

AUTUMN

The Golden Season of Kashmir

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Kashmir, often called "Heaven on Earth," is the most loved tourist destination across the world. Whether it's summer in Kashmir, monsoon, autumn, or winter, tourists love to enjoy the scenery and landscapes but, when it comes to those travel enthusiasts who love to witness the cool temperature and vibrant colours of the falling flowers, there is no better time to visit Kashmir other than the autumn season.

Autumn is called 'Harud' in Kashmiri - which refers to the time of harvest, and is visually the most awe striking of all seasons. This is also the shortest of all seasons, stretching between mid-October to mid-November. The autumn season in Kashmir begins from September and lasts until November. The temperature during the autumn season stays between 9°C and 20°C, resulting in cold and sweet winds. During that season, the leaves of trees turn golden and reddish, creating a breathtaking view for visitors, making it the best season to visit Kashmir.

Kashmir in the Autumn season is a breathtaking and awesome display of brilliant colours and beautiful landscapes. The atmosphere evolves into a fascinating artwork of golden-hued trees, glistening rivers, and mountain peaks covered in snow, which creates an enchanting environment that attracts hundreds and thousands of visitors.

On normal days, travellers adhere to these gardens during the summer season to relax underneath the shades of leafy chinar leaves, but when it comes to October, these dazzling autumn hues attract a lot of tourists, especially newly married couples, travel enthusiasts, and filmmakers.

Autumn in Jammu and Kashmir is quite short, especially in Jammu. After an extremely hot July, August welcomes the humid and restless monsoon, and September experiences the anxiety of its absence. It's the October month, which farewell the summer and starts celebrating summer like falling in love for the first time.

The Autumn season in Kashmir is highlighted by a comfortable drop in the temperature and an easy transition from monsoon to winter. The surrounding area is frequently visited by tourists during this time



of year due to its magnificent landscapes and vibrant greenery.

Kashmir has again become the first choice of international tourists. Over fifteen thousand foreign tourists have visited the Kashmir Valley in the first six months of 2023. While the number of tourists coming to Kashmir has broken all previous records, at the same time, foreign tourists have kept their date with Kashmir its all-time high arrival of foreign tourists in the Valley in the last three decades. In 2022, the total number of foreign tourists who visited the Kashmir Valley was around 4,000.

International travellers are once again flocking to the enchanting and picturesque destination of Kashmir. From January 1 to June this year, an impressive surge of over 15,000 foreign



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tourists has reconnected with the Valley, and authorities expect this number to increase significantly by the end of the year. The sharp increase indicates a growing attraction towards Kashmir as a preferred destination among international travellers. The government of Jammu and Kashmir hosted a G20 meeting in May. Ambassadors and foreign delegates from around 17 countries participated in these meetings with

a focus on tourism. The government is hopeful that G20 meetings held in Srinagar would translate into more promotion of Kashmir tourism across the world. The numbers have already crossed all the previous records and the government is also planning to do international promotions, especially in Southeast Asian, Middle East and North American countries. It is late autumn in Kashmir, and villagers around Pampore - also

known as the saffron town of Kashmir - are picking the delicate flowers to fill their wicker baskets.

Kashmir's saffron (*Crocus Sativus Kashmirianus*), known for its flavour and colour, is harvested just once a year from late October till mid of November in Autumn season as it has many uses in industries such as food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and perfumery as well as in the textile dye. Saffron harvesting season in Kash-

mir runs in late October-early November. One of the best destinations to start your purple hunt is Pampore, nicknamed Saffron Town of Kashmir.

In Autumn, the entire Kashmir valley is bathed in different hues of red, brown and orange. All the leaves change into multi-colored works of art to eventually fall away. Autumn is indeed Kashmir's golden season and the sights are a pleasure for the discerning eyes.

This season is absolutely perfect for taking beautiful scenic photos and spending time outdoors. While camping, exploring, long walks and drives along the poplar-lined boulevards are popular among nature lovers, the children are often seen playing cricket under the shade of the mighty Chinar trees.

A little nip in the mornings and evenings and the gentle warmth of the autumn sun are refreshing while evenings are a perfect time to sit together in the evening with friends or family around the bonfire. Chinars across the Valley attract tourists as well as locals during autumn when its leaves turn blood-red, mauve, orange, beige and brown before these eventually fall on the ground during the winters.

The Mughal Gardens on the banks of Dal Lake are attracting tourists who want to witness the hues of Chinar that started changing in the middle of October and have these days acquired bright colours.

The beautiful atmosphere of the region is enhanced by the coolness in the air, mild sunshine throughout the day, cold mornings and evenings and burning poplar trees all around during this time. Mughal Gardens are the first choice of tourists during this season as these gardens are filled with poplar trees.

The proactive promotions of Jammu and Kashmir tourism department both domestically and internationally, has played a vital role and collaborative marketing campaigns, roadshows, and participation in global tourism events have helped in projecting Kashmir as a must-visit destination. The pristine natural beauty, diverse cultural heritage, and unique experiences offered by the Valley have also contributed to its allure.

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The Exercise That Helps Fight Dementia at Any Age

Susan McQuillan

Following a healthful diet, being physically active, using stress management techniques, getting a good night's sleep, and maintaining overall emotional well-being are all evidence-based tools recommended to improve the lives of people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or dementia and even delay or prevent the development of these conditions in those who show no signs of impairment. A recent review of more than 60 studies from around the world found that, of all these "lifestyle medicines," exercise is likely the most effective and significant intervention.

While those with MCI lead functional lives and the majority won't progress to a more serious decline in mental capacity, approximately one-third will advance to dementia. Conventional medical treatments for dementia and Alzheimer's disease (which accounts for up to 70 percent of all dementia cases) are sorely lacking, and those that have been developed show limited effectiveness. Because of the difficulty in finding effective medical treatments, researchers and medical experts also turn to alternative, non-pharmaceutical recommendations, particularly increased physical activity.

A wide variety of physical activities are also associated with more than 30



percent reduction in future development of cognitive decline and memory loss in people who currently show no signs of either. The World Health Organization, WHO, specifically recommends resistance exercise as an effective activity, particularly for older people. Resistance training includes any of

the many exercises that involve pulling or pushing against the resistance of another object, including your own body. Resistance exercises include squats, chair squats, leg lifts, leg extensions, hip extensions (deadlifts), knee lifts, step-ups, calf raises, lunges, push-ups, wall push-ups, chin-ups, planks, side planks, rowing, and bench

pressing. Add-on aids, such as elastic resistance bands, are often used to add more physical tension to resistance exercises.

One Brazilian multi-university review study broke down the evidence behind the WHO recommendation. Resistance exercises protect brain cells and provide cognitive benefits

because they reduce inflammation and also reduce the formation of amyloid plaque that damages brain cells and their networks to a degree that disrupts language, reasoning, metabolism, and social behaviors, and eventually leads to death. Resistance exercises have a positive effect not only on brain health but also on bone density, balance, muscle strength, and overall physical function.

All lifestyle interventions—diet, exercise, and everything that goes into psychological well-being—appear to be important factors associated with the preservation of cognitive function, executive function, and memory in adults with and without signs of MCI or dementia. In the case of MCI, lifestyle improvements were especially significant and effective when used as an early intervention. In terms of clinical significance, or the scientific measurement of a meaningful outcome for a significant number of cases, exercise is the current leader of them all.

Note: Speak with your health care provider, physical therapist, or licensed or certified trainer before attempting any new exercises, especially as you get older. A good physical therapist or licensed trainer can adapt most standard exercises to fit your specific needs and prevent injury.

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