A glimpse of festivals in Singapore, Gangtok and Kashmir by Pradeep Kumar

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Singapore is the perfect place to travel to if you want to experience the cultural magnificence of several cultures. It is a place where Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists coexist. If you choose a Singapore tour to coincide with festivals, you get to know that Singapore is not just a metropolitan powerhouse; it is a cultural treasure as well.

Chinese New Year is one of the biggest festivals here and the government declares a 2 day public holiday during this festival. Usually, the festival falls around January â€“ February. The city is lit up with parades, carnivals and dragon dances. The Chinese has family reunion dinners and the celebrations go on for fifteen days. Buying a Singapore tour package at this time of the year is perfect time to visit the country. Other major Chinese festivals celebrated in Singapore are Qing Ming or the Clear and Bright Festival, Yu Lan Jie or the Festival of the Hungry Ghost and the Mid Autumn Festival which is also called the Lantern Festival or the Mooncake Festival. On Dragon Boat Festival day, special dragon boat races are held in Marina Bay.

Muslims in Singapore celebrate Hari Raya Puasa which is a public holiday in Singapore. This is a very special festival signifying acceptance and openness towards mankind. On this day, Muslims invite the non Muslims for feasts and share the celebrations. This festival is a celebration of the true multi racial culture in Singapore. Ramadan and Muharram are two other important festivals. Hari Raya Haji festival marks the end of Mecca pilgrimage and is a public holiday in Singapore.

For the Buddhists, Vesak Day which is celebrated as the birthday of Buddha is the most important festival. On this day, caged birds are released, gifts are distributed irrespective of race caste and creed, candlelight processions are taken out and large number of Buddhists congregate in stadiums for mass prayers. On this day, Buddhists donate blood in Singapore hospitals. The festival is a public holiday here.

Hindus, who are mainly of Tamil origin, celebrate Thaipusam in which devotees pierce their bodies in worship to Lord Subramaniam. Thimiti or the fire walking festival, Tamil New Year, Deepavali which is a public holiday and Navarathri are major Hindu festivals here.

The large Christian population of Singapore celebrates Christmas, Good Friday and Easter.

Other celebrations and public holidays in Singapore with are the New Yearâ€™s Day, Labor Day and National Day. Make sure that your Singapore tour does not fall during these public holidays.

Gangtok tourism is largely sought after by tourists in India. Some of the festivals celebrated by Hindus in Gangtok are Deepavali, Maghe Sankranthi and Daisin which is Sikkimese version of Dussehra. The Tibetians here celebrate Bumchu festival, Losar and many others. Besides these, there are numerous other festivals such as the Sikkimese New Year and native lepcha festivals. Gangtok tourism promotes and celebrates these festivals. Planning a visit to Gangtok tourism during any of the festival days can be a great idea.

Going for a Kashmir during festivals such as Deepavali can be a great sight because complementing the beauty of Kashmir are thousands of fluttering lamps at window sills of the houses. Lots of festivals are celebrated by the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs here. Kashmir tour during festivals not only takes you close to nature but also to the real communal harmony which exists here. Plan a Kashmir tour and enjoy your vacations.

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