

Condé Nast Traveller

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**MALDIVES
SPECIAL**
INSIDE

THE LAST WORD IN TRAVEL
MAY-JUNE-JULY 2021 | ₹200

INDIAN EDITION

INDIA'S 50 BEST VILLAS

The perfect
staycations to book

★★★

THE HOT LIST

The world's best
new hotels

★★★

BEYOND THE THEPLA

Gujarat's little
known cuisines

*Family
first*

50 incredible experiences
with the kids across India





50 TOP VILLAS IN INDIA

Your new vacation destination is a gorgeous villa in the middle of nowhere, on the edge of cliffs, on the banks of a river, by the beach, in the heart of a cardamom plantation. India's incredibly diverse landscapes are now dotted with architectural masterpieces, quaint cottages, centuries-old lovingly restored bungalows, and state-of-the-art structures. They are private, yet spare no creature comforts, with menus to rival the best 5-star restaurants. Luxurious spaces that spill into emerald green gardens, with mist that winds through verandahs, halls that echo with the sound of waves, and midnight feasts under starlight—welcome to the 50 top villas in India, just a click away on MakeMyTrip, Airbnb, Saffronstays, Isprava, Vista Rooms, Booking.com and more.

Compiled by **Rituparna Som**

🏠 Number of rooms | 🐾 Pet-friendly | ♿ Wheelchair-accessible | 🏊 Swimming pool | 📶 WiFi



976 PANANGAD, ERNAKULAM KERALA

Quintessential Kerala, and then some more. A short drive away from the heart of Kochi, 976 is a slice of paradise that's going to make you want to stay here forever. All four rooms offer direct views of the backwaters beyond an infinity pool. Locally inspired design and uniquely curated artefacts combine with a minimalist design aesthetic. The in-house chef serves up sumptuous fresh seafood, procured daily from the neighbouring Chinese fishing nets. Spend your day watching Brahminy kites overhead, head out on kayaks, or make a quick 15-minute drive to Fort Kochi and explore its multicultural streets. —Bharath Ramamrutham
976panangad.com; book on the website or via Airbnb; ₹55,000 per night for the entire villa

🏠 4 | 🚗 No | ♿ Yes | 📶 Yes | 📺 Yes

© BHARATH RAMAMRUTHAM

ONE 90 BY THE GOLF, DEVDHOLERA GUJARAT

Located a few miles away from the city centre of Ahmedabad, One 90 by The Golf, is a quick and idyllic getaway especially for those who enjoy a round or two of golf. The design of the villa mimics that of a ship, with all the bedrooms and multiple living rooms opening out to verdant vistas. Owner Manish Jain's love for art echoes throughout, with sculptures and paintings from Bastar and Kashmir dotting the gardens and interiors of the house. The villa has two kitchens, one of which is open to guests. There is a cook onsite who can whip up vegetarian Indian and Continental dishes (they serve eggs). Waking up to birdsong from the neighbouring Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary is one of the biggest highlights of this peaceful escape. —RS

one90bythegolf.com; book via their website, Airbnb and Booking.com; ₹9,500 for the entire villa

🏠 3 | 🐾 Yes | ♿ Yes | 🇬🇧 Yes | 🇮🇳 Yes

ELAKAI, MUNNAR KERALA

Far from the madding crowd, past hillside swathed in green tea estates and overlooking Anayirangal lake, Elakai is an enchanting two-bedroom property set in the midst of a vast cardamom plantation. Surrounded by lush greenery, blue hills with spectacular panoramic views all around, Elakai Munnar is all about switching off and letting time catch up with you. The in-house chef serves up everything from hot chai and pakoras to authentic local and Continental fare. Get a crash-course on cardamom production on a trek through the property, head out for a boat ride, or spend your day in the comfort of an armchair while spotting the different birds in the area. —BR

elakaimunnar.com; book via their website; ₹30,000 for the entire villa

🏠 2 | 🐾 No | ♿ No | 🇬🇧 No | 🇮🇳 Yes

SAWAI CHUKKERS, ASSAGAO GOA

Sawai Chukkers is a modern villa with a hint of Goan aesthetic in its stark laterite walls. The property is surrounded by green, and the sublimely luxurious rooms overlook an infinity pool and swaying coconut trees. The living rooms flow seamlessly into the outdoors, creating a zen-like atmosphere. An in-house cook can whip up Indian dishes catering to individual dietary requirements and tastes. Located in the buzzing Assagao

village, the villa is ideally suited to explore the beaches, restaurants and heritage sites in north and central Goa. —JL

thesawai.com; book via MakeMyTrip; price on request

🏠 5 | 🐾 Yes | ♿ N/A | 🇬🇧 Yes | 🇮🇳 Yes

SECRET GARDEN, PUSHKAR RAJASTHAN

The next time you're in Pushkar, check out Secret Garden—a six-bedroom villa, tucked away in a picturesque part of town. The villa is styled like a heritage fort and features panoramic views from its terraces. Unwind in the gardens, the games room or in the pool. The Pushkar dunes are a short drive away for those who want a feel of the desert. While the in-house chef prepares the most delicious home-style vegetarian meals, you can bring in your own food and alcohol. The villa has its own yoga shala for those who want to catch some early morning asanas or meditate. —RG

secretgardenpushkar.com; book via MakeMyTrip; ₹46,000 for the entire villa

🏠 6 | 🐾 No, but they are open to a conversation | ♿ No | 🇬🇧 No | 🇮🇳 Yes

VILLA BRANCO, VAGATOR GOA

Bathed in shades of white, Villa Branco is done up to reflect an European and Indian regal aesthetic, with arched doorways, louvered doors, carved screens, and bespoke flooring. The 9,000-sqft structure has bedrooms with walk-in closets, a study, private pool and gazebo to lounge in as well as a huge well-tended garden. Guests can use the fully stocked kitchen or request for a chef. Its location in Vagator makes it easily accessible to north Goa's tourist hotspots. A concierge team can guide with excursions for those seeking to explore the state. —JL

451/E, near Church Road, Badem, Vagator, Goa; book via Isprava; ₹60,390

🏠 5 | 🐾 N/A | ♿ N/A | 🇬🇧 Yes | 🇮🇳 Yes

SUMMERTIME, CALANGUTE GOA

A tastefully done up villa in the heart of Calangute, Summertime offers luxury, privacy and a curated taste of Goa. Each room in the house is unique, and dotted with bird motifs or prints. Bedrooms boast spacious bathrooms, little bookshelves, furniture sourced from trips abroad, and spots of brightness in the form of curios and lamps. The carefully tended garden has cosy little pockets of beauty: a koi pond,

seating under graceful cashew trees and a handmade stream and mini waterfall. The in-house cook can whip up any dish as per your taste while a concierge service offers curated tours and experiences. —JL

summertimegoa.com; book via Airbnb.

₹36,000-55,000 for the entire villa depending on the season

🏠 3 suites | 🐾 No | ♿ Yes | 🇬🇧 Yes | 🇮🇳 Yes

SECLUDE, LANSDOWNE UTTARAKHAND

Lansdowne is a quiet town in the Garhwal Himalayas where you can still walk under ancient oaks and pines without running into people. Located in the village of Umri Khal, 14km away from the main town, Seclude is just as its name suggests—away from it all—but isn't disconnected from luxury. A perfect haven for writers and artists, the place is well-equipped with good Wi-Fi, modern amenities and great food including Garhwali meals and gourmet barbecue dinners. Guests can go on long nature walks and forest picnics in the many trails around the area. Lansdowne town is a good break for a spot of sightseeing or boating in the Bhulla Lake. —ST

seclude.in; book via their website;

₹5,510 for The Reading Room; ₹6316 for The Wordsmith Room; ₹11,186 for The Writerhouse Apartment

🏠 4 (2 independent rooms + 2 rooms in a single apartment) | 🐾 No | ♿ No | 🇬🇧 No | 🇮🇳 Yes

THE INNER TEMPLE, MOIRA GOA

The Inner Temple is a cosy, homely villa located in the quiet village of Moira in Goa. The patterned tiles and themed rooms are bested by a spacious, high-ceilinged hall. The verandah is where all the action happens from quiet evenings to cocktail nights to lazy meals. For relaxation, there's a masseuse, yoga and ayurvedic treatments and a pool. The in-house cook can whip up any dish; her Goan food is especially delicious and you can expect prawn curry-rice, fried fish, sol kadi and more. The property can organise a range of curated experiences, from in-house magic shows to marine adventures. Or you can simply walk around the quiet lanes of the village. —JL

theinnertemple.in; book via their website;

₹25,000-60,000 for the entire villa

🏠 3 | 🐾 Yes, but with rules | ♿ Limited | 🇬🇧 Yes | 🇮🇳 Yes

Clockwise from top: the pale pink interiors of Villa Alenteho, Goa; a lunch spread at Villa in Palms by Vescapes, Goa; the pool and gazebo at Villa Beira Mar at Alibaug