

# 9 Indian Hotels to Check Into For a White Christmas

Perfect places for a view of snowy peaks. | By NGT Staff

HOTELS NORTH INDIA | POSTED ON: DECEMBER 3, 2015



Guests at Villa Himalaya are lulled to sleep by the rhythmic roar of the Sind River. Photo courtesy The Villa Himalaya

Pack your woollens and head to north India for gorgeous views of snow-covered peaks and powdery white slopes. Given how temperamental the weather is, you may not get to make wonky snowmen, or go sledding down a hill. But fret not, at least you can gaze at the white-tipped mountains with a steaming cup of chai. We've picked beautiful hotels across north India that are ideal for leisurely lazing and guarantee a Christmas you won't forget anytime soon.

## The Villa Himalaya, Sonamarg

The Villa Himalaya checks all the boxes of a mountain getaway: Spectacular location, friendly but discreet service, and rooms that steer clear of the kitschy Kashmiri aesthetic that many hotels in the state favour. There were traditional touches—a runner with Kashmiri embroidery, a papier mâché lamp by the bedside, and a small, richly woven carpet—but they didn't overpower the space. The star in The Villa Himalaya's rooms is clearly the view. Every corner (even the

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shower) has mountain vistas. I fell asleep counting pine tree silhouettes on a moonlit rocky ridge, and thanks to the soothing sound of the Sind, enjoyed a deep, restful sleep. –*Neha Sumitran*

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## Doli Guest House, Jibhi



*Doli Guest House belongs in a Kipling novel. Photo courtesy Doli Guest House*

It says on the guesthouse website that these cottages are inspired from Swiss chalets and for once, the comparison doesn't make me laugh when I get there. Deodars, locally known as the "Tree of the Gods", have shed their cones on the forest floor all around us while making their powerful ascent towards the sky. The land ahead slopes down towards the banks of a stream that's swirling urgently around boulders before disappearing purposefully around the bend, quite determined to break the tranquil mood. On the opposite bank, Doli Guest House remains unfazed in the afternoon sun, with a few guests sprawled out in the garden with books and mattresses. The smell of pine and cedar seals it. We've unwittingly walked into a Kipling novel. – *Sejal Mehta*

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## The Himalayan, Manali



*The stone mansion is far away from the chaos of old Manali's hippie hangouts and new town's mayhem. Photo: Milan Moudgil*

The Himalayan is every boy's dream castle. The stone mansion, which took a decade to build and was completed three years ago, has battlements, buttresses, and a plush but medieval feel. I spent a morning exploring the property, sinking into the Conservatory's posh armchairs, snooping around the cabbage patch, and trekking up to the gazebo on the roof for an aerial view of the land. The Himalayan is away from the chaos of old Manali's hippie hangouts and new town's mayhem, and offers day vistas of pine-covered mountains veiled in thick mist. The sky on a clear night is sigh-inducing. –*Neha Sumitran*

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## Khyber Himalayan Spa and Resort, Gulmarg



The hotel was constructed in the Alpine log-cabin style. Photo: Khyber Himalayan Resort and Spa

The hotel has large picture windows everywhere, framing different vistas and snowscapes, perfect for travellers who like to enjoy the outdoors from the inside. The hotel's L'Occitane Spa offers an excellent deep tissue massage. —Mamta Dalal M. Agaldas

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    T'Aroha, Dhanachuli



*The Master's Bedroom at Te Aroha is cosily furnished with high four-poster bed, plush sofas, and a little private garden. Photo courtesy Te Aroha*

The rooms don't have televisions at Te Aroha, a boutique hotel in Dhanachuli in Uttarakhand's Kumaon's district. But that's hardly a problem: Draw back the curtains and a grand drama unfolds. Clouds slide into the valley, tree branches sway in the breeze, and birds swoop past. On clear mornings, the snow-capped peaks of Nanda Devi, Nanda Kot, and Trishul glisten in the sunshine. When I was not mesmerised by the stellar vistas, I found enough reading material to keep me busy. Books occupy every niche, flat surface, or cosy corner, and there's also a reading room with an eclectic collection. —Neha Dara

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## Itmenaan Estate, Almora

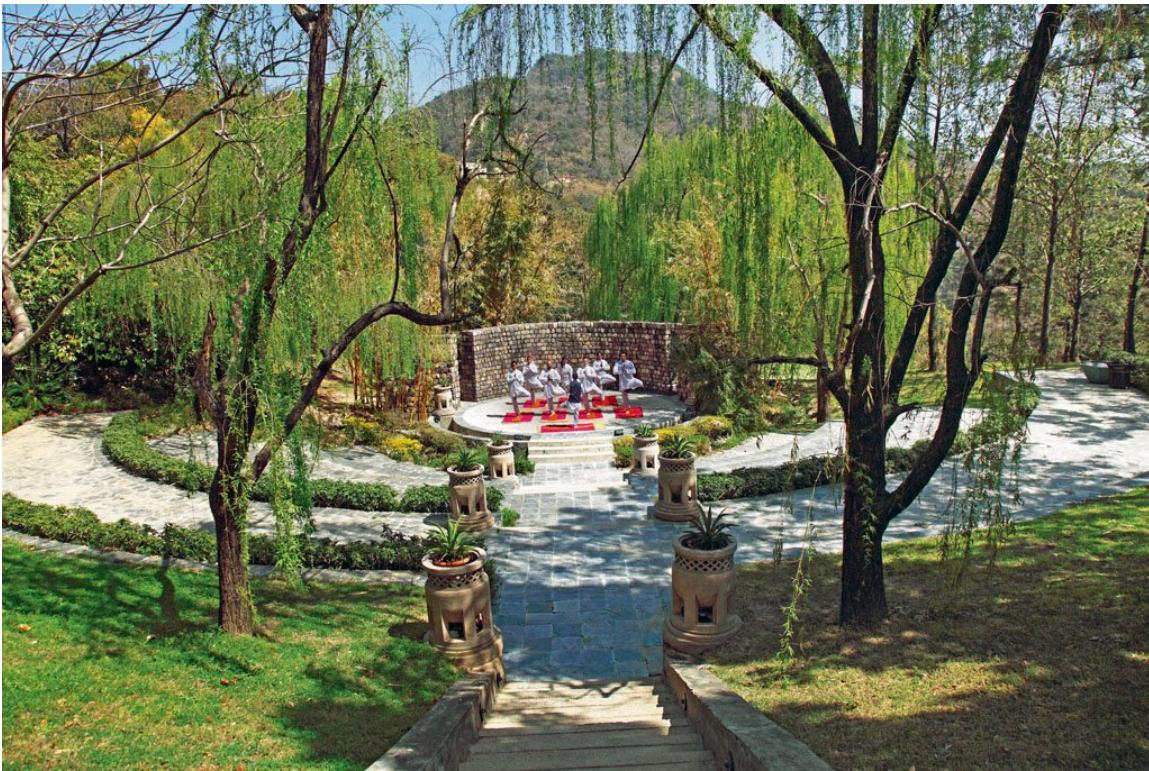


*The grounds of Itmenaan Estate include beautiful oak and rhododendron trees. Photo courtesy Itmenaan Estate*

There's something therapeutic about a great view. It makes my mind relax, all my worries fall away, and only the present matters. My stay at Itmenaan Estate, a hotel located in the one-lane village of Chalni Chheena in Uttarakhand, was about such a view. A short, steep downhill hike from the village leads to the 10-acre estate's restored century-old Kumaoni house. Perched on a mountainside, it overlooks terraced fields and cascading slopes draped with pine trees. —Neha Dara

Read more [here](#).

## Ananda in the Himalayas, Dehradun



*Stress management is one the resort's primary goals and yoga is an important component of the plan. Photo courtesy Ananda In The Himalayas*

For me the stay at Ananda was about focussing on myself. In our everyday lives, filled with lists of things to complete, our bodies regularly send out signals, telling us things we need to heed. At Ananda, after a long time, I stopped to listen. What I heard wasn't sweet or pleasant. Even though I was there for a getaway rather than a formal wellness programme, I felt the calm and the unwinding. The pervading wellness mantra put me in the mode to do something about improving my health, to attempt to fix and cleanse my system, and reclaim a sense of wellbeing. —Niloufer Matraman

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## Soulitude, Uttarakhand



*Cosy up while watching the snow fall. Photo courtesy Soulitude*

If you'd like to be snowed in and curled up beside a warm, comforting fire, Soulitude is a great bet. Situated in the mountains, in Gagar village, this beautiful hotel is surrounded by stunning landscapes and tiny winding forested trails. Until the snow comes down, take small walks along the hillside, where the trees reveal a promise of rhododendron blooms in the summer. The rooms are big and tasteful, and each has spectacular views of the valley around. When it

snows, it's like the entire place has put on a white quilt to wait out the cold. Stay indoors, ask for hot chocolate, grab your book or significant other, and enjoy a truly white Christmas. —*Meera Mehta*

## The Mirage, Andretta



*Meals and views apart, The Mirage scores for its warmth and intimate vibe. Photo courtesy The Mirage*

Meals and views apart, The Mirage scores for its warmth and intimate vibe. Our toasty rooms had heavy wooden beds, colourful, locally woven blankets, and quirky touches that give homestays their character. One of our rooms for instance, had a padlock shaped like Buddha's head with a key that went into the third eye. Mine had a lock shaped like a woman, and a key that unlocked her Kundalini (that's personal hotspot for non-yogis). Together they summed up this mud-walled cottage's appeal: a place for quiet introspection, but also great for good, old-fashioned fun. —*Neha Sumitran*

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