

ASIA'S TOP 5 MUST-SEE DESTINATIONS



spiritual wonders.

Home to a myriad of stunning cities and travel sights, Asia is growing in popularity among tourists from near and far. ITB Asia, the 'trade show for the Asian Travel Market', is only to underline the importance of the many attractions the region has on offer. ITB Asia in collaboration with Tourism-review.com introduces five of the most remarkable Asian destinations rich in cultural, natural, and

Bengaluru, India

If a modern scene with a touch of nature is what you are after, Bengaluru (formerly known as Bangalore) is a can't-miss city on your Asian vacation. Bengaluru is the country's cosmopolitan, technology hub located in southern India. Unlike most of the cities in the region, Bengaluru has a cool, temperate climate throughout the year, making it an oasis for visitors and residents alike.

Referred to as India's "Garden City," you can take a break from the buzz of the city at many of Bengaluru's lush parks, such as the famous Lal Bagh Botanical Gardens where people go to see gorgeous flower exhibitions.

You will find it easy to make your way around while you explore this busy city's diverse art, culture and cuisine since many residents speak and understand English. Brigade Road and MG Road offer amazing restaurants and pubs, but the area's attractions aren't all concentrated in the city center. Head to the outskirts of Bengaluru to the Forum Mall at Koramangala for an international shopping spree.

Chengdu, China

Chengdu is the cultural hub and historical center of China. Visitors can take in sites such as jaw-dropping temples, beautiful monasteries and a fascinating giant panda breeding and research facility. At 92 acres, the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding is positioned in the city's center, and plans are in the works for a mass expansion, totaling 500 acres. Also at the facility is the world's only endangered species museum - the China Giant Panda Museum, which is a must-see attraction for anyone who comes to Chengdu.

After you tour the museum, make your way to the Minjiang River to see the ancient 500-meter long Anlan Suspension Bridge and the Dujiangyan Irrigation Project that dates back 2,300 years. At Chengdu's West Gate, there are fascinating attractions such as the serene Du Fu Cottage and the stunning Wuhou Memorial Temple.

Chiang Mai, Thailand

Welcome to the "real Thailand" as Chiang Mai is often described. Nestled in the mountains approximately 430 miles/700 km north of Bangkok, Chiang Mai is a low-key place where you can visit hill tribes, do volunteer work, or journey through the countryside. It is also the largest and most culturally significant city in northern Thailand.

However, there are plenty of activities for night owls – live music venues, bars, discos, restaurants and a Muay Thai boxing ring with a walk-in arcade. Thai cultural music and dancing is displayed at the Galare Food Centre for those who want free entertainment while they enjoy food and drinks at the multiple coffee outlets, bars and American fast food franchises.

Chiang Mai is well known for the relatively low prices of goods at its multiple-block night bazaars and modern shopping centers. Tourists and residents alike flock to the food and craft market on Sundays on Rachadamnoen Road and the craft market on Saturdays on Wua Lai Road.

Kyoto, Japan

Are you looking for an alternative to Tokyo's fast-paced environment? If so, then Kyoto is the place for you. Step back in time as you take a tranquil journey through the city's 200 shrines and temples, intricate castles, bamboo-lined paths and 17 UNESCO World Heritage locations.

As you explore Kyoto, stop by the impressive Ginkaku-Ji and Ryoan-Ji temples of Zen. If you are looking for an immersion experience, many of the smaller temples around the city offer monk-like slippers and robes to wear while taking in the peaceful settings.

Stop for a moment and grab a bite at Kyoto's Gion area's quaint restaurants and bars, where you may even catch a glimpse of a geisha from time to time. Then go to Niji Castle to see its lovely paintings in a black-on-white style, where images will immediately flood your head of Shogun stand offs of the past faintly reverberate over the castle walls.

Langkawi, Malaysia

A beach lover's paradise! Langkawi consists of 100 islands, of which only two are inhabited. Once you arrive, you will be surrounded by crystal-clear lagoons, white sand, warm sunshine, pole huts and a smattering of high-end resorts. Nestled between patches of white sand are huge rice fields, sloping jungles and mangrove trees.

Hop from island to island to enjoy activities such as boat excursions, snorkeling and hikes through undeveloped terrain. At Langkawi's main island, take a ride on a cable car to see nearby Thailand from the air and the spectacular SkyBridge. Be sure to visit the crocodile farm, the eagle mascot of the island and the local monkeys.

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