
Kaziranga National Park – a world heritage site

Great numbers of species have been driven to extinction never to be seen again. Once, the one-horned Indian rhinoceros seemed bound to share this fate. Fortunately, through early intervention the species has slowly rebounded. The Kaziranga National Park has been instrumental in the preservation of the one-horned Indian rhinoceros.

If you are visiting India for the park alone, you can book a flight to Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati. The park is 23 km from there and you can hire a cab to take you to the park. An alternative is to go to the bus station in Paltan Bazaar and take a state or private-owned bus to the park. By train, the nearest rail station is the Jorhat railway station. Take the Ghy Intercity to Khumtai for 57 rupees which is not more than 1 USD. From Khumtai, ride a cab to the park for 476 rupees or \$7.

The Kaziranga National Park is a sprawling 430 sq. km of protected land made of rolling hills and vast plains. It boasts of having the densest population of the one-horned Indian rhinoceros and is also a tiger reserve. Wildlife tourism is authorized by the park so you can come and visit. The park is not open for the entire year though so make sure to plan your visit from November to April.

Apart from rhinos and tigers, other wildlife you can find in the park are elephants, wild buffalos, leopard cats, sloth bears, and other mammals and reptiles, as well as a numerous variety of birds. The park's flora is made up of vegetation, deciduous forests, woodlands, and evergreen forests. These differences are because of the variations in altitude from the east and west parts of the park. The numerous lakes and parks in the area also have aquatic flora.

Safari rides are the best way to explore the park. The park is divided into several ranges; each with different flora and fauna. The four ranges are the Kaziranga Range or Central Range, Western Range, Eastern Range, and the Burapahar Range. Each range has a safari point: Mihimukh, Kohora for the Central Range, Bagori for the Western Range, Agaratoli for the Eastern Range, and Ghorakhati for the Burahapar Range. The Central range has grassland, rivers, and lakes. Rhinos, elephants, and birds can be spotted in this area. The Western range has rhinos, elephants, deer, water buffalos and migratory birds. The Eastern range also has a lot of birds and waterfowl but less rhinos. Morning jeep safari runs from 8 am. to 10 am. while afternoon safari are from 2PM to 4PM.

You can also sign up for elephant safari. This is usually in Kohora and takes a slightly different route in the Kaziranga Central range. Elephant safari times are from 5:30 to 6:30 AM and 6:30

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to 7:30 AM.

A visit to Kaziranga National Park will not only allow you to see Indian rhinos in person but it will also get you acquainted with the park's efforts to be a safe haven for various species.

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