

From Mahakumbh to UNESCO recognition, 2025 redefined Uttar Pradesh Tourism

MANOJ BHADRA
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The year 2025 marked a decisive shift for UP tourism. The state not only consolidated its position as India's most visited destination but also began a deeper transition toward cultural pride, global recognition and sustainable tourism models.

From historic spiritual gatherings to international heritage acknowledgements, the year reflected both scale and substance. As UP moved toward 2026, tourism was no longer limited to pilgrimages alone. It evolved into a broad-based movement that connected faith, culture, wellness, urban growth and community participation.

• The major achievements in the year gone by:

Mahakumbh 2025 emerged as the defining moment of the year, with more than 66 crore devotees taking the holy dip at the Sangam in Prayagraj. The scale of planning, safety, sanitation, and crowd management showcased UP's growing capacity to host mega global religious events. Beyond numbers, Mahakumbh strengthened the livelihoods of local boatmen, vendors, guides, and farmers, turning faith tourism into a people-driven economy.

Lucknow's recognition as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy became a cultural milestone for Uttar



Pradesh. It celebrated the city's living food traditions, culinary craftsmanship and generational knowledge carried by chefs and home kitchens alike. The recognition opened new global avenues for food tourism and storytelling while encouraging opportunities for women entrepreneurs, traditional cooks, and local food producers.

The inclusion of Sonbhadra's Salkhan Fossil Park in UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites placed UP firmly on the global geoheritage map. This recognition laid the foundation for geo tourism, educational travel and research-led visits, while reinforcing a

conservation-based approach where learning and preservation moved together.

The inauguration of Rashtra Prerna Sthal added a powerful new cultural landmark and gave a renewed identity to Lucknow as a city where heritage, values and modern public spaces came together. The site strengthened cultural tourism in the capital region and offered visitors a space that went beyond leisure into reflection and inspiration.

Deepotsav 2025 in Ayodhya created two Guinness World Records, one for the lighting of over 26 lakh diyas across the ghats and another for the largest simultaneous diya rotation. The year gained further significance when Diwali

was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in December 2025, turning a festival into a moment of cultural diplomacy and global storytelling through UP.

Major Things to Look Forward to in 2026:

Magh Mela 2026 will be introduced with a renewed identity, marked by the launch of its first-ever official logo. The logo drew from the cosmic and astrological framework of the mela period, reflecting the spiritual tradition of Kalpavas at the Sangam, and positioned Magh Mela as a festival rooted in precise celestial alignments. This has added a new layer of branding and public engagement while keeping the core spiritual experience intact.

For the first time in 2025, new recruitment reforms in the tourism department were set to professionalise services across destinations and ensure deployment across all 75 districts of the state.