

# A new recipe

Dhabas to whet tourists' appetite in Uttar Pradesh



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Uttar Pradesh, which clocked 180 million tourists in 2023, more than any other state and an increase of 50 per cent over 2022, hopes to increase this number to 800 million by 2028. The recipe for this increase includes a gastronomical ingredient.

The Yogi Adityanath government in the state is looking to curate a network of 1,001 dhabas (small local eateries) dotting the state's major national and state highways. The state tourism department has already identified the dhabas for revamp. A process of registration will start soon for providing them with 25 to 30 per cent subsidy under the UP Tourism Policy 2022.

The state government has identified tourism as a key sector to fuel its ambition of becoming a trillion dollar economy. The state received tourism related project proposals worth ₹60,000 crore at the UP Global Investors Summit in February 2023.

UP Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh has tasked officials with drawing up a list of eligible dhabas flanking major highways and routes crisscrossing the state's

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75 districts. The tourism department will partner with private companies for imparting culinary training and skilling of the staff associated with these restaurants.

UP tourism sector's gross value added (GVA) was pegged at ₹14,000 crore in 2022-23, and the state aims to achieve a GVA of ₹70,000 crore by 2028.

After the redevelopment of the Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi and the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, UP has witnessed a surge in spiritual and religious tourism. The state also expects a footfall of almost 400 million to congregate during the Prayagraj Mahakumbh in Jan-Feb 2025.

"UP is fast-developing in the tourism domain. Lakhs of people visit the major tourist centres of Ayodhya, Kashi, Mathura, Buddhist Circuit, etc, on a daily basis," Singh added.

He said the government was ramping up tourism infrastructure so that tourists did not face hassles and were offered the best services in

terms of hospitality, lodging, and food.

The selected dhabas will be expected to promote the state's cultural heritage and local cuisines while providing a congenial ambience with top class cleanliness, sanitation, and atmospherics.

Meanwhile, the UP tourism department has exhorted restaurant and dhaba operators to partner the state under the project. The state plans to add 200,000 new hotel rooms to its hospitality inventory, especially in the hotspots of Varanasi, Ayodhya, Prayagraj, Agra, Mathura, Gorakhpur, and the Buddhist Circuit. The rooms would be added by way of hotels, resorts, homestays, and guest houses

Last month, UP Tourism joined hands with MakeMyTrip, which will work as a strategic partner providing insights on consumer trends, tourist preferences, and supply side information.

"Travelers search for information on the internet before and during trips. Search engines reveal whether a tourist's interest leans towards eco-tourism, adventure tourism, spiritual tourism, etc," UP Tourism and Culture Principal Secretary Mukesh Kumar Meshram said earlier.