

Hornbill & Nagaland Travel Guide



by Jazzleen | @techtotravel



WHAT IS THE HORNBILL FESTIVAL?

Held every year in early December at Kisama Heritage Village near Kohima, the Hornbill Festival is one of India's largest cultural and music festivals. It brings together Naga and other tribes, live music, traditional dances, food, and community in one place.

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

- **Live Music:** Concerts and evening performances.
- **Culture:** Traditional tribal dances and indigenous rituals.
- **Food:** Local Naga food, rice beer, and street snacks.
- **Art:** Handicrafts, textiles, and cultural showcases.
- **Vibe:** A vibrant mix of locals, travelers, and artists.

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BOOKING & CAMPING TIPS (Read This Carefully)

- **Book Early:** Book accommodation at least 1-2 months in advance —December is peak season.
- **Camp Type:** Always prefer a permanent campsite over pop-up camps [pop-ups often have poorly maintained toilets].
- **Crowd Vibe:** Check the Instagram handle of the camping company before booking—crowd quality matters.
- **Shared Tents:** Shared tents usually cost around 999 per person for a sharing tent.
- **BYO Tent:** If you have your own tent, pitching fees are usually around 500 [confirm with owner].
- **Location:** Stay inside or very close to the festival area; walking back late at night can be difficult.
- **Weather:** Carry warm layers—mornings and nights are cold.

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Suggested 5-7 Day Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival & Kohima

- Arrive at Dimapur [train/flight] and travel to Kohima.
- Explore: War Cemetery, Cathedral, State Museum, local cafés, and the night market.

Day 2: Khonoma, Dzuleke & Poilwa [Nature Day]

- Transport: Rent a bike or hire a private cab. Start early!
- Khonoma: A local guide is required [approx. Rs 500 per group].
- The Route: Visit Khonoma Village, then head to Dzuleke and Poilwa Sheep Farm.
- Stay: You can choose to stay overnight in a homestay at Khonoma/Dzuleke OR return to Kohima in the evening.

Day 3: Kisama Heritage Village [Festival Day]

- Spend the full day at Kisama Heritage Village.
- Immerse yourself in the cultural performances, food stalls, and evening music concerts.

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Day 4: Kapamodzu Peak [Offbeat Views]

- Leave early for Kapamodzu Peak, a majestic offbeat spot.
- Stay: You can choose to stay near the peak for the views OR return to Kisama/Kohima the same day.

Day 5: The Decision Day

- Option A: Explore the festival one last time and leave for Dimapur [as per your flight/train].
- Option B [Dzukou Valley]: If you want to trek, start your journey today.

Day 6 & 7: Dzukou Valley Extension [Optional]

- If you chose Option B, spend Day 6 trekking and exploring the valley.
- Day 7: Descend and leave for Dimapur for your onward journey.

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✨ The Hornbill Checklist

There is an entry ticket for the festival - 150 rs per day, for evening concert - 200 rs per day, Imagi Land - 300 rs per day.

You can check the artists and decide where you wanna go.

DO: Watch the evening concerts , explore the Morungs , and interact with locals.

TRY: Sip on local Rice Beer, eat traditional Naga food, and grab exotic street snacks at the festival. Disclaimer for vegetarians[there are very few options]

BUY: Unique handicrafts and traditional Naga textiles/shawls from the cultural stalls.

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