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HOW HILLS OF SOUTH INDIA DIFFER FROM NORTHERN HILLS?

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The hills of South India, Ooty (7500 ft), Kodaikanal (7000 ft) and Coonoor (6200 ft), despite having some common characteristics differ to a great extent from the **northern hills**. While winter rain and snow favour Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, snowfall is a completely absent phenomenon for southern hills. The winter month of December is characterised only by a drop in temperatures and winter chill.

The Western Disturbance, the core reason for snowfall, fails to reach South India and hence the region remains deprived of this white beauty. However, active Northeast Monsoon brings ample rainfall for the hilly region. The drop in minimum temperatures, slipping to single digits, is another characteristic of southern hills during the winter month of December. The freezing points are low and white sheet in the form of frost sometimes develops over the region. Ooty is the coldest hill station because of its elevation and certain weather conditions.

Although Northeast Monsoon officially withdraws by December 30, scanty rainfall continues in the month of January as well. By this time, extreme cold conditions set in, with night temperatures slipping to less than 5 degree Celcius. In January 2019, Ooty recorded its lowest minimum at 3°C, followed by Kodaikanal 5°C and Coonoor 7°C. Meanwhile, days remain comfortable with temperatures around 16 degree Celcius. Except for some days, bright sunshine takes over and foggy days are rarely seen.

Contrary to northern hills, wherein maximums drop to as low as single digits, the day temperatures over southern hills settle in double digits only. The region escapes cold day conditions. Likewise, it remains free of any inclement weather conditions such as rail, road or air traffic disruption, which is a regular sight during winters in northern hills.