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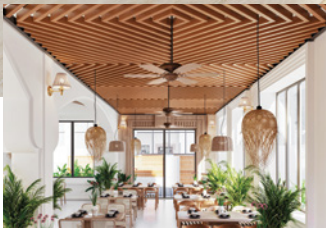


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# EDITOR'S NOTE

**In** our continuous quest to provide you limitless possibilities, we hope to expand not just your explorations, but also the lens with which you view the world. In that spirit, we unveil three new pathways—Mind, Body, Soul.

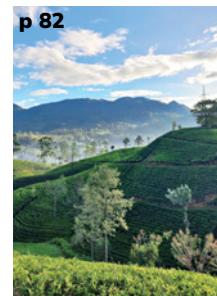
In Soul, we aim to take you on the most sensorial and transformative experiences to satiate your wanderlust and enrich your very being. For instance, in our Cover Story, we invite you to savour the world through shared meals and ancient culinary traditions. Imagine foraging or cooking with locals or taking a culinary class—the idea is to connect with cultures, a flavour at a time. In Denmark, food takes on a powerful role of forging friendships, as community dining brings people out of their homes to share conversations over meals. We explore Japan with a sake trail, a truly soul-satisfying quest. Journeys like these truly resonate, leaving indelible memories and impressions.

In Mind, we seek to take you on stimulating journeys that stoke your intellectual curiosity and shape new perspectives. In this issue, we delve into the subtle art of mindful travel, revealing how cultural sensitivity can transform your sojourns. We also explore the emerging trend of micro-luxury stays, which is signalling a shift in how we view luxury escapes. It's about expanding your horizons, one thought-provoking story at a time.

Finally, we honour the Body and put your physical well-being upfront. Our scenic walking trails help you connect with the world at your own pace. The aim is to find harmony between movement and mindfulness. To new thoughts and new horizons...

Happy reading and Namaste!

— **Namaste.ai** Editorial Team



**EDITOR'S PICK OF THE MONTH**  
A curated fusion of the finest events, travels, exquisite cuisine, and enriching experiences, presenting a snapshot of life's vibrant mosaic.



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APRIL 2025

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Discover the myriad ways culinary experiences enhance the flavour of our travels



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A mix of spices, intrinsic to many cuisines worldwide

Cover image courtesy Shutterstock

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An IIMC graduate, Delhi-based Trisha has been a features writer for over a decade, working with large agencies and publications. She has written extensively on all things art and culture. While art is her primary area of interest, every now and then, she also dabbles in fashion, food, books, cinema, and travel.

↓ **page 100**



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↓ **page 28**



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A Mumbai-based F&B expert, Nikhil is a consultant and writer who strives to wed the flavours of food to the myriad moods of life. With a keen eye on global hospitality trends, he takes comfort in uncovering culinary stories, worldwide.

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One of India's leading health and fitness experts, Deanne has authored three books—*Balance: The Secret to True Health and Happiness in 13 Ways*, *Shut Up and Train! A Complete Fitness Guide for Men and Women*, and *I'm Not Stressed*. She has trained many celebrities as well.

All author images courtesy respective authors; Left to right: Getty Images; Shutterstock; Rani Pani Jungle Lodge





# CHECKLIST

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## DIG RIGHT IN

The eclectic cuisine of Bali is sure to satisfy even the most demanding palate



*You'll find a wide variety of chicken dishes in Bali*



# 8 Dishes TO TRY IN BALI

Everyone's favourite island is filled with unique dishes that highlight its bounty

words by **Joanna Lobo**



## ↑ PISANG GORENG

As expected from a tropical place, Bali loves its bananas. This popular street food is sold in the markets and at some hawker stalls. Consider it a version of a banana fritter. A ripe banana is dipped in a batter (usually rice flour) and deep fried till crispy, offering a nice textural contrast to the sweet fruit. Some even serve this with cheese (*pisang goreng keju*). Depending on where you eat it, the fried snack will be dusted with sugar, chocolate shavings or even a spattering of coconut.

**Where to try it:** Pisang Goreng Kremesh, Denpasar



## ↓ NASI CAMPUR

This dish feels like an Indonesian thali—rice with an assortment of sides like grilled chicken, steamed and stir-fried veggies, sometimes satay, and fried tofu. Each place has its own version and it was a treat trying all of them. This was the one thing I ate almost every day.

**Where to try it:** Run's Warung, Ubud



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### ← GADO GADO

It is a salad of stir-fried or steamed vegetables. For the times I was seeking a separate veggie fix, this came to my rescue. Essentially a tossed-up mixture of raw and cooked (steamed) vegetables—cabbage, mung beans, potatoes, lettuce, and cucumber—it comes with some accompaniments of tofu, tempeh or boiled eggs. A generous drizzle of peanut sauce and it made the best kind of nutritious cold salad.

**Where to try it:** Gado Gado Suroboyo “Oma”, Kuta

### ↓ IKAN PEPES

Fish steamed in banana leaves is common in some parts of India. In Indonesia, they have a similar preparation. Here, too, fish is marinated with a thick coating of spices—typically containing turmeric, chillies, lemongrass, and garlic—and gently wrapped in a banana leaf to steam till tender. It is served with rice and sambal.

**Where to try it:** Poppies, Kuta



### ↑ AYAM BAKAR

Pork isn't the only meat eaten in Bali. There's an abundance of chicken and beef too. One of my preferred ways of eating chicken, this grilled dish consists of a chicken leg—a fat, meaty thigh piece with skin—grilled to a nice, caramelised char, and served with raw veggies and sambal. It is filling and a healthy substitute on days when you don't want to be indulgent.

**Where to try it:** Warung D'ala Desa, Sangeh, Kec. Abiansemal





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↓ **SATE LILIT**

There's something immensely satisfying about biting into a well-made kebab. The smoky, meaty flavours, enhanced by the light herby marinade, becomes a filling snack. In Bali, sate can be found at every street corner in the bustling markets and in fancy restaurants. Here, lemongrass skewers act as the base for minced chicken or pork, which is lightly seasoned and smoked. This dish is typically served with *sambal matah* (a raw version of sambal with *kaffir*, shallots, and lemongrass) or the ubiquitous peanut sauce.

**Where to try it:** Warung Lokal, Ubud



↑ **BABI GULING**

It's roast pig, Bali style. One of the more popular dishes here, this is a spit-roasted variant. Once largely eaten during celebrations, there are now specific restaurants that serve portions of the delicious slow-cooked meat, with pork crackling, vegetables, rice, and a pork kofta. Famous Chef Anthony Bourdain is believed to have claimed this was the best pork he'd ever eaten.

**Where to try it:** Babi Genyol Manuaba, Tegallalang



↑ **COCONUT (VEGAN) ICE CREAM**

It's not unusual to see a line outside ice cream stores in Bali. The island has a variety of shops promising unique flavours, combinations, and, of course, vegan options. One of my favourite spots, which became a preferred after-dinner treat, was Tukies Coconut Shop. The ice cream chain focuses on one thing—coconut—and does it well. Their coconut vegan ice cream is a bestseller, a decadent creamy treat with toasted coconut shavings, coconut brittle, and tender coconut flesh. They also sell fruit salads, juices, and avocado floats, but their coconut products are the best.

**Where to try it:** Tukies' stores, across Bali



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## ← CHATTI OPENS IN NYC

**Why:** It's the first international venture of Kerala cuisine expert Chef Regi Mathew that also explores the micro-cuisine of Kerala's toddy shops. **Where:** Manhattan, NYC  
**Recommended:** Red Pumpkin Stew, Idukki Potatoes, Border Chicken Fry (Pichu Pota Kozhi)



## ↓ STEP IN STYLE

Wear your love for all things natural with these luxury vegan shoes from Disobedience. The collection uses materials like wood, rubber, textiles, and latex.



## ↑ WATCH THIS

The ice-blue dial of the latest Breitling Navitimer B19 is sure to dial up the cool quotient. It boasts a platinum bezel, stainless-steel case, and the calendar chronograph manufacture movement.

## ↑ ↓ PLANET FRIENDLY

Sustainable fashion brand No Nasties has introduced a new fabric—organic linen. The new collection includes shirts, shorts, dresses, and more.







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# TOP FIVE READS

Author **John Vaillant** lists books that taught him how to be a writer and tell a story



### CEREMONY (Leslie Marmon Silko)

I was 19 when I first read it and used this book as a guide for one of my own novels. It's about homecoming and reconnecting with your homeland.

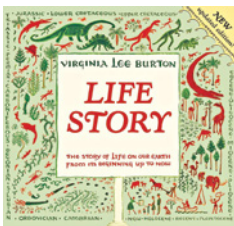
*Penguin Classics; ₹2,005*



### LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN (James Agee and Walker Evans)

The honesty, eloquence, and candour of the narrative is unparalleled. A great work of non-fiction, it helped me grow and become morally brave.

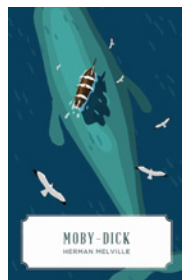
*Penguin Classics; ₹1,090*



### LIFE STORY (Virginia Lee Burton)

I admire the way she tells the history of Earth as if it's a play.

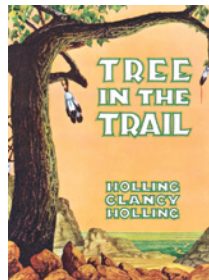
*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; ₹664*



### MOBY-DICK (Herman Melville)

I love the way he moves gracefully from action to existential philosophy.

*Canon Press; ₹2,900*



### TREE IN THE TRAIL (Holling Clancy Holling)

When writing my first book, it helped me determine the structure of the story.

*Clarion Books; ₹1,048*

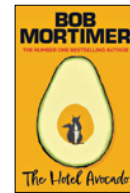
## NEW ON THE SHELF



### THE BOY FROM THE SEA (Garrett Carr)

A heartfelt narrative of a close-knit community on Ireland's west coast, it explores the ties that connect us with each other.

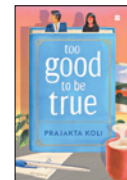
*Picador; ₹1,622*



### THE HOTEL AVOCADO (Bob Mortimer)

Join Gary Thorn as he struggles to take a life-altering decision. What adds to his distress is the arrival of Mr Sequence.

*Simon & Schuster; ₹893*



### TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE (Prajakta Koli)

This relatable, witty, true-blue 'will-they-won't-they love story' touches upon the themes of modern love, relationships, friendships, and family.

*HarperCollins India; ₹ 399*





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Other venues include Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Jaipur, Delhi, Visakhapatnam, Guwahati,



Chandigarh, and Dharamshala. This year, look out for the 13 double-header days (essentially two matches played on a single day).

And finally, keep an eye out for the 13-year-old promising talent from Bihar, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, from the Rajasthan Royals, the youngest player to earn an IPL deal. Game on.



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# ACTION-PACKED

Seek out some laughs, raise a toast, and groove to music



## REVIVE YOUR SOUL SITAR FOR MENTAL HEALTH

**Pune, Maharashtra**  
18<sup>th</sup> April

Join the internationally-acclaimed sitarist and music producer Rishab Rikhiram Sharma in his initiative that advocates for mental health. This last, and youngest, disciple of sitar maestro Pt. Ravi Shankar will be performing across several Indian cities in April.

[district.in](http://district.in)



## LOS ANGELES BEER FESTIVAL

**Los Angeles, USA**

The event returns to LA Center Studios with over 80 breweries, 200 beers, food trucks, live music, and a Power 106 DJ Truck. Admission includes unlimited samplings.

[labeerfest.la](http://labeerfest.la)

## LAUGH OUT LOUD MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL

**Melbourne, Australia**  
Till 20<sup>th</sup> April

One of the largest of its kind in the world, it features a rich mix of cabaret, stand-up comedy, theatre, street performances, and more. Attendees can catch shows by noted artistes, including Geraldine Hickey, Adam Rozenbachs, Alister Kingsley, and Andy Balloch.

[comedyfestival.com.au](http://comedyfestival.com.au)



Clockwise from top left: Rishab Rikhiram Sharma; Shutterstock; facebook.com/melbournecomedy



## ON THE RADAR



### SNOWBOMBING FESTIVAL

📍 **Mayrhofen, Austria**  
7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> April

Established in 1999, this event combines a luxury ski holiday with a music festival.

[snowbombing.com](http://snowbombing.com)



### ARIJIT SINGH INDIA TOUR 2025

📍 **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**  
27<sup>th</sup> April

Catch the country's beloved artiste at the YMCA Ground as he enralls his fans.

[district.in](http://district.in)



### SANHITA EXHIBITION

📍 **Bengaluru, Karnataka**  
Till 30<sup>th</sup> April (may be extended)

Works by greats like MF Husain and Salvador Dali at the National Gallery of Modern Art.

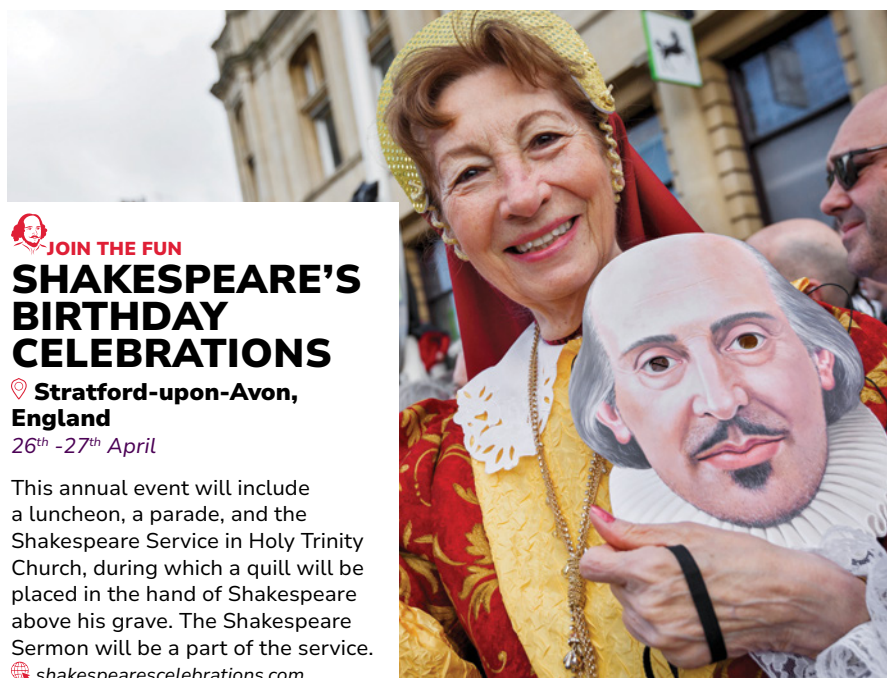
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## FEEL THE BEAT COACHELLA

📍 **Indio, California, USA**  
11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> April and 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> April

Held at the Empire Polo Club, this iconic music festival will feature a line-up boasting the likes of Lady Gaga, Green Day, Post Malone, Travis Scott, Missy Elliott, Charli XCX, Megan Thee Stallion, Zedd, and more. There will also be art studios, a silent disco, engaging games, and other interactive activities.

[coachella.com](http://coachella.com)



## JOIN THE FUN SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

📍 **Stratford-upon-Avon, England**  
26<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> April

This annual event will include a luncheon, a parade, and the Shakespeare Service in Holy Trinity Church, during which a quill will be placed in the hand of Shakespeare above his grave. The Shakespeare Sermon will be a part of the service.

[shakespearescelebrations.com](http://shakespearescelebrations.com)





Street art can be seen in many locations across the city

# STEEPED IN ART

Pristine beaches, striking murals, world-class cuisine, and revered sites of worship infuse Chennai with an indelible charm

words by **Tasneem Sariya**

## 🕒 07:00AM

### Take a walk

📍 Elliot Beach

Kick-start your day with a stroll on the beach. The morning air is crisp and you'll find both individuals and groups engaged in fitness routines. Admire the Karl Schmidt Memorial, named after the Dutch sailor who saved a drowning girl here.

## 🕒 8:00AM

### Fill your soul

📍 Murugan Idli Shop

Walk to the southern end of the Beach to this iconic eatery, which is one of Chennai's oldest hotels serving authentic regional cuisine and considered one of the best. Dig into piping hot idlis, vadas, Pongal, and puris. Finish with a cup of strong filter coffee that will energise you for the rest of your day.

## 🕒 10:30AM

### Dive into culture

📍 Dakshina Chitra

Drive to this heritage museum that brings together art, architecture, crafts, and the performing arts of South India under one roof. It also organises puppet shows and live performances for visitors. This is a good place to pick up handcrafted souvenirs as well.

## 🕒 02:30PM

### Spot local creativity

📍 Street Art

Back in the city, drive through Adyar Bridge to admire the educational, illustrative art on the animal kingdom. Also see the stunning murals portraying the daily lives of the local fishing community on Loop Road. Both offer glimpses of the city's beautiful street art. Stop for a moment to take in the creativity.



**CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT**  
 The delicious fare at Pandan Club; Pick up resplendent sarees from one of the city's numerous silk shops; A cultural programme in full swing at Dakshina Chitra.



### GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Chennai from Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Coimbatore, and Madurai.



### STYLISH STAYS

**1/ The Leela Palace** is a premier seafront hotel with splendid views of the Bay of Bengal. With 325 rooms, the property's architectural style is inspired by the grand Chettinad palaces.

**2/ ITC Grand Chola** pays tribute to the Chola dynasty with its grandeur in layout, aesthetics, and architecture. There are four entrances to the hotel, each with a unique artistic approach.

**3/ The Park**, established on the premises of the former Gemini Studios, boasts interiors that draw heavily from the legacy of South Indian cinema.

🕒 03:30PM

#### Pray in reverence

📍 Kapaleeshwarar Temple

Tamil Nadu is known as the land of temples so, visiting one is a given. A stunning example of the Dravidian architectural style, entry is through an imposing 37m-high tower or *gopuram*. The design and carvings on the *gopurams* on the east and the west are breathtakingly intricate and beautiful.

🕒 05:00PM

#### Take in the view

📍 Chennai Lighthouse

Close by, on Marina Beach, is this iconic white-and-red structure. This active lighthouse, surrounded by opulent gardens, stands as the only such structure within a city's limits in India. Buy a ticket and take the elevator to the topmost level that welcomes you with splendid Insta-worthy views of the bustling city and the endless expanse of the Bay of Bengal.

🕒 06:00PM

#### Shop till you drop

📍 T Nagar

This is a quintessential market that boasts some of the state's biggest retail outlets. Step into Saravana Stores, where you will find clothes, jewellery, electronics, and more. For traditional silk sarees and fabrics, visit Pothys and Nalli outlets. Enjoy street shopping at Pandy Bazaar and Ranganathan Street.

🕒 09:00PM

#### Dine in style

📍 Pandan Club

End your day with a hearty meal at this restaurant in T Nagar. Serving modern Peranakan cuisine, it offers vegetarian, non-vegetarian, and seafood options. Enjoy unique combinations of radish and fermented soy paste or tiger prawns cooked in *rempah*. Indulge in Singaporean desserts or quench your thirst with Tebu Tebu (a refreshing sugarcane-based drink).



# A RAINBOW OF SENSATIONAL OFFERINGS AT PURPLE MARTINI

*Nestled in Goa's tropical landscape, Purple Martini serves up delicious cuisine and cocktails amid chilled-out afternoons, gorgeous sundowners, and star-studded nights*



**SAARTHAK GUPTA**  
CEO/Founder, Purple Martini



A beacon of culinary excellence, Purple Martini is a much-loved destination among locals, tourists, and celebrities. Founded by Saarthak Gupta, the restaurant began as a passion project and has since ascended to the pinnacle of Goa's dining scene. Purple Martini is not merely a dining experience, it is a symphony of flavours, an embodiment of luxury, and a testament to Saarthak's unwavering commitment to gastronomic innovation. With its stunning sunset views, eclectic menu, impeccable service, and an ambience that fuses sophistication with a relaxed Mykonos-style vibe, Purple Martini, a gem along the Anjuna coast, remains a place where unforgettable memories are crafted. Whether you're seeking culinary delight or a brush with stardom, this lively restobar offers an experience that transcends expectations, making it an enduring icon of Goa's culinary landscape.

## DELICIOUS BLISS

Be transported into a world of relaxation and indulgence as soon as you walk in. The bar features a wide selection of signature cocktails, including the famous Purple Martini, Stylish Turkey, Red Decor, and the Floral Whiskey Sour. The menu also boasts an impressive selection of wines, beers, and spirits from across the globe.

But it's not just the drinks that make

Purple Martini a must-visit spot in Goa. The kitchen also offers a delectable cuisine selection that blends Indian and international flavours. From appetisers like Peri-Peri Chicken Skewers and Recheado Prawns to entrées like Banana Wrapped Snapper with fiery chillies and tamarind, the menu has something that tantalises every taste-bud.

Purple Martini's crown jewel, however, is its breathtaking sunset views. With its beachfront location, guests can enjoy a front-row seat to the spectacular hues of orange, pink, and purple that light up the sky during sunset—the perfect backdrop for a romantic dinner, a lively get-together with friends, or a relaxing evening alone. No wonder it's the top restobar in Goa.


## ABOUT THE FOUNDER

Saarthak Gupta, an alumnus of The Doon School and the University of Leeds, has been recognised as a leading entrepreneur in the hospitality industry. With his passion for hospitality, astute leadership, marketing prowess, and an eye for detail, he has transformed Purple Martini into one of

the most popular restobars in Goa. His commitment to excellence has been recognised by various institutions, and he has received several prestigious awards for his contributions to the hospitality industry, as well as being named amongst the Times 50 Most Influential Personalities.

Purple Martini has won several accolades, including the Times Nightlife Award for the Best Sundowner Bar and The Most Popular Restaurant four years in a row. The restaurant has also been featured in various publications, including *Conde Nast Traveller*, *Vogue India*, and *The Economic Times*. And we expect many more under Saarthak's leadership in the coming years!

**Disclaimer:** Connectivity details are subject to change. Please visit [airindia.com](http://airindia.com) for the latest flight schedules.

 @purplemartinigoa; For reservations, call or WhatsApp: +91 8793242210



# SOUL

36 COMMUNITY DINING 40 SAKE TRAIL 52 CUISINE

## LET YOUR PALATE GUIDE YOU

Foraging trails, farm-to-plate meals, spice tours, dining with a local—explore the world, gastronomically



A delectable grazing platter with crackers, figs, cheese, and almonds



# OFF THE EATEN PATH

Exploring destinations with a culinary approach opens you up to a plethora of authentic and immersive gastronomical experiences

words by **Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal**





*Culinary adventures  
in kitchens around the  
world allow travellers to  
bring a very tangible bit  
of a destination home*





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP**  
*Spices form an integral part of every cuisine; A hearty pumpkin risotto; The author during the saffron harvest in Pampore, Jammu and Kashmir.*

**F**or two decades, my food writing journey has been a delicious excuse to delve into the heart of cultures through their cuisine. In this, I have truly come to understand the meaning of the saying: ‘food is a universal language’. I chase flavour over ticking

checkboxes against tourist landmarks. I’m drawn to the vibrant pulse of local markets and street food stalls, the warmth of home kitchens, cooking with locals, and, of course, discovering the gems hidden beyond what meets the eye.

My passion for food markets was ignited by my first culinary adventure to Melbourne many years ago. The Queen Victoria

Market is a testament to the city’s multicultural fabric—a kaleidoscope of colours, languages, and products that reflects its diverse population. I wandered for hours, lost in the market’s vibrant present and intriguing past—a former cemetery, rumoured to be haunted. While I saw no ghosts, I did discover otherworldly produce.

The sheer variety was





of Singapore and Thailand, the colossal avocados and fragrant passion fruit in Tanzania, and the serendipitous exploration of fresh herbs and handmade pasta in Verona. This last find taught me to consult tourism websites, revealing lesser-known hidden gems that are treasure troves for authentic ingredients, spice blends, artisanal jams, cheese, and more.

Apart from browsing food markets, cooking classes and dining with locals offer profound immersion into culinary traditions. I experienced authentic Italian hospitality when I was hosted by a lovely Italian couple during Terra Madre (in Turin, Italy), a global celebration of sustainable food. Staying with Giorgio and Laura, I watched her cook risotto with freshly-harvested pumpkin, measuring Arborio rice with a charming tradition—"one handful for each person eating, plus one for the house angel". We shared stories over homemade meals, and I gained invaluable insights into their daily lives. This underscored the immeasurable difference between a hotel stay and the enriching experience of living alongside locals.

Ever since, cooking with locals has become my most cherished way to capture a destination's essence. Whether mastering classic Aussie fish and chips and barbecue shrimp at Sydney's seafood market

*Nilāvala, a twilight dinner on a Chinese fishing net platform in Kochi, Kerala*

### CULINARY SOUVENIRS

Always shop for food or related objects that capture a place's essence. These keepsakes, both functional and decorative, make wonderful gifts and personal mementos. Think ingredients, spice blends, indigenous cookware like a Spanish paella pan or a South Indian filter coffee maker, a Thai mortar and pestle or a Chinese wok. Local markets, like the floating Maasai market in Nairobi, offer unique and affordable finds. Don't overlook local shops and supermarkets; they provide authentic products at fair prices. If all else fails, ask the locals—hotel staff, concierges or even cleaning staff—they are your best resource for hidden gems and local shopping tips.

overwhelming. Numerous varieties of Italian tomatoes, countless lettuces, and the yellow watermelon—a visual paradox that tasted just like its red counterpart. But the most bizarre find there was the Buddha's hand. This gnarled, yellow citrus fruit, resembling a frozen hand, emitted a heavenly aroma. "Use it like a lemon, mostly the rind," the stall owner advised.

Intrigued, I purchased this mutant lemon.

My encounter with that Buddha's hand convinced me that markets are at the heart of a destination, essential for authentic immersion. Now, scouting local food markets tops my priority list, especially during longer trips when I have kitchen access. That has included discovering the bustle of the wet markets





**Food Walks and Tours**

**Mumbai:**  
Heritage & Food Walk (Matunga), Chit Chaat (Kalbadevi), and Legends of South Mumbai  
[nfpexplore.com](http://nfpexplore.com)

**Delhi:**  
Culinary walks, historical baithaks, and food pop-ups  
[talesofcity.com](http://talesofcity.com)

**Lucknow:**  
The hidden culinary gems of Lucknow  
[lucknowwithanubhuti](http://lucknowwithanubhuti.com)

**Kochi:**  
Food Anthropology Trail in Old Cochin  
[communitymesa](http://communitymesa.com)

**Turkey:**  
Food walks, culinary tours, and cooking classes  
[turkishflavours.com](http://turkishflavours.com)

**Melbourne:**  
Culture tours and food trails  
[foodietrails.com.au](http://foodietrails.com.au)

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

Walk around Delhi's Jama Masjid to sample heritage dishes; Vietnamese rice paper rolls feature on the Melbourne Foodie Culture Tour; Prakash ki kulfi is part of the 'Lucknow with Anubhuti' tour; The Buddha's hand is a citrus fruit the author discovered years ago at a food market in Australia.



or crafting split belly aubergines and spinach-cheese *borek* with Selin Rozanes (Founder of Turkish Flavours) in Istanbul. I have even journeyed by boat on Bangkok's Chao Phraya river to prepare *pad kra pao*, *tom yum goong*, and *gai hor bai toey* with Tam Piyawadi Jantrupon (she runs Amita Thai Cooking Class), amidst her ancestral home's charming menagerie of Basil, the mynah; Soy Sauce, the rooster, and Black and

White Sesame, the hens. Each experience has yielded tangible memories.

I've also found a delightful evolution in cooking classes—sustainable farm-to-table experiences. These offer the unique pleasure of strolling through working farms, savouring meals crafted from the owners' fresh, seasonal harvests, and deepening one's understanding of the food-environment connection. In

Kashmir, I spent a pleasant morning at SAGG Eco Village taking a farm walk and participating in a *ver* or *wuer* (spice-making) workshop, in which we pounded spices to make the traditional go-to blend that is dried into small cakes. In the process, I learnt about a cherished cultural practice of the region. This immersive day culminated in a rustic, heartfelt meal prepared by Executive Director, Lubna

Clockwise from top left: Tales of City; The Foodie Trails; Natasha Gandhi; Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal





**LEFT AND RIGHT**  
Pad kra pao is a popular Thai preparation; The author barbecued shrimp at Sydney's seafood market.

Rafiqi. Similarly, near Kochi, Joppu Sebastian and Roshini invited me to their 'Pepper & Faith', a Syrian Christian Spice Trail, in which we explored their lush farm, filled with fruit and spice trees, followed by a beautiful meal of *kappa* (cassava) paired with spicy fish curry, vindaloo, and other accompaniments, that wove together the history of the Syrian Christian community and its cuisine in a fascinating narrative of Kerala's culinary history.

Sharing meals with locals offers an intimate peek into their culture, and these experiences needn't be confined to homes. I recently had the distinct privilege of participating in the magical 'Nilāvala - Twilight Dinner on a Chinese fishing net', a remarkable example of The

Blue Yonder's sustainable culinary immersion offerings. 'Nilavalla', a name woven from the Malayalam words *nilavu* (moonlight), *ala* (waves), and *vala* (net), perfectly captures the essence of this experience, which unfolds on the tranquil Veeranpuzha backwaters near Kochi. Our evening began with a traditional boat journey to Kerala's iconic Chinese fishing nets. These massive structures employ a 'scoop fishing' method, where large nets are lowered and raised using levers, capturing fish brought within reach by the unique tidal currents. This ancient and visually-captivating practice is a testament to the region's rich but endangered fishing heritage.

As the sun descended,

casting a golden hue on the water, we were transferred to a Chinese fishing net that had been repurposed into a platform and transformed into a floating dining space on which we savoured a delectable dinner prepared by local fisher families. Made with ingredients sourced directly from the surrounding waters and farms, it was a celebration of local flavours and sustainable practices. It is not just a unique gastronomical experience but also one that has breathed a new life into these historic fishing structures, supporting the local community and preserving a vital part of the state's heritage.

But not everything is packaged into ready experiences. Sometimes





*The author learnt to make tom yum goong at a class in Bangkok*

**FACING PAGE**  
*(top and bottom)*  
Delicious galawati kebabs; The Melbourne Foodie Culture Tour lets you sample spices.

true exploration demands venturing beyond set paths. In the past year, I embarked on a quest to unearth undiscovered spice treasures. And the spontaneous journeys have yielded ethereal experiences. I've witnessed the delicate art of saffron harvesting and processing with Afan Basu of Noush in Pampore, Jammu and Kashmir, and trekked through the plantations of Graamyia in Idukki, to discover the plant-to-plate journey of nutmeg, cloves, and nearly 14 varieties of indigenous peppercorns. It's in these

unplanned moments that the true magic of culinary discovery unfolds.

Food walks and tours are another crucial element of culinary exploration for me. As a curator of such experiences, I understand their power to unveil a destination's soul. These multi-sensory journeys, whether they are themed around street food, history, or local culture, offer a deeper understanding of new gastronomical landscapes. The Foodie Trails' Melbourne Foodie Culture Tour is a great example. Beginning from the Immigration Museum,

the tour navigates lanes and arcades, stopping at culinary havens, to tell stories and weave together history and culinary delights to offer a taste of just what makes Melbourne famous as a melting pot of cultures. Traversing Aboriginal Australian, European, Asian, and African flavours, it reflects the city's diverse migrant communities. The company also offers a wonderful Footscray Trail, that progresses through the neighbourhood of Footscray, which has transformed into a hub for Indo-Chinese, Middle Eastern, and African cuisines.





Clockwise from top left: Shutterstock; Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal; The Foodie Trails

My understanding of Australia’s rich culinary landscape was profoundly altered by dining at Danish Chef René Redzepi’s Noma Australia pop-up some years ago, an event that ignited a global fascination with native Australian ingredients. This experience illuminated the unique foods cultivated and foraged by Australia’s Aboriginal people—plants, meats, and seafood found nowhere else. Dishes featuring *saltbush*, *lemon myrtle*, *finger limes*, and *wattleseed* are as intriguing to the palate as they are to the eye. The Royal Botanic

Gardens in Sydney also offers guided walks that offer insight into native Aboriginal heritage and plant uses. Closer home, a curated food walk with Sadaf Hussain and Abu Sufiyan of Tales of City not only brought alive Old Delhi but highlighted the growth of the concept in India as well. We congregated beneath the towering silhouette of Jama Masjid to make our way into the labyrinth of narrow lanes for a progressive breakfast. Starting with a steaming cup of *doodh patti chai*, we went on to savour delicious



### IMMERSIVE MEALS WITH LOCALS

**Naimat Khana** offers authentic Awadhi food from the homes of Lucknow  
[@naimatkhaneakhana](#)  
**SAGG Eco Village** in Ganderbal, Jammu and Kashmir, is a regenerative farm stay  
[@saggecovillage](#)  
**Pepper & Faith** is a Syrian Christian Pepper & Faith spice trail near Kochi  
[pepperandfaithkerala@gmail.com](#)  
**The Open Field** in Khunti district, Jharkhand, is all about tribal culture and local food  
[theopenfield834001@gmail.com](#)

slow-cooked *nihari* at Haji Shabrati Nihari Wale, the tender meat falling apart at the touch, and ended with crisp *puri sabzi*. Each bite was a step deeper into the city’s living culinary history. Similarly, Anubhuti Krishna, through ‘Lucknow with Anubhuti’, emphasises exploring the city’s lesser-known culinary gems. Over two days, we ate our way through *pani ke batashe* and *aloo ki tikki* at Shukla Chaat House; *dahi bada* and *imarti-rabri* at Moti Mahal; *khastā aloo* and *kachauri aloo* at Bajpayee Kachodi

Bhandar, and *jalebi-dahi* and *malai gillauri* at Ram Asrey. We also tried Mutton Korma, Tunday Mutton Kabab (Galawati), and Awadhi Mutton Biryani at Tunday Kababi. Experiences curated by Krishna are journeys through time and taste that guide you away from the predictable towards the authentic. These culinary adventures around the world have allowed me to bring a very tangible bit of a destination home to re-create for family and friends, served and seasoned with stories.





# BUILD BONDS OVER FOOD

The Danish concept of *fællesspisning* uses the power of food to foster a sense of community

words by  
**Teja Lele**

It's a full house at Copenhagen's Folkehuset Absalon, a community space that opened in 2015 to bring people together over food. The atmosphere is buzzing as I tuck into potatoes in pesto, tomato stew, and fresh sourdough bread, wash it down with wine, and make conversation with the person sitting next to me.

This evening, there are students and seniors, executives and families, blue-collar workers and tourists, all sitting at tables of eight in a large, cheerful hall that can house 200 people. A former church, Absalon is positioned as an extension of a family living room—where it's easy to





Folkehuset Absalon is located in a building that was formerly a church

**FACING PAGE**

Fællesspisning has its origins in community centres where locals traditionally gathered to eat and play bingo

meet people you don't know and share a wholesome meal that fills the stomach and the heart.

For long, Denmark's most popular cultural export has been *hygge*, the cosy, mood evoked by comfort and conviviality. But that is now making way for an idea that's come alive again: *fællesspisning*. This translates to communal eating but is more than a shared meal. The tradition has its origins in community centres (*forsamlingshuse*) in small towns and villages, where locals gathered to eat, drink, and play bingo.

Historian Nina Bauer says the Danish dictionary defines *fællesspisning*

(pronounced *fellu-spees-ning*) as an event where a group either shares a meal or brings its own food and eats together. "These meals were historically potluck dinners as many places did not have adequate kitchens to cook on a large scale. People would eat together, and the meal would be followed by an activity like a lecture from a speaker, communal singing or bingo," she says.

Over the decades, *fællesspisning* fell out of favour. But the concept of shared meals resonates more strongly than ever at a time when life is isolated. People look down at their phones in the metro, avoid

conversations in public spaces, and often return home to empty rooms.

The number of lonely people in Denmark, a country high on the World Happiness Index, has grown from 8.3 per cent of the population in 2017 to 12.4 per cent in 2021. The need for social connection also grew significantly post the pandemic. It initially led to a fear of being together and has now resulted in people seeking togetherness.

*Fællesspisning* aims to reinforce that by creating new connections among the community. Many such community spaces have come up in big cities like Aarhus and Copenhagen—

**BEST STAYS IN COPENHAGEN**

**25hours Hotel Indre By**  
Housed in a 19<sup>th</sup>-century building, this 243-room hotel is an explosion of colour, artwork, and expression.

**Hotel Ottilia**  
Located in a former brewery, the hotel in Carlsberg City District has an iconic façade with 60 circular golden discs.

**Audo Copenhagen**  
This historic building is now a multifunctional space that combines a boutique hotel, a café, a shop, and a courtyard.





## SHARE A MEAL IN COPENHAGEN

### Absalon

The most popular community dining and hangout space in Copenhagen. Open 6pm onwards on all days

### Kanalhusete

A social eatery with stunning views of the canals. Open 7pm onwards on all days

### Send Flere Krydderier

This community kitchen is a socio-economic enterprise that aims to create jobs for ethnic minority women. Open 5pm to 8pm (Tue–Thu)

### KU.BE

This community space is also child friendly. Open 5.45pm onwards only on Mondays

### KraftWerket

A community kitchen that serves 100 per cent plant-based meals. Open 6pm on Tuesdays, 5pm–7pm on Sundays

## GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Copenhagen from Delhi.



### LEFT AND RIGHT

At Absalon, the food is simple and the focus is on conversation; Fællesspisning aims to create connections among the community.

apart from Absalon, the list includes Send Flere Krydderier, One Bowl, Madglad, KraftWerket, Kafa-x, and KU.BE.

At all these centres, the food is simple and the focus is on connection and conversation. There are no waiters. Instead volunteers from each table collect the dishes of food, as well as cutlery. Guests can buy reasonably-priced drinks, serve themselves, and help clean up. The process often leads to quick exchanges and sometimes long conversations.

Bauer believes food is a powerful vehicle for making connections. “Since ancient times, there has been this idea of friendship and keeping the peace between people who have shared a meal,” she tells me. ‘To break bread together’, a phrase that’s as old as the Bible, reveals how a meal has the power to bring people together, strengthen

social bonds, and foster a sense of community.

Communal dining is prevalent across the world in many forms—the Muslim Iftar, the Jewish Passover Seder, the American Thanksgiving, the Native American Potlatch, and the Hawaiian Luau. India has the Sikh Langar and the Kerala Sadya. But now in Denmark, this concept is being used to meet people beyond the community as well. “At fællesspisning, you meet people from all over and start talking about the food. Conversation flows and afterwards you feel fulfilled, both physically and socially,” Bauer says.

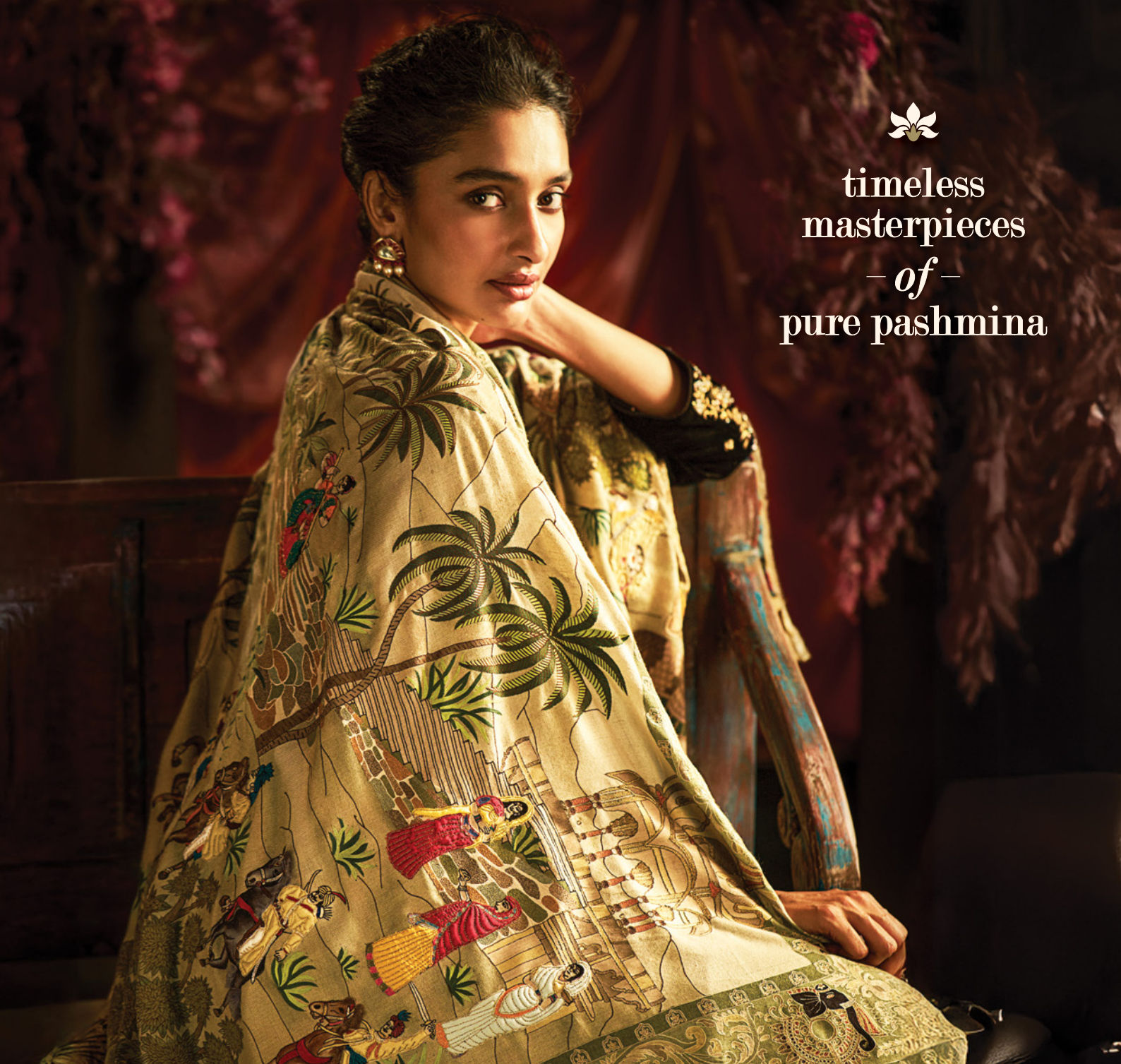
I saw that at Absalon, which also offers activities like table tennis, music, backgammon, film, bingo, dance, chess, yoga, markets, parties, and talks. “There has also been a boom in the building of smaller housing communities with separate houses, but a

communal building with kitchen facilities for eating together,” she says.

Fællesspisning also works because it is priced well. At Absalon, dinner costs between 60DKK (USD8.74) and 100DKK (USD14.55) per person. Typically, one ends up paying between 20DKK (at a pay-as-you-please place like OneBowl) and 100DKK for a meal that includes vegetarian and vegan options. All this is more inexpensive than a meal at a restaurant that would cost about 300DKK (USD43.65). The concept also promotes sustainability through shared cooking and food waste reduction.

In a world where people are at their loneliest, the Danish art of fællesspisning facilitates camaraderie and connection.





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# FOR SAKES, SAKE

An exploration  
of iconic  
breweries in  
and around  
Tokyo proves  
to be an  
immersive  
experience  
into the realm  
of Japan's  
favourite  
rice wine

words by **Raul Dias**





Sake or nihonshu is rice wine made from sakamai rice

It is said, that in Japanese, there are more words for 'rice' than for 'love'. Playing a significant role in quotidian Japanese life, rice is the pearly white prism through which travellers like me can get a peek into the wondrous and vast repertoire of the country's food and beverage offerings.

A little under two weeks of travelling through the archipelago's main island of Honshu—keeping Tokyo as my jumping off point—I was soon witness to the reverence, nay, obsession with rice in its myriad avatars. If *kome* refers to uncooked rice, then *gohan* is the term for cooked rice. *Meshi* is a more casual term for rice, while freshly-harvested rice, celebrated for its sweetness and tenderness, is called *shinmai*. But, if there's one appellation of rice that I'm most familiar with, it's *sakamai*. For this is the type of rice used for brewing my favourite form of rice wine, aka sake, more commonly referred to as *nihonshu* in Japan.

#### LIQUID ASSETS

I've always been drawn to the artistry behind sake—the way rice, water, yeast, and *koji* mould (derived from rice) can transform into something so unique and complex. It was with this passion that I set off on an unforgettable journey to explore a few sake breweries, called *shuzos*, in and around Tokyo. Each stop not only heightened my appreciation for this





**TOP AND BOTTOM**

*In Japan, a toast is raised by saying 'kanpai'; An assorted platter of sashimi makes for a good accompaniment to sake.*

**SAKE TOURS AND EXPERIENCES**

**SAKE TASTING AND BREWERY TOUR**

Sake Lovers organises engaging sake-tasting events and brewery visits in Tokyo and beyond. Led by experts, it takes you through the history of sake, from the often-complex brewing process to food pairings. They also host private and group tours, ideal for those seeking a personalised and authentic curated sake experience. [sakelovers.co.jp](http://sakelovers.co.jp)

**LUXURY SAKE EXPERIENCE**

Representing the flagship brand of Yaegaki Brewing, a 350-year-old brewery in Himeji, Hasegawa Eiga in Roppongi is an exclusive sake store offering a luxury sake experience. This one-hour session takes the form of a tasting of five of the brand's finest sakes that are each paired with appetisers, curated by the head chef and owner of Tokyo's iconic Ginza Wakyou restaurant. [wabunka-lux.jp](http://wabunka-lux.jp)

**OLD BREWERY TOUR AND TASTING**

Held twice a day, with an additional third tour on weekends and holidays, this free, half-hour tour of the Ozawa Shuzo sake brewery is a great way to get an introduction to the world of *nihonshu*. During the tour, one gets to check out the old earthen walled *genroku-gura* or warehouse—one that has been there since the Genroku era, which was when the brewery was established. Make sure to check out the well at the back of the storehouse from where water used to be drawn to prepare the sake in earlier times. For those wishing to sample the brewery's various sake brands, there is a small fee for the tasting. [gotokyo.org](http://gotokyo.org)

**WHERE TO STAY**

**Aman Tokyo**

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**The Peninsula Tokyo**

Catering to both business and leisure travellers, this luxurious hotel takes prime position in Tokyo's vibrant Marunouchi district. Known for its impeccable service, it provides a sophisticated atmosphere.



ancient craft but also gave me a deeper understanding of Japan's rich culture and history.

My first visit was to the 1822-established Tamura Shuzojo (brewery), for which I took the train, which left on the dot, to Fussa station from the grand Tokyo Station. In operation since the Edo period, this brewery offers free tours (in Japanese, but English

pamphlets are available) of the production process that ends in a tasting of two of its bestsellers. These take the form of the smooth and sweet Daiginjo Taigumo and the drier Junmai Tokyo Wajo that I sip from a small wooden box called a *masu*, traditionally what sake is served in.

Located a mere three kilometres from Tamura is the Ishikawa Brewery

that prides itself on making products using natural ingredients found only in Tama. Started in 1863, today the brewery has a museum and an Italian restaurant, Fussa no Birugoya (serving handmade pasta and pizza, and seasonal fare, with a side of their delicious local beer, Tama no Megumi), on site along with a Sake Cellar, where I learn about



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Sake barrels lined up in Tokyo

the various types of sake one can try and purchase. While *junmai*, made with only rice, water, yeast, and *koji*, has a rich, full-bodied flavour with a smooth finish, *ginjo* is brewed with highly-polished rice and is lighter, with a more gentle, aromatic profile.

But what I found the most delicious was the cloudy *nigori*. This unfiltered sake has a creamy texture that

provides a sweet and rich finish to the palate.

#### SIPS AND BITES

Speaking of the palate, over my days travelling from one *shuzo* to the other, I picked up the various nuances of which foods work best with sake and which don't. The most important of which came as a revelation. I learnt that traditionally, sake and sushi are never

served together. "In Japan, we don't eat rice alongside alcohol. So, while sashimi is fine, we don't eat rice-based sushi rolls with *nihonshu*," a brewmaster at one of the *shuzos* told me. He recommended I try a virtual smorgasbord of dishes that pair well with sake like the wobbly *chawanmushi*, which is a savoury steamed egg custard with bits of shrimp, mushrooms, and ginkgo



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**Kamakura:** Known for its massive Great Buddha statue, Kamakura offers a blend of temples, beaches, and hiking paths. Only an hour from Tokyo, it's perfect for a day of history and coastal beauty.

**Hakone:** Famous for its hot springs and views of Mount Fuji, Hakone is a relaxing retreat with a scenic lake, an open-air art museum, and spa resorts.

**Yokohama:** Less than an hour away from Tokyo, it boasts a vibrant waterfront, the Cup Noodles Museum, and the picturesque Sankeien Garden. It's a blend of modern attractions and traditional beauty.



**TOP AND BOTTOM**  
*The masu is a wooden box in which sake is traditionally served; The breathtaking Kegon Falls in Nikko is known as one of Japan's top three greatest waterfalls.*

nuts in its silken folds. But what really hit the spot was the *agedashi*, fried tofu served in a soy broth.

#### HERE AND THERE

While Tokyo is rich in sake culture, I knew I couldn't leave Japan without making a pilgrimage to Hakkaisan,

located in the Niigata Prefecture, just outside Tokyo. Known for its high-quality sake and pristine water sources, this is a true gem for a sake lover.

After a couple of hours by train from Tokyo, I arrived at the brewery, which sits at the foot of Mount Hakkai.

The water here is famously soft, ideal for creating sake that is both delicate and rich. I toured the brewery with a guide who was very knowledgeable about the history of Hakkaisan and its commitment to crafting premium sake.

The tasting was a





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### WORLD'S LARGEST SAKE FAIR

Tokyo's annual Sake Fair at Sunshine City in Ikebukuro, a shopping and entertainment district, is a must-visit for sake enthusiasts. Recognised as the world's largest sake event, it is held every year in July and features a tasting event of nearly 400 kinds of award-winning sakes. Attendees can also sample other traditional drinks like *awamori*, *shochu*, and *hon mirin*. Lecturers from Niigata University's Sakeology Research Center and the National Research Institute of Brewing also share valuable insights and offer in-depth knowledge.

**LEFT AND RIGHT**  
A traditional sake shuzo in Kyoto, Japan; Sake being brewed in a local vintage brewery.

revelation. I was impressed with their Hakkaisan Junmai Daiginjo, which had a crisp, clean taste with a hint of melon and rice sweetness. It was perfectly balanced and refined—a true example of why Niigata has earned a reputation for producing some of the best sake in Japan. What stood out was the depth of flavour that came from the water—something I'd never fully appreciated until I tasted it. Sitting in the brewery's garden, sipping sake, and reflecting on the history of the land, I felt at peace.

#### ONE FOR THE ROAD

Through my research, I realised that no sake trip

would be complete without visiting Asahi Shuzo, the brewery behind the world-famous Dassai brand. Located in the Yamaguchi Prefecture, about four hours from Tokyo, it produces the highest quality sake, especially the Dassai line, known for its ultra-premium, fruity flavours.

At the brewery, I toured the state-of-the-art facility, which employs the most advanced brewing technology. The process is incredibly precise, with every step aimed at extracting the purest and most refined flavours from the *sakamai*. The rice polishing process was especially impressive. Some

of their sake is made from rice polished to 23 per cent of its original size, which is rare, and results in a clean, aromatic sake.

Tasting Dassai was the highlight of my journey. The Dassai 23, I must say, was exquisite—floral, fruity, and smooth. It was unlike any sake I had tasted, with a complexity that lingered long after. As I savoured every last drop, I marvelled at how far sake had come from its humble origins. All thanks to remarkable breweries, each pushing the boundaries of what sake could be, yet maintaining a deep reverence for tradition and the nuanced art of sake making.



#### GETTING THERE

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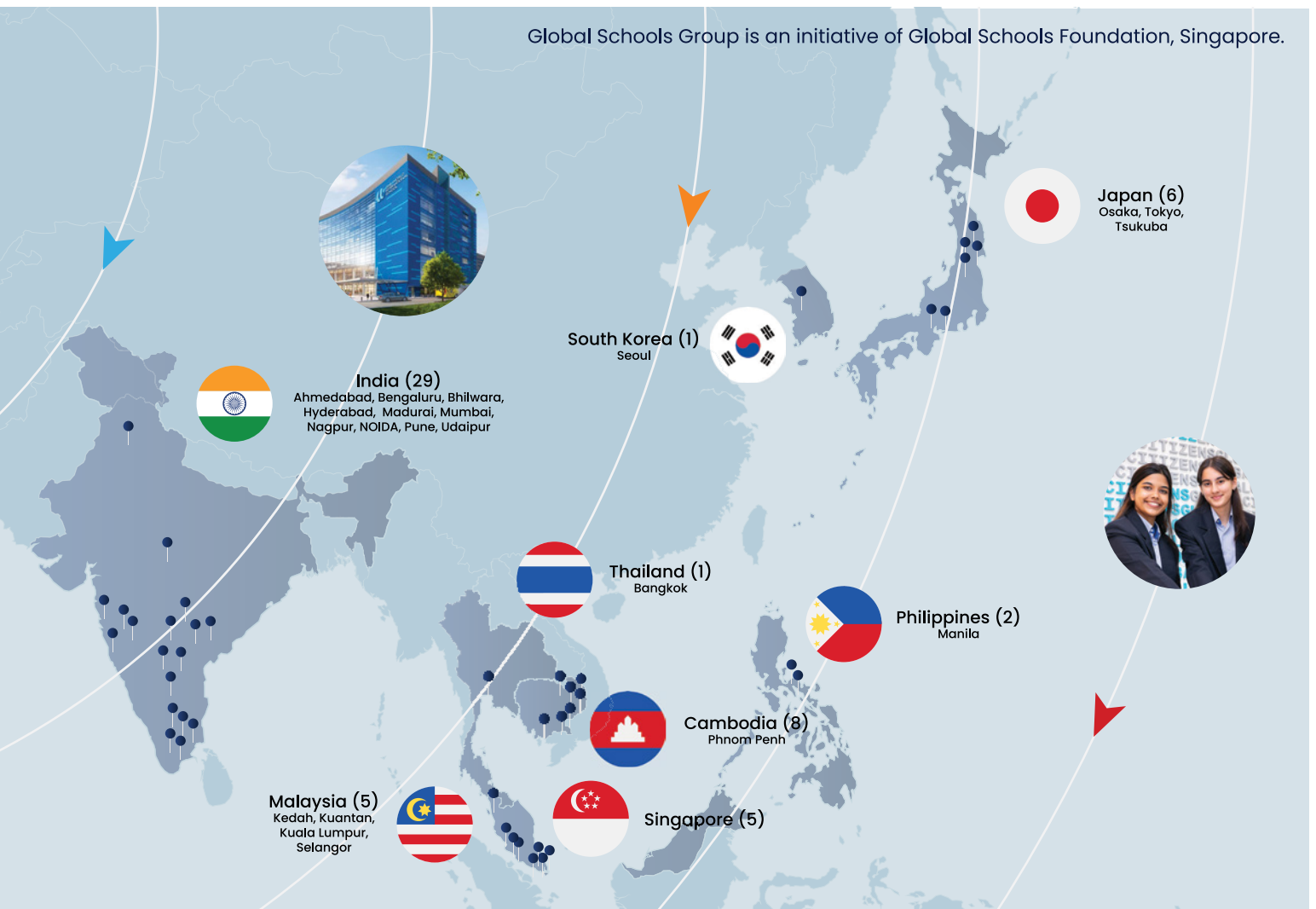
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# FLAVOURS OF THE SEA

An eclectic spice tradition, abundance of fish, and innovative ingredients make Maldivian cuisine a true gem waiting to be discovered

words by **Fareeda Kanga**

**W**ith its incalculable underwater reefs, turquoise lagoons, and powdery-white beaches, the Maldives remains the ultimate hedonistic paradise for sea lovers. But after several trips to 'Dhivehi Raajje' (the island kingdom, in local parlance), I decided to ditch the swimsuit for sweatpants to delve into its cuisine, which I was told is hearty and delicious.

## A GEOGRAPHICAL CONNECTION

Maldivian cuisine has been shaped not just by its location—close to India, Sri Lanka, and eastern Asia—but also due to the scarcity of ingredients. The revelation from this tiny nation is how innovatively they incorporate limited local produce to create a unique and spicy spin on coastal cuisine.

A local home chef, Aisha Sadaf, walks me through the basics of Maldivian or 'Dhivehi' food. "Coconut is king here—plucked off swaying palms and grated fresh into bubbling, spicy curries—whilst a bounty of the freshest catch of tuna, Green jobfish, and *mahi-mahi* are basted in spices and barbecued to perfection or served in salads and curries," she explains.



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In Malé's local eateries, I feel completely at home, as rice (steamed or drenched with coconut milk) accompanies all gravies. The *farata* (a soft flatbread of *maida* and *dalda*, with a pinch of sugar and salt) is their version of paratha. Keep in mind, it is fried and served like a calorie-laden roti.

If this accompaniment doesn't float your boat, then opt for a *roshi* (roti) or try the very interesting Maldivian crepes called Fen Folhi Noodles. These are pancakes or crepes made from flour, coconut milk, and egg. What's unique is that they are cut into noodle-like strips to mop up gravies.

### A FRESH START

On my first morning, I excitedly head to breakfast, assuming it will be the standard fare of eggs and toast or cereal—but to my surprise, I learn that fish dominates even this meal.

Mashuni (or *mas huni*) is the ultimate Maldivian breakfast dish. Made by mixing boiled, canned or smoked tuna with shredded coconut, sliced onions, lime, and chillies, I dig into this flavourful salad with *roshi* and a hot cup of strong black tea.

My vegetarian friends begin to feel nervous and decide to order pancakes, but soon realise that they are surprisingly well



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP** Mas Riha (fish curry) can be eaten with rice or roshi; Award-winning Chef Ahmed Saain; Dry chicken curry rolled with roti, served with a kopee leaf salad.



catered to, with drumstick curries, breadfruit vegetable preparations, and banana flower sambal, to name a few local delicacies.

Another must try is a delicious salad called *kopee fathu satani*, made from a local lettuce called Kopy with onion, lemon juice, and Maldivian chillies (tiny, green monsters). It is garnished with an ubiquitous coconut—a gourmet treat.

### A CULINARY MASTER CLASS

In my quest to learn traditional cooking, Sadaf recommends a class at the Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Landaa

### MALDIVIAN MENU DECODER

- \* All fish is referred to as **Mas**. Tuna, which is the most popular, is called **Kandu Mas**.
- \* Curry dishes are called **Riha** and chapatis are known as **Roshi**.
- \* Some other common dishes include: **Mas Huni** (shredded smoked fish with grated coconut and onions, the most common Maldivian breakfast) and **Bambukeylu Hiti** (breadfruit curry)
- \* Snacks are called **Hedhikkaa**. They are almost invariably fish-based and deep-fried, and are available everywhere.
- \* Look out for these snacking options:

- Bajiya**: Pastry stuffed with fish, coconut, and onions
- Gulha**: Pastry balls stuffed with smoked fish
- Keemia**: Deep-fried fish rolls
- Kulhi Boakibaa**: Spicy fish cake
- Masroshi**: *Mas huni* wrapped in *roshi*. Can be baked or fried
- Theluli Mas**: Fried fish with chilli and garlic





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## PLACES TO STAY

### Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa and Landaa Giraavaru

With two distinct resort experiences, this hotel chain makes it easier for guests to discover more of the Maldives.

Start your holiday at Kuda Huraa, a vibrant garden island with the charm of a traditional village. For serious marine enthusiasts, the resort at Landaa Giraavaru, located within the Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, offers access to dolphins, sea turtles, and manta rays.

### Patina Maldives, Fari Island

From the award-winning Capella Hotel Group, this luxury resort is a 45-minute speedboat ride from Malé. Sophisticated villas and contemporary studios are on offer along with a range of 13 culinary concepts—from Nordic-Japanese fusion to plant-based creations.

### Cheval Blanc Randheli

The property's 46 villas have been designed in harmony with the lush vegetation of the island and the breathtaking views of the lagoon. Enjoy guided dives, yoga and meditation, sunset cruises, and Guerlain wellness rituals.

## GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Malé from Delhi and Mumbai.



Giraavaru with local Chef Ahmed Saain: winner of the title 'The Best Maldivian Chef 2024'.

Against the backdrop of the pounding ocean, my first lesson is all about seafood, particularly tuna, which is their hero ingredient. Every day, hauls of freshly-caught seafood are brought to the resorts or available at the Malé fish market. "We use the fish in every possible way," says Chef Saain.

One night, I enjoy a freshly-barbequed lobster with a hint of Maldivian chilli; another time, I relish chunks of tuna, *wahoo*, and *mahi-mahi* served up in curries and lime-spiked soups. There is never any wastage as trimmings are used up in fishcakes or

stuffed into light bites.

People in the Maldives, unlike Pacific islanders, don't have a tradition of eating raw fish, so dishes are well cooked, as a rule. "The practice of making fish curry and fried fish has parallels in Sri Lankan cuisine, with tamarind or lime used to create a tangy flavour. Rice and curry are central dishes in both countries, though Maldivian curry tends to be simpler, with a focus on the fish rather than a complex blend of spices," says Chef Saain.

During the class, I also make a Green jobfish curry with onions, ginger-garlic paste, coriander seeds, and red chillies, much like our desi version. "Such South Indian-style

### CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

Opting for a thali lets travellers try out a variety of traditional dishes; Green jobfish is a staple; Screwpine pudding is made of a fruit locally called kashikeyo.

cooking influences as curry leaves, mustard seeds, and tamarind are frequently used in Maldivian dishes as well," adds the Chef.

Another interesting fact I discover is that teatime snacking is a national pastime, and yummy tidbits are called *hedhikaa*. These are almost invariably fish-based and deep-fried, and can be found in any Maldivian restaurant.

Dessert? Frankly, I didn't care for any. With the warm waters of the ocean lapping against my feet, I don't think any other ending could have been as sweet.



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# THE ADVENT OF MICRO-LUXURY TRAVEL

Luxury is shifting to a smaller, quieter, more immersive space as stays across India entice travellers with intimacy over opulence

words by **Nikhil P Merchant**





**LEFT AND RIGHT**

*Chunda Shikar Oudi is an idyllic countryside luxury retreat in Udaipur; Reni Pani Jungle Lodge in Madhya Pradesh organises private safaris with a grand breakfast thrown in en route.*



**T**ravel is seeing a shift—heading towards a more discerning direction.

The goalpost of luxury has moved from the ostentatious to intimately-curated experiences that are understated. While grand hotels on the one hand and homestays on the other, represent today's extremes, there is a certain traveller looking at luxury with fresh eyes, searching for a place to belong, even if only for a while. This is the advent of micro-luxury hotels—intimate constructions with fewer rooms where tranquillity comes in the form of a true disconnect. These spaces, built with privacy as a backbone, offer intuitive hospitality and are often tucked away on surprising, offbeat tracks. Yet they're taking over the mantle as India's most-visited vacation spots.

**THE COAST: BAREFOOT LUXURY**

The sea has a mysterious way of offering calm within chaos. Let your feet sink into soft sand, and the vacation begins instantly. Today's luxury seeker has moved beyond postcard-perfect beaches and the trance of beach clubs, gravitating, instead, towards something more elemental. India's endless coastline and tropical air hides some of the country's most remarkable stays—perched on hilly terrains and offering unimaginable horizons at any time of day. These spaces feel like paintings brought to life, their architecture blending into the landscape,

designed with natural materials and an overwhelming sense of space.

At Coco Shambhala, a four-villa luxury hideaway in Sindhudurg, Maharashtra, mornings begin with an all-terrain hike through the Western Ghats, leading to Bhogwe, a secluded beach—the ideal setting for guided breathwork and yoga. Or you can opt to learn the art of Malvani cooking from a village local, with a cooking set-up in your own villa. As evening descends, coastlines transform with a fiery sunset over the water, a perfect time to go backwater cruising and birdwatching in the mangroves of the Karli river. The hotel provides in-house designed canoes and a team to assist you.

If you are a fan of Goan beaches, head to South Goa, known for its sandy white shores. A stunning 12-suite boutique property called Amaraanth offers a unique farm-to-glass experience at Countertop's The Lab. Begin with a scenic trip to a nearby farm, hand-picking seasonal botanicals with a foraging expert. After exploring a traditional *feni* distillery and tasting rare expressions, head to The Lab for a hands-on session in pickling and mixology. Guided by an expert mixologist, you'll craft your own signature cocktail using your foraged ingredients and premium spirits.

**THE MOUNTAINS: ON A HIGHER PLANE**

The mountains have long been revered for their arduous ascent—slow, winding





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

*Coco Shambhala organises morning hikes to Bhogwe beach, which it overlooks; Savour a hot cup of tea beside a snow-fed waterfall at Vatika, when at Sitara Himalaya; Amaraanth's The Lab lets you forage and then holds a mixology session, to create a signature cocktail.*

**Notable Stays**

**Chunda Shikar Oudi, Udaipur**, is one of India's rare, small-boutique properties built on a private reserve. Its maintenance extends to the preservation of the reserve and its wildlife.

**Amaya, Kasauli**, is an eco-conscious hotel, ideal for travellers seeking sustainability and resource-friendly luxury stays.

**Coco Shambhala, Sindhudurg**, is a paradise for vacationers looking for unpopulated beaches and bespoke services.

through pine forests, where AQI quickly drops, and a clean crispness gives way to deafening stillness. It's not long before one finds comfort in the way light catches the ridges at dawn or breaks through the trees. Stays here are naturally staggered at varied elevations with sustainability at their core, shaped by the terrain and built with teak and stone as foundational elements. The framing is deliberate, with openness as a guiding mantra, ensuring uninterrupted views. A walk through the forest from your back door is not uncommon, and hidden trails often lead to panoramic views, where steaming salted chai and

freshly-baked bread await against a mesmerising backdrop of rolling mist.

Wake up to the distant chimes of the Hidimba Devi temple bells in Manali, and start your day with a walk through the Vatika (a cedar forest), where snow-fed waterfalls flow through forests and the Beas river cuts through the gorge below. Treat yourself to a hot cup of tea and snacks—luxuriously prepped by the Relais & Chateaux-certified, private 10-suite hotel, Sitara Himalaya, near Manali—surrounded by nature.

Explore the region's culinary canvas with your dietary preferences intact or embrace the unknown

and forage for wild mint and fiddlehead ferns at Darwa village near Kasauli. Follow this up with a multi-sensory and multi-course meal prepared with Himalayan ingredients at NAAR (in Kasauli), where Chef Prateek Sadhu will share the delicate craft of regional cheesemaking during the cheese course. Stay at Amaya, an eco-conscious luxury stay near NAAR, where you can choose to dine in a century-old cowshed transformed into a culinary lab. As temperatures dip, bonfires crackle—the right moment to sip on your favourite tippie—while a guided stargazing session at Mary Budden Estate, a

Clockwise from top left: Coco Shambhala; Sitara Himalaya; Amaraanth








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**LEFT AND RIGHT**  
At Amaya, a century-old cowshed has been transformed into a culinary lab; Movie nights at Chunda Shikar Oudi by the Mahadev Sagar Lake.

### Luxury's New Language

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mountain hideaway in Binsar, reveals planets and stars otherwise lost in smog. It's the perfect setting—heaven on earth.

### THE WILDERNESS: PRIMAL RETREATS

Safari and nature reserves are high on the list for adventure-seeking travellers, but it's no longer about spotting the Big Five. Now, it has become a way to rewire oneself with nature in its rawest form, within the comforts of luxury. With natural lodges speckled across the country, many built within private sanctuaries or revenue forested land, the thrill of discovering wildlife just beyond your doorstep is

palpable. The design of these stays is deliberately attuned to the environment, ensuring minimal disruption to their natural surroundings.

A private jeep safari here doesn't come without its comforts—warm blankets, hot beverages. Expect to stop at rocky ledges or secluded forest clearings for a grand breakfast at Reni Pani Jungle Lodge, Madhya Pradesh's modern-day conservation camp, spread across 30 acres of striking forest cover, typical of the Satpura. This feels far removed from the overcrowded game parks of more popular reserves. At these micro-luxury stays, experiences are adapted to your pace and designed for quiet intimacy.

At Chunda Shikar Oudi, an eight-bed resort in Udaipur, movie nights unfold on the cushioned shores of a natural lake, Mahadev Sagar, complete with five-course meals, while fishing expeditions on the same waters are a subdued afternoon escape. Walking safaris, some stretching into post-dinner strolls through undergrowth and spiderwebs, are a special treat at Tipai Forest Villas on the outskirts of Nagpur, conducted by a team of naturalists and hotel staff. Here, campfire meals and folk musicians are a staple.

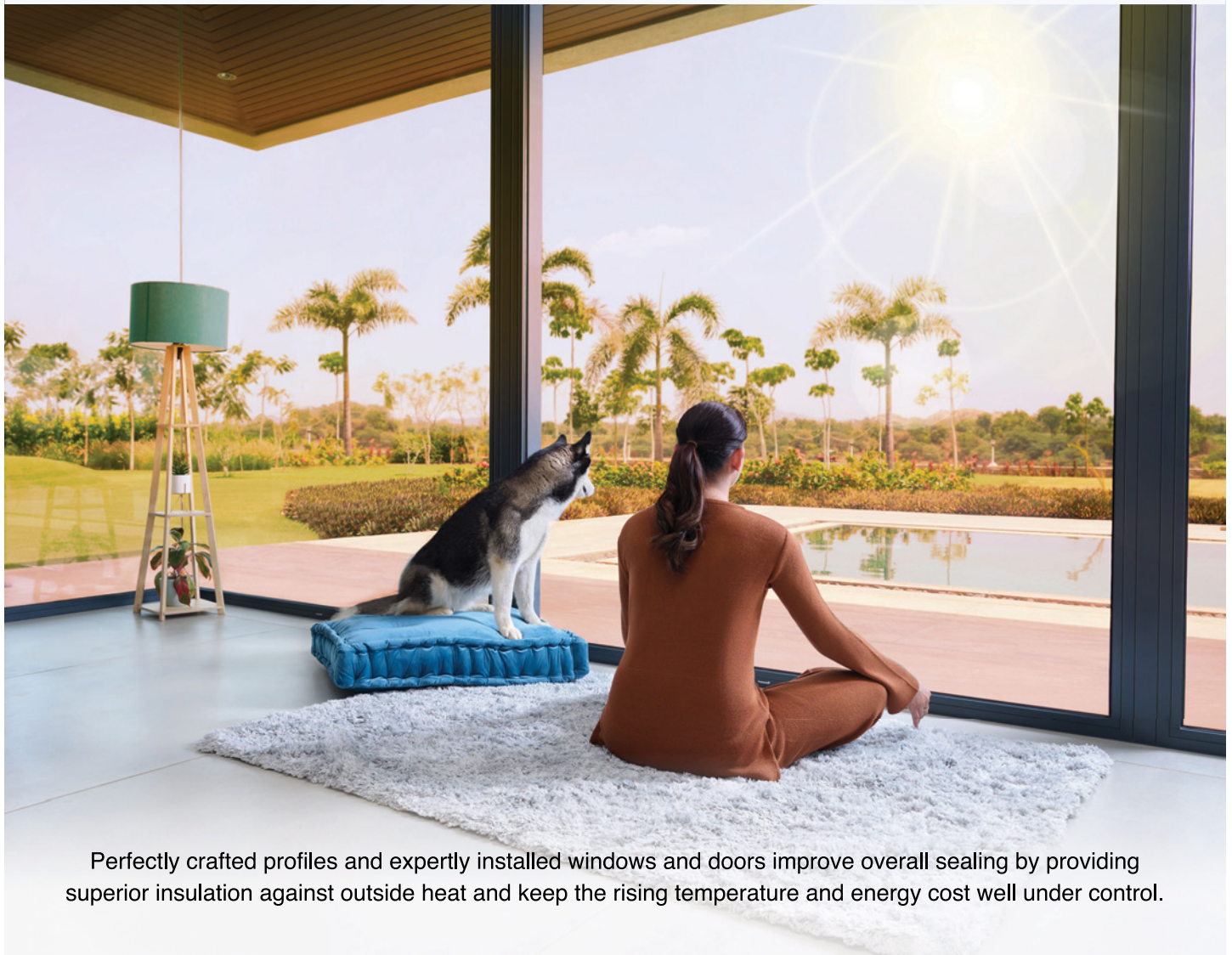
The wild has so much more to offer than just itself; it ensures you become a lifelong admirer.

Left and right: Amaya; Chunda Shikar Oudi





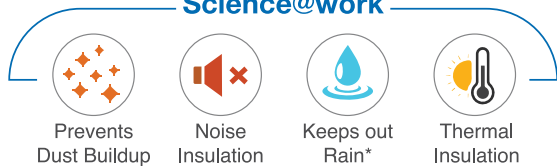
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# NAVIGATING CULTURAL NUANCES

Being mindful of local customs helps us become better visitors

words by Neha Bhongale

**F**or me, travelling is an enriching experience, offering the chance to immerse myself in new cultures and learn about diverse traditions. A key part of responsible travel includes making the effort to understand the cultural nuances of a destination and ensuring that we are considerate guests in someone else's home.

## JAPAN: BEING CALM AND CONSIDERATE

Japan is renowned for its deep respect for tradition, politeness, and social harmony. An important cultural etiquette in Japan is bowing. A bow can be a greeting, a show of respect or even a way of apologising. Removing shoes before entering homes, temples or certain public spaces is a crucial aspect of Japanese culture.

Another etiquette to be mindful of is maintaining silence on public transport. You will notice that the general ambience on trains (and even on platforms) is calm, showing respect to fellow travellers; it is this



level of consideration that permeates daily life within Japanese society.

## COSTA RICA: VALUING OUR ECOSYSTEMS

Costa Rica is often referred to as the land of "Pura Vida",

translating to "pure life" or "simple life." The warmth and friendliness of the *Ticos* (Costa Ricans), greeting strangers with a "Pura Vida" and a smile, touched me. Taking the time to greet people and embody this

*Bowing is an important part of Japanese etiquette and is a way to show respect*





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**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** The sloth, a symbol of Costa Rica's biodiversity, reflects the country's commitment to environmental protection; Wai (folded palms and a bow) is the traditional greeting of Thailand; Pintxo hopping in San Sebastián, Spain, is a great way to soak in the local culture.



It is advisable to gather a fair knowledge and understanding of the cultural norms, etiquettes, traditions, and customs of the destination you plan to visit. In Thailand, for example, an important cultural norm is to dress modestly when visiting temples or palaces, covering shoulders and knees as a sign of respect.

mindset shows that you respect the local culture. The country's values of environmental conservation are evident everywhere—from a family in the beach town of Tamarindo pausing their picnic to pick up plastic wrappers drifting in the sand to our guide in the Monteverde Cloud Forest sharing the story of how Costa Rica abolished its army in 1949 to invest in social programmes and environmental conservation.

For example, when hiking in the rainforests or national parks like Manuel Antonio, I was politely reminded to tread lightly, stay on marked paths, and avoid littering—small gestures that show

respect for the pristine environment Costa Rica works hard to preserve.

**SPAIN: CONNECTING WITH CULTURE**

One of the most distinctive customs in Spain is the siesta—a time when businesses close and families enjoy leisure time with loved ones or simply take a nap. Understanding this cultural rhythm gave me a deeper appreciation for the country's focus on work-life balance and community.

One of my favourite experiences was *pintxo* hopping in San Sebastián, Spain's "food capital." Pintxos are bite-sized snacks, like tapas, often served

on a skewer or toothpick with bread; they are the centrepiece of lively bar-hopping in this coastal city. What I had not anticipated was how important connection and conversation were to the experience. So, I took my time, savouring each *pintxo* and participating in the laughter and storytelling that flowed among strangers-turned-friends, all gathered around the bar counters.

**THAILAND: RESPECTING LOCAL CUSTOMS**

Thailand's culture is deeply rooted in Buddhism, and visitors are encouraged to show respect for the religion and its customs. One of the

most recognisable cultural practices in Thailand is the *wai*, a traditional greeting that involves placing your palms together in a prayer-like gesture and bowing slightly. It is a symbol of respect and humility, often used when greeting elders, monks, and even strangers.

As I continue my travels across the globe, I remind myself that respecting the world's diverse cultures isn't just part of being a responsible traveller—it's part of what makes travel truly transformative. Each interaction in a particular country is an opportunity to connect, show kindness, and to leave a positive impact wherever we go.



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# CROSSING BOUNDARIES

Shilpa Gupta's artworks have always been inspired by lines and borders, and how human aspirations seek to leap across them

words by **Mignonne Dsouza**

**YOU'VE WON THE POSSEHL PRIZE FOR INTERNATIONAL ART 2025. WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE SOLO EXHIBIT IN SEPTEMBER IN LÜBECK, GERMANY?**

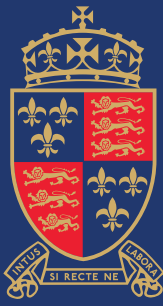
It is an honour to receive the Possehl Prize, and I look forward to the solo exhibition this September. The exhibition will extend my inquiries into systems of surveillance, censorship, and borders, bringing together sound, text, and sculptural works that speak to contemporary forms of control and resistance. Lübeck, with its layered history as a trading hub and being a border town, offers an interesting backdrop to engage with these themes.

**CAN YOU TELL US WHAT INFLUENCED YOUR FIRST SOLO SHOW IN WEST ASIA, *LINES OF FLIGHT*, WHICH IS CURRENTLY ON IN DUBAI?**

The exhibition, curated by Sabih Ahmed, draws from ideas of mobility and resilience. It looks at borders—be it state or societal, those on paper or psychological—and how people navigate them. The title, *Lines of Flight*, reflects on passages of movement, systems of control, and the ways in which language and sound can hold or resist power. West Asia has a deep history of crossings—cultural,







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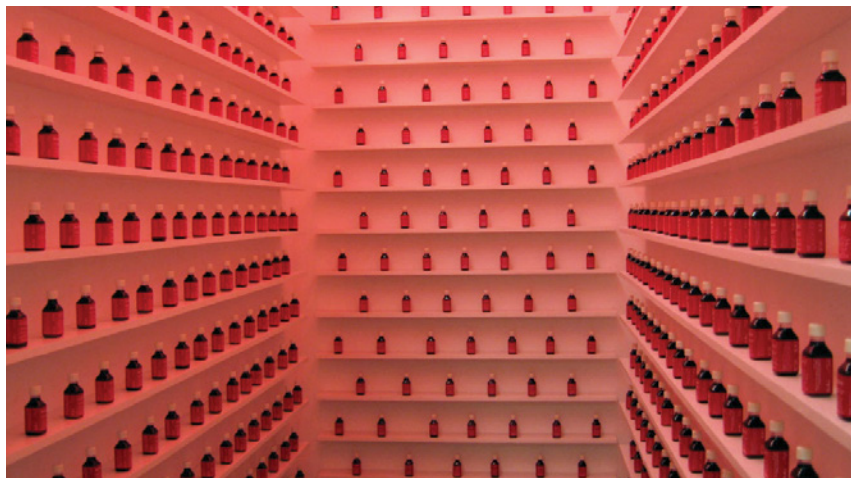
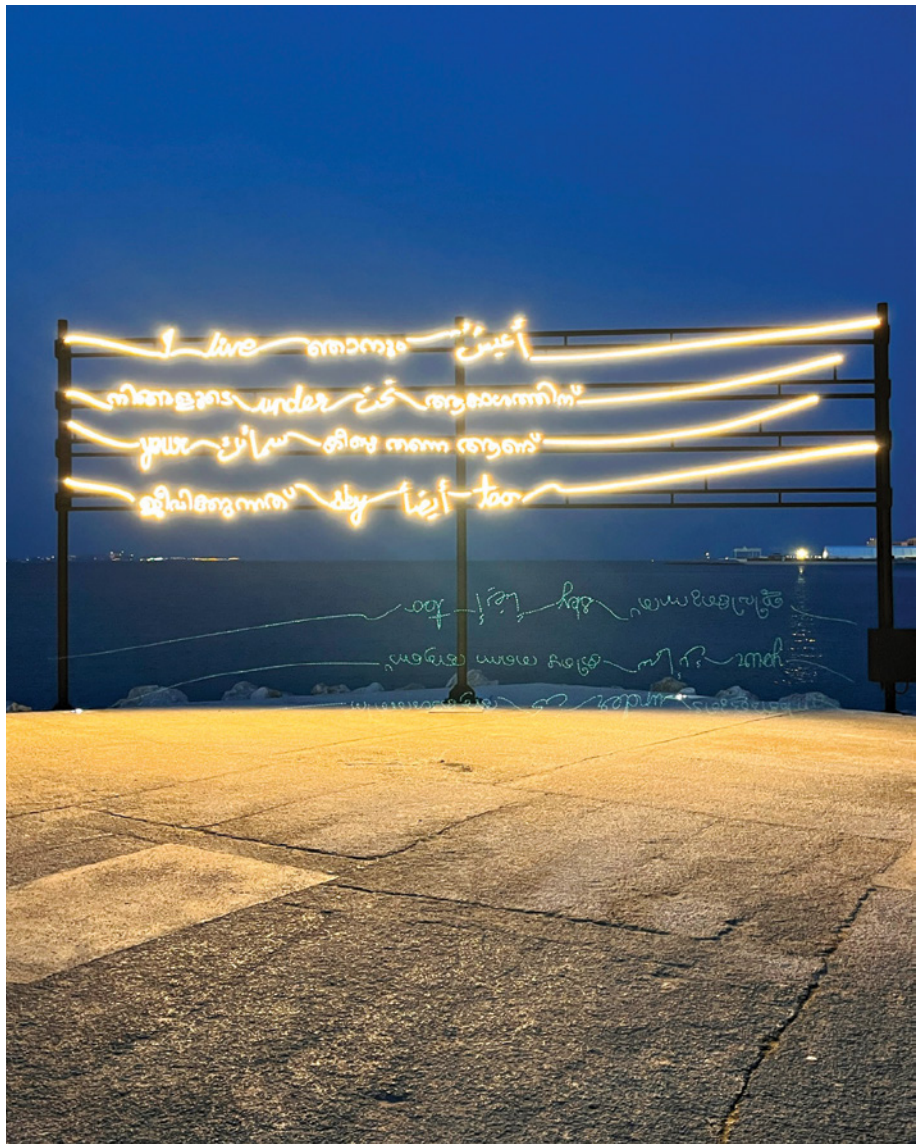


**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** Gupta's first solo show in West Asia, *Lines of Flight*, is at the Ishara Foundation, Dubai; Her favourite artwork, *I live under your sky too*, is a part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (Qatar); The artist's *Blame* installation.

linguistic, and geographical—so, presenting these works in that context brings new resonances. It is showing at the Ishara Art Foundation till 31<sup>st</sup> May.

**YOUR BASE IS MUMBAI, INDIA. HOW DOES THE CITY, AND THE COUNTRY, CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR JOURNEY AS AN ARTIST?**

Mumbai is a city of migrants. Walking through its streets, we hear countless languages and dialects, reflecting the inevitable mutation and dispersion that occurs when cultures and individuals come into contact. Growing up as a woman in South Asia, one is aware of boundaries—visible and invisible. This aspect and the experience of seeing a



Clockwise from top left: Image courtesy the artist and neugierriemschneider. Photography by/lens Ziehe; Shilpa Gupta

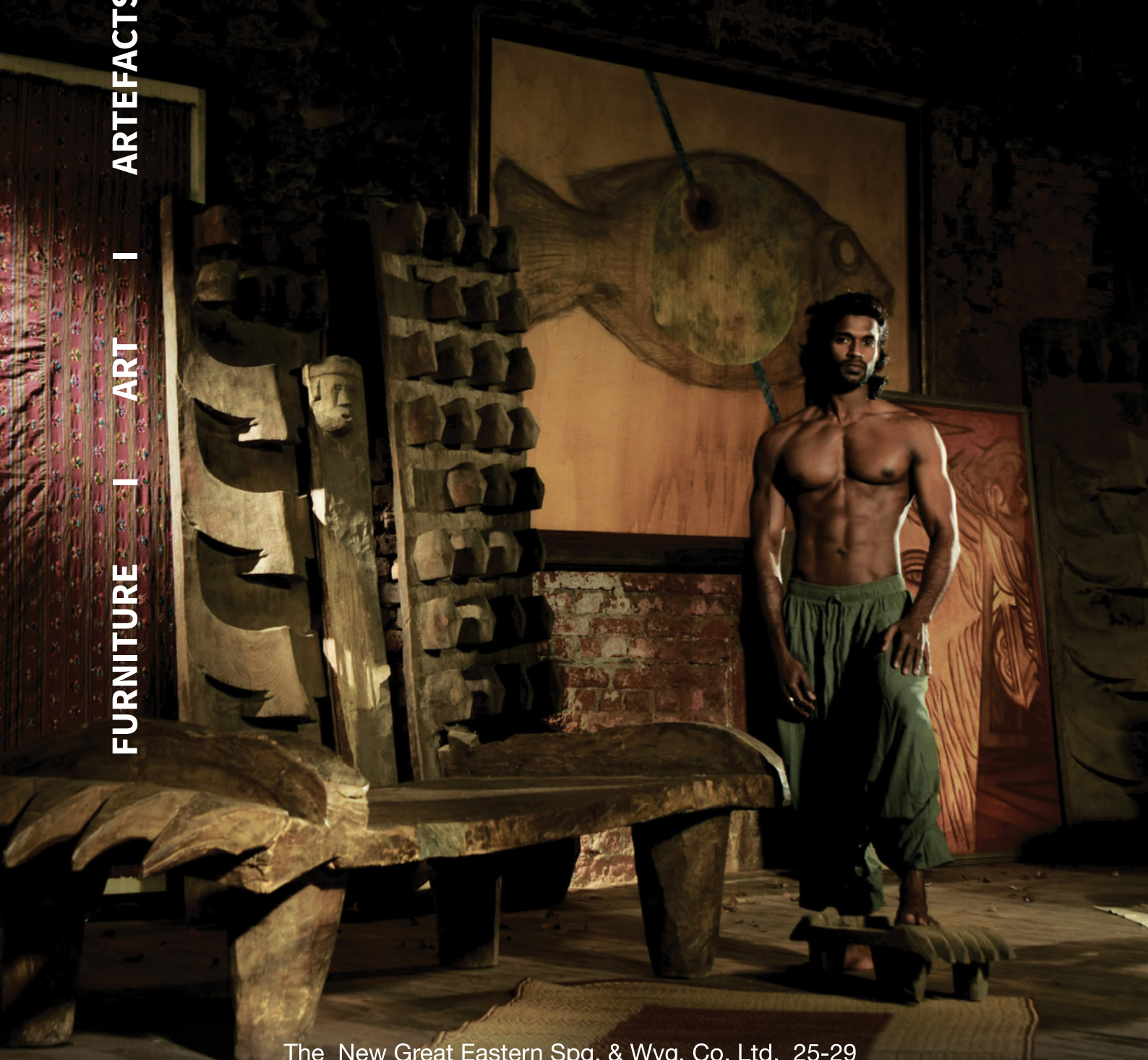




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**CLOCKWISE FROM HERE**  
An artwork from the ongoing show in Dubai; A multimedia installation; Gupta likes to examine how modern systems of power and control depend on linear forms.

### THREE MUSEUMS THAT GUPTA RECOMMENDS

**Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi:** They are known for thoughtfully-curated retrospectives by Roobina Karode.

**Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark:** Its architecture magically emerges from the landscape and leads onto the sea.

**Tate Modern, London:** It offers a dense variety of shows to enjoy.



cosmopolitan society shift and change in the 1990s makes one attentive to lines and how human aspirations seek to leap across them.

**AS AN ARTIST WHOSE WORK IS ON DISPLAY IN MANY MUSEUMS WORLDWIDE, DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE EXHIBIT?**

One of my works is part of the permanent collection at the MIA Park in Doha. It is a light installation in the form of an animated sentence in handwriting, spilling out of the lines of a ruled book to read, *I Live Under Your Sky Too*, in three interwoven languages—English,

Arabic, and Malayalam. Using national and migrant languages, the work builds on the idea that there is space for us all. I especially love the setting, where people can view it against the sea—water being a symbol of migration and movement.

**PUBLIC ART IS NOW SO MUCH IN THE MAINSTREAM—FROM DISPLAYS AT TRAFFIC JUNCTIONS TO PLAZAS TO AIRPORTS. HOW DOES THIS HELP TO FURTHER THE PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING OF ART?**

Public art allows for encounters outside of traditional art spaces, reaching people who may not

otherwise step into a museum. When placed in transit zones—airports, plazas, street corners—it exists in conversation with the everyday, weaving into the rhythm of life rather than being set apart from it. In India, we lack public institutions and outdoor opportunities for art, which one hopes will change.

**FINALLY, WHAT ELSE IS IN STORE FOR YOU THIS YEAR?**

I concluded a solo show in Los Angeles in February. A new project will open at the Manchester International Festival in July and then the solo show in Lübeck.





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**N**irona village in Kutch, Gujarat, at first glance, looks like any other Indian hamlet. But it stands out because of the house whose painted walls say 'Rogan Art' on one side and 'Padma Shri winner' on the other.

Rogan art is an ancient Indian craft tradition now kept alive by just one family, the Khatri. As I enter their living room, I spot photos of celebrities who have visited the family, along with the latter's awards and recognitions. Another wall displays Rogan paintings, framed and displayed as patches, as well as on some skirts and scarves.

Rogan art originated from Persia around 400 years ago and gets its name from the main ingredient of the paint, which is castor oil (*rogan* means 'oil-based'). Using a stylus and a paste consisting of castor oil, lime, and natural colours, patterns are sketched on fabric. This unique craft was only ever practiced by a few artisans in Kutch and used for making trousseaux for the brides of the region. My guide, Iqbal Kumbhar, explains that this family has prevented the art from becoming extinct.

The moving force behind this undertaking is a bearded patriarch with twinkling eyes and a gentle demeanour. Padma Shri awardee, Abdul Gafur Khatri, lives in a joint family of 10 members comprising Abdul, his brother Sumad,

their wives, and children.

Explaining the family's role in preserving the art and refining it over eight generations, the senior Khatri informs us that his endeavour began in 1984. A year before that, he adds,

he had left the village to find a job in modern textiles but returned when a message from his grandfather invited him to get involved in reviving the dwindling art.

Khatri introduced a series of innovations to revitalise

# REVIVING A FADING CRAFT

Rogan art, practised by just one family in Kutch, is now seeing a resurgence

words by Kalpana Sunder



*After PM Narendra Modi gifted Rogan art pieces to Barack Obama and the Queen of Denmark, the art has become a popular diplomatic gift*



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**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

Rogan art was originally used to make trousseaux for the brides of the region; Padma Shri awardee Abdul Gafur Khatri and his son Sahil; Artisans use a metal stylus to draw freehand designs on the fabric with Rogan paste.

the art form, fashioning designs like the 'Tree of Life' and experimenting with different products apart from traditional paintings and clothes.

The production is, in itself, an arduous process. Castor seeds are crushed by hand, and the oil is heated over a fire for two days until it takes on a gooey texture. It is then cast in water. The making of the Rogan paste is done in the jungle, where the sticky residue and crushed, natural pigments are mixed to create the paint. The colours are usually hues of red, blue, yellow, white, and green.

As I sip on cups of tea made with the rich milk of the region, I watch Abdul's son Sahil give us a demonstration, holding the *kalam* (metal stylus), putting a blob of paint on his hand and then twirling the stylus till the paint falls like a string. He draws the design freehand from his imagination, with one finger below the fabric controlling the flow. Sahil then folds the cloth and shows us how an exact mirror image is created.

Depending on the complexity of the design, it takes the family anywhere between days and months to create a piece of art. "It's just focus and control, and a little imagination," says the



senior Khatri with a smile.

Rogan art has spread far beyond the shores of Kutch. In 2014, PM Narendra Modi gifted the then-US President Barack Obama two paintings featuring a 'Tree of Life', during his visit to USA, both made by Khatri. The PM also gifted Queen Margarethe II of Denmark a Rogan art masterpiece in 2022. Since then, the art has become a favourite diplomatic gift, and there has been a growing demand in India and abroad.

The Khatri's reveal that they have been visited by people from over 70 countries, including travellers, students, and research scholars. They have also embraced social media

to find new buyers. As I view some exquisite Rogan fabrics and panels, which can cost upwards of a few lakhs, I choose a small 'Tree of Life' panel as a souvenir.

Khatri has another major accomplishment to his name. In 2023, he established a world record in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, by crafting the longest Rogan art piece during India's G20 presidency. He now trains other families and also women in what was once a predominantly male-dominated profession.

As we drive back, I muse on how one family has revived this rich tradition and hope it continues to survive and thrive.

**EXPLORE THE AREA**

Nirona village (40km from Bhuj) is also famous for copper bell making and lacquer art. It is best to visit when the Rann Utsav is taking place from November to March at Dhorado.

Other villages in the area that can be explored include Ajrakhpur, famous for its block prints, Khavda for pottery, Hodka for leather bags and quilts, and Bhujodi for handloom weaves.

**GETTING THERE**

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# GO ON A RAMBLE

These foot trails are the best way to get off the beaten path and experience a new level of adventure

words by **Team Namaste.ai**

**A** chance to soak up some sunshine, enjoy panoramic views at your own pace, stretch your legs, breathe in some fresh air, and achieve over 10,000 steps every day—those are just some of the benefits of embarking on a walking trail during your next vacation. It is also a great way to truly discover a destination beyond touristy pamphlets.

The main advantage of these trails is that they do not involve steep ascents or descents, making them ideal for travellers who are reasonably fit but feel daunted by conventional hiking routes. While some paths can be covered in a few hours, others take longer. So, choose the one that you feel most comfortable starting out with.

When setting off, it is important to be prepared: wear comfortable shoes (that have already been broken in), carry snacks and water, a cap and sunscreen, and appropriate clothing in case of weather changes. Finally, stick to the marked paths (look for signs or painted blazes to point you in the correct direction) and resist the urge to step off the path to take better selfies.

*Petra, Jordan, has been featured as a location in several Hollywood movies, including Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989) and the 2021 remake of Dune*



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**TOP AND BOTTOM**

The West Highland Way offers a glimpse of the Scottish countryside; Spot the Hornby Lighthouse on the South Head Heritage Trail.

**ABOVE AND BEYOND: THE LONG TRAILS**

While most walking trails can be covered in a day or just a few weeks, there are longer ones that feature on the bucket list of dedicated walkers.

**The Appalachian Trail, USA**

This is 100 years old and stretches from Mt. Katahdin, Maine, to Springer Mountain, Georgia. At nearly 3,524km in length, it is the world's longest hiking-only footpath.

**The National Trail, Australia**

This follows coach and stock routes, and horse trails for over 5,000km from Cooktown in Queensland to Healesville in Victoria. There are 12 sections that offer trekkers a chance to sight magnificent views along with flora and fauna.

**Trans Canada Trail, Canada**

This stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic. At 28,000km long, this can take two (or more) years to complete.



**PETRA TRAIL, JORDAN**

This oft-visited trail spans 3.9km and offers a leisurely journey through the ancient city. It begins by going past fascinating monuments carved out of the rock like the Djinn block tombs, the Obelisk Tomb, and an ancient dam.

These lead to the Siq, a natural, narrow gorge that features sandstone rock formations. It serves as the main entrance into Petra and is certainly the most dramatic way in. The trail then opens onto a spectacular view of the

Treasury (Al Khazna). The trail takes anywhere from one-and-a-half to two hours. **Starting point:** *Get here by bus or taxi from Amman.*

**THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY, SCOTLAND, UK**

Starting just north of Glasgow is a 154km trail that runs from Milngavie to Fort William. Said to be Scotland's first official long-distance trail, it offers a variety of scenery, including views of moorlands, loch shores, and mountains.

The entire trail takes six to eight days, but

travellers can opt to explore shorter sections. The most favoured are Inveroran to Kingshouse and Kingshouse to Kinlochleven—they boast the most stunning scenery.

Between Inveroran and Kingshouse, you cross Rannoch Moor and get to witness the rugged splendour of Glen Coe. Travelling from Kingshouse to Kinlochleven means you get glimpses of the mountain ranges along Glen Coe and get to tackle the famed Devil's Staircase.

**Starting point:** *There are bus services to sections*



# Find 'The One' with vows for eternity personalised, progressive matchmaking

A marriage is much like an elegant handloom tapestry. Coming from a vivid and ancient tradition, it's a mindful coming together of two partners—two worlds, two communities, and two worldviews. They blend with each other and lend each individual strand a distinct identity. At Vows For Eternity, this intuitive, holistic approach is channelled into their matchmaking process. For the global matrimonial service, understanding you as a person is the first leap in finding you the right partner. Led by celebrated matchmaker and Founder CEO Anuradha Gupta, the firm is a market leader in offline matrimonial search and has helped members seek partnership without biodatas and across the borders of India, Canada, the USA, the UK and Dubai.

The brand's vision is to align members' unique expectations and visions of a life partner to lead them to a comfortable starting point, through an 'arranged introduction'. One where individuals and their families are transparent, honest, and in sync about what's important and what's non-negotiable including personality fits, value systems and socio-economic compatibility. The service prides itself in offering an inclusive environment where a member is never judged based on conventional measures of appearance, complexion, community or age.

From successful professionals, corporate leaders, industrialists and celebrities, the brand caters to affluent clients in India and across the world. They fall in the age bracket of 22-55 years and are well-educated, well-travelled Indians and NRIs. In their serious search for marriage, members meet an uncompromising eligibility criteria before committing, with quality of their global network taking precedence over quantity.

The brand's base membership, The Circle, introduces members within the same tier who share similar education and global exposure. A dedicated relationship manager, for every tier, acts as your trusted guide and confidante in the process. In The Icon and The Pyramid, members from prosperous business families and experienced corporate professionals are offered a niche search with a certain degree of handholding and relationship coaching.

The Private Club and Luminary League is the brand's signature offering distinguished by the highly curated nature of the search. It is exclusively crafted for celebrities, industrialists and members from well-established business families. As per the team, Anuradha personally works with a handful of clients, as her decades of experience in the industry and intuition guide the search, while bridging traditional generational gaps with a progressive nuance. "Our members signify the crème de la crème of society. With limitless access to almost anything that money can afford, they are fiercely private and extremely selective about who they let in. We are one of those they do, and over the last decade, we have earned that place," explains the brand team.



**If your goal is to find love this year, then what you are truly seeking is a deliberate expansion—a life that is, in its way, complete, but could hold more. And we, as your matchmakers, are not simply looking for them—we are working with and walking alongside you, intent on finding that person who will add not just another chapter, but an entirely new narrative arc. The search is a declaration of intent and hope, and hope, always, is where the story begins.**

#### For More Information:

**Call:** +91 97179 85766

**Office:** +91 22 6864 3999

**Email:** [contactus@vowsforeternity.com](mailto:contactus@vowsforeternity.com)

**Website:** <https://www.vowsforeternity.com>

**New York | London | Delhi | Mumbai | Dubai**







**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

*The walk around the Namgyal Monastery in Mcleodganj is dotted with prayer flags and wheels; The Peak Trail offers fantastic views of Hong Kong Harbour; Sri Lanka's Pekoe Trail winds through centuries-old tea estates.*

*on the trail like Ardlui, Crianlarich, Tyndrum, and the Bridge of Orchy. Travellers can also use a hired car to get to and from the town of Milngavie; the starting point is marked by an obelisk on Douglas Street.*

**SOUTH HEAD HERITAGE TRAIL, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

This 1km-loop gives travellers a chance to capture some spectacular Pacific Ocean vistas, as well as views of Sydney Harbour, Middle Head, and North

Head. On the way, along a cobblestone road, you'll also encounter Lady Bay Beach, the historic Hornby Lighthouse (built in 1858 after the wrecking of a ship at the foot of South Head) in the iconic red and white stripes, and sandstone gun emplacements.

Between April and November, there is a good chance that you may get to spot some whales, if you're lucky. The trail takes anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour, and is a family-friendly activity.

**Starting point:** *Travellers*

*can use public transport or hire a car to get to Camp Cove in Watsons Bay.*

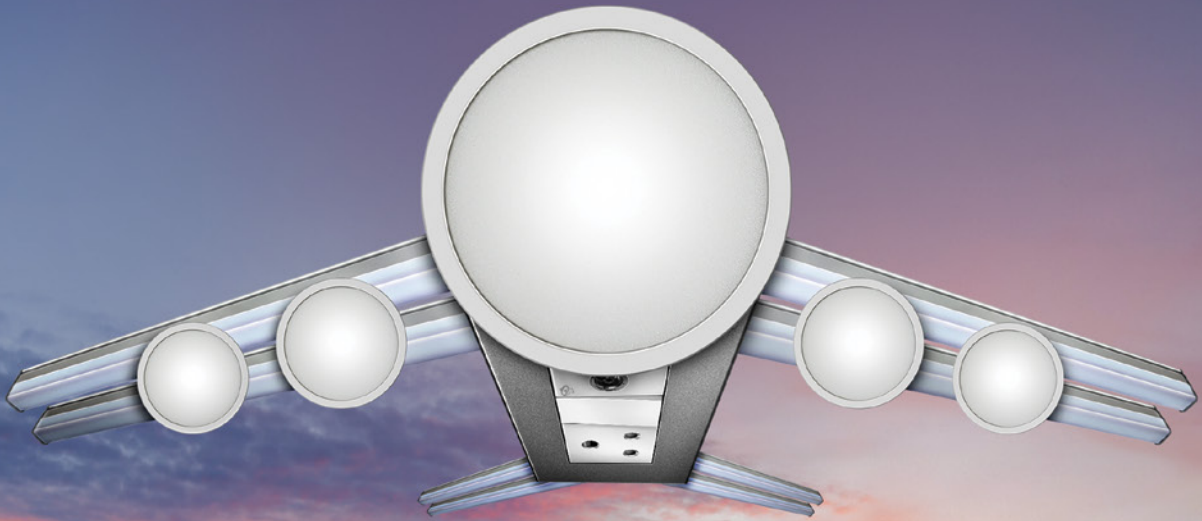
**THE DALAI LAMA TEMPLE LOOP, MCLEODGANJ, INDIA**

Also called the Kora Circuit, this is an undemanding 30-minute *parikrama* (circuit) around the Namgyal Monastery in Mcleodganj, Himachal Pradesh, which is home to the Dalai Lama.

While on this route, you will frequently spot pilgrims for whom this is a holy endeavour. Don't miss the prayer flags along the







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The Makalidurga Trail makes for a nice weekend activity from Bengaluru

path and the views of the Dhauladhar range.

**Starting point:** The trail starts from the parking lot by the Namgyal Monastery.

### PEAK CIRCLE WALK, HONG KONG

This 3.5km-long paved pathway winds around The Peak—the highest point on Hong Kong Island—and offers gorgeous, panoramic views. It is an easy walk that should not take longer than an hour, unless you stop to shoot selfies and capture Insta reels.

The time around sunset makes this a particularly scenic route but also take notice of the woodland you will encounter during the walk.

**Starting point:** Take the

Peak Tram or the bus to get to Lugard Road near the Peak Tower to embark on your scenic walk.

### PEKOE TRAIL, SRI LANKA

This is a 300km long-distance walking trail from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya that winds its way through the enchanting Central Highlands of Sri Lanka—often regarded as one of Asia's best-kept secrets. Travellers can join the trail by walking through any of the 22 short stages that wind through pretty hill towns, lush tea plantations and forests, scenic viewpoints, and more.

**Starting point:** Take a bus, train or taxi to Kandy from Colombo. The start is the historic Ceylon Tea Museum,

located at the Hantane Tea Factory near Kandy.

### MAKALIDURGA TRAIL, KARNATAKA, INDIA

A great weekend adventure, this trail is located 15km from Doddaballapura, which is around 50km from Bengaluru. The 4km trek takes around three hours to complete.

Along the way, you can explore the Makalidurga Fort and enjoy views of the lush greenery and the Gundamagere Lake. There is a temple at the top as well that you can visit.

**Starting point:** Travellers can get here by road or rail from Bengaluru.

The trail starts from the railway station or the Muthurayaswamy temple near the parking lot.





# AS GOOD AS NEW

Jet lag can affect even the most seasoned traveller. Here are some winning strategies to tackle it

words by **Deanne Panday**

**TOP AND BOTTOM**  
A week before the flight, move meals and bedtime closer to the new time zone; Kiwi and bananas are naturally high in melatonin, which regulates sleep and wake cycles.

**O**ne of the main reasons for suffering from jet lag is that when we travel, the body's internal clock, or circadian rhythm, stays in one time zone, while we physically move to another zone. That results in our body clock going out of sync. Here are tips that one can practice before, during, and after a flight to reduce some of the adverse effects of long-distance journeys and taking red-eye flights.

## BEFORE A FLIGHT

I often fly to Los Angeles to visit my daughter. LA is roughly 12 hours behind India, and that contributes to the worst kind of jet lag, so I have personally developed



strategies to help me cope. A week before, I start to slowly move my meals and bedtime closer to that time zone. This is something I would advocate to everyone.

Also, start including foods that naturally contain melatonin (this is the hormone that regulates sleep and wake cycles). These include bananas

(they contain tryptophan, an amino acid that helps you fall asleep), kiwi (rich in serotonin, which transforms into melatonin), and green leafy vegetables (a natural source of magnesium that also aids sleep). I carry these on flights, along with cherries and unsalted pistachios (rich sources of melatonin). For up to

two days before and on the flight, I avoid salty and sugary foods that can disrupt the sleep pattern; also note that anything high in sodium causes puffiness and bloating.

## ON THE FLIGHT

Hydration is key here, so I pack cucumber sticks, which are high in water content. I





**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT**  
*Matcha helps reduce the oxidative stress caused by travel; Do light stretches for the first two days after you land at your destination; Eat protein-rich breakfasts like avocado on sourdough; Carry unsalted pistas on the flight.*

**WELLNESS TIPS**

Using magnesium body lotion or foot sprays can help deal with jet lag. One can also use calming essential oils on one's pillow or apply it to the temples. Before bedtime, create a relaxing atmosphere with soothing music and dim lights; avoid devices. You can read a book though. Drinking chamomile or lavender tea is also a good option.

drink warm water and lemon juice; another tip is to put a pinch of Himalayan salt in your water bottle.

My snack bag for the flight contains all of the foods mentioned above, as well as almonds and walnuts, protein-rich choices that don't make you sluggish. Avoid coffee and alcohol when in the air.

Matcha is a powerful antioxidant and helps reduce the oxidative stress caused by travel. You can drink it on the flight with hot water (and once you land). It provides a steady energy boost and helps you sleep.

**ONCE YOU LAND**

At your destination, continue to eat these foods, as well as watermelons and melons. Structure meals in this manner: a well-

balanced breakfast with protein, healthy fats, fibre and complex carbs. I ideally prefer eggs or avocado and sourdough toast and a glass of orange juice. Eat a lunch rich in protein and fibre, and make sure dinner is light and eaten a couple of hours before bedtime. It is best to do this for the first three days. Plan trips to gourmet restaurants after this period because a heavy meal comes in the way of establishing a good sleep pattern.

If you land at your destination at night, adjust meals accordingly. If you arrive during the day (and it is night in your home location), ease into the light slowly: keep the shutters down or wear dark glasses. Remember, getting outside in the sunshine at the right time can help to release

melatonin naturally.

I try not to take naps, but since the first two days can be rough, a 20 to 30-minute nap can help if you are tired.

When it comes to beverages, choose herbal or chamomile tea, or warm milk with honey and turmeric. Avoid alcohol for at least three days after you land.

Deep breathing, meditation, and yoga all help one counter the effects of jet lag. Choose these options rather than a workout for the first one to two days post arriving at your destination. A walk or light stretches can also be considered. Finally, a body or foot massage also helps one relax.

Follow these tips in reverse order once your journey is complete. And, always, be kind to your body and listen to its cues.



# YOUR AIR INDIA



## THE TRANSFORMATION

A new series to track how we are elevating your travel experience

**p 92** ↑

## ROUTES

We present our latest global connectivity, offering you unparalleled access worldwide

**p 103** ↑

## PARTNERS

Through our Codeshare and Interline partnerships, we try to bring the world closer

**p 108** ↑





# WORLD-CLASS AIRLINE WITH AN INDIAN HEART

In 2022, Air India launched its five-year transformation programme, Vihaan.AI, embarking on its journey to become a world-class airline with an Indian heart—the absolute best-in-class in customer service, technology, product, reliability, and hospitality.

**TAXI**



**Phase 1: Sept 2022 – March 2023**  
Fix the basics

**TAKE-OFF**



**Phase 2: April 2023 – March 2024**  
Build for excellence

**CLIMB**



**Phase 3: April 2024 – March 2027**  
Scale and grow

## TRANSFORMATION PILLARS

### People and Digital as differentiators



**Global loyal customer base**



**Robust and clockwork operations**



**Industry-best talent**



**Industry captain on future agendas**



**Commercially efficient and growing**

### Enablers

- Clear and open communication
- Powered by technology
- Values-driven cultural transformation



# EXPERIENCE THE NEW AIR INDIA

Air India is currently at a mid-point in its five-year transformation journey, Vihaan.AI. In this new series, we give you a sneak peek into how the airline is progressively elevating the travel experience to emerge as a world-class airline with an Indian heart.





# DELECTABLE MEALS

Have you ever wondered what it takes to serve fresh and delicious food at 35,000ft in the air? We take you behind the scenes to show you



## **FACTORS TO NOTE WHILE CURATING AN INFLIGHT MEAL...**

The challenges of inflight food revolve around managing specific variables that are unique to the airline industry. Some of these are reduced oxygen levels at 35,000feet and their effects on taste buds; ahead-of-time

production and reheating on board; and catering to a very wide taste profile with limited choices on board. To tackle these, the recipes are tweaked so that they remain fresh, taste great, and are crowd pleasers, all at once. Particular recipe changes include enhanced seasoning and spice

levels, and understanding the demographics of the different sectors we fly to, in order to curate menus.

## **FROM INGREDIENT SOURCING TO SERVING ON BOARD...**

There are multiple steps such as making the menu, the meal presentation,

recipe creation, sourcing of specific raw material, food trials, and the menu launch. The Air India team considers CSAT (Customer Satisfaction) comments as well while designing menus.

## **CATERING TO DIVERSE TASTE PROFILES WHILE**





**DELIVERING MEALS AT SUCH A LARGE SCALE...**

Air India's New Product Development Team and the catering partner are constantly studying the domestic food landscape and international trends to keep pace with what's trending. This applies to well-being, culinary trends for cuisines, as well as trending ingredients such as millets. These trends are then fine-tuned to operations-friendly airline formats. Data-driven changes are derived from the robust CSAT process

that gives the team a sense of what's working and what's not.

**REGIONAL FLAVOURS/ SPECIALITIES SERVED ON SPECIFIC ROUTES...**

All international sectors include highlights of the country/cuisine of origin on the menu. The idea is to present a taste of the region on board. Domestically, the endeavour of regional non-metro sectors is to have local cuisine menus which resonate with flyers. For example, South Indian cuisine menus, festival



menus, etc. On metro sectors where the flyer demographic is more complex, the team ensures that at least one choice is regional/inspired by one of the popular regional cuisines.

**TABLEWARE AND CUTLERY...**

Dining in an aircraft should be no different from dining

in a restaurant. Air India has always strived to offer a premium inflight dining experience. The new chinaware, tableware, and glassware in Business and First Class cabins underscore this philosophy. The timeless designs are inspired by India's rich heritage and the iconic Maharaja, and add a streak of luxury to your meal.

**48 million**  
meals are served to  
customers per annum



# A FLIGHT TO REMEMBER

A recent transit flight to London from Delhi on board the all-new Air India A350 turned into an unforgettable and remarkable experience, for all the right reasons

words by **Chua Enlai**



I'd read all the buzz around the introduction of the A350 into the Air India fleet. I've flown Air India for over 10 years now, on domestic flights as well as for travel between Singapore and Chennai, Goa, and Bengaluru, amongst others. I even remember flights on (erstwhile) Indian Airlines as a child. It's always exciting when an airline, especially one with a storied past like Air India, rebrands. The catering on board has always been pretty good and the cabin crew, generous and quite charming.

This time around, the airline is promising brand-new cabins that are well appointed, well maintained, and accompanied by a slew of new amenities. Along with a change of livery, I was happy to see the elevated design and aesthetics of the Business Class experience. After reading about it all in the news, I was curious to try it out in person.





**About the author:**

A Singapore-based award-winning actor and host, Enlai is known for his dramatic and comedic work across theatre, television, and film. Popular across Asia, he is the host of CNA's award-winning documentary series on artificial intelligence, *Becoming Human*. Enlai has performed in over 50 theatre productions and is perhaps best known for the nine seasons of the International Emmy-nominated *The Noose*, for which he's won the Asian Television Award for Best Comedy Performance in 2010 and 2013.



For me, another important reason for selecting Air India was that it is a member of Star Alliance. My journey with Air India allows me to earn elite-qualifying tier miles, which I can redeem on any of the other Star Alliance airlines.

**THE ALL-NEW A350 EXPERIENCE**

All I can say is, the Maharaja is back! I'd carefully selected Delhi as my transit point to be able to fly the A350 as flights to London from Mumbai are instead operated by the 777-300ERs. On flight AI111 from Delhi to Heathrow, I was seated in

4A. The Business Class suite comes with a door for privacy and a shallow wardrobe for my jacket. The footwell and seat area are spacious, and the walls are high. I found the tray table to be well designed as it can be used as a smaller tray for drinks or pulled out fully to become a large dining table. There's also a generously-sized side table and a storage compartment with a door. The colours are as pleasing to the eye as they are in pictures.

The amenities, on the other hand, are bountiful and beautifully presented. I really liked the locally-inspired designs. This is what I received:

- A set of pyjamas, something that

not many airlines provide in their Business Class

- A pair of slippers in the shoe storage compartment
- A Ferragamo amenity kit within a cotton bag embellished with a lotus mandala pattern and a gold Maharaja charm
- An intricately-patterned day blanket that can also be used as a shawl
- An ingenious 2-in-1 mattress and pillow that can be folded as a firm cushion or opened when making your bed
- A very plush and comfortable duvet

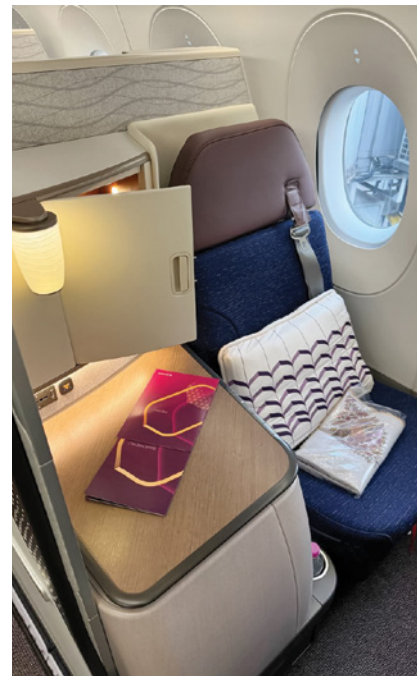
Catering is one of the most important aspects of a flight and the new crockery really elevates the dining





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

Chua Enlai was impressed with the Business Class suite that features a generously-sized bed on board the all-new Air India A350; Guests are offered luxury amenity kits from Ferragamo and Tumi; The suite is like your own private sanctuary; The elevated dining experience includes stylish cutlery and delicious fare; The bar is located at the rear of the Business Class.



experience. The champagne served has been upgraded and the menus are colourful. There are beautiful patterns everywhere—on the stylish ramekins, cutlery, and glassware. I dined on a *makai paneer bhurji* and *laal maas* accompanied by a glass of Laurent-Perrier champagne.

There are a couple of other things unique to the A350 aircraft. One is the bar at the rear of the cabin. I appreciated the drinks and snacks placed there. It is an ideal spot from where to peek out the windows and enjoy the views and sunlight when the cabin is darkened.

But what makes or breaks a journey

is the people you meet. I had the pleasure of having an enthusiastic cabin crew who were beaming with pride over the new Manish Malhotra uniforms they donned and the improved product that they can now offer to their guests. It seemed like the crew and the other passengers, too, were happy to be in this newly-revitalised travelling environment.

Flying with Air India has been, to use the famous quote from *Forrest Gump* (1994), “like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get”. This A350 experience sets the standard for the rebirth of Air India. I had met Campbell [Wilson, Air India CEO] many

years ago and I am excited to see the magic he and his team at Air India will create as the product evolves with the refurbishment of the 777s and Dreamliner 787s.

All I can say is that the Maharaja has some exciting days ahead.

*The services mentioned above are subject to the aircraft type/route flown*



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Colourful puppets from Rajasthan

# HANDCRAFTED WITH LOVE

Have a few hours to spare in the capital? Here are the top spots to pick up some traditional handicrafts from

words by **Trisha Mukherjee**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that everyone wants to pack in the most into their travels. And often, that involves not just taking in scenic locations but also experiencing the place's art and craft heritage.

India has a plethora of traditions unique to each state. But if there is one stop that will give you an accumulative taste of its rich craft history, it is Delhi.

If you have a few hours in the city, here are a handful of places you can visit to explore the country's diverse crafts, engage with artisans, and bring home a souvenir (or many).

## **NATIONAL CRAFTS MUSEUM & HASTKALA ACADEMY, PRAGATI MAIDAN**

This is a window to the indigenous handcraft traditions of India. It is divided into three sections—a museum, a handicrafts store, and a restaurant. Begin with the museum that boasts a number of galleries alongside several open-air exhibition spaces. You can view traditional puppets, jewellery, and ceremonial objects.

The biggest USP of the museum, however, is that it offers visitors an opportunity to see artisans at work, as they weave their magic to create some of the most intricate

handcraft objects. From Bihar, there is stone inlay work, and from Jammu and Kashmir, there is papier-mâché, among others, all of which are up for grabs at their respective stores here.

*Entry: Free; Timings: Tuesday to Sunday (10am – 6pm)*

## **DILLI HAAT, INA**

Established in 1994, this was based on the traditional Indian concept of a haat or an open marketplace. It houses small kiosks that host artisans from various Indian states highlighting their best handcraft traditions. There's pottery from Khurja in





Uttar Pradesh, *dokra* craft objects from Bastar in Chhattisgarh, and utility objects made from jute from the North-east, to name a few. From South India, you'll find decorative masks and finely-carved

woodwork.  
*Entry: ₹30 (Indians), ₹100 (foreigners);*  
*Timings: Monday to Sunday*  
*(10:30am – 10pm)*

### CHATTA CHOWK BAZAAR, RED FORT

Located inside the iconic Fort, (enter through Lahori Gate) this one is for history buffs. Also known as Meena Bazaar, it historically catered to the requirements of the royal families. Today, shopkeepers, mostly from Old Delhi, continue the tradition, selling handcrafted objects, including delicate silver

jewellery and attractive souvenirs.  
*Entry: ₹35 (Indians), ₹500 (foreigners);*  
*Timings: Tuesday to Sunday*  
*(9:30am – 4:30pm)*

### STATE EMPORIA, BABA KHARAK SINGH MARG

This is a one-stop-shop for all traditional handicraft needs. There's Garvi (Gujarat) where you can find *rogan* artwork and the state's famed copper bells. At Rajasthali (Rajasthan), you will find home decor items like blue pottery and rugs. Cauvery offers a wide range of authentic Karnataka handicrafts, including sandalwood carvings, lacquerware, and *bidri* ware. From West Bengal's Biswa Bangla store, you can pick up Shantiniketan leather bags, jute jewellery, and Bengal *dokra* crafts.

At Madhya Pradesh's Mrignayani, you'll find stunning brass crafts.  
*Entry: Free; Timings: Monday to Saturday*  
*(9am – 9pm)*

### CENTRAL COTTAGE INDUSTRIES EMPORIUM, JANPATH

Spread out over several levels, it has dedicated sections for arts and crafts. Level Zero displays art, while Level One boasts wood craft, marble craft, and ethnic jewellery. Level Two takes you to Bankura silver articles and metal ware. Level Three houses a beautiful collection of pottery. The topmost level has cabinets, wooden screens, *jhoolas*, and marble tabletops with inlay work and delicate carvings.  
*Entry: Free; Timings: Monday to Sunday*  
*(10am – 7pm)*



# PROUD WINGS

A look at the aircraft in Air India's fleet\*

**Airbus A319**

 **06**

**Boeing 777-300ER**

 **19**

**Airbus A320neo**

 **94**

**Boeing 777-200LR**

 **08**

**Airbus A320ceo**

 **04**

**Boeing 787-9  
Dreamliner**

 **07**

**Airbus A321ceo**

 **13**

**Boeing 787-8  
Dreamliner**

 **27**

**Airbus A321neo**

 **14**

**Airbus A350-900**

**06**

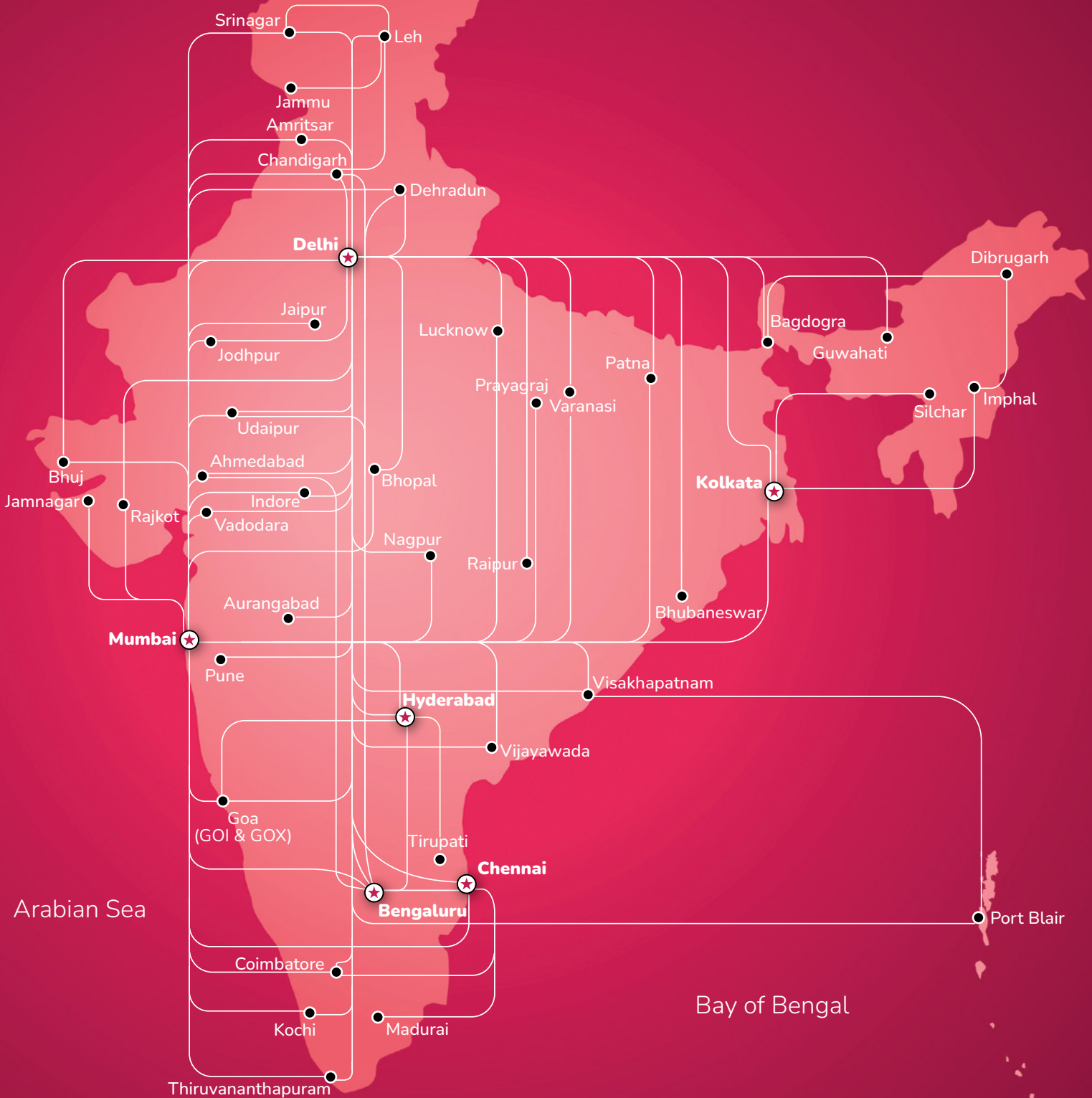
**FLEET  
STRENGTH  
198**



\*Total number as on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025;  
This fleet count is exclusive of Air India Express  
(Air India Group's low-cost carrier)



## DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY



\*Map not to scale. The depiction and use of routes and boundaries are for informative purposes only.

\*Mumbai to Srinagar route will be effective from 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

\*This route map pertains only to destinations served by Air India.

\*Route map as on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025.



# INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Air India flies non-stop to 41 destinations across five continents from multiple Indian cities (pinned on the map of India)

## Europe



Amsterdam (AMS)	←-----→	DEL	
Copenhagen (CPH)	←-----→	DEL	
Frankfurt (FRA)	←-----→	DEL	BOM
Milan (MXP)	←-----→	DEL	
Paris (CDG)	←-----→	DEL	
Vienna (VIE)	←-----→	DEL	
Zurich (ZRH)	←-----→	DEL	
Tel Aviv (TLV)	←-----→	DEL	

## UK



Birmingham (BHX)	←-----→	DEL	ATQ
<u>London</u>			
Heathrow (LHR)	←-----→	DEL	BOM BLR
Gatwick (LGW)	←-----→	ATQ	AMD GOX

## North America



Chicago (ORD)	←-----→	DEL	
Newark (EWR)	←-----→	DEL	BOM
New York (JFK)	←-----→	DEL	BOM
San Francisco (SFO)	←-----→	DEL	BOM BLR
Toronto (YYZ)	←-----→	DEL	
Vancouver (YVR)	←-----→	DEL	
Washington (IAD)	←-----→	DEL	

## Middle East



Abu Dhabi (AUH)	←-----→	BOM	
Dammam (DMM)	←-----→	BOM	
Doha (DOH)	←-----→	DEL	BOM COK
Dubai (DXB)	←-----→	DEL	BOM COK HYD MAA
Jeddah (JED)	←-----→	DEL	BOM
Riyadh (RUH)	←-----→	DEL	BOM

\*Map not to scale. The depiction and use of routes and boundaries are for informative purposes only.

\*This route map pertains only to destinations served by Air India.

\*Route map as on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025





INDIA

### ✈️ Far East

Hong Kong (HKG) <----->	DEL
Seoul (ICN) <----->	DEL
Tokyo (HND) <----->	DEL

### ✈️ South East Asia

Bali (DPS) <----->	DEL
Bangkok (BKK) <----->	DEL BOM
Ho Chi Minh City (SGN) <----->	DEL
Kuala Lumpur (KUL) <----->	DEL
Phuket (HKT) <----->	DEL
Singapore (SIN) <----->	DEL BOM BLR MAA PNQ

### Indian Subcontinent

Colombo (CMB) <----->	DEL BOM MAA
Dhaka (DAC) <----->	DEL BOM
Kathmandu (KTM) <----->	DEL
Malé (MLE) <----->	DEL BOM
Yangon (RGN) <----->	DEL

### ✈️ Africa

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## BROADCAST REGARDING INDIAN CONSTITUTION

नवंबर 26, 1949 को भारतीय संविधान ऐतिहासिक रूप से अपनाया गया, जो 26 जनवरी, 1950 को लागू हुआ। यह सभी भारतीयों के लिए लोकतंत्र, समानता, और न्याय का प्रतीक है।

November 26, 1949, marks the historic adoption of the Constitution of India, which came into effect on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950. It is a cornerstone of democracy, equality, and justice for all Indians.

## 150<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SHRI BIRSA MUNDA

भारतीय आदिवासी स्वतंत्रता सेनानी, श्री बिरसा मुंडा की 150वीं जयंती के अवसर पर, हम उनके साहस और राष्ट्र के प्रति सेवा के लिए उनका सम्मान करते हैं।

On the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the iconic tribal freedom fighter from India, Shri Birsa Munda, we express our respect for his unwavering courage and service to the nation.

## MISSION LIFE

मिशन लाइफ़, जिसे प्रधान मंत्री श्री नरेंद्र मोदी द्वारा शुरू किया गया है, पर्यावरण की सुरक्षा और संरक्षण के लिए लोगों को प्रेरित करने वाला एक वैश्विक जन आंदोलन है। इसका मकसद लोगों को पर्यावरण के प्रति जागरूक करना और उन्हें पर्यावरण की रक्षा के लिए कदम उठाने के लिए प्रेरित करना है।

Mission LiFE is a global mass movement, launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, to inspire people to protect and conserve the environment. Its purpose is to make people aware of the environment and motivate them to take steps to protect the environment.

## AIR-SEWA

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय ने अपने एयर-सेवा पोर्टल को अपग्रेड किया है जो उपयोगकर्ताओं को ऑनलाइन शिकायतें जमा करने, ट्रैक करने और भारत में हवाई यात्रा के बारे में जानकारी प्राप्त करने की अनुमति देता है। सेवा संबंधी किसी और जानकारी के लिए, आप [airsewa.gov.in](http://airsewa.gov.in) पर लॉगिन कर सकते हैं।

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has upgraded its Air Sewa portal that allows users to submit and track grievances/complaints online and get information about air travel in India. For any further service-related information, you can login to [airsewa.gov.in](http://airsewa.gov.in)

## DIGI YATRA

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय द्वारा 13 airports - दिल्ली, बेंगलूरु, वाराणसी, पुणे, कोलकाता, विजयवाड़ा, हैदराबाद, अहमदाबाद, मुंबई, जयपुर, लखनऊ, गुवाहाटी और कोचीन के लिए, डिजी यात्रा की सुविधा का शुभारंभ किया गया है। डिजी यात्रा ऐप को डाउनलोड करके खुद को नामांकित करें, और इन एयरपोर्ट्स पर बिना रुकावट के, यात्रा का अनुभव करें।

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched Digi Yatra facilities at 13 airports, namely Delhi, Bengaluru, Varanasi, Pune, Kolkata, Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, and Cochin. You can avail of it yourself and have a hassle-free experience at these airports. To avail the facility, download Digi Yatra app and register yourself on it.





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# A TRAVELLER'S TALE



## THE TASTE OF NYC

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### MY LOCAL EXPERIENCE

I love New York for its energy. It pulsates like Mumbai, and is home to a varied diaspora and their fabulous ethnic foods. I like the cool atmosphere in the Bronx, brimming with hip-hop and graffiti. A perfect lazy afternoon means strolling through Little Italy, with buskers setting the mood, and eating at The Crown.

### A FARE TO REMEMBER

The East Village is my favourite location in NYC. With food trucks and restaurants, it is a vibrant mix where you can get food ranging in price points from US\$10 to over US\$1,000. I like the pasta and sandwiches—especially the pastrami—at Katz Delicatessen (over 100-years-old) here. I can spend hours walking through Chelsea Market in Manhattan's Meatpacking District. A special spot for me inside the Market is Miznon, an Israeli hotspot chain, where I have had the best pita and hummus in the world.

### I RECOMMEND

Visiting Hudson Yards. It boasts a distinct charm with its bunch of buildings in peculiar shapes, like the iconic, click-worthy Vessel. Steakhouse dining at the unbeatable Chef Daniel Boulud's La Tête d'Or is another to-do. I also love the lively bar scene at Laser Wolf Brooklyn, which boasts amazing cocktails, a raw vibe, and a great crowd.

— As told to **Shilpi Madan**





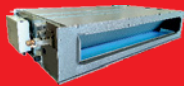
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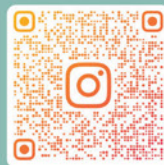
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