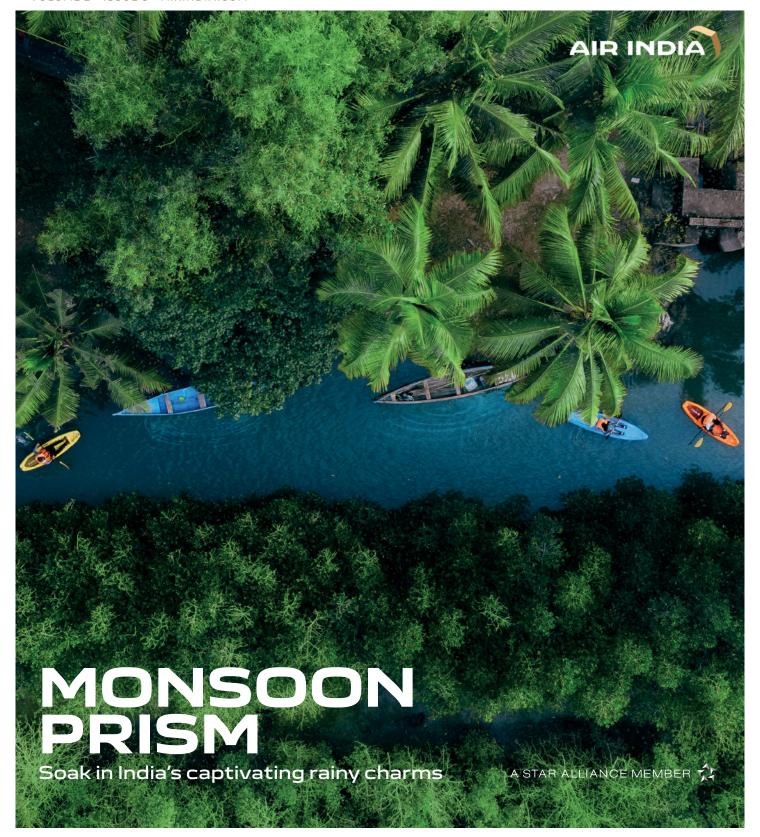
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Top to bottom: Avinash Martins; #visitfrankfurt, Holger Ullmann; Unsplash; The Goan Kitchen

EDITOR'S NOTE

the onset of monsoons brings with it some much-needed rejuvenation, romance, and a renewed sense of joy, it transforms the landscape into a vibrant paradise.

> Melodious birdsong, lush greens and tranquil surroundings, sweet scent of petrichor, and the sizzle of fritters being fried—all come together to create the magic of monsoon...an emotion in itself.

In this issue, our Cover Story invites you to experience this emotion with our curated list of monsoon escapes, celebrating the country's diverse flora, fauna, and food.

Speaking of celebrations, we commemorate a landmark moment—Air India's 76th anniversary of its inaugural flight to London, pioneered by JRD Tata. With the unveiling of Air India's new A350-900. adorned with a sleek new livery and an elevated customer experience, we delve into how we have come a long way, always anchored by the drive to offer the best-in-class experience.

Our journey then takes us from London to Vancouver, where we explore the city's harmonious blend of urban elegance and natural vistas. Next, we traverse Kuala Lumpur's lively neighbourhoods, with our insider guide uncovering the city's diverse charm. Finally, when the wanderlust strikes your palate, we whisk you off to Goa for one-of-a-kind dining scenes.

We invite you to dive into these captivating stories and more. Thank you for your continued support and heartfelt enthusiasm.

Happy reading and Namaste!

- Namaste.ai Editorial Team





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











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1 page 52



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10 page 48



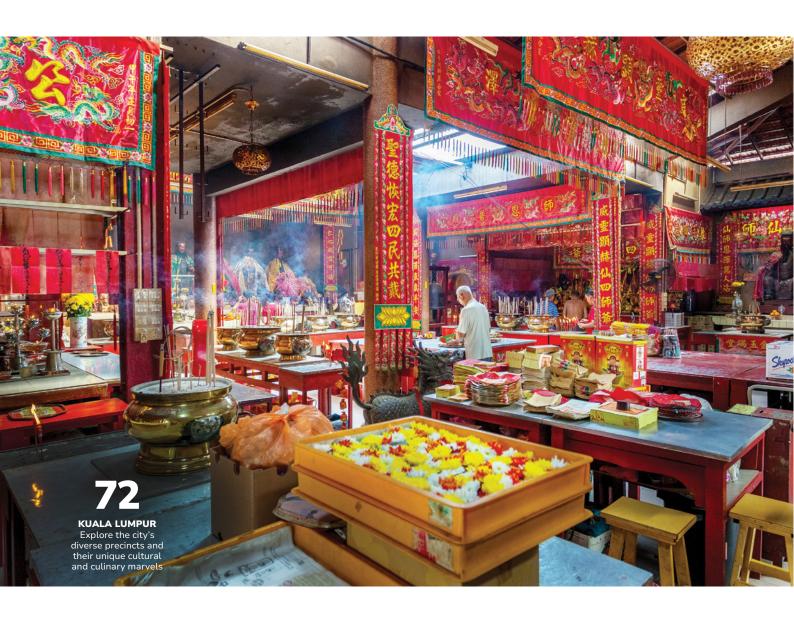




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CONTENTS

AUG 2024



SPOT LIGHT

48

GADGETS

The latest gadgets that blend cuttingedge functionality with style

52

IN FOCUS

A glimpse of India through artworks of 19th century travelling artists at DAG

68

TRULY INDIA

The myriad flavours of food capital Goa through curated dining experiences

COVER STORY

Take in the beauty of the Indian monsoon though its rainkissed landscapes and wildlife, comfort food, and more



Special Feature

08 READY TO SOAR Air India touches vet another milestone with its upcoming India-London flights

The People

32 INSPIRING INDIA Indian entrepreneurs who are carving a niche for the country on the global stage

The Checklist

- 38 DRINKS Must-try Indian native spirits that are empowering rural communities
- 58 NOW TRENDING A guideline to the latest launches, menus, collections, and more

The Places

64 ON THE CLOCK A day in Vancouver beyond its eponymous port, food, and thriving art scene

Your Air India

- **78** MILESTONES About the Climb phase and the journey so far
- 80 NEWS Exclusive offers, new partnerships, a long-haul debut, and much more
- 82 FLEET Our magnificent machines
- 83 ROUTES Explore our connectivity
- 88 LOYALTY Earn rewards with every spend

TRAVEL WITH US

Find Air India's connectivity for your seamless travels.

- Non-stop Flights
- Interline Flights
- Codeshare Flights
- Intermodal Connectivity

91

TRAVELLER'S TALE

Jay Sean recalls his recent trip to Bali



44 EVENTS

A list of mustattend global festivals this season

On the Cover

Boats floating gently on Kerala's serene river during the monsoon

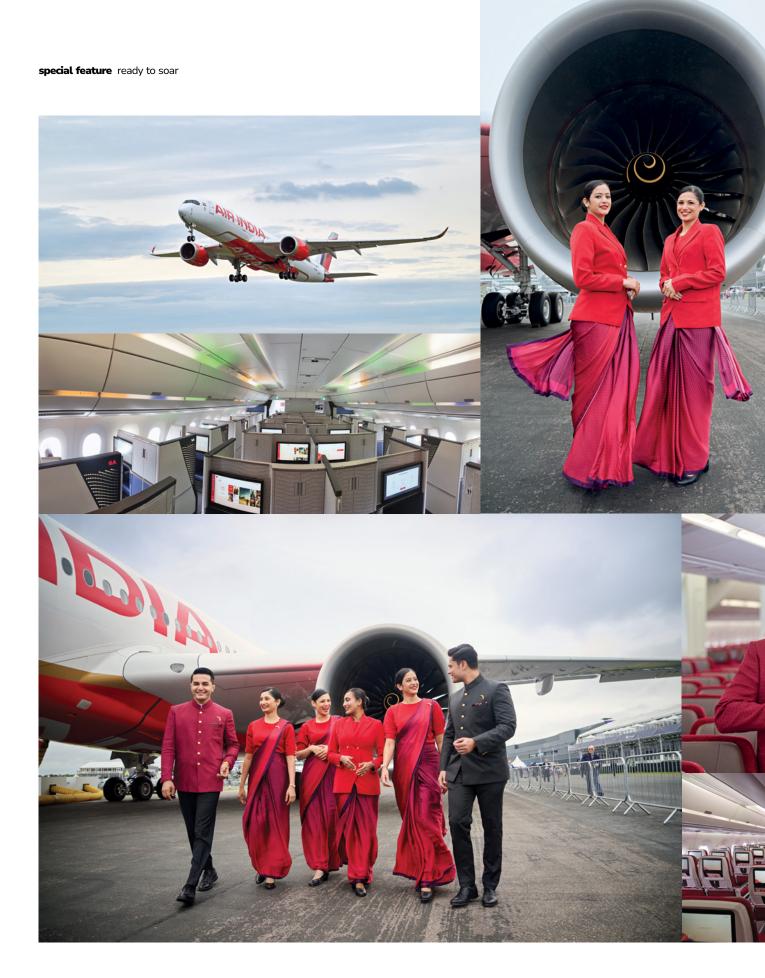
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COME SEPTEMBER!

Then and now, Air India elevates the customer experience to new heights, marking London as a key chapter

words by Reshmi Dasgupta



ir India has been achieving milestones in its journey ever since its inceptioninspired by the legendary JRD Tata's zeal to achieve excellence. For JRD Tata. who could never be too far from his beloved Air India, in spirit if no longer in form, his influence remains deeply etched in its core. It is his insistence on maintaining impeccably high standards—perfection, if possible—that continues to guide and drive Air India to navigate the skies of the

While Air India now connects to 40 destinations across 29 countries, London has always held a special place in its history, especially through the legacy of JRD Tata. After all, Air India's international journey

modern times.

began with the Malabar Princess, a Lockheed L749A Constellation, making a historic flight from Mumbai (erstwhile Bombay) to London via Cairo and Geneva on 8th June 1948, less than a vear after India herself awoke to "life and freedom" on 15th August 1947. Further, the airline operated the first flight of its Boeing 747 to London in 1971, the same year the aircraft was inducted into the Air India fleet, introducing luxury travel with 'The Palace in the Sky'.

In keeping with tradition, cutting-edge Airbus 350-900s, complete with Air India's Air India's new livery, upgraded product, and onboard services, will fly between New Delhi and London from 1st September. Modern aviation technology now ensures that the trip no longer requires refuelling stopovers in Cairo and Geneva,



thereby cutting the total journey time from just over 24 hours to less than 10.

That first weekly flight between Bombay and London expanded to twice a week, five months later. Then, as new Constellations arrived, it expanded to five, every fortnight; but London remained the only longhaul destination till Bombay to Nairobi via Aden was launched in 1950. Today, Air India operates 54 non-stop weekly flights to the UK from seven cities in India, including 31 weekly flights to London Heathrow—17 from Delhi; 14 from Mumbai.

As a pioneer in commercial

aviation, Air India has an enviable reputation. Its precursor, Tata Airlines, took flight on a very personal note when JRD Tata piloted a De Havilland Puss Moth on 15th October 1932. And that emotional investment, which was in evidence on that first Bombay-London flight with JRD Tata and his wife Thelma among the passengers, remains a touchstone for Air India.

With all-important passengers, impeccable onboard service, and ontime arrival at Heathrow Airport (that had just opened the year before), the team earned praise from all

quarters. And JRD himself expressed immense pride on seeing India's tricolour emblazoned on the aircraft flying in London. There were 35 passengers and 8 crew including 2 pilots, on board, on that first weekly flight. Meanwhile, the flights between Delhi and London, starting 1st September this year, will provide 316 seats—28 Business Suites, 24 Premium Economy, and 264 Economy.

The focus on keeping up the high standards remains the common thread even today. Indeed, JRD's keen interest in every aspect of Air India is immortalised in



air hostesses of the airline; Present-day Air India crew in designer uniforms; Noisecancelling headphones are also a part of the amenity kit of the new aircraft; The A350-900 Business class; Interiors of the new A350 aircraft: On-board service on an Air India flight in the 1940s.

his famous 'blue notes' to managers, with observations on everything—from the reclining angle of seats to the colour of the tea. That attention to detail gave the airline its edge as the world watched. Could a nation that just attained Independence be able to provide a worldclass experience? Could it set a trend in air travel? It did and how!

Smartly turned-out cabin crews, immaculate interiors, classy inflight accessories, and superlative food legend has it that Mr Tata conducted trials on how to cook and serve fluffy eggs onboard. He would

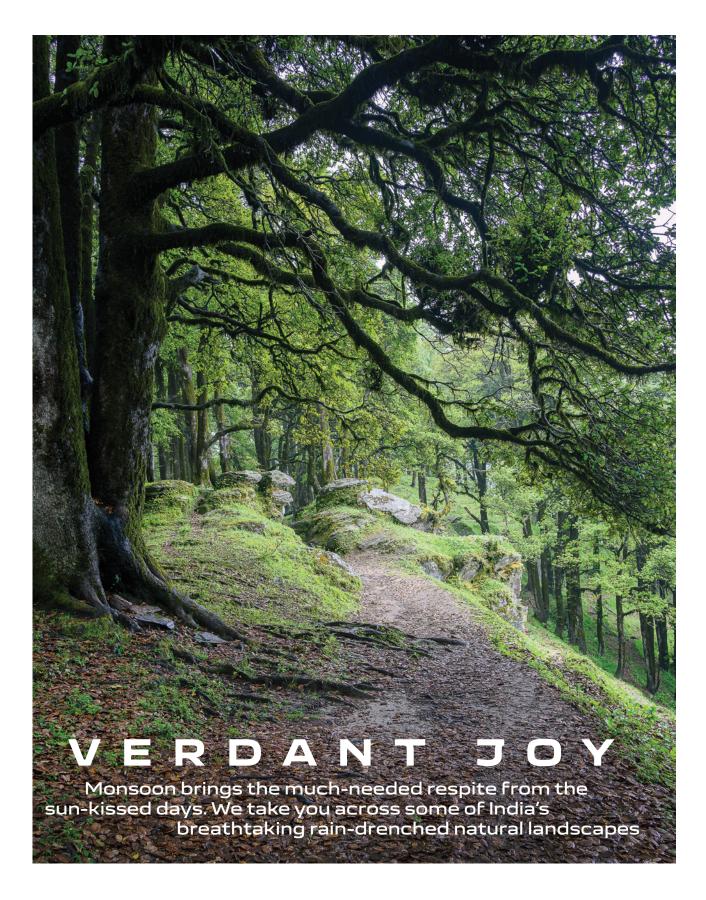
have certainly approved of the new blankets (reminiscent of Kashmiri shawls), and amenity kits from Ferragamo, and TUMI, besides an array of fare for diverse food preferences available in present-day Air India flights.

Today, the new colour palette of aubergine and red with gold accents is evocative of not only Air India's evolution but of India itself. The airline's famous jharokas reimagined as a golden arch opening to new vistas, the crew in sleek uniforms, and the induction of best-in-class aircraft, mark a journey from that first flight of a nascent country's nascent airline to the resurgent flagbearer of a resurgent India ascending new heights.

Air India announced its flightpath through its Vihaan.Al vision statement in 2022, with precise planning and execution timeline. London is as special for Air India today as it was in 1948, when a new era began aboard a new aircraft. Passengers on Air India's new A350-900 Delhi-London flights can count on superlative experiences. The airline and its legacy would settle for nothing less.











LEFT AND RIGHT

Straddling the two states of Nagaland and Manipur, the Dzükou Valley is locally known as the 'Valley of Flowers'; Located in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, the Valley of Flowers National Park is strewn with vibrant blooms in monsoon.

MALSHEJ GHAT, MAHARASHTRA

An approximate fourhour drive away from the cacophony of Mumbai (and three, from Pune), lies the hill station pass of Malshej Ghat, where the air is fresh and crisp, and the only sounds you hear are those of cascades and avifauna. A part of the Western Ghats, it is dotted with waterfalls (fed by the monsoon downpour), scenic trekking routes, and sprawling meadows of

varying greens—all against a backdrop of the mistcovered Sahyadris-offering a much-needed respite for weary eyes.

Explore nearby: Malshej Falls, Shivneri Fort, Lenyadri caves, Pimpalgaon Joga Dam

■ DZÜKOU VALLEY, **NAGALAND**

Rolling meadows carpeted with vibrant blooms, meandering streams, undulating grasslands, and thick forests make up

this picture-perfect valley. Monsoon fills the stretch with pretty blooms of myriad colours. It is known as one of the most charming valleys in all of Nagaland. If you are lucky, you may even spot the rare pink-hued Dzükou Lily. Trek to reach the Valley; base camps are at Jakhama and Viswema villages. An Inner Line Permit is required to visit Nagaland.

Explore nearby: Japfu Peak, Kisama Heritage Village, Kohima War Cemetery



₩ VALLEY OF **FLOWERS** NATIONAL PARK. **UTTARAKHAND**

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is home to over 600 species of exotic flowers, including the rare Himalayan Brahmakamal (the state flower), along with subalpine forests—a true nature-lover's paradise. The trek to the Valley (one of India's oldest) starts with an ascent from Govindghat to Ghangharia (night camp),

and onward to the final destination. Remember to keep track of time as you must head back to Ghangharia on the same day. **Explore nearby:** Hemkund Sahib, Joshimath, Badrinath en route for India's last village, Mana

UDAIPUR, **RAJASTHAN**

Dubbed the 'city of lakes and palaces', Udaipur was once described by an English Colonel of the East India Company as 'the most romantic place in the Indian subcontinent'. And the city is a mesmeric sight during a downpour, especially over one of its numerous lakes. The most captivating views of the grey-white clouds (that vie for attention against the serene lakes) pouring over the placid waters can be had from any of the rooftop restaurants that dot the city.

Explore nearby: Monsoon Palace, Lake Pichola

FUN FACT

Monsoon is entwined with Indian classical music—the most popular being raga Malhar. Legend has it that Tansen once sang raga Deepak, which lit lamps, and his daughter sang raga Megh Malhar to douse them.





BANDIPUR NATIONAL PARK AND TIGER RESERVE. KARNATAKA

Nestled in the verdant Western Ghats and forming a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, nature is at its most beautiful here and witnessed in unparalleled beauty when drenched in the monsoon showers. This also happens to be one of the last sanctuaries for the endangered Asian elephants, who are easier to spot, playing and splashing about in the rain, than the park's more elusive tigers. Look out for: Sambar, fourhorned antelope, jackal

CORBETT TIGER RESERVE, **UTTARAKHAND**

Asia's first National Park, it is believed to house the highest density of tigers in the world. The park's core zone is closed off during the monsoon season; having said that, the monsoon safaris are thrilling, nonetheless. There's ample wildlife spotting that one can look forward to in the Jhirna Zone and the buffer area called the Sitabani Zone. The rainy season also draws several keen birdwatchers and wildlife enthusiasts to this biodiversity hotspot. Look out for: Asiatic black bear, Nilgai, Chital (spotted deer); leopard

* RANTHAMBORE **NATIONAL** PARK AND TIGER RESERVE. RAJASTHAN

This present 'Project Tiger' reserve, located in the state's Sawai Madhopur district, was once a private game reserve of Jaipur's royalty. A paradise for wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers, it is best explored on a jeep safari. Although partially open during this time of year, the Park more than makes up for it with a few year-round accessible zones that include tiger territories.

Look out for: Leopard, Painted Sandgrouse, marsh crocodile, Indian porcupine

LEFT TO RIGHT

A tiger peeks from behind thickets at Corbett Tiger Reserve (National Park), Uttarakhand; An Indian giant squirrel (the state animal of Maharashtra) in Kabini, Karnataka; Young primates drenched in the monsoon showers in Kaziranga National Park, Assam.







LEFT TO RIGHT

A Great White Egret savours a fish in Nevra Lake (Jaipur), Rajasthan; A Pied Cuckoo (or Jacobin Cuckoo) enjoying the rain in Kevadia, Gujarat; A Red Avadavat. popularly known as the red munia, photographed in Udaipur, Rajasthan; An elephant and a calf take a stroll in the Kaziranga National Park,

THEPPAKADU ELEPHANT CAMP, TAMIL NADU

Having a baby elephant extend its cute little trunk and take food from your hand, leaving your palms tickling, is a once-in-alifetime thrill. And you can experience it at this elephant camp, one of the oldest such in the country, located on the banks of the Moyar river in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. Feeding times are 8am-9am and 5:30pm-6pm. Book your tickets (on-site or online) well in advance to not miss out on this fascinating adventure. Look out for: Panther, Malabar Grey Hornbill

***** MORACHI CHINCHOLI, MAHARASHTRA

There is, perhaps, nothing more synonymous with monsoon and rain than the country's national bird, the glorious Indian peacock. An approximate two-hour drive from Pune will take you to Morachi Chincholi, popularly known as the 'Peacock Village'. Here, the majestic birds roam wild and free, sometimes inquisitively venturing into the homes of the villagers, only to be welcomed with warmth. Look out for: Village

homestays for a true local experience, authentic rural tractor rides

💞 HEMIS NATIONAL PARK, LADAKH

This is a haven for trekkers and wildlife enthusiasts. And for all the right reasons! The Park is home to the elusive snow leopard (around 200 of them) and the way to navigate it is to trek though the park on foot as vehicles are not allowed here. Minimal rainfall in this part of Ladakh renders this Park safe for trekking during the monsoon. It is recommended to dedicate a few days and camp inside the Park, as the trek itself takes around two days to complete.

Look out for: Red fox, Tibetan wolf. Eurasian brown bear









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LUXURY STAYS TO REFRESH

Experience lavish accommodations and stunning views, across India, this monsoon



Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort (Parwanoo, Himachal Pradesh)

Nestled at 5,000ft, high up in the Shivalik Ranges, this luxurious resort offers a serene retreat amidst lush mountains. It comes complete with an Ayurvedic spa, cable car, infinity pool, breathtaking views, and exquisite culinary delights, both local and global.



The resort blends European-inspired architecture with lush gardens and woodlands, featuring wood cladding, shingle roofs, and stunning fireplaces. It offers immersive luxury amid a dramatic landscape of towering trees. Must experience a meal by the bonfire.



The property blends diverse elements to offer an authentic wellness experience in Alappuzha's tranquil backwaters, providing a serene setting for guests to embark on a healing journey of calmness, peace, and rejuvenation.

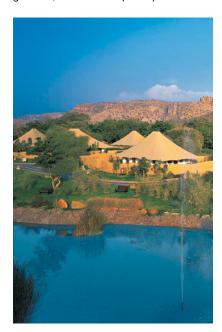


Statue of Unity Tent City-1 (Kevadia, Gujarat)

Perched on the idyllic Sadhu-Bet Island in the Narmada river at Ekta Nagar, this glamping facility is flanked by the river flowing on one side and embraced by the stunning Vindhya and Satpura mountain ranges on the other. It's a harmonious blend of luxury and nature.



A jungle resort on the edge of Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, it offers luxury tented suites inspired by royal caravans, exquisite Rajasthani and international cuisine, and tailored spa treatments, all complemented by genuine, heartfelt hospitality.



MUST KNOW

Some eco-friendly resorts across the country use **monsoon rains for rainwater harvesting**, turning it into sustainable irrigation and even drinking water, exemplifying innovative and responsible **environmental practices**.



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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

A perfect pairing of spicy samosas with soothing masala chai; Toasted bread meets savoury ghugni; Warm and smoky corn cob roasted fresh; Crispy parippu vadas are Kerala's beloved fritters with a spicy kick; Vada pav is synonymous with Múmbai.



SAMOSA & MASALA CHAI. **NORTHERN AND EASTERN INDIA**

The combination of samosa, tea, and rain has been a holy trinity for several years now. Experience the bliss of biting into a crispy samosa paired with steaming masala chai during the monsoon. The spicy, savoury snack combined with the warm, aromatic tea creates a comforting escape from the cool, rainy weather.

VADA PAO, MAHARASHTRA

Enjoying vada pav in Mumbai or Pune during monsoon is pure delight. The flovoursome, crunchy vada in a soft bun, with spicy-tangy chutneys, is a street food classic that feels especially satisfying as the rain pours down. It's the perfect indulgence, offering both

warmth and flavour against the drizzly backdrop.

SHUGNI & TOAST, WEST BENGAL

Ghugni with toast in Kolkata during monsoon is a comforting treat. Be it a meal or snack, the spicy, hearty chickpea stew paired with crispy toast makes for a perfect rainy-day snack. The rhythm of the rain outside enhances the joy of this savoury combination, turning a simple meal into a cherished experience.

ROASTED CORN COB, ACROSS INDIA

Walk on any street in India during the monsoon, and you'll come across at least three shops within a minute selling roasted corn cobs or bhutta. Imagine its smoky aroma, seasoned with lemon, as you munch on it while the rain falls gently.





KERALA

In Kerala, these peppery, crispy lentil fritters, paired with coconut chutney, are a monsoon essential. Experience warmth and delight in every bite!

SGHEWAR, **RAJASTHAN**

This traditional sweet with a delicate, honeycomb texture, deep-fried and soaked in sugar syrup, pairs perfectly with a steaming cup of tea.

METHI GOTA, **GUJARAT**

The crispy fenugreek fritters, with chutney, are incredibly satisfying on a rainy day.

♥ MULLIGATAWNY SOUP, TAMIL NADU

With roots in British colonial India, its Tamil name means 'pepper water', reflecting its flavourful kick to your palate.

WHILSA FISH, **WEST BENGAL**

A monsoon delicacy, it's celebrated for its rich, buttery flavour. Try it in a simple mustard gravy or seasoned and deep-fried.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Crispy on the outside and soft inside, methi gota is ideal as a savoury snack; Ghewar is a honeycomb-like Rajasthani sweet soaked in syrup; Hilsa fish curry cooked with mustard paste, is a quintessential Bengali dish; Rich and aromatic, mulligatawny soup offers comfort during the monsoon.

Wellness during monsoon

FAVOUR WARMING FOODS

Emphasise food or drink like soups, stews, cooked grains, and hot beverages to counterbalance the cold weather and support digestion and immunity.

CONSUME DIGESTIVE **SPICES**

Incorporate beneficial spices like black pepper, fennel, and cinnamon into your meals to aid digestion and balance the digestive fire (Agni) during the rainy season.

INTEGRATE SWEET AND SOUR

Balance the season's dampness by including sweet and sour flavours through fresh citrus fruits, to maintain digestive health and boost vitality.

THE PEOPLE

32 O INSPIRING INDIA



UNIQUELY INDIAN ALL THE WAY



On the 77th Independence Day, we honour a few trailblazers who are elevating India's pride and showcasing the tricolour across the globe

words by Priya Kumari Rana



YANGDUP LAMA Mixologist, Co-founder of Sidecar. **New Delhi**

He's just back from a Soviet-era factory, attending the St Petersburg Cocktail Week,

where he won the Roku Industry Icon award. His bar, Sidecar, stands among Asia's 50 Best Bars—a long way from growing up in Gayabari, near Darjeeling, which he visits every three months, tending to the community and renovating his five-bedroom house. "It's the recognition for which we strive, we struggle a lot in the alcobev space," says Yangdup.

A 28-year career in hospitality, bartending started with the Polo Lounge at Hyatt Regency, New Delhi, as a bar captain. "In the early 2000s, there were no bars outside hotels, till TGIF opened. By 2010-11, bars had mushroomed all over Delhi," he recalls.

"Just like my grandmother, a storyteller, I want to narrate my own story and inspire youngsters that if you work hard, success will come. I also want to tell stories of tea, through tea cocktails. My village is in the midst of a tea estate, where I could smell the fresh tea in the air. I want to introduce cocktails from the mountains and deserts." Yangdup's recently-opened bar in Gurugram, The Brook, is inspired by the mountains of India and Nepal.

THE **STAR**

The Beetle, a paan cocktail "It has betel leaf and paan supari [areca nut]. It is clear but flavourful, with vodka or gin as the base. It's quintessentially Indian," says Yangdup.





SNIGDHA MANCHANDA India's first tea sommelier. Founder of **Tea Trunk**

Growing up in Mumbai in the 1990s, she collected teas from China, Japan, Sri Lanka, and

Egypt, and stored her collection in her father's old army trunk. In 2010, she trained under a Japanese tea master in Sri Lanka. Says Snigdha, "When I studied tea, I had no idea about the business. Green tea wasn't as accessible as it is today, and Tea Trunk [named after her father's old trunk] was a way to make those teas available to a larger group of audience."

Fast forward 10 years, and from selling online, Snigdha now has a café and tea room in Panjim, Goa, where she

THE **STAR BLEND**

Marigold Lemongrass **Green Tea**

"Marigold is used in temples," says Snigdha of the 'tricolour' blend, "Lemongrass is easy to grow, the blue pea matches our chakra.'

resides. Her expertise lies in tea blending—dried fruit, flowers, herbs, and spices. She sources her purely India-grown, long leaf loose tea from Assam, Darjeeling, the Nilgiris (except for Matcha, which is sourced and packed in Japan). "My goal," she remarks, "is to build a tea brand from India so we are not paying premium prices to foreign companies selling Indian teas."





ARVIND KRISHNA Telugu actor, professional basketball player

India's only actor who is also a pro basketball player, Arvind attended private boarding school on the US East Coast, where

he picked up athletic and academic scholarships—which continued over to his undergrad years at UCLA—and was so good he could have made the NBA draft. Known as 'Air India' by his teammates, Arvind returned to his hometown of Hyderabad after an injury and started working as a trainer at the Satyam School of Leadership. He was spotted by the debut director of It's My Love Story, where he played the lead, later starring in the 2012 hit Rushi. "As an outsider, the industry has been good to me," says Arvind of the Telugu film fraternity. His guest role in Shukra has got him many opportunities on OTT.

In the early days of his sports career, he was picked for India as a junior and played for Andhra Pradesh and then Telangana in basketball's usual five-a-side format. He continues to play professional basketball as captain of the 3BL Hyderabad team, recently competing in Japan, the only Indian to do so. "Today, there's no stigma in balancing careers; the sky's the limit," remarks Arvind. "With social media, if you have the vision and the strategy, you should be able to brand yourself."

THE **STAR CAREER**

Homegrown Superhero Arvind is slated

to appear in A Masterpiece. "People want a superhero with a strong mythological background," savs the yegan actorathlete, who was also nicknamed 'Superman'.





ANKITA VASHISTHA Start-up investor, Founder of Arise Ventures

This investor studied engineering in India, pursued an MBA degree in the UK and a Masters degree in Venture Capitalism from Stanford

University, California (the US), and has worked for one of the largest emerging market private equity funds worth US\$2 billion. Today, she heads Arise Ventures (formerly Tholons Capital), looking to invest in promising tech start-ups from India, with one arm (StrongHer, previously SAHA) devoted to women-led start-ups.

"I moved back to India in 2012 [after stints in the US, Europe, and Singapore]," says Ankita, "Venture capital was picking up, with businesses that use tech to solve

real-world problems."

STAR POWER Empowering women

"Why should there only be two-three per cent women founders? We need to touch one million for rural entrepreneurship," asserts Ankita.

In the decade since she started the venture, Ankita has invested in over 60 companies with over US\$10 billion market value, with 80 per cent going to StrongHer for women, a US\$100 million fund. "We have the thirdlargest ecosystem in the world for start-ups. Last year, US\$3 billion was invested into Indiain fintech, health-tech, biotech."















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RIMZIM DADU Avant-garde fashion designer

Fresh from showcasing her baroque-inspired collection Stucco at **FDCI India Couture** Week last month. Delhi-based Rimzim is celebrating 18

years in fashion. The shows had models in her structured outfits, using her signature cording and metallic thread, walking on a runway filled with European plaster busts.

Characterised by her avant-garde approach to design, her pieces blend artistry with wearability. "Earlier, designer clothing was mostly occasion wear and bridal wear," she says. "Luxury pret, along with a more experimental approach to fashion, has only evolved in the last 15 years, with women coming into the workforce." Her avant-garde, Met Gala-worthy pieces came into the limelight when Sonam Kapoor wore one of her metallic sarees at Cannes in 2018. "My father always told me 'Do something unique'," remarks Rimzim of her experiments with metallic weaves.

"Today, everyone wants to stand out, have fun," she points out, "No one is following a trend. Today, fashion is also a serious business with big corporations taking over brands. India has proved to be a powerhouse, globally. The future of fashion is exciting and rife with possibilities."



"It defines India," says Rimzim. "It looks malleable and soft yet it's got structure, much like our country—there is madness and chaos vet it's organised.





CHEF AVINASH **MARTINS** Goa-based chef, Owner of Cavatina restaurant

He's back from Mumbai, catering for the mammoth Ambani wedding

and fresh from the launch of his TV show Goa Food Fable Family on Zee Zest. Chef Avinash, ranked by Culinary Culture in 2022 as one of the top 30 chefs in India, celebrates Goa and its cuisine. "The unsung heroes are the artisans of Goa, who are in the show," he says. "We were in farmers' fields, bakeries, markets, which are the lifeline of Goa."

Coming from a shipping family, it was natural that he join the Merchant Navy but soon gravitated towards the culinary arts. He won a scholarship to Switzerland and worked as part of the opening team of 360 at The Oberoi, New Delhi, in 2006. However, the lack of creativity took

> THE **STAR** DISH Childhood in

"I take thin slices of coconut *malai*, put pink solkadhi with kokum, coconut, and spices,' savs Chef, for a dish reminiscent of

Goa on a Plate

his boyhood.

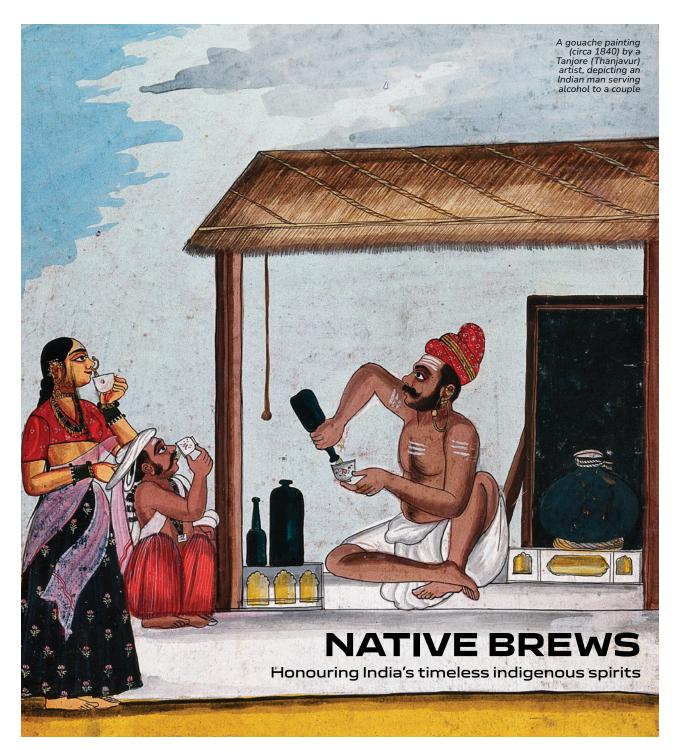
him all over Europe and the US, finally opening Cavatina in Benaulim, Goa, in 2012.

"We have 29 countries within India and each cuisine is unique," says Chef Avinash. His approach has always been hyperlocal, with produce from fisherfolk and farmers, seafood being his forte. He eschews paneer and tofu for rain-grown vegetables, roots, and Goan fish—all seasonal.



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HOME BREWS

A heady tour of India's native spirits, made using indigenous ingredients, that are empowering local communities

words by **Anurag Mallick & Priya Ganapathy**

O CHHANG ♥ LADAKH, JAMMU & KASHMIR

In Ladakhi and Tibetan homes, it is customary to offer guests *chhang*, a delicious beer made by fermenting barley with yeast or dried barm (froth of fermenting malt). It tastes like wine and is served with *churpe* (local yak cheese). Had at room temperature in summer, or hot in winter, *chhang* is also prepared with finger millet or rice. *Tongba*, a variant, is derived by passing hot water through fermented barley. This can be repeated a few times.

WHERE TO FIND: The Grand Dragon Ladakh, Leh





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Karol Bagh | Khan Market | South Extn. Part II DLF Mall of India, Noida | DLF Promenade, Vasant Kunj | Terminal 3, IGI Airport T: +91 11 4134 5200 E: store@ahujasons.com When it comes to wine in Karnataka's coffee district Coorg (Kodagu), grape is passé. Wine making is a home industry; women and Self Help Groups bottle anything growing in their estates—rice, betel leaf, ginger, coffee, bird-eye chilli, starfruit, grapefruit, pomelo, pineapple, pomegranate, bitter orange, mango, orange, lychee, mulberry, and jamun. A tad sweet but potent, these wines and liqueurs are often served at weddings and special occasions.

WHERE TO FIND: Flavours in Virajpet and Kallucoppa Coffee in Madikeri, besides shops in Kushalnagar, Gonikoppal, Madikeri.





MAHUA ○ CHATTISGARH ○

Across Central India, tribal communities like Bhils and Gonds in Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, besides Santhals and Oraons in Odisha and Jharkhand, have worshipped the *mahua* as the 'tree of life' for centuries. Between Feb end and April, local tribes collect the tiny pale green flowers, which are brewed on woodfire and distilled for a week in a pot still. Declared a Heritage Liquor, *mahua* has empowered nearly six lakh local families who depend on it.

WHERE TO FIND: Tribal haats around Jagdalpur, CT; India's first mahua distilled spirit 'Mond' available across MP and Desmondji's Mahua in Goa

SALAP ♥ ODISHA; SALFI, ♥ MADHYA PRADESH

Members of Odisha's Bonda tribe are master brewers, who make a plethora of spirits – tadi (toddy) from palm trees, mahuli from mahua flowers, and salap derived from a palm tree (locally known as salap), whose sap is tapped to make the local brew. In adjoining MP, it is called salfi or 'Bastar Beer'. In village haats across southern Odisha, Bonda tribesmen offer it in unique bottle gourd containers with ladles.

WHERE TO FIND: Tribal haats in Odisha's Chatikona near Rayagada and Onukadelli near Koraput







1 JEELUGU KALLU / FISHTAIL PALM TODDY 9 ARAKU VALLEY. **ANDHRA PRADESH**

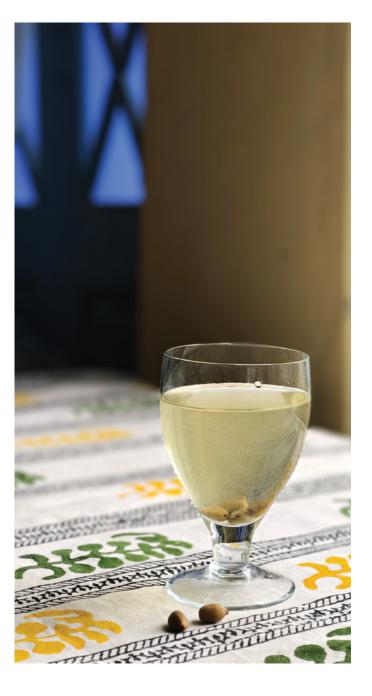
Worshipped as the wish-fulfilling tree by the Nooka Dora tribals, the jeelugu (fishtail palm) in the hilly tracts of Araku Valley has been ritually tapped for its sap, which is fermented into jeelugu kallu. It is consumed in summer by tribal communities who believe the tree should be approached only after performing rituals and saying prayers. The drink must be had near the tree. Unlike the pungent palmyra toddy, jeelugu kallu is sweet, scooped into leaf cups or tumblers, and offers a pleasant high.

WHERE TO FIND: Easily available at stalls and weekly shanties in Araku Valley

! HERITAGE LIQUORS ! RAJASTHAN

The royal families and thikanas of Rajasthan have a long history of fermentation and distillation. During the mid-18th century, Thakur Karni Singh Shekhawat prepared various aasav or infusions using herbs and spices like saunf (fennel), elaichi (cardamom), and fruit extracts. The Kanota thikana created Chandrahaas for the Jaipur royals in 1863, containing 165 herbs and spices. The Shyopurs have over three dozen recipes like Angoor, Ananas, and Narangi.

WHERE TO FIND: Royal Heritage Liqueurs by RSGSML, Chandrahaas at Hotel Castle Kanota and Hotel Narain Niwas Palace in Jaipur, and Fort Amla in western Madhya Pradesh





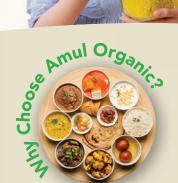
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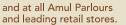














CULTURAL FIESTA

Must-attend events, worldwide, this monsoon





30th-31st August

This unique festival brings together monsoon, music, and the sea. Be enthralled by sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and his sons greeted by artist Paresh Maity's canvas, alongside an electrifying set by Blues legend Gary Lawyer and London-based pop star Kaiya Maxfield.

malharandthesea.in



28th August

What started as a playful fight between young friends in 1945 is now counted among the world's most unique and much-awaited events. Attended by thousands from across the globe, the event kick-starts at 9am in the town square after a hearty breakfast, courtesy pastries and rolls from the Town Hall. At 11am, truckloads of tomatoes begin to arrive and the celebrations begin, with people hurling tomatoes at each other and practically anything that moves. The only rule of this festivity: squish the tomatoes well before you throw. Remember to carry goggles. 🔍 spain.info



A ROWING CHAMPIONSHIP **NEHRU TROPHY BOAT RACE**

🔂 Alappuzha, Kerala 10th August

One of Kerala's premier snake boat races, it takes place in the Punnamada Lake. Locals and tourists arrive in large numbers to see 100-ft-long chundan vallams (snake boats), with raised prows, being rowed with great flourish. A highlight of the event are the floats that carry artistes performing Kathakali, theyyam, and pulikali (tiger dance). nehrutrophy.nic.in















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RHEINGAU WINE MARKET Frankfurt, Germany

28th August – 6th September Pick from over 600 still and sparkling wines from Rheingau, at the famous Freßgass promenade. *visitfrankfurt.travel*



VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL Venice, Italy

28th August – 7th September It kicks off with the premiere of Tim Burton's Beetlejuice Beetlejuice. labiennale.org



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Counted among the world's greatest celebrations of arts and culture, this is where artist(e)s and performers take to the stage—hundreds of them, including concert halls and repurposed spaces like bars, parks, and buses—all over the city, presenting shows for every taste. Look out for the 15—Equinox exhibition by Davy Macdonald at Dundas Street Gallery and the performance, 100 Years of Musicals! by UKbased Show Choir at the Space Triplex. @ edfringe.com



$\mathring{\otimes}$ HOLISTIC WELL-BEING

SOUL FESTIVAL

Soneva Fushi, the Maldives

9th – 13th October

Gear up for an immersive exploration of health and wellness with the second edition of the festival. Unwind amidst nature with engaging activities like meditation, yoga, fitness boot camps, and breathwork. Imbibe music and art alongside plant-based and stress-fighting adaptogenic fare. This year, the speaker line-up includes author Jeffrey Rediger, spoken word artiste Richard Williams, and more. soneva.com



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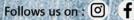
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THE COVET LIST

Power through work and leisure with these tech buys

words by Roobina Mongia

© ONEPLUS WATCH 2R

A full-fledged Wear OS smartwatch, it gives you access to a wide range of apps and smarter notifications on your wrist. The watch is powered by a Snapdragon W5 Gen 1 processor and a large battery that runs almost two days on a charge. It also has a range of workout features for accurate fitness tracking. The 1.43-inch circular AMOLED screen is bright and visible outdoors with up to 600 nits of brightness.

Why buy: Pocket-friendly, robust performance, capable Android watch

₹19,999 (Original price)

• APPLE IPAD PRO (13 INCH)

The latest iPad Pro is all set to redefine what a tablet can do. It can be used for entertainment and productivity on the go as the slimmer design makes it easy to carry anywhere. It has an OLED screen, giving it excellent black levels. It is powered by Apple's most powerful M4 chip, which gives it laptoplike capabilities, especially when it's paired with the new Magic Keyboard. The powerful chipset will also allow it to run the all-new AI-powered Apple Intelligence when it launches later this year.

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OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

REVA University, Rukmini Knowledge Park, Kattigenahalli, Yelahanka, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560064 This emerges as a top choice for travellers always on the move. The compact Bluetooth speaker can be attached to a bag with its built-in clip. It's got an IP67 rating, which makes the waterproof design perfect to use by the pool. It packs a 5W speaker ensuring that it can go loud enough to fill a room, while the large battery promises up to 10 hours of music playback so you never have to worry about running out of entertainment. The JBL Clip 4 is an excellent travel companion.

Why buy: Great audio, adventure ready, portable ₹5,499



MUZEN BUTTON

The retro-themed Bluetooth speaker is built with a zinc-aluminium alloy for a premium finish. It comes with a 3W speaker that can output crisp and clean music despite its palm-sized frame. The built-in Bluetooth 4.2 technology powers it with enough range to enjoy the sound across the room. It has seven hours of battery life so that you can enjoy music at your convenience. The speaker is available in a range of eye-catching colours.

Why buy: Vintage design with modern features ₹4,499



O SAMSUNG GALAXY Z FLIP 6

Samsung's latest foldable, a successor to the Samsung Galaxy Z Flip 5, pushes the boundaries while seamlessly blending style and substance. This smartphone is small yet bears notable improvement over previous models. It boasts a long-lasting battery as well as the latest Snapdragon 8 Gen 3 chipset. The camera section, too, has been amped up, with the main sensor upgraded from 12 MP in the Z Flip 5 to 50 MP in the Z Flip 6, making it consistent with the brand's flagship Galaxy S24 series. However, the big selling point here is Galaxy AI, which will let you sketch an image to generate a life-like version, do realtime translation, create summaries of notes, and create instant portraits in various 3D styles. This year, Samsung has ensured that the phone will run cooler, too, with a larger Vapour Chamber.

Why buy: Cutting-edge, AI features, superlative performance ₹1,09,999 (Starting price)







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TOP AND BOTTOM

Exhibition displays of Destination India by DAG in New Delhi, one of the premium art companies based in Delhi, Mumbai, and New York

dward Lear, an early 19th-century painter and poet, visited India in the 1870s and penned fascinating accounts of the people he witnessed in his journals. He also described various monuments and places of interest in Agra, Lucknow, and Benaras, among others. Before him, artists like William Hodges, unclenephew duo Thomas and William Daniell, and Johann Zoffany (all of whom visited India between 1760 and 1820) wrote mostly about the architectural influences of monuments and buildings of then India.

THE FOREIGN INFLUENCE

These highlights and a lot more can be found in the exhibition Destination India: Foreign Artists in India (1857-1947), on display at DAG, New Delhi, till 24th August 2024. It focuses on foreign artists who travelled to India from across the world, namely Germany, Holland, Denmark, France, the US, Japan, and Britain, between the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and Independence in 1947, serving as an example of the late phase of Orientalist art.

PLUGGING THE GAP IN **ORIENTAL ART**

The contribution of travelling artists, who were active





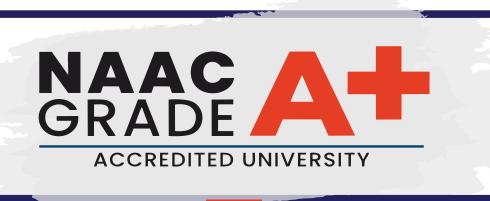








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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Erich Kips's painting, titled Benaras at the Golden Gate; Richard Robert Drabble's canvas, The Mosque of Aurangzeb, Benaras; George Strahan's George Stranan s Kashmir landscape; Udeypoor by Japanese artist Hiroshi Yoshida; Cart in Ahmedabad by Edwin Lord Weeks.



between the 1840s and 1900s, has been neglected so far. As recently as the early 2000s, Tate London's exhibition, The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting (2008), failed to mention India despite featuring British travelling artists who had visited the country and created several paintings of repute. Even earlier, in the 1980s, another exhibition, which was a part of Britain's Festival of India, London, mentioned the contribution of the travelling artists in India only up to the

1860s. Ashish Anand, CEO and MD, DAG, remarks, "The traditional trajectory has overlooked the contribution of several foreign artists who came to India in the late 19^{th} and early 20th centuries."

PAINTINGS CAPTURING INDIANS IN INDIA

Giles Tillotson, senior VP, DAG, observes how many of these travelling artists, compared to their earlier counterparts, provided "more personal views of Indian life, often at the street level". Tillotson, also the



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curator of the exhibition, makes this observation in his essay, titled Oriental Painters in India, which is part of a catalogue that accompanies the exhibition.

THE EAST INDIA **COMPANY ARTISTS**

The catalogue, besides containing a foreword by Member of Parliament and author Shashi Tharoor, features in-depth essays by art historians Pheroza Godrej and Tillotson, and profiles of the artists by Aditi Mazumdar, assistant manager (Exhibitions and Publications), DAG.

In fact, Godrej, observes how the earliest travelling artists worked with the

British East India Company to make not just artworks but also maps, surveys, and topographical views. This was critical, considering it was a time when photography hadn't spread in India.

ART BY BRITISH LADIES

The exhibition's inclusion of two British ladies, namely Mary Anne Blyth and Lena George, is vital in showcasing their contribution to how the British women viewed India and its people from their unique perspectives.

For those interested in the true and original sights and sounds of our country, Destination India is just for you. An experience to behold!



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Destination India's focus is on the late phase of Orientalist art; Dutch artist Marius Bauer's oil works featuring common people and animals; The exhibition is richly curated to illustrate how foreign artists viewed India and her people; Marius Bauer's The Palace at Udaipur; Pastels on paper by Italian artist Olinto Ghilardi.



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TE AMO-GLOBAL INDIAN BISTRO & BAR

Why: Boasting a menu curated by Michelin Star Chef Suvir Saran, the unique bar and bistro celebrates a rich smorgasbord of Indian flavours infused with influences from the world over. The bar offers clarified cocktails. seasonal specials, and more. Where: M3M, IFC, Gurugram Recommended: Lemon Rice Arancini, Patiala Chicken Cornetto, Edamame Shiitake Dumplings, Jijabai Vada Pao, Gajar Halwa Cake, besides Pragma and Ludus in drinks



ALL IN VOGUE

The latest launches, openings, and must-haves



THE RUB OF GREEN

Made in Germany, the suitcase collection from Rimowa features a stageless telescopic handle and multi-wheel system. Add the Cross-Body Bag for a coordinated look.



MODERN VIBES

Designer Vikram Goyal's lifestyle brand Viya offers tastefully-designed lifestyle objects, including tables, chairs, lightings, vases, soft furnishings, and more.







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HAPPY FEET

TOMS India has collaborated with Indian designer footwear label Fizzy Goblet to create a limited-edition collection that redefines style and comfort.



LEAP.CLUB

Why: It's the first-of-its-kind club curated exclusively for women (memberships are by invite only). Meet like-minded women, build professional connections, exchange thoughtful conversations and forge friendships.

Where: Bandra (W), Mumbai Highlights: Community workstations, reading clubs, a library, and more



CELEBRATION OF ART

A three-city (Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad) travelling exhibition, between 24th Aug and 15th Sept, Naayaab, will showcase over 100 artworks by more than 70 artists.



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Pen aficionados can get their hands on this one-of-a-kind limited edition Graf Von Faber Castell - Ancient Egypt collectible at Makoba.





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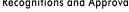










































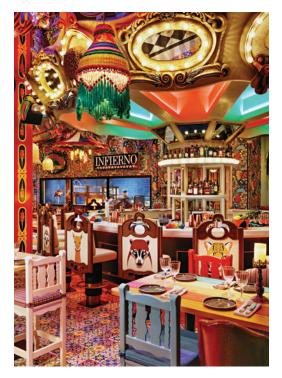












WEEKEND FUN

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DISNEY MAGIC

Step onboard the Disney Cruise Line with theme areas inspired by Pixar, Disney, and Marvel stories, a destination in itself. The company's first Asia-based cruise ship, it will sail from Singapore in 2025.



MONKEY BAR

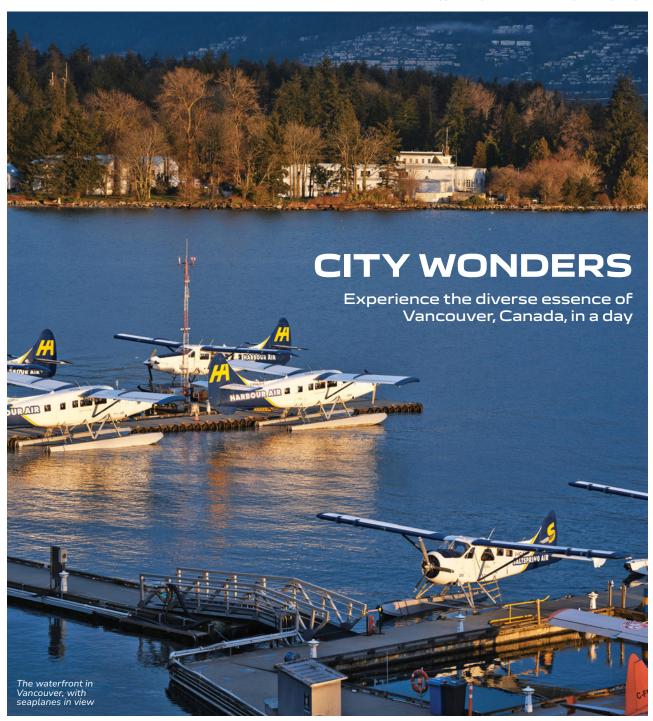
Why: One of India's first gastropubs is back with a whole new vibe and design element. While regional fare rubs shoulders with international spreads on the menu, the reimagined bar is a nod to India's indigenous beverage scene with a new Coffee programme. The team has meticulously refined every detail.

Where: Vasant Kunj, New Delhi Recommended: All the cocktails, Avo Toast, Fire Pork, Methi-Spiced Prawns



THE PLACE

68 TRULY INDIA 72 KUALA LUMPUR





A VANCOUVER VACAY

Enjoy its coastal charm amid historic backdrops and urban trappings words by **Vaishali Sabherwal**

○ 07:00AMFitness first○ Canada Place

Start early and clock in your steps or rent a bike at the scenic Canada Place. Soak in the unbeatable views of North Shore Mountains and Port of Vancouver. Watch seaplanes take off and gigantic cruise ships dock here. Fitness lovers can try free sessions like waterfront yoga and Zumba (till August-end).

An exhilarating morning deserves a hearty breakfast. Yolks specialises in delicious varieties of eggs Benedict with their signature hollandaise sauce. Chef and owner Steve Ewing insists their poached eggs are the best anywhere. Their Pemberton Valley Braised Beef Short Rib, made with English Stilton, is delicious.

10:30AM A walk in the (Stanley) park Stanley Park

The lush Stanley Park is dotted by tall cedar and fir trees. Rent a bicycle to go around the scenic Seawall or take a horsedrawn carriage to witness pristine views of the city, mountains, and ocean. It also houses a tranquil lagoon and totem poles, among other attractions, for outdoor enthusiasts.

11:00AM Marine marvels

Vancouver Aquarium

Nestled within Stanley Park is the Vancouver Aquarium with an impressive display of aquatic life. At this hub of marine conservation and rehabilitation, connect with over 65,000 incredible animals, including coloured fish, playful otters, cute sea turtles, and adorable dolphins. Do buy your tickets online to skip the long queues.



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BY TIMES ALL INDIA ENGINEERING INSTITUTES RANKING SURVEY 2024

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for providing Top Placements PAN India

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

The Canada Place, an iconic landmark, is located on Vancouver's waterfront; A visitor leans on the Capilano Suspension Bridge, surrounded by a stunning rainforest; A hearty breakfast awaits at Yolks.





GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Vancouver from Delhi.





STYLISH STAYS

- 1/St. Regis Hotel, Vancouver is only five minutes away from the float and cruise ship terminals.
- 2/ The Westin Bayshore, Vancouver, a resort-style hotel, offers sweeping views of Stanley Park, the Seawall, and the North Shore
- 3/ Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre boasts chic rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows and phenomenal views of the seafront.

Midday munch

The Sandbar seafood restaurant

Located in the bustling Granville Market, it's famous for fresh seafood, live music, and stunning waterfront views from the patio. Fancy some lobster or giant, meaty prawns grilled just right? There's sushi, crab cakes, oysters, and wood-fired pizza too. Don't leave without trying their classic clam chowder.

© 03:30PM

Adventureland

Capilano Suspension Bridge Park

The Park's eponymous, and popular, suspension bridge stretches nearly 450ft across the Capilano river. Perched at an elevation of around 230ft, it presents mesmerising views of the lush rainforest right below. There's a lot on offer for thrill-seekers, like exhilarating cliff walks and treetop adventures amid trees as tall as 110ft. Remember to prebook way in advance for a hassle-free entry.

→ 05:30PM

Down memory lane

Gastown neighbourhood

The famous Gastown Steam Clock is a popular Instagrammable spot in one of Vancouver's oldest neighbourhoods. Explore historical sites and swing by trendy boutiques and eclectic galleries. Gastown has a vibrant nightlife with cosy pubs and chic bars, making it a beautiful confluence of past and present.

4 08:00PM Ambrosia

Dinner in Yaletown

Yaletown is home to some of the most stylish boutiques, busy bars, and chic restaurants serving a variety of cuisines. Can't get enough of Indian food? Head to Tasty Indian Bistro, which is one of the best Indian restaurants in Vancouver, with each dish bursting with authentic flavours. How about some rich. creamy butter chicken scooped up with bits of tandoori garlic butter naan? There are great vegetarian options too.



www.vastukalp.com

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Internationally Renowned Vastu Expert Vimal Jhajharia, along with his son Vikas Jhajharia, has created a revolution in the field of Vastu Shastra. Their expertise in providing 'Vastu Remedies without Demolition' has earned them the faith and praise of millions of people in more than 40 countries across the globe.

Vimal Jhajharia and Vikas Jhajharia (MBA from Australia) have delivered many lectures, conducted workshops, seminars and have widely travelled and provided consultancy on major projects already in operation without any changes or modifications. They are currently providing consultancy in the USA, UK, Australia, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, South Africa, UAE, and South America, among others.

Both of them have been felicitated several times for their outstanding knowledge on Vastu & have also won several awards of national and international repute.



Awarded in Dubai "The most Influential Vastu Expert under 50 years"



Awarded TIMES OF INDIA

"Times Icon
of the year 2017"



Awarded by Kangana Ranaut in Thailand "The Best International Vastu Guru"

Based on the principles of Vastu, the Vastu Shankha Yantra is an original conch shell used to potentially rectify any kind of land, Vastu or energy defects without making any modifications. It can potentially save a lot of time & money as it is used to create positive energy in places having major Vastu defects without changing the looks and beauty of the place.

and relationships of a person





Vastu is protection against unforeseen circumstances.

It is used to increase personal energy in health, wealth



Does the Vastu Shankha Yantra really work for prosperity in factories and industries?

Yes, we have a big list of successful clients including businessmen, entrepreneurs, doctors, scientists, professionals, architects, interior designers, etc giving testimonials on our website.

Endorsing the Vastu Shanka Yantra is industrialist Sushil from New Delhi. He says, "My son and I are running a factory but were not getting the desired results. We came to know about Vimalji and Vikasji through one of their articles in inflight magazines. Upon showing them the factory, we immediately realised our north was blocked and all the heavy machinery was placed along the north wall. We then got the Vastu Shankha yantras placed at certain places on Jhajharia ji's recommendation. Now, every new factory of ours is made under their able guidance and we also recomend them to all our friends and relatives"

Can Vastu Shankha Yantra also help in selling a property?

Yes, we do a lot of Vastu correction for builders and developers and also individuals whose properties have been stuck for a long time and which are not getting sold because of some or the other Vastu defect. Vouching for success is Satish from Bangalore who was trying to sell his four acres property for two years. When we saw the property, we saw it had multiple corners & it was not a proper rectangle or a square. We then positively charged this property by placing our Vastu Shankha Yantras in various corners to help correct the magnetic field of the property and hence creating positive energy in the atmosphere.

DID YOU KNOW?



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- Mr. Vikas Jhajharia is an MBA from Australia
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GOAN GEMS

Going beyond restaurants to find a good meal at local hideaways in picturesque settings

words by Joanna Lobo

SOUL TRAVELLING

On the serene island of Chorão, a kulagar (plantation) is where you can avail an all-day culinary experience, curated by Soul Travelling. Enjoy a hearty breakfast of Goan staples, tour the plantation, and help with the cooking using traditional kitchen utilities. Lunch is a lavish spread of Goan dishes, including sorpotel, sannas, and alle belle. Expect coconut-rich curries, rice-based sweets, and plenty of vegetarian fare.





10 THE LOCAL BEAT PICNIC

A picnic amid lush environs is bound to evoke nostalgia. Mackinlay Barreto of The Local Beat believes in showcasing the true gems of Goa, through day-long picnics at a few select hidden spots—the beautiful locations remain a secret. It promises a relaxing experience, offering a true Goan spread, prepared by locals. They even treat guests to fish, fried onsite. It includes a small bar, serving feni-based cocktails.





O FAZENDA CAZULO

Goa's feni man, Hansel Vaz, is your best guide to learn about this unique local spirit. The location happens to be a small pond in the heart of a cashew farm. Here, you taste different feni concoctions and learn to pair them with food. Guests are taken on a tour of the farm that introduces the traditional equipment used—the bhatti (distillery) and a cellar lined with garrafões (pitchers).



PALÁCIO DO DEÃO

A heritage building situated on the banks of the Kushavati river, the Palácio do Deão makes for a pictureperfect setting for a meal. The 213-year-old home in Quepem was lovingly restored by Ruben and Celia Vasco da Gama, and is rich in history. Ruben takes you on a tour of the house, which is followed by a delicious meal cooked by Celia. The food is Indo-Portuguese, prepared with produce from their garden, featuring prawn fritters, empadinhas de porco, stuffed crab, and bebinca.

! THE GOAN KITCHEN

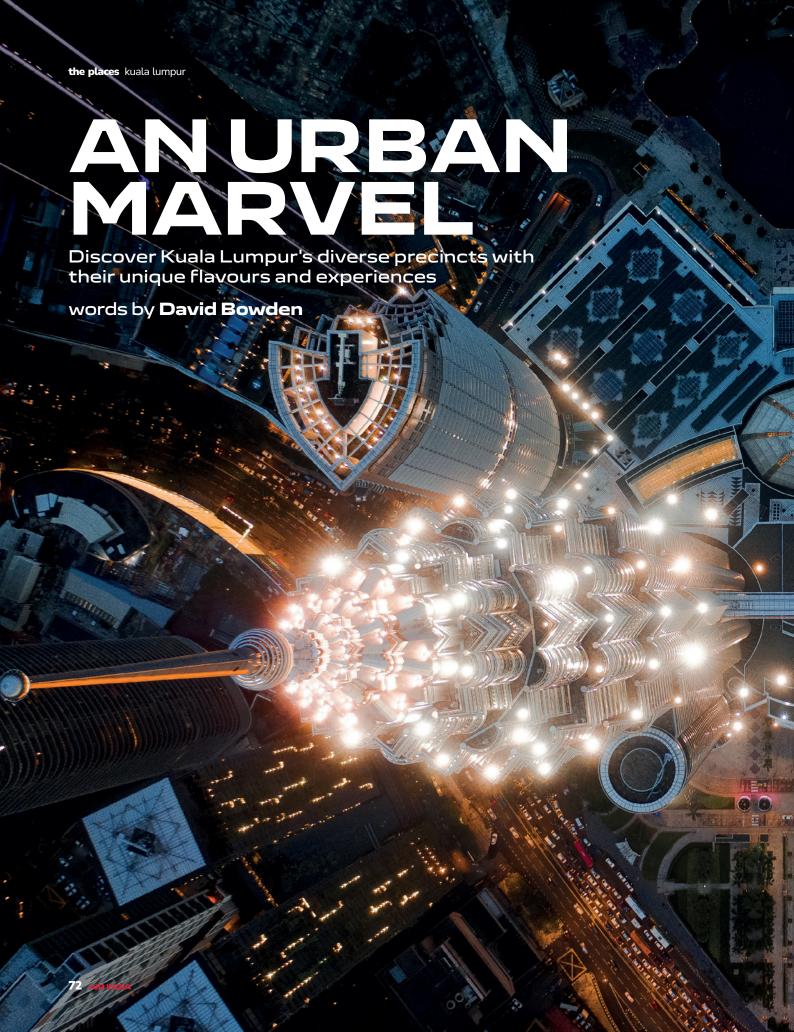
The Goan Kitchen (co-founded by Crescy Baptista and Oliver Fernandes) offers a sitdown meal in Crescy's garden in Loutolim. It's an elaborate meal—snacks, mains, and desserts—that pays tribute to Goa's rich culinary heritage and traditional cooking techniques. Alongside, you get to observe a traditional kitchen setup, see how Goan sausages are stuffed, and how the famous bebinca is made without using an oven.





OAAI'S

Home chef Shubhra Shankhwalker has magic in her hands. At her farm in Camurlim, she shares her talent with culinary enthusiasts through an elaborate lunch. Over the course of the day, she will feed you homemade drinks, snacks, and a meal that is abundant in portions and flavours. Her cooking is seasonal, uses local ingredients, and is prepared fresh. She will also regale you with nuggets of information about the cuisine along with some cooking tips. You are sure to need a nap after the sumptuous feast!







uala Lumpur has blossomed from its humble origins as a ramshackle mining camp in the mid-19th century into one of Southeast Asia's most vibrant cities. Known to the locals as 'KL', the Malaysian city and its satellite suburbs extend throughout the Klang Valley to provide a home to approximately 7.5 million residents.

Kuala Lumpur is a city with distinctive precincts, including its colonial heart centred on Merdeka Square. The eclectic architecture is striking, with grand buildings from either the British 'Raj' or in Mogul-style standing in the shadows of modern towers that soar skyward like the Merdeka 118, Exchange 106, and the famous **Petronas Twin Towers**.

BRICKFIELDS

Just a few kilometres away, lies the heartland for Malaysians of South Asian heritage. There are numerous places of worship in Little India Brickfields like the Sree Veera Hanuman Temple, the Buddhist Maha Vihara temple, and the **Tamil Methodist Church. The Temple** of Fine Arts, meanwhile, is a centre for Indian performing arts.

Its liveliest street, Jalan Tun Sambanthan, is brightly decorated with colourful arches and lined with restaurants, bazaars, textile shops, and food stalls. South Indian cuisine



dominates but others are also available. Rice with spicy curries, served on a banana leaf, is among my favourites, as is mamak (Indo-Malay fusion cuisine).

Visitors coming in from the airport will arrive at KL Sentral, a transportation hub close to Brickfields. Suburban and regional trains also radiate from KL Sentral, which includes NU Sentral Mall that caters to shoppers and diners.

BANGSAR/DAMANSARA

Bangsar and Bukit Damansara are two parts of the city, located in close proximity to each other, and filled with upmarket restaurants, cafés, and boutiques. Pubs and bars draw in party crowds, while for live sports, I usually head to pubs in **Bukit Damansara** like The Sticky Wicket, Sid's Pubs, and Rockafellers Kitchen + Bar.

Shoppers make a beeline for **Bangsar** Village, Bangsar Shopping Centre, DC Mall, and the newly-opened Pavilion **Damansara Heights** for premium merchandise, designer fashion, and lifestyle accessories. An open-air night market, or pasar malam, extends along parts of Bangsar Baru every Sunday (3-11pm).

KAMPUNG BARU

Kampung Baru, which translates to 'new village', is a well-established inner urban Malay residential enclave. Its uniqueness lies in being a villagelike oasis close to the city, providing a window to traditional Malay life from a bygone era. Low-rise buildings stand in stark contrast to city skyscrapers, within view of old wooden houses dating back a hundred years. I recommend arriving here around dusk to witness vignettes

Best time to visit

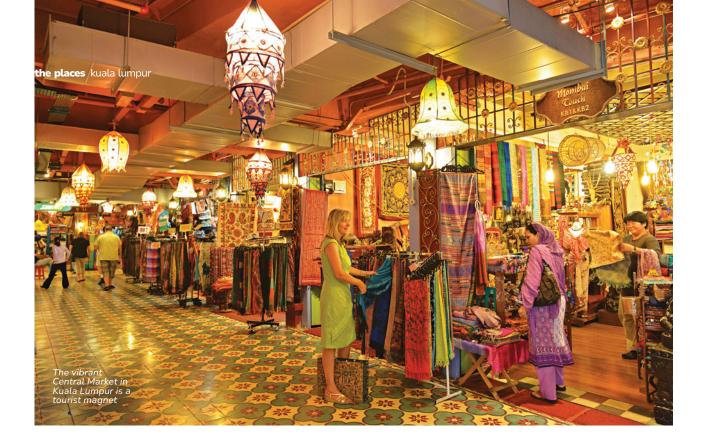
Kuala Lumpur's temperature rarely varies; it's hot and humid on most days. Monsoon showers provide relief, mostly in the afternoon with short bursts of storms. The **southwest monsoon** brings rain in August.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The Sri Mahamariamman Temple at KL; The sky-high Exchange 106 tower in KL; The imposing Kampung Baru Mosque; The Saloma Link bridge in the city.





of village life along a modern city skyline, with the setting sun making for the perfect backdrop. The illuminated **Saloma Link** over the **Klang river** is another must-photograph site. Enjoy two worlds and eras, side by side.

This is one of the best locations to sample halal Malay dishes served in rustic outlets, especially streetside stalls. Seek out *pisang goreng* (banana fritters), satay (barbecued meat on skewers), ikan bakar (grilled fish), and teh tarik (Malaysian tea). Alight at the **Kampung Baru LRT** station to explore this precinct on foot.

CHINATOWN

Chinatown is undergoing a transformation as a new generation of young entrepreneurs clamber to redevelop heritage shoplots with atmospheric restaurants and Instaworthy bars. Merdeka 118 has risen above its low-rise surroundings and tourists are now in awe of the world's second-tallest tower. Street art and the kaleidoscopic paintwork of surrounding buildings create striking scenes for photographers. Places of worship include Sin Sze Si Ya (Taoist) Temple

and Sri Mahamariamman Temple.

While bargain shoppers will be distracted by the lively covered market along **Petaling Street**, others can head to the art deco **Central Market**, which has been repurposed as a venue for Malaysian and regional souvenirs, and dining outlets. Many restaurants serve traditional Chinese fare like dim sum and Hainanese chicken rice, even as smart new outlets have adopted contemporary flair.

I recommend starting at **REXKL**, the former 1940s cinema now reimagined as an arts and culture enclave. Enjoy craft beer at **The Rex Bar**, small plates and wines at **Shhhbuuuleee**, and browse books at **Book Xcess**. My other favourite haunts are **Chocha Foodstore** (creative local dishes) and **Botakliquor Bar** (designer cocktails and natural wines). For a taste of Spanish tapas and wines, **Barra**, guided by Chef Ignasi Prats, leaves a lasting impression.

Visit during the Chinese New Year to enjoy streets illuminated with red lanterns. Nearby, **Pasar Seni** is a rail hub for the MRT and LRT networks. KL's precincts showcase a rich blend of flavours and experiences.

HOTELS TO STAY AT

EQ

Located on Jalan Sultan Ismail, it offers innovative dining and boasts Sky51, a sophisticated rooftop bar with views of the Petronas Twin Towers.

Villa Samadhi by Samadhi

Located in KL's Embassy district, this urban oasis has 21 exclusive garden villas within walking distance of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre.

Banyan Tree Kuala Lumpur

Perched above the city, guests can enjoy urban bliss. Horizon Grill on the 58th floor is one of KL's finest restaurants.

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PREPARING TO ASCEND



n 2022, Air India had launched its five-year transformation programme, Vihaan.Al. Vihaan means "Dawn of a New Era" in Sanskrit and heralds a new beginning for Air India and Indian aviation. After fixing the basics in the initial Taxi phase, Air India entered the Take-off phase in April 2023, looking to consolidate on the foundation laid initially. Now, Air India has entered the Climb phase in April 2024 and is all set to achieve new milestones. The airline is optimistic in transcending to even greater heights.

The mission is to be the absolute bestin-class in customer service, technology, product, reliability, and hospitality.

Campbell Wilson, Air India's CEO and MD, had earlier unveiled the Vihaan.AI plan, with milestones focusing on growing Air India's network and fleet, and developing a completely revamped customer proposition. The transformation roadmap is built around five distinctive key pillars—exceptional customer experience, robust operations, industry-best talent, industry leadership, alongside commercial efficiency and profitability. Air India's Climb phase focuses on establishing premises to become a global industry leader. A strong momentum has been set to provide the tailwind to make Air India climb upwards in 2024.

"April of 2024 marked the transition from the Take-Off phase of Vihaan.Al to Climb, where we put the foundations and capabilities we've built over the last 18 months to work, accelerating and growing toward our ambition of being a World-Class, Global Airline with an Indian Heart."

- CAMPBELL WILSON Air India CEO and MD



THE JOURNEY SO FAR

TRANSFORMATION PILLARS



Global loyal customer base



Robust and clockwork operations



Industry best talent



Industry captain on future agendas



Commercially efficient and growing

- · Launched revamped website and app (Trishanku)
- Renewed service of most of the grounded legacy aircraft
- Launched new brand identity, deployed new aircraft liveries for AI and Air India Express
- Revealed new uniforms in line with new brand
- Launched airline industry's first Generative AI chatbot
- Appointed design agency (HBA) to initiate lounge makeover at DEL and JFK
- Launched rebranded Loyalty Programme
- Initiated set-up of AI lounge at SFO (Al's 2nd international lounge)
- · Became first and only Indian airline to offer self check-in and baggage drop services for US-bound passengers from India
- · Reinforced customer feedback process; onboarded new service providers (catering and ground handling).

- Leased new 57,000sq ft engineering warehouse for robust spares management
- Signed a 12-year agreement with SIA Engineering for A320 component and onwing engine support
- Signed MoU with Govt. of Karnataka to establish MRO facilities at Kempegowda International Airport (Bengaluru)
- Commenced crew training at the new **Aviation Academy**
- Adopted TaxiBot operations, automated aircraft cleaning, and minimised single-use plastic usage
- · Architected a new IT infrastructure across the organisation.

- Shifted to modern and contemporary office premises in Gurugram
- Launched SOAR -Al's first-ever campus engagement with premier B schools
- Welcomed 9,000+ new colleagues—1,000+ cockpit crew, 5,000+ cabin crew, and more
- Launched Cadet Pilot programme.

- Elected to the IATA **Board of Governors** and the Executive Committee of the Star Alliance
- Cleared Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme (CORSIA) audit
- Bagged Gold at the 11th annual Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards for its innovative and customer-friendly mobile app
- Received 'Best F&B in Central/Southern Asia' award at FTE APEX Asia Expo 2023
- · Awarded 'Asia-Pacific Overall Deal of the Year' by Airline **Economics**
- Awarded 'Global Overall Deal of the Year' at the Airline **Economics**
- Awarded 'Cargo Airline of the Year -Region India' at the Air Cargo India 2024 Conference.

- Formalised order for 470 aircraft, in addition to 36 leased aircraft
- Signed Interline agreement with AccesRail, Bangkok Air, and Vistara, and codeshare with AirAsia
- Successfully integrated AirAsia India and Air India Express, forming single LCC
- Received India's and Air India's first A350-900 in December 2023
- Initiated Aviation Academy construction
- Inducted India's first A350 in January 2024
- Launched 16 new routes (5 domestic, 12 international) and added 6 new international stations in FY24
- Inducted 6 A320neos. 16 A321neos. 8 B777s. 6 A350s in FY24.



OTHE 'NEO' **EXPERIENCE**

Air India's narrowbody aircraft, the A320neo, sporting the airline's new livery and featuring all-new cabin interiors, have entered service in the domestic network. This marks the beginning of a new chapter for Air India, reaffirming its commitment to upgrading its products and services, and providing a transformed, world-class flying experience for its guests in the domestic sector as well.

LEFT AND RIGHT

State-of-the-art cabin interiors of Air India's new three-class cabin configured A320neo; Air India's flagship A350 will soon debut on long-haul routes to the US.



A350 PREPARES FOR **LONG-HAUL TAKEOFF**

Air India's flagship A350-900 aircraft will operate Delhi-New York (JFK) flights from 1st November 2024 and Delhi-Newark flights from 2nd January 2025, thus transforming passenger experience on these strategicallyimportant routes. The A350 deployment will introduce Air India's Premium Economy class experience for the first time on these routes.

GIFTING MADE CONVENIENT

Air India has introduced Air India Gift Cards, offering travellers a convenient and flexible way to gift the joy of travel to their loved ones. These e-cards can be purchased online in any denomination between ₹1,000 and ₹2,00,000 to gift loved ones or save for their own future use.

Air India Gift Cards can be used to book domestic and international flights too. The Cards are available in four themes-Travel, Wedding Anniversary, Birthday, and Special Moments—and can be easily personalised.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

Air India's crew and an A350-900 aircraft at the Farnborough International Airshow 2024; Sunil Suresh, Head of Marketing, Loyalty & E-commerce, Air India, with officials of Merlin Entertainments; Sunil Suresh along with delegates of The Bicester Collection.



STEALING THE SHOW

Air India showcased its brand-new A350-900 aircraft, a testimony of the airline's transformation, at the Farnborough International Airshow 2024. It attracted hundreds of aviation industry professionals, media and other quests, at the air show, who wanted to have a look at Air India's world-class offering.

The flight feature brand new seats, refreshed inflight entertainment, internet connectivity, and award-winning guest enhancements.



HAVING FUN CAN BE REWARDING

Air India and Merlin Entertainments, a global leader in location-based family entertainment, have entered a partnership, whereby members of Air India Flying Returns loyalty programme will earn Reward Points when they buy tickets to LEGOLAND® theme parks.

Air India Flying Returns members can earn up to 10 Reward Points per ₹100 spent across five participating LEGOLAND® locations, namely Windsor (the UK), New York and California (the US), Dubai (the UAE), and Malaysia.

Designed specifically for families with children aged 2 to 12 years, LEGOLAND® offers a great day out and an ultimate short-break experience.



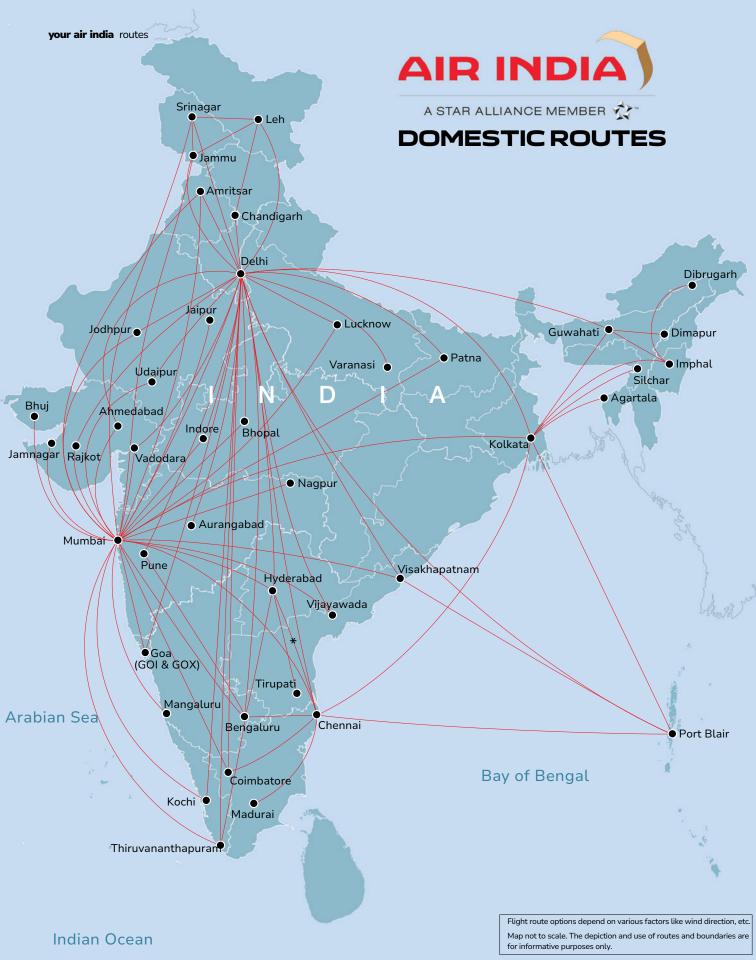
CALLING LUXURY SHOPPERS

Air India has announced an exclusive new partnership with The Bicester Collection, a family of immersive luxury destinations, for the airline's recently-redesigned Flying Returns loyalty programme. The partnership offers Flying Returns reward points on shopping and dining experiences at The Bicester Collection's nine open-air luxury shopping Villages in Western Europe.

Flying Returns members can now collect 5 Points for every £4 or €4 spent at any of The Bicester Collection's Villages in Europe.







^{*} Temporary operations with A350-900





Flight route options depend on various factors like wind direction, etc.

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

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*DEL: Indira Gandhi International Airport (Delhi Airport), New Delhi, Delhi; Milan Malpensa Airport, Province of Varese, Italy; Humberto Delgado Airport, Lisbon, Portugal

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DIGIYATRA

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय द्वारा 13 एयरपोर्टस्—दिल्ली, बेंगलुरु, वाराणसी, पुणे, कोलकाता, विजयवाड़ा हैदराबाद, अहमदाबाद, मुंबई, जयपुर, लखनऊ, गुवाहाटी और कोचीन के लिए डीजी यात्रा की सुविधा का शुभारंभ किया गया है । डीजी यात्रा ऐप को डाउनलोड करके खुद को नामांकित करें और इन एयरपोर्टस् पर र्निबाध और बाधारहित यात्रा का अनुभव करें।

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

MISSION LIFE

पर्यावरण के प्रति जागरूक जीवन शैली को अपनाने की

दिशा में व्यवहारिक परिवर्तनों को प्रेरित करने के लिए. माननीय प्रधान मंत्री ने मिशन लाइफ—लाइफस्टाइल फॉर एनवायरनमेंट शुरू किया है, जो की भारत के नेतृत्व वाला वैश्विक जन आंदोलन है। आइए हम सभी प्रो-प्लैनेट एक्शन लेने का संकल्प लें, जैसे ऊर्जा की बचत, पानी का संरक्षण, पेड़ों का पोषण और पर्यावरण के अनुकूल अपशिष्ट निपटान।

Mission LiFE—Lifestyle for Environment is an India-led global mass movement launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister for inducing behavioural changes towards adopting environmentallyconscious lifestyles. Let us all pledge to take Pro-Planet actions like saving energy, conserving water, nurturing trees, and eco-friendly waste disposal.

AIR SEVA

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय ने विमान सेवा पोर्टल को अपग्रेड किया है, जो इंटरैक्टिव वेब पोर्टल और मोबाइल ऐप के ज़रिए सुलभ है। इस नए संस्करण में:

- (क) सोशल मीडिया के साथ सुरक्षित साइन अप और लॉग इन
- (ख) अतिथियों की सहायता के लिए, चैट बॉक्स
- (ग) सोशल मीडिया शिकायत सहित, परिष्कृत प्रबंधन
- (घ) रियल टाइम उड़ान स्टेटस और विस्तृत उड़ान संबंधी जानकारी शामिल हैं सेवा संबंधी किसी और जानकारी के लिए आप airsewa.gov.in पर लॉग इन कर सकते हैं।

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has upgraded its Air Sewa portal, which is accessible through an interactive web portal and a mobile app. The new version includes:

- a) Secure sign-up and log-in with social media
- b) Chat box for traveller's support
- c) Improved grievance management, including social media grievance
- d) Real-time flight status and detailed flight schedule.

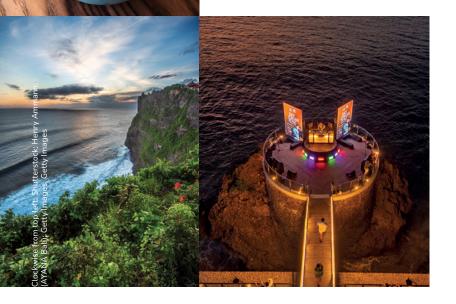
Air Sewa is available at airsewa.gov.in.

A TRAVELLER'S TALE



ISLAND **ESCAPE**

British singer-songwriter **Jay Sean** on his recent whirlwind trip to Bali



AN UNFORGETTABLE MEMORY

I had travelled to Bali earlier but when I visited the island during my Asia tour in May 2024, I stayed at AYANA Resort Bali. It had a beautiful, gigantic infinity pool right by the ocean. I have never felt so relaxed in my entire life.

MY TRAVEL MANTRA

When I arrive at any destination, the first thing I say is, "Take me to where the locals eat and drink", because that's only way I know how to connect with people.

LOCAL FOOD

My diet is restricted to seafood, so my choice was limited. I do admit that, at times, I am tempted to try a different dish. However, the seafood there is amazing, as is the ceviche—my all-time favourite. When in Bali, I recommend tucking into delicious Balinese fare at Tickled Pink.

LOCAL EXPERIENCE

From meditation and massage to yoga on the beach—I did it all, as well as a performance at Rock Bar Bali, perched atop a sea cliff.

- As told to Shrabasti A Mallik







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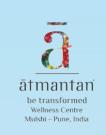
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