

# TODAY'S traveler

CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, LUXURY & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2023 | ₹50

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JEWELLERY  
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**WHEELS AND WANDERLUST**

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# WHEELS AND WANDERLUST: PERFECT SHORT ROAD TRIPS ACROSS INDIA

Nothing captures the essence of freedom quite like hitting the open road for a spontaneous short adventure, and who else to revel in that exhilaration with, than your friends or family?

KAMAL GILL

The laughter, the shared playlists, the roadside munchies, and the joy of discovering new places together – these are the moments that etch unforgettable memories. India, with its vast and varied landscapes, offers a plethora of breathtaking locales waiting to be explored. But there's something exceptionally delightful about setting off on a short road trip, especially with your friends by your side.

From the sun-kissed beaches of the south to the rolling tea gardens of the east, the mystic desert landscapes of the west to the serene valleys of the north, India's roadways guide you through stories told and untold.

From Mumbai, a drive to the serene beaches of Alibaug or the vineyards of Nashik provides a refreshing break from the city's hustle. From Delhi, a short road trip to the historic town of Neemrana or the peaceful landscapes of Lansdowne or the

forts of Rajasthan provides a wonderful break. Similarly, from Bengaluru a quick road trip to the lush green hills of Coorg and the UNESCO heritage town of Hampi is just a short drive to another world.

The City of Joy, Kolkata, presents the tranquil Sundarbans or the colonial architecture of Chandannagar as quick drive-aways. Meanwhile, those in Chennai can immerse themselves in the French colonial charm of Pondicherry or the golden sands of Mahabalipuram.

These short road trips not only rejuvenate one's spirit but also provide a quick dip into the rich tapestry of India's heritage and natural beauty.

It does not matter if you are seeking adventure, solitude, or just a change, these short road trip destinations in India promise memories to be cherished for a lifetime. So, rev up those engines, call up your buddies, and let the road be your muse!



Couple On Road Trip



**MUMBAI TO LONAVALA**

For Mumbaikars feeling the urge to swap the city’s skyscrapers for some refreshing green landscapes, Lonavala, merely 83 km away, offers a picturesque reprieve.

The most preferred route is the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, ensuring a smooth drive with pockets of scenic beauty emerging every now and then. A crucial pitstop along this route is the Khandala Ghat, which provides panoramic views of rolling hills and meandering waterfalls, especially during the monsoons.

Drivers should be mindful of occasional fog and mist that might reduce visibility, as well as updated road advisories during the rainy season. Upon entering Lonavala, a world of emerald mountains, historic forts, and dense forests unfolds.

Whether it’s relishing some freshly made chikki, wandering around the serene Tungarli Lake, or hiking up the Duke’s Nose peak, Lonavala promises a refreshing experience.

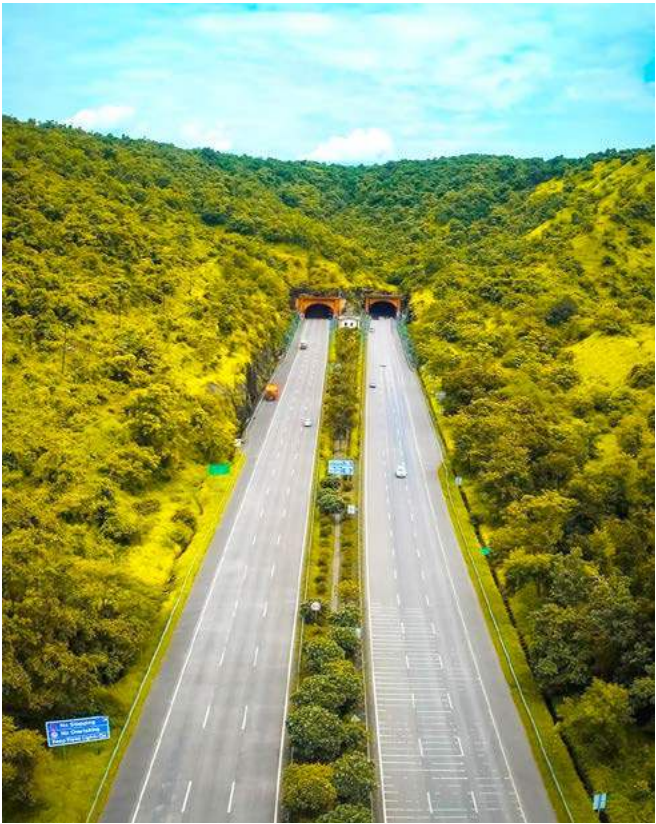
**DELHI TO AMER**

For Delhiites yearning for a dose of royal history combined with scenic beauty, a road trip to Amer in Rajasthan is a tempting proposition. Located approximately 238 km from Delhi, Amer is best known for its iconic Amer Fort which speaks volumes of India’s illustrious past.

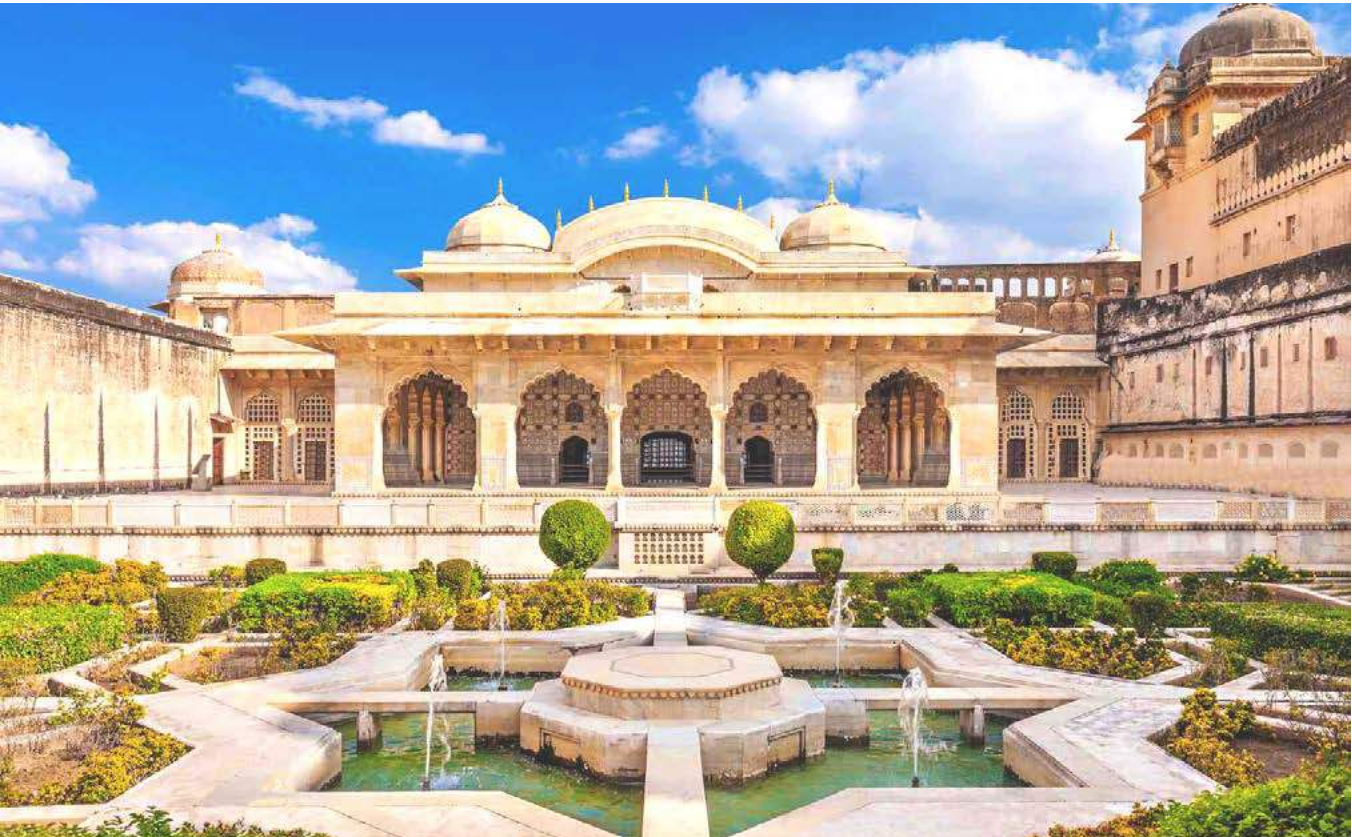
As you approach Rajasthan, the arid landscapes dotted with historical landmarks provide a stark yet fascinating contrast to Delhi’s urban sprawl.

Upon reaching Amer, the majestic fort perched on a hilltop welcomes you, offering a panoramic view of

the region. Spend your day exploring the fort’s grand courtyards, palatial rooms, and intricate architecture. As the sun sets, share tales of maharajas and battles with your friends, perhaps over a traditional Rajasthani meal, completing a journey that blends adventure with nostalgia. Find a beautiful outdoor spot where you light a bonfire, sit back with your friends and reminisce about great times together.



Mumbai-Pune Expressway



Amer Fort’s Grand Courtyards





Mandarmani Beach



Mandaragiri Betta

### KOLKATA TO MANDARMANI

West Bengal has an array of lesser-explored wonders, and Mandarmani, a seaside village, is one of them. If you and your friends are seeking a relaxing getaway, Mandarmani is among the top endorsed destinations for relaxation by Indian travellers. Starting from Kolkata, the 180 km route to Mandarmani is quite interesting as you get to see the wonderful scenery of rural Bengal.

There are quite a few good accommodation options in Mandarmani for you to choose from depending on the budget. And if you and your friends are in the mood for some adventure go for a jet ski ride, banana boat ride, and parachute ride along the beach.

### CHENNAI TO PONDICHERRY

For those residing in Chennai and yearning for a serene coastal escape, Pondicherry, roughly 150 km away, beckons. The most scenic route is the East Coast Road (ECR), which not only offers captivating views of the Bay of Bengal but also passes through the mesmerizing heritage town of Mahabalipuram. It's a perfect pitstop, where travelers can marvel at ancient rock-cut temples and sculptures, taking a step back in time.

As the drive progresses, it unfurls a tapestry of contemporary aesthetics, charming French-style villas, and verdant landscapes. Upon reaching Pondicherry, travellers are welcomed into a world of Franco-Tamil heritage; they can stroll along the Rock Beach, unwind in the tranquil corridors of the Aurobindo Ashram, or delve deep into the town's colonial past. Truly, this road trip is a tale of culture, history, and scenic beauty, seamlessly woven together.

### BENGALURU TO MANDARAGIRI BETTA

If a short road trip to an offbeat destination from Bengaluru is what you are looking for, then Mandara Giri Hills or Mandaragiri Betta is a mere 60 km away and one of the best bets one would take.

Pack your bags and hit the road along with your friends to Mandaragiri Betta, a small hillock in the Tumkur district of Karnataka with well-maintained roads, so the ride is pleasant and takes you through several green patches. Once you reach Mandaragiri Betta, you can indulge in authentic Kannada-style food and also visit one of the most eye-catching structures, called Digambar Jain Heritage center.

This hall resembles a peacock feather with a simple idol of the saint in the middle and is ideal for meditation after a tiring trip. The aesthetic beauty of the hall also makes for an





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Instagram-worthy picture that you can store as a beautiful memory with your buddies.

### DARJEELING TO PELLING

Nothing brings out Darjeeling's blooming beauty more than a road trip to Pelling. At 74 km from Darjeeling, you get to pass through small villages catching glimpses of the monasteries and abundant waterfalls. The four hours of the journey feel like heaven and even more when you drive through the hills and lush tea gardens.

If you and your friends need to take a break to refresh, there are small tea shops along the way that serve warm and delicious tea. Pelling, a beautiful hill station that lies in the foothills of Mount Khangchendzonga, has many places for your squad to explore in a day. Make a wish for a never-ending friendship at Khecheopalri Lake, which is locally considered to be the one that fulfills your wish.

You can also go for a picnic at the Sewaro Rock Garden when it is safe to do so, or simply take a walk on the Pelling Skywalk but make sure to buy your friends some souvenirs from the local bazaar.

### HYDERABAD TO ANANTHAGIRI HILLS

For Hyderabad residents itching for a breath of fresh air and a dip into nature's lap, a road trip to Ananthagiri Hills is the ideal weekend sojourn. Located merely 82 km away from the bustling city, Ananthagiri Hills promises an escapade filled with pristine lakes, dense green forests, and centuries-old temples.

The most recommended route is via Chevella Road, but as always, a quick check on local travel advisories will ensure an uninterrupted journey. The drive itself is a treat, with roads winding through scenic landscapes, gradually introducing the rich greenery of the hills. Once you arrive, the serene

lake beckons for a peaceful moment of reflection, while the untouched trails of the forest invite the explorer in you.

Wander around the reservoirs, get entranced by the exotic local flora, and let the aroma of coffee from nearby plantations tantalize your senses.

And for those with a penchant for adventure, Ananthagiri Hills doesn't disappoint, offering trekking paths that challenge and reward in equal measure. It's a destination that promises both tranquillity and thrill, making it a wonderful road trip.

### EVERY ROUTE TELLS A UNIQUE STORY

Whether it's the winding mountain paths of the Himalayas, the vast expanses of the Thar Desert, the coastal highways alongside the Arabian Sea, or the dense forests of the Western Ghats, every route tells a unique story.

Embarking on a road trip in India is more than just a journey; it's an immersive experience into the heart of the country's heritage, traditions, and natural beauty.



Ananthagiri Hills



Pelling



*An ode to the grandeur of Gujarat*



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# WET AND WILD: A MONSOON ROAD TRIP FROM CHENNAI TO VARKALA

Take a holiday break with a memorable road trip during the monsoon from Chennai to Varkala and unveil a tapestry of natural beauty, as the lush landscapes come alive.

KAMAL GILL

For those seeking respite from the scorching heat of Chennai, embarking on a drive from Chennai to Varkala proves to be an excellent escape. Located along the captivating coastline of Kerala, the town of Varkala offers a unique blend of natural beauty and cultural charm which transforms into a breathtaking paradise during monsoon rains.

The joy of travelling by road lies in the stops along the way, indulging in local cuisines, and exploring some lesser-known attractions. The journey covers approximately 700 km and takes about 13 to 14 hours non-stop by car.

## MORNING DEPARTURE FROM CHENNAI

Begin your journey early morning from Chennai. The roads are generally clear and it's a smooth ride. Your first leg of the journey

should ideally be towards Villupuram. Enjoy the beautiful sunrise and the lush greenery alongside East Coast Road (ECR).

## BREAKFAST AT VILLUPURAM (158 KM FROM CHENNAI)

Villupuram is a great place for breakfast. Try the local South Indian dishes like idli, dosa, and vada at one of the many local restaurants such as Hotel Aaryas.

Villupuram is one of the largest districts in Tamil Nadu, known for its rich history and agricultural landscape. For history enthusiasts, the Gingee Fort, also known as the "Troy of the East", is a must-visit. While primarily a transit town, it is also home to several ancient temples. The local cuisine here is dominated by traditional Tamil dishes and is a treat for food lovers.



Road Trip





*French Colonies*

#### **STOPOVER AT PONDICHERRY (40 KM FROM VILLUPURAM)**

Post breakfast, proceed towards Pondicherry. Take a short detour to explore the French colonies, Auroville, and the beautiful beaches in the city. If time allows, visit the serene Aurobindo Ashram.

Pondicherry is also known for its French bakeries, so grabbing a pastry or a sandwich for a quick snack might be a good idea.

Pondicherry's French Quarter, with tree-lined streets and mustard-coloured colonial villas, offers a stark contrast to the South Indian architecture in the Tamil Quarter. Visit the serene beaches, explore Auroville, the universal city, and enjoy the delectable French-Tamil fusion cuisine here.

#### **LUNCH AT CUDDALORE (22 KM FROM PONDICHERRY)**

Drive further south to Cuddalore for lunch. Cuddalore is known for its traditional Tamil cuisine. The Nivedhanam Restaurant is a popular choice among travellers and locals.

Cuddalore is a rapidly growing industrial city known for its beautiful beaches and historical temples. Silver Beach is a popular tourist attraction, known for its pristine sand and tranquil waters. The city's cuisine offers a variety of South Indian dishes, especially seafood due to its coastal location.

#### **SCENIC STOPOVER AT CHIDAMBARAM (44 KM FROM CUDDALORE)**

Post lunch, you can head towards Chidambaram, a town known for its magnificent temples. The Thillai Nataraja



*The Thillai Nataraja Temple*

Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is a significant stopover offering a spiritual retreat.

Chidambaram is a spiritual destination, known for the Thillai Nataraja Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva. This town is also renowned for its traditional music and dance festivals. The local markets offer a variety of handloom products that make great souvenirs.



### **DRIVE TO THANJAVUR (104 KM FROM CHIDAMBARAM)**

As you continue your journey, your next stop will be Thanjavur, a city steeped in history and culture. Famous for its Brihadeeswarar Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Thanjavur also offers an opportunity to shop for Tanjore paintings and dolls.

Also known as Tanjore, Thanjavur is a historical city famous for its exquisite art and architecture. The Brihadeeswarar Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is an architectural marvel of the Chola dynasty. The city is also famous for its unique Tanjore paintings and handcrafted dolls.

### **DINNER AT TIRUCHIRAPPALLI (60 KM FROM THANJAVUR)**

End your day at Tiruchirappalli, also known as Trichy. A late-night dinner at the famous Parthasarathy Vilas will provide an authentic experience of the local cuisine, including their special thalis.

The city is a fine blend of tradition and modernity. It is renowned for its historic Rock Fort Temple, offering panoramic views of the city. The bustling local markets, like the famous Gandhi Market, provide a lively shopping experience for tourists.

### **DRIVE TO MADURAI (133 KM FROM TRICHY) FOR AN OVERNIGHT STAY**

Finally, head towards Madurai for your night halt. This ancient city is known for the grand Meenakshi Amman Temple. A comfortable stay at one of the city's hotels will get you refreshed for the next day's journey.

One of the oldest cities in India, Madurai is often referred to as the "Athens of the East" due to its significant cultural and historical importance. The city is synonymous with the iconic Meenakshi Amman Temple, which is a grand

architectural spectacle. Don't miss the famous Jigarthanda, a local dessert, while you are here. The shopping here is great for handicrafts, and silks.

### **MORNING DRIVE TO TIRUNELVELI (160 KM FROM MADURAI)**

After a good sleep and a tasty breakfast in Madurai, your next stop could be Tirunelveli, a town known for its unique Wheat Halwa. Make sure to grab a box for the journey.

Tirunelveli is a vibrant city known for its unique Dravidian style of architecture, particularly in the Nelliappar Temple. It is also famous for its distinct cuisine, particularly the Tirunelveli Halwa, a sweet delicacy made from wheat and sugar. The serene banks of the Thamirabarani River provide a perfect spot for a peaceful break.

### **ARRIVE AT VARKALA (240 KM FROM TIRUNELVELI)**

Post lunch, proceed towards your final destination - Varkala. The drive from Tirunelveli to Varkala is scenic with views of the lush countryside and coconut groves.

Arriving in Varkala, you will be welcomed by the sight of the beautiful cliffs overlooking the Arabian Sea, lined with shops and beach shacks. Varkala Beach, or Papanasam Beach, is a must-visit, known for its holy waters which are believed to wash away sins.

Varkala is famous for its beautiful beaches, cliffs, and religious sites. Some popular attractions include Varkala Beach, Janardanaswamy Temple, Sivagiri Mutt, Varkala Lighthouse, and Kappil Lake. You can also indulge in activities like swimming, surfing, and Ayurvedic treatments.

This marks the end of your memorable self-drive journey from Chennai to Varkala. Remember, the idea of a self-drive vacation is not just to reach the destination but also to relish the journey. So, make the most of it, create memories, and have a safe trip!



*Kappil Beach & Lake*



# WELCOMHERITAGE: CELEBRATING INDIA'S HERITAGE AND HOSPITALITY

In an exceptional start to the FY 2023-24, WelcomHeritage showcases its expansion with the opening of two luxurious hotels in the pristine natural beauty of Srinagar and Ooty.

## TT BUREAU

Embracing the essence of heritage and hospitality, WelcomHeritage Ayatana, Ooty, and WelcomHeritage Grand, Srinagar, have delighted guests with unique offerings and unforgettable experiences.

### WELCOMHERITAGE AYATANA, OOTY

Nestled amidst the verdant hills of Ooty, Ayatana captivates visitors with its serene charm and rich history. The hotel offers elegantly designed rooms, seamlessly blending modern comforts with a touch of heritage. Guests are treated to picturesque views from private balconies, and the rejuvenating spa pampers them with traditional wellness therapies. The culinary journey is an adventure in itself, with a range of delectable local and international cuisines served at its fine dining restaurants.

### WELCOMHERITAGE GRAND, SRINAGAR

A gem in the heart of Srinagar, WelcomHeritage Grand promises an opulent stay, surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of the Kashmir Valley. The hotel's architecture showcases the region's cultural legacy, and its rooms are adorned with traditional craftsmanship. Guests can unwind amidst lush gardens, while the hotel's proximity to iconic attractions makes it a gateway to explore the wonders of Srinagar. The hotel's authentic Kashmiri cuisine leaves a lasting impression on the taste buds, completing the immersive experience.

WelcomHeritage looks forward to the opening of two more splendid hotels in Q2, one in the tranquil hills of Kasauli and the other in the historic town of Dungarpur. These additions reinforce their commitment to preserving heritage and creating unforgettable experiences for travellers.

At the core of WelcomHeritage's identity is a dedication to providing an experiential journey for every guest. Hospitality goes beyond mere accommodation; it's about curating moments that weave stories and cherished memories. From exploring the cultural tapestry



*WelcomHeritage Ayatana, Ooty*



*WelcomHeritage Grand, Srinagar*

of destinations to indulging in authentic flavours, WelcomHeritage crafts experiences that stay etched in the hearts of patrons.

WelcomHeritage believes in elevating vacations with exclusive offers tailored to guests' desires. Their "The Long and Winding Road" offer beckons adventure enthusiasts on drivable holidays, uncovering hidden gems along the way to their opulent hotels. With all-inclusive packages, guests can enjoy worry-free getaways, relishing delectable meals and engaging activities without a care in the world. A dream escape awaits, where every moment is a celebration of life, heritage, and unparalleled experiences.

Embrace the allure of the past, immerse in the present, and embark on an unforgettable journey with WelcomHeritage, where cherished memories are made!



# GO GOURMET! GLOBAL DINING DESTINATIONS

A treat for your taste buds, here are some of the most luxurious restaurants and best dining destinations in the world you can bookmark for your travel this year.

## TT BUREAU



*Le Louis XV*

Food is an integral part of travel. A restaurant offering unique tastes and flavours combined with stunning décor makes for an unforgettable experience and becomes a key element of the destination. Delight your palate and elevate your culinary game as we embark on an epicurean journey around the globe, highlighting some of the world's most luxurious and coveted dining establishments.

Your travel itinerary this year wouldn't be complete without these gastronomic gems that are known not just for their distinctive, flavourful offerings but also for their extraordinary ambience and exceptional service. After all, the food we savour and the dining spaces we choose form an inseparable part of our travel stories, contributing significantly to our overall journey.

The allure of international dining is exemplified by establishments like Alinea in Chicago, where avant-garde culinary techniques meet extraordinary flavour profiles, and Tokyo's Sukiya-bashi Jiro, offers a uniquely intimate sushi dining experience, prepared by the master himself.

Over in Europe, Spain's El Celler de Can Roca dazzles with its gastronomic innovations deeply rooted in Catalan cuisine, while France's Le Louis XV - Alain Ducasse in Monaco is a beacon of opulence and classic French fine dining. Experience the height of luxury in Dubai's Pierchic, an overwater haven of exquisite seafood, or journey to the tranquil heart of Bangkok to dine in Sorn, a two Michelin-starred restaurant known for its authentic Southern Thai cuisine.

Each of these outstanding dining establishments promises a feast for the senses, creating moments of culinary delight that resonate long after the meal has ended. Prepare to feast your senses on culinary masterpieces turning dining into an unforgettable adventure in these top global culinary destinations.

### **LE LOUIS XV – CHEF ALAIN DUCASSE, MONACO**

Epitomizing opulence and elegance, Le Louis XV - Alain Ducasse in Monaco is a standout in the world of fine dining. Under the guidance of world-renowned Chef Alain



Ducasse, this three-Michelin-starred restaurant offers an exquisite selection of Mediterranean dishes, prepared with precision and flair. Each plate is a tribute to the local produce and the region's rich culinary tradition, making a meal at Le Louis XV a truly grand affair.

**ALINEA, CHICAGO – CHEF GRANT ACHATZ**

Known for its creative innovation in gastronomy, Alinea in Chicago is a dining experience beyond ordinary. This three Michelin-starred restaurant, led by visionary Chef Grant Achatz, presents modernist cuisine with an artistic flair.

Each course is carefully constructed to provide diners with a multi-sensory experience, often incorporating elements of molecular gastronomy. The menu is ever-evolving, showcasing unique flavours and textures from a wide range of global ingredients. This is a dining experience that pushes the boundaries of culinary norms.

**SUKIYABASHI JIRO, TOKYO – CHEF JIRO ONO**

Sukiyabashi Jiro is an intimate sushi restaurant nestled in the heart of Tokyo, famed for its meticulous attention to detail and fresh, high-quality ingredients. The restaurant's patriarch, Jiro Ono, considered the greatest sushi craftsman alive, creates a symphony of tastes and textures with each sushi piece, allowing the natural flavors to shine.

This two Michelin-starred establishment offers a sushi experience par excellence, promising an unforgettable journey into the artistry of traditional sushi-making.

**EL CELLER DE CAN ROCA, SPAIN – CHEFS JOAN, JORDI, AND JOSEP**

Located in Girona, Spain, El Celler de Can Roca is a culinary gem. Headed by the Roca brothers - Joan, Jordi, and Josep - this three Michelin-starred restaurant offers an innovative

and nuanced take on Catalan cuisine. Joan helms the kitchen, creating dishes that meld local ingredients with global culinary techniques, while Jordi's desserts capture the essence of nostalgia and Josep's wine pairings complete the sensory journey. Dining at El Celler de Can Roca is akin to experiencing a beautiful, edible symphony of Catalan culture and innovation.



*Alinea, Chicago – Chef Grant Achatz*



*Sukiyabashi Jiro, Tokyo*





*Epicure at Le Bristol Paris*

#### **PIERCHIC, DUBAI – CHEF BEATRICE SEGONI**

Perched on its own pier in the azure waters of the Arabian Gulf, Pierchic is Dubai's leading seafood restaurant. Its location alone promises a luxurious dining experience, complemented by an array of fresh, high-quality seafood, curated and crafted by Chef Beatrice Segoni.

The menu features a blend of Mediterranean flavours with an emphasis on sustainable produce, ensuring each dish not only tantalizes the palate but also respects the ocean's bounty.

#### **SORN, BANGKOK - CHEF SUPAKSORN 'ICE' JONGSIRI**

For those seeking authentic Southern Thai cuisine in a serene, luxurious setting, Sorn in Bangkok is the destination. Chef Supaksorn 'Ice' Jongsiri sources rare, local ingredients from 14 Southern provinces of Thailand, creating dishes that tell a story of the region's cultural heritage.

His approach to preserving traditional recipes while introducing innovative techniques earned Sorn two Michelin stars, affirming it as a must-visit dining destination for any culinary traveller.

#### **EPICURE AT LE BRISTOL PARIS – CHEF ERIC FRECHON**

At Epicure at the iconic Le Bristol Paris, celebrated chef Eric Frechon, who holds four Michelin stars, has created a temple of gastronomy that is absolutely French.

Chef Éric Frechon made Le Bristol his home for over 20 years: two decades of a fruitful collaboration that have birthed one of the most prestigious signatures in contemporary fine dining.

In 2009, Epicure earned its 3 Michelin stars, all of which it has maintained every year since. With his subtle sense of harmony in flavour and delicate use of sauces, Éric Frechon's cooking inspires awe for its creativity.

His macaroni stuffed with black truffle, artichoke and duck foie gras, gratinée with aged Parmesan is an unforgettable dish that people travel to Paris to experience. Epicure restaurant can be visited every day of the year, with tables laid in an exquisite garden setting throughout the summer.

#### **PLÉNITUDE AT CHEVAL BLANC PARIS – CHEF ARNAUD DONCKELE**

On the first floor of Cheval Blanc Paris, the gastronomic restaurant of Chef Arnaud Donckele (awarded five toques and a 19/20 rating by Gault & Millau) Plénitude is an intimate place where sensual pleasures arise from new alliances: maturity and freshness, tradition and location, familiar and far-flung. Suddenly, time stands still, suspended in unforgettable moments at the luxurious Cheval Blanc Paris.

The cuisine at Plénitude takes inspiration from the tradition of preservations such as broths, vinaigrettes, creams, veloutés, juices.

These rural traditions of potting, refining and maturation bring forth essences and perennial aromas, inscribed in history. Arnaud Donckele has plunged with passion into this ancestral art of preservation in search of new fragrances and flavours. He unites this heritage, entirely reinvented during his exploratory walks, with the freshest ingredients of the day.

For each of his "magic potions", Arnaud Donckele has given a number, such as his Velours n°1, whose secret lies in a skilful composition of bonito belly filets, prawn consommé, Lambrusco-and Chardonnay vinegar, chestnut honey and citron essence, rosemary infusion, roasted fish-head oil, and Java pepper.

And then there are his other sublime sauces: Juice n°2, Cream n°7, Vinaigrette n°6 or Bouillon n°9. So many extracts



of happiness infused into the moment and the plate of the day. The discoveries continue with Maxime Frédéric's desserts, which seal another alliance: that of two artists' flavours.

#### **ARMANI RISTORANTE AT ARMANI HOTEL MILANO – CHEF FRANCESCO MASCHERON**

Armani Ristorante draws on the rich gastronomic traditions of Italy to provide you with classic and authentic culinary delights. The dishes take advantage of fresh produce served amidst an elegant ambience with impeccable and lifestyle service. Armani/Ristorante features a unique Enoteca with an exclusive and wide selection of wine and private dining. Chef Francesco Mascheroni's cuisine brings together classic Italian culinary traditions with an international twist. Francesco carefully selects the finest produce from Italy and beyond, creating dishes that aim to bring out the true flavours of each ingredient. Francesco's creations feature a carefully balanced selection of textures and flavour combinations that are sure to surprise and delight the palate.

#### **L'ATELIER ROBUCHON AT THE WOODWARD GENEVA – CHEF OLIVIER JEAN**

After 7 years as Executive Chef of L'Atelier in Taipei, Chef Olivier Jean is at the helm of the kitchens at The Woodward, an all-suite hotel located on the shores of Lake Geneva. L'Atelier Robuchon features the legendary chef's open kitchen concept, creating a theatrical dining experience for 36 guests seated around the counter, as well as two dining rooms that can be privatised. After Paris, Tokyo, New York, Shanghai, Las Vegas and Miami, Geneva welcomes the first and only Swiss address for the French chef.

#### **LA GRANDE TABLE MAROCAINE AT ROYAL MANSOUR MARRAKECH**

The fine-dining restaurant, emblematic of Marrakech, offers nothing but taste discoveries and sensory delight. Sh'hiwates, seafood pastillas, seven-vegetable couscous and Amlou ice cream show you a new interpretation of

Moroccan cuisine based on the deep secrets of tradition. The very best of Moroccan fine dining is served in an equally matched setting: simply royal. High ceilings, original artworks, designer linens, cutlery, glassware and peaceful melodies from luth and oud musicians: the omnipresent elegance is there to give rise to the greatest pleasure.

#### **TASTE OF SIAM, CHIVA-SOM HUA-HIN**

Overlooking the Gulf of Thailand, the Taste of Siam restaurant at Chiva-Som, Asia's renowned and pioneering wellness destination, is the perfect blend of contemporary and traditional Thai architecture. Ideal for those who want to relax and recover from the rigours of a hectic lifestyle, Taste of Siam Restaurant showcases Thailand's exceptional wellness cuisine and is the perfect place to enjoy a moment of serenity. Serving delicious wellness cuisine, the exclusive beachside restaurant offers a contemporary guilt-free menu of Thai and international cuisine. The culinary team's skills and techniques, which have been developed over many years, are combined with the freshest of organic ingredients, many grown in the resort's own organic garden, to deliver masterful cooking that delivers both flavour and goodness.



*Taste of Siam, Chiva-Som Hua-Hin*



*La Grande Table Marocaine at Royal Mansour Marrakech*



# BACK TO ROOTS - INDIA'S BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES

We are indeed fortunate that India remains a country with a living historical richness and an amazingly diverse culture.

## TT BUREAU

**B**efore cities even came into being, our ancestors' homes were the villages that are spread out across India. The tapestry of charming villages spread in pockets across the country offers a glimpse into its vibrant rural life.

Visiting some of India's most beautiful hamlets is akin to stepping into a timeless world, untouched by the clamour of urbanization. They showcase the country's diverse topography, from verdant valleys and snow-capped mountains to lush forests and tranquil river islands. Each village, with its distinct culture, traditions, and delectable cuisine, unfolds a new facet of India's deep-rooted heritage.

### ZIRO, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Nestled amidst the Subansiri district's pine hills in Arunachal Pradesh, Ziro is a captivatingly beautiful village. Known for its rice fields and the unique Apatani tribe, Ziro's charm lies in its untarnished beauty and simple lifestyle.

It is on the tentative list of being declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is the cultural heritage site of the Apatani tribe.

Visiting Ziro is akin to stepping into a portal that takes you into a world of emerald-green rice fields, bamboo groves, and a sky that changes hues with every passing hour. You find yourself enthralled by the simple lifestyle



Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh





*Om Beach, Gokarna*

of the locals, their tattooed faces adorned with large nose plugs, a reminder of the tribe's intriguing history.

With the placid backdrop of the pine-clad hills, Ziro's beauty is only magnified by the melodious folksongs that fill the air, particularly during the Ziro Music Festival, a treat for music enthusiasts.

### **GOKARNA, KARNATAKA**

Known for its pristine beaches and revered temples, Gokarna, a small temple town in Karnataka, exudes a charm quite like a village. This quaint town is famous for its serene, scenic beaches such as Om Beach, shaped like the spiritual symbol 'Om', Kudle Beach, and Paradise Beach, each offering a unique charm with their soft sands, clear blue waters, and coconut groves.

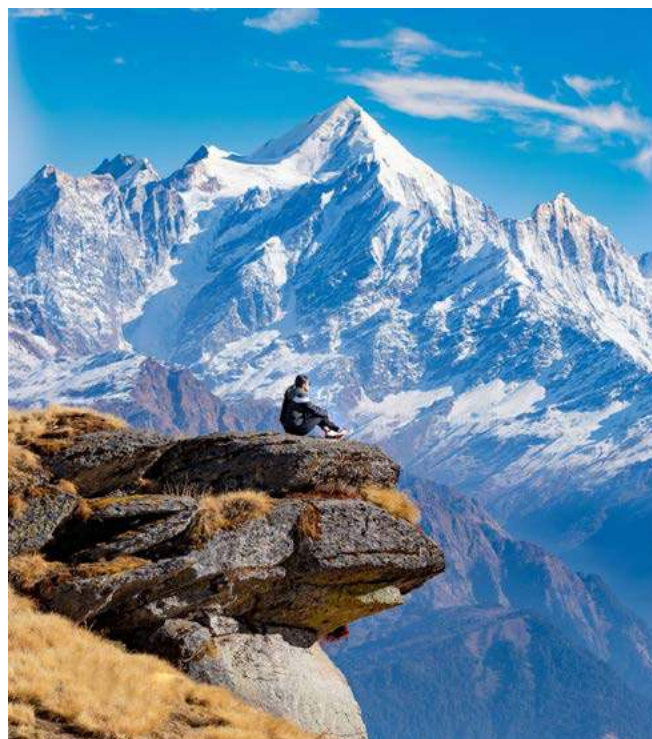
Exploring the narrow lanes of this village, you will come across many traditional houses, small cafes, and shops selling religious paraphernalia, alongside intricate handicrafts that reflect the local culture.

Its religious significance is equally profound, with the ancient Mahabaleshwar Temple being a prime pilgrimage site, attracting countless devotees.

### **MUNSIYARI, UTTARAKHAND**

Literally translating to a 'place with snow', Munsiyari is a quaint village in Uttarakhand that offers stunning views of the snow-capped Kumaon Himalayas. It's a starting point for several treks into the interior of the range.

The village is also home to the Bhotia tribe, known for their weaving skills and woollen handicrafts. The pristine environment, picturesque landscapes, and tranquil ambience make Munsiyari a must-visit place.



*Munsiyari, Uttarakhand*

### **MAJULI, ASSAM**

Majuli, one of the world's largest river islands, is a vibrant cultural hub of Assam. The village is famous for its Vaishnavite Satras (monastic centres), unique tribal culture, and biodiversity.

The annual Raas Festival is a significant cultural event showcasing the rich heritage of the region. Known for its beautiful sunrises and sunsets, Majuli is an ecological paradise and a haven for birdwatchers.

### **KHONOMA, NAGALAND**

Known as the first 'Green Village' in India, Khonoma in Nagaland is a remarkable blend of environmental conservation and tribal heritage.

The village is home to the Angami Naga tribe who are renowned for their sustainable agricultural practices, including the cultivation of the famous alder trees that enhance soil fertility. Khonoma's terraced fields, set against a backdrop of lush green forests, are a sight to behold.

### **NAKO, LAHAUL**

Nako is a village that lies on the route to Lahaul District. The locals are mostly engaged in agricultural activities, and animal fostering. Nako has an old Monastery that was built by Rinchen Zangpo the great translator. The walls of the monastery are covered with intricate drawings about the Buddha's life.

Another beautiful attraction is the "Nako Lake". The lake is a mirror image of the village, clean and full of life. You will also find little stone compartments where lambs and calves sit by and warm each other. It is a cute thing to see. Individuals frequently go to Nako to encounter isolation and reconnect with themselves.





*Diskit, Ladakh*

### **DISKIT, LADAKH**

Diskit is located in the remote district of Ladakh. The town is filled with calmness and peacefulness that invite numerous guests.

The town additionally plays host to the sculpture of Maitreya Buddha who is said to be the founder of this town. You can also go on a small excursion to Nubra Valley located just nearby. Partaking in Bird watching is likewise a popular activity in the valley.

### **MAWLYNNONG, MEGHALAYA**

Mawlynnong in Meghalaya is the state's diamond. The town has laid out a solid foundation advancing in the field of eco-tourism, a drive that is upheld by both the inhabitants and the public authority to protect their environment.

The village was deemed as the "cleanest village" in 2003. The village is not only pristine but also creative, with unique tree houses offering a bird's eye view of the Indo-Bangladesh border. Mawlynnong is the epitome of community-driven eco-tourism.

The village is famous for its living root bridges, made from rubber trees by the local Khasi tribe. It is a mind-baffling attraction. It is the definition of nature being an architect. You can attempt some lip-smack indulgences that are cooked in bamboo shoots. You can also go cavern exploration when in Mawlynnong.

### **KASOL, HIMACHAL PRADESH**

Nestled in the Parvati Valley, in Himachal Pradesh – Kasol is often referred to as 'Mini Israel' due to the influx of Israeli tourists. This village is a haven for trekkers, backpackers, and



*Idukki, Kerala*

nature lovers. The crystal-clear Parvati River flowing by, the serene ambience, and the surrounding snow-clad mountains together make Kasol a mesmerizing experience. The local cuisine, particularly the Israeli delicacies, is a must-try.

This little village is popular for flower cultures and festivals and is a hitchhiker's heaven. The Village is fixed for certain curious bistros that serve the absolute most heavenly worldwide foods you will eat upon.

The village is known for its ethereal excellence and some travelling trails. You can attempt a few travelling courses with Sherpas who will aid you in your treks and allow you to learn more about their livelihood.

### **IDUKKI, KERALA**

Idukki is set in the most elevated place of the western ghats in the state of Kerala. The village is known for consolidating the thrilled excellence of the slopes alongside the quietude of the little village. The village brags a great deal of mesmerizing attractions that incorporate, lakes woods cascades, Jungle



trails and so on. You can likewise go setting up camp by the Idukki curve dam. When you have finished exploring the village you can unwind with the neighbourhood ancestral individuals of Idukki who will likewise serve tons of delicacies of Kerala to dig on.

### **MANDAWA, RAJASTHAN**

Mandawa is a village that was established in the eighteenth century by rich Rajasthani traders. Their richness and luxurious way of life are clear in the numerous manors that adore the village. The legacy and solid chateaus draw in an enormous number of historic tales.

You can likewise explore the delightful manors and snap all the wonderful frescoes. The village has certain neighbourhood markets where you can purchase keepsakes for your relatives and friends. The inhabitants will pamper you with some delightful Rajasthani food that you ought to attempt.

### **YANA, KARNATAKA**

Yana is a village that is hidden away in the woods of Karnataka. Surrounded by the Sahyadri mountain gives it a beautiful panoramic view. The most visited part of the village is the dark glasslike rocks that resemble a Shiva lingam that has bewildered numerous researchers and scholars.

The stone assembles the consideration of a few pioneers just as nature fans to this spot. You can likewise visit the close by Vibhooti Falls when in Yana.

### **TABO, SPITI**

Tabo is a small village that is 47 kilometres away from Kaza and is situated near the banks of the Spiti river. Tabo holds places

of historical and Buddhist interest. The Tabo Monastery was founded in 966 CE by Rinchen Zangpo. The great translator which is now under the protection of ASI (Archaeological Survey of India). The monastery has 9 temples, four decorated stupas, and cave shrines.

One of the notable stories of the golden temple here is that it was plated in Gold. The interiors of the temples are old and covered with wall paintings in a particular style called Thangka.

Tabo also has another attraction, which is the Tabo Caves. The walls are decorated with murals and Thangka Paintings. Preservation measures are being taken to slow down the rate at which the paintings are deteriorating. There is also a small market where one can enjoy a warm bowl of Thukpa while interacting with the locals.

### **VISITING INDIA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES ARE A SOUL-ENRICHING EXPERIENCE**

Embarking on a journey to India's most beautiful villages is a soul-enriching experience that offers a different, quieter perspective of this vibrant country.

You will discover the traditional culture, sample delectable local cuisine, and marvel at the architectural heritage, blending effortlessly into the breathtaking surroundings.

More than just a visual delight, they provide an intimate interaction with the soil and soul of India. Each village, with its unique charm, leaves an indelible mark on your heart, compelling you to return.

This is a voyage not only to the picturesque landscapes but also into the heart of India's cultural richness and timeless traditions.



*Yana, Karnataka*



# DARE TO DREAM - BUCKET LIST EXPERIENCES

What's on your global travel to-do list? No matter what calls to your wanderlust, we've curated a list of phenomenal bucket-list jaunts, brimming with unparalleled experiences from all corners of the globe.

TT BUREAU



*Arizona's Upper Antelope Canyon*

**D**are to dream. Visualize a world without limits. Close your eyes and imagine that passport of yours with a smattering of multicoloured stamps, each one a grand adventure, a memory cherished. With an abundance of exotic destinations around every corner of this vast, beautiful world, whittling down your ultimate travel bucket list can indeed pose quite a challenge.

So, whether it's the ethereal dance of the Northern Lights, the winding journey of an open road, or an experience yet unnamed that calls out to you, take that leap of faith. Every item on this curated list is more than a destination; it is an

opportunity to collect a treasury of experiences, to live a thousand lives in one, and to kindle the flame of wanderlust that will keep your travel dreams eternally glowing.

***We share a curated list of phenomenal experiences for global travel:***

## **PHOTOGRAPH ARIZONA'S UPPER ANTELOPE CANYON**

Arizona's Upper Antelope Canyon is a geological marvel carved by time and the relentless forces of water and wind. This slot canyon is famous for its undulating sandstone walls that glow with radiant hues of red, orange, and pink as sunlight



filters down from above. It is one of the most photographed locations in the American Southwest and rightfully so.

A walk through the sinuous passages feels akin to navigating a labyrinth from a different world, etched with mesmerizing patterns of swirling rock. The guided tours offered by the Navajo Nation are the only means to access this protected site.

### GO UNDERGROUND AT THE BASILICA CISTERN

The Basilica Cistern in Istanbul offers an entirely different but equally awe-inspiring journey. This enormous underground water reservoir dates back to the 6th century during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Justinian I. With its dimly lit, forest-like assembly of 336 marble columns, each reaching 9 meters high, it creates an atmosphere of haunting beauty. Reflections of the column heads ripple on the water surface, generating a mesmerizing mirror effect.

The unique Medusa column bases, artfully carved and mysteriously inverted, add an intriguing note of history and myth to the site. Traverse the wooden walkways, the distant drip of water echoes, amplifying the sense of stepping back in time.

### TREK THE HIMALAYAS

There are plenty of pathways in the Himalayas to accommodate all adventure enthusiasts, so you don't have to summit Mount Everest to demonstrate you can hike the Himalayas. The Himalayan mountain range consists of hundreds of mountains spanning India, Nepal, China, Pakistan, and Bhutan — the majority of people wanted to travel to India or Nepal. Stick to the colder, clearer months of the year, from April to November.

There are several hikes to select from, but for those who simply would like to rest and enjoy the beauty of the range, there are lodges and luxury resorts that can suit the more easy-going tourist.

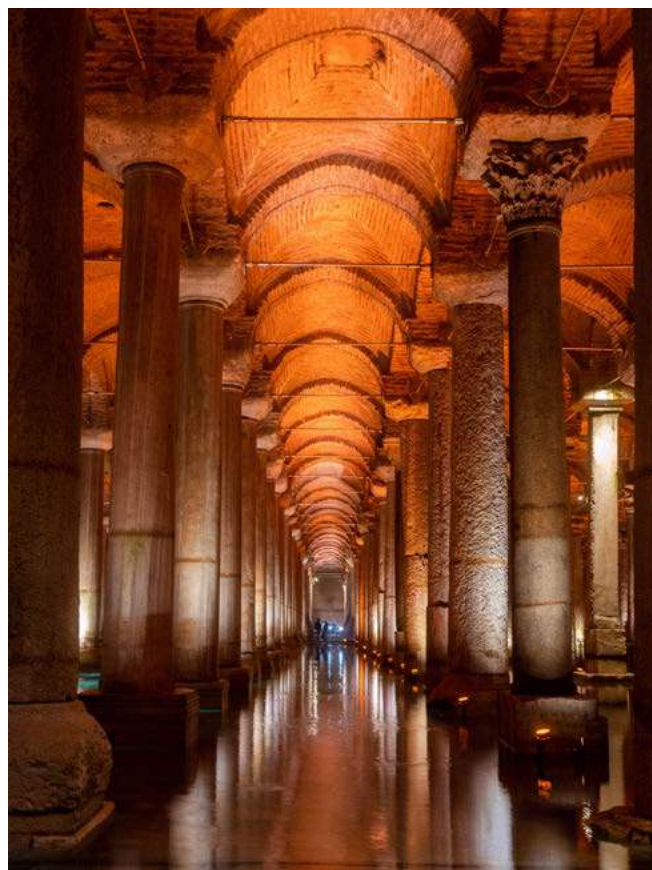
### WALK ALONG CHINA'S GREAT WALL

The Great Wall, which stretches over 21,000 kilometers, may not be walkable in its entirety, but it is well worth a visit. You may experience the architectural marvel in a variety of ways, including walking (have excellent shoes), cycling, helicopter rides, and even cable cars in some locations.

We suggest visiting the Great Wall of China during the warm months of the year, from March to May in the spring and September to November in the autumn. Hire a trip guide to fully appreciate the history and hidden mysteries of the old Chinese Empire. Thus, the sight of hiking the full length of China's Great Wall would be life-changing.

### EXPERIENCE THE ANCIENT 'LOST CITY OF PETRA

This UNESCO World Heritage Site has long enthralled visitors with its beautiful sandstone architecture and history. It is about 3000 years old and was formerly the



*The Basilica Cistern*



*China's Great Wall*



*The Ancient 'Lost City of Petra*

headquarters of the Nabataeans, a nomadic Arabian tribe who were merchants and crafters.

The city was subsequently forgotten, only to be rediscovered by Bedouin, who started living in the caverns in the 1980s. The intriguing city was named one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007, and every tourist who visits may witness why.





*The Galápagos*

Tourists to the huge 102-square-mile complex are overwhelmed by the magnificence of the Siq, the winding narrow canyon that was once a commerce channel. It was a focal point for religious processions, to the renowned 128-foot-high Treasury structure. Jordan has a record for being one of the friendliest and most inviting nations in the Middle East.

### **VIEW THE GALÁPAGOS**

The Galápagos Islands are a scientific paradise that hides natural secrets not found anywhere else on the planet. The islands stimulate reflection and astonishment as the birthplace of Charles Darwin's ideas on evolution by natural selection.

Many of the natural animals are specific to the length of islands off Ecuador's coast, including 200-year-old tortoises, enormous pink and yellow land iguanas, and flightless cormorants. The Galápagos Islands, which are situated at the confluence of three ocean currents, are home to a diverse wide range of aquatic life. The airport was opened with ecological and recycled materials and runs on solar and wind power, indicating that ecotourism has become a big industry in recent years.

### **EXPLORE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS**

The Northern Lights are one of nature's most stunning wonders and should be on everyone's bucket list. Nature's method of giving us a free light display is the dancing lights in the northern and southern hemispheres. The best time to see the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights in the North) is during the winter, from 8 p.m. until 2 a.m.

If you intend to remain up all night in the open to see this incredible spectacle, bring plenty of warm clothes and hot drinks. Viewing the northern lights is thus a transforming event that many people wait years, even a lifetime, for seeing since the circumstances must be ideal for this stunning show to occur.

### **MARVEL UPON GEYSERS AND GRIZZLIES AT YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**

Yellowstone National Park, home to 60 per cent of the world's geysers (including the park's most famous, Old



*Yellowstone National Park*

Faithful), is a sensory overload. There is still something to surprise, from eggy whiffs of roaring, hot springs that burst over a scorching terrain to the exhilarating sight of bison, elk, bears, and wolves dashing by.

Yellowstone became the first national park in the United States on March 1, 1872, and it now attracts over 4 million visitors each year. Rugged gorges, mountains, and woods abound, ideal for hiking, strolling, climbing, trail running, as well as other outdoor pursuits.

### **VISIT THE GREAT BARRIER REEF**

The Great Barrier Reef, one of Australia's greatest treasures, is a 2,000-kilometer coral reef ecosystem off the coast of Queensland. With so much scenic scenery, visitors have the choice of diving or snorkelling directly into the bright blue ocean to completely engage themselves in the reef or admiring the magnificence from afar by taking in breath-taking vistas from an aircraft or helicopter tour.

Whales, dolphins, sea turtles, dugongs, and porpoises, as well as around 1500 kinds of fish and billions of other microscopic marine critters, all call the Great Barrier Reef home.

### **AMAZE AT THE EXTRAORDINARY POWER OF IGUAZÚ FALLS**

The ferocious Iguazu Falls are a breath-taking display of nature's strength, and they are freely reachable from both Brazil and Argentina. The cascades are produced by a



sequence of numerous waterfalls that stretch over about two miles (3 kilometers) and combine forces to create spectacular.

The adjacent national park, which covers 67,720 hectares and is home to a diverse range of plant and animal species, makes it more interesting. As Garganta del Diablo (Devil's Throat) thunders over the cliffs, several rainbows can be seen when the spray and falling water are illuminated against the light.

**GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH ELEPHANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

You won't believe this, you're standing next to a youthful bull elephant who could or might not be poised to charge. Even as a junior jumbo, it's enormous – about a third the size of the Asian elephants you would have experienced in Thailand or India.

Trekking safaris are more emotional than vehicle safaris because they take you back to your roots. Addo Elephant Park in the Eastern Cape is the third-largest national park in South Africa and home to the world's densest elephant population, making it a must-see attraction for any tourist.

**FLOAT ON A MIRROR SURFACE AT SALAR DE UYUNI**

Bolivia's Salar de Uyuni, the world's largest Salt Lake, is converted into a vast mirror after rain, where the borders between sky and ground dissolve. The horizon vanishes as the flat salt surface reflects the clouds.

The lake, which covers 4085 square miles (10,582 square km) and is located at a height of 3653 meters (11,984 feet) in the Bolivian altiplano, is as captivating when dry, with the white fractured surface as that of another planet. There are even geyser sites to see, and flamingos swarm to high-altitude waters of aquamarine.

**THIS CURATED SELECTION OF GLOBAL ADVENTURES IS ONLY A STARTING POINT FOR YOUR ADVENTURES**

Every corner of our magnificent planet beckons with a unique allure, a secret charm that cannot be truly captured, but only experienced. This curated selection of global adventures is a starting point, an open invitation to the world, a call to broaden your horizons and immerse yourself in the myriad cultures, landscapes, and mysteries that await.



South Africa



Great Barrier Reef



# EXPLORING 2023: TOP SHIFTS IN LEISURE TRAVEL

Halfway through 2023 and there is a continued resurgence of wanderlust, coupled with an array of new trends that reflect the evolving desires and priorities of modern travellers. Let's delve into some of the hottest travel trends this year

## TT BUREAU

### SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

With an increasing global emphasis on environmental preservation, travellers are more conscious about their ecological footprint than ever. Many are opting for eco-friendly accommodations, engaging in voluntourism, and selecting destinations committed to conservation efforts. This has led to a surge in eco-resorts, biodegradable travel products, and even travel itineraries that benefit local habitats.

### DIGITAL DETOX RETREATS

The 'always connected' lifestyle has spurred a new kind of vacation - digital detox retreats. These are travel experiences that encourage visitors to unplug from their digital devices, offering them a genuine break from the virtual world. Such retreats might be found in remote areas without Wi-Fi or even in dedicated resorts with no-screen policies.

### HYPER-LOCAL EXPERIENCES

Today's travellers seek genuine, immersive experiences. Rather than just sightseeing, they want to dive deep into local cultures, learn indigenous crafts, enjoy traditional music, and taste authentic cuisines. Many tour operators now collaborate directly with local communities to offer these enriching experiences, ensuring that travel revenues also benefit local economies.

### SPACE TOURISM

As futuristic as it sounds, 2023 has seen significant advancements in space tourism. Companies like Blue Origin and SpaceX have laid the groundwork, making suborbital flights more accessible to civilians. The allure of seeing Earth from space has made this an incredibly sought-after, albeit premium, travel experience.

### SLOW TRAVEL

The rush of ticking off destinations from a bucket list is fading. In its place, 'slow travel' is emerging, where travellers spend more extended periods in one location, deeply exploring and



Workcations

understanding its essence. This approach is more sustainable and allows for a deeper connection to a destination.

### FLEXIBLE WORKCATIONS

With remote work becoming the norm for many, combining work and vacations – termed 'workcations' – is on the rise. Travellers are booking longer stays in destinations with robust Wi-Fi and serene environments, blending the line between leisure and work.

### HEALTH AND WELLNESS TOURS

The pandemic made everyone more health-conscious. This consciousness has translated into travel, with many tourists choosing destinations offering wellness retreats, spa treatments, meditation courses, and yoga sessions amidst nature.

### SOLO FEMALE TRAVEL

Empowered women around the world are breaking societal norms and venturing out alone. The travel industry has responded with female-only tours, women-friendly accommodations, and safety apps, catering to this growing segment.

Leisure travel trends highlight a shift towards more conscious, immersive, and personalized experiences. With sustainability at its heart and technology as its backbone, the future of travel promises to be exciting!





## **BRACE FOR STYLE**

Bracelets are understated pieces of ornaments that can make you look effortlessly masculine and handsome. Add to this Cartier's distinctive luxury sensibilities and you have a winner at hand. Wear this as a daily piece of jewellery or on special occasions – in either case, you'll look dapper.



# HYDERABAD'S JEWELLERY HERITAGE

Hyderabad's Jewellery Heritage makes the city a rich glittering hub of connoisseurs who seek traditional iconic styles in hand-crafted jewels.

TT BUREAU



*Nizam's Jewellery Collection in National Museum in Delhi*

Hyderabad, the City of Pearls, holds a rich lineage of bejewelled history and is famous for its timeless traditions of keeping alive the legacy of the jewellery of the Nizams. The regal past of this bustling city is beautifully embedded in the myriad styles of its traditional jewellery, which still charm connoisseurs with their exquisite craftsmanship and allure.

Tracing back the lineage of Hyderabad's jewellery-making tradition, it's impossible not to mention the wealthy reign of the Nizams. The royal house of Hyderabad is renowned worldwide for its priceless collection of jewels, diamonds, pearls, and other precious stones. Their fondness for jewels and adornments shaped Hyderabad's jewellery culture, influencing the aesthetics, techniques, and materials used even today.

The city of the Nizams, remains a premier destination for jewellery enthusiasts, as it is home to about 2000 jewellers that range from small-scale artisans to leading industry giants. The city alone consumes 120 tonnes of gold annually, translating to approximately 15,000 crores. It's the beating heart of India's jewellery business and the historic birthplace of the world-renowned Kohinoor diamond, along with Golconda diamonds, Kashmiri sapphires, and Gulf pearls.

## INCOMPARABLE COLLECTION OF THE NIZAMS

The Nizams of Hyderabad were known for their lavish lifestyles and a great fascination for gems and jewellery. They amassed one of the world's most spectacular





*Gold Turban Ornament With Emeralds*



*Antique Diamond, Spinel, Pearl And Enamel Sarpech*



*Kanthi Almas Kanval - Gold Necklace Set With Diamonds*

collections of jewels. This collection included over 173 jewels, including emeralds, diamonds, pearls, rubies and other precious stones. One of the most famous jewels in Nizam's collection was the Jacob Diamond, which is the fifth-largest diamond in the world. It is a 184.75-carat diamond and was used by the last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, as a paperweight! The incredible collection of the Nizams' jewellery was bought by the Government of India for around Rs 218 crore and is now kept in the Reserve Bank of India's vault in Mumbai. It is exhibited only occasionally at the National Museum in Delhi.

Hyderabad, often referred to as the 'City of Pearls', has been a vital global centre for pearl trade since the time of the Nizams. The city was renowned for its traditional methods of pearl drilling and stringing. The Nizams had a special fondness for Basra pearls, which come from the Persian Gulf. Hyderabad is still famous for these pearls, and you can find them in various markets around the city. The Nizams also patronised the local goldsmiths and craftsmen, leading to the development of the unique Deccan School of Art in jewellery, which combined Turkish, Arabian and local Indian elements in its design.

The Kollur mines near Golconda were the only known diamond mines in the world for many centuries and produced many of the world's most famous diamonds, including the Koh-i-Noor, the Hope Diamond, and the Regent Diamond. Hyderabad's connection to these historic mines further elevated its reputation as a jewellery hub.

### **HANDCRAFTED PERFECTION: THE ARTISTRY OF HYDERABADI JEWELLERY**

The charm of Hyderabad jewellery lies in its intricate craftsmanship. Skilled artisans employ age-old techniques to fashion gold, diamonds, pearls, and various other gemstones into stunning pieces.

Kundan work, pearl stringing, and silver encasing are some of the handcrafted processes that highlight Hyderabad's jewellery heritage, imbuing each piece with a unique character.

The city is still home to many skilled master craftsmen and local artisans who have been practising their craft for generations. Their unique skills, passed down from their

forefathers, ensure that Hyderabad continues to produce some of the finest jewellery in the country.

Hyderabad's jewellers work with a broad array of materials, each adding a distinctive touch to the city's jewellery designs. The city's title 'City of Pearls' speaks volumes about its centuries-old pearl trading tradition, while Golconda's diamonds have made it a hub for diamond lovers. Gold and platinum jewellery, inlaid with precious and semi-precious gemstones, also form an essential part of the city's jewelled heritage.

Hyderabad jewellery embraces a range of styles, from the traditional Satlada haar and Jadau work to modern, minimalist designs. While traditional styles exude a royal



*Hyderabad's Jewellery*





Hyderabad's Jewellery

grandeur, contemporary designs cater to the tastes of the modern clientele, seamlessly blending tradition with trendiness.

We take you on a journey of Hyderabad's jewellery heritage, its traditional styles, intricately handcrafted processes, precious gemstones used, and the finest places to indulge your love for these splendid creations.

#### QUINTESSENTIAL STYLES IN HYDERABAD'S JEWELLERY

**Nath:** A sign of the bride's purity, the Nath or nose ring is usually a gold piece featuring a ruby bead flanked by two pearls. As per Hyderabad custom, the bride pierces her nose before the wedding day. This ornament is considered a bridal essential and can be removed post-wedding.

**Sat Lada:** The Sat Lada, a bridal favourite, differs significantly from a choker. It is a multi-strand necklace, each strand enriched with Hyderabad pearls. This piece is a real head-turner, designed to extend from the neck to the navel, with each strand featuring a pendant of gold and gemstones. A must-have for brides seeking a royal aura!

**Maang Tikka and Jhoomar:** The Maang Tikka, is a forehead ornament that illuminates the bride's face. Crafted from gold and adorned with exquisite pearls and gemstones, this piece is a token of blessing from the bride's maternal relatives. The Jhoomar or Pasa, another Hyderabad favourite, is a triangular ornament made from pearls and

gold, often highlighted with red stones, worn on the left side of the forehead.

**Jada Huwa Lachcha:** This is no ordinary piece, it's a traditional Hyderabad choker-style necklace studded with uncut diamonds, pearls, and vibrant gemstones. The Jada Huwa Lachcha is an antique beauty that reigns supreme over other jewellery types. Its crowning glory is the green gemstones, beautifully accented with the intricate pearl-work characteristic of Hyderabad designs. For variety, one can opt for red or maroon gemstones in place of green.

**Karan Phool and Chandbali:** These two unique earring styles are essentials for a bridal trousseau. The Karan Phool, shaped like a large flower, complements the Jada Huwa Lachcha and is connected to strands of pearls that attach to the bride's hair. The Chandbali earrings, a celebrity favourite, resemble a crescent moon and feature uncut diamonds, gems, and pearls.

**Jugni:** The Jugni necklace, designed with two to three strings of pearls, often incorporates Kundan elements. This is one of the most exquisite pieces in a Hyderabad pearl set combination. It's not merely an ornament but a masterpiece that symbolises the rich craftsmanship of the city.

**Tirmani:** This intricate necklace style embodies Hyderabad's rich jewellery heritage. Made with three rubies or emeralds, Tirmani is also adorned with uncut diamonds and Hyderabad pearls, giving it a regal finish. This piece exudes royalty and is highly sought after for its elegance.

It is this dedication to keeping alive Hyderabad's jewellery legacy, with its diverse array of nose rings, necklaces, earrings, and headwear, that has carved a niche for itself in the world of bridal adornments. Although this style of jewellery is steeped in antique designs, it has successfully embraced contemporary trends, making it a must-have addition to any bride's wedding collection.

#### WHERE TO SPLURGE ON JEWELLERY IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad boasts numerous reputed jewellery stores, offering a broad spectrum of pieces to suit every preference and budget. From age-old shops in the Charminar area, known for their traditional and bridal jewellery collections, to luxury boutiques in Banjara Hills and Jubilee Hills, showcasing contemporary styles alongside heritage pieces, Hyderabad offers a unique shopping experience for jewellery lovers.

#### A SPARKLING JOURNEY IN THE CITY OF PEARLS

Hyderabad's heritage jewellery encapsulates the city's rich past and its evolving present. With their unique blend of traditional styles and contemporary trends, handcrafted processes, and a wide array of precious materials, these pieces narrate stories of an era bygone, while shaping the future of India's jewellery tradition. Whether you're a jewellery connoisseur or a casual admirer, a visit to Hyderabad promises an exquisite exploration of this timeless art form. Embark on your sparkling journey through the lanes of the City of Pearls.

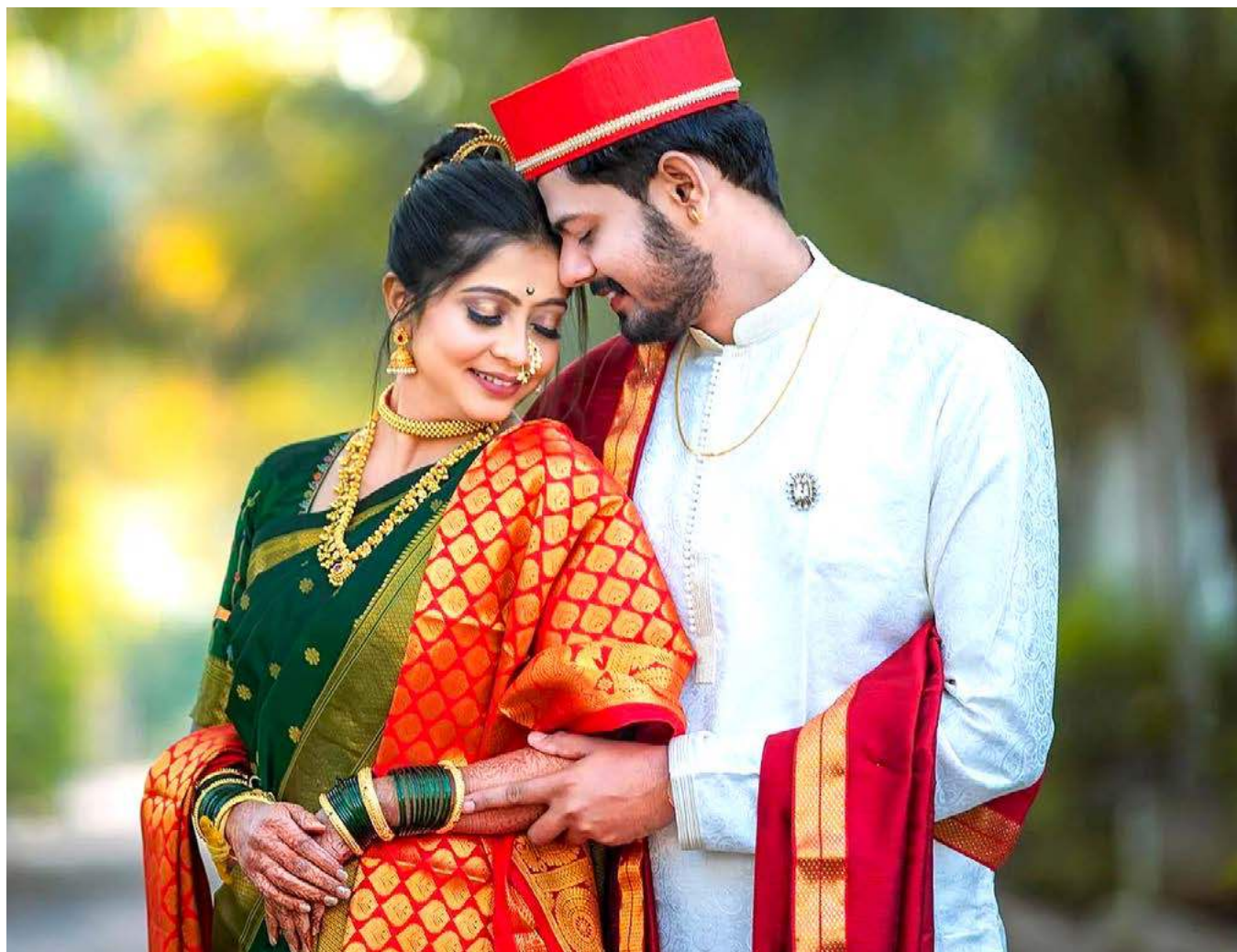


## SHADES OF GREY

High on style and functionality, this titanium-cased watch with its monochromatic finish and iconic design will surely be the talk of the town. The heart of this watch beats to the rhythm of the HUB1280 calibre, which has a 72-hour power reserve.



# THE MAGIC OF A TRADITIONAL WEDDING IN MAHARASHTRA



Marathi Wedding Couple

Marathi weddings are vibrant and full of exciting rituals that are sure to add zest to the ceremonies.

## TT BUREAU

When one sees a traditional wedding in Maharashtra, the first impression that springs to mind is "Simple is lovely." Marathi weddings are not just a union of two souls, but a rich tapestry of rituals, customs, and symbolism, each thread narrating its own fascinating tale of love, unity, and lifelong commitment.

Bathed in the warm hues of saffron, green, and gold, these weddings captivate your senses with an unmatched cultural splendor. Rooted deeply in the earthy ethos of Maharashtra, every ceremony, from the Sakhar Puda (sugar

packet) ritual to the vivacious Antarpat ceremony, unfolds like a beautifully choreographed performance, adding an irresistible zest to the proceedings.

Prepare yourself for a captivating journey as we delve into the heart of these vibrant celebrations, where every ritual is a vibrant symphony, a testament to the rich cultural heritage of Maharashtra. From melodious nuptial songs to the tantalizing aromas of traditional Marathi cuisine, every moment of a Marathi wedding is an enchanting spectacle that truly encapsulates the magic of this extraordinary culture.



## PRE-WEDDING RITUALS – MAHARASHTRA

- **Sakhar Puda** – One of the earliest rituals that marks the start of the wedding process is Sakhar Puda. It's similar to a traditional engagement ceremony. It usually takes place a few days before the wedding. The two families get together, and the groom's mother presents the bride with a saree, jewellery, and a packet of sugar, or Sakhar Puda, as a sign of her welcome into the family.
- **Muhurt Karane** – The family priest determines the exact date and time of the wedding, and wedding festivities begin at both houses by asking five married women, or 'Suhasanie,' to participate on a pre-determined lucky day a few months before the wedding. The women pound turmeric or halkund to be used later in an iron pestle laced with mango leaves. They prepare sandage and roll out papads. Following the rites, the bride's side often hosts a rukhvat — a display of the bride's handmade decorative and food items.
- **Kelvan** – A puja is offered to the family deity by both the bride and groom's sides a few days before the wedding, with their own relatives and friends in attendance. The Kelvan is the name for this ritual, which is usually followed by a lunch.
- **Halad Chadavane** is a pre-wedding ceremony that takes place the day before the wedding. The same five Suhasinis use the turmeric pound at the Muhurt Karane ceremony. They use mango leaves to apply the turmeric paste to the bride's head, shoulders, hands, and feet, as well as the groom's. The ceremony is held first at the groom's home, after

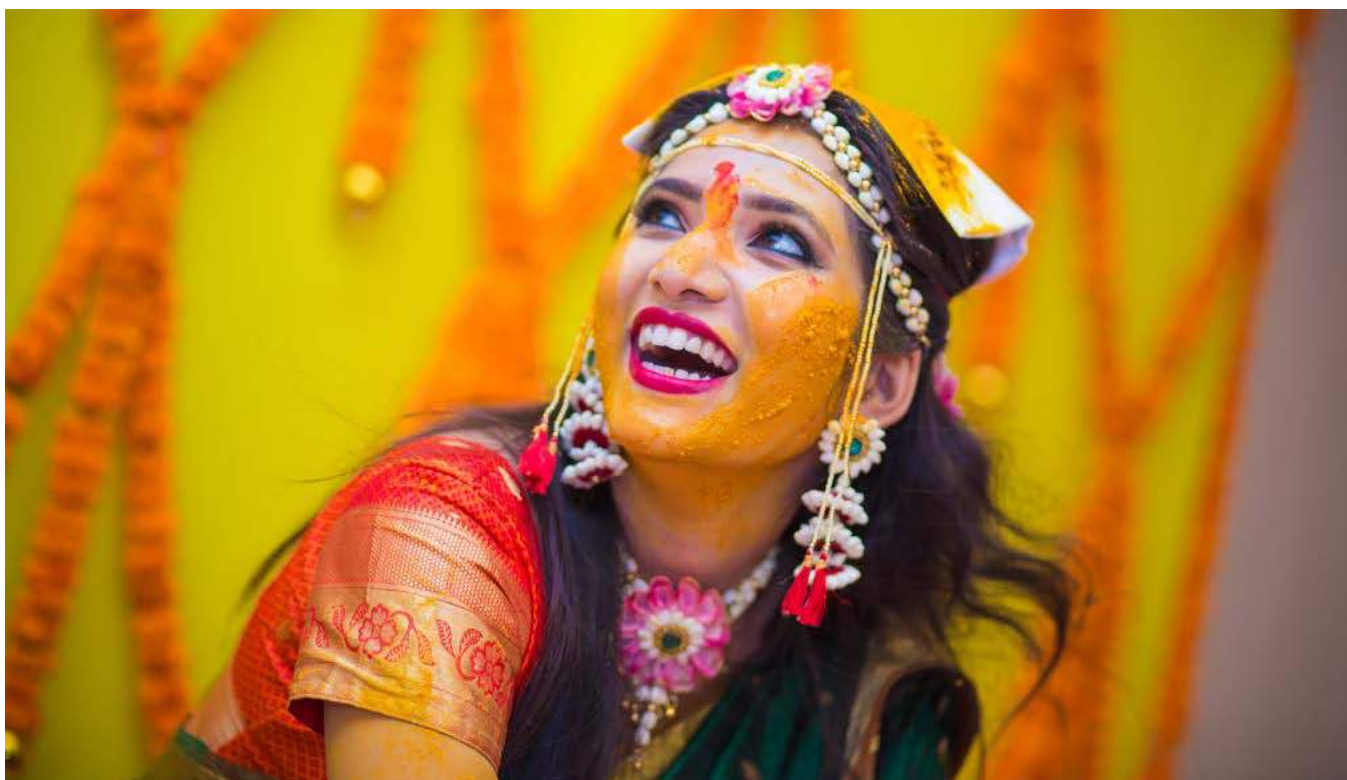
which the leftover turmeric paste is delivered to the bride's home and applied on her.

## WEDDING RITUALS – MAHARASHTRA

- **Ganpati Puja**, Devdevak and Gurihar Puja – The wedding day begins with Lord Ganesha's adoration, as it does with many other significant Maharashtrian celebrations. Ganpati Puja is done for the couple's prosperous future. Devdevak then invites the family deity to the wedding Mandap. The bride, clad in her bridal gown, worships the goddess Parvati for a successful life at Gurihar Puja. The bride's maternal uncle presents her with rice, which she subsequently delivers to the Goddess.
- **Antarpat** – The groom now enters the mandap wearing a customary cap or turban, the mundavalya, and sits at his allocated spot on the mandap. The Antarpat is a garment that is draped in front of the groom to keep him from seeing the bride.
- **Sankalp** – The Mangalashtakas, or sacred wedding vows, are chanted by the priest. Her maternal uncle



*Sakhar Puda*



*Halad Chadavane*





Saptapadi

leads the bride to the mandap. The Antarpatri is withdrawn, and the couple can see each other for the first time. They exchange garlands and are showered with akshatas (rice that has not been broken).

- **Kanyadaan** – The groom's father then offers his daughter to him, along with his blessings, so that they might begin a life of Dharma, Artha, and Kama. The groom takes his blessings and declares that he is gaining love in exchange for love, and that the bride represents Divine love that descends from Heaven and is received on Earth.
- **Saptapadi** – The couple encircles the sacred fire seven times while conducting the Marathi marriage rite of Saptapadi, saying out loud the seven wedding vows.
- **Karmasamapti** – The pair idolises and performs the Laxmi Pujan until the fire is extinguished. The bride is then given a new name by the husband. Ultimately, the bride's brother tweaks the groom's ear to remind him of his marital responsibilities, and the couple accepts everyone's blessings.

#### POST-WEDDING RITUALS – MAHARASHTRA

- **Varat** – After the wedding ceremonies are completed, the bride bids a sorrowful farewell to her family and is brought to her husband's home. Even during Gaurihar Puja, the groom picks up Devi Parvati's silver idol. The Varat pertains to the bride's departure from her paternal home and arrival at her husband's home.
- **The first ceremony** following a wedding is Grihapravesh. The new couple is embraced by the



Sankalp

groom's mother, who washes their feet with milk and water. Following that, the bride is requested to enter the house by knocking over a glass of rice that has been placed at the entryway. With their right foot, the pair enters the house.

Lastly, a reception party is held, during which the newlywed couple meets and greets all of their family and friends while delectable cuisine is served. The bride wears a sari and jewellery given to her by the groom's family, while the groom wears the bride's family's outfit.

#### ADORNED IN TRADITION: WEDDING ATTIRE

Again, for the wedding, the Maharashtrian groom wears a modest white or beige cotton kurta with a white Kanche or Dhoti with a thin border. They wear a crimson



or gold-coloured ornamental piece of cloth across their shoulders. They may wear a pheta turban or the customary white Gandhi-style cap on their heads.

In traditional Maharashtrian trouser style, the bride wears a silk saree with ornate gold borders in vivid colours. Yellow or marigold with green or purple borders are the most popular colour combinations. The saree might be Paithani, which measures roughly 6 yards, or a traditional Nauvari saree, which measures 9 yards. Green glass bangles or Choodas, mangal sutras with two hollow gold cups at the centres, Thusi or traditional necklaces, the classic Maharshtriannath, and Vaaki or armlets are all worn by Maharashtrian brides. Her forehead is adorned with a moon-shaped bindi, which is distinctive of Maharashtra.

A headband called as 'Mundavalya' is worn by both the bride and groom. Two rows of pearls dangle down from the headband in front of the ears, and two strings of pearls are knotted horizontally across the forehead.

### TRADITIONAL CUISINE AT A MAHARASHTRIAN WEDDING

**Vangi Bharli (Stuffed Eggplant)** – When it comes to deciding on a Maharashtrian meal menu, this dish is at the top of the list. You can include this dish in your main course menu and rest assured that your visitors will be licking their fingers. The meal is created with a stuffing of tomatoes, onions, Indian spices, and herbs stuffed in brinjals and is popular throughout Maharashtra.

**Pandhara Rassa** – White curry is known as Pandhara Rassa in Marathi. It's a dish that even non-vegetarians enjoy. This meal is produced with mutton and gravy that has been patiently cooked with the particular ingredient of Kolhapuri masala, as well as other Indian spices and herbs.

**Masala Bhaat** – Masala Bhaat is Maharashtra's equivalent of pulao, and it's popular throughout the state. You will not be upset if you include this in the rice area of your wedding food menu. It's a vegetable-and-spice-based dish. The Garam Masala is the primary ingredient that creates the magic and provides it a smoky flavour.

**Poli Puran** – Puran Poli is a typical Maharashtra dish that is eaten at weddings and celebrations. It's a flatbread with a delicious lentil paste packed inside. It is well-liked by all and can be served with ice cream.

**Amrakhand** – Amrakhand is an absolute must-try dessert. Curd, sugar, almonds, pistachios, saffron, and green

cardamom are used to make this dish. The Mango Amrakhand is a different variation to consider.

**Kadhi Sol** – This is a famous drink in Maharashtra and Goa as well. It's commonly served with rice or as an after-dinner drink. Coconut milk and kokum are used to make it.

**Aluvadi** – Aluvadi is a spinach or fresh taro leaf-based deep-fried meal. It's a great appetiser to provide before your guests dig into the main course. It has a tart and sweet flavour.

**Kothimbir Vadi** – In Marathi, kothimbir vadi means coriander, and it is one of Maharashtra's most famous meals. One can serve this meal with a dollop of green chutney on the counter.

### AN EXTRAORDINARY CELEBRATION OF LIFE AND LOVE

In the grand finale, a Maharashtra wedding is nothing short of a mesmerizing spectacle of love, unity, and cultural richness. The symphony of rituals, from the spiritual vibrance of the Antarpat ceremony to the delightful resonance of Mangalashtak, weaves a tapestry of unforgettable moments. Marathi weddings celebrate not just the coming together of two individuals, but also the glorious cultural legacy passed down generations. The scents of time-honoured cuisine, the rhythm of traditional nuptial songs, and the shimmering colours of bridal attire all come together to create an experience that reverberates with the unique magic and charm of Maharashtra.

This extraordinary celebration of life and love is, indeed, a testament to the vibrant cultural ethos that defines the Marathi community. This vivid tableau of rituals, traditions, and emotions, beautifully encapsulates the true essence of a magical Maharashtrian wedding.



Amrakhand



Kothimbir Vadi



Masala Bhaat

# TIMELESS ESCAPES - INDIA'S HISTORICAL WONDERS

Are you looking for an authentic way to explore India's rich history? India has a diverse range of historic destinations that are sure to transport you back in time.

## TT BUREAU

As a land of timeless tales, India's rich history beckons travelers with an array of destinations where antiquity still whispers its stories through magnificent mausoleums, colossal monuments, vibrant bazaars, and pulsating metropolises. These are places where the echoes of ancient empires reverberate and the footprints of historical epochs are still palpable.

### A TALE OF RAJASTHANI ARCHITECTURE THE MAJESTIC AMER FORT

The massive Amber Fort, also known as Amer Palace Fort, one of Jaipur's most popular tourist sites, sits atop a tiny hill about

11 kilometres from the city centre. The majestic Amer Fort is a sprawling palace complex constructed of pale yellow and pink sandstone and white marble. The fort is divided into four portions, each with its own courtyard. At the Amer Fort, there are numerous sites to see, including the diwan-e-aam, such mandir, and the Sheesh Mahal. The Amer Fort is a must-see for anyone interested in Rajasthani architecture.

As visitors approach Amer Fort, they are greeted by the grand main entrance, known as the Suraj Pol (Sun Gate), which is adorned with intricate frescoes and ornate carvings. This majestic gateway sets the stage for the architectural wonders that await within the fort's walls.



*The Majestic Amer Fort*





*The Rumtek Dharma Chakra Centre*

The interior of Amer Fort is a treasure trove of palaces, courtyards, and ornate chambers, each showcasing a unique blend of Rajput and Mughal architectural styles. One of the highlights of Amer Fort is the Sheesh Mahal (Mirror Palace), a breathtaking chamber entirely embellished with thousands of tiny mirrors, creating a dazzling effect when light falls on them. The fort also houses the Sukh Niwas (Pleasure Palace), which features a system of water channels designed to cool the air during hot summers.

In the evenings, Amer Fort comes alive with the spectacle of the Sound and Light Show, where the fort's history is narrated through colourful lights and sound effects. Amer Fort stands as a proud testament to the valour, artistic genius, and regal lifestyle of the Rajput rulers.

### **UNEARTH THE ANCIENT SECRETS OF INDIA WITH A TRIP TO THE ELEPHANTA CAVES, MAHARASHTRA**

The Elephanta Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located on Elephanta Island in Maharashtra, India, are a captivating historical destination that serves as a mesmerizing throwback in time. These caves, together with the natural beauty of the area, make for an ideal one-day trip from Mumbai. The caves' panels depict five stages in an ascetic's life: the significance of a teacher, his grace, the illusory presence of the world, the oneness of Shiva-shakti, and Shiva's ultimate form.

Elephanta caves may be reached by small motorboats departing from the Gateway of India. The journey itself is an experience, as it offers breathtaking views of the Arabian Sea and the Mumbai skyline.

Dating back to the 5th to 8th centuries, the Elephanta Caves are a series of rock-cut temples dedicated to Lord Shiva,

one of the most revered deities in Hinduism. The caves are a testament to the artistic and sculptural achievements of the ancient Indian civilization, showcasing a blend of Hindu and Buddhist influences.

The main cave, known as the Shiva Cave or the Great Cave, is the largest and most impressive of the caves on Elephanta Island. As visitors enter the cave, they are immediately awestruck by the colossal statue of Lord Shiva, known as Maheshmurti. This three-faced sculpture, depicting Shiva as the creator, preserver, and destroyer, stands at an impressive height of 20 feet and is a masterpiece of ancient Indian art.

The interiors of the cave are adorned with intricately carved reliefs, depicting scenes from Hindu mythology, including episodes from the life of Lord Shiva and various gods and goddesses. Apart from the main cave, the Elephanta Caves complex also features several smaller caves, each with its unique sculptures and architectural elements.

The caves are believed to have been active centres of worship and pilgrimage during ancient times, attracting devotees from various parts of India and beyond. They serve as a gateway to the past, offering a window into the ancient traditions, beliefs, and artistic genius of the people who once inhabited this region.

### **DISCOVER THE SACRED WONDERS OF SIKKIM AT THE RUMTEK DHARMA CHAKRA CENTRE**

The Dharma Chakra Centre is a Buddhist temple in Sikkim and is located on the hilltop of Rumtek. It was founded in 1740 and was left by Rumtek, which means God. About a 45-minute drive from Gangtok (24 miles), the seat of Tibetan Buddhism's Kagyud order. It has housed the world's most



unusual holy scriptures and precious artefacts since the 1960s when His Holiness the XVIth Karmapa arrived.

This historical destination offers a fascinating glimpse into the world of Tibetan Buddhism and serves as a throwback in time to the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Situated on a picturesque hilltop, the Rumtek Dharma Chakra Centre is the largest and most significant monastery in Sikkim. It was originally built in the 16th century, but its current structure dates back to the 1960s when it was reconstructed by the 16th Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, after he fled from Tibet to India.

The monastery showcases traditional Tibetan architecture, with its ornate golden roofs, intricate murals, and prayer wheels. The main building, known as the Golden Stupa, houses precious relics and artefacts, including statues, thangkas (religious paintings), and sacred scriptures. These treasures are a testament to the deep spiritual heritage and artistic traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

Inside the monastery, the main prayer hall, known as the Dharma Chakra Hall, is a sight to behold. The hall features a massive statue of the 16th Karmapa, flanked by statues of other important Buddhist figures. Elaborate wall paintings, colourful tapestries, and intricate woodwork adorn the interior, creating a visually stunning experience.

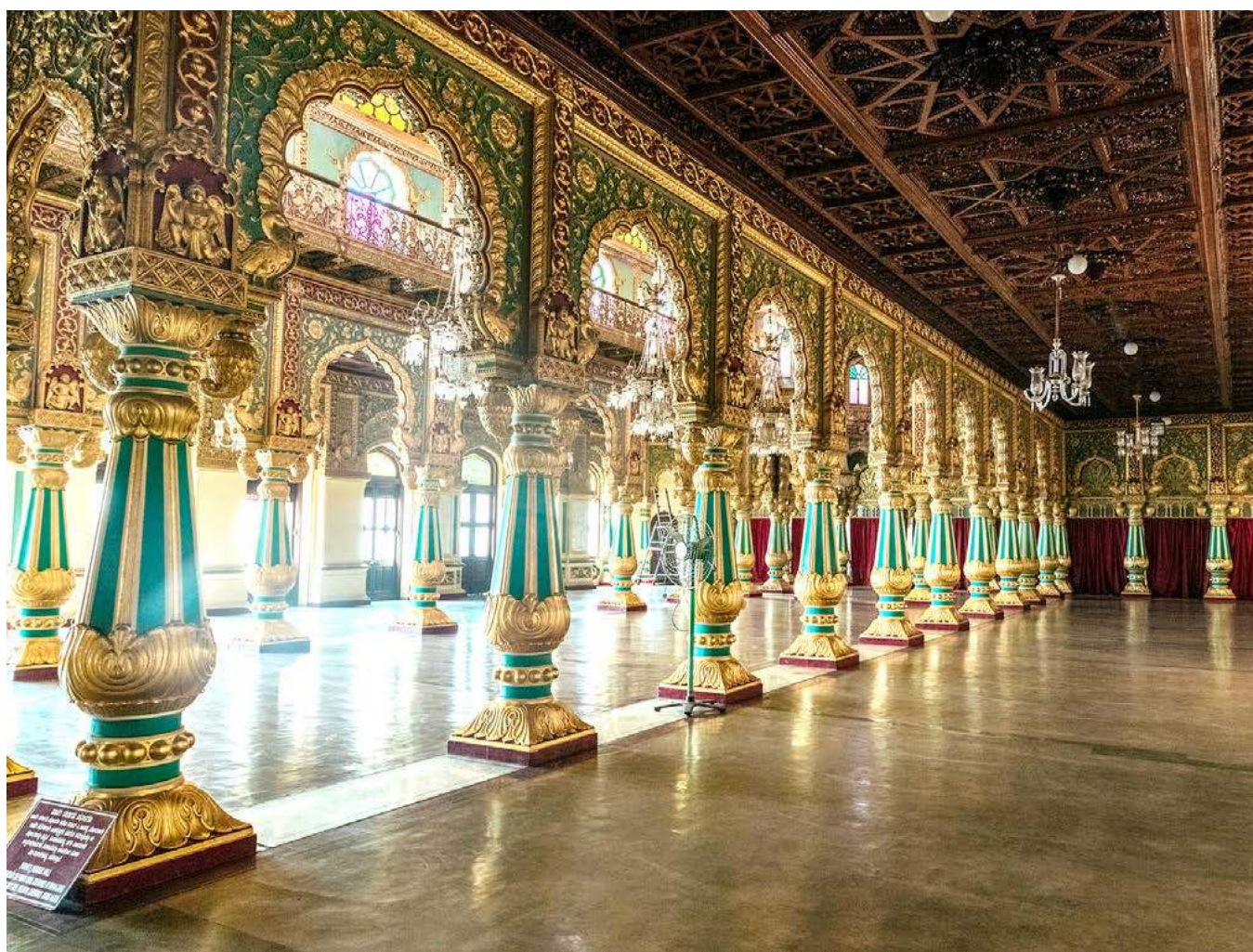
Visiting the Rumtek Dharma Chakra Centre is not just an opportunity to witness the splendour of Tibetan Buddhist architecture and rituals but also a chance to gain a deeper understanding of the teachings and practices of this ancient tradition.

## **THE MYSORE PALACE KARNATAKA – OF MONARCHS AND ROYALTY**

The Mysore Palace or the Mysuru Palace that stands today, was completed in 1912 at a cost of Rs. 41,47,913. A work of Indo-Saracenic art on par with large Mughal palaces in the north and majestic colonial public buildings in the south. This opulent palace, often referred to as the “City of Palaces,” stands as a magnificent testament to the grandeur and architectural finesse of the Wadiyar dynasty, who ruled the Kingdom of Mysore for centuries.

Built in the Indo-Saracenic architectural style, Mysore Palace is an awe-inspiring blend of Hindu, Muslim, Rajput, and Gothic influences. The palace is a visual spectacle, especially during the Dasara festival, when it is illuminated with thousands of lights, transforming it into a mesmerizing sight that attracts visitors from near and far.

The interiors are a marvel of craftsmanship, with intricately carved doors, gilded ceilings, stained glass windows, and elaborate murals that depict scenes from



*The Mysore Palace Karnataka*





*Odisha's Sun Temple*

Hindu mythology and the history of the Wadiyar dynasty. The Durbar Hall, with its towering columns, arches, and a golden throne and the Ambavilasa, a grand hall adorned with Belgian crystal chandeliers, stand out with their magnificence. One of the highlights of the Mysore Palace is the palace's private apartments, known as the Royal Residence. The royal throne, silver palanquins, and other artefacts on display add to the sense of awe and fascination.

### **UNVEIL THE ARTISTIC SPLENDOR OF ODISHA'S SUN TEMPLE**

The exquisite Sun Temple in Konark is the pinnacle of the Odisha temple building and one of the world's most beautiful religious monuments. The entire temple was created in the shape of a huge chariot with seven horses and twenty-four wheels, conveying the sun deity, Surya, across the skies, by King Narasimhadeva in the 13th century. Since the Vedic time, Surya has been a prominent deity in India.

This historical destination, often referred to as a "poem in stone," takes visitors on a mesmerizing journey back in time. Picturesquely located on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, the Sun Temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is considered one of the most stunning examples of ancient Indian architecture.

The temple complex is a marvel of engineering and artistic craftsmanship, and consists of three main structures: the Natya Mandap (Dancing Hall), the Jagamohana (Assembly Hall), and the Vimana (Main Temple). Every inch of the structure is adorned with intricate sculptures depicting mythological stories, celestial beings, deities, animals, and intricate motifs.

The erotic sculptures of the Sun Temple, famously known as the "Khajuraho of the East," have fascinated visitors for centuries.

These sensuous depictions are a celebration of human emotions and desire, highlighting the belief in the union of physical and spiritual realms. The eroticism, however, represents just a fraction of the overall artistic brilliance of the temple's intricate carvings.

The Sun Temple was built in such a way that the first rays of the rising sun would pass through its main entrance, illuminating the sanctum sanctorum.

The engineering prowess of the architects is evident in the precise alignment of the structure with the movements of the sun. The Sun Temple also showcases a deep reverence for astronomy.

The temple is designed as a colossal celestial chariot with twelve pairs of exquisitely carved stone wheels, representing the twelve months of the year. These wheels not only add to the visual grandeur of the temple but also serve as sundials, accurately telling time based on the position of the sun.

Visiting the Sun Temple of Konark is like stepping into a time capsule that transports you to a glorious era of art, architecture, and spiritual devotion.

A trip to these ancient destinations with their historical treasures, is not just a treat for history enthusiasts but also for those seeking tranquility and a deeper understanding of India's rich heritage.

A visit to these mesmerizing destinations is like stepping into a time capsule, allowing you to experience the grandeur and splendour of ancient India while immersing yourself in the cultural tapestry of the region.





# SACRED SPACES: EXPLORE THE EXQUISITE TEMPLES OF RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan's timeless temples encapsulate the very soul of India's religious and cultural diversity.

TT BUREAU

These divine sanctuaries, sculpted over centuries, provide a fascinating glimpse into the timeless traditions, intricate artistry, and profound spirituality that continue to thrive in the heart of India. The state is also regarded as the "Land of Kings" because of the nation's long and rich history.

This wonderful state will wow you with its magnificence, luxury, and colourful combination of heritage, music, food and spirituality. Majestic forts and palaces, beautiful deserts with chilly evenings, and notably temples foretell a re-enactment of history and religion.

Delving into the spiritual heritage of Rajasthan, one cannot miss the large number of exquisite temples that mark the landscape. Many represent a distinct style of architecture, a certain period in history or the grandeur of an era. The Dilwara Jain Temples in Mount Abu for example are masterpieces of intricate marble carvings, exemplifying the elegance of Jain architectural style.

The Eklingji Temple near Udaipur, a complex of 108 temples enclosed by high walls, reverberates with the sanctity of Lord Shiva while the Nathdwara's Shrinathji Temple, famed for its idol of seven-year-old Lord Krishna, draws devotees from far and wide.

Similarly, the Brahma Temple in Pushkar, one of the very few temples dedicated to Lord Brahma, holds a significant place in Hindu mythology. Karni Mata Temple in Deshnok, also known as the "Rat Temple," is a unique spectacle with its holy rodents. Ranakpur Jain Temple, nestled in the valley of Aravalli, stands as a magnificent edifice of white marble, known for its distinct architecture.

The Somnath Temple in Sirohi, an architectural marvel, pays homage to the 'Moon God.' Osian Temples in Jodhpur, a cluster of ancient Brahmanical and Jain temples, transports one to a bygone era. Finally, the Birla Temple in Jaipur, a contemporary masterpiece built of pure white marble, gloriously represents India's secular ethos, with its walls bearing the teachings of saints and philosophers from various religions.



These temples, each unique and awe-inspiring, are not merely places of worship; they are vivid chronicles of Rajasthan's rich spiritual and architectural heritage. Each temple in Rajasthan has its public persona. Most of them were constructed throughout the reigns of various monarchs and hence symbolize those times even now. Experience the grand temples that together evoke one of India's richest histories.

### THE EKLINGJI TEMPLE, UDAIPUR

The Eklingji Temple in Udaipur is one of Rajasthan's most beautiful temples and one of the nation's many prominent tourist spots. Its enormous and attractive construction illustrates the historical architectural masterpiece. It was created in the eighth century and has undergone several alterations throughout the years to retain its beautiful, rustic yet visually attractive appearance.

It is devoted to Lord Vishnu, although it also has Lord Ganesha, Goddess Parvati, and Lord Kartikeya statues. As you approach, you are greeted with a massive ceiling that shelters a gigantic silver figure of Nandi (bull of Lord Shiva and his vehicle). The temple's main attraction, however, is the shivling, which is adorned with a silver serpent.

### THE BIRLA MANDIR, JAIPUR

It is one of Rajasthan's most beautiful temples, frequented by worshippers and visitors all year. It is also referred to as the Lakshmi-Narayan temple. It maintains a clean appearance at all times, due to the white marble including the deity statues used in its construction.

It was traditionally attributed to Lord Vishnu and his companion, Goddess Laxmi, who is considered to bring prosperity and success to Hinduism. It was constructed in

1998 by the famous Birla family. A museum is also located on the temple grounds. The domes, though, are what stand out most about this one-of-a-kind Rajasthan temple. The Birla Mandir features three domes designed in the styles of India's mainstream religions, representing Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism. It certainly embodies India's secular mindset!

### THE RANAKPUR JAIN TEMPLE

Considered the most famous temple in Rajasthan, Ranakpur Jain Temple has outstanding beauty with 1,444 carved sculptures reflecting classical grandeur in a space of around 48,000 square feet. Its 24 chambers, 80 domes, and 400 columns make it worthwhile to visit as a visitor, as well as a follower praying here. The temple is devoted to Lord Adinath and it has the tallest spire.



*The Birla Mandir, Jaipur*



*The Eklingji Temple, Udaipur*



This temple's architectural style is so distinctive that no two pillars are the same. It is one of Rajasthan's most well-known Jain temples in India. A 6ft tall statue of Lord Adinath is also a key draw within the temple, which stands beautifully beneath the main temple complex's biggest tower. Surya Temple, Chaumukha Temple, Parshvanath Temple, and Amba Mata Temple are among the temples that adjoin this one and attract pilgrims throughout the year.

### THE MEHANDIPUR BALAJI TEMPLE

It is one of Rajasthan's most important Hanuman temples, located in the tiny village of Dausa, and was built in the 11th century. Its structure is classic Rajput in elegance. It mostly draws travellers because of its ceremonial treatment of physical or supernatural problems, such as attacks by demonic spirits. Within the temple, three idols – Lord Hanuman, Pret Raj, and Bhairav are claimed to be over 1,000 years old.

If you want to have chills, head to the major hallways where there are a lot of possessed men and women in the frightening recovery period. It is a must-see temple because of its enigmatic vibe!

### THE TIJARA JAIN TEMPLE, ALWAR

As one of Rajasthan's most prestigious Jain temples, people throng its grounds all year. It is also extremely important to archaeologists. It was unearthed in 1956 and has a 15-inch idol of Chandra Prabhu made completely of white marble. In 1972, another 8-inch black idol of Chandra Prabhu was uncovered.

The temple is thought to have been built in the 16th century. It boasts a stunning structure and sky-high domes, and the inner walls are covered with rare artworks and lovely glassworks depicting holy scenes from Chandra Prabhu's lifetime. There is a deep conviction that all genuine wishes were fulfilled here, and the 'Kundli Dust' even works as a cure for all grief and sickness.

### BRAHMA MANDIR, PUSHKAR

Pushkar's Brahma Mandir is an exceedingly prominent religious tourism destination in Rajasthan. It is considered the oldest temple in Rajasthan and is said to be over 2000

years old and worshipped by Lord Brahma, the Hindu god of formation. However, Pushkar boasts around 500 temples, the most noteworthy is the Brahma Temple.

In the mind of the worshippers, the temple carries symbolic importance. Lord Brahma is said to have arrived on Earth and conducted a yajna on the precise site where the temple now exists. The temple's interior Sanctorum has an idol of Lord Brahma and his wife, Gayatri. Its shikhara (tower), made of marble and granite slabs, may be seen from afar. Maharaja Jagat Raj of Ratlam is responsible for the existing construction as it stands now.

### KALIKA MATA TEMPLE, CHITTORGARH

The Chittorgarh Fort is among India's biggest forts and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was formerly the capital of



*The Ranakpur Jain Temple*



*The Tijara Jain Temple, Alwar*



*Brahma Mandir, Pushkar*



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*The Bisaldev Temple, Bisalpur*

Mewar and is home to various monuments that stun visitors with their pure magnificence. Kalika Mata Temple in Chittorgarh is one of them. This temple, located directly across from Padmini Palace, was constructed during the rule of the Pratihara Rajput kingdom.

It is devoted to Goddess Kali and is located on an elevated rock accessible by a set of stairs. Aside from its historical significance, this temple is notable for its strong pillars, massive domes, and mandapas (porch-like structures). In the evenings, a ratri Jagran is also hosted in the temple compound.

### **THE SHRI MAHAVIR JI TEMPLE, KARAUJI**

Jain temples are among the most well-known temples in Rajasthan. Shri Mahavir Ji Temple, nestled in Rajasthan's Karauli district, tops the list. Despite what the name suggests, this temple complex has five temples. In architectural terms and majesty, each is as wonderful as the other. Atishaya Kshetra Shri Mahavirji, Bhagwan Parshvanath Jinalaya, Shantinath Jinalaya, and Kirti Ashram Chaityalaya are the five temples worshipped by visitors throughout the year.

Each of these temples seems to have something unique about it. The Manastambha, also referred to as the Column of Pride, is the primary feature at the Atishaya Kshetra Temple. It is over 52 feet tall and is topped with Tirthankaras looking in all four directions which have the utmost significance as per Jain mythology.

For its remarkable mirror work, the Bhagan Jinalaya Temple is also known as kaanch ka mandir (temple of mirrors). Apart from this, the Shantinath Jinalaya is particularly well-known for its 32-foot-tall statue of Shantinath (the 16th Jain Tirthankar).

### **THE BISALDEV TEMPLE, BISALPUR**

This temple is in the Pali area, next to the beautiful Banas River. The Archaeological Survey of India has designated it as a Monument of National Importance, thus worshipers and visitors alike go to this religious site in big numbers. It is



*Kalika Mata Temple, Chittorgarh*

named after Lord Gokarneswara. When the Banas River level rose, the courtyards of this old temple became somewhat flooded. Its grand halls with exquisite carvings on the pillars appear fantastic, perfectly capturing the historical mood.

It also includes several 12th-century inscriptions in and around the temple, which inspires history buffs to want to go back in time and explore the beautiful heritage.

### **THE SALASAR BALAJI TEMPLE**

One of Rajasthan's most famous Hanuman temples, it is claimed that the statues in this temple were self-created, and there are numerous fantastic legends associated with it. It is maybe the primary reason that the Salasar Balaji Temple in Rajasthan draws numerous devotees year-round who wholeheartedly believe in its mythological significance. Their numbers grow significantly during Chaitra Purnima and Ashvin Purnima.

The worshippers' specific affinity to the temple stems from its status as a swayambhu (self-created) and shakti sthal (a religious place blessed with great power). The temple's principal deity is a youthful statue of Lord Hanuman with an intriguing mythical story behind this one.



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# PONDI-LICIOUS: SHOP LOCAL, EAT LOCAL

Pondicherry's Recipe for Happiness: One Part Shopping, One Part Dining is a perfect amalgamation of the vibrant traditions of this place with its colourful history.

**TT BUREAU**

**A** Shopaholic's Paradise and a Foodie's Dreamland! Pondicherry sports a distinct architectural and gastronomy style that sets them apart from other cities in India. Most buildings in Pondicherry are built in the traditional French colonial style, with high ceilings and arched doorways. Many of the streets are lined with small shops selling everything from handmade crafts to clothing. The atmosphere in Pondicherry is bustling and vibrant, full of life and energy.

The sights and sounds of the market are colourful as vendors call out their wares while shoppers haggle over prices. There is an abundance of fresh produce available, along with spices and pickles that give off a pungent aroma. Handmade items such as baskets, jewellery, bangles, and

slippers line the stalls while artisans make intricate wooden carvings, jute mats, and brass lamps, often creating handcrafted items in front of their shops.

## **UNIQUE HANDICRAFTS OF PONDICHERRY**

The quaint and colourful town of Pondicherry is known for its unique handicrafts. From terracotta figurines to papier-mache dolls, the craftsmen of Pondicherry bring a splash of vibrant culture to everyday life.

Terracotta is the most popular craft in this French colonial town, with figures ranging from gods and goddesses to animals, birds and even everyday objects. Craftsmen are also adept at making delicate papier-mache dolls, depicting characters from local folklore. These dolls come in a variety of colors, sizes, and shapes.



*Pondicherry*



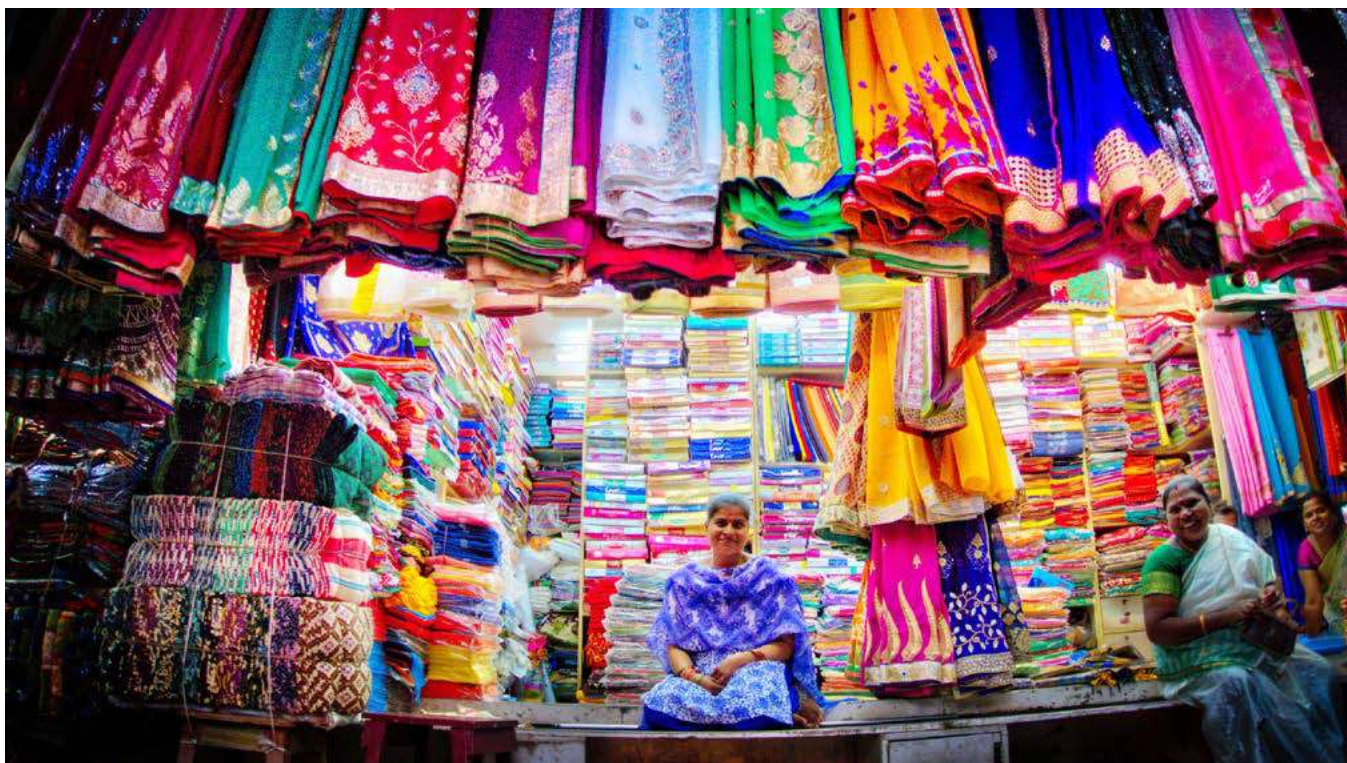
The most iconic craft is the plaster of Paris doll, known as 'PuducherryBommaï'. This doll is a representation of the beloved Lord Ganesha, and it has become an integral part of local festivals and celebrations. The craftsmanship involved in making these dolls is truly remarkable, with each doll painstakingly crafted to perfection.

The artisans of Pondicherry are also masters at creating traditional clay crafts, such as ornamental containers, pots, and figures. Stone carving is another traditional art form, with intricate designs and carvings found on various objects like stone pillars, walls, and doors.

Pondicherry craftsmen also specialize in making grass baskets, leaves, reed, and fiber. These are often used for storing food items and other items of daily use. Leather craftsmen turn out stunning wallets, handbags, belts, and sandals, while woodcarvers create intricate sculptures and carvings for use in homes as well as temples.



*Puducherry Bommai*



*Pondicherry's Market*

The handicrafts of Pondicherry have attracted tourists from all over India and the world who often marvel at the exquisite craftsmanship and attention to detail on display.

## 10 BEST STREET MARKETS TO SHOP IN PONDICHERRY

Get ready for a shopping spree and discover the best of Pondicherry in the vibrant street markets.

- **Pondicherry's Gandhi Market:** Located in the heart of the city, this market is loaded with a variety of shops selling everything from books and jewellery to clothes and footwear. The architecture of the market is colonial-style buildings made from red bricks that give off a vintage vibe. You can also find some traditional South Indian souvenirs here like terracotta figures, wooden toys, brass lamps, and more.
- **Bharathi Park Market:** This colourful night market is one you don't want to miss! With its active atmosphere and wide range of items for sale, it's no wonder why many people flock here every evening. Not only can you purchase clothes and knickknacks at this market, but you can also find unique items like handmade jewellery and antiques.
- **Bazaar Street Market:** Located near the French Quarter of Pondicherry, this vibrant bazaar street has been around since the 17th century! Here, you can find a variety of goods such as spices, vegetables, fruits, and even fabric for traditional Indian clothing. It is also known for its delicious street food; don't forget to try out some of the local delicacies.
- **Nehru Street Market:** This busy street market is full of small shops selling everything from textiles to



electronics and books. The atmosphere here is always bustling with activity as bargain hunters flock to get their hands on great deals. Be sure to check out the traditional items found here like kurtas, sarees, and salwar-kameez sets.

- **Pondicherry Promenade Market:** This popular shopping area is located on the banks of the Bay of Bengal. There are a variety of shops selling jewellery, clothes, accessories, and souvenirs for visitors to take home with them. It's also worth mentioning that this market has some great food stalls too!
- **Bharathi Park Night Bazaar:** A charming night bazaar that lights up in the evening, this lively market sells everything from clothing to toys and books. It is lined with small shops selling everything at very reasonable prices so you can shop without breaking the bank!
- **Mission Street Market:** This vibrant market is a great spot to pick up some local handicrafts, home décor items, and interesting souvenirs. It's full of shops selling everything from handmade artwork to clothes and jewellery at reasonable prices. Be sure to check out the antiques as well!
- **Karaikal Market:** This bustling street market is an ideal spot for bargain hunters looking for traditional Indian wares such as spices, fabrics, and handicrafts. Here you can find plenty of stalls with cheap yet unique items that make for perfect gifts or souvenirs for your friends back home.
- **Haddows Road Market:** This narrow but busy street market has been around since the 18th century and is

a great place to find unique items such as handmade jewellery, antiques and furniture. It's worth going down this street just to admire the architecture of the buildings too!

- **Sri Aurobindo Ashram Market:** Located near the famous ashram in Pondicherry, this market is popular for its bookshops that sell books about spirituality and philosophy. Here you can also find handicrafts, incense sticks, spices and ayurvedic medicines at reasonable prices.

### LOCAL STREET FOOD IN PONDICHERRY

The traditional Pondicherry cuisine is a beautiful combination of Tamil and French flavours. There are various dishes that have originated in Pondicherry, like 'Kadugu Bonda', a version of 'Masala Dosa', and many more.

Be sure to try some of the delicious local street food while you're here! The vibrant streets of Pondicherry are filled with delightful smells and flavors that locals and visitors alike cannot resist. From traditional South Indian dishes to fusion plates, the local street food in Pondicherry is sure to tantalize your taste buds.

One of the most popular dishes in Pondicherry is the 'Kadugu Bonda' which is basically a fried snack made from Bengal gram flour. It is served with coconut chutney and it has a crunchy outer layer, with a soft inner texture that melts in your mouth. The dish has an earthy flavour, thanks to the generous use of spices like cumin, chilly powder, and curry leaves.

Another famous dish from Pondicherry is the special version of 'Masala Dosa', which is a crepe-like pancake filled



Masala Dosa



*Kadugu Bonda*

with potatoes and onions. The pancakes are made using rice and lentil flour and they are served with sambar and chutney. It is a spicy and flavourful dish, with its unique taste coming from the addition of spices like mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds, asafoetida, and curry leaves.

There are many other traditional delicacies in Pondicherry that you must try. There is 'Kari Kuzhambu', a gravy-like dish that is prepared with tamarind and aromatic spices. There is also 'Vathal Kuzhambu', which is a tangy gravy, made with dried vegetables and spices. In addition to these, there are many other dishes like 'Fried Rice' and 'Vadai' which are also very popular.

Start your journey by tasting one of the most popular snacks – vada pav. A delicious snack made from a spicy potato patty encased in bread buns smeared with butter, this dish is great for a quick bite on the go. Another classic delicacy from Pondicherry is masala dosa, which is served with side accompaniments like sambar and chutney. The thin crispy rice crepe filled with mashed potatoes makes it an irresistible snack!

If you are looking for something a little more indulgent, the biryani at Pondicherry is to die for. The flavoursome combination of basmati rice, mutton, and vegetables cooked in clay pots make it one of the most popular street food dishes around. It's best enjoyed with a side dish of raita or curd to balance out all the spices and flavours.

For those with a sweet tooth, there's nothing better than jalebi – deep-fried spirals made from refined wheat flour and soaked in sugar syrup. The succulent treat is often served hot with cold ice cream or rabri – creamy milk custard that has been thickened by simmering over low heat.



*Vadai*



*Vathal Kuzhambu*

Try out Pondicherry's popular local dish – Khowsuey which has its roots in Burmese cuisine. It is a street-side delicacy that has been embraced by locals and tourists alike. The dish consists of thick vermicelli noodles, cooked with spices like turmeric, red chilli powder, coriander powder, and cumin powder, cooked in a coconut-based gravy. It is often garnished with roasted peanuts, fried onions, chilli flakes, lemon juice, and fresh coriander leaves.

Khowsuey has an irresistible aroma of spices combined with the comforting taste of coconut that lingers in your mouth. The best part about Khowsuey is that it can be enjoyed as an individual dish or with accompaniments like vegetable curries, fried fish, or chicken. The noodles are served in a clay bowl (kulhar) which adds to the rustic charm of this street-side delicacy.

All in all, the markets of Pondicherry are a kaleidoscope of sights, sounds, and smells that give off an unmistakable charm.



# TOP FOOD TRENDS OF 2023

As we venture further into the 2020s, the global culinary landscape is undergoing a dramatic evolution, reshaping the way we perceive, produce, and consume food.

TT BUREAU



Millet

The year 2023 has been no exception, with fresh trends emerging at the intersection of technology, sustainability, health, and culture. Whether it's the fusion of ancient traditions with contemporary techniques or a heightened focus on planetary health, this year's food trends capture a world in flux, hungry for innovation. Dive into this gastronomic journey as we explore the top food trends of 2023 that are delighting palates, challenging norms, and changing the future of food.

## MILLET

Once relegated to the background behind more popular grains, millet has made a massive comeback in 2023. Recognized for its impressive nutrient profile – rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals – this gluten-free grain is a versatile base for many dishes. Its resilience as a drought-tolerant

crop also casts millet in a starring role in the sustainable farming narrative, further amplifying its appeal to health-conscious consumers.

## HERBAL TEAS

The world is sipping its way to wellness with a renewed interest in herbal teas. Beyond mere hydration, herbal teas like chamomile, hibiscus, and rooibos offer potential benefits from relaxation to anti-inflammatory properties. In 2023, as people sought beverages with therapeutic properties, herbal teas emerged as a comforting and healthful option.

## BUTTER

In a surprising turn from past decades, butter has been embraced once more in 2023 as a champion of healthful



fats. Moving away from highly processed alternatives, many have come to appreciate butter for its simplicity and nutrient profile, containing essential fat-soluble vitamins like A, D, and K2.

Grass-fed butter, in particular, has gained immense popularity for its higher omega-3 fatty acid content and rich, creamy taste. As more research dispels old myths about saturated fats, butter has rightfully reclaimed its spot in the kitchens of health enthusiasts.

**PEPPER AND HOT SPICES**

The year 2023 has been sizzling with the increased interest in pepper and other hot spices. Capsaicin, the compound responsible for the fiery kick in many spices, has been studied for its potential metabolic-boosting and anti-inflammatory properties.

Additionally, the allure of global cuisines has further elevated the status of spices like chilli, cayenne, and black pepper. Beyond flavour enhancement, these piquant additions have been recognized for their potential in supporting digestion, improving circulation, and even elevating mood.

**MORINGA**

Dubbed the “drumstick tree” in certain parts of the world, Moringa has become a global superstar in 2023. Every part of this tree is a treasure trove of nutrients, but it’s the leaves that have caught the most attention. Rich in vitamins, minerals, and amino acids, Moringa powder has found its way into smoothies, supplements, and even skincare products. As a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent, Moringa’s popularity reflects a larger trend of turning to nature’s pharmacy for health solutions.

**YUZU FRUIT**

The fragrant yuzu fruit, native to East Asia, has captivated palates and health enthusiasts alike in 2023. Resembling a small grapefruit with a zesty tangerine flavour, yuzu is celebrated not just for its unique taste but also for its impressive array of vitamins and antioxidants.

Often used in both culinary dishes and beverages, its high vitamin C content and other phytonutrients have been associated with skin health, improved digestion, and even mood enhancement. As global gastronomy expands, the yuzu fruit stands out as a delightful fusion of flavour and function.

**SOY**

Soy continues to be a centrepiece in many diets around the world, and 2023 has seen it celebrated more than ever. As a quality source of plant-based protein, replete with essential amino acids, soy also boasts heart-healthy isoflavones. Its versatility has paved the way for countless innovations, from tofu steaks to soy milk lattes.



*Pepper and Hot Spices*



*Yuzu Fruit*



*Nuts and Seeds*

**NUTS AND SEEDS**

Tiny but mighty, nuts and seeds have held their ground as nutritional powerhouses in 2023. Whether it’s the omega-3-rich flaxseeds, protein-packed almonds, or magnesium-rich pumpkin seeds, these bite-sized foods have been recognized for their ability to support everything from heart health to cognitive function.



## PLANT-BASED DIET

The wave of plant-based eating reached a crescendo in 2023. Driven by both health considerations and environmental concerns, more individuals have adopted diets focusing on whole grains, legumes, vegetables, and fruits. As research continues to highlight the potential benefits of a plant-centric diet – from reduced disease risk to improved gut health – its popularity shows no signs of waning.

## TURMERIC

This golden-hued spice, a staple in traditional medicine for centuries, shone even brighter in 2023. Celebrated for its active compound curcumin, turmeric has been associated with a host of health benefits, including anti-inflammatory effects and potential protection against chronic diseases. As a result, it's found its way into everything from morning lattes to evening meals.

## BERRIES

Nature's candy, berries – be it blueberries, raspberries, or the more exotic acai – have been in the spotlight for their antioxidant-rich profiles. In 2023, they're not just for smoothies; these vibrant fruits are recognized for their potential in supporting brain health, boost skin health, and reduce the risk of certain diseases.

## FISH

As a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids, fish has maintained its reputation as a heart-healthy choice in 2023. With growing awareness of sustainable fishing practices, consumers are leaning towards species that are both beneficial for health and the environment, like mackerel, sardines, and certain wild-caught salmon.

## GREEN VEGETABLES

Green is the colour of health in 2023. Leafy greens like spinach, kale, and chard, along with cruciferous veggies like broccoli and Brussels sprouts, continue to be celebrated for their dense nutritional content. Loaded with vitamins, minerals, and fiber, these greens play a pivotal role in supporting overall health and preventing chronic conditions.

## SWEET POTATOES

The vibrant hue of sweet potatoes is more than just a feast for the eyes in 2023; it's a testament to their nutritional richness. Packed with beta-carotene, a precursor to vitamin A, these tubers have become a sought-after choice for those pursuing health and wellness. Their natural sweetness offers a healthier alternative to conventional carbs, and their versatility in recipes, from savoury dishes to desserts, has cemented their popularity. Additionally, their high fiber content and low glycemic index make them a favoured option for those monitoring blood sugar levels.

## YOGHURT

Yoghurt's reputation as a probiotic powerhouse has only strengthened in 2023. With growing awareness of gut health and its significance in overall well-being, yoghurt, especially the fermented and live culture varieties, has taken centre stage. Rich in protein, calcium, and beneficial bacteria, it's celebrated not only for its potential to promote digestive health but also for its role in strengthening immunity. The rise of plant-based yoghurts, made from almond, coconut, and soy, has expanded its appeal to vegans and lactose-intolerant individuals, making it a universally cherished health food.

## HONEY

Beyond its use as a natural sweetener, honey has been revered in 2023 for its therapeutic properties. Harvested from the hard work of bees, this golden elixir boasts antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds. With a resurgence in natural remedies, honey has been recognized for its potential in soothing sore throats, heal wounds, and even combat certain allergies. The trend of sourcing raw, local honey has further augmented its status, with aficionados seeking out varieties that capture the unique flora of specific regions.

These snapshots offer just a glimpse into the vast and diverse world of food trends in 2023, demonstrating a collective shift towards holistic wellness and sustainable consumption.



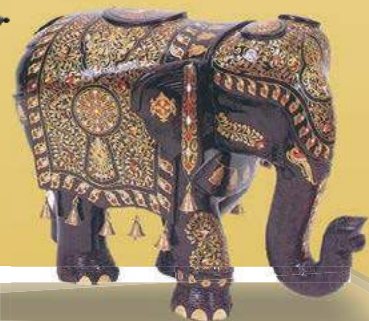
*Green Vegetables*



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# PAHARI PALATE: SAVOUR THE MOUNTAIN FLAVOURS



Pahari food carries a unique charm and a plethora of flavours that represent the distinctive culture, climate, and lifestyle of the mountain folks.

## TT BUREAU

Pahari in India refers to the culture, traditions, and cuisines of the mountainous regions, especially from the Himalayan belt. The term encapsulates a variety of regional cuisines including those of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu & Kashmir in the northern part of India, and some parts of the Northeast states like Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and some regions in Nepal.

Pahari cuisine offers a gastronomic experience that truly embodies the charm and simplicity of the Himalayan lifestyle. It is a cuisine shaped by the rugged terrain and the cold climate of the region, which influences both the ingredients used and the style of cooking.

The dishes are predominantly based on locally sourced produce such as red rice, lentils, seasonal vegetables, and hearty meats. They're often slow-cooked to enhance the flavours and nutritive value, mirroring the slow-paced life in the mountains. One of the key features of Pahari cuisine is the subtle use of spices, which adds warmth without overpowering the natural flavours of the ingredients.

The use of fermented foods and pickles is also quite common, given the region's long, harsh winters when fresh produce is scarce. This balance of nutrition, taste, and sustainability makes

Pahari cuisine not just unique, but a testament to the resilience and resourcefulness of the mountain communities.

***Let's explore some of the most exciting Pahari dishes that you must try:***

### BHUTWA

This dish is a popular delicacy in Uttarakhand. Bhutwa is made from goat intestines, which are thoroughly cleaned, boiled, and then sautéed with a medley of local spices like



Bhutwa





*Thupka*

turmeric, red chilli, coriander, and garam masala. The dish carries a unique texture and earthy flavours, showcasing the rusticity of the mountains in each bite.

### **TIBETAN MARKET KA THUPKA**

This aromatic soup-based noodle dish originates from Tibet but is a heartwarming delicacy served across mountainous regions. Found in various Tibetan markets around the states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the Northeast, Thupka embodies a mixture of subtle flavours from its vegetable or meat broth, combined with noodles, and accented by spring onions and other local greens. It's a hearty bowl of warmth, especially during the harsh winter months. It is indeed a popular street food of Himachal Pradesh on account of its wholesomeness as a complete meal.

### **MASH KE VADE**

This dish is a delicacy from Himachal Pradesh and is made from black lentils (mash ki dal). These lentils are soaked overnight, then ground to a coarse paste, mixed with spices, shaped into patties, and deep-fried to golden perfection. Mash Ke Vade, served with yoghurt and chutney, offers a blend of flavours and textures that is both comforting and satiating.

### **PALTANBAJARKE MOMOWITH TOMATOTILL KICHATNI**

This is a popular street food, especially in Dehradun's Paltan Bazaar in Uttarakhand. The momos here are distinct and more flavorful, filled with seasoned minced meat or vegetables, and steamed to perfection. What makes them unique is the accompanying Tomato Till Ki Chatni (sesame tomato chutney), a spicy and tangy sauce that perfectly complements the soft, delicate momos.



*Momo with Tomato Till Ki Chatni*



*Bhatt Ki Churkani*

### **MURGI SHIKAR**

This dish is at the top of the Kumaoni food list and is not restricted to its origin in Uttarakhand. Murgi Shikar is a chicken curry, but what sets it apart is the use of local herbs, spices, and cooking techniques. The chicken is slow-cooked in a pot, allowing the flavours to fully permeate the meat, resulting in a dish that's aromatic and full of rustic flavours.

### **BHATT KI CHURKANI**

Another gem from Uttarakhand, Bhatt Ki Churkani is a traditional dish made from a variety of black soya beans known as 'Bhatt'. The beans are cooked and mashed, and then a tempering of local spices is added to bring about a depth of flavour. The 'Churkani' refers to the thick consistency of this preparation. It is a wholesome and protein-rich dish, usually enjoyed with rice.

### **CHONKE BHATT**

This is a traditional Himachali dish made from black soybean (Bhatt). The dish gets its name 'Chonke' from the technique of tempering (tadka or chonk) used in the preparation. The soybean is boiled and then tempered with ghee, cumin seeds,



asafoetida (hing), and other spices. This dish, with its earthy flavours and high protein content, is a staple in the local diet.

### JHOLI

From the land of Uttarakhand, Jholi is a unique curry made with buttermilk or curd, gram flour (besan), and local spices. The dish gets its name from the process of slow cooking, allowing the ingredients to simmer together to create a rich, comforting curry. It is usually served with rice and offers a sour and spicy flavour profile.

### KAKADI KA RAITA

A popular side dish and traditional food of Himachal Pradesh, Kakadi Ka Raita is made from cucumbers (kakadi), curd, and a handful of spices. The cucumber is grated and mixed with whisked curd, and a tempering of mustard seeds, curry leaves, and dried red chillies are added on top. This raita provides a cooling balance to the other spicy dishes and is a refreshing accompaniment to meals during the hot summer months.

### BALU SHAHI

Finally, to satisfy the sweet tooth, Balu Shahi is a famous dessert from Himachal Pradesh. It's a kind of doughnut made from

all-purpose flour (maida), yoghurt, and sugar, deep-fried and soaked in sugar syrup. This dessert is rich, sweet, and melts in your mouth, providing a perfect end to a hearty Pahari meal.

### MANDAL

Mandal, a quaint town in Uttarakhand, has its own distinct take on Pahari cuisine that reflects the culinary ingenuity of its inhabitants. One of the region's beloved specialties is a unique dish made with locally grown oranges, sweetened with honey and sugar, and seasoned with a dash of salt and a variety of local spices. This unconventional blend results in a dish that is an exciting melange of sweet, salty, spicy, and tangy flavours, all in one bite.

What makes it even more remarkable is how this preparation utilizes the bounty of the region's orange orchards, showcasing the traditional ethos of sustainable and seasonal eating. It is an exquisite example of how Mandal's Pahari cuisine combines simplicity with bold flavours, creating dishes that truly epitomize the region's rich culinary heritage.

With every bite, these Pahari dishes transport you to the serene mountains and offer a glimpse into the local lifestyle and food habits of the region. They encapsulate the unique terroir, the changing seasons, and the local produce of the Pahari regions, providing an experience that's both delightful and distinct.

No wonder these dishes continue to be relished. Their unmatched simplicity and wholesomeness, are imbued with a depth of flavour that speaks of the mountains and the spirit of its people. There's so much more than the wonderful flavours – here is a cuisine that invites you to explore the fascinating interplay of culture, geography, and food in the Himalayas, promising an enriching gastronomic journey.

No matter what you prefer – a hearty lentil dish or a subtly spiced meat curry, tasting Pahari cuisine is an experience that is as warming to the soul as it is pleasing to the palate.



Jholi



Kakadi Ka Raita



Balu Shahi



  
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