

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, LUXURY & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2024 - ₹50

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2024 TRAVEL
TRENDS

VARANASI-
SOUL OF INDIA

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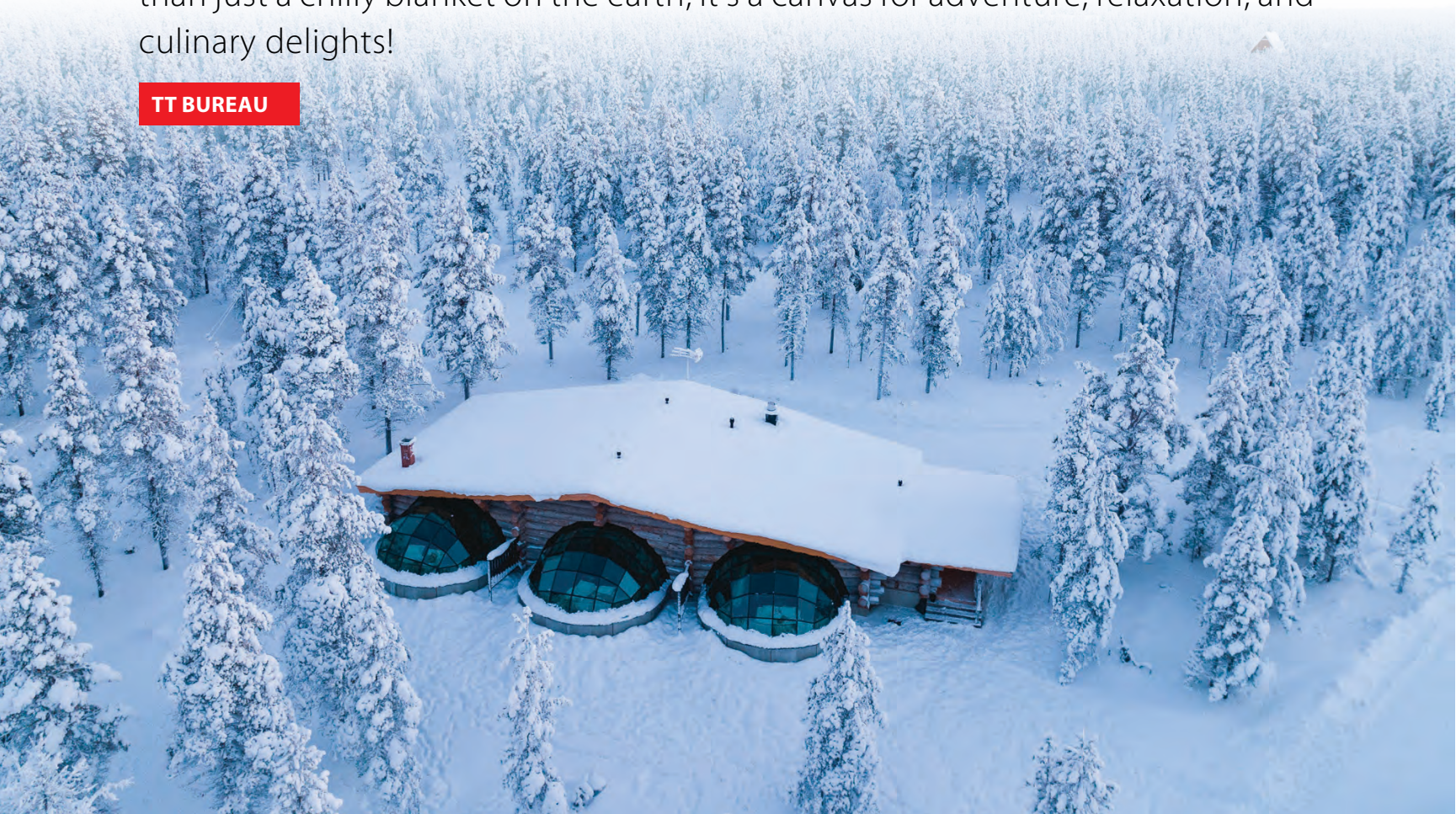


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CHILL IN STYLE!

Welcome to the world of Winter Wonderland retreats – where the snow is more than just a chilly blanket on the earth, it's a canvas for adventure, relaxation, and culinary delights!

TT BUREAU



Glass Igloo at the Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort

Imagine swapping your morning alarm for the call of the wild in Lapland, or trading your daily commute for a scenic gondola ride in the Himalayan paradise of Gulmarg. From the frost-kissed forests of Finland, where the Northern Lights dance a celestial ballet, to the serene, snow-laden slopes of Auli, India, where skiers carve their way through powdery dreams – every winter retreat we're about to explore is a unique snowflake, each with its own frosty charm.

Think of this as your guide to 'chill' in style. We'll ski through Japan's powder snow in Niseko, get cosy with a fondue pot in St. Moritz, and perhaps even say a "thank you" to Iceland's adventurous Hákarl dish. Whether you're a snow angel maker, a mountain conqueror, or just someone who likes to sip hot cocoa in exotic locales, there's a winter wonderland waiting for you.

We take you on a frosty journey around the globe (and in India), where each destination promises its own winter magic, with a side of laughter and a dash of awe. Welcome to the ultimate chilly thrill ride!

LAPLAND, FINLAND – THE ARCTIC ADVENTURE

Lapland, located in the northernmost region of Finland, offers a magical winter experience. It's a place where the enchantment of the Arctic truly comes alive. The highlight here is undoubtedly the opportunity to see the Northern Lights, best viewed from the comfort of a glass igloo at resorts like Kakslauttanen. During the day, activities like husky sledding, snowmobiling, and reindeer safaris offer a deep dive into Lapland's unique winter culture. Culinary explorers should not miss the chance to try traditional Lappish dishes, especially those featuring reindeer, a staple of the local cuisine.

• **Special Experience:** Witness the spectacular Northern Lights from a glass igloo at the Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort. The resort offers unique accommodation options, including traditional log cabins and glass igloos.

• **Food Speciality:** Be sure to try 'Lappish' cuisine like reindeer meat, served as a hearty stew or as part of a traditional Finnish meal.

BANFF, CANADA – A ROCKY MOUNTAIN HAVEN

Banff, nestled in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, is a winter wonderland par excellence. This picturesque town, surrounded by the stunning Banff National Park, is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts. The dog-sledding experience here is not just an adventure but a way to connect with Canada's wilderness and history. After a day in the snow, the local cuisine provides comfort and warmth, with dishes like poutine, a Canadian classic, offering the perfect blend of cheese, gravy, and fries.

- **Special Experience:** Explore the snowy landscapes of Banff National Park on a dog-sledding adventure. Experience the thrill of being whisked through pristine wilderness by a team of huskies.

- **Food Speciality:** Warm up with a bowl of 'Poutine', a Canadian favourite featuring fries topped with cheese curds and gravy.

ST. MORITZ, SWITZERLAND – THE LUXURY ALPINE GETAWAY

St. Moritz in Switzerland epitomizes luxury alpine tourism. Known for its world-class skiing, upscale shops, and high society, it's a place where the jet set come to play. Unique to St. Moritz is the opportunity to experience the thrill of a bobsled ride on the world's only natural ice track. For culinary indulgence, traditional Swiss fondue and raclette, featuring local cheeses, are a must-try, embodying the true flavours of the Swiss Alps.

- **Special Experience:** Experience the glamour of the Swiss Alps with a bobsled ride on the world's only natural ice track in St. Moritz.

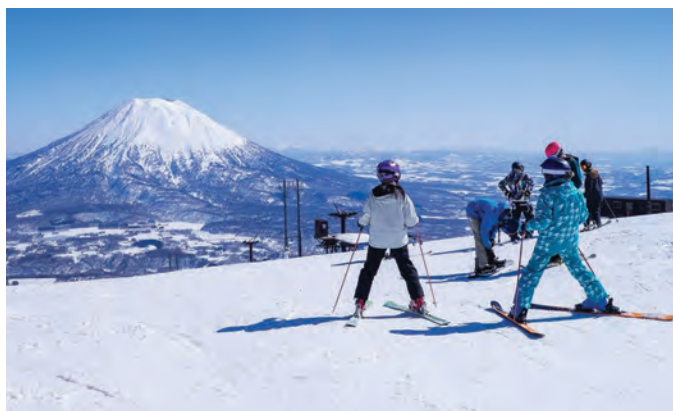
- **Food Speciality:** Indulge in 'Fondue' and 'Raclette', two iconic Swiss dishes perfect for cold winter nights.

NISEKO, JAPAN – THE POWDER SNOW PARADISE

Niseko, located on Japan's northern Hokkaido island, is renowned for its light, powdery snow, drawing ski enthusiasts from around the globe. The skiing experience in Niseko is unparalleled, with its consistent and high-quality snowfall creating ideal conditions. Japanese cuisine, with its emphasis on freshness and flavour, offers the perfect end to a day on the slopes. Local specialties like ramen and sushi provide a delicious and authentic taste of Japanese culinary traditions.

- **Special Experience:** Enjoy world-renowned skiing and snowboarding on Niseko's famous powder snow. The area is known for its consistent and high-quality snowfall.

- **Food Speciality:** After a day on the slopes, savour 'Ramen' or 'Sushi', staple Japanese dishes known for their delicious flavours and freshness.



World-Renowned Skiing and Snowboarding on Niseko's Famous Powder Snow



Snowy Landscapes of Banff National Park on a Dog-Sledding Adventure



Vibrant Life in Aspen, USA

ASPEN, USA – THE SKIER’S DREAM

Aspen, Colorado, is a destination synonymous with skiing. Renowned for its world-class slopes and glamorous social scene, Aspen offers an alluring mix of outdoor adventure and cultural activities, including winter music festivals. The local cuisine in Aspen is as diverse as its visitors, ranging from traditional American comfort food to more exotic offerings like Rocky Mountain Oysters, offering a true taste of the American West.

- **Special Experience:** Aspen offers not just world-class skiing but also the chance to enjoy winter music festivals and vibrant nightlife.

- **Food Speciality:** Try the ‘Rocky Mountain Oysters’, a unique delicacy for the adventurous eater, or stick to comforting American classics like a juicy burger or steak.

CHAMONIX, FRANCE – THE ALPINE JEWEL

Chamonix, nestled in the French Alps, is a destination that captures the essence of Alpine beauty and adventure. Renowned for its proximity to Mont Blanc, the highest peak in Western Europe, Chamonix offers breathtaking views and a range of winter sports. The Aiguille du Midi cable car journey is a highlight, offering panoramic vistas of the surrounding mountains. For food enthusiasts, the regional cuisine is a delight, especially the Tartiflette – a warm, cheese-laden dish that is quintessentially Savoyard and perfect for cold winter days.

- **Special Experience:** Take the Aiguille du Midi cable car to witness breathtaking views of Mont Blanc, the highest peak in the Alps. Chamonix is also a haven for skiing enthusiasts.



Aiguille du Midi Cable Car in Chamonix, France

- **Food Speciality:** Indulge in ‘Tartiflette’, a savoury French dish made with potatoes, rebloche cheese, lardons, and onions - a perfect meal after a cold day outdoors.

QUEENSTOWN, NEW ZEALAND – THE ADVENTURE CAPITAL

Queenstown, often referred to as the adventure capital of the world, is a paradise for thrill-seekers and nature lovers. Located on New Zealand’s South Island, it offers a stunning backdrop of mountains and lakes. Winter in Queenstown is a season for skiing, snowboarding, and unique experiences like heli-skiing in the Southern Alps. The local culinary scene is diverse, but a traditional Hangi feast, where food is cooked in an earth oven, offers a unique taste of Maori culture, alongside the renowned fresh seafood and lamb dishes New Zealand is known for.

- **Special Experience:** Experience heli-skiing in the Southern Alps, where you're flown by helicopter to untouched snow for an incredible skiing adventure.

- **Food Speciality:** Savor a traditional 'Hangi' feast, cooked in an earth oven, or enjoy fresh seafood and local New Zealand lamb.

REYKJAVIK, ICELAND – THE NORDIC WONDERLAND

Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, serves as a gateway to a land of geological wonders. Winter here brings the magical Northern Lights and the opportunity to explore unique landscapes of glaciers and ice caves. A must-do is a dip in the geothermal waters of the Blue Lagoon, an iconic experience amidst Iceland's snowy backdrop. Icelandic cuisine is known for its distinctiveness, with Hákarl, fermented shark, being one of the most unusual delicacies, alongside more approachable yet delicious options like Icelandic lamb and fresh seafood.

- **Special Experience:** Soak in the geothermal waters of the Blue Lagoon, surrounded by snow and ice, for a truly unique experience. Don't miss the chance to explore Iceland's stunning glaciers and ice caves.

- **Food Speciality:** Try 'Hákarl', fermented shark, for a truly Icelandic experience, or stick to more palatable options like Icelandic lamb or seafood.

HARBIN, CHINA – THE ICE CITY

Harbin, in northeastern China, is famous for its Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival, the largest of its kind in the world. During winter, the city transforms into a fantastical land of ice and snow, with enormous, intricately carved ice sculptures illuminated in vibrant colours. The local cuisine reflects the region's Russian influences and harsh climate, with dishes like Guobaorou, sweet and sour pork, and hearty Dongbei-style dumplings offering warmth and flavour to visitors braving the cold.

- **Special Experience:** Marvel at the incredible ice sculptures at the Harbin International Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival, the largest ice and snow festival in the world.

- **Food Speciality:** Warm up with 'Guobaorou', a traditional Manchurian sweet and sour pork dish, or enjoy 'Dongbei' dumplings.

ZERMATT, SWITZERLAND – BENEATH THE MATTERHORN

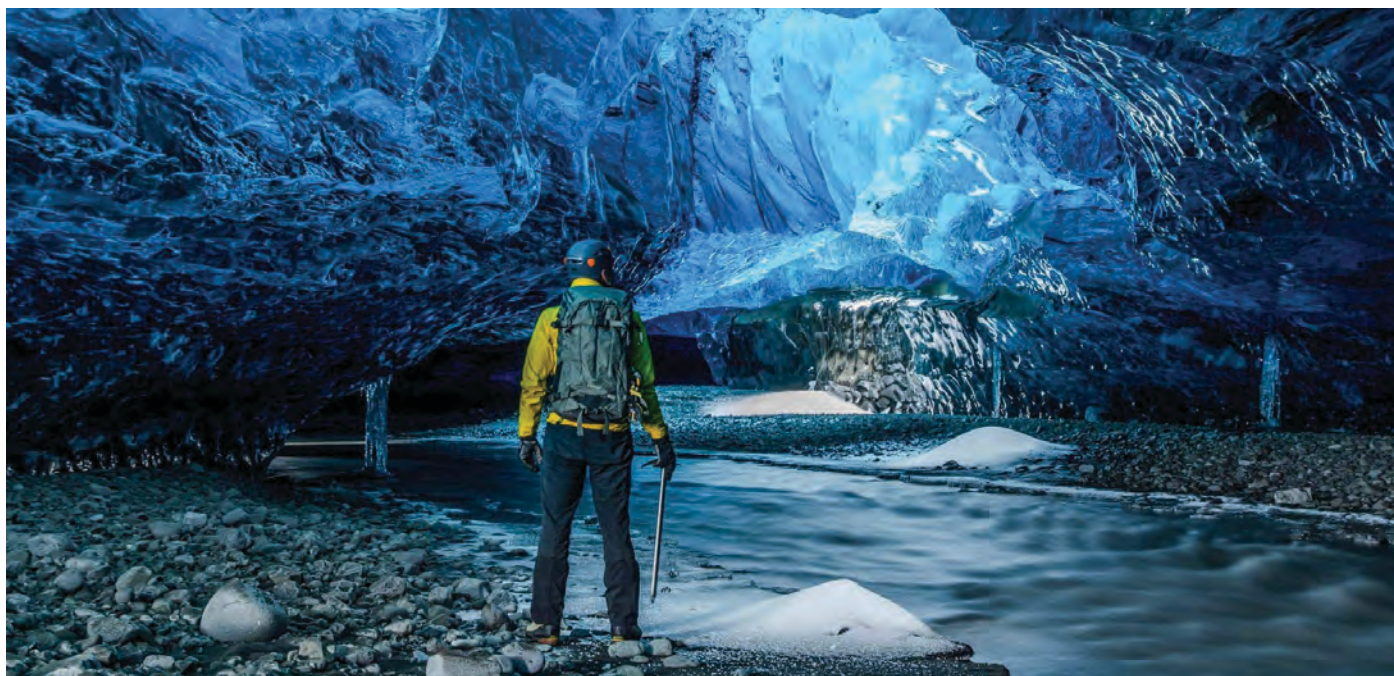
Zermatt, located at the foot of the Matterhorn, one of the most iconic mountains in the world, is a destination synonymous with skiing, mountaineering, and breathtaking Alpine scenery. This car-free village exudes charm and offers some of the best ski slopes in the world. Swiss culinary delights in Zermatt are a must-try, especially Rösti, a simple yet delicious potato dish, often accompanied by Zürcher Geschnetzeltes, making for a comforting meal after a day in the Swiss Alps.

- **Special Experience:** Ski in the shadow of the iconic Matterhorn, and enjoy the charming car-free village of Zermatt with its romantic winter ambiance.

- **Food Speciality:** Taste 'Rösti', a Swiss potato dish, often served with 'Zürcher Geschnetzeltes', thinly sliced veal in a creamy mushroom sauce.



Harbin, China – The Ice City



Stunning Glaciers and Ice Caves in Reykjavik, Iceland

FROSTY FAIRY-TALE RETREATS

Gulmarg, Kashmir

Ah, India! Land of contrasts, where the summers can make you long for a personal iceberg, but come winter, parts of this vast country transform into something straight out of a frosty fairy tale.

TT BUREAU

Welcome to the slightly chillier side of India, a side that doesn't often make it to the postcards, but absolutely should. Here in India's Winter Wonderlands, we trade the ubiquitous chai for hot chocolate, the breezy cottons for snuggly woollens, and the hustle-bustle of city life for serene snowscapes.

Imagine waking up to a pristine Himalayan sunrise in Gulmarg, or sipping on some steaming 'Kahwa' after a thrilling ski run in Auli.

From the frosty tips of the Himalayas to the cosy cottages of Manali, we're about to embark on a journey where the snow isn't just a backdrop, but the main character. Where

every snowflake is like a tweet from the heavens, and the cold, is not just a temperature, but an excuse to wear that stylish winter gear you've been dying to show off.

So, are you ready to discover a side of India that's cool in more ways than one? Where every turn in the road promises a new adventure, and every snowy peak whispers tales of mystique? It's going to be a delightful ride through India's own winter wonderlands – with a side of humour, a dash of adventure, and a whole lot of 'chai'... or maybe hot chocolate this time!

GULMARG, KASHMIR – THE HIMALAYAN PARADISE

Gulmarg in Kashmir, known for its stunning Himalayan landscapes, is a gem for winter sports enthusiasts in India.



Skiing In Auli



Snow Scootering In Manali

The Gondola ride here, one of the highest in the world, offers breathtaking views and is a must-experience. The local cuisine, rich in flavours and spices, includes traditional Kashmiri dishes like Rogan Josh and Yakhni, providing a warm and hearty meal in the cold weather.

- **SPECIAL EXPERIENCE:** Embark on a Gondola ride in Gulmarg, offering breathtaking views of snow-clad mountains. It's one of the highest cable cars in the world.
- **FOOD SPECIALITY:** Relish 'Rogan Josh' or 'Yakhni', traditional Kashmiri dishes that are sure to warm you up in the cold weather.

AULI, UTTARAKHAND – THE SKIING HUB OF INDIA

Auli, located in the Indian state of Uttarakhand, is famous for its ski resorts and stunning views of the Himalayas. It's a paradise for skiers, offering beautiful slopes and ample facilities for beginners and experts alike. The local Garhwali cuisine is a delight, with unique dishes like Aloo Ke Gutke and Kandalee Ka Saag, offering a taste of the region's culinary heritage.

- **SPECIAL EXPERIENCE:** Experience the thrill of skiing on the slopes of Auli, with panoramic views of the Himalayas. Skiing lessons and equipment rentals are widely available.

- **FOOD SPECIALITY:** Try 'Garhwali' cuisine, including 'Aloo Ke Gutke' (spicy stir-fried potatoes) and 'Kandalee Ka Saag'.

MANALI, HIMACHAL PRADESH – THE SNOWY WONDERLAND

Manali, nestled in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh, is a popular winter destination in India. The drive to the Rohtang Pass offers scenic beauty and adventurous activities like snow scootering. Local delicacies like Siddu, a bread filled with fat and spices, provide a flavorful and warming experience, perfect for the chilly climate.

- **SPECIAL EXPERIENCE:** Take a scenic drive to the Rohtang Pass, a high mountain pass offering stunning views and fun activities like snow scootering.

- **FOOD SPECIALITY:** Don't miss out on 'Siddu', a local bread filled with fat and spices, often served with ghee and lentil soup.

SHIMLA, HIMACHAL PRADESH – THE QUEEN OF HILLS

Shimla, the Queen of Hills, is famous for its colonial architecture and the historic Kalka-Shimla toy train, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The journey on this train, winding through

beautiful mountains and valleys, is a unique experience. The local Himachali cuisine, with dishes like Chana Madra, offers a taste of the region's rich culinary traditions.

- **SPECIAL EXPERIENCE:** Enjoy a ride on the Kalka-Shimla toy train, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, winding through picturesque mountains and valleys.

- **FOOD SPECIALITY:** Taste 'Chana Madra', a Himachali dish made of chickpeas in a yoghurt-based gravy, rich in flavour and perfect for the chilly weather.

LACHEN, SIKKIM – THE SERENE RETREAT

Lachen in Sikkim is known for its serene beauty and the breathtaking Gurudongmar Lake, one of the highest lakes in the world. This tranquil destination offers a peaceful retreat from the world.

The local cuisine, with comforting dishes like Thukpa and Momos, reflects Sikkim's cultural diversity and provides a warming culinary experience in the cold climate.

- **SPECIAL EXPERIENCE:** Visit the Gurudongmar Lake, one of the highest lakes in the world, known for its ethereal beauty and tranquil surroundings.

- **FOOD SPECIALITY:** Sample 'Thukpa' and 'Momos', traditional Sikkimese dishes that are both comforting and flavorful, ideal for the cold climate.

Imagine strolling through the tranquil vistas of Lachen in Sikkim, where even the air seems to whisper ancient Himalayan secrets, or cruising through the pristine landscapes of Srinagar and Ladakh, where the chill in the air is matched only by the warmth of the people (and the food, of course!).

Here, every destination is like a snow globe scene come to life. In Lachen, don't be surprised if a yak photobombs your perfect selfie.

Over in Srinagar, you might find yourself in a snowball fight with the locals, while in Ladakh, you could be sipping butter tea and wondering why you can't feel your toes – but in a good way!

Each place offers its own brand of winter magic. From the mouth-watering warmth of a Kashmiri Wazwan in Srinagar to the soulful simplicity of a Ladakhi Thukpa, these retreats are a feast for both the eyes and the taste buds.

So, pack your woolliest socks and your sense of adventure, and get ready to experience the chilly charm and culinary wonders of India's winter wonderlands. Remember, in India, even the coldest days come with the warmest welcomes!



Kalka-Shimla Toy Train



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NEW YEAR: NEW LUXURIES

Luxury travel provides incredible opportunities for a wide range of travellers with diverse preferences

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Luxury Yacht

No matter what kind of traveller you are, whether you're someone who thrives on outdoor adventures or someone who prefers a serene and peaceful retreat in a picturesque setting, luxury travel has options tailored to suit your desires. In recent years, the world has seen big changes, and many people are now choosing to make luxury travel a regular part of their lives.

They're seizing the moment and enjoying life to the fullest. Studies in the travel industry reveal that those who have the time and resources are more interested than ever in luxury travel. They want the very best when it comes to places to stay, delicious food, transportation, and unforgettable experiences. So, what are these well-off travellers seeking in luxury travel today? Let us navigate them:

LUXURY YACHT & CRUISE CHARTERS

Travelling luxuriously doesn't always mean staying on land; it can also mean embarking on a sea adventure. People who

adore the vast ocean can opt for yacht charters through services. These journeys allow you to sail from one country to another while surrounded by designer furnishings and amazing features like cutting-edge TVs and hot tubs with breathtaking views.

Another choice is luxury cruise companies that make high-end travellers happy with special attention, exclusive adventures, and top-notch facilities. Since these travellers like one-of-a-kind and deep travel experiences, luxury cruises can offer extraordinary experiences and the highest standards of comfort and service.

A majestic vessel like the Azimut Grande 35 Metri Yacht, where every detail is crafted for utmost luxury is a floating paradise that boasts sumptuous suites, each a sanctuary of comfort with panoramic sea views. Guests can bask in the sun on expansive decks, unwind in the Jacuzzi, or enjoy a bespoke cocktail from the bar. From gourmet meals prepared by private chefs to tailor-made itineraries exploring secluded coves and glamorous ports, every aspect of the journey is designed to create unforgettable memories.

HIDDEN RESORTS AND DESTINATIONS

When travellers are on their journeys, they often seek something truly special, an experience that stands out and creates lasting memories. This quest for uniqueness is particularly significant for discerning travellers who crave exclusive and exceptional experiences.

In a world overflowing with hotels and resorts, it's the distinctive character of a hospitality establishment that captures the attention of these travellers. It sets the venue apart from the crowd and transforms a stay into something extraordinary. Picture, for instance, a luxurious resort nestled into the volcanic rock formations along the stunning coast of Capri Island. This kind of architectural marvel is a rarity and offers a truly one-of-a-kind experience.

One of the world's most luxurious hidden resorts and destinations is "Nihi Sumba" on the remote Indonesian island of Sumba. Often considered one of the world's best-kept secrets in luxury travel, this exclusive resort is nestled within a lush tropical paradise, surrounded by pristine beaches, verdant hills, and an untouched natural landscape. Accommodations range from private villas to traditional Indonesian-style houses, seamlessly integrating with the natural surroundings. A stunning infinity pool, a luxurious spa nestled in the jungle, and a range of outdoor activities such as surfing, horseback riding, and exploring hidden waterfalls creates a truly exclusive and immersive escape.

In today's competitive market, this uniqueness is a prized commodity. It's what entices travellers to choose one destination over another. Whether it's an unparalleled location, innovative design, or exceptional service, these distinctive features create a sense of wonder and adventure, making each stay a memorable journey.

PRIVATE JETS

Jet-setting across the globe via a private jet represents a travel experience that stands in stark contrast to the routine of commercial airlines and bustling airport terminals. It's a realm of travel where luxury knows no bounds, offering privileged travellers a level of comfort, privacy, and indulgence that remains unmatched, even by the most premium first-class commercial flights.



Nihi Sumba - Luxurious Resorts



The Airbus ACJ319neo Infinito

Private jet travel presents a world where relaxation reigns supreme, opulence is the norm, and pampering is par for the course. Plush seats, spacious cabins, and luxurious amenities await. You're greeted by a dedicated flight crew who cater to your every need, ensuring your journey is nothing short of extraordinary.

The Airbus ACJ319neo Infinito is the epitome of a private jet luxury with a cabin layout that can offer private suites, dining areas, lounges, and even a dedicated bedroom for long-haul journeys. The Infinito's unique sky ceiling incorporates high-definition displays that mimic a live view of the sky above. This innovative feature allows passengers to experience daylight or a starlit night, even at cruising altitude. This mode of travel transforms not just the destination, but the entire journey itself into a seamless experience. Whether it's a business trip or a leisurely getaway, private jet travel offers an unparalleled level of convenience, luxury, and exclusivity.

PRESTIGIOUS CAR RENTALS

Prestigious car rentals redefine the art of travel with an unparalleled level of sophistication and opulence. The pleasure of cruising down winding coastal roads in a sleek and powerful supercar, the engine's purr echoing the rhythm of your heart is a made-to-order luxury experience.

From iconic brands like Rolls-Royce and Lamborghini to classic favourites like Ferrari and Aston Martin, prestigious car rentals offer access to a world of automotive excellence. Each vehicle is a masterpiece of design, engineering, and craftsmanship, meticulously maintained to ensure a flawless journey.

Renting vintage or luxury vehicles for leisure has long held a special place in the hearts of travellers who relish a more personalized and engaging way to explore their destinations while valuing the pinnacle of automotive craftsmanship.

For enthusiasts of vintage or luxury cars, the experience transcends the ordinary. It's akin to having the keys to a work of art, a masterpiece of engineering and design. When you choose to rent such a vehicle, you're not simply selecting a mode of transportation; you're securing a unique, exclusive, and even extravagant means of getting around.

LAVISH TRAINS

There are train rides, and then there are train rides. Travelling by train is often overlooked as a luxurious mode of transportation, but it's truly a hidden gem. Luxury train journeys offer a host of appealing features. The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is renowned as one of the world's most luxurious and iconic train journeys. This opulent train harks back to the golden age of travel, offering passengers a lavish experience reminiscent of the 1920s and 1930s.

Traveling through Europe, it features meticulously restored vintage carriages with plush furnishings, exquisite dining cars, and impeccable service. Passengers can indulge in gourmet meals prepared by top chefs and unwind in elegantly appointed cabins. The journey takes travellers through picturesque landscapes from London to Venice, Paris, and beyond, providing a truly enchanting and luxurious travel experience.



The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express Lavish Train

India's Palace on Wheels is another instance of a luxury heritage train that takes passengers on a regal journey through the enchanting landscapes and historic cities of Rajasthan. Modelled after the royal trains of the Maharajas, this train ride offers a glimpse into India's rich cultural heritage. Passengers travel in luxurious carriages adorned with intricate decor, dine on delectable Indian cuisine, and explore majestic palaces and forts along the route.

A surprising 81% of travellers are now thinking about taking a train for their next adventure, and 32% are considering the opulent experience of luxury train travel instead of flying.

WELLNESS SERVICES

For many luxury travellers, taking a break from the hustle and bustle of work life means more than just going to a stunning destination. They also seek to embrace a healthy lifestyle, disconnect from daily stresses, and truly relax. This involves pampering themselves with a range of treatments, therapies, and wellness activities that promote relaxation, rejuvenation, and overall well-being.

To cater to this growing desire, luxury hotels and resorts are stepping up their game. They now offer top-notch wellness and spa facilities, along with access to fitness and beauty experts who are dedicated to helping guests look and feel their absolute best throughout their stay. These amenities often include opulent day spas where you can indulge in massages and skincare treatments, well-equipped

fitness centres for exercise enthusiasts, tranquil yoga studios for those seeking inner peace, or even the chance to work with a personal trainer or professional makeup artist.

The Chedi Andermatt Spa in the picturesque Swiss Alps is renowned for offering an unparalleled wellness experience that combines the healing powers of nature with world-class luxury. This spa boasts a stunning design with floor-to-ceiling windows that frame breathtaking mountain views. Offering a comprehensive range of treatments, the wellness treatments include traditional Alpine-inspired therapies and modern wellness practices. One of the highlights of this spa is its hydrothermal facilities, including a serene outdoor heated pool and a unique Japanese-inspired onsen. The spa's yoga and meditation classes, provide a perfect balance of rejuvenation. In essence, luxury travel today isn't just about opulent accommodations and fine dining; it's also about nourishing your body and soul.

CULINARY TRAVEL

Culinary travel, often known as food travel, is a delightful journey that revolves around discovering extraordinary and unforgettable dining and drinking experiences. Whether these experiences unfold in your local neighbourhood or in faraway destinations, this form of travel is all about embarking on a delectable exploration that goes beyond mere eating. It's a captivating voyage that allows you to immerse yourself in the culture, traditions, and flavours of a place.

This culinary adventure encompasses a wide array of experiences, ensuring there's something to satisfy every palate. You can roll up your sleeves and participate in hands-on cooking classes, where you'll learn to craft local delicacies

under the guidance of skilled chefs. Alternatively, you might choose to embark on food and beverage tours, where local experts lead you through a treasure trove of hidden culinary gems, unveiling the secrets of a region's cuisine.

For those who thrive in bustling and lively environments, food and beverage festivals are a highlight of culinary travel. These events offer a vibrant atmosphere where you can savour a diverse array of dishes and drinks, often representing the very best of a destination's culinary offerings.

Specialty dining experiences at luxurious restaurants or a destination takes culinary travel to new heights by offering meals in extraordinary settings. Imagine dining in underwater restaurants with marine life as your companions, enjoying a mountaintop feast with breathtaking views, or having a beachfront dinner at sunset, creating memories that enhance the flavours of each dish.

One of the most luxurious experiences in the realm of culinary travel with Michelin-star restaurants is the "Osteria Francescana" located in Modena, Italy. Helmed by Chef Massimo Bottura. It has consistently held three Michelin stars and ranks among the world's top restaurants. What sets Osteria Francescana apart is its dedication to storytelling through food. Each course tells a narrative, often rooted in Italy's rich history and heritage. The restaurant's limited seating ensures a highly personalized and attentive service and exemplifies the pinnacle of luxury in culinary travel.

Of course, culinary tourism is a mouthwatering adventure that weaves together a rich tapestry of flavours, traditions, and cherished memories. It invites you into the heart of a destination's culinary heritage, transforming each meal into a truly unforgettable travel experience.



The Chedi Andermatt Spa



Jewellery Magic: Co-founders Jeff Forrest & Jessica Nahmias

HEIRLOOM JEWELLERY MAGIC FOR TRAVELLERS

Gather 'round and prepare to be dazzled, because we have a Jewellery treat for you! Introducing LUUM, a contemporary jewellery company that creates a unique keepsake with your own story

TT BUREAU

This company provides what mass-produced bands cannot: meaning. For travel aficionados craving a keepsake from a once-in-a-lifetime journey, this is it. That's right, this company is here to bring meaning back to the world of jewellery, and they do it with style.

Now, we all know that feeling of wanderlust, that insatiable desire to traverse the globe and collect memories like

souvenir shot glasses. Well, guess what? Here is a company come up with the perfect solution for you, a keepsake that will make your once-in-a-lifetime journey unforgettable.

PERSONALIZED MASTERPIECE

Imagine this: You sign up with LUUM, and before you can say "bling" they send you a magical kit. Okay, maybe not magical, but definitely awesome. Inside this kit, you'll find a bag for



Jewellery Magic: Leftover Process Metal for Donation

your chosen casting medium. They've got it all, folks, from sand to sediment, ash to brick. Who knew you could have a piece of jewellery made out of your favourite beach sand or your grandmother's old brick? LUUM did, that's who!

But wait, there's more! They don't stop there. They also include a handy scale for weighing your vintage noble metals. Gold, silver, platinum—you name it, they'll weigh it! And just when you thought it couldn't get any better, they throw in a ring sizer too. This company has got your back when it comes to finding the perfect fit for your finger.

Now, here's the best part: once you've assembled all your precious materials and sent them back to the company, the real magic happens. They've got their smiths, their artisans, situated in none other than the vibrant cities of Los Angeles and Toronto. These talented folks take your unique concoction of sand, sediment, ash, brick, and noble metals, and with their skilled hands, forge them into magnificent rings.

So, jewellery enthusiasts, say goodbye to mass-produced bands that lack meaning and say hello to LUUM! They've got a contemporary style, an old soul, and a process that's easier than you can imagine. Here is where you make your jewellery dreams come true, one unique ring at a time. Get ready to rock the world with your own personalized masterpiece!

THE PROCESS

Each LUUM ring is meticulously forged by a foundry artisan. The process begins not with a mould but with a casting medium provided by you (think sand from a secret beach, clay from wine country, or sediment from a mountaintop). Recent customers have sent in such media as rubble from the Berlin wall, soil from a childhood playground, and brick dust from a family home.



The name LUUM, "earth" in Mayan, is a homage to the first ring cast: Las Coloradas, Yucatan, Mexico



Family Heirloom Signet ring

You also have the option to provide the metal for your ring. By sending in an unworn heirloom or outdated piece, you layer in yet another element of meaning. The result, with every beautiful imperfection that hand craftsmanship promises, is one of a kind.

These jewellery elements are not tokens; they are time capsules ensconcing moments, places and people, plural.



Jewellery Magic: LUAP | Size: 6 | Width: 6mm | Medium: Sediment, School Playground | Metal: Family Heirloom Yellow Gold

These jewellery pieces are heirlooms, and they are storytellers. The name LUUM, “earth” in Mayan, is a homage to the first ring cast.

It all began when co-founders Jessica Nahmias and Jeff Forrest celebrated their engagement with a road trip through Mexico’s Yucatan peninsula, unearthing treasures of Jessica’s heritage as they went.

Their trip included a visit to the Cenotes of Los Colorados from which the pair kept a sample of the mud known for its celestial mineral qualities. Jeff, an architect and furniture designer familiar with the casting process, melted down Jessica’s Bubbie’s gold jewellery and used the mud they had brought home from their trip to craft his wedding band.

LUUM is about storytelling and this one continues at an event that the pair attended with their friends, LUUM co-founders Jackie and Justin Treitz. When the topic of Jeff’s wedding band came up, they too were lovestruck by the tale behind the craft.

This time it was Justin who proposed; a business plan that would allow the group to share this beautiful idea with the world. Between the four of them, there is a storyteller (Jessica), designer (Jeff), brand expert (Jackie), and financial planner (Justin), all excited to help others forge their cherished memories into LUUM bands.

And the process cannot be easier. Once registered with LUUM, clients are sent a kit that includes a bag for the casting medium (sand, sediment, ash, brick, etc.) of their choice. There is also a scale to weigh vintage noble metals (gold, silver,

platinum), as well as a ring sizer. Everything is then returned to the company who then engages its smiths – located in Los Angeles and Toronto – to forge the rings.

The casting process results in a small amount of leftover noble metal known as a sprue. This residual metal is donated to Ethical Metalsmiths, a non-profit organization whose mission is to connect consumers with jewellers dedicated to leaving as little environmental trace as possible. Their process and ethos align perfectly with LUUM’s.

Essentially, the company facilitates the creation of signature jewellery cast from a medium that matters and made from a noble metal with import. The time and cost investments are equivalent to a custom design, but the result is as unique as a fingerprint. When the casting medium meets the molten metal, it leaves a signature pattern, meaning each ring is as unique as the story behind it.

In brief, the company transforms noble metals, heirlooms, and casting mediums into forged memories.

- **CRAFT:** Once they receive the completed customer Kit, their smiths create a custom ring mould using the personalised casting medium.
- **CAST:** The customer’s choice of noble metal or heirloom(s) is melted and poured. Once set, their smiths carefully hand-finish the ring.
- **LOVE:** It’s a personal ring, a piece of designer jewellery — a unique remembrance of a place, a person, a moment — that is shipped back to the customer.

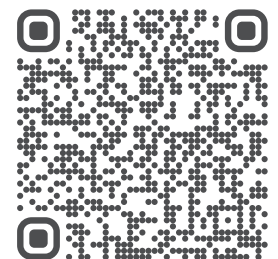
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SCAN TO BOOK

NEVER A DULL MOMENT WITH THE GRAND VENICE MALL!

Entertainment, dining opportunities and retail mix, at the Grand Venice mall, ensure that travellers seek this venue as a part of their itinerary

TT BUREAU



Today's traveller not only seeks convenient and safe modes of travel combined with pleasant accommodation, he or she also seeks unique experiences and opportunities to create memories to take home with them. This is where retail spaces are playing an increasingly important part and taking center stage.

One such development is the Grand Venice Mall, that has over the past two years brought life and energy to Greater Noida, a locale not historically associated with an aspirational lifestyle. Today thanks to the entertainment, dining opportunities and retail mix, at the Grand Venice mall, travelers from around the country and abroad, along with local denizens are incorporating time at this venue as a part of their itinerary.

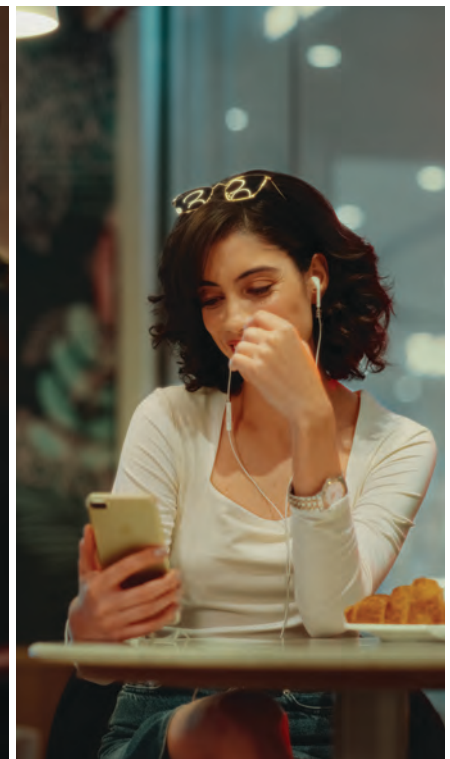


Current attractions include the eponymous and unique Venetian canals with aria singing gondoliers, US based 5 Iron's first golf center in India, a five-screen multiplex and over 50,000 square feet of entertainment including a snow park.

Dining options run the gamut of international and indigenous brands combined with restaurants and bars, and

all the major retail brands, thereby ensuring that irrespective of age or interest there is never a dull moment at the mall.

Situated close to the Expo Center, the Grand Venice Mall plans to further cement it's and Greater Noida's tourist draw by adding approximately 275 deluxe rooms to the city by the end of 2025 and allowing guests to enjoy the mall's attractions for extended periods of time.





Sterling Kodai Lake

THERE IS MORE THAN WHAT MEETS THE EYE AT KODAI

TT BUREAU

Sitting at a height of 2,100 meters in the pristine Palani hills of the Western Ghats, Kodaikanal - often referred to as the "Princess of Hill Stations," is a popular summer retreat of the South. A true natural haven with loads of lush landscapes, serene lakes, and a rich tapestry of culture and history. As one ventures into the heart of the Kodai Valley, the crisp air, the aroma of eucalyptus trees mingling with the gentle mist and creating an enchanting ambiance is what defines the first and the lasting impression of Kodaikanal.

CULTURAL TAPESTRY, HISTORICAL SPLENDORS, AND UNIQUE GEOGRAPHICAL IDENTIFICATIONS

Embedded within its expansive natural 'Sholas' (thickets and forests of the Palani Hills) here lies an underbelly of rich cultural heritage that is deeply intertwined with its historical past. Originally inhabited by the Paliyan tribal people, the region witnessed the establishment of a hill station by the American missionaries back in the early 19th century. To go back further into history and culture of natives and early settlers one can take a trip to the Poombarai Village to get a glimpse into their lifestyle, a visit to the famous 10th Century Murugan Temple known to be decorated with nine medicated herbs, shopping for the distinctive bulb shaped pods of hill garlic called as 'Malai Poondu'

and a specially made 'Palani Panchamritam' - both bestowed with unique GI Tags are some of the best ways to discover Kodaikanal.

A ride in serene Kodai and Mannavanur Lakes, traversing through the picturesque Pine forests for a perfect Instagrammable pic, Lutheran Church, Coakers Walk and lots more are popular experiences of this idyllic hill town.

COMFORTABLE STAYS AND MEMORABLE HOLIDAYS AT STERLING

Located at a short distance from Coimbatore in the north and Madurai in the South, Kodaikanal is a perfect quick getaway destination by car, or a short 6-hour journey from Chennai. And



GI TAG HILL GARLIC



3D Theatre at Kodai Valley



Valley View Restaurant at Kodai Valley

boasting of contemporary, thoughtful places for stay here are Sterling Kodai Lake and Sterling Kodai Valley. Featuring 102 and 106 upscale, spacious, and fully equipped rooms and suites, the two leisure havens are a feather in the cap for Sterling. Designed for families with pets, heightened venues for small to large scale events / celebrations, ample of car park spaces, private theatre, stylish dining destinations and loads of outdoor entertainment for all ages; Sterling's twin leisure hotspots are a bedrock of comfort and signature hospitality of Sterling.

CULINARY DELIGHTS OF STERLING

Food enthusiasts will find themselves in a gastronomic paradise at Sterling in Kodai. The in-house restaurant at Kodai Lake called as the Lake View not only offers a scenic view of the silvery waterbed but also serves sumptuous continental and India breakfast-signature delight of the region, packed by lively dinners and speciality dining menu. Hire our barbeques and grills with our chef special veg / non- veg menu for that private in-room dining experiences, accompanied with your favourite choice of spirits.

To tantalise your taste buds with some desi specials or to indulge in a more lavish spread with a larger group of friends and family head to Valley View at Sterling Kodai Valley. Kaadai chops, kola urundai, mulberry mule, panjunitai cocktail, are just some of the uniquely engineered local fusion food and beverages worth trying at both these resorts.

EVENTFUL BEGINNINGS BEYOND ORDINARY

Celebrations at Kodaikanal are not just out of the box but also out of the ordinary. Inspired and thematic destination weddings, corporate offsites with activities packed for small and large teams, reunions, launch events, conferences or private and intimate board meets; three distinctive versatile venues decked by natural light, fresh ambience, state-of-the-art AV equipment and expertise for seamless execution. There is everything for everyone here at Sterling!

DISCOVER AND EXPERIENCE KODAI BEYOND THE RESORT

While the Sterling Kodai resort offers a world of luxury within its premises, the allure of Kodaikanal extends beyond its boundaries. Guests can explore the vibrant local marketplaces,



Mulberry Mule at LOCAL



Sterling Kodai Valley

where handmade artefacts and local produce showcase the artistic prowess of the region. The bustling streets echo with the laughter of locals and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, creating a sensory symphony for visitors.

Tourist spots like Coaker's Walk, Bryant Park, and the Pillar Rocks beckon adventure enthusiasts and nature lovers alike. Each site narrates a story of its own, adding layers to the already rich history of Kodaikanal.

In conclusion, Kodaikanal, with its cultural depth and natural splendour, is a destination that captivates the soul. Sterling Kodai - Lake and Valley blend modern luxury and traditional charm, emerging as a perfect getaway into this enchanting hill station, and offering a holistic experience that transcends the ordinary. Whether you seek tranquillity by the lake, cultural immersion, or a seamless blend of work and leisure, Sterling at Kodai offers promising memories that linger long after the journey ends.

WINTER ADVENTURES: EXPLORING COASTAL INDIA

Winter in Coastal India for adventure enthusiasts, is a season to explore and indulge in thrilling activities under the warm and welcoming sun

KAMAL GILL



Surfing at Covelong Beach, Tamil Nadu

As winter casts its cool blanket over India, the coastal regions from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Odisha to the distant islands of Lakshadweep and Nicobar, and down to the vibrant shores of Kerala, beckon adventure enthusiasts with a plethora of exhilarating activities.

Coastal India with its ideal winter weather, becomes the perfect destination for those seeking excitement and adventure.

TAMIL NADU: COASTAL THRILLS AND EXCITING TRAILS

Surfing at Covelong Beach: Covelong Beach isn't just a scenic spot; it's a surfer's haven. The consistent waves during the winter months provide perfect conditions for both novice and

expert surfers. Surf schools along the beach offer lessons and the necessary gear, making it easy for everyone to catch a wave.

Paramotoring for Sky-high Adventures: Experience the exhilaration of flight with paramotoring. This activity, ideal during the cooler, calmer winter months, offers a unique bird's-eye view of Chennai's diverse landscape, from its beaches to its urban expanses.

ATV Rides on Rugged Terrains: Explore the outskirts of Chennai on an ATV, navigating through challenging terrains. These rides are perfect for those who love a bit of adrenaline-pumping action, with the cooler weather making the experience even more enjoyable.



Mangrove Kayaking in Andaman

GOA: A BLEND OF AIR, WATER, AND LAND ADVENTURES

Hot Air Ballooning Over Goa's Landscape: Imagine floating in the sky as the sun rises, offering panoramic views of Goa's coastline and lush landscapes. Hot air ballooning in Goa is a must-try winter activity, perfect for those seeking a serene yet thrilling experience.

Water Sports Galore: Goa's beaches are ideal for a variety of water sports. Winter brings calmer seas, which are perfect for activities like windsurfing, jet skiing, and parasailing. These sports provide a rush like no other, against the backdrop of Goa's beautiful beaches.

Trekking to Dudhsagar Falls: A trek to Dudhsagar Falls is a blend of adventure and natural splendour. The cooler winter months make the trek through dense forests and rugged terrain to the majestic waterfall both pleasant and invigorating.

THE ANDAMANS: AN UNDERWATER AND OVERWATER EXPEDITION

Scuba Diving and Snorkelling in Crystal Clear Waters: The Andaman Islands, with their clear waters, are a paradise for scuba diving and snorkelling. Winter offers the best visibility to explore the vibrant coral reefs and marine life, making it an unforgettable experience for underwater enthusiasts.

Sea Walking at North Bay Island: For those who prefer not to swim or dive, sea walking is an incredible alternative. Walking on the seabed surrounded by fish and coral is a surreal experience, made possible in the clear waters of the Andamans.

Mangrove Kayaking – A Serene Exploration: Kayaking through the mangroves of the Andamans isn't just adventurous; it's a peaceful way to connect with nature. Paddle through tranquil waters and witness the unique ecosystem of the mangrove forests.

KERALA: BACKWATERS AND BEYOND

Houseboat Cruises in Alleppey: The backwaters of Kerala offer a serene experience aboard traditional houseboats. The winter climate makes it a pleasant journey, showcasing the rural, verdant landscape of Kerala.



Houseboat Cruises in Alleppey



Hot Air Ballooning Over Goa's Landscape

Surfing in Varkala: The surf breaks in Varkala are perfect for surfing enthusiasts. The season from November to March offers the best waves for both beginners and advanced surfers.

Sailing in Kochi's Backwaters: Experience the thrill of sailing in the backwaters of Kochi, a unique way to explore the labyrinthine network of waterways and islands.

Heritage Walks in Fort Kochi: Immerse in the rich history of Kochi with heritage walks in Fort Kochi, where the cool winter climate makes exploring the historic streets and landmarks a pleasure.

MAHARASHTRA: ADVENTURE ON THE KONKAN COAST

Parasailing in Alibaug: The beaches of Alibaug offer thrilling parasailing experiences, with the cool winter breeze making it ideal for this activity.

Dolphin Watching in Tarkarli: Tarkarli is known for its clear waters, which become a playground for dolphins in the winter months. Dolphin-watching tours are a delightful experience for visitors.

KARNATAKA: COASTAL ESCAPADES

Microlight Flying in Mangalore: Experience the thrill of flying a microlight aircraft over the beautiful coast of Mangalore. The winter months offer clear skies and favourable weather for this activity.

Jet Skiing in Murudeshwar: The beaches of Murudeshwar offer exciting jet skiing experiences, with the Arabian Sea providing the perfect backdrop for adrenaline-packed adventures.

WEST BENGAL: CULTURAL RICHNESS AND NATURAL SPLENDOR

Experiencing the Blend of Culture and Adventure in West Bengal.

Trekking in the Sundarbans: Explore the world's largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans, on a winter trek. The cooler weather makes it ideal to venture through this UNESCO World Heritage Site, known for its unique biodiversity.

Bird Watching in Gorumara National Park: Winter is the perfect time for bird watching in Gorumara National Park, home to numerous species of migratory birds.

LAKSHADWEEP: TROPICAL PARADISE

Island Adventures: Unforgettable Experiences in Lakshadweep
Kayaking and Canoeing: The calm lagoons of Lakshadweep are perfect for kayaking and canoeing, offering a peaceful way to explore the islands.

Lagoon Fishing: Try your hand at lagoon fishing, a relaxing and rewarding experience amidst the pristine waters of these coral islands.

NICOBAR: THE UNTOUCHED ARCHIPELAGO

Exploring the Mystical Nicobar Islands

Snorkelling in Clear Waters: The Nicobar Islands, with their clear waters and rich marine life, are ideal for snorkelling, providing an unspoiled underwater experience.

Island Hopping: Discover the lesser-known islands of Nicobar, each with its unique charm and untouched natural beauty.

ODISHA: WHERE CULTURE MEETS COAST

Discovering the Coastal Charm of Odisha

Sand Art and Beach Camping in Puri: Engage in sand art on the beaches of Puri or spend a night under the stars with beach camping, making the most of Odisha's beautiful coastline.

Olive Ridley Turtle Watching: Witness the mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles at Rushikulya Beach, an awe-inspiring natural phenomenon that occurs during the winter months.

PUDUCHERRY - UNVEILING ADVENTURES ON THE GALLIC SHORES

Scuba Diving in Coral Reefs: Discover the underwater marvels of Puducherry with scuba diving. The region's clear winter



Lagoon Fishing in Lakshadweep



Island Hopping in Nicobar

waters provide excellent visibility to explore vibrant coral reefs and marine life.

Heritage Bicycle Tours: Explore the French colonial charm of Puducherry on a bicycle. Winter mornings are perfect for cycling through quaint streets lined with colourful houses and cafes.

PLAYGROUND FOR THRILL-SEEKERS

The coastal regions of India transform into adventure playgrounds during the winter months, offering a myriad of activities for every type of thrill-seeker. From surfing the waves in Chennai and Varkala to exploring the serene backwaters of Kerala, and from high-flying adventures in Goa and Mangalore to underwater explorations in the Andamans, the Indian coastline is a treasure trove of excitement.

Coastal India has much more on offer - you can explore the unique experiences that Puducherry and Kochi have in store for adventure enthusiasts. The winter season in India offers an array of adventures for every enthusiast from the cultural vibrancy of West Bengal and the serene beauty of Odisha's coast to the exotic escapades in Lakshadweep and the untouched splendour of the Nicobar Islands.

Whether it's trekking through dense mangroves, exploring coral reefs, or witnessing the wonders of nature, these regions provide an unforgettable experience for those looking to explore India's diverse landscapes and cultures. So, embrace the chill of winter with a spirit of adventure and discover the unique thrills that these destinations have to offer.



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Set out on a fulfilling journey of wellness, healing and peace through the two invaluable gifts from India — Yoga and Tea. Scientific studies have shown that both Tea and Yoga help relieve stress and anxiety, and have proven health benefits for the patients with diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.

We welcome you to connect with your inner self and discover the perfect harmony of mind, body and soul through the unique confluence of Yoga and Indian Tea.



2024 INDIA TRAVEL TRENDS

Travel trends in India for 2024 are based on trending hotspots and emerging patterns. Trends suggest that Indian destinations that sport a calendar of events are likely to be big draws

TT BUREAU

Destinations that present new themes and showcases, hold big-league activities or are in the news for new developments or travel circuits are likely to drive traffic on account of their popularity on social media. The three top spots for 2024 are Mumbai, Rajasthan and Arunachal Pradesh.

KEY DESTINATIONS FOR 2024

MUMBAI

Mumbai, often referred to as the city that never sleeps, emerges as a central hub for cultural and music enthusiasts. The global music festival Lollapalooza is set to grace Mumbai with performances from iconic artists like the Jonas Brothers and Anoushka Shankar, offering a perfect blend of Western and traditional music. Mumbai's charm extends to its iconic spots like Marine Drive, Shaniwar Wada, Lonavala, and Matheran, each offering a unique glimpse into the city's dynamic personality.

RAJASTHAN

Moving to the west, Rajasthan, the desert state of India, showcases its vibrant culture and colourful festivals. The Desert



Mumbai



The Desert Festival in Jaisalmer



Rafting in Siang River

Festival in Jaisalmer is a cultural extravaganza, that brings traditional art forms and folk music to life. The state is also known for its rich history, home to nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites including the majestic Chittorgarh Fort and the astronomical wonder, Jantar Mantar, and Hawa Mahal are big attractions.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

In the northeast, Arunachal Pradesh, the 'Land of Dawn-lit Mountains', is a treasure trove of biodiversity and tribal culture. Known for hosting over 500 rare species of orchids in its dense jungles, Arunachal Pradesh is a haven for nature lovers and adventurers alike. The state's rich tribal diversity is celebrated through various festivals, offering an authentic cultural experience. Destinations like Tawang and the Siang River provide exhilarating experiences, from angling to rafting, set against the backdrop of picturesque landscapes.

EMERGING TRAVEL TRENDS

The travel trends of 2024 also reflect a significant shift in traveller behaviour and preferences.

DISCOVERY DESTINATIONS

In 2024, the trend of exploring lesser-known destinations is gaining momentum among travellers seeking unique and less crowded experiences. Destinations like the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and remote villages in Bhutan are at the forefront of this trend. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, an archipelago in the Bay of Bengal, are known for their pristine beaches, vibrant coral reefs, and dense rainforests.

Bhutan, on the other hand, offers a blend of serenity and rich cultural heritage. Its remote villages provide an unparalleled glimpse into traditional Bhutanese life. This growing interest in off-the-beaten-path travel is supported by a shift in traveller preferences towards more authentic and immersive cultural experiences, as well as a desire to explore untouched natural landscapes.

RETRO TECHNOLOGY

There is a shift towards older technology for documenting trips, and group trips for celebrating special occasions. Gen Z is leading the way with a preference for high-quality, retro-cool photos using analogue and favouring traditional Instant cameras, Polaroid and Fuji Instax over selfies and digital documentation. Vinyl records and simple plug-and-play consoles such as the Sega Genesis Mini making an interesting comeback. This trend suggests a desire for more immersive and authentic experiences.

SPLURGE TRAVEL

A trend towards splurging for comfort, with more travellers upgrading to business or first class on flights is apparent. Luxury travel escapes with options like palatial stays in Rajasthan, villas and bungalows in Darjeeling, beach houses in Kerala, and Himalayan adventures in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh are being sought.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Sustainable travel takes centre stage as travellers become more conscious of their environmental impact. The demand for eco-friendly accommodations, transportation, and tours with a focus on conservation is on the rise. This trend reflects a growing awareness and responsibility towards preserving the natural and cultural heritage of destinations.

REMOTE WORK AND DIGITAL NOMADISM

The concept of remote work has revolutionized the travel industry, with the rise of digital nomads who blend work and leisure. India, with its diverse landscapes and robust internet infrastructure in major cities, is becoming a popular destination for those seeking to work remotely while exploring new cultures and experiences.

WELLNESS AND MINDFUL TRAVEL

The growing popularity of wellness-focused trips, like yoga retreats, Ayurveda centres and wellness getaways, especially in places like Rishikesh and Kerala is a noticeable trend. There is a greater focus on rest and rejuvenation and wellness retreats in places like Rishikesh, Goa, Coorg, and Alleppey are popular for this reason.

TECH TRAVEL

The use of technology in travel planning is significant. Travellers are increasingly relying on AI and digital tools for efficient and personalized trip planning. Budget-friendly tips for saving on accommodation, transportation, and activities, with suggestions for hostels, guesthouses, and exploring lesser-known places are being sought through technology platforms.

EVENT-BASED TRAVEL

Celebration vacationers are another emerging group, with travellers increasingly planning trips around special occasions, often in groups, to destinations that offer sporting events, cultural events and shows, religious events, music festivals, Broadway shows, firework displays, dance festivals and other forms of group celebration. Millennials and Gen Z show a strong interest in live concerts and cultural events. Trips for graduation celebrations, significant birthdays, or anniversary milestones are being recorded as once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

These trends reflect the dynamic and evolving landscape of travel in India, from cultural immersion, and event seekers to those looking for mindful vacations and relaxation. The year 2024 is poised to introduce novel experiences, further solidifying India's position as a multifaceted and vibrant destination on the world travel map.



Bhutan



Yoga in Rishikesh

SOUTH INDIA'S TEA TRAILS

For those who hold a special place in their hearts for tea, the tea gardens of Southern India offer an enchanting world to explore

TT BUREAU

Southern India, a land of diverse landscapes and rich cultural heritage, is also home to some of the most enchanting tea gardens in the world. These sprawling estates, nestled in the lush greenery of the Western Ghats and rolling hills of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, are not just agricultural marvels but also serene retreats for nature lovers and tea enthusiasts alike. As you wander through these verdant plantations, the air is fragrant with the aroma of fresh tea leaves, and the picturesque scenery unfolds like a painted canvas, offering a tranquil escape from the bustling world outside.

Here, amidst the symphony of nature, the journey of tea from leaf to cup comes alive, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in the unique flavours and stories of Southern India's tea heritage.

COONOR, TAMIL NADU

Among these, the Blue Mountains or Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu hold a special place. Since 1835, these hills have been home to tea gardens known for the distinctive, exquisite aroma of Nilgiris Teas. Around Coonoor, you'll find numerous tea farms, each with its unique charm and history. During the British Raj, the native Badagas tribe faced the transformation of their lands into tea estates, leading to a change in their traditional way of life. Today, the Nilgiris are peppered with tea estates, extending beyond Coonoor to areas like Wayanad, the Anamalai region, and Nelliampathy.

A notable mention is the O'land Estate, situated just 40 minutes from Ooty. Nearby, the Tenerife Plantation offers a refreshing retreat for those visiting Coonoor. When in Coonoor, a plethora of activities beckons the tea lover. You



Tea Plantations



Kolukkumalai Tea Estate

can visit the tea plantations to discover the delicate and intricate process of tea making. The Nilgiris Coonoor tea, known for its light and floral flavour, makes for a delightful tasting experience. A scenic train ride on the Nilgiri Mountain Railway, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is another must-do, offering stunning views of the rolling hills and tea plantations.

Coonoor also boasts attractions like Sim's Park, a botanical haven with a wide variety of plant species, including several exotics. For panoramic views, the Dolphin's Nose Viewpoint is a popular spot, especially for sunrise and sunset. Nature enthusiasts can explore Law's Falls, a picturesque waterfall ideal for picnics and relaxation. Trekking trails abound, including the Catherine Falls Trek and the Kotagiri Trek, each offering breathtaking vistas. The St. Catherine's Church, a colonial-style edifice, adds a historical dimension to your visit. Lastly, for a taste of local culture, Coonoor's markets with their hand-woven textiles, pottery, and jewellery are not to be missed.

In essence, a visit to the tea gardens of India is not just about savouring a cup of tea; it's an immersive journey into the heart of tea culture, encompassing history, nature, and local traditions.

KOLUKKUMALAI, TAMIL NADU

Nestled in the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu and bordering Kerala, the hill station of Kolukkumalai is a hidden gem for nature lovers and tea enthusiasts alike. Known for the Kolukkumalai Tea Estate, which is arguably the highest and largest tea plantation in India, it stands majestically at 8,000 feet above sea level. This elevation not only provides a spectacular view but also contributes to the unique scent and flavour of the tea grown here, making it a sought-after variety among tea connoisseurs.



Coonoor

Reaching Kolukkumalai is an adventure in itself. The journey from Suryanelli in Kerala's Idukki district takes about two hours, covering a mere 20 miles (32 kilometers) from Munnar town. The challenging terrain necessitates completing the final stretch of the journey by jeep, offering an exhilarating experience through breathtaking landscapes.

A trip to Kolukkumalai is filled with various activities catering to different interests. Visitors can embark on guided tours of the tea estates to delve into the intricate process of tea making. The tea from Kolukkumalai, known for its light, smooth flavor with a hint of sweetness, is rich in antioxidants and often used in premium tea blends. Tasting sessions allow visitors to appreciate the unique qualities of this high-altitude tea.

For the outdoor enthusiast, Kolukkumalai is a paradise. The surrounding hills and forests are perfect for hiking and trekking, offering trails that meander through scenic landscapes and provide stunning views of the valley. Nature walks through the lush green plantations and forests are an opportunity to observe the area's diverse flora and fauna up close.

The ancient Kolukkumalai Temple, perched atop a hill, is another attraction. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, this temple is not only a significant pilgrimage site but also offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscapes. For those seeking a more tranquil experience, camping in Kolukkumalai is ideal. The serenity of camping under the stars, amidst the wilderness, is a unique way to connect with nature.

Adventure sports enthusiasts will find plenty to do in the area around Kolukkumalai, with options like paragliding, rock climbing, and rappelling. These activities add an element of thrill to the visit. Additionally, interacting with the local people in nearby villages presents a wonderful opportunity to learn about the culture, customs, and lifestyle of the region.

WAYANAD, KERALA

Wayanad, a picturesque hill station in Kerala, has long been synonymous with its extensive tea plantations that are spread across five major estates. Known as the Green Heaven of Malabar, Wayanad captivates nature lovers with its lush, mountainous agricultural terrain that not only nurtures tea but also a variety of other crops like coffee, pepper, areca nut, cardamom, and spices.

The heart of Wayanad's tea culture lies south of Kalpetta, stretching from Vythiri to Meppadi. These regions offer stunning views characterized by mist-covered hills and crystal-clear mountain streams, creating a serene environment far

removed from the hustle of city life. A journey through these tea estates is not just visually arresting but also a sensory delight. The tea from Wayanad is known for its strong, robust flavour with a hint of bitterness, rich in antioxidants, and commonly used in various tea blends.

Visitors to Wayanad can indulge in a variety of activities that showcase the region's natural beauty and cultural richness. Trekking enthusiasts can explore trails such as the Chembra Peak Trek, which offers scenic vistas and leads to a cave with a natural spring at Pakshipathalam, providing exceptional views of the surrounding hills and forests. Wildlife viewing is another highlight, with the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary being a haven for diverse species including tigers, elephants, and a myriad of birds.

For those interested in history and archaeology, the Edakkal Caves present a fascinating exploration with their ancient rock carvings believed to be over 3000 years old. The Wayanad Heritage Museum offers further insights into the region's rich cultural heritage, including its history, art, and architecture.

Nature's bounty in Wayanad is also evident in its beautiful waterfalls like Soochipara Falls, Meenmutty Falls, and Kanthanpara Falls, offering tranquil spots for relaxation. The local villages in Wayanad are a great place to interact with the community and learn about their customs and way of life. For a holistic experience, Ayurvedic massages and treatments are available, known for their rejuvenating properties.

Lastly, plantation tours in Wayanad are a must-do, especially for those interested in the cultivation of spices such as cardamom, coffee, and tea. These tours provide an in-depth understanding of the cultivation processes and the agricultural heritage of the region.



Soochipara Falls



Chembra Peak Trek



वन की बात

KASEZ



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRIES **KANDLA SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE**

Kandla Special Economic Zone bearing the distinction of being the first SEZ in the Asia-Pacific region, was inaugurated by Late Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri on 7th March, 1965 as an Export Promotion Zone which was seamlessly converted into a Special Economic Zone in 2006. KASEZ has been awarded as "First Green Industrial City of India" in Platinum Category for the year 2021-2026, under IGBC Green Cities rating for existing Cities in industrial cities category. This zone is home to 281 exporting units providing employment to over 28,000 persons.

Kandla Special Economic Zone offers opportunity to set up new manufacturing units in various sectors such as engineering, pharma and chemical, Textiles, timber and plywood and new emerging technologies including E-Vehicles and their accories. 36.92 Ha (100 Acres) is being developed into 75 plots of size ranging from 2800 sqm to 6300 sqm which is an opportunity ready to be seized by investors.

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- Well connected to NH 8-A, Railway Station- 2km away.
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3. Stamp duty levied on lease deed and other documents from SEZ units.
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Rann Utsav, Kutch

CELEBRATING HERITAGE: JANUARY FESTIVALS

As the world steps into the new year, India's celebration spirit takes on a resplendent hue, especially in January

TT BUREAU

This month is replete with festivals that are unique in their fervor, colour, and significance, making them a magnet for locals and travellers worldwide. Here is a curated list of the best festivals you can attend in January 2024 in India, each an emblem of the country's unyielding spirit and cultural ethos.

RANN UTSAV: A CELEBRATION IN THE HEART OF THE DESERT

Rann Utsav, celebrated in the vast expanses of the Rann of Kutch, is a festival that magnifies the natural beauty and cultural richness of the region. This desert festival, a true embodiment of the local heritage, showcases a myriad of activities ranging from traditional folk dances and music to adventure sports. The festival is also a paradise for those who appreciate handcrafted goods and local cuisines, offering a first-hand experience of the region's vibrant culture.

DATE: November 1, 2023 to February 20th, 2024

LOCATION: Great Rann of Kutch salt desert, Dhordo, Gujarat

HIGHLIGHTS

SCENIC BEAUTY: The festival offers a breathtaking view of the white salt desert, especially during full moon nights, providing a surreal backdrop for the festivities.

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES: Traditional folk dances and music performances showcase the rich cultural heritage of Gujarat, offering a glimpse into the soul of the region.

HANDICRAFTS BAZAAR: Artisans from across Gujarat display their crafts, including embroidery, pottery, woodwork, and jewelry, making it a perfect place for souvenir hunting.

GASTRONOMIC DELIGHTS: A variety of food stalls serve local Gujarati cuisine, giving visitors a taste of the region's culinary richness.

ADVENTURE SPORTS: For thrill-seekers, the festival offers activities like hot air ballooning, camel safaris, and ATV rides across the desert landscape.

LUXURY TENTS: Comfortable and luxurious tents are set up for tourists, providing a blend of traditional and modern amenities amidst the desert.

INTERNATIONAL KITE FESTIVAL : SKY-HIGH CELEBRATIONS FOR MAKAR SANKRANTI

The International Kite Festival, held in January, is a spectacular celebration marking Makar Sankranti. This festival draws countless enthusiasts from various states and countries, transforming the sky into a canvas of vibrant colors. From sunrise to sunset, the sky is adorned with millions of kites, creating a mesmerizing spectacle.

DATE: January 14, 2024

LOCATION: Sabarmati River Front, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and in Jaipur, Rajasthan

HIGHLIGHTS

KITE FLYING COMPETITIONS: The festival features exciting kite flying competitions, where participants showcase their skills in maneuvering kites with precision and grace.

AERIAL ACROBATICS: Watch skilled kite flyers perform incredible aerial acrobatics with their kites, a visual treat for all attendees.

KITE MAKING AND PAINTING: Engage in kite-making and painting competitions, allowing visitors to unleash their creativity and contribute to the kaleidoscope of colours in the sky.

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES: The festival is also accompanied by folk music and dance performances, adding a cultural dimension to the event.

INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION: With participants from various countries, the festival offers a global experience, fostering cross-cultural interactions.

FOOD STALLS: Savor local Gujarati delicacies at various food stalls, making the festival a treat for the taste buds as well.



International Kite Festival at Ahmedabad

BIKANER CAMEL FESTIVAL: A VIBRANT TRIBUTE TO THE SHIP OF THE DESERT

The Bikaner Camel Festival is a colourful celebration held in January, dedicated to the camel, an animal synonymous with the desert life of Rajasthan. The event is filled with unique activities such as camel beauty pageants, races, and highly anticipated camel dancing, making it a must-visit for those intrigued by the vibrant culture of Rajasthan.

DATE: 8 and 9 January, 2024

LOCATION: Bikaner, Rajasthan

HIGHLIGHTS

CAMEL PAGEANTRY: Witness the spectacle of camels decked out in colourful saddles, bridles, and traditional Rajasthani textiles, reflecting the region's rich artistic heritage.

CAMEL DANCE PERFORMANCE: The camel dance, a major highlight, showcases the training and grace of these animals, drawing crowds from all over.

CAMEL RACES: Experience the thrill of camel races, a display of speed and agility that captivates audiences.

FOLK MUSIC AND DANCE: Enjoy traditional Rajasthani folk music and dance performances, adding a rhythmic charm to the festivities.

CRAFTS AND HANDLOOMS: Explore local crafts and handlooms at various stalls, offering a glimpse into the artisanal skills of the region.

AUTHENTIC CUISINE: Relish the flavours of authentic Rajasthani cuisine, an integral part of the festival experience.

KENDULI MELA: A MELODIC JOURNEY THROUGH BENGALI FOLKLORE

Kenduli Mela, held in the quaint village of Kenduli near Shantiniketan in West Bengal, is a festival that truly captures the essence of Bengali culture. The gathering of wandering Baul musicians, known for their soulful performances, creates an atmosphere that is both heartwarming and culturally rich.



Bikaner Camel Festival

DATE: January 14-16, 2024

LOCATION: Kenduli village, West Bengal

HIGHLIGHTS

BAUL MUSICIANS: Experience the unique music of the Bauls, dressed in their traditional saffron robes, playing the Ektara (a one-stringed instrument) and singing profound songs that reflect life's philosophy.

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES: Apart from Baul music, enjoy a variety of other folk music and dance performances that showcase the rich tapestry of Bengali culture.

LOCAL CUISINE: Savour authentic Bengali cuisine, a treat for food enthusiasts looking to experience the local flavors.

RURAL SETTING: The festival's rural backdrop provides a serene and authentic setting, enhancing the overall experience.

MODHERA DANCE FESTIVAL: A CONFLUENCE OF ART, HISTORY, AND HERITAGE

The Modhera Dance Festival is an annual event that is a treat for cultural enthusiasts and a must-attend for those who appreciate classical dance. Set against the magnificent 11th-century Sun Temple, dedicated to the Sun God, the festival offers a stunning backdrop that enhances the beauty of the performances. Artists from various states across India come together to showcase their talent, making each evening of the festival a memorable experience.

DATE: January 17-19, 2024

LOCATION: Modhera, Gujarat

HIGHLIGHTS

STUNNING VENUE: The ancient Sun Temple, an architectural marvel, serves as the breathtaking backdrop for the dance performances, adding a touch of historical grandeur.

CLASSICAL DANCE PERFORMANCES: Witness a variety of classical dance forms from different parts of India, performed by skilled dancers.

TEMPLE ILLUMINATIONS: As night falls, the temple is beautifully illuminated, creating a magical atmosphere for the evening performances.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY: The festival is a celebration of India's diverse cultural heritage, showcasing dance forms from various Indian states.

JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL: A GRAND CELEBRATION OF THE LITERARY WORLD

The Jaipur Literature Festival, popularly known as JLF or Jaipur Lit Fest, is a haven for literature enthusiasts. Ranking as one of



Modhera Dance Festival

the top festivals in January in India, it is also recognized as a significant literary event in Asia.

The festival provides a unique platform to engage with some of the most fascinating literary works and illustrations by acclaimed authors.

DATE: January 28th to February 1st, 2024

LOCATION: Diggi Palace, Jaipur, Rajasthan

HIGHLIGHTS

AUTHOR INTERACTIONS: Attendees have the opportunity to meet and interact with renowned national and international authors, offering a rare glimpse into their creative world.

DIVERSE LITERARY PANELS: The festival features panels and discussions across various literary genres, allowing visitors to explore a wide range of topics and themes.

BOOK LAUNCHES AND READINGS: Witness the launch of new books and enjoy readings by authors, providing a firsthand experience of their latest works.

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES: The festival is also known for its cultural events, including music and dance performances that add to the vibrant atmosphere.

FREE ENTRY: One of the festival's unique aspects is its free entry, making it accessible to all literature lovers.

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A PILGRIMAGE BEYOND THE USUAL

Join a one-of-a-kind pilgrimage to uncover hidden temples in Mathura-Vrindavan

NAVEEN KAKKAR



Kirti Temple

Get ready for an extraordinary adventure as you uncover the hidden treasures of Mathura-Vrindavan through these 10 temples with deep spiritual significance. These temples promise a serene and soul-enriching experience for travellers exploring Mathura-Vrindavan.

Check out this list of 10 stunning temples in the city, each offering a unique glimpse into the love story of Radha and Krishna, making your pilgrimage an unforgettable journey filled with divine moments.

KIRTI TEMPLE

Kirti Mandir, situated in Barsana, is a truly exceptional temple dedicated to the Divine Mother of Radha. What sets it apart is the presence of depictions portraying Shri Radharani cradled

in the loving embrace of Kirti's Mother, making it the only temple of its kind in the world. This remarkable temple was constructed under the wise guidance of Jagadguru Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj. It is conveniently located near Rangeeli Mahal in Barsana, making it a significant spiritual destination in the region.

MAAN MANDIR

Maan Mandir is on top of Maan Garh, which is also called Maan Ghaati and is one of the four hills in Barsana. According to the history of this place, it is said that Radha used to come here when she was upset, and Krishna would try to make her happy.

Inside the temple, there's a small tunnel that goes to a dark room where Radha is believed to have gone to be alone. As the name of this place itself suggests "Maan" means anger.



Pili Phokhar

BHUTESHAWAR MAHADEV

The Bhuteshwar Mahadev Temple in Mathura is a revered and ancient place of worship, with a history that dates back centuries. Situated at the Bhuteshwar Crossroad, which is conveniently located about 3 kilometres from Mathura's main railway station, this temple holds a special significance in the hearts of the local inhabitants and pilgrims alike.

The central deity of this temple is Lord Shiva, worshipped in the form of a Shiva Lingam. The name "Bhuteshwar" is derived from the belief that Lord Shiva at this temple serves as the protector of the Brajwas from evil.

Visiting the Bhuteshwar Mahadev Temple allows one to not only connect with the spiritual heritage of Mathura but also to appreciate the historical and cultural richness of this ancient city.

PILI PHOKHAR

Peeli Pokhar, also known as Priya Kund, is situated in Barsana. This historic pond derives its name, which means "yellowish pond," from an ancient tale. According to this, it was at this very pond that Radha washed her henna (mehndi) adorned hands, magically transforming the water's colour into a vibrant green. Remarkably, despite being cleaned numerous times over the centuries, Peeli Pokhar retains its distinctive green hue, preserving the enchanting legacy of Radha's touch.

You can find Peeli Pokhar in Barsana, not far from Radharani's temple and Rangeeli Mahal. Just cross a small bridge between them, go left for about 1 kilometre, and you'll reach Peeli Pokhar.

GOPESHWAR MAHADEV

The Gopeshwar Mahadev Temple in Vrindavan is one of the oldest and most revered temples in the area, situated near the sacred Yamuna River. This temple is famous for its Shiva Linga, which was installed by Vrajanabha, the great-grandson of Lord Krishna.

The unique feature of this temple is its representation of the balance between masculine and feminine energies of nature. During the day (from 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM), devotees worship the Shiva Linga, symbolizing male power. At night (from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM) during the Raasleela, the Shiva Linga is adorned as a gopi, symbolizing the divine feminine. The Gopeshwar



Gopeshwar Mahadev Mandir, Vrindavan



Ancient Kadamba Tree

Mahadev Temple is located near Vamshivat, and those seeking to experience the bliss of the Raas Leela should visit this temple.

KALI DEH

Kalideh, also known as Kaliya Ghat, is a special place on the banks of the Yamuna River in Vrindavan. It's where, in his childhood, Lord Krishna confronted and subdued a poisonous serpent called Kaliya Nag. The river Yamuna used to flow closer to this spot in the past, but it has shifted over time.

You can still see the ancient Kadamba tree from which Lord Krishna jumped into the Yamuna River. At this Ghat,



Kali Deh

there's a small shrine that commemorates the incident with Kaliya Nag during Krishna's childhood. Inside the shrine, you'll find idols of Lord Krishna, Balram, and Kaliya Nag. The Ghat itself is made of red sandstone and adorned with stone sculptures depicting this memorable event from Krishna's life.

BHANDIRVAN

Bhandirvan is one of Vrindavan's 12 forests, where a unique event took place – the marriage of Radha and Krishna. In a special twist, this wedding wasn't a public affair but a hidden ceremony orchestrated by Lord Krishna's divine power, yoga-maya. Lord Brahma played the role of the priest. Not far from Bhandirvan, approximately 600 meters away, you'll find Vamsivat, another noteworthy spot in this sacred land.

SEVA KUNJ

Seva Kunj is a special place in Vrindavan that celebrates the deep love between Radha and Krishna. It's called Seva Kunj because people believe that Lord Krishna lovingly served Radha here. He helped her get ready for a dance called Raas Leela by combing her hair and adorning her with beautiful jewellery. You can see these moments depicted in a lovely painting on the wall, along with verses from Hindu Scriptures.

There's also a pond called Lalita Kund here. It's said that every night, Lord Krishna and Radha come to this place. Because of this, Seva Kunj is closed to visitors in the evening to give them privacy. Seva Kunj is only 2.1 kilometres away from Vrindavan.

DAUJI TEMPLE

Located approximately 18 kilometres from Mathura, the Dauji Mandir is one of the country's most esteemed temples. This



Garud Govind Temple

ancient temple, dating back over 5000 years since 1535 AD, is among the city's oldest. The main deity worshipped in the temple is Lord Balarama, who was the elder brother of Lord Krishna.

GARUD GOVIND TEMPLE

Just before you reach Vrindavan city on the busy highway, there's a small, somewhat hidden road that leads to the village of Chhatikara. This road takes you to the Garud Govind Temple, which is one of the oldest temples in Vrindavan, located in Chhatikara village on NH2.

The temple is special because it's believed to be built on the spot where Garud, the bird that carries Lord Vishnu, prayed to Vrindavan. He couldn't go inside the main temple due to a curse. Inside the temple, you'll find a statue of Lord Vishnu with 12 arms, seated on his mount, Garud, along with Mahalakshmi. It's a proud and ancient place of worship.



CARL F. BUCHERER MANERO CENTRAL COUNTER

Carl F. Bucherer Manero Central Counter is a sporty chronograph in manly shades of green and black with just the right hint of glamour. With a hybrid rubber strap, domed sapphire crystal and stainless steel casing, this is a limited-edition timepiece.

VARANASI: SOUL OF INDIA

Have you ever heard the mystical call of Varanasi, whispering through the winds, inviting you on a journey to visit Varanasi not just through narrow lanes, but through time itself?

KAMAL GILL



Varanasi

In Varanasi, history doesn't just whisper; it chats, laughs, and sometimes sings hymns in opera at the top of its lungs. It's a place where the past and the present don't just meet; they sit down for a cup of chai together. This city is a living, breathing museum of India's spiritual and cultural heritage, but don't expect dusty artefacts – here, history is alive and knocking at your door!

So, pack your bags (and maybe a time machine) for a journey to Varanasi, where every corner has a tale to tell, every alley holds a secret, and the quest for spiritual peace is more colourful than a festival celebration.

Whether you're a pilgrim, a history buff, or just someone looking for a chat with a wise sadhu, Varanasi's timeless charm is ready to enchant you. Remember, in Varanasi, you

don't just take a trip; you embark on an odyssey – one that promises to be as enlightening as it is entertaining!

A MELTING POT OF MYTHS, LEGENDS, AND SPIRITUAL MARVELS

Considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, Varanasi is a melting pot of myths and spiritual marvels. Varanasi isn't just rich in legend; it's a goldmine of archaeological treasures. The city's history can be traced back through layers of ancient ruins and excavations. These sites reveal a continuous human habitation dating back thousands of years.

Archaeological discoveries made in the Kashi-Rajghat area indicate that the city was settled around the 9th century BC. The archaeological findings here range from ancient

temples submerged in the Ganges to residential structures, all of which provide a fascinating glimpse into the lives of ancient civilizations.

THE ESSENCE OF VARANASI

At the core of Varanasi's spiritual identity is the belief that it is the abode of Lord Shiva, one of Hinduism's principal deities. According to legends, Varanasi is where the first jyotirlinga, the fiery pillar of light by which Shiva manifested his supremacy over other gods, broke through the earth's crust and reached the heavens. This makes Varanasi an exceptionally sacred site.

Hindus hold a deep belief that Varanasi is a sacred city where anyone, regardless of their past actions, can achieve 'Moksha,' which means liberation or release from the cycle of rebirth. The belief is that spending the last part of their lives in Varanasi brings spiritual liberation and that any creature that dies here is blessed with 'Moksha.'

According to Hindu beliefs, even if the whole world were to be destroyed, Varanasi would remain untouched. This belief makes Varanasi an extremely important religious site, drawing devotees from around the globe. The city is known for its rich traditional culture and is home to many temples that add to its spiritual significance.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES: ABODES OF THE DIVINE

Varanasi's landscape is dotted with ancient temples, each narrating a divine saga.

KASHI VISHWANATH TEMPLE

Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the temple is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas and a must-visit for any pilgrim. The temple's golden spire symbolizes Varanasi's enduring spiritual significance. Also known as the Golden Temple of Varanasi because its three domes are made of pure gold, Lord Shiva

is worshipped here as 'Vishwanath' or 'Vishveshwara,' which means the ruler of the universe.

It is believed that seeing the deity, known as 'darshan,' cleanses people of their sins and leads them to 'Moksha,' a state of liberation. Devotees offer 'panchamrut' (a mixture of milk, honey, sugar, yogurt, and ghee), water, and flowers to Lord Vishwanath. The temple conducts five daily rituals, known as 'Aartis,' for the deity.

The charm of the temple extends beyond its spiritual importance to its architectural splendour. At the heart of the temple is a beautifully set linga, placed on a silver altar.

SANKAT MOCHAN TEMPLE

Famous for its association with the monkey god, Hanuman, this temple is a place of solace and belief, where devotees find relief from their troubles. The Sankat Mochan Temple, renowned for its beautiful architecture, is home to the idols of Lord Rama and Lord Shiva. When you enter this holy place, you'll be welcomed by the melodious recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa. This temple captivates visitors not only with its spiritual atmosphere but also with the breathtaking views it provides.



Sankat Mochan Hanuman Temple



Kashi Vishwanath Temple



Ganga Aarti, Dasaswamedh Ghat

THE SANKATA DEVI TEMPLE

The Sankata Devi Temple is situated near Sindhia Ghat in Varanasi. In this temple, you'll find the four-armed idol of Maata Sankata Devi, a revered figure in Hinduism. Flanking her idol are Lord Hanuman and Lord Bhairav, two important deities. Visitors will also notice a large statue of a lion within the temple grounds. Maata Sankata Devi is known as a powerful goddess who provides solutions and relief.

DURGA TEMPLE

The Durga Temple, fondly known as the Monkey Temple due to the presence of monkeys around it, is one of the most revered temples in Varanasi. The temple, built in the 18th century, is dedicated to Goddess Durga. The red colour of the temple is symbolic of the goddess's fierce form. The Durga Temple showcases the Nagara style of architecture. This temple features multi-tiered spires painted in a striking red colour.

GYAN VAPI KUP

Gyan Vapi Kup, or the Well of Wisdom, is a significant landmark in Varanasi. Situated close to the famous Kashi Vishwanath Temple, this well is steeped in history and legend. It's believed that the Jyotirlinga of Shiva was hidden in this well to protect it from invaders, symbolizing the unbroken lineage and resilience of the city's spiritual history.

THE GHATS: STEPS TO SPIRITUALITY

The Ghats of Varanasi are the city's soul. These riverfront steps leading to the banks of the Ganges are more than just physical structures; they are spiritual gateways. Each Ghat, with its own story and patron deity, offers a different perspective of the city.

DASASWAMEDH GHAT

This is perhaps the most vibrant and lively Ghat. One of Varanasi's oldest and most sacred ghats, it is renowned for

its Ganga Aarti, a vibrant and elaborate fire ceremony held every evening. The ceremony is a sensory experience with the sound of conch shells, bells, brass cymbals, and the rhythmic chanting of mantras. During this ritual, priests, dressed uniformly in kurtas and dhotis, honour the Ganges River with multi-tiered brass lamps.

The preparation for the Aarti involves setting up five raised planks, placing an idol of Goddess Ganga, and arranging flowers and incense sticks. The ceremony, lasting about 45 minutes, is conducted by scholars of the Vedas and Upanishads under the leadership of the head priest from the Gangotri Seva Samiti.

Devotees participate by releasing small diyas on leaf platters into the river, paying homage to the sacred Ganges. As daylight fades, the sight of countless lamps floating on the water creates an unforgettable spectacle. This hour-long ritual can be observed from both the ghat and boats anchored along the riverbank.

MANIKARNIKA GHAT

It's the primary cremation Ghat, where the eternal cycle of life and death unfolds before your eyes. Witnessing the cremation rituals here is a profound experience, reflecting the Hindu belief in the transitory nature of physical existence.

One of the most revered and holy ghats for Hindus, it is a prominent site for cremation ceremonies. Nearby, there is a pond believed to have been created by Lord Vishnu to provide a bathing place for Lord Shiva and Goddess Shakti.

Ascending the steps of the ghat, visitors come across the famed Manikarnika well. According to legend, Goddess Parvati once dropped her earring here, and Lord Shiva, in his search for it, dug a hole that eventually became this well, filled with his sweat.

Historically referenced in texts dating back to the 5th century, Manikarnika Ghat is intertwined with the story of Goddess Shakti. It is believed that after Shakti self-immolated

at her father's yagya (fire ritual), Lord Shiva, overwhelmed with grief, carried her body across the universe. To prevent his dance of cosmic destruction (tandava) from annihilating everything, Lord Vishnu dismembered Shakti's body with his chakra. The spot where her earring fell is known today as Manikarnika.

ASSI GHAT

Known for its morning and evening rituals, Assi Ghat is where pilgrims gather to pay homage to Lord Shiva by taking a dip in the holy Ganges. Visitors come to worship a Shiva lingam placed under a peepal tree. The evening 'aarti', a sacred fire ceremony, is a mesmerizing experience here with mantras chanted, conches blown, and palpable spiritual energy in the air. This ghat is also the starting point for boat rides and is a favoured place for early-morning yoga and devotional music sessions.

THE PILGRIM'S JOURNEY

For every visitor, Varanasi is a pilgrim's journey. It's not just about visiting a place; it's about experiencing a transformation. The city compels you to introspect, to delve into the depths of your own belief and spirituality.

BOAT RIDES ON THE GANGES

A boat ride at dawn, when the first rays of the sun light up the Ghats and the river, is an ethereal experience. It offers a panoramic view of the Ghats and the myriad activities that define the city.

WALKING TOURS

The best way to experience Varanasi is on foot. Walking through the winding lanes, you'll come across hidden shrines, ancient buildings, and the real culture of the city.

CULINARY JOURNEY

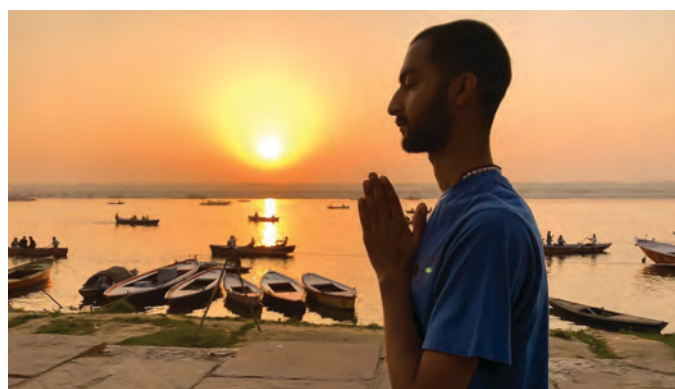
Varanasi's street food, especially its sweets and chaats, is an integral part of the pilgrimage. The flavours and aromas are as much a part of the city's character as its temples and Ghats.

A LASTING IMPRESSION

Varanasi leaves a lasting impression on every visitor with its chaos and serenity, its timeless rituals, and its spiritual aura. Each person's journey through this city is unique, yet universally, it's a journey of self-discovery, of confronting life's ultimate truths, and of finding peace amidst the ephemeral world.



Manikarnika Ghat



Yoga at Assi Ghat



Boat Rides on The Ganges

MALAYSIA - SCENIC ISLES, FOOD AND SHOPPING

Malaysia, a gem in Southeast Asia, presents a fascinating blend of cultural richness and natural beauty. This enchanting land is a mosaic of bustling cities, serene islands, culinary delights, and shopper's paradises

TT BUREAU

As you journey through Malaysia, you are greeted by the endless allure of its sandy beaches, lush rainforests, and the vibrant, diverse cultures that have shaped its history. The Malaysian experience is a tantalizing feast for the senses, offering a unique blend of traditions and modernity.

A TROPICAL DREAM

The islands of Malaysia are nothing short of a tropical dream. The islands and beaches here have their unique charm and beauty. The most popular ones are Langkawi and Tioman Island. There are pristine white sand beaches in Langkawi to explore and then there are the unique coral reefs of Sipadan Island. You can go ahead and experience the beauty of

Penang or the rugged beauty of Sabah, only to understand that Malaysia has some of the most beautiful islands in Southeast Asia.

The crystal clear waters surrounding these islands are teeming with marine life, making them a paradise for snorkelers and scuba divers alike. Meanwhile, the lush jungle-clad hills provide great opportunities for trekking and exploration. With its many picturesque lagoons and tranquil bays, it's easy to see why so many people fall in love with these beautiful islands and beaches.

DELICIOUS FLAVORS OF MALAYSIAN STREET FOOD

The Malaysian food scene, influenced by Malay, Chinese, Indian, and European cuisines, offers an array of flavours that



Malaysia Kuala Terengganu Redang Island

are a true reflection of its multicultural heritage. From the street food in Penang to fine dining in Kuala Lumpur, every meal is an adventure in itself.

Malaysian street food is a delicious mix of flavours, textures, and spices. From the sweet-tangy taste of satay to the creamy richness of laksa, the street food here has a wide variety to offer. The country's diverse culinary heritage means that you can find dishes from all over Southeast Asia in one place - including Chinese, Indian, Thai and Indonesian influences.

Penang Island is the home of Malaysian street food, as it is strongly influenced by Malay, Chinese, and Indian cuisine. Some of the most popular dishes include nasi lemak, satay and roti canai. Visitors can enjoy a quick snack on the go or spend an entire afternoon or evening exploring local markets and stalls offering unique combinations of spices and flavours.

UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES AT THEME PARKS

Several theme parks offer fun and exciting experiences for visitors of all ages. The SkyWorld theme park features a variety of water rides and virtual reality experiences. It also has themed zones based on popular movies and TV shows, such as Ice Age, Rio, and Planet of the Apes.

From wild roller coasters and water rides to traditional carousels and Ferris wheels, there are plenty of options for thrill-seekers looking for an exciting day out. With state-of-the-art facilities, interactive attractions and themed events all year round, unique destinations like the adrenaline-pumping rides of Genting Highlands to the classic charm of Sunway Lagoon promise a truly memorable experience that will keep you coming back time after time.

UNIQUE SHOPPING EXPERIENCES

Shopping in Malaysia is another highlight, offering everything from luxurious malls in Kuala Lumpur to quaint local markets in Melaka. It's a paradise for those seeking both high-end brands and unique local crafts. Kuala Lumpur, the capital city, is home to several world-class shopping destinations, including the iconic Petronas Twin Towers and Suria KLCC mall, which features over 300 stores and restaurants. Make sure to download the Journify app which is a digital one-stop center for every traveller to explore their places of interest in and to Malaysia.

For unique shopping experiences, you can check out Petaling Street Market which is an iconic Chinatown market for bargain hunters and foodies alike; Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, a luxurious mall in the heart of KL which is home to over 500 retail outlets and restaurants; Berjaya Times Square, which is the largest shopping mall in Kuala Lumpur, and it boasts over 1,000 retail outlets as well as an indoor theme park.

You can also shop at Mid Valley Megamall which boasts over 400 retail outlets, making it one of the largest shopping malls in the country; or Central Market Kuala Lumpur which is located in the historic part of town and is home to over 300 stalls selling everything from traditional handicrafts to modern fashion; and many more.



Legoland



Street Food



Resort World Genting

A FRIENDLY CULTURAL AND SOCIAL SCENE

Malaysia is a great destination for the young who want to travel due to its affordability, diverse cultural attractions, and vibrant social scene. It is also known for its nightlife and a variety of affordable food options, making it an ideal destination for the young who want to experience a new culture and make new friends.

The fusion of old-world charm and modern sophistication makes Malaysia a captivating destination, promising unforgettable experiences at every turn. Whether you're seeking relaxation on a sun-drenched beach, a culinary journey, or a shopping spree, Malaysia offers an enchanting mix that caters to all.

A GOOD LIFE

A nutritious diet is essential for optimal health for all age groups which includes healthy and organic food and drinks

TT BUREAU



Healthy And Organic Food And Drinks

In a world where fast food and processed meals dominate our dining tables, the quest for a healthier, more organic lifestyle has never been more crucial. Embarking on this journey, we delve into the heart of what makes a diet not just palatable, but beneficial for our well-being.

At its core, a good life is sustained by food choices that do more than just satisfy hunger. It's about selecting meals, fruits and vegetables and beverages that are rich in nutrients, low in harmful additives, and produced in harmony with nature.

Organic food and drinks play a pivotal role in this, offering a cleaner and more environmentally friendly approach to eating. By choosing organic, we reduce our exposure to pesticides and chemicals, and we support sustainable farming practices that are kinder to our planet.

While customized diets such as the Whole30 or Paleo diet have grown in popularity in recent years, there is no compelling need for you to follow one of these regimens in

addition to consuming more healthily. Such tailored diets are better suited to persons who have certain dietary sensitivities or are on a weight-loss regimen. The key to eating healthily is organic food consumption, as well as choosing the correct meals and consuming the right adequate amounts. Here is a list of healthy foods and drinks from across various food groups.

MIXED SEEDS AND NUTS

Mixed seeds and dry fruits should be included in everyone's healthy and organic food and drink diet plan. They are high in nutrients and give refined carbs, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and dietary fibre, as well as plenty of energy! They offer healthy fats, fueling your blood cells and aiding brain function. They, like nuts, decrease inflammation in the body, which slows ageing and lowers the risk of heart disease.

They include plant sterols, which help control cholesterol levels and lower the risk of cancer. They are high in trace



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Green Tea

minerals, including selenium, magnesium, copper, and zinc, which our bodies need. Seeds, when ingested regularly, can help prevent weight gain over time.

GREEN TEA

Green tea has been acclaimed for decades in Asian nations for its health advantages; Americans just recently caught on. While most of us think of green tea as a healthy drink that hydrates and calms the spirit, it actually does serve you more than it.

Green tea is filled with a high concentration of polyphenols, which prevents some forms of cancer, such as breast cancer and prostate cancer. According to research, it can also help avoid abrupt spikes in blood sugar after meals, which is especially advantageous for patients with type 2 diabetes.

AVOCADO

Consuming just one or two avocados every week provides you with all of the importance of organic monounsaturated fats, Vitamin B6, and plenty of folates. It may, for example, lower the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and overall mortality while also encouraging a healthy complexion and hair, enhanced energy, and weight control.

POMEGRANATE JUICE

Pomegranate juice a vibrant and tangy elixir, is more than just a delightful beverage; it's a powerhouse of health benefits. It is one of the most nutrient-dense drinks on the market. This colourful fruit juice is rich in antioxidants that help protect cells from harm and reduce inflammation. It is a great organic food and health essential and is high in immune-boosting vitamin C, making it a favourite cold-fighting healthy beverages.

Regular consumption of pomegranate juice is linked to improved heart health, as it aids in reducing high blood pressure, improving cholesterol levels, and enhancing blood flow. It's also a friend to fitness enthusiasts, helping in muscle recovery and endurance improvement.



Pomegranate Juice



Beet Juice 2

BEET JUICE

Looking for a few reasons to include beets in your diet? Beets have several health advantages, beginning with the reality that they are an excellent source of folic acid, magnesium, and nitrates. Nitrates are converted inside our system into nitric oxide, which decreases one's blood pressure and boosts overall blood flow in the body. According to a few studies, it's a fantastic drink to take before workout sessions and exercises to enhance stamina.

LEMONS

Lemons, the zesty citrus fruits known for their bright yellow hue and tangy flavour, are more than just a garnish or a

flavouring agent; they are a powerhouse of nutrients and health benefits.

High in vitamin C, lemons are excellent for boosting the immune system, making them a go-to during cold and flu season. This vitamin C also plays a role in skin health, helping to reduce signs of ageing and promoting a brighter complexion. Lemons have natural antibacterial and antiviral properties, which help in fighting infections and soothing sore throats. Additionally, lemons are a good source of potassium, which is important for heart health, and their low calorie and high water content make them a weight loss-friendly food.

LENTILS

Lentils, small but mighty legumes, are a nutritional treasure trove and a staple in many cuisines around the world. They are like small beans, develop in pods, and come in different varieties, such as red, brown, black, and green variants. This powerful legume is strong in fibre and protein, and it adds fantastic flavour and texture to any dish. Lentils are frequently used as a meat alternative in traditional dishes by vegans and vegetarians.

They are a great source of iron, which is crucial for maintaining energy levels and overall vitality, especially important for those who don't consume meat. Lentils are also loaded with B vitamins, magnesium, zinc, and potassium, all vital for neurological health and overall well-being.

SPINACH

Spinach is excellent in salads, and when it's not as crisp, it's great in smoothies, pasta dishes, and soups. This nutritionally green superfood is widely accessible in a variety of forms, including fresh, frozen, and tinned. It is one of the healthiest vegetables on the earth, providing Vitamin A, Vitamin K, and vital folate while being low in calories. You can also sauté it with onion and serve it in an omelette for a quick and nutritious lunch.

OATMEAL

Oats are one of the healthiest grains on the planet. For years, this whole-grain powerhouse has loaded substantial

nutrients and hearty taste into breakfast. It's one of the few delicious meals that are both healthy and delicious.

They're a gluten-free whole grain that's high in vitamins, fiber, minerals, and antioxidants. Weight loss, decreased blood sugar levels, and a lower risk of heart disease are some of the benefits. Therefore, oats are one of the most nutritious meals available.

COCONUT WATER

The flavour of this tropical water is refreshing. There is no denying that this nutritious drink which is both organic and conventional can hydrate the body while also providing a surprising quantity of potassium. Potassium is essential for keeping a healthy pulse and controlling blood pressure.

This guide is not just a set of dietary recommendations; it's a celebration of food that nourishes the body and soul. Whether you're a busy parent, a fitness enthusiast, or simply someone who wishes to make more informed food choices, leading a good life is a delicious and rewarding journey towards better health and a more sustainable lifestyle.



Lemon



Lentils



Spinach

THERE'S MORE TO TAMIL NADU CUISINE THAN DELICIOUS DOSA

Tamil Nadu cuisine offers an extraordinary tradition that is a captivating blend of taste, colour, culture, and spices

TT BUREAU

This cuisine from the south of India is recognised for its intricate flavours, liberal use of locally grown spices, and an array of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. Rooted deeply in the local culture and agrarian history of the region, Tamil Nadu cuisine involves an array of rice-based specialities, fermented foods, coconut-infused recipes, and seafood, underpinned by the fragrant presence of curry leaves, tamarind, and mustard seeds.

WHAT IS UNIQUE IN THE CUISINE OF TAMIL NADU?

Tamil Nadu cuisine stands unique in its approach to a balance of flavours and health-oriented cooking techniques. It's not just

about tantalizing the taste buds, but it's also about maintaining a delicate equilibrium between the six fundamental tastes - sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent, and astringent.

Tamil Nadu's cuisine is also noted for its wonderfully imaginative usage of a variety of rice preparations, given the abundant rice cultivation in the region, with dishes like dosa, idli, and pongal becoming global favourites.

The 'Meals' or 'Saapadu', an elaborate lunch platter, is a true representation of Tamil Nadu cuisine's diversity and balance, showcasing multiple vegetable dishes, lentils, pickles, and desserts along with staple rice. Another distinct feature is the liberal use of tamarind, providing a tangy flavour in sambar and rasam. Tamil Nadu's coastal location also influences its



Saapadu

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Uttapam

cuisine, bringing an array of seafood dishes, flavoured with locally sourced spices and coconut.

Moreover, the traditional 'Chettinad' cuisine, a sub-cuisine of Tamil Nadu, is famous for its fiery and aromatic dishes, distinguished by the generous use of pepper and other spices, providing a unique gastronomical experience. Importantly, Tamil Nadu cuisine is centred mostly on two ingredients: rice flour and coconut. These components are used in the majority of the state's breakfast meals. Aside from that, because the state is located on the coast, seafood is quite popular in the state. Here are a few delicious dishes from Tamil Nadu to try out.

UTTAPAM

Although similar to dosa, Uttapam is more akin to a pancake with toppings. Uthappa or Ooththappam is another name for it. The dish's batter is made using urad dal and rice. The dish's exterior shell is crunchy, yet the inside is as soft as an idly. It only takes 5 minutes to make the meal after the batter is prepared. The uttapam is then topped with tomatoes, onions, capsicum, and other vegetables. It's great with either coconut chutney or sambar.

Unlike a traditional dosa, which is thin and crispy, Uttapam is thicker, with a soft, fluffy texture, often likened to a pizza due to its toppings. It's characterized by various toppings like finely chopped onions, tomatoes, capsicum, carrots, coconut, and cilantro. Not only is it rich in taste, but it's also a nutritious dish, usually served with coconut chutney and sambar. Uttapam, with its simple ingredients and easy preparation, represents the comfort and richness of South Indian cuisine.

TAMARIND RICE

Tamarind rice, also known as 'Pulihora' or 'Puliyodharai' in Southern India, is a tangy-spicy dish typically made from cooked rice, tamarind extract, and a unique spice mix. The process involves cooking the rice and then flavouring it with a paste made from tamarind, jaggery, and an array of spices



Tamarind Rice

such as turmeric, asafoetida, fenugreek, and mustard seeds. The dish is further embellished with crunchy peanuts, curry leaves, and dried red chillies, which are fried in sesame oil to release their aromatic flavours.

Tamarind rice is not only popular for its delightful combination of tangy, sweet, and spicy flavours, but also for its long shelf life, making it a favourite choice for travel or picnics. This vibrant dish is a staple during festivals and special occasions in South India, exemplifying the region's culinary traditions.

MURUKKU

Murukku is a popular South Indian snack made from a mix of rice flour, urad dal flour, salt, and water, flavoured with



Murukku

ingredients like sesame seeds, cumin seeds, asafoetida, and sometimes, a hint of chilli powder or pepper for spice.

The dough is then shaped into spiral or coil forms using a 'Murukku press' before being deep-fried until they attain a golden-brown hue. The end result is a crunchy, savoury treat that is characterized by its knotted appearance and light, brittle texture.

CABBAGE KOOTU

Cabbage Kootu is a wholesome and nutritious dish from South Indian cuisine that combines cabbage with lentils, typically moong dal or pigeon peas. The key components of this dish include finely chopped cabbage, cooked lentils, and a ground paste of coconut, cumin seeds, and green chillies.

The dish is tempered with mustard seeds, curry leaves, and asafoetida in ghee or oil, enhancing the flavours significantly. Cabbage Kootu is known for its comforting blend of mild spice and subtle sweetness from the cabbage. This dish is often served with hot rice or roti and is part of the daily meal routine in many South Indian households. It's also a perfect example of the simplicity and health-focused approach of South Indian cuisine.

Moong dal is commonly used to make Cabbage Kootu, but you may also use tuvar dal or a half-half of both tuvar dal and moong dal. Cabbage kootu is often served with steaming rice and a vegetable stir fry, roast, or pickle, as well as papadums.

LEMON RICE

Lemon Rice, also called chitranna or nimmakaya pulihora, is a crunchy, aromatic, and tangy dish that is simple to prepare and delicious. The dish primarily comprises steamed rice, flavoured with lemon juice and tempered with mustard seeds, dried red chillies, curry leaves, and turmeric powder.



Cabbage Kootu



Lemon Rice

The spicy, acidic, and nutty flavour of this steamed rice is enhanced by the addition of lemon juice, fried nuts, aromatic herbs, and spices. The crunch of roasted peanuts and urad dal adds a textural dimension to the dish, making it a perfect standalone meal or a refreshing accompaniment to other South Indian delicacies. You can serve lemon rice with pappadums or with a side vegetable salad or even coconut chutney.

This concoction results in a beautifully yellow-hued dish that not only tantalizes the palate with its tangy-spicy taste but also proves to be a visual delight.

RASAM

Rasam is a traditional South Indian soup, revered not only for its delicious taste but also for its digestive benefits. The dish typically incorporates a tamarind juice base and a blend of spices such as cumin, coriander, and black pepper. The flavoursome broth is then further tempered with mustard seeds, asafoetida, and curry leaves, infusing it with a distinctive aroma.

Rasam is a basic and necessary dish in a South Indian meal. It is also called saaru in Kannada and chaaru in Telugu. In Tamil and Telugu, the word Rasam means “liquid.” Traditionally served as a second course with rice, Rasam can also be enjoyed as a starter or as a standalone spicy soup.

PORIYAL

Beans Poriyal is a South Indian classic made with delicate French beans, aromatic spices, and fresh coconut. It is essentially a stir-fried vegetable dish seasoned with a medley of spices. The dry steamed meal has a lot of green beans cooked till soft with herbs and spices such as mustard seeds, curry leaves, and red chillies, then topped with freshly grated coconut.

The vegetables, which could range from beans and cabbage to okra and beetroot, are sautéed with mustard seeds, urad dal, dried red chillies, and curry leaves. A unique feature of Poriyal is the addition of grated coconut towards the end of cooking, which adds a hint of sweetness and a rich texture to the dish.

Served as a side dish, Poriyal complements both rice and flatbreads wonderfully, and its versatility ensures it has a place in everyday meals, as well as on festive occasions.

PONGAL

Khara Pongal, also known as Ven Pongal, is a hearty dish, made with rice and moong dal, which can be served sweet or savoury. The savoury variation, known as Ven Pongal or Khara Pongal, is made with ghee, curry leaves, black pepper, ginger, cumin, and hing. It is predominantly consumed during breakfast or lunch.



Rasam

The savoury notes of this concoction are beautifully contrasted by the decadent aroma and richness of the ghee, making it a favourite amongst all age groups. Khara Pongal is commonly served with coconut chutney, sambar, or gojju (a type of tangy gravy), and is particularly associated with the harvest festival of Pongal in Tamil Nadu, signifying prosperity and abundance.

KUZZHI PANIYARAM

Kuzhi Paniyaram is a well-loved South Indian dish, particularly popular in Tamil cuisine. Ball-shaped dumplings made with fermented urad dal and rice batter are known as Kuzhi Paniyaram. It's crafted from a fermented batter of rice and black lentils, similar to the one used for making idlis and dosas. A mixture of finely chopped onions, green chillies, and other spices is then added to the batter, which is subsequently poured into a unique paniyaram pan, consisting of several small, hemispherical indentations. The batter cooks into delightful, round dumplings that are crispy on the outside while maintaining a soft and fluffy interior.

Masala Paniyaram is typically served with a chutney such as coconut or tomato chutney. These are typical morning dishes from South Indian cuisine.

RICE PAYASAM

Rice Payasam is a sweet dessert made with rice, milk, ghee, and nuts that has been passed down through generations. It's a South Indian variation of the popular Rice Kheer from North India. This creamy and rich dish is slowly cooked until the rice is completely softened and the milk is thickened, resulting in a lusciously smooth consistency. Aromatic ingredients like cardamom, saffron, dried fruits and nuts are often added to enhance the flavour and provide a crunch against the creamy backdrop.

The humble ingredients in Rice Payasam come together to create a universally loved dessert that is the perfect end note to any meal.



Rice Payasam

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