

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, LUXURY & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2023 | ₹50

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SIZZLING TRENDS OF 2023-FROM ECO ESCAPES TO GALACTIC GETAWAYS

Halfway through 2023 and there is a continued resurgence of Leisure Travel, coupled with an array of new trends that reflect the desires and priorities of modern travellers.

KAMAL GILL

The world of leisure travel finds itself at an interesting crossroads. From eco-conscious getaways to immersive digital escapades, the landscape of exploration is being redefined, with boundaries expanding further than ever before. Here are the top shifts in leisure travel, and discover how 2023 is rewriting the traveller's tale, one transformative trend at a time.

Let's delve into some of the hottest travel trends this year:

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

With an increasing global emphasis on environmental preservation, travellers are more conscious about their ecological footprint. Many are opting for eco-friendly accommodations, engaging in voluntourism, and selecting

destinations committed to conservation efforts. This has led to a surge in eco-resorts, biodegradable travel products, and even travel itineraries that benefit local habitats.

One can witness the commitment to sustainable tourism in practices like Costa Rica's eco-lodges, which emphasize harmony with the surrounding rainforest while offering tourists a unique connection to nature. Similarly, in Bhutan, a country known for measuring Gross National Happiness over GDP, the government strictly controls tourism numbers to ensure minimal environmental and cultural impact.

The Galápagos Islands have taken a similar approach, imposing strict visitor limits to protect its unique biodiversity. Meanwhile, community-based tourism initiatives in places



Leisure Travel

like Thailand empower local villages by allowing them to share their way of life with visitors, ensuring that the revenue generated benefits the community directly.

Across the globe, from the ancient pathways of the Camino de Santiago in Spain to the national parks of Kenya, sustainable tourism practices are not only preserving precious ecosystems and cultures but also providing richer, more authentic experiences for travellers.

DIGITAL DETOX RETREATS

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

Nestled in the serene landscapes of California's Big Sur, Esalen Institute offers retreats that encourage visitors to unplug, connect with nature, and delve deep into holistic wellness practices. Over in the UK, the idyllic countryside serves as the backdrop for retreats where attendees surrender their devices upon arrival, replacing screen time with nature walks and meditation.

Meanwhile, the remote forests of Scandinavia have become sanctuaries for those seeking a respite from the digital world, with lodges emphasizing mindfulness practices and deep connections with the natural world. Tucked away in the lush foothills of the Himalayas, Vana Retreat in Dehradun provides the ideal setting for a digital detox experience. Vana is founded on the philosophy of holistic wellness which goes beyond just physical health, encompassing mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. The retreat offers Ayurvedic treatments, Tibetan healing, and traditional yoga sessions in their 21-acre estate.

These retreats spread across different continents, share a common purpose: to provide harried souls a chance to disconnect from the digital realm and reconnect with themselves and the world around them.

HYPER-LOCAL EXPERIENCES

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

In the winding alleys of Marrakech, Morocco, travellers can participate in traditional cooking classes with local families, using ingredients sourced from neighbourhood markets to prepare age-old recipes.

Over in Tuscany, Italy, agriturismo stays offer tourists a taste of rustic farm life, complete with vineyard tours,



Yoga Sessions



Rann Utsav, Kutch

homemade wine tastings, and meals prepared with fresh produce from the garden. Meanwhile, in Kyoto, Japan, local artisans open their workshops to share the intricate processes behind crafts like Kiyomizu pottery or Nishijin weaving.

In the vast salt desert of the Kutch region in Gujarat in India lies the spectacle of the Rann Utsav. This cultural festival is a celebration of the region's heritage, art, music and dances. The highlight is undoubtedly the surreal white expanse of the salt desert, which glistens under the full moon, creating an awesome experience.

Such hyper-local experiences allow travellers to immerse themselves deeply into a destination's culture and lifestyle, moving beyond typical sightseeing to form genuine connections with places and people.

SPACE TOURISM

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



Space Tourism

Pioneers like SpaceX are making strides towards commercial spaceflights, with plans to ferry civilians on orbital jaunts around the Earth. Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic, after years of anticipation, has already taken private passengers on suborbital voyages, offering them breathtaking views of Earth against the vastness of space.

Meanwhile, Blue Origin, founded by Jeff Bezos, has successfully launched missions giving travellers a few minutes of weightlessness in space before a parachute-assisted landing. Beyond just flights, visionary projects propose lunar resorts in the near future, where guests can experience the moon's barren landscapes first hand.

SLOW TRAVEL

The rush of ticking off destinations from a bucket list is fading. In its place, 'slow travel' is emerging, where travellers spend more extended periods in one location, deeply exploring and understanding its essence. This approach is more sustainable and allows for a deeper connection to a destination. In the picturesque countryside of France, many opt for canal boating, where days are spent meandering through gentle waterways, punctuated by leisurely stops at quaint villages.

In Spain, the Camino de Santiago offers a time-honoured pilgrimage route, where the journey itself, often undertaken on foot, becomes as significant as the destination. Italy's Tuscany region, with its rolling hills and vineyards, invites travellers to stay in rustic villas, savouring local wines, and adopting the leisurely pace of rural life.

In India, chugging along the picturesque slopes of the Eastern Himalayas, the Toy Train of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway offers a unique slow travel experience.

Established in the 1880s, this UNESCO World Heritage site takes travellers on a nostalgic journey through vistas of terraced tea gardens, dense forests, and majestic peaks.



Workcations

In each of these instances, slow travel champions the idea of connection over mere consumption, prioritizing experiences over checklists.

FLEXIBLE WORKCATIONS

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

Bali, with its idyllic beaches and co-working spaces, has become a haven for digital nomads seeking to balance work with surf sessions and yoga retreats. Over in the bustling streets of Chiang Mai, Thailand, professionals set up temporary bases in cafes, benefiting from the city's rich culture and affordable living costs after office hours.

The Portuguese town of Ericeira, recognized as a World Surfing Reserve, sees a melding of business meetings and wave-catching, all in a day's work.



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HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRAVEL

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

Yoga sessions, a practice that harmonizes physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, are frequently held in serene natural settings, allowing participants to draw a profound sense of peace from their surroundings.

A wonderful example is Ananda, a haven of holistic wellness and spiritual rejuvenation centre in the foothills of the Himalayas. Melding ancient Indian healing practices with luxury, this retreat invites guests to embark on a transformative journey of mind, body, and spirit.

Furthermore, these wellness journeys are often complemented by organic and nutritious culinary offerings, ensuring that travellers are nourished from the inside out.

SOLO FEMALE TRAVEL

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

This surge in solo female exploration can be attributed to a combination of factors: increased safety measures in many destinations, more women-centric travel groups and resources, and a digital age that keeps everyone connected and informed.

Social media platforms, particularly, have played a pivotal role, offering a space for solo female travellers

to share their experiences, insights, and advice. Many countries around the world have recognized the growing trend of solo female travel and have made efforts to cater to and ensure the safety of such travellers. Among them are Japan, New Zealand, Canada, Nordic countries.

BEYOND REALITY: THE NEW WAVE OF VIRTUAL EXPLORATIONS

Virtual explorers don state-of-the-art VR headsets, breaking free from the confines of their urban dwellings. The vast terrains of Machu Picchu for instance, materialize, enveloping them in its mystique. They traverse the ancient Incan trails virtually, sensing an authentic connection to the majesty of the bygone era.

For many of these digital wanderers, the synthesis of history and exploration is spellbinding, allowing them to delve deeper into the stories behind iconic landmarks.

From the mountainous beauty of the Andes, they transition to the quaint streets of Kyoto. As they saunter alongside the virtual Kamo River, an elegant traditional ryokan beckons. Zooming in, they can navigate its interiors, appreciate the tranquillity of its gardens, and sense the ambience of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Some might use it as a precursor, previewing locations before an actual visit. For others, it's an eco-friendly alternative, satiating their wanderlust without leaving a carbon footprint.

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



Virtual Explorations

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PLANET'S PLAYLIST: A HAPPY FUTURE WITH ECO-TOURISM

In an age where the whispers of nature intertwine with the hum of innovation, green transportation and eco-tourism emerge as the harmonious duet charting the course to a sustainable tomorrow.

TT BUREAU



Our Green Planet

As the wheels of sustainable transportation tread softly on Earth, they pave the way for tourism that reveres rather than exhausts the world's wonders. Together, they form an alliance, ensuring our adventures tread lightly, even as our horizons expand. By prioritizing the environment and crafting travel experiences that are both enriching and sustainable, we are not just witnessing but actively participating in a transformative movement.

This evolving symphony of green transportation and eco-tourism promises not only unforgettable journeys for the wanderer but also a flourishing future for our planet.

GREEN TRANSPORTATION TAKES CENTRE STAGE

In a world growing ever-conscious of its environmental footprint, the spotlight on eco-friendly transportation has

never been brighter. Industry innovators and consumers alike are driving this change, with trends emerging that promise greener roads and skies ahead.

Electric Vehicles (EVs) are no longer just a dream for the future; they're a reality of today. From bustling urban streets to rural roads, EVs are making their presence felt. The boom in battery technology and an expanding network of charging stations are propelling EVs from niche status to mainstream adoption in both personal and public transit sectors.

Hybrid Vehicles sit at an interesting crossroads, bridging the world of gasoline and electricity. By using a mix of traditional engines and electric motors, these vehicles offer a blend of reduced emissions and heightened fuel efficiency, paving the way for a greener transition. Venturing into the realm of zero-emissions, Hydrogen

Fuel Cell Vehicles present a tantalizing vision. Powered by hydrogen gas, their sole by-products are water and heat, heralding them as a beacon for sustainable transport.

On the urban front, Bike-Sharing Programs have taken cities by storm. From tourists to daily commuters, bicycles have become the go-to choice for short jaunts, aiding in slashing both congestion and pollution.

Then there's the social trend of Carpooling and Ride-Sharing. Platforms such as UberPool and BlaBlaCar have reimagined travel, rallying individuals to share rides, thereby trimming the number of cars and emissions.

In the public transport domain, we're witnessing remarkable Public Transit Improvements. Electric buses hum along city streets, and hybrid trains crisscross the countryside, reflecting a massive push towards greener mass transit solutions.

In terms of futuristic travel, Maglev and Hyperloop Trains are drawing global intrigue. Envisioned to ferry passengers at breathtaking speeds while consuming minimal energy, these could redefine long-distance travel.

High in the skies, Green Aviation is making headway. The quest for biofuels and aerodynamically efficient aircraft aims to drastically diminish the carbon footprints of our flights. And sown in the deep oceans, Sustainable Shipping is navigating greener waters, too.

With a focus on alternative fuels, better-designed vessels, and astute sailing routes, it's charting a course for reduced marine emissions.

A game-changer in vehicle design is the adoption of Lightweight Materials. By slashing vehicle weight, these innovative materials promise remarkable boosts in fuel



Green Transportation



Eco Tourism, Cycling Outdoor

efficiency. On the tech front, Regenerative Braking Systems are being incorporated into many electric and hybrid cars. By harnessing energy typically lost during braking, these systems add a layer of efficiency.

The evolving urban landscape is also witnessing a surge in Pedestrian-Friendly Urban Planning. Cities are metamorphosing, crafting spaces that nudge people to walk more and drive less, fostering healthier lifestyles and cleaner air. Of course, Smart Traffic Management is the unsung hero of this green transition. Leveraging the power of AI and IoT, cities are striving to streamline traffic, curbing congestion and the resulting pollution.

These trends paint a picture of a world in motion, a world striving towards greener transit solutions. As we stand on the cusp of a new era, it's evident that eco-friendly transportation and tourism are not just passing trends but pillars for our shared future.

Futuristic technology, from self-sustaining electric vehicles, to AI-driven sustainable travel itineraries, is revolutionizing the way we explore and experience our planet. Yet, it's the indomitable human spirit, our collective desire to safeguard our home, that truly fuels this transformation.

When technological innovation collaborates with conscious human effort, the result is a symphony of sustainable choices that promise a harmonious coexistence with our environment.

Together, we're not only journeying towards breathtaking destinations but also paving the way for a brighter, greener world for generations to come.

WONDERFUL ERA OF THOUGHTFUL TRAVEL – WHERE ADVENTURE MEETS CARE

Eco-friendly travel, often termed “green tourism,” is not just a buzzword—it’s a commitment to journeying our beautiful planet responsibly.

TT BUREAU

It’s about recognizing our footprint and choosing to tread lightly, ensuring that the mesmerizing landscapes, vibrant cultures, and diverse ecosystems we relish today remain preserved for future generations.

As travellers, we have the unique privilege of experiencing the world’s wonders, but with that come the responsibility to minimize our impact. Welcome to the era of thoughtful travel—where adventure meets care for our planet.

KEY TRENDS TO KNOW FOR ECO-FRIENDLY TRAVEL

SLOW TRAVEL

Slow Travel has emerged as a favourite among the eco-conscious. Instead of rushing through a whirlwind tour of multiple cities, many are choosing to immerse themselves in one place, savouring the local rhythms and nuances. This approach not only reduces carbon emissions from less frequent travel but also fosters genuine connections with local communities and cultures.

STAYCATIONS

The concept of Staycations is making waves, urging individuals to rediscover the wonders of their own backyards. By exploring local environs or venturing just within national borders, travellers drastically cut down the carbon emissions synonymous with long-haul flights. The hospitality industry has witnessed the ascent of Eco-Lodging.

An increasing number of eco-resorts and hotels are sprouting, championing sustainable energy, waste recycling, and minimising environmental disruptions.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Wildlife Conservation in tourism has metamorphosed from a niche concern to mainstream demand. Instead of seeking entertainment from captive creatures, discerning travellers now gravitate towards experiences that respect, protect, and actively conserve wildlife and their natural habitats.



Green Traveller

LOCAL EXPERIENCES

Embracing Local Experiences goes beyond just enriching travel stories. By patronizing local artisans, farmers, and vendors, travellers are infusing life into local economies and trimming the carbon emissions tied to the long-distance transportation of goods.

CARBON OFFSETTING

The term Carbon Offsetting is no longer a jargon used only by environmentalists. A rising tribe of travellers, as well as tourism enterprises, are pouring resources into programs designed to balance out the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from their sojourns. In the same spirit, Zero-Waste Travel is not just a trend; it's a movement. Carrying reusable essentials, sidestepping disposable plastics, and meticulously minimizing waste has become second nature for the green traveller.

GREEN TRANSPORTATION

Green Transportation options are gaining momentum. Whether it's pedalling on rented bicycles, walking city tours, or hopping on public transit, eco-friendly transit options are becoming the norm. Many destinations are also fast-tracking the availability of electric vehicle rentals.

REGENERATIVE TRAVEL

Regenerative Travel takes the concept of sustainable tourism a notch higher. It embodies the philosophy of not just taking but giving back, be it through grassroots conservation efforts or championing regenerative farming practices. In response to the perils of Over-Tourism, ingenious solutions are cropping up. Hotspots are rolling out reservation systems, capping visitor counts, and even promoting off-peak visits to balance tourism and environmental well-being.

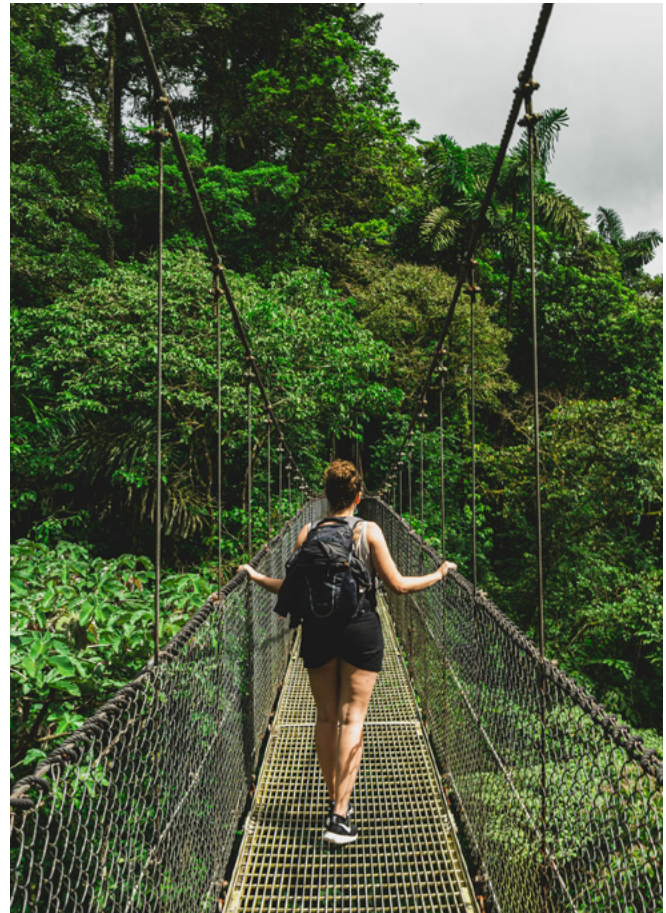
DIGITAL TOOLS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Digital Tools for Sustainability are equipping travellers with information at their fingertips. Be it apps pointing towards green accommodations or platforms spotlighting eco-friendly eateries, digital aids are simplifying sustainable choices. Of course, Education and Awareness initiatives are enlightening travellers about ecosystems, conservation imperatives, and the criticality of safeguarding our natural world.

These trends, influenced by global awareness and the urgent need for environmental conservation, are reshaping the travel industry to be more in harmony with nature and local cultures.

GREEN VACATION SPOTS AROUND THE WORLD

As the footprints we leave on the planet become increasingly evident, a new era of travel beckons—one where the allure of pristine landscapes meets sustainability. Eco-friendly vacation spots aren't just destinations; they're testimonies to humanity's effort to coexist harmoniously with nature.



Rainforests of Costa Rica

These havens of conservation and cultural respect showcase how tourism can flourish without compromising the earth's well-being. Join us on a journey to these paradises where sustainability takes centre stage, ensuring that the wonders we enjoy today are preserved for generations to come.

RAINFORESTS OF COSTA RICA

In the lush rainforests of Costa Rica, biodiversity thrives. The nation's commitment to eco-tourism is palpable in every corner. Imagine waking up in an eco-lodge nestled amidst the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, where sustainability and conservation are a way of life. The calls of exotic birds echo in the air, reminding visitors of the beauty of nature that's being fiercely protected.

NEW ZEALAND'S SOUTH ISLAND

On the other side of the globe, New Zealand's South Island reveals pristine landscapes that seem untouched by time. Kayaking in Abel Tasman National Park might bring you face-to-face with playful seals or leaping dolphins, as the nation emphasizes eco-friendliness in its accommodations and activities.

ICELAND

Venturing north, Iceland's geothermal wonders mesmerize. Beyond the awe-inspiring Northern Lights, the country takes pride in its sustainable energy sources. Hot springs and geysers serve as nature's reminders of the geothermal power that fuels the nation.

THE AZORES IN PORTUGAL

Midway between Europe and America, The Azores in Portugal emerge from the Atlantic like a green gem. This archipelago is the epitome of marine conservation and sustainable agriculture. The fresh sea air carries whispers of whale songs, as these majestic creatures find refuge in the surrounding waters.

PALAU, PACIFIC OCEAN

Palau, a shimmering island country in the western Pacific Ocean, beckons visitors with its underwater wonders. Here, commitment to the environment is not taken lightly. Every visitor is asked to sign an eco-pledge, sealing their promise to tread lightly on this paradise.

BHUTAN

Nestled between giants, Bhutan stands tall in its eco-initiatives. As the world's only carbon-negative country, its monastic traditions merge with environmental consciousness. Ancient monasteries sit atop hills, watching over forests that the nation has vowed to protect.

GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

Galápagos Islands off Ecuador are nature's grand theatre. The unique wildlife, from blue-footed boobies to giant tortoises, thrives as eco-friendly cruises sail the waters and lodges ensure minimal human impact, all under strict regulations to preserve the island's ecosystems.

SOUTH AFRICA

On the vast plains of South Africa, eco-safaris offer a glimpse into nature's heart. Lodges work hand in hand with local

communities, ensuring that as lions roar and elephants trumpet, conservation remains paramount.

South has 19 National Parks, 42 Marine Parks, five UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 27 Ramsar sites, and several Transfrontier Parks.

NORWAY

Norway showcases its majestic fjords and advocates for sustainable tourism. The pristine coastal beauty stands testament to the nation's efforts toward a carbon-neutral future and eco-friendly travel initiatives.

BACKWATERS OF KERALA

In the southern part of India, Kerala's backwaters reflect the sky, as houseboats powered by sustainable means cruise gently. The state's commitment to responsible tourism shines through community-led tours and green accommodations.

SLOVENIA

Interestingly, as the first country to earn the title of a 'Green Destination,' Slovenia is a beacon of eco-tourism. Whether it's the eco-friendly lodgings or the serene beauty of Triglav National Park, Slovenia showcases a harmonious blend of nature and human endeavour.

Each of these destinations echoes the global song of environmental responsibility. As the tapestry of eco-friendly travel trends continues to evolve, it's evident that the world is shifting from mere exploration to conscientious journeying. Green vacation spots across the globe serve as beacons, illustrating that beauty and sustainability can coexist in perfect harmony.



The Azores in Portugal



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The Laureato 42mm showcases the iconic combination of polished and satin finished surfaces in its stainless steel case. With a slim profile of 10.68 mm, it easily fits under a shirt cuff, while the well-designed steel bracelet ensures a comfortable fit for the wearer.

LUXE LIFE: UNIQUE LUXURY TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Make your travel experience a jaw-dropping, heart-pounding moment of pure joy, and let it stay with you forever.

TT BUREAU

Today's Traveller helps you sketch out your own, unique luxury bespoke travel experience by narrowing down the field and rounding up the hottest travel trends...

If you're reeling from a stormy year and looking for a holiday that offers complete escapism, then you've got it lucky. There are options a-plenty for today's travellers, who are adventurous and trendy.

This could see more of 'experiential travel,' which translates to fabulous heart-warming travel experiences while holidaying like wildlife travel, active travel, culinary travel, and much more. In fact, there are more extensive options available than ever before, but regrettably, not that many breaks that you can take in any given year.

Today's Traveller helps you discover the best of what luxury travel has to offer, from trendsetting bespoke travel

experiences tailor-made just for you to places that make a virtue of the fact that there's nothing to do!

WILDLIFE SAFARI AT KARKLOOF SAFARI VILLAS AND SPA, SOUTH AFRICA

A luxurious and spacious boutique lodge with 16 individually decorated Villas, an expansive world-class spa and 3,500 hectares of beautiful terrain abundant with wildlife, Karkloof Safari Villas and Spa, is easily Africa's largest destination spa.

Escape from stress and submit yourself to nature's bespoke offerings at the spa amidst luxurious African surroundings. Get yourself a pedicure even as zebras make short shrift of the nearby grasses or break the shackles of time and tension as soothing hands massage in the warmth of the African sun. You'll soon find out how every



Karkloof Safari Villas and Spa, South Africa



Relais Il Falconiere in Tuscany, Italy

wellness treatment here is an experience with professional therapists who have been carefully selected for their skills.

The spa nestles in extensive grounds and features 17 generous, airy treatment rooms, two of which are couples' rooms, all with wonderful views over a native bush, a four-chair manicure/pedicure room, floatation tank, Kneipp pools, or cold-water pools used to improve blood circulation, Jacuzzi, sauna and steam rooms.

Enjoy a diverse range of activities at Karkloof Safari Villas and Spa at your own time and pleasure. You could go game viewing, walking, hiking, mountain biking, birding, or just enjoy the ambiance. It's all about being in sync with nature, whether you want to settle into the deck overlooking the valley or lounge at the heated pool.

Walk on the wild side, as buffalo and black and white rhinos roam these incredibly wide spaces. Get your fill of various small carnivores, numerous antelope species, zebra, giraffe, and wildebeest.

With four waterfalls, various dams, and three rivers located all within the precincts of Karkloof Safari Villas and Spa, not to mention the varied landscape and vegetation, mist belt forests and thickets, open plains, and riverine valleys, this is one pure life travel experience in South Africa that you cannot miss out on.

COOKING CLASS AT RELAIS IL FALCONIERE & SPA, TUSCANY

For an out-of-the-box travel experience, take a cooking class at the Relais Il Falconiere in Tuscany, Italy, a spa hotel that also prides itself on its excellent Michelin-starred restaurant and cuisine.

If you're looking for a relaxing break and a gastronomic insight into the Tuscan lifestyle, this is it. Silvia and Riccardo Baracchi's 17th-century family residence, set amongst the



Cookery Classes Organised By Silvia

vineyards and olive trees that surround the small Etruscan city of Cortona, is a true delight.

The cookery classes organised by Silvia are a unique gastronomic experience. In her cuisine, fresh products are drizzled with oil from the estate's olive trees, and the wine comes from vines grown in line with biodynamic principles. Other regional products, such as the Chianina beef, are chosen with care. Developing local synergies is natural here, as is the concept of a circular economy: food waste is strictly monitored.

In between the cooking classes get initiated into the art of falconry, which recently became a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage. The courses are organised on request for at least four people and teach the basics of falconry, tools and its history through the centuries. The services of the town's expert falconer would be available. And, if you wish to enjoy the travel experience of a lifetime - try a true Tuscan lifestyle travel experience, where you could

go hunting partridge or wild boar with Riccardo, the Falconiere's owner.

Other unforgettable travel experiences and activities you could avail of our golfing, horse riding, fishing, water skiing, biking, sailing, mountain biking, jogging, archaeological excursions, hiking, Nordic walking, wine tastings, and helicopter tours.

BIKING TOUR IN PROVENCE, FRANCE

Get immersed in an active vacation as you burn calories hiking/biking/walking/ or taking a multisport trip because it's often just a better way to see the destination in more detail. The idea is to 'slow down to see the world', according to one well-known tour operator. Top-shelf luxury competitors like Backroads, Trek Travel, Gray & Co., and Italian newcomer Tourissimo, all arrange incredible bike trips, so if you want to burn those extra calories and be immersed in your destinations of choice, then go for it!

Take the Provence Luxury Biking and Culinary Tour and inhale the essence of this pristine countryside while pedalling along through sleepy hillside villages and along endless fields of lavender. Enjoy delicious local cuisine and the powerful, full-bodied red wines of the Chateauneuf-du-Pape region.

Discover the natural beauty of Provence, where every few miles the landscape changes into ever more breathtaking views and where locally grown wines and freshly grown foods grace every table.

Enjoy incredible riding and spectacular views of the magical Provence countryside. Enjoy delicious gourmet meals and local wines.

Experience a whole new concept of village luxury. Indulge in a multifaceted travel experience that caters to spirit, gourmet dining, Spa, vineyards, and cycling. Enjoy the stunning views over the Luberon and Mont-Ventoux, in Gargas in the Vaucluse – a perfect spot for lovers of the great outdoors.

Cycling at La Coquillade is a blast for sports lovers and for anyone who loves exploring, because of the sheer number of services proffered by the resort. You can hire one of the famous BMC bikes at your convenience and set off to explore the splendid countryside. Some stunning routes include the charms of the Luberon and its wildlife. If you're more adventurous, hire a mountain bike and scale the legendary Mont Ventoux, and also try the passes in the Mountains of Vaucluse.

RIVER CRUISE ON THE RIVER NILE, EGYPT

River cruising has gained much popularity in recent years and is a hot trend with honeymooners. River cruising promises many attractions – apart from the fact that there's no sea sickness to contend with, you will enjoy personal service and the ability to visit many desirable "ports" that are not on the ocean, from exclusive islands to inland European cities to the natural wonders of the Amazon.

If you're looking for some mystery, history, and grandeur, take a river cruise to Egypt, along the River Nile. Get steeped into the wonders of Egyptian culture, the gripping story of the history that shaped it, from Moses to the great emperor Julius Caesar and his lover Cleopatra, queen of Egypt.

You can select from the most luxurious cruise ships like the Oberoi Zahra, a five-star Luxury Nile Cruiser, which



Cycling At La Coquillade



Oberoi Philae

offers to take you scuba diving in the Red Sea and a visit to the High Dam and Philae Temple among other unique travel experiences.

Other luxury cruise ships on the Nile include the Farah Nile Cruise, Alexander the Great, Sonesta Star Goddess Cruise or Mövenpick Royal Lily Cruise, and Chateau Lafayette Nile Cruise among others.

The Nile beckons visitors year after year with its mesmerising mysticism. Itineraries include stunning visits to Cairo, the capital of Egypt, with shore excursions to the Pyramids of Giza, the Sphinx, and the ancient city of Memphis. Here are some of the highlights that you will enjoy when you opt for an Egypt river cruise along the River Nile.

KARNAK TEMPLE, LUXOR

Be amazed as you enter the ancient world in Luxor's Karnak Temple. Enjoy the light show, and engage with an Egyptologist, who will explain many of the features of the temple complex. Check out the sound and light show in Lower Nubia, near the Temples of Abu Simbel. For some added fun, attend a traditional Galabeya party on board the ship, filled with native music and high jinks.

EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS

Many Nile cruises offer the services of a skilled Egyptologist who can enlighten you on the language, society, and history of Egypt – full of enriching travel experience stories for all onboard. Take a trip to the famous Khan el-Khalili Bazaar and sample some authentic street food. Enjoy a stimulating cup of the best Arabian coffee in the world and visit Al-Azhar University.

GREAT SPHINX AND PYRAMIDS OF GIZA

Many itineraries start in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, where you can journey by camel to the Pyramids of Giza and the Great Sphinx. You can also learn more about ancient Egypt



Karnak Temple



Pyramids Of Giza

at the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, which has a vast array of artefacts, including a gold mask of King Tut. Other attractions include the Citadel of Salah al-Din, the Mosque of Muhammad Ali and the Egyptian Museum.

Some itineraries also include Lake Nasser, a reservoir created by the Aswan High Dam, which is surrounded by some incredible sites, such as the Kalabsha Temple of Nubia and the Wadi El Seboua.

Egypt River Cruises offer many luxury yachts that offer the ultimate in luxury Nile cruises. An epitome of style and comfort, many are available for charter. You also have the advantage of tailoring your cruise to suit each day's sightseeing by offering an a la carte style touring itinerary.

SIPPING BLISS: GREAT DESTINATIONS TO CELEBRATE YOUR CUP OF TEA

Rich and aromatic - your cup of tea! That comforting brew that starts the day for two-thirds of the world's population.

TT BUREAU

It is a ritual for most people to brew leaves and leaf buds of the tea plant, *Camellia sinensis* by steeping them in freshly boiled water. Just the image of a teapot with a teacup or two symbolizes relaxation and refreshment.

Although we can't get enough of our favourite cuppa, it's interesting to know that altogether there are six types of tea which include green tea, Wulong (oolong) tea, white tea, black tea, puer (pu-erh) tea, and dark tea. The herbal teas do not come from the traditional tea plant but irrespective of the type of tea which is your favourite, tea brings companionship and comfort in each happy sip.

Tea is a worldwide phenomenon and just about every country, from India to Argentina to Malaysia, has its own way of consuming it. Much like wine, different terrains and altitudes not to mention rain and the region, affect the

taste and characteristics of tea ...full-bodied, brisk, earthy, soft, delicate, soft, and fruity characteristics.

With 44% of Indian travellers keen to try the best places for food and drink on their next trip, it is the perfect excuse to travel to locations naturally steeped in history and beauty.

DARJEELING, INDIA

Darjeeling - the land of tea gardens! The Darjeeling district of West Bengal is known for its plethora of tea gardens, with over 80 stretching across acres of land. Located in the foothills of the mountains, the emerald-green Darjeeling Tea Garden produces tea with such an intense aroma and spicy flavour, that it's often referred to as the 'champagne of teas.'



The Tea Gardens, Darjeeling



Kollukkumallay, Kerala

Visitors get their best experience at tea bungalows which are old-world and often colonial in ambiance to explore the tea gardens, the hills, and the misty mornings not to forget the trekking and golf available.

When visitors aren't admiring the majestic Khangchendzonga, the world's third-highest mountain, they can visit Buddhist monasteries and take a ride on the 140-year-old stream Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

KOLLUKKUMALLAY, KERALA - THE HIGHEST TEA GARDEN IN INDIA

The highest tea garden in India is worth a visit. Beautifully located in steep and rugged terrain, Kolukkumalai in Munnar, Kerala is situated at 7900 ft. Due to its height and terrain, you can reach it by jeep, take a round of the sprawling estate including a wonderful tour of its factory and check out the tea varieties. At the tea tasting centre, enjoy the special flavours of Broken Orange Pekoe (BOP) and the Flowery Orange Pekoe (FOP) for your cuppa. In fact, the tea factory has enormous charm as it was built in 1930 and its wooden interiors bring in another age and time.

Kolukkumalai is around 38 km from Munnar town which in itself is intrinsically linked to tea as it is a part of its history and culture. Tata Tea set up a Tea Museum at the Nallathanni Estate in 2005 which contains exhibits of photographs and types of machinery, chronicling the history of tea in the region.

JORHAT TEA BUNGALOWS, ASSAM

Assuming there's one thing that Assam is known for other than its nature's excellence, it is the tea estates here. It is the Tea Capital of the World, and you can't pass by the state without visiting the Jorhat Tea Bungalows. It will just add more flavour to your vacation.

Assam tea is, for the most part, collected twice -

the primary flush i.e. first season begins in March. The subsequent flush, collected later in the season begins from May to June. The tea created in the subsequent flush season is maltier, better, and all the more full-bodied and is by and large viewed as better than the principal flush tea. For the most part, tea creation goes on till the end of November and is known as pre-winter flush.

NILGIRIS TEA PLANTATION, TAMIL NADU

Home to one of the best tea estates in India, Nilgiris Hills in Tamil Nadu is about a thousand years old. A scrumptiously fragrant tea, with sensitive botanical notes and brilliant yellow tones – this brew will make you feel freshly



Nilgiris Tea Plantation, Tamil Nadu



The Herbal Tea Yerba Mate

energetic. The peaceful Toda clan of these tea gardens helps in making this fragrant cup of tea. Nilgiri tea has a somewhat minty flavour, possibly because trees like the Blue Gum and Eucalyptus populate the locale.

The wonderful mix of flavours and body makes Nilgiri tea a 'blender's fantasy'. The Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu otherwise known as the 'Blue Mountains' have experienced the impact of both southwest and northeast rains; a reason why the tea leaves here are culled around the year. Also, maybe the flavours created by the tea gardens themselves give the light mix its liveliness.

HARROGATE, UNITED KINGDOM

English breakfast tea is a British staple, which has expanded over the years to include a variety of brews including decaf and gold standard. The quaint spa town of Harrogate is home to one of the UK's most popular Yorkshire tea brands, where it blends tea leaves from Assam and East Africa to create unique combinations bursting with flavour.

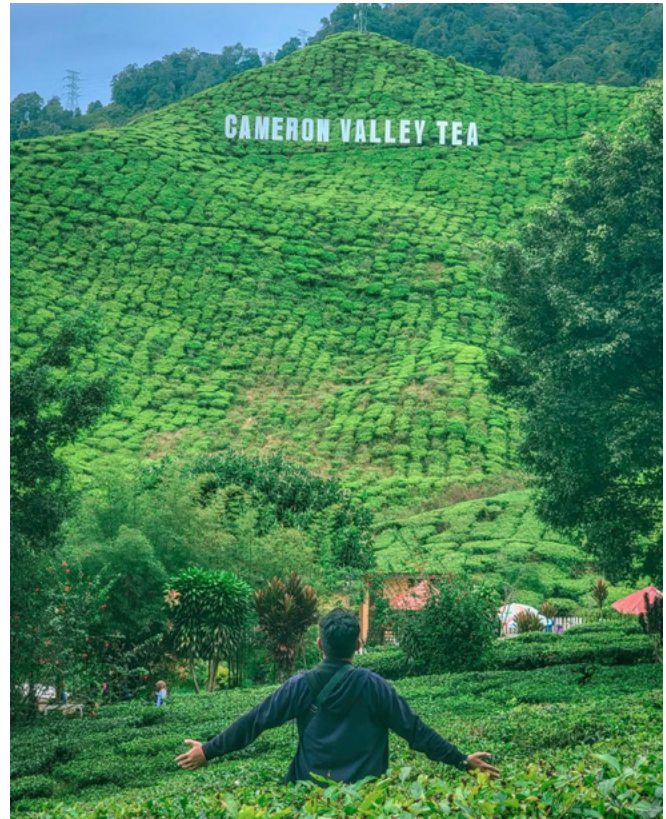
Take a trip to the nearby city of York and enjoy a delightful Afternoon Tea Boat Cruise along the picturesque River Ouse, where visitors will discover the city's medieval history. Iconic sites include York Minster, one of the largest and most beautiful Gothic cathedrals in the world.

Stop by at the traditional tearooms in the market towns throughout the District. After a day of sightseeing, be it historic castles, mansions, gardens, or lush landscapes take a break over a freshly brewed cup of tea along with freshly baked cakes and pastries.

MEKNES, MOROCCO

Morocco's ancient imperial city of Meknes is replete with stunning architecture. Explore the old quarter, Meknes' Medina which dates back to the 11th century and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Meander around the old town to discover everything from specialist souks to teahouses in secret courtyards, after which it's time to unwind with that delicious Moroccan mint tea. You will find café-cum-teahouses which can be



Cameron Valley

simple alfresco shops or traditionally decorated tea shops with colourful tiles.

Refreshing mint tea is the national drink of choice in Morocco. Various blends are made across the country, but the vibrant mint leaves from the scenic hilltop city of Meknes are said to be the best.

MISIONES, ARGENTINA

Said to have the strength of coffee, the health benefits of tea, and the joy of chocolate, the herbal tea Yerba Mate is Argentina's national drink and is enjoyed for its energy-boosting qualities.

The leaves are grown in the rich rainforests of the northeastern province of Misiones, famed for its red earth and papaya fields. Within Misiones lies the Iguazú National Park, home to the magical Iguazú Falls – the world's largest waterfall – where visitors can spot bright-billed toucans and colourful butterflies.

CAMERON HIGHLANDS, MALAYSIA

Steeped in rich tea-making traditions, the Cameron Highlands in Malaysia is renowned for its impressive emerald tea estates and exquisite mountain views.

The Bharat Tea Estate produces some of the world's favourite tea labels including Cameroon Valley, which takes its flavour inspiration from Sri Lanka and South India. Visitors can quench their thirst at the estate's Tea House with a special high tea, and wander through the lush hilly terrain with moss-covered trees, rich wildlife, and exotic plants.



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REDISCOVER ROMANCE: THE WORLD'S MOST EXOTIC BEACH DESTINATIONS

Ah, romance and the sea—a match made in heaven, like Champagne and strawberries or sunsets and selfies.

TT BUREAU

What is it about the sound of waves crashing, the scent of salty air, and the warm embrace of sun-kissed sands that makes our hearts flutter? Is it the promise of secluded escapades, or perhaps the allure of sultry nights illuminated only by the moon and stars?

Whatever it is, beaches and beachfronts are utterly captivating. If you yearn for more than just a getaway but a genuine romantic rendezvous, then read on. We've curated a list of the world's 10 most enchanting beach destinations that promise not just exotic experiences, but an escape into a realm of romance.

Explore the alluring universe of pristine coasts amidst waving palm trees, vibrant coral reefs, scuba diving and snorkelling, colourful marine life and the luxurious allure of nightlife by the sea.

Get to know more about these awesome beaches which transport you to a world of romantic shores and sunset enchantment!

MYKONOS, GREECE

Mykonos provides numerous reasons to fall in love with it rather than just one. This sunny Greek island has it all: peaceful beaches, iconic Cycladic architecture, 16th-century windmills, and fun discos and dance clubs in Mykonos Town.

If you're here for the beaches, head to Ornos Bay for breath-taking vistas and world-class windsurfing, or fashionable Psarou for the chance to meet celebrities and for hedonistic sun worshiping and dancing till daybreak.

THE ALGARVE, PORTUGAL

The bright Iberian sun shines brilliantly throughout Portugal's southern coast, so it's no wonder that the Algarve is one of the top beach locations. It's also quite lovely and reasonably priced, which makes it popular during peak season.

There are around 150 beaches, including Praia da Falésia in Albufeira and Praia da Marinha near Lagoa, which have beautiful limestone cliffs.



Mykonos, Greece



Maldives, Asia

There are several busy pubs, wine stores, trendy restaurants, shopping and street art and adorable cafés to visit along the roadside.

MALDIVES, ASIA

The Maldives is a small yet most beautiful country. It has the world's most acclaimed beach resorts, renowned for its romantic ambiance, crystal blue waters, and world-class scuba diving adventures.

Captivating honeymoon resorts and floating bungalows on the calm waves are two features of the Maldives that will make you want to live here with your companion. Delectable fish and mouth-watering Maldivian cuisine will light up your trip. You may also enjoy romantic strolls on

the beach with your loved one on full moon nights. You will also discover perfect conditions for snorkelling, stand-up paddle boarding, and kayaking.

BALI, INDONESIA

Bali offers breath-taking vistas of mountains and tranquil beaches. Here, you may enjoy a romantic coastal villa or any other low-cost hideaway surrounded by lush rainforests. Scuba diving is usually a good choice for water enthusiasts. Visit the regal antique Bali temples with your significant other.

Art aficionados can visit Ubud, the island's artistic center. It features a plethora of workshops and museums for you to explore. Adventurers can go on a hiking tour to learn about the prominent volcanoes in the area, such as the massive Mount Agung and the smoking Mount Batur.

KOH SAMUI, THAILAND

Koh Samui is one of Thailand's most intriguing islands, with beaches surrounded by palm trees and crystal blue seas. Visitors love to experience the beaches and partake in a range of water leisure activities such as snorkelling, scuba diving, and kayaking in the island's pristine seas.

The Chaweng Beach nightlife scene is a must-see. Couples who love beer will appreciate the numerous beer pubs that provide tasty local beer. There are several great dining spots to create memories.

GOA, INDIA

Goa, India is remarkable for its beautiful white sands, crystal clear blue waters, and tranquil moments with your sweetheart. The place has a plethora of destinations for romantic couples, such as the secret islands, heritage sites, fancy restaurants, and happening casinos.

Wander hand in hand as the warm waves roll over your feet. If you are an adventure enthusiast, try some adventure



Goa, India

sports like parasailing and kayaking and cherish memories for a lifetime.

The after-effects of Goa will surely make for a personality change - your new avatar as a party lover, a classy casino player, and a speed rider.

ANDAMAN, INDIA

Andaman is one of the most renowned beach locations, as well as a highly family-friendly tourist destination. Almost everything you can dream of can be found here: crystal blue beaches, dense rainforest, wonderful food, affordable beachfront bungalows, and some of the world's top luxury hotels. With never-ending activities to keep you entertained at India's greatest beaches and remote islands, you will undoubtedly have a fantastic trip.

Take a stroll along the peaceful and beautiful beaches. Spend some time at one of those five-star resorts. Water sports, scuba diving, and snorkelling are popular activities for thrill-seekers.

MIAMI, FLORIDA

Miami will surely come to your mind whenever you think about a romantic beach getaway. You will feel it the second you step out of the plane. The sandy beaches are a great spot, to begin with.

There are so many little islands of peace for couples wanting some cosy and private moments. Little Havana makes for a beautiful date-worthy diversion.

You can also go to the rooftop bars and pools to have parties and energize yourself with the rocking DJ and energetic crowd.

SEYCHELLES, EAST AFRICA

To be away from the city chaos while relaxing on beaches and falling in love again, Seychelles is a great travel beach destination. The beaches of this Indian Ocean archipelago are covered with thick palm trees, including six varieties that are exclusively found here.

Adventure activities are in plenty. The Aldabra giant tortoise, an extraordinary species, is the island's main attraction.

Visit the gorgeous Anse Source d'Argent, one of the most magnificent beaches in the world, and you'll know about it when you see the elephant-like limestone scattered across the sand.

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Cape Town's stunning coastline is studded with spectacular beaches, and awe-inspiring scenic beauty. The beaches lie close to majestic hills and have all the spectacular drama of an oceanfront. These spectacular beaches are the top places to spend quality time in South Africa. You can enjoy the penguins waddling along the Boulders Bay beach.

Queen's Beach is great for surfers and water sports activities. Glen Beach is tucked away behind sand dunes and boulders and makes for a secluded quiet romantic spot. Beta Beach offers great sunset views and soft white sands against sharp blue ocean waters, so perfect for a romantic time.

Apart from these wonderful beaches, couples will love to explore the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Two Oceans Aquarium, and Camp's Bay glitzy beach and awesome shopping are other highlights around Cape Town.



Cape Town, South Africa

WHY? TO GET A STEP AHEAD OF DISEASE.

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VINEYARD VENTURES: LUXE WINE DESTINATIONS

It's time to try something different and create a brand new travel bucket list with beautiful wine destinations.

TT BUREAU

Wines are distinct and are best experienced in their own home where water, weather and soil retain original flavours and taste. Wine tourism is a wonderful way of experiencing age-old cultures. Adding to the experience is the fact that various musicians and artists come to vineyard festivals to perform and set a lovely atmosphere for the night. So pack your bags and get ready for new experiences.

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON, FRANCE

For music-loving wine fans, the best ticket of the year is Jazz à l'Hospitalet, a yearly celebration put together by noted winemaker Gérard Bertrand. Hosted at Gérard Bertrand's 38-room Château l'Hospitalet — which is a biodynamically

cultivated wine domain — the celebration takes place over five days in late spring.

While this celebratory wine event is a springboard to the region, a major reason to visit the area can be found in the town of Narbonne, which lies inside the Corbières AOC. Narbonne itself is only a 10-minute drive from the Mediterranean Sea — a reason that makes it even more alluring because of the bright Mediterranean environment.

Corbières offers a natural and biodynamic viticulture. The vineyards here mainly produce red AOC wine, characterised with fruity, spicy aromas. The grape varieties cultivated are Carignan, Syrah and black Grenache.

Here is a rich landscape of awesome countryside, a sea of vineyards, a background of rolling hills, where pinewood



Luxe Wine Destinations



Languedoc-Rousillon, France

and garrigues dominate. While sampling wine or trekking or enjoying festivities do visit the citadels, the massif of the Hautes Corbières, the valley of the Torgan, or walk along the Canal du Midi.

CAPE WINELANDS, SOUTH AFRICA

With non-stop flights presently available from most metropolitan cities to Cape Town, it's easy to get to South Africa's Cape Winelands, the home of the country's most recognised wineries. The drive from Cape Town to wine country requires only 45 minutes, and the drive is both scenic and attractive as you go through the towns of Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, and Paarl (each situated in the core of the district).

This region is a paradise for wine lovers who wish to explore this great wine growing region that boasts 45 producer cellars, 457 private wine cellars, 5 wine regions and 22 wine routes. There are guided tours and tastings at vineyards which range from boutique wineries to sprawling estates.

The best way, of course, is to wither cycle between vineyards or take the Wine Tram from Franschhoek, with a hop on and off at various wine estates as and when you please. Visitors can sample wine and food pairing at picturesque food outlets at vineyards and tasting of the classic Pinotage, South Africa's smoky, red wine, as well as the wonderful Chenin Blancs makes this wine region a premier wine destination.

PORTO, PORTUGAL

Set to open in mid-2020, the Fladgate Partnership's World of Wine is a vacationer dream that will offer five wine gallery meetings, nine eateries and bars, a wine school, and different display spaces, all inside Fladgate's distribution centres in the city of Porto. The event expects to feature Portugal's reputation as a noted winemaking country, which is already known as a global forerunner in 'wine stopper' creation.

The charming city of Porto offers visitors a great history, local and sophisticated shopping areas, and welcomes you



Cape Winelands, South Africa

to its waterside promenades and cafes. Porto, with its noted historical centre, is recognised as a UNESCO world cultural heritage site and marks the gateway to your Portuguese wine travel. here is a landscape to inspire you with its famous wine regions; Douro (the birthplace of Port wine) and the unmatched Vinho Verde.

Porto's vicinity to the Douro Valley, which can be reached by boat, train, or car, makes visiting real grape plantations a reality while remaining in the city. Yet, with a flourishing eating scene and neighbourhood aperitifs to boot, you can be pardoned for saving that outing for another time.

TENERIFE, SPAIN

Spain is right now going through a thrilling winemaking renaissance, and it's on the island domain of Tenerife that considerable interest is seen among travellers. Tenerife has five wine regions: Valle de la Orotava, Ycoden-Daute-Isora, Abona, Tacoronte-Acentejo and Valle de Güímar.

This small area covers an area of 8,000 hectares in Tenerife. Wine production in Tenerife began in the 15th century and in the 16th century, its wines became a byword for excellence among leading figures, and monarchs in Europe.

Tenerife's grounded wine course and most of its bodegas (wineries) are situated in the upper east of the island, near the city of San Cristóbal de La Laguna. Guests can partake in a variety of wines made utilizing native assortments, including the sensitive Listán Blanco and Listán Negro and Baboso Negro, which is vinified into incredible, hard reds. If white wine is a favourite, then you are in the right place as 80% of the Valle de Güímar wines are white.

There are a hundred wineries on the island where visitors can discover the flavours and nuances of Tenerife wines. Enjoy guided tours, or go biking to explore the wonderful vineyards and take in the tastings and food and wine pairing.

CAMPANIA, ITALY

Italy is the fifth-most visited country on earth, getting more than 60 million vacationers yearly. While this tells you there is hardly any region 'unexplored' places, a fresh and beautiful locale is Campania. Here is a little known gem that is an iconic wine destination.

Situated on the "shin" of Italy's boot, Campania is home to Naples (and its reality popular pizza), Mount Vesuvius, the Amalfi Coast, and the Pompeii ruins. The district represents considerable authority in wines especially red grape Aglianico, and white grapes Greco, Fiano, and Falanghina.

The Amalfi Coast is also a highlight with dreamy coastal destinations, like the seaside resort of Sorrento and the beautiful islands of Capri and Ischia in the Tyrrhenian Sea.

You will see small picture-perfect villages like Positano and Ravello which are built along the cliff line and offer



Campania, Italy

stunning views of the coast and the sea. No wonder this stretch of coastline is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Austria's capital, Vienna is a centre of music, workmanship, and espresso culture. A lesser-known yet similarly attractive reason to visit is that Vienna is the world capital producing huge amounts of wine and well-developed viticulture and wine-related culture in the city. By huge, we're talking about 630 producers of wine, from urban vineyards or more than 700 hectares of vineyards — 85% of which are committed to white wines like Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, and Grüner Veltliner.

The best season to experience Vienna's vineyards is during fall, when the city has its yearly Wine Hiking Day. With three courses traversing a sum of 15 miles, guests can stroll the city's grape plantations while sampling tasty food and wine pairings. There are castles spotted along the course, as well, and provide a broad perspective of the city as a pleasant background.

A detour to a must-visit wine tourism destination is the small Wachau valley in Lower Austria. You must sample wines grown here, which is the best of Austrian wines — Riesling. Wachau is a picturesque UNESCO World Heritage Site with vineyards, ancient monasteries and castles. Don't miss the stunning baroque Melk Abbey and the Göttweig Abbey near Krems.



**CARL F. BUCHERER MANERO
CENTRAL COUNTER**

Carl F. Bucherer Manero Central Counter is a sporty chronograph in many 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.

PAVAN ANAND LAUNCHES 'ABDUCTION', AN ENCHANTING WORLD OF MAXIMALIST JEWELLERY

Pavan Anand announced the launch of Pavan Anand's exclusive collection 'Abduction' by Pavan Anand Fine Jewels (PAFJ).

TT BUREAU

Bijoutier Pavan Anand's risqué jewellery collection isn't meant to merely adorn a still body but is instead meant to move with the body, enhancing its fluidity and becoming an extension of the wearer's personality. Pavan's work builds off the presence of the 'fantastical realm' at the centre of the design discipline. Iconic, and experimental, the collection shatters the glass ceiling of the previously seen and imagined – designed for a select swath of tastemakers and the aesthetic elite. 'Abducting' them into Pavan Anand's enchanting world of maximalist jewellery.

ABDUCTION BY PAVAN ANAND FINE JEWELS - SEEING STRENGTH IN THE DRAGON

Design encompasses a multitude of disciplines – and mythical creatures are one of the most fascinating ones. This prized collection looks back into time immemorial by fusing artistic ingenuity within a world of fantasy.

A symbol of seduction, strength, change and inner possession, Pavan's series of 'Dragon' inspired high jewellery goes through unending metamorphosis. Continually changing through the varied pieces, the Dragon unfurls its ever-shifting nature and relentless power through sophisticated yet alluring modern interpretations. Exotic, dramatic and commanding, like the wearer who adorns it.

AMUN RA - BRUNCH EARRINGS, RED CARPET BROOCH

The reverence for Amun Ra – the legendary Egyptian God of the Sun, has never faded but only strengthened with time immemorial. A collector's piece and a creation that is something greater than each of the parts, it is the confluence between Amun Ra and Bahamut – the God of Dragons. Uniting forces in design, legends and splendour, the architectural earrings wind themselves around and nestle behind the ears to bare only certain elements – as if unearthing a myth.

ABOUT THE JEWELLERY

Emerging triumphant as an extraordinarily rare piece, it is crafted in 18k Gold, Burmese Rubies & flawless diamonds



ENVY - Cocktail Brooch



FIRE - Statement Cocktail Earrings

ENVY - COCKTAIL BROOCH

It seems as though we live in an ephemeral world that is driven by envy and her talons run deep. The profound human emotion is felt by all and sundry, cleverly disguised as praise towards the other. Personifying envy, this piece is the embodiment of 'green with envy'.

ABOUT THE JEWELLERY

Green Gold commands attention and envy. Crafted in 18k Yellow Gold, Green Gold, fancy vivid intense Yellow Canary Diamonds, White Diamonds and Burmese Rubies.

FIRE - STATEMENT COCKTAIL EARRINGS

Of the four Aristotelian elements, fire is the only one that man can create – this gift of fire to mankind represents the kinship between mortals and the Gods. Pavan Anand's Fire is an eternal flame symbolizing illumination, protection and purification, juxtaposed with the mighty dragon – an empowering source of positive energy. It is this universal energy that makes it the pièce de résistance of the collection.

ABOUT THE JEWELLERY

Blazingly beautiful, it is crafted in 18k Gold, flawless White Diamonds, fancy vivid intense Yellow Canary Diamonds, Emeralds and Rubies. Pre-sold to: Nawaz Modi Singhania.

THE SEDUCED? - STATEMENT RED CARPET RING

The lure of social media is but a fatal attraction and its tempting nature presents a false ideal. It captivates and ensnares, alluring



THE SEDUCED - Statement Red Carpet Ring

minds into a hollow abyss of filtered reality. This vortex of distortion is very much like having one wrapped around their little finger. This striking piece is a symbol of seduction, charm, fascination, glamour and unrivalled beauty, drawing all eyes in.

ABOUT THE JEWELLERY

Best adorned at a scintillating red carpet event to make a sartorial statement. Crafted in 18k Yellow Gold, flawless White Diamonds and a 7-carat Cognac Coloured rare Diamond.

ABOUT PAVAN ANAND

Celebrated international bijoutier Pavan Anand's body of work builds its strength from the avant-garde school of design. With a strong focus on layered forms that are suffused with provocative, sensual and idiosyncratic meanings that one recognises through archetypal forms seen in nature and history, Pavan's line of jewels are symbolic and resist classification into the stylistic silo of 'modernism', they are however 'ageless'.

PROVENANCE - ADMIRER BY ALL, WORN BY A FEW

The Pavan Anand creations have been donned by Goldie Hawn, Annalynne Mccord, Edward Norton, the Royal Family of Morocco, and the Royal Family of Monaco, among other global figures.

SAVOIR FAIRE

Armed with a degree in architecture, Anand's inference of form and structure are two obvious leitmotifs and fundamental pillars that shoulder his creative direction towards edgy, transformative and provocative jewellery concepts.

HISTORY

Bringing meaning into the world with functional aesthetics and creating elevated experiences, the bijoutier has pioneered an architectural awakening in Alibaug with his recently completed luxury home.

He has also produced capsule collections alongside Jyotsna Singh, the Maharaja of Patiala's granddaughter, and is known to have collaborated with international brands such as Versace and Nankai.



Traditional Rajasthani Wedding Couple

UNFORGETTABLE VOWS: THE MAGIC OF TRADITIONAL RAJASTHAN WEDDINGS

Traditional weddings in Rajasthan feature extravagant décor, vibrant colours, graceful dance forms, wonderful food, rituals and music.

TT BUREAU

Rajasthan is known for its royalties, rich cultural past, and exquisite lifestyle, and its wedding traditions are famous. It is no wonder that weddings in the desert state are unique.

Celebrating a wedding in India's Rajasthan state is like no other. Bursting with vibrant colours, mouth-watering feasts, and unique ceremonies, these traditional weddings are an unforgettable experience that will be etched into your memory forever.

We shall also explore what meals make up these extraordinary feast days so that next time you have to

attend one of these special events (or even plan one) you're truly prepared for this once-in-a-lifetime journey!

So, whether you're the guest of honour or just along for the ride, there's always something special happening at every turn that makes any Rajasthan celebration, unlike anything you've ever seen before. Let us take a closer look at how tradition plays such an integral role in these nuptials.

PRE-WEDDING RITUALS

We take a journey through some of the fascinating pre-wedding customs and ceremonies that would be perfect

for lovers of culture looking to learn more about a wedding in this royal state which is guaranteed to be extraordinary or add interesting flavours to their own big day.

SAGAI – In Marwari culture, sagai pertains to the engagement ceremony. Mudha-Tikka is another name for this function. The wedding is held in the groom's home. Male members of the bride's family pay a visit to the groom's family, and the bride's brother places a kumkum and rice tika on the groom's forehead to signify the match's welcome. In general, women do not participate in the Sagai ritual.

GANAPATI STHAPANA – Both of the bride and groom's families celebrate this tradition a few days before the wedding, in which they begin the wedding ceremonies by placing Lord Ganesh's idol on a sacred platform in a procedure termed Ganapati Sthapana.

PITHI DASTOOR – In various cultures, Pithi Dastoor pertains to a ceremony similar to Haldi. Pithi is a turmeric, sandalwood, and sometimes besan paste that is administered to both the bride and groom. The bride dresses in a traditional yellow or orange gown and sits beneath a colourful shade, wherein her mother and other family members apply the paste to her hands, feet, and face.

She is then showered in water that the women had collected from a local body of water. Women sing traditional wedding melodies while the dhol is being beaten. The vibe

is jovial and cheerful throughout. At the groom's home, the same customs are observed. The bride and groom are not allowed to leave the house after the Pithi Dastoor till the wedding day.

MAHIRA DASTOOR – Throughout this ritual, the bride or groom's maternal uncle/mama pays a visit to their home and brings a variety of presents. The gifts contain bridal attire for the bride and husband, as well as jewellery, fruits, and sweets for the entire family. The bride's or groom's mother greets her brother and his family and feeds them home-cooked meals. It traditionally implies that he is also contributing to the wedding costs.

JANEU – After performing puja and havan on the occasion of the wedding, the priest presents a sacred thread to the groom. During this event, the groom wears a saffron gown. He acknowledges the duties of married life by doing this ceremony, and he is moved from the Brahmacharya Ashram to the Garhasthya Ashram.

PALLA DASTOOR – The bride is showered with clothing, jewellery, cosmetics, and accessories from the groom's relatives. Her bridal jewellery and attire are among them. These items are on showcase in a public area of the house for all of the family's relatives and friends to see.

BARAAT – The wedding procession that follows the groom as he departs for the wedding destination is known as the



Pithi Dastoor



Panigrahan

baraat. He must ride a mare and wield a sword, a customary reminder of the region's royal and military background.

THE WEDDING

AARTI – At the entrance, the groom is greeted by a welcoming party. The bride's mother does an elaborate Aarti for him and feeds him sweets and water. The groom is then greeted as he enters the venue.

JAIMALA – The husband is then led to the bride, who is wearing a veil over her face. She places seven suhalis on the groom's head. Suhali refers to some sort of snack. The bride and groom exchange garlands after that.

GRANTHI BANDHAN – A knot is tied by the groom's sister or the priest between the groom's odhni and the bride's odhni. This represents the coming together of two souls.

PANIGRAHAN – After the promises are made, the groom's father places the bride's hand on top of the groom's. The Panigrahan ceremony is finished when the groom accepts the bride's hands from her father and ties a sacred thread across the unified hands.

PHERA – While the priest repeats Vedic mantras, the bride and groom take rounds around the holy fire. Four pheras are taken in the mandap during Marwari wedding traditions. For the first two pheras the bride precedes the

groom and then later two pheras are taken by the groom. Three more pheras are taken at the entry afterward.

ASHWAROHAN – The bride's foot is placed on a grinding stone. She must push the stone forward seven times with her feet. This ceremony symbolises the obstacles that the bride would experience during her married life and indicates that she will tackle them with conviction and resolve.

POST-WEDDING RITUALS

BIDAI – After leaving the bride's parental home, the newlyweds proceed to the groom's home. The bride's family bids her farewell with tears in their eyes.

When the car starts, a coconut is placed under the wheel, which is meant to be crushed, giving good luck for the journey. In front of her husband, the bride lifts her veil for the first time, and he presents her with a piece of jewellery.

GRIHA PRAVESH – The bride is greeted with an elaborate and warm welcome by her mother-in-law, who performs an Arti before bringing her into her husband's home. The bride is instructed to step over the threshold with her right foot into a dish containing milk and crimson solution.

She kicks over a pot loaded with rice and a coin signifying the bringer of fertility and wealth to her husband's home in five steps with her coloured feet.

PAGELAGNI – The bride is introduced to her family and extended family during this ritual. The bride is blessed by the elders, and a puja is held in her honour.

WEDDING ATTIRE

Are you looking for a peek into the fascinating past of Rajasthani culture? No visit to India is complete without delving deep into its rich traditions, especially when it comes to wedding attire! If you're wondering what traditional Rajasthani wedding attire looks like and all the fabulous customs that go along with it, you've come to the right place. We'll explore everything from sartorial choices to matchmaking rituals – get ready for an insight into cultural flamboyance at its best!

GHAGRA AND A CHOLI – Sometimes known as Kanchli, which is also the name of the Rajasthani clothing Choli or blouse – are the most common outfits worn by Rajasthani women. Ghagra is the name given to a form of long skirt worn by women in Rajasthan. A Choli or a long or short blouse is generally paired with the Ghagra.

The bride's entire face is covered throughout the wedding rites with a colourful Odhni or Dupatta, which completes the look. Rajasthani wedding ghagras come in a variety of brilliant colours and designs, such as Leheriya and Mothra. Cotton is commonly used for these. Rajasthani men are not far behind women when it comes to dressing up. They have the same vibrant and attractive appearance as women. A Pagri (turban), Dhoti or Pyjama, Angarkha, Patka (waistband), and Kamarbandh are among their clothes.

GREAT CUISINE

Rajasthan is a tapestry of mouth-watering cuisine, with a broad variety of delectable dishes that can make the wedding the finest it can be in terms of flavour. Rajasthani royal wedding meal is traditionally hot and spicy, cooked in pure ghee.

DAL BAATI CHURMA – This is the most well-known Rajasthani/Marwari dish that is vegetarian. The spicy dal and sweet churma provide a well-balanced dinner that goes well with baati.

RAJASTHANI KADHI – It's a tasty vegetarian dish made with yogurt, gram flour, and seasonings.

GATTE KA PULAO – Another delectable Rajasthani or Marwari meal that is served as a main course. Gatte Ki Khichdi or Ram Pulao are other names for it. As previously stated, the gatta is formed from besan (gram/chickpea flour) and mixed with rice and seasonings.

MAWA KACHORI – This is a unique Rajasthani Marwari dessert. It's a puffed pastry that's deep-fried and stuffed with mawa and dry fruits before being dipped in sugar syrup.



Rajasthani Kadhi



Ghevar

GHEVAR – This is yet another traditional Marwari/Rajasthani celebratory dish. A sweet disc-shaped cake soaked in sugar syrup is served as a dessert.

BALUSHAH – The design of this Rajasthani treat is similar to that of a doughnut, but the taste and texture are quite different. They're made of maida flour and deep-fried, then dipped in sugar syrup and topped with a variety of toppings.

Traditional weddings of Rajasthan stand as a vivid tapestry of rituals, colors, and deeply ingrained cultural practices. From the ornate bridal attire to the intricate henna designs, each element plays a crucial role in creating an unforgettable celebration. As the final chants are recited and the newlyweds take their first steps together, guests leave with their hearts full and memories that will last a lifetime.

THRILL-SEEKER'S PARADISE: GO GLOBAL FOR AN ADRENALINE RUSH!

Adrenaline junkies searching for their next death-defying destination can head for these exhilarating dare-devil experiences.

TT BUREAU



Zip World Velocity 2 zip wire, Snowdonia, Wales

Global adventure tourism is expected to grow to 2,257 billion pounds by 2030, with tourists swapping their poolside 'fly and flop' holidays for adrenaline-fuelled breaks. From boarding down active volcanoes to swimming with ferocious crocodiles, those with an appetite for adrenaline should try these terrifying activities to get their hearts pumping.

We have the help of StressFreeCarRental.com who have scoured the globe to find the best spots for thrill seekers looking for adventure. Top adrenaline-fuelling activities around the world:

ZIP WORLD VELOCITY 2 ZIP WIRE, SNOWDONIA, WALES

Located in beautiful Snowdonia, Velocity 2 is the fastest zipline in the world and the longest in the UK. Once strapped in, thrill seekers can reach 100mph+ as they fly head-first over a

deep blue quarry. This exhilarating experience is the closest thing flying daredevils will ever encounter, leaving them with unforgettable memories forever.

STORM CHASING IN TORNADO ALLEY, OKLAHOMA CITY, USA

Driving towards a tornado most would be a nightmare, but for adrenaline junkies worldwide, storm chasing gives the ultimate thrill and is growing in popularity.

Tours in Oklahoma City offer the chance to pursue after twisters and giant thunderstorms using satellite and radar imaging, where winds hit highs of 500km/h and twisters rip through Tornado Alley.

CAGE OF DEATH, AUSTRALIA

The cage of death is a unique experience in Australia that allows for the ultimate predator encounter as dare-devils are



Pamplona Bull Run, Spain

lowered into the water and left to face ferocious crocodiles. Regular feeding by the crocodile handlers means the crocodiles are close and personal with swimmers in the ultimate underwater adventure.

PAMPLONA BULL RUN, SPAIN

Being charged by 1500-pound bulls comes with a considerable element of danger. However, each year in July, thousands sign up for the Pamplona bull run to be chased down a half-mile stretch of the street by the beasts. Although many are injured yearly, it doesn't stop adrenaline junkies from signing up.

SKYDIVING OVER MOUNT EVEREST, NEPAL

Skydiving over the tallest mountain in the world combines a dramatic high-altitude skydive with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Those who dare to take the plunge will freefall past some of the world's highest mountain peaks and land on one of the highest drop zones on the planet. Jumpers will plunge from 29,500 feet, reaching speeds of 130mph as they drop past the snow-capped Himalayas.

CYCLING DEATH ROAD, BOLIVIA

This terrifying road entices adrenaline-thirsty tourists each year, but it is not an activity to be taken lightly, as one wrong move will see cyclists plunge straight over the edge and hundreds of meters down to their deaths. This road is known as one of the most dangerous in the world, beginning in the mountains and descending into the jungle. Those signing up to cycle Death Road should do so cautiously.

VOLCANO BOARDING, NICARAGUA

Sliding down an active volcano is a daredevil's dream and possible at the Nicaraguan Cerro Negro. Thrill seekers hike to the top of the 2,300ft (701m) peak with wooden boards that they'll use to slide down. Adventurous should try this one out before the next eruption.

WHITE WATER RAFTING, RIVER ORCHY, SCOTLAND

White water rafting in the Eas Urchaidh waterfall on the River Orchy is not for the faint of heart, providing huge rapids,



Skydiving Over Mount Everest, Nepal



White Water Rafting, River Orchy, Scotland

narrow shots and waterfalls to satisfy the adventurous. Boasting some of the UK's most challenging and technical rapids, it has 6m high Falls, offering the ultimate high-octane experience for thrill seekers.

BASE JUMPING ANGEL FALLS, VENEZUELA

Tour operators offer crazy adrenaline junkies the chance to trek through the jungle and leap from the world's highest waterfall. Brave adventurers can leap off the rocky cliff and free-fall into the air from a staggering 979 meters high.

WING WALKING, KENT, ENGLAND

Offering a taste of the high life, this extreme activity entails being strapped to the wings of a plane, handed some goggles, and given the flight of a lifetime.

MUMBAI'S SECRET CHARMS: WHAT THE GUIDEBOOKS MISS

Mumbai, often referred to as the “City of Dreams,” stands as one of the most iconic and diverse cities in the world.

TT BUREAU

Mumbai is well-known for its dizzying skyscrapers, bustling local trains, thriving film industry, and delectable street food. Yet, beneath the well-trodden paths and widely circulated stories lies a treasure trove of tales and trivia that remain lesser-known.

There are several lesser-known facts that deepen the intrigue of this sprawling metropolis. Hidden amidst the bustling streets is the Global Vipassana Pagoda, a monument twice the height of the previously mentioned Gateway and inspired by the Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar. It silently stands as an ode to peace and meditation.

Few are aware that Mumbai houses one of the world's few Zoroastrian Towers of Silence, where traditional sky burials are conducted. Then there's the story of the city's 'dabbawalas'. With a Six Sigma quality certificate, these

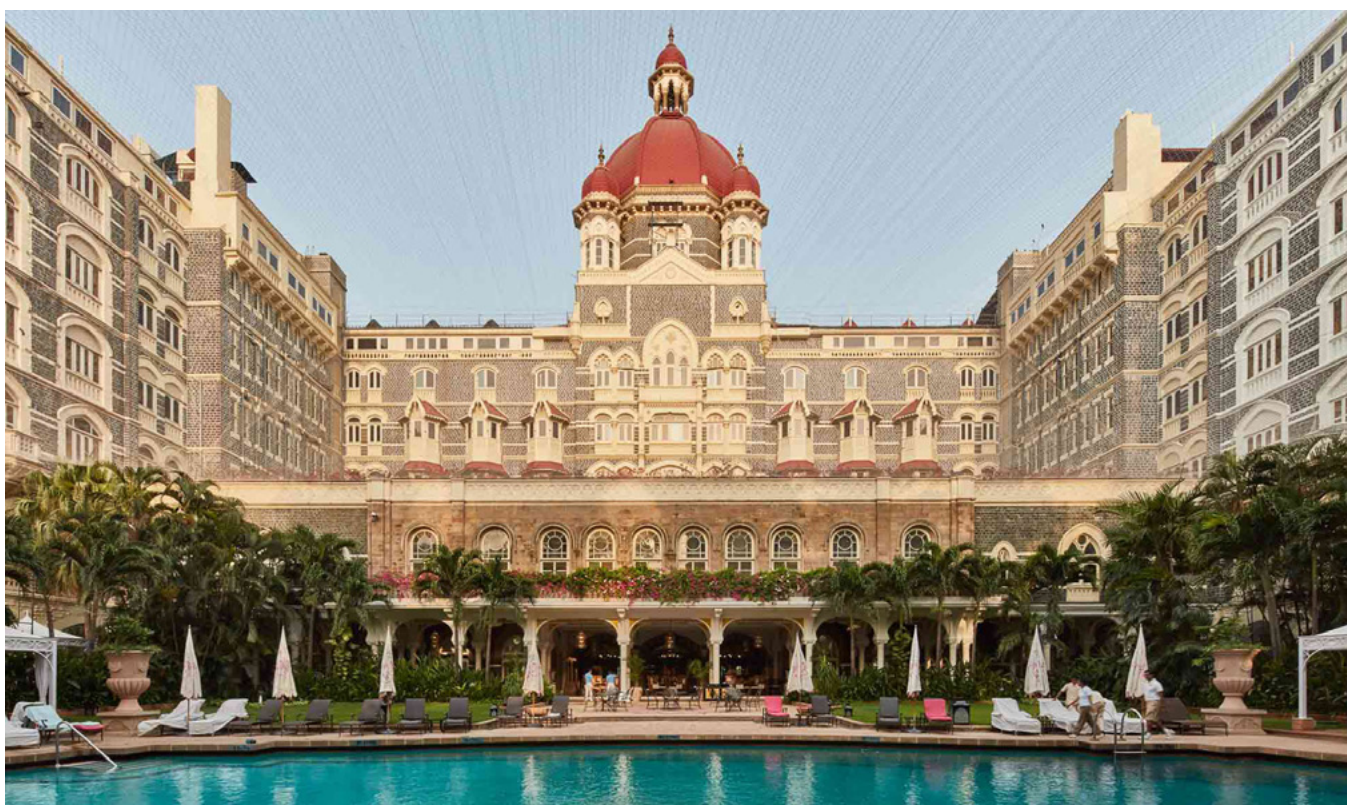
lunchbox carriers transport thousands of meals with near-perfect precision. Moreover, close to the urban streets and high-rises, lie ancient rock-cut temples like the Elephanta Caves and the Jogeshwari Caves, which date back to the 1st and 6th centuries, respectively.

And lastly, while many revel in the delights of Mumbai's coastline, only a handful know about its unique 'Dancing Houses' – buildings that appear to sway due to optical illusions created by their wavy reflections against the rippling sea waters. Mumbai, it seems, never ceases to surprise even the most seasoned traveller.

So whether you're a curious traveller, a history enthusiast, or someone looking to explore Mumbai beyond the headlines, these lesser-known facts will offer you a unique and enriched perspective of this majestic city.



Global Vipassana Pagoda



The Taj Mahal Hotel

As you gear up for your visit, let's dive deep into the heart of Mumbai and discover what makes it tick beyond its renowned landmarks.

Check these lesser-known facts about Mumbai to help you get to know this spectacular city better.

HIDDEN BOLLYWOOD GEMS

When people think of Mumbai, Bollywood inevitably springs to mind, glittering with its larger-than-life movie stars and extravagant dance numbers. Yet, beneath the glamour, there lie captivating tales that many visitors remain unaware of.

For instance, Mumbai's Film City, which sprawls over 520 acres, isn't just a studio complex; it has authentic-looking gardens, lakes, homes, and even cities used for various scenes. The industry's birth wasn't heralded by a big-budget film but by a short film in 1896 by the Lumière Brothers, shown at Mumbai's Watson Hotel.

Interestingly, Bollywood produces the maximum number of films in the world, but its profit is less than that of Hollywood due to the lower average ticket prices in India. Moreover, many might be surprised to know that the term "Bollywood" was coined much later in the 1970s and originally, Indian cinema was known internationally as "Bombay cinema." Delving into these lesser-known facets can offer visitors an enriching perspective on Bollywood's vast and varied cinematic universe.

IT HAS THE WORLD'S LARGEST PARK WITHIN A CITY

Mumbai is home to the world's largest park within a city, the Sanjay Gandhi National Park. This park is situated in Borivali

and is a major tourist attraction in the city. The park covers an area of 104 sq km and has 2,000-year-old Buddhist caves, two enormous lakes, a resident tiger population, and more. You can also go for treks and stargazing here.

INDIA'S FIRST FIVE-STAR HOTEL IS LOCATED HERE

Founded in 1903, The Taj Mahal Hotel in Colaba, Mumbai, is India's first-ever 5-star hotel. The hotel was turned into a 600-bed hospital during World War I (1914-1918). For the freedom movement, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and Sardar Patel would assemble here. Between the late 1920s and the early 1950s, Bombay's social scene was enlivened by jazz, ballet, and gala balls.

IT IS HOME TO THREE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Mumbai is also a repository of cultural and historical treasures, some of which have garnered UNESCO World Heritage status. The city is the proud home to not one but three UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, the Elephanta Caves, and the ensemble of Victorian and Art Deco Buildings.

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, formerly known as Victoria Terminus, is an architectural marvel that serves as a living testament to the grandeur of British colonial rule. Designed by Frederick William Stevens, the building is a stunning blend of Victorian Gothic Revival and traditional Indian architectural styles.

The Elephanta Caves, located on Elephanta Island, are another captivating site that takes you back in time. The

intricate rock-cut temples dedicated to Lord Shiva offer a window into India's ancient spiritual and artistic traditions. They stand as silent yet eloquent narrators of a culture steeped in mysticism and artistry. Last but not least is the ensemble of Victorian and Art Deco Buildings in Mumbai's Fort Area. This collection represents the evolving styles and aspirations of a burgeoning city at the turn of the 20th century. Together, these heritage sites enrich Mumbai's cultural landscape.

IT HAS INDIA'S FIRST TRAIN AND FIRST BUS TO START OPERATIONS

Indian Railways have a long history, dating back over 160 years. The first passenger train operated between Bori Bunder (Bombay) and Thane, a distance of 34 km, on April 16, 1853. It had thirteen carriages and was pulled by three locomotives named Sahib, Sultan, and Sindh. Today, with 2.2 billion passengers per year, the Mumbai Local Train network is the world's busiest railway system.

We have seen that Mumbai was where the first train in the country was operated. However, Mumbai is also home to the first Indian bus. The first motor bus service, which operated between Afghan Church and Crawford Market in Mumbai, began on July 15, 1926. For the same journey, the bus fare was four annas or 25 paise.

IT HAS INDIA'S FIRST AIRPORT

The country saw a commencement in the aviation industry when India's first aerodrome was built in 1928, the Juhu Aerodrome. In a non-operational part of the airport, the country's first civil aviation museum will open. The airport first opened in 1928 and served as the city's sole airport until 1948, when the current one in Santa Cruz was built.

IT HAS INDIA'S LARGEST THEMED ENTERTAINMENT PARK

Imagicaa is India's largest themed entertainment park, with attractions such as a theme park, a water park, a snow park, and a place to stay. People come here to relax and take a break. Many school trips are held here. You can also enjoy the Novotel Imagicaa which is a magnificent property surrounded by the Sahyadri highlands.

THE FAMOUS GLOBAL VIPASSANA PAGODA IS HERE

Mumbai's Global Vipassana Pagoda stands as an emblem of peace and harmony. Not only does this colossal structure captivate with its golden splendour, but it also holds the distinction of being the world's largest pillarless dome. Inspired by the Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar, it was primarily built to honour Gautama Buddha and his teachings. Tourists flock to this serene site to not only admire its architectural prowess but also to delve into the



Imagicaa Entertainment Park



Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus



Mumbai Coastline

tranquillity of Vipassana meditation – an ancient Indian meditation technique that seeks self-transformation through introspection.

IT HOLDS THE ANCIENT ZOROASTRIAN TOWERS OF SILENCE

The Zoroastrian Towers of Silence, locally known as ‘Dakhma’, provide a sacred and unique insight into the city’s ancient funerary customs. Perched atop Malabar Hill, these open-topped towers, secluded by dense foliage, have long served as the final resting place for Mumbai’s Parsi community. Here, in accordance with Zoroastrian traditions, the deceased are left exposed to the elements and birds, signifying a ‘sky burial’. While the towers themselves remain closed to non-Parsis, their surrounding gardens and the story of the age-old customs they uphold provide a fascinating detour from Mumbai’s usual tourist trail.

IT SHOWCASES THE WHIMSICAL DANCING HOUSES

While Mumbai’s skyline never fails to mesmerize, a curious phenomenon along its coastline gives the city a whimsical charm. As the gentle waves ripple across the Arabian Sea, certain buildings along the shoreline create an illusion of swaying or ‘dancing’ due to their reflections in the undulating waters. These aptly named ‘Dancing Houses’ can be best observed during early mornings or late afternoons, turning the simple act of watching the horizon into a magical visual treat.

ITS FAMOUS ‘DABBAWALAS’ ARE WORLD FAMOUS

The ‘dabbawalas’ are a testament to the city’s incredible spirit of resilience and efficiency. Each day, these white-capped lunchbox carriers weave their way through the city’s chaotic streets, delivering home-cooked meals from kitchens to offices with unparalleled accuracy.



Dabbawalas

Armed with a colour-coded system and bicycles, the dabbawalas have achieved a Six Sigma quality rating, a feat indicative of fewer than 3.4 mistakes in a million deliveries! Their dedication has even attracted the attention of royals, with Prince Charles once paying them a visit. For those seeking the true essence of Mumbai’s daily life, the rhythmic cadence of the dabbawalas is not to be missed.

THE FINANCIAL CAPITAL OF INDIA HAS MANY NUGGETS TO DISCOVER

Mumbai, the financial capital of India, stretches beyond its well-known landmarks and bustling streets. The city, established on seven islands, has an enthralling history that dates back to ancient times, with evidence of its rich heritage scattered throughout.

While most know it for Bollywood and the Gateway of India, the city’s lesser-known wonders lie in the alleys and bylanes, waiting to share stories lesser told but equally captivating. These hidden spots, from spiritual sanctuaries to architectural anomalies, provide a unique lens through which one can experience the city’s rich tapestry of traditions and tales.

To truly grasp Mumbai’s essence, one must delve into these hidden chapters that contribute to its vast and vibrant narrative.

KALARIPAYATTU: KERALA'S ANCIENT MARTIAL ART LEGACY

Kalaripayattu is one of the oldest surviving martial art forms, with roots that trace back over 3,000 years to the southern state of Kerala in India.

TT BUREAU

Often referred to as the “mother of all martial arts,” Kalaripayattu is deeply intertwined with Kerala’s culture and traditions. It is a unique blend of physical prowess, discipline, combat techniques, and spiritual development.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origins of Kalaripayattu are believed to have been established by Lord Parasurama, the sixth avatar of Lord Vishnu, according to Hindu mythology. The word “Kalari” means battlefield, and “Payattu” refers to fight or practice. So, Kalaripayattu can be translated as the “practice in the arts of the battlefield.”

TRAINING AND TECHNIQUES

PHYSICAL CONDITIONING: Training begins with a rigorous regimen to attain peak physical fitness and

flexibility. Exercises mimic the movements of various animals, giving rise to techniques such as the “elephant posture,” “cat posture,” and “snake posture.”

COMBAT TECHNIQUES: Students learn unarmed combat before moving on to weaponry. The techniques involve strikes, kicks, grappling, and defensive methods.

WEAPONS: Kalaripayattu incorporates various weapons into its training, including:

- Urumi: A long, flexible sword.
- Kathi: A knife.
- Kuntham: A spear.
- Otta: A curved wooden stick.
- Mace and shields.

MARMASHASTRAM: This is the science of vital points. Knowledge of these points allows a Kalaripayattupractitioner



Kalaripayattu - Mother Of All Martial Arts



Marmashastram

to incapacitate or heal. They are the pressure points of the human body, and hitting them can have lethal effects.

SPIRITUAL AND HEALING ASPECTS

Apart from the physical training, Kalaripayattu also emphasizes spiritual development. Practitioners meditate and practice breathing techniques to strengthen their mental focus and discipline.

Moreover, Kalaripayattu is closely associated with the traditional Indian medical practice known as Ayurveda. Many Kalaripayattu practitioners are also trained in Ayurvedic treatments and massage therapies. The healing practices ensure that warriors can recover rapidly from injuries.

CULTURAL IMPACT

Kalaripayattu has influenced various dance forms in the state, most notably Kathakali and Theyyam, where artists use postures and movements inspired by martial art. Moreover, it's not only the foundation for physical conditioning for dancers but also a source of choreographic techniques.

MODERN-DAY RELEVANCE

Over the past few decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in Kalaripayattu. Schools have popped up across the world, and it's been incorporated into various fitness programs. Film and theatre artists have trained in Kalaripayattu for physically demanding roles, and it has



Theyyam - A Dance Form

gained international recognition for its comprehensive approach to physical and mental wellness.

HOW IS KALARIPAYATTU TAUGHT TO BEGINNERS?

Teaching Kalaripayattu to beginners is a systematic process that involves a holistic approach encompassing physical training, mental conditioning, and spiritual discipline. The

training, traditionally imparted in specially designed pits called 'Kalari', is structured to move from basic sequences to more advanced techniques as the student progresses.

Here's an overview of how beginners are introduced to the world of Kalaripayattu:

INITIATION RITUAL

Before starting the actual training, there's often a ceremonial initiation ritual to pay respects to the deity of the Kalari, the earth, and the master or 'Gurukkal'. This sets the tone for the discipline and reverence with which art should be approached.

BODY CONDITIONING

The initial stages focus on making the body agile, flexible, and strong. Beginners undergo:

MEYTHARI: Basic postures, leg swings, and body sequences that instil balance, coordination, and stamina. This phase might include exercises that imitate animal movements, such as the lion, elephant, cat, or snake, each focusing on different aspects of agility and strength.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONING: Rigorous exercises, including stretches, jumps, and squats, which are designed to increase strength, stamina, and flexibility.

Basic Combat Techniques Once a certain level of physical fitness is achieved, students move on to basic combat techniques:

UNARMED COMBAT: This involves learning to use the body as a weapon, and mastering punches, kicks, locks, and grappling techniques.

BASIC SEQUENCES (VANDUS): Choreographed patterns of movement that combine defence and attack, teaching students to anticipate and counter an opponent's moves.

INTRODUCTION TO WEAPONS

Though beginners won't start with advanced weaponry, they are often introduced to basic weapons like:

STICKS (KETTUKARI): The most basic weapon, practising with sticks helps students understand distance, timing, and rhythm in combat.

Breathing and Meditation From the beginning, the importance of breath control is emphasized. Proper breathing techniques are essential for executing moves with power and precision. Meditation is introduced to help students cultivate focus, calmness, and mental clarity.

Cultural and Philosophical Context To understand Kalaripayattu deeply, students are also taught about its cultural significance, historical evolution, and the philosophical principles that underpin the art form.

Respect and Discipline Throughout the training, a strong emphasis is placed on respect - respect for the Gurukkal(teacher), for fellow students, and for the space (Kalari). Discipline, dedication, and humility are considered as important as physical prowess.



Kalaripayattu - Mother Of All Martial Arts



Meenakshi Raghavan - Granny Of Kalaripayattu

For beginners, Kalaripayattu is not just about learning combat techniques; it's an immersive experience that shapes the body, mind, and spirit. The initial stages lay the foundation upon which the more advanced practices are built. As they progress, students delve deeper into the complexities and nuances of this ancient martial art.

FEMALE KALARIPAYATTU PRACTITIONERS

Yes, there are many female practitioners. While historically, Kalaripayattu was predominantly practiced by men, the narrative has shifted over the past few decades. Today, women actively practice, perform, and even teach this ancient martial art form.

NOTABLE FEMALE KALARIPAYATTU PRACTITIONERS:

MEENAKSHI RAGHAVAN: Often hailed as the "Granny of Kalaripayattu", Meenakshi Raghavan, also known as Meenakshi Amma, garnered international attention for her proficiency in the art. Even in her 70s, she showcased exceptional skills in demonstrations and competitions. She has also been an avid teacher, training many students, both male and female, at her school in Vadakara.

SREEDEVI UNNI: A Kalaripayattu expert and Mohiniyattam dancer, Sreedevi Unni seamlessly blends the martial art form into her dance performances. She is a prominent figure who advocates for the integration of this martial art into classical dance training.



Female Kalaripayattu Practitioners

SANTHI V. KAVINKAL: Santhi is another revered name. She has been practising since a very young age and now runs her own school, where she trains a new generation of enthusiasts.

LAKSHMI R. MENON: A researcher and practitioner, Lakshmi uses this martial art as a tool for empowerment. She conducts workshops for women, focusing on self-defence and personal development using the principles of Kalaripayattu.

Apart from these individuals, there are many women worldwide, including outside India, who have embraced Kalaripayattu for its holistic approach to fitness, self-defense, and personal growth. The martial art has been an empowering tool, providing a platform to break gender stereotypes and showcasing that strength and grace are attributes not bound by gender.

CULINARY SECRETS OF MAHARASHTRA: MORE THAN JUST VADA PAV

Maharashtra's culinary landscape offers much more than the iconic Vada Pav for which it is famous.

TT BUREAU

While the beloved street food of Mumbai has its own irreplaceable charm, the state's gastronomic offerings stretch far beyond it, beckoning food lovers to explore a realm teeming with complex spices, varied textures, and cultural depth. From the coastal delicacies of Konkan to the robust flavours of Vidarbha, each region offers a unique culinary story waiting to be told and tasted. Whether it's the tangy Poha of Nagpur, the comforting Puran Poli, or the fiery Kolhapuri mutton curry, Maharashtra's culinary richness challenges the notion that this state's food can be summarized with just the famously delicious Vada Pav.

The staple food of Maharashtra is the traditional unleavened flatbread known as bhakri, which is typically made from jowar (a type of millet) or bajra (pearl millet). It is served with many accompaniments like ghee, curd, pickles, and chutneys. Puran Poli is a sweet flatbread stuffed with chana dal (split chickpeas) and jaggery.

The popular snack food in Maharashtra is of course the Vada Pav, a sandwich-like dish made of batata vada (potato fritters) sandwiched between two slices of pav (a type of Indian bread). Misal Pav is a spicy curry made of sprouts and served with pav, while Pithla Bhakri is a dish made from besan (gram flour) gravy.

The people of Maharashtra also enjoy savoury street snacks such as bhel puri (puffed rice mixture) and pav bhaji (mixed vegetables in spicy gravy) and light tasty snacks are part of the great cuisine of Maharashtra.

Maharashtrians have traditionally considered their cuisine to be more austere than others. Mild and spicy meals are served in Maharashtrian cuisine. Wheat, rice, jowar, bajri, vegetables, lentils, and fruit are all staple foods. Vegetables are frequently served with peanuts and cashews.

PAV BHAJI

It is a world-famous street food delicacy from the western state of Maharashtra or even the king of street food. The dish is made



Pav Bhaji

up of veggies seasoned with a special blend of spices called pav bhaji masala and served with soft bread rolls called pav.

The recipe was created as a quick meal for textile workers, providing the necessary nutrition from the combination of veggies. Serve it with lemon wedges for an additional push to the dish.

BHEL PURI

Maharashtrian cuisine is famous for its mouth-watering chaat recipes, which are mainly sold by street sellers. The majority of them are gravy or sauce-based snacks with vegetables, spices, and chaat chutneys.

This popular savory street snack recipe uses puffed rice, finely chopped vegetables, and chaat chutneys. It's usually



Bhel Puri

served as a late-night snack with deep-fried flat puris that also function as an edible spoon. When travelling in Maharashtra, this delicious street food is a great appetizer.

SABUDANA KHICHDI

Sabudana khichdi, cooked with sabudana pearls, boiled potatoes, roasted peanuts, and a few spices, is one of the most popular fasting dishes. It is traditionally prepared during Hindu fasting days such as Navratri, Mahashivratri, or Ekadashi. It's high in carbohydrates, with peanuts providing the only source of protein.

Because sabudana is high in carbohydrates, it makes a satisfying snack. You can garnish the dish with coriander leaves and grated fresh coconut.

BHARLI VANGI

Stuffed eggplant-based curry recipes are popular in India and can be utilised for a variety of purposes. This dish is a traditional hot curry cooked with purple eggplant and a mixture of packed spices.

It's one of Marathi cuisine's most popular curries, and it's full of goda masala's warmth. It's usually served with Indian flatbread or roti, although it can also be served as a side dish with dal rice.

PITHLA BHAKRI

Pitla is a besan (gramme flour) and onion-based Maharashtrian dish. A spicy base of ginger, garlic, green chillies, and onions is thickened with gram flour and water.

Most Maharashtrian families' favourite comfort food is spicy pithla with bhakri, which is also a famous dish at Mumbai's "Zunka Bhakar centres." Spicy pithla with jowar bhakri (similar to jowar roti) and chilli garlic chutney would make a perfect supper.

POHA

Poha is a Maharashtrian morning dish made of flattened rice, herbs, and spices. It's a popular breakfast in Maharashtrian households and is enjoyed by all ages. In the two most prevalent variants, poha is made with either potato or onion, or both potatoes and onion.



Sabudana Khichdi



Bharli Vangi

Add boiled peas, grated carrots, roasted peanuts, cashews, coriander leaves (cilantro leaves), and shredded coconut to make it more nutritious.

KOLHAPURI MUTTON CURRY

The Kolhapuri Mutton Curry is a culinary masterpiece that hails from the vibrant city of Kolhapur in Maharashtra. Known for its fiery heat and robust flavours, this dish is not for the faint-hearted. At its core is tender mutton, marinated to perfection and cooked slowly to absorb the

Hyderabad's Jewellery



Shrikhand

medley of spices that constitute its unforgettable gravy. The recipe calls for an intricate blend of toasted coconut, red and green chillies, and a range of traditional spices like coriander, cumin, and garam masala.

What sets it apart is the use of a special Kolhapuri masala, a local spice mix that elevates the dish to an entirely new level of deliciousness. The curry is often garnished with fresh cilantro and served with a side of steaming white rice or soft, flaky chapatis to balance its intensity.

One bite of this flavourful dish, and you'll instantly understand why it has earned a legendary status among spice aficionados and curry lovers alike. The people of Maharashtra also enjoy seafood like bombil (Bombay duck) and prawns, as well as vegetarian dishes such as bhaji (vegetables cooked in spices).

AMTI DAL

The word amti means tangy, and it refers to a flavour that is a mix of spice and sweetness. It is distinctive and specific to Marathi cuisine because of the blend of sweet, sour, spicy, and acidic flavours.

The tanginess comes from the kokum, the sweetness from the jaggery, and the spice from the goda masala. Toor dal/pigeon pea lentil is used in this classic Maharashtrian-style dal recipe. It's typically served with plain rice and jeera rice for lunch and dinner.

PURAN POLI

Puran Poli is a delicious flatbread cooked with husked split Bengal gramme (chana dal) and jaggery and filled with a



Puran Poli

sweet lentil filling. Puran Poli is a traditional Maharashtrian dish that is offered during festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, and others. Modak, Puran Poli, and Nariyal ladoo are commonly served during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Maharashtra. With milk, ghee, or curd, Puran Poli can be served warm or at room temperature (yoghurt).

Maharashtra has a variety of traditional sweets, many of which are made from milk products.

SHRIKHAND

Shrikhand is a popular dessert in the western Indian states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. It is one of the simplest and most delicious desserts available. It is a simple and tasty delicacy made with thick yoghurt and sugar, saffron, and cardamom.

Often topped with sliced dried fruits, roasted nuts, or charoli/chironji and crushed pistachios as a finishing touch, this mouth-watering dessert is for the gods..

The local beverages include buttermilk and the popular energy drink known as Sol Kadi. Maharashtra is also known for its unique Saatvic cuisine, which uses only pure ingredients free from onion, garlic, and other spices. This type of cuisine is often served on special occasions or during religious festivals.

Through its unique culture and cuisine, Maharashtra has something to offer to everyone. Visitors to the state will surely enjoy exploring its diverse culinary offerings!



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REGIONAL DELIGHTS DEFINE INDIA'S CULINARY MAP

Regional Indian Dishes

Regional Food Specials are something that we can all agree is our favourite food thing.

TT BUREAU

People are proud of their local cuisines and think that it helps them connect with their heritage. Yes, Regional Food binds us to our ancestors. It is that one thread that we all cling to and love delighting in at all times.

Eating your favourite Regional Food has been shown to have therapeutic properties superior to retail therapy. Here's a list of must-try traditional Regional Food from different states of India. Here's a list of must-try traditional Regional Food from different states of India;

LITTI CHOKHA

Litti Chokha, a Bihari cuisine, embodies the state's earthiness and tenderness. It is a common delicacy in Bihar, Jharkhand, and even Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Litti, the star of the show, is a savory dough ball made from whole wheat flour, stuffed with a spicy mixture of roasted gram flour, spices, and herbs. It is then baked to



Litti Chokha



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Dal Makhani

golden perfection in a traditional clay oven, imparting a smoky aroma and a delightfully crispy exterior.

Accompanying the Litti is its soulmate, Chokha, a fiery mash of roasted eggplant, tomatoes, and potatoes, seasoned with mustard oil, spices, fresh herbs and a dab of desi ghee. The combination of the smoky, earthy Litti and the tangy, spicy Chokha creates a flavour explosion that lingers on the palate and leaves a lasting impression.

DAL MAKHANI

In the vast tapestry of regional food specials, there is one iconic dish that holds a special place in the hearts of food lovers across India - Dal Makhani.

Originating from the vibrant land of Punjab, this sumptuous delicacy combines the simplicity of lentils with the richness of butter and cream. Slow-cooked to perfection, the velvety black lentils, or "urad dal," are infused with aromatic spices, smoky charcoals, and a touch of tangy tomatoes.

The result is a creamy, luscious delight that tantalizes the taste buds with its harmonious blend of flavours and can be enjoyed with piping hot tandoori rotis or fragrant basmati rice. Although the dish has several variations, it has a class of its own.

VINDALOO

In the world of fiery and flavorful regional food specials, Vindaloo reigns supreme. Hailing from the sun-soaked coastal region of Goa in India, this tantalizing dish is a testament to the perfect fusion of Indian and Portuguese influences.

Vindaloo's distinctive character lies in its bold and robust flavours. A fiery medley of spices, including red chillies, garlic, ginger, and aromatic vinegar, infuses tender chunks of meat or succulent seafood, creating a symphony of taste that dances on the palate. Vindaloo, which is made with vinegar and dry red chillies, can be made with chicken, prawns, pork, or potatoes.

The slow cooking process ensures that every morsel is steeped in intense flavours, resulting in a dish that strikes a perfect balance between heat and tanginess. Vindaloo is a flexible traditional Goan meal that is suitable for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians. It is one of the spicier foods with a strong savory flavor.

LAAL MAAS

Eat the Laal Maas if you're in Rajasthan! Lal Maas stands tall as a fiery emblem of Rajasthan's culinary heritage. Lal Maas, or red meat curry, is a spicy Rajasthani meal packed with flavours and spices.

Literally meaning "red meat," this iconic Rajasthani delicacy gets its name from the vibrant hue bestowed upon it by the liberal use of Mathania, a unique kind of Rajasthani red chilli, which is added to provide spice and colour to the meal. Previously, it was the favorite cuisine of Rajput soldiers, who appreciated these powerful, robust, and fiery tastes. red chilli peppers and spices.

Succulent pieces of mutton slow-cooked to perfection, are bathed in a rich and aromatic gravy infused with a blend of traditional Rajasthani spices. The robust flavours of cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, and fiery red chilli peppers create a symphony of heat and depth that lingers on the palate.

Whether savoured with traditional bajra rotis or fragrant basmati rice, Lal Maas exemplifies the bold flavours of Rajasthani cuisine.



Laal Maas

VADA PAV

In the realm of regional food specials, one street food delight reigns supreme in the bustling streets of Mumbai - Vada Pav, a humble yet iconic creation that has captured the taste buds of millions.

At its core, Vada Pav is a delectable combination of a spiced potato fritter, known as the "vada," nestled within a soft and pillowy bun, or "pav." The vada is made by mashing potatoes with a medley of aromatic spices, then coating them in a chickpea flour batter and deep-frying them to golden perfection.

Put simply, Vada pav is similar to veggie burgers. For every foodie, it is a carb-heavy dish that consists of a deep-fried potato dumpling served in a small bun. To cater to the spice-loving palates of Indians across the country, it is usually served with a tangy and spicy chutney made from tamarind and garlic and sometimes accompanied by a sprinkle of aromatic dry garlic chutney, and green chilli.

UNDHIYU

Undhiyu is a regional Gujarati dish. During the winter, every Gujarati home cooks this pot of mixed veggies to enjoy the richness and nutrients of each component. This delightfully thick curry is often consumed in the winter since it requires vegetables such as fenugreek leaves, surti papdi, and tuvar lilva, which are only readily accessible throughout the winter.

It is made differently in different sections of Gujarat; Surti style, Kathiyawadi style, and Matla Undhiyu are the three main versions. Undhiyu is a slow-cooked dish that incorporates a variety of vegetables, a blend of spices, and

some coconut. Undhiyu, a Surat speciality, is a must-try for every food lover on every vacation to Gujarat.

ROGAN JOSH

Rogan Josh, also known as Rogan Gosht, is a fragrant curried meat dish loved all over Kashmir. The dish's primary ingredient is red meat, lamb or goat, which is seasoned with alkanet flower or root and enhances the flavour with Kashmiri chillies. It goes well with plain basmati rice, plain steamed rice, roti, butter naan, Sheermal, or Turmeric rice.



Undhiyu



Kashmiri Rogan Josh

Originating from the picturesque valleys of Kashmir, the name “Rogan Josh” translates to “red lamb,” and true to its name, the dish boasts a vibrant red hue that comes from a careful blend of Kashmiri red chillies and aromatic spices.

Tender pieces of meat, typically lamb, are slow-cooked in a fragrant gravy infused with a melange of spices like cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, and fennel seeds, creating a symphony of flavours that leave a lasting impression. The rich and velvety texture of the sauce, along with the tender meat, make each bite a delightful experience. In a multicourse dinner or the Wazwan Rogan Josh is always the hero and will remind you about a fantastic feast again and again.

MASALA DOSA

Masala dosas are undoubtedly South India’s most popular traditional food item loved around the globe. They might be called an Indian pancakes made with a thin batter of rice, wheat, and lentils. Preparing dosas is a long-drawn procedure that needs the batter to soak in water for a minimum of 24 hours before it can be formed. When the batter is ready, it is placed onto a heated Tava (griddle pan) and made similar to a crepe created in France.

Dosas are commonly consumed folded in half and filled with spicy potatoes. Hot sambar increases a spicy edge to the cuisine, the coconut chutney also adds to the flavour, and whatever you load them with, dosas are sure to create a delectable and substantial supper.

MAKKI DI ROTI & SARSON DA SAAG

Capturing the essence of Punjab’s culinary heritage is Makki Di Roti and Sarson Da Saag. Born from the fertile fields of Punjab, this iconic combination celebrates the bountiful harvests and the rich traditions of the land.

Makki Di Roti, a flatbread made from maize flour, holds a rustic charm with its hearty texture and earthy flavour. It is the perfect accompaniment to Sarson Da Saag, a vibrant mustard greens curry, known for its pungent aroma and robust taste. The slow simmering of mustard greens, combined with a medley of spices, creates a harmonious blend of flavours that sing on the tongue.

This iconic duo has become a symbol of Punjab’s culinary identity, celebrated and savoured by locals and food enthusiasts alike. It is commonly consumed throughout the winter months. The saag is generally cooked in the traditional slow cooking technique and is typically served with Makki di roti, Makkhan (unprocessed white butter or processed yellow butter) or, more classically, ghee to enhance the taste and topped with a glass of lassi (a blended yoghurt drink).

ALOO POTOL POSTO

Bengalis like poppy seeds more than anything. They truly do, and why wouldn’t they? It makes meals much more delicious!



Masala Dosa



Makki Di Roti & Sarson Da Saag

No wonder, in the treasure trove of regional food specials, Aloo Potol Posto stands out for its unique combination of flavours and textures. This delectable Bengali delicacy pays homage to the fertile lands of West Bengal, where the humble pointed gourd, or “potol,” and potatoes, or “aloo,” find themselves transformed into a culinary masterpiece.

The “posto” paste, made from ground poppy seeds, imparts a rich, nutty essence to the curry. The gentle spices and fragrant mustard oil add depth and complexity to the dish, while the tender vegetables soak up the creamy goodness, creating a symphony of taste and aroma. The recipe uses potatoes and pointed gourd, red and green chillies, and occasionally coconut cream to offer some much-needed heat.

Aloo Potol Posto, with its harmonious blend of earthy flavours, represents the heart and soul of Bengali cuisine, captivating both locals and food enthusiasts with its unforgettable charm.

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