

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, LUXURY & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

APRIL 2024 - ₹50

**THE GLOBAL SHIFT:
REGENERATIVE
TOURISM**

**ECHOES OF
ETERNITY: HERITAGE
AND SACRED SITES**

**TAMIL NADU'S
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**THE ZEN LIST: WELLNESS
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THE ZEN LIST: WELLNESS RETREATS

A roundup of the world's most exclusive spa and wellness retreats, offering cutting-edge treatments, holistic retreats, and breathtaking environments for relaxation

KAMAL GILL

In an era where wellness is not just a trend but a lifestyle, the quest for serene sanctuaries and rejuvenating experiences has led to the emergence of unparalleled spa and wellness resorts around the globe. These destinations, nestled in some of the world's most breathtaking landscapes, offer more than just luxury; they provide a haven for the mind, body, and soul. Here's an in-depth roundup of eight of the world's most exclusive spa and wellness resorts, each offering unique, cutting-edge treatments and holistic retreats.

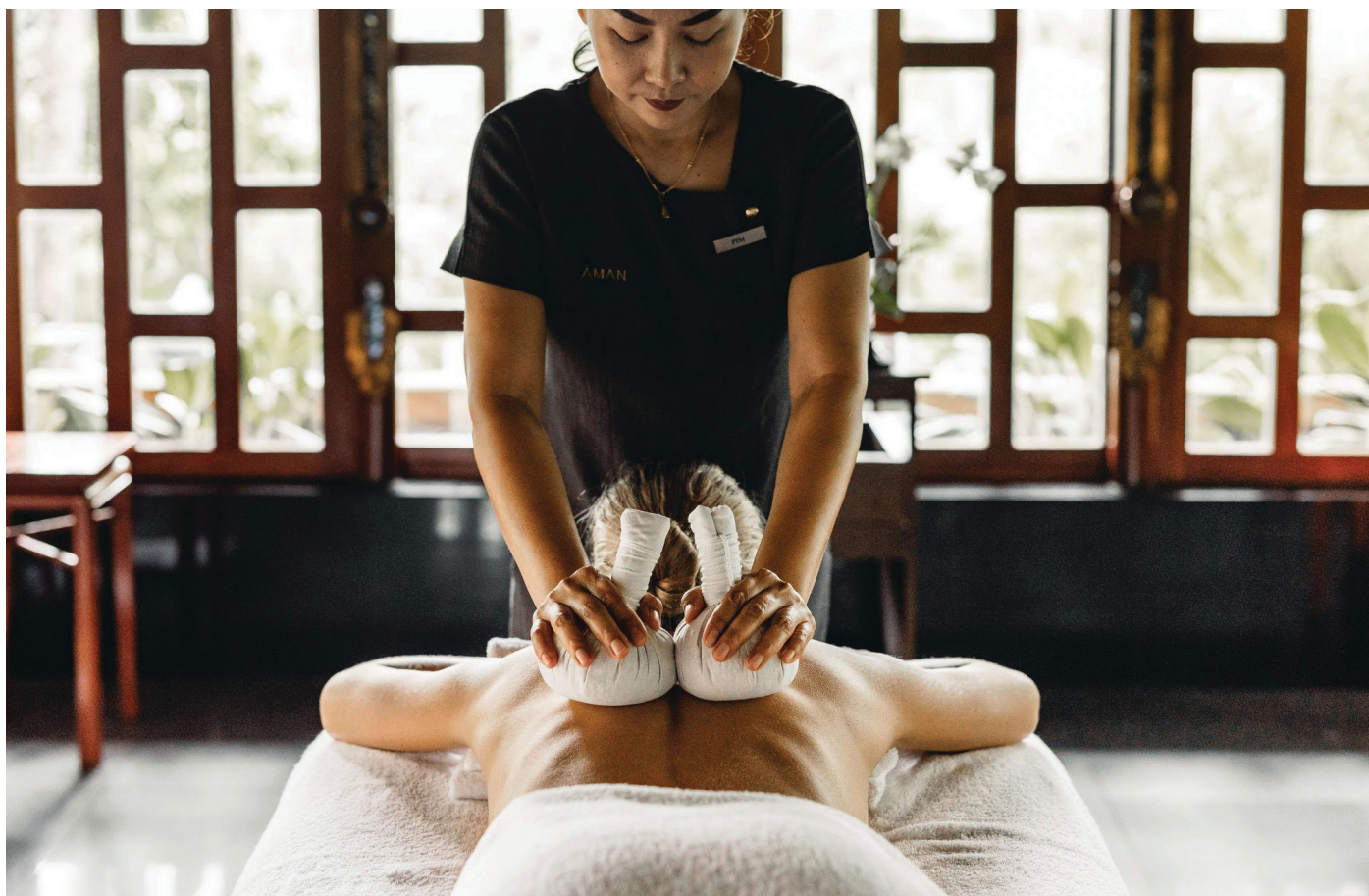
AMANPURI – PHUKET, THAILAND

Set atop a peninsula on the Andaman Sea, Amanpuri is surrounded by the turquoise waters of the ocean and the

lush greenery of coconut groves. The resort's design reflects classic Thai architecture, with teak wood pavilions and villas that seamlessly blend into the natural landscape.

EXCLUSIVE USP

The resort's Integrated Medical Services and Wellness Centre provides personalized programs combining traditional Thai medicine, alternative Western therapies, and modern diagnostics. Treatments like the Purifying Journey, incorporating lymphatic drainage and herbal compresses, are designed to detoxify and rejuvenate. A standout feature is its "Holistic Wellness Centre," offering a wide range of personalized programs that focus on detoxification, mindfulness, and



Amanpuri – Phuket, Thailand

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SHA Wellness Clinic – Alicante, Spain

rejuvenation, incorporating modern diagnostic tools to enhance the effectiveness of ancient therapies.

USE AND HEALING TECHNIQUES

Amanpuri's approach to wellness is deeply rooted in the belief that true health encompasses the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of one's being. The resort offers a variety of healing techniques, including traditional Thai massage, which is known for its ability to improve flexibility and relieve tension. Other therapies such as craniosacral therapy, sound healing, and energy work are also offered, aimed at restoring balance and harmony within the body.

WELLNESS THERAPIES

The Holistic Wellness Centre at Amanpuri is a healing sanctuary, offering a comprehensive array of therapies. From Ayurvedic treatments to Chinese medicine, and Naturopathy to cutting-edge wellness technologies like hyperbaric oxygen therapy, guests have access to a diverse range of healing modalities. The centre also offers specialized retreats that focus on weight management, stress reduction, and detoxification, guided by a team of expert practitioners.

WELLNESS FOOD MENU

Nutrition is a cornerstone of the wellness experience at Amanpuri. Using organic and locally sourced ingredients, the menu features a range of gourmet dishes that adhere to dietary preferences and health goals. Guests can experience a significant improvement in their overall well-being, including reduced stress levels, enhanced physical health, and a deeper sense of inner peace.

SHA WELLNESS CLINIC – ALICANTE, SPAIN

Perched on the beautiful Sierra Helada Natural Park, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, the SHA Wellness Clinic minimalist, modern architecture is designed with Feng Shui principles, creating a tranquil environment that encourages wellness and rejuvenation. SHA Wellness Clinic is a pioneer in integrating natural therapies with Western medicine to improve and prolong health and well-being. Their approach is comprehensive, offering nutritional plans, regenerative medicine, anti-ageing programs, and even genetic testing. Signature therapies, such as the SHA Detox, aim to cleanse the body, while their cutting-edge facilities and serene environment promote total relaxation.

EXCLUSIVE USP

SHA Wellness Clinic sets itself apart as a global pioneer in integrated medical and holistic wellness, combining ancient Eastern philosophies with cutting-edge Western techniques. Its unique proposition lies in its scientifically backed approach to health and well-being, focusing on personalized wellness programs designed to achieve optimal health, reduce ageing, and prevent illnesses. SHA's signature program, "SHA Method," integrates nutrition, natural therapies, and the latest advancements in medical science to address individual health concerns.

USE AND HEALING TECHNIQUES

At SHA, guests can experience a wide array of healing techniques and treatments, including traditional Chinese medicine, regenerative medicine, genetic testing, and anti-ageing therapies. The Clinic is renowned for its detoxification

programs, weight loss and nutrition plans, stress management, and sleep recovery treatments, all tailored to the individual's health status and goals.

WELLNESS THERAPIES

Beyond the traditional spa treatments, SHA offers unique therapies such as oxygen bar sessions, cryotherapy, and high-tech beauty treatments, including photodynamic therapy and aesthetic medicine. Its comprehensive wellness approach is supported by a team of over 35 doctors and 250 professionals specializing in different areas of health and well-being.

WELLNESS FOOD MENU

Nutrition plays a central role in SHA's wellness philosophy, with a focus on macrobiotic diets that are tailored to each guest's health conditions and goals. The Clinic's restaurants serve gourmet health food prepared with organic, locally sourced ingredients, offering balanced meals that detoxify, nourish, and delight. Guests can also participate in cooking classes and lectures on healthy eating habits to integrate wellness into their lifestyle. The integration of a serene environment, personalized wellness programs, and advanced medical therapies offers profound therapeutic benefits, including improved physical health, enhanced mental clarity, and emotional balance.

THE RANCH MALIBU – MALIBU, CALIFORNIA, USA

Nestled in the Santa Monica Mountains, The Ranch Malibu spans over 200 acres of stunning natural beauty, offering breathtaking views and a serene environment for detoxification and renewal. This luxury wellness retreat emphasizes on disconnecting from daily life to focus on health and wellness goals, offering programs that include rigorous hikes, yoga, massage therapy, and organic plant-based cuisine, designed for detoxification and weight loss.

EXCLUSIVE USP

The Ranch Malibu is renowned for its intensive, results-driven wellness and fitness program set within a luxury, ranch-style retreat. The core of its philosophy is a "No Options" policy, offering a highly structured regimen of physical activities, nutritional dining, and restorative wellness therapies. Its signature 7-day program focuses on weight loss, improved fitness levels, and mental clarity through a rigorous schedule of hikes, yoga, strength training, and a plant-based diet.

USE AND HEALING TECHNIQUES

The retreat leverages the healing powers of nature, physical activity, and dietary discipline to achieve holistic wellness. The daily routine includes 4 to 5 hours of morning hikes through the mountains, afternoon fitness classes, and evening yoga sessions, complemented by daily massages to aid recovery and relaxation. The use of natural settings for exercises is

intended not only for physical benefits but also for mental and emotional rejuvenation.

WELLNESS THERAPIES

Beyond physical activity, The Ranch Malibu offers a variety of wellness therapies aimed at enhancing the detoxification and healing process. This includes deep tissue massages, reflexology, and nap time to promote healing and recovery. The program is designed to detoxify the body, clear the mind, and allow guests to reconnect with themselves in a deep and meaningful way.

WELLNESS FOOD MENU

A cornerstone of The Ranch Malibu's philosophy is its plant-based, nutritionally dense, and calorie-restricted menu, designed to complement the physical demands of the program. The menu is meticulously crafted to support detoxification, promote weight loss, and enhance energy levels, without sacrificing flavour or satisfaction. Participants often report significant physical and psychological benefits, including weight loss, improved physical strength, and greater mental clarity. The Ranch Malibu stands out as a sanctuary for transformation, where the rigours of daily workouts, the purity of a plant-based diet, and the healing embrace of nature work in concert to produce a truly transformative wellness experience.

CHABLÉ RESORT & SPA – YUCATÁN, MEXICO

Chablé Resort merges the ancient Mayan concept of well-being with modern luxury in the heart of the Yucatán Peninsula. Set



The Ranch Malibu – Malibu, California, USA



Chablé Resort & Spa – Yucatán, Mexico

within a lush 750-acre estate, featuring stunning landscapes that blend the natural beauty of the jungle with the heritage of the Mayan culture, the resort seamlessly integrates contemporary design with the restoration of the historical hacienda's original 19th-century buildings, offering a unique luxury experience that pays homage to the region's rich history.

EXCLUSIVE USP

Chablé Resort & Spa 'offers a unique blend of luxury wellness within a culturally rich setting, centred around a natural cenote, which the Mayans considered to be a sacred gateway to the underworld and source of rejuvenation. This exclusive feature underpins the resort's holistic approach to wellness, combining ancient Mayan healing practices with modern luxury. The spa's signature treatment, the "Temazcal Ceremony," is led by a traditional shaman, offering a deeply spiritual experience that purifies the body and soul. Alongside traditional Mayan rituals, guests can enjoy advanced skincare treatments and wellness therapies that incorporate local herbs and practices.

USE AND HEALING TECHNIQUES

Emphasizing a balance between ancient tradition and modern wellness, Chablé Resort provides a diverse range of healing techniques. Apart from the Temazcal Ceremony, it offers traditional Mayan spa treatments using local herbs and healing practices. The resort also provides holistic therapies including flotation therapy, hydrotherapy, and sound healing, aimed at achieving mental, physical, and spiritual well-being.

WELLNESS THERAPIES

Chablé's spa boasts a comprehensive array of wellness therapies designed to detoxify, relax, and rejuvenate. From personalized facial and body treatments utilizing natural and organic products to private yoga and meditation sessions in serene outdoor settings, guests are invited to embark on a tailored wellness journey. Advanced therapies such as bioenergetic healing and customized nutritional programs complement the resort's holistic approach.

WELLNESS FOOD MENU

The culinary experience at Chablé Resort & Spa is deeply rooted in the philosophy of wellness and sustainability. Ingredients are sourced from the resort's organic gardens, ensuring freshness and nutritional value.

LANSERHOF TEGERNSEE – MARIENSTEIN, GERMANY

Lanserhof Tegernsee's location in Marienstein, overlooking the stunning Tegernsee Valley, provides an idyllic setting for healing and relaxation. Designed by award-winning architect Christoph Ingenhoven, it offers breathtaking views of the Bavarian landscape. This state-of-the-art medical facility in the Bavarian Alps is renowned for its innovative approach to wellness, combining modern medicine with traditional healing methods.

EXCLUSIVE USP

Lanserhof Tegernsee's core philosophy revolves around the Lans Med Concept, which focuses on detoxification, regeneration, and prevention. Guests undergo comprehensive medical evaluations to tailor treatments that range from energy and sleep therapy to sports medicine and nutritional consultation, all aimed at restoring balance and vitality.

USE AND HEALING TECHNIQUES

Lanserhof Tegernsee employs a comprehensive approach to health and wellness, incorporating diagnostics, nutrition, exercise, and relaxation techniques. The Mayr Cure, the cornerstone of its program, focuses on digestive health and detoxification through dietary restriction, abdominal treatments, and personalized medical care. Additional treatments include cryotherapy, IV therapies, energy medicine, and bespoke fitness programs, all designed to support the body's natural healing processes.

WELLNESS THERAPIES

The resort offers a wide range of advanced medical treatments, from sleep diagnostics and stress management programs to aesthetic medicine and sports medicine. These therapies are complemented by traditional practices such as yoga and meditation, as well as innovative offerings like hyperbaric oxygen therapy and electromagnetic stimulation, catering to the comprehensive wellness needs of guests.



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Aurika- Luxury by Lemon Tree Hotels, Udaipur

WELLNESS FOOD MENU

Nutrition is a fundamental aspect of the Lanserhof philosophy. The resort's cuisine is based on the principles of the Mayr Cure, focusing on light, easily digestible meals that support the body's detoxification and regeneration processes. Guests of Lanserhof Tegernsee often report profound health improvements, including enhanced energy levels, weight loss, improved digestive health, and a greater sense of overall well-being.

AURIKA- LUXURY BY LEMON TREE HOTELS, UDAIPUR

Spread across five acres of undulating terrain, Aurika, Udaipur is nestled atop its private hill and offers an oasis of tranquillity in the vibrant City of Lakes. The resort's signature feature, the Antara Gate, invites guests to pause and immerse themselves in the enchanting ambience of its grand courtyards, terraced gardens, and opulent interiors, providing a glimpse into a bygone era. The scenic vistas of Lake Fateh Sagar and Lake Pichola from rooms and suites with private plunge pools enrich the stay with breathtaking views and tranquil experiences.

EXCLUSIVE USP

Aurika, Udaipur distinguishes itself with a wellness philosophy deeply rooted in the ancient practice of Ayurveda, combined with modern wellness therapies. The spa's signature offering includes luxurious treatment that uses locally sourced saffron and other herbs known for their healing properties, reflecting the rich heritage of Rajasthan. The spa at Aurika is envisioned to be a sanctuary of wellness, offering a range of treatments that blend Ayurvedic traditions with contemporary spa therapies. Specialized detoxification preparations and personalized Ayurvedic consultation for Ayurvedic treatments like Podikizhi for arthritis, neuro muscular ailments and insomnia and Abhyang Spice Bundle to balance doshas, relieves fatigue and stimulates deep sleep are wellness experiences tailored to individual needs.

USE AND HEALING TECHNIQUES

Aurika's serene spa, Araya, is a sanctuary of wellness that offers a blend of traditional Indian and international therapies, and an exclusive menu of treatments designed to pamper and revitalise. Guests are invited to rejuvenate their senses with treatments that range from luxurious milk and rose baths to therapeutic massages, including Thai, Balinese, and Ayurvedic techniques. Guests can indulge in unique therapies such as a chocolate scrub or relax in the couple's room equipped with a private jacuzzi, steam, and shower facilities. With three private therapy rooms, the spa offers a secluded and intimate setting for ultimate relaxation.

WELLNESS THERAPIES

Beyond traditional spa services, Aurika Hotel and Spa could offer yoga and meditation sessions led by experienced instructors, designed to harmonize the body, mind, and spirit. The property features holistic wellness programs focusing on stress relief, and rejuvenation, leveraging both the natural tranquillity of its setting and the expertise of its wellness practitioners.

WELLNESS FOOD MENU

Emphasizing the importance of nutrition in overall well-being, the dining experience at Aurika Hotel and Spa features a wellness menu crafted with the principles of Ayurvedic nutrition at the exquisite multi-cuisine restaurant, Mirasa. Dishes are prepared using fresh, organic ingredients, with options tailored to balance the doshas (body types) and promote healing from within. These destinations not only redefine luxury but also offer profound wellness experiences that cater to the sophisticated traveller seeking rejuvenation for the mind, body, and soul. Each resort's unique blend of local tradition, natural beauty, and innovative wellness philosophies promises an unforgettable journey towards holistic health and well-being.

SG

WHERE INNOVATION INSPIRES THE FUTURE

BUSINESS EVENTS.
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REHABILITATION



THE GLOBAL SHIFT: REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Regenerative travel transforms visits into healing touches for destinations. Goa shines as a global beacon in this pioneering movement

ARJUN GILL



Bhutan

The emerging paradigm of regenerative travel doesn't just aim to reduce harm or maintain the status quo; it seeks to actively heal the destinations we visit, making them better for future generations. This global story explores how countries, communities, and innovative businesses across the world are embracing regenerative travel, creating a blueprint for a more harmonious relationship between travellers, the environment, and indigenous cultures.

At its core, regenerative travel is an acknowledgement that it's not enough to simply sustain; we must actively contribute to regeneration. This means going beyond eco-friendly practices and working towards restoring ecosystems, strengthening local communities, and preserving cultural heritage. It's a holistic approach that considers the long-term impacts of tourism on a destination's environmental, social, and economic health.

GLOBAL PIONEERS IN REGENERATIVE TRAVEL

BHUTAN: THE DRAGON KINGDOM'S GREEN BLUEPRINT

Bhutan, the mystical Himalayan kingdom, is a beacon of regenerative travel, pioneering a model where environmental conservation and cultural preservation are paramount. Known for its philosophy of Gross National Happiness, Bhutan places the well-being of its citizens and the natural environment above economic gain. The country mandates that at least 60% of its land remain forested for future generations, intertwining sustainability with state policy. Bhutan's approach to tourism, characterized by its high-value, low-impact strategy, ensures that travel experiences contribute positively to both the environment and local communities. Visitors to Bhutan become part of conservation efforts, cultural preservation, and community development projects, leaving the kingdom richer in spirit and nature than before their arrival.

ICELAND: HARNESSING NATURE'S POWER FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Iceland stands out as a leader in regenerative travel, harnessing its unique geothermal and hydroelectric energy resources to power almost the entire country sustainably. This commitment to green energy is mirrored in its tourism practices, with a focus on preserving its dramatic landscapes, waterfalls, geysers, and hot springs. Iceland encourages responsible travel through education and conservation efforts, promoting experiences that respect the delicate balance of its unique ecosystems. The country's innovative approach to using its natural resources without depleting them serves as a model for sustainable living and regenerative travel, making it a destination where travelers can witness the power of sustainable innovation in harmony with nature.

NEW ZEALAND: A LEGACY OF "KAITIAKITANGA"

New Zealand not only captivates with its stunning landscapes but also leads by example in environmental stewardship through the Maori principle of "kaitiakitanga." This deep-rooted respect for the land is woven into the fabric of New Zealand's tourism, which promotes interactions with nature that are respectful and enriching. The country's approach to tourism, emphasizing conservation and cultural immersion, invites visitors to partake in efforts to preserve its natural beauty while experiencing the richness of Maori culture. From participating in tree planting initiatives to engaging with local Maori communities, travelers are encouraged to contribute to the land's regeneration, ensuring that New Zealand's splendor endures for generations to come.

COSTA RICA: THE PIONEERS OF ECO-CONSCIOUS TRAVEL

Costa Rica's reputation as a haven for eco-tourism is evolving into a leading example of regenerative travel. The nation's

commitment to restoring its ecological paradise extends beyond conservation to active regeneration of its natural wonders. Efforts to rehabilitate rainforests, safeguard endangered species, and revive coral reefs are integral to the country's vision. Costa Rica's model of community-



New Zealand



Waterfall in Iceland



Goa

based tourism ensures that the rewards of tourism flow back into local hands, supporting sustainable development and cultural preservation. Through this holistic approach, visitors not only revel in Costa Rica's rich biodiversity but also play a part in its ongoing story of ecological restoration.

SCOTLAND: BLENDING TRADITION WITH ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Scotland is setting the pace for regenerative travel in Europe, marrying its wealth of natural and cultural heritage with forward-thinking conservation strategies. The nation's rewilding projects, aimed at rejuvenating its ancient woodlands and wetlands, demonstrate a commitment to ecological restoration that mirrors its reverence for history and tradition. Scotland's approach extends to nurturing local customs and practices, offering travelers a chance to delve into authentic Scottish experiences. From exploring the rugged Highlands to learning about traditional crafts and folklore, visitors contribute to the vitality of Scotland's communities and the preservation of its landscapes, ensuring the legacy of its natural and cultural treasures thrives.

GOA, INDIA - TRAILBLAZER IN REGENERATIVE TRAVEL

Amidst its renowned beaches and vibrant culture, Goa is emerging as a trailblazer in regenerative travel within India and beyond. The state is leveraging its rich natural and cultural assets to pioneer initiatives that not only mitigate the impacts of tourism but actively contribute to environmental restoration and community empowerment. Its efforts to preserve and celebrate Goan culture and heritage, through community-led tourism experiences, ensure that visitors leave a positive impact. This holistic approach to tourism, which enriches both the traveller and the host community, cements Goa's position as a leader in the global shift towards regenerative travel, showcasing a model that other destinations can aspire to.



Scotland

GOA - AS A CASE STUDY FOR REGENERATIVE TRAVEL

Goa's approach to tourism is embarking on a transformative journey, intertwining the essence of regenerative tourism with a comprehensive roadmap aimed at redefining its tourism landscape. This vision of regenerative tourism positions Goa as a leader in shaping a more sustainable and equitable future for travel.

Taking Regenerative centre stage, the Goa International Travel Mart (GITM) 2024, Suneel Anchipaka, IAS, Director Tourism & Managing Director GTDC, in his keynote address said, "Our commitment to Regenerative Tourism goes beyond mere preservation; it encompasses a holistic approach that seeks to regenerate and rejuvenate our ecosystems, communities, and cultural traditions."

He outlined the tourism blueprint saying, "Our vision for Goa's tourism sector harmonizes with nature, respects local cultures, and fosters meaningful connections between visitors and our communities. By embracing Regenerative Tourism, we not only enhance the visitor experience but also ensure the long-term sustainability of our tourism industry. A notable focus of this year's GITM was on regenerative tourism, a paradigm shift towards sustainable practices that prioritize the restoration and revitalization of local ecosystems and communities. The momentum and

enthusiasm generated by GITM leave me confident that Goa's potential as a premier destination for regenerative tourism will continue to flourish." This strategy is meticulously designed around five core priorities, each contributing significantly to the sustainable and inclusive growth of Goa's tourism sector.

Green Tourism stands at the forefront, focusing on eco-friendly practices that aim to sustain Goa's natural beauty and resilience. This initiative seeks to balance tourism development with environmental preservation, ensuring that Goa remains a vibrant and sustainable destination for generations to come.

Digitalization is identified as a crucial tool in enhancing Goa's tourism competitiveness. By embracing technology, the region is set to improve accessibility, efficiency, and the overall visitor experience, making strides towards a more inclusive and sustainable tourism ecosystem.

Skills Development is another pillar, aiming to equip the youth with the necessary skills for employment and entrepreneurship within the tourism industry. This focus on education and training is expected to catalyze innovation and sustain economic growth, fostering a community that is well-prepared to thrive in the evolving tourism landscape.

Support for Tourism MSMEs underscores the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises, startups, and the private sector in driving innovation and dynamism within the tourism industry. By nurturing these entities, Goa sets the stage for a more vibrant, diverse, and competitive tourism offering.

Lastly, Destination Management takes a holistic view, emphasizing the strategic oversight of tourism destinations to ensure they align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This approach aims to harmonize tourism activities with broader goals of sustainability, community well-being, and environmental protection.

The Goa Tourism Roadmap also aligns with key Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting tourism's potential to contribute positively to decent work and economic growth, innovation and infrastructure, sustainable cities, responsible consumption and production, and fostering partnerships.

An intriguing intersection exists between spiritual tourism and regenerative tourism, with the former playing a pivotal role in fostering a travel ethos that benefits individuals, communities, and the environment. This synergy emphasizes a travel philosophy that not only seeks personal enlightenment but also contributes positively to the regeneration of the destination's social, environmental, and economic fabric.

Through this integrated approach, Goa is not just aiming to preserve its allure as a travel destination but is striving to enrich it, ensuring that tourism acts as a force for good, rejuvenating both the land and its people.

THE ROLE OF TRAVELLERS AND BUSINESSES

The shift towards regenerative travel is not just about destination management but also involves a change in the mindset of travellers and businesses. Travellers are

increasingly seeking meaningful experiences that offer a sense of connection and contribution to the places they visit. In response, businesses are innovating to meet this demand, offering experiences that allow tourists to participate in local conservation projects, cultural workshops, and community development programs.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the transition to regenerative travel presents numerous opportunities for environmental restoration and cultural preservation, it also faces challenges. Balancing the economic benefits of tourism with the need for conservation and community well-being requires careful planning and collaboration among all stakeholders. Moreover, measuring the impact of regenerative practices remains complex, necessitating ongoing research and adaptation.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look to the future, regenerative travel offers a hopeful vision for the tourism industry, one where travel becomes a driving force for positive change. By choosing destinations that prioritize regeneration, supporting businesses that adopt sustainable practices, and engaging in experiences that enrich rather than exploit, travellers can play a crucial role in this global movement. The journey towards regenerative travel is not just about seeing the world; it's about leaving it better than we found it, ensuring that the wonders of our planet remain vibrant for generations to come.



Goa's Charm

ECHOES OF ETERNITY

Journey through India's heritage and sacred sites, where stones whisper ancient tales

TT BUREAU



Ganga Aarti at Varanasi Ghat

Rich in history and spirituality, with a mix of cultures and religions, India casts its spell on seekers of living heritage and sacred sites. Ancient monuments and sacred sites whisper stories from old civilizations, gods and goddesses, and incredible architecture.

"Echoes of Eternity" invites you on a journey to explore some of India's most majestic heritage and sacred sites, where every stone tells a story and every location breathes life into myths and legends.

As we journey through the sacred sites it becomes evident that the heritage sites of India are not merely relics of the past but are vibrant examples of living heritage, deeply ingrained in the life and spirituality of the people. Each of these sacred destinations pulsates with the rhythm of devotion, tradition, and cultural practices that have transcended centuries.

VARANASI: THE SPIRITUAL HEART OF INDIA

Varanasi, one of the world's oldest inhabited cities, is a melting pot of life, death, and rebirth. Situated on the banks of the Ganges River, it is a place where the physical and spiritual worlds intertwine. The Ghats of Varanasi, with their continuous rhythm of life and death, present a unique spectacle to visitors. The Kashi Vishwanath Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, stands as a testament to the city's ancient religious importance. Pilgrims from across the globe come here to wash away their sins in the sacred waters or to cremate their loved ones, hoping for moksha—liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

LIVING HERITAGE

In Varanasi, the spiritual heartbeat of India, the ghats and temples are staged for daily rituals and ceremonies that trace



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Sri Vijaya Vittala temple, Hampi

back millennia, illustrating a continuity of faith and tradition that flows as perennially as the Ganges. Here, life and death dance in an eternal cycle, witnessed by pilgrims and saints who seek solace and salvation in its sacred waters.

THE ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL OF HAMPI

In the southern state of Karnataka lies Hampi, the erstwhile capital of the Vijayanagara Empire, now a UNESCO World Heritage site. The ruins of Hampi, set against a rugged backdrop of boulder-strewn hills, tell the tale of a prosperous city that was once the epicentre of trade and religion. The Virupaksha Temple, dating back to the 7th century, is still an active place of worship and a key attraction. The intricate stone carvings and magnificent architecture of the Vijaya Vittala Temple showcase the advanced craftsmanship of the era. Hampi's landscape, dotted with over 1,600 remains, including temples, palaces, and market streets, offers a surreal experience to its visitors.

LIVING HERITAGE

Hampi, with its ruins whispering tales of grandeur and fall, is still a revered site, hosting vibrant festivals that celebrate the

legacy of the Vijayanagara Empire. The locals' reverence for these ruins and the stories they encapsulate breathes life into the stones, making history tangible.

THE SACRED CITY OF AMRITSAR

Amritsar, home to the Golden Temple, is a city that embodies the spirit and resilience of Sikhism. The Golden Temple, or Harmandir Sahib, is a symbol of brotherhood and equality. Surrounded by a serene lake, the temple's golden facade reflects beautifully, especially at night. It is not just a place of worship but a community kitchen, or Langar, that feeds thousands of people daily, regardless of caste, creed, or religion. The Jallianwala Bagh, a short walk from the temple, is a somber reminder of India's struggle for independence, making Amritsar a city of both spiritual solace and patriotic pride.

LIVING HERITAGE

Amritsar's Golden Temple serves as a luminous beacon of Sikh faith and community, embodying the principles of service and equality. It's not just a monument but a living,



Golden Temple, Amritsar



Alipura Village, Khajuraho

breathing centre of spirituality and hospitality, where the Langar feeds thousands daily, continuing a centuries-old tradition of communal harmony.

THE TIMELESS APPEAL OF KHAJURAHO

The Khajuraho Group of Monuments in Madhya Pradesh is famous for its nagara-style architectural symbolism and its erotic sculptures. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Khajuraho was built between the 10th and 12th centuries by the Chandela dynasty and originally consisted of 85 temples, of which only about 20 have survived the ravages of time.

The temples are renowned for their intricate sculptures and carvings that celebrate human form and emotion in its most candid forms. The temples are divided into three complexes - Western, Eastern, and Southern, with the Western complex being the most famous. The Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is the largest and most ornate temple in Khajuraho.

LIVING HERITAGE

The erotic sculptures and temples of Khajuraho are a testament to the ancient Indian ethos of celebrating life in all its facets. They remain sites of worship and cultural festivals, demonstrating how the sacred and the sensual coexist, offering insights into a philosophy that sees divinity in all aspects of existence.

THE MYSTICAL CALL OF BODH GAYA

Bodh Gaya, a small town in Bihar, is one of the most sacred Buddhist sites in the world. It is here, under the Bodhi Tree, that Prince Siddhartha attained enlightenment and became Buddha. The Mahabodhi Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site, marks this hallowed spot and is a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists from around the world.

The temple's architecture is a splendid example of Indian brickwork and has been highly influential in the development of later architectural traditions. Surrounding the temple are numerous other monasteries and temples, built by various Buddhist countries, each adding to the serene and contemplative atmosphere of Bodh Gaya.



Mahabodhi Temple



Mehrangarh Fort

LIVING HERITAGE

Bodh Gaya stands as a serene witness to the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama. It is a global pilgrimage site, where monks, nuns, and laypeople gather to meditate and study. The Bodhi Tree, under which enlightenment was attained, is a living link to this pivotal moment in history, making Bodh Gaya a living bridge between the past and the present, the human and the divine.

RAJASTHAN'S MEHRANGARH FORT: A CITADEL OF CULTURE AND HISTORY

Perched on a rocky cliff 400 feet above the city of Jodhpur, Mehrangarh Fort stands as a testament to the architectural brilliance and the rich history of Rajasthan. This formidable fortress, built in 1459 by Rao Jodha, dominates the city's skyline and offers breathtaking views of the blue houses below.

Within its thick, impregnable walls lie palaces adorned with intricate carvings, expansive courtyards, and a remarkable collection of royal artefacts housed in the fort's museum. Mehrangarh Fort is a heritage fort and a cultural hub that hosts festivals, concerts, and art exhibitions, bringing the vibrant traditions of Rajasthan to life.

LIVING HERITAGE

Mehrangarh Fort in Rajasthan is not merely an architectural marvel; it's a living testament to the Rajput era's glory, culture, and valour. This historic fortress continues to be a centre of

cultural vitality in Jodhpur, hosting an array of festivals, such as the Rajasthan International Folk Festival, which celebrates the rich musical traditions of the region.

Its museum, one of the most well-stocked in Rajasthan, brings to life centuries-old stories through an extensive collection of palanquins, costumes, paintings, and armoury. The fort's continued relevance in the cultural and social life of Jodhpur, along with its enduring beauty and historical significance, exemplifies living heritage, where the past seamlessly blends with the present, making it a sacred site for not only its architectural grandeur but also its cultural vibrancy.

KERALA'S BACKWATERS: A SERENE JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

Kerala's backwaters, a network of interconnected canals, rivers, lakes, and inlets, offer a serene and sublime experience that is quintessentially Indian yet uniquely Keralite. This intricate waterway system, set against the backdrop of lush palm-fringed landscapes, has been the lifeline of the local communities for centuries. A journey through the backwaters on a traditional houseboat, known as a "Kettuvallam," unveils the everyday life of the people living along the banks, showcasing a blend of culture, cuisine, and history that has evolved around these waters. The backwaters are a living heritage, where the rhythm of life moves to the gentle flow of water, offering a tranquil escape into nature's lap.

LIVING HERITAGE

The backwaters of Kerala represent a unique living heritage, encapsulating the essence of life in southern India. This

network of waterways is integral to the local communities' daily routines, serving as avenues for transport, fishing, and agriculture. The traditional houseboats that glide along these waters are a testament to age-old shipbuilding skills passed down through generations. Moreover, the backwaters are central to the state's ecological system, supporting a diverse range of flora and fauna. The harmonious coexistence of humans with nature observed here is a sacred legacy, highlighting a way of life that respects and relies on the natural world. As visitors journey through these tranquil waters, they witness a lifestyle that has sustained and thrived in these parts for centuries, making Kerala's backwaters a sacred site of living heritage in the truest sense.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE SOUL OF INDIA

India's sacred sites are a testament to the country's architectural brilliance and spiritual depth. They are also a mirror reflecting the diverse tapestry of beliefs, traditions, and cultures that have thrived in this land for centuries. Exploring these sites offers a glimpse into the soul of India—a journey through time that brings to life the echoes of eternity. From the ghats of Varanasi, the ruins of Hampi, the golden allure of Amritsar, and the erotic sculptures of Khajuraho, to the serene enlightenment of Bodh Gaya, each destination leaves an indelible mark on the traveller, inviting them to delve deeper into India's mystical past and vibrant present.

These destinations exemplify how India's heritage sites are not just historical landmarks but are integral to the living fabric of the country's diverse cultural and spiritual identity, making them truly sacred.



Kerala's Backwaters



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

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

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

BENEFITS AVAILABLE/SALIENT FEATURES:

- Exemption from various Central & State duties & taxes.
- Single window clearance concept.
- Proximity to two major ports, viz., Kandla Port & Mundra Port.
- Well connected to NH 8-A, Railway Station- 2km away.
- Un-interrupted Power Supply and water supply
- Round the clock security by Ex-servicemen.
- Installation of Software based LED streets lights
- Single point entry and exit
- 24x7 Customs clearance at doorstep

COMPLETE EXEMPTION FROM :-

1. All customs duties levied upon all imported goods.
2. Both basic custom duty as well as IGST on goods for development, maintenance and authorized operation of SEZ units.
3. Stamp duty levied on lease deed and other documents from SEZ units.
4. GST on goods brought from Domestic Tariff Area to a SEZ unit.
5. GST on services provided to SEZ units consumed within SEZ

More than 25 Ready to move Factory Buildings & Warehouses are available in Kandla SEZ, Vacant land/plots are available in Adani Port SEZ, Sterling SEZ, Dahej SEZ and other SEZs in Gujarat. Kandla SEZ also Notifies available space from time to time on website.

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THE HEART OF MANIPUR WEDDING VOWS

Manipur weddings, a blend of rich traditions and vibrant celebrations, showcase the cultural heritage of Northeast India's gem

TT BUREAU



Manipur Wedding Couple

The wedding traditions in Manipur are truly magical. From the betel leaf and betel nut to the Potloi dress, every part of a Manipur wedding is designed to amaze and delight you. These traditions showcase the rich culture of Manipur and its people.

Manipur, tucked away in Northeast India, is a region that celebrates weddings with a unique cultural identity, keeping alive traditions, and contemporary mores. These celebrations are lively and colourful, showcasing the region's traditions through a series of rituals before and after the wedding.

In Manipur, people usually marry within their community, but marriages outside the community are also accepted. The process of finding a spouse often starts with the potential bride and groom meeting. A popular time for young men and women to meet potential life partners is at the grand New Year Festival, offering a perfect setting to find someone special.

Here wedding traditions, weddings are viewed as sacred moments where two individuals come together to enrich each other's existence with joy and vibrancy. The term "luhongba," used by the Manipuri or Meitei community, refers to marriage, symbolizing the deep connection and unity of heart between a man and a woman.

The Meitei community remains faithful to their ancestral customs, untouched by Western or contemporary influences. This adherence enhances the beauty of their culture and showcases its unadulterated essence.

PRE-WEDDING RITUALS

Manipur weddings are of two types: elopements and arranged marriages. They mostly have the same rituals, but the beginnings are a bit different. In an elopement, three, five, or seven men from the groom's family go to the bride's family to let them know their son has chosen their daughter. After telling the bride's family, the bride is brought to the groom's house. Later, she goes out with the older women of the groom's family.

The main difference between an elopement and an arranged marriage is how the bride and groom come together. In an elopement, the bride and groom choose each other. In an arranged marriage, families do the planning as usual.

The groom's family visits the bride's family three times until they agree on a wedding date. Both families also decide what gifts to give to the Pala, the woman who sings religious songs at the wedding. Let's explore more pre-wedding ceremonies of Manipur Wedding:

HINABA

Hinaba is the first step in a traditional or arranged Meitei wedding. It's when the bride's and groom's parents meet for the first time. During this meeting, they compare the bride's and groom's horoscopes to set a wedding date. After everything is agreed upon, the families decide to meet again later.

YATHANG THANAGA & WARAI POT PUBA

During the Yathang Thanaga, the bride's family, usually her parents, go to the groom's house to officially say yes to the wedding. After that, the Waraipot Puba happens when the groom's family visits the bride's family to return the respect and happiness. Both of these events usually involve sharing food and gifts.

HEJIAPOT

The Hejiapot ceremony is like the official engagement in Meitei culture. In this event, the groom's family brings food, gifts, fruits, jewellery, and clothes to the bride's house, along with the rings for both the bride and groom. However, unlike typical engagements, the bride and groom don't meet each other before the wedding day. Only the families' elders take part in the Hejiapot celebration.

Once the ceremony is done, a priest sets the wedding date. The groom's family then leaves, and in the evening, the Hejiapot turns into a celebration where the bride enjoys a party with her family and friends.

WEDDING CUSTOMS

Following the pre-wedding ceremonies and the setting of the wedding date, the traditional Manipur wedding then

begins with much joy and celebration. Let's explore further the traditional wedding rituals of Manipur Wedding:

BOR BATON & LEILENGA

This part is about inviting the groom to the traditional Manipur wedding. The bride's brother does this by giving the groom a special garland called Pana Kwa, made from betel leaves, betel nuts, and banana leaves, all tied together with a white cloth. This happens at the groom's house. At the same time, at the bride's house, there's a different ceremony called Leilenga.

Here, the bride makes two flower garlands - one for herself and one for the groom, with the help of a priest who says prayers for a happy marriage. The flowers used are called Kundo. After making these garlands, the bride has her last lunch at home with her parents.



Bor Baton Ceremony



Leilenga Ceremony



Wedding Ceremony

LUHONGBA (WEDDING DAY)

Manipur weddings are held at the bride's home. The ceremony starts when the groom and his relatives arrive and are welcomed by three elder women from the bride's side. They receive a welcome of betel leaves and betel nuts presented on a banana leaf. The special area for the wedding called the mandap, is set up around a tulsi (holy basil) plant, and the entire ceremony revolves around this plant. The groom first sits with the priest for prayers, and then the bride joins later.

During the ceremony, the bride and groom hold hands, and the bride's mother ties their hands together with a thread as a blessing. She then blesses them with a plate containing a coconut, banana, and betel leaves and nuts. After this, other family elders bless the couple and may also give them money. The bride walks around the groom seven times, and then they exchange garlands.

POST-WEDDING TRADITIONS IN MANIPUR WEDDING

Phamnando: The bride brings a single and a double bed to her new home with her in-laws. Her uncle touches the single bed, wishing her a joyful and fruitful life. She then sits on the bed while the elders bless her.

Mangani Chakouba/Chaoba: This traditional wedding reception happens 5 days after the wedding at the bride's family home. It's a feast to celebrate the new union.

WEDDING ATTIRE AT TRADITIONAL MANIPUR WEDDING

For her wedding, the bride dresses in a traditional "Rasleela outfit", reflecting the deep devotion to Radha and Krishna shared by many. The "Potloi", a drum-shaped bridal dress



Wedding Attire

notable for its religious embroidery crafted by skilled artisans, carries great cultural significance. In modern times, many brides choose to rent the "Potloi" and accompanying jewellery, though some opt to create their own sets. The bride's ensemble includes a long necklace called "Likhom", and she also wears two sets of "Merei", which are essential to her attire. Additionally, a traditional headgear is a must for the brides.

The groom's attire is more understated, consisting of a simple dhoti and kurta, complemented by a turban and a plain white shawl, symbolizing purity and calmness. Experiencing a Manipur wedding, with all its rituals and celebrations, is like going through a series of wonderful moments that will stay with you as cherished memories.



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GEMS OF GRACE



Woman with Traditional Karnataka Jewellery

Handcrafted with love and passed down through generations, traditional Karnataka jewellery is a treasure of prosperity, pride, and identity

TT BUREAU

Karnataka's traditional jewellery is not just beautiful; it's a symbol of the region's long history and creativity. Known for detailed designs that never go out of style, Karnataka's jewellery includes everything from the grand 'Mangalorean Bunt' necklaces to the pretty 'Kasu Malai' chains. Each of these traditional gold jewellery designs tells a story from the past, showing what's important to the culture.

These pieces are made using old methods that have been taught from one generation to the next. They represent wealth, pride, and who people are in Karnataka, far beyond being mere accessories. This jewellery captures the heart of

traditional Indian jewellery and highlights the skill of local artists, making it special for both those who know a lot about jewellery and those who are just starting to learn in Bengaluru Karnataka's rich centres of jewellery making/.

For example, a bride from the Mangalore Bunt community treasures her gold jewellery set, which includes various necklaces and 'balais' (bangles).

These items are carefully made with designs that take inspiration from nature and include symbols that are meant to bring good luck to the bride as she starts a new part of her life. Here's a look at the jewellery that celebrates Karnataka's traditions:

KASINA SARA AND MISRI MALA

The Kasina Sara is a necklace made from coins, and the Misri Mala is a similar coin necklace but with a stamp or embossing of Lakshmi on it. This type of necklace is a staple in South Indian jewellery collections and goes by different names in various states. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, it's called Kasulaperu; in Tamil Nadu, it's known as Kasumalai; and in Kerala, people refer to it as Kasumala.

HAVALAKKI SARA

The Havalakki Sara, also known as Avalakki Sara, is a traditional South Indian necklace designed to resemble flattened rice or poha. It's a popular piece of wedding jewellery among



Lakshmi Sara

brides in South Karnataka. This necklace is not just famous in Karnataka but also in other states. In Maharashtra, it's referred to as Poha Haar, and in Kerala, it goes by the name Avilmala. It's a cherished part of traditional jewellery collections, especially for Kannadiga brides.

MALLIGE SARA/MALLIMOGGU SARA

The Mallige Sara, also called Mallimoggu Sara, is a necklace designed to look like jasmine buds. It can be made of plain gold or decorated with precious stones such as rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. In Kerala, this necklace is known as Mullamottu Mala.

LAKSHMI SARA

The Lakshmi Sara is a special necklace that brides in Karnataka wear to represent and seek the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi for their new life. It comes in different styles, including a



Misri Mala

Lakshmi choker, a long Lakshmi haaram, and a Lakshmi Kasina Sara. This necklace is a key piece in a traditional Karnataka bridal collection. In other states, it's known by names like Lakshmi Mala, Lakshmi Malai, and Lakshmi Haar.

GILOLA SARA

Gili Ole refers to earrings adorned with rubies and pearls, arranged to depict parrots, complemented by three jhumka (bell-shaped) dangles. Matching these earrings, the Gilola Sara is a necklace richly embellished with precious stones and pearls, also fashioned in the shape of parrots.

This distinctive set of necklaces and earrings captures the essence of traditional Karnataka culture. In Kannada, 'Gili' translates to 'parrot,' and 'Ole' signifies 'danglers,' making Gili Ole synonymous with parrot danglers.



Gilola Sara



Kokkethathi Necklace

KOKKETHATHI NECKLACE

Kokkethathi is a traditional bridal necklace, featuring a pendant shaped like a half-moon, worn by Coorgi or Kodava brides. This distinct necklace, also known as Kokkethathi, is deeply embedded in the rich and ritualistic traditions of Coorgi jewellery, making it a popular choice among brides from other Kannadiga communities as well.

PAVAN SARA

The Pavan Sara is a necklace made up of coin-shaped trinkets arranged in a specific pattern. This style of necklace is also well-liked in Kerala, where it's known as Panamala. Nowadays, there are many modern designs and arrangements, but the traditional Pavan Sara remains a favourite among Kannadiga brides and women.

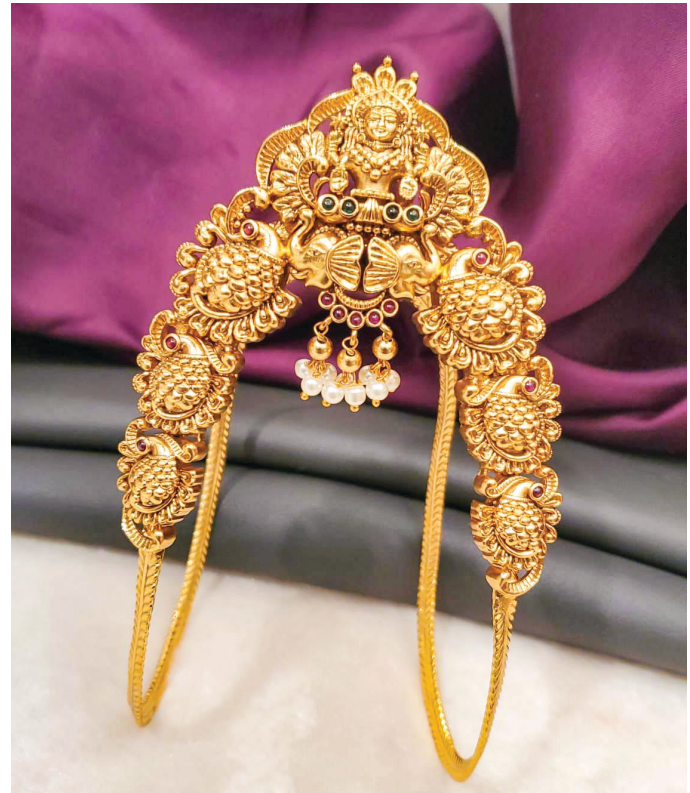
THOLU BANDHI

Tholu Bandhi is an ornate forearm bracelet cherished by Karnataka women and traditionally worn on special occasions. This exquisite piece features a central peacock motif, often accompanied by figures of gods, enhancing its spiritual and aesthetic appeal.

Extending from both ends of the central design, chains lead to a secure locking mechanism, ensuring a snug and comfortable fit. Its intricate craftsmanship and symbolic design make it a staple of ceremonial attire.

ENTELE SARA

The Entele Sara is a precious piece of heritage jewellery that holds a special place in the hearts of brides from South Karnataka, especially among those belonging to the Tuluva,



Tholu Bandhi

Bunt, or Mangalorean communities. This beautiful necklace is designed with several layers of gold chains, giving it a rich and elegant look.

It's a symbol of tradition and is cherished on special occasions like weddings. In the northern parts of India, a necklace with a similar layered design is known as a Rani Haar, which translates to "queen's necklace," highlighting its regal charm.

KOKKETHATHI

Kokkethathi, characterized by its unique half-moon-shaped pendant that hangs on a necklace, is a traditional piece of bridal jewellery cherished by Coorgi or Kodava brides. Known by the same name, Kokkethathi, this necklace embodies the rich and ritualistic traditions of Coorgi jewellery design, making it a sought-after choice among brides from other Kannadiga communities as well.

KUKKUMIDI SARA

The Kukkumudi Sara is a quintessential piece of traditional Karnataka jewellery, revered for its unique design and cultural significance. This exquisite necklace is crafted with intricate detailing, often featuring a blend of vibrant colours and motifs that reflect the rich heritage of the region. Symbolizing beauty and tradition, the Kukkumudi Sara is a cherished adornment among women, especially during festive occasions and weddings, adding a touch of elegance and tradition to their attire.

MUTHINA VOLE JHIMIKI

The Muthina Vole Jhimiki is an emblematic traditional piece of Karnataka jewellery, distinguished by its elaborate

craftsmanship. These are ornate earrings made with pearls (muthu means pearl in Kannada), often embellished with gold and precious stones to create intricate designs. Symbolic of elegance and sophistication, the Muthina Vole Jhimiki is a favoured accessory for women in Karnataka, adorning their ears during weddings, festivals, and other auspicious occasions, showcasing the region's rich cultural heritage.

KARTHAMANI PATHAK

The Karthamani Pathak stands as a testament to the rich cultural tapestry of Karnataka, embodying the traditional jewellery craftsmanship of the region. This venerable piece, often worn around the waist, is meticulously crafted from gold and adorned with intricate designs and precious stones. Serving both as a symbol of marital status and a piece of ceremonial adornment, the Karthamani Pathak is cherished by women, especially during significant events like weddings and religious ceremonies.

JADAENAGARA

Jadaenagara is a traditional piece of Karnataka jewellery that plays a crucial role in the bridal ensemble. This ornamental hair accessory is designed to adorn the braids of brides, adding a majestic touch to their overall appearance. Crafted with gold and often embellished with colourful gemstones, Jadaenagara reflects the craftsmanship and cultural heritage of Karnataka. It symbolizes beauty and grace, making it an essential element of the bridal trousseau in Karnataka weddings.

GURUVINA KADA

Guruvina Kada is a bracelet that holds deep cultural significance. Crafted with precision and care, this gold bangle is often intricately designed, featuring symbols and motifs that pay homage to spiritual and natural elements. It's not just a piece of jewellery; it's a wearable symbol of respect and devotion, reflecting the rich traditions and values of Karnataka. Worn by both men and women, Guruvina Kada is a cherished emblem of heritage and faith.



Muthina Vole Jhimiki

KASINA BALE

Kasina Bale is renowned for its elegant and timeless design. These are gold bangles that embody the essence of Karnataka's rich cultural heritage, often intricately crafted with exquisite patterns and sometimes studded with precious stones. Kasina Bale is a symbol of prosperity and grace, worn by women as a mark of their cultural identity and during important life events, making it a treasured adornment in Karnataka's traditional attire.

MOOGUTHI

This gold nose piece comes in various designs, from understated studs to ornate versions decorated with gems. More than just a decorative item, Mooguthi signifies femininity and, often, marital status, making it a cherished symbol across generations of women. It holds a special place in their traditional wardrobe, reflecting their heritage and identity.

PADASARA

Typically worn around the ankles, this ornamental piece beautifully captures the essence of Karnataka's rich cultural heritage through its intricate gold craftsmanship. Designed to chime melodically with every step, Padasara is not only a symbol of elegance and grace but also an auditory delight, adding a rhythmic beauty to the wearer's presence. It's a cherished accessory, especially during festive and ceremonial occasions.

These timeless pieces, from elegant bangles to intricate nose rings, not only adorn but also celebrate Karnataka's traditions, making them cherished heirlooms that connect generations and embody the spirit of its people.



Jadaenagara

SCENT OF HERITAGE - THE STORY OF ITTAR

The essence of Ittar, an ancient perfume craft captures the soul of heritage in each drop

TT BUREAU



Petals are a Critical Essential Oil Base Used in Perfume Making

This is the world of Ittar, also known as Attar, a type of traditional perfume extracted from flowers, herbs, and spices, which has been cherished for centuries for its natural, enduring essence. Unlike contemporary fragrances that rely heavily on synthetic components, Ittar is crafted through a meticulous, ancient process that distills the very soul of nature into a form that can be worn and cherished.

The legacy of Ittar is as rich and diverse as the cultures that have nurtured it. Originating from the ancient lands of Persia, Ittar found its way into the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, and beyond, weaving its aromatic presence into the rituals, traditions, and daily lives of countless generations. This art, passed down through generations, symbolizes more

than just the mastery of perfume making; it embodies the connection between humanity and the natural world, a testament to the human desire to capture and hold onto the ephemeral beauty of nature.

We delve into the heart of Ittar, exploring its historical journey, the traditional methods of its creation, and the unique place it holds in the heritage of various cultures. From the bazaars of Istanbul to the flower fields of Kannauj in India, we trace the footprint of this ancient art, uncovering the stories and secrets that have kept it alive through millennia.

HISTORY

The people who lived in the Indus Valley Civilisation were the first to produce attars. This civilization was one of the three



great cradles of civilization, along with ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Culturally and historically, the people who lived in an area that included the majority of what is now Pakistan and India are considered to have been Indians. These early civilizations were among the first to distil and produce attar. And despite the fact that the name ittar was eventually adopted by the civilizations of Persia and Arab countries, its roots remain firmly anchored in the taxonomy and culture of India.

The Mughal Empire, a Turco-Mongol monarchy that existed in India and was culturally Persian, was responsible for propelling the production of attar to the forefront of worldwide significance in 1526. Passionate about scent, the Mughal emperors and princes supervised the blossoming of a golden period of ittar-making that survived the Mughal Empire itself, which came to an end more than three centuries later in 1857.

At the end of the day, then, despite the fact that the custom of manufacturing attars is deeply rooted in Indian culture, it was the influence of the Persian culture of the Mughal Empire that led to the expansion of ittar making beyond the boundaries of India herself.

Since the Mughal rulers lavished power and fame on the local Indian attar producers, they are credited with bringing about a golden period in the history of ittar production.

THE MAKING OF ITTAR

Elites of the Mughal dynasty in India were among the first consumers of essential oils. After the Mughal monarchy fell into disarray in the 18th century, the Nawabs took control of Awadh and established themselves as its new rulers. It is said that the late Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was a talented Kathak dancer.

During the time of the Nawab, the arts and crafts community in the city of Lucknow, which is the capital of India's Awadh region, thrived. It is reported that he worked up a lot of sweat while practising his dance, which is why he would put the henna attar. Awadh was instrumental in advancing agricultural practices and Ittar handicrafts, both of which have persisted to the present day.

Making an Ittar in the traditional manner requires a great deal of expertise and information, and since the Indians have been doing it for more than five thousand years, they are the undisputed leaders in this field. Kannauj, which is located in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and serves as the state capital, is widely regarded as the birthplace of the art of ittar production.

Ittar manufacturers situated in Kannauj have a long history of dealing with Middle Eastern countries and have provided ittars to the princes of the Mughal Empire for more than three centuries. Kannauj is appropriately referred to as the Grasse of the Ittar World because it is bordered by silt-rich fields and valleys that support the growth of an astonishing variety of exotic flowers, scented grasses, roses, and herbs.

Traditional deg - Copper stills, sometimes known as degs, are used throughout the process. Since the dawn of time, degs have been an essential component in the production of organic fragrance oils via the use of time-honoured methods. Copper metal is used to construct degs, which also have an aperture that may accommodate connections to either one or two recipients.

BHAPKA OR RECEIVER - Copper is used in the construction of the Bhapka, which has a spherical form and a long neck. It is also known as a "receiver." The receiver is expected to maintain a connection with the deg via the use of chonga while the

attar is being crafted. In the regional language, it is known as bhapka, and it also performs the function of a condenser.

BHATTI OR FURNACE - Bricks and clay are often utilised in the construction of traditional bhatti, which ittar artisans use. During the procedure, wood or coal is most often used to heat the environment.

GACHCHI - The Bhapka, also known as the receiver, is stored in a chilled water tank, and the tank's job is to cool the distillate down to a temperature of.

KUPPI - Kuppi is a leather bottle manufactured in the traditional way in Japan. Ittars may be dehumidified in these bottles using the appropriate method.

Resins and gums are two examples of substances that can't be extracted by the use of steam or water but may be used in the production of ittars. When this occurs, the substance is heated until it generates fluid tears. These fluid tears are scraped from the inside of the warmed deg and then combined with sandalwood oil. After that, the attars are powdered, cleaned, preserved, and developed in the same manner as conventional floral ittars.

It is said that certain civilizations have held the belief that ittars had the power to fend off bad spirits while also attracting angels. This belief dates back thousands of years. Saints and other spiritual seekers used to decorate themselves with these fragrances so that they might progress more quickly down the path leading to enlightenment.

Offerings made in homes and temples are considered forms of devotion for the many sects that make up Hinduism. Ittars are often used inside the offerings of incense and food that are given to deities. This has been nature's timeless gift to us from the natural world.

WHERE TO BUY

Small shops located all around India, as well as Amazon and other online retailers that focus only on the production of ittars, are good places to look for ittars to purchase. Despite this, the best spot to get ittar is in the Indian town of Kannauj, which is also the only town in India where attars are produced.

The journey from the ancient Indus Valley to the Mughal courts and beyond highlights Ittar's rich tapestry woven through history, culture, and artistry. This aromatic legacy, deeply rooted in Indian soil yet influenced by Persian sophistication, showcases a blend of tradition and craftsmanship, marking Ittar as more than just a fragrance.

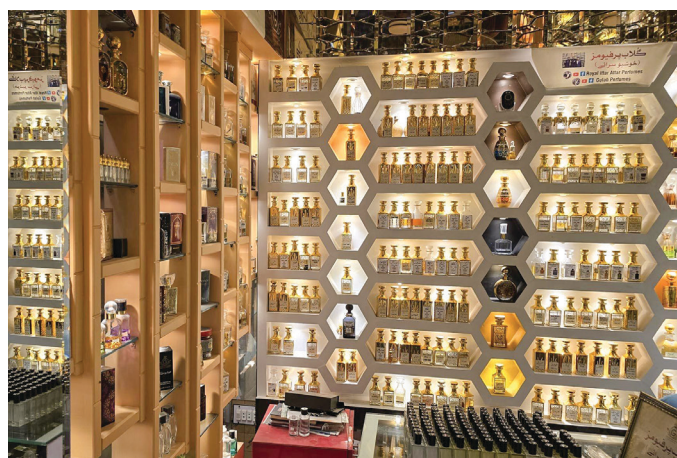
It embodies the essence of cultural heritage, the finesse of distillation art, and the timeless allure of nature's scents. As Ittar continues to be celebrated and cherished in modern times, its story—a blend of history, culture, and skilled artistry—remains a testament to the enduring



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RETREAT FROM THE HEAT

Explore India's hill destinations, which offer unforgettable escapes into nature, breathtaking views, serene landscapes, and adventure

TT BUREAU

As summer heats up, India's hill stations emerge as sanctuaries of untouched beauty and tranquillity, making them the ultimate retreats for nature lovers and adventurers alike. These elevated escapes provide a cool respite from the lowland heat.

This time of the year is particularly magical in the hills, where the climate is pleasant, and the landscapes are lush and inviting. It's an opportune moment to explore the outdoors, with the weather perfectly balanced between the chill of winter and the warmth of summer.

Hill destinations like the misty heights of Darjeeling, the rolling tea gardens of Munnar, and the rugged terrain of Ladakh offer a blend of breathtaking vistas, rich cultural heritage, and exhilarating experiences. This season beckons travellers to delve into the heart of India's hill stations, each promising a unique journey through serene nature, vibrant cultures, and unforgettable adventures.

Explore the enchanting beauty of these hill destinations, where every turn reveals a new panorama and every moment is a memory in the making.

BIR

At the Himalayan foothills in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district, the scenic Greater Bir area, including Billing, Chowgan, and Ghornala, is a haven for eco-tourism and meditation enthusiasts. Bir offers a plethora of activities for every kind of traveller, making it an ideal hill destination in India.

Adventure seekers can enjoy world-class paragliding in Billing, while nature lovers can explore tea gardens and visit Tibetan monasteries. Bir is committed to eco-tourism and voluntourism, providing numerous opportunities for visitors to learn about ecology and meditation or volunteer in the community. Easily accessible by bus or taxi from Dharamshala Airport or Pathankot railway station, Bir is a must-visit for eco-conscious travellers in the spring.

TAWANG

Tawang, a place of both spiritual significance and natural splendour, provides countless reasons for a visit. Accessible via the Sela Pass, the only high-altitude motorable mountain pass, it offers stunning panoramic views. Home to the largest Buddhist monastery in India, the Tawang Monastery

Chokling Monastery, Bir





Tulip Garden, Gulmarg

is revered globally by Buddhists. Known as the land of 101 lakes, Tawang holds sacred status among Buddhist followers.

For those drawn to nature and spiritual exploration, Tawang is a prime hill destination in India. The closest airport and railway station are located in Tezpur, with road access to Tawang available.

YUMTHANG VALLEY

Situated in Sikkim's North Sikkim district, the Yumthang Valley, often referred to as the Valley of Flowers (distinct from Uttarakhand's Valley of Flowers), is celebrated for its extensive fields of rhododendrons, poppies, primulas, and other wildflowers.

Due to its proximity to the Indo-China border, visitors must obtain entry permits from Gangtok beforehand. The journey to the valley from Lachung takes about 1.5 hours, with Lachung itself being approximately 7 hours from Gangtok. Blooming in full glory during April and May, Yumthang Valley ranks as a top destination for springtime visits in India.

GULMARG

Located within the Pir Panjal range in the Himalayas, Gulmarg lies in the Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir. It's celebrated as India's winter sports capital, offering a variety of activities such as skiing, tobogganing, snowboarding,



Yumthang Valley

and heli-skiing. The Gulmarg Gondola is among the world's highest cable cars.

For those seeking to escape the intense heat of April and May, Gulmarg presents an ideal springtime retreat, making it a top choice for a cool and adventurous getaway in India.

SANDAKPHU

Sandakphu, the tallest peak in West Bengal, sits close to Singalila National Park and offers unparalleled views of Kanchenjunga. Its unique appeal lies in providing clear vistas of four of the world's highest peaks: Everest, Kanchenjunga, Makalu, and Lhotse, making it a dream destination for trekkers.

The journey to Sandakphu and Phalut is considered a trekker's haven, thanks to the stunning views and verdant surroundings. For trekking enthusiasts, Sandakphu represents one of the most scenic destinations to explore in spring in India. Treks to Sandakphu begin from Manebhanjan, which is just an hour's drive from Darjeeling.

MUNNAR

Munnar, located in the Western Ghats of Kerala, blooms into a mesmerizing beauty in spring. This hill station becomes a sea of green, punctuated by vibrant floral hues as the tea plantations and exotic flora come to life.



Sandakphu Trekking



Munnar

The cool climate and misty hills offer a perfect retreat from the heat, making Munnar an ideal hill destination. Its serene landscapes and tranquil ambience attract visitors seeking peace and natural beauty.

SHILLONG

Shillong, often referred to as the Scotland of the East, transforms into a vibrant canvas in spring, with rhododendrons and orchids adorning its landscape. This season brings out the city's ethereal beauty, with lush green hills and crystal-clear lakes under the soft, warm sunlight.

Shillong's cool, pleasant climate and breathtaking views make it a perfect hill destination for those seeking nature's tranquillity and an escape from bustling city life.

MAHABALESHWAR

Formerly the summer retreat of the Bombay province, Mahabaleshwar is a plateau encircled by valleys, showcasing breathtaking views of its verdant surroundings. Renowned as the origin of the Krishna River and six other rivers, it's a place steeped in natural beauty.

Visitors can enjoy day trips to nearby attractions like Raigad, Pratapgad, Wai, Lingmala Waterfalls, and Venna Lake. Situated 160 km from Mumbai and 260 km from Pune, Mahabaleshwar ranks among top hill destination in India, offering a refreshing escape with its cool climate and scenic landscapes.

ARAKU VALLEY

Araku Valley, a hidden gem among hill stations, is nestled in the Eastern Ghats and home to indigenous tribes. It stands out as a popular destination in Andhra Pradesh, particularly noted for its coffee plantations. Visitors to Araku should not miss the tribal museum, Borra caves, and Ananthagiri Hills for a full experience of the area's natural and cultural wealth. Accessible from Visakhapatnam, which has frequent bus services to the valley, Araku offers a unique blend of scenic beauty and cultural exploration.

GANGTOK

If you're a flower enthusiast, spring in Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, is a paradise. The city bursts into colour with flowers blooming in every corner, complemented by crystal-clear skies that provide stunning views of the Himalayan peaks. This season transforms Gangtok into a perfect spot for those who love nature and seek adventure, offering a blend of floral beauty and mountainous landscapes in a serene and inviting atmosphere.

DARJEELING

Darjeeling, once the British Raj's summer capital, is now a popular hill station in West Bengal. It's perfect for escaping the heat. The train ride from the plains to over 2,000 meters up gives stunning mountain views. Darjeeling is also known for its tea, with more than 86 estates producing the famous 'Darjeeling Tea'.

You can see Kanchenjunga, the world's third-highest and India's highest peak, for a breathtaking view. The ideal time to visit is from April to June when the weather is nice.

UTTARAKHAND VALLEY OF FLOWERS

Spring is the ideal season to visit this location, which does require some hiking to reach. However, the effort is quickly rewarded as you are greeted by breathtaking scenery that makes any concerns fade away. The trek itself offers an unparalleled sense of exhilaration, unlike anything you've experienced before. Additionally, the chance to encounter rare plants and animals along the way ensures a continuously engaging and memorable adventure.

India's hill destinations offer a spectacular array of experiences, from the floral wonders of Gangtok to the wildlife-rich landscapes of Ranthambore. Embracing these places during spring provides not just a visual feast but a deep connection with nature's renewal. Each location promises unique adventures, making spring the perfect time to explore India's diverse beauty.



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SURFING PARADISES IN INDIA

Discover the best surf spots in India, where the waves whisper tales of adventure and the sea becomes your playground

TT BUREAU



Surfing Experience in Mahabalipuram

India's coast stretches over 7,000 kilometres (4,349 miles), and much of it hasn't been checked out for surfing spots yet. Given its vast coastline along the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Bay of Bengal, and with no land between southern India and Antarctica, it's almost certain there are amazing waves to be found when the weather's right.

You can find 3 to 5-foot waves in India all year, but the best time for big waves (over 8 feet) is from May to September, during the pre-monsoon and monsoon seasons. Then, waves can hit 8 to 15 feet or more. Sometimes the sea is rough, but on good days, you'll see some top-notch, smooth waves with winds blowing offshore.

The Indian coast is known for its long, straight beaches, where you can enjoy regular beach waves that are great on small days but close out in bigger swells. And there's no shortage of bays, coves, and points along the coast, many of which have never been surfed.

From October to December, the large swells calm down to normal (3 to 5 feet). From January to April, there might be bigger swells on both coasts, sometimes reaching 6 to 7 feet, thanks to small storms. Discover the following captivating surf spots in India for an exhilarating adventure:

MAHABALIPURAM, TAMIL NADU

Just a 20-minute drive along the coast from Tamil Nadu, you'll find Mahabalipuram (also known as Mamallapuram), famous for its right-hand point breaks near the Shore Temple. These waves are shaped by a bunch of boulders placed around the temple, which stick out into the Bay of Bengal to prevent the temple from falling into the sea. Mahabalipuram is also a hotspot for backpackers.

Keep in mind that the waves change with the sand's position and tend to be flat in October and November. The real action starts in May when the beach sand shifts to form a sandbank, leading to no point break until then. June and July are prime times for perfect waves, which usually last until the end of September.

COVELONG/KOVALAM VILLAGE, TAMIL NADU

Just an hour south of Chennai, you'll find Covelong (also called Kovalam), a fishing village that has turned into a surfing hotspot. This place is known for its vibrant surfing community, some of India's top surfers, and very consistent waves. You can enjoy both beach and reef breaks here, with right-hand breakpoints that are probably the most reliable on the mainland.

Every August, Covelong hosts the Covelong Point Surf, Music & Yoga Festival, where you can even get free surfing lessons. It's the most famous surf spot in India, not necessarily because it has the best waves, but because it offers affordable hotels and cool spots to chill if you're on holiday. Plus, the surfing conditions are pretty good most of the time.

GOA

Goa is more famous for its parties than its surfing. But if we were to name the top surfing spot in India, Goa would be it. This small state is known worldwide for its beautiful beaches. When it comes to surfing, its west-facing coast catches regular 3 to 5-foot waves during the monsoon season.

The northern beaches are great for beginners and have lively nightlife too. Down south, places like Palolem attract bodyboarders who enjoy the gentle waves. There are also some quaint resort towns around. However, Goa is quite developed, with not many hidden spots left. For the best surfing experience, try the stretch from Ashwem to Arambol in the far north.

LITTLE ANDAMAN, ANDAMAN ISLANDS

Surrounded by the clear blue waters of the Indian Ocean, and even though it's a bit of a journey from the mainland, the Andaman Islands are a part of India. If you're looking to escape the crowd and you're good at surfing, the untouched Andaman Islands are perfect.

Most surf spots here are reached by boat. But, Little Andaman Island is starting to get noticed for its surfing, especially around Butler Bay, which has some top-notch left-hand waves. Since there are reef breaks, it's a good idea to wear reef shoes to protect against cuts. The biggest waves, stirred up by far-off storms, happen from late March to early May.

DWARAKA, GUJRAT

Dwarka offers the ultimate Arabian Sea experience. Here, you'll find some of the clearest waters by the Indian coast. It's a very old town, believed to be around 5,000 years old. Some parts of the ancient city are even underwater now and can be explored through scuba diving. Dwarka is well-known for its Sri Krishna temple, attracting millions of visitors every year. Right north of this temple, there's a neat spot for surfing, especially when there's a strong swell coming from the south, making for a great left-hand wave.

ALWARS, TAMIL NADU

Alwars, located on the southeast coast at Manapad Point, could be the top surf spot in India. It's hidden away from the usual paths and can be tricky to find. This point is unique because it was created by lava flows millions of years ago, stretching out into the sea. When the conditions are right, surfers can enjoy rides up to 400 meters long, so expect a bit of a trek back to the starting point after each wave. Near the point, there are also excellent hollow left waves. And when



Scuba Diving in Dwarka



Surfing in Goa



Surfing in Ramchandi Beach, Puri

the waves get really big, the scene resembles the famous spots on Hawaii's north shore. Always usually experience a lot of south wind, but on days with offshore wind, the waves it produces are absolutely thrilling!

RAMESWARAM, TAMIL NADU

This spot is named after a story from the Ramayana, where Sri Rama stopped here before heading to Lanka to defeat the demon king, Ravana. A long time ago, a stunning temple was constructed in this area. The water here is among the clearest and cleanest you can find in mainland India. Rameshwaram is famous for having perfect winds for windsurfing. The winds are steady all year round, making it a great place for windsurfing lovers.

JAGANNATHA PURI, ORRISSA

The beach at Puri might seem quiet, but it's actually quite lively thanks to the many pilgrims visiting each day to see

the Jagannatha temple. This temple, the tallest in India, is thousands of years old. Puri's beach has a long stretch of sand where you can catch some good waves, especially further out. On days when the waves are big, between 6 to 8 feet, dealing with the strong shore break and currents can be tough. But once you're past that, you'll find some great waves to ride, and the best part? You'll have them all to yourself!

Beyond the surf, these spots are steeped in culture and history, inviting surfers to not just ride the waves but also immerse themselves in India's rich coastal heritage. Whether you're seeking adrenaline-packed sessions or serene rides against stunning backdrops, India's secret surf spots are waiting to be explored.

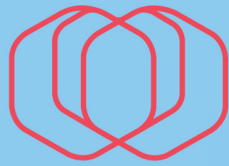
With its extensive shores touching three major bodies of water, India promises diverse surfing experiences, from gentle waves for beginners to challenging swells for the experienced. While the word "surf" itself has roots in the Indian language, the country's surfing potential remains largely untapped.



Windsurfing in Rameshwaram

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TAMIL NADU'S SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

Discover the beauty of the temples of Tamil Nadu, where ancient architecture and spiritual heritage blend to create awe-inspiring sanctuaries that captivate the hearts of visitors worldwide

TT BUREAU



Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur

The state of Tamil Nadu is renowned as the “Land of Temples.” Tamil Nadu’s famous temples have long been a subject of awe for individuals all over the globe. With over 33,000 temples, Tamil Nadu boasts several notable names among India’s finest and most venerated temples.

Aside from being ageless structural marvels, these locations hum with heavenly power, attracting millions of visitors during the year. The coastal state’s temples are a foundation of historical stories, cultural events, and tourism itineraries. Among these, the UNESCO World Heritage Sites

like the Great Living Chola Temples stand as a testament to the grandeur of Tamil Nadu’s temple architecture.

As you step into the cool, stone corridors, you are transported to a world of ancient rituals, timeless art, and divine energy. Whether it’s the majestic Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, the serene shore temple of Mahabalipuram, or the vast temple complex of Rameswaram, temples of Tamil Nadu offer a unique glimpse into the soul of the south.

Visiting these temples is a journey through the spiritual and architectural legacy of Tamil Nadu, leaving visitors in awe of its ancient wisdom and beauty.

KAPALEESWARAR TEMPLE, CHENNAI

The Kapaleeshwarar Temple in Chennai is a recognized temple in Tamil Nadu. The Ammirulgu Kapaleeshwarar temple, built in the seventh century, is devoted to Goddess Parvati in the guise of Karpagambal, or the 'Goddess of the Wish-Yielding Tree,' and Lord Shiva. Heavenly pleasure is all-encompassing for a pilgrim to the temple. The Gopuram, the temple's primary sanctuary, is a one-of-a-kind masterpiece of Dravidian architecture.

The markings on the temple grounds originate from the 12th century. All year round, people go to the Kapaleeshwarar temple to perform six types of pujas: Ko pooja, Vaikarai Pooja, Kaala sandhi Puja, Uchi Kala Pooja, Evening Puja, Kala Puja, and Ardhajama Pooja. The temple grounds host big events such as Brahmotsavam or 'Arupathumooar' Festival, Theppa Thiruvizha Float Festival, Navratri Festival, and Vasanta Utsavam.

BRIHADEESWARAR TEMPLE, THANJAVUR

Thanjavur's Brihadeeswarar shrine is a 1002-year-old temple devoted to Lord Shiva, with 100s of statues of the deity. The massive statue of Lord Shiva with three eyes is a sight to see. Rajaraja Chola I, the Chola Emperor, erected it around 1010 AD. This is India's biggest temple, also referred to as "Thanjavur Periya Kovil." The temple was built with around 130,000 tonnes of stone and exemplifies the Cholas' structural brilliance and magnificence.

The 216-foot-tall Vimana (tower) is the world's tallest. One of the greatest sculptures of its sort is a 16-foot-long and 13-foot-high figure of Nandi (Lord Shiva's holy bull) sculpted out of a small stone. On the temple grounds, there really are 250

lingams (representatives of Lord Shiva) and statues depicting his 108 dancing poses. UNESCO designated it a World Heritage Landmark in recognition of its outstanding architectural quality.

MEENAKSHI TEMPLE, MADURAI

The Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple is situated in Madurai and is considered one of the greatest temples in Tamil Nadu, India. Worshippers visit the temple to seek the blessings of Lord Shiva, as Sundareswarar, and his spouse, Goddess Parvati, as Meenakshi. The complex contains 14 exquisite Gopurams, including two golden Gopurams lavishly sculpted and decorated for the principal deities.

The Nayak dynasty established the current temple in the 17th century A.D. The Meenakshi temple is a magnificent



Kapaleeshwarar Temple, Chennai



Meenakshi Temple, Madurai



Ramanathaswamy Temple, Rameshwaram

work of art with a wonderful structure. Devi Meenakshi's figure is supposed to be crafted from pure emeralds. As per the temple's tradition, the wedding of the divinity Meenakshi to Shiva apparently happened in Madurai and is now commemorated with tremendous zeal every summertime.

RAMANATHASWAMY TEMPLE, RAMESHWARAM

The Ramanathaswamy temple at Rameshwaram, positioned on Pamban Island, is among the oldest shrines in Tamil Nadu. The temple holds one of the 12 Jyotirlingas and is a part of the Char Dham holy places. According to mythology, Lord Rama bowed to Lord Shiva at Rameshwaram to beg for his miracles and forgiveness for killing his most devoted disciple. The temple has a sandstone linga constructed by Lady Sita, Lord Ram's wife, known as Ramalingam, and a Lord Hanuman transported from the Himalayan region known as Vishwalingam.

The Ramanathaswamy temple features the world's longest hallway, which is around 3000 feet long. The temple also has 22 teerthams, or sacred river systems in the shape of reservoirs as well as wells. These teerthams depict Rama's quiver's 22 arrows. Bathing is required for all devotees before accessing the inner Sanctorum. Across the year, travellers from all around the world are inspired by Rameshwaram's stunning setting and exquisite ambience.

KUMARI AMMAN TEMPLE, KANYAKUMARI

Kumari Amman Temple is situated on the coast of Kanyakumari, at the meeting point of the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, and the Bay of Bengal. People pay a visit here to offer their prayers to Kanyakumari, the Virgin Goddess, an avatar of Parvati. According to historians, the Temple was erected in the 8th century by the Pandya monarchs and then restored by the Vijayanagar, Nayaka, and Chola emperors. As

per the cultural tradition, Goddess Kanyakumari's temple is devoted to the destroyer of evil, Banasura, the wicked ruler.

To earn Lord Shiva's permission to marry, the goddesses endured great devotion. Sage Parashuram is also said to have placed the bluestone statue of Goddess Kanya. The Devi is portrayed in meditation, holding a garland and a dazzling nose gem in her right hand. Kanyakumari Temple is one of the most magnificent temples in India as it also draws people from all around the globe.

NAGANATHASWAMY TEMPLE, THANJAVUR

Naganathaswamy Temple is one of the Navagraha Temples and is one of the most well-known temples in Tamil Nadu. Folks from all across the nation come to the temple to get relief from Rahu Doshas. Devoted to Sri Naganathaswamy and His companion Giri Gujambika, this is the sole temple where Almighty Rahu is housed in a human figure, as opposed to his snake version in other temples.

As per mythology, Lord Rahu came here on the day of Shivaratri to free himself from the wrath of a rishi. Suriya Pushkarani, Prugu Theertham, Gowthama Theertham, Kannuva Theertham, Parasara Theertham, Indira Theertham, and Vasishta Theertham are among the twelve holy water sources in this region. A bath in the sacred waters is claimed to heal one of the ailments and bring good fortune. It also purges negative karma and eventually offers enlightenment.

NATARAJA TEMPLE, CHIDAMBARAM

The Nataraja temple, one of Tamil Nadu's most prominent temples, is situated near the centre of Chidambaram's temple town. This temple is among the Pancha Bhoota Sthalas, each of which represents one of the five natural elements, akasha (aether). The temple complex is situated across 50 acres and

was erected during the reign of the Pallava/Chola monarchs. The temple honours Lord Shiva in the guise of Nataraja and Lord Govindaraja Perumal.

This is one of the very few temples in which both Shaivite and Vaishnavite idols are housed. Another very notable highlight is Lord Shiva's Ananda Tandava pose. One of the roots of Bharatanatyam is this heavenly dance position.

EKAMBARESWARAR TEMPLE, KANCHIPURAM

Kanchipuram's Ekambareswarar Temple is one of the greatest Shiva temples in India and regarded as the most important of the nation's seven major pilgrimage sites. The Ekambareswarar Temple is among five great Shiva temples known as Pancha Bootha Sthalams, each symbolizing a different natural component. As the revered god is the Prithvi Lingam, this shrine signifies the aspect of Earth.

According to mythology, Devi Parvati, the spouse of Lord Shiva, worshipped a Prithivi Lingam made of sand underneath a mango tree. The temple's exquisite ambience is well worthy of your attention. Devotees come here to discover why it is one of the most frequented temples in the world and marvel at the legendary legends, architecture, and exquisitely delightful surroundings.

MAHABALIPURAM SHORE TEMPLE

The Mahabalipuram Shore Temple temple was built on the sands of Mahabalipuram on the Coromandel Coast near the Bay of Bengal and is known as the most stunning temple in Tamil Nadu. The temple is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is well-known for its magnificent architecture. It was constructed in the 7th century, reflecting the rich tradition of the Pallava dynasty. The temple, battered by wind and water, has seen India's significant events. Shore

Temple has three temples, the most important of which are devoted to Lord Shiva and Vishnu.

The temple is decorated in stunningly realistic and artistically crafted depictions of ordinary life. Shore Temple is no longer an active temple. It is regarded as a living testament to the Pallava Dynasty and its artistic excellence. The holy site is now the backdrop for the Mahabalipuram Dance Festival, conducted annually in the month of January/February. The event was developed to encourage both traditional dance and the tourist industry in Mahabalipuram.

KANCHI KAILASANATHAR TEMPLE, KANCHIPURAM

Kanchipuram is popular for its sarees, but it is also home to the Kanchi Kailasanathar Temple. If you enjoy design, the Pallava Dynasty's artistic brilliance could well be observed here. The Dravidian contemporary design is worth getting the impression of. It is among the most important Tamil Nadu temples, dating from the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Sandstone sculptures may be found throughout the temple.

It has been one of the ancient Shiva temples in Tamil Nadu, with a 16-sided Shivling built of black granite. The 58 tiny Shiva shrines within the temple complex are not to be missed. The artistically crafted sculptures of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati in various dancing poses can now be seen. It is the relic of the Pallava Dynasty, which attracted millions of devotees, particularly on Maha Shivratri every year.

These temples, revered as much for their divine significance as for their historical and architectural grandeur, serve as pivotal landmarks in the cultural and spiritual landscape of Tamil Nadu. They are the epicentres of a vibrant tapestry of traditions, stories, and festivals that continue to draw millions of devotees and tourists from around the globe.



Kanchi Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram

TRACING THE SPIRITUAL PATH



Discover the majestic Jain temples of Karnataka, where fine artistry meets profound devotion in a celebration of faith and heritage. Mahavir Jayanti in April, marks the birth of the 24th and revered Tirthankara, Lord Mahavir

NAVEEN KAKKAR

Karnataka, in South India, has a deep history of Jainism, a religion supported by many important ancient kingdoms like the Rastrakuta Dynasty, Western Ganga, Kadamba, Chalukya dynasties, and the Hoysala Empire. Hence, the state has many Jain sites, including temples, big statues of Gommata, and pillars.

Karnataka is widely known as a Jain pilgrimage site. While the big festival Mahamastabhisheka at Shravanabelagola attracts crowds from across India, the Jain temples in places like Moodabidri or the north part of the state are architectural gems worth visiting. During Mahamastabhisheka, the Gomateshwara statue is bathed in milk, sandalwood paste, turmeric, and more, in a grand event held every 12 years. Just like it's known for its natural diversity, Karnataka is also celebrated for its rich mix of culture and religion.

The preservation and study of these historical sites offer invaluable insights into ancient Indian society, its values, and its cosmological views, contributing to our understanding of human civilization's diverse expressions. Explore these great Jain Temples of Karnataka:

THOUSAND PILLARS TEMPLE

Dakshina Kannada boasts yet another architectural gem, a temple dedicated to the Jain Tirthankara, Chandraprabhu, who is the eighth Tirthankara in Jainism. The temple's pillars are a sight to behold, adorned with intricate carvings that narrate stories and symbols from Jainism. This makes the temple not only a spiritual centre but also an educational one, highlighting its historical importance. It stands as a monument to the brilliant minds of 15th-century engineers



Thousand Pillars Temple

and sculptors. The temple area, often referred to as the 'Jain Kashi' of India, is home to numerous Jain temples, enriching its cultural and religious tapestry.

Another historic treasure in South India is the Thousand Pillar Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its star-shaped structure encompasses three main shrines, or Trikulalayam, each adorned with numerous sculptures depicting ancient epic tales. The entrance to Lord Shiva's shrine is marked by an imposing statue of Nandi, carved from black basalt rock, greeting visitors. Built-in 1163 AD under the reign of Kakatiya king Rudra Dev, the temple is a testament to the artistic and spiritual legacy of its era.

Each temple, with its distinctive features—from the grandeur of Mahamastabhisheka at Shravanabelagola to the intricate designs of the Thousand Pillars Temple—invites devotees and art lovers alike to explore the serene beauty and complex philosophy of Jainism. The Jain temples of Karnataka are not merely architectural wonders but are profound symbols of a philosophy that espouses compassion, non-violence, and reverence for life.

SRI MANJUNATHA TEMPLE DHARMASTHALA

Located in the lush Western Ghats, Dharmasthala is a famous pilgrimage spot by the Netravati River in the Belthangady

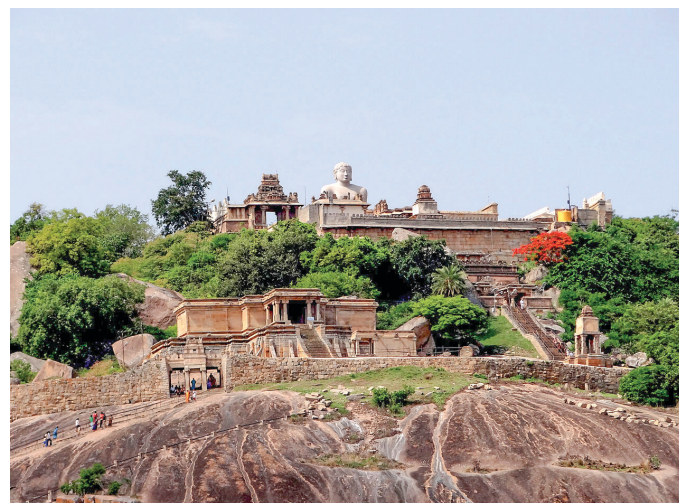
area of Dakshin Kannada district. It stands out as a unique mix of different beliefs and is probably the most popular religious site in Karnataka. Dharmasthala shines as a symbol of unity across communities, religions, and cultures. The main temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is run by a Jain family known as the Heggades and surprisingly, has Vaishnavite priests.

A giant 39-foot statue of Lord Bahubali, reflecting Jain traditions, is located near the temple. Here, both the Jain Tirthankara and Lord Shiva are honoured at the same sacred place. Giving to those in need is part of Dharmasthala's ethos, offering free meals to visitors of any background. The annual festival, Laksha Deepotsava, lights up the place with one lakh lamps and includes talks on literature and religion.

Shravanabelagola, located roughly 150 km northwest of Bangalore, Karnataka's capital, has been a key site for Jain culture, including its art, architecture, and religion, for over 2000 years. It became famous when Bhagawan Bhadrabahu, a leading Jain teacher, and his followers came here from Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, around two thousand years ago. This place also became the retirement spot for the famous emperor Chandragupta Maurya, who, influenced by Bhadrabahu, gave up his throne to his son and settled here.

SHRAVANABELGOLA

This town is a significant Jain pilgrimage spot in South Karnataka. It's known for the impressive 18-meter-tall statue of Lord Gomateshwara, which is one of the tallest monolithic statues in the world. This statue, built in 981 AD by the warrior



Shravanabelgola

Chamundaraya from the Ganga dynasty, is made from a single piece of granite and stands atop Vindhyagiri Hill, visible from as far as 30 km away. To get a closer look, visitors need to climb nearly 700 steps carved directly into the rock.

The statue is not just huge but also beautifully detailed, embodying the concept of immense strength without aggression. Surrounding this statue, there are representations of all Jain Tirthankaras, adding to the spiritual ambience. The sight of this giant, peaceful figure of Lord Gomateshwara is bound to leave anyone in wonder.



Kundadri Jain Temple

KUNDADRI JAIN TEMPLE

Kundadri Jain Temple Located on the Theerthahalli-Agumbe road, about 12km from Theerthahalli, Kundadri Hill is a gigantic monolithic rock formation. Surrounded by dense evergreen forests, it is a lovely place for trekking. A rough, stone-paved path leads to a Jain temple, Parshwanath Chaityalaya, a stone structure, perched atop the hill. Camping in the open at Kundadri Hills is an exhilarating experience as from the hilltop you can see the twists and turns of the Thirthahalli-Agumbe road.

A visit to Kundadri can be clubbed with nearby attractions such as Agumbe (16 km), Sringeri (30 km from Kundadri) and Kuppalli (31 km from Kundadri). Kundadri is 16 km from Agumbe, 90 km from Shivamogga and 350 km from Bengaluru. Public transportation is available till Thirthahalli or Agumbe. Private vehicles or taxis are required to cover the last 15 km to reach the top of Kundadri hills. Roads are steep and not recommended for inexperienced drivers.

NAVAGRAHA JAIN TEMPLE

The Navagraha Jain Temple, also known as Navagraha Teertha, is located in Varur near Hubli, Karnataka, and is a significant pilgrimage destination for Jains across India. This temple is home to a remarkable 61-foot-tall monolithic statue of Shri 1008 Bhagavan Parshvanatha, making it the tallest statue of Parshvanatha in the country.

Alongside it, there are smaller representations of the eight other Jain Tirthankaras, each associated with one of the nine planets, suggesting a unique celestial connection. The entire structure, including the statue and its 48-foot pedestal, reaches a total height of 109 feet.

The grand statue of Lord Parshwanath is not only striking in its beauty but also surpasses the size of the Gomateshwara or Lord Bahubali statue in Shravanabelagola. Visible from up to 4 km away along the national highway, the statues of



Chaturmukha Basadi

Navagraha Teertha present a majestic sight to those passing by the Tapovan flyover exit near Varur.

CHATURMUKHA BASADI

This unique Jain temple, tucked away in a quiet coconut grove, offers a tranquil retreat from city life. What makes this temple special is that visitors can enter its main sanctuary from all four directions, earning it the name 'chaturmukha,' which means 'four faces.' In South India, Jain places of worship are referred to as 'Basadi.' During your visit, you can explore other Jain temples in the area like Kere Basadi, Padmavati Basadi, and the Gommateshwara statue in Karkala.

With 108 granite pillars, Chaturmukha Basadi is a sight to behold. The Gomateshwara Statue, another notable landmark, is just 1.4 km away. Another temple worth visiting is in Varanga, 27 km from Karkala, situated in the middle of a picturesque pond.

Karkala is 361 km from Bengaluru and 51 km from Mangaluru, with the latter being the nearest airport and railway station. The town is accessible by bus from Udupi and

Mangaluru. The temple itself is only 1.3 km from the centre of Karkala, easy to reach by walking or by taking an auto.

GOMATAGIRI

Gomatagiri, located in the Bettadoor area of Mysuru district, is renowned for its smaller version of the Gomateshwara (Bahubali) statue. This 20-foot tall monolithic statue stands on Gomatagiri hill, about 164 feet above the ground, and is approximately 700 years old, marking it as a significant Jain worship site in the region.

Each year, the statue is honoured with a special 'Abhisheka' ceremony, where sacred items are poured over it. This grand event, known as Maha Masthakabhisheka, typically occurs in September and offers a spectacular view of the surroundings, including parts of Mysuru city and the KRS Dam in the distance.

Crafted from a single granite stone during the Vijayanagara period, the statue echoes the style of the larger Gomateshwara statue in Shravanabelagola, albeit it is smaller in size (6 meters compared to 17 meters). Nearby attractions include the KRS Dam (20 km away), Balamuri Falls (18 km away), and Arabithittu Wildlife Sanctuary (15 km away), making Gomatagiri a worthy visit alongside these sites.

Gomatagiri is 153 km from Bengaluru and just 22 km from Mysuru. The nearest airport is in Mysuru, 32 km away, with

the city's railway station serving as the closest train link. From Mysuru, visitors can easily reach Gomatagiri by taxi.

CAVE TEMPLE

The Badami cave temples are situated in the Badami town, nestled in the north-central region of Karnataka, India. These temples lie approximately 88 miles east of Belgavi and 87 miles northwest of Hampi, with the Malaprabha River located just 3 miles away. The temples are also conveniently placed near other historical sites, being 14 miles from the UNESCO World Heritage site Pattadakal and 22 miles from Aihole, which is home to over a hundred ancient and medieval Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist monuments.

Mangalesha, Kirtivarman I's brother, between 598 and 610 AD, finished building the cave temples and dedicated them along with a village during the Vishnu image installation ceremony. Pulakeshi II, who reigned from 610 to 642 AD, was the most illustrious ruler of the dynasty, notable for defeating the Pallava King Mahendra Varman I.

However, the Pallavas later seized and demolished Badami to retaliate for their loss. Over the centuries, Badami changed hands among various rulers, including the Vijayanagar Kings, the Adil Shahis, the Savanur Nawabs, the Marathas, Hyder Ali, and eventually the British, who incorporated it into the Bombay Presidency.



Badami Cave Temples

APRIL'S FESTIVAL FIESTA IN INDIA

Festivals in April in India create a global cultural tapestry of joy, bringing together various cultures in a celebration of spring's renewal and the rich diversity of the human spirit

TT BUREAU

India is an incredible travel destination, offering a perpetual festivity with its myriad festivals and fairs. From stunning natural landscapes to rich cultural heritage, this nation has it all. The vibrant fairs and festivals celebrated in April significantly contribute to India's tourism, inviting you to immerse in its splendid culture.

These events, celebrated with immense zeal and vibrancy, showcase India's diverse culture and traditions through festivities like Baisakhi, Mahavir Jayanti, Buddha Purnima, and many others. Each festival sees enthusiastic participation from various communities, highlighting the equal importance they hold across different groups. April in India is marked by a plethora of colourful festivals, each presenting a unique glimpse into the country's rich cultural fabric and rituals. Here is a list of the Festivals which are celebrated in April:

BAISAKHI

Baisakhi, celebrated with grandeur in Amritsar, Punjab, is a festival that ushers in April with vibrant traditions and cultural festivities. It is a day that marks the commencement of the

Nanakshahi calendar, aligning with the start of Baisakh, the season for harvesting the Rabi crops.

This festival, deeply rooted in agricultural practices, also carries astronomical significance as it coincides with the sun's transition into Mesh Rashi. Recognized widely on the 13th or 14th of April across Punjab and Haryana, Baisakhi is not just a harvest festival; it holds profound spiritual and historical importance, especially for the Sikh community.

Farmers celebrate the fruits of their labour with enthusiasm, while the broader community engages in a spiritual homage, dressing in colourful attire and offering prayers in Gurudwaras. The streets come alive with cultural performances, depicting the rich heritage and communal spirit of the region.

For Sikhs, Baisakhi is a time of dual celebration. It not only commemorates the successful harvest but also marks significant milestones in Sikh history. The festival is replete with kirtans, visits to local Gurudwaras, community fairs, and nagar kirtan processions. It is during this time that the Khalsa order was established by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, on April 13, 1699, laying the foundation for a collective Sikh identity.

Baisakhi Celebrations





Bihu Festivals

BIHU, ASSAM

Bihu stands at the heart of Assam's cultural and festive life, celebrated with unmatched vibrancy and enthusiasm throughout the state. This festival trio—Bohag Bihu in April, Magh Bihu in January, and Kati Bihu in October—each holds a unique place in the Assamese calendar, embodying distinct traditions and significances that together paint a full picture of Assamese life and seasonal cycles.

Particularly notable is the Bohag Bihu, or Rongali Bihu, which signals the arrival of spring and the Assamese New Year, filling the air with joy and celebration. The festivities commence with Goru Bihu, dedicated to the welfare of livestock. On this day, cows and bulls are treated with utmost care, bathed in turmeric water, and fed well, symbolizing respect and gratitude towards these animals for their role in agriculture.

Following Goru Bihu is Manuh Bihu, the day that marks the start of the New Year, where the emphasis shifts to human connections and community. People don new attire, homes bustle with the preparation of festive meals, and Pithas—traditional Assamese delicacies—is a must-have.

MAHAVIR JAYANTI

Mahavir Jayanti is a highly revered festival among the Jain community, commemorating the birth of Lord Mahavira, the 24th and final Tirthankara, or spiritual teacher, in Jainism. This festival underscores Jainism's core values, emphasizing world peace, harmony, and a lifestyle that minimizes harm to all living beings. Lord Mahavira's teachings focused on principles such as non-violence, truthfulness, abstaining from theft, maintaining chastity, and practising non-attachment. He advocated for the sanctity of all life, promoting kindness, compassion, and respect towards every soul. His teachings also highlighted the importance of leading a simple, peaceful life grounded in virtue.



Devotees Participate in Prayers of Lord Mahavira

Celebrated with immense joy and devotion by Jains worldwide, Mahavir Jayanti sees a variety of religious activities. Devotees participate in processions, visit temples to offer prayers, engage in acts of charity, meditate, and sing hymns in honour of Lord Mahavira.

RAM NAVAMI

Ram Navami is a significant Hindu festival that commemorates the birth of Lord Rama, an embodiment of virtue and an avatar of Lord Vishnu. Celebrated with immense devotion and enthusiasm, Ram Navami not only marks the culmination of the nine-day Chaitra Navratri festivities but also symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. This joyous occasion is observed with great reverence both in India and by Hindus around the globe, making it a unifying event across different cultures.

The festival is characterized by vibrant celebrations, spiritual activities, and the practice of fasting. Devotees undertake fasts on this day, believing that such devotion brings them infinite joy, prosperity, and blessings from Lord Rama. Temples are filled with worshippers who engage in prayers, chant mantras, and listen to epic tales recounting Lord Rama's deeds.

POORAM- KERALA

In Kerala, life is beautifully intertwined with the rhythm of annual festivals that honour the village deities, celebrating the bounty of the harvest season. These festivals offer a delightful pause from the daily grind, ranging from intimate gatherings to the grand spectacle known as Thrissur Pooram. While there are several Pooram festivals celebrated throughout central Kerala, each with its unique charm, Thrissur Pooram stands out for its unparalleled beauty and grandeur, earning the title of the "Mother of all Poorams."

Thrissur Pooram is not just any temple festival; it is a cultural phenomenon that showcases the essence of Kerala's festival traditions on a magnificent scale. Celebrated during the Malayalam month of Medom (April-May), this festival brings together a majestic assembly of Gods and Goddesses from the surrounding regions to the Vadakumnathan Temple. The deities, mounted on splendidly caparisoned elephants and accompanied by the vibrant sounds of Chenda melam and pancha vadyam, create an awe-inspiring spectacle.

The festival features ten principal participants, including deities from Thiruvambady Bhagavathi to Kanimangalam Sastha, each following a meticulously planned schedule to keep the 36-hour festivities energetic and uninterrupted.

NENMARA VALLANGHY VELA

The Nenmara Vallanghy Vela, also known simply as Nenmara Vela, stands as one of Kerala's most vibrant annual festivals. It is celebrated with great fervour at the Nellikulangara Bhagavathy temple located in Nenmara, within the scenic Palakkad district. Nestled between the neighbouring villages of Nemmara and Vallanghy, in the lush valley beneath the Nelliampathi hills, this festival transforms the verdant paddy fields into a bustling festival ground in early April.

The celebration, which marks the end of the paddy harvest season, is renowned for its grand display of fireworks, elaborately decorated elephants, and a wide array of cultural performances, including Panchavadyam and Pandi Melam, showcasing some of Kerala's finest artists. Villages construct magnificent structures, or 'anapanthal', adorned with bamboo, wood, and twinkling lights, adding to the festival's allure. The highlight of the event is the majestic elephant procession to the Nellikulangara temple, a meeting of the divine and the devout.

The fireworks display, known for its intensity, has earned a reputation as one of the loudest in Asia, and perhaps globally. The festival not only serves as a spiritual gathering but also ignites a friendly rivalry between the villages of Vallanghy and Nemmara, adding to the communal spirit.

As these celebrations bring communities together in a burst of colour and spirituality, they not only enrich the cultural landscape but also beckon travellers worldwide to partake in India's rich heritage. This month of festivity is a testament to the enduring spirit and unity of its people, making India a truly enchanting springtime destination.



Ram Navami Festival



Pooram- Kerala

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A TASTE OF ASSAM

Assamese cuisine offers a rich tapestry of flavours beyond the iconic Khar, showcasing a unique blend of traditions and tastes

TT BUREAU



Aloo Pitika

Assamese cuisine extends far beyond the renowned dish Khar, offering a fascinating exploration of flavours and culinary techniques. This rich gastronomy weaves together a tapestry of local ingredients, traditional practices, and communal heritage, showcasing dishes that resonate with the essence of Assam's diverse landscapes and cultural influences.

Assamese cuisine is a cooking style that combines the cooking habits of the hills, which favour fermentation and drying as preservation methods, with those of the plains, which give fresh vegetables and plenty of fish and meat. Assamese cuisine is distinguished by its use of exotic fruits, vegetables, and medicinal plants, as well as a lack of spice. The chosen oil

is mustard oil. Rice, commonly known as bhaat, is a staple dish that appears in all meals. Assamese cuisine blends various local traditions with significant regional diversity and some influences from abroad. It shares similarities with the culinary practices of Southeast Asian nations like Thailand and Myanmar. This cuisine is known for its minimal spice usage, limited cooking on the flame, and distinctive tastes primarily from unique local fruits and vegetables, which may be fresh, dried, or fermented. Explore some of the delectable Assamese dishes given below:

ALOO PITIKA

Aloo Pitika is a trademark Assamese side dish that should be included in every thali. The most popular pitika and side dish

in Assam is aloo pitika. This is a deep, comforting dish that is a long-time Assamese favourite. Pitikas, on the other hand, are created with a variety of vegetables, dry fish, boiled eggs, and a little form of fish known as puti mass and are served as side dishes along with other main dishes.

OUU TENGA

Elephant apple, also known as Ouu tenga, is a sour Asian apple that is used in Indian curries, jams, pickles, and jellies. In other parts of the world, it's used to produce chutneys with coconut and spices. It also has a variety of health benefits, therefore during the summer, you'll find elephant apples being cooked in almost every Assamese household. For comfort, Assamese people usually cook a light applewood gravy with local fish.

HANHOR MANGXO KOMORA

This is duck meat with ash gourd. This dish is traditionally regarded as a delicacy prepared and served on rare occasions such as Bihu, feasts, or for special guests. The optimum time to eat duck meat in Assam is from Kaati Maah (late October) to Bohag (early November) (Early April). Even now, this meal is an important part of every celebration or celebration. Serve with steaming plain rice (bhat), arahar daal, and lemon on the side (kaaji nemu).

Traditionally viewed as a delicacy, this dish is prepared and served during special occasions such as Bihu, feasts, or for honored guests. Today, it remains a fundamental component of celebrations and festive events.

MASOR TENGA

Masor Tenga is one of Assamese cuisine's most popular dishes and is one of the most important dishes of the region. It's a tangy fish curry with a hint of sourness. The meal has a distinct acidic flavour that is reminiscent of fried fish. It only requires a few ingredients and spices, and it takes very little time to prepare. This fish curry is a crowd-pleaser and a must-have on any Assamese meal. It's finest served with steamed rice.

It is an edible fern that is popular among the Assamese in Northeast India. It grows naturally along river banks, ponds, and village streets. This plant vegetable is full of beneficial nutrients and is a classic food item in the Northeastern diet. It can be prepared in a variety of ways, including curries, salads, and dry vegetable fry. However, it should not be consumed raw as it can cause food poisoning. Served as a side dish, it's usually fried with little potatoes.



Ouu Tenga



Masor Tenga



Komolar Kheer

SUNGA CHICKEN

Bamboo has been an important element of Assamese culture for a long time, mostly due to its availability. It has a number of purposes, such as a building material, food, and in this example, as a utensil for cooking chicken. In Assamese, sunga refers to a hollow cylinder, in this case, the bamboo stem's hollow cavity. Serve the sunga chicken while it is still warm, garnished with fresh herbs.

JUTE LEAVES FRITTERS

Jute is a vitamin and fibre-rich edible leafy vegetable. Mora xaak is the Assamese word for jute. In Assam, there are two different types of jute leaves. Titamora is one that has a little bitter flavour. Mithamora is the other one that is not bitter. Any variety of jute leaves can be used for making fritters. Serve immediately.

TIL PITHA

The Assamese Bihu Platter is incomplete without Til Pitha. It's just rice flour rolls with jaggery and ground black sesame seed filling. Even though it appears to be an easy task, perfecting the til pitha takes time and effort. When served with a cup of Assam Tea or flattened rice, fresh cream, yoghurt, and jaggery, it's at its best.

NARIKOL PITHA

Narikol Pitha is a North Eastern delicacy made with Assamese sweetened coconut fried pita. This recipe is made during festive celebrations, where grated fresh coconut is combined with sugar and caramelized, then blended with flour and milk before being deep-fried to create this dish. Your kids will love these Narikol Pitha as an after-school snack. It can be served as a dessert at the conclusion of dinner or as a tea-time snack in the evening.

KOMOLAR KHEER

This is a traditional and popular Assamese delicacy with a unique but enticing flavour. It's simple to make and ideal for serving at special occasions or festivals. It's simple to make and



Til Pitha



Jute Leaves Fritters

ideal for serving at special occasions or festivals. After a light lunch of Pav Bhaji or Dal Pakwan, serve Assamese Komolar Kheer as a dessert.

From the iconic Aloo Pitika to the tangy Masor Tenga and the exotic Sunga Chicken, each dish reflects the unique agricultural and cultural heritage of Assam. This rich culinary tradition, reflecting both local and Southeast Asian influences, offers a palette of flavours that are as diverse as they are delectable, inviting explorers to delve into its array of distinctive dishes.

Each recipe, whether for festive occasions or everyday meals, tells a story of cultural heritage and local flavours, blending traditional techniques with fresh, local ingredients. Through its simple yet flavorful dishes, Assamese cuisine invites us to explore the depth and richness of its culinary traditions, making it a vital part of any celebration or festivity.



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