

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, LUXURY & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

JULY 2024 - ₹50

**A MONSOON
AFFAIR**

**ESCAPE THE
ORDINARY**

**UNFORGETTABLE
JAISALMER
ADVENTURES**

**EXQUISITE ART
OF MEENAKARI**

**SUMMER HEALTH RETREATS
ACROSS THE WORLD**

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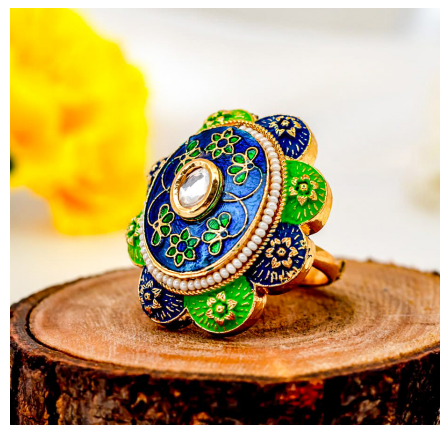
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Euphoria Retreat, Greece

SUMMER HEALTH RETREATS ACROSS THE WORLD

Reports indicate that health retreats are now more sought after than ever, providing a holistic approach to well-being that combines relaxation, fitness, and nutrition

KAMAL GILL

A recent study by the Global Wellness Institute highlights that the wellness tourism market is growing at a rapid pace, outpacing the growth of the overall tourism industry. This trend signifies a shift in consumer preferences towards vacations that not only offer relaxation but also enhance physical and mental well-being. Famous Health Retreats and What They Offer:

THE RANCH ITALY, ITALY

Located in the serene surroundings of a 19th-century property in the Italian countryside, The Ranch Italy offers a transformative wellness experience.

The offerings include rigorous fitness regimens such as guided hikes, yoga, and core training, along with nutritional counseling

and plant-based cuisine. Additionally, comprehensive wellness evaluations and personalized health plans are provided, as well as mindfulness and stress reduction workshops.

EUPHORIA RETREAT, GREECE

Situated in the heart of the Peloponnese, Euphoria Retreat is a holistic wellness destination that combines Greek and Chinese healing philosophies. The offerings include personalized wellness programs tailored for detox, weight loss, and emotional healing. Guests can also enjoy a state-of-the-art spa featuring hydrotherapy and salt room treatments. Nutritional guidance is provided, along with Mediterranean-inspired healthy cuisine. Additionally, yoga, meditation, and fitness classes are available to enhance overall well-being.

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Raghadan Forest Park,
Al Baha



Ananda in the Himalayas, Uttarakhand

ARO HA, NEW ZEALAND

Nestled in the Southern Alps, Aro Ha offers a unique blend of adventure and wellness in the stunning landscapes of New Zealand. The offerings include mindful movement classes such as yoga and Pilates, along with plant-based, nutrient-dense meals designed for detoxification. Guests can participate in outdoor activities like hiking and kayaking, and attend wellness workshops focused on mindfulness, stress reduction, and sustainable living.

LANSERHOF TEGERNSEE, GERMANY

Lanserhof Tegernsee, located in the Bavarian Alps, is a modern health retreat known for its advanced medical wellness programs. The offerings include medical diagnostics and personalized health programs, detoxification treatments and metabolic optimization, and state-of-the-art spa and fitness facilities. Additionally, guests can benefit from nutritional counseling and enjoy gourmet healthy cuisine.

SHOU SUGI BAN HOUSE, USA

Located in the Hamptons, New York, Shou Sugi Ban House is a holistic wellness retreat inspired by Japanese healing practices. The offerings include integrative wellness programs such as meditation, yoga, and energy healing, complemented by nutrient-rich plant-based meals. Guests can also enjoy spa treatments like watsu, craniosacral therapy, and Reiki, as well as participate in wellness workshops and educational sessions.

ANANDA IN THE HIMALAYAS, UTTARAKHAND

Ananda in the Himalayas is a luxury destination spa located in the serene foothills of the Himalayas. It offers a unique blend of Ayurvedic treatments, yoga, and international wellness experiences.



Lanserhof Tegernsee, Germany

The offerings include personalized wellness programs focusing on stress management, detox, and weight management, along with authentic Ayurvedic treatments and consultations with Ayurveda doctors. Guests can participate in yoga and meditation sessions led by expert instructors, and enjoy gourmet healthy cuisine designed to complement their wellness goals.

ATMANTAN WELLNESS CENTRE, PUNE

Atmantan Wellness Centre, located near Pune, is a luxury wellness resort that focuses on holistic well-being. It combines modern medical science with traditional healing practices to offer comprehensive wellness programs.

The offerings include tailored wellness programs focused on detox, weight loss, and rejuvenation, along with Ayurvedic treatments and spa therapies. Guests can engage in fitness



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activities like yoga, Pilates, and functional training, and benefit from nutritional guidance while enjoying farm-to-table organic cuisine.

SPECIAL TREATMENT CENTERS AND SPAS

Health retreats around the world are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities that offer specialized treatments and therapies. Here are some notable examples:

CLINIQUE LA PRAIRIE, SWITZERLAND

Renowned for its longevity and revitalization programs, the offerings include medical and wellness services such as stem cell therapy and detoxification, along with personalized nutrition and fitness plans.

THE FARM AT SAN BENITO, PHILIPPINES

The offerings integrate holistic medicine and healing therapies, featuring wellness programs such as detox, stress management, and weight control. A range of treatments is provided, including Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, and naturopathy.

LEFAY RESORT & SPA DOLOMITI, ITALY

Specializing in energy and therapeutic treatments based on classical Chinese medicine, the offerings include wellness programs focused on detox, anti-aging, and stress reduction. Guests can also enjoy luxurious spa treatments and participate in various fitness activities.

NEW THERAPIES IN INDIA AND ABROAD

Health retreats are continuously innovating and offering new therapies to meet the evolving needs of their guests. Here are some of the latest and most sought-after therapies:

India, with its rich tradition of holistic healing and natural therapies, is home to some of the world's most renowned health retreats. These retreats offer a perfect blend of ancient wisdom and modern wellness practices.

PANCHAKARMA DETOX

Panchakarma is an ancient Ayurvedic detoxification process that eliminates toxins from the body and restores balance. It involves five main treatments: Vamana (therapeutic vomiting), Virechana (purgation), Basti (enema), Nasya (nasal administration), and Raktamokshana (bloodletting).

SOUND HEALING

Sound healing uses the vibrations of sound to relax and heal the body and mind. Instruments like Tibetan singing bowls, gongs, and tuning forks are used to create soothing sounds that promote deep relaxation and emotional release.

MARMA THERAPY

Marma therapy is an Ayurvedic practice that involves stimulating specific energy points on the body to promote healing and balance. It is believed to improve circulation, boost immunity, and relieve stress.



Panchakarma Detox



Sound Healing


NEW THERAPIES ABROAD

CRYOTHERAPY

Cryotherapy involves exposing the body to extremely cold temperatures for a few minutes. It is used to reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and boost metabolism. Cryotherapy chambers are becoming popular in health retreats around the world.

FLOATATION THERAPY

Floatation therapy, also known as sensory deprivation, involves floating in a tank filled with Epsom salt solution. It helps in reducing stress, relieving pain, and enhancing



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mental clarity. The therapy is gaining popularity in wellness centres in Europe and North America.

IV NUTRIENT THERAPY

IV nutrient therapy involves infusing vitamins, minerals, and other essential nutrients directly into the bloodstream. It is used to boost energy levels, improve immunity, and promote overall well-being. Many health retreats in the USA and Europe now offer this therapy.

THE ROLE OF NUTRITION IN HEALTH RETREATS

Nutrition is a cornerstone of health retreats, with many programs emphasizing the importance of healthy eating for overall well-being. Health retreats often provide gourmet meals that are not only delicious but also designed to support specific health goals.

PERSONALIZED NUTRITION PLANS

Many health retreats offer personalized nutrition plans based on individual health assessments. These plans are tailored to meet the unique needs of each guest, whether they are looking to lose weight, detoxify, or improve their overall health.

ORGANIC AND LOCALLY SOURCED INGREDIENTS

Health retreats emphasize the use of organic and locally sourced ingredients. This ensures that the food is fresh, nutritious, and free from harmful pesticides and chemicals.

PLANT-BASED DIETS

Plant-based diets are a common feature at health retreats. These diets focus on whole foods like fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and seeds, which are rich in nutrients and beneficial for health.

NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION

Health retreats often include educational sessions on nutrition, helping guests understand the importance of healthy eating and how to make better food choices. These sessions may cover topics like mindful eating, reading food labels, and understanding macronutrients and micronutrients.

DETOXIFYING FOODS

Detox programs at health retreats include foods that support the body's natural detoxification processes. These foods may include green leafy vegetables, herbs like cilantro and parsley, and antioxidant-rich fruits like berries.

MORE THAN JUST VACATIONS

The increasing preference for health retreats over exotic vacations reflects a broader trend towards wellness and self-care. Health retreats offer a comprehensive approach to well-being, combining relaxation, fitness, nutrition, and therapeutic treatments. They provide a sanctuary for individuals to rejuvenate, heal, and rediscover themselves.

With a focus on physical, mental, and emotional well-being, these retreats are more than just vacations—they are journeys towards better health and a more balanced life.



Plant-Based Diets



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

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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 ETERNAL MAGIC OF THE MONSOON IN INDIA

The monsoon in India is more than just a season; it is a celebration, a time of rejuvenation, and a symbol of romance

TT BUREAU

The sound of raindrops dancing on the rooftops, the smell of earth soaked in rain, and the sight of lush green landscapes create an enchanting atmosphere. The rains have inspired poets, artists, and lovers for centuries, weaving a tapestry of emotions that is as old as time itself.

“यदिन्द्र द्यावापृथिवी अप्रथयस्त तवमेको अस्ति तवेन्दु पर्क्षि” - Rig Veda

This ancient verse from the Rig Veda praises Indra, the god of rain, for his role in nurturing the earth and the heavens. It reflects the deep connection between the monsoon and the cycle of life. In modern times, the monsoon continues to inspire poets. R. Parthasarathy, in his poem “Exile,” writes:

“The first monsoon shower that drenched the earth,
And the smell of wet earth that brings the heart alive.”

Rain is often seen as a metaphor for love and longing. The gentle drizzle, the fierce downpour, and the intermittent showers mirror the various shades of human emotions.

The monsoon’s arrival is eagerly awaited, as it brings relief from the scorching summer heat and marks the beginning of a season filled with joy and vitality.

THE MONSOON IN INDIAN POETRY

Indian poets, from ancient times to the present, have found inspiration in the monsoon. The Rig Veda is among the earliest texts that celebrate the rains. The verses not only praise the gods for the rains but also highlight the significance of rain in sustaining life.

Kalidasa, one of India’s greatest classical poets, wrote extensively about the monsoon in his famous work, “Meghaduta” (The Cloud Messenger). In this lyrical poem, a cloud acts as a messenger between two lovers separated by distance. The vivid descriptions of the monsoon landscapes and the emotions of longing and love are beautifully intertwined.



Enjoying Monsoon



Onam Festival

“प्रियं प्राणा नाथ वद मम प्रिये च
तेषां दुःखं सुदिन वयमिवाव”

(Translation: “Tell my beloved that I am waiting with a heart full of longing, like the earth waits for the monsoon.”)

In contemporary times, poets like Gulzar have continued this tradition. In his poem “Baarish,” Gulzar captures the essence of monsoon romance:

“बारिश की बूँदें जैसे चुपके से कह रही हों,
तुम्हारी यादों का आलम है आज भी मेरे साथ।”

(Translation: “The raindrops seem to whisper silently, your memories are still with me today.”)

The monsoon, with its myriad moods, has been a muse for poets across generations. Whether it is the anticipation of the first rains, the joy of a downpour, or the melancholy of a lingering drizzle, the rains evoke a range of emotions that poets have beautifully expressed.

THE MONSOON IN INDIAN CINEMA

Indian cinema has beautifully captured the essence of the monsoon. Rain sequences in movies often symbolize romance, nostalgia, and dramatic moments. Iconic songs like “Pyaar Hua Iqar Hua” from the film “Shree 420,” where Raj Kapoor and Nargis share an umbrella in the rain, have become timeless classics.

Another memorable song is “Rimjhim Gire Saawan” from the film “Manzil,” featuring Amitabh Bachchan and Moushumi Chatterjee. The song beautifully portrays the romance of walking in the rain and enjoying the simple pleasures of life. Movies like “Monsoon Wedding” by Mira Nair explore the cultural and emotional dimensions of the monsoon, weaving it into the fabric of the narrative. The monsoon, with its dramatic and transformative power, continues to be a powerful motif in Indian cinema.



Teej Festival

INDIAN FESTIVALS THAT CELEBRATE THE MONSOON

The monsoon season is celebrated across India with various festivals that honour the rains and the rejuvenation they bring. These festivals are a blend of cultural traditions, rituals, and community gatherings, reflecting the profound connection between the monsoon and Indian life.

TEEJ FESTIVAL

Teej is celebrated predominantly in Rajasthan, Haryana, and Punjab. It marks the reunion of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Women dress in vibrant saris, apply henna on their hands, and enjoy traditional songs and dances. Swings are decorated and hung from trees, and sweets like Ghewar are specially prepared for the occasion.

ONAM

Onam is a harvest festival celebrated in Kerala. It marks the homecoming of the mythical King Mahabali. The festival features elaborate feasts, traditional dance forms like Kathakali, snake boat races, and floral decorations called Pookalam. The lush greenery of Kerala during the monsoon adds to the festive spirit.

DESTINATIONS IN INDIA FAMOUS DURING THE RAINS

India transforms into a magical land during the monsoon. Here are some destinations where the monsoon's magic is at its best:

MUNNAR, KERALA

Known for its tea gardens, Munnar becomes a paradise during the monsoon. The lush greenery, mist-covered hills, and refreshing climate make it a perfect destination for a monsoon getaway. The waterfalls like Attukal and Lakkam come alive, adding to the charm of this hill station.

CHERRAPUNJI, MEGHALAYA

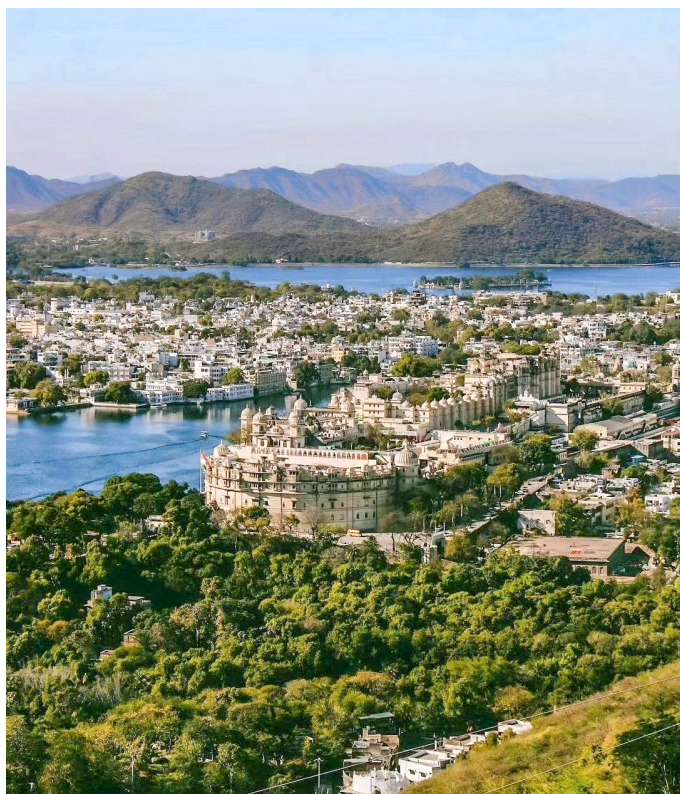
One of the wettest places on earth, Cherrapunji, showcases the true essence of monsoon. The living root bridges, numerous waterfalls, and breathtaking landscapes are a treat to the eyes. The rain here is a part of everyday life, and it creates an enchanting ambience.

COORG, KARNATAKA

Coorg, often referred to as the Scotland of India, is a popular monsoon destination. The coffee plantations, verdant hills, and serene lakes are mesmerizing during the rains. Abbey Falls and Iruppu Falls are especially captivating when the monsoon is in full swing.

LONAVALA, MAHARASHTRA

Lonavala and its twin Khandala are famous for their scenic beauty during the monsoon. The hills, covered in greenery, the misty valleys, and the numerous waterfalls create a romantic atmosphere. Bhushi Dam, Tiger Point, and Rajmachi Fort are popular spots to visit during this season.



Udaipur

UDAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

While Rajasthan is known for its desert landscapes, Udaipur transforms into a picturesque city during the monsoon. The lakes fill up, the palaces and forts reflect their grandeur in the water, and the Aravalli hills become greener, making Udaipur a delightful place to visit.

The monsoon in India is a time for renewal, reflection, and celebration. The romance of rain, the joy of seasonal delicacies, the beauty of rain-soaked landscapes, and the creative inspiration it provides make the monsoon a truly magical season.

As the raindrops fall, they weave a story of love, life, and hope, reminding us of the eternal dance of nature and the cyclical beauty of life.



Rajmachi Fort, Lonavala



Coorg



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In a world of traditional hospitality schools, A-Star Academy arrives to change the game. This is where you become a hotelier on DAY ONE. This promise is fulfilled with the support of the luxury five-star Hotel Sahara Star in Mumbai and Aamby Valley City, India's first planned hill city.

With over 20 years of legacy, these two iconic properties form the backbone of A-Star Academy, offering students unmatched real-world experiences and hands-on learning in various hospitality fields.

"As a former hotel management graduate and an observer of hospitality trends for over three decades, we designed A-Star Academy to address the skill gaps that prevent aspiring hoteliers from meeting industry demands. At A-Star Academy, we deliver a reality check on day one. Our students gain experiential learning, graduating with the essential skills needed to succeed in the hospitality industry."

— Romie Dutt, Executive Director of Aamby Valley City & Sahara Star

THE GAME-CHANGING PEDAGOGY

Our teaching approach, developed by industry veterans, meets the evolving demands of the hospitality

landscape. A-Star Academy combines theoretical knowledge with practical application for a comprehensive understanding of the industry.

Each module blends theory with hands-on experiences, including immersive internships and industry placements. Our educational model balances classroom learning with real-world practice, followed by rigorous assessments.

The "earn while you learn" initiative highlights our commitment to practical training in entrepreneurship, giving students the opportunity to manage a live restaurant and gain invaluable business operations experience.

Romie Dutt emphasizes **"Our goal at A-Star Academy is to bridge the market gap by equipping students with enhanced skills that secure employment opportunities."**

We aim to ensure our graduates are



Mr. Romie Dutt – Executive Director of Aamby Valley City & Sahara Star



Sahara Star Mumbai

not only employable but also well-prepared to stand out in the job market.

COURSE JOURNEY

The journey at A-Star Academy is meticulously designed to offer rigorous and enriching experiential learning through:

- Classroom Theory Sessions
- Training Kitchen Practical Sessions
- Live Environment Sessions at Hotels
- Regular Tests and Assessments
- Mock Practice and Drill Sessions
- Soft Skills and Professional Development
- Entrepreneurial Workshops and Guest Lectures
- Niche Skill Development Guidance
- Final Projects and Comprehensive Examinations
- Graduation and Career Placement Assistance

This structured approach ensures readiness for industry demands, fostering a generation of competent and adaptable hospitality professionals. By integrating entrepreneurial and fine arts courses into the curriculum, students' overall outlook is enhanced, promoting personal growth, leadership skills, and cultural awareness.

Romie Dutt underscores, **"Our commitment is to craft an educational journey that goes beyond mere knowledge acquisition to genuinely transforming lives."**

BEYOND THE MARK SHEET

What sets A-Star Academy graduates apart is the dual certificate. Our graduates enter the industry with not only



A-Star Academy Classrooms equipped with smart boards



A-Star Academy - Mumbai Campus

a mark sheet but also an invaluable experience certificate that documents their hands-on efforts throughout their education. This places them in a league above the rest, making them ideal candidates for any recruiter.

"At A-Star Academy, we offer specialized courses that cater to specific interests in hospitality rather than limiting ourselves to a standard program. Our goal is to provide practical exposure and real-time training, giving our students a competitive edge in the market," explains Romie Dutt.

THE ACADEMY OFFERS:

- 3-Year Degree Programs
- Diploma and Certificate Programs
- Culinary and Crafted Beverage Workshops

Beyond theoretical knowledge, A-Star Academy emphasizes leadership and soft skills development, essential for future managers. Students can engage in a variety of extracurricular activities, fostering a balanced and versatile skill set that distinguishes them in the competitive hospitality landscape.

THE A-STAR ADVANTAGE

The hospitality industry is evolving every day, and it is crucial to keep up with the changing trends. The future talent that will shape hospitality practices will be born at A-Star Academy. Experiential learning is the only way to teach the dedication and determination needed to be a top hotelier.

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TRADITIONAL TO MODERN

Gujarati jewellery is a dazzling tapestry of tradition, artistry, and cultural heritage. Each piece is not just an ornament but a story, meticulously crafted to reflect the rich history and vibrant spirit of Gujarat

TT BUREAU

From the intricate design of the Chokha to the radiant shine of the Kundan set, Gujarati wedding jewellery is an ode to elegance and grandeur. These timeless pieces adorn brides, transforming them into visions of grace and beauty, and are often passed down through generations as cherished heirlooms.

Join us as we delve into the mesmerizing world of Gujarati wedding jewellery, where every jewel is a testament to the state's unparalleled craftsmanship and artistic legacy.

GUJARATI JEWELLERY: A LONG-STANDING TRADITION OF EXQUISITE JEWELLERY-MAKING

Gujarat, a vibrant state in western India, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and a long-standing tradition of exquisite jewellery-making. The traditional jewellery of Gujarat showcases a blend of diverse cultural influences, from the intricate designs of Mughal and Rajput styles to the vibrant colours of Gujarati folk art.

Traditional Gujarati jewellery exhibits a stunning diversity among the various communities of the state. Located on the western coast of India, Gujarat boasts a rich cultural tapestry that is vividly reflected in its traditional jewellery and attire. This article delves into the renowned designs of Gujarati jewellery.

The true splendour of traditional jewellery from Gujarat comes to life during festivals like Navratri and Dussehra. During these celebrations, locals don their finest traditional outfits and jewellery, revelling in the festive spirit. The people of Gujarat adorn themselves with lavish jewellery and accessories, showcasing a royal sense of style, artistry, and grace.



Gujarati Traditional Jewellery

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Gujarat's jewellery-making tradition is deeply rooted in ancient history, tracing back to the Indus Valley Civilization. Archaeological excavations in sites like Lothal and Dholavira have unearthed an array of intricate jewellery pieces, including beads, necklaces, and bangles, made from materials like gold, silver, and semi-precious stones.

These findings highlight the advanced craftsmanship and the aesthetic sensibilities of the people of Gujarat even during ancient times. The region's strategic location as a trading hub further enriched its jewellery heritage, bringing in diverse influences from various cultures, including Persian, Greek, and later, Mughal and Rajput styles.

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

In Gujarati culture, jewellery is more than just an accessory; it is a symbol of social status, religious beliefs, and cultural identity. The traditional jewellery of Gujarat reflects the state's diverse cultural influences and is deeply intertwined with its customs and traditions.

ARTISANAL SKILLS IN JEWELLERY FROM GUJARAT

The creation of traditional jewellery from Gujarat showcases meticulous craftsmanship, blending traditional methods with

modern adaptations. Traditional techniques such as Kundan, Meenakari, and Jadtar remain central. Kundan involves setting gemstones with gold foil, while Meenakari adds vibrant enamel designs. Jadtar jewellery, with uncut diamonds set in gold, requires precision and skill.

Modern adaptations have introduced laser cutting and fusion designs, enhancing detail and integrating contemporary styles. Artisans now blend traditional motifs with modern aesthetics, catering to evolving tastes without compromising heritage. This blend of old and new ensures that the jewellery remains both timeless and trendy, celebrating cultural legacy while embracing innovation.

Each piece, whether a bridal adornment or a statement accessory, reflects the artisans' dedication to excellence and their ability to adapt traditional techniques for today's world. These pieces are not merely adornments but also symbols of the wearer's social status, religious beliefs, and cultural identity.

ICONIC ORNAMENT PIECES OF JEWELLERY FROM GUJARAT

PATLA

Patla is a traditional waistband worn by women in Gujarat, typically crafted from gold and adorned with precious stones like diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. This ornate accessory encircles the waist, symbolizing wealth and status. Patla is prominently featured during special occasions such as weddings and festivals, showcasing the wearer's elegance and cultural heritage. Its intricate design and luxurious materials make it a cherished piece of heritage jewellery.

KANDORA/KARDHANI

Kandora, is among waistband Gujarati jewellery designs jewellery cherished by women in Gujarat that showcases intricate craftsmanship and cultural elegance. Crafted from gold and adorned with precious stones like diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, this beautiful piece features a broad band

secured with a hook or clasp. Delicate chains and tassels dangle gracefully from the band, enhancing its allure, while small pendants like bells or coins add a charming jingling sound.

In Gujarati culture, Gujarati bridal jewellery like the Kandora is more than just an accessory; it symbolizes wealth, status, and femininity. Worn on special occasions such as weddings, festivals, and religious ceremonies, it holds a place of honour. The creation of a Kandora demands exceptional skill and expertise, reflecting the dedication and artistry of its makers.

KUNDAN BUTTI

Kundan Butti is a traditional jewellery piece that originated in Rajasthan and is also popular in Gujarat. The gemstones are set in a wax mould and then placed in a frame. Typically worn as a necklace or earrings, Kundan Butti is revered as a symbol of beauty and elegance, enhancing any traditional attire.

HANSULI

The Hansuli, a traditional Gujarati neck ornament, is renowned for its elegant crescent shape. Crafted from gold or silver, it often features intricate engravings and embellishments with gemstones like rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. As a staple in traditional jewellery sets, the Hansuli symbolizes wealth and cultural heritage. Frequently worn during significant ceremonies and passed down as a family heirloom, this exquisite piece reflects the rich craftsmanship and enduring beauty of jewellery from this state.

BAJUBANDH

The Baju Bandh, a traditional armlet cherished by women in Gujarat epitomizes elegance and grace. Crafted from gold and adorned with precious stones like diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, this exquisite piece is worn on the upper arm. It symbolizes femininity and beauty, adding a touch



Kundan Butti



Damini - Drop Earrings

of splendour to the wearer. Baju Bandh remains a treasured adornment in Gujarati culture.

CHANDLO

The Chandlo, a cherished jewellery heirloom, is a stunning forehead ornament symbolizing elegance and tradition. This intricate piece typically features a central gemstone, often a ruby or emerald, surrounded by delicate patterns crafted in gold or silver. The detailed designs and vibrant stones reflect skilled craftsmanship. Worn during weddings and cultural ceremonies, the Chandlo not only enhances beauty but also signifies cultural heritage, making it a treasured family heirloom.

DAMANI

Drop earrings are a versatile accessory, perfect for any occasion, whether it's a night out or a formal event. These earrings have a decorative piece that hangs below the earlobe, giving them a graceful and elegant appearance. They come in various styles, such as chandelier earrings, teardrop earrings, and statement drop earrings, offering a wide range of options to suit different tastes and outfits.

TODI

Todi is a traditional toe ring worn by women in Gujarat, typically made of silver and worn on the second toe. It symbolizes marital status and is commonly gifted to brides on their wedding day. Beyond its cultural significance, Todi is also believed to have medicinal properties, offering health benefits to the wearer. This meaningful ornament blends tradition with wellness, making it a cherished part of Gujarati bridal attire.

MATTHA PATTI OR GUJARATI DAMINI

A Gujarati bride also wears this traditional Damini at her wedding. The Damini includes a maang tikka for the forehead



Todi - Toe Ring



Mattha Patti

and side strings that tie into the hair. It features several gold chains linked together, adorned with captivating motifs encrusted with rubies and emeralds. This headpiece, worn on the forehead with its side loops secured at the sides and centre, adds an elegant touch to bridal attire.

PACHHELI

The Pachheli is a distinctive earring traditionally worn by men in Gujarat. Featuring a circular disc design, these ornaments are often embellished with gemstones or pearls, adding a hint of sophistication to the wearer's appearance. Pachheli earrings are more than just accessories; they carry the weight of heritage, frequently passed down through generations as cherished family heirlooms, blending elegance with tradition.

NATHINI

Nathini, popular among Gujarati and Rajasthani women, features a large golden ring with a chain that attaches to the hair. It is often decorated with gemstones like Rose Quartz, Amethyst, or Diamond. The nose pin, or Kil, is typically made of silver. Some women opt for a small stud, while others prefer a larger nose pin adorned with intricate floral designs, making this piece both versatile and elegant.

RAKHDI OR BORLA

Another beloved jewellery item is the “Borla” or “Rakhdi” – a stunning maang tikka traditionally worn by brides on their wedding day. This elaborate forehead ornament, crafted from gold or silver, beautifully adorns the bride’s forehead. Artisans embellish it with pearls, kundan work, and vibrant gemstones, creating a piece that is both exquisite and culturally significant.

KANTI

Kanti is a traditional Gujarati choker-style necklace that sits closely around the neck, radiating elegance and cultural richness. The elaborate designs reflect skilled craftsmanship, making it a statement piece worn during special occasions like weddings and festivals. Kanti not only enhances the wearer’s beauty but also symbolizes tradition and status, making it a cherished addition to any jewellery collection.

CONTEMPORARY ADAPTATIONS

Modern designers are skillfully blending traditional elements with contemporary aesthetics, creating pieces that appeal to today’s fashion-conscious consumers. They incorporate traditional motifs, like peacocks and lotus flowers, into sleek, minimalist designs, and use modern materials such as white gold and diamonds alongside traditional gold and enamel work. This fusion results in jewellery that maintains its cultural roots while appealing to modern tastes.

The influence of celebrities and fashion influencers has significantly elevated the global profile of traditional jewellery. Bollywood stars and international celebrities often adorn Gujarati-inspired pieces at red-carpet events, weddings, and fashion editorials. These high-profile endorsements have brought global attention to craftsmanship and unique designs, making it a sought-after choice for luxury fashion.

Social media platforms amplify this visibility, with influencers showcasing how these traditional pieces can be styled in contemporary ways, appealing to a younger, global audience. This trend not only boosts the popularity of traditional jewellery designs but also supports the artisans and preserves the cultural legacy of Gujarat’s rich jewellery-making tradition.

By embracing innovation while honouring heritage, jewellery from Gujarat stands as a symbol of enduring beauty and craftsmanship, captivating generations with its timeless elegance. The intricate designs and vibrant aesthetics of jewellery making from Gujarat have captivated admirers for centuries, and today, they continue to shine on a global stage.



Nathini



Kanti - Traditional Gujarati choker-Style Necklace



Rakhdi or Borla



SPELLBINDING TRADITIONS OF KASHMIRI WEDDING

Discover the enchanting rituals and vibrant traditions that make Kashmiri Hindu weddings a mesmerizing blend of culture, love, and celebration

TT BUREAU

Steeped in the exceptional beauty of Kashmir, the Kashmiri wedding ceremony is a mesmerizing blend of traditions, creating a truly enchanting experience. From delightful vegetarian cuisine and unique family customs to the traditional attire of the bride and groom, a Kashmiri Hindu wedding is a cherished memory waiting to happen.

Kashmiri Pandit weddings, rich in culture and ethnicity, are like a breathtaking fairytale brought to life. Every element, from pre-wedding ceremonies to the wedding outfits, is a sequence of mesmerizing details. Arranged marriages among Kashmiri Pandits are blessed by both families, with considerations of family virtues and socio-religious factors. The families match the teknis

(horoscopes) of the couple. Once the horoscopes align, the families agree on the wedding. The girl's family proposes a date, which is then approved by the groom's family, and the priest seals the date. With formalities completed, the wedding begins in full fervour.

Our detailed guide will walk you through the cultures and rituals of the wedding, helping you appreciate the rich heritage of the Kashmir valley and providing essential guidance if you're planning a Kashmiri Pandit wedding.

PRE-WEDDING RITUALS

Much like Kashmir's stunning landscapes, its weddings are a harmonious blend of tradition and beauty. Pre-wedding rituals take place in both the couple's homes on an auspicious



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date chosen by their families. While song and dance are integral to the celebration, as with any Indian wedding, the ambience here is serene and elegant, reflecting the unique charm of Kashmiri culture. This is how it goes.....

KASAMDREY

Kasam Dreij, meaning “giving your word,” is when the families of the boy and girl agree to the marriage in principle. A crucial requirement is that the Tekinye (horoscopes) of both must match, a nearly sacred tradition.

The formal commitment ceremony, known as Kasam Dreij, takes place at a temple. Families meet, exchange flowers, and offer puja to honour the match, followed by a traditional vegetarian meal prepared by the girl’s family. The aunts of both the bride and groom prepare a special rich pudding called ‘Var,’ which is then shared with family and friends.

GANDUN

Gandun, which means “tying up,” is the formal engagement ceremony held at the respective homes of the bride and groom. The family priest sets the date according to the Kashmiri calendar. This ceremony occurs in front of a worshipped idol. On this day, the groom’s sister or sister-in-law visits the bride’s home with a gold Tyok (tikka) and an adorned golden thread called Narivan (Mauli) for the bride.

She applies the Tyok to the bride’s forehead and ties the Narivan to her wrist. She also brings gifts such as a saree, shawl, silver cup with cream, salt, and sugar for the bride. Additionally, she hands over the groom’s Zaatukh (horoscope scroll), which remains with the bride’s family until the wedding. On her return, she receives gifts, clothes, jewellery for the groom, and blocks of crystallized sugar called Nabad Noet.

LIVUN

Livun marks the exciting kick-off to the grand wedding festivities, rooted in the age-old tradition from when people lived in mud huts. This ceremony involves a symbolic and thorough cleaning of the bride and groom’s homes, performed by married women from each family, who are

often rewarded with money or clothes. During Livun, surfaces like walls and floors are daubed, symbolizing the ceremonial cleaning of the house. In the past, Kashmiris lived in mud houses, and on this day, these homes were cleaned and given a fresh coat of mud or clay to spruce them up.

MAENZIRAAT

Maenz is the Kashmiri term for Mehndi, and Raath means Night — together, Maenziraat is the night of mehndi, song, and dance that takes place a couple of days before the wedding. This ceremony prominently features the bride’s maternal and paternal aunts. At the bride’s house, a bathing ritual is performed where her feet are washed by her maternal aunt. Afterward, her eldest aunt applies henna (mehndi) on her palms and feet.

DEVGOAN

This significant ritual, typically held a day before the wedding, symbolizes the transition of the bride and groom from Brahmacharya Ashram to Grahasthya Ashram.

At their respective homes, the bride and groom undergo the Kanyi Shraan — a ceremonial bathing ritual. In this tradition, the Maamanye (maternal aunt) cleans the Vuz (main lobby of the house), and the bride or groom is seated at the centre. Water mixed with milk is poured over them through a muslin cloth held by four young girls (Kanya), one at each end.

A noteworthy mention is the Atth and Dejhor. Kashmiri Pandit women wear a gold chain with an attached pendulum in both ears, identifying them as married Kashmiri Pandits. This ornament holds deep spiritual significance. The Dejhor, a hexagon-shaped gold pendant, represents the union of Shiva and Shakti, while the Atth is the gold chain that holds the Dejhor, worn in both ears.

WEDDING DAY RITUALS

BARAAT

The groom’s family is warmly welcomed by the bride’s family at the wedding venue with the blowing of a conch shell. Both families exchange nutmegs as a symbol of lifelong friendship.



Engagement



Maenziraat



Vedic Rituals At The Mandap

LAGAN

Once the Baraat arrives at the bride's home, the women of her family welcome them with Vanvun. The groom and his family are garlanded with marigold flowers, and a conch is blown to ward off any evil spirits. Unlike other Indian weddings, Pandit weddings do not feature a music band or dancing.

As the groom steps into the courtyard, both he and the bride stand on the Vyoog, a traditional rangoli. The eldest lady of the bride's family performs a traditional Aalath (similar to an Aarti) and offers Nabad sugar crystals. This is followed by Dwar Poozah at the main entrance, a small puja conducted by the priest. The bride wears Pulhor (straw sandals) for this ceremony.

The bride, groom, grandparents, and all from their gotra fast until the Laegan is completed. The nuptial knot is tied through a long puja, following Vedic rituals at the Mandap with a lit yagna. The extensive puja rituals span several hours, culminating in the Kanyadaan, where the bride's father or eldest family member gives her hand to the groom.

The bride and groom take Pheras (rounds) around the sacred fire, holding hands. They also undertake the Saptapadi, where the groom makes seven promises to the bride. With each step the bride takes towards her new home, the priest announces a condition for the groom to accept. The marriage is solemnized only when these seven promises are made.

POSHE POOZAH

At the conclusion of the wedding ceremony, the bride and groom sit down together. A red cloth is placed over their heads, and the surrounding guests shower them with flowers (posh) while Vedic mantras are chanted. This act symbolizes the worship of the couple Shiva and Parvati, blessing them with love and prosperity.

VIDAYI

This is the moment when the bride formally bids farewell to her family. During this ceremony, the couple stands on a wooden pedestal called Vyoog. The eldest female family member kisses them thrice on the forehead in a gesture known as offering Nabad.



Poshe Poozah



Phera

GHAR ATCHUM

Ghar Atchum is a formal reception ceremony hosted by the bride's family. After this event, the bride returns to her husband's home. From the joyous Wanvun to the sacred Lagan and the poignant Vidayi, every moment is a testament to the rich heritage and enduring traditions of Kashmir. Kashmiri weddings are a mesmerizing blend of rituals, music, and heartfelt moments that celebrate the union of two souls and the merging of two families.

Each ritual, steeped in cultural significance, adds a unique flavour to the festivities, creating memories that last a lifetime. Whether you're attending or planning a Kashmiri wedding, these rituals offer a beautiful journey through love, culture, and celebration.

EXQUISITE ART OF MEENAKARI

Originating in Persia and adopted by the royal courts of Rajasthan, the Art of Meenakari is a centuries-old art form that adorns jewellery and decorative pieces with its dazzling enamelwork

TT BUREAU

Minakari, also known as Meenakari, is an enamelling technique that was developed in Safavid-era Iran for the purpose of painting and colouring the surfaces of ceramic tiles and metal objects. The countries of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India are the primary producers of this art form, which is also practised as an art form.

The fine patterns that are typical of minakari art are often used to decorate a wide range of things, such as jewellery, plates, containers, vases, frames, and other display items.

HISTORY OF MEENAKARI

The history of the Meenakari craft may be traced back to Persia. Since “Mina” is the feminine form of the Persian word

“Minoo,” which means “Heaven,” Mina is preoccupied with the cyan hue that represents heaven.

Craftsmen in Iran are credited with this technique’s invention, which was brought to people in other nations (including India) by the Mongolians. The Mughals, who were known for their love of elaborate Mughal jewellery, eventually became acquainted with this Shahi craft.

LEGENDARY MEENAKARI GEMS

Meenakari flourished as a royal splendour and cultural synthesis hallmark during the Mughal period. It adorned thrones, crowns, and architectural marvels commissioned by Mughal emperors, showcasing intricate designs and vibrant enamelling techniques.



Handcrafted Elegance Meenakari Ring



Colour Being Applied With Thin Spoke

These majestic artefacts, once symbols of imperial power and artistic finesse, now find their esteemed places in renowned museums such as the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Displayed to awe-inspiring effect, these pieces not only reflect the cultural richness of their era but also stand as a testament to the enduring allure of Meenakari artistry across centuries.

PROCESS OF MAKING MEENAKARI

The production of meenakari is an extremely time-consuming, intricate, and challenging procedure. It calls for a significant amount of expertise as well as commitment. The process includes fusing coloured powder glass to a base made of a material such as metal, glass, or ceramics.

This is accomplished by subjecting the material to very high temperatures, often in the range of 750 to 850 degrees Celsius (1,380 to 1,560 degrees Fahrenheit) during the firing process. This results in the material being known as vitreous enamel or ceramic enamel, depending on which term you want.

On the metal, the glass, or the ceramics, the powder will melt and flow, and then it will cure into a vitreous coating that is smooth, long-lasting, and resilient. Any steel, stone, substance, or anything that is able to endure and maintain the fusing temperatures may have enamel applied to it. Enamel can be used in a variety of applications.

The chunk of steel that will be used for Meenakari is affixed to a lac stick before the process begins. On it are sculpted or engraved patterns of flora and fauna, such as flowers, birds, fish, and other animals, that are beautiful, intricate, and exquisite.

The enamel dust of the desired colour is then dispensed and hurried into the grooves after the walls and grooves



The Finished Jewelry Piece, To Be Boiled With A Mild Acid

necessary to retain and grab the colour have been generated as a result of this process.

The colour is melted by the temperature of the kiln, and the melted colour is distributed uniformly throughout the groove. The art of Meenakari is characterised by complex and ornate patterns that are created via the use of geometric lines and forms, along with other gorgeous motifs. Dishes for serving, vases, frames, displays, containers, and jewellery are all common places where you'll find Meenakari art applied as a decorative element.

Metal oxides are combined with a little bit of powdered glass to create the colours that are used in enamelling. According to the scientific explanation, the shade of colour that is produced is determined by the oxide concentration of the material alone. These colours are ordered according to how difficult they get, starting with the one that is the most difficult of them all.

When the combinations are still in their unprocessed state, the colours do not appear immediately; rather, they appear only after the product has been heated in the furnace. Amritsar, Punjab, Germany, and France are the most common countries from which enamel colours are purchased and transported.

The Meenakari art style, which is featured on a wide range of objects, is well-known for having characteristics that are both distinctive and immediately noticeable. This includes things like anklets, earrings, jewellery boxes, picture frames, key chains, stools, seats for tiny temples, and even anklets and earrings.

The states of Rajasthan and Gujarat are the most well-known for the Meenakari products and jewellery that they produce, with Jaipur serving as the industry's primary hub. In the enamelling done in Jaipur, traditional Mughal hues like

red, green, and white are employed. It is common knowledge that Nathdwara, Bikaner, and Udaipur are famous for their silver. Glass enamelling is a speciality that may be seen at Meenakari and Pratapgarrh.

Even in modern times, people in many parts of India continue to perform this art form. The hue known as gulaabi Meena, which is closer to rose pink, is the one most often seen in Banaras. Meenakari in Lucknow prefer to work with blue and green Meenakari rather than silver. Enamel work over gold is often done in Delhi, Banaras, and Jaipur.

Paintings created in the time-honoured and conventional style of Meenakari may be seen in collections all over the globe. It is grand, and it maintains its crown-worthy status by providing a sensation and experience befitting a monarchy. The artistic form is important to a large number of individuals in a variety of distinct ways. It can be found in all parts of the nation, and each region has developed its unique style and approach to the implementation of the art form.

WHERE TO BUY

Since the 16th century, Jaipur has served as the most important place for Meenakari jewellery. Other regions of the state are also known for making and selling Meenakari jewellery around the world. Most Meenakari jewellery made of gold is made in Jaipur, Delhi, and Benaras.



Meenakari Bangles



Meenakari Earrings

Most Meenakari jewellery made of silver is made in the cities of Bikaner, Udaipur, and Nathdwara. The glass enamelling that is used in Meenakari jewellery that originates from the Pratapgarrh area is in great demand due to the region's more affordable price tags.

These hubs not only offer a wide range of traditional Meenakari items like jewellery, home decor, and religious artefacts but also provide insights into the intricate techniques and cultural significance behind each piece.

Additionally, art galleries and exhibitions worldwide occasionally feature Meenakari artworks, offering opportunities to acquire unique and curated pieces that blend historical craftsmanship with contemporary interpretations.

CELEBRATING THE ARTISTRY AND LEGACY OF MEENAKARI

As admirers of Meenakari art, we are drawn not only to its rich historical roots and intricate craftsmanship but also to its enduring allure in contemporary times. Each piece, whether a delicately enamelled pendant or a vividly adorned vase, carries within it centuries of tradition and the skilled hands of artisans who have mastered this ancient craft. By owning a piece of Meenakari, we not only cherish its beauty but also become custodians of its cultural narrative, connecting us to a heritage that spans continents and epochs.

As we bring these treasures into our homes and lives, we celebrate the artistry and legacy of Meenakari, ensuring its timeless elegance continues to inspire and enchant for generations to come.



Meenakari Necklace

A BIT OF SPARKLE

Small, stylish and superbly elegant – this pair of cufflinks by William Penn can uplift any humble white shirt. Made from tough Basildon steel and inlaid with mother-of-pearl, this nifty piece is a must-have in any gentleman's wardrobe.



HAPPY RABBIT TIE BY HERMES

Perhaps the most visible piece of formal garment is also the most neglected one. But not anymore. Hermes is on a mission to save men from stylistic disasters and its new range of quirky ties is the perfect tool in its arsenal. Wear it with pride!

ESCAPE THE ORDINARY



Beautiful Sunset in Majuli, Assam

For the adventurous traveller, the allure of offbeat adventure getaways holds an irresistible charm

TT BUREAU

With its vast and diverse landscape, India is a treasure trove of such hidden gems. Beyond the popular tourist spots lies a realm of extraordinary beauty, rich culture, and unique experiences waiting to be uncovered. In this journey, you'll traverse through unusual holiday destinations - serene mountain villages, explore ancient forests, and discover pristine beaches untouched by the masses.

Each destination offers a glimpse into these secret destinations - the heart of India's authentic and uncharted beauty. Here, every path leads to a new adventure, and every moment is a story waiting to be told.

MAJULI, ASSAM

Majuli, a captivating river island located in the Brahmaputra River of Assam, holds the title of the world's largest inhabited river

island. It also proudly stands as the first island to be designated a district in India. This remarkable island is cradled between the River Brahmaputra to the south and the River Subansiri to the north, making it a unique geographical marvel. Despite its lesser-known status among tourists, Majuli boasts a vibrant landscape and rich cultural heritage that is sure to enchant any visitor.

Originally spanning approximately 880 square kilometres at the dawn of the twentieth century, Majuli has experienced significant erosion and now covers around 514 square kilometres. This mid-river deltaic island owes its formation to the shifting courses of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries. Surrounding the island are numerous islets known as Chaporis, adding to its scenic charm.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT MAJULI

Explore the Satras: Visit Samuguri Satra, Garmur Satra, Auniati Satra, and other satras at Majuli. These satras feature

a large prayer hall facing a simple shrine, surrounded by dormitories and bathing tanks for monks.

Witness Beautiful Sunsets: Experience the breathtaking sight of the mighty Brahmaputra River embracing the setting sun. You can witness this awe-inspiring view by visiting the sunset point, which leaves spectators captivated by its beauty.

Visit Mask Makers: An exciting experience awaits you at Samaguri Satra, the residence of skilled mask makers. These artisans demonstrate exceptional talent, creating incredible masks using a bamboo base, dried cow dung, and other materials.

Boat Ride on the Brahmaputra: In the heart of Assam, Majuli invites you to intimately connect with the grandeur of the mighty Brahmaputra River. Embrace the adventure by hiring a traditional country boat and rowing across the vast waters, feeling the river's powerful presence like never before.

Savour Local Cuisine: At Majuli, you can indulge in a delectable array of local delicacies, including fish baked in banana leaf (pattot dia mas), sticky rice, chicken roasted on a stick (chicken khorika), and fish curry with Oo Tenga fruit (Oo Tenga Mas Jul). These dishes, accompanied by fresh vegetables, offer a truly delightful culinary experience.

ORCHHA, MADHYA PRADESH

Located along the River Betwa, the quaint town of Orchha is rich in history, stunning architecture, and beautiful scenery.

True to its name, which means "hidden place," Orchha features a mix of palaces, chhatris, havelis, shrines, and gardens, all quietly set amid a scrubby jungle. Though the town is no longer the formidable stronghold it once was, its medieval buildings, though a bit worn, still exude charm.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT ORCHHA

Rafting: When in Orchha, river rafting on the Betwa should top your list of activities. The river's turbulent currents provide an adventurous trail before merging into the Yamuna.

Jungle Safari: The sanctuary, located along the Betwa River, is a must-visit in Orchha. Next on your list should be a safari through this scenic marvel in a charming corner of Madhya Pradesh. Both the Betwa and Jamni Rivers provide essential water sources for the sanctuary's wildlife. Spanning approximately 46 sq.km., the sanctuary offers a variety of adventure sports, including fishing, canoeing, trekking, and camping.

Light and Sound Show at Orchha Fort: The captivating history of Orchha comes alive at the light and sound show at Orchha Fort. The grandeur of medieval Indian architecture is highlighted brilliantly as the palace transforms into a digital spectacle.

DAROJI SLOTH BEAR SANCTUARY, KARNATAKA

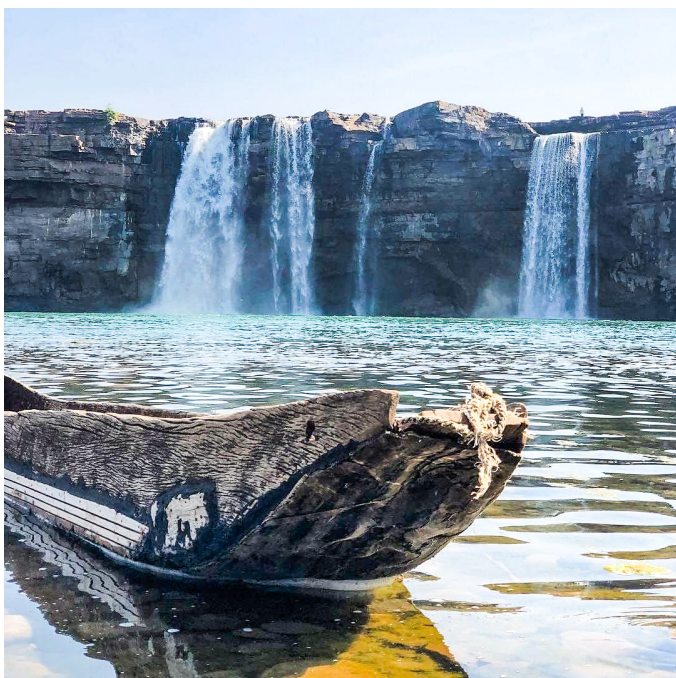
Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary, the first of its kind in India and Asia dedicated solely to the conservation of Sloth Bears, spans 82.7 square kilometres. Evening machan sightings are arranged due to the bears' nocturnal habits.



River Rafting in Orchha



Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary



Chitrakote Falls

Besides a significant population of free-roaming bears, the sanctuary is home to hyenas, wild boars, pangolins, porcupines, jackals, and leopards. It also houses diverse wildlife including star tortoises, monitor lizards, and rock agamas.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT DAROJI SLOTH BEARS SANCTUARY

Wildlife Safari: Embark on a safari through the sanctuary's scrub jungle to spot sloth bears, hyenas, wild boars, pangolins, porcupines, jackals, and leopards. Safaris are typically conducted in the early mornings or late evenings for the best wildlife sightings.

Machan Experience: Experience the thrill of observing sloth bears from elevated machans (watchtowers) strategically placed around the sanctuary. This activity is particularly popular in the evenings when bears are active.

Bird Watching: Explore the sanctuary's diverse avian population with sightings of endemic bird species such as the painted spurfowl, yellow-throated bulbul, sand grouse, stone curlew, and peafowl. Bird-watching is best done during the early morning hours.

Nature Walks: Take guided nature walks through the sanctuary's scrub jungle to learn about its flora and fauna, including the star tortoise, monitor lizard, and rock agama.

Photography: Capture stunning wildlife and landscape photographs during your visit. The sanctuary's natural beauty and diverse wildlife offer excellent opportunities for photography enthusiasts.

CHITRAKOTE FALLS, CHHATTISGARH

Amidst the majestic Vindhya ranges, the Chitrakote Waterfalls on the River Indravati in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, cascade down from a height of 32 meters. The name "Chitrakote" is derived from the local Halbi word for deer, "chitar," reflecting the herds that once roamed its scenic surroundings. Located about 275 km from Raipur, these falls are often referred to as the Niagara Falls of India due to their impressive width and horseshoe shape.

Surrounded by dense sal forests, the falls create a stunning visual as the massive water curtain drops with a thunderous roar that echoes through the rugged hills, cliffs, and tidy paddy fields. During the rainy season, the usually white water turns various shades of brown, laden with silt. If you're fortunate, you might even spot a rainbow or two arching above the misty depths of the falls.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT CHITRAKOTE FALLS:

Kayaking: Paddle through gentle currents on the Indravati River, enjoying picturesque waterfall views. Experience the thrill of kayaking at Chitrakote Falls, where you can navigate through cascading waters and marvel at the breathtaking beauty of India's widest waterfall.

Boat riding: Enjoy a leisurely boat ride for an up-close encounter with the majestic Chitrakote Falls, offering a truly immersive experience.

Bird Watching: Explore the rich biodiversity of Chembra Peak, which is home to various bird species. Bird watching is particularly rewarding during the spring or fall migrations, with a wide variety of species to observe. The area is a haven for several endemic and endangered birds, such as the black-chinned laughing thrush, Nilgiri flycatcher, and Nilgiri pipit. Additionally, you can spot fascinating species like the brown wood owl, oriental dwarf kingfisher, steppe buzzard, and blue-bearded bee-eater.

Embracing offbeat travel is about experiencing the thrill of the unknown, connecting with local cultures, and creating lasting memories. Every path leads to a new adventure, and every moment is a story waiting to be told. From the serene river island of Majuli in Assam to the enchanting Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh, each destination showcases India's authentic and uncharted beauty. Get on this journey and let India's hidden gems redefine your sense of adventure and wonder.

OLFACTORY SENSATION

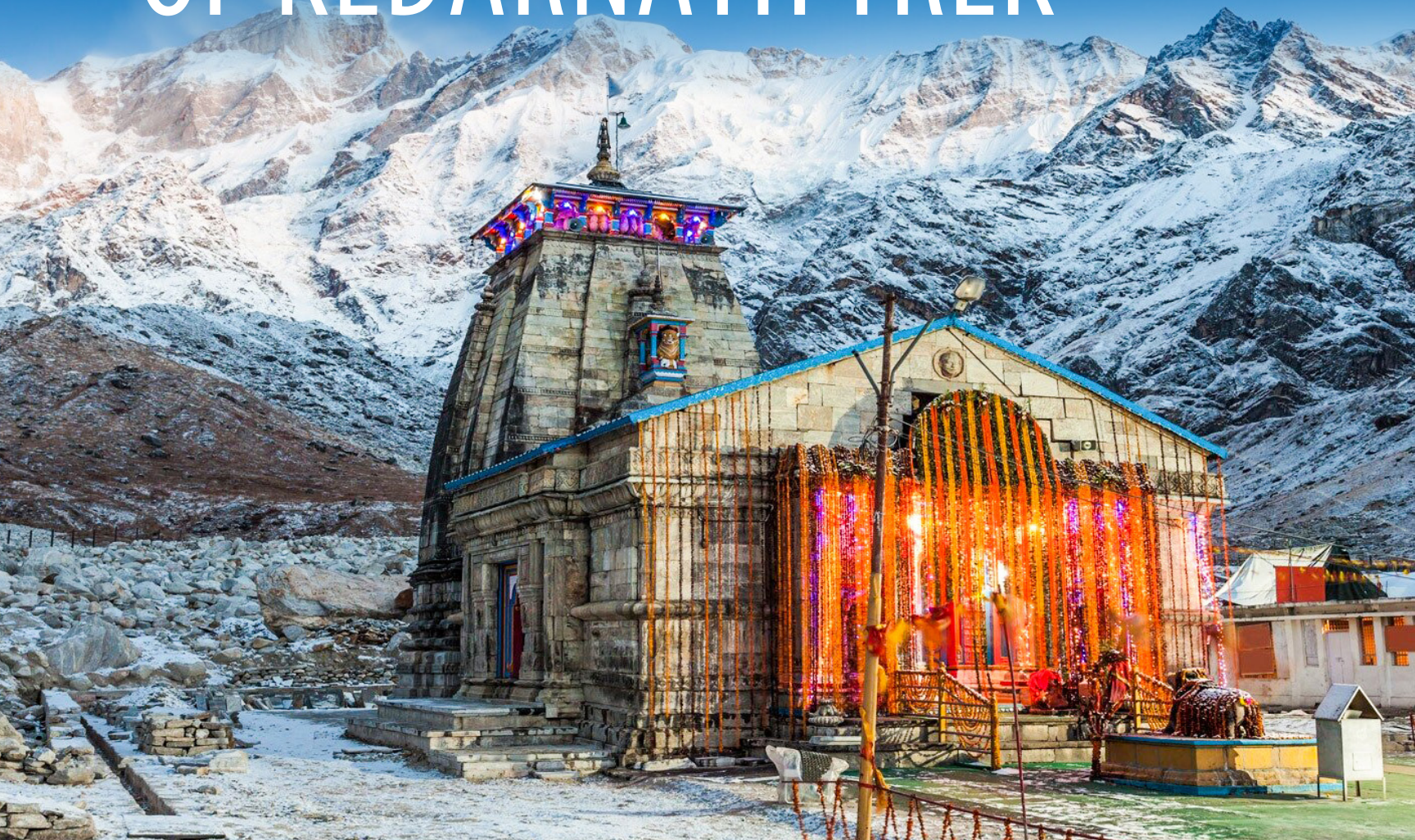
One of the most expensive perfumes in history, Bulgari's limited edition Opera Prima has notes of orange blossom, florals, lemon and musk. But it is the bottle that is a collector's item. Showcasing fine Italian craftsmanship, it is finished in gold leaf and studded with diamonds.



AN ICON IN A BOTTLE

When it was first introduced in the year 1921, it sent shockwaves through the world of perfumery. Initially reserved for the 100 most valuable customers of Chanel, the perfume went on to become one of the most iconic smells of the 20th century. Prepared by French perfumer Ernest Beaux, this perfume has notes of rose, jasmine and synthetic aldehydes. Perfect for evening wear, this is one iconic smell that is hard to be forgotten.

UNMISSABLE HIGHLIGHTS OF KEDARNATH TREK



Discover the highlights of the Kedarnath Trek, a powerful blend of spirituality and adventure in the Himalayas

NAVEEN KAKKAR

Kedarnath is one of India's most revered temple destinations in the majestic Garhwal Himalayas. Situated at an altitude of 3,580 meters, this sacred town is built around the famous Kedarnath Temple, near the Chorabari Glacier, which is the source of the Mandakini River.

Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the ancient Kedarnath Temple boasts exquisite architecture, made of large, evenly shaped grey stone slabs. Inside, a unique conical rock formation is worshipped as Lord Shiva in his "Sadashiva" form. This temple is not only a significant part of the Char Dham pilgrimage

circuit but also one of the 12 Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva in India. The backdrop of the temple features the impressive Kedarnath Peak, Kedar Dome, and other towering Himalayan peaks.

Historically known as "Kedar Khand," the region is legendary. According to the epic Mahabharata, the Pandavas, after their victory over the Kauravas, sought Lord Shiva's blessings for redemption from their guilt.

The elusive Lord Shiva took refuge in Kedarnath in the form of a bull, diving into the ground and leaving his hump on the surface, which is worshipped at Kedarnath today. Other

parts of Shiva appeared at four different locations, forming the revered Panch Kedar pilgrimage circuit: Tungnath (arms), Rudranath (face), Madmaheshwar (belly), and Kalpeshwar (locks of hair).

Reaching the Kedarnath Temple requires an inspiring 16-kilometer trek starting from Sonprayag. Join us on this beautiful journey filled with spiritual significance.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Kedarnath is a revered pilgrimage site dedicated to the Hindu deity Shiva. It is one of the four sacred destinations that form part of the Uttarakhand Char Dham Yatra, also known as the Chota Char Dham Yatra. The temple's construction is attributed to the Pandava brothers from the Mahabharata.

However, the Mahabharata does not specifically mention a place called Kedarnath. One of the earliest references to Kedarnath appears in the Skanda Purana (circa 7th-8th century), which identifies Kedara (Kedarnath) as the location where Shiva released the holy waters of the Ganga from his matted hair, leading to the formation of the Ganges River.

According to hagiographies based on Madhava's Sankshepa-Shankara-Vijaya, the 8th-century philosopher Adi Shankaracharya died near the Kedarnath mountains. However, other hagiographies, based on Anandagiri's Prachina-Shankara-Vijaya, claim he died at Kanchipuram. The ruins of a monument purported to mark the resting place of Adi Shankaracharya are located at Kedarnath.

THE KEDARNATH TREK: GAURIKUND TO KEDARNATH

Gaurikund stands as the final accessible point by any means of transport, making the distance of 16 kilometres to Kedarnath crucial for all pilgrims. Situated at 6,502 feet above sea level, Gaurikund serves as the starting point for those journeying to the Kedarnath shrine. Understanding the straightforward Gaurikund to Kedarnath distance and duration is essential.

Initially a 14-kilometer journey, the Kedarnath Trek route was extended to 16 kilometres after the 2013 floods necessitated a new trek route to Kedarnath. From here, the Kedarnath Trek unfolds with the following steps:

JUNGLE CHATTI

Located near the Rambara bridge, Jungle Chatti is approximately 4 kilometres from Gaurikund. This stretch can be covered by walking or utilizing Pony and Palki services for a comfortable journey.

BHEEMBALI

Next, a 3-kilometre trek from Jungle Chatti leads to Bheembali, where you'll find abundant facilities such as GMVN tents, complimentary drinking water, restrooms, and WiFi services.

LINCHAULI

Following that, a 4-mile hike from Bheembali takes you to Linchauli, offering a breathtaking view of the highlands where the Mandakini River begins. Medical facilities, as well as private and GMVN tents, are available here.



Kedarnath Base Camp



Rambara Bridge



Kedarnath Temple

KEDARNATH BASE CAMP

Subsequently, it's approximately 4 kilometres from Linchauli to the Kedarnath base camp, passing by numerous glaciers and scenic panoramas along the way.

KEDARNATH TEMPLE

It's just a 1-kilometer distance from Kedarnath Base Camp to Kedarnath Temple. At the Base Camp, you'll find the GMVN camp, where reservations can be made through their official website.

THINGS TO DO IN KEDARNATH

EXPLORE VASUKI TAL

An expansive lake situated 8 km into the Himalayas near Kedarnath, offers a captivating experience for hikers willing to tackle its steep slopes. The panoramic vistas of the Himalayan mountain ranges, tranquil blue waters, and lush forest surroundings make it an exhilarating adventure. This popular spot attracts both pilgrims and tourists and is accessible round the clock.

VISIT SONPRAYAG

Another place of religious significance on your way to the Kedarnath Temple is Sonprayag. Perched at an altitude of 1829 meters above sea level, this location is believed to be the site of the marriage of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. The term "Prayag" means "convergence," and Sonprayag is where the Basuki and Mandakini rivers meet. Situated between Rudraprayag and Gaurikund, it can be reached by taking a cab or taxi from Rudraprayag.



Vasuki Tal



Basuki And Mandakini Rivers Meet

VISIT SUNSET POINT

For unparalleled views of the Chopta Valley, this is the perfect destination. Ideal for overnight camping, it also serves as the base for treks to Tungnath and Chandrashila. Visitors can capture stunning footage of the expansive Valley as a backdrop, making for a truly unique outdoor experience.

ENJOY BIRD WATCHING

Chopta, located in the Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary of the Garhwal Himalayas, is rapidly becoming a premier birdwatching destination in India. With its breathtaking landscapes, a mix of pine and deodar forests, rhododendrons, and lush grassy meadows known as 'bugyals,' it is one of the most accessible places in India to spot the stunning 'nine-coloured' state bird of Uttarakhand, the Himalayan Monal.

Bird enthusiasts can also find Kalij and Koklass Pheasants, the delightful Brown Dipper, nuthatches, and laughingthrushes. Chopta is a paradise for wildlife lovers, birdwatchers, and photographers alike.

In essence, the Kedarnath Trek is a transformative pilgrimage that blends the beauty of the Himalayas with profound spiritual insights, making it a journey that touches the heart and soul of every pilgrim.

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BEAUTIFUL HIDDEN TEMPLES OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Discover the hidden temples of Himachal Pradesh, where ancient legends come alive amid the breathtaking Himalayan landscapes

TT BUREAU



Bijli Mahadev

Himachal Pradesh, often referred to as the “Land of the Gods,” is renowned for its stunning landscapes and vibrant culture. Beyond its popular tourist destinations and well-known pilgrimage sites, the state harbours a treasure trove of hidden temples, each with its own unique story and mystical charm. These lesser-known sanctuaries offer a glimpse into the rich tapestry of history, architecture, and spirituality that defines Himachal Pradesh.

Imagine trekking through serene forests, only to stumble upon an ancient temple shrouded in local legends. Picture a temple so old and sacred that it stands without a roof, believed to have been built by the Pandavas during their exile. Or envision a shrine perched on a hilltop, where the Shivalinga is struck by lightning and miraculously restored by the priests. These are just a few of the enchanting tales that await those who venture off the beaten path in search of lesser-known temples in Himachal Pradesh.

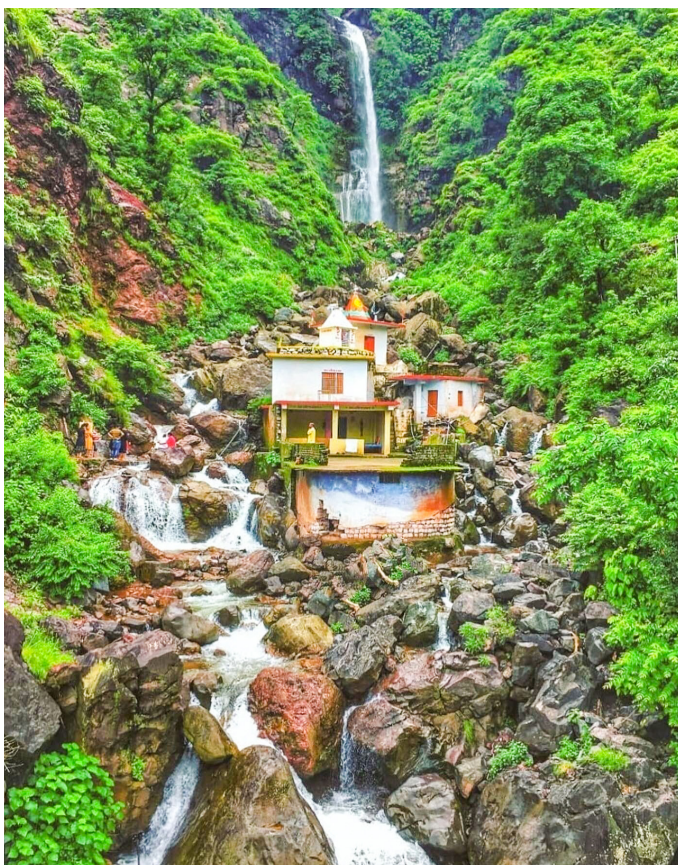
The hidden temples of Himachal Pradesh, such as the Shikari Devi Temple in Mandi and the Bijli Mahadev Temple near Kullu, are not just places of worship but also architectural marvels set against breathtaking backdrops.

Join us as we explore these captivating hidden temples, revealing the secrets and stories that make them extraordinary. Whether you’re a history enthusiast, a spiritual seeker, or an adventure lover, this journey promises to be a memorable and enriching experience. Here are some hidden sacred sites in Himachal Pradesh that offer a perfect blend of historical exploration.

BIJLI MAHADEV

In the picturesque village of Kashawri in Kullu Valley, Bijli Mahadev Temple stands as a testament to ancient mysticism and enduring faith. Located approximately 20 km from Kullu, this revered shrine can be reached after a scenic 3 km trek. Renowned as one of India’s oldest temples, Bijli Mahadev is steeped in legend and awe.

Every 12 years, a mysterious phenomenon occurs: the Shiva Lingam within the temple is struck by lightning bolts. This celestial event, shrouded in mystery, causes the lingam to shatter into pieces. Yet, the temple priest, anticipating this divine intervention, meticulously gathers the fragments and reassembles them using a unique mixture of cereal, pulse flour, and unsalted butter.



Renuka Ji Temple

Remarkably, after several months, the Shiva Lingam is restored to its original form, whole and pristine. According to local lore, these lightning strikes are not random acts of nature but the will of the presiding deity, aiming to protect the region's inhabitants from evil. This sacred site, with its intriguing legends and breathtaking surroundings, continues to draw both devotees and curious travellers alike.

SHRINGA RISHI TEMPLE

Located in the serene valley of Banjar in Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh, the Shringa Rishi Temple stands as a beacon of spirituality and history. Revered as the ruling deity of the Banjar Valley, Rishi Shringa's presence is deeply embedded in the lore of this enchanting landscape, once his 'tapa Bhoomi' or meditation site.

Legend has it that a sacred stone, or 'Pindi,' in the dense forest of Skeeran, called out to passersby, compelling them to enshrine it in a temple. Answering this mystical summons, the villagers built a temple in Skeeran. However, the arduous journey to this remote sanctuary prompted them to construct another temple closer to home, in the village of Bagi. This new Shringa Rishi Temple, located 12 kilometres from the original site, seamlessly blends the traditional pagoda and Pahari architectural styles.

Adorned with exquisite wooden craftsmanship, the temple is a visual delight, while the brass and stone idol in the sanctum exudes a timeless aura. The deity, always enshrined in its chariot, commands reverence throughout the year, although the temple itself closes during the harsh winter months.

The Shringa Rishi Temple is not just a spiritual haven but also a magnet for tourists and devotees, drawn by the

captivating natural beauty and the profound sense of divinity that pervades the region.

RENUKA JI

In the Sirmaur District of Himachal Pradesh, Renuka Ji is an unspoiled haven waiting to be discovered. Just 37 km from Nahan, it serves as the perfect weekend escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. Renuka Ji is renowned for its breathtaking Renuka Lake, the largest natural lake in Himachal Pradesh. Surrounded by dense, lush forests at an elevation of 672 meters, this serene lake spans an impressive circumference of about 3214 sq. km, offering a captivating and picturesque view.

Named after the goddess Renuka, who took jal samadhi in Ram Kund Sarovar following the death of her husband, Rishi Jamdagni, the lake is believed to have formed in the shape of a lady, hence its name. Each year, Renuka Ji hosts a five-day International Fair during Prabodhini Ekadashi, which begins with the arrival of Lord Parshuram to the holy lake to honour his mother, Renuka. This event adds a vibrant cultural touch to the tranquil beauty of Renuka Ji, making it a must-visit destination.

SHIKARI DEVI TEMPLE

Shikari Devi Temple, located about 18 km from Janjehli and accessible via a jeepable forest road, sits majestically at an altitude of 3359 meters. As the highest peak in Mandi District, it is aptly known as the Crown of Mandi. The journey to Shikari Peak is a visual treat, with thick forests lining the way, offering a spectacular backdrop of natural beauty.

Nature lovers flock to this destination for its vast green pastures, captivating sunrises and sunsets, and panoramic views of the snow-capped ranges. The area receives a significant



Shringa Rishi Temple



Narvadeshwar Temple

amount of snow during the winter months, adding to its allure. From Karsog, just 21 km away, Shikari Devi is easily accessible.

CHURDHAR TEMPLE

Churdhar Temple, located in the Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh, is perched at an impressive altitude of 3,647 meters, making it the highest peak in the outer Himalayas. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, this temple is a significant pilgrimage site, drawing devotees and trekkers alike.

The temple's location offers stunning panoramic views, including the Churdhar Wildlife Sanctuary, home to diverse flora and fauna. The trek to Churdhar is an adventure, with routes passing through dense forests, lush meadows, and quaint villages. A notable feature is the 18-foot tall statue of Lord Shiva at the summit, exuding a serene and spiritual aura.

Legend has it that Churdhar is the place where Bhuri Singh, the king of Chamba, found his divine inspiration. The temple is also mentioned in the epic Ramayana, where it is believed that Churdhar was the place where Lord Hanuman found the life-saving Sanjeevani herb.

NARVADESHWAR TEMPLE

Narvadeshwar Temple, located in the charming town of Sujampur, was constructed by Maharani Prasanni Devi, the wife of Raja Sansar Chand. This 200-year-old temple is renowned for its exquisite wall paintings that adorn its interiors, enhancing its architectural beauty. Built in the traditional Bhatti style, the temple's arches and niches captivate every visitor's eye.

Surrounding the Narvadeshwar Temple are several other temples, each dedicated to various deities including Durga, Ganesh, Laxmi Narayana, and Mahisasur Mardini. These temples collectively create a spiritual haven, making



Churdhar Temple

Narvadeshwar not only a historical gem but also a vibrant centre of devotion and art. The intricate designs and historical significance of the temple complex continue to attract and inspire countless pilgrims and tourists alike.

From the mystical Bijli Mahadev with its lightning-struck Shiva Lingam to the serene Shringa Rishi Temple nestled in Banjar Valley, each site tells a unique story. The roofless Shikari Devi Temple, the tranquil Renuka Ji with its picturesque lake, and the lofty Churdhar Temple all provide a deep spiritual experience amidst stunning landscapes.

These sacred sites, steeped in legends and surrounded by nature, invite visitors to explore the rich cultural heritage and serene beauty of this Himalayan region.



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Jaisalmer Fort (Sonar Quila)

UNFORGETTABLE JAISALMER ADVENTURES

Immerse yourself in unforgettable Jaisalmer desert adventures, in a mesmerizing destination renowned for its historic forts, vibrant culture, stunning architecture, and thrilling desert escapades

TT BUREAU

Named after Maharaja Jaisal Singh, Jaisalmer stands as one of Rajasthan's most iconic historical destinations. Located in the heart of the vast Thar Desert, this city is celebrated for its rich heritage, traditions, and vibrant culture. Jaisalmer district holds the distinction of being the largest in Rajasthan and the third largest in India. Located in the Marwar region (Jodhpur Division), the city serves as the administrative headquarters of the district.

Known as the "Golden City," Jaisalmer enchants visitors with its golden-hued sandstone architecture, stunning landscapes, and deep cultural roots. The city is adorned with serene lakes, intricate Jain temples, and grand havelis, showcasing its opulent past.

MUST-VISIT PLACES IN JAISALMER

Jaisalmer Desert Adventures offers an exclusive and immersive destination experience, distinct from the typical tourist 'triangle.' Its smaller size compared to cities like Jaipur and Jodhpur allows for more intimate and unique encounters, cherished by discerning travellers.

JAISALMER FORT (SONAR QUILA)

Jaisalmer Fort, one of the largest forts in the world, stands as the most iconic landmark of Jaisalmer city. Unlike other forts in Rajasthan, this one is a vibrant living monument, housing museums, shops, restaurants, residences, and even hotels within its ancient walls.

Inside the fort, the main attractions include the Raj Mahal (Royal Palace), the Jain temples, and the Laxminath Temple. Built to the true Rajasthan standards, the fort presents a striking cityscape against a red-and-yellow backdrop. Often referred to as the "Sonar Kila" or "Golden Fort," it is made of yellow sandstone that glows with a golden hue when bathed in the early morning sunlight.

PATWON KI HAVELI

In the city of Jaisalmer, Rajasthan stands an architectural gem known as Patwon ki Haveli. Located near the Patwa Valley, this haveli consists of five distinct palaces and is also called the House of the Brocade Merchants, as a prosperous brocade merchant and jeweller, Guman Chand Patwa built it. These five

mansions were intended for the five Patwa brothers. Today, one of the havelis hosts guests, while two others are managed by the Archaeological Survey of India. Inside, visitors can find a museum and a shop selling antique furniture.

Constructed from yellow sandstone with a striking brown gateway, the haveli's walls are adorned with intricate mirrorwork and beautiful paintings. Each arch features a uniquely distinct style, and lattice or jali carvings allow sunlight to beautifully illuminate the interiors. With around 60 balconies, the structure is built in the traditional style of Jaisalmer and is one of the region's most well-preserved heritage sites.

GADISAR LAKE

Gadisar Lake is more than just a body of water; it's a living museum showcasing the rich history and culture of Jaisalmer. Surrounded by splendid monuments, temples, chhatris, and shrines, the lake reflects the artistic and architectural heritage of the city. It also hosts various festivals and events that celebrate Jaisalmer's traditions and customs, making it a popular attraction for visitors worldwide who come to bask in its charm and tranquillity.

The lake's fascinating history dates back to the 12th century when it was built by Rawal Jaisal, the founder of Jaisalmer, as a rainwater harvesting reservoir to provide water for his people. Rawal Jaisal, a Bhati Rajput ruler, established Jaisalmer as his capital in 1156 AD after relocating from Lodurva due to water scarcity.

SAM SAND DUNES

The Sam Sand Dunes, located about 45 km from Jaisalmer city, are a breathtaking part of the Thar Desert, offering endless stretches of golden sand as far as the eye can see.

Shaped and sculpted by the wind over centuries, these ever-changing dunes form a unique and mesmerizing landscape. Positioned on the outskirts of Jaisalmer, they

provide an unforgettable desert experience, a stark contrast to the bustling city life.

TANOT MATA TEMPLE

Tanot Mata is a revered temple located in the Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan, India. Worshipped as Tanot Mata, Goddess Aavad, the daughter of Mamadji Charan (Gadhvi), is considered a predecessor of Karni Mata. Like other prominent goddesses of the region such as Temde Rai, Karni Mata, Deg Rai, and Khodiyar, Tanot Mata was born into the Charan caste



Patwon Ki Haveli



Gadisar Lake

and lived as a warrior sage. According to ancient Charan literature, Tanot Mata is an incarnation of the divine Goddess Hinglaj Mata and is thus revered as a Goddess of War.

The village of Tanot is situated near the Pakistani border, close to the historic battle site of Longewala from the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, famously depicted in the Hindi movie "Border." Contemporary folklore attributes the temple's divine intervention to the favourable outcome of the battle.

ACTIVITIES TO ENJOY IN JAISALMER

BOATING

Rajasthan, particularly Jaisalmer, boasts numerous artificial lakes that offer breathtaking views. These lakes are not only visually stunning but also provide various activities for visitors. Boating, in particular, is a popular pastime in Jaisalmer.

Spend a memorable day at Lake Gadisar with your family while in Jaisalmer. A boating trip offers the chance to admire towering stone forts as you glide across the tranquil waters. Don't miss out on this wonderful experience with your loved ones.

DESERT CAMPING

Jaisalmer offers a wide range of Camel Safari options, no matter what time of day you have available. You can enjoy an exciting camel ride at many popular sand dune sites like Sam sand dunes, Khuri sand dunes and Lodhruva sand dunes. For a more secluded experience, you can arrange a safari in the lesser-known areas of the Thar Desert.

CULTURAL TOURS

To uncover the cultural history of Jaisalmer, travellers can visit Kuldhara Village (the Ghost Village) and Bada Bagh. These locations offer a fascinating glimpse into the past through guided tours and captivating stories shared by locals. This unique experience provides a deep understanding of the area's rich history and mysteries. Additionally, visitors can engage with local artisans and craftsmen, exploring bustling markets and witnessing the creation of intricate silver jewellery, embroidered textiles, and traditional puppets.

LOCAL CUISINE: A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

Rajasthani food is typically spicy, and the cuisine in Jaisalmer is no exception. Influenced by the locally available ingredients, Jaisalmer's food is predominantly vegetarian. However, the city also excels in creating delicious Rajasthani non-vegetarian dishes. Here are some must-try local dishes in the city.

DAL BAATI CHURMA

These are hard wheat-bread balls seasoned with salt, cooked in a tandoor or over firewood, and then sprinkled with clarified ghee. They are typically served with a delicious dal made from soaked lentils. Churma, a traditional sweet dish, is made from a blend of wheat flour, besan (gram flour), sooji,



Desert Camping in Sam Sand Dunes



Dal Baati

sugar, ghee, and mixed nuts. This combination is a must-try for anyone visiting Rajasthan, especially Jaisalmer.

GATTE KI SABZI

Gatte ki Sabzi is a popular Rajasthani dish in Jaisalmer, made from gram flour (besan) dough shaped into dumplings. These dumplings are cooked in a spicy yoghurt-based gravy, infused with traditional spices. The dish is rich, flavorful, and best enjoyed with steamed rice or bajra roti.

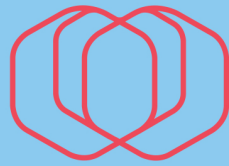
LAAL MAAS

Laal Maas, a speciality dish from Jaisalmer, is a fiery mutton curry cooked with yoghurt and a generous amount of red chilli paste. This intensely spicy dish pairs perfectly with rice or roti. When ordering, the server might ask if you'd prefer a medium spicy version, but be warned—it's still very hot!

Jaisalmer is more than just a destination; it's a journey back in time where history, culture, and adventure converge. Whether you're exploring its majestic forts, experiencing the desert's serenity, or indulging in its rich cuisine, Jaisalmer promises an unforgettable tapestry of memories.

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TT BUREAU



A Monsoon Affair: Hot Chai and Warm Memories



Shree 420 - Romancing the Rain

The first raindrops began to fall, bringing with them the earthy scent of petrichor that filled the bustling streets of Mumbai. People hurried to find shelter, and the city seemed to come alive with the vibrancy that only a monsoon could bring.

In a small, quaint café tucked away in one of Mumbai's many narrow lanes, Ananya sat by the window, watching the rain pour down. The café, a popular spot among locals, was known for its monsoon snacks. Ananya had always loved this season; it was her favourite time of the year. The rain brought back memories of her childhood, and with it, the comfort of delicious, hot snacks.

As she sipped her steaming cup of chai, her mind wandered to scenes from her favourite Bollywood movies, where the monsoon was not just a backdrop but a character in its own right. She remembered Raj Kapoor and Nargis sharing an umbrella in "Shree 420," their love story unfolding

amid a downpour. The romance of rain and the promise of new beginnings were themes that resonated deeply with her.

SHREE 420

Just then, the aroma of freshly fried pakoras wafted through the air. The waiter brought a plate of golden-brown pakoras, crispy on the outside and soft on the inside, accompanied by green chutney. Ananya picked up a pakora and took a bite, savouring the crunch and the burst of flavours. The rain outside intensified, creating a perfect setting for this comforting treat.

She thought of another iconic scene, this time from "Aashiqui 2," where Aditya Roy Kapur and Shraddha Kapoor shared a moment in the rain. The song "Tum Hi Ho" played in the background, and the simplicity of the scene, coupled with the rain, made it unforgettable. It was in these moments that Ananya felt the true magic of the monsoon.

The café door opened, and a young couple, drenched in the rain, walked in. They looked at each other and smiled, the rain adding a romantic touch to their evening. They ordered vada pav, Mumbai's quintessential street food. The spicy potato filling encased in a bun served with fried green chillies was a favourite among locals and tourists alike. As the couple bit into their vada pavs, Ananya couldn't help but smile, remembering her college days when vada pav was a staple snack during the monsoon.

Her next order was samosas, another beloved snack. She recalled a scene from "Munna Bhai M.B.B.S." where Sanjay Dutt's character, Munna, shared samosas with his gang in the rain. The camaraderie, the laughter, and the simplicity of sharing food in the rain made it a memorable scene. The samosas arrived, hot and crispy, with a spicy potato filling that was just perfect for the rainy weather.

MUNNA BHAI M.B.B.S.

As she enjoyed her samosas, Ananya noticed a street vendor across the road, roasting bhutta (corn) over a charcoal fire. The sight took her back to her childhood vacations in the hills, where roasted bhutta, rubbed with lime and chilli powder, was a monsoon staple. She decided to buy one for herself. The taste of the smoky, sweet corn was a perfect companion to the rainy evening.

The café had started to fill up with people seeking shelter and warmth from the rain. Friends gathered, sharing stories and laughter over cups of chai and plates of snacks. The monsoon had a way of bringing people together, creating moments of connection and joy.

As the rain continued to fall, Ananya ordered another cup of chai. She thought of "Chaiyya Chaiyya" from "Dil Se," where Shah Rukh Khan and Malaika Arora danced on top of a moving train in the rain. The energy, the music, and the rain made it one of the most iconic Bollywood scenes ever.

Lost in her thoughts and the rhythm of the rain, Ananya felt a deep sense of contentment. The monsoon, with its grey skies and persistent showers, had a way of transforming the mundane into something magical. It was a season that celebrated the small joys of life—hot pakoras, spicy vada pav, crispy samosas, roasted bhutta, and endless cups of chai. Each snack carried with it a story, a memory, and a taste of nostalgia.

The rain outside showed no signs of stopping, and Ananya was in no hurry to leave. She decided to order one last plate of pakoras, savouring every bite as she watched the rain paint the city in shades of grey and green. The monsoon had once again cast its spell, and Ananya was more than happy to be caught in its embrace, surrounded by the warmth of her favourite snacks and the memories they evoked.



Chaiyya Chaiyya from Dil Se



Street Vendor Roasting Bhutta in Rain



Munna Bhai M.B.B.S. - Hot Chai and Samosa



Vada Pav

SPICY WONDERS OF MUMBAI

Explore Mumbai's street food magic, where every bite of spicy vada pav and tangy pani puri bursts with unforgettable flavours

TT BUREAU

Mumbai, India, is a gastronomic paradise teeming with flavours that reflect its vibrant culture and diverse heritage. The city's signature dishes, such as vada pav, pav bhaji, bhel puri, and an array of seafood specialities, are a testament to its rich culinary tapestry.

A walk through Mumbai's streets introduces you to street food stalls where you can indulge in spicy, tangy, and savoury treats that are both delightful and affordable. Iconic restaurants like Britannia & Co., famed for its Parsi cuisine, and Trishna, renowned for its seafood, offer a more formal dining experience, allowing you to savour traditional recipes passed down through generations.

Mumbai's non-vegetarian street food scene is a tantalizing blend of flavours, spices, and textures that reflect the city's diverse culinary heritage. From the bustling lanes of Mohammed Ali Road to the lively beach stalls of Juhu, Mumbai offers a plethora of mouth-watering non-veg delights.

Signature dishes include succulent kebabs, spicy tandoori chicken, and the famed baida roti, a savoury flatbread stuffed with minced meat and egg. The iconic Mumbai biryani, rich with fragrant basmati rice and tender pieces of mutton or chicken, is another must-try. Each bite of these street foods tells a story of the city's vibrant culture and the culinary artistry of its street vendors, making Mumbai a paradise for non-vegetarian food lovers.

Exploring Mumbai's culinary scene isn't complete without visiting its bustling local markets. The vibrant Crawford Market and Dadar's vegetable market are perfect spots to experience

the hustle and bustle of daily life while discovering fresh produce and exotic spices. For a more immersive experience, culinary tours offer guided street food tours, spice market visits, and cooking classes focusing on Maharashtrian cuisine, providing a deeper understanding of the local food culture.

The city's culinary landscape is also shaped by the diverse communities that call Mumbai home. The influences of Parsi, Gujarati, and Konkani flavours are evident in the variety of dishes available, making every meal a celebration of Mumbai's multicultural essence. Through its food, Mumbai tells a story of tradition, innovation, and the communal spirit that makes this city's culinary scene truly extraordinary.



The Iconic Mumbai Biryani

GREAT PENMANSHIP

While the art of penmanship is all but dead, this special edition pen by Mont Blanc is sure to revive it. Designed as a tribute to Jimi Hendrix, this pen gives out a distinctly retro vibe with its stylish black cover. The rollerball tip uses water-based ink that makes writing sharper, clearer and more vibrant.



IRRESISTIBLE SUMMER DESSERTS TO BEAT THE HEAT

Summer is the perfect season to indulge in refreshing and delightful desserts that not only satisfy your sweet tooth but also help you beat the heat

TT BUREAU



Summer Desserts

As temperatures soar, there's nothing more appealing than a cool, delectable treat to brighten your day. From classic ice creams and sorbets to exotic kulfi and halo-halo, summer desserts come in a myriad of flavours and forms. These culinary creations are more than just a way to cool down; they're a celebration of seasonal fruits, vibrant colours, and the joy of sweet indulgence.

Imagine savouring a scoop of creamy mango ice cream or a bowl of zesty lemon sorbet on a sweltering afternoon, each bite offering a burst of refreshing flavour. Or perhaps you prefer the rich, spiced delight of an Indian kulfi, slow-cooked to perfection with hints of cardamom and saffron. For those who love a mix of textures and tastes, the Filipino halo-halo offers a tantalizing blend of shaved ice, sweetened beans, fruits, and jellies, topped with a scoop of ice cream.

Beyond these traditional favourites, there are innovative and health-conscious options like yoghurt parfaits, chia seed

puddings, and smoothie bowls, which combine nutrition with indulgence. These desserts not only cool you down but also provide a delicious way to enjoy the bounty of summer fruits and flavours.

Join us on a mouth-watering journey through the top summer dessert dishes that promise to refresh and rejuvenate, offering something delightful for every palate.

ICE CREAMS AND GELATOS

Ice creams and gelatos are quintessential summer treats that have captured hearts worldwide with their creamy textures and delightful flavours. The history of these frozen desserts is as rich and varied as their flavours. Ice creams and gelatos are beloved summer favourites for their ability to provide instant relief from the heat. Their cool, smooth textures and sweet, refreshing flavours make them the perfect indulgence on a hot day. The richness of ice cream, typically higher in fat and air content, contrasts with gelato's denser, silkier texture, which has less fat and more intense flavours.



Watermelon Sherbet

Summer brings a bounty of fresh fruits and herbs, inspiring a range of popular ice cream and gelato flavours. Mango is a standout, offering a sweet, tropical escape with every scoop. Strawberry, with its vibrant colour and natural sweetness, remains a perennial favourite, often enhanced with chunks of real fruit. Mint, especially when paired with chocolate chips, provides a refreshing, cool burst that's both invigorating and delicious. Ice creams and gelatos continue to be a celebration of flavors and a symbol of summertime joy, delighting people of all ages with their endless possibilities and refreshing qualities.

SORBET AND SHERBET

Sorbet and sherbet are both refreshing frozen treats with key differences. Sorbet is dairy-free and made from pureed fruit, sugar, and water, offering a light and intensely fruity flavour. Sherbet contains a small amount of dairy, usually milk or cream, giving it a creamier texture than sorbet but lighter than ice cream.

Fruit-based sorbets are especially popular in summer due to their vibrant flavours and refreshing qualities. Lemon sorbet, with its tart and tangy kick, is perfect for cooling down on a hot day. Raspberry sorbet offers a sweet yet slightly tart flavour, bursting with fresh berries' essence. Watermelon sorbet captures the juicy, hydrating goodness of this summer fruit.

PANNA COTTA

Panna cotta, an elegant Italian dessert, translates to "cooked cream." It's a creamy treat made by simmering together cream, sugar, and gelatin, then chilling it until set. Panna cotta's smooth, silky texture makes it a favourite for hot summer days. This versatile dessert comes in various flavours. The classic vanilla panna cotta offers a rich, creamy base, often enhanced with a hint of vanilla bean. Coffee panna cotta provides a robust, aromatic twist perfect for coffee



Panna Cotta

lovers, while berry panna cotta incorporates fresh or pureed berries, adding a refreshing fruity element.

RICE PUDDING

Chilled rice pudding offers a delightful twist on the traditional warm dessert, making it perfect for summer. Made by simmering rice in milk and sugar until creamy, the pudding is then chilled, resulting in a cool, refreshing treat. The creamy texture and mild sweetness make it a soothing dessert on hot days. To elevate chilled rice pudding, consider incorporating various add-ins. Fresh fruits such as mango, strawberries, or blueberries can add a burst of flavour and vibrant colour. Dried fruits like raisins or apricots also work well, providing a chewy contrast.

Nuts such as almonds, pistachios, or walnuts bring a delightful crunch and richness. Enhance the flavour profile with spices. A dash of cinnamon or nutmeg adds warmth and depth, while cardamom offers an exotic, aromatic touch. Vanilla extract can also be added for a classic, comforting flavour. These additions transform simple rice pudding into a sophisticated and flavorful dessert that is both versatile and satisfying, perfect for any occasion.

FLAN AND CRÈME BRÛLÉE

Flan and crème brûlée are both luxurious custard desserts that are perfect for summer. Flan, also known as caramel custard, features a creamy custard base topped with a layer of soft caramel. Crème brûlée, on the other hand, is a rich custard topped with a hard caramelized sugar crust that cracks delightfully under a spoon. The primary difference lies in their preparation and texture. Flan is typically baked in a water bath and then inverted to reveal the caramel sauce, resulting in a smooth, creamy texture with a soft caramel topping. Crème brûlée is also baked in a water bath, but

it's served in the dish it's baked in, and the sugar topping is caramelized with a torch, creating a crisp, glass-like surface.

Both desserts come in a variety of flavours. Flan can be infused with vanilla, coffee, or citrus for a refreshing twist. Crème brûlée is often flavoured with vanilla, but variations like chocolate, lavender, or even matcha add exciting nuances.

COLD CUSTARD WITH FRESH FRUIT

Cold custard with fresh fruit is a classic, refreshing dessert perfect for summer. This creamy, chilled custard pairs beautifully with the vibrant flavours of seasonal fruits, creating a delightful contrast. The dessert is not only tasty but also healthy, as it combines the richness of custard with the natural goodness of fruits.

To enjoy, simply spoon cold custard into bowls and top with an array of fresh summer fruits like strawberries, blueberries, mangoes, and kiwi. For added texture and flavour, sprinkle with nuts or drizzle with a bit of honey. This easy combination makes for a delicious, cooling, and nutritious treat on hot days.

JELL-O AND GELATIN DESSERTS

Jell-O, a popular brand of gelatin dessert, is known for its bright colours, wobbly texture, and sweet taste. Made from gelatin, sugar, artificial flavours, and colouring, Jell-O is a versatile treat that can be moulded into various shapes and combined with fruits or whipped cream. It's a favourite among children and adults alike, often evoking a sense of nostalgia.

Jell-O comes in an array of flavours, each bringing a burst of sweetness and colour. Classic flavours include strawberry, raspberry, cherry, lime, and orange. These fruity varieties are refreshing and perfect for summer, offering a light, cool treat. There are also unique flavours like blue raspberry, watermelon, and even tropical blends, catering to diverse palates.

Jell-O is easy to prepare: simply dissolve the powder in boiling water, add cold water, and refrigerate until set. For added fun and nutrition, mix in fresh fruits before chilling. This simple dessert is not only visually appealing but also a refreshing, low-calorie option for hot days, making it a beloved choice for family gatherings and parties.

MOUSSES

Mousses are known for their light, airy texture, achieved by folding whipped cream or beaten egg whites into a flavoured base. This makes them incredibly appealing, providing a rich yet delicate mouthfeel. Chocolate mousse is a classic favourite, offering a deep, velvety indulgence. Lemon mousse provides a refreshing, tangy twist, perfect for summer. Berry mousses, made with fresh strawberries or raspberries, add a fruity and vibrant touch. For an elegant presentation, layer mousse with fresh fruit or whipped cream in clear glasses. Top with berries, mint leaves, or chocolate shavings for added visual appeal



Cold Custard with Fresh Fruit



Cream Cheese Mousse

and texture. These combinations enhance the flavour and make for a stunning, refreshing dessert.

These treats, ranging from classic ice creams and sorbets to exotic delights like Rice Pudding and Mousses, offer a celebration of vibrant flavours and seasonal fruits. Each dessert not only helps to beat the heat but also brings joy and indulgence.

Whether you're enjoying a creamy mango ice cream, a zesty lemon sorbet, or a health-conscious yoghurt parfait, these desserts provide a delightful way to beat the heat and savour the joy of sweet indulgence. So, embrace the season's bounty and treat yourself to these refreshing delights that bring cool comfort on the hottest days.



CARL F. BUCHERER MANERO CENTRAL COUNTER

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



FROM KEBABS TO BIRYANIS

Explore the rich, flavourful world of Awadhi Dishes, from tender kebabs to aromatic biryanis, showcasing culinary elegance and heritage

TT BUREAU

Awadhi cuisine is an all-encompassing experience of dining, etiquette, elegance, and luxury. The array of dishes that form the Awadhi spread were meticulously crafted by the master chefs of the Nawabs' royal kitchens in Awadh. This cuisine epitomizes the refinement, elegance, and sophistication of the Nawabi lifestyle.

Today, Awadhi food is prevalent in North Indian cities. Yet, many modern eateries fail to capture the true sophistication and subtleties of authentic Awadhi fare. It's primarily in the historic streets of Lucknow and a few other select areas where one can still savour the traditional flavours. Modern adaptations were inevitable, given the labour, intricacy, and

finesse required for the Nawabs' cooking are challenging to sustain. Despite this, certain distinct characteristics remain, forming the heart and soul of Awadhi cuisine.

Awadhi cuisine, as its name implies, hails from the Awadh region in North India. This historically and culturally rich area lies in the heart of the Gangetic Valley, encompassing present-day Lucknow and its surroundings. The region fell under Mughal rule in the 16th century, but by the 18th century, the Nawabs of Awadh, semi-independent rulers, rose to prominence as Mughal power waned.

Under the patronage of the Nawabs, Awadhi cuisine developed its unique flavour profile. The first Nawab, Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Khan, was of Persian descent, infusing Persian

cultural practices into the Nawabi court, including its culinary traditions. Thus, the royal kitchens of the Nawabs became a melting pot of Mughal, Persian, and local influences, perfecting what we now recognize as Awadhi cuisine. Let's explore some mouth-melting Awadhi traditional dishes:

KEBABS

GALOUTI KEBAB

Galouti Kebab, also known as 'Gilawat' or 'Galawat,' boasts a rich and fascinating history. Created by the master chefs (Khansamas) during the reign of Nawab Asad-Ud-Daula, the ruler of Awadh, this kebab has a unique origin story. Despite losing his teeth due to old age, the Nawab's craving for meaty delights remained strong. To satisfy his desire, the royal cooks crafted a kebab so tender it melted in the mouth, giving birth to the legendary Galouti Kebab.

SEEKH KEBAB

Legend has it that Seekh Kebab, originally known as Shish Kebab, was introduced to India by the Turks. In Turkish, "Shish" means "sword" or skewer, and "Kebab" means "to roast," giving the dish its literal meaning of roasting meat on a sword.

KAKORI KEBAB

Kakori kebabs, a signature delicacy of Awadhi cuisine, originated in Lucknow. These tender, succulent kebabs, made with minced meat and spices, were created to impress a British official with their softness.

The story behind the birth of Kakori kebabs is as captivating as the Awadhi cuisine itself. It is said that Nawab Syed Mohammad Haider Kazmi from the Kakori district in Lucknow once hosted a dinner party, inviting several friends, including a British official. The Nawab chose an Awadhi menu to impress his guests, with seekh kebab as one of the

starters. However, the British official complained about the tough, chewy texture of the seekh kebabs, leaving the Nawab feeling insulted. He then commanded his chefs to create a kebab that was soft and tender.

After several days of relentless effort in the kitchen, the chefs finally presented the Nawab with a batch of soft, succulent Kakori kebabs. These kebabs are made with minced meat, spices, and a secret tenderizer—raw mango.

CURRIES AND GRAVIES

NIHARI

Nihari was originally a breakfast dish served to the Muslim Nawabs of Lucknow and Delhi. Over time, it transitioned from royal kitchens to the tables of labourers, who were given this protein-rich meal instead of wages, as it kept them energized throughout the day. The name "nihari" comes from the Arabic word "nahaar" (morning), highlighting its role as a morning meal, traditionally enjoyed after the fajr namaz (Islamic morning prayer).

While the basic ingredients for Nihari are straightforward, the magic lies in the precise balance of spices. Up to 50



Galouti Kebab



Nihari



Seekh Kebab



Korma

different spices can be used, tailored to each chef's preference. From the familiar warmth of cloves to the exotic allure of Peepli (long pepper), these spices add layers of depth and complexity, turning Nihari into a culinary masterpiece.

KORMA

Korma, with its roots in Mughlai cuisine, is a hallmark of the Indian subcontinent's rich culinary heritage. Dating back to the 16th century during the Mughal expansion into South Asia, this dish has become synonymous with royal feasts. Traditionally, korma involves braising meat or vegetables with yoghurt or stock, creating a rich, flavourful sauce. The magic of korma lies in its blend of spices, such as ground coriander and cumin, which are carefully mixed with yoghurt at a low temperature to prevent curdling and allow the flavours to meld with the meat juices.

RICE DISHES

AWADHI BIRYANI

Biryani, the timeless classic adored by all, reigns supreme as India's most beloved delicacy. Originally hailing from Persia, this dish journeyed to Hindustan, evolving with regional flavours and preferences to become a finger-licking favourite across the nation. Among its many variants, Awadhi Biryani stands out, originating from the Awadh region of India.

Awadhi Biryani is a delectable rice preparation made using the distinctive dum style, or dumpukht, a signature technique of Awadhi cuisine. Traditionally crafted with mutton, it can also be made with chicken, offering a subtle, flavourful, and aromatic experience.

During the Mughal era, Awadh (now Lucknow) served as the capital, lending its name to this delicate biryani. Awadh cuisine, deeply influenced by the Nawabs of Awadh from Persia, gave rise to variations like vegetarian Awadhi dishes



Awadhi Biryani

like Awadhi Veg Biryani. These adaptations cater to India's diverse palate, ensuring that everyone, whether vegetarian or non-vegetarian, can savour the exquisite taste of Awadhi Biryani without disappointment.

TEHRI

Tehri is a simple yet delicious one-pot meal cherished by families in North India. Mothers and grandmothers from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Haryana often serve it for lunch alongside coriander chutney, raita, papad, and pickle.

While it might be mistaken for vegetable biryani or yellow pulao, Tehri has its own distinct charm. Unlike biryani, it doesn't involve marinated ingredients, and unlike pulao, it doesn't use stewed meat. Tehri finds a unique middle ground: it features the "bhun-na" (sautéing) of vegetables with fragrant spices reminiscent of biryani and combines rice and veggies without layering, similar to pulao.

Tehri's origins trace back to the Kayastha community of Hindu bookkeepers in the courts of Awadh. This dish has many variations beyond Uttar Pradesh. In Jammu and Kashmir, a version called tehar is a staple comfort meal for Kashmiri Pandit households. This simpler version involves cooking rice with turmeric and adding a tadka (tempering) of mustard oil.

A GOURMET TOUR OF AWADHI GASTRONOMY

A Gourmet Tour of Awadhi Gastronomy showcases the elegance, sophistication, and rich flavours of Awadhi cuisine. Developed in the royal kitchens of the Nawabs, these dishes blend Mughal, Persian, and local influences to create a unique culinary experience.

Signature dishes range from a grand variety of kebabs, such as Galouti and Seekh to hearty biryanis and kormas. The cuisine also features breads like roomali roti and sheermal, and sweet delicacies such as shahi tukda and kheer. Awadhi cuisine is celebrated for its complex flavour profiles and royal heritage, making it a true feast for the senses.

Whether it's the tender Kakori kebabs or the aromatic Awadhi biryani, this cuisine offers a timeless and exquisite dining experience that reflects the grandeur of its heritage.



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