

ITODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, LUXURY & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE SEPTEMBER 2024 - ₹50

MAGNIFICENT
STAYS: HERITAGE
HAVELIS

DIVE INTO
ADVENTURE

WONDER
WEAVE

EXTRAORDINARY NEW PLACES

SICIS O'CLOCK



The greatest luxury is time

Sicis Jewels Milan · Via della Spiga 9, Milan 20121 · www.sicisjewels.com · jewels@sicis.com
Sicis Jewels Paris · Rue François 1^{er}, 41 · Paris 75008 · Ph: +33 0149528989

GATEWAY TO THE DESTINATION

Bring stunning destinations to life
with memorable stays at Gateway.



GATEWAY
HOTELS & RESORTS

BEKAL | MADURAI | COONOR | CHIKMAGALUR | NASHIK

www.gateway-hotels.com | [1800111825](tel:1800111825) | reservations@ihcltata.com

CHAIRMAN
KEWAL GILL

PUBLISHER/EDITOR
KAMAL GILL

MANAGING EDITOR
ARJUN GILL

SR. VICE PRESIDENT - SALES
VAGISH MISHRA

VICE PRESIDENT - SALES & ALLIANCES
SAFAL SAALWAR

MANAGER - SALES & OPERATIONS
ABHISHEK MANDAL

ASST. MANAGER - ADMIN & OPERATIONS
AMIT KUMAR JHA

ASST. MANAGER - DIGITAL & OPERATIONS
NAVEEN KAKKAR

CONSULTANT GRAPHIC DESIGNER
DEEPAK RASTOGI

Today's Traveller is published/printed by Kamal Gill on behalf of M/s Gill India Concepts Pvt. Ltd. Registered Office : Z-33, 11nd Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi, 110016

Printed at: Thomson Press (India) Ltd.
B-315, Okhla Industrial Area,
Phase 1, New Delhi-110020
All rights reserved.

For correspondence and advertising:
Z-33, 11nd Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi, 110016
Mobile : 9953701567, 9625846296
Email : publications@gillindia.com

All information in TODAY'S TRAVELLER is derived from sources, which we consider reliable. Information is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. The contents of this publication contain views of authors and are not the views of M/s Gill India Concepts Pvt. Ltd. (GICPL). Similarly, opinions/views expressed by any party in abstract and/or in interviews are not necessarily shared/do not necessarily reflect any opinion of GICPL. All rights reserved throughout the world. Reproduction in any manner is strictly prohibited. Material appearing in the publication cannot be reproduced in whole or in part without prior permission. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole, without permission could face legal action. Editorial enquiries and enquiries concerning the reproduction of articles, advertising and circulation should be emailed at publications@gillindia.com. The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning unsolicited material nor is responsible for material lost or damaged in transit. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw, amend or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the Indian Advertisements Code as well as the Advertisements Code of South Asia. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by the late publication, error or failure of advertisement to appear.



CON

06

UNIQUE LUXURY RETREATS

EXPERIENCE INDIA'S UNMATCHED LUXURY RETREATS, WHERE TRADITION MEETS MODERN OPULENCE

10

EXTRAORDINARY TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

UNCOVER UNIQUE DESTINATIONS FAR FROM THE USUAL

14

MANASKHAND EXPRESS: DISCOVER UTTARAKHAND

AN INNOVATIVE TRAIN JOURNEY DESIGNED TO REVEAL UTTARAKHAND'S HIDDEN GEMS

16

MAGNIFICENT STAYS: HERITAGE HAVELIS

ROYAL RESIDENCES THAT OFFER AN IMMERSIVE JOURNEY INTO THE GRANDEUR OF THE PAST

20

HOMESTAY BOOM

UNIQUE, PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCES THAT GIVE TRAVELLERS A TASTE OF LOCAL LIFE

24

DIVE INTO ADVENTURE

WORLD'S PREMIER SCUBA DIVING DESTINATIONS PERFECT FOR LEISURE AND ADVENTURE

28

WEDDING EXTRAVAGANZA

EXPERIENCE THE JOURNEY OF PLANNING A BIG FAT INDIAN WEDDING WITH VIKRAMJEET SHARMA





TENTS

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, LUXURY & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE | VOLUME 27 | No. 09 | SEPTEMBER 2024

32 ASSAM'S JEWELLERY HERITAGE
STEP INTO THE LEGACY OF ASSAM WITH ICONIC JEWELLERY PIECES

36 WONDER WEAVE
DISCOVER THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE CARPETS WITH JAW-DROPPING PRICES

40 GET YOUR FASHION FIX
GET READY TO SHINE WITH THE LATEST COLLECTIONS OF LUXURY SUNGLASSES AND JEWELLERY

44 GUARDIANS OF THE SERPENT
JOURNEY THROUGH INDIA'S FAMOUS SNAKE TEMPLES

48 SIP & SAVOUR AT TOP VINEYARDS
EXPLORE THE MOST CELEBRATED WINE REGIONS

50 IRRESISTIBLE MANIPUR DISHES
GET ON A FLAVOURFUL JOURNEY WITH OUR HANDPICKED SELECTION OF MANIPUR DISHES

54 TASTE OF SOUTH INDIA
SAVOUR THE AUTHENTIC FLAVOURS OF SOUTH INDIAN CUISINE

58 2024 POP CULTURE UNPLUGGED
EXPLORE THE YEAR'S BOLDEST POP CULTURE TRENDS, FROM MUSIC TO THEATRE



VISIT US AT:

WWW.TODAYSTRAVELLER.NET

FOR MARKETING ENQUIRIES:

PUBLICATIONS@TODAYSTRAVELLER.NET

OR FOLLOW US



<https://facebook.com/TodaysTraveller>



https://Instagram.com/TodaysTraveller_updates/



<https://linkedin.com/company/TodaysTraveller/>

UNIQUE LUXURY RETREATS

India's officially the VIP lounge of unique luxury retreats! Where else can you find cultural richness, jaw-dropping scenery, and wellness practices that have been on trend for centuries? Namaste to that!

KAMAL GILL

It's no secret that India has long been a top pick for those in search of unique and unforgettable experiences, but when it comes to luxury retreats, India is truly in a league of its own. From the serene foothills of the Himalayas to the lush backwaters of Kerala, India's luxury retreats are more than just beautiful—they're transformative.

These retreats go beyond the usual, combining world-class hospitality with innovative sustainability practices that not only pamper but also give back to the environment. These elements have positioned India as a premier destination for discerning travellers seeking both opulence and holistic well-being.

Ready to explore why India tops the charts for luxury retreats? Let's explore the magic!

RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

One of the most compelling reasons for India's popularity in the luxury retreats sector is its rich cultural heritage. The country's historical depth and diversity offer a captivating backdrop for luxury retreats. Palatial resorts housed in ancient forts, havelis,

and palaces provide an immersive experience that marries the grandeur of the past with contemporary luxury.

Stok Palace in Ladakh brings alive the conservation of the 200-year-old palace building and undertakes the conservation of palace art annually, along with the Palace Museum's display of priceless thangkas.

Properties such as Six Senses Fort Barwara and RAAS Devigarh allow guests to step back in time while enjoying all the modern comforts one could desire. This blend of historical opulence and modern amenities creates a unique allure that few destinations can match.

Aman-i-Khas, located near Ranthambore National Park, offers a regal experience with its luxurious tented camp. Here, guests have the chance to explore the local wildlife and the rich heritage of Rajasthan through curated experiences and traditional cuisine. It's a perfect blend of adventure and cultural immersion and is considered one of the best luxury retreats in India.

Six Senses Vana, nestled in the lush forests of Dehradun, combines wellness with cultural immersion. This retreat



Stok Palace, Ladakh



RAAS Devigarh

offers Ayurvedic treatments and local culinary experiences, allowing guests to rejuvenate while enjoying the serene natural surroundings. Shreyas Retreat, near Bangalore, offers a blend of luxury and traditional wellness practices in a serene environment. Guests can indulge in yoga and Ayurveda, experiencing a tranquil retreat that reflects Indian culture and promotes holistic well-being.

These luxury retreats not only provide exceptional amenities and services but also offer unique experiences that connect guests to the rich cultural and natural heritage of India.

TRADITIONAL WELLNESS PRACTICES

Traditional wellness practices form another cornerstone of India's appeal. As the birthplace of Ayurveda, Yoga, and Meditation, India holds a unique position in the global wellness landscape. These ancient practices have gained international acclaim for their holistic approach to health and well-being. On the blue shores of Om Beach in Karnataka SwaSwara capitalises on wellness luxury with its yoga, meditation, and food menus.

Atmantan Wellness Centre, Maharashtra offers custom-made wellness programmes with nutrition and healing therapies in an eco-friendly environment. The commitment to sustainability centres on green buildings and nature preservation.

Luxury retreats like Ananda in the Himalayas and Niraamaya Retreats Surya Samudra specialize in these traditional therapies, offering authentic and transformative experiences that attract wellness enthusiasts from around the world. The ability to access such ancient wisdom in its homeland adds a layer of authenticity that is deeply valued by global travellers.

STUNNING LOCATIONS FOR LUXURY RETREATS

India's geographical diversity further enhances its attractiveness as a luxury retreat destination. The country's varied landscapes, from the serene Himalayas and lush Western Ghats to the tranquil backwaters of Kerala and the pristine beaches of the Andaman Islands, provide stunning settings for these retreats. Chamba Camp Thiksey, Leh



The Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa



Six Senses Vana

camped amidst the stunning Stok and Ladakh mountain ranges and the famous Thiksey monastery and The Kumaon, Almora surrounded by the Nanda Devi Range offer luxury in great settings.

These picturesque locales not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the luxury retreats but also offer a serene environment that is conducive to relaxation and rejuvenation. For instance, the Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa in Kashmir offers breathtaking views of snow-capped mountains, while Taj Exotica Resort & Spa in the Andamans is set amidst lush rainforests and turquoise waters, providing guests with an immersive natural experience.



Lchang Nang Retreat, Nubra Valley Ladakh

SUSTAINABILITY AND ECO-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

In recent years, many luxury retreats in India have also embraced sustainability and eco-friendly practices. These luxury retreats not only emphasize environmental conservation but also incorporate local materials and traditional building techniques to create eco-conscious luxury experiences.

Mary Budden Estate, Binsar in the Himalayan forests of Uttarakhand echoes sustainability and eco-practices while The IBNII spread over a 120-acre coffee plantation, is a new-age luxury property upholding sustainability practices and bringing alive elements of nature and preservation in its designs.

Lchang Nang Retreat, Nubra Valley Ladakh means 'the house of trees' and translates eco-conscious luxury through its cottages and buildings using the local architectural style of mud, stone, and wood, including local cuisine for its guests.

Properties like Astroport Sariska Treetop in the Sariska Tiger Reserve allow guests to enjoy stargazing amidst nature, as does Starlight Machan in Lonavala, which features "star beds" with retractable roofs, enabling guests to sleep under the stars while enjoying the surrounding forest.

Woods At Sasan in the Sasan Gir forest of Gujarat and Samode Safari Lodge in the Bandhavgarh National Park are renowned for their commitment to sustainability, resonating with environmentally conscious travellers. By prioritizing sustainability, these luxury retreats ensure that lifestyle does not come at the expense of the environment, adding another layer of appeal to their offerings.

CULINARY EXCELLENCE

Culinary excellence is another facet of India's luxury retreats that cannot be overlooked. Indian cuisine, known for its diversity and richness, plays a significant role in enhancing the retreat experience. Many such retreats offer gourmet dining experiences that highlight regional flavours and use fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

This focus on culinary excellence not only delights the palate but also provides guests with a deeper appreciation

of India's gastronomic heritage. For example, Svatma in Tamil Nadu emphasizes sattvic cuisine, which complements their wellness programs and promotes holistic health.

At the iconic Taj Lake Palace in Udaipur, guests can savour a blend of Rajasthani and Mughlai cuisines. The dishes, prepared using local ingredients, provide an authentic taste of the region's rich culinary heritage. Ananda in the Himalayas, set in a former Maharaja's estate, integrates Ayurvedic principles into its cuisine. This retreat offers health-focused meals alongside traditional Garhwali dishes, providing a holistic dining experience.

In Rajasthan, Amanbagh offers an oasis of luxury with its local Rajasthani cuisine. Prepared with fresh ingredients, guests can savour authentic flavours in a truly opulent setting. Six Senses Fort Barwara features a menu that incorporates local Rajasthani flavours, providing an authentic dining experience in a luxurious setting.

Niraamaya Retreats, with properties across India, emphasizes regional flavours and offers culinary experiences that highlight local ingredients and traditional cooking methods unique to each destination.

These luxurious retreats not only provide a sumptuous dining experience but also a deep connection to India's diverse culinary traditions.



Astroport Sariska



Woods At Sasan




JW MARRIOTT
MUMBAI SAHAR

Unveiling Culinary Fables of India

Beneath the starlit sky, indulge in the vibrant tapestry of Indian culinary traditions at BarQat, where each exquisite flavor promises an unforgettable experience.

BarQat

For reservations, call 022 6882 8888 or visit www.jwmumbai.com
Soon opening it's doors to a world of culinary artistry and refined flavors.

EXTRAORDINARY TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Explore remarkable destinations that break the mould, offering travellers extraordinary experiences in the most unexpected corners of the world

TT BUREAU

Ever find yourself daydreaming about discovering extraordinary new places far from the usual tourist traps? We all crave a bit of adventure and the thrill of uncovering destinations that make for truly unique travel experiences.

That's why we've handpicked five extraordinary new places that promise just that. These places are perfect for those who want to explore without the hustle and bustle of the typical tourist crowd.

First up, we have Mongolia, a land of vast steppes and unique nomadic culture. Want to try out a camel trek in the Gobi desert? It's an extraordinary adventure that takes you off the beaten path and into the heart of a fascinating way of life.

Then there's Hydra, Greece. Imagine a car-free island where you can stroll through serene streets, marvel at stunning architecture, and relax on beautiful beaches. It's the perfect escape from the chaos, offering tranquillity and beauty at every turn.

Next, let's talk about Cartagena, Colombia. This coastal city is a vibrant mix of lively street life, colonial architecture, and world-class cuisine. It's less touristy than other Colombian spots, giving you a more genuine taste of its Caribbean charm.

Finally, Slovenia often gets overshadowed by its neighbours in Europe, but it's a hidden paradise. Slovenia means 'the loved one'—prepare to swipe right on historic cities, stunning lakes, beautiful mountains, unique cuisine, and irresistible wine!

Exploring these destinations lets you discover romance with a capital R, amazing adventures, rich cultures and stunning landscapes without the crowds. So, book your flights and get ready for an adventure like no other!

MONGOLIA'S MAGIC: WHAT SETS IT APART EXCLUSIVE ACCESS

Mongolia is like no other place on earth, and here's why: First off, there are the vast landscapes. Imagine diverse terrains



Sagsai Golden Eagle Festival - Mongolia



Cartagena, Colombia

stretching as far as the eye can see, from the expansive Gobi Desert to lush grasslands and rugged mountains. The natural beauty here is simply stunning and offers endless opportunities for exploration and adventure. Next up, the nomadic culture is truly fascinating.

Around 25-40% of the population still lives a nomadic lifestyle, residing in traditional yurts (gers) and herding livestock. It's a living glimpse into ancient customs and a way of life that has remained largely unchanged for centuries.

Mongolia's rich history is also a major draw. This is the birthplace of Genghis Khan, whose empire was the largest contiguous land empire in history, influencing cultures across Asia and Europe.

The historical significance here is immense and palpable. One of the coolest things about Mongolia is its unique festivals. Events like the Naadam Festival celebrate traditional sports such as horse racing, wrestling, and archery, showcasing Mongolia's heritage vibrantly and excitingly.

The country is also a haven for biodiversity. Home to rare species like the snow leopard and the two-humped Bactrian camel, Mongolia's wildlife is both unique and endangered, making it a paradise for nature lovers. And let's not forget about the fossil richness.

The Gobi Desert is famous for its dinosaur fossils, making it a significant site for paleontological research. It's like stepping into a prehistoric world! All these elements combine to create a distinctive and enriching travel experience in Mongolia.

WHY CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA SHOULD BE ON YOUR TRAVEL LIST

Cartagena, Colombia is like stepping into a vibrant postcard, and here's why it's such a standout destination: First, let's talk about its well-preserved colonial architecture. Picture colourful buildings with ornate balconies and charming plazas all nestled within the historic walled city.

It's like walking through a living museum! Then there's the vibrant food scene. Cartagena is a food lover's paradise with world-class restaurants serving fresh seafood and ceviche in beautiful courtyards. Your taste buds are in for an adventure!

And we can't forget about the nearby islands and beaches. Think white sand and turquoise waters at places like the Rosario Islands and Playa Blanca. It's pure bliss for beach bums and sun seekers.

The romantic atmosphere here is something special too. With boutique hotels, elegant bars, and the feeling of stepping back in time, it's a perfect destination for couples looking for a dreamy getaway.

Cartagena also boasts a fascinating history. As one of the oldest cities in the Americas, it has a rich past as a major slave port and pirate target.

History buffs will find plenty to explore. Lastly, the artistic culture is alive and well. From the iconic Palenqueras selling fruit to the vibrant street art in trendy Getsemani and the exhibits at the Museum of Modern Art, there's creativity around every corner.

WHY HYDRA, GREECE IS ONE OF A KIND

Hydra, Greece, is like stepping into a dream. First off, imagine an island with no cars—yes, you heard that right! The car-free environment means you'll be getting around on mules and donkeys, which adds to the serene and timeless feel. It's a charming escape from the everyday hustle.

The island has a rich history too. Hydra was once a big deal during the Greek War of Independence, and it shows. You'll see grand stone mansions from the 18th and 19th centuries, each one telling a story of its affluent past.

Art lovers, you're in for a treat! Hydra has a vibrant artistic heritage. Since the 1960s, it has been a magnet for artists and writers, giving the island a cool, bohemian vibe. Wander through galleries and studios, and you'll feel the creativity in the air.

For nature enthusiasts, Hydra's stunning natural beauty will take your breath away. Picture crystal-clear waters, picturesque coves, and dramatic landscapes. Whether you're swimming, hiking, or just soaking in the views, it's paradise. Culture buffs will love the cultural attractions. Explore museums like the Lazaros Koundouriotis Historical Mansion and the Ecclesiastical Museum, which showcase Hydra's rich heritage with fascinating artefacts and art.

EXPERIENCE SLOVENIA: EUROPE'S BEST-KEPT SECRET

Slovenia is a hidden gem that stands out due to its breathtaking natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and wide range of activities. So, what makes this place so special?

Imagine waking up to the stunning views of Lake Bled. This picturesque lake, with its charming island and church, is perfect for hiking, swimming, or even glamping. It's straight out of a fairytale! One of the coolest things about Slovenia is its diverse geography. You can go from the Alpine mountains to the Mediterranean coastlines and explore karst caves, all

within a short drive. It's like having multiple vacations in one. For those who love soaking up local culture, Ljubljana and coastal towns like Piran offer vibrant architecture, mouth-watering local cuisine, and a rich historical backdrop.

These cities are the heartbeat of Slovenia's cultural experiences. If you're an adventure junkie, Slovenia won't disappoint. Picture yourself white-water rafting in the Soča Valley or hiking through the trails of Triglav National Park. The outdoor activities here are endless and exhilarating.

And let's not forget the unique attractions. The Postojna Cave and Predjama Castle are must-visits, offering fascinating insights into the country's geological and historical wonders. All these elements come together to create a captivating travel experience in Slovenia.



Hydra, Greece



TEA BOARD OF INDIA
www.teaboard.gov.in



World's Gold Standard

CELEBRATE LIFE WITH INDIAN TEA AND YOGA

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

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



MANASKHAND EXPRESS: DISCOVER UTTARAKHAND

The Manaskhand Express, a collaboration between UTDB and IRCTC, offers travellers a captivating experience, highlighting Uttarakhand's undiscovered treasures and vibrant cultural traditions

TT BUREAU

The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB), in collaboration with IRCTC, has launched the Manaskhand Express, an innovative train journey designed to reveal Uttarakhand's hidden gems to the world. This initiative not only enhances connectivity but also provides travellers with an immersive experience of the state's rich cultural heritage.

In February 2024, UTDB signed an MoU with IRCTC, securing a dedicated 3AC train called the 'Manaskhand Express,' capable of accommodating 400 passengers. According to Shri Sachin Kurve, Secretary Tourism and CEO of UTDB, the primary goal is to link different parts of India to Uttarakhand through a comprehensive tour package provided by IRCTC.

The tours last between 7 and 10 days, covering both famous and lesser-known destinations across the state. The package includes train and road travel within Uttarakhand, meals, sightseeing, accommodation, and local delicacies to promote the state's cuisine.

The first two journeys, originating from Pune, allowed guests to explore renowned sites such as Punagiri Temple, Nanakmatta Gurudwara, and Jageshwar Temple, along with hidden treasures like the Tea Gardens at Champawat, Haat Kalika Temple, and Patal Bhuvneshwar Temple. In June 2024, another tour was launched from Madurai, focusing on the Shri Kartik Swami Temple in Rudraprayag and including stops at Rishikesh, Badrinath, and Kedarnath. A similar trip is planned from Mumbai in October 2024 with bookings available on www.irctctourism.com/bharatgaurav.

Encouraged by the success of the Manaskhand Express, UTDB introduced the "Pitr Chaya Express," a tour designed to allow Hindus to perform the sacred ritual of "Tarpan" for their ancestors during the Shradh/Pitr Paksha period. This journey starts from Pune and covers Haridwar, Rishikesh, Panch Prayag, and Badrinath. The Pitr Chaya Express starting from Pune allows the visitors to offer Tarpan at Haridwar and the five Prayag's (confluence) which lead to the formation of the Holy Ganga and finally at Brahm Kapal near Badrinath.



Kainchi Dham

Another upcoming journey, the Ganga-Yamuna Express, will depart from Bhopal and travel through Haridwar, Rishikesh, Dehradun, Mussoorie, and Hanol, focusing on key sites along the Ganga and Yamuna rivers. While Haridwar and Rishikesh are well-known for the Ganga, Kharsali serves as the winter seat of Yamunotri Dham. Another highlight of the trip is the Mahasu Devta Temple in Hanol, Jaunsar Bhawar, where Lord Shiva is worshipped. Highlights include the Mahasu Devta Temple in Hanol, known for its wooden frescoes depicting local folklore.

Shri Kurve emphasized that the project is receiving a positive response, with tourists from across the country exploring these hidden gems. Beyond promoting the state's treasures, the initiative is fostering organized tours, creating employment opportunities, and benefiting local businesses through the Manaskhand Express.

Are you Yearning for the Joys of Life in the Hills?

Book Best **Homestays**
of Uttarakhand

uttarastays.com

Official Website of Uttarakhand Tourism



For booking
scan this QR Code

Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board
uttarakhandtourism.gov.in



Fresco-filled Haveli at Nawalgarh, Shekhawati, Rajasthan

MAGNIFICENT STAYS: HERITAGE HAVELIS

Explore the grandeur of India's historic havelis, showcasing intricate architecture, rich history, and timeless elegance of royal residences

TT BUREAU

Traditional havelis in India celebrated for their intricate architecture and rich history, have been meticulously restored to provide unique and immersive experiences. These experiences include authentic regional cuisine, cultural activities, and luxurious accommodations in settings adorned with antique furniture, traditional textiles, and vibrant frescoes.

These Havelis are not merely architectural marvels; they are living museums that encapsulate their regions' rich heritage, intricate artistry, and historical lineage. This in-depth exploration delves into the architectural brilliance, historical significance, art and painting restoration efforts,

and the unique experiences offered by the restored havelis of Delhi, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

HAVELIS: GATEWAYS TO INDIA'S ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The term "haveli" originates from the Arabic word "hawali," meaning "partition" or "private space." The concept of havelis gained prominence during the Mughal era, serving as residences for the ruling class and becoming integral to urban environments. However, the idea of multistory homes with courtyards in the Indian subcontinent dates back to as early as 3300 BCE, evident in early examples found in traditional houses and farmhouses.

Over time, Havelis evolved to incorporate local traditions and Islamic architectural styles, resulting in a distinctively Indian blend. The courtyard, a common feature in traditional Indian homes, is a key element in havelis, serving as a central gathering space and a means of ventilation in the region's hot and dry climates.

Traditionally, Havelis were grand mansions built by wealthy merchants, aristocrats, and nobility. These structures are characterized by their intricate facades, expansive courtyards, and lavish interiors, reflecting a unique blend of local architectural styles influenced by Mughal, Rajput, and European designs.

Havelis stand as living repositories of history, art, and culture. These architectural marvels, predominantly found in the northern regions of the country, have stood the test of time, serving as witnesses to the nation's rich heritage. From the intricate carvings adorning their facades to the vibrant frescoes decorating their walls, havelis offers a unique glimpse into the lives and times of their former inhabitants.

EXPERIENCING THE HAVELI CULTURE

Visiting a haveli is not just about admiring its architectural beauty; it is also about immersing oneself in the region's rich cultural heritage. Many havelis have been converted into hotels, offering visitors a chance to experience the grandeur of the past while enjoying modern amenities. These haveli hotels often feature traditional cuisine, showcasing the culinary delights of the region. Guests can also participate in cultural activities such as pottery making, weaving, and block printing, gaining a deeper understanding of local artisanal traditions.

In addition to staying in a haveli hotel, visitors can explore the surrounding areas and experience the vibrant local culture. In Shekhawati, for instance, one can visit the numerous havelis scattered throughout the towns and villages, marvelling at the intricate frescoes and learning about the region's history.

Similarly, in Old Delhi, visitors can explore the winding streets of the Walled City, visit local markets, try street food, and experience the bustling energy of the city. The restored havelis in the area offer a chance to step back in time and appreciate the city's cultural richness.

PRESERVING THE LEGACY OF HAVELIS

As time passes, many Havelis have fallen into disrepair, with owners unable to afford the cost of upkeep and restoration. However, several initiatives are underway to preserve these architectural gems for future generations. One such initiative is "The Shekhawati Project," which aims to conserve and restore the structures and fresco paintings of the region's havelis. This project has helped revive interest in these cultural icons, encouraging owners to take pride in their ancestral homes.

Similarly, in Old Delhi, the restoration of havelis has led to the creation of vibrant cultural spaces that celebrate the city's heritage. These restored Havelis serve not only as performance venues but also as museums that showcase the history and culture of Delhi through art, crafts, and everyday objects.

The restoration of havelis is a meticulous process that involves preserving their architectural integrity and reviving the original artistry. Many have fallen into disrepair over the



Samode Haveli- Jaipur



Dewan Nathmal ki Haveli, Jaisalmer

years, and their restoration requires a deep understanding of traditional construction techniques, materials, and artistic styles.

The frescoes and murals that adorn the walls of havelis are an integral part of their charm. These artworks are often created using natural pigments and depict a variety of themes, from religious stories to historical events and daily life.

Restoring these frescoes involves cleaning, stabilizing, and retouching the artwork to preserve its original beauty. In some cases, layers of paint need to be carefully removed to reveal the original frescoes underneath. This painstaking process requires skilled artisans and conservationists who are well-versed in traditional painting techniques.

Restoring the architectural elements of havelis, such as jharokhas, chhatris, and jaalis, involves using traditional materials and techniques. Skilled craftsmen work to replicate the intricate carvings and designs, ensuring that the restored elements blend seamlessly with the original structure.

The use of lime plaster, natural pigments, and traditional woodworking techniques is essential in maintaining the authenticity of the restoration. In some cases, original elements are carefully dismantled, restored, and reassembled to preserve their integrity.

RAJASTHAN: THE LAND OF MAJESTIC HAVELIS

In Rajasthan, Havelis are often synonymous with opulence and grandeur. The region's arid climate and desert landscape influenced the construction techniques and architectural styles. Built primarily from locally sourced sandstone and marble, Rajasthani havelis are adorned with elaborate jharokhas (overhanging enclosed balconies), chhatris (elevated, dome-shaped pavilions), and intricate stone carvings.

THE ARCHITECTURAL MARVELS OF SHEKHAWATI

One of the most famous regions for havelis is Shekhawati, located in the northeastern part of Rajasthan. Known as the "largest open-air art gallery in India," Shekhawati boasts a stunning collection of havelis adorned with intricate frescoes. Commissioned by wealthy Marwari merchants between 1830 and 1930, these Havelis were heavily influenced by Mughal architecture.

Shekhawati havelis were designed to be closed off from the outside world, with a single large main gate serving as the entrance. Typically, these havelis incorporated two courtyards: an outer one for men, serving as an extended threshold, and an inner one, the domain of women.

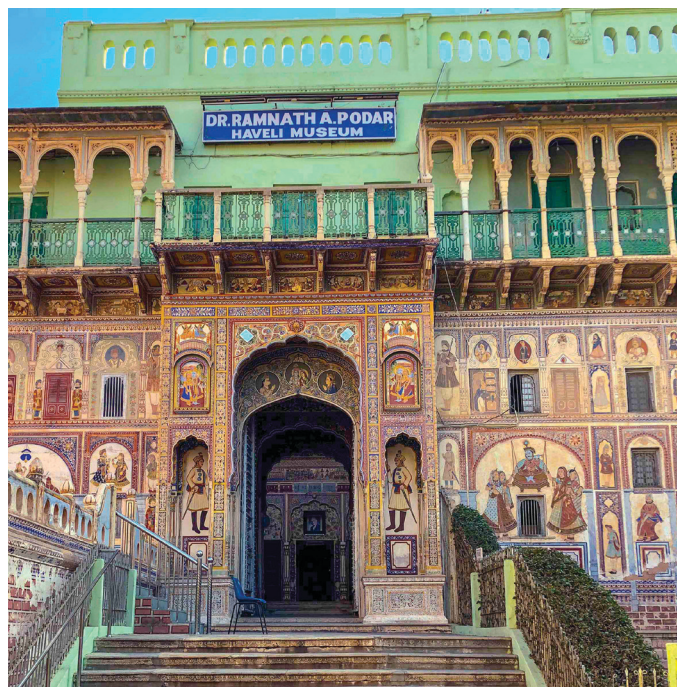
The largest havelis could have up to three or four courtyards and were two to three stories high. The frescoes adorning the walls of Shekhawati havelis are a testament to the artistic prowess of the region's painters, depicting a wide range of subjects, from religious motifs to scenes of everyday life, historical events, and technological advancements.

THE HAVELIS OF JAISALMER

Jaisalmer, a city in Rajasthan known for its stunning Golden Fort, is also home to some of the most impressive havelis in the country. Three havelis, in particular, stand out: Patwon Ki Haveli, Salim Singh Ki Haveli, and Nathmal-Ki Haveli. These elaborate homes, once owned by wealthy merchants, feature ostentatious carvings and intricate designs that showcase the region's architectural prowess.

The havelis of Jaisalmer are not only architectural marvels but also serve as testaments to the city's rich cultural heritage. Many of these havelis have been converted into hotels, offering visitors a chance to experience the grandeur of the past while enjoying modern amenities.

One of the most famous havelis in Rajasthan is the Patwon Ki Haveli in Jaisalmer. Constructed in the early 19th century



Podar Haveli Museum Nawalgarh

by a wealthy merchant, Guman Chand Patwa, this haveli is a cluster of five intricately designed houses. The facade of Patwon Ki Haveli is a masterpiece of craftsmanship, with detailed carvings and elaborate murals. The interiors boast mirror work, intricate wood carvings, and vibrant frescoes and vibrant frescoes depicting Rajasthani culture.

HISTORICAL LINEAGE

The historical lineage of havelis is deeply intertwined with the socio-economic and cultural fabric of their regions. These grand mansions were not just residences but also symbols of power, wealth, and prestige, significantly aligned with the nobility of the time.

In Rajasthan, Havelis were predominantly built by the princes and families of royal lineage as well as wealthy merchant families known as Marwaris. These merchants amassed great wealth through trade and commerce, particularly during the Mughal era and the British colonial period. The Havelis served as a testament to their prosperity and social status.

The Shekhawati region in Rajasthan is particularly renowned for its havelis, often referred to as 'open-air art galleries.' The towns of Mandawa, Nawalgarh, and Fatehpur boast numerous havelis adorned with intricate frescoes and murals. These frescoes depict a wide range of themes, from mythological stories and folklore to scenes from daily life and European influences.

GUJARAT - A BLEND OF CULTURES

Gujarat's Havelis, particularly in the regions of Kutch and Saurashtra, reflect a unique amalgamation of architectural influences from Hindu, Islamic, and European styles. The state's prosperous trading history is evident in the grandeur and design of its havelis, which were often built by wealthy traders and merchants.

The Vijay Vilas Palace in Mandvi, Kutch, is a splendid example of the architectural elegance of Gujarati havelis. Built in the 1920s by Maharao Shri Khengarji III, the palace features a blend of colonial, Mughal, and Victorian architectural styles. The intricately carved stone jaalis (lattice screens), expansive courtyards, and ornate interiors reflect the craftsmanship and opulence of the era.

In Ahmedabad, the Sidhpur havelis stand as a testament to the region's rich architectural heritage. Known as the 'Bohravad,' these havelis were built by the affluent Bohra Muslim community. The facades of these havelis are adorned with intricate woodwork, stucco decorations, and stained glass windows, showcasing a blend of European and Indian architectural styles.

HERITAGE HAVELIS AND THEIR RICH CULTURAL LEGACY

Havelis are not just buildings but living, breathing testaments to India's rich architectural and cultural heritage. From the

architectural marvels of Ahmedabad, the serene retreats of Udaipur, and the grand mansions of Shekhawati to the historic havelis of Old Delhi, these architectural marvels offer a glimpse into the lives and times of their former inhabitants.

As we move forward in the 21st century, preserving these cultural icons for future generations is crucial. Through initiatives like "The Shekhawati Project" and the restoration of havelis in Old Delhi, we can ensure that the legacy of havelis lives on, inspiring and educating visitors worldwide.

HAVELIS AS HERITAGE HOTELS

The transformation of Havelis into heritage hotels has breathed new life into these historical structures, allowing them to be preserved and enjoyed by future generations. These heritage hotels offer a unique blend of historical charm and modern luxury, providing guests with an immersive experience of India's rich cultural heritage.

Heritage Haveli hotels offer luxurious accommodations that reflect the grandeur of their historical past. The rooms are often adorned with antique furniture, intricate woodwork, and traditional textiles, creating an ambience of regal opulence.



Bohra Haveli, Siddhpur - Gujarat



Vijay Vilas Palace- Kutch

HOMESTAY BOOM

India is a dream destination for travellers everywhere. Recently, the tourism scene has seen a big shift. The Homestay boom in India is changing the game, offering unique, personalized experiences that give travellers a taste of local life

TT BUREAU



Homestay in Himachal

Homestays, in particular, open doors to rich cultural experiences, letting tourists immerse themselves in the daily lives of locals. These accommodations offer a unique and personalized touch, providing travellers an intimate and authentic alternative to traditional hotels. The rise of homestays has opened doors to rich cultural experiences that allow tourists to immerse themselves in the local way of life.

LOCAL CHARM: THE NEW ERA OF TRAVEL

Homestays are leading the way in transforming tourism in India. They cater to modern travellers who crave personal and meaningful experiences. Unlike big hotel chains, these smaller, more intimate places allow guests to connect deeply with the culture, history, and traditions of the area they're visiting.

One trend is converting old heritage properties into boutique hotels. Imagine staying in a centuries-old haveli in Rajasthan or a colonial bungalow in the Nilgiris. These places blend traditional architecture with modern amenities, offering a unique stay steeped in history.

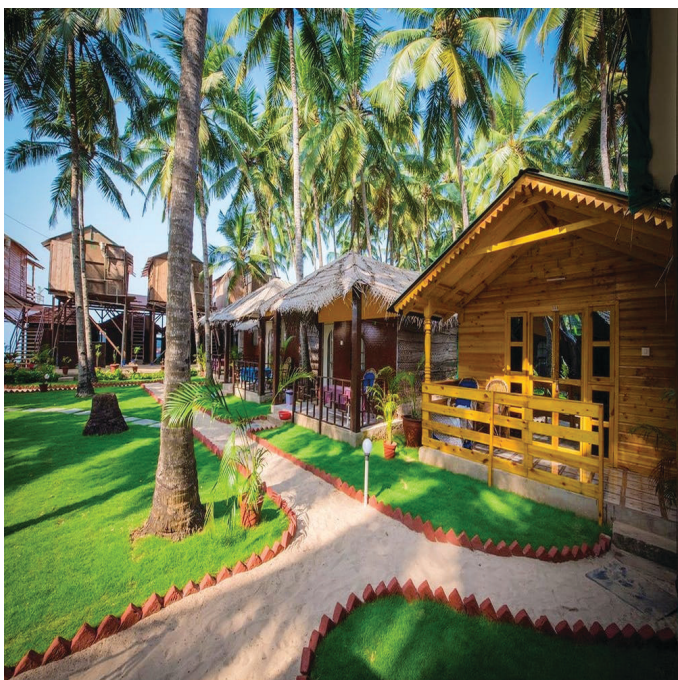
Experiential tourism is another big trend. Boutique hotels and homestays offer activities that go beyond regular sightseeing. You can join cooking classes to learn local recipes, participate in yoga retreats for a holistic experience, or go on wildlife safaris to see India's natural beauty up close. These activities make your trip unforgettable.

Sustainability is also a key focus. Many boutique hotels and homestays are eco-friendly, using organic farms and sustainable materials. This green approach appeals to travellers who care about their environmental impact.

The architecture of these properties is often a mix of traditional and modern. Each place tells its story from the intricate carvings of a Rajasthani palace to the minimalist design of a Kerala homestay. This unique design adds to the charm and comfort of your stay.

Personalized service is a big draw. The hosts at these places make you feel at home, ensuring your needs are met and your stay is special. This personal touch creates a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Weekend getaways and short breaks are becoming popular, and boutique hotels and homestays near major cities are perfect for quick escapes. Whether it's a cosy homestay in



Homestay in Goa

the hills or a beachfront boutique hotel, these places offer a relaxing break from busy urban life.

STAY AND ENJOY: HOMESTAYS OFFER AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

Homestays offer an unmatched cultural immersion experience. Unlike regular hotels, where you might miss out on local life, homestays let you live with a local family and see their daily routines up close. This kind of stay gives you insights that typical tourist spots can't offer.

Staying in a homestay means you can learn about local customs, languages, and traditions directly from your hosts. You get to see local festivals, daily rituals, and other cultural practices up close, enriching your travel experience. Building personal connections is a big part of the homestay experience. Staying with a family encourages meaningful relationships,



Homestay in Khimsar, Rajasthan

leading to mutual respect and appreciation. These connections often last long after your trip, creating lifelong memories.

Local knowledge is another benefit. Your hosts can guide you to hidden gems and local spots that regular tourists might miss. Whether it's a secluded waterfall, a little-known temple, or a bustling local market, these insider tips make your trip special. Homestays also support the local economy. By staying with a local family, you're directly helping them sustain their way of life. This support ensures that cultural traditions are preserved and passed down through generations.

UNIQUE VILLAGE HOMESTAYS WITH DEEP CULTURAL ROOTS

While popular destinations like Kerala, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh are well-known for their homestays, many lesser-known spots in India offer rich cultural experiences.



Homestay in Mawlynnong Village

These hidden gems allow you to explore India's diverse culture away from the crowds.

In Meghalaya, the village of Mawlynnong is famous for its cleanliness and community-driven projects. Staying in a homestay here lets you experience the unique culture of the Khasi tribe. You can participate in traditional farming, explore living root bridges, and learn about Khasi traditions.

Khimsar in Rajasthan is another fascinating destination. This village in the Thar Desert offers a glimpse into rural Rajasthani life. You can stay in traditional mud huts, go on camel safaris, and enjoy folk music and dance performances. Local artisans often host guests, sharing insights into their crafts and traditions.

Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh offers a chance to experience Himalayan Buddhist culture. You can stay with local families, visit ancient monasteries, and join traditional festivals. The serene landscape and warm hospitality of the locals make this a transformative experience.

Agonda in Goa provides a different kind of cultural immersion. Known for its pristine beaches, Agonda offers homestays where you can learn about the Goan way of life. Fishing trips and traditional Goan cooking classes give you a deeper understanding of the local culture.

In Assam's tea gardens, villages like Jorhat and Dibrugarh offer insights into tea plantation culture. Staying with tea estate families, you can learn about tea-making, participate in tea-tasting sessions, and hear stories about the region's history.

Coorg in Karnataka is known for its coffee plantations and scenic beauty. Homestays here offer a chance to experience the culture of the Kodava community. You can participate in coffee harvesting, explore spice gardens, and enjoy traditional Kodava cuisine. The hosts, often coffee planters, share their knowledge about local agricultural practices and traditions.

Hodka in Gujarat's Kutch region offers a unique cultural experience. Staying in traditional Bhunga huts, you can immerse yourself in the vibrant culture of the Kutch community. You can learn about intricate embroidery work, participate in folk music and dance, and enjoy the colourful local life.

Udaipur in Rajasthan offers a blend of royal hospitality and cultural immersion. Staying in heritage havelis, you can join traditional cooking classes and explore the city's architectural wonders. The hosts, often from royal families, provide insights into Udaipur's history and culture.

In Nagaland's Mon village, you can experience the culture of the Konyak tribe, known for their headhunting traditions. Staying with local families, you can learn about their unique customs and practices. Hosts often share stories about the tribe's history, offering a rare glimpse into Nagaland's cultural heritage.

Kumarakom in Kerala offers a serene homestay experience in the backwaters. Staying in traditional Kerala homes, you can participate in houseboat cruises and learn about local cuisine. Hosts share insights into the region's history and traditions, making your stay peaceful and culturally enriching.



Homestay in Manali



Homestay in Kerala



Traditional Wonders

"CAUVERY" Karnataka State Arts & Crafts Emporia

The ultimate destination for true connoisseurs of arts and crafts...



KARNATAKA STATE HANDICRAFTS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.,

(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)

No.45, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore 560001.

Ph. : 00-91-80-25582656 / 25582793 • Fax : 00-91-80-25580402

email : md@cauveryhandicrafts.net • Website : www.cauverycrafts.com

On-line sale website : www.cauveryhandicrafts.net



DIVE INTO ADVENTURE



The Great Barrier Reef, Australia

Ready for an underwater adventure? Explore our list of the world's best scuba diving destinations, featuring stunning reefs, diverse marine life, and thrilling dives

TT BUREAU

For experienced divers passionate about exploring underwater wonders, finding the best diving locations worldwide is a constant quest. Even if you're new to diving, why not take the plunge and give it a try?

With oceans covering over 70% of the Earth's surface, there are countless fascinating places to discover beneath the waves. To uncover some of the world's premier scuba diving destinations perfect for leisure and adventure, you need to know where to look. So, why wait? The ocean is calling.

Pack your bags, gather your gear, and dive into your next adventure. The options are limitless, but here's our shortlist of the top scuba diving spots globally.

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA

The Great Barrier Reef, located off the coast of Queensland, Australia, is one of the most iconic scuba diving destinations in the world. As the largest coral reef system, spanning over 2,300 kilometres, it offers an unparalleled underwater experience. Divers can explore vibrant coral gardens teeming with life, including over 1,500 species of fish such as the clownfish, parrotfish, and the elusive Maori wrasse.

Additionally, the reef is home to a myriad of other marine creatures, including majestic sea turtles, graceful manta rays, and a variety of sharks like the white-tip reef shark and the gentle whale shark. Beyond diving, visitors can engage in activities such as snorkelling, surfing, underwater photography, and guided marine tours to learn about the reef's delicate ecosystem.

BLUE HOLE, BELIZE: A DIVER'S DREAM

Renowned globally, the Blue Hole in Belize is a scuba diving paradise that enthralls divers with its extraordinary geological features and abundant marine life. Situated at the centre of Lighthouse Reef, this colossal marine sinkhole spans approximately 300 meters in diameter and plunges to a depth of 124 meters. The allure of the Blue Hole lies in its clear, azure waters and the chance to explore magnificent underwater stalactites and limestone formations that date back to ancient ice ages.

The Blue Hole's marine ecosystem is vibrant and diverse, hosting an array of species such as reef sharks, nurse sharks, and the occasional hammerhead shark. Divers can also marvel at the colourful coral reefs, home to a variety of fish including

angelfish, groupers, and parrotfish. Beyond diving, the area offers numerous activities like snorkelling, kayaking, and boat tours, which provide a broader view of the surrounding atolls and the rich marine biodiversity they support.

SIPADAN ISLAND, MALAYSIA

Sipadan Island, located in the Celebes Sea off the coast of Sabah, Malaysia, is widely regarded as one of the top scuba diving destinations in the world. This oceanic island, formed by living corals growing on top of an extinct volcanic cone, is surrounded by a wealth of marine life and crystal-clear waters. Divers are captivated by the island's diverse underwater ecosystem, which includes over 3,000 species of fish and hundreds of coral species.

Among the marine creatures that can be encountered are barracudas, large schools of jacks and trevallies, green and hawksbill turtles, and a variety of sharks such as hammerhead sharks and white-tip reef sharks. The island also boasts the famous Turtle Tomb, an underwater limestone cave with a labyrinth of tunnels that contain many skeletal remains of turtles.

Apart from diving, visitors can enjoy snorkelling in the shallow reefs surrounding the island, where they can observe colourful corals and a plethora of small reef fish. Bird watching is another popular activity, as the island is home to several tropical bird species, including sea eagles, frigatebirds, and kingfishers. Guided tours of the island provide insights into its unique ecological and geological features.

GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS, ECUADOR

The Galápagos Islands, located in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Ecuador, are a premier scuba diving destination renowned for their unique biodiversity and volcanic origins. This archipelago is famous for its role in Charles Darwin's

theory of evolution, and it continues to captivate divers with its extraordinary marine life found nowhere else on Earth.

Diving in the Galápagos offers encounters with marine iguanas, the only sea-going lizards, as well as majestic whale sharks, especially around Darwin and Wolf Islands. These dive sites are also home to large schools of hammerhead sharks, Galápagos sharks, and silky sharks. Additionally, divers can enjoy the playful antics of sea lions and the chance to see manta rays, eagle rays, and various species of turtles.

Apart from diving, visitors to the Galápagos can engage in snorkelling, kayaking, and guided wildlife tours. The islands' volcanic landscapes provide a stunning backdrop for hiking and bird watching, with species such as the blue-footed booby and the Galápagos penguin. The marine life is complemented by a diverse array of fish species, including large schools of yellowfin tuna, barracuda, and a variety of colourful reef fish.



Sipadan Island, Malaysia



Jet Ski Activity in Blue Hole, Belize

RED SEA, EGYPT

The Red Sea, situated between Africa and Asia, is a world-renowned scuba diving destination celebrated for its crystal-clear waters, vibrant coral reefs, and rich marine biodiversity. Divers flock to this region to explore famous dive sites such as Ras Mohammed and the SS Thistlegorm wreck. Ras Mohammed, a national park at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, offers dramatic drop-offs, flourishing coral gardens, and an abundance of marine life, including barracudas, jackfish, and occasionally, whale sharks. The SS Thistlegorm, a British-armed merchant ship sunk during World War II, is one of the most famous wreck dives in the world, teeming with marine life and historical artefacts.

Apart from diving, visitors can indulge in activities such as snorkelling, where they can witness stunning coral formations and colourful reef fish up close. The Red Sea's marine ecosystem boasts over 1,200 species of fish, including clownfish, angelfish, and butterflyfish, as well as larger species like the grey reef shark, hammerhead shark, and the majestic manta ray, making it one of the best scuba diving destinations in the world. The region's historical and cultural significance adds to its allure, with ancient ports and coastal towns offering a glimpse into Egypt's rich maritime history.



Sharks in Red Sea, Egypt

PALAU, MICRONESIA

Palau, a remote island nation in Micronesia, is celebrated for its untouched beauty and some of the most pristine dive sites in the world. The unique Rock Islands, a UNESCO World Heritage site, consist of over 200 limestone islands, offering stunning landscapes both above and below water. One of the most famous diving spots is the Blue Corner, renowned for its strong currents that attract a plethora of marine life, including schools of sharks, barracudas, and snappers.

Divers can also explore Jellyfish Lake, where millions of harmless jellyfish create an ethereal underwater experience. Palau's marine ecosystem is incredibly diverse, featuring over 1,500 species of fish and 700 species of coral. Besides diving, visitors can enjoy snorkelling, kayaking, and paddleboarding among the Rock Islands, providing opportunities to observe the rich biodiversity and dramatic scenery.



Paddleboarding Activity in Palau, Micronesia



Parasailing Activity in Kadmat Island, Lakshadweep

Palau places a strong emphasis on sustainable tourism and marine conservation. The nation has established the Palau National Marine Sanctuary, which protects 80% of its waters from fishing and other extractive activities. Visitors are encouraged to respect the environment by adhering to responsible diving practices and supporting local conservation efforts. This commitment to preserving its natural beauty ensures that Palau remains a premier destination for future generations of divers and nature enthusiasts.

THE MALDIVES

The Maldives, a tropical paradise in the Indian Ocean, offers a unique combination of luxury and adventure, making it a premier scuba diving destination. The archipelago consists of 26 stunning atolls, each surrounded by crystal-clear waters and vibrant coral reefs teeming with marine life.

Divers in the Maldives can expect encounters with majestic manta rays, gentle whale sharks, and a plethora of other marine species such as eagle rays, turtles, and a myriad of colourful reef fish. Notable dive sites include Banana Reef, Manta Point, and the Ari Atoll, each offering diverse underwater landscapes and abundant marine biodiversity.

In addition to diving, the Maldives is famous for its luxurious overwater bungalows and world-class dive resorts, providing an unparalleled level of comfort and convenience. These resorts often feature private dive centres, offering tailored diving experiences and courses for all skill levels. Beyond diving, visitors can enjoy snorkelling, water sports, and spa treatments, making it an ideal destination for both relaxation and adventure.

KADMAT ISLAND, LAKSHADWEEP

Kadmat Island, part of the Lakshadweep archipelago off the southwest coast of India, is an emerging scuba diving

destination known for its pristine marine environment and tranquil surroundings. This narrow island, stretching about 8 kilometres in length, offers divers an opportunity to explore vibrant coral reefs and abundant marine life in the crystal-clear waters of the Arabian Sea.

The dive sites around Kadmat Island are home to a variety of fish species such as groupers, snappers, and angelfish, as well as larger marine creatures like manta rays, eagle rays, and turtles. The coral reefs are lush with hard and soft corals, providing a colourful and dynamic underwater landscape.

In addition to scuba diving, visitors to Kadmat Island can enjoy snorkelling, kayaking, and windsurfing. The island's lagoon is ideal for snorkelling, allowing easy access to observe the thriving marine life up close. The white sandy beaches and clear blue waters make it a perfect spot for relaxing and soaking in the natural beauty of the surroundings.

The period from June to September is characterized by the southwest monsoon, bringing heavy rains and rough seas, which can adversely affect diving conditions and visibility. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid visiting during these months. The peak tourist season, from December to February, offers the best overall conditions, with mild temperatures and clear skies, making it the ideal time for both diving and exploring the island's other attractions.

Exploring the world's premier scuba diving destinations, from the mystical Blue Hole in Belize to the untouched beauty of Palau, reveals the incredible diversity and allure of our planet's underwater realms.

Each destination offers unique experiences, the historical treasures and vibrant marine life of the Red Sea, the luxurious yet adventurous appeal of the Maldives, and the serene, pristine waters of Kadmat Island in Lakshadweep. These sites not only provide thrilling dives but also highlight the importance of sustainable tourism and marine conservation.

WEDDING EXTRAVAGANZA

Hey there! I'm Vikramjeet Sharma, the heart and soul behind Le Florence Weddings, and let me tell you, there's nothing quite like the magic and excitement of planning a Big Fat Indian Wedding.

VIKRAMJEET SHARMA



From the moment I meet a couple, I'm whisked away on a journey that's as much about their love story as it is about creating an unforgettable celebration. Let me take you behind the scenes of what goes into making these weddings the grand, magical affairs they are.

UNVEILING THE VISION

It all begins with a story. I spend time getting to know the couple and their families, diving deep into their backgrounds, their dreams, and the unique vision they have for their special day. It's like piecing together a puzzle, where every element—from the location to the tiniest details of décor—fits into a bigger picture that reflects their personalities.

When I say these weddings are grand, I mean it! Many of my clients are globetrotters, bringing a dash of international flair to their celebrations.

Imagine a wedding where the décor is inspired by Parisian elegance, with a touch of Moroccan mystique, or where the entertainment includes dancers from Africa, Europe, and even artists flown in from South America. Themes like Moulin Rouge, black-and-white galas, or even a whimsical fairy tale setting are just the tip of the iceberg.

CRAFTING UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

Every wedding I plan is a fresh canvas. One couple might want to step into a Cinderella-like fairyland, while another might draw inspiration from the spiritual serenity of the Kasar Devi Temple

in Himachal Pradesh. Yes, you heard that right—I've planned weddings that range from a magical forest filled with fairy lights to a deeply spiritual ceremony centred around a temple.

The planning for these grand Indian weddings usually kicks off about a year in advance, and believe me, it's worth every moment. Setting up the venue can take days—sometimes weeks—but it's all part of the process. And then there's the food. Oh, the food! In India, food is the soul of any celebration, and for a Big Fat Indian Wedding, we pull out all the stops.

The best caterers, Michelin-star chefs, and an array of global cuisines come together to create a culinary experience that guests will talk about for years.

The Sustainability Challenge

One thing that's become increasingly important is sustainability. Many couples today want a wedding that's not just grand but also eco-friendly.

This brings its own challenges, especially when you're trying to balance the luxury of a Big Fat Indian Wedding with the principles of sustainability. But hey, that's what makes this job so thrilling! It's all about finding creative solutions honouring both the couple's vision and the planet.

Choosing the Perfect Location

Location is everything. Whether it's the regal charm of Rajasthan, the serene beaches of Goa, or the spiritual depth of a temple in Uttarakhand, the venue plays a crucial role in setting the tone for the wedding. And let's not forget about international destinations like Thailand or Italy, which offer a perfect blend of stunning backdrops and rich cultural experiences.

Bringing It All Together

When everything finally comes together—the décor, the food, the entertainment, the laughter, the love—it's pure magic.

Each wedding is a symphony, with every detail harmonizing to create a day that's not just beautiful, but unforgettable.

A Passion for Perfection

So, what keeps me going? It's the joy on a couple's face when they see their dream wedding come to life. It's the thrill of creating something unique every single time. And most importantly, it's knowing that I'm not just planning a wedding—I'm helping to craft memories that will last a lifetime. That's the behind-the-scenes magic of a Big Fat Indian Wedding. And I wouldn't have it any other way.



Wedding Celebrations



Wedding Celebrations



Haldi Ceremony



Haldi Ceremony

Must haves in Big Fat Indian Weddings

While weddings are grand celebrations of traditions, emotions, and celebrations - there are some seriously stunning details. Let me take you through some of the Indian wedding traditions and essentials that make these weddings truly unforgettable.

Bridal Wear

Let's start with the star of the show—bridal wear. When it comes to weddings, the bridal attire is a statement of tradition and personal style. From the timeless red lehenga that every girl dreams of to elegant sarees draped in luxurious Kanjeevaram silk, the options are endless. And let's not forget the modern brides who are rocking fusion gowns that blend Indian embroidery with Western silhouettes. Every piece of bridal wear I help select is about more than just looking stunning; it's about showcasing the bride's unique story and the rich cultural heritage she brings with her.

Wedding Jewellery

Ah, wedding jewellery—the sparkle that completes the bride's look. In India, jewellery isn't just an accessory; it's a legacy passed down through generations. Whether it's the intricate kundan sets from Rajasthan, the goddess-inspired temple jewellery from the South, or the elegant diamond pieces, each type of jewellery adds a unique touch. And the best part? Every piece, from the mangalsutra to the nose ring, carries a deep cultural significance, making the bride's ensemble even more special.

Bridal Makeup & Hair

When it comes to bridal makeup and hair, it's all about striking the perfect balance between tradition and personal flair. Some brides opt for the classic look with bold red lips and kohl-lined eyes, while others prefer a more modern, subtle approach with nude tones. Hairstyles range from traditional braided buns adorned with jasmine flowers to sleek, sophisticated updos. My job is to ensure that the bride feels like the most beautiful version of herself, whether she's channeling a timeless look or something a bit more contemporary.



Haldi Ceremony

Wedding Decor

Now, let's talk decor—the element that sets the entire mood of the wedding. Indian weddings are known for their opulent decor, from grand floral mandaps to intricate table settings. But what I love most is how versatile the decor can be. Whether the couple wants a royal Rajasthan theme, a boho-chic vibe, or a mix of modern and traditional elements, the possibilities are endless. Each setup is a reflection of the couple's personality and the story they want to tell on their big day.

Weddings Wedding Photography

Capturing the magic of a wedding is no small feat, and that's where wedding photography comes in. Traditional photography focuses on those timeless posed portraits and

rituals, while candid photography captures the spontaneous, emotional moments that often become the most cherished memories. And for those who want to go all out, cinematic videography can turn the entire wedding into a beautifully crafted film, complete with drone shots and slow-motion sequences. It's all about preserving the day in a way that reflects the couple's unique journey.

Groom Wear

Let's not forget the groom! Groomwear in India is just as detailed and diverse as the bride's attire. From the classic sherwani with a regal turban to the more contemporary bandhgalas and jodhpuri suits, there's something for every style. And for the modern groom who wants to blend tradition with a touch of Western influence, there's always the option of a tailored tuxedo with Indian embroidery. The key is to ensure that the groom's outfit complements the bride's look while reflecting his personality.

Invitations and Gifts

Wedding invitations and gifts are the first glimpse guests get of what's to come. Traditional invites might feature intricate designs with cultural motifs, while modern couples often opt for digital RSVPs or even personalized video messages. As for gifts, they range from luxurious hampers filled with gourmet treats to customized keepsakes that guests can treasure long after the celebration ends. It's all about setting the tone for the wedding and making sure guests feel special.

Wedding Accessories

Accessories are the finishing touches that bring the entire wedding ensemble together. For brides, this could mean a

statement maang tikka, a set of bangles, or even a kamarbandh. Grooms might choose a stylish brooch, a pocket square, or a pair of priceless cufflinks that add a personal touch to their outfit. These accessories aren't just about adding bling—they're about completing a look that's uniquely the couple's own.

Mehendi Setups and Designs

Finally, there's the mehendi ceremony, a celebration in its own right. The setup can range from traditional, with low seating and marigold garlands, to modern, with lounge-style seating and vibrant, eclectic decor. Mehendi designs are just as varied, from intricate, classic patterns to more modern, minimalist styles. Each setup and design is chosen to reflect the bride's personality and the overall theme of the wedding, making it a joyous occasion that everyone looks forward to.

Planning a Big Fat Indian Wedding is a journey filled with creativity, tradition, and a lot of heart. Every detail, from the bridal wear to the mehendi designs, is a piece of the puzzle that comes together to create a day that's not just beautiful, but truly magical. And as a wedding specialist, there's nothing more rewarding than seeing that magic come to life.

About the Author

Vikramjeet Sharma, Founder & Director, Le Florence Weddings is a dynamic and passionate individual who believes in living life to the fullest. With a creative entrepreneurial spirit, he founded Le Florence Weddings, a globally recognized wedding planning company. Vikramjeet's leadership and commitment to creative freedom have propelled Le Florence to international success, with exciting plans for further expansion in the near future.



Haldi Ceremony

ASSAM'S JEWELLERY HERITAGE

Step into the world of legacy ornaments with these iconic Assam jewellery pieces.

TT BUREAU



Assam Jewellery

Assamese ornaments hold a significant place in Assamese culture, often crafted from "Kesha Xoon," or raw gold. These exquisite pieces of jewellery are not only visually stunning but also carry immense cultural prestige.

Typically handmade, Assam ornaments feature designs inspired by the region's rich flora and fauna. The traditional pieces, while simple in design, are adorned with vibrant red gemstones, rubies, or mina work. The striking black, red, and green hues used in these gold ornaments beautifully complement the traditional attire of the tribes and communities of the northeastern states. Historically, these pieces were studded with gemstones like rubies, moonstones, emeralds, and garnets, earning them the local name "Dalimiya Pathur," a reference to the pomegranate seed-like colour of the stones.

The creation of traditional Assamese jewellery is an intricate craft that requires specialized skills, with designs often reflecting elements of nature, musical instruments, or everyday life. These unique designs, crafted exclusively by skilled Assamese artisans, are a hallmark of the region's jewellery. While gold remains the primary metal used, silver and other metals have also been employed for centuries.

This art form thrives particularly in three regions of Assam: Nagaon, Jorhat, and Barpeta. Jewellery from Upper Assam is predominantly stone-studded, whereas, in Lower Assam, the focus is on intricate gold designs with minimal or no stone embellishments.

Assamese jewellery pieces are often named after the design motifs they represent, such as Jon Biri (crescent-shaped pendant), Lokaparo (two pigeons placed back to back), Jethi Poti (featuring a lizard's tail design with a row of small V-shaped medallions and a central pendant), and Dhol Biri (drum-shaped design), among others.

ICONIC JEWELLERY PIECES OF ASSAM

Japi

Japi is a traditional headgear of Assam, intricately crafted from bamboo and cane, symbolizing respect, dignity, and the rich cultural heritage of the region. Historically worn by farmers as protection from the sun, the Japi has evolved into a significant cultural icon.

Though not a conventional piece of jewellery, its ornamental versions, often embellished with vibrant designs and motifs, are worn by women during festivals and cultural events as a statement of cultural pride. The Japi not only



Jonbiri Traditional Assamese Necklace

reflects the craftsmanship of Assamese artisans but also serves as a symbol of the region's identity, embodying the values of honour and tradition.

Gamkharu

Gamkharu is a traditional Assamese bangle crafted from gold or silver, renowned for its thick, solid structure and intricate designs. Often adorned with delicate engravings or minimalistic patterns, this bangle is a significant cultural symbol in Assam. Gamkharu is traditionally worn by married women, signifying their marital status, and is an essential element in Assamese weddings.

It is usually presented to the bride by her family or in-laws as a symbol of prosperity, commitment, and the bond of marriage. The bangle holds deep cultural value, representing the rich heritage of Assam and the enduring traditions that are passed down through generations.

Loka Paro

These earrings are often crafted in gold or silver, intricately designed to capture the delicate form of pigeons in mid-flight. Worn by Assamese women, Loka Paro holds deep cultural significance, symbolizing peace and harmony. The pigeon, as a universal symbol of tranquillity, is embodied in this jewellery, making it not just an adornment but also a representation of the values and aspirations of the Assamese people. Loka Paro earrings are cherished for their elegance and the cultural message they convey, making them a meaningful part of Assamese heritage.

Jonbiri and Doogdoogi

Jonbiri is a traditional Assamese necklace characterized by its striking crescent shape, often crafted from silver or gold. This elegant piece is typically paired with the Doogdoogi,



Japi Set



Gamkharu Traditional Assamese Bangle

a pendant that complements the Jonbiri with its intricate design and symbolic significance.

Together, Jonbiri and Doogdoogi are more than just adornments; they represent the cultural richness of Assam and are often worn during important cultural events and festivals. These jewellery pieces hold deep sentimental value and are frequently passed down through generations as cherished heirlooms, symbolizing the continuity of tradition and the enduring connection to Assamese heritage.

Keru

An ear ornament, traditionally worn by Assamese brides, the Keru is often crafted from gold or silver, featuring elaborate designs that showcase the craftsmanship of Assamese jewellers. This ear ornament is not only a symbol of marital status but also plays a crucial role in enhancing the beauty of the bride on her wedding day.

The delicate and ornate structure of the Keru complements the bridal attire, adding an element of elegance and cultural richness to the overall look. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the Keru is deeply embedded in Assamese customs, symbolizing the bride's connection to her heritage and the cultural traditions that are honoured and celebrated during the wedding ceremony.

Galpata

Galpata is a traditional Assamese necklace known for its intricate floral patterns, often crafted in gold or silver. This elegant piece of jewellery is typically worn by women during special occasions such as weddings, festivals, and cultural celebrations. The floral motifs of the Galpata symbolize femininity and grace, reflecting the delicate beauty and cultural sophistication of Assamese craftsmanship. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the Galpata holds deep cultural significance, embodying the essence of womanhood in Assamese society and serving as a timeless expression of elegance and tradition.

Thuriya

The Thuriya is a traditional Assamese jewellery piece, characterized by its unique and intricate spiral design.



Thuriya Earrings



Assamese Ring

Typically crafted from gold or silver, the Thuriya earrings are distinguished by their helix-like structure that coils gracefully, often ending in a small, rounded ornament.

These earrings hold cultural significance in Assam and are traditionally worn by women, especially during festivals and significant cultural ceremonies. The design of the Thuriya is both aesthetically pleasing and symbolic, often representing continuity and eternity.

Senpati

Senpati is a typical Assam traditional jewellery necklace known for its exquisite craftsmanship and cultural significance. Typically made of gold, the Senpati necklace features intricate designs, often inspired by nature, such as floral and leaf motifs. This necklace is a symbol of Assamese heritage and is commonly worn by brides as part of their wedding attire, signifying prosperity and tradition.

Dhansiri

Dhansiri is a traditional Assamese necklace named after the Dhansiri River, a significant waterway in Assam known for its natural beauty and cultural importance. This necklace symbolizes prosperity and abundance, reflecting the fertile lands nourished by the river.

Typically crafted from gold, the Dhansiri necklace features intricate designs that often incorporate motifs inspired by the river and its surroundings, such as flowing water patterns, leaves, and other natural elements. The necklace is cherished for its cultural significance and is often worn during important festivals, weddings, and other ceremonial occasions in Assam.



Dhansiri Traditional Assamese Necklace



Assamese Earrings

Magardana

Known for its intricate design, the Magardana often features motifs inspired by nature, such as flowers, leaves, or animals, with the most common being floral patterns. This piece of jewellery is usually made from gold and is often adorned with delicate engravings or embossing, showcasing the exquisite craftsmanship of Assamese artisans.

Magardana rings are not only decorative but also hold cultural significance, often worn during special occasions like weddings and festivals. They symbolize prosperity and are sometimes passed down as heirlooms within families.

Uka-keru

Uka-keru is a traditional earring from Assam, known for its simple and elegant design. Unlike the more ornate Assamese earrings like Loka-paro or Thuriya, Uka-keru is typically crafted from gold or silver with a minimalist approach, often featuring a plain hoop or a modest decorative element.

These earrings are a staple in everyday wear for Assamese women, embodying both practicality and subtle beauty. Though not as elaborate as other traditional pieces, Uka-keru holds cultural value, symbolizing the grace and tradition inherent in Assamese jewellery.

Kerumoni

Typically crafted from gold, Kerumoni earrings are small and often feature detailed floral or geometric patterns, reflecting the skilled craftsmanship of Assamese artisans.

These earrings are commonly worn by women across Assam, particularly by young girls, and are a staple in traditional Assamese attire. The name "Kerumoni" combines



Assamese Jewellery

"Karu" (meaning small) and "Moni" (meaning jewel or gem), emphasizing the earring's petite and elegant nature.

THE ROLE OF JEWELLERY IN ASSAMESE FESTIVALS AND RITUALS

Jewellery plays a crucial role in Assamese festivals, weddings, and cultural ceremonies, serving not only as adornment but also as a symbol of the region's rich traditions and heritage. During festivals like Bihu, the most important festival in Assam, traditional jewellery such as Gamkharu (heavy gold bangles), Kerumoni (small, intricate earrings), and Thuriya (spiral earrings) are worn by women to celebrate the occasion with elegance and cultural pride.

These pieces are not merely decorative; they carry deep symbolic meanings that are intertwined with Assamese customs. For example, Gamkharu is often worn to signify strength and prosperity, while Thuriya represents continuity and the cyclical nature of life, echoing the rhythms of the agricultural cycles celebrated during Bihu.

Beyond their aesthetic appeal, these jewellery pieces are imbued with cultural and spiritual significance, often passed down through generations as family heirlooms, thus preserving the state's cultural legacy. During religious rituals and other cultural ceremonies, wearing traditional jewellery is a way of honouring the gods and ancestors, as well as a demonstration of respect for Assamese customs.

The craftsmanship involved in these pieces reflects the region's artistic heritage, with each design carrying stories and symbolism that connect the wearer to Assam's rich cultural tapestry. In essence, traditional Assamese jewellery is not just an accessory; it is a living expression of the state's identity, history, and values, playing a vital role in the celebration and preservation of Assamese culture.



The Clark Sickle-Leaf Persian Carpet

WONDER WEAVE

The world's most expensive carpets are renowned for their exquisite craftsmanship and fetch millions from collectors. Discover what makes these rare pieces so sought after

TT BUREAU

When it comes to the world of art collecting, nothing quite matches the allure of the most expensive carpets ever sold. These masterpieces with stories that stretch across centuries and continents combine exquisite craftsmanship, historical intrigue, and jaw-dropping prices that leave even the most seasoned collectors doing a double take.

So, let's explore the luxurious world of these textile treasures and discover why collectors are willing to drop millions on these extraordinary pieces.

THE \$33 MILLION MASTERPIECE: THE CLARK SICKLE-LEAF PERSIAN CARPET

Let's start with the reigning champion of carpets, the Clark Sickle-Leaf Persian Carpet. When this 17th-century beauty went under the hammer at Sotheby's for a jaw-dropping \$33 million, it blew past expectations. Why? Well, aside from being a masterpiece of Safavid-era craftsmanship, it's one of the few surviving examples of a specific design motif: the sickle-leaf pattern. The intertwining leaves and floral motifs, all in striking reds, blues, and greens, create a sense of movement and life that makes this a dynamic piece of art.

This Persian wonder also boasts impeccable provenance, having been part of the esteemed collection of William A. Clark, an industrialist with a sharp eye for art. It's not just the rarity and beauty that made this carpet a \$33 million sensation; it's the story it tells of Persian artistry at its peak.

THE PEARL CARPET OF BARODA: \$5.45 MILLION OF ROYAL OPULENCE

Now, if the Persian carpets feel a bit too classic for your tastes, how about something with a little extra bling? Enter the Pearl Carpet of Baroda. This 19th-century Indian treasure sold for a cool \$5.45 million at a Sotheby's auction, and believe me, it's worth every penny. Commissioned by the Maharaja of Baroda, this isn't just a carpet; it's a royal statement of luxury and extravagance.

What makes this piece stand out? For starters, it's covered in pearls—over two million Basra pearls, to be exact. Add to that rubies, emeralds, and diamonds, all sewn into an intricate floral pattern, and you've got a carpet fit for a king (or, in this case, a maharaja). The story goes that this carpet was intended as a gift for the Prophet's Tomb in Mecca, but it never made it there. Instead, it became one of the most famous examples of Indian artistry in the 19th century, blending Islamic and Indian design influences into a glittering, unforgettable masterpiece.

THE KIRMAN VASE CARPET: A \$1.5 MILLION BOTANICAL DREAM

Heading back to Persia, we find the Kirman Vase Carpet, a 17th-century wonder that sold for \$1.5 million. Now, this carpet is famous not just for its price but for the sheer beauty of its design. The "vase" motif is what sets it apart—delicate floral patterns bursting from intricately woven vases create a tapestry that feels alive with nature's bounty. The Kirman region was known for producing some of the finest carpets in history, and this particular piece is a shining example of why. With its finely spun wool and natural dyes, this carpet has managed to maintain its vibrant colours over the centuries. The craftsmanship is undeniable, with each knot painstakingly tied to form a complex and harmonious design. For art

collectors, this is the kind of piece that transcends function - it's a botanical masterpiece that has survived hundreds of years.

THE LOUIS XV SAVONNERIE CARPET: FRENCH ROYALTY FOR \$4.4 MILLION

What if your taste leans toward French sophistication? The Louis XV Savonnerie carpet, created in 18th-century France, could make your heart skip many a beat. Fetching \$4.4 million at auction, this opulent carpet was woven in the prestigious Savonnerie workshops, which were originally established to produce carpets for the royal palaces of Louis XIV. By the time Louis XV ascended the throne, these carpets were symbols of royal prestige, known for their lush textures and vibrant floral designs.

This particular carpet is a riot of blooming flowers, scrolling vines, and ornate borders, all woven in the rich palette that typifies the Rococo period. Imagine the salons of Versailles, where French aristocrats would gather, with this stunning carpet anchoring the room.

EDMOND J. SAFRA'S SAFAVID CARPET: A \$7.7 MILLION SLICE OF PERSIAN HISTORY

If you're a collector looking for something with a bit more grandeur, look no further than Edmond J. Safra's Safavid Carpet. This 16th-



The Louis XV Savonnerie Carpet



The Pearl Carpet of Baroda



Polonaise' Silk and Metal-Thread Carpet

century Persian treasure sold for \$7.7 million, and for good reason. The Safavid period was the golden age of Persian carpet-making, and this piece is a perfect example of the era's sophistication. With its intricate arabesques and floral motifs, all set against a backdrop of deep reds and blues, the carpet feels almost regal.

This particular carpet was part of the esteemed collection of Edmond J. Safra, a banker and philanthropist with a deep appreciation for fine art. Owning a Safavid carpet is like holding a piece of history in your hands!

POLONAISE' SILK AND METAL-THREAD CARPET: \$790,000 WORTH OF GLAMOUR

If you're a Collector looking for something truly unique, how about a carpet that incorporates silk and metal threads? The 'Polonaise' carpets, made in 17th-century Persia, are the epitome of luxury. One of these remarkable pieces recently fetched \$790,000 at auction, and it's easy to see why. Woven with shimmering silk and actual silver and gold threads, these carpets were crafted for the elite—European nobility who had an insatiable appetite for Persian luxury goods. The metallic threads catch the light in a way that's nothing short of magical, giving the carpet an otherworldly glow. Owning a 'Polonaise' carpet is like owning a piece of wearable art—even if it's on your wall or vault.

THE MUGHAL 'STAR LATTICE' CARPET: \$2 MILLION OF INDIAN GRANDEUR

For those with a taste for Mughal luxury, the 'Star Lattice' carpet is an Indian masterpiece that commands attention—

and a \$2 million price tag. This exquisite carpet was created during the height of the Mughal Empire when art and craftsmanship flourished under the reign of Emperor Akbar.

The design is a stunning interplay of interlocking stars and floral motifs, woven in a rich palette of deep reds, blues, and golds. Mughal carpets are celebrated for their intricate designs, which combine Persian and Indian influences, and the 'Star Lattice' is no exception. With its regal history and impeccable craftsmanship, it's a favourite among collectors who appreciate both its beauty and its cultural significance.

THE FINAL KNOT

Whether it's the luxurious Pearl Carpet of Baroda, shimmering with jewels, or the 17th-century silk and metal threads Polonaise rug, these carpets represent the pinnacle of craftsmanship and artistry. For collectors, they are more than just investments—they're pieces of history, woven into every knot and thread. From the royal courts of France and Persia to the regal palaces of Mughal grandeur, these carpets tell stories of the cultures and people who created them. And while their price tags may make headlines, it's their beauty, history, and craftsmanship that truly make them priceless.

Owning one of these carpets isn't just about owning a piece of art—it's about holding a piece of history, a tangible connection to the artisans who spent years bringing these masterpieces to life. And in a world where fast fashion and mass production dominate, there's something undeniably special about owning something so rare, so timeless, and so exquisitely crafted.



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

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

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

BENEFITS AVAILABLE/SALIENT FEATURES:

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

COMPLETE EXEMPTION FROM :-

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

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

CONTACT DETAILS

DINESH SINGH, IOFS

Add: Zonal Development Commissioner, Kandla Special Economic Zones, Gandhidham, Kutch, Gujarat, India. Pin -370230

Email: dc.kasez-gj@gov.in

Website: www.kasez.gov.in

Tel: (02836)-252475 | **Mobile:** +91-9717055199

GET YOUR FASHION FIX

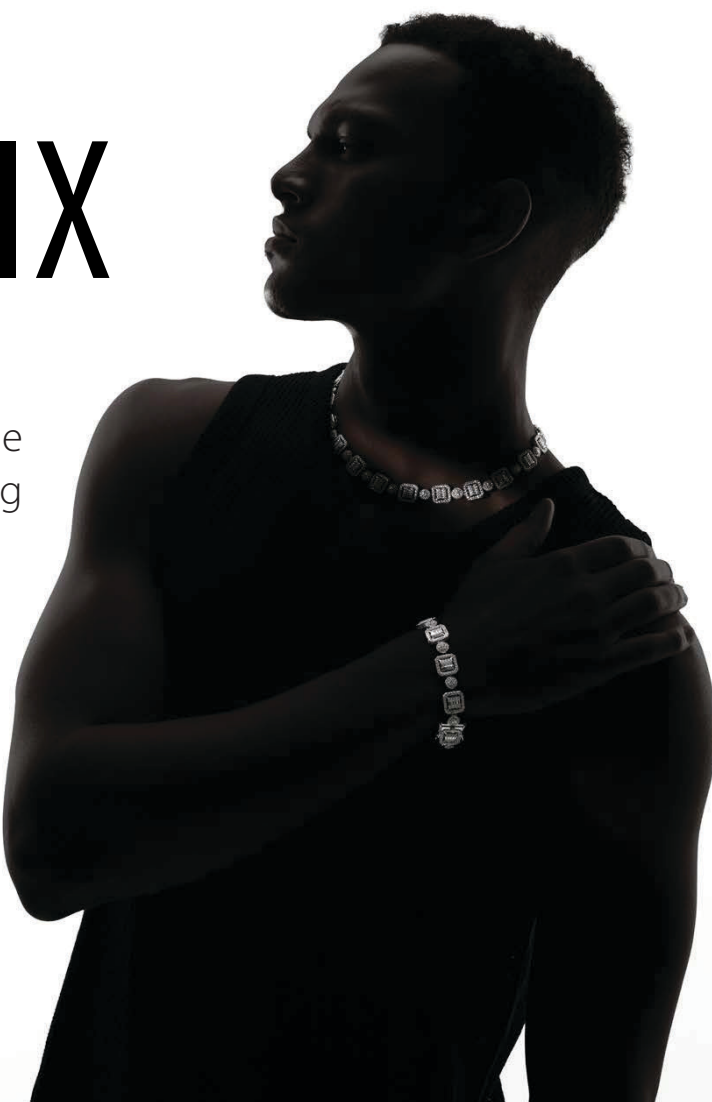
Sunglasses and jewellery have become essential fashion statements, embodying style, elegance, and individuality

TT BUREAU

In high fashion, sunglasses and jewellery have become the ultimate power players. Whether you're heading to a glamorous rooftop party or simply strutting through the city, these statement pieces are essential to elevating your look. Gone are the days when sunglasses were just for shielding your eyes from the sun or jewellery was reserved for special occasions—today, they're symbols of sophistication, personality, and trendsetting style.

Sunglasses have evolved into a must-have accessory that combines both function and flair. Think oversized frames for a dramatic touch or vintage cat-eye designs that instantly add a playful, retro edge to any outfit.

For example, Golden Concept's latest collection brings us the Baller II—a stunning update on a classic style, with larger



Jewellery By Golden Concept

frames and bold metal detailing that make it impossible to go unnoticed. The mirrored lenses not only protect your eyes but also give you that cool, futuristic vibe, perfect for anyone looking to make a statement. And if you're after a more timeless look, the new Pilot and Glider frames are a modern twist on classic aviators, available in luxurious gold and silver tones that scream elegance.



Golden Concept Jewelry Cuban Iced Collection

When it comes to jewellery, it's all about mixing and matching to create a personal style that feels unique. Layering delicate chains of different lengths is one of the biggest trends right now, allowing you to curate a look that's all your own.

Picture this: multiple delicate necklaces cascading down, paired with stackable rings that add just the right amount of sparkle. For those who prefer something bolder, chunky gold hoops or geometric cuffs offer a luxurious twist, instantly elevating even the simplest outfit.

The brand's Cuban Iced Collection is a perfect example of how jewellery can transform your look. This collection combines urban flair with high-fashion elegance, featuring Cuban chains dripping in zirconia gems that catch the light and turn heads. Whether it's a necklace, bracelet, or ring, these pieces make it clear you're here to dazzle.

And let's not forget the Halo Collection, where contemporary design meets royal opulence. Crafted from sterling silver and adorned with sparkling gems, these pieces offer a touch of regal charm while keeping things modern and fresh.

Both sunglasses and jewellery are no longer just accessories—they're an extension of your style and personality. The new collection proves that high fashion is about more than just clothes; it's about the details that make you stand out, whether you're going for understated elegance or full-on glamour.



Sunglasses By Golden Concept



Cuban Iced Necklace By Golden Concept



Golden Concept Jewelry Collection - Halo Bracelet

LUXE ESSENTIALS: THE MUST-HAVE SUNGLASSES AND JEWELLERY SELECTION

Here's a look at the standout products in the latest collection. Indulge in these luxurious pieces and take your fashion game to the next level.

Baller II: Redefining Bold Elegance

The Baller II sunglasses are an evolution of the brand's iconic Baller design. These oversized frames are designed for the fashion-forward individual who loves to make a statement. The updated larger frames and sleek metal detailing give the Baller II a bold yet refined look. Perfect for day or night, these sunglasses offer both protection and an air of exclusivity.

Features: Larger frames, metal accents, mirrored lenses.
Style tip: Pair with a sleek leather jacket for an ultra-cool vibe.

Pilot and Glider: Timeless Aviators with a Modern Twist

For those who prefer something classic, the Pilot and Glider models are perfect. Inspired by the timeless aviator design, these sunglasses are available in gold and silver frames, featuring Golden Concept's iconic pattern on the temples. The result is a sophisticated yet modern accessory that suits any occasion.

Features: Metal frames, available in gold and silver, iconic temple detailing.

Style tip: These work best with a tailored suit or chic summer dress for a polished look.

Cuban Iced Collection: Urban Flair Meets High Fashion

The Cuban Iced Collection takes jewellery to new heights. Featuring Cuban chains adorned with sparkling zirconia gems, this collection is designed for those who love a bold, eye-catching accessory. Available in necklaces, bracelets, and rings, the Cuban Iced pieces add an urban edge to your look while maintaining a sense of high-fashion sophistication.

Features: Sterling silver or black finish, zirconia gems.

Style tip: Layer the Cuban chain necklace with simpler pieces for a statement look.

Halo Collection: Modern Royalty

The Halo Collection is all about elegance with a nod to royal grandeur. Inspired by ancient royal jewellery, each piece in

this collection is meticulously crafted from sterling silver and set with sparkling zirconia gems. The intricate designs draw attention without overpowering your outfit, offering a balance between modern chic and timeless luxury..

Features: Sterling silver, hand-set zirconia gems.

Style tip: Wear with a simple black dress or formal wear to let the jewellery take center stage.

Get ready to shine with the latest collections of luxury sunglasses and jewellery! From bold and edgy to classic elegance, these pieces perfectly blend innovation and timeless style.



Cuban Iced Bracelet By Golden Concept



Launch of New Luxurious Sunglasses By Golden Concept



LAUREATO 42 MM

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



Naga (Snake) Worship

GUARDIANS OF THE SERPENT

Journey through India's Famous Snake Temples, discovering sacred rituals, age-old myths, and the deep-rooted cultural significance of snake worship in India's spiritual landscape

NAVEEN KAKKAR

In the vibrant tapestry of Indian culture, few creatures command as much reverence and mystique as the snake. Revered in myths, legends, and religious texts, snakes hold a powerful place in the spiritual landscape of India. They are not merely seen as reptiles but as divine beings symbolizing power, fertility, and protection.

The serpent, or "Naga," is woven into the fabric of India's spiritual consciousness, often associated with Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, who are depicted with snakes as their companions. This deep-seated reverence has given rise to numerous temples dedicated to snake deities, where devotees flock to seek blessings, protection, and prosperity.

Across the length and breadth of the country, these snake temples in India stand as significant centres of worship, attracting devotees who honour the serpent gods through

rituals that have been passed down through generations. The snake, with its ability to shed its skin, is seen as a symbol of renewal and transformation, embodying the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. In many regions, particularly in South India, the serpent is also revered as a guardian of the land, believed to bring fertility to the soil and prosperity to the people.

WHY DO HINDUS WORSHIP SNAKES?

Snakes hold a significant place in Hindu culture, deeply influencing religious practices and beliefs. Integral to various religions, mysticism, and sacred rituals, the worship of snakes likely originated in India. The Sanskrit word "Sarpam" and the term "Naga" both mean serpent or snake. But why do Hindus worship snakes?

In Hindu mythology, snakes are depicted in multiple forms, including gods, demigods, and even demons. Lord Shiva, one of the principal deities, is often shown with a snake coiled around his neck, symbolizing power and protection. Similarly, Lord Vishnu, another revered deity, is depicted reclining on a thousand-headed serpent called Shesha. These depictions emphasize the omnipresence and protective nature of snakes in Hindu iconography.

Snakes are seen as symbols of power, protection, and fertility in Hinduism. They are believed to be the guardians of the Earth's treasures and, in some traditions, protectors of the underworld. Many Hindus worship snakes to seek protection from harm and to attract good fortune. However, snakes also represent a darker aspect of Hinduism, symbolizing temptation, deception, and chaos.

FAMOUS SNAKE TEMPLES

Mannarasala Sree Nagaraja Temple, Kerala

Mannarasala Sree Nagaraja Temple, located in Kerala, is a renowned pilgrimage site dedicated to Nagaraja, the King of Serpents. According to legend, the temple was established by a Brahmin woman who, with the blessings of Nagaraja, bore children after long being childless. The temple is unique for its rituals, particularly the offering of turmeric, which is believed to possess healing properties and is a symbol of fertility.

Women devotees play a central role in the temple's rituals, with the temple's chief priestess, known as the "Mannarasala Amma," being a woman. She leads the temple's ceremonies and oversees the observance of traditions, reflecting the

temple's deep connection with feminine energy and fertility. This emphasis on female devotees underscores the temple's belief in the nurturing and protective aspects of the serpent deity.

Mannarasala Sree Nagaraja Temple is located in Haripad, a town in the Alappuzha district of Kerala. The temple is not only a significant pilgrimage site but is also surrounded by several other attractions. Nearby, you can explore the beautiful Alappuzha Beach, known for its picturesque views and serene atmosphere.



Mannarasala Sree Nagaraja Temple, Kerala



Mannarasala Sree Nagaraja Temple, Kerala



Sri Nagareshwara Temple, Bangalore, Karnataka

Kukke Subramanya Temple, Karnataka

Kukke Subramanya Temple, located in the town of Subramanya in the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka, is one of the most revered temples in South India. The temple is dedicated to Lord Subramanya, also known as Kartikeya, the god of war and son of Lord Shiva. According to legend, Lord Subramanya offered protection to the serpent king Vasuki from the wrath of Garuda, the eagle deity. As a result, the temple is closely associated with serpent worship, and devotees believe that it holds special significance for those seeking relief from snake-related curses.

One of the temple's most important rituals is the 'Sarpa Samskara,' a unique ceremony performed to alleviate the effects of Sarpa Dosha, a curse believed to result from harming serpents in past lives. Devotees who suffer from issues related to snake bites or infertility often undertake this ritual, which is believed to cleanse the individual of the curse and bring about positive changes in their life.

Sri Nagareshwara Temple, Bangalore, Karnataka

Sri Nagareshwara Temple, located in Bangalore, Karnataka, stands as a testament to the enduring cultural beliefs surrounding snake worship in an urban setting. This ancient temple, believed to have been established centuries ago, holds deep historical significance as a centre for the worship of serpent deities. In the bustling city of Bangalore, the temple serves as a spiritual refuge, where the age-old



Kukke Subramanya Temple, Karnataka

traditions of serpent worship continue to thrive amidst rapid modernization.

The temple is particularly vibrant during festivals like Nag Panchami, a day dedicated to the worship of snakes. On this occasion, devotees flock to the temple to perform special rituals, including the offering of milk, flowers, and turmeric to the serpent idols. These rituals are believed to invoke the blessings of the serpent gods, ensuring protection from snake-related fears and bringing prosperity and fertility to the devotees.

Kalahasti Temple, Andhra Pradesh

Kalahasti Temple, located in the town of Srikalahasti in Andhra Pradesh, is one of the most revered temples in South India, particularly known for its association with the shadow planets Rahu and Ketu, symbolized by serpents in Hindu astrology. These two celestial bodies are believed to have a profound influence on human lives, often causing disruptions and challenges.

The temple is renowned for the unique Rahu-Ketu Dosha Nivarthi ritual, which is performed by devotees seeking to mitigate the adverse effects of these planets in their astrological charts. This ritual involves specific prayers and offerings that are believed to neutralize the malefic influences of Rahu and Ketu, bringing peace and prosperity to the devotee's life.

ADI SESHA TEMPLE, TAMIL NADU

Adi Sesha Temple in Tamil Nadu is a revered spiritual site dedicated to Adi Sesha, the king of all Nagas and the divine serpent on whom Lord Vishnu rests. Adi Sesha holds immense significance in Hindu mythology, symbolizing the eternal cycle of creation, preservation, and destruction.

The temple's unique architecture is a remarkable reflection of this symbolism, with its intricate design mirroring the coiled form of a serpent. The temple's sanctum is shaped in a way that evokes the image of Adi Sesha's majestic coils, offering a powerful visual connection to the deity's protective and all-encompassing nature.

In the spiritual landscape of Tamil Nadu, the Adi Sesha Temple occupies a vital place, drawing devotees who seek the blessings of the serpent king for protection, health, and spiritual wisdom. The temple is not only a place of worship but also a site of deep cultural heritage, where rituals and ceremonies are performed with great devotion, reflecting the region's rich religious traditions.

As guardians of cultural continuity, these snake temples invite us to explore the layers of meaning within India's religious landscape, fostering a deeper appreciation for the diverse ways in which spirituality is expressed across the country. By honouring these traditions, we not only preserve the past but also enrich our understanding of the present and the future of spiritual practice in India.



Kalahasti Temple, Andhra Pradesh

SIP & SAVOUR AT TOP VINEYARDS

As September ushers in harvest season across some of the world's most renowned wine regions, it's the perfect time to immerse yourself in the art of wine tasting.

TT BUREAU

With the last traces of summer warmth lingering and the hustle of peak tourist season subsiding, vineyards are alive with celebration. The grapevines, heavy with ripened fruit, signal the start of the winemakers' most anticipated time of year, creating a festive atmosphere in charming villages.

The air turns crisp, the wine flows freely, and the landscape bursts with colour and flavour. Here's a guide to the most famous vineyards to visit during the September harvest.

OPUS ONE WINERY – NAPA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Visiting Opus One Winery in Napa Valley during the September harvest is an unforgettable experience for wine enthusiasts. As one of the most prestigious wineries in California, Opus One opens its doors to visitors, offering a rare glimpse into the art of winemaking during the busy harvest season. In September, visitors can enjoy exclusive vineyard tours,

where they can observe the grape-picking process and learn about the meticulous methods behind crafting their iconic Bordeaux-style wines. The winery also offers guided cellar tours, where guests can explore the barrel ageing rooms and taste wines straight from the barrel, gaining insights into the different stages of production.

One of the highlights of visiting during harvest season is the special wine-tasting sessions, where you can savour limited-edition releases alongside carefully curated food pairings that enhance the complexity of the wines.

CHÂTEAU MARGAUX – MARGAUX, BORDEAUX, FRANCE

A visit to Château Margaux in Bordeaux, France during the September autumn harvest offers a once-in-a-lifetime experience for wine lovers. As one of the most legendary wine estates in the world, Château Margaux is renowned for its rich history and the production of some of the finest Bordeaux



Opus One Winery



Château Margaux



Antinori Chianti Classico, Italy

wines. During the September harvest, the estate opens its doors to visitors, allowing you to witness the bustling activity in the vineyards as grapes are meticulously handpicked, offering an intimate view of the winemaking process that has been perfected over centuries.

Guests can indulge in exclusive wine tastings that feature some of Château Margaux's most prestigious vintages, paired with local gourmet delicacies that enhance the tasting experience. The guided tours of the grand estate and its historic cellars offer fascinating insights into the estate's legacy, architecture, and the techniques behind its world-class wines. For a unique touch, visitors can explore the picturesque vineyards, where the golden autumn leaves create a breathtaking backdrop, making it perfect for leisurely walks or photo opportunities.

SULA VINEYARDS – NASHIK, MAHARASHTRA

Sula Vineyards in Nashik offers a perfect blend of relaxation, wine exploration, and scenic beauty. As one of India's most popular and pioneering wineries, Sula Vineyards is renowned for its extensive range of wines and breathtaking views of rolling vineyards against the backdrop of the Western Ghats. In autumn, the weather is pleasant, making it an ideal time to explore the lush vineyards and immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere.

Visitors can indulge in guided vineyard tours, where they get an insider's look at the grape cultivation and harvesting processes. These tours offer fascinating insights into the journey from grape to bottle, showcasing the craftsmanship behind Sula's award-winning wines. Afterwards, you can enjoy wine-tasting sessions at the Tasting Room, where a selection of Sula's finest wines—including their signature Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, and Shiraz—are paired with light snacks to enhance the experience.

ANTINORI CHIANTI CLASSICO, ITALY

Nestled in the rolling hills of the Chianti region, this iconic winery, owned by the renowned Antinori family, offers a rich blend of history, architecture, and exceptional wine. Autumn, with its crisp air and vibrant fall colours, is the perfect time to explore the vineyard as the harvest season is in full swing, filling the estate with lively energy.

The Antinori Cellar is a highlight of the visit, offering a stunning architectural experience. Built into the hillside, the state-of-the-art cellar is an immersive space where visitors can learn about the intricate winemaking process, from fermentation to ageing. For a more hands-on experience, Antinori offers wine blending workshops, where guests can create their own unique blends, guided by expert winemakers.

GROVERZAMPA VINEYARDS – NANDI HILLS, KARNATAKA

With over three generations of winemaking expertise, Grover Zampa Vineyards stands as one of India's oldest and most renowned producers of premium wines. Located on a sprawling 410-acre estate at the foothills of the scenic Nandi Hills in Doddaballapura, about 47 km from Bangalore's MG Road, this vineyard offers a serene and picturesque setting.

Grover Zampa's rich history and tranquil surroundings make it a perfect destination for an immersive wine experience. Visitors can enjoy a comprehensive wine tour, which includes a stroll through the vineyards, a guided walk-through of the winemaking process, and a sommelier-led tasting, followed by a delightful lunch, making for a perfect day out amidst nature and fine wine.

Autumn's harvest season is a special time to visit the world's most famous wine regions. With the excitement of grape picking and exclusive tastings of limited-edition wines, each vineyard offers a unique mix of tradition, culture, and beautiful scenery.

IRRESISTIBLE MANIPUR DISHES

Get on a flavourful journey with our handpicked selection of Manipur dishes

TT BUREAU



Welcome to Manipur, where your taste buds embark on a flavourful adventure through the northeastern corner of India. This vibrant region boasts a culinary tradition that's as rich as its culture and as lush as its landscapes. Manipur's cuisine is the epitome of bold, fresh, and always satisfying.

Rice is the star of the show here, always paired with a delightful cast of seasonal veggies, wild herbs, and fermented goodies that bring a zing to every dish. And if meat is a favourite, you're in for a treat! Fish, chicken, and pork are regulars at this delicious gathering, all infused with maroi (chives) and ngari (fermented fish) for that distinctive Manipuri taste.

But that's not all! Manipur's cuisine is like a culinary tribute to nature, reflecting the region's unique geography and culture. It's a sensory delight, with flavours ranging from

mild to "where's the water?!" spicy. So, if you're a fan of rice, fish, and leafy greens, consider Manipuri food your new go-to. Bon appétit!

TASTE OF MANIPUR: A CULINARY CELEBRATION OF TRADITION AND NATURE'S BOUNTY

Manipur's cuisine reflects the geographical and socio-cultural uniqueness of this land in the Indian subcontinent's north-eastern corner. The cuisine of this region shows the people's close relationship with nature. Manipuri food is an exquisite treat to the senses, with an amazing array of flavours ranging from plain to spicy. Rice, fish and leafy green vegetables are prevalent in Manipuri cuisine.

Singju

Manipur's Singju is a dish that is said to have started with the Meitei culture, but it has since spread to most of the state's

ethnic communities as well as some neighbouring states in Northeast India. Singju has a lot of variations because its major ingredient is seasonal veggies. Ngari-based and Thoiding-Besan-based are the two most common forms. It's popular as an afternoon or evening snack, and it's often served as a spicy side dish.

It is a vibrant mix of finely sliced or julienned vegetables, such as cabbage, banana flower, lotus stem, and pea shoots, often combined with herbs like coriander and maroi (chives). The dish is given its distinctive tangy and spicy kick through the addition of red chilli powder, roasted chickpea powder, and fermented fish known as ngari, which are integral to Manipuri cuisine.

Nga-Thongba

Manipur's food is substantially hotter than that of the rest of the northeast. Nga Thongba is a fish curry made with both red and green chillies, as well as mustard oil, ginger, and garlic. The oily quality of the powerful fish complements the tart and fiery flavours of the sauce in this variation, which is traditionally made with white fish.

This traditional fish curry is prepared with freshwater fish, which is typically first fried and then simmered in a spiced gravy. The gravy is made using a blend of local spices, onions, ginger, garlic, and sometimes tomatoes, creating a savoury and slightly tangy base that complements the fish perfectly. A key characteristic of Nga-Thongba is the use of turmeric, which gives the dish its distinct golden hue and earthy undertones. The dish is often garnished with fresh coriander and sometimes maroi (chives) to enhance its flavour profile.

Nga-Thongba is usually served with steamed rice, making it a comforting and hearty meal that is deeply rooted in Manipuri culinary traditions. The dish is beloved for its balance of spices and the freshness of the fish, reflecting the region's rich natural resources and its people's deep connection to their land and waterways.

Paaknam

The word "Paknam" can be broken down into two parts: 'pak' meaning flat and 'nam' meaning press. Renowned for its distinctive taste and texture, Paknam is a traditional steamed dish from Manipur made with a variety of vegetables, fish, or other meats. This savoury Manipuri pancake is typically made from gram flour, seasoned with chives, and infused with the flavour of ngari (fermented fish).

Eromba

Eromba is one of the traditional dishes to try in Manipuri that holds a significant place in the state's culinary landscape. The dish is a flavorful mash of boiled vegetables, typically potatoes or seasonal greens, mixed with fermented fish known as ngari, which is a key ingredient in many Manipuri recipes. Eromba is distinguished by its spicy and tangy profile, often heightened



Singju



Paaknam

with the addition of red or green chillies, making it a dish that packs a punch in both flavour and aroma.

Alu Kangmet

Alu Kangmet is a simple yet flavorful dish that is a staple and finds its place among the famous food of Manipur. This dish primarily consists of mashed potatoes mixed with a generous amount of mustard oil, which imparts a distinct and robust flavour. The potatoes are boiled and then mashed until smooth and are typically combined with ingredients like finely chopped onions, green chillies, and salt to enhance the taste. In some variations, fried red chillies are also added to give the dish an extra kick.

Morok Metpa

Morok Metpa is one of the state's most popular delicacies. It's a salad-like food from Manipur. It is frequently served as a side dish with most lunch main course entrees. It's a dry, slightly spicy dish created with seasonal veggies. It can be eaten as

a snack as well. It is a popular meal for the inhabitants of the northeast.

This chutney is primarily made from fresh green or red chillies, which are either boiled or roasted before being ground into a coarse paste. The chillies are often combined with ngari (fermented fish), a staple in Manipuri cooking, to add a deep umami flavour to the chutney.

Chamthong

Chamthong, also known as Kangshoi, is a traditional Men's meal from Manipur and Assam's Barak Valley region. It's a stew made with dry fish or grilled fish chunks and any seasonal veggies. Chomthong is a soupy dish that is served with rice. It's a flavorful and nutritious stew made with fresh local vegetables, herbs, turmeric, and the spicy bhut jolokia or ghost chilli. It is one of the state's most important dishes. It is most commonly cooked during festival celebrations.

Uti Thongba

In Manipur, no major feast is complete without 'Uti thongba.' Uti thongba is a traditional Manipuri vegetarian dish that can be prepared in a variety of ways by the locals. It can be served as a main dish or as a side dish with your favourite meat curry. The 'Usoi Mangan uti,' which is a whole grain with fresh bamboo shoot uti, is a popular form of Uti Thongba.

Champhut

Champhut (with "cham" meaning simple and "phut" meaning boil) is a vegetarian dish characterized by its simplicity, with

no spices or strong flavours. It consists of boiled vegetables like mustard leaves and shoots, carrots, cabbage, peas, bottle gourd, and cucumber.

Chak Hao Kheer

The Chak-Hao Amubi (Black Rice Pudding) is a delicacy from India's North East, namely Manipur. Assam and Manipur grow a huge amount of black rice, which is drought-tolerant and mineral-rich. This unique rice variety is revered for its deep purple-black colour, nutty flavour, and high nutritional value, including rich antioxidants, fibre, and iron content.

Manipur dishes offer a unique fusion of tradition and innovation, creating an unforgettable culinary experience that lingers long after the last bite.



Uti Thongba



Chak Hao Kheer

WHY? TO GET A STEP AHEAD OF DISEASE.

Today's lifestyle puts your body through a lot. Lack of sleep, irregular food, and stress. Although seemingly small, each of these opens a doorway to disease.

The only way to avoid that is by being one step ahead of it.

Apollo PERSONALISED HEALTH CHEK™

Tailored around you, this comprehensive programme helps you prevent diseases before they become problems.

DNA+

This breakthrough test identifies your genetic risk for various diseases (including cardiac, diabetic, metabolic disorders and cancers) and enables timely intervention.

You are the centre of a universe. The reason behind an entire family's laughter. And joy. And the key to that is your health.

To know more, log on to
www.personalisedhealthchek.com

Book your appointment today.

 **1860-500-0707**

 **www.apolloedoc.co.in**

 **aphc@apollohospitals.com**

Additional tests, if required, will be at additional cost. Conditions apply.



South Indian Spices

TASTE OF SOUTH INDIA

Prepare for a South Indian Food adventure where every dish is a delicious history lesson for your taste buds! In Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh, food isn't just eaten — home kitchens celebrate it!

TT BUREAU

The real magic of traditional South Indian cuisine is happening in home kitchens where homemakers are the true culinary rockstars, stirring up centuries of tradition with a dash of local flair. These dishes are like a flavourful journey, taking you on a delicious ride through the rich culture and heritage of the South—one spicy, coconut-laden bite at a time!

Join us on a journey into the heart of these kitchens, where tradition meets taste. From the lively streets of Chennai to the peaceful backwaters of Kerala, get ready to savour the authentic, time-honoured flavours of South India.

THE JOY OF COOKING IN SOUTHERN INDIAN HOME KITCHENS

The heart of southern Indian cuisine lies in the home kitchen, where the true essence of the region's culinary traditions is brought to life. Cooking in these kitchens is a labour of love, where time-honoured recipes are prepared with care and attention to detail.

From the intricate process of grinding spices to the precise timing of tempering, every step in the preparation of

a South Indian dish is a testament to the skill and expertise of the homemakers. In Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh the use of fresh, local ingredients, combined with traditional cooking methods, results in dishes that are not only flavourful but also nourishing.

One of the most distinctive features of South Indian cooking is the use of a wide range of spices. The homemakers are masters of this art, meticulously grinding and roasting spices such as cumin, coriander, black pepper, and chilli peppers to unlock their full potential. The resulting spice blends, known as masalas, are the foundation of many South Indian dishes.

Another hallmark of South Indian cuisine is the use of fermentation, a technique that has been perfected by homemakers over generations.

Equally important are the unique cooking methods employed in South Indian kitchens. The use of clay pots, known as "Kuzhi Paniyaram," for steaming and roasting, and the intricate process of tempering spices in hot oil, known as "Tadka," are just a few examples of the techniques that have been passed down through the generations.



Avial Dish



Karimeen Pollichathu

KERALA: THE COASTAL FLAVOURS OF GOD'S OWN COUNTRY

Kerala, often referred to as "God's Own Country," is a coastal paradise where the sea plays a significant role in shaping its culinary landscape. The state's cuisine is a harmonious blend of spices, coconut, and fresh seafood, with rice as the staple of every meal. The influence of centuries-old trade routes, which brought in spices like black pepper, cardamom, and cloves, is evident in every bite.

One of Kerala's most iconic vegetarian dishes is Avial, a medley of seasonal vegetables cooked in rich coconut gravy, flavoured with curry leaves and green chillies. Another quintessential dish is Puttu, a steamed rice cake layered with grated coconut. Puttu is often served with Kadala Curry (black chickpeas curry) or ripe bananas, making it a versatile dish enjoyed at any time of the day.

Kerala's coastline provides an abundance of fresh seafood, and the state's home kitchens are where some of the most flavourful seafood dishes are created. Karimeen Pollichathu is a traditional dish where the pearl spot fish, marinated in a mixture of spices and wrapped in a banana leaf, is grilled to perfection.

Another seafood delight is Chemmeen Curry, a prawn curry cooked in a tangy and spicy coconut milk gravy. The combination of succulent prawns with the richness of coconut milk, tempered with mustard seeds, curry leaves, and a hint of tamarind, creates a dish that is a true celebration of Kerala's coastal flavours.

Nadan Kozhi Varuthathu (Spicy Chicken Fry) is a Kerala speciality, known for its crispy texture and fiery flavours. Marinated in a blend of spices and curry leaves, the chicken is fried to perfection, resulting in a dish that's both crunchy and tender.

Appam with Stew is a quintessential dish of Kerala. The appam, a soft and fluffy rice pancake with a slightly crispy



Puttu



Spicy Chicken Fry

edge, serves as the ideal companion to the rich and creamy coconut stew often made with vegetables, chicken, or mutton, and simmered in a fragrant mix of coconut milk, curry leaves, and spices.



One of the most iconic desserts in Kerala is the payasam, a creamy, milk-based pudding flavoured with a variety of ingredients, from cardamom to saffron. The homemakers of the region have perfected the art of creating the perfect payasam, carefully balancing the sweetness with the richness of the milk and the fragrance of the spices.

TAMIL NADU: THE QUINTESSENTIAL SAMBAR AND IDLI

Tamil Nadu's cuisine is a reflection of its deep-rooted history, cultural diversity, and love for bold flavours. Known for its use of spices like turmeric, red chillies, and mustard seeds, Tamil Nadu's dishes are vibrant, aromatic, and often accompanied by rice, which is the cornerstone of every meal.

No culinary journey through Tamil Nadu would be complete without Sambar, Dosa and Idli. Sambar, a lentil-

based stew made with tamarind, vegetables, and a robust spice blend, is a staple in every Tamil household. It is often served with Idli, a soft, steamed rice cake, making for a perfect combination that is enjoyed across the state.

Similarly, the classic dosa, with its paper-thin crispiness and aromatic fillings, is a true masterpiece that requires immense skill and patience to perfect. Homemakers are masters of the dosa-making process, skillfully pouring and spreading the batter on a hot griddle to create the perfect crispy texture.

The Chettinad region of Tamil Nadu is famous for its spicy and aromatic cuisine, which is known for its liberal use of spices like fennel, star anise, and cinnamon. One of the most popular dishes from this region is Chettinad Chicken, a fiery chicken curry that is both complex in flavour and deeply satisfying.



Sambar, Dosa and Idli - Tamil Nadu

Another Chettinad speciality is Kuzhi Paniyaram, small, round dumplings made from fermented rice and urad dal batter, similar to Idli but with a crispy exterior. Paniyaram is often served with chutneys and sambar.

ANDHRA PRADESH: THE FIERY FLAVOURS OF THE DECCAN

Andhra Pradesh is known for its bold, spicy, and tangy cuisine, where chillies play a central role. The region's dishes are often fiery, but they also offer a balance of flavours, with the use of tamarind, coconut, and jaggery to temper the heat. Rice is the staple grain, and it is often accompanied by a variety of pickles, chutneys, and curries that showcase the region's culinary diversity.

An iconic dish Pesarattu, a green gram dosa that is crispy, savoury, and packed with protein. It is often served with Allam Pachadi (ginger chutney) or coconut chutney, adding a refreshing contrast to the earthy flavour of the dosa.

Pulihora, also known as tamarind rice, is another beloved dish in Andhra Pradesh. The rice is flavoured with tamarind, curry leaves, peanuts, and a blend of spices.

Pulasa Pulusu is a true gem of Andhra Pradesh, made from the highly prized Pulasa fish, which is available only during the monsoon season. Known for its tender, flavourful meat, Pulasa Pulusu is a tangy, spicy curry that's as nutritious as it is delicious. The fish is cooked in a blend of tamarind, onions, and traditional spices, creating a unique flavour profile that's hard to find anywhere else.

For seafood enthusiasts, Royyala Yeppadu is an absolute must-try. This fiery prawn dish is a favourite in Andhra cuisine, where prawns are marinated in a mix of bold spices and then fried to perfection.

Kodi Kura (chicken curry) is another classic dish from Andhra Pradesh, known for its fiery flavour and rich gravy. Kodi Kura is often served with rice or Ragi Mudda (ragi balls), a traditional accompaniment that helps balance the heat of the curry. Kodi Pulao is a hearty dish that brings together the best of both worlds—tender meat and aromatic rice.

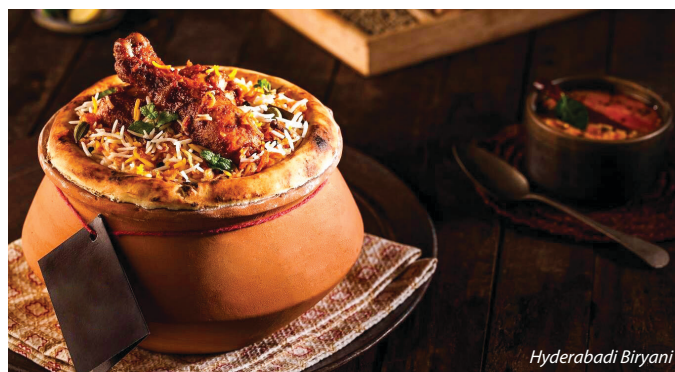
No mention of South Indian cuisine would be complete without Hyderabad Biryani. In neighbouring Telangana.



Chettinad Chicken



Pulihora



Hyderabad Biryani

This iconic dish is renowned across the world for its intricate layers of fragrant basmati rice, succulent meat, and a medley of spices. Originating from the royal kitchens of Hyderabad, it's a dish that embodies the opulence of Mughlai cuisine.

The Spice of Andhra is the apt name given to Gongura and Kodi Kura. Gongura is a leafy green used in a variety of dishes, most notably Gongura Pachadi (a tangy chutney) and Gongura Mutton. The tangy flavour of gongura leaves pairs beautifully with the richness of mutton, creating a dish that is as delicious as it is distinctive.

SOUTH INDIAN FOOD AS A CULTURAL SYMBOL

South Indian cuisine is a cultural symbol that has transcended the boundaries of the region and become a global phenomenon. The food of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh and Telangana is a reflection of the region's history, culture, and way of life.

The homemakers of South India have played a pivotal role in ensuring that the flavours, techniques, and traditions of their culinary heritage remain intact. Through their meticulous attention to detail, their mastery of traditional cooking methods, and their deep respect for the region's culinary history, these homemakers have played a crucial role in this cultural narrative, serving as the custodians of a culinary legacy and ensuring that the flavours and aromas of South Indian cuisine extend far beyond the realm of food.



Kuzhi Paniyaram

2024 POP CULTURE UNPLUGGED

Explore the year's boldest pop culture trends, from music to theatre.

TT BUREAU

2024 is the year where keeping up with entertainment trends feels like trying to read Shakespeare while dancing to Afrobeats. Indie artists are taking over global charts, theatre is more immersive than ever (quite literally), and the influencer scene is as unpredictable as ever. Stay tuned my friend—it's a cultural rollercoaster, and we're all just trying to look graceful on the ride!"

Meanwhile, Bollywood music, still firmly rooted in tradition, has taken a digital leap with remixes dominating YouTube and TikTok, transforming old classics into viral sensations. On the theatre front, immersive experiences are all the rage. Productions like "The Burnt City" in London and "Sleep No More" in New York are breaking down the fourth wall, allowing audiences to wander through sets and become part of the narrative.

Books are no exception to the global trends shaking up other sectors. Dark academia is taking over bestseller lists, blending gothic atmospheres with intellectual intrigue. Authors like R.F. Kuang and Brandon Sanderson have captured the imaginations of readers worldwide with their complex, multi-layered stories. On the non-fiction front, self-help meets spirituality, with books like Atomic Habits and The Power of Now continuing to trend.

Food is having a global renaissance as well. Korean street food like tteokbokki and hotteok—becoming a fixture in food markets around the world. Plant-based meats, meanwhile, are no longer a fad but a fixture, making waves in both fast-food chains and high-end restaurants alike. On social media, food influencers are combining ASMR with cooking tutorials, generating millions of views as people become hooked on the relaxing yet visually satisfying format.

Viral videos, fuelled by short-form platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels, have given rise to a new generation of influencers. From dance challenges set to catchy pop songs to cinematic travel vlogs, content creators like Khaby Lame and Bella Poarch, Bhuvan Bam, Prajakta Koli, and Jannat Zubair are riding high. And let's not forget the rise of OTT platforms in India, where series like Made in Heaven (created by Zoya Akhtar and Reema



Pop Music Concerts

Kagti) and Delhi Crime (starring Shefali Shah) capture attention worldwide, reflecting the complexities of modern Indian life.

The global cultural scene right now is like a mashup of classic paintings and AI art, vinyl records and virtual concerts, Taylor Swift anthems, retro A.R. Rahman classics, and Telugu songs hitting all the right notes on YouTube. 2024 is here to push the envelope... and probably drop a few surprise tracks along the way!!



A R Rahman Performing Live



MEISSEN COUTURE

JOAILLERIE



My little
MYSTERY!



MEISSEN® ITALIA, Via Monte Napoleone 3, Milano • www.meissen.it • Tel: +39 02 89 42 37 25



REVERSE MARKETPLACE®

Speed Dating with Corporates

DELHI MTM

10TH

JANUARY 2025

DELHI VENUE:
Pullman New Delhi Aerocity

MUMBAI MTM

23RD

MAY 2025

MUMBAI VENUE:
JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar

BOOK YOUR SPACE

MART HIGHLIGHTS

- Meet Corporate Purchasers, Event & Wedding Planners
- Reverse Marketplace • Meet PAN India Decision Makers • MTM Star Awards
- Networking Tea, Lunch, Cocktails & Dinner

Media Partner

TODAY'S
traveller

Organiser

OptiMICE
Events Pvt Ltd

FOR PARTNERSHIP & BOOKING SPACE PLEASE CONTACT:

Safal Saalwar: +91 9953701567 | Amit Kumar Jha: +91 9625846296

✉ mtmsales@optimiceevents.com