

A woman with long, wavy brown hair and green eyes, wearing a vibrant purple strapless dress, is leaning against a thick, mossy tree branch. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a lush, out-of-focus garden filled with green leaves and clusters of bright pink flowers.

# TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, LUXURY & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

MARCH 2025 - ₹50

ANCIENT  
RITUALS &  
GLOBAL SPAS

FORAGED  
FEASTS

**BACK TO NATURE**



# SICIS O'CLOCK



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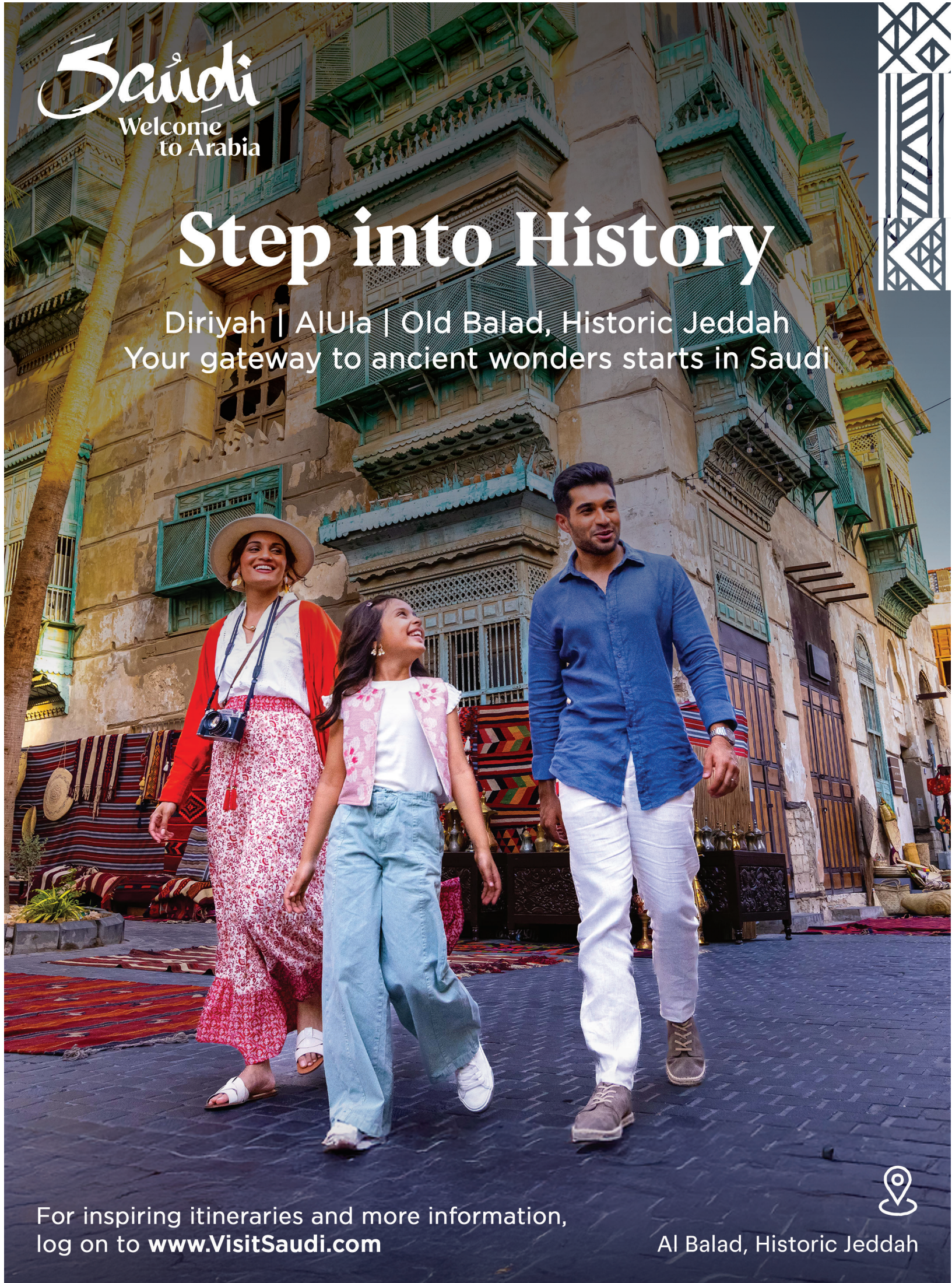
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**SUB EDITOR**  
CHANDRUTPAL DAS BORO

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
YOGESH SHARMA

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

Printed at: HT Media Limited,  
Plot Number 8, Udyog Vihar,  
Greater Noida - 201306, UP.

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

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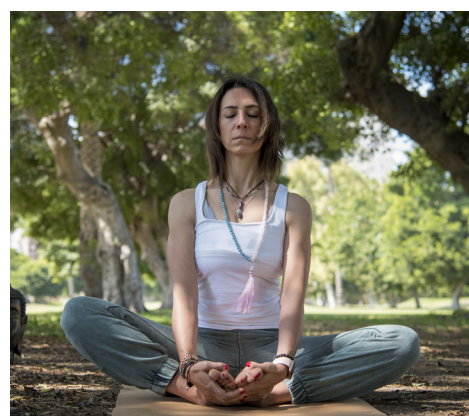
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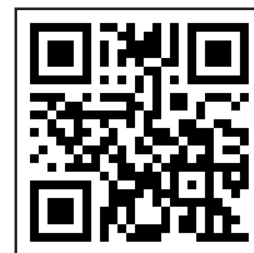
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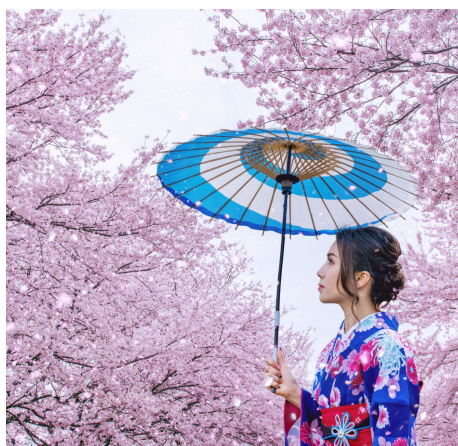
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# THE FUTURE OF GREEN GETAWAYS

How the Ultra-Rich Are Saving the Planet, One Private Island at a Time

TT BUREAU

**T**he next time you book a getaway, the question isn't just, "Is this five-star?" but "Is this future-proof?" Will your resort run on solar energy, or is it just greenwashing its way to good PR? Will your stay actively benefit the planet, or is it just another indulgence wrapped in a thin layer of eco-marketing?

The best part of this shift? You don't have to choose between a luxury experience and a clean conscience because now you can have both. A pristine planet and a cocktail by the infinity pool? Now that's a vacation worth booking.

Luxury travel used to be all about excess. Bigger villas, longer infinity pools, and imported marble flown in at great expense

from a country no one could pronounce. But in 2025? That's old news. The new luxury isn't just about indulgence, it's about impact. And no, not the kind where your private jet leaves a carbon footprint the size of a small nation.

Forget just having a fancy villa. If it's not solar-powered, built from reclaimed wood, and actively protecting a rainforest, is it even worth anything? Leonardo DiCaprio, long-time environmental warrior and part-time vacation connoisseur, co-owns Blackadore Caye, a regenerative eco-resort in Belize that doesn't just "reduce" harm, it actually fixes the local ecosystem. Meanwhile, Sir Richard Branson, never one to be left behind, has turned Necker Island into a renewable energy utopia, where



the only footprints left behind are from barefoot guests making their way to their carbon-neutral bungalows.

And it's not just Hollywood A-listers jumping on the green train. Investors are betting big on sustainable travel, realizing that today's ultra-wealthy don't just want exclusivity, they want their vacations to come with bragging rights about saving the planet.

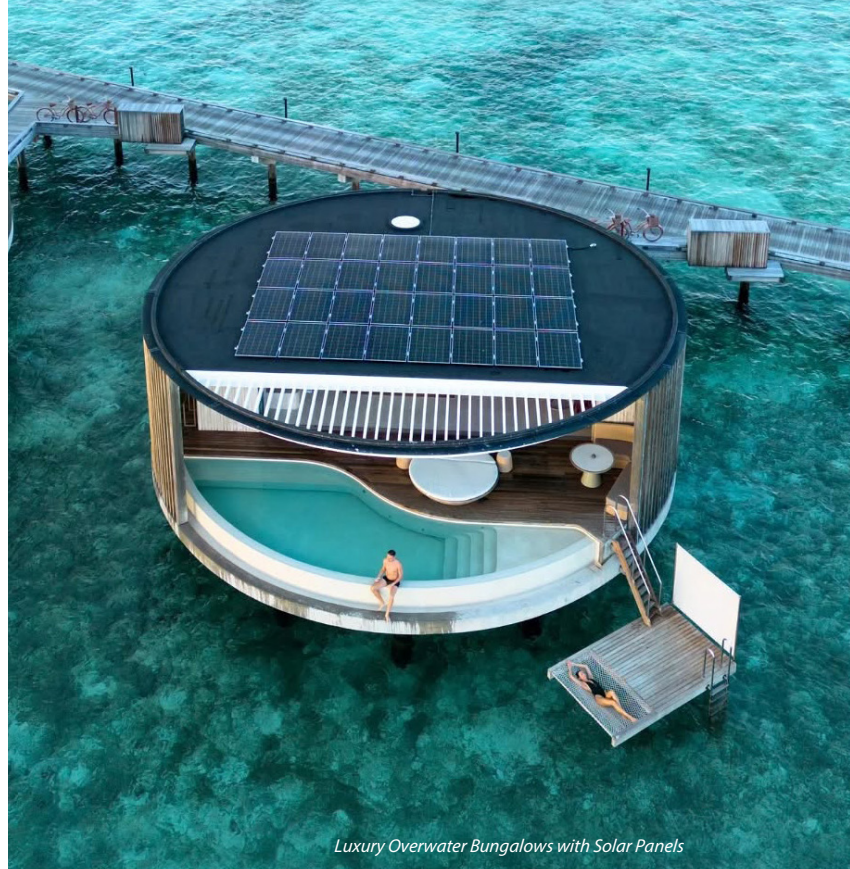
### CLIMATE-POSITIVE RESORTS: A STEP BEYOND SUSTAINABILITY

Once upon a time, slapping a "green" label on a hotel meant planting a tree or two and calling it a day. But the future of sustainable travel isn't just about offsetting damage—it's about actively reversing it. Enter the age of climate-positive resorts, where your stay doesn't just neutralize your footprint but actually leaves the destination better than you found it.

The Soneva Group in the Maldives introduced a carbon tax on guests, using the funds to restore mangrove forests and invest in renewable energy. Six Senses Resorts have gone beyond towel reuse policies, with stays that fund reef-building projects, local reforestation, and sustainable farming. Self-sustaining hotels are becoming the new norm—places that generate their own energy, filter their own water, and even grow their own food. Talk about farm-to-table... but make it five-star.

### TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN ECO-FRIENDLY TRAVEL

The biggest game-changer in eco-travel? Technology. AI is now running hotels better than any overworked concierge ever could. Imagine a suite that knows exactly when to dim the lights, adjust the temperature, and even refill your reusable water bottle. That's already happening at Chedi Andermatt in Switzerland.



*Luxury Overwater Bungalows with Solar Panels*

Meanwhile, blockchain is finally doing something useful beyond confusing your uncle at family dinners—it's bringing transparency to carbon offsetting. No more vague hotel promises about "investing in sustainability"—guests can now track exactly how their stay helps the environment.

And let's talk transportation. Private jets have long been luxury travel's dirty little secret, but electric and hydrogen-powered aviation is coming for the guilt-free high life. The Alice electric aircraft from Eviation is already testing zero-emission flights, and Airbus's hydrogen-powered planes could be airborne by 2035. Resorts like Soneva Fushi are already investing in sustainable seaplanes, ensuring that your trip to paradise doesn't come with an environmental price tag.



*Electric Sustainable Seaplane*



## THE MERGING OF SUSTAINABILITY AND INDULGENCE

Once upon a time, choosing an eco-friendly hotel meant giving up luxuries. Think composting toilets, no Wi-Fi, and showering under a bucket of collected rainwater (Romantic? Maybe. Convenient? Not so much). Not anymore. Sustainability and indulgence have officially merged.

At The Brando in French Polynesia, you can sip champagne in your private plunge pool, knowing the resort runs on solar energy and coconut oil biofuel. Fogo Island Inn in Canada is a breathtaking modern lodge built with locally sourced materials, employing the very community it sits in. Over in Cambodia, Shinta Mani Wild lets you zip-line straight into your jungle villa, while your stay funds anti-poaching efforts and conservation projects.

And this isn't just a trendy niche—the entire hospitality industry is shifting. Four Seasons Seychelles now runs reef restoration programs where guests can actively participate, because saving coral is way cooler than just looking at it. Bawah Reserve in Indonesia has banned single-use plastics and runs entirely on solar energy. Kudadoo Private Island in the Maldives proves that sustainability doesn't mean sacrificing private butlers and floating breakfasts—it just means they're powered by the sun.

## THE NEW STATUS SYMBOL: CARBON-NEUTRAL INDULGENCE

Once, the pinnacle of wealth was how much you could consume. Now? It's about how little impact you leave behind. The world's most luxurious getaways aren't about excess; they're about exclusivity with a conscience.

The Maldives' Kudadoo Private Island is an ultra-exclusive retreat running entirely on solar power, proving that luxury and sustainability aren't just compatible—they're the perfect pairing.



*Mashpi Lodge, Ecuador*

In Sweden, the Arctic Bath Hotel literally floats in a frozen river, offering Northern Lights views with zero environmental damage. Costa Rica's Lapa Rios ensures that every guest contributes to rainforest conservation just by booking a stay.

Even hospitality giants are getting in on the action. Marriott International has pledged to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Hilton Hotels is committed to cutting its environmental footprint in half by 2030. Accor (owners of Raffles and Fairmont) is rolling out sustainability programs that will redefine high-end hotels worldwide.

## THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL: GUILT-FREE, CARBON-FREE, AND ULTRA-LUXURIOUS

Luxury travel has always been about staying ahead of the curve. Right now, that means embracing sustainability, technology, and innovation as the foundation of a truly exclusive experience. Because at the end of the day, the most luxurious thing of all isn't where you are, it's knowing your stay is making the world just a little better.



*Floating Arctic Bath Hotel Under Northern Lights*

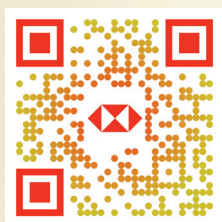




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# NEW AGE WELLNESS: ANCIENT RITUALS AND GLOBAL SPAS

The Wellness Revolution That's Rooted in the Past

TT BUREAU

In an age where our phones tell us when to breathe and our watches track every step we take, you'd think we'd have self-care figured out. Yet, modern wellness seekers are looking backward rather than forward, trading high-tech treatments for ancient rituals steeped in tradition. It turns out, the secret to true relaxation isn't cryotherapy or AI-powered mindfulness apps: it's centuries-old healing methods that have stood the test of time.

The spa industry is undergoing a seismic shift, moving away from generic relaxation and toward holistic, immersive wellness experiences. No longer satisfied with a deep-tissue massage and a fluffy robe, today's wellness tourists crave authenticity. They're seeking treatments that are culturally rooted, historically proven, and designed to restore balance at the physical, mental, and spiritual level.

## WHY CONSUMERS ARE DITCHING MODERN WELLNESS FOR ANCIENT HEALING

This isn't just a passing trend, it's a response to modern-day burnout. Stress, chronic illness, and emotional exhaustion have reached epidemic levels, leaving consumers desperate for more than just quick fixes.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), stress-related disorders contribute to conditions like anxiety, depression, and cardiovascular disease. A 2023 study by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that 77% of U.S. adults experience stress-related symptoms, from fatigue to muscle tension. Across the Atlantic, a 2023 UK Mental Health Foundation report found that 74% of adults had felt so overwhelmed by stress that they struggled to cope.

Technology-driven wellness solutions, mindfulness apps,



fitness trackers, biohacking techniques, have failed to provide lasting relief. While they may offer temporary benefits, they rarely address deeper emotional and spiritual needs. That's why the wellness economy is shifting toward ancient traditions that have sustained cultures for centuries, proving their effectiveness in restoring well-being.

### THE DATA BEHIND THE SHIFT TO HOLISTIC WELLNESS

The numbers speak for themselves. The Global Wellness Institute (GWI) reported that the global wellness economy reached \$5.6 trillion in 2023, with the spa and wellness tourism sector growing at an astonishing 18% annually. Traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine saw a 25% surge in consumer demand between 2020 and 2023.

By 2027, wellness tourism is projected to surpass \$1.3 trillion, driven by demand for experiences rooted in cultural healing traditions. Luxury hotels and resorts are taking notice, brands like Six Senses, Aman Resorts, and Ananda in the Himalayas are expanding their offerings to include Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and indigenous healing treatments.

And it's not just the usual wellness destinations like Bali and Thailand seeing a surge, new hotspots like Mexico, Iceland, and Portugal are emerging as go-to sanctuaries. Mexico, in particular, has witnessed a 20% year-over-year rise in wellness tourism, thanks to its indigenous healing traditions, from temazcal sweat lodges to agave-based spa treatments.

### BEYOND RELAXATION TO TRANSFORMATION

Wellness consumers are looking for more than an indulgent escape, they want transformation. The 2023 McKinsey Future of Wellness Report found that 79% of consumers prioritize long-term health and emotional well-being over short-term pampering.



This explains why people are flocking to Ayurvedic detox programs in India, meditation retreats in Buddhist monasteries, and shaman-led healing rituals in the Amazon. These traditions don't just soothe sore muscles but also promise realignment of the body, mind, and spirit.

### THE RETURN OF THE OLD: ANCIENT RITUALS IN MODERN SPAS

Contrary to popular belief, the hottest wellness trends today aren't new at all. Traditional healing practices, some dating back thousands of years, are making a resurgence in luxury spas worldwide.

Ayurveda, India's ancient system of holistic medicine, has found a home in five-star retreats from Bali to Switzerland. Panchakarma detox programs, Shirodhara oil therapies, and Abhyanga massages are now mainstream. Likewise, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), with its acupuncture, gua sha, and herbal therapies, has expanded beyond medical clinics into high-end wellness resorts.







*Spa Treatment*

Even Greco-Roman bathing traditions are making a comeback. European spa towns like Budapest and Bath have revitalized their historic thermal bathhouses, merging history with modern luxury. Meanwhile, in North America, Native American sweat lodges are being embraced by wellness seekers looking for purification rituals that reconnect them to the elements. These time-honored traditions resonate because they offer something modern spa trends often lack, depth, history, and a holistic focus beyond surface-level relaxation.

### THE NEW WELLNESS EXPERIENCES CONSUMERS ARE CRAVING

For those who find a classic massage too predictable, the wellness industry is embracing unconventional treatments.

- **Sound healing** - through Tibetan singing bowls, gong baths, or binaural beats, has surged in popularity, with studies suggesting it lowers stress hormones and improves sleep.
- **Shinrin-Yoku (forest bathing)** - a Japanese practice, has been scientifically proven to lower cortisol and strengthen immunity.
- **Vinotherapy** - yes, wine-based spa treatments, is booming in France, with grape extracts used in body scrubs, facials, and wraps.
- **Halotherapy (salt therapy)** - originally a European remedy, is gaining traction, with salt caves popping up across the U.S.
- **Temazcal ceremonies** - intense sweat lodge rituals in Mexico, offer a unique spiritual detox combining steam, medicinal herbs, and chanting.

### WHAT MAKES THESE TREATMENTS SO APPEALING?

They're not just about relaxation; they're immersive experiences with cultural significance. In a world where people crave meaning, these therapies provide a deeper connection to history, tradition, and self.

### AYURVEDA'S GLOBAL FOOTPRINT: THE INDIAN WISDOM RESHAPING WELLNESS

Few wellness philosophies have influenced the spa industry as profoundly as Ayurveda. Its emphasis on balance, between body, mind, and spirit, resonates deeply with today's consumers.

Ayurvedic retreats are booming, from Kerala in India to Bali and even luxury European resorts. Panchakarma detox programs promise to cleanse the body of toxins and boost longevity,



*Temazcal Ceremonies, Mexico*






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while Shirodhara oil therapies have been shown to reduce stress hormones by nearly 30%.

Luxury spas are taking note. High-end resorts like Ananda in the Himalayas and Six Senses have seamlessly integrated Ayurvedic treatments into their offerings, making ancient wellness both accessible and indulgent.

## WELLNESS AROUND THE WORLD

- **Mexico** - Temazcal ceremonies push wellness seekers to their limits-sweating out toxins (and maybe past regrets) inside a Mayan sweat lodge led by a shaman. If that sounds too intense, agave wraps and cacao facials offer a less extreme but equally transformative experience.
- **Japan** - Onsens, or natural hot spring baths, are integral to Japanese culture. Soaking in mineral-rich waters is said to improve circulation, ease pain, and cure existential dread—especially if you stay in a traditional ryokan.
- **Iceland** - Alternating between boiling geothermal pools and ice baths might sound Viking-level intense, but it's scientifically proven to boost circulation and reduce inflammation.
- **Thailand** - Thai massages are not for the faint of heart, they're part yoga, part chiropractic, part "why am I being folded in half?" Yet, they boost flexibility and circulation, while Buddhist meditation retreats offer deep spiritual healing.
- **Turkey** - The Ottoman hammam experience involves being



Thai Massage, Thailand

scrubbed within an inch of your life, leaving you softer than a newborn seal.

- **Scandinavia** - Nordic spa rituals involve sauna sessions followed by icy plunges. Extreme? Yes. But Scandinavians swear by it.

## THE FUTURE OF WELLNESS IS ROOTED IN THE PAST

As the spa industry evolves, one thing is clear: today's wellness seekers crave authenticity over indulgence. Ancient healing practices are now shaping the future of self-care.

The next time you book a wellness retreat, skip the generic massage. Opt for something with history, tradition, and maybe even a little bit of magic. After all, if it's worked for thousands of years, it's probably worth a try.



Nordic Spa, Scandinavia



# FORTUNE BEACHFRONT PURI: COASTAL ELEGANCE REDEFINED

Experience stunning sea views, world-class dining, and refined comfort at Fortune Beachfront Puri.

## TT BUREAU

Finding the perfect stay in Odisha's coastal gem, Puri, is no easy feat, with countless options setting the bar high. Yet, Fortune Beachfront Puri stands apart, blending contemporary elegance with the spiritual and cultural essence of the region. Nestled along Puri's serene shoreline, this seaside sanctuary offers an experience that soothes the soul, catering to both spiritual seekers and beach lovers alike.

### A STAY BEYOND ORDINARY

Designed to offer both comfort and cultural immersion, the hotel's 63 elegantly styled rooms and suites provide a refined retreat with panoramic views of the Bay of Bengal. Plush interiors, high-speed Wi-Fi, smart LED TVs, mini-bars, electronic safes, temperature control, and in-room tea/coffee makers ensure a seamless experience. Premium bath amenities and 24-hour room service add to the indulgence, making every stay effortless and memorable.

### DINING REDEFINED

A diverse culinary journey awaits with three exceptional dining options:

- Zodiac, the rooftop all-day dining restaurant, offers an exquisite mix of Indian, Continental, and Chinese delicacies alongside breathtaking sea views.
- Fortune Deli, a charming bakery and café, serves freshly brewed coffee, cakes, pastries, and artisanal snacks, ideal for a relaxed indulgence.
- Sea & Spice, the hotel's premium seafood restaurant, specialises in coastal delicacies, featuring rich curries and delicately spiced seafood creations.

### COMFORT AND RECREATION

Recreation and relaxation go hand in hand with a swimming pool, spa, and state of the art fitness center, offering guests the perfect wellness escape. Additional conveniences such as valet parking, currency exchange, airport transfers, in-house laundry, and a doctor-on-call enhance the guest experience.

### A SETTING FOR EVERY OCCASION

Fortune Beachfront Puri offers a selection of exquisite venues for corporate events and grand weddings. The grand ballroom, with a capacity of up to 400 guests, provides an elegant setting for conferences and receptions. Outdoor celebrations come to life at Lawn Vyom, Lawn Ikshana, and the Poolside Ayaan, each offering a distinct and memorable ambiance.

### EXPLORING PURI

Beyond the hotel's refined offerings, Puri's cultural and natural landmarks await discovery:

- **Puri Beach** – A haven for sunrise strolls and seafood delights.
- **Jagannath Temple (4 km)** – A 12th-century spiritual marvel.
- **Chilika Lake (6 km)** – Home to picturesque boat rides and birdlife.
- **Konark Sun Temple (50 km)** – A UNESCO-listed architectural masterpiece.
- **Bhubaneswar (68 km)** – A gateway to Odisha's cultural heritage.

Fortune Beachfront Puri seamlessly combines elegance, culture, and nature, making every stay an unforgettable experience.





# BREATHE, BLISS, REPEAT: NATURE'S Rx

Here's how you can use Nature Therapy in simple ways to slow down, breathe deeply, de-stress and rekindle your lost connection with the earth

**TT BUREAU**

In today's fast-paced, screen-dominated world, many people feel disconnected from nature, which leads to stress, anxiety, and a sense of emptiness. However, scientific studies, expert insights, and real-life experiences prove that reconnecting with nature can significantly improve mental and physical well-being.

## START YOUR DAY WITH NATURE

A study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* investigated the impact of nature exposure on stress hormone levels. Over eight weeks, 36 urban dwellers were instructed to spend at least 10 minutes three times a week in an outdoor place that made them feel connected to nature.

Participants provided saliva samples before and after these nature experiences to measure cortisol levels. The findings revealed that spending 20 to 30 minutes in a natural setting, either sitting or walking, led to the most significant reduction in cortisol levels. Beyond 30 minutes, additional stress-reduction benefits continued but at a slower rate. This study offers valuable insights for healthcare practitioners to prescribe 'nature pills' as

an effective, low-cost nature therapy strategy to combat stress in urban environments.

**The Balcony Escape:** For those struggling with high stress and poor sleep, you can create a morning ritual of sitting on your balcony, sipping herbal tea, and listening to birds. Within weeks, you will notice reduced anxiety and increased focus at work. Make this nature therapy practice a part of your daily life.

## PRACTICE MINDFUL BREATHING IN NATURE

Research from Harvard Medical School confirms that deep breathing in nature lowers blood pressure and improves emotional regulation. Harvard has extensively studied the benefits of deep breathing techniques and their impact on stress reduction and emotional regulation. Practicing slow, deep breathing for just a few minutes daily can lower blood pressure, potentially reducing systolic blood pressure by up to 10 points.

While specific research combining deep breathing with nature exposure is limited, engaging in these nature therapy practices separately has been shown to yield significant health benefits.







Japanese “Forest Breathing: Executives in Tokyo practice deep breathing in small parks during lunch breaks. Many report improved decision-making, reduced stress, and better mood throughout the day.

The Art of Living Foundation in India promotes nature therapy programs focussing on mindful breathing through outdoor yoga retreats, helping thousands experience the benefits of nature-assisted breathwork.

### TAKE TECH-FREE NATURE THERAPY BREAKS

Research from the University of California, Irvine, underscores the cognitive benefits of immersing oneself in nature. Gloria Mark, a Chancellor’s Professor of Informatics at UCI, highlights that spending just 20 minutes in natural settings can significantly reduce stress and enhance creativity..

Incorporating nature breaks into daily routines can serve as a practical nature therapy strategy to rejuvenate the mind, boost creativity, and maintain optimal cognitive function.

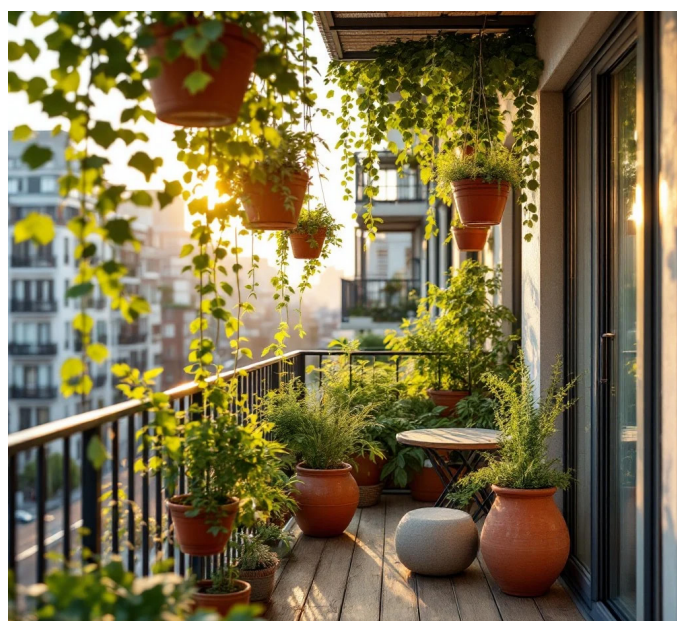
Digital Detox in Himachal Pradesh: Take a tech-free weekend retreat in Himachal Pradesh, trekking in the forests and meditating in the mountains. After returning, you will feel more focussed and re-energised. Schedule weekly digital detox hours.

### GROW SOMETHING GREEN

A NASA Clean Air Study found that houseplants improve indoor air quality, reducing stress and enhancing focus.

The Study investigated the potential of houseplants to improve indoor air quality by removing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as benzene, formaldehyde, and trichloroethylene.

However, beyond air purification, numerous studies have highlighted the psychological benefits of indoor plants. Interacting with indoor plants has been shown to reduce physiological and psychological stress, as evidenced by decreased sympathetic nervous system activity and lower diastolic blood pressure. Additionally, the presence of indoor plants has been associated with improved concentration and productivity, enhancing overall well-being.



Urban Gardens in Bengaluru: Bengaluru’s community gardens have helped city dwellers reconnect with nature. You can transform your apartment balcony into a small vegetable garden, which can become your daily stress reliever.

The concept of Rooftop Farming is gaining traction in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Chennai, helping people cultivate their food and reconnect with nature.

### ENGAGE YOUR SENSES WITH NATURE

A thematic analysis published in *Frontiers in Psychology* explores the multiple pathways through which nature engagement benefits mental health, highlighting sensory input as a key factor.

The study suggests that sensory experiences in natural environments—such as sights, sounds, and smells—can reduce anxiety by fulfilling an innate human desire for such stimuli. This aligns with the biophilia hypothesis, which proposes that humans have an inherent affinity for nature. Additionally, exposure to nature has been linked to improvements in cognitive performance, including working memory and cognitive flexibility.



These cognitive benefits are often attributed to Attention Restoration Theory, which posits that natural environments engage effortless attention, allowing directed attention capacities to replenish.

Madhubani Art Therapy, Bihar: Artists in rural Bihar engage deeply with nature by using natural dyes and painting on handmade paper, inspired by trees, rivers, and animals. Studies show that this tactile connection to nature lowers stress and increases creativity.

### TRY FOREST BATHING

Japanese research in Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine states that forest bathing reduces heart rate and stress levels. This study investigated the physiological effects of shinrin-yoku, or forest bathing, on 280 participants across 24 forests in Japan. The findings revealed that engaging in forest environments led to significant reductions in heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels, indicating decreased stress.

Additionally, there was an increase in parasympathetic nerve activity, suggesting enhanced relaxation. These results support the therapeutic benefits of forest bathing in promoting cardiovascular health and stress reduction.

Nature therapy retreats across India offer several serene forest retreats where guests can immerse themselves in nature and experience the benefits of forest bathing.

Jim Corbett National Park, India – A Silent Healing Retreat: In Jim Corbett National Park, a forest retreat encourages participants to practice Shinrin-Yoku (forest bathing). Walking barefoot on the forest floor, inhaling the fresh air, and simply being present in nature will help you overcome emotional exhaustion.

### CAMP OR STAY OFF-GRID FOR A WEEKEND

A PNAS (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences) study found that time spent camping resets circadian rhythms, improving sleep patterns. A study published in Current Biology investigated the impact of natural light exposure on human circadian rhythms and sleep patterns.

Participants who spent a weekend camping without artificial light sources experienced a significant shift in their internal biological night to align more closely with sunset and sunrise. This alignment led to earlier sleep onset and improved sleep quality, demonstrating that exposure to natural light-dark cycles can effectively reset circadian rhythms and enhance sleep patterns.

The Wilderness Reset: If you feel drained by the pressures of daily life, a wilderness therapy backpacking trip might be the perfect escape. Trek through remote trails, set up camp under the stars, and let the simplicity of nature quiet your mind. The physical challenge of hiking, combined with the solitude of the wild, fosters resilience and clarity. Without digital distractions, you'll reconnect with yourself and those around you, returning home with a renewed sense of calm and purpose.

The Spiti Valley Escape: If you are overwhelmed by corporate stress, spend a week camping in Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh. With no Wi-Fi and only natural surroundings, you will feel deeply rested, with improved focus upon returning to work.

### NATURE IS A STATE OF BEING

Reconnecting with nature doesn't require drastic changes—it's about small, mindful shifts in how we engage with the world around us. Go ahead - choose to grow a plant, take a silent walk in the park, or spend a weekend in a forest. Nature has the power to heal and transform.







## 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





# FORAGED FEASTS: CULINARY JOURNEYS INTO THE WILD

Fine dining goes wild, forest floors, no tablecloths, just truffles from the earth.

TT BUREAU

Imagine sitting at a candlelit table deep in a pine forest, the crisp air carrying the scent of wild rosemary and damp earth. Or picture yourself on a rugged coastal cliff, watching the sun dip below the horizon while a private chef grills freshly caught seafood over an open fire. Welcome to the world of wild dining, where nature isn't just the backdrop, it's the entire menu.

This is not your average fine-dining experience. There's no maître d', no predictable menu, and certainly no white tablecloths. Instead, you get an adventure that starts with muddy boots and ends with a meal so fresh and exquisite, it could make a Michelin-starred restaurant look uninspired. Welcome to the thrilling, delicious world of foraged feasts.

## THE RISE OF WILD DINING

Foraged dining has evolved from a niche trend to a culinary movement, taking root in some of the world's most celebrated

kitchens. According to the World Food Travel Association, interest in wild dining has surged by 30% in the past five years, with pioneering restaurants like Noma in Copenhagen and Single Thread in California redefining luxury gastronomy through the art of foraging. These meals reconnect diners with the land, the seasons, and the deep, untamed flavours that nature provides.

## WHY FORAGED INGREDIENTS?

Beyond their unrivalled freshness, wild foods are often more nutrient-dense and flavourful than their commercially farmed counterparts. Wild blueberries are these tiny, deep-hued gems that contain nearly twice the antioxidants of their cultivated cousins. The terroir of a foraged ingredient imparts a character no farm can replicate. Arctic cloudberries, Tasmanian sea lettuce, and Nordic birch sap each carry the essence of their landscapes, making every bite a sensory journey.



For those willing to step beyond the traditional fine-dining experience, wild dining offers something deeply primal yet profoundly luxurious. It's about trading silverware for a handmade wooden spoon, swapping a perfectly starched tablecloth for a bed of fallen leaves, and savouring flavours that can only be found where the wild things grow.

### NATURE AS THE CANVAS

The setting makes the feast. Dining in nature is theatre as much as a meal. Picture a remote dinner table beneath the Northern Lights, or a handcrafted wooden bench on a secluded Balinese beach, surrounded by lanterns. Every bite tastes different when paired with the rustling of leaves, the crash of waves, or the distant hoot of an owl.

Take Norway's Lofoten Islands, where exclusive wild dining events feature dishes crafted from the land and sea. Locally foraged herbs, berries, and seafood are transformed into gourmet plates, served against a backdrop of jagged fjords.

### WILD INGREDIENTS, GOURMET TRANSFORMATIONS

Foraging may sound like something your ancestors did out of necessity, but in the hands of expert chefs, wild ingredients become the height of sophistication. Forget predictable supermarket produce. Instead, think truffles freshly unearthed from Italian soil, seaweed harvested from British Columbia's cold waters, or mushrooms plucked from the depths of Sweden's Lapland forests.

Take truffle hunting in Piedmont, Italy. With a seasoned local guide and a highly trained truffle dog, you scour the rolling countryside, hoping for that telltale scent beneath the soil. Hours later, after much hopeful digging, you return triumphant and ready to taste your hard-earned bounty in a rich, decadent risotto.

### THE NUTRITIONAL POWER OF FORAGED FOODS

Foraged foods pack a serious nutritional punch. Unlike cultivated crops, often bred for size and sweetness at the



expense of nutrients, wild edibles retain their original potency. Many wild greens, like dandelion leaves and nettles, contain significantly higher levels of vitamins and minerals than their farmed counterparts.

Take wild mushrooms. Guccchi mushrooms (Morel mushrooms), found in the Himalayas, are prized for their deep, earthy flavours and remarkable health benefits. These rare fungi are rich in antioxidants, high in protein, and packed with essential minerals like potassium, iron, and vitamin D. They also boast anti-inflammatory properties, making them not just a luxury ingredient but also a superfood.

### WILD DINING AROUND THE WORLD

#### India: Guccchi Mushroom Foraging in the Himalayas

In the misty hills of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, foraging for Guccchi mushrooms (*Morchella esculenta*) is a generations-old tradition. These rare fungi fetch up to ₹30,000 per kg (\$360 per kg) due to their scarcity and labour-intensive collection.

Appearing after the first spring rains, Guccchi mushrooms thrive in moisture-rich conditions. Indigenous foragers trek through forests at dawn to collect these highly coveted delicacies, which are transformed into slow-cooked ghee dishes, saffron-infused gravies, and Guccchi Pulao. Some boutique Himalayan resorts offer foraging expeditions, culminating in farm-to-table feasts, paired with local herbs and organic cheeses.







### Australia: Truffle Hunting

Imagine strolling through a misty Tasmanian forest or the truffle orchards of Manjimup, Western Australia, guided by a trained truffle dog. Suddenly, the dog halts, sniffs the ground, and starts to dig, unearthing a prized black truffle.

From Oberon, New South Wales, to the fertile soils of Western Australia, truffle hunting is an immersive experience where gastronomy meets adventure. The hunt ends with an exquisite tasting session, where freshly shaved truffle is sprinkled over everything from buttery risotto to aged cheeses.

### Scandinavia: Lapland Foraging & Feasting

In Sweden's Lapland, boutique lodges offer guided foraging excursions through Arctic landscapes. Expect to gather lingonberries, mushrooms, and wild herbs, culminating in a fireside meal under the Northern Lights. Some tours are led by Sami foraging experts, who share insights into traditional Arctic survival techniques and indigenous food sustainability.

### North America: Farm-to-Table Foraging in California

Napa Valley isn't just about wine. Some of its top Michelin-starred restaurants now feature wild foraging menus, with chefs sourcing ingredients from the surrounding hills. Think hand-picked wild herbs, mushrooms, and edible flowers, paired with California's finest vintages.



### SUSTAINABILITY MEETS LUXURY

Foraging is more of a sustainable way to eat than just pure indulgence. No food miles, no waste, just fresh, local produce plucked straight from the source. Many wild dining experiences support conservation and indigenous food traditions, ensuring that nature's bounty is protected for future generations.

In Tasmania, for instance, boutique lodges work closely with indigenous communities to highlight native bushfoods, while protecting their habitats. Similarly, Vancouver Island's foraging tours educate guests on sustainable harvesting, ensuring that wild dining remains viable for years to come.

### EAT WILD, LIVE FREE

So, what are you waiting for? The city's concrete jungle will still be there when you return—but out in the wild, an unforgettable dining experience awaits. Be it under the Northern Lights, deep in the Tasmanian wilderness, or on a serene Balinese beach, these meals offer more than sustenance; they create moments that nourish the soul.

It's time to swap white tablecloths for fallen leaves, the stuffy dining room for an open sky, and the predictable for the utterly unexpected.





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Beltane Fire Festival

# ECHOES OF THE EARTH

Celebrations that honour the earth, sky, rivers, and wildlife across India and the world

TT BUREAU

**W**e often hear the phrase, “This is natural,” but have you ever truly thought about what nature is? As humans, we have altered the world to suit our convenience, yet nature exists beyond our control.

Nature is everything around us that is not man-made. It includes trees, plants, animals, rivers, mountains, the sky, the sun, and even the air we breathe. It is life’s greatest masterpiece!

Trees dance with the wind, rivers sing their own melody, mountains stand tall, and the sun warms our days. From the tiniest flower to the endless sky, nature is the heart of our world—wild, beautiful, and full of wonder!

So why not celebrate this masterpiece by embracing each element of it, and what better way to do so than by exploring the incredible nature-focused festivals celebrated across India and the world?

## MEDARAM JATARA – THE WORLD’S LARGEST TRIBAL GATHERING

What if we tell you that this tribal celebration gives tough rivalry to the giant Kumbh Mela? Deep within the forests of Telangana, Medaram Jatara stands as the largest tribal

congregation in the world, celebrated once every two years.

This grand festival honours Goddess Sammakka and her daughter Saralamma, revered as fierce protectors of the land and their people. Their legacy continues, with devotees gathering in millions to pay homage and seek blessings. What makes Medaram Jatara unique is its deep-rooted connection to nature.

Unlike mainstream religious festivals, there are no grand temples or idols—the deities are represented by bamboo poles, emphasising their presence in the natural world. Devotees offer jaggery equal to their weight, believing it ensures protection, prosperity, and a harmonious relationship with nature.

For the indigenous communities, Medaram Jatara is more than devotion—it is a tribute to their heritage, resilience, and the land that sustains them.

## SARHUL – A CELEBRATION OF SPRING AND NATURE’S BLESSINGS

Ever wondered how ancient tribes welcome the arrival of spring? In Jharkhand, as the Sal trees burst into bloom, the Oraon, Munda, and Ho communities come together to



celebrate Sarhul, a festival that honours nature's renewal and the start of the New Year. This vibrant festival is deeply connected to the land, as villagers offer Sal flowers to their deities, seeking blessings for a bountiful harvest.

As the drums echo through the forests, the air fills with the energy of tribal dances and songs, uniting people in joy and gratitude. Families and friends gather to share traditional meals, accompanied by Handia, a fermented rice beer, strengthening community bonds. Sarhul is not just a festival, it is a reminder that every leaf, every bloom, and every season is a gift from nature, worth celebrating with reverence and joy.

### **BHOOT KOLA – WHEN NATURE AND SPIRITS COME ALIVE**

In the quiet villages of coastal Karnataka, where the forests whisper and the wind carries ancient tales, the Bhoot Kola ritual unfolds like a dance between nature and the divine. This age-old tradition of the Tulu-speaking community, celebrated in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, is more than just a performance, it is a sacred moment where spirits are believed to walk among the people.

As night falls and the drums begin to beat, a performer, dressed in bright colours and striking makeup, steps into the role of a guardian spirit known as 'Deiva'. The flickering oil lamps cast long shadows, and the rustling trees seem to move with the rhythm of the dance.

In this powerful ritual, the performer, believed to be possessed, delivers messages, resolves conflicts, and blesses devotees. The energy is electric, the faith unshaken. Here, in the heart of nature, Bhoot Kola is more than a festival—it is a timeless connection between the earth, the spirits, and the people.

### **A SPIRITUAL CONNECTION: JAPAN'S OBON AND BHOOT KOLA**

Though separated by geography, Japan's Obon and Karnataka's Bhoot Kola share a deep spiritual connection as



*Bhoot Kola*

both festivals honour the presence of spirits and their role in the human world. Obon, held every August, with its glowing floating lanterns, guides ancestral spirits home, while Bhoot Kola, through trance-like rituals, allows spirits to communicate with the living.

The highlight of the festival is the Toro Nagashi, where glowing lanterns are set adrift on rivers and lakes, creating a mesmerising sight as they float under the night sky. Both festivals reflect the belief that the departed never truly leave; they remain intertwined with nature and the people who remember them.

### **LOY KRATHONG – FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS AND WATER**

Every year, on the full moon night of November, Thailand's rivers, lakes, and canals glow with thousands of floating lanterns during Loy Krathong. This festival, deeply tied to water and gratitude, is a way to honour the Goddess of Water, Phra Mae Khongkha, and seek blessings for the year ahead.

People release krathongs—delicate, lotus-shaped baskets made of banana leaves, adorned with flowers, candles, and incense—into the water, symbolising letting go of negativity and embracing renewal.

The shimmering reflection of candle-lit krathongs creates a magical sight, accompanied by traditional dances, fireworks, and sky lanterns. Loy Krathong is not just a festival; it is a spiritual connection between people, nature, and the flowing waters that sustain life.







Alaska's Iditarod

### BELTANE FIRE FESTIVAL – FIERY WELCOME TO SUMMER

Rooted in ancient Celtic traditions, Scotland's Beltane Fire Festival marks the transition from spring to summer, celebrating light, fertility, and renewal. Held on April 30th in Edinburgh, this modern revival of a pagan ritual sees performers reenact symbolic battles between winter and summer, with fiery displays lighting up the night sky.

Massive bonfires blaze as dancers, drummers, and costumed figures, painted in red and white, create an atmosphere of wild energy and transformation. The flames are believed to purify, protect, and bring prosperity for the months ahead. This festival is not just about spectacle—it revives an ancient bond with nature, where fire symbolizes life, strength, and the eternal cycle of the seasons.

### ALASKA'S IDITAROD – HONOURING THE SPIRIT OF THE ARCTIC

Every March, the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race takes centre stage in Alaska, paying homage to the endurance of sled dogs and the raw beauty of the Arctic wilderness. This grueling 1,000-mile race follows historic trails once used for survival and trade, commemorating the 1925 serum run, when mushers and their dogs braved icy terrains to deliver medicine to Nome.

Beyond the thrill of the race, the festival celebrates Alaska's deep bond with nature, emphasising the resilience of both

humans and animals in extreme conditions. Through storytelling, indigenous traditions, and outdoor festivities, Iditarod is a tribute to the harsh yet majestic landscape of the Arctic and the vital role nature plays in survival and culture.

### NATIONAL CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL IN WASHINGTON, DC

This burst of cherries stands as a blooming spectacle of beauty and culture! Every spring, the city transforms into a pink and white wonderland, celebrating Japan's 1912 gift of 3,000 cherry trees. From late March to mid-April, visitors flock to the Tidal Basin to witness the breathtaking blossoms at peak bloom.

The festival bursts with energy—parades, kite flying, cultural performances, and fireworks light up the city. More than just a visual treat, it's a symbol of friendship between the U.S. and Japan, marking the arrival of spring with joy, tradition, and unforgettable memories!

These celebrations across the globe highlight a profound truth, humans and nature are not separate entities but deeply intertwined, relying on each other for balance and harmony. Whether through fire, water, earth, or spirit, these festivals remind us that honouring nature is also honouring ourselves, as we are all part of the same sacred cycle of life.



Loy Krathong



Obon Festival, Japan



Sarhul Festival of Jharkhand





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Chief Executive Officer  
Marjan



**Anil Chadha**  
Divisional Chief Executive  
ITC Limited Hotels Division



**Anuraag Bhatnagar**  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Leela Palaces  
Hotels and Resorts



**Ashish Jakhnawala**  
Chairman, MD & CEO  
SAMHI Hotels



**Arun K. Saraf**  
Chairman and MD  
Juniper Hotels



**Atul Jain**  
Chief Operating Officer  
India, Sri Lanka, & Bangladesh  
Best Western Hotels



**Barbara Muckermann**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Kempinski Hotels



**Bhanu Chopra**  
Chairman & MD  
RateGain



**Behzad Kharas**  
Chairman & MD  
BNK Group



**Dillip Rajakarier**  
Group CEO, Minor International  
& CEO, Minor Hotels



**Dimitris Manikis**  
President – Europe,  
ME, Eurasia, & Africa  
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**Dr. Jyotsna Suri**  
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**Kenneth Macpherson**  
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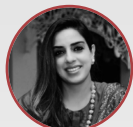
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Chief Executive Officer  
The Ascott Limited



**Nathan Andrews**  
Strategic Advisor  
DS Group



**Nitan Chhatwal**  
Managing Director  
Shrem Infrastructure



**Pooja Ray**  
Managing Director  
Mayfair Hotels & Resorts



**Rahool Macarius**  
Market MD Eurasia  
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts



**Rajeev Menon**  
President – Asia Pacific  
(excluding China)  
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**Rajesh Magow**  
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**Zubin Saxena**  
Senior Vice President  
& Country Head – India  
Hilton



# NOMADIC INSTINCTS: HERITAGE TRAILS IN INDIA

Beyond the city, ancient trails echo past eras

TT BUREAU

India's soul stretches far beyond palace walls, city streets, and festival grounds. Ancient trails wind through spectacular terrain, each footpath echoing with centuries of stories waiting to be discovered. Seasoned mountaineers and curious newcomers alike find themselves captivated by these routes that seamlessly blend physical challenge with cultural immersion.

These heritage paths serve as history breathes through every rocky pass and forest clearing. Traders once hauled precious goods along these routes, pilgrims sought spiritual enlightenment, and empires rose and fell as these trails connected distant lands. Ready to journey through time? These historic treks reveal India's magnificent past with every step.

## RAJMACHI FORT TRAIL, MAHARASHTRA

Nestled in the Sahyadri range, the Rajmachi Fort Trail connects the hill stations of Lonavala and Karjat. Historically, it was a vital trade route between the Konkan coast and the Deccan Plateau, traversed by merchants and warriors alike. Today, it attracts trekkers looking for adventure and history.

The trail winds through dense forests, rocky terrains, and scenic plateaus before reaching Rajmachi Fort, comprising two majestic citadels, Shrivardhan and Manaranjan, dating back to the Maratha Empire. Along the way, trekkers encounter Bhairavnath Temple, a serene spot perfect for a peaceful rest. Further along, the Kondane Caves, an ancient cluster of Buddhist rock-cut caves, reveal intricate carvings, adding an archaeological element to the trek.







Rudranath Temple, Uttarakhand

During the monsoon, the trail transforms into a lush green paradise with waterfalls cascading down moss-covered cliffs. Mist-laden hills and the sound of gushing water enhance the experience, making it a favourite among nature lovers.

This moderately easy trek spans 16 kilometres (round trip) and takes approximately 5–6 hours. While beginners can attempt it, a moderate level of fitness is beneficial due to some steep sections. The best time to visit is during the monsoon (June to September) for vibrant surroundings or between October and February for cooler trekking conditions.

### RUDRANATH TREK, UTTARAKHAND

For those seeking spiritual solitude, the Rudranath Trek is a hidden treasure within the Panch Kedar circuit. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, this sacred route offers a journey through pristine wilderness, ancient folklore, and breathtaking Himalayan landscapes.

The trek begins in Sagar village, leading through dense oak and rhododendron forests that are especially vibrant in spring. The ascent is challenging yet rewarding, with undulating meadows, alpine streams, and stone pathways adding to the mystical charm. Traditional wooden huts and shepherd shelters dot the landscape, offering glimpses into the locals' simple lifestyle.

At the heart of this trek lies Rudranath Temple, believed to be where Lord Shiva's face emerged after his self-imposed exile following the battle of Kurukshetra. Unlike other revered Shiva shrines, this one remains relatively untouched by large crowds, allowing visitors to soak in its tranquillity. The temple is surrounded by an amphitheatre of snow-covered peaks, including Nanda Devi, Trishul, and Nanda Ghunti.

The trail meanders through stunning landscapes filled with

rare high-altitude flowers, including the elusive blue poppy. Trekkers also encounter sacred water bodies like the Vaitarani River, or 'River of Salvation,' where pilgrims perform rituals for their ancestors.

Covering 22 kilometres (one way), the trek typically takes 2 to 3 days, with overnight stays in Panar or Pitradhar, offering breathtaking camping spots. Due to steep climbs and rugged terrain, it is classified as moderate to difficult, requiring good endurance. The best time to embark on this spiritual adventure is between May and October.

### SANDAKPHU TREK, WEST BENGAL

Dubbed the 'Trekkers' Wonderland', the Sandakphu Trek follows an ancient Indo-Nepal trade route and stands at 3,636 metres, making it the highest point in West Bengal. The trail



Rudranath Trek, Uttarakhand





*Spiti Valley Monastery Trek*

offers trekkers stunning views of four of the world's tallest peaks including Mt. Everest, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse, and Makalu.

One of the most unique aspects of this trek is that it follows the Indo-Nepal border, allowing trekkers the surreal experience of crossing between the two countries multiple times. The most iconic view along this route is the Sleeping Buddha formation, where Kanchenjunga's snow-capped peaks resemble a reclining figure, best seen at sunrise or sunset.

In spring, the trail transforms into a riot of colours as rhododendrons, magnolias, and wildflowers bloom, making it ideal for nature lovers. Additionally, the region is home to some of India's finest tea estates, and trekkers can enjoy authentic Darjeeling tea in traditional mountain lodges along the way.

This trek covers 65 km and takes around 6–7 days. The terrain varies from gentle ascents to steep climbs, making it moderately challenging but accessible to fit beginners. The best time to visit is from March to May for blooming flowers or October to December for clear mountain views.

### **SPITI VALLEY MONASTERY TREK, HIMACHAL PRADESH**

For those captivated by Tibetan culture, the Spiti Valley Monastery Trek is an immersive journey through time. This high-altitude desert is home to some of India's oldest Buddhist monasteries, each perched precariously on cliffs, radiating spirituality and mystery.



*Sandakphu Trek*

The trek takes adventurers through a dramatic landscape of jagged cliffs and vast barren expanses, interrupted only by green villages sustained by glacial streams. Along the route, trekkers visit Key Monastery, a 1,000-year-old structure at the spiritual heart of Spiti, as well as Tabo Monastery, often called the 'Ajanta of the Himalayas' due to its ancient murals. Dhankar Monastery, perched atop a 1,000-foot cliff, offers panoramic views of the Spiti and Pin Rivers converging below.

Trekkers can interact with Buddhist monks, partake in traditional prayers, and even stay in monastery guesthouses, experiencing monastic life. The region is also home to unique wildlife, including blue sheep and Himalayan ibex.

The trek varies in length from short day hikes to multi-day treks spanning 5–10 days, depending on the route. Due to high altitude and extreme climate, it is rated moderate to challenging. The best time to visit is from June to September.

### **ARAKU VALLEY HERITAGE TRAIL, ANDHRA PRADESH**

For a more leisurely yet culturally immersive experience, the Araku Valley Heritage Trail offers a journey through lush green valleys, coffee plantations, and tribal heartlands. Nestled in the Eastern Ghats, Araku Valley is renowned for its picturesque landscapes and indigenous communities.

The trail winds through undulating hills and dense forests, passing through villages inhabited by tribes like the Bagatha



*Rajmachi Trek*





*Sandakphu Trek*

and Konda Dora. A highlight of this trek is the Borra Caves, a fascinating network of limestone caves adorned with stalactites and stalagmites, believed to date back millions of years.

One of the most unique aspects of this trek is the opportunity to learn about organic coffee cultivation. Araku is famous for its single-origin organic coffee, cultivated by tribal farmers. Trekkers can visit plantations, interact with farmers, and sample some of the finest brews.

Unlike high-altitude Himalayan treks, the Araku Valley trail is relatively easy, making it accessible for beginners and families.

Covering approximately 10 kilometres, it can be completed in 1–2 days. A scenic way to start is by taking the Araku Valley Toy Train, which winds through tunnels, waterfalls, and lush valleys.

The best time to visit is from October to March when the weather is pleasant.

Rugged mountain trails challenge experienced hikers while gentle paths welcome first-time adventurers. Step into boots worn smooth by centuries of travellers and discover what lies beyond the next ridge.



*Zip Line At Araku Valley*



*Araku Valley Heritage Trail*



# JUNGLE CHIC: NATURE-LUXE LIVING

Let your home breathe with cascading vines, earthy textures, and a serene, sunlit glow. Because nature isn't just a place; it's a feeling.

TT BUREAU

There's something deeply restorative about being in nature, feeling the sun's warmth, inhaling fresh air, and listening to birdsong. But what if you could bring that same sense of wild serenity into your home? Biophilic design, a concept rooted in our innate connection to nature, is transforming interiors worldwide. Homeowners are embracing nature-inspired living without stepping outside.

Forget packing for a weekend getaway or braving unpredictable weather. Why not turn your home into a nature retreat? Fill your space with lush houseplants, swap synthetic materials for earthy textures, and let in natural light (no more blackout curtains—embrace the sun like a house cat). Bring the great outdoors inside, minus the bug bites and rain showers.

Who wouldn't want a home that feels like a tranquil forest hideaway or a breezy tropical escape? Picture yourself waking up to soft sunlight filtering through sheer linen curtains, sipping

coffee next to a flourishing indoor jungle, and winding down in a zen-like sanctuary where nature and luxury coexist. With biophilic design, it's doable, and your stress levels will thank you.

Eco-conscious interiors make spaces feel alive. And the best part? No green thumb is required, just a willingness to embrace nature, one leafy plant (or reclaimed wooden table) at a time.

## WHY NATURE-INSPIRED DESIGN MATTERS

Science backs organic architecture. Studies show integrating natural elements into interior spaces reduces stress, enhances cognitive function, and improves overall well-being. A 2019 study in the *International Journal of Environmental Health Research* found that just ten minutes of interaction with nature—be it houseplants or outdoor views—lowers stress levels. Another study in *The Journal of Environmental Psychology* revealed that workplaces incorporating natural light and greenery see a 15% increase in productivity and creativity.





Beyond mental and emotional benefits, naturalistic interiors improve indoor air quality. NASA's Clean Air Study highlights how plants like peace lilies and spider plants filter toxins, making homes healthier. Maximising daylight, increasing ventilation, and using organic materials also contribute to better sleep, increased energy, and an overall sense of well-being.

Exposure to natural elements even lowers blood pressure, decreases heart rate, and improves concentration—critical when most people spend 90% of their time indoors. Biophilic design fosters a connection to the environment, encouraging sustainable habits. When we integrate natural materials into our homes, we appreciate nature more and feel inspired to protect it. Nature-inspired interiors are also eco-conscious, reducing reliance on synthetic materials and artificial lighting. Using reclaimed wood, bamboo, and stone lowers our carbon footprint while creating beautiful, durable spaces.

## BRINGING THE OUTDOORS IN

### Natural Materials for a Healthier Home

Wood, stone, bamboo, and rattan create a warm, organic atmosphere while supporting sustainability. Reclaimed wood furniture adds rustic charm, with each imperfection telling a story—think of it as a table with a past life, possibly more exciting than yours! Bamboo flooring offers durability with a modern feel, while rattan furniture adds a bohemian touch that practically says, I read about this in an interior design magazine.

A shining example of this approach is the work of Nari Gandhi, renowned for creating structures that blend



*The Slate, Phuket, Thailand*

seamlessly with their environment. His Alibag home is a spectacular representation of natural materials in harmony with surroundings—burnt brick, stone, bamboo, leather, shells, pebbles, and more. Each project appears as if it always belonged, merely waiting to be uncovered. If houses could talk, his would say, “I’ve been here forever, you just didn’t notice.”

Sustainability-conscious homeowners opt for FSC-certified wood and upcycled furniture to reduce environmental impact.

Natural fibers like linen, hemp, and organic cotton make excellent upholstery and bedding choices, providing breathable, chemical-free comfort.

Not only do these materials create an effortlessly stylish home, but they also help you sleep better, both literally and figuratively, because you know you’re doing your part for the planet.

### The Power of Indoor Greenery

Houseplants actively purify the air and enhance mood. Snake plants, pothos, and peace lilies thrive with minimal care while filtering pollutants, while monstera and fiddle-leaf figs add a lush, tropical feel that practically whispers, You live in a jungle oasis now.

Large potted plants create focal points in living areas, while hanging baskets and smaller plants on windowsills enhance ambiance (and provide something green to admire while avoiding emails).

For those who struggle to keep plants alive, low-maintenance options like succulents, cacti, and ZZ plants add greenery without requiring constant attention. Living walls and vertical gardens are also growing in popularity, making



*Nari Gandhi's Alibag House, India*



a bold statement while maximizing space. Because, let's be honest, what's cooler than an entire wall covered in plants?

Vikas Dilawari's restoration of the Esplanade House in Mumbai showcases how nature-infused design principles can be applied to historic architecture. The project preserved the building's grand colonial structure while introducing lush indoor courtyards and green terraces, proving that even century-old homes can embrace a touch of jungle chic.

### Maximising Natural Light & Fresh Air

Sunlight enhances mood, boosts vitamin D, and makes everything feel more Instagram-worthy. Installing larger windows, skylights, or glass doors invites more light into the home. If a renovation isn't in the cards, light-colored walls, mirrors, and sheer curtains brighten darker spaces, reducing the need for artificial lighting (and ridiculous energy bills).

Ventilation is equally important. Regularly opening windows improves airflow—yes, even when it's cold. For those going the extra mile, air-purifying plants like Boston ferns or areca palms keep the air fresh. High-tech options like heat recovery ventilators (HRVs) circulate fresh air while cutting energy consumption.

Philip Jodidio's Green House in Costa Rica blurs the boundaries between indoors and outdoors with floor-to-ceiling glass walls, open-air corridors, and skylights flooding the interior with daylight.

Surrounded by lush greenery, the home embraces cross-ventilation, making air-conditioning almost

unnecessary. It's proof that good design can create a sun-drenched paradise while staying energy-efficient.

### BIOPHILIC DESIGN & ECO-CONSCIOUS INTERIORS

Architects worldwide are proving that nature and modern living can (and should) coexist harmoniously. Didi Contractor, known as the Earth Architect of the Himalayas, built homes with adobe, bamboo, slate, and river stone.

Her Dharmalaya Institute is a masterclass in passive solar heating and rainwater harvesting, creating homes that practically take care of themselves.

Elora Hardy, founder of IBUKU, redefined luxury eco-living by pioneering bamboo architecture in Bali. Her work at Green School Bali showcases how strong, flexible, and stunning bamboo can be. Liu Jiakun's Luban Museum in China seamlessly integrates natural light, open-air courtyards, and locally sourced materials, making it an extension of the landscape.

### THE LASTING IMPACT OF A NATURE-INSPIRED HOME

Biophilic design fosters well-being, sustainability, and a deeper connection to nature. From improved air quality and reduced stress to enhanced creativity and relaxation, nature-inspired interiors offer countless benefits. Bringing the outdoors in doesn't require a complete renovation. Simply adding plants, increasing natural light, or incorporating organic materials can transform a space into a calming, rejuvenating environment. Whether city buzz or countryside calm, a nature-infused home keeps you connected to the outdoors—no need to step off the sofa.



*Chandolin Boutique Hotel, Switzerland*



# GREAT PENMANSHIP

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





# DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

Eight Powerful Reasons a Digital Detox Vacation Will Change Your Life

TT BUREAU

**W**e've all been there. That bleary-eyed morning reach for your phone, drowning in emails and social notifications before even getting out of bed. Ironically, your meditation app reminds you to "breathe" (thanks for the tip, I was planning to anyway!).

The world's elite travellers, jet-setting professionals who seem to have it all, have hit their digital breaking point. They're trading hyper-connectivity for something rare: complete and utter silence. And honestly, what's more luxurious these days than ghosting the world guilt-free for a week?

In our screen-obsessed reality, where the average person spends nearly seven hours daily staring at devices (Digital 2023 Global Overview Report), the idea of unplugging is both terrifying and tempting. A 2022 Global Wellness Institute study found wellness tourism is growing 21% faster than regular tourism, with digital detox retreats leading the trend. More travellers are seeking ways to slow down, disconnect, and feel human again.

With burnout at epidemic levels, even the World Health Organization classifies it as an "occupational phenomenon." No surprise then that GlobalData predicts wellness tourism will hit \$1.3 trillion by 2025, proving we're all desperately searching for balance.

## **SLOW LIVING: THE ANTI-INSTAGRAM WAY TO TRAVEL**

Forget those perfectly curated infinity pool shots, today's ultimate luxury is doing absolutely nothing, on purpose.

Slow travel ditches the frantic bucket list approach. Instead of racing between sights or checking work emails under the dinner table, it encourages sinking into the moment. Science backs it up, a Harvard study from 2021 revealed unplugging boosts brain function by 30% and increases happiness by 25%.

Beyond mental clarity, digital detoxing improves sleep, restores attention spans, and sparks creativity. Imagine returning from holiday not just tanned, but actually functioning like your best self.

Slow travel is also more sustainable. Longer stays mean fewer flights, a lower carbon footprint, and deeper community engagement. 72% of travellers want to make greener travel choices, and digital detox retreats fit this shift perfectly.

## **LUXURY DIGITAL DETOX AND WILDERNESS RETREATS**

If the thought of going offline gives you anxiety, don't worry, these retreats make disconnection feel like a privilege.

Imagine: a private island, a hidden forest, a desert retreat, where the only "ping" is a bird or a friendly lizard.

The Ranch Malibu is digital detox royalty, with daily hikes, organic meals, and absolutely no screens. At £6,000 per week, you'll rediscover what life was like before notifications ruled your world.

For design lovers, CABN X (Australia) offers eco-luxe tiny houses with floor-to-ceiling glass windows, immersing you in untouched wilderness. These solar-powered, rainwater-collecting hideaways feature guided hikes, stargazing, and natural hot springs, with no WiFi to interrupt.







*Six Senses Svart, Norway-Eco Luxe Escapes*

Seeking drama? Awasi Patagonia (Chile) enforces a strict no-WiFi policy while surrounding you with jaw-dropping landscapes. Horseback riding, glacier walks, and private hikes replace Netflix binges, offering a nature-based reset that no wellness app can match.

### **SILENT SANCTUARIES: ESCAPE THE NOISE**

Ever wondered what life would be like without digital chatter?

Eremito (Italy) offers luxury monk life—where silence is the main attraction. Guests read by candlelight, dine in hushed tranquillity, and experience an almost scandalous level of peace.

Interest in silence is booming, Google searches for “digital detox retreats” jumped 170% in two years. Experts say this reflects a growing craving for inner peace in a world designed to keep us overstimulated.

For the hardcore, Vipassana Meditation Centres worldwide offer 10-day total silence retreats, no phones, no books, no eye contact. CEOs and entrepreneurs are increasingly drawn to this extreme unplugging, realising constant availability makes them less effective.

Moving to a gentler entry, Plum Village (France), founded by Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, guides guests through walking meditations and silent meals. Similarly, Esalen Institute (California) pairs meditation with oceanfront hot springs, creating a truly reflective retreat.

Even traditional luxury resorts are adapting. Shreyas Retreat (India) offers silent yoga retreats, while Ananda in the Himalayas creates silent zones where the only sound is the occasional distant bell.

These retreats challenge us to embrace solitude, a concept almost foreign in today’s hyper-connected world.

### **FARM-TO-TABLE HIDEAWAYS**

Nokken Cabins offer digital detox with a food focus, reconnecting guests to real food sources (not just delivery apps). Guests help prepare farm-to-table meals, join wild foraging workshops, and learn about regenerative farming.

At Heckfield Place (UK), visitors bake sourdough, harvest vegetables, and make artisanal cheese, learning biodynamic farming techniques. The estate champions zero-waste principles, making guests temporary sustainability experts.

In Sweden, Ett Hem encourages slow living through communal dining, where guests prepare meals using hyper-local ingredients—rediscovering mindful eating and real human connection.

These retreats don’t just disconnect you from screens—they reconnect you with sustainable living and conscious food choices.



*Habitas Alula, Saudi Arabia*



## HERITAGE HAVENS

NIHI Sumba (Indonesia) redefines slow luxury, offering horseback rides on empty beaches, day-long spa treatments, and private villas so secluded they might as well have their own postcode. At £800 per night, they're essentially charging you to forget what century you're in.

For history buffs, Eremito (Italy) transforms a medieval monastery into a silent retreat, where guests live like modern monks—with only candlelight and thermal springs for company.

At Amanbagh (India), guests stay in a restored Mughal palace, engaging in Ayurvedic wellness, temple walks, and storytelling sessions. Meanwhile, Fogo Island Inn (Canada) blends luxury with rich local traditions, whale-watching, and artisan workshops.

These heritage retreats ground us in history, proving that humans thrived for millennia without WiFi.

## THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL DETOXING

Luxury hotels are embracing tech-free travel. Six Senses and Aman resorts now ban phones in spas, while Bhutan and the Faroe Islands market themselves as unplugged destinations.

The Mandarin Oriental (Bangkok) provides lockboxes for phones and journaling kits, while Borgo Egnazia (Italy) introduces silent check-ins; no digital distractions, just handwritten notes and herbal tea.

Black Tomato's "Off the Grid" adventures take it further, no GPS, no phone, just handwritten daily clues leading to mystery locations. Tierra Hotels (Chile) swaps WiFi for guided treks and fireside storytelling.

This reflects a shift towards intentional living where luxury isn't about status but about depth, presence, and genuine connection.



## WHY THE WORLD'S ELITE ARE PAYING TO SLOW DOWN

Silence is now the ultimate status symbol. Forget designer bags, the new flex is saying, "Oh, I don't have WiFi there," without panicking.

A 2022 McKinsey study found leaders who take regular digital breaks experience 40% higher productivity and feel more engaged.

## SUSTAINABLE & SLOW: BRINGING BALANCE BACK

These retreats aren't just good for mental health, they align with eco-conscious travel. Less tech means lower energy use, fewer distractions, and a deeper appreciation for nature.

When the retreat ends, small habits help: "no-phone zones" at home, screen-free evenings, and handwritten notes instead of texts.

In a world that's always switched on, true luxury is learning to be present. And sometimes, that means putting down the phone and remembering how to be human again.





# 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.

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Louis Vuitton Eco-Friendly Collection

# THE TRUTH ABOUT FASHION'S GREEN MAKEOVER

What exactly is sustainable fashion?

CHANDRUTPAL DAS BORO

Fashion has always shaped trends and identities, turning the ordinary into the extraordinary. But beneath the glamour lies an inconvenient truth: it's one of the most environmentally destructive industries, consuming vast amounts of water and generating massive textile waste.

Now, the tide is turning. Brands are rushing to embrace sustainability, not just for marketing appeal but because the future belongs to the eco-conscious. Sustainable fashion prioritises organic and recycled materials, ethical production, and waste reduction, focusing on carbon cuts, innovative fabrics, and circular fashion to keep clothes out of landfills.

Consumers are driving this shift. A 2022 study found that 75% of Gen Z and 68% of Millennials prefer sustainable brands, even at a higher cost. They're scrutinizing supply chains, calling out greenwashing, and demanding transparency.

This consumer revolution has fashion giants scrambling to prove their eco-credentials. Some are making real changes, rethinking materials, and cutting emissions. Others? They're just slapping 'conscious' on collections and hoping no one notices. The message is clear, fashion must evolve or risk being left behind.

## WHY ARE CONSUMERS PUSHING FOR CHANGE?

Fast fashion is like that one friend who always shows up late, makes a mess, and disappears without helping to clean up. It's been a key player in pollution, dodgy labour practices, and



using up natural resources like there's no tomorrow.

The numbers are staggering. Fashion is responsible for about 10% of global carbon emissions, that's more than all international flights and shipping combined. It guzzles 93 billion cubic meters of water a year, and textile dyeing alone is the second-biggest polluter of water on the planet. Looking good comes with a hefty environmental price tag.

Once trendy outfits have had their five minutes of fame, most end up in landfills. Every year, around 92 million tonnes of textile waste are either dumped or incinerated. Why? Because fast fashion brands have convinced us we need a new wardrobe every season. On average, a piece of clothing is worn just seven to ten times before it's tossed.

Thankfully, shoppers are getting wise to the industry's bad habits. Conscious consumerism is on the rise. People are researching brands, looking for sustainability credentials, and calling out greenwashing when they see it. Companies that pretend to be eco-friendly without doing the actual work are getting exposed faster than last season's trends.

The message from consumers is clear: we still love fashion, but we're not willing to destroy the planet for it. The industry must evolve or get left behind.

## LUXURY BRANDS LEADING THE ECO REVOLUTION

Some luxury brands have been pushing for change for years, while others are just jumping on the bandwagon. But who's actually making a difference?

### GUCCI

Gucci achieved carbon neutrality across its supply chain in 2019 and aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030. The brand launched the Off The Grid collection, featuring recycled, organic, and bio-based materials, including ECONYL®, a regenerated nylon made from industrial plastic



*Prada Presents Eternal Gold Made of 100% Certified Recycled Gold*



*Gucci Circular Lines, Off The Grid Champions The Regeneration of Materials*

and fishing nets. Gucci also invests in regenerative agriculture and biodiversity protection. In 2018, it banned fur, proving that fashion can survive without turning animals into accessories.

### STELLA MCCARTNEY

Stella McCartney has been championing sustainability since 2001. Her collections feature groundbreaking materials like Mylo™, a leather alternative made from mushroom roots, and ECONYL®. She refuses to use leather, fur, or exotic skins, proving ethical fashion can be luxurious. She also collaborates with resale platforms like The RealReal, encouraging circular fashion and transparency.

### BURBERRY

Once caught burning unsold stock in 2018, Burberry has had a serious eco-glow-up. They now aim to be climate positive by 2040, ensuring all cotton, wool, and leather come from sustainable sources by 2025. The brand is investing in fabric recycling and biodegradable textiles, because no one wants their outfit to outlive them by centuries.

### PRADA

Prada's Re-Nylon project replaces virgin nylon with regenerated nylon from fishing nets, fabric scraps, and industrial waste. By 2025, Prada aims for all its nylon products to be made from recycled materials. They're also cutting down energy consumption and rolling out a take-back program where customers can return worn-out Prada pieces for recycling.

### FABINDIA

India's beloved homegrown brand, Fabindia, has long been ahead of the curve in ethical fashion. Long before sustainability became a buzzword, Fabindia was championing handcrafted, organic, and naturally dyed fabrics. The brand works with over 55,000 rural artisans, ensuring fair wages and preserving traditional



weaving, dyeing, and embroidery techniques that are inherently eco-friendly. Their organic cotton and handloom collections skip harmful chemicals and excessive water usage, while waste-reduction initiatives focus on upcycling fabric scraps.

## LOUIS VUITTON

Louis Vuitton has pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030. The brand is swapping traditional textiles for organic cotton, recycled polyester, and eco-friendly leather. By 2025, it aims to use 100% recyclable or reusable packaging and is investing in lab-grown leather and reforestation projects to offset its environmental impact.

## GREENWASHING: WHO'S FAKING IT?

Not all brands claiming sustainability actually are. Some launch limited "green" collections while keeping their main lines as wasteful as ever. Others use vague words like "conscious" or "eco" without publishing real data to support their claims.

So, how can you tell who's genuine? Brands that publish sustainability reports with measurable goals and third-party certifications like GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) or Fair Trade are more credible. True sustainability also means fair wages and safe working conditions, something greenwashing brands tend to overlook.

## IS SUSTAINABLE FASHION WORTH THE PRICE?

One of the biggest barriers to sustainable fashion is cost. Ethical, eco-friendly clothing often comes with a higher price tag. But there's a good reason for that.



*Stella McCartney Autumn 2025 Collection, Made From Cruelty-Free Materials*



*Prada Re-Nylon Collection for Men Is Made of Regenerated And Sustainable Nylon*

Firstly, sustainable fashion lasts longer, meaning clothes don't need to be replaced as often. Secondly, resale platforms like The RealReal and Vestiaire Collective make it possible to recoup some of the cost by selling pieces later. And finally, every purchase pushes the industry toward better practices, making sustainable fashion more accessible in the long run.

## HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Consumers hold serious power. Choosing quality over quantity, shopping second-hand, and repairing clothes instead of discarding them can make a huge impact.

Brands are being forced to change because shoppers are demanding better. Research the companies you buy from, check their sustainability credentials, and call out greenwashing when you see it. The future of fashion depends on all of us making more conscious choices.

Sustainability is the new standard. As climate regulations tighten and technology advances, brands will have no choice but to clean up their act. The rise of lab-grown leather, biodegradable fabrics, and AI-driven production will accelerate the shift.

Fashion is evolving. The question is, which brands are leading the way, and which ones are just faking it?







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# GO WILD, GET FIT

Why confine yourself to a gym when you can train in the world's largest fitness centre, Nature?

**TT BUREAU**



*Kayaking & Paddleboarding*

**F**orget your monotonous gym routine for once and imagine yourself running on rugged trails passing through woods and mountains. Doesn't it sound interesting and guess what, it doesn't charge a membership fee!

Wilderness workouts take fitness beyond repetition and routine, transforming exercise into an adventure that blends endurance, strength, and mental well-being into one exhilarating experience. Outdoor fitness challenges the body with natural resistance, uneven terrain, and dynamic environments that no treadmill can replicate.

So, why stay inside when you can run, climb, and paddle your way to fitness in the world's biggest, wildest gym?

## **NATURE'S PLAYGROUND: EXPLORING THE WILD SIDE OF FITNESS**

Trail running and hiking go beyond fitness—they're a full-body experience that tests stamina, agility, and strength while immersing you in nature. Unlike road running, trails engage stabiliser muscles, improve coordination, and challenge balance with every step over uneven ground. Hiking, on the other hand, is a low-impact yet highly effective way to build endurance, strengthening the legs, core, and cardiovascular system.

India is home to some of the most breathtaking trails for both activities. The moderate yet scenic route to Triund in Himachal Pradesh, the lush green paths of Munnar in

Kerala, and the rugged landscapes of Satpura National Park in Madhya Pradesh offer varied terrain for every fitness level. Beyond India, the Swiss Alps, the Grand Canyon in the USA, and Chile's Torres del Paine promise legendary high-altitude adventures. Sprinting through dense forests or trekking up towering mountains, the wild serves as the ultimate training ground.

Why train indoors when the outdoors is a natural gym? Forest workouts bring a raw, primal energy, using fallen logs, uneven terrain, and trees as natural equipment. Trail sprints, bodyweight drills, and obstacle courses seamlessly integrate with the environment, building endurance, strength, and coordination while deepening the connection with nature.

In India, the forests of Jim Corbett in Uttarakhand, the misty expanses of the Western Ghats, and the diverse terrain of Kanha National Park provide the perfect backdrop for an exhilarating workout. Globally, the Black Forest in Germany, Yosemite in the USA, and Australia's ancient Daintree Rainforest invite adventure-seekers to transform fitness into an immersive wilderness experience. With no walls, no machines—just you, your body, and the wild—it's fitness in its purest form.

For those drawn to water, kayaking and paddleboarding provide a full-body workout with an adventurous edge. Paddling engages the core, arms, shoulders, and back, improving balance and endurance in ways no static



gym machine can replicate. The continuous activation of stabiliser muscles makes each movement dynamic—gliding across a calm lake, navigating choppy waves, or tackling fierce rapids.

In India, thrill-seekers can take on the whitewater rapids of the Zaskar River in Ladakh, while Goa's coastal waters provide a relaxed paddling experience. Chilika Lake in Odisha, a haven for migratory birds, offers a serene alternative. Internationally, the turquoise waters of Hawaii, Norway's majestic fjords, and the sun-drenched Greek Isles rank among the world's top paddling routes. From the thrill of rapids to serene drifts over crystal-clear waters, the world's waterways serve as the ultimate open-air gym.

For those craving a vertical challenge, rock climbing and bouldering push both body and mind to the limit, demanding strength, agility, and strategy. Every ascent is a battle against gravity, requiring control, precision, and a fearless spirit.

India's climbing scene is as diverse as its landscapes. Hampi in Karnataka is a world-class bouldering hotspot, while Badami's red sandstone cliffs offer stunning routes for all levels. Malshej Ghat in Maharashtra provides a dramatic setting for rock climbers. Internationally, Yosemite in the USA, Fontainebleau in France, and Railay Beach in Thailand attract climbers worldwide. Scaling sheer cliffs or tackling intricate bouldering problems, every climb challenges strength, focus, and determination.

From trails to forests, rivers to cliffs, nature offers an endless playground for those willing to embrace the challenge. Adventure is out there—you just have to take the first step.



### RETHINKING FITNESS: WALK THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

We all know the usual fitness routines—trail running, hiking, kayaking—but what about the emerging traditional practices that are just as intriguing and fulfilling? These alternative approaches blend mindfulness, movement, and a touch of adventure, redefining what it means to stay active.

Walking meditation is not just about taking steps; it's about being fully present in every movement. Rooted in Buddhist traditions, it encourages a deep connection with the rhythm of your steps, helping to clear the mind and enhance mindfulness. No distractions, no scrolling through your phone—just a slow, intentional journey that can offer surprising moments of clarity. Maybe it won't lead to instant enlightenment, but it's a great way to enjoy a stroll without looking lost.

Forest bathing may sound like a woodland swim, but it's



Trail Running





something far more immersive. The Japanese practice of Shinrin-yoku is about connecting with nature through all the senses—breathing in the crisp air, feeling the textures of the trees, and listening to the symphony of the forest. More than just a walk, it's a way to relax, recharge, and reconnect with nature in a deeply personal way.

For those who enjoy multitasking, plogging offers a fitness experience with a purpose. Born in Sweden, the term merges “plocka upp” (Swedish for “pick up”) with jogging, creating an activity that combines running—or walking—with picking up litter. Not only does it provide an excellent cardio session, but it also sneaks in squats and lunges every time you bend down to grab a piece of trash. A workout that benefits both your body and the planet? Now that's a fitness trend worth following.

From mindful movement to eco-conscious workouts, these alternative fitness practices prove that staying active

doesn't always have to follow the beaten path. Sometimes, the road less travelled is the one that leads to the most rewarding experiences.

### STEP OUTSIDE: 2025 FITNESS TRENDS AND EXPERT PERSPECTIVES

Outdoor fitness is evolving, blending movement with mindfulness, technology, and nature. Smart wearables enhance workouts, while mindful hikes and cold water dips gain popularity as people seek innovative ways to stay active. More individuals are turning to nature-based recovery, incorporating stretching, light hikes, and breathing exercises to relax and recharge. Strava's 2024 data shows a 59% rise in run club participation, signalling a shift toward social, relaxed fitness.

The evolution of GPS watches and fitness apps is revolutionising outdoor workouts, providing real-time terrain and environmental insights. Coach and marathon runner Mimi Nguyen predicts these tools will soon be fine-tuned for runners and hikers, optimising performance. Mindfulness workouts like forest bathing, walking meditation, and plogging are on the rise, promoting both mental and physical well-being. Personal trainer Chloe Thomas notes that as mental health becomes a priority, mindful walks offer a natural way to detox.

Group hikes and digital detox walks are now a social movement, fostering deeper connections. High-tech trail running shoes improve grip, endurance, and speed, aligning with the 125% surge in running and walking events in 2024.

Every outdoor workout is an adventure—trails shift, rivers flow, and the wind provides natural resistance. One day, a hike may feel like an effortless glide, while the next, an unexpected uphill battle tests endurance. The unpredictability of the outdoors keeps fitness fresh, exciting, and ever-evolving.







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# NATURE'S PHARMACY: HERBS & THEIR WONDERS

Stress, Skin, and Everything in Between: Discover nature's timeless remedies that have been healing us long before modern medicine took the stage!

ATUL KISHORE

**W**e've all heard tales of our ancestors' strength, their deep connection with nature, and the wholesome diets they thrived on. While modern science has brought incredible advancements, have we truly unlocked all of nature's secrets or are we still catching up?

Spoiler: Nature has had the answers all along! From Ashwagandha's stress-busting magic to Neem's skin-saving superpowers or Black Cohosh being the ultimate mood-swing manager, these herbs have been solving problems long before labs existed.

Sure, our egos might make us overlook these natural remedies (hahaha!), but maybe it's time to listen to the wisdom of the past. After all, why fix what isn't broken? Let's dive into

the world of herbs—where science meets tradition, and solutions grow on trees, literally!

## **ASHWAGANDHA: YOUR NATURAL ALLY AGAINST STRESS**

This ancient Indian root, celebrated in Ayurveda for centuries, is clinically proven to lower cortisol (the stress hormone) and boost energy levels. It also supports thyroid function, helping regulate metabolism and mood.

As an adaptogen, it strengthens your body's resilience to daily chaos—whether it's deadlines, burnout, or just life's curveballs. Studies highlight its ability to reduce anxiety, improve sleep, and even enhance physical stamina. Available as tea, capsules, or powder, it's a versatile addition to your wellness routine.





*St. John's Wort*



*Black Cohosh Herb*



*Ashwagandha Herb*

**Pro Tip:** Pair it with a calming evening ritual for maximum zen, and yes, always consult a doctor before starting any new supplement!

### GINSENG: THE ROOT OF ALL GENIUS

Meet Ginseng, the brain's favourite multitasker, here to turn your mental fog into a spotlight moment. Known as the "king of herbs," it enhances cognitive function, sharpening focus and memory, while its anti-inflammatory properties help combat joint pain and chronic inflammation.

Need energy without the caffeine jitters? Ginseng does the job! Unlike caffeine, it boosts energy smoothly and sustainably, like swapping a rusty bike for a sleek electric ride. Studies around the world back its role in supporting immune health and reducing stress. It also gives your immune system a friendly high-five while tackling inflammation like a pro.

**Pro Tip:** Mix its extract into honey-sweetened tea or morning smoothies for a radiant, "I woke up like this" glow!

### BLACK COHOSH: EVERY WOMEN'S BESTIE!

Black Cohosh is a natural remedy for women tackling hormonal challenges, from menstrual cramps to menopausal hot flashes and mood swings. Used for centuries by Native Americans and supported by modern research, this North American root helps balance estrogen levels, offering relief from discomfort and emotional turbulence.

It's particularly effective for easing menopausal symptoms like night sweats and irritability. Pair it with dark chocolate for a soothing ritual that enhances its benefits. You can enjoy this wonder in various forms, like tea, capsules, or tinctures, making it an easy fit for any wellness regime.

**Pro Tip:** For optimal benefits, consistency is the key, and yes, we don't want you to delete the number of your family Gynec!

### ST. JOHN'S WORT SAYS, WHY SO DEPRESSED?

St. John's Wort is a natural mood lifter, often called "nature's sunshine in a bottle." This vibrant yellow herb is widely recognised for its ability to ease mild to moderate depression and reduce anxiety by boosting serotonin levels—your brain's feel-good chemical.

Research shows it can be as effective as some antidepressants, minus the heavy side effects. It's also a star at easing seasonal blues and calming nervous tension. Beyond easing these challenges, this sunny herb is also explored for its potential in managing ADHD, Somatic symptom disorder (extreme anxiety over physical symptoms), and even Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). While research is ongoing, its





serotonin-boosting powers make it a promising natural option for a range of mental health challenges.

**Pro Tip:** Depression is a serious illness. If you or someone you know may be affected, reach out to a healthcare provider for help!

### NEEM: NATURE'S DERMATOLOGIST

Consider it as the Swiss Army knife of herbal remedies, packing antibacterial, antifungal, and skin-reviving powers into every leaf. This ancient Ayurvedic superstar tackles acne, eczema, and fungal infections like a pro, leaving your skin glowing and irritation-free.

Beyond skincare, it's a natural detoxifier, purifying your blood and boosting your immunity while even farmers use it as a green alternative to chemical pesticides!

Slather it as oil, chew its twigs (yes, it's ancient toothpaste!), or add it to skincare routines for a radiant glow as it has been nature's ultimate wellness hack for centuries!

**Pro Tip:** Mix neem powder with honey for a DIY face mask. Warning: Its bitterness might make your taste buds revolt, but your skin will thank you.

### MILK THISTLE: YOUR LIVER'S SOULMATE

Milk Thistle is your liver's ultimate wingman, stepping in to detoxify and protect like a superhero with a PhD in liver health. Its active compound, silymarin, repairs liver cells, fights toxins, and even helps with fatty liver disease.

Had a little too much pizza or one too many cocktails? Milk Thistle comes to the rescue. Traditionally, it was even used to treat mushroom poisoning—proof of its remarkable potency!

But wait, there's more! It doesn't just stop at liver love but is also a champion for your skin, helping to clear acne and give you that natural glow by flushing out toxins. Studies suggest it may even support cholesterol levels and blood sugar regulation, making it a multitasking marvel.

**Pro Tip:** Pair it with a glass of lemon water for an extra detox boost while who knows your liver might just send you a thank-you note!

### SAW PALMETTO: SMALL BERRY, BIG BENEFITS

Meet Saw Palmetto, the prostate's herbal hero, here to tackle urinary woes and keep things flowing smoothly. This powerhouse



Herbal Apothecary

berry is a game-changer for men's health, reducing symptoms of an enlarged prostate (like those midnight bathroom runs) and improving overall urinary function.

Its natural compounds block hormones that cause prostate issues, offering a gentle yet effective alternative to medications.

Used for centuries by Native Americans, it's now backed by modern science for its prostate-protecting powers. Studies also suggest it may support hair health by reducing DHT levels, a hormone linked to hair loss. Whether you're dealing with prostate concerns or just want to stay ahead of the game, Saw Palmetto is the nature's gift worth considering.

**Pro Tip:** Pair Saw Palmetto with a handful of pumpkin seeds rich in zinc—because your prostate deserves a snack too!

From ancient Ayurveda to modern science, herbs like Ashwagandha, Neem, and Saw Palmetto have long proven that nature is the ultimate healer. These green wonders calm the mind, enhance skin radiance, and support overall balance, making them essential for well-being.

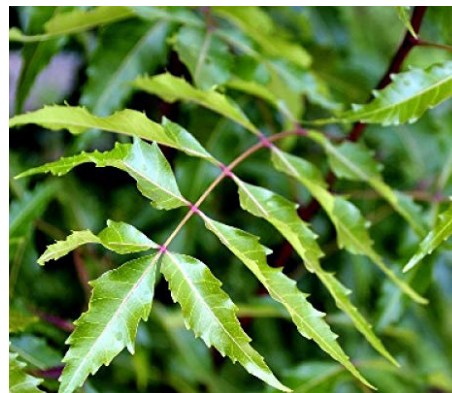
So, ditch the ego and embrace your roots, quite literally! Let nature's pharmacy work its magic, after all, the best remedies often come with a little dirt on them.



Saw Palmetto



Milk Thistle



Neem Leaves





## **CARL F. BUCHERER MANERO CENTRAL COUNTER**

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





# BANANA LEAVES: ANCIENT WISDOM, MODERN MAGIC

From temple rituals to taco wraps, spa treatments to street food - banana leaves have been out there doing it all for centuries!

TT BUREAU

As the world races towards eco-friendly solutions, it's fascinating to see how banana leaves have been ahead of the curve for centuries. From traditional medicine in India and Sri Lanka to healing rituals in the Pacific Islands and modern sustainability movements, this humble leaf has always been a force of nature - literally and figuratively.

The usefulness of banana leaves stretches back thousands of years, with traces of their role as natural plates and bowls found in the Indus Valley Civilization as early as 2000 BC. One of

the world's oldest urban civilisations embraced them, proving that this eco-friendly wisdom has stood the test of time.

## A GLOBAL CULINARY TREASURE

At many South Indian weddings, guests are welcomed with a grand feast served on a giant, vibrant green banana leaf. No forks, no spoons - just the time-honored tradition of eating with hands, savoring every bite, and experiencing flavours in their purest, most natural form.

But South India isn't the only place where banana leaves



steal the show. Travel to Mexico, and you'll find tamales—delicious masa (corn dough) pockets filled with meats, cheeses, or chilies—wrapped in these same leaves before being steamed to perfection. It's not just about convenience; the banana leaf infuses the dish with a subtle, earthy aroma, making the meal even more flavourful. From Hindu rituals to Thai water festivals, Amazonian jungle kitchens to Vietnamese street food stalls, banana leaves have been an integral part of cultures worldwide.

In India and Sri Lanka, banana leaves play a crucial role in traditional feasts like Onam Sadhya and Tamil Nadu's banana leaf meals, enhancing flavors while also being valued for their antimicrobial properties. In Mexico and Central America, they are a staple in wrapping tamales, particularly in Mexican and Guatemalan cuisines, where they help retain moisture and infuse flavor during cooking.

Across Thailand and Southeast Asia, banana leaves are widely used to wrap fish, sticky rice, and desserts such as Khao Tom Mat, a sweet coconut banana delicacy. In parts of the Amazon and the Philippines, they serve as a natural alternative to aluminum foil, commonly used for grilling and steaming fish, chicken, and rice cakes.

#### **BANANA LEAVES: A SPIRITUAL MESSENGER**

Banana Leaves are also considered to hold deep spiritual significance. Across continents—from Asia to Africa, the Pacific Islands and beyond - the humble banana leaf symbolises purity, prosperity, and devotion in rituals, festivals, and sacred traditions.

In India and Sri Lanka, no Hindu puja, wedding, or temple ritual is complete without the banana leaf. Its broad, untainted surface is believed to enhance the sanctity of sacred offerings, making it a divine vessel for Prasadam (holy food).

At South Indian temples, it's customary to serve prasadam on fresh banana leaves, ensuring the meal retains its spiritual



essence. Take the Tirupati Temple, one of the world's richest temples, where banana leaves play a key role in preparing and serving the famous Tirupati Laddu, a much-revered offering to Lord Venkateswara.

Banana leaves also grace weddings, where the plant's large, sturdy leaves adorn the wedding mandap, standing tall as symbols of fertility, longevity, and prosperity. During Vara Mahalakshmi Vrata, a festival dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi, banana leaves are placed in worship, reinforcing their role as bearers of good fortune.

Venturing east to Thailand and Indonesia, banana leaves take on a spiritual significance, deeply woven into offerings and festivals. In Thailand's Loy Krathong festival, thousands of krathongs—small floating rafts crafted from banana leaves, candles, and flowers—are gently set adrift on rivers as offerings to the water goddess, creating a breathtaking spectacle of glowing lights under the moonlit sky, symbolising peace, renewal, and gratitude.

In Bali, Indonesia, Canang Sari—delicate woven banana leaf baskets filled with flowers and incense—are placed outside homes and temples daily, serving as a gesture of devotion,







balance, and gratitude to gods and ancestors. Beyond Asia, banana leaves carry an equally profound spiritual and cultural role in West Africa and the Pacific Islands. In Ghana and Nigeria, they are used in grand feasts to wrap food, sealing in not just flavours but also blessings and tradition, transforming meals into sacred connections between people and their ancestors.

In the Pacific Islands, Polynesians uphold ancestral customs by using banana leaves in earth ovens, cooking meals in a way that honors both nature and heritage, while in worship ceremonies, banana leaves are laid out as symbols of respect, connection, and spiritual offering.

### ANCIENT HEALING: A NATURAL MEDICINE FOR THE AGES

For generations, banana leaves have been a staple in Ayurveda, herbal medicine, and indigenous healing systems, revered for their cooling, detoxifying, and anti-inflammatory properties.

In India, Ayurveda has long relied on banana leaves in therapeutic steam baths to draw out toxins and restore balance to the doshas. Their cooling nature helps soothe heat-related ailments and supports detoxification. In Sri Lanka, fresh banana leaves are placed under feverish patients to naturally regulate body temperature, a simple remedy still practiced in rural areas.

In Hawaii, traditional healers use mashed banana leaf paste as a natural antiseptic for burns and wounds, speeding up healing and reducing inflammation. In Fiji, newborns are sometimes wrapped in banana leaves to protect their skin from heat rashes, a practice that has been passed down for generations in the tropical climate.

Banana leaves also play a role in Ayurvedic skincare, with their extracts used in face packs and herbal pastes to hydrate,

heal, and protect against infections. Across cultures, these leaves have remained a trusted natural solution for health and healing.

### MORE THAN JUST A PLATE – A SUSTAINABILITY ICON

While the world searches for alternatives to plastic, banana leaves have been fulfilling this role effortlessly for centuries. Their biodegradable, chemical-free, and antibacterial properties make them the ultimate eco-friendly choice for food packaging, dining, and everyday use.

In South India, banana leaves have long served as a natural replacement for disposable plates, offering a sturdy, waste-free dining solution that modern restaurants are now reviving as part of global eco-conscious dining movements. In Thailand, supermarkets have embraced this sustainable practice by wrapping fresh produce in banana leaves instead of plastic, a cost-effective initiative that is inspiring similar eco-friendly packaging trends across Vietnam, Indonesia, and India.

Meanwhile, in Vietnam and the Philippines, street food vendors are rediscovering tradition, using banana leaves to wrap rice, meats, and sweets, significantly reducing reliance on plastic containers and styrofoam packaging while reconnecting with a time-honored, sustainable way of serving food.

From healing fevers in Sri Lanka to replacing plastic in Thai markets, banana leaves bridge tradition, wellness, and sustainability. They are not just a piece of greenery—they are a symbol of wisdom from the past, guiding us toward a greener, healthier future. Who knew a humble green leaf could be such a globetrotter, flavour enhancer, and sustainability warrior all at once?





# WHAT'S NEW IN VEG TODAY?

Take a trip around the world and discover the newest, most exciting vegetarian dishes today!

TT BUREAU



Think vegetarian food is boring? Think again, since it's time to break the myth! Around the world, chefs are flipping the script, turning classic dishes into bold fusion masterpieces. What about Sushi Dosa, where crispy South Indian dosa meets delicate Japanese sushi? Or a Masala Risotto, giving the Italian favorite a fiery Indian twist.

These unexpected mashups are redefining plant-based cuisine, proving that meat-free meals can be just as thrilling, flavourful, and indulgent. From kimchi hummus to jerk-spiced paneer, the vegetarian revolution is here, and it's anything but dull! Are you ready to take your taste buds on a wild ride?

## A GLOBAL VEGETARIAN RENAISSANCE

Across the world, chefs are mixing cultures on a plate, using fresh ingredients and creative techniques to give vegetarian food a new identity. To start with, the prime example would be the famous restaurant Eleven Madison Park in New York, led by

Chef Daniel Humm, has taken a bold step by going fully plant-based while still holding onto its three Michelin stars.

His menu features eggplant tonburi caviar, a luxurious vegetarian take on fish roe, and a beet Wellington, which replaces beef with slow-roasted beets wrapped in a buttery pastry. His approach proves that vegetarian fine dining can be just as indulgent and sophisticated.

Meanwhile, London's Mildreds, a vegetarian institution, serves fusion dishes like Korean-style BBQ tofu burgers and Sri Lankan sweet potato curry. Also, the much-loved Indian restaurant Dishoom in London itself has reinvented vegetarian street food.

Their jackfruit biryani mimics the texture of slow-cooked meat, while their smoked aubergine raita, influenced by Middle Eastern flavours, brings a delightful depth of taste.

Over in Dubai, OPA Dubai merges Greek and Middle Eastern influences. Their spanakopita-stuffed bell peppers with harissa yogurt bring together Mediterranean and North African





*Sri Lankan Sweet Potato Curry*

flavours, while their halloumi kebabs with pomegranate glaze add a modern twist to a traditional dish. This shift is not just about replacing meat but about reimagining flavours, textures, and traditions in exciting new ways.

### INDIAN CHEFS TURNING TABLES AROUND GLOBALLY

In Bangkok, chef Garima Arora of Gaa is making waves with dishes that blend Indian and international flavours. Her Sushi Dosa, where dosa is rolled and sliced like sushi, is a perfect example of how two different cuisines can come together in harmony.

Another standout is her betel leaf tacos, which wrap Thai-inspired fillings in fresh betel leaves, offering a unique take on street food.

In Milan, celebrity chef Ritu Dalmia is redefining Italian cuisine with an Indian touch at Cittamani. Her Masala Risotto, infused with saffron and garam masala, gives the classic creamy dish a bold, aromatic upgrade. She also experiments with tandoori artichokes, where the delicate Italian vegetable meets smoky Indian spices.

The trend continues across continents. Kimchi hummus in Korea, Mexican-inspired paneer tacos in Los Angeles, and jerk-spiced paneer in the Caribbean all prove that vegetarian food is no longer an afterthought—it's leading a global revolution.

These dishes show that plant-based meals can be vibrant, unexpected, and packed with awesome taste. The world is changing its view on vegetarian food—are you ready to take a bite?

### ARE INDIANS CONSERVATIVE ABOUT TASTE?

India, the land of dal makhani and idli-sambhar, has a culinary heritage that's as rich as its spices. But when it comes to embracing global trends, are Indians ready to step out of their comfort zone?

Although, indeed, Indian vegetarian cuisine is deeply tied



*Betel Leaf Tacos*

to culture and tradition. For many, the idea of replacing paneer with tofu or experimenting with unfamiliar ingredients like jackfruit can seem, well, a bit too adventurous.

But times are changing! Urban millennials and Gen Z are leading the charge, flocking to cafes that serve masala pasta, vegan biryani, and sushi rolls with a desi twist.

Social media is also playing a huge role, with food bloggers and influencers introducing Indians to global trends like never before.

The key lies in striking a balance between tradition and innovation. Restaurants are now offering dishes like paneer tikka tacos and butter chicken pizza, which blend Indian flavours with global cuisines. It's a win-win for both traditionalists and trendsetters!

So, while Indians may be conservative about taste, they're slowly but surely warming up to the idea of culinary experimentation. After all, who can resist a gulab jamun cheesecake?



*Desi Sushi*





*Lab Grown Meat*

### LAB-GROWN MEAT: AN EMERGING ALTERNATIVE

Think of biting into a juicy burger that looks, tastes, and feels like meat but is made entirely in a lab. Sounds like science fiction? Welcome to the world of lab-grown meat! This groundbreaking innovation is reshaping the future of food, offering a sustainable and ethical alternative to traditional meat production.

Scientists extract cells from an animal and cultivate them in a controlled environment, using nutrients to help them grow into muscle tissue. The result? Meat that's biologically identical to the real thing but produced without harming animals.



*Vegan Buddha Bowl*

Lab-grown meat is a game-changer for the food industry. It's ethical, sustainable, and has the potential to significantly reduce the environmental impact of meat production. For meat lovers who are hesitant to switch to plant-based diets, it offers a guilt-free way to enjoy their favorite foods.

However, there are hurdles to overcome, including high production costs and consumer skepticism. For vegetarians, this innovation presents an interesting dilemma. While it aligns with the ethical principles of avoiding animal harm, it blurs the line between plant-based and animal-derived products. Will vegetarians embrace it? Only time will tell, but one thing is



*Salad Ingredients*





certain: lab-grown meat is here to stay, and it's changing the way we think about food.

## VEGETARIANISM AND HEALTH

Let's face it—vegetarian food isn't just good for the planet; it's good for you too! Packed with nutrients, low in saturated fats, and bursting with flavour, it's a win-win for your health and your taste buds.

- **Nutritional Powerhouse:** A well-balanced vegetarian diet is packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Think leafy greens, nuts, seeds, and legumes—nature's multivitamins!
- **Weight Management:** Vegetarian diets are often lower in calories and saturated fats, making them a great option for weight management. Studies show that vegetarians tend to have lower BMIs compared to meat-eaters.
- **Mental Health Boost:** Did you know that what you eat can affect your mood? Emerging research suggests that vegetarian diets, rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, may help reduce stress and anxiety.
- **Challenges:** Of course, it's important to ensure a balanced diet. Vegetarians need to pay attention to their intake of protein, iron, and vitamin B12, which are commonly found in animal products. But with supplements and fortified foods, it's easy to bridge these nutritional gaps.

As we look ahead, one thing is clear! Vegetarian food is not just about what's on your plate; it's about making choices that are good for your health, the planet, and the future of food. Whether you go veg or non-veg is entirely up to you, but why not take a bite out of this delicious revolution and see what the buzz is all about?





  
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