

THE
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THE EXCELLENCE PORTAL

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Your Gateway to Knowledge

Travel & Adventure

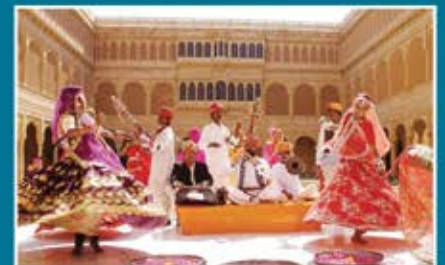
**RANTHAMBORE: ADVENTURES
ON TIGER SAFARIS**



**DALHOUSIE: WHERE MEN
AND MOUNTAINS MEET**



**DESTINATION WEDDINGS :
FAIRYTALE-STYLE**





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From the Publisher's Desk

Dear Readers,

As we end the year, this issue of *The Excellence Portal* is all about embracing the thrill of travel and adventure. We journey through the wilds of **Ranthambore**, explore the promise of **eco-tourism**, and discover the tranquil charm of **Dalhousie**.

For those dreaming of a regal celebration, our feature on **destination weddings in Rajasthan** will transport you to the land of palaces and royal sunsets. We've also got you covered with practical tips on **washroom hygiene** during your travels and a guide on **planning for your pets** when you're away, so everyone in the family — furry friends included — is cared for.

We hope these stories inspire you to explore new places and make unforgettable memories.

You can download the soft copy of earlier issues from the website: www.authors-point.com.



We look forward to your thoughts and feedback! You can write to us at
info@authors-point.com

Raaj Verma

Author's Point, The Excellence Portal

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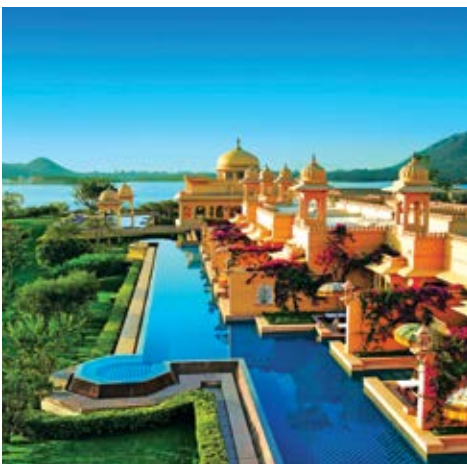


PHOTO CREDIT: DR. SANDEEP ARORA

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Wildlife



RANTHAMBORE
*Adventures on
Tiger Safaris*

A close-up photograph of a tiger with vibrant orange fur and black stripes. The tiger is leaning over a shallow pool of water, its mouth open as if drinking. The background consists of large, grey, textured rocks. The lighting is natural, highlighting the texture of the tiger's fur and the surrounding environment.

By Ranees Sahaney

*Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*

The world's most loved and photographed tigress had made it her home. Machali, that brave and beautiful wild cat, refused to be intimidated by a 14-foot-long crocodile, he of the pearly teeth and jaws of death. For hours the deadly battle raged between the two—one of the wild world's most fearsome predators on water and land, and the other, the apex predator of the Indian jungles. Her mighty triumph over the croc has long passed into jungle legend.

For over a decade this ferocious tigress, with her high-octane personality, ruled Ranthambore National Park as queen. What gave her name was the unique fish-like mark on the left ear of her face. “Lady of the Lake,” or “Crocodile Killer” as she was also known, left for the heavenly hunting grounds on 18th August 2016. Machali’s death at age 20, made her the world’s oldest-surviving tigress in the wild. Did you know that the government had even launched a commemorative postal cover and stamp to honour Machali for her ecological and economical contributions.

It is jungle folklore such as Machali’s fascinating stories which make Ranthambore National Park, a huge draw for visitors from all over the world. Straddling

the junction of the Aravali and Vindhya hill ranges, Ranthambore National Park is one of India’s premier tiger-spotting destinations. Its unique geographic setting offers some of the most thrilling wildlife experiences you could hope for.

Ranthambore has a rich and bio-diverse setting, supporting both the tiger and his natural prey in great numbers. Its lazy sprawl over 400 sq km, and if combined with the area of Sawai Man Singh Sanctuary area, is around 500 sq km. The jungles here once served as the private hunting preserve of the Maharajas of the princely state of Jaipur. With hunting officially long banned now you can only hunt the tigers and other wildlife denizens of the park by camera. Today thousands of wildlife enthusiasts from the world over

have immersed themselves in this glorious wilderness and returned home with their own unique stories and photographs.

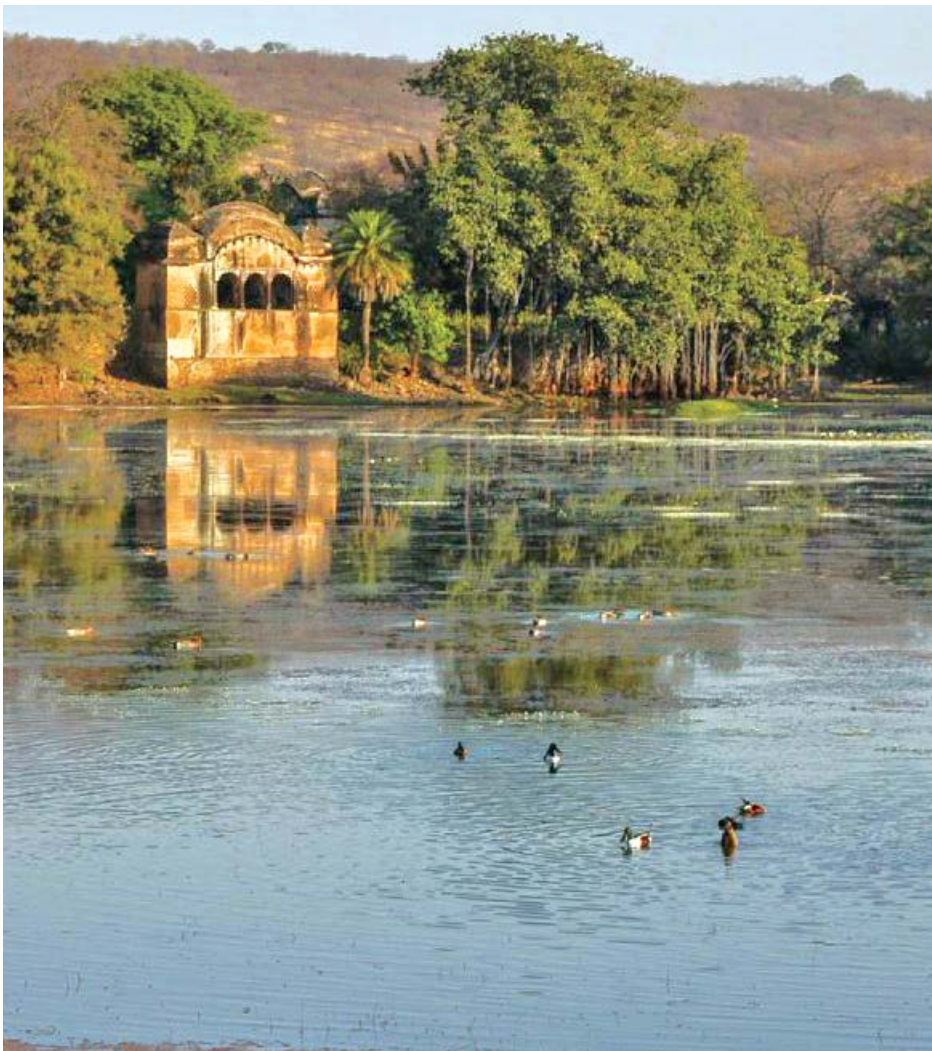
Kings and commoners, presidents and chieftains all have marvelled over the fabulous wealth of faunal and botanical splendour of this game park. Tiger sightings are the big lure, but Ranthambore is also a magnet for birding enthusiasts.

Scattered across the game park are ancient structures and water bodies which also draw the attention of the visitors. The Ranthambore Fort, dating to the 10th century, three lakes and an ancient temple punctuate the luxuriant verdure of the park.

Jogi Mahal, nestled by the **Padma Talao** in Zone 3 of Ranthambore National Park, once served as a hunting lodge for the Jaipur royals. It was transformed into a forest rest house many years ago and accommodated visitors like the former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Bill Clinton, and Amitabh Bachchan, when they were touring the park. Another landmark site here is the massive banyan tree purportedly the second largest banyan tree in India. Padma Talao is also a great spot for birdwatching.

The **Ranthambore Fort**, located on the outskirts of the park, is a vivid reminder of a fierce battle fought between Raja Hameer Dev Chauhan and Delhi sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji in 1301. After a long siege, the defenders of Ranthambhore, ancient Ranastambhapura, suffered from a famine and defections of some of Hameer’s own generals. Raja Hameer (a direct descendant of Rajasthan’s legendary Prithviraj Chauhan) and his loyal forces fought to the death. The female contingent of his family collectively committed Jauhar (mass self-immolation) rather than be taken prisoner. Khilji ultimately took over the hill fort and left Ulugh Khan behind as its governor.

The fortress is awash with old palaces, royal court, temples, chhatris bazaars, and water bodies. Largely in ruins— the structures serve as an evocative reminder



of a Ranthambore that defied the growing greed of the Delhi sultanate to gobble up more territories in Rajasthan and neighbouring Gujarat.

Located within the precincts of Ranthambore Fort is the **Trinetra Ganesh Temple**, a huge attraction for local devotees. Dating back to the year 1299, it is believed to be one of Rajasthan's oldest temples. What's unique about it also is that enshrined here is a three-eyed Lord Ganesh, along with his entire family which includes his two wives Riddhi and Siddhi and two sons Shubh and Labh. It becomes a hive of activity during the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations.

Tiger Safaris

A 6-seater vehicle, open from all sides, a gypsy in Ranthambore is available for morning and evening safaris. There are 10 eco-tourism zones in Ranthambore, and a jeep safari is allowed in each of them.

Jeep Safari Bookings Being one of India's most popular tiger parks, safari bookings (available online on <https://fmdss.forest.rajasthan.gov.in/>) should be made well ahead.

Birding excursions

Ranthambore is a huge attraction for birding enthusiasts. Arrive here with binocs and bird book for a truly immersive experience. The **Padma Talao**, the lotus filled waterbody is an excellent spot for bird watching. **Malik Talao** may be small but it is an alluring spot for birdlife. Get your fill of waterfowl and keep your eyes peeled for sightings of **marsh crocodiles** who visit frequently.

Established in 1955 as the Sawai Madhopur Game Sanctuary by the government it was brought under Project Tiger in 1973 as one of India's top Tiger Reserves. By 1980 Ranthambore had also gained the status of a National Park. In 1991 it came to include the adjoining expanses of the **Sawai Man Singh and Keladevi sanctuaries**.



Other attractions

Dastkar Ranthambore

Find your way to a popular artisan hub in Swai Madhopur— this is Dastkar Ranthambore, where you can have a leisurely browse of local crafts. Do your bit for the economy of the local community. The

NGO has been pivotal in empowering local women by supporting traditional crafts like embroidery, block printing, and textiles.

Ranthambore School of Art

The Ranthambore School of Art, located on Ranthambore Road, is a treat for wildlife buffs. Marvel over the creations of local artists who have on display some superb paintings and artworks of tigers and other denizens of the forests at Ranthambore.

Rajiv Gandhi Regional Museum of Natural History

Located 9km away from Swai Madhopur, Ramsinghpura village is home to the Rajiv Gandhi Regional Museum of Natural History. Steep yourself in the astonishing wilderness heritage of the biodiversity of India's western region. On display are rare plants, animals, and geological specimens. The aim of the museum was to put the spotlight on the critical need to conserve the region's unique flora and fauna. ■

FACT FILE

Location Near the town of Swai Madhopur, at the juncture of the Aravalli and Vindhya range in SE Rajasthan **Attractions** Tigers, avifauna **Best time to visit** Oct-June **Timings** 7.00 -10.00 .am-2.30-5.30 pm **Safari Jeep and Canter** **Getting there** Nearest airport is Jaipur (175km); Swai Madhopur is the nearest railhead 15km away. **Resort pick-up** **Accommodation** Private and tourist hotels **Website** www.rajasthanwildlife.in , www.projecttiger.nic.in

TIP Check current prices online

Ecotourism *to defy growing Carbon Footprint*

By Ranee Sahaney

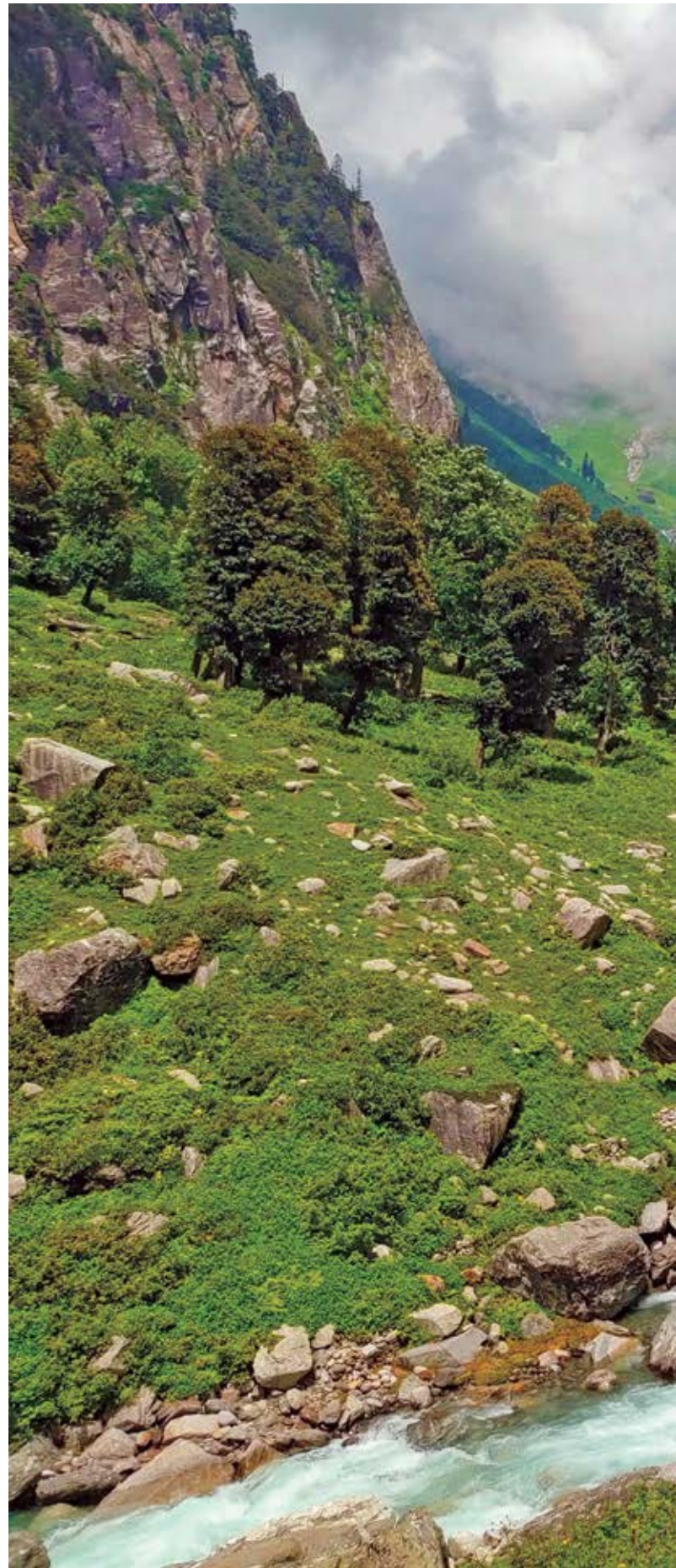
The growing concerns about climate change have pivoted the trajectory of tourism development worldwide. Tourism is responsible for roughly 8% of the world's carbon emissions. From plane flights and boat rides to souvenirs and lodging, various activities contribute to the burgeoning tourism carbon footprint.

It has also more vigorously put the spotlight on the growing menace of depletion or in more severe cases, extinction, of several species of flora and fauna due to various causes.

Ecotourism's concerns are nature based, focusing on ecologically sustainability and in which education and interpretation is a major constituent; it's also important that local people are benefited by the tourism activities.

The need to play a super-active role in the protection of and conservation of Nature and wildlife habitats is not just the job of governments today. All stakeholders involved in the travel and tourism industry including tour operators, visitors, NGOs and the local population have a very important contribution to make in this endeavour.

The eco-friendly world we leave behind for our children—and the enjoyment of travelling and exploring and discovering holiday destinations—is their right as well.





A Tryst with Some leading Eco-friendly Destinations in India

CORBETT NATIONAL PARK

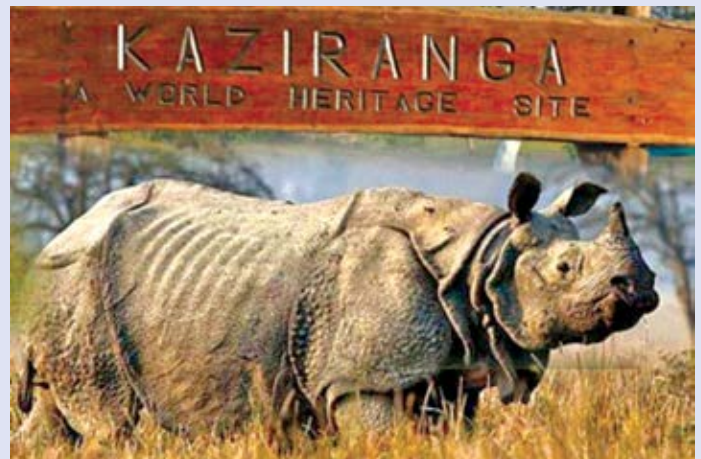
Located in Uttarakhand it was the first wildlife reserve of India, to come under the international Project Tiger, with the aim to protect the Royal Bengal Tiger, whose numbers were diminishing rapidly, thanks to hunting and poaching and loss of habitat. Corbett National Park was one of the nine tiger reserves created at the launch of the Project Tiger in 1973. The park is home to over 50 species of mammals including the elephant, leopards, wild boar, sambar and Himalayan black bear. Over 110 species of trees and 51 species of shrubs can be found in Corbett in addition to a stunning array of insect life.

Apart from tiger and elephant spotting, one can also enjoy birdwatching and angling. Strict rules are in place for visitors to behave in a responsible manner while visiting the park. No littering, loud music, harassing animals, breaking flowers or uprooting plants from the forest— these are just basic givens for an eco-friendly safari. The number of safaris is monitored and only permitted along tourist designated routes, so as not to disturb the animals in this beautiful natural habitat.



KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

This superb wildlife habitat has played a pivotal role in the conservation of the endangered great Indian one-horned rhino which was nearing extinction. The remarkable turn-around has been recognised with the UNESCO tag. This is Assam's oldest



game park and can be found at Golaghat along the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River in Nagaon district. You can enjoy some wonderful jeep safaris spotting other denizens such as another endangered species, the barasingha, hunted down mercilessly for its magnificent horns, back in the day till the government put a ban on hunting. Keep your eyes peeled for families of elephant and the dangerous Asiatic buffalo who have also made this beautiful game park their home.

Gir National Park and Wild Ass Sanctuary

Two Indian endangered animal species can be found in the protected environs of Gujarat's game parks. The Asiatic lion, which once had a home in many of the country's jungles, lost the battle to the hunters' guns. Now you can only see this magnificent 'king of the jungle' at Gir National Park, and only on a jeep safari

Just 150 km away from Ahmedabad in the Little Rann of Kutch lies the Wild Ass Sanctuary. This UNESCO-acclaimed site is also the



protected habitat of the last remaining population of the Indian Wild Ass, a critically endangered species. It's also the world's last population of the khur sub-species of the wild ass. One of the fastest Indian mammals, it can reach speeds of 70-80 kmph and even outrun a jeep!

Also, a popular birding site, the sanctuary is home to over 350 different species of birds, including the common crane, pelican and the lesser flamingo. On a visit here you will enjoy some unique experiences intermingling with some of the ethnic groups and local tribes who have made the unique region of the Rann their home. Discover the charms and cultural richness of the Kolis, Rabaris, Bajanias, Kutchis, Gujjars and the Bhavads who live here.

GAHIRMATHA MARINE SANCTUARY

The state of Odisha offers many thrilling experiences for the eco-friendly tourist. One of the most unique encounters one may enjoy here is a boat ride to the nesting and breeding site of the unique Olive Ridley turtles. The Dangamal Conservation Project at the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary offers a window to the unique world of the saltwater crocodile.



Located in Kendrapara district in the state of Odisha, the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary has been playing a critical role in the conservation of the endangered Olive Ridley Turtle. Spread across 672 sq km, Gahirmatha is one of the world's most important and largest nesting and breeding sites for the Olive Ri-

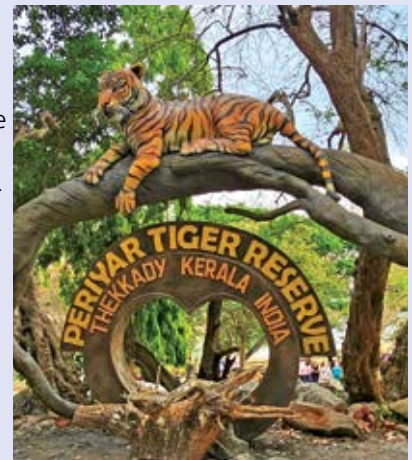
dleys. Olive Ridelys travel for thousands of nautical miles across the Bay of Bengal to arrive at the seaboard of the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary, the entry point to the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.

Strict vigilance by the forest department has ensured the protection of this site by monitoring the number of tourists who are permitted to travel by boat to witness this unique phenomenon. Visitors also get to travel through these waterways located in this estuarine deltaic region, which is served by the confluence of three rivers — the Brahmani, Baitarani and Dhamra. The site is famed for its amazing mangrove habitat which itself is rich in a unique range of marine life. A wonderful bonus for the eco-friendly traveller indeed!

Another bonus is the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary itself which is the subcontinent's biggest sanctuary space for the endangered saltwater crocodile.

PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE

Located in the lush and verdant environs of the Western Ghats, Periyar Tiger Reserve is one of the country's oldest protected habitats. On offer are several eco-tourism activities at the game park— wonderful treks, boating, a Night Patrol trek with the forest guards and, for the more fit, the Tiger Trail Trek Package— which includes camping in the forest for a night or two with armed guards. Also known as Thekkady the game park was declared both a Tiger Reserve and National Park by 1982.



By availing any of these community-based ecotourism programmes you will be directly helping in the empowerment of forest dependent communities which will in turn reduce their forest dependence and help in the conservation of the park and the tigers. You will also, thus be contributing in your personal way towards the conservation of Periyar Tiger Reserve.

Donate and promote these conservation efforts and initiatives

- To restore and save the habitat and Ecosystem and thereby protect the endangered wildlife
- To strengthen and disseminate conservation education awareness to a broader community
- To promote wildlife conservation-oriented research projects and to strengthen facilities for protection
- To support the livelihood of Forest Dependent Communities
- All donations are audited and accounted as part of the annual budgeting and will be put through in the annual reports and hence foolproof transparency shall be kept.



HEMIS NATIONAL PARK

If you are travelling to Ladakh, do plan a visit to the beautiful Hemis National Park renowned for its exceptional conservation programme for saving the endangered snow leopard. What makes your visit even more meaningful, as well as the local people, is staying at one of the homestays, which is an intrinsic part of helping support the local economy. This initiative has been designed to use tourism as a conservation tool for the preservation of snow leopards and their ecosystem. Himalayan Homestays champion tourism with a difference, proposing village-based experiences that uphold and share traditional ways of life in the high Himalayas. Established in picturesque villages across Ladakh and Zaskar, these homestays give you the opportunity to immerse yourself in an authentic, eco-friendly and socially responsible manner.

Only 5000-7000 snow leopards are left in the wild! You can help save the snow leopards by donating to specific projects. Your donation helps fund Snow Leopard Research and Conservation Projects. With your help, the work will continue to improve the livelihoods of people who share their mountain habitat with these magnificent cats.

MAWLYNNONG VILLAGE

Located in the misty highlands of Meghalaya, Mawlynnong Village in the East Khasi Hills has gained world fame as a prime example of how cleanliness is next to godliness. UNESCO has acclaimed Mawlynnong as Asia's cleanest village. The village is also renowned for its astounding living



root bridges. The Nohwet Living Root Bridge was formed by weaving the roots of the Ficus Elastica tree around a bamboo framework. The upkeep of this tradition has been a much-venerated activity with the local community down the ages. For the unaware living root bridges are an essential component of traditional Khasi traditional architecture as the village communities relied extensively upon them to navigate the steep valleys and mountains. There are several homestays in the village which serve as a base for exploring local culture and the gorgeous surrounds. Mawlynnong also enjoys 90% literacy and a local community that has a good understanding of how a high civic sense can promote cleanliness and keep you healthy.



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The United Nations and World Tourism Organisation saw fit to declare the year 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism. Ecotourism serves as a critical tool and springboard for the conservation of nature and sustainable development. Sustainable development of tourism is also critical for accruing benefits for the local community, socially, economically, and ecologically.

The Indian government has set in place rigorous guidelines to serve this cause, and the growing championing of responsible tourism is closely intertwined with the foreseeable future of this critical component of the tourism landscape.

As identified by the World Economic Forum: “leading hospitality players have embraced the environmental, social and governance (ESG) model and are committed to reducing their carbon footprint. They are also working toward reducing the impact of their buildings by retrofitting old ones and imposing stricter environmental rules on developers, architects, designers and engineers, using certifications such as LEED or BREEAM.

For almost 20 years, these companies have given guidance and regulations to their assets to develop a more sustainable approach to their operations, from renewable energy, energy efficiency and water conservation, to local employment and supporting cultural heritage. They have developed their own corporate responsibility measurement platforms and most hotel management companies have set up science-based targets (SBTi) for 2030.”

Holidaymakers are increasingly making informed choices to spend their leisure time in a more meaningful Earth-friendly way. There is a growing understanding of the need to conduct oneself in a responsible manner while travelling through ecologically-sensitive areas. Leading by example one can show others, not so like-minded, how to sensitize themselves to the importance and need for conservation of flora and fauna. It also means respecting the local community and its rootedness in preserving the natural environs around their village settlements.

You too can contribute in some small way with the knowledge that responsible tourism practices can drive the process of conservation to reduce ecological threats such as protecting wildlife and the forest. ■

India has a significant geographical advantage owing to its rich natural & Eco-tourism resources: • 70 percent of the Himalayas • 7,000 km of coastline • Among the one of the three countries in the world with both hot and cold deserts • Ranks 10th in total area under forest cover • Ranks 6th in terms of the number of recognized UNESCO Natural Heritage sites.

Source: Government of India, Ministry of Tourism

Top ten tips for eco-tourists

1. Visit destinations which have conservation value, such as protected areas, World Heritage sites or areas where nature and culture is a key attraction. Include in your trip visits and activities related to conservation projects. Or take this a step further and plan a “doing” holiday! Many organizations plan expeditions where you can spend time working on a local conservation project.
2. Travel light: limit the packaging you bring with you. This will become waste in your holiday destination.
3. Before you travel, learn as much as possible about your destination, about the natural assets, the local people and their culture and any environmental concerns (for example if there is a drought, if forest fires are a major threat ..). This should help to make your journey more enjoyable!
4. Use reputable local tour operators, preferably those who contribute to conservation themselves. Aim to follow any local codes, for example regarding behaviour or dress if visiting cultural or sacred natural sites.
5. Pick nature-friendly accommodation: ask hotels if they are truly eco, for example do they have an environmental policy? Have they implemented energy and water saving measures? Do they contribute to local conservation efforts and support local communities?
6. If you can, try to get to your destination by train or coach – you’ll see more of the country you’re travelling in as well as reducing your carbon emissions.
7. When you’re on holiday, choose wisely what you put on your plate. Choose locally sourced produce that’s in season and be aware that certain Endangered species may be on the menu without your knowledge - ask local conservation organizations for a list of what to look out for.
8. Many wild plants and animals are in great danger ... you can contribute to protecting them by avoiding buying souvenirs made from Endangered species (jewellery made from red coral and turtle carapace, shatoosh and many others). Be careful if you’re bringing plants or seeds back from your travels – check that they couldn’t become invasive species.
9. Wildlife watching can be an incredible experience... but don’t disturb wildlife, for your own safety and theirs!
10. Maintain a relationship with your new friends in the destination, become a member of local conservation organizations.

SOURCE: IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)



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Washroom *Hygiene on the Go*

By Ranees Sahaney

Going on a holiday is a joyful event for us. But there are wrinkles along the way that can be really upsetting—more so for women and girls. And that comes in the form of a safe and hygienic toilet, be it on a train, a plane, a mall or a shop where there’s a lot of public movement. Unclean and unhygienic public washrooms are not only off-putting but also a health hazard—and a breeding ground for UTIs and the like.

Were you aware that ‘Safe Toilets for all by 2030’ is one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal No. 6? The fact that safe toilets have made it to this list speaks volumes about addressing this basic human need worldwide. The issue of inadequate toiletry habits affects us all in various ways. Additionally, effective solutions must be developed in different environments and situations to mitigate this threat.

WORLD TOILET DAY 2024

World Toilet Day, celebrated annually on November 19, worldwide seeks to put the spotlight on the need for more investment and better governance of sanitation to create a fairer, more peaceful world.

Every year, UN-Water — the UN’s coordination mechanism on water and sanitation — sets the theme for World Toilet Day. In 2024, the theme is ‘Sanitation for peace’.

Safely managed sanitation is a basic human right. Were you aware that 3.5 billion people still live without safely managed sanitation, including 419 million who practise open defecation. 2 billion people still lack basic hygiene services, including 653 million with no facility at all (WHO/UNICEF, 2023).



Speedier ways need to be found to improve and protect people’s access to sanitation. It is critical to building a fairer, more peaceful world.

Toilets protect our health and safety. When toilet systems don’t work – or don’t exist – untreated human waste spreads into the environment, unleashing deadly diseases such as cholera.

Decent toilet arrangements help protect everyone’s dignity, more so, to transform the lives of that vulnerable sector of society— women and girls.

TRAVEL PEACEFULLY —TRAVEL SECURE

Here are some tips that address hygiene issues while travelling

Disposable Underwear

Avoid wearing tightly fitted trousers during long road trips. Choose loose, flowing garments for more comfort.— don’t forget for many



Flush and get out fast

Air-borne germs and bacteria can fly great distances during flushing. Close the lid before flushing!

Wet wipes

Also useful for wiping down the toilet seat, holding the toilet doorknobs/ taps/the flush etc.; after using the toilet roll.

Don't have wet wipes? Squirt hand sanitiser on toilet paper/tissue and it'll do the job!



Ditch the hand dryer

Another germ spreader. Opt to use tissue paper instead.

Menstrual Matters on the Road

An intimate part of a woman's monthly personal hygiene, periods can be such a hassle for many; especially when it comes to being on the road, away from the safety, comfort and clean environs of your restroom at home at that time of the month.

The answer is to stock up on period panties, panty liners, reusable pads, tampons, cups —a leak-free solution which can be worn for longer hours.

Drink lots of water to remain hydrated, wear loose pants, pack painkillers, and ensure you have enough sanitary products to last the journey.

Handy Menstrual Travel Kit

Stock up on essentials:

- Intimate wipes
- Sanitary pads
- Disposable bags
- Painkillers
- Hand sanitizer

Travel Secure, Travel Happy ! ■

the journey itself is the destination!

Take an extra change of Tee's etc, along with undies, to wear. Disposable underwear is also available in the market

To pee or not to pee

Holding back from answering the call of nature for prolonged periods to avoid an unhygienic washroom experience is a complete 'No, No!' Did you know that doing that opens you to the hazard of getting Urinary Tract Infections and kidney stones! Travel with a Pee Safe Toilet Seat Sanitizer Spray, to Sanitize any public toilet seat, in seconds!

Portable jet spray

If you aren't a toilet paper fan you can pick up a portable jet spray to maintain your hygiene and feel clean. Toilet papers can sure feel scratchy, and make you feel like you haven't cleaned up really well. Portable Jet Spray, which is practically a bidet you can take on your travels really comes in handy during long commutes, road trips, and international travel. Pee Safe Portable Jet Spray has 2 speed variants, making you sure that you clean really thoroughly!



PET-FRIENDLY VACATION TIME

By Dr. S.K. Pandey

While vacations can be exciting for you it can be very taxing for your furry companion. Both ways – whether you travel with your pet or leave him behind. It’s important to understand about the Do’s & Don’t that you need to follow to make your pet comfortable in either situation.

Planning a vacation with your Pet

Most pets do not like to be out of their safe and cozy home environment or, for that matter, even break their daily routine. So, here are a few pointers for how you can enjoy a holiday accompanied by your pet.

Enjoying the journey

Start training your pets for road trips in their early life to condition them to not get car sick, nervous or anxious. This can be done by taking them on small joy rides with you occasionally. Doing this gets pets accustomed to being in a vehicle and associating the ride with fun and companionship with a loved master/mistress.

If you are planning a long trip with your pets the arrangements need to also cater to their comfort rather than just yours alone.

Your pet should recognize his car and get familiar with his designated place in the car on the journey. Give him the right and comfortable place to sit, although he may wish to explore other seating places during the journey—after all he’s not a windup toy.

Needless to say, the vehicle should be comfortable with enough space for your pet. Avoid jerks as much as possible during the road journey; think you are travelling with a baby and how it could get hurt.

How long do you plan on driving at a stretch?

Make it short — may be 3-4 hours at a go. Get out of the vehicle with your pet. Ensure there are no strays around when you take a break otherwise it can be counterproductive. Also ensure that the place is not too crowded to avoid creating any stress for your pet.

Take time to stretch your legs, let him also walk around a bit and ease himself, before continuing your journey. A small treat during the break and a drink of water should ease any residue anxiety.

Preparations before travel

Make sure to stock up on pet food, at least two sets of leash and collar, feeding and water bowls, clothes and bedding as the season demands. Wipes and small towels for any minor accidents on the car seats are handy as well.

Don’t forget to carry first aid medicines as advised by your vet.

It’s a good idea to take along some of your



pet's favourite toys to keep him out of mischief.

Some tasty treats will be useful.

Give a light dose of anti-vomit medicine an hour before travel to avoid motion sickness. Give it very light food before you take off. Take your pet on a small walk before getting him into the vehicle to work off his energy so he can settle down. Offer water along the journey often to prevent dehydration.

Planning a stay

When planning your accommodations for your holiday it makes sense to choose a pet-friendly hotel or homestay. It should have enough open space where your pet can enjoy himself as well. A small private open area outside your cottage would be wonderful. It's lovely to have hotel staff who are at ease with pets.

Avoid letting your pet mingle with other dogs to prevent accidents and infection. Be alert for monkeys if they are around. They carry rabies.

Don't leave your pet alone when you go out as it can be very stressful.

Rather than a walled in restaurant opt for an outdoor space for a meal so that your pet is comfortable.

Leaving your pet behind while you travel

It's the worst thing your pets would like but life has compulsions and you cannot always travel with them. Make sure your pet is comfortable while you are away, even though he's bound to pine for you till your return.

Try to accommodate the pet in his familiar place. As far as possible try to keep him either at home with an attendant or with a relative/friend known to him.

Keep the pet's feeding and water bowl, toys, clothing etc. with him while you are away.



Ensure that whoever is taking care of him follows the routine feeding pattern, food type and walks. Let your pet visit his familiar spots while on a walk.

Someone should always be around the pet; do not leave it unattended to keep him calm.

Choosing a boarding

It's not feasible every time to keep the pet at your friend's place when you are away, making it necessary to opt for the right boarding facility.

The pet should be accustomed to boarding from an early age once he becomes an adult. It's preferable to keep him, if possible, at the same boarding facility each time. Start boarding your

pet with a short time duration (1-2 days) and gradually increase it to more days. With this practice he will have soaked in the feeling that he will not be abandoned and his parents will come back.

Keep all his toys and utensils with him to get a homey feel.

Feed the same food that he is familiar with. Some delicacies may be added to pamper him.

Ensure that boarding follows strict hygiene and comfort conditions required for pets.

Your pet should not be housed with unvaccinated, sick and aggressive dogs.

There should be a proper play area in the boarding facility.

The boarding staff should be friendly and walk and play routine should be followed. ■

The above information is provided from the desk of Doggy World Ventures Pvt. Ltd. For any further information you can contact at doggyworlddelhi@gmail.com or call at 9811299059/9310445969.

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Destination Weddings *Fairytale-Style*



By Ranee Sahaney

Dream weddings are all about getting everything perfectly in place for that “Great Day”—a landmark signpost in the odyssey of your life. From courting to joining hands in holy matrimony around the sacred fire at the mandap, it’s an amazing journey in itself.

Be it an arranged marriage or the culmination of a long romance, we all want that perfect wedding to capture in our memory bank.

Lyrical romantic notions keep our spirits high, enveloping all our loved ones in a cloud of shared happiness. Expectations go into frenzy mode as each detail of the wedding arrangements comes under a microscope. Friends and family are roped in to handle all the minutiae, while the happy couple wander around in a daze of dizzy delight awaiting that joyful day.

For billionaires to just ordinary folk—Rajasthan is a much-favoured destination for their wedding celebrations, regardless of their budget. The

‘land of kings’ offers a fantastic array of geographic settings for this life-changing event for the bridal couple.

From rural forts, to lakeside luxury resorts, from fairytale palaces to elegant havelis, they not only hold the promise of unique experiences but also provide greater privacy and security.

Making things easier for all involved, a slew of destination hotels across Rajasthan have scripted a wonderful narrative for this grand occasion. From its enduring allure as one of the most romantic spots on earth the Indian



state of Rajasthan has been quietly honing its skills to take care of even the smallest detail for not only a wedding but all the other ceremonies and events associated with it.

Micromanagement is the key to a seamless wedding arrangement. From setting up a wedding procession led by caparisoned horses, camels, and a groom arriving on an elephant, to gourmet cuisine, and venues for the Haldi, Mehendi, and Sangeet ceremonies— it's par for the course. Pandits or priests, the decor, mehendiwallahs, makeup artists, and



hairdressers, DJs and bands, fireworks, even gifting — not even the smallest detail is left to chance, even in the most remote wedding venue.

The cost of the wedding is determined by the choice of the venue, ceremony type, thematic event, catering, decor, entertainment, and guest list. There are even package deals on offer.

Here's a quick reckoner for some of the finest settings for a destination

wedding in the erstwhile royal state of ancient Rajputana.

Udaipur

This royal city of fairytale palaces and tranquil lakes is regarded as one of the world's most romantic spots for a lavish wedding setting. Oftentimes as not known as the 'Venice of the East', Udaipur is home to the fabled pristine white water palace which has hosted numerous weddings and associated ceremonies down the decades. The Lake Palace, run as a super luxury resort by the Taj group is one the city's most iconic spots. It was actually built on Lake Pichola by a rebel prince as his private romantic getaway, to escape the displeasure of his father because of his hedonistic way. Even today the only way to get to the water palace is by boat.

Udaipur has a cluster of beautiful hotels and elegant palaces and havelis where the bridal couple can enjoy a fantastic experience of this special time in their lives. Udaipur serves as an excellent option to Jaipur, which also gets booked by tour groups in the winters, which coin-

From rural forts, to lakeside luxury resorts, from fairytale palaces to elegant havelis, they not only hold the promise of unique experiences but also provide greater privacy and security

cide with the wedding season.

Some other attractive wedding venues: Shiv Niwas Palace, Oberoi Udaivilas Hotel, The Leela Palace Udaipur, Udai Kothi, Amet Haveli, Deogarh Mahal Near Udaipur

Jaipur

The erstwhile capital of the Jaipur royals this is Rajasthan's leading tourist destination. It's also a hugely popular wedding destination. Hosting a wedding here also means guests can delve into many other aspects of the Pink City, apart from enjoying themselves in the wedding ceremonies.



Shopping, eating out and making quick forays to Amer and the Jhalana Leopard Sanctuary are amongst its many allurements.

Some attractive wedding venues: Ram Bagh Palace, Jai Mahal Palace, Chomu Palace Hotel, Samode Bagh, ITC Rajputana, Alila Fort

Jodhpur

The desert outpost of Jodhpur served as the ancient bastion of the Marwar kings. One of the most attractive venues for a wedding here is the Umaid Bhavan Palace Hotel. Built as a work-in-progress by the maharajah to give



employment and some relief to his harried subjects during a terrible famine, it is one of the world's largest living residences. One wing of the palace is run as a super luxury hotel by the Taj group. The other wing is the private residence of Maharaja Gaj Singh II and his family. There are parts of this beautiful hotel which you can explore, which includes a nice little private museum in the complex.

Jodhpur city is noted for its fabled Mehrangarh Fort. Guests can enjoy shopping, city sightseeing, ziplining and thrilling explorations of the sand dunes



on camel safaris.

Some great wedding venues: Umaid Bhawan Palace, Khimsar Fort and Dunes, Mihir Garh

Jaisalmer

This historic city, known for its fabled ‘Sona Kila’, or Golden Fort, is getting a lot of attention as a new wedding destination. It’s becoming a city of choice for bridal couples looking for an alternative to Jaipur and Udaipur to host the various ceremonies and events lined up around the wedding. Joining the ranks of A-list wedding destination options,

You can let your imagination run wild planning a memorable “Desert Wedding” with bells and all! This medieval bastion of the Bhati rulers has a host of exciting places to hold various events

Jaisalmer is quite unique in that its proximity to the Thar Desert offers another charming twist to this grand affair.

You can let your imagination run wild planning a memorable “Desert Wedding” with bells and all! This medieval bastion of the Bhati rulers has a host of exciting places to hold various events— think palaces and havelis, ancient stepwells and gardens or even lavish pavilions set up under the stars on the desert sands on cool nights

Some alluring wedding venues: Thar Haveli, Suryagarh, Fort Rajwada, Gorbandh Palace ■

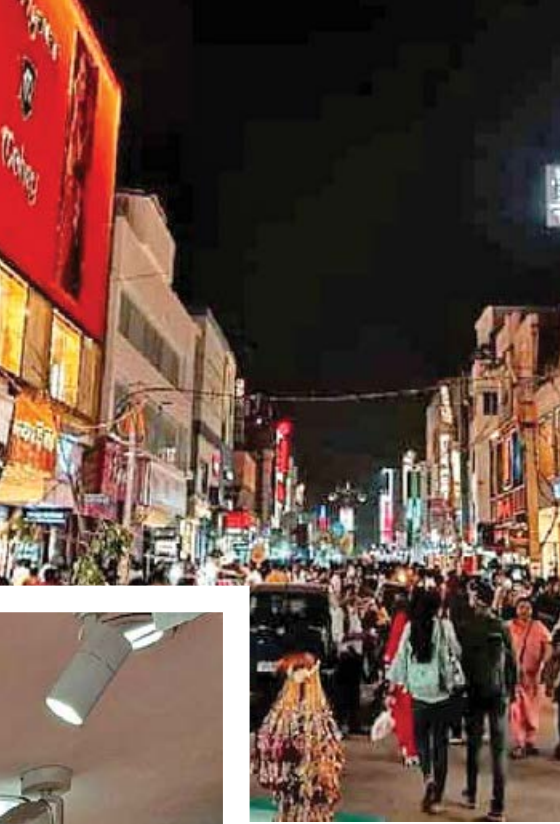


Wedding Shopping Sprees in Delhi

By Ranees Sahaney

The line up of things to do for a wedding has everyone in the family in a tizzy...be it for the bride or the groom. While Delhi has long been a haven for trousseau shopping, for every conceivable need, it's always nice to have a handy guide to save us racking our already scrambled brains for the best places to source things. Why it's also helpful is that so many new places and shops have cropped up on this landscape, having a ready reckoner is a godsend to help us navigate our way...





Here goes...

CHANDNI CHOWK

You can't go wrong here because this historic traditional market is totally geared for all the hype of the wedding season. From lehengas to latkans to sherwanis, from pashmina shawls to turbans, from jewellery to wedding bangles it has it all.

You can also source wedding card printers and flowers sellers who can decorate everything from the mandap to the wedding buggy..

Gift boxes of mithai for the wedding can be picked up from the famous Chaina Ram Sindhi Halwai, and dry fruits from the nearby spice market Khari Baoli.

Revive yourself with the famous street food, be it hot jalebis from the Old Famous Jalebiwallah at Dariba, dahi bhalla from Natraj near Central Bank of India, or bedmi puri aloo from Shyam Sweets, and kulfi from Giani.

Best stores to explore: Om Prakash Jawahar Lal; Tek Chand Arjit Goel; Sudhir Bhai Saree Wale; Asiana Couture; Kamal Bhai Saree Sangam; Shrangar; Payal Keyal; Sunehree; Padmavati Jewellers; Panna Lal Roshan Lal Jewellers; Shri Balaji Mansaram Jewellers; Sharma Flowers; Suneja Card Designs; Classic Wedding Designer Cards (Chawri Bazar); RK Cards (Chawri Bazar)



KAROL BAGH

Another city space that's a saviour for the exhausted shopper. The line-up of traditional sareewallahs, jewellers, fancy undies and nightwear stores around Ajmal Khan Road, Arya Samaj Road, Padam Singh Road and the lanes around them will save you plenty of time. It's also got some super home stores, perfect for choosing gifts for the bride and groom and their families.

For a lunch break head to Roshan di Kulfi for its legendary channa-bhatura and its kulfi

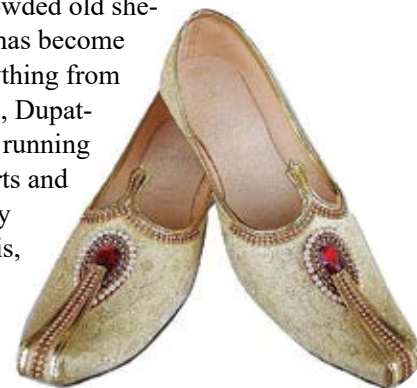
Some stores to explore: Anarkali; Meena Bazaar; Frontier Raas; Frontier Bazaar; Gujralsons (sherwanis); Diwan Saheb; Suneja Sons; Pindi Jewellers; Chottey Lal & Sons; Metro (shoes); Sethi Shoe Co.; Venus Steps; Srishti Khurana (wedding cards)

LAJPAT NAGAR BAZAAR

For South Delhiwallhas, reluctant to head out for the crowded old she-

har, Lajpat Nagar has become a godsend. It stocks everything from gorgeous sarees, lehengas, Dupattas, embroidered blouses, running fabric for women and shirts and suit lengths for men, fancy shoes, embellished mojaris, sherwanis and safas.

Your tailor can run up some beautiful outfits





from the wealth of fancy fabrics on sale here. You can pick up jewellery, both real or the costume variety.

There are mehendi wallahs and chura wallahs selling traditional kaleeras; mukuts for the groom are available on rent as are lavish artificial gold jewellery sets for the ladies.

Some good stores to explore: Om Sons Bridal Store; Laljees - A Complete Wedding Store; Wedding Bells - Rent An Attire; Shakuntalam – 1; Vineet's Sarees; Shri Ram And Sons; Ramjisons - The Fabric Shop - Shop No.1; Stelatoes Shoe

GREATER KAILASH I M-BLOCK MARKET

This is another popular South Delhi hub for wedding needs. Glamorous sarees and lehengas, brocade borders, nightwear, jewellery (both real and costume), foreign cosmetics, fancy tops and trousers, juttis.... At some shops you can drive a hard bargain if you are in the mood to.

Some good stores to explore: L'affaire, Meena Bazaar; Hazoorilal and Sons Jewellers Pvt. Ltd; Multani Jewellers; Beli Ram; Babu Churi Wala

HAUZ KHAS VILLAGE MARKET AND SHAHPURJAT

Awash with many trendy boutiques operated by leading designers both places are your go-to spots for stunning bridal outfits. Take your gold card with you!

Some good boutiques to explore: Ogaan; Bhumika Grover; Sahiba Singh

RAJOURI GARDEN

Locals in West Delhi love it that Rajouri is a paradise for wedding shopping, saving them time for forays further afield, for all the little things one forgot to buy, in the rush of things, for the wedding ceremonies and events. The market offers an array of lovely bridal wear, male attire and clothing to suit all budgets.

Some good stores to explore: Shakuntlam Xclusif; Roop Vatika by Raj Arora; Flyrobe; Shabad Originals; Wedding Bells-Rent an Attire; Tanishq Jewellery; Muskan Jewellery; Forever- The Shoe Bazar; A&S (footwear) ■



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
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BAKU AND GEORGIA

Shining Gems of Central Asia



By Anil Bansal

Recently, I had the privilege of exploring Baku, the vibrant capital of Azerbaijan, and I'm thrilled to share my insights with you.



The people of Azerbaijan are warm and welcoming, and their hospitality made me feel right at home. Baku, often referred to as the “City of Winds,” captivated me with its unique blend of ancient history and modern architecture. The iconic Flame Towers, a trio of skyscrapers adorned with mesmerizing fire-like patterns, instantly became a symbol of this dynamic city. As I wandered through the charming streets of the Old City, I was transported back in time, marvelling at the ancient walls, mosques, and the magnificent Maiden Tower.

Beyond its architectural wonders, Baku offers a diverse range of experiences for every traveller. For history buffs, the Heydar Aliyev Center, a masterpiece of

contemporary architecture, is a must-visit. Art enthusiasts will be delighted by the numerous art galleries and museums showcasing Azerbaijan’s rich cultural heritage. For those seeking more thrilling adventures, the nearby Caspian Sea and its surrounds has in store numerous opportunities for water sports and immersive explorations of its stunning coastal landscapes.

The cuisine is a delightful blend of Eastern and Western influences, with dishes like plov (a flavourful rice dish), dolma (stuffed grape leaves), and kutab (pancakes filled with herbs or meat) tantalizing my taste buds.

My trip to Baku has further strengthened my belief that travel has the power to broaden horizons, inspire creativity, and create lasting memories. I just can’t wait to go back and explore many other aspects of this fascinating country.

Often overshadowed by its neighbouring countries, Georgia emerges as a hidden gem, beckoning adventurers with the promise of unforgettable experiences that enrich the soul. With a rich tapestry of ancient history interwoven with vibrant culture, it offers an unpar-

alleled blend of sights, activities, and experiences that will leave any traveller spellbound and eager for more.

Our journey commenced in Tbilisi, Georgia’s enchanting capital city that exudes charm at every corner. As we wandered through the historic Old Town, we were instantly captivated by its narrow, winding cobblestone streets. Each turn revealed kaleidoscopic houses adorned with intricate wooden balconies that seemed to tell stories of the past.

The air was alive with the sounds of laughter and conversation as locals gathered in cafes, and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee mingled with that of sizzling street food. We explored bustling markets bursting with vibrant colours and shops filled with all manner of enticing wares.

Along the way we stopped to sample a variety of heavenly Georgian dishes, each bite more tantalizing than the last. The succulent khinkali, with its juicy filling and perfectly pleated dough, and the cheesy khachapuri, golden and gooey, truly represented the essence of Georgian cuisine while immersing us in the lively atmosphere that defines the city.



A thrilling cable car ride up to Narikala Fortress presented us with breathtaking panoramic vistas of Tbilisi. As we ascended, the view transformed dramatically beneath us—picturesque rooftops sprawled against the backdrop of lush, green hills, creating a stunning patchwork that was nothing short of magical. Standing atop the fortress, we felt the whispers of history echoing around us, a reminder of the city’s rich past and strategic importance.

Our next stop took us to the delightful town of Signaghi, often referred to as the “City of Love.” Nestled among rolling vineyards and dramatic mountain landscapes, Signaghi is an idyllic romantic escape. The air was filled with the sweet scent of ripe grapes, and we took leisurely strolls along its cobblestone streets, punctuated by quaint shops and charming guesthouses. We explored the ancient Alaverdi Monastery, a solemn contemplation of stone and faith, its sturdy walls echoing stories of centuries past as we marveled at the dedication of those who had lived here, a serene spiritual sanctuary cut off from the toil

and stress of the temporal world.

A thrilling highlight amongst these excursions was our visit was wine tasting at local wineries, where we indulged our senses in the rich and diverse flavours of Georgian wines. Each sip revealed the intricacies of the country’s storied viticulture, from velvety reds to crispy whites, allowing us to appreciate the craftsmanship behind each bottle.

No trip to Georgia would be complete without venturing into the magnificent Caucasus Mountains. Our adventure took us to the breathtaking Kazbegi region, where we embarked on a thrilling hike that tested our limits and filled our souls with awe. As we trekked through the lush valleys, towering snow-capped peaks loomed majestically above us, a reminder of nature’s grandeur and the serenity it offers. Crystal-clear alpine lakes sparkled like gems under the sun, inviting us to pause and take in their beauty. The highlight of this leg of our journey was the Gergeti Trinity Church, standing in solitary splendour high above the valley floor, a sacred sanctuary that felt as if it was touching the sky. From its

lofty heights we soaked up the dramatic panoramas of the unspoiled landscape reaching deep into the far horizon.

Through all our adventures, we were continually warmed by the genuine hospitality of the Georgian people. Each interaction, whether with a local shopkeeper offering us endless smiles or a family sharing their home-cooked meal, turned into a cherished memory. Their zest for life, the deep love for their homeland, and culinary prowess transformed every encounter into a heartfelt experience. Georgia is a destination that caters to every wanderer’s desires, whether you seek a deep dive into history, an exploration of rich culture, thrilling adventures, or tranquil moments of relaxation.

If you yearn for a travel experience steeped in authenticity and wonder, I wholeheartedly recommend uncovering the treasures of Georgia. With its unique blend of natural beauty, rich culture, and warm-hearted people, it’s a destination that promises to leave a lasting impression. ■

Anil Bansal, Managing Director at Holiday Desire

DALHOUSIE...

Through My Eyes

Author Dr Kiran Chadha shares her fascination about the hill town and its deep connection with her family roots

What inspired you to write a book specifically about Dalhousie? Was there a defining moment that led you to embark on this journey?

The sudden death of my loving husband H.R. Chadha (IPS) in January 2015 shattered me completely. However, my positive persona and complete faith in God Almighty, and destiny helped me recover to engage myself in some mental activity. So, the research for this book began in the summer of the same year, 2015.

I had also realized that while there are many books on Chamba, there is little to read about Dalhousie and its development since it was founded. Connected with this was the urge to delve into the history of my own family of Plahas. They had moved into Dalhousie in 1880, within 20 years of the founding of the hill station, and would live there for seven months a year.

I have spent two years in research talking to many old residents and many hours about my great fascination for Dalhousie.

Can you share a brief overview of the book and what readers can expect from Dalhousie...through my eyes?

Dalhousie... through my eyes is a slice of the pictorial history of almost two centuries. Spread over five hills, Dalhousie with tall pine trees, lush green meadows surrounded by snow-clad mountains in the mesmerizing Himalayas is my home town. After traversing the world, I have settled here. I have my roots here. I dwell here amongst its cool breezes, the torrential rains, the rainbow encircling





horizons, the mystical colours of the sunset vales— in all the familiar aspects of Dalhousie.

The book is a pictorial history of this magical hill town. The readers will get a glimpse of Dalhousie, its history and historical sites, some old British-style cottages, institutional marvels, the schools of eminence, the churches of the Raj era and the tourist spots to visit. The book contains information on the heritage hotels and the new ones as well. It has information on the famous personalities who came to Dalhousie to paint, write and recover in its salubrious surroundings.

The first edition was a coffee table version, but with the support of Author s Point and Raaj Verma we have published a smaller version for the discerning tourists.

Were there any lesser-known or surprising aspects of Dalhousie that you discovered while working on the book?

I had the privilege of access to Cantonment records, thanks to the fact that I belong to Dalhousie. So, the historical



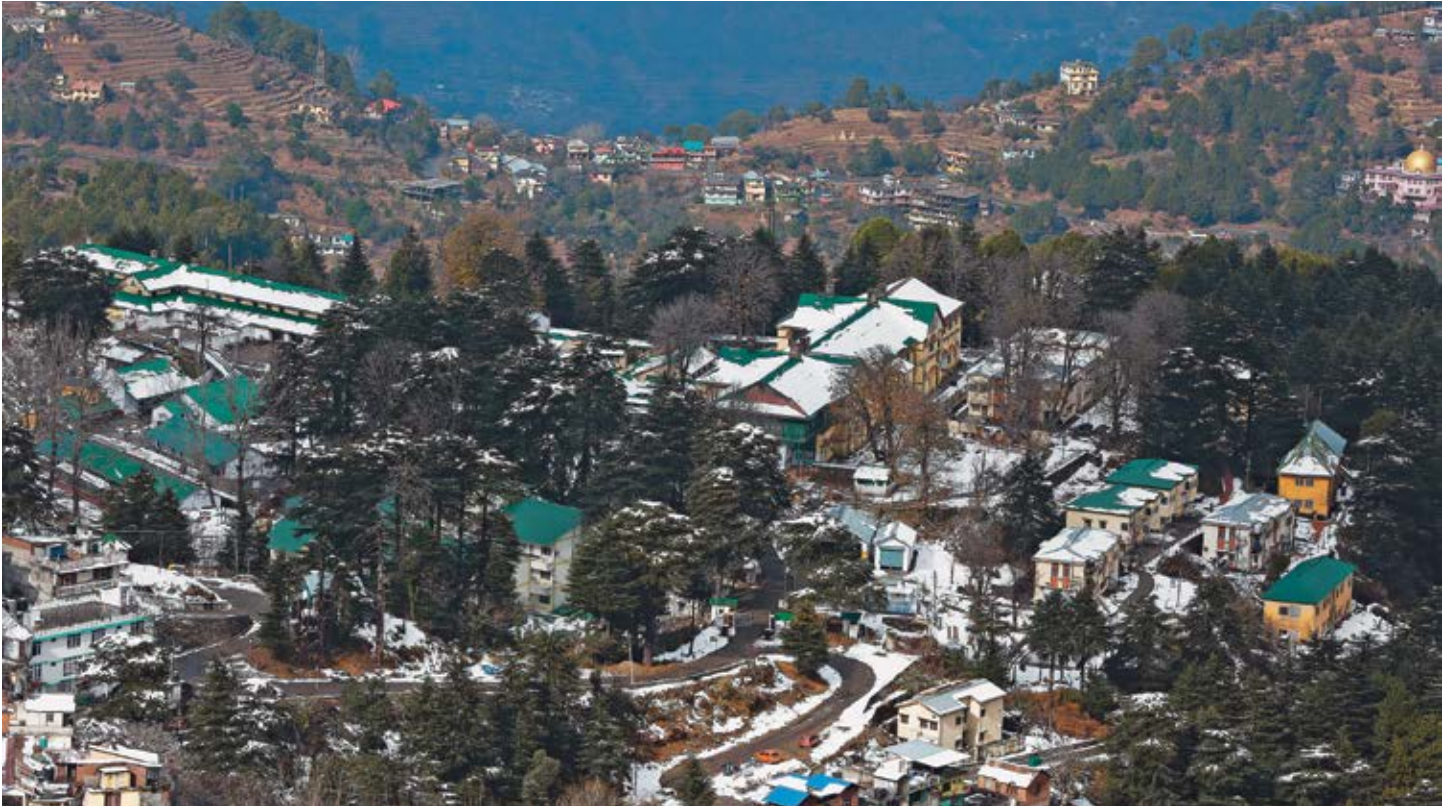
facts are facts, not fiction. The bungalows I have mentioned are laced with real anecdotes and the readers will be fascinated to read them.

It has also covered the aspect of Partition. India almost lost Dalhousie to Pakistan. Some incidents are straight from the horse's mouth!!!

Tell us more about your family's connection with Dalhousie. Do you have

any favourite memories or spots in the town that hold special meaning for you?

My forefathers were invited by the Britishers to set up a timber and bricks business. We have been there since 1880, just 20 years after the seven hills of Dalhousie were bought up by the Britishers from the Raja of Chamba. In fact, no auction was complete until my great-great grandfather Hiralal participated in it.



Personally, I love revisiting my ancestral village, Surkhigala, and my school and college - Sacred Heart.

Our own cottage built in Bakrota is a beautiful spot in the verdant hills of Dalhousie. The snow-capped mountains, the radiating warmth of the sun, the clear blue sky give me a hangover when I leave Dalhousie in winters. To look at the full moon from my window is sheer magic. And Dalhousie is where I write my poetry.

The title Dalhousie... through my eyes suggests a personal narrative. How much of the book is influenced by your own experiences compared to historical or cultural research?

Indeed, the entire book is a personal journey when I met the local people to find ways to improve Dalhousie. Research and history apart, the book is ridden with my own perspective of the hill station.

Dalhousie has a rich colonial history. How did you balance its historical as-

pects with the modern-day charm of the town in your book?

The rich colonial history is visible through the houses, schools, institutes and churches. Modern day construction is not able to keep up with its architectural past. However, the heritage properties, as well as the new hotels, are geared for all the comforts for the tourists.

I do wish more could be done to retain the charm of this mesmerising hill town. I refer to the water scarcity and garbage disposal in particular. Dalhousie could easily be developed as an adventure sports spot with gondola rides, hiking and a golf course.

What message or feeling do you hope readers will take away after reading Dalhousie...through my eyes?

Well, I know and hope many more people will buy the book to learn about the heritage and history of this quaint hill town. I hope the administration will look into the points raised in the book.

If you had to describe Dalhousie in three words, what would they be and why?

1. Lush green Dalhousie
2. Heritage and history
3. Pollution-free

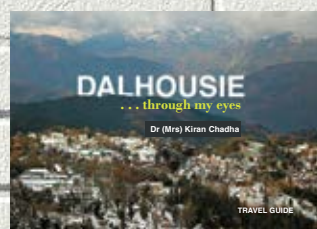
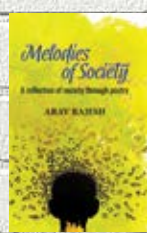
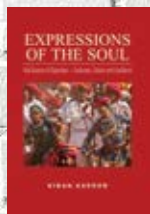
What advice would you give to aspiring writers looking to explore travel writing or memoirs of specific places?

History of any town may be explored by those who have a feel of the place and a personal angle. Writers must meet the locals to delve into the folklore, music, food and flavour of the town or city. Historical buildings too. Research must start from its founding to how it looks now. Suggestions to improve is also a requisite. Some stories of interest and good quality of photos will add to the value of any book. ■

Dr Kiran Chadha is the author of the book "Dalhousie ... through my eyes and has also authored 3 more books Echoes of the heart Dil Se..., Magic of Indian Weddings(Rupa), Ehsaas...Dil Se(Author's Point)

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Sustain your routine to be fit as a fiddle on your trek

By Dr. Subodh Mor

Backpacked for your next trek? Here are a few things to keep in mind to have a stress-free adventure.

Strength and Stamina, Flexibility, Stretching and Breathing are the four pillars of a stress-free hike. Trekking grades hinge on components such as length, duration, altitude, type of trail, the gradient, and average hours of trekking on a single day.

Strength and Stamina

Legs, core and shoulders are the main body parts which require the most attention when you start building up your strength and stamina for a trek.

Your pre-trek prep should also include meditation/or any mindfulness practices to help calm your mind and ramp up your mental strength.

Being physically fit and mentally alert, by building leg strength (think--thighs, glutes and knees), stepping up one's cardiovascular endurance, and strengthening your core (with planks and hip raises), is something even the most prolific trekker is adept at, to enjoy a comfortable and good trekking/hiking experience.

Flexibility

Flexibility refers to enjoying unrestricted movement of muscles and joints. It plays an important role while travelling and hiking as it helps to face challenging terrains with confidence and reduces the risk of injuries. It also provides better coordination and the correct posture which helps facilitate climbing for



longer periods with less strain on the muscles and joints.

Focus on flexibility and breathing to make your steps along the trail much smoother and less laborious. The advantages of flexibility include improved performance in physical activities, helping joints in full range of motion, reduction in risk of injury, increased flow of blood and ease of carrying out day to day activities.

Stretching

Did you know stretching before and after trekking is important? Stretching is essential for improving flexibility and mobility of the joints. Stretching before and after hiking can prevent muscle fatigue, soreness and tension. Stretching reduces muscle stiffness. These stretching exercises can be easily done at home.

Before beginning stretching, the body must be warmed up. The best stretching exercises include knees to chest stretch, hamstring floor stretch, spinal stretch, piriformis stretch and seated hip stretch.

Breathing

Similarly, breathing is also an essential component of trekking and hiking. Practicing deep breathing as part of your daily routine improves your ability to cope with stress, anxiety and muscle tension.

Breathing helps to maintain one's pace and increases stamina while walking on varied terrains. It also helps in improving one's endurance to walk longer on the trail.

Staying Ahead

Even the most experienced trekkers go into the groove at least a month ahead before hitting the trail for a trekking adventure.

The key to trek training is all about discovering your own pace as a stepping stone to ramping up your fitness and strength from there.

And when you walk, while body strength training, do it with a backpack to get the feel of the real thing! The other important thing to keep in mind is to choose a grade of trek according to your current level of fitness— to really enjoy your adventure. ■

*Dr. Subodh Mor, Ph.D Sports
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VIDESHI STUDIO: *Bespoke Elegance for the Modern Gentleman*

In a world dominated by off-the-rack options and fast fashion, Videshi Studio by Abhishek Gandhi stands out as a game-changer in bespoke tailoring. The brand's core belief is to offer the best quality, ensure customer satisfaction, and, most importantly, define a unique style statement with every custom piece.

As the saying goes, 'the difference between fashion and style is quality,' Videshi Studio exemplifies this ethos through its premium range of bespoke creations.

Whether you need a sleek tuxedo for a formal event, a stylish sherwani for a traditional occasion, or a refined casual look, Videshi Studio meets all your designer wear needs.

A Legacy of Tailoring Excellence

The foundation of Videshi Studio lies in the inspiring journey of Mr. Sunil Gandhi, who built Gandhi Selections, a textile business in Delhi, with sheer determination and an unwavering commitment to quality. With over 50 years of experience in bespoke tailoring, Sunil's craftsmanship and values became the guiding principles for his son, Mr. Abhishek Gandhi.

Growing up surrounded by fine fabrics and precision tailoring, Abhishek was immersed in the art from a young age. Inspired by his father's dedication and passion, he pursued formal training in fashion marketing and retail management, blending traditional expertise with modern design sensibilities. This unique combination led to the launch of Videshi Studio in 2018.



Why Videshi Studio?

- 50+ Years of Expertise: Decades of experience in bespoke tailoring ensure unmatched craftsmanship and precision.
- One-Stop Shop: From wedding wear to formal suits, Videshi Studio caters to all men's designer needs.
- Celebrity-Endorsed Designs: Trusted by celebrities for unique, high-quality creations.
- Custom Suits in 24 Hours: A perfect blend of traditional tailoring and modern efficiency.
- Affordable Luxury: Offering a wide range of luxury designs at accessible price points.
- Premium & Italian Fabrics: Only the finest, including premium Italian suiting materials, are used in every creation.

Videshi Studio quickly distinguished itself in the world of premium menswear by blending traditional tailoring techniques with contemporary design. Specializing in both Western and ethnic menswear, including impeccably tailored suits, tuxedos, sherwanis, and kurta-pyjamas, the studio delivers precision and style with every garment.

At Videshi Studio, each piece is more than just clothing; it's an experience. The team is dedicated to making every client feel seen, heard, and celebrated, ensuring their personal style is reflected with every custom creation. With a focus on comfort, elegance, and timelessness, Videshi Studio enables men to wear their stories with pride.



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