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Serendipity in Making

INDIA'S
ICONIC
PLACES
TO ADMIRE
THE

FULL

moon



Healing Journeys, Conscious Choices & Timeless Stories

Dear Readers,

As the monsoon breathes new life into our landscapes, the July issue of Tourism One invites you to explore journeys that go beyond sightseeing—towards healing, heritage, and harmony.

We begin with nature's very own spa—natural hot springs and geysers spread across India. These steaming wonders are not just marvels to behold, but also therapeutic retreats believed to cleanse skin and soothe the soul. We guide you to places where Earth herself offers rejuvenation.

In recognition of Plastic Bag Free Day, we present a thoughtfully curated list of eco-friendly alternatives for our ever-growing tribe of conscious travellers. Sustainability is not a trend—it's a responsibility, and your travel bag can lead the change.

This issue also celebrates International Moon Day by listing scenic destinations across India, where moonrise is a magical event.

We are honoured to feature an exclusive interview with Abhay Kumar, the celebrated diplomat-poet whose words have travelled across borders and hearts alike. His reflections on art, history, diplomacy, and travel will leave you inspired.

Also in this issue: discover top Indian travel podcasts, explore handy audio travel guides, and journey through the architectural brilliance of the Pandya dynasty in Tamil Nadu.

And of course, no Indian journey is complete without flavours. Our recipe section serves up seasonal favourites like Dalwada and Drumstick Soup.

Here's to soulful travels and mindful moments.

Read on!



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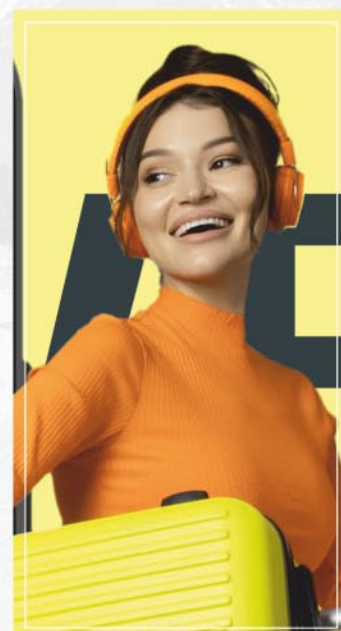
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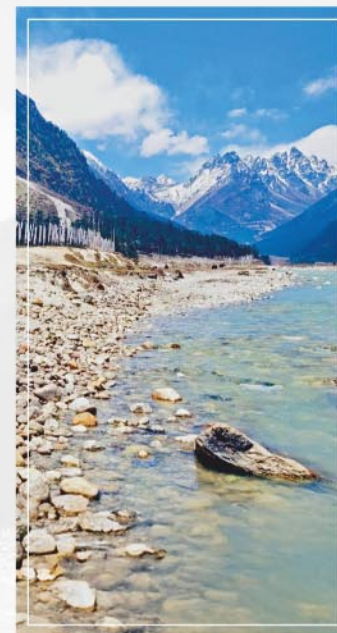
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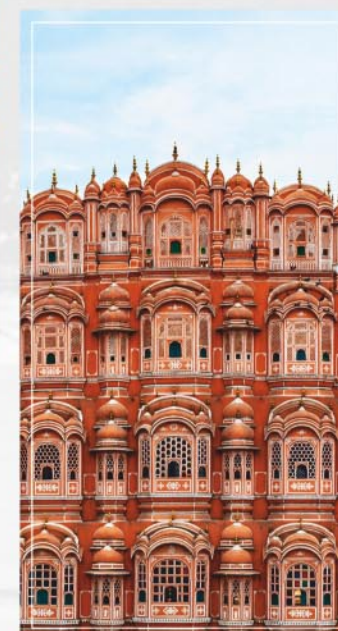
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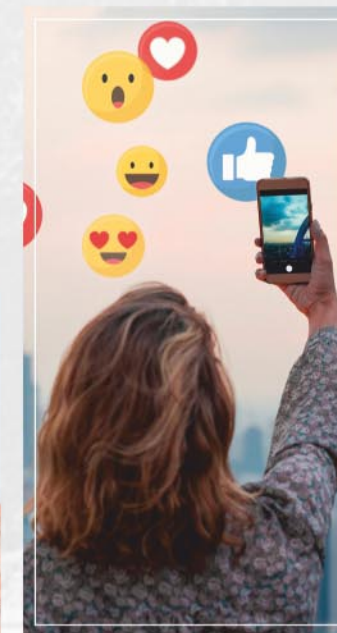
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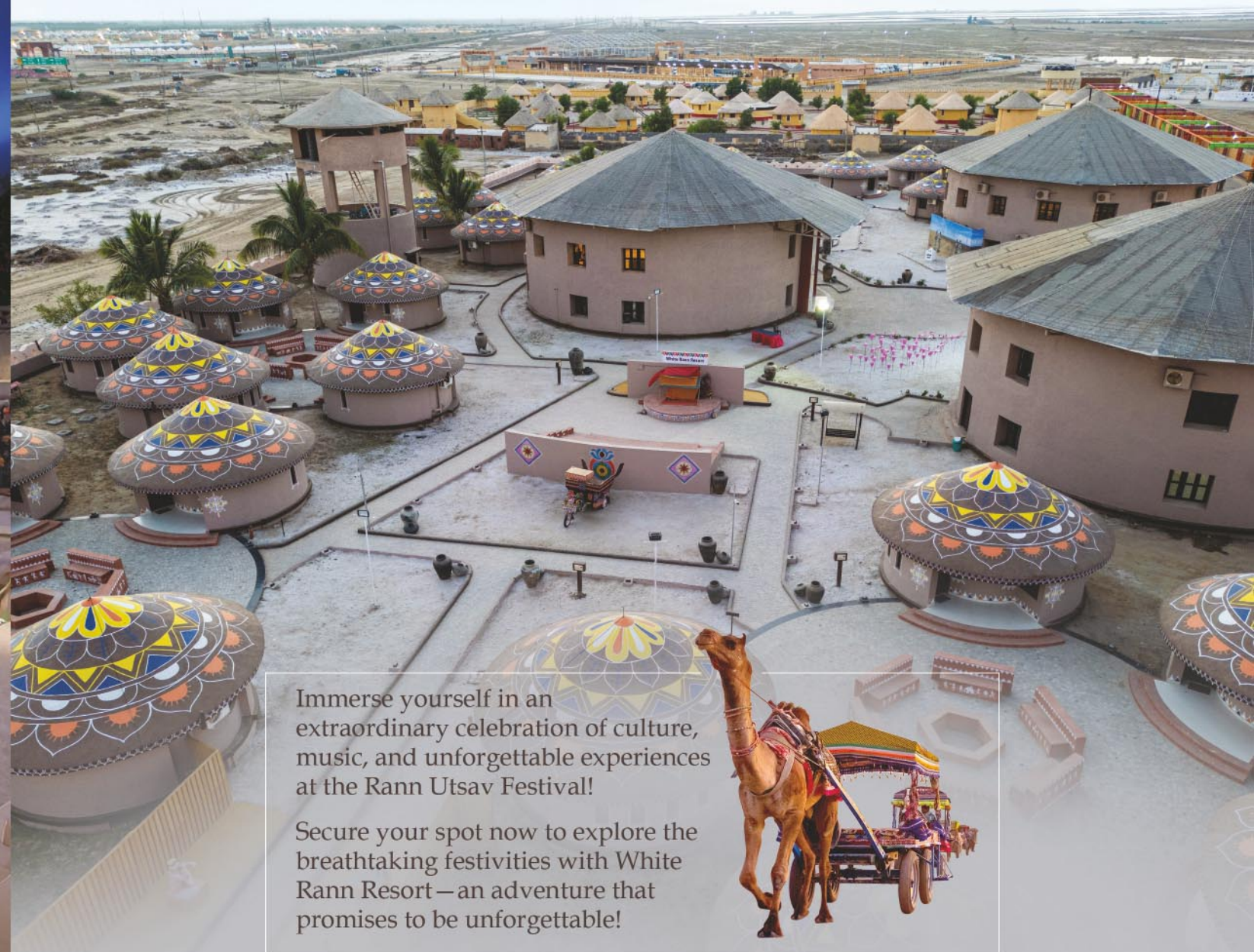


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Serendipity in Making

INDIA'S
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FULL moon

By NAMRATA SHAH, Contributor

Since eons the Moon has enticed us. Be it the poets or writers, scientists or astronomy enthusiasts, curious minds or just a mother rocking her child to sleep - the moon has been everyone's favourite. While science has its own definition of moon, for us selenophile mortals, moon has always been our darling companion, be it happiness or sorrow. That is why we do not miss a beat and say "Love you to the moon and back" to express our infinite love to people we hold closest to our hearts.

Remember the time when we, as kids, thought the moon followed us during our travels? Our faces beamed with happiness and ecstasy, and the cool satellite was as euphoric for us as it was for Neil Armstrong and the crew of Apollo 11 mission on 20th July 1969, when history set its footprint on the Moon. Such is the aura, allure and charisma of the Moon that no one can escape its effect.

The more we are attracted towards the moon, the more it presents its magic to us. From enticing us with its waxing and waning phase to showing us its marvellous beauty in form of Pink Moon, Blood Moon or Yellow Moon, our social media or phone galleries are full of photos capturing this celestial beauty. Every moon admirer celebrates it in different ways. Science commemorates mankind's 'giant leap' with International Moon Day on 20th of July. Travel bugs like us make it special in another way. They travel to different places, wait for the sun to go down and for this mesmerising beauty to rise, attain its full bloom and enjoy its calmness and serenity.

If you haven't taken a trip to watch the moon in all its glory, then you have missed out on an experience that qualifies fully to give FOMO to every travel, photography and moon enthusiast.

We bring you a curated list of places in India which enhance by many folds the beauty and pomp of the full Moon.

White Rann Resort

Rann of Kutch, Gujarat

White Desert

Rann of Kutch, Gujarat

The enormous expanse of the desert with clear skies, no artificial lights to hinder and a full moon lighting up the place with its exuberance

The lines "Kutch Nahi Dekha To Kuch Nahi Dekha" aptly sum up experiences that Kutch region of Gujarat has to offer. Arabian sea waters flood the desert during monsoon; as the waters evaporate and dry out the entire area, deposits of salt are left behind, turning the entire terrain into a vast sheet of 'white' hue. Thus the name the White Rann or the White Desert.

Now picture this. The enormous expanse of the desert with clear skies, no artificial lights to hinder and a full moon lighting up the place with its exuberance. You need to visit it to know the magic that White Rann of Kutch on a full moon offers

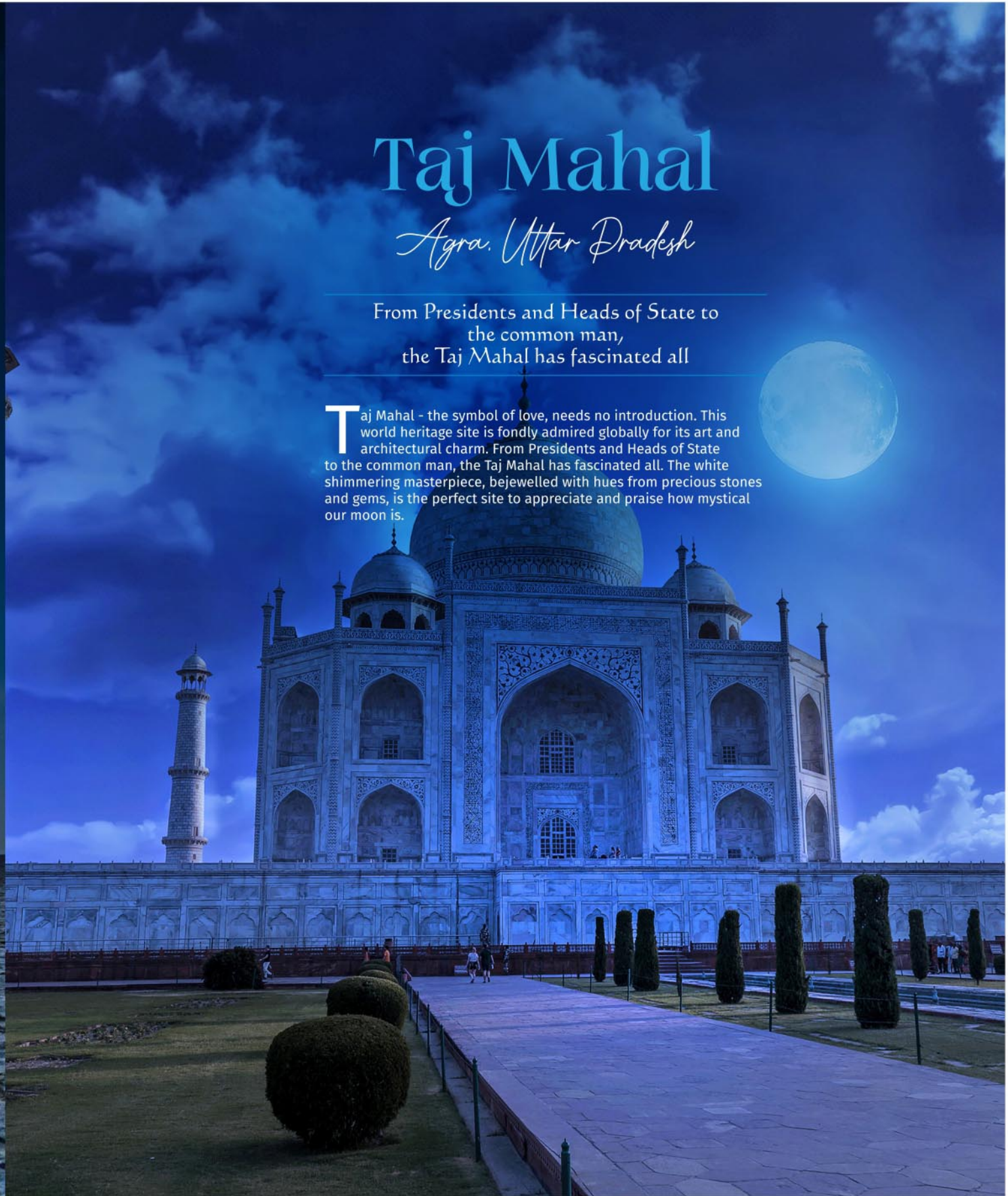


Taj Mahal

Agra, Uttar Pradesh

From Presidents and Heads of State to the common man, the Taj Mahal has fascinated all

Taj Mahal - the symbol of love, needs no introduction. This world heritage site is fondly admired globally for its art and architectural charm. From Presidents and Heads of State to the common man, the Taj Mahal has fascinated all. The white shimmering masterpiece, bejewelled with hues from precious stones and gems, is the perfect site to appreciate and praise how mystical our moon is.



Houseboats of Alappuzha

Kerala

Away from the maddening turmoil of modern-day living, life blooms in peace as we step onto these houseboats.

God's own country - Kerala is the personification of 'aplomb', allowing you to soak in the surrounding calmness and restfulness. The houseboats floating in the backwaters of Alappuzha add to this ambience. Away from the maddening turmoil of modern-day living, life blooms in peace as we step onto these houseboats. As twilight breaks and the moon slowly makes its appearance on the grand stage, settle yourself on the bow area of these houseboats and enjoy the full moon unfolding its glamour.

Marine Drive

Mumbai

The waters of the Arabian Sea reflect the bright moon, smiling and shining on the beholders enjoying the peace at Marine Drive.

The Queen's necklace or Marine Drive in Mumbai is everyone's special spot. One can hear the waves crashing on the rocks in the background as Mumbai's skyline rises and leaves you awestruck. And what better place than this to witness the spell our beloved moon casts on us. The waters of Arabian Sea reflect the bright moon smiling and shining on the beholders enjoying the peace at Marine Drive.

With technology taking centre stage in our daily routine, our life is indeed now quick-paced, but somewhere we also crave to slow down, to unwind and live in the present moment. So next time, do not wait for your mind and body to feel burned out. Drop a vacation email, pack your bags and start chasing the moon.

Until next time, happy gazing!



Lamayuru

Ladakh

This rustic village in Leh, district of Ladakh is an unspoiled place, ideal to gaze moon and the sky with its bountiful treasure of stars and other celestial bodies.

Ladakh is on every travel fan's bucket list and more so is travelling to Ladakh on a motorcycle. If you are gearing to make plans to tick this pending itinerary on your bucket list, you need to add homestay at Lamayuru. Termed as 'Mooncape' for its resemblance to Moon's surface, this rustic village in Leh district of Ladakh is the unspoiled place, ideal to gaze the moon and the sky with its bountiful treasure of stars and other celestial bodies.

Vivekananda Rock Memorial

Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu

Vivekananda Rock Memorial is also a unique geographical location where the waters of the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Sea converge.

The southernmost tip of India, Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanyakumari is a place where mythological legend meets spirituality. It is believed to be the place where Maa Parvati – as Kanyakumari – performed her penance for Lord Shiv. This is also the place where Swami Vivekananda meditated and found enlightenment.

Vivekananda Rock Memorial is geographically also a unique place where waters of Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea meet. The place is a great spot to enjoy the uninterrupted luminance of the Moon.

Mehrangadh Fort

Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Among the many famous places is the Mehrangadh Fort in Jodhpur, a magnificent edifice which draws people in huge numbers.

Rajasthan is a kaleidoscope of magical experiences. Known for its forts and palaces, desert and sand dunes, exploring Rajasthan at night is a chance one should not miss. Among the many famous places is the Mehrangadh Fort in Jodhpur, a magnificent edifice which draws people in huge numbers.

The towering fort with all its majesty, away from the artificial lights, is the perfect place to enjoy the beauty of the moon and the night sky.



Neermahal

Tripura

Neermahal or the Lake Palace, built by the erstwhile king of Tripura, Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur, is a floating wonder standing tall in the middle of the lake Rudrasagar.

A hidden gem of Northeast India, Tripura is home to a brilliant cultural confluence of many tribes and religious practices. It is also a state that houses monuments rich in Hindu and Islamic architectural style. Neermahal or the Lake Palace, built by the erstwhile king of Tripura Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur, is a floating wonder standing tall in the middle of the lake Rudrasagar. This royal structure wears a stunning ethereal look and becomes a sight to behold at night especially on a full moon night.



Chandrashila

Uttarakhand

A popular destination for film shooting, a trek up this peak on a full moon night is a dream come true for every moon aficionado.

"What's in a name?" "Everything", answers

Chandrashila, the summit of Garhwal Himalayan range in Uttarakhand. Literally meaning 'Moon Rock', this unparalleled gem is special for trekkers waiting to get a panoramic view of the snowcapped peaks of the Himalayas. A popular destination for film shooting, a trek up this peak on a full moon night is a dream come true for every moon aficionado. If you want to know from Earth what heaven feels like, do not miss a chance to gaze at the full moon from this place.

Lake Shiota

Maharashtra

This lake site offers you ample opportunities to enjoy camp – sit back, relax and watch the moon, twinkling stars and constellations light up the night sky.

When looking for a getaway in close vicinity to Mumbai or Pune, Lake Shiota is the place where your search ends. Tucked just 11 km away from Lonavala, this lake site offers you ample opportunities to enjoy camp – sit back, relax and watch the moon, twinkling stars and constellations light up the night sky. 🌕



MOON Night



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Top Eco Friendly **ALTERNATIVES to** **PLASTIC** **BAGS** *for Conscious Travelers*

By UMANG SHARMA, Staff Writer

As sustainable travel becomes increasingly important, rethinking how we carry our belongings is essential in the fight against plastic pollution. Single-use plastic bags pose significant environmental harm, but there are now plenty of eco-friendly alternatives available. From durable cotton totes to innovative upcycled designs, these options are practical, stylish, and mindful of waste reduction. Whether you're hiking, shopping at local markets, or packing essentials, choosing smarter bags can significantly reduce your plastic footprint and lead to more responsible adventures. Here are the top eco-friendly alternatives to plastic bags that every conscious traveller should consider.





COTTON TOTE *Bags*

Cotton tote bags stand out as one of the most popular eco-friendly options. Made from natural fibres, they are sustainable, biodegradable, and reusable. Their exceptional durability and longevity—especially those crafted from thick cotton canvas or reinforced seams—ensure they can handle daily use, whether for heavy groceries or essential travel items. Beyond shopping, cotton totes are versatile enough for sightseeing, beach outings, carry-ons, or even picnics. Many are machine washable, making them easy to maintain while traveling. With a broad array of colours, patterns, and designs available, cotton totes combine style and practicality seamlessly.

Fact: A single cotton tote can replace up to 600 plastic bags over its lifespan.



RECYCLED PAPER *Bags*

Recycled paper bags serve as a sustainable choice for short-term or single-use needs. Made from recycled fibres, they are both biodegradable and recyclable themselves. Although they aren't suitable for wet or heavy items, they are excellent for carrying dry goods, souvenirs, or snacks on short excursions. Their quick decomposition ensures minimal environmental impact compared to plastic, though their reusability is limited.

Fact: Using recycled paper bags helps save trees—one ton of recycled paper can save approximately 17 trees.

JUTE & HEMP *Bags*

Jute and hemp bags represent a sustainable option derived from renewable plant sources, and they are naturally biodegradable. With their rugged strength and unique texture, these bags add a stylish and eco-friendly touch to your travels. The production of jute and hemp requires minimal water and chemicals, making them more environmentally friendly than cotton or synthetic alternatives. Perfect for market visits, beach outings, or eco-conscious gift-giving, these bags do require careful handling; hand washing and air drying are recommended to extend their lifespan.

Fact: Jute is one of the strongest natural fibres and can have a life cycle of over 20 years when maintained properly.

CANVAS *Bags*

Canvas bags are made from a heavier weave of cotton or linen, giving them exceptional strength and durability—often surpassing thinner cotton totes. They are ideal for travellers in need of reliable bags that can handle heavy loads repeatedly over time. Many canvas bags feature reinforced stitching and sturdy handles, ensuring they are dependable companions for rugged adventures, shopping sprees, and everything in between. Similar to cotton totes, they sport a stylish design, are easy to clean, and can accompany you on countless journeys.

Fact: Like cotton bags, canvas bags can last for years with proper care, making them a cost-effective choice over time.



FOLD-UP & STUFFABLE *Bags*

Ultra-lightweight and compact, fold-up and stuffable bags can fit easily in your pocket, purse, or even on a keyring. Despite their small size, they can expand to carry significant loads, making them remarkably handy for spontaneous shopping trips or extra luggage flexibility while traveling. Their portability is unmatched, occupying almost no space when not in use.

Fact: Some foldable bags can hold up to 50 pounds while weighing less than an ounce themselves.



Image Source: amazon.com



REUSABLE SILICONE *Bags*

Reusable silicone bags, primarily designed for food storage, provide airtight, leak-proof, and heat-resistant containment. These bags are versatile for snacks, meal prep, or protecting toiletries and electronics from spills during travel. They are dishwasher safe and can be used thousands of times, making them a waste-free solution for storing perishables on the go. Plus, their transparency simplifies organizing luggage or picnic supplies.

Fact: Silicone can last up to 10 years, drastically reducing the need for single-use plastic bags.

Source: amazon.com

ORGANIC MESH & MUSLIN *Bags*

Organic mesh or muslin bags are lightweight, breathable, and perfect for organizing packed goods or carrying produce. Their open weave promotes air circulation, making them excellent for fruits, vegetables, or even as laundry or shoe bags in your suitcase. Washable and biodegradable, they are practical and eco-friendly, effectively reducing reliance on plastic zip pouches or wraps.

Fact: Using breathable bags helps extend the freshness of produce, making them a smart grocery choice.

UPCYCLED & RECYCLED MATERIAL *Bags*

Bags made from upcycled or recycled materials, such as discarded fabric scraps, old tents, or recycled plastics, extend the life of existing resources, reducing the need for virgin materials and minimizing waste. These bags often boast unique designs and are perfect for travellers seeking something ethical yet eye-catching. Many brands now offer attractive options that come with compelling backstories.

Fact: Upcycling helps divert waste from landfills, with millions of tons of textile waste generated each year.



BAMBOO *Bags*

Bamboo is a fast-growing, renewable plant requiring little water or pesticides. Bamboo fibre is soft, breathable, naturally antibacterial, and ideal for sustainable travel totes, backpacks, and even lightweight handles. Bamboo bags are strong, moisture-resistant, and lightweight—great for multi-purpose use.

CORK *Bags*

Harvested from the bark of cork oak trees without harming the tree, cork is renewable, biodegradable, water-resistant, and hypoallergenic. It's increasingly used in stylish, long-lasting backpacks, wallets, and organizers thanks to its durability and unique look.



RECYCLED PET/NYLON *Bags*



Backpacks and accessories made from recycled polyester or nylon (often from PET bottles) are water-resistant, strong, and divert plastics from oceans and landfills.

Care and Sustainability Tips

- **Fabric Bags:** Wash regularly using mild detergent; avoid bleach and heavy loads to prevent wear.
- **Bamboo, Cork, and Pinatex:** Wipe down with a damp cloth and air-dry. Keep away from heat and sunlight to prevent warping.
- **Silicone Bags:** Durable and dishwasher-safe; use a gentle cycle with low heat.
- **Bag Swaps and Rentals:** Consider swapping or renting specialty bags to save money and reduce waste.
- **Ethical Sourcing Certifications:** Look for labels like Fair Trade or GOTS to ensure organic materials and fair labour practices.

The Environmental **UPSIDE & RESPONSIBLE** *Recommendations*

Choosing any of these materials means fewer single-use plastics in your travels, supporting reduced landfill, ocean pollution, and the conservation of ecosystems. While some up-front options cost more, their longevity and reduced waste make them smart investments. Consider the full product journey: from raw material to disposal, circular solutions like upcycling, and ethical labour practices all contribute to truly sustainable travel gear.



Summarizing

By embracing these eco-friendly alternatives, travellers can enjoy both convenience and peace of mind, knowing they are making a positive impact on the environment. Switching from single-use plastics to durable, sustainable bags not only reduces waste but also sets a responsible example for fellow explorers. With so many innovative and stylish options available, now is the perfect time to make a lasting change and travel with a lighter environmental footprint. 🌱

ARCHITECTURAL BRILLIANCE OF THE PANDYAS

Sankarankovil and Kazhugumalai

By Dr INDIRA NITYANANDAM, Contributor

Dr Indira Nityanandam continues her temple-hopping in South India. Fresh from her travel diary is 'Architectural Brilliance of the Pandyas: Sankarankovil and Kazhugumalai'.

Read her travel story of temples: Sankarankovil and Kazhugumalai.

Though the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva is worshipped all across India, it is interesting to note that Kartikeya (the younger son of Shiva) is worshipped mainly in South India and to some extent in Bengal. He is also known as Muruga, Arumugam, Vadivel, Subramanian, etc. Interestingly, the temples of Sankarankovil (Shiva temple) and Azhagumalai (Muruga temple) are less than 20 km away from each other, and both were built by the Pandya dynasty around the same time.

Along with the Pallavas, Cheras, and Cholas, the Pandyas are an important dynasty of South India. Reaching their peak of

imperial dominance around the 10th century, their capitals have been at Korkai, Madurai and later at Tenkasi. In addition to their patronage of literature, with Sangam literature being the most important, mention of the Pandyas can be seen in the inscriptions of Asoka. Originally Jains, they converted to Saivism (worshippers of Shiva), and the rock-cut Kazhugumalai temple is clear proof of the co-existence of both these religions.

Sankarankovil, considered one of the Pancha Bhootha sthalas, has a history dating back to the 10th century and is dedicated to Shiva (Sankareswara) and Parvati (Gomati

amman). The five Pancha Bhootha sthalams represent the five basic elements. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, this group of five ancient temples is four in Tamil Nadu and one in Andhra Pradesh: Prithvi in Kanchipuram, Jala in Tiruvanaikaval, Agni in Tirvannamalai, Vayu in Srialahasti, Akasha in Chidambaram.

Representing the Shaivite and Vaishnavite unity, this temple also has the combined form of Shiva and Vishnu called Shankaranarayana. Built by Ukkira Pandya Thevar in the 10th century, it has an

Sankarankovil, considered one of the Pancha Bhootha sthalas, has a history dating back to the 10th century and is dedicated to Shiva (Sankareswara) and Parvati (Gomati amman).





imposing 9-tier rajagopuram, with 9 kalasas and each representing one of the nine levels. As with most temples in our country, there are many legends associated with the temple. An interesting one is about the deity combining both Shiva and Vishnu. There was a quarrel between two nagas—one being a Shiva devotee and the other a Vishnu devotee – about which of the two gods was greater.

When they went to Parvati for a verdict, she took up a penance, asking the two gods to grant a joint darshan. And that is why we see them here together. There is a sandpit (Vanmikam) in the temple premises, about which it is said that the sand extracted from the pit will cure all diseases.

The temple is built in the Dravidian style

of architecture. It is well known for its towering gopurams as well as spacious courtyards and mandapas as well and Prakaras or pillared corridors. All these are adorned with stone sculptures as well as intricate carvings. Most of them depict mythological stories or religious symbols and cultural motifs. An interesting feature in the temple is that during both the equinoxes

Kazhugumalai (also spelt Kalugumalai), which means hill of the vulture, is also known as Araimalai, Thirunersuram and Perunersuram

(March and September: on 21st, 22nd and 23rd of both months), the sunlight enters the sanctum of Sankaralingaswamy.

Kazhugumalai (also spelt Kalugumalai), which means hill of the vulture, is also known as Araimalai, Thirunersuram and Perunersuram. Believed to have been built in the eighth century during the reign of the Pandyan king Parantaka Nedunjadaiya, it was expanded during the 18th century. Situated in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu, the temple combines history and mythology and is also an architectural marvel with the core temple having a rock-cut architecture which is exemplary of early Pandyan architecture. In addition to the main sanctum sanctorum, also noteworthy are the Kazhugumalai Jain beds and Vettuvan Koil.

Legend has it that after Jatayu was slain by Ravana, Rama performed the final rites for Jatayu. His brother Sambathi (while some believe he was a sage also known as Kaghugumahamunivar) was worried because he should have performed the last rites, and hence sought refuge here and performed penance in Gajamukhaparvatam. Ages later, Murugan rested here for some time while pursuing the demon Surapadman. Hence, Murugan is the main deity here. (A beautiful temple, but on my visit there, it was pouring and there was a power cut, so pictures are few.)


As we enter the temple through a pillared hall, in a rock-cut cave is the sanctum of Muruga who is in a seated posture, which is not very common. And then, there are separate shrines for his two consorts—Valli and Deivanai, as well as Shiva and Parvati and the Parsvatah Devas.

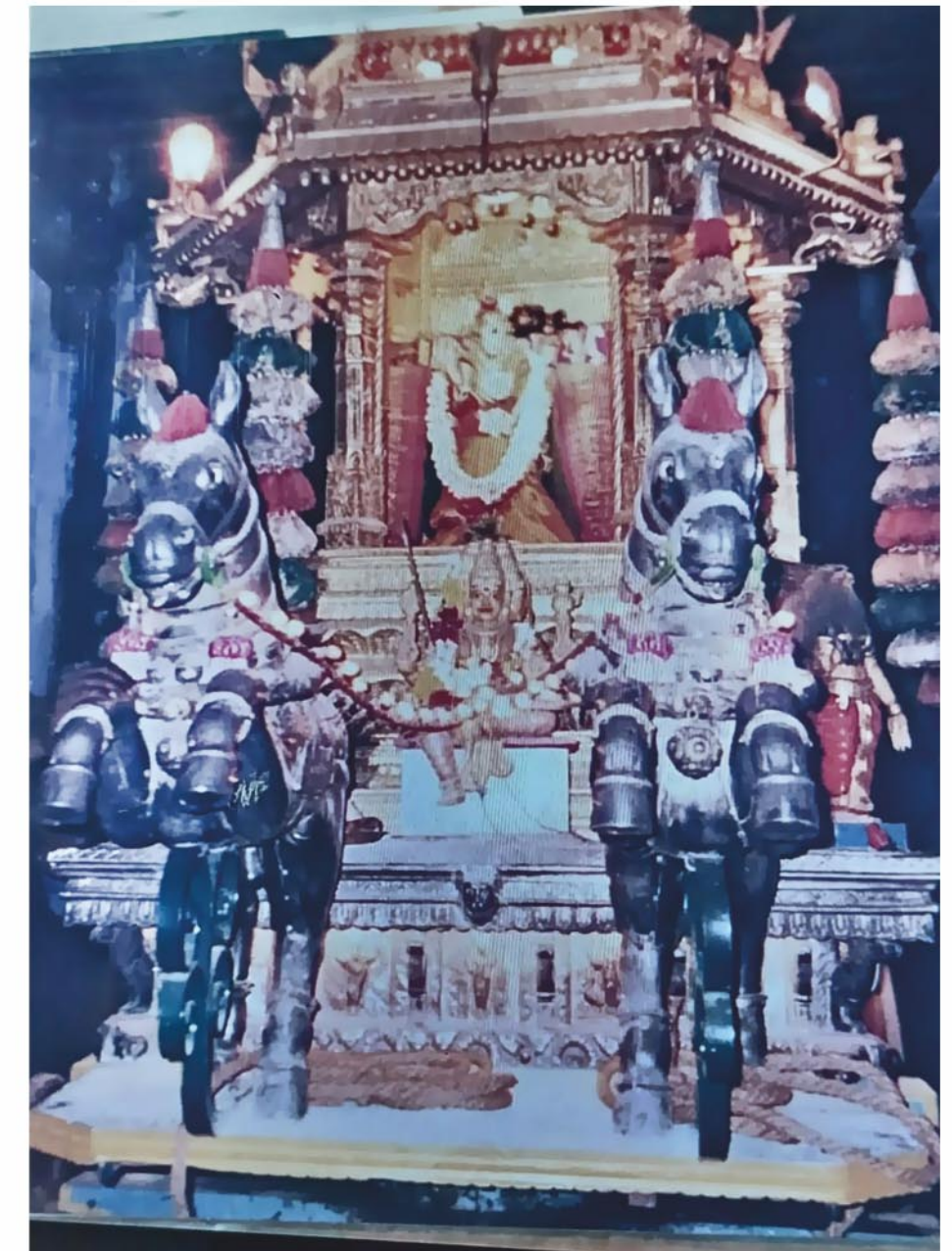
Two other important places here are the Vettuvan Koil and the Jain Beds. According to scholars, this is one of the oldest Jain sites in South India. Jainism probably thrived in this region till the 14th century. According to palaeographic and literary evidence, the Jain beds can be traced back to the 8th century, with local traditions connecting them to Buddhist history too. There are approximately 150 niches in that bed, which include images of Gomateswara, Parshvanatha and other Tirthankaras of Jainism. There are 98 inscriptions related to Jainism, below the reliefs of the Tirthankaras and the yakshis. It is believed that the Digambara sect encouraged women mendicants too, and there is ample proof of that here.

The third important site here is the Vettuvan Koil, which has been variously

interpreted as 'heaven of sculptors' as well as 'temple of the slayer'. The first meaning indicates that it is a sculptural marvel, while the other refers to a more tragic legend. A father and son had a rivalry over who was the greater sculptor. The father constructed the Vettuvan Koil while the son built the Murugan shrine. It is believed that the son mocked the father, saying that his Koil would never be completed. Enraged, the father murdered his son. But

realising his folly, the father grieved and never completed the Koil, which stands unfinished to this day.

The entire region is dotted with small and big temples of both Shiva and Vishnu. Some of the important ones are Thiruchendur, Navathirupathi (9 Vishnu temples), Navakailayam (9 Shiva shrines), Korkai (ancient port city), Ettayapuram, etc. 



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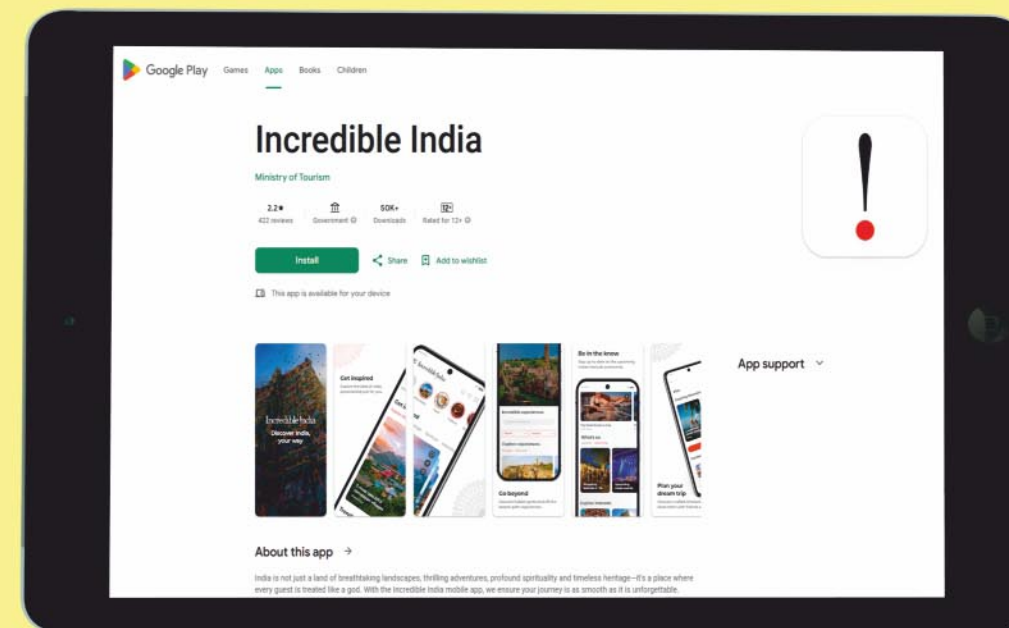
By PRATISH AMIN, Contributor

A List of **iOS** and **Android** Apps

From the bustling streets of Mumbai to the historic Gothic alleys of Rome, these apps are transforming how we explore. Looking for the best iOS or Android audio travel guide apps? We've compiled the top choices that turn every trip into an unforgettable adventure.



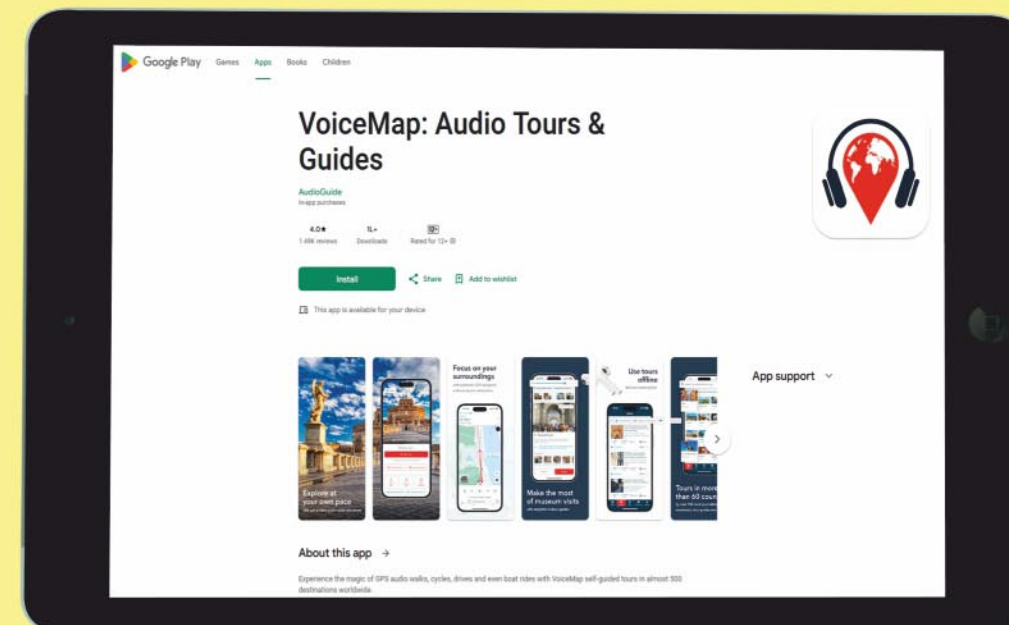
INCREDIBLE INDIA



iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/in/app/incredible-india-app/id6744102413?uo=2>

If you want to immerse yourself in the rich cultural and historical tapestry of India, the Incredible India app by the Ministry of Tourism is your essential tool. Available on both iOS and Android, this free audio travel guide offers immersive guided tours of iconic cities and heritage sites. With 4.3 ratings in iOS, curated itineraries, practical travel tips, and multilingual support, it's the perfect companion for experiencing India's vibrant culture.

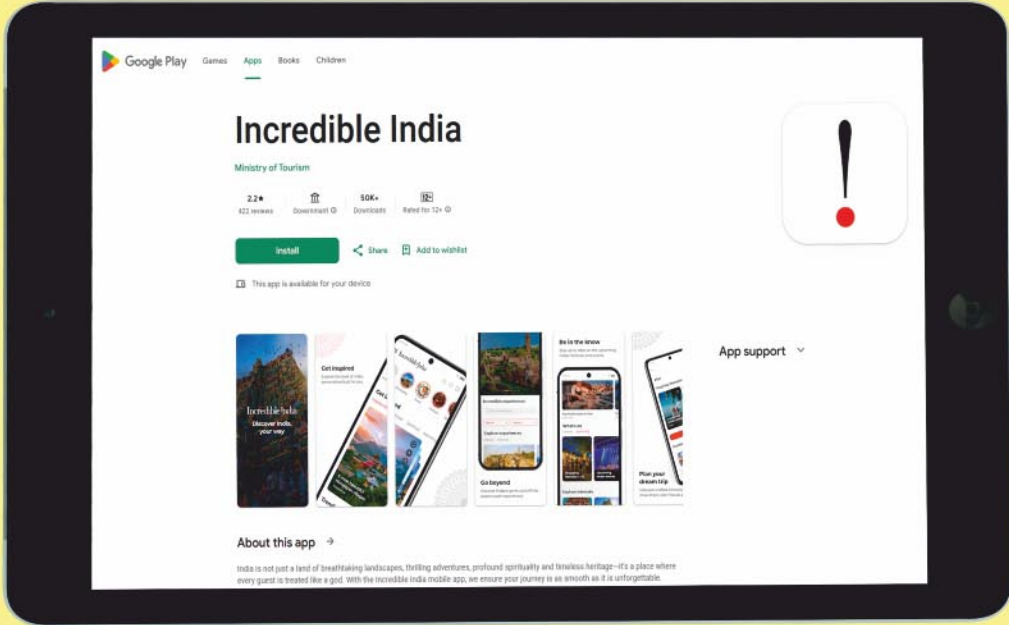
VOICEMAP: AUDIO TOURS & GUIDES



iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/in/app/voicemap-audio-tours-guides/id852027939>

Eager to listen to or learn more about Beijing's disappearing hutongs or Cape Town's stunning coastline? The VoiceMap travel app is perfect for you. This audio guide seamlessly integrates with your GPS, revealing stories as you wander, allowing you to stay fully engaged without staring at your screen. The best feature of the audio travel guide app is its ability to work offline, loaded with over 1,700 free and paid tours across 75 countries, including self-guided tours from local narrators. VoiceMap should be a part of your smartphone.

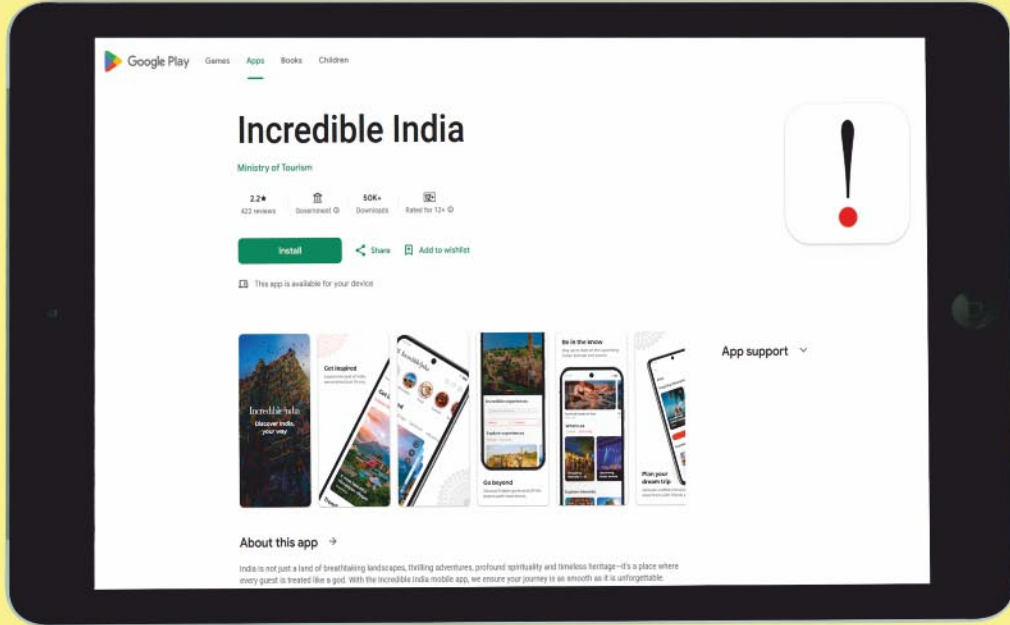
IZI.TRAVEL: AUDIO TOUR GUIDES



With a library of over 25,000 audio tours across more than 2,500 cities worldwide, and 10lac downloads in the Android app, izi.TRAVEL is a paradise for travelers. It covers every aspect of each city, woven into engaging stories. Whether you're touring famous museums or wandering through historic sites in India, the app offers rich narration filled with history, culture, and quirky facts. Much of the content is free, created in partnership with local tourism boards to give you an authentic, insider experience.

Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=travel.opas.client&hl=en_IN
iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/in/app/izi-travel-audio-tour-guide/id554726752>

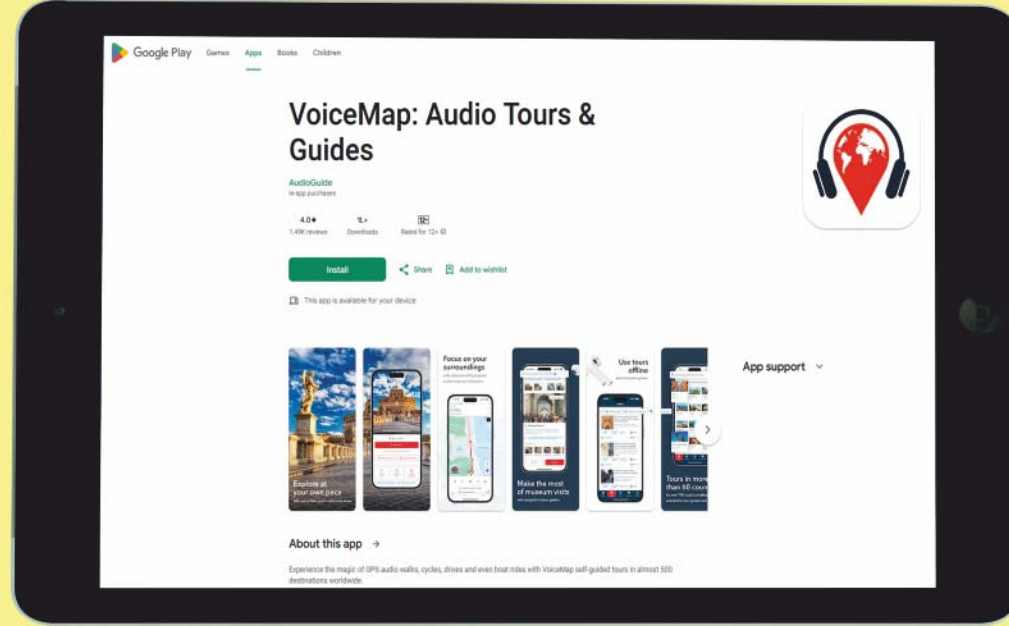
SMARTGUIDE: DIGITAL TOUR GUIDE



Seeking an audio tour guide or offline maps? SmartGuide is the best audio travel guide app to choose. Offering options for self-guided tours and offline city maps, it has earned top ratings in both Android and iOS. With content curated by official tourism bodies, you can rely on current, trustworthy guides for destinations like Prague, Bangkok, and beyond. Whether travelling alone or with others, SmartGuide makes every journey seamless and self-directed.

Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.smart_guide.smartguide.T_00007
iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/in/app/smartguide-travel-guide-map/id318062323>

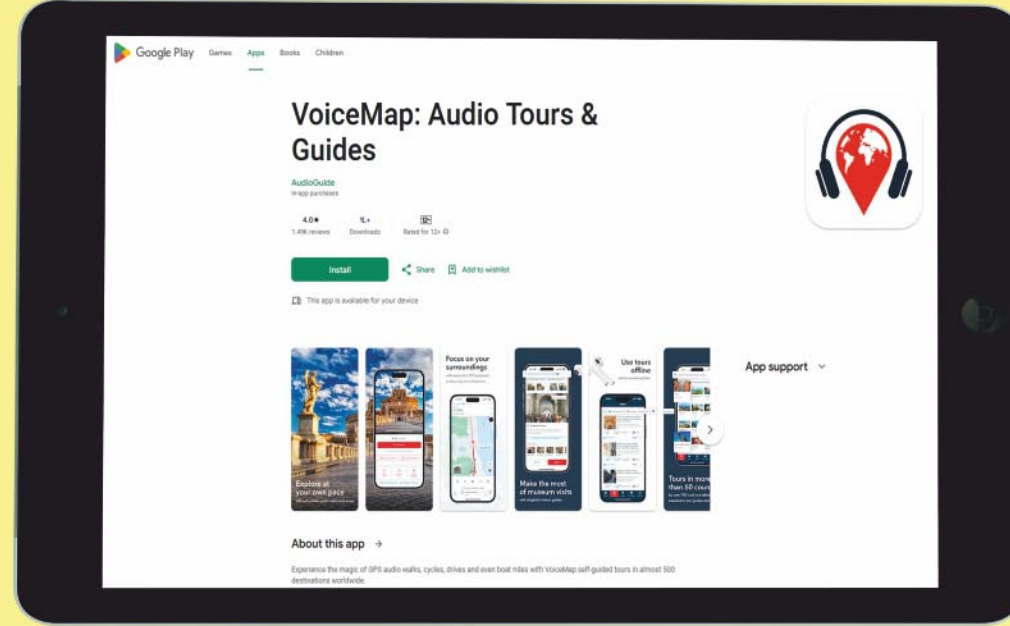
POCKETGUIDE: AUDIO TRAVEL GUIDE



PocketSights Tour Guide is a GPS-enabled travel app with over 10 lakh downloads on Android, designed for self-guided walking tours across the UK and beyond. Perfect for curious travelers, it provides narrated tours with rich photos that can be transformed into 3D videos, guiding users through historic sites, landmarks, and attractions. The app has a large database covering 150 major cities with a mix of free and premium tours. It works offline, allowing you to explore without Wi-Fi or data. With its easy-to-use navigation, it is the best app to use. Available on both iOS and Android.

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=hu.pocketguide>
iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/in/app/pocketsights-tour-guide/id935030205>

HOPON INDIA



Available on both Android and iOS, HopOn India provides immersive city walks and audio content through vibrant destinations like Delhi, Mumbai, Jaipur, Varanasi, and more. The app blends cultural stories, local legends, and hidden gems, brought to life by the voices of renowned authors, heritage experts, and well-known personalities. Managing audio and visual tour content is straightforward, making it suitable for all travellers.

CONCLUSION

The digital travel landscape is evolving swiftly, providing powerful tools for modern guide creators. Each app listed above comes with a dynamic content management system, making it easier than ever to explore cities and publish rich, engaging destination content. 10

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*Nature's Prescription
for Perennial
Health and Happiness
Hot Springs of India*

By NAMRATA SHAH, Contributor

Hear the word Doctor and what do we often visualise - long white coat, stethoscope hanging around the neck, some positive quotes adorning the walls, a tray with cotton gauze, spirit and syringes ready to drive us nuts, a big examination table to scare the ghost out of us.

Well, you are not alone. We all have this phobia, especially associated with doctors. But what we often miss appreciating is the hardworking soul; the tireless one who is our saviour, ensuring we always remain in the pink of our health. If our health ever turns grey, they will try to the best of their abilities to bring back the rainbow in our lives.

We may always joke around saying 'An apple a day, keeps the doctor away', but the truth remains that they will always be our knight in shining armour, out there, protecting us and saving us from mayhem.

Now picture this. What if our doctors, instead of prescribing us bitter medication and needle pricks, suggested Travel Mantra as a Fitness Mantra? Yes, you've heard it right. Our doctors recommend that we prepare our backpacks and consume travel doses at regular

intervals. More and more doctors now recommend family getaways, outings, and camps. These exercises not only strengthen our familial bond but also help us break the monotony of our routine life and sharpen our instincts of going out in the wild and experiencing nature undisturbed and unspoilt.

Exciting, isn't it? Let us make it a little more exciting, adventurous, but unforgettably memorable.

It is time to soak your feet in nature's therapeutic spa and feel the magic. India's natural hot springs are a marvellous delight. A storehouse of rich minerals beneficial to the human body, these natural hot springs and geysers promise a healthy body, a healthy mind, and a happy heart.

Though India's northern states, especially those lined with the Greater and Lesser Himalayan mountain ranges, Shivalik and others are blessed with many big and small hot springs, there are a few surprises in the eastern and western states of India. Not many know that southern India too has a hidden gem.

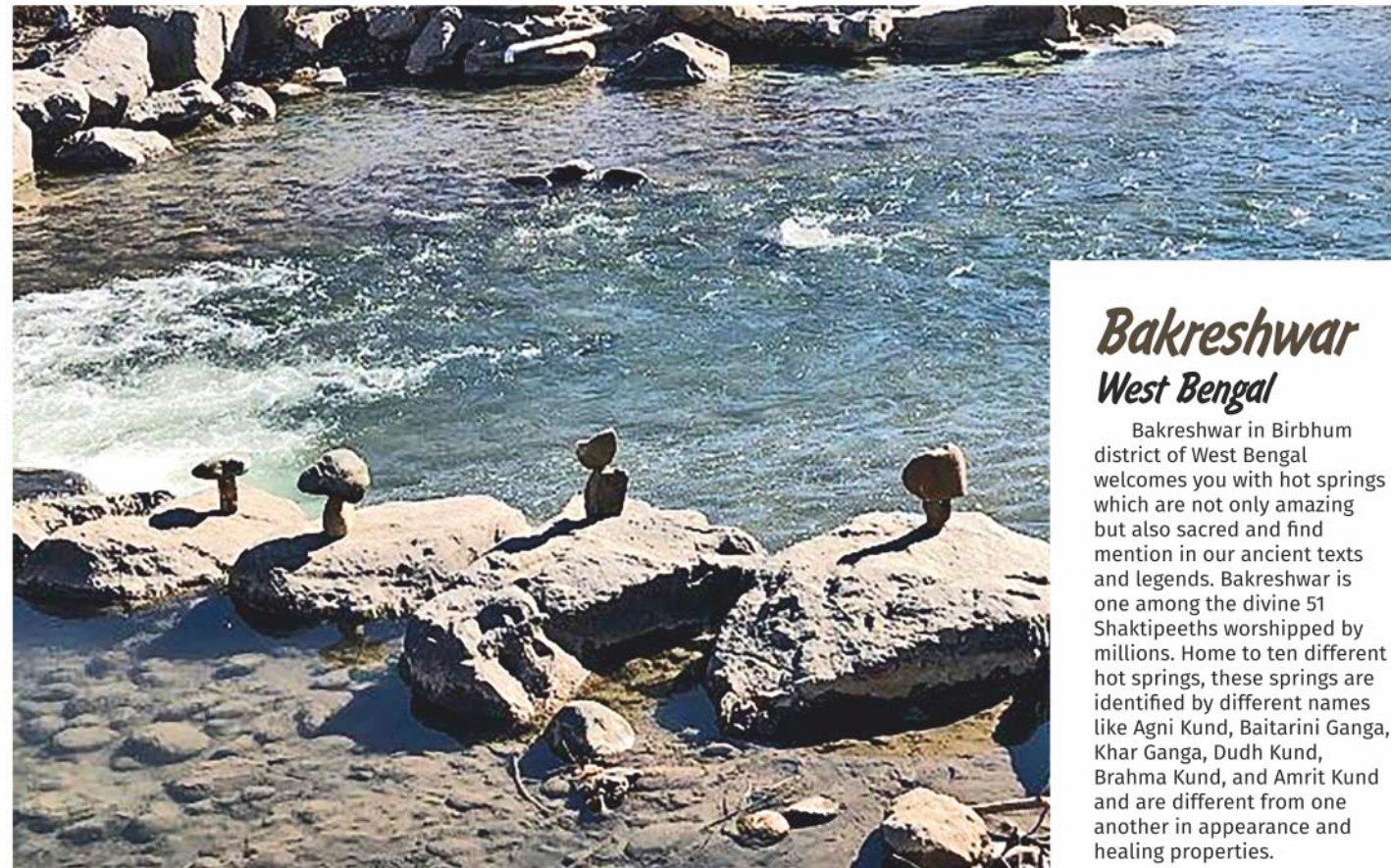
What are you waiting for? Let the trip begin....



Experience Mystical Warmth Hot Springs of Eastern India

Surajkund Jharkhand

A nature's marvel, Surajkund in Jharkhand is often said to be the hottest natural spring in India with its surface temperature as high as 87 degrees Celsius. Being rich in sulphur, this hot spring has amazing healing properties for skin ailments.

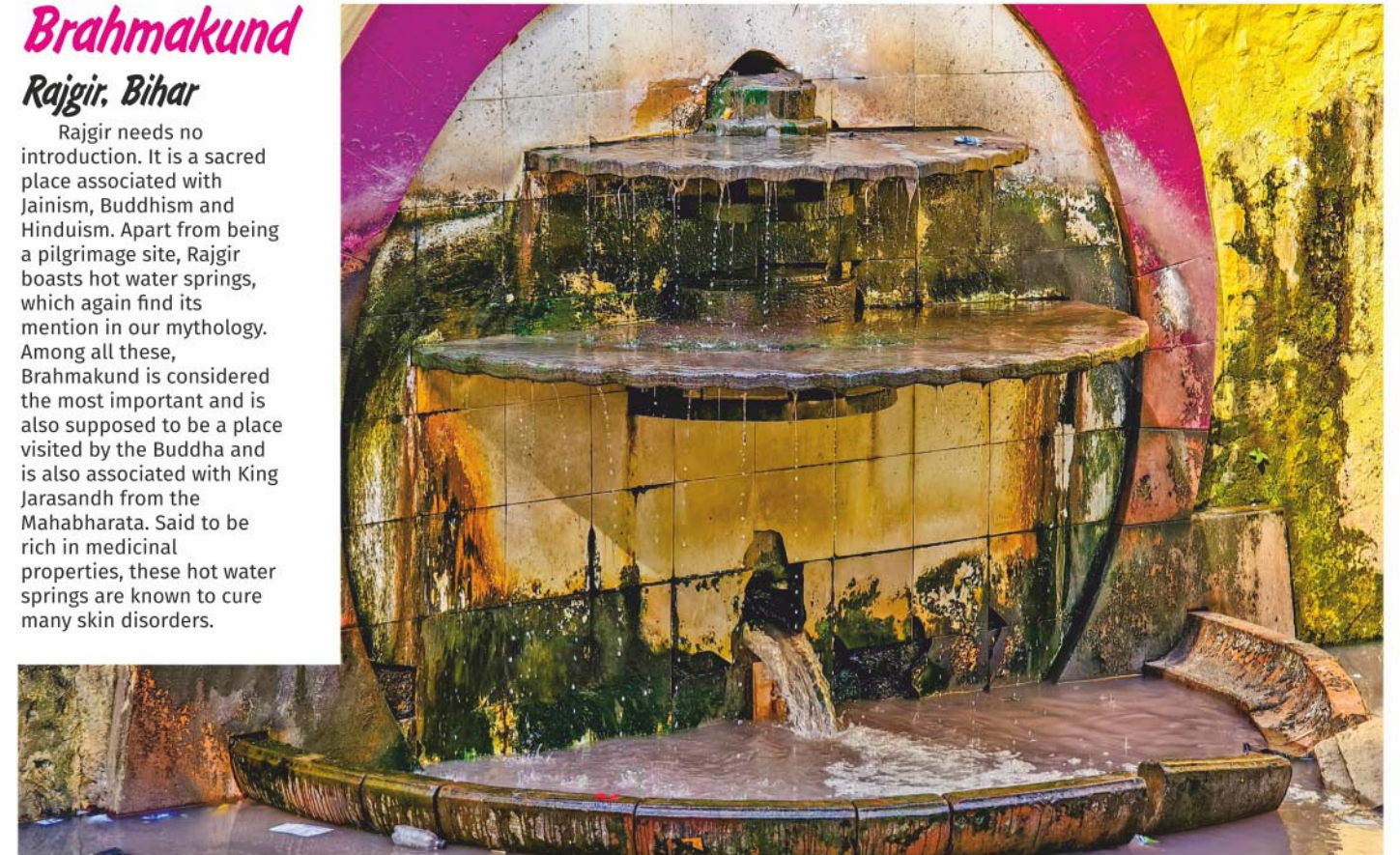


Bakreshwar West Bengal

Bakreshwar in Birbhum district of West Bengal welcomes you with hot springs which are not only amazing but also sacred and find mention in our ancient texts and legends. Bakreshwar is one among the divine 51 Shaktipeeths worshipped by millions. Home to ten different hot springs, these springs are identified by different names like Agni Kund, Baitarini Ganga, Khar Ganga, Dudh Kund, Brahma Kund, and Amrit Kund and are different from one another in appearance and healing properties.

Brahmakund Rajgir, Bihar

Rajgir needs no introduction. It is a sacred place associated with Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Apart from being a pilgrimage site, Rajgir boasts hot water springs, which again find its mention in our mythology. Among all these, Brahmakund is considered the most important and is also supposed to be a place visited by the Buddha and is also associated with King Jarasandh from the Mahabharata. Said to be rich in medicinal properties, these hot water springs are known to cure many skin disorders.



Atri Odisha

With Lord Jagannath seated in Odisha, the land is surely a blessed one. But apart from the famous temple, the state also has these geological wonders in the form of hot springs. Atri is one such place, which is not thronged by people in huge numbers but is a calm, serene place, just 15 km away from Bhubaneswar. Rich in Sulphur, this spring also gets pretty hot with water temperature recorded at 58 degrees Celsius and lends its medicinal properties to heal skin problems.

Beneath the Hills, Magic Flows

Magical springs of Northeast India



Yumthang Hot Springs

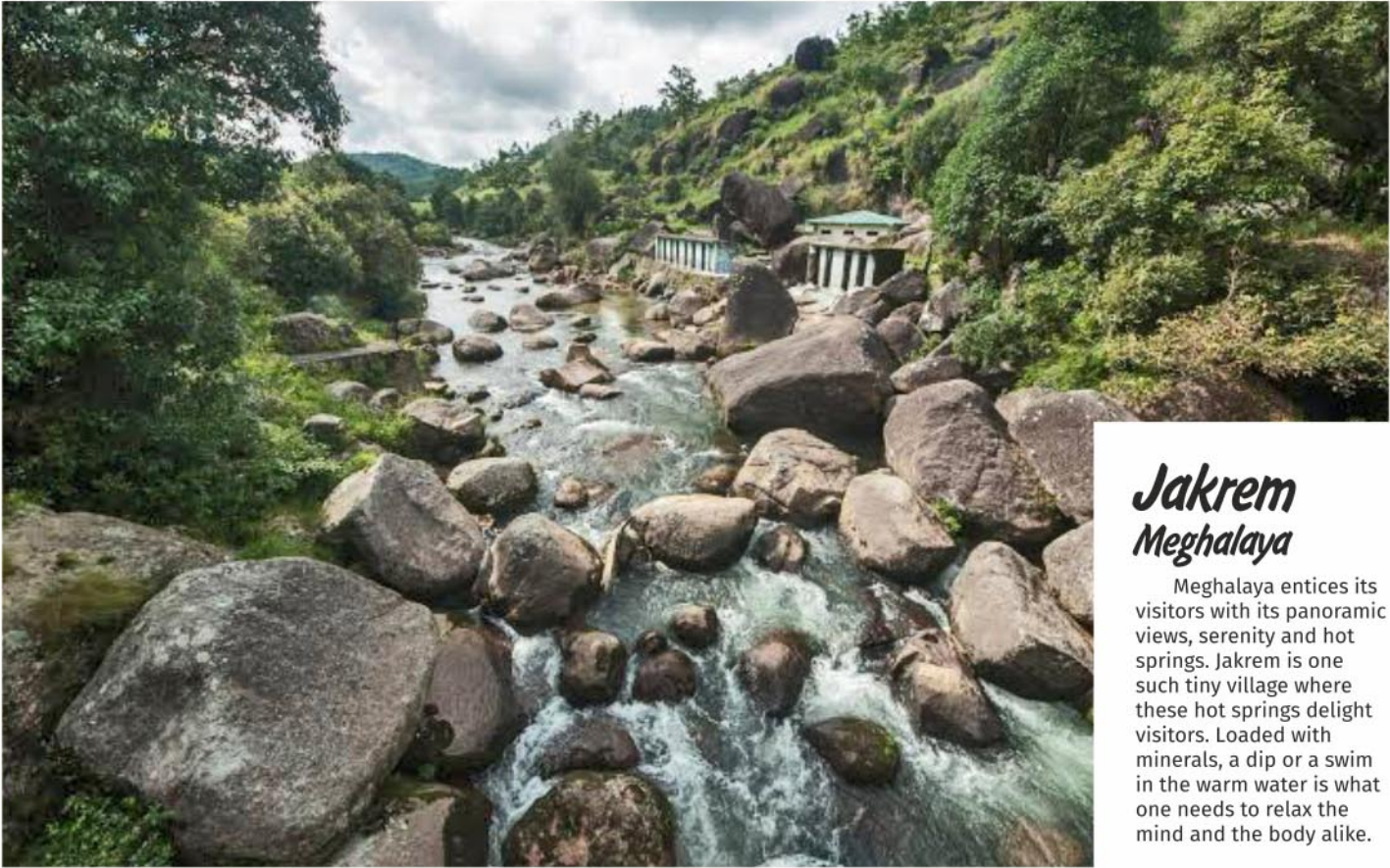
Sikkim

Discover the enchanting beauty of Sikkim as you visit the Yumthang Spring located close to the bank of the river Lachung in the Yumthang Valley of Sikkim. The quietude of the place, along with the well-preserved water pools, makes it a memorable experience.

Dirang Hot Spring

Arunachal Pradesh

Hidden away from mainstream places, the hot springs of Dirang speak about the unspoiled beauty of Arunachal Pradesh. With the rise of social media, this place is now the go-to place for those exploring the northeastern state of India and who love local homestay experiences.



Jakrem

Meghalaya

Meghalaya entices its visitors with its panoramic views, serenity and hot springs. Jakrem is one such tiny village where these hot springs delight visitors. Loaded with minerals, a dip or a swim in the warm water is what one needs to relax the mind and the body alike.

Straight from the Mountains

Springs of North India

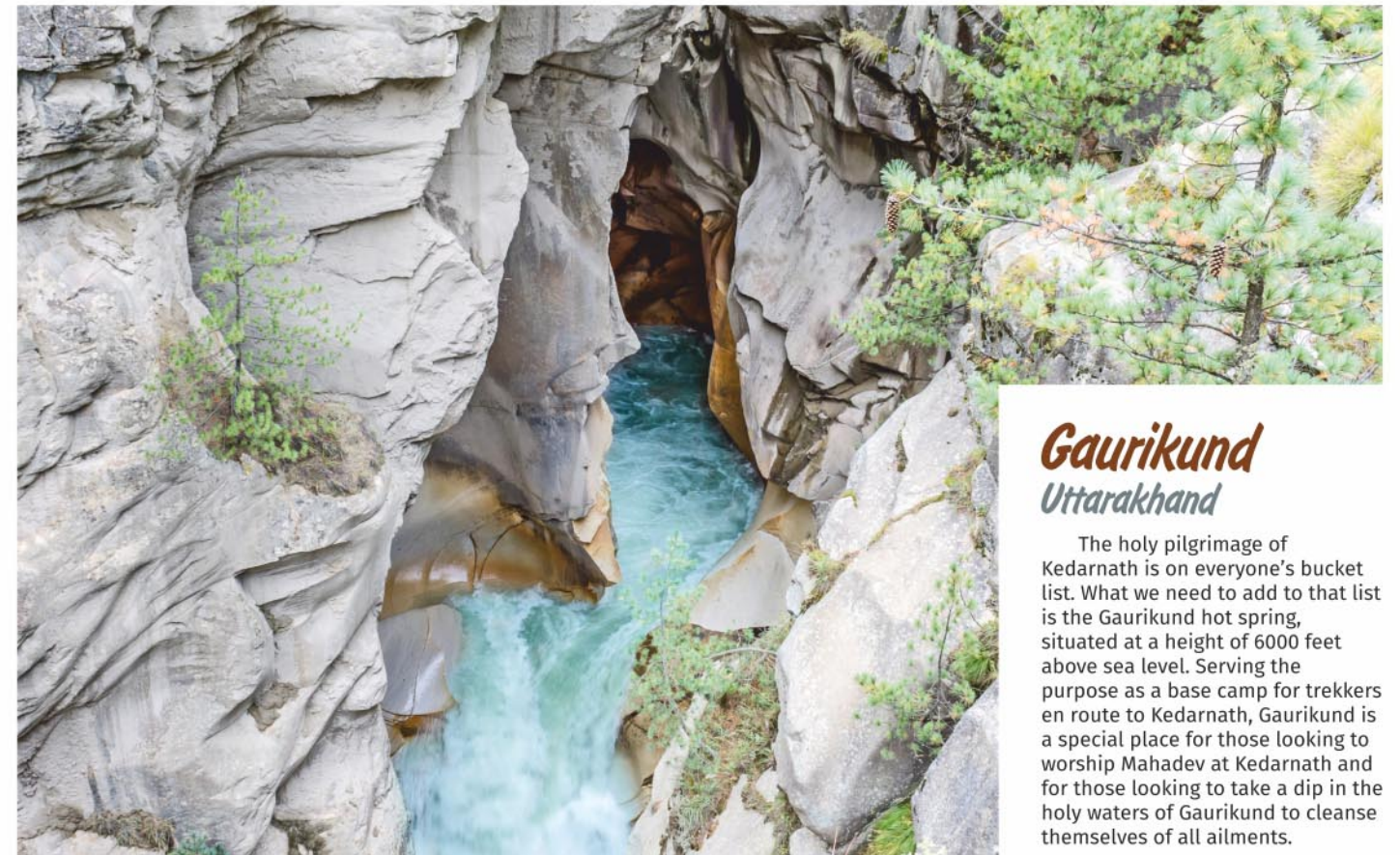


Panamik Ladakh

If you've wondered what Ladakh is all about its landscape, then the Panamik natural geyser is not only a visual treat but also a treat to the mind and body. Tucked away in Nubra Valley at an elevation of 10,442 feet above sea level, the hot springs at Panamik are exactly what you want.

Kheerganga Himachal Pradesh

We all love Kasol, right? But what we don't know is there is a tiny heaven, called Kheerganga perched near Kasol and easily accessible via an uphill trek. The hot spring welcomes you with its warm waters and picturesque landscape.



Gaurikund Uttarakhand

The holy pilgrimage of Kedarnath is on everyone's bucket list. What we need to add to that list is the Gaurikund hot spring, situated at a height of 6000 feet above sea level. Serving the purpose as a base camp for trekkers en route to Kedarnath, Gaurikund is a special place for those looking to worship Mahadev at Kedarnath and for those looking to take a dip in the holy waters of Gaurikund to cleanse themselves of all ailments.

South India's Only Fiery Blessing

India's hidden jewel in South India

Bendru Theertha

South India

Bendru Theertha, nestled in Dakshin Kannada district of Karnataka, is India's lone natural spring in the southern part of the country, and a gem not to be missed. The surprising part of this natural hot spring is that the water here is lukewarm, unlike the other hot springs, and visitors can easily take a dip in this spring without the fear of scalding hot water touching the skin.

Nature has abundant surprises and we've to keep discovering them to truly know that nature is our best doctor! 10



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Abhay Kumar

in a Candid Conversation with

TOURISM ONE

Abhay Kumar is a writer and a diplomat. A creative powerhouse, he wears multiple hats as poet, translator, writer, editor, lyricist, and diplomat. Kumar enjoys an illustrious career in the Ministry of External Affairs – India. Here, with Tourism One, Abhay Kumar shares his literary ideas, his connection with history, and love for travel.



Hawa Mahal, Jaipur

1. **Abhay K - a diplomat or a writer?**

A writer and a diplomat, but also a poet, editor, translator and artist.

2. **Your job takes you to different destinations. How does travel shape your personality, thoughts, and life? Which culture influenced you the most apart from India's?**

Travel gives me new perspectives, experiences and material to write about. I am what I am today because I have lived and travelled in different parts of the world. I have been influenced and shaped by different cultures. My diplomatic journey began in Russia, where I spent five years in the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, then three and a half years in Nepal, three years in Brazil and three and a half years in Madagascar. I have loved living and working in all of these countries and have absorbed from their culture.

3. **Thoughts on Indian literature, especially Sanskrit literature?**

A. Indian literature is rich and diverse. It is written in over two dozen major languages, which is recognised by the Sahitya Akademi, the national academy of letters of India. There are many more languages in which literature is written.

4. **Sanskrit has always been a language of pundits and scholars. With its rich literature, why didn't this language become popular among commoners in India today?**

A. Sanskrit, an ancient Indo-Aryan language has evolved from proto Indo-European language and is known for its rich literary heritage with the oldest form, Vedic Sanskrit, used in the Vedas around 1500-500 BCE, later evolving into Classical Sanskrit.

Sanskrit and Prakrit gave way to Apabhramsa, which ultimately led to the birth of modern languages we speak today in many parts of India. When the number of speakers of a particular language grows exponentially, new languages are born.

5. Masters of Sanskrit literature never mentioned dates. It is always difficult to trace their time/age. Why? What made them write their treatises without giving dates or times?

A. Probably, they believed in the cyclic nature of time where past, present and future coexisted. Everything was eternal for them. However, it is possible to find out the approximate date of their literary creations from palaeographic and other literary sources.

6. **Your experiences translating two of Kalidasa's creations—Meghdootam and Ritusamharam.**

A. Translating these two poems of Kalidasa had an immense influence on me and inspired me to write a book-length poem, Monsoon, which was published by Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters). Monsoon draws inspiration from both Meghadutam and Ritusamharam.

Both Meghaduta and Ritusamhara focus on nature and sensuous love, the two eternal subjects. I began by translating Meghaduta and was overwhelmed with its sheer beauty and splendour. I found an immediate connection with the poem being far away from India in Madagascar. Reading these two classics of Kalidasa was timely owing to lockdowns around the world, thereby making us reflect upon the impact of our actions on the environment.

Nature abounded in Madagascar, and I internalized everything as if the spirit of Kalidasa's Yaksha had entered within me, and I started thinking of recreating the same Rasa in my new poem Monsoon, as I find very little of it in contemporary poetry.



Neemrana Fort Palace

7. **There is a popular belief that Nalanda University housed books older than the Rigveda. Do you think there is any truth to this claim?**

A. No. Nalanda was home to Buddha's teachings and Prajnaparamita Sutras, which were composed much later.

8. **About your latest book: Nalanda: How It Changed the World.**

A. Much about Nalanda remains a mystery. When was it founded, who founded it, and who studied and taught there? What subjects were taught? How many students and teachers were there? Was Nalanda a university in the modern sense? What led to Nalanda's downfall?

I unveil these mysteries in this book and tells the story of the rise, fall and revival of Nalanda, highlighting its contributions in various fields such as science, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, art, architecture, translation, poetry, script, grammar, religion among others. I also explore the lives of the great luminaries who contributed to Nalanda's unparalleled reputation as the pre-eminent seat of knowledge and learning, as well as the foreign scholars who visited the celebrated monastery, through this seminal work based on extensive research.

9. **India has been systematically attacked for centuries, with multiple attempts to demolish our history and culture. Is it fair to say that outsiders have made sincere efforts to erase our history from public memory?**

A. India has continued to retain its culture of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam despite all the storms that came throughout its history. No wonder poet Iqbal wrote these poetic lines—

“Yunan-o-Misr-o-Roma sab mit gaye
jahan se

Ab tak magar hai baki naam-o-
nishan hamara

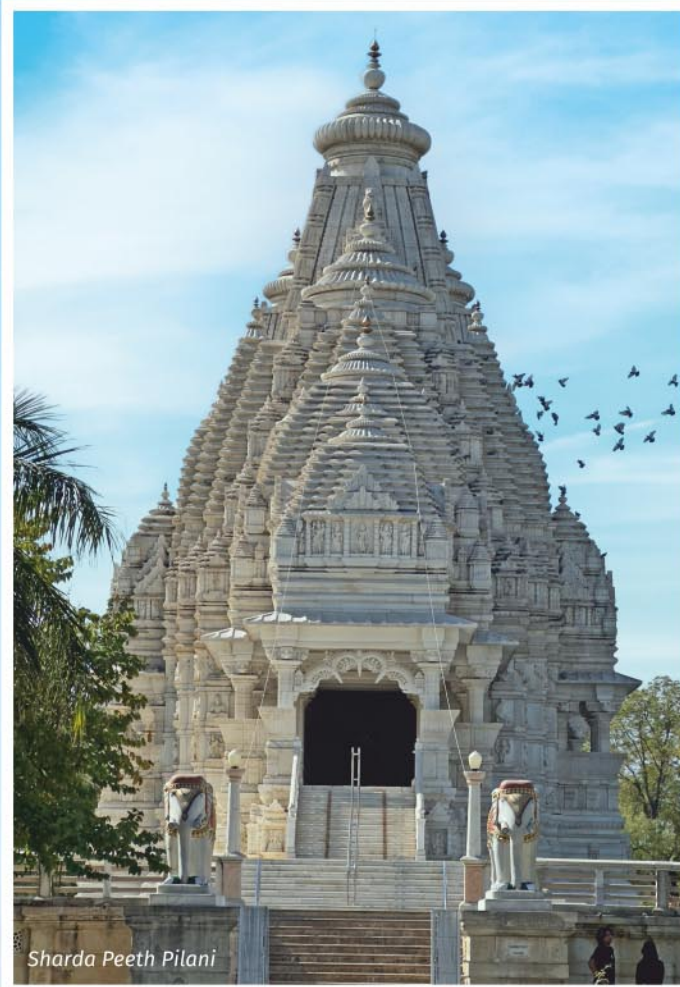
Kuchh baat hai ke hasti mit'ti
nahin hamari

Sadiyon raha hai dushman daur-e-
zaman hamara.”

10. **Why is the study of history and literature important for any civilization, with special reference to India? Do you think our current problems have solutions in texts written a few thousand years ago? How?**

History and literature are the foundations of any civilisation. Without them, there is no civilisation. We can certainly derive inspiration from the ancient texts, however, contemporary problems need contemporary solutions.

A HEART-TO-HEART WITH PRAVEG



Sharda Peeth Pilani

11. What inspired you to write an Earth Anthem?

- A. I wrote Earth Anthem in 2008 in St Petersburg, Russia, inspired by the blue marble image of our planet taken by the crew of Apollo 16 and the ancient Indian philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

12. How does your anthem differ from other anthems—Mother Earth (Natural Anthem) by Neil Young, Earth Song by Michael Jackson, and Earth by Lil Dicky?

- A. Earth Anthem is an anthem that eulogizes the Earth, its beauty, and its biodiversity. It is a song that can be sung by anybody, anywhere, any day to pay tribute to planet Earth. It was put to music by Sapan Ghimire in 2013 and sung by Shreya Sotang. Later its music was composed by violin maestro Dr. L. Subramaniam and it was sung by Kavita Krishnamurti.

Earth Anthem has been translated into 160+ world languages, including all six official UN languages and is used across the world to celebrate Earth Day and World Environment Day. It was played at the United Nations to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day in 2020.

It's different from other anthems/songs as its scope is not only humans but all the species that inhabit our planet as well as the oceans and continents. It takes a holistic and interdependent view of life on our planet and uses all the UN languages in its lyrics to reflect global diversity.

13. Sanskrit literature is often criticized as mere tales of kings and queens, driven purely by imagination. What are your thoughts?

- A. It's not correct. Sanskrit literature covers a wide range of subjects including science, grammar, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, poetry, novels, philosophy, and economics among others. Please remember the medium of teaching at the great monastery-university of Nalanda was Sanskrit and the great Sutra library of Nalanda had one of the greatest collections of Sanskrit literature.

14. Kālidāsa's Meghadūta is often admired for its poetic beauty, but scholars like Joseph Tiefertaler and others have also traced the geographical accuracy of the route described in the poem. Their studies suggest that this route persisted even into the 20th century. As someone who has translated Meghadūta, do you think Kālidāsa's work serves as more than just poetry—perhaps as a historical or geographical record as well?

Kalidasa's Meghadutam is not only an accurate description of geography of central India to the Himalayas, but also a record of the rich and varied flora and fauna of that region. I have not only translated Meghadutam and Ritusamharam, but have also written my poem, Monsoon, which uses the Kavya Sandesh genre of Kalidasa but expands the geography of Meghadutam to cover all the islands in the Indian Ocean as well as the entire Indian subcontinent. The poem follows the path of the monsoon from Madagascar to the Himalayas and back. ¹⁰

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LAKSHADWEEP
TINAKKARA

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Hemra Fort

Best Indian Travel Podcasts

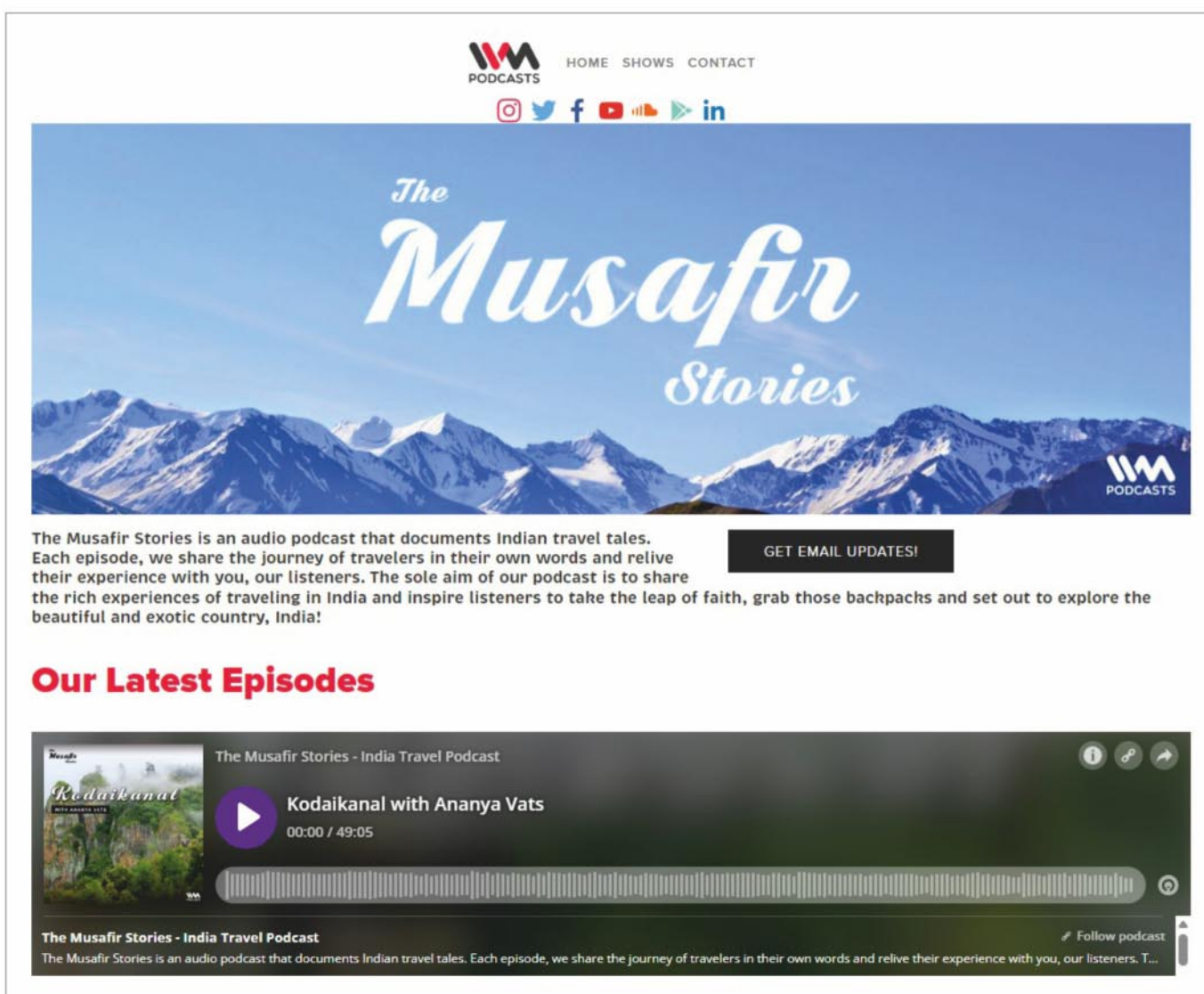
By MAHEK SIDDIQUI, Contributor

India is a land of storytellers, with each village, each region, and each community having something distinct to say. Whether it's hiking through the world-renowned Himalayas, getting lost in the majestic beauty of the Western Ghats, or enjoying the laid-back charm of coastal regions, every travel escapade is a saga of its own.

Several Indian travellers have documented their journeys on podcasts to help you experience different destinations through the power of audio. Tuning into these Indian travel podcasts offers a unique way to explore the subcontinent and add new places to your travel bucket list. Here are five of the best Indian travel podcasts that will not only fuel your wanderlust but also give you practical insights, cultural context, and a taste of the road less travelled.

The Musafir Stories

Available on
Spotify, Apple Podcasts, YouTube



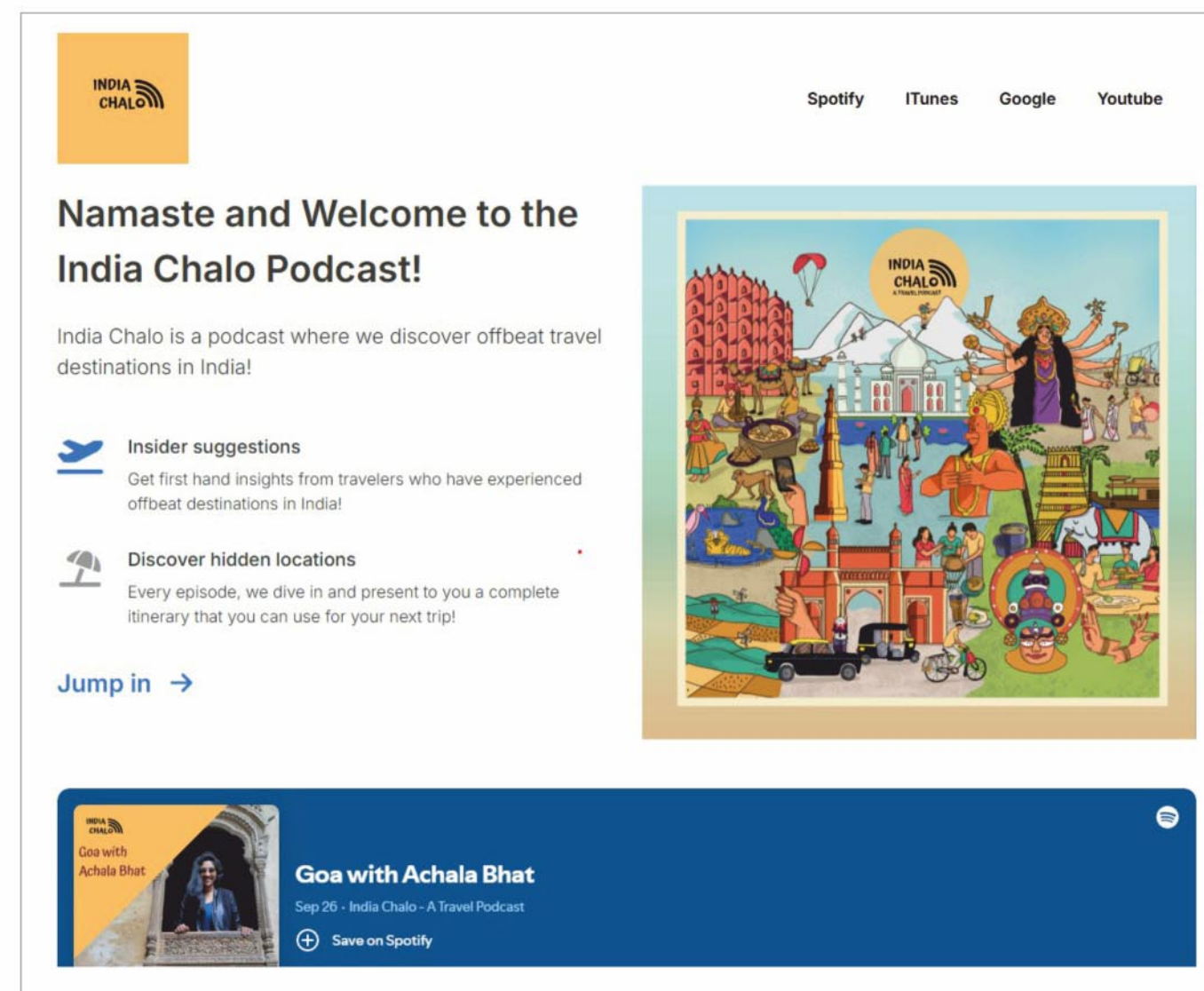
If you're someone who loves listening to first-person travel narratives packed with practical tips and deep cultural insights, The Musafir Stories is your go-to show. This podcast brings a different Indian traveller to the mic each week to talk about their experiences at varied Indian destinations.

What sets this podcast apart is its inclusive approach. You hear voices from across the country, from solo female travellers to couples, families, and motorbike enthusiasts. Episodes cover both popular places like Goa, Kolkata, and New Delhi, as well as offbeat gems like Arunachal Pradesh, Ratnagiri, and Nagaland.

It's not just about places but rather about the people who go there, the challenges they face, and the joys they discover along the way. The hosts are warm and curious, and the tone is friendly, making it feel like you're eavesdropping on a conversation between fellow travellers. It's the perfect companion for cosy evenings when you're dreaming of getting away from the daily grind.

India Chalo

Available on
Spotify, Apple Podcasts, JioSaavn



If you're drawn to immersive, guest-driven narratives that paint regional India in vivid color, India Chalo deserves a spot on your playlist. Aired in two seasons (2018-2022) with 16-17 episodes, the show features travellers sharing their journeys—from the sun-drenched beaches of Goa to the silent monasteries of Spiti Valley and the lush hills of Dharamkot.

Each episode brings a fresh voice and perspective. For instance, one traveller, Achala Bhat, recounts exploring Goa's Latin Quarter and charming cafes, while another, Niyati Saxena, takes you to Chitkul, which is India's last inhabited village, complete with heartwarming local encounters and scenic treks. Whether it's mountain trails, coastal escapes, or cultural trails, the podcast blends practical insights like where to stay and what to expect with atmospheric storytelling.

This show marries relatable travel tips with a sense of wanderlust that'll keep you hooked. It's perfect for curious travellers seeking real stories, actionable advice, and a taste of India's diverse landscapes.

Travel Katta

Available on
Spotify, YouTube, Google Podcasts

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TRAVEL कट्टा

WITH SUNILA PATIL

मराठी

ट्रॅवल कट्टा | Travel Katta with Sunila Patil | Marathi Travel Podcast

As the name suggests, Travel Katta is a casual conversation hub hosted by Sunila Patil, where seasoned travellers gather to share their incredible travel stories. This podcast is designed to educate and entertain, offering a blend of captivating stories, unique experiences, valuable knowledge, stunning visuals, and much more. A fresh episode drops every alternate Wednesday. Join us on this journey of exploration and discovery – see you on the other side!

जसे नाव सुचवले, Travel Katta म्हणजेच एक गप्पांचा कट्टा, जिथे होस्ट सुनीला पाटील अनुभवी प्रवाशांसोबत त्यांच्या रोमांचक प्रवासकथा शेअर करतात. हा पॉडकास्ट तुमचे मनोरंजन करण्यासाठी आणि माहिती देण्यासाठी खास तयार करण्यात आला आहे, जिथे तुम्हाला मिळतील अद्भुत कथा, अनेक अनुभव, मौल्यवान ज्ञान, नेत्रदीपक दृश्ये आणि बरेच काही. नवीन एपिसोड दर पंधरवड्यात बुधवारी उपलब्ध होईल. नवीन अनुभव आणि कथा ऐकण्यासाठी तयार राहा, चला, या अनेक प्रवासाचा भाग बनूया!

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Ep: 5

41:24 min

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Ep: 6

31:36 min

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30 Apr, 2025

Travel Katta is one of the few regional-language travel podcasts in India and a true delight for Marathi-speaking audiences. It offers a heady blend of storytelling, nostalgia, and practical travel tips.

The word “katta” in Marathi literally means a place for friends to sit and talk casually, and this podcast certainly feels just like that. It’s like having a tête-à-tête with someone who loves exploring the world. The host, Sunila Patil, shares her personal travel experiences across India and abroad, weaving in memories, cultural observations, and suggestions for fellow travellers.

What’s truly commendable is how the podcast remains rooted in the local while embracing the global. It serves as a rare example of how regional language content can thrive in the podcasting space, offering listeners a unique cultural lens on travel.

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Postcards from Nowhere is a travel podcast that takes you on journeys exploring culture, history, food and people in the form of stories. With over a decade of travel stories in his kitty, Utsav Mamoria narrates the stories of the strange, obscure and fascinating things about the world, often interspersed with practical tips and deep realizations, which would shape the way you travel. Tune in to the new episode every Thursday.

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Postcards From Nowhere with Utsav Mamoria

The intertwined destinies of Ramen and Japan - Part 1

00:00 / 08:42

Postcards From Nowhere with Utsav Mamoria

Postcards from Nowhere is a travel podcast that takes you on journeys exploring culture, history, food and people in the form of stories. With over a decade of travel stories in his kitty, Utsav Mam...

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This podcast is a compilation of short and thought-provoking episodes that will expand your knowledge and lend you new perspectives about the world. It’s packed with layered storytelling on unique topics such as how the ice age shaped Indian food, the history of incense trade routes, the evolution of Polish food, and much more.


The host, Utsav Mamoria, beautifully explores the intersection of travel, history, culture, and personal philosophy. Each 8–15-minute episode dives deep into one specific idea, memory, or curiosity, often starting with a seemingly simple anecdote and expanding into a rich tapestry of insights.

What makes Postcards from Nowhere stand out is its literary quality. Utsav doesn’t just describe where he went, but he examines why we travel, what we remember, and how experiences shape us. It’s perfect for mindful travellers who appreciate depth, nuance, and storytelling with soul.

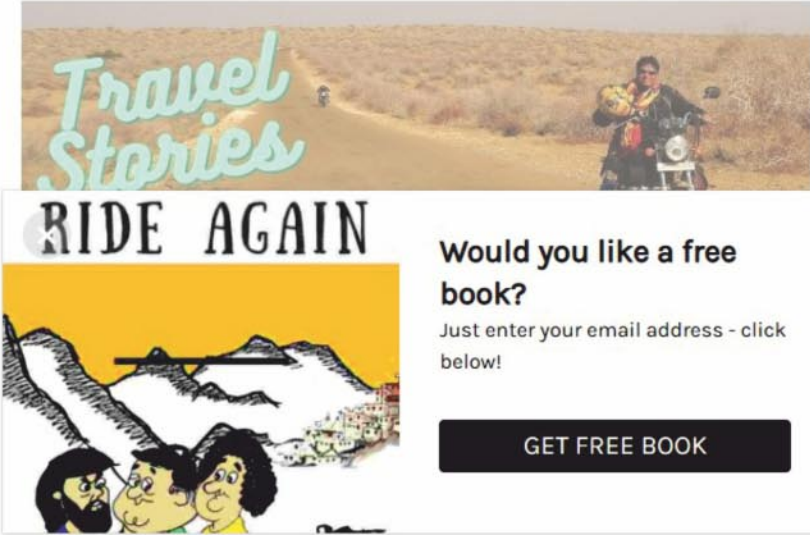
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Travel with Ketan

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If you're after a travel podcast that feels like a laughter-filled road trip with an old friend, Travel with Ketan hits the mark. The host, Ketan Joshi, has authored several travel-themed books such as the Three Men on Motorcycles series and the One Man Goes Backpacking series.

This podcast chronicles his adventures across India and beyond, often on a Royal Enfield. The episodes are structured as bite-sized travelogues (most range from 10-30 minutes), blending humour, history, and practical travel advice. Highlights include Himalayan escapades like crossing the daunting Kunzum and Rohtang passes in Spiti, as well as quirky tales from places like Kasol, Manikaran, and Chandigarh that are peppered with local lore.

What makes this podcast especially engaging is Ketan's lively storytelling. He vividly paints the journey, be it a nerve-racking puncture at high altitude, a playful karmic moment in Manali, or navigating chaotic Indian traffic with a tone that's both amusing and authentic.

Wrapping Up

In a content landscape saturated with YouTube vlogs and Instagram reels, podcasts offer some refreshing slowness. They allow you to pause, imagine, and absorb. Indian travel podcasts, in particular, are important because they highlight regional voices, diverse languages, and homegrown experiences that are often overlooked by global audiences. They also challenge stereotypes. They show that Indian travellers are not a monolith; they are solo adventurers, senior citizens, weekend warriors, photographers, foodies, and history buffs. They document not just destinations, but the emotional, cultural, and even political landscapes of travel. So, put on your headphones, hit play, and let these voices take you somewhere you haven't been before.

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India Eats Dalwada (Lentil Fritters)

Crispy, spicy fritters for an irresistible teatime snack

By JAYESH PUROHIT, Staff Writer

Dalwada are crispy, spicy lentil fritters — a Monsoon special recipe that pairs perfectly with a hot cup of tea or coffee. Made with your choice of lentils, aromatic spices, and fresh herbs, these deep-fried delights are crunchy on the outside and soft inside. Whether you're hosting a festive gathering or simply craving something flavourful on a rainy day, Dalwada makes for an irresistible teatime snack. Serve them with chutneys like coconut, coriander, garlic, or mint. For a healthier twist, you can even air-fry them!

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup moong dal (yellow split lentils)
- ¼ cup bengal gram (chana dal, optional but recommended)
- 2 tablespoons urad dal (optional)
- ½ to ¾ teaspoon garam masala
- 1½ teaspoon ginger garlic paste (or ¾ inch ginger and 2 garlic cloves)
- 1 onion finely chopped
- 2 to 3 green chopped chilies (adjust to taste)
- 2 dried red chilies (optional for extra heat)
- 2 sprigs curry leaves (finely chopped)
- 3 tablespoons coriander leaves (fine chopped)
- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds (jeera)
- ½ to ¾ teaspoon salt (adjust to taste)
- Oil for deep frying



Preparation

- Wash and soak all lentils for 2 hours, then drain and rinse well.
- Set aside 2 to 3 tablespoons of the soaked lentils separately.
- If using red chilies, grind them first, then add the remaining lentils and pulse to a coarse paste without water.
- Transfer the mixture to a bowl and add the reserved lentils, garam masala, green chilies, ginger-garlic paste, curry leaves, coriander, onions, and cumin. Mix thoroughly.
- Check the consistency by shaping a ball and flattening it; it should hold its shape. If not, blend about ¼ cup of the mixture again and mix it back in.
- Taste and adjust salt as needed.

Method

Heat oil in a deep pan for frying.

Take small portions of the mixture, shape into balls, and flatten them on a greased surface.

You should get about 10 vadas.

Test the oil temperature by dropping a tiny bit of the mixture — it should rise slowly without turning brown.

Gently transfer the vadas from your greased fingers into the hot oil. Fry 2 to 3 at a time, depending on the pan size.

Fry on medium flame. Avoid stirring for the first 2 minutes to prevent them from breaking.

After 2 minutes, flip and fry until golden and crisp. Drain on kitchen paper.

Repeat the process with the remaining mixture.

Serve hot with chutney or tea.

Recipes by www.indianhealthyrecipes.com

Boondi Ladoo

A popular, traditional Indian sweet for festivals

By JAYESH PUROHIT, Staff Writer

Dalwada are crispy, spicy lentil fritters — a Monsoon special recipe that pairs perfectly with a hot cup of tea or coffee. Made with your choice of lentils, aromatic spices, and fresh herbs, these deep-fried delights are crunchy on the outside and soft inside. Whether you're hosting a festive gathering or simply craving something flavourful on a rainy day, Dalwada makes for an irresistible teatime snack. Serve them with chutneys like coconut, coriander, garlic, or mint. For a healthier twist, you can even air-fry them!

Ingredients

For boondi batter

- 1 ¼ cup besan (115 grams of gram flour, sifted or sieved)
- ½ to ¾ cup water (approximately)

Other ingredients

- Ghee or oil as needed for deep frying
- 6 green cardamoms (2.5 grams)
- 12 cashews (20 grams)
- 15 raisins (10 grams)
- 5-gram rock sugar pieces (1 tsp)
- 1 pinch edible camphor (optional)

For sugar syrup

- 1 ¼ cup sugar (225 grams)
- ¾ cup water



Prepare the Batter

- In a mixing bowl, add besan (gram flour) and ½ cup water. Mix to form a smooth, lump-free batter. Add more water as needed to achieve a free-flowing consistency - not too thick or too runny.

Heat the Oil/Ghee

- Heat ghee or oil in a kadai. For added flavour, mix 2 tablespoons of ghee into the oil. The oil should be hot but not smoking.

Test the Batter & Oil

- Drop a bit of batter into the oil. If it sizzles, forms round boondi, and rises without browning, the temperature is right.
- If boondi has tails: batter is too thick — add a little water.
- If boondi is flat: batter is too thin or oil isn't hot enough — sprinkle a little besan to adjust.

Method

Fry the Boondi

- Pour a ladleful of batter over a boondi jhara (perforated ladle), spreading it gently to drop small round droplets into the oil.
- Fry just until the bubbles subside and raw smell disappears. Do not fry until crispy.
- Remove to a steel colander and continue frying the rest in batches.

Fry Nuts & Add-ons

- In the same oil or ghee, fry cashews until light golden, then add raisins. Once they puff up, transfer both to the boondi bowl.
- If using rock sugar (किरी), add it at this stage.

Making Sugar Syrup

- In a pot, boil sugar and water until you reach one-string consistency. To test, cool a drop of syrup, press it between your thumb and index finger, and gently pull apart — a single thread should form.
- Turn off the heat. Add crushed cloves, cardamom powder, and a pinch of edible camphor. Mix well.

Making Boondi Ladoo

- Add the boondi, cashews, and raisins to the hot syrup and mix well. Let it rest for 5–10 minutes until the syrup is fully absorbed.
- While the mixture is still warm, shape into laddoos. No need to grease your hands.
- Once cooled completely, store in an airtight container.

Recipes by www.indianhealthyrecipes.com

Tricolour Dhokla Recipe (Tiranga Dhokla)

Gujju Taste with Colours of Nationalism, Taste of India

By JAYESH PUROHIT, Staff Writer

This 15th August, as India prepares to celebrate 78 glorious years of independence, the spirit of patriotism is in the air and on our plates too! While the nation is draped in the vibrant hues of the Tiranga, let's bring that same tricolour magic into our kitchens with a festive twist on a beloved Gujarati dish — the Tricolour Dhokla (Tiranga Dhokla). Layered in saffron, white, and green to represent the Indian flag, this soft and flavourful snack is a perfect way to honour the occasion with a burst of taste and tradition.

Ingredients

(Ingredients for all the three colours are almost similar except some minor differences)

Ingredient	Orange Layer (Saffron)	White Layer	Green Layer
Besan (gram flour)	6 tbsp	–	6 tbsp
Rava (semolina)	–	1/4 cup	–
Curd	1/4 cup	2 tbsp	1/4 cup
Carrot Puree	2 tbsp	–	–
Spinach Puree	–	–	2 tbsp
Coconut (grated)	–	1 tbsp	–
Lemon Juice	1/2 tbsp	1/4 tbsp	1/2 tbsp
Sugar	1/2 tbsp	1/4 tbsp	1/2 tbsp
Oil	1/2 tbsp	1/4 tbsp	1/2 tbsp
Eno Fruit Salt	1/2 tbsp	1/4 tbsp	1/2 tbsp
Ginger (grated)	1/4 tsp	1/4 tsp	1/4 tsp
Green Chilli (chopped)	1	1	1
Salt	As per taste	As per taste	As per taste
Water	2 tbsp	1 tbsp	2 tbsp

For Tempering:

- 1 tbsp Oil
- 2-3 Curry Leaves
- 1/2 tsp Mustard Seeds
- 1/2 tsp Cumin Seeds
- 1/4 cup Water
- 2 Green Chilies slit them and cut into halves
- 1 tbsp Coriander Leaves chopped
- 2 tbsp Fresh Coconut grated - optional



Method

Start by preparing your steamer — pour enough water into it and switch it on so it begins to heat while you prepare the batter. Also, grease the dish or container in which you'll be steaming the dhokla to prevent sticking.

Now, divide your work into three separate bowls — one each for the orange, white, and green layers. In each bowl, add the respective ingredients as listed in the ingredient table above, except for Eno and water.

Once the dry ingredients and purées (carrot for orange, coconut for white, and spinach for green) are added to their respective bowls, pour in the specified amount of water and mix well until smooth, lump-free batters are formed.

Now it's time to work quickly. Start with the orange batter: add Eno fruit salt to the bowl, stir vigorously in one direction for about 45 to 60 seconds — you'll notice the batter become airy and light. Immediately pour this into the greased dish and spread it evenly.

Repeat the same process with the white batter — add Eno, mix briskly, and then gently pour it over the orange layer, spreading it evenly without disturbing the layer below.

Finally, do the same with the green batter, pouring it over the white layer and smoothing the surface gently.

Once all three layers are assembled, place the dish into the steamer and steam for 25 to 30 minutes on medium heat. To check if the dhokla is cooked, insert a toothpick into the centre — if it comes out clean, it's ready. If not, steam for another 5 minutes and check again.

After steaming, remove the dish from the steamer and allow it to cool completely. Once cool, gently invert the dhokla onto a plate so that the orange layer is on top, followed by white and green — mirroring the Indian national flag.

Cut into pieces and serve this soft, fluffy, and colourful dhokla with green chutney or enjoy it as is!

Recipes by [blessmyfoodbypayal.com](https://www.blessmyfoodbypayal.com)

Drumstick Soup

Warm, nutritious, and perfect for the monsoon!

By JAYESH PUROHIT, Staff Writer

Drumstick soup, a popular Chettinad speciality, is known for its bold flavours but can often be overly spicy in restaurants. A milder, home-cooked version with balanced spices brings out its true taste. There are several variations: some prepare it as a clear soup, others enrich it with cream, milk, or coconut milk. This recipe uses a small amount of lentils, which naturally thicken the soup and enhance its flavour, eliminating the need for cream or cornflour. Rich in iron, calcium, and antioxidants, drumstick soup is especially nourishing during the monsoon season.

Ingredients:

- 4 Drumsticks
- 1 tablespoon Toor Dal (Pigeon pea)
- 1 Onion (medium size)
- 3 Garlic cloves
- 1 Tomato (small size)
- ½ teaspoon Pepper Powder coarse
- 1 teaspoon salt (adjust to your taste)
- 1 tablespoon coriander leaves

For Tempering

- 1 tablespoon Cooking Oil (or butter)
- 1 Bay Leaf
- 1-inch Cinnamon Stick
- 2 Cloves



Making Drumstick and Toor Dal

Cut drumsticks into small pieces and pressure cook them with 4 cups of water. Do not discard the water as it contains the nutrients and flavour — strain and set it aside. Scoop out the pulp from the cooked drumsticks and keep it ready. Separately, pressure cook toor dal until soft.

Method

Making the Soup

Heat a pan and add oil or butter.

Add the seasoned ingredients and sauté for a minute.

Add finely chopped onions and garlic with a pinch of salt. Sauté until onions turn transparent (not brown).

Add chopped tomatoes and peppercorns; cook until tomatoes turn mushy.

Add mashed toor dal and mix well.

Pour in the drumstick water and let the mixture simmer on a low flame.

Add half of the drumstick pulp, reserving the rest. Boil for 10 minutes on a low flame. Add salt to taste.

Remove from the flame, let it cool slightly, and blend into a smooth soup.

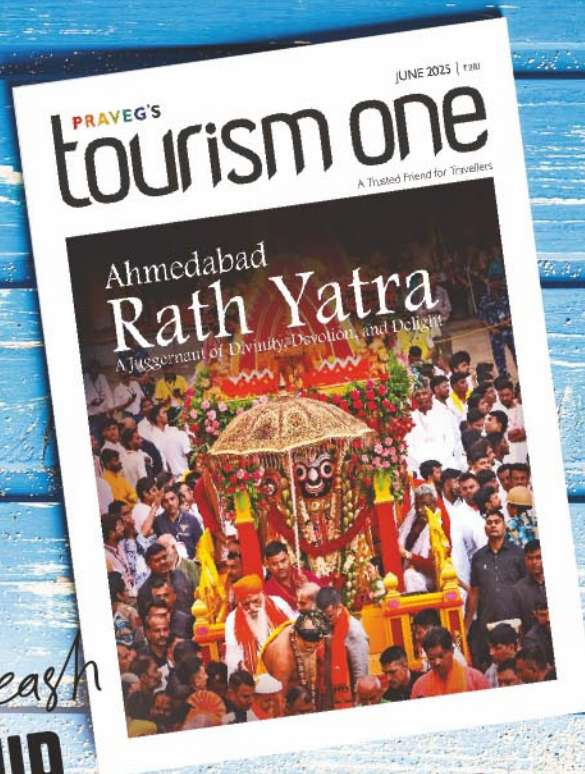
Clean the pan, return to flame, and pour in the blended soup along with the remaining pulp. Stir well.

Simmer on low flame for another 10 minutes.

Garnish with coarse pepper and chopped coriander leaves.

Drumstick Soup is ready to serve — warm, nutritious, and perfect for the monsoon!

Recipes by www.subbuskitchen.com



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