The List

WORLD'S BEST SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

Mexico City

THE PLAY OF VIBRANT MURALS AND STREET ART

Ho Chi Minh City

THE CITY’S ROMANCE WITH FRENCH COLONIAL STRUCTURES

Reflections of Time

WALKING THROUGH MUMBAI’S ART DECO STREETS

CITY TRAILS

HYDERABAD

JUST BACK

CHIANG MAI

POSH

FORT BARWARA
“We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us”
— Winston Churchill

**explore**

**30 The List**
Team OT
Sustainable buildings across the globe

**38 Mumbai**
Team OT
All about Mumbai’s historical Art Deco buildings

**44 Mexico**
Roopkheeta Das
All about the city’s murals and street art

**50 Ho Chi Minh**
Team OT
Vietnam’s most popular city’s modern aspirations

**Compass**

**16 WHEELING SOLO**
And the Andaman adventure

**18 SPINDRIFT**
And an off-shore miracle in Kerala

**22 JUST BACK**
From Bo Sang in Thailand’s Chiang Mai

---

**EXPLORE PLATEAU ASSY, ALMATY REGION**

Air Astana operates direct flights between Delhi and Almaty. We are your wings to explore Plateau Assy, Charyn Canyon, Altyn Emel National Park, Medeu Skating Rink, Big Almaty Lake or the city’s gleaming malls and spots to dine.
posh
54 FORT BARWARA
Six Senses’ first outpost in India indulges one in Rajasthan’s royal heritage and history

eat
60 CHEF INTERVIEW
Vaibhav Bhargava’s love for Delhi and ode to Vietnam

back
72 BOOKS
Amri – An Expression of Love by Prasanna Pandarinathan

74 FINAL SHOT
I wasn’t much of an art guy for the longest time. In my school days, I’d do revolting things like finish house work on my elder sister’s behalf, accompany her to dance classes, drop her for tuitions and even obey her (pathetic, I know!) — all just to make her do the requisite sketches and paintings.

As I grew older, though, several things changed. I became calmer, my sensibilities evolved, I was more culturally inclined about places and people. And I realised that, despite her devilish acts, I loved my sister.

She was always deeply invested in the arts — and it was because of her that my aesthetic sense developed strongly over time. She would find fluidity in things that I thought were just collections of geometric patterns.

There was, however, one thing we shared. Both of us loved reading and would discuss whatever books we read.

It’s strange to even think that one wouldn’t know what Art Deco means, but to be honest, I didn’t — not quite, and not till I was a teenager. My sister was reading something about French culture and that’s when this term was introduced to me. After a deeper discussion on it, I was pulled in — everything about Art Deco seemed magnetic!

Norbert Wolf’s book, Art Deco, is a fascinating window into the world of its eponymous subject. It’s a must-read.
The Ganga and Uttar Pradesh:
A STATELY CONNECTION

Based on episodes 13 & 14 of Rag Rag Mein Ganga: https://youtube.com/doordarshan

The sarus crane is the state bird of Uttar Pradesh. A vulnerable, non-migratory bird, it is found in north India and is easily recognised by its red-coloured head. It is perhaps fitting then that one of the state’s most important floodplains, the Indo-Gangetic floodplain, plays a very important role in the protection and conservation of the cranes.

Spread over 161.3 hectares, the Sarsai Wetland lies close to the city of Etawah. It has been recognised as a Ramsar site, and the slushy, black cotton mud it uses as a nesting habitat for the sarus crane is the state bird of Uttar Pradesh.

The Namami Gange project clearly shows the way forward. When it comes to tanneries, the NMCG authorities are increasingly recommending the adoption of greener, more eco-friendly in-house practices as well as the use of natural, less-polluting chemicals. Additionally, filters and plants to treat and recycle the different types of pollutants generated in these factories are being installed. These include zero liquid discharge plants which ensure that the tanneries treat and recycle effluents for reuse within the tanneries themselves.

Today, Chambal praharis are ensuring that the river’s inhabitants are no longer threatened by menaces such as river pollution and illegal activities such as poaching. The river authorities have also set up biodiversity information centres after every 20-kilometre stretch of the Chambal in Uttar Pradesh to spread awareness and educate tourists and locals on the need for river conservation and how it can be achieved. It’s a model that could be replicated in other parts of the country as well.

50 kilometres from Etawah lies another spectacular sight. The Pachnada—a confluence of the combined stream of the Yamuna and Chambal—and the confluence of the Sindh, Kuvani and Pahuj—is an area of immense natural beauty and a rich habitat of river dolphins. The confluence amply shows what’s possible when barriers are overcome and dissolved. Etawah’s river conservation efforts are exemplary—and its reputation as a religious destination (it is home to one of the 51 shakti pithas) and its reputation as a religious destination (it is home to one of the 51 shakti pithas) and as local people and the authorities are coming together to maintain and clean ghats such as Sarsaiya Ghat and Atal Ghat, and river banks.

The river-conservation efforts in Etawah and Kanpur show all that is achievable in the face of insurmountable odds, should we face them with sustained courage and dedication. More such efforts are the need of the hour—and the Namami Gange project clearly shows the way forward.

The Ganga and Uttar Pradesh: A STATELY CONNECTION

Based on episodes 13 & 14 of Rag Rag Mein Ganga: https://youtube.com/doordarshan

The sarus crane is the state bird of Uttar Pradesh. A vulnerable, non-migratory bird, it is found in north India and is easily recognised by its red-coloured head. It is perhaps fitting then that one of the state’s most important floodplains, the Indo-Gangetic floodplain, plays a very important role in the protection and conservation of the cranes.

Spread over 161.3 hectares, the Sarsai Wetland lies close to the city of Etawah. It has been recognised as a Ramsar site, and the slushy, black cotton mud it uses as a nesting habitat for the sarus crane is the state bird of Uttar Pradesh.

The Namami Gange project clearly shows the way forward. When it comes to tanneries, the NMCG authorities are increasingly recommending the adoption of greener, more eco-friendly in-house practices as well as the use of natural, less-polluting chemicals. Additionally, filters and plants to treat and recycle the different types of pollutants generated in these factories are being installed. These include zero liquid discharge plants which ensure that the tanneries treat and recycle effluents for reuse within the tanneries themselves.

Today, Chambal praharis are ensuring that the river’s inhabitants are no longer threatened by menaces such as river pollution and illegal activities such as poaching. The river authorities have also set up biodiversity information centres after every 20-kilometre stretch of the Chambal in Uttar Pradesh to spread awareness and educate tourists and locals on the need for river conservation and how it can be achieved. It’s a model that could be replicated in other parts of the country as well.

50 kilometres from Etawah lies another spectacular sight. The Pachnada—a confluence of the combined stream of the Yamuna and Chambal—and the confluence of the Sindh, Kuvani and Pahuj—is an area of immense natural beauty and a rich habitat of river dolphins. The confluence amply shows what’s possible when barriers are overcome and dissolved. Etawah’s river conservation efforts are exemplary—and its reputation as a religious destination (it is home to one of the 51 shakti pithas) and as local people and the authorities are coming together to maintain and clean ghats such as Sarsaiya Ghat and Atal Ghat, and river banks.

The river-conservation efforts in Etawah and Kanpur show all that is achievable in the face of insurmountable odds, should we face them with sustained courage and dedication. More such efforts are the need of the hour—and the Namami Gange project clearly shows the way forward.

The Ganga and Uttar Pradesh: A STATELY CONNECTION

Based on episodes 13 & 14 of Rag Rag Mein Ganga: https://youtube.com/doordarshan

The sarus crane is the state bird of Uttar Pradesh. A vulnerable, non-migratory bird, it is found in north India and is easily recognised by its red-coloured head. It is perhaps fitting then that one of the state’s most important floodplains, the Indo-Gangetic floodplain, plays a very important role in the protection and conservation of the cranes.

Spread over 161.3 hectares, the Sarsai Wetland lies close to the city of Etawah. It has been recognised as a Ramsar site, and the slushy, black cotton mud it uses as a nesting habitat for the sarus crane is the state bird of Uttar Pradesh.

The Namami Gange project clearly shows the way forward. When it comes to tanneries, the NMCG authorities are increasingly recommending the adoption of greener, more eco-friendly in-house practices as well as the use of natural, less-polluting chemicals. Additionally, filters and plants to treat and recycle the different types of pollutants generated in these factories are being installed. These include zero liquid discharge plants which ensure that the tanneries treat and recycle effluents for reuse within the tanneries themselves.

Today, Chambal praharis are ensuring that the river’s inhabitants are no longer threatened by menaces such as river pollution and illegal activities such as poaching. The river authorities have also set up biodiversity information centres after every 20-kilometre stretch of the Chambal in Uttar Pradesh to spread awareness and educate tourists and locals on the need for river conservation and how it can be achieved. It’s a model that could be replicated in other parts of the country as well.

50 kilometres from Etawah lies another spectacular sight. The Pachnada—a confluence of the combined stream of the Yamuna and Chambal—and the confluence of the Sindh, Kuvani and Pahuj—is an area of immense natural beauty and a rich habitat of river dolphins. The confluence amply shows what’s possible when barriers are overcome and dissolved. Etawah’s river conservation efforts are exemplary—and its reputation as a religious destination (it is home to one of the 51 shakti pithas) and as local people and the authorities are coming together to maintain and clean ghats such as Sarsaiya Ghat and Atal Ghat, and river banks.

The river-conservation efforts in Etawah and Kanpur show all that is achievable in the face of insurmountable odds, should we face them with sustained courage and dedication. More such efforts are the need of the hour—and the Namami Gange project clearly shows the way forward.
Venice, a traveller’s paradise, boasts of destinations galore. It’s one of the reasons why the city suffers from the problem of excess — Venice has been dealing with overtourism for quite some time now. So, when one gets to know of another attraction coming up in the city, it is only natural that fears regarding the possible ill effects start surfacing again.

With the latest addition, however, Venice is trying to leverage the excess number of tourists to generate awareness on social responsibility. The Procuratie Vecchie in the iconic St. Mark’s Square is one of the most well-known buildings in the city. Its porticoed ground floor houses some of the city’s most historic cafes, but the inaccessible fourth floor of the building has now been opened to the public for the first time in its history, from its origin in the early 1500s. After an extensive five-year renovation, the fourth floor is now home to a permanent exhibition. However, this is not your usual arts-and-crafts exhibition. The exhibition, called A world of Potential, is a unique one in the city and aims to explore social skills through the lens of technology. Features include interactive exhibits to cultivate thoughtfulness and empathy, teamwork games and a novel exercise in which you can raise a ball in the air, miraculously, through the power of concentration.

The proceeds from the exhibition’s ticket sales will go to The Human Safety Net, an organisation helping at-risk people such as refugees. Incidentally, the organisation’s headquarters will also be located on the fourth floor. On a different note, the same floor will also have a cafe with roof terraces offering a panoramic view of St. Mark’s Basilica and the famous bell tower.
Secure your trip with international travel insurance

The PhonePe app is a one-stop solution for all your international travel insurance needs. From covering unexpected medical expenses to assisting in case of losing a passport, here are the many benefits of international travel insurance available on the PhonePe platform.

What is International Travel Insurance?

In simpler terms, international travel insurance helps protect against unexpected events that, if they occur, might prove to be financially damaging during one’s travel. It covers several aspects of travel like emergency medical expenses, trip cancellation and delay, loss of baggage, delay of checked-in baggage, loss of passport, accidental death, etc.

Picking the right insurance travel that caters to your needs traditionally hasn’t been easy. Travelers typically suffer from a lack of information about the right policy to avail and the benefits they can avail with it. But now, with the fintech revolution in India especially in the last few years, obtaining the right travel insurance for all your needs has become seamless, hassle-free and is made available at your fingertips.

How to Pick The Right International Travel Insurance?

The PhonePe App is just a tap away! India’s first digital payment platform that enabled international travel insurance for its customers in January 2021. PhonePe has helped in redefining what a good customer focused international travel insurance product looks like for many Indians on its platform.

The travel insurance plans on the PhonePe App provide a wide range of choices that caters to all your international travel needs. It offers you a plethora of benefits that covers medical expenses, provides financial aid in case you lose your bag, bears the cost of cancellation of the trip, provides quick assistance in case you lose a passport and is a call away in case of any emergencies. Finally, it offers easy cancellation and instant refunds making it completely hassle free.

The plans on PhonePe app also cater to the current scenario, enabling a travel insurance plan that covers medical expenses for Covid-19 related treatment. The plan also provides coverage in US Dollars while the premium is in Indian Rupees.

These are the key elements that international travel insurance covers for:

- Covers financial loss and unexpected medical expenses: Along with these, it also helps in covering cashless hospitalisation abroad.
- 24/7 assistance during an emergency: Help is just a call away. You can avail help anytime you want.
- Protects fully against losses: The insurance provides full protection against losses like theft, flight delays, baggage loss, missed connections and more.
- Assists in case of losing a passport: If you are travelling and you end up losing your passport, that is the worst that can happen to anyone. With this insurance plan, you can get assistance to get a duplicate passport and also compensation for reasonable expenses incurred due to the unfortunate incident of losing a passport.
- Covers the cost of cancellation of a trip due to sickness/injury/death: You do not know what life has in store for you. A good policy reimburses expenses in case of cancellation of the insured trip due to certain events such as sickness, injury or death of the insured, the immediate family member or the travel companion.
Here’s why one should get international travel insurance on PhonePe!
PhonePe has enabled its customers travelling for business or leisure with insurance coverage that is relevant, convenient to buy and easy to self-serve. From covering unexpected medical expenses to assisting in case of losing a passport, International Travel Insurance available on PhonePe ensures complete peace of mind during your travel.

International travel insurance plans on PhonePe App will cover all your needs while also answering any queries related to the cover with full transparency. From providing instant refunds to coverage for family members and self in the same policy, PhonePe App provides the solution to all your international travel needs.

Here are the reasons why you should opt for international travel insurance on PhonePe:

• Coverage for Covid-19 related treatment
• Plans are underwritten by India’s trusted insurers like Bajaj Allianz and Tata AIG
• Users can customise their plan for a wide coverage amount ranging from USD 15,000 to USD 1 MN as per their requirements.
• One can compare plans and features and choose the best coverage.
• Instant cover with no medical tests.
• For PhonePe users, premiums start as low as Rs. 35 per day.
• Easy cancellations.
• Instant refunds with no cancellation changes as long as you cancel before the start of the day of your travel.
• Covers family members and self in the same plan.
• Provides 24/7 international travel assistance for customers throughout their journey across 220 countries.
• Insurance cover offers coverage against trip cancellation, theft, flight and baggage delays.
• Insurance is compliant with visa requirements.
• Business travellers can claim GST input credit.

Free Again

FREEDOM. IT’S THIS THOUGHT THAT CAME TO ME AS I strolled on the cobalt blue water of the Balearic Sea. On the other end, I could see the Gothic spires of the Castell de Bellver, the 14th-century cathedral that marks the city. I decided to walk towards it.

I was walking along the sunny, harbour-side promenade when the thought of freedom smacked me. Yes, I have been travelling in the Nordics, but the cold and the fear of catching COVID never left me in these trips. I had been to India, but there too, I couldn’t walk outside freely. Moreover, India was home, and I didn’t feel like I was stepping outside my comfort zone. Here in Mallorca, though, I experienced something different. I could stroll freely. I didn’t need to wear masks anywhere — and it felt like I had, after long, stepped into a world different from the ones in which I had spent the last two years.

In Palma, spring was in full bloom. The narrow pathways of the city were tree-lined and, at this time of the year, the yellows and the oranges peak these trees. As I continued exploring the side-streets, I came across art galleries, pottery stores selling hand-painted platters, bowls and, of course, restaurants. These restaurants (many of which were Indian) and cafes turn into party spots as the dusk gathers, and one could occasionally hear loud techno beats coming from inside. Otherwise, during the day, the seating area outside became a resting spot for both locals and tourists who sit there for long hours, sipping coffee.

I claimed a slot outside one of the cafes, among a sociable crowd that, perhaps, was experiencing the same sense of freedom as we. So, while planning your next international trip, remember to give priority to your health and safety and opt for International travel insurance on the PhonePe App. Get more details on the insurance plans on the PhonePe app.

Disclaimer
Group insurance for PhonePe users only. This is not an offer or invitation or recommendation to become a member of PhonePe App or purchase specific insurance policy.

NITIN CHAUDHARY

In Palma, spring was in full bloom. The narrow pathways of the city were tree-lined and, at this time of the year, the yellows and the oranges peak these trees. As I continued exploring the side-streets, I came across art galleries, pottery stores selling hand-painted platters, bowls and, of course, restaurants. These restaurants (many of which were Indian) and cafes turn into party spots as the dusk gathers, and one could occasionally hear loud techno beats coming from inside. Otherwise, during the day, the seating area outside became a resting spot for both locals and tourists who sit there for long hours, sipping coffee.

I claimed a slot outside one of the cafes, among a sociable crowd that, perhaps, was experiencing the same sense of freedom as we. So, while planning your next international trip, remember to give priority to your health and safety and opt for International travel insurance on the PhonePe App. Get more details on the insurance plans on the PhonePe app.

Disclaimer
Group insurance for PhonePe users only. This is not an offer or invitation or recommendation to become a member of PhonePe App or purchase specific insurance policy.
While on a trip to one of the Andaman islands a few summers ago, we went to a beach to shoot some aerial footage. Courtesy of a technical malfunction, that exercise ended with an expensive drone lodged in the branches of a towering tree near the waterline. This particular tree was at least three times as tall as any I’d seen before. Its trunk was so wide that two people couldn’t hold hands if they stood around it. There was simply no way any of us would have been able to climb the tree. We required some local help.

The challenge was that not everyone was happy to see or hear about drones. Given how remote this particular island was, it seemed safe to assume that they wouldn’t react kindly to such a strange gadget. I found myself in quite a predicament.

Left with no other choice, I eventually sought the advice of a few locals to figure out how we might recover our ‘toy’ from the top of a giant tree. I did my best to avoid focusing on what it was or how it ended up there. The recurring answer I got was that the only people who could climb that particular tree were the Nicobari Tribe who lived in a settlement on the other side of the island – who preferred to be left to themselves.

The challenge was that not everyone was happy to see or hear about drones. Given how remote this particular island was, it seemed safe to assume that they wouldn’t react kindly to such a strange gadget. I found myself in quite a predicament.

Left with no other choice, I eventually sought the advice of a few locals to figure out how we might recover our ‘toy’ from the top of a giant tree. I did my best to avoid focusing on what it was or how it ended up there. The recurring answer I got was that the only people who could climb that particular tree were the Nicobari Tribe who lived in a settlement on the other side of the island – who preferred to be left to themselves.

When I was granted an audience before the Chief, I told him the story of how “something” of ours was stuck on a “big tree.” I made the story unnecessarily complicated, while conveniently avoiding mentioning the “D” word, even when pressed for more information. A small crowd had gathered by now and they spent some time discussing my situation. Unfortunately, their verdict was that they could not be of any help. “Our men can climb the tallest of coconut trees, but we cannot give anyone the dangerous task of climbing this other tree,” he said.

My last ray of hope had vanished. But, I felt a certain sense of relief for having managed to get through all this without upsetting anyone or highlighting the fact that we had been using a “that” thing. Or, so I thought.

Just as I was leaving, the Chief called out to me again. He said, “By the way, if you find anyone who can climb that tree to recover your drone camera, ask them to also come here. My son was flying his drone the other day – and it also crashed into a tall tree.”

My jaw dropped, and then I was in splits! They must have thought me to be such a fool for assuming that they would not know what I was truly talking about. We city folks often believe that we know more than those who remain rooted to more traditional realities. The truth, however, is that the joke can often be on us.

Don’t Say the D Word!
Right now, a Miracle is happening off the shore of Kerala.

The winds and current, swirled up by the heat of the sun, have created a shallow, calm shoal in the Arabian Sea. This has attracted breeding fish. It will, later, give a rich silvery harvest for Kerala's fishermen.

But, that is not the only bonanza given by the gathering storm of the monsoon. Its soil-heavy waves also deposit long strips of earth parallel to Kerala shore. The waters also bring those packaged seafaring fruits – coconuts – and deposit them on these strips of new earth. The dimpled 'eyes' atop the coconut sense a favourable environment. A long-dormant biological system is awakened. The coconut strikes root, binding the embryonic coast. Others drift in, creating a new palm-fringed coastline. It encloses a stretch of inland water, joining a growing network of rivers, lakes, shimmering wetlands, and then, canals. Families settle on these virgin sea-gifted lands. A new backwater community has been born.

We have cruised through their fairy-tale water world often, and recall the collective experience with nostalgia. Here, then, are our many vivid memories distilled into a single cruise. All our backwater discoveries are made in traditional rice-boats, converted into small house-boats by one of India's most creative tourism entrepreneurs: Jose Dominic.

Very attentive crews handle the boat and its logistics. All we do is to loll back on cushioned cane chairs and let the backwaters unreel unhurriedly.

And it is timeless. No clock can record the feather-light shadows of palm fronds stroking our bodies as we drift below them. The soft perfume of incense reaches out from a church. It blends with the sugary chimes of bells, which were first heard in Kerala after the visit of Thomas Didymus, one of the twelve Apostles of Christ. We recall that the Government of India had issued a postage stamp to commemorate his visit.

Dawn settles gently, like a dream, on the backwaters of Kerala. At breakfast, there is the gentle tingle of appams and stew savoured with fresh palm toddy drawn before the sun has touched it. As the crew casts off the boat from its moorings, we see that the backwaters are awake with plunging bathers. A motorboat races past, carrying loads of newspapers to their eternally politically-savvy readers. Women, neck-deep in the flowing water, feel with their bare toes for the shy karimeen (the pearl spot fish) hidden in the sandy bottom of the backwater. They pluck them out and pop them into their floating earthen pots. We ask for fried fish and tapioca chips for lunch.

An eagle-eyed man spearfishes from the banks. A pre-teen boy lies at the edge of the backwater with his hands under the surface. He is, apparently, a reputed crab-catcher and has many scars on his fingers to vouch for his skill. Just as we sail past him, we hear a loud shout. He has either caught a crab, or a crab’s caught him!

We enter a huge, blue lake. And our backwater cruise is nearly over.

The sky behind the palms becomes an angry red, tinged with gold. And then, it flares into an eye-achingly scarlet shot with spears of molten brass. The backwaters have staged a spectacular finale for us.
Hyderabad is very well connected with all major cities. Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is 20 kms away from the city.

Hyderabad Deccan Railway Station, Secunderabad Railway Station and Kachiguda Railway Station are the main stations.

**QUTUB SHAH TOMBS**
A group of small and big mosques and tombs, the Qutub Shahi tombs were built by rulers of the Qutub Shahi dynasty.

**SALAR JUNG MUSEUM**
Established in 1931, the major portion of the collection of the museum was acquired by Mir Yousuf Ali Khan (known as Salar Jung III). It has a diverse collection of paintings and carvings.

**GOLCONDA FORT**
A massive fortress that once housed the Kohinoor diamond. It also hosts a light-and-sound show.

**HUSSEIN SAGAR LAKE**
One of the largest man-made lakes in the city, it has a statue of Lord Buddha right in the middle of the lake.

**CHARMINAR**
The identifying feature of the city, Charminar was erected by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah in 1591 to signify the founding of Hyderabad. The famous Laad Bazaar sprawls around it.

**TAJ FAULKNUMA PALACE**
Former residence of the Nizams. It has beautiful domes, arches and windows.

**TIRUPATI**
A unique mix of history, modern living and unending charm, Hyderabad’s understated regal monuments and age-old charm never fail to impress.

Compiled by MALIIKA BHAGAT
Illustrated by SAHIL

**HEART OF THE CITY**

**Charminar**
**Iconic Tombs**
**World of Cinema**
**Food Trail**
**Historical Monuments**
**Lakes & Gardens**

**So Much To Do**
Lakes, gardens, temples and more!

**Time to Eat**
- North Indian
- Hyderabadi food
- Telugu delicacies
- Famous Hyderabadi fare

**Street Photography and Hyderabad Architecture**

**HYDERABAD is accessible by air, road and rail**

![Map of Hyderabad](image-url)

All stops are within 30 minutes of each other.

Hyderabad is very well connected with all major cities. Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is 20 kms away from the city.

Hyderabad Deccan Railway Station, Secunderabad Railway Station and Kachiguda Railway Station are the main stations.

**QUITUB SHAH TOMBS**
A group of small and big mosques and tombs, the Qutub Shahi tombs were built by rulers of the Qutub Shahi dynasty.

**SALAR JUNG MUSEUM**
Established in 1931, the major portion of the collection of the museum was acquired by Mir Yousuf Ali Khan (known as Salar Jung III). It has a diverse collection of paintings and carvings.

**GOLCONDA FORT**
A massive fortress that once housed the Kohinoor diamond. It also hosts a light-and-sound show.

**HUSSEIN SAGAR LAKE**
One of the largest man-made lakes in the city, it has a statue of Lord Buddha right in the middle of the lake.

**CHARMINAR**
The identifying feature of the city, Charminar was erected by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah in 1591 to signify the founding of Hyderabad. The famous Laad Bazaar sprawls around it.

**TAJ FAULKNUMA PALACE**
Former residence of the Nizams. It has beautiful domes, arches and windows.

**TIRUPATI**
A unique mix of history, modern living and unending charm, Hyderabad’s understated regal monuments and age-old charm never fail to impress.

Compiled by MALIIKA BHAGAT
Illustrated by SAHIL

**HEART OF THE CITY**

**Charminar**
**Iconic Tombs**
**World of Cinema**
**Food Trail**
**Historical Monuments**
**Lakes & Gardens**

**So Much To Do**
Lakes, gardens, temples and more!

**Time to Eat**
- North Indian
- Hyderabadi food
- Telugu delicacies
- Famous Hyderabadi fare

**Street Photography and Hyderabad Architecture**

**HYDERABAD is accessible by air, road and rail**

![Map of Hyderabad](image-url)

All stops are within 30 minutes of each other.

Hyderabad is very well connected with all major cities. Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is 20 kms away from the city.

Hyderabad Deccan Railway Station, Secunderabad Railway Station and Kachiguda Railway Station are the main stations.
Where It Rains UMBRELLAS

A short drive from Thailand’s Chiang Mai, Mallika Bhagat meets a community that has been making paper umbrellas for over a century

Purple, pink, lime, blue, yellow, white, red, green. In every shade of every colour imaginable, umbrellas line the alleys of Bo Sang in Thailand’s Chiang Mai. In this village, approximately 10 kilometres from the city centre, women are hard at work, their nimble fingers working deftly on bamboo and strings to make the frames for paper umbrellas that are a cultural heritage of this region.

How these umbrellas came to be an integral part of Lanna culture in Chiang Mai is surely an interesting legend. A Buddhist monk, Phra Inthaa, is said to have brought back the skills to make umbrellas after working as a monk in Myanmar. Realising how people back in his village had access to the resources needed to make parasols, he imparted the necessary skills to them. These skills have navigated generations, and fought imposing modernisation to survive and thrive here. Over the years, Bo Sang has been commercialised and turned into a hub for artists to display and sell their craft.

On a walk around the Bo Sang Umbrella Making Centre, we see a production line working, just as it has for a 100 years now. The first task at hand is making the paper. After cutting and boiling the pulp, it is beaten, mixed with solvents and then dried in the sun on a sieve. Once dry, the paper can be put on a bamboo frame and tied with strings – and your umbrella is ready. You’d imagine these umbrellas to be a mere artefact, with little practical use. However, Bo Sang umbrellas are painted over with oil paint, making them effective even outside the precincts of the centre on a rainy day.

Making Centre, we see a production line for artists to display and sell their craft. It is interesting to note how almost the entire production line is run by women, young and old, all working simultaneously on different parts of the handicraft – a well-oiled machine refined over decades. A kind artist also offers to paint my phone cover, aligned. I try not to be fooled by the ease with which a young woman is making strong strokes on the umbrella. I knew I couldn’t paint and needed to have realistic expectations of what art I could produce. From flowers to religious symbols and Harry Potter names (which I drew), we spent a good part of an hour struggling with colours, only to realise how intricate the craft truly was and how ambitious a project we had undertaken.

Not only are they practical in a tropical country like Thailand, these colourful handicrafts are also an integral part of Chiang Mai’s history and culture. Across Asian nations, parasols are not just shields against the sun, they are symbols of prosperity and royalty too. Small umbrellas are used as good-luck charms, and to protect against evil spirits. Bo Sang’s umbrellas are sent all over the world, adorning entrances, markets and temples – hopefully, carrying their good luck with them.

You’d imagine these umbrellas to be a mere artefact, with little practical use. However, Bo Sang umbrellas are painted over with oil paint, making them effective even outside the centre on a rainy day.

Everywhere my eye darts, there are hundreds of umbrellas. Many hang from the ceiling inside a souvenir shop, where visitors can purchase them in all shapes and sizes – from handheld parasols, beach umbrellas to the ones that have an entire landscape adorning their frail shape. The centre has diversified its offerings, selling small parasol magnets, hand fans and more, made from Sa paper and bamboo. A kind artist also offers to paint my phone cover, aligned. I try not to be fooled by the ease with which a young woman is making strong strokes on the umbrella. I knew I couldn’t paint and needed to have realistic expectations of what art I could produce. From flowers to religious symbols and Harry Potter names (which I drew), we spent a good part of an hour struggling with colours, only to realise how intricate the craft truly was and how ambitious a project we had undertaken.

Not only are they practical in a tropical country like Thailand, these colourful handicrafts are also an integral part of Chiang Mai’s history and culture. Across Asian nations, parasols are not just shields against the sun, they are symbols of prosperity and royalty too. Small umbrellas are used as good-luck charms, and to protect against evil spirits. Bo Sang’s umbrellas are sent all over the world, adorning entrances, markets and temples – hopefully, carrying their good luck with them.

A kind artist also offers to paint my phone cover, aligned. I try not to be fooled by the ease with which a young woman is making strong strokes on the umbrella. I knew I couldn’t paint and needed to have realistic expectations of what art I could produce. From flowers to religious symbols and Harry Potter names (which I drew), we spent a good part of an hour struggling with colours, only to realise how intricate the craft truly was and how ambitious a project we had undertaken.

Not only are they practical in a tropical country like Thailand, these colourful handicrafts are also an integral part of Chiang Mai’s history and culture. Across Asian nations, parasols are not just shields against the sun, they are symbols of prosperity and royalty too. Small umbrellas are used as good-luck charms, and to protect against evil spirits. Bo Sang’s umbrellas are sent all over the world, adorning entrances, markets and temples – hopefully, carrying their good luck with them.
The green hillsides of Valparai
Kodaikanal
Mannavanur Lake, a great location for ecotourism in Tamil Nadu
5 DESTINATIONS IN TAMIL NADU TO END THE WEEK ON A PERFECT NOTE

From great adventures to rich cultural awakenings, Tamil Nadu offers more than one can imagine!

Tamil Nadu provides several perfect weekend getaways for travellers to enjoy. From beaches to hill stations to towns with significant architectural and cultural heritage, the state has it all. And due to its excellent network of roads and railways, you won’t break a sweat to figure out how to reach these destinations. Here are five options you may consider for your next weekend getaway:

**East Coast Road, Mamallapuram**
The East Coast Road (ECR) is a state highway running between Chennai and Kanyakumari, which covers a significant portion of Tamil Nadu. The roots of the ECR lie in the roads that once criss-crossed the entire region. Today, several of the state’s popular heritage sites lie along this road.

• Did you know of the Chola mandal Artists’ Village in Kanchipuram? An art destination, this idyllic village is India’s largest self-supporting commune of artists.
• While travelling along the road, you may also want to stop at Dakshineshwar, a living-history museum and a centre for South-India-centric performing arts, crafts and architectural traditions and practices, in Multikud, Kanchipuram district.
• Further down south, you would want to spend time at Thoothukudi/Tuticorin, the ‘Pearl City’, and revel in the glory of its spectacular ocean views.
• On your way back, the calm and picturesque Chidambaram, in Tamil Nadu’s Cuddalore district, will provide you with the perfect setting for you to refresh yourself. It is famous for the Nataraja Temple and the Pichavaram Mangrove forest, the largest of its kind in Tamil Nadu.

However, probably the most popular highlight of this route is the city of Mamallapuram (or Mahabalipuram). Here, 40 ancient monuments and Hindu temples of spectacular craftsmanship, from the 7th and 8th centuries CE, form the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Group of Monuments. The prime attraction is probably the Shore Temple, perhaps among the finest structures constructed by the Pallava Dynasty.

**Valparai**
Valparai, 102 kilometres away from Coimbatore, is a hill station on the Anamalai Hills range in the Western Ghats. Pay a visit to the sprawling Anamalai Tiger Reserve, spread over nearly 955 sq km, which is the refuge of many endangered animals (Bengal tiger, Indian elephant, Indian leopard, dhole, Nilgiri tahr and lion-tailed macaque). Indian brown mongoose and several more as well as over 300 species of birds. Stop at verdant Chinna Kallar, one of the regions that receive the maximum rainfall here. Other sightseeing options in Valparai’s proximity include Monkey Falls, Balaji Temple, Velankanni Church and Pancha Mughra Vineyagvar Koli. Trekking is quite popular here. The best times to visit this hilly town are between October and November and March and May.

**Kodaikanal**
Kodaikanal’s cooler climate ensured that it developed as a retreat and getaway for those escaping the summer heat of the Deccan Plateau or those in search of a cure to tropical diseases they may be suffering from. Kodaikanal is a misty paradise that is situated on top of the upper Palani Hills. Here, you will find meadows, grasslands, forests of pine, cypress, eucalyptus and acacia, and several rock formations that constitute some of the attractions (such as Green Valley View, Pilgrim Rocks, Guna Caves, Silver Cascade and Dolphin’s Nose).

However, the biggest attraction here is the Kodai Kanyan Lake. This artificial, man-made, star-shaped lake is preferred for boating activities, despite evidence of water population. You can also enjoy walks, horse- and bicycle-rides beside or along the periphery of the lake.

**Pollachi**
There are many attributes of Pollachi, a town located 40 kilometres to the south of Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. It is called the coconut city, as the produce here is marketed to towns and cities in India. While here, you can also visit one of the largest jaggery markets in Asia and the largest cattle market in south India—both of which make Pollachi a popular destination for tourists looking to shop to their heart’s content.

Pollachi’s position in the Western Ghats ensures that the climate here all year round is thoroughly enjoyable. Not only that, its natural beauty will also leave you spellbound. Like Valparai, Pollachi is also close to other tourist attractions—wildlife sanctuaries such as the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve, which is the Kodaikanal Lake. This artificial, man-made, star-shaped lake is preferred for boating activities, despite evidence of water population. You can also enjoy walks, horse- and bicycle-rides beside or along the periphery of the lake.

In Courtallam, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation offers boating services during June, July and August. Tourists can avail of rowboats, pedal boats and kayaks for a spot of fun and thrill in the midst of nature’s abundant beauty.
Inspired by Italo Calvino’s 1957 novel, The Baron in the Trees, architect Stefano Boeri’s Bosco Verticale in Milan, Italy, is a glowing example of urban façade greening. It consists of two towers measuring 80 and 112 metres, from the balconies of which spill out a staggering 20,000 trees, shrubs and other plants. According to Boeri, there are approximately two trees, eight shrubs and 40 plants for each resident here — all of which absorb 30 tons of carbon dioxide and generate 19 tons of oxygen annually.
The Sarhul Festival is one of the most beloved tribal festivals in Jharkhand. Here’s a look at what it is and how it is celebrated.

Beyond their practical uses, few trees are as central to the cultures and traditions of communities and societies in India as the sal tree. It is one of the major sources of hardwood timber in India, but it assumes greater significance due to its frequent mention in Indian mythology. Among Hindus, it is widely believed that the tree is favoured by Vishnu, while Jains and Buddhists believe that the tree is associated with enlightenment. Mahavira, the 24th Jain Tirthankara, is believed to have attained enlightenment under a sal tree. Buddhists, on the other hand, believe that Queen Mahamayā of Sākya gave birth to the Buddha while holding a sal tree, and the Buddha’s life came full-circle when he died, presumably, under the two sal trees. Quite understandably, then in Buddhism, the brief flowering of the sal tree is considered to be a symbol of impermanence.

The sal also assumes great significance in a number of tribal communities scattered across eastern India. This should not come as a surprise especially as these tribes hold festivals in honour of the tree and to worship it. A case in point is the Sarhul Festival, one of the most popular and widely observed tribal celebrations in Jharkhand. Sarhul essentially translates to ‘a worship of trees’, but it is particularly the sal tree (and nature in general) that is the object of veneration of tribes such as Oraon, Munda, Ho and Santal.

The Sarhul Festival is usually held in spring each year on the fortnight of the month of Chaitra, coinciding with the beginning of the new year in these regions. It is usually a three-day event; however, some groups worship it for a month-long period till the time jyeshtha (or jeth) arrives. Legend has it that villagers in these areas from a long time ago prayed to their gods and protectors during this time of the year. As trees and nature’s gifts were and are still considered sacred, the festival is held in a grove of trees (sal ones in particular) called sarna, which is protected by a deity called sarna burhi (meaning, woman of the grove), which is also connected with spirits, rain and plants. The cutting of trees in a sarna is strictly prohibited—and it is believed that doing such a sinful act invites misfortune and the wrath of the spirits residing in the grove.

During Sarhul Festival, people make offerings of fruits, flowers, sal leaves, and sometimes, animals and birds to invoke the blessings of sama burhi and other protective deities in designated groves (sarna sthals). This is accompanied by lively processions and much festivity in which children, women and adults all participate. This is also the time when the people of the celebrating tribes are decked up in their newest, most colourful attires (called karia, in the case of men, and khanria, for women). They then perform traditional dances to the beats of the popular, local folk tunes of the region. This event, called the Bai Porob, is a standout feature of this festival. The festival also sees the ritual consumption of handia, a locally prepared beer brewed by hand using a mixture of rice, water and some tree leaves.

According to media reports, the Sarhul Festival this year commenced on April 4 in Ranchi. It was inaugurated by a tribal priest placing two earthen, water-filled pots under a sal tree in a sarna sthal in Ranchi’s Hatma area. As it is celebrated with much pomp, the entry of vehicles into the city on April 4 has been prohibited in the period between 6 am and midnight, while the movement of private vehicles within the city will remain banned from 1 pm onwards. Additionally, strict COVID-19 protocols have been imposed on the observance of the festival. Individual processions can have a maximum of 100 people in attendance, whereas in places where processions meet each other and gather, there can be no more than 1,000 people at one time. Furthermore, no processions will be allowed to continue after 6 pm, while the use of pre-recorded and DJ music after 6 in the evening also remains banned.

Photos: Pranay Prasoon

SARHUL FESTIVAL: AN ODE TO THE SAL TREE

The Sarhul Festival is one of the most beloved tribal festivals in Jharkhand. Here’s a look at what it is and how it is celebrated.
For planet earth to exist, the future, as they say, must be clean and green. Team QT takes a look at nine iconic, exemplary structures that are saving the planet, one building at a time, by adopting and making use of the most eco-friendly measures and techniques.

The ACROS Prefectural Hall was originally envisaged as a government office building back in the 1990s. Hailed as a model of urban façade greening ever since its construction in 1994, the ACROS (Asian Crossroads Over the Sea) Fukuoka Prefectural International Hall in Fukuoka, Japan, addresses two seemingly contrasting demands — a developer’s desire to maximise the profitable nature of a site and the public need for more green spaces. The hall consists of two façades. The one to the south seamlessly extends the nearby Tenjin Park (among the last stretches of greenery in the concrete city) to nearly double its size, with a series of 15 low, terraced gardens. To visitors, it appears as a green pyramid or mountain, akin to the ancient Hanging Gardens of Babylon, and is the perfect space for activities such as exercising, meditating and relaxing. People can even climb to the top of this green pyramid, where a rooftop garden offers luxuriant views of the city, the surrounding mountains and the harbour. At the opposite end, overlooking the city’s financial district, the north face is made of striped glass, and has more than 1,000,000 square feet of multipurpose space. By successfully blending architecture with landscape, it is both a building as well as an enormous garden — a much-needed boon for Fukuoka.

The building houses an exhibition hall, museum, proscenium theatre, conference rooms, governmental and private offices, and four underground levels of parking and retail facilities.

ACROS Fukuoka Prefectural International Hall, Japan
One of the greatest examples of green architecture, this hall was built by the award-winning Argentinian architect, Emilio Ambasz, often considered to be the father of the sustainability movement.
Mercedes-Benz Stadium, USA

The Mercedes-Benz Stadium was the first professional sports stadium in the US to be awarded the LEED Platinum certification. One of the most sustainable sports venues all over the world, the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, has several features that make it a model stadium worth emulating. Its focus on renewable forms of energy ensures that energy use is reduced by as much as 29%. The solar panels generate 1.6 billion kilowatt hours of renewable energy each year — equivalent to powering 160 households. LED lights in the stadium use 60% less energy compared to conventional lights, while the halo board video display and the stadium’s façade (made using ethylene tetrafluoroethylene — a durable, light material that allows natural light to filter through) also significantly cut down on energy wastage. A rigorous zero-waste system, replete with zero-waste stations, is also in place that efficiently segregates it and ensures that over 90% of the waste generated never reaches a landfill. Instead, the materials are either recycled into unique products or turned to compost for the stadium’s urban garden. Of further note is the stadium’s efficient water-management system, that collects stormwater and conserves water (with the use of other features such as low-flow plumbing fixtures and waterless urinals) — all resulting in a 47% reduction in water use.

The Mercedes-Benz Stadium is the home stadium of the Atlanta Falcons, an American football outfit, and Atlanta United FC, a soccer team.

Museum of Tomorrow, Brazil

The Museum of Tomorrow is part of a larger revitalisation of Porto Maravilha, the port neighbourhood in Rio de Janeiro. Inspired by Carioca culture and with the motive of exploring the relationship between the city and its natural environment by means of its architecture, the Museum of Tomorrow is a temporary and permanent exhibition space. The museum’s design focuses on sustainable cities and an ecological world, while incorporating natural energy and light sources, along with water from the Guanabara Bay that is used to regulate temperatures inside. Along with this, the building also has photovoltaic solar panels, which can be adjusted to the sun’s rays throughout the day to generate solar energy at all hours. Inside the museum, the exhibits address issues like population growth, consumption patterns, technological advances and changes in biodiversity.

The museum is aimed at answering five questions — where did we come from, who are we, where are we, where are we going and how do we want to live together over the next fifty years?

Anandaloy, Bangladesh

Anandaloy won the prestigious Obel Award in 2020. Bricks, concrete and steel may be the choice of material for modern buildings. But, that is not the case with Anandaloy, a disabled-friendly community centre-cum-textile studio in Rudrapur in Bangladesh. Anandaloy incorporates sustainability by resorting to age-old practices, and sticks to the core belief that architecture is meant to improve people’s lives. That is why this unique building, constructed in 2019, has been built by farmers and labourers using mud and bamboo, two locally-sourced materials. Mud may be considered inferior to brick, but, for designer Anna Herringer, this was just another challenge meant to be overcome creatively. Herringer used a technique called cob to explore the plastic abilities of mud to create a stronger framework. The technique also negates the need for a formwork — the reason why Anandaloy’s interior layout takes the shape of ‘dancing curves’ and not ‘rigid rectangles’. For Herringer, this is symbolic — the dancing curves symbolise deep joy and convey the message that diversity is wonderful. The same is the case with the giant ramp connecting the two floors, which represents inclusion.

The first floor has a therapy centre for people with disabilities, while the second floor hosts Dipdi Textiles, a studio for female tailors in the village.
The LIS t eXpLore

Torre Reforma, Mexico City

Torre Reforma reaches a staggering height of 807 metres. The Tower consists of 57 floors.

Torre Reforma enjoys a Platinum certification from LEED, the most widely used green building rating system in the world.

It may not be evident at first glance, but much thought has gone into the building of Torre Reforma, the highest tower in Mexico City. It resembles a solid concrete-and-steel tower in the shape of an open book, with a glass façade enclosing it. Furthermore, its ground-site area may seem insufficient for a building that high, but rest assured, every single feature of this building is designed to cut down on energy consumption and increase its aesthetic appeal. The use of concrete and steel in the building’s construction, besides lending immense structural stability, is also a subtle nod to the conventions of pre-Hispanic and colonial Mexican architecture. And according to the architects responsible for the building’s construction, the slimness of the building ensures that the maximum amount of light is let into the building, thereby significantly reducing the dependence on and use of electric lights. Weather permitting, the windows can automatically open before dawn to let in cool air as a form of ventilation. The glass façade can also turn 45 degrees to offer the best views of the city, while interior triple gardens create useful micro spaces within the building.

Torre Reforma can withstand earthquakes and seismic activities. For this purpose, the concrete walls of the building were designed to bend.

Pixel Building, Australia

The Pixel Building is Australia’s first carbon-neutral office building.

This visually appealing building in Melbourne is a classic example of sustainable design technology and innovation. The Pixel Building opened its doors in 2010 generating its own power and water through a system of on-site wind turbines and a green roof. Built with sustainably sourced building material, the output is a self-sufficient one and can even function when disconnected from the mains supply. The building’s design also employs low-carbon concrete to reduce its embodied carbon content, and has bagged the highest-possible and highest-ever rating from the Green Building Council of Australia.

The building is a former brewery run by Carlton & United Breweries (CU&U).

The building is a former brewery run by Carlton & United Breweries (CU&U).

PHoTogrAPH: geTTyIMAgeS
Agrotopia, Belgium

Agrotopia is touted to be largest public building dedicated to urban food production in Europe

Located in the city of Roeselare, Agrotopia is an urban food-production centre that aims to both produce farm food and educate people on agriculture. Built in 2021, Agrotopia is a 9,500-square-metre greenhouse built on top of the REO Veiling agricultural auction market. Inside, the greenhouse is divided into four climatic zones for the cultivation of different fruits and vegetables. The building also has research facilities and an educational trail for people, with ‘box-in-box’ spaces creating a more suitable climate for the people, the researchers and the educators. A double-height conservatory enables cultivation in vertical spaces, while the horizontal-faceted construction lets in sufficient sunlight for the crops and generates a reflection-free view at the ground level. Outside, silos store rainwater at the foot of the greenhouse for irrigation purposes, while run-off from irrigation is also constantly recycled and reused. The heating is facilitated by the residual heat generated from a waste incinerator nearby. The whole effect has been aptly described as a “circular symbiosis within the city”.

CopenHill, Denmark

CopenHill is an integral part of Copenhagen’s goal of becoming the world’s first carbon-neutral city by 2025

Spread across 41,000 square metres, CopenHill in Copenhagen is a waste-to-energy plant whose furnaces, steam and turbines convert 4,400,000 tons of waste annually into clean energy. However, it also doubles up as an excellent recreation-cum-sports centre. Here, people are able to enjoy activities such as skiing, hiking and even rock climbing. The centrepiece is a 9,000-square-metre ski terrain formed by the precise positioning and placement of various machinery to create a sloping rooftop. The green roof absorbs the heat, eliminates particulate matter from the air and minimizes stormwater runoff.

Bosco Verticale, Italy

One of the four finalists for the 2018 RIBA International Prize, Bosco Verticale absorbs 30 tons of carbon dioxide and generates 10 tons of oxygen every year

“Green buildings” are, perhaps, the first words that come to one’s mind as they stare at Bosco Verticale, two residential towers measuring 80 metres and 112 metres in Milan, Italy. Literally translating to “Vertical Forest,” Bosco Verticale is widely considered to be one of the most intensive green facades in the world. According to the estimates of the building’s architect Stefano Boeri, a staggering 20,000 trees, shrubs and plants spill out of curiously irregular balconies, inching their way along the sides to the top. These serve to drastically improve the air quality, not just in the environs of the towers but the city as a whole as well. Additionally, the buildings, Boeri says, harbour hundreds of birds from over 15 species. So noticeable are the verdant offerings of these apartments that their other special features often slip under the radar. For instance, Bosco Verticale also has exemplary geothermal and wastewater-treatment facilities, which are just as vital to the functioning of these green paradises as the other more observable features are.

According to Boeri’s estimates, there are two trees, eight shrubs and 40 plants for each human resident here
Mumbai, an Art Deco paradise, is home to one of the largest concentrations of such buildings that deserve to be explored to the fullest.

Words: OT Staff

© The Taraporewala Aquarium in Mumbai

AN Artistic sight
it opened in 1951, inaugurated by Rajendra Prasad, India’s first President. Now recognised as India’s oldest aquarium, and known for its large collection of marine and freshwater fish, the Taraporevala Aquarium is one of the most popular attractions of Mumbai. But not many are aware of the secret feather in its cap. It is also one of the famous Art Deco buildings in the city — its exterior marked by well-defined lines and an artwork consisting of seahorses and other creatures of the deep waters.

In 2018, when UNESCO inscribed Victorian Gothic and Art Deco ensembles of Mumbai on their World Heritage List, many city dwellers looked up in awe at the buildings they had so long taken for granted. While it was not difficult to understand the grandeur of the Victorian Gothic aesthetic, it was the Art Deco aspect which took most people by surprise. Residential buildings, fire temples, cinema halls, which they had been visiting or passing by for years, suddenly became edifices that catapulted Mumbai into the global league of cities such as New York, Miami or Paris. However, this, by no way, means that before the UNESCO recognition, there was absolutely no interest in Mumbai’s Art Deco buildings. For instance, finance professional Atul Kumar had already been documenting them with the help of experts and an enthusiastic team. The website (artdecomumbai.com) floated by them has a fantastic inventory of Art Deco buildings in Mumbai.

Although

Mumbai

is doted with many such buildings (some having been pulled down over the years), it is the precinct to the west of the sporting fields of the Oval Maidan, with its slew of Art Deco buildings, that ultimately led to the UNESCO honour.

The term Arts Décoratifs (or Art Deco, in short) became popular following the 1925 Paris-based world’s fair titled ‘Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes’ (the International Exposition of Decorative Arts and Modern Industries). However, this new architectural design had already taken its roots in Europe by the 1920s. Buildings made of modern materials sported a precise look, including flat roofs and smooth walls, while the exteriors sported unique designs reflecting the use of geometric patterns and regional
motifs (Chinese, Egyptian, Mayan, among others). The style was even reflected in the lettering seen on the outside of the buildings. The cosmopolitan city of Mumbai (or Bombay, as it was then called) and its well-travelled citizens and business entrepreneurs were quick to take a liking to this new architectural style — a sign of their growing wealth. In Mumbai, the style reached its peak during the 1930s and 1940s. Perhaps, this preference might have also been a “people’s challenge to the British rulers” — an attempt to replace the colonial style of architecture with modern aesthetic styles. Mumbai’s single-screen movie halls were one of the prominent groups of buildings to adopt the new style. The city’s iconic theatres or cinema halls, such as Edward Theatre, Metro, Regal and Eros, sported the aspirational design. Regal, which opened its doors in 1933, is said to be Mumbai’s first Art Deco building.

As a thriving business centre, Mumbai in the 1930s and 1940s, saw a rise in the number of affluent families. The rulers of many princely Indian states too had started calling the city their second homes. The royalty and the newly rich took pride in setting up their residences in tony neighbourhoods, owned automobiles and the finer things in life. Consequently, their homes too reflected their modern disposition. The use of reinforced concrete also helped. Brightly coloured buildings sported various facets such as curved balconies, porthole windows, window ledges (which architects famously referred to as ‘eyebrows’), tiered zigzags, spiralling shapes, and more. Ornamentations included sunburst patterns, running lines, tropical images, to name a few. One of the buildings which is often featured in the itinerary of Mumbai Art Deco walks is the 1937-built Soona Mahal, recognisable by its prominent linear look, curved balconies and turret — a throwback to the time when Mumbai emerged as a key port of India. In fact, a walk along the western edge of the Oval Maidan or the Marine Drive reveals groups of buildings, mostly residential, which, together, exhibit the evolution of Art Deco in Mumbai.

The Art Deco influence, which soon became popular as Bombay Deco, continued from the façade to the interiors as well — mostly reflected in the use of a variety of materials and innovative designs. Geometric patterns, the use of more than one colour, the use of bright colours, murals, and other such conventions, became fashionable.

According to the UNESCO citation, “the Art Deco edifices, with their cinemas and residential buildings, blend Indian design with Art Deco imagery, creating a unique style that has been described as Indo-Deco.” Driving past the MG Road in the Fort area, one of the Art Deco buildings that you cannot miss is the New India Assurance Building. Its façade boasts of two huge statues which bear a striking resemblance to Egyptian art. And with the Indian imagery of a potter or a woman spinning the charkha in bas relief, it is one of the best examples of Indo Deco.
Artist Melania Chavarría’s fashionable creations provide new interpretations of Mexico City’s vibrant street art and murals.

Words: Rooplekha Das

PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK
It is amply evident that street art and murals enhance the aesthetic and visual appeal of the city spaces they inhabit and decorate—the reason why these artworks and their value should be highlighted. But Chavarría's connection to her brainchild is far more personal. Ever since her childhood, she had liked fashion, and started to explore fashion trends on her own from a very young age. “My family was always supportive of that. They even encouraged me to express myself freely and not care about what people thought of the way I looked or dressed. That was very important to me, and I think you can see that learning process manifested in everything I do today,” she tells Outlook Traveller. Choosing to study fashion design was a natural decision for her. “I think there’s a clear link between fashion and architecture—they have a similar language. I feel that fashion is my own version of building, not around the city but over the body.”

Beginnings
Chavarría’s interest in Mexico City’s profile and architecture was influenced by her father who owns a construction firm. Her mother bought her magazines that opened before her the power and possibilities of design, especially through the images created for ad campaigns and editorials. Her first encounter with street art, though, was not in Mexico City, but in Belgium. “I studied fashion in Antwerp and used to live in front of a mural. That mural was the backdrop to one of my first attempts at matching,” she recalls.

The Art of Dressing to Match was born out of “a personal need of finding my own creative voice as a fashion designer—a need to build my own language,” according to Chavarría herself. She further adds, “I wanted to explore different aesthetics and trends, mixed with my personal interest in Mexican culture and traditions. So I literally started shooting at home using basic backgrounds, but eventually I got bored of that and wanted something else. I started walking around my neighbourhood to find other options—and that’s how I found street art.” The fact that several people from different spheres have joined her on her journey has come as a welcome surprise.

Choosing the Right Background and Outfits
In a flâneur-like fashion, Chavarría walks a lot to explore the potential of her surroundings. “Many people will tell you that Mexico City was not precisely designed to walk, but I refuse to believe that. That is the only way to discover new expressions around the many neighbourhoods we have, because they are all different,” she emphatically states. Despite socio-economic disparities, Chavarría flips the script around, challenging herself, by her own admission, “to find inspiration and links between me and all those kinds of living and their expressions.”

“Creativity is the answer to finding the right outfit for each background,” explains Chavarría. “It’s not only about clothes, because I have to consider all possibilities—from lighting and proportions, to colour variations or perspectives. After that, I try to select all clothes and accessories that could work, but if I don’t have anything similar to what I’m interested in matching, I have to produce it from scratch. Also, I do a lot of clothing customisation. Sometimes I buy basic clothes and experiment with stitching, embroidering, cutting or layering,” says Chavarría.

However, as more and more artists have started collaborating with her, the matching process has undergone a change. “Earlier, it was very exciting to find the natural connection between a colour or...”
print trend and then finding it in art (be it a mural or an artwork). Nowadays, I rely on many different processes. Sometimes, I look for a place to match a specific outfit. At other times, I find a mural for which I create clothes. In the case of festivals and Mexican rituals/traditions, I can start from an appropriate concept [that I have in mind].

**Portraying Mexican City's Art and Murals**

Mexico City's rich culture of muralism is fundamental to Chavarría's works. “The idea of muralism in Mexico is not only to express oneself, but also, more importantly, to educate and communicate to people. We have more than 60 indigenous languages – so, painting in this format and proportion has been incredibly important to building and strengthening our identity,” she says.

Citing the names of luminary artists such as David Alfaro Siqueiros and Diego Rivera, Chavarría expresses her desire to continue Mexico’s visual tradition in a contemporary manner by choosing murals that express Mexican identity in unconventional manners and showcase and reinforce the many different messages and personalities that Mexican muralists have. “Every mural tells a story or has a message to give, so I try to highlight it with a proper pose, attitude and outfit,” she concludes.

Chavarría’s flexible yet reverential attitude towards murals is evident from the fact that she is not picky about the backgrounds she uses for her compositions. Following the new and very different expressions without losing her identity or sacrificing her fashion style has led her to grow as a designer and appreciate art at a deeper level.

For all of Chavarría’s links with Mexico City, one of her most favourite collaborations, however, happened outside that city. It was with Airbnb, for a visit to El Nido de Quetzalcoatl, a wonderful example of organic architecture in Naucalpan created by the Mexican architect Javier Senosiain. “It was a dream come true to spend some days there creating lots of matching outfits. Also, I got to travel to Oaxaca, where a tour company named Las Bugambilias created a special street-art tour for me. They took me all around the city and surrounding places to look up murals to match them. It was a very original way of travelling and getting close to the art of dressing to match is not Chavarría’s first brush with architecture, art and fashion. Her graduation project called Ciudad de México 11000 (a subtle nod to the zip code of the place where she grew up) told the architectural story and evolution of the city through clothing – all of which was translated into a mix of fabrics, textures and materials. “I might be doing it now in a different way with art and photography, but the influence has always been there, as Mexico City is so unique, diverse and evolving,” she says, bringing the conversation and her journey full-circle.

Still, it’s not the end of the road for Chavarría. “Mexico City is enormous, and I am still discovering new places thanks to street art,” she muses. And, is she willing to light up places and spaces beyond Mexico City with her magical touch? “I know there are many great artists around the world, many of whom write to tell me to take photos with their murals if I ever visit their countries. So I have a long list of cities and countries – from the iconic streets of New York to Berlin, Argentina, and many more,” the brilliant and hopeful artist replies.
A Colonial Legacy

Modern aspirations and real-estate expansion lay siege to the old French colonial architecture in Vietnam’s most popular city.

Words: DT Staff

Dũng Khơi Street in Ho Chi Minh City, with its Clutch of French Colonial Buildings

and modern shopping quarters, is a pleasant road to stroll along. But, this once tree-lined boulevard, then known as Rue Catimot, is a far cry from the scenic stretch that formed the backdrop to Graham Greene’s novel, The Quiet American. It also highlights, in a nutshell, the dilemma of Ho Chi Minh City – whether to retain its past architectural gems or replace them with modern buildings. Should Ho Chi Minh City lose its individuality to aspirations of being one of the modern but ubiquitous cities of Asia, is a question that is being raised by the city’s heritage lovers.

Emerging as a Khmer fishing village, Saigon (or Ho Chi Minh City, as it is known today) is Vietnam’s largest city and its commercial capital. After the Treaty of Saigon (1862) between Emperor Tự Đức of Vietnam and the French Empire, the latter acquired Saigon and three of the southern provinces along with other concessions. Within the next five or six years, the French occupied the whole of southern Vietnam. Like other colonial powers, they too began to build Saigon after their home country, filling it with administrative and cultural buildings that used both local and French styles.

Today, these old buildings draw a lot of tourists (in pre-pandemic times, of course). They are a study in the evolution of Saigon’s French-influenced architecture.

Saigon Opera House

Built in 1897, the Saigon Opera House (now the Municipal Theatre) is one of the best examples of the city’s French architecture. The interior was modelled after the then-contemporary opera halls back in France.
**Bến Thành Market**
Built around 1912 in the heart of the city, it is known for its indoor market, where you will find a wide range of products — from fresh produce to souvenirs. Do not forget to explore the rows of food stalls, and stop to enjoy the sizzling bánh xèo (Vietnamese pancakes or crêpes).

**Tân Định Parish**
The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus or the Tân Định Parish Church (in District 3) was built in the late 1870s. It largely reflects neo-Romanesque architecture with influences of neo-Gothic and neo-Renaissance styles. It is the second-largest church in the city.

**Fine Arts Museum**
This former home of a wealthy city resident exhibits a mix of eastern and western architecture. It has now been converted into a fine arts museum.

**Notre-Dame Cathedral**
Popularly known as the Notre-Dame Cathedral, the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception is situated on Đỗ Ngũ Hành Street. It is said that all the construction material for this cathedral (which was built between 1863 and 1880) was imported from France. Entry is ticketed.

**Hotel Continental**
Inaugurated in 1880, Hotel Continental on Rue Catinat was the first hotel to be built in Saigon. According to the hotel’s website, some of its famous guests included the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (who won the 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature), the award-winning writer André Malraux, whose Man’s Fate won the 1933 Prix Goncourt, British writer Graham Greene (long-term guest in room 214 of the hotel), as well as former French President Jacques Chirac (he was Mayor of Paris when he stayed here), Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, to name a few.

**Central Post Office**
Also called the Saigon Post Office, the Central Post Office is a neighbour of the Notre-Dame Cathedral. Built in 1886, it drew inspiration from Gothic and French architecture. The massive foyer inside the Central Post Office, with its arches and pillars, will compel you to linger awhile.

**Chinatown, Ho Chi Minh City**
Apart from its French architecture, Ho Chi Minh City is also known for its Chinese legacy. The city’s Chinatown still retains the rows of apartment houses with their cast-iron railings — a throwback to the old times.
Fort Barwara, Six Senses’ first outpost in India, affords Malika Bhagat a stunning foray into Rajasthan’s royal heritage and history.

“There is a belief that Chauth Mata had appeared in a dream to Maharaja Bhim Singh, the Chauhan ruler of the time, asking to be worshipped in Barwara, which now lies in the town of Sawai Madhopur. The temple was then constructed in 1453,” we are told by a devout pilgrim who makes his way up the daunting steps to the hillock where the shrine of the goddess is situated. I pant and heave, and after a grueling hour of sweat, make it to the top, and look at the magnificent piece of history that is perched across the temple on the other side. It is my residence for the weekend—Fort Barwara.

Six Senses’ latest outpost in this quiet destination, Fort Barwara is a former citadel restored to its modern-day glory as a sprawling spa resort, put on the wellness destination map thanks to an opulent Bollywood wedding. Even long after the charm of the wedding wore off, this 700-year-old fort’s stunning facade continues to enthrall and enchant. The multilevel grandeur of the fort is overwhelming, and a quick trot up the stairs takes me and my partner to the grand lobby, where a traditional swagat (welcome) awaits us. We put up in the Fort Suite, from the balcony of which the village life unfolds in all its splendour. With elaborate archways and intricate latticework, our suite takes us back to the magnificence of a bygone era that Six Senses aims to meld organically with a love for modern pleasures.

Our feet ache from the temple climb, and after a brief siesta, we head to The Cortile, the fort’s all-day diner. Here, we find ourselves indulging in a deep conversation with the property’s effervescent GM, Sangjay Choegyal. The first Six Senses resort in India has been a long time coming. A decade of efforts by designers and architects have transformed a tottering Rajasthani mahal into an elegant wellness retreat. The food too, Sangjay tells me, is an ode to Rajasthani cuisine, with modern twists for the adventurous. His words ring true: under the domes of the fort, we feast.
Located next to the lobby is the Rajawat room, part of the former Mardana Mahal (the male palace), reimagined as a casual lobby lounge that serves cocktails and opportunities for a quick tête-à-tête with guests. For us, the room is a doorway into history as our guide Surya Pratap Singh heralds us to a heritage walk. Of royal lineage himself, Singh guides us to different parts of the fort, regaling us with innumerable tales that I find hard to retain, and even harder to recount.

At a rather spacious terrace, Singh recounts stories of the bravery of former kings, before breaking into a detailed narration on Shekhawati architecture. At the entrance of the spa and wellness centre, which was once the Zenana Mahal (female palace), he tells us of the various design elements that were taken into consideration while constructing the ladies’ section of the palace. The entrance to the palace is marked by an archway leading to the Ganesha temple, from which a small turn leads to the main area, ensuring privacy to women in the palace. I explore more of this mauli on my visit to the spa, a regal, immersive experience that is one of the highlights of the property. It’s varied wellness offerings — ayurveda, meditation, massages and personalised wellness programmes — make Fort Barwara the perfect place to escape the cacophony of towns and cities.

Of the Past and the Present
Fort Barwara is everything that it claims to be — a luxury heritage wellness retreat. And its heritage is as much a part of its architectural and functional ethos as is its focus on wellness. The original Barwara Fort was constructed in the 14th century by the rulers of the Chauhan dynasty. During World War II, Raja Man Singh of Barwara fought alongside the British and was a regal, immersive experience that is one of the highlights of the property. It’s varied wellness offerings — ayurveda, meditation, massages and personalised wellness programmes — make Fort Barwara the perfect place to escape the cacophony of towns and cities.

Located next to the lobby is the Rajawat room, reimagined as a casual lobby lounge. For us, the room is a doorway to history as our guide Surya Pratap Singh heralds us to a heritage walk.

Mahal, named for its elongated dome’s resemblance to melons grow nearby. “Prithviraj’s father, Bhagwati Singh, studied at Ajmer’s famed Mayo College, but returned to serve the community here at Barwara,” Surya tells us as we return from our heritage walk, before adding that it is in this fort that elements old and new find perfect balance. The walls of the structure were also assessed and restored using local materials and keeping local artisans in loop.

Back in the Rajawat room, Sangjay hands out local whiskies and nibbles at the Library Bar. Part of the state’s liquor board, it’s a genial local woman who comes every day. The use of plastic is non-existent in Fort Barwara: from providing toothpaste tablets in glass bottles to composting waste, the writing is clear on the wall. Conservation of both culture and the environment is at the heart of luxury.

From refreshing cocktails to history lessons, a game of chess or an evening of musical delights — there is much for an ordinary traveller seeking respite from the humdrum of city life. The best part: The tigers of Ranthambore are just an hour’s drive away.

Sense and Sustainability
The Six Senses Fort Barwara is not just a beacon of modern luxury; it is also an example of how hospitality giants can invest in sustainability and conservation efforts. One of the reasons why the restoration took a copious amount of time was the sensitive incorporation of efficient design elements such as rainwater collection tanks and solar panels. At Six Senses Earth Lab, we indulge in a session of organic lip-balm making with Jocelyn, who later takes us on a sustainability walk to showcase Six Senses’ efforts to protect the Barwara community, lake and landscape. “Our rewilding project aims to conserve the natural habitat by removing invasive species such as Prosopis juliflora and by planting native and endemic trees and plants,” Jocelyn tells us. Much of the produce is grown outside the fort walls, in the lawns near the kacheri (courthouse) which is now the GM’s residence. A thriving vegetable and fruit garden also abounds in local shrubbery under the watchful eyes of the resident horticulturist, and a poultry farm may soon be added to the resort’s prized portfolio.

The resort has also done away with plastic and glass bottles to composting waste, the use of plastic is non-existent in Fort Barwara: from providing toothpaste tablets in glass bottles to composting waste, the writing is clear on the wall. Conservation of both culture and the environment is at the heart of luxury.

The Six Senses Fort Barwara is not just a beacon of modern luxury; it is also an example of how hospitality giants can invest in sustainability and conservation efforts. One of the reasons why the restoration took a copious amount of time was the sensitive incorporation of efficient design elements such as rainwater collection tanks and solar panels. At Six Senses Earth Lab, we indulge in a session of organic lip-balm making with Jocelyn, who later takes us on a sustainability walk to showcase Six Senses’ efforts to protect the Barwara community, lake and landscape. “Our rewilding project aims to conserve the natural habitat by removing invasive species such as Prosopis juliflora and by planting native and endemic trees and plants,” Jocelyn tells us. Much of the produce is grown outside the fort walls, in the lawns near the kacheri (courthouse) which is now the GM’s residence. A thriving vegetable and fruit garden also abounds in local shrubbery under the watchful eyes of the resident horticulturist, and a poultry farm may soon be added to the resort’s prized portfolio.
There have been multiple efforts and campaigns around the world to help the people of Ukraine ever since the war with Russia began. #CookForUkraine is one such initiative—a unique community- and volunteer-led campaign designed to support the people and children impacted by the unfolding conflict and humanitarian crisis. Started by London-based chefs and authors Ola Hercules and Alissa Timoshkina, the movement is now global and led by food writers, restaurants, chefs, and entrepreneurs. Since its inception, hundreds of people from different backgrounds and nationalities have reached out and shown their solidarity by cooking up a storm. Restaurants and home cooks have been sharing Ukrainian and Eastern Europe-inspired dishes with guests, friends and across social media. Curious to know more or want to join in? Look up the hashtag which is trending on Instagram.

The movement also seeks to raise awareness on all aspects of Ukrainian cuisine—from Pishkhy pop-ups to varenyky classes.
There has always been cross-pollination of cuisines work in India?

The culinary range our capital is so much to explore and there is a lot of culture and traditions of our heritage. There — I was born and brought up in Daryaganj. Delhi, a melting pot of culture, is my home.

How did Delhi's varied cuisine culture inspire you?

“Vietnamese cuisine has surely made its presence felt in the capital. How did you decide to start CHO?”

CHO is my brainchild and was conceived during the pandemic. Owing to the lockdown, my previous experience of cooking in a restaurant in Gurugram and being at the receiving end of a great response for it, I came to a realisation that Delhi needed a concept like CHO. When I found that there is a premium space available, I started looking for people who I could collaborate with to take the idea further. There was no looking back.

How did you start your journey as a chef?

My career took off some 20 odd years ago. I started my journey with JP Group of Hotels and then moved to various other hotels and restaurants such as Hyatt and Olive Bar & Kitchen. I had the privilege to work in Noma in Denmark, very early in my career. This not only changed my outlook but also helped me evolve tremendously as a chef.

Who do you take inspiration from in the culinary world?

Chefs Rene Redzepi, Tetsuya and Manjit Gill - these chefs have the philosophy to cook with simplicity. They also highlight the ingredients as the star of the recipe and use the best technology to create new textures from it.

— MALLIKA BHAGAT

A stalwart of Asian cuisine, the chef speaks about his love for Vietnamese cuisine.

— Vaibhav Bhargava's Ode to Vietnam

Delhi, a melting pot of culture, is my home. There has always been cross-pollination of cuisines. In fact, in the yesteryears, much cross-pollination took off between Puducherry and Vietnam (both were under French control) as people travelled between these two locations for business and pleasure. Hence, it’s not new to our country, but we have not taken inspiration from it either. Instead, our food has evolved and crossed barriers due to mixing of cuisines.

Do you believe the pandemic has influenced the way people eat?

Somewhere, yes, people have become cautious of what they should eat, and their dietary preferences have changed. In some way, everyone is trying to become a healthier version of themselves. Leading a healthy life is very important and in such hard-hitting times, it is very crucial to make

— CHEF RECOMMENDS

TRUFFLE EDAMAME DUMPLINGS
Edamame beans dumplings served with a rich dipping sauce

KATSU TOFU SUMMER ROLL
A refreshing roll that highlights tofu and spices

VIETNAMESE PIZZA
A savoury snack made of rice paper, eggs and chicken sausage

RECIPE BY MAMA MISO, GOA
Ingredients

- Sticky rice
- Coconut milk
- Icing sugar
- Beetroot juice
- Fresh mango
- 50 grams of sugar to the mix after a while. Let it cool.
- Take another portion of sticky rice and mix it with beetroot juice.
- Take a plate, place the sticky rice in a round-shaped moulding. Over that, add another layer of red sticky rice that has been mixed with beetroot.
- Drizzle fresh, thick mango pulp over the two layers of sticky rice

In Thailand, street food vendors also prepare the same dish but serve it with durian

1. Take 100 grams of steamed sticky rice in a bowl.
2. Cook sticky rice with 400 ml coconut cream in a pan.
3. Make sure to use glutinous (sticky) rice & not regular rice.
Prawns Raw Mango Curry, Kerala

As summer is upon us, so is the season of mangoes! And the great news is that you can find raw mangoes throughout the year. The raw mangoes give the curry a bright and tangy flavour, which work really well with the spiciness and the vivacity of the wine.

Wine Pairing

While wine and a cheese platter might be the most usual combination, here is a guide to pairing wines with Indian delicacies from across the length and the breadth of the country:

1. Chicken Tandoori

Chicken tandoori is undoubtedly one of the most popular dishes in India. A red wine that is slightly and amply would pair perfectly well with the roasted flavours of the tandoori. I personally feel that a Shiraz red wine, aged in toasted American oak barrels would be a great pairing. A fiery wine packed with flavours of cherries and red fruits along with subtle hints of vanilla that beautifully complement the savoury flavours of chicken tandoori – you cannot go wrong with this pairing!

2. Hyderabadi Biryani

Hyderabadi biryani has a very distinct characteristic. Hyderabadi biryani is super flavourful and spicy. It would be great to pair it with a fresh, vivacious and off-dry wine. A nice Zinfandel Rose, with some residual sugar, would be a delightful choice. The slight sweetness of the wine perfectly balances the spiciness of the dish. The aromatic flavours of this biryani and the citrusy wine is an exceptional combination.

3. Masor Tenga, Assam

Mazor tenga is a delicate fish curry from Assam. An aged American oak Chardonnay would be a great companion to the tangy flavours of masor tenga. I would imagine a wine with enticing notes of stone fruit and lemon, a balanced oakiness, and a silky texture which would be a great mirror to the texture of the curry. The subtle vanilla notes from the aging oak barrel would balance out the tanginess of the masor tenga.

4. Veg Kolhapuri, Maharashtra

Veg kolhapuri is a hot and spicy dish. It is great to have a wine which has deep flavours to stand in front of the intensity of the dish and will bring freshness. Vivacious and bright, an aged, oak Sauvignon Blanc is a great option! The enticing aromatics of the wine and its layers of tropical flavours works well with that dish – a match which I enjoy a lot!

Craft Coffee Experience Centre

Craft Coffee is home to innovative coffee concoctions and an airy multilevel space that Mediterranean touches Promise a slice of the Mediterranean in the middle of the tony Ballygunge area in Kolkata, this new, light-filled, 104-seater café punches above its weight with its multilevel seating areas and an array of artisanal coffees. If you can, we suggest you fight for a seat under the canopy of the magnificent 140-year-old mango tree. Outside, the patio has been made cozi with chis (window blinds). An air-conditioned space on the second level has a contemporary feel, perfect for digital nomads. The specialty-brew coffees served here are from beans sourced mainly from plantations in Coorg and Chikmagalur, while some from Odisha’s Tribe-O project – a social enterprise dedicated to improving the livelihood of tribal coffee farmers in India. Dare to stray from your usual, and try their kombucha-inspired coffucha – especially as it’s remarkably refreshing in the summer heat. Alternatively, go for the mellow cold brew infused with honey, or the Turkish coffee which they serve with a side of free bread cheese from the award-winning Kolkata brand, Meraki (the cheese is served free with all their handmade brews). The menu has some familiar dishes with the occasional flourish - mushroom antipasto, peri-peri chicken wings, prawn-and-hard-egg canapé, chicken roulade. Although, nothing can distract you from the conversation you’re having over that glass of chilled lychee coffee served in a beautiful goblet.

Incidentally, Craft Coffee isn’t just a café. The brand also positions itself as a coffee experience centre with a manual brewing counter where you can pick up bags of coffee powder blended to suit your palate.

— ANURADHA SENGUPTA
1. Shri Hemant Soren, Chief Minister, Jharkhand, invited IRTA 2022 delegates to join him in making tourism more sustainable in his state.

2. Shri Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, reiterated the GOI’s commitment to responsible tourism.

3. Roxana Ashtari, Project Specialist, Sustainable Development of Tourism, UNWTO, spoke of transforming tourism value chains.

4. Bharatbala, renowned filmmaker and the creative mind behind Virtual Bharat, gave the keynote address on Rewriting the India story.

5. Naveen Munjal, MD, Hero Electric, spoke on India’s EV Revolution and its impact on tourism.

6. Shri Pankaj Kumar Pandey, Secretary Tourism, Commerce & Industries and Mines, underlined Karnataka’s key tourism action plans.

7. Dr Mario Hardy, Investor, Board Advisor and Global Peace Ambassador shared a wider perspective on technological innovations and tourism in South Asia.

8. Sonu Shivdasani, CEO and Joint Creative Director of Soneva, shared his brand’s iconic journey.


Honourable Minister of Tourism, Ecology and Environment, Government of Karnataka, Shri Anand Singh, emphasized the need to celebrate local culture and heritage, and take pride in what we have as a nation.
1. Samarth Kholkar, CEO and Co-Founder, BLive, shared his start-up's challenges and triumphs through the pandemic years.

2. The opening keynote session at IRTA 2022 was delivered jointly by five of India’s Grassroot Warriors. The session was moderated by Malika Virdi, Sarpanch, Sarma-Jani Van Panchayat and Co-Founder, Himalayan Ark and Soity Banerjee, Project Editor, Outlook Responsible Tourism Initiative.

3. C B Ramkumar, Board Member & India Country Representative of GSTC and Indrani Roy, CEO, Outlook Group, signed an MoU announcing GSTC as the Knowledge Partner for IRTA 2023.

4. Shashank Srinivasan, Director, Technology for Wildlife, explored how data sharing and robotics can be assets for destination management, and help public and private stakeholders address issues raised by initiatives like ‘Save Mollem’.

5. A panel discussion on ‘Re-magnetising the Indian Hospitality Experience’ with (L-R), Soity Banerjee, Moderator, Manav Khanduja, Co-Founder, Pugdundee Safaris, Sunil Varghese, Director, Dune Wellness Group, and Jose Ramapuram, Director Marketing, Evolve Back, on taking responsibility as a destination and not just as an independent business or property.

6. Off-stage discussions were just as engaging; seen here are Shruti Dewan, Director, Marketing, Outlook Group, and Mr. Pandey. 7. Delegates enjoying a traditional lunch at the venue, Karnada University, Hampi. 8. Indrani Roy, CEO, Outlook Group, and Sonali Chatterjee, Project Consultant, Outlook Responsible Tourism Initiative, listen to IRTA 2022 speakers with rapt attention. 9. Sandeep Nanduri, MD, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) spoke on changing perceptions and offering new experiences that are sustainable and truly local.
THE WINNERS

SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP
HOMELETS
Gold: Teeddi Forest Garden
Silver: Sabban - The Kanha Homestay
One to Watch: Himalayan Tribe

SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP
TRAVEL ENTERPRISES
Gold: BLive
Silver: The Extra Mile
One to Watch: Camping Co.

SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP
CONSERVATION
Gold: Dakshin Foundation
Gold: Forest Post

One to Watch: Earthling First
Technology for Wildlife

PATHFINDERS
Gold: Pradeep Murthy
Silver: Oken Tayeng
Silver: Moirangthem Loiya Ngamba

GRASSROOTS HEROES
Gold: Limalenden Longkumer
Silver: Tsewang Dorje
Silver: Shakeel Rizvi
Ones to Watch: Santosh Alankode
Kuldip Gadhvi

OVERALL WINNER
Stone Hedge Ladakh
Every year, two weeks after the Easter Holy Week, the Andalusan capital of Sevilla transforms into a spectacle of colours and festivity. Historically speaking, the Seville Fair was conceived in the mid-19th century as a livestock fair. Today, it is known for the daily, long parades of carriages and horse riders that carry the city’s most influential citizens and make their way to the Real Maestranza, a bullring where bullfighters and breeders meet. Some of the best bullfights are said to happen at this time.

The seven-day-long festival — held in a huge fairground in Los Remedios, situated on the banks of the river Guadalquivir to the south-west of the city — sees much eating, drinking and socialising. Flamenco dancers dressed in the most colourful outfits are a common sight, providing a lively spot of entertainment to visitors. Then there’s Real de la Feria, an area spread across 4,50,00 sq mts in 24 blocks along 15 streets, where one finds row after row of casetas — striped, marquee tents of different sizes. These belong mostly to local families, groups of friends, businesses, clubs, trade associations and political parties, even though some of them are open to the public. Inside the casetas, the occupants revel in night-long festivities to the accompaniment of vibrant folk music, dances, drinks and tapas.
The fragrance of fresh spices... 

Her entire repertoire of recipes spans South India, Ipoh, Penang, Singapore, Indonesia and Europe. This book contains some, which have been carefully selected by us – her family. These are mostly simple, home-styled and easy to cook, yet alive with the aromas, flavours and textures that she collected during her extraordinary journey through life. We use these almost always as a bonding and reliving of the beautiful and wholesome memories and have come to believe how deeply food affects us. In sharing them we hope you enjoy the warmth and joy that emanates from a perfectly glazed juicy roast chicken or a flavourful fish sambal that your family and friends have gathered over.

"A recipe has no soul. You, as the cook, must bring soul to the recipe." – Thomas Keller

This is my mother's story. Food holds a history for everyone. For my mum, it began in the melting pot of cultures and cuisines – colonial Singapore. She was born and raised here in a mix of Indian, Malaysian, Chinese, Indonesian and European cultures and cooking. Eldest of the seven siblings, she had the privileged place in the kitchen and her time after school was often spent alongside the family cook who had a flair for marrying traditional Malaysian delicacies with Singaporean and other Southeast Asian flavours. It was here that ma experienced her first flames with food and soon learned the little secrets that lay embedded in fresh ingredients and exotic herbs.

Fueled with her new passion, she soon found herself putting together a potpourri of simple and ingenious dishes for the family, displaying an inherent talent that even the cook came to rely on.

Boarding school in Singapore didn't stop her from continuing her chemistry with cooking, and her holidays at her ancestral village in South India were spent experimenting and learning the spicy flavours of the South.

The saga of expressing love through cooking continued through her life, and we, her family, were fortunate to experience that love waft into our lives each day. I am the fourth of the five siblings (four sisters and a brother) who took complete advantage of our mother's affection.

Then came her connection with continental cuisine and French delicacy that became part of her life. She had our father, who, at the time, was completing his Masters in Engineering at the Imperial College in London, and the infamous English weather, to thank for that. She enrolled herself at the famous Gordon Bleu Cooking School to add a feather in her cap. The French soup and freshly baked bread brought warmth to the cold English days, and it was here that mum's love affair with traditional French cuisine, and its techniques, began.

Mum and dad brought up not just us, but everything around them, with love. One of those was a charming farm in Madura. Each morning, dad would be stationed at the portico of the farmhouse, on his favourite chair reading the newspaper and sipping a steaming cup of filter coffee. Mum, seated next to him, would be deftly chopping, dicing and slicing the vegetables she planned to use for the day. Their conversations ranged from tending to my mother's precious jasmine and tuberose to discussions on the political state of the country and more. I would often stand by the doorway and watch them interact with love and mutual respect.

Over time, we left the nest one by one, and her entrepreneurial side emerged. She started a catering business, which naturally flourished. With the birth of her grandchildren, Anush, Sanjith and her brother and her last born gripped her interest, allowing her to give her attention to them, with love.

Even when the tragic loss of my brother and her last born gripped her in an unspoken gloom, it was her deep bond with cooking that brought back the light. When I casually mentioned that I'd like to record her timeless recipes in a book so all of us have access to the memories, my mother and our family, through her cooking. I had 308 recipes in mind for the final cut. During this process, I started studying food photography in New York City. Here, I started taking photos and writing down memories and anecdotes, as well as testing and retesting the recipes. The mix of recipes is a lot of my favourites, my dad's favourites and some from the rest of my family as well, which have been curated and put together. They include recipes which were cooked during special times in our family's lives, and also some everyday, comfort food. It's been a fulfilling, educative, challenging and rewarding experience, and I hope you enjoy this book as much as I've enjoyed putting it together!
This natural, spa-like bath pool, surrounded by rocks of multiple hues, can be found in Australia’s Karijini National Park. The park, with its many waterfalls and waterholes, is like an oasis given that it is situated in Pilbara, one of the most arid and sparsely-populated regions lying to the north of Western Australia. Pilbara also happens to be one of the oldest (if not the oldest) places on earth, going back nearly 3.6 billion years. Besides possessing the world’s oldest crust in an exceptionally preserved state, Pilbara contains plenty of stromatolites, considered by scientists to be evidence of earth’s oldest life forms in a fossilised state. Even more fascinating is the chemical similarities in the composition of rocks here and on Mars. It’s the reason why NASA scientists conducted investigations and studies here in 2019, to better prepare for their journey to the Red Planet.
The majestic structures. The tales of chivalry and valour. Great testimonies of history. Come to get captivated by the glorious heritage of Rajasthan.

Amrit Fort, Jaipur

Rajasthan

A stunning heritage awaits you in