

LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

# travel

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January



February



March



April



May

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## Traveling Through 2019



June



July



August



September



October



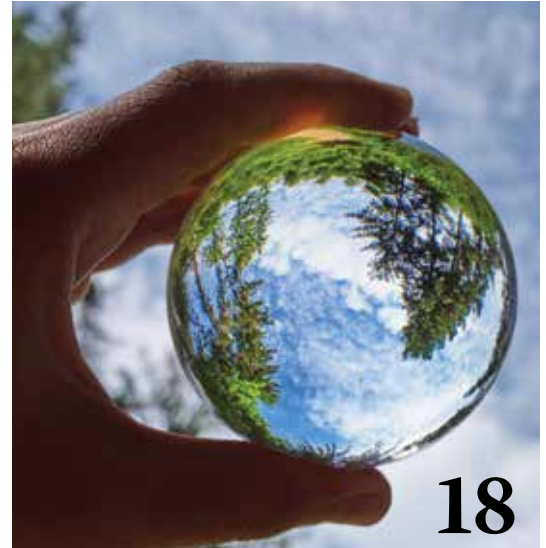
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## Editor's Letter

## Tourism industry seeks urgent relief under Ministry of Commerce's SEI Scheme

*The travel and tourism sector has sought urgent relief under the Ministry of Commerce's Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS). The demand was raised at an interactive meeting of the travel and tourism industry federation with the Ministry of Commerce & Industry officials on April 8.*

As an immediate relief measure for the crisis-ridden industry, the stakeholder associations, at the aegis of the Federation of Associations of Indian Travel & Hospitality (FAITH), have sought release of 10% SEIS to the tourism businesses on the basis of the foreign exchange earnings of the previous year. The other demands placed before the Ministry of Commerce & Industry include deemed export status for the industry, SEIS on gross forex earnings, zero rating of tourism exports, GST refunds to tourists, strategic focus on MICE sector, Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) on tourist vehicles and relaxing export obligations.

The meeting witnessed the participation of leaders of travel and tourism industry associations represented under FAITH, Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the tourism committees of CII, ASSOCHAM and FICCI.

The Government of India had introduced the Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) under the Foreign

Trade Policy (FTP) - 2015-20. The main objective of the scheme is to make Indian services globally competitive in terms of price. Under SEIS, the service providers of notified services are incentivised in the form of Duty Credit Scrips at the rate of 3% or 5% on their net foreign exchange earnings.

### India's robust domestic tourism segment will soften impact of COVID-19

Although the travel & tourism industry in India currently staring at an uncertain future with the COVID-19 pandemic inflicting an unforeseen dent on business and travel prospects, we are hopeful that sector will bounce back since India has a fairly strong domestic tourism market. "We are in a much better position than most other countries. India has a robust domestic tourism segment, it will soften the impact of COVID-19 drastically in times to come." None denying the fact that the current outbreak has engulfed the world, the awareness and recognition towards health will take center stage. "India has a huge opportunity because there will a growing interest for wellness, Ayurveda and yoga along with religion. This will be a huge opportunity to be tapped towards a long-term recovery."



We are on    

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# STAY HOME TODAY, # TRAVELTOMORROW



*“By staying home today, we can travel tomorrow”. The hashtag #TravelTomorrow encapsulates this message of solidarity and hope, through which the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) calls for shared responsibility among travellers and the tourism sector around the world to deal with the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.*



**D**iscovering different cultures, practicing solidarity and respect, caring for the environment, continuing to learn, fostering decent work, development and sustainability, generating new opportunities for all. These are the core values of tourism advocated by the World Tourism Organization and which constitute the main pillars of the #TravelTomorrow campaign.

#TravelTomorrow has become the common thread that runs through the World Tourism Organization's response to the current crisis, highlighting the enduring values of tourism.

**“Our response must be fast, coherent and united so that we can all travel again”**

This online campaign has had a massive impact on social networks and is being embraced by a growing number of countries, destinations and companies linked to tourism, cities, media outlets and individuals from all over the world. Countries

such as Germany, Morocco, Mongolia, Oman and Uruguay, as well as cities such as Bogotá or Vienna, have already endorsed the hashtag #TravelTomorrow, thus amplifying the voice of tourism, which is united in the face of this unprecedented global challenge.

A digital resource platform has been created to provide different options for any individual, business or institutional user to join this initiative, offering elements such as images for social media profiles, electronic signatures, as well as relevant audio-visual content on tourism and COVID-19.

“Historically, tourism has proven itself as a key driver of international recovery, and as early as now, we must begin to prepare in order to build the foundations of the future resilience of tourism,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili.

## Crisis Committee

The Global Tourism Crisis Committee, chaired by the UNWTO, has also supported this initiative within the framework of the **recommendations** it has developed to address this crisis. **“Our response must be fast, coherent and united so that we can all travel again soon and do so in a safer, more sustainable and more respectful way, learning from the lessons of the current crisis,”** concluded Pololikashvili.

Among the **recommendations promoted by the Committee is the need for financial and political support for recovery measures aimed at the tourism sector, in coordination with international development organizations, in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on employment, protect the most vulnerable segments of society and accelerate recovery.**

At the same time, it is important for policies and actions to ensure the promotion of **sustainable development**, in line with the mandate of the UNWTO, especially at the beginning of the **Decade of Action**—ten years to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals deriving from the 2030 Agenda.

# Indian Tourism Industry on the Brink of collapse

*Massive Job Loss Looms Over Crores as COVID-19 Brings Tourism to A Standstill FAITH Appeals to the Govt of India for immediate Survival Package*

- Over 95% MSMEs of 53,000 travel agents, 1,15,000 Tour Operators (inbound, domestic, outbound), 15,000 Adventure, 2700 MICE, 19,11,000 Tourist Transporters, 53,000 hospitality and 5 lakh restaurants facing the heat due to lack of cash flows
- COVID-19 Pandemic has jeopardized India's once hailing 5 lakh crores tourism industry and employment of an estimated 3.8 crore jobs

**F**ederation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality, the policy federation of all the national associations representing the complete tourism, travel and hospitality industry of India (ADTOI, ATOAI, FHRAI, HAI, IATO, ICPB, IHHA, ITTA, TAAI, TAFI) over the past six weeks has been appealing to the **Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Tourism Minister, Commerce Minister, Aviation Minister, Niti Aayog and the Parliamentary Committee on Tourism and Reserve Bank**

**faith**

Federation of Associations in  
Indian Tourism & Hospitality



**of India.** Indian Tourism industry, in 2018-19 **handled business of** over 10.5 million foreign tourists, more than 5million visiting NRIs, 1.8 billion domestic tourist visits & over 26 million outbound travellers. The industry is facing its biggest economic challenge with the larger and combined effect of 9/11 and the slowdown of 2009 and estimated bigger effect than the Economic Depression and World War II.

All the cash inflows of the industry have completely frozen and are likely to stay that way for the financial year 2020-21. To address the issues of cash outflows, **FAITH has recommended immediate measures for survival that need to be addressed parallelly.**

- A complete deferment for twelve months of all statutory dues payable by tourism, travel & hospitality industry at the Central Government level, state and municipal government level without attracting any penal interest. These would include GST, Advance Tax payments, PF, ESI, customs duties, excise fees, fixed power & water

charges and any fees for licenses and renewal at the state level.

- A support fund 'Tourism COVID 19 Relief fund' to be set up by RBI or Ministry of Finance or Tourism to support salaries and establishment costs. It should be either in the form of an interest free loan to Tourism companies for repayment of the principle over 10 years. The industry estimates the value of the fund to be minimum of Rs.50,000 crores which is almost equal to gross banking credit to the Indian Tourism industry.

- RBI has already provided for three months moratorium on EMIs of principle and interest payments on loans and recalculation of working capital from Financial Institutions. This needs to be without any accrued and accumulated interest during this period and it needs to be extended for twelve months.

To achieve the above FAITH recommends setting up **National Tourism Task Force of all relevant ministries of the Central Government along with ministry**



**of tourism and chief secretaries of State governments and industry stakeholders. This should be with legislative powers on the lines of GST council for state-wise standardized tourism response.**

FAITH has also recommended that once the survival measures have been implemented then the measures for revival of Indian Tourism needs to be put in immediately. The Govt needs to stimulate domestic tourism by giving 200% weighted reduction of expenses to Indian corporates for undertaking their meeting, conferences, and exhibitions in India. LTA like income tax exemption of upto Rs.1.5 lakhs to Indians for undertaking their holidays with the country, these exemptions to be availed against invoices issued by

GST registered Indian Tourism service providers.

To stimulate Tourism exports, SEIS needs to be notified at 10% value for all foreign exchange tourism companies and needs to be maintained at minimum same value for next 5 years and for off-season, it could go upto 15% value. To ensure the revival of Indian travel agent, all refunds, advances and cancellation amounts to be immediately paid back by all airlines, railways and state wildlife parks.

The TCS on travel agent proposed in the finance bill 2020 to be implemented on October 1, should be completely abolished as it puts the Indian travel fraternity at a huge disadvantage of upto 15% v/s their global competitors. Additionally, the service fee for credit

card charges needs to below 1% and all corporate travel agent credit cards to be honored. To additionally ensure the survival of Indian tourist transporters, all inter-state levy need to be reduced and standardized. The year 2020-21 can be declared as a GST tax holiday for Indian tourism without stopping the flow of Input tax credits since there will be minimal GST collections from highly reduced travel within India.

FAITH urges the Government to declare immediate survival measures to prevent mass bankruptcy and crores of unprecedented layoffs. Worldwide, countries have already put in support measures for Tourism industry through salary support and tax waiver such as USA, UK, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Indonesia and many others.

## Global airlines to lose \$314bn in revenue due to coronavirus: IATA

*Outlook for the industry grows darker by the day, trade body IATA says*

**G**lobal airlines will lose \$314 billion (Dh1.15 trillion) in passenger revenue this year, a 55 per cent drop from 2019, as the rapid spread of the coronavirus and ensuing travel bans continue to hurt the industry, the International Air Transport Association said on Tuesday.

The latest assessment is much higher than the organisation's previous estimate of a \$252bn loss just three weeks ago on March 24.

"The industry's outlook grows darker by the day," said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's director general and chief executive in a statement.

"The scale of the crisis makes a sharp, V-shaped recovery unlikely. Realistically, it will be a U-shaped

recovery with domestic travel coming back faster than the international market. We could see more than half of passenger revenues disappear."

Passenger demand globally is forecast to plunge 48 per cent year-on-year in 2020 due to travel restrictions imposed by governments to contain the spread of the disease, as well as weaker economic growth.

The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday said the global economy is heading for its worst decline since the Great Depression of the 1930s, forecasting a 3 per cent decline for global GDP this year, from a previous estimate of a 3.3 per cent increase.

"The world is heading for a recession. The economic shock of the Covid-19 crisis is expected to be at its most severe in the second quarter when GDP is expected to shrink by 6 per cent," IATA said. "The impact of reduced economic activity in the

second quarter alone would result in an 8 per cent fall in passenger demand in the third quarter."

As of early April, the number of flights globally was down 80 per cent compared to 2019, largely due to severe travel restrictions imposed by governments to fight the spread of the virus, according to IATA.

Airlines worldwide are suspending most or all of their passenger flights, grounding jets and axing jobs in efforts to preserve cash.

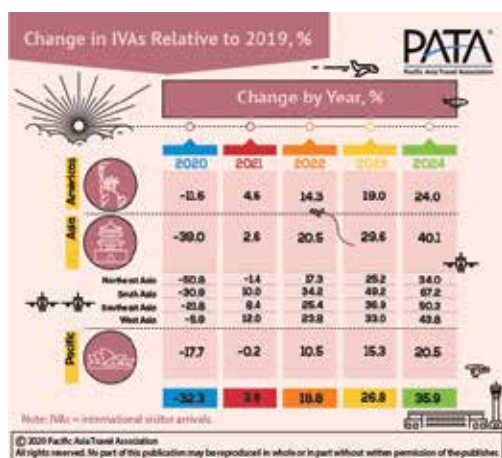
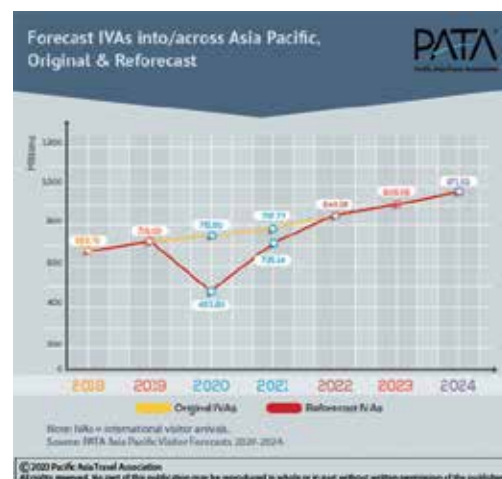
IATA urged governments to step up efforts to help by extending direct financial support to the industry, as well as granting loans and tax relief.

"Airlines could burn through \$61bn of cash reserves in the second quarter alone. That puts at risk 25 million jobs dependent on aviation. And without urgent relief, many airlines will not survive to lead the economic recovery," Mr de Juniac said.

# PATA

## Asia Pacific

### Visitor Numbers Likely to Reduce by 32% in 2020, but return in 2021



Under the newly updated forecasts from the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), the most likely scenario for international visitor arrivals into and across Asia Pacific in 2020 is that visitor numbers are likely to reduce by 32% year-on-year. Taking into account the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the volume of arrivals is now expected to reduce to fewer than 500 million this year.

That effectively takes visitor volume back to levels last seen in 2012. At this stage, growth is expected to resume in 2021, returning to forecast levels by 2023. Much of course, depends on how quickly and completely the COVID-19 pandemic is contained and controlled. A more optimistic scenario suggests arrivals still falling in 2020 but by 16% year-on-year while a pessimistic narrative predicts a reduction of approximately 44%.

The impacts are expected to be most severe in Asia, especially Northeast Asia, which is now predicted to lose almost 51% of its visitor volume between 2019 and 2020 (most likely scenario), followed by South Asia with a reduction of 31%, and then Southeast Asia with a 22% drop in visitor arrivals. West Asia is projected to lose almost six percent in visitor arrivals, followed by the Pacific with a projected contraction of 18%, and the Americas with a loss of a little under 12%.

Recovery rates relative to 2019 are expected to occur in most destination regions/sub-regions in 2020, however, Northeast Asia is likely to take a little longer and exceed the 2019 volume of arrivals in 2022.

The same is essentially true for visitor receipts as well as they are expected to drop by 27% between 2019 and 2020 under the most likely scenario, reducing to US\$594 billion,



significantly below the original 2020 forecast of US\$811 billion.

Asia is expected to lose more than US\$170 billion (-36%), with Northeast Asia predicted to lose more than US\$123 billion (-48%) under this most likely scenario, followed by South Asia with a US\$13.3 billion loss (-33%) and Southeast Asia with a US\$34.6 billion shortfall (-20%). The Americas is projected to lose more than US\$35 billion (-13%) and the Pacific US\$18 billion (-18%).

Here, recovery at the annual level is expected to return more quickly across most regions/sub-regions, with perhaps the Pacific taking a little longer to return to 2019 levels.

PATA CEO Dr. Mario Hardy noted that, "This is first and foremost an

unfolding human tragedy, with a dire loss of life and for millions more, a loss of income while businesses are closed, and many remain in self-quarantine or follow social distancing guidelines. We can only hope that this pandemic is brought under absolute control quickly and effectively, enabling the global travel and tourism industry to get back on its feet, re-employ the millions of people who lost their positions and create even more employment opportunities both directly and for the upstream and downstream sectors that rely on it".

"While there are obvious reductions in arrivals, there still remains a significant volume of visitors expected into Asia Pacific through 2020, with just under half-a-billion such travellers

still generating almost US\$600 billion, with each visitor still requiring and expecting the attention and service that this region has become famous for delivering," he added. "Nevertheless, perceptions are difficult to change so recovery might take longer in the minds of many potential travellers. This however gives us time to reconsider the position we had created up to 2019; if numbers return only slowly, the obvious imperative will be to offer travellers such incentives that they remain in the destination longer and see more of what it has to offer. The metric should therefore shift from the numbers of arrivals, to time spent in any one destination and the dispersion across it. Receipts will then follow."

## Covid-19 pandemic could erase the global tourism growth of last seven years: UNWTO

According to the *UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)*, the specialised agency for tourism within the United Nations, the Covid-19 pandemic could put the clock back by five to seven years for international tourism. The pandemic might erase all the growth achieved by international tourism over the last five to seven years, UNWTO notes in its updated assessment of the likely impact of the Covid-19 on international tourism.

Taking into account the unparalleled introduction of *travel* restrictions across the world, the United Nations specialized agency for tourism expects that international tourist arrivals will be down by 20 to 30 percent in 2020 when compared with 2019 figures. Taking into account past market trends, this would mean that between five and seven years' worth of growth will be lost to Covid-19.

However, UNWTO stresses that these numbers are based on the latest developments as the global community

*UNWTO predicts  
20 to 30 percent  
decline in International  
Tourist Arrivals in 2020;  
International Tourism  
Receipts to fall by  
one-third compared  
to 2019*

faces up to an unprecedented social and economic challenge and should be interpreted with caution in view of the extreme uncertain nature of the current crisis.

An expected fall of between 20-30 percent could translate into a decline in international tourism receipts (exports) of between USD 300-450 billion, almost one third of the USD 1.5 trillion generated in 2019. Putting this into context, UNWTO notes that in 2009, on the back of the global economic crisis, international tourist arrivals declined by



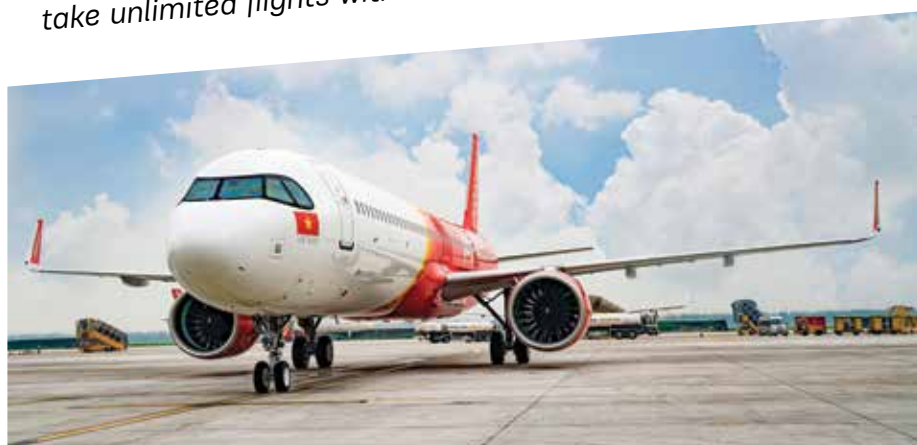
4 percent, while the SARS outbreak led to a decline of just 0.4 percent in 2003.

**UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili** said, "Tourism is among the hardest hit of all economic sectors. However, tourism is also united in helping to address this immense health emergency – our first and utmost priority – while working together to mitigate the impact of the crisis, particularly on employment, and to support the wider recovery efforts through providing jobs and driving economic welfare worldwide."



## Passengers now can take unlimited flights in Vietnam with Vietjet Power Pass!

*Vietjet launches the Power Pass that allows its holders to take unlimited flights within Vietnam for the whole year.*



Note: (\*) Excludes taxes, fees and additional add-on services (if any)

(\*\*) Excluding VAT

(\*\*\*) Except the Lunar New Year holidays (Tet)

Vietjet has introduced the Power Pass, enabling travellers to take unlimited flights within Vietnam. The low-cost carrier operates nearly 300 green flights daily covering 45 routes across the southeast Asian country.

Passengers can buy the pass on [powerpass.vietjetair.com](http://powerpass.vietjetair.com) or [vietjetair.com](http://vietjetair.com). The exclusive Power Pass account offers passengers with free air ticket's net fares (\*), free 15kg of checked baggage and 7kg of hand luggage on unlimited domestic flights during the validity of the pass. Passengers can change their flight schedules as many times as they want to for VND 100,000 (₹324) (\*\*) for each change.

Vietjet offers two Power Pass options — Power Pass Sky6 priced at VND 8,999,000 (₹29,268) (\*\*) for unlimited domestic flights until the end of September 30, 2020, while the Power Pass Sky12 priced at VND 16,999,000 (₹55,288) (\*\*) for unlimited domestic flights until the end of March 31, 2021 (\*\*\*).

All payments via credit cards and international payment cards issued by HDBank in Vietnam will be entitled to a gift worth of VND 299,000 (₹971).



# Delta extends change fee waiver for flights booked through to June 2020

**D**elta has extended several of its amended travel policies further into the summer, as global travel restrictions continue to batter the aviation industry.

Customers with cancelled travel booked up to the end of June 2020, can now re-book without change fees to fly up until May 31, 2022.

**The above applies to customers who have:**

- Upcoming travel already booked in April, May or June 2020, as of April 14, 2020
- Existing eCredits or cancelled travel from flights in March, April, May or June 2020

The carrier also said that it has capped fares in all cabins for travel throughout Canada and the US until May 31, although exact details of this were not given.



Delta recently announced a number of social distancing measures for those travelling before May 31, including blocking the middle seat on all flights in Main Cabin, Delta Comfort + and Delta Premium Select cabins.

**These moves will now also be extended until the end of June.**

Finally the airline is offering free round-trip Delta flights to states including Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan

and New York, for eligible medical volunteers. This programme is also valid for travel through to the end of June, and more details can be found [here](#).

Earlier this month Delta extended tier statuses for members of its Sky Miles frequent flyer programme, with all SkyMiles Medallion members set to enjoy the same loyalty benefits throughout 2021 as they currently have in 2020.



## Japan Airlines outlines international flying schedule for May

**J**apan Airlines has published its planned international flight schedules for the period from May 1 to May 31, with just six per cent of services set to operate.

The Americas fare particularly badly, with 97 per cent of services suspended, including all flights from Tokyo Haneda to New York JFK, Dallas Fort Worth and San Francisco, and From Narita to Boston, LAX, San Diego and Seattle.

The launch of the carrier's route from Narita to San Francisco (originally scheduled for March 29) continues to

be postponed, but selected flights will operate from Haneda to Chicago and LAX, and from Narita to Vancouver.

JAL will operate 9 per cent of services to Europe, but in reality this is on just one route – Haneda to London Heathrow. Flights from Haneda to Paris, Helsinki and Moscow all remain suspended, as do those from Narita to Frankfurt and Vladivostok.

No flights will operate to Australia next month, with both of the carrier's Haneda-Sydney and Narita-Melbourne routes suspended.

A larger number of routes will operate to Asia, with selected services running to Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Ho Chi Minh, Manila, Dalian, Hong Kong, Taipei and Seoul.

But there will be no services to destinations including Singapore, Delhi, Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou, and the carrier's planned route launch to Bengaluru remains postponed.

An up to date list (as of April 13) of operating and suspended international flights can be seen [here](#).



# Turkish Airlines extends flight cancellations until May 20

**T**urkish Airlines has extended its suspension of international flights until May 20 over the coronavirus crisis.

"In accordance with the decisions taken by the authorities of the Republic of Turkey and to protect the

public health from novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic...all our international flights are suspended until May 20, 2020," reads a statement from the airline on its website.

The carrier previously said it would pause almost all international flights

until April 17, but has now extended the cancellation until mid-May. Domestic flights have been suspended until May 1.

The carrier said on its website that it has waived all change fees for international tickets purchased on or before March 20 for travel booked until the end of the year.

For domestic flights, change fees have been waived for tickets purchased on or before March 19 for travel booked until the end of the year.

Both domestic and international ticket holders can rebook for a flight before February 28, 2021, but tickets can only be changed once. For international flights, the new ticket must be to the same region as the original destination. Customers can also opt for an open ticket where the return date is not fixed. *See the full policy here.*

Airlines around the world have suspended international flights due to border closures and a drop in travel demand. This includes Qantas, Virgin Australia, Emirates, Etihad, Vietnam Airlines, and HK Express.

## Indigo to Resume Flight Operations from May 4 in Phased Manner



**I**nitially starting with a slightly curtailed capacity, the airline will increase the operating capacity over the subsequent months, also re-opening selected international flights, depending on the existing international travel guidelines

In its endeavour to reconnect critical air corridors post the lockdown, IndiGo

will resume flight operations from May 04, 2020. Initially starting with a slightly curtailed capacity, the airline will increase the operating capacity over the subsequent months, also re-opening selected international flights, depending on the existing international travel guidelines.

Ronojoy Dutta, Chief Executive Officer, IndiGo said, "Complementing the government's efforts against COVID-19, we will restart flight operations on vital corridors of air traffic from May 04, 2020. We will begin operations for domestic only and then gradually ramp it up further, to commence operations on some international routes as well. Our singular focus will be on ensuring the health of our customers and our

employees. We are working closely with the government and the airports to take our aircraft and our airports to a significantly higher level of cleanliness while ensuring social distancing. The airline industry has always done a tremendous job in ensuring the safety of its customers and I am confident we will rise to this latest challenge as well".

For customers who are affected by the cancellations until 3rd May'20, the booking amount will be protected in the form of a credit shell under their PNR number, which can be used to make bookings for the same customer(s) on our website or mobile app valid for 1 year from the date of issuance. For any queries, customers can connect with us via live chat at <https://bit.ly/2x5T6nv>.





# Emirates

## announces limited passenger flights to more cities

- Emirates will operate to: Tunis, Jakarta, Manila, Algiers, Taipei, Chicago, and Kabul
- All Emirates flights to operate from Dubai International airport T3

Emirates is planning to operate passenger services to Jakarta, Manila, Taipei, Chicago, Tunis, Algiers and Kabul in addition to the already commenced operation to London and Frankfurt. These services will facilitate residents and visitors wishing to return home.

Passengers will be able to book directly on [emirates.com](http://emirates.com) or via their travel agent. Only citizens of the destination country and those who meet the entry requirements will be allowed to board. Passengers will be required to

comply with each country's requirement.

With the increase of services and flights out of Dubai, Emirates have recommenced its operation at Dubai International airport Terminal 3. Customers will be required to follow all health and safety measures required by the UAE authorities and the country of destination.

During this time, there will be no online check in and seat selection available and services such as chauffeur drive and lounge will not be available in any of the destinations.

Emirates will also offer amended services on these flights. Magazines and other print reading material will not be available, and while food and beverages will continue to be offered on board, packaging and presentation will be modified to reduce contact during meal service and the risk of infection.

**Cabin baggage** will not be accepted on these flights. Carry-on items allowed in the cabin will be limited to laptop, handbag, briefcase or baby items. All other items have to be checked in, and Emirates will add the cabin baggage allowance to customers' check-in baggage allowance.

Passengers are required to apply social distancing guidelines during their journey and **wear their own masks when at the airport and on board the aircraft.** Travellers should arrive at Dubai International airport **Terminal 3** for check-in, three hours before departure. Emirates' check-in counters will only process passengers holding confirmed bookings to the above destinations.

All Emirates aircraft will go through enhanced cleaning and disinfection processes in Dubai, after each journey.

# Qatar Airways and Standard Chartered sign \$850 Million Aircraft Financing Agreement

**Q**atar Airways and Standard Chartered have successfully signed a US\$ 850 million financing in respect of seven Boeing 787-9 aircraft. This transaction demonstrates the confidence that the banking market has in Qatar Airways and also highlights the strong relationship between Qatar Airways and Standard Chartered.

**Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker** stated, "I am grateful to

Standard Chartered for their continued support to Qatar Airways. The bank has been a close partner of Qatar Airways for many years and have proven their support for the airline by closing this transaction during difficult times resulting from COVID-19. Qatar Airways focus remains on finding solutions to get as many people back to their homes to be with their families and loved ones during these difficult times and this is made possible by the support we have from so many people

including our close partners such as Standard Chartered."

**Standard Chartered Chief Executive Mr. Bill Winters** stated, "We value our partnership with Qatar Airways and are very pleased to close this landmark deal at this difficult time. At Standard Chartered we continue to support our clients and communities despite the ongoing challenges with COVID-19 and are proud to have been able to provide Qatar Airways with this financing."

## Air Canada and others suspend flights until June as sector slammed by coronavirus



**A**ir Canada is suspending most international flights until June, while Air Transat and Sunwing Airlines Ltd. are cancelling all trips until May 31 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision extends the suspension of more than 160 Air Canada routes as well as Air Transat and Sunwing trips by another month as closed borders and vanishing travel demand continue to ravage the airline industry.

Air Canada says it is still operating repatriation flights for Canadians

stuck abroad on three continents in collaboration with the Canadian government.

Air Transat, owned by Transat AT Inc., says it will provide credit for travel within 24 months of the original return date. The company cites "extraordinary circumstances" that are beyond its control and describes the two-year voucher as "an acceptable solution."

Sunwing says passengers can redeem flight credit for departures until June 20, 2022.

Advocates have argued that travellers should be entitled to refunds for flight services paid for but not received, as in the United States and the European Union. But a statement on the website of the Canadian Transportation Agency says airlines are not obliged to pay back passengers for trips suspended due to the novel coronavirus and "should not be expected to take steps that could threaten their economic viability."





# India

## suspends flight operations until May 3

**T**he Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) India has announced that all domestic and international scheduled airline operations in India will remain suspended until 2359 hours of May 3, 2020.

The office of DGCA also announced the continuation of travel and visa restrictions relating to Covid-19. The

statement said the restrictions will not apply to international all cargo operations and flights specifically approved by DGCA.

This move came in after Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi extended the nation-wide lockdown period until May 3 in his today's address.

Commenting on this, India's Civil

Aviation Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri tweet reads, "There were good reasons for the lockdown to be extended until May 3. We can consider lifting restrictions on both domestic and international flights thereafter."

"I understand the problems being faced by people who need to travel and request them to bear with us."

## Finnair to deepen its cooperation with Juneyao Air

**F**innair and Shanghai-based Juneyao Air have signed a Letter of Intent to deepen their cooperation between China and Europe subject to required regulatory approvals.

The aim is to establish a joint venture on the Helsinki – Shanghai route enabling Finnair and Juneyao Air to offer their corporate and leisure customers a seamless travel experience through a wider choice of destination, schedule and fare options via their main hubs, Helsinki Airport (HEL) and Pudong International Airport (PVG).

"Despite these immensely challenging times for our industry, we at Finnair remain steadfast in our belief and commitment to China as a key market and to Juneyao Air as a key partner. Over the last year we have

built up a close and mutually beneficial partnership with Juneyao Air. Taking the important step to evolve this into a deeper cooperation focused on our Shanghai and Helsinki hubs will allow us to not only serve our current customers even better, but also to lay a platform for further growth in the future, once the aviation market starts to normalise", says Ole Orver, Chief Commercial Officer at Finnair.

"The aviation industry has encountered tough situations. Nevertheless, we consistently and optimistically trust in our emphasized China-Europe market and partnership with Finnair. We have been in comprehensive cooperation with Finnair and have obtained a mutually trustworthy and beneficial partnership with shared visions and values.

Expanding the partnership enables us to accelerate further development and to serve passengers better with diversified choices and broadened network coverage.", says Mr Yu Chengji, Executive Vice President of Juneyao Air.

Juneyao Air launched its route from Shanghai to Helsinki in July 2019, and since then both Finnair and Juneyao Air have been code sharing on each other's Helsinki-Shanghai routes and on selected routes from Helsinki to Europe and from Shanghai to other destinations in China. A reciprocal agreement for Finnair Plus and Juneyao Air Club member was also implemented in August 2019, allowing customers to earn and redeem miles and points throughout each partner's entire network.

Once implemented, the joint venture cooperation will enable significant further expansion of codesharing across the networks of both partners, particularly to key points behind Shanghai Pudong and Helsinki, as well as the introduction of enhanced benefits for frequent travelers.

# World Earth Day



## What is Earth Day ?

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated around the world on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. Since it started, Earth Day has been celebrated

every year on 22 April to highlight important issues such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and plastic waste. The aim is to educate people and encourage environmental movements around the world.

## When was it started ?

First celebrated in 1970, it now includes events coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network in more than 193 countries

Earth Day was first celebrated in 1970. Peace activist, John McConnell proposed the day

of March 21, 1970, the first day of spring, to honor the earth and the concept of peace.

The April 22 Earth Day, founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson, was first organized in 1970 to promote ecology and respect for life on the planet as well as to encourage awareness of the growing problems of air, water, and soil pollution.

## Importance of Earth Day

Earth Day is a day dedicated to increasing awareness about the Earth, its issues and problems. Today, more than 1 billion people now participate in Earth Day activities each year, making it the largest civic observance in the world.

## Why we celebrate Earth Day ?

The reason why we “celebrate” Earth Day is that it affirms the principle of human beings as an equal part of nature and that though we have the greatest benefit of being the intelligent species, we also have the enormous responsibility of protecting the Planet.

Things you can do on Earth Day (or everyday) to help the nature & environment.

Go on a beach clean.

If you want to help get rid of some of the plastic waste in your area, going on a beach clean is a great and fun way to do this

### Plant a tree

If you want to help make your area a bit greener and help reduce deforestation and climate change; plant a tree or even a forest

### Buy a bag for life

Single-use plastic carrier bags are no friend to the environment, clogging up landfill sites, and posing great danger to marine wildlife. The 5p plastic bag charge in shops and supermarkets has helped this issue, however, you can help further by buying a bag for life so that you never have to buy a plastic carrier bag again. These are reusable bags that are very strong, and are available in most supermarkets and online.

### Don't eat any meat

As a species, we love eating meat, especially in the West, but this is putting a great pressure on this industry. As well as potential animal welfare issues from intensive farming, the environmental damage animal products create is also a massive issue. Beef in particular uses up a lot of land, a lot of water, and produces many greenhouse gases

### Go microbead-free

Microbeads are tiny beads of plastic that are in many cosmetic products, such as face washes and toothpaste. They end up being washed down your sink into the ocean and can enter the food chain when marine animals consume them.

### Walk or ride a bike

Cars contribute greatly to air pollution, climate change, and have a negative impact on human health. They produce dangerous gases such as carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides,

which then enter our atmosphere that we have to breath in.

Rather than taking your car, try to walk or ride a bike instead. This is also good exercise contributing to a healthy lifestyle

### Give up chewing gum

You might think that chewing gum is environmentally friendly, but it is actually made from a synthetic rubber, which is plastic. Around 100,000 tonnes of this plastic is thrown away every year, and a lot of it ends up on our streets.

### Shop at a local farmers market

Farmers markets are a great way to get fresh produce and are beneficial in many ways. Firstly, they support local businesses encouraging positive growth in your area. They also tend to use a lot less, or even no plastic packaging compared to supermarkets, so help reduce waste. Finally, the products are grown or made locally so transport distances are very short and CO2 emissions are low.

### Buy a reusable water bottle

In 2016, over 480 billion plastic bottles were sold, which is over 60 for every person. If everyone had a reusable water bottle, then this number would decrease greatly. If you don't already own one, then go out and buy a bottle that you can take with you everywhere you go.

### Stop using plastic straws

Plastic straws contribute greatly to the plastic waste in our oceans. The next time you go to a bar or restaurant, make sure say no to a straw, and even encourage them to stop using straws completely. If you have to use one, then buy an environmentally friendly one that is reusable.

### Switch all of your bills to paperless

Rather than being sent your monthly bills by post, switch to online statements to reduce paper waste. It's really easy to do and you are sent an email when your bills are available

online to view. Decreasing the demand for paper will hopefully decrease the rate of deforestation.

### Start a compost heap in your garden

Food wastage is a massive problem all around the world. Starting a compost heap in your garden will help you get rid of kitchen and garden waste efficiently and you can use it to fertilise your garden with valuable nutrients.

Spread the word!

Earth Day 2020 is the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. Celebrations will include activities such as the Great Global CleanUp, Citizen Science, Advocacy, Education, and art.

COVID-19 has shifted the global emphasis to Digital Mobilizations. Individual activities such as education and cleanups are encouraged where local conditions permit. "At Earth Day Network, the health and safety of volunteers and participants in Earth Day events is our top concern. Amid the recent outbreak, we encourage people to rise up but to do so safely and responsibly — in many cases, that means using our voices to drive action online rather than in person," said President of Earth Day Network.

Earth Day will educate and mobilize more than one billion people to grow and support the next generation of environmental activists. It's time to reimagine what we can collectively do for our global environment with activities and events.

The enormous challenges — but also the vast opportunities — of acting on climate change have distinguished the issue as the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary. Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable.

Earth Day 2020 will be far more than a day. It must be a historic moment when citizens of the world rise up in a united call for the creativity, innovation, ambition, and bravery that we need to meet our climate crisis and seize the enormous opportunities of a zero-carbon future.



# 21 Travel Industry favours day Lockdown N

announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi



## JYOTI MAYAL

**President, Travel Agents Association of India**

There has been no travel & tourism since last 3 weeks we have only witnessed cancellations & the industry has suffered huge losses. This 21 days curfew is a great initiative by our Hon Prime Minister as containment is the need of the hour & life is most important. Travel & Tourism is the first to be impacted & always the last to revive. The industry is going to further suffer huge losses & huge impact on unemployment. We have given proposals to the Hon PM & FM for rebates & reliefs as these are very trying times for the industry. Many big & small agents may have to go out of business as survival is going to be a challenge.

## PRADEEP LULLA

**(Acting President / Vice President), Travel Agents Federation of India;**  
Cupid Travels & Tours Pvt.Ltd., Mumbai

Prime minister Modi move is good for our good health but travel and tourism will get a further setback. Firstly aviation industry till 15 March has already reeling under losses of 252 billion dollars and counting I suspect many airlines will even have problems restating.. Our industry will have multiple financial challenges and we will look up various government agencies to support that.



## RIAZ MUNSHI

**President - Outbound Tour Operators Association of India;**  
**President - N. Chirag Travels Pvt. Ltd.**

The travel industry is living through an unprecedented moment and this is the most challenging time I have seen. Businesses are operating on zero revenue with fix infrastructure and employee costs to meet. From tourism to aviation and hospitality, the industry is going to suffer huge losses globally, but there is nothing much that we can do. There might be a change in operating dynamics but it's difficult to predict further losses as we are currently at a blind spot where we don't know how long this is going to continue. We can only hope and pray for a horizon that brings with it positive signs of Coronavirus being abated. The actions of the government are inevitable and I would like to thank them for proactively dealing with the current

situation to control the spread of the virus. My only advice at this point would be to stay united and stand strong because we are all in this together. Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines that will teach us, prepare us and make us stronger. So let's be positive and ready with new ideas to bounce back strongly. Right now, our utmost priority has to be safeguarding against Covid-19 and to care for each other and together, we shall get past this.



**ANIL PARASHER**

*President and CEO, Inter globe technology quotient*

Yes , India and the World faces crises -tourism is down , planes are grounded and planes are empty Is this the end of the world ? Far from it ! This is an opportunity to develop and skill ourselves and more importantly , keeping ourselves and our families safe and continue motivating and keeping the teams together. Our industry, by its very nature of linkage to leisure and good times takes the big hit upfront and similarly is the first to bounce back ! In the interim, World Health Organisation needs planes for fly medical supplies and doctors and other experts and patients .Hotels are required for quarantining people. Question is are we future ready -are we prepared to implement new ways of business , like working from home! Are airlines ready to practice social distancing while carrying passengers !So they carry less passengers

and do hotels ban big parties ! What's the new way forward ? The airlines and hotels business will be different ! And our agents have to find new ways of servicing passengers ! Going forward , instead of competition amongst travel fraternity , can there be an opportunity of alliances where a few companies can work collectively as a team focussing in their areas of speciality .The great aspect of our business is that it contributes 9 percent plus to the GDP and as long as the experiential bug lives in us humans , travel and hospitality will continue to boom Travel and tourism will live as long as people have the urge to discover the world

**RAJIV KOHLI**

*Managing Director, Creative Travel*

Desperate times require desperate measures. I don't think we had any choice. The initial reaction of the authorities at our international ports of entry could have been better. But all considering, the lock down is the only way out to curtail the spread. I hope the government comes out with an industry rescue package soon and also something to support the dialy wagers who now have nothing to survive on. This is a messy situation we are all in. Time to listen to Mother Nature a bit more carefully.



**SANDEEP DATTA**

*Marketing Manager, Korea Tourism Organization*

"We as a nation must come together and wholeheartedly support and follow all directives of the government to ensure all containment measures have their maximum effect. Well being of people in India supersedes all other activities right now. India shall overcome Covid-19 outbreak soon".

**CHETAN GUPTA**

*(Hony. General Secretary), Association of Domestic Tour operators of India*

If we look at health perspective, its a great and required initiative. As far as travel business is concern, it will burden all Travel fertility in a very big way. Almost entire travel business is gone till 2021. Summer season is 100% gone till june/july. Winter season/diwali etc gone as schools will be open and no holiday for students/offices to complete work of this 02 month long break. But as this is need of the hour, we totally support PM call of 21 days total India lockdown. I would request everyone to take care of yourself and everyone in family. Also kindly restrict the number of items in meals and try for zero wastage of food and water.

STAY SAFE | STAY HELATHY




**PARAMJIT BAWA**
*Country head, New South Wales*

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute.

The COVID 19 virus has enforced upon us a new world order. For the travel industry this is a new and alien global scenario wherein we will have to adjust to drastically changed consumer travel patterns, equally drastically changed aviation environments and commercial practices adopted by airlines, changed consumer consumption and spending patterns, to name only a few. Businesses will have to adapt quickly and sometimes make difficult decisions. Staffing and office structures will need to be rationalised and the use of technology will come to the fore, among other things.

But I believe innovation is going to have to be the order of the day. I can't say here what exactly those innovations could be because our situation is still unfolding, and it will have to be bespoke for each business, but I believe the focus is going to shift to finding ways to

allow customers a lot more flexibility/freedom in what they want to do, how they want to pay and how to allow them to make changes without too many penalties.

I have suggested to a prominent association of travel professionals that they may think about setting up a panel or cell of innovation experts to help businesses brainstorm and ideate to help them adapt and survive. These experts could be similar to financial advisors whereby they understand the particular situation of a business and what it seeks to achieve, then help it with a route map to achieving it. Trade associations should also arrange periodic seminars/webinars by innovation experts for their members to benefit and get inspiration from.

In the end, all travel businesses should remember the old saying – tough times don't last, tough people do.

Paramjit Bawa, Country head New South Wales

**ROMIT THEOPHILUS**
*Director Marketing and Sales India, The German National Tourist Office*

We welcome the announcement by the honourable Prime Minister,

At this point the health and welfare of the people is of the utmost important to all of us. We do hope the government does assist the travel industry inbound and outbound to weather the storm we are presently in. Tourism has been affected since the middle of January and this will without doubt cause a slowdown in our industry.

We do hope this current situation finishes fast and we are back stronger than before with the help of all industry player including the government. Lastly We would like to wish everyone good health and to be safe.


**VACHIRACHAI SIRISUMPAN**
*Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), New Delhi*

"Our priority now is to follow the Indian government instruction as well as our team and their family on their health and safety, so we are already working from home. The affect of COVID-19 is tremendous to travel and tourism industry worldwide including India and Thailand as we have never experienced. However, as with previous challenges, the tourism industry will prove its resilience to emerge stronger. For our office, we are adjusting activities/projects for this year due to the impact of COVID-19. My heart and good wishes are extended to everyone in the travel and tourism business in India with positive and forward thinking, we will overcome this challenging situation with full of hope for a greater tomorrow."





### SHRAVAN BHALLA

**CEO, Highflyer; General Secretary, otoi**

21 days lockdown was much needed to save lives. Tourism business is already affected in a big way and I believe things should improve post the lockdown. If this step was not taken by our hounrable PM then things would have gone totally out of control and would have taken a lot of time to recover enabling lots of tour operators and airlines to shut shop by then.

Atleast post lockdown period we will get to know exactly where we stand .

### PANKAJ NAGPAL

**Managing Director, Travstarz Global Group**

The start of 2020 has been the worst that one can expect not only for the tourism industry but covering the while world now. Fortunately the central and the state governments have been proactive and it seems with all these measures in place, India will win this war. Yes the 21 day lock in is going to make things worse but we need this to save our nation and our citizens and hope to have a new start with a completely changed mind set and hopefully we will start to live fuller lives now when things get better.



### RAJAT SAWHNEY

**Director, Rave Tours & Travels**

21 day lock down announced by Honbl'e Prime Minister is a welcome decesion considering the fact that the health and well being of the nation is at stake.

It will be a difficult situation to deal with considering no guidelines are specified to obtain essential commodities.

It will have an adverse impact on Tourism considering all airlines, trains ,hotels are closed in the short run .In the long run Outbound and Domestic tourism will be severely affected as it will take nearly 6to 7 months for people to get in terms with the situation. Beyond that people will not risk travelling too.Tourism will face its worst crises in a long long time. Employment of large no of people and their livelihoods are at stake.I pray to God that Tourism bounces back soon.

### VASUDHA SONDHI

**Director Market Strategy & Research, OM Tourism**

The lockdown is very much required as nothing but a doomsday prediction will make our masses stay indoors to flatten the curve. Tourism has been badly affected and will take a long time to recover.



# Amadeus India

## supports the travel community during these difficult times

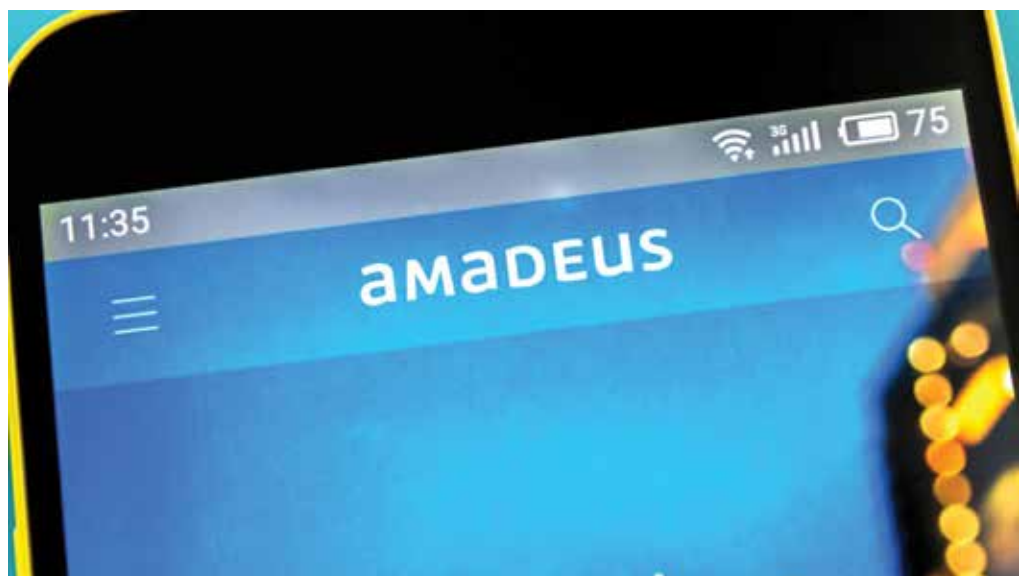
In the light of the difficult situation due to Covid-19, the priority at Amadeus India is to ensure the health and well-being of all its employees, as well as to continue supporting its customers.

Amadeus is working closely with customers across all areas of the travel industry in order to help them navigate this complicated situation as best as possible. As each customer's situation is unique, Amadeus India teams across the business are speaking with them individually to see how they can support them and their business during this difficult time.

For example, Amadeus tools and solutions such as Amadeus Ticket Changer (ATC) and Auto Refunds are helping customers manage their queues, refunds and other schedule related changes as quickly as possible. The Helpdesk team has also been equipped to work from home as a part of our business continuity plan, extending continued support to our partners and managing over 800+ contacts on a daily basis.

Amadeus Ticket Changer (ATC) is the only automated ticket changer tool which works on CAT 31, CAT 33 and CAT 16 for both offline and online travel channels. This solution also helps travel agencies automatically recalculate and prepare documents for the issuance of voluntary reissues or re-validations of electronic tickets based on the IATA industry standard. We have seen a large increase in the number of customers using this feature, reflecting the time and effort saved by the travel counsellors processing reissue and refunds.

Besides empowering customers with swifter refunds and extending technical support, Amadeus India is using this time to upskill its customer's resource pool by organising training sessions, such as Amadeus basic



training and training on ticketing, reissues, refunds, EMD's, hotels, automation solutions and soft skills. Instead of face-to-face trainings, Amadeus India is now conducting virtual classrooms sessions and is expanding its extensive catalogue of e-learning resources.

Here are some more examples of the measures that have been adopted by

Amadeus India to support customers during this critical situation:

In this fast-changing situation, having updated information at your fingertips is crucial. The Helpdesk team is therefore keeping agencies updated via Newsflash on any new airline policies or functionalities around changes, refunds and exchanges during the Covid-19 situation.

Technical teams across the country have been helping customers set-up Amadeus access from alternative workplaces.

Amadeus India is in regular contact with airlines to receive timely information on their schedule updates, policy changes, etc. during the Covid-19 situation. Their Account Management teams across the country are then cascading this important industry information to our customers.

**In this fast-changing situation, having updated information at your fingertips is crucial.**

# Survival of the Industry

**T**his is a tough time for mankind. A scenario that perhaps none of us were prepared for. However, as the world grapples and tries to control the outbreak of Covid-19, India too, is undertaking a series of strong measures to keep the Corona numbers from rising, three-week lockdown being one of them. India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) supports the efforts of the Government of India in handling the situation and assures that the association and its members will always be willing to contribute to the cause in whatever capacity required.

Industries across the globe are widely affected and tourism business is no different. With a string of international and national conferences and events postponed indefinitely, how much time will it take for this pandemic scare to settle and for life to resume as “normal” is anyone’s guess. However, there is also no doubt that there will surely come a time when all this will be over and when that happens, it is pertinent to have a strategic and robust recovery plan for India to make up for lost ground and take advantage of the pent-up demand to attract potential travellers – both business and leisure. We need to have a marketing strategy in place, a price discussion and a pitch on why India should be the first point of call when travel comes back.

With this mission in mind, the members of ICPB have held a couple of “Online Interactive Sessions” wherein ideas, ways and means have been discussed at length to keep India prominent in the global MICE scenario, once the worst is over. The second Online Interactive meeting of the board members of ICPB was

## India Convention Promotion Bureau discusses Travel and MICE concerns amid covid 19

chaired by Mr. Rakesh Kumar Verma, IAS, Chairman ICPB / Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism via ZOOM. The core discussion of the meet was focussed on formulating a plan focussed on “survival of the industry”. Amidst various strategies, there were talks on making soft loans available for companies so that they are able to meet their operational cost for next six months. There were talks of some new schemes, which are likely to be introduced by the Ministry of Tourism to assist the MICE stakeholders.

Some of the major demands made by the Travel Industry included –

1. Moratorium on repayment of EMIs of principal and interest for term loans for 12 months
2. Enhancement of Working Capital Limits/ Over Drafts at interest free rates
3. Support Fund majorly for salaries and establishment costs
4. Refunds of cancellations and advances of travel agents & tour operators from airlines
5. Creation of a Tourism Relief Fund
6. Deferment of TDS deposit

7. No fixed costs on power tariffs, water or any other utilities

8. Roll back of TCS introduced in 2020 budget

9. Reduced interest rates/ subsidised rates and reduction in overdraft interest rates

10. Lowering of the GST slab rates

Meanwhile, there are plans to organise ‘Webinars’ on subjects relevant to the MICE industry in the context of Covid-19, members are urged to participate in the coming Webinars.

ICPB also applauds the initiatives undertaken by its various members who are going out of their way to help the poor / needy and sick in these times of crisis. From distributing free meals to offering quarantine facilities, ICPB members are truly showing solidarity with the government and acting as responsible citizens. The ICPB Secretariat is working from their respective homes and forever forthcoming in arranging any news / information – should you require it.

These are testing times for all of us but we must not lose hope and stand together in solidarity with each other.



# Eastbound Group

## among four Indian travel companies to be certified by Great Place to Work



**E**astbound Group, a consortium of travel and tourism businesses offering solutions for experiential journeys, integrated travel representation, end-to-end event management and B2B hotel distribution becomes one of the only four Indian travel companies to be certified by Great Place to Work® Institute.

With around 300 employees, Eastbound Group constitutes brands like Eastbound, Distinct Destinations, 2HUB, Eastbound Discoveries, CHIME, etc. and received the Great Place to Work® certification under the mid-size organizations category.

Every year, more than 10,000 companies from over 60 countries partner Great Place to Work® Institute for assessment, benchmarking and planning actions to strengthen their workplace culture. Its methodology is recognized as rigorous, objective and is considered as the gold standard for defining great workplaces across business, academia and government organizations.

Great Place to Work® Certification Program is the first step for a

company in its journey to build a high-trust, high-performance culture™ and Eastbound Group has successfully accomplished this milestone.

"This is a proud moment for us all and I thank my employees for their continuous commitment in making us the organization we are today. I hope that we make great strides in surpassing these assessment results and keep raising the bar for ourselves and all organizations that aspire to be a great place to work," **Mr. Manish Pratik, Co-founder and Director, Eastbound Group.**

"We are proud and yet humbled to have received this certification from Great Place to Work® Institute. This

is a real feather in our cap and it will only encourage our employees to push themselves further and strive for excellence," **Mr. Prithviraj Singh, Co-founder and Director, Eastbound Group.**

"We are traversing through difficult times right now, much like any other travel and tourism business, therefore this recognition is a true reinforcement of our undestructible spirit. It emboldens the organization to tide through this challenging period with the same commitment it has displayed over the years. We are strong today, stronger tomorrow and strongest together," **Mr. Amit Kishore, Co-founder and Director, Eastbound Group.**

# Arabian Travel Market



moved to  
2021 amid  
coronavirus  
outbreak



*The travel and industry-related event was to be held from June 28 to July 1, after being moved from its initial date of April 19 this year*

**A**rabian Travel Market, a major exhibition for the region's travel and tourism industry, has been moved to 2021 due to concerns over the spread of the coronavirus.

The event will now be held at the World Trade Centre in Dubai after Eid celebrations next year, from May 16 to 19, organiser Reed Travel Exhibitions said on Sunday.

Arabian Travel Market was initially scheduled to be held this month but was postponed to June 28 to July 1 as the virus outbreak halted global air travel and led to lockdowns around the world.

"Many meetings took place with the Dubai World Trade Centre and we reviewed other options to organise an event in the last quarter," Reed Travel Exhibitions said.

"However, after consultation with our key stakeholders and after listening

to our industry, ultimately it became apparent that the best course of action, and with everyone's best interests in mind, is to postpone the event to 2021."

The four-day event attracts more than 39,000 professionals from the global travel industry and generates about \$2.5 billion (Dh9.18bn) of new business.

A number of top executives from the industry were expected to speak during the event.

"Discussions took place at the highest level, both internally and externally, with the local and federal government, partners, sponsors, exhibitors and attendees who all endorsed our evaluation of the current situation and our decision to act once again, without delay," the organiser said.

The pandemic, which has infected

more than 2.3 million worldwide and killed more than 161,000 people, according to Johns Hopkins University, has derailed the global economy and brought the trade and the travel industry to a virtual standstill.

The global economy is set to contract 3 per cent this year as it slides into the deepest recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Global airlines are expected to lose \$314bn in passenger revenue this year, a 55 per cent drop from 2019, as the rapid spread of the virus and ensuing travel bans continue to hurt the industry, the International Air Transport Association said last week.

Its latest assessment is much higher than the organisation's previous estimate of a \$252bn loss just three weeks ago on March 24.

Reed Travel Exhibitions said it is planning to run an "ATM virtual event" from June 1 to 3, featuring webinars, live conference sessions and one-on-one meetings, among others, to help businesses connect with each other.





# Countries should encourage MOU and cooperation to promote tourism



**-Jong Sool Kwon, Director,**  
*Korea Tourism Organization New Delhi*





**Q** The impact on **international tourism**. How related sectors (airlines, hotels, tour companies) are impacted and what it will take for the markets to **recover and consumer confidence to be uplifted once again**.

**A** The International tourism and related sectors have been greatly affected by the current stand still situation. The travel trade needs to think in terms of cooperative working. The airlines, hotels and NTOs all need to join hands and work on joint offers to lure the clients to travel and help each other grow business.

To boost the consumer confidence competitive offers from hotel and airlines, easy access of travel formalities like visas, new experiences and offerings from the destinations will play a significant role to recover the market.

**Q** Rise in **influencer marketing** and social media.

**A** Influencer and Social media marketing are playing an important role in today's world. With every influencer and social media platform having millions of followers and user database it becomes easier to reach mass audience. In fact, we can target

and reach a relevant audience based on geographic location and interest.

Our current social media communication is currently emphasising on positive messages like stay at home, individual safety and planning future travel inspired by virtual tourism content.

**Q** The **future of travel and tourism industry**.

**A** Coronavirus has greatly affected the tourism industry. With no international flight operations it has brought the entire travel industry to a standstill.

The actual impact of Coronavirus can only be realized after a few months, once the business operations start

again. It will take some time for the travellers to again start making their travel plans.

Safety of travellers should be considered as priority. It is imperative for the travel industry to build their client's trust again. South Korea has been applauded world over for its proactive approach on containing COVID-19 pandemic. We are working to achieve similar standards when we welcome the travellers post coronavirus issue is resolved.

**Q** Travel & Tourism contributes **10.4% global GDP across the world and employs an estimated 320 million people globally**, presently over 50 million jobs are at risk in the sector, **what actions should be taken to control this incurable damage**.

**A** As I mentioned earlier all relevant organizations need to come together and work in cooperation with each other to overcome the unprecedented loss faced by the travel trade globally. Recently WHO and UNWTO strengthened their collaboration to coordinate their response to COVID-19.

Similarly individual economies need to work with each other to boost tourism. Countries should encourage MOU and cooperation to promote tourism. At the same time private players like Airlines, hotels and travel agencies should cooperate with a customer centric approach to attract more travellers and enhance travel movements.





# Taiwan prepares Holiday for Healing to focus on more enriching experiences

**W**e are globally in a difficult situation. All of India is in a lockdown. Typically, Spring and Summers are when Taiwan gets ready to host its maximum visitors from India.

Taiwan Tourism Bureau, in close contact with all stakeholders within Taiwan and in India, is keeping a close eye on the situation and exploring ways to recover from the situation,

once the virus is a thing of the past. TTB understands that the extent of damage caused by the virus - to lives, businesses and our own stress levels - will not be overcome quickly. It also understands that when travel resumes, the safety and health of all travellers will be paramount. During this road to recovery, TTB's communication will embark on a new campaign focusing on: **'Holiday for Healing'**.

## **Holiday for Healing will include:**

- Focussing on enriching holidays which emphasize on quality time being spent together by families, friends
- Rejuvenating experiences, rather than commercialized options. These will include greater focus on Taiwan's mountains (which was already TTB's main focus for 2020), natural hot springs, trekking, birdwatching and similar experiences
- Greater interaction and experience with the culture of Taiwan and its people instead of large, crowded festivals
- And finally, continued transparency on the health situation, and prioritizing the well-being of all visitors

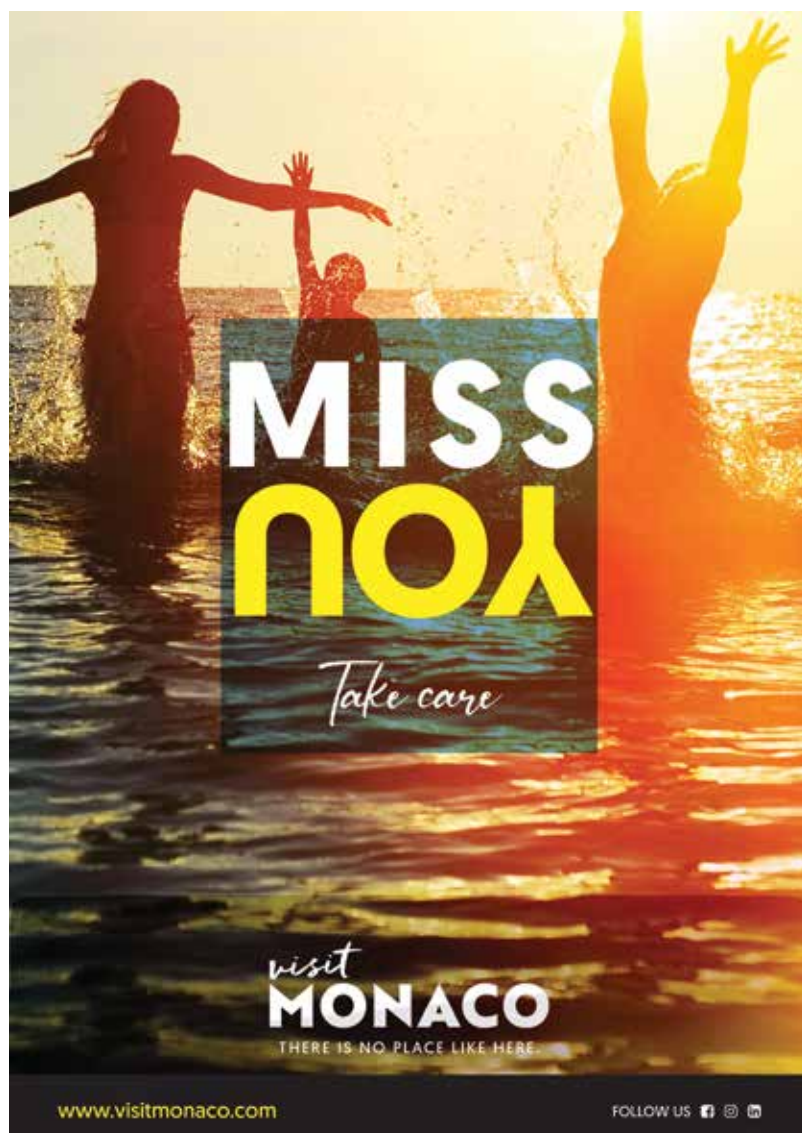
Speaking specifically about India in the context of 'Holiday for Healing', **Dr Trust HJ Lin, Director of TTB for India, Asia Pacific and Middle East**, said, "India has been and will remain an important market for us. In the past few years, we have seen a steady increase in traffic from India. At the start of the year, we had announced that 2020 would be the year of promoting our mountains in India. And once things improve and travel resumes, this theme becomes more pertinent than ever."

At the start of the year, Taiwan was estimating at a 20% growth in this year's tourism from India. Based on prolongation of the health situation and prioritising the wellbeing of travellers, a revised estimate is only possible once the situation improves globally, and significantly.

In addition, Taiwan has received global praise for its deft handling of the health situation in the region, with compliments for being prompt and transparent. Even in the aftermath of the virus, transparency of the situation and well-being of its visitors will continue to remain a priority.

Taiwan sends its prayers and wishes to all of India and look forward to being in a position to welcome all of you soon to a safe and enjoyable holiday - a 'Holiday for Healing'. In the meantime, share with TTB your experiences and expectations from a holiday in Taiwan on Instagram using the hashtag **#holidayforhealing**.





## Monaco Tourist and Convention Authority

wants to keep in touch, with a message to tourists around the world: “Take care of yourself, we miss you!”

*With more than 3 billion people around the world under lockdown, airlines grounded and many airports closed, global tourism has ground to a halt.*

**T**he Principality of Monaco has been heavily affected. During this hiatus for the tourism industry, the Monaco Government Tourist Authority is keen to stay in touch with everyone who loves to travel, whether they are already familiar with the Principality or are planning to visit once the crisis is over. Today, the tourist board is rolling out a new communication campaign to let them know just how much they are missed in Monaco!

The Principality is missing everything their visitors bring, from those treasured moments of friendship and fun, to their opinions, their valued custom, their languages, and of course the ‘wow’ factor experienced by everyone who comes to Monaco. All of the things that together make the country so vibrant and alive.

The Tourist & Convention Authority’s usual slogan, “FOR YOU”, a warm invitation to take advantage of all the incredible things the Principality has to offer,

has evolved into a simple declaration of affection.

This is a difficult time, with so many of us under lockdown and lacking that most precious of things: social contact.

So today, the message is “MISS YOU”, supported by friendly messages and pictures, to remind us of those precious times that we look forward to sharing again. They show touching snapshots of life, with happy people spending unforgettable moments together in Monaco. We hope they are back in our

everyday lives again very soon. Each tactile image inspires a desire to relive those experiences, in these unique places... just as soon as possible.

This campaign is targeted at both leisure and group business tourism, for professionals and private customers.

It will be promoted by the Principality of Monaco’s ten representative offices in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Oceania, and will be carried on social networks, travel industry websites and in magazines.





# Kathmandu Marriott Hotel

completes a successful year

In midst of the pandemic, as a turnabout, we have a reason to mark a special day as Kathmandu Marriott Hotel turns one today. Located in the capital city of Nepal, the hotel opened its doors to globe trotters just last year and has received immense feedback from its guests.

On this occasion, **Jean Louis Ripoche, General Manager, Kathmandu Marriott Hotel** said, “We



*are proud to have serviced over thousands of guests worldwide with our best in class facilities. This would have not been possible without the support of our dedicated team members who work day and night to provide the best and most comfortable experience to guests."*

He added, "We truly hope for the safety of everyone during such difficult times. Our services remain open for the ones in need in Kathmandu."

The hotel's mission is clear from day one, to deliver the perfect premium package that turns any moment in Kathmandu Marriott Hotel into a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and it has been successful in achieving this. Guests can expect a comfortable stay with the perfect touch of Nepal's proud local heritage. The hotel has been the talk of the town for the past twelve months.

The dining experience at Kathmandu

Marriott Hotel is spectacular with cuisines from various parts of the world, ensuring that the need of every guest is met, sometimes with an underlying surprise element. Thamel Kitchen offers multi cuisine offerings while the modern Asian specialty restaurant, Edamame serves contemporary interpretation of Thai, Japanese and Chinese cuisines. Rakshi Music Bar and M-Club are the most favoured among party lovers, offering an exotic collection of beverages coupled with great food and music. There is also Kathmandu Baking Company, an in-house patisserie serving delectable sweets and baked goods paired with freshly made espresso and coffee-based drinks.

The hotel provides a unique wellness experience at its spa, salon and fitness centre. Additionally, the 8000 plus sq ft of meeting and banqueting space create the perfect scenery for unforgettable business meetings, social events and other conferences.

Launched in early 2020, the hotel also houses the Deltin Casino that offers a luxury gaming experience.

By committing to unparalleled guest service, the hotel aims to continue to provide a world class experience in the years to come.



# Santiburi Koh Samui

## Receives Accolades and recognition as a carbon-neutral and “Green” Resort

*Tropical retreat honoured by Thailand Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, Thailand Greenhouse Gas Management Organization, and VGreen for operating in harmony with the environment*



*A beachfront villa surrounded by lush gardens, coconuts groves and the Gulf of Thailand at Santiburi Koh Samui*

**H**igh-end, experience-driven beachfront retreat, Santiburi Koh Samui has been certified as a 2020 Green Hotel and recognized as a carbon-neutral resort. Both accolades reflect its deep and lasting commitment to the environment.

Nestled among 23 acres of landscaped gardens and coconut groves, with a 300-metre-long stretch of private sandy beach, Santiburi Koh

Samui has received a 2020 Green Hotel certification from the Thailand Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, an entity from the Bureau of Public Participation Promotion. As a 2020 Green Hotel, it is recognized as a sustainable resort that has succeeded in enhancing the use of resources and energy of the property and improving the standard of all its services to become more environmentally friendly.

Santiburi Koh Samui was already certified at the end of 2019 by the Thailand Greenhouse Gas Management Organization for cutting the amount of carbon it emits and successfully offsetting the rest. The certification programme was created in collaboration with VGreen, Kasetsart University's environmental research programme.

Santiburi operates a comprehensive environmental programme, comprising wastewater treatment, energy saving, waste management, organic gardening, recycling, and replacing any chemicals, plastics and other harmful products with green alternatives, including a natural salt cleaning system for its private pool villas. The resort has also trained its team in all areas of eco-friendly operations and works with responsible local suppliers that share its values.

Guests are encouraged to play a role; they can decide how often their towels and bed linen should be changed and participate in community activities such as beach cleaning. The resort supports many important local community initiatives, including a conscientious elephant sanctuary.

“We are thrilled to be certified again as a carbon-neutral and green resort. The team at Santiburi has been working hard towards this status for many years by undertaking a series of important initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint, lower our energy usage and preserve our ecosystem. These new accolades are a recognition of our ongoing efforts. I am confident that our guests will be delighted to know that their stay remains in perfect harmony with Koh Samui's island ecosystem,” said Sabine Lamberts, Santiburi's General Manager.



India

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Steeped in a thousand arts
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# Madhya Pradesh

## A culture... steeped in a thousand arts



**A**s varied is the natural beauty of Madhya Pradesh so is its art and culture. Madhya Pradesh is a cauldron of diverse cultures as it has been home to Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Muslims and various tribes. Virtually all races and phases have left an indelible mark in the form of temples, stupas, palaces etc. all over the state.

Nature's artistry is strikingly palpable in the topography of Madhya Pradesh, the geographical heartland of India that gave birth to the likes of Kalidasa, the celebrated Sanskrit poet-dramatist, and Tansen, the legendary musician of Akbar's court. Though the modern state of Madhya Pradesh came into being only in 1956, its heritage and chequered

history date back to the third century BC when Emperor Ashoka laid the foundation of the Great Stupa at Sanchi. Art and culture received further patronage under the Guptas during the period 300–510 CE. Subsequent rulers left their indelible imprints on the sands of time in the plethora of forts, palaces, temples, mosques, and monuments, many of which survive with their tales of courage, treason, romance, heroism, and glory.

Visiting Madhya Pradesh to explore its vivid culture? It is significant to include some of the tribal villages to discover the unique tribal tradition and craft. Let us discover some of the local heritage and culture at its best in the heart of India.





## Tribal Paintings

*Beautifying the present with ancient art*

It's a pleasant surprise that in a state that has around 20 cities shortlisted in the government's 'Smart City' plan, there still is immense respect for ages old tribal art. More importantly, it is still preserved and practised.

The Gondwana region of Madhya Pradesh, which includes Mandla,

Balaghat, Chhindwara, Seoni and Shadol, has held the status of being a cultural hub for years. It is from this region that the matchless and popular Gond art originates. For an art this unique, the role of the canvas is often played by walls and doors. Artists use geru for walls, over which they use yellow and black clay for patterns. These patterns are a signature identity of the Gond art.

Co-existing with this is another ancient and popular art form – the **Pithora paintings**. Pithora paintings with their bright colours and animated figures often reflect the joyful sentiments of the tribe and the artists. Undoubtedly then, these mark the beginning of an auspicious occasion like a wedding, festivals and childbirth. This tradition started long back when artists used to display their elation for harvesting and fertility. The uniqueness of **Pithora art** lies in the fact that the artists use horses to represent Gods and Goddesses.

Both these art forms can be sighted prominently across the landscape of Madhya Pradesh. But there's one more art form, which, together with Gond and Pithora art, makes the state a treasure of tribal art. It is **Chitera**; a gift from the Bundelkhand region which comprises of Gwalior, Datia, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Jabalpur, Sagar, Damoh and adjoining areas.

These various art forms might be having their roots in ancient tribal beliefs and traditions, but today, these are one of the most sought after in the commercial market.

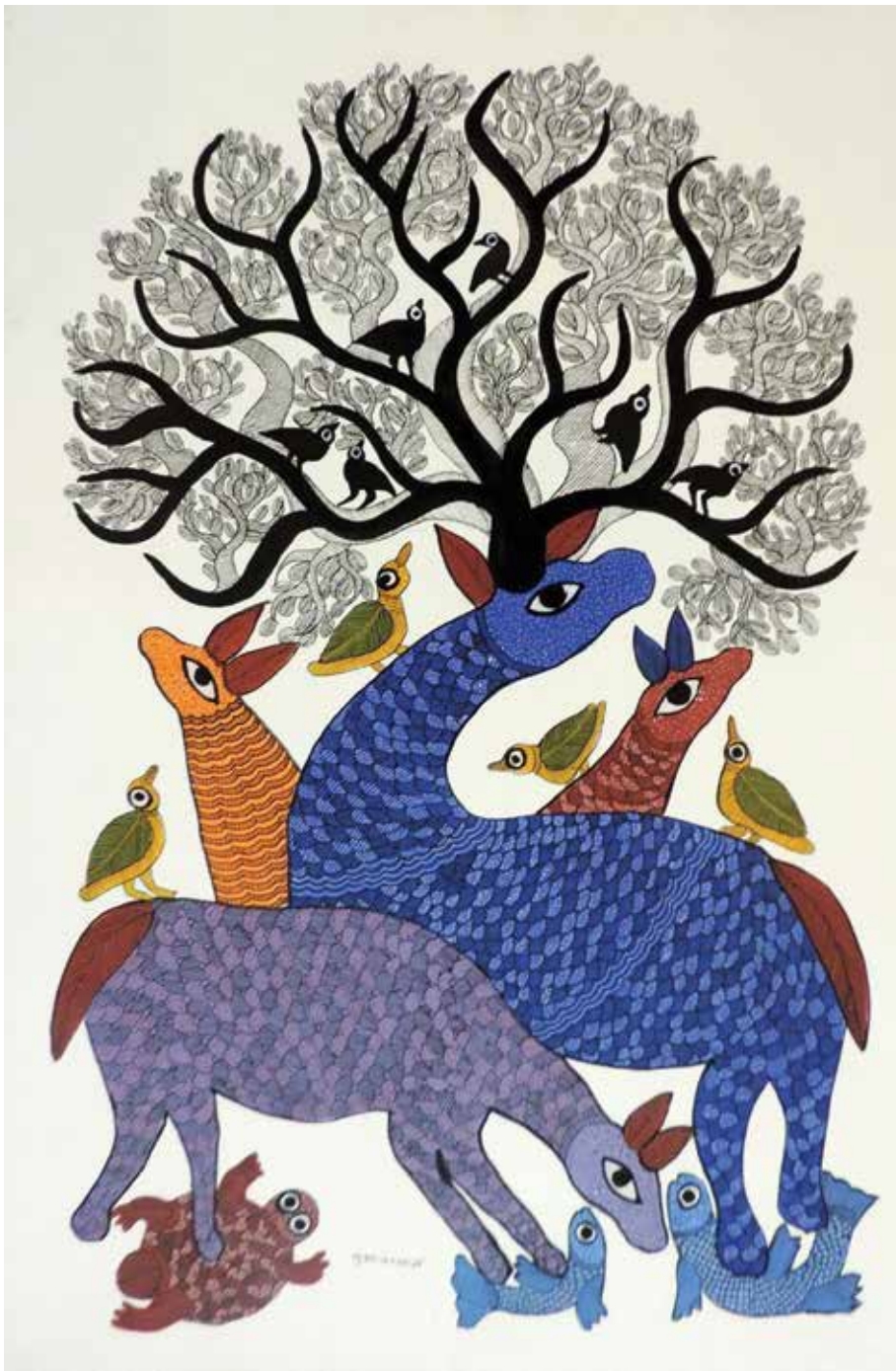
## Dhokra

*An embodiment of tribal beliefs*

The state speaks volume about its cultural diversity through its rich art & craft. From delicate weaves to a good range of exquisite artefacts, the heart of Incredible India is blessed with many distinguished crafts and talented craftsmen who give their soul and heart to create countless masterpieces. Dhokra is one such attractive art form which is quite popular in the state. It is widely practised in the Betul district by the local tribal community. It is a non-ferrous (other than iron or steel) metal moulding craft, created using the lost-wax casting technique.

### **The tribal influence in Dhokra**

The Bharewas community of Betul, a sub-tribe of Gonds is still putting all their efforts to improve and enrich this craft in nearby villages namely Amla, Tigaria, Barkhed, Chunahazuri and Kamleshara. Intertwined with their





culture, the artists traditionally made ceremonial items like the dagger worn by the groom, oil lamps gifted to the bride by her parents and accessories for the tribal gods. The most popular ritual associated with craft among the tribal community is enshrining of the deity in the house of newly married to give blessings for their new journey. With simple to intricate, today artisans have found many new ways to make the craft look more eye-catching with innovative designs and motifs. Each piece tells a story, usually inspired by nature and tribal beliefs. Hence, every piece of Dhokra is precious, graceful and unique!

### ***The process***

Dhokra work involves a mixture of beeswax (natural wax) and saras (gum), which is boiled to a thick paste and pressed through a strainer, to get fine threads. The unique property of natural beeswax allows flexibility and helps to twist the treads in tiny shapes easily.







To start the final process, artists take a mixture of mud and cow dung to make a shape out of it, then in the next step, the wax thread is coiled around it. Now, another layer of mud coating is done and the piece is left to dry down completely. It is then placed in the furnace to bake for a while. Lastly, the outer clay is removed, and unveiled the masterpiece of Dhokra.

### Attracting many art lovers...

The craftsmanship has been driving many art & craft lovers from all over the world and making a mark not only in local markets but also in the global market. It has found places in many exhibitions and gracing many high street stores abroad.

When in Madhya Pradesh, you cannot leave the state without picking-up some pretty souvenirs. The brass metal figurines such as a lamp, bell, photo frames, animal figures, and bullock carts can make for ideal souvenirs and sit beautifully on tables as a showpiece to keep a reminder of this beautiful state.

### Bead Jewellery

#### *An Appealing Art*

The history of Madhya Pradesh has been glorious and so is its art & crafts. With each growing year, the craftsmanship in the state is redefining in its own.

Travelling through the villages

of Jhabua and Alirajpur districts in Madhya Pradesh, one can witness a colourful pastiche of tribal culture and lifestyle in the creative work. The tribal communities like Bhil and Bhilala who practise bead work, skilfully express their notions in the designs of bead necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. It highlights the traditional occupations emphasising rich art and aesthetics from rural Madhya Pradesh. You can grab your hands on these colourful ensembles made with glass and plastic beads at the tribal haats organised during the weekends or festivals.

The fusion of bright colour schemes and contemporary designs make this jewellery an inspiration for many including the travellers and designers. Hence, the local bodies are helping local communities and artisans to arrange regional and national level exhibitions to provide the rural handicrafts a much-needed exposure.

### Weaving stories for centuries now in Madhya Pradesh

In the little lanes of Madhya Pradesh, weavers, tailors and seamstresses have come together to weave their own stories.

**The Chanderi**, one of the oldest fabrics, has a fabulous tale to tell. Its advent can be traced to Ala-ud-din-Khilji in the year 1305 AD. Once a favourite amongst royalty, it has now earned the affection of the masses too.

The charm of a Chanderi saree lies in its colours that are reflective of nature – fruits, flowers, birds and leaves. Once available only in a natural off-white, today it's the striking pastel shades that add to its beauty.

**The DABU** is a style still waiting to be discovered by all. The craftsmen of Indore and Jawad use dyes from the very lap of nature to create a distinct look. The motifs and dyes are representative of the craftsmen's deep respect for nature. The delicate floral patterns are simply exquisite. No wonder, this hand-crafted process has earned a special place amongst fabric connoisseurs across India and world markets.

And then from the 16th century the state bring an exquisite **Tussar silk**. Also known generically as '**Kota silk**', it is valued for its texture and natural gold, which is unusually rich and deep. While historically, Tussar silk has been produced across various states, in Madhya Pradesh, the Devangans have been crafting the silk for generations now. Other silks such as Eri, Mukta and Mulberry are used to provide different textures to add to the aesthetics. Today, Tussar silk is one of the finest fabrics one can own.

**The Bagh print** has truly stood the test of time, given that the Bagh printers migrated from Pakistan some 1000 years ago. The process of Bagh painting is tedious. The fabric is treated





gives its lustrous quality. In the 19th century, the use of two distinct types of silks in the weave gave birth to the silk sari, a phenomenon of the 80's. When you buy a Maheshwari, make sure it is woven in handloom, for a hand-crafted beauty that is guaranteed to become one of your most prized possessions.

### **The Marble Art of Bhedaghat**

The mighty marble rocks by the Narmada River giving new meanings to the lives of Bhedghat and Jabalpur!

#### ***The marble artistry of Bhedaghat***

The quaint town of Bhedaghat in Jabalpur district is popular with tourists for its misty Dhuandhar fall and colossal marble rocks. Another thing that equally attracts the tourists from all over the world is the incredible craft of marble sculpting that this place has to offer. Marble and stone moulding is a great art. The sculptors shape the astonishing white marble into intricate deities and other quirky sculptures. Stones found in the bed of Narmada provide occupation to many carvers and their families.

If you are on a visit to Jabalpur, do not forget to visit the Bhadaghat's dhuandhar fall, marble rocks and shop marble handicrafts here.

### **Mandana Art**

*(The term Mandana is derived from the word 'mandan' which means decoration and in the regional language, 'Mandana' denotes 'drawing')*

*The vibrant tribal art form of Madhya Pradesh*

Mandana is one such art form of folk painting created by one of the oldest tribal communities of Madhya Pradesh called 'Meena'. The art is created on walls and floors of houses and usually done by women. This artistic form of illustration is considered a representation of good luck and a method to ward off evil spirits. The painting marks the beginning of auspicious occasions such as marriages, festivals and childbirth.

The focal theme of Mandana revolves around religious and wildlife elements which include gods, goddesses, flowers, plants, animals and birds.



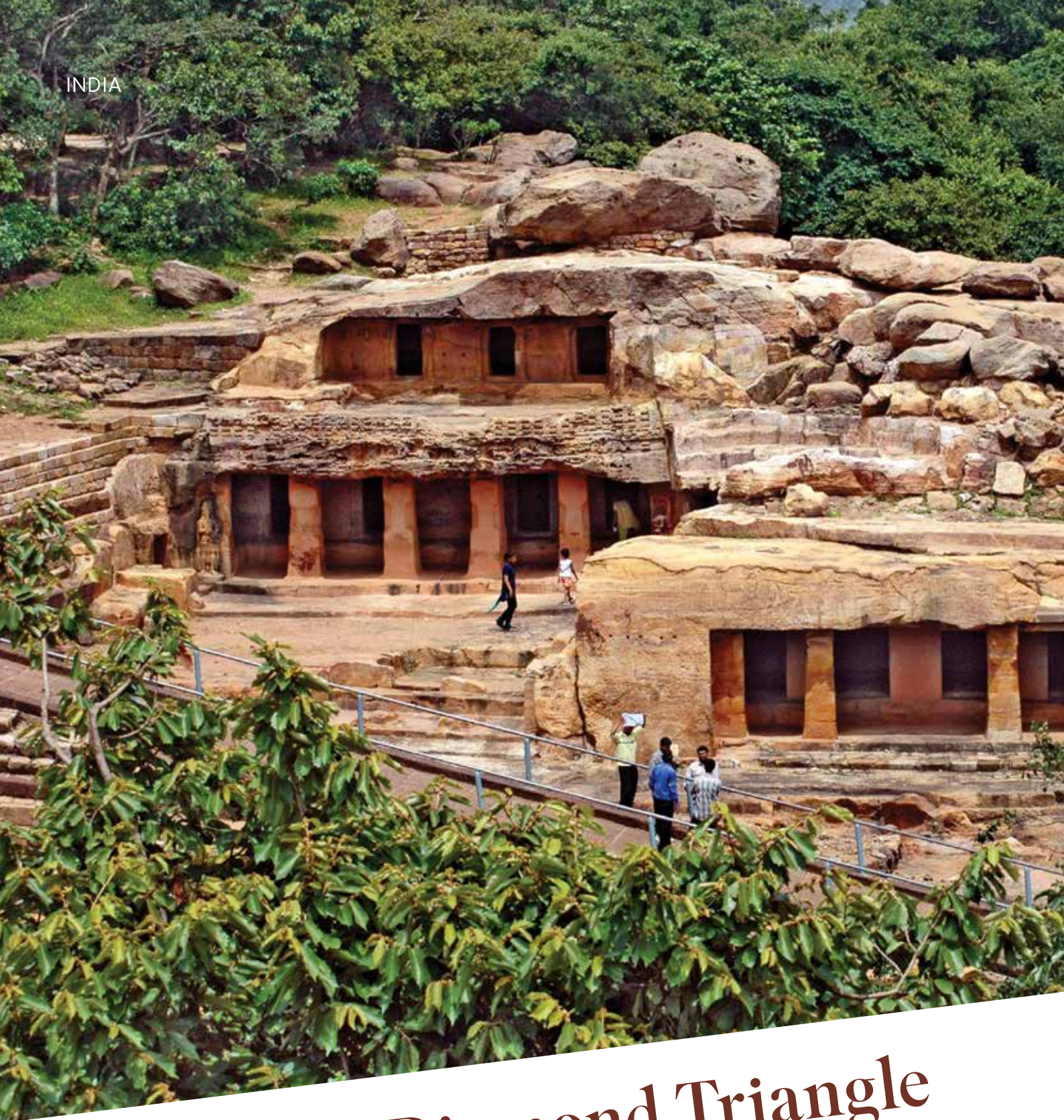
by a special method known as "Khara." It is soaked in natural solutions before it is laid out to dry three times in succession. The distinctive red colour can be attributed to Chiya seeds, Imli and Phitkari. The black colour is prepared using iron fillings and jaggery. And finally, the printing is done using wooden blocks. The cloth is then dried for fifteen days and washed before you get the final product. And yet, when you stare down at the final product, one cannot imagine the effort taken to produce it.

And last but not the least the state is known for Maheshwari fabric. Apart from the use of Zari and its distinguished patterning, it is known for its use of mercerized cotton, which





INDIA



# The Diamond Triangle Buddhist Heritage **in** **ODISHA**





*Whenever we talk about travelling in Odisha, we usually think about the Golden Triangle of Bhubaneswar, Konark and Puri along with the Chilika Lake. But Odisha is also quite rich in heritage and archaeological sites. We are talking about the Diamond Triangle of Odisha, excavation sites that are rich in Buddhist relics and heritage.*





**F**ar away from the hustle and bustle of the cities along the riverbanks and serene surroundings, lives remnants of Odisha's glorious tryst with Buddhism. The contribution of Buddhism in shaping the cultural heritage of Odisha & the latter's contribution in spreading the religion to Asian countries is a perfect example of symbiotic relationship.

During the 8th Century -10th Century AD under Bhaumakara dynasty rule, Buddhism was considered a state religion of Odisha. In fact it's believed that the first disciples of Lord Buddha were Tapasu and Bhallika who hailed from the modern day city of Jajpur. Though Buddhism entered Odisha long before the Kalinga War it took wings in the region after the under the patronage of Emperor Ashoka. Odisha's most famous poet Jayadeva went on to describe Lord Buddha as one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu in the 12th century AD. The writings of fabled Chinese Traveler Hiuen T'sang just reinforces the glorious chapter of Buddhism in Odisha. The influence of Buddhism can be found in the socio-cultural life of the people of Odisha and rich depository of history is reflected in the Buddhist monuments of the state.

## Top Places to Visit

Buddhist sites in Odisha have been excavated recently and are largely unexplored. More than 200 Buddhist sites, scattered across the length and breadth of the state, were revealed by these archeological excavations. They show the prominence of Buddhism in Odisha from the 6th century BC to at least the 15th-16th centuries AD, with

the 8th-10th centuries being the period when it really prospered. Buddhist teachings from all sects (including Hinayana, Mahayana, Tantrayana, and offshoots such as Vajrayana, Kalacakrayana, and Sahajayana) are believed to have been conducted in Odisha, giving the state a rich Buddhist heritage.

The largest concentration of Buddhist remains can be found at three sites -- Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, and Lalitgiri -- referred to as the "Diamond Triangle". The sites consist of a series of monasteries, temples, shrines,

stupas, and beautiful sculptures of Buddhist images. Their rural setting, among fertile hills and paddy fields, is both picturesque and peaceful.

Odisha Tourism has spent the last few years developing tourist facilities around these important Buddhist sites, which are now one of the *top tourist places to visit in Odisha*.

## Ratnagiri

*Remnants of An Illustrious Seat of Learning*

Ratnagiri, "Hill of Jewels", has the most extensive Buddhist ruins





in Odisha and is of great importance as a Buddhist site -- both for its magnificent sculptures and as a center for Buddhist teachings. One of the first Buddhist universities in the world, rivaling the renowned one at Nalanda (in Bihar state), is believed to have been located at Ratnagiri.

The Buddhist site at Ratnagiri dates back to the 6th century AD. It appears that Buddhism flourished unhindered there until the 12th century AD. In the beginning, it was a center for Mahayana Buddhist. During the 8th and 9th centuries AD, it became a significant center for Tantric Buddhism. Subsequently, it played a notable role in the emergence of Kalachakra Tantra.

The Ratnagiri site was discovered in 1905. Excavations carried out between 1958 to 1961 revealed a massive stupa, two monasteries, shrines, numerous votive stupas (the excavations turned up as many as seven hundred of them!), a large number of terracotta and stone sculptures, architectural fragments, and plentiful Buddhist antiquities including bronze, copper and brass objects (some with images of Buddha).

The monastery known as Monastery 1, constructed in 8th-9th centuries AD, is the largest excavated monastery

in Odisha. Its elaborately carved green doorway leads to 24 brick cells. There's also an imposing seated Buddha sculpture, flanked by Padmapani and Vajrapani, in the central sanctum.

The massive stone sculptures of Lord Buddha's head at Ratnagiri are particularly awe-inspiring. More than two dozen heads of various sizes, magnificently depicting the serene meditative expression of Buddha, were found during the excavations. They're considered to be fine works of art.

The Ratnagiri site is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Entry tickets cost 25 rupees for Indians and 300 rupees for foreigners.

Numerous stone sculptures have also been removed from the site and are now displayed in the four galleries at the *Archaeological Survey of India Museum in Ratnagiri*.

### Udaygiri

*The Hill of The Rising Sun*

Nestled between the foothills of two mountain ranges of the Eastern Ghats, Udaygiri is the biggest and most picturesque site of the triad. However, it is also the least excavated site amongst the triad and is often confused with the more prominent Udaygiri and Khandagiri Caves of

Bhubaneswar.

Udaygiri, "Sunrise Hill", is home to another large Buddhist complex in Odisha. It consists of a brick stupa, two brick monasteries, a stepped stone well with inscriptions on it, and numerous rock-cut Buddhist sculptures.

The Udaygiri site has been dated back to 1st-13th centuries AD. Although it was discovered in 1870, excavations didn't commence until 1985. They've been undertaken in two phases across two settlements around 200 meters apart -- Udaygiri 1 from 1985 to 1989, and Udaygiri 2 from 1997 to 2003. The remains indicate that the settlements were called "Madhavapura Mahavihara" and "Simhaprastha Mahavihara", respectively.

The stupa at Udaygiri 1 has four seated stone statues of Lord Buddha, enshrined and facing each direction. The monastery there is also impressive, with 18 cells and a shrine chamber that has an intricately carved ornamental facade. The excavation turned up many Buddhist images and stone sculptures of Buddhist divinities as well.

At Udaygiri 2, there's an extensive monastic complex with 13 cells and a towering statue of Buddha, seated in *bhumisparsa mudra*. Its vaulted arches are an architectural marvel from





8th-9th century AD. What's unique about this monastery is the path around its shrine, which isn't found in any other monastic settlements in Odisha.

Another attraction at Udayagiri is a gallery of Buddhist rock-cut images, overlooking the Birupa river (locally known as Solapuamaa) below. There are five images consisting of a standing life-size Bodhisattva, a standing Buddha, a goddess seated over a stupa, one more standing Bodhisattva, and a seated Bodhisattva.

The Udayagiri site promises additional treasures, as there's still more to excavate.

### Lalitgiri

*The Glory of The Past Reflected In Stone*

Lalitgiri lies between the valley of two rivers Birupa and Chitrotpala. Also known as Naltigiri amongst the locals, Lalitgiri is the oldest of the Buddhist Diamond Triangle triad as they are referred to in Odisha. The monastery built in the 1st Century AD is the oldest known Buddhist monastery in the state.

Though the site was discovered in 1905, it was excavated as late as 1985-1991, based on the chronicles of the famous Chinese Traveler Hiuen T'sang, excavations are still being carried out albeit sporadically

at the site. The findings indicate the Monastery propagated both the Hinayana Sect of Buddhism (name for schools of the earliest Buddhist doctrine) and Mahayana sect of Buddhism (a path where a follower seeks enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings). Later on under the influence of Bhaumakara King's it embraced Vajrayana sect of Buddhism (Tantric Buddhism). Thus the monastery survived till the 13th century AD.

The majestic ruins of the Mahastupa (Main Stupa) atop a hill, the Chaityagriha's (prayer halls), the numerous Votive Stupa's (stupa erected after fulfillment of a wish/vow) amidst lush green surroundings gives a magical feel to this ancient Buddhist complex.

Among the many noteworthy findings at this site is the relic casket which comprised of four containers made of Khondalite, Steatite, Silver and Gold. Its antiquity and the gold and silver contents have led to speculations that these are relics of Lord Buddha.

The museum located inside the monastery complex houses artefacts recovered during the excavation of the site. On display are spellbinding statues of Buddha, Bodhisattva and statues of Tara, Jambhala amongst others. Interestingly, most of these sculptures contain short inscriptions on them. The Standing Buddha figures, with knee length draperies over the shoulders remind one of the influence of the Gandhara and Mathura school of art.

### Dhauli hill

*A Monument That Celebrates & Conveys The Message of Peace.*

Dhauli hill is on the bank of the river Daya, about 8 kms south of Bhubaneswar. In the year 272 B.C., the Kalinga-Nippon-Buddha Sangha established a peace pagoda (Shanti Stupa) at Dhauli along with the construction of a monastery called Saddharma. "Ashoka the Great" transformed totally and changed his mind in favour of spiritual conquests.

Looking down on the plains bearing witness to the gruesome war waged on Kalinga by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka, stand the rock edicts of Dhauli. It was





here that Emperor Ashoka, full of remorse renounced his bloodthirsty campaign and embraced Buddhism. The edicts are a living testimony to the King's change of heart, where he urges his administrators to rule the land with justice and compassion. The edicts are so remarkable that they have been excellently preserved, despite the fact that they date back to the 3rd century BC. A sculpted elephant, the universal symbol of Lord Buddha, tops the rock edicts.

The moment one enters near this place, one realizes that it is here after the battle Ashoka was transformed to Ashoka - The Compassionate who championed the cause of Buddhism. The Shanti Stupa or the peace pagoda, built through the Indo-Japanese collaboration, is located on the opposite hill. It has an interesting background that goes. As per Japanese belief, there is a prophecy handed to history about 7 to 7 1/2 centuries ago by Mahatma Nichiren Imaha Bhikshu. He prophesied that the chief priest of Nipponzan Myohoji Fuji Gurugi would come to India in 1930 from Mt. Minobu, the original holy place of the Nichiren sect. He came and got the Shanti Stupa built, which was inaugurated on November 8, 1972.

It is a round structure with a dome on top, with mushroom-like structures on top, raising their umbrella heads

as if speaking to God. The stupa is decorated with speaking stone panels. Prominent amongst them being the reclining Buddha, an elephant procession, the bodhi tree, footprints of Buddha bearing the chakra (wheel), a sleeping beauty fanned by female attendants, procession on horse back, and Emperor Ashoka renouncing war by offering his sword to Lord Buddha at Dhaulagiri Hill. Each is a sensitive portrayal of an event ranking outstanding Buddhist tradition.

### Jirang

*Where Happiness & Peace Are A Way of Life*

Odisha's Little Tibet- is not as well-known as the abode of his holiness the Dalai Lama at McLeodganj in Dharamsala and Majnu ka Tila in Delhi, but it offered the Tibetan settlers a home nevertheless after China invaded Tibet in 1959. Chandragiri was designated as camp no.4 for settlement of Tibetan's.

The first batch of Tibetan's arrived in Chandragiri on 1st May 1963. Since arriving they have not only made Chandragiri and the adjoining camps at Labarasingh, Mahendragadh, Tankilipadar (all located at a radius of 4-5 KM around Chandragiri) their home, but through their enterprise and demeanor added colour to the picturesque mountains of the Eastern Ghats in this part of Odisha. The Tibetan's have named this place "Phuntsokling" - which means land of plenty and happiness.

The major attraction is the Padmasambhava Monastery popularly known as the Jirang Monastery. It is the largest monastery in Eastern India. The monastery was inaugurated by His Holiness The Dalai Lama in 2010. It is a residence cum college for budding Buddhist monks who come from all over India here to study.

The Avalokiteswara statue in a sitting position at Mahendragad is another attraction along with the Monastery at Labarasingh. Don't miss the peace pagoda at the entrance of Camp No. 4.

**When Is Best to Visit?**

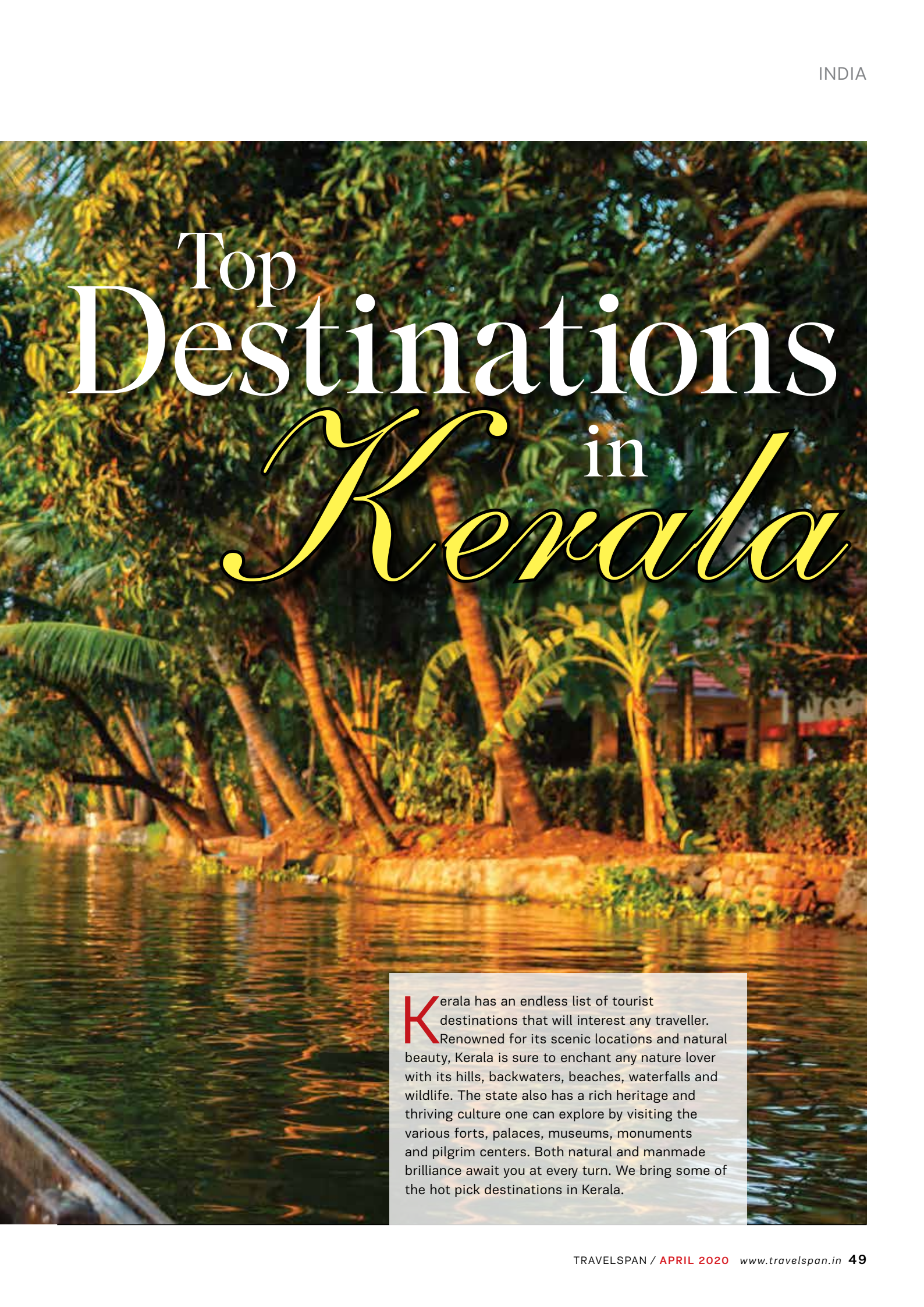
The cooler dry months from October to March are the most comfortable.











# Top Destinations in *Kerala*

**K**erala has an endless list of tourist destinations that will interest any traveller. Renowned for its scenic locations and natural beauty, Kerala is sure to enchant any nature lover with its hills, backwaters, beaches, waterfalls and wildlife. The state also has a rich heritage and thriving culture one can explore by visiting the various forts, palaces, museums, monuments and pilgrim centers. Both natural and manmade brilliance await you at every turn. We bring some of the hot pick destinations in Kerala.



### Bekal Fort in Kasaragod

Around 16 km to the south of northernmost district in Kerala, Kasaragod, lies the massive Bekal Fort. It is among the biggest forts in Kerala and has been impeccably maintained throughout the years. It rises to 130 feet above sea level and is situated on a headland spanning 35km. Much effort has been put to develop a beautiful beach here called the Bekal Fort Beach. People flock to these spots in great numbers. Situated comfortably on steep hills by the sea, the fort provides for an imposing view from the beach. Built using laterite slabs and with a polygonal shape, it is amongst the most visited sites in Kerala.

There are many factors that have added to the popularity of the site. An observation tower fitted with beautiful peepholes, the Anjaneya Temple with its famous masonry and two Theyyam sculptures built from laterite are among the primary attractions. An ancient mosque built by Tipu Sultan and various underground passageways are also important places in the area. A rock garden was built using laterite in the parking area and is an architectural marvel in itself. Trees have been planted on the beach along with the construction of a splendid walkway which makes it easier to traverse the beach and enjoy its sights. At night, the entire place is lit up with special lights that add a whole new dimension to its beauty.

#### Getting there

*Nearest railway station:* Kasaragod, on the Kozhikode-Mangalore-Mumbai Route.

*Nearest airport:* Mangalore, about 50 km from Kasaragod town; Calicut International Airport, Kozhikode, about 200 km from Kasaragod Town.

### Kumarakom

The village of Kumarakom is a cluster of little islands on the Vembanad Lake, and is part of the Kuttanad region. The bird sanctuary here, which is spread across 14 acres is a favourite haunt of migratory birds and an ornithologist's paradise. Egrets, Darters, Herons, Teals,







Waterfowls, Cuckoo, Wild Duck and migratory birds like the Siberian Stork visit here in flocks and fascinate all visitors.

An enchanting backwater destination, Kumarakom offers visitors many other leisure options. Boating and fishing facilities are available at the Taj Garden Retreat, a sprawling old bungalow-turned-resort.

Waterscapes, the backwater resort of the Kerala Tourism Development

Corporation has independent cottages built on stilts, set amidst coconut groves offering a panoramic view of the backwaters. Holiday packages involving houseboats and traditional Kettuvalloms (rice barges) offer great experiences.

#### **Getting there**

*Nearest railway station:* Kottayam, about 13 km

*Nearest airport:* Cochin International Airport, about 94 km

### **Illikkal Kallu, Kottayam**

Illikkal Kallu is a popular tourist attraction situated at 6000 ft above sea level at Kottayam. Three hills, each rising to 4000 ft and above together form the Illikkal hills. Each of these hills has a peculiar shape. One of the hills resembles a mushroom and is called Kudakallu (umbrella shaped rock). The second hill has a small hunch on the sides and is therefore referred to as Koonu kallu (hunchback rock). It is one of the highest peaks in Western Ghats.

### **Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady**

The very sound of the word Thekkady conjures up images of elephants, unending chains of hills and spice scented plantations. The Periyar forests of Thekkady is one of the finest wildlife reserves in India. Spreads across the entire district are the picturesque plantations and hill towns that nestle beautiful trails for treks and mountain walks. It is one of the oldest tiger reserves in the country and the forests of Periyar is embellished by the presence of endangered species including White Tigers.

To explore the wilderness of Periyar Tiger Reserve tourists has many options like from boating to trekking.







### Boating in Periyar Lake

The best way to enjoy Periyar is from the edge of your seat on a boat. If you are a little more adventurous, then you can take a bamboo raft and row while the wild watches you. The Bamboo Rafting at Periyar is available in two slots – Full day and Half day.

### Trekking Trails

The guided day trek at Periyar: The Periyar Tiger Trail, an adventure trekking and camping; Border Hiking - Protection oriented range hiking; Bamboo Rafting; Jungle Patrol, Shepherding the jungle; Tribal Heritage - A peep into the past; Jungle Inn - Jungle in the night.

### Camping

The Bamboo Grove - Eco lodge: The stay over programme provides eco-lodge accommodations inside bamboo thickets. 15 bamboo huts with double-bedded occupancy with hygienic and modern furnishing are available.

### Wealth of Periyar Forests

**Flora:** There are over 1965 flowering plants including 171 grass species and 143 species of orchids here. The only south Indian conifer, scientifically known as *Podocarpus Wallichianus*, grows in the forests of the Periyar Tiger Reserve.







can be seen foraging from the trees near where the boat lands.

**Birds:** Here we have 265 species including migrants. The Malabar Grey Hornbill, The Indian Pied Hornbill, Whitebellied Treepie, many species of Drongos, Woodpeckers, Flycatchers, Babblers, the spectacular Malabar Trogon, etc. can be seen near where the boat lands.

**Reptiles:** Cobra, Viper, Krait, a number of non-poisonous snakes, and the Indian Monitor Lizard.

**Amphibians:** Frogs like the colorful Malabar Gliding Frog, Fungoid Frog, Bicolored Frog, many species of toads, and limbless Caecilians.

**Pisces (fish):** The Periyar Lake and streams have several species of fish including the Mahseer, the famous and endangered game fish of India. The Smooth-Coated Otter can be frequently spotted from the boat.

**Plantations:** Tea, cardamom, pepper and coffee plantations abound in the areas adjoining the Tiger Reserve.

**Watch Towers:** There are a few watch towers inside the Periyar Tiger Reserve which are excellent for viewing wildlife.

### **Munroe Island in Kollam**

Munroe Island is a hidden pearl in the backwaters which is composed of a cluster of 8 islands. Each of them is separated by small water channels and lakes. Munroe Island is located about 27 km from Kollam. The place is named in honour of Resident Colonel John Munroe, of the former princely state of Travancore. He is said to have integrated several backwater regions by digging canals. Some of this island's main attractions are the narrow waterways, canal cruise and the famous Kallada Boat Race held here during the 10-day festival of Onam. It offers a unique and tranquil setting, far away from the constant chaos of modern life.

#### **Getting there**

*Nearest railway station:* Munroe Island, about 3 km

*Nearest airport:* Trivandrum International Airport, about 84 km



**Mammals:** More than 60 species are found here which include the Asian Elephant, Bengal Tiger, Indian Bison, Sambar Deer, Indian Wild Dog, Leopard, Barking Deer and the Smooth-Coated Otter which can be sighted during a boat cruise in the Periyar Lake. The Nilgiri Tahr is confined to the higher rocky areas whereas the endangered Lion Tailed Macaque can be found in the interior evergreen forests. Both the Bonnet Macaques and Nilgiri Langur







### Pookot lake, Wayanad

A natural freshwater lake surrounded by evergreen forest and rolling hills. A freshwater aquarium with large variety of fish is an added attraction. Tourists can also avail of boating facilities, children's park, and a shopping centre for handicrafts and spices.

Wayanad lies at an altitude varying from 700 - 2100 metres above the sea level. The district has the highest number of tribal settlements in Kerala.

The hill ranges of Vythiri taluk (taluk is a subdivision of a district), through which the road from Kozhikode ascends the Wayanad plateau over the mind boggling bends and ridges, are the highest locations of Wayanad district.

#### Getting there

*Nearest railway station:* Kozhikode, about 63 km

*Nearest airport:* Calicut International Airport, about 63 km

### Kakkathuruth - the Island of Crows

Kakkathuruth is a spectacular tiny island on Kerala's backwaters in Alappuzha, has been listed in National Geographic's 'Around the World in 24 Hours,' a photographic tour of travel-worthy spots in the world. The emerald-fringed 'Island of Crows' is a quiet place surrounded by Vembanad Lake, offers a haven for birdwatchers.

#### Getting there

*Nearest railway station:* Cherthala, around 15 kms

*Nearest airport:* Trivandrum International Airport, about 186 kms

### Kollukkumallay - the highest tea garden in India

Located in steep, rugged terrain, Kollukkumallay in Munnar is the highest tea garden in the country at 7900 ft. Accessible only by jeep, a visit to the estate includes a drive around the tea fields and a tour of its factory. What gives Kollukkumallay tea its special flavour is presumably the high altitude.

#### Getting there

*Nearest railway station:* Angamaly, about 109 km from Munnar

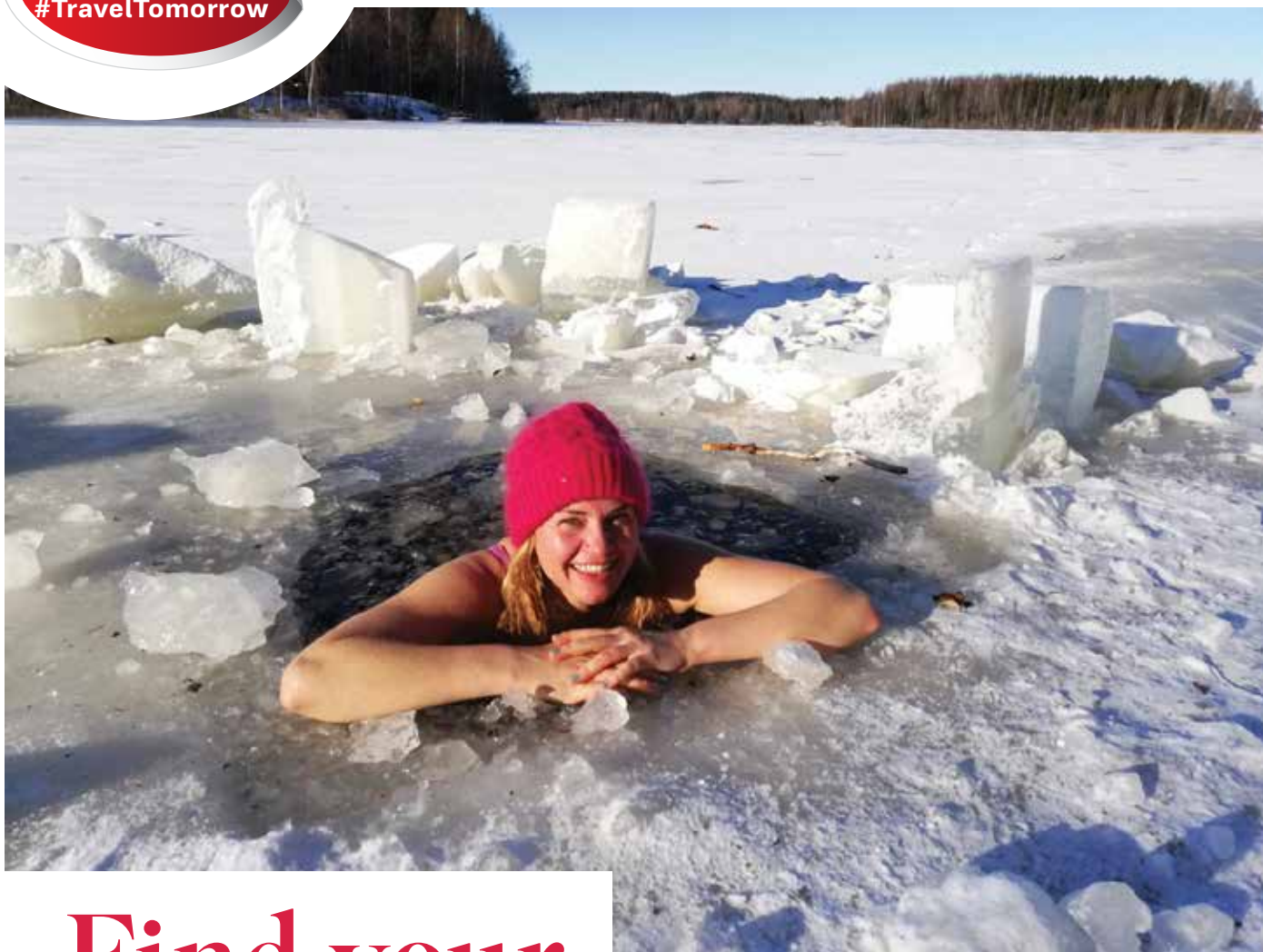
*Nearest airport:* Cochin International Airport, about 108 km



International

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# Find your (Finnish) calm 5 tips for happiness at home

**T**here is no reason to forget what makes us happy—especially on March 20, which is the United Nations' annual *International Day of Happiness*. This day has been marked since 2013 as a way to recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. The UN issued its annual World Happiness Report, **which ranks 156 countries around the world.**

For the third year in a row, Finland was named the happiest country in the world.

So what makes the Finns so happy—and what can we learn from them during this time of global turmoil caused by an outbreak of coronavirus?

Also what makes Finland home to the happiest people on earth, These are lessons that anyone around the world can integrate into their own lives





during normal times or if you're staying at home and sheltering in place due to coronavirus.

If you ask a Finn, what makes us happy, one of the answers is nature. Finns like to put on a pair of rubber boots, head to the woods to slow down and calm our mind. About 70 per cent of our country is covered by forest and travellers fall in love with Finland's clean air, serenity and silence. Now, however, is not the time to travel, but rather focus on the health and well being of oneself and those around us.

Visit Finland shares some simple tips on how to find your calm at home – the Finnish way – while you dream about your next adventure.

## 1 Start your day with a cold shower

(instead of a dip in a lake or the sea)

The Finns love winter swimming as much as they love the sauna. The secret of plunging into icy water lies in the feeling that surges through your body once you get out of the water – as soon as you're back on dry land your circulation kicks in and your body starts to warm up and makes you feel happy. Your body is producing the mood-balancing hormone serotonin with dopamine, and stress starts to



melt away. The easiest way to do this at home is to take an ice-cold shower for a couple of minutes. If you do it in the morning, your day couldn't ask for a more refreshing way to start your day. Dive into your inner Finnish mentality "Sisu", and just do it! You can alternate cold and warm showers to get a "sauna" feeling, and your blood circulating even better.

## Learn more about Finnish mentality Sisu:

<https://finland.fi/arts-culture/sisu-within-finnish-key-life-love-success/>

## Learn more about winter swimming:

<https://www.visitfinland.com/article/a-refreshing-dip-icy-waters/>

## 2 Make sense of the world by reading

(instead of visiting a library)

Books are close to the Finns' hearts. There are many libraries in Finland with Helsinki's Oodi being the newest library to open in 2019 and was awarded the best public library in the world the same year\*. In 2016 the United Nations named Finland the world's most literate nation, and Finns love books—as well as public libraries. In fact, Helsinki's new Oodi library was awarded the best public library in the world in 2019. **"We are 5.5 million people, and we borrow close to 68 million books a year,"** But if you can't get to a library, no matter. Reading a book at home or online will have the same impact on your mental health and happiness. "Above all, reading (any) book is surely more relaxing than surfing social media."

Want to really get into the Finnish spirit? Check out the *Moomins*, which are white, hippo-like characters created by the writer and artist Tove Jansson in the 1940s. "Today the Moomins are part of the Finnish identity, inspiring generations over and over from children to adults,".





### 3 Experience a relaxing forest path on your sofa

*(instead of walk in an actual forest)*

There is something magical about the forest and the Finnish soul has always been linked with it. The green color is calming; the gentle rustling of the leaves and pine needles is like music. Finns feel good in the forest. The forest roots us and helps us remember who we are and where we come from. In the forest we don't feel being alone or even lost – the forest provides protection and peace for us.

It has been scientifically proven that only 15 minutes in the forest calms your pulse and your body starts to rest; what a wonderfully simple cure for stress! So, please close your eyes, stretch yourself on the sofa, and have an imaginary sound trip to the Finnish forest. You can experience the relaxing sounds of Finnish Lapland by listening to Scapes album on

Spotify: <https://www.lapland.fi/visit/sound-of-lapland/scapes/>

More about therapeutically effects of forests:

<https://finlandnaturally.com/experiences/nature/finnish-forest/can-you-believe-this-is-how-15-minutes-in-a-forest-affects-you/>







#### 4 Make a world better (and tastier) place by baking a Cinnamon bun

(instead of a visiting a Finnish café serving them)

Finns are obsessed with a local cinnamon bun treat called *korvapuusti*, which means “slapped ears” in English. The difference in Finland: They are made a dash of cardamom. “For Finns, it’s the highlight of the day, and we definitely don’t count the calories,”. “Cinnamon buns are the perfect comfort food as well, and baked at home they bring a cozy smell to the kitchen as in our childhood days, when we ate them with a glass of milk.”

Grown-up Finns love *korvapuusti* paired with coffee, and in fact, it is such a national treasure that there is a special word for it: *pullakahvit*, which literally means “bun coffee.” This is often enjoyed at a cafe, but at the moment, “Finns are doing with virtual *pullakahvi* pauses,”.

Want to make Finish *korvapuusti* at home? You can find a recipe [here](#).

#### 5 Enjoy art online

Finland’s contemporary art scene embraces everything from experimental artist-run initiatives and commercial galleries to flagship art institutions. There are more than 55 art museums, and numerous art galleries packed into our cities. Finland is a country of extremes and contrasts and along with the Finns’ close relationship with nature

are the main sources of inspiration for Finnish Art.

Another hallmark of Finland is its rich art scene, which ranges from experimental artist-run initiatives to commercial galleries to flagship art institutions. The country is home to more than 55 art museums, and much of the art in the country is inspired by the Finns’ close relationship with nature. The Finns also use art to “calm the mind and transport their thoughts to stress-free, comforting places.”.

Take a virtual trip from your own sofa to the Finnish museums to understand how art is a tool for happiness. One place to check out is the new Amos Rex museum, which won the prestigious LCD (Leading Culture Destination) Award for New Cultural Destination of the Year – Europe. You can take a virtual tour of the museum’s new Generation 2020 exhibition in its *Instagram Stories*.

For something more classic, there’s the Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki, which includes more than 450 works by the famous Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela. Take a *virtual tour of the Ateneum*, and you’ll be feeling the calm Finnish vibes in no time flat.

You can discover Lapland, head to Rovaniemi Art Museum located in the Arctic Circle too. Their main focus is on Finnish Contemporary Art and Northern Art. <https://cumulus.rovaniemi.fi/rovtaide/>







# Virtual ISRAEL Series

## Part 1 Jerusalem 2U

**J**erusalem is Traveling 2U: For the First Time Jerusalem is Set to Provide Tourists a Virtual Tourism Experience Featuring E-tours, E-prayers, E-museums, E-shopping and E-culinary

### Experiences for All to Enjoy

Bridgify Will Allow Access to Leading Sites around Jerusalem. Host Virtual Tours and Attend Prayer Events from the Holy City

The COVID-19 outbreak has impacted travel all over the world. With all three major religions celebrating their respective holidays during the month of April, the Jerusalem Development Authority has launched





an interactive online platform which will allow tourists to take part in events and tours from afar. The platform was founded in collaboration with the Jerusalem Municipality, the East Jerusalem Development Company and Bridgify, an Israeli online platform which specializes in developing customized smart trips all over the world. Bridgify has quickly adapted to the current situation and has created a new genre in the tourism world based mainly on virtual tours. Since tourists are not travelling, Bridgify's platform brings destinations to them, enabling travelers to enjoy online experiences such as virtual tours, live streaming, workshops & more.

Amit Shamni, founding partner and CEO of Bridgify "We all came together at record speed – these types of projects usually take a number of months to complete- in a common goal to benefit the local and global community. I am proud of the product created in cooperation with the Jerusalem Municipality, the city I grew up in. We are looking at a new genre of travel extremely relevant to the current day and age and for the future as well and we are excited to be taking part in this process."

With the Jerusalem is Traveling2U platform, the city of Jerusalem is literally making its way in to its followers' homes, while providing an in-depth view of the city's main attractions, including hiking, food, shopping and museums. The site allows viewers an opportunity to regain hope amid these difficult times, especially towards the cornerstone holidays for the 3 monotheistic religions. The JDA fully intends on maintaining and developing the platform, once the world returns to normalcy, in order to allow a unique and quality experience from a distance.

Ilanit Melchior, Director of Tourism at the Jerusalem Development Authority said "We set a goal of keeping the city of Jerusalem in our follower's mindset and we believe, through these activities and tours we will be able to allow tourists from all over the world feel connected to the upcoming holiday season. We are proud to launch this interactive system featuring our four virtual experiences- E-tours, E-attractions, E-prayer and E-culinary experiences for all to enjoy."

Explore the city of Jerusalem now: <http://explore.itraveljerusalem.com/>





## Part 2 Museum Tours



As we approach the summer with most of us in continued isolation for the next 2 weeks, the Israel Ministry of Tourism invites you to take a journey to some of the most beautiful sites in the world. Transport yourselves to the streets of Tel Aviv, beaches of Eilat or the historical walled city of Jerusalem from the comfort of your home.

Israel has the highest number of museums (per capita) in the world. While we cannot walk through the exhibits, you can still learn about the history, art and culture housed in each museum through virtual tours.

Tel Aviv Museum of Art — Israel's first art museum, founded in 1932 — is a leading and influential institution dedicated to the preservation and display of modern and contemporary art from Israel and abroad. The museum invites you to enter the museum's website and pages on social media, where video content from the museum exhibitions and events will be available for viewing, as well as a virtual tour with a voice guide that will discuss selected works in the museum. The site also offers artistic activities for children.

**The Nahum Gutman Museum of Art** located in Neve Tzedek, Tel Aviv gathers the works of one of Israel's most famous painters, Nahum Gutman (1898-1980), a Moldovan-born Israeli painter, sculptor, and author. The Nahum Gutman Museum of Art was opened in 1988; its entire museum collection was donated by the artist's family who wished to showcase Nahum Gutman's multiple talents. These days, the museum allows the public to become familiar with the complexity of his work through a variety of virtual content and activities on its website and social media pages. Activities include virtual tours of the museum, creative workshops with home materials, games and more.

The Israel Museum in Jerusalem was established in 1965 as Israel's foremost cultural institution and one of the leading arts and archaeology museums in the world. Its holdings include the world's most comprehensive collections of the archaeology of the Holy Land, and Jewish Art and Life, as well as significant and extensive holdings in the Fine Arts. The museum's website offers a virtual tour of the

museum's permanent exhibitions through Google ART cameras, videos, "behind-the scene" clips, as well as creative workshops for children.

**The Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem** which presents Jerusalem's story, was opened to the public in 1989. The museum is located in the medieval citadel known as the Tower of David, near the Jaffa Gate, the historic entrance to the Old City. It details the major events in Jerusalem history beginning with the first evidence of a city in Jerusalem in the second millennium BCE, until the city became the capital of the State of Israel, and its importance to the three monotheistic religions. The museum's website is one of the best ones(!), it offers many fascinating virtual activities that will make you feel like you are in ancient Jerusalem: virtual tours, videos, pictures, lectures, VR of the holy city during the holidays and a very exciting VR that explores the grounds of the Tower of David, and the origins of the Crusader time period fortress with the Crusader King Baldwin 11 of Jerusalem.

### City of David

The story of the City of David began over 3,000 years ago, when King David left the city of Hebron for a small hilltop city known as Jerusalem, establishing it as the unified capital of the tribes of Israel. Today, the story of the City of David continues. Deep underground, the City of David is revealing some of the most exciting archeological finds of the ancient world. While above ground, the city is a vibrant center of activity with a visitor's center that welcomes visitors for an exciting tour to the site where much of the Bible was written. The City of David website offers a 360 degree *virtual tour of ancient Jerusalem*, an interactive map that highlights different parts of Ancient Jerusalem, City of David Timeline, picture galleries, "behind-the-scene" videos, interviews, news on archaeological findings unearthed in the City of David excavations, videos and colouring pages for children and more.





# Las Vegas

## to host 2021 IPW Travel Trade Show

**T**he U.S. Travel Association has announced that its annual trade show, IPW, will next be held in Las Vegas May 10-14, 2021. This year's IPW, scheduled to convene in Las Vegas on May 30, was forced to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. The previously scheduled 2021 host city, Chicago, agreed to step aside for next year and will assume the host mantle in 2025.

"This is incredibly welcome good news amid the serious challenges facing the travel industry, the country and the world," said U.S. Travel Association President and CEO Roger Dow. "Cancelling this year's IPW was a difficult though clearly necessary call, and our future host cities came together to achieve a win-win outcome for the future of the event."

Dow continued: "As we look to recover from this health emergency and the resulting economic crisis, it is fitting that we will be able to hold IPW in Las Vegas, a city that epitomizes the economic power of travel and tourism. We are deeply grateful to Chicago, which had one of the most successful IPWs in recent memory as a first-time host in 2014, for their flexibility,

generosity and collaborative spirit."

Other future host sites—Orlando in 2022, San Antonio in 2023, and Los Angeles in 2024—remain unchanged.

IPW is the country's leading international inbound travel trade show, driving \$5.5 billion in future travel to the United States. At IPW, travel buyers (including international tour operators, wholesalers and receptive operators) meet face-to-face with sellers of U.S. travel product (representing accommodations, destinations, attractions, retail, transportation companies and more), transacting business that would otherwise be generated only through an exhaustive number of around-the-world trips.

Another serendipity from the reshuffling of dates: IPW 2021 will be held in the *newly constructed West Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center*.

"Thank you to the leadership at the U.S. Travel Association for inviting Las Vegas to host its IPW 2021 trade show," said Steve Hill, CEO/President of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. "Like many of our industry colleagues, we are anxious to contribute to the travel and tourism

recovery efforts, and know that IPW bringing travel trade decision makers from across the globe together is an important step in that process."

"Brand USA is honored to serve as the Premier Sponsor for the U.S. Travel Association's IPW. As the nation's destination marketing organization, IPW offers Brand USA the biggest stage and brightest lights to showcase our collective success to a global network of key industry stakeholders," said Christopher Thompson, Brand USA president and CEO. "We look forward to the opportunity to reconnect with industry friends and remind the world about all of the diverse destinations and amazing experiences across the United States. We will see you back in Las Vegas in 2021."

"This important decision was a collaboration between U.S. Travel and Choose Chicago. Having the privilege of hosting IPW in June of 2025 in Chicago will be a tremendous opportunity for us and our partners," said David Whitaker, President and CEO of Choose Chicago. "Equally important, we look forward to traveling to Las Vegas next year to continue our partnership and engagement with the global travel community."



INTERNATIONAL



# Virtual FAMs the New Travel amid lockdown



**D**uring these critical times when travel is severely restricted, tourism establishments across the globe are coming up with interesting contents to entertain globetrotters and travel enthusiasts. From highlighting memories from the past to bracing them for future adventures, here are few campaigns adopted by travel and tourism boards worldwide that encourage people to 'stay home now and travel later.'







INTERNATIONAL

**ABU DHABI:** Reassuring travellers of better times ahead, Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi has unveiled an inspirational video campaign brimming with shots of popular attractions from the emirate.

**JAPAN:** The land of the rising sun is offering insights on offbeat and unique spots of the region. These include details on Ibaraki Prefecture’s Hitachi Seaside Park that is painted violet and blue with baby blue eyes flowers; Monet’s Pond, known as Namonaki Ike in Japan and traditional “gassho-zukuri” thatch roof houses of Gokayama.

**UNITED KINGDOM:** The official tourist board of Great Britain is focusing on generating interactive content in the form of quiz, literature and culinary (virtual) sojourns.

**AUSTRALIA:** Raising hope for a beautiful tomorrow, Australia has come up with a video message “about staying connected and looking forward to welcoming visitors with open arms

when the time is right – ‘With Love From Aus’.”

**AZERBAIJAN:** A promising tourist destination, Azerbaijan is introducing the #ExperienceAzerbaijanLater campaign. Meanwhile, enjoy a 360-degree view of Baku, the capital and largest city of Azerbaijan.

**MALDIVES:** Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) has released a #visitmaldiveslater campaign that encourages everyone to stay home and visit the island nation later when travel opens up.

**SWITZERLAND:** For those who had to cancel their dream holiday in this picturesque European country for now, here’s something that might cheer you up and help you plan your future trip to this surreal region.

**ICELAND:** Since it’s the best time to look back on those unforgettable memories, Inspired By Iceland, the official tourism website for Iceland urges you to share your experiences from the Nordic island nation.



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Whether you seek a romantic interlude with just the two of you, or a festive time surrounded by old and new friends, our hotel offers privileged services that will transform your honeymoon into an absolute dream... With five restaurants presenting the best flavours in international cuisine... seven bars where drinks and entertainment are simply redefined, outdoor swimming pools with sparkling water and relaxing pools that promise romance and tranquillity... the Elysion Spa offering 6,000 square metres of luxe treatments... a dedicated 650-metre-long beach and gazebos where you can enjoy sea, sun and sand amid a superior service understanding...all awaits you.

### A SPECIAL CONCEPT FOR HONEYMOON COUPLES

Services dedicated to honeymoon couples at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa are extraordinary... with the Honeymoon Duplex Suite option other than the standard honeymoon package. In the Honeymoon Suite, you'll find a Jacuzzi, a sauna and a terrace as well as a living room and a plush bedroom. But this is not all: When





you take your first step into your most beautiful journey, you are brought to the hotel with a private transfer service. You are welcomed with Champagne and chocolate as you enter the hotel, and with wine, fruit, and appetizers in your room. As a special treat on to your first day, an in-room breakfast and or breakfast in a private area in the restaurant are just the beginning. Accommodation in a seafront Gazebo House, a massage in your room or the spa centre await you, all there to help you make beautiful memories during your honeymoon and your stay at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa.

Whether you choose to stay in the Honeymoon Duplex Suite or in one of the hotel's comfortable rooms ... all honeymoon couples married within two weeks - without any exceptions - are invited to enjoy dinner in an à la carte

restaurant, accommodation in a Gazebo House for one day, a fruit basket in the room, and other surprises in one day - as you select during your stay, and as you wish.

## **HILTON DALAMAN SARIGERME RESORT & SPA: THE NEW HONEYMOON DESTINATION FOR INDIAN TOURISTS**

In recent months, guests from India have joined us at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa, embracing the unique geography of the region. The Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa was honoured to host a traditional, fabulous Indian wedding, while the happy couple enjoy their honeymoon privileges at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa.



**Hilton**

DALAMAN SARIGERME  
RESORT & SPA

[www.hiltondalaman.com](http://www.hiltondalaman.com)