

LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

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Contents

Volume 24 | Issue 01 | February 2024

- 08** Passenger air traffic surpasses pre-pandemic levels
- 14** Goa Tourism showcases regenerative initiatives at SATTE 2024
- 15** Qatar Airways to move operations to North Goa, India from Dabolim Airport to the new, Manohar International Airport
- 18** South African Tourism Organises Corporate Think Tank in India; Aims to Capitalise on Growing Incentives Travel Demand
- 24** Antara River Cruises launches sustainably built catamarans to traverse the Bhitarkanika mangrove wetland in Odisha



Contents



- 26** Hilton's landmark 600th hotel opens in Greater China, showcasing expansive growth
- 29** The resurgence of the culinary icon at The Imperial
- 30** Germany expects tourism surge during UEFA Euro 2024
- 32** France experiences surge in travel demand ahead of 2024 Summer Olympics – with Americans leading the charge
- 34** UN Tourism and WTTC applaud Saudi Arabia's historic milestone of 100 million tourists
- 37** Marriott Bonvoy brings once-in-a-lifetime experiences at Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour select performances across the world
- 38** Palace on Wheels will now offer destination weddings: From The Skies To The Rails
- 40** Hyatt Announces the Opening of Ronil Goa in Southwest Asia
- 43** Goa Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte launches India's first regenerative tourism model
- 44** Turkey's Turquoise Coast Unmissable Things to Do in Fethiye
- 50** Souqs of Jeddah
- 55** Accor Showcase 2024 successfully concludes in Delhi and Mumbai
- 56** Top 7 Wonderous Reasons to Host an Event in Phuket
- 58** Best Places to Visit in Morocco



EDITOR'S LETTER

Dubai announces 5-year multiple entry visa for India

34 pc growth in overnight visitors from booming Indian story

Dubai has introduced a five-year multiple-entry visa to enhance travel between India and Dubai, reflecting the commitment to sustained economic collaborations and encouraging tourism and business ties. The visa, issued within two to five working days, allows a 90-day stay, extendable once, with a total stay not exceeding 180 days in a year.

Dubai experienced a surge in tourism from India, welcoming 2.46 million overnight visitors between January and December 2023, as reported by the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET). This signifies a substantial increase from the 1.84 million tourists in 2022, surpassing the pre-pandemic figure



of 1.97 million visitors in 2019, showcasing an impressive 25 per cent growth compared to the pre-pandemic era. India, with a remarkable 34 per cent year-on-year growth, maintains its position as the leading source market for Dubai, contributing significantly to the city's record-breaking tourism performance in 2023.

Aligned with the Dubai Economic Agenda, D33, launched by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, over a year ago, this growth aims to consolidate Dubai's standing as one of the top three global cities for business and leisure.

Bader Ali Habib, Regional Head of Proximity Markets at Dubai Department of Economy, and Tourism highlighted the long-standing relationship with India and the significant contribution of Indian tourists to Dubai's record-breaking tourism sector in 2023. The introduction of the five-year visa is seen as a strategic step to deepen ties and explore possibilities between the UAE and India.

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“Dubai values its long-standing relationship with India, and our inbound visitation from the market in 2023 was outstanding, contributing to a record-breaking performance by our tourism sector. As a key market for Dubai, India will continue to play an integral role in enabling us to achieve the goals of the D33 Agenda, further reinforcing Dubai’s position as a hub for business, investment, and tourism. The five-year multiple entry visa initiative signifies a strategic step towards deepening our already existing ties with India. This historic milestone will not only open doors to a longer and more enriching experience for Indian tourists but also provide a platform for increased economic collaboration. It is also a testament to Dubai’s commitment to India and the infinite possibilities that can be explored between the UAE and the sub-continent. With exceptional

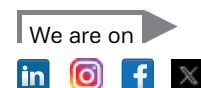
flight connectivity and our ongoing commitment to the Indian market, we are confident that our upcoming initiatives will further amplify awareness about Dubai’s diverse offerings, multicultural setting, and abundance of hotels and attractions, continuing to make it the top travel choice for Indian tourists,” says Bader **Ali Habib, Regional Head of Proximity Markets, Dubai Department of Economy, and Tourism.**

In 2023, Dubai recorded its highest-ever tourist influx, welcoming 17.15 million international overnight visitors, reflecting a 19.4 per cent year-on-year growth. Recognised as the No.1 global destination in the Tripadvisor Travellers’ Choice Best of the Best Destinations Awards 2024 for the third consecutive year, Dubai’s diverse offerings and commitment to excellence in hospitality contribute to its popularity

among global travellers. The UAE and India, as key economic partners, continue to foster cultural exchanges, diplomatic cooperation, and robust trade ties, making Dubai a preferred destination catering to various traveller preferences.



DEVENDER GROVER



Passenger air traffic surpasses pre-pandemic levels

Most international Asian routes, except those serving South West Asia, continue to have substantially lower levels of traffic in 2023 compared to the pre-pandemic levels.



In the first quarter of 2024, **ICAO** projects that passenger air traffic levels will be around 2% higher than in 2019, with airlines expected to sustain their operating profitability seen in 2023.

“The commitment of ICAO’s Member States to aligning their pandemic responses with the guidance developed by the ICAO Council has been crucial to the recovery of their air services,” remarked ICAO Council President **Salvatore Sciacchitano**. *“The implementation of ICAO’s post-pandemic guidance is now equally crucial to ensuring the resilience and sustainability of this recovery.”*

Demand this year is forecast to

be around 3% above 2019 levels and could reach 4% if the pace of recovery strengthens in the routes that have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels. This translates to a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of around 0.5% over the 2019-2024 period.

“The aspirational goals agreed upon by governments towards the decarbonization of air transport by 2050 are supporting the environmental sustainability of the recovery and future development of the global air transport network,” remarked ICAO Secretary General **Juan Carlos Salazar**. *“This is further driven by initiatives led by ICAO to accelerate the development and*

implementation of the technologies, operational improvements, and cleaner aviation energies that decarbonization requires. ICAO’s latest air traffic forecasts are promising for global development and a reminder that the global community must accelerate its sustainability efforts, particularly to assure the production and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels in sufficient quantities.”

Today’s forecasts come with the caveat that risks affecting international air transport do not escalate from current levels.

ICAO’s latest analysis also reveals new insights into aviation for the previous year 2023, revealing that air traffic on most routes had already reached or surpassed pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year. This is aligned with ICAO’s earlier prediction of an almost complete recovery of passenger air traffic, namely around 95% of 2019 pre-pandemic levels globally by the end of 2023.

The major regional routes which surpassed the 2019 levels by the end of 2023 are:

- Intra-Europe,
- Europe to/from North America, the Middle East, South West Asia, and Africa,
- North America to/from Latin America and the Caribbean, South West Asia, South East Asia, and the Pacific
- Middle East to/from South West Asia and Africa.

However, most international Asian routes, except those serving South West Asia, continue to have substantially lower levels of traffic in 2023 compared to the pre-pandemic levels.

Despite high fuel prices and economic uncertainties, airlines’ 2023 total operating profits are estimated at USD 39 billion, in line with the 2019 levels. This profit is mainly due to increased passenger yields and productivity gains achieved by the industry. Similarly, to previous years, airlines of North America and Europe captured the majority of the industry’s profits.

SITE celebrates excellence in incentive travel with annual Crystal Awards program



Supported by IMEX Group, this year's SITE Crystal Awards recognized nine companies' incentive travel achievements

The **Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE)** honored nine companies with *Crystal Awards* Tuesday evening during the association's Global Conference, celebrating an immense range of skills and triumphs related to incentive travel.

This year's Awards attracted a record number of entries, elevating the achievements of this year's winning organizations.

"I'm so proud of the growth and success on display tonight," said SITE CEO **Annette Gregg**. "This is truly a chance to celebrate the very top of our profession, with leaders here who set the stage and prove the amazing power and potential incentive travel uniquely delivers."

Reflecting a range of geographies, clients, and program features, their collective accomplishments signal a strong, confident future in the continued use of incentive travel as a highly effective and inspirational reward and motivation strategy.

"This is always an immensely special evening to be part of," said **Carina Bauer**, CEO of the **IMEX Group** (the sponsor of the Crystal Awards). "The bar truly is raised higher and higher each year, with nominees pushing themselves and their teams to create impactful programs and long-lasting memories that will drive performance for months and years to come. It's always a thrill to be part of recognizing these efforts alongside industry friends and colleagues."

Crystal Awards Committee Chair **Ellie MacPherson** was also recognized during the ceremony for re-imagining the Crystal Awards program as the incentive travel industry's Oscars, indisputable validation for excellence in incentive travel design, programming and delivery.

"I pass the baton to my friend and fellow Canadian, Cate Banfield, following four years as Chair of this extraordinary program," said MacPherson. "Throughout my career as an incentive travel professional

I've always strived for excellence in designing and delivering incentive travel experiences. I passionately believe that travel experiences, more than any other corporate reward or recognition, truly transform individuals, companies and the destinations they choose. SITE's Crystal Awards program recognizes that, and honors it appropriately."

Receiving Crystal Awards this year are:

- **Arabian Adventures Meetings, Incentives & Events**, for Excellence in Incentive Travel: Africa & Middle East
- **Haute**, for Excellence in Incentive Travel: North America
- **MFactor Meetings**, for Excellence in Incentive Travel: Europe
- **Next Level Performance**, for Most Impactful Effort Toward Corporate Social Responsibility as Part of an Incentive Travel Program
- **PHP Event Services**, for Excellence in Incentive Travel: Asia-Pacific
- **Portugal Travel Team**, for Best Destination-Based Experiential Incentive Travel Program
- **Spectra DMC**, for Most Creative Solution Deployed to Overcome Adversity
- **streamlinevents**, for Excellence in Incentive Travel: Latin America and the Caribbean
- **Synergy Effect**, for Excellence in Incentive Travel: Asia-Pacific

Special congratulations were extended to MFactor Meetings again as the inaugural recipient of the "Par Excellence" award, a new prize introduced at this year's ceremony that recognizes outstanding overall incentive travel accomplishments.

More information about all winning entries will be available soon on the SITE website, and applications for the next Crystal Awards program will open in June 2024.



Thailand targets sustainable growth in tourism with a focus on the Indian market at SATTE 2024

TAT emphasizes sustainable tourism from India, aiming for 80 billion Baht in revenue with visa waivers and enhanced connectivity.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) highlights Thailand's diverse tourism offerings towards sustainability at the **Amazing Thailand** Media Briefing as part of its 15th participation in **South Asia's Travel and Tourism Exchange (SATTE) 2024**.

Ms. Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol, Minister of Tourism and Sports, said *"I am determined to elevate Thailand to be a quality and safe destination that delivers a valuable experience to our visitors from India through Thailand's Soft Powers and promotes Thailand to*

be an all-year-round destination."

India is one of Thailand's most important visitor markets. Last year, the number of Indian travellers totalled 1.62 million, making it the fourth largest market. Revenue generated from Indian travellers' spending amounted to over 63 billion Baht in 2023. This year, as of 19 February, India ranked fifth with 262,986 arrivals.

To inspire Indian travellers to visit Thailand, the Thai government waives tourist visas for Indian citizens, effective from 10 November, last year, to 10 May, this year, and is also working to boost connectivity between the two countries.

For this year, TAT has set a target of 80 billion Baht in revenue from about 1.74 million Indian travellers to Thailand.

Ms. Thapanee Kiatphaibool, TAT Governor, said *"Key strategies to realise our targets will be subsidy schemes for incentive, wedding, and celebration groups. Joint promotions*

with airlines and travel agents will be offered for repeat visitors and golfers. Just as importantly, we will continue to strengthen our presence through India's leading shows including the Outbound Travel Mart in Mumbai, and this SATTE in New Delhi."

TAT's marketing activities will aim at current segments, including family, millennials, weddings and celebrations, golfers, luxury, and incentive groups. Specific initiatives will be introduced for new segments, such as senior citizens, women travellers, rejuvenating tours, and adventure sports. Gen Z and LGBTQIA+ are also earmarked as potential segments.

Aside from well-established destinations like Bangkok, Phuket and Pattaya, TAT is promoting Hua Hin, a family, golf and wellness destination; Kanchanaburi for its abundant natural and historical attractions, and Khao Yai, which is known for its national park, wineries, and many family and sport activities.

In terms of new tourism offerings, TAT has listed EmSphere shopping mall, Thai Bus Food Tour and Pruek dining

cruise in Bangkok; three UNESCO sites in Nakhon Ratchasima; and Andamanda Phuket water park and Carnival Magic theme park in Phuket.

For Health and Wellness enthusiasts, the choices are RVX Sampran in Nakhon Pathom, Thann Wellness in Ayutthaya, and La Vita Sana in Khao Lak, Phang-nga. Meanwhile, Cape Fahn in Samui, Four Seasons in Bangkok, Banyan Tree in Krabi, Anantara Koh Yao Yai present most recent options for weddings and celebrations.

To facilitate air travellers, the Airports of Thailand (AOT) has increased the annual passenger handling capacity at Suvarnabhumi Airport to 60 million from 45 million with the September 2023 opening of the Midfield Satellite Building (SAT-1). Also last year, Chiang Mai International Airport has been operational 24/7 since November. In addition, AOT plans to expand Phuket International Airport, while conducting a feasibility study on a new airport in Phang-nga.

Interprovincial travel is set to be more convenient with two new

motorway projects – the M6 motorway, connecting to Nakhon Ratchasima, and the M81 motorway, connecting to Kanchanaburi – slated to be ready for public use in 2025.

"TAT's activity in India aligns with our "PASS strategy" to drive Thailand's tourism towards High-Value and Sustainability. This encompasses 'Partnership 360' efforts, digital transformation, subculture movement, and sustainable practices," Ms. Thapanee said.

In 2023, Thailand welcomed over 28 million foreign visitors, generating 1.2 trillion Baht in revenue. The top five visitor markets by the number of arrivals were Malaysia, China, South Korea, India, and Russia.

From 1 January – 19 February 2024, Thailand recorded 5.32 million foreign arrivals, generating over 254 billion Baht. The top five markets were China, Malaysia, Russia, South Korea, and India. For the entire year, TAT has set an overall revenue target of 3 trillion Baht, comprising 1.92 trillion Baht from international tourism and 1.08 trillion Baht from domestic tourism.



ATM 2024

to spotlight the Indian tourism sector amid outbound market boom

Arabian Travel Market 2024 in Dubai to focus on the rapidly growing Indian outbound tourism market, valued at \$143.5 billion by 2030.



With the Indian outbound market forecast to be worth \$143.5 billion annually by the end of this decade, the Indian tourism sector will come under the spotlight during the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2024, which returns to the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) for its 31st edition from 6-9 May.

According to a report by booking.com and McKinsey, 70% of Indians travelling overseas choose nearby destinations, with one-third choosing destinations in the Middle East. The

UAE is the top regional destination, followed by Saudi Arabia. According to the DET, India is Dubai's top source market, with 1.9 million visitors in the first 10 months of 2023. Saudi Arabia is aiming for 7.5 million visitors by 2030.

To illustrate the sheer size and potential growth of India's overall outbound market, before the pandemic in 2019, Indians made 26.9 million overseas trips; the report predicts that by 2030, that number could increase to 50 million departures.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "The boom in outbound travel from India is being driven primarily by the growing middle class. In 2020, only 37 million households had annual income between \$10,000 and \$35,000, but due to India's rapid economic growth, by 2030 that number will rise significantly to 177 million households.

"More specifically, households earning over \$35,000 per annum will also increase from two million in 2020 to 13 million by 2030, a sixfold increase!

"And with India's median age being just 28 years, it's little wonder that the UNWTO recognises India as one of the top three fastest-growing outbound markets in the world. By 2030, India's total travel expenditure will be valued at \$410 billion.

"Putting that into perspective, prior to Covid, in 2019, it was worth just \$150 billion, an increase of 173%."

Furthermore, it is not just the volume of Indian travellers that is getting Middle East destinations excited. According to a survey by Acko Insurance, the majority of Indian travellers who responded were willing to spend up to \$7,000 on international trips.

Another reason already alluded to is the proximity of the Gulf states, Dubai is the most popular city destination for Indian travellers, just three hours flight time from Mumbai. In addition, increased connectivity and affordable air travel from tier-two cities are also driving demand, particularly direct flights with low-cost carriers.

"And with over 8.5 million Indian expatriates currently working in the

GCC, business travel and bleisure, will undoubtedly underpin this growth," added Curtis.

ATM 2024 is expecting a record number of travel professionals representing outbound as well as inbound travel to India. Delegates, exhibitors and attendees will be given ample opportunity to network and make new and business contacts as well as the opportunity to explore the Indian travel sector through various show features, including a dedicated India Summit, which will look deeper into this vibrant market.

ATM 2024 will feature a dedicated India summit entitled, 'Unlocking the True Potential of Inbound Indian Travellers,' which will take place at ATM's Global Stage on Day 1 of the show, Monday 6th May, from 14:45 to 15:25 in conjunction with VIDECON Consultants Private Limited. The Summit will explore the dynamics of India as a key source market for tourism growth, as well as current and future opportunities.

Last year's ATM hosted several high-profile exhibitors from India, including

Air India, who exhibited for the first time, the Goa Department of Tourism, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Uttar Pradesh Tourism, Karnataka Department of Tourism, Odisha Tourism and Puducherry Tourism. This year, with an anticipated 20% increase in exhibitors from India expected, TBO.com, Taj Hotels, Rezlive, and Rategain have already confirmed. New exhibitors to feature in the 2024 edition of the show include Verteil Technologies, Tulah Clinical Wellness, ZentrumHub and The Paul Resorts & Hotels.

In line with its theme, 'Empowering Innovation: Transforming Travel Through Entrepreneurship', the 31st edition of ATM will once again host a range of stakeholders from across the Middle East and beyond.

Held in conjunction with Dubai World Trade Centre, ATM 2024's strategic partners include Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), Destination Partner; Emirates, Official Airline Partner; IHG Hotels & Resorts, Official Hotel Partner; Al Rais Travel, Official DMC Partner and Rotana Hotels & Resorts, Registration Sponsor.

Qatar Airways to participate in ITB Berlin 2024 with Second Generation MetaHuman Cabin Crew, Sama

Qatar Airways is the world's first airline to develop a virtual cabin crew MetaHuman

Qatar Airways, the industry standard for innovation in aviation, is participating in the global travel and trade event, **ITB Berlin**, from 5-7 March 2024, with the reveal of its second-generation revolutionary **MetaHuman**, **Sama** 2.0. The launch will be held at the remodelled Qatar Airways stand on the opening day of the trade show.

The national carrier of the State of Qatar is the first airline in the

world to develop a virtual cabin crew. Sama, the world's first AI-powered MetaHuman cabin crew member, will be unveiled in a previously unseen way at this highly anticipated event, spotlighting the future of personalised service and accessibility in air travel. Sama, powered by digital human creator, Uneeq, is primed to create new benchmarks for future AI implementations, showcasing a level of interaction that is as personal as it is

functional.

The world-leading travel trade show, ITB Berlin, which is a major travel and tourism industry event, showcases a range of travel exhibitors from over 180 countries and five continents, providing over 160,000 visitors with information on new products, services, and facilities in the tourism industry.

Sama 2.0 will soon be ready to welcome passengers in Qatar Airways' digital platform, **QVerse**.



Goa Tourism

showcases regenerative initiatives at SATTE 2024

Goa Tourism announced its participation in **SATTE 2024**, where the state highlighted its **Regenerative Tourism** initiatives.

As the first state in India to embrace Regenerative Tourism, Goa is leading the way in sustainable and responsible travel practices, setting a new standard for the industry. The pavilion led by Mr **Rajesh Kale**, Deputy Director, of the Department of Tourism, Mr. **Laxmikant Vaigankar**, General Manager of GTDC, and Mr. **Deepak Narvekar**, Deputy General Manager, of Marketing GTDC.

At SATTE 2024, the Goa Tourism Pavilion showcased diverse programs to foster responsible tourism practices. The setup aimed to underscore Goa's unwavering commitment to sustainable development, by its adherence to the principles of Regenerative Tourism. Goa Tourism will also unveil new tourism services tailored to cater to the diverse interests of travellers. These initiatives that were launched aim to deliver distinctive and unforgettable experiences while advancing sustainable practices.

Goa leads in sustainable travel, spotlighting Regenerative Tourism at SATTE 2024 with new initiatives for a resilient industry.

Officials from Goa Tourism actively engaged with hosted buyers during the exhibition, fostering meaningful interactions and facilitating B2B meetings to explore potential collaborations. Moreover, the Goa Tourism pavilion at SATTE was enriched by the presence of over 50 esteemed hoteliers and tour operators from Goa. Together with the Department of Tourism, they collectively showcased their diverse range of products and services, offering attendees a comprehensive glimpse into the vibrant tourism offerings of the state.

"We are pleased to showcase Goa's pioneering Regenerative Tourism initiatives at SATTE 2024," said Mr. **Suneel Anchipaka**, IAS,

Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Goa. *"As the first state in India to embrace this transformative approach to tourism, Goa is setting a new standard for sustainability and responsible travel. We invite attendees to visit our pavilion and join us in our journey towards creating a more resilient, equitable, and regenerative tourism industry."*

Goa's participation in SATTE 2024 underscores its commitment to driving positive change in the tourism sector and inspiring others to adopt Regenerative Tourism principles. Visit the Goa Tourism Pavilion to experience the future of sustainable travel and be part of the movement towards a more regenerative world.

Qatar Airways to move operations to North Goa, India from Dabolim Airport to the new, Manohar International Airport

Qatar Airways will cease operations at Dabolim Airport (GOI) on 20 June 2024, with its last departure from Hamad International Airport (DOH) to GOI being 19 June 2024 and its last departure from GOI to DOH being 20 June 2024



Qatar Airways announces its operations to the new **Manohar International Airport (GOX)** located in the North Goa district from the current **Dabolim Airport (GOI)** in South Goa, India, effective 20 June, 2024. This route will be served with the same schedule of a direct daily flight operated on a mix of Airbus 320 and Boeing 787.

Qatar Airways is joining a list of airlines ready to be served by GOX, including strategic partners IndiGo and Oman Air. With its state-of-the-art infrastructure, and close proximity to hotels and public transportation, the new airport is set to deliver an enhanced passenger experience.

Qatar Airways first launched its

operations in Goa in 2009, marking the start of the long-standing partnership between Doha and Goa. The transition from GOI and GOX heralds a superior airport experience for travellers on Qatar Airways' network to over 170 destinations.

GOX's expansive airport experience is designed to reflect the exuberant nature of the local culture with its blend of contemporary and Goan architecture. Its cargo facilities, comprising 25,000 metric tonnes of temperature-controlled handling capacity, has the potential to make GOX the ideal export hub in the region.

Currently, Qatar Airways flies to 13 destinations in India including: Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Bengaluru,

Calicut, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Nagpur, and Thiruvananthapuram.

Flight Schedule DOH-GOX (Daily, all local time):

- Doha (DOH) to Goa (GOX) – QR522
Departure 19:40, Arrival 01:55
- Goa (GOX) to Doha (DOH) – QR523
Departure 03:40, Arrival 05:00

Operational Moving Dates:

- DOH-GOI – Last flight: 19 June 2024
- GOI-DOH – Last flight: 20 June 2024
- DOH-GOX – First flight: 20 June 2024
- GOX-DOH – First flight: 21 June 2024

Rikant Pittie elected Vice Chairman of CII Delhi State Council, spearheads sustainable growth

EaseMyTrip Co-Founder, Rikant Pittie, becomes Vice Chairman of CII, championing competitive and sustainable growth for India@100.



In a significant development that marks a new chapter in the journey of Indian entrepreneurship and industry leadership, **Rikant Pittie**, Co-Founder of **EaseMyTrip**, one of India's leading travel and tourism companies, has been elected as the Vice Chairman of the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Delhi State Council**. This prestigious appointment underscores Mr. Pittie's remarkable contributions to the Indian business landscape and his visionary outlook towards the nation's progress and sustainability.

The Confederation of Indian Industry is a pivotal organization in India's growth story, fostering a conducive

environment for the development of the country through its partnership with industry, government, and civil society. With a legacy spanning over 125 years, CII's role in shaping policy, enhancing competitiveness, and promoting inclusive and sustainable growth is unparalleled. Mr. Pittie's election as Vice Chairman is a testament to his corporate sagacity, entrepreneurial spirit, and unwavering commitment to the nation's development ethos.

Speaking on his election, Mr. Rikant Pittie expressed, *"It is an honor and a profound responsibility to serve as the Vice Chairman of CII Delhi State Council. This role is not just a position but a*

pledge to contribute towards creating a more competitive and sustainable India on the cusp of its centenary of independence. The path ahead is both challenging and exhilarating, as we strive to harness the collective might of Indian industry to realise the vision of India@100. I am deeply committed to the role and look forward to working closely with all stakeholders to drive growth, inclusiveness, and globalisation, underpinned by trust."

Under Mr. Pittie's leadership, EaseMyTrip has demonstrated remarkable growth and innovation, embodying the spirit of excellence and customer-centricity. His vision for the nation's development, grounded in sustainability, inclusiveness, and global outreach, aligns seamlessly with CII's theme for 2023–24, 'Towards a Competitive and Sustainable India@100: Growth, Inclusiveness, Globalisation, and Building Trust'. His role as Vice Chairman is expected to further invigorate CII's initiatives across its 65 offices, including 10 Centres of Excellence in India and 8 overseas offices, leveraging institutional partnerships across 133 countries.

Mr. Pittie's rise from EaseMyTrip's founding to CII Delhi State Council Vice Chairmanship highlights the limitless promise of Indian entrepreneurship, emphasizing industry's crucial role in national advancement. As an advocate for competitive enhancement, his timely leadership aligns with prioritising sustainability. His journey from creating an empire of online travel business to guiding stakeholders towards sustainable yet profitable business models showcases his dynamic leadership. Together with CII's transformative influence, Mr. Rikant Pittie is set to drive innovation and collaboration, aiming for a self-reliant India that also makes significant global contributions.

Chef Mustian Gadang joins as Master Chef - The Spice Route at The Imperial

Chef Mustian Gadang has taken the helm as the esteemed Chef de Cuisine at the iconic Spice

Route. Inspired by his family's culinary traditions, Chef Mustian is renowned for his fervent passion for flavours and

impeccable skill in creating perfectly balanced menus.

Drawing inspiration from his Indonesian roots and extensive epicurean experiences across Asia, the USA, and the Middle East, Chef Mustian's creations are nothing short of extraordinary adventures. Every dish is a masterpiece, meticulously crafted to tantalize the senses and transport diners on a gastronomic voyage. His dedication to authenticity shines through in every dish, whether it's his home creation of vegetarian bacon made from tempeh or any other expertly invented dish on the menu that caters to all tastes and preferences.

Chef Mustian's commitment to preserving the authenticity and integrity of Asian cuisine is evident in every bite. With a keen eye for detail and an unwavering dedication to excellence, he sources only the finest local ingredients to create dishes that pay homage to the rich culinary heritage across Asia.

Louis Sailer, Senior Executive Vice President at The Imperial

New Delhi, says: "I've had the privilege of encountering numerous talented Asian chefs during my decades in Asia, yet Chef Mustian stands head and shoulders above the rest. What truly sets his dishes apart is his profound connection to Asian cuisine. His ability to extract flavours from each ingredient is unparalleled and a taste sensation. He has truly elevated the menu of our iconic restaurant to unprecedented dimensions, and his hand-crafted recipes stay true to their origins."

Chef Mustian's passion for Asian cuisine has earned him accolades and recognition throughout his illustrious career, and now, he is set to inspire and influence the culinary landscape of India's favourite Asian dining destination. Through his curated recipes, Chef Mustian invites diners to embark on a journey along the ancient spice route, where every dish tells a story of tradition, innovation, and unforgettable flavour.



South African Tourism Organises Corporate Think Tank in India; Aims to Capitalise on Growing Incentives Travel Demand

India emerges as one of the largest contributors to incentive travel in South Africa



After concluding an extremely successful Annual India Roadshow 2024, South African Tourism has kickstarted the third edition of its incentive travel initiative – Corporate Think Tank. Following its inaugural event in Mumbai on 02nd February and its second chapter in Delhi on 23rd February, the event recently concluded its third chapter in Bengaluru, the IT capital of India, on 07th March. It is now gearing up to arrive in Chennai on 15th March and Hyderabad on 22nd March 2024.

India is amongst the largest markets contributing to inbound incentives travel in South Africa. Demonstrating marked success following the previous editions, Corporate Think Tank programmes have emerged as an essential platform for South African Tourism to understand and simplify corporate travel needs for Indian businesses. Hosting such events enables the tourism board to connect with decision makers and solidify its relationships. Owing to attractive exchange rates in comparison with USD (\$1 = 82.70 INR approx.) and GBP (£1 = 105.50 INR approx.) the Rainbow Nation remains one of the most affordable and accessible international destination, with 1 ZAR valued at just 4.40 INR approximately. Besides, the tourism board has observed a visible appetite for South Africa as an incentive destination against the backdrop of increased focus on such travel programmes by Indian corporates.

Led by **Ms. Neliswa Nkani, Hub Head – Middle East, India and South-East Asia, South African Tourism** the Corporate Think Tanks are specifically curated to be highly interactive and encourage attendees to participate in a healthy free flowing discussion. At a time when outbound tourism from India is firing all cylinders, engagement sessions such as these assists in setting the ground for quick recall and are particularly aimed at capitalising on the growing demand in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions travel segment. The conversations during the session touched upon varied subjects from South Africa's infrastructure in

accommodating corporate travellers, closed door meetings and seminars to the destination's USP for incentive led travel.

Ms. Neliswa Nkani, Hub Head – Middle East, India and South-East Asia, South African Tourism said, *"Today, South Africa stands out as a preferred premier yet value for money destination in conducting vital business events for corporates from India and around the world. Our recent successful hosting of BRICS Summit serves as a testament to the Rainbow Nation's world class capabilities in supporting large scale conventions as well as intimate corporate gatherings."*

She further adds *"India has been a long-standing ally to South Africa, and it is heartening to witness the friendship materialising in an economically beneficial partnership for both the nations. The country has been fast climbing up the ladder of outbound tourism and emerged amongst the leading contributors to the travel and tourism sector from Asia. On the back of strengthening demand, we hope to continue building on the MICE travel momentum from India in 2024."*

South Africa boasts some of the world's most breathtaking landscapes, thrilling 3,000+ adventure activities catering to millennials, and mesmerizing wildlife encounters. Employees arriving on incentive trips are presented with many opportunities, from surfing through wildlife safari's, road-tripping famous routes or basking in the nation's natural beauty, all within a week. Understanding the importance of quick turnarounds, South African Tourism processes corporate visas within 5-7 working days. The country has a glowing track record and have successfully addressed MICE travel needs of renown Indian corporations across India in the past.

India holds a position of strategic importance for South African Tourism and has cemented itself amongst the top three growth markets. The country's growth over the recent years has outperformed many nations and displayed remarkable resilience. Being the Silicon Valley of India, Bengaluru is a city of foremost significance in realising the tourism board's MICE arrivals targets from India. Amongst the overall inbound traffic from Bengaluru in 2023, 53% of visitors chose the Rainbow Nation for professional travel needs. Adopting a multi-faceted approach, the tourism board also conducted its Annual India Roadshow 2024 in the city to tap into Bengaluru's vibrant leisure travel market.

Overall, South Africa welcomed 79,774 Indian travellers last year, marking an increase of 43% in visitors from India on a year-on-year basis. Notably, 46% of overall travellers were motivated by business travel of which MICE alone attracted 21% signifying its underlying potential. To further propel this momentum, the tourism board will continue with its efforts to improve accessibility and encourage dialogues aimed at establishing direct air connectivity to boost tourism and trade between the two nations. In its endeavor of providing further value to travellers coming to the Rainbow Nation the tourism board is also running a campaign in partnership with Ethiopian Airlines offering return fares to South Africa starting at just 39,990/- INR.

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Heavens Portfolio appoints Yamini Singh as Regional Director of PR and Marketing in India & Middle East

Heavens Portfolio, Asia's leading Sales, Marketing, and PR representative of some of the world's most luxurious and alluring travel brands and experiences, has appointed Yamini Singh as Regional Director - PR and Marketing for the India; Middle East. Yamini was recognized on the "40 Under 40" list at the India PR and Corporate Communications Awards by exchange4media in 2023. In her 14+ years of experience, she has worked extensively on building B2B; B2C communication strategies and integrated campaigns focused on building brand awareness and enhancing client reputation.

With the company entering a new growth chapter and fully-geared to bolster its remarkable portfolio of ultra-luxury global clients, Yamini has been appointed to strengthen media relations, create high impact brand partnerships, and super charge top-of-mind awareness for the client portfolio of Heavens Portfolio in India, including the likes of LVMH's Cheval Blanc, Armani Hotels, Oetker Collection, Ultima Collection, Badrutt's Palace Hotel, and Capella Hotels; Resorts among others.

She will be instrumental in steering compelling thought-leadership content and driving strategic direction in Marketing for Heavens Portfolio in India to cement the company's reputation as a pioneer in the future of integrated tourism representation. Additionally, she will spearhead the PR; Marketing initiatives in Heavens Portfolio's upcoming Middle Eastern operations.

Christine Galle Luczak, Founder and CEO of Heavens Portfolio, commented, "We are delighted to welcome Yamini to our universe of angels. Heavens



Portfolio has spread its roots deep into Asia with India being among our key source markets and Middle East gaining steady momentum.

Yamini's unique combination of experience in Marketing, PR and Communications will be instrumental in driving strategic direction and growth for the varied list of clients of Heavens Portfolio India and its upcoming Middle East entity."

Yamini conveyed her enthusiasm

for her new role, stating, "I'm deeply honored to accept this appointment. The clients of Heavens Portfolio are iconic brands giving us an opportunity to create compelling and authentic narratives that will resonate in the hearts and minds of the discerning traveller. I look forward to collaborating with our partners, stakeholders, and highly talented colleagues in upholding Heavens Portfolio's legacy of excellence."

DreamFolks and Looks Salon partner to offer exclusive beauty and grooming services

individuals with DreamFolks Club memberships. By diversifying its revenue streams beyond lounge services and banks as clients, DreamFolks aims to not only increase its market presence but also attract new enterprise clients.

Ms. Liberatha Kallat, Chairperson & Managing Director of Dreamfolks Services Ltd., remarked on the collaboration, stating, "Our partnership with Looks Salon marks a significant step in broadening our range of services. This partnership underscores DreamFolks' commitment to provide a comprehensive and enriched lifestyle experience for our clients' customers and DreamFolks Club members. It reinforces our position not only as India's foremost airport & travel services aggregator but also reaffirms our dedication to further enhance the value proposition of our clients' card loyalty programs and offer diverse premium experiences to DreamFolks Club members through a single membership card."

Mr. Sanjay Dutta, Managing Director, Looks Salon Private Limited, said, "This partnership with Dreamfolks represents an exciting new chapter for our company and our clients. Leveraging DreamFolks' vast network and expertise, we look forward to expanding our reach and redefine client expectations by seamlessly integrating travel and lifestyle services. This partnership will undoubtedly accelerate our growth and propel us towards even greater success in the years to come."

DreamFolks, India's leading airport & travel services aggregator, has partnered with **Looks Salon**, a premium salon chain brand in the Indian beauty and grooming industry. This collaboration strengthens DreamFolks' foray into the lifestyle services segment, expanding its spectrum of services beyond travel.

With the introduction of beauty & grooming services, DreamFolks seeks to enrich customer loyalty programs, thereby amplifying the value brought to their clientele. The expansion

to Looks Salons' 200+ outlets nationwide will allow customers of DreamFolks Clients and members of the DreamFolks Club to enjoy a variety of services offered by skilled stylists and beauty professionals. These services include manicures, pedicures, clean-ups, facials, and haircuts, all seamlessly managed through DreamFolks' proprietary technology platform.

To access these exclusive services, customers need to simply visit the DreamFolks web-access solution, generate a QR code, and

present it upon their arrival at any of the salon outlets. Upon validation, customers will be granted access to the comprehensive array of beauty & grooming services available under this partnership.

This strategic partnership will benefit DreamFolks' existing clients by making their card value proposition more attractive to their customers. Additionally, this initiative represents a strategic move for DreamFolks to expand its scope beyond airport services, targeting both corporate entities and

Want to visit Kaziranga National Park this rhino season?

It's the time to plan your trip



Kaziranga National Park: A Haven of Biodiversity and Conservation. Nestled in the northeastern state of Assam, India, Kaziranga National Park stands as a beacon of conservation success and a testament to the rich biodiversity that graces the Indian subcontinent. Spanning an expansive area of approximately 1085 square kilometres, this UNESCO World Heritage Site has earned its reputation as a stronghold for the conservation of the Indian one-horned rhinoceros,

among many other species.

The Kaziranga National Park spread across Golaghat, Nagaon, and Sonitpur districts in Assam, is one of the most popular destinations for nature and wildlife lovers. The national park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is known for its rich biodiversity and attracts tourists from across the world every year.

Beyond the iconic one-horned rhinoceros, Kaziranga National Park boasts a diverse range of

wildlife, making it a haven for nature enthusiasts and wildlife photographers. The park is inhabited by Bengal tigers, Asian elephants, wild water buffalo, swamp deer, and various species of deer. Its location in the floodplains of the Brahmaputra River contributes to its rich biodiversity, providing a unique ecosystem that supports an abundance of flora and fauna.

One of the park's primary claims to fame is its significance in the conservation of the **Indian one-**

horned rhinoceros, a species that once teetered on the brink of extinction. Thanks to dedicated conservation efforts, the rhinoceros' population in Kaziranga has experienced a remarkable resurgence over the years. The park is now home to a substantial population of these magnificent creatures, offering a unique opportunity for visitors to witness them in their natural habitat.

To explore the wonders of Kaziranga, visitors can embark on guided jeep safaris, elephant safaris, or even boat rides on the Brahmaputra River. These excursions offer a chance to witness the park's inhabitants in their natural habitats, from the elusive tigers

water sources, and the park remains open to visitors eager to witness the remarkable biodiversity. The dry season also presents an ideal opportunity for bird-watching enthusiasts. Kaziranga is home to an impressive array of avian species, including migratory birds that visit during the winter months.

Conservation challenges persist, as they do in many wildlife sanctuaries around the world. Kaziranga faces threats such as habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict. Efforts are ongoing to address these challenges, with conservation initiatives aimed at preserving the park's ecological balance while ensuring the well-being of the communities residing in the vicinity.

Ahead of the season to spot the rhinoceros, let's take a quick look into the jungle safari, other major attractions, and other key details for a memorable trip to the Kaziranga National Park.

Kaziranga National Park

Established in 1908, the Kaziranga National Park is spread over a 430 square kilometre area. It is located on the edge of the Eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspots, which are crucial in housing a diverse range of wildlife. Besides the wildlife, the national park includes a variety of flora and fauna like alluvial inundated grasslands. Alongside the park is full of the kumbhi, Indian gooseberry, cotton tree, and elephant apple trees across the area.

How to reach?

To witness the scenic beauty of the national park, you can plan your visit in the coming two months, March, and April. The park is located in a convenient area where reaching the site is well connected by road, flight, and railway network.

The nearest airport to Kaziranga is Jorhat and from there one can hire a taxi to the national park. The nearest railway station to the park is Furkating, from where the bus and taxi services to the national park are available.

Safari

The Kaziranga Park administration organises jeep and elephant safaris at different times of the day. Jeep safaris start from 8 am while the last jeep safari is available till 4 pm. These safaris usually begin from Mihimukh in the Central Range at Kohora, Bagori in the Western Range at Bagori, Agaratoli in the Eastern Range at Agaratoli, Ghorakati in Burapahar Range at Ghorakati.

According to the official site, the jeep safari for Indian visitors from Kohora and Bagori is 4,000 each, at Agaratoli 4,600, and Burapahar 5,400. For foreign visitors, the jeep safari prices are 7,700 for Kohora and Bagori, 8,600 for Agaratoli and 9,700 for Burapahar.



stalking through the tall grasses to herds of elephants leisurely grazing by the water's edge. The varied landscape, comprising grasslands, wetlands, and woodlands, enhances the overall experience, offering different perspectives on the diverse ecosystems within the park.

The **best time to visit Kaziranga National Park** is during the dry season, typically from November to April. During this period, wildlife sightings are more frequent as animals gather around

Kaziranga National Park is not only a sanctuary for wildlife but also holds cultural importance. The park is surrounded by indigenous communities, and conservation efforts include integrating local communities into initiatives that prioritize both biodiversity conservation and respect for traditional practices. This approach not only strengthens the bond between people and nature but also ensures the sustainability of conservation efforts in the long run.

Antara River Cruises

launches sustainably built catamarans to traverse the Bhitarkanika mangrove wetland in Odisha



Following the 2023 epic launch of the longest river cruise in the world aboard the MV Ganga Vilas, Antara River Cruises is thrilled to announce their newest floats: Antara Catamarans. These two-suite, state-of-the-art, sustainably built vessels – MV Mahanadi and MV Bhitarkanika – are designed to explore the Bhitarkanika mangrove wetland in Odisha, covering

an area of 672 sq km in the estuarine region of the Brahmani – Baitarani River systems and their tributaries.

Get ready for an extraordinary cruise as the catamarans navigate through India's second largest mangrove in India after Sundarbans in the Bay of Bengal and unveil the hidden treasures of this enchanting and undiscovered region. Cruising through this wildlife sanctuary

at a slow pace allows you to see the abundant flora and fauna all around you, such as the saltwater crocodile and over 320 species of birds.

The MV Mahanadi and MV Bhitarkanika offer 3 night/4 day itineraries – Amazon of the East sails every Friday and Cruising in Bhitarkanika every Monday. Embarking at Gupti, just over a 3 hour drive

from Bhubaneswar airport, you cruise through Dangamal exploring Bhitarkanika and then returning to Gupti. The cruise is priced at INR 25000/- per person per night on twin sharing/double occupancy.

"A cruise on a catamaran provides a more intimate setting, often just 4 people who can explore the area exclusively with personalised service and flexibility. It's a quiet, simple though rich journey through the wetlands, mangroves and dense forests of the Bhitarkanika National Park along with visits to local villages and temples known for their historical and cultural significance and beaches dotting the coast," says Raj Singh, Chairman, Exotic Heritage Group, promoters of Antara River Cruises.

"However, dipping into these intricate ecosystems comes with the responsibility of protecting them and as you are aware, Antara River Cruises is both community inclusive and sensitive to the planet's challenges. Our catamarans present the first hybrid solar electric and fuel powered cruise in India," added Singh.

Small pleasures on the Antara catamarans:

Comfort and Elegance: The catamarans, 17 metres long and 6 metres wide, travelling at 5 knots per hour, boast a perfect blend of comfort and elegance offering spacious interiors with panoramic views. Featuring two identical cabins, each with sweeping windows, private 3-fixture bathrooms and wardrobes with common spaces to lounge and dine and an airy sundeck. The suites are designed with fresh contemporary furniture, original works of art on palm leaves, handloom textiles and luxe linen ensuring a beautiful night's rest in the heart of the forest. Fully air conditioned with luxurious amenities, the Antara catamarans redefine cruising in Odisha offering a tranquil home as you cruise through the wetlands.

Scenic Routes: Glide through the rich and unique mangrove ecosystem with creeks, mudflats, and estuaries of

the park, presided over by the majestic Sundari tree, immersing yourself in the unparalleled beauty of dense mangroves, vibrant landscapes, and rich biodiversity that the 'mini Amazon' is renowned for. As you lounge on the sun deck or in the comfort of your room, marvel at the flora and fauna enlivening the banks and the constantly changing view along the crisscrossing rivers of the park. Let your camera capture the majestic saltwater crocodiles or the many varieties of kingfishers caught in the act of snapping up their breakfast fish or even a foraging water monitor lizard having a lazy morning. Ride a small boat through a tangle of breathing roots with a naturalist, perhaps spotting a fishing cat's luminous eyes amidst the gloom, and immerse yourself in the thrilling stillness of unspoiled nature.

Culinary Delights: Indulge your palate with a curated selection of local and international cuisines. Our onboard chefs ensure a gastronomic experience that complements the breathtaking surroundings. Wake up to a breakfast with a view or enjoy a sundowner as you gently traverse the Pathsala River or indulge in a curated high tea as the sight of the distant Bay of Bengal mesmerises you. Multi-course traditional fare awaits you at meal times giving you the flavours of the region.

Guided Excursions: Join our expert guides on immersive excursions, be it bird watching, nature walks, or exploring hidden villages. Every moment promises discovery and awe-inspiring encounters with the natural wonders of Odisha in India.

Sustainability on board the Antara Catamaran

Antara River Cruises have made great strides in sustainability:

The catamarans present the first hybrid solar electric + fuel powered cruise in India

Avoid single use plastic

Bio-chemical toilets and water purifying plants on board

Source all ingredients from local markets

Follow strict animal welfare guidelines

Encourage local Odia artisans and crafts for décor and retail

Bhitarkanika: the hidden treasure of history and biodiversity: Bhitarkanika is a 672 sq km large, ecologically significant and protected sanctuary. It was birthed when the king of the ancient kingdom of Kanika meticulously carved a labyrinth of creeks, not only as a defence against sea pirates, and safeguarding his kingdom's flourishing commerce, but also as a secret spot for his hunting escapades. These wild, intricately designed waterways, complex to outsiders, are entered through the Khola gate. Khola means to 'dig the earth', signifying the land's excavation. See the mangroves, creeks and mudflats and their salt-tolerant species and the ubiquitous Sundari tree. This thriving mangrove ecosystem protects the coastline from erosion and is a nurturing ground for an array of marine and land species, including the formidable saltwater crocodile, graceful Indian pythons, elusive king cobras, a plethora of avian species, including migratory birds from Central Asia and Siberia, elegant spotted deer, and robust wild boars.

The Antara Story: Antara believes the best way to see South Asia is from the river. What began in 2003 as a dream for travel industry pioneer and naturalist Raj Singh has today turned into Antara's thoughtfully designed, well-appointed fleet of nine ships that sail South Asia's most iconic rivers. Antara offers its guests beautiful perches on moving water from which to enjoy vibrant and meditative landscapes, people, crafts and wildlife. Our philosophy is to bring the region's indigenous environments and cultures to the world, sustainably, and with its renowned hospitality, in ships that are designed with thought, luxury and care. Antara cruises encompass the Ganga, the Padma and the Brahmaputra River systems to make the world's longest river cruise. In 2024, Antara commenced sailing the four rivers that inundate Bhitarkanika National Park, India's second largest mangrove forest.

Hilton's landmark 600th hotel opens in Greater China, showcasing expansive growth

Hilton celebrates its 600th Greater China hotel opening with Hilton Nanjing Niushoushan, highlighting its strategic growth and diverse brand presence in key destinations.



Hilton has announced the grand opening of its landmark **600th hotel** in the Greater China region, **Hilton Nanjing Niushoushan**. This milestone signifies Hilton's robust presence in Greater China, boasting 600 hotels in operation across over 200 destinations and 10 distinct brands, each tailored to meet the

diverse needs of travelers.

"Launching our 600th hotel in Greater China marks an incredible chapter in our growth story, highlighting the strength and promise of the Hilton enterprise in a market that continues to show long-term prospects for travel and tourism. As the fastest-growing hotel company in the Asia Pacific region,

we are proud that one in three hotel rooms under construction in Greater China bears a Hilton flag. This expansion positions us well to capture increasing travel demand and deliver exceptional hospitality experiences to travelers in Greater China," said **Alan Watts**, president, Asia Pacific, Hilton.

"As one of the fastest-growing international hotel groups in Greater China, Hilton has opened 100 new hotels annually over the past four years. This rapid expansion showcases our collaborative success with our owners, partners, Team Members and guests, a pace we proudly refer to as 'Hilton speed'," said **Qian Jin**, President, Greater China and Mongolia, Hilton.

"The launch of our 600th hotel in Greater China reaffirms our dedication to the Chinese market and our founding purpose to fill the earth with the light and warmth of hospitality. We are excited to continue this journey and look forward to celebrating the next milestone."

A Blend of Sophistication and Nature: Hilton's Debut in Nanjing Niushoushan

Nestled within the picturesque Niushou Mountain cultural tourism zone, Hilton Nanjing Niushoushan blends the natural environment with exceptional hospitality. The hotel is a masterpiece of design, harmoniously integrating refined oriental aesthetics with modern architecture. Each of the 381 guest rooms offers spacious comfort and private balconies to admire the varying seasonal landscapes of Niushou Mountain. The hotel's serene atmosphere, inspired by traditional Chinese study and tea rooms, promises guests a tranquil and enriching stay. Featuring an energizing reception lobby, a 1,350-square-meter pillarless banquet hall, an expansive indoor kids' club, and diverse dining options, the hotel offers not only comprehensive amenities but a dynamic stay that unlocks the best of the scenic destination.

Continued Investment Fueling Growth and Breakthroughs in Greater China

- **New Openings:** In 2023, Hilton



introduced distinct properties in key urban and sought-after destinations for both business and leisure travelers. Standouts include the Conrad Shenzhen in Qianhai's Central Business District, Hilton Zhuhai with breathtaking views of Macau Bay, Hilton Garden Inn Shanghai Lujiazui in the bustling financial hub, and DoubleTree by Hilton in Zhuhai Hengqin, strategically situated at the heart of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area. For a more relaxing experience, The Mermoon Resort Hainan Tufu Bay, Tapestry Collection by Hilton, offers a unique, thematic stay, while Hilton Huzhou Nanxun, Hilton's first in the city, emerges as a prime spot for leisure and conferences in the Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai region.

• **Brand Expansion:** Hilton's luxury brands Waldorf Astoria and Conrad Hotels & Resorts continued to experience significant growth with new openings in major cities such as Shanghai, Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Haikou. The recent unveilings of Yuexiu Hotel Guangzhou and Humble House Taipei, both under the Curio Collection by Hilton, as well as the newly-signed Canopy by Hilton Shanghai Belfry Plaza, mark the debuts of Hilton's lifestyle brands in these cities. The latest introduction of two new brands—Motto by Hilton in Hong Kong, an urban lifestyle brand, and Signia by Hilton in Chengdu, a premier full-service brand—further broadens and diversifies the company's brand portfolio in the region.

• **Agile Operating Model:** Hilton's growth in China has been driven by a mix of operating models ranging from managed, franchised, and Master License Agreements, significantly expanding the reach of Hilton Garden Inn, Hampton by Hilton, and Home2 Suites by Hilton. Over 60 Hilton Garden Inn hotels are strategically located along high-speed railway routes in key cities, embracing the latest designs to cater to evolving guest preferences. In nine years, Hampton by Hilton has established over 320 hotels in China, hosting more than 30 million guests. Meanwhile, Home2 Suites by Hilton,

Each of the 381 guest rooms offers spacious comfort and private balconies to admire the varying seasonal landscapes of Niushou Mountain.

introduced to China just three years ago, has already opened over 40 properties, leading the way in travel + living. The franchise model, proven successful with Hilton Garden Inn, is now being extended to full-service brand DoubleTree by Hilton.

• **Stellar Performance:** Hilton Honors' membership base has increased by over 56% year-on-year in China, with a notable rise in member stays. Hilton has expanded its reach by collaborating with key players like the online travel platform Fliggy, featuring both popular domestic tourist destinations and international hotels. Launched in 2022, Hilton's global marketing platform 'Hilton. For The Stay' continues into 2023 in China with a fresh, localized marketing campaign, further amplifying Hilton's visibility on digital and social media in China's metropolitan hubs, highlighting the importance of the stay and being truly cared for in the overall travel experience. The company keeps a close eye on travel trends that resonate with Chinese travelers, particularly through experiences that celebrate China's cultural heritage. Nearly 130 hotels across more than 20 provinces have engaged in an intangible cultural heritage campaign, weaving cultural elements into the fabric of guest experiences.

"Travel with Purpose": Hilton's Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy to create positive environmental and social impact.

Guided by its "Travel with Purpose" ESG strategy, Hilton continues to reinforce its commitments across its operations, supply chain and

communities in China.

• **Reducing plastic use:** As of November 2023, all managed hotels in China have transitioned to full-sized bath amenities; and Digital Key is now available across over 120 hotels.

• **Promoting eco-friendly travel** through EV chargers: Hilton has installed over 1,000 electric vehicle chargers at over 140 hotels as of November 2023.

• **Creating an engine of opportunity** for our Team Members and our neighbors: Hilton's dedication to social impact is reflected in numerous volunteer activities centered on environmental protection, charity donation, and career development. In 2023, Hilton's hotels across China contributed to local communities with over 700 volunteer activities.

"Best Workplaces in Greater China" for Nine Consecutive years, granted the honor of "The Legend" for strong workplace culture.

Hilton has continued to build its strong culture through an unwavering focus on creating a workplace that is inclusive and diversified, is driven by purpose, and provides the kind of support that empowers its 35,000 Team Members in the Greater China region.

By 2023, Hilton has been named "Best Workplace in Greater China" for nine consecutive years by Great Place to Work®, and as "Best Workplace for Women in Greater China" for four years. With a focus on diversity and inclusion, the company has facilitated career opportunities for local talents, leading to over 94% of its hotel general managers in China being Chinese as of November 2023. The Greater China region also prides itself on having more than 27% female general managers and over 2% Team Members with disabilities.

As the first international hotel group in China to adopt the "GIG" model, Hilton has introduced flexible employment across over 70 cities, completing more than 60,000 shifts. This innovative approach offers flexible job opportunities, boosts operational efficiency, and connects the hotels with the local communities.

The resurgence of the culinary icon at The Imperial



In a mesmerising blend of art, design, and culture, The Spice Route at The Imperial unveiled a menu curated with care and creativity. Each dish, a delicate ensemble of Asian aromas, offers a choice of vegetarian, vegan and non-vegetarian delights. From Hand-folded Thai Spring Rolls, Flaky Duck Handbags and Crispy Jackfruit with a Velvety Vegetable Curry to Gindara Miso Cod and much more, our culinary artisans have crafted exclusive recipes that captivate the senses. Head Chef Mustian weaves a story of rich culinary heritage with authentic and specially sourced ingredients drawing inspiration from recipes and cuisines along the ancient spice route, extracting the uniqueness and taste from a world of expanded flavours, textures and cooking techniques of ethnic Asian cuisine. Rousing curiosity, the menu blends diverse histories and contemporary sensorial flair. Discover the archaic and step into this artful haven, where

intimate dialogues blend seamlessly with inspired and delicious cuisine.

Journey through the legendary existence of 'The Spice Route,' an architectural design masterpiece by Rajeev Sethi. Hand-painted with vegetable and flower dyes, it is a testament to India's cultural richness. The restaurant, divided into nine sections based on the Feng Shui principles, weaves the journey of life into its very fabric. From materialism to salvation, each section showcases antique treasures and murals dating back thousands of years. Explore a courtyard adorned with traditional sculptures, forming the backdrop for star-lit evenings and sunny afternoons. Committed to sustainability, the restaurant uses local ingredients and practices social responsibility in its daily operations. One can indulge in an extraordinary epicurean fiesta, where tradition, innovation, and sustainability converge at 'The Spice Route.'

Louis Sailer, Senior Executive Vice President at The Imperial,

said, "Spice Route is an architectural marvel conceived by our visionary owners and the esteemed architect, Mr. Rajiv Sethi. The restaurant's ambience is not only inviting but also timeless, boasting intricate designs that capture the spirit of ancient temples and captivating mural artistry, painstakingly crafted over seven years. Spice Route transcends being just a dining spot, it's a destination in its own right - a sensory delight for all who enter. From the plush soft textiles to the carefully curated lighting, every element contributes to an atmosphere that encourages movement and conversation. Guests are invited to embark on an Ethnic Asian culinary journey, where every aspect of the dining experience, from décor to cuisine, is meticulously crafted. In essence, Spice Route offers a cohesive and memorable dining experience that appeals to a diverse audience."



Germany expects tourism surge during UEFA Euro 2024

- *Germany expects over 2.7 million in-stadium spectators during UEFA Euro 2024*
- *Special preparations for Caspar David Friedrich's 250th birth anniversary*

Germany is poised to welcome a remarkable surge in tourism with the UEFA Euro 2024

illuminating the nation's cultural and scenic splendours. As the tournament kicks off on June 14, the country

braces for an influx of over 2.7 million stadium spectators and an additional 7 million fans engaging in public viewings, reminiscent of the enthusiasm seen during the 2006 World Cup.

This anticipated visitor boom underscores Germany's appeal as a prime European travel destination, especially highlighted through its 'Germany Simply Inspiring' campaign, which



showcases the country's commitment to sustainable tourism.

The German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is at the forefront, ensuring that global tourists, including those from India, are well-informed about the host cities and the myriad attractions that lie beyond. This effort not only facilitates smooth travel planning but also encourages visitors to explore Germany's uncharted territories — from serene landscapes and culinary gems to urban marvels and historical sites.

Romit Theophilus, the Director of the Marketing & Sales Office – India at the GNTB, emphasizes the

campaign's aim to project a positive image of Germany among Indian tourists while offering sustainable travel tips. This narrative aligns with the artistic heritage of Germany, notably through the works of Caspar David Friedrich, whose allegorical landscapes offer a contemplative journey into nature's embrace, urging a slower, more mindful approach to travel.

Art aficionados and nature lovers alike are invited to follow in Friedrich's footsteps, exploring destinations like the chalk cliffs on Rügen Island and the Zittau Mountains, which echo his deep connection with the natural world. As Friedrich's 250th birthday approaches, an array of commemorative events is planned in his hometown of Greifswald, promising an enriching cultural experience.

Moreover, Germany offers an array of leisurely road trips that meander through its stunning landscapes, ideal for families and individuals alike. Whether it's traversing treetop trails, delving into silver mines, or exploring the fish-route, Germany presents a treasure trove of experiences, making it a must-visit destination during UEFA Euro 2024 and beyond.





France experiences surge in travel demand ahead of 2024 Summer Olympics – with Americans leading the charge

Sojern, the leading digital marketing platform built for travel, shares its latest travel data* ahead of the 2024 Summer Olympics. Slated to be held in Paris, France from 26 July – 11 August 2024, the summer Olympic games will bring together 10,500 athletes from 206 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) that represent nations from all over the world. The games will be the biggest event ever organized in France.

Between the Super Bowl, Olympics, European Championship, and other major sporting events, ad spending

is projected to reach \$61 billion this year alone. Not only do these events bolster advertising revenues, but they also drive incredible travel demand, with countries seeing massive spikes as attendees flock to cheer on their favorite teams. For example, flight bookings surged 63% compared to the prior year ahead of the F1 Grand Prix in Singapore and travelers booked their trips to Qatar well in advance of normal leisure travel to secure their place at the 2022 FIFA World Cup. These major sporting events also renew interest in host destinations long after the final

match. After Qatar hosted the World Cup, the country saw between a 79–255% increase in international lodging searches, bucking seasonal travel trends.

Flight Bookings to Paris Increase as Olympic Tickets Go On Sale

Paris is already a popular destination—6.3 million travelers visited the Eiffel Tower in 2023, surpassing pre-COVID-19 tourism—and the Olympics will only solidify its place as top-of-mind for travelers. Tickets for the 33rd Olympic Games went on sale on 30 November 2023, and travel demand to France has already increased substantially. For the period of the Olympic Games in 2024, flight bookings, not just searches, to Paris are up 125% compared to the same travel period last year.

Arrival dates vary, indicating that travelers likely are planning trips around specific events and available vacation time. Regardless of arrival date, one thing is certain: The majority of travelers are planning to leave Paris the day the Olympics end, highlighting that many are likely coming from countries where companies don't offer extended leave, such as the United States. Additionally, with an average trip length of 11 days compared to 13.2 in 2023, it's clear that the games are driving travel decisions.

France is Still a Popular Destination for American Travelers

Historically, Paris has been a top summer destination for travelers around the world, and the Olympics will cement France's place at the top of their lists. According to Sojern flight booking data, 23.8% of bookings during the Olympic period to Paris originate from the United States, making it the top origin country internationally followed by Canada, United Kingdom, Japan and Spain. The United States led the medal count in both the 2020 and 2016 Olympics, which may be contributing to demand. Given that summer travel to Paris is consistently strong, travelers need to book their trips early during the Olympic Games.





UN Tourism and WTTC

applaud Saudi Arabia's historic milestone of 100 million tourists

Saudi Arabia's Travel & Tourism sector achieved a 156% increase in international tourist arrivals in 2023 compared to 2019.

In a testament to its strategic vision and robust sector growth, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has welcomed over 100 million tourists, marking a significant milestone in its journey to become a global tourism powerhouse.

In an exceptional achievement, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has

welcomed over 100 million tourists, a milestone celebrated by the **World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism)** and **WTTC**. This remarkable accomplishment achieved seven years ahead of its original schedule, not only underscores Saudi Arabia's emergence as a global tourism powerhouse but also highlights its leading role

in the economic diversification and sustainable development of the tourism sector worldwide. This milestone, marked by the arrival of over 27 million international tourists and over 79 million domestic tourists with a combined total spend of over USD 67 billion, not only showcases the Kingdom's robust tourism sector but also underscores the Saudi Ministry of Tourism's commitment to advanced data gathering and statistical analysis, a priority echoed by UN Tourism.



The Kingdom's success story is built on a foundation of strategic initiatives and reforms that have propelled its tourism sector to new heights. With a staggering 390% increase in demand for tourism activity licenses in 2023 and the contribution of tourism to the non-oil GVA estimated to exceed 7%, Saudi Arabia's vision for the future is clear. With the tourism sector's direct contribution to the GDP estimated to exceed 4%, the country has showcased its resilience, innovation, and commitment to excellence.

Strategic Partnerships and Global Leadership

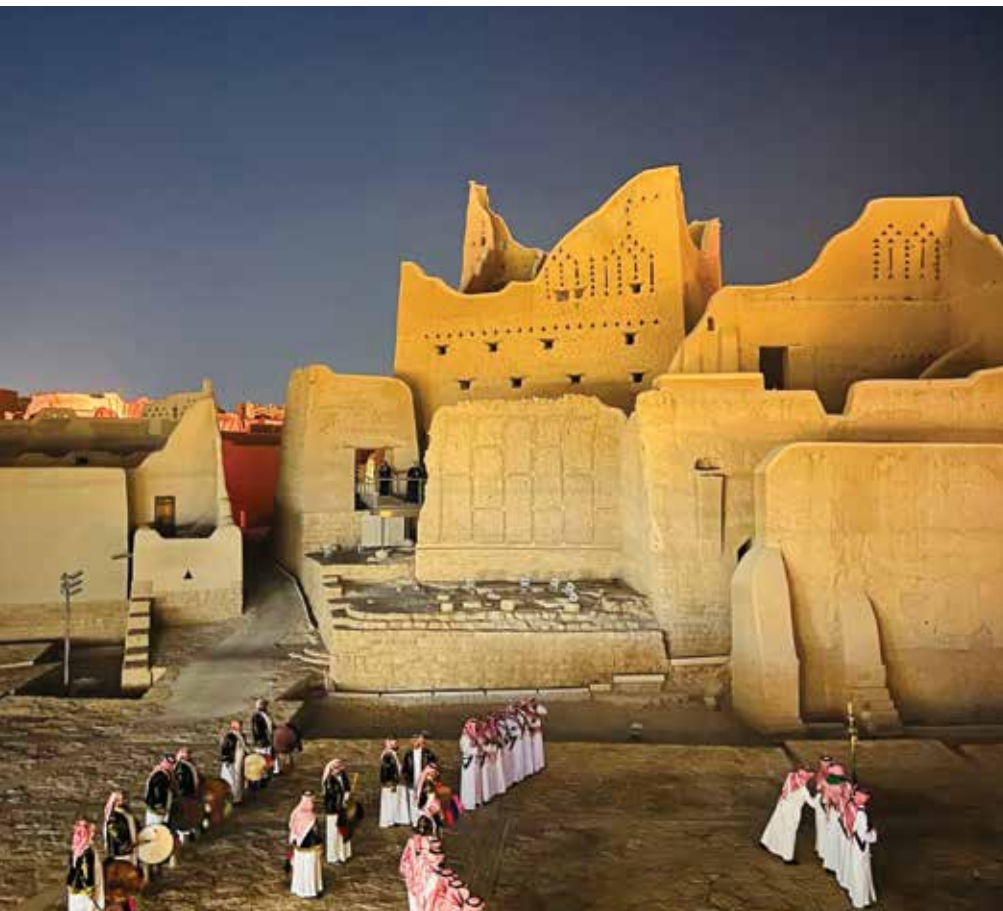
UN Tourism has closely collaborated with Saudi Arabia, recognizing its efforts in developing a robust tourism infrastructure and statistical analysis capabilities. The inauguration of UN Tourism's Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh in 2021 marked a significant step towards fostering tourism innovation, education, and rural development. This partnership has been instrumental in positioning Saudi Arabia as a leader in sustainable tourism practices and statistical excellence.

Elevating its global position in the tourism sector, Saudi Arabia has distinguished itself by leading the G20 in international tourist growth rate in 2023 compared to 2019. This recognition underlines the Kingdom's pivotal role in the global tourism sector's recovery following the pandemic. Moreover, the Middle East has emerged as the sole region not only to rebound but also to outpace pre-pandemic tourism levels, with a 122 percent recovery in international tourist arrivals in 2023 compared to 2019. At the forefront of this remarkable growth, Saudi Arabia witnessed a staggering 156 percent recovery in international tourist arrivals compared to 2019, underscoring its central role in the region's tourism boom.

A Testament to Resilience and Innovation

The Kingdom's tourism sector has shown remarkable resilience, with inbound spending reaching over USD 37 billion in 2023 and a significant increase in hotel keys across the kingdom. These achievements are a testament to Saudi Arabia's





commitment to creating a prosperous and sustainable tourism sector.

Empowering the Workforce

The employment opportunities created by the tourism sector are a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's success. As of 2023, with 925.5 thousand jobs in the tourism sector and significant investments in training, the Kingdom is on track to make tourism the second-largest employer by 2030. This focus on workforce development ensures that the benefits of tourism growth are shared widely and sustainably.

Gratitude and Future Vision

UN Tourism extends its congratulations to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for this historic achievement. We commend the leadership, the Ministry of Tourism, and all partners for their unwavering support and dedication. As Saudi Arabia continues to drive towards its goal of 150 million tourists by 2030,

UN Tourism looks forward to supporting its journey, celebrating its successes, and promoting a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive future for global tourism.

Saudi Arabia's achievement of welcoming over 100 million tourists in 2023 is a beacon of what is possible through collaboration, innovation, and a clear vision for the future. The Kingdom not only promises a diverse and rich tourism experience but delivers on that promise, paving the way for a brighter future for the global tourism industry.

World Travel & Tourism Council congratulates Saudi Arabia

The introduction of tourist visas in 2019 and the strategic formation of the Ministry of Tourism in 2020 have been pivotal in aligning the Travel & Tourism sector with the ambitious goals of Vision 2030. The National Tourism Strategy and subsequent regulations introduced in 2022 to enhance service quality and development have further

propelled the sector forward, setting a strong foundation for sustainable growth and innovation.

Saudi Arabia's Travel & Tourism sector has demonstrated remarkable resilience, achieving a 156% increase in international tourist arrivals in 2023 compared to 2019. This recovery highlights the effectiveness of the Kingdom's strategic initiatives, including the streamlined E-visa program and significant investments in tourism infrastructure, which have collectively enhanced the country's appeal as a premier global tourism destination.

The achievement of attracting over 100 million tourists underscores the success of Saudi Arabia's proactive strategy and reform-driven approach to cultivating a vibrant tourism ecosystem. This milestone not only showcases the sector's appeal but also Saudi Arabia's strategic foresight and adaptability, achieving a significant goal seven years ahead of schedule.

Saudi Arabia's strategic reforms have created a supportive and flexible regulatory environment that encourages investment and innovation. Key among these reforms is the restructuring of tourism license fees, tailored to meet specific needs and operations of investors. The Kingdom has also taken significant steps to alleviate the financial burden on the Travel & Tourism sector by reducing annual government fees by almost 22%, with a commitment to further reductions of up to 70%. These initiatives are integral to Saudi Arabia's broader economic diversification strategy and its aim to position tourism as a leading employment sector by 2030.

As Saudi Arabia continues its path of expansion and strategic reforms within the Travel & Tourism sector, WTTC recognizes the Kingdom's significant achievements and is committed to supporting its ongoing ambitions. The global tourism body looks forward to Saudi Arabia's continued growth and success in establishing itself as a global tourism powerhouse, contributing to the sector's global recovery and prosperity.

Marriott Bonvoy brings once-in-a-lifetime experiences at Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour select performances across the world

From an unforgettable trip to see three shows in three countries, to concert packages for shows in select cities across Europe and North America, Marriott Bonvoy unlocks access to Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour.

**TAYLOR SWIFT
THE ERAS TOUR**

**MARRIOTT
BONVOY**
A TOURING SPONSOR
IN SELECT CITIES



Marriott Bonvoy is taking fans to Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour when it lights up select cities across Europe and North America in 2024. Inspired by the singular experience Taylor Swift created and the countless fans who have traveled the world to see her, Marriott Bonvoy will make it possible for fans to witness Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour in select cities through member sweepstakes and Marriott Bonvoy Moments.

"Fueled by a deep desire to experience her shows live, Taylor Swift fans have traveled near and far to be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime experience, and now, Marriott Bonvoy is helping fans make their passion a reality," says **Peggy Roe**, Executive Vice President

and Chief Customer Officer, **Marriott International**. *"People today are craving community and connection through shared experiences. We designed Marriott Bonvoy to give members access to people, places and passions they love, and we couldn't be more thrilled to be extending this unforgettable experience to new and existing members around the world."*

Starting today, eligible fans can enter the Marriott Bonvoy Sweepstakes for the opportunity to win one of the following prizes:

- 3 Concerts, 3 Countries, An Unforgettable Experience
- You and a guest can win a once-in-a-lifetime trip to see Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour at three (3) different

tour stops at select shows in Europe, USA, and Canada. Each 4-day/3-night trip for two (2) includes air travel, hotel accommodations, two (2) concert tickets, and a Marriott Bonvoy Welcome Gift.

- Vancouver Ultimate Concert Experience

- Head to Vancouver, Canada, for Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour. This 4-day/3-night trip for two (2) includes air travel, hotel accommodations, two (2) concert tickets, and a Marriott Bonvoy Welcome Gift.

- "Where Can We Take You?"

Concert Packages

- Win two (2) tickets to see Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour in select cities and a Marriott Bonvoy Welcome Gift. Packages are available for multiple performances at tour stops including Stockholm, Madrid, Zurich, Milan, Hamburg, Vienna, Miami, New Orleans, Indianapolis, Toronto, and Vancouver.

Fans can also take advantage of Marriott Bonvoy Moments packages featuring two concert tickets, a two-night hotel stay at a Marriott Bonvoy portfolio property, dinner at one of Marriott Bonvoy's premier restaurants, a spa treatment, transportation to and from the venue, and more. Moments packages for Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour will go live starting March 13 at noon UTC at moments.marriottbonvoy.com. Marriott Bonvoy Moments offers members access to extraordinary experiences all over the globe by using their points earned from travel and everyday activities to redeem exclusive access to in-demand concerts, the world's best restaurants, and premier sporting events across the globe from motorsports to professional football.

With over 8,800 hotels and 30 brands, and access to over 10,000 destinations worldwide, Marriott Bonvoy hotels are a great home away from home for fans traveling to Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour. As the Tour descends on select cities where Marriott Bonvoy is a Touring Sponsor, certain hotels will celebrate the Tour with pop-ups on property happenings, including friendship bracelet-making stations, to prepare for the big night.



Palace on Wheels will now offer destination weddings: From The Skies To The Rails

A destination wedding like no other awaits – embark on a regal journey of love & tradition aboard Rajasthan's iconic Palace on Wheels train.



Recently, a Boeing 747 doubled up as the venue for a big fat Indian wedding, with the seats and aisle decked in the hues of love. Following suit, Rajasthan's ultra-luxury train, Palace on Wheels, has announced its availability for weddings and events like corporate meetings and wedding shoots. Famed as one of the most

opulent and sought-after trains globally, this initiative will boost Rajasthan's tourism nationally and internationally, showcasing the state's Vedic wedding traditions, art, and culture at the forefront.

The Rajasthan Tourism Department is developing new ways to promote destination weddings. To make the state an ideal destination wedding venue, the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) has also taken steps as a result, soon the Palace on Wheels, which is counted among the most beautiful and luxurious trains in the world, will now offer destination weddings. Not only this, couples tying the knot will also be able to get pre and post-wedding shoots done at the Palace on Wheels.

On this occasion, **Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister, Tourism Diya Kumari**, said that making Palace on Wheels available for destination weddings is a big decision as it will not only give a huge boost to destination weddings in Rajasthan but will also increase the attraction of foreign tourists towards Rajasthani art and culture and Vedic marital customs.

She also said that Palace on Wheels is one of the most beautiful and luxurious trains in the world. Couples having a destination wedding at Palace on Wheels will not only be able to make the most important moments of their lives memorable but will also be able to play the role of tourist ambassadors for Rajasthan and India.

Moving towards developing basic facilities

It is noteworthy that work is being done by the Tourism Department to develop basic facilities for tourists at the tourist places of the state as per global standards. Due to this, more and more foreign tourists will flock to the state and domestic tourists will also be eager to come here. Rajasthan has 75 per cent of the country's heritage properties. This is the reason why Rajasthan is becoming the first choice in the wedding destination area across the country.

Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur and many other districts of the state also have forts and mansions etc. which are gradually attracting domestic and foreign tourists for destination weddings. Although there are innumerable heritage forts, havelis etc. in the state, destination weddings are being organized at 120 forts, forts, havelis etc. From this number, one can determine Rajasthan's suitability for destination weddings.

Destination weddings are tempting celebrities

These days, the Rajasthan Tourism Department is emphasizing developing heritage places located in other districts of the state as wedding destinations in addition to the famous and renowned destination wedding places. Be it film stars or industrialists in the country, not only, Hollywood stars are also turning to Rajasthan to convert their marriage into a wedding celebration.

Destination wedding-fairytale feel

When the forts and mansions of Rajasthan are decorated for a destination wedding, it doubles the joy of the wedding and makes the bride and groom feel like the stories and fairy tales of kings and queens. This royal experience provides emotional strength to their marital union and becomes memorable.

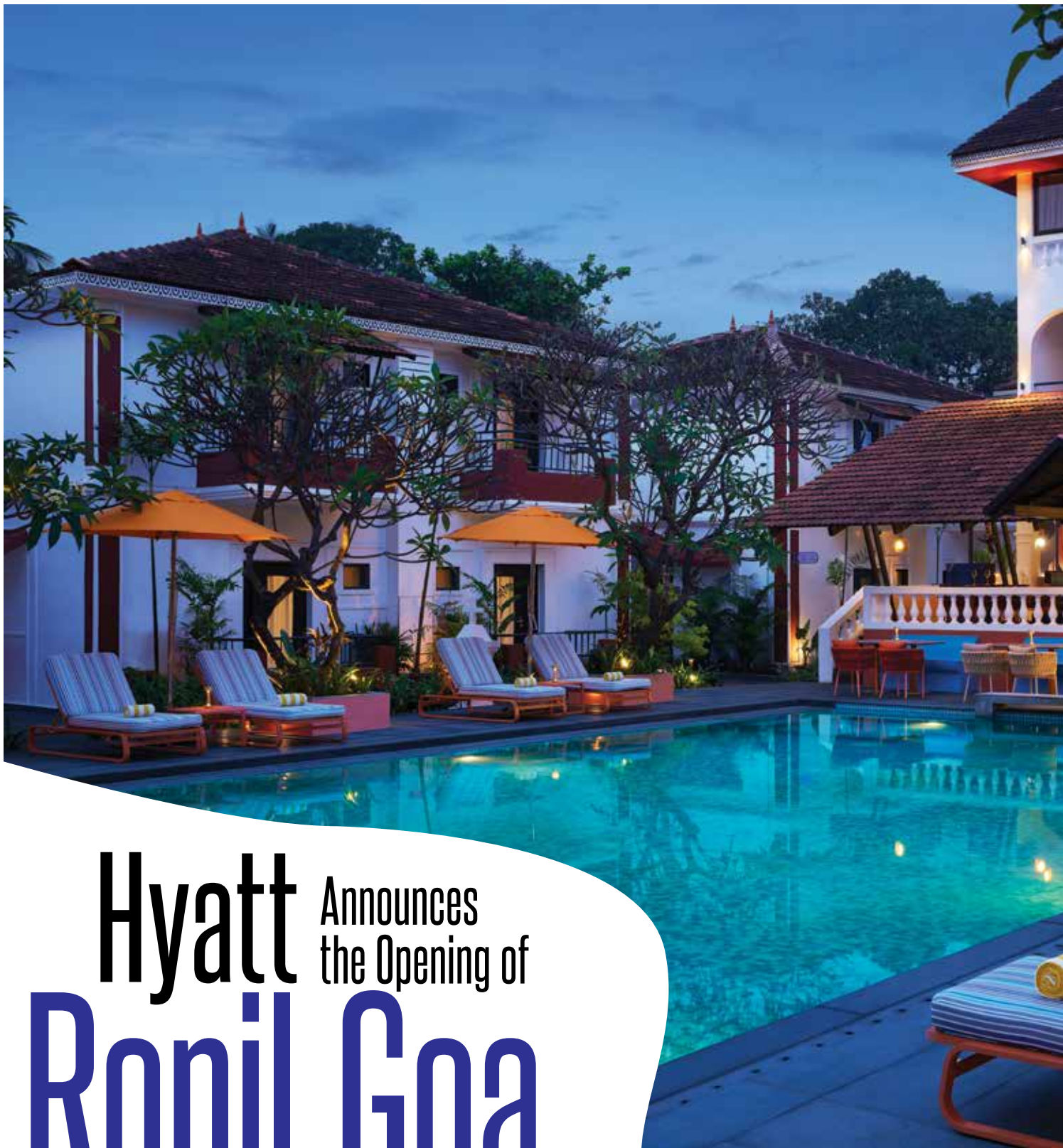
Some of the important awards received by the state for destination weddings:

Year 2019- Best Wedding Destination Award by Travel & Leisure

Year 2020- Rajasthan Best India Wedding Destination Award by Outlook Traveller. Best Wedding and Honeymoon Destination Award to Rajasthan by Travel and Leisure (India and South Asia).

Year 2021- Best Wedding Destination Award by Travel & Leisure.

Year 2023- Outlook Traveler Awards Ceremony-Best Destination Wedding Award



Hyatt Announces the Opening of Ronil Goa in Southwest Asia

*Ronil Goa marks the
foray of the JdV by
Hyatt brand in India*



Hyatt Hotels Corporation has announced the opening of Ronil Goa, part of the JdV by Hyatt brand, in the holiday state of Goa, India.

This marks the entry of the JdV by the Hyatt brand in Southwest Asia.

Located on the iconic Calangute Baga Road in north Goa, Ronil Goa

has a legacy of more than 35 years. In its new position as a JdV by Hyatt Hotel, this boutique resort will be the first five-star hotel on this bustling stretch and is well connected to key tourist attractions as well as upscale shopping and entertainment areas. The hotel is easily accessible from Dabolim International Airport Goa and Manohar International Airport Goa.

True to the JdV by Hyatt brand promise, the resort, with its Indo-Portuguese-inspired architecture, will bring to life classic Goan hospitality through immersive experiences. These will include a vibrant entertainment program, opportunities for rejuvenation at the Soul Station and the spa, an onsite DJ Host, and distinctive food & beverage offerings, all creating a holistic joyful vibe across the property.

"Complementing our current portfolio of Hyatt brands in the country, the introduction of the JdV by Hyatt brand in India signifies a strategic milestone in Hyatt's thoughtful expansion within the leisure market. We are excited for guests traveling to Goa to embrace this bold experience. Ronil Goa aligns seamlessly with the brand, which encourages living in the moment and celebrating the joy of life, making it a perfect addition to the portfolio. We look forward to further enhancing our distinctive brand footprint throughout the sub-continent," said **Sunjae Sharma, Managing Director, India and Southwest Asia, Hyatt.**

"We are very excited to witness Ronil in this new iteration as the first JdV by Hyatt hotel in India and Southwest Asia. We are looking forward to celebrating many milestones together with Hyatt as we embark on this new journey together." – **Gaurav Khaunte, Managing Director, Ronil Hotels and Resorts and Owner of Ronil Goa.**

The boutique resort will be an ideal destination for the 'young at heart' and for those who are open to embracing new and unique experiences.

The resort offers 135 chic rooms with private balconies, two swimming pools that are the heart of the resort, and a host of memorable experiences. Inspired by the texture of shells,



fluted wall panels are consistent across the resort, especially the guest rooms. Spacious open wardrobes, complimentary mini-bar, signature Cedar Sandalwood bath amenities, comfortable beds and locally loved tea and coffee brands in collaboration with Tea Trunk and Hermit coffee, ensure our guests feel at home.

True to the JdV by Hyatt brand promise – “To celebrate the joy of life” – the dining options celebrate international classics as well as spirit-free and spirited beverages,

complemented by intuitive service delivered by a welcoming team. Guests will dine amidst a cosmopolitan vibe fueled by energizing neighborhood connections and the spirit of socializing.

Dining offerings include Ronil Bistro, serving a farmhouse breakfast, and classic

comfort foods for lunch and dinner; Patrão's, the living room of the resort with 24/7 bar serving small plates and Goa-inspired spirits and cocktails; and The Hub, featuring a stunning swim-up pool bar, cabanas, sunken beds, jacuzzi, a wood-fired oven, and poolside BBQ – the ideal place to start and end a relaxing day.

For gatherings, the resort's event spaces are spread across 5,446 square feet (506 square meters) and include Ronil Studio which includes a pre-function space, The Loft, and the

Garden. The residential-style venues are ideal for DJ events, intimate celebrations, ideation sessions, brand showcases, and after-parties.

The onsite experiences are designed to elevate a leisure state of mind and create an environment for guests to live in the now. They'll find true relaxation at the 'Energy' and 'Tranquil' pools which offer a vibe that matches the names; an on-site DJ host and upbeat entertainment program, distinctive music offerings, a BBQ and pizzeria, a bonfire, jacuzzi and swim-up bar, as well as poolside dining and picnics. The hotel's dedicated Experience Team is made up of local insiders with expertise on all things in and around the resort. Guests will also find Soul Station, a comfortable place to immerse themselves in a music zone of their liking with comfortable seating and noise-cancelling headphones. The space also houses a Hyatt Loves Local shop retailing resort wear, souvenirs, and more – all from locally loved brands. The hotel's Stay Fit Gym is open 24/7 and an onsite spa experience will be available in upcoming months.

Goa Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte launches India's first regenerative tourism model



Tourism Goa aims to make a positive difference in the environment, culture, and communities, which support regenerative tourism. The goal of introducing a regenerative tourism model is to encourage the travel and tourism sector to adopt sustainable practices that benefit both the environment and the people.

To mark the 62nd anniversary of the Liberation of Goa, the state's tourism department unveiled a groundbreaking model for regenerative tourism. This innovative approach seeks to revolutionize the Indian tourism industry by advocating environmental restoration, cultural preservation, and community empowerment through four key pillars: spirituality, indigeneity, civilizational and cultural nationalism,

and conscious tourism.

In alignment with the principles outlined in the Manila Declaration of World Tourism in 1980 and the recent G20 tourism ministers' working group meeting in Goa, which formulated the Goa roadmap for tourism as a catalyst for achieving sustainable development goals, the Department of Tourism in Goa is committed to metamorphosing the state into regenerative tourism in India.

Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte said, "Through travel and pilgrimage, the Indian people have expanded their geographical knowledge throughout millennia, freeing themselves from the constraints of regionalism and parochialism. We are committed to making a positive difference in the environment, culture, and communities

we interact with, and this is reflected in our support of regenerative tourism in Goa. Our goal in introducing this model is to encourage the travel and tourism sector to adopt sustainable practices that benefit both the environment and human population."

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation defines Regenerative Tourism as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities". *The Ekadasha Teertha are spiritual sites to be decided by the Department of Tourism in consultation with the communities around these sites.*

"The key is to develop mutual respect and appreciation between visitors and the hosts. We are all involved in this project, and it is important to have a sense of ownership and invest in each other and the planet. Our focus is to build communities. We are in advanced talks with entrepreneurs and innovators in the tourism sector to help local women and youth get first-hand experience on becoming commercial partners in the Ekadasha Teertha endeavour," said **Suneel Anchipaka, IAS Director, Tourism & Managing Director, GTDC.**

In the decades following liberation, Goa strategically embraced tourism, leveraging its historical global connections and scenic beaches for economic growth. This led to the acquisition of distinctive attributes, positioning Goa as a gateway to and from India to the globe.

"Facing unique challenges, including competition from countries like Thailand and Indonesia, modern cities like Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, and large Indian states, Goa has set its sights on innovative solutions post-COVID. Emphasizing technology adoption and collaboration, the focus is on making people and communities decision-makers in the tourism sector," **Khaunte said**, adding that Goa is transitioning from a sea-shore-centric tourism model to a more inclusive, people-centric approach.



Turkey's Turquoise Coast

Unmissable Things to Do in Fethiye

Ancient ruins, azure waters, and vibrant marketplaces... Fethiye is much more than your average beach resort, remaining at the top of Turkey's best traveler pilgrimages to this day.





Situated on Turkey's picturesque southwestern coast, Fethiye holds a significant place in both historical and contemporary contexts. Originally known as Telmessos, the city boasts a rich history dating back to ancient times, with evidence of settlement dating as far back as the 5th century BCE. As a **prominent Lycian city**, Fethiye played a vital role in the region's cultural and economic landscape. Over the centuries, Fethiye has been influenced by various civilizations, including the Persians, Greeks, and Romans, each leaving their mark on its architecture and culture.

Today, Fethiye serves as a bustling center for tourism, renowned for its stunning natural beauty. Among its most popular spots are the famed Blue

Lagoon and nearby Ölüdeniz Beach, home to some of the best things to do in Fethiye. While you are there, you will get a chance to indulge in outdoor adventures and immerse yourself in the more laid-back side of Turkish culture.

What is Fethiye Turkey famous for?

Fethiye is famous for its ancient **Lycian rock tombs**, carved into the cliffsides overlooking the city. These impressive burial sites date back thousands of years. One of Turkey's most iconic beaches, **Ölüdeniz Beach** is famous for its stunning turquoise waters and picturesque surroundings. Fethiye is also a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts, offering a wide range of activities such as paragliding, hiking, sea kayaking, and scuba diving.

In addition to the Lycian rock tombs, Fethiye is home to other ancient ruins and historical sites, including the ancient city of Telmessos, the Fethiye Museum, and the ruins of Kayaköy, a ghost town abandoned during the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s.

Why is it called Fethiye? Fethiye is named after Fethi Bey, an Ottoman air officer who died in a plane crash during a military mission in the Balkans in 1914. The city was renamed in his honour in 1934, previously known as Makri. Fethi Bey is remembered as a hero in Turkish history, and the renaming of the city was a tribute to his bravery and service to the country.

1. Beautiful surroundings

One of the main draws to Fethiye is the sheer beauty of this area. A port city on the Turquoise Coast, you can enjoy soaking up the sunshine on the *beach* and a refreshing swim in the sea. You can also take a hike up and along the cliffs, which boast incredible views across Fethiye and the surrounding area. If you are someone who loves to escape into nature, this could be an ideal location for you.

2. Thriving community

While this area can offer a beautiful nature retreat, you will also have access to a thriving community and





plenty of fun cultural activities here. There are various historical sites to see of ancient ruins, as well as a lot of great restaurants to enjoy. Being located on the coast, there are also opportunities for sailing and water sports if this interests you, as well as a great nightlife scene for when you are looking for something livelier to stay entertained. The people in this area are also very friendly, so making new friends with other ex-pats and people local to the area shouldn't be too much of a challenge.

3. Great property

Another key reason to look at moving to Fethiye is that there are a lot of great property investment opportunities there. Whether you are interested in purchasing a beautiful villa or a stunning apartment, you should be able to find what you are looking for at a great price. This can be ideal for those looking to relocate

to Turkey, or perhaps want to invest in property to lease as holiday rentals. Look at these villas for sale in Fethiye to get an idea of what you can get.

4. Affordable living

As mentioned previously, Turkey can offer a lot of expats more affordable living than in some other countries, and this is another good reason to consider a move to this area. Not only can you get great houses for good prices, but the overall *living costs* in Fethiye will allow you to get the most out of your life there and can have reduced financial pressures compared to some other areas.

15 Best Things to Do in Fethiye Turkey – from sailing to City tours

1. Explore the Lycian Rock Tombs

These ancient tombs, carved into the cliffsides overlooking Fethiye, offer



not only a glimpse into the region's rich history but also a fascinating architectural marvel. Dating back to the Lycian period, these rock-cut tombs serve as a testament to the craftsmanship and burial practices of the ancient civilizations that once thrived in this area. What is more is that you can reach these must-see marvels in nearly 20 minutes on foot from the Old Town! They are hard to miss once you get close enough, rising over the lovely little town as

testaments of Fethiye's historical heritage.

2. Relax at Ölüdeniz Beach

With its stunning turquoise waters and pristine sandy shores, Ölüdeniz Beach is the epitome of paradise. Nestled within a sheltered lagoon and surrounded by lush green hills, this beach offers visitors the perfect spot to unwind, sunbathe, and take refreshing dips in the crystal-clear waters. Visit in the summer months, which are easily

the high season in Fethiye, and you will witness one of the trendiest beach resorts in all of Turkey. The coastline of Ölüdeniz is lined with hip restaurants and beach clubs where nightlife is most happening.

3. Visit the Blue Lagoon

Adjacent to Ölüdeniz Beach, the Blue Lagoon is a protected nature reserve known for its mesmerizing shades of blue and tranquil ambiance. Whether you choose to lounge on the soft white



sands, snorkel amidst colorful marine life, or simply admire the breathtaking scenery, a visit to the Blue Lagoon is a must for any traveler to Fethiye.

4. Take a Boat Tour

Explore the scenic coastline of Fethiye and its surrounding islands and coves on a leisurely boat tour. From full-day excursions to sunset cruises, these boat trips offer the opportunity to discover hidden gems, swim in secluded bays, and marvel at the stunning coastal landscapes from the comfort of a traditional Turkish gulet. If you are worried about busy boats, good news! You can choose from a variety of boat sizes—some tours only take small groups so your boat won't be overcrowded. And, almost all tours make a pit stop at the most beautiful coves across the coast of Fethiye.

5. Paraglide over Ölüdeniz

Experience the thrill of paragliding from the dizzying heights above

Ölüdeniz Beach. With experienced instructors and panoramic views of the coastline, this adrenaline-pumping activity provides an unforgettable adventure and a unique perspective of Fethiye's natural beauty. How to find the best paragliding experience in Ölüdeniz? Just search "paragliding in Ölüdeniz" and you will get to choose from a variety of companies offering the service.

6. Hike the Lycian Way

Follow in the footsteps of ancient traders and adventurers on the Lycian Way, Turkey's first long-distance hiking trail. Stretching over 500 kilometers along the rugged coastline of Lycia, this trail offers hikers the chance to explore remote villages, ancient ruins, and breathtaking landscapes while immersing themselves in the region's rich history and culture.

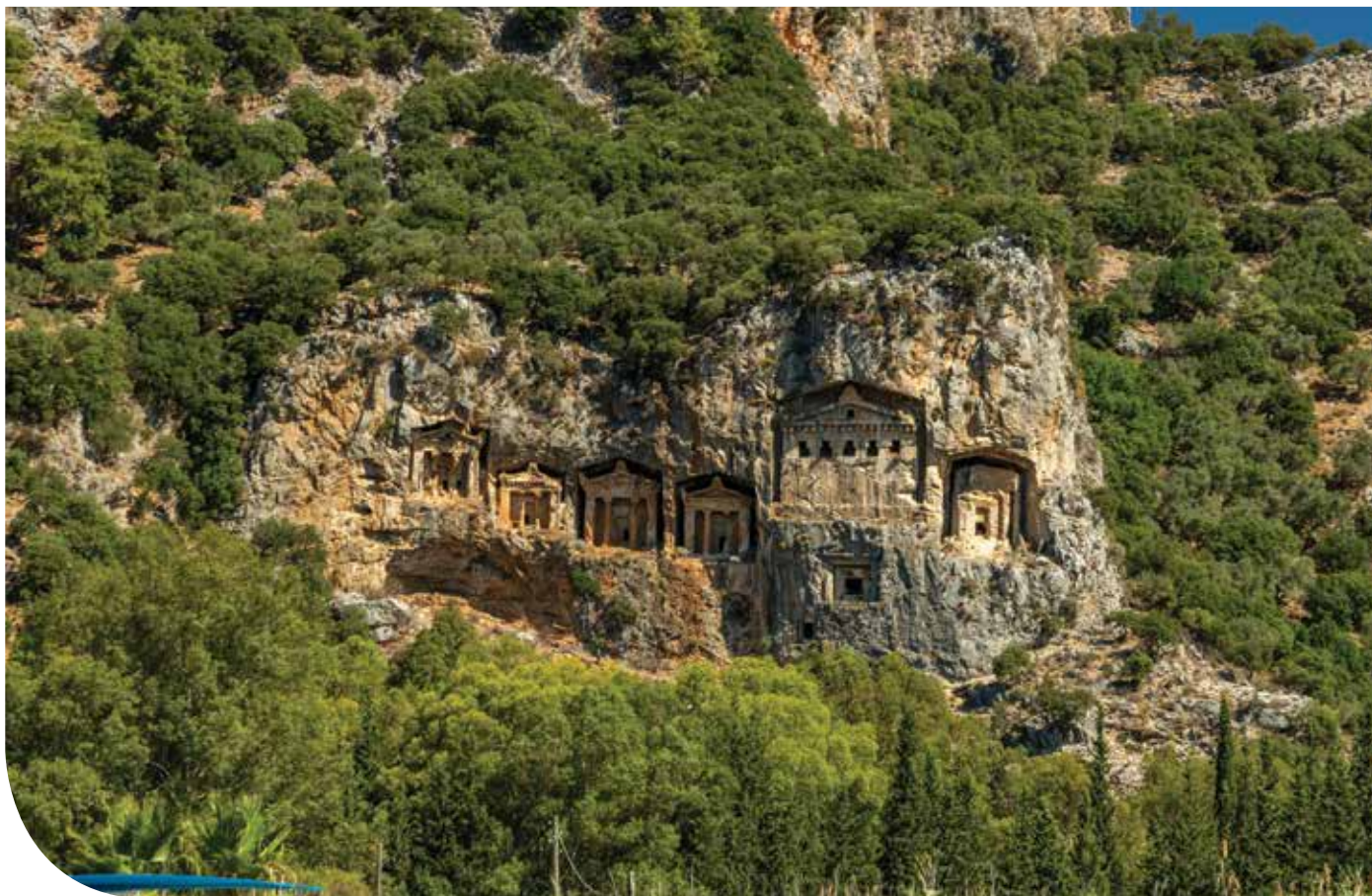
7. Visit Saklıkent Gorge

Escape the summer heat and

venture into the cool depths of Saklıkent Gorge, one of the deepest canyons in Turkey. Carved by the rushing waters of the Xanthos River, this natural wonder offers the chance to hike along wooden walkways, wade through icy streams, and marvel at the towering cliffs that surround them. So, if you are willing to take on a little adventure, this is your chance you get to know the truest spirit of the region and some of the best things to do in Fethiye that are off the beaten path.

8. Experience Turkish Night

Step back in time as you explore the eerie ruins of Kayaköy, a deserted village nestled in the hills above Fethiye. Once home to a vibrant community of Greeks and Turks, Kayaköy was abandoned during the population exchange of the 1920s and now stands as a haunting reminder of the region's tumultuous past. During the summer, visit in the early morning to avoid the scorching sun if you





wish to walk every alleyway of this labyrinthine village.

9. Shop at Paspatur Bazaar

Lose yourself in the bustling lanes of Paspatur Bazaar, Fethiye's charming old town market. From colorful textiles and handcrafted souvenirs to aromatic spices and traditional Turkish delights, this vibrant market offers a sensory feast for visitors looking to experience the sights, sounds, and flavors of Turkey.

10. Relax in a Turkish Bath

Indulge in a luxurious spa experience at one of Fethiye's traditional Turkish baths, known as hammams. Treat yourself to a steam bath, invigorating scrub, and relaxing massage as you unwind and rejuvenate both body and mind in the soothing ambiance of these historic bathing rituals. You can find the best of these hammams in and around the city center and the old town.

11. Explore Fethiye Museum

Dive deeper into the region's rich history and cultural heritage at Fethiye Museum, home to an impressive collection of artifacts spanning various periods of antiquity. From intricately carved sarcophagi and statues to delicate pottery and jewelry, the museum offers valuable insights into the art, religion, and daily life of ancient

civilizations that once flourished in the area.

12. Sample Turkish Cuisine

A Turkish gastronomy tour is arguably one of the best things to do in Fethiye due to the exceptional practices of Mediterranean cuisine. Savor the flavors of Turkey at one of Fethiye's many restaurants and eateries, where you can indulge in a mouthwatering array of traditional dishes and culinary delights. From savory kebabs and mezes to fresh seafood and sweet baklava, Turkish cuisine offers a diverse and delicious gastronomic experience that's not to be missed.

13. Attend a Turkish Night

Immerse yourself in the vibrant culture of Turkey at a traditional Turkish night show, where you can enjoy live music, energetic folk dances, and sumptuous feasts fit for a sultan. With colorful costumes, lively performances, and warm hospitality, Turkish nights offer a memorable and entertaining glimpse into the country's rich cultural heritage. Check the schedule of some of the more traditional venues in Fethiye to see if your visit coincides with one of these epic nights.

14. Go Scuba Diving

Dive into the underwater world of Fethiye and discover a mesmerizing

realm teeming with marine life, colorful coral reefs, and ancient shipwrecks. Whether you're a seasoned diver or a novice looking to take the plunge, Fethiye offers a variety of dive sites and dive centers catering to all levels of experience. Even if you don't try one of the more professional diving experiences, get a snorkel and underwater goggles from one of the local shops and enjoy the marine life of the most beautiful coves in Fethiye at your own pace.

15. Visit Butterfly Valley

Escape the hustle and bustle of city life and retreat to the natural sanctuary of Butterfly Valley, a hidden gem nestled between towering cliffs along the Mediterranean coast. Accessible only by boat or via a challenging hike, this secluded paradise offers visitors the chance to relax on pristine beaches, swim in crystal-clear waters, and admire the vibrant flora and fauna that thrive in this idyllic setting. Keep an eye out for the valley's namesake butterflies, which flutter among the wildflowers in the spring and summer months, adding to the valley's enchanting charm.

Best Views in Fethiye

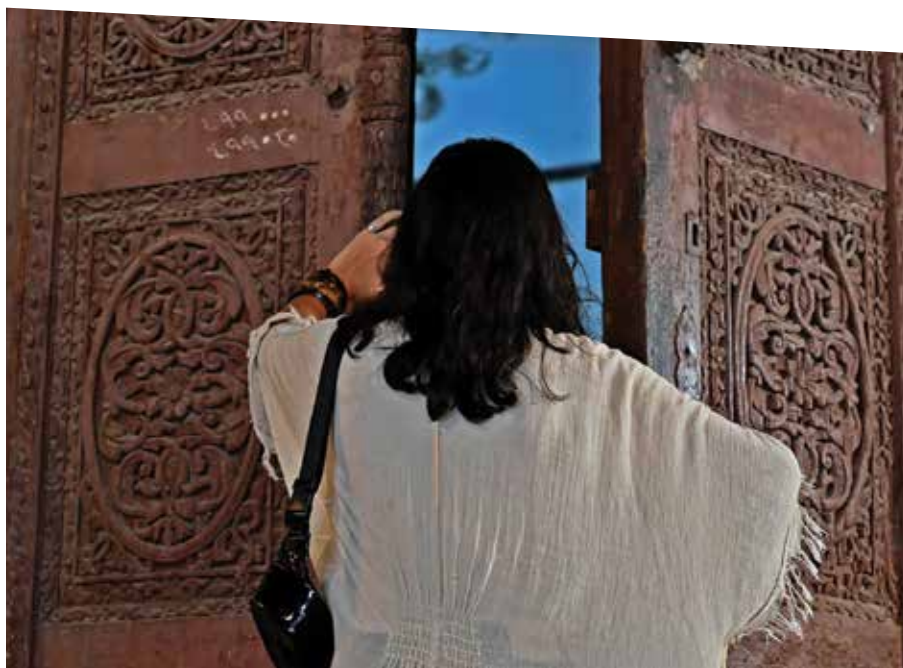
Babadağ Mountain: Head to the summit of Babadağ Mountain for one of the most spectacular views in Fethiye. Whether you hike to the top or take a paragliding flight, you'll be rewarded with sweeping vistas of Ölüdeniz Beach, the Blue Lagoon, and the surrounding mountains and valleys.

Afkule: Visit Afkule, an ancient watchtower located near Kayaköy, for panoramic views of the surrounding countryside and coastline. From this elevated vantage point, you can admire the rugged terrain, lush valleys, and sparkling sea stretching out before you.

Fethiye Marina: Wander along the waterfront at Fethiye Marina and marvel at the views of the boats bobbing in the harbor and the majestic mountains rising in the distance. This bustling area is perfect for enjoying a waterfront meal or simply taking in the sights and sounds of the sea.



Souqs of Jeddah



The traditional folk markets add a unique cultural value to Jeddah.

The cultural openness of Jeddah manifests in these markets' old alleys and modern buildings that gather people from all around the world. It is your must-visit place for traditional local goods along with various consumer goods where most come from the sea. It is the ideal destination to get hard-to-miss souvenirs and handmade goods.

Souqs of Historic Jeddah

When you visit Historic Jeddah, you will stumble upon its distinctive markets. A vibrant pulsing area in the heart of the city, where traditional





antique goods meet goods from the latest trends in a captivating scene. Over decades, these markets have established their cultural identity as a symbol for this area, such as Souq Al Badu , Souq Qabil, Souq Alawi, Souq Nada, Souq Al-Khaskeya, Souq Bab Al Makkah, and Souq Bab Shareef.

Souq Alshat'a

As you enjoy your stay in Jeddah, pay a visit to one of its essential local markets, Souq Alshat'a, where you will find everything you're looking for. It is ideally located in Alzahra's neighborhood with an easy commute, and well known for outdoor markets and restaurants and many seating places. Though, what makes it iconic is

its many diverse shops specializing in Abaya design and retail. However, it is not limited to Abayas as it offers many store options that will satisfy every taste, like home supplies and family stores, as well as gift, makeup, and perfume shops.

Souq Al-Murjan

One of Jeddah's famous local markets located in Al-Safa neighborhood, Souq Al-Murjan, previously known as "Syrian Market" due to Syrian the goods sold in abundance there from ancient Syrian merchants, offers local and imported goods at low to medium prices that suit your need. This market specializes in clothing, Abayas, tableware, Bekhoor

(incense), Oud and perfumes as well as a fun safe playground inside the market.

Souq Al Bawadi

If you wish to buy wholesale or local items, head to Souq Al Bawadi in the AlBawadi neighbourhood. Many of its visitors seek it for handcrafted products and traditional clothes and goods. Here, you will also find many leading local exquisite gold and jewellery stores with trendy designs, aside from different home supplies and family stores.

Souq Almena (Souq AlSawarek)

Don't miss out on a visit to the largest, extending over a spacious area exceeding 9 km2 southwest of Jeddah,





and most famous among Jeddah's and the western region residents, Souq Almena (the Port Market), locally called Souq AlSawarek (the Rockets market). It is the ultimate place for merchants and investors to purchase and sell retail or wholesale products, and the go-to destination for bargain prices lovers as you'll find consumer goods at unbelievably low prices along with second-hand products.

This vast area market consists of many sections, together making about 26 adjacent commercial complexes separated by streets and paths for cars and pedestrians. Each of those

complexes contains various stores, where you will find everything that comes to mind and even more; from carpets, furniture and decorations, building supplies, electronics, culinary and tableware, to wholesale stores, libraries, and all home and family supplies.

Gold markets

Stemming from the close link gold has to the Saudi local culture, especially during special seasons and occasions, gold markets gained their special place in the hearts of Jeddah's residents. If you wish to buy gold,

jewellery, or silver pieces, or if you seek to browse the latest fashionable gold and diamond designs, then Oasis Mall, located in the Alworood neighbourhood, is the place for you. It is a multi-story commercial complex of local gold stores, which were previously scattered all over Jeddah's neighbourhoods. Although these stores are now located in a modern mall, they still retain their local traditional feel. The complex includes many high-quality gold and jewellery stores of the latest international designs, and the most famous local names in the gold and jewellery trade.

Accor Showcase 2024 successfully concludes in Delhi and Mumbai

The curtains have closed on Accor Showcase 2024, a ground-breaking business-to-business (B2B) event that unfolded with tremendous success in Delhi at Pullman, Aerocity on February 21, 2024, and in Mumbai at Novotel Mumbai International Airport on February 23, 2024. This dynamic showcase not only met but exceeded expectations, leaving an indelible mark

on the landscape of hospitality collaboration and innovation.

Accor Showcase 2024 created an immersive experience, fostering dynamic discussions on meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) that resulted in positive conversions. Over 50 Accor properties worldwide were represented, drawing active participation from corporates, travel partners, wedding planners,

travel agents, and airline partners.

The culmination of Accor Showcase 2024 saw participation from a diverse array of countries, including the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, India, Turkey, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, and many more underscoring its international significance and impact. Attendees from these nations enriched the discussions with their unique perspectives, contributing to the event's success as a global platform for collaboration and innovation in the hospitality sector.

Furthermore, the spotlight was on the ALL-Accor Live Limitless loyalty program which captivated attendees, reaffirming Accor's commitment to

delivering exceptional guest experiences and setting new standards for loyalty in the industry. Attendees were privy to the latest updates on the ALL-Accor Live Limitless loyalty program and its offerings, signalling Accor's unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences. It also focused on the luxury, premium, mid-scale, and economy segments with captivating conversations.

Pratima Badhwar, Head of Commercial Accor India & South Asia said, "Accor Showcase 2024 has been a testament to our commitment to innovation and pushing the boundaries of hospitality. The positive responses received in both cities affirm that we are not just setting trends; we are defining the future of hospitality."

Accor Showcase remains the highly respected and anticipated hotel exhibition in the travel and tourism industry. The event concluded with an engaging evening featuring the finest food and beverage offerings, leaving participants inspired and eager to embrace the evolving landscape of hospitality.

Accor is a world-leading hospitality group offering experiences across more than 110 countries in 5500 properties, 10,000 food & beverage venues, wellness facilities and flexible workspaces. The Group has one of the industry's most diverse hospitality ecosystems, encompassing more than 40 hotel brands from luxury to economy, as well as Lifestyle with Ennismore.





Top 7 Wonderful Reasons to Host an Event in Phuket

Phuket offers a perfect blend of business and leisure, boasting easily accessible locations, stunning beaches, a wide range of hotels, exceptional event venues, a vibrant food scene, local expertise, and a commitment to sustainability, making it an ideal destination for events.

Phuket is known for its powdery white sandy beaches, offshore islands, delicious Thai food, and great hotels and it's a combination of these things that generates strong attendance for events held on the island. If you want to make sure everyone shows up to your next event, then stage your event in Phuket... Where business meets beach. Here are 7 reasons why Phuket is the perfect destination for events:

1. Easily Accessible – Location, location, location. You can't meet there if you can't get there, and Phuket ticks all the boxes with robust direct international airlift, and regional connectivity and is an attractive add-on for Bangkok events. "Phuket's strategic geographic location and the rise of Thailand as one of the world's major tourism destinations have helped drive the event sector. Within proximity





to Asia's leading financial markets, Hong Kong and Singapore, Phuket is a winner with regional corporate meeting planners, as well as long haul attendees coming from Europe, North America, Australia and the Middle East."

2. Great beaches – Business event programmes in Phuket should aim to include downtime exploring some of the best beaches and offshore activities to the nearby islands. Phuket has some of the best beaches in Asia if not the world. Phuket is very unique in that there are in excess of 20 high-quality beaches to visit in a relatively compact area and there are stunning offshore islands to visit during a day cruise."

3. Choice of hotels – You're spoilt for choice with a wide choice of hotels from international branded

to local heritage, from beachfront to cultural charming Phuket Town, from large size to medium size, from luxury to midscale, and all within easy reach from airport, marinas and major attractions. Whatever a meeting planner might be looking for, Phuket Hotels will for sure meet & exceed the expectations.

4. Event venues are plentiful

– Although mainly famous for its beaches and nearby islands, Phuket is much more than sea and sun. **Sumate Sudasna**, President of Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (TICA) says "Privileged with impressive hotel spaces, renowned restaurants, landmarks, and luxury private venues, Phuket is a destination blessed with exceptional event spaces. The island has a truly wide array of venue options for every style, preference, and budget. Backed up by creative themes, high-tech audio-visual production, and experienced staff, in Phuket, you're sure to find a venue that ticks all the boxes for your next event."

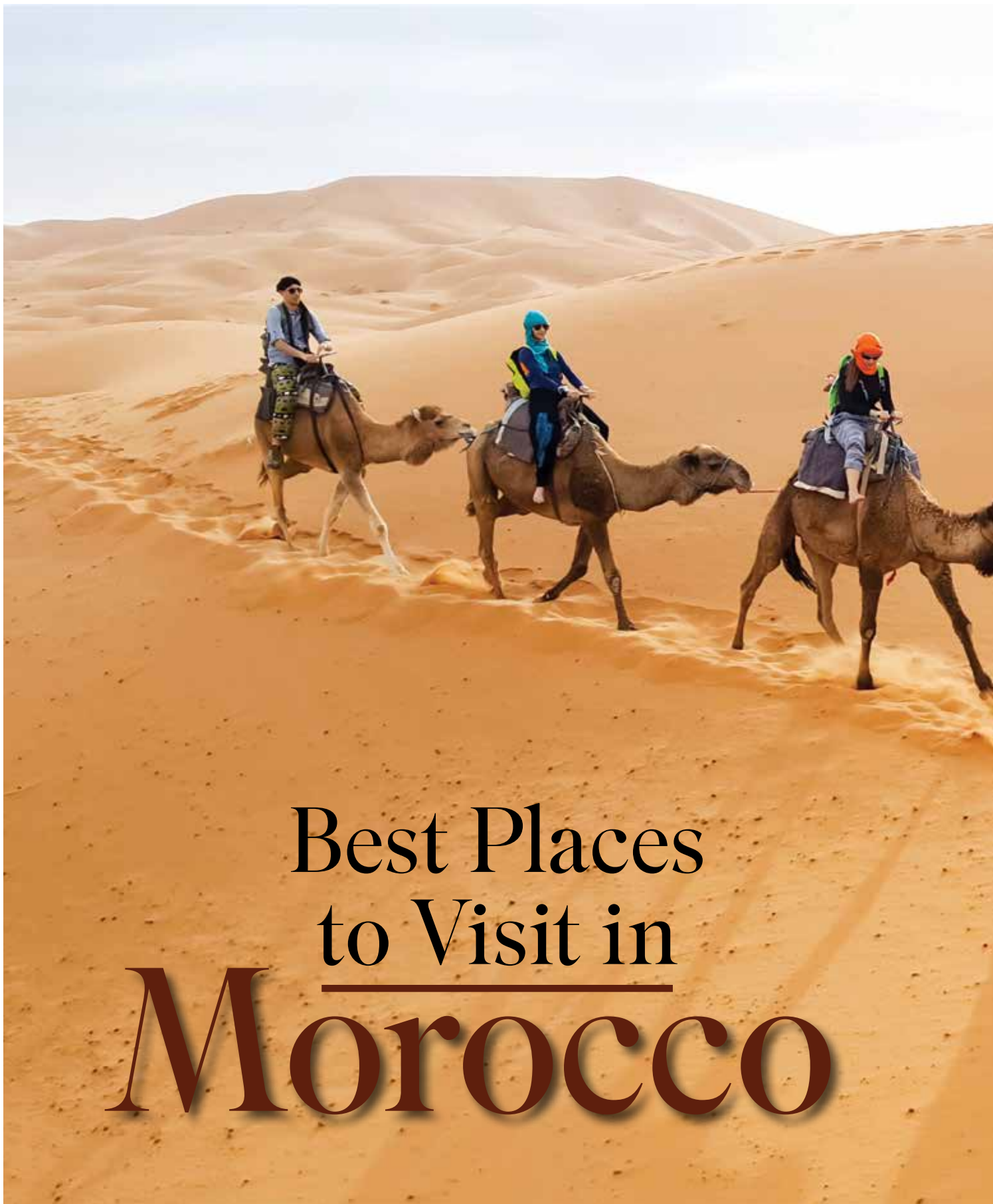
5. Food – Food glorious food!

Other than stunning beaches and friendly locals, there is one thing most people agree on – one of Phuket's big attractions is its food scene. Designated as a Gastronomic City by UNESCO, the

island serves up delicious street food to Michelin-starred restaurants and everything in between, so international delegates will always find something to their taste."

6. Local expertise – Phuket's soft power with talented people is our strength. Phuket's events industry and its people have a reputation for being warm, welcoming, and willing to help. This 'can-do' attitude is present in our events planners who take pride in going above and beyond to nail the brief, and in our hospitality staff who are passionate about their line of work and deliver service with a smile."

7. Sustainability – On the checklist for most event planners, Sustainability is at the forefront of action in Phuket. Phuket's tourism industry provides event planners and participants with the opportunity to leave a lasting impact. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can take many forms from turtle releases to tree planting and beach clean-ups. And for socially responsible culinary experiences, where sustainability is on the menu with locally sourced products, Phuket is committed to operating sustainable events that contribute to the environment and local community.



Best Places to Visit in Morocco

Within easy reach of Europe, many come to Morocco for the year-round sunshine, all-inclusive beach vacations and a rich cultural heritage with historic cities so well preserved that it seems time travel is possible. Travel a little deeper to discover wilderness areas and a sense of remoteness.

Morocco has invested heavily in modernizing its tourism offerings. Traveling around the country is easier thanks to domestic flights, high-speed rail, new roads, and luxury coaches covering long distances.





The Ultimate Desert Getaway

Unearth the treasures of the Sahara in Morocco's scorched desert destinations. Whether you are staying in the village or camping out in the desert, Merzouga will deliver the ultimate desert dream. Camel trekking on the endless Erg Chebi dunes will make you forget about time. It is one of the best places to visit in Morocco. At night, come out from your tent for stargazing. The desert night sky is like no other, especially away from the city lights in Merzouga. When it comes to the matchless desert camp atmosphere, Zagora is also a Moroccan highlight. In the dreamy oasis, you will lose yourself in the authentic tunes of the Sahara surrounded by the hearty Bedouin culture.

High On The Atlas

In Morocco, mountains mean sinuous old ravines, kasbah-studded towns, and an intransigent road-bound culture. Deep in the Atlas, Dades

Valley is a natural passageway that seems to connect them all. You will admire it best for its ageless kasbahs and dynamic spirit where the Bedouin nomads and nature are in united motion. Hike down from the valley and you have Ouarzazate. In itself, it is a cascade of red-earthed Berber kasbahs and houses tumbling down the Atlas. Visit the spectacular Ait Ben Haddou at sunset, as the entire land catches fire with the sun. Things simmer down a notch in Azrou, another one of the best places to visit in Morocco, right at the foot of the Atlas. It is worthy of a day trip with its uneventful town and vivid nature.

A Bedazzling City Scene

When it comes to Moroccan big-city hassle and frenetic spirit, the golden trio of Casablanca, Fes, and Marrakech blaze the trail. A stream of cultural happenings rules the cities, from feverish souqs and stimulating stalls to age-old arts and crafts. Give







yourself a few hours in the legendary Djemaa el-Fna of Marrakech to soak in the boundless cultural happenings. Pay a visit to the Bahia Palace for a taste of the Islamic heritage. But for its true landmark, visit the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca. This is where the diverse character of Morocco is most vigorous, with Portuguese, Islamic, Spanish, and French influences painting the cityscape. In Fez, the eye-catching leather tanneries alone deliver the picture of a city run by artisanship.

There are also a handful of ravishing towns in the shadow of the Moroccan giants. Chefchaouen is the prettiest by far with its blue-washed streets. And for the exotic Atlantic coast, head to Essaouira, where old traditions blend with fresh-faced activities. These towns are among the best places to visit in Morocco.

Must-See Sights in Morocco

The best places to visit in Morocco.

Agadir

Agadir is a major coastal town on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. It is famous for its summer resorts and beautiful beaches as well as exquisite seafood. With its pristine beaches, year-round sunshine, and abundance of water sports, Agadir is a top choice for those seeking a relaxing coastal getaway in Morocco. Be sure not to miss the opportunity to bask in the sun on the city's wide sandy beaches.

Anti-Atlas

Best for hiking and outdoor adventures.

The *Anti-Atlas* is Morocco's lesser-explored mountain playground with plentiful plateaus, valleys and soaring

peaks to explore. Travelers here can blaze new hiking trails, unearth empty archaeological sites and connect with locals who share their timeless valleys with generosity and warmth.

Plentiful short hikes and climbing routes are available in the Ameln Valley, home to Jebel Lkest - Jebel meaning mountain - and *Tafraoute's* dramatic granite boulder-strewn landscapes, including *Napoleon's Hat* and the *Painted Rocks*. Drive or pedal your way along winding mountain passes to the date-palm filled Ait Mansour Gorges.

Longer treks at Jebel Siroua (3,305m) include a dramatic volcano for those hardy hikers looking to spend several nights wild camping. Take some time to connect with the Imazighen people living in the region. A glimpse into their simple life and grounding way of being is food for the soul.





Ait Ben Haddou

Established in 757, the Moroccan Ksar is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is famous for its appearance in *Game of Thrones*.

Steeped in history and nestled on the edge of the Sahara Desert, Ait Ben Haddou is a mesmerizing UNESCO World Heritage Site with a collection of stunning clay and straw buildings that date back centuries.

Azrou

Azrou means literally ‘rock’ in the local language, named for the black volcanic outcrop at the center of town.

Tucked away in the lush cedar forests of the Middle Atlas Mountains, the charming town of Azrou offers visitors a chance to immerse themselves in Berber culture, spot rare wildlife, and browse for unique handicrafts.

Casablanca

The largest city of Morocco stands impressively on the coast of the Atlantic with its beautiful port and countless venues to enjoy.

A bustling metropolis that exudes Moroccan charm, Casablanca is a melting pot of cultures and boasts an array of attractions, including breathtaking architecture, bustling souks, and delicious cuisine.

Chefchaouen

Chefchaouen is a city in the Rif Mountains of northwest Morocco. It’s known for the striking, hilarious blue-washed buildings of its old town.

Known for its picturesque blue-washed buildings, Chefchaouen is a bohemian paradise that offers visitors a tranquil escape from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Dades Valley

The Dades Valley is the principal route between the desert and the ancient trading oases of the Tifilalt.

With its stunning natural beauty and scenic driving routes, the Dades Valley is a top destination for adventure seekers and nature lovers alike.

Djemaa El Fna

The main square of Marrakech hosts many attractions and an authentic local market.

One of Morocco’s most iconic attractions, Djemaa El Fna is a vibrant and lively square in the heart of Marrakech that offers visitors a glimpse into the country’s rich cultural heritage.

Essaouira

Located on the Atlantic Coast, Essaouira is famous for the powerful



trade wind blowing onto the protected, calm bay.

A picturesque coastal town with a rich history, Essaouira is a top destination for those seeking a

laid-back seaside retreat that offers everything from water sports to world-class seafood.

Fes

Fes is a northeastern Moroccan city often referred to as the country's cultural capital. It is primarily known for its walled medina.

One of the oldest and most culturally significant cities in Morocco, Fes is a must-visit destination for history buffs and architecture enthusiasts, with its ancient medina, stunning mosques, and bustling souks.

Marrakech

Best place for romance

Marrakech, a former imperial city in western Morocco, is home to exquisite mosques, palaces, and gardens.

A vibrant and exotic city with a heady mix of sights, sounds, and smells, Marrakech is a top destination for those seeking a sensory overload of colors, flavors, and cultural experiences. Morocco's red city Marrakech as a must-visit destination for travelers seeking a culturally rich experience, showcasing the city's various tourism assets that promise an unforgettable experience.

"Famous for its vibrant colour and intoxicating culture, this ancient city has something for all the senses,

Between tradition and modernity, Marrakech is the promise of unequalled sensations. Strolling the Jemaa El-

Fna square and the souks with their shimmering colours and oriental smells, the red city offers you a complete change of scenery. Horse-drawn carriage rides, sunny terraces, travelling artists, and other day and night activities will give a taste of a wishful comeback.

You will be able to admire all the architectural richness of Medina, upon visiting one of its many roads, and small oriental palaces overlooking a beautiful patio. You can also relax and recharge at the Menara, a vast garden with an emblematic basin. Marrakech showers its visitors by its splendour and its diversity, you just have to leave the ramparts to be immersed in modern Morocco. The districts of Gueliz and Hivernage offer the most modern infrastructures, luxury boutiques and international ready-to-wear stores, and airy avenues ; which all contribute to Marrakech's unique offering.

Being a growing economic bustling city, Marrakech has special festive and cultural places, such as the « Palais des Congres » and the splendid Royal Theater. Enjoy Marrakech at night by discovering the many themed venues, trendy clubs and traditional evenings that reflect the lively part of the city.

Merzouga

Merzouga is a village in the Sahara Desert in Morocco, on the edge of Erg Chebbi, a 50km long and 5km wide set of dunes.





With its towering sand dunes, epic desert landscapes, and starry night skies, Merzouga is a top destination for those seeking a once-in-a-lifetime desert adventure.

MHamid

Also known as Bounou, M'hamid is an oasis town isolated from the crowds. It hosts seven old and decaying Ksars.

Nestled on the edge of the Sahara Desert, the peaceful village of Mhamid offers visitors a chance to experience the timeless beauty of the desert and explore traditional Berber culture.

Sahara Desert

Best place for getting away from it all

The drive to the *Sahara* is long, but when you arrive on the edge of the world's largest hot desert, the pavement stops and the sand begins with an endless ocean of dunes ahead. Whether you choose to travel by 4WD or camel deeper into the desert, the emptiness of the Sahara can bring a sense of remoteness that's rare to find these days.

Visiting the Moroccan Sahara is an opportunity to disconnect, empty your mind, and enjoy being in the middle of nowhere. This stark and barren environment comes to life with a good guide, especially at night when the night sky free of light pollution fills with stars.

Tangier

Best place for a sense of geographical location

The ferry between Spain and

Tangier takes just one hour, and seeing Spain from Africa's coastline brings to light Morocco's proximity to Europe. The «white city,» so-named for its whitewashed buildings, has a buzzing art scene, tapas restaurants and cafe culture – *Cafe Hafa* has some of the best ocean views. Spanish is still widely spoken, adding to the Euro-Afro vibe, and open plazas such as *Grand Socco* and beautiful Mediterranean beaches make it a smooth entry point for travelers to Morocco.

Combine your time in the city with a trip to *Hercules Caves* and *Cape Spartel's* lighthouse and rugged coastline. You could also use Tangier as a base for a *road trip* to the famously blue city of *Chefchaouen* and Spanish-infused *Asilah*. Hop on *Al Boraq*, the *high-speed train*, and you'll be in the capital city of *Rabat* in an hour and a half.



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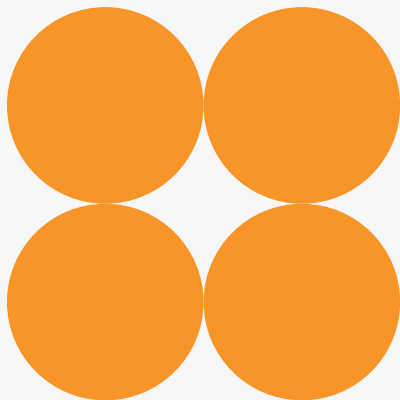
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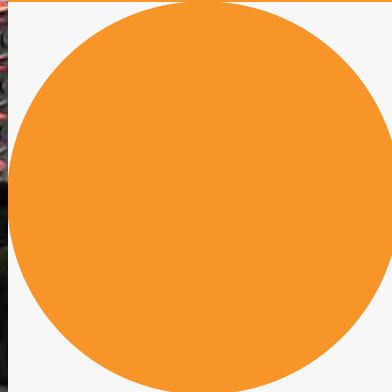


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