

Travel Links

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COLOURS
HOLI OF BARSANA

Blue echos
of the Sea

Morocco

LENS VIGNETTE | LESSER KNOWN | THE WINE WORLD | ECO FRIENDLY HOLIDAY | LUXURY STAY



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Here we are with the most awaited issue of Travel Links, which is being presented in one of the biggest travel fairs, The ITB Berlin. The Theme colours, brings to you the cover story of "Barsana ki Holi", "The festival of splashing and playing with the friendly colours with your family and friends, which has a spiritual meaning too. As it is the love and the romantic season with valentines still fresh on our minds, The writer falls in love with Morocco and gives us the breathtaking description of the city's heritage, culture, ruins and architecture .It is a visual delight as he gives us a few breathtaking pictures. We also bring you the cultural seasonal harvesting festival of Karnataka, a delight for the readers.


Top 10 romantic destinations according to Travel Links and the travel styling tips shall keep the readers engaged and help them plan better.

On international front, we present the travelling experience of the Aurore Borealis, The northern lights in the might of the night in Alaska, which will keep the adrenaline pumped.

The Australia travel information stresses the importance of responsible and eco tourism

On reader friendly pages, we give you amazing shot in the lens vignette section, the Art Arena, and enjoying the festival drinks.

Enjoy reading and travel more. Stay Tuned for more on travellinkslive.com

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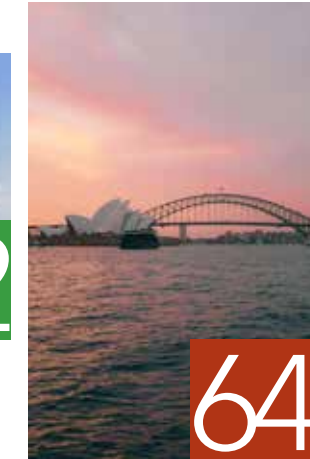
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BLUE ECHOES



It was the utter captivating Charm of the Vastness, the Thrill of the Unknown... and the vociferous Rush of Adrenaline that reverberated, responded and attracted me, congruently, to the ancient wilderness of the Deep Blue that first led me to the High Seas. Sometimes standing on the external bridge Decks with the Fresh Seabreeze on my face ..my eyes fixated on scanning the deep Dark pitch Black horizon ... inner consciousness still wonders at the grand plan and the allure of it all.

The Morning after, when the Sun rises... radiating Life energy the mesmerizing Aurum hue of the sky reaffirms the belief that the world has been blessed indeed by the Almighty.

As the day propagates from the morning glow towards noon and the sun climbing to a higher altitude every second the apparent sun's rays peirces through the surface waters of the world to the Deep that causes absorption of light Spectrum.. by the water except “Blue” and brings

upon the rich and strong Blue Hue of the Sea...reminiscing the profound inherent Nature of the subaqueous to simply absorb everything and return trascendental Beauty that surrounds the world as is...!!. Not only does the water posses the potency of granting beauty to the Oceans and to the world but also it preserves the Memory of Era's that have passed by...!!.

The Motion of the Heavenly bodies causes the Noon, where the Sun Culminates providing the Flora and Fauna of the world and the Living sphere its Life force and generates Vibrancy in every aspect of the Living beings for both Aquatic and Non-Aquatic. Although seemingly simple the potency of this is seen in full manifestation across the world and the living kingdom when we observe and expereince continents and cultures. Many years of visiting and experiencing young and old cultures and people have made me come to atleast one definite conclusion that we “Humans” are same “in more ways than



we know”, this gained knowledge through experience brings a large smile across my face.

The further path traced by the apparent Sun brings about a beautiful change as the altitude of the sun above the horizon starts dipping causing the onset of evening twilight..., the heavenly concoction of the nature that sets in... leaves me light hearted and makes me glad to be able to witness one of the most captivating moments in the world, incomparable to any man made object in any form and

incomprehensible and unfelt, if self is not a witness. The Last few moments of the suns descent towards the horizon establishes the expression of Sun’s supremacy over the heavenlies, recognized by the ancient of the ancient civilizations across the World, the utter grandeur of the cessation ceremony of the Mighty King’s journey across the sky provides a feast for mortal eyes... as the Golden gates of heaven opens up, where there were blue Skies and dark husky clouds, now there is presence of glittering yellow Golden hue in multitude variance

...!!!. The golden skies provide a distinct orange tinge to the Oceans surface waters which seems similar to a lush field full of daisies seen from above. The Sun’s Chariot makes a glorious exit towards the Western end of the Horizon until the next day.

The 18 minutes of twilight goes by rather fast as I am left mesmerized, eyes fixated on the horizon ...sipping on my hot coffee. The end of the evening astronomical twilight leaves the skies with some shiny sparkles of stars which intensifies and increase manifolds in numbers as the



pitch dark colour of the sky and the space unknown takes over and paints the Horizons and the Skies canvas Black, the magnitude of the Stars intensities becomes relevant when the eyes of the Navigator searches for different patterns and constellations amongst them for locating own position. The firm resonance to the subtle but persistent , calm yet powerful music of the Universe manifests itself to the Mariner while he is using the heavens above to determine “his” coordinates.

Midnight brings the Star charts out and the ship’s younglings(Cadets) practising the art of identifying the constellations and utilizing the knowledge for application into position determination. A sense of Nostalgia sets in seeing the young blokes in crisp white uniforms taking notes and listening to the supervising officers instructions.

Tradition has it the One who knows very well the orientation of the Stars Up above usually ends up being a good Navigator, ofcourse a lot changed due to the introductions of Latest technology. However, the bond that is experienced by being in connection with the Elements for a good many years gives a hint of contrasting colours to the overall personality and charisma of a sailor, that is undeniably true, Alas... that’s a story to be told some other day..!!

Life at Sea is filled with multiple anecdotes and experiences that brings a real rush of emotions and adrenaline alike. So transcendently mesmerizing are certain moments that which can only be appreciated if self has experienced it, like the first sighting of an Iceberg at sea, the utter white glow of the horizon is simply blinding and one is gawking at the real pristine beauty that God has blessed to the most remote place on earth. The hypnotic sky colours of Aurora borealis, a shooting star seen falling off the sky on a dark night with an orange burning tail, the silhouettes of the waves and the velvety folds of glistening waters under a Full Moon Night, the bloody redness of the rising moon, The absolutely stunning-enigmatic beauty of the irregularity of the Milkyway.. visible across the sky.. Lit with starry glow.. studded with seraphic Jewels.. awash with cosmic matter, the crashing of the



waves on the blunt end of a shore cliff, the white seahorses seen due to the apparent movement of the wind over water, an unexpected volcano on an island spurting red-orange Lava in to the Sea, the contrast coloured waters of the oceans of different streams meeting one another stretching miles and miles over the ocean, the rubbing of waters of the oceans during a dark night against the ship’s side producing bright greenish blue colour caused due to bioluminescence, The fury of the storm, the Tumultuous movements of the High seas, the Tossing of the ships and the True Grit of the Men who sail the seas. All of this brings together an extravaganza that defines not only the SEA but also the history of Man, as there would not be any life without water ...There indeed would not be anything worth appreciating without COLOURS...!! 🌈

• SAURABH SINGH •

Profession:- Merchant Mariner
Experience:- 18 Years.
Academically bright student , joined shipping aged 18 and gained varied experiences in many Trades. Passionate Artist, Loves playing the strings, writing are some Hobbies along with an equal passion for Bikes, Marshall Arts, YOGA, Swimming, Cycling & Working Out. Trying to present an Unadulterated View of SeaLife and seafarers to the World and bring about a change in the perception of Sailors.

Morocco: A Love Affair to Remember

“Can I have a vodka with orange juice and lots of ice?” Egypt Air, air hostess looks at me with stoically, responding after what seemed an eternity- placing a juice glass sans vodka she says, “Sorry sir but alcohol is not served on this flight”. It seemed like a bad start to an anticipated journey but with little option left, I settle just for juice.

The aircraft is amazingly silent, oblivious to the barren desert that lies beneath its belly. It has been a while since takeoff from Cairo airport and the flirting with the Mediterranean Sea coastline, the plane romances with the ochre and blue hues. Aboard the Egypt Air flight, I take a snooze trying to fight my excitement of what Morocco has to offer.

I awaken in time to see the Atlas Mountains with their snow-smeared peaks, North Africa’s highest mountain range in the distance as the terrain turns green. Atlas mountains stretch across Morocco, Algeria and Tunis marking a striking contrast and barrier between the arid Sahara and the humming coastline of Morocco.

Close enough, one can see the russet slopes dotted with pines and cedar, the green valley winding past goats and leading to Berber villages.

The last line of the movie Casablanca, spoken by Humphrey Bogart comes to my mind as I tell myself “Rahul, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.” Seat belt sign comes on as ***I watch the city of Casablanca taking shape. Earlier in the century as the French were looking to build this city, the architects flew over this very land and had it designed from the air, the first of its kind. Big cities, I avoid like the plague but Casablanca for me has been an image as an unsung jewel of Morocco.***

Crisp blue skies and breeze with a nip greet us as we land and soon we are chugging along the road to Rabat. Deciding to begin the journey from Rabat, our central point of stay, it allowed easy access to the Northern end of Meknes and Fez

and down south to Marrakesh. Palm-lined roads, lush greenery outside European style houses, the city greets you with its laid back vibe. Driving slowly, the French influences can be seen in abundance but my heart is with the blushing hibiscus bushes as I roll down the window and inhale the heady scent of orange blossom. This capital city of Rabat may be in the shadows of its big brother Casablanca but it holds its own elegant charm.

Rabat has a shared heritage, one as the modern capital and the other where its ancient remains are still intact. Dividing the city sightseeing into two parts; we decide to commence our journey with a visit to Marinid Necropolis at Chellah. Gulping the not too hot mint tea, a national beverage and quite like a religious ceremony, we were already racing to reach the 14th-century necropolis built by Sultan al-Hassan.

Standing at the entry of the palace, the city noises dims and a peaceful atmosphere prevails. ***The challah is both a Roman ruin and an Islamic Burial place, both claimed without any bias by the storks whose large nests perch on top of the minarets.*** It seems like the city has new sentinels guarding its heritage. The bustling trading post on the mouth of the river BouRegreg lies in scattered ruins amidst ageing fruit trees and cats that seem to have found new playgrounds. Time in Chellah stands still.

The Moroccan sun is fast disappearing behind the Palace walls, sinking in the river as we decide to call it a day and sleep early.

It has rained during the night as we traverse the wet lawn with the wheels of the suitcase refusing to roll over. Our guide and Chauffeur give us a helping hand as we settle in the minivan, which seems equally eager to discover the historic cities of the African continent.

The drive is a short one and time slips easily. The modern city is left behind as a beautiful landscape opens up its arms, reaching the dark blue sky. The scenario changes quickly from palms and orange





trees to olive farms, undeveloped, grassy and sandy plots as we find ourselves close to the third-largest city of Morocco- Fez is also known as Fes which is not only a spiritual capital but also hold the old world charm as the capital of medieval Morocco. Within a few hours, modernity is replaced with carts laden with oranges and other colourful vegetables and children playing with marbles. The gravel road ends at BorjSud, the southern hills of Fes offering a panoramic view of the city. As we stretch our legs, vestiges of the fortress in ruins stand yellowed against a greying sky. I walk to the edge of the cliff where a meadow of grazing sheep feasts on the grass uncaring of the cemetery downhill painted in white. On the other side of the hill is the view of Fes el Bali, protected by high walls, the medina imposing with its 9000 unnamed alleys housing 200,000 people. The only sound is of the breeze but I knew that closer to the Medina, it would be a world within a world.

Finding ourselves in a “riad”, a traditional Moroccan house, the breeze cuts across the courtyard reminding us that away from the Moroccan sun, it could be cold, a stark contrast just like this country itself. Its already lunch and we are hungry as hell. I love eating and for me, Moroccan food was turning out to be a feast.

My first encounter with tagine is in Fes itself. After having a taste of the dish, I am made aware that tagine is not only a dish but also the name of the utensil, cookware itself. Food cooked in clay utensils retains the natural flavours of the dish. Savouring my lamb tagine with dried prunes and vegetables, I relish the spices that lead to the conquering of nations.

Food makes us lazy but we are also mindful of the sunset that does not seem to be that far away. Spreading a printed map of the city, we opt for some sightseeing spots that were in walking distance. Bab Boujloud, the most famous gate of Fez and entrance to the medina is close by and soon

we find ourselves standing under its mighty arch admiring the Arabic-Andalusian design that combines blue and jade zelliges with scroll-shaped cutouts. This was the opening to the heart of the Medina.

The narrow cobbled street spirals downwards with streams of people crawling like ants on a mission. Mules push their way through as vendors wave their hands frantically and beckon you to come close. Old women sitting in the doorways, stalls brewing mint tea, leather skins on the roof, smaller alleys leading to God knows where - the sounds, sights and smell immediately consume us as I realize that I had forgotten to write the name of the gate, one of the twelve, through which we had entered. The feeling that we are already lost comes naturally as we willingly lose ourselves to the crowd. In the land of no directions, no GPS MedersaBouInania building looks at me, inviting me to its beautiful confines.

From the maze of dark passages and stained blue walls, this medersa spellbound me, first with its silence and then with its intricate motifs and designs covering every inch of the building. Built-in 14th century, this place housed students of Theology. Sitting under the green-tiled roofs, I am transported back in time allowing myself rest from the maddening Medina.

Later in the evening, freshly squeezed orange juice rehydrates me. Taking a break from the memories of the Medina, I realize that beyond the overwhelming architecture, it is the Moroccans themselves that make the country so friendly and inviting.

The next day, we travel to the far reaches of Rome. Yes, you read that right. Volubilis, Morocco's grand Roman city was once a very fertile area and was ruled under descendant of Cleopatra. The rich history of the place fascinates me just as much as the lush green fields at the base of Rif Mountains that slope upwards to meet the deep dark blue sky. Murder, Mosaic and Magnificence can all be found here interwoven in history and draped in intrigue. Roman Emperor Augustus, Caligula, Marcus Aurelius- all ruled this





empire, one way or another.

The ruins are small but spectacular. The most notable structure is the House of Orpheus, which is adorned beautiful mosaics, one showing the son of Hercules. My moment of glory is the magnificent triumphal arch dedicated to Emperor Caracalla who in 212 AD offered Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the Roman Empire.

In the distance, on the other side of Volubilis, one can see the whitewashed town of Moulay Idris Zerhoun, Founder of the Idridid dynasty of Morocco in 787. A very small town sitting astride two green hills is the most important Islamic city of Morocco and also the most neglected and not popular with the tourists. Perhaps its lack of popularity and inaccessibility has helped the town retain its quintessential charm. This is even though Moulay Idris demolished parts of the city to build his new palaces in Meknes.

As someone wisely said, “Between the ruins and the holy city, only a couple miles apart sit two amazing symbols of the importance of the past, and the importance of the present”.

Well there it was and time to see what Moulay Idris's new places looked like that housed four wives and hundreds of concubines and am not counting his offspring's. It is said that he admired his contemporary, Louis XIV of France and wanted to make Meknes his version of Versailles.

Meknes is slow during the day with hardly any tourists, which meant good news. The town is almost sleepy, quiet with white walls and pastel streets. Remnants of fortifications and The King's tomb sit at the heart of the city along with the strange attraction of a vast old prison. An unwarranted tour by a young guy who cannot speak English insists on showing how the Christians were hanged, chained and tortured before the kill. When he realizes that we will not be giving him a bakshish he parts with a grunt leaving us in the cool and ochre confines of the underground prison.

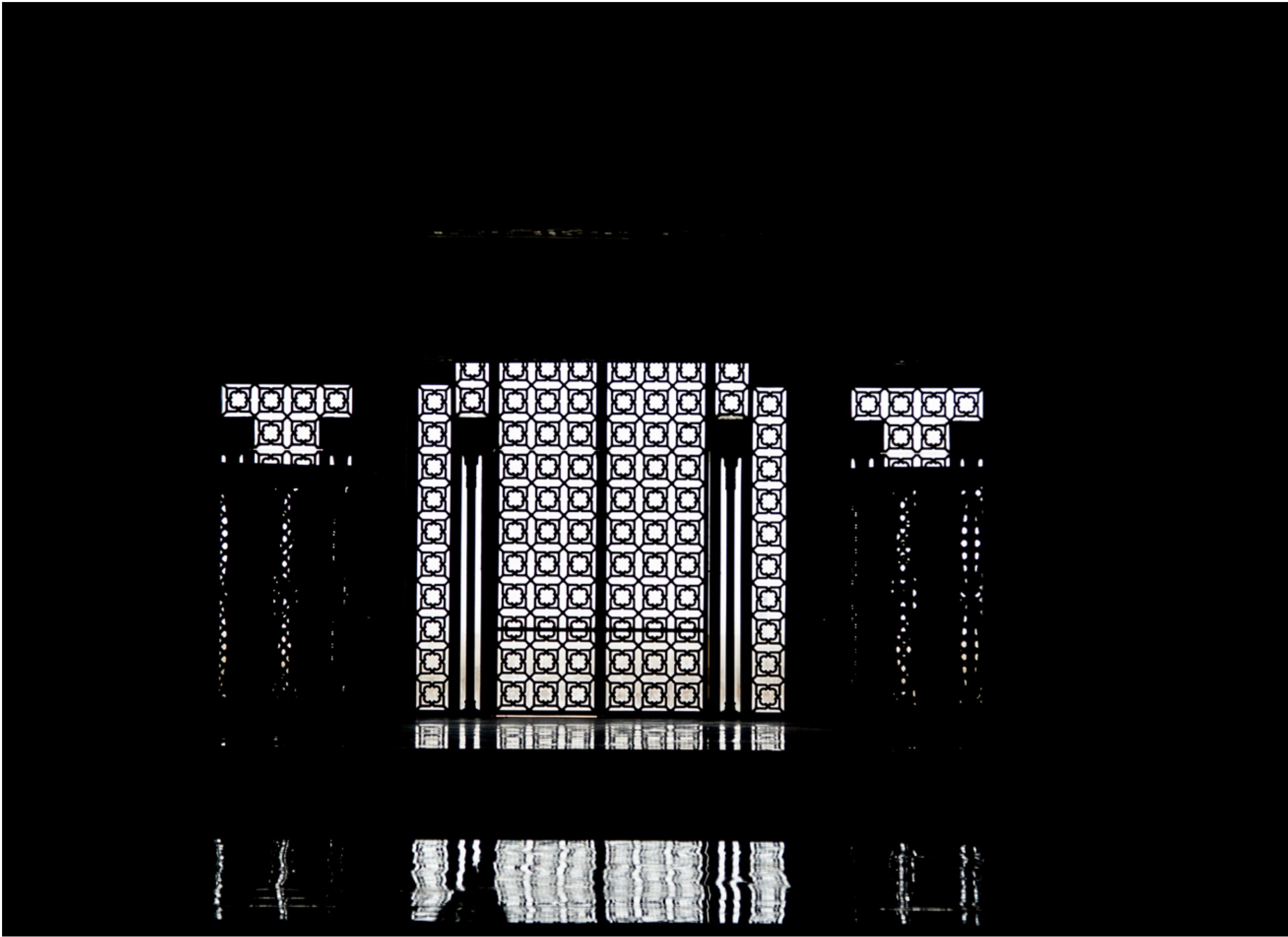
The souks in Meknes Medina almost circle the Great Mosque- colourful and vibrant they are noisy and full of the unexpected. Picking up some blue pottery things, I make a quick exit to walk over to the gate of Bab- al Mansour. It is almost impossible to take any photographs with tens of selfie sticks and camera lovers obstructing the view of this beautiful structure made in the 18th century.

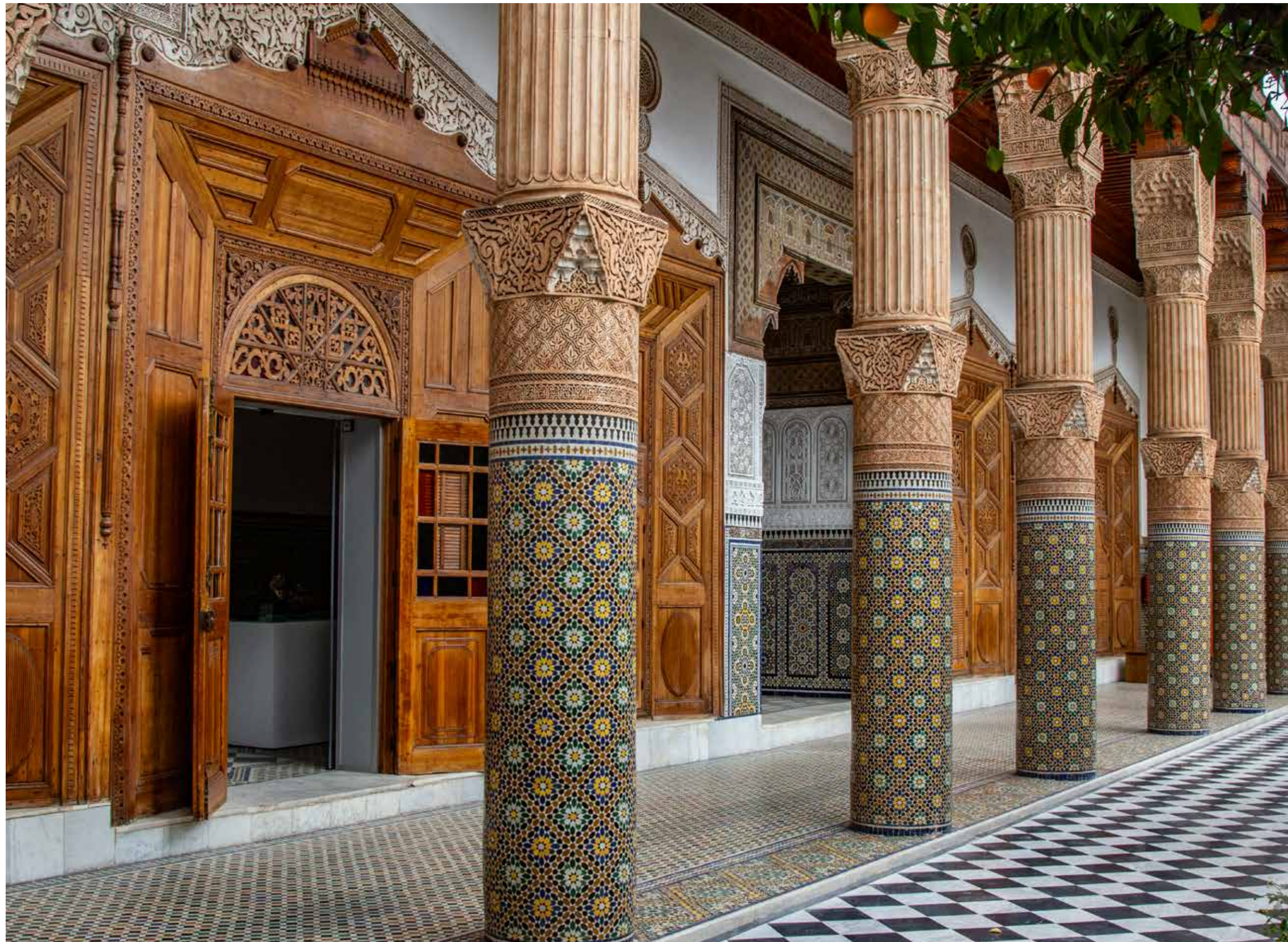
Tucking in the Museum of Moroccan Art (Dar Jamai), jaw-dropping treasures enclosed in this small space are a true marvel. Belonging to minsters of Moulay, one can see the opulence in the intricate decoration, art deco on wood and the Andalusian garden housing many fruit trees. The courtyard is shady and peaceful with the bokeh of orange cast by its fruit trees.

Meknes Ville nouvelle is like one crazy circus as we find the contrast with the quiet Medina a few kilometres away The Mediterranean boulevards and cafes are alive, locals playing music, food all around, sparking lights – every seat seems to have been taken and all cafes looked packed. Struggling to find a place, we wander around, lost to the noise and endless sights of street food.

Finding a table at a French restaurant seems to be a lucky straw. Not being able to make much sense of the dishes, we leave the ordering to a young waitress who babbled in French and all I could say was NO Parlez-vousFrancias. Struggling to make sense, I show her a dish on an adjacent table and suddenly a smile formed on her lips. I did not know what to make of the change in her behaviour. Vegetables with chickpea and two pieces of lamb sit before me smiling and ready to be devoured. Sumptuous and tasty to the hilt, it seemed like a perfect day to end in Meknes.

Meknes to Marrakesh is a huge contrast. This is where the cultural confluence of Africa, Europe and the Middle East meet. The city of Maghreb founded almost 1000 year ago. Sitting on the edge of the Sahara desert, the pink pise palaces with the snow-





capped Atlas Mountains in the backdrop; Marrakesh comes across as a city steeped in tradition and yet layered with modernity. Pulling myself from the van, I find myself at the souk and after having taken the headlong challenge of Fez, the adventures of navigating the heady tangle of shops seems easy. Freshly dyed wool in riots of orange and reds make an attractive collage, wooden carts crammed with blue pottery tiles and brass lanterns thrown everywhere as I take a pause standing under a shop in the slanted shadows under a bamboo roof.

The gardens of Marrakesh steal my heart. From the 800-year-old Agdal, this place is also referred to as the Versailles of Islam to the little sister of Agdal, the Menera, similar in design but small in area. The Badi palace is a lively square with its solitary palm tree casting in the shadows of the water tank. At the heart of the complex lie the ruins of Sultan Mansour's home with pavilions and sunken gardens.

But if there was a place which took my breath away was the Bahia Palace. Aptly titled Bahia, pronounced as ba-ha-ha, meaning brilliance in Arabic, was built by Abu 'Bou' Ahmed, a slave who went on to become a vizier. Constructed on a 2-acre plot boasting of 150 rooms including a section for the harem, the palace has an abundance of stained glass, hand-carved huge wooden doors and mosaic tile. The pandemonium caused by the overzealous tourists wanting a perfect selfie and their noise is amplified by the courtyard design.

The crowded lanes of Medina, an old part of Marrakesh offer little respite from the noise. Portable radios blaring music, buzzing scooters and the hawkers doing their best to get to you, the beguiling interplays continue.

The only heaven of tranquillity available, or so it seemed is Jardin Majorelle, window to a secret garden. The place is located on a quiet side street in the upscale neighbourhood of Guéliz. I step into a small but intimate courtyard with a fountain. Majorelle took almost 40 years to plant about 135 species of plants turning this



property in an enchanting landscape. Creating his version of blue trademarked as bleu Majorelle, he painted his building with his colour.

Fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent made Morocco his second home and bought this property after Jardin's death where own ashes lie scattered in the rose garden.

This was the fastest week that I have ever lived and yet one with immense memories. The last evening of my stay in Morocco draws close at the famous Rick's Café in Casablanca. Tired and overwhelmed, I put my head in the tiny cup of coffee and let my swirling mind rest from the overdose of history, architecture and Morocco itself. Brassy saxophone from Glenn Miller plays and a beautiful Ingrid Bergman flirts with Bogart on a widescreen screen playing in an endless loop with subtitles. The lounge felt intimate and somewhat glamorous.

In the sombre mood of leaving behind a great country and its people, the jostle and bustle of people, their warmth and to being lost under the blue sky – Morocco was more than a country and people, it was an experience itself.

I travel back just as a legendary traveller, Ibn Battuta did in 1326, from North Africa to Cairo. My regret that we did not meet in Tangier but am sure somewhere our footsteps will cross.

Till we meet again, Au Revoir! 🇲🇦



RAHUL GUPTA

A farmer by passion, Landscape Designer by profession, Rahul Gupta is based in Jaipur and loves to capture his journeys through the lens and words.



Travel Links in talks with the Owner of **TIF KITCHEN** café & restaurant is located in the heart of the Pink City, **JAIPUR**.



Q *Please let us know about your student life, and what made you choose your field of study, what inspired you?*

Right from childhood, I was a foodie, always interested in eating new dishes presented to me by my mom or at any venue out of the house with friends and family. When I was in high school, Woodstock International School, Mussoorie, UP – India, I had joined cooking classes as an extracurricular activity, so perhaps the idea initially was in the back of my mind to be involved in the cooking line in the future or near food! I proceeded to complete my education in Hospitality from Swiss Hotel Association, Hotel Management School, Les Roches, Switzerland where I graduated with a Bachelor of Science with Honors in International Hospitality Management.

Q *How good were you as a student?* Good, hmmm! I think I have always, been a balanced individual with studies in the classroom, with full concentration so I could review briefly

on the subject just before exam time. Socially I was very active in committees and activities in high school as well as in Les Roches. One has to be creative and an extrovert to be in the hospitality business.

Q *What challenges did you face in your journey; include corporate/competitive or any other challenges?*

Good question, I feel challenges are a part of life, all depends on how you take them on, individually or all at the same time! At the start of my career in the corporate world, like everyone else, you are seeking growth. How does one achieve that? This is perhaps the most interesting part of being in the corporate world is HOW to convince your superiors! Be consistence in your profession, and the fruits will pay off in time. If you rush chasing goals, you will face broader challenges in the future without the required experience.

Q *Please let us know about your Work Experience.* My first trainee job was at the Oberoi New Delhi, where I had the



SUMEET KUMAR

25 years in the hospitality industry! A graduate from Les Roches, Switzerland. Worked in Europe, USA, India and UAE. Thank you to my family and friends for their continued support.

opportunity to focus on the result of the company wide performance appraisals. I had interviewed 25 % of the team members across the company and illustrated my results by graphing the team members' answers collectively. Over a short phase of just 3 months, I had prepared a special questionnaire approved by the Human Resources senior management. During my hospitality course of study in Switzerland, I had worked in various swiss hotels, focusing on the service aspect in front of the house in restaurants & bars, kitchen training in and management training at the front desk, each training lasted for a 6 months. I continued my journey at a 5 start resort in the heart of Palm Beach, Florida, USA. I worked for 9.5 years at the same property. I had worked in several departments and various positions during the 9.5 years, from 'In Room Dinning', 'Fine Dining Restaurant', 'Casual restaurant', 'Bar', 'Banqueting' and 'Human Resources'. I had gained knowledge of both Food & Beverage and Human Resources Administration acquiring the required tools for training and developing hiring new recruits.

Moved to the United Arab Emirates for the next 10 years. I had worked with a private group of restaurants, at a Director level of multiple restaurants and high end caterings. Developed their portfolio of venues during the years I had worked in the UAE and Qatar. Leading the team into experiencing and catering to extensive large wedding events, VVIP caterings, social events, corporate events and opened over a dozen QSR outlets. Today, I have set up my own business in Jaipur, Rajasthan – India known as: TIF KITCHEN café & restaurant is located in the heart of the Pink City, Jaipur. It features Mexican, Italian, Middle Eastern flavors, Asian and a Bakery. Located in a villa with over 80 covers, a beautiful terrace and balcony along with 4 rooms each themed in a different color scheme. In less than 5 months, I have expanded my bakery section in collaboration with one of the sophisticated retail shops in Jaipur to bring in Tif Kitchen Café Restaurants range of bakery & patisserie collection into their show room!

Q *What is the skill set required to be a successful entrepreneur in the Hospitality.*

I think before we can use the term 'skill set' your mind has to be fully focused to continue in the Hospitality industry. I have several colleges who have moved to different professions after graduating from Switzerland. Skills are gained from the years of experience, I have 26 years of experience in this profession, and I love it! A few core skills needed to continue are Leadership, Multitasking, being Multilingual, Planning, Action, Follow up, Consistency, Creativity, and able to work for very long hours. The most effective skill of all must come from within as a drive along with the passion to tackle any situation that comes forth. My longest day was 52 hours without stopping! 24 hour shifts I have done several times and even today if the occasion demands it, I will be present.

Q *What is your advice to young kids who are pursuing similar field as yours in today's time?*

I would simply say, Go for it! Hospitality today is so diverse as compared to 25 years ago. There is a sea of areas where one can specialize in, apart from just phrasing it as service, kitchen and management. Today, one has to be innovative and creative as an artist to produce the items that are presented on the table for our guests. Working with chocolate is a true example of this! Creating new and improvised dishes to be infused with spices from parts of the world. Technology in hotel rooms where smart mini bars are now considered a norm, or smart key for the rooms. Even the training and development of the team have come a long way today. Respect, Smile, Be Friendly, & Be Polite to all

Q *Why Jaipur?* I have been thinking of opening in India for a couple of years, and I decided on Jaipur because the Pink City appealed to me personally. There are more than 4,500 eateries in Jaipur, a reason for the market to continuously expand here in which ever capacity. As a heritage city, the number of tourist visiting Jaipur is year round. Also, suited my financially as compared to other metropolitan cities around India.

Q *Please let us know more about your future plans.* Tif Kitchen has only been opened for 5 months, and we have seen a steady response with a mix of groups, families and the younger crowd, and liking what we have to offer. I plan to expand laterally in Jaipur first, meaning taking parts of TIF Kitchen, bakery (as we are doing), express outlets, in a club and even in airports around India.

Q *What is the success mantra?* This depends entirely on the individual, how to measure our success. I believe today I have gained the 'sweat equity' in through my education, experience and operations in the hospitality industry. The door of knowledge never ends and one has to keep opening them to reach out to new opportunities and that is success to me, be able to make my own decisions.

Q *What is your passion which keeps you going?* Earlier on, I had mentioned 'mind set'! This transforms into my passion over the years, you must carry forward, push yourself to face new challenges! I feel the ups are great, and the downs are greater as this teaches you to overcome your emotions so you can reflect on them from time to time.

Q *What is your vision for TIF Kitchen Café * Restaurant?* To open 100 Tif Kitchens outlets all over in India. Why not? How much do you think this café industry going to grow in 5 years from now? The café industry has re created itself to 'café restaurant' so you can enjoy a family meal at a café restaurant compared to being limited to cup of coffee and croissant. With the economies worldwide at a challenging stage, each individual calculates their affordability to enjoy a family meal. The café restaurant venues / industry will continue to re develop or re model in the years to come, to qualify and then quantify in numbers.

Q *What is the major competition you are facing?* Tif Kitchen café Restaurant is still in its early stages. I am focusing on consistency of our food and service, as Tif Kitchen gives a homely vibe to our guests, to make sure they return.

Q *How do you plan to counter the competition?* For starters, keep the quality of the product consistently great. Being creative on how to attract your guests rather than a simple discount! Keeping the team motivated as happy staff reflects on your service. Be visible in many areas of social media, ads, events, sponsorships etc. Counter your competition and diversify your products into various streams of business, parallel expansion, lateral expansion, franchise to name a few. **1**

Thank you Travel Links
Sumeet Kumar
Tif Kitchen Café Restaurant

Travel Links Brings to you the most comfortable Styling Tips for Travel

Keep the wardrobe versatile: We know everyone tends to over pack but pack according to your itinerary. Keep the outfits that you can style in multiple ways. Things like co-ords which are awesome together but can be styled with other tops & bottoms. This will help you avoid us stuffing our bags.



- **Coordinating Colours:** Pack coordinating Colorus which are natural pairs. This way you can match almost all of your outfits & create multiple sets for different occasions.
- **For Formal Wear:** Instead of heavy/bulky jackets, blazers with sleek pants & crisp shirt are an option for men. As for women, we suggest an elegant slip dress with a light jacket (if necessary) with elegant earrings & heels.
- **Shoe Situation:** Everyone likes sweet kicks. But while on vacation, keep in mind that you tend to walk a lot. Minimise the amount, keep one pair of sensible sneakers & a pair of sandals/loafers if you are going someplace sunny.



- **No Ironing:** Keep fabrics like printed cotton, rayon or any dry fit wrinkle resistant clothing. Because it's a hassle to find an iron while travelling. So, go for fuss free clothing options. Or if you have printed tops which hides wrinkles as a part of its pattern.
- **Comfort First:** Athleisure comes to our mind when someone talks about comfort & fashion together. It is one of the trendiest looks to go for. Especially while travelling. It looks chic without being over-the-top. Exercise clothes are becoming increasingly trendy & for travel, especially those long journeys, they're incredibly comfortable to wear. And they fit into virtually any type of bag.



- **Layers:** While traveling in spring season, the mornings tend to be colder than afternoons. So, a duster or a denim jacket over your outfit will keep the chills away while making you look structured & sophisticated.
- **Pack a scarf:** Be it cotton or cashmere, they are a lifesaver while travelling. Even though it makes you look on point with fashion, you can use them as a little blanket if you get chilly or a sleep mask.



Biggest trends of 2020

- Neon/Pop Colours for outerwear
- Basic white t-shirt & blue denims with trench coat
- Wallpaper Print Shirts
- Polka Dots Dresses
- Tiered Ruffled skirts

Inputs & Images by MEHA BHARGAVA Founder Styl.inc

RAINBOW CAKE

Setting the tone of the theme colors, we bring to you the recipe of the Rainbow Cake, which is sure to salivate you and try the recipe..



This recipe makes a super moist rainbow cake. You can frost it with your favorite buttercream, cream cheese or whipped cream icing.


- 3 cups All purpose flour
- 3 cups granulated sugar
- 3 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter,softened
- 1 Tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup whole milk room temperature
- 2/3 cup vegetable oil
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- VIBGYOR Food coloring
- Whipping cream (as required)

- Tools:
- 7 six inch pans
 - 7 bowls
 - Rubber spatula
 - Offset Spatula

Method

Preheat the oven at 170C and Grease all the 7 pans. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs in 2 parts. Mix until the eggs are fully incorporated and emulsion is formed. Mix milk and oil in a bowl. Add milk and oil alternatively with dry ingredients. Combine until the batter is smooth. Divide the batter in 7 equal parts and color them by adding few drops of food coloring. Bake them at 170C for 15-20 mins or until the toothpick comes out clean. Note: Each oven works differently so keep an eye on the cake after 12 mins as the layers of the rainbow cake will be very thin. Defrost the whipping cream and whip it for 5 to 8 mins or until soft peaks are formed. Add some vanilla (optional) You can also soak your cake with simple syrup (1 part sugar and 1 part water). Level the cakes by removing the domes form top. Frost each layer with whipping cream. Refrigerate for an hour and enjoy. 🍷

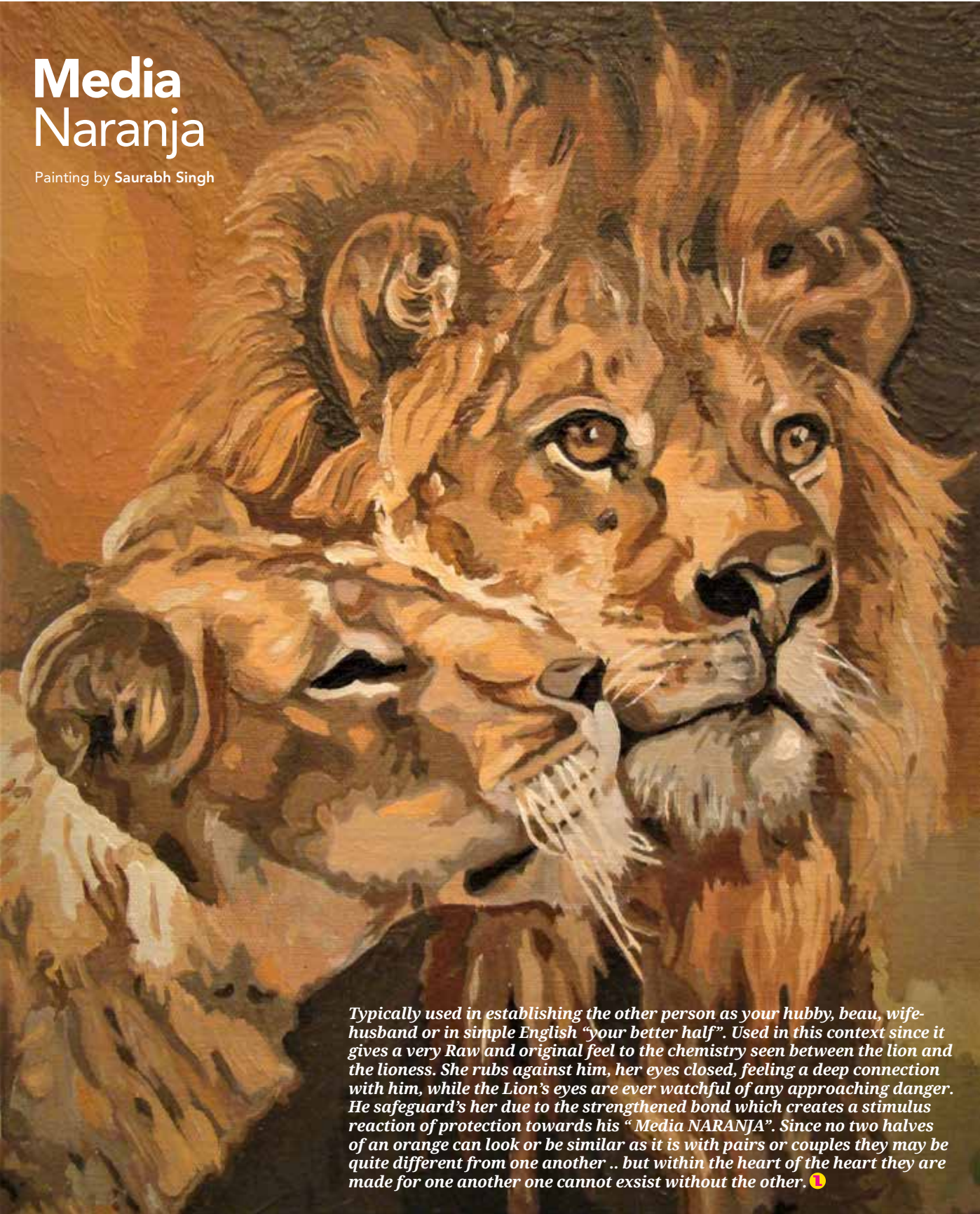
• PRAGYA ARORA •



Pragya Arora is a graduate from The Culinary Institute of America, a young home baker turned entrepreneur who explored her passion for baking and made it her profession while still being a teenager. She founded Maitre Patisserie while she was still in her high school. Now, she is the COO Primea Foods.

Media Naranja

Painting by Saurabh Singh



Typically used in establishing the other person as your hubby, beau, wife-husband or in simple English “your better half”. Used in this context since it gives a very Raw and original feel to the chemistry seen between the lion and the lioness. She rubs against him, her eyes closed, feeling a deep connection with him, while the Lion’s eyes are ever watchful of any approaching danger. He safeguard’s her due to the strengthened bond which creates a stimulus reaction of protection towards his “Media NARANJA”. Since no two halves of an orange can look or be similar as it is with pairs or couples they may be quite different from one another .. but within the heart of the heart they are made for one another one cannot exist without the other. 🍷

Painter's Thoughts...

*Magnificent stars covered by dense clouds,
Just like beautiful hearts, broken by fictional vows
Looking at the moon who was looking at me,
I realised that my only option was to flee.
Lake full of water,
Just like tears I like to halter 🇮🇳*



London Underground Stairs

Thought: Stairway to somewhere, I have been watching the world go by in neon lights. Sometimes a draft knocks on my slumber and I awaken to feel the pain of stepping fast.

— RAHUL GUPTA —



A farmer by passion, Landscape Designer by profession, Rahul Gupta is based in Jaipur and loves to capture his journeys through the lens and words.

— DEETYA BHATIA —



Deetya Bhatia, is a student. She has a passion for art since childhood, is creative and loves to draw what she imagines. She is flexible with respect to the medium she uses, some of them being charcoal pencils, prisma colours, paints

World of Wines and **THE FESTIVAL OF COLORS**

We left of in the previous issue on pairing wines with foods. Hope you have had a chance to try some of the mentioned wines with your favorite dishes in that article.

In this issue, we will focus on wine cock tails and mock tails or non alcoholic beverages.

As the festival of colors approaches traditionally known as 'HOLI'. I thought of providing some unique ways to involve wines and create a few good cocktails using the wines. To add a few interesting non alcoholic beverages especially for kids.

Let us begin with the famous red wine Sangria. There several ways to create and enjoy the Spanish cocktail, traditionally made with red wine, cubes or chopped fruits and brandy or orange juice with a dash of cane sugar syrup.

A Pinot Noir wine, not too expensive, is a lighter choice that will bring upfront fruitiness to your Sangria as compared to a Cabernet Sauvignon with loads of aromas like blackcurrant and cocoa or coffee.

As mentioned in the earlier articles, your palate is the best judge to enjoy your wine.

What is involved in making sangria?

Red Wine Sangria

Chopped Fruits (Pear, Apple, Peach, Orange, Strawberries, Raspberries, Cherry's) The fruits can be cut into small cubes and keep some sliced for garnishing the glass or jar

50 ml Cane sugar

50 ml Brandy

2 whole Lemons

Club soda to top it off before serving to give that fizz.... Now that we have all our ingredients, we can go ahead and mix them together. To start with, cut cubes of apples, lemon, oranges and strawberries into a glass jar. Pour your choice of red wine into the glass jar. Add 50 ml of the cane sugar syrup Add Brandy (on how strong you would like the sangria to be) Once all the ingredients are in the glass jar, refrigerate the glass jar over night so the sangria is chilled and the fruits have now infused well with the beverages.

Before serving, just add a dash of club soda for the fizz.. Or you can do without it and enjoy!

White wine Sangria

Ingredients:

White wine – in this recipe to use

Sauvignon blanc

Chopped Green apple

Chopped pears

4 Cinnamon Sticks

3 Cardamom Pcs

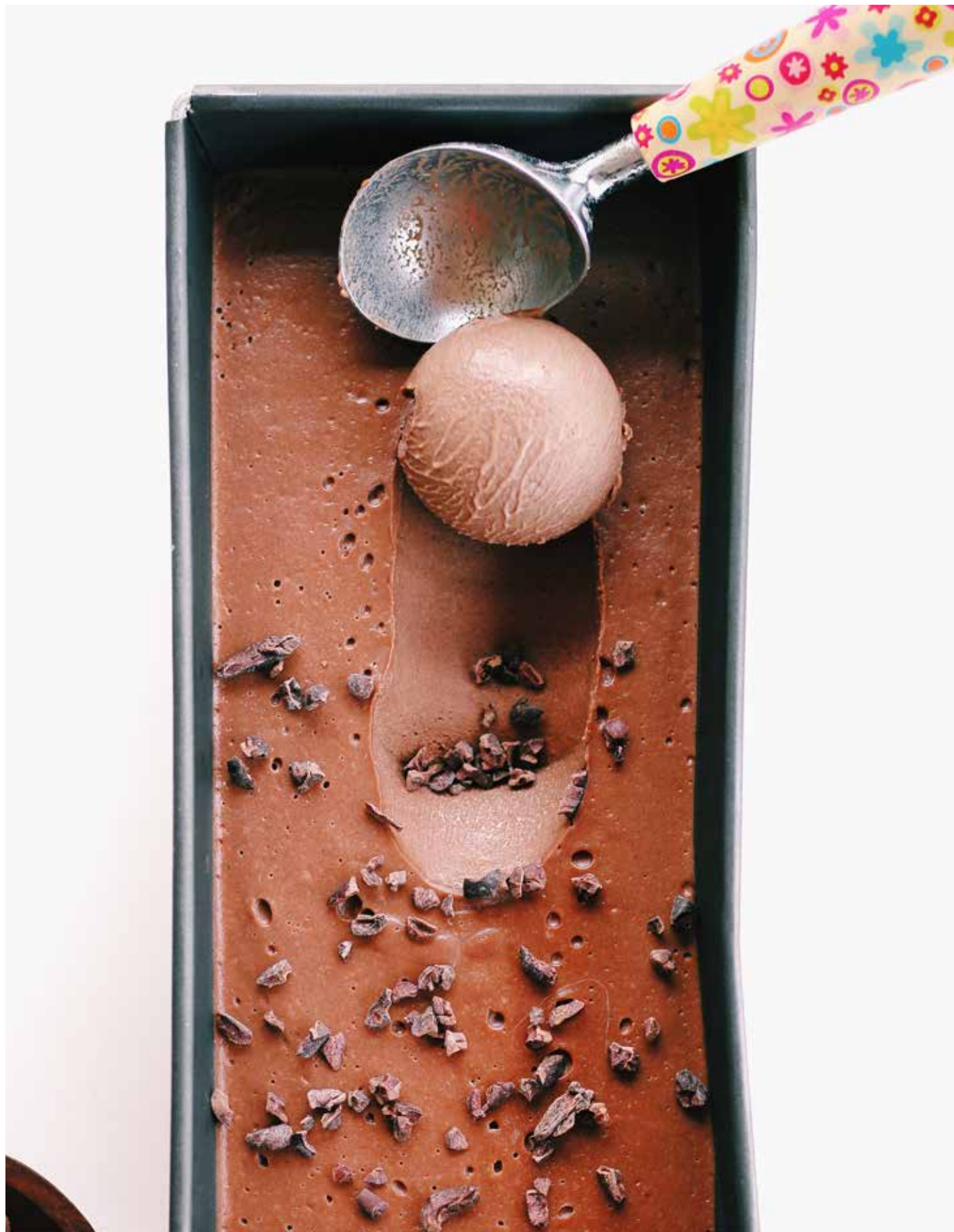
50 ml cane sugar syrup

50 ml Orange Liquor – Cointreau

Pour all into the glass jar and place in the fridge over night

I used the cinnamon and the cardamom to give the white wine sangria a touch of spiced flavors

Here are a few great non alcoholic beverages to enjoy for the festival of colors!



Ice cream floats

Ingredients:

- 3 scoops vanilla ice cream in a tall glass
- Pure orange juice over the ice cream
- Top it with a dash of sprite
- Fresh fruits mocktail

Chilly virgin mohito

- Two tbl spoons brown sugar
- Two whole lemons
- Mint leaves (small bunch)
- 1 green chilly chopped
- Crush them in the glass using a muddler or a tall spoon
- Add ice cubes till the top of the glass
- Add club soda
- Add a dash of sprite
- Fresh mint leave to garnish


Coke Float

- Three scoops of coffee ice cream
- Add coke
- Top it with whipped cream

- Fruits basket of juices
- 100 ml Orange juice
- 50 ml Pomegranate juice
- 100 ml Water melon juice
- 100 ml Carrot juice
- Mint leaves
- Slice of orange to garnish
- Enjoy your beverages this Holi... 🌈



— SUMEET KUMAR —



Over 25 years of multi-faceted experience, in the hospitality industry. A Bachelor of Science with Honors Graduate from Swiss Hotel Association Global Hospitality Management Institution in Switzerland. Today, he has set up his own business in Jaipur, Tif Kitchen Cafe * Restaurant.

Experience the finest 'ACTIVE HOLIDAYS'



Club Med, the premium all-inclusive resort brand is well regarded as the biggest sports school in the world providing an immersive active holiday experience for Indian travellers. From relaxed to extreme sports, guests can make their choice with over 60 activities across all Club Med resorts around the world most of them included in the resort package making it one of the best active holiday all-inclusive vacation experiences.

Land sports – Imagine a holiday playing tennis by the sea or golf on the highest golfing green in Europe with a full view of Mont Blanc. Children can play on a trapeze and try out many sports at Club Med Creactive Circus School, led by the Cirque du Soleil; all this and more under the all-inclusive experience at Club Med resorts. Among the great variety of Club Med sports, one can choose between indoor and outdoor activities ranging from mountain biking, nature hikes and trails, Pilates, squash to table tennis. Bali, Bintan Island, and Phuket resorts have an archery school, flying trapeze, fitness and



Golf schools within the properties with instructors training guests of all levels. Flying Trapeze at Club Med Kani is the only resort in Maldives with a stunning view on the lagoon. Club Med Bintan Island has a 27-hole championship course designed by golf legend, Gary Player, recipient of the Asia Gold Awards 2017 for the best course in Indonesia. The resort is also known for Aerial Yoga sessions by the beach surround by the island's raw natural beauty.

Water sports – As for water sports, one can go full steam ahead on a catamaran or opt-in for a dozen water activities in the most exotic locations like Maldives and Mauritius. A stay at Club Med Kani or the Finolhu Villas resorts gives guests a chance to go sailing and spot stingrays

and turtles or head out on kayaks and stand up paddleboards to explore the pristine Indian ocean waters of Maldives. Besides these activities, the all-inclusive experience also includes a snorkeling tour twice a day unveiling the best coral life. Additionally, one can take lessons in surfing and advanced PADI Open Water Dives. The adventure kind must experience flyboarding for a spectacular sky-high view of the island. La Plantation d'Albion Club Med and Club Med La Pointe aux Canonnières in Mauritius offers water activities where one can discover preserved coves, connect with the dolphins or embark on a family diving adventure among coral reefs and swordfishes.

Club Med, founded in 1950 by Gérard Blitz, invented the all-inclusive holiday club concept, adding in activities especially for children with the creation of the Mini Club in 1967. Led by its pioneering spirit, Club Med seeks out exceptional destinations and sites. Today, Club Med is the world's leading provider of upscale, all-inclusive holiday packages with a French touch for families and working couples. Club Med operates nearly 70 resorts, of which 85% are rated Premium & Exclusive Collection. Present in 30 countries around the world, the Group employs more than 23,000 Gentils Organisateurs (GOs) and Gentils Employés (GEs), representing 110 nationalities. 🇫🇷



Of colour palettes exploding and mouth-watering Gujiyas: **Holi**

As the Sun moves towards the Northern Hemisphere, the temperatures soar, pushing our woollens away, and bring in the breezy summery clothes. The flowers bloom as nature romances the soul. In India, Holi signals the oncoming spring in the most colourful way.

In the month of Phalgun, on the full moon day, the evening marks the beginning of the festival, as people circumambulate the bonfire. The next day, North and Western India are shades and hues of all colours known as people young and old play with colours and water till afternoon. Communities partake in the carousing on the occasion of Holi. Radha Krishna idols are dolled up and carried in palanquins along the main streets of the city. Devotional hymns are sung, colours are applied, and song and dance sequences in the name of God are performed.

Legends keep the spirit alive
When Krishna came to visit Radha and teased her and her friends, he was chased away by the ladies in Barsana. The tradition is kept alive today as men from Nandgaon visit Barsana to be hit by women with sticks. They have to protect

themselves from the sticks using shields. At the Radha Rani temple in Barsana in Uttar Pradesh, Lathmar Holi is celebrated in the only temple dedicated to Radha. It is a touristic attraction indeed as thousands gather to witness it. Women beat men with sticks, called lathis, and the latter protect themselves with shields. Songs are sung to attract women's attention, who chase men away by hitting them with sticks.

The legends around Holi signify the triumph of good over evil. Once there was a demon king, Hiranyakashyap, whose son Prahlad refused to worship him. He was a devotee of Lord Vishnu, while his father wanted everyone in the kingdom to worship him. Disappointed, he asked his sister Holika to sit in blazing fire with Prahlad, wanting the latter to die. Holika's boon of being unharmed by fire did not work, and she died. Prahlad was saved as



arrow on Shiva to bring him back to his original self. Angered, Shiva opened his third eye and burnt Kaamadeva to ashes. Bereaved wife Rati prayed to Shiva to revive Kaamadeva, to which he agreed. It is believed that Kaamadeva was burnt on the day of Holi. It is thus called Kamavilas, Kaman Pandigai and Kama Dahanam. **Celebrations and festivities galore**

For places associated with Radha and Krishna, Holi brings with it colours and mischief out in the open, as the towns of Mathura, Vrindavan, Barsana and Nandgaon come alive on the occasion of Holi.

he kept chanting Lord Vishnu's name, who blessed the devotee and saved his life. In many parts, effigies of Holika are burnt to mark this. In yet another folklore, an ogress Pootna was appointed by Lord Krishna's uncle, Kansa, to kill him. When she disguised and offered to feed baby Krishna, he sucked her blood and laid her to death. Effigies of Pootna are also burnt to signify end of darkness. In the southern parts of India, Lord Kaamadeva is worshipped, to depict the sacrifice he made for the worldly beings. When Lord Shiva was in deep meditation over the loss of Sati, the worldly affairs went awry and gods requested the deity of love and passion to shoot his love

"Yashomatimaiya se bole Nandlala, Radha kyun gori, main kyun kala". The song translates to English as- Nandlala (Krishna) complains to his mother Yashoda about his complexion being darker than Radha's. To this, Yashoda asked him to colour Radha's face in whichever colour he wanted, making her look like him. Playful young Krishna applied colour on Radha and other gopis using water guns, and that tradition turned into a festival. The entire country celebrates Holi, as do the Indian diaspora in other parts of the world. Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Malaysia, Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, and United States of America are drenched in the colours of



Holi. Nepal celebrates Holi as a national festival, with goddess Saraswati being worshipped in Vajrayogini temples.

With tropical rainforests in abundance and Fort Zeelandia present, the Phagwa festival (as it is called here) is celebrated as a national holiday in Suriname. It is customary to wear old whites when playing with colours here. Close by in Guyana, known for its cricket and calypso music, the main celebrations in the capital Georgetown are held at Mandir in Prashad Nagar.

In the South Pacific, in the archipelago of over 300 islands, Fijians celebrate Holi by singing folksongs called PhaagGaaian celebrating the love of Radha Krishna. Straight from a postcard perfect picture, Bali in Indonesia celebrates Holi enthusiastically. Mauritius in the Indian Ocean is home to beaches and lagoons known to the world over. The festivities in Mauritius around Holi celebrate the beginning of spring and is celebrated with great fervour. Further

North in the United Kingdom, Holi is a jamboree of colours and merriment, as people enjoy the festival of colours. Across the Atlantic Ocean, the United States is home to a large number of Hindu believers, who participate in the revelries of Holi. ***Revelries colouring India in all shades***

Closer home in Vrindavan, Holi is a 16-day long festival. Special rituals are performed in praise of Lord Krishna. Earthen pots filled with butter are hung high for boys and men to reach. Women make the task harder by throwing coloured water on them and singing songs. In the last few years, widows in Vrindavan, along with those from Varanasi, have started celebrating Holi, with colours anointing not only their joyous faces but lives as well. As colours of Holi paint their plain white saris, the happiness is evident in their smiles, in their laughter.

History has it that the freedom fighters who fought in India's revolt of 1857 had organised a fair in Kanpur. This was

called Ganga Mela as it was held along the banks of river Ganga, and continues to be organised till date. Holi is given a musical touch by the neighbours in Uttarakhand, who celebrate Baitihki Holi, Khari Holi and Mahila Holi, with Holiyars singing classical ragas. Punjab celebrates Holi Mohalla, a 3-day event where martial arts are depicted, fairs are held, and folk theatrical performances take place. Guru Gobind Singh had initiated this, the last of ten Sikh gurus.

Pushkar in Rajasthan is a special place on Holi. A holy town, it is suggested to keep your camera ready- waterproofed and on a full battery- because there are going to be a plethora of pictures and videos. At least a thousand people with hands up in the air, dancing to the techno music, covered in blue, green, pink, red, yellow, all wet and happy would greet you here.

Not without Gujiya, Kaanji and Bollywood!

Any festivity is incomplete without




food and music. Gujiya, a deep-fried sweet packing milk solids and dried fruits in a flour shell, is especially made on Holi. It is a hard to resist delicacy, and nothing makes Holi better than Gujiya. With lots of carbs going inside our bodies, a drink to cool it all down is essential. Kaanji does wonders for this. Beetroot infused tangy water is taken in copious amounts by everyone as they enjoy the Holi celebrations. Bollywood fulfilled our wishes as it created many songs for the festival. Peppy thumping music, dancing people with faces coloured, and food to keep the energy levels high- Holi is a beautiful celebration of the oncoming spring and summer.

As Holi festivities spread colour and love, people are now moving to organic colours instead of chemical ones. The latter would cause skin allergies and

are now being replaced by their organic counterparts. Often, like the olden days, people use natural colours made from dried leaves and flowers. So turmeric, henna, neem, sandalwood, indigo, beetroot et cetera are used to colour each other on the colourful festival.

Holi is a celebration of spring, love, bonding, and new beginnings. People often travel to various parts of India and the world to partake in the revelry on this vibrant festival. Dear reader, go ahead and experience a different Holi this year, I encourage you to. Go explore the rituals that are followed at other places, the delicacies you can treat your taste buds to, and the addition of a new experience in your arsenal. I wish the readers a happy, safe and blessed Holi. Happy travelling to you! 🇮🇳



— SRISHTI VERMA —
 I am Srishiti Verma, a Delhi-based freelance travel writer. I love reading and travelling, with a special place for lofty mountains in my heart. When not studying, I can be found trying to click my dog's pictures (my furry boy hates the camera)!

KOLKATA AND NOSTALGIA

When we look back in our childhood, all we can see is life full of colours. Life is always full of surprises but the colour of childhood memories is something, which stays with you forever.

For me my most memorable journey has always been visiting my grandma's place, during the summer vacation.

Though, today I have travelled many places around the country and so, but the path that takes me to my Grandma's place have always remained very special.

Those were the Days.....

The train journey, the hawkers calling 'Chai-chai', the fight with sibling for the window seat, and gossip with sibling on the upper berth, these are some beautiful colorful page of my childhood.

Entire year, we used to wait for the summer vacation, and before the vacation would start our tickets for our home-town Kolkata, would be booked in advance. Shopping for the vacation would start a month prior to the vacation, and packing



continues till the last day before leaving the house.

Then finally the day arrives, when we would be all ready to start our journey for our most beloved place, 'Kolkata'.

There is a very beautiful song in a bengali movie, 'Kolkata, tumio hete dekho Kolkata', this song tells you if you want to see the real beauty of Kolkata, walk down the streets of Kolkata. Though, I am a Delhite, born and raised in Delhi. But the warmth, the charm of this beautiful city Kolkata, always attracts me.

Being raised by a super awesome dad, we were taught to be content and happy with whatever you have, and appreciate each moment. With these thoughts in mind, we used to start our journey, a 3-tier sleeper train journey 20years back, was so full of life, which a flight to Kolkata couldn't replace ever.

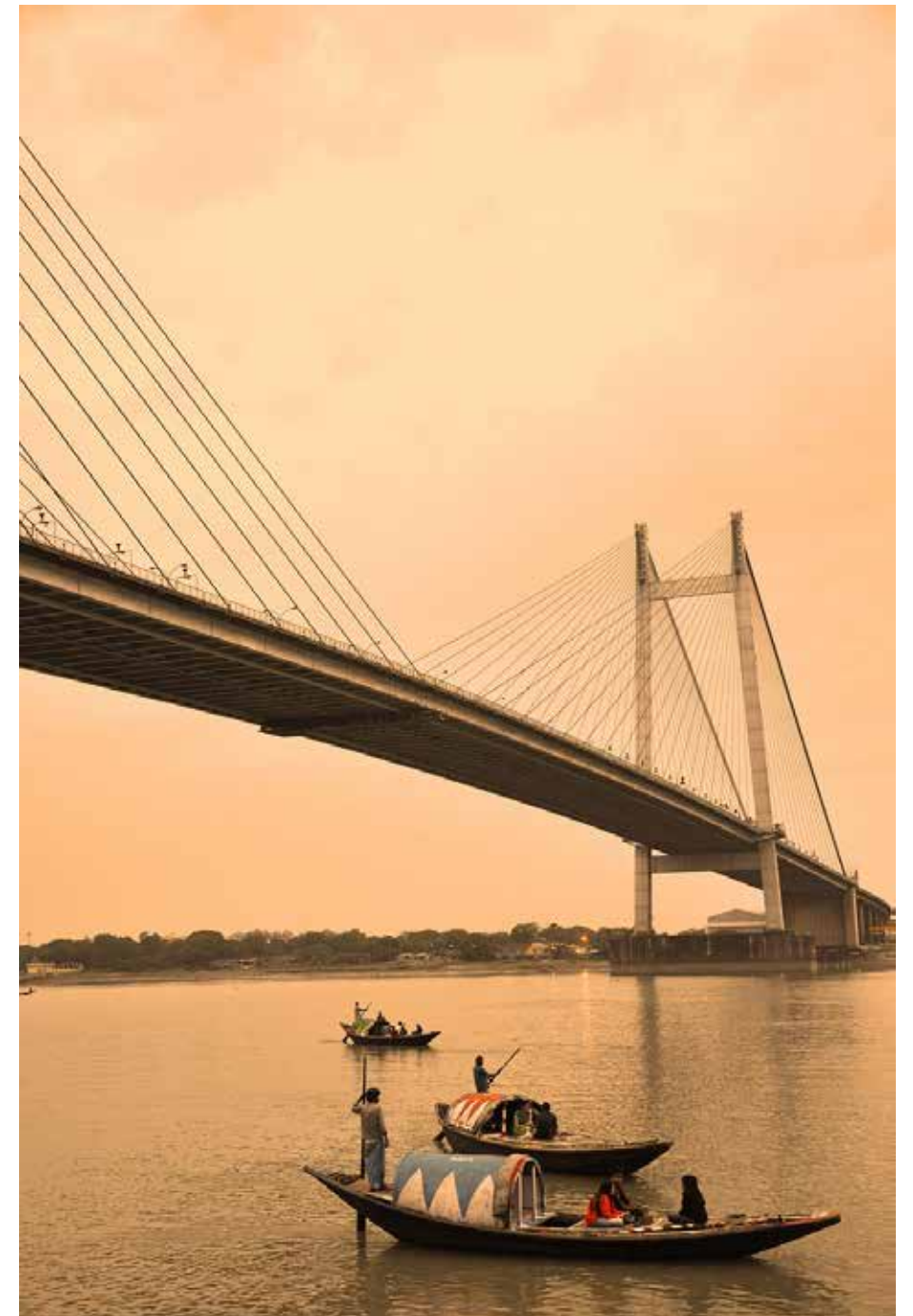
The journey used to continue with long chit chats, and enjoying every other snacks, that hawker will get, whether it is Bengal special 'Jhalmuri', or 'Ghugni', or Kanpur's famous 'Aaloo Puri'. Train from Delhi to Howrah was an overnight journey, and still is. You can sense Kolkata is not far, when you can see the change in the landscape, the leaves in the tree are greener, number of coconut trees, palm trees, Mango trees increases the more you approach towards the eastern India.

So, the next morning, small ponds in the villages, large fields of countryside welcomes you to West Bengal, and finally when you hear your parents saying, get ready 'We reached Howrah', that used to be like music to my ears.

Majestic Howrah...

'Howrah Station is one of the primary station serving Kolkata, other than 'Sealdah'. It is also one of the oldest and largest railway complex in India. Moving ahead, as we come out of the station our cousin and relatives would be waiting for us, to take us home in the Yellow Taxi.

Yes, 'Yellow Ambassador' is the Pre-Paid taxi service of Kolkata. This yellow taxi used to take us to our destination crossing the famous Howrah Bridge. Fresh breeze from the banks of river Hooghly, which flows between Kolkata and Howrah, used to make the journey much more memorable.



Howrah Bridge again has its own legendary story to tell. Howrah Bridge is the most iconic symbol and pride of the people of Kolkata. It is one of the most popular bridges in India. This bridge was made of 23,000 tons of steel by Tata Steel; however, the most interesting fact about the bridge is that there are no nuts and bolts in the structure.

Steel riveting was done in place of nuts and bolts.

The journey from the station to my grandma's place used to take an hour or so, which is little less now, thanks to the new roadways and better managed traffic. The experience of the childhood was very different from what it is now, taxi used to drop us to the nearest possible point, as the roads still used to be kuccha, and narrow, ponds were there on either side of the

lane. This is now replaced with multi-story society complexes. So, I am not really sure, whether, I am happy that now, we have proper roads, that drops us right in front of our house, or I was happy when we actually used to walk down those narrow lanes.

Bengali and Our Love for Food
The day in my grandma’s place used to start with nice sumptuous Bengali Lunch, prepared by my aunt, which used to include, Steam Rice, Ghee (Clarified Butter), Aalu-posto bhaja (Potato Fried with poppy seeds), Bhaja mugger daal (Lentil Soup), Begun Bhaja (Brinjal Fry), Macher Jhol(Light Fish Curry), Mishti Doi(Sweet Curd), and finally the Rosogolla.

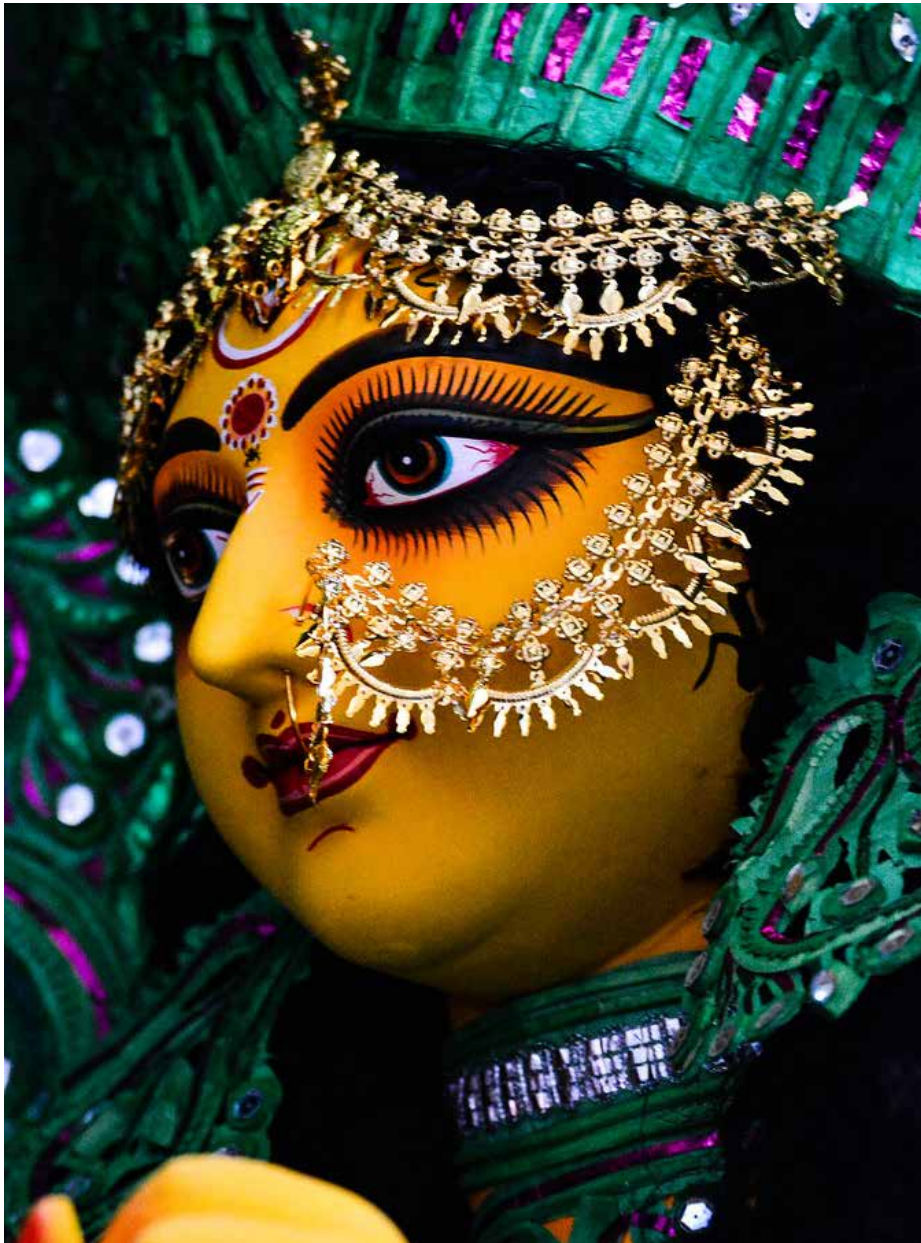
And I am blessed, that even though my grandma is not anymore, but we are still served the same, with much love and warmth.

Kolkata and Bengali as a community are known for their love for food. Even when we are having lunch, in the dining table at that very moment we will be discussing some other food preparation, and will be planning for the next meals menu.

Some of the must try food that one should explore, when travelling to Kolkata are: ‘Phuchka’, unlike ‘Golegappe’, the water used in this is tamarind water, with spicy potato mash filling inside. ‘Churmur’ another such street food, which the same vendor can offer, which is another delicacy one must try. ‘Phucka’ competition with the cousins was a must, which was how many one can have. And we maintained the ritual, to have this competition even now, when we visit our hometown.

Kolkata Roll, is another mouth-watering street food which is getting quite popular these days, even outside Kolkata. The specialty is the filling inside, the ingredients used, and one such ingredient is Kasundi(close to Mustard sauce), but have its own tangy flavor.

In the main course, the most popular is Kolkata Biryani. Now, many of you may actually think, Biryani is Biryani. What is special about Kolkata Biryani? Well, the Koklata Biryani is inspired by Awadhi style, and has a very unique flavor, not much spicy, very mild, and along with your juicy mutton pieces, it is served with a Potato,



and Boiled egg. The aroma, itself will wins your heart, if you are a food lover. ‘Arsalan Restaurant’ is one of the most famous destinations to get the best Biryani. Kosha Mangsho (Mutton curry) is another most loved dish from the city.

City of Celebrations

For me, Kolkata was the most favorite destination for summer vacation. Though, it is a bit humid at that time. The ideal time of the year to visit Kolkata and other majestic parts of West Bengal is around February March. Once, I did manage to enjoy the beautiful weather of Kolkata, in the month of March. This is the time when the country celebrates the festival of colour, in West Bengal they celebrate the same, and call it ‘Dol Purnima’. Though like any other parts of India, this city too gets immersed in colour, but celebration of ‘Dol Purnima’, celebrates the love of Lord Krishna and Radha. Believe is that the Lord Krishna expressed his loved to beloved Radha on this special day.

‘Dol Utsav’ is something one should not miss, if you are in West Bengal around this time of the year. ‘Dol Utsav’ also known as ‘Basanta Utsav.’ The legendary Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore introduced ‘Basant Utsav’ in Santiniketan, Birbhum district of West Bengal to refabricate the magic of Holi.

With the onset of spring the entire Visva-Bharati University which was



founded by Rabindranath Tagore gears up to be painted in different shades of colors. My visit to the university during the ‘Dol Utsav’, is one of a lifetime experience. Though, the primary theme colour that takes the centre stage is yellow color, but you can see different shades of bright colour of spring around you. Students and faculty clad in yellow colored clothes. University also presents spectacular cultural programme by the students. The colours of spring, music in the air, make the festival worth cherishing for lifetime.

Talking about festivity and not mentioning ‘Durga Puja’ will be an injustice to the reader, West Bengal is the birth place of ‘Durga Puja’. When the northern India is busy celebrating Navratre, Bengalis celebrate the homecoming of their beloved daughter ‘Durga’, from Kailash. The city gets ready like a new bride, shining, and glowing with happiness.

Coming back to days of childhood, and my Kolkata diaries, some places left lasting memories are, my Tonga ride from ‘Victoria’ to ‘Maidaan’, magical ‘Birla Planetarium’, The ‘Alipore Zoo’, the adventurous ‘Science Museum’ and last but not the least the famous ‘Park Street’

The magic of Park Street, I realized much later in my life. Park Street is known for its old colonial mansions, famous restaurants, and for nightclubs which exist since the glory days of the 60s.

Heritage of India

My Kolkata vacation always used to be incomplete, without the tram ride. Initially, it was an important means of transport, but at present it is more popular amongst the tourists. Running alongside the other vehicles in the busy street, the charm of tram cannot be ignored. Trams have been an inherent part of the history and culture of Kolkata. In India, Tram ride can be only possible in Kolkata.


My dad, never used to miss the opportunity to make each vacation memorable, whether it is tram ride, my first metro train ride, or a boat ride from Dakshineswar Temple to Belur Math. When family is together, everything around you becomes special and colourful.

From Kolkata as a pivotal point, we also made it a point, to explore some new destination of West Bengal in each

vacation. Sometimes, it was ‘Darjeeling’, sometime it was ‘Dooars’, sometimes we explored the ‘Raj Baari’ in ‘Mednipur’, sometime we explored the beauty of ‘Maithon Dam’, in ‘Assansol’. Lush green fields, experiencing the tides in Ganga river, sitting in the ‘Princep Ghat’, and sitting in tranquility is only possible in this city of joy. Where, people are just looking for opportunity to celebrate life.

As we grew up, the number of visit to this city of joy kept on reducing. I miss all those beautiful innocent days when we used to hold the finger of our dad, and were always ready to experience something new. Now, it is the wedding invitation, or some other family that takes us to Kolkata. But, I really wish to explore much more colours of this beautiful city, which has lot more to offer.

In comparison to other Metro cities, you might not see Kolkata as a very happening city, but the city has lot more in its palate. One must visit at least once, with enough days in hand, to cherish the beauty of this beautiful serene city. 🇮🇳



DEBJANI SAHU

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SPIRIT OF SPRING IN KARNATAKA

Significance of colourful cattle

I was almost taken to a trance with rhythmic drums beats .I saw colourfully decorated bulls all standing with their care takers as if all poised for a fancy dress competition and all ready to walk the ramp. This is an age old tradition in rural parts of Karnataka. During the three day harvest festival and arrival of spring in the month of January 14, 15 a d 16, cattle especially bulls are bathed, smeared in turmeric and other holi colours and decorated vibrantly than human beings. It is believed to protect the cattle from bugs. There is an interesting legend as to why bulls are given so much of hype during this time.

The Arrival of Spring

Spring is nature’s way of saying “let’s party “-Robin Williams. The sweet smell of spring is a refreshing time. The warm sunshine feels so good on our skin, and melts away our winter blues. This is one season romanticized by famous poets all over the world and more to come. Spring adds new life to all that is and so goes the celebration of spring all over the world.

I was more inclined and fascinated to experience the celebration of colours and arrival of spring in Rural Karnataka with



their mirth of games during this harvest season. It felt more down to earth, raw and very close to nature spirits all coming alive, blooming with new beginning.

It marks the arrival of spring and ‘celebrated as harvest festival among farmers. It is the end of the month with winter solstice and beginning of longer brighter and warmer days.It is spiritually a day dedicated to Sun and devotees mark this day by taking a dip in river Ganges in India.

A shared cultural practise is making sweets from sesame and jaggery. This sweet is a symbolism for being together in peace and joyful ways, despite the uniqueness and differences in people.

For most parts of Karnataka, this period is a early stage of agricultural cycle, where crops have been grown and hard work in the fields is mostly over. This signifies a period of socialising and family getogether, taking care of cattle, celebrating around bonfires and flying kites.



It is said that Lord Shiv had asked his close disciple Nandi to inform the ways of praying to him which was wrongly instructed to the people on earth and hence he was punished to work and help the farmers in the field to cultivate and bring prosperity through crops.

Mangalore International Kite Festival 2020

“Throw your dreams into space like a kite and you do not know what it will bring back – a new life, a new friend, a new love, a new country “well this old wise saying coincided with the concept of tradition coinciding with International Kite Festival 2020 held in coastal part of Karnataka in Mangalore , which happens once in two years regularly in Panabur Beach.

In olden days, generally it was done in the early hours of the morning when the




sun’s rays were bright but not too harsh. Also during the kite flying, the human body was exposed to the sun for long hours. The early morning sun was considered beneficial for the skin and body. Since winter is also the time of a lot of infection and sickness, by basking in the sun Hindus believed that bad bacteria on their bodies would be cleared to a certain extent, creating a fun way of sun basking, cool.

Dance to Glory

Mention has to be made on the rich folk dance of the Halakki tribe in the coastal areas of Uttarakannada district of Karnataka. One of their most celebrated events is called “Suggi Dance” performed during holi festival. They use unique turban which is decorated with colourful ornaments, small wooden birds, and peacock feathers which resembles a tree. A good observation can show that the steps or moves or formations can show elements of nature such as waves of the sea, curves of growing vines, flowing rivers.etc.

To conclude, the gaiety of celebrating with the spirit of seasons and nature and animals, respect and honouring our mother earth is so much to be seen among the rural festivities in Karnataka. Ts is a heartfelt way of remembering the importance of human connection, interdependence and interplay with nature. 🌈

◀ SHRUTHI SINGH ▶



Hobby – Belly dance trainer & performer and tarot reader Description – I love all the good things in life. My passion for nature, esoteric topics, poetry and exotic night life destinations keep my foot busy to explore whatever resonates with my soul deep travel.

Love is in the Air

Are you looking forward for a vacation to rekindle the flames with a romantic escape? Though we believe in celebrating love every day, in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, sometimes we need reasons to celebrate it furthermore in a special way. When love is in the air, no matter what the ether changes and fuses to your mood; as the Valentine's Day is still fresh in our mind, the romance is still in the breeze. Travel Links brings a list of scintillating destinations to epitomize a romantic eve at its best. From private beach to starry night, thatched roof bungalow to luxury resorts, from beaches to tropical islands, there is something for everyone. Get acquainted with the some chosen destinations for you and your special one. So, let's check what all you should have in your bucket list.

When you are in love you fall for the person in most uncertain moments. Existence of that special person around you makes it too happening for you to fear the absence. You don't know how to bridge the gap between the serene certainties, and the wildest uncertainties and create an eternity out of it. An eternity that carries an urge to transform every dark insecurity into a coruscate of beaming hope.

Travel Links Top 10 ❤️ Romantic Destinations



VENICE

If one goes through research and data, different opinions may occur. But for most of us, our dream destination has always remained 'Venice'. Being an old school soul, we used to love old Bollywood movie songs. And many Bollywood movies beautifully captured the beauty of Venice as the most romantic city of the world. It has been very rightly considered as one of the most popular honeymoon destination. Venice can be the perfect place for a romantic gateway with our

soul mate.

One of the most romantic things to do in Venice is to do nothing! 'Cuddlongh Gondola' ride through the meandering canals of the city with the special one can be the most memorable ride, and for those who love theater and opera, experience it in Venice like never before at Teatro La Fenice theatre. Romantic show is enough to light up the moment between two special people romantically involved.



BELGIUM

Further to move on, next in the list is Belgium's 'Lake of Love.' As per the belief of the legends, couples who cross the bridge over the "Lake of Love" will be together forever. "Lake of Love" also called as 'The Minnewater' is the old port of medieval Bruges.

Though as the name suggests, the story is not happy; it is rather tragic. According to the legends, there lived a young lady called Minna who was in love with a man called Stromberg. However, her father arranged her marriage with someone else, and thus she eloped. Her love Stromberg started searching for her, and found her dead on the shores of the lake. Stromberg buried her on the bottom of the lake to make their love immortal in this water. From then on, the lake is known as the Lake of Love. One can enjoy the serene scenery from the lake bridge or from the benches along the lake or by just stroll through the calm Minnewaterpark. This place is also famous for the swan which is the city's emblem. So, if one is looking for an excellent place for picturesque photos, this is the right place.

SANTORINI

Third in list as per our survey, is Santorini. Nothing can beat a romantic walk, but when it's Santorini, the experience is mesmerizing. Santorini is an island in the southern Aegean Sea of Greece's mainland. Blue Sky, black sand beach, whitewashed villages, cobbled pavement, and beautiful sea- together they make a perfect destination for a soulful romantic escape. And when we talk about the most romantic destination in Santorini, the first picture that comes to mind is of 'Oia'. Blue domed churches, around the whitewashed villages, wide sea and witnessing the Sunset at Oia can be the perfect quaint moment, and must be in one's bucket list.





BORA BORA

Beaches and water always attract attention of the couples. Pristine white sandy beaches, and quite time in Bora Bora, Tahiti- Travel Links suggests that this can be the most enthralling experience with the loved one. Bora-Bora lagoon resembles an artist's palette, full of bright colours. Turquoise sea and a lush green interior make this destination awe-inspiring. An ultimate romantic destination, located at the north west of Papeete. Amazing sunsets, flowering hibiscus, coconut plantations, sand-fringed islets make this place a perfect natural paradise.

ZAKYNTHOS

Yet another offbeat destination for a unique romantic escape is this beautiful Greek Island. This beauty is called by Venetians 'Fiore di Levante' or the Flower of the East. Very rightly, it was considered as the jewel of the empire. Zakynthos is the perfect place to sail through the beautiful beaches. Cavalcade of beaches is captivating. Each beach is much more magical than the previous one. Turquoise green water, white cliffs and ubiquitous white sand add drama to the enchanting beauty. This landscape is not only famous for beaches, but the center of the town, Bokhali, is another attraction of the town to spend a lovely time with your partner. One can admire the panoramic view of this beautiful place.



MALDIVES

Maldives diary is another chapter one should write in their book of love. Scintillating beaches, serene blue sea, lagoon lapping the beach, and coconut and palm trees waving on the shore, relaxing spa, what else can you ask for. Resort in Maldives can turn into a love nest designed to fulfill all the passionate dreams. Villas are secluded in lush vegetation or isolated above a lagoon. Experience the magical moment with the beautiful sunset where the sky turns golden until darkness arises; and who doesn't want the sea waves to kiss their feet and the sand to slowly sweep beneath you. Experience Maldives for a quixotic gateway. Holiday in the Maldives is yet another opportunity to be together in a way that has not been explored before.



VIETNAM

Vietnam has limitless scenic landscape. This destination is more popular for its untouched beaches, old Buddhist pagodas, countryside and also for the bustling cities. Warm cultural aspect of Vietnam further makes it a popular choice for couples. Mai Chau is one of the calmest places in Vietnam. The lush green fields and mountains in combination make a perfect hideout for couples. Situated in the Hoàng Liên Sơn mountains of Vietnam, Sa Pa is popular amongst the adventurous couples, as it is a destination for trekking. Sa pa is a serene-yet-colourful countryside. Terraced paddy cultivation makes the destination perfect for a secluded getaway.



JAPAN

For those who love fresh air and colours all around, nothing can beat Japan. Though Japan is quite popular for multiple other reasons, but this place in Asia can be counted as one of the most romantic destinations. Many years back, only Bollywood could realize the beauty of this place and made 'Love in Tokyo'. Onset of spring season is celebrated throughout Asia in different ways. In Japan it is popularly known as Sakura- or the cherry blossoms. This time of the year, the city is painted in the most beautiful colours of nature. It should be in one's bucket list to be in this paradise soon. There's something whimsical about seeing the rainbow, beautiful mountains, Sakura with our soul mate away from the crowd in a distant land.

And if you are single, this goes for you. Komizu Dera is one of the most popular shrines in Kyoto, preferred by many single as well as by couples. Belief is that there is a small shrine behind the main hall which is called as the "the stone of love". So, according to legends, if one wants to find true love, there are 2 big stones placed in the center of the shrine. One should first touch the stone and close their eyes continue walking wards the other stone and, if they find the other stone and touch it, then they will find true love. I would surely like to check this out, what about you?

MAURITIUS

Though as per Travel Links survey it stands last, as the place is quite popular for the lovebirds, but Mauritius can never be enough.

Mauritius will always stay fresh in one's mind even after one bids goodbye to the place. The beauty of the place begins the time you land. So, remember to book a window seat for the special one. The island boasts inspiring landscapes that will certainly keep us dazzled. Flic-en- Flac is a dreamy beach of the island, as it is the only spot where you will envision perfect sunset in Mauritius. If you want a relaxing romantic break on an island to rejuvenate yourself and rekindle your relationship, an ideal destination for this is Mauritius.

Travelling with your loved one enhances the bonding and also infuses excitement in the relationship and renews feelings of intimacy, which sometimes takes a back seat when you are caught up in the hustle and bustle of routine life. Let us know how you are planning to surprise your partner this Valentine's.



INDONESIA

For those couples who enjoy art, nature, awesome cuisine and are creative, Travel Links advises you to explore Indonesia.

Sumba Island in Indonesia is one of the best places away from the hustle bustle of the city and Nihiwatu Beach here offers an intimate escape. Love is when one sits beside someone doing nothing and still feels content and happy. One can spend some such time doing nothing in this private beach, almost whispering sweet nothings to your loved one. Laze around on the beaches and then explore all of Indonesia's picturesque villages and have some delicious Indonesian cuisine.

One of the most beautiful nature reserves is Bali in Indonesia. Out of the thousand other islands of Indonesia, Bali has its own charm and beauty. There is a saying in Bali: "We have no art. We do everything as beautifully as possible." Indeed, be it art or culture, nature or people, everything about this place is serene and beautiful. 🌸



• DEBJANI SAHU •

Writer, Wanderlust, Free Spirit, Foodie and a Social Activist Interest and Research Area: Media, Diaspora, Education, Language



ALASKA! Aurora Borealis – Bask in the night and light



Vandana Mathur comes to life on this spectacular show of nature at Fairbanks Alaska known as Northern Lights. She talks to Ritu Ghai about the visual stimulation at Alaska and how this experience has ensured her return to this place in future.

“I suddenly decided to make a trip to Fairbanks Alaska. To enjoy a few days of solitude amidst the mountain ranges, pristine rivers and lakes of this white wonderland.

In just two days I packed my bags, determined to see Northern Lights, also known as the Aurora Borealis, so often talked about by people who have travelled to this place. Although there is no guarantee that the northern lights show will happen on any particular day but the chances of seeing this phenomenon is more in late winter months, typically on nights with clear skies. Since I stay in USA, it was easy for me to plan this tour. The total trip cost me \$4600 which included the flights, hotel stay, tours and cab fare. To add to the excitement, my niece who lives in Canada decided to join me.

A 5 ½ hours United Airlines flight from New Jersey took me to Seattle where I was joined by my niece. From Seattle, we took a 3 ½ hours flight to Fairbanks. We reached our destination around 2 am and as soon as we stepped out of the airport, the – 20F cold air hit us hard. Despite the extreme cold, we were eager and determined to catch the Northern Lights.

From the airport, a cab took us to Aurora Villa, pre booked for our stay. We self-checked into the modern and scenic room with long windows and heated floors to brave the biting cold weather. We were aware that due to winters, the sun was up for about 5 hours only.

After a little rest, we took a heritage tour of Fairbanks the very same day. It was a breathtaking drive along trees covered in white snow, so ethereal, scenic and crystal. The cab driver took us to Denali mountain site from where we saw the peak. We went to the huge Alaskan Pipeline and then downtown to have supper at a Thai Restaurant. Being vegetarians, we were



pleased with the choices available.

We then drove to University of Alaska, from where we saw the sunset. A beautiful moment as the sun went down, leaving behind a reddish orange sky with hues of purple. Still wanting to see more, we visited the museum in the university and then drove to the city of North Pole to visit the Santa Clause House where a larger than life three dimensional 50 feet statue of Santa stood alongside Santa's sleigh. The Santa Claus house is more like a gift shop with beautiful Christmas decorations and a small Santa's workshop for making toys.

After this tour, we returned to our hotel for a short relaxation.

Around 10 pm, we again went downtown for the Northern Light Tour. There were 7 people with us in the tour. The driver took us to cabin where we were provided with fresh dinner. After a while, on the advice of the guide, we stepped out at the glacial night just as hues of blue appeared. Tired but with eyes peeled to the sky, we looked forward to the appearance of Northern lights. What came next changed Alaska for me. An amazing dance of incandescent green, blue, red and purple shades painted the sky in a spellbinding colour spectacle among the twinkling stars. I heard myself gasp. As the sky became intense, more colours filled in. The guide explained that different atmospheric gases cause the different colours. I was dwarfed by this celestial show.

But one needs lots of dedication and patience to wait for the perfect sight which lasts for just a few minutes before fading back to normal. We were there for about 4 hours, enjoying the sight and meal. Many tribes, people and communities believe these lights to be the harbingers of good luck. But to me it was simply the greatest natural phenomenon on earth, a lifetime experience.

The next day we took a stroll around the city, all wrapped up in 4 layers of warm clothing. We then took a tour to Chena Hot Springs, Ice Museum and Northern Lights. The Aurora Ice Museum was an experience. The world's largest year-round ice environment had ice sculptures including entire rooms built out of ice, igloos, a giant chess set, and a full-sized pair of knights



jousting on horses. Even the entire bar is crafted from ice and the whole place is lit up with ice chandeliers.

We then went to immerse ourselves in the healing waters of mineral hot springs, where the outside temperature was -40 and inside we were covered with loads of mist as if we were the only two people there. A relaxing experience when we both has frost in our hair and eye lashes. Buried in the warm water, we looked up to see the black sky with shining stars. I would call it once in a life time experience.

After this we took dinner and drove back to our villa. On our way back we again saw the bright northern lights, flashing beautiful colors and changing shapes. There were so bright, clear and magical.

The last day was booked for dog sledding in North Pole. The morning starts with a visit by our tour advisor, Denver. As guided, we wear snow pants and snow boots with five layer of clothes before embarking on our journey. At first instance,



I thought the dogs are doing some gruelling work. But as 8 to 10 Alaskan Huskies teamed together at the sled, I could see their excitement, aching to run. We hopped on the sled and in a while got the hang of the balance as we sleighed past snowed trees and roads. It was a surreal experience and even my eyelashes were almost frozen. After half an hour of dog sledging, we headed to have some good food at a North Pole Chinese restaurant before returning to the warmth of the villa. Next morning, we catch a flight back home. Enriched with this 3 day magical experience of sunsets and sunrises that last forever, colours that stay forever and memories that remain forever.



A few tips to future travellers:

Be Prepared - Wear clothing to protect yourself from the extreme cold conditions. Jackets, insulated pants, insulated boots, Electric hand warmers and layers of warm clothing to survive the cold.

Warm drinks—Carry insulated thermos filled with hot water, tea, or coffee.

Since it might take hours to have the Northern lights to emerge on the sky. So carry snacks and food to munch while you stay awake to view this mesmerising glimpse.

Charge your phone batteries to last a few hours while your wait outside. Also a camera to catch these amazing lifetime moments. 📷

Inputs by Ritu Ghai

Of Kangaroos and Koalas- **Australia**



The general knowledge book in grade 3 had mentioned that kangaroos with their baby pouches, koalas bearing resemblance to teddy bears and the Great Barrier Reef are present in Australia. Three years later when the geography book had a lesson on Earth's movements, it came as a huge surprise to everyone in the class that Christmas in the southern hemisphere is celebrated in summers. So there could be no Santa Claus in pristine white snow riding on his sleigh in the Australian continent. People there have beach time on Christmas!

The Opera House in Sydney, Great Barrier Reef in the northeast, gold reserves in the west, and vast swathes of green forests inhabited by beautiful animals- Australia has it all, and more.

About Australia

Lying between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the continent nation is roughly divided into half by the Tropic of Capricorn running through it. The climate of the nation is favourable for the lush green cover that it is famous for. Eucalyptus trees are present here, and are home to the cute koalas. These trees have a special property of not only growing really fast, but also of conserving the water. The leaves of eucalyptus shut off the stomas and thus does not turn yellow or dried up in case of low rainfall or droughts. Also, the roots of the tree grow turning downward, which can be visualised as a corkscrew. 1766, on the ship of British Captain James Cook, eucalyptus travelled to various countries, moving out of its native environment for the first time.

Australia comprises of the mainland Australian continent, Tasmania island, Kangaroo Island, Fraser Island, and other 8200 islands within its maritime borders. Along with the capital Canberra in the southeast, most urban centres of Australia





are located on the coast, including Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, among others.

Capital Canberra

The capital is the seat of government, and the largest inland city. It is home to the Australian War Memorial which was built to commemorate war fatalities. In the evening, a tribute called ‘Last Post’ is paid. Another favourite among tourists is the Lake Burley Griffin in the city centre. It is named after the city’s architect. In the circumference of the Lake lie the National Gallery, National Museum, Captain Cook Memorial Jet, and the venue of the renowned Floriade festival, which celebrates spring like no other with more than a million flowers blooming.

If you are at the Australian War Memorial, take a two kilometre walk, or bike, or drive this distance. The path is well paved and provides a good trail to the Mount Ainslie. Do not forget to carry a light jacket, breeze can make you shiver. The view from Mount Ainslie promises to be a delightful scene which stays with you for long. The planning of the city can be well appreciated from here, while learning about the Australian battles as you walk here. If botany piques your interest, head straight to the National Botanic Gardens, home to the representatives of all important species of flora.

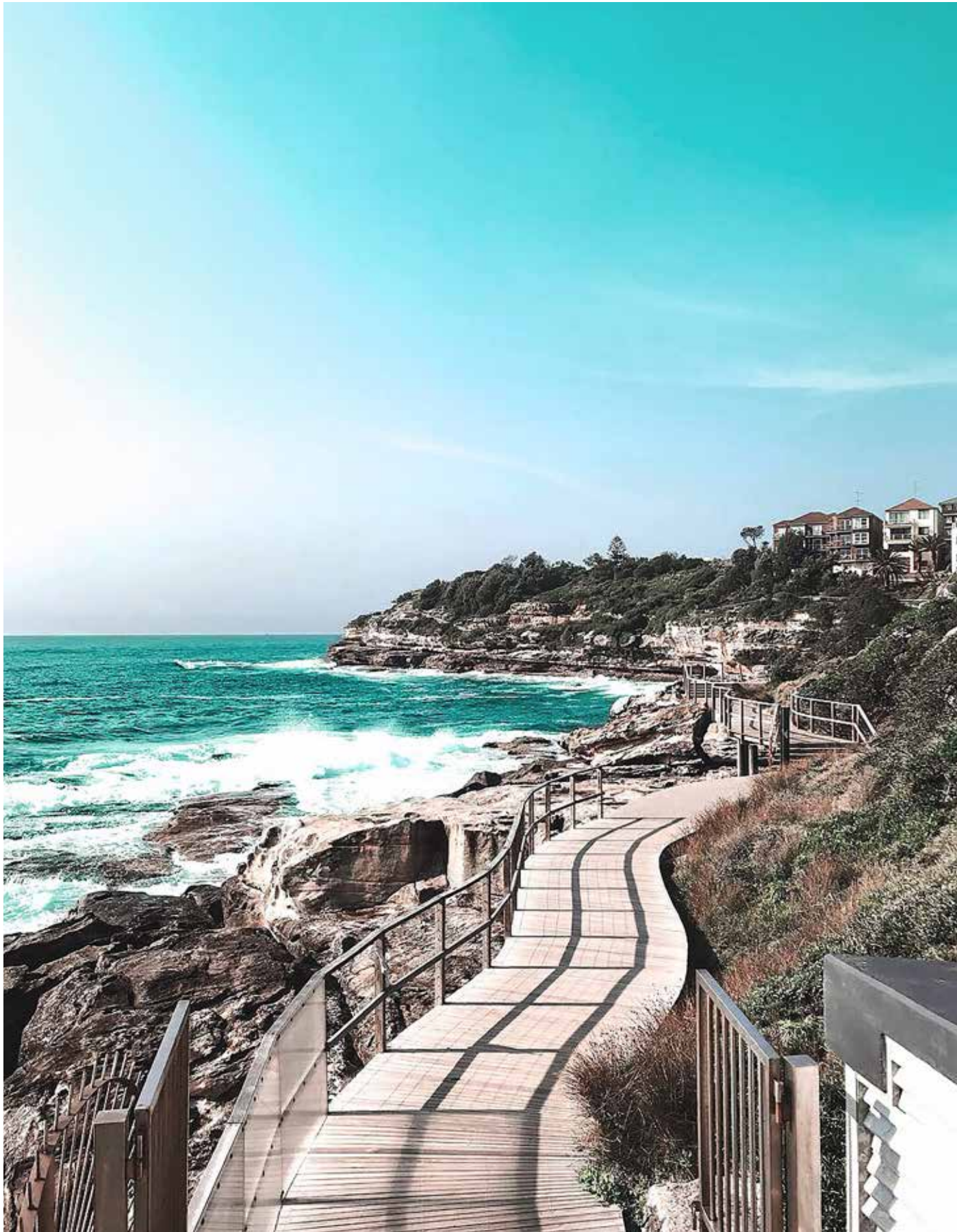
A two-hour drive can elevate you to a height of 2200m. Snowy Mountains are flocked by tourists all year round. You can hike at Kosciuszko Walk, or fish in the Lake Jindabyne; enjoy water sports, go for a horse ride here in summers, or just sit in the serene and peaceful environment. Winters bring with them a chill in the air and snow caps the mountains to provide for great slopes for all skiers.

Sydney: Opera House and Coathanger

Canberra lies at about a three hour drive from Sydney, the capital of New South Wales.

Sydney is synonymous with the Opera House- a multi-venue performing arts centre. Located at the Sydney Harbour, it is one of the most famous buildings built in the 20th century. It was inaugurated on 20 October 1973, with a total seating capacity of 5700 people. This is a UNESCO





World Heritage Site, designated in 2007. It is listed in the Australian National Heritage List, and in the New South Wales Heritage Register. It was designed by the Danish architect Jørn Utzon, and hosts over 1500 performances each year which have more than 1.2 million people in attendance. 8 million people visit the Opera House annually. The first performance was by Paul Robeson, who sang ‘Ol’ Man River’ to the construction workers whilst they had their lunch. Ever since, Birgit Nilsson, Joan Sutherland, Michael Buble, have performed here, among many others. In 1990, Nelson Mandela had addressed a crowd of forty thousand here.

From books to coffees, and swimming to historical visits, Sydney has something for everyone. It is exciting to visit Sydney throughout the year. If you too enjoy the laneways meandering and beautiful restaurants serving delectable food, Angel Place in city centre is the place to go to. Dining at the harbourside is a wonderful experience in itself and must not be missed; enjoying appetising delicacies under the moonlit sky here is a must-do. At the most famous beach in Australia, Bondi Beach, check out the cafes and restaurants for splendid views and yum food. Coathanger. That is what the locals call the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Built in 1932,

it is the world’s largest steel arch bridge. Two railway lines run along its length. The panoramas of the Bridge can be taken up a notch further by climbing it on an almost 3.5 hour climb to the top of the bridge.

Madame Tussaud’s, WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo, SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium and lots of shops and restaurants dot the Darling Harbour. There is the Chinese Garden of Friendship here to satiate the souls seeking some green, while a replica of Captain Cook’s ship, Endeavour, is present at the Australian National Maritime Museum. It is indeed a sight to behold as you marvel at the intricate design and beauty of the ship.

The Taronga Zoo is a delightful place to come closer to over 4000 animals. Kangaroos, emus, koalas, lemurs, lions, tigers, giraffes and seals are present here. The iconic amusement park built in the 1930s, Kuna Park sydney has a Wild Mouse rollercoaster, Tango Train, Coney Island, slideshow games and cotton candy for the little ones. And did you just say sand castles, for Sydney has numerous beaches do practice your paddling, sailing, snorkeling, kayaking or building beautiful sand castles. You can have a 360 degrees view of Sydney from the Sydney Tower Eye, looking right up to the Blue Mountains National Park.

Bushfires 2019

Australia is a cultural hub, booming with fun, activity, food and nature. It will seep into you and give you myriad memories along with enticing experiences to add to your mental scrapbook. It had shades of green, it has shades of blue and shades of sandy beaches with stick to hair like glue! In a major shock to the world, however, the green cover has been reduced to ashes, animals are dead, houses are burnt, people are hurt, as the recent bushfires engulfed the continent. It is a reminder to all of us to tap into ecotourism and maintain the beauty of nature by not interfering with it under the garb of urbanisation. Happy travelling to you! 🇦🇺

— SRISHTI VERMA —

I am Srishti Verma, a Delhi-based freelance travel writer. I love reading and travelling, with a special place for lofty mountains in my heart. When not studying, I can be found trying to click my dog’s pictures (my furry boy hates the camera)!



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