

Travel Links



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October - November - December 2024



Outletcity Metzingen

Elevates the Shopping Experience with a Diverse Culinary Landscape

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Travel Links

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Dear Readers,

As we step into the final quarter of the year, the air is filled with excitement, festivity, and the promise of new adventures. October-November-December (OND) issue of Travel Links, brings you a kaleidoscope of travel experiences and insights that inspire wanderlust and offer a glimpse into the ever-evolving world of travel, tourism, and hospitality.

Exploring Retail Paradise: Outlecity Metzingen

Shopping has always been an integral part of travel for many, and this time, we are excited to take you on a journey to the renowned shopping destination, Outlecity Metzingen. Located in Germany, Metzingen is synonymous with luxury shopping, offering a unique experience where visitors can indulge in high-end brands at significantly reduced prices. Our article delves into what makes this outlet city stand out in a competitive retail landscape, from its diverse brand offerings to its seamless blend of shopping and leisure. Whether you're a fashion aficionado or a savvy bargain hunter, Metzingen has something for everyone, and we explore how it has become a must-visit spot for travellers looking to add a touch of luxury to their journeys.

Navigating the Waters of the Cruise Industry

The cruise industry has been experiencing a resurgence, with more travellers eager to embark on oceanic adventures that promise both relaxation and exploration. In this issue, we explore the latest trends shaping the cruise industry, from sustainable cruising practices to the evolving expectations of modern travellers. As the world continues to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, the cruise sector has shown remarkable resilience, adapting to changing health protocols while enhancing guest experiences with innovative itineraries and on-board amenities. Whether you're dreaming of a luxury cruise through the Mediterranean or an adventurous expedition to the Antarctic, our feature provides an in-depth look at what to expect when you set sail in the coming months.

The Allure of Sharjah and Jordan

This issue also shines a spotlight on two captivating Middle Eastern destinations: Sharjah and Jordan. Sharjah, often seen as the cultural capital of the UAE, offers travellers an authentic experience steeped in tradition. From its historical museums to its vibrant souks, Sharjah is a city that beautifully preserves its heritage while embracing modernity. Meanwhile, Jordan presents a journey through time, with ancient wonders such as Petra, the Dead Sea, and the vast deserts of Wadi Rum. Jordan's rich history, breath-taking landscapes, and warm hospitality continue to make it a popular destination for travellers seeking both adventure and cultural enrichment. In our articles, we explore these regions in detail, providing a comprehensive guide to their hidden gems and must-visit attractions.

The Charm of Mauritius

For those in search of an island escape, Mauritius remains a perennial favourite. This Indian Ocean paradise, known for its pristine beaches, lush landscapes, and vibrant cultural tapestry, offers an idyllic setting for both adventure and relaxation. In this issue, we dive into the many facets of Mauritius that make it more than just a beach destination. From hiking through the island's mountainous interiors to exploring its rich colonial history and indulging in world-class resorts, Mauritius is a destination that promises to cater to every type of traveler. Our feature also looks at the island's growing appeal for sustainable tourism and eco-friendly travel experiences, which are becoming increasingly important to today's conscientious travellers.

Exclusive Interviews and Hospitality Reviews

No issue of Travel Links would be complete without our exclusive interviews and in-depth hospitality reviews. In this edition, we sit down with industry leaders who are shaping the future of travel, from hoteliers and cruise executives to tourism board representatives and retail innovators. Their insights offer a unique behind-the-scenes perspective on the strategies driving growth and innovation in the travel sector. Additionally, our team has curated reviews of some of the most notable properties around the world, from luxurious city hotels to tranquil island resorts, giving you first-hand accounts of what to expect when you book your next stay.

As we move toward the end of the year, this issue of Travel Links is not only a celebration of the incredible destinations and experiences available to travellers but also a reflection on the resilience and adaptability of the travel industry. Despite the challenges it has faced, the industry continues to evolve, innovate, and provide unforgettable experiences for travellers across the globe.

Whether you're looking for your next great shopping destination, planning a cruise adventure, or dreaming of sun-soaked shores, we hope this issue inspires you to embark on new journeys and explore the endless possibilities that travel offers.

Enjoy the journey!

Payal Sahni
Editor
Payal Sahni
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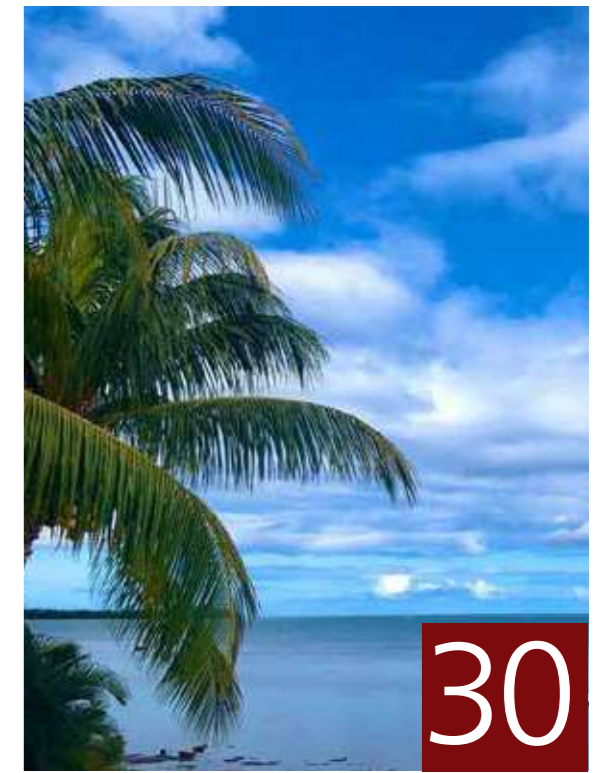
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Outletcity Metzingen Elevates the Shopping Experience with a Diverse Culinary Landscape

By Payal Sahni

Outletcity Metzingen is one of Europe's leading premium outlet destinations, offering an unparalleled shopping experience with over 170 international brands at exceptional prices. Home to the world's largest BOSS outlet and the birthplace of Hugo Boss, Outletcity Metzingen is a must-visit for fashion enthusiasts. Beyond shopping, it is committed to providing a diverse culinary landscape, enhancing the overall visitor experience with an array of dining options to suit every taste.

Metzingen, Germany –Outletcity Metzingen, renowned for its premium shopping experience, has also established itself as a culinary paradise. With 12 diverse restaurants and cafés, including Halal options, the destination caters to all tastes. From sophisticated champagne bars to vibrant eateries offering Asian Fusion at Champa, Alpine specialties at Almresi and a taste of India at Namaste, Outletcity Metzingen promises a gastronomic adventure that complements its world-class retail experience.

“At Outletcity Metzingen, our commitment extends beyond enhancing the shopping experience to include a diverse selection of dining options that cater to a variety of tastes and preferences,” said Ms. Angela Rieger, Senior International Partnership Manager at Outletcity Metzingen. “The vibrant array of restaurants complements our premium retail offerings, ensuring that every visit is both memorable and satisfying.”

A Taste of Luxury at Bollicine & Co. Champagne Bar

Nestled within the opulent Schwenkel Areal, Bollicine & Co. Champagne Bar



stands out as a sparkling oasis amidst the shopping excitement. This elegant bar offers a refined selection of Italian sparkling wines, providing a sophisticated retreat for champagne enthusiasts and casual visitors alike. With its stylish décor and plush seating, Bollicine & Co. invites guests to unwind and celebrate in a chic atmosphere.

BOSS Café and Tommy's Coffee: Stylish Coffee Retreats at Outlet Flagship Stores

Tommy's Coffee and BOSS Café, located within their respective Tommy Hilfiger and BOSS flagship stores, offer stylish retreats in Outletcity Metzingen. Tommy's Coffee combines Hilfiger's heritage with a modern, airy design, while the BOSS Café provides a cozy atmosphere with delicious treats, perfect for a relaxing break during shopping.

Namaste: A Taste of India in Historic Metzingen

Located in the historic town centre near

Outletcity Metzingen, Namaste offers an authentic Indian dining experience with a rich blend of traditional flavours and inviting ambiance.

Almresi: A Chalet Chic Dining Experience

For those seeking a unique culinary adventure, Almresi offers a harmonious blend of traditional alpine flavours and contemporary cuisine. This restaurant captures the essence of the Alps, presenting a menu of hearty dishes with a modern twist. The inviting, chalet-inspired setting ensures a memorable dining experience in a cozy, welcoming environment.

Marché Mövenpick: Fresh Market Cuisine at Its Finest

Marché Mövenpick brings fresh, market-style dining to Outletcity Metzingen with its dedication to handmade cuisine crafted from locally sourced ingredients. The interactive setup allows diners to select from a variety of freshly prepared





dishes, including grilled specialties, thin-crust pizzas, and vibrant salads. Catering to both vegetarians and meat lovers, Marché Mövenpick is celebrated for its quality and freshness.

Champa: A Taste of Asia

Champa introduces the vibrant flavors of Asia to the shopping district with its fresh and light cuisine. Featuring a range of cold and warm bowls, Champa highlights fresh vegetables, tender meats, and aromatic herbs. This stylish eatery is perfect for those looking to enjoy a healthy and flavorful meal in a contemporary setting.

L'Osteria: Italian Classics Reimagined

L'Osteria remains a beloved destination for Italian cuisine enthusiasts, known for its generous portions of pizza and pasta. The lively atmosphere and authentic dishes, including classic Margherita pizzas and creamy pasta creations, make L'Osteria a favorite among visitors seeking a true taste of Italy.

MOXY Bar: Urban Vibes and Versatile Dining

Located within the MOXY Hotel, the MOXY Bar combines a modern co-working space with a relaxed urban vibe. Guests can enjoy everything from morning cappuccinos to late-night cocktails. The eclectic menu.



Angela Rieger has been with Outletcity Metzingen since 2019. As Senior Destination

Marketing & Partnership Manager, she is focused on developing the Indian market as a key Source. Prior to her role at Outletcity Metzingen, she held positions in Product Management For a luxury tour operator and International Sales & Marketing within the wellness tourism Industry. E interview: Payal Sahni with Anegele Rieger. Outletcity Metzingen: A Global Luxury Shopping Destination



Q What are the unique selling propositions (USPs) that differentiate Outletcity Metzingen from other shopping destinations in Europe?

Outletcity Metzingen offers a unique combination of premium and luxury brands, exceptional savings, and a convenient location in the heart of Europe with excellent connections to major German airports. Its distinctive blend of contemporary flagship outlet stores within a historic town center makes Outletcity a captivating shopping destination for all ages. The carefully curated selection of luxury fashion, accessories, and home goods, discounted by up to 70% off the regular retail price, sets Outletcity apart from other shopping destinations. Outletcity is committed to providing a personalized shopping experience and a welcoming atmosphere with a plethora of seasonal events that encourage repeat visits.

Q How does Outletcity Metzingen position itself in the global market, especially when compared to other luxury shopping outlets?

Outletcity is renowned for its exceptional selection of premium and luxury brands housed in spacious flagship outlet stores. Since 2020, Outletcity has proudly held the title of Europe's largest outlet, awarded by

Ecostra, a leading market research firm. Moreover, Outletcity has been a pioneer in the European outlet shopping scene since its inception in 1997. Even before that, the small town served as a hub of the textile industry and the birthplace of the world-famous Boss brand. This unique fusion of history, luxury, curated selection, VIP services, and a customer-centric approach differentiates the shopping destination from other shopping outlets. The largest BOSS outlet worldwide and a museum showcasing the fascinating history of Hugo Boss and his connection to Outletcity are just a few more reasons to visit.

Q What measures does Outletcity Metzingen take to ensure a smooth and comfortable travel experience for international visitors, particularly those from visa-required countries like India?

To cater to the needs of international travelers, Outletcity offers a range of services, including a multilingual Welcome Center, Concierge Services, and a Tax-Free Counter, ensuring a seamless and convenient visit. A highlight of this year was the opening of the lifestyle hotel, Moxy Outletcity Metzingen, located in the heart of the city. The hotel offers guests a stylish option to extend their stay, enjoy more shopping time, and explore the beautiful surrounding region, brimming with tourist attractions.

Q Are there any partnerships or collaborations with media / travel agencies to offer packages that include visa assistance and travel to Outletcity Metzingen?

Yes, we have established partnerships with various booking platforms and travel agencies to offer exclusive packages that include extra benefits at Outletcity Metzingen, visa assistance, travel arrangements, and accommodations. We continuously strive to expand our network within the travel industry to provide more options for our guests.

Q How does Outletcity Metzingen tailor its marketing and promotional strategies to different international markets, including India?

Outletcity maintains close partnerships with travel agencies and employ targeted

marketing strategies, including exhibitions, online campaigns, and influencer partnerships, to effectively reach and engage different international markets.

Q Can you elaborate on the types of luxury services and customer experiences that are offered to visitors at Outletcity Metzingen?

Outletcity Metzingen offers a range of luxury services, such as VIP benefits, concierge assistance, and comfortable lounge areas, to enhance the shopping experience for our visitors. This year, we have opened a sophisticated Lounge exclusively for our VIP guests to further elevate their experience. Our offerings are complemented by year-round events, from art exhibitions and concerts to activities for children and VIP Shopping Events at selected brands, ensuring that every visit is unique.

Q How does Outletcity Metzingen ensure a high level of customer satisfaction and repeat visitation among international tourists?

It is the commitment to exceptional customer service, outstanding offers, and

Q How important is the Indian market for Outletcity Metzingen, and what specific strategies are you implementing to attract Indian shoppers?

The Indian market is highly important to us. We collaborate with Indian travel agencies, engage with our Indian audience on social media, and work with a well-established representation in India to intensify our collaborations. We also participate in various tourism trade fairs in the country. And especially for our Indian visitors, we are glad to offer an Indian restaurant in Metzingen, serving traditional cuisine from various Indian regions.


Q What future developments or expansions can we expect from Outletcity Metzingen to enhance its appeal to international visitors?

We are constantly exploring new opportunities to enhance our appeal, such as expanding our brand portfolio, improving accessibility, and introducing innovative experiences like personalized and private shopping. Furthermore, our event calendar is continually updated and refreshed, and you can look forward to exciting developments in the coming year.



a welcoming atmosphere that ensures a positive shopping experience that encourages repeat visits. Additionally, the picturesque surroundings of Metzingen, with its abundance of nature, outdoor activities, and historic sights, provide ample opportunities to complement a visit to the outlet.

Q What is your vision for the next two years?

Our vision is to solidify Outletcity Metzingen's position as a leading luxury shopping destination in Europe by expanding our international reach and enhancing the shopping experience. 



A Luxurious Stay at Jaipur Marriott: An Unforgettable Experience

By Payal Sahni

Location: Convenient and Accessible

Nestled in the pink city of Rajasthan, Jaipur Marriott is ideally located with approximately just 10 minutes' drive from the airport and proximity to the town; it makes it an ideal location for all sorts of occasions, be it MICE, weddings, private small functions or even to just grab a good evening with family and friends. Additionally, the hotel is well-connected to the city's major attractions, including the Amber Fort, City Palace, and Hawa Mahal, making it a convenient base for exploring Jaipur.

Despite being close to the hustle and bustle of the city, the hotel provides a tranquil environment, allowing guests to unwind and relax after a day of sightseeing.

Our experience there has been



unforgettable for many reasons despite this being our third visit in the last 2/3 years. To begin with, the way they followed up on our safe arrival was commendable. When you enter, you feel their love and affection, the traditions they follow with tilak ceremony, Rajasthani dupatta and nice fresh buckeye waiting for us. One feels very welcomed.

Suite Room: Spacious and Sophisticated

Our recent stay at the Jaipur Marriott was nothing short of exceptional, and it all began with my experience in the suite room. From the moment I entered, I was struck by the sheer size and elegance of the space. The suite was designed to offer maximum

comfort and luxury, with a generous living area, a well-appointed bedroom, and a spacious bathroom. The decor was modern yet warm, creating a welcoming atmosphere that made me feel right at home.

The living area was furnished with plush sofas and a large flat-screen TV, perfect for relaxing after a long day of exploring the vibrant city of Jaipur. The bedroom featured a king-sized bed with high-quality linens that ensured a restful night's sleep.

The bathroom was equally impressive, with a deep soaking tub, a separate rain shower, and a range of premium toiletries.

Goodies in the Room: Thoughtful and Generous

The best thing about staying in Marriott properties is their goodies, roasted almonds, chocolates, wines, and what not- they just spoil you. From a well-stocked minibar to a selection of gourmet snacks and beverages,



the Marriott team left no stone unturned in ensuring that guests feel pampered. Fresh fruits, chocolates, and a selection of fine teas and coffees were replenished daily, adding a delightful touch to the overall experience. Also, I would like to mention here, that since I was following a certain kind of diet, they followed it to the T, made everything healthy as per my choices, be it nuts and seeds, healthy snacks, fresh fruit juices, and protein bars.

Throughout my stay, I found the staff to be incredibly attentive and courteous. Whether it was the housekeeping team ensuring my suite was spotless, the concierge offering valuable tips for exploring Jaipur, or the restaurant staff catering to my dietary preferences, every interaction was marked by professionalism and genuine warmth.

Dining Experience: A Culinary Delight

The dining options at Jaipur Marriott were diverse and impressive. The hotel boasts several restaurants, each offering a unique culinary experience. During my stay, I had the pleasure of dining at Okra, the all-day dining restaurant, and Saffron, which specializes in Indian cuisine.

The Italian and Mexican food was finest at Okra, with a wide display of dishes and desserts. It was not just 2/3 but almost 20-30





varieties of sweet dishes to choose from.

At Okra, I enjoyed a sumptuous breakfast buffet with a wide variety of dishes, from freshly baked pastries and tropical fruits to made-to-order omelettes (they use cage-free eggs) and traditional Indian breakfast items. The quality of the food was excellent, and the service was prompt and friendly.

Saffron, on the other hand, offered an exquisite dining experience with its rich and flavourful Indian dishes. The chefs took great care in preparing each dish, and the use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients was evident in every bite. The ambiance of the restaurant, with its elegant decor and soothing music, added to the overall dining

experience. Another thing that we like when visiting Jaipur Marriot is the shopping complex within the hotel. It provides ample opportunities to look for authentic Jaipur suits, gift items, jewellery at reasonable prices.

Amenities: Comprehensive and High-Quality



Jaipur Marriott offers a wide range of amenities designed to enhance the guest experience. The fitness centre is well-equipped with state-of-the-art machines, allowing guests to maintain their workout routine while traveling. The swimming pool area is beautifully landscaped, providing a perfect spot to relax and soak up the sun.

The Quan Spa at Jaipur Marriott deserves a special mention. Offering a variety of treatments and therapies, the spa is a haven

of relaxation and rejuvenation. I indulged in a traditional Ayurvedic massage, which left me feeling refreshed and invigorated.

Overall Experience: Highly Recommended

In conclusion, my stay at Jaipur Marriott was truly memorable. The combination of a luxurious suite room, thoughtful amenities, exemplary hospitality, and convenient location made it an ideal choice

for both leisure and business travellers. Every aspect of my stay was marked by attention to detail and a commitment to providing the highest level of service. I would highly recommend Jaipur Marriott to anyone planning a visit to the Pink City. Whether you're seeking a relaxing getaway or a comfortable base for exploring the rich cultural heritage of Jaipur, this hotel promises an experience that will exceed your expectations. [📍](#)

INTERVIEW

Rahim Aslam is the driving force behind One Above Global's rise to prominence in the global tourism industry. With over a decade managing the largest resort chain in the Maldives and fourteen years as the founder and leader of a highly respected Destination Management Company, Rahim's expertise spans key sectors. His outstanding interpersonal skills and strong reputation in both international and Indian markets make him a key figure in transforming 'One Above Global', into a powerhouse in the tourism world. My Intercation with Mr. Rahim Aslam By **Payal Sahni**

Q Can you tell us about your professional background and what inspired you to start One Above Global?

I spent around 14 years in Sales & Marketing as a hotelier in the Maldives. During this time, I handled PR and marketing for one of the largest resort chains in the region, which required extensive travel to attend global travel events, roadshows, and tourism fairs. This exposure to the world's largest tourism markets inspired me to start a global destination management company.

Q What was the initial idea or vision that led to the founding of One Above Global, and how did you go about bringing this idea to life?

The vision was to create a global destination management company with 195 DMCs under our portfolio, offering a one-stop solution to our B2B partners worldwide. We aimed to cover all segments of hospitality, including:

- Hotels
- Sightseeing
- Events
- Wellness Tourism
- Special Interest Tourism
- Sports Tourism
- Logistics
- F&B
- MICE
- Adventure Tourism

We brought this idea to life by leveraging our extensive network and industry expertise to build a comprehensive and reliable platform for our partners.

Q What were some of the biggest challenges you faced in the early stages of starting One Above Global, and how did you overcome them?

Initially, gaining the trust of our B2B partners was a significant challenge. We overcame this by consistently delivering on our promises and demonstrating our commitment to



DMC portal to cover all segments of tourism comprehensively.

Q How does One Above Global differentiate itself from other companies in the industry? What sets you apart?

We don't just represent; we are present. All our offices are either owned or partnered, and we operate as One Above Global, a single brand across the globe. This unified approach sets us apart from others in the industry.

Q Can you share some insights into your marketing strategy? How do you attract and retain clients?

Marketing is a key aspect of creating our brand, but retaining brand value is even more important. Our strategy revolves around delivering what we commit to. We also produce top-quality marketing flyers circulated to our global B2B partners and provide white-labeled versions on request.

Q How do you approach leadership within the company, and what qualities do you look for when building your team?

I believe in listening before speaking, being productive rather than just a product, and leading rather than preaching. These principles guide my approach to leadership and the qualities I seek when building my team.

Q What advice would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs who are looking to start their own consultancy firms?

Listen to your clients and team, deliver on your commitments, and strive to create a brand that stands out through reliability and excellence. [📍](#)

excellence. Having a team with a wealth of experience in handling DMC operations was crucial in navigating these early challenges successfully.

Q What is the long-term vision for One Above Global, and how do you see the company evolving in the next five to ten years?

Our long-term vision includes creating the best and happiest working space with 195 DMCs. We aim to develop a complete end-to-end DMC platform covering all segments of tourism.

Q What are some of the key goals and milestones that One Above Global has achieved so far, and what future goals are you aiming to accomplish?

We currently have 25 DMCs covering 90 destinations. Our future goal is to expand our

A Comprehensive Guide to the Cruise Industry

By Payal Sahni

The global travel and tourism market comprises a thriving cruise industry that has attracted people's imaginations for decades. Nowadays, the sector is a multi-billion dollar industry with various budgetary and diversity ships available.

These modern ships are engineering marvels that give their passengers the ultimate experience of adventure, relaxation, and entertainment thus making them the most preferred choice by millions of travelers and tourists looking for a lavish and comfortable way to see the world. During this period, the number of choices and destinations has increased while

catering to different tastes and budgets.

History and Beginning

The history and beginning of the industry is a story of evolution from simple passenger shipping services to magnificent floating resorts. The origin of cruising can be traced back to the 19th century when ocean liners were the primary means of travel.

These early voyages were more about necessity than leisure, mainly for immigrants, merchants, and mail services.

The idea of taking a cruise for pleasure became famous around the beginning of the 20th century. The end of World War II marked a significant turning point as air travel began to outpace ocean liners for abroad travel. To survive in business,

shipping companies shifted their focus from transportation to leisure travel.

Further expansion and innovation took place in the 1970s and 1980s with mega ships being introduced and themed cruises developing. Furthermore, "The Love Boat" was a key factor that popularized growth in the cruise industry. Today, it is an advanced global market where every aspect needs to be addressed for different needs of every social group.

Major Players

A small group of key players dominates the cruise industry. Each is known for its unique offerings and extensive fleets. The largest cruise company in the world is Carnival Corporation & plc, which has a range of

famous brands including Carnival Cruise Line, Princess Cruises, Holland America Line, and Costa Cruises.

Royal Caribbean Group is another giant in the sector, its reputation built on its adventurous voyages and innovative ships. It boasts of mega-ships like Oasis-class vessels that offer facilities such as wave pools on board, ice rinks, and Broadway-style shows.

Varun Chadha, CEO, TIRUN Travel Marketing tells Travel Links "On the evolution of international cruising, the Indian outbound travelers have made cruising the hero of their holidays versus a decade ago, where they used to plan a land/resort based vacation and then look for cruise options in and around it! Today, they first plan their cruise and then an itinerary around it, which is very encouraging for us. In addition, cruise lines are responding with newer, bolder ships and opening up





newer destinations and closer to home deployment. Expedition cruising too is also on the rise, which points towards a maturing consumer market."

Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings comprises Norwegian Cruise Line, Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises also plays a substantial part in it, known for its Freestyle Cruising concept allowing guests more freedom when it comes to dining and activities.

Manoj Singh, Country Head of Norwegian Cruise Line talks to Travel Links and quotes, "We're aiming for net zero emissions by 2050 across our operations and value chain and are transitioning towards a low-carbon economy. Our climate action strategy primarily focuses on three key areas reducing carbon intensity; investing in technology and exploring alternative fuels; and implementing a voluntary carbon offset program. We're looking at the use of methanol as an alternative fuel source that can be used alongside traditional marine fuel. We are in the process of modifying our upcoming Prima Class ships, slated for delivery in 2027 and 2028, to be methanol-ready and are assessing the feasibility of retrofitting existing engines to operate

with methanol. We've established a target for 70% of the NCLH fleet to be equipped with shore power capabilities by 2025, which will allow our ships to connect to onshore electrical power grids. We will continue to monitor and invest in opportunities to reduce carbon emissions and are working closely with partners to identify best practices to accelerate our de-carbonization efforts".

These major players remain at the



forefront of innovation and growth through their competitiveness towards one another with an effort to enhance the customer experience for future generations of cruising.

Operating and Famous Destinations and Cruises

Cruise lines function and cover the world's major oceans and rivers, offering itineraries

that range from short escapes to extended world cruises

Famous ports include Nassau in the Bahamas, St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Cozumel in Mexico. The Mediterranean is one of the most famous destinations when it comes to Cruise tourism, where travelers can explore historic cities like Rome, Barcelona, and Athens, along with the stunning coastlines of the French Riviera and Greek Islands.

In recent years, other regions have gained popularity as well. Northern Europe cruises give a chance to passengers to experience Norway, the historic Baltic capitals, and the British Isles.

Asia has become another famous cruise market with destinations like Singapore, Hong Kong, India, and Bangkok offering exotic cultural experiences and a chance for exploration.

These varied destinations and types of cruises ensure that there is an itinerary to

determines the price as well; inside cabins are the least expensive, while suites, balconies, and views of the ocean are more expensive. Cruises to unique or remote regions typically cost more than cruises to more popular destinations, therefore the destination has a big impact on the final cost. The time of year affects prices as well; peak times, such as holidays, are typically more expensive because of increased demand. Early booking discounts, last-minute deals, and additional costs such as airfare, shore excursions, and onboard activities can also affect the total expenditure, making it essential for travelers to consider all these factors and options when planning their cruise vacation.

Key considerations when choosing a cruise

Choosing the right cruise involves considering several factors to ensure an

helps ensure that the cruise matches your expectations and lifestyle.

Budgetary restrictions, together with the season and weather, are other important factors. You can save a lot of money by making reservations during off-peak times or by taking advantage of early booking discounts.

Finally, gathering assistance from seasoned travelers and reading reviews can offer insightful information about the reputation and general quality of the trip.

Amenities and Luxury Quotient

Modern cruise ships offer an impressive range of services and features designed to pamper passengers and elevate the onboard experience to new heights.

Luxury cruise lines set the bar high with a more comfortable set of suites featuring spacious balconies, marble bathrooms, and



suit every traveler's tastes and interests.

Tentative Cost and Factors Affecting the Cost

Although the price differs greatly based on several conditions, a regular cruise can cost anywhere from ₹1, 00,000 to ₹3, 50,000 per person. Budget cruises can range in price from ₹50,000 to ₹100,000 are typically shorter in length and have fewer amenities included.

The type of accommodation, or cabin,

enjoyable and fulfilling experience.

Firstly, determining the destination and itinerary is crucial. Selecting a destination that aligns with your interests and preferences sets the foundation for a memorable trip.

Next, the type of cruise line is a very important factor. Each cruise has its own set of amenities and caters to different demographics, from family-friendly to luxury and adventure-focused. Researching the onboard amenities, dining options, entertainment, and cabin accommodations

personalized services.

These amenities include fine dining experiences like gourmet restaurants by acclaimed and notable chefs serving exquisite cuisine from around the world. Onboard spas and wellness centers provide a sanctuary for relaxation, offering a range of treatments, including massages, facials, and yoga classes.

Entertainment options are equally impressive, with dance performances, live music performances, and movie theaters providing nightly entertainment, while on-

site casinos and bars provide opportunities for nightlife and socializing.

They often have exclusive site excursions and visits to the Private Island and sites, allowing guests to explore exotic destinations in style and comfort.

Effect on Environment and Sustainable Practices

The cruise industry faces growing scrutiny and criticism regarding its environmental impact and the way it affects the water bodies. Cruise ships are known to emit harmful and severe pollutants which contribute highly to air and water pollution.

The discharge of wastewater can harm and affect marine ecosystems and coastal environments. Concerns also arise from the use of heavy fuel oil, which releases harmful emissions and poses risks of oil spills.

Cruise lines are increasingly adopting sustainable practices to minimize their environmental footprint. This includes investing in cleaner technologies such as exhaust gas cleaning systems, LNG-powered ships, and advanced wastewater treatment systems to reduce air and water pollution.



Moreover, initiatives to reduce single-use plastics, promote recycling and waste management, and protect marine habitats through partnerships with conservation organizations demonstrate the industry's commitment to sustainability and being responsible for the marine environment.

Ongoing efforts are needed to ensure that the cruise industry continues to prioritize environmental protection and sustainability as it grows and evolves.

Growth potential of the cruise industry in India

This industry in India is undergoing major growth, particularly in the sphere of river cruises. From the peaceful and beautiful backwaters of Kerala to the mesmerizing Brahmaputra River in Assam, there is a massive range of destinations waiting to be discovered through these luxurious cruise ships and houseboats.

These river cruises not only provide



tourists and guests with a luxurious and comfortable experience but also offer the chance to witness amazing landscapes and scenery, encounter diverse wildlife, and immerse themselves in the rich heritage and culture of India.


Cordelia Cruises has emerged as a leader in the Indian market which serves and gives a chance to the travelers to witness the splendors of the country, facilitating remarkable journeys that showcase the beauty and allure of Lakshadweep. With

regular visits from major ports like Mumbai, Goa, and Kochi, Cordelia Cruises has made it easier than ever for travellers to go on an unforgettable voyage to these islands.

Jurgen Bailom, President & CEO, Waterways Leisure Tourism Pvt. Ltd. (Cordelia Cruises), quotes, "As pioneers in the Indian cruise market, Cordelia Cruises has set a high standard by tailoring experiences to the unique preferences of Indian travelers, combining international cruising trends with Indian hospitality. Indian

travelers often prioritize family-oriented vacations, and cruises are uniquely suited to meet this demand, offering something for every age group and making them a popular choice for multigenerational trips. With all-inclusive packages that bundle accommodation, meals, entertainment, and activities, cruises present an attractive, cost-effective option for Indian travelers. As rising incomes and a youthful population drive demand for new experiences, India holds tremendous potential for cruising. We are excited to be at the forefront of this growth, creating unforgettable memories for a new generation of Indian cruisers."

Conclusion

This industry presents and continues to be a dynamic and luxurious landscape for travellers across the world, where they offer a wide range of destinations, experiences, and amenities. While the industry continues to evolve, expand, and explore itself, with emerging markets like India showcasing significant growth potential, it also faces challenges, particularly concerning environmental sustainability and preserving the water bodies. The cruise industry stands firm in delivering unparalleled adventures across the seas and rivers of the world. 



A Memorable Stay at DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur



By Team TL

Located just a comfortable drive from Delhi, DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur offers an ideal retreat for those seeking a blend of luxury and affordability. Nestled amidst the serene landscapes on the outskirts of Jaipur, this property is not only a perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of city life but also a convenient choice for those looking to host weddings, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) events, or simply indulge in a leisurely getaway.

Proximity to Delhi

One of the standout features of DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur is its close proximity to Delhi. The drive from the capital to this hotel is smooth and pleasant, taking approximately five to six hours depending on traffic. The journey itself is an experience, with well-maintained highways, scenic landscapes, and occasional glimpses of Rajasthan's rustic charm. This makes the hotel an excellent option for weekend getaways or quick escapes from Delhi's fast-paced life.

Rooftop and View

Upon arrival, one of the first things that struck us was the breath-taking view from the hotel's rooftop. The rooftop is undoubtedly one of the highlights of DoubleTree by Hilton

Jaipur. Offering panoramic views of the Aravalli hills, the rooftop provides a tranquil setting that is hard to match. Whether you're enjoying a quiet morning coffee or watching the sunset with a cocktail in hand, the rooftop is the perfect place to unwind. The pool on the rooftop adds an extra layer of luxury, allowing guests to relax while taking in the stunning vistas.

The rooftop also serves as a versatile space, ideal for intimate gatherings or cocktail parties. The ambiance is further enhanced by the soft lighting and tasteful decor, making it a preferred spot for hosting evening events.

Culinary Delights

The food at DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur is a treat for the senses. The hotel boasts a variety

of dining options that cater to different palates. From traditional Rajasthani cuisine to international favourites, the culinary team ensures that every meal is a gastronomic delight. The breakfast buffet is particularly noteworthy, offering an extensive spread that includes everything from fresh fruits and juices to hot Indian dishes and made-to-order eggs. The quality of ingredients is evident in every bite, and the attentive service adds to the overall experience.

For lunch and dinner, the hotel's signature restaurant offers a menu that combines local flavours with global influences. The traditional Rajasthani thali is a must-try, providing an authentic taste of the region's rich culinary heritage. The chefs take great pride in preparing dishes that are not only delicious but also beautifully



presented.

Room service is prompt and efficient, with a wide selection of dishes available around the clock. Whether you're in the mood for a late-night snack or a full meal, the hotel ensures that your culinary needs are met with the same level of excellence.

Comfortable Rooms: Affordable Luxury

The rooms at DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur are a perfect blend of comfort and luxury. From the moment you step inside, you are greeted by a warm and inviting atmosphere. The decor is modern yet elegant, with thoughtful touches that make the space feel like a home away from home.

The beds are plush and comfortable, ensuring a restful night's sleep. High-quality linens, pillows, and mattresses make it easy to relax after a long day of sightseeing or attending events. The rooms are also equipped with all the modern amenities you would expect from a luxury hotel, including flat-screen TVs, high-speed internet, and well-stocked minibars.

The bathrooms are equally impressive, with spacious showers, premium toiletries, and fluffy towels. The attention to detail is evident in every aspect of the room, from the carefully selected artwork on the walls to the well-placed lighting that creates a cozy ambiance. Despite offering all the trappings of luxury, the rooms at DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur are surprisingly affordable. This makes it an excellent choice for travellers who want to experience high-end accommodations without breaking the bank.

Value for Money: Weddings, MICE, and Events

DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur stands out as an exceptional venue for weddings, MICE, and other events. The hotel offers a range of event spaces, from large banquet halls to smaller meeting rooms, all equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. The team at DoubleTree is highly experienced in organizing events, ensuring that every detail is taken care of.

For weddings, the hotel provides a magical setting that combines traditional Rajasthani elements with contemporary luxury. The outdoor spaces, including the beautifully landscaped gardens and the rooftop terrace, offer stunning backdrops for ceremonies and receptions. The hotel's in-



house event planners are adept at creating bespoke weddings that reflect the couple's unique style and preferences.

Corporate clients will appreciate the hotel's well-appointed conference rooms, which are ideal for meetings, seminars, and workshops. The hotel also offers various packages that include catering and accommodation, making it a convenient and cost-effective choice for corporate events.

What sets DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur apart is its commitment to providing value for money. Despite the luxurious surroundings and top-notch services, the hotel offers competitive pricing that makes it accessible to a wide range of guests. Whether you're planning a grand wedding, a corporate event, or simply a relaxing getaway, DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur delivers exceptional value without compromising on quality.

Final Thoughts

Our experience at DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur was delightful. From the convenient location to the stunning rooftop views, delicious food, and comfortable rooms, every aspect of our stay exceeded expectations. The hotel strikes the perfect balance between luxury and affordability, making it an ideal choice for various occasions, be it a wedding, corporate event, or a leisurely vacation. Its combination of amenities, stunning views, delicious food, and exceptional service makes it a top choice for travellers and event planners alike. Whether you're looking for a quick getaway from Delhi, planning a destination wedding, or organizing a corporate event, DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur offers an experience that is truly value for money.



Carissa Nimah is the Chief Marketing Officer for Bhutan Tourism

Carissa Nimah is the Chief Marketing Officer for Bhutan Tourism, responsible for the ongoing development, promotion, and positioning of tourism in the Himalayan Kingdom. In her role, Carissa leads a team to craft and execute strategic marketing initiatives that showcase Bhutan's unique cultural heritage, natural beauty, and sustainable tourism practices, with the goal of sustainably increasing visitor numbers.

Carissa also serves as a non-executive board member for Druk Air, Bhutan's national airline, where she contributes to strategic decisions aimed at improving connectivity and service quality for residents and tourists visiting Bhutan.

Before joining Bhutan Tourism in 2022, Carissa spent eight years in Asia as the Guardian of the Brand (Chief Commercial Officer) for a global luxury hospitality brand with resorts in Thailand and the Maldives, overseeing their sales, marketing, revenue, and reservations teams globally. Prior to that, she worked for a decade in the UAE in luxury jewellery, PR, and communications.

Originally a journalist, Carissa transitioned into marketing and sales, accumulating nearly 20 years of experience with some of the world's top luxury brands. She is driven by creativity, purpose, and ethical business practices. Carissa holds a Master's degree in Strategic Marketing and two undergraduate degrees in Politics and Journalism from Australian universities. She is currently studying law part-time. Carissa resides in Thimphu, Bhutan, with her husband and daughter.

Interview by **Payal Sahni**

Q Can you describe your primary responsibilities as the Chief Marketing Officer of the Department of Tourism in Bhutan?

As the Chief Marketing Officer of the Department of Tourism in Bhutan, I am responsible for developing and implementing comprehensive marketing strategies to promote Bhutan as a premier travel destination. This involves identifying target markets, setting marketing goals, and creating action plans that align with our brand values. A key aspect of my role is maintaining and enhancing Bhutan's tourism brand through various marketing campaigns across digital, social media,

print, and events, ensuring consistency and effectiveness in all our communications.

Collaboration and stakeholder engagement are crucial components of my responsibilities. I work closely with government agencies, local businesses, local tourism affiliations, travel agencies, and international partners to support tourism initiatives and enhance the visitor experience. Additionally, conducting market research to understand trends and preferences allows us to tailor our strategies and improve campaign effectiveness. Organizing and participating in tourism-related events, both domestically and internationally, is also vital for promoting

Bhutan through trade shows, exhibitions, and cultural festivals.

Performance analysis is also integral to my role, ensuring that marketing activities are effective and resources are allocated efficiently. We also prioritize the development of creative content development and strong public relations efforts, which further enhance Bhutan's reputation, attracting more tourists and sustaining our position as an accessible and aspirational travel destination. As a small country with a very unique tourism strategy and a strong focus on sustainability, we must be agile and creative when developing a marketing strategy, and we must constantly

ensure that we are achieving the desired results.

Q How do you prioritize your tasks and initiatives to align with Bhutan's overall tourism goals?

To prioritize tasks and initiatives in alignment with Bhutan's overall tourism goals, we start by identifying the short-term, mid-term, and long-term requirements of our guests, the Bhutan tourism industry, and the international travel industry, including travel agents.

Based on these insights, we develop relevant B2C and B2B marketing strategies that help us achieve our objectives. Since the inception of tourism in Bhutan in 1974, our vision has been to promote "high value, low volume" tourism, avoiding mass tourism and focusing on attracting high-value visitors in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Our commitment to high-value tourism is reflected in the daily Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) charged to guests: USD 100 per person per day for foreigners and INR 1,200 per person per day for Indian nationals. This approach ensures that visitors have high expectations and encourages us to deliver a world-class tourism experience. To meet these expectations, we prioritize initiatives that enhance the quality of the visitor experience from start to finish, ensuring every aspect of their stay in Bhutan meets our high standards.

By focusing on responsible tourism and maintaining our high standards, we align our tasks and initiatives with Bhutan's overall tourism goals. We continually assess and adjust our strategies to ensure they meet the evolving needs of our guests and the industry, while staying true to our vision of sustainable, high-value tourism. This approach not only benefits our visitors but also supports the long-term sustainability and growth of Bhutan's tourism sector.

Q What new marketing initiatives have you introduced to promote Bhutan as a top tourist destination?

To promote Bhutan as a top tourist destination, we have introduced several new marketing initiatives:

- **Content Creation:** Recognizing that content is king, we focus on producing high-quality photography and videography that can be leveraged across all our marketing platforms.

By showcasing the hidden stories and unique aspects of Bhutan, such as its fascinating people, places, animals, and history, we aim to create a compelling desire for people to visit Bhutan. This content-driven strategy is designed to generate demand and inspire potential visitors. We prioritize collaborating with Bhutanese content creators to ensure authenticity and local perspectives.

- **Strengthening B2B Partnerships:** The Department of Tourism has recently joined exclusive, high-end travel networks like Virtuoso, Serandipians (Traveller Made), and XO Private, which allows us to tap into the luxury travel segment and connect with affluent travellers seeking unique experiences. We conduct weekly webinars with global travel agents to raise awareness about Bhutan and equip them with the knowledge and tools to sell the destination effectively. Additionally, we attend key travel events to build and maintain relationships with top travel agents and conduct sales roadshows in our key source markets.

- **PR and Media Outreach:** Working with PR agencies in our key source markets, we generate news coverage about Bhutan worldwide and secure media interviews to share our stories. We have identified more than 15 different content pillars unique to Bhutan that we regularly share information about, ensuring a steady stream of interesting and lesser-known topics. We also welcome press, travel agent, and influencer visits to Bhutan to experience and promote our destination first-hand.

- **50th Anniversary Campaign:** This year marks the 50th anniversary since foreign tourists started visiting Bhutan in 1974. To celebrate this milestone, we have launched a comprehensive marketing campaign highlighting the rich history and unique experiences Bhutan offers.

- **Improving B2C Communications:** We enhance our direct communications with potential visitors through newsletters, social media activities, digital marketing, events, and collaborations with Bhutan's friendship societies. These efforts help us maintain a strong connection with our audience and keep them informed about the latest developments and attractions in Bhutan.

- **Improving industry collaboration:** We

have focused on proactive collaboration and communication with the local trade partners and industry affiliations. We are a small industry in Bhutan and we need to work together to achieve the best possible results.

Q Could you share some successful campaigns or strategies that have boosted tourism in Bhutan?

Brand Campaigns (Bhutan Believe): The Government of Bhutan has launched influential brand campaigns such as "Bhutan Believe" to craft a distinctive and captivating identity for Bhutan as a travel destination. Inspired by Bhutan's unique blend of ancient traditions and forward-thinking policies, this campaign emphasizes the country's cultural richness, natural beauty, and spiritual essence. The rebranding effort was designed to resonate with a modern, global audience while staying true to Bhutan's core values of Gross National Happiness and sustainability. The campaign's innovative approach and authentic storytelling have gained global recognition, attracting more visitors and positioning Bhutan as a must-visit destination for travellers seeking profound and transformative experiences.

Digital Marketing Campaigns: The department implements targeted digital marketing campaigns to promote Bhutan in key source markets. By leveraging various online channels, these campaigns effectively raise awareness about Bhutan and encourage potential tourists to visit. The strategic use of digital platforms ensures a wide reach and engagement with diverse audiences.

PR Campaigns: We consistently secure over 300 tourism-related pieces of coverage about Bhutan globally each month in some of the world's most prestigious publications. This extensive publicity has significantly increased awareness of Bhutan as a destination and has generated a strong desire among travellers to explore Bhutan in the future.

Q Bhutan is known for its commitment to sustainable tourism. What specific measures has your Department taken to ensure that tourism development remains sustainable?

The Department of Tourism of Bhutan has implemented several specific measures to



ensure that tourism development remains sustainable:

High Value, Low Volume Policy: Bhutan adheres to a "high value, low volume" tourism policy to avoid the pitfalls of mass tourism. By focusing on attracting fewer but higher-spending tourists, Bhutan can better manage the environmental and cultural impact of tourism.

Sustainable Development Fee (SDF): All international visitors to Bhutan are required to pay a Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) of USD 100 per person per day, while Indian nationals pay INR 1,200

per person per day. This fee supports environmental conservation, sustainable development projects, and the preservation of Bhutan's cultural heritage, ensuring that tourism revenues contribute directly to the well-being of local communities and the protection of natural resources.

Promotion of Local Culture and Heritage: The Department of Tourism places a strong emphasis on promoting and preserving Bhutan's cultural heritage. By encouraging tourists to engage with local traditions, festivals, crafts, and staying in Bhutanese-owned hotels, the tourism sector

helps sustain the cultural fabric of Bhutan while providing economic benefits to local communities.

Environmental Conservation Initiatives: Bhutan has implemented various environmental conservation initiatives to protect its pristine landscapes. These include strict regulations on waste management, promoting eco-friendly accommodations, and supporting reforestation projects. Tourists are also educated about the importance of conservation and responsible travel practices.

Community-Based Tourism: The Department supports community-based tourism projects that empower local communities and ensure they benefit directly from tourism. This includes initiatives that encourage homestays, Bhutanese guiding services, and the development of community-owned tourism enterprises. By involving local residents in tourism planning and operations, Bhutan ensures that tourism development aligns with the needs and aspirations of its people.

Green Building Standards: Tourism infrastructure development in Bhutan adheres to green building standards, promoting energy efficiency, sustainable construction practices, and minimal environmental impact. This commitment ensures that new hotels, resorts, and other tourism facilities are built in harmony with Bhutan's natural environment.

Q How do you balance the influx of tourists with the need to preserve Bhutan's natural and cultural resources?

Recognizing the value of the pristine environment and rich culture, Bhutan implemented various measures and strategies to preserve natural and cultural resources:

Sustainable Development Fee: The minimum fee we are asking our guests to pay is reinvested in Bhutan, the place of our meeting, which has become our shared asset for generations.

High value, Low volume policy: Bhutan adopted a unique approach prioritizing environment conservation and sustainability. With this policy, Bhutan invites and welcomes responsible and conscious travellers seeking authentic experiences.

Cultural preservation: The Department

of Tourism (DOT) promotes festivals and cultural events happening across the country. We place strong emphasis on cultural immersion by encouraging visitors to participate in local festivals and traditions while respecting the nation's customs and way of life.

Eco-friendly initiatives: The travel partners including hotels, tour operators and homestays are encouraged to incorporate green themes and practices, with certifications in place for those meeting ecological standards.

Guided tours: Visitors are required to travel with a licensed tour guide, ensuring respectful interactions with both nature and culture.

Q Bhutan's rich cultural heritage is a major draw for tourists. How does your department work to preserve and promote Bhutanese culture and traditions?

By inviting conscious and responsible guests to the country and emphasizing meaningful engagement, Bhutan ensures that cultural treasures are both showcased and preserved. While the guests are welcomed to partake

“ The long-term goals for the Department of Tourism include achieving our tourism arrivals target, promoting sustainable tourism, enhancing visitor experience, increasing the global reach of Bhutan as a premier destination and preserving Bhutan's cultural heritage. ”

in festivals, local guides educate them on appropriate behaviours and etiquettes.

Moreover, Bhutan implemented various strategies to educate visitors about Bhutanese culture, etiquette, and the importance of respecting local customs and some of these are:

- The Department of Tourism trains guides and other travel partners to ensure that our guests will always have knowledgeable and informative guides to educate them about the places they visit, the traditions they observe and the customs they should respect.
- We develop informative materials and visitors are often provided with brochures or other informational

Q materials that highlights do's and don'ts while in Bhutan. Besides the information about the attractions, how to get into Bhutan, these materials also cover topics like dressing appropriately and preserving the intact culture of Bhutan.

- We also encourage and promote festivals. Attending these events provides visitors with first-hand experience of Bhutanese culture and traditions.
- We also encourage hotels and other star-rated accommodations to ensure that the infrastructure is built in a way that educates and immerses visitors in Bhutanese culture. We also encourage them to feature local and authentic Bhutanese cuisine.

Q Are there any upcoming cultural events or festivals that you are particularly excited to promote to international tourists?

Each festival is vibrant and unique, featuring a variety of interesting programs and activities. We are eager to promote all these festivals to showcase Bhutan's rich cultural heritage and provide unforgettable

Q the unique preferences and expectations of Indian travellers when promoting Bhutan?

Our department tailors promotional efforts to the unique preferences of Indian travellers. We highlight visa-free entry, and convenient access via road and air. Marketing campaigns are focused on family-friendly activities, culinary tourism, adventure tourism, cultural attractions and other shopping and sightseeing areas, resonating with Indian tourists' interests. We also address dietary preferences by promoting Indian cuisine availability in Bhutan.

Q What are your long-term goals for the Department of Tourism, and how do you plan to achieve them?

The long-term goals for the Department of Tourism include achieving our tourism arrivals target, promoting sustainable tourism, enhancing visitor experience, increasing the global reach of Bhutan as a premier destination and preserving Bhutan's cultural heritage. To achieve these, the department focuses on strategic marketing campaigns inviting responsible and conscious travellers, improving tourism infrastructure, and fostering community-based tourism initiatives.

Q In what ways do you see the tourism landscape in Bhutan evolving over the next five to ten years?

Over the next five to ten years, Bhutan's tourism landscape is set to improve with better connectivity through additional domestic airports and upgraded international airports, alongside enhanced infrastructure and enriched visitor experiences. The focus will remain on promoting eco-friendly travel to support environmentally responsible tourism. With the growing global interest in wellness and adventure tourism, Bhutan will capitalize on its unique wellness activities and pristine natural landscapes to attract niche markets, maintaining its appeal as an exclusive and sustainable travel destination. The new Gelephu Mindfulness City will also be a major milestone in the next five to ten years, and this is likely to become a major new tourism, lifestyle, business and economic hub in Bhutan in the near future. [\[1\]](#)

experiences for our visitors.

Q India is one of Bhutan's largest tourism markets. What strategies are you implementing to attract more Indian tourists to Bhutan?

Bhutan is working hard to raise awareness about our destination in India and among Indian travellers. We are doing rigorous advertising and promotional activities to enhance Bhutan's presence in the travel industry. We also work closely with media and travel partners and engage influencers and KOLs who share Bhutan's vision for sustainable and responsible tourism.

How does your department address

The Maurice – An Unforgettable Odyssey

By Gautam Singh Kanwal

A Vibrantly Tranquil Island Offering Countless Experiences.

Smack in the middle of the Indian Ocean lies this beautiful piece of land the world knows as Mauritius (Ile Maurice). An island known for its beaches, reefs, avifauna and vegetation among other attributes, is beyond all measure when it comes to splendor and magnificence. Merely calling it an island of sublime beauty would be putting it rather mildly considering the countless experiences it has to offer to travelers from all over the world. My own experience of Mauritius was nothing short of a dream



right from the moment we landed there.

After some scouring homework on how to go about exploring the island we booked the direct Aflight from New Delhi. The near seven hours flight lands in Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport (named after the first Prime Minister of Mauritius) in the south eastern part of the island.

Upon clearing immigration, we took a cab to La Gaulette (a town on the south western tip of the island). Reaching after roughly an hour's drive through scenic routes on a smooth road, we got settled in a studio apartment at Bay Watch Apartments (pretty well-furnished with a scenic seafront view). From a supermarket at walking distance, we got the basics (local sim cards most importantly) and grabbed some dinner at Enso (the most popular restaurant in La Gaulette), and relaxed at our balcony, watching the sun go down while planning for the next day. Before knocking off for the night we managed to rent a car through the owner of the apartments. A Kia Picanto it would be that would take us around Mauritius for the next 17 days.

Sea front at Bay Watch Apartments, La Gaulette.

The purpose of choosing to stay at La Gaulette initially was to start the trip by visiting one of the most unique locations in Mauritius – The Seven Colored Earths and the famous Rum Distillery, both located at Chamarel, a hilltop village area very close to La Gaulette.

Having a smooth road to drive on is one

booking on arrival, it is advisable to book a slot for the guided tour a day in advance. There is a very elite restaurant within the complex of the rum distillery (some of the cocktails there are excellent). It's probably the best restaurant in all Mauritius offering a wide range of delicacies. The tour of the rum factory was very interesting and really educational. After the detailed tour of the rum factory it was time for the next stop – The

different hues from the deposits of iron and aluminum oxide on this layer. Aluminum and iron repel one another causing the colors to be prominently displayed. A walk around the colorful earth could remind you of the famous line from Alice Walker's masterpiece (it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple .and don't notice it). Nothing short of a miracle of nature, the Seven Colored Earths is deservedly among



of the unsung pleasures of life. This unsung pleasure was experienced in abundance all over Mauritius. The near 6 kilometers uphill drive to Chamarel couldn't have been more than 15 minutes, but the scenic routes made us stop for photographs every now and then, stretching the journey to over half an hour.

View of the ocean from Chamarel

The Rhumerie de Chamarel, or the rum distillery (commonly called rum factory by the locals) is housed in a beautiful complex. They make fine rum from sugarcane which they grow themselves and carefully select. A guided tour of the distillery shows the visitors the entire machinery and process involved in making the rum right from scratch. Though we were lucky to get a

Seven Colored Earths. Just 5 kilometers downhill from the rum factory is located the geopark where the seven colored earths lay bare for visitors to get a visual treat. A winding drive with directions within the park takes you to the well protected and well-preserved location.

The Seven Colored Earths – Chamarel, Mauritius. A one of a kind miracle of Nature.

At first sight it was well beyond my ken as to how the terrain got these colors amalgamated in such fashion. It would fascinate yet flummox anyone at first sight. The description on a signboard solves that mystery for everyone – volcanic activity dating over a billion years ago along with prolonged hot and humid climate has eroded the basalt rock layers in that area revealing this intriguing layer of colorful rock surface called saprolite. The rock being chemically weathered over ages gets its

the topmost tourist attractions of Mauritius.

The Chamarel waterfall is another major attraction in the geopark. Svelte looking twin waterfalls plunging from a height of 272 feet over a concave faced rock are picturesque in every sense and can be viewed from a raised deck. Being the tallest waterfall in Mauritius it is well provided for by two different rivers (St. Denis and Viande Salee). The viewing deck allows for a good photo session. The geopark closes at 5 pm, therefore one can easily plan and cover both the Rum Distillery and the Geopark within a day if they start timely in the morning.

Chamarel Waterfall

Driving back from the geopark to the apartment with a hangover of the colorful images was mesmerizing in its own way. Something I can't forget for an eternity.



Having covered 2 major attractions in pretty much detail, it already felt accomplishing as a good start to any trip would normally feel. Dinner at Enso followed by lazing on the balcony with the signature shades of the setting sun over the Indian Ocean and soaking in the experiences of the day was the only thing playing on the mind and body for the rest of the evening. The following morning was going to be a new destination with some promising experiences.

After a hefty breakfast (self-cooked at the apartment), we got all packed to drive off to Flic en Flac. 26 kilometers north of La Gaulette and no more than a 40 minutes' drive we had booked another Studio Apartment facing the beach. La Plage . Apartments would be our den for the next 4 days.

A 13 kilometers long white sand beach facing Clearblue water in quietude remains like an indelible mark in my memory bank. The view was so inviting that walking bare feet on the beach with an occasional dip in the sea and gazing at the variety of birds that flock the area were some of the things we did for over an hour after arrival,

even before we moved into the apartment. Restaurants, souvenir shops, apartments, hotels line the parallel road against the beach. Barbecue meals on the beach are a thing to experience on the beach at Flic en Flac.

The pristine beach at Flic en Flac that stretches up to 13 kilometers.

After moving into the apartment, we wasted no time in getting back on the beach. Walking, running or just lying on the white sand and occasionally strolling into the water was more pleasurable than one could imagine. Having skipped lunch, we booked our dinner at a barbecue place on the beach itself.

Cool breeze, dim lighting and foot tapping music on the open beach, and it could have been a whole night to munch through if one could glutton away.

Rising early in the morning the next day and the first thing to do was jump into the sea for a smothering feel of the blue ocean. That swim session lasted over 2 hours and

was most relaxing. And we were sure this would be repeated daily during our stay at Flic en Flac.

The next thing we'd been looking forward to was a tour of Casela Park. A huge amusement park with jungle safari tours where one can interact with lions, cheetahs, feed giraffes, ostriches go zip lining and take a safari tour on a quad bike or a segway. Located at Cascavelle which is about 7 kilometers from Flic en Flac, one must arrive timely in the morning (the park opens at 9am) in order to catch all the action (primarily the African safari tour and the interaction with lions, giraffes and ostriches). We were late to arrive Casela Park and we were advised that we wouldn't be able to do all the main activities on that day therefore we made a booking for the next day and arrived timely. Set in a salubrious environs Casela park houses a huge infrastructure for adventures apart from the African Safari.

We got the passes for the African Safari and hopped onto our quad bike for the tour. Along the rugged and bumpy jungle route which we followed behind our guide we

spotted zebras, rhinos, gazelles, ostriches, turkeys, oryxes, and a variety of tortoises among other African fauna. The beauty of it was that we rode past most of the animals and birds at very close quarters and got a very good look at them, while even touching and feeding some zebras. The safari was a feast for the cameras. They could run out of battery and memory space, but you could not run out of enthusiasm.

That was followed by a session of feeding giraffes and ostriches which was an experience as unique as can be. The giraffes, being as friendly as possible while feeding from your palms was heartwarming to see. The ostriches were a bit scary as their long neck jerked down with great speed to feed from a pan with a long handle that we were holding. A bit scary in the beginning but real good fun as the ostriches continue to eat.

But the real thrill is experienced when you interact with and pat lions. We interacted and patted an albino lioness. She had a name. Zaza. Rescued from different parts of Africa these lions, cheetahs have been raised by humans and have become comfortable in the company of humans. It wasn't easy leaving Casela Park as we had a great time there gazing at the variety of wildlife it houses. Before leaving the premises of the park we made sure to pick up some souvenirs from a shopping store towards the exit.

The next two days at Flic en Flac were spent lazing around on the beach, swimming

in the sea, driving around the village and eating at different restaurants. Flic en Flac is a perfect area to unwind without any care while soaking in the serene ocean view by the beach. One could not tire of it.

After bidding adieu to Flic en Flac we drove up to the northern most part of Mauritius, Grand Bay (Grand Baie). A 50 kilometers drive from Flic en Flac to Grand Bay lasted well over an hour as there was converging traffic while crossing the Capital – Port Louis. Having booked a place at Ocean Villas (a lovely location with a great ambience, wonderful restaurant, pretty beach side beds and picturesque sea view) we were set for 3 days of eventfulness as well as relaxation.

Sunset at Grand Bay

After dumping our luggage in the room, we headed straight for the hotels resto-bar by the beach. Grabbing a drink each we lay down on the beach beds, watched the yachts go past the bay, planned on our own activities for the following day as well. Dinner at the resto bar was complimentary for us on the first night and a live band played while dinner was served. Unable to hold our excitement we discussed the things to do around Grand Bay with other travelers as well as the staff of the hotel.

A sea side view of Grand Bay from Ocean Villas

Early next morning we went to the beach



front and took kayaks out to the sea. We glided the kayaks across the bay winding around the buoys, anchored yachts and ferries as the sun rose with mellifluous humming of the birds all around. Kayaking around the bay early morning for an hour made us really hungry before breakfast. Breakfast was scrumptious to say the least with a wide range of cuisines in both veg as well as non-veg. An hour of kayaking made up for the overeating that we indulged in.

The highlight of our stay at Grand Bay was a boat ride to Benitiers Island and swimming with dolphins on the way to Benitiers island. The sight of dolphins jumping out of water and diving back again lifts up the mood exponentially. And when it's happening in all directions around your boat it's a treat to watch and one could watch tirelessly.

Benitiers Island (Ile Aux Benitiers), is situated about 400 meters off the mainland (off the SW side of Mauritius), but is around a 60 kilometers boat ride from Grand Bay and it's a fun boat ride getting there (stopping for the dolphin experience on the way). After getting down at the island which appears so peaceful and secluded, we looked all around and soaked in the sequestered feel of the place. White sand, turquoise colored water, green shrubs. An oval shaped island with a clean white sand beach all around its coast which outlines the shrubs and coconut trees at the center. Scampering in and out of the water, laying on the beach and watching the catamarans come and go was making me a child all over again. One of the most eye-catching sights of the island was the crystal rock which is a coral island. A rarity in nature. It's the only one in Mauritius. There are five in Seychelles we were told and some in Maldives as well. The 'Crystal Rock' appears to be floating on water even when viewed from close quarters. It is possible to get on it if you take your boat close by carefully.

For thrill seekers, seaplane trips over the island and skydiving activities are also available at Grand Bay. Having lived these experiences in other destinations we decided to skip them for now. Crystal Rock off Ile aux Benitiers – An iconic symbol of Mauritius and a marvel of nature. It is a coral island, the only one in Mauritius, which appears to be floating on water.

After a blithe time at Grand Bay, we headed for the capital city – Port Louis. A 30

kilometers drive took around 45 minutes. We had booked an apartment at the Citadel Mall. An apartment on the 2nd highest floor of the 3rd tallest building of Mauritius (it was the tallest at one point of time), offered us the most stunning view of Port Louis. A 3 BHK with a big balcony was high on luxury and space.

Port Louis viewed from Citadel Mall Apartments

After travelling around the natural and remote areas we were finally in for a city life feel. The capital of Mauritius is well planned with the port infrastructure being surrounded by the city architecture in an arc shape.

Orderly traffic and well-maintained roads and other infrastructure in general make it a conducive environment for a leisurely city.

Since we were at the heart of the city, we were at walking distance from the main attractions of the city. Those being the Aapravasi Ghat, Caudan Waterfront and the museum (Mauritius Institute of the Mauritius Museums Council).

Sauntering from our apartment towards the museum and the Aapravasi Ghat, we walked past the Office of the Prime Minister. Right in front of his office door. It took us by surprise and as one would have expected such a place to be heavily barricaded.

A visit to the Aapravasi Ghat was like transporting ourselves back in time and living Mauritian history. This is the immigration depot through which came the original population of Mauritius. Indentured labor from India were brought to Mauritius by sea and the Aapravasi Ghat is where they entered Mauritius from in the year 1834. A record is still maintained there of each and every indentured laborer who came to Mauritius all the way from India when under British rule (Mauritius was discovered by Dutch sailors and subsequently ruled by the Portuguese, French and the British). It is these laborers who populated the island and made it inhabitable. A tour of the area shows the rooms they were allotted, their tools and equipment. Photographs of these indentured laborers, the founders of Mauritius (fair enough to say) are put on display. Relics belonging to former Prime Ministers including their very first, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam are put on display



including their books.

An engraved stone commemorating the landing place of the indentured immigrants

From 1834 to 1910 almost half a million workers arrived in Mauritius not only from India, but also from China, Comoros, Yemen,

Madagascar, Mozambique and some South East Asian countries as well. They worked as slaves only for a fixed period of time after which they would be freed. Their main task was cultivation of sugarcane, the main agricultural produce of Mauritius (Vanilla is also an agricultural produce of Mauritius, Madagascar being the only other place in the world where vanilla is grown). About 65 percent of them stayed back in Mauritius



permanently starting their new life after completing their contracted period. 70 percent of the population of Mauritius are descendants of these indentured laborers. After successfully reaping the benefits of indentured laborers in Mauritius, it became a widespread practice in other European colonies.

All in all, the Aapravasi Ghat is a very well-preserved historical site that offers an excellent insight into history and must be paid a visit by every traveler in Mauritius.

Portraits of some of the Indentured Laborers and a Kitchen at the Historical Aapravasi Ghat

Hospital Block at the Historical Aapravasi Ghat

A panoply of birds and other wildlife are displayed at the Natural History Museum, near the government house. It's not too far from the Aapravasi Ghat. Great Dodos are

on display with in depth description on their history along with a short movie on the dodos. But there are other displays at the museum which can hold your interests as well if you admire wildlife, marine wildlife in particular.

A Dodo Skeleton at the natural History Museum

The Dodo, it's worth noting, has only been assumed to be a stupid bird. There is no evidence of it. The dodo is an extinct flightless bird that was endemic to Mauritius and was first spotted by the Dutch in 1598. It is another symbol of Mauritius and you would even find a picture of a dodo on the currency notes of Mauritius. There is a dodo skeleton on display which is unique as all the bones are from a single bird as opposed to the assembled ones.

The Caudan Waterfront at Port Louis is a beautiful complex with shopping and

entertainment spots and a wide array of restaurants, souvenir shops including a casino, cinema, craft market and a marina. This place hosts regular live entertainment shows on the street. The prettiest sights include a colorful umbrella roofing over the street and the SBM fountain at the sea front that starts every evening with its changing decoratively lit patterns. 3 days at Port Louis were very satisfying and insightful for us.

The last stop for us at Mauritius was Blue Bay. A quiet and peaceful spot on the South Eastern end of the island. Very peaceful, white sand and blue glistening water. Greenery, rocky beaches, white sand beaches, parks, bird watching spots, steady breeze and the soothing sound of moderate waves crashing against the shore all day made it a perfect spot to feel relaxed right to the soul. For our last few days in Mauritius, Blue Bay was a perfect place to finally relax and reflect upon after a whirlwind trip across Mauritius. Blue bay also happens to be a popular spot for scuba diving and para sailing. Being only a 15-minute drive to the airport from Blue Bay, it was a convenient place to end the trip.

Blue Bay, Mahebourg

After a few peaceful days at Blue Bay, we drove back to the airport calling it curtains to our 17-day odyssey across Mauritius.

And as I mentioned in the beginning, it was with a very heavy heart but a load full of memories that we left from Mauritius. I could go on extolling Mauritius, but one must go there to know what a marvel it is.

*Keeping in mind the current COVID situation, it is advisable to travel once clearer guidelines are issued by the government of Mauritius. Mauritius has done well enough to contain the pandemic as they have only 3 active cases currently. As of now the entry of aircrafts and ships are prohibited till 31st August 2020. One must consult the embassy for more accurate information on travel to Mauritius.

About the author: The above article is authored by Gautam Singh Kanwal (Master Mariner) who works aboard Merchant Ships and hails from Nainital, Uttarakhand. An avid for travelling, music, art, adventure sports, etc. he is keen to indulge in new experiences every time. He travelled to Mauritius with his wife (Ritu Danu Kanwal) in September 2019 for a holiday.



Manuj Ralhan

Seasoned Hospitality Leader | Expert in Hotel Pre-Openings and Convention & Exhibition Management

What are some of the unique aspects of your role as a General Manager, particularly at Novotel Jaipur?

One of the unique aspects of my role as a General Manager at Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre & Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre is the opportunity to lead a dynamic team that is always brimming with ideas to elevate our guest experience and solidify our position as Jaipur's premier MICE destination. Here are some key initiatives and strategies we are implementing:

Sustainability Initiatives: We are committed to minimizing our environmental footprint by implementing solar panels, water harvesting systems, and waste management initiatives. These efforts not only promote sustainability but also set a benchmark for eco-friendly practices in the hospitality industry.

Bespoke Packages: We design bespoke packages tailored to specific interests such as heritage tours, adventure activities, and cultural immersions. These curated experiences offer our guests unique and personalized ways to explore and enjoy the rich heritage and vibrant culture of Jaipur.

Expanding MICE Segments: We are catering to the growing MICE segments by hosting diverse events such as medical conferences, sporting events, live concerts, and technology summits. This diversity not only broadens our reach but also enhances our reputation as a versatile and premier MICE destination.

Inclusivity and Accessibility: We

prioritize universal design principles and implement assistive technologies to ensure inclusivity for guests with disabilities. This commitment ensures that all our guests have a comfortable and enjoyable experience.

Cultural Collaborations: We collaborate with cultural institutions, NGOs, and artists to organize workshops, exhibitions, and community outreach programs. These partnerships enrich our offerings and foster a deeper connection with the local community.

Environmental Partnerships: We partner with environmental organizations to organize clean-up drives, tree-planting campaigns, and eco-awareness workshops. These initiatives not only contribute to the environment but also engage our guests and staff in meaningful and impactful activities.

Curated Cultural Experiences: We offer curated experiences such as visits to local bazaars, artisan workshops, and traditional performances to showcase the vibrant culture of Jaipur. These experiences provide our guests with an authentic and immersive taste of the local culture and traditions.

These are just a glimpse of the exciting possibilities I envision for Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre. By embracing innovation, sustainability, and community engagement, we can create a truly unique and unforgettable MICE experience for our guests, solidifying Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre's position as Jaipur's crown jewel.

Q Could you describe a typical day or week in your current position?

As the General Manager my role involves a dynamic mix of strategic planning, team leadership, and guest engagement to ensure the seamless operation of our premier MICE destination.

"My day usually begins early with a review of the daily schedule and key performance metrics. This helps me stay informed about occupancy rates, event schedules, and any pressing issues that need immediate attention. I conduct a morning briefing with department heads to discuss the day's agenda, review guest feedback, and address any operational challenges. This meeting ensures that everyone is aligned and prepared for the day ahead. I make it a point to walk through the property, engaging with staff and guests. This hands-on approach allows me to identify any areas for improvement and to personally address guest concerns or compliments. Mid-morning is often reserved for strategic meetings with the executive team. Topics include upcoming events, marketing strategies, financial performance, and sustainability initiatives. These discussions are crucial for long-term planning and goal setting. I spend time interacting with guests, especially those attending events or conferences".

"Given the nature of our property, overseeing event preparations and execution is a significant part of my role. I liaise with the events team to ensure everything runs smoothly, from setup to catering and guest services. I review operational reports and meet with department heads to address



any ongoing issues. This includes checking on maintenance projects, housekeeping standards, and food and beverage quality. I often attend networking events or community meetings, fostering relationships with local businesses, cultural institutions, and government officials. These connections are vital for collaboration and community involvement. I conclude the day by reviewing the day's achievements and challenges, preparing for the next day, and addressing any urgent emails or communications."

Q What have been some of the biggest challenges you've faced in managing a hotel like Novotel Jaipur?

Managing Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre & Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre presents unique challenges that we

embrace as opportunities to excel:

Adapting to Diverse Guest Needs: We create bespoke packages for interests like heritage tours and cultural activities, ensuring a memorable experience for all guests.

Sustainability Initiatives: We lead with eco-friendly practices such as solar panels and waste management, enhancing our environmental impact and appealing to eco-conscious guests.

Catering to Varied MICE Segments: We innovate and customize our services to handle events from medical conferences to live concerts, reinforcing our status as a premier MICE destination.

Ensuring Inclusivity: We implement universal design principles and assistive technologies to provide a seamless experience for all guests, showcasing our

commitment to inclusivity.

Maintaining Operational Excellence: We foster continuous improvement and teamwork, ensuring smooth operations and effective problem-solving.

Engaging with the Community: Collaborations with local institutions and NGOs enrich our cultural offerings and support community initiatives.

Handling High-Pressure Situations: Our team excels under pressure, ensuring flawless execution of large-scale events through flexibility and resilience.

In summary, these challenges drive us to innovate and adapt, affirming our commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences.

Q With the recent tie-up between Novotel Jaipur and NJCC and JEC how has this integration impacted operations and guest experience?

The recent integration of Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre (NJCC) and Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JEC) has significantly enhanced our operations and guest experience, as demonstrated during the "State Working Committee Meeting" for the Government of Rajasthan on 13 July 2024. This high-profile event, attended by Honourable Chief Minister Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma Ji and Cabinet Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan Ji along with other cabinet ministers, catered to 14,000 guests and showcased our seamless collaboration among 10 Accor hotels and a dedicated team of 500 professionals working around the clock.

Key Benefits of the Integration:

- Enhanced Operational Efficiency:** Streamlined operations allow us to manage large-scale events with precision, ensuring that all aspects of event planning and execution are handled smoothly.
- Expanded Service Offerings:** The integration has expanded our array of services and facilities, including state-of-the-art convention spaces and bespoke dining options, providing guests with a comprehensive and luxurious experience.
- Elevated Guest Experience:** We deliver impeccable service and flawless event logistics, ensuring that every guest has a memorable and enjoyable experience.

• **Innovative and Sustainable Practices:** Our commitment to sustainability has been bolstered with enhanced initiatives such as solar panels and advanced waste management systems, reducing our environmental impact.

Strengthened Community Engagement: We have expanded our collaborations with local NGOs, artists, and cultural institutions, strengthening our ties with the community and contributing to local development.

Exceptional Teamwork: The integration has demonstrated our team's flexibility and resilience in high-pressure situations, highlighting our ability to work cohesively and effectively.

Future-Ready Facilities: With state-of-the-art infrastructure, we are well-equipped to accommodate diverse events, from small meetings to large-scale conferences and exhibitions.

Increased Confidence and Visibility: The successful management of high-profile events has increased confidence in our capabilities and boosted our visibility in the industry.

Close Relationship with the Government: Our close relationship with the government has been strengthened, allowing us to host significant events and reinforce our position as a leading convention centre.

This integration of NJCC and JECC has not only improved our operational efficiency and service offerings but has also significantly enhanced the overall guest experience, positioning us as a premier destination for large-scale events and conventions.

Q What initiatives have been taken to ensure smooth MICE and Events? Any recent case examples?

At Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre & Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre, we ensure every MICE event runs smoothly with a focus on operational efficiency, guest comfort, and sustainability. Recent initiatives include:

Infrastructure Upgrades: For a large-scale car company event with 400 guests, we enhanced comfort by adding 650 tons of air conditioning to our 50,000 sq. ft. JECC Hall 1, totalling 1300 tons.

Sustainable Practices: We use eco-friendly materials and decorations to minimize our environmental impact,

demonstrating our commitment to sustainability.

Authentic Hospitality: We integrate traditional Rajasthani elements like folk music, dance, and local cuisine to enrich the guest experience.

Event Coordination: Our team meticulously manages all aspects, from logistics to catering, ensuring a flawless event.

Technological Integration: We utilize advanced audio-visual systems, high-speed internet, and digital signage for engaging and efficient presentations.

Customizable Spaces: Our flexible venues are tailored to meet diverse event needs and reflect clients' brands.

Guest Comfort: We focus on comfort and satisfaction with ergonomic seating, ample breakout areas, and high-quality catering.

These strategies ensure exceptional and memorable experiences for our clients and their guests.

Q What strategies have you implemented to maintain or enhance guest satisfaction amidst industry changes and competition?

Personalized Experiences: We tailor amenities and services based on guest preferences to make each stay unique.

Innovative Facilities: We continually upgrade our infrastructure and introduce new amenities to meet evolving guest needs.

Sustainability Initiatives: Our eco-friendly practices, including solar panels and waste management, appeal to environmentally conscious guests.

Cultural Integration: We offer authentic local experiences, such as traditional Rajasthani welcomes and local cuisine, to enrich our guests' stay.

Exceptional Service: Our trained staff ensures professional and attentive service, enhancing overall guest satisfaction.

Technological Advancements: We use smart technology, like high-speed internet and mobile apps, to provide a seamless guest experience.

Feedback and Improvement: We actively seek and act on guest feedback to continually refine our services.

Health and Safety: Our rigorous health and safety protocols ensure a safe environment for guests and staff.

Community Engagement: We collaborate with local businesses and

cultural institutions to stay relevant and competitive.

Flexibility: We adapt quickly to changing guest needs and industry trends to ensure a smooth experience.

By focusing on these strategies, we consistently enhance guest satisfaction and stand out in a competitive market.

Q How do you see the hospitality landscape evolving in Jaipur, and what opportunities do you foresee for Novotel Jaipur in the coming years?

As Jaipur emerges as a prime destination for MICE tourism, Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre & JECC is poised to capitalize on this growth. We plan to attract international MICE delegates by creating multilingual promotional content and actively networking with MICE organizers and travel agents. By showcasing Jaipur's rich heritage, vibrant bazaars, and traditional cuisine, we aim to enhance the delegate experience. We'll also offer attractive packages and leverage virtual tours to highlight our versatile event spaces and advanced technology. Emphasizing our track record of successful international events and providing dedicated client attention will further solidify our position as a top choice for global MICE events. These strategies will help us effectively attract international delegates and elevate Jaipur's reputation in the MICE industry.

Q What initiatives has Novotel Jaipur taken to promote sustainability and responsible tourism?

Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre is deeply committed to sustainability and responsible tourism through various initiatives:

Advanced Infrastructure: The property boasts a robust electrical setup and efficient HVAC systems. With a comprehensive 33kv electrical power system and high-capacity chillers and cooling towers, we ensure a pleasant indoor climate while maximizing energy efficiency.

Water Management: Our water treatment facilities are top-notch, featuring a multi-grade filter, activated carbon filter, and a high-capacity RO plant. These systems ensure a consistent supply of high-quality water. Additionally, our sewage treatment plant emphasizes our dedication to sustainable water use and recycling.

Environmental Sustainability: We

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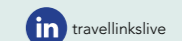
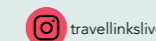
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have implemented rainwater harvesting systems to conserve water and reduce our environmental footprint. Our energy-efficient heat pump system and an Organic Waste Converter for waste management further highlight our commitment to sustainability.

Green Energy: The hotel supports electric vehicle (EV) charging and generates a significant amount of solar energy each month, reducing reliance on conventional energy sources and promoting green energy use among guests.

Plastic-Free: We have eliminated plastic usage across the property, aligning with global sustainability trends and reducing environmental impact.

Farm-to-Table Dining: Our in-house vegetable garden ensures fresh, organic produce for our kitchen, promoting healthy dining options and reducing the carbon footprint associated with food transportation.

These initiatives not only enhance the guest experience but also demonstrate our commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

Q In your opinion, what qualities are most important for someone aspiring to a leadership role in the hospitality industry?

As the General Manager of Novotel Jaipur, I believe that effective leadership in the hospitality industry is built on a combination of essential qualities and practices that drive both personal and organizational success. Key qualities include visionary thinking to anticipate future trends, empathy and emotional intelligence to build strong relationships, and exceptional communication skills to convey goals and feedback. Leaders must also demonstrate resilience and adaptability to navigate the industry's challenges, a commitment to excellence to inspire high standards, and strategic decision-making to align actions with organizational goals.

Additionally, a successful leader in hospitality should embrace innovation and maintain agility to quickly adapt to changes and seize new opportunities. To benefit employees, leaders should invest in professional development, provide recognition and rewards, and promote a healthy work-life balance. Offering clear career advancement opportunities, fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace, and

encouraging active employee engagement are also crucial. Supportive leadership through mentorship and guidance helps employees navigate challenges and achieve their potential. By integrating these qualities and practices, leaders can create a positive and productive work environment, driving both team performance and organizational success while enhancing the overall guest experience.

Q Looking ahead, what are your personal goals and aspirations within the hospitality sector, and how do you envision Novotel Jaipur contributing to those goals?

Looking ahead, my personal goals within the hospitality sector centre on advancing our property's reputation, fostering innovation, and enhancing the overall guest experience. I aim to continually refine and elevate the guest experience at Novotel Jaipur, ensuring that we deliver exceptional service that not only meets but exceeds expectations. Expanding and deepening our commitment to sustainability is also a key focus, with plans to implement cutting-edge eco-friendly practices that set a benchmark in the industry. Embracing and driving technological advancements will allow us to stay ahead of trends and effectively meet the evolving needs of our guests.

In addition to these goals, I am dedicated to developing and nurturing a high-performing team by investing in their growth, recognizing their contributions, and cultivating a positive work environment. Strengthening strategic partnerships within the hospitality sector will enhance our service offerings and expand our network of opportunities. Furthermore, increasing our involvement in local community initiatives and fostering meaningful collaborations with local organizations will reinforce our role as a community-focused organization.

Novotel Jaipur will play a pivotal role in achieving these goals by maintaining high standards of service excellence, leading in sustainability with initiatives such as solar energy and advanced waste management, and investing in the latest technologies. Our focus on comprehensive team development, strategic partnerships, and community engagement will ensure that we continue to set the standard for exceptional hospitality and contribute to the broader goals of excellence, innovation, and sustainability.

Any advice that you would like to give to

Q youngsters?

As the General Manager of Novotel Jaipur, my advice to young professionals aspiring to build a successful career in the hospitality industry would be:

Embrace Learning and Adaptability: The hospitality industry is dynamic and ever-evolving. Stay curious, seek continuous learning opportunities, and be open to adapting to new trends and technologies. This will help you stay ahead and remain relevant in the field.

Cultivate Strong Interpersonal Skills: Building genuine relationships with guests, colleagues, and industry partners is crucial. Develop strong communication, empathy, and teamwork skills to create positive experiences and foster a supportive work environment.

Pursue Excellence and Innovation: Always strive for excellence in your work and look for innovative ways to enhance guest experiences and improve operational efficiency. Being proactive and forward-thinking will set you apart from others.


Build Resilience and Manage Stress: The hospitality industry can be challenging and fast-paced. Learn to manage stress effectively, stay resilient in the face of setbacks, and maintain a positive attitude to navigate the ups and downs of the profession.

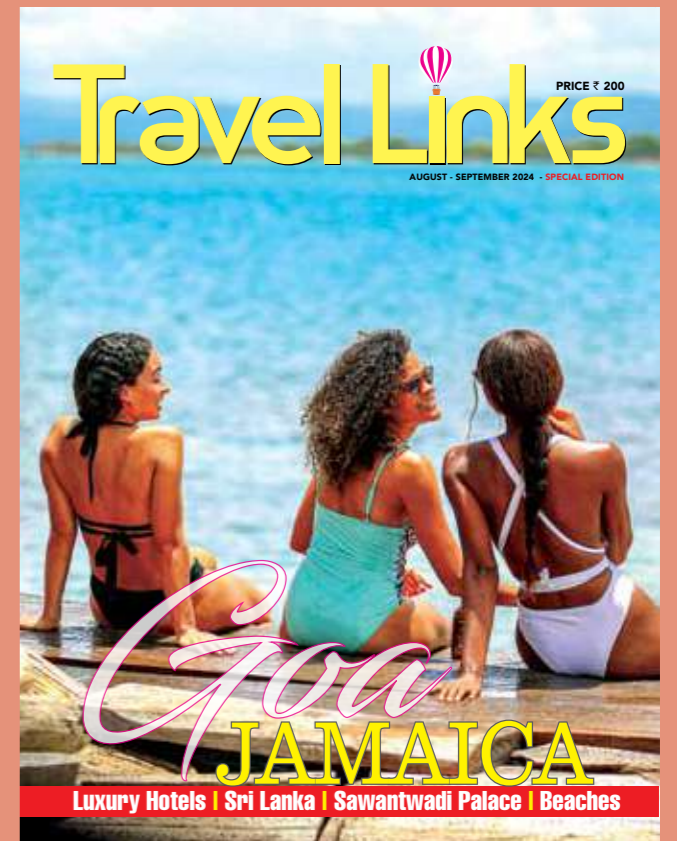
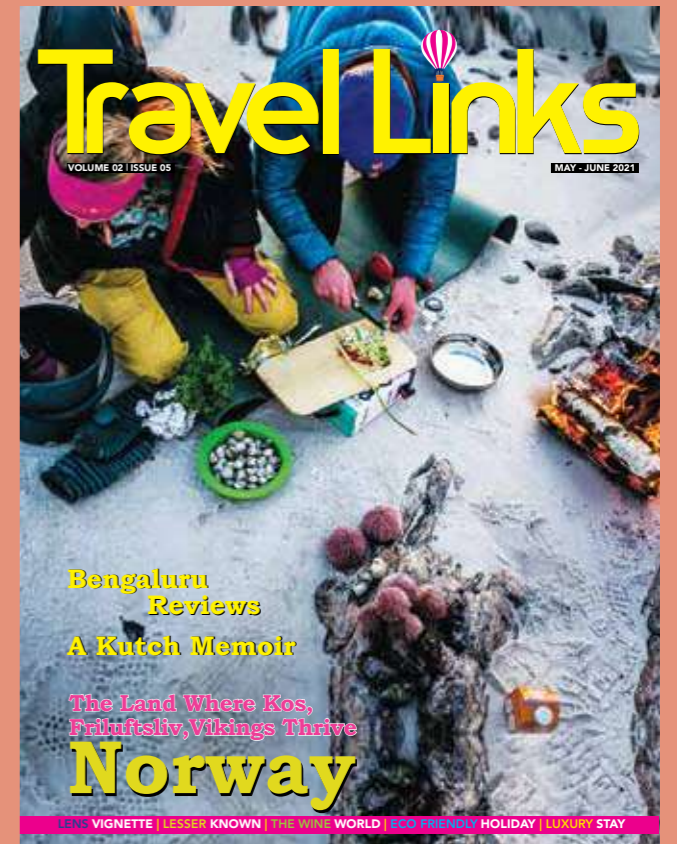
Seek Mentorship and Network: Find mentors who can guide you and provide valuable insights based on their experiences. Networking with industry professionals can open doors to new opportunities and help you gain a broader perspective on the field.

Commit to Personal Growth: Invest in your personal and professional development. Attend workshops, earn certifications, and seek feedback to continually improve your skills and knowledge.

Demonstrate Integrity and Professionalism: Uphold high ethical standards and professionalism in all your interactions. Integrity builds trust and credibility, which are essential for long-term success in the hospitality industry.

Passion and Enthusiasm: Approach your work with passion and enthusiasm. A genuine love for hospitality and a commitment to delivering exceptional service will drive your success and inspire those around you.

By embracing these principles, young professionals can build a rewarding career in hospitality, contribute meaningfully to their organizations, and make a lasting impact on the industry. 



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Mahakumbh 2025: Where Spirituality Meets Tradition and Adventure



Since ancient times, saints across India have engaged in deep spiritual practices, or sadhana, striving to connect with the divine and praying for world peace. The tradition of collective prayer and unity runs deep in Indian heritage and continues today through vibrant festivals and spiritual gatherings. Of these, the Mahakumbh stands out as the pinnacle, a sacred event occurring every 12 years that is among the world's largest spiritual gatherings.

Millions of pilgrims from around the world gather at Prayagraj, the sacred confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers, known as the Triveni Sangam. This revered gathering is steeped in the symbolism of ancient Indian texts, which recount the cosmic battle between gods and demons for the elixir of immortality. Bathing in the waters of this confluence during Mahakumbh is believed to purify the soul, bringing devotees closer to salvation and liberation.

Mahakumbh is hosted in rotation between Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj every 12 years, creating a powerful blend of spirituality and cultural diversity. This monumental event serves as a unique bridge to inner transformation and offers visitors a deep look into India's living traditions, making it a pilgrimage unlike any other.

In January 2025, Prayagraj will once again welcome the Mahakumbh, with extensive preparations already underway. The Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (UPSTDC) is establishing a "tent city" at key areas like Arail Ghat, Parade Ground, and Jhunsi, offering around 2,000 tents in categories from basic to luxurious, and ensuring that pilgrims can enjoy both comfort and spiritual retreat. Moreover, special accommodations are being made for the Akhadas representing different monastic orders; these spiritual organizations bring an added dimension to the Mahakumbh's sacred atmosphere.

One of the key rituals of Mahakumbh is the series of seven important snans, or ritual baths, each with its own deep significance. The first snan is scheduled for January 13th, known as Paush Purnima, a full-moon bath associated with the pursuit of moksha (liberation from rebirth). On January 14, the Makar Sankranti snan—the first Shahi snan, or royal bath—will occur, where spiritual leaders symbolically lead devotees in taking the holy dip to mark the sun's northward shift. Other major snans include Mauni Amavasya (January 29), Basant Panchami (February 3), Magh Purnima (February 12), and the grand finale on Mahashivratri (February 26), each representing unique blessings and significance on the journey to spiritual awakening.

In addition to these ritual baths, Mahakumbh offers visitors a rich cultural experience. A wide array of indigenous and local cuisines will be available, giving visitors the chance to savor the authentic flavours of the region. Complementing this is a series of yoga sessions, offering pilgrims a rejuvenating opportunity to align their physical, mental, and spiritual selves. Yoga, renowned as an integral part of Indian culture, will play a significant role in providing inner peace to all who attend the Mahakumbh.

Another beautiful cultural component of Mahakumbh will be the bhajan sandhyas, or evening devotional music performances, where the uplifting sounds of traditional music fill the air with tranquility. For those seeking adventure, Mahakumbh 2025 will have something special to offer: helicopter joy rides will give visitors an exhilarating aerial view of the grand Kumbh Mela grounds and the holy Sangam, providing a unique perspective on the enormity of this sacred congregation and the captivating landscape of Prayagraj.

Adventure lovers can also engage in water sports along the banks of the rivers. The area surrounding Prayagraj boasts a number of revered temples, including the famous Hanuman Temple and Mankameshwar Temple, each adding to the city's spiritual depth. These sacred sites allow visitors to explore Prayagraj's rich cultural history and enhance their journey with moments of deep spiritual connection.

Together, these cultural and recreational elements transform the Mahakumbh from a traditional pilgrimage into a multifaceted celebration of India's cultural heritage. With activities and experiences for every type of visitor, Mahakumbh 2025 promises to be an enriching event that resonates with both domestic and international travellers, all converging on Prayagraj for a glimpse of India's unique spiritual heartbeat.



Incredible India



BATHING DATES:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Paush Purnima | - 13 th January, 2025 |
| 2. Makar Sankranti (1 st Shahi Snan) | - 14 th January, 2025 |
| 3. Mauni Amavasya (2 nd Shahi Snan) | - 29 th January, 2025 |
| 4. Basant Panchami (3 rd Shahi Snan) | - 03 rd February, 2025 |
| 5. Achala Saptami | - 04 th February, 2025 |
| 6. Magh Purnima | - 12 th February, 2025 |
| 7. Shri Mahashivratri | - 26 th February, 2025 |

Experience Spiritual Grandeur in Unmatched Luxury

At the Mahakumbh 2025, tent cities are being set up at the banks of the Sangam and key areas like Parade Ground, Arail, and Jhunsi.

The tent city will offer sheer luxury with three categories of accommodation to choose from.

Villa, Maharaja, and Swiss Cottage—the three types of accommodation will offer unique amenities to suit various preferences of the travellers.

The site at Parade Ground will have 55 tents/Swiss cottages, while the site at Jhunsi will spread over 2.5 acres and accommodate 200 luxury cottages, while a larger tent city at Arail will feature 2000 cottages across 25 acres, with deluxe, super deluxe, and luxury options.



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Kerala Travel Mart 2024

Showcasing the Timeless Beauty and Sustainable Future of God's Own Country

By team TL inputs Payal

Beautiful Kerala: A Timeless Paradise

Kerala, often referred to as "God's Own Country," is a paradise that has captivated the hearts of travellers worldwide. Its natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and the promise of serene escapades make it a dream destination for those seeking solace amidst nature. From the backwaters of Alleppey to the tea gardens of Munnar, from the wildlife sanctuaries of Thekkady

to the bustling cultural hub of Kochi, Kerala offers an exquisite blend of experiences. In this article, we delve into the beauty of Kerala and its significant role in India's tourism industry while highlighting the Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) and the profound impact it has on promoting sustainable and responsible tourism.

Kochi: Gateway to Kerala's Rich Heritage

Kochi, the starting point for many travellers exploring Kerala, is a city that beautifully merges the past with the present. Known

as the "Queen of the Arabian Sea," Kochi's strategic location has made it a melting pot of cultures for centuries. Fort Kochi, with its Portuguese, Dutch, and British influences, is a treasure trove for history buffs. Visitors can explore historic sites like the Mattancherry Palace, Paradesi Synagogue, and the iconic Chinese fishing nets that have stood tall for centuries.

Beyond history, Kochi is also the cultural hub of Kerala, hosting numerous art galleries, cultural performances like Kathakali, and modern-day street art that adorns the walls of its streets. The city's harbour is busy with



local ferries and cargo ships, symbolizing its deep-rooted connection with global trade and tourism.

Munnar: The Land of Tea Gardens and Misty Hills

Nestled in the Western Ghats, Munnar is a hill station that can easily be described as Kerala's crown jewel. Famous for its sprawling tea gardens, rolling hills, and cool climate, Munnar offers a refreshing break from the tropical heat of the coastal regions. The mist-covered hills, lush greenery, and vast plantations provide an ethereal



experience to visitors.

Tourists visiting Munnar can take guided tours through tea plantations, learn about the history and process of tea production, and indulge in tea-tasting sessions. The Eravikulam National Park, home to the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, adds an element of wildlife adventure to the Munnar itinerary. Anamudi Peak, the highest point in South India, offers trekking opportunities for the more adventurous.

Thekkady: Wildlife, Spice Plantations, and Adventure

Moving from the misty hills of Munnar to the wild heart of Kerala, Thekkady is where adventure and wildlife converge. Located near the Periyar National Park, Thekkady is synonymous with dense forests, diverse wildlife, and sprawling spice plantations. The Periyar Tiger Reserve is one of the most popular wildlife sanctuaries in India, where visitors can embark on jungle safaris, bamboo rafting, and even elephant rides.

Spice plantations are another significant attraction in Thekkady, with cardamom, pepper, cinnamon, and clove growing abundantly. Tourists can explore these plantations, learning about the intricate process of cultivating and harvesting spices while experiencing the aromatic ambiance of the region.

Alleppey: The Enchanting Backwaters

No trip to Kerala is complete without experiencing the magical backwaters, and Alleppey (Alappuzha) is the quintessential destination for this serene experience. Known as the "Venice of the East," Alleppey is famous for its houseboats that drift along the tranquil network of canals, lagoons, and lakes. Staying on a traditional houseboat is one of the most sought-after experiences, offering tourists a chance to witness Kerala's rural life up close.

The backwaters are dotted with lush green paddy fields, coconut groves, and

quaint villages, making the houseboat journeys a meditative experience. The region also hosts the annual Nehru Trophy Snake Boat Race, a thrilling spectacle that draws spectators from across the globe. Alleppey's calm waters and mesmerizing views have earned it a special place in the hearts of travellers worldwide.

CGH Earth: Sustainable Tourism Redefined

CGH Earth is a brand that has become synonymous with sustainable tourism in Kerala. With a focus on eco-conscious hospitality, CGH Earth offers authentic experiences rooted in the local culture, traditions, and environment. From their eco-resorts in the backwaters of Kumarakom to the heritage properties in Kochi, CGH Earth provides a window into Kerala's soul while emphasizing sustainability and responsible tourism.

Each CGH Earth property is unique, designed to blend harmoniously with its

surroundings. Whether it's the spice-scented air of Thekkady, the tranquil backwaters of Kumarakom, or the art and culture of Fort Kochi, the experiences are immersive and deeply connected to the local environment. CGH Earth has set a benchmark in eco-friendly hospitality, proving that luxury and sustainability can go hand in hand.

The Importance of Kerala Travel Mart (KTM)

Kerala's tourism industry has flourished over the years, thanks to the concerted efforts of various stakeholders, including government bodies, private enterprises, and local communities. At the forefront of this growth is the Kerala Travel Mart (KTM), an initiative that has played a pivotal role in showcasing Kerala's tourism potential to the world.

Launched in 2000, the Kerala Travel Mart is one of India's largest tourism events, held biennially in Kochi. It serves as a platform where buyers and sellers from the



tourism industry come together to network, collaborate, and promote Kerala as a prime travel destination. KTM has not only attracted international attention but also encouraged local enterprises to innovate and enhance their offerings.

The Role of KTM in Promoting Responsible Tourism

One of the key aspects that sets KTM apart is its focus on responsible and sustainable tourism. Kerala, with its unique ecosystems,

Collaborations and Innovations KTM has fostered numerous collaborations between local and international stakeholders. The event brings together tour operators, hotel chains, airlines, media representatives, and government officials from across the globe. This convergence of expertise and ideas has not only increased Kerala's visibility on the global tourism map but also spurred innovation within the industry. The Travel Mart has also helped in the digital transformation of Kerala's

tourism sector. Through workshops and discussions on the latest technologies, tourism enterprises have embraced digital tools for marketing, online bookings, and customer engagement. KTM has thus been instrumental in modernizing Kerala's tourism offerings while keeping the essence of its natural and cultural charm intact.

Social Responsibility and Community Engagement

KTM goes beyond the commercial aspects

of tourism and emphasizes the importance of community engagement and social responsibility. The event encourages tourism enterprises to work closely with local communities, ensuring that they benefit from tourism activities. From employing local guides and artisans to promoting handicrafts and traditional art forms, KTM has played a significant role in uplifting Kerala's local communities.

The Mart has also been a strong advocate for gender equality in tourism. By promoting

women entrepreneurs and offering them a platform to showcase their talents, KTM has contributed to empowering women in the industry. Women-run homestays, wellness centres, and handicraft shops have become popular among tourists, adding a unique dimension to Kerala's tourism scene.


The Future of Kerala Tourism with KTM

As the global travel industry evolves, Kerala Travel Mart continues to adapt to new trends

and challenges. The event has embraced sustainability, digital innovation, and community-centric tourism as the pillars of its future growth strategy. Post-pandemic, KTM has been instrumental in revitalizing Kerala's tourism industry, ensuring that the state remains a top destination for domestic and international travellers alike.

KTM 2024 is poised to be bigger and better, with a focus on promoting wellness tourism, adventure tourism, and heritage tourism. Kerala, with its Ayurvedic treatments, eco-friendly retreats, and rich history, is well-positioned to attract a diverse range of tourists. The Travel Mart will continue to showcase the best of Kerala while driving the state towards a more sustainable and inclusive tourism model.

Conclusion

Kerala's charm lies in its diversity—from the misty hills of Munnar to the calm backwaters of Alleppey, from the vibrant streets of Kochi to the wildlife havens of Thekkady. This natural beauty, coupled with the state's deep-rooted cultural heritage, makes Kerala a must-visit destination. The Kerala Travel Mart has played a significant role in promoting this beauty to the world, ensuring that tourism in Kerala thrives in a way that is sustainable, responsible, and inclusive. As KTM continues to grow and evolve, it will undoubtedly shape the future of Kerala's tourism industry, preserving the state's unique essence while embracing modernity and progress. 



fragile landscapes, and traditional cultures, requires tourism models that prioritize conservation and community well-being. KTM has been a champion of these values, promoting eco-friendly initiatives, community-based tourism, and the preservation of Kerala's cultural heritage.

KTM encourages the tourism sector to adopt sustainable practices by integrating eco-friendly operations, reducing carbon footprints, and promoting local businesses. The Mart serves as a knowledge-sharing platform where industry professionals discuss and implement strategies for sustainable growth. Initiatives like rainwater harvesting, waste management, and responsible travel guidelines have been adopted widely across Kerala's tourism landscape, thanks to the efforts led by KTM.



Jordan: Bridging Cultures and Economies in the Heart of the Middle East



It boasts the ancient Nabataean city of Petra, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, and numerous Roman ruins that highlight its role in early civilizations. Economically, despite challenges posed by limited natural resources, especially oil, Jordan has developed a robust tourism sector, alongside flourishing industries such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and textiles. Today, Jordan is recognized for its remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of changing regional and global dynamics, offering a captivating blend of historical allure and modern ambition.

Historical Significance

Jordan, a country located in the heart of the Middle East, has a rich historical and cultural heritage that dates back to ancient times. Its strategic location at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe made it a hub of trade, culture, and politics throughout history. Jordan's roots extend to some of the earliest human civilizations, including the Nabateans, Romans, and Byzantines, leaving behind a legacy that still resonates today.

Ancient History

Jordan's early history is marked by the rise of the Nabatean Kingdom, which flourished around the 4th century BCE. The Nabateans,

1. Historical and Cultural Overview



By Team Travel Links

Jordan, a pivotal nation at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe, holds a vital role in the Middle East as both a cultural treasure and strategic hub. Bordered by influential neighbours and home to iconic historical wonders like Petra, Jordan masterfully blends its ancient heritage with modern development, making it a unique player in regional geopolitics. With its steady diplomacy, rich historical

legacy, and expanding economic sectors, Jordan stands as a beacon of resilience and opportunity—bridging the past with the present while shaping a dynamic future for the region.

Positioned at the heart of the Middle East, Jordan is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the south, Iraq to the northeast, Syria to the north, Israel and Palestine to the west, and the Red Sea to the southwest. This strategic location makes Jordan a critical geographical and political bridge between

some of the region's most powerful nations. Its capital, Amman, serves as a thriving centre of activity, where ancient history intertwines with modern progress.

Geopolitically, Jordan holds immense strategic importance. Situated amidst regional conflicts, it has emerged as a key player in promoting peace and stability across the Middle East. The country's stable relationships with both Western powers and its neighbouring countries have enabled it to act as a mediator in pivotal discussions

and conflicts over the years. Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel further underscores its diplomatic influence in the region. Additionally, Jordan's neutrality, coupled with its strong diplomatic ties with both the Arab world and Western allies, makes it a vital conduit for global trade, especially through its trade routes and proximity to the Gulf of Aqaba, offering access to the Red Sea and beyond.

Culturally and archaeologically, Jordan is a land of immense significance.



skilled traders and engineers, are most famous for their capital city, Petra, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This city, carved into rose-red cliffs, became a significant trade centre connecting the Arabian Peninsula with the Mediterranean.

Following the decline of the Nabateans, the Roman Empire gained control over the region, integrating Jordan into the broader Roman province of Arabia Petraea. Roman influence is still visible in sites like Jerash, with its well-preserved Roman architecture and amphitheatre. Over time, the region witnessed the spread of Christianity and later Islam, which both left lasting impacts on the region's identity.

Modern History

In the 20th century, Jordan played a pivotal role in the Arab Revolt against Ottoman rule, leading to the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan in 1921 under British mandate. In 1946, Jordan gained full independence and became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan under King Abdullah I. Since then, Jordan has navigated the challenges of regional conflicts while maintaining relative stability. Its monarchy, now led by King Abdullah II, continues to be a symbol of unity in the face of modern political pressures, including the Arab-Israeli conflict and the influx of refugees from neighbouring Syria and Iraq.



Cultural Heritage

Jordan's cultural heritage is deeply rooted in its historical layers, reflecting the diverse civilizations that have influenced the region over millennia. From ancient ruins to modern traditions, Jordan's culture is a unique blend of the past and present.

Major Cultural Influences and Traditions

The culture of Jordan is shaped by its Bedouin roots, Islamic traditions, and interactions with neighbouring civilizations. Bedouin

hospitality remains central to Jordanian society, where guests are treated with great respect and generosity. Traditional Jordanian cuisine, such as mansaf (a dish made of lamb, yogurt, and rice), reflects the Bedouin way of life and communal values.

Islam is the predominant religion, and its influence is seen in the country's customs, festivals, and daily life. However, Jordan is known for its religious tolerance, with a Christian minority coexisting peacefully alongside the Muslim majority. Jordan's cultural diversity is also highlighted in its folk music, dance, and arts, which showcase

the country's historical ties to the Arab world.

Important Historical Sites

Jordan is home to some of the most remarkable historical sites in the Middle East. Petra, known as the "Rose City," is one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Its intricate rock-cut architecture and historical significance as a trading hub make it a must-see destination for visitors.

Jerash is another key site, boasting one of the best-preserved Roman cities in the world. Its impressive colonnaded streets, temples, and theaters offer a glimpse into Jordan's Roman past. Meanwhile, the desert castles of eastern Jordan, built during the Umayyad period, reveal the artistic and architectural prowess of early Islamic rulers.

Jordan's Role in Preserving Cultural Heritage

Jordan plays a leading role in the preservation of cultural heritage in the Middle East. The government, along with international organizations like UNESCO, has invested heavily in the conservation of its ancient monuments and historical sites. Petra and the ruins of Quseir Amra are both recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, highlighting Jordan's commitment to safeguarding its cultural legacy.

Moreover, Jordan's role as a peaceful mediator in regional conflicts has allowed it to remain a cultural and historical haven in a turbulent region. The country's dedication to preserving its diverse cultural heritage makes it a beacon of historical continuity amidst modern challenges.

In the end, Jordan's historical and cultural heritage reflects its deep connection to ancient civilizations and its significant role in the modern Middle East. From the ancient city of Petra to the vibrant traditions of its people, Jordan stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of the past and its influence on the present.

2. Geography and Demographics

Jordan, located in the heart of the Middle East, boasts a varied and dramatic landscape. The eastern part of the country is dominated by the Arabian Desert, covering

about 80% of its land area, characterized by arid conditions and occasional oases. In contrast, the western region includes the Jordan Valley, part of the Great Rift Valley, which stretches along the Jordan River—a natural border with Israel. The Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth, is situated here and is known for its hyper-saline waters and therapeutic mud.

Jordan's climate varies significantly with its geography. The desert experiences extreme summer heat and cold winter nights, while the highlands enjoy milder temperatures. The Jordan Valley has a Mediterranean climate with warm summers and cool winters.

Strategically positioned at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe, Jordan has historically been a crucial link for trade between the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean. Today, it leverages its location with the port city of Aqaba on the Red Sea, which is essential for trade, particularly for landlocked neighbouring countries like Iraq. Politically, Jordan's location has made it an important player in Middle Eastern geopolitics, maintaining stable relations with both Western and Arab nations and acting as a mediator in regional conflicts.

As of 2024, Jordan's population stands at approximately 11 million. The capital, Amman, is the largest city, housing over 4 million people, and serves as the political, economic, and cultural hub of the country. Other significant cities include Irbid, known for its agriculture, and Aqaba, a key port city.

The majority of Jordan's population is Arab (over 95%), with Sunni Muslims comprising the largest group and a small Christian minority, primarily Greek Orthodox. Jordan has also been a refuge for displaced populations, including Palestinian and Syrian refugees, which has influenced its demographic makeup. The country's strategic importance, diverse geography, and varied population continue to shape its role in the Middle East, making it a central player in regional trade and diplomacy.

3. Economy and Trade

Jordan's economy, while small, is diverse and includes tourism, agriculture, industry, and services. Located strategically in the Middle East, Jordan benefits from political stability but faces challenges such as limited

natural resources, high unemployment, and regional instability.

Tourism is a major economic contributor, with attractions like Petra, the Dead Sea, and Wadi Rum drawing millions annually. It accounts for about 13% of GDP, generating employment and foreign revenue, though it is susceptible to regional geopolitical tensions.

Agriculture, contributing around 4% to GDP, is limited by Jordan's arid climate. The country grows crops like tomatoes, cucumbers, and olives primarily through irrigation. However, water scarcity and high production costs restrict its growth.

The industrial sector represents approximately 30% of GDP, encompassing textiles, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, and mining, particularly phosphates and potash. Jordan is a leading global exporter of phosphates, but challenges include high energy costs and limited resource access.

Economic Challenges and Opportunities
Jordan faces significant hurdles including high public debt, over 22% unemployment, and dependence on external aid. Energy deficits due to limited oil and gas reserves lead to costly imports. Despite these issues, opportunities exist, particularly in Jordan's strategic location as a trade hub between Europe, Asia, and Africa. The tech sector is expanding rapidly, with notable growth in software development and digital services. Additionally, the focus on renewable energy, especially solar power, offers substantial growth potential.

Trade Relations and Investment Opportunities

Jordan's trade network is extensive, with major partners including the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the European Union. Exports were about \$10.5 billion in 2022, while imports totaled \$19 billion. Major exports include textiles, fertilizers, and pharmaceuticals, while imports largely consist of machinery, foodstuffs, and oil. Jordan's role in regional trade is bolstered by agreements like the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) and its membership in the WTO. The Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) is a key logistics hub.

Investment opportunities are prominent in renewable energy, IT, tourism, and manufacturing. Jordan's goal to generate 50% of electricity from renewables by 2030



creates prospects in solar and wind projects. The IT sector is growing, with emerging startups and tech hubs. Investment in tourism, including eco-tourism and medical tourism, is also encouraged. The government offers incentives through special economic zones and public-private partnerships to attract foreign investment.

4. The Importance of the Indian Market

Jordan and India share a rich history of trade and cultural exchange, which has evolved into a strong modern economic partnership. Historically, trade between the two regions was part of ancient routes connecting the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, dealing in

textiles, spices, and minerals. The formal establishment of diplomatic relations in 1950 marked a new era of organized trade and cooperation.

Currently, India is one of Jordan's major trading partners, with bilateral trade around USD 2.2 billion. Jordan exports phosphates, fertilizers, chemicals, and minerals to India, while India exports textiles, machinery, petroleum products, and agricultural commodities. Indian investments, particularly in IT, energy, and manufacturing, significantly impact Jordan's economy, contributing to sectors like construction and pharmaceuticals.

A notable example is the collaboration in Jordan's phosphate industry, where Indian companies like IFFCO have formed

joint ventures, enhancing agricultural productivity. Jordan offers Indian businesses access to the MENA region through its free trade agreements, providing a strategic platform for regional expansion. There is significant potential for future joint ventures in energy, especially renewable resources like solar and wind, where Indian expertise can advance Jordan's goals. Indian construction firms and pharmaceutical companies also have opportunities to contribute to infrastructure and healthcare development in Jordan. The growing partnership holds promise for further economic growth and mutual benefit.

5. Tourism and Attractions

Jordan is renowned for its iconic tourist

destinations, blending natural beauty, history, and culture. The ancient city of Petra, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the country's crown jewel. Known as the "Rose City" for its pink-hued rock formations, Petra, once the capital of the Nabataean Kingdom, features stunning structures like the Treasury (Al-Khazneh) carved into sandstone cliffs. Petra's unique architecture and historical significance make it one of the Seven New Wonders of the World.

The Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth at 430 meters below sea level, is another major attraction. Famous for its mineral-rich waters, it offers unique health benefits, including effortless floating and therapeutic mud known for alleviating skin conditions. Luxurious resorts in the

area provide wellness and spa treatments, making it a popular relaxation spot. For adventure enthusiasts, Wadi Rum, or the Valley of the Moon, presents a dramatic landscape of red sand dunes and towering sandstone mountains. Known from films like Lawrence of Arabia and The Martian, Wadi Rum offers jeep tours, camel rides, stargazing, rock climbing, and desert camping, immersing visitors in Bedouin culture. These attractions hold significant cultural and historical value. Petra reflects Jordan's rich heritage as an ancient crossroads, the Dead Sea has been a site of healing for centuries, and Wadi Rum connects visitors with the Bedouin way of life. Tourism is crucial to Jordan's economy, contributing to GDP and job creation.

The government's initiatives, including marketing campaigns and infrastructure improvements, aim to boost tourism. With further investments and development, Jordan's tourism sector is set for continued growth and opportunities for investors.

6. Challenges and Future Outlook

Jordan faces significant economic, political, and social challenges that impact its development. Economically, the country struggles with high public debt at about 95% of GDP and a youth unemployment rate exceeding 35%. This financial instability is compounded by heavy reliance on foreign aid, limiting economic independence. Socially, poverty and inequality are prevalent, especially in rural areas with inadequate access to essential services. Urban areas like Amman face infrastructure strain due to rapid urbanization, leading to housing shortages and increased living costs. Politically, Jordan's stability is tested by regional conflicts. While it remains relatively peaceful compared to its neighbours, the Syrian and Iraqi crises have strained resources, particularly with the influx of 1.3 million Syrian refugees. This has led to increased competition for jobs and pressure on education and healthcare systems, causing social tensions.

Regional instability and global economic trends further impact Jordan. The proximity to conflict zones like Syria and Iraq heightens security concerns and disrupts trade and tourism. Global economic factors, such as fluctuating oil prices and inflation, exacerbate living costs despite Jordan's minimal oil production.

Looking forward, Jordan's strategic development plans, including the "Jordan Vision 2025," aim to enhance economic prospects through fiscal reforms, increased foreign investment, and growth in tourism, renewable energy, and technology. The country's historical landmarks and potential in renewable energy offer promising economic opportunities. Additionally, Jordan's educated youth and government support for startups could drive future growth. As a stable Middle Eastern nation, Jordan remains a key player in regional geopolitics and international diplomacy.

7. Jordan as Wedding Destination

Jordan is rapidly emerging as a popular wedding destination, particularly highlighted by the upcoming Destination Wedding Planners Congress in Aqaba, scheduled for October 2025. This event will attract around 500 luxury wedding planners and suppliers from across the globe, showcasing Jordan's potential as a premier wedding location.

to June and October to December, avoiding the extreme heat of July and August.

Cultural and Historical Richness: The country's historical sites, such as Jerash and the Citadel in Amman, can serve as unique wedding venues, offering a rich cultural experience alongside stunning visuals.

With its picturesque landscapes and rich history, Jordan is poised to become a significant player in the global wedding market, which is projected to grow

sectors like renewable energy, healthcare, and information technology, Jordan is actively positioning itself in the global market. The country has also made significant strides in international trade, benefiting from its free trade agreements with key markets like the United States and the European Union.

For India, Jordan presents a unique opportunity. Bilateral trade relations have been on a steady rise, particularly in



Key Attractions for Weddings in Jordan:

Diverse Locations: Jordan offers stunning venues for weddings, including:

Aqaba: Known for its beautiful beaches along the Red Sea, it features luxurious hotels like Hyatt and InterContinental, perfect for both ceremonies and receptions.

Dead Sea: A unique spot for weddings at the lowest point on Earth, surrounded by breath-taking landscapes.

Petra: As one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, the ancient city provides a magnificent backdrop for weddings, with its iconic pink sandstone cliffs.

Amman: The capital city boasts various venues, from upscale hotels to charming restaurants.

Ideal Weather: The best months for outdoor weddings in Aqaba are from April

substantially over the next decade

Conclusion

Jordan, a nation nestled in the heart of the Middle East, has emerged as a key player in the region, blending its rich historical legacy with modern advancements. The country's strategic location, serving as a bridge between Asia, Africa, and Europe, has made it a vital hub for trade and diplomacy. Throughout the article, we've explored Jordan's rich cultural and historical heritage, its political stability, and its robust economy. From its bustling cities like Amman to the ancient wonders of Petra, Jordan's tourism industry remains one of its strongest economic drivers, attracting visitors worldwide.

Moreover, Jordan's emphasis on education, technology, and innovation highlights its commitment to future growth. With an economy that is diversifying into

sectors like fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, and textiles. Indian companies can find significant growth potential in the Jordanian market, especially given Jordan's stable political environment and openness to foreign investments. Furthermore, Jordan's position as a gateway to the larger Middle Eastern market makes it an attractive destination for Indian businesses looking to expand their regional footprint.

In conclusion, Jordan's growing significance in the Middle East, combined with its diverse economic prospects, offers numerous opportunities for deeper engagement, especially from the Indian market. As Jordan continues to build its global profile, collaborative efforts between India and Jordan could lead to mutually beneficial outcomes, fostering economic growth and strengthening ties in the coming years. [\[1\]](#)

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RUSSIA





SHARJAH: A Cultural Gem of the UAE

By Team Travel Links

Introduction

Sharjah, often regarded as the cultural capital of the UAE, is a city that seamlessly blends history, tradition, and modernity. Located along the Persian Gulf, it is the third-largest emirate and holds significant historical importance. Sharjah's rich heritage is evident in its well-preserved architecture, vibrant arts scene, and numerous cultural institutions, making it a key player in preserving its history.

Sharjah stands out for its commitment to promoting art and education, as well as housing prominent museums, art galleries, and cultural centres. The city hosts annual events like the Sharjah Biennial and the Sharjah International Book Fair, attracting global visitors. Its traditional souks and landmarks like the Sharjah Heritage Area

provide a glimpse into the past, while modern infrastructure adds to its growing appeal.

Strategically located, Sharjah plays an integral role in the UAE's cultural and economic landscape. It bridges the gap between modern development and preserving heritage, contributing significantly to the nation's tourism and trade. As an epicentre of culture and education, Sharjah continues to be a beacon of tradition amidst the rapid modernization.

Historical Background

Sharjah, one of the seven emirates of the UAE, boasts a rich historical legacy. Its origins trace back over 6,000 years when it flourished as a vital trading centre due to its strategic location along ancient trade routes connecting the Arabian Peninsula with the East. Archaeological finds reveal early

settlements that highlight their significance in maritime trade and cultural exchanges.

Sharjah has played a pivotal role in the spread of Islamic culture throughout the Arabian Gulf. Its strong commitment to preserving Islamic traditions has made it an influential centre for Islamic learning, art, and architecture. The city's mosques, libraries, and cultural institutions are a testament to its dedication to Islamic heritage.

Over the centuries, Sharjah evolved from a modest port town into a vibrant cultural hub. Major milestones in its development include the discovery of oil, which fuelled rapid modernization, and the visionary leadership of Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi. His efforts have transformed Sharjah into a beacon of arts, literature, and history, earning it the title of "Cultural Capital of the Arab World" by

UNESCO in 1998. Today, Sharjah stands as a key player in the cultural renaissance of the UAE, merging its past with a dynamic present.

Cultural Significance

Sharjah, often referred to as the cultural gem of the UAE, holds a unique position as a hub of art, history, and knowledge. Recognized by UNESCO as the Cultural Capital of the Arab World in 1998, Sharjah's dedication to preserving Arab culture and heritage is evident in its rich offerings of museums, galleries, and events.

The city is home to renowned cultural institutions like the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, which showcases over 5,000 artefacts spanning Islamic history, the Sharjah Art Museum, known for its diverse collection of contemporary and classical art, and the Al Mahatta Museum, an aviation museum housed in the UAE's first airport.

Annual cultural events further elevate Sharjah's significance. The Sharjah International Book Fair is one of the largest in the world, attracting literary enthusiasts globally. The Sharjah Biennial highlights contemporary art from the Arab world, while the Sharjah Light Festival celebrates

the city's architectural beauty, blending history and innovation with light shows projected on iconic buildings. Together, these institutions and events have made Sharjah a beacon of culture in the UAE, bridging the gap between tradition and modernity and offering visitors a deep insight into the rich heritage of the Arab world.

Architectural Marvels

Sharjah, often regarded as the cultural capital of the UAE, showcases a blend of historic and modern architectural marvels. The city's traditional architecture reflects its rich past, with iconic structures like the Al Hisn Fort, a former royal residence, offering a glimpse into Sharjah's defensive heritage. Another jewel is the Al Noor Mosque, renowned for its Ottoman-inspired design and intricate detailing, which invites visitors to explore Islamic art and architecture.

In contrast, Sharjah's contemporary skyline boasts modern landmarks such as the Al Majaz Waterfront, a hub of leisure and culture with stunning architecture, and the Eye of the Emirates, a towering Ferris wheel offering panoramic views of the city. These structures symbolize the city's

forward-looking vision. Sharjah takes great care in preserving its architectural heritage while embracing modernity. Conservation efforts ensure that historic sites like the Heart of Sharjah are protected, reflecting the city's commitment to maintaining its cultural identity amidst development. This balance between the old and the new makes Sharjah a city where tradition and innovation coexist, attracting visitors to experience its rich architectural legacy.

Sharjah's Economy

Sharjah, the third-largest emirate in the UAE, boasts a diverse and rapidly growing economy. Key sectors driving its economic development include manufacturing, tourism, and education. The emirate is known for its robust manufacturing sector, producing a range of goods such as machinery, textiles, and petrochemicals. Additionally, Sharjah's cultural heritage and historical landmarks make it a rising star in tourism, attracting visitors from around the world. The presence of top-tier educational institutions further strengthens the emirate's economy by fostering innovation and skilled labour. Sharjah's free zones, particularly the Sharjah Airport





International Free Zone (SAIF Zone) and Hamriyah Free Zone, play a pivotal role in attracting global businesses. These zones offer incentives such as tax exemptions, full foreign ownership, and strategic access to Middle Eastern and African markets, making them prime hubs for international companies. Looking to the future, Sharjah is focusing on economic diversification to ensure sustainable growth. Investments in technology, renewable energy, and creative industries are central to its long-term vision. With strategic infrastructure projects and innovation hubs, Sharjah aims to strengthen its position as a key player in the region's economic landscape, fostering continued prosperity and development.

Tourism in Sharjah

Sharjah, a cultural hub of the UAE, offers a variety of unique tourist attractions that blend tradition with modernity. Notable sites include Al Qasba, a vibrant waterfront destination offering dining, cultural activities, and the iconic Eye of the Emirates Ferris wheel. The Sharjah Aquarium showcases the region's diverse marine life, while the Sharjah Desert Park provides an immersive experience of the flora and



fauna of the Arabian Desert.

Sharjah is also a leader in eco-tourism, with attractions like the Mleiha Archaeological Centre, where visitors can explore ancient archaeological sites and the beauty of the surrounding desert. The Kalba Conservation Reserve is another eco-tourism highlight, offering a protected habitat for endangered species like the Arabian leopard and rare birds.

To support its growing tourism industry, Sharjah has invested heavily in developing

hotels, resorts, and tourism infrastructure. Visitors can choose from luxury beachfront resorts, cultural boutique hotels, and eco-lodges near nature reserves. With its unique blend of cultural, historical, and natural attractions, coupled with a commitment to sustainability and a well-developed tourism infrastructure, Sharjah is becoming a must-visit destination in the UAE.

Education and Innovation

Sharjah stands as a hub of education and

innovation in the UAE, home to renowned institutions like the University of Sharjah and the American University of Sharjah. These universities attract students from across the globe, fostering an environment of academic excellence and cultural exchange. Sharjah is also a pioneer in research, driven by the Sharjah Research, Technology and Innovation Park (SRTI Park), which focuses on enhancing scientific advancement and encouraging start-ups in key sectors like renewable energy, water management, and digital technologies.

Beyond formal education, Sharjah plays a key role in promoting learning and cultural awareness through various initiatives. Programs like the Sharjah International Book Fair and the Sharjah Children's Reading Festival reflect its dedication to literacy and intellectual growth. The emirate also launched the Sharjah Education Council, working to elevate educational standards across the region. Sharjah's commitment to integrating education and culture has made it a vital centre for intellectual and creative development, continually investing in future generations while preserving its rich heritage. This balance between education, innovation, and cultural promotion sets Sharjah apart as a dynamic force in the UAE's educational landscape.

Lifestyle and Living in Sharjah

Sharjah, known as the cultural gem of the UAE, offers a lifestyle that combines modern living with a rich heritage. Residential areas such as Al Nahda, Al Qasimia, and Muwailih Commercial are popular for their well-planned infrastructure, affordable housing options, and proximity to educational institutions, making them ideal for families and professionals alike.

The cultural and social life in Sharjah is vibrant and diverse. The city is home to numerous parks, such as Al Majaz Waterfront, which provides recreational spaces for families. Shopping canters like Sahara Centre and City Centre Sharjah offer a wide range of retail and dining options, catering to every taste. Traditional souks and modern art galleries further highlight Sharjah's unique blend of the past and present.

Sharjah is renowned for its family-friendly environment, with a strong focus on community values and safety. The city's well-maintained public spaces, low crime



rate, and emphasis on education create a nurturing atmosphere for families. Its cultural festivals, museums, and theatres ensure that residents and visitors are constantly immersed in enriching experiences. Overall, Sharjah strikes a balance between urban convenience and cultural depth, making it an appealing destination for families and individuals alike.

Sharjah's Role in the UAE

Sharjah, one of the seven Emirates of the UAE, holds a significant position within the country's political and administrative framework. As a member of the UAE Federal Supreme Council, Sharjah plays an active role in shaping national policies and decisions. The Emirate's leadership under Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi has been pivotal in balancing tradition with modern governance, contributing to the overall stability and unity of the UAE.

Culturally, Sharjah has emerged as a leader not only within the UAE but also across the Arab world. Its dedication to preserving heritage and promoting the arts has earned it the title of UNESCO's "Cultural Capital of the Arab World." Initiatives like the Sharjah International Book Fair and

Sharjah Biennial have solidified its status as a hub for intellectual and artistic activities, attracting global attention.

Sharjah also maintains strong collaborative ties with other Emirates, particularly Dubai and Abu Dhabi, in both economic and cultural sectors. These relationships foster inter-emirate growth and cooperation, with joint ventures and partnerships across industries such as tourism, real estate, and trade. This cooperation bolsters Sharjah's influence while contributing to the UAE's collective prosperity.

Environmental Initiatives

Sharjah, known for its rich cultural heritage, is also a pioneer in environmental sustainability in the UAE. The emirate has taken significant strides in promoting green spaces and ecological preservation. Al Noor Island, a serene sanctuary combining art, nature, and sustainability, exemplifies Sharjah's commitment to creating environmentally friendly public spaces. Additionally, the Wasit Wetland Centre is a vital project, transforming barren land into a thriving habitat for over 350 bird species, showcasing the emirate's dedication to conservation.

Sharjah is also at the forefront of innovative waste management and recycling initiatives. Through partnerships with environmental agencies, it has implemented comprehensive recycling programs, reducing landfill use and encouraging responsible waste disposal practices. Beeah, Sharjah's leading waste management company, operates one of the most advanced waste processing facilities in the region, converting waste into energy and promoting circular economy principles.

Looking ahead, Sharjah has ambitious goals for further environmental development. Plans are in place to expand green spaces, enhance biodiversity, and



adopt more sustainable practices across industries. These initiatives align with the UAE's broader vision of environmental responsibility, ensuring Sharjah remains a leader in green development for years to come.

Future Vision for Sharjah

Sharjah is poised for significant transformation as it embraces its Sharjah 2025 vision, which focuses on sustainable growth and cultural enrichment. The strategic plans aim to enhance the emirate's infrastructure, elevate its cultural landscape, and bolster its tourism sector, making it a global hub for art and heritage.

Upcoming projects include the development of the Sharjah Waterfront City, a sprawling mixed-use community that will redefine waterfront living. Additionally, the Sharjah Cultural District is set to expand, featuring museums, galleries,

and performance spaces that will attract international attention.

Sharjah's commitment to cultural diplomacy positions it as a leader in the Arab world, with initiatives like the Sharjah International Book Fair and the Sharjah Art Foundation fostering dialogue and exchange. The emirate's influence is growing, with its dedication to preserving traditions while embracing modernity, ensuring it plays a vital role in the regional and global cultural landscape. By prioritizing sustainable development and cultural initiatives, Sharjah aims to strengthen its identity and become a beacon of progress and creativity in the UAE and beyond.

Conclusion

Sharjah stands out as a cultural gem within the UAE, embodying a rich tapestry of heritage and innovation. Its commitment

to preserving traditional arts, literature, and history is evident through numerous museums, cultural festivals, and educational initiatives. Economically, Sharjah plays a vital role, with diverse sectors such as trade, tourism, and education driving its growth. The emirate's strategic location enhances its position as a commercial hub, attracting businesses and investments.

Looking forward, Sharjah is poised for continued development as a leading city in the UAE. Upcoming infrastructure projects and cultural initiatives aim to bolster its reputation as a centre for tourism and education. Additionally, the emirate's efforts to promote sustainability and smart city technologies will likely enhance its likability and attractiveness for residents and visitors alike. As Sharjah embraces its heritage while adapting to modern trends, it is set to thrive as a vibrant, culturally rich metropolis in the region.

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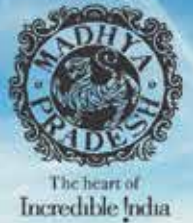
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Are you ready to break free from the ordinary? Step into the extraordinary with Madhya Pradesh's exciting array of adventure activities. As a premier offbeat destination, Madhya Pradesh is a treasure trove for adventure enthusiasts, offering everything from serene river rafting to thrilling tiger safaris. Discover ancient temples, trek through lush forests, and conquer majestic peaks!

MOWGLILAND CYCLE TOUR

Embark on a four-day journey through the enchanting wilderness of Pench, following in the footsteps of Mowgli. Experience the untamed beauty and diverse wildlife of this iconic Indian landscape on your bicycle adventure!



Embark on Unforgettable Adventures

ROCK CLIMBING FESTIVAL

Push your limits at the Jatashankar Hill in Pachmarhi! Join the inaugural 10-day Climbing Challenge this November, hosted by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, and embrace winter in this picturesque offbeat destination.



PENCH MOWGLI TREK

Immerse yourself in the wildlife of Pench National Park, one of India's premier tiger reserves. This seven-day guided trek in September takes you through the lush buffer zone, rich in flora and fauna. Experience the thrill of exploring a protected tiger reserve on foot in collaboration with the forest department.

MOWGLILAND HALF MARATHON

Feel the adrenaline as you run through the heart of the jungle in this unique half marathon held in September. This special event hosted by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board offers adventure enthusiasts an unforgettable running experience in the backdrop of stunning sights and resonating sounds of nature.

RIDERS IN THE WILD BIKING TOUR

Explore pristine tiger reserves and iconic destinations with Madhya Pradesh Tourism's unique biking event, which takes you through not one, but four tiger reserves. Discover popular tourist spots such as Khajuraho, Amarkantak, Panarpani, and Bhopal along the way!

QUEENS ON THE WHEEL WOMEN'S BIKING TOUR

Discover the rich heritage and beauty of the Heart of Incredible India on a seven-day, women-only biking adventure—"Queens on the Wheel"—along a historic trail this March.

KHAJURAHO MARATHON

Run through the historic Khajuraho Group of Temples in February, just before the mesmerizing Khajuraho Dance Festival.

MP SKYDIVING FESTIVAL

Unleash your inner daredevil at the Skydiving Festival! Experience the unparalleled thrill of free-falling over stunning landscapes like Mahakal Lok, Ujjain. An electrifying adventure awaits!

Madhya Pradesh offers a wealth of exciting adventures, from jungle safaris, camping experiences, trekking trails, off-road 4*4 TSD Car Rallies, Marathons, Water Sports, heritage walks, and more. Whether you're a seasoned explorer or a curious newcomer, this state has something for everyone!