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Dear Readers,

Every issue of Travel Links tells a story, but some issues stay with you long after the pages are closed. This is one of them. Over the past few months, our travels have taken us across continents, cultures, rivers, cities, and conversations, reminding us once again why we do what we do. Travel is not simply about moving from one destination to another. It is about collecting moments, perspectives, and experiences that change the way we see the world.

The cover story of this issue takes us to Europe, aboard the VIVA Enjoy river cruise, on a remarkable journey along the Danube. Cruising through historic cities, charming towns, and breath-taking landscapes from Budapest onwards, this experience was a reminder that slow travel has its own magic. Unlike traditional holidays that rush from one attraction to the next, river cruising allows you to absorb a destination at its own pace. The Danube revealed Europe in a way that was elegant, intimate, and deeply enriching. It is a journey that continues to stay with me, not because of the places alone, but because of the feeling of being connected to centuries of history flowing alongside us.

Equally memorable was our participation at Thailand Travel Mart 2026. While trade events are often viewed purely through a business lens, this experience offered much more. It provided an opportunity to understand the future direction of tourism through conversations with tourism leaders, hoteliers, airlines, wellness experts, and destination specialists.

What stood out most was Thailand's vision of "Healing is the New Luxury." Across Pattaya and Koh Samui, we experienced first-hand how wellness is becoming an integral part of travel. From the serenity of spa experiences and mindfulness sessions to the discipline of Muay Thai at Fairtex Training Center and the sustainability initiatives at Conrad Koh Samui's Iris Farm, every experience reflected a shift in how destinations are redefining luxury. Today's traveller is increasingly seeking meaning, wellness, authenticity, and connection—and Thailand is responding with remarkable clarity.


Closer to home, Rajasthan continues to inspire with its timeless elegance and warm hospitality. Our feature on Brij Bageecha showcases a side of luxury that is rooted in culture, community, and a genuine sense of place.

This issue also celebrates journeys by rail, explores cities that reveal their true personalities after sunset, and reflects on the evolution of the Indian traveller. As Indians travel more than ever before, we are witnessing a new generation of explorers—curious, confident, culturally aware, and eager to engage with the world in deeper ways.

As I write this note, I realise that the common thread connecting every story in this issue is not geography. It is experience. Whether on a river in Europe, at a wellness retreat in Thailand, aboard a train crossing landscapes, or in the heart of Rajasthan, travel continues to remind us that the world is both vast and wonderfully connected.

Editor

Payal Sahni

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A slow lane is the best lane: VIVA Cruises River Cruise lover's manifesto

By Payal Sahni

There are journeys that merely tick destinations off a list — and then there are journeys that fundamentally rewrite the way you think about travel. My seven-night river cruise aboard a VIVA Cruises vessel, sailing from the magnificent Hungarian capital of Budapest through Bratislava, Austria, small towns across Germany, and a constellation of lesser-known riverine districts, belonged firmly in the second category. Invited by Discover the World India — the official representative of VIVA Cruises in the subcontinent — this was not just a press trip. It was an education in slow, soulful, luxury travel. And as someone who has spent decades curating and experiencing the finest journeys, I do not say that lightly.

Why River Cruising Is the Future of exquisite Luxury Travel

River cruising is having its moment, and those in the know have already made the switch. At Travel Links, we have long championed experiential luxury over ostentatious opulence — travel that is curated, intimate, and genuinely transformative. VIVA Cruises, with its elegant ships sailing the legendary Danube corridor, ticks every single one of those boxes.

The fundamental USP of a river cruise is this: *your hotel moves with you*. That single sentence changes

everything about the calculus of travel. There is no marathon check-in at a new property every night, no dragging luggage across cobblestoned squares, no taxi-to-hotel-to-taxi fatigue. You unpack once, settle into your cabin, and let Europe unfold outside your window — sometimes at the speed of a slow waltz, sometimes while you are asleep.

The Itinerary: Europe's Most Storied Waterway

The seven-night itinerary begins in Budapest — one of the world's most dramatically beautiful capitals — where the Danube cleaves the city into Buda and





Pest like a liquid spine. From there, the ship makes its way to Bratislava, Slovakia's compact, cosmopolitan capital that most travellers still underestimate. Then into Vienna and Durnstein and Melk the gilded heart in Austria. The stunning three-river city straddling Germany and Austria, and Melk, home to one of Europe's most breath taking Benedictine monasteries perched high on a granite bluff above the river. After Austria the cruise moves to hidden gems in Germany which

are not just the touristy sites but the most memorable and instagramable locations ie Passau, Regensburg, Kelheim and Nuremberg.

But what genuinely elevates this itinerary is the river itself. The Danube is not simply a means of transport — it is a lens through which you see Europe the way its earliest civilisations did. Medieval fortresses rise from forested hillsides. Vineyard-draped slopes catch the afternoon light. Villages of pastel-coloured

houses sit at the water's edge, seemingly untouched by time. You witness the ordinary life of Europe from the extraordinary vantage point of the view.

Stay at the Cruise: Refined Luxury That Feels Personal at VIVA Enjoy (Cruise)

I was accommodated in a Diamond deck, and it delivered on every promise. The space was thoughtfully designed — not merely adequate, but genuinely

pleasant to inhabit. The bathroom was a particular highlight: a full-sized shower with excellent water pressure, which seasoned travellers know is far from guaranteed even on high-end vessels. The cabin had that rare quality of feeling both refined and relaxed — the kind of space you actually want to return to after a day of sightseeing, pour yourself a glass of something excellent, and simply breathe. At the Riverside all day dining restaurant, Moments and Bistro, they serve you the most delicate and delicious remarkably well plated meals for you of your choice. And drinks they are countless and floating 24 hrs, one may get drunk at leisure and gain weight too).

Because the ships are intimate by design — far removed from the floating megacities of ocean cruising — the level of personal attention is remarkable. The crew knows your name. They remember your coffee order. They notice if you are a late riser or an early deck-walker. For the evolved luxury traveller who has grown weary of anonymity in five-star hotels, this is deeply restorative.

The Key USPS of VIVA Cruises: A River Cruise Connoisseur's Checklist

After seven nights on the Danube, here is my considered breakdown of what makes VIVA Cruises — and river cruising in general — a compelling proposition for the discerning traveller:



1. Unpack Once, See everything

The single greatest logistical luxury of a river cruise. Your cabin is your base for the entire journey. Pack, unpack, and forget about it — the ship handles everything else.

2. Easy In, Easy out Sightseeing

Dock in the heart of a city, step off, explore, return, refresh, and dine — all within a few elegant hours. No transfers, no scheduling nightmares. This rhythm of travel is genuinely liberating.

3. Intimate Scale, Exceptional Service

The ship feels like a private club. The staff-to-guest ratio translates into service that is attentive without being intrusive — the gold standard of luxury hospitality.

4. Three Distinct Dining Experiences

VIVA Cruises offers three dining venues — the elegant Riverside restaurant, the more relaxed Bistro, and the lively Moments — ensuring that no two diners feel the same. The food quality was consistently excellent across all three: fresh, well-conceived, and presented with evident care. And critically, the philosophy is one of abundance. Eat as much as you wish.

Drink as you please — wine, beer, whiskey, cocktails — available at virtually any hour. Fair warning: arriving home lighter than you departed is not a realistic expectation.

5. The Lounge

Every evening is something new — live singers one night, an acrobatic performance the next, themed parties, ambient music in the evenings. This was not generic entertainment; it was thoughtfully curated and genuinely convivial. On a river cruise, the evenings become as memorable as the days.

6. Wellness on the Water

A massage room and a well-equipped gym ensure that even the health-conscious traveller is not entirely at the mercy of the dining room's temptations.

7. The Magic of Multicultural Connection

Among all the pleasures of this voyage, perhaps the most unexpected was the community that forms naturally aboard a river cruise. Fellow guests from America, Europe, Asia, and beyond — brought together by a shared pace and a shared view. Slow travel creates the conditions for genuine conversation. You learn about the world not just from the riverbanks but from the

people sitting next to you at dinner. I made connections on this voyage that I expect to last.

The Verdict: Should You Book a VIVA Cruises?

In two decades of travel journalism, very few experiences have prompted me to reach for the phone and urge friends and readers to simply go and do it. This is one of them.

***About VIVA Cruises*:**

“VIVA Cruises offers a premium river cruise experience across some of Europe’s most beautiful rivers, including the Danube, Rhine, Moselle, Douro and Seine. Guests can discover famous cities, charming medieval towns, UNESCO World Heritage Sites and hidden gems, all while enjoying the comfort of a modern river cruise ship.

The VIVA All-Inclusive concept, where “Exclusive is Inclusive,” makes the journey completely hassle-free. Guests can enjoy delicious meals throughout the day in up to three restaurants, a daily replenished minibar in their cabin, a wide selection of premium alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, complimentary Wi-Fi, and carefully selected shore excursions. Combined with friendly service, comfortable ships and thoughtfully planned itineraries, VIVA Cruises offers the perfect mix of relaxation, discovery and unforgettable travel experiences.

VIVA Cruises has recently launched its new premium concept, VIVA Boutique. Its first ship, VIVA Beyond, debuted in May 2026 with a 7-night sailing from Paris along the beautiful Seine River. Designed for travellers seeking a

more refined and immersive journey, the ship features spacious accommodations, with nearly 50% of its cabins offered as suites for added comfort and exclusivity. A particular highlight is the exclusive Michelin-star restaurant dining experience reserved for Master Suite guests, offering a truly memorable culinary journey. Carefully curated shore excursions further enrich the voyage, allowing guests to connect more deeply with the culture, history and traditions of each destination.

This is just the beginning for VIVA Boutique. Next year, VIVA Cruises will launch another boutique ship on Italy’s Po River, giving guests the opportunity to discover the culture, history and beauty of Northern Italy while enjoying a unique and immersive river cruise experience.”



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Thailand Travel Mart Plus 2026: Showcasing Thailand’s Vision for the Future of Tourism

By Team TL

Thailand has long been one of the world’s favourite holiday destinations, but at Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+ 2026), it became evident that the country is preparing for a new era of tourism—one built around wellness, sustainability, meaningful experiences, and high-value travellers.

Held in Pattaya, TTM+ 2026 brought together tourism stakeholders, hospitality brands, airlines, destination management companies, international buyers, and media representatives from across the globe. Organized by

the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the annual event served as a platform to showcase Thailand’s evolving tourism landscape and its vision for the years ahead.

Travel Links was privileged to attend the event and experience firsthand the destinations, hospitality, wellness offerings, and tourism products that Thailand is positioning as key drivers of future growth.

A Clear Vision from Thailand’s Tourism Leadership

Ms. Thapanee Kiatphaibool, Governor Tourism Authority of Thailand said, “TTM+ 2026 enables

TAT to bring Amazing Thailand: Healing is the New Luxury into a global trade setting, showing how Thai tourism can meet demand for wellness, meaningful experiences, and responsible travel. The event reflects our commitment to sustainable growth through the BCG model, Zero Waste to Landfills, and Zero Food Waste, while creating the connections and shared commitment needed to move Thai tourism forward with quality, responsibility, and confidence.”

Mr. Surasak Phancharoenworakul, Minister of Tourism and Sports, said, “TTM+ 2026 reflects the Thai Government’s commit-



ment to tourism as a key driver of national growth. The event connects Thai tourism businesses with high-potential buyers, media, and partners from around the world, while strengthening ASEAN connectivity and wider regional cooperation. It also creates opportunities for business, innovation, and partnerships that strengthen the tourism industry, generate economic value, and distribute benefits to local communities.”

One of the highlights of TTM+ 2026 was the opportunity to interact with senior executives from the Tourism Authority of Thailand, including **Miss Pattaraanong Na Chiangmai, Deputy Governor for International Marketing – Asia and the South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand.**

During our conversation, she emphasized the growing importance of the Indian market for Thailand. India has emerged as Thailand’s third-largest short-haul source market after China and Malaysia and continues to show strong growth. The country’s proximity, affordability, excellent connectivity, and increasing middle and upper-income population make it a highly attractive market.



Ms. Thapanee Kiatphaibool, Governor Tourism Authority of Thailand said, “As Thailand’s flagship travel trade event hosted by TAT, TTM+ brings together global buyers, Thai tourism businesses, media, and partners to turn Thailand’s tourism direction into business opportunities. Through Value over Volume, TAT is presenting products and experiences that create stronger economic value, meaningful journeys, and wider benefits for communities and businesses, while reinforcing Thailand’s position as a leading desti-

nation for balanced, responsible, and sustainable tourism.”

According to TAT, more than 1.11 million Indian travellers visited Thailand between January and mid-2026, reflecting growth of over 7 percent compared to the previous year. Thailand’s target for 2026 is approximately 2.55 million Indian visitors, generating nearly 98 billion Thai Baht in tourism revenue.

The focus, however, is not merely on increasing visitor numbers. Thailand’s tourism strategy is centred on value-driven growth, attracting travellers who spend more, stay longer, and seek deeper experiences. The ultimate objective is to position Thailand as an all-year destination rather than a seasonal getaway.

Three Key Tourism Segments Driving Growth

The Tourism Authority of Thailand has identified three major segments that will help shape the country’s tourism future.

The first is Wellness & Leisure, promoted under the concept of “Healing is the New Luxury.” The focus is on creating premium wellness experiences that appeal to





families, younger travellers, and health-conscious visitors seeking restorative holidays.

The second is Wedding Tourism. Thailand remains one of the world's most desirable destinations for weddings, and TAT continues to expand this segment by attracting both traditional destination weddings and the growing LGBTQ+ wedding market.

The third strategic focus is attracting first-time international travellers and new passport holders from Tier II and Tier III cities across India. This initiative aims not only to increase visitor arrivals but also to encourage travellers to explore lesser-known destinations across Thailand.



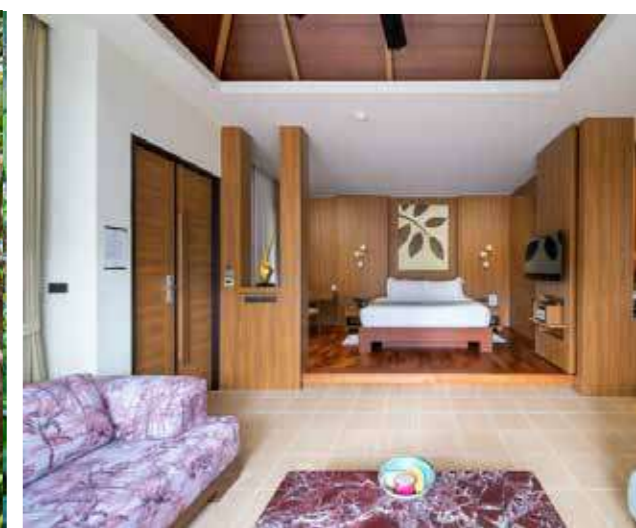
Experiencing Thailand's Wellness Revolution

What made TTM+ 2026 particularly memorable was that delegates were able to experience Thailand's wellness philosophy first-hand.

Throughout the journey, every curated experience reinforced the event's central theme: Healing is the New Luxury.

Rather than presenting wellness as a luxury add-on, Thailand is integrating it into the very heart of its tourism offerings.

Fairtex Training Center: Thailand's National Sport in Action



One of the most engaging experiences was a visit to the Fairtex Training Center in Pattaya.

Muay Thai is Thailand's national sport and an important part of the country's cultural identity. At Fairtex, delegates were introduced to the world of professional training, boxing, fitness, and discipline that has made Muay Thai internationally respected.

The visit highlighted how sports tourism is becoming an increasingly important component of Thailand's tourism portfolio. Beyond competition, Muay Thai represents physical fitness, mental resilience, self-discipline, and personal transformation.

For many travellers, experiences like these offer a deeper connection with Thai culture while si-

multaneously supporting wellness goals.

Oasis Spa Pattaya: The Art of Relaxation

The wellness journey continued with a rejuvenating experience at Oasis Spa Pattaya.

Thailand's reputation as a global wellness destination is built upon decades of expertise in traditional therapies and holistic treatments, and Oasis Spa beautifully demonstrated this strength.

Surrounded by peaceful surroundings and expert therapists, delegates experienced how wellness tourism in Thailand combines traditional healing knowledge with luxury hospitality.

The experience perfectly reflected the country's growing em-

phasis on restorative travel and self-care experiences.

Sea Sand Sun Resort and Villas

The Resort has the beauty of the location and atmosphere which indicates the unique identity of the resort, beautiful sea (sea), nice and clean beach (sand), and the impressive of the sunrise and evening sunset (sun).

In these perfect components one can find all accommodations (60 rooms) surrounded and shaded by mature trees and easy access to the beach. To enjoy the delicious food with panoramic view of the ocean, the place is here **The Horizon Seaview Restaurant**, an open-air restaurant

To relax, **Sea Sand Sun Spa** is



the right place to pamper yourself with specially formulated therapies, in conjunction with Bhawa style and its products your spirit will be lifted like never before.

The resort is located in Na Jomtien – Pattaya, Chonburi, with approximately 30 minutes away from the city of Pattaya and an hour and a half away from Suvarnabhumi International Airport.

Koh Samui: A Wellness Destination in Its Own Right

While Pattaya showcased active wellness and traditional thera-

pies, Koh Samui revealed another dimension of Thailand's wellness offering.

The island has increasingly become a sanctuary for travellers seeking balance, mindfulness, and rejuvenation.

Delegates participated in wellness-focused activities that included yoga sessions, meditation practices, and experiences designed to encourage mental and physical well-being.

These programs highlighted a growing trend among modern travellers who increasingly seek

transformative journeys rather than simply sightseeing holidays.

Koh Samui is ideally positioned to cater to this demand, offering a unique blend of tropical beauty, luxury hospitality, and wellness expertise.

Tamarind Springs Forest Spa: Healing in Nature

One of the most unforgettable experiences during the trip was a visit to Tamarind Springs Forest Spa.

Set amidst lush tropical vegetation, ancient granite boulders, and serene forest surroundings, the spa offers a wellness experience unlike any conventional luxury spa.

The natural setting itself becomes part of the therapy.

Walking through forest pathways and treatment spaces hidden among giant rocks creates an atmosphere of calm and introspection.

The experience perfectly illustrated the concept that luxury today is increasingly defined by peace, wellness, and meaningful connection with nature.

Tamarind Springs stands as an excellent example of how Thailand is redefining luxury tourism for a new generation of travellers.



Bangkok Airways: Connecting Thailand's Experiences

Connectivity remains one of the most important pillars supporting Thailand's tourism growth.

The airline plays a vital role in connecting international visitors to Thailand's island destinations and secondary tourism hubs.

Its extensive network provides convenient access to destinations such as Koh Samui, Phuket, Krabi, and Trat, helping travellers move seamlessly between Thailand's major cities and leisure destinations.

As Thailand continues promoting regional tourism and destination dispersion, airlines like Bangkok Airways will remain crucial partners in driving tourism growth.

Conrad Koh Samui: Luxury beyond Accommodation

Among the hospitality experiences showcased during the journey, Conrad Koh Samui stood out as a remarkable example of how luxury hospitality is evolving.

Perched on the southwestern coast of Koh Samui, the resort is renowned for its spectacular



ocean-facing villas, exceptional dining experiences, and world-class service.

However, what truly distinguished the property was its commitment to sustainability and experiential travel.

Travel Links had the opportunity to interact with Ms. Ploypaphas Phoithrote (Mind), Sales Manager – DMC & Wedding Group, who shared valuable insights into the property's growing appeal among destination wedding planners, luxury travellers, and Indian wedding

groups.

The resort continues to be a preferred choice for travellers seeking privacy, exclusivity, and unforgettable experiences.

Iris Farm: Sustainability at the Heart of Luxury

One of the most inspiring experiences at Conrad Koh Samui was a visit to Iris Farm.

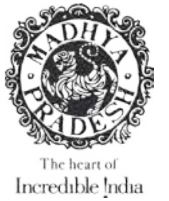
More than simply an organic farm, Iris Farm represents the property's commitment to sustainable hospitality and responsi-



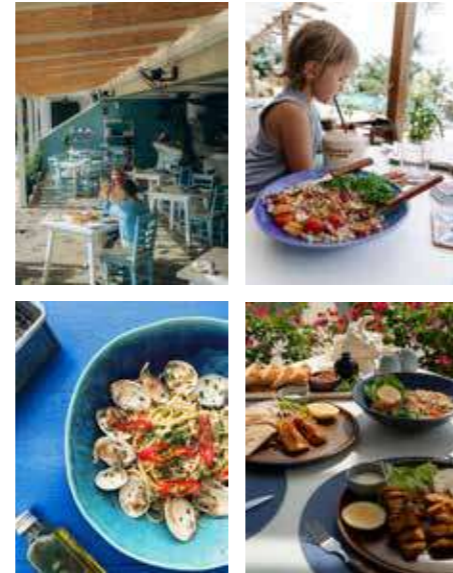
Sunset Spot, Ocean Vibes. Beach Access



Slow Down. Stay Longer. Discover Madhya Pradesh



Poolside Retreat: Mediterranean Flavors. Open-Air Ocean view



ble tourism.

Fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and produce are cultivated on-site and incorporated into the resort's culinary offerings.

Guests are encouraged to understand the journey from farm to table, creating a stronger appreciation for sustainable food practices and local agriculture.

The experience demonstrated how luxury resorts can successfully combine environmental responsibility with exceptional guest experiences. At a time when travellers increasingly seek authenticity and sustainability, Iris Farm offers a meaningful example of how hospitality can contribute positively to both guests and the local ecosystem.



Weddings, Wellness and High-Value Tourism

The experiences at Conrad Koh Samui also reflected one of TAT's major strategic priorities—wedding tourism.

Thailand continues to be one of Asia's most sought-after wedding destinations, and luxury resorts such as Conrad Koh Samui play an important role in attracting destination weddings from around the world.

Combined with wellness offerings, sustainability initiatives, and personalized luxury experiences, these properties contribute sig-

nificantly to Thailand's goal of attracting high-value visitors.

Beyond Destinations: Creating Lasting Memories

Perhaps the most important takeaway from Thailand Travel Mart Plus 2026 was the realization that Thailand is no longer marketing destinations alone.

The country is marketing experiences.

Whether it is learning about Muay Thai at Fairtex Training Center, enjoying a therapeutic treatment at Oasis Spa, practicing yoga in Koh Samui, reconnecting with nature at Tamarind Springs Forest

Spa, exploring sustainability at Iris Farm, or discovering luxury hospitality at Conrad Koh Samui, each experience contributes to a larger tourism narrative.

It is a narrative built around well-being, authenticity, sustainability, and meaningful travel.

Looking Ahead

Thailand Travel Mart Plus 2026 offered a compelling glimpse into the future of tourism in the Kingdom.

Through strategic leadership, innovative tourism products, strong airline partnerships, luxury hospitality investments, and an unwavering focus on wellness, Thailand continues to evolve while staying true to its unique cultural identity.

For Indian travellers, the opportunities have never been greater. Improved connectivity, world-class hospitality, destination wedding options, wellness retreats, family experiences, and emerging destinations ensure that Thailand remains one of the most attractive international destinations for years to come.

As Travel Links concludes successful edition of TTM+2026 one message remains clear.

Thailand is not simply inviting travellers to visit. It is inviting them to heal, celebrate, connect, discover, and create memories that last a lifetime. [in](#)

Along Sacred Rivers

In Ujjain, the spiritual presence of Mahakaleshwar Temple shapes the city's rhythm. Samrat Vikramaditya The Heritage offers a refined luxury heritage-style stay close to the temple precinct, while Shipra Residency provides a comfortable base near the ghats for pilgrims and travellers alike. Visitors immerse themselves in the city through the pre-dawn Bhasma Aarti, heritage walks and quiet evenings along the Shipra.

At Omkareshwar, Temple View overlooks the sacred island and offers easy access to the revered Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple, making it ideal for pilgrims and photographers chasing sunrise views.

The journey continues to Maheshwar, where the majestic Maheshwar Fort rises above the Narmada. Narmada Resort offers a peaceful riverside retreat, perfect for sunset boat rides and evenings that echo with the heritage of Maheshwari weaving.

Embrace the Hills

In the cool heights of Pachmarhi, misty mornings and forest trails define the Satpura experience. Glen View provides sweeping valley vistas and calm surroundings, while Highlands places visitors at the centre of the hill station's relaxed charm.

The heritage Champak Bungalow evokes colonial-era nostalgia after excursions to Bee and Duchess Falls, while Rock End Manor offers an intimate heritage stay following trekking, cycling or rock-climbing adventures. As evening approaches, travellers gather at Dhoopgarh for spectacular sunset views before



returning for dinner at Amaltas Restaurant, a unique women-run dining space celebrating local hospitality.

Into the Wild

Few journeys rival the excitement of the Kanha-Bandhavgarh-Pench-Satpura wildlife circuit. At Kanha National Park, Baghira Jungle Resort offers immersive forest stays inspired by the surrounding wilderness, while Safari Lodge Mukki provides convenient access to the Mukki gate for early safaris and nature explorations.

At Bandhavgarh National Park, White Tiger Forest Lodge blends rustic charm with warm hospitality near the historic Bandhavgarh Fort. In Pench National Park, Kipling's Court reflects the wilderness that inspired The Jungle Book, offering a relaxed retreat between safaris.

Further south at Madhai, Bison Resort overlooks the Denwa River and invites guests to slow down with canoeing, nature walks, birdwatching, photography and meditation sessions.

Lakes and Leisure

In Bhopal, Palash Residency offers a comfortable stay close to the city's cultural landmarks, while Wind n Waves provides tranquil lakeside views that capture the charm of the City of Lakes.

Just outside the city, Kerwa Resort makes for a refreshing nature escape, ideal for relaxed picnics, quiet walks and lakeside photography.

Across Madhya Pradesh, every stay becomes a gateway to culture, nature and heritage—inviting travellers to slow down, stay longer and rediscover the joy of unhurried journeys.

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USP

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- Excellent for foreign tourists and luxury seekers
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The World on Rails: Most Beautiful Train Journeys across India & Beyond

By team TL

There is something timeless about train travel. Airports may save time, cruises may offer luxury, and road trips may promise freedom – but trains give something entirely different: romance. A railway journey slows the world down just enough for travellers to absorb changing landscapes, local life, mountain curves, rivers, deserts, castles, tea gardens, and snow-covered valleys in one continuous cinematic frame.

In 2026, train tourism is witnessing a remarkable revival. Luxury rail journeys are becoming bucket-list experiences, while scenic regional trains are attracting younger travellers seeking slow travel and immersive experiences. From India's royal palace trains to Europe's legendary Orient Express and Japan's minimalist luxury rails, the world's greatest train journeys are no longer just transportation – they are destinations in themselves.

This editorial feature explores the most beautiful train journeys in India and internationally, including their USP, approximate cost, planning ease, visa considerations, and best booking strategies for Indian travellers.

Why Train Journeys Are Becoming the New Luxury Travel Trend

Luxury travellers are increasingly choosing experiences over destinations. Instead of rushing through

five cities in seven days, travellers now prefer immersive journeys where the route itself becomes the highlight.

Rail travel offers:

- Slow and meaningful exploration
 - Stunning panoramic scenery
 - Less airport stress
 - Sustainable travel
 - Fine dining and curated experiences
 - Cultural immersion
 - Luxury without constant packing and unpacking
- Globally, iconic rail journeys are reporting high occupancies for 2026. Luxury trains like the Venice Simplon Orient Express and India's Maharajas' Express are witnessing increased demand among experiential travellers.

INDIA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL TRAIN JOURNEYS

1. Maharajas' Express – India's Most Luxurious Rail Experience

Few trains in the world represent royal India as magnificently as the Maharajas' Express.

Operated by IRCTC, this ultra-luxury train takes travellers through Rajasthan, Agra, Varanasi, Khajuraho, Mumbai, and Central India with palace-like interiors, butler service, and gourmet dining, and curated excursions.





through tea gardens, mountain settlements, misty valleys, and colonial stations.

USP

- One of the world’s most scenic mountain railways
- Steam engine heritage
- Incredible Himalayan atmosphere

Approximate Cost
INR 1,500–3,000 for premium joy rides.

Best Season
October–April
Planning Difficulty
Easy.

Best Experience
Sit by the window during the Batasia Loop section when Kanchenjunga appears dramatically in the background.

4. Kalka–Shimla Railway – Colonial Beauty in the Hills

The Kalka–Shimla Railway is one of India’s most photogenic train journeys.

The route features:

- 100+ tunnels
- Historic bridges
- Pine forests



- Colonial stations
- USP
- Perfect for families and heritage lovers.
- Approximate Cost
- INR 500–2,500 depending on train category.
- Planning Ease
- Very easy.
- Best Time
- March–June and October–December.

5. Konkan Railway – India’s Most Underrated Coastal Journey

Stretching along India’s western coastline, the Konkan

Legend

The Palace on Wheels remains one of India’s most iconic rail journeys. Inspired by the personal coaches of former Rajput rulers, the train showcases Rajasthan’s forts, deserts, palaces, and wildlife.

USP

- Deep royal Rajasthan immersion
- Heritage interiors
- Ideal first luxury train experience
- Combines Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Ranthambore, and Agra

Approximate Cost

INR 4 lakh to 15 lakh depending on cabin type and season.

Real Experience

Travellers wake up to desert landscapes, enjoy folk performances at stations, and dine in lavishly decorated coaches.

Ease of Planning

Easy if booked early during peak winter months. Interestingly, the train has recently expanded beyond its traditional seasonal schedule due to growing demand.

3. Darjeeling Himalayan Railway – The Toy Train Dream

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is not about luxury – it is about nostalgia.

This UNESCO-listed narrow-gauge railway climbs



The experience here is closer to a relaxed farmhouse retreat blended with apartment-style villa living. It is unpretentious, grounded and deeply connected with nature. The charm lies not in extravagance, but in authenticity. You do not come here expecting a five-star resort atmosphere. You come here to disconnect from routine, to slow down, and to embrace a softer rhythm of life.



Railway connects Maharashtra, Goa, and Karnataka.

USP

- Waterfalls during monsoon
- Arabian Sea views
- Dense Western Ghats
- Goa arrival by rail is magical

Approximate Cost

INR 1,500–6,000 depending on class.

Best Time

Monsoon for scenery; winter for comfort.

Planning Ease

Moderate during peak Goa season.

THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL TRAIN JOURNEYS

6. Venice Simplon Orient Express — Europe's



Most Iconic Luxury Train

The legendary Venice Simplon-Orient-Express remains the gold standard of luxury rail travel.

Restored 1920s art-deco carriages, tuxedo dinners, champagne breakfasts, and routes through Venice, Paris, Vienna, Prague, and Istanbul make it one of the world's most aspirational journeys.

USP

- Pure old-world glamour
- Art deco interiors
- Fine dining
- European cinematic landscapes

Approximate Cost

Starts around £3,800 per person and rises significantly for suites.

Visa Difficulty

Moderate for Indians due to Schengen visa requirements.

Best Booking Strategy

Book 8–12 months ahead.

Real Experience

Travellers describe the experience as less about transport and more about stepping into another era.

7. The Glacier Express — Switzerland's Alpine Masterpiece

The Glacier Express connects Zermatt and St. Moritz through dramatic Alpine scenery.

USP

- Panoramic glass coaches

- Snowy mountains
 - Alpine villages
 - Bridges and deep valleys
- Approximate Cost
CHF 150–500 depending on class and season.
- Best Time
Winter for snow; summer for green valleys.
- Visa Ease
Schengen visa required.
- Planning Difficulty
Easy if Swiss Pass is purchased early.

8. The Ghan — Australia's Outback Adventure

The The Ghan crosses Australia from Adelaide to Darwin through deserts, red earth landscapes, and remote wilderness.

USP

- Authentic Outback experience
- Massive geographical diversity
- Premium dining and cabins
- Approximate Cost
- AUD 2,000–7,000.
- Visa Ease





Tips for Planning the Perfect Rail Holiday

- Choose the Right Season
- Snow journeys and monsoon journeys offer entirely different experiences.
- Pick Window-Side Cabins
- Especially crucial for scenic routes.
- Travel Light
- Luxury trains have limited storage compared to cruises.
- Add Pre- and Post-Stays
- Spend extra nights in departure and arrival cities.
- Use Rail Passes Smartly
- Swiss Pass, Eurail Pass, and JR Pass can save substantial money.

The Emotional Magic of Train Travel

Flights disconnect travellers from geography. Trains reconnect them. You watch villages transform into cities, plains rise into mountains, deserts melt into forests. Conversations happen. Landscapes unfold slowly. Meals feel longer. Time behaves differently. Luxury trains amplify this magic with fine dining, heritage interiors, and curated storytelling. Scenic regional trains deliver authenticity and local life. Together, they represent a form of travel that is deeply human.

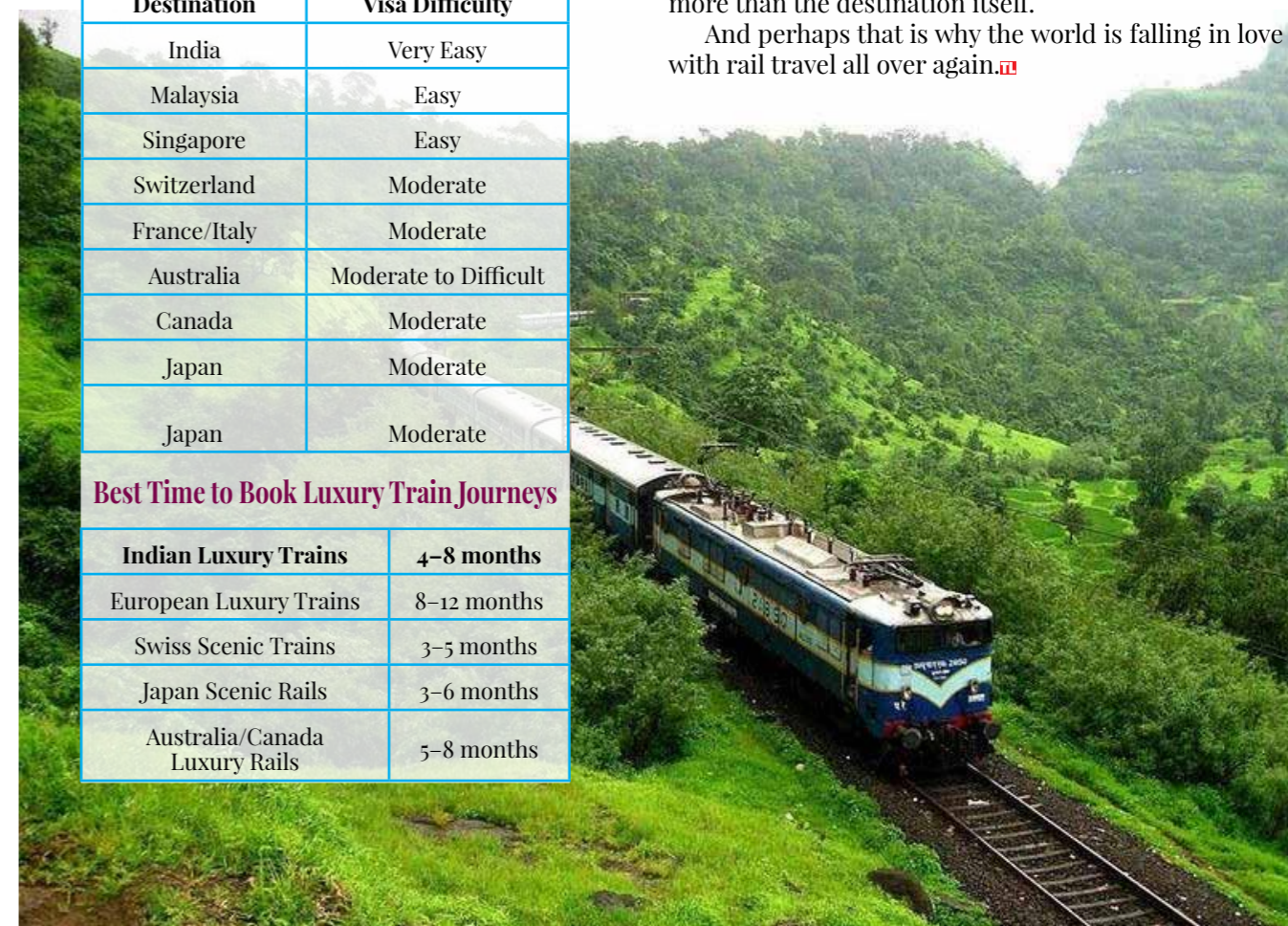
Visa Ease Ranking for Indian Travellers

Destination	Visa Difficulty
India	Very Easy
Malaysia	Easy
Singapore	Easy
Switzerland	Moderate
France/Italy	Moderate
Australia	Moderate to Difficult
Canada	Moderate
Japan	Moderate
Japan	Moderate

Best Time to Book Luxury Train Journeys

Indian Luxury Trains	4-8 months
European Luxury Trains	8-12 months
Swiss Scenic Trains	3-5 months
Japan Scenic Rails	3-6 months
Australia/Canada Luxury Rails	5-8 months

In an era dominated by speed, train journeys remind travellers that the route can sometimes matter more than the destination itself. And perhaps that is why the world is falling in love with rail travel all over again.



- Australian visa processing can take time for Indians.
- Planning Difficulty
- Moderate.

9. Rocky Mountaineer – Canada’s Scenic Giant

The Rocky Mountaineer offers extraordinary journeys through the Canadian Rockies.

- USP
- Glass-dome coaches
 - Snow peaks
 - Wildlife sightings
 - Luxury slow travel
 - Approximate Cost

CAD 2,500-10,000.

Best Routes

- First Passage to the West
- Rockies to Red Rocks

The newer Rockies to Red Rocks route is gaining popularity for its dramatic American Southwest storytelling experience.

10. Eastern & Oriental Express – Southeast Asia’s Culinary Rail Gem

The Eastern & Oriental Express moves through Singapore and Malaysia with tropical landscapes, rainforest views, and exceptional culinary experiences.

- USP
- Southeast Asian luxury
 - Gourmet cuisine

- Colonial elegance
 - Tropical rail experience
- Recent culinary collaborations have made the train especially attractive for food-focused luxury travellers.
- Approximate Cost
USD 4,000-10,000.
- Visa Ease
Very easy for Indians travelling to Singapore and Malaysia.

MOST AFFORDABLE SCENIC TRAIN JOURNEYS
Not every memorable rail experience requires luxury pricing.

Some affordable yet unforgettable routes include:

Journey	Country	Approximate Cost
Mandovi Express	India	INR 1,000-3,000
Bergen Railway	Norway	EUR 100-250
Flam Railway	Norway	EUR 70-150
Coastal Pacific	New Zealand	NZD 150-350
Vande Bharat Kerala Routes	India	INR 1,500-4,000

South India’s Vande Bharat routes are increasingly being recognised for comfort and scenic coastal journeys.

The Rise of the Experience First Indian Traveller

Luxury is no longer about where you go. It's about how deeply you feel it.

By Payal Sahni

There was a time—not too long ago—when travel began with a destination and ended

with a checklist. Paris meant the Eiffel Tower. Dubai meant Burj Khalifa. Switzerland meant snow. The Indian traveller, ambitious and eager, moved swiftly from one landmark to another, measuring success in photographs and passport stamps.

That time is quietly, but decisively, fading.

In 2026, a new narrative is shaping global travel—and India is at the forefront of this shift. The modern Indian traveller is no longer asking “Where should I go next?” but rather “What kind of experience do I want to live?” It is a subtle yet powerful transformation—one that is redefining luxury, hospitality, and

the very essence of travel. This is the rise of the experience-first traveller.

From Destinations to Emotions

Today's traveller is not chasing places—they are chasing feelings.

A quiet sunrise over the backwaters of Kerala. A private dinner under the desert stars in Rajasthan. A chef-led foraging walk through a European countryside. These are not add-ons anymore—they are the core of the journey. The shift is deeply psychological. After years shaped by uncertainty and digital saturation, travellers are seeking authenticity, connection, and presence. Travel is no longer an escape—it is a form of self-expression, even self-discovery. Luxury, therefore, is being redefined. It is no longer about chandeliers and

thread counts. It is about time, space, exclusivity, and emotional resonance.

The Rise of Slow, Intentional Travel Speed is no longer aspirational—depth is.

The Indian traveller is increasingly choosing fewer destinations, longer stays, and more immersive itineraries. Instead of a 10-city European sprint, they are opting for a week in Tuscany, a wellness retreat in Bali, or a cultural deep dive in Japan.

This evolution aligns with the global rise of slow travel—a philosophy that prioritises meaningful engagement over hurried sightseeing. It encourages travellers to live like locals, understand cultures, and build narratives rather than just memories.

For travel brands, this presents both an opportunity and a chal-

“Luxury is no longer about where you go. It's about how deeply you feel it - True luxury has transcended the miles travelled and the coordinates chosen. It is found in the intimacy of a moment that echoes, a sensory experience that stays, and the soul-deep certainty of being right where you belong.”

Utsa Majumder,
General Manager at Ozen Villas Jaipur.

“The new luxury traveller seeks not spectacle, but significance, journeys that inspire mindfulness, connection, and lasting meaning.”

Dorji Dhradhul,
Sustainable Tourism Specialist Bhutan.

“India's new luxury traveller is increasingly motivated by emotion, meaning and immersion rather than the usual sightseeing. Today, memorable travel is more intentional. It is defined by transformative experiences — whether through discovery, culture, celebration, adventure or rare access — that creates a deeper personal connection and lasting recall. Luxury as we know it is shifting from ownership to enrichment, and from status to storytelling.”

Deepa Misra Harris, Founder BrandsWeLove LLP.

“Indian travellers are moving in layers. So it's difficult to speak in absolutes. It reminds me of my first spiritual lesson - ‘not this!’ Till you tap into your calling. The Indian traveller after travelling overseas to all the aspirational destinations is re-discovering India. And India of myriad experiences. Add Nepal, Bhutan to this list in the subcontinent. This could be driven by nostalgia or a true willingness to see lived and living experiences.”

Shoba Rudra, The RARE Collection
www.rareindia.com

enge. It requires a shift from selling packages to curating journeys.

Hospitality's New Role: From Stay to Story

Hotels are no longer just places to stay—they are becoming experience ecosystems.

Luxury properties across the world are reimagining their offerings to align with this shift. Private villas now come with personalised chefs and curated local excursions. Resorts are building entire narratives around wellness, sustainability, and culture. Urban hotels are transforming into cultural hubs with art residencies, culinary labs, and immersive programming.

In India, this transformation is particularly striking. Boutique heritage properties, forest lodges, and design-led retreats are gaining traction among affluent travellers who are seeking uniqueness over uniformity.

The message is clear: the future of hospitality lies not in infrastruc-



“Luxury travel today is evolving into something far more meaningful than lavish stays or iconic destinations. Modern travellers are increasingly drawn towards eco-conscious living, sustainable hospitality, and authentic experiences that connect them with nature and local communities. At The Pavilions Himalayas – The Farm and The Pavilions Himalayas – Lakeview, we witness guests appreciating experiences rooted in organic farm-to-table dining, mindful wellness, environmental responsibility, and the simple luxury of slowing down amidst nature. The future of luxury lies in creating deeper emotional connections through sustainability, wellbeing, and purposeful travel.”

Ajoy Biswas
 Cluster Hotel Manager
 The Pavilions Himalayas –
 The Farm & Lakeview



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ture, but in storytelling.

The Culinary and Cultural Turn

Food has become one of the most powerful entry points into experiential travel.

Indian travellers are increasingly planning journeys around culinary discovery—whether it's vineyard tours in Europe, street food trails in Southeast Asia, or farm-to-table experiences in India. Dining is no longer about luxury—it's about authenticity.

Similarly, cultural immersion is gaining prominence. From learning traditional crafts to participating in local festivals, travellers are seeking deeper engagement with destinations.

This shift is also influencing how destinations market themselves. It is no longer about "top attractions" but about unique experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

Wellness: The New Luxury Currency

If there is one segment that perfectly captures the experience-first mind-set, it is wellness travel.

From Himalayan retreats to Southeast Asian spa sanctuaries, Indian travellers are investing in journeys that prioritise mental, physical, and emotional well-being. Digital detox programmes, mindfulness retreats, and holistic healing experiences are no longer niche—they are mainstream.

Wellness is also expanding beyond spas. It now includes sleep tourism, nutrition-led travel, and even emotional healing journeys.

For the modern traveller, feeling

“The Indian traveller today is not just chasing destinations, they are chasing meaning and experience. They want to feel genuinely connected to the place, its people, and its rhythms. This is where depth of experience becomes a competitive advantage. The more layered and authentic a destination, the more irresistible it becomes.”

Neeti Sharma, Director,
Intrepid Marketing and Communications

Lubaina Sheerazi

Co-Founder and CEO, BRANDit.

The Indian traveller is changing in a very visible way. They are researching more, asking sharper questions, and choosing holidays that offer more than a well-planned itinerary. Food trails, local neighbourhoods, nature-led stays, wellness breaks, festivals, and hands-on cultural experiences are no longer add-ons; they are becoming part of the decision itself. For many travellers today, the true measure of a holiday lies in how intimately it lets them experience a place, not simply

in how much ground they cover. Luxury today is less about excess and more about access—to places, people, stories and moments that stay with you. Today's luxury traveller is no longer just chasing destinations; they are seeking experiences that help them feel a place more deeply, whether through local culture, hidden stories, nature, wellness, or simply the time and space to be fully present. The most meaningful journeys are the ones that remain with you long after you have left”.

better is the ultimate luxury.

Personalisation at the Core

Technology has enabled a level of personalisation that was once unimaginable.

From AI-driven travel planning to hyper-customised hotel experiences, every aspect of the journey can now be tailored to individual preferences. But interestingly, the goal is not efficiency—it is intimacy. Travellers want to feel seen, understood, and catered to—not processed.

This is where luxury brands are investing heavily: in data, design, and human connection.

The Indian Traveller: A Global Force

What makes this trend particularly significant is the growing influence of the Indian traveller on the global

stage.

With rising disposable incomes, increased international mobility, and a strong digital presence, Indian travellers are shaping global tourism trends. Their preference for experiential, value-driven luxury is pushing destinations and brands to innovate.

They are not passive consumers anymore—they are co-creators of the travel experience.


The Road Ahead

The rise of the experience-first traveller is not a passing trend—it is a structural shift.

It demands a rethinking of how travel is designed, marketed, and delivered. It calls for deeper collaboration between destinations, hospitality brands, and experience curators. And most importantly, it places the traveller—not the destination—at the centre of the narrative.

For platforms like Travel Links, this evolution opens up a powerful editorial space—to not just showcase destinations, but to decode experiences, spotlight stories, and inspire journeys that go beyond the ordinary.

Because in the end, travel is no longer about ticking boxes.

It is about creating moments that stay with you—long after the journey ends. 

PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Is Travel Assistance the New Essential for Every Journey?

In today's fast-moving travel landscape, disruptions are no longer the exception — they're an expected part of the experience. According to a recent Global Airline Performance Report, over 25 million bags were reported mishandled globally, and more than 35% of all flights faced delays exceeding 60 minutes. While travel demand has bounced back post-pandemic, the quality of the journey often hasn't kept pace. Travellers are facing longer wait times, more lost luggage, and higher levels of uncertainty at every step.

This is where the gap between travellers' actual needs and travel reality becomes clear. Insurance coverage may reimburse financial loss after an incident, but it doesn't show up when a bag goes missing, when a connection is missed, or when travellers are stranded at a foreign airport with no immediate assistance.

What travellers need today isn't just reimbursement. They need real-time help. They need assistance.

Recognising this shift, ASEGO has structured ASEGO BOLT, a powerful new travel assistance bundle created by combining real-time baggage tracking and lounge access during flight delays. Together, they deliver rapid response and real protection, exactly when and where customers need it most.


It enables global, real-time baggage tracking across all airlines and routes, with guaranteed compensation of up to ₹66,000 per checked-in bag (up to two bags) if the luggage isn't recovered within 96 hours.

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Similarly, it automatically activates premium lounge access if a flight is delayed by more than 60 minutes—offering travellers comfort instead of frustration. Coverage extends across up to four flight segments in a single trip and includes access to over 1,300 lounges across more than 100 countries.

This isn't just a service upgrade — it's a mindset shift. Travel assistance is no longer an add-on; it's becoming a baseline expectation. As a travel advisor or booking partner, offering BOLT is more than an upsell — it's about being proactive, customer-centric, and aligned with what modern travellers truly value: peace of mind and dependable support.

ASEGO BOLT empowers travel agents to move beyond selling destinations and start offering dependable journeys. It's time to think beyond insurance and give your customers a protection layer that actually travels with them. Whether it's a family vacation, a corporate itinerary, or a solo international trip, assistance like this transforms stress into trust.

Disclaimer: The information provided is for general awareness and promotional purposes only. ASEGO BOLT and its services are value-added offerings subject to specific terms, conditions, and eligibility. Services are delivered via third-party providers and may be governed by their respective terms. This is not an insurance product or legal advice. Travellers should review full-service details before purchase. ASEGO reserves the right to modify or discontinue services without prior notice. 

In Conversation with Alefiya Singh— Founder of Iris Reps



There are journeys that follow a plan—and then there are journeys that unfold with instinct, courage, and quiet resilience. When I sat down with Alefiya, what stood out wasn't just her professional trajectory across some of the most respected names in travel and aviation—it was the honesty with which she spoke about pauses, pivots, and starting over. From a protected upbringing to building a globally respected representation company, her story is not just about success, but about self-belief. In an industry that is constantly evolving, Alefiya reminds us that growth isn't linear—it's deeply personal.

This conversation is not just about travel. It's about conviction, reinvention, and the power of creating your own path.

Inputs given by Alefiya Singh

By Payal Sahni

Beginnings & Early Life

I grew up in a very protected environment, studying in an all-girls school just a short walk from home. Travel, at that time, wasn't even a thought—it felt distant, almost unrealistic. Coming from a business family, it was always assumed that I would eventually step into the family's printing and boutique business.

Academically, I was fairly average, but my heart

was always in dance. I was a trained Bharatnatyam dancer—something not many people know—and it was a huge part of my identity growing up.

Travel came into my life quite unexpectedly during my graduation when I pursued an IATA course. Traveling alone for classes became my first step towards independence, and from there, my journey in travel began.

“ Iris Reps was born from a simple conversation after I stepped away from Emirates. Walking away from comfort to start from scratch was the biggest risk—but also the most rewarding decision of my life.”

The First Dream

Dance was always my first love. I envisioned myself performing and exploring various classical forms like Kathak and Odissi. I was also fascinated by rhythmic gymnastics and expressive movement. While life took a different direction, that passion for storytelling through movement has stayed with me.

A Defining Turn

Meeting mentors like Mr. Katgara and Mr. Peter Kerkar shaped my journey. Their passion for travel was infectious—it made me realise this industry had depth, emotion, and purpose. That's what drew me in and made me stay.

The Early Hustle

My journey began with Marvelous Mumbai, followed by Eurail sales, and then MICE and operations at Cox & Kings. Each role added a new layer of learning.

Taking a five-year break during pregnancy was a defining phase. Restarting wasn't easy, but it gave me clarity. Later, working with airlines like Turkish Airlines, Air New Zealand, South African Airways, and Emirates felt like life had come full circle.

Lessons That Stayed

Dreams don't just happen—you build them with belief, effort, and consistency. I started from the ground up, without legacy or shortcuts, and every step shaped who I am today.

The Birth of Iris Reps

Iris Reps was born from a simple conversation after I stepped away from Emirates. Walking away from comfort to start from scratch was the biggest risk—but also the most rewarding decision of my life.

Building a Brand with Purpose

We started small, with just three people and a vision. Today, Iris

Taking a five-year break during pregnancy was a defining phase. Restarting wasn't easy, but it gave me clarity. Later, working with airlines like Turkish Airlines, Air New Zealand, South African Airways, and Emirates felt like life had come full circle.

Reps stands for credibility, strategic thinking, and meaningful partnerships in the travel industry.

Leadership & Personal Philosophy

Leadership, for me, is about responsibility, not authority. I value integrity, empathy, and resilience. Balance in life is not about perfection—it's about alignment and purpose.

Navigating Today's Challenges

The travel industry is highly sensitive to global changes. Adaptability is key. We focus on evolving strategies, digital storytelling, and maintaining credibility in a competitive landscape.

A Woman in Travel

I didn't wait for opportunities—I created them. That has been my true empowerment.

The Human Side of Travel

Travel is deeply personal for me. It's about experiences, people, and perspectives. Every journey leaves a mark.

Looking Ahead — The Vision

My vision is to build Iris Reps into a globally respected brand while mentoring future leaders and creating long-term impact.

The Future of Travel

Travel is shifting from transactional to transformational. Personalisation, sustainability, and digital storytelling are redefining the industry.

Coexistence & Collaboration

The future of travel belongs to those who collaborate. Growth is stronger when it's shared.

A Note to Aspiring Professionals

Believe in your journey—even when it doesn't look perfect. <#>

INTERVIEW

Egypt Air's India Strategy Takes a Flight



Amar Aly, Country Manager - India, EgyptAir,

India's outbound travel landscape is undergoing a decisive transformation. Today's traveller is no longer driven by destinations alone, but by depth—seeking experiences that are immersive, culturally rooted, and elevated in every sense. As this shift gathers momentum, destinations like Egypt are witnessing a renewed surge of interest among Indian travellers.

In this exclusive conversation, Amar Aly, Country Manager – India, EgyptAir, Amr Aly is a highly accomplished professional with over 26 years of extensive experience in the aviation industry. Throughout his career, he has successfully represented key international markets including India, Vietnam, and Hong Kong. He shares how the airline is strategically aligning itself with this evolving demand—leveraging Cairo's geographic advantage, strengthening partnerships, and curating experiences that go beyond traditional air travel.

Adding a deeper layer to this narrative is Mr Rahul Kulshreshth,—a retired Indian Foreign Service Officer, and visited Egypt as a tourist in December 2001. Later, he served twice at the Indian Embassy in Cairo, including as Ambassador between July, 2018 and February, 2021. He quotes: "My family and I have very fond memories of our first holiday in Egypt twenty-five years ago. Egypt should be on the bucket list of outbound Indian travellers. From the pyramids and the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo to the temples of Luxor, Aswan, and Abu Simbel—best experienced through a Nile cruise—the country leaves travellers awe-struck. The Red Sea resorts offer a completely different, relaxed dimension, while the warmth of Egyptian people adds to the experience. Importantly, improved connectivity, including direct flights, makes Egypt more accessible than ever."



Mr Rahul Kulshreshth

Q1. India is emerging as a high-value outbound market. How has EgyptAir positioned itself for this shift?

Over the past few years, we have witnessed a clear transformation in the Indian traveller profile, with increasing demand for meaningful, experiential, and premium travel.

Simultaneously, interest in Egypt has grown significantly—particularly for heritage tourism, luxury holidays, and culturally immersive experiences. At EgyptAir, we have aligned our strategy to support this evolution by strengthening our product offering, maintaining high service standards, and ensuring seamless connectivity through Cairo, which serves as a strategic gateway to Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

We have also focused on schedule reliability, competitive fares across cabins, and close collaboration with travel partners to deliver curated travel experiences that combine comfort, convenience, and authentic destination value.

Q2. With Cairo as a key hub, how are you enhancing connectivity for Indian travellers?

Connectivity remains one of our strongest advantages. Through Cairo, we offer efficient onward connections across Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

Indian travellers are increasingly exploring destinations beyond traditional European circuits—particularly across Africa—and we are well positioned to support this demand.

We have optimised connection timings and enhanced transfer efficiency to ensure smoother journeys. For passengers with longer layovers, we offer STPC (complimentary hotel stays), which has been well received.

Additionally, to position Cairo as more than just a transit hub, we are offering a complimentary Nile River Cruise for passengers travelling until April 2026, in collaboration with our tourism arm, Karnak.

Q3. How critical are partnerships with the Indian travel trade?

Partnerships with the Indian travel trade are central to our growth strategy. India is a relationship-driven market, and collaboration with agents, tour operators, and MICE planners has been instrumental in building demand.

We actively engage through roadshows across key cities including Bengaluru, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, and Chandigarh, among others.

Our participation in platforms such as SATTE and OTM Mumbai has further strengthened our visibility, while recognising top-performing partners helps us build long-term relationships.

Q4. Beyond connectivity, how is EgyptAir contributing to Egypt's tourism narrative?

We see ourselves as enablers of complete travel experiences—not just an airline. Indian travellers are rediscovering Egypt for its rich heritage, coastal luxury, and cultural depth. Our role extends to working closely with tourism authorities, hospitality partners, and tour operators to present Egypt as a holistic destination.

This includes collaborative cam-

paigns, familiarisation trips, and curated travel programs that highlight Egypt's diverse offerings.

Q5. What has driven EgyptAir's recent growth in India?

The Indian market has shown strong growth, driven by increasing awareness of Egypt, along with our reliability, service quality, and connectivity.

We are seeing consistent demand across leisure, corporate, and

Enhancing premium travel remains a priority. We continue to focus on onboard comfort, service consistency, and passenger convenience.

incentive segments. Student traffic has also emerged as a key contributor, particularly to destinations such as Paris, Rome, Toronto, and New York. Our global expansion—including new services to Chicago and Los Angeles—further strengthens Cairo's role as a global hub connecting India with multiple regions.

Q6. How are you enhancing the premium travel experience?

Enhancing premium travel remains a priority. We continue to focus on onboard comfort, service consistency, and passenger convenience.

For long-haul travellers, seamless journeys and punctuality are key expectations. Our STPC offering en-

ures comfort during long layovers, while our partnership with Karnak provides 24/7 assistance at Cairo Airport, along with curated city tours and experiential offerings.

Q7. How are collaborations shaping multi-destination itineraries?

Collaboration is essential in today's travel ecosystem. We work closely with the Egyptian Tourism Authority and global stakeholders to design seamless multi-destination itineraries combining Egypt with Europe and Africa. We also conduct familiarisation trips for travel partners to deepen their understanding of the destination.

Q8. What differentiates EgyptAir in a competitive landscape?

Our key differentiator is geographic advantage. Cairo offers efficient connectivity between India, Africa, Europe, North America, and the Middle East.

We provide competitive journey times, reliable operations, and consistent service quality. Being part of Star Alliance further enhances our global reach and value proposition.

Q9. How has EgyptAir adapted to global aviation challenges?

We continuously monitor geopolitical developments and adapt our operations to maintain reliability.

Transparent communication with partners and travellers remains a priority. Our ability to respond quickly to disruptions reflects our operational agility and commitment.

Q10. What is your vision for India and South Asia?

India remains a key strategic market for EgyptAir. Since launching operations from Delhi in 2023, we have seen strong demand and encouraging growth.

Our focus is on strengthening current operations while evaluating expansion opportunities across India and South Asia.

Our long-term vision is to position EgyptAir as a preferred airline for experiential and premium travel—while promoting Egypt as a destination in its own right.

Hriday Bhoomi: A Return to Slow Living Amid Fields, Silence and Open Skies

By Payal Sahni

In a world where luxury is often measured in marble lobbies, towering chandeliers and butler service, places like Hriday Bhoomi in Jim Corbett, located in the scenic village of Dhela on the edge of the iconic National Park, quietly redefine what an escape can truly mean. Hidden away from the noise of crowded cities and predictable hotel experiences, Hriday Bhoomi is not about polished perfection. It is about breathing space. It is about waking up to the sound of birds instead of traffic, sipping tea while watching fields stretch endlessly into the horizon, and re-discovering the forgotten comfort of stillness.

There are stays that impress you, and then there are stays that calm you. Hriday Bhoomi belongs to the second category.

The experience here is closer to a relaxed farmhouse retreat blended with apartment-style villa living. It is unpretentious, grounded and deeply connected with nature. The charm lies not in extravagance, but in authenticity. You do not come here expecting a five-star resort atmosphere. You come here to disconnect from routine, to slow down, and to embrace a softer rhythm of life.

Where Simplicity Becomes

the Luxury.

One of the most beautiful things about Hriday Bhoomi is its honesty. Nothing here feels oversized or artificial. The property carries an earthy warmth — open spaces, greenery, village-inspired surroundings, farm-style landscapes and an atmosphere that naturally encourages you to pause.

The villas and apartment-style accommodations offer comfort without excessive flamboyance. There is enough privacy to make it feel personal, and enough openness to keep you connected with the outdoors. Mornings arrive gently here. Sunlight filters through the fields, cool breezes move through the pathways, and the silence itself becomes therapeutic.

For urban travellers constantly surrounded by deadlines, screens and crowded roads, this kind of environment feels increasingly rare.

The Beauty of Rural Calm

Hriday Bhoomi's real USP lies in its connection with rural calmness and natural living. During the stay, one notices how quickly the mind begins to slow down. There are hens wandering around, open fields creating postcard-like backdrops, earthy pathways, fresh air and an almost meditative silence

during certain parts of the day.

The experience feels less like checking into a hotel and more like temporarily borrowing a simpler lifestyle.

Families with children may particularly appreciate the atmosphere here. In an age where vacations often revolve around malls, indoor entertainment and digital distractions, Hriday Bhoomi offers something refreshingly old-school — open spaces where children can simply run, observe nature and interact with a countryside-inspired environment.

Couples looking for a peaceful break away from loud commercial destinations may also find comfort in its laid-back setting. It is not a destination demanding an itinerary every hour. Instead, it encourages travellers to do less and feel more.

A Stay for the Mind, Not Just the Camera

Social media has changed travel dramatically. Many destinations today are curated entirely for photographs. Hriday Bhoomi, however, feels more emotional than performative. While there are certainly beautiful corners for photography and Instagram-worthy moments, the property's real appeal lies in how it makes you feel.

There is something deeply calming about sitting outdoors with tea while hearing distant sounds from the farms, watching sunsets over open land, or simply spending an evening without city chaos interrupting your thoughts.

This is wellness in its simplest form.

No complicated spa therapies are needed when nature itself begins to slow your breathing and quiet your mind. Safari Vibes and Open Landscapes.

Another interesting layer to the experience is the safari-like atmosphere surrounding the property. The open landscapes, raw earthiness and countryside setting create a sense of adventure without making the stay physically exhausting. It combines elements of a rustic retreat with the comfort of a relaxed villa stay.

The surrounding environment gives travellers an opportunity to reconnect with outdoor living. Walks feel longer and conversations feel slower here. Even ordi-

nary activities somehow become more meaningful when experienced without constant noise and distraction.

For travellers seeking mental detox rather than luxury indulgence, Hriday Bhoomi offers an unexpectedly refreshing alternative.

Hospitality Rooted in Warmth

Unlike highly commercial luxury hotels where interactions can sometimes feel rehearsed, plac-





value peace over crowds, nature over nightlife, space over excessive glamour, and emotional comfort over material extravagance. Sometimes comfort is not a lavish buffet or a marble bathtub. Sometimes it is a quiet morning, clean air, fresh food and uninterrupted silence. Ideal for Weekend Escapes

es like Hriday Bhoomi often leave an impression because of their warmth and sincerity. The hospitality here aligns naturally with the environment — relaxed, welcoming and uncomplicated.

There is no pressure to constantly “do” something. The property allows guests to settle into their own pace. Some may spend hours reading outdoors, others may prefer evening walks, photography, family time or simply enjoying quiet moments under the open sky.

That freedom itself becomes part of the charm.

The Rise of Conscious Escapes Travel trends have shown a major shift in what travellers are looking for. While luxury hotels continue to dominate aspirational travel, there is also growing demand for conscious escapes — places where people can reconnect with themselves, nature and slower experiences.

Hriday Bhoomi fits beautifully into this emerging category.

It appeals to travellers who

One of the strongest advantages of destinations like Hriday Bhoomi is that they work beautifully as short getaways. Not every trip needs flights, packed itineraries or exhausting sightseeing schedules. Increasingly, travellers are seeking destinations where the journey itself feels lighter

Whether it is a weekend with family, a quiet couple’s retreat, a digital detox or even a solo reset, the property offers a mood that feels restorative rather than overwhelming.

Final Thoughts

Hriday Bhoomi may not compete with grand luxury resorts in terms of opulence, but that is precisely what makes it memorable. Its charm lies in simplicity, stillness and sincerity. In an increasingly fast-moving world, places like this remind us that travel does not always need excess to feel meaningful.

Sometimes all we truly need is open land, soft silence, natural surroundings and the luxury of slowing down.

Hriday Bhoomi is not just a stay — it is a pause button for the mind.

Couples looking for a peaceful break away from loud commercial destinations may also find comfort in its laid-back setting. It is not a destination demanding an itinerary every hour. Instead, it encourages travellers to do less and feel more.



Luxury, Reimagined: A Soulful Escape at Brij Bageecha, Rajasthan

By Payal Sahni

Luxury, for me, has never been about excess. It has never been about the size of a chandelier or the scale of a lobby. True luxury lies in how a place makes you feel—seen, cared for, and quietly at ease.

Over the years, I've experienced some of the finest hotels and resorts across the world, each offering its own interpretation of indulgence. But every once in a while, you come across a place that gently shifts your perspective—a place that doesn't try too hard, yet leaves a lasting imprint.

Brij Bageecha is one such discovery.



Arrival: Where Stillness Begins

The journey into Rajasthan is often associated with grandeur—forts rising dramatically against the skyline, palaces steeped in history, and a cultural vibrancy that is almost theatrical in its expression.

Yet, as I arrived at Brij Bageecha, what greeted me was something entirely different.

There was no overwhelming spectacle. No hurried welcome rituals. Instead, there was stillness.

Open skies stretched endlessly above, the earthy palette of the landscape blended seamlessly with the architecture, and a quiet rhythm seemed to define the space. It was in that moment that

I realised—this wasn't a property trying to impress. It was a space inviting you to pause.

And in today's world, that in itself is a rare luxury.

The Private Villa: Redefining Personal Space

At the heart of the Brij Bageecha experience lies its private villas—spaces that go beyond design and enter the realm of feeling.

Each villa is thoughtfully curated, balancing understated elegance with a sense of warmth that feels almost home-like. The textures are soft, the tones are calming, and the layout is intuitive—nothing feels forced or overly styled.

But what truly elevates the experience is the sense of privacy.

In a time where luxury often comes with shared spaces and curated visibility, there is something deeply comforting about having a space entirely your own. No interruptions. No distractions. Just you, your thoughts, and a setting that allows you to unwind at your own pace.

The private plunge pool becomes a natural extension of this experience.

Mornings begin with gentle sunlight reflecting off still water. Evenings transition into golden hues, where time seems to slow down just enough for you to notice it. These are not grand moments—but they are deeply personal ones.

And sometimes, those are the ones that matter most.



A Thoughtful Touch: Luxury That Includes Everyone

One detail that stood out immediately was how thoughtfully inclusive the experience is.

The villas are pet-friendly—a small detail, perhaps, but one that reflects a deeper understanding of today's traveller. For many, pets are family, and the ability to travel with them without compromise adds a layer of comfort that cannot be overstated.

It is gestures like these that quietly redefine luxury—not as exclusivity, but as thoughtfulness.

Dining: Where Every Meal Tells a Story

Food, for me, is always an emotional experience. It is memory, culture, and comfort—all



brought together on a plate.

At Brij Bageecha, dining is not positioned as a performance. There are no unnecessary theatrics. Instead, there is authenticity.

The farm-to-table philosophy is not just a concept here—it is a way of life.

The Chulha Dinner: A Return to Roots

One of the most memorable evenings of my stay was the Chulha dinner.

Set under a sky scattered with stars, the experience felt almost cinematic in its simplicity. The food, prepared over traditional firewood, carried a depth of flavour that modern kitchens often struggle to recreate.

There is something incredibly grounding about food



ooked this way. The smokiness, the warmth, the subtle imperfections—they all come together to create something deeply satisfying.

It reminded me of home. Of simpler times. Of meals that were not rushed, but savoured.

Sundowners: Quiet, Yet Powerful

Equally special was the sundowner experience.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, the landscape transformed into a canvas of soft golds and muted browns. There was no loud music, no exaggerated setup—just a beautifully curated space that allowed the moment to speak for itself. And it did.

Culinary Philosophy: Pure, Honest, and Heartfelt

What makes the food here truly stand apart is its sincerity.

At a time when many luxury properties focus on presentation and global menus, Brij Bageecha takes a more rooted approach. The emphasis is on freshness, purity, and in-house preparation.

From handcrafted kulfis and ice creams to traditional mithai, everything carries a sense of intention.

The Rajasthani kadhi, in particular, stayed with me. It was simple, comforting, and deeply nostalgic—exactly the kind of dish that reminds you that luxury does not always lie in complexity.

Sometimes, it lies in getting the

basics absolutely right.

Wellness: A Space to Reconnect

Luxury, in its truest form, should restore you.

The spa at Brij Bageecha does exactly that.

Designed as a quiet sanctuary, it allows you to step away—not just from the outside world, but from the constant noise within.

The therapies are holistic, thoughtfully curated, and delivered with care. But beyond the treatments, it is the environment that makes the experience complete.

Soft lighting, calming aromas, and an almost meditative stillness create a space where time feels ir-

relevant.

After my session, I found myself sitting quietly by the pool, not wanting to rush back into anything. That pause—that moment of stillness—felt like the real take-away.

Hospitality: The Soul of the Experience

If there is one element that truly defines Brij Bageecha, it is its hospitality.

Not the scripted kind. Not the overly polished version.

But something far more genuine.

There were moments during my stay that stood out—not because they were grand, but because they were real. A quiet



check-in to ensure I was comfortable. A thoughtful gesture at just the right time. An attentiveness that felt intuitive rather than instructed.

It is rare to find hospitality that feels this personal.

And when you do, it stays with you.

The Beauty of Slowing Down

One of the most refreshing aspects of this stay was the absence of urgency.

There was no fixed itinerary pushing you from one activity to another. No pressure to “do more” or “see more.”

Instead, there was time.

Time to walk.

Time to sit.

Time to simply be.

As I wandered through the property, I noticed small details—the way light filtered through trees, the quiet corners that invit-

ed you to pause, the natural beauty that felt untouched.

In a world that constantly demands movement, this stillness felt almost luxurious.

A New Definition of Luxury in Rajasthan

Rajasthan has long been associated with grandeur—and rightfully so. Its palaces and heritage properties are iconic, offering a glimpse into a royal past.

But Brij Bageecha presents a different narrative.

It shifts the focus from scale to soul.

From spectacle to substance.

This is not a place that overwhelms you. It is a place that gently draws you in.

And in doing so, it offers something far more meaningful.

Final Reflection

As I reflect on my time at Brij Bageecha, I realise that what

stayed with me were not just the experiences—but the feeling.

A sense of calm.

A sense of connection.

A sense of being exactly where I needed to be.

In a world where luxury is often defined by how much is offered, this retreat reminds us that sometimes, less is more. And that the most powerful experiences are often the most personal.

Travel Links Verdict

For those seeking a luxury Rajasthan stay that goes beyond the expected—one that is intimate, thoughtful, and deeply immersive—Brij Bageecha offers an experience that is both refreshing and unforgettable.

This is not just a destination.

It is a feeling.

And one that lingers long after you leave. [u](#)



After Dark: Cities That Come Alive at Night

By Team TL

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THE HOUR WHEN CITIES CHANGE

There is a moment in every city when it quietly changes personality. Muse-

ums close. Office windows switch off one by one. Streets soften. Restaurants glow warmer.

And if you happen to be walking through a city at that exact hour, you begin noticing things you

would never notice during the day.

The smell of coffee drifting through old lanes in Istanbul. Rain reflecting neon lights across Tokyo sidewalks. Jazz escaping from hidden basement bars in Budapest.

Some cities are beautiful during the day. Others reveal their soul only after dark.

Travel itself is changing. People no longer travel simply to see landmarks. They travel to feel atmosphere. To remember moments instead of monuments.

BUDAPEST

I properly understood this while walking through Budapest close to midnight.

The Parliament building glowed beside the Danube like a film set. Bridges turned gold beneath the night sky.

Later, inside a hidden jazz bar, travellers sat beside locals without distinction. Nobody was filming anything. Nobody appeared rushed.

The atmosphere felt genuine.

That evening stayed with me longer than most sightseeing ex-

periences.

Perhaps because nighttime strips away performance.

TOKYO

Tokyo at night feels unlike anywhere else.

Tiny ramen bars glow beneath railway tracks. Basement listening cafés play vinyl softly while strangers sit in silence.

One rainy evening in Shinjuku, I entered such a place simply because piano music drifted upstairs.

Inside, there were barely eight people.

Nobody spoke loudly. Drinks arrived quietly.

For a moment, Tokyo stopped feeling overwhelming.

And became intimate instead.

ISTANBUL

If Tokyo feels introspective, Is-

tanbul feels sensory.

The city changes rhythm after sunset. Ferries continue crossing the Bosphorus beneath glowing lights while cafés remain full deep into the evening.

One night, I sat beside the water long after dinner had ended.

Nothing dramatic happened.

Yet the moment felt unforgettable.

Travel memories are strange that way.

Sometimes the strongest moments happen when absolutely nothing is planned.

BANGKOK

Bangkok makes the least sense during the day and the most sense after midnight.

Street food stalls emerge beneath glowing signs. Rooftop bars fill slowly as the skyline flickers alive.



You can begin the evening inside a sophisticated rooftop lounge and end it beside a roadside vendor eating mango sticky rice at 1 a.m.

Both experiences feel equally authentic.

THE RISE OF ATMOSPHERE-LED TRAVEL

Travellers are no longer visiting cities only for landmarks.

They are travelling for atmosphere.

This explains the rise of rooftop culture, illuminated architecture,

after-dark museum tours, jazz districts and night markets.

Luxury itself has changed.

Earlier, it meant expensive hotels and shopping.

Today, luxury increasingly means mood.

A rooftop overlooking Tokyo.

A midnight jazz performance in New Orleans.

A lantern-lit riad in Marrakech.

Luxury has become emotional rather than material. Europe's Best Night Experiences for Luxury Travellers in 2026

When the sun slips behind Eu-

rope's historic skylines and shimmering coastlines, the continent reveals a second personality altogether. Streets become cinematic, rivers mirror golden reflections, underground jazz clubs begin to hum with life, rooftop lounges fill with soft conversations and clinking glasses, and centuries-old cities transform into living theatres of culture, cuisine, music, and indulgence. Europe after dark is not merely about nightlife — it is about atmosphere, storytelling, romance, and experiences that linger long after the journey ends.

For Indian travellers increasingly seeking curated luxury experiences rather than hurried sightseeing checklists, Europe's nighttime offerings are becoming a major attraction. From moonlit river cruises in Budapest and glamorous beach clubs in Mykonos to Vienna's classical concerts and Parisian cabarets, after-dark Europe blends elegance with emotion.

The modern traveller no longer asks only, "What should I see during the day?" Instead, the question has become: "What comes alive after sunset?"

This is where Europe truly

shines.

Budapest: The Queen of the Danube at Night

Budapest

Few cities in Europe look as magical after sunset as Budapest. As evening descends, the Hungarian capital transforms into a glittering masterpiece. The illuminated Parliament building, glowing bridges over the Danube, and historic Buda Castle together create one of Europe's most unforgettable night panoramas.

A luxury Danube river cruise is perhaps the finest way to begin a

Budapest evening. Most premium cruises include live violin performances, champagne dinners, and panoramic decks where travellers can admire the city's UNESCO-listed skyline. For honeymooners and luxury travellers, this experience remains one of Europe's most romantic nighttime activities.

The city's famous thermal baths also offer unique after-dark sessions. Imagine soaking in naturally warm mineral waters under historic domes while live music echoes softly in the background. Night bathing experiences at Budapest's iconic spas have become increasingly popular among inter-





national visitors.

Budapest is also home to the legendary “ruin bars” — abandoned historical buildings transformed into artistic nightlife spaces filled with eclectic décor, indie music, vintage furniture, and candlelit corners. Yet unlike the loud party scenes associated with nightlife elsewhere, Budapest offers a refined balance of culture and entertainment.

Approximate Costs

- Luxury Danube Cruise Dinner: INR 8,000–18,000 per person
- Thermal Bath Night Experience: INR 2,500–5,000
- Premium Riverside Hotel: INR 18,000–45,000 per night

Visa Ease

Hungary falls under the Schengen visa zone. Indian travellers with proper documentation and travel history generally find the process manageable, especially with confirmed hotel and cruise bookings.

Paris: Romance Beyond Midnight

Paris

Paris after dark is timeless. The city does not scream for attention; instead, it seduces quietly. Elegant cafés spill onto cobblestone streets, jazz melodies drift through historic alleys, and the Eiffel Tower sparkles every hour like a jewel suspended in the night sky.

Luxury travellers often begin

their Paris evenings with a sunset Seine River cruise paired with fine French dining. Floating past illuminated landmarks while sipping champagne creates an experience that feels lifted from cinema.

The legendary cabaret culture of Paris continues to thrive. Experiences at historic venues combine theatrical performances, couture costumes, live orchestras, and gourmet dining into one unforgettable night. These are not merely shows — they are celebrations of Parisian glamour.

For travellers seeking sophistication over crowds, Paris offers rooftop cocktail lounges overlooking the city skyline. Hidden speakeasies and Michelin-starred late-night dining experiences further

elevate the city’s nighttime charm.

Night walking tours through Montmartre or the Latin Quarter reveal another side of Paris — intimate, artistic, and deeply atmospheric.

Approximate Costs

- Seine Luxury Dinner Cruise: INR 15,000–30,000
- Premium Cabaret Experience: INR 12,000–28,000
- Luxury Boutique Hotels: INR 30,000–1 lakh per night
- Best Time to Visit

April to June and September to October provide pleasant evenings and comfortable weather for outdoor nightlife experiences.

Mykonos: Europe’s Most

Glamorous Island Nights

Mykonos

For travellers who associate luxury nightlife with beach glamour, celebrity culture, and endless Mediterranean energy, Mykonos stands unrivalled.

By day, the island is all white-washed architecture and turquoise waters. By night, it transforms into one of the world’s most exclusive party destinations. International DJs, sunset beach clubs, luxury yachts, and candlelit seaside restaurants define the island’s identity after dark.

Sunset at Little Venice remains one of Europe’s most photographed evening experiences. As the sky turns orange and pink over the Aegean Sea, luxury travellers gather for signature cocktails while waves crash gently against waterfront terraces.

Yet Mykonos is not solely about loud parties. Private yacht dinners, hidden beach lounges, and luxury

villa gatherings offer more intimate after-dark experiences for affluent travellers.

Indian honeymooners and luxury groups increasingly combine Mykonos with Athens and Santorini as part of premium Greek island itineraries.

Approximate Costs

- Luxury Beach Club Entry: INR 8,000–25,000
- Private Yacht Evening Charter: INR 1.5–5 lakh
- Luxury Villas: INR 50,000–3 lakh per night

Planning Tip

Mykonos becomes extremely expensive during peak summer. Advance bookings of hotels and ferries are essential.

Vienna: Classical Elegance After Sunset

Vienna

Not every great night experience





involves cocktails and clubs. Vienna offers something far more refined – cultural luxury.

The Austrian capital comes alive through classical concerts, grand opera houses, horse-drawn carriage rides, and elegant cafés that remain active late into the evening. Music lovers often describe Vienna as spiritually transformative after dark.

An evening at Vienna's historic concert halls allows travellers to witness Mozart and Strauss compositions performed in magnificent imperial settings. The atmosphere is regal, sophisticated, and deeply immersive.

Luxury travellers often pair concerts with gourmet Austrian dinners and overnight stays at heritage palace hotels.

The city's Christmas season deserves special mention. Illuminated markets, warm mulled wine, and orchestral performances create magical winter evenings unlike anywhere else in Europe.

Approximate Costs

- Premium Opera Tickets: INR 8,000–40,000
- Fine Dining Experience: INR 10,000–25,000
- Palace Hotels: INR 35,000–1.5 lakh per night

Ideal For

Couples, culture enthusiasts, mature luxury travellers, and music lovers.

Ibiza: Beyond the Party Stereotype

Ibiza

Ibiza is often misunderstood as merely a party island. In reality, modern Ibiza has evolved into a luxury lifestyle destination balancing wellness, music, gastronomy, and exclusivity.

The island's nightlife remains legendary, hosting some of the world's biggest DJs and immersive electronic music experiences. However, luxury travellers increasingly seek Ibiza for sunset sailing, bohemian beach dining, wellness retreats, and curated

nightlife experiences rather than nonstop partying.

Exclusive cliffside restaurants and luxury beach clubs provide elegant evening settings with Mediterranean cuisine and live performances. Sunset sessions at Ibiza's western coastline are iconic, attracting travellers from around the world.

The island also offers private villa parties and curated luxury experiences tailored for elite travellers seeking privacy and sophistication.

Approximate Costs

- Premium Club Tables: INR 40,000–4 lakh
- Luxury Beach Dining: INR 12,000–30,000
- High-End Resorts: INR 40,000–

2 lakh per night

Travel Insight

Ibiza works best as part of a Spain luxury itinerary including Barcelona and Mallorca.

Prague: Gothic Mystery and Nighttime Magic

Prague

Prague after dark feels like stepping into a medieval fantasy novel. Gothic churches, lantern-lit bridges, castle silhouettes, and cobbled alleys create a hauntingly beautiful atmosphere.

The city is ideal for travellers seeking affordable luxury combined with old-world charm. Evening river cruises on the Vltava River provide spectacular views of



Prague Castle and Charles Bridge illuminated against the night sky.

Jazz bars, underground wine cellars, and hidden cocktail lounges give Prague a distinctly artistic identity. The city's beer culture also plays an important role, with centuries-old taverns offering immersive local experiences.

Night walking tours focusing on legends, folklore, and ghost stories are increasingly popular among international tourists.

Approximate Costs

- River Cruise Dinner: INR 4,000–10,000
- Luxury Heritage Hotels: INR 15,000–40,000
- Fine Dining: INR 6,000–18,000

Why Indians Love Prague

Compared to Western Europe, Prague offers excellent value for luxury travellers without compromising on atmosphere or elegance.

Amsterdam: Canal Nights and Contemporary Luxury

Amsterdam

Amsterdam's nighttime beauty lies in its contrasts. Historic canals coexist with cutting-edge cocktail culture, Michelin-starred dining, artistic nightlife, and modern luxury hospitality.

Private canal cruises after sunset remain among the city's finest experiences. Illuminated bridges and reflections dancing across the water create a dreamlike atmosphere.

The city also caters exceptionally well to culinary travellers. Late-night tasting menus, wine-pairing experiences, and experimental gastronomy have elevated Amsterdam into one of Europe's top food capitals.

Luxury travellers increasingly favour boutique canal-side hotels that combine heritage architecture with contemporary design.

Approximate Costs

- Private Canal Cruise: INR 15,000–60,000
- Michelin Dining: INR 18,000–45,000



- Luxury Canal Hotels: INR 35,000–90,000 per night
- Scandinavian Midnight Experiences

Scandinavia

Northern Europe offers an entirely different interpretation of nightlife. Here, nature itself becomes the after-dark spectacle.

In Norway and Finland, travellers chase the Northern Lights through luxury glass igloos and wilderness lodges. Midnight sun cruises, Arctic dining experiences, and snow-covered landscapes create extraordinary memories.

Luxury expedition travel has become particularly popular among Indian high-net-worth travellers seeking unique experiences beyond traditional European tourism.

Approximate Costs

- Northern Lights Luxury Stay: INR 45,000–2 lakh per night
- Arctic Excursions: INR 20,000–80,000
- Luxury Fjord Cruises: INR 1–5 lakh

Best Time

September to March for Aurora experiences.

Europe's Rooftop Revolution

One of the strongest luxury travel trends across Europe is the rise of rooftop nightlife. Cities like London, Barcelona, Athens, Rome, and Lisbon are investing heavily in panoramic rooftop experiences combining gastronomy, cocktails, music, and skyline views.

London, Barcelona, Rome, and Lisbon now boast world-class rooftop cultures that appeal strongly to younger Indian luxury travellers. These spaces offer more than nightlife — they represent lifestyle curation. Sunset dinners, live jazz, designer cocktails, and skyline infinity pools are becoming central to Europe's premium hospitality scene.

Luxury Night Trains and Sleeper Experiences

Europe's growing revival of luxury sleeper trains has also redefined nighttime travel. Overnight journeys through Switzerland, Austria, and Italy combine scenic landscapes with gourmet dining and elegant cabins.

For Indian travellers planning a Europe-after-dark itinerary, strategic planning remains essential.

Best Time to Travel

- Summer (May–August): Ideal for beach nightlife and rooftop culture
- Winter (November–December): Best for Christmas markets and classical European evenings
- Shoulder Seasons: Offer lower prices and fewer crowds

Visa Considerations

Most European nightlife destinations fall under the Schengen visa category. Applying through countries with strong travel documentation, proper finances, and confirmed itineraries improves approval chances. The United Kingdom requires a separate visa.

Budgeting Smartly

Luxury nightlife in Europe can escalate quickly. Reservations for cruises, cabarets, concerts, and premium restaurants should ideally be secured before departure. Approximate Luxury Daily Budget

- Moderate Luxury: INR 35,000–60,000 per day
- Premium Luxury: INR 1–3 lakh per day

Best Booking Strategy

- Indian travellers often benefit from:
- Booking flights 3–5 months early
 - Combining rail passes with luxury stays
 - Using premium travel advisors for nightlife reservations
 - Staying centrally for safe nighttime exploration

The Future of Europe After Dark

The definition of nightlife is evolving globally. Modern luxury travellers are no longer interested solely in clubs and crowded entertainment districts. They seek emotional experiences — meaningful evenings that combine storytelling, gastronomy, music, wellness, heritage, and exclusivity.

Europe remains uniquely positioned to deliver this blend.

Whether it is listening to classical music in Vienna, watching the Eiffel Tower sparkle at midnight, sailing under Budapest's illuminated bridges, or enjoying a private beach dinner in Mykonos, Europe after dark is less about excess and more about atmosphere.

For Indian travellers increasingly embracing experiential luxury, nighttime Europe represents the next frontier of global travel.

Because sometimes, the true soul of a destination only reveals itself after sunset. [📍](#)

Switzerland and Italy are witnessing renewed interest in slow luxury tourism where the journey itself becomes the destination.

For affluent travellers tired of rushed airport schedules, luxury night trains offer romance, nostalgia, and sustainability.

Planning the Perfect European Nightlife Journey



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While travelling, our skin requires extra dose of care & nourishment. Pamper your skin and retain its suppleness, youthful appearance by carrying these travel essentials with you. With unique beauty secrets from Ayurveda in a contemporary manner, neoVeda by Craft House brings 'Travel skincare products' to protect and nourish your skin during the travel.

With pure, natural ingredients and essential oils, pamper yourself with neoVeda skincare products this season that will add freshness and suppleness to your skin. The

products are not only made with natural, fresh and pure ingredients and essential oils, but is also designed to balance 3 Bio Energies known as Vatta, Pitta and Kapha in Ayurveda. And they are without parabens, and harmful chemicals like sulphate, silicone, mineral oil, Trethanolamine and Phenoxyethanol, also are PETA Certified

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Body Moisturizer Honey, Almond & Aloe Vera Lotion: neoVeda Body Moisturizer Honey, Almond and Aloe Vera Lotion deeply nourishes and moisturizes skin, giving it a soft, smooth, fresh and hydrated texture. The exotic fragrance is a treat to the senses. It protects the skin from dryness. Also, the special ingredients in it keeps the skin supple even while traveling and moisturizes all day long. This lustre product is especially effective during travel and can be used luxuriously all over the body. Price: INR 350 for 200 ml

Face Firm Sandalwood & Saffron Cream: While traveling, your skin is exposed to dust and harsh

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Face Soft Rose Damascena Toner -. For instant glow and rich hydration, toners are what you need in your bag always. Replenish your skin with a splash of our Best Seller Face Soft Rose Damascena Toner to pamper yourself after a long traveling. Enriched with damascena rose, the toner not only hydrates but also softens skin and stimulates circulation, boosts tired and dull skin. Rose reduces spots from the skin and gives smooth texture. When used skin looks and feels smoother and firmer. Price: INR 350 for 200 ml

Body Care Almond Kumkumadi Kokum lotion- - Our Favorite travel partner, neoVeda Body Care Almond, Kumkumadi & Kokum Lotion is a luxurious, rich and creamy body care that gives intensive hydration instantly and keeps skin soft and protected. It gets quickly absorbed without leaving a greasy residue. Almond oil makes skin healthier and kokum butter is rich in essential fatty acids, which softens skin and promotes elasticity. It is suitable for almost all types of skin. It acts as an intensive moisturizer which hydrates, moisturizes and improves skin tone reviving its natural glow. Ayurvedic kumkumadi oil improves skin complexion and texture. Price: INR 650 for 200 ml



sunlight. In order to repair your

Summer 2026: Where India Is Travelling Now

From Alpine escapes to African safaris, Indian travellers are choosing slower, cooler and more meaningful holidays.

There was a time when Indian summer holidays were predictable.

A hurried Europe tour with eight countries in ten days. Matching raincoats. Breakfast deadlines. Eiffel Tower pictures taken in a rush before boarding another coach. Switzerland meant Jungfrau. Paris meant one photograph near the Louvre. Italy meant pizza, Pisa and panic.

That version of travel still exists, of course. But somewhere over

the last few years, Indian travellers have quietly changed.

You notice it first at airports.

Families are travelling with fewer suitcases but longer itineraries. Elderly parents are accompanying their children abroad more often. Young couples are choosing Iceland over Thailand. Luxury travellers are spending more time in one destination rather than collecting countries like stamps. Even conversations sound different now.

People are no longer asking, "How many places can we cover?"

They are asking, "Will we actually enjoy the place?"

That single shift may define Indian outbound travel in summer 2026 more than any tourism campaign ever could. This summer, India is travelling slower. Smarter. Cooler. And perhaps for the first time in a long time, more emotionally.

The Summer Escape Still Matters.

For Indian families, summer remains sacred travel season. School holidays still decide calendars. Families still wait for May and June to finally breathe after a year



packed with deadlines, exams, meetings and routines. But the way Indians are escaping the heat has evolved dramatically.

Earlier, summer holidays were about ticking destinations off a list. Today, they are about creating memories that feel personal.

Travel advisors across Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad say the biggest rise this year is in “experience-led itineraries.” Clients are asking for scenic train journeys instead of internal flights, boutique hotels instead of standard chain properties, longer stays

That is what Indian travel looks like in 2026. Less hurried. More thoughtful. More emotional. Not just about seeing the world. But about feeling something while doing it.

in fewer cities, curated local experiences and wellness integrated into travel.

And perhaps most noticeably, they are asking for destinations with better weather.

The era of the “coolcation” has officially arrived. Everyone Wants Cooler Destinations

After consecutive years of intense summers across India, travellers are actively chasing lower temperatures. This has pushed demand sharply toward Switzerland, Austria, Norway, Iceland, Scotland and Canada.

Travel agents say many clients are specifically rejecting tropical humidity this year. Even traditionally popular destinations in South-east Asia are facing competition from alpine and Nordic regions.

One Delhi-based luxury planner shared how a family originally planning a beach-heavy Mediterranean holiday changed their entire itinerary after hearing about Europe’s rising temperatures. “They told us very clearly—they wanted cold mornings, jackets, lakes and open landscapes. They wanted to breathe differently.” That sentence stayed with me.

Because perhaps modern luxury is no longer excess. Perhaps it is comfort. Silence. Space. Weather.

Switzerland Is Still the Dream — But the Traveller Has Changed

There is no denying India’s love affair with Switzerland.

For decades, Bollywood shaped its fantasy. Snow-covered mountains, train rides, lakeside promenades — Switzerland became emotionally familiar to Indian travellers long before they ever visited.

But Summer 2026 reveals something interesting.

Switzerland itself has not changed much. Indian travellers have.

Earlier, people rushed through Lucerne, Interlaken and Zurich in two or three nights total. Now they are spending four nights in a single region. They are choosing lake-view boutique stays. They are taking scenic rail journeys slowly instead of running between sight-seeing spots.

Today, luxury means time.

One of the biggest travel shifts of 2026 is the decline of hyper-rushed Europe itineraries.

Earlier: 7 countries in 9 days. Now: 2 or 3 countries maximum, longer city stays and slower experiences.

Paris is no longer just about monuments. Travellers are spending afternoons at cafés, exploring bakeries, discovering flea markets and walking through quieter neighbourhoods.

The visual grammar of luxury has changed.

Earlier it was chandeliers.

Now it is sunlight, privacy and authenticity.

The Rise of Central Asia

Few regions have surprised the travel industry as dramatically as Central Asia.

If Summer 2026 has a breakout star, it is undoubtedly Uzbekistan.

Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara are now appearing across premium itineraries.

One traveller described standing in Samarkand at sunset, watching the changing colours of Registan Square.



“There were tourists, but it didn’t feel overrun. It still felt magical.”

Africa Is No Longer Niche. South Africa remains one of the strongest long-haul performers because it offers incredible diversity within a single itinerary.

Cape Town continues to charm Indian travellers with its scenery and food culture, while safari experiences are becoming increasingly premium.

Meanwhile, Kenya’s Masai Mara migration has transformed into one of the most sought-after experiential holidays among affluent Indian travellers.

What is interesting is how safari is being marketed now.

Not as wildlife tourism.

But as emotional reset.

Multi-Generational Travel Is Defining the Market

One of the most visible changes in outbound travel today is the rise of multi-generational holidays.

Grandparents are travelling





abroad more confidently than ever before. Parents are intentionally creating family experiences across generations.

Families now prioritise walkable cities, comfortable transport, leisurely schedules and spacious stays.

Luxury Has Become More Personal

Travellers are spending heavily, yes. But they are spending differently.

The modern luxury traveller wants personalisation, privacy, emotional value, wellness and storytelling.

Luxury today may mean a vineyard lunch in Tuscany, a private fjord cruise in Norway or a quiet

spa retreat in the Alps.

The Instagram Effect Is Still Real – But More Refined

Social media still drives travel inspiration, but audiences are becoming more sophisticated.

Earlier it was famous landmarks. Now it is quiet cafés, scenic windows, boutique stays and slow moments.

People still want beautiful holidays. But they increasingly want them to feel real.

The Return of Emotional Travel Perhaps the most beautiful thing about Summer 2026 is that travel feels emotional again.

After years dominated by uncertainty and fast-paced digital living, people are searching for

experiences that make them feel present.

Travel is no longer just tourism. It has become therapy. Celebration. Reconnection.

Final Thoughts

Somewhere in Switzerland this summer, an Indian family is probably sitting quietly beside a lake after dinner, watching the mountains turn gold.

Somewhere in Kenya, a child is seeing wildlife in the wild for the first time instead of on a screen.

Somewhere in Uzbekistan, a traveller is standing beneath centuries-old architecture feeling wonderfully small in the presence of history.



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