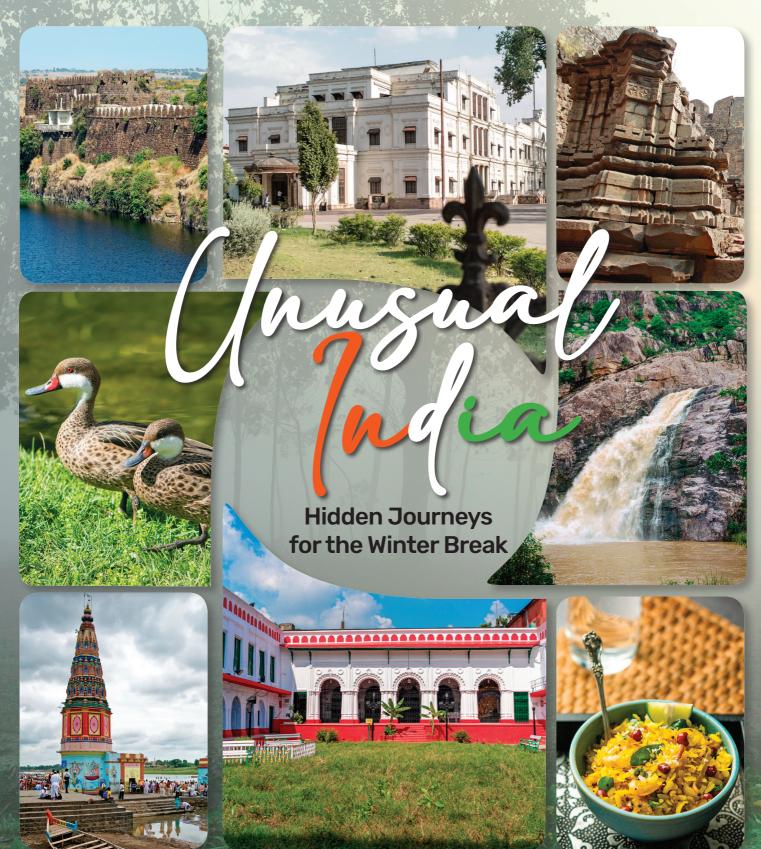






# THE RISING STAR











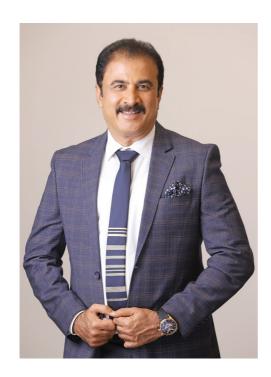






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#### Dear Passengers

It gives me great pleasure to share another exciting chapter in our journey of Connecting Real India. We've reached the 31-destination mark, a proud milestone that brings us one step closer to making air travel accessible to more people.

We've now added Indore, the Heart of Madhya Pradesh, and Gondia, the Rice City, to our map of Real India. We've also connected the Culture Capital of India, Kolkata, to the historic city of Purnea in Bihar. Our newest addition, Solapur, brings even more communities closer together. With these new connections comes the renewed hope of linking more people, more families, and making air travel an accessible option for everyone.

We are also proud to welcome Oscar, our newest Embraer E175, into our growing fleet. Each new aircraft helps us expand to every corner of India while continuing to offer the best possible experience to our passengers.

As we celebrate these milestones, we take pride in connecting the many stories, dreams, and destinations that define Real India.

On behalf of everyone at Star Air, I would like to thank our passengers, partners, and team members for their continued trust and support. With your encouragement, we look forward to exploring new skies together and bringing more corners of Real India closer than ever before.

Warm regards,

**SANJAY D. GHODAWAT** 

July Glodemat

Chairman

## Contents November-December 2025 Volume 6 × Issue 6



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#### **INDIA, FIRST & FOREMOST**

As we fly across this vast and vibrant nation, Star Air proudly joins the people of India in celebrating the adoption of the Constitution on January 26, 1950-a day that shaped our democracy.

This moment enshrined justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity as the core of our Republic. These values guide our mission to Connect Real India, ensuring every citizen enjoys access, opportunity, and connection.

As you travel with us today, we invite you to reflect on the strength of our democracy and the unity that binds us all.

Jai Hind! Team Star Air

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### **EMPOWERING CHAMPIONS**



SANJAY GHODAWAT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

#### **EXCLUSIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL AT PUNE**

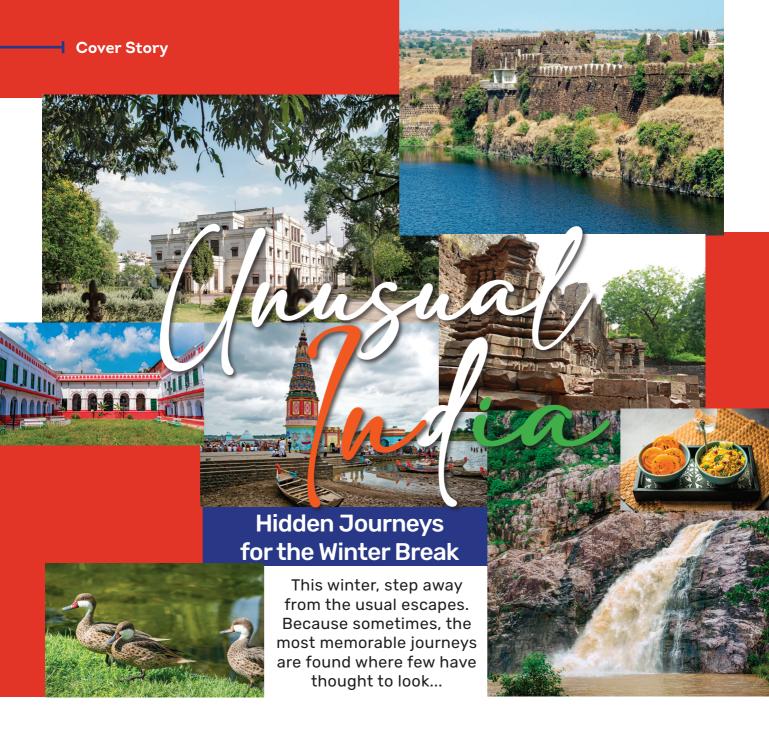




Village: Rawade, Taluka: Mulshi, District: Pune - 412 108, India.

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**CAMPUS ALSO AT - KOLHAPUR AND BELAGAVI** 



hen winter drapes
India in a softer light,
it's the perfect time
to wander off the
beaten track. Beyond
the predictable hill
stations and beach towns lie places
that reveal the country's quieter, more
surprising side — destinations where

history lingers in old mansions, mist curls over rivers, and everyday life unfolds with unhurried grace.

From Solapur's textile legacy and temple traditions to Kolkata's fading *rajbaris* that whisper of royal splendour; from Purnea's golden maize fields and misty mornings to Vidyanagar's artful balance of

heritage and modern design; from Indore's hidden ateliers and stately palaces to Gondia's forested calm and mirror-like lakes — these journeys offer more than just a change of scenery. They invite you to slow down, to savour detail, and to rediscover the joy of travel as a gentle, sensory experience...



Star Air operates flights to all destinations featured in this article



f Maharashtra's cities were textiles, Solapur would be its most intricate weave — threads of history, culture, and craftsmanship blending into one vibrant fabric. Best known for its iconic cotton *chaddars* and towels, this city on the Deccan plateau is far more than a textile hub. It is a gateway to neighbouring Karnataka and Telangana, a land of saints and revolutionaries, and a destination that offers both spiritual calm and modern indulgence.

#### **Revolutionary Past**

Solapur holds a unique place in India's freedom struggle. In May 1930, after Mahatma Gandhi's arrest, protests here grew so intense that the British police abandoned the city. For three extraordinary days, Solapur tasted independence even before the nation was free! It was also the first municipal council in India to hoist the national flag on its building. That defiance cost four freedom fighters their lives, honoured today at Hutatma Chowk.

#### **Weaving Dreams**

No trip to Solapur is complete without experiencing its world-renowned textiles. The Solapur *chaddars* —

colourful cotton bedspreads with distinctive patterns — are prized across India and abroad. Durable, vibrant, and affordable, they are the city's pride. For craft enthusiasts, the region also produces Mashru and Himroo fabrics — silk-and-cotton weaves once favoured by royalty. To hold a Solapur textile is to hold a piece of the city's identity.

#### **Tradition Meets Tranquillity**

Solapur is dotted with temples that are as much about atmosphere as architecture. At its heart lies the Siddheshwar Temple, dedicated to a 12th-century saint, surrounded by a tranquil lake. The Rukmini Temple, with its striking 51-foot idol, is another landmark. Jain temples like Parasnath and Adinath offer intricate carvings and courtyards steeped in serenity.

#### **Exploring the Outdoors**

Nature lovers will find plenty here. The Ujjani Dam is popular for boating, kayaking, and birdwatching, especially when migratory flocks arrive. For wildlife enthusiasts, the Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary at Nannaj offers a rare glimpse of this critically endangered bird. Back in the city, the Bhuikot Fort — with its ramparts, gardens, and animal park — combines history with leisure.

#### **Blend of Cultures and Flavours**

Straddling the borders of Karnataka and Telangana, Solapur is a cultural crossroads. Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, and Gujarati influences mix seamlessly — reflected in festivals, dialects, and especially food. From hearty Marathi thalis to crisp dosas and spicy Andhra curries, the city's palate is delightfully diverse. A growing café culture adds international flair for younger travellers.

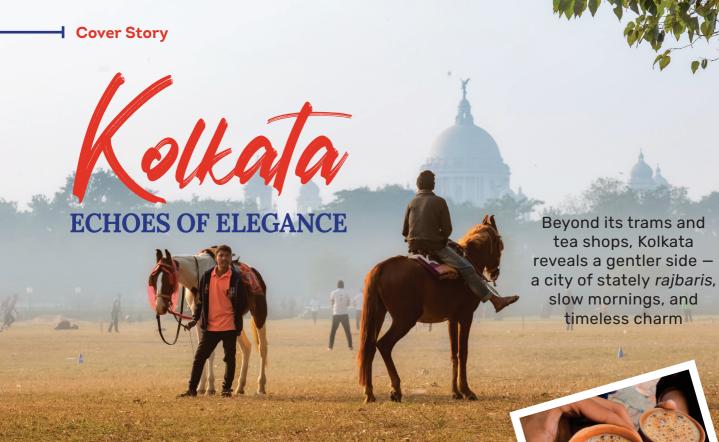
Festivals heighten the vibrancy. The Siddheshwar Festival in January fills the city with music, lights, and devotion, stretching celebrations across a month. Traditional dances like Lavani and Dhangari Gaja bring rhythm and colour to the season.

#### **Solapur Calling**

Here, forts meet vineyards, temples echo with centuries of devotion, and textiles tell the story of generations.

It also serves as a gateway to the pilgrim towns of Pandharpur, Tuljapur, and Akkalkot, making it an ideal stopover on Maharashtra's spiritual circuit.

Step into Solapur and you'll find a city that is historic yet contemporary, sacred yet celebratory — a destination that, like its famous *chaddars*, weaves a hundred colourful threads into something timeless.



olkata is often described as a city of paradoxes — where the colonial past brushes shoulders with a vibrant, creative present. But beyond its trams and tea shops, the city hides treasures that speak of a quieter, more aristocratic era: its magnificent rajbaris.

The raibaris – ancestral mansions of Bengal's landed gentry – are scattered across North Kolkata and its fringes. Step through their gates, and you enter another century. Faded stucco, Corinthian columns, Belgian glass chandeliers, and family temples whisper stories of opulent Durga Pujas and soirées where Tagore's songs mingled with British ballroom music. Many are still lived in, others carefully restored - like the beautifully maintained Pathuriaghata Rajbari and the Marble Palace, both steeped in history and grandeur. A few, such as Bawali Rajbari on the outskirts of the city, have been turned into heritage stays, where guests can relive the leisurely rhythm of zamindari life over a cup of Darjeeling tea on the verandah.

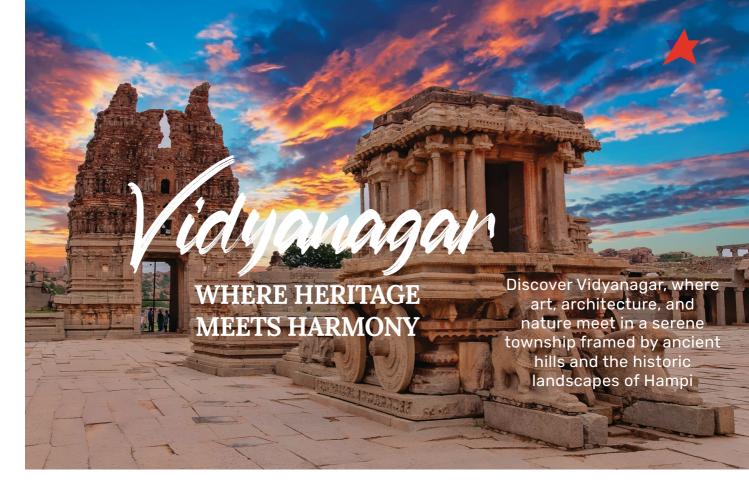


Beyond the mansions, Kolkata's lesser-known charms lie in its slow pleasures — a morning boat ride on the Hooghly when the mist hangs low over the river, or browsing in College Street's labyrinth of bookstalls where the scent of old paper feels almost sacred. Duck into the Kumartuli quarter to watch idol-makers mould clay into goddesses, or take a tram through Shyambazar for a glimpse of the city's unhurried pulse.

And then there's food – the city's other great heritage. Skip the

predictable *mishti* shops and follow the locals instead to hidden gems like Chitto Babur Dokan for *kochuri* and *alur torkari* or Nizam's for the original *kati* roll.

Kolkata rewards the traveller who lingers, who looks beyond its surface of sepia nostalgia to discover how art, intellect, and everyday life weave together. In its *rajbaris*, narrow lanes, and riverside ghats, the city still hums with the rhythm of a genteel past that refuses to fade — a living museum of memory and grace.



ucked away in Karnataka's
Ballari district, Vidyanagar
is a destination that
defies easy definition.
It's not a typical tourist
town — more a vision
of quiet sophistication built amid
ancient hills and rust-red earth. Once
known mainly as a private township
developed by the Jindal family,
today it has quietly evolved into
one of South India's most graceful,
self-contained enclaves of art,
architecture, and nature.

Drive through its wide, tree-lined boulevards and you sense a rare order — the kind that blends modern planning with ecological mindfulness. Sculptures and installations dot the roadsides; the skyline alternates between sleek contemporary design and classic stone structures that echo the ruins of nearby Hampi.

Barely an hour's drive away, Hampi adds a touch of grandeur — a landscape where temples rise from boulders, and every stone seems to hum with history.

A UNESCO world heritage site, Hampi rises like a dream carved in stone. Once the glorious capital of the Vijayanagara Empire, its ruins still whisper tales of kings, poets, and merchants who shaped one of India's greatest civilisations. Amid temples that glow gold at sunset and the silent majesty of the Tungabhadra River, Hampi feels timeless — both ancient and alive. Cyclists weave through banana groves, backpackers trace history's footprints, and pilgrims offer prayers at shrines that have stood for centuries. In Hampi, the past isn't just remembered — it's lived, every single day.

Just beyond the township, the Sandur Valley opens up in hues of rust and green, framed by the iron-rich hills that give this region its distinctive colour.

Art lovers can visit the JSW Foundation's Kaladham Museum, a beautifully designed space that fuses digital technology with classical themes from Indian epics. A short ride away, the Kumaraswamy Temple in Sandur, believed to date back over a millennium, nestles amid forests that come alive after the monsoon. And for those who crave simple



pleasures, the township's cycling trails, bird-watching zones, and evening performances at the open-air amphitheatre provide calm, unhurried diversions.

It's a place that encourages you to breathe deeply, look closely, and rediscover the grace of stillness. Vidyanagar is a gentle reminder that the most memorable journeys are often the quietest ones.



ucked into the far northeast of Bihar, Purnea is one of those places that rarely make it to travel itineraries — and that's precisely what makes it special. This quiet town, cradled between the Kosi and Mahananda rivers, offers a slice of rural India that's both timeless and surprisingly rich in hidden beauty.

Known as the "land of lotus eaters" in the British era for its languid charm, Purnea wakes gently each morning under a blanket of mist. Winter is the best time to be here — when the air

and the countryside ripples with golden maize fields stretching as far as the eye can see. It's also when the chhath ghats along

smells of wood smoke

the Kosi come alive with offerings of sugarcane and flowers at sunrise, a ritual that feels almost cinematic in its simplicity.

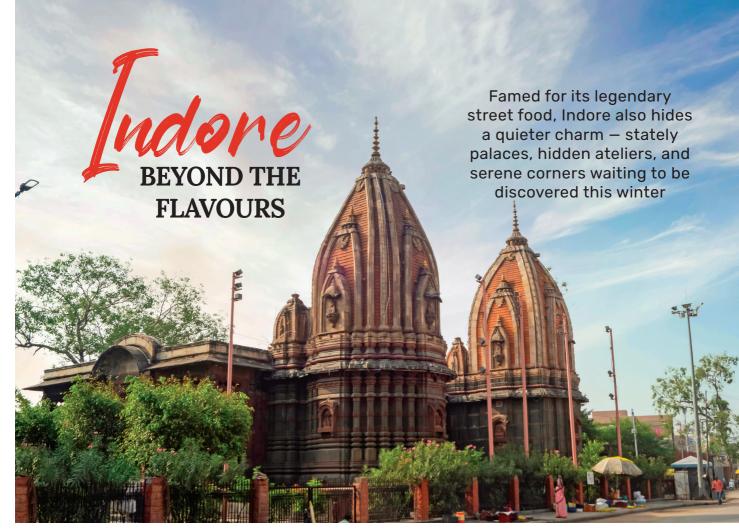
The town's colonial remnants still linger – from the old dak bungalows and the British-era courthouse to the languorous pace of life around the Line Bazaar, where you can sip sweet milky tea and watch the world go by. But the true soul of Purnea lies in its people – storytellers, farmers, poets – who speak of floods and

harvests with the same stoic poetry.

For those

who wander further, the wetlands around Purnea are a quiet revelation. The Kursela and Sarsi birding belts attract migratory species — from pintail ducks to Siberian cranes — turning the horizon into a painter's palette at dusk. You can also explore nearby Kishanganj, a tea-growing district whose rolling plantations are still a hidden secret outside the northeast.

There's no checklist of sights here, no rush of tourism. Instead, Purnea invites you to slow down — to drive through its misty mornings, walk through mustard fields, and discover a landscape that speaks softly, but stays long after you've left.



ew cities in India balance old-world charm and modern energy quite like Indore. Often hailed as the cleanest city in the country and the culinary capital of Madhya Pradesh, it's easy to know Indore for its bustling Sarafa Bazaar nights or the irresistible poha-jalebi mornings. But beyond its famous flavours lies another Indore — one of graceful architecture, royal echoes, and quiet creativity.

Begin at the Lal Bagh Palace, where Greco-Roman columns, Italian marble floors, and Belgian glass chandeliers recall the opulence of the Holkar dynasty. While most visitors admire its grandeur, few know that the palace once hosted soirées with European orchestras and was among the first in central India to use an elevator imported from England — still in place, a relic of refinement.

A short drive away, the Krishnapura Chhatris by the Khan River come alive at dusk, their silhouettes mirrored in the still water — a photographer's secret haunt. In the narrow lanes of Rajwada, you'll stumble upon traditional artisans: miniature painters, silver inlayers, and weavers of the famed Maheshwari and Chanderi textiles. If you wander far enough, you might chance upon heritage *havelis* with crumbling balconies that still hum with the rhythm of classical music practice sessions at twilight.

Indore's modern pulse beats strongest in its cafés and creative collectives — the new spaces where food, art, and conversation meet. From galleries that showcase local artists to farm-to-table kitchens hidden in the outskirts, this side of the city thrives quietly alongside its royal past.

For nature lovers, the Ralamandal Wildlife Sanctuary, just outside town, offers a green escape — a morning trek through *sal* and teak forests with sweeping views of the Malwa Plateau.

To truly know Indore, however,



is to experience it through its people — warm, humorous, endlessly hospitable. Whether it's the shopkeeper who insists you try another piece of *khopra* patties, or the old storyteller at Sarafa recounting how the market once hid freedom fighters under its stalls, the city wins you over in unexpected ways.

Indore is a city that feeds all your senses — not just with its legendary street food, but with its layers of history, craft, and heart.



unexpected wonders.

Gondia's story is shaped by the forests that surround it. The lush tracts of Navegaon National Park, barely an hour's drive away, are its green heart — a sanctuary where teak, bamboo, and mahua trees shelter leopards, deer, and hundreds of bird species. At dawn, mist floats over the lake as cormorants and herons trace silver lines across the water. Nearby, the Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary offers a quieter trail through wetlands alive with migratory ducks, making it a dream for birdwatchers and

But Gondia is not all wilderness. Its heritage hides in plain sight — in

photographers alike.

the remnants of the Bhandara–Gond royal legacy, and in the old railway settlements that earned it the nickname 'Rice Bowl of Vidarbha'. The city was one of the earliest in the region to be connected by rail, and even today, the grand old station retains echoes of a bygone era when trade routes and steam engines shaped its destiny.

For travellers seeking something off the usual map, Gondia opens unexpected doors. The ancient temples of Nagzira and the tranquil Itiadoh Dam offer moments of quiet reflection; the vibrant weekly markets brim with forest produce, handwoven baskets, and earthy spices. In winter, when the air is cool and the fields turn golden, you'll find farmers drying grain by the roadside — a scene that seems lifted from a painting.

What makes Gondia remarkable is its simplicity — an unhurried rhythm where nature and everyday life coexist seamlessly. It's a place to pause, take the scenic routes that wind through sal forests and village hamlets, and rediscover the charm of a countryside that still listens to the sound of the wind.

For travellers who crave authenticity over grandeur, Gondia is a gentle revelation — a green gateway to central India's quiet heart.



# CICLO WINTER

Crisp air, open roads, and stunning landscapes make winter the ultimate time for a biking adventure

here's something magical about a winter ride—the crisp air on your face, the landscapes bathed in golden light, and the thrill of the open road. For motorcycling enthusiasts, the season brings perfect weather and endless opportunities to explore India's diverse terrain on two wheels.

#### **Destinations to Chase**

Winter opens up some of the country's most spectacular routes. The desert highways of Rajasthan are a classic favourite, where the vast dunes, ornate forts, and starry night skies make every mile memorable. For those drawn to the mountains, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand offer pine-scented air, snow-dusted valleys, and winding roads that demand both skill and wonder. Down south, the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu treat riders to misty mornings, emerald tea plantations, and thrilling hairpin bends. If coastal charm beckons, the Konkan stretch from Goa to Ratnagiri promises sun-kissed beaches, seafood pit stops, and sweeping sea views.

#### **Choosing the Right Bike**

Matching your bike to the journey is key. For smooth highways, cruisers such as the Royal Enfield Meteor 350 or Jawa Perak deliver comfort and stability over long hours. Adventure riders tackling varied terrain often opt for dualsport machines like the Royal Enfield Himalayan or KTM Adventure 390, designed for both dirt tracks and tarmac. For shorter leisure rides or city-to-coast escapes, nimble options like the Honda CB350 or Yezdi Roadster offer reliability and agility.

#### **Find Your Tribe**

Riding becomes even more rewarding with company. Communities such as Royal Enfield clubs regularly plan winter expeditions across the country. India Bike Week, usually held in December in Goa, is another unmissable celebration where thousands of riders gather to share stories, music, and camaraderie. Travel collectives like WanderOn and Backpackers United curate guided bike tours, ideal for those who prefer well-planned adventures with expert support.

Whether you're chasing solitude on a winding mountain pass or revelling in the energy of a convoy, winter is the season to chase horizons on two wheels. Gear up, ride safe, and let the road write your next adventure.

# A PATNA ris mas IN 1957

The cold bit deep, but the day itself was all warmth and wonder... Revisiting a Christmas from childhood

**TEXT: CAROL ANDRADE** 

t 8 am, sitting down to breakfast, the adults were feeling the cold. Bundled in flannels and sweaters and cardigans at breakfast to fight the temperatures that hovered at 3 or 4 degrees Celsius in unheated Indian homes.

Us children? Not so much and we were already fighting the ayah over brushing teeth and using the wooden commodes and then wailing that we didn't want breakfast and what did she MEAN we had to wear slacks instead of dresses. "Daddy bola," she said briefly. Suddenly, Daddy, that wonderfully romantic figure who came down from Kashmir twice a year for holidays,

and who agonised over us getting sick, wasn't so popular anymore and the fight was moved to the real front with Mummy arguing that we would be the only ones attending the noon Christmas tree event in pants instead of pretty dresses. Cotswol with tiny flowers. She won. Noon would be warm. Lunch on the lawn at Hazeldel in the shadow of the great Mughal granary called the Golghar.

For some reason, my younger sister and I had asked for perambulators with dolls. I imagined mini English buggies with hoods that I could fill with pups or pet rabbits and me racing around and terrifying them. I expected to see them under the Tree because no one had



said we were NOT getting them.

Christmas in Patna in the 1950s was always the same. Four or five families, comprising my parents' oldest friends, plus their other friends, gathered at Hazeldel which offered a family setting with a lawn, a garden and space for an al fresco potluck lunch of rice, curry, a roast, salads, etc, followed by the range of cakes and sweets, all homemade, all wonderful. Sugar wasn't the big evil Lucifer it is today and we so looked forward to eating ourselves into a sugar-induced coma.

Packed into a line of cycle rickshaws carrying parents, children, servants, vessels of cooked food, we set off usually by 11 am to make the 2 km journey. As we rode up to the gate, over the low wall we could see the Tree. It was a rather sad one that year, made of neem branches bravely got up with streamers and balloons and squads of yelling kids collected around it. From the road itself I could see very large bright pink things under the Tree. When I rushed up to get a closer look, I could not believe my eyes.





The two prams we expected were elaborate wooden contraptions obviously made in a local workshop, with sides shaped like swans. I looked accusingly at my mother who was looking even more elaborately away. There were also two dolls inside, clay heads, cloth bodies and bows nailed to their heads. I opened my mouth to

protest - but by then, Santa landed up in a tonga pulled by a smelly horse.

Later my father apologised, acknowledging my disappointment. Santa also looked ruffled. He had been attacked and hit in the eye by a flailing small boy and looked fed up of the proceedings. Luckily, lunch was announced so we dashed off to the





lawns and cheered up at the sheer lavishness on display.

Tables had been set up covered with lovely white cloths and the array of food dazzled. The best of Anglo-India was reflected there, a mix of British roasts, with curries and an array of roasted vegetables to go with - well - everything. Separate tables held a range of beverages and soft drinks with even non-drinkers lifting a toast to Christmas. And then there were the desserts, a table laden with fudge, guava cheese, ginger snaps, kulkuls and rose cookies - the largesse of a community of friends.

Unsupervised closely for once, we ate and drank into the late afternoon. The sun was bright, the cold receded for now. The grass was green and soft under supine little bodies. On the road far outside the property, Patna went about its noisy business. Within, it was all calm and sleep-threatened satiated bodies and heavy eyelids. It smelled good, it sounded good, adult conversation was a comforting drone in the background. Even the pink swan-bedecked wooden "prams" ceased to matter. Best of all, there was still the evening.

That was when our parents' friends came over in droves to celebrate with us, keeping us all busy with cutting cake, making coffee for the ladies, while Daddy uncorked bottles and saw to the gentlemen. And as usual, there was a roast for dinner with all the trimmings, made impeccably by our Bihari cook from Chapra, that no-one ate. Because it was just too too much. 🗯



Carol Andrade has been both journalist and then journalism educator for the past 50 years. She has lived in Mumbai for the past 53 years, coming here directly from Patna. Follow her on Instagram @ carolandrade1915



St Peter's Church, Landour

# Snow, Song



Noted author-photographer photographs proving Mussoorie's

/ **Ganesh Saili** shares words and Christmas is unlike any other

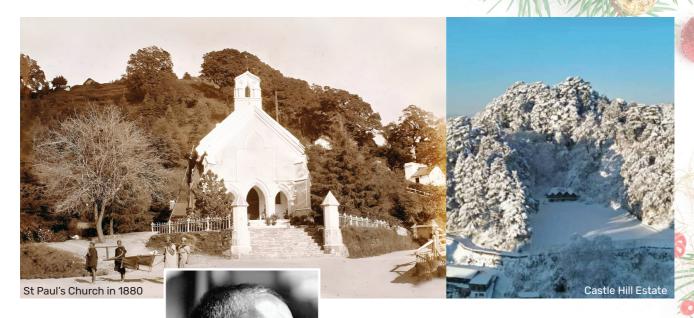
**TEXT: NICHOLA PAIS** 

#### You've lived in Mussoorie for decades. What makes Christmas in the hills so unique and magical?

A white Christmas is special to our hill station. Everyone waits, hoping that it'll snow on that special day. Having been born and homegrown in Mussoorie, one hopes that climate change won't affect our weather patterns too much. But it has, and there's no telling which way the cookie will crumble this year!

### Are there particular traditions that you find yourself returning to?

Cake mixing used to be the 'in' thing in the larger hotels, right from our days of wine and roses. Everything that would go into the cake was mixed by guests (of course, wearing rubber gloves). These were left to soak in alcohol, and a month later, they went into the oven.



#### As a photographer, what details of Christmas in the hills draw your eye?

The unending stream of visitors still attracts the photographer in me.

# What aspect of Mussoorie best captures the spirit of the season?

That would have to be Christ Church, the station's earliest church. Consecrated in 1836, it was the first church in the Himalaya and the first of eight other churches that came up in the hill station. I recommend you walk down the Mall, the local promenade in Mussoorie, take a break from the tourist traps, and stop for a while at Christ Church.

Watch the magic woven of sunbeams filtering through the stained glass windows – the most magnificent in Northern India. In a minute, the ordinary becomes extraordinary, bringing back

a wash of nostalgia -- the chimes of the church organ, and the peals of bells calling the devout.

#### Do tell us a little about its history and beauty...

By 1835, the local European population had grown to the point where it needed to build a church. Among the luminaries was George Everest, for whom fame was far away. A site on a hump above Kulri was chosen. Objections came from Mr Mackinnon, the owner of Mussoorie Seminary, already a leading man in the hill station owing to his energy and public spirit. Because of the distance from his school, he proposed that the Church of England should be out to the west of the station, and the site above the Mall was settled on.

If you move down the aisles of Christ Church, the grace of the tapering windows will take your breath away. Considering their fragility and the moments of fury and violence of the past, it is surprising that so much has survived from antiquity. Bathed in the mysterious light that filters through hundreds of bits of coloured glass, you will suddenly face a miracle of rare charm and beauty - truly a joy forever!



**GANESH SAILI** 

The magnificence of stained glass in Christ Church



#### **UNTAMED LUXURY**

Nestled on the edge of Gir National Park – the only home of the majestic Asiatic lion – **Araiya Gir** offers an extraordinary escape for travellers seeking an offbeat New Year retreat. "Our aim is to create a sanctuary where guests can reconnect with nature without compromising on comfort," says Amruda Nair, Founder & CEO, Araiya Hotels. Winter lends its own magic — crisp mornings, mellow afternoons, and starlit nights set the perfect stage for both adventure and relaxation.

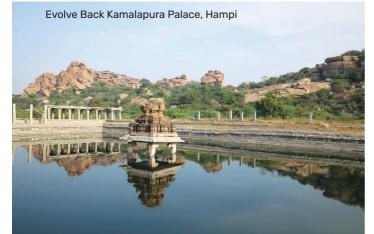
This season, Araiya Gir promises a holiday that blends nature, luxury, and unforgettable flavours. From thrilling jungle safaris to immersive cultural encounters, it's a destination where adventure meets serenity — a truly magical way to begin the year.

Guests can choose from spacious villas — from tranquil Lake Villas to Forest Villas with private plunge pools — each designed for privacy and comfort. At the heart of the experience lies the thrill of safaris through Gir National Park, with the chance to spot lions, leopards, and hundreds of bird species. Beyond wildlife, village



tours, cultural interactions, and nature trails reveal the rich heritage of Saurashtra.

Culinary experiences are equally memorable. "Our dining celebrates local flavours while embracing global tastes," Nair shares. From Gujarati thalis and festive multi-cuisine feasts to outdoor barbecues and bonfire evenings, Araiya Gir makes every meal a celebration...for the soul.



#### **TIMELESS RENEWAL**

For travellers seeking a New Year celebration steeped in history and serenity, **Evolve Back Kamalapura Palace, Hampi**, offers an unforgettable setting. "Our Hampi property offers guests a truly offbeat and immersive holiday experience," says Jose Ramapuram, Executive Director – Marketing, Evolve Back Resorts. "It is a harmonious blend of heritage and luxury that transports one directly into the heart of the Vijayanagara Empire."





As winter drapes the Deccan in soft light, the palace comes alive with quiet grandeur. Each experience at Kamalapura Palace is crafted to awaken the senses – from morning yoga and guided heritage walks to cycling excursions through hidden trails.

New Year's Eve here is an elegant affair — candlelit dinners under the stars, live music, and cultural performances that weave seamlessly into the night. "It's a blend of celebration and calm," shares Ramapuram, "where we embrace new beginnings surrounded by history, nature, and warmth."

#### **LAKESIDE CALM**

For a serene and memorable New Year. Naukuchia House - IHCL SeleQtions offers the perfect setting. "The Palladianinspired architecture, the Yellow-Billed Blue Magpie, and the serene natural surroundings make this one of the region's most enchanting escapes," vouches General Manager Sanjeev Kumar. Tucked 4,000 feet above sea level overlooking the nine-cornered Naukuchiatal Lake, the retreat is framed by pine and cedar forests that shimmer in morning mists and golden winter light, creating an atmosphere of calm introspection. It remains an unhurried haven for those seeking solace, scenic beauty, and a reflective start to the year.

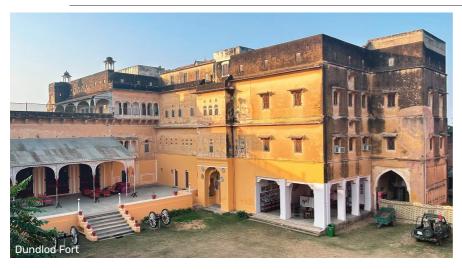
Guests can immerse themselves in Kumaon's soul through forest trails, lake walks, and cultural evenings. "Evenings unfold with aromatherapy turndowns, bath rituals, and sound healing sessions,"



Kumar shares.

Dining follows the 20-Mile Menu philosophy, celebrating local ingredients. New Year celebrations blend warmth, flavor, and mountain spirit. Guests enjoy Indian and European barbecues, roasted as well as regional specialties, and global desserts alongside choice beverages.

Set against the tranquil Naukuchiatal Lake, the evening features soulful music, crackling bonfires, and handcrafted experiences - a celebration of authenticity, serenity, and unforgettable mountain magic.



#### **DESERT AWAKENING:**

For those seeking an extraordinary start to the New Year, **Dundlod Fort** in Rajasthan's Shekhawati region offers more than regal walls and vintage

charm-it promises an experience steeped in adventure, artistry, and authentic connection. The 17th-century fort, converted into a heritage hotel in 1982 by Thakur Raghuvendra Singh

Dundlod, a scion of the royal family. stands as a testament to the timeless fusion of Rajput and Mughal influences.

Lovingly restored by its custodians Mallyka Singh Dundlod, founder of Baisa Adventures, and her brother Vijit Singh Dundlod, the property blends royal heritage with immersive local experiences that bring the desert to life.

Guests can step beyond the ramparts to engage with village artisans-learning lac bangle making with the Manihar community, crafting pottery with local Kumhars, or exploring the vivid tie-anddye artistry of the Rangrezz artisans. For the adventurous, jeep rides, cycling trails, and horse safaris on the legendary Marwari breed offer thrilling ways to explore Shekhawati's painted havelis and golden sands. Bringing in the New Year under the star-studded Rajasthan sky... what more could one possibly ask for!

# Strengthening Regional Air Connectivity Across India

Strengthening our mission of connecting Real India, we marked another milestone in our aim of regional expansion with a series of new route launches across Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and West Bengal





e commenced direct flights between Ahmedabad and Purnea on 15 September 2025, coinciding with the inauguration of Bihar's newly constructed Purnea Airport by Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. The route, operated under the government of India's UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, opened a new chapter in regional connectivity for the Seemanchal and Kosi regions, offering travellers faster and more convenient access to the rest of the country. We further enhanced our presence in eastern India with the launch of flights between Kolkata and Purnea, on 18 September 2025. The new service offered business travellers, students, and families a faster and more comfortable alternative to long road and rail journeys.

Continuing our growth momentum, we also launched flights between Bengaluru, Indore, and Gondia on 16 September 2025, becoming the second airline to operate from the prominent district of Gondia in eastern Maharashtra. Operated with the modern Embraer E175, the route connected key business and educational hubs, providing a seamless link between















Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Concluding this remarkable expansion, Solapur became the newest addition on our growing map. The new Solapur-Mumbai service, inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Devendra Fadnavis, operates four days a week under the Maharashtra State RCS initiative on 15 October 2025. The launch created a vital air link for business and leisure travellers alike, boosting regional trade and accessibility while supporting the state's development goals.

Commenting on these launches, Capt. Simran Singh Tiwana, CEO of Star Air, said, "Each new route strengthens our vision of Connecting Real India by improving accessibility and empowering regional economies. We are proud to serve communities that have long awaited the convenience of direct air travel."

Together, these additions reflect our ongoing dedication to bridging unserved and underserved regions, promoting tourism, trade, and stronger community ties across Real India.

As we look forward, we are now gearing up for our launch in connecting another one of Real India's gems, Vidyanagar to the IT capital Bengaluru on 1 November. With the help of this new service, visitors and business travellers will be able to get to the UNESCO world heritage site of Hampi much more quickly and easily. As we continue to grow, we remain committed to making air travel more inclusive, accessible, and meaningful for every community we serve. 🗯

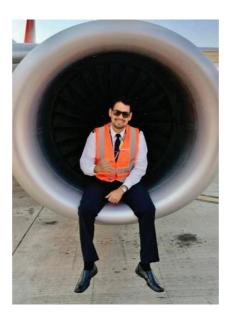


# WINGS ACROSS WINGS ACROSS

Born in the mountain state of Táchira, Venezuela, Captain César Augusto Rodríguez has flown across continents—from Amazon missions to Indian skies—carrying with him a spirit of service, discipline, and connection

## Can you tell us about your early life and what inspired you to pursue a career in aviation?

**A.** I grew up in western Venezuela, in the beautiful state of Táchira — surrounded by mountains and kind, humble people. My fascination with aviation began during childhood. One vacation, while staying near my country's main airport, Simón Bolívar, I would spend hours watching airplanes take off and land, completely captivated by their power and grace. That magical experience planted the dream of flight in my heart. I was determined to pursue it, which led me to join the Air Force Military Academy in Venezuela.



# From your first flight lesson to becoming a captain at Star Air, what has your journey been like?

A. My journey began in 2008 at the Training Air Command in Maracay, Venezuela. Later, I continued my training in the country's southern region, supporting indigenous communities deep in the Amazon forest. Those humanitarian missionslanding on unprepared runways, performing medical evacuations, and saving lives—were both challenging and rewarding. I was later assigned to the Venezuelan Presidential Wing, flying aircraft such as the Dassault Falcon 50, Falcon 900, Boeing 737, and Airbus 319 for the nation's top authorities. After years of service. I chose to retire from the military to explore civil aviation globally. Now, with over 16 years in aviation and 6,500 flight hours, I proudly serve as Captain on the Embraer 175 at Star Air, which I ioined in June 2024

## What has been the most challenging experience in your career so far, and how did you overcome it?

**A.** Every challenge in aviation is an opportunity to grow. I rely on knowledge, training, and adherence to standard operating procedures to navigate difficult moments. Leadership under pressure means staying calm, analysing carefully, and trusting your crew. My most emotional flights have been those shared with my family — seeing my mother, wife, daughter, or siblings on board fills me with pride and reminds me why I give my best every single flight. For me, serving through aviation is also a way of serving God.

## What does a typical day in the cockpit look like for you?

**A.** A day begins with preparation — reviewing weather reports, NOTAMs, and operational details, followed by a thorough crew briefing. Once in the aircraft, teamwork, communication, and precision take centre stage. Every



flight, regardless of duration, deserves complete focus and commitment to safety. After landing, debriefs help us identify lessons and improvements - because learning in aviation never stops.

#### How do you maintain focus and composure during long or unexpected situations?

A. Discipline and mindset are essential. Years of training have taught me that composure comes from preparation and respect for procedure. I stay focused by planning ahead, communicating clearly with my crew, and maintaining a calm, analytical attitude. Aviation is never a solo act it's a coordinated performance built on teamwork and trust.

#### Why did you decide to make the switch to an Indian airline, and how has your experience been flying in India?

A. Joining Star Air offered a unique opportunity to grow in one of the world's fastest-developing aviation markets. Flying in India has been wonderful - from diverse weather and stunning landscapes to a culture rich in hospitality. My family and I are deeply grateful to be here, learning from India's traditions and spiritual depth. We're especially looking



Flying in India has been a wonderful experience – from its diverse weather and stunning landscapes to a culture rich in hospitality and respect."



forward to celebrating Diwali, which so beautifully symbolises the triumph of light over darkness.

#### Are there any memorable flights or experiences that have stayed with you?

A. Many. The humanitarian missions in the Amazon are unforgettable – helping people in remote areas under difficult conditions gave deep purpose to my work. And, of course, flying with my family on board remains among the most special memories of my career. Their joy and pride make every takeoff and landing more meaningful.

#### How has travelling the world shaped your perspective on life, culture, and aviation?

A. Travelling has shown me that despite our different languages or traditions, we all share the same emotions and dreams. Aviation connects humanity – it brings people closer, fosters understanding, and reminds us how small the world truly is. Every country I've flown to has shaped me, teaching me humility, respect, and aratitude.

#### What advice would you give young aspiring pilots?

A. Dream big and never stop learning. Aviation is not just about flying it's about discipline, teamwork, and responsibility. The sky rewards those who prepare, stay humble, and remain passionate. Every challenge will test you, but persistence and love for what you do always pay off.

#### How do you balance your personal life with the demands of flying, and what keeps you motivated?

A. Balancing life and aviation can be demanding, but love and family support are essential. My wife and daughter have been my greatest strength throughout this journey. Living in India together has been a beautiful adventure - discovering new cultures and growing spiritually. My motivation is simple: serving others. Each flight connects lives, reunites families, and fulfills dreams - and that gives true purpose to what I do. 🗯







#### **Connecting Real India**



 $<sup>^{\</sup>ast}$  Map used for general illustration only, and does not represent the political boundaries of India.



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Seats : 2+5 Cruise Speed : 259 kmph



#### Airbus H130

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#### **Airbus H135 T2+**

Seats : 2+5 Cruise Speed : 259 kmph



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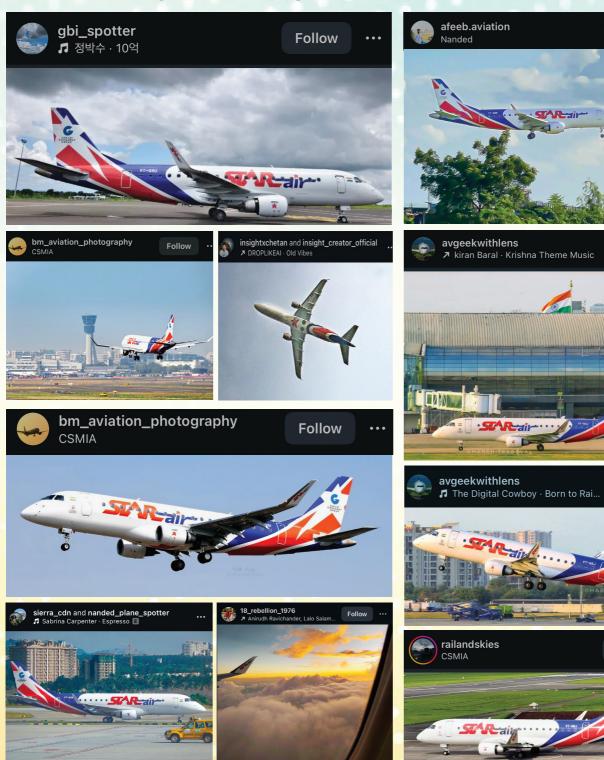
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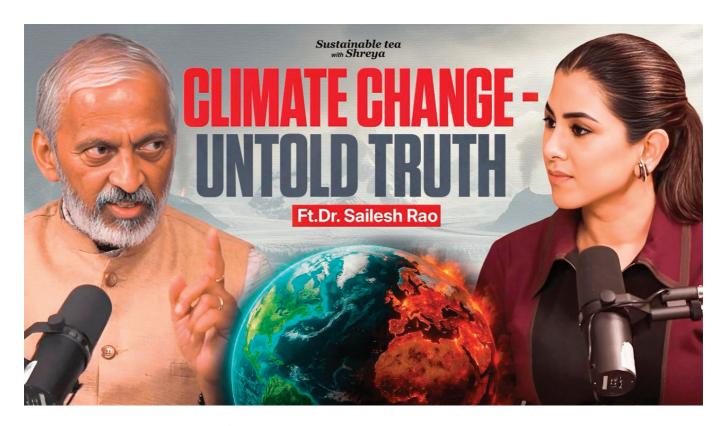
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## **Shooting for the Stars**

Featuring some of the coolest photos of our constellation from social media







## What's On Your Plate... **Could Be Harming Your Health**

Hosted by sustainability and climate activist Shreya Ghodawat, this episode of Sustainable tea with Shreya features Dr Sailesh Rao on the dangers hidden in our food choices

iet-related diseases are skyrocketing, and what we eat might be the missing piece in the health conversation.

Change what's on your plate, and you might just change the course of your life and your future.

In this powerful episode of Sustainable tea with Shreya, India's #1 sustainability podcast, host and climate activist Shreya Ghodawat sits down with systems engineer, global thought leader Dr Sailesh Rao, founder of Climate Healers, for a conversation that peels back the layers of one of the most overlooked drivers of disease, destruction, and disconnection: our food system.

From calling out dairy as "the longest-running scam in human history" to exposing how animal agriculture is driving 30 million preventable deaths every year, Dr Rao makes one thing clear: this is not just about our planet; it's about our bodies, our families, and our future.

The episode explores how meat and dairy consumption affects everything, from cardiovascular disease to diabetes and inflammation, and how shifting toward plant-based choices is the most powerful, practical step we can take to prevent illness and build resilience for long-term wellbeing.

Together, they explore how our food choices also impact industries, economies, and even the futures our children will inherit. This episode delves into the science and statistics of this reality and serves as a wake-up call for anyone who cares about themselves, their values, or the world they're helping to create.

Whether you're a policymaker, a student, a parent, or just someone curious about the link between food and our future, this episode offers clarity, courage, and a call to consciousness.

Season 1 of Sustainable tea with Shreya is now streaming. Watch the full conversation on YouTube now! \*

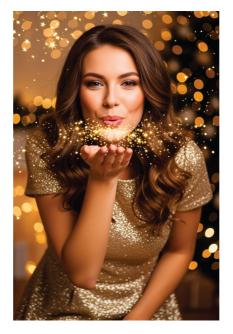


"It's all about smart packing," says Rima Melwani. "Choose versatile pieces that work in different ways — they keep your suitcase light and your look polished for every occasion."

#### **For Women**

When in doubt, start with a cocktail dress — timeless, flattering, and easy to style. Choose one in a fabric that resists creasing, and elevate it with statement accessories. For a modern twist, jumpsuits make a chic alternative: they're comfortable, travel well, and can go from brunch to ballroom with a quick switch of heels and jewellery.

If you prefer separates, pair a flowy skirt with a fitted top or a silky blouse with tailored trousers — both are easy to restyle for day or night. Add sparkle



with bold earrings, a sleek clutch, or metallic heels, and you're good to go.

Hair and makeup should stay effortless too. Think loose waves, sleek buns, or low ponytails paired with a bold lip or a hint of shimmer for instant party appeal.

#### **For Men**

For men, festive dressing is all about balancing sharpness and ease. A well-fitted suit or tuxedo in navy, black, or charcoal remains the gold standard for formal events. Add a crisp shirt, slim tie, and pocket square to elevate the look.

For semi-formal or resort settings, trade the full suit for a blazer-and-trouser combo. Lightweight linen or wool-blend blazers paired with chinos or dark denims strike the perfect note







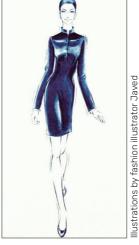












of smart yet relaxed. For casual gatherings, a stylish shirt with dark jeans and dress shoes is effortlessly cool.

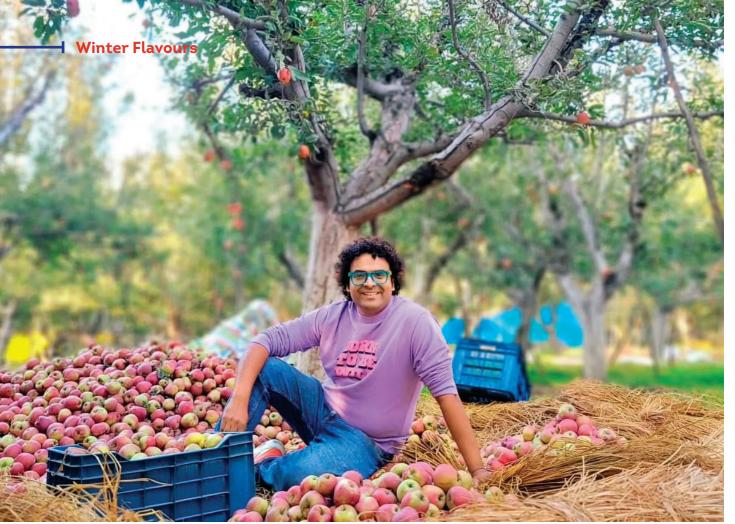
Complete the look with a statement watch. polished shoes, and a classic leather belt. Don't neglect grooming - a neat haircut, trimmed beard, and moisturised skin go a long way in pulling your look together.

#### **Universal Tips**

- Whatever your itinerary, plan your looks in advance.
- Pack pieces that can multitask a single blazer, clutch, or pair of heels can transform multiple outfits.
- Choose comfortable, travel-friendly fabrics like cotton-silk blends or soft knits that stay fresh after a long flight.
- · Don't shy away from a touch of festive shimmer - sequins, metallics, or jewel tones add instant celebration energy.
- · Above all, wear your confidence. As Melwani puts it, "Style isn't about how much you pack, but how effortlessly you carry yourself — even at 30,000 feet." 🗯



Rima Melwani is an acclaimed costume designer, celebrity fashion stylist, and educator. Follow her on Instagram @rimamelwani



# Feasting in Winter

Celebrated restaurateur, author and television host Chef **Varun Inamdar** shares how India's brief winter transforms kitchens across the country into celebrations of warmth, nostalgia, and endless regional variety

Text: NICHOLA PAIS

inter is that time of the year when India feels like an overflowing harvest basket," smiles the charming and articulate Chef Varun Inamdar, who remains deeply rooted in his craft. Across the country, fields and

markets brim with colour, aroma, and produce that appear for just a few precious months. Beyond the familiar carrots and peas, he points to treasures such as *kaali gajar* (black carrots) in Punjab, used for *halwa* or *kanji*, Delhi's vibrant *gajar-shalgam* destined for pickles, and lush greens

like *methi saag, bathua,* and *sarson* creating layered *saags* in the north.

Down south, Karnataka celebrates avarekalu (hyacinth beans) so fervently that entire food festivals are dedicated to them. Gujarat gleams with tender green toor and ponk (immature sorghum), while Maharashtra shows off mulberries, strawberries, and Nagpur oranges. "In the northeast, Meghalaya's Khasi mandarins and Nagaland's axoneflavoured foods are quintessential winter," he says. "It's a season when India feels like a continent within itself!"

#### **Season of Hearty Plates**

"Winter is when Indian kitchens truly shine," the chef says with enthusiasm. The season invites slow cooking, robust flavours, and the comfort of rich textures. In Punjab, sarson da saag with makki di roti dominates, while the rare kaali gajar ka halwa in Lucknow draws him back year after year.

Across Gujarat, undhiyu—traditionally cooked upside down in earthen



pots buried in the soil-becomes the showstopper, and ponk takes on streetfood avatars in bhel, chivda, or even cutlets. Rajasthan warms up with gond raab and bajra rotis paired with flery garlic chutney. In Kashmir, mornings begin with harissa, and in Bengal, the arrival of *nolen gur* (date palm jaggery) turns sandesh and rosogolla into oncea-year indulgences.

Every region, he observes, cooks "with an intimacy born of seasonality." Then, with a grin, he confesses: "And amidst all this cold breeze and chills, a long drive and ice cream on cone is an absolute must. Strange but true!"

#### **Playing Favourites**

Asked for his personal favourite, Chef Varun doesn't hesitate. "If I had to choose, I'd say gajar ka halwa," he recalls. "My mother would slow-cook grated carrots with khoya and ghee until the house smelled of warmthoften past midnight. I'd sit on the kitchen top, sipping the cantaloupecoloured milk."

That childhood memory inspired one of his signature creations: gajar halwa and rabdi-stuffed cannoli. "It's a meeting of Italian craft and Indian soul." he explains. "It retains the comfort of the original but presents it with global elegance." His culinary imagination also led to the safed dal-made with hyacinth beans, panch phoran spices, and mustard oil—"my hat-doffing to India's farmers and our winter produce."

#### **Roots & Reinvention**

When asked about the influences behind his winter menus, he reflects: "I draw equally from tradition, local produce, and creative reinterpretation. Tradition grounds me-because dishes like kanji or harissa carry centuries of wisdom. Local produce keeps my food rooted. But as an innovator, I reinterpret."

He recalls crafting India's fermented vegetable tonic, kanji, into a fine-dining amusebouche served in champagne flutes. "The challenge," he says, "is never to

Daulat Ki Chaat Sprouted coconut in Chennai

overshadow authenticity but to showcase it for global diners with fresh wonder."

#### **Culinary Map of Winter India**

Safed Dal

For those who love to combine travel and taste, the chef suggests a few must-visit destinations:

> Srinagar: Dawn at Ael Kadal with a steaming bowl of harissa-

> > "unforgettable," he says. His own restaurant, New Light in Sopore, serves an authentic version with girda bread.



**Gujarat:** Every street corner hosts spontaneous ponk parties.

Tomato Rasam

Nagpur: Visit the orange orchards at harvest time for naturally chilled, honeyed juice.

Kolkata: Sweet shops brim with nolen gur creations that vanish by spring. Amritsar: Saag, makki roti, and gur make the Lohri table legendary.

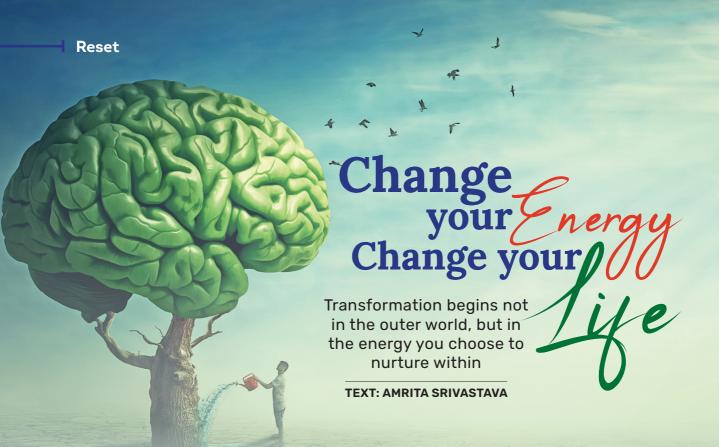
Bengaluru: The Avarekalu Mela-an entire festival of beans.

Shillong and Aizawl: Winter markets filled with wild greens, smoked dishes, and herbs unseen elsewhere.

"There are few journeys like winter food pilgrimages in India," he concludes. "Winter is the perfect season to taste India's truest diversity."

In the end, winter in India is more than a season—it's a mood, a memory, and a feast. In Chef Varun's words, it's "the time when warmth comes not just from sweaters and shawls, but from kitchens that smell of nostalgia, ghee, and joy."

With "more rock 'n' roll than Freddie Mercury," Chef Varun Inamdar is a National Awardwinning, Guinness World Recordholding, trailblazing creator of iconic chocolate masterpieces. Follow him on Instagram @ varuninamdar 🗯



here your attention goes, your energy flows." In the language of Dr Joe Dispenza, focus is not merely a mental act—it is a physical one. Every thought and emotion generates measurable energy, reshaping neural pathways, influencing the body's chemistry, and ultimately directing how reality takes form around you.

#### 1. Observe your Inner Landscape

In order to transform your life, notice your thoughts, emotions, and habitual patterns. Pay attention to recurring worries, emotional loops, or subtle currents of energy within you. Psychologists call this metacognition—the ability to observe your own thinking. This awareness creates the space to step out of old habits and begin choosing your focus intentionally.

#### 2. Recognise the Power of your Attention

Your attention is like sunlight—it energises whatever it touches. When you focus on fear, scarcity, or doubt, your energy contracts, and life mirrors

that tension. When you focus on possibility, gratitude, and joy, your energy expands, and opportunities begin to appear naturally

#### 3. Cultivate Elevated Emotions

Intentionally evoke emotions like gratitude, love, and wonder. These are high-frequency states that ripple through your mind and body, reshaping your inner landscape. Notice how your mood, clarity, and energy change when you immerse yourself in these emotions, deliberately.

#### 4. Practise Mindful Rewiring

Use tools like meditation, visualisation, and journaling to rewire not just your thoughts, but the energetic patterns that shape your reality. Dr Dispenza emphasises that repeated focus on positive patterns literally sculpts your brain and your electromagnetic field, thereby influencing how you experience life.

#### 5. Step Into the Role of Conscious Creator

Transformation is not something that happens to you—it is something you choose. You are the architect, director.

and author of your reality. Every thought, every emotion, every focus is a brush stroke on the canvas of your life. Your life exists first as energy; by shaping your inner field consciously, you shape your outer reality.

#### 6. Commit to Daily Practice

Becoming a conscious creator will not be a one-time effort—it will be a daily devotion. Each morning you need to check in with your energy, redirect your attention, and choose to cultivate elevated emotions. Some days it will feel effortless, other days it will feel like work, but with consistency you will train your body and mind to live in a new state of being.

The life you imagine is not somewhere "out there"; it is already encoded in the energy you carry. When you choose to align with that energy each day, your future will no longer be a hope—it will become your lived reality.



(Founder-director of Ink Studio, Amrita Srivastava's expertise spans research, academic writing, creative storytelling, and digital marketing, Find her on Instagram@amritawonderworld)



# SEN COOLDETS SUGAARO



# Lighting up the



Special moments from Diwali celebrations with the Star Air family



















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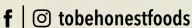
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\* All menu items are subject to availability www.starair.in





