

CELEBRATING
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.....
1963-2013

STAY AT

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

LIFESTYLE

SPOTTED BY SITA

TOP CHEF RECOMMENDS

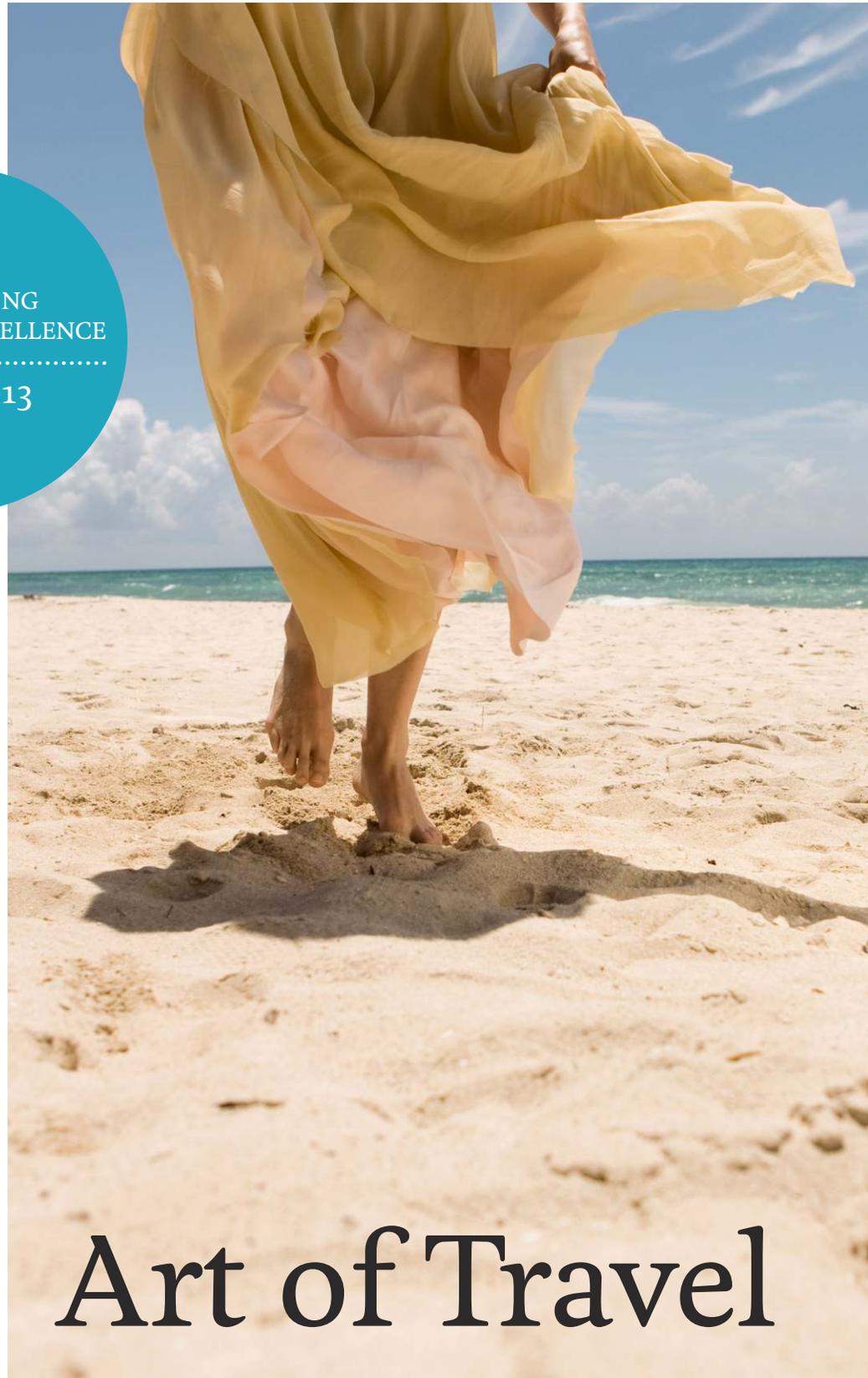
DESTINATION INSIDER

6 THINGS WE LIKED ABOUT

FESTIVALS

INSPIRATION LOCATOR

TRADE SHOWS



Art of Travel



Arco iris, Goa

Stay At

“You sell your start up. Move from a big city to Goa, restore a 200- year-old Portuguese Villa with 5 bedrooms and start hosting your friends that you were once associated with. How cool is that. And that’s the story of [Arco Iris](#), located in Curtorim, a quiet village in South Goa, about 7 kms from Margao and the affable family of Bennita (“Beni”), Ganesh (“Gani”) and their daughters Trusha and Trikaya (“T&T”), your hosts who reside on the premises,” says Kuntil from our Destination Knowledge Centre who stayed there. “The nearest beach is 12 kms away so Arco Iris is not for someone who wants to go to Goa for its beaches,” Kuntil adds.

Arco Iris is ideal for those of your clients who wants to live like a Goan and smell the Goan soil, take delight in the clucking of the hens, grunting of the pigs, the pealing of the church bells, the honking of the local baker’s cycle horn, a hearty afternoon siesta in a planter’s chair, indulge in village gossip in the local taverns and settled down for chats with village folks on wooden tables. Arco Iris, meaning “Rainbow” in Portuguese, is built on a sprawling, terraced, 1.5 acre property which overlooks a seasonal lake that supplements the water requirements of the surrounding paddy fields. It is located a kilometer away from the Zuari river where your clients can go for boat rides to experience a slice of Goa’s hinterland that quietly exists.

The house, with a built up area of around 7,000 sq. feet, comprises an entrada (foyer), sala (living room), dining room, five bedrooms with en suite bathrooms (four on the ground floor and one on the first floor), lounge, library, fully equipped modern kitchen, utility area, two store rooms and accommodation for the support staff. Three of the bedrooms open into private balconies. It also has a balcao (balcony) and gallery in front and a courtyard in the rear. “I love the Balcao of old Portuguese home which is being fast obliterated by the onslaught of the concrete jungle. It resembles a porch and function as an outdoor living space. It suited the social pattern during the days of the yore in Goa where persons of lower strata were entertained outside the house and placed on a seat or step as per their social standing. Great place to have your morning cuppa and catch the breeze while watching the world to go by,” says Kuntil.

Arco Iris built on a high plinth, with its imposing



columns, high ceilings offers excellent year-round natural ventilation. The house, has been restored and renovated, true to its heritage and without compromising the modern day requirement for convenience and comfort. During the restoration process, all efforts have been made to preserve the original materials which have gone into the construction of the house by using them, at times, for alternate purposes. The end result is a house which reflects a judicious and tasteful blend of the modern and the traditional. The colours of the bedrooms have been picked keeping in mind the colours of the rainbow, and your clients can choose between the yellow, blue, green, violet, orange and indigo rooms.



“”

Tour Animator, Kachhpura village

We met Radha Mohan again in the Kachhpura village, right behind the Taj Mahal in Agra on the [Mughal Heritage Trail](#). We have seen him since 2005 and his excitement of showing guests around hasn't changed a bit. Once we ended our walk at Mehtab Bagh we decided to have a chit-chat with him. The sun was about to set and the Taj Mahal was looking beautiful from the Mehtab Bagh. Radha Mohan was relaxed.

“I was born in Kachhpura Village” tells Radha Mohan. “When I was in school we used to come here with our animals and while they grazed in the fields we would study.” So how did he become a guide for the Mughal Heritage Trail? Radha tells me that in 2005 there was an initiative called Crosscutting Agra Project (CAP), by [the Centre for the Urban and Regional excellence \(CURE\)](#). CURE was doing research in Radha Mohan's village with the objective to mobilize the low-income communities, particularly women and children to participate in the implementation of sanitation services and also promote livelihood, one of which was to develop a Mughal Heritage Trail around the cluster of lesser known monuments so to enhance tourism based livelihood opportunities. “Every day when they would come here they would see me and my friends with our animals lost in our books. They were so impressed that one day they called us and explained to us what the project was all about and how they needed local volunteers to run the walk. I was very excited since they promised to train us to speak English, coach us and develop our personality. Although most of us could read a little bit of English, we couldn't speak with confidence. After a few months of training, it was a proud moment for me when I conducted my first walk on 28th Sep 2005 for a large group which consisted mainly of foreigners” says Radha Mohan.

So What is the best part about this job? He smiles and says “Every day I get an opportunity to talk about my village, the place I grew up, talk about our culture, festivals. It's good to see that my education is helping me as well as my community to grow. We have even had clients celebrate Holi and Diwali with us and they loved the time they spent here. Now that I have my own email address, I am in touch with a lot of my foreign friends who keep writing to me from their country” says Radha Mohan. [Click here to read more](#)

A Day in The Life of Radha Mohan





Lifestyle



Best kept secrets of Old Jaipur

It's a walking tour which offers your clients a sneak peek into the best kept secrets of Old Jaipur. We have had very good feedback so far and during the recently concluded Great Indian Travel Bazaar, Lovleen Sagar from the Destination Knowledge Centre experienced it afresh to see if it has remained unique to explore the living traditions of the walled city of Jaipur. It's an early morning walk starting at 7.30 am! "The mornings in Old Jaipur are very special if you want to see the religious way of life of its residents," says Lovleen.

The walk starts at Sri Chaturbhuj and Roop Chaturbhuj temples, both really ancient, situated at Choti Chaur, the city square. "The temples are as old as the city. With their elevated location, they provide an excellent view of the surrounding market and residential areas. We had a surprise visit by the monkeys of this area, who were being fed by an old lady, as her good deed of the day! What a life, their breakfast consisted of grapes and bananas. My guide was very passionate and he spoke at length of how religion permeates people's way of living," says Lovleen. From here clients move onto seeing some beautiful Havelis albeit in poor condition. "We saw a beautiful restored Haveli owned by a welcoming family. It was a pleasant surprise. The lady of the house offered us tea and she spoke about her husband who has a great taste for traditional art and architecture of the city," says Lovleen. From here clients continue their quest and visit a private Tantra Temple with beautifully carved doors. This Shiva temple used to serve as a prominent seat for Tantric rituals; a style of religious ritual and meditation that arose in medieval India.

"The crowds we saw at the Shri Gopinath Ji Krishna Temple after the Tantra Temple was amazing. It is a popular and lively temple of Jaipur where we met the chief priest and had a firsthand experience of the Aarti ceremony and hymn singing," says Lovleen. Your clients are then taken to a local's home for a cup of tea and hot pakoras (traditional Indian snacks) and the tour ends here. "The tour came up to our expectations and was just as interesting. It is a great way to experience the religious life of local communities by visiting colourful temples, interacting with residents over tea and snacks at their home and discovering some of the best kept secrets of the walled city of Jaipur. Highly recommended," says Lovleen.

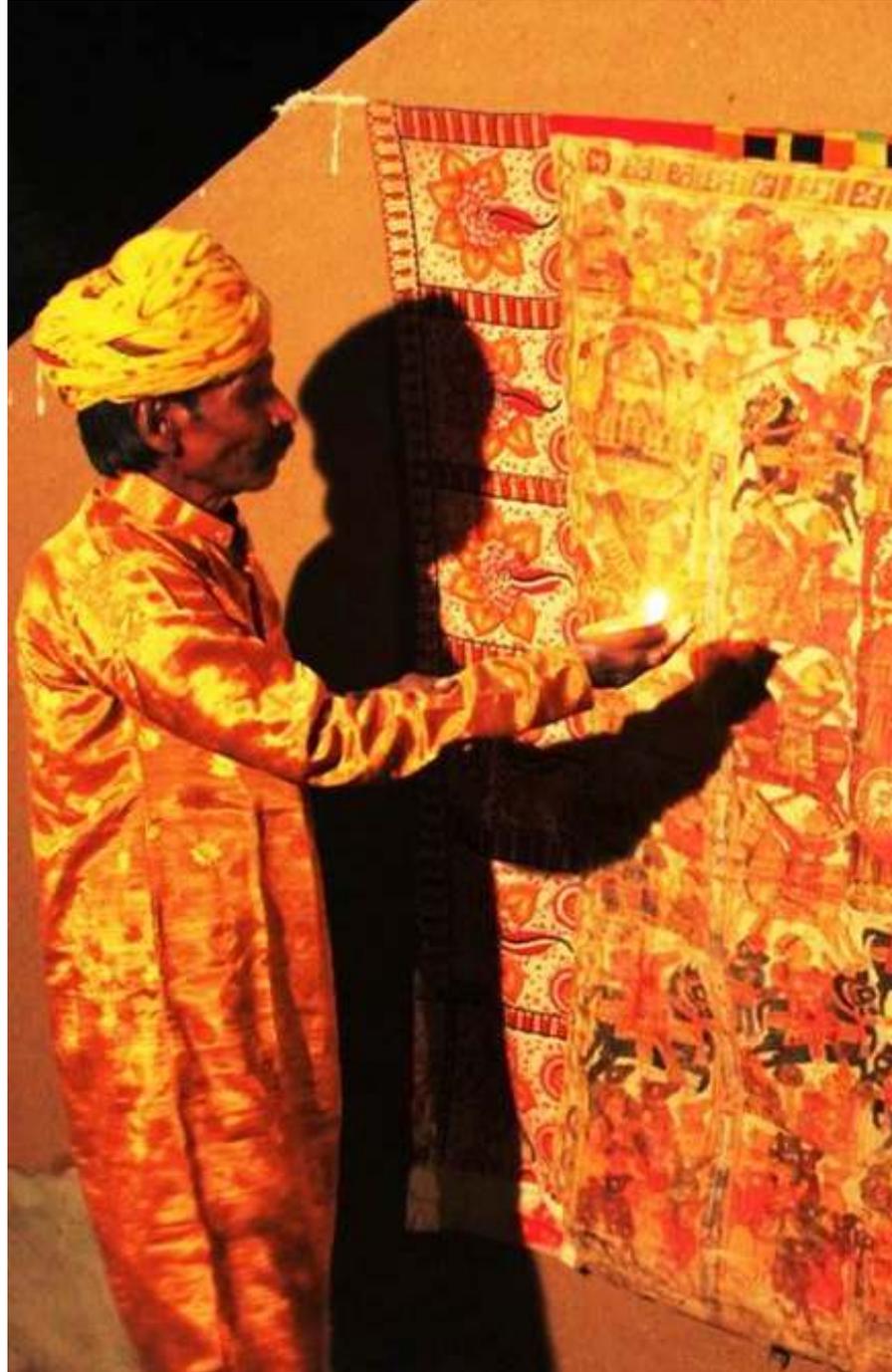




Pabuji ki Phad

Spotted By Sita

Pabuji ki Phad is an art form of Rajasthan which combines folk singing and dancing interspersed with interludes to interact with the audience in front of a scroll or a canvas known as Phad (pronounced Phar), that depicts the life and times of a folk deity called Pabuji. The Phad functions as a 'portable temple' and has miniature scenes depicting the life of Pabuji and his adventures painted and sewn together. Passed on from generation to generation, daily offerings are made to the Phad. As the Phad gets worn or torn or becomes thread bare, a religious ceremony is done to remove its divine power and is confined to the Ganges or Pushkar Lake. The Bhopas or Balladeers, who do the narrative of the heroics of Pabuji are from the Nayak community who are Sunni Muslims and consider themselves as Muslim Rajputs. The Bhopas are invited by villagers to perform in their localities during times of sickness and misfortune. The performance goes on throughout the night and ends only at dawn.





Chicken Sailana



Chef Rajey of [Sherbagh](#) in Ranthambore recommends the Chicken Sailana, a signature dish from the royal house of Sailana as a must try during your stay here. In royal circles, Sailana, which is on the Rajasthan-Gujarat border, has always had a reputation for its cuisine. The kitchen of Sherbagh draws on the recipes of North India's royal houses as well as rustic 'jungle cooking' over clay ovens. The dish is prepared using fresh produce from their organic vegetable and herb garden, they are always happy to provide cooking lessons for those guests who may wish to learn the intricacies of this particular dish or any of their favourite recipes.

Recipe available on request - [click here](#)

Top Chef Recommends





Change of Guard Ceremony at the President's House

Hello Friends,

It's a ceremony which offers the commoner a sneak peek into the corridors of power. The Change of Guard ceremony is held every Saturday in the forecourt of the vast official grounds of the President House in the imposing Raisina Hills and is open to the public. During my days as an airport representative I used to make my clients drive through the area while on our way from the airport to the hotel. They were totally impressed with the grand President's House, the Parliament building next door and the wide roads leading up to India gate. Some would even get down and walk for a short distance.

Last Saturday I was short of breath from running up the Raisina Hill. I could vaguely hear some announcements happening inside the gates of the President's House. Although I was there before time, we were only allowed to walk up to the gates sharp at eight. It takes about 5 minutes to reach to the top of the hill followed by the customary security screening. I was pleasantly surprised that it was not a tedious process. There were no stringent restrictions about what could be carried inside. I saw a group of foreigners with hand bags, mobiles and even photographers entering with their tripods. Fortunately I didn't miss much and it was only after everybody has settled into their seats that the Army Brass Band started to play.

The Change of Guard ceremony starts with sleek, muscled and well-groomed horses flanking both side of the gravel path performing in perfect unison to orders belted out by a baritone voice. The riders - President's Bodyguard (PBG) Regiment - were all over 6ft tall in their ceremonial regalia. The crisp white uniform and the coat of arms shimmered in the early morning sunshine. The brass band played beautifully and its playlist included patriotic Bollywood classics. Expect all the pomp that is customarily attached to such spectacles: flashing swords, lances, ear-piercing roll-calls, bugles and much stomping on the ground. The half an hour spectacle ends with a request to the audience to stand up for the National Anthem. Time seemed to have passed too quickly. Like me, the rest of the audiences hung around for some time clicking pictures before finally starting to disperse.

This ceremony provides the perfect start to the Delhi experience and is ideal for those of your clients staying

Destination Insider



at city centre hotels. They can watch the Change of Guard ceremony; head back to the hotel for breakfast and continue with the rest of their itinerary. For those of your clients who are keen to attend the ceremony but are not staying in city centre hotels do write to us and we will work it out for them in the best possible way.

IMPORTANT POINTERS:

- ▶ Timings change as per season. Current Summer Timings : 0800hrs-0830hrs (April till 14th Aug).
- ▶ The ceremony doesn't happen on public holidays.
- ▶ The entry to the ceremony is from Gate No. 2 near the Prime Minister's Office.
- ▶ The gates are closed after a crowd capacity of 200 is reached.
- ▶ Accompanying escort/guide recommended.
- ▶ There is no parking facility here. It is best to drop clients at the foot of the Raisina Hill and then park the car at the Central Secretariat Metro station or India Gate. The accompanying escort/guide can coordinate with the vehicle once the ceremony is over among others.
- ▶ One must carry a valid photo identification such as passport, driving license etc.
- ▶ Don't carry any remote control device like the one of your car locking system. They will not allow it inside. Carrying bottled water is fine.
- ▶ Mobile phones must be on silent mode.
- ▶ Entry free.
- ▶ Chairs provided to audience.
- ▶ Carry a sun hat in the warmer months as there is very little shade.

Photo Gallery of The Change of Guard Ceremony - [click here](#)

Cheers

Soumya Mukherji



Arco Iris

6 Things We Liked About

1. The Hosts - Bennita ("Beni"), Ganesh ("Gani") and their daughters Trusha and Trikaya ("T&T"), are your hosts at [Arco Iris](#), who reside on the premises. Fenni and Scooty, the two dogs are the latest addition. "Gani and Beni are extremely warm people who would make you feel immediately at home. Not to mention their lovely daughters. In that sense, it is ideal for clients travelling with children too. They drove me around, visited their favourite restaurants and bars. They also took me to Romeos house, the local baker to see bread being made," says Kuntil. They also do Art Exhibitions of local Goan Artists once in a while and if there is a local festival happening in the village, the villagers are bound to visit Arco Iris as a part of the celebrations. "And ask Beni to teach you a few Konkani words. Speak a word or two of the local language and you have just unlocked the heart of a Goan," says Kuntil.

2. The Location - Arco Iris is quietly located in Curtorim village, 7 kms from Margao in South Goa set amongst verdant fields and wooded areas on a sloping 1.5 acres of land. The front edge of the property overlooks a seasonal lake which supplements the water requirements of the surrounding paddy fields. "Curtorim is a really pretty village with its lakes and water bodies. Very friendly people too, with whom the hosts enjoy a very good rapport. Gani took me to the local bar every evening, where we had a great time chatting with the locals. The crowds on the beach were miles away," says Kuntil.

3. The House - "Loved the way the owners have restored the 200 year old Portuguese home. Nothing jars. It is a perfect blend of the traditional and the modern. The traditional Portuguese vibe with all modern amenities. You should hear from the hosts themselves, how difficult the restoration work was, over a couple of beers. I remember the part where the labours disappeared for quite some time since there was a festival and it was a race against time since the Goa monsoon was just around the corner," says Kuntil. The house, with a built up area of around 7,000 sq. feet, comprises of an entrada (foyer), sala (living room), dining room, five bedrooms with en suite bathrooms (four on the ground floor and one on the first floor), lounge, library, fully equipped modern kitchen, utility area, two store rooms and accommodation for the support staff. Three of the bedrooms open into private balconies. It also has a balcao (balcony) and gallery in front and a courtyard in the rear.



4. The Rooms - Arco Iris is built on a high plinth, with its imposing columns, high ceilings and offers excellent year-round natural ventilation. The colours of the bedrooms have been picked keeping in mind the colours of the rainbow and your clients can choose between yellow, blue, green, violet, orange and indigo rooms. "The rooms at Arco iris are very comfortable, spacious, airy and I love how Beni has done up the rooms. They also have some of the softest towels in the bathrooms that I have come across," says Kuntil.

5. In and around - "Arco Iris is a perfect place not to do anything and perhaps see the grass grow. But there are many interesting places in and around the property," says Kuntil. One can cycle down to the Rachol Cemetery crossing the Curtorim and Maina lakes. It is one of the oldest seminary in Asia. Go for walks around the pretty village, enjoy its peaceful and unhurried lifestyle or on take a boat ride on the Zuari River which is just a kilometer away to experience the hinterland of Goa that quietly exists. "If it is a Sunday, go for mass in the village church. People are relaxed and in their best Sunday finery. Practice some of the Konkani that you have just learnt from Beni and see them smile. Perfect Moments that you will treasure for the rest of your life.

6. Birding - "I thought Birding was boring and not for me. But after the short birding trip, my first, which Gani organised with an Ornithologist close by to Arco Iris, changed my mind. I had a super time with the birding expert and loved his 'birding for dummies' approach which made it very interesting," says Kuntil. Curtorim with its lakes and water bodies is also known for its birdlife. "From dummies like me to serious birders Gani can organise short birding trips to multiple day trips for your clients. Dinesh Kumble, one of India's very well-known nature and wildlife photographer was also staying at the Arco Iris while I was there. I realised why he would disappear early morning to get that one shot of a particular species of bird found in Curtorim," says Kuntil.



Festivals



Phyang Festival, 6- 7 July 2013, Ladakh

The Phyang festival gives you the chance to enjoy a monastic festival and make the most out of the carnival atmosphere, where the locals gather to meet friends and enjoy. The festival takes place in the central courtyard of the monastery where we witness early morning sacred ceremonies followed by traditional masked dances, where monks tell stories through dance accompanied by drums. The costumes are made from rich vibrant colours and the masks range from the comical to the intimidating. The highlight of the festival for viewing spectators and the devotees is the raising of the giant thangka (painting on silk with embroidery, usually depicting a Buddhist deity or some scene), only displayed once a year, which is hung at one side of the courtyard.

Phyang Festival itinerary - [click here](#)





Tourist Map of INDIA

Scale: 1:7,200,000 (1 Centimetre = 72 Kilometres)

Kilometres 400 300

Miles

LEGEND

- National Capital
- State Headquarters
- Other Town
- Places of Tourist Interest
- ✈ International Airport
- ✈ Domestic Airport
- 🌳 Wildlife Sanctuary / National Park
- International Boundary
- National Highway
- Major Road

SPOTTED BY SITA
Mandawa

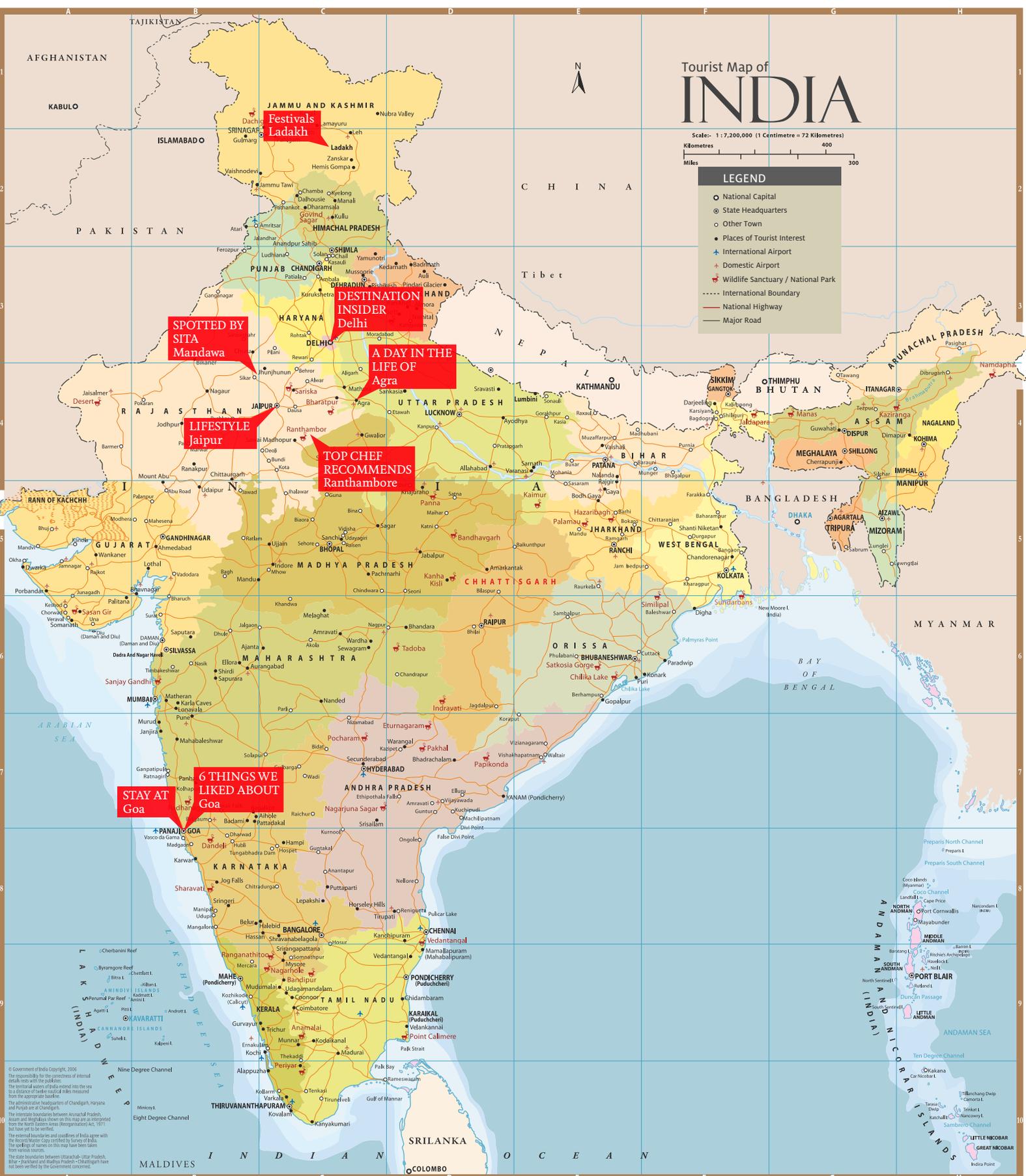
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Delhi

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Agra

TOP CHEF RECOMMENDS
Ranthambore

LIFESTYLE
Jaipur

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Goa



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The responsibility for the correctness of internal details rests with the publisher.
The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate baseline.
The administrative headquarters of Chandigarh, Haryana and Punjab are at Chandigarh.
The international boundaries between Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya shown on this map are as interpreted from the Border Security Forces (Registration) Act, 1971 but have yet to be verified.
The internal boundaries and coastline of India agree with the Revised Major Copy certified by Survey of India.
The spelling of names on this map have been taken from various sources.
The state boundaries between Uttar Pradesh - Bihar, Bihar - Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh - Chhattisgarh have not been verified by the Government.



Meet us at the Upcoming Trade Shows

If you wish to schedule a meeting, do e-mail us at info@sita.in

Trade Shows	Booth No.	Whom to Meet
ATM Dubai 6th -9th May	AS 6714	Philip Thomas
OTDYKH Leisure Fair Moscow 17th -20th September	Awaited	Ernest Dias & Deepak Sharma
TOP RESA Paris 24th -27th September	Awaited	Philip Thomas & Valerie Chalopet
FITA Mexico 26th -29th September	Trade Visitor	Neeraj Bhatt
IATO Convention India Awaited	Trade Visitor	Neeraj Bhatt & Philip Thomas
ABAV São Paulo 4th -8th September	Trade Visitor	Neeraj Bhatt
UITM Kiev 16th -18th October	Awaited	Deepak Sharma
TTG Rimini 17th -19th October	Trade Visitor	Matteo Pennacchi & Philip Thomas
WTM London 4th -7th November	Hall No S8, Booth No IN200	Neeraj Bhatt
USTOA Scottsdale 5th -7th December	Awaited	Neeraj Bhatt

Trade Shows

