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Art of Travel



Innovation & Marketing

From The CEO's Desk

Dear Partners,

We have recently been honoured with the CNBC AWAAZ Travel Award 2011 in the category of “Innovative Work in Marketing India as Travel and Tourism Destination” for the first time. The company’s Destination Knowledge Centre, which is the first of its kind in the travel industry, was granted the award for innovation. The CNBC AWAAZ Awards are based on an objective, robust and comprehensive study conducted by India’s leading research firm, The Neilson Company.

We are very proud to have been recognised for our innovative ways to promote the destination. The entire Destination Knowledge Centre team has worked effortlessly to provide new ways to experience travel, they have searched for deep insights into different traditions and cultures, enabling our customers authentic encounters with lasting impressions. Our belief is that the future of travel is based on experiences and our “Explore” product line effectively communicates this to all stakeholders.

Thank you for your support.

Come Explore With Us.

Happy Reading.

Regards

Dipak Deva





Stay At

The Riverwood Forest Retreat, Dooars



Planning a trip to Bhutan? We suggest you have a slice of the Dooars area, North Bengal in Eastern India enroute to Bhutan and stay at the Riverwood Forest Retreat. This beautiful resort is located near Chalsa, overlooking the Gorumara National Park and Murti River with great views of the Himalayas. Spread over 20 acres, it is an ideal base for exploring the natural attractions of Dooars, be it the wildlife sanctuaries, tea gardens or its rural life. The resort is also an ideal stopover point, before or after returning from Bhutan.

North Bengal is a region rich in flora and fauna. Dense forest envelope the regions around Darjeeling and Dooars. Buxa Tiger Reserve, wild life sanctuaries at Jaldapara, Chapramari, Neoravalley and Mahananda and the Gorumara National Park are some of the places that one can visit while at the Riverwood Forest Retreat.

Here's an itinerary designed by our Product and Procurement Team combining a stay at Riverwood Forest Retreat with your Bhutan trip - [Click here](#).





Rural Tourism Entrepreneur

A Day in The Life Of Sumit Vashisht

“Banjaar is one of the greenest valleys in the Western Himalayas and a fantastic place to enjoy a slice of unspoiled village life,” says Sumit Vashisht. He is visibly excited about his recent venture of the Village Walks, which he leads himself. Sumit’s day begins at 06:30 hrs, irrespective of which walk, with the sound of tinkling of bells worn by the domestic cattle in the village. Every morning a person is given the responsibility of taking the cattle of the village to graze in the meadows. Sumit comes out from his tent and asks his cook to send a cup of tea to his guests in their respective tents. Guests are given hot water to wash and get ready, after which they meet in the dinning tent at around 07:30 hrs, where a table for breakfast waits them. After breakfast the tents are wrapped, the kitchen equipment and the utensils, packed to be carried away by the porters.

Sumit leads his guests through the lanes of the village. The village temple, a marvel example of hill architecture, constructed of wood and stone, which is open for the visitors at times. The morning sun casts its light on the village houses and locals can be seen going to their fields. After capturing some of the glimpses of these hardworking mountain folks by means of photography, his guest walk to the next village. These Village Walks bring you close to nature and is a perfect exercise to get yourself rejuvenated. Here, nature plays with you, touches you and makes you her own baby and teaches you how to remain confident and fresh. Vast valleys, tranquility of the forests and soothing sounds of the wind, nourish your soul. You may chose to slow down for a while, find a place on a rock and close your eyes to listen to the sound of nature.

A pleasant walk of four to five hours, is what it takes to reach the next village. The team of porters and the cook is already there and have set up the camp for their guests. Lunch is ready; they are allotted their respective tents and then are welcome to the dining tent. Lunch is followed by a brief nap, after which it is time to visit to the village. Villagers are happy to see the guests. Children ask them to click photos; they are invited to have a cup of tea with them. Ladies are shy but are keen to interact.

By now Sumit has already sent a message about their arrival to the ‘Gram Pardhan’ - the village chief, elected by the villagers after every five years. After a round of the village, guests are taken to the community centre



where the villagers has already gathered. The villagers get together, sing folk songs and perform ‘Naati’ - a folk dance to entertain their guests. Tea is served with local snacks and then guests are given a chance to interact with their hosts. They ask many question about their life, profession, their simplicity and of course their culture, Sumit does the translation for this interactive session. Musicians arrive with their drums and trumpets; sing some more songs and the guests join in the dancing. The guests click some photographs to remember this interaction with the villagers. Sumit returns to the campsite with his guests by 18:30 hrs. Dinner is served at around 19:30 hrs. As per Sumit, the best part of the day is the chatting session he has with his guests, post dinner. “It gets really interesting , sometime we don’t even realize how late it is and that we should now go and sleep,” he says.

Sumit calls it a day at around 22:00 hrs, having checked that everything is in order for the next day.



Lifestyle



Laughter Yoga

Inner Jogging

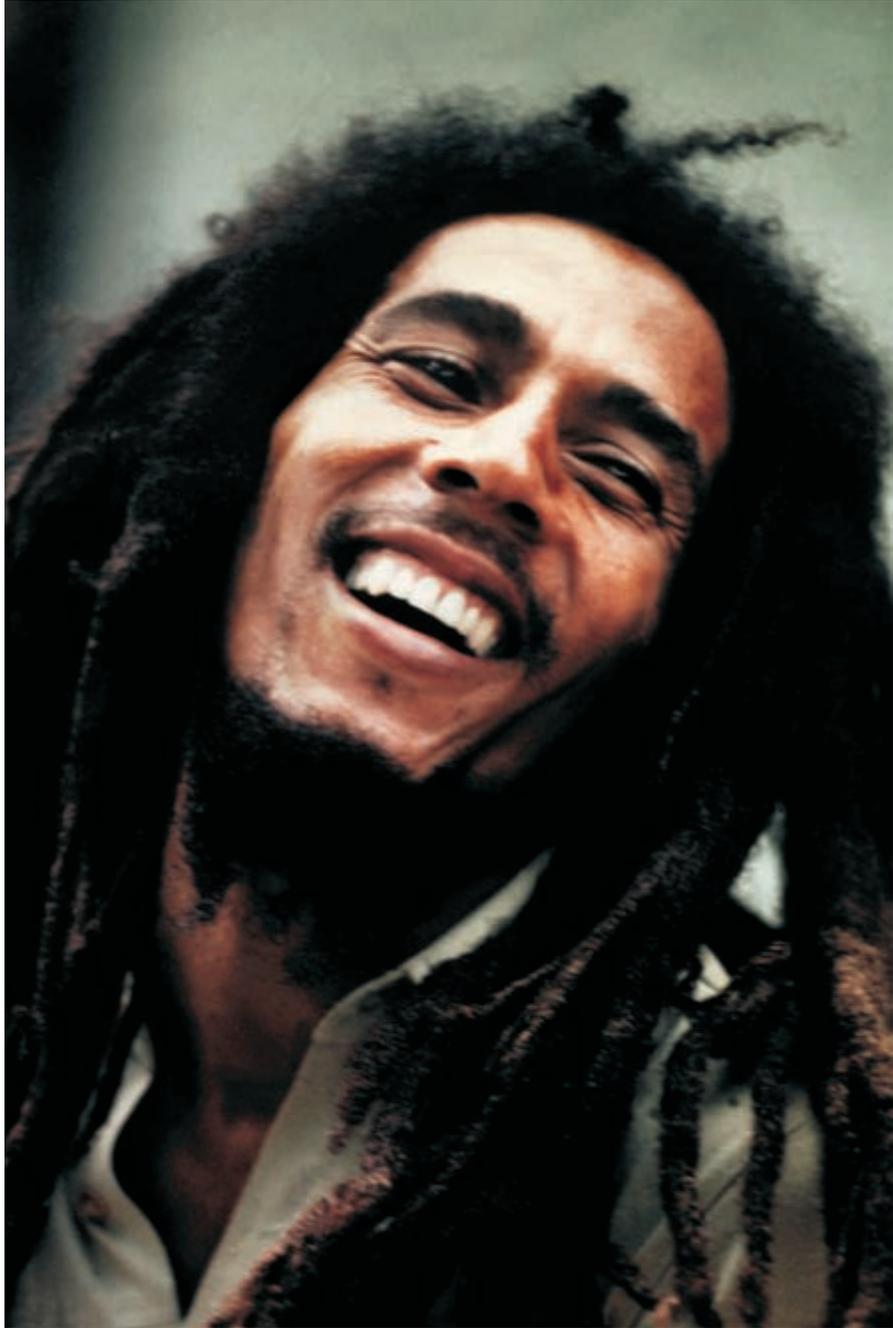
We all know that laughter is the best medicine, but this pure and simple act is fast fading away from our life.

You laugh best when you laugh like a small child. ..when you laugh for no reason. A healthy person should laugh at least 15 to 20 minutes daily. While laughing, our body produces positive hormones which diminish all negativity. There is no fixed time or limit to laugh, but you should laugh freely and continuously with short intervals for 10-15 minutes every day, in order to allow your body to resonate with your soul. Our lungs get enough oxygen, blood circulation becomes smoother and the most important thing is the positivity which is generated deep inside. My students tell me that Laughter Yoga has brought about a positive mental attitude in them, that it brings openness and generosity, enhances team spirit and a willingness to help others.

And when you love people you work for peace. So let's join the Laughter party. Shall we?

Jiten Kohi is a friend of Sita and a certified Laughter Yoga expert who is based in New Delhi. Should your clients want to know more about Laughter Yoga during their India holiday and want a session with him, we will be more than happy to organise it.

To know more - [Click here](#)



Reggae Artist Bob Marley was known for many things but somehow this photo captured the emotion behind those things, a happy man contented with his music. This iconic photo was taken by Kim Gotlieb during the 1975 and 1976 tour. Over two years of historic trips to Jamaica and exclusive meetings in Los Angeles, Kim took iconic photographs of Marley who would go on to define the genre and captivate a generation.



Spotted By Sita



Shri Meenakshi Temple

Sita spotted this statue at the Shri Meenakshi Temple in Madurai where pregnant women pour oil and apply butter and ghee (clarified butter) praying for a healthy pregnancy and safe delivery of the baby.

Also known as the Athens of the East, Madurai is the oldest city in Tamil Nadu with its recorded history dating back to 4th century BC. Planned in the shape of a lotus, modern Madurai is a burgeoning industrial centre, even though the vast stretches of lush paddy fields, dusty roads and crowded bazaars make it seem almost like an overgrown village. And everything in Madurai revolves around the Shri Meenakshi Temple built in the pre-Christian era. People pray here when they get engaged, return here with the first invitation card of their marriage, pray as a newly married couple, while expecting their child and return with the newborn. Some even get married here. With its ten towering gopurams (temple towers), Shri Meenakshi Temple is located within a high-walled enclosure, at the core of which are two sanctums for the presiding deities; Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Sundareshwara.

Take a tour of Shri Meenakshi Temple with our friend in Madurai who is also an accomplished Indian classical danseur and discover many more such fascinating aspects of one of India's finest examples of temple architecture.





Top Chef Recommends

Black Cod with Miso



Chef Soumya Goswami of The Oberoi, New Delhi recommends the Black Cod with Miso at Threesixty° as a must try during your stay there.

“One of Threesixty° signature dishes; the Black Cod with Miso is pure indulgence to one’s palette,” says Soumya. White Miso marinated Atlantic Black Cod is slow roasted and served with “Hajikame” (Japanese pickled ginger shoot) “The soft texture of the fish absorbs the flavours of the Japanese Miso paste, Mirin and aged Soya and offers a sublime taste; making it a perennial favourite since Threesixty° opened its doors to patrons in 2004,” he adds.

A glass of sochu or sake heightens the flavours and compels you try it again. The Black Cod with Miso at Threesixty° is priced at ₹ 2500 + taxes.





Vicky's Delhi

Destination Insider

I can't stop admiring this person. Vicky Roy. Vicky is an extraordinary story of an ordinary man from the streets of Delhi. A former rag picker and a homeless street child, Vicky went on to study photography sponsored by a local not-for-profit organisation which works with street children of Delhi. His work has been extensively exhibited in India, England and South Africa.

We at Sita have launched a special tour for your clients with Vicky Roy in the recently concluded World Travel Mart in London. We spend the day visiting some of Vicky's favourite places for photography and one need not be a hot shot photographer to be on this tour. Having called the streets his home, he is a master in capturing street life. Vicky will take your clients on this exciting walk through the streets of Paharganj and the New Delhi railway Station area. One can learn from Vicky first hand, during the walk, how he survived the streets of Delhi, the deals he struck to survive, get to see where he slept and where he hid to escape from abusive policemen. One also gets to know about the lure of the street life and the 'freedom' it promises, despite all odds. And why it's so difficult to give it up.

And Vicky continues to surprise us. He now tells us that he has roped in his former comrades from the streets of Delhi to start a Cycling Tour of Mehrauli, a 3 hour guided tour on bicycles, of one of the seven ancient cities of Delhi. It starts early morning at 07:00 hrs to beat the heat and the Delhi traffic.

Friends, here is a humble request from our side. Please do include it in your upcoming FAM trip itineraries to India, touching Delhi. Doesn't matter even if you don't have clients who are likely to take this tour. For Vicky and his friends need all your encouragement and constructive feedback. Can this cycling tour be combined with a photography tour of Mehrauli with Vicky? Anything else you can think of? Please feel free to discuss the possibilities when you go bicycling with Vicky and friends. They are raring to go and willing to learn. And you can help them do it even better.

Website - www.mehraulibycycle.com

To know more please email info@sita.in

Cheers

Kuntal Baruwa





Ramgarh Fresco

Non Touristy: The semi-arid Shekhawati region of Rajasthan popularly known as India's "open art gallery" is known worldwide for magnificent mansions, built by its rich merchants with beautiful fresco wall paintings, whose vibrant colours and exquisite details cover almost every square inch of available wall space. While destinations such as Mandawa and Nawalgarh of the Shekhawati has become touristy over the years, Ramgarh, which is a mere 60 minutes drive from the populist Mandawa, is a hidden gem which tourists rarely visit. Ramgarh almost resembles an abandoned movie set of a Bollywood period film and [Ramgarh Frescos](#) is an ideal base for your clients to explore this quaint little town and admire the beautiful frescos without the press and the clamour.

Private Walks: We loved going out on the Private Walks designed by Sanjay and Siddharth Khandelwal, the owners of Ramgarh Frescos. While Sanjay is an audio guide expert, Siddharth is a professional photographer. Together they have lovingly restored a 100 year beautifully painted, 110 year mansion which they run as a hotel. These walks are a fantastic insight, not only to some of the region's most beautiful frescos but also a peek into the lifestyles that once existed in these grand mansions, which has a unique architectural style that evolves around the courtyards to ensure safety and privacy of the women folk and protection from the heat of the long and harsh summers.

Insider access: It was great to know and see that Sanjay and Siddharth Khandelwal despite not being from Ramgarh share a very cordial relationship with the locals. Courtesy their local network, your clients can have access to locked up mansions and beautifully painted cenotaphs which are otherwise off limits for those making day trips or visiting Ramgarh enroute. We were shown a mansion that once served the purpose of a Gentleman's Club and a Cenotaph of a prominent merchant with exquisite frescos. Often away from home on business, the merchants of Shekhawati built massive mansions with colourful frescoes, largely as a gesture to the women and children they left behind. The women rarely left the confines of their mansions. A retinue of servants did all errands. Door-to-door salesmen would bring their wares to the mansions. Only the tiniest of windows gave the women folk a view of the outside world and the lavish decoration of their mansions was meant to compensate for the social seclusion and also for the dull palette of the arid environment.

6 Things We Liked About



Photography: Ramgarh Frescos is the only hotel in the entire Shekhawati region with a in-house professional photographer and we love it, for Ramgarh is a photographer's delight. Apart from the beautiful fresco wall paintings, Ramgarh has some of the most bizarre paintings depicting Victorian and Edwardian England. Our favourite image is that of an English couple in a hot-air balloon with a man vigorously blowing into the balloon through a pipe. The comic naivety of the wall paintings is understandable; as the local artists who portrayed these had never seen Europeans and had depended on the description given by their patrons of their British bosses and their peculiar pastime. The earliest fresco date back to 1750; the last was completed in the 1930s.

100-Gram-Laddus: Laddus are a variety of Indian sweet made out of flour, ghee (clarified butter) and a variety of other ingredients rolled into soft balls. We loved the local variety of Ramgarh which Sanjay and Siddharth serve for dessert at the Ramgarh Frescos. Each weigh 100 gram, melt into your mouth and are a sinful delight.

Handmade furniture: Collecting is not the same as shopping. It has a greater affinity with hunting. Collectors are not merely possessors; they are themselves possessed by the search and at last by the object of their affection. And if your clients fancy handmade furniture, Ramgarh is the hub where one can browse through replicas and also antique furniture that once adorned the magnificent mansions to be delivered right to your clients' doorsteps.



Festivals



Pongal Festival, Harvest Festival of South India 14th January 2012

Pongal festivities begin days before the actual festival; new clothes are bought and the house is cleaned to perfection. The actual festival generally falls on 14th January. At dawn on this very day, families everywhere gather around a new earthen pot. As the pot of milk boils over, signifying prosperity, a shout of "Pongalo Pongal" fills the air. A dish called pongal is cooked with the new grain and jaggery. In fact, as friends and relatives greet each other on this day, they ask, "Ponga pane pongitha?" or did the pongal boil over? The excitement of an overflowing pot is considered to be a sign of a prosperous future. The third day after Pongal, is devoted to the worship of cattle.

Pongal occurs in one of the most beautiful months in Tamil Nadu. People wake up early in the morning and start the day with a song especially dedicated to the festival.

Every temple and almost every household follows this tradition.

Celebrate Pongal with Sita - [Click Here](#)

Most of the Festival dates are decided by Solar / Lunar calendars practiced in India, due to which the dates are subject to change.

You may plan some special departure based on these festivals. For any assistance please contact us.



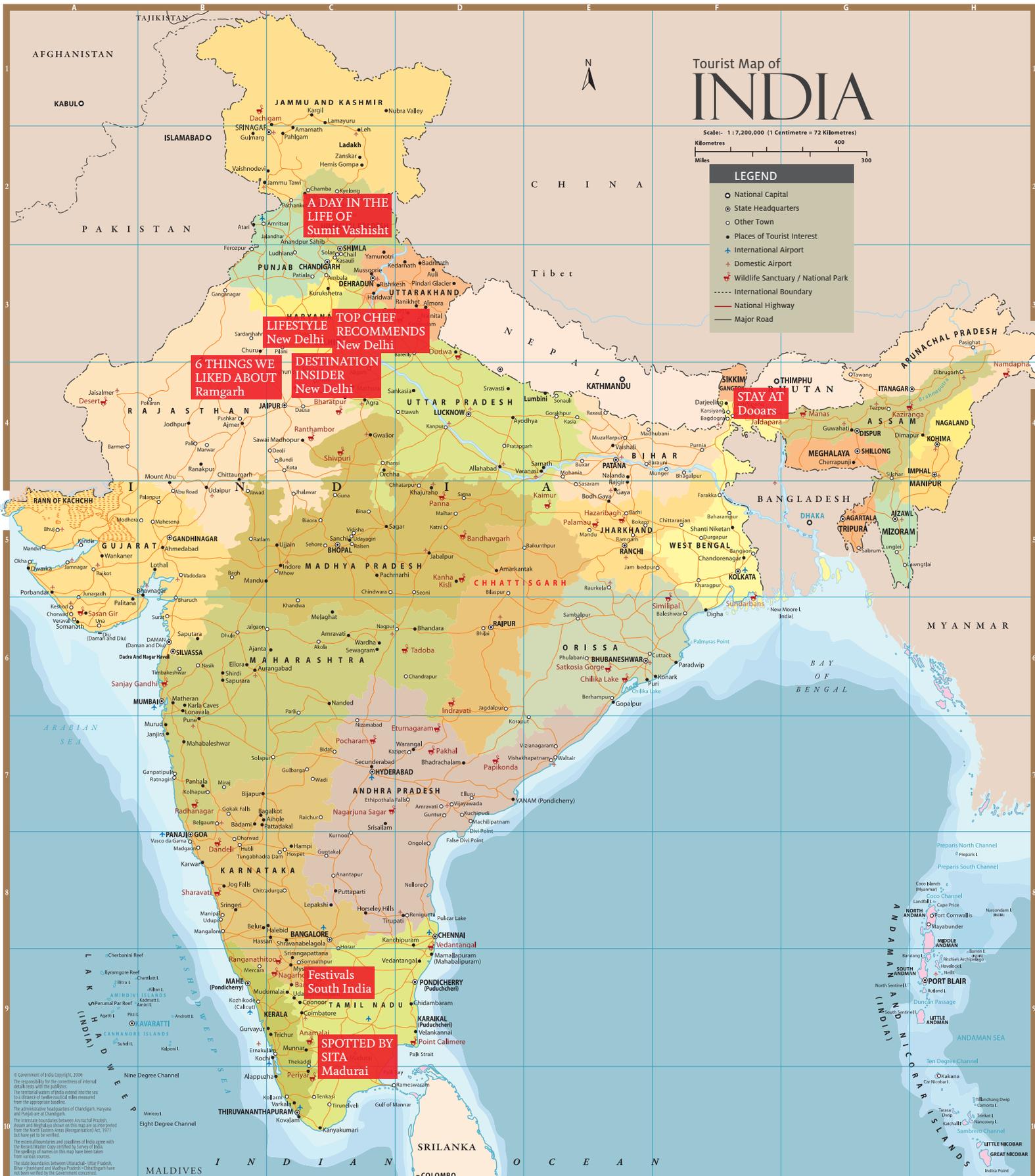


Tourist Map of INDIA

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

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



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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 Force (BSSF) Report, 1971 and have yet to be verified.
 The external 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.



Trade Shows



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
USTOA Florida 11th -13th December	Trade visitor	Neeraj Bhatt





Impression



A Note to Thank You

From: Carol Selva Rajah
Sent: Wednesday, November 02, 2011 5:32 PM
To: Lobo, Rosette

Subject: thank you for a great trip

Dear Rosette and Ernest,

A note to thank you for the organization and the lovely places you sent us to, Cida de Goa is a great hotel and the views we had were spectacular

I am very sorry I did not get to meet Ernest but please share this email with him. Vincent is a wonderful tour guide and his knowledge is prolific. He knows so much about Goa and was a great help to all of us.

The arrangements and organisation by Rosette and Vincent and Anoop in Kerala were so well organised everything worked like clockwork.

I also appreciated the visits to the Spice village and to the home of Ruben and his charming wife. We got some good shots of food and had a lovely lunch as well I think you will be pleased with some of the events we did and of the footage we shot. It will take a bit of time to get this all completed and edited to retain the good parts with voice overs as well.

I am very appreciative of all your efforts and know that you will be pleased with the shoot.

Bernie was busy working for at least 10 hours each day and had to charge batteries and charge them for at least 4 hours more each night so he was really at it for most of the trip. He sounded quite tired but I know he is trying to get as much done before the line producer can look at the work as he had to use 3 to 4 cameras during the shoot..

Once again, my grateful thanks for a wonderful piece of organisation and handling of our accommodation and food and transport..

Regards

Carol Selva Rajah
Food Writer/Cookbook Author/Chef

