

AMORE

LIFE & LEISURE

Monsoon Issue 2025

SHOWER POWER

**SPLASH
INTO
STYLISH
SPACES**

CRUISE CONTROL

**SECRETS
FROM A
SEASONED
SAILOR**

IT'S POURING RECIPES!

CREAMY GELATO

**HOT BAKED
APPLES**

**FESTIVE MEXICAN
FLAVOURS**

MOVE LIKE A CELEB

**MEET
YASMIN
KARACHIWALA
FITNESS GURU
TO THE STARS**



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AMANDA JOY PURAVANKARA
Executive Director
Provident Housing Limited

Something rather simple caught my eye the other day. It was a child's drawing, taped somewhat precariously to a newly painted wall in one of our show homes. A lopsided sun, stick figures holding hands, and a riot of colourful scribbles. It struck me with a gentle force. Because in that moment, surrounded by the pristine finishes and carefully curated furniture, that little piece of artwork felt like the most important element in the entire space. It whispered a truth we at Puravankara hold dear: four walls, however well-crafted, do not a family and a home make.

We pour our expertise and passion into the very fabric of the buildings we create. We consider the flow of light, the quality of materials, the thoughtful design that anticipates your needs. But ultimately, it is you who breathes life into these spaces. It is the accumulation of shared moments, the echoes of laughter, the quiet comfort of belonging that transforms bricks and mortar into a sanctuary.

Don't underestimate the power of personalisation. Let your home reflect your unique story, your passions, and the personalities of those who dwell within it. Hang the artwork your children create, display the souvenirs from your travels, arrange your books in a way that feels authentically you. These are the threads that connect the physical structure to the emotional heart.

We hope that within the homes we build, you find not just shelter, but a true sense of belonging, a place where love flourishes and life is lived fully.

Amanda Joy

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1992



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KYOMI Boutique Opening Soon At MALL OF ASIA Bengaluru

Monsoon Issue 2025

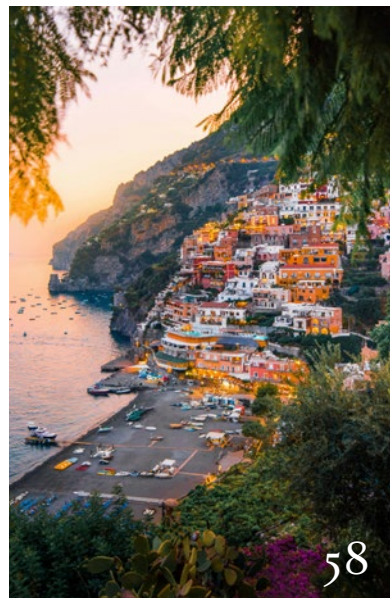
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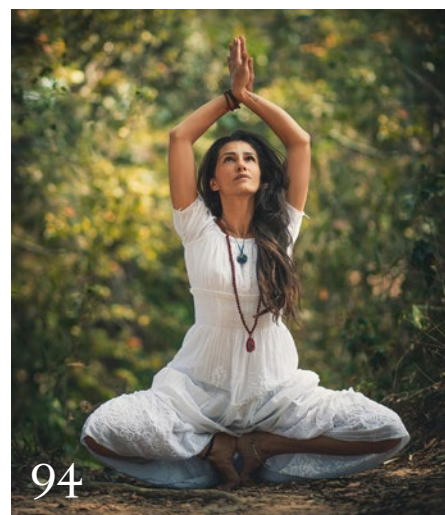
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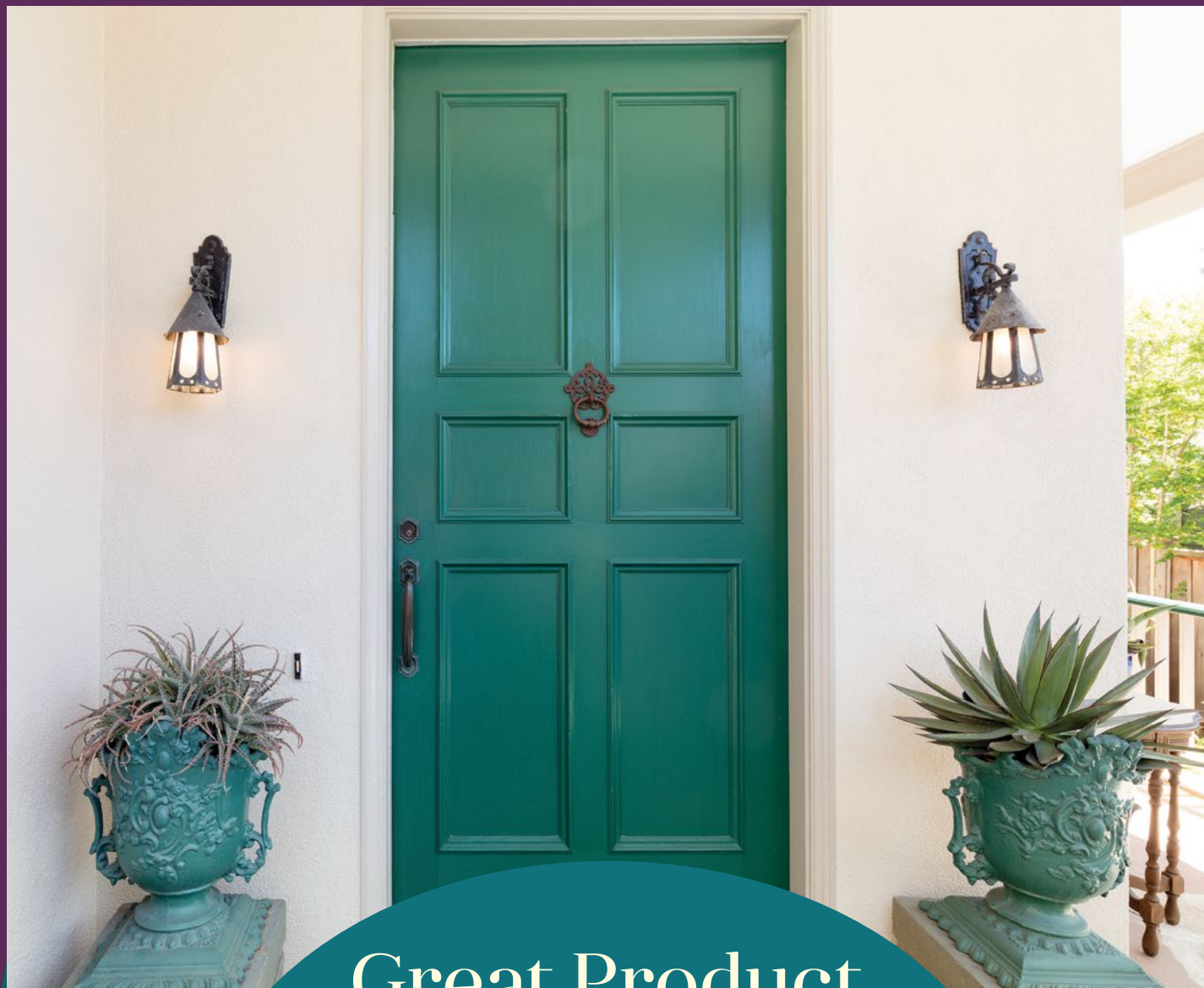
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Great Product is Built When You Don't Depend on others

Fully Finished Door Systems from
Puravankara's Own Manufacturing Unit

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Construction



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**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Amanda Joy Puravankara

CEO & PUBLISHER

Abhishek Kapoor

MANAGING EDITOR

Abhinav Kanchan

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Shubhra Krishan

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Chetna Srinivasan

EDITORIAL TEAM

Avinash Bhat, Nikunj Joshi,
Rohit Biswas

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Shirin Khajuria, Rachna Virdi,
Shyam Rao, Chetna Srinivasan

DESIGN DIRECTOR

Vijay Rana

ASSOCIATE DESIGNER

Amit Singh

ADVERTISING CONSULTANT

Nikunj Joshi
nikunj.j@puravankara.com
+91 9901124273

**FOR FEEDBACK / QUERIES
& SUGGESTIONS**

amore@puravankara.com

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Please Recycle This Paper

editor's note



Dear Readers,

As the monsoon rain softly taps against windows, it feels like the perfect time to embrace the season in all its beauty. This issue of Amore brings that very essence to life—from the fresh, rejuvenating spirit of monsoon home decor to the heartwarming charm of a photographer turned artist.

In our special section dedicated to monsoon home decor, we explore how to transform your living space into a cosy, rain-kissed retreat. Think soft lighting, soothing hues, and textures that invite warmth, no matter how heavy the downpour outside.

For those who love the joy of a good read, we've included an evocative book extract courtesy Penguin Random House that's bound to stir something within you. It's the kind of passage that you'll want to read with a cup of chai in hand, looking out at the rain.

And of course, no celebration of the season would be complete without a bit of colour and joy! In our culinary feature, we'll show you how to create a vibrant Mexican spread for your next gathering. It's the perfect way to add a splash of warmth and zest to your rainy-day plans.

This issue is a celebration of the rain—the way it refreshes, renews, and invites us to savour the simple pleasures. May it inspire you to embrace the season with open arms and create a home that reflects the beauty and joy of this magical time.

Shubhra



Samuel Shetty

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The A List

TRENDING RIGHT NOW

TIM HORTON BOBA

Tim Hortons India launches Popping Boba in bold Indian flavours like Spicy Jamun, Mosambi Litchi, and Aam Panna.



PANCA HUNG CURD STRAINER BOX

A multifunctional 1100-ml yogurt filter designed for making hung curd and Greek yogurt at home.

BOTTEGA VENETA

Bottega Veneta's latest luxury collection is crafted from Intrecciato leather in elegant styles.



MYBAGEECHA TABLETOP DECORATION

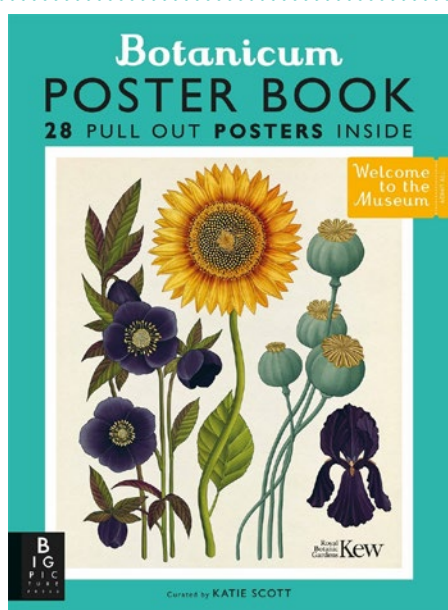
This eco-friendly glass with natural flowers is a beautiful conversation-starter.





TRUKE BUDS MEGA 9 WITH SPATIAL AUDIO AND ENC

Truke's Buds Mega 9 Series features 24-bit Spatial Audio, 13mm Titanium Drivers, and Environmental Noise Cancellation (ENC), housed in a stylish leather-metal case.



BOTANICUM POSTER BOOK

This large-format poster book lets you decorate your walls with images from Katie Scott's Botanicum, featuring plant life of all kinds, from right around the world.



CONVERSE X NARUTO SHIPPUDEN COLLABORATION

Converse collaborates with Naruto Shippuden, featuring Chuck Taylor All Star sneakers with designs based on Naruto, Sasuke, Anbu Kakashi, Gaara, and Itachi, blending anime culture with classic footwear.



DANCING GARDEN LIGHTS

Homehop Solar Lights for garden pathways feature flickering flames for a dancing effect. The LED lamp is waterproof.





ENGLISH VILLAMENTS NEWTON WOULD FALL FOR

Your gateway to a charming English life, with manicured gardens and cobbled pathways, is here. Take a dip in the serene pool, work up a sweat on the many play courts or gather for riveting performances at the amphitheatre. Feel yourself transported to Manchester's rich heritage, only at **Provident Deansgate**.



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Play Courts

Swimming Pool

Amphitheatre

Artistic impression

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THE BEST THINGS ANYBODY SAID ABOUT... RAIN

**“When it rains,
look for rainbows.
When it’s dark,
look for stars.”**


– Oscar Wilde

**“Without the
rain, there would
be no rainbow.”**

– Gilbert K. Chesterton

**“The rain had been falling
for days, relentless and
soft, and everything had
become soft, too.”**

– Arundhati Roy

A close-up, low-angle shot of a vibrant red umbrella. The umbrella is open, and its ribs are visible, creating a geometric pattern. The fabric of the umbrella is wet and glistening with raindrops. The background is a dark, wet pavement with visible ripples and reflections from the rain. The overall mood is atmospheric and evocative of a rainy day.

**“Let the rain kiss you.
Let the rain beat upon
your head with silver
liquid drops. Let the
rain sing you a lullaby.”**

- Langston Hughes

**“Life isn’t about
waiting for the
storm to pass. It’s
about learning to
dance in the rain.”**

- Unknown

**“The sound of
rain needs no
translation.”**

- Alan Watts

**“Every time it rains, it
pours. But remember:
the sun always shines
after the rain.”**

- James Brown

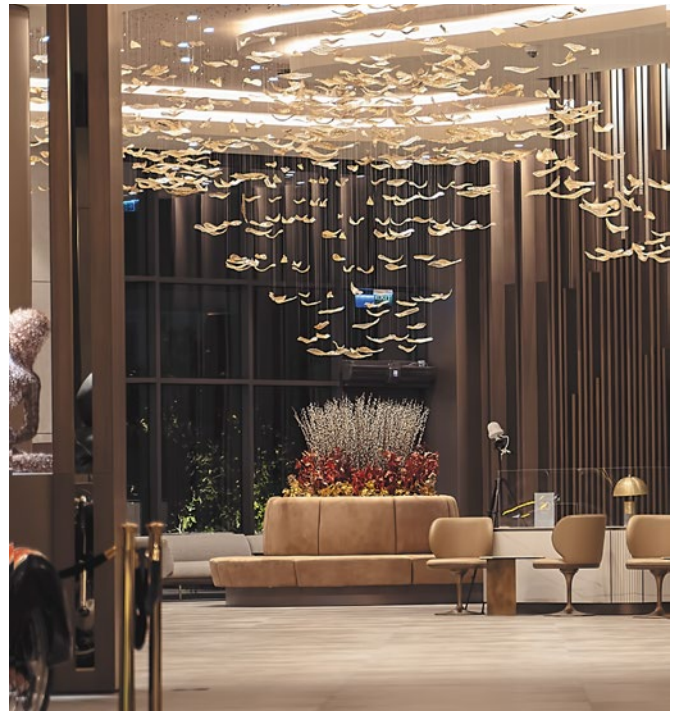
FROM PARIS TO SANTORINI, THE WORLD INSPIRES EVERY CORNER OF THIS LANDMARK ADDRESS IN BENGALURU'S HEART. GLOBETROTTERS, THIS IS YOUR SIGNATURE ADDRESS.

YOU LOVE EXPLORING THE WORLD. SO WE BROUGHT IT TO LALBAGH ROAD.

Purva Orient Grand is a tribute to the modern Indian's global spirit. Located in the heart of Bengaluru, this iconic address elegantly weaves Parisian artistry, English charm & Grecian tranquility into one extraordinary home. No wonder it's part of our WorldHome Collection that features acclaimed global designers, intuitive technology & a conscious approach to sustainable living. Step inside. Embrace the world.



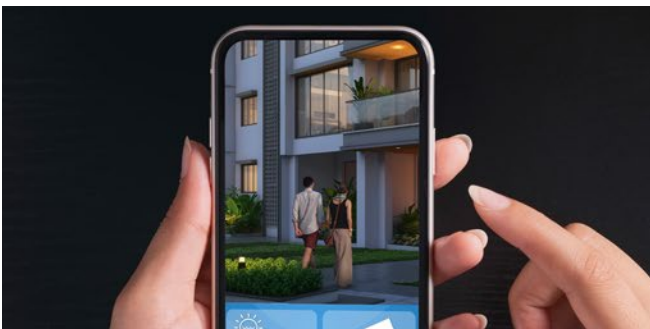
Begin with the **Welcome Stairway**, inspired by Christian Louboutin's iconic heels - an entrance that celebrates your partner's grace and your shared sense of style. Unwind at **The Clubhouse**, designed by Andy Fisher, the mind behind Changi Airport's architectural marvels. At sunset, your **sundeck balcony** transforms into your personal Santorini, framing each dusk like a painting.



Feel at home at **The Rose & Cypress**, a tavern-style retreat echoing the camaraderie of an English pub, and later descend into **The Vault**, where the oak barrel flooring and warm lighting summon the spirit of Scottish conversations and aged indulgence.



Every residence is without shared walls - because your privacy deserves Swiss standards. And with **BluNex Technology**, you can check on your Bangalore home from your penthouse in Seattle. Outside your window? The green embrace of **Lalbagh and Cubbon Park**, right in the city's soul.



PURVA ORIENT GRAND

THE WORLDHOME COLLECTION

LALBAGH ROAD


This is where the world's finest meet Bengaluru's rarest. Celebrate the **#GlobetrottersHomecoming**.



AMORE



IS CAST IRON COOKWARE A HEALTHY OPTION?

 *Priya, Bengaluru*

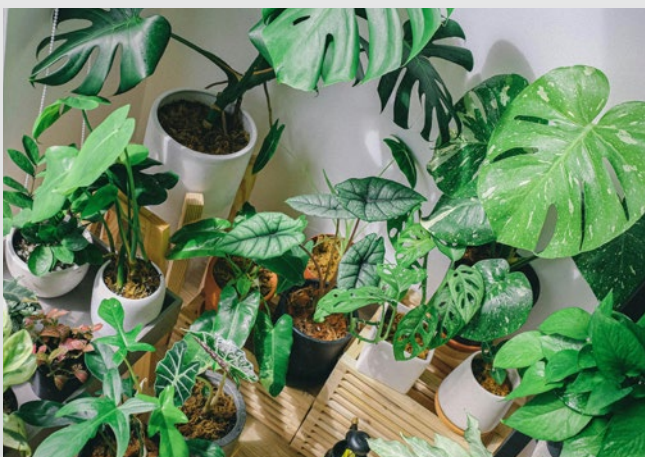
Yes, cast iron cookware is a fantastic healthy option. It's made from natural materials, free of toxic chemicals like PTFE, PFOA, and lead that you'll often find in non-stick pans. Plus, cast iron is known for its durability and even heat distribution, ensuring your cooking is not only healthy but also efficient. It can even add a little iron to your food, which is a bonus! Just remember, cast iron needs a little TLC—season it regularly and avoid using harsh detergents to keep it in top condition. And, always use a wooden or silicone spatula to preserve that seasoned surface!



WHAT'S THE BEST KIND OF OVERHEAD LIGHT FOR A DINING TABLE?

 *Vineet, Kolkata*

For a dining table, you want a light that's both functional and fabulous. A pendant or chandelier is perfect—it gives focused light over the table and adds an elegant vibe. Hang it 28-34 inches above the table for that sweet spot. Got a big table? Go big with a larger fixture or multiple pendants. Bonus: Choose dimmable lights for mood lighting that can match your dinner party or Netflix and chill vibes. Minimalist design for a modern look, or a vintage chandelier with warm bulbs for that cozy, traditional feel.



I WANT TO ADD SOME GREENERY TO MY HOME BUT I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT MAINTAINING PLANTS. ANY LOW-MAINTENANCE INDOOR PLANTS THAT THRIVE IN INDIAN CONDITIONS?

 *Mihika, Bengaluru*

Good news—there are several hardy plants that thrive with little attention. Snake plants (Mother-in-Law's Tongue) are practically unkillable and great for air purification. ZZ plants tolerate neglect like pros, and Pothos (Money Plant) is easy to grow in any corner of your home. Spider plants also do well with minimal care. Just check their light and watering needs, but these plants are all perfect for green thumbs (or lack thereof) in Indian homes!

WHAT IS THE IDEAL THREAD COUNT FOR BED LINEN, AND DOES IT REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

📍 *Kavita, Hyderabad*

For most people, a thread count between 200 and 400 is perfect for comfort and durability. Higher thread counts (800 or 1000) might feel softer, but they don't always mean better quality—sometimes, they make the fabric less breathable. Cotton, especially Egyptian or Pima, is your best bet for softness and breathability. Remember, feel the fabric. It should be soft and durable, not just smooth and silky.



Got a burning home decor dilemma or a kitchen conundrum you need advice on? Send your queries to [<amore@puravankara.com>](mailto:amore@puravankara.com) with your name and city, and you might see your question featured in the next issue of Ask Amore!



I'M CONFUSED ABOUT USING STRIPES, CHECKS, AND FLORALS TOGETHER IN UPHOLSTERY. WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE?

📍 *Revathi, Chennai*

Stripes, checks, and florals can absolutely work together—just be mindful of balance! Start with a dominant pattern (like florals) and use stripes or checks as accents. For example, pair a floral sofa with striped cushions in neutral tones to keep things in check (pun intended). Keep the number of patterns limited so they don't start a war in the room. And most importantly, stick to a cohesive colour palette that lets the patterns complement, not clash.



WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO STORE FRESH HERBS? MINE WILT WITHIN A DAY.

📍 *Bhumika, Delhi*

Treat your herbs like the delicate little flowers they are! For leafy herbs (like basil, cilantro, and parsley), trim the stems and place them in a glass of water, covering the leaves with a loose plastic bag. Store them on the counter (away from sunlight) for up to a week. For hardier herbs (like rosemary and thyme), wrap them in a damp paper towel and store in the fridge. Alternatively, freeze herbs in ice cube trays with water or oil for long-term storage—no more wilting, promise!

an ode to Linen

Aeka is a planet- positive brand that consists of linen sarees and separates. The endeavour at Aeka was to empower the wearer to lend her personality and style to the garment.

We work with breathable fabrics and relaxed silhouettes and believe in slow fashion and living.



aeka

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TAKE TIME TO NURTURE THE MOST IMPORTANT
PERSON IN YOUR LIFE—YOU!



INSPIRATION BOARD

Because you are what you read, watch and think

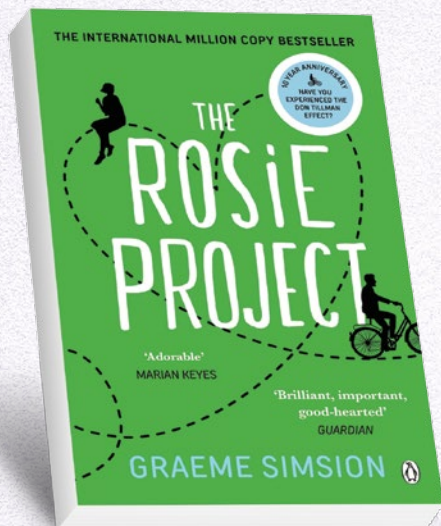


BOOKS THAT DEFY THE ORDINARY

“THE VEGETARIAN”

by Han Kang (South Korea)

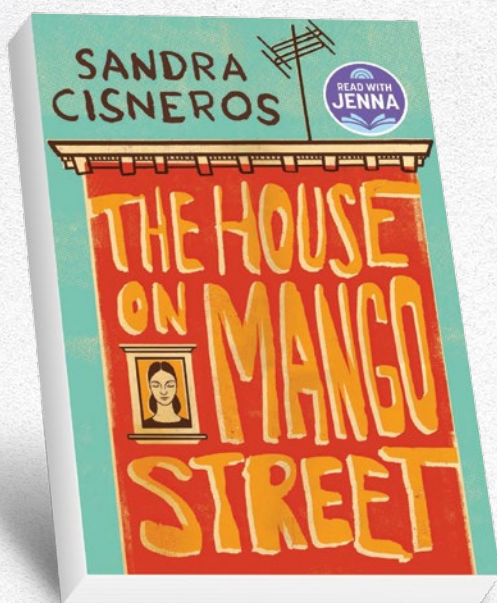
A Booker Prize-winning novella that delves into the unsettling psychological transformation of a woman who decides to become a vegetarian, challenging societal norms and exploring themes of rebellion and identity. Its intense and lyrical prose leaves a lasting impact.



“THE ROSIE PROJECT”

by Graeme Simsion (Australia)

A charming and humorous novel about a genetics professor with Asperger's syndrome who devises a scientific method to find a wife. His logical approach to romance leads to unexpected and delightful complications.



“THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET”

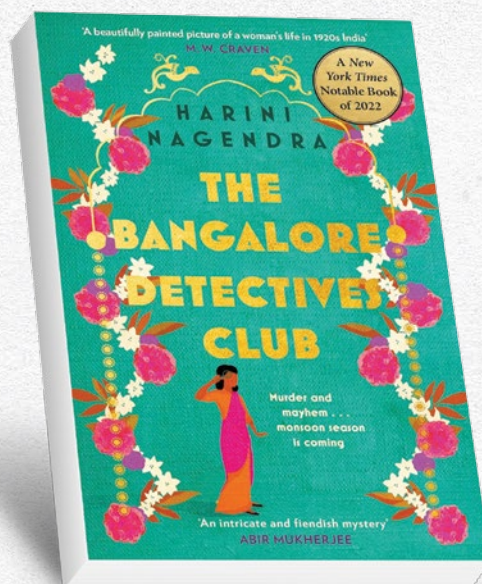
by Sandra Cisneros (USA)

A collection of vignettes told through the eyes of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, capturing the universal experiences of adolescence, identity, and the search for belonging with poignant simplicity.

“THE BANGALORE DETECTIVES CLUB”

by Harini Nagendra (India, 2022)

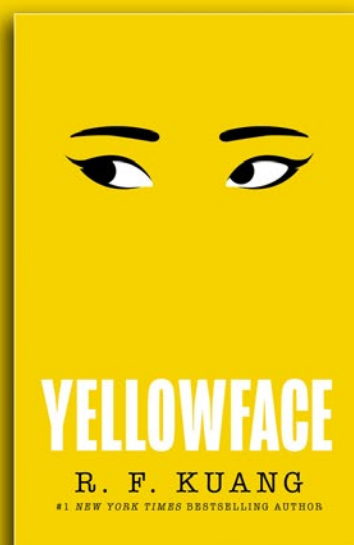
Set in 1920s Bangalore, this charming murder mystery introduces Kaveri Murthy, a sharp-witted young woman who stumbles upon a murder at a party. With her keen observational skills and a supportive doctor husband, she embarks on a journey to unravel the truth in a society grappling with tradition and modernity.



“YELLOWFACE”

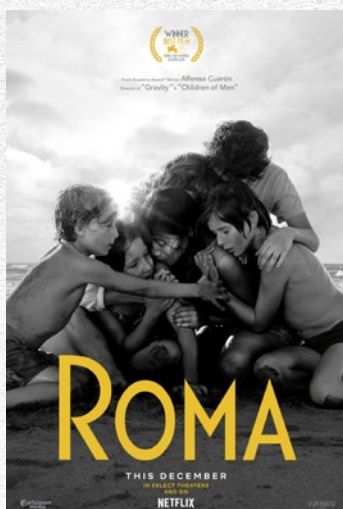
by R.F. Kuang

This sharp and provocative novel explores themes of cultural appropriation, ambition, and the complexities of identity in the publishing world. After the death of a more successful Chinese-American author, a struggling white writer publishes her deceased friend's manuscript as her own, leading to both acclaim and a dangerous web of deceit.





FILMS THAT PROVOKE AND INSPIRE



“ROMA” (Mexico, 2018)

Alfonso Cuarón's Oscar-winning masterpiece is a visually stunning and deeply personal story set in 1970s Mexico City, following the life of a live-in housekeeper of a middle-class family. It's a poignant exploration of memory, class, and human connection. Available on Netflix.



“THE HANDMAIDEN” (South Korea, 2016)

Park Chan-wook's visually opulent and suspenseful psychological thriller set in 1930s Korea under Japanese rule. It involves a complex web of deception, eroticism, and unexpected twists between a Korean pickpocket hired as a handmaiden and a Japanese heiress. Available on Amazon Prime Video.



“SPIRITED AWAY” (Japan, 2001)

A visually stunning and imaginative animated film by Hayao Miyazaki that tells the story of a young girl who enters a world of spirits. It explores themes of courage, identity, and the importance of inner strength. Available on Amazon Prime Video. Available on HBO Max.



“CHEF” (USA, 2014)

A feel-good movie about a renowned chef who rediscovers his passion for cooking (and his connection with his son) after losing his restaurant job and starting a food truck. It's a lighthearted story about following your dreams, the joy of food, and family. Available on Netflix.



“CAPERNAUM” (Lebanon, 2018)

A powerful and moving film that tells the story of a neglected child living in the slums of Beirut who sues his parents for the “crime” of bringing him into the world. A raw and unflinching look at poverty and resilience.

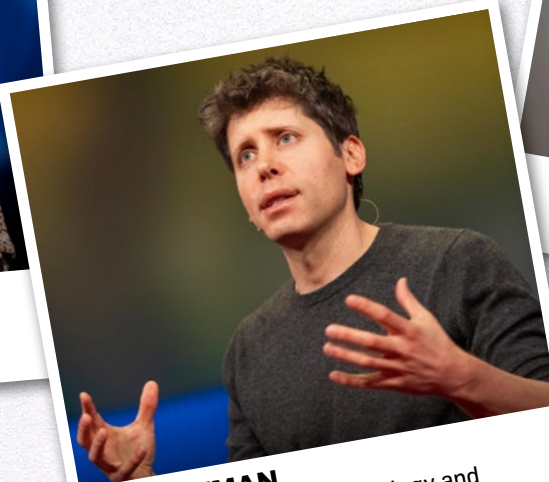


THOUGHT-PROVOKING TALKS

Watch these TED & TEDX gems on YouTube



ANGELA DUCKWORTH
"Grit: The power of passion and perseverance."



SAM ALTMAN
Talks on the future of technology and artificial intelligence.



HELEN FISHER
"Why we love, why we cheat."



SIMON SINEK
"How great leaders inspire action."



TIM URBAN
"Inside the mind of a master procrastinator."



FEI-FEI LI
Talks on human-centered artificial intelligence.



ESTHER PEREL
Talks on modern relationships.




PRIYA KUMAR
"The Science of Achieving Anything."



SCROLL TO SANCTUARY

Home Décor Inspiration on Instagram

@myscandinavianhome

This account showcases minimalist, bright, and airy Scandinavian-inspired interiors, often featuring natural materials and a sense of calm. It's a great source for elegant simplicity. 



@thejungalow

While vibrant, Justina Blakeney's account embodies a lush and bohemian aesthetic that can feel like an indoor sanctuary. Expect lots of plants, rich textures, and a unique, soulful style.



@designmilk


This popular design blog's Instagram feed features a wide range of modern and innovative designs, including stunning home interiors that often push creative boundaries and offer fresh perspectives.



@amberinteriors

Amber Lewis's feed features California-cool interiors that are both relaxed and stylish, often incorporating natural elements, vintage finds, and a warm, inviting atmosphere.

@em_henderson

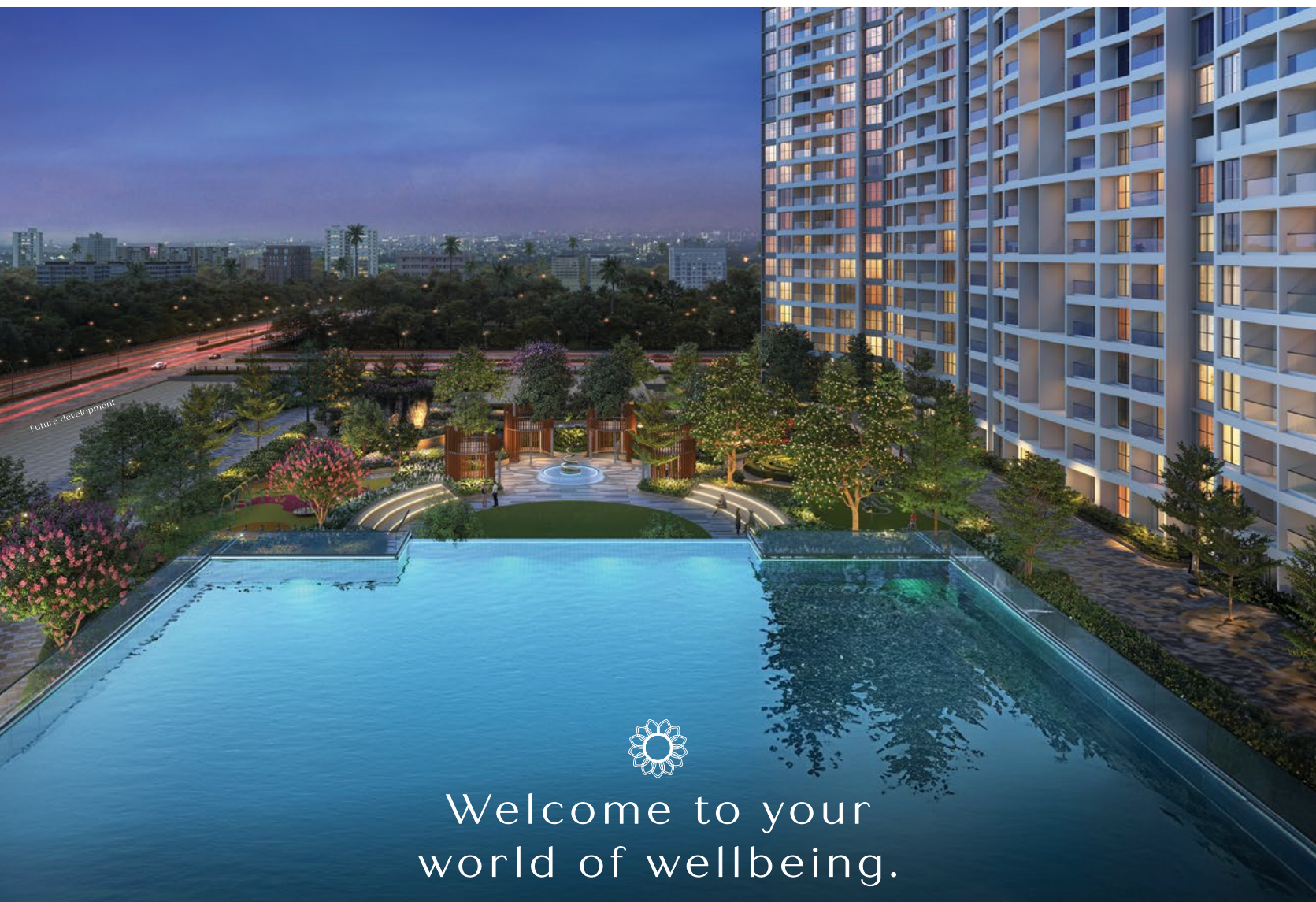
Emily Henderson's account offers a mix of attainable and aspirational décor inspiration, with a focus on creating comfortable, stylish, and livable spaces. She often shares tips and behind-the-scenes looks. 



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PURAVANKARA



Welcome to your
world of wellbeing.

Artist's impression. Not an actual site image.

Welcome to Purva Atmosphere - a sprawling 10-acre sanctuary where 70% of the space breathes open, and the lifestyle is inspired by Bali's hill terraces.

Purva Atmosphere is more than a home. It's your world of wellbeing.



~70% Open
Spaces



~2.2[^] Acres of
Landscape Area



50+ Amenities



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PURVA
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STORIES FROM THE NORTH-EAST

LAPBAH

EDITED BY KYNPHAM SING NONGKYNRIH AND RIMI NATH

PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE INDIA

VOLUME TWO

L*apbah*: Stories from the North-east, whose title is inspired by *Lapbah Sohra*, *Sohra's* monsoon deluge, is a compilation of fifty-two authors and fifty-seven short stories from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. More about the title and its relevance may be read in '*Lapbah Sohra*: By Way of Elucidation'.

Elephant Country

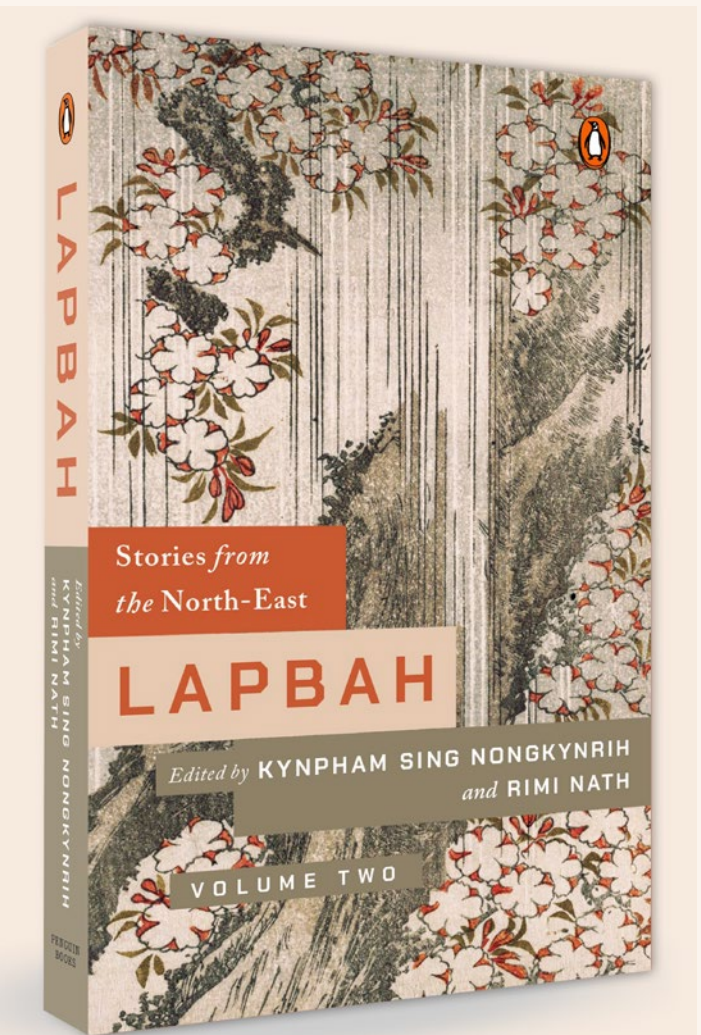
DHRUBA HAZARIKA

It was the second day since the elephants had taken over the road. There were twelve of them. They were now occupying a higher elevation, which was not as soggy as where they were earlier, near the wide-open paddy fields. At times, an elephant or two would drift down the dirt road southwards towards the village, less than two furlongs away, and then swerve right, enter a forest, where they would uproot banana trees that grew in abundance and carry them back to the herd.

On either side of the road, the rains had turned the fields muddy, at least three feet deep. Even if one tried to circle around, it meant being sucked in right up to one's waist while covering the 500-odd metres between the village and a safe place beyond the elephants. Because of this, no one had been able to enter or leave the village. The road was the only connecting link between the village and the national highway five kilometres to the north.

That evening, the forest ranger stepped into the circuit house compound and waited for the magistrate to come to the veranda. It was dark. Down by the river, the waters gurgled as bats flapped among the tall, gnarled, leafy *ahot* trees.

When she emerged from her room, the ranger, addressing her as *Baideo*, elder sister, said, 'They simply do not move, *Baideo*. It's the second day. Those who want to return to the village are camping in a basti, a furlong-and-a-half away from the elephants.' Then he blurted, 'It's best to use firearms.'



'Firearms?' said the executive magistrate. She was short and dark and round-faced with her hair drawn back, tight. In all the times he had met her, not once had he seen her smiling. From inside the room came the whirring sound of a fan; the long, thin curtains on the doorway fluttered listlessly.

The ranger slapped a *gamosa* against his neck. The mosquitoes never left you, summer or winter. The sweat had pockmarked his face and dripped down his chest. He looked bedraggled. It was not that he did not have any dress sense, but right now, he looked like a man who had stepped out of a swamp.

'Didn't you use the *dhols*, the drums?' the magistrate inquired. It was the raspy voice of someone who had far too much nicotine in the throat, or maybe she had just recovered from a cold. Close to the door were three cane chairs, but she kept standing. In the light from the bulb in the veranda, she looked drawn, as if having woken from a night of bad sleep.

'We used them, Baideo,' the ranger said. 'It didn't work.' She stared at him, and suddenly, embarrassed for no reason, he coughed unnecessarily. 'Sometimes a few of them shift positions, and sometimes one or two go into the forest and come back with banana stems. But otherwise, you cannot move them.' He sighed, his eyes taking in the tiny silver ring on her nostril. 'Fifteen years I have been on field duty. But nothing like this.'

'I see,' said the magistrate. 'And the firecrackers?' She was dressed in a white salwar kameez without a dupatta. He tried not to look at her breasts, firm and pointed with a faint outline of nipples against the fabric.

'Firecrackers too. These last two days. We hardly have any more sticks.'

'I see,' said the magistrate again.

For a while, there was silence save for the sound of water lapping against the bank. It was clammy, the air still and heavy. The rains had stopped sometime in the afternoon, and for an hour after, you could breathe without the sweat bothering your eyes and mouth. Then the clamminess came dripping back, mocking your attempts at restoring whatever freshness you had felt but seconds ago. There was nothing you could do about it.

Tiny droplets ran down the magistrate's temples. She was a thinking person, not much given to words, and now the silence added or seemed to add, more depth to her. 'How many elephants?' she asked.

'Twelve,' the forest ranger said. He was trying not to stare at her nipples, marble-small and taut under the lights. He looked away. 'We climbed a coconut tree and counted. They are bunched on top of a slope . . . on the road. Could be more.'

'The leader? You could pinpoint the leader?'

'A big one, a cow, Baideo, but there's another female as well.' He felt the sweat under his armpits, against his thighs and knew he was carrying that acrid smell that had become a part of his life, a smell his wife had somehow been able to tolerate. Almost unconsciously, he took a step away from the magistrate. 'I think there are two groups. They are banded together.'

'Strange!' she said. She ran a forefinger over her nose, and the ranger saw the shine on the ring as her nostrils flared momentarily. 'Something's very strange.'

'Very strange,' the ranger echoed. He wiped his face once again, his back against the railing.

Because she was a thinking person, she said, 'Any accidents? You know, that railway track near the highway? I get reports of injuries.'

She's no fool, he thought, and because he had for a while forgotten about it himself, he looked guiltily at his mud-caked boots. 'A villager saw one of them, a cow, limping up the slope the day before. Around dusk. Could be an injury.'

'I see,' she said. 'You have the tranquillizers?'

'We have them, Baideo,' he said. 'But she isn't badly injured. She can walk.'

'Even so,' she said. Wearily, he thought.

The heat was pricking him now, a sweat of another kind spilling the next words from him. 'We need to clear that road tonight, Baideo,' he breathed. 'Or, by tomorrow morning.'

The light in the veranda blinked twice, then steadied. A moth hummed towards the bulb, struck it head-on and, stunned, fell to the floor. A twig from a tree awning over the river plopped into the waters below. 'Tonight? Something urgent?'

'A man from the village struggled through the paddy fields in the afternoon. Took him two hours through that slush.' He wiped his neck with the gamosa and wanted to say, 'I'm tired; I want to sit. But, instead, he said, 'There's a woman in labour. Long past her time. Needs a doctor urgently. It has to be a caesarean.'

The magistrate turned around, her eyes scanning the darkness outside, her breathing long-drawn, deep, and then she faced the ranger once again, 'There's no way out from the other side? From behind the village? From the reserved forest?'

'No, Baideo,' he replied quickly. 'That forest is six kilometres wide, eight kilometres long. Thick with trees and the undergrowth. Leopards, wild boar, snakes. East and west of the forest are the wide grasslands, now flooded. To the north, it leads to another village. No doctors there. Even if there is one, it is not possible to carry a pregnant woman all the way. There are only hunting tracks and narrow paths. They are slippery and difficult. The rains. Fallen trees, branches every few metres.' He straightened himself, his lean muscular body like that of a boy scout suddenly aware of his role. 'I know that forest, Baideo. It has been a second home for years.'

Both volumes of Lapbah are available on Amazon.in.

WHERE THERE IS A WILL...

There is a right time and way to make it

BY SHIRIN KHAJURIA



When Mr. Zee passed away, he left behind a handwritten entry in his diary outlining how he wished his house, shop, and business to be divided among his three children. It seemed simple enough. But when the children attempted to sell the house and transfer the ownership of business and bank accounts in their name, they found themselves entangled in legal hurdles. The buyers were reluctant, and the Authorities demanded more. The handwritten diary entry, though expressed the intention of the deceased, did not carry the legal weight of a formal or registered Will.

This is not an uncommon story. In the absence of a valid Will, families struggle with legal complications and uncertainty. Amidst the grief of personal loss, they also face disputes, paperwork and delays.

WHAT IS A WILL?

While this might seem like a basic question, it's worth clarifying. A Will is a legal declaration of a person's wishes regarding the distribution of their property and assets after their death. It ensures that your belongings are passed on to the family, friends and charitable organisations you choose, in the way you intend.

Section 2(h) of the Indian Succession Act 1925, defines a Will as "the legal declaration of the intention of a testator with respect to his property which he desires to be carried into effect after his death." The said legislation deals with the making and enforcement of a Will.

WHY SHOULD YOU MAKE A WILL?

While there is no legal obligation to make a Will, making a Will is an act of foresight, responsibility, and, most of all, of

deep care and love for those you leave behind. It's a critical document to protect the future of your family.

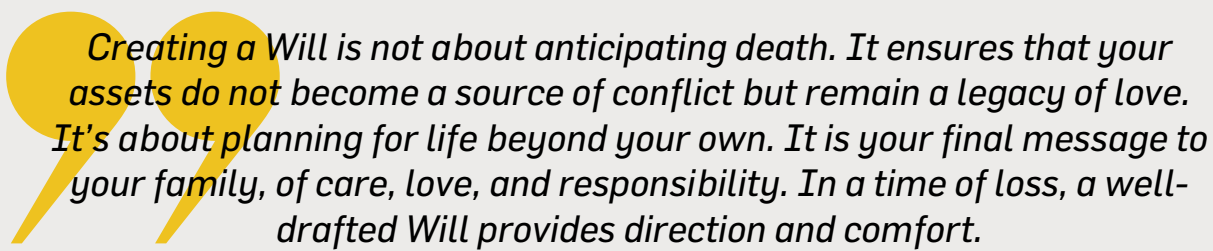
Over your lifetime, you've built your home, business, gathered savings, selected jewellery and heirlooms with thought and love. A Will ensures these are passed on seamlessly to those people or institutions you cherish. It eliminates ambiguity. It spares your loved ones from confusion and conflict and instead provides clarity, security, and peace. As Justice Krishna Iyer of the Supreme Court said, a Will can ensure that the testator's wishes are fulfilled in a way that benefits both their loved ones and society at large. This could involve provisions for social causes and charitable donations.

To clarify, if there is no Will, the properties will be transferred to your 'legal heirs' as defined under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 or Part V of the Indian Succession Act, 1925.

However, without a Will:

- Purchasers and Authorities are reluctant to accept your right over the property and transfer in your name.





- Your family or the institution made your beneficiary may need to go to court to establish their right to your property.
- Legal delays may prevent access to crucial financial assets when they need them most.
- Disputes may arise between heirs, causing emotional and sometimes permanent rifts.

WHEN SHOULD I MAKE A WILL?

Now. Many assume that Wills are only for the elderly or the very rich. They think that a Will once registered cannot be changed and hence, postpone the making of the Will. That's incorrect. Life is uncertain, and a Will should ideally be made:

- Once you acquire any property (like a house or land)
- Once you have financial investments such as bank accounts, FDs, shares, or mutual funds.
- Whenever you feel your assets should be distributed as per your intentions.
- You can re-make a Will at any time. The last Will or the last registered Will is considered your final intention.

While moveable assets are often easier for legal heirs to access, immovable assets can be difficult to transfer without a proper, registered Will.

REGISTERED WILL OR UNREGISTERED WILL

Though a Will need not be registered to be valid, registration adds a strong layer of credibility and simplifies property transfer. It is registered by going personally to the office of the registrar near your place of residence, with two witnesses, after taking prior appointment.

A registered Will:

- Is legally more secure, especially for immovable property.
- Increases the confidence of buyers when your heirs try to sell property.
- Helps in quicker mutation of property in government records.
- Creates a clear record of family structure, heirs and intentions, which aids inheritance processes.

ESSENTIALS OF A WILL

To make your Will effective and less likely to be challenged, include the following:

- Stamp Paper: Not needed, it can be on a plain paper and may be hand written or typed.
- Sound Mind: You must be mentally fit and state so in the

Will. Have a doctor counter-sign your state of mind if you are ailing or elderly.

- Mention previous Wills: Explicitly mention and revoke previous Wills, if any, specially a registered Will.
- State Your Family Structure: Clearly list your family structure of children and wife, or parents, other legal heirs and beneficiaries.
- Beneficiaries: You are free to bequeath your assets to anyone—a family member, a friend, or even a charitable organization.
- Explain Disparities: If you're excluding or giving less to a particular family member or heir, or more to another, it's wise to state your reason to avoid future disputes and challenge to Will be executed under compulsion or fraud.
- Detailed Description of Assets and their location: Include all immovable (land, house), business and moveable assets (jewellery, shares, lockers, heirlooms).
- Executor: While not mandatory, appointing a trusted executor can ensure your wishes are carried out smoothly. Choose carefully, someone reliable, as executors wield significant power and have been known to mis-use their power to the detriment of the intended beneficiaries.
- Witnesses: Your Will must be signed by at least two witnesses, who should be thoughtfully selected. They should be people you know who can come physically to the registrar's office for registration and whom you trust well to testify to your sound state of mind and the execution of the Will, if needed.
- Safe keeping of Will: After execution of Will, give it to a trusted person/ your advocate for safe keeping and also inform your family.
- It is suggested that you consult a legal expert before finalising your Will.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Creating a Will is not about anticipating death. It ensures that your assets do not become a source of conflict but remain a legacy of love. It's about planning for life beyond your own. It is your final message to your family, of care, love, and responsibility. In a time of loss, a well-drafted Will provides direction and comfort. It speaks for you when you no longer can speak and ensures that all the assets you have worked so hard to build end up exactly where you wanted them to.

Don't wait for the "right time" to make that Will. The right time is now.

The Power of 'WHY NOT'

BY MONICA SAIGAL BHIDE

A few weeks ago, I sat on a quiet Miami beach, the sun setting behind me, the waves murmuring their eternal rhythm. It was one of those rare, peaceful moments where time feels suspended. Nearby, a young boy and his mother caught my attention. She was pointing to a plane overhead, its wings gliding gracefully through the endless blue.

Watching them, I was transported back to the grassy banks of the Potomac, where my own boys grew up marvelling at planes. They were fascinated by their shapes, the roar of their engines, and the magic of how something so massive could stay suspended in the sky. They would wave to the planes, imagining their grandparents or favourite cousins arriving on those miracle machines.

As I reminisced, I heard the boy ask his mother a question that made me stop: "Why don't planes flap their wings if they fly like birds?"

What a glorious question! A blend of innocence and genius that made me pause and smile. Of course, there's the science behind it—thrust, lift, drag, all the physics that make flight possible. But that wasn't the point. In that simple, curious question lay something far more profound: a reminder that the things we take for granted often hold deeper stories, waiting to spark creativity and innovation.

How often do we, as adults, move through life assuming we understand the world, rarely stopping to question the mechanics of the everyday miracles around us? Planes don't flap their wings, yet they still soar. That truth feels so obvious—until someone dares to ask, "Why not?"

That kind of curiosity is where magic begins. It's where creativity, invention, and even storytelling find their spark. It invites us to reexamine what we think we know, to look beyond the familiar and see possibilities that were always there, waiting to be uncovered.

As I sit here now, working on a story, that boy's question keeps popping into my head: Why don't planes flap their wings? It's not about the answer; it's about the act of asking. It's about letting our imaginations roam freely, daring to dream differently, and challenging the status quo.

Maybe that's the key to everything. To wave to the planes in the sky, to look at the ordinary and ask the extraordinary. And to never stop wondering where those questions might take us.



Monica Saigal Bhide is a bestselling author and thought leader based in USA.

The Alternative Artist

Reimagining Art: Greeshma's Unique Printmaking Journey



Bengaluru-based visual artist Greeshma holds a postgraduate degree from the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT, Chennai). She took up professional photography in 2008.

After years behind the camera, she was drawn to more hands-on processes that offered a deeper material connection. This shift led her to alternative techniques such as cyanotype and gel plate printing, which now form the core of her practice. Inspired by the natural world, she often works with her own photographs alongside organic materials—leaves, flowers, and other botanical elements collected from her garden and surroundings.

Rooted in both process and intuition, Greeshma's work invites a sensory, reflective engagement with the natural world—transforming everyday materials into quiet, resonant compositions that blur the line between image and object.

Her work can be viewed at www.greeshma.com and on Instagram @greeshmap.

Tell us about your work

I work with both classic and wet cyanotype processes on paper, fabric,

and other surfaces. My cyanotypes take the form of framed wall art, greeting cards, bookmarks, tags, and small collectibles, as well as functional items like tote and sling bags. I recently developed a series inspired by Bengaluru's iconic Cubbon Park, based on digital negatives of my own photographs. These prints are currently in circulation as postcards.

In contrast to the cool monochromes of cyanotype, my gel plate prints are vibrant and full of colour. Made using acrylic paints and layered botanical forms, these richly textured monoprints explore pattern, rhythm, and spontaneity. Each print is built through intuitive layering and mark-making, often incorporating leaves, petals, and found textures to create unique, organic compositions.

Can you explain cyanotype and gel plate printing techniques in simple terms and what makes them special in your creative process?

Cyanotype and gel plate printing are both hands-on, tactile techniques that really transformed how I think about making images.

Cyanotype is a historic photographic printing process that uses sunlight and iron-based chemicals to create deep blue prints. I coat paper or



Wet Cyanotype



Wet Cyanotype



Gel print cards



Gel print card



Gel print card



Gel print mounted on MDF



Cyanotype print framed



Cyanotype sling bag



Gel print



Gel print frame



Round print with frame

fabric with this light-sensitive solution, place objects like leaves or a digital negative on top, and expose it to sunlight. Once rinsed in water, the image appears. It feels magical every time—and I love how the process captures both the sharpness of a photo and the subtleties of nature.

Gel plate printing, on the other hand, is a monoprinting technique where I roll acrylic paint onto a gel printing plate, layer leaves or textures, and then press paper onto it to make a one-of-a-kind print. Unlike cyanotype's cool blues, these are bold and colourful.

There's no undo button—it's all about intuition and spontaneity.

What makes both special to me is the physicality and unpredictability. They bring me back to working with my hands, and each print carries a bit of imperfection, texture, and surprise. That's what I find beautiful.

How can one learn cyanotype or gel plate printing?

There are many accessible ways to get started with cyanotype and gel plate printing—it doesn't require a formal background or a fully equipped

studio. I began by attending a three-day cyanotype workshop at Studio Goppo in Shantiniketan, which gave me the opportunity to slow down and connect more intentionally with the process. After that, most of my learning has been self-directed—through online tutorials, following other artists on Instagram, and experimenting on my own.

For both cyanotype and gel plate printing, there are excellent beginner-friendly videos online. In particular, the Gelli Arts blog is a great resource for gel plate printing—it offers simple,



Cubbon park



Cubbon park



Cyanotype Lily



Cyanotype ginger lily



Butterfly cyanotype



50 postcards of love

approachable tutorials that are easy to follow at home.

If you're looking for hands-on sessions, there are several studios across India that offer printmaking workshops. Whether you're starting at home with a basic kit or joining a local workshop, the best way to learn is by doing—embracing the unpredictability and joy that these processes bring.

Artists who have particularly inspired your work

Yes—two artists have had a lasting influence on my work. I came across

Kim Herringe while exploring monoprinting, and her work and teaching opened up a new way of thinking about image-making. Her focus on layering, texture, and working intuitively gave me the confidence to experiment and trust my own process.

I also deeply admire Anna Atkins, whose cyanotypes of algae are some of the earliest photographic prints ever made. There's a quiet clarity in her way of seeing and recording the natural world—something I keep returning to in my own work.

A philosophy that guides your artistic process

I've always leaned toward being a bit of a perfectionist, so one idea I try to hold onto, especially in my printmaking work, is to choose the process over the end result. It reminds me to stay open to play and spontaneity. Cyanotype and gel plate printing are both mediums where things rarely turn out exactly as planned, and that's taught me a lot about letting go. Some of my favourite pieces have come from moments where I stopped trying to control the result.



M M Javed
Homini Designer

YOUR LUXURY WEAR SPECIALIST

DECORATE

IDEAS & INSPIRATION ON HOW TO MAKE
YOUR HOME A BEAUTIFUL SANCTUARY



MONSOON MUSE

Your Guide to
a Comfortable,
Stylish, and
Practical Indoor
Season

The drumming of rain, the earthy fragrance of wet soil, and a shift in the very air around us. While the monsoon transforms the outdoors, our homes become our primary sanctuary. This special feature is your guide to not just weathering the monsoon, but truly embracing it indoors, focusing on practicality, comfort, and subtle style that complements the season.





Monsoon-Proofing Your Home

The dampness and humidity of the monsoon present unique challenges to our homes. Protecting your living spaces is the first step towards a comfortable season.

SHIELDING YOUR FURNITURE

Invest in breathable furniture covers made of cotton or linen to protect upholstery from moisture. For wooden furniture, consider using coasters and avoiding placing damp items directly on surfaces. Elevating furniture slightly with small risers can also improve air circulation underneath.



COMBATING MOLD AND MILDEW

Prevention is key. Regularly clean surfaces with anti-fungal solutions, especially in moisture-prone areas like bathrooms and kitchens. Ensure proper ventilation in these spaces. Choose paints and finishes that are mould-resistant.



TACKLING HUMIDITY

High humidity can lead to discomfort and even damage. Utilize dehumidifiers in particularly damp areas. Ensure good air circulation by strategically placing fans and opening windows when the rain subsides. Consider moisture-absorbing materials like silica gel packets in wardrobes and drawers.



PROTECTING ELECTRONICS

Keep electronics away from windows and areas prone to leaks. Use surge protectors to safeguard against power fluctuations common during storms. Consider storing sensitive equipment in airtight containers when not in use.



CARING FOR WOOD

Wood can warp and swell with excessive moisture. Apply sealant or varnish to wooden surfaces. Avoid using harsh chemical cleaners that can further damage the wood.

Smart Storage Solutions for the Monsoon

Staying organized during the monsoon makes indoor living more comfortable and prevents clutter from exacerbating dampness.



DESIGNATED WET ZONES

Create a designated area near the entrance for wet umbrellas, raincoats, and shoes. Use stylish umbrella stands, sturdy hooks, and well-ventilated shoe racks or trays to contain moisture.



PROTECTING WARDROBES

Store away delicate fabrics and items susceptible to dampness in airtight containers or garment bags with moisture-absorbing packets. Ensure wardrobes are not overcrowded to allow for air circulation.



VENTILATED STORAGE

Opt for storage solutions with good ventilation, such as wire baskets or slatted shelves, for items that might retain moisture, like bags and shoes.



KEEPING LINENS FRESH

Store clean linens in dry, airtight containers or drawers with moisture-absorbing sachets. Ensure proper ventilation in linen closets.

Light & Ventilation Strategies

The often-grey skies of the monsoon necessitate smart approaches to lighting and ventilation to keep our homes bright and airy.



MAXIMIZING NATURAL LIGHT

Position mirrors strategically to reflect any available natural light deeper into rooms. Opt for light-coloured walls and window treatments to enhance brightness. Keep windows clean to allow maximum light penetration.

Creating Cosy Indoor Retreats

Embrace the opportunity to create comfortable and inviting spaces for relaxation during the monsoon's indoor days.



RAINY WINDOW VIEWS

Place a chair by your window with a soft cushion and blanket—perfect for watching the dance of raindrops. Keep your curtains airy; let the breeze play with them like it's the monsoon's personal dancer.

Colours that Rain



THE PERFECT READING NOOK

Designate a corner or area with comfortable seating – a plush armchair, a floor cushion arrangement – good lighting (a reading lamp), and a small side table for beverages and books. Layer with soft throws and pillows.



WARM 'N BRIGHT

It's dull outside. Why not create some homely warmth with perky cushions and egg-yolky lamplight!

Cosy Up



RAINY DAY COCOON

Curl up like a cat in a cosy corner with oversized cushions, plush throws, and dream the afternoon away (or your phone, no judgement).



HOT CHOCOLATE BAR

This season, your kitchen counter is the hot chocolate station. Add some cinnamon sticks and marshmallows for a dash of rain-kissed warmth.

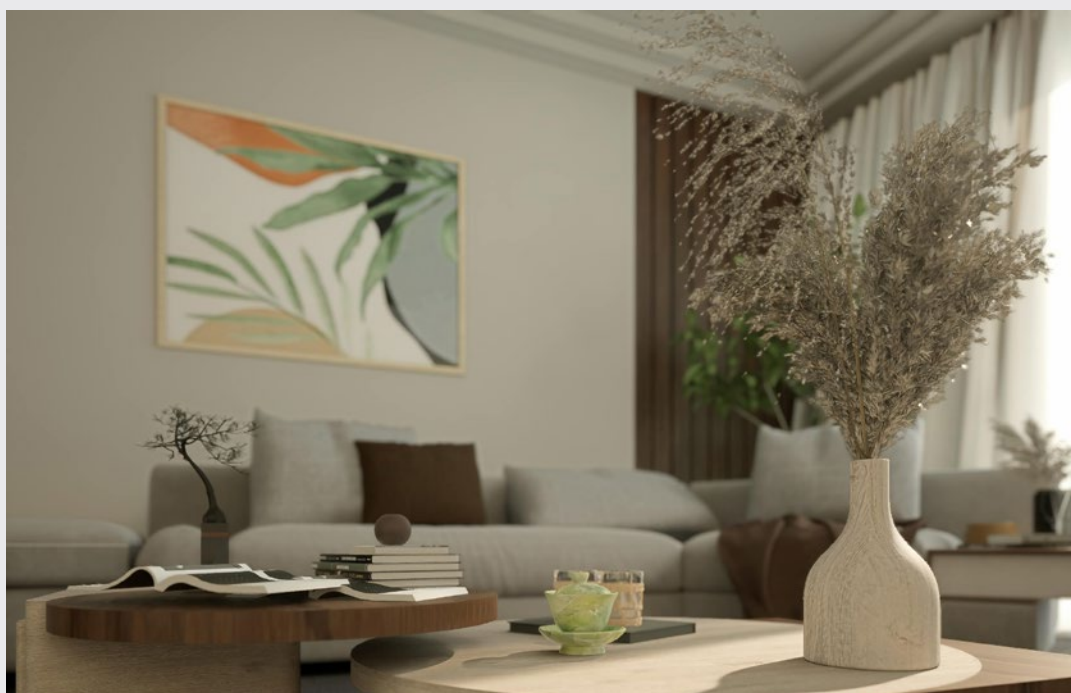
Subtle Monsoon-Inspired Decor Touches

Incorporate subtle nods to the season without overwhelming your existing decor.



NATURAL ELEMENTS

Arrange smooth river stones, interesting pieces of driftwood, or foraged branches in decorative bowls or vases. These bring a touch of the outdoors in a refined way.



CALMING COLOUR PALETTES

Introduce accents in muted blues, soft greens, and gentle greys through cushions, throws, or small decorative objects. These colours evoke the tranquility of the monsoon.

Paint Your Home with the Monsoon



COLOURS OF THE STORM

Bring the sky indoors by painting an accent wall a stormy gray of the rain-laden sky. Not in the mood to paint? Try wallpaper.

STATEMENT PIECES

Embrace furniture that makes a statement—This is the season to splurge on that tangerine loveseat that invites you to relax and catches the eye.

SPA-INSPIRED BATHROOMS

Rain shower heads, soft bathrobes, and the aroma of eucalyptus will make you feel like you're in a spa on a rainy day.

RAIN-INSPIRED DIY WALL HANGINGS

Use a simple string of twigs, paint them blue or gray, and hang them by the window for a charming monsoon display.

BOTTLE PLANTERS

Take some old glass bottles and turn them into unique planters for your indoor plants.



ACCENTS THAT RAIN

Rain makes everything grow lush! Now is the time to create corners that show off your green thumb and give your home a fresh rainforest feel.



CREATIVE INDOOR GARDENING

Explore small terrariums to create enclosed, humid environments for delicate plants. Use interesting and unique planters to add visual appeal.

GREEN YOUR SPACE

Incorporate eco-friendly materials like bamboo or cork into your home decor. They're naturally monsoon-friendly and stylish.

UPCYCLED DECOR

From old jars as candle holders to tin cans as planters, embrace eco-conscious creations. It's the season to give your old things new life!

RAIN-READY RUGS

Look for quirky, water-resistant rugs with fun prints. Picture this: umbrellas, puddles, or even raindrops as designs!



MONSOON PLANT CARE

Adjust your watering schedule as humidity levels are higher. Ensure good drainage to prevent root rot. Provide adequate indirect light.

Monsoon-Inspired DIYs

Engage in simple DIY projects that enhance comfort and reflect the season's mood.



UPCYCLED GARDEN

Old boots and teacups can become quirky plant pots. Who knew a soggy boot could hold such charm?



A LONG HOT SOAK

treat your feet to the relaxing magic of bath salts while you read a beautiful book.

WATER FEATURE WONDERS

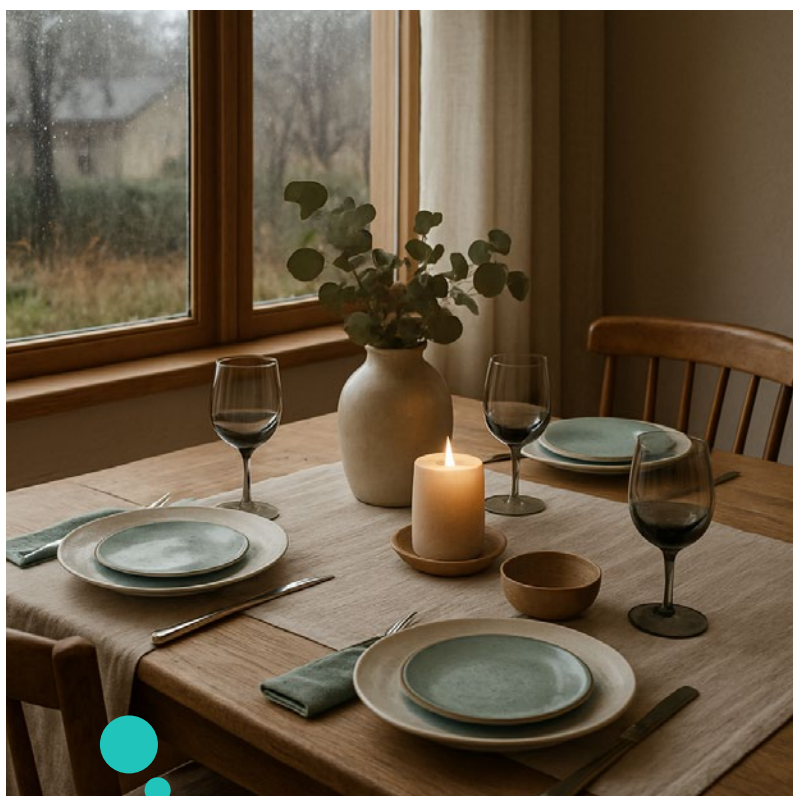
Transform a corner with a water feature, such as a fountain, a small indoor pond, or a trickling water wall. The sound of water flowing will evoke the soothing rhythm of the rain while adding an element of tranquility.





NATURE-BASED ART

Create simple art using pressed flowers and leaves collected after the rain, framing them for a delicate touch of nature.



RAINY DAY TABLE SETTINGS

Use natural materials like wood and linen for your table settings. Incorporate subtle green or blue accents in your tableware or napkins.

MONSOON MAGIC MIRRORS

Mirrors framed with vintage wooden shutters or bamboo sticks—just like peeking out of an old cottage window.

WHITE NOISE MAGIC

Create your own rain symphony. Play soothing rain sounds in the background while you read or relax. It's like your own personal monsoon soundtrack.

CHIME IT IN

Hang wind chimes near an open window. The wind will carry their soft music while the rain taps its own beat.



RAINY FLOWERS

Opt for flowers that thrive in the rain, like hibiscus, jasmine, and lotus. Place them in quirky, mismatched vases for a carefree monsoon vibe.

WILDFLOWER BOUQUETS

Fill your home with the smell of wildflowers. They add a rustic charm to your decor—perfect for the season.



SCENTED SOIREE

Scented candles in earthy, woody fragrances or essential oils like eucalyptus and lavender will transport you to the monsoon forests.

CANDLELIT CHARM

When the rain is heavy, light a few candles in hurricane jars. Watch the flame flicker in rhythm with the storm outside.



FAIRY LIGHTS

Twinkle like raindrops with soft, fairy-like lights. Hang them around windows or across shelves—create your own monsoon glow.

RAINY DAY ANTIQUES

Hunt for vintage umbrellas, old raincoats, or antique tea kettles to display. They add character and nostalgia to your decor.

MONSOON MEMORIES

Frame old black-and-white photographs of rainy days or family monsoon vacations. It's a lovely way to hold onto the memories of the season.

MONSOON MUG SHOTS

Mugs filled with steaming hot beverages—coffee, chai, or even hot toddies—are perfect for a rainy evening.

RAINY PLATTERS

Set a cosy table with comfy, comforting food. Think warm soups, hot fritters, samosas—perfect for serving as the rain taps on the windows.

DECOR THAT TELLS A STORY

Use vintage lanterns or rain-soaked street art to tell stories of monsoon evenings. Create an atmosphere where each item feels like a memory of rainy days long gone.



RAINY DAY CHRONICLES

Hang a 'Monsoon Storyboard' on your wall—a collection of postcards, old letters, and photographs to narrate the tales of the season.

UPCYCLED LANTERNS

Find discarded glass jars and turn them into storm lanterns. The perfect quirk for a monsoon table setting.

END THE RAINY DAY WITH A SMILE

Finish your monsoon decor journey with a cheeky smile. Add quirky decor items like umbrella-shaped lamps or raincloud cushions, because—let's face it—the monsoon is all about fun, refreshment, and a bit of joy.

Monsoon Edit Curated By: Chetna Srinivasan

EXPLORE

**WHERE ARE YOUR DREAMS
TAKING YOU THIS SEASON?**



Update Your Bucket List

Our Round-Up of The Latest Attractions Across the World



01

TEAMLAB PHENOMENA ABU DHABI (UAE)

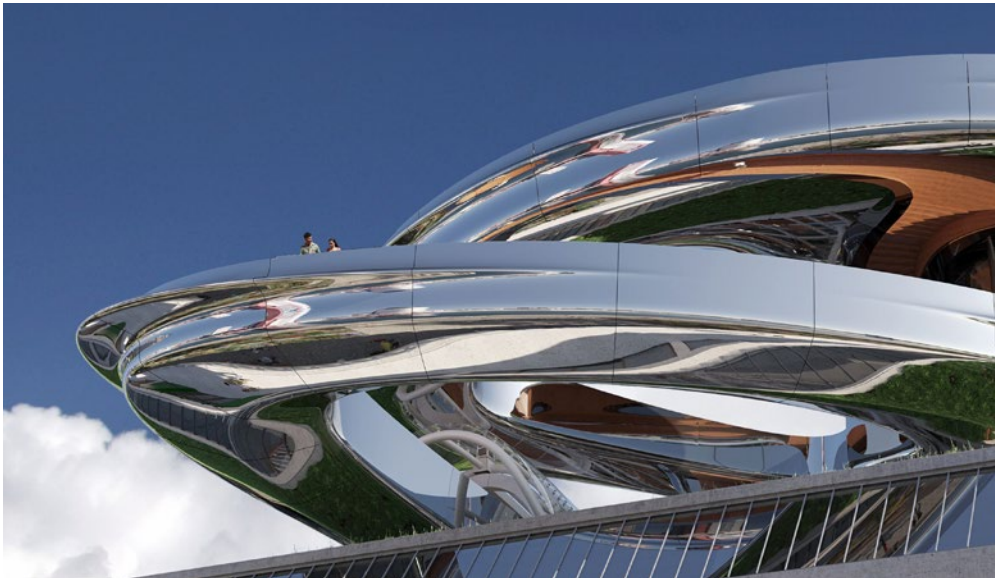
Dive into a world where art and technology blur! This expansive space by the renowned teamLab collective offers multi-sensory installations designed to spark curiosity and wonder. Expect interactive digital artworks that respond to your presence, creating a truly unique experience.

SUPER NINTENDO WORLD - EPIC UNIVERSE (ORLANDO, USA)

Level up your vacation at the newest addition to Universal Orlando! This highly anticipated land brings the vibrant worlds of Mario, Luigi, and Donkey Kong to life with immersive rides, interactive games, and themed dining. Get ready to race go-karts, battle Koopa Troopas, and explore Peach's Castle!

02





03

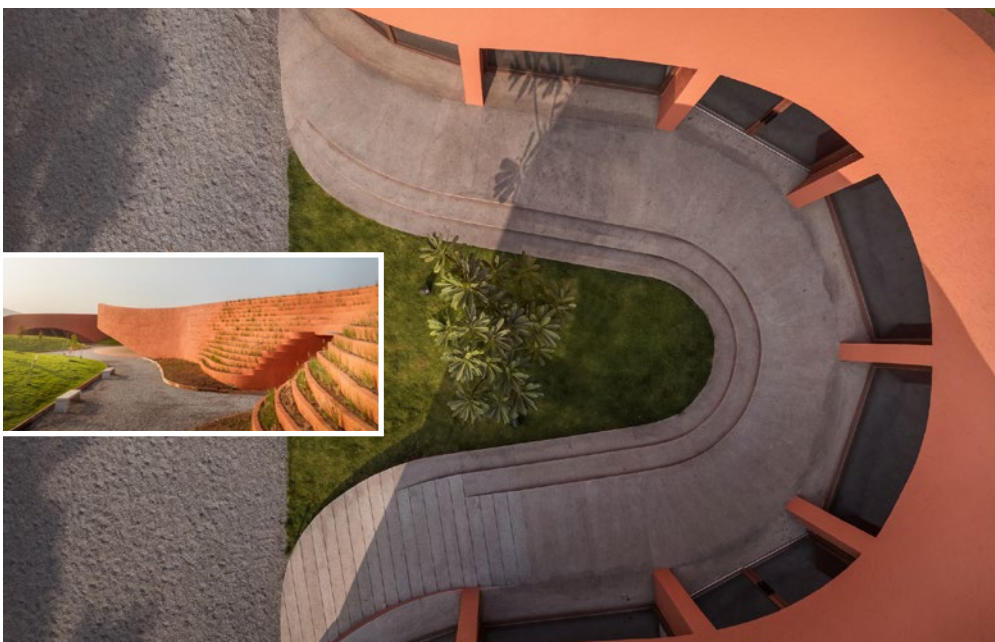
FENIX MUSEUM OF MIGRATION (ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS)

Experience migration stories through a unique lens of art, architecture, photography, and history. Housed in a historic warehouse, Fenix aims to connect visitors with the human stories behind global movement in an engaging and thought-provoking way.

04

MAISON PASSERELLE (NEW YORK CITY, USA)

Indulge in a unique dining experience at this new fine-dining restaurant located within the Printemps department store in the Financial District. Chef Gregory Gourdet explores the legacy of French cooking with global influences, promising an exciting and flavorful culinary journey.



05

HAMPI ARTS LAB (KARNATAKA, INDIA)

Discover a new space for contemporary art nestled within the historical landscape of Hampi. This initiative provides a platform for artists and showcases a diverse range of works, blending art with the rich cultural heritage of the region.

COME SEPTEMBER

10 MUST-VISIT

DESTINATIONS

FOR THE GOLDEN MONTH OF THE YEAR

September is the sweet spot between summer's end and autumn's arrival, making it one of the best months for travel. Whether you're chasing warm sun, cool breezes, or vibrant landscapes, here are 10 terrific destinations that shine in September. Which trip would you like to pick?



01

ICELAND

As the days shorten and the crowds thin, Iceland is at its best in September. Explore its stunning waterfalls, volcanic landscapes, and glaciers under more moderate temperatures. Plus, the Northern Lights begin to show up, adding a magical touch to your adventure.

02

JAPAN

September in Japan is perfect for exploring its cities and countryside before the autumn crowds hit. The heat of summer starts to fade, and the early autumn colours begin to peek through, especially in places like Kyoto and the Japanese Alps.





03

ITALY (TUSCANY & AMALFI COAST)

Tuscany's vineyards and the Amalfi Coast are vibrant in September. The crowds from August have subsided, and you can enjoy warm, but not oppressive, weather.

It's harvest season, so expect to indulge in fresh produce, wines, and seasonal festivals.

04 GREECE

September offers ideal weather in Greece—warm enough for the beach, but with fewer tourists than in the height of summer. The islands like Santorini and Mykonos are quieter, and the golden hour over the Aegean Sea is unbeatable.



KENYA

September is one of the best times to experience Kenya's Great Migration in the Maasai Mara. The weather is dry, and the game viewing is at its peak. Witness thousands of wildebeest and zebras crossing the Mara River—an awe-inspiring natural spectacle.



06

BALI, INDONESIA

Bali's dry season peaks in September, offering clear skies and perfect conditions for exploring temples, rice terraces, and beaches. The island's lush greenery is especially beautiful during this time, making it ideal for nature lovers and culture enthusiasts alike.

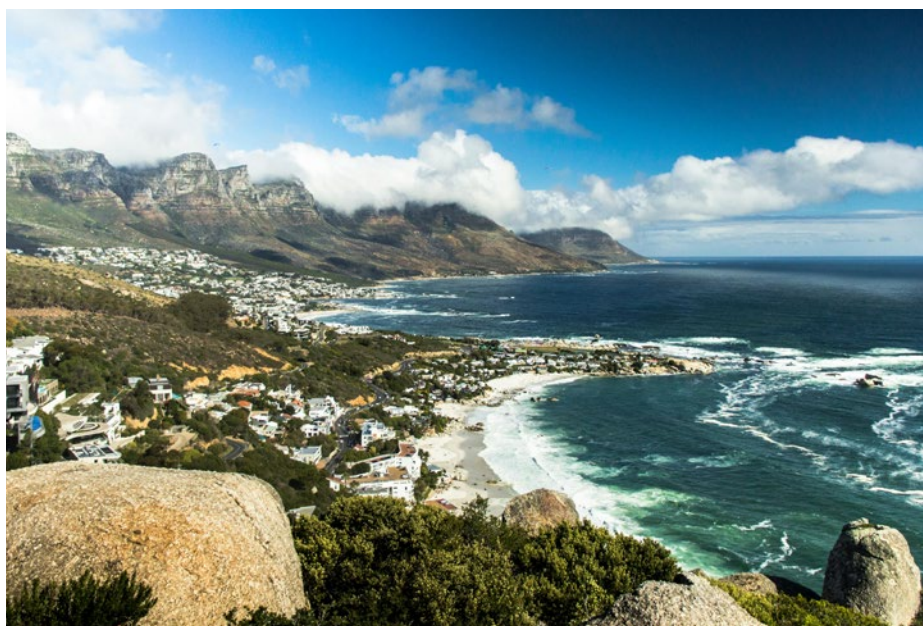




07

CROATIA

By September, Croatia's beaches along the Dalmatian Coast are less crowded, but the weather is still perfect for swimming and lounging. This is the ideal time to visit places like Dubrovnik, Split, and the nearby islands without the heavy tourist crowds.



08

SOUTH AFRICA (CAPE TOWN & KRUGER)

September is springtime in South Africa, bringing mild temperatures and excellent conditions for both wildlife safaris and coastal exploration. From wine tasting in Cape Town to game drives in Kruger National Park, it's an exceptional time to visit.



09

SCOTLAND

Scotland's weather in September is just right for hiking, whisky tours, and exploring castles. The Highlands start to show off their autumn colours, and with the Edinburgh Festival winding down, it's the perfect time to enjoy the country's dramatic beauty without the summer rush.

10

PORTUGAL

Portugal enjoys perfect weather in September, particularly in Lisbon and the Algarve. The crowds have thinned, making it ideal for exploring charming streets, coastal hikes, and enjoying the region's delicious seafood and wines.



THE PROS AND CONS OF OCEAN CRUISING

A Former Naval Officer Takes a Deep Dive
into Shipboard Bliss

BY SHYAM RAO





Imagine a week-long holiday abroad. Where you are maybe in Italy one day and Greece the next, where you can have scrumptious food from all over the world at any time of the day, and stay in 5 star comfort with resort like facilities, and enjoy a multitude of options for recreation and entertainment. All this without having to pack and unpack every day, at prices that won't cost an arm and a leg. Find it hard to believe? Welcome to the world of ocean cruising — probably the most affordable luxury holiday you could have.

Time was when iconic ships like QE2 used to call on the odd port in India during its annual Round the World cruise. While those of us lucky enough to go on board to visit were often in awe at the splendour and well-appointed interiors, we were also aware that the passengers were mostly elderly millionaires. Probably people who booked the cruise months or years in advance, just to be among the privileged few to be on board. Cut to the present, where the cruise ship industry has grown manifold. Not only are there ships that would dwarf QE2 in size and magnificence, but the greater number of cabins and passengers has reduced costs substantially. Plus, the passenger demographic has broadened so much that it's helped to make an ocean cruise that much more inclusive and affordable. Sold on the idea? Here's how to go about finding the cruise that's right for you, making the most of it, and getting the most "Bang for your Buck".

SELECTING YOUR CRUISE

Obviously, the first item on your agenda would be to select the right cruise. There are plenty of online resources — think vacationstogo.com and cruisecritic.com — where you can shortlist options based on your requirements and home on to the right cruise for you. Some aspects to consider:

- **Time of the Year and Duration**

This looks like a no-brainer, but since most cruise itineraries are seasonal, this would depend on whether cruises are operating in the region you want at the time when it's convenient for you. As far as the duration goes, a week would probably be ideal, as this would usually take in an adequate number of ports as well as days at sea.

- **Destination(s)/Ports of Call**

Find the cruise that takes you to as many of your long dreamt of destinations. Obviously, it would be unlikely that one cruise would cover everywhere you want to go, but you would definitely find an itinerary that would suit you. When researching, also see the duration that the ship is in



each port, and if that time would be adequate to explore and cover everything on your agenda.

- **Ship/Cruise Line**

The destinations of the ship? With the advent of super-size and super luxury cruise ships, the lines are getting blurred, and more and more people are choosing a cruise based on the ship. Naturally, the bigger the ships, the more the recreational facilities and the “Bells and Whistles,” — with the ships becoming destinations in themselves. Moreover, some cruises are thematic, focusing on specific things like culture, food, music and adventure. There are also adults only, or fun oriented cruises for youngsters, all of which would also have a bearing on the choice.

- **Group size**

Who you are travelling with will naturally influence the decision, as the ship and the itinerary would need to be compatible. Many ships have Adults Only recreational areas, pools, hot tubs, etc, so this may be a boon for those travelling without kids.

- **Visas**

Don't forget — always check whether visas are required for the itinerary. Some lines may not allow you to board without a valid visa.

- **Cost**

Think of a rough budget and compare costs across sites, and, indeed with the cruise line itself. Most offer early bird discounts and freebies, but you would need to make sure that these deals actually translate to savings. For instance, “Free Gratuities” would definitely be worthwhile if gratuities are otherwise mandatory on the cruise, whereas a free drinks package may not make sense to a teetotaler. While there are far too many variables to give an approximate cost, just to get an idea, the cheapest cruises could conceivably go for 300-400 USD for a 5-day cruise in peak season.

ACCOMMODATION ON BOARD

Accommodation on a cruise ship typically consists of Inside, Ocean View, and Balcony cabins (sometimes called Staterooms), and Suites. To get an idea, imagine a plan view with two aisles running the length of the ship, with the inside cabins being between the two aisles, and the others being outside the aisles. Some of the larger ships have a central promenade well extending a number of decks from the fourth deck or so, so the inside staterooms facing the promenade would have a “Promenade View”.

So, what should one choose? The short answer — the best you can afford. Having said that, remember that you're not likely to spend too much time in the cabin except mostly to sleep and freshen up. So, any functional cabin should be good enough. Given the constraints of space on a ship, all the cabins including the insides are reasonably well appointed, with adequate storage space, space to stow your luggage, and the like. On the other hand, an “Ocean View” may well be through a single porthole, or may well be the dreaded “Obstructed Ocean View,” meaning it may be overlooking one of the lifeboats through the porthole.

Also remember, except for the days "At Sea," the ship will usually depart a port at night, and hence there would not be much of the ocean to view. So, look at the deck plans, the photographs, proximity to crowds and potentially noisy areas (lift lobbies, dining, and entertainment areas, etc), and, of course, the cost, before deciding what's best for you.

DINING

You cannot be more spoiled for choice where food is concerned. Most cruise ships typically have some food available almost throughout the day in addition to room service. Apart from many self-service choices, there is seated fine dining in the main dining room. Most lines offer "Anytime Seating", so you don't need to reserve a seating time ahead. The menu is well curated, and there is always something for everyone. Special requests are also accommodated, and, in acknowledgement of the growing number of Indian passengers, many cruise lines are specifically catering for Indian food.

Speciality Dining: In addition to the plethora of inclusive dining options, there are speciality restaurants for which there's usually a surcharge. With the wide choice available at different outlets, I personally feel that it is an extravagance. Even if it is to celebrate a special occasion, you could always open a nice bottle of wine at the dinner table instead.

ALCOHOL

Unless it's an alcohol inclusive cruise, most cruise lines are sticky about carrying alcohol on board, usually limiting passengers to maybe one bottle of wine. Alcohol prices on board are generally what one would pay in a decent restaurant ashore. There are different beverage packages offered, but you would need to do the math to figure out if they are worth the cost. Usually, you would need to consume a considerable number of drinks every day just to break even. Moreover, some lines require that all passengers in the cabin need to take the same package, so this skews the economics further.

But if you want to enjoy a drink without breaking the bank, you do have some options. To begin with, there are a few occasions like the Captain's reception where free alcohol is served. There are also art auctions and other shopping galas where they usually serve champagne (with no obligation to buy anything), some cruise lines allow liquor bought on board to be served at your table, and there are always daily deals and promotions at different bars and venues that one can try.

ON BOARD ENTERTAINMENT

From Broadway musicals and shows by Cirque du Soleil, to Music, Dance, Comedy, you name it, the daily entertainment offered on board is enthralling. Most ships have two performances a day, and you should definitely make it a point to attend.

While these performances are in the theatre, ships with ice rinks usually put up a few ice-skating shows. Again, not to be missed. There's plenty of other entertainment too,





like disco evenings, movies, live music in bars, and some adults only game nights among others. Many ships also have casinos on board. In short, never a dull moment.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

A big part of the charm of the cruise are the shore visits at the ports of call. Naturally, you'd like to explore the different places that the ship visits. All ships offer shore excursions but these are typically much more expensive than doing it on your own.

On regular cruise ship ports, tour operators are usually lined up on the pier, as are taxis, and guides. Choose from one of them, or with a little bit of research, go into town and explore on your own. One resource that is quite helpful are the cruise forums on sites like cruise critic, where you can meet travelling companions, arrange tours, and more.

While exploring the place on your own allows you to be in control, and gives you that much more flexibility, remember that the only advantage of taking an excursion from the ship is that in case of a delay, the ship will wait for the arrival of a scheduled tour. So always allow for a little time in hand for breakdowns and unforeseen contingencies if you're on your own.



THINGS TO DO ON BOARD AND THE "DAYS AT SEA"

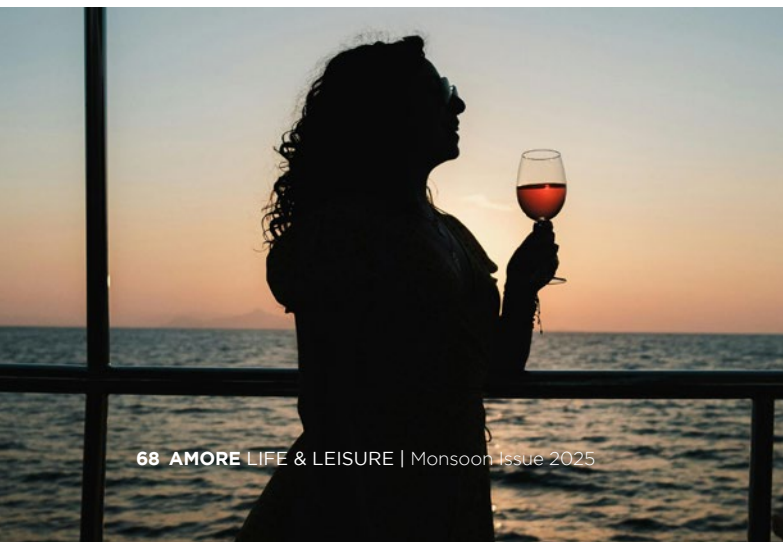
A seven-day cruise would typically have two "Days at Sea," that is, when the ship is transiting the sea throughout the day from one port to the other. That's when you can enjoy the time on board to indulge in the vast array of options of things to do. Of course, most of these would be available on other days too.

All ships issue a daily bulletin outlining the various activities scheduled for the next day so you can plan what you want to do in advance. Apart from activities which are intrinsic to the ship like swimming pools, skating, rock climbing, water parks, golf simulators, libraries and so on, there are a number of activities that vary every day like cooking lessons, yoga, themed quizzes, exhibitions, Bridge and card games — the list is endless. In fact, you'll be hard pressed to take in even a third of all there is on offer. There is always something for everyone.



THE OCEAN AWAITS-GET ON BOARD

Given the wonderful blend of luxury, relaxation, entertainment and sightseeing that ocean cruising offers, it easily makes for an unparalleled vacation experience. With the wide range of destinations, activities, cuisine, and onboard amenities, cruises pretty much cater to any traveler's requirement. The added bonus of indulging in all this at great value for money, and without the stress of constant packing and unpacking make ocean cruising a great choice for the avid traveler.



Shyam Rao is a retired Naval Officer who is an avid traveller. Having travelled extensively to many parts of the world, he finds cruising an appealing travel option, and has embarked on many an ocean cruise like the Mediterranean, Alaska, and the Canary Islands. He has also been on river cruises in China and Vietnam.

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CURATED TO SERENADE YOUR SENSES



Portable Treats

Easy. Healthy. Veggie.



Packing a nutritious and delicious lunchbox is easier than you think. We've curated ten simple, vibrant vegetarian recipes that are perfect for taking to the office. These fuss-free ideas celebrate fresh, seasonal ingredients and offer a delightful mix of flavours to keep your midday meal exciting and energising,

01 MEDITERRANEAN QUINOA SALAD

Combine cooked quinoa with chopped cucumbers, tomatoes, Kalamata olives, and crumbled feta cheese. Drizzle generously with lemon juice and olive oil. Toss in some fresh parsley for an extra burst of flavour.



02

AVOCADO & BLACK BEAN WRAPS

Spread mashed avocado on whole-wheat tortillas. Layer with seasoned black beans, sweetcorn kernels, and salsa. Roll them up tightly for a satisfying and fibre-rich bite.



03

HUMMUS & VEGGIE PITTAS

Spread creamy hummus inside whole-wheat pitta pockets. Stuff with a colourful array of sliced vegetables like carrots, bell peppers, and cucumbers. A quick and refreshing option.

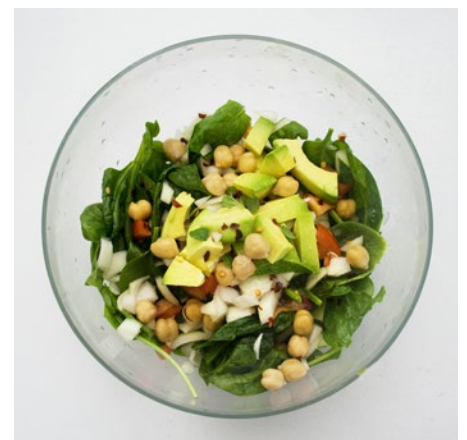




04

COTTAGE CHEESE & FRUIT BOWL

Combine creamy cottage cheese with a medley of your favourite seasonal fruits like berries, melon, or peaches. Sprinkle with a touch of cinnamon or a drizzle of honey if desired.



05

CHICKPEA & SPINACH SALAD

Mix tinned chickpeas with fresh spinach leaves, diced red onion, and a tangy vinaigrette made with olive oil, vinegar, and Dijon mustard. Add a handful of toasted nuts for crunch.



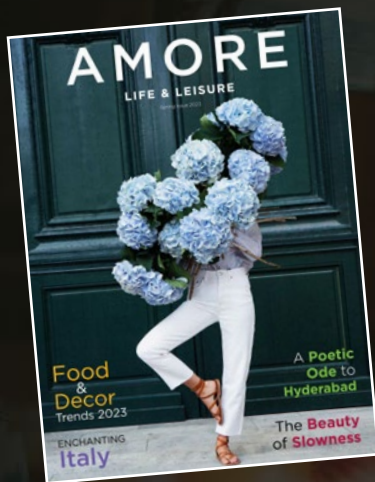
06

PANEER & BELL PEPPER SKEWERS

Thread cubes of roasted paneer and colourful bell pepper chunks onto skewers. Lightly sprinkle with chaat masala or your favourite spice blend. A flavourful and protein-rich choice.

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O Gelato



How to Make Homemade Gelato That's a Scoop Above the Rest



BASIC GELATO (SERVES 4)

WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

WHAT YOU DO:

1. In a saucepan, combine the whole milk, heavy cream, and granulated sugar over medium heat. Stir occasionally until the sugar completely dissolves and the mixture begins to simmer. Remove from heat.
2. Stir in the vanilla extract and a pinch of salt. Let the mixture cool to room temperature.
3. Once cooled, pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and churn according to the manufacturer's instructions until the gelato reaches a creamy consistency (about 25-30 minutes).
4. Transfer the churned gelato into an airtight container and freeze for at least 2 hours to firm up.
5. Serve the homemade gelato in bowls or cones, and enjoy!



TRY THESE DELICIOUS TWISTS

01

CHOCOLATE GELATO

Add 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder or 3/4 cup dark chocolate (melted) to the milk, cream, and sugar mixture while heating it. Stir well until fully dissolved.



TIP: For a richer chocolate flavour, you can increase the amount of cocoa powder or use high-quality dark chocolate.

02

BERRY GELATO

Puree 1 cup of fresh or frozen berries (strawberries, raspberries, or blueberries) and add it to the cooled mixture before churning. Strain the puree to remove seeds if desired for a smoother texture.

TIP: Adjust the sugar depending on the sweetness of your berries.



03

NUTTY GELATO (HAZELNUT, PISTACHIO, OR ALMOND)

Add 1/2 cup of finely ground nuts (hazelnuts, pistachios, or almonds) to the milk, cream, and sugar mixture. You can also toast the nuts lightly for a deeper flavour.

TIP: For extra nutty flavour, fold in small pieces of chopped roasted nuts after churning.



GELATO TIPS

- **Creamy Texture:** For a super-smooth texture, ensure the gelato is churned at a slower speed. This prevents large ice crystals from forming.
- **Pre-Chill the Bowl:** If your ice cream maker has a detachable bowl, freeze it beforehand for the best texture.
- **Freezing Tip:** If you don't have an ice cream maker, pour the mixture into a shallow dish and freeze. Stir vigorously with a fork every 30 minutes for the first 3 hours to break up ice crystals.

THE ORIGIN OF GELATO:

- Gelato, the Italian ice cream, has roots in Sicily, dating back to the 17th century. It was created by freezing sweetened fruit juices and then grinding them to a fine, creamy texture. The word "gelato" comes from the Italian word for frozen, "gelare."
- It became more refined with the introduction of milk and cream, with Florence credited for its modern-day evolution, thanks to famous gelato maker Bernardo Buontalenti in the 16th century.



OFFBEAT GELATO AROUND THE WORLD

- **Black Sesame Gelato (Japan):** A deep, nutty flavour loved in Japan, it's a unique twist on classic gelato.
- **Olive Oil Gelato (Italy):** An unexpected combination of creamy texture with the rich, peppery kick of high-quality olive oil.
- **Caviar Gelato (France):** Yes! Gelato infused with luxury caviar is a treat for the daring foodie in Paris.
- **Wasabi Gelato (Singapore):** A surprising fusion of spicy and creamy, it brings the heat from wasabi to a sweet, smooth base.
- **Lavender Gelato (USA):** A floral, fragrant gelato that's both refreshing and calming, popular in places like California.



GOOD TO KNOW

- **Temperature Matters:** Gelato is served at a slightly warmer temperature than ice cream (about -10°C). This allows the flavours to shine more intensely and the texture to be silkier.
- **Low on Fat:** Gelato contains less fat than ice cream, typically using more milk and less cream.
- **Gelato vs. Ice Cream:** While both are frozen desserts, gelato has less air churned into it, making it denser and richer than regular ice cream.



The Taste of Coastal India

COASTAL RESTAURANTS ARE OFFERING NEWER GASTRONOMIC ADVENTURES THAT ARE LEAVING RESTAURANT GOERS CRAVING FOR MORE.

BY RACHNA VIRDI

As culinary tourism continues to expand globally, there is a rising demand for immersive cultural experiences that offer both authenticity and flavour. This trend is fuelling the growth of coastal culinary tourism, with the market projected to exceed USD 5.6 trillion by 2034.

New coastal specialty restaurants are redefining the culinary landscape, offering unique and authentic coastal delicacies with innovative twists that celebrate regional traditions. Some coastal eateries have reinvented classic Indian dishes with contemporary influences, creating indulgent feasts that blend cuisine and culture. Let's look at the trend of immersing diners in the rich culinary traditions and flavours with signature creations of coastal restaurants.

A MODERN TWIST ON COASTAL CUISINE

TAT, a coastal gem in Mumbai's culinary scene, shines a spotlight on Indian coastal cuisine, preserving its deep-rooted traditions while delivering an unparalleled dining experience. Their menu is a celebration of coastal flavours, inspired by traditional recipes from across the Indian peninsula. Each region contributes its own culinary treasures, brought to life through both vegetarian and non-vegetarian delicacies.

Sumit Govind Sharma, Founder, TAT, shares, "Our goal is to create an immersive dining experience that transports guests to India's coastal regions. We aim to capture the essence of India's diverse coastal cuisine by covering the 'V' of India, from Maharashtra to West Bengal. From the rich, aromatic curries of Kerala to the tangy, spicy flavours of Goa, every dish we serve tells a story, evoking nostalgia and a sense of belonging while offering a gastronomic journey through India's vibrant heritage."

About the trend of immersing diners in the traditional flavours he expresses, "More than just a trend, I think it's the need of the hour. There's a very high demand for traditional Indian food for more mature customers who appreciate the culture and diversity of our country, and there are few restaurants that cater to this need. More people are realising this potential and therefore, we're seeing a crop of new diners offering this type of specialised cuisine."

While honouring authenticity, their chefs reimagine classic Indian dishes with a contemporary twist, creating indulgent



Sumit Govind Sharma



Malvani fish curry



Sigadi Prawn Ghee Roast



Sri Lankan Prawn curry

feasts that embrace local communities. “Our chef-curated menu has a range of signature dishes from nine Indian coastal states and a little bit of Sri Lanka. While these dishes are traditional at their core, we’ve adapted them to suit our customer’s local palate. Decadent and indulgent, our aim with every recipe is to celebrate the diverse flavours that take us back to our Indian roots,” he adds.

The must-eats at TAT? There are a bunch. But the Kothmirvadi, Sigdee Ghee Roast (prawns), Chicken 65, Bombil Fry, Tandoori Crab, Bameen Tikka, Koshamangsho, Mavani Fish Curry, Mushroom Pothi, Bamboo Chicken, Pooran Poli Phyllo Rolls are some of the signatures, loved by the customers.

THE INFINITY OF THE OCEAN

Oito, a new venture located in Panjim Goa, is more than just a restaurant. It stands as a living testament to the endless cycle of culinary creativity. At its heart burns the ancient soul of the Irori Hearth, where fire and hot sand come together in a time-honoured ritual of transformation. Chef Viraf Patel states, “We represent the convergence of sophisticated European culinary techniques with the freshest seafood that Goa has to offer. We have created a menu that honours both the ocean’s abundance and the comfort of familiar classics, reimagined through a contemporary lens.”

Chef Patel curates a menu that reads like a love letter to the ocean, blending tradition with innovation in signature creations. He speaks about the diverse cuisines and cultures represented here. “Oito is a heartfelt tribute to



Chef Viraf Patel and Prakriti Lama

Goa, reflecting my deep gratitude for the abundant gifts of its ocean and landscape, which have inspired me since childhood. No matter where I’ve cooked around the world, I’ve always drawn inspiration from the coast. Dishes like the Whole Mackerel on Fire-Baked Flatbread evoke memories of grilling fish on the beach and warming local bread over a bonfire, while the Veggie Farmer’s Pie replaces meat with locally grown lentils from the low-lying flatlands, celebrating the region’s rich agricultural heritage.”

Beyond culinary artistry, Oito supports the local economy by sourcing from food markets. “We are deeply committed to sourcing locally, actively exploring markets across Goa—from its borders to its heart—in search of fresh ingredients and inspiration. Goa never fails to offer something new, and I personally seek out the best of what the region has to offer. Prioritising local produce not only enriches our menu but also fosters a sustainable and rewarding connection with the community. While Oito welcomes guests from across India and the world, our core focus remains on supporting Goa’s economy and celebrating its vibrant food culture.”



CD Oito



The Old Banana



Panna Cotta



CD-Oito



Prawn ajilo - Oito

Among the must-try's is the Singapore Chili Crab Ravioli, a reflection of cross-cultural inspiration. The Whole Charcoal-Grilled Chonak, infused with oranges and herbs, celebrates the pure essence of the sea, while the Crab Rockefeller reinvents a classic, weaving new stories with familiar flavours. Oito's vegetarian offerings challenge conventions, drawing from ocean vegetation to craft plant-based dishes that captivate the palate. Standouts like the Mushroom Bourguignon and Meatless Wellington prove that the ocean's bounty extends far beyond seafood, offering rich, flavourful experiences that redefine coastal cuisine.

Chef's favourites? "I have the Tenderloin Carpaccio with caesar dressing almost every day—its light yet packed with umami. The Crab and Leek Risotto is a favourite for its perfect balance of comfort and convenience, making crab indulgence effortless. And, of course, the 'IT' Waldorf Salad with cottage cheese and miso dressing is an absolute must-try."

TIME-HONOURED FOOD TRADITIONS

And for those eager to explore the bold, vibrant flavours of southern coastal cuisine, South of Vindhya's at The Orchid Hotel, Mumbai, takes you on a culinary journey inspired by the five southern states—Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. Meticulously curated by Chef Bala, the menu is a celebration of coastal flavours, time-honoured traditions, and exquisite preparations that bring the essence of South India's shores to life. A highlight of the experience is their specially curated seafood platter,



Chef Bala



Chicken masala



Devilled Prawns



Fish Curry & Rice



Fish Fry

a tribute to the ocean's finest bounty. Diners can expect a line-up of tantalising starters.

Chef Bala says, "Start your journey with delectable appetisers that give a tantalising glimpse of what's to come—from the crispy, golden rice fritters (Kara Paniyaram) from Tamil Nadu to the fiery, flavourful



Non Veg Thali South of Vindhyas

spicy meatballs (Sundiya) from Chettinad. For the main course, vegetarians will delight in the creamy, aromatic Avial from Kerala and the tangy, spicy Kaalan Curry from Chettinad, which features mushrooms simmered in a rich, flavourful curry. Non-vegetarians can savour the Maasa Coondapur from Karnataka, a tender lamb dish cooked in a luscious coconut gravy, or indulge in the succulent Lobster Curry (Kalyara Pal Curry) from Pondicherry."

A signature dish of Chef Bala, the Chicken Masala has earned rave reviews and is a must-try for those seeking an unforgettable dining experience. For seafood lovers, the Pepper Crab (Nandu Pepper Fry) from Tamil Nadu is a crowd favourite, packing a punch with its bold, spicy flavours.

The restaurant strikes a balance between home-style flavours in its menu. "Staying true to the traditional recipes passed down through generations is essential to maintain the integrity of the cuisine. Our cooking style ensures that each dish has genuine flavours and techniques used in the households of southern India. We have maintained a blend of authenticity, regional diversity, comfort, and personalisation. This approach makes the experience appealing to guests," he concludes.



Sea Food Thali

MEXICAN FIESTA

Dish up a colourful platter
for your next party!

Hosting a cosy gathering and looking to serve something vibrant, delicious, and fun? Look no further than a Mexican Platter! It's perfect for sharing, easy to assemble, and, most importantly, allows your guests to build their own unique dish. We've put together a vibrant vegetarian spread that'll have everyone coming back for more!



THE BASE: SOFT CORN TORTILLAS

The heart of any Mexican meal, soft corn tortillas are perfect for making tacos or burritos. They're light, flexible, and offer that authentic taste. If you don't have tortillas, thin rotis will do just as well.

TIP:

Warm the tortillas just before serving by wrapping them in foil and placing them in the oven for a few minutes, or heat them on a dry pan for 10 seconds on each side to keep them soft and pliable.

THE FILLINGS: CHOOSE 3-4 DELICIOUS OPTIONS

1. SPICY BEAN FILLING (REFRIED BEANS) ▶▶

These creamy, flavourful beans are cooked with onions, garlic, and spices. You can also use kidney beans instead of black beans. They are called 'refried' but they are actually just mashed.

How to cook: Heat a little oil, sauté onions and garlic, add the cooked beans, and mash them with a potato masher. Season with cumin, paprika, and chili powder for a rich flavour.



Grilled Vegetables

3. GUACAMOLE ▶▶

No Mexican meal is complete without this. Creamy mashed avocado mixed with lime juice, cilantro, diced tomatoes, and onions.

How to prepare: Mash ripe avocados with a fork, then add finely chopped onions, tomatoes, cilantro, and squeeze fresh lime juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Plating Tip: Serve it in a colourful bowl, and drizzle a little extra lime juice on top to keep it fresh and vibrant.



Corn Salad with Lime and Chilli



Refried Beans



2. GRILLED VEGETABLES

A medley of bell peppers, zucchini, mushrooms, and onions, grilled to perfection with a smoky, charred flavour.

How to cook: Toss the veggies in olive oil, lime juice, and seasoning (think chilli powder, garlic powder, and a pinch of salt). Grill or sauté until tender, slightly charred, and full of flavour.



Guacamole



4. CORN SALAD WITH LIME AND CHILLI

Mexicans love corn. This tangy, sweet salad made with fresh corn, lime juice, chilli powder will add oodles of flavour to your platter.

How to prepare: Grill fresh corn or use sweetcorn kernels, then mix with chopped red onions, lime juice, chilli powder, and a sprinkle of crumbled cheese.

Plating Tip: Present this salad in a wide, shallow bowl so guests can scoop it easily onto their plate.

5. MEXICAN RICE

An absolute essential: Fluffy rice cooked with tomato, onions, and garlic, seasoned with a pinch of cumin and paprika.

How to cook: Sauté onions and garlic in a bit of oil, add rice, and then cook with tomato puree, vegetable broth, and spices. Let it simmer until fluffy.

Plating Tip: Serve this rice in a warm bowl and sprinkle a little fresh cilantro on top for extra flavour and colour.



Mexican Rice

TOPPINGS: ADD FLAVOUR AND FRESHNESS



TIP: For extra depth, you can char the tomatoes and onions before chopping. This adds a smoky kick to the salsa.



Salsa Roja (Tomato Salsa)

A fresh, tangy tomato salsa made with diced tomatoes, onions, coriander leaves, and a squeeze of lime juice.



TIP: For an even fresher taste, blend the ingredients raw or cook them for a deeper flavour.



Salsa Verde (Green Salsa)

A salsa made with tomatillos (underripe tomatoes work well, too), green chilies, coriander leaves, and lime juice. It's tangy with a touch of heat.



TIP: Toss the shredded lettuce with a drizzle of lime and salt to bring out its flavour.



Shredded Lettuce

For a crisp, refreshing crunch.



TIP: Serve in a small bowl with a spoon, so guests can add as much or as little as they want.



Sour Cream

Cool, creamy, and the perfect balance for all the spices.



Tip: Serve in a small bowl for guests to sprinkle on top of their creations.



Chopped Fresh Coriander

Adds a burst of brightness and freshness to each bite.



Mexican Platter



Pickled Jalapeno



Margarita

THE FUN PART: ASSEMBLING THE PLATTER

Now that you've prepared the base, fillings, and toppings, it's time to assemble the platter. Here's how to do it:

1. **Start with the Base:** Place the warm tortillas in the centre of the table, stacked on a large plate or serving tray.
2. **Create Colourful Stations:** Arrange your fillings, toppings, and sauces around the tortillas, each in its own bowl. Ensure everything is within easy reach so guests can build their own dish.
3. **Add Garnishes:** Place bowls of lime wedges, fresh coriander, and chilli flakes so guests can add a personalised touch to their creations.
4. **Mix & Match:** Let guests choose their own tortillas, fill them with their favourite fillings, and top with salsa, guacamole, and sour cream. The beauty of this platter is in its flexibility and the ability to tailor each bite to personal taste.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

- **Cheese:** Offer crumbled feta cheese or shredded Monterey Jack cheese as a topping for an extra creamy texture.
- **Pickled Jalapeños:** For those who like a spicy kick, pickled jalapeños add a zingy contrast to the rich, creamy elements of the platter.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS:

- Pair this platter with a Margarita or Agua Fresca (fruit-infused water) for a refreshing, fiesta-like vibe.

If you'd like to make it even more festive, set the scene with colourful tableware and vibrant napkins to complement the bold colours of your food.

THE LEGEND OF THE AMALFI LEMON

While Italy's most stunning gem, Amalfi, is known for its stunning cliffs and coastal views, it's also famous for its lemons, particularly the Sfusato Amalfitano, a variety of lemon that's larger, juicier, and more fragrant than your typical lemon. What many don't know is that these lemons have been a vital part of the region's history for over a thousand years!

In the Middle Ages, Amalfi's ancient paper mills and trade routes helped the town flourish, but its true agricultural secret was its lemons. The Amalfi lemon was used for medicinal purposes, and its essential oils were even traded as far as the East. The fruit is so integral to the town that it's said to have been a symbol of wealth for Amalfi's ancient nobility.

Today, these lemons are used to create the world-famous Limoncello, but if you visit, you'll find that the zest of Amalfi's lemons isn't just for liqueur—it's part of local customs.

Many local restaurants and cafes serve a lemon-infused "after-dinner" breath freshener, made from the zest, mint, and a bit of sugar, offering visitors a refreshing taste of local tradition.



SELF

TAKE TIME TO NURTURE THE MOST IMPORTANT
PERSON IN YOUR LIFE—YOU!



Pilates Powerhouse

Yasmin Karachiwala on Cores, Celebs, and Keeping it Real

With over three decades sculpting bodies and minds, Yasmin Karachiwala, the undisputed “Pioneer of Pilates in India” and trusted instructor to Bollywood’s brightest stars (think Alia Bhatt, Preity Zinta, Katrina Kaif, Deepika Padukone, and Hardik Pandya), is launching her brand-new Pilates haven, YKBI Juhu, in Mumbai, alongside her son Zahaan Karachiwala and his partner Zainab Bashey. We sat down with Yasmin to unlock the secrets of her Pilates journey, diving into her unwavering passion and revealing the unexpected benefits that go way beyond just a toned core.





My “aha!” moment came after having my children. Despite being a personal trainer for about ten years, I struggled to lose my post-pregnancy belly fat. My online research led me to Pilates, which was described as a core-centric exercise. Initially, I equated “core” solely with my abs, thinking, “Great, a way to get rid of this!” That curiosity propelled me to a highly reputable Pilates studio in the US, where I immersed myself in three months of intensive training to become a certified instructor. It wasn’t just about losing belly fat; it was the beginning of a complete transformation in how I understood movement and the body.

From Bollywood icons to everyday individuals, you cater to a diverse clientele. What’s the magic behind making Pilates feel both personalised and powerfully effective, regardless of fitness levels or lifestyles?

The beauty of Pilates lies in its inherent adaptability. There’s no secret formula beyond understanding this fundamental principle. Pilates is truly for everyone – teenagers, housewives, athletes, those seeking posture improvement, or individuals dealing with back, neck, or lower back issues. Qualified instructors are trained in various levels and modifications to suit different bodies. In Pilates, we work with the individual in front of us, recognising that each person has unique needs and goals. Our expertise lies in tailoring the exercises to maximise their ability and functional movement.

Pilates transcends mere physical exercise. How do you weave mental

well-being into your routines?

Pilates inherently fosters a powerful mind-body connection. We consistently emphasise breath, which is a cornerstone of mental well-being. A qualified instructor will continuously guide you on your breathing throughout the exercises. This focused breathing oxygenates the body and actively promotes mental relaxation, naturally leading to stress reduction. It’s a conscious effort to link movement with mindful inhalation and exhalation.

We all know Pilates sculpts a strong core, but what’s one unexpected advantage you’ve witnessed in your clients—and perhaps even experienced yourself—that often goes unmentioned?

The common misconception is that the “core” is just your abdominal muscles. In reality, it’s a sophisticated team of four key players: the transverse abdominus (your deepest abdominal muscle, acting like a natural corset),



A qualified instructor will continuously guide you on your breathing throughout the exercises. This focused breathing oxygenates the body and actively promotes mental relaxation, naturally leading to stress reduction.



Building a solid foundation is the key to unlocking the full potential of Pilates.

the multifidus (deep spinal muscle), the diaphragm, and the pelvic floor. Strengthening this entire network yields incredible “side effects,” as I like to call them: improved posture, fewer injuries, and enhanced movement in any activity, be it sports or daily life. Many clients also experience a sense of increased height as Pilates works to elongate the spine.

If someone is stepping into their first Pilates class tomorrow, what's the one crucial piece of advice you'd offer—a little insider tip that most instructors might overlook—to ensure they start strong?

My core advice to every newcomer is to prioritise the foundation. Don't get swept away by the often advanced and visually striking content you see on social media platforms like Instagram. While those visuals can be inspiring, they often showcase complex movements. True progress and understanding come from diligently learning the basics. In your initial classes with me or any of my certified trainers, we will emphasise

understanding your core muscles and how every Pilates movement originates from this powerhouse. Building a solid foundation is the key to unlocking the full potential of Pilates.

Spill a diet secret you've never publicly shared before!

For radiant skin, I swear by a daily shot of moringa, amla (Indian gooseberry), and curry leaves.

What's the Pilates exercise that holds a special place in your heart?

Without a doubt, my all-time favourite Pilates exercise is the Teaser. It beautifully integrates core strength, balance, and control in one fluid movement. There's a real sense of accomplishment when you nail a perfect Teaser.

After a demanding week, what's your go-to ritual to completely recharge?

My weekly reset involves taking an invigorating Ice Bath. The initial shock gives way to a profound sense of calm and mental clarity. It's a fantastic way to reset both physically and mentally, washing away the stress of the week.

What's one fitness myth you wish would just disappear already?

The persistent myth that you need to sweat profusely for a workout to be effective. Intensity and focus are far more important indicators of a good workout than the amount you sweat. You can have a very effective Pilates session without breaking a massive sweat.

Looking back at your remarkable journey, what stands out as your most profoundly rewarding moment as a Pilates expert?

The most deeply rewarding moments are when I witness a tangible difference in someone's movement. It's particularly impactful when individuals come to me experiencing pain and find relief and improved mobility after their Pilates sessions. That ability to positively impact their quality of life is truly the most fulfilling aspect of my work.

HEALTHY BAKE

STUFFED APPLES

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large apples
- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/4 cup chopped nuts (walnuts, almonds, or pecans)
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons melted butter or coconut oil
- 1/4 cup raisins or dried cranberries (optional)
- Vanilla ice cream or whipped cream, for serving

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Wash the apples thoroughly and core them, leaving the bottoms intact. Use a spoon or melon baller to scoop out the centres, creating a hollow space for stuffing.

3. In a bowl, combine oats, chopped nuts, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, melted butter or coconut oil, and raisins or dried cranberries (if using). Mix well until all ingredients are evenly combined.

4. Stuff each apple with the oat mixture, packing it lightly into the cavities.

5. Place the stuffed apples in a baking dish and bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the apples are tender and the filling is golden brown.

6. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly before serving.

7. Serve warm with a dollop of vanilla ice cream or whipped cream on the side.

WHY IT'S HEALTHY

- **Nutrient-Rich Ingredients:** Oats provide fibre, nuts offer healthy fats and protein, and apples are packed with vitamins and antioxidants.
- **Controlled Sweetness:** Using brown sugar adds sweetness without overwhelming the natural flavour of apples.
- **Low-Calorie Option:** This dessert is a healthier alternative to traditional bakes, with controlled portions and natural sugars from fruits.



LISTEN TO YOUR GUT

UNLOCK BETTER HEALTH BY TUNING INTO YOUR "SECOND BRAIN": SUBTLE SHIFTS, SIGNIFICANT REWARDS



We often think of our brain as the command centre, but our gut – the “second brain” – wields surprising influence. This intricate network of neurons and a vast community of microbes constantly communicates with our head, impacting everything from our mood and stress resilience to our immunity and cognitive function. Understanding this connection and making subtle shifts in our lifestyle can yield significant rewards.

The trillions of bacteria, fungi, and viruses in our gut, the microbiota, are key players. They produce vital neurochemicals, including a large chunk of our serotonin, our natural mood booster. An imbalanced gut microbiome (dysbiosis) isn't just about digestive woes; it's increasingly linked to anxiety, low mood, and even longer-term neurological issues.

Instead of stating the obvious, let's focus on less commonly highlighted yet impactful actions:

EMBRACE THE POWER OF POLYPHENOLS

Beyond basic fibre, focus on incorporating polyphenol-rich foods. These plant compounds, found in colourful fruits like berries, dark leafy greens, dark chocolate (in moderation!), and even green tea, act as potent prebiotics, specifically feeding beneficial gut bacteria and reducing inflammation. Benefit timeline: You might notice subtle improvements in digestion and energy levels within a week or two. Longer-term benefits for mood and inflammation may become more apparent within 4-8 weeks of consistent intake.



PRIORITISE MINDFUL MEAL TIMES

Instead of eating on the go or while distracted, dedicate time to sit down and eat without screens or stress. This allows your body to enter a “rest and digest” state, improving nutrient absorption and reducing digestive discomfort. Furthermore, eating slowly and chewing thoroughly gives your gut more time to signal fullness to

your brain, potentially aiding in weight management, which indirectly benefits gut health. Benefit timeline: You may experience reduced bloating and improved digestion within a few days. A more consistent impact on overall well-being and potential weight management could take several weeks.



EXPLORE THE WORLD OF ADAPTOGENS

Consider incorporating adaptogenic herbs like Ashwagandha or Rhodiola Rosea (after consulting a healthcare professional). While not directly targeting the gut microbiota, these herbs help your body manage stress more effectively. Since stress significantly impacts gut health, reducing your stress response can have a positive knock-on effect on your digestive system and the balance of your gut microbiome. Benefit timeline: Noticeable reductions in stress levels and indirect improvements in gut comfort might be felt within 2-4 weeks of consistent, appropriate use.



By focusing on these less conventional yet powerful strategies, you can actively cultivate a healthier gut environment and strengthen the vital connection with your “second brain.” These aren't quick fixes, but consistent, mindful changes that can lead to significant and lasting improvements in your overall health and well-being.

HEALTH FLASH

TURMERIC FOR JOINT COMFORT

A 2024 study published in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine found that a specific formulation of curcumin nanoparticles significantly reduces knee pain and improves function in Indian adults with osteoarthritis.

GUT MICROBIOME & METABOLIC HEALTH

Research published in early 2025 in Nature Communications by an international team including Indian scientists identified specific gut bacteria prevalent in healthy Indian individuals, suggesting that a traditional fibre-rich diet supports a beneficial gut profile linked to better metabolic health.

OMEGA-3S AND EYE HEALTH

A large-scale study published in the Indian Journal of Ophthalmology in late 2024 indicates that regular consumption of omega-3 fatty acids, found in foods like flaxseeds and walnuts, is associated with a reduced risk of age-related macular degeneration in an Indian cohort.

AIR QUALITY AND RESPIRATORY HEALTH IN CHILDREN

A May 2025 report by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) in New Delhi links specific indoor air pollutants common in Indian households to increased respiratory issues in young children. Improving ventilation and using air purifiers have been suggested as key interventions.


PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND COGNITIVE FUNCTION IN OLDER ADULTS

Research published in the Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences followed a group of older adults in Kerala and found that those who engaged in regular moderate-intensity physical activity show better cognitive function and a lower risk of cognitive decline over a two-year period.



DRAWING THE LINE

CULTIVATING CONNECTION THROUGH CLARITY

A full-page background image showing a man and a woman walking hand-in-hand on a paved road that curves through a snowy, mountainous landscape. The woman is on the left, wearing a brown jacket and blue jeans, and the man is on the right, wearing a dark jacket and dark pants. They are both looking at each other and smiling. The road has white lines and is flanked by snow-covered hills under a clear blue sky.

We often tiptoe around setting boundaries, fearing they'll build walls in our relationships. Yet, as Brené Brown wisely states in *Daring Greatly*, "Daring to set boundaries is about having the courage to love ourselves even when we risk disappointing others." Far from being barriers, healthy boundaries are the very scaffolding that allows genuine connection to flourish, built on a foundation of mutual respect and understanding.

Moving beyond the commonplace advice of simply saying "no," the art of gentle boundaries lies in nuanced communication and a deep understanding of our own needs. Consider these less obvious yet powerful approaches:

- **The "Assume Positive Intent, Clarify Impact" Technique:** Instead of "You're always late and it's disrespectful," try, "When you arrive late without letting me know, I feel like my time isn't valued, which makes it difficult for me to fully relax and enjoy our time together." This approach, often advocated in therapeutic settings, opens a space for dialogue rather than immediate conflict.
- **Boundary Setting Through Shared Values:** Instead of simply saying "I need my evenings to myself," you could say, "Because we both value being present and rested when we spend time together, I need my evenings to recharge so I can be fully present with you on [agreed-upon times]." This reframes the boundary as contributing to the overall

health of the connection, a concept beautifully explored in Esther Perel's work on relational intelligence.

- **The "Broken Record" Technique with Empathy:** For example, "I understand you'd like me to help you with this right now, and I wish I could, but I'm unavailable. I can help you at [specific time]." This acknowledges their desire while firmly holding your limit. This technique echoes the assertive communication skills highlighted in many interpersonal effectiveness guides.
- **Visualising Your Energetic Space:** Think of your personal energy as a precious resource. Before agreeing to something, visualise how it will impact your energy levels. If it feels draining or encroaching on your essential needs, that's a strong indicator a boundary needs to be set.
- **Learning from Film:** The Subtle Power of "No": Watch films where characters set or fail to set boundaries. Notice the subtle cues in their language and body language. The film *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* offers nuanced portrayals of characters learning to assert their needs in various relationships, highlighting that "no" can be a complete sentence, delivered with kindness and conviction.

As the saying goes, "Good fences make good neighbours." In our personal relationships, these "fences" – our clear and kindly communicated boundaries – are what allow the garden of connection to truly flourish.

IT'S ABOUT TIME

3 TERRIFIC TECHNIQUES TO HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR DAY

01



THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE: WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

This technique encourages you to work in 25-minute intervals, known as “Pomodoros,” followed by a 5-minute break. After completing four Pomodoros, take a longer break (15-30 minutes). This approach keeps your mind fresh, helps maintain high focus, and prevents burnout. By breaking your work into digestible chunks, you’ll be able to maintain productivity without feeling overwhelmed.

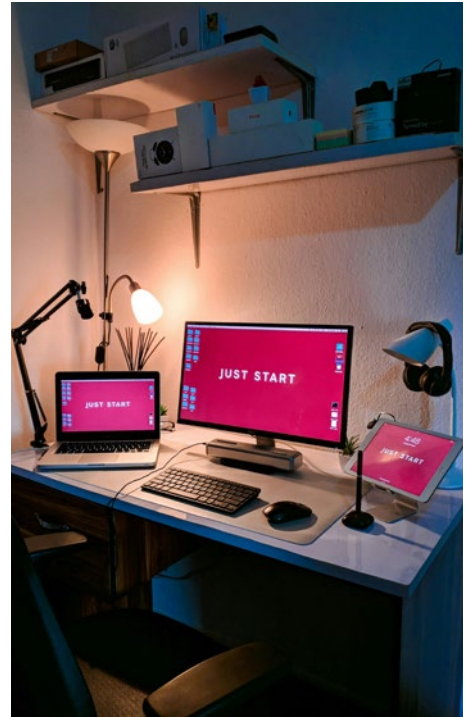
02



TIME BLOCKING: CREATE A VISUAL ROADMAP FOR YOUR DAY

Time blocking is the art of scheduling specific blocks of time for particular tasks. Rather than creating a to-do list, allocate fixed time slots for your activities throughout the day. This method gives you a visual structure of your day, reducing the chances of procrastination and distractions. It also allows you to set realistic goals for what you can accomplish in a given time frame, helping to stay on track and feel more accomplished by the end of the day.

03



THE EISENHOWER MATRIX: PRIORITISE LIKE A PRO

The Eisenhower Matrix helps you focus on what truly matters by sorting tasks into four categories:

- **Urgent and Important:** Do these immediately.
- **Important, but not Urgent:** Schedule these to avoid last-minute stress.
- **Urgent, but not Important:** Delegate them if possible.
- **Neither Urgent nor Important:** Eliminate these distractions.

By following this method, you can make clearer decisions about where to invest your energy and avoid wasting time on less significant tasks.



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