

August-September 2023

# INDO THAI LIFESTYLE

125 THB

## THE ULTIMATE EUROPEAN ESCAPE

UNVEILING THE CHARMS OF  
A DREAMY SUMMER

## FROM ANCIENT TEMPLES TO PRISTINE BEACHES

A JOURNEY THROUGH SOUTHERN  
THAILAND'S GULF COAST

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**Founder & Managing Director**  
Pawan Mishra

**Managing Editor**  
Maria Mercy Querijero-Bugtong

**Publicity Director**  
Panumas Puangpala

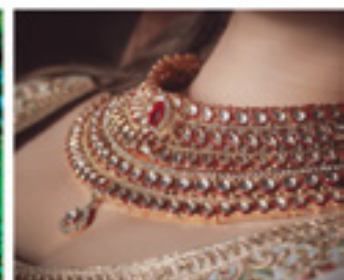
**Admin**  
Kamolchanok Boonchai  
Mary Aung

**Layout and Design**  
Austin Brock

**Issue**  
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**For Information Contact**  
editor@indothainews.com

**For Advertisement Contact**  
contact@indothainews.com  
Call: +66 90 975 220



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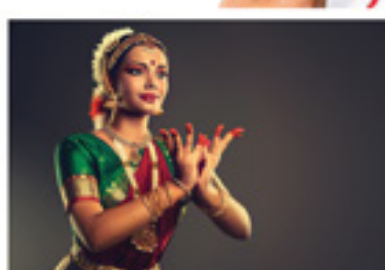
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## Indo Thai News Founder's Note

**W**e had an exciting month of May and we are thrilled to share the exhilarating success of our event, **Chak Lein De — Kailash Kher Live**, on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023 in Bangkok. We take this opportunity to extend our deepest gratitude to our sponsors, whose support and belief in our vision made this event possible. Their generosity and dedication to the arts have played a pivotal role in bringing such extraordinary talent to our stage.

The night was filled with mesmerising performances by **Kailash Kher & Band Kailasa**, the hilarious **Vibhor Chaudhary**, the talented lyricist **Prabudha Saurabh**, elegant Ganesh dance and the electrifying Aigiri Nandini dance recital. We have put up an interesting feature of the night in this edition recapping the event in all its glory.

Continuing with our commitment to bringing high-quality content for our readers, we also have an interesting potpourri of features and stories in this Indo Thai Lifestyle magazine edition.

Come with us on a mesmerising journey as we explore the perfect summer destinations in our feature — **Ultimate European Escapade: Unveiling the Charms of a Dreamy Summer**. For all fashion and jewellery enthusiasts, check out our special feature on **India's Timeless Elegance:**

**Discover the Allure of Ethnic Kundan Jewellery.**

Know all about the candle festival in Ubon Ratchathani, the beaches you can head to in South Thailand Gulf Coast at this time of the year and learn about the various boat races in Kerala. With monsoon round the corner, check out our list of precautions you should take to beat the weather blues.

Learn to bake the perfect eggless brownies, discover India's eight exquisite classical dances, know the secrets to maintain focus in this digital age — all in this edition.

From stories on travel in Thailand and India to festivals, food, fashion, wellness, and entertainment, there is something to meet the reading palate of all our readers.

We are grateful for the love and support we have received from our readers — without whom we would not be here. You inspire and encourage us to bring out interesting and wholesome stories from India and Thailand.

Happy Reading!

**Pawan Mishra**  
Founder, Indo Thai News



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# Indulge in Decadence

## Irresistible Eggless Chocolate Brownies

Jyoti Babel

**A**ttention all chocolate lovers! Get ready to be blown away by the ultimate indulgence that will satisfy your cravings and leave you wanting more. In celebration of World Chocolate Day (7<sup>th</sup> July), we bring you a sensational recipe for eggless chocolate brownies that is a triumph of flavour, texture, and pure decadence.

Whether you're avoiding eggs for dietary reasons or simply looking to explore new dessert options, these brownies will take you on a journey of taste that you will remember.

### The Quest for the Perfect Eggless Brownie

For years, bakers around the globe have strived to create the perfect eggless brownie recipe – one that boasts a fudgy interior, a crackly top, and an intense chocolate flavour that lingers on the palate.

After countless experiments and taste tests, we can proudly present you with the holy grail of eggless brownies. Each bite is an explosion of rich, velvety chocolate with a moist and tender crumb that will leave you weak at the knees.





## The Secret Behind the Magic

What sorcery brings these brownies to life without a single egg? The answer lies in the perfect combination of ingredients. Instead of relying on eggs for moisture and structure, this recipe harnesses the power of yoghurt, which adds moisture, tenderness, and a subtle tang that complements the richness of the chocolate.

Vegetable oil ensures a moist texture, while the right balance of leavening agents guarantees the perfect rise. This harmonious blend creates a brownie so extraordinary; you won't even miss the eggs!

So, let's gather all the ingredients, grab the apron and let's get baking!

## Ultimate Eggless Chocolate Brownie Recipe

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Baking Time:** 25-30 minutes

**Serves:** 12

### Ingredients

1. 200g dark chocolate, finely chopped
2. 1 cup all-purpose flour
3.  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup unsweetened cocoa powder
4.  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking powder
5.  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon baking soda
6. 1 teaspoon instant coffee powder
7.  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
8. 1 cup granulated sugar
9.  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plain thick yoghurt
10.  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetable oil
11. 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Optional Toppings

1. Powdered sugar for dusting
2. Chocolate ganache
3. Toasted nuts
4. Whipped cream
5. Ice cream





## Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease a 9" square baking pan and line it with parchment paper, leaving an overhang for easy removal later.
2. In a heatproof bowl, melt the dark chocolate in the microwave in short bursts, stirring in between, or using a double boiler on the stovetop. Set aside to cool slightly.
3. In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, cocoa powder, coffee powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt until well combined. Set aside.
4. Combine the granulated sugar, plain yoghurt, vegetable oil, and vanilla extract in a large mixing bowl. Whisk vigorously until the mixture is smooth and well blended.
5. Gradually pour the melted chocolate into the wet ingredients while continuously whisking, ensuring it is thoroughly incorporated.
6. Add the dry ingredient mixture to the wet ingredients and gently fold everything together using a spatula. Be careful not to overmix; stop folding when the flour disappears into the batter.
7. Pour the batter into the prepared baking pan, spreading it out evenly.
8. Place the pan in the preheated oven and bake for approximately 30-35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out with a few moist crumbs.
9. Remove the pan from the oven and allow the brownies to cool completely in the pan on a wire rack. Leaving them overnight for cooling is even better. It will ensure they are set properly.
10. Once cooled, carefully lift the brownies out of the pan using the parchment paper overhang. Cut into squares or desired shapes.
11. For an optional finishing touch, dust the brownies with powdered sugar or drizzle them with chocolate ganache. Add toasted nuts and whipped cream, or serve with your favourite ice cream scoop.
12. Serve and enjoy these decadent eggless chocolate brownies!



### Note:

Store the brownies in an airtight container at room temperature for 3-4 days. You can also freeze them for longer storage.

These eggless chocolate brownies prove that indulgence knows no bounds and that the absence of eggs is no barrier to creating culinary delights. Savour every bite and relish that you have discovered the secret to baking eggless brownies to perfection. Bon appétit!

# India Gears Up for 77<sup>th</sup> Independence Day

A Grand Finale to Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

Jyoti Babel



India, the land of diverse cultures and rich heritage, is gearing up for a momentous occasion - the 77<sup>th</sup> Independence Day on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2023. This year's celebrations hold even greater significance as they mark the culmination of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a 75-week-long nationwide celebration of India's 75<sup>th</sup> independence.

The Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, which commenced on 12th March 2021, has taken the nation on a journey of remembrance, reflection, and rejuvenation. The campaign has been an ode to the countless sacrifices and contributions made by the brave freedom fighters who fought valiantly for India's independence.

It aims to inspire the youth to draw inspiration from the past and play an active role in shaping India's future. The Mahotsav revolves around five core themes, each representing a crucial aspect of India's journey:

## Freedom Struggle

This theme pays tribute to the heroes of the freedom struggle. Digital exhibitions, webinars, and mesmerizing performances of patriotic songs and dances have transported us back to that era, instilling a deep sense of pride and gratitude within each citizen.



## Ideas@75

India's progress in the past 75 years owes much to the ideas and innovations that have propelled it forward. The Mahotsav showcases the nation's achievements in science, technology, and innovation through hackathons, startup boot camps, and exhibitions, inspiring the young minds of India to dream big and contribute to the country's growth.

## Resolve@75

India's strength lies in its unity and the indomitable spirit of its people. The Mahotsav encourages patriotism and national unity through flag-hoisting ceremonies, patriotic rallies, and cultural events, reinforcing the resolve to build a stronger and more prosperous nation.

## Actions@75

To achieve India's goals for the future, concerted actions need to be taken. The Mahotsav emphasizes good governance, social justice, and economic development through debates, discussions, and workshops, urging citizens to shape the nation's destiny actively.

## Achievements@75

India has witnessed remarkable accomplishments in sports, arts, and culture. The Mahotsav celebrated these achievements through award ceremonies, exhibitions, and concerts, showcasing our nation's incredible talent and diversity.

The Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is not just a celebration; it is a call to action. It beckons the youth of India to draw inspiration from past sacrifices and contribute their talents, ideas, and energy to building a stronger and more prosperous nation. It is an opportunity to reflect on the journey of the past 75 years and envision a future where India stands tall on the global stage.

As the countdown to Independence Day on 15th August 2023 begins, India braces itself for a grand finale of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

In view of this, new themes have been identified, aligned with the Panch Pran (namely, Goal of Developed India, Removal of Colonial Mindset, Take Pride in Our Roots, Unity, and Sense of Duty in Citizens) announced by Hon'ble Prime Minister





of India. They are a reminder of the values that India stands for and the goals that the country hopes to achieve in the years to come.

The new themes include: Women and Children, Tribal Empowerment, Water, Cultural Pride, Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE), Health and Wellness, Inclusive Development, Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Unity.

It is a time for all Indians, irrespective of their backgrounds, to come together, celebrate the spirit of independence, and pledge their unwavering commitment to the nation's progress.

Let us embrace this historic moment with pride, passion, and patriotism. Together, let us make India's 77<sup>th</sup> Independence Day a testament to our collective resolve to shape a glorious future for our beloved nation. Jai Hind!





# The Ultimate European Escapade

## Unveiling the Charms of a Dreamy Summer

Jyoti Babel

As the summer sun casts its golden glow across the European continent, a sense of wanderlust weaves through our hearts, beckoning us to embark on a remarkable journey. Picture yourself strolling along cobbled streets, savouring delectable cuisine, and immersing yourself in the rich tapestry of European culture.

From the awe-inspiring Swiss Alps, the ancient ruins of Italy, the romantic allure of France, the sun-drenched coastlines of Portugal, the picturesque tulip fields of the Netherlands, the mythical landscapes of Greece, the indulgent delights of Belgium, and the cosy charisma of Denmark, Europe holds the key to an unforgettable summer holiday.

In each country, a unique symphony of sights, flavours, and experiences awaits, offering an exquisite blend of history, art, natural beauty, and culinary pleasures.

Whether you seek the tranquillity of a beachside retreat, the exhilaration of exploring ancient ruins, or the joy of indulging in local delicacies, Europe unveils an enticing array of destinations to satiate every traveller's desires.

Take this captivating journey through Europe with us; prepare to be enchanted, for the summer is calling, and an extraordinary adventure awaits.





## Switzerland: Alpine Bliss and Pristine Lakes

Switzerland, often referred to as a paradise on earth, offers awe-inspiring landscapes of snow-capped mountains, crystal-clear lakes, and charming alpine villages. Zurich, the country's largest city, provides a plethora of choices; begin by exploring its historic centre and world-class museums.

No visit to Switzerland is complete without a trip to the Swiss Alps. Head to the Jungfrau region, where

you can embark on breathtaking hikes, witness cascading waterfalls, and take in panoramic views from the top of the Schilthorn.

Indulge your taste buds with Swiss delicacies like fondue and raclette, and don't forget to satisfy your sweet tooth with delectable Swiss chocolate.

**Best Time to Visit:** June to September



## Italy: Art, History, and Gastronomy

Italy, the birthplace of the Renaissance and home to incredible art, history, and gastronomy, offers an unrivalled experience for travellers.

Start your journey in Rome, where ancient ruins like the Colosseum and the Roman Forum await. Wander through the winding streets of the Eternal City and marvel at iconic landmarks such as the Trevi Fountain and the Pantheon.

Continue to Venice, where you can navigate the

intricate network of canals aboard a gondola and get lost in the charming labyrinth of narrow streets and historic squares.

Travel south to Naples to indulge in the birthplace of pizza before visiting the breathtaking Amalfi Coast with its picturesque cliffside villages and azure waters.

**Best Time to Visit:** May to September





## The Netherlands: A Tapestry of Tulips and Canals

Nestled in the heart of Europe, the Netherlands is a country that boasts a rich cultural heritage and stunning natural landscapes.

Begin with Amsterdam, the capital city known for its iconic canals and picturesque architecture. Rent a bike and explore the city like a local, cruising along the charming streets and soaking in the laid-back atmosphere.

For a truly mesmerising experience, visit the

Keukenhof Gardens just outside Amsterdam. From mid-April to mid-May, this floral wonderland bursts into vibrant colours as millions of tulips bloom.

Lose yourself in a sea of tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths, immersing yourself in the essence of Dutch horticulture.

**Best Time to Visit:** Mid-April to mid-May



## France: Romance and Elegance

France, the epitome of romance and elegance, offers diverse experiences. In Paris, the City of Light, you can admire iconic landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, stroll along the Seine River, and explore world-class museums like the Louvre and Musée d'Orsay.

Head south to the French Riviera, where glamorous cities like Nice, Cannes, and Saint-Tropez await. Bask

in the Mediterranean sunshine, relax on pristine beaches, and indulge in exquisite French cuisine.

Take a detour to Provence, known for its charming hilltop villages, lavender fields, and vineyards producing some of the world's finest wines.

**Best Time to Visit:** May to October



## Portugal: Sun-Kissed Coastline and Historic Charm

With its sun-kissed coastline, vibrant cities, and rich history, Portugal beckons travellers seeking a unique blend of relaxation and culture.

The capital city of Lisbon is known for its colourful streets, historic neighbourhoods, and iconic Belém Tower. Explore the cobblestone alleys of Alfama, savour traditional Portuguese pastries, and enjoy panoramic views from the hilltop São Jorge Castle.

Venture south to the Algarve, where golden beaches, dramatic cliffs, and crystal-clear waters await. Relax in picturesque towns like Lagos and Albufeira, or explore hidden coves and caves along the coast.

In Porto, immerse yourself in the rich history

of the port wine industry and wander through the narrow streets of the Ribeira district.

**Best Time to Visit:** May to September







## Greece: Mythical Legends and Azure Waters

Greece, the cradle of Western civilisation, invites travellers to discover its ancient ruins, idyllic islands, and warm hospitality.

Begin your odyssey in Athens, where the Acropolis dominates the skyline. Explore the Parthenon, the Temple of Zeus, and the ancient Agora, and soak in the awe-inspiring views of the city below.

Hop on a ferry and venture to the enchanting island

of Santorini, known for its iconic blue-domed churches and breathtaking sunsets. Lose yourself in the winding streets of Mykonos, known for its vibrant nightlife and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

For a more laid-back experience, head to Crete, where pristine beaches, charming villages, and ancient ruins await.

**Best Time to Visit:** May to October

## Belgium: Chocolates, Waffles, and Gothic Grandeur

Belgium, a small country with a big appetite for indulgence, offers a delightful blend of delicious cuisine, stunning architecture, and rich history. Explore Brussels, the capital city and marvel at the magnificent Grand Place, sample world-famous Belgian chocolates, and savour crispy waffles from street vendors.

Travel to the charming city of Bruges, often called the "Venice of the North," and wander through its medieval streets, cross picturesque canals and admire Gothic landmarks like the Belfry Tower.

Delight in the art of beer brewing and tasting in breweries scattered throughout the country, and don't miss the opportunity to try some of Belgium's renowned Trappist beers.

**Best Time to Visit:** April to September





## Denmark: Castles, Fairy Tales, and Hygge

Denmark, known for its fairy-tale castles, modern design, and cosy "hygge" concept, offers a unique Scandinavian experience.

Start your adventure in Copenhagen, the capital city, and explore the colourful Nyhavn waterfront, visit the iconic Little Mermaid statue, and discover the vibrant food scene in the trendy district of Nørrebro.

Embark on a journey to the picturesque Kronborg

Castle in Helsingør, which inspired Shakespeare's Hamlet. Explore the vibrant city of Aarhus, known for its innovative architecture and world-class museums.

Embrace the Danish concept of "hygge," which celebrates cosiness and contentment, by enjoying a leisurely picnic in one of the country's many parks or indulging in a comforting cup of hot chocolate.

**Best Time to Visit:** June to August



Each of these European countries offers a unique blend of culture, history, natural beauty, and culinary delights.

From the tulip fields of The Netherlands to the azure waters of Greece, the charm of Belgium, the elegance of France, the romance of Italy, the stunning landscapes of Switzerland, the

historical treasures of Portugal, and the cosiness of Denmark, Europe is a treasure trove of experiences waiting to be discovered.

So, set your sights on these captivating destinations and create unforgettable memories on your European summer holiday.



# Massaman Curry

## Exploring the Rich and Fragrant Flavours of Southern Thailand

Jyoti Babel

**S**tep into the enchanting world of Southern Thailand with Massaman Curry, a culinary masterpiece that beautifully blends rich, fragrant spices with tender meat and creamy coconut milk.

Originating from the Malay-Muslim community, Massaman Curry has become a beloved Thai dish celebrated for its complexity and depth of flavour. With influences from Indian and Persian cuisines, this curry showcases the region's fascinating cultural fusion.

The name "Massaman" is believed to be derived from the Malay word "masam," meaning sour, and the Thai word "man," meaning curry. The curry paste,

meticulously prepared with a medley of ingredients like dried red chillies, lemongrass, galangal, and aromatic spices, forms the foundation of the curry's distinct character. This unique combination of flavours creates a harmonious balance that is comforting and exciting to the palate.

One of the defining features of Massaman Curry is its mild heat compared to other Thai curries, making it accessible to a wider audience. Its gentle warmth is accompanied by a symphony of flavours, including hints of sweetness from palm sugar and tamarind, earthiness from cumin and coriander, and warmth from cinnamon and cloves. The result is a curry that tantalises the taste buds with every spoonful.







Traditionally, Massaman Curry is made with tender chunks of lamb. However, chicken and tofu variations have gained popularity, providing equally delightful alternatives. This versatile dish can be customised to suit different dietary preferences, making it a favourite among meat lovers and vegetarians.

Beyond the delightful flavour profile, Massaman Curry tells a story of cultural exchange and historical significance. Its roots can be traced back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the kingdom of Ayutthaya served as a melting pot of different cultures, resulting in a diverse culinary heritage.

Join us on a culinary adventure as we unravel the secrets of this delectable curry and guide you through crafting it in your kitchen. Together, we will explore the vibrant spices, fragrant aromas, and exquisite flavours that make Massaman Curry a true gem of Southern Thai cuisine. Get ready to embark on a gastronomic journey that will transport you to the sun-drenched shores and bustling markets of Southern Thailand.

## Chicken Massaman Curry Recipe

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking Time:** 50 minutes

**Serves:** 4-6 servings  
(depending on portion size)

### Ingredients:

#### For the curry paste:

1. 4 dried red chillies, deseeded and soaked in warm water
2. 2 shallots, roughly chopped
3. 4 cloves of garlic, minced
4. 2 stalks of lemongrass, white part only, finely sliced
5. 1 thumb-sized piece of galangal, peeled and grated
6. 1 thumb-sized piece of ginger, peeled and grated
7. 1 teaspoon ground cumin
8. 1 teaspoon ground coriander
9. ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
10. ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
11. ½ teaspoon ground cardamom
12. ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
13. ¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
14. 1 tablespoon shrimp paste (optional)



## Ingredients:

1. 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2. 2.5 lbs (700g) boneless chicken thighs, cut into bite-sized pieces (substitute with lamb or tofu for a vegetarian option)
3. 1 can (14 oz/400ml) coconut milk
4. 2 tablespoons tamarind paste
5. 2 tablespoons palm sugar (substitute with brown sugar)
6. 2 medium-sized potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
7. 1 onion, sliced
8. 1 cup roasted peanuts
9. 2 tablespoons fish sauce (substitute with soy sauce for a vegetarian option)
10. 1 cup chicken or vegetable broth

Fresh coriander leaves for garnish

Steamed jasmine rice to serve

1. Begin by making the curry paste. Drain the soaked red chillies and place them in a blender or food processor. Add all the remaining curry paste ingredients and blend until you achieve a smooth and fragrant paste. Set aside.
2. In a large pot or wok, heat the vegetable oil over medium heat. Add the curry paste and stir-fry for 2-3 minutes until the aromas are released.
3. Add the chicken pieces to the pot and cook until browned on all sides, ensuring they are coated in the curry paste.
4. Pour in the coconut milk, tamarind paste, and palm sugar. Stir well to combine and bring the mixture to a gentle simmer.
5. Add the potatoes, onion, and roasted peanuts to the pot, stirring them into the curry. Allow the curry to simmer on low heat for 30-40 minutes or until the chicken is tender and the potatoes are cooked.
6. Stir in the fish sauce and chicken or vegetable broth. Adjust the seasoning according to your taste preferences, adding more fish sauce or sugar if desired. Simmer for an additional 5 minutes to let the flavours meld together.
7. Remove from heat and let the curry rest for a few minutes. It allows the flavours to develop further.



Serve the Massaman Curry over steamed jasmine rice, garnishing with fresh coriander leaves for a burst of freshness.

From the exquisite combination of spices in the curry paste to the tender meat and creamy

coconut milk, every spoonful promises an explosion of taste and aroma. So, roll up your sleeves, gather the ingredients, and transport yourself to the vibrant streets of Thailand as you prepare this special dish in your kitchen.

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# Raksha Bandhan

## The Sacred Bond of Love and Protection

Jyoti Babel

**I**n the vast tapestry of Indian festivals, one stands out for its sheer beauty and significance — Raksha Bandhan. This joyous occasion, observed on the full moon day of the Hindu month of Shravana, is a testament to the enduring love, care, and protection that siblings share. This year the festival is being celebrated on 30th August.

Raksha Bandhan, also known as Rakhi, is a time-honoured tradition that transcends religious boundaries and is celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains. The festival holds deep-rooted historical and mythological significance, dating back to ancient times. Its essence lies in exchanging a sacred thread, the rakhi, which symbolises the bond of love and protection between siblings.

This sacred thread, often beautifully adorned with

intricate designs and embellishments, is tied by a sister on her brother's wrist. In return, the brother pledges to protect and cherish his sister, come what may. It is a promise that goes beyond mere words and resonates with the unbreakable bond of siblingship.

With its rich historical significance and heartwarming tales, Raksha Bandhan has evolved into a cherished festival that transcends generations.

### Historical Stories: Legends and Symbolism

Raksha Bandhan is woven with captivating historical stories that lend depth to the festival and showcase its enduring significance.





## Legend of Lord Krishna and Draupadi

One of the most prominent tales associated with Raksha Bandhan harks back to the era of the great Indian epic, the Mahabharata. It is said that when Lord Krishna injured his hand, Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas, tore a strip from her sari and tied it around his wound.

Krishna promised to protect Draupadi in distress in return for her selfless act. This heartfelt incident symbolises the essence of Raksha Bandhan, where the brother pledges to safeguard his sister from all harm.

## Rani Karnavati and Emperor Humayun

Another remarkable story dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century when Rani Karnavati, the widowed queen of Mewar, faced imminent danger from the invading forces of Emperor Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.

In desperation, Rani Karnavati sent a Rakhi to Emperor Humayun, seeking his protection. Touched by her plea, Humayun swiftly came to her aid, emphasising the power of Raksha Bandhan to unite even the most unlikely allies in times of crisis.

## Rabindranath Tagore's Rakhi Mahotsav

Inspired by the spirit of Raksha Bandhan, the renowned poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore initiated the Rakhi Mahotsav to foster unity and brotherhood during the Indian independence movement.

This festival brought people from diverse backgrounds together, emphasising the importance of standing united against colonial rule and promoting the ideals of love, peace, and harmony.





## The Modern Relevance of Raksha Bandhan

Raksha Bandhan transcends time and continues to hold immense significance today. This sacred festival strengthens the bond between siblings and reinforces the values of love, respect, and protection in our society.

### Celebrating Sibling Love

Raksha Bandhan is a reminder to cherish and celebrate the unique bond between brothers and sisters. It is a celebration of unconditional love and serves as a reminder of the countless childhood memories, shared laughter, and tears that have woven the fabric of the sibling relationship. It is a day to express gratitude for the constant support, encouragement, and guidance that siblings provide each other.

## Promoting Unity and Harmony

The festival also serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of unity and harmony within society. Regardless of cultural or religious differences, this festival fosters a sense of brotherhood and strengthens social bonds. Communities celebrate the joyous occasion, exchanging sweets and gifts, transcending barriers, and spreading love.

Raksha Bandhan is a testament to the timeless bond between siblings and the power of love and protection. Through its captivating historical stories and contemporary relevance, the festival continues to inspire and strengthen relationships. As we celebrate Raksha Bandhan, let us embrace the spirit of love, care, and unity, spreading joy and fostering a society that cherishes and protects one another.





# Weathering the Storm

## Essential Precautions During Monsoon Season

Prapoorna Kiran

*"Rain is just confetti from the sky!" — Anonymous*

**M**onsoons are the enrapturing season of the year that makes us fall in love with love! As the rains descend upon us, accompanied by gusty winds and the refreshing scent of petrichor, it's essential to embrace the beauty of the monsoon season while ensuring our safety.

Monsoons are like sour & sweet candy! The fun of rains and the pain of water logging! Both have to be dealt with equipoise. Else, it may ruin our health and happiness.

The monsoon can bring about various challenges, from waterlogging and floods to the risk of waterborne diseases. But it is not the villain in our story. However, lack of awareness about the necessary precautions or failure to implement the same could be a potential threat.

So, here we are today, sharing some tips and preventive care tips that may help you ace your monsoon plans with aplomb.







## Protect Yourself from Waterborne Diseases

Monsoons can be synonymous with waterborne diseases. Their prevalence and breakout during the monsoon are due to contaminated water sources. The safe choice could be enhanced personal hygiene.

Ensure to wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially before meals. Avoid consuming street food or raw vegetables that may have been washed in contaminated water.

Use a water purifier or boil water before drinking. It is crucial to consume only purified water. With this single habit, you can significantly reduce the risk of waterborne illnesses such as cholera, typhoid, and gastroenteritis.

## Strengthen your Immunity

Physical immunity plays a pivotal role in combating any unexpected infections. However, immunity building is not an overnight magical upgradation.

But a consistent lifestyle that includes fitness, good eating habits, calming activities, pleasant social interactions and a balanced diet together work to boost an individual's physical and mental immunity.

Regular exercise improves blood circulation, strengthens the immune system, and helps combat seasonal blues. A healthy routine helps in building better resilience in life.

## Stay Informed and Plan Ahead

Stay up-to-date with weather forecasts, warnings, and local advisories to remain well-informed about the monsoon conditions in your area. This knowledge will enable you to plan your activities accordingly and avoid venturing out during heavy downpours or high flood risks.

Prepare an emergency kit with essentials such as torchlights, batteries, non-perishable food items, first-aid supplies, and important documents, ensuring you are well-equipped to face unforeseen circumstances.







## Prevent Mosquito-Borne Diseases

Water stagnation is an impending peril of the monsoons. Breeding of mosquitoes in these stagnant waters is the core reason for the spread of mosquito-borne diseases like dengue, malaria, and chikungunya during the monsoon season. To protect your neighbourhood and yourself, eliminate stagnant water around your home, in open spaces and areas where mosquitoes breed, such as in flower pots, buckets, or uncovered water storage containers.

Use mosquito nets, repellents, or screens on windows and doors more liberally in this season. Wearing long-sleeved clothing and using mosquito coils or vaporisers can also be effective preventive measures.

With a reduced risk of mosquito-borne illnesses' one can enjoy the monsoon without worry.

## Ensure Safe Travel

Travel has become an inseparable part of our lives today. If you must travel during the monsoon, exercise caution and prioritise safety. Patience, vigilance and being up-to-date with weather information are a few pertinent aspects of ensuring a safe journey during the monsoon season.

If travelling by road, avoid driving through waterlogged areas as it may be difficult to judge the depth of the water, leading to accidents or vehicle breakdowns.

If you encounter a flooded road, turn back and find an alternative route. Opt for public transportation whenever possible or utilise ride-sharing services that can navigate flooded areas.

Wait for the weather to settle or arrange for alternate modes of transportation.

A little delay is better than never reaching!



## Protect Your Home

Homes are also prone to damage due to the outrageous downpours of monsoons! So, ensure you gear up to face the battle of mindless monsoons. Inspect your roof, windows, and doors for any gaps or cracks that may allow rainwater to seep in—clear clogged gutters and drains to prevent water accumulation.

Ensure that your electrical systems and appliances are well-maintained to avoid electrical hazards. Investing in waterproofing measures and securing valuables in elevated areas can provide added protection.

Proactive measures can help minimise structural damages, water leakages or electrical issues.



## Dress Appropriately

Dressing appropriately during the monsoon is essential to stay comfortable and prevent infections. By wearing weather-appropriate clothing and footwear, you can navigate through the monsoon season with ease and style.

Lightweight and quick-drying fabrics that do not retain moisture are ideal. Keep a raincoat or umbrella handy to shield yourself from sudden showers. Choose footwear with good traction to avoid slipping on wet surfaces.

The monsoon season brings with it an array of challenges and delights. By taking the necessary precautions, we can ensure our safety and fully enjoy the wonders of this enchanting time of year.

Let us embrace the monsoon season with preparedness and caution, making it a memorable experience while staying safe and healthy.



# Rain or Shine

## Essential Monsoon Skincare Tips for Beauty Enthusiasts

Prapoorna Kiran

*"The best cleanser in the world is a sprinkle of rain."*  
– Unknown

**T**he onset of monsoon brings relief from the scorching heat but also presents unique skincare challenges. As the weather shifts, our skin requires special attention to combat the humidity, moisture imbalance, and potential skin concerns. Changing weather is a reminder to revamp your skincare routine to adapt to the changing weather conditions.

During the monsoon, rain showers can be nature's way of cleansing our surroundings, but what about our skin? Rainwater is known to be soft and pure,

making it a fantastic natural cleanser.

So, if you get caught in a light drizzle, embrace it! Allow the raindrops to touch your face and revel in the refreshing feeling. Savour the earthy scent of petrichor and revel in the charms of monsoon.

However, the increased humidity and occasional downpours can pose challenges for our skin. Fear not! We bring to you some popular skincare tips that will help you embrace the season's beauty while keeping your skin radiant and nourished.





## Cleanse Gently & Moisturise Right

*"Cleansing is like the first sip of a cup of tea – it sets the tone for the rest of the day." – Unknown.*

During the monsoon, cleaning your skin effectively is crucial to remove dirt, sweat, and excess oil. Go for a gentle, pH-balanced cleanser that won't strip away essential moisture from your skin. Avoid harsh scrubs or cleansers that may disrupt the skin's natural barrier.

After cleansing, moisturising becomes even more important. Choose a lightweight, non-comedogenic moisturiser that provides hydration without clogging your pores. Look for moisturisers with ingredients like hyaluronic acid or glycerine, which help retain moisture in the skin.



## Sun Protection is a Must

Don't let the cloudy skies fool you—UV rays are present even on overcast days. Sun protection remains crucial throughout the year, including the monsoon season.

Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher and apply it generously to all exposed areas of your skin. Reapply every two hours, especially if you're out in the rain or engaging in outdoor activities.

## Tackle Monsoon Acne

With increased humidity and sweat, acne breakouts can become common during the monsoon. Clean your skin by washing your face twice daily with a gentle cleanser. Incorporate a salicylic acid-based toner or serum into your skincare routine to help control excess oil and prevent breakouts.

Avoid touching your face frequently, as it can transfer bacteria and worsen acne. If you experience breakouts, resist the urge to pick at them, which can lead to scarring.





## Banish Monsoon Dullness

Humidity can make your skin appear dull and lifeless. Combat this by exfoliating regularly to remove dead skin cells and reveal a brighter complexion.

A gentle exfoliator with natural ingredients like rice bran or fruit enzymes is a good choice. However, avoid over-exfoliating, as it can strip away the skin's natural oils. Limit exfoliation to once or twice a week.

*"Exfoliation is like a dance — it helps your skin shed its old moves and reveal a fresh glow." — Unknown*

## Hydrate from Within

Staying hydrated is crucial for healthy skin, regardless of the season. Drink plenty of water to keep your skin hydrated and flush out toxins. Additionally, incorporate hydrating foods such as watermelon, cucumber, and citrus fruits into your diet.

These foods are refreshing and packed with vitamins and antioxidants that nourish your skin from the inside out.



## Embrace Minimal Makeup

During the monsoon, heavy makeup can melt or smudge easily. A minimalist approach by embracing lightweight products will allow your skin to breathe. Choose a tinted moisturiser or a light coverage foundation to improve your skin tone.

Waterproof mascara and long-lasting lip tints can add a touch of colour without worrying about smudging. Remember to cleanse your face thoroughly at the end of the day to remove any residual makeup and allow your skin to breathe and rejuvenate overnight.



## Monsoon Must-Haves for a Radiant Skin:

There are a few skincare essentials that can be safe to be used in your monsoon beauty routine.

- A hydrating face mist is perfect for a quick pick-me-up during the day.
- A lip balm with SPF will keep your lips soft and protected from both dryness and the sun.
- An antioxidant-rich serum in your routine to combat oxidative stress caused by environmental factors.

*"Skincare is like a recipe — you need the perfect ingredients to create a masterpiece." — Unknown*

As the monsoon season graces us with its presence, let's

modify our skincare routines to nurture and protect our skin from the challenges it brings. Remember, consistency is key, and along with proper skincare, staying hydrated, eating a balanced diet, and getting enough sleep will further contribute to your skin's overall well-being.

Once you know your skin and understand its requirements, you are almost close to winning the monsoon skin battles!

*Happy skin care! Let your skin dance to the music of the monsoon.*





VITALLIFE

# Residual effects still linger, awaiting rehabilitation

## Post-COVID-19 Rehabilitation Program for People with Past COVID-19 Infection

Now that the COVID-19 illness has gone,  
you may still experience some of the following lingering symptoms even though  
the virus is no longer detectable in your body



Fatigue



Difficulty breathing



Cough/Joint pain



Chest pain



Trouble Sleeping



Headache



Pounding Heartbeat



Loss of smell



Depression/Anxiety



Fever



Dizziness on standing



Easily tired



# Navigating the Digital Age

## 5 Secrets to Maintain Focus Amidst Distractions

Akshara Tyagi

**I**n today's fast-paced digital age, the pursuit of instant success has become a common goal. However, it is important to remember that success is not a trophy to be won; it is a journey influenced by various factors. One of the key factors that significantly impact success is focus.

Unfortunately, maintaining focus has become increasingly challenging in a world dominated by smartphones and constant connectivity. We have adapted to the constant interruptions and distractions that have become the norm, but experts

are now warning that these disruptions have detrimental effects on our ability to concentrate.

Without determination and concentration, achieving anything significant in life becomes difficult. The relentless nature of the digital age often leaves us lacking the focus we need to succeed. If you find yourself facing this problem, do not despair. I have compiled a list of basic yet effective strategies to help you avoid frequent distractions and maintain your focus.





## Start with Intention & Attention

Every morning, set a clear intention for what you want to accomplish during the day. By consciously focusing on your goals, you allow your attention to follow suit. As you gain clarity and focus, you will feel the energy building up in your mind and body.

When intention, attention, and energy align, you tap into a powerful reservoir to help you master the fundamental skills of focus and concentration. This state of flow will propel you towards success without any barriers.



## Watch the Clock

While it may sound simple and basic, observing a clock can quickly reveal the difficulties we face when trying to concentrate on a single task.

Find a traditional clock with hands and a second hand. Focus closely on the second hand as it moves around the clock, starting at 12, without allowing any other thoughts to interfere. Continue observing the clock until the second hand completes a full round and returns to 12. Repeat this exercise for several rounds until you can do it comfortably.

Initially, distractions and intrusive thoughts may disrupt your focus, but with practice, you will develop the skill to regain your focus whenever needed.





## Practice Mindfulness or Meditation

Engaging in mindfulness or meditation for a few minutes each day can significantly enhance your ability to concentrate and focus. Additionally, cultivating healthy habits such as regular exercise, spending time in nature, getting enough sleep, or practising gratitude before bed can promote emotional balance and improve focus.

## Use the ABC Rule

Acknowledge that you always have a choice when faced with distractions. You can either give in to these diversions or stay committed to what truly matters to you.

Once you realize this, take a deep breath, step back, and relax. Consider the consequences of each course of action before making a decision. This approach will reduce impulsiveness and enable you to prioritize tasks effectively.



## Pay Attention to the Details

In our visually stimulating world, we are often exposed to a wealth of information without truly paying attention or observing. We passively absorb impressions and sensations without actively engaging. However, consciously observing and visualizing what we see can significantly enhance concentration and focus.

Whether you are watching a movie, taking a bus ride, or simply looking out of a window, make an effort to pay closer attention to your surroundings. Instead of memorizing every detail, focus on the object of

your attention, take note of its specific features, and reflect upon it. Over time, you develop the ability to close your eyes and vividly visualize the image.

Here are a few additional activities that can help improve your ability to focus:

- Prioritize sufficient sleep
- Engage in regular exercise
- Cultivate a habit of reading
- Limit the time spent using electronic devices



Focus has become a crucial challenge in our technologically advanced and innovative era. The ability to discern what to ignore is perhaps the most difficult decision.

Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, reveals that one of the most valuable lessons he learned from Steve Jobs was the importance of focus. He emphasized that true excellence can only be achieved by dedicating oneself to a limited number of things. Apple,

renowned for its groundbreaking products, often rejects numerous good ideas to focus on the truly exceptional ones.

Maintaining your focus is essential for enhancing your chances of success. By implementing these strategies and consciously prioritizing your attention, you can navigate the digital age with greater efficiency and achieve your goals.



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# India's Timeless Elegance

## Discover the Allure of Ethnic Kundan Jewellery

Akshara Tyagi

**I**n the midst of ever-changing fashion trends, there are certain elements that stand the test of time, transcending generations and cultures. One such timeless treasure is India's ethnic Kundan jewellery. Originating from the royal courts of India, Kundan jewellery, one of the oldest types of crafted jewellery in India, has captivated the hearts of jewellery enthusiasts around the globe with its exquisite craftsmanship and intricate designs.

The art of making Kundan jewellery has been faithfully handed down through the centuries. Since then, this handcrafted jewellery has been worn by women with pride. From trendy Western wear to royal ethnic ensembles, it goes perfectly well with all kinds of attires.





## The Origins of Kundan Jewellery

Kundan jewellery, sometimes referred to as Bikaneri or Jaipuri jewellery, dates back to the third century BCE. However, its popularity grew during the Mughal era in India, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, the skilled artisans of Rajasthan perfected the art of setting gemstones in gold.

The term "Kundan" is derived from the Sanskrit word "Kund," meaning pure gold. Kundan jewellery was primarily worn by royalty and aristocracy as a symbol of opulence and social status. Crafting the jewellery was a labour-intensive procedure

that required trained artisans to achieve elaborate ornamentation.

Due to Kundan's accessibility to regular people, the subcontinent saw increased use and popularity. The jewellery design changed over time and was successfully translated into silver pieces in Rajasthan, Bihar, and Punjab, making it more accessible to the general populace. Over time, it became an integral part of Indian cultural heritage, passed down from generation to generation.



## The Crafting Process

Crafting Kundan jewellery is a highly intricate and collaborative process requiring multiple artisans' expertise. It is not a task that a single individual can complete. A team of skilled craftsmen may take several months to create a single Kundan necklace or set. Each artisan specialises in a specific aspect of jewellery-making, working together to bring the design to life.

The process begins with the *Ghaat* stage, where the basic structure of the piece is established. It lays

the foundation for the intricate design that will be created. Once the structure is in place, the next step is the *Paadh* process. During this stage, wax is carefully poured into the framework and moulded to match the desired design. This step ensures that the final piece will have the desired shape and form.

The *Khudai* stage follows, where the diamonds and gemstones are meticulously set into the jewellery. It requires a high level of precision and skill, as each stone must be carefully placed to enhance the overall



beauty and appeal of the piece. The artisans work diligently to ensure that every stone is securely held in place, creating a stunning visual effect.

After the stones are set, the jewellery moves on to the *Meenakaristage*. The enamelling process occurs here, adding intricate details and vibrant colours to the design. Skilled artisans carefully apply enamel to the metal surface, creating patterns and motifs that enhance the overall aesthetic of the jewellery.

Once the enamelling is complete, gold foils are cold-soldered onto the jewellery. This step further secures the gemstones in place and adds a touch of brilliance to the piece. The final touch is given during the *Pakai* stage, where the jewellery is polished to perfection using a process known as *Chillai*.

Attention to detail and a deep understanding of the materials and techniques are paramount throughout the crafting process. Each artisan brings their unique expertise to the table, working in harmony to create a masterpiece that showcases the timeless beauty of Kundan jewellery.

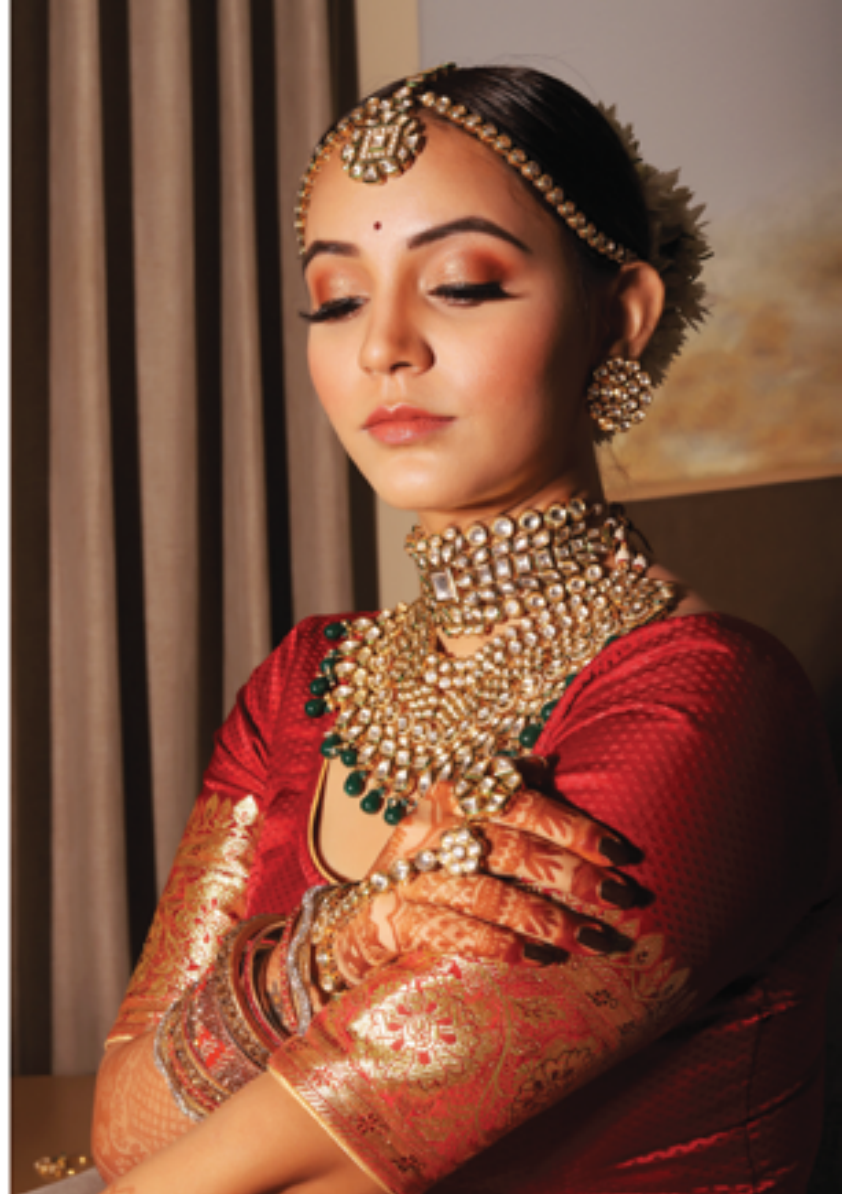
## Choose Your Best From an Array of Kundan Designs

While Kundan jewellery is deeply rooted in tradition, it has evolved with changing times, adapting to contemporary tastes and fashion sensibilities. Modern Kundan designs feature a fusion of traditional elements with contemporary styles, making them versatile and suitable for various occasions.

Some of the trending designs include:

**Chokers:** Kundan chokers are regal neckpieces that sit snugly around the neck, adorned with an array of gemstones. They add a touch of grandeur and elegance to any outfit, be it a traditional saree or a modern gown.

**Jhumkas:** These intricately crafted earrings are a quintessential part of Indian heritage. Kundan jhumkas are known for their delicate craftsmanship



and dangling gemstones, adding a touch of grace and charm to the wearer's face.

**Haathphools:** Kundan haathphools are hand harnesses that adorn the back of the hand and connect to the finger with delicate chains. They are a popular choice for brides, symbolising beauty and femininity.

**Maangtikas:** These are forehead ornaments that add a touch of glamour to Indian bridal attire. Kundan maangtikas feature a central pendant, usually with a cascading chain, beautifully encrusted with gemstones.

**Rani Haars:** These long, statement necklaces are fit for royalty. Kundan rani haars feature a stunning blend of Kundan stones and pearls, creating a magnificent piece that demands attention.





## The Timeless Appeal of Kundan Jewellery

Kundan jewellery's timeless appeal and ability to transcend cultural boundaries set it apart. Its intricate craftsmanship and exquisite designs make it a sought-after accessory for traditional and contemporary occasions.

It beautifully complements Indian ethnic wear such as sarees, lehengas, and salwar suits, enhancing the wearer's overall look with a touch of regality. Kundan jewellery has also made its mark on the global fashion scene, with designers and celebrities incorporating it into their collections and red-carpet ensembles.

Whether worn as a symbol of heritage or a statement piece, Kundan jewellery radiates a unique, captivating, and eternal charm. So, if you're looking to add a touch of India's timeless elegance to your jewellery collection, indulge in the enchanting world of Kundan jewellery and embrace the legacy of regal adornment. It's a perfect go-to option when you want that royal and confident look.







## AUSTRALIA'S FAVOURITE all-day cafe

Find out what's new at The Coffee Club. Your Happy Place isn't just a place. It's the first sip of coffee on a Monday morning, or the mouth-watering moment right before you take a big, juicy bite of your favourite burger. It's that feeling you get when you hug a friend you haven't seen in a while, or that ring of the doorbell when the delivery driver has arrived with your dinner.

At The Coffee Club we believe what makes people happy isn't complicated – it's enjoying those small, real moments of happiness. We're all about serving the food you love, the way you want.

No matter which Coffee Club you visit, we will serve you good food, great service and excellent coffee. Our menu comprises of favorite foods that celebrate local produce. Recently, we have been working to support the local agricultural industry. We wanted to show-case that Thai coffee is now on-par with some of the World's best. As a result, we worked with local farmers to introduce a Single Origin Blend at the Coffee Club. We hope that you will enjoy this new blend as much as we do.



# THE COFFEE CLUB NEW LOCAL BLEND

## Siam Blend

This blend was created through a special collaboration between The Coffee Club and Bluekoff.

From Mae Suay, Chiang Rai province, these locally sourced Arabica beans have gone through the washed process.

This blend has been highly recommended and received a score of 93 from Coffee Review, one of the worlds leading Coffee Guides.

The Siam Blend is a blend between 2 roasting levels: Medium-dark roast and dark roast. This combination is best for making espresso, giving an intense aroma with a strong body that tastes like chocolate, nuts and caramel.



X



### *Product Specification*

1. Process: Washed Process.
2. Roasting level: Medium-Dark Roast and Dark Roast.
3. Brewing methods: Espresso, Moka pot, French press etc.
4. Origin: Mae suay, Chiang Rai, Thailand.
5. Varieties: Mixes of Catuai, Catura, Catimor, Typica and Bourbon
6. Altitudes: 1,200 – 1,500 MASL.
7. Tasting Notes: Intense aroma and strong body with chocolate, nutty and caramel, chocolate.





# Unveiling India's 8 Exquisite Classical Dances

## A Journey through Time and Tradition

Abhimanshu

India, a land steeped in a rich cultural legacy, is renowned for its diverse traditions and artistic expressions. Among the myriad facets of Indian culture, classical dances stand tall as integral pillars, embodying the grace, beauty, and storytelling prowess that define this enchanting nation.



### Origin and History of Indian Classical Dance Forms

Indian classical dances, originating in the sacred domain of temples with worship at its core, have evolved into art forms that captivate audiences worldwide, transcending boundaries of time and place.

While originating from different regions, these dance forms share a common ancestry that can be traced back to Bharata Muni's *Natya Shastra* (an ancient Sanskrit text). The seminal work, compiled between 200 BCE and 200 CE, serves as the foundational scripture for all classical dances, offering insights into their intricate techniques, gestures, expressions, emotions, and aesthetics.



Throughout history, gifted artists have endeavoured to refine and reimagine classical dances, resulting in today's vibrant and enchanting forms.

From Bharatanatyam's elaborate hand gestures to Kathak's fluid movements, each dance style tells its unique story, captivating audiences with its distinct blend of rhythm, grace, and theatricality.

It is through the dedicated efforts of legendary dance gurus like Acharya Nandikeshawara and Sharangdev, whose authoritative texts, *Abhinaya Darpan* and *Sangeeth Ratnakar* (*Nartanadhyaya*), respectively, elucidate the intricate technicalities of classical dance forms. These treatises delve into the profound nuances of body movements, evoking various *rasa* (emotions) and manifesting profound *bhava* (expressions).

## The Cultural Fabric of India

Addressing the indelible impact of classical dances on the cultural fabric of India, the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, has officially recognised eight dance styles as classical dances.

These timeless art forms, shaped by centuries of tradition and imbued with the spiritual essence of India's cultural heritage, continue to delight audiences near and far with their ethereal beauty and evocative narratives.

According to Bharata Muni's *Natya Shastra*, there are Eight *Rasas* that the classical dances must evoke:

1. Shringar: Love
2. Hasya: Humorous
3. Karuna: Sorrow
4. Raudra: Anger
5. Veer: Heroism
6. Bhayanak: Fear
7. Bibhats: Disgust
8. Adbhoot: Wonder

Later, Abhinav Gupta added *Shanta*: Peace as the ninth *rasa*.

## The 8 Classical Dances of India

### Bharatanatyam

Originating in South India, prominently Tamil Nadu, this classical dance form traces its origins back nearly two millennia. It was first brought to life by the *Devadasis*, young devotees within the sacred confines of Hindu temples.

*Abhinaya Darpana*, by Nandikesvara, emerges as a source of textual wisdom, illuminating the intricate techniques and grammar governing the eloquent movements of the body within this expressive art form.

Bharatanatyam blurs the boundary of individuality, for it is a dance of oneness. The dance is often referred to as *ekaharya*, where a single dancer adorns countless roles trying to capture the essence of multiple characters within a single performance. It encompasses a symphony of harmonising elements to create a transcendent experience for the performer and the audience. Within its graceful embrace, *bhava* (expression), *raaga* (music), *ras* (emotion), and *taal* (rhythm) entwine in a mystical dance of unity.

Bharatanatyam dancer striking a eloquent pose



## Historical evidence of Bharatanatyam

- Ilango Adigal's 5<sup>th</sup>-century Tamil epic *Silappatikaram* mentions the dance form
- Brihadishvara Temple, located in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, was one of the major centres for Bharatanatyam since 1000CE
- The gopuram of Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, displays 108 poses of this Indian classical dance form

## Kathak

Derived from the Hindi word Katha, meaning a story, Kathak is a graceful dance form originating in North India. Originally performed in temples and villages, Kathak dancers skillfully narrate stories from ancient scriptures, making it a mesmerising spectacle.

Also known as Natwari Nrutya, Kathak is celebrated as one of India's most enchanting dance forms. Its themes revolve around the captivating tales of *Ramayan*, *Mahabharata*, and Krishna, but it extends beyond that, embracing a wide range of subjects.

The dance form encapsulates rhythmic footwork, breathtaking spins, and the unique art of Padhant (recitation of rhythmic syllables). The

latter creates an intricate synchronisation between the dancer and the audience.

In terms of movement, Kathak emphasises straight body postures, setting it apart from the fluid bends of South Indian dances. The dancers adorn themselves with heavy ghunghroos (small metallic bells strung together on the anklets), wearing 100, 200, or even 250 bells on one leg.

Each ghunghroo produces a variety of sounds, evoking the sensation of a running train, heavy rains, the rhythm of horse riding, and much more. This rich auditory experience adds an extra layer of beauty to the performance.



Kathak performer during her training session





Kathakali performer ready for the show

## Kathakali

The remarkable classical dance of Kerala derives its name from the words *Katha*, meaning story or tale, and *Kali* signifying performance and art.

It finds its origin in ancient art forms like Kutiyattam and Krishnattam. Kathakali combines classical Sanskrit dance drama elements and portrays stories from Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavat Purana, particularly those related to Lord Krishna.

Modern-day Kathakali dancers have also ventured into presenting stories and play by the renowned playwright William Shakespeare, showcasing the dynamic evolution of this timeless art form.

Originally a male-dominated dance, it has now embraced female performers as well. Renowned for its grandeur, Kathakali features elaborate costumes, intricate makeup styles, face masks, and ornate accessories.

Unlike other classical dances, Kathakali evolved within the courts and theatres of Hindu lords. Traditional performances would stretch from dusk to dawn, but contemporary presentations have been adapted to suit time constraints.

1. Interestingly, Kathakali resembles Japanese dance forms like Noh and Kabuki. This connection highlights the universality of expressive storytelling through movement and dramatic art.
2. The Kerala Kalamandalam is the main hub for Kathakali artists, nurturing and preserving this vibrant art form.



## Mohiniattam

It is a classical dance form from Kerala, where grace and elegance flow through soft, calm, and gentle movements.

The name Mohiniattam draws inspiration from Lord Vishnu's charming female incarnation, Mohini, who was believed to have vanquished evil forces.

Translated as the enchantress's dance, Mohiniattam celebrates women's beauty and allure through its captivating performances.

The dancers of Mohiniattam don a unique and visually striking white or off-white costume, adding to their movements' ethereal quality.

Complementing their attire is a distinct one-sided hairstyle known as the Kuduma, often referred to as a prominent dance feature. This traditional hairstyle, characterised by a neatly tied bun, accentuates the dancers' poise and adds an element of sophistication to their appearance.



- In Mohiniattam, the dancers meticulously follow the instructions outlined in the ancient text *Hastha Lakshanadeepika* to perfect their hand gestures and facial expressions, known as mudras.
- Two texts, Mazhamagalam Narayanan Namputiri's *Vyavaharamala* and Kunjan Nambiar's *Ghoshayatra*, mention this art form.
- The Nationalist Malayalam poet Vallathol Narayan Menon helped repeal the ban on temple dancing in 1930, facilitating the revival of Mohiniattam.

## Odissi

It is a long-established dance form that originated in Odisha. This exquisite artistry, also known as Odissi, finds its roots in Bharata Muni's *Natya Shastra* (ancient Sanskrit text), where it is referred to as Audramagdhi.

Within traditional Odissi dance, two distinct styles stand out, the Maharis, also known as Devadasis or Temple Girls, and the Gotipua, a form performed by young boys.

The *Maharis*, once considered sacred temple servants, bestow their devotion upon the deities through graceful gestures and fluid movements. Their ethereal performances





embody reverence and artistry, enchanting audiences with their storytelling abilities.

Contrasting with the Maharis, the Gotipua style showcases the inherent talent of young boys, who

are trained rigorously in the discipline of Odissi. With their nimble footwork and dynamic leaps, these spirited performers evoke a sense of joy and youthful energy, adding a delightful dimension to the dance form.

## Kuchipudi

An ancient dance-drama style that originated in the eponymous village of Kuchipudi in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. This classical dance form has stood the test of time, captivating audiences with its rich cultural heritage.

The modern version of Kuchipudi, as we know it today, was organised and established by Tirtha Narayana Yati and his disciple Siddhendra Yogi.

Over the years, Kuchipudi has evolved into a solo dance form, allowing male and female performers to showcase their skills. The themes of Kuchipudi revolve around Vaishnavism, with performances often dedicated to Lord Krishna, Rukmini, Satyabhama, and various other myths.

The repertoire of Kuchipudi shares similarities with Bharatanatyam while also boasting its distinctive specialities. One such highlight is the spellbinding *tarangam*, where the dancer gracefully performs on brass plates, sometimes even balancing pots on their head. This extraordinary feat adds an awe-inspiring spectacle to the dance form, making it exceptional.

## Manipuri

It is an enchanting dance form from Manipur, also called *Jogai*, which embodies devotion and grace. This art form combines dance and drama, skillfully expressing the timeless love between Radha and Krishna in the spellbinding Raaslila.

Combining influences from both Indian and Southeast Asian cultures, Manipuri is a captivating

blend that showcases its unique essence.

Categorised as Tandav or Lasya, this dance form embodies both powerful and delicate movements, emphasising the hands and upper body. The dancers' curvaceous figures, adorned with vibrant costumes and exquisite ornaments, further enhance the allure of Manipuri.



A Kuchipudi performer  
Augustus Binu via Wikimedia Commons





Manipuri dancers enacting a scene of Raaslila.  
Matsukin via Wikimedia Commons

One intriguing aspect of Manipuri is the absence of ghunghroos (bells), which are synonymous with classical dances in India. Instead, the focus lies solely on the graceful movements and expressions, emphasising the subtle nuances of the art form.

The three distinct styles of Manipuri are:

- **Tal Rasak**, accompanied by a rhythmic clapping, exudes infectious energy.
- **Danda Rasak**, characterised by synchronised stick beats, creates mesmerising geometric patterns as the dancers move harmoniously.
- **Mandal Rasak**, sees the gopis forming a circle while Krishna takes the centre, evoking a sense of divine unity.

## Sattriya

Sattriya, the traditional dance-drama of Assam, has emerged as a global sensation. Influenced by Vaishnavism, this art form owes its modern manifestation to the revered 15<sup>th</sup> century Bhakti Movement Scholar and Saint Srimanta Sankaradev.

Since its inception in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Sattriya has thrived as an integral part of the Vaishnav Bhakti Movement, flourishing within the Hindu monasteries known as Sattras.

The preservation and promotion of the art form have been carried out by the monastic temples, which house dedicated dance community halls known as namghars. Today, Sattriya enjoys immense popularity worldwide.

The performances of Sattriya predominantly revolve around themes such as Radha-Krishna and various mythical narratives.



Famous Sattriya dancer Krishnakshi Kashyap  
*Sattriyadancer via Wikimedia Commons*



The seamless integration of two distinct styles, the Paurashik Bhangi (masculine) and Stri Bhangi (feminine), makes this dance form unique. Its dynamic energy, and exuberant jumps characterise the former, while the latter exudes grace and delicacy.

Sattriya's allure lies in its ability to transport audiences into a realm where divine love and mythological tales come alive through enchanting movements and expressions. With its rich heritage, profound spirituality, and captivating performances, Sattriya continues to enthrall and mesmerise audiences across the globe

In the year 2000, Sangeet Natak Akademi, the national-level academy for performing arts, endorsed Sattriya as a Classical Dance form of India.



# Top 10 Binge-Worthy Thai Dramas on Netflix

Shubhang Saurav

Another week, another longing for the weekend, another plan to binge-watch some good Netflix shows. If you are someone who prefers binge-watching not-so-conventional shows on weekends, Thai dramas can be something you can explore.

Over the past few years, Thai dramas have gained significant popularity among global audiences for their compelling storytelling, intriguing characters, and captivating plots, thanks to the accessibility

offered by streaming platforms like Netflix. Now, viewers around the world have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the addictive world of Thai dramas, exploring the fascinating intricacies of Thai culture and society while being enthralled by gripping storylines and unforgettable characters.

If you're looking to dive into the world of Thai dramas, here is a curated list of the ten best dramas available on Netflix that will captivate and entertain you.



## Hormones (2013-2015)

Considered a game-changer in Thai dramas, *Hormones* explores the lives of high school students dealing with adolescence, friendship, love, and societal pressures. With its realistic portrayal of teen issues, this series gained massive popularity and received critical acclaim.



## SOTUS: The Series (2016-2017)

*SOTUS: The Series* centres around the intense relationship between a senior and a freshman at a prestigious university, where a hazing tradition creates a complex dynamic. This compelling drama explores friendship, loyalty, and personal growth while showcasing students' challenges.





## The Judgement (2018)

*The Judgement* is a thought-provoking drama that delves into the complexities of the justice system. It follows the story of a rookie judge who faces moral dilemmas when presiding over cases involving his friends. With its engaging narrative and stellar performances, this series keeps you engrossed from beginning to end.



## The Crown Princess (2018)

*The Crown Princess* is a gripping romantic drama that follows the story of an ordinary girl who becomes a princess through an arranged marriage. Faced with danger and political conspiracies, she falls for a man from her past. This captivating series combines romance, action, and suspense, keeping viewers on the edge of their seats.



## Love Destiny (2018)

Set in the historical period of Ayutthaya, *Love Destiny* takes you on an enchanting journey through time. It tells the tale of a modern-day archaeologist who magically transports back to the Ayutthaya era, where she falls in love with a military officer. The series beautifully weaves together history, romance, and suspense.



## 2gether: The Series (2020)

*2gether: The Series* is a heartwarming romantic comedy that has garnered a massive fan following worldwide. The show revolves around a fake relationship between two college students, which slowly evolves into something more profound. With its adorable lead couple and lighthearted storyline, this drama is a delightful watch.





## Bpoop Phaeh Saniwaat (2018)

If you're a fan of historical dramas, *Bpoop Phaeh Saniwaat* will transport you to 19<sup>th</sup>-century Thailand. The story follows a modern woman who is transported back in time and finds herself in the body of a noblewoman. This series is a visual treat with its stunning costumes, enchanting romance, and mystical elements.



## The Stranded (2019)

Combining mystery and survival elements, *The Stranded* tells the story of a group of students stranded on an island after a devastating tsunami. As they struggle to survive, they uncover dark secrets that test their unity and resilience. This suspenseful drama keeps you hooked with its unpredictable twists.



## U-Prince Series (2016-2017)

The *U-Prince Series* is a collection of romantic dramas, each focusing on a different male lead and his unique love story. From the charming 'First Class' to the brooding 'Badass,' this anthology offers a diverse range of characters and narratives, making it a delightful watch for romance enthusiasts.



## Lhong Fai (2017)

*Lhong Fai* is a gripping drama that combines elements of romance, mystery, and revenge. The story revolves around a young woman seeking justice for her family while navigating a complicated love triangle. With its intense storyline and captivating performances, this series keeps viewers engrossed until the end.

Whether you're a fan of romance, mystery, or historical settings, this list of the ten best Thai dramas will undoubtedly have something to suit your taste. So, grab your popcorn, settle in, and prepare to be captivated by the world of these amazing Thai shows available on *Netflix*.



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# Magical Splendour of Ubon Ratchathani Candle Festival

## A Celebration of Light, Art, and Culture

Jyoti Babel

Every year, in the north-eastern part of Thailand, the city of Ubon Ratchathani comes alive with a spectacular event that captures the hearts and imaginations of visitors from around the world.

The Ubon Ratchathani Candle Festival, Thailand's largest and most famous candle festival, is a vibrant celebration of art, culture, and Buddhist traditions. It features a breath-taking display of intricate sculptures, enchanting parades, and an atmosphere filled with joy and reverence.

Let's take you on a journey through this magnificent festival, providing essential information and tips to make the most of your experience.





## A Cultural Extravaganza

The Festival is characterised by elaborate parading of intricately carved candles to Buddhist temples or wats. Held during the Buddhist holidays of Wan Asanha Bucha and Wan Kao Pansa, the festival has deep historical and religious significance.

While the festival is typically held in July-August, the dates vary annually, as determined by the lunar calendar. This year it is being held from July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Wan Asanha Bucha commemorates Buddha's first sermon, while Wan Kao Pansa marks the beginning of the Buddhist Lent. During these auspicious occasions, the city of Ubon Ratchathani comes alive with vibrant colours, captivating sculptures, and a lively atmosphere.

## The Venue Details

Located at the heart of Ubon Ratchathani, Thing Si Mueang Park serves as a majestic backdrop for the artistic wonders of the festival.

On the eve of Wan Asanha Bucha, the park transforms into a mesmerizing showcase adorned with elaborately decorated and sculpted candles. The following day, on Wan Kao Pansa, the main procession kicks off, taking the awe-inspiring sculptures to their sacred destinations.

The festival's highlight is undoubtedly the Candle Parade. Artists from around the globe gather to participate in the annual competition, showcasing their skill in meticulous carving beeswax candles into awe-inspiring sculptures.

These sculptures often depict mythological characters from Thai and Hindu folklore. As the parade winds through the city, musicians and dancers in traditional costumes accompany the procession, adding to the enchanting ambience.





## Immerse Yourself in the Festivities

Aside from the mesmerizing Candle Parade, the festival offers a range of festivities that immerse visitors in Thai culture. Surrounding the Thing Si Mueang Park, where the candles are displayed, the city transforms into a bustling street fair.

Explore the open-air markets, indulge in delectable local cuisine from the food stalls, and enjoy live music performances that add a buzz to the atmosphere. The festival truly offers something for everyone, from art enthusiasts to those seeking an unforgettable cultural experience.

The winning wax sculpture is put on display for a few weeks. All the wax sculptures, meticulously crafted with devotion and skill, are eventually melted down. This act symbolizes the Buddhist belief in impermanence, reminding us of the transitory nature of life.

## Practical Tips for Festival-Goers

To ensure you make the most of your visit to the festival, here are some practical tips to keep in mind:

### Arrive Early

The main parade begins at 8 AM and lasts for approximately three hours. It is advisable to arrive at least an hour before the procession starts to secure a prime viewing spot. Remember, the festival draws a large crowd, and standing in one spot for an extended period can be hot and uncomfortable, so plan accordingly.

### Plan Ahead

The period leading up to the Ubon Ratchathani Candle Festival sees a surge in tourism. Book your accommodations and transportation well in advance to avoid any last-minute hassles.

Flights and accommodations tend to fill up quickly, so securing your reservations months ahead is recommended. Additionally, as public transportation may not be reliable during the festival, staying within walking distance of the parade venue can be advantageous.



### Be Prepared for the Heat

Thailand's tropical climate can be scorching, especially during the festival period. Protect yourself from the sun by wearing sunscreen, a hat, and lightweight, breathable clothing.

Consider bringing a small umbrella for shade. Staying hydrated is crucial, so carry a water bottle and drink plenty of fluids throughout the day.

### Respect Local Customs

During the festival nationwide restrictions are imposed on the sale of alcohol for the 48-hour duration. Bars and clubs are typically closed during this period. It is important to respect these customs and abide by the regulations of the festival.

The Ubon Ratchathani Candle Festival is a feast for the senses. Whether you are an art enthusiast, a culture lover, or simply seeking a unique experience, this festival promises to leave you in awe. It is an extraordinary event that will undoubtedly create lasting memories for all who attend.






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# Chak Lein De – Kailash Kher Live Event

## A Fusion of Music, Dance, Laughter and More!

**C**hak Lein De – Kailash Kher Live, a highly exciting and mesmerising evening of music, dance, poetry and laughter organised by Indo Thai News had Bangkok enthralled on 27<sup>th</sup> May. Kailash Kher and his band, Kailasa, known for their soul-stirring melodies and dynamic stage presence, gave a captivating performance that left a lasting impression on the audience. Their iconic hits resonated through the venue, with Kailash Kher's soulful voice touching hearts.









Adding a touch of humour to the proceedings, the renowned stand-up comedian Vibhor Chaudhary had the audience in stitches with his witty observations and hilarious anecdotes. Vibhor effortlessly connected with the crowd, leaving no stone unturned in his quest to bring joy and laughter to everyone present.











The talented lyricist Prabudha Saurabh took the stage and mesmerised the audience with his profound words and heartfelt renditions. Each verse struck a chord with the listeners, evoking a wide range of emotions and creating a truly immersive experience.













The event commenced with a graceful performance by the Dance Queen troupe from Thailand, who presented a unique and enchanting Ganesh Dance. Their skilful movements and elegant choreography set the tone for the rest of the evening.







Another highlight was the spellbinding Aigiri Nandini performance by Miss Sarika Sarkar from the Rizza Group. Her expressive movements and captivating choreography left everyone in awe, creating a visual spectacle that amazed and inspired the audience.







The palpable energy in the air was evident as soon as the curtains were raised, and it continued to intensify throughout the event. The collective passion and support of the sponsors, coordinators, guests, and audiences made it possible to showcase such extraordinary talent on stage.





The organisers express their gratitude to everyone involved and look forward to embarking on a continued journey of creating unforgettable experiences and bringing the best of the arts to the community















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# From Ancient Temples to Pristine Beaches

## A Journey through Southern Thailand's Gulf Coast

Abhimanshu

**S**tep foot into the beautiful land of Southern Thailand's Gulf coast. The sun-kissed region awaits your arrival, boasting the breathtaking provinces of Songkhla and Phatthalung, along with the irresistible treasures of Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala.

While the temptation of beachfront bungalows on the enchanting islands may be hard to resist, the mainland has hidden gems.

Picture yourself basking on sheltered sandy beaches, dipping your toes into crystal-clear waters, surrounded by majestic mountains and beautiful historical sites. Let's explore some of the must-visit places in Southern Thailand.



Mu Ko Chumphon National Park, Thailand  
*KOSIN SUKHUM, via Wikimedia Commons*

### Chumphon: Gateway to the South

Chumphon, a Thai province on the Malay Peninsula, is a coastal paradise renowned for its coral reefs and beautiful beaches.

Embrace the warm hospitality, savour authentic Thai

cuisine, and explore the vibrant local culture. From jungle treks to thrilling water sports, Chumphon caters to adventure enthusiasts. Experience unparalleled beauty and immerse yourself in the charm of this beautiful southern Thai province.



## Cha-am: Where Tranquility Meets Weekend Escapes

Just a stone's throw away from the bustling Hua Hin, Cha-am offers a serene retreat favoured by Thais on short breaks.

With its shaded, straight beach and calm waters, Cha-am entices families and party animals seeking a laid-back seaside experience. While the weekends bring more crowds and higher prices, weekdays offer a slower pace and a chance to find solitude under the canopy of casuarina trees.



A beachside hotel in Cha-am  
Phong Phat G, via Wikimedia Commons



Panoramic view of a beach in Pak Nam Pran

## Pak Nam Pran: A Sophisticated Haven for Beach Lovers

Once the domain of family-owned beach villas, this area boasts boutique hotels catering to discerning travellers.

Though not exceptional, Pak Nam Pran's Hat Naresuan offers a long stretch of fine sand, often empty and occasionally frequented by playful dolphins. The surrounding region also provides access to the natural wonders of Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park.

## Prachuap Khiri Khan: A Coastal Gem with Scenic Beauty

Nestled along a palm-fringed bay, Prachuap Khiri Khan captivates visitors with its stunning setting.

Though lacking major tourist attractions, this provincial capital entices with its tranquil beach, Ao Manao, and a waterfront promenade perfect for savouring seafood delights. Prachuap Khiri Khan offers a glimpse into authentic small-town Thai life, providing a pleasant break during a coastal journey.



A cave temple at Prachuap Khiri Khan  
KOSIN SUKHUM via Wikimedia Commons



## Ban Krut: Tranquillity and Natural Beauty Unleashed

Blessed with a serene 5km stretch of white sand, Ban Krut is a gem 70km south of Prachuap Khiri Khan.

The coastal paradise is adorned with upmarket bungalow resorts, seafood restaurants, and a traditional village near the train station.

Don't miss the opportunity to explore the colourful fishing village, the panoramic Khao Thongchai headland, and the remarkable Wat Phra Mahathat Phraphat temple, which combines traditional and contemporary elements.



Group of upmarket bungalow resorts



Wat Phra temple in Chaiya, Thailand  
KOSIN SUKHUM, via Wikimedia Commons

## Chaiya : A Glimpse into Southern Thailand's Historical Past

It is a charming town located approximately 140km south of Chumphon. Once a capital under the Srivijayan civilization, Chaiya now attracts visitors with its progressive temple, Wat Suan Mokkh.

The town can be explored on a day trip and offers unique insights into southern Thailand's history and culture.

## Ang Thong National Marine Park: Pristine Beauty in the Gulf

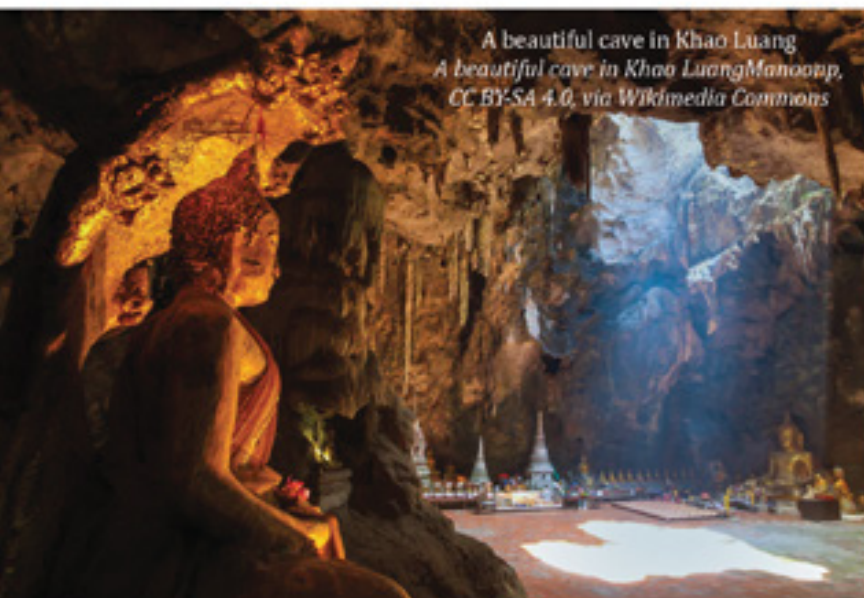
The breathtaking Ang Thong National Marine Park is a collection of 42 small islands scattered like a dragon's teeth in the Gulf of Thailand, just west of Samui. Once a refuge for pirates and a naval base, the park is now a protected area with natural wonders.

Explore coral reefs, white-sand beaches, and virgin rainforests as you encounter playful dolphins, diverse marine life, and a variety of bird species. Experience the untouched beauty of this hidden gem and create memories that will last a lifetime.



A top view of Ang Thong National Marine Park  
GiggieAun, via Wikimedia Commons





A beautiful cave in Khao Luang  
A beautiful cave in Khao LuangManoatp,  
CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

## Khao Luang: Exploring Southern Thailand's Highest Mountain

Khao Luang is southern Thailand's highest mountain. It is located west of Nakhon Si Thammarat. Within this expansive national park, you will find jagged peaks, magnificent waterfalls, and lush tropical rainforests.

You will encounter diverse wildlife, including macaques, deer, civets, and various bird species. Explore the trails, marvel at the vibrant flora, and immerse yourself in the serenity of this natural wonderland. Plan your visit after the rainy season for optimal conditions.



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# World Sanskrit Day

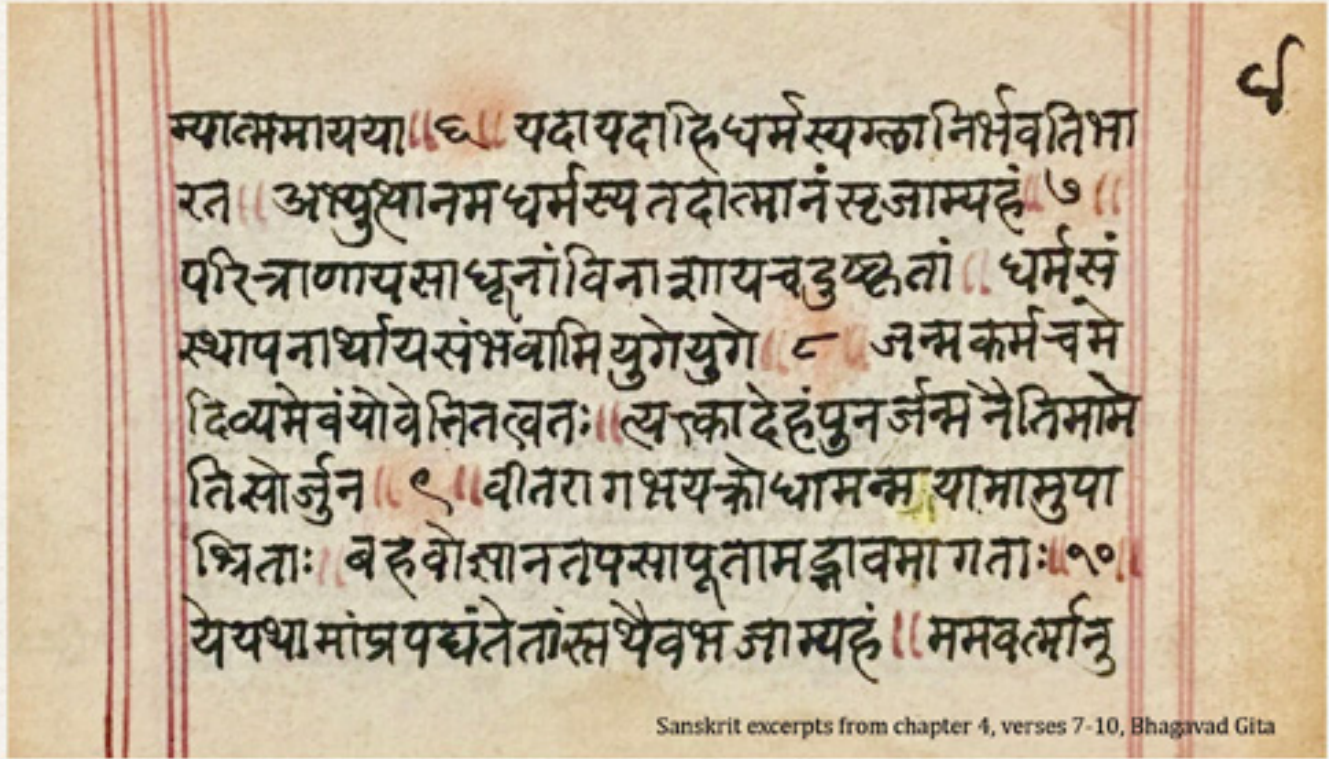
## Reviving the Melodies of Past

Abhimanshu

*"Languages are a treasure and convey something more than words"*  
— Michel Serres

**C**ertain treasures defy the test of time in a world marked by constant change and fleeting trends. Among these enduring gems is the ancient language of Sanskrit, an eloquent and melodic tapestry of words that has captivated hearts for millennia.

Every year, on World Sanskrit Day's auspicious occasion, we celebrate the profound legacy and immeasurable contributions of this classical language.



Sanskrit excerpts from chapter 4, verses 7-10, Bhagavad Gita

### A Brief History of Sanskrit Language

The term "Sanskrit" is derived from the combination of two components, namely "sam" and "krit." In this context, the prefix "sam," synonymous with "samyak," denotes completeness, entirety, or perfection. On the other hand, the word "krit"

signifies the act of accomplishing or executing something. The term also translates to "refined" or "perfected" and holds a special place in scholars, spiritual seekers, and linguists' hearts.



The language is believed to belong to the Indo-Germanic or Indo-Aryan family, tracing its roots back to 3500 years. Thus, it is one of the oldest and most venerable languages.

Sanskrit has been indispensable in preserving ancient wisdom and knowledge as the primary language of texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and Mahabharata.

Within the tapestry of this linguistic marvel, Panini takes centre stage. As a revered Sanskrit linguist, Panini's immortal contribution shines through his magnum opus, the *Ashtadhyayi*, a masterpiece comprising eight chapters.

Paninigifted the world an unparalleled understanding of spoken Sanskrit through this sacred guide, illuminating the path for future generations.



An illustration from Sanskrit epic Mahabharata

## Tracing the Evolution of the Sanskrit Language

Sanskrit is a language of great importance in Indian culture. It is widely used in religious scriptures, particularly in Hinduism, and has significantly influenced the development of modern Indian languages.

In ancient India, knowledge of Sanskrit indicated social status and educational achievement, primarily among higher castes, a tradition that persisted until the medieval era.

Today, Sanskrit continues to thrive on the Indian Subcontinent. Since India gained independence, more

than 3,000 Sanskrit compositions have emerged, and there are over 90 regular publications in Sanskrit. Sudharma, a newspaper written in Sanskrit, has been published daily in India since 1970.

Furthermore, Sanskrit is prominent in Indo-European studies, focusing on extinct and contemporary Indo-European languages. It is taught in leading universities worldwide. The extensive corpus of Sanskrit literature includes diverse texts, such as poetry, drama, science, technology, philosophy, and dharma.



Numerous universities worldwide, particularly in Europe and America, have established dedicated courses and conducted extensive research in the

field of Sanskrit language. Their primary objective is to unravel and revitalize this ancient language of profound wisdom.



19th Century, Illustrated Sanskrit, Chapter 1 20 21 Bhagavad Gita

## When and How World Sanskrit Day Celebrated

World Sanskrit Day was established by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. With its inception in 1969, coinciding with the auspicious Shraavana Poornima, this day became a special occasion to honour the profound legacy of Sanskrit. It serves as a reminder of the language's invaluable contribution to human civilisation.

It is an annual celebration on the full moon day of Shravan month, according to the Hindu calendar, typically in August. 2021 it was observed on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, while in 2022 on August 12<sup>th</sup> and 2023, it is to be celebrated on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

The celebration extends far beyond the boundaries of India, resonating with a global community of writers, scholars, and language enthusiasts. An

outflow of creativity fills the air with Kavi Sammelan events as poets and writers gather the essence of Sanskrit's poetic soul.

It is a day where literary minds converge, exchanging verses that dance upon the lips and touch the heart. From the vibrant shores of India to far-flung corners of the world, these events kindle a passionate flame, igniting the love for Sanskrit literature within the souls of seasoned wordsmiths and budding talents alike.

The day serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring legacy of Sanskrit, beckoning us to delve into its ancient verses, philosophical treatises, and timeless wisdom.



## Significance of the Day

Despite Sanskrit being India's most revered and ancient language, its widespread usage is limited, leading to concerns about its potential extinction. The celebration of World Sanskrit Day serves as a means to raise awareness and foster respect for this ancient language of India while striving to revitalize its usage.

In 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized the importance of promoting and popularizing Sanskrit by dedicating an entire week, from August 19<sup>th</sup> to August 25<sup>th</sup>, to commemorate this day.

The primary objective of World Sanskrit Day is to encourage the incorporation of Sanskrit into everyday conversations beyond its traditional domain of religious rituals.

Moreover, the observation of this day aims to enhance understanding and appreciation of Sanskrit, which encompasses the profound essence of Indian culture and has been preserved for centuries through folklore and stories.



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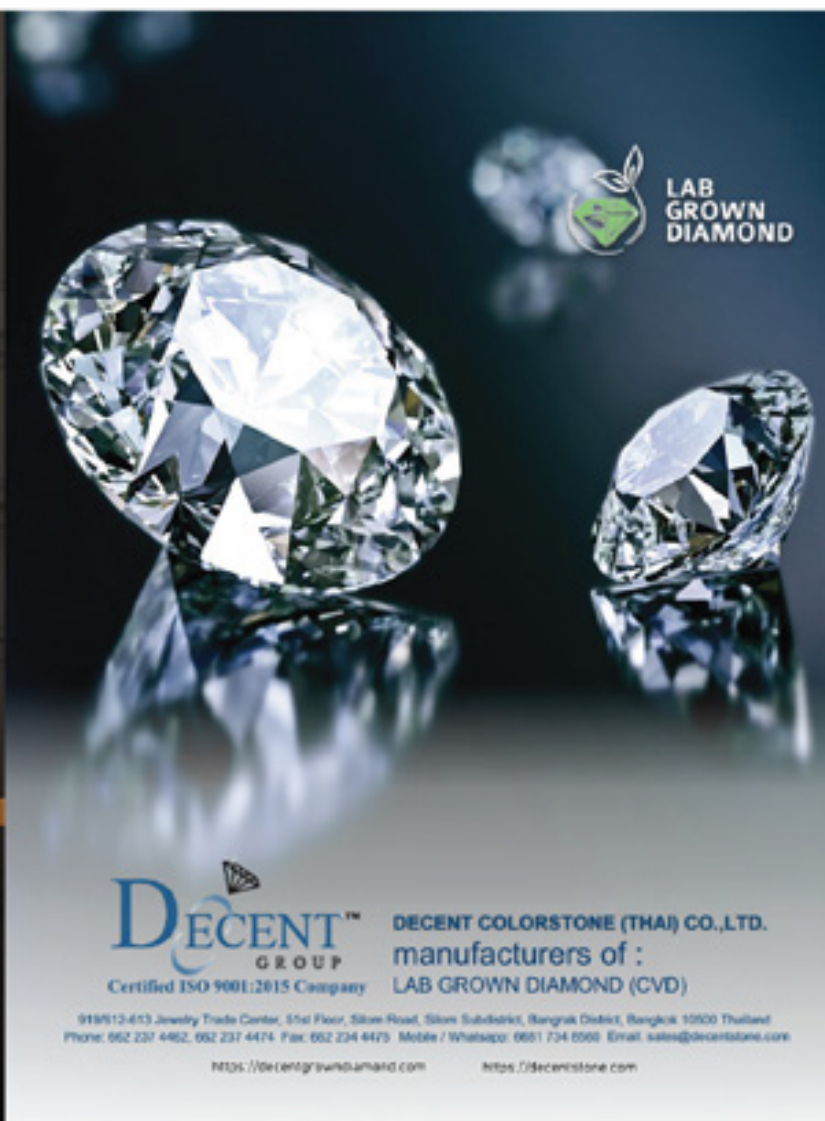
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# Thailand's Medical Tourism

## A Thriving Epicentre in Asia

Abhimanshu

**I**n recent years, Thailand has emerged as the unrivalled leader in Asia's ever-expanding medical tourism landscape. With an industry flourishing at an astounding pace, the nation's rise to the summit has left other countries needing to catch up.

Since the early 2000s, the number of medical tourists flocking to Thailand has witnessed a consistent and impressive growth trajectory, propelling the country to its well-deserved place atop the global medical tourism market.

Thailand's reign as the medical tourism destination of choice is not a coincidence but the result of a perfect confluence of factors that set it apart from its competitors.

Three key elements have played a pivotal role in cementing Thailand's dominance and continue to fuel its meteoric ascent are:

- Low cost of medical treatments
- Unparalleled hospitality
- Nation's highly developed tourism industry



Doctor attending to her patient



## Revolutionising Medical Tourism: The Allure of Affordable Healthcare

When it comes to healthcare costs, Thailand possesses an irresistible allure for patients worldwide. While medical expenses in many Western countries have become exorbitant, Thailand stands out as a beacon of affordability without compromising quality.

The stark difference in prices makes Thailand an oasis of cost-effective healthcare, inviting individuals burdened by steep medical bills or long waiting lists in their home countries.

Thailand offers top-notch medical services at a fraction of the cost, which has effectively shattered the financial barriers that often hinder patients from seeking necessary treatments.



Top view of Bumrungrad International Hospital, Thailand  
Pinaew via Wikimedia Commons

## Excellence is the Mantra: The Superiority of Private Medical Centres

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Medical team attending to a pregnant woman

## Excellence is the Mantra: The Superiority of Private Medical Centres

A key pillar of Thailand's medical tourism success story is its flourishing private medical sector, renowned for its exceptional quality of care. The nation's healthcare infrastructure has over 1,000 hospitals and 470 private facilities.

It takes pride in housing Asia's largest private hospital and being home to the first Asian hospital to

receive ISO 9001 certification and JCI accreditation. Notably, 37 private hospitals in Thailand have achieved JCI accreditation, underscoring the country's commitment to maintaining exceptional healthcare standards.

The country boasts an extensive network of state-of-the-art medical facilities staffed by highly skilled



and internationally trained healthcare professionals. These private centres have built a reputation for delivering world-class healthcare outcomes, from advanced surgical procedures to complex treatments across various disciplines.

Tourists travelling to Thailand can rest assured that they will receive meticulous attention, comprehensive treatment plans, and access to cutting-edge medical technologies, surpassing their expectations and fostering a sense of trust and confidence in the country's healthcare system.



Female patient happy with affordable healthcare

## Beyond Healthcare: The Hospitality Extravaganza

Thailand's ascent as a premier medical tourism hub is not solely attributable to its exceptional healthcare offerings. The nation's thriving tourism industry, renowned for its warmth and hospitality, has played a crucial role in shaping its reputation.

People embarking on a medical journey in Thailand are greeted with a diverse array of attractions, exquisite cultural experiences, and world-class hospitality.

From stunning beaches to lush landscapes, vibrant markets to ancient temples, Thailand offers a captivating tapestry of experiences extending far beyond medical treatments.

The seamless fusion of healthcare and tourism creates an environment where patients can heal their bodies while nurturing their souls, making Thailand an unparalleled destination for holistic healing and rejuvenation.





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### Top Thailand Hospitals for Foreign Patients

- Bangkok Anti-Aging Center, Bangkok
- Bumrungrad Hospital, Bangkok
- Samitivej Hospitals, Bangkok
- Bangkok Hospitals Group

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# Travelling through God's Own Country & Discovering Its Favourite Sport

Abhimanshu

**K**erala, often hailed as "God's Own Country," truly lives up to its heavenly reputation. Nestled amidst the captivating beauty of lush green landscapes and accompanied by the soothing sound of waves crashing against its shores, Kerala offers an enchanting escape for all who visit. Moreover, its people's warm and generous nature ensures that you are guided and supported every step of the way, making your journey an unforgettable experience.

In August and September, when Kerala's monsoons reach their pinnacle, the allure of this remarkable land becomes even more mesmerising. The backwaters, a defining feature of the region, transform into a spectacle that transcends the ordinary. As if choreographed by nature, gracefully gliding through the lagoons are the exquisitely designed snake boats, evoking a sense of rhythm and harmony that captivates all who witness it.



Panoramic view of Snake Boat Race, Kerala  
Antara Chattaraj via flickr



If you ever plan to visit Kerala, August and September is the time. Accompanying the scenic beauty, Kerala's vibrant boat races add to this beautiful land's unwavering pride and enthusiasm. As the monsoons enter, painting the landscape in vivid hues and the enchanting backwaters echoing the spirit of various boat races is an experience that will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark on your soul.

Let us look at some of the most popular boat races in Kerala.

### Indira Gandhi Boat Race

The Indira Gandhi Boat Race is a yearly spectacle that unfolds along the scenic backwaters of Kochi during the final week of December. Organised by the Department of Kerala Tourism, this highly anticipated event pays homage to the former Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi. The boat race serves as the grand finale of the Tourism Fair, drawing a massive crowd of spectators.

Sixteen magnificent snake boats representing various region villages participate in this exciting race. Manned by four skilled helmsmen, 25 talented singers, and 100 dedicated rowers, these boats glide through the waters in perfect synchrony, propelled by the pulsating rhythm of the Vanchipattu. The pulsating beat of drums and the fierce competition among the rowers create a memorable experience that will stay with you forever.



### Nehru Trophy Boat Race

The Nehru Trophy Boat Race, known as the world's most renowned snake boat race, takes place annually on the serene Punnamda Lake in Alappuzha, Kerala. Originating from the visit of the late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the former Prime Minister of India, the boat race is fiercely competitive and immensely popular.

As one of the top tourist destinations in Kerala, Alappuzha offers a remarkable backwater tourism experience. The thrilling event, held on the second Saturday of August, attracts a large audience and is a must-see during the monsoon season.

The event has become a major commercial affair with approximately 200,000 attendees, including international tourists.

### Champakulam Moolam Boat Race

The Champakulam Moolam boat race is the oldest and most beloved boat race. This cherished event heralds the monsoon season, honouring centuries of heritage. It unfolds on the Pampa River near Alleppey, precisely on Moolam day (the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the festival of Onam) during the Midhunam month (a month in the Indian solar calendar).

Rooted in history and united in celebration, the Champakulam Moolam boat race connects the past with the present. It unfolds as a dazzling visual spectacle, merging the river's tranquil beauty with the people's vibrant spirit.





Competitors getting ready for Aranmula Boat Race, Kerala  
Arun Sinha via Wikimedia Commons

## Payippad Boat Race

The awe-inspiring Payippad boat race is also known as Jalotsavom. It is conducted in the enchanting village of Payippad, Alappuzha. It takes place over three consecutive days during the vibrant Onam festival (the Indian harvest festival celebrated predominantly by the people of Kerala), usually in August or September. The event is a celebration of the installation of the Lord Subramanian idol at Haripad Subramanya temple.

The boat race boasts the largest participation of snake boats after the prestigious Nehru Trophy Boat Race. Alongside the thrilling snake boat races, the festivities feature captivating water pageants, adding to the spectacle.

## Aranmula Boat Race

The Aranmula Snake Boat Race, known as Aranmula Vallam Kali, is a captivating two-day event during the renowned Onam festival in August-September. Also referred to as the Uthrittathi Boat Race, it is prominent among Kerala's boat races.

With its splendid spectacle and deep-rooted traditions, the Aranmula Boat Race is closely linked to the annual festival of Sri Parthasarathy Temple. It is traditionally conducted on the final two days of the festivities.

Honouring Lord Krishna and Arjuna, the Aranmula Vallam Kali is more than just a race; it is a sacred ritual that draws tourists from around the globe. Over 25 majestic traditional Palliyodams, each accommodating 100 rowers, 25 singers, and 15 helmspersons, participate in this grand occasion.



Competitive boat race held at Alleppey, Kerala  
Ashit Desai via flickr

## Sree Narayana Jayanthi Boat Race

The captivating Sree Narayana Jayanthi Vallam Kali, known as the Kumarakom boat race, is conducted on the serene Vembanad Lake. This thrilling event occurs every September during the joyous Onam festival in Kerala. Its purpose is to commemorate the arrival of Sri Narayana Guru, who visited Kumarakom in 1903 to consecrate the idol of Sri Subrahmanya Swami at the Kumara Mangalam Temple.



Before the race begins, a grand procession of boats carrying a portrait of Sri Narayana Guru sails from the Kumara Mangalam temple to the Kottathodu, the race venue. Hundreds of skilled rowers compete in various boat types, including the Chundan, Iruttukuthi, Churulan, and Veppu.

Moreover, Kumarakom is renowned for its traditional houseboat rides, making it a popular destination for Kerala's backwater exploration. It is truly one of the best places to experience Kerala.

### Kallada Boat Race

The Kallada Boat Race, known as Kallada Jalotsavam, is a renowned and eagerly anticipated event on the picturesque Kallada River in Munroe Thuruthu, Kollam. On the 28th day after the Onam festival, this annual extravaganza attracts participation from all the famous Chundan Vallams, the majestic snake boats of Kerala.

The race course stretches from Muthiraparambu to Karuthrakadavu along the Kallada River, providing a breathtaking view for spectators on the scenic Munroe Island.

A total of 11 snake boats, including the impressive Iruttukuthi and Veppam Vallams, compete in this thrilling race. The victor of this prestigious event is honoured with the Kallada Rolling Trophy and a prize of one lakh rupees, adding to the allure and prestige of the competition.

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# Expand Your Horizons

## 5 Life-Altering Books That Will Change Your Perspective

Prapoorna Kiran

*"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."*

— Joseph Addison

**B**ooks have the remarkable power to transport us to new worlds, introduce us to diverse perspectives, and challenge our existing beliefs. In a world where empathy and understanding are more important than ever, literature can serve as a gateway to enlightenment and personal growth.

In this article, we made efforts to present a carefully curated list of five extraordinary books that have the potential to change your perspective, ignite your imagination, and broaden your understanding of the world.

So, grab a cosy spot, prepare to embark on a transformative journey, and let these literary works leave an indelible mark on your soul.



### 1. To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

Harper Lee's timeless masterpiece, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, is a profound exploration of racial inequality, injustice, and the indomitable spirit of human compassion.

Set in the Deep South during the 1930s, this novel follows young Scout Finch as she witnesses her father, Atticus, defend an innocent black man accused of a heinous crime. Through Scout's innocent eyes, readers gain insight into the devastating consequences of prejudice and the power of empathy.

Lee's poignant storytelling confronts the complexities of society, challenging readers to question their own biases and embrace the importance of understanding, tolerance, and justice. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a literary treasure that will forever alter your perspective on morality, social issues, and the resilience of the human spirit.

*"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."*

— Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.



## 2. The Power of Your Subconscious Mind by Joseph Murphy

*The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* by Joseph Murphy — a book that can help unleash the depths of human potential! Yes!

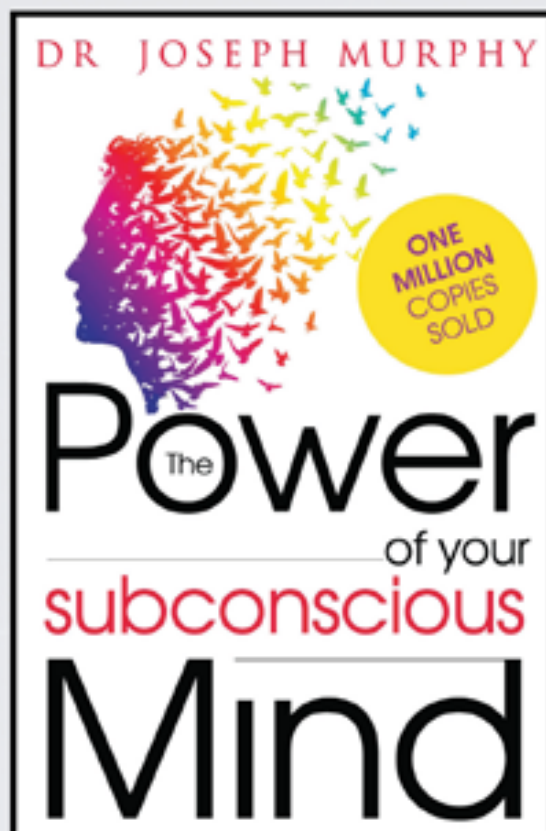
It is a captivating exploration of the untapped potential within each of us. Written in a lucid style, this thought-provoking book transcends cultural boundaries and engages readers with its universal message of self-empowerment.

The book highlights the profound influence our subconscious mind exerts on our thoughts, actions, and overall well-being. The author elucidates how we can reshape our lives and achieve our deepest desires by harnessing the power of positive affirmations and visualisation.

In a world that often feels overwhelming, this book provides a powerful tool to reshape our perception and unleash our true potential.

Murphy's profound insights, the practical techniques like positive affirmations and visualisation, explained in this book, offer a roadmap for achieving personal growth and success. But its impact extends far beyond individual transformation.

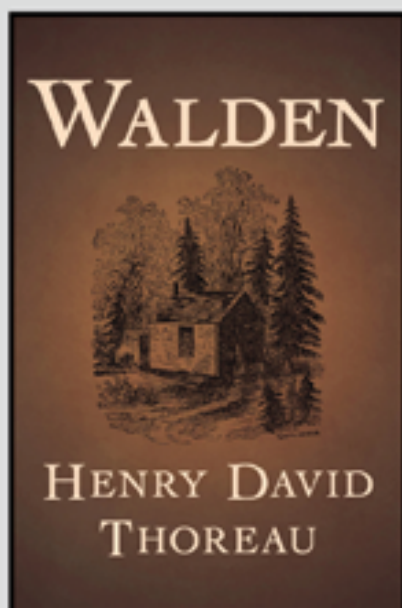
*The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* reminds us that change begins within ourselves. By harnessing the potential of our subconscious minds, we can become agents of positive transformation, both in our own lives and the broader world. This book invites readers to embrace their innate power,



inspiring them to create a more compassionate and inclusive future.

*"Habit is the function of your subconscious mind. There is no greater evidence of the marvellous power of your subconscious than the force and sway habits hold in your life. You are a creature of habit."*

— Joseph Murphy,  
*The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*



## 3. Walden by Henry David Thoreau

A book that embraces simplicity whilst illuminating the human spirit.

*Walden* by Henry David Thoreau is a compelling book that has the power to impact the mindset of international readers intensely. Set against the backdrop of nature's serene beauty, this contemplative memoir invites us to re-evaluate our lives, challenging the status quo and urging us to reconnect with our inner selves.

Thoreau's journey of self-discovery at Walden Pond is a poignant reminder of the importance of simplicity and introspection in a world consumed by materialism and busyness. Through his keen observations of nature and reflections on societal constructs, he illuminates the essence of what it means to be human.



This book encourages readers to question their own existence and the values they hold dear. It prompts us to consider the impact of our choices, both on our personal well-being and on the world around us. Thoreau's call for mindful living and deliberate simplicity resonates deeply, inspiring us to prioritise the pursuit of meaning and authenticity in our lives.

*"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."*

— **Henry David Thoreau, *Walden***

#### 4. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari

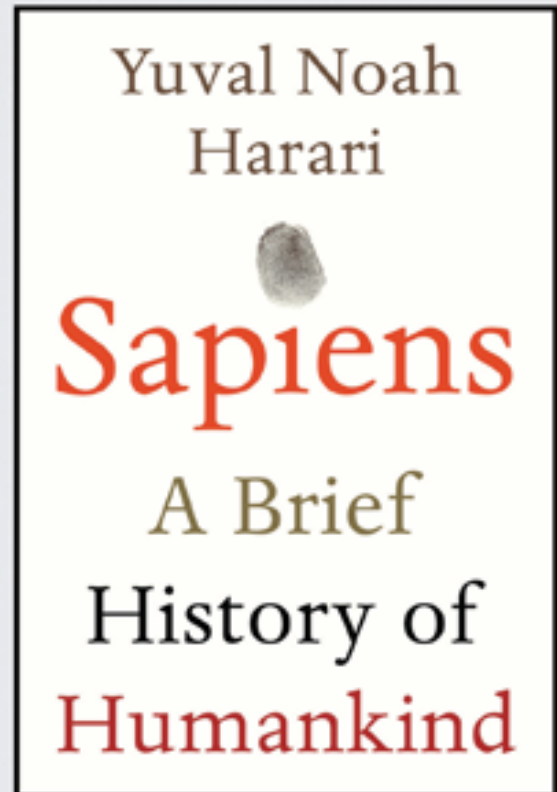
In *Sapiens*, Yuval Noah Harari takes readers on an extraordinary journey through the history of our species, from the emergence of Homo Sapiens to the present day.

Through a captivating blend of science, anthropology, and philosophy, Harari examines the defining moments that shaped humanity's evolution. He challenges conventional wisdom and offers a fresh perspective on topics such as agriculture, religion, empire-building, and the impact of technology.

By exposing the intricacies of human development, Harari compels us to confront the ethical dilemmas we face as a species.

*Sapiens* compels readers to question the narrative of our collective history. This thought-provoking book will expand your understanding of humanity's past and inspire you to reimagine our future.

It challenges conventional beliefs, unravelling the myths and narratives that have shaped our understanding of ourselves. It invites us to question the very foundations of our societies, shedding light on the cultural constructs and shared fictions that govern our lives.



*"The real root of suffering is this never-ending and pointless pursuit of ephemeral feelings, which causes us to be in a constant state of tension, restlessness and dissatisfaction."*

— **Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens***

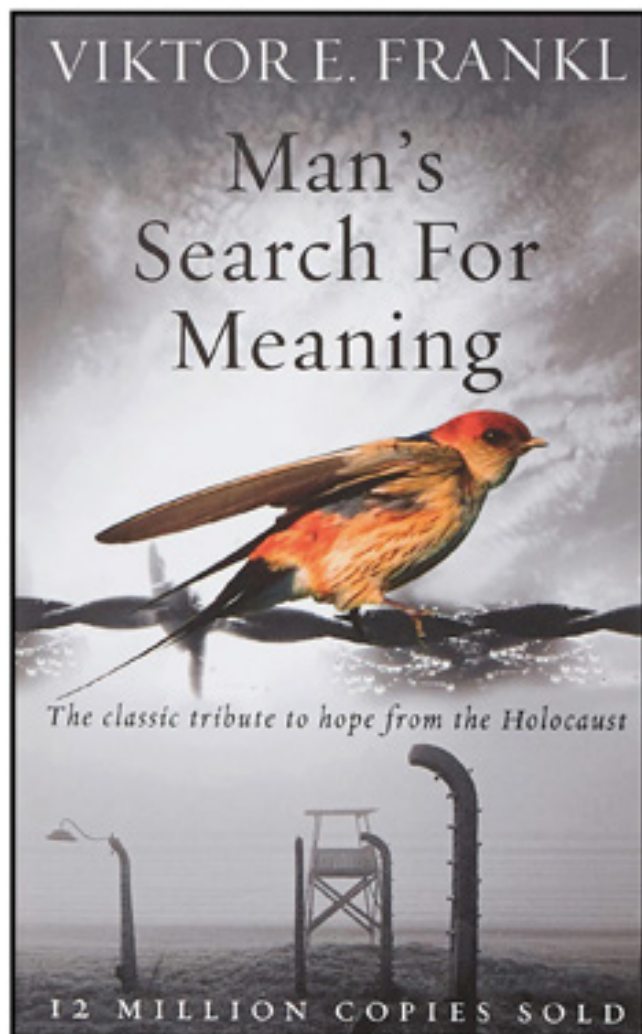
#### 5. *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor E. Frankl

Viktor E. Frankl's seminal work, *Man's Search for Meaning*, is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable adversity. Based on Frankl's experiences as a Holocaust survivor, this powerful memoir explores the pursuit

of meaning and purpose in life.

Frankl asserts that even in the darkest of circumstances, individuals possess the freedom to choose their attitudes and find meaning in their





existence. By sharing his personal story and intertwining it with existential philosophy, Frankl encourages readers to reflect on their own lives and consider the significance of suffering, personal responsibility, and the search for meaning.

*Man's Search for Meaning* will leave an indelible impression on your soul, forever altering your perspective on life's challenges and the resilience of the human spirit.

*"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."*

— **Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning***

In a world that often seems divided and entrenched in its own perspectives, these five books offer a glimpse into alternative realities, challenge preconceived notions, and inspire personal growth.

By immersing yourself in these literary works, you may mark the beginning of a self-transformation that will expand your understanding of the human condition, promote empathy and tolerance, and ignite a hunger for knowledge and self-reflection. Embark on an intellectual odyssey, and prepare to be forever transformed inside out with this new treasure trove of books.

So, carve out some time, pick up these life-altering books, and begin an extraordinary voyage that will forever change your perspective on life, society, and the depths of human potential.

*As the adage goes — "Read to grow. Read more and grow more."*





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