





**“ All you need is love.  
And a passport. ”**















# Welcome

**I**n my youth, I was fortunate to travel the world. My father was an airline pilot and I often heard “the world is just a plane ride away.” I always had an affinity for South Asia, and I nurtured this curiosity by receiving my degree in Religious Studies/Religions of India from the University of Colorado. Post-graduation, I continued my independent research on India’s socioeconomic development as it relates to religious practices and then contributed my work to Little India, the largest circulated Indian publication in the United States.

After years of researching the country’s spiritual lifeline, I made my first trip to India. My life was forever changed, in ways I could never anticipate.

In the past 15+ years, I’ve had the opportunity to interview the Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs at the United States Embassy in Delhi and was selected as the Delhi Destination Expert for AFAR. I also curated content for several publications, including Chicken Soup for the Soul, and facilitated panels on ecotourism initiatives in South Asia. All of these experiences cultivated a deeper understanding of not only the respective destinations but also traveling with purpose.

Sodha Travel was born from my desire to share the beauty of India with the world. I continue to be amazed by South Asia’s ability to transform at such a rapid pace and yet fluently maintain its cultural, historical, and spiritual treasures.

To our past clients, we thank you. To our future travelers, we welcome you.

Enjoy the journey!

**Allison Sodha**  
President, Sodha Travel







A person wearing a grey bucket hat is seen from behind, looking out over a savanna landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow over the scene. Bare trees and dry grass are visible in the background.

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Our private, socially-conscious itineraries offer a mindful approach to travel. We specialize in customized, culturally-authentic programs with insider access to unique experiences.





# Why Sodha Travel?

Our personal travel representatives reside in the destinations we serve and are immediately responsive to your needs. Our award-winning specialists have spent thousands of hours inspecting hotels, building relationships, supporting communities, and personally experiencing the road less traveled.

## LOCAL CONNECTIONS

With insider access to unique experiences, Sodha Travel's guides and historians are thoughtfully selected for each program. Our itineraries cater to your individual interests and our team invites you to share in the customs of the community.

## PERSONALIZATION

At Sodha Travel, we prefer a boutique approach to understanding our clients. The planning process is a time to create, converse, and collaborate. We take a genuine interest in learning your story and what fuels your wanderlust. No two itineraries are the same.

## GIVING BACK

Sodha Travel is committed to directly supporting the destinations we serve. A portion of all sales are donated to organizations making a difference in local communities. Together, we can make our world a better place.







## Community Immersion and Sustainable Initiatives

What motivates you to travel? For our team, it is about making connections with communities and one another. It is a smile, a conversation, a shared experience. It is about embracing diversity while also recognizing that our similarities harmonize our differences. It is about creating sustainable and eco-friendly solutions for this magnificent planet.





## MINIMIZING PLASTIC

We believe in avoiding single use plastic where possible and ask our travelers to do the same.

## PROTECTING WILDLIFE

We never take part in tours that might cause harm to our wildlife.

## COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

We believe in supporting and giving back through NGO Partnerships. In addition to our philanthropic initiatives, we have also developed a meaningful partnership with iVillage, an organization that empowers women through education and employment.









It is not **where** you travel, but **how** you travel. With Sodha Travel, there is something for everyone. While some travelers prefer to experience the cultural and historical attractions of the destinations we serve, others target a specific theme or interest. Sodha Travel serves a diversified clientele and our destination specialists enjoy sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for South Asia.









# Family Tours

South Asia is truly an enchanting destination for families. Cultural wonders, adventure activities, world heritage sites, tribal villages, grand palaces and forts, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, vibrant markets, and culinary delights are just a sample of what you can experience together in an ancient and diverse landscape.

Sodha Travel's family tours cater to multi-generational travelers with activities for all ages. Our team crafts and customizes every program from personal experience - not a guidebook.

We understand the challenges and variables when exploring a developing country and our teams take several elements into consideration during the planning process. Food allergies? Motion sickness? Likes and dislikes?

From scheduling (and overscheduling!) to packing the right gear, Sodha Travel is your advocate for family travel in South Asia.









# Women's Tours

Sodha Travel provides a safe, comfortable, and enriching experience for female travelers. Gender specific services include women guides and escorts (when available) and specialized activities, including mehndi sessions, culinary classes, and spa services. Some of our female travelers have also selected a personalized shopping excursion and tailor-made traditional clothing, while others have requested visits to special needs organizations.





South Asia  
Destination  
Specialists



**HUTAN**

**LAOS**

**THAILAND**

**CAMBODIA**

**VIETNAM**







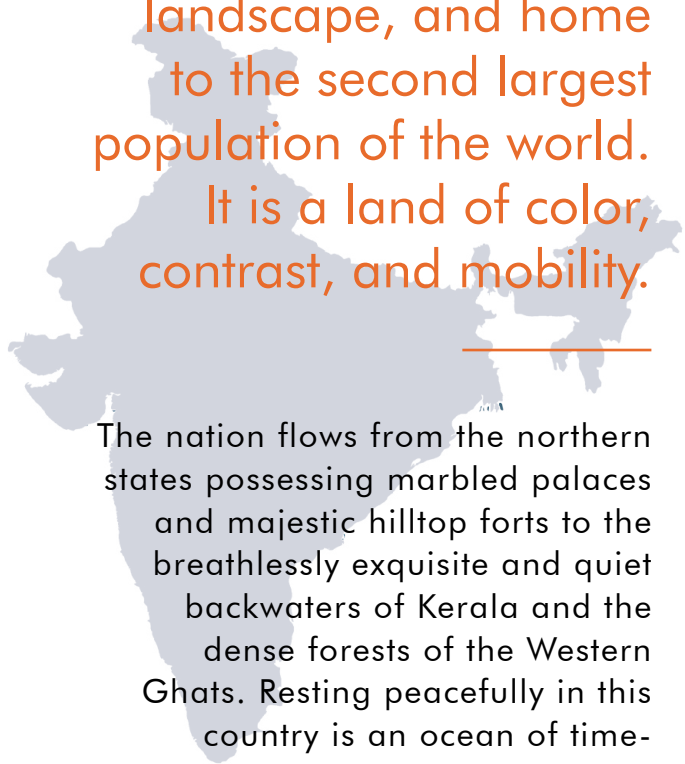


# INDIA

India is an elegant  
mayhem blessed by  
the almighties, graced  
with an enthralling  
landscape, and home  
to the second largest  
population of the world.

It is a land of color,  
contrast, and mobility.

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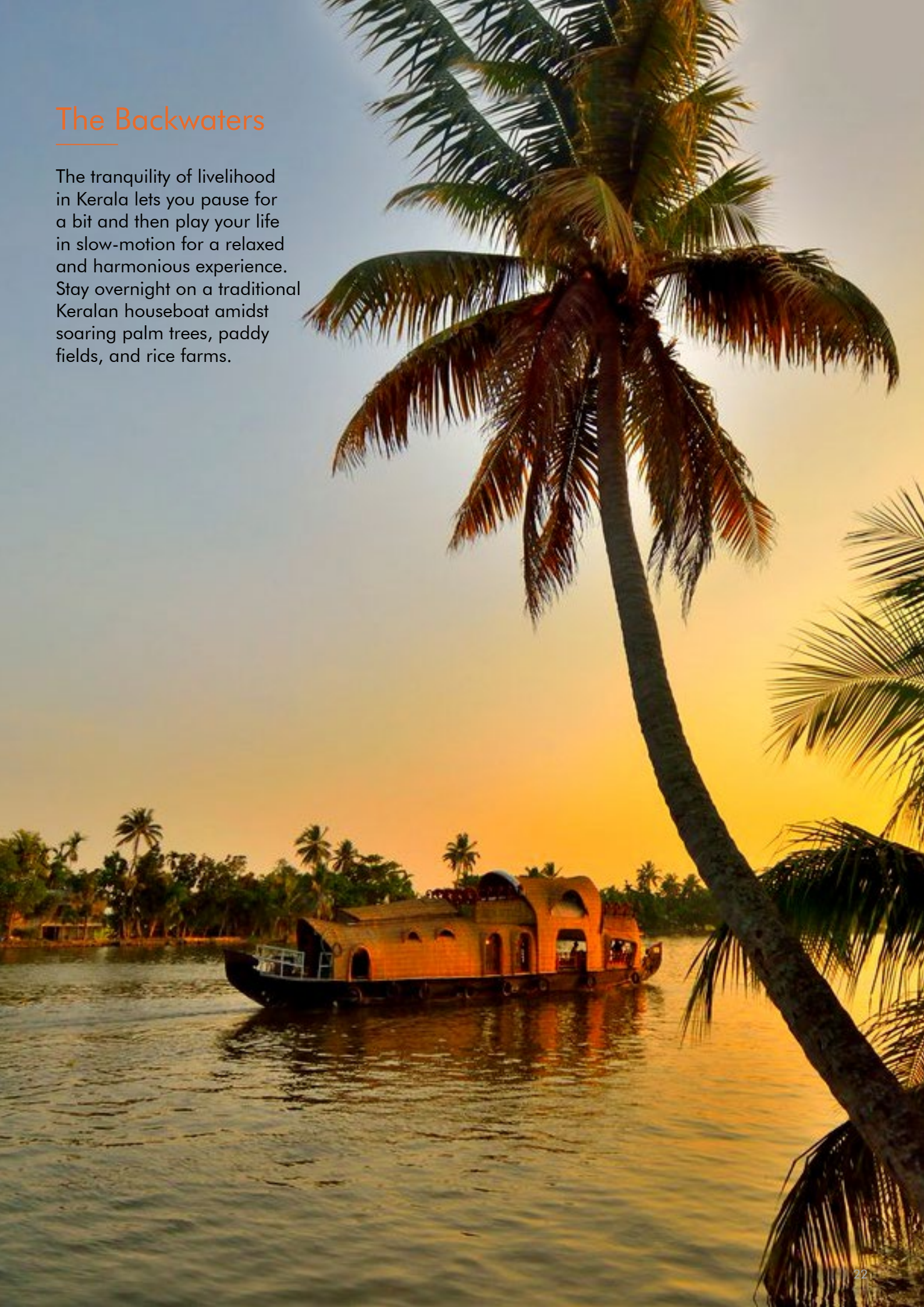


The nation flows from the northern  
states possessing marbled palaces  
and majestic hilltop forts to the  
breathlessly exquisite and quiet  
backwaters of Kerala and the  
dense forests of the Western  
Ghats. Resting peacefully in this  
country is an ocean of time-  
honored conventions, animated  
religious beliefs, several world  
heritage sites, bounteous natives,  
and a hurricane of hues, sounds,  
and scents. The zeal with which  
India welcomes is unquestionably  
infectious!



## The Backwaters

The tranquility of livelihood in Kerala lets you pause for a bit and then play your life in slow-motion for a relaxed and harmonious experience. Stay overnight on a traditional Keralan houseboat amidst soaring palm trees, paddy fields, and rice farms.







## Sail on the Ganges

Enter the surreal aura that stands still on the ghat of the divine Ganges and relish a mystical boat ride in the silent waters surrounded by the scent of incense and fumes of prayers. Watch the bright orange sunlight touch the surface of Ganga and how it shines endlessly like fluid gold.

## Grand Forts and Palaces

Rajasthan, the Land of Royals.

Step into the nobility by walking in the extravagant palaces ornamented with exquisite depictions, brushing your hands over the carved sandstone courtyards, eyeing the golden artwork on ceilings, and having a moment to yourself in embellished balconies overlooking lavish fountains. Dream with your eyes open!





## Live Like Royals

The royalty, the vigor, and the zeal carried on by the forts of Rajasthan are undeniably remarkable. Meet with the royal families and reside in a fort from the 17th century, all while enjoying cuisine inspired by the illustrious and tasteful recipes from noble kitchens. Sunbathe in the lavish garden green by the extravagant fountains and other alluring decoratives.







## Wildlife and Adventure

Beyond India's buzzing cities nature lovers can discover serene sanctuaries teeming with wildlife. From ferocious Royal Bengal tigers to Asiatic Elephants, from exotic birds to a variety of eccentric mammals, India is home to a diverse variety of wildlife and has its own 'Big Five' must-see mammals.

## All Aboard

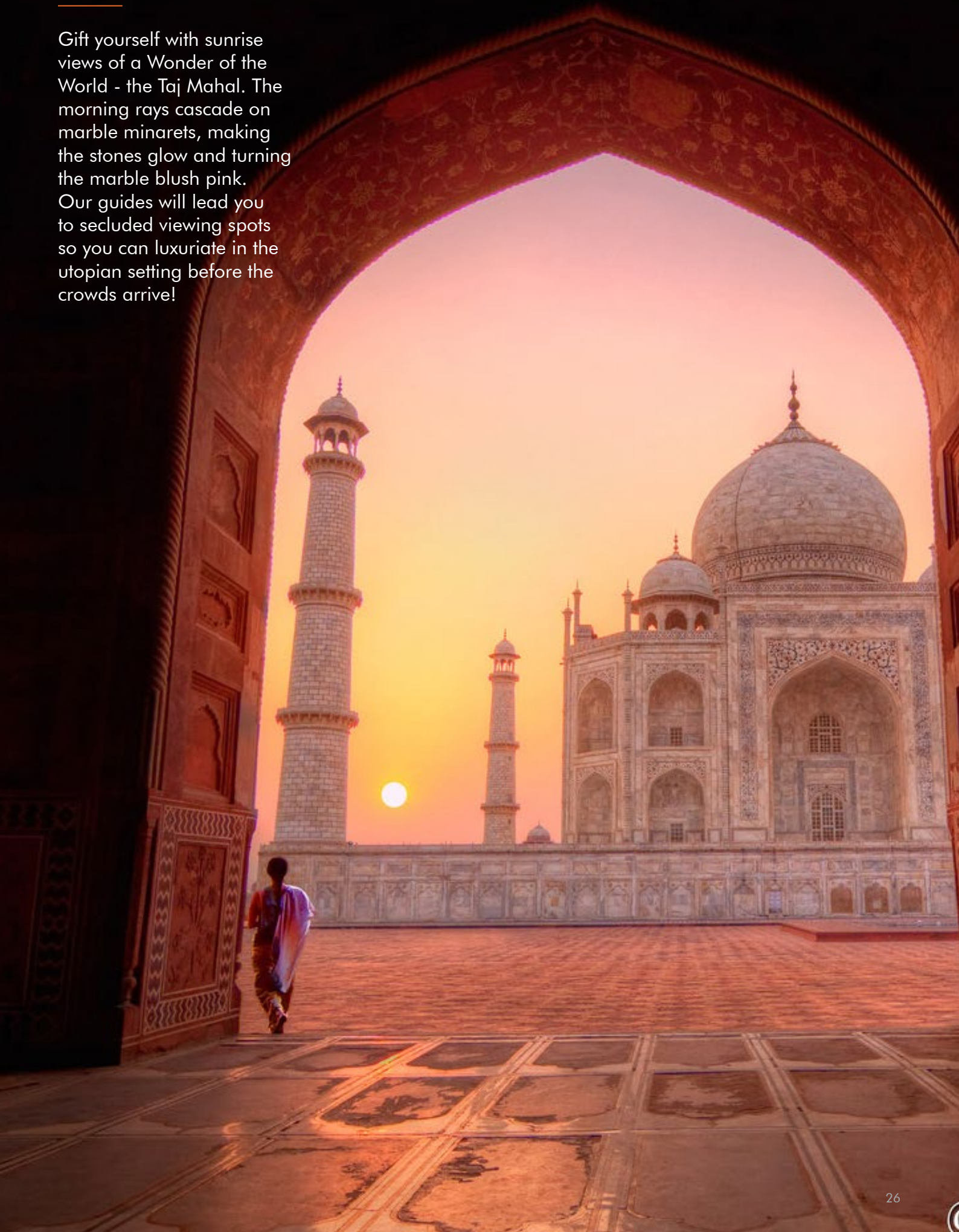
Established during the colonial era, the railway tracks of India have inspired poets and artists for centuries. Pass by aromatic tea gardens, ride above bridges amidst lush green slopes, and catch a glimpse of life outside the bustling cities.





## The Majestic Taj Mahal

Gift yourself with sunrise views of a Wonder of the World - the Taj Mahal. The morning rays cascade on marble minarets, making the stones glow and turning the marble blush pink. Our guides will lead you to secluded viewing spots so you can luxuriate in the utopian setting before the crowds arrive!







## Festivals

Indian festivals are a time of connection, celebration, and affirmation.

Experience the zest, colors, spiritual energy, traditional costumes, warmth, and the star of any festivity - the food. Popular celebrations include Holi, Diwali, Pushkar Camel Fair, Lohri, Pongal, and the Hornbill Festival.

## Health and Wellness



Nestled in ethereal valleys and amidst exotic grasslands, India has a bouquet of wellness centers scattered around its terrain like dew droplets. Providing well-being programs, soul-stirring yoga, and ayurvedic treatments, along with spectacular scenery and excellent culinary creations, the rejuvenation and wellness resorts do everything to make you feel the harmony and graciousness of nature.











# SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES



## Mumbai by Dawn

Wake up at the crack of dawn and dive into the tenacity and passion of the City of Dreams. Watch the fishermen collect their fresh supply for the day, the newspaper vendors pile up multilingual papers, and the locals prepare the market to welcome buyers. From hearing waves splash and birds chirp to cars honk and people chatter, witness Mumbai rise and shine.







## A Taste of India

From antiquated spices to homemade chutneys and innovative culinary techniques, entering an Indian kitchen is like winning the lottery for any foodie! Stroll the local market, pick your favorite vegetables, and indulge in an interactive cooking session with a local Indian family.

## Old Delhi by Rickshaw

This is not your standard guidebook tour! Witness the architectural marvels, the multicolored facades, beautifully decorated shops, ethnically dressed locals, and the fragrances emanating from the potpourri of eateries that line the historical alleys. Sample sweets from 100-year-old stalls, discover alleys overflowing with silver and spices, and find sacred spaces at Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India.





## A Day with Tea Pickers

It will be all lush and green as far as your eyes can see! The captivating fragrance of fresh tea leaves makes the Munnar tea gardens extremely welcoming. Enter the tea paradise, join the planters, trek through the blanketed hills, and learn how the pickers pluck two leaves and a bud with deft hands. Feel the herbal warmth of freshly grown leaves, taste the moderately spiced dry tea, and pick the perfect leaves for yourself. From bush to factory and into your teacup, this is a truly aromatic experience.







## The Markets of Mattancherry

Not far from the heart of Kochi, Mattancherry has an old-world charm and an exalted reputation for its spice market. Explore the allure of the Keralan backwaters by hopping on a cruise, walking through large rain trees, and exploring the beautiful colonial buildings and quaint streets.

## Chettinad Antiques and Cuisine

Chettinad is a jewel in the crown of Tamil Nadu owing to the magnificent Raja's palace in Kanadukathan village. The Art-Deco style homes spread across the towns and villages of the region. On this walking tour, peruse local antique markets and hear the tales of Colonial India from shopkeepers. Thanks to its subtlety of blending so many spices into a single dish, Chettinad also serves the most aromatic dishes of all Indian cuisine.





## Aarti Ceremony on River Ganga

Fill your soul with a powerful devotional ritual by attending the Aarti (prayer) ceremony on the shores of River Ganga. Stand on the ghats that lead you to the holy Ganges where the priests perform their daily devotion, recite lengthy mantras, and ignite fiery lamps. Receive a purification and blessing while listening to the evocative chanting in a powerfully moving experience.







## Plantation with a Purpose

A farm that fosters a better tomorrow, Philipkutty is nestled in the backwaters by Vembanad Lake. An azure sky with velvety clouds when you look above, paired with gracefully green surroundings and glassy lake water when you look around, creates the perfect backdrop for conversations with your hosts. Walk on the ridges by the canals and into the farms that naturally grow a number of crops. Relish a scrumptious lunch made with organically grown spices and vegetables.

## The French Connection Trail

Welcome to Pondicherry, the land of mustards and yellows. Here the tiny, innumerable, and swarming lanes have a uniquely French narrative. Meet our historian and enjoy an informative walking tour through streets lined with color-washed villas sporting louvred shutters, wrought iron grilles, and ornate cornices. Explore the tastes and historic treasures and discover how it has influenced Tamil culture.











# BHUTAN

With an attractive patchwork of lofty landscapes, laid back towns, lush mountains, and mighty rivers, Bhutan is drastic in beauty but humble in charm.

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Crowned with several of the highest summits in the world, the Land of the Thunder Dragon is brimming with folkloric traditions and national pride. It is a country where global influence is less, nature is untamed, traditional Buddhist culture still thrives, and locals welcome you as old friends. Experience sacred valleys and mighty dzongs; cliffside monasteries and soaring Himalayan peaks; and dense forests of rhododendron and archer monks.



## Festivals

Tshechus are grand events where entire communities come together to witness religious performances, receive blessings, and socialize. Extravagant costumed dance acts, beguiling fire performances, narratives recited from the legends, and eloquent masks give birth to the vibrance and ardor carried by the festivities of Bhutan.





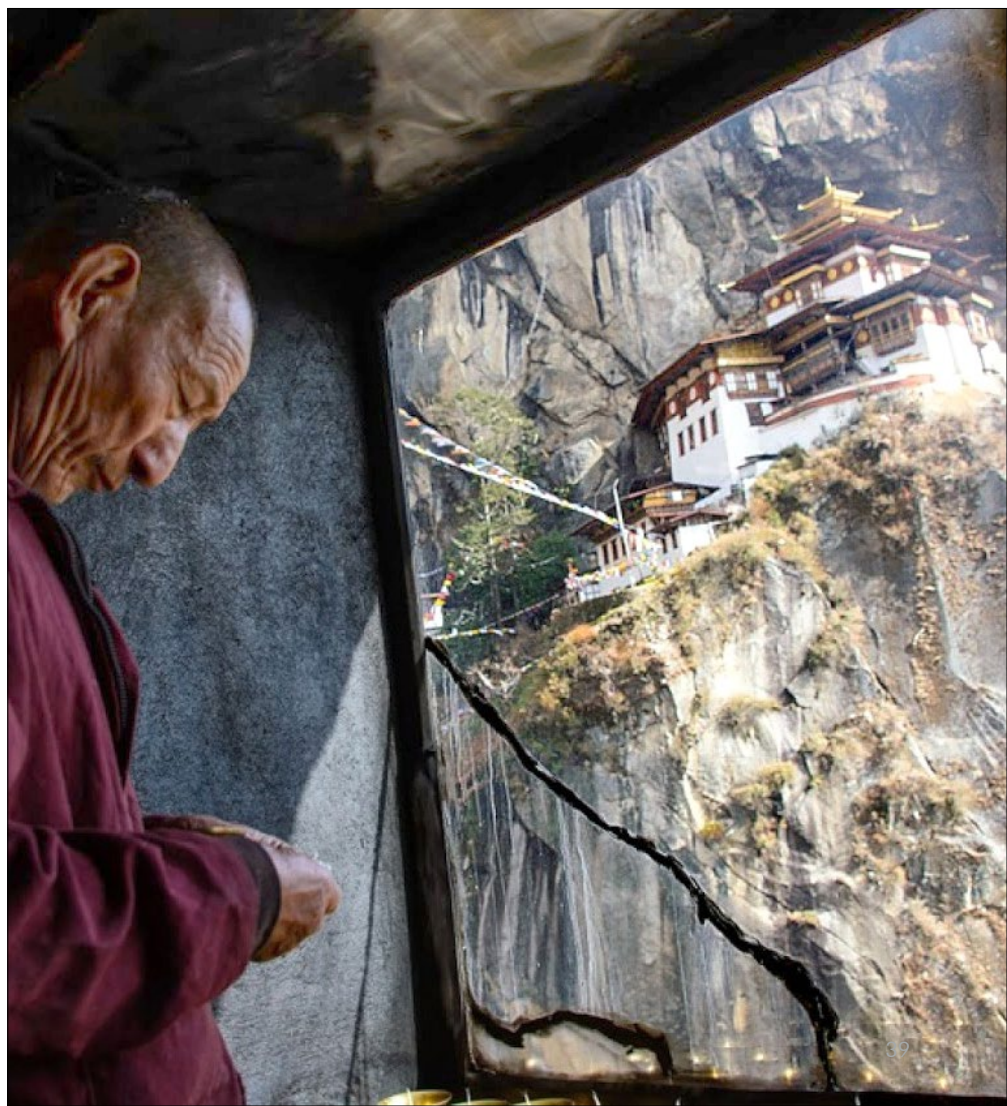


## Rituals

With Buddhism engraved in the soul and fortresses narrating a triumphant saga of the glorious bygone era, Bhutan has a peerless authentic culture since unknown times. Take a dip into the sacred lives which the Bhutanese adhere to and absorb the essence of their rituals.

## Mountainside Monasteries

Tiger's Nest Monastery is utopian and feels like it comes alive from the pages of a fantasy chronicle. Trek to this fanciful monastery which carries the vigor of holy blessings and witness the glaring sun rays cascading into the lush valley.





## Himalayan Vistas

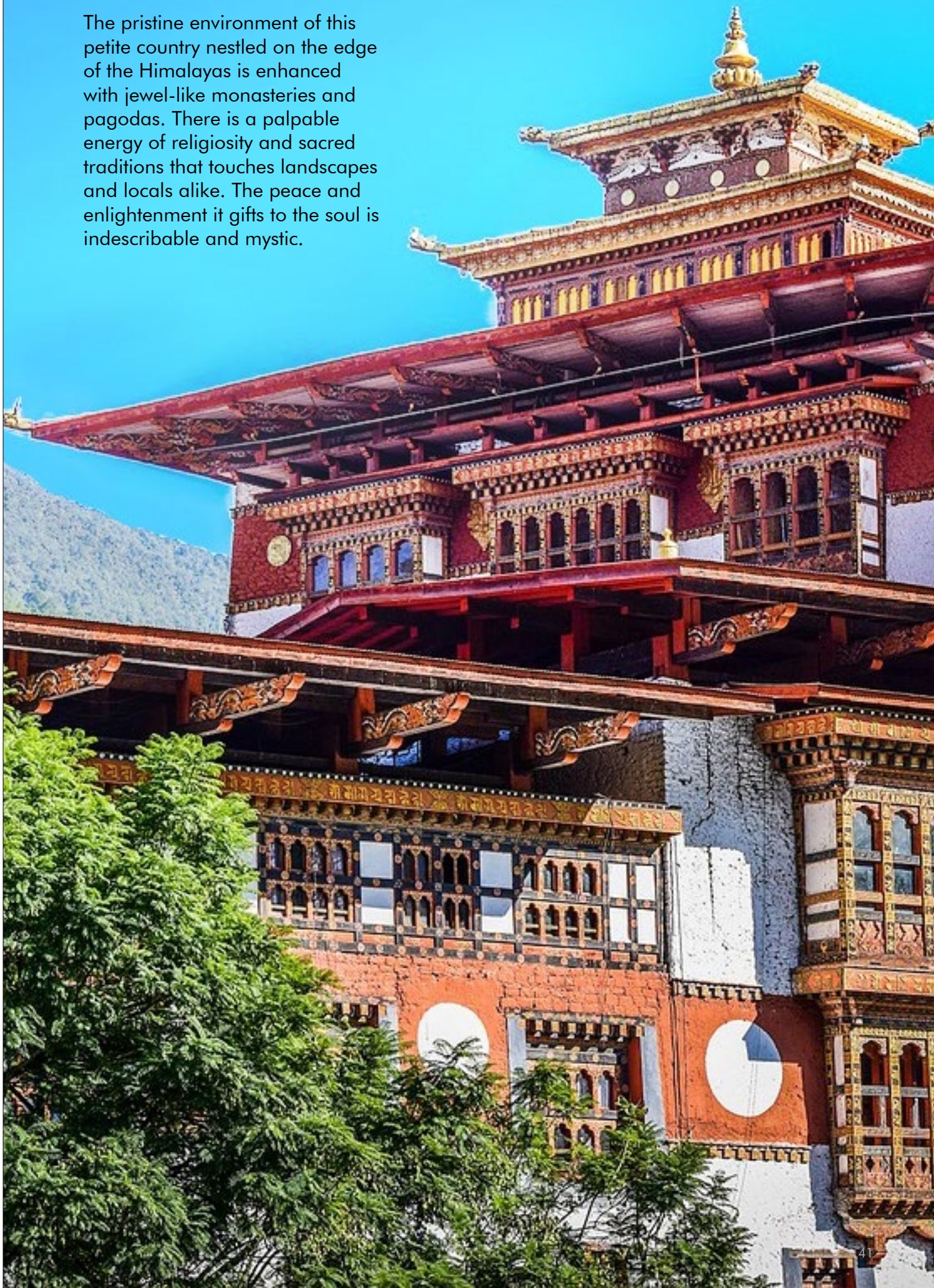
Nestled in the foothills of the mighty Himalaya, Bhutan invites you to touch the cotton candy clouds, embrace the brisk wind, and trek over the mountain passes. Sip aromatic herbal tea while gazing at stupas and relish an ambience that is frozen yet ornamented with the warmth of the people.





## Sacred Spaces

The pristine environment of this petite country nestled on the edge of the Himalayas is enhanced with jewel-like monasteries and pagodas. There is a palpable energy of religiosity and sacred traditions that touches landscapes and locals alike. The peace and enlightenment it gifts to the soul is indescribable and mystic.











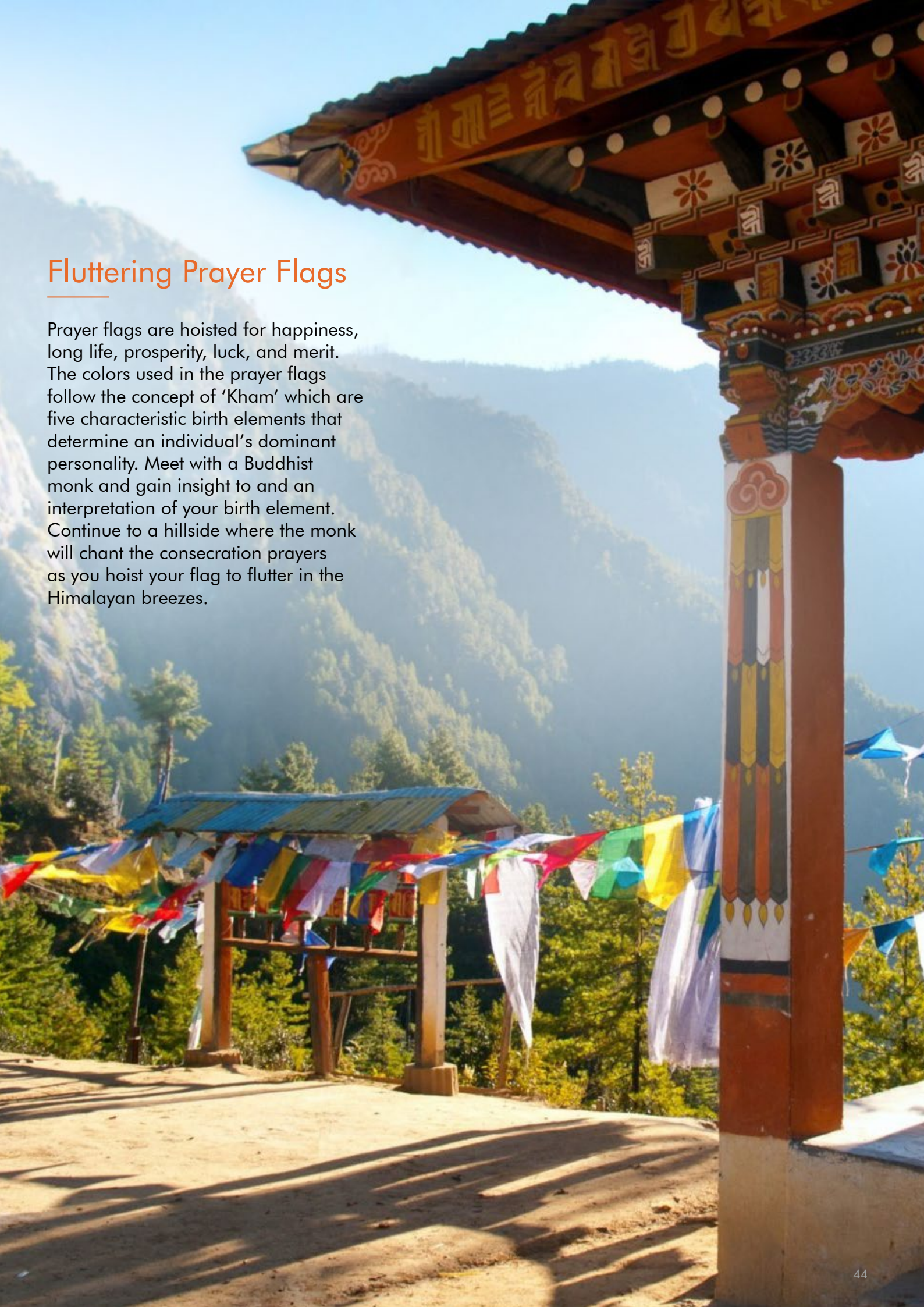
# SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES





## Fluttering Prayer Flags

Prayer flags are hoisted for happiness, long life, prosperity, luck, and merit. The colors used in the prayer flags follow the concept of 'Kham' which are five characteristic birth elements that determine an individual's dominant personality. Meet with a Buddhist monk and gain insight to and an interpretation of your birth element. Continue to a hillside where the monk will chant the consecration prayers as you hoist your flag to flutter in the Himalayan breezes.







## Monastic Music

Music to fill your soul!  
Arrive early at a local monastery and observe the junior monks recite their sunrise chants and songs. The chanting is used for both religious purposes and to prepare the mind for meditation. You will have exclusive access to a private prayer room - a rare opportunity for travelers to experience the often-mysterious lives of monastic youth - with the option to join in a meditation session.

## Farmhouse with a Family

Experience the raw ranch life in the rolling hills of the Bhutanese countryside. Listen to the unfiltered stories, wake up eyeing a view as beautiful as a painting, and feel the fresh air rejuvenating your mind and body. Feast with neighborhood families and rejuvenate with a traditional hot stone bath.





## Sleep Under the Stars

After a moderate hike in the foothills of the Himalayas, arrive at your luxury tented camp next to a gentle stream. A private chef will curate a traditional Bhutanese menu that includes local greens, red rice, momos, Phaksha Paa (pork with red chilis), and buckwheat noodles. Drift off to sleep to the sounds of wildlife under a ceiling of stars.







## Mask Making

In Bhutan, mask dances are a deeply spiritual affair. Monks and locals dress up with elaborately painted masks and perform in the valley as part of their religious tradition. The masks may represent fearsome male or female protective deities, animals, skulls, saints, sages, and legendary personages. Meet with a local artisan whose family has been making traditional wooden masks for generations. Learn about the complex process, the representation, and the skillful carving of contours and ornaments.

## Blessing Ceremony

Visit one of the oldest monasteries in Bhutan where monks learn Lamaism and astrology based on Buddhist philosophy. Sodha Travel will organize a private puja (prayer ceremony) with the monks for peace, prosperity, and good luck. An offering will be made with butter lamps at the altar while the main priest (lama) of the monastery will chant and offer blessings with a traditional scarf.











# SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is an idyllic country of golden beaches, misty mountains, and abundant wildlife. From culinary to cultural, and with rows of coconut palms and verdant highlands, Sri Lanka is an incredible offshore garden.

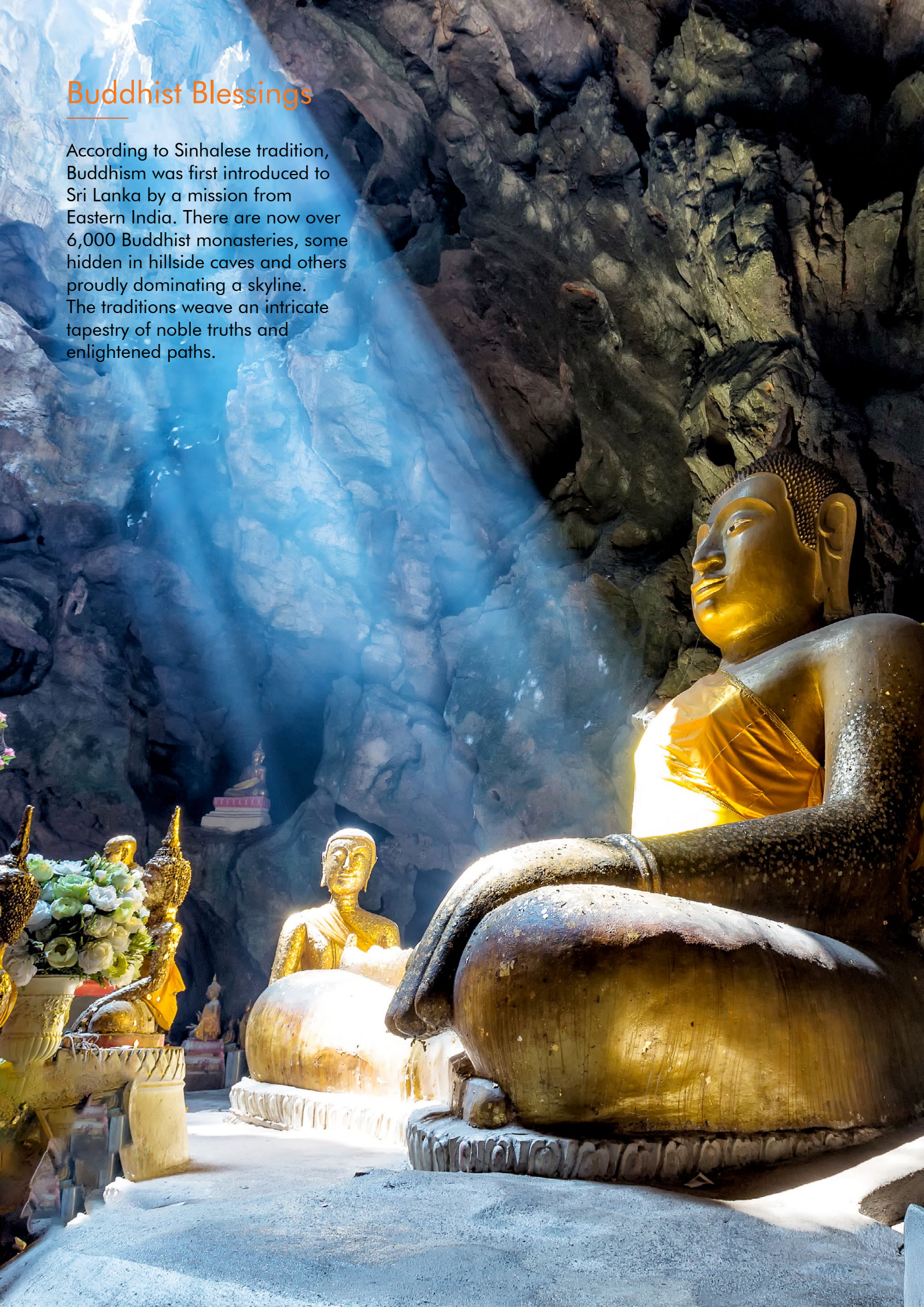
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With many sites and scenes bottled up into a small island, a traveler can be riding the waves at dawn and admiring the green carpeted mountains by dusk. The landscape here mirrors the ideologies of the Buddhist religion it fosters, nurturing calmness and relaxation. And then there is the food. Sri Lankan cuisine offers a vivid array of flavor combinations, including sweet caramelized onion relishes, bitter melon, spicy scraped coconut, curry tamed by mild rice, and desserts sweetened by palm sugar.

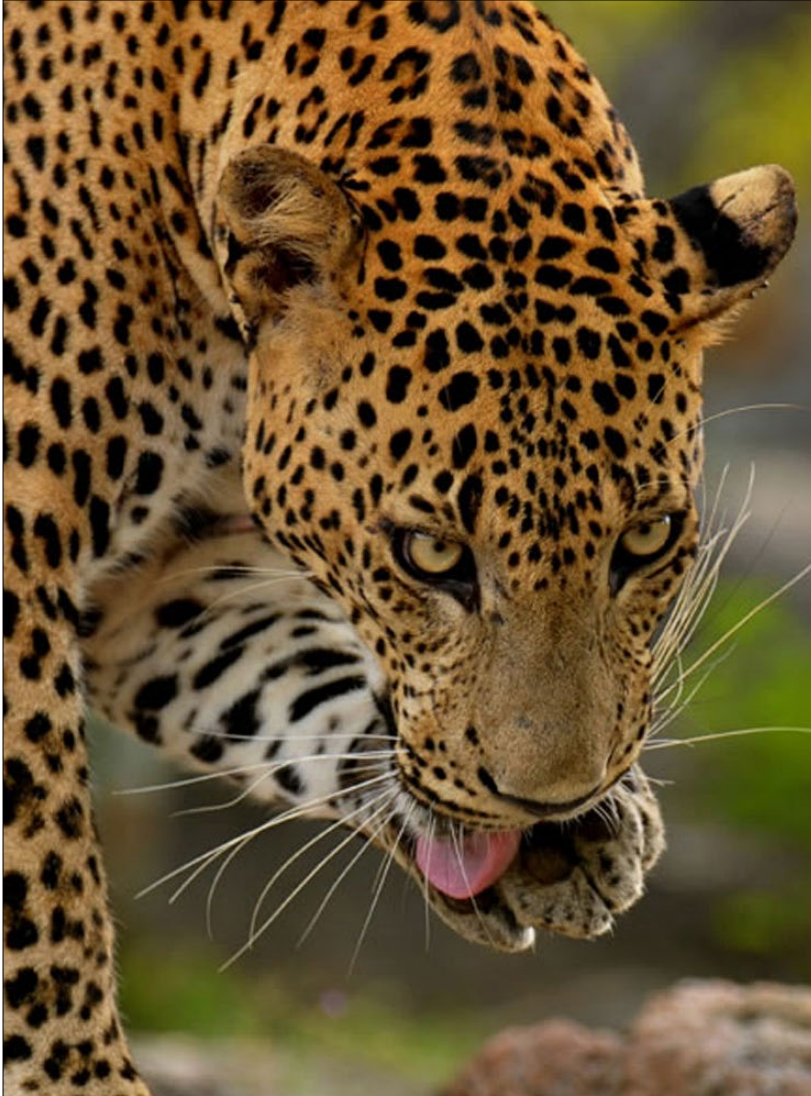


## Buddhist Blessings

According to Sinhalese tradition, Buddhism was first introduced to Sri Lanka by a mission from Eastern India. There are now over 6,000 Buddhist monasteries, some hidden in hillside caves and others proudly dominating a skyline. The traditions weave an intricate tapestry of noble truths and enlightened paths.







## Wildlife

A country that cradles wildlife like a mother, Sri Lanka is home to 22 national parks, 120 species of mammals, 171 species of reptiles, 106 species of amphibians, 227 species of birds, and one of the world's largest populations of blue whales and sperm whales. Pheasant-tailed Jacanas delicately pick their way through the flowering lotus while the mighty Asian elephants graze just yards from your vehicle.

## Beaches

Sri Lanka's coastlines are fringed with numerous golden beaches. The cool coastal breezes and freshly shredded coconuts are a welcome refreshment from the tropical inland heat. Soak in the rays, snorkel, surf, or hop on a boat to observe the migratory whales.





A blue train is shown from a side-on perspective, moving through a vibrant green landscape. The train consists of several blue passenger cars with white window frames. The surrounding terrain is covered in dense green vegetation, including tea plantations and tall, slender trees. The sky is a warm, golden color, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

## Rail Journeys

Embellished with sparkling waterfalls and terraced plantations, train journeys in Sri Lanka cherish all facets of Mother Nature. The aroma of tea plantations seeps into the soul and the view witnessed is so sublime that it feels like a dream. Reserve a window seat or panoramic car for hypnotizing views that criss-cross across the emerald highlands and beyond.



## Adventure

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Sri Lanka is more than just sunny beaches and soaring palm trees! The island is like a firecracker that bursts with a handful of thrilling options for adventure travelers, including waterfall trekking, mountain biking, and kite surfing. With dry plains, tropical rainforests, coastlines, and highlands, there is an activity and climate for all levels of adrenaline.











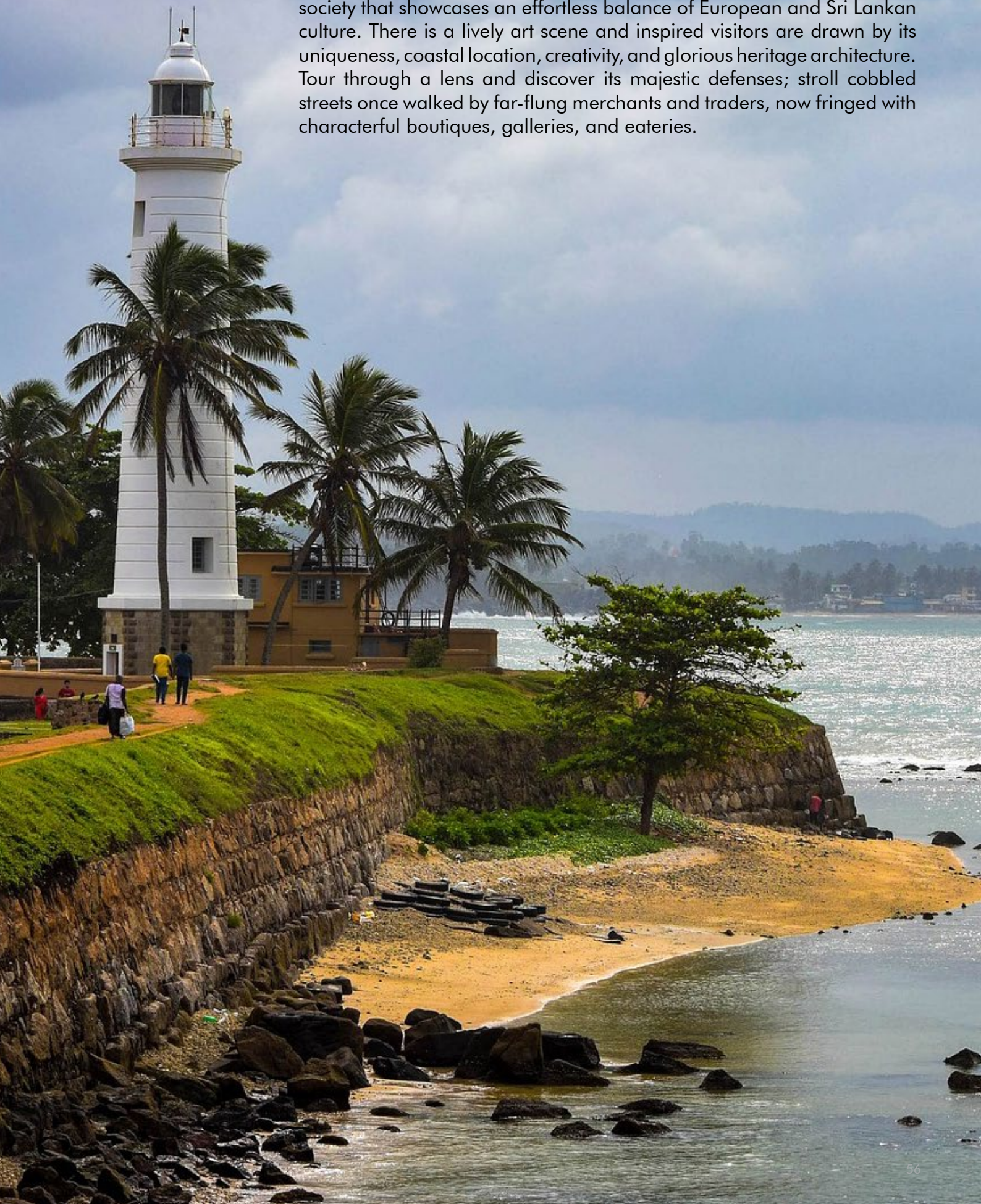
# SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES





## Fort Photography

Galle Fort is a vibrant and self-contained multi-ethnic and multi-religious society that showcases an effortless balance of European and Sri Lankan culture. There is a lively art scene and inspired visitors are drawn by its uniqueness, coastal location, creativity, and glorious heritage architecture. Tour through a lens and discover its majestic defenses; stroll cobbled streets once walked by far-flung merchants and traders, now fringed with characterful boutiques, galleries, and eateries.







## Remote Trails

Explore the tranquility of hill country in Knuckles, a mystical region of the island. Named after the range's resemblance to knuckles on a hand, the area is valued by scientists and anthropologists alike for its biodiversity and native tribes. With exclusive access to remote trails, hike among 40 hidden villages and a plethora of endemic wildlife.

## Art and Philosophy

Art sparks a conversation.

An ancient house of a Village Chief has been transformed into a modern art center while preserving historical aspects of Dutch-style architecture dating back to the 18th century. Its vast collection reflects the interests of its founder Jacques Soulié – traditional furniture, art items, antique books, manuscripts, photographs, and postcards highlighting a deeper understanding and convergence of two cultures: Sri Lankan and French.

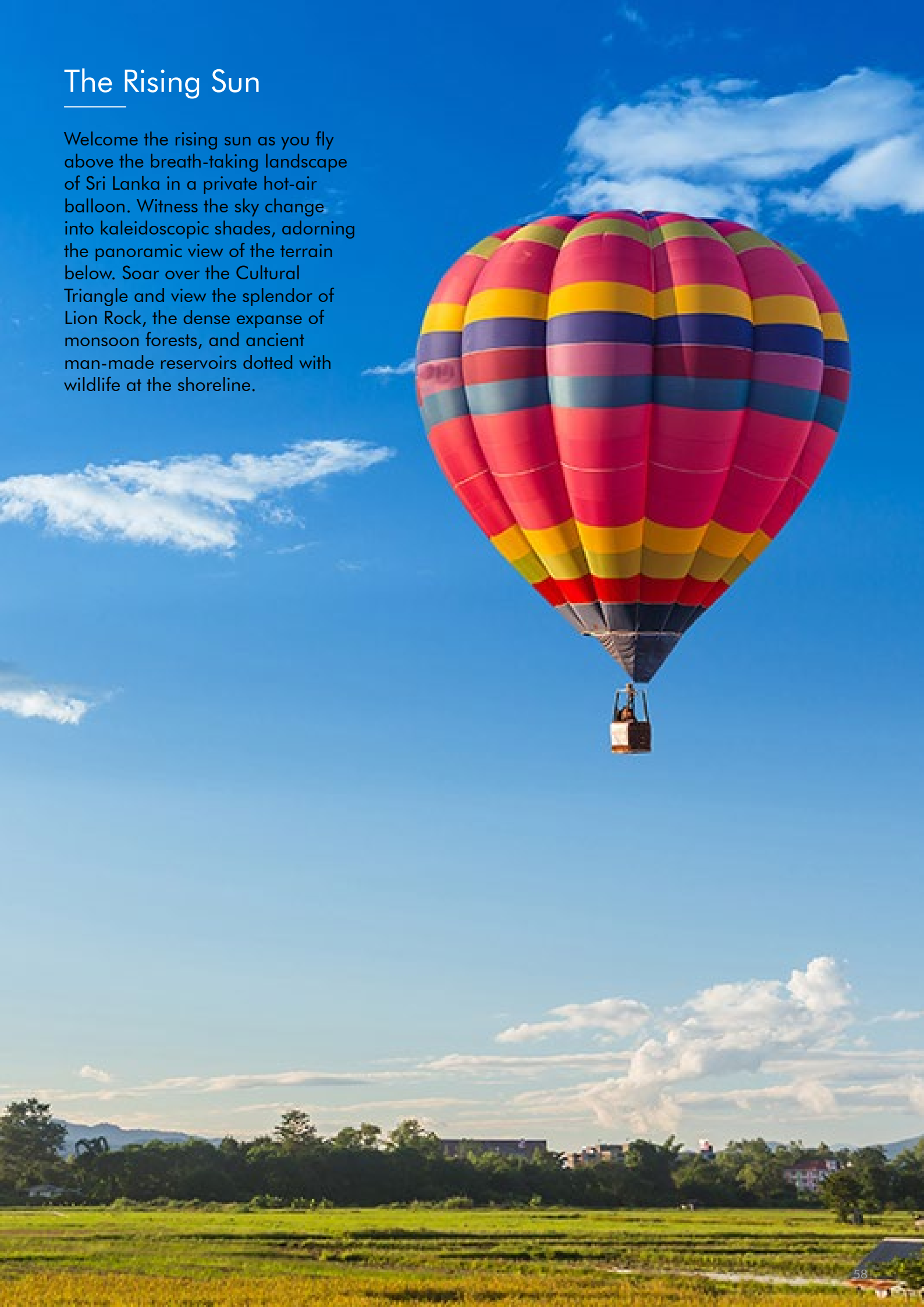




# The Rising Sun

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Welcome the rising sun as you fly above the breath-taking landscape of Sri Lanka in a private hot-air balloon. Witness the sky change into kaleidoscopic shades, adorning the panoramic view of the terrain below. Soar over the Cultural Triangle and view the splendor of Lion Rock, the dense expanse of monsoon forests, and ancient man-made reservoirs dotted with wildlife at the shoreline.







## Paddies and Plantations

Hop on a bike and cycle through flourishing paddy and cinnamon plantations in the charming southern countryside. Glide by unfrequented village life where local temples burn incense and vibrant blue kingfishers fly overhead. There is no better way to experience the local landscape than by bike, an opportunity to really explore its meandering paths and lanes.

## The Secret Garden

Journey to a picturesque farm with incredible views of the Aluvihare Mountains. Meet your host, sip freshly squeezed juice, and learn about the garden's collection of Sri Lankan produce, pepper, papaya, cocoa, coconut, mango, and mahogany. Enjoy the fruits of the planters' labor with a traditionally prepared rice and curry lunch served on banana leaf.





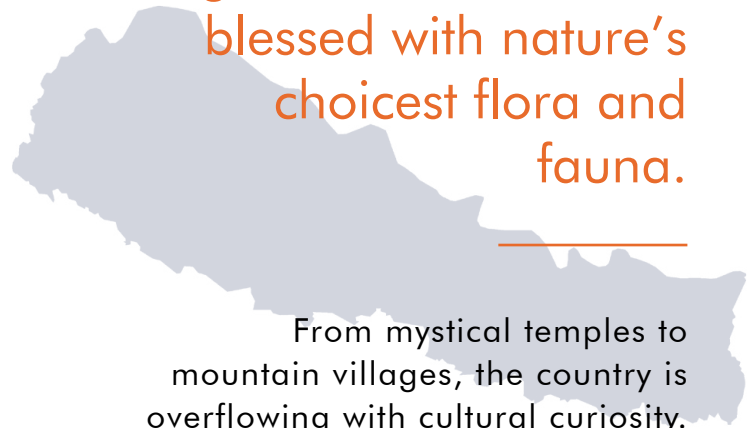






# NEPAL

A mountainous country  
of sacred spaces and  
Himalayan vistas,  
Nepal is cradled  
among the world's  
highest mountains and  
blessed with nature's  
choicest flora and  
fauna.



From mystical temples to mountain villages, the country is overflowing with cultural curiosity. Although tourism is increasing, Nepal's remote location has traditionally shielded it from outside influences. Travelers can embrace serenity while admiring mountainside monasteries sprinkled among elevated peaks and valleys. Nepal is a country where simple activities become life-altering experiences.



## High in the Himalayas

Fluttering prayer flags wave in the crisp air of Nepal's Himalayan communities. The mountain ranges are the backbone of the country, with white peaks dotting the azure sky. Whether by foot or air, tent or lodge, experience the dramatic landscapes and vistas of the mighty Himalayas.







## Architecture and Ancient Cities

Step back in time and walk the lanes of ancient cities like Patan and Bhaktapur. Be introduced to the shrines, stupas, and temples where the fragrance of floral incense marks the way. Enrich yourself with the allure and charm of antiquated kingdoms with traditional Nepalese architecture, a unique strain of art and practicality.

## Natural Spaces

Adjacent to tranquil landscapes reside eclectic wildlife habitats. The dense jungles of Nepal have often been compared to the pages of a Rudyard Kipling book and provide premium wildlife watching in Asia.

Home to both Chitwan National Park and Bardia National Park, the valley is graced with exotic wildlife and offers safaris in its lush grasslands.





## The Buddhist Trail

Nepal has fostered and sheltered the ideology of Buddhism since ages. Home to Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, and possessing the divine Bodhi Tree, Nepal shields the two most eminent places of worship and pilgrimage for the Buddhist. Presence of all places holy and sacred enhances the glory of Nepal.





## An Elevated Adventure

Calling all adrenaline junkies! From trekking the rugged foothills of the Annapurna range to soaking in restorative waters of natural hot springs, Nepal offers an assorted menu of adventure activities. Cycling, rafting, paragliding, canyoning, kayaking, and ice climbing are just a sample of what you can experience in your personal playground of the Himalayas.











# SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES





## The Goddess Kumari

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Time to earn all the blessings from the goddess herself! Following an ancestral tradition, Nepal honors a girl with the title of 'Kumari', thereby equating her to a deity. Converse with her family and enlighten yourself with concealed facts of her life, including how the maiden symbolizes the seed of the powers that regulate creation, stability, and destruction.







## Singing Bowl Master

To rejuvenate the soul, Nepal has the finest musical technique - the singing bowls. Immerse yourself in the relaxing and rejuvenating sound waves of the bowls designed by master Tibetan and Nepali Buddhist monks. The idea is to revive and reawaken the soul and mental tranquil by giving rest to the body.

## Barauli Community Homestay

Barauli, home to the Tharu people, is a small indigenous community near Chitwan National Park. Tharu are mainly farmers; by day the villagers create artisanal products and tend to the crops while children play near the jungle. The community homestay provides job opportunities and empowers the village women. Your visit directly supports cleanliness programs, improved agricultural techniques, and primary education.





## Meet the Sherpas

Come face to face with those who know every path and every struggle that leads to the highest peak in the world - Everest! Sherpas are locals who are highly skilled and experienced climbers. Scientific studies also concluded that Sherpas had undergone genetic adaptations after living in high altitudes for thousands of years. Hear their ancestral chronicles and learn about the preparations required to lead climbers. This is a unique opportunity to engage with the indigenous Sherpa community.







## Meditation with the Monks

Time to pull off the curtains from the opaque and mysterious life of Buddhist monks! Know them, through them. Converse about their mystic and pure lifestyle at a hillside monastery, followed by an exclusive meditation session with a senior monk.

## Everest for Breakfast

Be whisked away by helicopter for an unforgettable morning in the Himalayas. The mountains tell a story while you relish a delicious champagne breakfast with Everest as your backdrop. Your host is a local summiteer who makes the surroundings come alive as you dine on eggs, fruit salad, sausages, croissants, and local jams.











# THAILAND

Thailand is a culturally diverse landscape shaped by many influences, including Indian, Laotian, Burmese, Cambodian, and Chinese. It is a country of ancient temples, sun-kissed islands, tribal villages, and culinary traditions that have made their mark worldwide.

From floating markets to terraced rice paddies, Thailand is a dazzling display of color and community.

In the countryside, golden idols stand adjacent to emerald jungles.

Rainbow rickshaws whizz past bustling city markets overflowing with red chilis while azure waters lap the sandy shores of the southern islands. Thailand offers heritage sites, haute cuisine, and a sprinkle of hedonism.

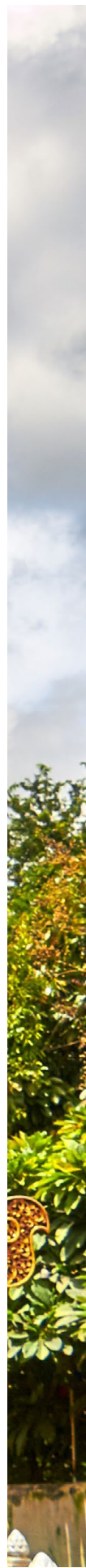








# SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES





## A Taste of Bangkrak

Join your host for a visit to Bangkrak, a Bangkok neighborhood known for culinary traditions. This signature tour combines delectable food tasting with off-the-beat sightseeing. Meet and engage with restaurant owners, sample their generations-old artisanal recipes, and visit local attractions hidden from the major tourist path. Not only you will experience the Thai gastronomic tradition, but your visit directly supports the local community.







## Cycling in Koh Kret

Hop on your bicycle and ride alongside the Chao Phraya River, passing small villages, temples, and fruit and flower plantations. Then head away from river life and explore the rural surroundings. Ride among rice paddies before finishing the first part of your journey at Ban Bua Thong. The beautiful part about riding on Koh Kret is that there are no cars allowed on the island - you have the open road! Finish with a delicious Thai lunch overlooking the river.

## Hill Tribe Villages

Journey into the highlands and experience several hill tribe villages. Start with the Hmong, whose ancestors migrated from China. Meet with the elders and learn about the complex history and migration across Southeast Asia. Continue to Baan Tong Luang and the Long-Necked Karen hill tribe.

The women are known for wearing numerous brass rings around their neck, creating the affectionate nickname Giraffe Neck. Nearby are the Lahu and Palong hill tribe villages where women accessorize with Rattan Rings around their waists. We invite you to engage with the locals and learn about their Burmese customs.





## Jewels of Khao Sok

Cheow Lan Lake is tucked away in Khao Sok National Park, one of the oldest rainforests in the world. Emerging from the emerald waters are limestone karsts, traces of a coral reef system that once stretched from Borneo to China. Cruise the klongs (waterways) on a traditional long-tail boat for spectacular sunset views. Cocktail optional. Transfer to your luxury tent where you drift to sleep with the music of the jungle.







## Phang Nga Bay by Starlight

Transfer to the pier for kayaking inside Phang Nga Bay with marine limestone karst islands, macaques, water monitors, kingfishers, and sea eagles. Sit back and be guided through caves on a single or double occupancy kayak. When darkness falls, the stars shine overhead in the circle of black night, fireflies flash in the cliffside jungle, and the sea glows with phosphorescence. Enjoy a spiritual ceremony with your own Krathong before boarding the escort boat back to land. A truly magical experience and a National Geographic Top 50!

## Morning Alms

In Buddhism, giving good = receiving good. Many locals start their day by giving alms (money, food, or other donations) to the monks. Rise and shine for an ancient ritual performed as the rays of the morning sun pierce the darkness of the previous night. Join the monks as they collect daily alms in the temple district. With exclusive permission by the resident monks, you will have the rare opportunity to perform the duties of a “temple boy” and then share in the morning meal. A uniquely enlightening experience!









# VIETNAM

Vietnam is a country that honors the past and celebrates the future. Sharing fabled borders with Cambodia, Laos, and China, the topography varies from coastal plains to mountain ranges.

The Vietnamese culture has evolved on the basis of the wet rice civilization, and the local lifestyle is closely related to its villages and native lands.

The diversity of the 54 ethnic groups is apparent in the many traditional and cultural treasures. Popular destinations include the dazzling capital of Hanoi, French colonial landmarks in Ho Chi Minh City, colorful streets of Hoi An, terraced highlands of Sapa, and the limestone pillars of Ha Long Bay.









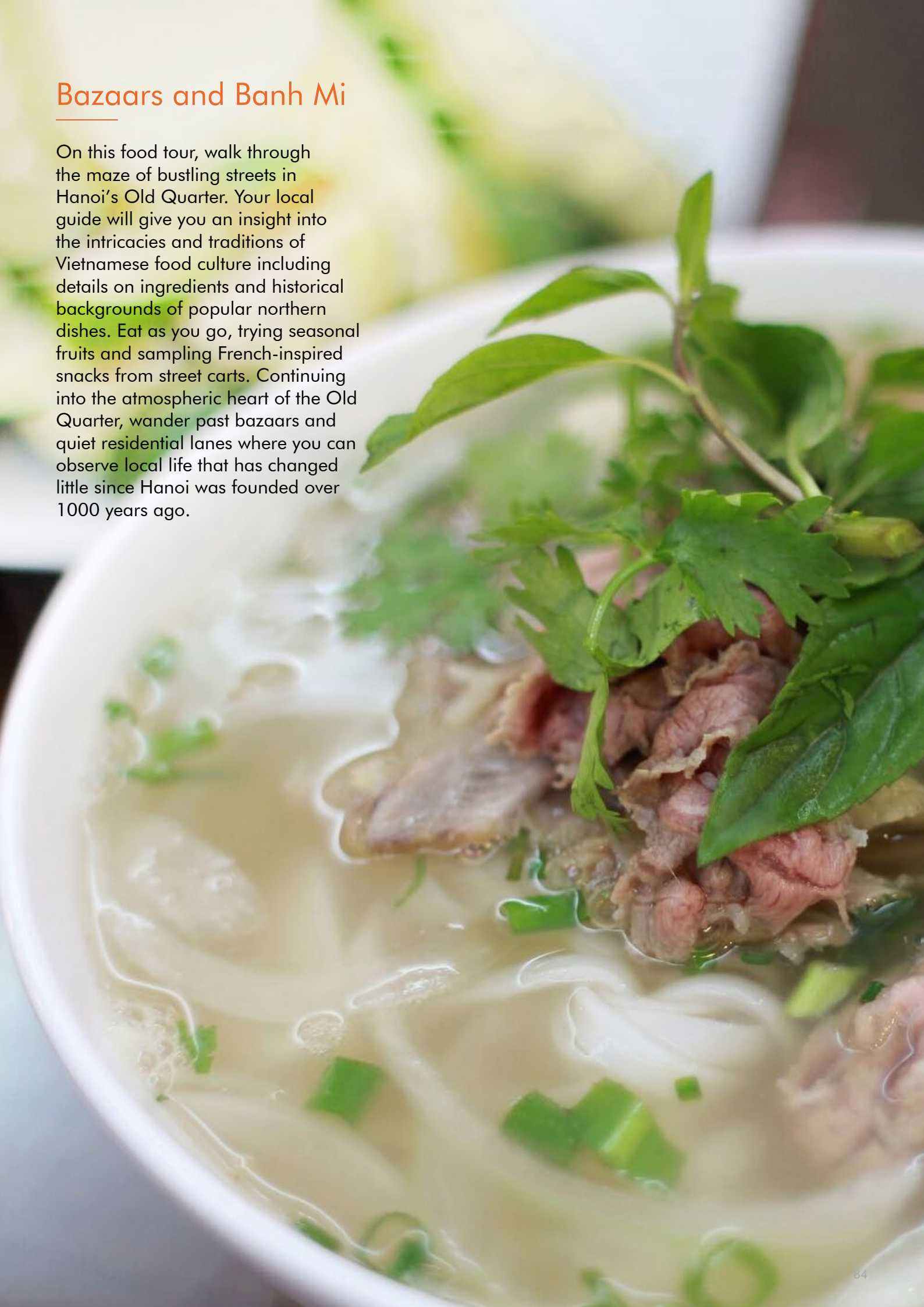
# SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES





## Bazaars and Banh Mi

On this food tour, walk through the maze of bustling streets in Hanoi's Old Quarter. Your local guide will give you an insight into the intricacies and traditions of Vietnamese food culture including details on ingredients and historical backgrounds of popular northern dishes. Eat as you go, trying seasonal fruits and sampling French-inspired snacks from street carts. Continuing into the atmospheric heart of the Old Quarter, wander past bazaars and quiet residential lanes where you can observe local life that has changed little since Hanoi was founded over 1000 years ago.







## Reaching the Summit

Established as a hill station by the French in 1922, Sapa has dramatic scenery and overlooks the terraced rice fields of the Muong Hoa Valley. It used to take travelers two days of intense trekking to reach Fansipan, the highest peak in Indochina. Now it takes only 15 minutes by cable-car. Before reaching the summit, arrive at a peaceful garden complex with stone paths, ancient Azalea trees, and skillfully sculpted bronze statues. These sculptures lead the way to a celestial Buddha statue perched on the mountainside -- the largest in the country. The cloud formations at the top of Mt. Fansipan change every few seconds, revealing new shapes and scenes as the earth meets the sky.

## Vespa by Night

Experience the nightlife of Saigon from a vintage Vespa! Throughout the night, sample a variety of food and drinks at local restaurants. Zoom past the famous must-see sights of Ho Chi Minh City in the bustling traffic. You will visit a traditional coffee shop with live music and then wrap up the evening at an exciting music bar where the new generation of Vietnamese unwind and flaunt their unique styles. Unlimited food and free flowing drinks included! Note: Safety first! Guests ride pillion behind our drivers.





## The Imperial Countryside

Boat along the Perfume River to the grapefruit village of Thuy Bieu. Cycle or walk to the historic temple dedicated to the genius of the village, a primary school, and a family plantation. Meet with friends of Sodha Travel and prepare lunch with the family: figs, salad, and lemongrass duck. After lunch, rest with a foot massage with oil made from medicinal herbs. Cruise along the river and admire the Imperial City at sunset.







## Ancient Art

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Hoi An was a bustling commercial port. Merchant ships from Asia and Europe would dock to exchange goods with the city. Silk was one of Hoi An's top commodities and lanterns became a popular way to decorate homes. Join your host and visit several art galleries that feature traditional and contemporary art. End at a renowned silk shop and make your own lantern with the family, accompanied by a classic Vietnamese coffee.

## Cruise the Mekong Delta

Located in Southern Vietnam, the Mekong Delta is a vast maze of rivers, mangrove forests, and islands. Board your traditional and comfortable teak vessel for an overnight cruise from Cai Be to Can Tho. Visit floating markets and dock alongside sampan boats for conversation and bargaining with the merchants.











# LAOS

Saffron-robed monks, emerald covered hills, and an abundance of wildlife await in Laos. It is a destination untouched by mass tourism. The landlocked mountainous nation features misty mountains, beautiful French colonial towns, and Buddhist stupas.

Golden temple spires rise against a backdrop of karst mountains while vibrant markets rouse sleepy river towns. With an estimated population of nearly 7 million, Laos is one of the most sparsely populated countries in Asia. Natural landmarks include the Annamite Mountains close to the border with Vietnam, as well as the Mekong River, which flows from China and along the border with Thailand. Laos is also emerging as a leader in ecotourism. Protected areas blanket the landscape and community-based projects abound to preserve both communities and the environment.









# SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES





## A Taste of Laos

Tempt your taste buds with traditional Lao cuisine. After meeting the family, shop for ingredients at the local market, create a recipe book, and prepare a 4-course homemade lunch. Dishes include papaya salad and Khao Larm, bamboo shoots filled with sticky rice and toasted coconut.





## Meditation and Mindfulness

Enter a world of health and wellness where there is a deeper connection to mind, body, and spirit. Start your day with a guided meditation at a local temple. A monk will then recite stories that connect Laos' spiritual heritage and Buddhist traditions. Continue to a holistic wellness center where a custom spa menu will be designed to show how there are many paths to balance, depending on individual patterns and behaviors. Complete the day with medicinal tea and aromatherapy.



## Lotus Art

The lotus is a sacred flower in Buddhism and a symbol of both compassion and the highest state of consciousness. Many aspects of the Buddhist path are captured in the Lotus: it grows from the mud (samsara), it is unstained and appears clean on the surface (purification,) and in the end produces a beautiful flower (enlightenment). Skip the canvas and create your own lotus leaf painting with a local artist.





## Behind the Lens

Join a professional travel photographer for the hidden highlights of Vientiane. With decorative temples, French colonial architecture, delicious food, and the famous procession of saffron robed monks, the city offers a wealth of color and community. Meander down eclectic alleys, explore the Vietnamese and Chinese quarters, and meet the proprietors who are the pulse of the city.







## Jungle Discovery

Join our naturalist for a trek in Nam Ha, a national protected area that is home to ethnic groups and diverse plant and animal species. Explore hidden trails that lead to panoramic vistas and remote villages while listening to the soundtrack of the jungle. It's not where you travel but how you travel, and your participation supports local conservation programs.

## Boats and Buddhism

Cruise down the Mekong River on a private sailing. Sip on fresh pomegranate juice or a cocktail as you drift by riverside villages, waterfalls, and the emerald green hills. Meet with a tribal guide to explore the Pak Ou Caves, packed with over 4,000 Buddha icons. With a history dating back thousands of years, the caves are nestled in a dramatic limestone cliff at the point where the Mekong joins the Nam Ou River.











# CAMBODIA

Cambodia is the successor state to the mighty Khmer empire that once ruled vast swathes of land across present-day Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam.


Cambodia's two dominant topographical features are the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake, and most travelers include a visit to the fabled temples of Angkor.

This complex and charming kingdom is a fusion of tribal villages, a contemporary art scene, and wonders of the world. After struggling through years of political instability, the resilient spirit of the locals casts an optimism that permeates the landscape.









# SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES



## Wings over Angkor Wat

Experience the beauty of Angkor Wat by helicopter. The 20-minute flight offers spectacular aerial views of the UNESCO archaeological park and Cambodian countryside. Continue for a curated private overland tour of the temples, including the Angkor Thom complex, Bayon Temple, and Ta Prohm Temple. End with Angkor Wat, a breathtaking Wonder of the World and the largest religious monument.







## Tonle Sap Sunset Cruise

Experience the magic of a Cambodian sunset with an evening cruise on Tonle Sap Lake. Hop aboard a traditional wooden boat and take in the highlights of Southeast Asia's largest lake, a protected UNESCO biosphere reserve. Watch fishermen cast their nets and drift past floating villages and stilted homes. A champagne toast awaits as the sunset casts red and orange hues across the lake.

## Street Art

As the Kingdom's capital rises from a deep slumber, enjoy breakfast at a local morning market and learn about the often-underrepresented food culture of Cambodia. You will then forage through the streets of Phnom Penh in search of the finest hidden murals. As part of the country's cultural renaissance, there has been a prominent street art scene developing in the Kingdom for the past decade. In total, you will view over 40 murals and sculptures around the city that represent artistic expression in a modern world.





## Fishing on the Mekong

Savvy visitors to Cambodia love eating the traditional seafood caught by local fishermen on the riverbanks of the Mekong. This boat ride and fishing lesson offers a more hands-on experience by teaching you to catch your own fish before an onboard chef prepares a delicious meal. A truly immersive, river-to-table dining experience!







## Sacred Mountain by Jeep

Just an hour from Siem Reap, the sacred mountain of Phnom Kulen is renowned for its beautiful Buddhist temples, ancient Angkorian ruins, and natural waterfalls. Take in the sights on a custom fitted 4x4 jeep and admire your surroundings with cool tropical breezes. View the powerful reclining Buddha and ancient rock carvings of Kbal Spean; cool off with a swim beneath the falls.

## Education and Community

With Cambodia's harrowing history of war and genocide, many communities have yet to recover. Although Phnom Penh is rapidly developing, many people still live in poverty and are unable to afford a basic education. Spend the day volunteering at a primary school for children from disadvantaged communities. You will directly support teachers and administrators based on needs, from adding a touch of paint to creating educational materials.







Photo Source: Hotel partners & Abhishek Hajela



It was once said that travel leaves you **speechless** and then turns you into a **storyteller**.

*What will your story be?*







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