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Celebrating Women in Tourism

March 10, 2026
Holiday Inn Aerocity, New Delhi



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BOTT announces #SheforShe Celebrating Women in Tourism

Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Time: 10:30 am onwards

Venue: Holiday Inn Aerocity New Delhi

Programme Flow

10:30 am onwards | Registration & Networking Tea/Coffee

11:15 am | Welcome Address

A warm welcome by **Ms. Priyanka Saxena Ray**, Editor-in-Chief, BOTT, setting the context and vision of #SheforShe and its relevance in today's tourism landscape.

11:30 am – 12:10 pm | Knowledge Session on “She Travels, She Leads: Celebrating Women’s Journeys, Achievements & Empowerment in Tourism”

This engaging panel will bring together inspiring women leaders from diverse segments of tourism, hospitality, aviation, policy, infrastructure and travel management. The discussion will spotlight personal journeys, professional achievements, the evolving space for women in travel today.

Panellists include:

- Moderator: Ms. Barkha Dutt, Editor-in-Chief, Mojo Story
- Ms. Ranju Alex, CEO, Accor South Asia
- Ms. Yummi Talwar, COO, South Asia, VFS Global
- Ms. Isha Goyal – CEO, STIC Travel Group
- Ms. Aarti Manocha, MD, Milestones to Memories (MtoM)
- Ms. Surabhi Rana, Head Aero Commercial, Noida International Airport

12:10 pm – 12:50 pm | Closing Circle – “Voices of #SheforShe”

A moderated open-floor session moderated by Ms. Barkha Dutt, inviting women to share a thought, idea, experience or message for fellow participants. This closing circle aims to foster solidarity, spark inspiration and reinforce the belief that every voice matters.

12:50 pm | Vote of Thanks – Ms. Gunjan Sabikhi, Director, More Media

1 pm onwards | Networking Lunch

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Celebrating Women in Tourism Speakers



Moderator:
Ms. Barkha Dutt
Editor-in-Chief, Mojo Story



Ms. Ranju Alex
CEO,
Accor South Asia



Ms. Isha Goyal
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Ms. Yummi Talwar
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(MtoM)



Ms. Surabhi Rana,
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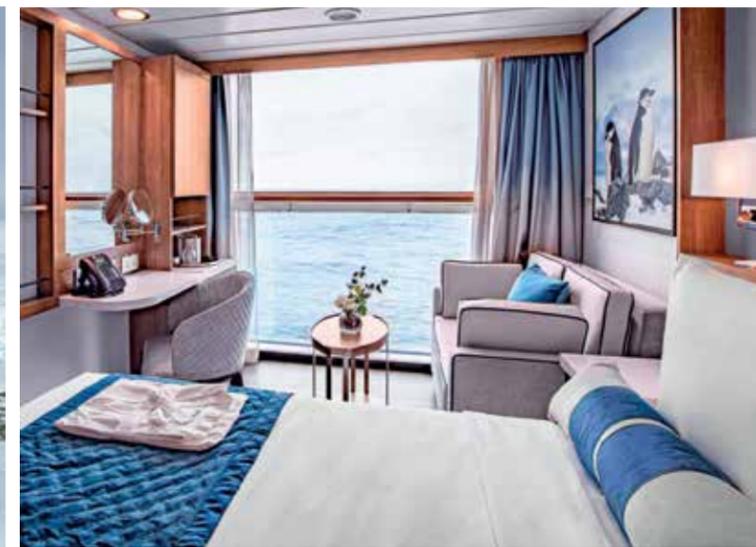
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Festivals of Maharashtra

A living celebration of Faith, Culture and Community



Ganesh Chaturthi: The Grand Celebration of Devotion

Maharashtra's cultural identity is deeply rooted in its vibrant festivals, each reflecting devotion, seasonal rhythms, folklore and collective celebration. From grand public celebrations to deeply personal rituals, these festivals embody Maharashtra's spiritual depth, agrarian traditions and inclusive ethos. Across cities, towns and villages, every season brings with it colour, music, devotion and a powerful sense of togetherness.

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Ganesh Chaturthi is the most iconic and widely celebrated festival in Maharashtra. Observed in the month of Bhadrapada, it marks the birth of Lord Ganesha. Elaborate idols are installed in homes and public mandals, accompanied by devotional songs, cultural performances and community gatherings. The festival culminates in grand immersion processions (visarjan), symbolising the return of Lord Ganesha to his celestial abode. The scale, artistic creativity and collective participation make it one of the most spectacular cultural experiences in the state.



Gudi Padwa: The Marathi New Year

Gudi Padwa marks the beginning of the Marathi New Year and heralds the arrival of spring. Families hoist a decorated "gudi" outside their homes as a symbol of victory, prosperity and new beginnings. The festival is associated with fresh starts, traditional attire, festive meals and prayers for good fortune. It is a day of optimism and renewal across Maharashtra.

Ashadhi Ekadashi: The Sacred Pilgrimage of Faith

Ashadhi Ekadashi holds immense spiritual significance. Devotees undertake the revered pilgrimage to Pandharpur, walking in organised groups known as "dindis" to seek blessings of Lord Vitthal. The rhythmic chanting of abhangs, devotional singing and unwavering faith create an atmosphere of spiritual unity. This festival represents Maharashtra's deep devotional traditions and the collective strength of belief.





Bail Pola: Honouring the Farmer's Companion

Bail Pola is a rural harvest festival dedicated to bullocks, acknowledging their invaluable role in agriculture. Farmers decorate their cattle with ornaments, colourful cloth and garlands, offering prayers in gratitude. The festival highlights Maharashtra's agrarian roots and respect for nature and livestock.

Navratri, Ghatasthapan and Dahi Handi: Energy and Enthusiasm

Navratri begins with Ghatasthapan, marking the worship of Goddess Durga. The nine nights are filled with devotion and festivities. Dahi Handi, celebrated during Janmashtami, is an energetic event where teams form human pyramids to break a suspended pot of curd, symbolising teamwork and youthful spirit.

Village Fairs and Jatras: Folk Traditions Alive

Traditional jatras such as Khandoba Jatra and Jyotiba Jatra are vibrant rural fairs combining devotion, folk performances and local markets. These gatherings preserve regional customs and offer visitors an authentic glimpse into Maharashtra's grassroots cultural heritage. **BOIT**

Pandharpur Wari

Maharashtra's Spiritual Pilgrimage



Pandar Vari — more commonly known as Pandharpur Wari or simply Wari — is one of Maharashtra's oldest and most significant religious traditions, steeped in devotion, history and collective spirit. It is an annual pilgrimage that sees hundreds of thousands of devotees, known as Warkaris, take a sacred journey on foot to the temple town of Pandharpur in Solapur district to honour Lord Vitthoba (Vitthal), a beloved form of Lord Krishna. This tradition, dating back more than 700–800 years, embodies the deep devotional and cultural ethos of the state and serves as a unifying force across communities.

The heart of the Pandharpur Wari is the palkhi (palanquin) procession, in which the padukas (sacred sandals) of revered saints such as Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Tukaram are carried from their respective shrines — Alandi for Dnyaneshwar and Dehu for Tukaram — to the Vitthoba temple in Pandharpur. Thousands of devotees join these processions, called dindis, walking long distances over 21 days while singing devotional hymns (abhangs), chanting the name of Vitthal and beating traditional instruments.

The pilgrimage culminates around Ashadhi Ekadashi, a sacred day in the Hindu calendar falling in June–July, when the community gathers in Pandharpur to offer prayers and take part in spirited celebrations. Many pilgrims arrive a day before Ashadhi Ekadashi, having traversed diverse terrains and towns, reinforcing not just spiritual fervour but also a sense of cultural unity and collective identity.

Unlike ritualistic temple visits, Pandharpur Wari is marked by simplicity, equality and devotion. Devotees from all walks of life — farmers, workers, students, elders — participate irrespective of caste or status, united by their faith in Lord Vitthoba. The pilgrimage is not merely a physical journey but a spiritual quest for inner purification, devotion and compassion.

The Wari tradition also reflects the teachings of the Bhakti movement, which emphasized heartfelt devotion over ritual formalities. Saints like Namdev, Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram expressed their love for Vitthal through abhangs that continue to resonate during the Wari, echoing messages of equality, humility and unwavering faith. **BOIT**



Flavours of Maharashtra

Maharashtra, a land of vibrant culture, diverse landscapes and rich heritage, is equally celebrated for its phenomenal cuisine. The state's food culture reflects its geography — from the spice-laced coastal dishes of Konkan to the fiery delights of the hinterland and the comforting staples of the Deccan plateau — offering food lovers a uniquely satisfying culinary journey.

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At the heart of Maharashtrian cuisine are simple ingredients enriched with distinctive local spices like goda masala, kokum and tamarind. Staples include cereals such as jowar and bajra, lentils, rice and pulses, while coastal regions add seafood to the culinary palette, creating food that is both hearty and flavourful.

One cannot talk about Maharashtra's flavours without mentioning its iconic dishes. Vada Pav, often called Mumbai's burger, is perhaps the most famous street food — a spiced potato fritter tucked in a soft pav served with chutneys. Misal Pav, a spicy lentil curry topped with crispy farsan, is another

beloved comfort meal found across the state. Classic snacks like sabudana vada, kothimbir vadi and batata vada and breakfast favourites like poha showcase the balance of spice, texture and aroma that Maharashtrian cuisine masters.

The state also offers deeply rooted traditional fare that resonates with festivals and family gatherings. Sweet treats like puran poli and modak — especially associated with Ganesh Chaturthi — celebrate the region's festive spirit, while dishes like pithla bhakri reflect rural simplicity and nourishment.

Street food culture in cities like Pune and Mumbai further elevates

Maharashtra's culinary identity, with ragda pattice, sev puri and other chaat items becoming staples of urban taste. Each region, be it Vidarbha with its rustic flavours or the coastal belt with its tangy seafood curries, adds its own flavourful story to the state's rich food narrative.

In essence, the Flavours of Maharashtra are a testament to the state's cultural fusion — where spice meets tradition, and every dish tells a story of heritage, community and celebration. Whether it's a roadside snack or an elaborate festive table, Maharashtrian food captivates the palate while offering a true taste of its cultural soul. **BOTT**

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Taiwan cements its status as Asia's top LGBTQ+ destination

Following the successful conclusion of the 23rd annual Taiwan Pride on October 25, 2025, the Taiwan Tourism Administration (TTA) has reaffirmed its strategic commitment to the global LGBTQ+ travel segment. Attracting over 150,000 attendees to the streets of Taipei, the event restates Taiwan's position as a regional sanctuary for liberty, equality, and inclusive celebration, acting as a key driver for the island's burgeoning tourism sector.

Organized under the theme 'Beyond Links: More than Clicks,' the 2025 celebration challenged the global community to move beyond digital interactions and embrace genuine, face-to-face empathy. Despite inclement weather, the massive turnout cemented Taiwan Pride's status as the largest LGBTQ+ event in East Asia. The 2025 event also saw record-breaking participation from a large number of charitable organisations, highlighting a robust domestic support system. Today, thriving Beyond Taipei, the spirit of acceptance in Taiwan extends well beyond the capital's limits. From 'Rainbow Markets' to specialized tours of landmarks like the Red House and Ketagalan Boulevard, Taiwan is con-



tinuously modernizing its visitor services to meet the specific needs of LGBTQ+ travellers. Cities like Kaohsiung recently became the first local authority to have its tourism bureau recognised in the 2025 LGBTQ+ Inclusive Workplace Index. This index recognised 59 major organisations and government agencies for excellence in gender-minority safety. Under this framework, tourism staff are specifically trained in gender diversity to better serve international visitors.

Outreach

Taiwan Tourism Administration (TTA) has intensified efforts to tap into the high-value pink economy through innovative marketing and international partnerships. To expand the reach of Taiwan's tourism brand "Taiwan – Waves of Wonder", TTA collaborated with high-impact influencers from the dance and LGBTQ+ communities. Through innovative and culturally engaging storytelling, the campaign highlighted Taiwan's diversity and vibrancy. As of August 2025, the campaign had achieved over 200 million digital impressions, more than 5 million engagements, 250,000 onsite spectators, and 26,000 direct participants at live events.

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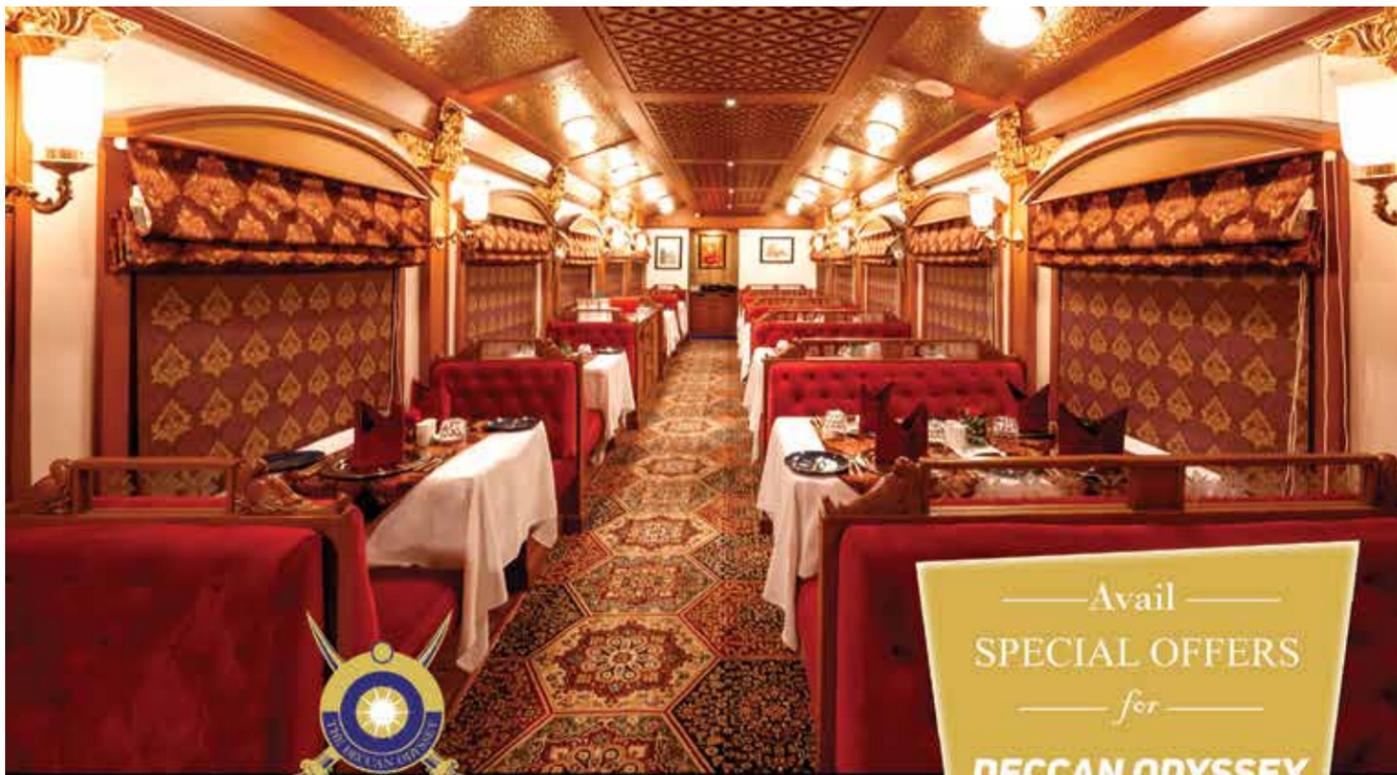
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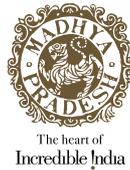


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