

Rising Stories In The East



Dear Travel Partners,

As we step into 2025, we are on the brink of an exciting journey—a year where transformation and innovation take center stage. This year, Rising Stories is dedicated to shining a light on the efforts to reshape tourism into an experience that is sustainable, safe, and impactful for all.

The beginning of a new year offers us the opportunity to reflect, rethink, and reimagine how we can create value—not just for travelers but for the destinations and communities that welcome them. It is a moment to focus on meaningful change, addressing the evolving needs of our industry while staying true to our commitment to responsibility and care.

2025 is the year where we prioritize creating transformative products, integrating innovative practices, and fostering a deeper connection with the world around us. By embracing sustainability as a guiding principle, we aim to craft experiences that respect nature, celebrate culture, and inspire future generations. Together, we aspire to make tourism a force for good, where every journey leaves a lasting positive impact.

Let's make 2025 a year of purpose and progress—where bold ideas, responsible actions, and visionary thinking shape the future of travel.

Welcome to a year filled with possibilities, innovation, and stories worth celebrating.

With Best Wishes,
Amit Periwai
Director

Upcoming Events



Behala Classical Festival
Date : 9th Jan – 12th Jan
Celebrated at : Behala, Kolkata

Significance: The Behala Classical Festival, held every year in Behala, Kolkata, is a prominent cultural event that honors the rich heritage of Indian classical music and dance. Established in 2012 by the Behala Sanskritik Sammilani, the festival has earned national recognition for introducing classical art forms to a broader, appreciative audience. Its goal is to make Indian classical traditions more accessible, particularly to younger generations, while presenting exceptional talents from across the nation.



Makara Sankranti
Date : 14th January
Celebrated at : Bengal

Significance: In Sikkim and Darjeeling, Makar Sankranti is a prominent festival that marks the Sun's transition into Capricorn (Makara Rashi). This event signifies the end of the winter solstice and the beginning of longer days. The festival holds deep religious significance, with rituals such as taking holy dips in rivers like the Teesta and Rangeet, believed to purify sins and bring blessings. Celebrated as an expression of gratitude for the harvest, the Nepali, Bhutia, and Lepcha communities honor the occasion with distinctive traditions, sharing sweets, and hosting community gatherings. Combining agricultural, seasonal, and cultural elements, the festival showcases the rich multicultural heritage of the region.



Reh Festival
Date : 1st Feb – 3rd Feb
Celebrated at : Arunachal Pradesh

Significance: The Reh Festival, celebrated annually in February by the Mishmi tribe in Roing & Anni, Arunachal Pradesh, is a vibrant cultural event that honors Nanyi Intaya, the goddess of prosperity and fertility. During the festival, the community participates in elaborate rituals, prayers, and ceremonial offerings, seeking blessings for health, happiness, and abundant harvests. With its colorful attire, traditional chants, and enthusiastic involvement from locals, the festival offers visitors a unique glimpse into the Mishmi tribe's rich spiritual beliefs and customs, while promoting the preservation of their cultural identity for future generations.

Sector Updates



Health Certificate Now Mandatory for Sandakphu Treks from January 2025

- From January 2025, trekkers heading to Sandakphu (11,941 feet), the highest peak in West Bengal, Darjeeling, must carry a health certificate due to fatalities caused by inadequate healthcare infrastructure in the region.
- Mini oxygen cylinders have been installed at tourist assistance booths (TABs) along the route from Maneybhanjang to Sandakphu, but their effectiveness is limited because TAB staff lack sufficient training.
- Starting March 2025, trekkers will also need to submit a self-declaration form to ensure better safety and awareness before beginning the trek.



Meghalaya Takes Flight: First Sky Cycling Experience Launches at Burni Hills

- Meghalaya has introduced its inaugural sky cycling experience at Burni Hills, providing an exciting new adventure for thrill-seekers.
- The 80-meter metal track, suspended 50 feet above the ground, offers riders breathtaking views and an adrenaline-pumping experience.
- This thrilling addition is expected to significantly boost the state's adventure tourism and open up new opportunities for local youth in the outdoor recreation sector.



Windamere Hotel Darjeeling: Renovation of Suites and Cottages

- From next month, restoration work will be underway at one part of Windamere Hotel, leading to the unavailability of Colonial Suites, Royal Suites, and Little Peppers Cottage.
- The available rooms for booking will be the Preferred, Superior, Hill Charm, and Maryla Cottages.
- The restoration may take a few months, and updates will be provided once the work is completed.



Protected Area Permit Now Mandatory for Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram

- The Union Home Ministry has announced that Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram are now restricted areas requiring a Protected Area Permit (PAP) for foreign nationals.
- Visitors with only a Tourist Visa will be permitted. Business Visa, Work Visa, and Student Visa holders must apply through the Ministry of Home Affairs for clearance.
- This directive follows increasing security concerns, and a formal notification from the State Governments is expected by mid-January 2025.

De-Coding Paradise Unexplored



Radhanagar Beach: A Shining Example of Eco-Tourism

- Radhanagar Beach was named the Best Eco-Friendly Beach Destination by Outlook Traveller in 2024.
- The beach is renowned for its unspoiled environment and dedication to eco-friendly practices, such as waste management and conservation efforts.
- Visitors can experience the breathtaking beauty of Radhanagar Beach while promoting sustainable tourism initiatives.



Exciting New Winery Visit Experience in Ziro

- Ziro Valley now offers a unique winery experience at Naara Aaba, allowing visitors to explore the organic wine-making process.
- The winery utilizes locally sourced fruits, creating wines that showcase the valley's distinct flavors while promoting sustainable practices.
- The winery also supports local farmers and youth, contributing to the region's economic growth and sustainable tourism development.



Discover the Sweet Trails of Kolkata

Explore Kolkata's rich tradition of sweets through its legendary heritage sweet shops. From the iconic rosogolla to lesser-known treats, these sweet shops are a must-visit for any food lover.

Duration: 04 hours from hotel to hotel (approx.)

Timings: In Between 0800 hrs. to 1600 hrs.

Pick Up Point: Hotel

Season: October – March

Recommendation For: 01 to 08 pax

Must-Visit Sweet Shops in Kolkata

Kolkata, the City of Joy, is renowned for its heritage sweet shops, each offering a taste of history and tradition. Here's a glimpse of some of the must-visit sweet shops that will take you on a delightful journey through the city's sweetest offerings:

- **Nobin Chandra Das & Sons, Shobhabazar** – A legendary name, famous for Kolkata's iconic rosogolla. It's a must-visit for every sweet lover!
- **Balaram Mullick & Radharaman Mullick, Bhowanipore** – Known for its delectable Kalojam, Pantua, and Baked Rasgulla. Don't miss out on these unique treats.
- **Bhim Chandra Nag, Bowbazar** – Home to the famous Ladikeni and other traditional Bengali sweets, it's a true heritage destination. Embark on a sweet journey through Kolkata and explore its rich tradition of sweets!



Explore the Wilderness: Pakke Tiger Reserve

• Nestled in the Eastern Himalayan foothills of Arunachal Pradesh, Pakke Tiger Reserve spans 862 square kilometers and is home to tigers, leopards, elephants, and over 300 bird species, including hornbills and the endangered white-winged wood duck.

• Established in 1977 and declared a tiger reserve in 1999, it showcases community-driven conservation through efforts like the Hornbill Nest Adoption Program.

• With lush forests, rivers, and eco-tourism activities such as safaris, birdwatching, and trekking, Pakke offers a tranquil escape into nature's lap.

Flavours Of the East

Aloor Dum with Peas Kachori



Aloor Dum with Peas Kachori is a delightful and traditional Bengali combination, commonly enjoyed as a hearty breakfast or a festive meal. The spiced potato curry, known as "Aloor Dum," pairs perfectly with crispy, stuffed peas kachoris, making it a beloved dish across Bengal. The peas kachori, filled with spiced green peas, adds a satisfying crunch that complements the soft, flavorful potato curry.

Ingredients for Aloor Dum (Potato Curry):

- Potatoes: 4-5, boiled and peeled
- Onion: 1, finely chopped
- Tomato: 1, finely chopped
- Ginger-garlic paste: 1 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1/2 tsp
- Red chili powder: 1 tsp
- Garam masala: 1/2 tsp
- Bay leaves: 2
- Cinnamon stick: 1 small piece
- Mustard oil: 2 tbsp
- Salt: to taste
- Fresh coriander leaves: for garnish

Ingredients for Peas Kachori:

- All-purpose flour (maida): 1 cup
- Semolina (sooji): 2 tbsp
- Baking soda: a pinch
- Salt: to taste
- Warm water: for kneading
- Oil: for frying
- Green peas: 1 cup, boiled and mashed
- Cumin seeds: 1/2 tsp
- Garam masala: 1/2 tsp
- Red chili powder: 1 tsp
- Coriander powder: 1 tsp
- Salt: to taste

Method

Cooking Method for Aloor Dum

1. Heat mustard oil in a pan, add bay leaves, cinnamon stick, and sauté for a minute.
2. Add chopped onions and cook until golden brown.
3. Stir in ginger-garlic paste, cook until fragrant, then add tomatoes and cook until soft.
4. Add turmeric powder, red chili powder, and salt, then mix in boiled potatoes. Stir gently to coat the potatoes in spices.
5. Pour in a little water, cover, and let it simmer for 10 minutes until the flavors blend.
6. Sprinkle garam masala and garnish with fresh coriander leaves. Serve with peas kachori.

Cooking Method for Peas Kachori:

1. In a bowl, mix flour, semolina, baking soda, and salt. Gradually add warm water to make a soft dough. Cover and set aside for 30 minutes.
2. For the filling, heat oil in a pan, add cumin seeds, then sauté mashed peas with garam masala, red chili powder, coriander powder, and salt. Let it cool.
3. Divide the dough into small balls, flatten each ball, and place a spoonful of the peas filling in the center. Seal the edges and roll into a smooth ball.
4. Heat oil in a pan for frying. Gently fry the kachoris until golden brown and crisp.
5. Serve hot with the Aloor Dum and enjoy!

Reviews

Lalgudi Venkatraman Sridhar
5 reviews
★★★★★ 3 months ago

Self and wife were on a tour to Pelling and Darjeeling from 12th SEP to 17th SEP. The transport for my journey was organised by Clubside Tours.

I must say that the entire trip with regard to transport was organised well and co-ordinated very well by ABHINAV RAI. I must say that Abhinav Rai planned it immaculately and we had no issues at any place. Also at Darjeeling we were handled by driver Man Bahadur very well. Man Bahadur a perfectionist was always on time and performed his duty diligently with smile. Overall I appreciate the support provided by Abhinav and Driver Man Bahadur.

Just wish to stay that was not that comfortable with the hotel provided in Darjeeling though Clubside tours had nothing to do with HOTAC. My best wishes to Clubside tour with best wishes.

LALGUDI SRIDHAR / USHA SRIDHAR

Shreya Das
1 review · 5 photos
★★★★★ 2 weeks ago · NEW

Best travel agent in Kolkata for international trip. We have travel to Maldives with them. They have given us a very good service at a reasonable price. They are the most recommendable travel partner.



turner register
1 review
★★★★★ a year ago

Wonderful experience with this company. Our first time visit to India, everything was brilliantly organised. Fabulous Raja met and delivered us for every transfer and gorgeous guide Malani was interesting entertaining and knowledgeable. She was especially helpful in assisting me seek out some special places with family.

All bookings were very smooth so we never left waiting or anxious about every element of our stay. Hi

The trip for Darjeeling was extremely well organised and planned for me. This was a individual customized trip for me. They booked the hotel of my choice, the car and driver services were super fabulous. You also have a representative from Veena World who stays in touch with you right thru your journey.

The service, ambience, food at Istana hotel were simply great and nothing to complain. The room had a breathtaking taking view of valleys, Kanchanjunga.

Offbeat places like Lamahatta, Lepcha, Teenchutay, Takdah, Bara Mangwa, Teesta, Gumbadara, Nepal border, Mirik all thru thick dense pine forests were out of the world.

Thanks to the entire team for customising the trip per my specifications whether it be the hotel, points to view and the car and driver were super excellent.

Good luck...

OFFICES AT

Siliguri | Darjeeling | Kolkata | Guwahati | Port Blair | Thimpu

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