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Singing that dotted line

While festive period brings in many offers, homebuyers must weigh their options before sealing the property deal



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The festive season is considered an auspicious time for major life decisions and for many, that includes buying a home. With a surge in special offers, discounts, and attractive interest rates, the period of festivals has become a popular choice for prospective homebuyers looking to turn their dream of homeownership into reality. Beyond the financial perks, the festive spirit adds an emotional touch, making the experience of purchasing a new home even more joyful. Hence, let's find out why buying a home during the festive season is not just about great deals but also about beginning a new chapter in a time of celebration and positivity.

With so many factors to consider—location, budget, amenities, and future growth—it's essential to make informed decisions.

WELCOME HOME

Everyone on the planet aspires to purchase and live in their own home. So is the case with majority Indians. Those that have moved out of the wealthy shadows of their lineage, find it espe-

cially satisfying to buy a home and why not! Anyone aspiring to buy a home should consider the divine aspects of this day as their primary agenda while moving into a new home. People should ideally purchase a home a few months before this day so that the actual welcoming ceremony can be commenced on this auspicious day.

FIRST STEPS

The simple fact that this day commemorates the victory of light over darkness is enough to move into a well-ventilated and lit apartment of one's own ownership. The first step towards buying a home should ideally start a few months in advance, but one could always plan it in such a way that at least the initial *puja* can happen on a festive day. Festivals such as *Dhanteras* and *Diwali* are not just about Hinduism, they are festivities where members of all communities gather to celebrate with much gaiety and it is an occasion when many bless their automobiles for a safe ride throughout the year ahead. Hence, why waste time when the steps to be taken are baby?

THE OFFERS

Pointblank, the offers during festive

season on all material gains are off the charts. Be it something in the e-retail segment, automobiles, clothing and apparel, and most definitely real estate—this makes it the ideal time to invest in a house of one's own be-

cause the only thing better than buying one's own home is buying the same home at 20 per cent price deduction.

These three primary benefits make the festive season an ideal time to buy property.

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Capitalising on an opportune moment

The festive season often heralds exciting opportunities in the property market, making it an ideal time for buyers to explore prelaunch offers. With many developers showcasing their projects during this auspicious period, savvy buyers can find excellent deals and make informed decisions

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As the festive season approaches, property developers frequently unveil new projects, enticing buyers with attractive prelaunch offers. This period is marked by heightened activity in the real estate market, where buyers can take advantage of lower prices, flexible payment plans, and exclusive incentives. To make the most of these opportunities, it's crucial to conduct thorough research, understand market trends, and carefully evaluate your options. By being proactive and well-informed, you can secure a property that not only meets your needs but also holds the potential for long-term value.

Festive occasions are often considered auspicious for new ventures or purchasing jewellery, automobiles or property. These are things that are believed to bring prosperity and good fortune.

This festive, there's one more reason to

choose real estate to reap good returns—prelaunch projects.

OWN USE OR INVESTMENT – HOW TO DECIDE

Buying your dream home has a certain element of emotional attachment. The sentiment attached to it is even more so, if it's your first one where you plan to live forever. However, if you plan to sell it after a few years or rent it out to earn some income from it, the entire scenario changes. It remains your property but not one where you live. This is where it makes great investment sense to put your money on a prelaunch property.

THE FUNDA OF PRELAUNCH

In real estate terms, when a developer announces the prelaunch of a project, it usually means that the project site, the design and construction plans are ready but some approvals from the authorities concerned could be pending.

The builder has part of the finance ready to begin the construction as soon as all approvals are in place. By announcing the project's prelaunch the builder will accept bookings from homebuyers and use this money to finance the project. This is usually done to avoid taking out a loan on the project, and to speed up the beginning of the construction to benefit the stakeholders, who are the homebuyers in this case.

THE BENEFITS TO LOOK FOR

One of the major advantages of buying into a project in its prelaunch stage is that the rates are far lower than that which is already launched. In fact, rates of prelaunch properties are almost 10 to 40 per cent lesser than those where the construction has begun. This makes it highly attractive and affordable for those who are looking to purchase their first piece of real estate called 'home'.



Another benefit that a homebuyer can enjoy is the huge discounts that developers offer on their prelaunch projects. This is because the builders are raising interest-free capital from the homebuyers instead of approaching banks for a housing construction loan on certain interest rates. Investing in a prelaunch property is one of the wisest decisions that an intelligent investor can make. Since you're already buying the home at a much lower price than the market, once the project is completed, you can sell it at a much higher price tag. You'll earn a handsome profit margin if you sell it immediately when the project is new. You can then use this profit to buy a home for your own use.

Most investors who want to earn from prelaunch properties invest in one as a second home rather than the first one, purely for the reason that there's usually an emotional sentiment attached to one's first home.

One of the reasons that homebuyers opt for a home in a prelaunch project is because you can customise their home ahead of the construction. So, if you want to add an extra wall between the living room and kitchen or remove a wall, or change the interior plumbing or wiring, etc, you have the liberty to do it in the different stages of the construction unlike in a ready to move in home.

What's more, buying a home on a prelaunch offer safeguards you from a future hike in property prices. The real estate industry is a labour intensive one. With the cost of construction materials, labour and logistics only rising, a prelaunch project is insulated from imminent price hikes.

There's another reason to buy property in a prelaunch project. You pay far less and also have the option to exit from the deal when the property is in the mid-stage of

construction. This is called an 'exit strategy'. In simple terms it means that you buy property at the lowest price in the market, sell it when property prices rise in the interim period when it's being constructed, and then invest this money in another property. As an investor, you can get the maximum benefit from the deal if you exit from it at the time of possession of the property.

TREAD CAUTIOUSLY

Like with any investment, putting your money into a pre-launch project involves certain degree of risk, particularly if you are a newbie to the game. It pays to ensure the track record of the builder and invest in an established brand to rest assured that your money is safe in a project that will not face any roadblocks. The risks associated with prelaunch construction delays due to lack of funds from lenders, etc.

Also, since the construction of any large project takes minimum two years, you need to be able to have the appetite to lock in your money in the prelaunch stage if you have no exit strategy.

Investing in a prelaunch project is a great choice if you have the financial strength to dabble in the real estate business. It allows you to pitch your funds in the early stage of a high quality, branded project and take home rich returns on the profits made from its sale. It is therefore prudent to choose a renowned project brand with all modern amenities that makes it a hot seller in market.

In the festive season and particularly on Pushyankshatra, several developers announce the pre-launch of their properties considering the auspiciousness around the festival. Plan your investment early and harvest a fortune at the same time.

It's essential to research thoroughly, assess your needs, and seek expert guidance to ensure a successful investment that aligns with your goals

Crafting your corners

This festive season, curate a special corner in your home that captures the essence of celebration. From vibrant decorations and twinkling lights to cosy textiles and traditional accents, each element can come together to create a welcoming space that inspires festive cheer

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As the festive season unfolds, dedicating a corner of your home to seasonal decor can infuse your space with joy and vibrancy. Picture a charming nook adorned with colorful decorations, soft lighting, and cherished symbols of the celebration. This small yet significant space becomes a focal point for gathering, where family and friends can come together to share stories, laughter, and create lasting memories. By incorporating elements that resonate with your personal style and cultural traditions, you can craft a delightful home corner that reflects the warmth of the season and invites everyone to partake in the festivities.

With a little creativity and thoughtful design, even the most neglected corner of your house can become inviting and eye-catching. A bunch of clever ideas and design tips can help you craft beautiful, attractive corners that elevate your space and reflect your unique style.

When you decorate spaces, you need to focus on the corners too. With a bit of creativity, you can transform corner spaces in your home into beautiful focal points. No matter how large or small a room may be, these nooks can be transformed to exude a classy appeal.

Corners can be used well in many ways—for more storage space to display memorabilia and even for some innovative interior decor. The converging an-



gles in a corner allow you to create a functional display or storage space that is simple yet elegant at the same time. You can transform this space by converting it into a visual focal point. For example, if there is a prominent

corner at the entrance of your apartment, you can place a medium-sized figurine and traditional bronze urn with floating petals there. The corner transforms instantly into a warm, welcoming area.

Lighting creates moods and can set the tone in your living spaces. Large brass lamps placed on the floor in a corner of a living area accentuate the room. Such lighting adds drama to the room and is an instant conversation starter. A pedestal lamp with stained glass work is also a great choice as it allows one to play with light and colour; and placing it in the corner results in great shadow patterns, making the entire room look vibrant.

For those who might want more practical uses for corner spaces, a shelf is a great idea. They come in all sizes and shapes and can vary from small ones that take up minimal space to larger shelves that extend from the ceiling to the floor. They can be used for a variety of things like displaying a book collection along with a few knick knacks, curios, and maybe even a potted plant.

While curios and lamps are often the more obvious choices for corner décor, the freshness that potted plants bring cannot be ignored. Indoor plants in ornamental containers provide a break from the monotony. Ensure that they are placed near a window where they can get direct sunlight. You can convert a corner into a green space by grouping small flowering plants on a corner table. If you feel like bringing a bit more of nature, you could always go for a small table-top fountain.

And if you feel like it, you could also opt for a single piece that is big enough to command attention all on its own. A single large stone sculpture or large decorative pot can create an impact like nothing else. However, this is advisable only if the room is large as well; otherwise, it will overpower everything else in the room.

Gifting joys

Festive gifts are more than just items; they embody the spirit of giving and sharing joy during special occasions. Thoughtful presents can strengthen bonds, express love, and reflect the rich traditions of our culture, making them an integral part of every celebration

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As the festive season approaches, the joy of selecting gifts for family and friends becomes a cherished tradition in itself. Each gift represents a gesture of love and appreciation, offering an opportunity to connect with our loved ones on a deeper level. Whether it's a beautifully wrapped box of sweets, a piece of traditional jewellery, or a thoughtfully curated gift basket, the act of giving is infused with warmth and meaning. By choosing gifts that reflect the recipient's personality and interests, we can create lasting memories that enhance the joy of the season.

With Diwali around the corner, it's time to indulge in the essence of love and celebrate the joy of togetherness. Apart from pampering your partners with gifts and warm gestures, you could spoil yourself with presents too, to earn a feeling of contentment. Many major online shopping websites too are coming up with exciting offers for thoughtful gifting ideas.

FRESH AROMA

For someone who would love to indulge in the freshness of floral aroma, a bouquet will be the perfect choice. "A bunch of long-stemmed red roses are one evergreen pick which doesn't need any brainstorming. Add some pink roses to it for the poetic love and admiration and you will surely make your beau smile. If you're looking forward to experimenting a little, plain pink tulips or crisp creamy lilies would look elegant too. Blue or purple orchids together with tuberoses are a great combination for a bouquet which will last

longer than the rest," says a relationship counsellor, Seeba Qazi.

BITE SIZE DELIGHT

"Surely, chocolates are an easy pick for festive gifting but that doesn't imply its thoughtlessness. Chocolate is the key to happiness and instantly elevates the mood. Depending on your loved one's taste, you can choose from a plethora of options on the online gifting portals and retail stores. The age of technology has blessed us with the convenience of sending gifts from miles away in a physically separated due to the pandemic," adds Qazi.

THE LOST ART

The idea of a greeting card has always been a festive gesture. Throwing light on the same, Vijal Shah, an optometrist by profession, says, "A simple letter full of sentiments and wishes written with an actual pen is an emotion itself. Unfortunately, with the ease of quick communication, importance of this art is fading away. But you should not overlook the value of this traditional method as it speaks volume about the immense affection and is considered as thoughtfulness at its best." "If you're not good with words, then just a heart-warming one liner scribbled on the greeting card from a store would be enough too," she adds.

ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

Speaking about the range of watches to choose from, Ritika Singh, a banking professional, says, "Rose gold metal belts are trending. Deep blue and green dials also look classy on wrists. Watches for men could range from sporty and durable ones with a raw look or the stylish and elegant ones with a chronograph dial."



BEAUTIFYING YOUR CAR

Let's start with the overall look. Sports cars have a universal appeal. For someone who wants to add a sporty look to their newly bought utility car, they can try the following accessories and tips:

- **Boot spoilers:** Start with the rear, where you can bolt in a boot spoiler. These are easily available for saloon cars. For hatch-back cars, the rear spoiler is mounted on the roof. In most cases, you can adorn it with brake lights too.
- **Side skirts:** Side skirts run below the doorsill. You can also go in for bumper add-on skirts. These give the car a road-hugging stance. However, it also means low ground clearance, so be careful while going over speed-break-

- ers and bad roads.
- **Stickers:** These are available for almost all shapes and sizes of cars.
- **Avoid side chrome strips:** These strips and external rubber beads lose their charm pretty quickly.
- **Free-flow exhaust:** You can make your good-looking car run faster with a few upgrades. Free-flow exhaust is a modification of the car's exhaust system which lets the gases pass out more effectively, resulting in increased pick-up, drivability and fuel efficiency. It also gives the exhaust a super throaty note that will surely make heads turn wherever you go. The performance enhancement, however, isn't very evident in turbo-charged diesel cars. Free flow exhausts are available for small cars too.

Revamp your ride

This festive season, why not let your car join in on the celebrations? Adding personalised touches to your vehicle not only amps up its style but also brings an extra dose of joy every time you hit the road



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For most of us, whether it's a luxury sports car or a simple utility vehicle. While many may look at it as a mode of transportation, for some it is the matter of passion. Their love for the machine is seen by the number of times it is serviced, retouched, and accessorised. Car owners take efforts to add an extra zing to their vehicles with the help of latest gadgets and gears. Here is a guide to improving your auto-



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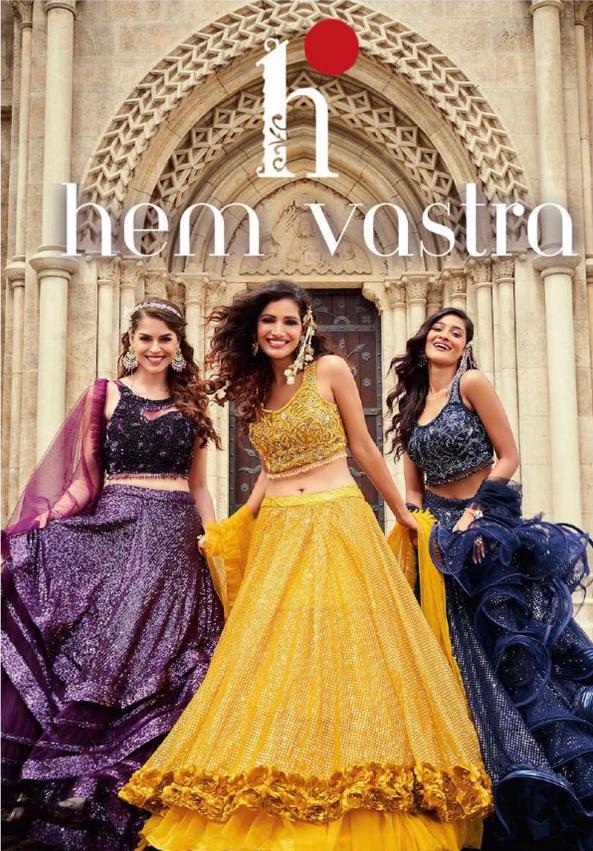
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The aroma of freshly churned ice cream wafts through the air at an artisanal dessert parlour, where master chefs are working overtime to meet the surge in festive season orders. A batch of fresh mango ice cream emerges from the churner, its golden hue a testament to the natural ingredients used. In the adjacent section, bakers put finishing touches on rows of classic tiramisu and New York-style cheesecakes, while traditional Indian milk-based desserts occupy their own special corner.

This scene reflects a remarkable transformation in India's dessert landscape, particularly during

from artificial flavoured ingredients, Indian ice cream makers are harnessing the rich diversity of local fruits to create authentic flavours. Alphonso mango leads the charge, with its creamy texture and intense flavour making it a perennial favourite. Seasonal varieties like *sitaphal* (custard apple) and *chikoo* (sapota) have found their way into premium ice cream collections, offering consumers a taste of nostalgia wrapped in modern presentation."

The technical aspects of natural fruit ice cream production have

Dessert delights for festivities

Festivals are a culinary playground, where classic treats take centre stage, but innovative desserts steal the show. While traditional sweets are always in vogue, indulgent creations like gourmet cakes, artisanal ice creams, and fusion bakeries add a contemporary twist



ALL PICS: ISTOCK

the festive season. Traditional Indian sweets are now sharing space with global desserts, as urban consumers embrace international flavours while maintaining their connection with traditional treats. The surge in demand for premium ice creams, European-style desserts, and innovative fusion creations has prompted both established brands and artisanal makers to expand their festive offerings.

Rohit Sharma, an ice cream shop owner, shares, "Natural fruit-based ice creams have emerged as frontrunners in this sweet revolution. Moving away

seen significant advancement. Manufacturers now employ sophisticated freezing techniques that preserve the intrinsic flavour of fruits while achieving the perfect creamy texture. Cold-pressed fruit pulps are integrated into premium milk bases, ensuring that each scoop delivers an authentic taste experience. The trend extends to lesser-known Indian fruits, with variants featuring jamun, jackfruit, and even raw mango gaining popularity.

European-style desserts have carved their own niche in India's festive celebrations. Tiramisu, with its sophisticated blend of cof-

fee, mascarpone, and cocoa, has become a staple at upscale gatherings. Indian pastry chefs are mastering the delicate balance of flavours in this Italian classic, while some innovative makers are experimenting with modern techniques, incorporating elements like cardamom or *masala* cher into the traditional recipe.

Chang Thappa, a chef, says, "Cheesecakes represent another category that has seen remarkable growth during festive seasons. The classic New York-style cheesecake serves as a canvas for creativity, with local adaptations featuring Indian fruits and spices.

Ingredients topped with fresh mango compote, rose-flavoured berry coulis, or caramelised local nuts have emerged as popular choices. Baked cheesecakes compete with their no-bake counterparts, offering different textures and flavour profiles to suit varied preferences."

The revolution in milk-based desserts spans both traditional and contemporary creations. Classic Indian desserts like *rabri*, *basundi*, and *kulfi* are being reimaged with modern techniques and presentations. Artisanal *kulfi* makers are experimenting with unusual flavour combinations, while maintaining the dense, creamy texture that characterises this frozen dessert. Traditional milk-based sweets are being adapted into modern formats, including *kulfi*-inspired ice cream bars and *rabri*-flavoured cheesecakes.

Dev Gadhvi, a fitness enthusiast, notes, "Health-conscious consumers have not been left behind in this dessert revolution. Sugar-free variants and alternatives sweetened with natural ingredients like dates and honey have become increasingly available. The use of organic milk, free from artificial hormones and additives, has become a selling point for premium dessert makers.

Some establishments have successfully introduced vegan versions of popular desserts, using plant-based milk alternatives without compromising on taste or texture."

The presentation of desserts has evolved to meet contemporary expectations. Individual portions, elegant plating, and innovative serving formats have become crucial elements of the festive dessert experience. Dessert makers are investing in premium packaging, making their creations suitable for gifting during the festive season. The rise of social media has influenced this trend, with visual appeal becoming as important as taste.

Temperature-controlled delivery services have expanded the reach of premium desserts beyond their immediate vicinity. Sophisticated packaging solutions maintain the integrity

of frozen and chilled desserts during transport, allowing quality products to reach consumers across cities. This has democratised access to premium desserts, making them available to a wider audience during festive celebrations.

The sourcing of ingredients has become more sophisticated, with dessert makers forging direct relationships with fruit growers and dairy farmers. This farm-to-table approach ensures quality control and enables the creation of seasonal specials based on fruit availability. Premium dairy products, including specialty cheeses, cheesecakes and high-fat cream for ice creams, are now more readily available, supporting the growth of quality dessert production.

ten include a mix of traditional Indian sweets alongside modern desserts, appealing to diverse preferences.

The pricing of premium desserts reflects their positioning as luxury items, particularly during the festive season. Consumers have shown willingness to pay more for quality ingredients, authentic flavours, and elegant presentation. This has encouraged dessert makers to invest in better ingredients and equipment to further elevating the quality of their offerings.

Seasonal variations in dessert menus keep the offering fresh and exciting. Summer might see an abundance of mango-based creations, while winter brings warming elements like caramel and chocolate to the fore. The festive season typically features more elaborate creations, often incorporating traditional Indian elements into international dessert formats.

Dessert makers are exploring new techniques, flavour combinations, and presentation styles while maintaining a connection to authentic tastes. The trend extends to regional specialties, with tier-two cities showing increasing appetite for premium desserts. Local dessert makers in these cities are adapting international favourites to regional tastes, creating unique variations that reflect their cultural context.

As the festive season continues to evolve, so too does India's relationship with desserts. The harmonious coexistence of traditional sweets and international desserts reflects the country's ability to embrace global influences while maintaining its cultural identity. From naturally flavoured ice creams to perfectly crafted tiramisus, from innovative cheesecakes to reimagined milk-based sweets, the options available to consumers have never been more diverse or exciting. This festive season marks not just a celebration of traditional customs but also a celebration of India's maturing dessert culture, where quality, creativity, and tradition come together in sweet harmony.

Traditional Indian sweets are now sharing the spotlight with global desserts, as urban consumers welcome international flavours without losing their connection to beloved classic treats. This fusion of culinary worlds adds a dynamic twist to festive indulgence



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In Indian families, the act of giving and receiving gifts is a cherished tradition, steeped in cultural significance and emotional resonance. Sweets, with their rich flavours and vibrant colours, often take centre stage during these occasions, symbolising love, goodwill, and shared joy. Choosing sweets is not just about taste; it's also an expression of thoughtfulness and care. Each type of sweet carries its own story and tradition, making it essential to select confections that resonate with the recipient's preferences. For instance, some might prefer the rich and creamy texture of *peda*, while others may delight in the crunch of a *ladoo*.

Understanding shelf life
When it comes to selecting sweets, understanding their shelf life is crucial. Different types of confections have varying degrees of freshness and longevity, and this can impact your choice. For example, dark chocolate is a popular choice because it typically has a longer shelf life compared to other chocolates. When stored properly, dark chocolate can remain fresh for months, making it an excellent option for gifting. On the other hand, milk-filled chocolates or those containing fresh fruit may spoil more quickly and are best enjoyed soon after purchase. Hard candies, gummies, and certain baked goods also have varying degrees of

Savouring traditional sweets

India's festive *mithais* are more than just treats; they are symbols of tradition, craftsmanship, and celebration. Each dessert carries a legacy, offering a perfect blend of rich flavours, cultural significance, and the joy of sharing during festivals

longevity, and it's important to consider these factors when making your selection.

Mahesh Marwadi, a bakery owner, shares, "Opting for sweets with longer shelf lives like dry fruit *laddoos* or hard candies is the best option for giving sweets as a gift for festivals. These types of sweets not only taste great but can also be stored for a long time without losing their freshness."

Types of long-lasting sweets
Among the various types of sweets available, dark chocolate stands out not only for its extended shelf life but also for its rich and indulgent flavour. It can be enjoyed on its own or used in a variety of sweet treats. Pairing dark chocolate with nuts or dried fruits can create a delightful gift that balances taste and texture. Similarly, hard candies, such as lollipops, mints, or toffees, are excellent options for festive gifting. These candies come in a range of flavours and can be enjoyed over time without the risk of spoilage. Their resilience makes them a reliable choice for gifting, especially for those who appreciate classic confections.

Gummy candies, while they can have a shorter shelf life than hard candies, can still last several months if stored correctly. High-quality gummies without artificial preservatives tend to hold up better and provide a chewy, satisfying treat. If you're considering a more health-conscious option, nuts and dried fruits can also be

sweet treats. Creating a mix of sweetened nuts and dried fruits can offer a unique and thoughtful gift, providing both flavour and a touch of nutritional value.

Sakshi Goswami, a junior chef shares, "People often look for unique combinations that offer variety, such as assorted chocolates and traditional Indian sweets. Sweets like chocolate-covered nuts or rich *barfis* tend to stay fresh longer and appeal to a wider audience. Aesthetically pleasing packaging enhances the gifting experience and use traditional Indian motifs to give it a festive touch."

Personal preferences
When selecting sweets for gifting, it's essential to consider the preferences of the recipient. Everyone has unique tastes, and being aware of dietary restrictions or potential allergies can ensure your gift is well-received. For instance, during festive seasons, certain confections may be more popular or traditional, depending on cultural backgrounds. Familiarising yourself with these nuances can help you choose sweets that resonate with the recipient. Additionally, considering the season can guide your selection. In warmer months, for example, it's wise to avoid

chocolates that can melt and instead opt for harder candies or packaged treats that are less sensitive to temperature.

Krishna Patel, a gift shop owner shares, "Customers are increasingly drawn to personalised gifts, especially when it comes to sweets. Understanding the preferences and dislikes of the recipient is essential. Tailoring your selection to what the individual truly enjoys enhances the gifting experience and shows thoughtfulness."

Importance of presentation
Once you've chosen the perfect sweets, presentation becomes a vital aspect of the gifting experience. A beautifully presented gift not only shows thoughtfulness but also enhances the overall appeal. Selecting the right packaging is the first step. Clear cellophane bags, elegant boxes, or decorative tins can significantly elevate the look of your gift. If you choose a box, consider lining it with tissue paper or fabric to protect the sweets and add an extra touch of sophistication. The packaging should complement the sweets while also ensuring they remain secure during transport.

To make your gift even more special, consider adding a personal touch. A handwritten note or label can make a world of difference, transforming a simple gift into something more intimate. Include a short message explaining why you chose those sweets or how they relate to the occasion. This personal connection can add depth to the gift and create lasting memories for the recipient. Additionally, aligning your packaging with the festive

theme can enhance the visual appeal.

Creating assortment of sweets
Creating an assortment of sweets can further enhance the gift-giving experience. Instead of presenting a single type of sweet, consider putting together a mixed selection. This not only offers variety but also allows the recipient to enjoy a range of flavours and textures. By including items with differing shelf lives, you can give the recipient an extended enjoyment period, allowing them to savour the sweets over time.

To ensure that the sweets remain fresh for as long as possible, proper storage is essential. Keeping sweets in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight is crucial, as heat can alter the texture and flavour of many confections, especially chocolate. For homemade treats, using airtight containers can help minimise exposure to air, which can lead to staleness. It's also important to be mindful of moisture, which can be detrimental to the quality of many sweets. Ensure your storage area is dry and avoid opening packages until you're ready to enjoy the treats, as exposure to air can affect freshness.

When it comes to gifting sweets, the thoughtfulness behind the selection is often as significant as the treats themselves. The joy of giving is amplified when you take the time to choose sweets that resonate with the recipient's tastes and preferences. By considering their likes and dislikes, you can create a personalised experience that shows you care. Moreover, understanding the significance of presentation and the extra layer of meaning to your gift, making it memorable. With careful consideration of the types of sweets, presentation, and storage, you can ensure that your gifts not only bring immediate happiness but also continue to delight long after the festivities have ended.

Choosing sweets that stay fresh for longer can enhance the joy of gift-giving during festive occasions. By selecting the right types of confections and paying attention to presentation and storage, you can create a delightful experience for your recipients. Ultimately, the act of giving sweets is an expression of affection and thoughtfulness that can bring people together, creating cherished memories that last far beyond the final bite. So, as the festivals continue, take the time to choose sweets that reflect your care, and watch as they bring smiles to the faces of those you hold dear.

From the velvety richness of *gulab jamun* to the nutty goodness of *barfi*, these festive delights not only satisfy the palate but also connect us to our roots



Revitalised revelry

From incorporating green practices to blending diverse cultural elements, the city is shaping a new narrative for how Diwali will be observed, balancing heritage with modern innovation

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As Deepawali rolls around, India is experiencing a profound transformation in how it is celebrated. The rapid pace of urbanisation is not only reshaping skylines but also redefining cultural practices, blending traditional customs with modern sensibilities to create new and sustainable ways of celebrating.

For instance, in cities, the festive season has become a showcase of how old traditions can harmonise with contemporary

Aisha Desai, an event manager, says, "In recent times, festival celebrations have become more eco-friendly due to urbanisation in cities. People are becoming more aware of the importance of celebrating festivals in a way that does not harm the environment. This trend is making celebrations more inclusive and sustainable for the future."

The essence of traditional festivals remains strong, even as practices evolve. Urban residents are finding innovative ways to honour their cultural heritage while adapting to modern demands. This blend of tra-

Amit Sharma, a civil engineer, shares, "Urban living has changed how we approach festivals. Celebrations have become more inclusive with a fusion of traditional and contemporary elements. For instance, we're incorporating global cuisine into our traditional feasts and using social media to connect with friends and family who can't be with us in person. It's a beautiful blend of maintaining our customs while embracing modern conveniences."

SUSTAINABLE CELEBRATIONS

Sustainability is a key theme in modern festive celebrations. The introduction of biodegradable idols and reduced use of harmful materials is a testament to how urbanisation is influencing cultural practices. Smriti Patel, an architect, says, "It's heartening to see how urbanisation has led to more sustainable practices while still preserving the core of our celebrations. The use of biodegradable idols during festivals is a great example of adapting to modern challenges while keeping our cultural values intact."

The adaptation of traditional festivals to align with contemporary environmental and social standards highlights the dynamic nature of urban life. As cities grow and evolve, so do their celebrations, reflecting a broader trend of cultural integration and sustainability.

The transformation of festive celebrations in urban areas is a sign of how cities are balancing growth with cultural preservation. By embracing modern practices while honouring traditional customs, the city is setting an example of how cultural practices can evolve without losing its essence. This shift not only benefits the environment but also enhances the inclusivity and vibrancy of urban celebration.

As we continue to navigate the complexities of urbanisation, the way we celebrate our festivals will remain a key indicator of how well we are blending old with new. The future of festival celebrations in Indian cities look promising, marked by a commitment to sustainability.

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lifestyles. From quieter celebrations to eco-friendly practices, urban areas are increasingly adopting methods that reduce environmental impact while keeping the spirit of the festivals alive.

One notable trend is the shift towards environmentally conscious celebrations. During Diwali, since last few years, there has been a significant move towards reducing noise and air pollution, and using eco-friendly materials. This transition is a response to growing awareness about the environmental impact of traditional festivities.

dition and modernity ensures that festivals are not only preserved but also enriched with new perspectives and inclusivity.

A FUSION OF CULTURES

Urbanisation has also led to more diverse and inclusive festive celebrations. Cities, with large expatriate population, is seeing a fusion of traditional and international practices. For example, celebrations here now incorporate elements from both local and global cultures, creating a unique blend of customs and practices.

A scrumptious celebration

Camaraderie is what transpires when two hearts find a happy space at a restaurant, café or bakery!



Debjani Ghosh
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Want to find the best moment of the festive season with the love of your life? Eating at an eatery of yours and your partner's choice can be an ideal way to spend some quality time with each other. Yes, that's one of the most ideal ways to celebrate a festive holiday and a date at your favourite restaurant, café or bakery can never go wrong. Take some time out from your hectic schedule to organise that perfect luncheon or dinner date, and if not that, an evening at your favourite café or going on a dessert spree at the end of the day sounds way too blissful already, isn't it? Imagine how therapeutic the hectic everyday life-style you both lead. Hence, a food date is any day the best for you and your partner as it will give both of you time and ambience to sit and talk about all those incomplete conversations over some scrumptious delicacies.

Arjun Chauhan, a young entrepreneur, says,

"My wife and I always prefer to celebrate occasions and festivals together irrespective of how busy we are. Even if it is late in the night, Diwali will be celebrated with equal zest. And we prefer to gift each other experiences over material presents as that's something which can be bought by self. So, this year, we both have decided to go food hopping. In other words, we're going to begin with starters and end with desserts, but each item will be from a different restaurant, and the journey will begin from 5pm."

From creating festive-themed menus to setting a romantic table and giving away souvenirs, some of the posh restaurants of the city are gearing up to make their guests feel special. Akshay Chaturvedi, a restaurateur, shares, "I believe in delivering experiences because that's what attracts 60 per cent of repeat customers. And by experience I don't just mean a good meal, a well-set ambience, and some soothing music. This festive season, we have decided to do something different for our esteemed customers. All the couples who visit us for the entire Diwali

week will get a freebie but that's going to be a surprise and we aren't going to reveal it out in the public. The whole idea is to give the 'real couples' and not those who visit us as a couple just to get the freebie."

From your parents to friends and children, your festive date can be anybody whom you love and connect with. Irrespective of the relation, the period ought to be celebrated by planning a special date. Talking about his first love, Monty Menon, a working professional, concludes, "For every child, I believe, the first love should be their parents; at least for me, that's how it is. Yes, I am about to get married very soon, but even then, festivals, as always, will be first celebrated with my parents. With a new partner in my life, I may meet her, but the dinner date will be with *amma* and *appa*."

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Stunning attires

As the festive spirit unfolds, discover the ultimate guide to making a statement with your style, from dazzling ensembles to essential accessories

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Fashion enthusiasts across the country are eagerly preparing to showcase their most glamorous and luxurious ensembles. This year, the fusion of traditional Indian wear with contemporary Indian style has reached new heights, creating a unique sartorial landscape that celebrates our rich cultural heritage while embracing modern trends. Here's your comprehensive guide to nailing festive fashion in India for 2024, blending the best of tradition and innovation.

ENDURING CHARM OF ETHNIC WEAR

While Western clothing dominates everyday wear in many urban areas, the allure of ethnic and traditional garments remains undiminished, especially during festive occasions. These pieces, with their vibrant colours, intricate embroidery, and sumptuous fabrics, hold a special place in the hearts of Indians. They're not just clothes; they're a connection to our cultural roots, often passed down through generations. Ethnic wear in the modern Indian context has evolved to encompass both traditional garments and contemporary

interpretations that draw inspiration from our rich textile heritage. This fusion perfectly encapsulates the spirit of modern India, allowing wearers to honour their heritage while embracing current fashion trends.

MODERN SHARARA SET

The Indo-Western pairing of a sharara with a crop top continues to reign supreme in 2024. However, this year sees a contemporary twist with the introduction of sustainable fabrics and innovative embellishments. Crop tops adorned with 3D-printed motifs paired with

flowing, eco-friendly fabric shararas are making waves. Accessorise with statement silver jewellery for a sophisticated look that's both environmentally conscious and stylish.

STRAIGHT PANTS WITH A TWIST

Straight pants remain a versatile staple, but 2024 brings innovative textures and patterns. Think hand-block prints, subtle flared hems, and even digital prints inspired by India's diverse landscapes. Pair these with long, asymmetrical kurtas or structured, short jackets for a perfect blend of comfort and style. Monochromatic sets in jewel tones are particularly popular, especially when

accented with traditional temple jewellery or contemporary mixed-metal pieces.

THE STATEMENT JACKET

Layering has become increasingly popular in Indian fashion, and the statement jacket is a key player in 2024 ensembles. Handcrafted jackets featuring a fusion of regional embroidery styles—think *Kutchi* mirror work meeting *Lucknowi chikanari*—are the season's showstoppers. These pieces not only add versatility to your outfit but also serve as wearable art. Look for jackets with subtle *zardozi* work for an extra touch of glamour, perfect for those grand *Diwali* parties.

REIMAGINED DHOTI PANTS

Vrushki Chauhan, a content creator, notes, "Dhoti pants have evolved from being a niche item to a must-have in every fashionista's wardrobe. The 2024 rendition sees them in unexpected fabrics like *Banarasi* silk blends and even eco-leather for the more daring." Pair these with crisp cotton shirts for a smart-casual look or heavily embellished crop tops for evening events. The key is to balance the voluminous bottom with a more fitted top.

PALAZZO PERFECTION

"Palazzo suits remain one of the most versatile ethnic wear options," says Darshani Singh, a Delhi-based fashion enthusiast. "They flatter all body types and are ideal for the varied Indian climate, offering both environmental consciousness and style."

Wide-leg versions with overlaying cape-like *dupattas* offer the fluidity of ethnic wear with the convenience of a modern jumpsuit. They're particularly popular for *Diwali* and *Bhai Dooj* celebrations.

THE NEO-SAREE

The saree, eternally elegant, gets a 2024 makeover. Pre-draped options with built-in pleats make this traditional garment more accessible to younger wearers or those new to saree draping. Experimental

blouses with power shoulders, cape sleeves, or corset-inspired designs add a contemporary edge. For a fusion look, sarees paired with long, tailored jackets create a stunning silhouette that's perfect for both traditional ceremonies and modern celebrations.

SUSTAINABLE LEHENGAS

Lehengas are no longer reserved just for weddings. Lighter, more wearable versions are perfect for various festive occasions. The focus in 2024 is on sustainable materials and production methods. Look for lehengas made from organic cotton, recycled polyester, or even innovative fabrics like banana fibre. These eco-friendly options often feature digital prints inspired by India's rich biodiversity, creating a unique blend of tradition and environmental consciousness.

FUSION JUMPSUITS

For those who prefer a more contemporary silhouette with an ethnic touch, fusion jumpsuits are the answer. These one-piece wonders come embellished with traditional embroidery or block prints. Wide-leg versions with overlaying cape-like *dupattas* offer the fluidity of ethnic wear with the convenience of a modern jumpsuit. They're particularly popular for *Diwali* and *Bhai Dooj* celebrations.

MENSWEAR REVOLUTION

Festive fashion isn't just about womenswear. Men's ethnic wear sees exciting innovations in 2024. *Bandhgala*s and *sherwanis* now come in experimental fabrics like *khadi* denim and bamboo silk, while *kurtas* are being paired with tailored *dhoti* pants for a sharp look. The big trend is modern ethnic wear—pieces that can be mixed and matched to create multi-

BLENDING TRADITION AND MODERNITY

techniques, and unique patterns that tell the stories of the past. Preserving these techniques is crucial for conserving historical heritage and maintaining the artistic craftsmanship that represents the ingenuity of different cultures.

AS DESIGNERS INNOVATE, THEY ALSO STRIVE TO KEEP THESE AGE-OLD TECHNIQUES ALIVE

Collaborations between artisans and contemporary fashion designers are becoming more common, ensuring that traditional skills are not lost to the winds of time. By integrating traditional wear into modern fashion, we celebrate this festive season with a new look that honours our rich cultural legacy.

THE REVIVAL OF TRADITIONAL ATTIRE IS NOT JUST A TREND BUT A MEANINGFUL MOVEMENT THAT CELEBRATES AND PRESERVES OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE WHILE EMBRACING THE INNOVATIONS OF TODAY

As the blend of traditional wear with modern wear increases, these timeless garments remain a cherished part of our festive celebrations. This revival is also a response to the growing awareness of sustainability in fashion. Many consumers are turning away from fast fashion in favour of garments that tell a story and are made with care. By investing in traditional attire, they support local artisans but also contribute to a more sustainable fashion ecosystem.

BLENDING MODERN CELEBRATIONS

As we navigate through the festivities, the choice of attire has become more than a mere fashion statement; it reflects our values and identities. The reimagining of traditional wear allows individuals to express themselves while still holding onto their cultural roots. Whether it's a family gathering or a community celebration as a part of festivities, traditional festive wear continues to hold its place as a symbol of identity and belonging.

LONGING. FASHION SHOWS AND EVENTS FEATURING MODERN TRADITIONAL WEAR ARE GAINING POPULARITY, SHOWCASING HOW THESE GARMENTS CAN BE BOTH STYLISH AND CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT

Designers are increasingly using platforms to highlight their creations, emphasising the importance of cultural storytelling through fashion. This year, as you shop for festive wear, consider styles that are poised to evolve. The fusion of traditional and contemporary designs isn't just a fleeting trend; it represents a fundamental shift in our approach to fashion. With an increasing appreciation for cultural heritage and sustainability, the festive attire of tomorrow will blend artistry, comfort, and tradition in exciting new ways. Embrace this evolution and find pieces that reflect both your style and the rich cultural narratives they carry.

THE RESURGENCE OF TRADITIONAL FESTIVE WEAR SERVES AS A REMINDER OF THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR ROOTS IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

By embracing these timeless garments, we honour our ancestors, celebrate our cultural identities, and pave the way for future generations to do the same. The festive season becomes not just a time for celebration, but a canvas for expressing who we are and where we come from.

That festive fashion fillip

As trends evolve, traditional attire is making a stylish comeback. By merging timeless heritage with contemporary designs, this revival keeps cultural roots alive while adding a modern twist to celebrations



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Shopping for festive occasions can be quite hectic, especially when it comes to fashion choices. However, the rediscovery of traditional festive wear is making a significant comeback, beautifully blended with modern styles. In a landscape often dominated by fast fashion, this revival of classic attire offers a refreshing perspective. It not only rejuvenates beloved garments but also keeps our cultural heritage alive and relevant in today's celebrations. This dynamic fusion breathes new life into cherished traditions, allowing us to celebrate our roots while embracing contemporary aesthetics.

BEACON OF CULTURAL PRESERVATION

In today's fast-paced, globalised world, contemporary fashion often eclipses traditional practices. However, the revival of traditional wear has become a beacon of cultural preservation. Garments like sarees, lehengas, and sherwanis are being cherished not only for their heritage but also reimagined to suit modern tastes. This blend of past and present offers a fresh perspective on how we celebrate our cultural identities. Shivani Kodwani, an aspiring fashion designer shares, "The fusion of traditional fabrics with modern materials is one of the aspects of modern fashion that helps. Seeing a saree in a sleek, modern fabric like velvet, or lehengas with innovative embroidery just adds a fresh perspective. It is a perfect blend of past and present, honouring the traditions while embracing the new."

THE EVOLUTION

One of the most significant changes in traditional attire is the adaptation of contemporary cuts and silhouettes. Sarees, for instance, are now often draped in innovative styles such as pre-stitched or draped lehenga looks, making them easier to wear while retaining their timeless elegance. Designers are experimenting with fusion fabrics, combining traditional materials like silk and brocade with modern elements like organza, velvet, and even denim. This results in garments that are not only comfortable but visually striking, effectively bridging the gap be-

EMBRACING VERSATILITY AND CUSTOMISATION

Versatility is another key aspect of modern adaptations. Many traditional garments now come with customisable elements, such as detachable parts or modular designs, allowing for various looks ranging from formal to festive. Traditional colour palettes are being updated with vibrant, unconventional hues, and old patterns are being reinterpreted with modern twists, such as abstract prints or minimalist designs that cater to contemporary aesthetics.

THE SALES OF MODERN TRADITIONAL WEAR ARE ALWAYS IN DEMAND DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON

The modern cuts and silhouettes make wearing a saree or lehenga so much easier and more comfortable, which is a huge plus for anyone who wants to enjoy the festivities without feeling constrained. Wearing traditional attire during festivals feels like coming to something bigger than ourselves, a way to celebrate our heritage while creating new memories.

ART OF TRADITIONAL WEAR

Traditional wear is more than just clothing; it's a form of art that has been passed down through generations. These garments showcase intricate handwork, weaving tech-



Amazing festal affair



Pic: Istock

With festive season round the corner, Rajkot is pulsating with cheerful vibes and optimism



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The air is thick with anticipation in Rajkot as this vibrant city readies itself for an enchanting journey into the heart of Gujarat's *Dussehra* fervour. The upcoming festivities promise to be a dazzling showcase of tradition, culture, and a whole lot of enthusiasm. Known for its grand celebrations, the city is gearing up to take centre stage in this year's festive extravaganza.

Gujarat, often referred to as the land of festivals, boasts a rich tapestry of traditions and cultures that come alive during this time of the year. From *Dhanteras* to *Bhai Dooj*, the state is full of colours and emotions. Also, the celebrations have become mindful now. Anamika Sharma, an entrepreneur, says, "From the past few years, the citizens have taken significant steps to celebrate festivities in eco-friendly manner. The campaign for a greener celebration is embraced."

For shopaholics, the city offers a diverse range of options. From bustling street markets to modern shopping malls, the city caters to every consumer's desires. The markets are adorned with colourful stalls selling traditional attire, jewellery, and home decor

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items, making it an ideal destination for festive shopping.

Kinjal Parekh, a homemaker, expresses, "Our city embraces its traditions, culture, and sense of community with open arms and the great thing is that the spirit of Gujarat, embodied in these festivities, continues to bring people together, forging bonds that last a life-

time."

With a vibrant blend of devotion and delicious cuisine, festivities offer a glimpse into the soul of Gujarat. As the city readies itself to embrace the forthcoming celebrations, the message is clear that the festivals are not just events; they are experiences that leave an indelible mark on the heart.

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Smart skincare for festivities

Festivals bring joy, but they can also pose challenges for one's skin. Indulging in sweets and rich foods can impact the complexion. By focusing on a tailored regimen, one can maintain the radiance and shield skin from stressors, allowing to celebrate with confidence

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As the festivities continue, excitement fills the air, and people begin preparing for celebrations filled with gatherings, parties, and special occasions. Amid the joyful chaos, it is essential not to overlook the significance of skincare. With increased social interactions and the need to look one's best, choosing the right skincare products becomes paramount.

Ishani Darji, a student of clinical cosmetology says, "Festivals can be a

stressful time for the skin due to changes in routine and environmental factors. It's essential to choose products based on individual skin types. Avoid products with heavy fragrances or alcohol, as they can irritate sensitive skin."

Understanding skin type is the foundational step in selecting suitable skincare products. Everyone's skin has unique characteristics that can change due to various factors, including stress and environmental conditions. It is important to identify whether your skin is oily, dry, combination, or sensitive. Each skin type

has specific needs that must be met to maintain its health and appearance. For instance, individuals with oily skin may benefit from lightweight, oil-free formulations, while those with dry skin should look for richer, more hydrating products. Combination skin types may require a balanced approach, incorporating both lightweight and hydrating formulations.

When it comes to ingredients, prioritising those that nourish and protect the skin is essential. One key ingredient to seek out is hyaluronic acid, renowned for its ability to retain moisture. This ingredient is especially beneficial during the upcoming winter months when the air tends to be drier, as it helps to keep the skin plump and hydrated. Products containing hyaluronic acid can significantly improve the skin's moisture levels, providing a youthful appearance.

While knowing what to include in

your skincare routine is crucial, it is equally important to be aware of ingredients to avoid. Fragrance, whether synthetic or natural, can be a significant irritant for many individuals. Skincare products containing fragrance can trigger allergic reactions or irritate sensitive skin, particularly during a busy season when skin is more vulnerable. Opting for fragrance-free products can help minimise the risk of irritation, allowing your skin to remain calm and healthy.

Alcohol is another ingredient to be cautious of when selecting skincare products. While some forms of alcohol can have benefits, others can lead to dryness and disrupt the skin's natural barrier. Products that contain high concentrations of drying alcohols should be avoided, especially when the skin may already be compromised from environmental stressors. Choosing alcohol-free formulations is a wise choice during the festive season when skin needs extra care.

Harsh exfoliants, often found in scrubs, can also cause more harm than good. While gentle exfoliation can improve skin texture and promote radiance, aggressive physical scrubs can lead to irritation and inflammation. It is advisable to look for products that contain gentle exfoliating acids, such as lactic or glycolic acid, rather than physical exfoliants that can be too abrasive. This gentler approach allows for effective exfoliation without risking damage to the skin.

Soothing ingredients should not be overlooked when selecting skincare products during the festive season. Aloe vera is well known for its calm-

ing properties and can help relieve irritation while providing hydration. Incorporating products with aloe vera can be particularly beneficial during times of stress, helping to soothe the skin and keep it looking fresh. Using a calming mask or moisturiser infused with aloe can make a significant difference, especially during the busy days leading up to celebrations.

A well-rounded skincare routine during the festive season should include cleansing, toning, moisturising, and sun protection. Starting with a gentle cleanser that removes impurities without stripping the skin is essential. Proper cleansing is especially important for those who wear makeup, as it ensures that all traces of products are effectively removed. A double-cleansing method, involving an oil-based cleanser followed by a water-based one, can be beneficial in ensuring thorough cleansing. Following cleansing, a hydrating toner can help restore moisture and balance the skin's pH levels. Look for toners that are alcohol-free and contain calming ingredients. A toner serves to prep the skin for the application of serums and moisturisers, enhancing their effectiveness.

Moisturising is a critical step that should not be overlooked. Choosing the right moisturiser can have a significant impact on how the skin looks and feels. For individuals with dry skin, a rich cream may be ideal, while those with oily

skin might benefit from lightweight gel formula-

tions. Finding a moisturiser that meets your skin's needs without feeling heavy or greasy is essential for maintaining a healthy complexion. Janvi Desai, an owner of beauty salon shares, "Every skin tone has different types which is why a good moisturiser and primer are essential for ensuring makeup sits well and lasts. Products with hyaluronic acid are my go-to for creating a smooth base. Choosing the right skincare is vital to achieving that flawless look during festive events."

In addition to daily skincare, many individuals opt for special treatments or masks during the festive season. Incorporating a hydrating mask a few times a week can provide an extra boost of moisture, helping the skin recover from any stressors it may encounter. Masks infused with hydrating ingredients can be particularly beneficial leading up to major events, ensuring the skin appears refreshed and revitalised.

Hydration should not be limited to topical products; staying hydrated from within is equally important. Drinking plenty of water during the festive season is crucial for maintaining skin health. Hydration helps to flush out toxins and keeps the skin looking plump and vibrant. Additionally, consuming a diet rich in antioxidants can support overall skin health. Foods such as berries, leafy greens, and nuts can help combat oxidative stress and promote a radiant complexion.

Mansi Shah, a student of nutrition and health shares, "Many people forget that what they eat and drink which influences their skin health during the festive season. Staying hydrated and consuming foods rich in antioxidants is just as important as the products you apply topically. A balanced diet complements a good skincare routine."

Maintaining a consistent skincare routine is vital during the festive season. Even with busy schedules, dedicating a few minutes each morning and evening to skincare can yield significant benefits. By understanding your skin type and prioritising ingredients that nourish and protect, you can enhance your natural beauty and maintain healthy skin. Avoiding irritants and opting for gentle formulations will ensure that your skin remains radiant and vibrant throughout the celebrations. The goal is not just to look good for the festivities but to cultivate healthy skin that reflects your inner joy and well-being. With the right approach, you can embrace the festive season with confidence, radiating beauty from within while celebrating with friends and family.



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Make a golden statement

Exemplifying elegance and sophistication, gold jewellery offers a diverse and exquisite range. From delicate necklaces and statement hoop earrings to bold rings, each piece embodies a unique hallmark of celebration and style, enhancing any festive occasion

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The timeless allure of gold accessories is undeniable, transcending through centuries and encompassing a wide array of traditional and contemporary adornments. As we embrace the festive season, it's a propitious time to invest in gold jewellery. Beyond its cherished classic motifs, gold has evolved to inspire avant-garde design concepts. Exemplifying elegance and sophistication, the choices available in gold jewellery are as diverse as they are exquisite. You can explore a spectrum of options, including delicate necklaces, statement hoop earrings, and bold, eye-catching rings, each bearing the hallmark of celebration and style.

WRIST FACTOR
Whether you opt for a fusion outfit or classic saree, gold wrist cuffs make for the ideal accessory. These bracelets

feature captivating and unique designs that not only grab attention but also lend a festive touch to your outfit. Opt for larger statement cuffs to elegantly wrap around your wrist. If you're looking for more flexibility, you can mix and match gold and silver bracelets to expand your jewellery options.

MIX THINGS UP
Fashion experts advise that by following the lead of celebrities and style icons, you can enhance your style by incorporating gold chains into your wardrobe. Whether you want to elevate a denim-on-denim look or add a stylish touch to a neutral or colourful kurta, layering gold chains is the way to go. You have a variety of choices, from multi-stoned chokers to necklaces with delicate pendants. Mix and match these gold chains to add an extra edge to your festive attire.

HOOP EFFECT
Designers and stylists highly



Pic:back

recommend sleek hoop earrings with their timeless appeal, which are considered the ultimate fashion statement. Among these, chunky gold hoops stand out as a stylish and edgy option. You can choose from more refined, sleek hoops or those with a wider or thicker design. Gold hoops never go out of style and can effortlessly elevate your fashion choices. They are versatile accessories that can add a touch of elegance to any outfit, making them a reliable solution for all your fashion needs.

RING IT ON
To enhance your traditional outfit with the elegance of gold rings, you have two options: stacking or making a bold statement. Gold rings come in a variety of unique designs and stunning architectural details that can add a

striking finishing touch to your ensemble. You can choose from intricately crafted floral designs or rings adorned with engravings and gemstones. Alternatively, consider wearing statement cocktail rings in rose gold for a glamorous look. Fashion experts often recommend stacking rings, which means wearing multiple rings on one finger or flaunting a ring on every finger. This edgy and styling technique can make a powerful statement on any occasion, allowing you to express your unique sense of style and add a touch of sophistication to your overall appearance.

IN LOVE WITH PEARLS
If you love combining pearls and gold, you're right on trend. Consider indulging in tribal-inspired jewellery that features baroque pearls accentuated with gold elements. You have options like wearing a gold necklace adorned with pearls or opting for pearl and gold earrings. This choice allows you to infuse a fashionable blend of elegance and individuality in your jewellery collection.

Safe to say, this yellow metal continues to win the favour of buyer's year after year. You can choose between a layered street-style look or bold statement pieces. Gold jewellery meets all your fashion requirements, offering a mix of simplicity and luxury. Elevate your ethnic attire with these stylish gold accessories for a unique and unconventional



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Elevate your sheen

Silver jewellery is not just a trend; it's a timeless expression of elegance and style. With its versatility and unique charm, it adds a radiant touch to any ensemble, making it a cherished choice for festive occasions and everyday wear alike

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On the auspicious day of festive, the norm is to buy gold. And though many people prefer that, there seems to be a steady increase in the demand for silver. According to jewellers in the city there has been an increase in the number of people buying silver in its pure form.

Several factors make silver a preferred metal. One key attraction is of course the cost. Unlike gold, silver is more affordable and is a soft metal, so many unique designs can be created out of it. Also, silver jewellery can complement any outfit a person wears, and it can elevate looks

instantly. Most popular silver jewellery pieces include chains, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, rings, pendants, and so on. Depending on your preference one can either wear a single piece or layer it with matching ones to get a stylish look. "One may not always be able to buy gold. And in that case, buying silver is the best option. It is affordable. As a college student, I may not be able to buy gold jewellery, but that doesn't stop me from buying a precious metal. The belief is that anything you invest in on the special day will come back in abundance to you. In which case, silver is definitely not a bad option. It has resale

value and also its price appreciates just like gold," says Santhi, a student. Various puja items and gift articles in silver are also very popular. "Articles used during pujas are made out of silver and there are many takers for such silverware. Even for gifting purposes, silver seems to be an ideal choice as customers find it more affordable and the articles are actually useful for the people," says Vinod Kumar, a salesperson. "We have a large variety of silver jewellery and accessories as well. The puja thalis (plates), miniature idols, bells and other accessories are much in demand. Antique silver is also gaining popularity among people with a lot of them going in for anklets and toe rings," adds Kiran, the proprietor of a jewellery store.

Gift items like little lamps, plates, flower vases, and drinking glasses are also popularly bought by people when it comes to silver. Apart from this, jewellers in the

city also offer tea sets, dinner sets and silver trophies that are sought after by high-end customers. "I always wear a silver anklet. And silver being a soft metal often becomes weak and brittle after a time. This is the reason why I buy quirky silver anklet every year, even when I have old pieces which may not be broken. That way, my collection becomes big and I have options to choose from for the rest of the year," says Anshu, a designer. "I love silver jewellery, for it exudes a thing you invest in on the special day will come back in abundance to you. In which case, silver is definitely not a bad option. It has resale

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With many silver jewellery designers who design gorgeous pieces that are one-of-a-kind, these accessories are perfect for any occasion. And with festive around the corner, I am hoping to make use of the offers and buy some of them," she adds. Working professionals and students also prefer silver jewellery for daily wear. "I use silver chains and earrings for office as it is lightweight. There are a wide variety of designs available that can go well with an official as well as a casual look. Stone-studded pieces are my favourite," says Sunitha, a finance professional. Jewellery lovers like to purchase silver pieces from well-known brands and designers. Key considerations while choosing a jewellery brand are value for money, design, and longevity. Stunning silver trinkets are a perfect for every occasion and are a must-have for adding elegance to your wardrobe. So, why wait, grab a nice piece this festive season.

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Embrace the festivities with a smart skincare routine that enhances your natural glow. From nourishing treatments to effective hydration, taking care of your skin ensures you look and feel your best during this joyful season



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Embrace the enduring beauty of silver, where each piece tells a story of craftsmanship and grace, ensuring you shine brilliantly on every occasion



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Making the day memorable

Social outreach programmes, of late, have been marking festive holidays. Participation of youth in them is indeed encouraging

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For most of the people, be it students or officegoers, weekends are meant for relaxation and having some fun moment. However, this time, on Diwali, you can consider making this holiday traditional enough by doing something special.

Social outreach programmes, of late, have been marking festive holidays. Participation of youth in them is indeed encouraging. Here are some interesting ideas that you can follow; we are sure they will help you love your country even more.

Helping the needy is the noblest thing that anyone can do this weekend. The underprivileged section of our society is facing a difficult time leading a normal life. Hence this Diwali, try to bring a smile on the faces of poor and deprived people by helping them out in small or big ways.

One can also hold social drives to spread awareness about cleanliness, tree plantation *et al*. Whatever the social initiative, its end-result will only benefit our motherland.

Abhay Deshmukh, a youth who has organised a cleanliness drive in his colony, says, "Keeping this long weekend in view, me and my friends have decided to organise a cleanliness drive in our lane. We will start the activity in the evening and try to collect all the day's garbage that people throw on the road. We have organised many such drives before to inculcate civic sense in people. We will be getting on the field and will do the needful."

Another option to make your weekend festive and fun-filled is visiting museums and historic places with your family or friends. Instead of going to beach, malls, and gardens, try to spend

quality time with your family by planning a trip to museums or old forts situated in and around our city. By doing this, you will not only spend quality time with your loved ones but will also get to know a lot of facts about our country.

If you are not the outdoor type and want to spend a relaxing time at home, don't worry, you too can get the festive vibes by watching a few wonderful and classic epics in the form of movies or series. Along with the dose of entertainment, these films will also increase the love that you have for Indian culture.

Festive holidays are celebrated with great enthusiasm all over the country. The people are eager to celebrate these significant occasions as they are a way to unwind oneself from the monotonous routine. The festive fervour of Indian people on these days brings the whole country together even in its embedded diversity. Festive

holidays are people's day in a variety of ways. It's when the regional identity takes a front seat. Sumit Dhande, a banker, opines that such days are a matter of fun for all the citizens and says, "All the festive holidays hold much significance than just being the day off from work."

Anand Satpute, a senior citizen, says, "For

me, festive days are the ones to feel happy and I really feel enthusiastic being an Indian. As they are observed as a holiday, I like to spend these in my own way. Usually, I go with my friends to some of the local places. During the day, we plan a lunch at a restaurant but definitely not at the cost of following all rituals as per the festival."

As Indians, let's celebrate all the festive holidays that are significant enough to give us the title of 'Culturally Rich Country' who have diverse regional identities, yet are bonded with the feeling of brotherhood and togetherness. Three cheers to our nation!



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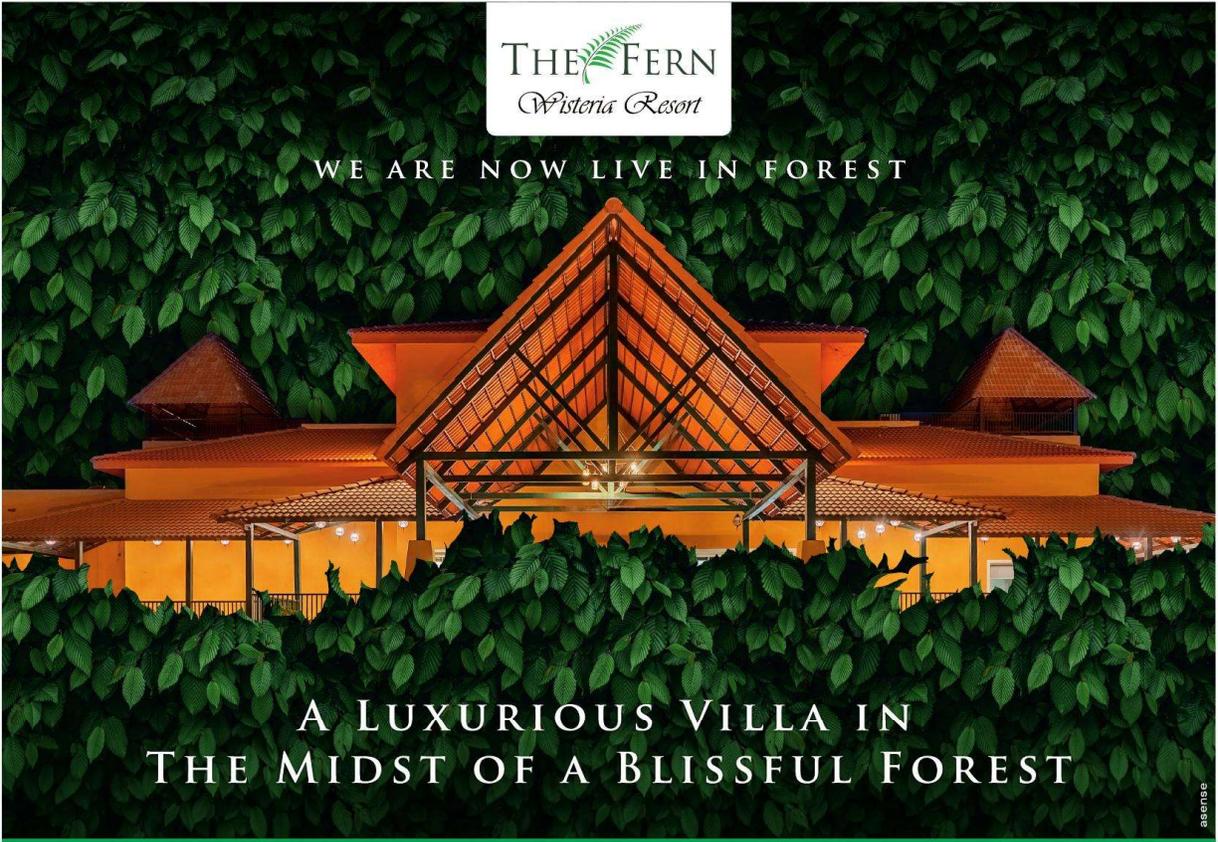
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