

Culture-Led Travel Takes Centre Stage as 67% Indians Plan Holidays Around Heritage, Festivals and Food, Reveals Skyscanner

Category: Business

written by International Khabar | August 11, 2026



Culture is increasingly shaping how and where Indians choose to explore. As travellers move beyond traditional sightseeing, they are seeking deeper, more authentic experiences that connect them with the local heritage, traditions, cuisine, festivals and communities. Leading global travel app, [Skyscanner](#) has launched The India Culture Travel Index, a report that reveals that India's appetite for culture-led travel continues to grow.



Navina Jafa, expert in heritage tourism and Neel Ghose, Travel Trends and Destinations Expert, Skyscanner India

Through The India Culture Travel Index, Skyscanner analysed the evolving behaviours driving culture-led travel in India. The findings uncover five defining trends that together form the R.O.O.T.S. of India's growing culture-led travel movement:

R – Rediscovering heritage

Heritage continues to be the strongest driver of culture-led travel. It is the top motivator for Indian travellers, with 47% saying they would plan a trip around heritage and historical sites. Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand rank among the country's leading cultural destinations, reflecting travellers' growing interest in exploring India's

architectural landmarks, historic communities and living traditions.

0 – Open discovery

As Indian travellers become more open to discovering destinations through culture, they are embracing more immersive experiences beyond traditional sightseeing. Social media and YouTube (42%), along with the growing popularity of food, craft and heritage trails (41%), are the biggest drivers behind growing interest in culture-led travel.

Beyond domestic travel, 46% of Indian travellers have already travelled internationally for a cultural event, festival or heritage trail, while a further 43% aspire to do so, highlighting a growing curiosity to explore culture both within India and around the world. This openness extends closer to home too, with one in four Indian travellers (25%) heading to Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns for cultural experiences, beyond the usual metro circuit.

0 – Once-in-a-year experiences

Festival tourism is emerging as a powerful travel driver, with 72% of Indian travellers saying they would consider planning a trip specifically to attend a major cultural or religious festival. India's iconic festivals are powerful travel motivators, with Durga Puja (58%) emerging as the top festival travellers would consider travelling to attend, followed by Ganesh Chaturthi (52%) and Navratri Garba (47%).

The findings suggest that travellers are increasingly treating

major festivals as limited-time experiences worth planning an entire holiday around, rather than simply activities to enjoy after arriving at a destination.

T – Traditions & Taste

Food, crafts, and local traditions continue to play an increasingly important role in shaping culture-led travel. Regional food experiences rank among the top reasons for travel, with 43% of Indian travellers saying they would plan a trip around them. The growing popularity highlights an appetite for experiences that connect travellers with a destination's local traditions, flavours and way of life.

S – Smarter planning

As cultural experiences become a bigger travel priority, travellers are becoming more intentional in how they plan their journeys. Most Indian travellers begin planning their culture-led trips well in advance, with 40% starting three to six months ahead and 36% beginning one to three months before departure.

Festival timing has become the biggest booking consideration, with 36% of travellers saying availability during key festival or event dates matters most, followed by affordable prices for transport and accommodation (32%).

With many cultural experiences taking place at specific times of the year, Skyscanner's **Price Alerts** allow travellers to monitor fare changes without having to repeatedly search, while **Whole Month** search lets them compare prices across

different travel dates to identify the best value around festivals, heritage trails and other cultural experiences.

Looking ahead, India's appetite for culture-led travel shows no signs of slowing. With 41% Indian travellers planning to take two culture-focused trips within India over the next year, 32% expect to take three to four. While enthusiasm remains high, safety concerns (49%) and high travel costs (37%) continue to be the biggest barriers to taking more culture-led journeys.

Neel Ghose, Travel Trends and Destinations Expert, Skyscanner India, said, *"For a long time, people chose a destination first and discovered its culture once they arrived. We're increasingly seeing that journey now happens in reverse. Travellers are starting with the experience they want, whether that's witnessing Durga Puja, exploring a heritage trail or discovering a region through its food, and then building the trip around it. That shift is changing not just where people travel, but how they plan."*

When festival dates are fixed and demand is high, comparing different travel dates, airlines, airports and routes can help travellers find better value. For instance, try mixing and matching airlines or airports when you are searching for flights, and use helpful tools like Skyscanner's Price Alerts, to find better value when planning travel. "

Dr Navina Jafa, an expert in heritage tourism, sustainability, cultural strategy, and Kathak dance, said, *"India's cultural heritage is not only about monuments, but also the ecosystems*

around heritage landscapes: creative skilled communities, cultural traditions, and living practices. Studies show a growing number of travellers seeking immersive heritage experiences, underlining India's need to invest in its vast geographical diversity and multilayered cultural legacy. This fast-growing sector offers major opportunities for conservation, economic growth, and for strengthening heritage tourism nationally and globally."

As India's appetite for culture-led travel continues to grow, Skyscanner continues to help travellers uncover the R.O.O.T.S. of every journey, from rediscovering heritage and open discovery to once-in-a-year experiences, traditions, and taste, and smarter planning.

Top destinations to connect with your R00TS**

Skyscanner has also curated a selection of cultural destinations across India, helping travellers turn inspiration into their next journey. Explore the guide [here](#).

Destination	Price
Kochi, Kerala	Rs. 10,765
Udaipur, Rajasthan	Rs. 10,307
Almora, Uttarakhand	Rs. 3,824 ⁽¹⁾
Kolkata, West Bengal	Rs. 5,271
Mumbai, Maharashtra	Rs. 4,722
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	Rs. 3,652
Puri, Odisha	Rs. 9,040 ⁽²⁾
Kohima, Nagaland	Rs. 7,250 ⁽³⁾

About Skyscanner

Skyscanner is a global leader in travel that helps travellers plan and book their trips with ease and confidence. Every month, Skyscanner connects millions of travellers, in 180 countries and 37 languages, to more than 1200 trusted travel partners so they can find flight, hotel or car hire options. Founded in 2003, Skyscanner has offices worldwide, in Europe, Asia-Pacific and North America, where traveller-first innovations are developed and powered by data and insights. Making use of the latest technology, Skyscanner simplifies the complexity of travel and provides honest and transparent solutions, searching around 100 billion prices every day so travellers can be sure they've seen the best possible options, all in one place.

Note to Editors

*Skyscanner research conducted with OnePoll in July 2026 with 2,000 respondents in India.

**Live prices dated 27th July 2026, one-way trip from Delhi to destinations. Subject to change

(1) Almora does not have an airport – prices are for Dehradun (354 kms)

(2) Puri does not have an airport – prices are for Bhubaneswar (65 kms)

(3) Kohima does not have an airport – prices are for Imphal (120 kms)

