Journeys that begin with a feeling

The most memorable journeys are not always the ones being planned months in advance. Sometimes, the most wonderful escapes begin with a spontaneous feeling or a thought, "I need a break." For the ones always managing the details, there is a deep liberation in simply placing a marker on the map, clearing the calendar and setting out for an experience of a lifetime.

This edition celebrates the beauty and thrill of the impromptu holidays. It is a tribute to all those last-minute getaways that unexpectedly transform into lifelong memories. We believe that a true journey is measured not just by the destination, but also by the companions who share the road and the renewed spirit you bring back home.

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THE BEAUTY OF LAST-MINUTE TRAVEL

There is a quiet, undeniable magic in spontaneity. No comprehensive checklists or overthinking, just stepping out of the daily pace of life and going for a fulfilling experience at a new place. When this sudden urge for a getaway strikes, short-haul destinations from India stand out.

You can never go wrong with the inviting warmth of South East Asian destinations. There is an unmatched thrill of leaving the everyday chaos behind and finding yourself wandering the lantern-lit streets of Hoi An or relaxing on the beaches of Phu Quoc just hours later. Alternatively, a short flight westward from Vietnam brings you to Thailand, where you can get in sync with the electrifying pulse of Bangkok, or disappear completely into the laid-back, scenic tranquillity of Krabi's coastline.

A journey further south leads to Bali, Indonesia’s premier island escape. Here, you can seamlessly trade your daily routine for sun-drenched beaches, sacred temple grounds, and dramatic landscapes. But if you can't decide between nature and city life, Malaysia turns out to be an unparalleled choice. In a single, spontaneous trip, you can experience its bustling, multicultural metropolis of Kuala Lumpur before retreating to the serene refuge of its stunning highlands and wildlife-rich rainforests.

And if your sudden break is brief and demands absolutely minimal planning, neighbouring Singapore happens to be a brilliant choice. Just get a direct flight to Changi Airport, and find yourself immersed in a brilliant microcosm of modern Asia, where cascading indoor waterfalls, cutting-edge cityscapes, and incredible gastronomy await from the moment you land. But the canvas for an unrehearsed escape stretches far beyond Southeast Asia. For something beautifully unexpected, set your sights on Georgia. Nestled at the dramatic crossroads of Europe and Asia, it offers a fascinating blend of the old-world charm of rustic towns and ancient fortresses with sweeping natural landscapes and thriving modern cities.

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MINI STORIES

Journeys That Match Your Mood & Soul

INTO THE WILD – WILDLIFE ESCAPES

Replace the constant noise of car horns and laptop clicks with the melodic chirping of crickets as you dive deep into nature. For instance, the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra brings you a step closer to the majestic animals, like tigers, leopards, spotted deer and marsh crocodiles. Here, an immersive gypsy/cruiser safari becomes the perfect gateway to the untamed wilderness.

Then there's jeep/canter safaris at the renowned Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand, where you have a chance to spot tigers, crocodiles, deer, elephants, birds and more. Deeper into the heart of India lies Bandhavgarh National Park in Madhya Pradesh. Celebrated for its dense population of Royal Bengal Tigers, it serves as a magnificent impromptu escape where you can witness the jungle life at its natural pace and explore the historic ruins of the Bandhavgarh Fort.

If your unplanned wanderlust stretches beyond borders, South Africa answers the call effortlessly. Without needing months of planning, you can find yourself locking eyes with lions in Kruger National Park, marvelling at leopards at Madikwe Game Reserve, being delighted at the sight of playful elephants at Addo Elephant Park, or experiencing shark cage diving near Grootbos. South Africa's numerous national parks and diverse wildlife can keep you intrigued throughout the entirety of your spontaneous holidays.

A SUMMER TO REMEMBER – MAURITIUS

The island nation of Mauritius holds a special place in the hearts of countless travellers. Located off the southeastern coast of East Africa, its clear aquamarine waters, white sand beaches and dramatic mountain peaks feel soul-soothing on any long day of the summer. Port Louis, the timeless capital city of Mauritius, seamlessly blends rich cultural heritage with pockets of unexpected luxury.

Every spontaneous activity on this island deserves an imprint on your camera roll. Let a sudden whim guide you to scuba dive among vibrant corals, feel the rush of adrenaline on a speedboat ride, soak in the natural allure while hiking through the Black River Gorges National Park, and satisfy your taste buds with the diverse Mauritian cuisine inspired by French, African, Chinese and Indian dishes.

QUICK ESCAPES – SINGAPORE, VIETNAM AND THAILAND

When time is limited on your unplanned breaks, you need to prioritise destinations that still deliver big on experiences. Singapore is a remarkable choice in this matter, thanks to its manageable size and availability of direct flights from India. The fun starts right when you land at the Jewel Changi Airport, home to the world's largest indoor waterfall. Then, the journey takes you to attractions like Gardens by the Bay, Sentosa Island, Singapore Zoo, Merlion Park and Singapore Oceanarium, which neatly fit into a concise itinerary.

Vietnam's charming metropolis, Ho Chi Minh City, is another great destination for a touchdown. You can then move over to exploring the heritage cities of Hoi An and Hanoi before setting out for the spectacular natural beauty and quiet of Halong Bay, Phu Quoc and Sapa. Alternatively, Thailand's renowned nightlife and calming wellness retreats prove that an impulsive, last-minute flight to Southeast Asia can feel like a deep, restorative exhale.

WHERE ADVENTURE BEGINS – AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND BALI

If your definition of a short getaway aligns with scenic waterfront views, calming coastal drives and captivating wildlife encounters, consider destinations like Australia, New Zealand and Bali. For those feeling a bit daring, scuba diving experiences at the Great Barrier Reef and spotting the unique wildlife at Kangaroo Island in Australia can be a great match.

New Zealand, deemed the ultimate adventure capital, has an answer for all of your sudden adrenaline cravings. Head down to Queenstown to enjoy 360-degree spins on a jet boat, soar across the sky on a zipline, or take a literal leap of faith with a bungee cord.

Or you can let your unplanned journey take you to Bali, where you can equip your scuba gear and fly underwater with stunning manta rays in Nusa Penida, or go shipwreck diving off the shore of Tulamben. For thrillseekers seeking adventures above the sea level, there's the Mount Batur hike, ATV riding and white water rafting in

Ubud.

WHERE THE HEART FINDS PEACE – KASHMIR, ANDAMAN AND LADAKH

Tackling endless tasks and team meetings at work makes you realise that sometimes, the ultimate luxury is uninterrupted quietude. If your heart craves an impromptu trip where you can listen to your thoughts while being surrounded by the beauty of nature, there are a lot of choices close to home. Kashmir, the crown jewel of Indian tourism, is a sanctuary of serene lakes, dramatic valleys and striking snow-capped peaks. Finding a secluded space to breathe and enjoy the peaceful landscape is easy here.

Then there is Ladakh, full of endless valleys, blue lakes and rocky terrains with nothing but a few remote towns and local snacks every once in a while. It offers a sense of spiritual isolation as you move past its moon-like landscape. Alternatively, you can hop on a flight to Andaman, book a private waterfront resort/villa and disconnect on the palm-fringed shores where the cell service is weak but the vibes are immaculate.

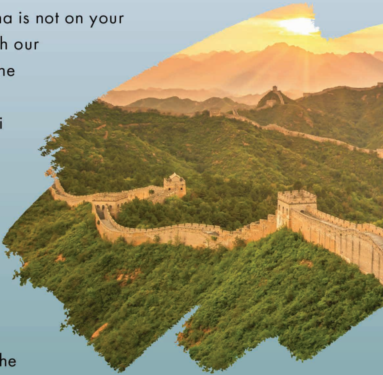
AN ALL-YEAR-ROUND DESTINATION – JAPAN

Japan accommodates the spontaneous traveller, regardless of the date on the calendar. Its neon-lit cities, rich cultural heritage and serene countryside often make it feel like a land straight from the storybooks. If you head down to Japan between March and April, you will be greeted by a mesmerising sight of Japanese cities draped in pink hues of cherry blossoms. Between mid-April and mid June, you will get the opportunity to pass through the famous 20-metre-high snow walls (Yuki-no-Otani) of the Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route.

In Autumn, from September to early November, an unplanned trip to Japan reveals its topography being engulfed by the bold hues of red, yellow and orange leaves. It is like a festival of colours, transforming the already striking Japanese landscape into something entirely mystical. If you find catching a flight to Japan during winter, from December to February, be prepared to experience its famous ski resorts and snow-dusted shrines, followed by a relaxing soak in an onsen.

EMERGING DESTINATION FOR INDIANS - CHINA

Sometimes, the most memorable journey is the one you never saw coming. If a sudden trip to China is not on your travel radar, it should be. With direct flights resuming with our neighbours, going on an improvised trip on that side of the border has never been this easy. Enjoy the skyline of Shanghai, ideally from the observation deck at Shanghai Tower. Head to Xi'An, one of China's ancient capitals, where the world-renowned Terracotta Army awaits your arrival.



Let the path take you to Beijing to wander the Temple of Heaven, the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square before standing on top of the historic Great Wall. And, for a truly mind-bending experience, consider dropping by Chongqing, the incredible city where you can be on the ground floor while also standing on the terrace of a 22-storey building.

BHUTAN

The Land of Happiness

If your impromptu travel plans seek new experiences without drifting far away from the borders, the neighbouring nation of Bhutan is a prime choice. Officially, the Kingdom of Bhutan, it is one of the few places that still remains largely untouched by the chaos of the modern world. Dotted with the dramatic Himalayan landscapes, lush greenery and deep-rooted Buddhist culture and spirituality, Bhutan is a place that can heal an exhausted soul.

Thanks to new direct flights from Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Bangalore, reaching this Himalayan haven is now effortless with SOTC. Even if you don't have time for planning, we've got your back. Our Bhutan tour packages are here to make your impromptu vacations a reality.

WHAT AWAITS YOU?

A TASTE OF HOME

Embrace the comfort of homemade dishes even on your impromptu escape. With meals thoughtfully prepared by an expert chef, every bite delivers a familiar warmth through the authentic Indian flavours.

THE BHUTANESE CULTURAL IMMERSION

Trade the crowded hotspots for the natural rhythm of Bhutan. Dress in the traditional weave of a Gho or Kira as you test your aim at a spontaneous archery session with the locals. Afterwards, unwind at an intimate farmhouse retreat and enjoy high-altitude wine tasting full of surprising notes.

A SCENIC RIVERSIDE FEAST

Let the dramatic Himalayan landscape be the setting for your lunch. Skip the restaurant ambience for an open-air dining experience in Punakha. Enjoy an unforgettable riverside picnic with the sweeping valley as your backdrop and rushing glacial waters as your soundtrack.

THE NATURAL SANCTUARIES

Top your unscripted getaway with a visit to the Phobjikha Valley. Allow the crisp air and natural quietude of this untouched sanctuary to reset your mind. Here, the only music in this grand, glacier-carved valley is the timeless chants drifting from the Gangteng Monastery and the echoing calls of the Black-Necked Cranes.

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The most remarkable journeys aren't found on a perfect itinerary. They often begin with the idea of simply deciding that you need to step away and take a break. Leave the overthinking behind and let your instincts lead the way. These types of journeys give us the much-needed time and experiences to reflect, rediscover and reconnect with what matters the most.

Whether it's finding solace in the endless valleys of nothing but rugged terrain or finding joy chasing fresh tiger trails on a wildlife safari, Journeys That Touch the Soul help us realise how meaningful travel is.

Follow your heart, and we will handle the itinerary. SOTC - Crafting Dream Holidays with Decades of Expertise.

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