

#TRAIN TRAVEL

Serenity On Rails

Discover India's scenic train routes where seas and rivers paint a mesmerising backdrop. Whether you are a nature lover or simply seeking a unique travel experience, these scenic train routes with stunning views are sure to leave you spellbound.



Imagine travelling by train, with your favourite book in hand, and immersing yourself in the beautiful views of the sun's rays reflecting on the shimmering waters. Doesn't it sound magical? India is blessed with stunning train routes that offer mesmerizing views of seas and rivers. Unlike other ways of travelling, trains have the special quality of making the journey itself more beautiful than the destination. In India, there are numerous breathtaking train routes that pass through lush greenery, dry deserts, snow-covered mountains, and much more. However, the routes that take you alongside mesmerising blue waters are more delightful.

Mumbai to Goa

The train journey from Mumbai to Goa on the Konkan Railway is incredibly scenic. This route is surrounded by the Sahyadri Hills and the Arabian Sea, offering breathtaking views.

You'll cross numerous rivers, tunnels, and bridges, including the famous Panvelnadi Bridge, which is the tallest viaduct in India. Along the way, you'll see stunning sights of coconut and mango trees, picturesque villages, and colourful landscapes. When you cross the Panvelnadi bridge, you'll be amazed by the stunning rivers flowing down to the sea.

These four train routes in India not only provide convenient transportation but also offer a visual treat to the passengers. From the stunning vistas of the Arabian Sea to the tranquil rivers flowing through lush landscapes, these journeys showcase the incredible natural beauty of India.

Bhubaneswar to Brahmapur

The train journey from Bhubaneswar to Brahmapur is a truly delightful experience, situated between the Eastern Ghats and Odisha's renowned Chilka Lake. This scenic route offers a peaceful and beautiful view of the Chilka Lake on one side and the dense Malayadri forest on the other. Bird enthusiasts will be captivated by the sight of numerous migratory birds flying over the second-largest lagoon in the country, known for its migratory bird population.



Mandapam to Rameshwaram



One of the most amazing train trips you can take in the world is the journey from Mandapam to Rameshwaram in India. This train ride goes over the second longest bridge in the country, called the Pamban Bridge, which is a whopping 2.2 kilometres long. It's the only way to reach Pamban Island from the mainland. As you travel on the train, you'll see the beautiful blue waters below, and it's quite exciting to cross this bridge, which is known to be risky, just to experience the stunning views.

Vasco Da Gama to Londa



Another train trip starting from Goa is the route from Vasco Da Gama to Londa in Karnataka. This train ride offers breathtaking views as it passes through the winding paths of the mountains in the Western Ghats. You can catch the beautiful blue waters and Dudhsagar waterfalls from a distance. If you love the beach, you will be thrilled to see the train approaching the beautiful beaches of Goa. Hop on the Goan Express and get ready for an unforgettable journey.

Peter Mundy, who was present in Agra for this event, gave the following description: 'On the Strand by the River side, under the castle wall and the Kinges windowe, there was a place Rayled in, about half a mile in Compasse att least. In it were placed the fireworkes, vizt., first a ranck [row] of great Eliphants, whose bellies were full of squibbs, Crackers, etts. Then a ranck of Gyants with wheeles in their hands, then a ranck of Monsters.'

The Grandest of Grand Weddings of Dara Shikoh



Bulbul Sharma

The wedding of Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's eldest son, in 1633 was a grand affair organised by his sister Jahanara Begum in accordance with the wishes of her dead mother Mumtaz Mahal, Shah Jahan's beloved first wife. The wedding of Dara Shikoh's first wife, for example, outshone all others in Mughal history. At the cost of 32 lakhs rupees, more than the Mughals had ever spent on a wedding, the royal family put on such a spectacle in 1633, that its dimensions are still impressive today. According to European observer Peter Mundy, the awe-inspiring fireworks display stretched half a mile across Agra. Sky illustrations of wedding festivities survive in a copy of the Padshahnama, an official chronicle of Shah Jahan's rule, now tucked away in Windsor Castle in England. The vibrant scene teem with crowds of imperial musicians, gift bearers, well wishers, and officials who make up a sea of colourful, bejewelled humanity, all present in honour of Shah Jahan's preferred son.

Aurangzeb, fourteen at that time, reportedly attended these events, although he does not merit even an appearance among the hundreds of figures who fill the Padshahnama illustrations of the wedding procession.

Quoting the Englishman in her book Daughter of the Sun, author Ira Mukhoty writes, "Peter Mundy, an English traveller, describes the fireworks, hidden inside huge puppets shaped like 'great elephants, whose bellies were full of squibs, crackers, etc., giants with wheels in their hands then a rank of monsters, then of turrets, then of artificial trees (and other) inventions, all full of rockets." A painting in the National Museum, New Delhi, depicting Dara Shikoh's marriage procession, features fireworks in the background and corresponds

records that this was the same veil that Shah-Jahan had worn for his own sihra bandi ceremony: 'In accordance with the custom of Hindustan, for good luck His Majesty fastened around the Prince's head the sihra, which consists of strands of lustrous pearls with brilliant rubies and emeralds, and which His Majesty Jannat-Makani [Jahangir] had fastened with his own blessed hand around His Majesty's [Shah-Jahan's] head on the eve of his marriage.'

The event takes place on an upper terrace overlooking the river, with the balcony in front of the Emperor and his sons draped in fine textiles. Beside them, witnessing the event, are important noblemen, including Jafar Khan, Dara-Shukoh's uncle by marriage. Two men on the far-right hold gifts of a sword, a dagger, and a turban ornament to be presented as gifts to the Prince. Below the terrace are female dancers, dancing barefoot in a circle, each depicted in a different pose of the dance. These women are probably kanchani, members of a professional class of dancers and musicians.

According to one contemporary European observer, "They were not indeed the prostitutes seen in bazaars, but those of a more private and respectable class, who attend the grand wedding, for the purpose of singing

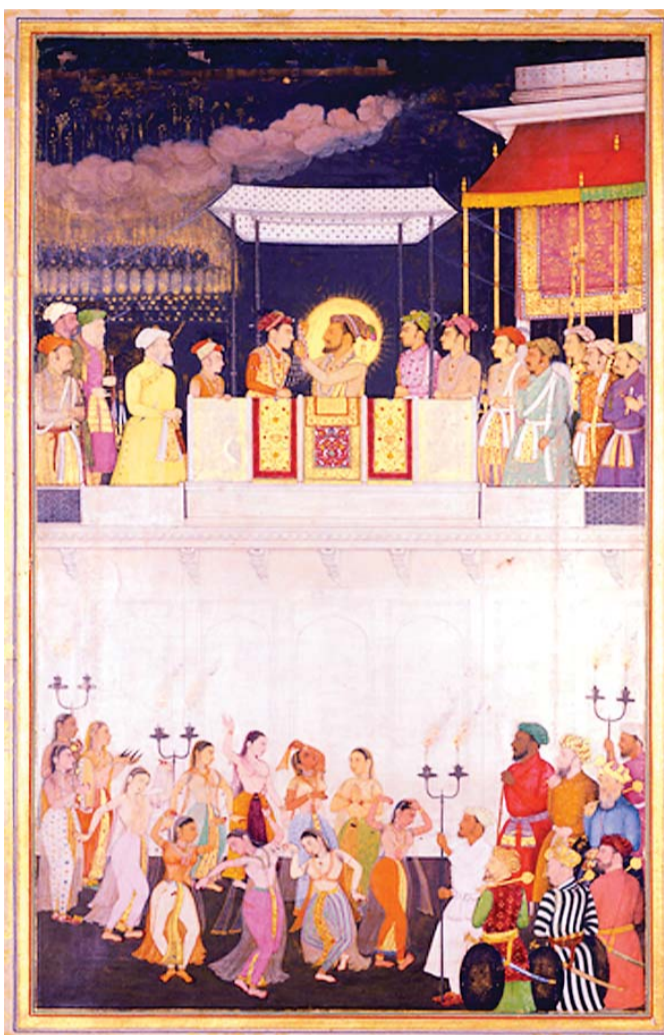
and dancing. Most of the Kenchens are handsome and well-dressed and sing to perfection..." (Francois Bernier, p.274). A group of macebearers stand guard watching them. In the background the artist has painted the magnificent firework display that took place that night, the fireworks taking human, animal and fantastic forms, details of which are just discernible on very close inspection of the upper right of the image. The English

traveller, Peter Mundy who was present in Agra for this event, gave the following description: 'On the Strand by the River side, under the castle wall and the Kinges windowe, there was a place Rayled in, about half a mile in Compasse att least. In it were placed the fireworkes, vizt., first a ranck [row] of great Eliphants, whose bellies were full of squibbs, Crackers, etts. Then a ranck of Gyants with wheeles in their hands, then a ranck of Monsters.'

Another historian, PK Gode claimed in an account titled History of Fireworks in India between 1400 and 1900 (1953) that firecrackers existed in India two centuries before that. He refers to various texts that mention the use of firecrackers. One of the earliest mentions Gode found was by Kamal-ud-din Abdur Razzaq, the ambassador from the court of the Persian Sultan Shah Rukh, who stayed in Vijaynagar in 1443, and mentioned the use of pyrotechny in the Mahanavami festival. In another instance, Gode, cites a description by Portuguese trav-

eller Duarte Barbosa in Travels (1518), of a Brahmin wedding in Gujarat, where rockets were used. Gode says some texts, such as Kautukacintamani by Odiya scholar Gajapati Prataparudradeva (1497-1535), described formulas for preparing different fireworks using sulphur, saltpetre, charcoal, powder of steel, powder of iron, a hollow piece of bamboo, cow's urine, and vermilion, among other ingredients. Gode concludes that "it is possible to suggest that the Chinese formulae for the manufacture of fireworks were brought to India sometime in AD 1400 and then modified by the use of Indian substitutes for Chinese ingredients."

around Rs 80,000 was spent on fireworks alone!



#HISTORY



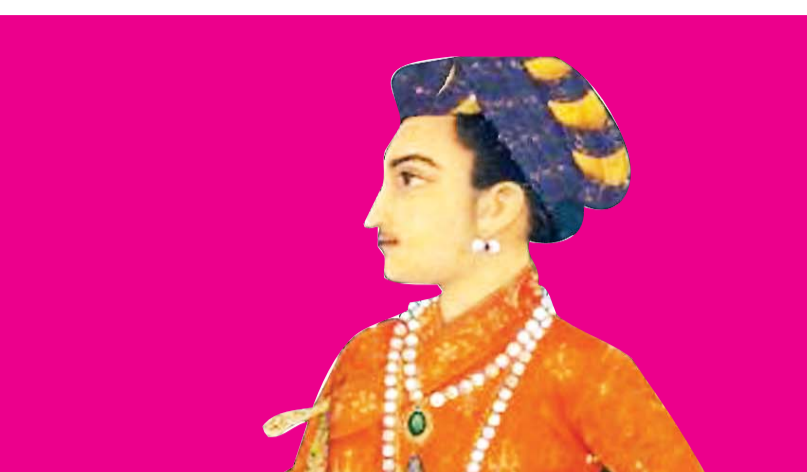
Another historian, PK Gode claimed in an account titled History of Fireworks in India between 1400 and 1900 (1953) that firecrackers existed in India two centuries before that. He refers to various texts that mention the use of firecrackers. One of the earliest mentions Gode found was by Kamal-ud-din Abdur Razzaq, the ambassador from the court of the Persian Sultan Shah Rukh, who stayed in Vijaynagar in 1443, and mentioned the use of pyrotechny in the Mahanavami festival. In another instance, Gode, cites a description by Portuguese trav-

eller Duarte Barbosa in Travels (1518), of a Brahmin wedding in Gujarat, where rockets were used. Gode says some texts, such as Kautukacintamani by Odiya scholar Gajapati Prataparudradeva (1497-1535), described formulas for preparing different fireworks using sulphur, saltpetre, charcoal, powder of steel, powder of iron, a hollow piece of bamboo, cow's urine, and vermilion, among other ingredients. Gode concludes that "it is possible to suggest that the Chinese formulae for the manufacture of fireworks were brought to India sometime in AD 1400 and then modified by the use of Indian substitutes for Chinese ingredients."

around Rs 80,000 was spent on fireworks alone!

Non-silvery Metals

metal is an element that readily forms positive ions (cations) and has metallic bonds. These elements have electrons that are loosely held to the atoms, and will readily transfer them. This is why metals are great electrical and thermal conductors - because the electrons move easily. Most metals' electrons reflect colours equally, so the sun's light is reflected as white. Gold and copper, however, happen to absorb blue and violet light, leaving yellow light. It's worth noting here that copper is also the only metal that is naturally antibacterial.



#GIFT IDEAS

DELIGHTS FOR RAKHI

This Rakhi, Jaipur based brands and businesses are crafting heartfelt hampers that blend tradition with sustainability, nostalgia, and wellness. Explore these unique offerings to celebrate sibling love while supporting the city's entrepreneurs. It is a celebration that goes beyond the thread, fostering bonds and local businesses alike.



Tusharika Singh
Freelance writer
and city blogger

Rakhi is just around the corner, and if you have not thought of a gift yet for your sibling, worry not. Jaipur, with its thriving local businesses, offers an array of well-curated Rakhi hampers to help you celebrate this cherished bond in style. So, why not celebrate the spirit of Rakhi by going local and supporting the entrepreneurs of our Pink City? Here are some unique gift ideas that will make this Rakhi truly special:



Playful Treasures from Omay Foods



When it comes to expressing profound love and care for your sibling, Omay Foods offers the ultimate solution. Their specially curated Rakhi gift boxes are designed to nurture the cherished sibling bond, blending well-being and joy into one delightful package. Each gift hamper features a delectable selection of wholesome snacks, tempting chocolates, traditional roli, chawal, and an exquisite set of handcrafted Rakhis that exude premium sophistication. Some boxes also include thoughtful surprises like a matching scarf and pocket square set, adding a touch of elegance to the festivities. This season, Omay Foods has gone the extra mile by introducing delightful gift boxes for children, brimming with playful treasures such as a pop-it toy and magic popping candies.

Sustainable Rakhi with Lagavi



A ceramics home decor and home table ware brand from Jaipur, Lagavi, presents a sustainable Rakhi hamper. This Rakhi hamper contains exquisite ceramic homeware from Lagavi, fine blends of coffee from Araku Coffee from Bangalore, and sustainable Rakhis from Seed Rakhi. Founder of Lagavi, Akshita Maheshwari, passionately explains, "Amidst the millions celebrating Raksha Bandhan with plastic and synthetic Rakhis that eventually find their way to waste, Lagavi, a staunch advocate of sustainability, has joined hands with Seed Rakhi to champion a cause that transcends tradition. It is an initiative that will not only nurture the bond between siblings but also nurture our connection with Mother Nature."

Healthy Treats from Kashmir Rare



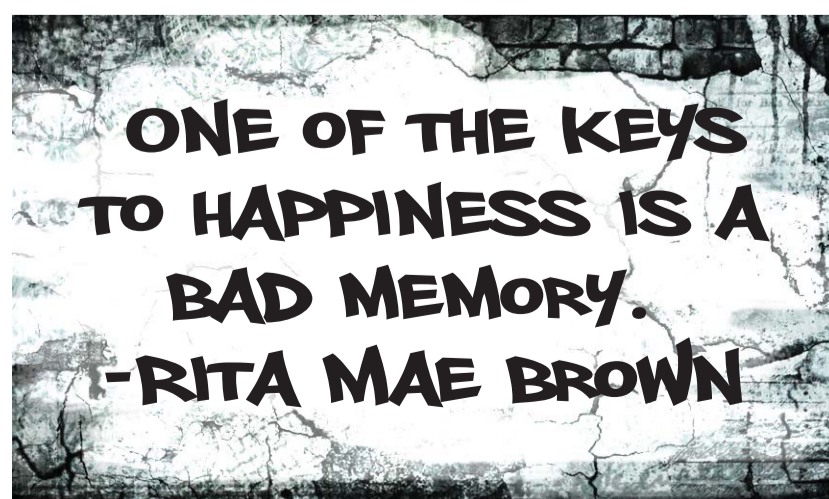
Kashmir Rare's beautifully packaged Rakhi boxes feature a unique mix of healthy treats and lots of love. This Rakhi hamper is all about celebrating the beauty of the bond you share with your sibling. It's a perfect opportunity for you to express your gratitude to your loved one. The Gift Box includes an Almond Pothi, Saffron, Honey, Ferrero Rocher, a reusable gift box, Rakhi with Roli Chawal, and a Happy Rakhi Greeting Card with your personal message. This Rakhi, make your celebration not only special but also meaningful by choosing from these thoughtfully curated local hampers. By supporting the artisans and entrepreneurs of Jaipur, you are not just exchanging gifts; you are exchanging love, culture, and a piece of your city's vibrant spirit.



A Nostalgic Rakhi with O'baque

O'baque, the brainchild of Chef Sanyogita Peshia and Swati Bhatnagar, introduces three different kinds of hampers. The "Nostalgia Cookie Tin" will take you back to your childhood with home-made versions of beloved treats like bournon biscuits, Jim Jam, Hide and Seek, Milk Bikis, and even customizes it with a photo of you and your sibling. Additionally, there are gourmet boxes that include delicacies like Jerusalem bagels, Korean cream cheese buns, and the 'Chai Pe Charcha Box' with chocolate and sea salt cookies, vanilla and chocochip cookies, shortbread, and more baked delights.

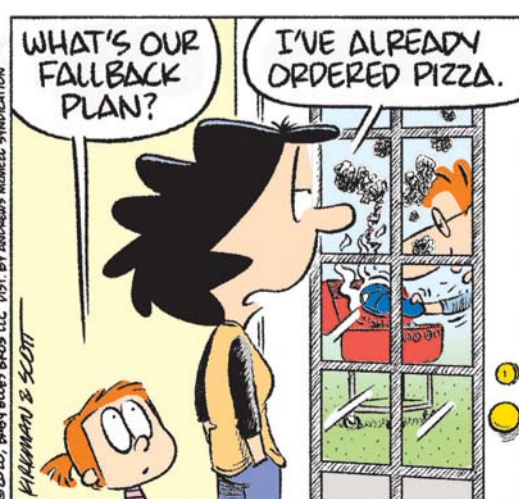
THE WALL



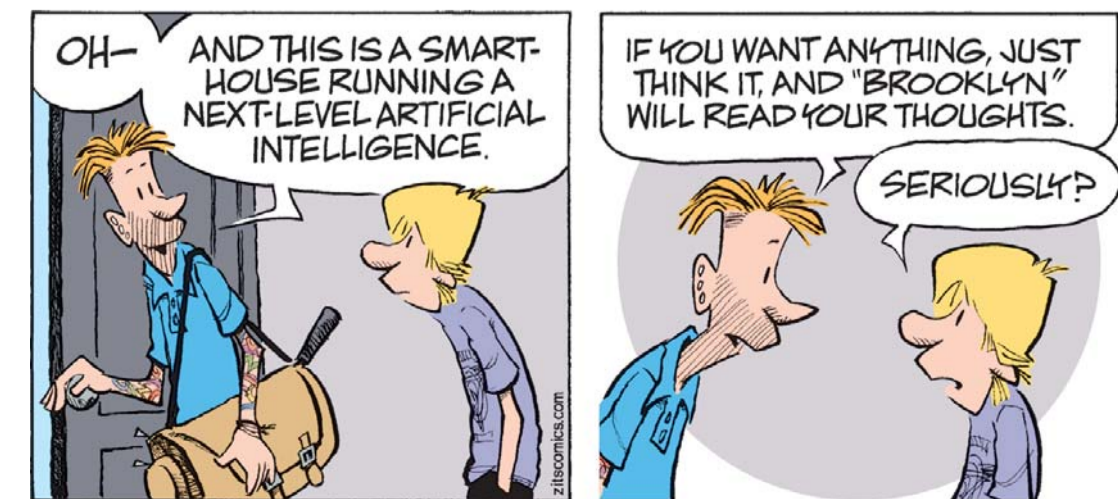
BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

