

#SPACE TOURISM

Is It Really Worth the Hype?

Before you start packing your space boots, let's ask the million-dollar (literally!) question: Is space tourism really worth all the hype?



Just a decade ago, the idea of sipping coffee while floating in zero gravity or watching Earth shrink beneath your feet seemed like a fantasy. Straight out of a sci-fi blockbuster. But welcome to 2025, where space tourism is no longer reserved for astronauts

The Rise of Commercial Space Travel

One era was just for government-funded missions and highly trained astronauts. Now, private companies are taking everyday (wealthy) individuals on the ultimate joyride. Picture this: you, strapped into a high-tech spaceship, counting down to launch, and within minutes, boom! You're weightless, floating like an astronaut, staring at the breathtaking blue marble we call home. Suborbital trips with Virgin Galactic or Blue Origin give passengers a

Why People Are Paying a Fortune to Go to Space

- The Ultimate Bucket-List Experience:** Forget skydiving or scuba diving with sharks, this is the pinnacle of adventure. Seeing Earth from space is a life-altering moment that only a select few have experienced.
- Zero Gravity Fun:** Floating around like an astronaut? Yes, please! It's the closest thing to feeling like a superhero, minus the cape. (Or maybe, bring one for dramatic effect!)
- Pioneering the Future:** Every ticket sold fuels the future of space exploration. Today's space tourists are paving the way for interplanetary travel, perhaps even that long-awaited vacation on Mars.
- Bragging Rights:** Let's be real, how many people can casually drop in conversation, "Oh, that reminds me of when I was in space last summer...?"

The Not-So-Stellar Side of Space Tourism

- The Astronomical Price Tag:** With tickets ranging from \$250,000 to millions, this is luxury travel taken to the extreme. For most, it remains a fantasy reserved for the ultra-rich.
- Safety Risks:** Space travel is still risky business. Rockets, high altitudes, extreme conditions, it's all part of the package, and while companies have made strides in safety, accidents aren't entirely out of the equation.
- Environmental Concerns:** Blasting rockets into space isn't exactly eco-friendly. The carbon footprint of a single launch is massive, raising concerns about sustainability and the environmental cost of these space joyrides.
- The Blink-and-Miss-It Experience:** Most suborbital flights last mere minutes in space, making some wonder: Is it really worth spending a small fortune for a short-lived thrill?

The Future of Space Travel

Despite its challenges, space tourism is only just getting started. As technology advances, prices are expected to drop, making space more accessible (though, maybe not quite budget-friendly just yet). Future plans include extended orbital stays, commercial space stations, and even lunar vacations. Imagine celebrating New Year's Eve while orbiting the Moon, now that's



It's True Your Tipple Causes Cancer

He said, "The body cells are always regenerating. In fact, over a small period of time, most of the blood and linings of our tubular structures change. This is true for all glands and other structures too. The only thing that changes in this process is that while in normal life, the regeneration is a controlled process, in cancer, the process is rampant and the cell growth has gone amok."



Dr. Goutam Sen
CTVS Surgeon
Traveller
Storyteller

Cancer is an ominous word! Surprisingly, the word prevails in most languages, unchanged. As if there was no need to modify it! The word originated in Greek in the fourth or fifth century BC. The doctors used the word 'Karkinos', the ancient word for crab. Later, the Latin speaking healers used the Latin for crab, cancer. Since then, it has stuck in the dictionary of most languages. It gained more strength and recognition by its inclusion in the Zodiac.

The invasiveness of cancer was such a crab-like activity! Long time ago, when I was in the medical college, I was given a very simple explanation of cancer by one of my teachers.

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The whole process of cancer and its control or destruction has been a constant battle. The causes of cancer have remained one of the main aims of research. Although, there have been many connections found but a clear and complete link has been elusive. Once found, it will be the end of all cancer.

Take for example, Breast Cancer. Since it is one of the consistent cancers known to animal world, it has been studied extensively. Some conclusions have



come forth. It is now well-established that some breast cancers are genetic in origin and can be identified in the blood. The treatment suggested has been very drastic. Recently one famous American actress found the cancer genes in her blood. She, then, opted for removal of both her normal breasts as a preventive measure. Thanks to plastic surgery, her bosom remained as alluring as before. There are many other causes of breast cancer, which keep being discovered from time to time.

Even removing the human breast does not seem an absolute cure. It has been noted that there are sample islands of breast tissue in other parts of the body, and cancer can occur in them too. One must recall that while humans normally have just two breasts, but there are small incidences of accessory breasts too. (Most animals have multiple breasts!)

It has become common knowledge that irritation of the surface of breast, particularly, the nipple may lead to cancer. Hence the 'Ban the Bra' movement! There are many more chemical causes which lead to cancer in many regions of the human body. Some of them are commonly used commodities and even been recommended as means of improved well-being. Alcohol has long been suggested as 'Good for the heart', taken in moderation.

Recently in USA, the Surgeon General's advisory provided a brief overview of research studies and reviews published in the past two decades, including a global study of 155 countries and territories involving twenty eight million people.

They all found that higher levels of alcohol consumption were associated with a greater risk of cancer.

Other studies looked at specific cancers, like breast cancer and mouth cancer, finding that the risks increased by 10 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, for those who had just one drink a day, when compared with those who

did not drink. The report described the biological mechanisms by which alcohol is known to induce cancerous changes at the cellular level.

The most widely accepted theory is that inside the body, alcohol breaks down into acetaldehyde, a metabolite that binds to DNA and damages it, allowing a cell to start growing uncontrollably and creating a malignant tumour. Animal experiments have shown that rodents, whose drinking water was spiked with either ethanol, the alcohol used in alcoholic beverages or with acetaldehyde, developed large numbers of tumours all over their bodies.

Research has shown that alcohol generates oxidative stress, which increases inflammation and can damage DNA.

It also alters levels of hormones like estrogen, which can play a role in breast cancer development and makes it easier for carcinogens like tobacco smoke particles to be absorbed into the body, increasing susceptibility to cancers of the mouth and the throat.

The Surgeon General's report also goes into detail about the increase in risk associated with drinking, differentiating between the increases in absolute risk and in relative risk.

For example, the absolute risk of breast cancer over a woman's life span is about 11.3 per cent (11 out of 100) for those who have less than a drink a week!

The risk increases to 13.1 per cent (13 of 100 individuals) at one drink a day, and up to 15.3 per cent (15 of 100) at two drinks per day. A meta-analysis of 572 studies found that alcohol consumption is associated with an increased risk of

several types of cancer, including cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, liver, colon, rectum, and breast. The risk of cancer increased with increasing levels of alcohol consumption. Approximately 4% of all cancer cases worldwide in 2020 were attributed to alcohol consumption. This translates to roughly 741,300 cancer cases globally that year. Cancer types with strong links to alcohol are Mouth and Throat, Esophageal Cancer (particularly esophageal squamous cell carcinoma, higher the alcohol consumption, higher the incidence), Liver Cancer (especially in people who have underlying liver disease, Breast Cancer and Colorectal Cancer have shown a strong link of increasing cancer incidence with heightening consumption of alcohol.

32% of esophageal cancer cases, 17% of liver cancer cases and 4% of breast cancer cases worldwide were estimated to be attributable to alcohol use in 2020.

Dose-Response Relationship: The risk of cancer generally increases with the amount of alcohol consumed. The combined risk is significantly higher for those who both drink alcohol and smoke tobacco. Genetic factors and overall health also play a role in cancer risk. Large cohort studies (studies that follow a group of people



#LIVING LONG

Celebrating the Melody

World Piano Day, observed on the 88th day of the year, symbolizing the 88 keys on a standard piano, celebrates the instrument's rich history and cultural significance. Founded by German pianist Nils Frahm, the day honours pianists, composers, and enthusiasts worldwide. Concerts, workshops, and virtual performances mark the occasion, highlighting the piano's role in classical, jazz, and contemporary music. Musicians of all levels come together to share their love for the instrument, inspiring new generations. Whether through live recitals or digital tributes, World Piano Day unites people through the universal language of music, celebrating creativity and artistic expression.



over time) have also provided strong evidence for the link between alcohol and cancer. For instance, the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) study, which included over 500,000 participants, found that alcohol consumption was associated with an increased risk of several types of cancer.

This is a turn around which is not acceptable to the alcohol imbiber as well as the manufacturer. So, the irony today is that all additions, which have been known to contribute to cancer, have not been stopped by the consumer.

The psychology of the addiction assumes that the warning of all bad effects of alcohol or tobacco intake, is that although it is a fact, the warning is for the next person. Many lame excuses are put forth.

"I do not take enough alcohol for it to have the deleterious effect."
"I don't drink a high percentage of alcohol. It is only the higher percentages that cause it. As it is, I am not a regular consumer."

"For chewing tobacco and smoking, the excuses are worse. Despite horrid pictures seen on cigarette packets, the warnings are flouted by lame pretenses of low consumption or less harmful brands."

There are numerous measures taken by the manufacturers to reduce the impact of cancer in relation to alcohol or tobacco. They are mostly subtle and the emphasis is in being taken in moderation. It is also claiming that the specific brand has neutralizing contents like saffron.

Finally, the fact remains that amongst the informed, there is denial about the relationship of cancer to alcohol and tobacco. There is also a lack of political will to ban alcohol and tobacco consumption as causative factor of cancer. There is too much money and benefits given to the lawmakers by the manufacturers!

Halfway measures have been made on cigarette and bidi packets. Chewing tobacco is still to be affected in a big way. People, who are addicted, soon get injured to the horror pictures on the packets. Economic measures like exorbitant taxes are countered by eating one less meal or cutting costs in clothing, food and travel.

As a footnote, the finding of this salient study done in 2023 in Bhubaneswar show the dismal state of our legal measures and bans. Within 100 yards of 18 schools in Bhubaneswar city, 57 vendors were found selling tobacco. About 48 distinct brands and 791 unbranded tobacco products were identified from 2135 packets collected from 57 vendors. Out of the 48 branded product packets examined, 25 brands were for smoking (cigarettes, bidis), while 23 were for smokeless tobacco products such as *khaini*, *gutika* and *pan masala* containing tobacco. Only six brands out of 17 cigarette packs complied with health warning provisions. None of the eight unbranded bidi packs and 302 unbranded bidi packs was compliant with any health warning compliance indicators. Other compliance-related issues included incomplete health warning labels, out-of-rotation pictorial health warnings, distorted printing (blurry, heavy tint, and faded) and split warnings.

If there is no will to stop alcohol and tobacco, Cancer will rule the roost. There are many jokes doing the round for ages, belying all attempts at making some difference in this blindness towards 'enjoying' or 'doing away with' bad weather, as it is called. Here is one.

A man came out of the pub with fumes of alcohol coming out of a pub. A woman chastised him for alcoholism.
"How will you face the lord in heaven with such a bad breath?"
He pondered a while and replied, "I assure you Ma'am, I shall have breathed my last breath before I appear before him."

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#TRIED & TASTED

Sacred Simplicity: Effortless Navratri Recipes for First-Time Fasters

Fasting during Navratri intertwines faith and discipline, serving as a profound act of spiritual purification that nurtures both body and soul, fostering deeper devotion and self-awareness.

Navratri is a festival of devotion, dance, and delectable delights! As the air fills with the echoes of *bhajans* and the aroma of festive feasts, many devotees embark on a spiritual journey of fasting. If you're observing Navratri for the first time and wondering what to cook while staying true to tradition, fret not! We bring you a selection of easy, flavorful, and wholesome *vrat* (fasting) recipes that will keep you energized and uplifted throughout the nine days. Say goodbye to mealtime confusion and embrace the festive vibes with these simple yet scrumptious dishes!

Makhana Kheer

A sweet treat that is both healthy and satisfying!

Ingredients

- 1 cup makhana (fox nuts)
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tsp sugar or jaggery
- ½ tsp cardamom powder
- 5-6 almonds (chopped)
- 1 tsp ghee

Preparation

- Heat ghee and roast makhana until crispy.
- Crush them lightly and add to boiling milk.
- Stir in sugar and cardamom powder.
- Cook for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Garnish with chopped almonds and serve warm.

Kuttu Ka Dosa



For a crispy, healthy alternative to regular dosas, try this!

Ingredients

- 1 cup kuttu (buckwheat) flour
- 2 tsp boiled potato (mashed)
- 1 green chili (chopped)
- ½ cup water
- Rock salt to taste
- Ghee for cooking

Preparation

- Mix kuttu flour, mashed potato, green chili, and salt with water to form a smooth batter.
- Heat a pan and spread a thin layer of batter.
- Drizzle ghee around the dosa and cook until crispy.
- Flip and cook the other side before serving with coconut chutney.

Sabudana Khichdi

A staple during fasting, *sabudana* (sago) *khichdi* is light, nutritious, and easy to make.

Ingredients

- 1 cup sabudana (soaked for 4-5 hours)
- 1 boiled potato (chopped)
- 2 tsp roasted peanuts (crushed)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 green chili (chopped)
- Rock salt (sendra namak) to taste
- 1 tsp ghee
- Fresh coriander leaves

Preparation

- Heat ghee in a pan, add cumin seeds and green chili.
- Add boiled potatoes and sauté for a minute.
- Mix in soaked sabudana and crushed peanuts.
- Cook on low flame, stirring occasionally, until sabudana turns translucent.
- Garnish with fresh coriander and serve hot!

Samak Rice Pulao

A wholesome, rice-like dish made from barnyard millet.

Ingredients

- 1 cup samak rice (washed)
- 1 tsp ghee
- 1 small potato (chopped)
- 1 small carrot (chopped)
- 1 green chili (chopped)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- Rock salt to taste
- Fresh coriander leaves

Preparation

- Heat ghee, add cumin seeds and green chili.
- Add potatoes and carrots, sauté for a minute.
- Mix in samak rice and two cups of water.
- Cover and cook for 10 minutes until rice is fluffy.
- Garnish with coriander and serve hot.

Fruit Chaat

A refreshing and nutritious snack.

Ingredients

- 1 banana (sliced)
- 1 apple (chopped)
- 1 pear (chopped)
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds
- Rock salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 tsp lemon juice

Preparation

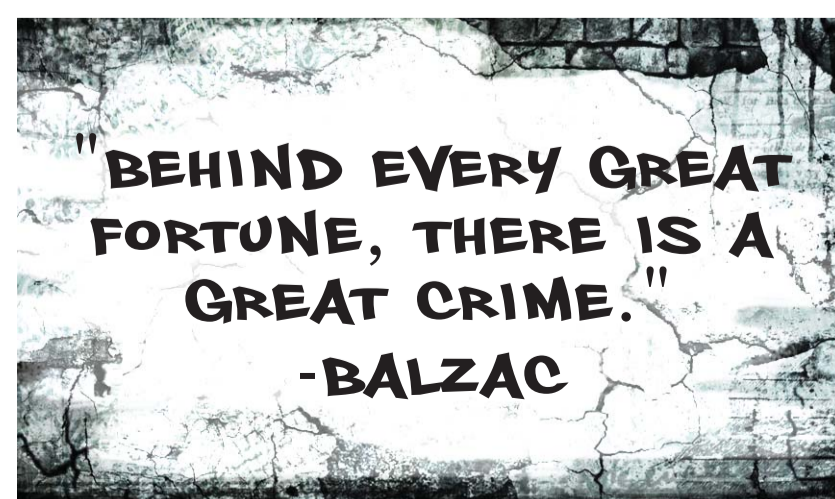
- Mix all the fruits in a bowl.
- Add salt, black pepper, and lemon juice.
- Toss well and serve fresh.

Tips for First-Time Fasters

- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Opt for light, easily digestible foods.
- Avoid fried and overly spicy dishes to prevent acidity.
- Include nuts and dairy for energy and strength.
- Listen to your body; if you feel

weak, don't hesitate to break the fast with a fruit or a light meal. Fasting during Navratri doesn't have to be complicated! With these simple yet delicious recipes, you can observe your fast without stress. Happy Navratri and happy cooking!

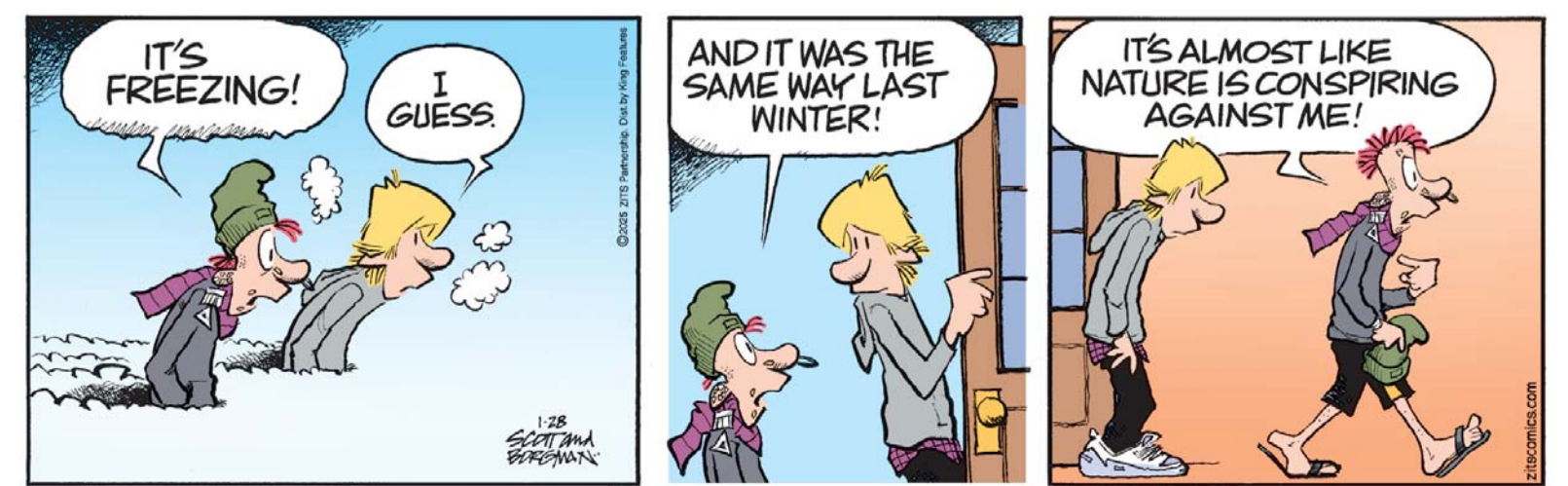
THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS



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