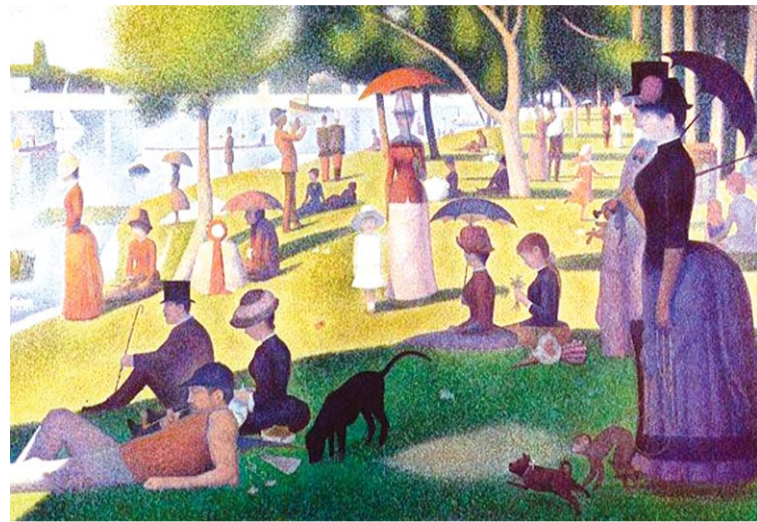


## #GEORGES SEURAT

### Bathers at Asnieres

So, the question is why is Seurat doing this? Why does he drain visible signs of life and sensory awareness from his figures?



What is it exactly that feels strange about the figures in this canvas? Because they look weird. Behind me is one of the great monuments of modern painting, Bathers at Asnières by Georges Seurat. Although there is nothing so remarkable about this tranquil scene and although this canvas is already probably extremely familiar for many who encounter it here in the National Gallery as this icon of modern life painting in the 19th century, something about the Bathers is still unsettling to viewers after nearly 150 years.

Seurat makes his figures so visually prominent but he also takes something essential away. Look at Monet's figures on the bridge. Even rendered with just a few loose strokes, they seem to lean towards one another as if communicating. The figures in the water raise their hands to splash. The sense of aliveness we get there is precisely what Seurat doesn't give us. Their bodies have a waxy, almost marble-like solidity. They are not rendered in fluid brushstrokes. They have this polished surface of paint with lots of lead white in it.

The absence of vitality in these marble-like figures is all the more striking because they confront us at human scale. People often describe Seurat's works as silent. I think it is because of the visible absence of oral communication taking place in his works. The boy whistling into the void off the edge of the canvas calls attention to this. He calls out, and there is no visible response. So, the question is why is Seurat doing this? Why does he drain visible signs of life and sensory awareness from his figures?

One answer historians often give is that this is a social commentary. Seurat's way of treating figures has often been associated with alienation in modern society of people, and especially working people, becoming dead-end cogs in a vast machine. Seurat's Bathers are seen from the widest possible historical scope of the deep ancient history of humankind and its evolution into the industrial present day.



# You Want Some Cold? Right Here In India?



Markha Valley Winter Trek.

Spiti Valley



Snow clearance near Rohtang pass.

## ● Jal Khambatta

Most Indians think snow trekking means heading to Switzerland or Norway. But here's the truth: some of the world's most challenging and beautiful snow treks are right here in India. We're talking about places where temperatures drop to -30°C, where frozen rivers become trekking routes, where the air is so thin that you have to consciously remind yourself to breathe.

These aren't your usual hill stations with a light dusting of snow. These are serious cold-weather destinations where winter changes everything, where the landscape transforms into a white wilderness, and where adventure takes on a whole new meaning.

Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh, Leh-Ladakh, and Dras aren't just cold. They're sub-zero playgrounds for trekkers who want something beyond the ordinary. The frozen Zaskar River, snow-covered monasteries perched on cliffs, villages where life slows to a

crawl in winter, these places offer experiences you can't replicate anywhere else.

This isn't about ticking destinations off a list. It's about testing yourself against nature, experiencing silence so profound that it feels sacred, and understanding what 'cold' really means.

Let's dive deep into these three towns, how to reach them, what to do, and most importantly, the snow treks that make them legendary.

### 3 Indian Towns With Sub-Zero Temperatures For Snow Treks

Complete guide to snow trekking in India's sub-zero towns isn't a casual holiday. It's a test of endurance, preparation, and your ability to handle discomfort. But it's also transformative.

#### Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh: The Middle Land Frozen in Time

Spiti Valley translates to 'the middle land' because it sits between Tibet



Leh Ladakh.



## #TRAVEL

Dras.

and India. In winter, it becomes one of India's most isolated regions. Temperatures drop to 20°C to -30°C. Snow blankets everything. Roads close. The handful of tourists who visit in summer disappear. What remains is raw, untouched beauty and a handful of hardy souls who call this frozen desert home.

#### How to Get There

- **By Air:** Fly to Chandigarh or Delhi, then take a bus/taxi to Shimla (7-8 hours from Chandigarh).
- **By Road:** From Shimla, take a shared taxi or bus to Rekong Peo (235 km, 8-10 hours). Stay overnight to acclimatise. From Peo, continue to Kaza via Nako and Tabo (200 km, 10-12 hours depending on road conditions).
- **Important:** Carry multiple layers, thermals, waterproof jackets, and plenty of cash. ATMs in Kaza may not work.

**Key Monastery:** One of the oldest and largest monasteries in Spiti, perched dramatically on a hill. In winter, reaching it through snow is an adventure in itself. The monastery looks surreal covered in

white, with prayer flags frozen stiff in the wind.

**Kibber Village:** At 4,270 metres, Kibber is one of the highest motorable villages in the world. Winter here is intense. The village gets cut off for months. But the experience of seeing life at this altitude in these conditions is unforgettable.

#### Why Leh-Ladakh in Winter?

Leh in winter is a different beast. Temperatures range from -11°C to -30°C. Pangong Tso freezes completely. The Zaskar River turns into the Chadar, a sheet of ice you can walk on. This is when Ladakh reveals its most extreme, most beautiful self.

#### How to Get There

- **By Air:** The most practical option. Kushok Bakula Kimpochee Airport connects Leh to Delhi, Mumbai, Srinagar, and Chandigarh with daily flights. From the airport, Leh city is 3 kms away.
  - **By Road (Winter):** The Manali-Leh route closes in October and reopens in May/June. The Srinagar-Leh route via Zoji La stays open but is unpredictable due to snowfall. Roads get blocked frequently. Not recommended unless you're experienced and have buffer days.
- Leh Town:** Explore Leh Palace,

Shanti Stupa, local markets. The town feels quieter in winter. Shops close early. But the clear skies and snow-covered mountains make it magical.

**Frozen Pangong Tso:** The lake that's blue and liquid in summer turns into a white, frozen expanse in winter. You can walk on it (carefully). The experience of standing on a frozen lake at 4,350 metres with nothing but white around you is surreal.

#### Dras, Jammu and Kashmir: India's Coldest Inhabited Place

Dras holds the title of India's coldest inhabited town. Winter temperatures drop to -40°C to -50°C. It's called the 'Gateway to Ladakh' and sits at 3,280 metres. Dras experiences some of the harshest winters on the planet.

#### How to Get There

- **By Air:** Fly to Srinagar. From Srinagar, Dras is 140 km (4-5 hours by road).
- **By Road:** The Srinagar-Leh highway passes through Dras. In winter, the road is open but frequently blocked by snow at Zoji La (11,575 feet). BRO clears snow quickly, but delays are common. Always have buffer days. Dras doesn't have established trekking routes like Spiti or

Spiti Valley translates to 'the middle land' because it sits between Tibet and India. In winter, it becomes one of India's most isolated regions. Temperatures drop to -20°C to -30°C. Snow blankets everything. Roads close. The handful of tourists who visit in summer disappear. What remains is raw, untouched beauty and a handful of hardy souls who call this frozen desert home.



frozen Zaskar River.



Frozen Pangong Tso.

Ladakh. The extreme cold makes long treks risky. However, short snow walks around the town, exploring frozen streams, and experiencing village life in -40°C is the real trek here. Walking through Dras in winter when everything is frozen solid, when your breath freezes in the air, when locals bundle in layers you didn't know existed, that's the experience.

#### Chadar Trek (Frozen Zaskar River)

**Difficulty:** Extremely Difficult  
**Duration:** 8-9 days  
**Altitude:** 3,200-3,500 metres  
**Details:** This is India's most famous winter trek. The Zaskar River freezes, and you walk 105 km on ice. The ice thickness varies. Sometimes, you walk on solid sheets. Sometimes, you hear cracks beneath your feet. Temperatures drop to -25°C to -35°C. You camp in caves. Your water bottle freezes overnight. But the experience of walking through a frozen gorge with 600-foot cliffs on either side is incomparable. Only for those in excellent physical condition. Book through registered operators only.

**Markha Valley Winter Trek**  
**Difficulty:** Moderate to Difficult  
**Duration:** 7-8 days  
**Altitude:** 3,300-5,200 metres  
**Details:** Usually a summer trek, Markha Valley in winter is for serious trekkers. Snow covers the entire trail. You cross frozen streams, walk through villages where families huddle around bukharis stoves, and climb Kongmaru La at 5,200 metres. The pass in winter is brutal. Wind, snow, altitude. But the views of snow-covered Kang Yatse and Stok Kangri peaks are stunning.

**Stok Kangri Winter Expedition**  
**Difficulty:** Extremely Difficult (Mountaineering)  
**Duration:** 10-12 days  
**Altitude:** 6,153 metres  
**Details:** Stok Kangri is a popular summer trek. In winter, it becomes a mountaineering expedition. Deep snow, avalanche risk, extreme cold. You need technical gear, ropes, ice axes. Success rate is low. But for mountaineers, summiting Stok in winter is a badge of honour. Happa freezing out.

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



kunzum pass.

## #BEAUTY EMPIRE

# The Rise Of Estée Lauder

In 1946, at the age of 38, she founded Estée Lauder Inc., with her first product, the Super Rich All Purpose Crème



Estée Lauder's rise from humble beginnings to becoming a global beauty mogul is a story of perseverance, innovation, and self-belief.

Born Josephine Esther Mentzer on July 1, 1908, in Queens, New York, she came from a modest, immigrant family. Early on, Estée developed an interest in beauty, inspired by her mother's homemade skincare treatments and her grandfather, a chemist. Despite these early influences, Estée faced numerous challenges and was often rejected by established beauty companies.

Undeterred, she set out to build her own brand, ultimately creating one of the most successful cosmetics empires in the world.

**Selling Directly to Customers**  
What set Estée Lauder apart from other entrepreneurs was her hands-on approach to sales. Recognizing that her products wouldn't gain traction through traditional advertising alone, she went directly to the customers. Estée didn't just sell her skincare line through stores, she personally demonstrated her products to women at beauty salons and department stores. She was involved in every aspect of the business, ensuring that her products not only met high standards but were also paired with outstanding customer service.

Her first breakthrough came when she was able to sell

large, established companies that were reluctant to accept a newcomer.

Rather than giving up, Estée Lauder took matters into her own hands. Instead of waiting for permission, she decided to create her own company. In 1946, at the age of 38, she founded Estée Lauder Inc., with her first product, the Super Rich All Purpose Crème. She was determined to carve a space for herself in an industry that had rejected her.

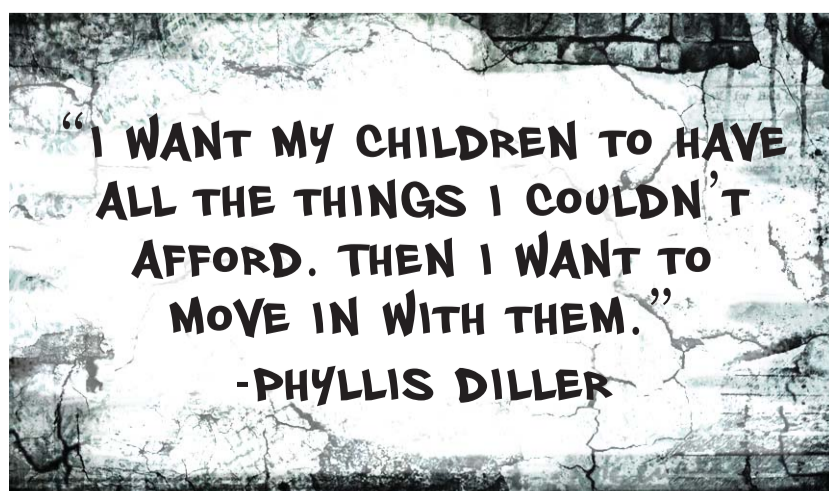
**The Personal Touch: Selling Directly to Customers**  
What set Estée Lauder apart from other entrepreneurs was her hands-on approach to sales. Recognizing that her products wouldn't gain traction through traditional advertising alone, she went directly to the customers. Estée didn't just sell her skincare line through stores, she personally demonstrated her products to women at beauty salons and department stores. She was involved in every aspect of the business, ensuring that her products not only met high standards but were also paired with outstanding customer service.

**Building an Empire**  
As her business grew, Estée Lauder didn't stop innovating. She expanded her product line to include new skincare items, makeup, and fragrances. By the 1980s, she began to expand internationally, bringing her brand to Europe and other markets.

**A Legacy of Resilience and Innovation**  
Despite being rejected and dismissed by the beauty industry in her early days, Estée Lauder's determination and vision transformed her into a pioneering figure in cosmetics. By the time of her death in 2004, her company was a multi-billion-dollar enterprise, with products sold in over 150 countries. Estée Lauder's legacy is not just about the products she created, but about her resilience in the face of rejection. She believed in herself when others didn't, and by doing so, she created a brand that would become synonymous with luxury, quality, and innovation. Today, the Estée Lauder Companies remain a powerful force in the beauty industry, a testament to one woman's relentless pursuit of her dreams against all odds.



## THE WALL

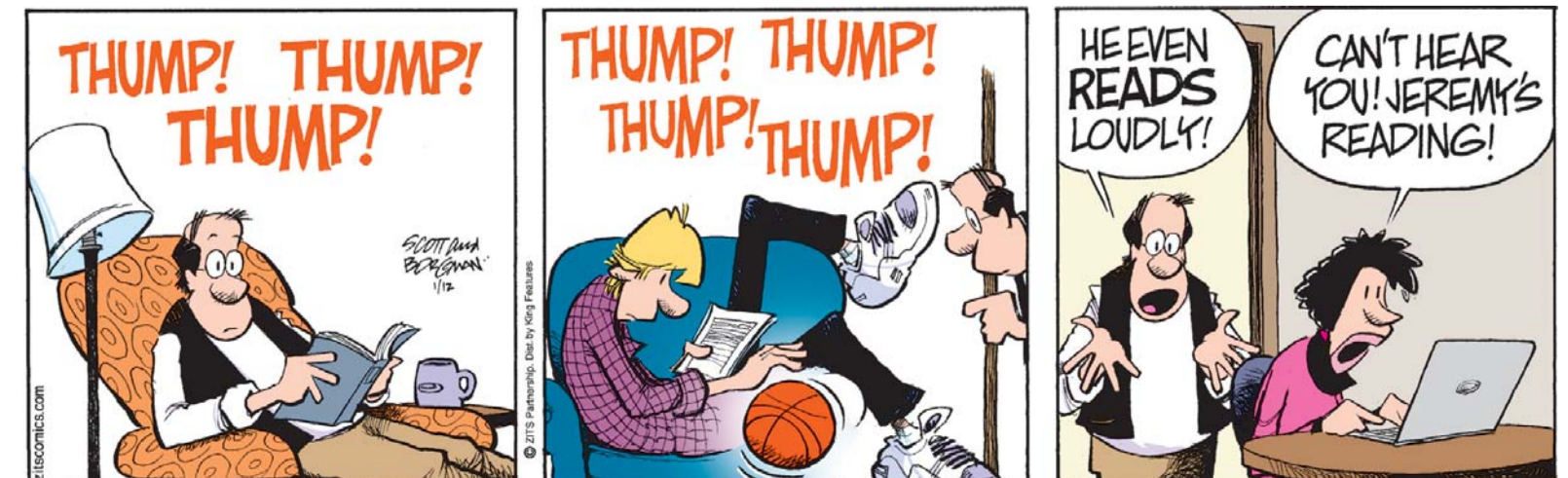


## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman