

# ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

**JOURNAL CONCIERGE**  
An Insider's Guide

## Delhi

India's capital city has forward-looking food, art and design scenes but still preserves the best of its past

Old Delhi, New Delhi. It is easy to think of the sprawling metropolis of Delhi, which encompasses both, as cleaved neatly into two halves: After all, New Delhi has the broad, orderly boulevards laid out by English architect Edwin Lutyens in the early 20th century for India's new capital, while the tangled streets and hurly-burly atmosphere of Mughal-era Chandni Chowk market are typical of dusty Old Delhi.

But "New" Delhi is hardly new. It's a modern city built upon the ashes of at least seven earlier ones, which rose and crumbled over a millennium. Though they're gone, vestiges of them remain: The imposing Red Fort, home to the Mughal rulers for nearly 200 years; the graceful 15th-century domes that dot the Lodhi Gardens park; and the 13th-century Qutub Minar obelisk are just a few reminders of New Delhi's ancient past that share real estate with the buzzy new restaurants, cafes, luxury malls and trendy shops popping up all over town.

4. Café Lota at the Crafts Museum



5. Earring vendor in the Kinari Bazaar



6. The Lodhi Hotel



1. Kingdom of Dreams



2. Khari Baoli Market



3. Humayun's Tomb



**THE SCRIBE**  
**William Dalrymple**  
Historian and author of 'City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi,' among other books



**THE TRENDSETTER**  
**Manish Arora**  
New Delhi-based fashion designer who's dressed the likes of Lady Gaga, Rihanna and Katy Perry



**THE CURATOR**  
**Neha Kirpal**  
Founding director of the India Art Fair



**THE CHEF**  
**Ritu Dalmia**  
Chef and owner, Diva Restaurants, a collection of eateries across the city



**HEAVENLY HARMONIES // Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya Dargah.** Every Thursday night, singers perform Sufi devotional songs, called qawwalis, in the open courtyard at this shrine where Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Hindus all gather to pray to the same Sufi saint. It is still as dramatic and moving an event as when I first saw it 30 years ago. Mathura Road, Nizamuddin, nizamuddinauliyayam.com

**LITERARY HUB // BahriSons Booksellers.** A fixture of the popular Khan Market for generations, BahriSons carries a broad selection of titles and is a great place to browse. Arcade ABC, Khan Market, Opposite Main Gate, booksatbahri.com

**PAST PERFECT // Begumpur Masjid.** You'll need to hire a guide to find this vast, 14th-century mosque and the neighboring remnants of a palace, but it is well worth the time and trouble to see what I consider the most resonant and extraordinary ruins in Delhi. Geetanjali Marg, Malviya Nagar

**FOOD FIX // Karim's.** This Old Delhi institution, founded by one of the families that cooked for Mughal emperors in the Red Fort, is the perfect place to stop after touring the Jama Masjid mosque, next door. I usually go for the kebabs but order the trotters when I'm feeling adventurous. House No. 16, Gali Kababian, Jama Masjid, Old Delhi, karimhoteldelhi.com

**SUPER SHOPPING // Kinari Bazaar (5).** I go to this wholesale-retail market both for inspiration and to source my collections. You can literally find everything here, from embellishments, embroidery and laces to idols, beautiful kites and amazingly delicious food. Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi

**FRENCH FARE // Le Bistro Du Parc.** This New Delhi French restaurant is my favorite in town. The food is wonderful and they serve a wide selection of wine and beer. A-57, 58, 59, Moolchand Market, Defence Colony, lebistroduparc.com

**SERIOUS SPECTACLE // Kingdom of Dreams (1).** A combination of Las Vegas glitz, Disney drama and Bollywood exuberance, this fantastical and sprawling tourist complex showcases Indian music, theater, film and dance, and has plenty of restaurants and shops to choose from. My favorite things to do there are to see the performances staged at the Nautanki Mahal area, and walk along Culture Gully, an indoor street where vendors sell arts, crafts and food. The whole place is a visual treat. Sector 29, Gurgaon, Haryana, kingdomofdreams.in

**HIGH CONTRAST // Hauz Khas.** Apart from this 14th-century neighborhood's historic significance, it also manages to have both a distinctly urban and rural flavor. The lake and the ancient mosque and tomb complex are gorgeous.

**MODERN ART // Gallerieske.** There's been an incredible explosion in contemporary art galleries recently. One of my favorites is Gallerieske, in Connaught Place. It features some of the best living contemporary artists in India, including Sudarshan Shetty, Bharti Kher and Sheela Gowda. Shivam House, 14-F Middle Circle, Connaught Place, gallerieske.com

**SERENE GREEN // Lodhi Gardens.** This lovely 90-acre (36-hectare) park is the site of several monumental tombs and other fine examples of Mughal architecture and is a favorite strolling spot for anyone living in South and Central Delhi. My favorite thing about it is the amazing variety of birds—it's like a bird's paradise in the middle of the city. Lodhi Road, Near Khan Market

**CULTURE CACHE // Devi Art Foundation.** This nonprofit contemporary-art and education space just outside Delhi, in Gurgaon, exhibits a lot of young emerging artists from India, Turkey, Iran and Bangladesh. Sirpur House, Plot no. 39, Sector 44, Gurgaon, Haryana, deviarfoundation.org

**BEST BITES // Town Hall.** Khan Market has many good restaurants, but one that I particularly love is Town Hall, which serves the best lamb chops in the city. 60-61, Near Dayal Opticals, Middle Circle Lane, Khan Market

**SMALL WONDERFUL // The Rose Hotel.** Delhi's only quirky boutique property, the Rose, in Hauz Khas, has 12 sunny, stylish rooms and very welcoming owners. From \$60 with breakfast, T-40 Hauz Khas Village, therosenewdelhi.com

**HOME COOKING // Café Lota (4).** Tucked inside the Crafts Museum in Pragati Maidan, this little gem showcases food that is hard to find outside an Indian home. Go for the kadak chai (strong masala tea), dal ka chilla (lentil pancakes) and keema bao (spicy minced meat with a bread roll). National Crafts Museum, Bhairon Marg, Pragati Maidan, facebook.com/CafeLota

**HISTORY LESSONS // National Museum.** Our culture and civilization stretch back more than 5,000 years. Every time I come here (and I come here often) I discover something new about our past. Janpath, Rajpath Road Area, Central Secretariat, nationalmuseumindia.gov.in

**MARKET VALUES // Khari Baoli (2).** It is crowded as hell, but I think this is the most exciting food market in the whole country—and a definite feast for the senses. Vendors sell spices, dried fruits, pickles, grains and tea, with entire lanes dedicated to just one product. The whole place is dotted with little stalls and eateries that sell delicious street food, so you can nibble as you shop. Old Delhi

### ROAD WARRIOR

## Passione for Water Taxis

**JASON POMEROY** is founding principal of Singapore-based eco-architecture firm Pomeroy Studio. He is also a television personality for Channel NewsAsia, as well as a lecturer at the Università IUAV di Venezia in Italy. The Briton spoke to the Journal about snacking on roasted almonds, taking the scenic route on Venice's water taxis, and timeless Asian architecture.



**How often are you up in the air?**  
Once a week. As Asia continues to boom and its cities expand, developers and city planners from Yangon to Kuala Lumpur are realizing that they need to reduce the energy burden and increase the livability of their metropolises if this growth is to be sustained. For an eco-architect such as myself, this means more projects and traveling throughout the region.

**Favorite hotel?**  
The Majestic Hotel when I am on business in Kuala Lumpur. The M Gallery Papadopoli when I am teaching in Venice. I think cultural heritage is important, and I tend to gravitate towards hotels that speak of a bygone age, buildings with their period fixtures still intact. Technology, urbanization and globalization run the risk of destroying cultural heritage, so it is buildings like these that highlight how cultures and traditions play their roles in the modern cityscape. Also, the bars at both properties serve fantastic Negronis—perfect after a long day of running about.

**Favorite airline?**  
Singapore Airlines. On flights, when I am not busy designing buildings or editing papers, I am settling into a good film. I have to confess to being a bit of a film fanatic.

**Best airline seats?**  
The first row in first class.

**Frequent-flyer program?**  
[Singapore Airlines'] KrisFlyer—though rather than miles, I would rather have carbon-offset credits.

**Favorite airport?**  
Changi airport [in Singapore] for its super-efficient immigration, great shopping and food selections, and, best of all, landing there means that I have arrived home.

**Preferred luggage?**  
My battered Rimowa. The case with its collage of airport stickers has been with me through thick and thin. It has braved blizzards, sandstorms and monsoons. And when I am filming my architecture and travel-focused television series [for Channel NewsAsia]—"City Time Traveller"—the bag often contains a bottomless pit of energy bars and roasted almonds to keep me going.

**Packing strategies?**  
I always pack a pair of brown loafers and a blue waterproof blazer that never creases. Also, bring along a scarf made from cashmere or silk in your hand luggage. It protects one from dust and from getting too cold or too warm.

**Which travel apps do you use?**  
None. I am surprisingly low tech.

**How do you stay fit while traveling?**  
By going to the gym and swimming. And when there are no such facilities, I opt for cardiovascular cross-training.

**What's your best travel advice?**  
Use a luggage tag. When I first bought my metal case, it was not so banged up and recognizable. Once, someone walked off with the said metal case, and this was fol-

lowed by a frantic exchange with the ground crew at Changi. Thankfully, the person who took my case by mistake returned it, and all was resolved.

**Best travel experience?**  
Despite being incredibly busy, the experience of visiting 12 cities in six countries in a three-month period during the filming of my television series was simply unforgettable. While I cannot detail every experience I had, as an eco-architect I was constantly drawn to some of the ancient buildings along the way—Chiang Mai's traditional bamboo houses, Beijing's hutongs, and Singapore's shop houses. These buildings were built well before electricity and air-conditioning, yet their passive, vernacular designs have truly stood the test of time. There is much to learn from our ancestors as we struggle to meet the growing demand for housing in the future.

**Worst travel experience?**  
Spraining my ankle and being wheelchair-bound within the first 10 minutes of my honeymoon. I literally stepped out of our car, took a few steps and slipped on a wet timber floor. A couple of packs of ice later, I was bandaged and in a wheelchair, forgoing the elephant training that we planned. My wife still jokes that it was a glimpse of our old age.

**What's left on the bucket list?**  
Season two of my television series that takes me to Oceania and the Middle East.

**Favorite city?**  
Venice. My love affair with this city started as a university student at the villas of Palladio and Scamozzi in the Veneto. Fast forward many years, and I am now a professor at the Università IUAV di Venezia. I perceive the historic palazzos, narrow alleyways and canals with a very different perspective than as a student who was learning about Renaissance architecture.

**Favorite restaurant/bar?**  
The House on the Bridge, Eton [in the U.K.]. Sadly, it is now closed. My parents used to take me there regularly from the age of 14. I liked the lobster thermidor and the Crêpe Suzette, both of which were fantastic—classics that chefs today seem to scoff at. But thankfully, old school cuisine is making a resurgence.

**Which city has the best taxis?**  
Venice's water taxis. When I head to the university, I take the Number 2 water taxi to Zattere, which is several stops away from the yacht club where I occasionally stay on San Giorgio island. It is a delightful journey every morning with the opportunity to observe the Venetian skyline, punctuated by the St. Mark's Campanile and the domes of Santa Maria della Salute.

—Edited from an interview by Mark Lean