

A woman with a Christmas-themed headpiece featuring pine branches, red berries, gold and silver ornaments, and small gift boxes. She is wearing a colorful beaded necklace and has her hand extended towards the text on the right.

World

# Luxury Travel

Magazine

Vol. 3 ■ Issue 6 ■ January, 2015

## **A Fresh New Start**

*New Year resolutions for travellers*

## **Beating Travel Blues**

**Cities with the Best  
Transport Network**

## **World's Best Bars with a View**

**The Indian Curry**

**February Festivals  
around the Globe**



**W**ow! We are here welcoming the New Year 2015. It feels the year has passed quickly! The confluence of the passing and upcoming year is the perfect time to reflect. We reflect upon the wonderful memories we created in the past year, the new friends we made and

how our bonds with the existing ones strengthened. This is also the time to think ahead and plan for a better tomorrow. Perhaps that's the reason we make resolutions to do certain things.

Everyone has their own resolutions however short lived, for the New Year. Resolutions are like the blue print of what you mean to do or want to be. In this issue of the magazine, we are analysing possible resolutions of a traveller. It was fun listing them. We are sure you would be able to relate to a few of them too!

Apart from our regular City Guide and Happenings sections, we have a feature story for you this time. Flip through it to

learn about the World's Best Bars with a magnificent view. The Luxe Food section of the e-zine talks all about the Indian curry. We are confident that you would definitely feel hungry after reading it.

We appreciate your support and encouragement. Looking forward to your continued love and support. With heartfelt gratitude, we at World Luxury

Tourism wish you a happy New Year!

Season's greetings!  
Thank you!



Manashree Prakash  
Editor-in-Chief

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**World**  
**Luxury Travel**  
**Magazine**

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# A Fresh New Start

*New Year resolutions  
for travellers*





New Year brings with it a host of resolutions, all sparkling with enthusiasm, much like the New Year champagne! Many such resolutions fall flat once the freshness wears off, pretty much like the bubbly itself. Lose weight, exercise more, keep the work station clean - we chide ourselves. If we think about it, most of our resolutions relate to our personal lives or our families. But have you thought

of expanding your resolutions to include a wider range of people and places? All of us travel on work or leisure-related reasons. Why not make some resolutions in our capacity as travellers? These resolutions will not only enrich our travel experiences but also touch lives beyond our own.

We have listed a few such New Year Resolutions which we can make as travellers.



**This year I shall make it to my dream destination**

*"If you have a goal, write it down. If you do not write it down, you do not have a goal, you have a wish." – Steve Maraboli*

Stop dreaming and take action. Make plans to turn your dream destination into a reality. Collect information from friends, social networks and the web. If it is finances that is stopping you, then a part time job, planning your



savings, signing up for special travel packages, or going for a group tour will be steps worth considering. If it's inertia, start researching, locating hotels, planning an itinerary. The excitement generated will get you started and before you know it; your dream destination will no longer be a dream.





## This year I shall try something new

*"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you did not do than by the ones you did do" – Mark Twain*

If your past vacations have revolved big-time around the beach theme, it's time to head for the mountains or even the jungles. The world is your oyster, so why limit yourself to the usual destinations. If you are a surfing enthusiast, and vacations have been all about Jeffreys Bay, California or Bali, why not try your hand at some skiing in St. Moritz? Try out a cruise vacation aboard the Danube, in the Caribbean or even to Iceland.





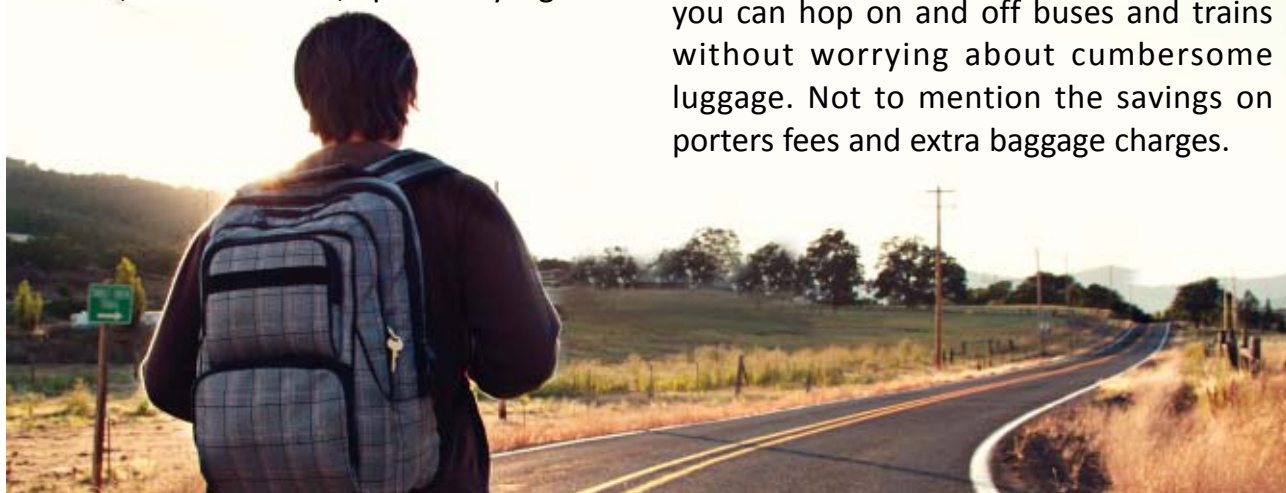


### This year I shall travel light

*“He who would travel happily must travel light” – Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

Light baggage is the best recipe for hassle-free travelling. With a little planning, you can make the most of a small bag. Mix and match, wrinkle-free, quick-drying and

layered clothes are all great ways of cutting down on space. Mini-sized toiletries, light travel bags, rolling clothes, mini zip bags, wearing heavy shoes instead of packing them, and carrying along washing powder are all useful in achieving a light bag. Any regret you may have had about leaving your favourite fur jacket behind will vanish when you can hop on and off buses and trains without worrying about cumbersome luggage. Not to mention the savings on porters fees and extra baggage charges.





**This year I shall be more spontaneous**

*“Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail” – Ralph Waldo Emerson*

By all means be guided by an itinerary. Only don't make it so iron clad that you cannot make delightful diversions or tweak your plans if needed. Remember that a destination on your

map is far different from the real deal. Surprise locations of interest or activities may reveal themselves when you are actually there. So make room in your plans for unplanned things too. Often, the best memories are of the unexpected things – an impromptu picnic in the fields, friends you made on the way or a charming eatery which was not listed on your guide book.







### **This year I shall overcome some prejudices**

*"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness" – Mark Twain*

One of the biggest advantages of travel is that it broadens the mind. If you don't allow prejudice to come in the way, travel in a new country can be an enriching experience. Remember there is no one right way for anything. While Westerners do not give a thought to their shoes while entering the church, in the East it would be considered

sacrilegious to enter a place of worship with footwear. While one part of the world tackles its viands with a fork and knife, chopsticks rule the table in another part and yet somewhere else, it is fingers all the way! Avoid being judgemental and be gracious enough to respect the local customs. Do not let negative racial stereotyping stop you from bonding with people and making your travel truly meaningful.







## This year I shall be an eco-conscious traveller

*"Earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth. Take only memories, leave nothing but footprints" – Chief Seattle*

Spare a thought for the bigger picture while travelling. Saving the planet sounds like a tall order, but it consists of simple things that all of us can do. While choosing tour operators or hotels, go for the 'environment friendly' ones. You can get information from the website of hotels that

have 'gone green'. Do not buy souvenirs that come from destroying wildlife or nature, products made of ivory, turtle shells, and shells from beach etc. Check out 'carbon offsetting', which allows you to make up for the greenhouse gases released by the flights you take. You can 'offset' the pollution you caused by donating for environmental projects. Use public transport. Conserve water, save electricity and do not litter. If each one of us follows these easy steps, we can make a big difference to the environment.

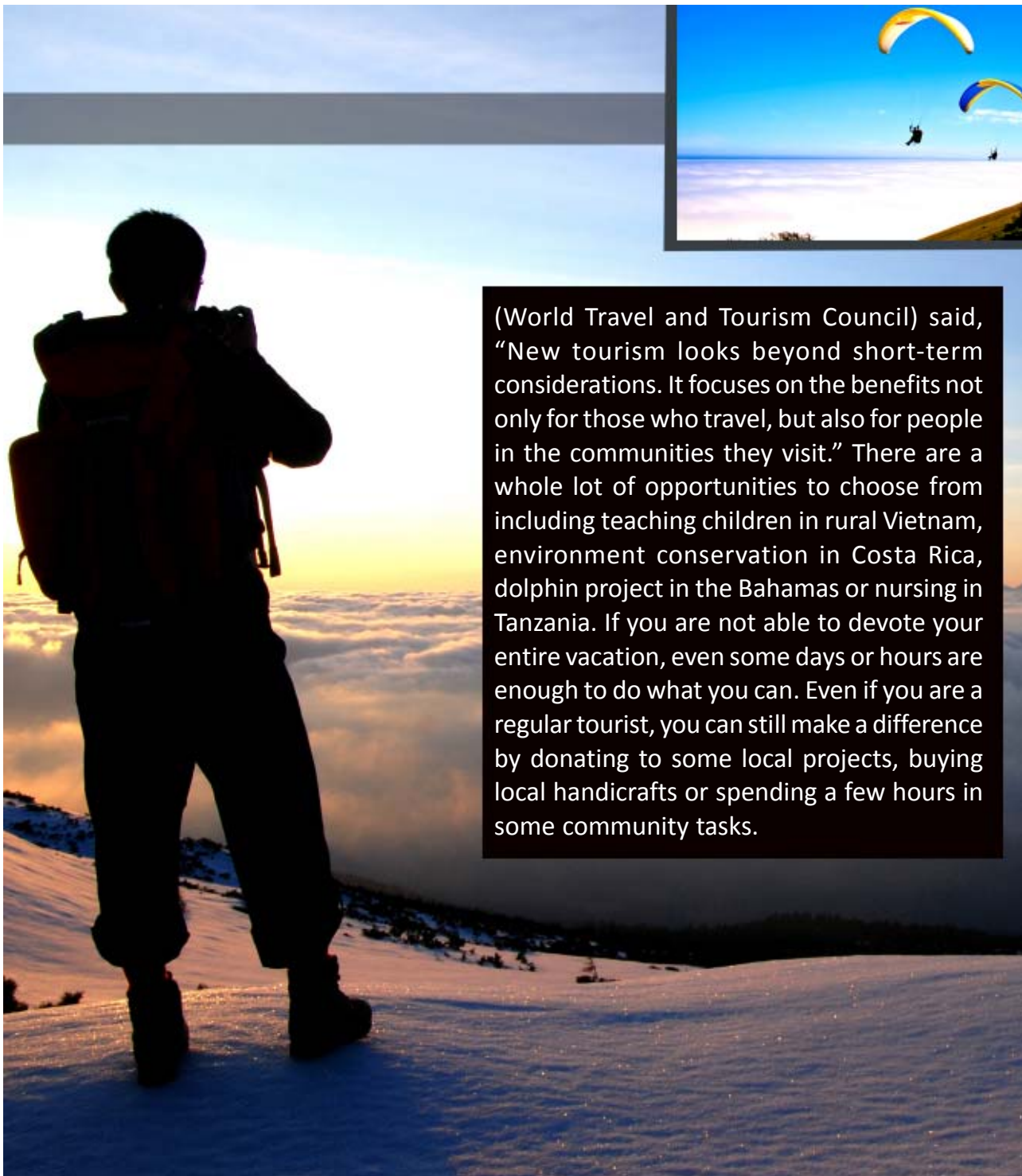


**This year I shall make a difference**

*"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do something that I can do." – Hellen Keller*

Why not try Voluntourism this year? Voluntourists combine their passion for travelling with contributing in some way to the local community they visit. As Jean-Claude Baumgarten, a former President of the WTTC





(World Travel and Tourism Council) said, “New tourism looks beyond short-term considerations. It focuses on the benefits not only for those who travel, but also for people in the communities they visit.” There are a whole lot of opportunities to choose from including teaching children in rural Vietnam, environment conservation in Costa Rica, dolphin project in the Bahamas or nursing in Tanzania. If you are not able to devote your entire vacation, even some days or hours are enough to do what you can. Even if you are a regular tourist, you can still make a difference by donating to some local projects, buying local handicrafts or spending a few hours in some community tasks.





"Travel is the only thing you buy, that makes you richer."

Travel is not about getting from one place to another and back again. It is the things in between – the people, the experiences, the learning, the sharing, the fun and the adventure that adds depth to our journeys. If we truly want to be enriched by our travels, it would be worthwhile to pause and reflect on the things we need to change in ourselves to make our travel experiences more enjoyable and meaningful. What better time than the New Year to ponder on this? Do put together your own list of travel resolutions. Here's wishing you fabulous vacations in the coming New Year!

TRAVEL IS  
THE ONLY  
THING  
YOU BUY  
THAT MAKES  
YOU RICHER



# Beating Travel Blues

## Cities with the Best Transport Network

**City  
Guide**



There is nothing as daunting as living in a city where getting around is a nightmare whether you are a tourist or a resident. Urban infrastructure plays a major role in determining the popularity of a place. Transportation facilities and connectivity serve as the backbone of the tourism industry. After all, comfort and convenience are the two important deciding factors when choosing a holiday destination. Here is a compilation of the world's top cities with an amazing transportation network to help you save on your travel time:

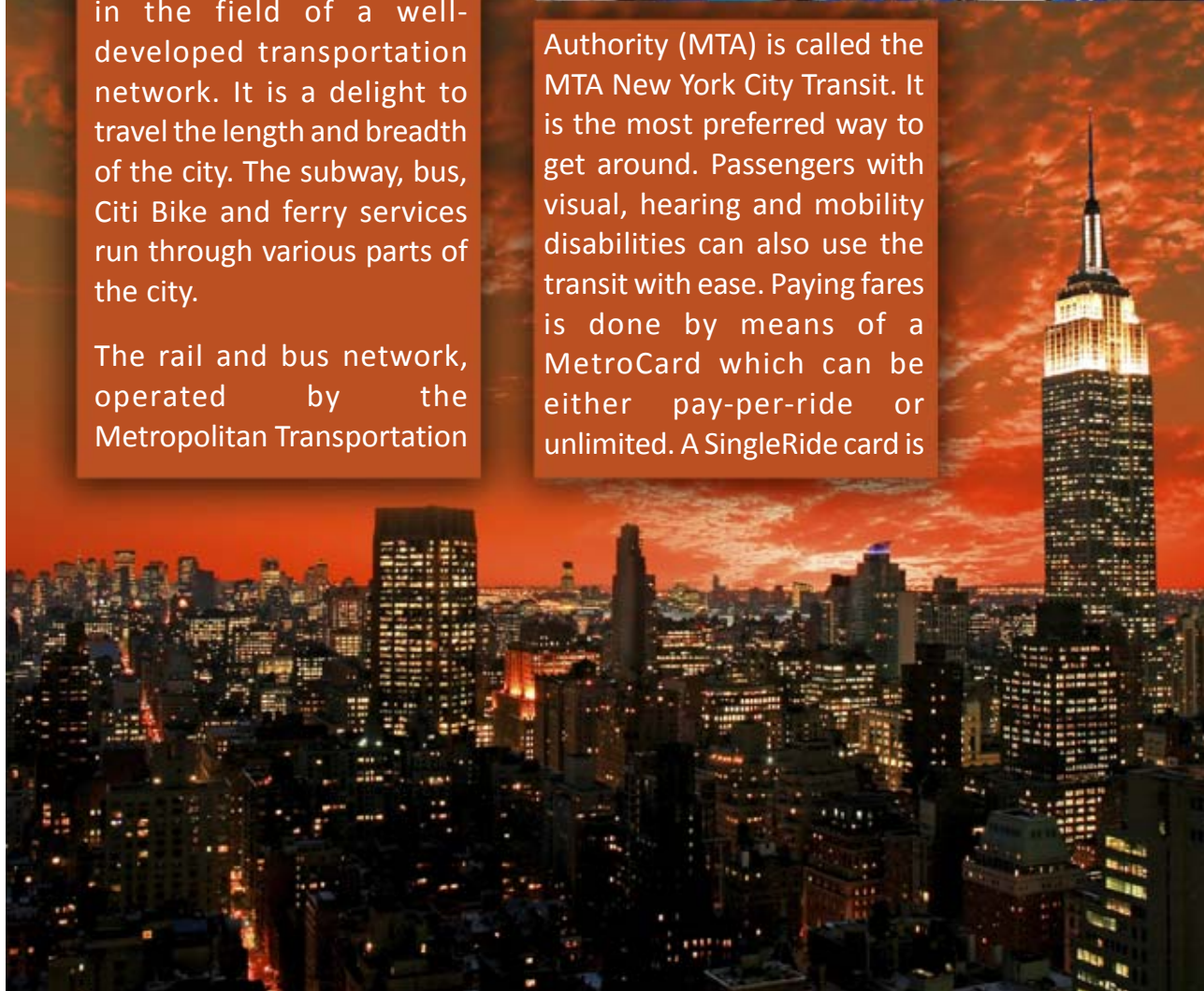


## New York City

The Big Apple leads the way in the field of a well-developed transportation network. It is a delight to travel the length and breadth of the city. The subway, bus, Citi Bike and ferry services run through various parts of the city.

The rail and bus network, operated by the Metropolitan Transportation

Authority (MTA) is called the MTA New York City Transit. It is the most preferred way to get around. Passengers with visual, hearing and mobility disabilities can also use the transit with ease. Paying fares is done by means of a MetroCard which can be either pay-per-ride or unlimited. A SingleRide card is



cheaper than an Express Bus ride. Discounts are given to senior citizens and ones with disabilities. The subway trains that run 24 hours a day are convenient and quick. Subway stations on the same line are usually at a gap of eight to ten blocks. One can use a single ticket to transfer unlimited times throughout the city without exiting the station. The public buses offer a beautiful ride and are a great way to explore the New York City. They are mostly used to travel to places which are not located near any subway stop. The Roosevelt Island provides an aerial view of Midtown East, Second Avenue in Manhattan to Roosevelt Island nestled between Manhattan and Queens. Taxis and ferries are the other popular modes of transport. The ferry system is extensive and operates across the rivers to Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and New Jersey.







## Tokyo

Tokyo is one of the most crowded cities in the world. However, its impressive public transportation system makes navigating and commuting in and around the city fairly easy. The entire network of train service is around 27,270 kilometres long from monorails to longer-haul suburban trains.

All the stations scattered throughout the city are really well maintained and spotlessly clean. That explains the importance of cleanliness in Japan. The subway is practically devoid of garbage and has heated seats. A computerised







messaging system in Japanese and English informs commuters about the approaching destinations. The trains run on time and are extensively used by the citizens on a daily basis. The platforms have markers that indicate where to stand to be right in front of a subway door. The entire system is very organised and efficient from buying and checking

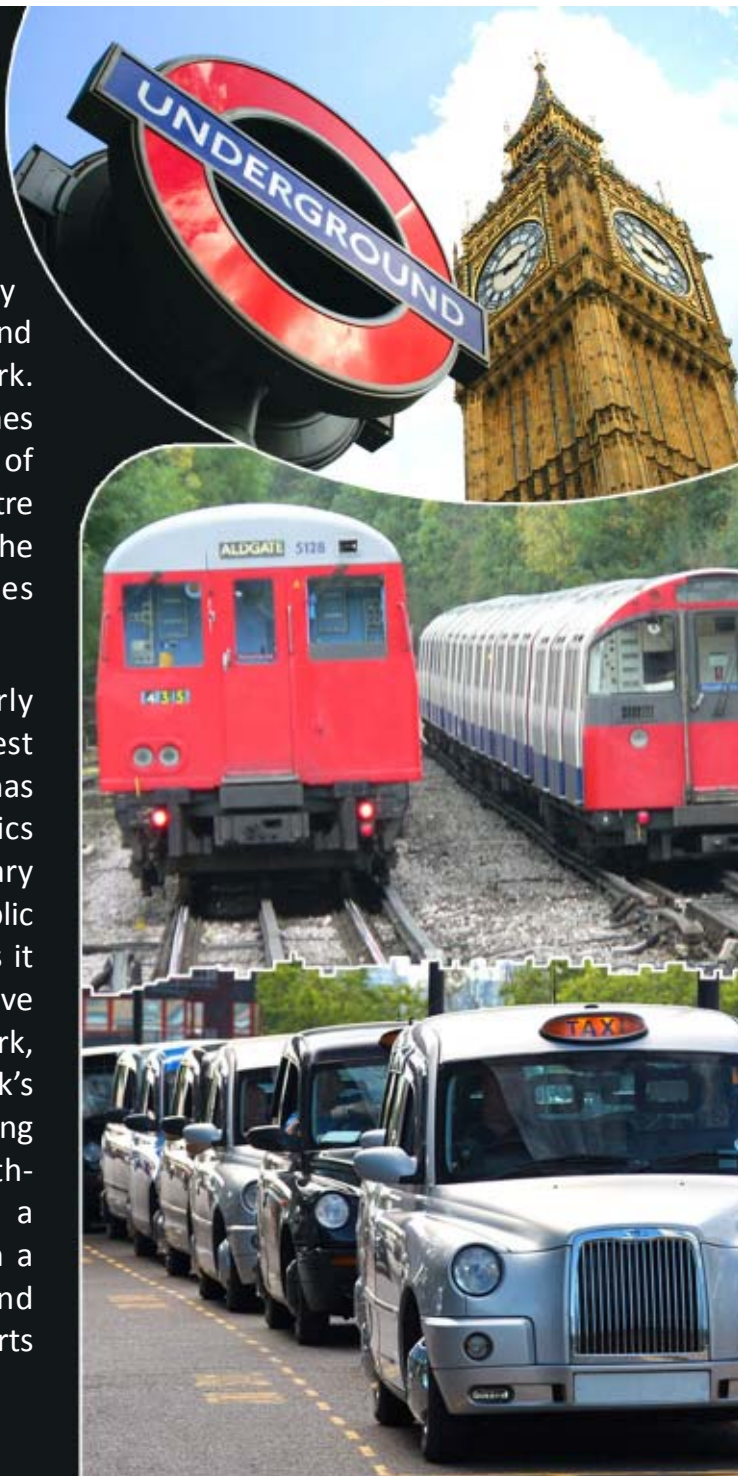
tickets, using smart cards to entering or exiting the stations. However due to the number of people serviced, the rush hours can be particularly daunting. Tokyo also has light rail lines and bus lines apart from its subway network. As with the rest of the city, the public transport network is exceptionally high tech and user friendly.



## London

A vast network of coaches and trains run throughout Greater London that comprises of 32 boroughs and the City of London. Underground, over ground and light rail constitute the network. London is divided into concentric zones from one through six in the domain of transportation, one being the city centre and six being the farthest from it. The value of real estate also changes depending on the zones.

The London Underground popularly referred to as the Tube is the oldest underground system in the world. It has been operating since 1863. Statistics from the House of Commons' library claim that it is the most expensive public transportation in the world. Besides it has one of the best and comprehensive maps designed for a transit network, which is an evolution of Harry Beck's revolutionary 1931 design. Commuting from the urban areas to the breathtaking countryside of London is a cakewalk and can be completed in a single fare. A number of buses and ferries also run regularly in various parts of the city.







## Munich

Munich boasts of one of the most efficient public transport systems that is also immensely user friendly. The city ranks as Germany's high-tech capital owing to its sound infrastructure and all round planning. Its connectivity appeals to travellers, citizens and corporate houses. Furthermore the steep real estate prices are a partial result of the city's infrastructure.

The transportation network comprises of the U-Bahn or underground trains, S-Bahn or commuter and street rail as well as bus and tram lines. All are exceptionally well integrated and run by the MVV, Munich's transit authority. The MVV Companion app for iPhone and Android displays maps, timetables and a route planner for travellers. It also provides information regarding delays and congestion. Daily, weekly and monthly multi-transport tickets are easily available. These tickets need one time validation only saving commuters the trouble of swiping at every stop.





## Copenhagen, Denmark

The Danish capital is home to a well acclaimed public transportation network that includes a highly efficient, driverless metro. Buses and commuter trains are also widely available. A major metro extension is scheduled in 2018.

The metro network is both safe and fast. Trains run every four to six minutes during the day and every fifteen to twenty minutes at night. There are two lines of the metro channel, both are fully automated and operate 24 hours a day. The route of M1 is from Vanløse Station to the airport on



East Amager and the M2 will take you to Ørestad. Metro stewards and CCTV on each train and at each station ensure a comfortable and safe journey for passengers. The bus and train network feature an integrated ticket system on the basis of seven geographical zones.

One ticket allows commuters to travel for one hour via three types of transport. Vending machines for tickets are available everywhere. Buses run all night on the



major routes of the city. Taxis and bicycles are the other means of transport. The cycling paths are plenty and are scenic, the reason why many people choose to explore the city while cycling.

The overall infrastructure of a city depends on its public transportation network, availability, connectivity, cleanliness, total cost and time of travelling and of course convenience. The above mentioned places score high on all these factors and are therefore the delights for travellers.



# World's Best Bars with a View





The view from the top is always believed to be the best! Perhaps that explains the entire world's fascination with bars that offer scenic spectacles coupled with an elaborate menu of drinks and munchies. After all what better way to unwind if not with your favourite drink in hand, staring into the distance, as the daily worries slowly begin to melt away with each sip?

We have put together a selection of the world's best bars with a view. The selection is also based on their location, menu, infrastructure, and of course the sights they offer. Read on to pick your favourite:



## Sky Bar, Thailand

Perched on the 63<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Lebua Hotel in Bangkok, the Sky Bar at Sirocco is touted to be the world's highest open-air bar that takes pride in its breath-taking view. It was made famous by the cult movie Hangover II, which was shot in the neon, circular, colour-changing bar. By far the popular hangout spot for sundowners during humid evenings, it comes across as a refreshing alternative in the social circuit. It is said that the bar provides a vertigo-inducing panorama of the capital and the nearby Chao Phraya River. The drinks are legendary and the cocktails are



too good to be true! The adjacent Mediterranean restaurant Sirocco claims to be the world's highest alfresco eatery and is undoubtedly one of the best bets of Bangkok. The bar has won various prestigious awards from different quarters. Sipping on a fancy cocktail, sampling a signature dish and taking in the spectacular sight is almost a near perfect way to end a

great day.

**USP:** Suspended on a precipice over the city at 820 feet in the air, it is the ultimate bar in the country.

**Must Try:** Ace mixologist Ron Ramirez's signature cocktails and 'Hangovertinis' (created for the cast of The Hangover Part II and now popular with the rest).





### Top Mountain Star, Austria

Top Mountain Star, the eye catching bar at Hochgurgl ski resort lies at the pinnacle of the Wurmkogel Mountain. It floats atop a crested ridge at 3,082 metres altitude, the highest skiing point on the border of Italy and Austria. The state-of-the-art bar and restaurant has a spectacular view spanning over 23 alpine peaks and stretching to the Ötztal Alps and the Dolomites. It looks like a precious treasure on a brightly illuminated summit that glistens in the sunbeams. The extraordinary setting and the visual



impact coupled with architectural excellence add to its appeal. There is a 120 square metre circular panorama platform with a full glass façade designed by Munich architect Professor Peter Schmuck. The sparkling drinks, relaxing music and picturesque location will surely blow you out of your mind. The culinary treats and the affordable yet delightful menu deserve special mention.

**USP:** Unusual design and strategic location at Wurmkogel Mountain's summit.

**Must try:** Grilled Sausage, roasted potatoes with bacon, beer and fine wine.



### Rock Bar, Bali

Here is what distinguishes Bali's Rock Bar from the rest on the list: though it does not boast of the highest location so to say, the tranquil natural setting more than makes up for it. A part of Ayana Resort and Spa, it sits pretty on the rocks of Jimbaran Bay, 14 metres above the Indian Ocean. A cable car ride will take you to the bar located along the 1.3 kilometre coastline of AYANA Resort and Spa.

Often endorsed as Bali's Best Bar, it is a famous night out spot. Regular DJ performances and live music till late hours keep the crowd grooving at the end of the day. However for those who prefer





having a relaxing time, Rock Bar offers a serene view of the setting sun that casts a magical glow on the Indian Ocean and its surroundings. The crashing waves, the volcanic cliffs that rise behind the open-air joint and the scenery of the ocean are the major highlights.

**USP:** Known as the best sunset bar, it enjoys a unique ocean setting.

**Must try:** Lychee Martini, Spa on the Rock, Green Graniti, Lemon Tart Martini, Ayana Passion, Rock Lobster Spring Rolls, Summer Rolls, Cigar and Port.



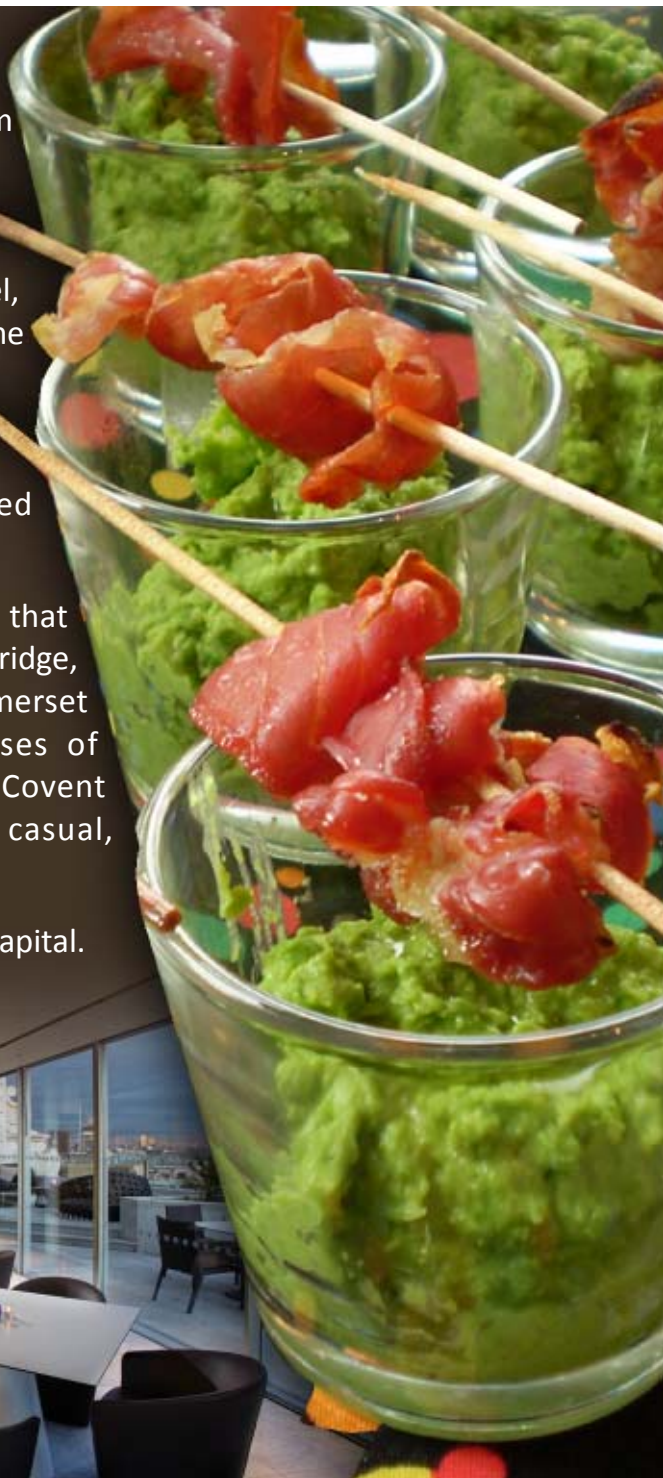
## Radio Rooftop Bar, London

The Radio Rooftop Bar derives its name from the location, a magnificent art deco edifice that used to be known as the Marconi House. Situated on the tenth floor of the amazing ME London hotel, it pays tribute to the very first BBC programme that was broadcast from here in 1922. The rooftop bar is exclusive, classy and very upbeat. Fancy cocktails, plush lounges and gourmet snacks provide a much needed variation from London's usual pubs.

Needless to say it boasts of a great view that include Tower Bridge, the Shard, London Bridge, Saint Paul's Cathedral, Tate Modern, Somerset House, Southbank, London Eye, Houses of Parliament, and the theatre district of Covent Garden. The dress code is trendy and casual, sportswear is not allowed.

**USP:** Stunning, uninterrupted view of the capital.

**Must Try:** Tapas and cocktails.





### **5.Kat Restaurant Bar, Istanbul**

The rooftop haunts are a great way to admire the city from above and indulge in some gourmet delights. 5.Kat Restaurant Bar is one such place and probably the best in the city.

Absolutely unassuming, unimposing yet so beautiful – that's 5.Kat Restaurant Bar for you. A red elevator will take you to the fifth floor and lead you to a charming garden patio with a central view of the





cityscape and the Bosphorus. Surrounded by numerous flower plants, the open air bar is tranquil beyond belief.

Run by glamorous red-haired film actress Yasemin Alkaya, 5.Kat Restaurant Bar is known for its soothing ambience, friendly service and sweeping sunset views. Hang around till the late hours for a night of music and dancing.

**USP:** Ideal for soaking up incredible views of the quaint town.





**Must Try:** Pastrami Hummus, Fried Halloumi Cheese, Oven Baked Sea Bass, Wine, Beer, and Gin.

Imagine the thrill of sampling a delectable cuisine, enjoying some foot tapping music, relaxing with a drink and soaking up a picturesque sight ahead – it seems as if the good things in the world have been served in a platter. If all these seem too good to be true, wait till you visit any of the world class bars and soon you will be enjoying a lot more than just your drink.



# The Indian Curry





When a soccer fan in Brazil pays over \$7,110 to have a dish transported from England, paying around \$4700 for flight for something that costs around \$2000, you can be sure that the dish is a phenomenal one. The dish in question was a curry. The curry, with its gravy-rich concoction of vegetables or meat and burst of spicy flavours, has exploded on palates across the world. Such is its allure that it features on menus across the world. It creates gluttonous cravings and it is so popular in the UK that the country celebrates a National Curry Week.



## 'Curry-eation'

So how did it all begin? No one exactly knows. The word is believed to be derived from the Tamil word 'kari' meaning 'spiced sauce'. The British encountered the Indian dishes made of a mixture of spices and dubbed them under the general heading of 'curry'. What the British termed as curry could contain meat, poultry, shellfish or vegetables in a mixture of gravy. However, the curry gained its fiery avatar only after the introduction of chillies in India by the Portuguese. (Yes, there was a time when Indians did not know about the chilli, they used pippali the long pepper instead.)



The curry became popular with the British stationed in India. The English carried the love for curry back to their land, adapting the Indian curry to suit their palate. Here comes the twist to the tale! Recent findings by scientists have indicated that curry was in existence 4500 years back. Research has shown that the

people of the Indus Valley Civilization used the basic spices of curry – ginger, garlic and turmeric in their cooking. So the origins of the curry appear to go a long way back.







### What is it

It can roughly be described as a gravy based dish cooked with meat and/or vegetables. The most commonly used ingredients that go into making the Indian curry include turmeric, ginger, garlic, onion, coriander, cumin, cinnamon, cloves and of course chilli peppers. Depending on the ingredients used, it varies in shade from a gorgeous golden colour to darker shades of red or brown. Though curries are mostly synonymous with gravy dishes, drier versions are also headed under the ubiquitous term of curry.

## What goes into it

There are hundreds of recipes. The ingredients depend on the local tastes and availability of ingredients. India is divided into several states and each region has its culinary idiosyncrasies. While the eastern part of India favours mustard oil while making curries, the south Indian palate would probably choose sesame oil instead. The ingredients vary too with some regions going for a predominance of cinnamon and cloves; others opting for ginger,





garlic, onion and poppy seeds and yet others choosing to include coconut, black pepper or fenugreek. In general, the spices and other ingredients used include – garlic, ginger, onion, nutmeg, cloves, fenugreek, aniseed, bay leaf, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, cardamom, asafoetida, mustard, poppy seeds, coconut, saffron, mace and star anise. Garam Masala is a popular, ready-made blend of spices and popularly used in making curries. Turmeric deserves a special mention for being used almost universally in Indian cooking to impart the lovely golden hue to the curries. Popular souring agents used for making curries include tamarind, tomatoes, lemon, kokum, dry mango powder and curd.

Curries are seasoned with herbs as toppings, the most popular ones being coriander and curry leaves.





## The types

The most amazing range of curries can be found in India, varying in their preparation styles, ingredients used and presentation. Here are a few basic curry types:

- **Bhuna:** Focus is on well-fried spices with vegetables and meat cooked in their own juices resulting in thick and drier gravy.
- **Dhansak:** Hot, sweet and sour sauce with lentils, vegetables, meat. It often contains pineapple.
- **Dopiaza:** Literal meaning of it is 'two onions'. Cooked and fried onions form the primary ingredient of the curry.
- **Jalfrezi:** A rather hot, low sauce, stir-fried curry with plenty of green peppers, onions and green chillies.



- **Korma:** Mild, creamy, yellow curry with coconut, yoghurt and spices giving it a delicate flavour.
- **Madras:** Hot, spicy and rich in tomatoes, this gravy-rich curry originated in South India.
- **Moghlai:** Culinary legacy of the Mughals who ruled India for hundreds of years, this curry is rich, creamy with liberal use of dried fruits, nuts and spices.
- **Passanda:** Mild, creamy curry using coconut milk, almond and cream to flavour thin lamb slices.
- **Roghan Josh:** Curried lamb dish with tomatoes and red pepper giving it medium spiciness and rich colour.



- **Saag:** Curry made of leafy greens like spinach, mustard, and fenugreek leaves etc.
- **Vindaloo:** Very hot curry using black pepper, garlic, red chilli, spices and lemon.



### Indian regional specialities

The names may not ring a bell, but tuck it away in your memory so you can ask for these dishes next time you visit an Indian restaurant or visit India.

**North India:** Roghan Josh, Sarson da saag, rajma masala, butter chicken.

**East India:** Bengali fish curry, chor chori, Bihari kebabs, chokha, maasor tenga, khar.

**West India:** Daal Batti, gatte, shaak, churma, kadhi, aamti, rassa, goan fish curry.







**South India:** Avial, mirchi salan, chettinad using only vegetables, only meat, both and chicken, sambar, mor kuzhambu, cabbage seasoned with endless variations of spices. poriyal.

### How is it made

The golden question! By now, you are aware that what was simply dubbed as 'curries' actually encompasses a bewildering range of preparations

The most basic and commonly used theme uses a fried paste of ginger-onion-garlic (with tomatoes thrown in often) as the base sauce. Spices of choice are added and later vegetables and/or meat are tossed in and everything is fried together. Water is added last, resulting in fluid gravy



which is topped with herbs for seasoning. This basic procedure is popularly followed, but keep in mind that every curry needs different treatment. So check for individual recipes if you are planning to indulge in curry making.

**Some “wow, I didnt know that” curry trivia:**

- ‘Coronation Chicken’, a popular British curry, was created for the Queen’s Coronation lunch in 1953
- The spices used in curries have all got medicinal, health-beneficial properties





- Chicken Tikka Masala is the most popular curry in Britain
- The world's biggest curry was a 13-tonne biryani (rice dish), made in Delhi by 60 chefs
- UK has over 9000 curry houses and restaurants
- The 'Chicken Naga' is the world's hottest ever curry
- The world's hottest pepper is grown in the Indian states of Assam, Nagaland and Manipur, and it is known as Bhut Jolokia (Naga Jolokia)







### 'Curry-sma'

Next time you order that takeaway, remember the curry has been made for generations with several nations having a finger in its evolution pie. What you have just read is a slice of the curry history. Remember different countries have their own curries with their own signature tastes. So there are a whole range of curries out there waiting to be tasted. Get ready to fall under the curry-spell!



## Happenings

# February Festivals around the Globe





## Quebec Winter Carnival

**Place:** Quebec City, Canada

**Dates:** January 31 – February 16, 2015

The delights of winter are joyously celebrated in Quebec City at the Quebec Winter Carnival – the largest winter carnival in the world. Thousands of tourists flock here to enjoy the fantastic line-up of activities, suitable for all ages. The festival is a package with night parades, snow slides, sleigh rides, skating, snow baths, snow sculptures and more. The Opening Night, the kaleidoscopic Ice Palace, the Plains of Abraham, Canoe Race and the breath-taking ice sculptures at the International Snow Sculpture Event are some of the major attractions of the carnival. The events take place in various locations, all within walking

distances. Needless to say, you must be armed with woollens and good walking shoes.

**Trivia:** *Bonhomme Carnaval, the red capped snowman, is the mascot of the festival!*





## Rio carnival

**Place:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**Dates:** February 13 – 18, 2015

Dubbed as “The Greatest Show on Earth”, the Rio Carnival is an electrifying mix of brilliant costumes, wild revelry, pulsating samba and an orgy of music, dance and merry-making. Everything is larger than life, and the carnival is the symbolic crescendo of sensual, wild partying before the collapse into the austere Lent season. You could join a banda (street party) following the





drummers and the leader of the party, dancing through the streets in merry abandon. If needed, just wear the colours of your group. The highlight is the Samba parade where over 200 samba schools vie with one another to steal the thunder. The lively parades feature flamboyant, sparkling costumes, gorgeous floats, foot-tapping music, dance and millions of charged spectators. The Sambadrome, built specially for the parades, is the hub of the carnival and can hold up to 90,000 people. Do not forget that great food and drinks are the integral parts of all the fun.



**Trivia:** *The Parade Balls are a famous attraction of the carnival with the most famous ones being the Copacabana Magic Ball and the Rio Scala balls!*



## Chinese New Year

**Place:** China

**Dates:** February 19, 2015

The Chinese New Year or the Spring Festival is ushered by the second new moon after the winter solstice. New Year festivities are typically family affairs with members getting together, feasting and welcoming the New Year. Preparations begin well in advance with people cleaning their houses, putting up red posters and lanterns as decorations. This is the time to visit family members and elders and to perform traditional rituals including the ones to honour the forefathers.







Elders gift youngsters with good luck money in little red envelopes. The colour red is a common motif, as legend has it that the colour scares away Nian, a monster said to attack people on New Year's Eve in ancient times. Nian was also scared of sounds and fire, so beating of drums, gongs and lighting blazes and fireworks are all integral features of the festival. Traditional feasts include rice dumplings, sweet soup, fish, fried cakes and noodles. The highlight of the fortnight long festival culminates in the Lantern Festival where a grand parade with people carrying beautiful lanterns ends in a gorgeous display of fireworks.



**Trivia:** 2015 is the Year of the Green Wooden Sheep according to Chinese astrology!



## Losar

**Place:** Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan

**Dates:** February 19 – 21, 2015

Losar, literally translating to 'New Year' is an important Buddhist festival and a holiday in Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan. People clean their houses and decorate their houses. New clothes are ordered, new prayer flags are put up, debts are paid and quarrels are resolved. Offerings of candles, cakes, khapsay, and chang are laid at the family altars. There are different rituals for the different days of the festival. They include making of guthuk, dresi, making the New Year barley wine and getting the year's first bucket of





water from the river. In Kathmandu, people gather at the Boudhanath Stupa, which is the centre of rituals and prayers. Incense is burnt, processions are taken out and the sound of the long horns fills the air. Khapse pastries and tsampa porridge are offered by the devotees. The festival is a time for dancing, music, feasting, fireworks and good cheer.

***Trivia:** Guthuk, the special noodle soup, contains dumplings with nine different fortune symbols. The symbol received by a person is believed to indicate his fortune for the coming year!*







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