



Tang

The Tamarind Tours Newsletter - May 2015

Upcoming Festivals

Sindhu Darshan Festival (01-03 June) Leh, Ladakh

The Sindhu Darshan festival is a celebration of River Sindhu or Indus. It's one of the world's longest rivers, and gave India its name. The festival aims to project the Sindhu as a symbol of multi-dimensional cultural identity, communal harmony, and peaceful co-existence in India. It promises a kaleidoscope of Indian culture and an exciting array of performing arts.

Shimla Summer Festival (01-09 June) Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

Beat the rain by heading north to the mountains in Shimla, to experience the five day summer festival. This renowned event has been held regularly in Shimla since the 1960s. It features musical performances, some from famous singers, food and fashion. Plenty of local handicrafts are on sale too.

Dharamsala Film Festival (11-13 June) Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh

The Dharamsala Film Festival is dedicated to celebrating consciousness and creativity in film. In keeping with this theme, the Festival presents the local community and travelers with a diverse range of high-quality independent films from around the world, with the aim of fostering awareness and change. A Thangka painting workshop will also be held during the festival.

Sao Joao Feast of St John the Baptist (24 June) Goa

The most popular festival in Goa. Sao Joao (the fertility feast of Saint John the Baptist), involves the interesting feat of men jumping into overflowing village wells to retrieve bottles of local feni alcohol. There are also boat races, and singing and dancing.

Hemis Festival (26-27 June) Hemis Monastery, Leh Ladakh

The two day Hemis Festival commemorates the birth of Guru Padmasambhava, who founded Tantric Buddhism in Tibet. There's traditional music, colorful masked dances, and a fair full of striking handicrafts. See Photos of the Hemis Festival and plan your trip with this Leh Ladakh Travel Guide.

Ladakh International Film Festival (TBA) Leh, Ladakh

Held for the first time in 2012, this annual festival is the highest film festival in the world. It aims not only to draw attention to the natural beauty of Ladakh but also to provide a platform for focus on environmental and ecological issues. A major theme of the festival is wildlife conservation. A Snow Leopard Trophy, in conjunction with the Snow Leopard Conservancy India, is awarded to the most educational or inspiring film about an endangered species.

Promotion of the Month - Ananda in the Himalayas

Ananda in the Himalayas

Set in a 100-acre Himalayan mountain estate set amidst sal forests, overlooking the river Ganges, close to the towns of Rishikesh and Haridwar, Ananda was established as India's first destination spa. Ananda focusses on Yoga and Ayurvedic practices, combined with international spa therapies.

When living is but part of the echo of nature then style and elegance blend discreetly to enhance each nuance of serenity. The Guest Rooms, Suites and Villas at Ananda in the Himalayas make a statement with colours that echo nature, and views that leave one gazing into the enchantment of god's own country.

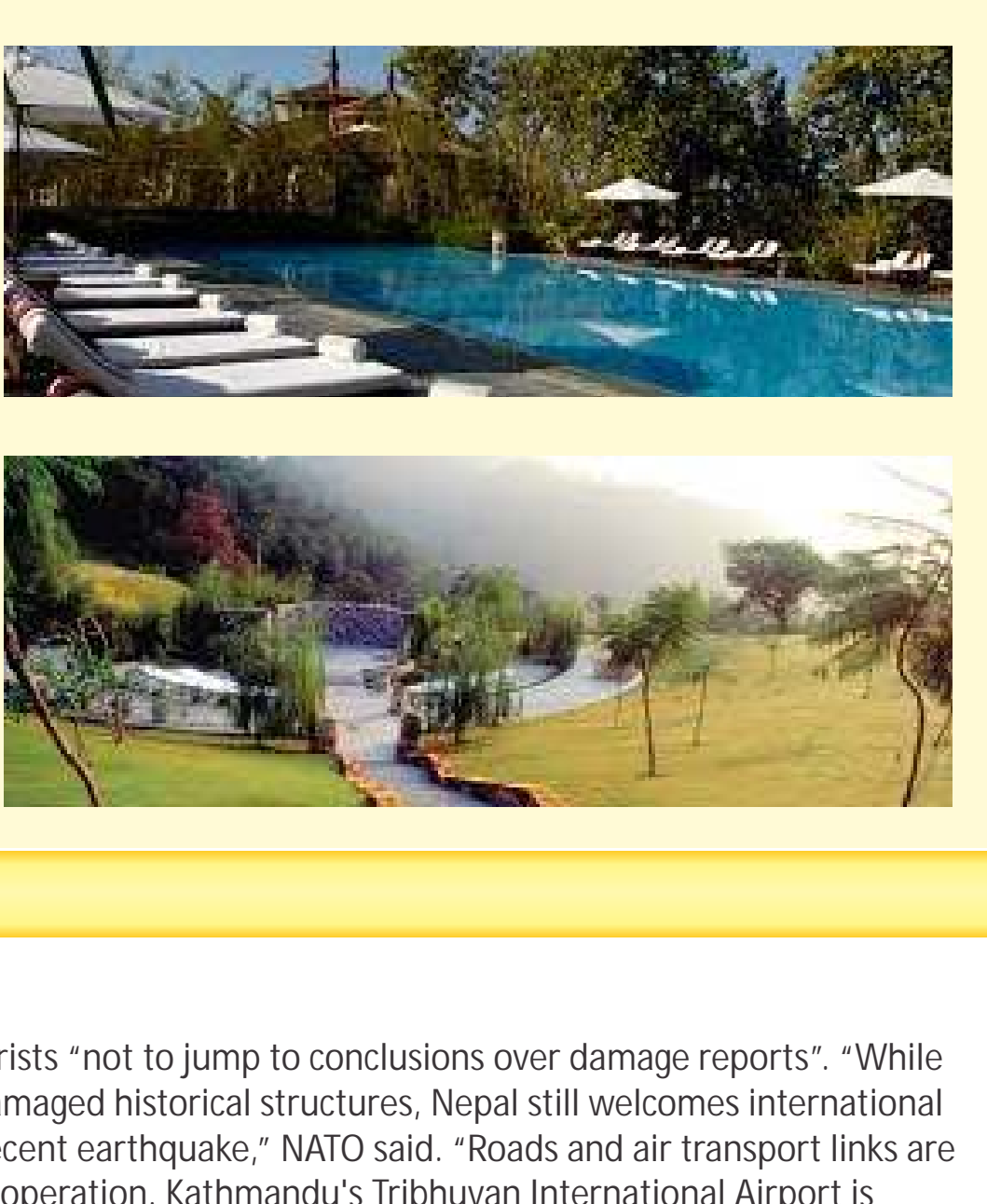
Rooms at Ananda are spacious with views of the Palace and the Rishikesh valley. The 70 rooms in all comprise Palace View Rooms, Garden View, Valley View Rooms and Premium Valley View (top floors) rooms. They feature walk-in closets and perfectly appointed bathrooms with windows overlooking panoramic views. Each room opens onto large balconies with picture-perfect views, ideal for a private meal.

The 24,000 square foot spa offers an extensive menu of over 80 body and beauty treatments, integrating the traditional Indian systems of Ayurveda with the more contemporary Western spa approach. The spa experience strives to achieve the ultimate harmony between the physical and the mental realms of the individual.

Everybody requires a customized diet. One type is not good for all, and standard diets such as high-carb, high protein or low-cal are simply not healthy choices for everyone. Ananda's food concept is based on this belief and through incorporating key principles from Ayurveda.

Enjoy Nature walks, treks, white water rafting, the Ganga Aarti, a nature safari, Vedanta classes, Yoga, billiards, cooking classes, golf and cultural programmes during your stay at Ananda!

Contact us for [Ananda in the Himalayas Packages](#)



News

- Nepal Tour Operators urges travelers to come back**
The Nepal Association of Tour Operators (NATO) issued a statement this week asking tourists "not to jump to conclusions over damage reports": "While there's no denying the... earthquake has caused significant damage across the country and damaged historical structures, Nepal still welcomes international visitors. The majority of popular tourist areas have escaped the brunt of the damage of the recent earthquake," NATO said. "Roads and air transport links are intact across the country barring some landslides, and most hotels and restaurants are back in operation. Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport is operating around the clock," it added. "The destroyed monuments and cultural sites around the Kathmandu Valley and elsewhere need to be rebuilt, and this will provide employment and create a resurgence in traditional building methods," said NATO's president, Ashok Pokharel
- Indian-Rural Tourism was recently promoted in events at London and Manchester**
The campaign is based on a concept that was initially created in India 10 years ago, to allow cultural exchanges between the local community and visiting travellers, offering holidaymakers the opportunity to experience "real" in Indian life. Visitors are encouraged to stay with local families in rural villages and learn about local traditions and crafts. The concept has been now brought to the UK market by Culture Aangan, a social enterprise that promotes sustainable rural tourism and grass-roots projects. The project aims to generate income for rural communities by giving villagers the opportunity to renovate their houses with sustainable features, such as water wells, and learn hospitality skills.
- Hike in Service-Tax will discourage tourism and impact hotel-industry**
The proposed hike in service tax to 14% will adversely affect the hotel industry, a parliamentary panel has noted asking the Union tourism ministry to take up the issue with finance ministry for seeking relief for the tourism sector. The standing committee on tourism headed by TMC MP Kunwar Deep Singh in its report, submitted in Parliament on Tuesday, said India already has a higher hotel tariff due to multiple tax regime both at the state and the Centre. There are various indirect taxes applicable to tourism industry such as service tax on room rents, restaurant services, banquet services, convention services, rent-a-cab services, dry cleaning services, health club/beauty parlour services, internet services and money changing services.
- New Tourism Policy in India to woo Inbound Travelers**
In order to promote Indian tourism to a great extent, Narendra Modi has come out with a National Tourism policy 2015 draft. According to it, Prime Minister's Office (PMO) can have direct control over deciding the crucial sector that is expected to contribute 6.7 per cent to the country's GDP. Also, one of the key co-ordination committee has stated that the policy would be under the PMO. Some of the Modi's ideas like Make in India and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Smart Cities, International Yoga Day and Skill Development are a part of this draft policy. The main objective behind this recently declared policy is to increase India's share in world's tourist arrivals from present position of 0.68 per cent to 1 per cent by 2020 and further, to increase it by two per cent by the year 2025.
- Tourism Minister Mr. Mahesh Sharma launches 'Visit Kerala' Campaign**
Union Minister of State for Culture, Tourism (Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation, Dr Mahesh Sharma, today launched 'Visit Kerala' 2015-16, a high voltage all-year tourism campaign that promises to present travellers to God's Own Country a lifetime experience of the state's natural beauty, cultural splendour, culinary traditions and famed hospitality. "Kerala needs to be promoted across the world," said Dr Sharma, who promised central assistance to the state to raise the profile of the state as a top tourist destination in the world. Describing "cleanliness, security and hospitality" as the three major ingredients of a successful tourism model, Dr Sharma said the country needs to propagate its culture and heritage around the world through tourism.



Hotels

- Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa awarded 'Best Spa Destination'**
Shillim Spa at Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa was awarded the 'Best Destination Spa' at the recently concluded Asia Spa India Awards 2014 event on March 30, 2015 in New Delhi. This is the second year in succession that the retreat has received recognition at these Awards. Last year, it was voted the Best New Spa (Resort). Acknowledged as one of the most prestigious recognition in the field of wellness, Geo Spaasia Spa India Awards showcase various categories that emphasise and recognise the best spas and spa products in the country. This award reinstates Shillim Spa's position as a leading destination spa in India.
- Sarovar Portico now in Vrindavan**
Stepping to raise the bar of hospitality in the holy town of Lord Krishna, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, the fastest growing hotel management company in India, re-brands Hotel Nidhivan as Nidhivan Sarovar Portico, Vrindavan. Nidhivan is strategically located in the vicinity of the temples and yet away from the hustle and bustle of the city. It is about 4 km from Banke Bihari Temple and only 2.5 km from ISKCON Temple. Nidhivan has easy access from NH 2 and Taj Expressway. The location of Nidhivan Sarovar Portico makes it a perfect accommodation choice for the devotees of Lord Krishna.
- Crown Plaza now reaches Chennai**
InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) signed the 286-room Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park with Adyar Gate Hotels Limited today. The hotel, which IHG is now managing, will be rebranded as Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park, marking the entry of the brand into Chennai and the second IHG hotel in the city after Holiday Inn Express Chennai Mahindra World City. The hotel's dining options include Dakshin, for regional fare from India's southern peninsula; Cappuccino, the 24-hour all day dining restaurant; the Residency which has global cuisine and On the Rocks, for grilled cuisine; the Westminster bar by the pool and Gatsby 2000, the hotel's night club. The property has a 24-hour business centre and a meeting space including a ballroom which can seat 500 people.
- JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar appoints Chef Anas Fa'our as Arabic Chef**
Chef Anas Fa'our has been newly appointed as the Arabic Chef at JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar. He holds specialised skills in Arabic cuisine and his range of excellence has been recognised with his endless list of promotions. Chef Fa'our began his culinary journey in 1996. With over 19 years of experience in the industry, he brings to the table, his expertise in handling operations, training, planning, developing and executing new concepts and various trends for many renowned hotels. Starting his career working with the kitchen of Ithad club in Aleppo, he has worked with many Hotels like Sheraton Aleppo and Cristal Erbil Hotel that he considers as stepping stones in his life leading him to JW Marriott, Sahar.
- Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts unveils Four Seasons Private Jet**
The new Four Seasons Private Jet was unveiled by The Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, the hotel industry's first fully branded jet experience and marking the establishment of a new standard in luxury hospitality experiences, a company release stated. Said to deliver a fully immersive Four Seasons Private Jet Experience both in the air and on the ground, the Jet reportedly builds on the brand's history of innovation focused on solving the guest experience. "In our hotels, spaces are conceived as settings for great experiences," says Dana Kalczak, Vice President, Design, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. "The same is true for the Four Seasons Private Jet. Along with the core objectives of comfort and functionality – and adherence to strict aircraft safety standards – we wanted to create an exceptionally luxurious ambience, and Champagne and caviar became our inspiration," Kalczak said.
- Mayfair Gangtok Chain Resort and Casino to see addition of 24 rooms this year**
Hospitality chain Mayfair Hotels and Resorts, based in Eastern India, this year will commence the room expansion plan of Mayfair Gangtok Spa Resort and Casino, which will see an addition of 24 rooms to the existing inventory of 68. Casino Mahjong at the resort will be relocated within the resort, giving it a much larger area. The two major expansions are likely to be completed in sync with the airport at Pakyong, about 20 kms from the resort by late 2016. Mayfair Darjeeling will also see an addition of about 12 rooms and a layout change of the resort and more open spaces.



Airlines

- Vistara now operates from Delhi to Bagdogra & Guwahati**
On April 2, 2015, Vistara took its inaugural flight from New Delhi to Guwahati. This new route marks Vistara's foray into the Eastern and North Eastern sectors. Vistara will now operate daily flights on the Delhi-Guwahati-Bagdogra-Delhi route. In a span of three months Vistara has already expanded its operations with the addition of Goa, Hyderabad and Pune to its route network. Guwahati, the gateway to the northeast, is the largest and most cosmopolitan city in Assam and serves as the starting point for most north-eastern itineraries.
- Now fly to Andaman from Vishakhapatnam by Air India**
Air India today introduced a direct flight to connect the coastal city of Vishakhapatnam to Port Blair. The airline already connects Port Blair to Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai and Bhubaneswar. This new flight will be in addition to Air India's already existing flight viz. daily direct flights on the Kolkata – Port Blair sector with an A319; Chennai – Port Blair with A321 aircraft; between Delhi – Vishakhapatnam with an A321 aircraft and another flight between Delhi and Port Blair via Bhubaneswar twice a week with a CRJ-700 aircraft. This flight will help capacity addition to this tourist destination. The direct flight will be a time saver for travel between Vishakhapatnam and Port Blair and give a fillip to tourism and industry at both the places.
- Virgin Atlantic connects Delhi and London with 787-9 Dreamliner**
Virgin Atlantic launched its maiden 787-9 Dreamliner flight to London from Delhi on 31 March 2015. The passengers travelling were in for a surprise as they received exclusive 787 cupcakes and the chance to take a "First Flight Selfie" whilst checking-in and boarding the flight from Delhi IG airport. The aircraft that arrived from London was greeted with a water canon salute as it touched down in Delhi. Virgin Atlantic operates 7 daily flights every week from Delhi to London with many onward connections, including New York and is currently investing £300 million in improving customer experience.



Hidden Gems of India - Kasol, Himachal Pradesh

Tamarind Tours brings you some lesser known but well worth visiting spots in India, what we like to call the hidden gems! For some quality time off the beaten track, watch this space for wonderful alternative holidays!

Kasol, Himachal Pradesh

Kasol is a village in Himachal Pradesh. It is situated in Parvati Valley, on the banks of the Parvati River, on the route between Bhuntar and Manikaran. Spread out along the lovely Parvati River and with mountain views to the northeast, Kasol is the main traveller hang-out in the valley. It's a small village, overrun with reggae bars, bakeries, internet cafes and guesthouses catering to a varied crowd. It is an easy base from which to explore the forested valley or just chill out. The village is divided into Old Kasol on the Bhuntar side of the bridge, and New Kasol on the Manikaran side.

Kasol is ideal for a vacation if you want to chill in the lap of nature. The village is an open space by the banks of the Parvati River where one can spend lazy afternoons. The river abounds with trout and is the perfect place for angling. However, permission from forest department is required for trout fishing in the river. Parvati river at Kasol is ideal for white water rafting. One can also visit Manikaran which is famous for the natural hot springs. The hot springs is said to possess curative powers. Many pilgrims take a dip in the holy water to wash away their sins.

Best time to visit Kasol: April to September

How to reach Kasol:

By Air: Kullu Airport near Kullu is the nearest airport.

By Rail: Ahuj Railway station is the nearest railhead from the Parvati Valley



Home remedies Indian style

The Indian Grandmom had a remedy for everything, from health issues to beauty issues and even psychological problems! In a time when we pop pills and self medicate needlessly, wouldn't it be refreshing to go back to Grandma's natural remedies?

Toothache

Chew a clove or dip a piece of cotton wool in clove oil and place on the aching tooth for best results.

Itching

Apply neem oil to the affected area. Or make a fresh paste of some neem leaves and apply externally. Boil neem leaves in the hot water used for your bath. Also eat a teaspoon of neem juice along with sugar for quick relief.

Cuts

For any cut or wound, apply turmeric powder to the injured portion to stop the bleeding. It also works as an antiseptic. You can tie a bandage after applying turmeric.



Recipe of the Month - Wasabi Tikki

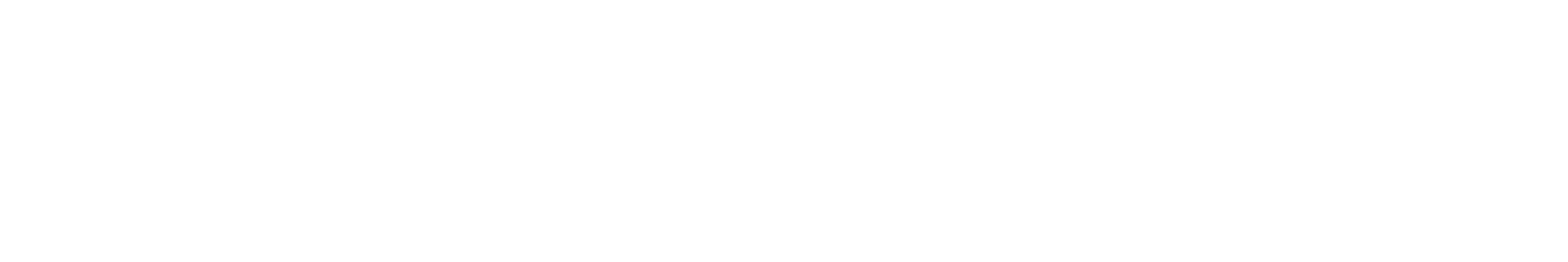
Fusion is the new mantra in world cuisine: Tang brings you international recipes with an Indian tweak... pasta with spices and tikki style burgers. It happens only in India!

- Ingredients for the Tikki**
Half aubergine, thinly sliced
2 tomatoes
5 potatoes, boiled
Olive oil
Salt and pepper
1 tsp butter, melted
2 tsp wasabi
1 egg, beaten
1 cup breadcrumbs (Here Japanese rice breadcrumbs have been used but you can use regular breadcrumbs too)
- Ingredients for sweet chilli sauce**
2 Tbsp honey
2 Tbsp fish sauce
1 lemon juice
2 chopped green chillies
1 chopped red chilli
- Method**
Marinate the aubergine slices in some olive oil, salt pepper and bake in the oven for about 10 minutes at 140 degrees. Make a slight incision in both the tomatoes, place them in boiling water for only 15 seconds. Once done, place them in some ice cold water.
Peel the skin of the tomatoes and slice them. Drizzle some olive oil, salt pepper over the tomatoes and bake for about 5-7 minutes at 140 degrees. Mash the potatoes. Add salt, pepper, butter and wasabi to it. Mix all together. Mix in the egg to coat the mashed potatoes. Reserve some of the beaten egg to coat the tikkis later. Make round tikkis (flattened round balls) with the potatoes. Brush the tikkis with some egg (you reserved earlier) and then wrap these tikkis in the bread crumbs. Deep fry the tikkis in oil till golden brown.
Once done wrap them with the baked aubergine slices and place the tomatoes over it.

You can serve this with a sweet chilli sauce. (Mix all the sauce ingredients together for the sweet chilli sauce)

The Quaint Customs of India

Why do Indian hang lemons and chillies on their car/homes??



Ancient India has a wide range of traditions and old wives tales that are carried generation to generation. There are fast track remedies for all ailments, like how to banish fear, fear of death, common colds, coughs in children, evil eye and frighten evil spirits. The Evil Eye Warder also known as "NAZAR BATTU" is used to keep home and businesses safe from all the evil spirits and let all the happiness be yours for always. This Battu or the "Nimbu-Mirchi Totka" as it is called, traditionally has "seven mirchis" (chilies) and "one nimbu" (lemon) to protect your home from all the bad and evil spirits. (At home it is dangled at the main door, in business establishments it is hung at the entrance-sometimes changed daily, weekly or fortnightly.



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