

Happy Diwali!*From all of us at Peirce & Leslie Travel*

Dear Industry Colleagues,

Namaste from Peirce & Leslie in India!

Happy Diwali!

On October 20th this year, we celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights. This popular Hindu festival is associated with Goddess Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity and marks the beginning of the financial year in India. Hindus also celebrate the return of Lord Rama, Sita and Laxman after 14 years of exile. Homes are illuminated with oil lamps to welcome Laxmi and celebrate the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. It is a time of renewal and hope with varied traditions depending on the region.

In this edition of our newsletter, we have handpicked a collection of unforgettable experiences for your clients' advanced planning. We have vibrant festivals, immersive cultural encounters, luxury retreats and off-the-beaten-track adventures showcasing the very best of the Indian subcontinent. Thoughtfully curated to inspire and delight, they promise journeys filled with authentic experiences, remarkable sights, and lasting memories – perfect for discerning travelers.

Our offices will be closed for the day on October 20th, 2025 on account of Diwali. However, we will continue to be available for urgent assistance or travel emergencies.

Cheers,
Team Peirce & Leslie



Punakha Tshechu, Bhutan (February 27th & 28th, 2026)

The Punakha Tshechu is one of Bhutan's most fascinating celebrations – a convergence of faith, art, and tradition in a spectacular expression of devotion. Each year, sacred masked dances and ancient rituals unfold in the courtyard of the majestic Punakha Dzong, to honor Guru Rinpoche, the revered saint who brought Buddhism to Bhutan. Monks in flowing silk robes with intricate masks perform the sacred *cham* or religious masked dances and the courtyards come alive with laughter as *atsaras* or masked clowns with crimson noses and quick wit, weave humour into the solemnity, teasing the crowd and lightening the air. There are also the mouthwatering aromas of traditional delicacies adding yet another layer to the festival's sensory allure.

P&L recommends: Don't miss the Thongdrel Ceremony (the closing ceremony) of the festival where a beautiful, large silk *thangka* (tapestry) of Guru Rinpoche and the Buddha is unveiled for a few hours. This moment is believed to bestow spiritual liberation upon all who behold it. Additionally, no two *tshechus* are ever the same – each is deeply rooted in its own place and spirit. And in Bhutanese belief, to witness a *tshechu* even once is to cleanse oneself of all sins.



Luxury in the Lap of Tradition at Dev Shree, Deogarh (Rajasthan)

Dev Shree, perched midway between Jodhpur and Udaipur on the tranquil edge of Ragho Sagar Lake, offers an intimate escape into rural Rajasthan. This serene retreat is the perfect antidote to city life, inviting guests to slow down, savour the beauty of rural India and experience a timeless corner of Rajasthan in style and comfort. With just ten exquisitely designed rooms, the boutique hotel exudes quiet exclusivity, blending traditional haveli architecture with modern comforts. Guests can enjoy a range of experiential activities, like village walks, lakeside sundowners and picnics, cycling excursions, visits to the local school to interact with the students, culinary workshops, yoga classes or a scenic steam train through the Aravalli Hills. Food is at the heart of the experience at Dev Shree and meals here are truly exceptional; fresh, locally sourced, and showcasing age-old family recipes.

What we love about the boutique hotel: The delicious homecooked meals, warmth and personalized attention of the host family to their guests, all of which make one feel like they are in a home away from home.



The Heartbeat of Kandyan Culture

Immerse yourself in the vibrant Kandyan Dance and Drum performance, a celebration of the rich arts of the Kandyan Kingdom in Sri Lanka. Watch skilled local artists bring history to life with the majestic elephant dance, mystical cobra movements, mask dances, and the fiery *Ginisila* (fire dance) – where performers walk barefoot across red-hot coals! After the show, don traditional Kandyan attire, learn the basics of the dance from a professional, shake a leg to the rhythmic beat of drums and capture memorable photos. This is a truly captivating cultural experience!



A Tryst with Nepalese Cooking

Elevate your tour of Nepal with an exclusive hands-on cooking session led by a renowned local chef – or even a skilled housewife. Begin with a visit to the bustling local farmers’ market, selecting fresh vegetables, fragrant herbs, and vibrant spices. Back in the kitchen, uncover the secrets of Nepalese cuisine as your chef guides you through preparing a traditional feast. Roll up your sleeves and try your hand at *momos* (Nepalese dumplings), *dal bhat* (rice with lentils), and other mouthwatering local delicacies. Then, sit back and devour the delicious dishes you’ve helped cook!



Meet one of our Guides

We’re delighted to introduce one of our most loved and sought-after guides, **Aman Chaudhary**. For over three decades, Aman has been curating unforgettable experiences in Varanasi for travellers from across the world. Born and raised in the sacred city, he spent his childhood wandering its labyrinthine alleys and riverfront ghats, absorbing the essence of its spiritual and cultural heartbeat. Over the years, Aman’s deep-rooted connection with Varanasi has only strengthened. Today, he takes great joy in sharing its timeless rhythms, rituals, and hidden stories with his guests. Well known for his engaging storytelling, warmth, and encyclopaedic knowledge of the region’s history, religion, and daily life, Aman brings the city to life in a way few others can. A favourite among Peirce & Leslie guests, Aman is celebrated for his wit, generosity of spirit, and ability to transform every tour into an experience of genuine connection and discovery.



In the news...

- As of 1 October 2025, **all foreign travelers entering India must complete an e-Arrival Card within the 72-hour window prior to arrival**. The online form is accessible via the official portal, <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/earrival/> or through the Indian Visa “Su-Swagatam” mobile app, streamlining the entry process for international visitors.
- From October 15th 2025 onwards, **all travelers visiting Sri Lanka for tourism must obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) prior to arrival**. This requirement is mandatory for all passengers arriving after this date. To apply for an ETA, travelers can visit <https://eta.gov.lk/> and complete the online application.
- The latest additions to the Taj Group’s collection of hotels are the **Taj Paro Resort & Spa** (40 rooms and 5 suites), **Taj Gangtey Resort & Spa** (32 rooms and 3 suites) and **Gulab Haveli Mandawa** (14 rooms and 3 suites).

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