

## NEPAL ART AND CULTURE FESTIVAL 2025 A Transformative Vision to Bridge Heritage and Hospitality



The Hotel Association Nepal is proud to be associated and announce a groundbreaking initiative that promises to reshape the landscape of cultural tourism. In collaboration with the Nepal Tourism Board and Nepal Art Council, HAN will orchestrate the Nepal Art and Culture Festival 2025, a comprehensive three-week celebration spanning September 5 to 27, 2025. This ambitious undertaking represents the first coordinated effort to fully integrate Nepal's rich festival traditions with immersive tourism experiences across the four municipalities of Kathmandu Valley.

As HAN President Mr. Binayak Shah articulates, this transformative initiative has garnered enthusiastic support from numerous government bodies, municipalities, and tourism organizations, all committed to contributing their collective expertise and resources. HAN, serving as the principal coordinating body, will facilitate seamless collaboration among all stakeholders with the primary objective of establishing meaningful connections between Nepal's traditional jatras and contemporary tourism experiences. Through this comprehensive approach, Nepalese festivals and jatras will become accessible and immersive for international visitors. While these celebrated cultural events have historically engaged primarily local communities, this festival will ensure that tourists receive a complete, authentic cultural experience.

### Transforming Cultural Engagement Through Immersive Tourism

The festival emerges from a critical recognition within our tourism sector. While Nepal's magnificent jatras, including the celebrated Indra Jatra and Bisket Jatra and Rath Jatra, have long

captivated international visitors, meaningful tourist participation has remained disappointingly limited. These sacred celebrations, deeply woven into the fabric of Nepali society, have traditionally engaged primarily local communities, leaving international guests as passive observers rather than active participants. The Nepal Art and Culture Festival 2025 addresses this disconnect by embracing the transformative concept of immersive and experiential tourism, drawing inspiration from successful international models such as Spain's Tomato Festival, where cultural barriers dissolve and visitors become integral participants in authentic cultural expressions.

Central to this festival's appeal is the unprecedented opportunity for visitors to witness and participate in the celebration of Kumari, Nepal's Living Goddess, during Indra Jatra. Organizers have carefully designed this experience to provide international guests with an appropriate cultural context while maintaining the sacred integrity of this ancient tradition. Similarly, the festival will establish designated viewing areas for the magnificent Rath Yatra, complete with comprehensive security arrangements and cultural interpretation services, ensuring that visitors can fully appreciate the spiritual and artistic dimensions of this spectacular procession.

The festival's cultural immersion reaches its pinnacle with the traditional Newa Bhoi/Samay Baji feast at the historic Hanuman Dhoka. This carefully orchestrated event recreates the warm hospitality that our ancestors extended to distinguished guests, serving culturally rich and flavorful foods in the same venue where generations of Nepali rulers welcomed visitors from distant lands. This initiative serves a dual purpose, not only providing international guests with authentic cultural experiences but also

reconnecting young Nepalis with their ancestral traditions, ensuring these precious customs continue to flourish across generations.

### **Comprehensive Festival Programming Across Kathmandu Valley**

The festival's meticulously planned three-week program begins with an elaborate opening ceremony in Kathmandu on September 5, featuring the Kathmandu Mahanagar Jatra Yatra and the premiere of the 'Roots and Reflections' Art Exhibition at the Nepal Art Council Gallery. Cultural performances by the Nepal Army and the traditional Newa Bhwey feast at Hanuman Dhoka will officially launch this unprecedented cultural celebration. The program continues with Bhaktapur's heritage experience on September 7, where guided walks through historic squares and temples will be complemented by visits to traditional pottery and craft workshops, culminating in an atmospheric evening lamp-lighting ceremony in the heart of the ancient city.

Kathmandu takes center stage from September 8 to 10 with the 'Made in Kathmandu' fair, showcasing the ingenuity of local artisans and producers alongside an Indra Jatra-themed photography exhibition, diverse food fairs, and the UNESCO Creative City of Film Challenge. The festival introduces Hadigaon on September 13, offering guided exploration of this nearly 2,000-year-old settlement, one of the valley's most historically significant yet underexplored cultural treasures. Kirtipur welcomes visitors from September 18 to 20 with cultural walks through its labyrinthine ancient streets, traditional dance and music performances, and intimate local feasting experiences that reveal the authentic rhythms of Nepali community life.

The festival's grand finale unfolds in Patan from September 23 to 27, presenting an extraordinary showcase of Newar cultural heritage. Visitors will experience the thunderous rhythms of Dhime Baja drumming, the spiritual resonance of Bhajan devotional singing, and the mystical allure of Lakhe masked dance performances. Live craft demonstrations will reveal the intricate artistry of traditional woodcarving and Paubha painting, while comprehensive exhibits explore Kumari traditions, Buddhist rituals, and the multifaceted dimensions of Newar heritage. The festival concludes with a ceremonial procession and farewell dinner at the prestigious Patan Museum, creating lasting memories of cultural immersion and authentic connection.

### **Strategic Vision for Nepal's Cultural Tourism Future**

This initiative represents far more than a tourism promotion; it embodies a strategic vision for Nepal's cultural and economic future. By extending tourist stays and deepening cultural engagement, the festival promises to generate substantial economic benefits for the hospitality industry while fostering genuine cross-cultural understanding. President Binayak Shah emphasizes that as visitors become more meaningfully connected to Nepal's



festival traditions, they naturally invest greater time and resources in their Nepal experience, creating a virtuous cycle that benefits local communities, preserves cultural traditions, and enhances our nation's reputation as a premier cultural tourism destination.

The timing of this festival aligns perfectly with Nepal's post-COVID tourism recovery trajectory. As international visitor numbers continue their encouraging upward trend, the Nepal Art and Culture Festival 2025 positions our nation at the forefront of innovative cultural tourism experiences. This annual commitment, with plans to expand future editions to include Bhaktapur's Bisket Jatra and Patan's Machindranath Jatra, demonstrates our sector's dedication to sustainable, culturally respectful tourism development that honors our ancestral wisdom while embracing contemporary excellence in hospitality.

The Hotel Association Nepal recognizes that this festival serves a profound cultural preservation function that extends well beyond immediate economic benefits. By creating authentic engagement opportunities for both international visitors and young Nepalis, it is ensured that Nepal's precious cultural traditions continue to thrive as living heritage rather than mere historical artifacts. This initiative represents our commitment to maintaining the delicate balance between cultural accessibility and cultural integrity, fostering meaningful connections that enrich both visitors and host communities while safeguarding the authenticity that makes Nepal's cultural landscape truly extraordinary.

## **TERRACES RESORT WINS FOUR PRESTIGIOUS HAUTE GRANDEUR AWARDS**

Nepali hospitality continues to garner international acclaim, marking another significant milestone in the nation's emergence as a premier luxury destination. This recognition underscores the exceptional standards and authentic cultural experiences that Nepal's hospitality sector consistently delivers to discerning global travelers.

The Terraces Resort has achieved remarkable recognition at the 2025 Haute Grandeur Global Excellence Awards, securing four prestigious titles that cement its position as a leading luxury destination in Asia. The resort received awards for Best All Suite Resort in Asia, Best Mountain Resort in Asia, Best Resort Hotel in Asia, and Best Scenic View in Asia.

These accolades represent a significant milestone for Nepal's luxury hospitality sector, highlighting the country's growing prominence as a world-class destination for discerning travelers. The Haute Grandeur Global Excellence Awards, recognized internationally for their credibility and transparency, base their selections on comprehensive guest feedback, making these honors particularly meaningful.

"We are incredibly honored to be recognized on a global scale



by the Haute Grandeur Global Awards," said Mr. Suman Shrestha, General Manager of The Terraces Resort. "This award reflects our team's unwavering commitment to creating enriching experiences for our guests. It inspires us to continue raising the bar in hospitality, ensuring that every stay at The Terraces is truly exceptional."

Located in the pristine forests of Lakhuri Bhanjyang,



The Terraces Resort offers an extraordinary blend of modern sophistication and authentic Himalayan heritage. The all-suite property features 46 luxuriously appointed accommodations, each designed with intentionally minimal interiors that create a striking contrast against the dramatic natural landscape visible through floor-to-ceiling windows.

This recognition underscores The Terraces Resort's role in

elevating Nepal's international hospitality profile. As the resort continues setting new standards for luxury and service excellence, it serves as an inspiring example of how Nepali hospitality can compete and excel on the global stage while maintaining authentic cultural connections. The awards reflect not only the resort's commitment to exceptional guest experiences but also its contribution to positioning Nepal as a premier luxury travel destination in Asia.

## NEPAL TOURISM BOARD PARTNERS WITH TIKTOK TO BOOST GLOBAL VISIBILITY

The Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), the country's premier focal tourism promotion organization, has officially signed a groundbreaking strategic partnership with TikTok, the world's leading short-form video platform that boasts over one billion active users globally. This innovative collaboration is designed to significantly enhance Nepal's presence and recognition in the competitive global tourism market through cutting-edge digital marketing strategies. Through a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that outlines detailed cooperation frameworks, this ambitious initiative aims to systematically showcase Nepal's breathtaking Himalayan mountains, ancient historic temples steeped in centuries of tradition, vibrant cultural festivals that celebrate the country's rich heritage, and authentic local cuisine that reflects diverse ethnic communities to TikTok's massive international audience spanning across continents.

### Three-Pillar Strategy

According to Mr. Sudhan Subedi, Senior Officer at the Nepal Tourism Board, the comprehensive collaboration focuses on three meticulously planned key components that will work synergistically to maximize tourism promotion effectiveness:

**Content Amplification:** Nepal-related destination content will be highlighted on TikTok's "For You" page, ensuring greater visibility for the country's tourism offerings.

**Creator Training:** Content creators are receiving training and guidance to produce high-quality promotional content and promote Nepal's attractions and cultural heritage.

**Influencer Engagement:** The board is actively collaborating with influencers to promote Nepal's diverse destinations to wider audiences, strengthening its global visibility and inspiring more travelers to experience the country.

The partnership comes with important considerations regarding cultural respect and appropriate content creation. Many of Nepal's religious and cultural sites have restrictions on photography and video content. Mr. Subedi emphasized that content creators must respect these boundaries and adhere to local regulations when producing material.

"People should understand what constitutes appropriate public content and respect the boundaries and judicial rules of sacred places," Mr. Subedi noted. "It depends on content creators to post only appropriate material that represents Nepal positively."

The collaboration marks a significant shift for TikTok in Nepal. The platform was previously banned in the country but has since been reinstated. This partnership represents the first major step in Nepal's digital tourism promotion strategy, with plans to expand to other social media platforms in the future.

### Content Focus Areas

Under the agreement, NTB will work with travel content creators and influencers to highlight Nepal's tourism gems through professionally produced TikTok videos. The content will feature:

- Trekking routes and mountain landscapes
- Pristine lakes and natural wonders
- Ancient temples and heritage sites
- Traditional homestay experiences
- Cultural festivals and local traditions

TikTok will provide workshops for Nepali creators, offering training in audience engagement strategies and content development techniques.

The initiative aims to make hashtags like #VisitNepal and #NepalBeauty trend globally, promoting both well-known and underrated destinations throughout the country. The program seeks to enhance international travelers' knowledge of Nepal's diverse offerings, from its world-renowned trekking routes to its rich cultural heritage.

Mr. Sudhan Subedi describes this groundbreaking partnership as "an initial but highly significant step to promote Nepal's unparalleled natural beauty, cultural richness, and tourism potential to the rapidly expanding digital world," with comprehensive broader social media expansion, digital marketing initiatives, and technology-driven promotion strategies planned for systematic implementation in the future. The partnership actively encourages widespread participation and creative contribution from Nepali citizens, diaspora communities, and international supporters to contribute authentic, diverse content that effectively showcases their country's immense tourism potential while maintaining unwavering respect for cultural values, traditional practices, religious sensitivities, and important privacy considerations that protect local communities and sacred spaces.



# ELEVATING NEPAL'S CULINARY HERITAGE: Chefs Call for Strategic Global Promotion

As Nepal's tourism industry continues to evolve, culinary experts are highlighting the untapped potential of the nation's rich gastronomic heritage to capture international attention. Two prominent figures in Nepal's hospitality sector have outlined strategic approaches to elevate Nepali cuisine from regional specialty to global phenomenon.

In Nepal, food represents far more than sustenance—it serves as a vibrant expression of culture, ancestry, and culinary artistry. However, industry leaders acknowledge that Nepali cuisine has yet to achieve the global recognition it deserves, despite its complex flavors and deep-rooted traditions.

## Nepal's Culinary Tourism Showcase

Executive Chef, Mr. Rajeev Shrestha of Aloft Kathmandu Thamel emphasizes that while Nepali cuisine possesses remarkable depth and tradition, it lacks the international exposure enjoyed by Indian, Chinese, or Italian cuisines. "Our dishes are often perceived as cultural or festive specialties rather than everyday global food trends," Shrestha explains. "The potential is enormous, it simply requires enhanced storytelling, refined presentation, and consistent promotional efforts."

The chef draws attention to the disparity between dishes like Rogan Josh, which has achieved worldwide recognition through mainstream Indian cuisine promotion, and traditional Nepali specialties such as Newari Dyaku La, which remains largely confined to cultural and festive contexts with limited international storytelling.

To address this challenge, Mr. Shrestha advocates for authentic storytelling combined with creative yet tradition-respecting presentation, alongside expanded collaboration with international platforms to showcase Nepal's unique culinary heritage. His approach to balancing authenticity with innovation involves preserving core flavors and traditional essence while reimagining presentation techniques to make Nepali cuisine more accessible and exciting for global audiences.

Regarding culinary tourism's trajectory, Shrestha observes steady growth as travelers increasingly seek authentic food experiences, noting that Nepal's diverse regional cuisines possess immense potential to complement the country's natural and cultural tourism offerings.

Chef Mr. Shyam Lama, Former President of the Chefs Association of Nepal (CAN), emphasizes the critical importance of food safety and transparency in establishing Nepal's global culinary presence. He advocates for comprehensive nutritional information and ingredient transparency to ensure safe consumption for international visitors, particularly those with dietary restrictions or allergies.

"Local tourists demonstrate keen interest in trying new dishes while visiting unfamiliar places," Mr. Lama notes. "Developing standardized curricula that provide accurate information about ingredients and nutritional content, while ensuring safety for various allergies and dietary requirements, should be implemented across all hospitality establishments, regardless of size."

Mr. Lama particularly stresses the need for stronger branding and intellectual property protection for Nepal's signature dishes. He points to concerning trends where traditional items like chatamari are rebranded as "Nepali pancakes," potentially diluting their cultural identity and origin. "Strong patenting and branding of our national dishes is essential for establishing Nepali food on the international stage," he emphasizes.

## Nepal's Culinary Excellence Gains Global Recognition

Food tourism plays a vital role in any country's overall tourism industry. Thailand exemplifies this success, having strategically used food tourism as a vehicle to drive the country's tourism growth. Their embassies worldwide actively promote not only Thai cuisine but also supply authentic ingredients, recipes, and culinary experiences to international markets.

As a culturally rich nation, Nepal possesses a unique cuisine that can bring culinary conversations about food, culture, and heritage to the global stage. A prime example of this potential is the recent nomination at the 31st GOURMAND World Cookbook Awards 2025 in the food tourism category, featuring Chef Mr. Bikram Vaidya from Mystic Kitchen of Nepal.

Chef Vaidya brings remarkable credentials to this recognition. He founded the popular establishment "Tom and Jerry" in Nepal, which earned recognition in The New York Times as a must-visit destination. As the first Nepali graduate of the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu and founding member and lead instructor of Oregon Culinary Institute, he represents Nepal's culinary excellence internationally.

His book "The Mystic Kitchens of Nepal" has been recognized for its significant contribution to culinary literature through this prestigious nomination. Through his work, Chef Vaidya continues inspiring culinary professionals and enthusiasts worldwide, effectively bridging the gap between Nepal's rich food heritage and the global culinary community.

This achievement demonstrates Nepal's readiness to leverage food tourism as a powerful catalyst for promoting the country's broader tourism industry and cultural heritage on the international stage.

## Strategic Development and Cultural Preservation

Both culinary leaders agree that comprehensive research initiatives and expert awareness programs are crucial for promoting Nepali cuisine globally. Mr. Rajeev Shrestha emphasizes the importance of authentic storytelling and creative presentation techniques that honor traditional essence while making dishes more accessible to international palates. His vision focuses on expanding collaboration with global platforms to showcase Nepal's unique culinary heritage through refined presentation standards.

Mr. Shyam Lama advocates for ensuring that international visitors understand the cultural significance and authentic identity of the dishes they consume, believing this cultural education will foster greater appreciation for Nepali cuisine and satisfy tourists' curiosity about the country's culinary traditions. His approach prioritizes comprehensive safety standards and transparent ingredient information to build trust with international consumers.

The convergence of these expert perspectives suggests that Nepal's culinary sector stands at a pivotal moment, with significant opportunities for international recognition through strategic promotion, cultural preservation, and enhanced presentation standards. As the global food tourism market continues expanding, Nepal's unique gastronomic offerings may soon claim their deserved place on the world culinary stage.



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## HANDICRAFTS IN HOTELS: Where Tradition Meets Hospitality Excellence

In today's discerning hospitality landscape, the strategic integration of handicrafts represents a sophisticated convergence of cultural preservation, community empowerment, and elevated design philosophy. From grand entrance lobbies to intimate guest quarters, artisanal creations weave compelling cultural narratives throughout hotel spaces, offering visitors authentic insights into regional traditions while creating atmospheres of unparalleled distinction.

According to Sangay Tenzing Lama, Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing of Hotel Barahi, their initiative directly connects local artisan communities with the hospitality industry, emphasizing authentic cultural representation and community reinvestment. The hotel's curated collection, particularly prominent in their Sarangkot property and featuring miniature wildlife sculptures from Chitwan, demonstrates Nepal's rich artistic heritage while establishing the venue as a sophisticated cultural destination that seamlessly blends traditional Nepali artistry with contemporary hospitality standards.

Contemporary hotels strategically curate impressive arrays of handicrafts, with each piece contributing distinctive aesthetic vocabulary and profound cultural resonance. Masterfully carved wooden elements, handwoven textiles, artisanal metalwork,

ceramic artistry, and sustainable bamboo crafts transform hotel environments into living museums of cultural expression, where every corridor articulates stories of heritage and human creativity.

This strategic incorporation creates powerful economic ecosystems extending beyond hotel walls. By establishing direct partnerships with local artisan communities, hotels function as crucial cultural commerce hubs, providing craftsmen sustainable income opportunities and international market access. This approach ensures traditional skills evolve as vital, living art forms rather than historical curiosities, fostering genuine cultural continuity and economic empowerment within local communities.

Beyond their cultural and economic significance, handicrafts fundamentally transform the hospitality experience itself. Handcrafted elements create environments that feel authentically welcoming rather than generically luxurious, resonating deeply with modern travelers seeking meaningful experiences over standardized commercial amenities while fostering cultural appreciation and establishing lasting emotional connections with destinations. This approach positions hotels as cultural ambassadors, creating competitive differentiation in an increasingly homogenized market.

## BREWING EXCELLENCE: The Strategic Role of Nepali Coffee in Hospitality

In contemporary hospitality environments, coffee has evolved beyond traditional beverage service, becoming a strategic differentiator that represents institutional commitment to quality, cultural authenticity, and local economic engagement. Within Nepal's hospitality sector, properties demonstrate this commitment through strategic curation of premium Nepali coffee brands, each contributing distinctive flavor profiles and compelling origin narratives that enhance overall guest experiences while reflecting Nepal's emerging position as a specialty coffee producer.

According to Sangay Tenzing Lama, Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing at Hotel Barahi, the local coffee culture has experienced tremendous growth within the hospitality industry. "Guests can now enjoy various coffee varieties throughout different times of the day," he notes. "Coffee has become a must-have consumption drink for both national and international guests."

The diversity in coffee offerings reflects the varied growing conditions across Nepal's unique terrain. Different types of coffee emerge based on quality, variety, and environmental factors where beans are cultivated. Guest preferences span the complete spectrum, from classic americanos and rich espressos to creamy cappuccinos, smooth lattes, and specialty variations tailored to individual tastes.

"This coffee culture has become the foundation of hospitality beverages," explains Lama. "In each guest room, we provide coffee powder with French presses, allowing guests to easily prepare their preferred brew. When ordered, our skilled hotel staff craft expertly prepared beverages. We accommodate guest preferences whether



they want to explore local specialties or prefer imported options."

The integration of local coffee offerings extends beyond product quality considerations, representing a comprehensive strategy for celebrating regional craftsmanship, supporting local agricultural economies, and creating distinctive cultural touchpoints. Each service interaction communicates narratives extending from high-altitude terraces where beans are cultivated through artisanal roasting processes that develop characteristic flavor profiles.

This approach enables properties to differentiate themselves within competitive markets by offering authentically local, culturally significant, and memorable experiences. Strategic emphasis on Nepali coffee creates value for international travelers seeking authentic regional experiences and domestic guests supporting local industry development and establishing participating hotels as leaders in culturally responsive hospitality practices.