

Checking In To Celebrate

Festive hospitality is evolving as hotels transform stays into immersive celebrations for families and friends.

By Bindu Gopal Rao



Photo courtesy: The Westin Mumbai Garden City

The rise of celebration-led travel reflects how luxury is increasingly being defined by experiences, convenience, and meaningful time spent together.

Hotels and resorts are becoming the new gathering spaces for festive celebrations, bringing families and friends together under one roof.

Celebrating Away from Home

Festivals are an integral part of our cultural ecosystem, but the way people come together is changing. Considering the way families have evolved and are spread across the globe, there is often a limitation of space in the family homes to accommodate the extended family visiting comfortably.

“Even if the ancestral home is large enough, the host of the home needs to pull the weight of planning and ensuring all are comfortable and feeling truly at home. Choosing a resort allows everyone to enjoy the occasion equally and truly make the most of the precious time with loved ones instead of rushing around to make things happen. Also, it allows families to travel and explore a destination together,” says Pratiti Rajpal, General Manager, Ronil Goa, a JdV by Hyatt hotel.

The New Festive Gathering

Families today are spread across cities and schedules.

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- Pratiti Rajpal

Festive times are the perfect occasion to come together and spend quality time, be it on the pickleball court, in the pool, playing some games or just bunking in one room and spending the night together comfortably.

Devendra Parulekar, founder of SaffronStays, avers, “Guests can enjoy customised, hot home-style meals along with complimentary traditional festive faraal such as chivda and laddoos prepared by local on-site caretakers. Villas are decorated with diyas, rangoli and fairy lights and offer amenities like barbecue nights, bonfires and movie nights in open lawns away from the pollution. There are also Diwali hampers for guests. Ultimately, during the festive season, the accommodation itself becomes part of the celebration. Families aren’t only looking for a place to stay; they’re looking for a place where everyone can be together.”

A Reason To Stay

Hotels are increasingly thinking about the group rather than just the individual room. Multi-generational travel means different people want different things from the same trip. Parents may want comfort and good food. Younger guests may want cocktails,



Pratik Shinde, GM, Lotus Eco Beach Resort



Pratiti Rajpal, GM, Ronil Goa, a JdV by Hyatt hotel



Devendra Parulekar, founder, SaffronStays



Gaurav Sinha, Hotel Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru

music and nightlife. Older family members may value culture, conversation and relaxed experiences.

“The best hospitality experiences create enough variety for everyone without making the group feel fragmented. For a property like ours, that means creating spaces and experiences where people can come together naturally, while still having the freedom to explore Goa at their own pace. If the hotel takes care of the logistics, the family gets something much more valuable and the ability to be present with one another. That is where hospitality can play a much bigger role in celebrations,” says Ashesh L Sajani, founder of The Passport Hotel & Hotel Jewel of Chembur.

The Art of Personalisation

The emotional core of Indian festivals hasn't changed, but our relationship with hosting certainly

has. Festive gatherings used to mean days spent prepping menus, managing table service and juggling chores instead of enjoying the occasion. Today, families are choosing to trade the operational stress of home logistics for effortless hospitality. There is a growing preference for celebrations that feel considered and personal rather than following a fixed format. Guests are looking at the details that make an occasion meaningful, from the venue and menu to décor, traditions and service.

Gurnoor Bindra, General Manager, Raffles Udaipur, says, “Bespoke dining at Polo Lawn and The Folly can be tailored through the setting, chef-curated menu, décor, celebration cake and ambient music, creating an occasion with its own character rather than a standard festive package. Personalisation extends beyond the celebration itself. Raffles Butler service provides individual attention through a dedicated

“Our festive programming, particularly the response to regional cuisines and visiting chefs, tells us that guests are interested in both familiarity and discovery.”

- Gaurav Sinha



Photo courtesy: Ronil Goa, a JdV by Hyatt hotel

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Photo courtesy: JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru

Festive celebrations are increasingly becoming an opportunity for families to pause from their busy routines and reconnect with one another

butler who understands guest preferences and assists with thoughtfully curated arrangements. For us, personalisation is not about adding more for the sake of it. It is about choosing the details that matter, whether that is a meaningful menu, the right setting, a cultural ritual or a private dining experience.”

Stay, Feast, Celebrate

Hosting a festival at home has always been an important expression of hospitality in India and many families will continue to do that. A hotel becomes attractive when the scale or complexity of the gathering makes it difficult for the host to enjoy it themselves.

Gaurav Sinha, hotel manager at JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru, explains, “I think people are becoming more intentional about what they spend their time and money on. A festival is one of the few occasions when several generations can genuinely come together, so there is value in creating an



Ahemer Shaikh, Director, Sales & Marketing, The Westin Mumbai Garden City

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Photo courtesy: Raffles Udaipur

Guests are looking for celebrations that feel deeply personal and culturally resonant.



Ashesh L. Sajnani, founder of The Passport Hotel & Hotel Jewel of Chembur



Gurnoor Bindra, General Manager, Raffles Udaipur



Anand Mishra, Director, Operations, Sayaji Hotel Vadodara



Karna Timbadia, MD, Saj Hotels Limited



Photo courtesy: The Passport Hotel

Hotels are increasingly thinking about the group rather than just the individual room



Photo courtesy: Ronil Goa, a IdV by Hyatt hotel

Hotel check-ins allow families to travel and explore a destination together

“Celebration-led travel presents an opportunity for resorts to create experiences that are both festive and destination-specific.”

- Karna Timbadia

experience around it. Luxury in this context is not necessarily about something elaborate; it can be the ability to have the whole family in one place, discover a cuisine together, or enjoy a meal without worrying about everything that goes into organising it. At the same time, the appetite for tradition remains strong. Our festive programming, particularly the response to regional cuisines and visiting chefs, tells us that guests are interested in both familiarity and discovery.”

The Celebration Stay

Festive staycations allow families and friends to extend celebrations beyond a few hours and turn them into a complete holiday. Instead of meeting just for a festive meal, guests can enjoy comfortable stays, festive dining, recreational activities and time together in a relaxed environment.

Ahemer Shaikh, Director of



Photo courtesy: The Passport Hotel

The best hospitality experiences create enough variety for everyone.



Photo courtesy: The Westin Mumbai Garden City

Travellers continue to value traditions but are now looking to experience them in more relaxed, comfortable and experiential settings

Sales & Marketing, The Westin Mumbai Garden City, says, “The rise of celebration-led travel reflects how luxury is increasingly being defined by experiences, convenience and meaningful time spent together. For today’s Indian travellers, luxury is not only about comfort but also about creating memorable moments with loved ones. Hotels provide an environment where families can enjoy festive traditions while experiencing personalised service, curated dining, and leisure. This allows traditions to be celebrated in a way that feels both familiar and contemporary.”

From Hosting to Holidaying

Authenticity is non-negotiable for today’s traveller. Guests are looking for celebrations that feel deeply personal and culturally resonant rather than standardised packages.

Anand Mishra, Director of Operations, Sayaji Hotel Vadodara, says, “Luxury in Indian hospitality has fundamentally shifted from pure material extravagance to the luxury of time, ease and effortlessness. Choosing a hotel for family celebrations isn’t about setting aside tradition; it is about elevating it. Today’s Indian traveller still deeply values the rituals, authentic food, and cultural warmth of traditional gatherings but prefers experiencing them in a setting that lets them savour every moment without the friction of home management.”

Pratik Shinde, GM, Lotus Eco Beach Resort, adds, “Luxury is increasingly about experiences,

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Celebration Has a New Address

Festive celebrations are increasingly becoming an opportunity for families to pause from their busy routines and reconnect with one another. The emphasis is on making celebrations effortless, meaningful and enjoyable for guests of all ages.

Karna Timbadia, Managing Director, Saj Hotels Limited, says, “Celebration-led travel presents an opportunity for resorts to create experiences that are both festive and destination-specific. At SAJ, properties such as Saj in the Forest, Pench, and Saj by the Lake, Malshej, offer distinctive natural settings that can enrich the experience of a family gathering. The larger shift is towards celebrations that are less about the logistics of hosting and more about spending meaningful time together.”

The festive season is an opportunity to make celebrations feel less like something that needs to be organised and more like something that can genuinely be enjoyed. When the food, setting, service and details are thoughtfully taken care of, families have more time to be present, continue traditions and create new ones. That is what checking in to celebrate is about: creating the space for families to come together, celebrate what is familiar, discover something new and leave with memories that belong to them. 