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Meet up, ignite the wanderlust in you

Jayashree Narayanan, April 15, 2016, DHNS

Travel talk



When Palak Saxena came across a Facebook notification informing her about a day-long travel mixer for women featuring speakers from varied fields, she, being a travel enthusiast decided to attend it. “I came across Kunzum Travel Cafe’s event – Kunzum Women Travel Mixer (KWTM) while I was browsing

through my newsfeed. And after attending the event my urge to travel has only increased. So I am planning to go somewhere in the mountains soon,” says Delhi-based Saxena.

Similarly, Sharmistha Sahoo attended a National Geographic Traveller meet up on ‘Holiday Planning’ in Mumbai and got exposed to a whole new world of travel trivia. “Being a planner myself and having travelled across three continents, I always thought I knew about most travel-related things, and knew it well. But I was wrong! You can never know enough about the various aspects of travelling. I learnt about the associated myths, how slow travelling is better than a rushed one, which app to use to find Vegan food, how to bond with locals, how to volunteer while travelling and more,” says Sahoo, who calls herself a banker by dawn and a travel and lifestyle blogger by dusk. A regular feature among the travel community, such

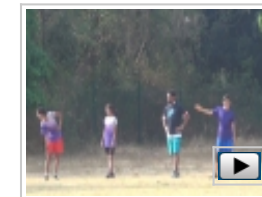
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meetups give travel buffs a platform to share their stories and inspire others to travel, while also serving as a full-time networking platform. So what actually happens during such meetups; does attending one actually help?

“Being a travel entrepreneur, I think it is something that is going to help change mindsets in our country. We need to get more stories out — of women intrepidly travelling, to help us make more women consider India as a destination,” says Malini Gowrishankar, founder of travel company F5 Escapes, and co-host of recently-held KWTM.

Sahoo, who is a regular at such meetups, says that the most powerful stories are those that come from people you can relate to and those who help you believe you can do it too.

“It feels really good to mingle with like-minded people. You learn, and get inspired as well, especially, when you hear experiences in foreign lands — that is when you feel you can do it too. Everybody has a unique travel story and nothing is good or bad,” she tells Metrolife.

Right from giving tips on saving money on food, transport to accommodation, such events also help overcome myths by giving examples of people who take the plunge. Be it radio jockey and solo backpacker Alisha Anand’s tell-all of her adventure travels across the world, or ArtySorts’ Jessica Singh who advises people to go local and explore the city, or Supriya Singh’s Antarctica expedition, it gives people the “confidence to wander and meet new people”.

Unmesh Rajput, founder of Delhi Vibes, a city-based friendly meetup says the idea is to connect like-minded people and their families besides restraints of time, cost and other such responsibilities. “We meet over weekends or workday evenings. The idea is not just to provide a safe space to share stories, but to catch up with one another over a cup of coffee, and plan out our next ventures,” says Rajput who has been organising meetups for the past two years.

Hacks, stories, photographs, pointers are part of the gathering that should never be missed. “For those seeking travel information, the Internet and social media have most of the answers. But there is still a missing element which can be addressed only face-to-face.

Because there is a lot of subjectivity involved in travel, it is only over conversations

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Photo Gallery



that people can make decisions. This is where such events are invaluable,” says Ajay Jain, travel writer, photographer, and owner of Kunzum Travel Café.

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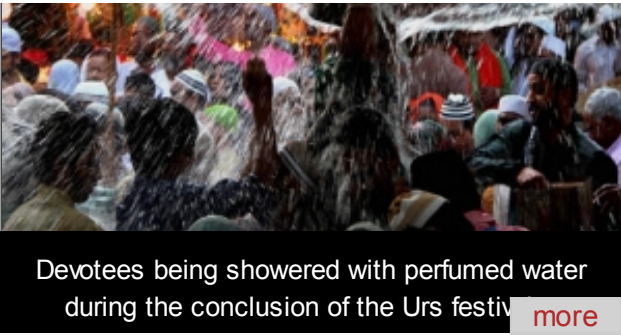
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