

Couples turn Valentine's Day into a long weekend; travel portals see surge



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Couples are ready to make the most of the Valentine's Day this year by turning it into a long weekend getaway as it falls on a Monday. From luxurious hotels to cosy boutique experiences and even staycations, love birds are all in for planning the most romantic getaway. Travel portals and tour planners are also seeing an upward trend in bookings for these days and reveal the trending destinations for couples this year.

Kovid Kapoor, co-founder, Holidify shares that most couples are primarily looking for staycation options due to the pandemic. "Since V-Day is on Monday, we have been getting a number of queries for a three-day trip for the last couple of weeks. A significant portion of potential travellers are planning to stay at a luxury hotel with stay packages that include all meals, and in some cases, complimentary happy hours in the



evening, for that complete experience."

According to Kapoor, the evergreen destinations, such as Coorg for Bengaluru travellers, Alibaug for Mumbai, and Himachal Pradesh/Neemrana/Jaipur for Delhi travellers are in high demand.

A couple-friendly holiday destination is on everyone's list this year. Rajeev Kale, president and country head, Holidays, MICE, Visa - Thomas Cook (India) Limited, says, "We

have seen a surge in queries from couples this Valentine's weekend. Our customers are planning weekend getaways to nearby destinations to celebrate this special day with their partners."

Apart from the usual holiday destinations, experts also witnessed many couples opting for an offbeat experience. "Experiential getaways are attracting higher customer interest this Valentine's Day. Outdoor lovers continue to seek activities such as biking trips, jungle safaris,

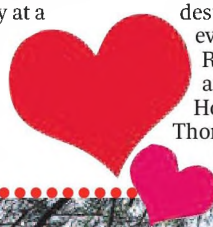
kayaking, zorbing, skydiving, white water rafting, etc. Many are also showing interest in wellness retreats and staying in eclectic accommodations such as tea estates, tree houses, coffee plantations, and colonial bungalows," says Daniel D'Souza, president and country head, SOTC Travel, who is seeing a positive surge of 25-30% in bookings for the V-Day weekend.

Ritu Mehrotra, regional manager, South Asia at Booking.com admits that Indian travellers are booking leisure destinations such as Goa, Jaipur, Manali and Udaipur from February 11 to 14 to celebrate the occasion. She adds, "Hotels emerge as the top-booked accommodation type during this period, followed by resorts, guest houses, and apartments."

Sharing his plans for the special day, Ankit Saluja, 31, finance analyst who tied the knot in December says, "My wife and I both work in the corporate field so we have applied for a Monday off and are heading out of town for a relaxing weekend."

This Valentine's Day, couples want to relax during the extended weekend and spend quality time with partners at luxury hotels, wellness retreats, resorts and guest houses

For the outdoor lovers, offbeat experiences such as skiing, jungle safaris, sky diving are on demand



Most couples are looking forward to spending their V-Day at the beach in Goa and Andamans

