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Back on the road: A case for post-pandemic travel as lockdown eases

Has Covid-19 cancelled India's vacation plans for 2020? It depends on who you ask.

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Hindustan Times



The angst of being confined to the home for months means many Indians will be seeking a break as soon as the option becomes available and viable. (Gajanan Nirphale)



A trip sounds scary to most right now. Others are itching to dart out of the house, even if just for a [weekend getaway](#) nearby. For those who do take off, a new layer of safety precautions awaits.

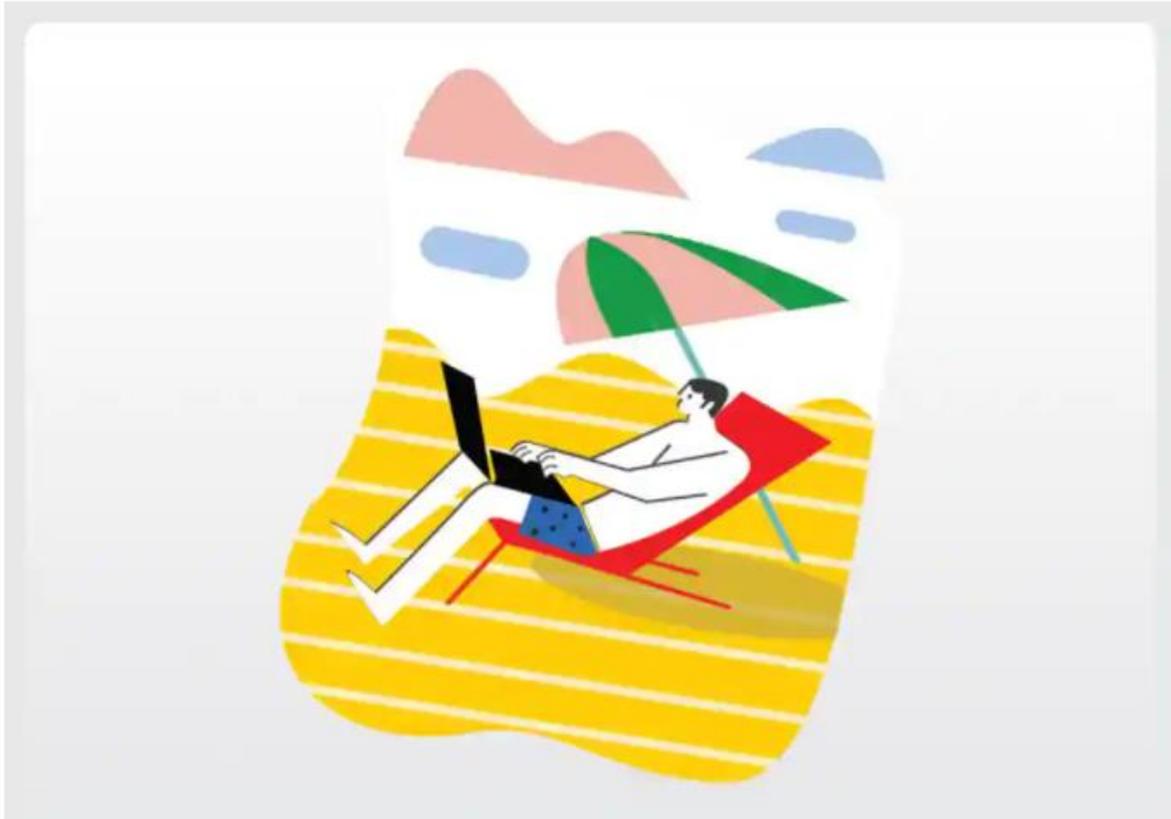


Who will travel

□ Many countries still discourage non-essential [travel](#), the fear of infection remains, and there might be a second, and even third, wave of the pandemic. But the angst of being confined to the home for months means many Indians will be seeking a break as soon as the option becomes available and viable.

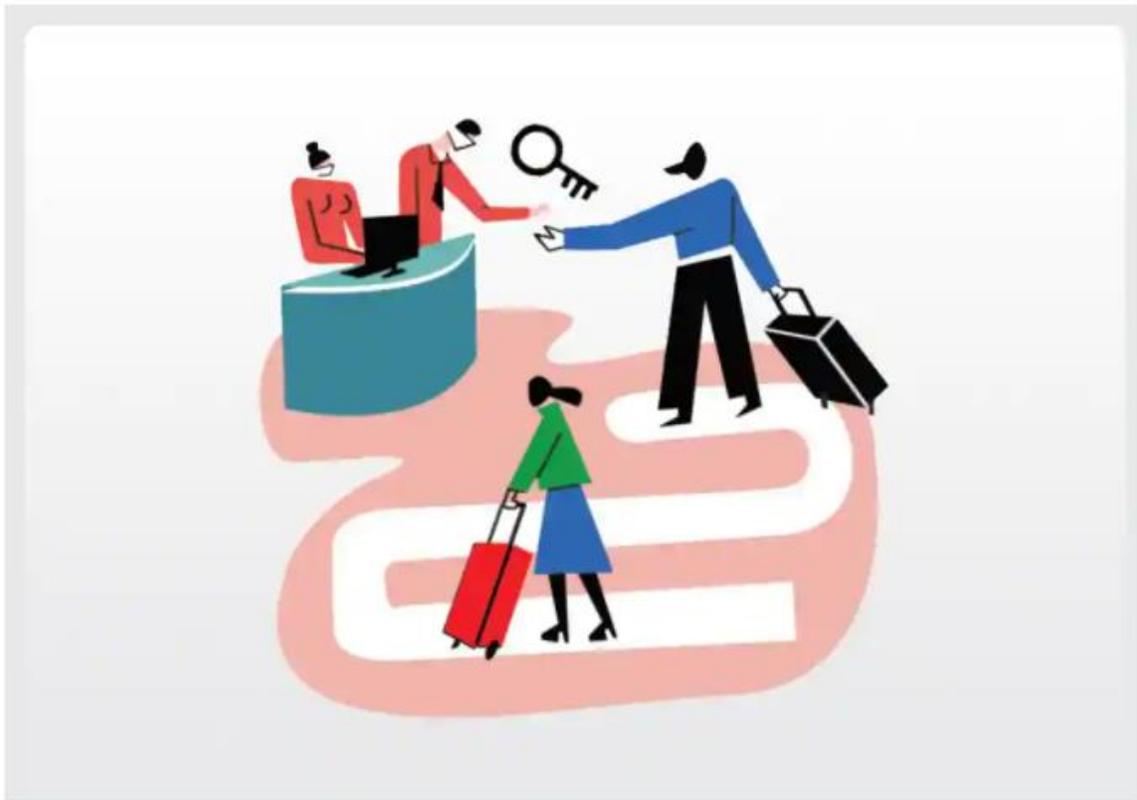


☒ "You can bring the office home, attend a wedding virtually, and make anything happen through a computer screen, but holidays can't be digitised," says Ramesh Ramanathan, chairman and managing director, Sterling Holiday Resorts.



Likely destinations

- ☒ Less-frequented destinations within driving distance will trump packed flights to hotspots. Hill stations like Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala, Rishikesh, Lonavala and Mahableshwar will likely be popular early choices for those in the metros.
- ☒ Travelling by car is safest. So drive or rent, and pack your own snacks for the journey so you don't have to stop at food courts.
- ☒ "Avoid public restrooms and use rest stops that are well-ventilated," says Dr Vishal Rastogi of Fortis Escorts, New Delhi. "Rigid hand hygiene is a must; it is impossible to avoid touching surfaces."
- ☒ Check out medical infrastructure in advance. "If someone develops Covid symptoms, you need to know where to go locally," says Dilip Puri, founder and CEO, Indian School of Hospitality.



Hospital-ity

☒ “In pre-Covid days, hospitals would approach the hospitality industry to manage housekeeping; now it is the other way round,” says Puri of Indian School of Hospitality.

☐ The Four Seasons in New York has tied up with Johns Hopkins for guidance and training. In India, ITC has an initiative accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH), for hospital-level hygiene standards. Travel agencies are offering Covid-19 cover.



- ☒ The knick-knacks have been reduced in many hotel rooms, to make deep cleaning easier.
- ☒ “Just because you’re going on vacation, don’t let your guard down. Covid-19 doesn’t take breaks,” says Dr Rastogi of Fortis Escorts, New Delhi.



Work and play



☒ What you do on vacation will change. Picnics and days at scenic open-air sites will replace museums and tourist attractions.

☒ Workcations will likely replace vacations.

☒ 'Do you have free wifi?' will be the new 'Do you have a spa?'

Expect work to overlap with personal life, just as it has during the lockdown.

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