

# CONDÉ NAST TRAVELLER

May 2020

“Choose luxury with a purpose”



INDIA INTERNATIONAL CITY GUIDES TRENDS THE LIST 2019 MORE

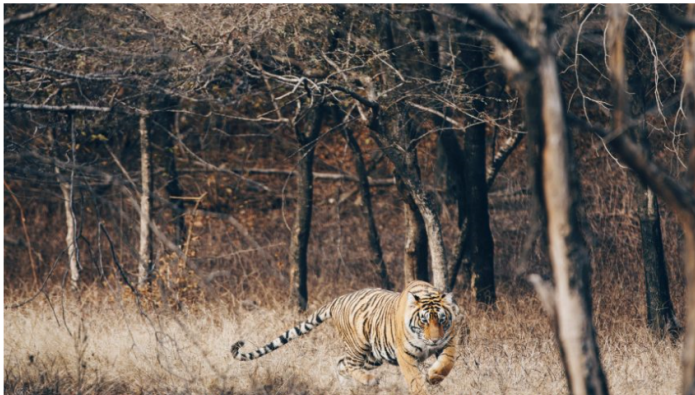
## Wildlife lovers

From one of the country's top luxury wildlife safari experts



Condé Nast Traveller

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A tiger on the move in Ranthambore. Photo: Rahulnath SR

We're in lockdown but our minds still travel. And for a lot of us confined indoors for the last few months, the first place it heads is to the great outdoors. This global pandemic has prompted us to reflect on our lives before, and wonder what we might do differently in a post-Covid world. There's no doubt that we'll go back to exploring the wild but this time around we will do it more mindfully. Yesterday in an Instagram Live, Divya Thani, editor-in-chief of Condé Nast Traveller India and Jaisal Singh, founder and CEO of SUJÁN discussed how travellers can do just this – become better travellers. Here are the five useful takeaways from the session in case you missed it :



**Check before you check-in**  
Singh urges travellers planning on going on safari to do their homework before they choose a camp. Do some online research and ask questions. Look for sustainability reports and reviews from trusted sources. Don't just take sustainability claims at face value. You want to go somewhere that is truly transparent in the work it does towards supporting biodiversity and its partnerships with communities to preserve and support local culture.

**Choose luxury with a purpose**  
Pick a camp that gives back. A brand such as the SUJÁN Group, for instance, is known for its luxurious safari camps in India and the conservation and community-focussed initiatives that are at the heart of its



Thani and Singh in conversation about how we can be better travellers when we head in to the wild

dripping with 1930s glamour? Check. An inviting spa underneath an ancient peepal tree and a fresh farm-to-table approach to dining? Check. A plastic-free guest experience? Check. Support for local wilderness protection schemes? Sanitation programmes for rural communities and employment of locals? A website with an entire section dedicated to transparently talking about its sustainability initiatives? Check, check, check and check. Guests who stay at a SUJÁN camp are even charged a fee per night that goes directly towards supporting these initiatives.

**Enough of the great indoors**  
Singh is optimistic safari travel will bounce back almost as soon as travel resumes. "Being out in the open, within a healthy, natural environment will put those still worried about Covid-19 at ease," he says. "And a conservation tourism model and luxury hospitality in the bush can go hand-in-hand. I believe. Good, responsible tourism is a key ingredient in conservation. If the younger generation respects our natural environment, there's hope for a better planet." A quick mantra to live by when you go on safari: give back more than you take out of the wild, Singh said.

**Expect the unexpected**  
Singh pointed out that wildlife enthusiasts will be excited to know that almost 22 percent of India's total geographical area is covered in forests. Safari goers will be pleasantly surprised by the amazing variety of flora and fauna to be found in the country. And he urged Indian travellers to see more of it. Singh gave the example of his property, SUJÁN Jawai where the team has documented around 55 leopards, making it one of highest densities of the animal per square kilometre anywhere in the world.



SUJÁN's camps offer a particular kind of luxury that isn't incongruous with the surroundings. Photo: Rahulnath SR

**The safari is the show**  
Singh laughed as he recounted how years ago guests coming on safari would demand televisions in their rooms. That is no longer the case, he noted. The Indian traveller has evolved—it's all about authentic, experiential travel now. Booking numbers point to this too. When SUJÁN Sher Bagh launched, only two percent of the property's clientele were Indian. Currently, 26 percent of bookings are from domestic travellers. The more Indians become acquainted with indigenous wildlife, the more they respect it and feel personally responsible for it. "Indians are now coming to us to disconnect and come fully prepared to live by the rules of the jungle," Singh said.