

Compass

GUIDING YOU TOWARDS YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE ✨



Words by DORA ALJOFRI; Photo by NARAYAN MAHARJAN/GETTY IMAGES

Painting the town red

Every year in April, locals from Bhaktapur, east of Kathmandu, usher in good luck and prosperity with a colourful procession

Sindoor Jatra (15 Apr this year) falls on the sixth day of a nine-day celebration known as Bisket Jatra, one of the largest annual festivals in Bhaktapur, 40 minutes from Kathmandu. Residents throw *sindoor* (vermillion powder) at parading chariots of deities such as Bhairab (an avatar of Shiva) and Ganesh. The origins of this centuries-old celebration are hazy, but one myth recounts the tale of a princess whose husbands kept dying on their wedding night. Eventually, a young commoner married the princess but refused to go to sleep. After dark, two pythons attacked, but he fought and killed them. The resulting festivities were how Sindoor Jatra started. The colour red is a symbol of luck in Nepal, and sindoor is often used in major celebrations.