

Chai & chills

Joys Of Winter In Desi Households

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Stock up for a cozy haven, because the mercury doesn't just drop - it plummets. One season we're melting at 50°C, fans on full speed and tempers even higher; the next, we're shivering at around 0°C, turning bedrooms into battlegrounds of blankets, age-old family rituals, and struggles native to big Indian homes.

Floral blanket supremacy

Digging out mislabelled boxes of blankets and *razais* feels like a mini archaeological dig. Each quilt has a personality - florals are the class toppers, animal prints the dramatic teens, and psychedelic patterns the cool know-it-alls. And yes, your quilt has to match your vibe. Darker ones? Apparently better sleep - NASA said so (somewhere). Few things beat sinking under a heavy *razai*, toes thawing, with that faint mix of naphthalene and sunshine bringing back old winter memories - the fluffiest relics indeed.

Chai par charcha

Ek garam chai ki pyaali ho, aur mummy banane waali ho.

The kitchen transforms into the living room, where the entire family is found lounging for "just one more cup of *chai*." *Garam-garam sarson ka saag* accompanied by its soulmate, *makki di roti*, is a kaleidoscope of flavours and divine fragrances - the ultimate food-coma combo. And what's an Indian meal without its heart-clogging dessert? Let the sky rain *gajar ka halwa*!

Larger-than-life sweater

Like an out-stationed friend, that one overly large sweater your mother said you'd "grow into" revisits every winter season - a testament that this is the extent of your body and there is no growing into it. Or perhaps that uniform blazer that will eventually be passed on to your younger sibling, who might never fill it completely either. Waddling like a penguin becomes the cool runway walk.

Hot water wars

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the hot-water waitlist is longer than that of a 5-star buffet. Woe to those who dare take longer than six minutes and leave nothing but cold water for the rest. It is a betrayal remembered for seasons to come.

From winter, with love

Wispy winds give way to sweaty loos. Farewells are bid to the blankets and woollens, until we see them again next year. All that's left behind is the unsettled Ludo score and memories of comfort.



Ink of intent

The Final Stroke Of Quills And Consequences

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I'm often dismissed as a squiggle, a flourish, a final formality at the bottom of a page. But have you ever paused, pen hovering above the line, breath held in anticipation? If so, you already know, I'm the Signature. I do not complete things; I make them matter.

For centuries, I have presided over decisive moments. Queen Elizabeth I once took twenty minutes to craft me amid royal tensions. My flourish sealed the Indian Constitution, and with the Treaty of Versailles, I turned the page on a world war. In courtrooms, though the gavel strikes, I am the mark that makes a judgment binding. Even John Hancock tried to immortalise me on the US Declaration of Independence, inspiring the phrase 'put your John Hancock here'. But I do not exist only in old parchments and political halls, I belong to everyone.

Though trembled through nervous hands signing their first bank

forms, and being replaced in Japan with the hanko stamp, I still accompany a plethora of milestones. I appear on certificates, passports, cheques, and even letters to idols that never drew replies. You have practiced me absentmindedly in notebooks, unaware that you were sketching your future self.

Today, I live in pixels and code. Through cryptographic keys, I secure online contracts, making forgery nearly impossible. E-signatures have become the newfound trust in a remote world that works across borders. Of course, I have been faked by those who think deception slips unnoticed. Spoiler alert: it never does. Between 2002 and 2016, a Wells Fargo scandal exposed fraudulent activity involving forged customer signatures. Yet I also hold power to redeem. You could say I have a dual nature, capable of both destruction and salvation. I must say, that has a certain ring to it.

You will find me in history and in culture alike. George Washing-

ton's signed Acts of Congress fetched 9.8 million dollars in 2012. On the other hand, a young girl once clutched a jersey marked by Virat Kohli's signature, tears glimmering not just for who he was but for what my imprint represented. That moment became real because of me.

For all my grandeur, I still carry human tenderness. Before embarking on Apollo 11, Neil Armstrong and his crew signed hundreds of memorabilia so their families never worry about insurance or safety. I have sealed promises of love and belonging, affirmed the bond between strangers, and handed peace where conflict once stood. I am not merely ink on paper. I am the instant everything changes.

So next time your pen hovers above that line, pause for a moment. Take a deep breath and feel the weight of it. Every stroke you draw is a declaration, not of completion, but of consequence. I am the very witness that turns intention into reality, the final word that makes it matter. And with that, as I've done for centuries, I'm signing off.