



Pondicherry Heritage Festival **1 February to 15 March 2023**

The 9th Pondicherry Heritage Festival (PHF) continues to celebrate the heritage of this extraordinary town and its environs, in all its aspects: Natural, Spiritual, Cultural and Architectural.

This year's festival will focus on “**Responsible Tourism**” as we turn our attention to how holidays can be transformed into more meaningful immersive experiences with greater awareness of a tourist's actions on the locals and the natural environment. The 2002 Cape Town Declaration characterises responsible tourism as: **i.** minimising impacts; **ii.** generating economic benefits for host communities; **iii.** involving local people in decision-making; **iv.** conserving natural and cultural heritage; **v.** providing meaningful connections between tourists and local people and **vi.** being accessible and culturally sensitive.

Responsible tourism should address the following challenges which inevitably arise as a result of mindless tourism: *littering, rises in crime, deterioration of authenticity, traffic congestion; exceeding the carrying capacity of an area's infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads etc.)* and capitalising instead on the economic benefits, the preservation of natural areas and the promotion of culture and heritage. PHF 2023 welcomes Pondicherry's local communities, the tourism industry, collaborators, government agencies and others to initiate sustained efforts in developing an environment where all can benefit and thrive. The festival will end with A special **Round Table on Responsible Tourism** in the hope that everyone: Governments (Local and Central), experts, stakeholders and people work together to make Pondicherry the pioneer in demonstrating to the rest of the country what Responsible Tourism is all about.

The “Creative expression by children” for school and college students under the theme of the festival will be held live for the first time since the lockdowns. The Crafts Bazaar will come alive again with crafts persons from the region and outside and MIP will be back again with local designers and artisans displaying their creations. Cultural heritage will be highlighted by dancers Anita Ratnam and Meera Das and musician Amrit Ramnath all performing in beautifully restored heritage locations. Traditional art forms, games, and ways of living, cooking and eating will be explored through different events. Responsible tourism will be actively demonstrated by boat rides in the mangroves, kayaking for a trash free planet, wetland photo contest, and a learning through nature workshop for children. There will be cycle tours, food walk, and one again the Street Play: reclaiming the streets for residents; a book launch and a poetry evening, talks, discussions and seminars on Vedic Chanting; Cultural Heritage Conservation; Indian Cultural Heritage in the Light of Sri Aurobindo; Tamil Heritage: Language, Literature, Culture, Diversity

www.pondicherryheritagefestival.org * <https://www.facebook.com/PondicherryHeritageFestival/>
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Registration for select events on Pondylive: www.pondylive.com



and Inclusion and Women's Contribution to Culture; as the UN has declared this as the year of the Millet, the Local Food Systems event will focus on Millet.

PHF has always been a volunteer effort, led by the People for Pondicherry's Heritage (PPH), INTACH and PondyCAN. It is supported by GOPs Tourism Department and partners: IFP, AFP, Sri Aurobindo Society, LAL, Kariappa House, Hidesign, Palais de Mahe; Aquaterra, PondicherryIn, Pondicherry Beach Escapes, SITA Cultural Centre, Midam Trust, Pondicherry Crafts Council of Puducherry, Gratitude Heritage, La Maison de Bitasta, EFEO, Brown Critique, Pondicherry Rivage Ladies Circle 47, Pondicherry Sketchers and others.

The organisers hope the Heritage Festival continues to strengthen the respect of Pondicherians for the traditions and treasures of our town, created by the confluence of cultures in a spectacularly beautiful setting. They believe that, by celebrating the heritage, it will become an important part of people's lives and Pondicherry will retain its unique character. They also hope more and more people from outside Pondicherry come to love and treasure the specialness too and visit it, and make their visit a living example of responsible tourism.

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