

# MY DELHI WEEKEND

FOUR LOCAL INSIDERS SHARE  
THEIR FAVORITE SPOTS IN  
COSMOPOLITAN DELHI

INTERVIEWS BY PALLAVI PASRICHA



The reservoir at Hauz Khas Forest in Siri Fort

FEDERICO ROSTAGNO/ALAMY



NAAMA-REDDY

## Karishma Jhalani

Filmmaker and art director  
at Janavi India | [janaviindia.com](http://janaviindia.com)

I enjoy spending time at Dhan Mill Compound in Chhatarpur, the home of OddBird Theatre & Foundation, a collaborative space hosting community theater and dance performances. Amid the green open spaces, this complex teems with stores and dining options. CAARA is my favorite restaurant for its *orecchiette* pasta, green goddess sandwiches, and grains superfood salad. Its pesto is the best in town. If you have time, squeeze in a yoga session at Lifeyoga in Chanakyapuri – it's a green and peaceful, dreamy space.

Stranger in Greater Kailash is a vibey dive bar that always has something going on, from DJ nights to movie screenings. In this city of foodies, two places you cannot ignore are Andhra Pradesh Bhavan, a canteen-style restaurant on Ashoka Road for spicy Indian food such as mutton biryani, fried chicken, and mutton curry, and Plats in Malviya Nagar, where the charred corn linguine and tender stem broccoli are excellent. Be warned: the portions are large, so don't over order.

**Insider's tip:** Hauz Khas Forest in Siri Fort is my oasis in Delhi. This verdant green spot that not many visit is full of prancing peacocks and wildflowers, and if you're lucky, you might spot the occasional nilgai, an antelope known as a "blue cow."

**Out-of-town getaway:** I love visiting Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan state because it's so peaceful to be in the middle of this amazing forest. It takes just a little over five hours to get there, so it's easily accessible from the city.



MAX MONTINGELLI

## Karan Torani

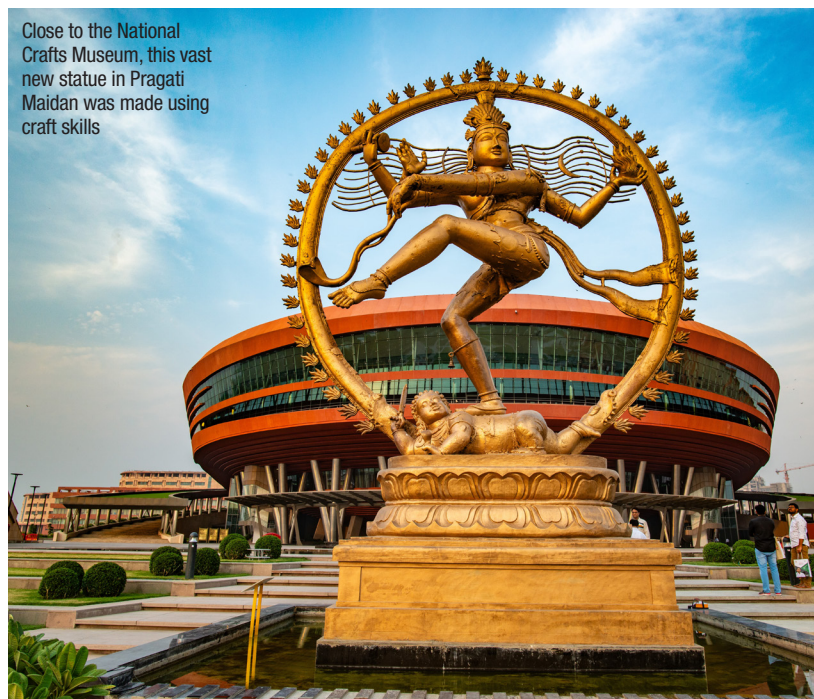
Fashion designer  
[torani.in](http://torani.in)

Culture, food, and history are at the very heart of Delhi. To combine all three, I love visiting the National Crafts Museum & Hastkala Academy in Pragati Maidan because there's so much to see, admire, and be inspired by. The textiles gallery has a wonderful collection of traditional fabrics, all handmade in India; there's a craft gallery with sculptures, paintings, and religious objects; you can also watch artisans at work using traditional tools. I often go with my mother and we like to stop off at Cafe Lota, which serves excellent regional Indian food, so I never leave hungry.

Another place that feels like the very soul of Delhi is India Gate. With layers of history, it is a city icon where families go to stroll in the evening when the sun goes down and the temperature is a little cooler. An old ice cream vendor who is the fourth generation of his family is still there – I remember him from when I was a child. When the sun is setting, I find it a beautiful place to reconnect the past and present.

**Insider's tip:** Among Delhi's many hidden gems for street food, my favorite is Kashiram Matar Kulchewala, a tiny, street-side, hole-in-the wall eatery in Naraina, for a dish called *chole kulche* – chickpeas in a tangy curry served with leavened bread. Chittaranjan Park in southeast Delhi is great for *puchka*, another tangy, delicious snack made of a puffed-up wheat ball that the vendor stuffs with mashed potato, boiled chickpeas, and spices, and then pours in tamarind-flavored water. It is quite a mouthful as it needs to be eaten in one go!

**Out-of-town getaway:** I'm drawn to the Himalayan hill station Kasauli because of the wonderful peace and quiet. Walks in the hills offer mesmerizing views of valleys and pine-clothed mountains. From Delhi, drive along National Highway 44 to Chandigarh and take the Chandigarh-Kalka highway – the journey takes just over five hours.



Close to the National Crafts Museum, this vast new statue in Pragati Maidan was made using craft skills

ENGLISH ROSE/ALAMY



The Library Bar at The Leela Palace New Delhi

VIDIT TANEDIA

### Tanvi Singh Bhatia

Cultural curator at IBTIDA – Ek Mehfil  
[ibtidaekmehfil.com](http://ibtidaekmehfil.com)



I love to walk along the quiet streets of Meharchand Market in southern Delhi, as it's a great place to look for quaint knickknacks, boutique Indian wear, and find unusual gifts. The colorful art murals on

the walls of nearby Lodhi Colony are worth seeing. You won't find street art like this anywhere else in the city. One of my favorite spots for cocktails is at The Library Bar in The Leela Palace New Delhi. I always order the Old Fashioned. The colonial vibe and atmospheric lighting give it a cozy yet luxurious atmosphere. It has a lively feel at the weekend when it's always packed.

Delhi is a great place for music lovers. My favorite haunt is The Piano Man; this jazz club has the best live music in the city, and the choice of bands and artists is as exceptional as the ambiance. Check the line-up before visiting. The mystical Sufi singing (*qawwali*) on Thursdays at Nizamuddin Dargah shrine is an experience not to miss – it's music for the soul. Go there for a raw atmosphere with no frills.

**Insider's tip:** Drishyakala Art Museum's display of lesser-known and renowned artists is a treat for art lovers. Its location, in the surroundings of the historic Red Fort, amps up the experience.

**Out-of-town getaway:** Agra is around three hours away via the Yamuna Expressway. At sunrise, the first rays give the Taj Mahal a surreal, pale pink hue. Combining architectural beauty with a nostalgic love story, this 17th-century marble monument is truly stunning.



Vibrant art murals at Lodhi Colony



### Tarun Sibal

Chef and entrepreneur  
[instagram.com/tarunsibal](https://www.instagram.com/tarunsibal)

The lively vibe, cosmopolitan crowd, and wide selection of bars and restaurants makes Basant Lok Market in Vasant Vihar my favorite hangout. As a Delhi kid, I grew up in this market, so it is filled with nostalgia for me. Now this location is a city hotspot, so it was the obvious place to open my bar, Khi Khi. If you want a deep dive into the city's pub culture and feel the buzz of a young country, this is the perfect area to visit.

I like to stroll in the sprawling Lodhi Garden in the morning; it's a great place to chill out, spend some quiet time, and then head to nearby Khan Market to browse the eclectic stores – don't miss Good Earth for luxury home decor products. You'll be spoiled for choice when it comes to restaurants in Khan Market, but a kebab roll at Khan Chacha or the pastas and decadent desserts at the Big Chill is always a good call. My favorite is the pepperoni pasta.

**Insider's tip:** For an evening of wine and tapas like cheese and charcuterie boards, head to Captain's Cellar near Khan Market, which has a great selection of international wines. The crowd is chic as is the space, with appealing artwork and elegant aesthetics.

**Out-of-town getaway:** Thanks to the new Delhi-Jaipur highway, I like to get behind the wheel for a three-hour drive to Jaipur in Rajasthan. The majestic 16th-century Amer Palace Fort (also known as Amber Fort) perched on a hill is always an awe-inspiring sight. I love the dazzling Sheesh Mahal (Hall of Mirrors) in the fort, where small mirrors in intricate patterns bedeck the walls. I also enjoy browsing Jaipur's lively markets for colorful, traditional Indian wear.



Inside Amer Palace Fort's Hall of Mirrors

BORIS STROUKO/SHUTTERSTOCK