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Tasting Bangalore on Golden Chariot

1 Feb 2008, 0123 hrs IST, TNN

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BANGALORE: The royal journey on board the Golden Chariot is sure to titillate your taste buds. While traversing through the sights and sounds of Karnataka's rich history, a tailor-made menu imbuing the spirit of the state awaits you.

Maple Hotels, which is the hospitality partner of the Rs 40-crore luxury-on-wheels project, has designed a menu that would be a mix of local delicacies and continental food.

Every day of the journey, passengers will be treated to a gastronomical delight of coastal Karnataka, north Karnataka and south Karnataka dishes.

"We have put forth a sit-down menu where passengers can choose from an array of continental delights to the day's special menu - which would be a cuisine from one of the regions of the state. As there would be a large number of foreigners travelling, we would have to tone down the spice levels," said Upendra Singh Jamwal, VP (operations) of Maple Hotels.

Coastal and north Karnataka food, which are traditionally spicy, will have to be made less so in order to cater to the large US and European audience, added Jamwal.

According to Luxury Trains, the marketing partner of this project, who also handle the marketing of Palace on Wheels and Deccan Odyssey, around 60% to 70% of the passengers would be foreigners, a majority of who would be non-resident Indians. What's more, the stop at Kabini gives the tourists a chance to experience a meal in the surroundings of a forest.

Also, on offer are dedicated tour guides to take one through the history and culture of every region. Golden Chariot has appointed IndiaWALKS as its cultural coordinator to oversee all the off-board activities including selection and

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training of guides at each destination.

This luxury offering will be flagged off by President Pratibha Patil on February 2. On February 11, trial runs of the train will commence. Commercial operations will kick off on March 3. However, bookings started from January 30, but actual issue of tickets will happen once the flagging off ceremony ends.

According to the stakeholders in this project, the Golden Chariot is expected to be a success taking into account the fact that there are no tickets available for Palace on Wheels till next year. "The demand for luxury train travel is growing at a phenomenal rate, as the rich who have seen the world are now looking to learn about their own country," said Sajivve Trehaan, CEO of Luxury Trains.

Correction: The cost of a one-week trip on the Golden Chariot is about Rs 1.1 lakh, and not as reported in TOI dated January 30.

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