



(<http://indulge.newindianexpress.com>)

It Takes a Village (<http://indulge.newindianexpress.com/it-takes-a-village-2/section/44488>)

East Coast (<http://indulge.newindianexpress.com/category/chennai/eastcoast>) Feb 5, 2016



(<http://indulge.newindianexpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/moha3.jpg>)

Get a slice of rural life in the craft centres between Auroville and Pondicherry

What comes to your mind when planning a weekend jaunt to Pondy? Lazing on the beach, café hopping and rummaging for quirky souvenirs, perhaps. It's hardly ever riding on a bullock cart, playing kho kho or trying your hand at kolattam. This seldom-seen side of the region is what the Auroville and Puducherry Village Heritage festival promises to open up to visitors, next weekend.

On the count of three

The third edition of the festival, organised by the Mohanam Bioregion Culture and Heritage Centre, showcases the uniqueness of the villages lying between Auroville and Pondicherry, explains P Balasundaram, head of the centre. "The festival is our way of sharing the local lifestyle with people elsewhere. It is also an opportunity to revive the region's traditional arts and crafts," he adds. Travellers are often intrigued by the colonial thrall of Pondicherry and the mysticism of Auroville, but between these lie Alankuppam and Sanjeevi Nagar—villages with a distinctive cultural identity. They have developed into small craft hubs, with both the work and village life heavily influenced by the melting pot that is Pondicherry and Auroville. (<http://indulge.newindianexpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/moha13.jpg>)

Last year's edition of the festival, which was revived after the maiden venture in 2005, saw casual camaraderie between