

#MUSING

GUY TRIPS

Where friendship turns into healing

I am not one for Bollywood movies, but one movie in particular lives rent-free in my head — Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara. Was it a particular masterpiece? Not really. But it stirred something in me that refused to fade — a yearning to hit the road. Not necessarily to Spain and go skydiving (although that's still on my bucket list), but to take a trip with my closest guy buds, cell phones off, and reality on hold.

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Would it really work the same? Does it have to be an international outing, or do local overnight stayovers count? Would it still feel different if the trip had girls along, or if it were with your partner or family? Being a realist (read pessimist), for a long time, I didn't think so, chalking it all up to 'movie magic.'

Well, as fate would have it, I got the chance to find out for myself. An old friend returned to the country after a decade, and as these things often go, it led some of us old friends to reconnect. That reconnection turned into numerous weekend stays and even a trip down to Cox's Bazar early this year. Sadly, that friend has gone back, but the memories and experiences we shared made me reconsider my opinion on ZNMD being just 'movie magic.'

So, why have these trips/stays been so memorable? Why do I think guy trips are therapeutic now? For starters, travelling with your mates can be as spontaneous as one text of "Man, I'm so bored" to spiral into "Ok, transport sorted, let's roll" in less than 10 minutes. Try that with your partner or your family and see how that goes!

It's also less stressful, as you are dealing with like-minded simpletons just like you, so two pairs of clothes can last five days, and as long



as someone remembers a charger, everyone's good to go. Another perk? Because it's just the guys, you can stay WHEREVER you want, no fancy five-star accommodation needed, meaning your trips are affordable!

It also means that because you are not worried about keeping a loved one safe, you can explore places and do things you would never dare to with partners or family, like walking through a wooded area for half the night in search of ghosts, only to find foxes and crazy, coloured spiders.

Not into adventure? That's fine too!

If you were on a trip with your partner, you'd have to plan outings lest you hear the dreaded "Did we come here just to sleep all day?" spiel. And even when you do head out, you're transformed into a part-time content creator documenting her trip for her Instagram feed.

No such problems on a guy trip. Guy 1 wants to nap till the afternoon? Let him. Guy 2 goes four kilometres away for some breakfast buffet that only stays

open for two hours? No one cares. You get the picture. You're all free to do what you want, even if all you do is absolutely nothing!

But the absolute best part? You can just sit on the beach (or insert place), you and your mates, and just talk about everything you have going on. No judgment, no future material for blackmail/fights, no interruptions!

All you will get are arms around your shoulder, a few moments of silence, followed by your bud's confession of his own problems. That's when you realise how similar your struggles are, and how few outlets exist that will truly listen and actually relate. Because make no mistake, dear reader, men are going through very difficult times these days, and the worst part is that no one really cares.

I can tell you this much. The year 2024 was rough on me, as I am sure it was for many of you in various ways. In my case, by the end of the year, I was heartbroken, and I'd lost a parent — so, to put it mildly, I was not okay. But the trips I had with my friends helped me process the hurt in a way that would have otherwise taken years. The trips also revealed what my friends were going through, too — divorces, financial losses, struggles I had no clue about. But we talked, we understood, we supported, and I like to think we came out better for it.

So, no, readers! Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara is not just movie magic. A trip with your guy buddies might just be the therapy you need, only cheaper. Maybe curb the expectation of finding and falling in love with a Katrina Kaif lookalike, and you're set.

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Photo: Collected

