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🌐 [LinkedIn Profile](#)

📍 Kolkata, India

EDUCATION

Master of Arts

Jadavpur University

2011 - 2013 | Film Studies

Master of Arts | Diploma

Momoyama Gakuin University

2012 - 2013 | Japanese & Film Studies
Japan Student Services Organisation
(JASSO) Scholarship recipient

Bachelor of Arts

Jadavpur University

2008 - 2011 | Comparative Literature

EXPERTISE

Photography

Cinematography

Photo/Video Editing

LANGUAGES

English, Bengali, Hindi

Links to all work experiences mentioned are provided in my [LinkedIn Profile](#)

Here is a [link](#) to my video work portfolio

SAMBIT DATTACHAUDHURI

Photographer | Cinematographer | Editor

ABOUT ME

I am a self taught photographer, cinematographer, and photo/video editor working independently for the past 12 years. I have also operated my own travel company, The Doi Host, from 2017-2023. I am a keen and fast learner, and adapt easily to changes.

WORK EXPERIENCE

● October 2023 - Feb 2024

The Habitats Trust, Tomorrowland Foundation, EkTara
Photographer, Cinematographer

I recently finished two freelance photo/video projects - one for The Habitats Trust covering pitches for action grants in Ladakh and Orissa; the other for Tomorrowland Foundation's EkTara NGO in Kolkata.

● 2017 - May 2023

The Doi Host Hospitality Private Limited | Uttarakhand
Manager, Host, Travel Guide

Formed and operated this travel company with my wife. We curated road trips to the remote Himalayas between 2017-2020. From June, 2020 to May, 2023 we operated Doi Homestay in Uttarakhand. We also operated a restaurant.

● 2016 - 2020

National Geographic Traveller India | Remote
Photographer

Contributed photos for various features on National Geographic Traveller India. Photos ranged from travel, wildlife, food, and others and were either published in their magazine or their website. I also conducted two online photography workshops with them during the pandemic.

● 2017 - 2020

Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust | New Delhi
Cinematographer, Film Editor

Shot and edited 60+ feature length interviews for an archive on Indira Gandhi.

● 2015 - 2016

People's Archive of Rural India | Bihar
Cinematographer, Film Editor

Shot and edited set of short films covering flood situation in North Bihar. The project consisted of four short documentaries on specific individuals affected by the floods.

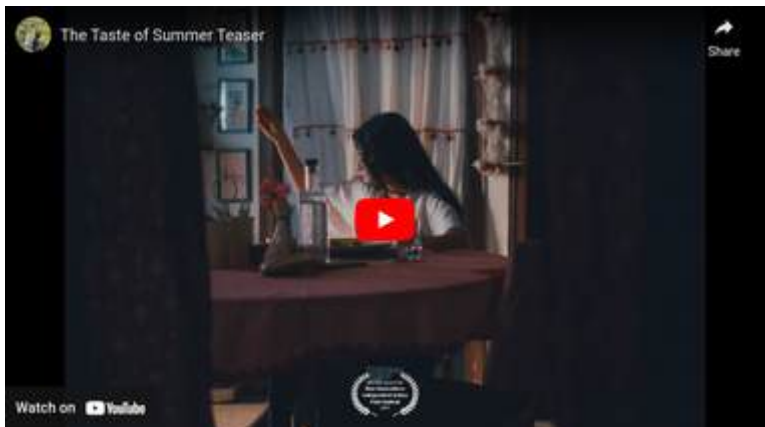
● 2014 - 2015

Firki, Teach for India | Delhi NCR
Cinematographer, Film Editor

Shot, Edited, Subtitled, and Sound Mixed about 60 videos for Firki's online teacher training portal during their formative days. These videos were shot across Government schools in Delhi NCR.

The Taste of Summer (2024) selected for New Generations Independent Indian Film Festival, Frankfurt, Germany.

This is my first fiction short film and was made on a shoe string budget. I served as the writer, cinematographer, editor, sound editor, and colorist for this film.



<https://youtu.be/9kdIyi37RWY>



THE TASTE OF SUMMER / GRISSHER SHAAD
Sambit Dattachaudhuri
(Bengali, Hindi, and English, 17mins, India)

Synopsis

A girl who's recently returned to her hometown conjures up memories about what she's been missing as a storm descends upon a hot summer afternoon.

Director's Statement

Often a period of seclusion and personal recollection helps in determining what steps to take next.

Inspired by my own summers at home with my mother, the film is a reflection of a generation of mid 30 year olds who are increasingly fed up with their routine jobs and are seeking for something more meaningful to do in their lives.

The pace at which life hits us at this age is nothing short of a bombardment to our senses. It is therefore essential to indulge in things that soothe us.

This is my debut fiction film. Shot on a FujiFilm X-H2s at 6.2k resolution. Post done in DaVinci Resolve.

I am extremely thankful to be able to use two music tracks in this film. The song Thumari by Gauhar Jaan is obtained from Wikipedia Commons and is free of any copyright licenses; and the permission for the instrumental track Nature was obtained directly from the musician Disasterpeace.



Below are four video stories I shot and edited for
People's Archive of Rural India.



Water come, water go

In north Bihar, people revered the monsoon and rivers, even though they caused floods on occasion. But now, Senu Devi says, the rising waters are a source of trouble

People's Archive of Rural India

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/water-come-water-go/>



Living with floods

While farmers in many parts of the world are learning to manage with less water, Vinod Yadav and his neighbours in north Bihar are trying to farm in constant flood water

People's Archive of Rural India

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/living-with-floods/>



Vote for boat

A recurring monsoon-driven demand drives the boat economy of north Bihar

People's Archive of Rural India

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/vote-for-boat/>



Jahangir's story

In north Bihar, embankments built by the government along the turbulent Kosi have created conflict, aggravated floods and caused huge losses to the people living in Ghongepur and other villages

People's Archive of Rural India

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/jahangirs-story/>

Below are two videos I shot and edited for
Spykar and IPL.



<https://youtu.be/-tGSPqF8MCo>



https://youtu.be/_OLui7ewjy0

For Tomorrowland Foundation & EkTara

TOMORROWLAND FOUNDATION

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ALL POSTS

India 3 min read

A Sweet visit by Roger van Damme



Published on



Surprise DJ set

Adding to the enchantment of the day, Roger van Damme's two sons joined him on this memorable trip. Among them, his son Luca surprised everyone with an amazing DJ set, adding a vibrant musical element to the cultural exchange.

[LEARN MORE](#)



BELGIAN WAFFLES BY ROGER VAN DAMME

Belgian Waffles by Roger van Damme

Renowned Michelin-starred pastry chef Roger van Damme brought a visit to the Tomorrowland Foundation x Ek Tara Music & Art School in Kolkata, India.

This unique collaboration brought together the essence of art, music, and culinary delights in a beautiful cultural exchange.

During his visit, Chef Roger van Damme, known for his exceptional pastry creations, shared his passion for Belgian cuisine by making delicious traditional Belgian Waffles with the girls from the school. Together, they immersed themselves in the art of pastry-making, blending Belgian flavors with Indian hospitality.

Mobile School

Roger van Damme and his sons also took the opportunity to visit the Mobile School in India.

Tomorrowland Foundation has an ongoing collaboration with Mobile School, the non-profit organization is focused on working with street children all over the world, helping them to discover and unlock their talents and regain a positive self-image.



For The Habitats Trust



For National Geographic Traveller India

THE DESTINATION HIMACHAL PRADESH



Well-camouflaged snow leopard cubs keep a keen eye on their mother at Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary, Spiti.

COLD PLAY

Difficult but stunning terrains teeming with winter wildlife make a photographer's Himachal all work and all play

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAMBIT DATTACHAUDHURI

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THE DESTINATION HIMACHAL PRADESH

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Five hundred kilometres is a long way, especially through the cold Himalayas. It is also what it takes to reach a snow-quilted Spiti valley in Himachal Pradesh from capital Shimla. The photographer undertook the journey—with a quick stop at Kinnaur—for the love of Himalayan wildlife, and encountered it aplenty. He returned fuller than intended, memories inhabited by the great outdoors and its winter playmates: cold rivers, hot momos, and apple orchards dusted silver.

Located halfway between Kibber village and Spiti's district headquarter Kaza, Kee Monastery offers grand winter vistas. Facing page: Snow (top) is the prime prey of the snow leopard. Sheep-wool socks (bottom) made by a women's self-help group in Kibber.



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Ceremonial drums (top left) at the Bhimakali temple in Saruhan, Kinnaur; A baby red fox (top right) nudged the photographer near Spiti's Chicham Bridge; Shoching is a tiny village (bottom) dotted with barren willow and poplar trees. Facing page: The Spiti River sparkles and sings beneath a bridge between the towns of Kaza and Tabo.

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APRIL 2017

THE DESTINATION

Delhi

FROM THE KABULIWALLAH'S KITCHEN

In the narrow lanes of South Delhi, a generation of Afghan settlers serves up a piece of tradition in a new home

BY PALLABI MUNSI | PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAMBIT DATTACHAUDHURI



INDIA



Chopana kebab, succulent mutton kebabs served with a scattering of tangy sumac (top left) at Lajpat Nagar's Chopana Kebabs is a meat lover's delight. The meat-filled sambosa (top right), which is much like the samosa, has a flaky pastry covering. Like Indian food, most Afghan rice dishes, like the Kabul pilav (bottom), are served with a side of curries.

T's Monday evening in the capital city: A game of hide-and-seek is afoot between the summer sun and stormy clouds. Zooming past Humayun's Tomb, my auto rickshaw stops inside a narrow lane in Bhogal, in the heart of South Delhi.

I am late for my guided food walk but Delhi Food Walk's owner Anshar Sapra, who quit his job as an HR professional four years ago to dedicate his life to his first love, food, hardly seems to mind.

Bhogal's narrow Kashmiri Lane is bustling with activity and we are here to trail the Afghan food this area is known for. India's proximity to Afghanistan and its position as a British colony meant that the country drew many a migrant worker in the 19th century. Afghan businessmen or *Kabulwallahs*, who were moneylenders who doubled as dry fruit and *asadostda* sellers, found a home in the then colonial capital of Calcutta. However, in this part of the country, an Afghan settlement grew a century later. Refugees migrated to Delhi's Lajpat Nagar and Bhogal after the Soviet withdrawal and subsequent mujahideen takeover in the late 1980s and early 1990s. While some returned to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, many chose to remain in their new home, leading to a permanent Afghan settlement.

My photographer friend, armed with a bag full of *insees*, asks where we'll start off and a grinning Sapra tells us to first just look around. The scent of butter and dough teases the senses as we walk past the shops of the famous *nanawais* or Afghan bread-makers. Digging into *dhajuri*, sweet, crusty naan shaped like dates or *dhajur*, I remember the reason for being so interested in this Afghan food trail.

Of the few memories of growing up in a Bengali household in Calcutta in the early 1990s, the one I hold dear is of the monthly visits of a *Kabulwallah*. Every time he would bring me some *sheer pira*, a type of succulent milk fudge flavoured with rosewater. I have moved to three different cities since then but the taste of *sheer pira* and the warmth of my 'Kabulwallah uncle' remain buried in my subconscious.

Sapra tells us that bread, though a staple in a typical Afghan household, is rarely made at home. It is bought instead from the local *naanwais*—mostly men—who make them fresh every day. As soon as one batch is baked, the next is ready to be popped into the large clay *tandoors*. As we stop at all eight *naanwai* shops—also run by men—that dot the lane, Sapra introduces us to different kinds of Afghan breads. There is sweet, round, sesame-sprinkled *rohi*; diamond-shaped *dhajus* and the very similar *gir*; the potato-stuffed *bolani*, which is served with a tomato-chilli chutney; and the rectangular, roti-like *faransa* among others. These nigella-, poppy- or sesame-topped, versatile naans are paired with just about anything, from rich lamb curry to a cup of hot tea, and have now become a part of Delhi's culinary landscape.

Next on our list is the Afghan burger, which looks more like a fat shawarma than burger. Layers of shredded cabbage, tomato, cucumber, shredded boiled chicken, and a generous helping of Aghani chips (similar to fries) are rolled in a naan. Finishing our





A popular Afghan delicacy, mantus are plump meat dumplings topped with mildy spiced chana dal (top left). The Afghan burger is more wrap than burger, stuffed with vegetables, shredded chicken, boiled egg and a heap of fries (top right). Bread is essential to Afghan cuisine, eaten as a snack with tea, or in a meal with curries (bottom).

meal of one burger—which could be a wise and filling choice for dinner—we hail a rickshaw to reach Lalpat Nagar railway station. According to Sapra, crossing the railway overbridge will transport us to Afghanistan itself.

On the other side, in Lalpat Nagar II, we find ourselves in a lane lined with shops selling food, clothes and all things intrinsically Afghan. There are more than five Afghan restaurants and Sapra decides that we should try out the newest of them all, Chopaan Kebab.

First we order mantus, plump dumplings nearly two-inches wide, filled with minced lamb and onions, and topped with cooked chana dal. The dish is served with a tangy yogurt sauce flavoured with garlic and mint. While we demolish our mantus, Pashto songs in Afghan singer Farhad Darya's voice serenade hungry guests. The seating arrangement at Chopaan Kebab—low queen-size divans with cushions—reflects that of an Afghan home. Next to us, an Afghani family of five sits cross-legged sharing their food from plates placed in the middle, like they would traditionally at home.

Next, we sample the restaurant's namesake dish. Chopaan kebabs are excellent, yogurt-marinated kebabs charbroiled to perfection, and have a smattering of the vinegary spice, sumac, and a special "kebab masala," which is a mix of bay leaves, dried ginger, cinnamon, clove, pepper corn, fennel powder and chilli powder. Accompanying the gratifying display of meat is the summer drink, daq. There's no hint of sweetness in this refreshingly salty, chas-like drink, which has long slices of cucumber and flecks of dried mint leaves. Soon, leaving Darya crooning, we move right across the road to Afghan Darbar.

At Darbar, we order Afghanistan's national food, the Kababi pilau. Juliens of carrot, plump raisins, and fiery lamb tikkas mix with aromatic basmati rice. Subtle flavours marry the peppery punch of the meat. It's served with a brinjal-and-yogurt curry and rajma. Looking at this spread, I cannot help but notice the similarities between Afghani and Indian cuisine. Though much lighter spiced, many of the Afghani dishes have similar ingredients and styles of cooking and serving—breads eaten with savoury curries, rice served with a side of curry and often a yogurt-based drink.

After this meal, our stomachs are full but the hunger for more delicious Afghani fare leads us to a roadside shop selling sambosa, flaky meat-filled patties, where we also buy vanilla-sponge-like Afghan cakes that are sold by the pound. With three stomachs filled (and four hours spent), we decide to end the walk with something sweet at Balkh restaurant down the road. Often known as Afghan ice-cream, *sheer qand* is similar to a kuli but quite rich. We are unable to finish even one plate. As we walk up to the counter to pay, the young Afghani man at the counter refuses to take our money, insisting that we hardly ate one plate and it doesn't feel right. Our insistence is met with a smile and a promise of accepting money the next time we eat here. In his smile, I see the warmth of my "Kababiwalah uncle."

www.delhifoodwalks.com; from \$2,000 per person depending on group size; max 16 people.



Tabo, Himachal Pradesh

Nature Instead of Kaza, Spiti



MOUNTAIN

The fact that the Dalai Lama has chosen Tabo as his retirement home speaks volumes about the beautiful village that in all valley, river and apple orchards. The best apples of the country are said to grow at Tabo, only 40 kilometres from Kaza, the more visible district headquarters of Spiti. Quite astonishing, given it doesn't have running water for half the year. The village is also home to a model agri-horticulture society promoting evolved, organic methods of farming to support local livelihoods. The Tabo Monastery sprawls over an impressive area, and is famed for its stunning sculptures, wall paintings and stucco images. Owing to its location in the shadow of two mountains, Tabo boasts wondrously night skies, splayed silver, waiting to be photographed.

—Sambit Datta Chaudhari

HOW TO GO

Tabo, Kaza and Spiti is best accessed via the neighbouring district of Shimla, connected by train and flight to all major Indian cities. From Shimla, one can take the HRTC bus (262 km/12 hr) to Tabo.

Diglipur, ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

Adventure

Instead of Havelock Island



BEACH

Diglipur in northern Andaman is blissfully underexplored—so far. Plans for an airport are underway. So go before the world does, and if you do, expect top-notch natural wonders. The twin islands of Ross and Smith, separated by a swift sandbar, are Diglipur's biggest draw. Cover the sandbar on foot, pausing for a swim or some sea watching. Plan your hours well; authorities only permit three.

A hike inside the Saddle Peak National Park takes you to the highest point in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands at 2,400 feet. Kalpong, Andaman's only river, flows through this forest. On the park's football, Lameya Bay Beach is perfect for idling. The nearby Kalpong Beach is a turtle nesting ground, claimed by hundreds of olive ridley, leatherback and hawksbill through December to January. The Alfred Caves echo with fruit-eating bats and inside the jungles of Shiyam Nagar thrive mud volcanoes. Craegy Island, a short swim from Kalipur, is superb for snorkelling... schools of parrot fish, sting ray, angeli fish and moray inhabit the blue waters with colours you'd find in a bag of confetti. —Edwina O'Souza

HOW TO GO

Port Blair, a stop or a short flight from Chennai, is the closest hub. The 298 km/12 hr ride from Port Blair to Diglipur winds through the disputed Andaman Trunk Road, where buses fly ahead under security. A more responsible option is to take a boat. The Aerial Bay Jetty near Diglipur connects to Port Blair by sea thrice a week. Some islands need permits, so do check in advance.

PHOTO: JEFFREY MAYER

Nongriat, MEGHALAYA

Nature Instead of Cherrapunji



MOUNTAIN

An hour's drive from the ever-popular Cherrapunji and a 3,500-step descent into the forests of the east Khasi hills lies Nongriat, home to the largest double-decker living root-bridge in the world. Woven by the Khasi community through an intertwining of aerial roots of rubber fig trees from either side of a stream, these 'living' bridges have taken over a century to get to the state they are in now, and they are ever growing. Photo ops are aplenty in the Tolkienesque landscape, although you'd do good to set the camera aside. With the pictorial Rainbow Falls lying slightly ahead of the root bridge, the trek into the forest is doubly rewarding. You will pass through tiny hamlets where locals offer fresh local lemonade and homemade ice cream to keep spirits up, scrambling now and then over some spectacular hanging bridges above turbulent tributaries of the Umiam river. Filled with water mist and the song of cicadas, Nongriat is best experienced in peak monsoon.

—Sambit Datta Chaudhari

HOW TO GO

Nongriat is best accessed via Shillong, connected by train and flight to major Indian cities. From Shillong's Police Bazar, take a cab to Tyra (65 km/2.5 hr), the closest motorable point to Nongriat. Local guides available at Tyra will take you on a 3,500-step pathway downhill, all the way to Nongriat and back.





Time stops in Jagatwar, a small town near Almora district in Uttarakhand. It hides another secret deep in its deodar forests—a cluster of 124 cut-stone Shiva temples built between the seventh and 13th centuries.

SHARMA/ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



A lingering retreat at the cozy Doi Homestay in Nathuakhan promises to be some work, and some play.

NATHUAKHAN, NOT OUT
UTTARAKHAND

If your idea of a workation is to settle into a homestay nestled deep in the Himalayas, then Doi Homestay in Nathuakhan, Uttarakhand is for you. A humble home run by Sambit Datta Chaudhuri and Disha Kapkoti, the vibrantly-coloured house opens to the mountains on one side and a fruit orchard on the other. With all meals prepared in-house (some with veggies and fruits right from the garden), and only four rooms, the couple manage to provide guests with the warmth of home. Currently, they're only accepting bookings for a minimum of a month, and require negative RT-PCR test results before arrival, but Datta Chaudhuri hinted at shorter stay options opening up soon. —**Lubna Amir**
Doubles from ₹35,000 for a month inclusive of all meals and laundry, thedoist.com/doi-homestay.

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PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM