

Herald Café



Goa's sneaker culture steps up

Goa's swapping flip-flops for chunky soles. From Yeezys to New Balance, sneaker fever's hit the coast—pricey, rare, and totally worth dodging red soil. Herald Café found a few kicking it in style

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Sun, sand, and now—sneakers. Once the land of laid-back chappals and sandy soles, Goa's slipping into something far sleeker. The global sneaker wave—born in the 1980s on the basketball courts of the US and fanned by hip-hop culture and Nike's game-changing Air Jordans—has finally made its way to our susegad shores. And it's not just hypebeasts showing off their Travis Scott x Jordans

or Yeezy Foam Runners; everyday folks are lacing up Adidas Sambas, Onitsuka Tigers, and Nike Dunks as a form of self-expression, flex, and function. Credit the wanderlusters—Goans returning from Dubai, London, or Melbourne with suitcases heavier in sole than soul. With no flagship stores or thriving retail culture, hunting for a pair of Jordans here feels like chasing monsoon lightning. Add import duties, GST, and the "Goa tax" of red soil and humidity, and your sneakers might just need their own skincare routine. Still, the

sneaker tech is wild—think Boost midsoles, Flyknit uppers, Zoom Air, sustainable algae-based foams—basically, high-performance couture for your feet. And despite Goa's sneaker-hostile climate (monsoons are merciless, white soles attract red soil like bees to bebinca), the culture is growing. Not for likes, not always for the 'Gram, but for the love of the drop, the design, and the sheer joy of wearing art on your feet—even if it means stuffing silica sachets like it's a personality trait.

KICKS SO FRESH, THEY NEED A FAN CLUB

Elton Rebello wears his heart on his soles. A Goan IT architect based in Dubai, this 37-year-old doesn't just love sneakers—he lives in them. "I wear sneakers everywhere. Gym? Sneakers. Airport? Sneakers. Wedding? I'll try to make it work," he jokes.

With over 35 pairs in rotation, his collection includes heavy hitters like the Travis Scott x Jordan lineup, classics from the Air Force series, Onitsuka Tigers, Adidas Superstars, and even Veja, which he admires for their sustainability. "I like shoes that feel good and do good. Veja as a brand contributes to environmental sustainability, and I can wear them pretty much anywhere," he says.

But he's not slave to trends. "I don't follow anyone. I go by what feels right—comfort, colour, and if it makes me happy. That's it."

And yes, maintenance is a full-time hobby. "My whites stay white, my colours stay crisp. I treat my sneakers just like my clothes," he laughs. "It's a task in Goa too—with all the red soil, you've got to be extra cautious or your white pair ends up looking like a rust experiment."

Despite the obsession, Elton isn't stingy with his stash. "I've gifted quite a few. Some I bought just because I liked how they looked and felt, but never wore them. So if I vibe with you, you might get lucky." Currently, he's hyped for the Adidas Gazelle x Gucci collab from 2021, which he's dubbed his "final boss pair." "That one's gonna be the cherry on top of my collection—until the next drop, of course," he grins.



SAMBAS OVER SELFIES – QUIETLY KICKING IT

Fayral Roriguese, a 34-year-old Goan living in Dubai, isn't flexing her sneakers for Instagram clout—she's wearing them because they feel like her. "I'm not that person posting new kicks with moody lighting and a Drake lyric. I just wear mine... a lot," she laughs. "If I like a pair, it goes everywhere with me—errands, dinners, airport runs, everything."

Back in college in Goa, sneaker culture was barely a whisper. "No one was flaunting kicks—it was more flip-flops and survival mode," she jokes. But when she moved to Dubai, things changed. "Suddenly I was surrounded by stores packed with colour, texture, hype—it was a whole new world." She bought her first pair on impulse, and since then, has grown a tight collection of over 15 pairs—including her

beloved Adidas Sambas, and her most sentimental pair: Adidas gifted by her roommate, a fellow sneaker enthusiast.

"We live together and bond over drops and expo visits—Sole DXB is our annual sneaker pilgrimage," she says. Her choices aren't guided by hype or resale value—they're emotional, instinctive, and very much her own. "I don't care about being trendy. If it's comfy and has a vibe, it's going on my feet," she grins.



SNEAKER CARE TIPS FOR GOA:

Red Soil Defence: Avoid light colours or wear older pairs during monsoon or beach outings

Humidity Hack: Use silica gel packets inside shoes and rotate frequently to prevent mildew

Sock It Up: Always wear socks to avoid sweat damage and keep sneakers fresher

Proper Storage: Use boxes or breathable racks, not plastic wraps, to avoid moisture

Gentle Clean: Brush with mild soap and warm water—skip the washing machine

75 PAIRS AND STILL COUNTING

"I've only ever played one sport—basketball—and that pretty much dunked me straight into sneaker culture," says Nolan Michael Mascarenhas, 41, an investment banker from Porvorim. "Back in the day, there was this brand called AND1 with the coolest kicks. I was in the 9th grade when I got my first pair—hand-me-down Nikes from a friend who didn't have time to re-sole them. I marched off to Mapusa market, got them fixed, and wore them for two years like they were gold." Growing up in the Calangute vicinity, Nolan saw expatriate kids blend local life with global flair. "They'd fly home to Germany and return with sneakers I could only

dream of—colours, styles, designs that were pure magic." Fast-forward 28 years and he's hunted down over 75 pairs, including the legendary Reebok Pumps ("You know, the ones with the basketball tongue you could literally inflate—iconic!"). His prized picks?

- Jordan 1 Retro High OG Travis Scott Mochas, Air Force 1 x Tiffany & Co '1837

and the Nike Air Yeezy 2 Red Octobers. His fun side pairs are the eye-catching Rick and Morty LaMelo Ball Pumas in neon green and pink ("One shoe Rick, one Morty—how can you not?"). Nolan admits he often buys in twos, waits for early drops, and has friends abroad on sneaker duty. "I don't follow trends—if I like it, I grab it. There's no bad sneaker, just some that go into storage for appreciation."

His real struggle? Goa's climate. "Monsoons here are sneaker nightmares. Silica, dehumidifiers—nothing saves leather from cracking. But hey, we suffer for style." He laughs, "Goa has a lot of closeted sneakerheads. It's time they come out and show off their soles."



MOST ICONIC SNEAKERS OF ALL TIME

- Air Jordan 1 (1985)**
Banned, bold & forever legendary
- Nike Air Force 1 (1982)**
Streetwear's cleanest classic
- Adidas Superstar (1969)**
Hip-hop's first sneaker love
- Converse Chuck Taylor (1917)**
Century-old rebel style
- Yeezy Boost 350 (2015)**
Kanye's fashion-forward revolution



FOLK DANCES OF JHARKHAND AND ODISHA IN GOA



RED FLAGS TO WATCH OUT FOR IN A RELATIONSHIP

SWIPE RIGHT

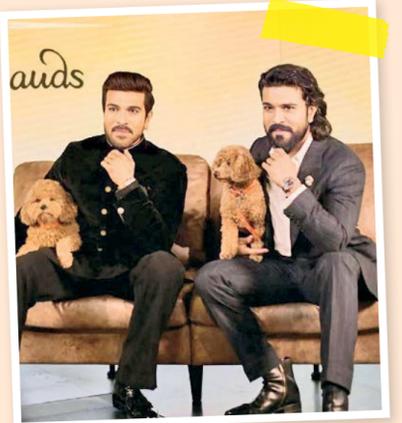
Cannes 2025 enforces stricter red carpet dress code



Ahead of the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, organisers have banned naked dressing on the red carpet. The festival's dress code for evening gala screenings at the Grand Théâtre Lumière has been updated to state, "For decency reasons, nudity is prohibited on the red carpet, as well as in any other area of the festival." The updated guidelines also add, "Voluminous outfits, particularly those with large trains that hinder the proper flow of guest traffic or complicate seating in the theatre, are not permitted. The festival's welcoming teams will be obligated to deny red carpet access to anyone who does not comply with these rules."

Maroon 5 and LISA team up on new track 'Priceless'

Maroon 5 has been a powerhouse in the pop music scene for decades, known for capturing hearts with their signature blend of rock, R&B, and pop. In their new single 'Priceless,' the band teams up with LISA to tell a fresh love story. 'Priceless' centers on the desire to take a chance on a new relationship. Set against soft guitar riffs and steady percussion, Maroon 5 and LISA express a willingness to risk everything for love. According to lead guitarist and backup vocalist James Valentine, the track harkens back to Maroon 5's early sound, featuring catchy lyrics and an unplugged guitar vibe.



Tollywood superstar Ram Charan has been honoured with a wax statue at Madame Tussauds Wax Museum in London. He joins Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as the only other figure at the museum to be immortalized alongside their pet

FROM CRICKET PRODIGY TO GLOBAL STYLE ICON

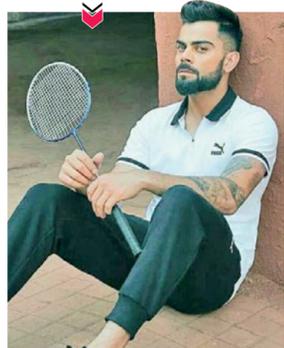
Virat Kohli's transformation from a young Delhi cricketer to a global fashion icon perfectly illustrates how his style and self-expression have evolved



2008 - THE YOUNG CRICKETER MAKING HIS MARK

At 19, Virat sported a clean-shaven face and short spiky hair. His fashion sense was simple and practical as he was more focused on his game.

2014 - THE STYLE AWAKENING
By 2014, Virat began growing a neatly trimmed beard and a more structured hairstyle. His clothing choices were well-fitted casual outfits and trendy jackets that showcased his growing confidence.

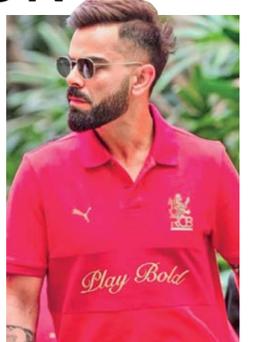


2017 - THE CAPTAIN AND THE TRENDSETTER
By 2017, as the captain of the Indian cricket team, Virat was often seen in tailored suits, designer casual wear, and sported a sharp undercut hairstyle. His beard was slightly fuller and meticulously groomed, adding to his bold and confident appearance.

2020 - CASUAL CONFIDENCE AND ATHLEISURE VIBES
In 2020, Virat's frequently wore athleisure outfits like tracksuits, hoodies, and sneakers. His hairstyle remained sharp with a fade and quiff, with a perfectly groomed beard. His look resonated deeply with fans and set new trends.



2023 - THE SOPHISTICATED ICON
By 2023, Virat was often seen in sleek tuxedos, three-piece suits, and designer jackets at red carpet events and award shows. His fashion choices became more coordinated, often complementing his wife, Anushka Sharma.



2025 - THE CONTEMPORARY TRENDSETTER

In 2025, Kohli debuted a stylish side fade paired with a voluminous quiff, creating a striking and edgy appearance for the IPL season. He wore a mix of sleek blazers, designer sneakers, and luxury accessories.