Navratri to New Year

Festive Footfall

Your playbook for the coming festive season: which festivals to plan for, what to offer and exactly when to send. Built on a year of restaurant campaigns, orders and loyalty.



Data from Reelo campaigns, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026

YOUR FESTIVE CALENDAR

Inside this report

The report follows the festive season in ten parts. Read it in order, or go straight to the part you need.

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The festive season is your busiest. It's also the hardest to be heard.

From Navratri to New Year is the busiest stretch of the year for Indian restaurants. Last December, restaurants took +7.6% more orders a day than in a non-festive month, and Diwali and Navratri campaigns brought back +36% more customers than a normal week. It is also when every customer's phone is fullest. Some messages fill tables. Many are never read.

What we looked at

We looked at two things. Which campaigns brought customers back: every Reelo campaign sent between January 2025 and September 2026. And what happened at the counter each month: orders, phone numbers captured and loyalty, shown only as changes.

Three things last season taught us

TIMING WINS

+136%

more customers came back when Diwali offers went out 8 or more days early, compared with a normal week

So: plan your big offers weeks ahead, not days.

CROWDS SLIP AWAY

+16%

more orders left without a phone number in December, the busiest month of the year

So: capture every number while tables are full.

TIME BRINGS THEM BACK

+550%

more customers came back when festive offers stayed open 15 days or more than when they ended within 3

So: give people time to use your offer, and remind them of their points.

How this report is built

It follows the season in order: the quiet weeks before it, the first peak from Navratri to Diwali, the crowded finish at Christmas, and January, when new faces become regulars. Then it covers what works all season, by restaurant and by city, and ends with your plan. A + means more than a normal week. A − means fewer.

Source: Reelo data, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026. Festive season = 22 Sep 2025 to 2 Jan 2026. Non-festive month = average of Jul and Aug 2025 and Feb and Mar 2026.

START HERE

The festive season in eight lessons

If you only read one page, read this one. Each lesson tells you one thing to do this season, and how many more customers came back when restaurants did it.

01 Page 09 →

Festivals about family and food bring the most customers back.

+36% more customers came back at Diwali and Navratri than in a normal week.

Do this: Build your message around the festival's dish and the people who share it.

02 Page 07 →

The days after Dussehra are the best of the season.

+36% more customers came back in the 10 days after Dussehra than in a normal week.

Do this: Keep an offer running for the 10 days after Dussehra.

03 Page 26 →

Give people a treat, not just a greeting.

+133% more customers came back for a free drink than for a greeting alone.

Do this: Offer a free drink, starter or main, not just a greeting.

04 Page 27 →

Keep the minimum bill low, or skip it.

+36% more customers came back when the minimum bill was ₹600 or less than when it was higher.

Do this: Set the minimum bill at ₹600 or less, or drop it.

05 Page 28 →

Keep festive offers open longer.

+550% more customers came back when offers stayed open 15+ days than when they ended in 3.

Do this: Keep every festive offer open for at least 8 days.

06 Page 15 →

Plan the big festivals two weeks out.

+136% more customers came back when Diwali offers went out 8+ days early, against a normal week.

Do this: Send your Diwali offer at least 8 days before Diwali.

07 Page 20 →

Send Christmas offers before 18 December.

+133% more customers came back to Christmas offers sent before 18 December than in the last fortnight.

Do this: Send your Christmas offer by 17 December.

08 Page 37 →

Festivals work in every city, big or small.

+67% more customers came back to Diwali campaigns in the metros than in a normal week. Smaller cities: +56% across festivals.

Do this: Run festive campaigns in every city you are in, not just the metros.

+ means more customers came back while the offer was open, compared with the line next to it. Each lesson has its own page.

BEFORE YOU SEND

Six checks for every festive campaign

- [ ] **There's an offer, not just a greeting.**
  Greetings alone got 0.9%.

- [ ] **It's something people want.**
  A free drink or starter, up to 10% off, or ₹51 to ₹100 off.

- [ ] **No minimum bill, or a low one (₹600 or less).**
  Higher minimums brought −26% fewer customers back.

- [ ] **It stays open for at least 8 days.**
  Short offers expire unused.

- [ ] **It goes out before the rush.**
  Not on the busiest day.

- [ ] **It goes to the right list.**
  Regulars, lapsed customers or first-timers.

PART

01

CHAPTER 1

The season at a glance

Late September to early January

For restaurants, the festive season is more than a few big days. It is three months of changing moods: a quiet start, a rush around Diwali, a crowded finish at Christmas and a long tail into January. Here is how last season played out, in campaigns and at the counter.

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Customers at festivals	08
Which festivals work	09
Festivals that need a plan	10

CHAPTER 1 · THE SEASON AT A GLANCE

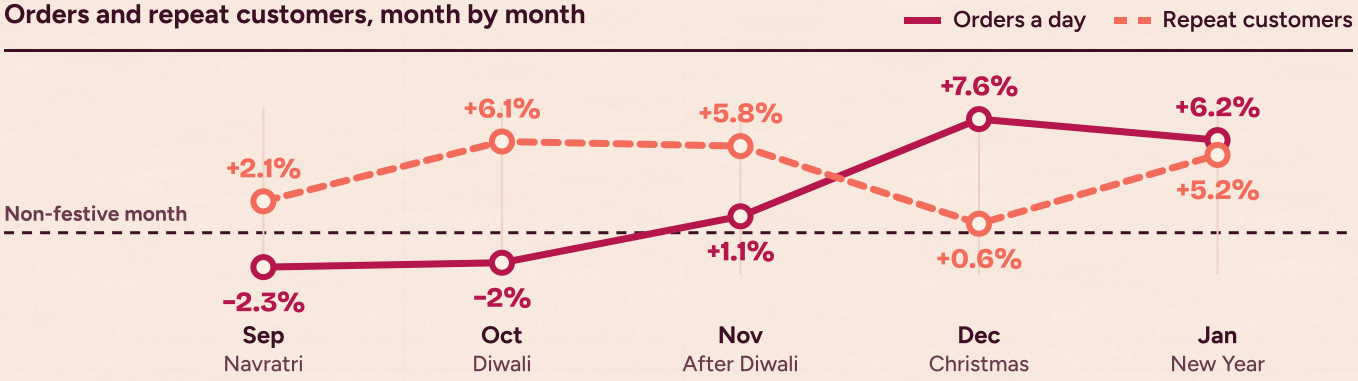
The season starts slow, then opens up after Dussehra

The season begins with a lull before Navratri. Once Dussehra passes, people start planning Diwali while inboxes are still quiet. That gap is the best window of the season.

+36%

more customers back in the 10 days after Dussehra than in a normal week.

Orders and repeat customers, month by month



How to read this chart. The dashed line is a normal, non-festive month. Each number shows how far a festive month was above or below it. **+7.6% in December** means restaurants got 7.6% more orders a day than in a normal month. **+6.1% in October** means 6.1% more of their customers came back to use their loyalty points.

Repeat customers come first, orders follow. Regulars came back around Diwali to spend their points. Orders a day peaked later, in December, when the crowd was newer.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Use the slump to prepare. Build your lists and save your budget.

Send your Diwali offer after Dussehra. This year, that's 21 to 31 October.

Then hold back. Diwali week itself is no better than a normal week.

Campaigns: all sent in each window, 22 Sep 2025 to 2 Jan 2026. Orders and repeat customers (captured customers who came back to redeem points): all of Reelo vs a non-festive month (Jul, Aug 2025, Feb, Mar 2026). 2026: Navratri 11 Oct · Dussehra 20 Oct · Diwali 8 Nov.

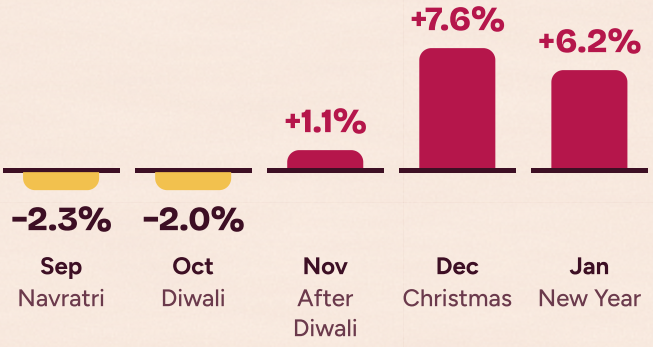
More customers came in. Fewer numbers were captured.

Last festive season, orders a day built up through the season and peaked in December, as the biggest crowd of the year walked in. But at a busy counter, asking for a phone number is the first thing to slip. More orders went out without a phone number in every festive month.

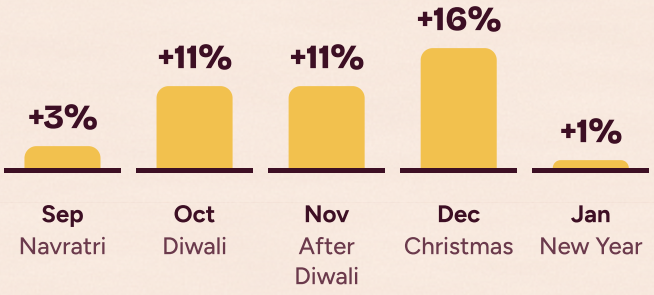
+16%

more orders left without a phone number in December 2025 than in a non-festive month.

Orders a day: % more or fewer than a non-festive month



Orders without a phone number: % more than a non-festive month



Baseline (the line at 0) = an average non-festive month: July and August 2025, February and March 2026.

Every missed number is a customer you can't invite back

In October and November, about 11% more orders went out without a number than in a normal month. In December, the busiest month, 16% more. Those festive guests, many of them new, will never get your next offer.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Ask at every bill. Make "May I have your number?" part of billing, even when the queue is long.

Give a reason to share. Tell customers they'll get points or a festive offer on their next visit.

Brief new staff. Festive shifts bring extra hands. Show them how to capture a number before the rush.

All restaurants on Reelo. Each month is compared with an average non-festive month: July and August 2025 and February and March 2026, either side of the season, so platform growth evens out. Orders per day. Phone numbers and loyalty per order. Festivals listed are those in each month: our best estimate of what drove the change.

CHAPTER 1 · THE SEASON AT A GLANCE

Festivals that bring people together over a meal bring the most customers back

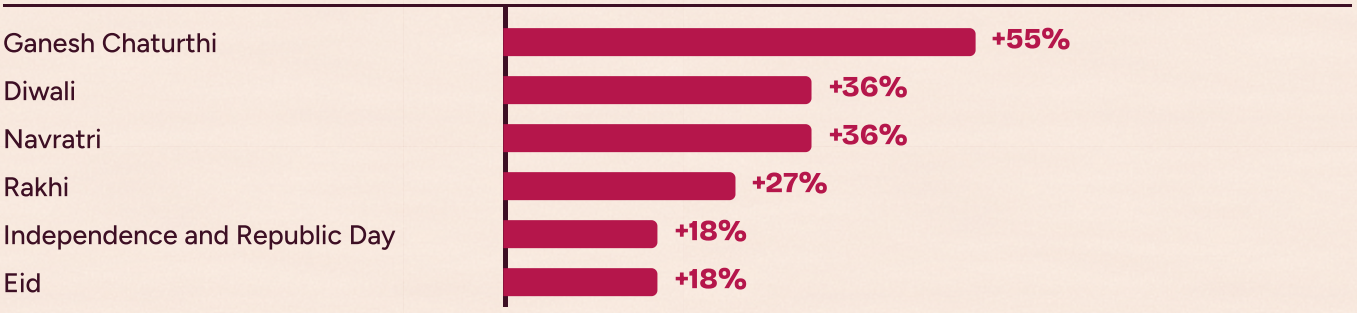
The festivals that bring customers back are already about food and family: modak at Ganesh Chaturthi, mithai at Diwali, a feast at Eid. It is the people and the meal together: when the festival is about sharing food with family and friends, your message reads like an invitation to bring them.

+55%

more customers back at Ganesh Chaturthi than in a normal week. Diwali and Navratri follow at +36%.

Festivals that bring customers back on their own (% more than a normal week)

Line = a normal week



The rest need a reason

Valentine's Day, Mother's and Father's Day, Holi, Christmas and Onam don't bring customers back on their own, mostly because restaurants send a plain greeting. Add a real offer and they work. The next page shows how.

+64%

more customers back on Valentine's Day when the offer was ₹ off

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Lead with the people and the meal. Invite customers to bring their family for the dish the festival is known for.

Plan your year around six. Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, Navratri, Rakhi, Independence Day and Eid all beat a normal week.

Give the rest a reason. With the right offer and timing, these festivals beat a normal week too. See the next page.

Campaigns that name the festival, sent from 3 weeks before to 2 days after it, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026. Each bar compares customers who came back with a normal week.

Quieter festivals are an opening

Some festivals don't bring customers back on their own. But orders hold steady, and at Christmas they rise. The demand is there; most restaurants just send a greeting with nothing to claim.

+3.8%

more orders a day in December. Customers are out; give them a reason to pick you.

Christmas and New Year

Customers: +3.8% more orders a day in December.

Most restaurants: send a greeting, late in December.

Do this: send before 18 December, with a free item

+27% more customers back

Mother's and Father's Day

Customers: up to +3% orders a day in May and June.

Most restaurants: send a greeting.

Do this: send 1 to 3 days before, with ₹ off

+45% more customers back

Valentine's Day

Customers: steady orders a day in February.

Most restaurants: send a greeting.

Do this: send 8+ days before, with ₹ off

+64% more customers back

Holi

Customers: close to normal orders a day in March.

Most restaurants: send a greeting.

Do this: send on the morning, with a free thandai or gujiya

+27% more customers back

Onam

Customers: steady orders a day in September.

Most restaurants: send a greeting (9 in 10 did).

Do this: make any real offer, like a sadhya pre-booking

Wide open

THE PATTERN

Customers are out. Most restaurants just say hello. Give them a reason to pick you.

Orders: all restaurants on Reelo, orders a day in the festival's month against the months either side, averaged over 2025 and 2026 where both exist. A festival is only part of its month. Best results: festival campaigns against a normal week, from pages 23, 24 and 20.

PART

02

CHAPTER 2

Before the season

2026: the weeks before Navratri, until 10 October

The season opens with a pause. In the weeks before Navratri, many families hold off on celebrations, and fewer customers respond. Not everyone slows down the same way, and for most restaurants this is the time to get ready.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Who slows down 12

CHAPTER 2 · BEFORE THE SEASON

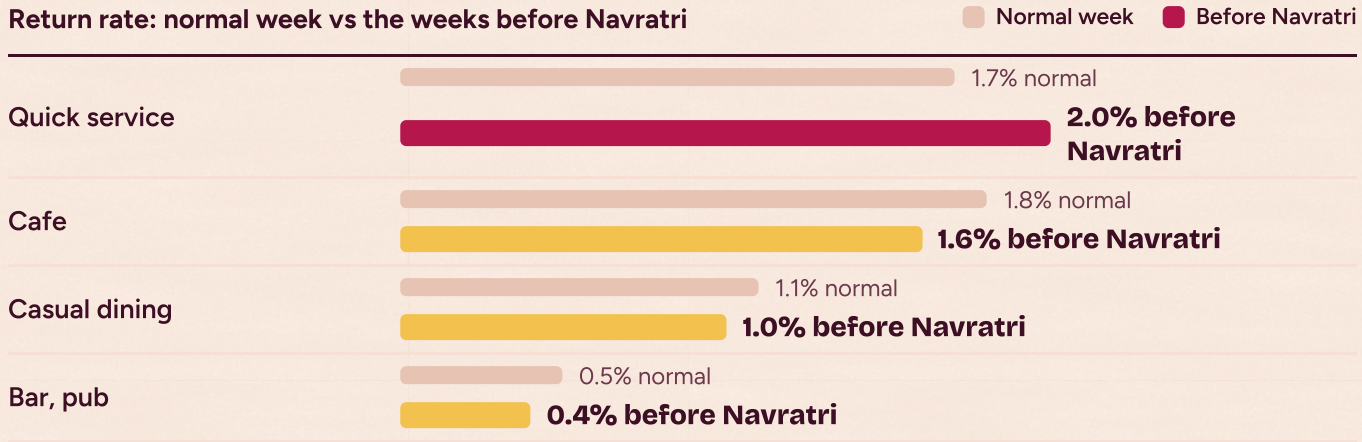
Quick service keeps going while the rest slow down

The slump doesn't hit everyone the same way. A quick bite doesn't feel like a celebration, so quick service keeps its customers through the weeks before Navratri. Bars and casual dining feel the pause most.

+18%

more customers back for quick service in the weeks before Navratri.

Return rate: normal week vs the weeks before Navratri



Orders dip a little. Campaign response drops a lot.

The pause shows in messages more than at the counter. September 2025 orders a day were just 2.3% below an average non-festive month. Campaign response fell much further, 36% below a normal week. Customers still eat out; they are slower to answer an invitation.

Then Navratri changes the picture again

Quick service and cafes rose to 2.1% on campaigns, as fasting food plays to their menus. Outside Reelo, magicpin saw about 40% more veg and thali orders than on regular days, and Swiggy's Ashtami orders rose 11.6% on the year before.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

QSRs: keep sending. The slump barely touches you.

Bars and casual dining: wait. Save your budget for after Dussehra.

Cafes: plan for Navratri. A veg or fasting menu brings people back.

Campaigns by restaurant type (looked up online for the most active restaurants). Orders: all restaurants on Reelo, per day; September 2025 also held the start of Navratri. Outside sources: magicpin via Angel One, 16 Oct 2025; Swiggy via Business Today, 14 Oct 2025.

PART

03

CHAPTER 3

The first peak: Navratri to Diwali

2026: 11 October to 11 November

Nine nights of Navratri, then Dussehra, then three weeks of Diwali planning. This is when families eat out together, when early offers get considered, and when loyal customers come back to spend what they have saved.

IN THIS CHAPTER

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CHAPTER 3 · THE FIRST PEAK

Navratri: reach people before day one, then let the offer run

Navratri is nine nights of fasting menus, garba and family outings. The restaurants that win give people a reason to eat out without breaking the fast, and say so before the first night.

+36%

more customers back on Navratri campaigns than in a normal week

2.5x

as many customers came back when offers went out 1 to 3 days before day one, compared with a normal week

BEST OFFER

% off did best, +82% on a normal week. A greeting alone, +9%.

WHO WINS

Quick service +136%, cafes +118%, bakeries +100%, casual dining +27%.

WHERE

Metros and the West +18%, the East +9%. Durga Puja campaigns matched a normal week.

WHAT HAPPENED IN RESTAURANTS

A quiet month, with loyalty stirring

Last year Navratri began on 22 September, after a slow start to the month. Across the month, orders a day sat **2.3% below** an average non-festive month, the slow weeks before Navratri. But loyalty was already stirring: **2.1% more customers** came back to redeem points. The real lift came next, once Navratri gave way to Dussehra and Diwali.

September 2025, against a non-festive month

-2.3%	orders a day
+2.1%	customers who came back to redeem
-0.3%	redemptions for every order
+3.2%	orders left without a phone number

DO THIS IN 2026

Send on 8 to 10 October, before day one on 11 October.

Lead with % off a veg or fasting menu, open all nine nights.

In the East, send your Durga Puja offer by 15 October.

Festival campaigns from the 2025 season, compared with a normal week. 2026: Navratri 11 to 19 Oct · Durga Puja 16 to 21 Oct · Dussehra 20 Oct. Restaurant figures: all of Reelo vs a non-festive month (Jul, Aug 2025, Feb, Mar 2026).

CHAPTER 3 · THE FIRST PEAK

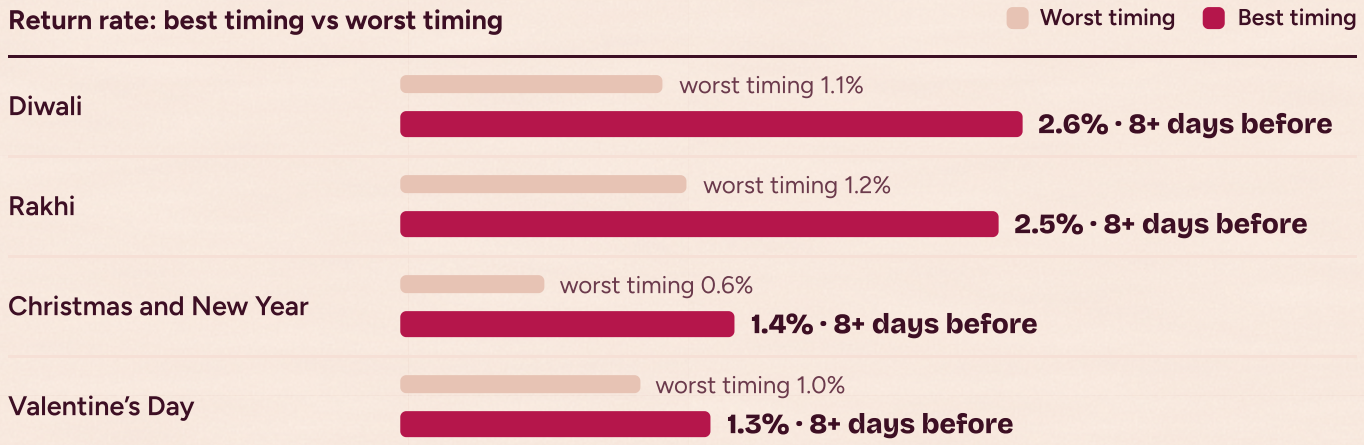
Plan the big festivals two weeks out

Diwali, Rakhi and Christmas are planned weeks ahead. Families decide where to eat, who to visit and what to gift long before the day. If your offer arrives after those plans are made, it's already too late.

+136%

more customers back when Diwali offers go out 8 or more days early (2.6%) than in a normal week.

Return rate: best timing vs worst timing



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Diwali 2026: send between 25 and 31 October.

Christmas: send before 18 December.

Rakhi and Valentine's: send 1 to 2 weeks ahead.

Festival campaigns, by days between sending and the festival day.

CHAPTER 3 · THE FIRST PEAK

Diwali: get in early, while families are still planning

Diwali is the biggest family occasion of the year. Plans for meals, visits and sweets are made weeks ahead, so the offer that arrives first gets considered. It's also the one big festival where warm words alone still land.

2.4x

as many customers came back when offers went out 8 or more days early, compared with a normal week

3.6x

the customer visits of a typical campaign, from one early Diwali offer

BEST OFFER

% off and a greeting both +45% on a normal week. A free item, +18%.

WHO WINS

Quick service +64%, bakeries +55%, casual dining +27%.

WHERE

The North +64%, the West +55%, metros +36%, smaller cities +27%, the South +9%.

WHAT HAPPENED IN RESTAURANTS

The month customers came back to spend

Last year Diwali fell on 20 October. Orders a day stayed close to an average non-festive month (**–2.0%**), but loyalty jumped: **6.1% more customers** came back to redeem, and redemptions for every order rose **3.7%**. In November, the weeks after Diwali, redemptions rose further, **+6.2%**. But **11% more orders** left without a phone number, so some festive visitors left with no way to invite them back.

October 2025, against a non-festive month

+6.1%	customers who came back to redeem
+3.7%	redemptions for every order
–2.0%	orders a day
+11%	orders left without a phone number

DO THIS IN 2026

Send between 25 and 31 October, in the quiet days after Dussehra.

Use % off with a low minimum bill, open until Bhai Dooj on 11 November.

Remind customers of their points. Diwali is when they come back to spend them.

Festival campaigns from the 2025 season, compared with a normal week. 2026: Dhanteras 6 Nov · Diwali 8 Nov · Bhai Dooj 11 Nov. Restaurant figures: all of Reelo vs a non-festive month (Jul, Aug 2025, Feb, Mar 2026).

CHAPTER 3 · THE FIRST PEAK

Loyalty works harder in the festive season

Festivals bring customers back to spend what they have earned. Last season, every loyalty measure rose, and the weeks around Diwali saw the biggest lift.

+6.2%

more redemptions for every order in November 2025 than in an average non-festive month.

Change in each month, against an average non-festive month

Oct 2025

Dussehra, Karva Chauth, Diwali, Bhai Dooj, Chhath

+1.3% orders earning points

+3.7% redemptions per order

+6.1% customers redeeming

Nov 2025

Days after Diwali, Guru Nanak Jayanti, weddings

+2.7% orders earning points

+6.2% redemptions per order

+5.8% customers redeeming

Dec 2025

Christmas, New Year's Eve

+1.7% orders earning points

+1.2% redemptions per order

+0.6% customers redeeming

Jan 2026

New Year, Lohri, Pongal and Sankranti, Republic Day

+1.5% orders earning points

+2.5% redemptions per order

+5.2% customers redeeming

December is for new faces, January brings them back

In December, orders jumped but redemptions rose the least: the crowd was new, with few points to spend. By January, redeeming rose again.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Mention points in your Diwali message. A reminder of what they've saved is an easy reason to visit.

Enrol every December guest. New faces at Christmas are your January regulars.

Issue points on every bill. The more orders earn points, the more customers come back to use them.

All restaurants on Reelo. Each month is compared with an average non-festive month: July and August 2025 and February and March 2026, either side of the season, so platform growth evens out. Orders per day. Phone numbers and loyalty per order. Festivals listed are those in each month: our best estimate of what drove the change.

PART

04

CHAPTER 4

The crowded finish: Christmas and New Year

2026: 12 November to 31 December

December brings the biggest crowd of the year to your tables, and the most messages to every phone. Many of the guests are new. The restaurants that do well get in before the rush and make sure every new face leaves a number.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Full tables, full inboxes 19

Christmas and New Year 20

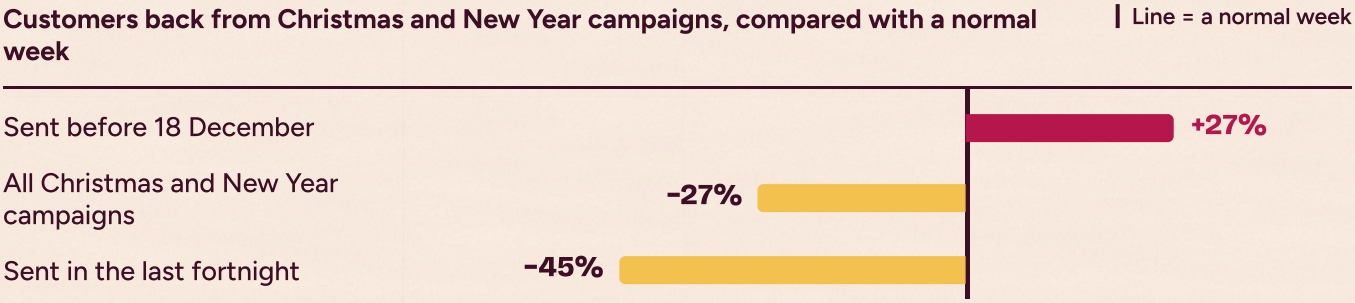
December: full tables, full inboxes

December is the busiest month for your tables, and for your customers' phones. Orders a day rose 7.6% on a non-festive month. But restaurants also sent twice as many campaigns as usual, and most said the same thing: Merry Christmas. When a phone fills up with greetings, each one gets less attention.

2x

as many campaigns a day as usual, between Christmas and New Year.

Customers back from Christmas and New Year campaigns, compared with a normal week



The same message, sent at the same time

8 in 10 Christmas campaigns were greetings with no offer, all competing for the same few days. The ones that stood out did two things differently: they went out before 18 December, and they gave customers something to claim. A free item did best, +27% on a normal week.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Go before the rush. Send your Christmas offer before 18 December (page 20).

Give a reason, not a wish. A free dessert or cake beats a greeting.

Save the greeting for the bill. Wish customers in person, when they're already at your table.

Campaigns that name Christmas or New Year, sent from 3 weeks before to 2 days after, compared with a normal week. Orders: all restaurants on Reelo, per day, against an average non-festive month.

CHAPTER 4 · THE CROWDED FINISH

Christmas: the busiest month, and the most new faces

The last fortnight of the year is the most crowded time for campaigns. Restaurants sent twice as many as usual, and 8 in 10 Christmas campaigns were greetings with no offer. The few that went out early, with something to claim, stood out.

2.3x

as many customers came back when offers went out before 18 December, compared with the last fortnight

2.8x

the customer visits of a typical campaign, from one early Christmas offer

BEST OFFER

A free item did best, +27% on a normal week. % off matched a normal week.

WHO WINS

Quick service +55%, bakeries +45%. Cafes matched a normal week.

WHERE

Smaller cities +9%. Metros were the most crowded, so send there first.

WHAT HAPPENED IN RESTAURANTS

Full tables, new faces

December brought the biggest crowd of the year: orders a day rose **7.6%** on an average non-festive month. Yet redemptions for every order rose just **1.2%**, and only **0.6% more customers** came back to redeem. Many of these guests were new, with no points to spend yet. It was also the month when the most orders went without a phone number, **+16%**, just as the most new faces walked in.

December 2025, against a non-festive month

+7.6%	orders a day
+1.2%	redemptions for every order
+0.6%	customers who came back to redeem
+16%	orders left without a phone number

DO THIS IN 2026

Send before 18 December. Lead with a free item and take New Year's Eve bookings.

Capture every number. December's new faces are January's regulars.

Bakeries, open cake pre-orders early.

Festival campaigns from the 2025 season, compared with a normal week. 2026: Christmas 25 Dec · New Year's Eve 31 Dec. Restaurant figures: all of Reelo vs a non-festive month (Jul, Aug 2025, Feb, Mar 2026).

PART

05

CHAPTER 5

After the season

2027: January onwards

The season doesn't stop on 1 January. The customers you met over the festivals are the easiest ones to bring back, and the year has plenty more occasions to bring them back for.

IN THIS CHAPTER

January	22
Through the year 1	23
Through the year 2	24

CHAPTER 5 · AFTER THE SEASON

The season doesn't end on 1 January

When the decorations come down, the customers don't disappear. Last January, orders stayed almost as high as in December, number capture recovered, and more customers came back to spend the points they earned over the festivals. The guests you met in December are the easiest ones to bring back.

2 days

of extra orders in January: 6.2% more orders a day adds up to almost two extra days of business

+73%

more customers back from Republic Day offers with ₹ off or a free item

1 in 20

extra regulars come back to spend points: one more for every 20 who return in a normal month

January has its own reasons to visit

Lohri, Pongal, Sankranti and Republic Day keep the celebrations going. Republic and Independence Day campaigns did +18% on a normal week overall, and +27% when sent 1 to 3 days before the day. Capture was back to normal too, so every new face counts again.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Win back December's new faces. One campaign in mid-January to customers who first came in over Christmas.

Remind them of their points. Points earned in December are a ready reason to return.

Plan Republic Day. Send 1 to 3 days before, with ₹ off or a free item.

Orders, capture and loyalty: all restaurants on Reelo, January 2026 against an average non-festive month (Jul and Aug 2025, Feb and Mar 2026), orders per day. Campaigns: festival campaigns, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026.

CHAPTER 5 · AFTER THE SEASON

Eight more occasions worth planning for

The festive season isn't the only time to reach out. Every occasion has an offer that works, even the quieter ones. The big number on each card is the best result we saw, against a normal week. The pattern is simple: ₹ off works for gifting and couple occasions, and a special menu works for food festivals.

Republic and Independence Day

2027: 26 Jan · 15 Aug

+73%

more customers back than in a normal week, with ₹ off or a free item

Campaigns overall did +18% on a normal week. Bakeries and quick service win, and festivals bring customers back in cities big and small.

Send 1 to 3 days before: +27%

Valentine's Day

2027: 14 Feb

+64%

more customers back than in a normal week, with ₹ off

The offer makes the difference: a greeting alone did −27%. Bakeries do best of all, at +127%, with desserts and cakes for two.

Send 8 or more days before: +18%

Eid ul-Fitr and Bakrid

2027: about 10 Mar · 17 May

+27%

more customers back than in a normal week, with a feast or biryani special

Campaigns overall did +18%. A feast beat % off by a wide margin. The South and smaller cities respond best, at +127%.

Send a week or more before: +27%

Holi

2027: 22 Mar

+27%

more customers back than in a normal week, with a free item

A free thandai or gujiya turns a day of colour into a visit. Bakeries, cafes and quick service lead.

Send on the morning itself: +9%

Festival campaigns, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026, compared with a normal week. Eid and Bakrid dates depend on the moon sighting; check local calendars.

CHAPTER 5 · AFTER THE SEASON

Food festivals need a menu. Family days need an offer.

Food festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi need little more than a festive menu to work. Family occasions like Rakhi and Mother's Day respond best to a clear ₹ off. And where nobody makes an offer, as at Onam, there is room for the first restaurant that does.

Mother's and Father's Day

2027: 9 May · 20 Jun

+45%

more customers back than in a normal week, with ₹ off

₹ off stood well ahead of every other offer. Among restaurant types, bakeries lead, at +18% on a normal week.

Send 1 to 3 days before, with ₹ off

Rakhi

2027: 17 Aug

+127%

more customers back than in a normal week, with ₹ off

Campaigns overall did +27%. Quick service and bakeries win. The South responds strongly, at +173%.

Send 8 or more days before: +127%

Ganesh Chaturthi

2027: 4 Sep

+91%

more customers back than in a normal week, with a festive menu

Campaigns overall did +55%, the best of any festival. A festive menu beat % off. Casual dining leads, at +100%, mostly in the West and South.

Send during the 10 days: +118%

Onam

2027: 12 Sep

92%

of campaigns were greetings with no offer

Almost no one gave customers a reason to visit. That leaves the field open for a restaurant that does.

Try a sadhya pre-booking with a date to book by

Festival campaigns, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026, compared with a normal week.

PART

06

CHAPTER 6

What cuts through, all season

Offers, timing and channel

Whatever the festival, a few choices decide whether your message gets read and acted on: what you offer, how long it stays open, when you send it and how.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Offers that work	26
Minimum bill	27
Offer length	28
Send close to the day	29
Channel	30
Time and day	31
What good looks like	32

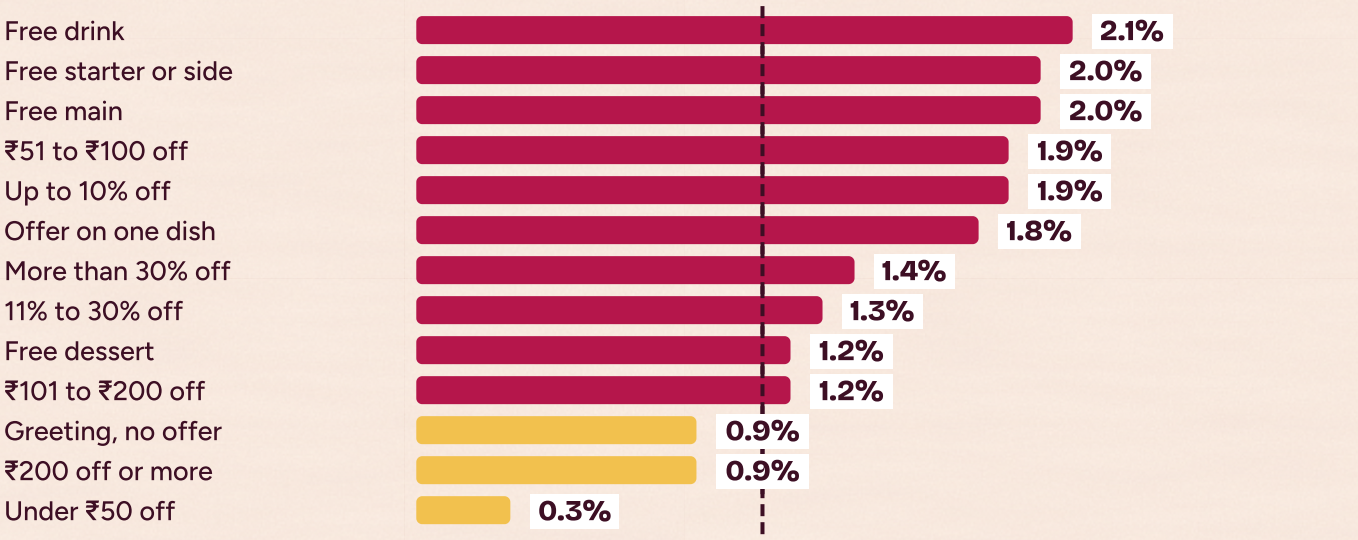
A free treat or a small, clear discount beats a big one

Customers respond to offers that feel like a treat and are easy to understand. A free drink says "come in and celebrate". Very big discounts and tiny ones both do worse: one looks too good to be true, the other isn't worth the trip.

+133%

more customers back with a free drink (2.1%) than with a greeting alone (0.9%).

Return rate by festive offer



What's a good return rate?

Return rate is the share of customers you messaged who came back while the offer was open. Use these as your yardstick:

TYPICAL	GOOD	GREAT	EXCEPTIONAL
1.1%	**2%+**	**2.9%**	**6.9%**
a normal-week campaign	where the best festive offers here land	top 25% of all campaigns	top 10% of all campaigns

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Lead with a treat. A free drink, starter or main.

Keep discounts small and clear. Up to 10% off, or ₹51 to ₹100 off.

Skip the tiny ones. Under ₹50 off gets ignored.

Campaigns sent in the festive season (22 Sep 2025 to 2 Jan 2026) or around a festival. Benchmarks: all completed campaigns, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026.

CHAPTER 6 · WHAT CUTS THROUGH, ALL SEASON

During festivals, keep the bar low

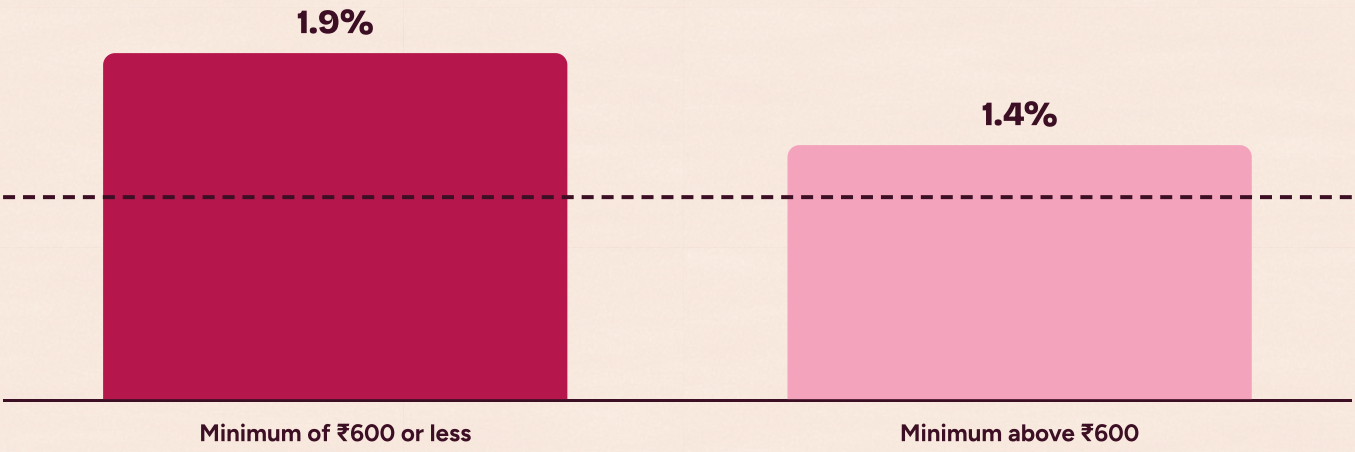
At festivals, people are already planning to eat out and spend. A high minimum bill turns your offer into a hurdle, and customers start doing the maths instead of booking a table. Skip the minimum, or keep it low enough that a normal family order clears it easily.

+36%

more customers back when the minimum bill was ₹600 or less than when it was higher.

Return rate by minimum bill

Normal week 1.1%



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Skip it or keep it low. The offer should feel like a gift, not a target.

Avoid high minimums. Above ₹600, fewer customers came back.

Say it clearly. "₹100 off on bills above ₹500" is easy to act on.

Campaigns sent in the festive season (22 Sep 2025 to 2 Jan 2026) or around a festival.

Give customers time to plan the visit

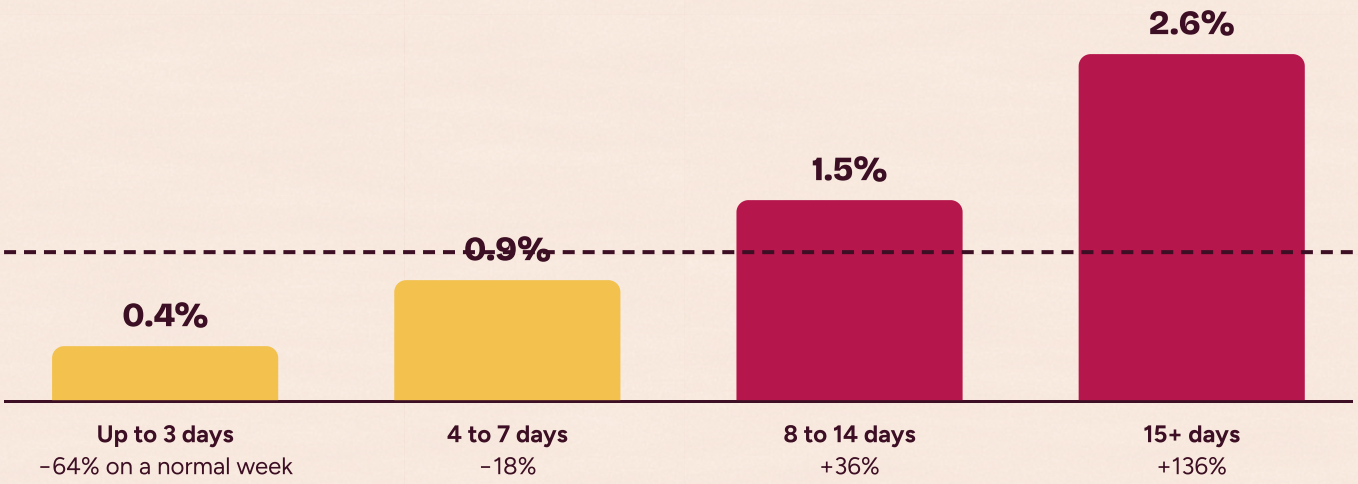
Festive weeks are busy. Families juggle pujas, visits and shopping, so a 3-day offer often runs out before anyone can use it. Offers that stay open longer give people time to fit you in.

+550%

more customers back when an offer stays open 15+ days (2.6%) than when it ends within 3 (0.4%).

Return rate by how long the offer stays open

Normal week 1.1%



Longer offers also have more days to count visits, so part of this gap is timing. The direction holds.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Give at least 8 days. Short offers expire unused.

Run Diwali offers until Bhai Dooj. That covers the whole festival.

Say the end date. A clear "valid till" helps people plan.

Campaigns sent in the festive season (22 Sep 2025 to 2 Jan 2026) or around a festival.

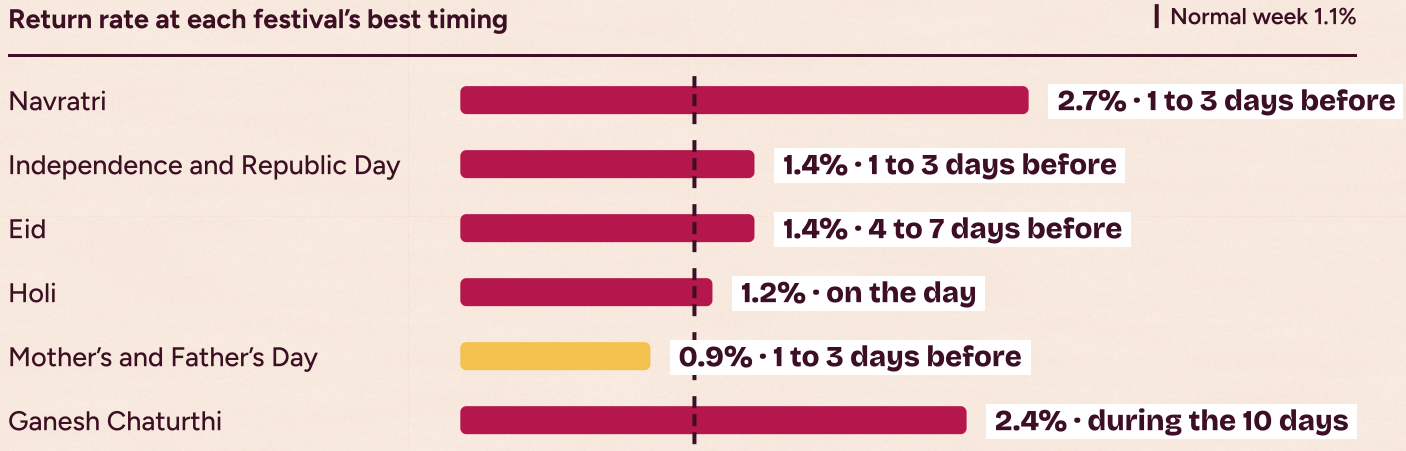
For everyday festivals, send close to the day

Not every festival needs weeks of notice. Navratri, Independence Day and Holi are decided closer to the day. A message a few days out lands while people are making plans. Ganesh Chaturthi is different again: it runs for ten days, so the message works best during it.

1 to 3 days

before the day is the best time for Navratri, Independence Day and Mother's and Father's Day.

Return rate at each festival's best timing



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Navratri 2026: send on 8 to 10 October, before day one.

Ganesh Chaturthi: keep sending through the ten days.

Holi: send on the morning itself.

Festival campaigns, by days between sending and the festival day (the first day for Navratri and Ganesh Chaturthi). Ganesh Chaturthi and Eid have smaller samples.

CHAPTER 6 · WHAT CUTS THROUGH, ALL SEASON

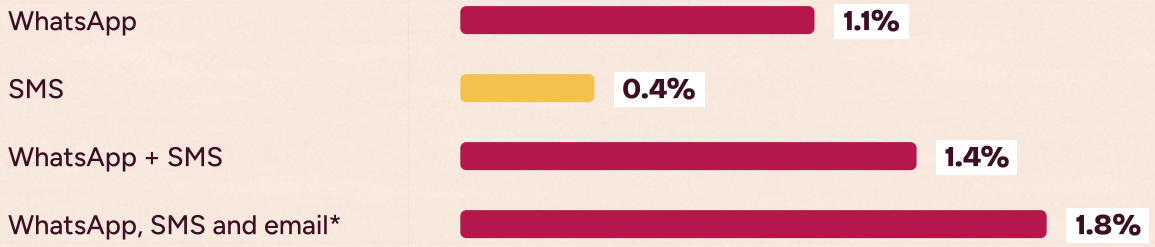
WhatsApp brings back +166% more customers than SMS

Customers read WhatsApp. SMS inboxes are full of OTPs and bank alerts, and a restaurant offer is easy to miss there. Adding SMS on top of WhatsApp helps, because more of your list gets the message at all.

+166%

more customers back from WhatsApp campaigns (1.1%) than from SMS (0.4%).

Return rate by channel, all campaigns



* Small sample.

Only about half your list gets the message

In a typical campaign, 56% of messages get delivered. The rest go to old numbers, blocked chats or people who never opted in. A clean, fresh list means more people actually see your offer.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Make WhatsApp your main channel.

Add SMS for reach. It catches people WhatsApp misses.

Clean your list before the season. Remove old and wrong numbers.

All completed campaigns, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026. Return rate = customers who came back ÷ messages delivered.

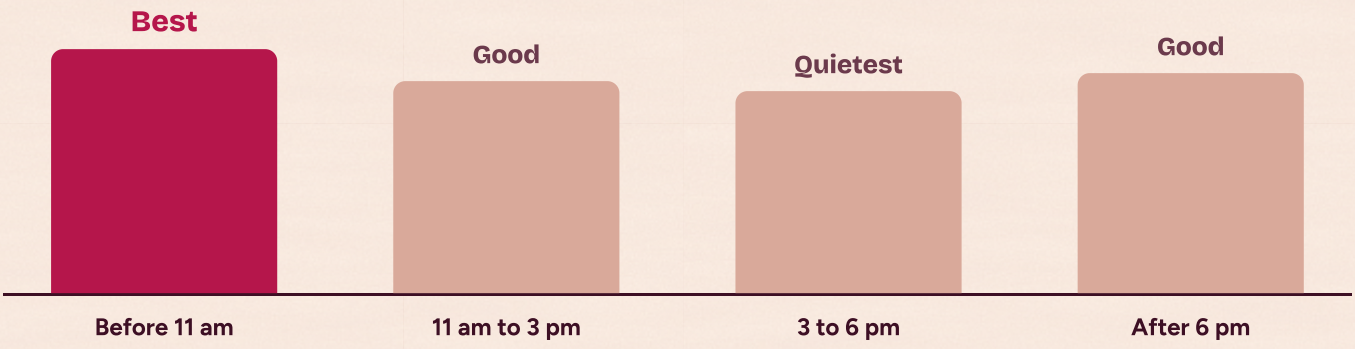
Send in the morning, late in the week

Morning messages reach people while they plan the day: where to eat, who to meet, what to order. By evening, plans are made. The same goes for the week. A message on Thursday or Friday arrives just as weekend plans take shape.

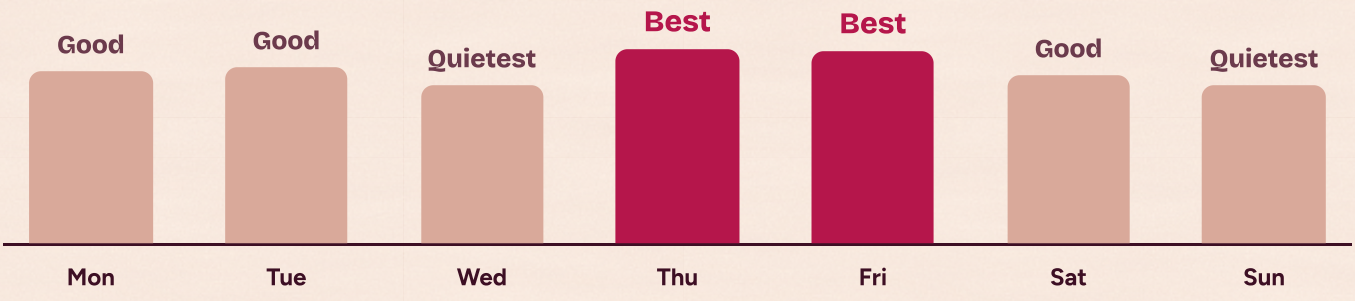
Thu & Fri mornings

the best time to send: mornings did better than later in the day, and Thursday and Friday did better than the rest of the week.

How well festive campaigns did, by time sent



How well festive campaigns did, by day sent



The gaps are small. Timing around the festival matters more than the hour.

Festive season campaigns, 22 Sep 2025 to 2 Jan 2026. Times are IST.

What good looks like

Typical results tell you what usually happens. The best restaurants show what's possible. The top quarter of campaigns bring back more than twice as many customers as a typical one, by getting the basics in this report right.

RETURN RATE	TYPICAL	TOP 25%	TOP 10%
Any time	1.1%	**2.9%**	6.9%
Festive season	1.0%	**2.8%**	6.2%
After Dussehra	1.5%	**3.7%**	8.0%

1.5

visits per returning customer while the offer is open

+41%

more customers back from festive campaigns built on Reelo templates (1.35% vs 0.96%)

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Aim for the top 25%. That's about 3.7x the visits of a typical campaign.

Start from a template. It builds in what works.

All completed campaigns, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026.

PART

07

CHAPTER 7

Your restaurant, your city

Type, zone and city

The same festival lands differently in a bakery in Indore and a bar in Bengaluru. Find your type and your city, and see what works for restaurants like yours.

IN THIS CHAPTER

By restaurant type	34
Playbook by type	35
By zone	36
By city	37
What works where	38

Bakeries and QSRs win more visits at festivals. Cafes lose the most.

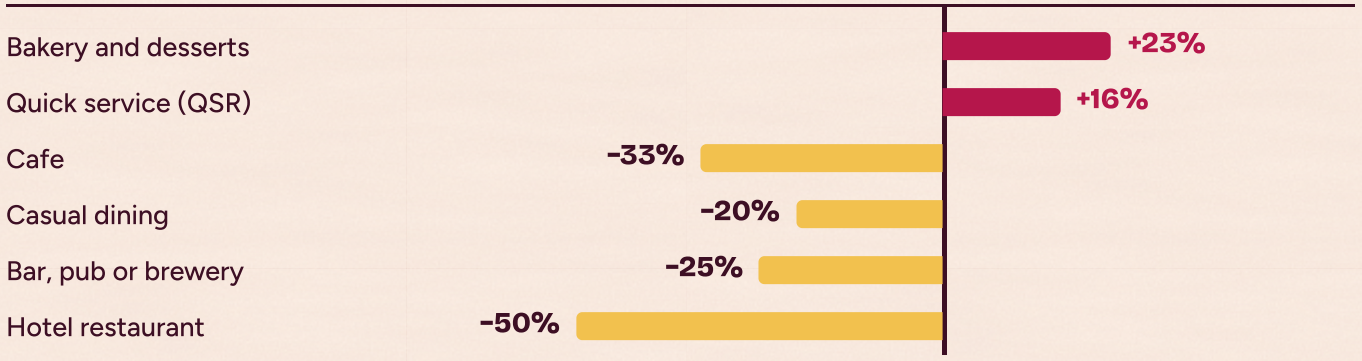
Return rate dips a little for almost everyone at festivals, because every inbox is busier. What changes is how many visits you win, and that depends on what you sell. Bakeries and quick service sell what festivals are made of: sweets, snacks and quick family meals.

+23%

more visits per festival campaign for bakeries than in a normal week.

Visits per festival campaign, compared with a normal-week campaign

Line = a normal week



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Bakeries and QSRs: festivals are your season. Plan a campaign for each.

Cafes and casual dining: pick fewer festivals and send early.

Bars and hotels: always add an offer. Greetings alone don't work for you.

Visits per campaign. Restaurant type looked up online for the most active restaurants on Reelo.

CHAPTER 7 · YOUR RESTAURANT, YOUR CITY

Your playbook, by type of business

Find your type of business below. Each row shows the festivals that worked best for businesses like yours, the festive offer that brought the most customers back, and one thing to do this season.

TYPE OF BUSINESS	DO THIS	BEST FESTIVE OFFER
Bakery and desserts	**Lead with sweets, cakes and gift boxes.** Best festivals: Independence Day, Valentine's, Holi, Navratri	A free item: 3.1%
Quick service (QSR)	**Slump-proof. Keep sending before Navratri.** Best festivals: Navratri, Independence Day, Valentine's, Diwali	% off: 1.9%
Cafe	**Send early and stay quiet on the big days.** Best festivals: Navratri, Independence Day, Holi	% off: 1.8%
Casual dining	**Own the feast festivals. Add a veg menu for Navratri.** Best festivals: Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, Navratri, Eid	A free item: 1.5%
Bar, pub or brewery	**Skip the slump. Come back with a free drink.** Best festivals: After Dussehra, not before	A free item: 0.6%
Hotel restaurant	**Always add an offer. It can triple your return rate.** Best festivals: Too few campaigns to rank	₹ off: 1.3%

Why it differs

What you sell decides which festivals feel like your moment. Sweets and quick meals fit almost every festival. A night out at a bar or a sit-down dinner competes with family plans, so it needs a stronger reason and better timing.

Return rates for festive offers, campaigns sent in the festive season or around a festival.

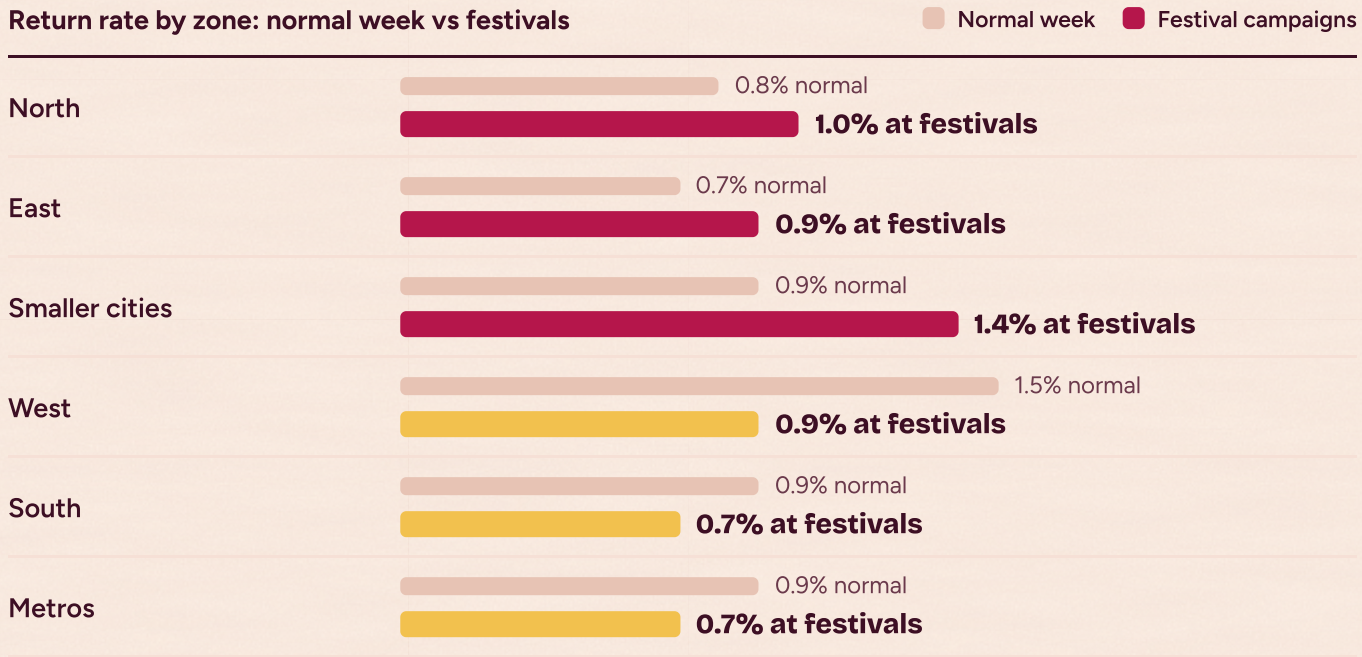
Festivals bring customers back across India

Festival campaigns work in cities big and small. Smaller cities, the North and the East see the biggest lift, because a festival message stands out there. In the metros and the West, inboxes fill up faster, so the restaurants that win pick their festivals and send early.

+56%

more customers back from festival campaigns in smaller cities than in a normal week there (1.4% vs 0.9%).

Return rate by zone: normal week vs festivals



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

North, East, smaller cities: plan a campaign for each big festival.

West and metros: lead with Diwali, and land before the rush.

South: Rakhi and Eid work best for you (page 38).

Zone looked up online for the most active restaurants on Reelo, which is why zone baselines differ from the 1.1% average.

CHAPTER 7 · YOUR RESTAURANT, YOUR CITY

In the big metros, timing does the work

Metro customers respond well all year, and Diwali is where metro campaigns shine. Around the smaller festivals, every restaurant in the city sends on the same day. The restaurants that do best land first, before festival week, when theirs is one of only a few messages.

+67%

more customers back from Diwali campaigns in the metros than in a normal week there (1.5% vs 0.9%).

Return rate by city: normal week vs festivals



* Small sample.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

In big metros: send 1 to 2 weeks before the festival, not on the day.

Stand out: a free item or clear ₹ off beats a greeting in a crowded inbox.

Use normal weeks: your customers respond well outside the rush.

City looked up online for the most active restaurants on Reelo. Ahmedabad, Pune and Hyderabad have small samples.

CHAPTER 7 · YOUR RESTAURANT, YOUR CITY

What works where

Every region has its own festive calendar. Rakhi and Eid matter most in the South, Diwali in the North and West, Durga Puja in the East. And everywhere, an offer beats a greeting.

ZONE	TOP FESTIVALS	BEST FESTIVE OFFER
North	Diwali 1.8%, Rakhi 1.5%, Valentine's 1.4%	**Free item 1.2%** greeting 0.6%
West	Diwali 1.7%, Navratri 1.3%, Rakhi 1.3%	**% off 2.1%** greeting 1.0%
South	Rakhi 3.0%, Eid 2.5%, Independence Day 1.3%	**Free item 1.0%** greeting 0.8%
East	Navratri and Durga Puja 1.2%, Independence Day 1.1%	**Free item 2.3%** greeting 0.7%
Smaller cities	Eid 2.5%, Independence Day 2.2%, Rakhi 1.7%	**Free item 1.9%** greeting 0.8%
Metros	Diwali 1.5%, Christmas 0.5%	**₹ off 1.1%** greeting 0.7%

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Follow your local calendar, not the national one.

In the East, a free item got 2.3%, against 0.7% for a greeting.

In the West, % off works best.

Return rates for festival campaigns by zone. Zone looked up online for the most active restaurants on Reelo.

PART

08

CHAPTER 8

Your festive plan

Week by week

Everything in this report, turned into a plan you can follow: what to send and when, what to check, what to expect, ideas for festive messages and messages you can copy.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Your plan	40
Before you send	05
What to expect	41
Ideas for what to send	42
Messages to copy	43
Season takeaways	44

The 2026 festive season, week by week

Now to 7 Oct	THE SLUMP	**Before Navratri. Hold your offers.** Build your lists: regulars, lapsed customers, first-timers. QSRs can keep sending.
8 to 10 Oct	SEND	**Send your Navratri offer.** % off a veg or fasting menu, open all nine nights.
11 to 20 Oct	LET IT RUN	**Navratri, Durga Puja, Dussehra.** Let your offer do the work. In the East, send Durga Puja offers by 15 Oct.
25 to 31 Oct	THE SWEET SPOT	**Send your Diwali offer.** % off with a low minimum bill, open until Bhai Dooj (11 Nov).
6 to 11 Nov	REMIND	**Dhanteras to Bhai Dooj.** A reminder only to customers who haven't used your offer yet.
12 Nov to 10 Dec	WIN BACK	**Bring back the ones who went quiet.** One campaign to customers you haven't seen since before Navratri.
By 17 Dec	SEND	**Christmas and New Year.** Lead with a free item and take New Year's Eve bookings.
January	THANK	**Start the year strong.** Thank your festive customers with a reason to come back.

2026 dates: Navratri 11 Oct · Durga Puja 16 to 21 Oct · Dussehra 20 Oct · Dhanteras 6 Nov · Diwali 8 Nov · Bhai Dooj 11 Nov. Check local calendars.

CHAPTER 8 · YOUR FESTIVE PLAN

What these numbers mean for your restaurant

Percentages are easier to use when you apply them to your own list. Take the number of customers you plan to message, multiply it by the return rate, and you have a fair estimate of how many will come back.

NORMAL WEEK

1.1%

of your list comes back

Your starting point

DIWALI, TYPICAL SEND

1.5%

of your list comes back

+36% on a normal week

DIWALI, SENT 8+ DAYS EARLY

2.6%

of your list comes back

2.4x a normal week

Some of these customers might have come in anyway.

WORK IT OUT FOR YOUR RESTAURANT

Your list × return rate × your average bill

Do it twice: once at 1.1% and once at 2.6%. The difference is what sending your Diwali offer early is worth, from the same list and the same message.

CHAPTER 8 · YOUR FESTIVE PLAN

Eight ideas for what to send this festive season

An offer is not the only reason to message. Mix two or three of these across the season.

Your festive menu

Navratri thali, Christmas specials, a new dessert. New food is news, and it gives regulars a reason to come back.

"Our Navratri thali is here. Nine nights only."

Order in, skip the cooking

Diwali week is busy with cleaning, shopping and guests. Offer to take dinner off their plate.

"Busy with Diwali prep? Let us cook tonight. Order here: [link]"

An event you are hosting

Garba night, a Diwali dinner, live music, a New Year party. Invite your regulars first.

"Garba night at [Restaurant], Sat 17 Oct. Reserve your table."

A festive offer or treat

A free dessert or drink, or a clear ₹ off. An offer brought more customers back than a greeting alone (page 26).

"Free dessert with every Diwali dinner, till 11 Nov."

A video from your team

Your chef and staff wishing customers and inviting them in. Short, warm and personal.

"Happy Diwali from all of us in the kitchen. Come celebrate with us."

Gifting and bulk orders

Sweet boxes, hampers, gift cards and office orders. Customers are already shopping for gifts.

"Diwali gift boxes for family and team. Pre-order by 5 Nov."

Book the big table

Festivals are family time. Help groups plan ahead for a festive lunch or Christmas brunch.

"Christmas lunch for 10? Book now and we will hold the big table."

Points and thank-yous

Remind customers what they have saved, and thank new guests so they return in January.

"You have [points] points with us. Use them for your festive treat."

Tip: whatever you send, add one clear reason to visit and a date to act by. Ready-to-copy messages are on the next page.

CHAPTER 8 · YOUR FESTIVE PLAN

Messages you can copy

Every message below follows the same recipe from this report: an offer people want, a low minimum bill, a clear end date, and the right send date. Swap in your restaurant, dish and dates.

Navratri · cafes and QSRs — Send 8 to 10 Oct

> Navratri thali is back at [Restaurant]!
> All nine nights: 10% off our fasting menu on bills above ₹400.
> Show this message at the counter. Valid till 19 Oct.

Why it works: % off a veg menu, low minimum bill, open the whole festival.

Diwali · casual dining — Send 25 to 31 Oct

> Diwali dinner with the family? We've saved you a table.
> ₹100 off on bills above ₹500, now till Bhai Dooj (11 Nov).
> Book here: [link]

Why it works: Lands 8+ days early, clear ₹ off, open 2 weeks.

Diwali · bakeries — Send 25 to 31 Oct

> Our Diwali gift boxes are here.
> Pre-order by 5 Nov and get a free box of [sweet] with orders above ₹600.
> Order now: [link]

Why it works: Free item, a low minimum bill, a date to act by.

Christmas · cafes and bars — Send by 17 Dec

> Christmas came early at [Restaurant].
> Free mocktail with every main, till 31 Dec.
> Planning New Year's Eve? Reserve your table: [link]

Why it works: Free drink, sent before the rush, open over two weeks.

Examples show the winning formats. Replace the words in brackets.

CHAPTER 8 · YOUR FESTIVE PLAN

Five things to take into this festive season

A festive season is won in the weeks around the big days as much as on them. If you remember five things from this report, make it these.

01

Get ready in the quiet weeks.

Build your lists and brief your staff before Navratri. Fewer numbers were captured in every festive month last year.

p. 12 · 08

02

Land in the quiet gaps.

The 10 days after Dussehra did +36% on a normal week. Christmas offers sent before 18 December did +27%.

p. 07 · 20

03

Give people a reason to visit.

A treat, a low or no minimum bill, and at least 8 days to use it.

p. 26 · 27 · 28

04

Let loyalty do the work at Diwali.

Redemptions for every order rose up to +6.2% around Diwali. Remind customers what they have saved.

p. 17

05

Turn new faces into regulars.

December brought +7.6% more orders a day, many from new customers. January is when they come back.

p. 20 · 22

ABOUT THIS REPORT

How we got these numbers

The data	Every WhatsApp, SMS and email campaign on Reelo, Jan 2025 to Sep 2026, plus monthly order and loyalty data. All figures are shown as rates or changes.
Privacy	All data is anonymised and grouped for data privacy. No restaurant, customer or phone number is named or shared.
Return rate	Out of every 100 customers who received a campaign, how many came back to the restaurant while the offer was open.
Visits	Customer visits one campaign brought in, shown only as a comparison. For both, we show the typical result: half of campaigns did better, half did worse.
Festival campaigns	Campaigns that name a festival, sent between 3 weeks before and 2 days after it. The festive season is 22 Sep 2025 to 2 Jan 2026.
Orders and loyalty	Pages 08, 17 and 22, and the restaurant boxes: all restaurants, each month against an average non-festive month (Jul and Aug 2025, Feb and Mar 2026). Changes only.
Type, zone and city	Looked up online for the most active restaurants on Reelo, so baselines differ slightly.

Read with care

Patterns, not promises. Small groups are early signals. We mark them where they appear.

Not all of it is extra footfall. Some regulars would have visited during a festival anyway.

Two views of a festival. Page 07 counts every campaign sent in a window. The festival pages count only campaigns that named the festival.

Make this festive season your best one yet

With Reelo you pick exactly who to message, set a festive offer, choose how long it stays open, and send on WhatsApp in a few clicks.

Book a demo

reelo

Let’s plan your festive season together

A Reelo expert will help you pick the festivals, offers and send dates that fit your customers.

Book a call with Reelo →

or scan

Know a restaurant owner who would find this useful? Pass it on.







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