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FEMINA

Be
unstoppable



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FOOD
MANGO
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REALLY IS
THE WORD

DECODE THE
'LET THEM'
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HOW TO
VINTAGE
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**OLD &
NEW**



FRESH AS A
SUMMER
BREEZE

**DISHA
PATANI**

Too HOT to HANDLE

Some flings are meant to last forever. Others? Just long enough to teach you how good it feels to live in the moment. Either way, **Sharon D'Silva** has the expert scoop on how to enjoy the heat – minus the heartbreak

Sun's out, buns out – and so is your willpower when that hot stranger on the beach sends over a piña colada with a smirk that could melt more than just your SPF. Whether you're lounging at a shack in Goa or barefoot at a sundowner in Greece, there's just something about summer that makes sparks fly a little faster. The vibe? Laid-back. The outfits? Barely there. The rules? Oh, honey – they packed their bags and left weeks ago.

Think lazy afternoons chasing ice-cold cocktails,



spontaneous sunset swims under pastel skies, midnight dance-offs to beach-side DJs, and stolen kisses in neon-lit alleys.

Summer flings are basically the mango popsicle of romance – sweet, seasonal, and oh-so worth it. even if they melt too soon.

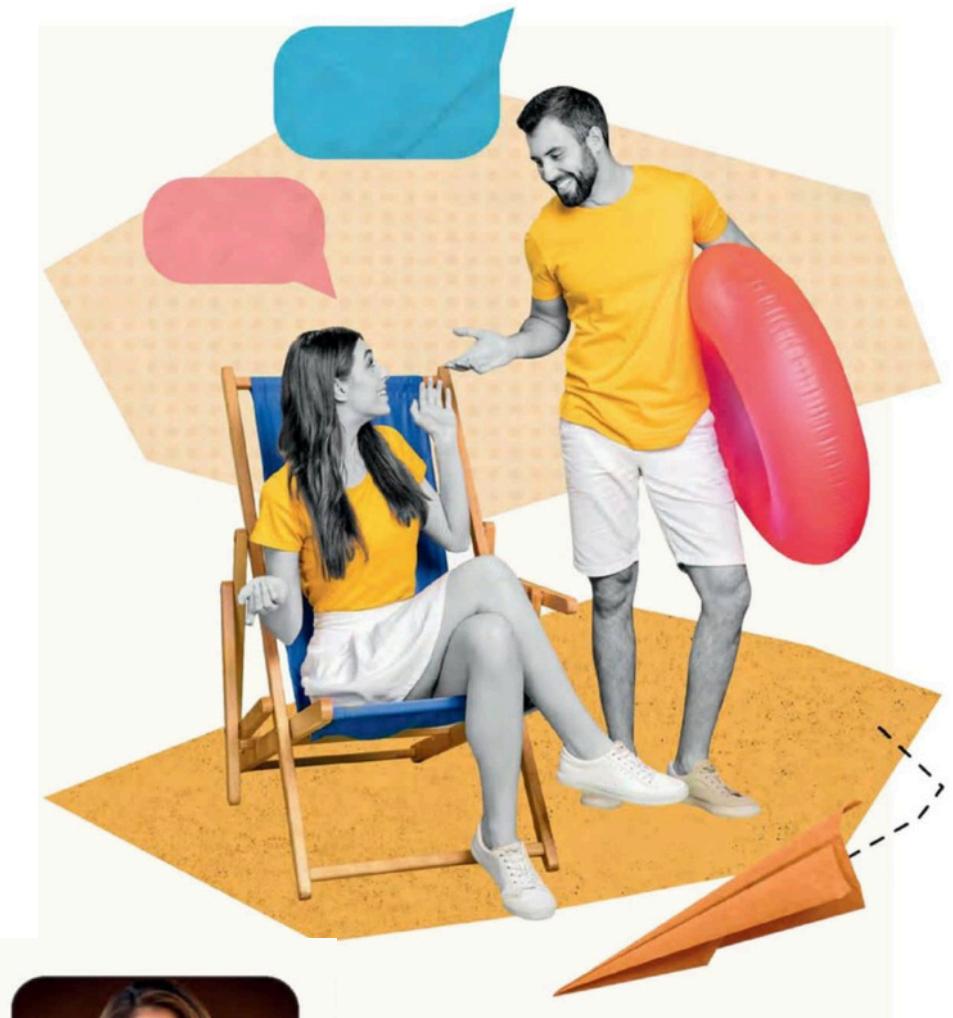
But, as the tide rolls in, how do you ride that perfect wave of flirtation without getting sunburnt by feelings? Stick around: we've got the cheat code to keeping it light, fun, and totally unforgettable...

NO STRINGS, JUST SUNSHINE

Crack open any vacation read, and chances are you'll meet a main character who's a touch bolder and a whole lot flirtier as the temperature rises. There's a reason summer flings feel as if they've leapt straight out of a movie scene – and it's not just the golden hour lighting. According to Mumbai-based sex and relationships coach Aastha Khanna, the season brings with it a sense of freedom. "Those long days and balmy nights invite spontaneity and emotional intensity, without the pressure of commitment," she explains. "Because summer often feels like a break from real life, it creates the perfect backdrop for a passionate, no-strings attached connection."

THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

A great fling thrives on mutual respect, freedom, and just enough chemistry to keep your pulse racing. But there's a secret ingredient: clear communication. Aastha's tip? Be upfront about your expectations, and make sure you're both aligned to the fact that this is to be a casual connection.



"SUMMER CREATES THE PERFECT BACKDROP FOR A PASSIONATE, NO-STRINGS ATTACHED CONNECTION"

– Aastha khanna

This ensures no messy assumptions or emotional confusion down the line. "Stay emotionally grounded by enjoying the relationship for what it is, without projecting long-term fantasies onto it. If feelings start to shift, be honest with yourself and your partner. Lastly,

respect each other's boundaries - casual doesn't mean careless. Be mindful of consent, emotional space, and basic decency. Because, in the game of casual connections, playing fair is always the most fun."

WHY THESE FLINGS MATTER MORE THAN YOU THINK

The beauty of short-term relationships is that they act as a mirror - showing you exactly what excites you, what drains you, and what makes your heart do that weird fluttery thing.

With no pressure, you begin to notice what truly lights you up: physical touch, deep late-night chats, or spontaneous plans made just for you. These quick connections also reveal patterns – do you fall fast, avoid emotional intimacy, or second-guess everything? A fling can bring all that – and more – to the surface in the most unexpected ways.

WHEN YOU ACCIDENTALLY CATCH FEELINGS

So you were just here for a hot girl summer and, now, suddenly, you're 19 posts deep into their Instagram from 2022. Relatable. Before you start spiralling, know this: there's nothing "wrong" with you. According to psychotherapist,

relationships expert, and founder of Gateway of Healing in Gurugram, **Dr Chandni Tugnait**, it's just biology. "Our brains aren't wired for compartmentalised connections," she explains. "Oxytocin – the bonding hormone – is released during moments of intimacy, especially with physical touch. It can create the illusion of a deeper emotional bond, even when the original intent was casual."

Toss in some shared belly laughs, steamy make-out sessions, and sleepy breakfast dates, and boom – your situationship is starting to feel suspiciously relationship-y. "Consistent presence, vulnerability, and pleasure act like emotional

glue," Dr Chandni adds. "For some, it even fills emotional voids they didn't know they had, shifting desire from playful to profound." That's why it's so important to check in



"IF ONLY ONE OF YOU IS CATCHING FEELINGS, DON'T STICK AROUND HOPING FOR A PLOT TWIST"

– Dr Chandni Tugnait

– not just with the other person, but with yourself. Ask: Am I still on the same page as when this started? Or has it quietly evolved into something deeper for me? Spoiler alert: it's okay if it has. What matters is honesty, not just chemistry.

SAYING 'BYE' WITHOUT THE BURN

Sure, some flings do level up into real love – but only when both parties swap out their beach goggles for emotional clarity and agree to dive in together. "If only one of you is catching feelings while the other is still playing by the no-strings script, don't stick around hoping for a plot twist," Dr Chandni emphasises. "Mixed signals are heartbreak's BFF.

Believe them when they say they're 'not ready'. Instead of stalking old DMs or hunting for hidden clues, set your boundaries, and redirect your energy into some much-needed self-love."

Remember, just because a fling doesn't turn into forever doesn't mean it wasn't worth it. It gave you what you needed in the moment – fun, freedom, maybe a few lessons wrapped in tan lines and late-night texts. Walk away not because it didn't matter, but because you're saving space for something that does. After all, some of the best love stories aren't the ones that go the distance – they're the ones that burn bright, fizzle out, and still make your heart do a little happy dance when you look back.

