

About Mumbai

Welcome to the city that never sleeps! Pulsating, Alive, On the Move, Vibrant, Fun -- this is Mumbai or as it is still frequently referred to -- Bombay. The most modern city in India, it captures the spirit of the changing pace set by liberalization and modernisation.

Once a cluster of seven islands, Mumbai was presented to King Charles II in 1661 as part of the dowry when he married Princess Catherine de Braganza of Portugal.

Over the years, as colonialism gave way to independence, Mumbai has transformed itself into an entity with thriving markets, business houses and many different communities reflecting a cosmopolitan and trendy atmosphere rarely seen elsewhere. On the surface, it represents the ever-changing face of today's India -- the old coupled with the dynamic new, and yet at its very core, the heart of the city is steeped in Indian customs and values.

It is the capital of Maharashtra state, and its official language is Marathi although English and Hindi are widely spoken and understood. The fast-paced life has given rise to hordes of "fast-food outlets" on almost every road, offering lip-smacking choices of Mumbai's very own pau bhaji, bhel puri and kababs. There is no dearth, though, of multi-culinary delicacies dished out in posh restaurants by expert chefs. Mumbai is a shopper's delight with bargain buys, exclusive boutiques, ethnic markets and mini bazaars. This busy city is also the hub of a thriving cultural life, with a constant stream of performances in music, dance and drama. The seat of the Hindi film industry, known locally as Bollywood, it produces the largest number of films in the world. Mumbai caters to the adventurous and the romantic through its sporting activities, nightclubs, pubs, theatres, beaches and restaurants. Old and new, rich and poor, classical and modern -- its all here for you to savour and enjoy!

Weather

The monsoon months (June-September) though cooler are hampered on occasion by heavy rainfall.

Getting Around

The local suburban railway network along the Western and Central corridors together with the BEST buses provide commuters with an efficient transportation network. Trains leave every few minutes from stations in both directions from 4.30 am to 1.30 am although the frequency is less in the nighttime and early morning. Taxis, cars for hire (along with drivers), and auto-rickshaws allow for easy travel within the city. Mumbai's yellow and black taxis are a convenient way to travel around the city. A tariff card converting the meter reading into rupees fixes payment. Auto-rickshaws are also metered but are only confined to the outer limits of the city, around the northern suburbs. The Mumbai train map can be found [Click here](#).

Emergency Services

For Police dial 100, Fire 101 and Ambulance 102. Most hotels can provide a physician for a medical emergency and will guide you to the nearest pharmacy around the area.

Attractions

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Market (Crawford Market)

A busy market area, this is best visited early on in the day. The fruits and vegetable section offers the best of produce. Depending on when you visit, the fruit/s of the season are always a good buy.



Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (Victoria Terminus)

This is a magnificent building, and considered to be architecturally one of the finest stations in the world. Built by the British in 1888, it has exquisite ornamentation on its facade along with beautifully executed panels and friezes. It holds the statue of Queen Victoria on its dome.



Global Vipassana Pagoda

Global Vipassana Pagoda is the World's Largest Pillar-less dome with a capacity to seat 8,000 meditators. In it are also enshrined Buddha's genuine relics, thus becoming the first such pagoda in India after King Ashoka's era.



Flora Fountain and the Gothic/Victorian buildings of the Fort Area

The Flora Fountain stands on the site of the old church gate of the Bombay Fort, now a major crossroad named Hutatma Chowk. It was erected to honour Sir Bartle Frere, a former governor of Bombay and named after the Greek goddess Flora. Other buildings to see in the Fountain or Fort area are the University of Mumbai buildings including the imposing Rajabhai Tower, the Mumbai High Court, the Old Secretariat, and the Institute of Science on one end. Close by are situated St Thomas Cathedral, the Asiatic Society of Bombay or Town Hall, the Office of the Director General of Police, the General Post Office and the Thomas Cook building.



The Western Railway Headquarters is also quite near, across the street from the Churchgate Station. These buildings are fine examples of the Gothic and Indo-Saracenic style. Many are illuminated by night. An exotic way of seeing these sights would be by the MTDC open-air bus or by the few surviving Victorias or buggy rides. Close by to Flora Fountain is the Kala Ghoda area which holds a once a week fair (every Sunday) from November to January.

Prince of Wales Museum

This is one of Mumbai's finest example of Victorian architecture. Built to commemorate King George V's visit to Mumbai (while still Prince of Wales), it was designed by George Wittet and completed in 1923. It is undoubtedly one of India's finest museums and houses treasures, artefacts, paintings and sculpture from the many periods covering India's history, including the Indus Valley Civilization. Open from Tuesday to Sunday, 10.30 am to 6 pm.



National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA)

This is the former Cowasji Jehangir Hall, of the Institute of Science. It has been renovated to serve as a four-storey exhibition hall, displaying the best of Indian contemporary art. Open daily except Monday, from 10 am to 5 pm.



Gateway of India

Mumbai's most striking monument, this too was designed by George Wittet. It has an imposing gateway arch in the Indo-Saracenic style with Gujarati and Islamic elements such as wooden carvings. It was built to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to India in 1911. This area is also the departing point for ferries plying to Elephanta Island and other beaches across the port. Behind it is the beautiful old (and new) structure of the Taj Mahal Hotel



Marine Drive and Chowpatty Beach

This is the stretch now known as Netaji Subhashchandra Bose Road with Nariman Point on one end to Babulnath, at the foot of Walkeshwar on the other. For the most part, a pleasant promenade continues along the beach with the Chowpatty area situated somewhat in the middle. Chowpatty Beach is a teeming mass of people, vendors, masseurs and roadside restaurants with its specialties being bhelpuri and kulfi. Across the Chowpatty Beach area is the Taraporewala Aquarium. Marine Drive is also referred to as the Queen's Necklace because of the dramatic line of street lamps lit up at night.



Malabar Hills

This is essentially an up-market residential area with some spectacular views of the city surroundings. On the road climbing up, is a Jain temple dedicated to Adinath, the first Jain tirthankara. At one end, on the top are the Hanging Gardens (Pherozeshah Mehta Gardens) and the Kamala Nehru Park. Both provide relaxing atmospheres of greenery. Beside the Hanging Gardens are the Parsi Towers of Silence. But these are off-limits to all except those who have come to dispose and pay respect to the dead.



Towards the other end is the Banganga temple complex at Walkeshwar, considered to be one of Mumbai's holiest sites. Local legend has it that the Hindu god Rama rested here on his way to rescue Sita (his wife) from Lanka. The Banganga Tank is supposedly the spot where Rama shot his bow or bana. Further away is the British built Raj Bhavan, the residence of the governor of Maharashtra. The Banganga Festival of Music is a yearly highlight, and is in the month of January usually.

Mani Bhavan

This simple and charming museum was where Mahatma Gandhi lived on his visits to Mumbai between 1917 and 1934. Gandhi's room and belongings including his books are on display. Mani Bhavan is situated on Laburnam Road, near the August Kranti Maidan, where the 'Quit India' movement was launched in 1942. Open daily from 9.30 am to 6 pm



Mahalaxmi Temple

The Mahalaxmi Temple is a popular holy site as Mahalaxmi is the goddess of wealth. It is situated at one end of Breach Candy -- a trendy residential and shopping area, now known as B. Desai Road.



Haji Ali Shrine

Further along the seashore, at the end of a long pathway surrounded by seawater is the shrine dedicated to Haji Ali, a Muslim saint. Access is only at low tide via the pathway.



Siddhivinayak Temple

Located in the Prabha Devi area of Mumbai, this popular temple dedicated to Ganesh was rebuilt on the site of a 200-year old temple. Built of black stone, the idol of Ganesh is two and a half feet in height and two feet in width.

An unusual feature of the statue is that the trunk turns to the right, not often found on Ganesh idols. Tuesday is the main day of *darshan* and *puja*, but this temple is frequented by hundreds of devotees everyday.



Juhu Beach

This suburban beach is great favourite with Mumbaites, and has plenty to offer everyone. Like Marine Drive's Chowpatty, Juhu 'Chowpatty' is a vendor's delight with innumerable food counters. It is a wonderful place to bring kids, as it doubles up as an amusement park, play ground, and open-air restaurant. An unusual sight at this beach is the camel ride, which is both fun and popular.



RBI Musems

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is the central bank of the country. As the central bank, it is also the custodian of the country's monetary heritage. To document and preserve India's monetary history for the posterity and as a part of the Reserve Bank's education and outreach programme for the common man, especially the students, the Reserve Bank has conceived the Monetary Museum.



Jahagir Art Gallery

Close by to the Prince of Wales Museum, this gallery is the showcase for contemporary art. The displays change regularly. Outside is the Artist's Plaza with more paintings on display and sale. Open daily from 11 am to 7 pm.



Source : <http://www.maharashtratourism.gov.in/>