

welcome to Goa & Mumbai



Marvellous Mumbai

More than just a gateway to Goa, Mumbai is a place that takes eating, drinking and making merry seriously. Luxuriate at a grand hotel, explore glorious Gothic architecture, munch on street eats galore and party hard in this sizzling-hot city beside the sea.

Beach Bounty

Goa's greatest drawcard is without doubt its legendary beaches. Strung in a shimmering gold strand from the tip to the toe of the state, they cater to every possible tropical whim: choose from happy, hippy Arambol or bolder, brasher Baga; from the lively sands of Palolem, or lovely, laid-back Mandrem; from expansive groomed sands

of fancy five-stars or from hidden crescent coves, where the only footprints will be sea eagles' and your own.

Spiritual Sanctuary

For those keener to top up their Zen than their tan, Goa's crop of spiritual activities grows more bountiful each year: silent Vipassana retreats, sunrise t'ai chi sessions, reiki healing courses and just about every other form of spiritual exploration are readily available statewide. By far the most popular of myriad regimes on offer is ayurveda, the ancient science of plant-based medicine; second only to ayurveda comes yoga, whose dozen-or-more varieties make it easy to find the pose and poise that suit you best.



Colourful and colliding, spiritual and soothing, crammed with deserted beaches, yogic bliss and heady nightlife. Goa is many things to many people, but everyone agrees: there's nowhere on earth quite like it.

(left) A cow shares the beach near the flea market at Anjuna
(below) Luscious pomegranates for sale, Crawford Market, Mumbai



The Spice of Life

Throughout every waking hour, the scents and flavours of Goa's cuisine will rarely elude you. Prepare to be enchanted by many Portuguese-influenced dishes, from a *bhaji-pau* (bread roll dipped in curry) at breakfast time to a lip-smacking *vindahlo*, with its infusions of wine vinegar and garlic. South Indian treats abound in breakfast joints and streetside carts: fill up on dosas (paper-thin lentil-flour pancakes), *idlis* (spongy, round, fermented rice cakes), and *vadas* (doughnut-shaped, deep-fried savouries made from lentil flour), before enjoying the traditional lunchtime repast of zingy *fish-curry-rice*, all washed down with a cold Kingfisher beer.

Cultural Crockpot

Though Goa now receives some two million annual visitors, its longest-staying callers came a-knocking in 1510, when Portuguese conquerors arrived, lured by the promise of lucrative spice routes, not relinquishing their hold on Goa until 1961. Their indelible mark is still evident in the state's baroque architecture, crumbling forts, colourful Catholic ceremonies, mournful *fado* music and culinary quirkiness. Combine this heritage with a modern Hindu majority, migrant workers from as far afield as Nepal and Kashmir, and a whole calendar full of happy, heady festivals, and you have the ingredients that make Goa one truly mesmerising melting pot.