

# Welcome to Goa & Mumbai

*Pint-sized Goa is more than beaches and trance parties. A blend of Indian and Portuguese cultures, sweetened with sun, sea, sand, seafood and spirituality, there's nowhere in India quite like it.*

## Beach Bounty

Goa's biggest draw is undoubtedly its virtually uninterrupted string of golden-sand beaches. This shimmering strand of sand stretches along the Arabian Sea from the tip to the toe of the state, and each of the various beaches have developed their own personalities and reputations since the hippie days of the '60s. They cater to every tropical whim: choose from backpacker Arambol or bolder, brasher Baga; from the palm-fringed sands of Palolem to hippie market bliss at Anjuna or lovely, laid-back Mandrem; from expansive groomed sands in front of fancy five-star resorts or hidden crescent coves, where the only footprints will be the scuttling crabs and your own.

## Spiritual Sanctuary

Want to top up your Zen as well as your tan? Welcome to winter in Goa where yoga is king and the crop of spiritual activities grows more bountiful each year: sunrise t'ai chi sessions, reiki healing courses, meditation and just about every other form of spiritual exploration are practised freely. Many travellers come here for a serious yoga experience and you'll find everything from drop-in classes to teacher training courses and spiritual retreats.

## Spice of Life

Food is enjoyed fully in Goa and Mumbai (Bombay), as it is throughout India. The scents, spices and flavours of Goa's cuisine will surprise and tantalise even seasoned travellers: whether it's a classic fish curry rice, a morning *bhaji-pau* (bread roll dipped in curry), a piquant vindaloo, with its infusions of wine vinegar and garlic, or a spicy *xacuti* (coconut and chilli) sauce, the Indo-Portuguese influence is a treat for the tastebuds. While you're here, visit a back-country spice farm to learn why the Portuguese were so excited about Goa.

## Colonial Heritage

Both Goa and Mumbai stand out in India for their extraordinary colonial-era architecture and heritage. Mumbai's British legacy of gaudy Gothic and Indo-Saracenic buildings is an architectural feast not to be missed. The Portuguese arrived in Goa in 1510, lured by the exotic East and the promise of lucrative spice routes. Their indelible mark is still evident in the state's baroque architecture, whitewashed churches, crumbling forts, colourful Catholic ceremonies, mournful fado music and the stunning cathedrals of Old Goa.



## Why I Love Goa & Mumbai

By Paul Harding, Writer

My first visit to Goa, in the late '90s, was also my first visit to India. After travelling overland from Delhi through central India and Mumbai, Goa – with its beaches, all-night parties and laid-back tropical vibe – was a blissful surprise. I've been back many times and while some things may have changed, the essence remains the same. I love hanging around by the beach, cruising through impossibly green countryside on two wheels, and the evening ritual of watching the sun melt into the Arabian Sea with a cold beer and a plate of spicy prawns. And I love the Goan people – hard-working, optimistic, quick with a smile and always happy to chat.

**For more about our writers, see page 256**