



Kolkata (Calcutta)

033 / POP 14.5 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ 6 Ballygunge Place (p475)
- ➔ Arsalan (p473)
- ➔ Kewpies (p474)
- ➔ Fire and Ice (p474)
- ➔ Tamarind (p475)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Astor (p470)
- ➔ Corner Courtyard (p472)
- ➔ Oberoi Grand (p469)
- ➔ Park Hotel (p470)
- ➔ Sunflower Guest House (p470)

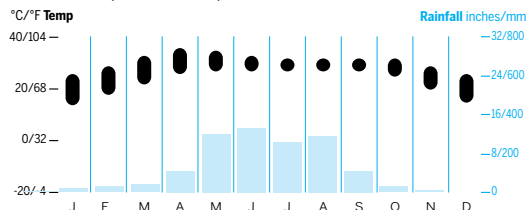
Why Go?

India's second-biggest city is a daily festival of human existence, simultaneously noble and squalid, cultured and desperate, decidedly futuristic while splendid in decay. By its old spelling, Calcutta readily conjures images of human suffering to most Westerners – although that's not a complete picture of this 350-year-old metropolis. Locally, Kolkata is regarded as India's intellectual, artistic and cultural capital. Although poverty is certainly apparent, the self-made middle class drives the city's core machinery, a nascent hipster culture thrives among its millennial residents and its dapper Bengali gentry frequent grand, old colonial-era clubs.

As the former capital of British India, Kolkata retains a feast of colonial-era architecture contrasting starkly with urban slums and dynamic new-town suburbs. Kolkata is the ideal place to experience the mild yet complex tang of Bengali cuisine. Friendlier than India's other metropolises, this is a city you 'feel' more than simply visit.

When to Go

Kolkata (Calcutta)



May–Sep Best avoided due to heavy rains that leave the city drenched.

Sep & Oct The city dresses up magnificently for the colourful mayhem of Durga Puja.

Nov–Jan Cool and dry, the winter months are a time for film and music festivals.



Kolkata Highlights

- 1 Kumartuli (p464)**
Watching clay goddesses come to life in this atmospheric neighbourhood.
- 2 Mullik Ghat Flower Market (p461)** Visiting colourful stalls selling tropical blossoms.
- 3 Victoria Memorial (p456)** Pondering the

architectural brilliance of the British Raj's tribute to Queen Victoria.

- 4 Dacres Lane (p475)**
Sampling lip-smacking creole cuisine at street-food stalls in this serpentine lane.

- 5 South Park Street Cemetery (p456)** Discovering

stories from the city's past etched on tombstones.

- 6 Marble Palace (p463)**
Being intrigued by the idiosyncratic exuberance of zamindars in arguably the city's most curious museum.

- 7 Maidan (p457)** Enjoying a fun ride through this lush green colonial-era park.