



Mumbai (Bombay)

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Best Places to Eat

- Koh (p759)
- Hotel Ram Ashraya (p760)
- Revival (p759)
- Pradeep Gomantak Bhojanalaya (p758)
- Culture Curry (p761)

Best Places to Stay

- Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai (p752)
- Iskcon (p754)
- YWCA (p752)
- Anand Hotel (p754)
- ITC Maratha (p756)

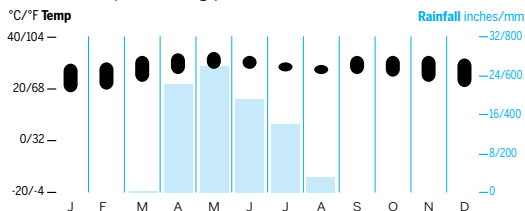
Why Go?

Mumbai is big. It's full of dreamers and hard-labourers, starlets and gangsters, stray dogs and exotic birds, artists and servants and fisherfolk and *crorepatis* (millionaires) and lots and lots of other people. It has the most prolific film industry, some of Asia's biggest slums (and the world's most expensive home) and the largest tropical forest in an urban zone. It's India's financial powerhouse, fashion epicentre and a pulse point of religious tension. It's evolved its own language, Bumbaiyya Hindi, which is a mix of...everything.

But Mumbai does not have to be overwhelming: it just has its own rhythm, which takes a little while to hear. Just give yourself some time to appreciate the city's lilting cadences, its harmonies of excess and restraint, and before you know it, Mumbai might just decide to take you in like you're one of her own.

When to Go

Mumbai (Bombay)



Dec-Jan The very best, least sticky weather.

Aug-Sep Mumbai goes Ganesh-crazy during its most exciting festival, Ganesh Chaturthi.

Oct-Apr Post-monsoon, best for festivals, and bird-watching in Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

Food

Mumbai is a city shaped by flavours from all over India and the world. Go on a cultural history tour by sampling Parsi *dhansak* (meat with curried lentils and rice), Gujarati or Keralan thalis ('all-you-can-eat' meals), Mughlai kebabs, Goan vindaloo and Mangalorean seafood. And don't forget, if you see Bombay duck on a menu, it's actually *bombil* fish dried in the sun and deep-fried. Streetwise, don't miss Mumbai's famous *bhelपुरi* (puffed rice tossed with fried rounds of dough, lentils, onions, herbs and chutneys). Stalls offering *bhelपुरi*, as well as samosas, *pav bhaji* (spiced vegetables and bread), *vada pav* (deep-fried spiced lentil-ball sandwich), *blurji pav* (scrambled eggs and bread) and *dabeli* (a mixture of potatoes, spices, peanuts and pomegranate, also on bread), do a brisk trade around the city.

DON'T MISS

For many, a visit to cosmopolitan Mumbai is all about dining, nightlife and shopping, but the city offers far more than nocturnal amusement and retail therapy. Nowhere is that more evident than in the spectacular maze of Gothic, Victorian, Indo-Saracenic and art deco architecture, remnants of the British colonial era and countless years of European influence. **Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, High Court, University of Mumbai, Taj Mahal Palace** hotel and the **Gateway of India** are just the most prominent: the city is laced with architectural jewels, and stumbling upon them is one of Mumbai's great joys.

Top Festivals

- ➔ **Mumbai Sanskruti** (☺ Jan; Fort) This free, two-day celebration of Hindustani classical music is held on the steps of the gorgeous Asiatic Society Library.
- ➔ **Kala Ghoda Festival** (☺ Feb; citywide, p741) Getting bigger and more sophisticated each year, the two-week-long art fest sees tons of performances and exhibitions.
- ➔ **Elephanta Festival** (☺ Mar; Gateway of India, p736) Formerly on Elephanta Island, this classical music and dance festival now accommodates more people on waterfront Apollo Bunder.
- ➔ **Nariyal Poornima** (☺ Aug; Colaba) This Koli celebration marks the start of the fishing season and the retreat of monsoon winds.
- ➔ **Ganesh Chaturthi** (☺ Aug/Sep; citywide) Mumbai gets totally swept up by this 10- to 12-day celebration of the elephant-headed Hindu god Ganesh. On the festival's first, third, fifth, seventh and 11th days, families and communities take their Ganesh statues to the seashore and auspiciously submerge them.
- ➔ **Mumbai Film Festival** (☺ Oct; citywide) New films from the subcontinent and beyond are screened at the weeklong MFF.

MAIN POINTS OF ENTRY

Most arrive at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Mumbai Central train station (BCT) or Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST; Victoria Terminus).

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Population:** 18.4 million
- ➔ **Area:** 444 sq km
- ➔ **Area code:** ☑ 022
- ➔ **Languages:** Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati, English
- ➔ **Sleeping prices:** \$ below ₹1500, \$\$ ₹1500 to ₹5000, \$\$\$ above ₹5000

Top Tips

Many international flights arrive after midnight. Beat the daytime traffic by heading straight to your hotel, and carry detailed landmark directions for your hotel: many airport taxi drivers don't speak English and may not use official street names.

Resources

- ➔ **Mumbai Magic** (www.mumbai-magic.blogspot.com) Excellent blog on the city's hidden corners.
- ➔ **Mumbai Boss** (www.mumbaiboss.com) The boss of what's on in Mumbai.
- ➔ **Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation** (www.maharashtratourism.gov.in) Official tourism site.
- ➔ **Lonely Planet** (www.lonelyplanet.com/india/mumbai) Recommendations, planning advice, reviews, insider tips.