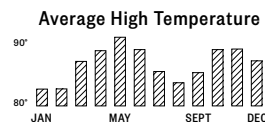


Mumbai

Country: India
FKA: Bombay
Population: 21 mil.
Predominant Languages:
 English, Hindi, Marathi

22
 Official languages in India.

Getting There
 Air India and United
 Airlines offer direct
 flights from New Jersey's
 Newark daily.



How Long to Stay
 Four days, then
 head to the
 beaches of Goa or the
 Jaipur palaces.



The truth is, spending time in India's largest city, formerly known as (and still often called) Bombay, can be exhausting. After all, this Arabian Sea-facing megalopolis has a population more than twice that of New York City, in a space just three-quarters the size—hence the terrible traffic. (The good news: Elephant-related jams are down since a 2013 law banned pachyderms from the center.) And yes, there are jewel-encrusted palaces everywhere, but you'll also find gleaming skyscrapers and slums that are cities unto themselves.

Yet Mumbai's madness is part of its undeniable allure. Along Marine Drive, the glittering waterfront thoroughfare, colonial architecture brushes up against Art Deco mansions and Buddhist pagodas, a nod to the city's centuries of Gujarati,



Portuguese, and British rule before India regained its independence in 1947.

Despite all of this foreign sway, Mumbai today has a South Asian aesthetic all its own. You'll see it in the booming arts scene (the always-hopping Colaba district now has galleries showing homegrown talent like Sahej Rahal) and the admirably ambitious restaurants serving hybrid dishes like lamb tacos and curry arancini. And then there's the shopping (anyone who works in the design world knows that whole itineraries are built around the markets and boutiques selling covetable saris, silks, and gems). It's all dizzying, for sure, but only in that intoxicating way which makes you want to travel in the first place.



The exterior of
 the Taj Mahal Palace
 Hotel in Colaba.



In This Massive City, These Are the Hoods You Need to Know

	The Vibe	What You'll Do While There	How Long to Stay	Our Insider Tip
COLABA	Think colonial sites, local design stores, and hip bistros that define modern Mumbai.	See the historic Gateway of India; hit the boutiques; sip a White Zen beer at Woodside Inn.	Make this your base—it has the best restaurant scene and shopping in the city.	Grab a butter-garlic crab lunch at the no-frills, 50-year-old Trishna.
BANDRA	Now home to Bollywood stars, this polished, creative suburb hasn't quite shed its decades-old boho skin.	Weekend like the well-heeled locals starting with lunch at the Fatty Bao, then spiced rum drinks at sceney MasalaBar.	Most of a day and into the night, thanks to its walkable clutch of cocktail bars and bistros.	Visit the 127-year-old local-art-focused Bombay Art Society, which recently moved into a funky new Bandra building.
LOWER PAREL	A former factory hub reborn as a glam row of hotels and shops popular with blinged-out socialites.	Browse the tiles and silk damask wallpaper at Raghuvanshi Mills, a cotton mill turned designer homeware spot.	Half a day. Go in the late afternoon to shop before cocktail hour at the many rooftop hotel bars.	Head to the Four Seasons' 33rd-floor Aer bar at sunset; get there 30 minutes ahead to snag a seat.



Colaba, the neighborhood you'll want to stay in.

Mumbai's Modern Art Scene Is Thriving. See the Best of It at...

Chatterjee & Lal

Owned by a husband and wife who are also art critics, it's one of the best galleries in Mumbai's Colaba art district and has a knack for projecting Indian talent onto the global stage—after debuting here, multimedia artist Sahej Rahal's *Adversary* continued on to Liverpool's Biennial and Japan's Setouchi Triennale this year.

Gallery Maskara

In this soaring rectangular space in Colaba, the ceilings are 45 feet high but the walls seem windowless (there are a few covered by blinds), adding to the provocative feel of installations from artists like Max Streicher, who filled the place with inflatable floating bodies (which was pretty much as creepy as it sounds).

Volte

Peel yourself away from Colaba and detour to this industrial-style spot between Colaba and Bandra that is widely considered the city's leading authority on video and new media art. Its concrete spaces have hosted big names like Anish Kapoor and Nalini Malani (who just finished exhibiting at New York City's MoMA), as well as established locals like Ranbir Kaleka.

“Stroll Marine Drive, with its famous Art Deco buildings, as the sun sets like a big orange lozenge into the Arabian Sea.”

Mortimer Chatterjee and Tara Lal, owners, Chatterjee & Lal



AND WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY AFTER...

Chatterjee & Lal

Stop in for a caramel-fudge Millionaire Brownie, baked fresh each day at the super-popular Theobroma bakery, just a five-minute stroll from the gallery.

Gallery Maskara

Cap off an early-evening visit with a cold pitcher of Kingfisher and a bowl of Beef Chilly Dry at iconic expat hangout Leopold Cafe, on the next street over.

Volte

Walk two blocks west to the Farzi Café, one of Mumbai's hottest new restaurants, for Indian-Italian snacks like Dal Chawal Arancini.



Yes, You Can Fill a Suitcase Here

In Rome, you nearly kill yourself trying to see all the sights; in Mumbai, you do the same to hit every cult-worthy boutique, homeware emporium, and silk-draped jewel house (the saris at Sabyasachi alone are worth planning an itinerary around). Kick off the day at [Le Mill](#), a sunlit store in Colaba with racks of beautifully colored knitwear from local designers, as well as one-shoulder maillots by Shivan & Narresh (though you're forgiven if you go straight for the store's coveted home goods line). Right around the corner is the Gem Palace, a fantasy of Rajasthani splendor and jewelry designed by the Kasliwal family, including the late, great Munnu Kasliwal and his equally talented eldest son, Siddharth (head's up—these jewels can run to six figures). A seven-minute walk north gets you to romantic [Sabyasachi](#), with chandeliers and boudoir-style fitting rooms, where heavily bejeweled saris

and lenghas spun in candy-floss pinks and golds sparkle almost as brightly as the society brides who shop here for their trousseaux. Northwest of the store, at iconic [Bungalow 8](#), owner Maithili Ahluwalia exercises her phenomenal eye in editing the shawls, dresses, and furniture that stock the semi-industrial space—we never leave without a pair of the store's own cotton harem pants, which help wearers

keep their cool in the Mumbai heat. Looking for the chicest housewares this side of Paris? Check out [Good Earth](#) for throw pillows embroidered in Mogul motifs. Bonus: When you finish shopping, Mumbai's best Lycheetini is served at the St. Regis's rooftop Asilo bar, a short walk away.

The ground floor at the Gem Palace, in Colaba.



16

The number of "selfie-free" zones introduced to the city this year.

Photograph by Tom Parker. Illustration by Denise Nestor

MUMBAI

HOW TO GET AROUND MUMBAI

Sprawling Asian cities can be a beast to navigate, and Mumbai is no exception. Though certain neighborhoods are eminently walkable (strolling Colaba or Marine Drive is a must), going from hood to hood can be tricky. Luckily, black-and-yellow cabs are reliable and easy to hail, and Uber is popular and affordable, as are two local competitors, Ola Cabs and Meru Cabs, both of which have downloadable apps. (Meru also has a budget-friendly option, Meru Genie, which costs about 25 percent less.) Be sure to factor in traffic when moving around—rush hour varies by area, so consult your concierge before hitting the road.

WE ASK THE MOST STYLISH SHOPKEEPERS IN MUMBAI WHAT ONE ITEM TO BRING BACK HOME WITH YOU

Siddharth Kasliwal, Gem Palace

"Go to Taherally's, in the Chor Bazaar, for their beautiful 1920s-era antique chandeliers from when Mumbai was under British rule."

Cecilia Morelli Parikh, Le Mill

"The twentieth-century shadow puppets are typical of the south of India, and you can find them at Phillips Antiques, near Kala Ghoda."

Maithili Ahluwalia, Bungalow 8

"The elephant god Ganesh, hugely popular in Mumbai, is the god of knowledge, wealth, and success and is the remover of obstacles. Pick up a statue at any handicrafts store."



A LOCAL WITH TASTE

Architect Bijoy Jain, of Studio Mumbai, Designs His Ideal Day Off

"In the mornings I like to shop ...

at [Crawford Market](#) for spices and stroll [Chor Bazaar](#), filled with antiques from the colonial era. If there's time, I'll dash into [Nalli](#), which has many locations around Mumbai, for cotton towels and lungis."

"Lunch will usually be something casual ...

like fish curry at [Taste of Kerala](#), in Fort, where the food is served on banana leaves, in the South Indian tradition."

"Don't miss the galleries ...

in the Colaba/Fort area—a great place to while away an afternoon. Two of my favorites are the [Chemould Prescott Road](#) gallery—the lineup of young artists is really dynamic—and [Gallery MMB](#), which doubles as a hub for panel discussions and screenings."

"Nights are for eating and drinking ...

and I will always head to one of Mumbai's excellent seafood restaurants, like [Fresh Catch](#), for ambotik curry, followed by a drink at the [Royal Bombay Yacht Club](#), which has been around since 1846."



How Expats Started a Restaurant Revival

It used to be that eating out in Mumbai meant little more than hotel dining or sitting down to humdrum Indo-Chinese. But in the past five years, international chefs with cred have been descending on the city, opening inventive restaurants with radically tasty dishes that rival the traditionally epic street food here. San Francisco's Alex Sanchez kicked things off with *The Table* in 2011, which still draws a loyal following for East-West small plates, like kohlrabi truffle risotto and chili-cheese toasties. Then came Toronto native Kelvin Cheung, who helmed Colaba's ground-breaking

“Obataimu in Fort is like a live performance space and a store—you can watch tailors sew the collections as you shop.”

Kelvin Cheung, Executive Chef, One Street Over, Bastian

Ellipsis before making a name for himself in Bandra with *One Street Over*, where the vegetable tempura udon pairs perfectly with the ginger-infused Gershwin cocktail. When he opened his second venture in May, the seafood-focused *Bastian*, his loyal Bollywood disciples followed him right down the street (yes, that's Katrina Kaif munching chili stir-fried crab at the table next to you). Back in Colaba, restaurateur and Mumbai native Pooja Dhingra lured Hungarian-Colombian chef Pablo Naranjo Aguilar from Paris in February to head up the breezy *Le 15 Café*. Now there's a line out the door for the bistro's Parmesan waffles and oh-so-expertly spiced masala chai. And it's not just foreigners making inroads: Though based in New York City for the past 30 years, celeb chef and Mumbaikar Floyd Cardoz returned home last year to help open the colorful *Bombay Canteen*, which is beloved for its pulled-pork vindaloo tacos and pumpkin-spinach daal.

»
Brown rice congee from One Street Over.

AND EVEN THE INDIAN CUISINE HAS FOREIGN ROOTS

Indian-born chef Atul Kochhar earned a Michelin star at Tamarind and at Benares in London, before opening the latest must-book spot in Bandra. **NRI** (the acronym for *non-resident Indian*, here short for *not really Indian*) brings cuisine from much of India's global diaspora under one blond-wood roof—think Malaysian glazed pork belly, braised Caribbean goat, and South Africa's (delish) bunny chow curry.

THEN THERE'S OUR NO-FAIL STREET FOOD SHORT LIST

WHAT ↓	BEST AT ↓
Pav Bhaji	
A vegetarian Sloppy Joe.	Sardar Pav Bhaji, a Tardeo district snack bar.
Chikoo Ice Cream	
Hand-spun sapodilla-flavored ice cream.	Taj Ice Cream, in Bhendi Bazaar.
Mutton Seekh Kebab Roll	
Grilled meat wrapped in roti (flatbread).	Ayub's, a hole-in-the-wall in Fort.
Pani Puri	
A fried puff with spices, potato, onions, and flavored water.	Elco Pani Puri Center, a take-out joint in Bandra.

MUMBAI



A Grande Dame Still Rules the Hotel Scene...

Many consider the 1903 Taj Mahal Palace, facing the Arabian Sea in Colaba, as much a landmark as the Gateway of India arch on the harbor, opposite the grand hotel's entrance. The Palace's 550 silk-draped guest rooms, most of which have views of the sea or the palm-fringed pool, have long been a favorite of visiting presidents, princesses, and even the queen of daytime TV herself, Oprah Winfrey, who splurged on its \$7,000-a-night Ravi Shankar Suite. If you're staying somewhere else, the swank Sea Lounge bar, excellent Wasabi by Morimoto sushi restaurant, and recently reopened Taj Art Gallery are reason enough to pop in.

100

Number of lamps lit at sunset at the Taj Mahal Palace.

... BUT THESE ALTS ARE ALSO WORTHY OF YOUR RUPEES

Abode
A red-hot Colaba address and retro Mumbai design (colorfully hand-stitched cushions, vintage sari fabrics) distinguish this more intimate property.

The Oberoi, Mumbai
The only hotel that may steal the Taj's thunder is this South Mumbai stalwart with killer Back Bay views.

St. Regis Mumbai
This upscale Lower Parel spot has a rooftop pool, a great spa, and 395 rooms.

Cocktail Spot MasalaBar in Bandra • **Most Insta-Worthy Market** Phool Gulli flower market • **Architecture-Spotting** The Global Vipassana Pagoda, modeled after Burma's Shwedagon Pagoda • **Afternoon Beer** Cafe Mondegar • **Top Cup of Chai** • Prithvi Café • **Cultural Excursion** Elephanta Caves • **Atmospheric Stroll** The Colaba Causeway

REPORTED BY SARAH KHAN, DAVID PRIOR, DIVIA THANI, HANYA YANAGIHARA