

Mumbai (Bombay)



Measure out: one part Hollywood; six parts traffic; a bunch of rich power-moguls; stir in half a dozen colonial relics (use big ones); pour in six heaped cups of poverty; add a smattering of swish bars and restaurants (don't skimp on quality here for best results); equal parts of mayhem and order; as many ancient bazaars as you have lying around; a handful of Hinduism; a dash of Islam; fold in your mixture with equal parts India; throw it all in a blender on high (adding generous helpings of pollution to taste) and presto: Mumbai.

An inebriating mix of all the above and more, this mass of humanity is a frantic melange of India's extremes. It is the country's financial powerhouse and its vogue centre of fashion, film and after-dark frolics. Glistening skyscrapers and malls mushroom amid slums and grinding poverty, and Mumbai slowly marches towards a brave new (air-conditioned) world. But not everyone made the guest list: more than half of the population lives in slums, and religious-based social unrest tugs at the skirt of Mumbai's financial excess.

Only once the initial shell shock of Mumbai's chaos subsides, can one start to appreciate the city's allure: a wealth of Art Deco and grand colonial relics; cacophonous temples; warrens of bazaars; and the odd spiritual bastion of tranquillity. In Mumbai you can dine at some of the finest restaurants in the country, and work off the appetite gyrating at ultrachic bars alongside Bollywood starlets and wannabes. With a pinch of gumption, a dash of adventure, an open wallet and a running start, there's no excuse not to dive into the Mumbai madness head-first.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Get lost in the labyrinth of Mumbai's (Bombay's) archaic **bazaars** (p793)
- Stand in awe before the commanding triple-headed Shiva sculpture at **Elephanta Island** (p797)
- Check out Mumbai's architectural chronicle of colonisation: **Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus** (CST, Victoria Terminus; p776), **Bombay University** (p775) and **High Court** (p775)
- Splurge on some of the most stylish **restaurants** (p786) in India, and keep the candle burning at both ends in swanky **bars** (p789) or **clubs** (p791)
- Wander around the sacred district of **Banganga Tank** (p778), spend an afternoon watching cricket on the **Oval** or **Azad Maidans** (p775) and then soak up **Chowpatty Beach** (p777)



WARNING: MUMBAI TERRORIST ATTACKS

Terrorists struck at a number of locations in Mumbai in a series of coordinated attacks in November 2008. Targets included several places frequented by Western visitors. In the aftermath of the attacks security forces remain on high alert and we recommend travellers check the usual travel advisories before travelling to Mumbai.

HISTORY

Koli fisherfolk inhabited the seven islands that form Mumbai from the 2nd century BC. Hindu dynasties held sway from the 6th century AD until the Muslim Sultans of Gujarat annexed the area in the 14th century, eventually ceding it to Portugal in 1534. The only memorable contribution the Portuguese made to the area was christening it Bom Bahai. The British government took possession of the islands in 1665, but leased them to the East India Company.

Then called Bombay, the area flourished as a trading port. So much so that the presidency of the East India Company was transferred to Bombay from Surat. Bombay's fort was completed in the 1720s, and a century later ambitious land reclamation projects joined the islands into today's single landmass. Although Bombay grew steadily during the 18th century, it remained isolated from its hinterland until the British defeated the Marathas and annexed substantial portions of western India in 1818.

The fort walls were dismantled in 1864 and massive building works transformed the city in grand colonial style. When Bombay took over as the principal supplier of cotton to Britain during the American Civil War, the population soared and trade boomed.

Bombay hosted the first Indian National Congress in 1885, and the Quit India campaign was launched here in 1942 by frequent visitor Mahatma Gandhi. The city became capital of the Bombay presidency after Inde-

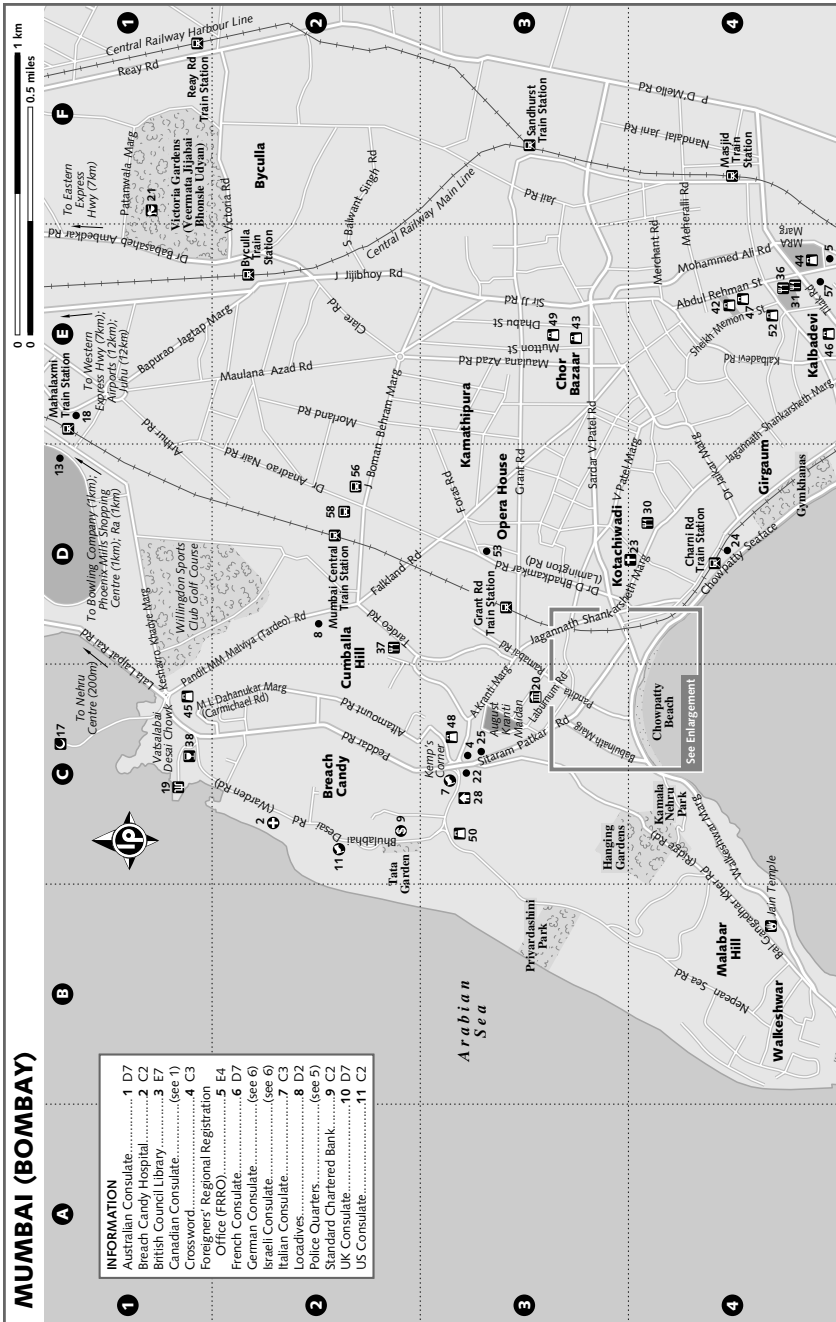
FAST FACTS

- Population: 16.4 million
- Area: 440 sq km
- Telephone code: ☎ 022
- When to go: October to February



pendence, but in 1960 Maharashtra and Gujarat were divided along linguistic lines – and Bombay became the capital of Maharashtra.

The rise of the pro-Maratha regionalist movement, spearheaded by the Shiv Sena (Hindu Party; literally 'Shivaji's Army'), shattered the city's multicultural mould by actively discriminating against Muslims and non-Maharashtrians. The Shiv Sena won the city's municipal elections in 1985. Communalist tensions increased and the city's cosmopolitan image took a battering when nearly 800 people died in riots that followed the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992. They were followed by a dozen bombings on 12 March 1993, which killed more than 300 people and damaged the



<p>SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aliganj Church.....12 D8 Amateur Riders' Club.....13 D1 Banganga Tank.....14 B5 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....15 C2 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....16 D6 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....17 C1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....18 C1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....19 C1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....20 D7 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....21 D7 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....22 E4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....23 C1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....24 D4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....25 C3 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....26 F5 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....27 D6 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....28 C3 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....29 E5 <p>ENTERTAINMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....30 C1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....31 D3 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....32 D1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....33 E1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....34 D6 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....35 D8 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....36 D8 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....37 E1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....38 C1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....39 D6 	<p>SHOPPING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....40 D6 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....41 D7 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....42 E4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....43 E3 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....44 E4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....45 C1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....46 E4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....47 E4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....48 C3 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....49 E3 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....50 C3 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....51 D8 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....52 E4 	<p>SLEEPING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....53 D3 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....54 D6 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....55 D8 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....56 D2 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....57 E4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....58 D2 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....59 D6 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....60 D7 <p>EATING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....61 D8 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....62 E4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....63 D6 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....64 D6 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....65 D2 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....66 D2 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....67 E4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....68 D2 	<p>TRANSPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....69 D6 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....70 D7 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....71 D7 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....72 D7 <p>DRINKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....73 D7 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Museum).....74 D7
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Bombay Stock Exchange and Air India Building. The more recent train bombings of July 2006, which killed more than 200 people, are a reminder that religious tensions are never far from the surface.

In 1996 the city's name was officially changed to Mumbai, the original Marathi name derived from the goddess Mumba who was worshipped by the early Koli residents. The Shiv Sena's influence has since seen the names of many streets and public buildings changed from their colonial names. The airports, Victoria Terminus and Prince of Wales Museum have all been renamed after Chhatrapati Shivaji, the great Maratha leader, although the British names of these and many major streets are still in popular local use.

ORIENTATION

Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra, is an island connected by bridges to the mainland. The principal part of the city is concentrated at the southern, claw-shaped end of the island known as South Mumbai. The southernmost peninsula is Colaba, traditionally the travelers' nerve-centre, and directly north of Colaba is the busy commercial area known as the Fort, where the old British fort once stood. It's bordered on the west by a series of intercon-

nected, fenced grass areas known as maidans. The main languages spoken in Mumbai are Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati.

The island's eastern seaboard is dominated by the city's naval docks, which are off limits. Further north, across Mahim Creek are the suburbs of Greater Mumbai and the international and domestic airports (p793). Many of Mumbai's best restaurants and night spots can be found here, particularly in the upmarket suburbs of Bandra and Juhu.

Maps

Eicher City Map Mumbai (Rs 250) is the most comprehensive and up-to-date street atlas and is well worth picking up if you're going to be spending any lengthy time in town.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

For new and second-hand books check out the street vendors lining the footpaths around Flora Fountain, the maidans, and Mahatma Gandhi (MG) Rd.

Crossword (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23842001; Mohammed Bhai Mansion, NS Patkar Marg, Kemp's Corner; ☎ 10am-9pm) Mumbai's biggest bookshop.

Oxford Bookstore (Map p776; ☎ 56339309; Apeejay House, 3 Dinsha Wacha Rd, Churchgate; ☎ 10am-10pm) A modern, clean, well-lit place for books.

FESTIVALS IN MUMBAI

Festivals in Mumbai (Bombay) are nearly as numerous and varied as its inhabitants. Read on for the best of these celebrations:

Banganga Festival (Jan) A classical music festival held early in the month over two days at the Banganga Tank (p778).

Mumbai Festival (Jan) Started in 2004 and based at several stages around the city, it showcases the food, dance and culture of Mumbai.

Elephanta Festival (Feb) Head out to Elephanta Island (p797) for more classical music and dance.

Indian Derby (Feb) Staged since 1942 this is India's richest and most popular horserace. It's run at Mahalaxmi Racecourse (p792).

Kala Ghoda Festival (Feb) Getting bigger and more sophisticated each year, this two-week-long offering has a packed programme of arts performances and exhibitions.

Nariyal Poornima (Aug) Festivals in the tourist hub of Colaba kick off with this celebration of the start of the fishing season after the monsoon.

Ganesh Chaturthi (Aug/Sep) Mumbai's biggest annual festival – a 10- to 11-day event in celebration of the elephant-headed deity Ganesh – sweeps up the entire city. On the first, third, fifth, seventh and 10th days of the festival families and communities take their Ganesh statues to the seashore and auspiciously drown them: the 10th day, which sees millions descending on Chowpatty Beach to submerge the largest statues, is particularly chaotic.

Colaba Festival (Oct) A small arts festival in Colaba that can merge with the general festivities of Diwali, depending on the year.

Prithvi Theatre Festival (Nov) A showcase of what's going on in contemporary Indian theatre; also includes performances by international troupes and artists.

READING MUMBAI

Containing all the beauty and ugliness of the human condition it's little wonder that Mumbai has inspired a host of the best writers on the subcontinent as well as international scribes such as VS Naipaul and Pico Iyer. Leading the field are Booker Prize-winner Salman Rushdie (*Midnight's Children*, *The Moor's Last Sigh* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*) and Rohinton Mistry (*A Fine Balance* and *Family Matters*), who have both set many of their novels in the city.

Making a credible grab to be the ultimate chronicle of the modern city is Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found*. This incisively researched and elegantly written epic – equal parts memoir, travelogue and journalism – covers Mumbai's riots, gang warfare, Bollywood, bar girls and everything in between. Another doorstopper is Gregory David Robert's factional saga *Shantaram*, about the Australian prison escapee's life on the run in Mumbai's slums and jails. Also well worth dipping into is the anthology *Bombay, Meri Jaan*, edited by Jerry Pinto and Naresh Fernandes, a heady mix of politics, pop culture, literature and history.

Search Word (Map p774; ☎ 22852521; Metro House, Colaba Causeway, Colaba; ☎ 10:30am-8:30pm) Small and tidy bookshop, also selling magazines.

Strand Book Stall (Map p776; ☎ 22661994, www.strandbookstall.com; Cowasji Patel Rd; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat) This old-school bookshop has walls overflowing with new English-language books, particularly nonfiction and titles by Indian authors.

Internet Access

There are many internet cafés across the city. Most charge Rs 30 to 40 per hour and almost all offer phone, fax, photocopying and printing services.

Cyber Online (Map p776; Jiji House, 1st fl, 17 Sukhad-wala Rd, Fort; per hr Rs 30; ☎ 10:30am-11pm Mon-Sat) Fast, new, flat-screen computers.

Sify iWay per 1½hrs Rs 50; Churchgate (Map p776; Prem Ct, J Tata Rd; ☎ 9am-11pm); Colaba (Map p774; Colaba Causeway; ☎ 24hrs) The entrance to the Colaba branch is on JA Allana Marg.

Waghela Communications Centre (Map p774; 23-B Nawroji F Rd; per hr Rs 30; ☎ 8:30am-11:30pm)

Libraries & Cultural Centres

Library books, newspapers, internet access and cultural information and events are available at the following:

Alliance Française (Map p776; ☎ 22035993; 40 New Marine Lines; 3-month/annual membership Rs 200/800; ☎ 9:30am-5:30pm Mon-Fri, 9:30am-1pm Sat)

American Information Resource Centre (AIRC; Map p776; ☎ 22624590; http://mumbai.usconcluate.gov/airc; 4 New Marine Lines, Churchgate; visit Rs 20, annual membership Rs 400; ☎ library noon-6pm Mon-Fri)

British Council Library (Map pp768-9; ☎ 22790101; www.britishcouncilonline.org; 1st fl, Mittal Tower A Wing, Barrister Rajni Patel Marg, Nariman Point; minimum monthly membership Rs 250; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sat)

Max Mueller Bhavan (Goethe Institut; Map p776; ☎ 22027542; K Dubash Marg, Fort; ☎ library 11am-6pm Mon-Fri) For German books.

Media

English-language publications:

City Info Free monthly listings booklet available in many hotels and guesthouses.

Indian Express Has a Mumbai edition.

Mid-Day The main local English-language paper.

Time Out Mumbai Published every two weeks (Rs 30), this is the best round-up of what's going on in the city.

Times of India Has a Mumbai edition.

Medical Services

Bombay Hospital (Map p776; ☎ 22067676; www.bombayhospital.com; 12 New Marine Lines) Close to Fort and Colaba.

Breach Candy Hospital (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23672888; www.breachcandyhospital.org; 60 Bhulabhai Desai Rd, Breach Candy) Best in Mumbai, if not India.

Royal Chemists (Map p776; ☎ 22004041-3; 89A Maharshi Karve Rd, Churchgate; ☎ 8:30am-8:30pm) A very reputable pharmacy.

Sahakari Bhandar Chemist (Map p774; ☎ 23648435; Colaba Causeway, Colaba; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat, 10am-8pm Sun) Well-stocked and convenient pharmacy.

Money

ATMS

The number of 24-hour ATMs linked to international networks in Mumbai has exploded in recent years and you're rarely far from one.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE

There's no shortage of foreign-exchange offices in Colaba that will change cash and travellers cheques. There are 24-hour exchange bureaux at both airports.

Erudite Forex (Map p774; ☎ 22882706; Colaba Causeway, Colaba; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Sat)

Standard Chartered Bank ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat Breach Candy (Map pp768-9; Bhulabhai Desai Rd); Fort (Map p776; MG Rd)

Thomas Cook (Map p776; ☎ 22078556-8; 324 Dr Dadabhai Naoroji Rd, Fort; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat)

Photography

Standard Supply Co (Map p776; ☎ 22612468; Image House, W Hirachand Marg, Fort; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Sat) Modern digital processing, print and slide film, video cartridges, memory cards and camera accessories are available here.

Post

The **main post office** (Map p776; ☎ 22621671; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) is an imposing building behind Chhatrapati Shiraji Terminus (CST, Victoria Terminus). **Poste restante** (☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat) is at Counter 1. Letters sent there should be addressed c/o Poste Restante, Mumbai GPO, Mumbai 400 001. You'll need to bring your passport to collect mail. There's an **EMS Speedpost parcel counter** (☎ 11am-1pm & 1.30-4pm Mon-Sat) to the left of the stamp counters. Regular parcels can be sent from the parcel office behind the

main post office building. Directly opposite the post office is a group of parcel-wallahs who will stitch up your parcel for around Rs 40. The **Colaba post office** (☎ 22023549; Henry Rd, Colaba) is convenient.

To send air-freight parcels domestically or internationally (a 10kg box to the UK or USA costs about Rs 6360), try the following:

Blue Dart (Map p776; ☎ 22822495; www.bluedart.com; 25/B J Tata Rd; ☎ 10am-8.30pm Mon-Sat)

DHL Worldwide Express ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat Churchgate (Map p776; ☎ 22837187; www.dhl.co.in; Sea Green South Hotel, 145A Marine Dr, Churchgate). Colaba (☎ 22044131; 1B Rahim Mansions, Colaba Causeway)

Telephone

Private phone and fax centres (labelled 'STD/ISD' or 'PCO') in Colaba and the Fort are convenient for STD and international calls (around Rs 12 per minute to the UK, USA or Australia). The cheapest international calls can be made through internet cafés using Net2 Phone. Calls cost from Rs 5 per minute to the USA.

Tourist Information

Government of India tourist office (Map p776; ☎ 22074333; www.incredibleindia.com; 123 Maharshi Karve Rd; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-2pm Sat)

MUMBAI IN...

One Day

Start at the granddaddy of Mumbai's colonial giants, **Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus** (CST, the old Victoria Terminus; p776). Stroll up to **Crawford Market** (p793) and into the maze of other, smaller bazaars here. Exhausted, rest and grab a bite at **Rajdhani** (p787), finishing off with a juice shake from **Badshah Snacks & Drinks** (p787).

Next, taxi it over to Malabar Hill's **Banganga Tank** (p778). Soak in the serenity, and cab it back to **Chowpatty Beach** (p777) for an ice cream at **Cream Centre** (p788). Be sure to pop into the wonderful **Mani Bhavan** (p778) museum dedicated to Gandhi while here.

Spend the late afternoon at the **Oval Maidan** (p775) for a spot of impromptu cricket. Don't forget to glance over at the grand edifices of the **High Court** (p775) and the **University of Mumbai** (p775). Next up is jumpin' Colaba and the **Gateway of India** (opposite), the **Taj Mahal Palace & Tower** (p774) and the colourful **Colaba Market** (opposite). You must be starving by now, so grab some tasty, street-side barbecue at **Bade Miya** (p786) or spoil yourself rotten at **Indigo** (p786). Finally, swap tall tales with fellow travellers over a beer at **Leopold Café & Bar** (p789).

Three Days

Make the trip out to **Elephanta Island** (p797), and spend the afternoon visiting the museums and galleries of **Kala Ghoda** (p775). In the evening, get up to Bandra district for a Goan feast at **Goa Portuguesa** (p788), followed by some seriously hip bar action at **Zenzi** (p790).

Another day could be spent visiting the **Dhobi Ghat** (p779) and the nearby **Mahalaxmi Temple** and **Haji Ali's Mosque** (p779). Spend the afternoon lazing at the **Mumbai Zoo** (p779) or pop into the inner-city enclave of **Kotachiwadi** (p777).

This busy but efficient office opposite Churchgate train station cheerfully provides tourist information for the entire country. Guides can be organised here, and it's the place to find out about the paying guest accommodation scheme (rooms cost around Rs 700 to 1500).

Government of India tourist office booths domestic airport (Map p785; ☎ 26156920; 🕒 7am-11pm); international airport (Map p785; ☎ 26829248; Arrival Hall 2A; 🕒 24hr)

Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation booth (MTDC; Map p774; ☎ 22841877; Apollo Bunder; 🕒 10am-5pm) Near the Gateway of India. Purchase tickets here for the MTDC bus and boat tours of the city (p782). **MTDC reservation office** (Map p776; ☎ 22027762; Madame Cama Rd, Nariman Point; 🕒 9.45am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) The head office of the MTDC gives some information on travel in Maharashtra and can book MTDC hotels throughout the state.

Travel Agencies

Agencies in Colaba tend to charge higher prices for flights, so it's best to go to the Fort area.

Akbar Travels (Map p776; 🕒 10am-7pm Mon-Sat) Reputable flight-booking agent with an army of computer-armed assistants. Opposite CST.

Magnum International Travel & Tours (Map p774; ☎ 22838628; 10 Henry Rd, Colaba) Handy for Colaba.

Thomas Cook (Map p776; ☎ 22048556; 324 Dr Dada-bhai Naoroji Rd, Fort; 🕒 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat) Efficient and reliable.

Visa Extensions

Foreigners' Regional Registration Office (FRRO; Map pp768-9; ☎ 22620111 ext 266; Annexe Bldg No 2, CID, 3rd fl, Sayed Badruddin Rd) Does not officially issue extensions on six-month tourist visas – even in emergencies they will direct you to Delhi (p1154). However, some travellers have managed to procure an emergency extension here after a lot of waiting and persuasion.

SIGHTS

Most of the major tourist attractions are based in South Mumbai, though North Mumbai is an alternative accommodation base and home to several trendy bars and restaurants, particularly in the Juhu Beach and Bandra districts.

Colaba

For mapped locations of all the following sights, see Map p774.

The unofficial headquarters of Mumbai's tourist scene, Colaba sprawls down the city's southernmost peninsula. It's a bustling district packed with street stalls, markets, bars and budget to midrange lodgings. **Colaba**

MUMBAI BY NUMBERS

- Number of black taxis: about 40,000
- Population density: 29,000 people per square kilometre
- Average daily income: Rs 134 (US\$2.90, or three times national average)
- Daily traffic passing through Chhatrapati Shiraji Terminus (CST Victoria Terminus): 2.5 million people
- Percentage of people living in slums: 55%
- Number of Bollywood movies made since 1931: 67,000
- Proportion of Mumbai built on reclaimed land: 60%

Causeway (Shahid Bhagat Singh Marg) dissects the promontory and is the traffic-filled artery connecting Colaba's jumble of side streets and gently crumbling mansions.

Sassoon Dock, south of the main tourist action, is a scene of intense and pungent activity at dawn (around 5am) when colourfully clad Koli fisherwomen sort the catch unloaded from fishing boats at the quay. The fish drying in the sun are *bombil*, the fish used in the dish Bombay duck. Photography at the dock is forbidden without permission from the **Mumbai Port Trust** (☎ 56565656; www.mumbaiporttrust.com). While you're here, it's worth popping into the 1847 Church of St John the Evangelist, known as the **Afghan Church** (Map pp768-9, dedicated to British forces killed in the bloody 1838-43 First Afghan War).

During the more reasonable hours of the day, nearby **Colaba Market** (Lala Nigam St) has plenty of activity and colour and is lined with jewellery shops and fruit-and-veg stalls.

GATEWAY OF INDIA

This bold basalt arch of colonial triumph faces out to Mumbai Harbour at the tip of Apollo Bunder. Derived from the Islamic styles of 16th-century Gujarat, it was built to commemorate the 1911 royal visit of King George V. It was completed in 1924: ironically, the gateway's British architects used it just 24 years later to parade off their last British regiment, as India marched towards Independence.

These days, the gateway is a favourite gathering spot for locals and a top spot for

COLABA

0 200 m
0 0.1 miles

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SHOPPING

- Antique & Curio Shops.....50 B2
- Central Cottage Industries Emporium.....51 C1
- Colaba Street Market.....52 A3
- Cottonworld Corp.....53 B2
- Courtyard.....54 B4
- Inshaallah Mashaallah.....55 B2
- Khubsons Narisons.....56 B2
- Phillips.....57 B1
- Soma.....58 A1

TRANSPORT

- Best Bus Depot.....59 A2
- Bus Stand.....60 B1
- Jet Airways.....61 A1
- Maldar Catamarans Ticket Office.....(see 5)
- PNP Ticket Office.....(see 5)

Hotels & Lodges:

- Gordon House Hotel.....19 B2
- Hotel Apollo.....20 B1
- Hotel Moti.....21 B2
- Hotel Volga II.....22 B2
- India Guest House.....(see 27)
- Maria Lodge.....23 A4
- Regent Hotel.....24 B2
- Salvation Army Red Shield Hostel.....25 B3
- Sea Palace Hotel.....26 B3
- Sea Shore Hotel.....27 B4
- Taj Mahal Palace.....(see 15)
- YVCA.....28 B1

people-watching. Giant-balloon sellers, photographers, beggars and touts rub shoulders with Indian and foreign tourists, creating all the hubbub of a bazaar. Boats depart from the gateway's wharfs for Elephanta Island and Mandwa.

You can ride in a Victoria – one of the **horse-drawn gilded carriages** that ply their trade

along Apollo Bunder. Get them to go around the Oval Maidan at night so you can admire the illuminated buildings – it should cost Rs 300 if you bargain. Hard.

TAJ MAHAL PALACE & TOWER

This sumptuous hotel (see p786) is a fairy-tale blend of Islamic and Renaissance styles

jostling for prime position among Mumbai's famous landmarks. Facing the harbour, it was built in 1903 by the Parsi industrialist JN Tata, supposedly after he was refused entry to one of the European hotels on account of being 'a native'. The Palace side has a magnificent grand stairway that's well worth a quick peek, even if you can't afford to stay or enjoy a drink or meal at one of its several restaurants and bars.

Kala Ghoda

Kala Ghoda, the area wedged between Colaba and the Fort, contains most of Mumbai's main galleries and museums alongside a wealth of colonial buildings. The best way to see these buildings is on a guided (p781) or self-guided (p780) walking tour.

CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ VASTU SANGRAHALAYA (PRINCE OF WALES MUSEUM)

Mumbai's biggest and best **museum** (Map p776; ☎ 22844519; K Dubash Marg; Indian/foreigner Rs 10/300, camera/video Rs 30/200; 🕒 10.15am-6pm Tue-Sun), this domed behemoth is an intriguing hodgepodge of Islamic, Hindu and British architecture displaying a mix of dusty exhibits from all over India. Opened in 1923 to commemorate King George V's first visit to India (back in 1905, while he was Prince of Wales), its flamboyant Indo-Saracenic style was designed by George Wittet – who also did the Gateway of India.

The vast collection inside includes impressive Hindu and Buddhist sculpture, terracotta figurines from the Indus Valley, miniature paintings, porcelain and some particularly vicious weaponry. There's also a natural-history section with suitably stuffed animals. Take advantage of the free, multilingual audio-guides as not everything is labelled.

Foreign students with a valid International Student Identity Card (ISIC) can get in for a bargain Rs 6.

GALLERIES

The **National Gallery Of Modern Art** (Map p774; ☎ 22881969-70; MG Rd; Indian/foreigner Rs 10/150; 🕒 11am-6pm Tue-Sun) has a bright, spacious and modern exhibition space showcasing changing exhibitions by Indian and international artists. Nearby, **Jehangir Art Gallery** (Map p776; ☎ 22048212; 161B MG Rd; admission free; 🕒 11am-7pm) is one of Mumbai's principal commercial galleries, hosting interesting weekly shows by

Indian artists; most works are for sale. Rows of hopeful local artists often display their work on the pavement outside.

KENESETH ELIAHOO SYNAGOGUE

Built in 1884, this impossibly sky-blue **synagogue** (Map p776; ☎ 2283 1502; Dr VB Gandhi Marg) still functions and is tenderly maintained by the city's dwindling Jewish community. One of two built in the city by the Sassoon family (the other is in Byculla), the interior is wonderfully adorned with colourful pillars, chandeliers and stained-glass windows – best viewed in the afternoons when rainbows of light shaft through.

Fort Area

For mapped locations of the following sights see Map p776.

Lined up in a row and vying for your attention with aristocratic pomp, many of Mumbai's majestic Victorian buildings pose on the edge of **Oval Maidan**. This land, and the **Cross** and **Azad Maidans** immediately to the north, was on the seafront in those days, and this series of grandiose structures faced west directly onto the Arabian Sea. The reclaimed land along the western edge of the maidans is now lined with a remarkable collection of Art Deco apartment blocks. Spend some time in the Oval Maidan admiring these structures and enjoying the casual cricket matches.

HIGH COURT

A hive of daily activity, packed with judges, barristers and other cogs in the Indian justice system, the **High Court** (Eldon Rd) is an elegant 1848 neogothic building. The design was inspired by a German castle and was obviously intended to dispel any doubts about the authority of the justice dispensed inside, though local stone carvers presumably saw things differently: they carved a one-eyed monkey fiddling with the scales of justice on one pillar. It's permitted (and highly recommended) to walk around inside and check out the pandemonium and pageantry of public cases in progress.

UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI

Looking like a 15th-century French-Gothic masterpiece plopped incongruously among Mumbai's palm trees, this university on Bhaurao Patil Marg, still commonly known as Bombay University, was designed by Gilbert Scott of London's St Pancras Station fame.

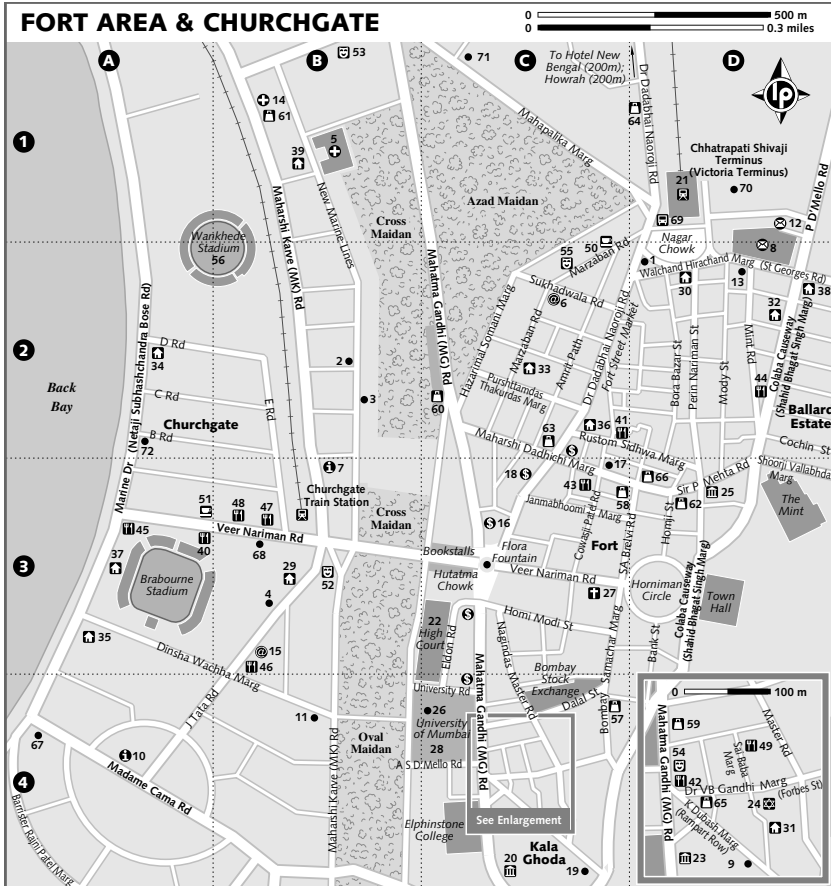
It's possible to take a peek inside both the exquisite **University Library** and **Convocation Hall** but the 80m-high **Rajabai Clock Tower**, decorated with detailed carvings, is off limits.

ST THOMAS' CATHEDRAL

Recently restored to its former glory, this charming cathedral on Veer Nariman Rd is the oldest English building standing in Mumbai (construction began in 1672, though it remained unfinished until 1718). The cathedral is an interracial marriage of Byzantine and colonial architecture and it's airy, white-washed interior is full of exhibitionist colonial memorials. A look at some of the gravestones reveals many colonists died very young of malaria.

CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI TERMINUS (VICTORIA TERMINUS)

Imposing, exuberant and overflowing with people, this is the city's most extravagant Gothic building, the beating heart of its railway network, and an aphorism for colonial India. Historian Christopher London uttered 'the Victoria Terminus is to the British Raj, what the Taj Mahal is to the Mughal empire.' It's a meringue of Victorian, Hindu and Islamic styles whipped into an imposing, Daliesque structure of buttresses, domes, turrets, spires and stained-glass windows. Be sure to get close to the jungle-themed façade, particularly around the reservation office: it's adorned with peacocks, gargoyles, cheeky monkeys and lions.



Designed by Frederick Stevens, it was completed in 1887, 34 years after the first train in India left this site. Today it's the busiest train station in Asia. Officially renamed Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST) in 1998, it's still better known locally as VT. It was added to the Unesco World Heritage list in 2004.

MONETARY MUSEUM

While you're in the area, it's worth popping into this tiny and thoughtfully-presented museum (☎ 22614043; www.museum.rbi.in; Amar Bldg, Sir P Metha Marg; admission Rs 10; ☒ 11am-5pm), run by the Reserve Bank of India. It's an engrossing historical tour of India through coinage: from early concepts of cash, to the first coins of 600 BC, through Indo-European influences, right up to today's Gandhi-covered notes. Also on display is the world's smallest coin, probably found in the crack of an ancient couch.

Marine Drive & Chowpatty Beach

For mapped locations of the following sights see Map pp768-9.

Built on land reclaimed from Back Bay in 1920, **Marine Drive** (Netaji Subhashchandra Bose Rd) arcs along the shore of the Arabian Sea from Nariman Point past Chowpatty Beach (where it's called Chowpatty Seaface) to the foot of Malabar Hill. Lined with flaking Art Deco apartments, this is one Mumbai's most

popular promenades and sunset-watching spots. It's twinkling night-time lights earned it the nickname 'the Queen's Necklace'.

Chowpatty Beach remains a favourite evening spot for courting couples, families, political rallies and anyone out to enjoy what passes for fresh air. Eating an evening time *bhelpuri* (crisp fried thin rounds of dough mixed with puffed rice, lentils, lemon juice, onions, herbs and chutney) at the throng of stalls found here is an essential part of the Mumbai experience. Forget about visiting during the day for a dip: the water is toxic.

Kotachiwadi

For mapped locations of the following sights see Mapp768-9.

This *wadi* (hamlet) is a bastion clinging onto Mumbai life as it was before cement trucks and high-rises. A Christian enclave of 30-odd elegant, two-storey wooden mansions, it's 500m northeast of Chowpatty, lying amid Mumbai's predominantly Hindu and Muslim neighbourhoods. These winding laneways allow a wonderful glimpse into a quiet life free of rickshaws and taxis. To find it, aim for **St Teresa's Church** on the corner of Jagannath Shankarsheth Marg and RR Roy Marg (Charni Rd) then duck into the warren of streets directly opposite. Guided walks of the area are occasionally organised by Bombay Heritage Walks (p781).

INFORMATION

Akbar Travels.....	1	D2
Alliance Française.....	2	B2
American Information Resource Centre.....	3	B2
Blue Dart.....	4	B3
Bombay Hospital.....	5	B1
Cyber Online.....	6	C2
DHL Worldwide Express.....	(see 37)	
Government of India Tourist Office.....	7	B3
Main Post Office.....	8	D2
Max Mueller Bhavan.....	9	D4
MTDC Reservation Office.....	10	A4
Oxford Bookstore.....	11	B4
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Rajabai Clock Tower.....	26	C4

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Hotel City Palace.....	30	D2
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Samovar Café.....	(see 23)	

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Wankhede Stadium.....	56	B2

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Bombay Paperie.....	57	C4
Bombay Store.....	58	C3
Fabindia.....	59	D4
Fashion Street Market.....	60	C2
Kala Niketan.....	61	B1
Kashmir Government Arts Emporium.....	62	D3
Khadi & Village Industries Emporium.....	63	C2
Planet M.....	64	D1
Rhythm House.....	65	D4
Uttar Pradesh Handicrafts Emporium.....	66	D3

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British Airways.....	68	B3
Bus Stand.....	69	D1
Central Railways Reservation Centre.....	70	D1
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Private Buses to Goa & Bus Agents.....	71	C1
Virgin Atlantic.....	72	A2
Western Railways Reservation Centre.....	(see 7)	

Malabar Hill

For mapped locations of the following sights see Map pp768–9.

Mumbai's most exclusive neighbourhood of sky-scratchers and private palaces, **Malabar Hill** is at the northern promontory of Back Bay and signifies the top rung for the city's social and economic climbers.

Surprisingly, one of Mumbai's most sacred and tranquil oases lies concealed among apartment blocks at its southern tip. **Banganga Tank** is a precinct of serene temples, bathing pilgrims, meandering, traffic-free streets and picturesque old *dharamsalas* (pilgrims rest houses). The wooden pole in the centre of the tank is the centre of the earth – according to legend Lord Ram created the tank by piercing the earth with his arrow. The classical music **Banganga Festival** is held here in January.

The lush and well-tended **Hanging Gardens** (Pheroze Shah Mehta Gardens) on top of the hill are a pleasant but often crowded place for a stroll. For some of the best views of the Chowpatty Beach and the graceful arc of Marine Dr, be sure to visit the smaller **Kamala Nehru Park**, opposite. It's popular with coy courting couples and there's a two storey 'boot house' and colourful animal decorations that the kiddies might like.

Kemp's Corner & Mahalaxmi

For mapped locations of the following sights see Map pp768–9.

MANI BHAVAN

As poignant as it is tiny, this **museum** (☎ 2380 5864; 19 Laburnum Rd; admission free; ⌚ 10am–6pm) is housed in the building in which Mahatma

BOLLYWOOD

History

Mumbai is the glittering epicentre of India's gargantuan Hindi-language film industry. From silent beginnings with a cast of all-male actors (some in drag) in the 1913 epic *Raja Haishchandra*, to the first talkie in 1931 *Lama Ara*, today the industry churns out more than 900 films a year – more than any other city in the world (yes, Hollywood included). Not surprising considering they have one-sixth of the world's population as a captive audience, as well as a sizable NonResident Indian (NRI) following.

Regional film industries exist in other parts of India, but Bollywood continues to enthrall the nation with its winning, escapist formula of masala entertainment – where all-singing, all-dancing good-guys battle evil protagonists (moustache optional) in a never-ending quest for true love. These days, Hollywood-inspired thrillers and over-the-top action extravaganzas vie for moviegoer attentions alongside the more family-orientated saccharine formulas.

Bollywood stars have been known to attain near godlike status in the minds of Indian moviegoers. Their faces plaster advertisement boards the length of the country, and Bollywood star-spotting is a favourite pastime in Mumbai's posher establishments (see boxed text, p790).

Extra, Extra!

Studios often look for extras for background scenes and sometimes need Westerners to add that extra whiff of international flair to a film. Getting a part, though, is a matter of luck. When extras are required the studios usually send scouts down to Colaba, often around the Gateway of India, to conscript travellers for the following day's shooting. You receive between Rs 500 and 1000 for a day's work, but it's clearly not something you do for the money. It can be a long, hot day standing around on the set, without promised food and water; others have described the behind-the-scenes peek as a fascinating experience. Before agreeing to be an extra, always ask for identification from the person who has approached you.

Tours

Though overpriced, **Bollywood Tourism** (☎ 26609909; www.bollywoodtourism.com; child/adult US\$75/100) is the only agency so far that offers Bollywood tours. Tours visit the BollywoodDrome (a special set showcasing dance sequences and stunts) and take a peek behind the scenes at the shooting of a live Bollywood film – there's always one on somewhere. Lunch is included.

Gandhi stayed during his visits to Bombay from 1917 to 1934. Dedicated to this amazingly insightful leader, the museum showcases the simple room where Gandhi formulated his philosophy of satyagraha (truth, nonviolence and self sacrifice) and launched the 1932 Civil Disobedience campaign that led to the end of British rule. There are rooms showcasing a photographic record of his life, along with dioramas and original documents such as letters he wrote to Adolf Hitler and Franklin D Roosevelt. Nearby August Kranti Maidan is where the campaign to persuade the British to 'Quit India' was launched in 1942.

MAHALAXMI DHOBI GHAT

If you've had washing done in Mumbai, chances are your clothes have already paid a visit to this 136-year-old dhobi ghat (place where clothes are washed). The whole hamlet is Mumbai's oldest and biggest human-powered washing machine: every day hundreds of people beat the dirt out of thousands of kilograms of soiled Mumbai clothes in 1026 open-air troughs. The best view, and photo opportunity, is from the bridge across the railway tracks near Mahalaxmi train station (Map pp768-9).

MAHALAXMI TEMPLE

It's only fitting that in money-mad Mumbai one of the busiest and most colourful temples is dedicated to Mahalaxmi, the goddess of wealth. Perched on a headland, it's the focus for Mumbai's **Navratri** (Festival of Nine Nights) celebrations in September/October. After paying your respects to the goddess, climb down the steps towards the shore and snack on tasty *gota bhaji* (fried lentil balls) at the cliffside Laxmi Bhajiya House.

HAJI ALI'S MOSQUE

Floating like a sacred mirage off the coast, this mosque is one of Mumbai's most striking shrines. Built in the 19th century, it contains the tomb of the Muslim saint Haji - legend has it that Haji Ali died while on a pilgrimage to Mecca and his casket miraculously floated back to this spot. A long concrete causeway reaches into the Arabian Sea, providing access to the mosque. Thousands of pilgrims cross it to make their visit, many donating to the beggars who line the way; but at high tide, water covers the causeway and the mosque becomes an island.

MUMBAI ZOO

Mumbai's **zoo** (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23725799; Victoria Gardens; adult/child Rs 5/2; 🕒 9am-6pm Thu-Tue) is remarkably well-maintained. Set in the sprawling and lush grounds of Victoria Gardens, it's worth visiting not least for its green hillocks, shady grassy bits and soundtrack of birds chirping in place of cars honking. The animals are a little few and far between, with the few local species in large cages including crocs, elephants, rhinos and a few bored lions. There's a small playground, and it's generally a popular place for families and couples to meander.

North Mumbai

NEHRU CENTRE & NEHRU PLANETARIUM

The most striking thing about this **cultural complex** (Dr Annie Besant Rd, Worli), which includes a decent **planetarium** (☎ 24920510; adult/child Rs 40/20; 🕒 English show 3pm Tue-Sun) and the serpentine-but-interesting history exhibition **Discovery of India** (admission free; 🕒 11am-5pm) is the bold modern architecture of the buildings. The tower looks like a giant cylindrical pineapple, the planetarium a UFO. There's a theatre here too (see p791).

ACTIVITIES

Horse Riding

The **Amateur Riders' Club** (Map pp768-9; ☎ 5600 5204-5; Mahalaxmi Racecourse) has horse rides for Rs 500 per 30 minutes; escorts cost Rs 250 extra.

Swimming

Despite the heat don't be tempted by the lure of Back Bay, or even the open sea at Chowpatty; the water is filthy. If you want to swim and aren't staying at a luxury hotel, Fariyas Hotel (p784) in Colaba has a tiny terrace pool (Rs 500 for nonguests).

Water Sports

H2O Water Sports Complex (Map pp768-9; ☎ 236 77546; info@h2osports.biz; Marine Dr, Mafatal Beach; 🕒 10am-10pm Oct-Apr) on the southeast side of Chowpatty Beach rents out jet skis (Rs 950 per 10 minutes) and speed boats (per person per hour Rs 175, minimum four people) or kayaks (per hour Rs 300). It also holds sailing and windsurfing classes and rents fresh-water (river) kayaks.

Outbound Adventure (☎ 26315019, www.outboundadventure.com) runs one-day rafting trips on the Ullas River near Karjat, 88km southeast of Mumbai, from the end of June to early September (Rs 1000 per person). After a good

rain rapids can get up to Grade III+, though usually the rafting is much calmer.

WALKING TOUR

Mumbai's distinctive mix of colonial and Art Deco architecture is one of its defining features. This walk takes you past many of the city's key buildings and is a great way to spend anything from a few hours to a whole day. Pick up the guidebook *Fort Walks* at most major bookshops if you wish to explore further.

Starting from the **Gateway of India (1; p773)** walk up Shivaji Marg past the members-only colonial relic **Royal Bombay Yacht Club (2)** on one side and the Art Deco residential-commercial complex **Dhunraj Mahal (3)** on the other towards **Regal Circle (4; SP Mukherji Chowk)**. Dodge the traffic to reach the car park in the middle of the circle for the best view of the surrounding buildings, including the old **Sailors Home (5)**, which dates from 1876 and is now the Maharashtra Police Headquarters, the Art Deco cinema **Regal (6; p791)** and the old **Majestic Hotel (7)**, now the Sahakari Bhandar cooperative store.

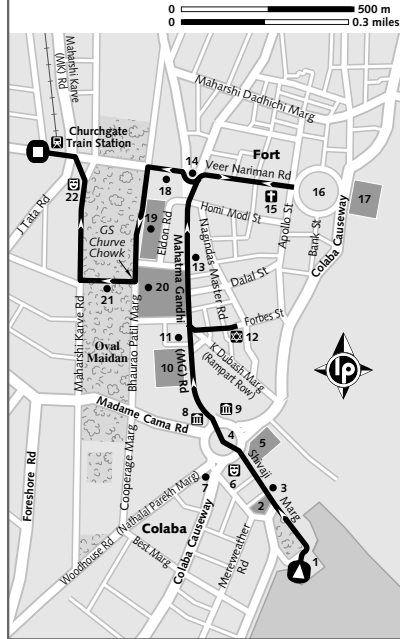
Continue up MG Rd, past the beautifully restored façade of the **Institute of Science (8)**. Opposite is the **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (9; Prince of Wales Museum; p775)**; step into the front gardens to admire this grand building. Back across the road is the 'Romanesque Transitional' **Elphinstone College (10)** and the inviting **David Sassoon Library (11)**, a good place to escape the heat of the day lazing on planters' chairs on the upper balcony.

Cross back over to Forbes St to visit the **Kenseth Eliyahoo Synagogue (12; p775)** before returning to MG Rd and continuing north along the left-hand side so you can admire the vertical Art Deco stylings of the **New India Assurance Company Building (13)**. In a traffic island ahead lies the pretty **Flora Fountain (14)**, named after the Roman goddess of abundance, and erected in 1869 in honour of Sir Bartle Frere, the Bombay governor responsible for dismantling the fort.

Turn east down Veer Nariman Rd walking towards **St Thomas' Cathedral (15; p776)**. Ahead lies the stately **Horniman Circle (16)**, an arcaded ring of buildings laid out in the 1860s around a circular and beautifully kept botanical garden. The circle is overlooked from the east by the neoclassical **Town Hall (17)**, which contains the regally decorated members-only Asiatic Society of Bombay Library and Mumbai's State Central Library.

Start	Gateway of India
Finish	Churchgate train station
Distance	2.5km
Duration	3 hours minimum

MUMBAI WALKING TOUR



Retrace your steps back to Flora Fountain and continue west past the Venetian Gothic-style **State Public Works Department (18)**. Turn south onto Bhaurao Patil Marg to see the august **High Court (19; p775)** and the equally venerable and ornately decorated **University of Mumbai (20; p775)**. The façades of both buildings are best observed from within the **Oval Maidan (21)**. Turn around to compare the colonial edifices with the row of Art Deco beauties lining Maharshi Karve (MK) Rd, culminating in the wedding cake tower of the **Eros Cinema (22)**. End your walk at Churchgate station.

COURSES

Yoga

For serious students, yoga courses are held at the **Kaivalyadhama Ishwardas Yogic Health Centre**

(Map pp768-9; ☎ 22818417; www.kdham.com; 43 Marine Dr, Chowpatty; ☎ 6.30-10am & 3.30-7pm Mon-Sat). Fees are a minimum Rs 300 (students Rs 220), plus Rs 400 extra for a monthly membership, and you are expected to attend a one-hour class, six days a week for at least three months.

The **Yoga Institute** (Map p785; ☎ 26122185; www.yogainstitute.org; Prabhat Colony, Shri Yogendra Marg, Santa Cruz) offers classes, some free, others from Rs 300/200 during your first/second month. The **Yoga Studio** (Map pp768-9; ☎ 24538852; 1st fl Delstar Bldg, 9-9A Patkar Marg, Kemp's Corner), recently opened by director Neetu Watamull, also has drop-in classes (Rs 150) in varying yoga styles with knowledgeable instructors. Monthly rates are Rs 1200.

Language

Professor Shukla is based at **Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan** (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23871860, 24968466; Dr KM Munshi Chowk, Sitaram Patkar Rd, Chowpatty), behind Wilson College, and offers private Hindi, Marathi and Sanskrit classes (Rs 500 per hour). Contact this worldly octogenarian directly to arrange a syllabus and class schedule to suit your needs.

MUMBAI FOR CHILDREN

Here are a few sure-fire recommendations on how to entertain the little darlings while in Mumbai.

For little tykes with energy to burn, visit **Esselworld** (Map p767; ☎ 28452222; Gorai Island, Borivali; admission adult/child Rs 325/260; ☎ 11am-7pm) amusement park and **Water Kingdom** (☎ 28452310; admission Rs 340/270) next door. Both are well-

maintained and clean, offer lots of rides, slides and have plenty of shade. It's a Rs 20 ferry ride from Marve Jetty near Malad.

Knock off a few pins at the **Bowling Company** (☎ 24914000; www.thebowlingcompany.com; High Street Phoenix, S B Marg, Lower Parel West; games Rs 59-199; ☎ 11am-11pm daily) or take a trip in one of the **horse-drawn gilded carriages** (p774) that ply their trade along Apollo Bunder.

For a little more education with their recreation, several museums have kid-friendly exhibits, including **Prince of Wales Museum** (p775) with lots of stuffed animals, and **Mani Bhavan** (p778) with fascinating dioramas of Gandhi's life.

The **Mumbai Zoo** (p779) may be a little low on animals, but has lots of tidy and lush grounds as well as several kids' play areas. The **Tarapore-wala Aquarium** (Map pp768-9; ☎ 22082061; Chowpatty Beach; adult/child Rs 15/10; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Sun) is a little sadder, with mostly unsigned, murky tanks. Kids still seem to dig it anyway.

TOURS

The best city tours are offered by **Bombay Heritage Walks** (☎ 23690992, 26835856; www.bombayheritagewalks.com), which is run by two enthusiastic female architects. There's often a monthly public Sunday walk (adult/student Rs 100/50) lasting no more than a couple of hours; otherwise private guided tours are Rs 2500 for up to five people.

Transway International (☎ 26146854; transintl@vsnl.com; ☎ 8am-8pm) runs a Bombay by night tour (US\$25) which includes the major sites, an

THE PARSİ CONNECTION

Mumbai has a strong – but diminishing – Parsi community. The Parsis (descendants of Persian Zoroastrians who first migrated to India after persecution by the Muslims in the 7th century) settled in Bombay in the 17th and 18th centuries. They proved astute businesspeople, enjoyed a privileged relationship with the British colonial powers, and became a very powerful community in their own right while managing to remain aloof from politics.

With the departure of the British, the influence of the Parsis waned in Mumbai, although they continued to own land and established trusts and estates, or colonies, built around their temples, where many of the city's 60,000-plus Parsis still live.

Perhaps the most famous aspect of the Zoroastrian religion is its funerary methods. Parsis hold fire, earth and water sacred and do not cremate or bury their dead. Instead, the corpses are laid out within towers – known as Towers of Silence – to be picked clean by vultures. In Mumbai the Parsi Tower of Silence is on Malabar Hill (although it's strictly off limits to sightseers). But traditions are being eroded by a shortage of vultures around the city, due mainly to urban growth and pollution which has driven the birds away. This has meant that the Parsis have sometimes had to resort to artificially speeding up the natural decomposition of their dead with solar-powered heaters or chemical methods.

arts performance and a drop-off at the night club of your choice.

MTDC (p772) runs uninspiring **bus tours** of the city (Rs 150; Tuesday to Sunday) and one-hour open-deck bus tours of illuminated heritage buildings (Rs 90, weekdays/weekends 7pm/8:30pm). All depart from and can be booked near Apollo Bunder. More enjoyable are the 45-minute boat tours of the bay by night (Rs 60 to 75, between 5:30pm and 9pm) that also run from here. H20 (see p779) also arranges 45-minute day (Rs 180 per person, minimum six people) and night (Rs 280, between 7pm and 10pm) cruises.

The Government of India tourist office (p772) can arrange **multilingual guides** (per half-/full day Rs 350/500). Guides using a foreign language other than English are an extra Rs 180.

Cruises on Mumbai Harbour are a good way to escape the city and offer the chance to see the Gateway of India as it was intended. Short ferry rides (one hour) cost Rs 30 and depart from the Gateway of India.

If you want to do a cruise in luxury, hire the **Taj Yacht** (up to 12 people per hour Rs 12,000); contact the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower (p786) for details.

SLEEPING

You may need to recalibrate your budget upon arrival; Mumbai has the most expensive accommodation in India. Anything under Rs 1000 a double is considered budget here, while midrange options go up to Rs 7000. During the hectic Christmas and Diwali season you may be hard pressed to find a room.

Colaba is compact, has the liveliest foreigner scene and many of the budget and midrange options. The fort area is more spread-out and convenient to sights and the main train stations (CST and Churchgate). Most of the top-end places are dotted around the international and domestic airports, with a smattering of up-market hotels in the Juhu Beach area, convenient for visits to the trendy Bandra district.

To stay with a local family in the city, contact the Government of India tourist office (p772) for a list of homes participating in Mumbai's paying guest scheme. There's a **hotel reservation desk** (☎ 26164790; ⌚ 24hr) in the arrivals hall of the domestic and international airports which can book hotels and arrange transfers.

Budget

Apart from Colaba and Fort there are some budget hotels in Vile Parle, a middle-class suburb adjoining the domestic airport, but they are fairly grotty and you'd be better off camping out at the airport for the night if needs be.

COLABA

For mapped locations of the following venues see Map p774.

Salvation Army Red Shield Hostel (☎ 22841824; 30 Mereweather Rd; dm with breakfast Rs 150, d/tr with full board Rs 600/897) This rock-bottom-priced hostel is a Mumbai institution popular with budget travellers counting every rupee. The large, ascetic dorms are reasonably clean, though bed bugs make the odd cameo appearance. It can fill up fast – come just after the 9am kick-out to ensure a spot as there are no reservations. Lockers are available for Rs 15 a day.

Sea Shore Hotel (☎ 22874237; 4th fl, Kamal Mansion, 1 Arthur Bunder Rd; s/d with shared bathroom Rs 375/400, s/d Rs 450/500) At the top of a building housing several budget guesthouses, the neat, intimate and friendly atmosphere makes up for shoe-box-sized rooms. It's worth paying that bit extra for a windowed room with harbour views. On the floor below, India Guest House (☎ 22833769; doubles with shared bathroom Rs 350 to 400) is an OK backup option, but a little low on charm.

Maria Lodge (☎ 22854081; 5/2 Grand Bldg, Arthur Bunder Rd; d without/with AC Rs 400/600; ♿) A sprightly contender in the Colaba budget accommodation race, Maria's rooms may be Lilliputian, but each comes with its own tiny bathroom and is kept ridiculously clean. The staff gets the thumbs up from travellers for big smiles and helpful advice.

Hotel Volga II (☎ 22885341; 1st fl, Rustam Manzil, Nawroji F Rd; s/d with shared bathroom Rs 500/600, d Rs 700, d AC & TV Rs 1000; ♿) Someone went on a white-tile rampage in this small, ramshackle establishment. It's clean enough and will do the job if other cheapies are full.

YWCA (☎ 22025053; www.ywca.info; 18 Madame Cama Rd; dm/s Rs 652/750, s/d with AC Rs 871/1655; ♿) This well-run place has spacious four-bed dorm rooms, which are a good deal considering rates include buffet breakfast and dinner. Other rooms are small but tidy, and they accept both men and women.

our pick Bentley's Hotel (☎ 22841474; www.bentleyshotel.com; 17 Oliver Rd; d incl breakfast & tax Rs 865-1600; ♿) Bentley's wins the accolade for 'most

charming budget option' yet another year running. Spread out over several buildings on Oliver St and nearby Henry Rd, all rooms are spotless and come with TV and optional AC (Rs 220 extra). Look at a few rooms as they come in dozens of sizes and flavours: the most expensive have colonial furniture and sweeping balconies overlooking a garden (rooms 31 and 21), while the cheaper options on Henry Rd are a bit noisier. Reservations recommended.

FORT AREA

For mapped locations of the following venues see Map p776.

Hotel New Bengal (☎ 23401951; Sitaram Bldg, Dr Dadabhai Naorji Rd; s/d with shared bathroom from Rs 285/425, s/d with bathroom from Rs 650/700; 🚻) This Bengali-run hotel occupies a rambling, maze-like building perennially buzzing with Indian businessmen. Rooms, slightly aged but tidy, are an excellent deal. Look at a few, as some have lots of natural light while others flirt with pokiness. It's right in the CST/Crawford Market area.

Hotel Lawrence (☎ 22843618; 3rd fl, ITTS House, 33 Sai Baba Marg; s/d/tr with shared bathroom incl breakfast & tax Rs 400/500/700) Once you get past the ominous-looking, red *paan* (mixture of betel nut and leaves for chewing)–stained stairwell (à la B-grade slasher flick), be ready to be pleasantly

surprised by basic, clean rooms and affable management. The foyer has fun, original '70s styling and the location can't be beat.

Hotel Outram (☎ 22094937; Marzaban Rd; small s/d with shared bathroom Rs 468/572, d with AC & bathroom Rs 1195; 🚻) This plain but superfriendly place is in a quiet spot between CST and the maidans. Rooms with private bathroom are fairly clean but low on natural light.

Welcome Hotel (☎ 66314488; welcome_hotel@vsnl.com; 257 Colaba Causeway; s/d with shared bathroom from Rs 650/900, s/d from Rs 1000/1400; 🚻) With a boggling array of single/double/bathroom/AC combinations, this fastidiously cared-for, marble-coated budget hotel boasts a foyer that adds some much-needed class to the budget category. The top floor rooms are very bright and have awesome views of CST.

Hotel City Palace (☎ 22615515; www.hotelcitypalace.net; 121 City Tce, W Hiranand Marg; economy s/d from Rs 675/875, larger s/d Rs 750/950; 🚻) The rather cramped rooms are spotlessly clean and quiet, surprising given its location opposite rowdy CST. A do-a-night option if you're only in Mumbai for a night or two.

Hotel Oasis (☎ 22697887; www.hoteloasisindia.com; 276 Colaba Causeway; r Rs 780, with AC Rs 1065; 🚻) This modern and fun-coloured skinny little hotel is a stone's throw from CST and has spick-and-span rooms, all with TV. Beware that

DHARAVI SLUM

An astonishing 55% of Mumbai's population live in shantytowns and slums, and the largest slum in Mumbai, and in all of Asia, is Dharavi.

Established in 1933 atop reclaimed marshland, it incorporates 1.7 sq km sandwiched between Mumbai's two major railway lines and is home to more than one million people. While it may look a bit shambled from the outside, the maze of dusty alleys and sewer-lined streets of this city-within-a-city are actually a collection of abutting settlements. In each part of the slum inhabitants from different parts of India, and with different trades, have set up homes and tiny factories. Potters from Saurashtra live in one area, Muslim tanners in another, embroidery workers from Uttar Pradesh work alongside metal-smiths, while other workers recycle plastics as women dry pappadams in the searing sun. Some of these thriving industries even export their wares: the annual turnover of business from Dharavi is thought to top US\$650 million.

Up close, life in the slums seems strikingly normal. Residents pay rent, most houses have kitchens and electricity, and building materials range from flimsy corrugated-iron shacks to permanent, multistorey concrete structures.

Sightful tours of Dharavi are run by **Reality Tours & Travel** (Map p774; ☎ 9820822253; www.realitytoursandtravel.com; Unique Business Centre; 1st fl, Nawroji F Rd, Colaba), allowing you to gain a glimpse into this microcosm of Mumbai life. Tours cost Rs 300/600 by train/car and last 2½ to 4½ hours, photography is strictly forbidden and a significant part of the profits go to a Dharavi-based NGO.

Visits to such economically depressed areas can be a sensitive issue, and as a visitor you will need to make up your own mind whether to go at all. If you decide to use a tour company, do your research beforehand and make sure they adhere to ethically sound principles.

the singles are so small you can touch all four walls lying in bed.

Midrange COLABA

For mapped locations of the following venues see Map p774.

Hotel Moti (☎ 22025714; hotelmotiinternational@yahoo.co.in; 10 Best Marg; s/d from Rs 1500/2000; 🍷) Occupying the ground floor of a gracefully crumbling colonial building, the rooms are a tad plain and shadowy, but absolutely huge and have some nice surprises – such as the ornate stucco ceilings. This place gets positive reports for friendliness.

Hotel Apollo (☎ 22873312; h.apollo@gmail.com; nr Battery St & Mahakavi Bhushan Marg; s Rs 1850, d Rs 2300-2900; 🍷) Fresh from a trendy modern facelift, the rooms are simple and modestly sized but kept in mint condition and have 'party' showers big enough for two. Some doubles come with a bathtub.

Regent Hotel (☎ 22871853-4; www.regenthotelcolaba.com; 8 Best Marg; s/d incl breakfast & tax Rs 2600/2750; 🍷 🍷) This stylish, Arabian-flavoured hotel has marble surfaces a-plenty and an attractive 1st-floor café serving Middle Eastern-style tea. Rooms are comfortable with enclosed balconies.

Sea Palace Hotel (☎ 22841828; www.seapalacehotel.com; 26 PJ Ramchandani Marg; s/d from Rs 1700/3000; 🍷) This freshly renovated property has lots of modern rooms that are heavy on glitz but light on personality. The pricier rooms with sea-views are worth splurging on, and there's an enjoyable patio seating area downstairs looking out onto the sea.

Ascot Hotel (☎ 66385566; www.ascototel.com; 38 Garden Rd; d incl breakfast & tax Rs 3500-3900; 🍷 🍷) The Ascot soothes you upon entry with contemporary blue-and-yellow tones and a fresh, uncluttered design. The rooms continue the tasteful scheme and are spacious, comfortable and boast decadent bathrooms with bathtubs.

Gordon House Hotel (☎ 22871122; www.ghotel.com; 5 Battery St; incl breakfasts/d Rs 5500/6000, ste Rs 10,000; 🍷 🍷) This white, mausoleum-like boutique hotel has elegant rooms decorated in Mediterranean, Scandinavian or country styles. Just this side of kitsch, it's fun and has gizmos such as CD players and flat-screen TVs in all rooms. Rooms above its Poly Esther's nightclub (see p791) are noisy but available at a discount if you ask.

Fariyas Hotel (☎ 22042911; www.fariyas.com; 25 Off Arthur Bunder Rd; s/d from Rs 6000/7000; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Straddling the high-end category, this efficient and friendly hotel has dated furnishings, but the rooms are otherwise good. There's a small swimming pool on the 1st-floor terrace, a gym, a restaurant, nail-bar, wi-fi and the Tavern & Beyond pub.

FORT AREA

Residency Hotel (Map p776; ☎ 22625525; residencyhotel@vsnl.com; 26 Rustom Sidhwa Marg; s/d from Rs 1600/1700; 🍷 🍷) This is one of the few comfortable options in the heart of the Fort. It has a marble-clad lobby with friendly staff and speckless rooms decorated with Indian-themed paintings and bright curtains.

Grand Hotel (Map pp768-9; ☎ 22618211; www.grandhotelbombay.com; 17 Shri Shiv Sagar Ramgulam Marg, Ballard Estate; s/d from Rs 2000/2300; 🍷 🍷) The quiet but central location is the big draw, and while it fails to live up to its name, it's not too bad with tidy, dowdily furnished rooms.

West End Hotel (Map p776; ☎ 22039121; www.westendhotelmumbai.com; 45 New Marine Lines; s/d Rs 2800/3200; 🍷 🍷) You'd half expect Austin Powers to be swinging in this Hotel's grey-velour-lined bar, Chez Nous. The hotel has a funky but unintentionally retro feel, and the old-fashioned rooms are plain but roomy, with soft beds. There's wi-fi downstairs.

CHURCHGATE, MARINE DRIVE & KEMP'S CORNER

Hotel Kemp's Corner (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23634646; 131 August Kranti Marg; s/d from Rs 1200/1700; 🍷) With a great spot close to the multitude of fashion stores at Kemp's corner, you might forgive the curt staff and occasional carpet bald-spot of this old-fashioned place. It's worth forking out a bit more for the deluxe double rooms.

Astoria Hotel (Map p776; ☎ 22852626; astoria@hathway.com; Churchgate Reclamation, J Tata Rd, Churchgate; s/d from Rs 2500/3000; 🍷 🍷) This conveniently located, smartly refurbished hotel has immaculate rooms that almost live up to the promise of the sleek, modern lobby. Some of the abodes have room enough to swing two cats in and there's a restaurant with wi-fi.

Sea Green Hotel (Map p776; ☎ 22822294; www.seagreenhotel.com; 145 Marine Dr; s/d Rs 2000/2450; 🍷) and **Sea Green South Hotel** (Map p776; ☎ 22821613; www.seagreensouth.com; 145A Marine Dr; s/d Rs 2000/2450; 🍷) are identical Art Deco-styled hotels offering spacious but spartan AC rooms, originally

built in the 1940s to house British soldiers. Ask for one of the sea-view rooms as they're the same price. A 20% tax is added to room rates.

JUHU BEACH, BANDRA & AIRPORT AREA

There are half a dozen midrange hotels clustered on Nehru Rd Extension near the domestic airport, though rooms are overpriced and only useful for early or late flights. Juhu's beach area is more convenient for clubbing/culinary excursions to the suburb of Bandra. For mapped locations of the following venues see Map p785.

Iskcon (☎ 26206860; guesthouse.mumbai@pamho.net; 111 Hare Krishna Lane, Juhu; s/d ind tax Rs 1320/1584; with AC ind tax Rs 1452/1971; 🏠) This unique, flamingo-pink building, with undulating exterior walls, is part of a lively Hare Krishna complex. The high-rise is very efficiently managed and rooms are a fairly big and spick-and-span, with large balconies, but no TV or fridge. A good vegetarian buffet restaurant, Govinda's, is on site.

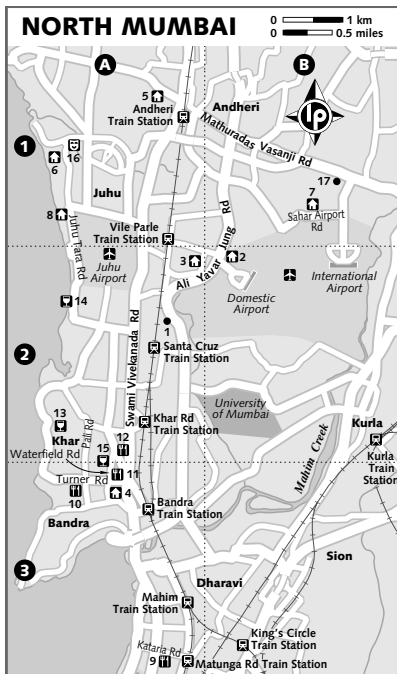
Hotel Columbus (☎ 26182029; hotel_columbus@rediffmail.com; 344 Nanda Patkar Rd, Vile Parle; s Rs 1650-

2000, d Rs 2000-3000; 🏠) This is one of the few midrange hotels in the airport area we'd happily send our grandmother to. Be sure to avoid the slightly skanky budget rooms and opt for the gussied-up deluxe options with simple, bright furniture and fun colour highlights.

Hotel Metro Palace (☎ 26427311; www.uniquehotelsindia.com; Ramdas Nayak Rd, Bandra; s/d from Rs 2200/2600; 🏠) One of the only options in the modish Bandra area that doesn't quote it's prices in US dollars, the rooms are very comfortable, have balconies and lovingly conserved flourishes of '80s décor. There is a small army of a superefficient staff on call.

Hotel Airport International (☎ 26182222; www.hotelairport.net; Nehru Rd, Vile Parle; s/d from Rs 2700/3700; 🏠) The pick of the bunch among cheaper airport hotels, it's so close to the domestic airport you can see the runway from most rooms. The decent rooms are clean but decorated in dowdy colours.

Hotel Suba Galaxy (☎ 26831188; www.hotelsubagalaxy.com; NS Phadke Rd, Andheri; s/d Rs 2500/3600; 🏠) This brand new, efficient and business-focused tower is 4km from the airport and offers ultramodern rooms, all nicely finished in dark wood and glass. It's got all the mod cons, with flat-screen TVs and broadband in each room. Oh, and lots of fluffy pillows.



SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	
Yoga Institute.....	1 A2
SLEEPING 🏠	
Hotel Airport International.....	2 B2
Hotel Columbus.....	3 A2
Hotel Metro Palace.....	4 A3
Hotel Suba Galaxy.....	5 A1
Iskcon.....	6 A1
ITC Hotel Grand Maratha Sheraton & Towers.....	7 B1
JW Marriott.....	8 A1
EATING 🍴	
Culture Curry.....	(see 9)
Goa Portuguesa.....	9 A3
Peshawri.....	(see 7)
Pot Pourri.....	10 A3
Sejjo & the Soul Dish.....	11 A3
Sheesha.....	12 A2
DRINKING 🍷	
Olive Bar & Kitchen.....	13 A2
Vie Lounge.....	14 A2
Zenzi.....	15 A2
ENTERTAINMENT 🎬	
Prithvi Theatre.....	16 A1
TRANSPORT	
Delta Airlines.....	17 B1

Top End**COLABA**

ourpick Taj Mahal Palace & Tower (Map p774; ☎ 66653366; www.tajhotels.com; Apollo Bunder, Colaba; tower rooms s/d from US\$325/350, palace rooms from US\$475/500; 🍷 🍷 🍷) A Mumbai landmark since 1903, this distinguished hotel is a world of sweeping arches, staircases and domes, all very far away from the flurry of Colaba life. Every conceivable facility is found within, including superb restaurants, miles of luxury shops, a large outdoor pool, spa, gymnasium, the nightclub *Insomnia* (p791), even a resident fortune-teller. The plush, heritage-themed rooms in the palace complex are the ones to go for if you want real decadence, although the rooms in the newer tower have better views.

MARINE DRIVE

Marine Plaza (Map p776; ☎ 22851212; hotelmarineplaza@vsnl.com; 29 Marine Dr, Nariman Point; d from US\$250; 🍷 🍷 🍷) An appealing and showy boutique five-star hotel with Art Deco flourishes and stylish rooms. The rooftop swimming pool has a glass bottom that looks down on the foyer five floors below! The hotel also has a gym, wi-fi, two restaurants and the popular Boston-style *Geoffrey's Bar*.

Intercontinental (Map p776; ☎ 39879999; www.intercontinental.com; 135 Marine Dr, Churchgate; d incl breakfast from US\$315; 🍷 🍷 🍷) You'll want to pay a little extra for the splendid sea views at this sophisticated boutique-style hotel. With equally stylish rooms, the cherry on the cake is the smart bar *Dome* (p789), which elegantly crowns the rooftop.

Hilton Towers (Map pp768-9; ☎ 66324343; www.hilton.com; Marine Dr, Nariman Point; s/d from US\$259/279; 🍷 🍷 🍷) The Hilton Towers (once the Oberoi Towers) wins out over its neighbour, the Oberoi, both on price and the spiffy design of its restaurants, bars and pool area. Although managed separately, both hotels still share facilities so you can wander happily between the two.

BANDRA, JUHU BEACH & AIRPORT AREA

ITC Hotel Grand Maratha Sheraton & Towers (Map p785; ☎ 28303030; www.itcwelcomgroup.in; Sahar Airport Rd, Andheri; s/d incl breakfast & tax from US\$250/275; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Easily the hotel in this area with the most luxurious Indian character, from the Jaipur-style lattice windows around the atrium to the silk pillows on the beds and the embalmed palms in the lobby. It's right

outside the international airport and has an excellent spa and the celebrated restaurant *Peshawri* (p789).

JW Marriott (Map p785; ☎ 66933000; mail@jwmarriottmumbai.com; Juhu Tara Rd, Juhu; d incl tax from US\$269; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Smack in the middle of Juhu Beach is this monument to luxury hotels, sporting no fewer than three pools, one of them filled with heavily filtered sea water. There's a bright foyer encasing a lily pond and the rooms leave little to be desired.

EATING

Munching in Mumbai is a treat. Food options in the metropolis are as diverse as the squillion inhabitants – 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) and everything from Muslim kebabs to Goan vindaloo to Mangalorean seafood. If you find Bombay duck on a menu, remember it's actually *bombil* fish dried in the sun and deep-fried.

Don't miss Mumbai's famous *bhelpuri*; readily available at *Chowpatty Beach* or at the excellent *Swati Snacks* (p788). During the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, fantastic night food markets line Mohammed Ali and Merchant Rds in Kalbadevi. Street stalls offering rice plates, samosas and *pav bhaji* (spiced vegetables and bread) for around Rs 15 do a brisk trade around the city.

If you're self-catering try the **Colaba market** (Map p774; Lala Nigam St) for fresh fruit and vegetables. The **Saharkari Bhandar Supermarket** (Map p774; cnr Colaba Causeway & Wodehouse Rd) and **Suryodaya** (Map p776; Veer Nariman Rd; 🕒 7.30am-8.30pm), are well-stocked supermarkets.

Colaba

For mapped locations of the following venues see Map p774.

Laxmi Villas (19A Ram Mansion, Nawroji F Rd; mains Rs 12-70) A budget eatery that serves great southern specialities in comfortable, modern, AC surroundings? Stranger things have happened. *Dosas* are the speciality, one reader even wrote in 'we still dream of the meals we ate there.'

Theobroma (Colaba Causeway, Colaba; cakes Rs 40-60) There are dozens of perfectly executed cakes to choose from at this top-notch bakery, as well as pastries and breads to be washed down with coffee. All the cakes are supposedly great, we can't know for sure – we could never go past the lavish chocolate truffle (Rs 50).

our pick **Bade Miya** (Tulloch Rd; meals Rs 40-60; ☺ dinner) As Mumbai as traffic jams, this street-stall-on-steroids buzzes nightly with punters from all walks of Mumbai life lining up for spicy, fresh grilled treats. Grab a chicken tikka roll to go, or snap up one of makeshift street-side tables to sample the *boti kebab* (lamb kebab) or *paneer masala* (cheese and tomato curry).

Kailash Parbat (5 Sheela Mahal, 1st Pasta Lane; mains Rs 50-80) Nothing fancy, but a Mumbai legend nonetheless thanks to its inexpensive Sindhi-influenced vegetarian snacks, mouth-watering sweets and extra-spicy masala chai.

Café Churchill (103B Colaba Causeway; sandwiches Rs 50-90) This tiny, packed place with booth seating does Western comfort food better than most, all served in fiercely-arctic AC. Grab a sandwich or a pasta and finish up with one of its 'happy endings.' Um, dessert that is.

Indigo Delicatessen (Pheroze Bldg, Shivaji Marg; mains Rs 235-350) This new place near Indigo has breakfast anytime (Rs 115 to 185), more casual meals and a selection of imported cheeses (at imported prices), breads and desserts.

Basilico (☎ 67039999; Sentinel House, Arthur Bunder Rd; mains Rs 265-320) A modish, Euro-style bistro, deli and bakery, this place whips up creative fresh pastas, salads and risottos almost as good as mamma used to make. There's lots of veggie options too, such as the yummy conchiglie pasta, with roast zucchini, peppers and garlic (Rs 255).

our pick **Indigo** (☎ 66368980; 4 Mandlik Marg; mains Rs 485-685; ☺ lunch & dinner) The finest eating option in Colaba, and possibly Mumbai, Indigo offers inventive European cuisine, a long wine list and a sleek ambience including a roof deck lit with fairy lights. The appetizer of lobster brusque with Cajun shrimp crackling appetizer (Rs 345) is a long-time favourite.

Bookings are essential, but if the restaurant is full you can always hang out with the in crowd at the bar.

Also recommended:

Delhi Darbar (Holland House, Colaba Causeway; mains Rs 80-180; ☺ lunch & dinner) Excellent Mughlai and tandoori restaurant.

Ming Palace (Colaba Causeway; mains Rs 150-305; ☺ lunch & dinner) Quality Chinese, Korean and Japanese food with gargantuan portions.

Kala Ghoda & Fort Area

Rajdhani (Map pp768-9; 361 Sheikh Memon St, Kalbadevthali; thali Rs 25) This smart place, opposite Mangaldaas Market, is a great spot to refuel on a tasty thali while shopping in the Crawford Market area.

National Hindu Hotel (Map p776; 1st flr, cnr Colaba Causeway & Mint Rd; thali Rs 25; ☺ lunch & dinner) Kerala run, this concealed, no-frills and grittily authentic working-man's eatery serves nothing but finger-licking (there are no utensils), all-you-can-eat thalis. Expect a fast-moving line out the door and rows of benches inside. Just find a spare seat, say hello to your neighbour, and wait for wandering staff to fill your banana leaf to the brim.

Mocambo Café & Bar (Map p776; 23A Sir P Mehta Rd, Fort; mains Rs 50-170) A modern, convivial and convenient spot for breakfast, sandwiches, a main meal or a cold beer. It has a huge Indian and Western menu, but the breakfast egg-and-brain fry (with fries! Rs 75) may only be for culinary adrenalin junkies.

Mahesh Lunch Home (Map p776; 8B Cowasji Patel St, Fort; mains Rs 70-180; ☺ lunch & dinner) A modern version of a hole-in-the-wall come good, this is the place to try Mangalorean seafood at budget prices. It's renowned for its ladyfish, pomfret, lobster and crabs, and its *rawas tikka* (marinated white salmon) and tandoori pomfret are outstanding.

DHABA-WALLAS

A small miracle of logistics, Mumbai's 5000 *dhaba* (snack bars)-wallahs (also called tiffin-wallahs) work tirelessly to deliver hot lunches to hungry office workers throughout the city.

Lunch boxes are picked up each day from restaurants, homes, dotting mothers and wives and carried in their hundreds on heads, bicycles and trains. Taken to a centralised sorting station, a sophisticated system of numbers and colours (many wallahs are illiterate) is then used to determine where every lunch must end up. More than 200,000 meals are delivered in Mumbai in this way – always on time, come (monsoon) rain or (searing) shine.

This same intricate supply-chain system has been used for centuries, and wallahs are known to take immense pride in their work. Considering that on average only about one mistake is made every six-million deliveries, they have certainly earned our pat on the back.

Trishna (Map p776; ☎ 22614991; Sai Baba Marg, Kala Ghoda; mains Rs 300-500; ☎ lunch & dinner) We have it on good authority that this might just be the best seafood in town. Specialising in Mangalorean preparations, the crab with butter, pepper and garlic and various shrimp dishes, all brought to your table for inspection, are excellent.

Khyber (Map p776; ☎ 22673227; 145 MG Rd, Fort; mains Rs 330-600; ☎ lunch & dinner) Khyber serves up Punjabi and other North Indian dishes in moody, burnt-orange, Afghan-inspired interiors to a who's who of Mumbai's elite. The food is some of the best the city has to offer, with the meat-centric menu wandering from kebabs, to biryanis, to its *pièce de résistance*, *raan* (a whole leg of slow-cooked lamb).

Also recommended are the following:
Badshah Snacks & Drinks (Map pp768-9; snacks Rs 15-70) Serving snacks and fruit juices (Rs 29 to 85) to hungry bargain-hunters for more than 100 years; opposite Crawford Market.

Ideal Corner (Map p776; Gunbow St, Fort; mains Rs 30-65; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon-Fri) A classic Parsi café serving a different menu daily.

Churchgate

For mapped locations of the following venues see Map p776.

Tea Centre (78 Veer Nariman Rd; mains Rs 60-130, set lunch Rs 200) A great place to try out some of India's premium teas, as well as sample some excellent light meals and snacks, this is a serene, colonial-meets-contemporary place with severe AC.

Samrat (Prem Ct, J Tata Rd; mains Rs 80-200; ☎ lunch & dinner) A busy traditional Indian vegetarian restaurant; one of three premises at the same location run by the same company. Relish (mains Rs 65 to 130) is the funkier cousin (open lunch and dinner) with dishes ranging from Lebanese platters to Mexican, while 210° C is an outdoor café and bakery (pastries from Rs 10; open noon to 11pm).

Pizzeria (Soona Mahal, 143 Marine Dr; pizzas Rs 110-350; ☎ lunch & dinner) Serves up passable pizza-pies with ocean views the main draw.

Gaylord (☎ 22821259; Veer Nariman Rd; meals Rs 125-550; ☎ lunch & dinner) Great North Indian dishes served with over-the-top, Raj-era styles dining replete with tuxedo-wearing waiters hanging on your every gesture. It also serves domestic and imported wines (Rs 125 to 550 per glass).

Chowpatty Beach & Around

For mapped locations of the following venues see Map pp768-9.

The evening stalls at Bhel Plaza on Chowpatty Beach are the most atmospheric spots to snack on *bhelpuri* (Rs 10) or *panipuri* (small crisp puffs of dough filled with spicy tamarind water and sprouted gram; Rs 20).

Swati Snacks (248 Karai Estate, Tardeo Rd, Tardeo; mains Rs 35-70; ☎ lunch & dinner) This bustling old-timer has been revamped as a modern cafeteria for discerning grown-ups (all stainless steel and smooth wood). Try out the delicious *bhelpuri*, *panki chatni* (savoury pancake steamed in a banana leaf) and homemade ice cream in delectable flavour combinations such as rose-coconut-pineapple (Rs 40). Don't leave Mumbai without snacking here.

Anantashram (46 Kotachiwadi, Girgaum; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) This no-frills restaurant is as renowned for its spartan décor and surliness of its staff as for its supremely delicious cooking and thali meals. Look for it down a small maze of laneways.

Cream Centre (☎ 23679222; 25B Chowpatty Seaface; mains Rs 85-139; ☎ lunch & dinner) With a slick, modern-art-adorned interior, it's only fitting that the fusion menu is equally original. Enjoy pure veg dishes and such hybrids as Indian Mexican cuisine, and of course there's an excellent ice-cream parlour.

Speaking of ice cream, try out these two places to cool off after a Chowpatty stroll:
New Kulfi Centre (cnr Chowpatty Seaface & Sardar V Patel Rd; kulfi per 100gm Rs 17-35; ☎ lunch & dinner) Serves kulfi, a pistachio-flavoured sweet similar to ice cream.

Gelato Italiano (Chowpatty Seaface; scoop Rs 29-49; ☎ lunch & dinner) Flavours such as custard apple sorbetto or limoncello, yum.

North Mumbai

North Mumbai's centres of gravity as far as trendy dining and drinking are concerned lie in Bandra West and Juhu. For mapped locations of the following venues see Map p785.

Culture Curry (Kataria Rd; dishes Rs 70-200; ☎ lunch & dinner) Next door to Goa Portuguesa (below) and run by the same folk, this restaurant offers curries from around India. Guitar-strumming musicians and singers wander between the two connected spaces.

Goa Portuguesa (www.goaportuguesa.com; Kataria Rd, Mahim; dishes Rs 90-200; ☎ lunch & dinner) As good as making a trip to Goa is a visit to this fun

restaurant, which specialises in the fiery dishes of the former Portuguese colony.

Pot Pourri (Carlton Ct, cnr of Turner & Pali Rds, Bandra West; mains Rs 100-260; ☎ lunch & dinner) In a great corner from which to peruse Bandra streetlife, decent Western-style cuisine is dished up here – everything from Highland Scotch broth to its famed chicken stroganoff (Rs 190). The reasonable prices scoff at much spicier Bandra establishments.

Sheesha (7th flr, Shoppers Stop, Linking Rd; dishes around Rs 120-230; ☎ lunch & dinner) This funky, roof-top place pays token homage to the Middle East, and is strewn with curvy concrete lounges and cushions ideal for elegant slumming. The food is good but almost secondary to the ambience, with Indian fare mixed alongside Arabic dishes such as kebabs (Rs 120 to 240).

Seijo & the Soul Dish (☎ 26405555; 206 Patkar Marg, Bandra; mains Rs 235-885; ☎ dinner) Serving some of the best pan-Asian fusion dishes around, it's worth coming to this über-hip joint just for the *Bladerunner*-meets-Sushi-bar design concept alone. The surreal, freestanding, egg-shaped loos inside the main dining room will leave you with lots to talk about over sushi, noodles or a Thai curry.

Peshawri (☎ 28303030; ITC Hotel Grand Maratha Sheraton & Towers, Sahar Airport Rd; mains Rs 400-1000; ☎ dinner) Make this Indian North-West Frontier restaurant, conveniently located just outside the international airport, your first or last stop in Mumbai. You will not regret forking out for the sublime leg of spring lamb and amazing dhal Bukhara (a thick black dhal cooked for more than a day!).

DRINKING

Mumbai's lax attitude to alcohol offers up loads of places to get nicely inebriated – from hole-in-the-wall beer bars to brash, multilevel superclubs. Expect to pay around Rs 80 to 130 for a bottle of Kingfisher in a bar or restaurant, a lot more in a club or fashionable watering-hole.

Cafés

Mocha Bar (Map p776; 82 Veer Nariman Rd, Churchgate; ☎ 9am-12:30am) This atmospheric, Arabian-styled café is often filled to the brim with bohemians and students deep in esoteric conversation, or maybe just the latest Bollywood gossip. Cosy, low-cushioned seating, hookah pipes, exotic coffee varieties and world music add up to longer stays than you expected.

Samovar Café (Map p776; Jehangir Art Gallery, 161B MG Rd, Kala Ghoda; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Sat) This intimate place inside the art gallery overlooks the gardens of the Prince of Wales Museum and is a great spot to chill out over a beer, mango lassi (Rs 50) or light meal.

The Rs 5 chai-wallahs are still out there, but fancy 'espresso-bars' are where Mumbaikers head for their caffeine jolt these days. Barista and Café Coffee Day vie for dominance across the city in a race to out-Starbucks each other. **Barista** (Colaba Map p774; Colaba Causeway; Colaba Map p774; Arthur Bunder Rd; near CST Map p776; Marzaban Rd) seems to be winning, with slightly more stylish pristine orange- and cream-coloured surroundings, but **Café Coffee Day** (Map pp768-9; Chowpatty Seaface) is not far behind.

The spiffy **Cha Bar** (Map p776; ☎ 66354477; Apeejay House, 3 Dinsha Wacha Marg, Churchgate; ☎ 10am-10pm) at Oxford Bookstore also serves an inspiring range of teas and tasty snacks.

Bars

COLABA & AROUND

For mapped locations of the following venues see Map p774.

Leopold's Café (cnr Colaba Causeway & Nawroji F Rd; ☎ 7.30am-12:30am) Drawn like moths to a Kingfisher flame, most tourists end up at this Mumbai travellers' institution at one time or another. Around since 1871, Leopold's has wobbly ceiling fans, open-plan seating and a rambunctious atmosphere conducive to swapping tales with random strangers. Although there's a huge menu, it's the lazy evening beers that are the real draw.

Busaba (☎ 22043779; 4 Mandlik Marg; ☎ noon-3pm & 7pm-12:30am; ☎) Red walls, framed postcards and old photos give this loungey restaurant-bar a bohemian feel. It's next to Indigo so gets the same trendy crowd, but serves cheaper, more potent cocktails.

Café Mondegar (Metro House, 5A Colaba Causeway; ☎ 8:30am-11:30pm) Mondegar's nightly traveller-based crowd is as 'colourful' as the wall caricatures by a famous Goan artist, but that could be our beer-goggles talking. Expect to shout your draught beer orders over the popular, nonstop CD jukebox.

Henry Tham's (☎ 22023186; Apollo Bunder; ☎ 7pm-1:30am) This superswanky bar-cum-restaurant features towering ceilings, gratuitous use of space and strategically placed minimalist décor. It's the currently darling of the Mumbai jet set and therefore *the* place to see and be seen. To

STAR STRUCK

Mumbai (Bombay) is home of the glitz and glamour of Bollywood (see p778); be sure to study up on some of the industry's A-list players:

- Saif Ali Khan: Dashing son of the Nawab (Prince) of Pataudi, this debonair actor is India's latest homegrown heart-throb.
- Amitabh Bachchan: Now in his 60s, the face of this white-bearded action-film legend graces half the movie-posters and billboards in the country.
- Raj Kapoor: Actor, producer, director and all-round, old-school megastar.
- Salman Khan: An infamous Bolly-bad-boy who plays the quintessential romantic hero onscreen.
- Rani Mukerji: A starlet with classic looks and a real passion for her roles.
- Aishwarya Rai: A former Miss World who has since become one of Bollywood's brightest stars.
- Shah Rukh Khan: Classically trained in theatre, he's a versatile actor with chiselled good looks.

And if you hang out long enough at any of these swanky establishments, you too can rub shoulders with India's celluloid jet-set:

- Henry Tham's (p789)
- Dome (below)
- Vie Lounge (below)
- Zenzi (below)
- Insomnia (opposite)

find it, look for the monolithic door – thankfully opened by a doorman.

Gokul Bar (Tulloch Rd; ☎ 11am-1.30am) This classic, workin' man's Indian drinking den can get pretty lively and the beer is cheap (starting at Rs 60). There's an AC section upstairs where the real boozers hang out.

MARINE DRIVE, BREACH CANDY & LOWER PAREL

Ghetto (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23538418; 308 Bhulabhai Desai Marg, Mahalaxmi; ☎ 7pm-1.30am) Mumbai's best and only real dive bar, this smoke-filled, graffiti-covered rocker's hang-out blares rock nightly to a dedicated set of regulars. International movies are screened (for free) every Monday night.

Saltwater Grill (Map pp768-9; Chowpatty Seaface, Chowpatty; ☎ 7.30pm-1.30am) As close as you can get to Mumbai's ocean without swimming in it, this beach bar sits cocooned by its own palm-frond jungle. Right next to H20, it's a prime contender for the title of 'ultimate sundowner cocktail venue.'

Dome (Map p776; ☎ 39879999, ext 8872; Hotel Intercontinental, 135 Marine Dr, Churchgate; ☎ 6pm-1.30am) What may be the swishest hotel bar in town, this white-on-white rooftop drinking lounge

has awesome views of Mumbai's curving sea-front. Cocktails beckon the hip young things of Mumbai nightly – get out your Bollywood star-spotting logbook.

BANDRA & JUHU

Vie Lounge (Map p785; ☎ 26603003; Juhu Tara Rd, Juhu; ☎ 7pm-1.30am) Right on Juhu Beach is this glamorous party spot (opposite Little Italy restaurant). Call before dragging yourself all the way out here to check there isn't a private Bollywood bash on.

Zenzi (Map p785; ☎ 56430670; 183 Waterfield Rd, Bandra West; ☎ 11.30am-1.30am) This superstylin' hang-out pad is a favourite among starlet wannabes and well-heeled expats. Comfy lounges are frequently visited by efficient and chatty service and the burnt orange décor is warmly bathed in soft lighting. It's at its best when the canopy is open to the stars after the monsoon season.

Olive Bar & Kitchen (Map p785; ☎ 26058228; Pali Hill Tourist Hotel, 14 Union Park, Khar; ☎ 7.30pm-12.30am) Hip and snooty, this Mediterranean-style restaurant and bar has light and delicious food, soothing DJ sounds and pure Ibiza décor. Thursday is packed: it's the new Saturday, though Saturday hasn't heard the news.

ENTERTAINMENT

The daily English-language tabloid *Mid-Day* incorporates the *List*, a guide to Mumbai entertainment. Newspapers have information on mainstream events and film screenings as does *Time Out Mumbai* (p771). You should also check out www.gigpad.com for live music listings in Mumbai.

Nightclubs

The big nights in clubs are Wednesday, Friday and Saturday when there's usually a cover charge. Dress codes apply so don't rock up in shorts and sandals.

Insomnia (Map p774; ☎ 66666653; Taj Mahal Palace & Tower, Apollo Bunder, Colaba; ☎ 8pm-3am) For Bollywood star-spotting, ultrachic *Insomnia* remains the place to be seen dropping some serious dough. It doesn't get going till after midnight and the minimum drinks spend is a hefty Rs 600 (Rs 1600 on Friday and Saturday).

Ra (☎ 66614343; Phoenix Mills, 462 Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel; minimum bar tab Rs 1500; ☎ 9pm-1.30am Wed-Sat) If you were wondering where the city's beautiful people come to shake their money-makers, wonder no more. Ra's glass roof opens wide to the stars, and your wallet will open even wider to pay for its top-notch cocktails. It's in the Phoenix Mills shopping complex, 1km north of Mahalaxmi Racecourse.

Polly Esther's (Map p774; ☎ 22871122; Gordon House Hotel, 5 Battery St, Colaba; cover per couple Rs 600-1000; ☎ 8.30am-1am Tue-Sat) Wallowing in a cheesy time-warp of retro pop, rock and disco, the Gordon House Hotel's mirror-plated, groovy nightclub still manages to pull a crowd. It comes complete with a *Saturday Night Fever* illuminated dance floor and waiters in Afro wigs.

Red Light (Map p776; ☎ 56346249; 145 MG Rd, Fort, cover Rs 300; ☎ 7pm-midnight) This very trendy bar is a huge hit with Mumbai's student scene, particularly on Wednesday when its thumping hip-hop sessions are on. The fun-house-mirror trip to the loos is not for the faint hearted.

Voodoo Pub (Map p774; ☎ 22841959; 2/5 Kamal Mansion, Arthur Bunder Rd, Colaba; cover Rs 200; ☎ 8pm-1.30am) Famous for hosting Mumbai's only regular gay night (Saturday), this dark and sweaty bar has little going for it on other nights of the week.

Cinema

Going to see a movie in India's film capital is practically mandatory; with well over 100

cinemas around the city there's no excuse not to. Try the following:

Eros (Map p776; ☎ 22823355; MK Rd, Churchgate; tickets Rs 40-100) For Bollywood blockbusters.

Metro (Map p776; ☎ 22030303; MG Rd, New Marine Lines, Fort; tickets Rs 40-100) Also for Bollywood blockbusters.

Regal (Map p774; ☎ 22021017; Colaba Causeway, Colaba; tickets Rs 70-150) Art Deco cinema showing brash Bollywood hits and the occasional Hollywood tripe.

Sterling (Map p776; ☎ 22075187; Marzaban Rd, Fort; tickets Rs 60-87) First-run English-language movies.

Music, Dance & Theatre

Not Just Jazz By the Bay (Map p776; ☎ 22851876; 143 Marine Dr; admission singles/couple Rs 200/300; ☎ 6pm-2am) This is the best, and frankly the only, jazz club in South Mumbai. True to its name, there are also live pop, blues and rock performers most nights, though Sunday- or Monday-night karaoke might be best avoided.

National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA; Map pp768-9; ☎ 22833737; www.tata.com/ncpa; cnr Marine Dr & Sri V Saha Rd, Nariman Point; tickets Rs 40-280) This is the hub of Mumbai's music, theatre and dance scene. In any given week, it might host Marathi theatre, dance troupes from Bihar, ensembles from Europe and Indian classical music. The Tata Theatre here occasionally has English-language plays. Many performances are free. The box office (☎ 22824567; open 9am to 1.30pm and 4.30pm to 6.30pm) is at the end of NCPA Marg.

Nehru Centre (☎ 24964676-80; www.nehrucentre.mumbai.com; Dr Annie Besant Rd, Worli) Stages occasional dance, music and English-language theatre performances.

Prithvi Theatre (Map p785; ☎ 26149546; www.prithvitheatre.org; Juhu Church Rd, Vile Parle) At Juhu Beach, this is a good place to see both English-language and Hindi theatre. It hosts an annual international theatre festival.

Sport

CRICKET

The cricket season runs from October to April. Test matches and One Day Internationals are played a handful of times a year at **Wankhede Stadium** (Map p776; ☎ 22811795; mcacrick@vsnl.com; D Rd, Churchgate). To buy tickets apply in writing well in advance. One-day match tickets start at Rs 150, for a test match you'll have to pay for the full five days – around Rs 700 for general admission, up to Rs 10,000 for the members stand (replete with

lunch and afternoon tea). State match tickets (Rs 25) are available at the gate.

HORSE RACING

Mumbai's horse-racing season runs from November to the end of April.

Mahalaxmi Racecourse (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23071401) Races are held on Sunday and Thursday afternoons (Saturday and Sunday towards the end of the season). Big races, such as the Indian Derby in February, are major social occasions. Entry to the public enclosure costs Rs 30.

FOOTBALL

The **Cooperage Football Ground** (Map p774; ☎ 220 24020; MK Rd, Colaba; tickets Rs 50) is home to the Mumbai Football Association and hosts national- and state-league soccer matches between November and February. Tickets are available at the gate.

SHOPPING

Mumbai is India's great marketplace, with some of the best shopping in the country. Colaba Street Market lines Colaba Causeway with hawkers' stalls and shops selling garments, perfumes and knick-knacks. Electronic gear, pirated CDs and DVDs, leather goods and mass-produced gizmos are for sale at stalls on Dr Dadabhai Naoroji Rd between CST and Flora Fountain, and along MG Rd from Flora Fountain to Kala Ghoda.

Antiques & Curios

Small antique and curio shops line Merewether Rd behind the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower (see Map p774). Prices aren't cheap, but the quality is definitely a step up from government emporiums.

If you prefer Raj-era bric-a-brac, head to Chor Bazaar (Map pp768-9; opposite); the main area of activity is Mutton St where you'll find a row of shops specialising in antiques (many ingenious reproductions, so beware) and miscellaneous junk.

Mini Market (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23472427; 33/31 Mutton St; ☎ 11am-8pm Sat-Thu) Sells original vintage Bollywood posters and other movie ephemera as well as many trinkets.

Phillips (Map p774; ☎ 22020564; www.phillipsantiques.com; Woodhouse Rd, Colaba; ☎ 10am-1.30pm & 2.30-7pm Mon-Sat) Opposite the Regal cinema, this long-running antique shop is known for its quality prints, silver, brassware and glass lamps – all late Victorian.

Fashion

Snap up a bargain backpacking wardrobe at Fashion Street Market, the cheap stalls lining MG Rd between Cross and Azad maidans (Map p776). Hone your bargaining skills.

Designer clobber can be bought at boutiques near Kemp's Corner. Pieces by Indian designers sell for half the price of off-the-shelf gear back home.

Courtyard (Map p774; SP Centre, 41/44 Mino Desai Marg; ☎ 11am-7.30pm) This collection of boutiques is Mumbai's fashion nexus, with appealing, keenly priced couture clothes, shoes and interior goods by top local designers such as Narendra Kumar and the Gaultier-goes-to-Bollywood look of Manish Arora.

Fabindia (Map p776; Jeroo Bldg, 137 MG Rd, Kala Ghoda; ☎ 10am-7.45pm Tue-Sun) All the vibrant colours of the country are represented in the top-quality, keenly priced cotton and silk fashions, materials and homewares of this modern Indian shop.

Kala Niketan (Map p776; ☎ 22005001; www.kalaniketangroup.com; 95 MK Rd; ☎ 12.30pm-11.30pm) The pick of the bunch of Sari shops lining this part of Queens Rd, the helpful staff will help you sort through the sari-madness. Prices range from Rs 500 all the way to Rs 80,000.

Also recommended are the following:

Khadi & Village Industries Emporium (Map p776; ☎ 33073280/8; 286 Dr Dadabhai Naoroji Rd, Fort) A 1940s time-war with ready-made traditional Indian clothing, material, shoes and handicrafts.

Mélange (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23534492; www.melange-world.com; 33 Altamount Rd, Kemp's Corner), Wall-to-wall, exposed-brick chic selling high fashion garments from 70 Indian designers.

Telon (Map pp768-9; 149 Warren Rd, Kemp's Corner) Fine gents tailor whipping up suits to order (starting at Rs 10,000).

For the massive, modern, sterile AC shopping centre experience, get lost in **Crossroads** (Map pp768-9; 28 Pandit MM Malviya Rd, Breach Candy; ☎ 10am-8pm), Mumbai's biggest (to date).

Handicrafts & Gifts

You can pick up handicrafts from various state-government emporiums in the World Trade Centre Arcade (Map pp768-9) near Cuffe Pde. All the following places have fixed prices and accept credit cards.

Bombay Store (Map p776; ☎ 22885048; Western India House, Sir P Mehta Rd, Fort; ☎ 10.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-6.30pm Sun) The place to browse if you're

looking for souvenirs from around India. Although the prices are considerably higher than at the markets or Central Cottage Industries Emporium (below), the range and quality is impressive. It sells rugs, textiles, home furnishings, silverware, glassware, *pietra dura* (marble inlay work) and bric-a-brac.

Bombay Paperie (Map p776; ☎ 66358171; www.bombaypaperie.com; 59 Bombay Samachar Marg, Fort; ☎ 10.30am-6pm Mon-Sat) Sells handmade, cotton-based paper manufactured in the village of Kagzipura near Aurangaba, crafted into charming cards, sculptures and lampshades.

Soma (Map p774; ☎ 22826050; 1st fl, 16 Madama Cama Rd; ☎ 10am-8pm) Soma has home-furnishings and clothing made from hand-block-printed materials at surprisingly reasonable prices, especially considering one bedspread can be hand-stamped up to 14,000 times!

Other stores worth popping into include the following:

Khubsons Narisons (Map p774; ☎ 22020614; 49 Colaba Causeway; ☎ 10:30am-8pm) Selling famous Tantra T-shirts sporting funky original sketches, designs and witty slogans.

Inshaallah Mashaallah (Map p774; ☎ 22049495; Best Marg, Colaba; ☎ 11am-9pm) An Aladdin's cave of olfactory chaos, with local perfumed oils and potions sold in antediluvian bottles.

Cottonworld Corp (Map p774; ☎ 22850069; Mandlik Marg; ☎ 10:30am-8pm Mon-Sat, noon-8pm Sun) Small chain selling quality cotton goods in Indian and Western designs.

Chimanals (☎ 22077717; 210 Dr DN Rd, Fort) An Aladdin's cave of cards, envelopes and writing materials made from traditional Indian paper. Enter from Wallace St.

Government emporiums worth checking out include the following:

Central Cottage Industries Emporium (Map p774; ☎ 22027537; Shivaji Marg, Colaba; ☎ 10am-7pm)

Kashmir Government Arts Emporium (Map p776; ☎ 22663822; Sir P Mehta Rd, Fort; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Sat)

Uttar Pradesh Handicrafts Emporium (Map p776; ☎ 22662702; Sir P Mehta Rd, Fort; ☎ 10.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat)

Markets

You can buy just about anything in the dense bazaars north of the Fort (see Map pp768-9). The main areas are Crawford Market (fruit and veg), Mangaldas Market (silk and cloth), Zaveri Bazaar (jewellery), Bhuleshwar Market (fruit and veg) and Chor Bazaar (antiques and

THIEVES BAZAAR

Nobody is sure exactly how Mumbai's Chor Bazaar (literally 'thieves market') earned its moniker. One popular explanation has it that Queen Victoria, upon arrival to Mumbai in her steam ship, discovered that her violin/purse/jewellery went missing while being unloaded off the ship. Having scoured the city, the missing item was supposedly found hanging in Chor Bazaar's Mutton St, and hence the name.

furniture), where Dhabu St is worth a peek for leather goods, and Mutton St specialises in antiques, reproductions and junk.

Colourful Crawford Market (officially called Mahatma Phule Market) is the last outpost of British Bombay before the tumult of the central bazaars begins. Bas-reliefs by Rudyard Kipling's father, Lockwood Kipling, adorn the Norman-Gothic exterior. The meat market is strictly for the brave; it's one of the few places you can expect to be accosted and asked to buy a bloody goat's head.

Music

LM Furtado & Co (Map pp768-9; ☎ 22013163; 540-544 Kalbadevi Rd, Kalbadevi; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat) The best place in Mumbai for musical instruments – sitars, tablas, accordions and local and imported guitars. It also has a branch around the corner on Lokmanya Tilak Rd.

Poor-quality pirated CDs and DVDs are available on the street for around Rs 200. If you want quality discs, drop by at either **Planet M** (Map p776; ☎ 66353872; Dr Dadabhai Naoroji Rd, Fort; ☎ 11am-9pm Mon-Sat, noon-8pm Sun) or **Rhythm House** (Map p776; ☎ 22842835; 40 K Dubash Marg, Fort; ☎ 10am-8.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am-8.30pm Sun).

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

AIRPORTS

Mumbai is the main international gateway to South India and has the busiest network of domestic flights. The **international airport** (☎ 26829000; www.mumbaiairport.com), officially renamed Chhatrapati Shivaji but still known as Sahar, is 4km away from the domestic airport, also called Chhatrapati Shivaji but known as Santa Cruz. A free shuttle bus runs between the airports, which are 30km and 26km north of Nariman Point in downtown Mumbai.

The international airport has two arrivals halls which have foreign-exchange counters offering reasonable rates, a **Government of India tourist office booth** (☎ 2615660, ext 4700; Arrival Hall 2A), a **hotel reservation desk** (☎ 66048772) and a prepaid taxi booth – all open 24 hours.

The **domestic airport** (☎ 26156600) has two terminals with foreign-exchange bureaus, ticketing counters and a restaurant-bar. The Government of India tourist office booth is in terminal B. Note that flights on domestic sectors of Air India routes depart from the international airport.

INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

Travel agencies are often a better bet than airline offices for booking international flights, and will reconfirm your flight for a small fee.

Air France (Map pp768-9; ☎ 22024818; Maker Chamber VI, Nariman Point)

Air India (Map p776; ☎ 22796666; Air India Bldg, cnr Marine Dr & Madame Cama Rd, Nariman Point)

British Airways (Map p776; ☎ 22820888; 202-B, Vulcan Insurance Bldg, Veer Nariman Rd, Churchgate)

Cathay Pacific (Map pp768-9; ☎ 22029561; 3rd fl, Bajaj Bhavan, Nariman Point)

Delta Airlines (Map p785; ☎ 28267000; Leela Galleria, Andheri-Kurla Rd, Andheri)

El Al Airlines (Map pp768-9; ☎ 22154701; 57 Shopping Arcade, World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade)

Qantas (Map pp768-9; ☎ 22020343; 42 Sakhar Bhavan, Nariman Point)

Thai Airways (Map pp768-9; ☎ 22823084; 15 Shopping Centre, World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade)

Virgin Atlantic (Map p776; ☎ 2281289; Marine Dr, Churchgate)

DOMESTIC AIRLINES

Domestic carriers servicing Mumbai include the following:

Air Deccan (☎ 26611601; domestic airport)

Go Air (☎ 9223222111; domestic airport)

Indian Airlines (Map p776; ☎ 22023031, 24hr reservations 1401; Air India Bldg, cnr Marine Dr & Madame Cama Rd, Nariman Point)

Jet Airways (Map p774; ☎ 22855788; Amarchand Mansion, Madame Cama Rd)

Kingfisher (☎ 56469999; domestic airport)

Sahara Airlines (Map pp768-9; ☎ 56374101-4; 7

Tulsiani Chambers, Free Press Journal Marg, Nariman Point)

Spice Jet (☎ 9871803333; www.spicejet.com; domestic airport)

There are flights to more than 30 Indian cities from Mumbai. See right for details of

MAJOR DOMESTIC FLIGHTS FROM MUMBAI

Destination	Fare (US\$)	Duration (hr)	Flights per day
Bengaluru	187	1½	18
Chennai	207	1¾	19
Delhi	237	2	34
Goa	127	1	16
Hyderabad	162	1¼	14
Jaipur	202	1¾	14
Kochi	232	1¼	20
Kolkata	287	2¼	21

major flights. The boxed table above shows rough prices for tickets booked in person a few days in advance – expect discounts if booking earlier or online. Kingfisher and Air Deccan offer flights to most of these destinations at the much cheaper Indian fares (up to 70% less).

Bus

Numerous private operators and state governments run long-distance buses to and from Mumbai. Private operators provide faster service, more comfort and simpler booking procedures.

Private long-distance buses depart from Dr Anadrao Nair Rd near Mumbai Central train station (Map pp768-9). Fares for non-AC deluxe buses include:

Destination	Fare (Rs)	Duration (hr)
Ahmedabad	300	13
Aurangabad	250	10
Bengaluru	550	24
Mahabaleshwar	300	7
Panaji	300	14-18
Pune	150	7
Udaipur	450	16

There are also sleeper buses to Goa for Rs 350 to 450. Fares to popular destinations (such as Goa) are up to 75% higher during holiday periods such as Diwali and Christmas. To check on departure times and current prices, try **National Travels** (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23015652; Dr Anadrao Nair Rd; ☎ 6am-10pm).

More convenient for Goa and southern destinations are the private buses that depart twice a day from in front of Azad Maidan, just

south of the Metro cinema. Purchase tickets directly from agents located near the bus departure point.

Long-distance state-run buses depart from **Mumbai Central bus terminal** (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23074272) by Mumbai Central train station. Buses service major towns in Maharashtra and neighbouring states. They're marginally cheaper and more frequent than the private services, but they're also decrepit and crowded. Destinations include Pune (Rs 160, four hours), Aurangabad (Rs 200, eight to nine hours) and Mahabaleshwar (Rs 180, seven hours).

Train

Three train systems operate out of Mumbai, but the two most relevant for overseas visitors are Central Railways and Western Railways. See the boxed table (below) for information on key long-distance services.

Central Railways (☎ 134), handling services to the east, south, plus a few trains to the north, operate from CST. The **reservation centre** (Map p776; ☎ 22625959; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun) is around the side of CST where the taxis gather. **Foreign tourist-quota tickets** (Counter 52, 🕒 8am-8pm) can be bought up to 60 days before travel, but must be paid in foreign currency or with rupees backed by an encashment certificate or ATM receipt. Indrail passes (p1180) can also be bought at Counter 52. You can buy nonquota tickets with a Visa or MasterCard at the much faster credit-card counters (10 and 11) for a Rs 30 fee.

A few Central Railways trains depart from Dadar (D), a few stations north of CST. Others leave from Churchgate/Lokmanya Tilak (T), 16km north of CST. One these is the *Chennai Express*, the fastest train to Chennai (Madras). Book tickets for all these trains at CST.

MAJOR TRAINS FROM MUMBAI

Destination	Train No & name	Fare (Rs)	Duration (hr)	Departure
Agra	2137 <i>Punjab Mail</i>	417/1118/1583	21½	7.10pm CST
Ahmedabad	2901 <i>Gujarat Mail</i>	235/604/844	9	9.50pm MC
Aurangabad	7057 <i>Devagiri Exp</i>	178/471/666	7½	9.05pm CST
	7617 <i>Tapovan Exp</i>	109/369*	7½	6.10am CST
Bengaluru	6529 <i>Udyan Exp</i>	377/1031/1472	24½	7.55am CST
Bhopal	2137 <i>Punjab Mail</i>	330/872/1229	14	7.10pm CST
Chennai	6011 <i>Chennai Exp</i>	389/1065/1521	26½	2:00pm CST
Delhi	2951 <i>Rajdhani Exp</i>	1495/2040**	17	4.15pm MC
	9023 <i>Janata Exp</i>	405***	30	7.25am MC
	2137 <i>Punjab Mail</i>	449/1208/1713	25¼	7.10pm CST
Goa	0111 <i>Konkan Kanya Exp</i>	284/769/1093	12	11:00pm CST
	0103 <i>Mandavi Exp</i>	284/769/1093	11½	6:55am CST
	2051 <i>Shatabdi Exp</i>	197/675*	8	5.30am D
Hyderabad	2701 <i>Hussainsagar Exp</i>	317/837/1178	15	9.50pm CST
Indore	2961 <i>Avantika Exp</i>	325/861/1212	15	7.05pm MC
Jaipur	2955 <i>Jaipur Exp</i>	389/1039/1469	18	6.50pm MC
Kochi	6345 <i>Netravati Exp</i>	441/1211/1732	27	11.40pm T
Kolkata	2859 <i>Gitanjali Exp</i>	517/1399/1989	30	6:00am CST
	2809 <i>Howrah Mail</i>	517/1399/1989	32	8.35pm CST
Pune	2123 <i>Deccan Queen</i>	82/270*	3½	5.10pm CST
	1007 <i>Deccan Exp</i>	72/240*	4½	7:10am CST
Varanasi	1093 <i>Mahanagari Exp</i>	429/1178/1683	29	12:10am CST
	5017 <i>Gorakhpur Exp</i>	421/1155/1651	31	6.35am T
Trivandrum	6345 <i>Netravati Exp</i>	473/1301/1862	31	11.40pm T

Abbreviations for train stations: CST – Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus; MC – Mumbai Central; T – Lokmanya Tilak; D – Dadar

Note: Fares are for sleeper/3AC/2AC sleeper on overnight trips except for: *2nd class/AC seat, **3AC/2AC and ***sleeper.

Western Railways (☎ 131) has services to the north (including Rajasthan and Delhi) from Mumbai Central (MC) train station (often still called Bombay Central). Make these bookings at the crowded **reservation centre** (Map p776; ☎ 22620079; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sun) opposite Churchgate train station. The **foreign tourist-quota counter** (Counter 28) is upstairs next to the Government of India tourist office, same rules apply as at CST station. The credit-card counter is No 20. There's a reservation centre adjacent to Mumbai Central train station for nonquota tickets.

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airports INTERNATIONAL

Taxis operate 24 hours a day from the airport. The trip is much faster by night, though a night surcharge is added.

The prepaid-taxi booth at the international airport has set daytime fares to Colaba, the Fort and Marine Dr (Rs 350; Rs 440 for AC), as well as to Juhu (Rs 190), Chowpatty (Rs 320) and to Mumbai Central train station (Rs 270). There's a 25% surcharge between midnight and 5am and a charge of Rs 5 to 10 per bag. The journey to Colaba takes about 45 minutes at night and 1½ to two hours during the day. You could try to negotiate a lower fare with a private taxi, but it's hardly worth the hassle. A tip of 5% to 10% is appreciated. Don't catch an autorickshaw from the airport to the city: they're prohibited from entering downtown Mumbai and can take you only as far as Mahim Creek.

The cheap alternative is to catch an autorickshaw (around Rs 30) to Andheri train station and catch a suburban train (Rs 9, 45 minutes) to Churchgate or CST. You can only do this if you arrive during the day; don't attempt it during rush hours (particularly the manic 7am to 10am morning rush), or if you're weighed down with luggage. At the very least, buy a 1st-class ticket (Rs 76).

Minibuses outside the arrival hall offer free shuttle services to the domestic airport and Juhu hotels.

A taxi from the city centre (eg CST station) to the international airport costs around Rs 300 with a bit of bargaining, plus extra for baggage; taxi drivers in Colaba ask for a fixed Rs 350. It's 30% more between midnight and 5am.

DOMESTIC

Taxis and autorickshaws queue up outside both domestic terminals. There's no prepaid-

taxi counter, but the taxi queue outside is controlled by the police – make sure your driver uses the meter and conversion card. A taxi takes one to 1½ hours to reach the city centre and costs around Rs 300.

If you don't have too much luggage, bus 195 stops on nearby Nehru Rd and passes through Colaba Causeway (Rs 16). Coming from the city, it stops on the highway opposite the airport.

A better alternative is to catch an autorickshaw between the airport and Vile Parle train station (Rs 15), and catch a suburban train between Vile Parle and Churchgate (Rs 9, 45 minutes). Don't attempt this during rush hour.

Boat

Both **PNP** (☎ 22885220) and **Maldar Catamarans** (☎ 22829695) run regular ferries to Mandwa (Rs 100 one-way), useful for access to Murud-Janjira and other parts of the Konkan Coast (p819), avoiding the long bus trip out of Mumbai. Their ticket offices are at Apollo Bunder (near the Gateway of India; Map p774).

Bus

Mumbai's single- and double-decker buses are good for travelling short distances. Fares around South Mumbai cost around Rs 3 for a section, pay the conductor once you're aboard. The service is run by **BEST** (☎ 28227006; www.bestundertaking.com), which has its main depot in Colaba (the website has a useful search facility for bus routes across the city). Just jumping on a double-decker bus (such as No 103) is an inexpensive way to have a look around South Mumbai.

Following are some useful bus routes; all of these buses depart from the bus stand at the southern end of Colaba Causeway and pass Flora Fountain:

Destination	Bus No
Breach Candy	132, 133
Chowpatty	103, 106, 107, 123
Churchgate	70, 106, 123, 132
Haji Ali	83, 124, 132, 133
Hanging Gardens	103, 106
Mani Bhavan	123
Mohammed Ali Rd	1, 3, 21
Mumbai Central train station	124, 125
CST & Crawford Market	1, 3, 21, 103, 124

Car

Cars are generally hired for an eight-hour day and with a maximum of 80km travel allowed; additional charges rack up if you exceed these limits.

Agents at the Apollo Bunder ticket booths near the Gateway of India can arrange a non-AC Maruti with driver for a half-day of sight-seeing for Rs 600 (going as far as Mahalaxmi and Malabar Hill). Regular taxi drivers often accept a similar price.

Motorcycle

Alibhai Premji Tyrewalla (Map pp768-9; ☎ 23099313; www.premjis.com; 205/207 Dr D Bhadkamkar Rd, Opera House; 🕒 10am-7pm Mon-Sat) is the place to purchase a new or used motorcycle with a guaranteed buy-back option. For two- to three-week 'rental' periods you'll still have to pay the full cost of the bike upfront. The company prefers to deal with longer-term schemes of two months or more, which work out cheaper anyway. A used 350cc or 500cc Enfield costs Rs 35,000 to 60,000, with a buy-back price of around 60% after three months. A smaller bike (100cc to 180cc) starts at Rs 25,000. It can also arrange shipment of bikes overseas (Rs 18,000 to the UK).

Taxi & Autorickshaw

Every second car on Mumbai's streets seems to be a black-and-yellow Premier taxi (India's version of a 1950s Fiat). They are the most convenient way to get around the city and in South Mumbai drivers almost always use the meter without prompting. Autorickshaws are confined to the suburbs north of Mahim Creek.

Drivers don't always know the names of Mumbai's streets – the best way to find something is by using nearby landmarks. The taxi meters are out of date, so the fare is calculated using a conversion chart, which all drivers must carry. The rate during the day is around 13 times the meter reading, with a minimum fare of Rs 13 for the first 1.6km (flag fall) and Rs 7 per kilometre after this. Costs are around 25% more expensive between midnight and 6am.

Cool Cabs (☎ 28227006) operates correctly metered, blue AC taxis. They're about a third more expensive than regular cabs and can be booked by telephone.

If you're north of Mahim Creek and not heading into the city, it's best to catch au-

torickshaws. They're metered but also use a conversion chart: the fare is roughly 10 times the meter reading.

Train

Mumbai has an efficient but overcrowded suburban train network.

There are three main lines, making it easy to navigate. The most useful service operates from Churchgate heading north to stations such as Charni Rd (for Chowpatty Beach), Mumbai Central, Mahalaxmi (for the dhobi ghat; p779), Vile Parle (for the domestic airport), Andheri (for the international airport) and Borivali (for Sanjay Gandhi National Park). Other suburban lines operate from CST to Byculla (for Victoria Gardens), Dadar, and as far as Neral (for Matheran). Trains run from 4am till 1am. From Churchgate, 2nd-/1st-class fares are Rs 5/41 to Mumbai Central, Rs 9/76 to Vile Parle or Andheri and Rs 11/102 to Borivali.

Avoid rush hours when trains are jam-packed, even in 1st class – watch your valuables. Women should take advantage of the ladies-only carriages.

GREATER MUMBAI

ELEPHANTA ISLAND

In the middle of Mumbai Harbour, 9km north-east of the Gateway of India, the rock-cut temples on **Elephanta Island** (Map p767; Indian/foreigner Rs 10/250; 🕒 caves 9am-5.30pm Tue-Sun) are a spectacle worth crossing the waters for. Home to a labyrinth of cave-temples carved into the basalt rock of the island, the artwork represents some of the most impressive temple carving in all India. The main Shiva-dedicated temple is an intriguing latticework of courtyards, halls, pillars and shrines, with the magnum opus a 6m tall statue of Sadhashiva – depicting a three-faced Shiva as the destroyer, creator and preserver of the universe. The enormous central bust of Shiva, its eyes closed in eternal contemplation, may be the most serene sight you witness in India.

The temples are thought to have been created between AD 450 and 750, when the island was known as Gharapuri (Place of Caves). The Portuguese renamed it Elephanta because of a large stone elephant near the shore, which collapsed in 1814 and was moved by the British to Mumbai's Victoria Gardens.

The English-language guide service (free with deluxe boat tickets) is worthwhile, tours depart every hour on the half-hour from the ticket booth. If you prefer to explore independently, pick up Pramod Chandra's *A Guide to the Elephanta Caves* from the stalls lining the stairway. There's also a small **museum** on site, which has some informative pictorial panels on the origin of the caves.

Getting There & Away

Launches head to Elephanta Island from the Gateway of India every half-hour from around 9am to 3pm Tuesday to Sunday. Economy boats cost Rs 100 return while more spacious 'deluxe' launches are Rs 120; buy tickets at the booths lining Apollo Bunder. The voyage takes just over an hour.

The ferries dock at the end of a concrete pier, from where you can walk (around three minutes) or take the miniature train (Rs 8) to the stairway leading up to the caves. It's lined with handicraft stalls and patrolled by pesky monkeys. Maharajas-in-training can be carried there by palanquins (one-way/return Rs 150/250).

SANJAY GANDHI NATIONAL PARK

It's hard to believe that within 90 minutes of the teeming metropolis you can be surrounded by the jungle of this 104-sq-km **protected area** (Map p767; ☎ 28866449; adult/child Rs 10/5; 🕒 7.30am-7pm Tue-Sun). Here, bright flora, birds, butterflies and elusive wild leopards replace traffic and crowds, all surrounded by forested hills on the city's northern edge. Urban de-

velopment and shantytowns are starting to muscle in on the edges of this wild region, but for now much of it remains a refuge of green and calm.

One of the main attractions is the **lion & tiger safari** (Rs 30; 🕒 every 20min 9am-12.40pm & 2-5.20pm Tue-Sun), departing from the tiger orientation centre (about 1km in from the main entrance). Expect a whirlwind 20-minute jaunt by bus through the two separate areas of the park housing the tigers and lions.

Inside the main northern entrance is an **information centre** with a small exhibition on the park's wildlife. The best time to see birds is October to April and butterflies August to November.

Another big draw are the 109 **Kanheri Caves** (Indian/foreigner Rs 5/100; 🕒 9.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun) lining the side of a rocky ravine 5km from the northern park entrance. They were used by Buddhist monks between the 2nd and 9th centuries as *viharas* (monasteries) and *chaityas* (temples), but don't compare to the caves at Ajanta (p812), Ellora (p809) or even Lonavla (p822).

For information on the park, contact Mumbai's main conservation organisation, the **Bombay Natural History Society** (Map p776; ☎ 22821811; www.bnhs.org; Colaba Causeway) in Kala Ghoda.

Getting There & Away

Take the train from Churchgate to Borivali train station (Rs 11, one hour). From there take an autorickshaw (Rs 15) or catch any bus to the park entrance. It's a further 10-minute walk from the entrance to the safari park.