

Kolkata



The crowd moves smoothly as if engaged in a choreographed routine, carrying briefcases or balancing baskets upon their heads. Gracefully, they make their way through the market squares and busy streets of Kolkata. Once the capital of British India, the city is awash in Victorian remnants, but the history of Kolkata ventures well beyond 1690, the year the East India Company arrived. Thought to have risen around an ancient Kali temple, the city's Hindu heritage is abundant, influencing everything from the city's cuisine to its art. A vast metropolis, Kolkata stretches out along the banks of the Hooghly River, a patchwork of fascinating neighborhoods where modern high-rises mingle with historic abodes.

Memorable Experiences

Maritime Meander

Take a leisurely cruise up the serene River Hooghly at sunset.

Sensational Match

Cheer on the Bengal cricket team at the Eden Gardens stadium.

Authentic Environs

Browse the antique shops and potter's studios of historic Chitpur Road.

Fragrant Atmosphere

Stroll among roses and marigold garlands at the Kolkata Flower Market.

Distinctive Details

A soft, doughy treat, Shondesh is made by combining sugar, flour, and cheese, and stirring the mixture ever so slowly. Traditional to West Bengal, the slightly sweet dessert is often served at celebrations.

Starwood Preferred Guest Recommends

Kumartuli Potter's Colony

The scent of clay fills the air by the Hooghly River where the artisans of Kumartuli create sculptures of the Goddess Durga and her children Laxmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesh. Figures are formed of straw and clay and then adorned with vivid hues.

Destination Information

Country India
State West Bengal
Elevation 9 meters
Population 7,780,544 (2008)
Language Bengali, Urdu, Hindu, English



Area Code: 33
Country Code: 91



Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport (Kolkata Airport) (CCU)



Transportation: Underground Metro, Tram, Bus, Taxi, Rickshaw



Indian Rupee

Nearby Luxury Collection Hotels and Resorts



The Sonar, Kolkata

1, JBS Halden Avenue
Kolkata, West Bengal 700046
Phone: (91)(33) 2345 4545



Culture

The nuances of a varied culture form a splendid collage of museums and monuments.

Highly Recommended



Victoria Memorial Hall

Wings outstretched and bugle held high, a bronze angel spins in the world, atop the majestic dome that crowns a magnificent building of white marble. Mughal elements combine with European details in the Indo-Saracenic façade of one of Kolkata's most monumental structures. Inaugurated in 1921 in honor of Queen Victoria, the hall is surrounded by immaculate gardens that include a serene pool that reflects its illuminated splendor at night. Inside, collections of paintings, sculptures, maps, and coins testify to the grandeur of the British Empire.

Address: 1, Queen's Way
Phone: (91)(33) 22231890



The Paresnath Temple

Thirteen marble steps lead to a graceful veranda. Elegant palm trees rise among this stunning complex of four Jain temples creating a paradise setting where gentle streams, flanked by rows of orange marigolds, flow. Dating from the nineteenth century, these exquisite temples are renowned for their distinctive ornamentation. Fluted pillars, gracefully curving arches, and conical towers are inlaid with a colorful array of mosaic motifs and tiny mirrors.

Address: Badridas Temple Street



Indian Museum

Impressive ivory tusks extend from the massive skeleton of an elephant. Ancient bones, vast and strong, inspire awe in the silent, spacious hall where they stand surrounded by an exquisite trove of rare zoological artifacts from the Indian subcontinent. Wooden vitrines fill nearby galleries, displaying specimens of quartz, obsidian, geodes, and meteorites that lead toward rooms of religious statuary. Buddha meditates peacefully, while Shiva dances. Fine art mingles with rare antiquities in a radiant building, housing one of the oldest museums in the world.

Address: 27 Jawaharlal Nehru Road
Phone: (91)(33) 22499902



Birla Academy of Art & Culture

Against a mesmerizing background of sky blue and celadon green, a woman, in a saffron and persimmon gown, plays the sitar. Nearby, the Hindu deity Yama rides among crimson blossoms, upon his smiling buffalo. The details of India's artistic, cultural, and religious heritage take shape in exceptional holdings showcasing artwork from medieval to contemporary times. Bold, bronze statuettes, South Indian sculptures, ancient archaeological manuscripts, and 12th century Chola images, are standouts of the Birla Academy collection.

Address: 108-109, Dr Meghnad Saha Sarani (Southern Avenue)
Phone: (91)(33) 24666802



Shopping

A heritage of superb craftsmanship is revealed in authentic markets and singular shops.

Local Charms



New Market

The clamor of a bustling marketplace resounds through a vast red brick building. Eager salesmen present swathes of aquamarine, emerald, and apricot-hued textiles while vegetable vendors weigh handfuls of plump green beans and crisp heads of cabbage. Women fill tall glass jars with almonds and dried papaya as jewelers hang heavy strands of turquoise, lapis and bone in colorful arrangements. Over two thousand stalls present native elements of an exquisite culture in this historic building, a premiere shopping destination since 1874.

Address: 19, Lindsay Street

Shops & Boutiques



Hidesign

In shades of caramel and beige, coffee and umber, alluring leather handbags line the gently lit shelves of Hidesign. Each one represents the exemplary craftsmanship of a revered brand. Skillfully designed in expert workshops, each product begins with full grain hide leather that is tanned with natural seeds and barks collected from the renewable forests of Africa and India. Softened with oils, they become supple. Sumptuous lengths are formed into the exquisite handbags, wallets, and briefcases of classic collections.

Address: City Center Mall, A01, DC 1, Sector 1, Ground Floor, Salt Lake
Phone: (91)(33) 23581625



She Design

Cream leaves, embroidered into flowing tussar silk, run in neat rows across black and persimmon stripes. Vivid scenes from the devotional play, Krishna's Raas Lila, sweep across a stunning shawl embroidered with threads of coral, buttercup, lime and aqua. By employing village women, guardians of a rare craft, to create kantha, a form of embroidery from the Bengal region, She Design preserves a heritage of fine needlework. A dazzling array of saris, long elegant jackets, dramatic tunics, and vibrant bedspreads comprise the label's unrivaled collection.

Address: 85 Lansdowne, 85B, Sarat Bose Road
Phone: (91)(33) 24799002



City Centre

A historic horse-drawn tram rests at the entrance to a complex of modernist buildings. An authentic relic of Kolkata's past, surrounded by patios, grassy lawns, and cubic buildings of varying heights painted white, mustard, and lilac, City Center symbolizes the crossroads of old and new. Within this six-acre shopping destination, trusted brands like Fab India and Benetton join distinctive shops like Aakriti, which features stained glass, jute, and textiles items handmade by Indian craftsmen. An "Art Wall" exhibits works by Kolkata artists.

Address: DC Block, Sector -1, Salt Lake
Phone: (91)(33) 23581011



Cuisine

Indian teas and European pastries tell a story of Kolkata's past with each taste.

Acclaimed



Flury's

A twinkling chandelier reflects off the glass of an immaculate pastry case. Behind its transparent shield, an unsurpassed trove of delightful confections resides. European dessert menu classics like apple strudel and linzer tortes lie decadently alongside chocolate loaves, opulently decorated cakes, and piles of sugar cookies. Striped chairs arranged upon a black and white checkered floor offer a nostalgic setting reminiscent of the late 1920s when this renowned tearoom first opened. Viennese coffee or Belgian hot mocha complete the old world experience.

Address: 1/B, Park Street

Phone: (91)(33) 22297664



Dumpukht

A medley of aromas fills the air as bowls of shorba are brought to the table. Cloves, cinnamon, and saffron combine in the delicate broth, offering a fine beginning to a memorable evening within the sophisticated dining room. Named after an ancient form of cooking, where a stew of rice, mutton, vegetables, and spices, sealed by a layer of dough, simmers over an open flame, Dumpukht features a vast menu of exquisite dishes. From chicken kebabs to jasmine infused biryani served with tandoor baked bread, each recipe delights.

Address: ITC Sonar

Phone: (91)(33) 23454545

Indigenous Flavors



Cha Bar at the Oxford Bookstore

Handpicked from the blue mountains of South India, the high plateaus of the Himalayas, and the valleys of the snow capped Dhauladhars, each variety of tea reveals an intrinsic story, steeped in India's cultural past. In a soothing atmosphere, where natural wood, steel, and glass form a splendid contemporary setting, café tables and modern white chairs offer an inviting place to relax with an aromatic pot of tea. Surrounded by a dynamic cache of vividly hued books, this café features a menu of the finest darjeelings, oolongs, ceylons, and green teas.

Address: 17 Park Street

Phone: (91)(33) 22175266

Local Specialty



Ivory

Ginger vinegar coats a mixture of bamboo shoots, mushrooms, tofu, and broccoli in the "Buddha's Delight." Chicken marinates in an aromatic stew in the "Lazeez Tikka Masala." The cuisine of India, Europe, and the Orient combine in a distinctive menu designed by master chef Sanjeev Kapoor. In a sophisticated warm yet modern atmosphere, an engaging dining environment thrives. Begin a meal with one of Ivory's icy cocktails, before retiring to the restaurant's inviting hookah bar.

Address: 22 Camac Street

Phone: (91)(33) 22811313



Noteworthy

Fulfilling moments of exuberance and contemplation are discovered in rare places.

Highly Recommended



Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA)

A stream of aqua blue cuts through marshes of dry yellow grass. Magenta blossoms merge into each other to form a tangled bush. Landscapes become abstract in the oil paintings of Paramjit Singh, one of India's finest artists, and one of the many talented painters represented by this celebrated art gallery in Kolkata's Ballygunge district. Dedicated to showcasing contemporary Indian art, CIMA hosts dynamic exhibitions throughout the year. Frequent seminars bring international scholars, artists, directors, and performers to the nine thousand square foot space.

Address: 43 Ashutosh Chowdhury Avenue, Sunny Towers 2nd floor
Phone: (91)(33) 24858717



Mother Teresa's Tomb

Beyond Kolkata's busy streets, peacefulness pervades every corner of a small room. In this holy space, the air seems to resonate with the prayers of those who come to visit and the spirit of the woman who lies within the white marble tomb. In 1997, one of India's most revered icons, Mother Teresa, founder of the Missionaries of Charity was buried here, in the heart of her beloved convent. One of her white cotton saris, bordered in blue, is on display among personal items including handwritten letters and a crucifix.

Address: 54A, A.J.C. Bose Road, Missionaries of Charity, Mother House

Recreation



The Tollygunge Club

Above grassy lawns and tranquil groves of acacia and East Indian walnut trees, a pair of green parakeets flies through the air. In the distance, a golfer swings his club and propels a ball toward the eighteenth hole. An exceptional oasis, just south of Kolkata's city center, this elegant club offers a peaceful escape into genteel greenery. A former indigo plantation, this splendid facility offers tennis, squash, swimming, riding, and of course, golf. Restaurants and bars are housed within the historic white mansion that lies at its heart.

Address: 120, Deshapran Sasmal Road
Phone: (91)(33) 24734539



Indian Botanical Gardens

Aerial roots rise like long straight trunks from the fertile earth and intertwine with gently curving branches peppered with thick, oval leaves. Believed to be the widest tree in the world because of its expansive canopy, the Great Banyan resides at the heart of a splendid botanical garden. Grand, palm-lined walkways lead to quiet ponds where massive Australian lily pads float. Wide, open fields lead to secluded groves of bamboo and shaded beds where blushing orchids blossom. Established in 1787, the gardens contain over twelve thousand botanical specimens.

Address: Shalimar, Howrah, west of Kolkata's city center, on the north banks of the Hooghly River.