

LOVE
BENGALURU

A HAND-BOOK FOR THE LUXURY VAGABOND

FIONA CAULFIELD



LOVE TRAVEL GUIDES

LOVE BENGALURU

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Hand-crafted in India

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LOVE STORIES

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LOVE BENGALURU

I believe falling in love with a city is just as exciting as falling in love with a person. Your senses become engaged and you simply feel more alive...

Author's Note

Over a year has gone by since the first Love Travel Guide, *Love Bangalore*, was released. Bangalore is now officially Bengaluru; the city continues to evolve and my discoveries have deepened. The intention of this guide is to introduce you to the most authentic experiences in Bengaluru — ones that will enable you to completely, head over heels, fall in love with the city and help you avoid experiences that could send you in the other direction.

The selection criterion was easy — does the place help one fall in 'Love' with Bengaluru? If yes, it was in; if not, it was out. For every entry that made it, many did not. All entries are based purely on merit, with no payments, commissions or incentives involved.

Special thanks to all the 'Bengalureans' who shared their Love stories of the city with me, so that I could include the special experiences you will find in these pages.

Change is inevitable. Please let me know if you come across any outdated information. I welcome any and all suggestions for additions or omissions. I can be reached at fiona@lovetravelguides.com

For updates and to be part of the Love Travel Guides community, please register at www.Lovetravelguides.com

Happy journey,
Fiona Caulfield

India, July 2008



Notes



I BENGLORIUS

Briefing:

Welcome to the 'New India.' Bengaluru, like the rest of India, is full of contrasts and chaos.

The most contemporary Indian city, Bengaluru retains a wonderful traditional core. A small-town attitude in a big city.

Bangalore had become India's most famous brand. Being 'Bangalored' is now part of the global lexicon and comes from the IT and BPO business boom. The question now is how quickly will the world adapt to being 'Bengalured'.

Here is what you absolutely 'Must-Know' about the city along with the recommended 'Must-Do's'. Enjoy!

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Lal Bagh Botanic Gardens

Must-Know's

Bengaluru has more epithets than any other city in India, a testament to its chameleon nature.

... these are a good way to start loving Bengaluru — its past, present and future.

Bean Town

Once upon a time whilst on a hunting expedition, a king lost his way in the forest. Seeing him tired and hungry, a kind old woman served him boiled beans. The grateful king named the place Benda Kaluru (literally, town of boiled beans). Over time the name was corrupted to Bengaluru, later anglicised to Bangalore (and has just been officially renamed Bengaluru once more).

Bright Lights, Big City

In 1906, *Bengaluru was the first city in Asia to have electricity*. It has been known as 'Neon City' ever since. Given the daily power cuts (both scheduled and unscheduled) this epithet is losing its lustre.

Garden City

Bengaluru has a profusion of formal landscaping such as Lal Bagh Botanic Gardens and the grand Cubbon Park, as well as a legacy of one-acre home blocks with leafy gardens. However, it is the abundance of tree-lined streets, which most supports this nickname. The year-long show of sequentially blossoming trees is known as the Bengaluru 'Ritusamhara' (it was designed at the turn of the century by Mr Gustave Krumbiegel at the behest of the Maharajah).

Must-Know's

'Pensioners Paradise'

Bengaluru is a youthful place, contrary to this nickname. Over the last two decades, the population has doubled to seven million and the median age is under 25. However prior to this many older Indians moved to 'Old Bangalore' attracted to the small quiet town, with little traffic, no pollution and a temperate climate, which made it perfect for retirement.

Pub City, Party City

Home of Kingfisher Beer, *Bengaluru has India's highest number of bars and pubs per capita* — close to 1,000 at last count. This is a legacy going back to 1857, when Bengaluru's beer industry began. Today, government licensing restrictions end all partying at 11.30pm and are currently enforcing the 'no dancing and drinking' rule!

Cosmopolitan City

As the largest city in the state of Karnataka, Bengaluru is a multicultural melting pot with immigrants from across India and the world. Kannada is the official state language but is spoken by only 45% of the population. English, Hindi, Telugu and Tamil are widely spoken and understood.

Air-Conditioned City

Latitude 12° 8" North, Longitude 77° 37" East, Altitude 919m. *Bengaluru is widely acknowledged to have the best climate in India*, which makes this nickname misleading as it is less likely to need A/C than any other Indian city. Even with the changing seasons the temperature stays between 14°C and 33°C.

Science City

In 1907, when Mr JRD Tata set out to create the Indian Institute of Science (IIS), he left it up to Sir William Ramsey to choose the location. The peaceful nature, temperate climate and plentiful beer supported his choice of Bengaluru. The IIS became the cornerstone of Bengaluru's science and technology base, paving the way for the city to become *home to many of India's preeminent science, engineering and medical institutions.*

LOVE BENGALURU

Biotech City

The double-helix sculpture between St Marks Church and the Bible Society on St Marks Road is symbolic of *Bengaluru's newest high-growth industry*. The nation's leading biotech company, Biocon (ranked 16th in the world in revenues) is headquartered here. Currently, there are over 100 biotech firms in the city.

India's 'Silicon Valley'

Bengaluru's most famous monicker is due to the fact thousands of IT companies are located here. It also reflects the aspirations of many residents to be in India's 'San Francisco'. Multinational corporations, especially computer hardware and software giants, also have operations in Bengaluru. Home-grown giants Wipro and Infosys (now multibillion-dollar companies) are local 'pin-ups' of this 'valley'.

City of the Future

Nehru famously talked about 'Bangalore' being the 'city of India's future'. In the 50 years since, Bengaluru has indeed become symbolic of the 'new India' — smart, inclusive and innovative. However, infrastructure woes (roads, power) and pollution problems must be overcome for the city to prosper and continue to define India into the future.

Must-Do's**MORNING****Trees & Tiffin**

Take an early morning stroll in the Lal Bagh Gardens (dating back to circa 1760) and discover the mango tree planted by Tipu Sultan. Then head to one of Bengaluru's most famous institutions, MTR (Mavalli Tiffin Room) (pg18) for the best breakfast in town — and most definitely try the grape juice made from Lal Bagh's famous 'black' grapes.

Sensory Feast

Watch the city wake up at KR City Market (pg62) and enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of India. The basement flower market is rich with the scent of jasmine and the bright colours of garlanded temple flowers. Sunday is flea-market day, when anything (and everything) is for sale on the streets. Take a brief respite from the hustle and bustle and enjoy a cool, fresh coconut juice from a pavement seller.

Taste 'Old Bangalore'

It's all good — visit the 16th century Basavana Gudi Temple (Bull Temple) and then explore this charming and traditional neighbourhood. The streets are lined with flower stalls and there is a bustling local market. Snack on Bengaluru's best *idli* at Brahmin's (pg20) or breakfast on *masala dosa* at Vidyarthi Bhavan (pg19) and then make a visit to Kalakshithi (pg78) to see the dance classes in the 100-year-old home.

Malleswaram Meander

Explore the busy tree-lined main streets and the myriad of by-lanes of this heritage area. Begin at the market (pg62) on 13th Cross and Sampige and feast on the flowers. Then head to Kanya, a sari shop (pg46), located in a beautiful historic home and see work of Karnataka artisans at Kamalini (pg38) run by the Crafts Council. Finally, reward yourself with a meal at The Village House (pg16) or pop in to the heritage hotel, Villa Pottipati (pg113) for tea.

DAY**A Coffee Pilgrimage**

Start at the Indian Coffee House 'Coffee Workers Cafe' (pg21) on MG Road, and buy 'coffee powder' at the India Coffee Depot (pg57) — ask a local for coffee-making lessons. Or skip the 'do-it-yourself' experience and head to Koshy's (pg17) where many millions of cups of the best coffee in town have been served over the last five decades.

An Artist's Date

Visit the premier educational institution of Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (pg79). This peaceful setting houses a large gallery with a number of fine Roerich paintings, Tagore drawings and a delightful folk art collection. Then head off to Gallery Sumukha (pg52) to see and (probably buy) some of the best contemporary Indian art.

Get Pampered

Experience one of the world's best holistic rejuvenation centres, Souyka (pg66, 94). A destination for global celebrities and executives, this peaceful haven offers truly fabulous Ayurvedic treatments and holistic therapies.

Drive Time

Take a power drive along Bengaluru's tree-lined streets and see the grand Vidhana Soudha, home of the Karnataka state secretariat, located across the road from the Pompeian-red painted high court building. Then head up to the Bangalore Palace, the Maharajah's very own Tudor castle. End your day with fine tea or coffee at the Rain Tree cafe (pg37), housed in a classic bungalow.

The Silk Road

Bengaluru is the centre of India's silk trade and thus has some of the best quality, variety and value in the country. For regional hand-woven Saris start with Vimor (pg45) and finish at Kanya (pg46) both located in homes. On the way, visit Vijayalakshmi Silks and Saris (pg46) on MG Road as all the Miss World contestants did. Next head to the bustling market area of Commercial Street to Maa House of Fabrics (pg46), at the Dickenson Road see live block-printing by hand, and buy great value silk by the yard. Not far from here is the stairway leading up to Mysore Sari Udyog (pg45), where there are three floors of silks and saris in every hue imaginable.

EVENING**Beers in Bengaluru**

Have Kingfisher beer at Dewars Bar (pg30) or do a full beer-tasting at Koshy's (pg17). Bengaluru is the home of Indian beer and Vijay Mallya — a Bengaluru-based Richard Branson — is the flamboyant owner of the Kingfisher brand. Kingfisher offshoots include a very good airline, a clothing range and its own version of the Pirelli calendar.

Curtain Up

Check out a modern Indian theatre performance at the Ranga Shankara (pg78) an active centre for the arts. Ideally, see a show by Bengaluru's acclaimed contemporary playwright, Mahesh Dattani. There are shows six days a week, many performed in English and there is a good cafe, gallery and bookstore. After the show, head home via the night market at Food Street (pg23).

Take it Easy

Get invited to a farmhouse for a relaxing weekend, or simply head about 45mins out of town to Grasshopper (pg23), a restaurant/gallery/boutique which has evolved from a private farmhouse into a sophisticated and relaxing oasis serving sumptuous 6-course meals.

Wine & Dine

Join well-heeled locals and a robust Expat crowd at Olive Beach (pg22) for an evening of fine wine and fine food under the stars in the candle-lit courtyard. Begin with a fresh mango daiquiri or a tamarind martini and then enjoy India's best wines along with excellent Mediterranean food. Jazz nights take place on the first and third Monday of every month and a fabulous Goa-style flea market takes place on the second Wednesday each month.