

# BEYOND CRICKET

AHEAD OF THIS CRICKET EXTRAVAGANZA'S EDITION, HERE'S A RECCE OF THE CITIES AND TOWNS WHERE THE MATCHES WILL BE HELD. **BY: BINDU GOPAL RAO**



## BENGALURU

India's Silicon Valley still has the best weather in the country, and wears its heritage tag with the same aplomb as it does its technology prowess. Also known as the Garden City, Bengaluru's large green lungs Lalbagh and Cubbon Park are a must-see. And so are Vidhan Soudha, Banerghatta National Park, ISKCON Temple, Tipu Sultan's palace, Bull temple and Venkatappa Art Gallery. Check out Wonderland Amusement Park, Bangalore Palace and HAL Aerospace Museum among others for insights into what is also one of India's most cosmopolitan cities.

**EAT:** Try an authentic thali at Mavalli Tiffin Room in Lalbagh where you can also sample their famed Masala Dosa and Rava Idli.

## DELHI

The country's capital is home to umpteen historical gems such as Red Fort, Qutub Minar (five-storey), India Gate, Humayun's Tomb, Lotus

Temple, Akshardham, and Lodi Gardens that occupy a sprawling 80 acres. Other important sites include Jama Masjid, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Gandhi Smriti Museum, Jantar Mantar, Raj Ghat, Laxminarayan Temple, and Iron Pillar. Take a walking tour, hop onto a sightseeing bus or embark on a food trail to get up, close, and personal with Delhi's glorious past. Enjoy a spot of shopping in the old city. There is always so much more to explore in this city.

**EAT:** Head to Paranthe Wali Gali in Chandni Chowk for authentic paranthas stuffed not just with potatoes but eggs, kheema, cauliflower, radish, dal and even bananas.

## HYDERABAD

The 'City of Pearls' offers a wealth of historic sites including the Charminar - an iconic mosque with four minarets and arches, Golkonda Fort, Salar Jung Museum, Chowmalla Palace, Birla Mandir and

Qutub Shahi Tombs. Don't miss Ramoji Film City, Nehru Zoological Park, and Lumbini Park either. Go boating on Lake Hussain Sagar, soak in the ambience at arts and crafts village Shilpagram, or enjoy the twin experience of a lake and park at Durgam Cheruvu. You could also shop for pearls and perfumes in the old city.

**EAT:** Sample authentic Hyderabadi Biryani at Café Bahar & Restaurant, Old MLA Quarters Road, Hyderguda.

## KANPUR

Seated on the banks of the mighty Ganges, Kanpur was one of the important centres of the Industrial Revolution. Pay a visit to Bithoor, a pilgrim spot that played a part in the Mutiny of 1857 and the Battle of Cawnpore. Other places of interest include Valmiki Ashram, Brahmavart Ghat, Patthar Ghat, Dhruva Teela, Siddhidham Ashram, Boodha Bargad, Kanpur Gardens, Shri Radhakrishna Temple, Jain Glass Temple, Allen Forest Zoo, and Jajmau which houses one of the largest tanneries in North India. If you're looking for spiritual rejuvenation, head to Baradevi Mandir and Kanpur Memorial Church, among others. With over 1,000 tanneries, Kanpur is famed for its leather products and is also known as the "Manchester of the East".

**EAT:** Indulge your sweet tooth with local desserts Thaggu Ke Laddu and Badnaam Kulfi at one of Thaggu Ke Laddu's six outlets.

**KOLKATA**

If there is one Indian city with heritage seeping through its very pores, it is Kolkata. Edifices such as the 2,300 foot cantilever Howrah Bridge, Victoria Memorial, St Paul’s Cathedral, Fort William, Dakshineswar Kali Temple and Eden Gardens (both 19th century) hark back to Kolkata’s rich colonial history. Shaheed Minar, Birla Industrial & Technological Museum, Rabindra Sarobar, Alipore Zoological Gardens, Marble Palace, Birla Planetarium and Calcutta High Court which is the country’s oldest high court are other sites worth visiting. There are many galleries strewn all over the city where you can enjoy Kolkata’s artistic vibe. Seek the goddess’ blessings at the Kalighat Kali Temple.

**EAT:** Taste the Bengali staple, Macher Jhol (fish curry) at one of Bhajahori Manna’s many outlets.

**MOHALI**

A well-known cricket venue, Mohali, close to Chandigarh, is fast becoming an IT hub of the state. Get a feel of the place by visiting the many Gurudwaras – Gurudwara Amb Sahib, Gurudwara Mata Sunder Kaur, and Gurudwara Singh Shaheedan Sohana, and historic sites – Fateh Burj (India’s tallest minaret), Baba Banda Singh Bahadur War Memorial, Sikh Museum and Kila, Sohana (Ramandeep Singh), and Rose Garden. If shopping is your thing, take a pick of Punjabi jutis, hand-woven carpets, woollen garments and Patiala salwars.

**EAT:** Pal Dhaba at SCO 52, Phase 3b2 and SCO 151-152, Sector 28D serves traditional tandoori and Punjabi fare.

Aga Khan Palace, Pune



**MUMBAI**

Few can resist the allure of the ‘City of Dreams’. Choose from an array of locations in and around Mumbai such as Gateway of India, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus railway station, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (art and history museum), Chowpatty Beach, Elephanta Caves, Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Kanheri Caves, and Esselworld. The spiritually inclined can visit the Siddhivinayak Temple, Haji Ali Dargah, and Basilica of Our Lady of the Mount at Bandra, among others. Not to be missed is the 3km long boulevard abutting the azure Arabian Sea i.e. Marine Drive.

**EAT:** When in Mumbai, street food is a must; be it Kheema-Pav at Gulshan-e-Iran, Crawford Market or Bun Maska and Mawa Samosa at Merwan’s, Grant Road.

**PUNE**

A three- to four- hour drive from Mumbai, Pune is also called the “Queen of the Deccan” and sports a unique ambience. A seamless blend of the past and the present, the city is home to several interesting sites such as the 18th century Peshwa fort Shanivar Wada, Aga Khan Palace where Mahatma Gandhi was imprisoned, Mulshi Dam, Saras Baug, Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati Temple,

and Osho International Meditation Resort founded by the late Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (spiritual guru). It is interesting to see old houses and colonial buildings share space with modern structures.

**EAT:** Tuck into some Puneri Misal - spicy gravy with lentils topped with fried munchies, onions, and a dash of lime at Munjabacha Bol located on Narayan Peth.

**RAJKOT**

Part of Gujarat’s industrial belt, Rajkot is also where you can visit the beautiful British-era Aaji Dam and the Kaba Gandhi No Delo where Mahatma Gandhi spent his childhood and which is now a memorial housing photographs and other belongings of the Mahatma. Watson Museum, Rotary Dolls Museum, BAPS Shree Swaminarayan Mandir, Jubilee Garden, Indira Circle, Pradhyuman Zoological Park, and Shri Ramakrishna Ashram are among other must-see locations. Dr Yagnik Road, Dharmendra Road and Gundwadi are places to shop for traditional Gujarati Bandhani sarees and mirror-and-beadwork dress materials.

**EAT:** No visit to Rajkot can be complete without trying out Gathiya in all its delicious variations - Fafda, Vanela and Bhavnagari - at Kankai, Race Course Road. ■