



Bengaluru's Seven Secrets

Witness the city through an architectural lens with several unexplored locations, waiting to be discovered.

by BINDU GOPAL RAO

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GARDEN CITY, SILICON VALLEY OF India, Beer Hub, Cosmopolitan City, the list of sobriquets that sit pretty on Bengaluru's head are endless. The city that I call home manages to surprise me with its atypical spots. Here are seven offbeat locales that you must explore when you are visiting the city.

RICE MEMORIAL CHURCH

Located in the bustling old market on Avenue Road, the Rice Memorial Church is marked by a simple white and ombre-hued facade. Named after Rev. Benjamin Holt Rice, a missionary, this British colonial structure was built in 1917. The stone building has a classic European style architecture with a small porch and a classic pediment. The double Tuscan columns flank the entrance, the keystone arch windows and the Roman semicircular arches. An important heritage structure, the building has been demolished three times in the past.

SHORTWAVE RADIO MUSEUM

A brainchild of Uday Kalburgi, known for his collection of Vintage Radios, the Short Wave Radio Museum was inaugurated on February 13, 2021. Located in Basaveshwaranagar, this is the first radio museum in India and includes over 110 classic, vintage, and rare radios, some of which are more than 100 years old. Spread over 900 sqft, the museum showcases rare pieces—the 1920s Westinghouse Radio, 1924 Mullard, 1930 Pye, 1940 Graetz, 1940 Philips Holland, 1935 Pilot X85BA, a 1948 RCAQ 122 and a 1950 HMV 5112.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF WORLD CULTURE

Located in Basavanagudi, the Indian Institute of World Culture, dating back to 1945, was set up by the theosophist B P Wadia with the objective to have a space that would be a cultural centre for ordinary

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THIS SPREAD

1. The Seshadri Iyer Memorial Hall currently houses the State Central Library with a whopping collection of over 2.6 lakh books
2. The Devanahalli Fort, a 15th century edifice, is spread across 20 acres

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INSIDERS' GUIDE

people. The spartan looking space is a hub of public lectures, music and dance shows aimed at making cultural life accessible to one and all. The star attraction is the general library that has over 45,000 books and a children's library with ergonomically-designed reading spaces showcasing 10,000 books. There is a reading room featuring a selection of 400 magazines and 30 newspapers, in addition to the Institute's collection of 400 periodicals.

BALABROOIE

The whitish cream-hued structure on Palace Road is an ode to Bengaluru's colonial past. Built in the 1850s, this was the home of Sir Mark Cubbon, a British army officer who became the Chief Commissioner of Mysore in 1834. The house has hosted prominent personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore, apart from other freedom fighters and foreign dignitaries. Interestingly, this was also the home of K C Reddy, the first Chief Minister of Karnataka. Set amidst thick landscape and trees that are over a century old, the sprawling 14-acre space exhibits a distinct European classical architectural style.

DEVANAHALLI FORT

A 15th-century edifice in Devanahalli, this was initially a mud fort that moved to the Wodeyars of Mysore, to the Marathas, to Tipu Sultan; and finally to the British, under Lord Cornwallis in 1791. Interestingly, the birthplace of Tipu Sultan is close by. Spread over an area of 20 acres, the fort has ruins of old homes as well as temples like the *Siddhe shwar Swami* temple, *Chandramoule shwara* temple, and the *Raghavendra Swamy* temple. The fort has seen several modifications as part of its chequered history.



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THIS SPREAD
1. The Rice Memorial Church is marked by a simple white and ombre-hued facade; 2. The Indian Institute of World Culture is a cultural hotspot; 3. Uday Kalburgi at the Short Wave Radio Museum; 4. A radio set at the Short Wave Radio Museum

SESHADRIYER MEMORIAL HALL

Named after Dewan Seshadri Iyer, the longest-serving Dewan of Mysore State from 1883 to 1901, this stunning red-coloured structure occupies pride of place in Bengaluru's Cubbon Park. The Hall currently houses the State Central Library with a whopping collection of over 2.6 lakh books, including those in Braille. The building has an interesting mix of architectural styles. With an apsidal plan, it has wooden roofs over 14 metres high, curved Dutch gables and

granite pillars. Large arched windows and a bronze statue of Dewan Seshadri comprise the brick and lime mortar structure.

GOVERNMENT MUSEUM

Said to be one of the oldest museums in the country, the Government Museum, set up in 1865, is a treasure trove of archaeological artefacts—paintings, coins, stone carvings, pottery, and inscriptions. The first-ever recorded Kannada inscription—the Halmidi inscription (450 AD) and Atakur inscription (949 AD) slabs, are key attractions here. The sculptures are from Hoysala, Nolamba and Gandhara periods, while the artefacts were found during excavation at Chandravalli, Mohenjodaro, Hampi and Halebid. Terracotta artefacts from Mathura, weapons of Kodagu warriors, old musical instruments, Neolithic pottery, 70 paintings from ancient kingdoms of Tanjore, Deccan and Mysore, and scale models of Tipu Sultan's Fort, Srirangapatna, are part of the collection. The two-floored museum has 18 galleries with a neo-classical architecture. ⚙️