

36 Hours in Bangalore, India



Namas Bhojani for The New York Times

Clockwise from top left: BluO bowling alley, New Sri Sagar, laughs at the Biere Club, flowers for sale in Malleswaram, Cubbon Park, pulling a draft at the Biere Club. [More Photos »](#)

By **ERICA WESTLY**

Published: March 28, 2013

Many tourists who find themselves in Bangalore, India's third-largest city, are merely on their way to somewhere else: Goa, for instance, or Kerala. But there is reason to linger in this lively city of some nine and a half million people. As the capital of the State of Karnataka and India's information technology hub, Bangalore has lots to offer: lush parks and gardens, a remarkably diverse restaurant scene, a raj-era palace and several beautiful churches, temples and mosques, not to mention temperatures in the 70s and 80s year round. Yes, the suffocating traffic can cause tempers to flare, but Bangaloreans are generally friendly and fun-loving. The stylish Koramangala and Indiranagar neighborhoods offer plenty of shopping, dining and night life, including dance clubs, sports bars and a jazz club. And if you like bowling, you've come to the right place.

Multimedia



Slide Show

A Taste of Bangalore, India



Map

Bangalore, India

Connect With Us on Twitter



Follow [@nytimestravel](https://twitter.com/nytimestravel) for tips, features and photography from all over the globe.

FRIDAY

3 p.m.

1. Landmark

Dating back to the 1890s, Malleswaram, in northwest Bangalore, is one of the city's most historic neighborhoods. Shops with bright awnings line leafy streets, where food vendors

sell flower garlands and spices. It's also one of the most walkable areas in town, with well-maintained sidewalks throughout. Start at Chowdiah Memorial Hall on 16th Cross Road (16th Cross, Gayathri Devi Park Extension; cmh.co.in), a red violin-shaped auditorium. The hall was built in 1980 to honor Tirumakudalu Chowdiah, one of India's most famous violinists and a Karnataka native. The building is modeled after one of Chowdiah's seven-stringed violins (replete with a giant replica of his bow). Besides being a great photo op, the hall hosts music and theater performances (check indianstage.in for listings).

4:30 p.m.

2. Dosa Time

It would be easy to spend an entire afternoon exploring the shops and temples of Malleswaram, but at some point, time must be set aside for dosas, savory crepes that south Indians enjoy at breakfast and as an afternoon snack. Sampige (pronounced som-pi-gay) Road, one of the neighborhood's main streets, is near several great dosa options. The 63-year-old New Sri Sagar (7th Cross and Margosa Road, 91-80-2331-7531), commonly known as Central Tiffin Room, the next street over from Sampige, is one of the most famous dosa places in Bangalore. The restaurant offers table service but no menus, so it's best to stick with the classic order: a benne masala dosa — a potato-stuffed crepe coated in ghee — and a cup of frothy south Indian coffee (about 40 rupees). Other locals prefer the dosas at Hotel Janatha on 8th Cross and Sampige (91-80-2334-5609), which dates from the early 1970s. Then there is [Adiga's](#), on Sampige and 17th Cross, which, with its shiny black counters, seems modern by comparison. Here, customers pay for dosas (about 50 rupees) and juices (try the apple shake for 80 rupees, or about \$1.50 at 53 rupees to the dollar) at the register then hand the various receipts to cooks at different parts of the counter, cafeteria-style. There are a few seats by the window, but most diners find a spot at the standing tables.

7:30 p.m.

3. A Taste of Persia

Persian and Indian cuisine have a shared history, but the former is still a novelty here. Persian Terrace (Sheraton Bangalore at Brigade Gateway, 26/1 Dr. Rajkumar Road, 91-80-4252-1000), an upscale outdoor restaurant at the Sheraton Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway, is one of the city's first authentic Persian restaurants. Grilled meat dishes, such as the lamb chop kebabs (1,015 rupees), are the specialty, but the menu also features several vegetarian, fish and poultry dishes. Dinner for two, with a glass of wine, costs about 4,000 rupees.

9 p.m.

4. Futuristic Bowling

The flashy Orion Mall, in the same plaza as the Sheraton, may technically be part of Malleswaram, but it feels far away from the quaint shops on Sampige Road. Skip the mall stores and head straight to the ultramodern BluO bowling alley on the third level. With 27 lanes, it's one of the largest bowling alleys in India, although that could soon change given the sport's growing popularity in the country. Waiters are on hand to bring cocktails and snacks from the bar and help novice bowlers get started. There's also a karaoke lounge and henna tattoo parlor. Bowling costs about 200 rupees per game.

SATURDAY

8 a.m.

5. A Walk in the Park

Bangalore is a rapidly developing city, and its garbage disposal problem has been the subject of recent attention. But it treasures its green space (its nickname is the Garden City), and Cubbon Park, covering more than 200 acres in the center of town, is particularly beloved. The park was built by the British in the late 1800s and is surrounded by historic buildings, including the giant neo-Dravidian-style Vidhana Soudha building and an imposing red colonial-era courthouse. It's also a popular destination for nature lovers. In addition to a towering bamboo grove and banyan trees, there are numerous flowering plants, like red-orange cannas and petunias, and plenty of birds, including kingfishers and green bee eaters. Families with young children flock to the small amusement park and toy train, and there are countless spots for picnics and paths for strolling.

10:30 a.m.

6. Coffee Break

Most people associate India with tea, but India is also a major coffee producer, with farms throughout the south and northeast. Café Coffee Day ("The Square") (23/2, Vittal Mallya Road; cafecoffeeday.com) across the street from Cubbon Park on Vittal Mallya Road, is one of the only places in the world where you can sample several different single-origin Indian coffees. A cup of single-origin coffee costs about 150 rupees and comes with a mini chocolate cookie topped with whipped cream. The cafe also sells coffee in whole-bean or ground form.

Noon

7. Eclectic Eggs

The menu at the Egg Factory (White House, St. Mark's Road; theeggfactory.in), a short auto-rickshaw ride from Cubbon Park, starts out traditionally, with a range of omelets and frittatas. But judging by the curry combos section, which includes egg vindaloo (115 rupees), it's clear that this is not your typical breakfast joint. The menu also offers egg-focused pasta and rice dishes and several Mexican-inspired items, including a strange but satisfying egg salad quesadilla (130 rupees). Try it with a cold coffee (65 rupees), the south Indian version of a coffee milkshake, or a fresh lime soda (45).

3:30 p.m.

8. Indian Microbrew

India is no stranger to beer, but microbreweries are relatively new. Bangalore, still known as “pub city” despite its 11:30 p.m. curfew, brews some of the best beer in the country. The Biere Club (20/2 Vittal Mallya Road, thebiereclub.com), the city's first microbrewery, sits near Cubbon Park and the luxury shopping area known as UB City. Consider visiting the hip Time & Space art gallery (55 Lavelle Road; gallerytimeandspace.com) first, to view contemporary art from around the country. Then, head for the bar for a draft stout or seasonal ale (about 200 rupees for 330 milliliters; about 300 rupees for 500). The bar also offers a wide range of cocktails and nonalcoholic mocktails.

9 p.m.

9. High-End Tradition

South Indian food encompasses far more than the humble masala dosa, and there is perhaps no better place to learn this than at Karavalli (66 Residency Road, 91-80-6660-4545), which sits in a bungalow-style building behind the Gateway Hotel. The head chef, Naren Thimmaiah, prepares classic dishes from Coorg, Goa and other south Indian hot spots. The crispy denji pulimunchi, a fried crab starter (1,300 rupees), is delectable and easily serves two. The ghee roast chicken (about 600 rupees) and haagalkkai kabbu saaru, a mild curry laced with squash and bits of sugar cane (425 rupees), are also popular.

SUNDAY

10 a.m.

10. History with Breakfast

There are always new restaurants to try in Bangalore, but the classics are still worth visiting. After more than 70 years, Koshy's (39 St. Mark's Road, 91-80-2221-3793) is an institution. It can get crowded on weekends, but a group of two or three should have no trouble securing a table. Peruse the framed black-and-white photos of Bangalore in the old days while nibbling on the Bombay Toast (75 rupees), a variation of French toast with a hint of chili in the crust.

Noon

11. Two-Stop Shopping

From Koshy's, it's a short walk up to M.G. Road, Bangalore's main thoroughfare. The sidewalk can get a bit hectic on weekdays, but it's relatively quiet on Sunday mornings. There are several bookstores and handicraft shops, most notably the government-run Cauvery Karnataka State Arts and Crafts Emporium (49 M.G. Road, cauverycrafts.com). Turn onto Brigade Road to find even more options. Lunch? Consider [Meghana Foods](#), on Residency Road near Brigade Road, specializing in Hyderabad-style biriyani. The fire-red chicken boneless biriyani (161 rupees) packs a punch, but its rich, addictive flavor may be worth the pain. The staff is also happy to tone down the heat and will bring extra raita to help cool your mouth. For a more modern shopping experience, the up-and-coming neighborhood of Indiranagar, in the northeast part of town, is only three metro stops away. Bangalore's metro system is still a work in progress, and Indiranagar and M.G. Road are two of the few operational stations. A metro ride between the two neighborhoods costs less than a quarter and offers fantastic city views.

WHERE TO STAY

For location, it's hard to beat the **St. Mark's Hotel** (4/1 St. Mark's Road, stmarkshotel.com), which is within walking distance of both Cubbon Park and M.G. Road. There are more luxurious hotels, but St. Mark's scores high on the amenities that matter — attentive staff, great food — and provides extra touches, such as a free jar of cookies at teatime. Rooms start at around 6,200 rupees (\$118) and include free Wi-Fi and breakfast buffet.

The **Lemon Tree Premier** (2/1 St. John's Road, lemontreehotels.com) overlooks the scenic Ulsoor Lake and is near M.G. Road and the Indiranagar neighborhood. The rooms are stylish and modern, and there is a swimming pool on the roof. The hotel offers multiple dining options. Rooms start about 6,200 rupees.

*A version of this article appeared in print on March 31, 2013, on page TR9 of the New York edition with the headline:
36 Hours: Bangalore, India.*