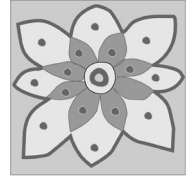


*T*hings to do in Mysore



Welcome to Mysore! We hope you have a wonderful time. Here are some of the best things to do in the area, based on what our guests have enjoyed...

Mysore Market

The market is the most popular attraction among our guests and is the perfect place to while away an afternoon. The much-photographed piles of colours used for decorating idols, the banana halls, the wonderful array of vegetables, and above all the flowers make it one of India's most attractive markets. You can buy jasmine and marigolds by the pound and trays full of roses. The garland makers will string flowers while you wait. A real treat for the senses!

The Palace

Built in 1912, the Palace is a triumph of Indo-Saracenic architecture. The finest ingredients such as Belgian stained glass, Minton tiles and cast iron from Glasgow combine to make this an extraordinary, lavishly carved building.

The Palace is illuminated at 7pm on Sundays. A band serenades the onlookers. The illumination of the Palace is the focus of a pleasant evening promenade for many Mysoreans.

Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery

The gallery is attached to the Palace. It has a very interesting collection of everything the Maharajah collected on his travels - from armour to French porcelain. There are interesting Indian paintings, particularly the Tanjore pieces, and the collection of carved ivory and jade is of world importance.

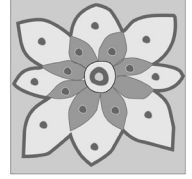
The building is also worth a visit. Hang on to your shoes though as you have to walk over gravel paths from the exit to the entrance!

Sandalwood Factory

The sandalwood factory is about 4kms from the town centre. It is closed on Sundays and government holidays - and there are a surprisingly large number of them - get reception to check. Open from 10am to 5pm.

Some guests have enjoyed visiting the sandalwood factory, but it is small and the guided tour may last about half an hour.

*T*hings to do in Mysore



Chalmundi Hill and the Nandi

There are 1000 steps to the top of the Chalmundi hill but it's worth the climb to visit the 12th century temple at the top. Alternatively, get a taxi! Tuesdays and Fridays are auspicious days and are more crowded than others.

The Nandi (statue of Shiva's holy bull), which is half way up the hill, is the second largest in India. It was carved out of a single piece of granite in the 17th century. Venerated as a religious object, the bull is much garlanded with marigolds.

It is best to secure your transport before you go, as it is often hard to get an auto rickshaw or taxi at Chalmundi.

The Lalitha Mahal

The Maharajah's summer palace built to house foreign guests, especially non-vegetarians, is now a hotel.

A visit to Chalmundi Hill and the Nandi can be conveniently combined with a visit to the Lalitha Mahal.

The road from the city centre to the Chalmundi Hill and Lalitha Mahal has many pretty old Mysorean buildings including the Police Band House, the Mysore Sports Club and the Turf Club (Mysore's race track). Races are held in the season – check with reception.

Kukkanalikere Lake

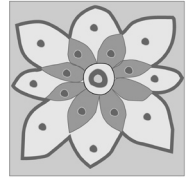
Walk round the University boating lake. A marvellous circular walk has been opened recently, which you can stroll round in about an hour (or jog in 15 minutes). Apart from the beauty of the lake there is a rich assortment of birds. (The walk is locked at sunset, at about 6.30pm, and opens at 7am, though times may vary.)

Srirangapatnam

Not to be missed! About 1/2 hour's drive from Mysore. This site includes the summer palace of Tipu Sultan, the Tiger of Mysore, who fought against British imperialism. The 18th century palace, with its wall paintings, and rich interiors set in formal gardens, is a real treat.

While you are at Srirangapatnam take the opportunity to visit the Cauvery River, and take a coracle ride.

*T*hings to do in Mysore



Brindavan Gardens

About 1/2 hour's drive from Mysore. Formal gardens laid out in the European style about half an hours drive from Mysore. Colourful fountains make the gardens a favourite picnic spot for Indian families.

The Silk Factory

Mysore is an important centre for silk spinning and weaving. You can visit the State-run silk factory.

The noise and hazards of working the machines bring alive history lessons about the Industrial Revolution, and make one appreciate the Factory Acts and Health and Safety legislation.

Other than that, the silk factory has a great deal of charm and it is fascinating to see how the beautiful silk saris are made. One visitor commented: "I will never complain about the price of silk again".

The factory has a good shop selling silk by the metre (including furnishing fabrics). Saris are also available. Down the road there is a seconds shop. Look out for *crepe de chine*, and silk satin of unsurpassable quality, as well as the more usual silk chiffon and taffetas.

Railway Museum

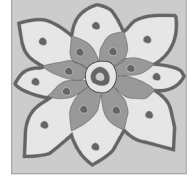
For railway enthusiasts, Mysore has a much-praised Railway Museum.

The Craft Museum at the University (Jayalaxmi Vilas)

Mysore has a very extensive university campus - just near the Green Hotel. In the midst of it is an interesting collection of carvings, baskets and photographs, put together by the Ethnography Department. There are also puppets - you'll even find one of Mahatma Gandhi's portable spinning wheels in a suitcase.

The wooden boodai (wooden carved figures) are world famous and of supreme quality. The university also has a rare and wonderful collection of early scrolls and palm leaf books, and an exhibition of Mysore's authors. These are only the tip of the iceberg. If you show a great deal of enthusiasm, other collections will probably be opened up to you!

*T*hings to do in Mysore



Mysore Zoo

This has been much enjoyed by our guests, particularly those with children. The spaciousness and conditions are a pleasant surprise for most people. There is also a newly opened butterfly park.

Mysore City

The town itself offers many pleasures. R.K. Narayan's 'Malgudi' books are based on Mysore, and reading them gives a good insight into the workings of this small town (not really so small with a population nearing a million).

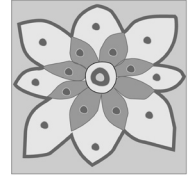
A stroll in the city centre up and down the side streets will bring the visitor many opportunities to see the unusual: the brass and stainless steel shops with items sold by weight; the grocers; the coffee and tea merchants; the sari shops, where Indian ladies will have scores of saris thrown open before them on a raised platform. Look out for the matching centres, where material for blouses and petticoats provide stunning rainbows of colour.

Buying Fabrics

Generally the state shops, such as Priyadarshini or Cauvery, offer the best value. The service and display can be off-putting or carry its own charm, depending on one's attitude. It has been said that for those employed in government jobs, the only task is to come to work, since they have virtual tenure. Occasionally one meets an enthusiast and that is both pleasurable and surprising. Buying at state shops means the weavers and spinners have been paid the government wage. Cooptex is the Tamil Nadu Handloom Corporation. The Karnataka State shop has a very good selection of silk and cotton fabric by the metre, including raw silks in lustrous colours. The Haberdashery Shop in Deverarajah Road is great for ribbons, braid and sequins.

For gentlemen, the Raymond Suiting shops on the Deverarajah Road give the opportunity to buy excellent cloth, which their tailors will turn into bespoke suits.

Things to do in Mysore



Khadi

Khadi is hand-spun yarn, which is then hand-woven. It has a cultural significance in India, as the plight of the hand-weavers, made destitute because of the introduction of factory made alternatives, was championed by Mahatma Gandhi.

Khadi can be cotton, cotton/polyester or silk (woollen Khadi is found only in North India). Cotton Khadi is like linen. It has the astonishing quality of being cool in summer and warm in winter.

There are several Khadi shops in Mysore. The official government one should be visited for its interior, which displays portraits of the leaders of the Independence Movement. Next door the Tirupar Khadi store offers a much more sophisticated range, including fancy silk weaves in vegetable dyed colours. The location of the Khadi shop in Lansdowne Building is interesting: the typewriter Wallas who will write letters for you are now being replaced by computers.

There is a bigger selection of khadi at the Khadi Vastharalaya, on Danaventhri road.

Other Shopping

Mysore is best known for silk but other specialities include a sweet known as Mysore Pak, which is like fudge (buy at Bombay Tiffany). Good purchases also include Titan watches (shop in Devarajah Road), sandalwood soap, incense, and essential oils which are best bought from the Cauvery.

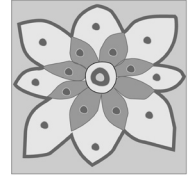
Clothes made in India for the western market (brands such as Levi's, Lee and Adidas) are found on the Deverajah road.

The State Cauvery Shop offers brass statues, silk and intricately inlaid furniture, all at reasonable prices. Keep an eye out for the pretty 50's-style embroidered table clothes...

Fab India

Mysore has a newly opened branch of Fab India. In it you will find great home furnishings (think of the Conran shop, but at lower prices). Also a large range of kurtas, and shirts, designed for the NRI (non-resident Indian) market. Very trendy, and very virtuous as the cloth is handloomed!

*T*hings to do in Mysore



Jewellery

Gold is sold by weight (more expensively than in the U.K.), but the workmanship is thrown in free!

If the elaborate jewellery is to your taste then enjoy! One word of warning - the earrings and nose studs have thick posts compared to the west, and it might be sensible to ask the jeweller to put on a finer post.

Many people buy rows of sapphire or emerald beads. Hyderabad is the centre of the world's pearl industry, but one can find pearls in Mysore as in most Indian cities. There are usually jewellers at the entrance hall of the Cauvery Shop.

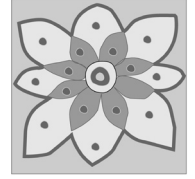
Look out for 'sale-exhibition' signs. This is quite a respectable way of selling goods. If sales are in five star hotels the prices will generally be high.

Bargaining

Some places have fixed prices but certainly higher than expected. In tourist areas the price is probably three times what is hoped for (it might be ten times but you can generally tell when it is really ridiculous). Some people want to bargain fiercely. They get more pleasure from the notion of getting a bargain than from the purchase itself. There is no point getting into a state about being overcharged, generally prices are very low compared to home, and people here need the money more than the visitors. Pay what something is worth to you. People who concentrate on the bargaining generally end up with things they do not necessarily want or like, because they managed to knock the seller down in price. Prices in the state shops are fixed, for example, Cauvery Emporium; UP Handloom; Co-Optex; Silk Factory; Khadi shops and most fabric shops.

Auto Rickshaws

Drivers should, by law, use the meter. If they do not but insist on a special pre-arranged price it is up to you to decide whether to use the rickshaw or not. As a guideline, the fare to the city centre is about 35 rupees, so reckon 40 rupees with tip! The fare to the railway station is about the same. If you hate the bargaining use the hotel's reception to get the rickshaw and fix the price for you. We can arrange to hire a rickshaw for you by the day, or half-day. This will cost about 350 rupees plus a mileage charge for the full day, for the usual sightseeing in Mysore.



Sports Facilities

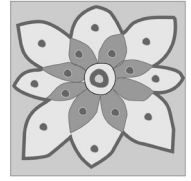
Swimming

There are several places to swim in Mysore. For serious swimmers the University has an olympic size pool. You may swim there (15 rupees) courtesy of the university authorities. Sunbathing is not allowed. Modest swimwear is essential (no bikinis or two-piece costumes for ladies). The pool is open for 3 sessions in the morning: 6.30-7.15am; 7.30-8.15am; and 8.30-9.15am. In the afternoon men can swim from 3-3.45pm, and ladies only is from 4-4.45pm. It is closed on Mondays and all government holidays.

The Southern Star has a pool open to non-residents. It is colonised by yoga students, who do not in fact swim much, but loll about sunbathing, giving the area a feel of a Spanish beach. The Lalita Mahal also has a pool.

Yoga

The hotel has a distinguished yoga teacher on call. If you want to take the opportunity to learn or improve your yoga, we can arrange lessons. Enquire at reception.



Trips out of Mysore

A trip out of Mysore is not just interesting because of the destination: the journey itself provides opportunities to see much of Indian life on the roads.

The Bird Sanctuary

Very tranquil, full of birds, with a large lake. A trip to the Bird Sanctuary can be combined with one to Somnathpur or Srirangapatnam (though many guests like to spend a day at each rather than combining). Watch out for the crocodiles!

Somnathpur, Belur and Halebid

The Hoysala dynasty ruled southwestern Karnataka between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. From the twelfth century onwards they built a series of distinctive temples centred primarily at three sites:

Somnathpur

About 20 miles from Mysore. A marvellous 13th century Hoysala temple, with extraordinarily fine sculptures. Very well preserved and maintained.

Hassan

This is about 118km from Mysore and makes a useful base for seeing the Hoysala sites at Belur and Halebid.

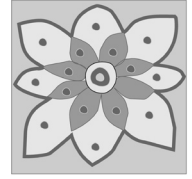
Halebid

This is 32km northwest of Hassan, and was once Dora Samudra, the capital of the Hoysala dynasty. There are several large Hoysala temples, two of which are covered in exquisite carvings. A small archeological museum (open daily except Fridays), adjacent to the Hoysaleswara temple, houses a collection of Hoysala art and other finds from the area.

Belur

37km from Hassan on the banks of the Yagachi. Belur was the Hoysala capital prior to Halebid, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Chennakeshava temple is a fine and early example of the Hoysala style. The quantity of sculptural decoration, if less mature than in later Hoysala temples, is staggering.

*T*hings to do in Mysore



Bellakope, Tibetan Monastery

On the road to Coorg, 50kms from Mysore, there is a settlement of followers of the Dalai Llama, who were given 4 acres each when they fled from Tibet. It has become a prosperous, hard working community. Visitors can see the Buddhist Temple.

Melkote

Melkote is a temple town, and a centre of Sanscrit scholarship, 80kms from Mysore (drive through Indian countryside with pretty villsages). The big temple, and 'tanks' (ancient water storage system) are scarcely visited by foreign tourists, and views from the hills make a charming visit.

We do hope you enjoy your stay at the Green Hotel. If you have any questions about things to do in the area, please ask at reception.