

ELEVATE



INSIDER TIPS

Best of Bengaluru

Traditional South Indian eats, innovative craft beer, year-round good weather and lots of green spaces make India's buzzing tech capital an ideal place for work and play – here are our tips for a memorable visit **BY MALAVIKA BHATTACHARYA**



Bangalore International Centre

In 2019, the Bangalore International Centre opened its doors as a new cultural hub – a striking space for art, theatre, cinema, and music.

Housed underneath an impressive solar roof, surrounded by greenery and flooded with natural

light, the building houses an art gallery and library, alongside an amphitheatre and performance spaces.

Each month sees around 20 free events, ranging from classical Indian and modern interpretive dance to musical performances, art shows and talks.

Stop by the cheery in-house café where a rotational menu from Podi & Spice highlights homestyle regional South Indian dishes from Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. There's also a bar run by Arbor Brewing Company. bangaloreinternationalcentre.org



Geist Brewing Co.

In a city with over a hundred microbreweries, Geist Brewing Co. stands out for its sustainable brewing practices in the craft beer space.

Their zero-liquid-discharge beer is brewed at a 10,000sqft factory, where all the rainwater is harvested, while leftover grain from beer production is supplied to local cattle farmers for livestock feed, or upcycled to grain flour that's used in baked goods.

Geist's citrusy IPAs, Belgian-style ales and Bavarian dark wheat beers are available on tap at a sprawling outdoor beer garden within the premises.

Set around an old Banyan tree in a lush green space, filtered sunlight streams through the canopy to long tables where Bangaloreans gather for craft brews and bar eats. Geist also offers take-home refillable growlers of their beer – a rarity in India. geist.in

Mavalli Tiffin Rooms

The typical Bengaluru morning begins with a frothy South Indian-style filter coffee served in a short steel glass, followed by a hearty breakfast of crisp, butter-laden *dosa* (rice flour crepes) and pillowy *idlis* (rice cakes). Traditional eateries called *darshinis* dot the cityscape, dishing out these classic breakfasts with generous sides of coconut chutney and tangy *sambar* (lentil soup).

Of these fuss-free food joints, Mavalli Tiffin Rooms (popularly known as MTR) is among the most iconic. Dating back to 1924, the brand's flagship outpost is situated just down the road from the popular Lalbagh garden, with simple interiors and a menu that features specials like the *rava idli* (savoury semolina cakes) and *chandrahara* (their trademark deep fried dessert that is served only on Sundays), alongside the classics.

You'll see snaking queues on a Sunday morning, even as early as 7am – a definite indicator that this is, indeed, one of the best breakfasts in town. mavallitiffinrooms.com



Butter-laden dosa
(rice flour crepes)

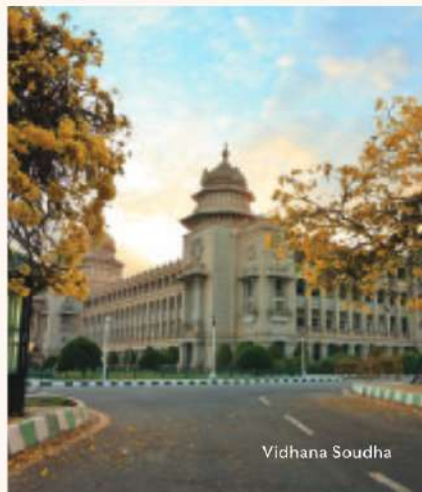
Cubbon Park

Beyond the steel-and-glass of the tech capital's business parks lie the green spaces that lend Bengaluru its moniker, Garden City. Of these, the British-era Cubbon Park, dating back to the 1800s, is the city's most beloved. Spread across more than 121ha in the city centre are lawns perfect for picnics, winding paths amid a quiet bamboo grove, and towering Banyan trees – India's national tree. The park is particularly glorious in spring – February to April – when the *Tabebuia* trees burst with vivid pink and yellow blooms. Take a walk around to spot eye-catching buildings such as the bright red State Library, the colonnaded High Court, and the stately Vidhana Soudha, a government office building.

“

Cubbon Park is particularly glorious in spring (February to April) when the *Tabebuia* trees burst with vivid pink and yellow blooms

”



Vidhana Soudha



Taj West End

Where to stay

Conrad Bengaluru

All rooms at this 24-storey hotel overlook Ulsoor Lake and the city's sweeping green cover – a rare treat in the busy CBD. Conrad Spa – among the best in the city – is known for its signature Ayurvedic and Tibetan-style therapies. Be sure to stop by the al fresco Tiamo by the infinity pool for gorgeous city views. hilton.com

Hilton Garden Inn

Located in a sprawling business park, this 353-room hotel opened in 2022 with well-appointed rooms, large-scale conference space and innovative dining options. Tuck into traditional South Indian meals and international fare at the restaurant F5. hilton.com

Taj West End

With its sloping tiled roofs and intricate trelliswork, this 19th-century heritage hotel retains much of its old-world grandeur. The grand dame is set within eight hectares of sprawling gardens, with age-old raintrees and tropical plants. Take your pick from award-winning Vietnamese cuisine at Blue Ginger or time-honoured Indian fare at Masala Klub before rounding off your evening with inventive concoctions at Blue Bar. tajhotels.com

ITC Gardenia

This sprawling 292-room hotel is set around tranquil gardens and beautiful water features. With a dedicated Japanese eatery, an Italian kitchen, and a refined North Indian restaurant offering kebabs, the dining options are varied and superb across the board. For a spot of relaxation, book yourself into the on-site Kaya Kalp Spa or work up a sweat at the well-equipped fitness centre. itshotels.com