

## **Mumbai Beyond the Meeting: A Cultural Guide for IALA 2025** **Participants For guests staying in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC)**

Dear Delegate,

Welcome to Mumbai! While you're here for the IALA Council Meeting 2025, we invite you to explore the city's rich history, coastal beauty, and spiritual depth. This guide highlights Mumbai's top cultural landmarks –thoughtfully curated for short, meaningful excursions from your base in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC).

### **Essential Mumbai Experiences**



#### **Gateway of India** **Historical & Architectural Highlights**

Built in yellow basalt and reinforced concrete, this 26-meter-high triumphal arch commemorates King George V and Queen Mary's 1911 visit, though construction was completed only in 1924.

Designed by architect George Wittet in the Indo-Saracenic style, it features Gothic elements, Mughal-influenced jaali screens, and turrets.

It gained symbolic importance when the last British troops departed through it in 1948.

#### **VISITING TIPS**

- **Opening Hours & Fees:** Open 7:00 AM–5:30 PM (free entry).
- **Best Time to Visit:** Early morning (7:00–9:00 AM) for quiet, or at dusk/night when it's lit and bustling with vendors and a sea breeze.
- **What to Do:** Enjoy photography (pigeons, skyline, boats), people-watch, and grab snacks or fresh juice from the vendors.
- **Nearby Boat Trips:** Ferries to Elephanta Caves (~50 min one way, INR 120–165) leave from the jetties here.

#### **How to Get There from BKC**

**Taxi/Auto:** Approx. 45-minute ride; request drop-off at Apollo under (Colaba).

**Public Transit:** Take a train to Churchgate or CSMT, then a short taxi/auto ride (2–3 km).

## Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS)



### History & Architecture

Established in 1922 (foundation in 1905) to commemorate the Prince of Wales, it was designed by George Wittet in an Indo-Saracenic/Victorian style. The museum is housed in a Grade I heritage building with palm-lined gardens and is recognized for architectural conservation.

### Collections & Experience

The museum houses ~50,000 artifacts across Art, Archaeology, and Natural History—ranging from Indus Valley relics, Gupta/Maurya sculptures, miniature paintings, arms, and tribal art. It also features galleries dedicated to maritime heritage, textiles, coins, and rotating exhibitions.

## VISITING TIPS

- **Hours & Fees:** Tickets ₹40 (local), ₹150–700 (foreign—check current). Audio guides (₹40 deposit), photography permitted with a small fee.
- **Facilities:** A modern visitor center handles entry, cloakroom, museum shop, auditorium, and restrooms.
- **Duration:** Allow 1.5–2 hours for a well-paced visit.
- **Recommended For:** Art/history lovers—Reddit users note impressive taxidermy and exhibits; “must-visit” if you’re into that.

### Access from Gateway

**Walking:** A scenic, 10–12-minute walk north via Horniman Circle/Kala Ghoda—ideal for soaking up South Mumbai’s heritage precinct.

**Best for:** Morning cultural excursion

**Nearby:** Colaba cafés (Leopold, Kala Ghoda Café)



### Marine Drive (~40 mins)

Marine Drive is a sweeping, palm-lined “Queen’s Necklace” promenade, roughly 3 km long, gracefully curving along reclaimed Back Bay from Nariman Point to Girgaum Chowpatty. Constructed in the late 1930s and crowned in 1940, its six-lane concrete boulevard is flanked by striking Art Deco apartment buildings—such as Kapur Mahal, Zaver Mahal, and Keval Mahal—that are part of Mumbai’s UNESCO-listed Victorian Gothic & Art Deco ensemble.



Open day and night, Marine Drive is a local favorite for early-morning jogs and evening strolls, especially at sunset when the streetlights illuminate as a glowing arc against the Arabian Sea.

**Best for:** Sunset drive or early evening walk

**How to Reach:** Around 40 minutes from BKC by taxi or auto (or via Western Line local train to Marine Lines or Churchgate).



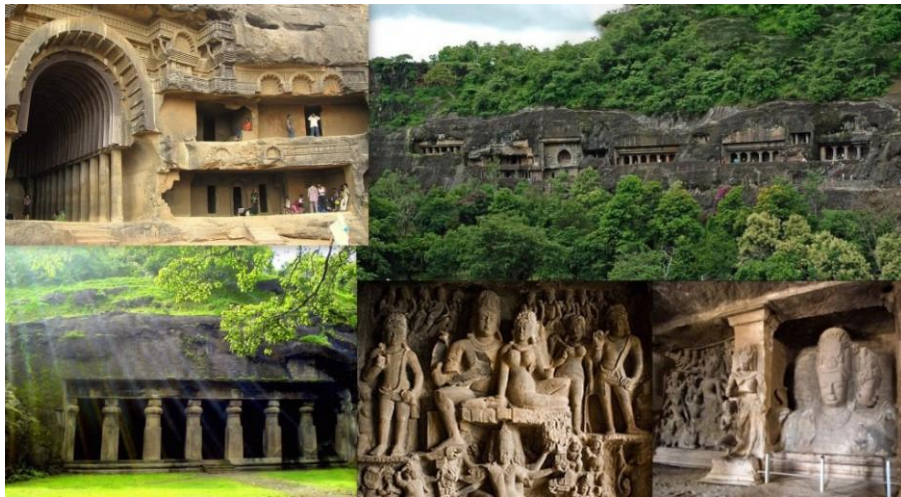
### Haji Ali Dargah (~35 mins)

Haji Ali Dargah, built in 1431 in memory of Sufi saint Pir Haji Ali Shah Bukhari from Bukhara, rests on an islet about 500m off Worli, connected to the mainland by a causeway only accessible during low tide—be sure to check tide times before visiting. Crafted from Makrana marble, it features a central dome, single minaret, mirrored halls adorned with Arabic inscriptions of the 99 names of Allah—an exquisite example of Indo-Islamic architecture. Open daily from 5:30AM to 10:00PM, entry is free. For an optimal experience, visit during low-tide windows (roughly 8–11AM or 3:30–7PM) and avoid Thursdays, Fridays, and weekends, when Qawwali sessions draw large crowds

**Open daily from 5:30 AM to 10:00 PM with free entry.**

Best visited early morning or late evening to avoid crowds, especially on Thursdays, Fridays, and weekends when devotional Qawwali sessions attract pilgrims.

### Elephanta Caves (Half-day trip)



The Elephanta Caves are a UNESCO World Heritage Site located on Elephanta Island, approximately 10 km east of Mumbai. Accessible via a 50–60-minute ferry ride from the Gateway of India, the island features rock-cut temples primarily dedicated to Lord Shiva, dating back to the 5th–7th centuries. The island also features Buddhist structures, including stupa mounds and water tanks, dating to the 2nd century BCE. Visitors can explore the caves and enjoy panoramic views of the Arabian Sea and Mumbai's skyline. The caves are open daily from 9 AM to 5 PM, with ferry services operating between 9 AM and 2 PM, except on Mondays when the caves are closed.

**Timing:** Morning ferries (8–10 AM) are best. Closed on Mondays.

**BuyTickets:** Ferry terminal at Gateway or MTDC site.

### *Kanheri Caves & Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) (Half-day nature & heritage outing)*

Embark on a half-day journey into Mumbai's rich Buddhist heritage and natural beauty by visiting the Kanheri Caves within Sanjay Gandhi National Park. Located approximately 5 km from the park's main entrance, the caves are accessible via a 15-minute shuttle ride.

Open daily from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, except Mondays, the caves offer a serene retreat amidst dense greenery.

Entry fees are ₹40 for the park, ₹100 for foreign nationals, ₹5 for Indian nationals, and ₹200 for foreign nationals for the caves.

### Buddhist Trail Including a Pagoda



After exploring the Kanheri Caves, continue your spiritual journey by visiting the Global Vipassana Pagoda, located approximately 20 km from the caves. This monument, inaugurated in 2009, serves as a symbol of peace and harmony, housing relics of Gautama Buddha. The pagoda is open daily from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM, with the last entry at 6:30 PM. Entry is free, and visitors can enjoy a self-guided audio-visual tour available through the Global Pagoda Audio Tour App.

**Best for:** History buffs, walkers, and photographers

**Bring:** Walking shoes, water, sun protection

### CST (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus) (~45 mins)

A UNESCO-listed Gothic railway station built in 1887, still fully functional and a photographer's dream. Illuminated at night, it's a favorite drive-past landmark.

**Pair with:** Mani Bhavan (Gandhi Museum) and Marine Drive

**Go:** Late afternoon for good light + post-session window.



### Mani Bhavan (~35–40 mins)

Gandhi's peaceful Mumbai residence turned into a museum. Simple, powerful exhibits on his philosophy, campaigns, and time in the city.



**Great for:** Quiet afternoon visit

**Combine with:** CST or Marine Drive

### Bandra–Worli Sea Link (10 mins from BKC access point)

An eight-lane engineering marvel, this sea bridge connects BKC-adjacent Bandra with South Mumbai. Drive across at twilight for stunning city and sea views.



**Viewpoints:** Bandra Fort or Worli Sea Face  
**instagram spot:** Evening light reflections on the water



## Mumbai Food & Drinks Guide

Mumbai is a melting pot of flavors, where street food meets fine dining, offering a vibrant and diverse culinary scene that reflects the city's rich cultural tapestry. From spicy vada pavs and tangy pani puris to upscale dining experiences with a modern twist, the city caters to every palate. Whether you're indulging in local favorites at iconic street-side stalls or savoring innovative dishes at chic cafes and rooftop bars, Mumbai's food and drinks never fail to surprise and delight. The fusion of traditional Indian ingredients with global influences makes every meal in Mumbai a flavorful adventure.

### Cafés & Casual Dining

**Leopold Café –**  
Colaba: Historic, vibrant, with a global crowd (~40 mins from BKC).

**Bombay Canteen –**  
Lower Parel: Modern Indian with creative dishes (~20 mins from BKC).

**Trishna –**  
Fort: Famous for fresh seafood (~30 mins from BKC)

**Bastian–**  
Bandra West: Luxury dining, celebrity favorite (~12 mins from BKC).

**Café Mondegar –**  
Colaba: Jukebox café with quirky murals (~40 mins from BKC).

**Prithvi Café –**  
Juhu: Cozy spot for Maharashtrian snacks (~25 mins from BKC).

**Sequel Bistro & Juice Bar –**  
Bandra West: Healthy, organic vegetarian options (~10 mins from BKC).

**Café Madras –**  
Matunga: South Indian classics (~35 mins from BKC).



### Signature Local Snack Experience



#### **Soda Bottle Opener Wala**

Lower Parel: Parsi-Indian dishes like Berry Pulao, Sali Boti, Cutting Chai & Masala Soda (~15–20 mins from BKC).

#### **Rooftop Bars & Nightlife Near BKC**

**Aer –Worli:** Stunning city and sea views (~15 mins from BKC).

**Dome – Marine Drive:** Elegant rooftop with Marine Drive views (~40 mins from BKC).

**Toto's Garage – Bandra West:** Funky, lively auto-themed bar (~12 mins from BKC).

**The Stables – BKC:** Horse-racing themed bar with cocktails and small plates (Located in BKC).

## Where to Shop for Local Snacks & Souvenirs

BKC Food Court - BKC: Clean, convenient street-style snacks (Located in BKC).

Colaba Causeway & Linking Road - Colaba & Bandra: Souvenirs, local snacks, quirky soda bottles.

Brittania & Co - Fort: Legendary Parsi café for berry pulao and baked goodies (~30 mins from BKC).

## Street Food Must-Try



Vada Pav - Spicy potato fritter in a pav (bread roll).

Famous spots:

- Anand Stall - Vile Parle (~25 mins from BKC)
- Aaram Vada Pav - CST (~30 mins from BKC)
- Chandresh Vada Pav - Bandra (~12 mins from BKC)

Bhel Puri / Pani Puri - Tangy puffed rice salad & hollow tamarind-filled puris.

Popular spots:

- Girgaum Chowpatty - Girgaum (~40 mins from BKC)
- Juhu Beach - Juhu (~25 mins from BKC)

Pav Bhaji - Soft bread with spicy vegetable mash.

Popular spots:

- Sardar Pav Bhaji - Tardeo (~25 mins from BKC)
- Shree Krishna Pav Bhaji - Byculla (~25 mins from BKC)
- Siddhi Vinayak Pav Bhaji - Vile Parle (~25 mins from BKC)



# Experiential Activities in Mumbai

## Engage, Explore & Experience the City's Vibrant Culture

### Art & Creative Workshops

#### Pottery & Clay Workshops

Get hands-on with Mumbai's thriving pottery scene! Various studios in areas like **Bandra and Lower Parel** offer workshops where you can try wheel-throwing, hand-building, and clay modeling. Great for a creative break or team-building activity.

#### Pottery & Clay Workshops

Local art studios and cultural centers offer short-term classes in traditional and contemporary painting techniques, including **Warli art, Madhubani, and mixed media**.

#### Street Art & Mural Tours

Explore vibrant street art in neighborhoods like **Bandra and Kala Ghoda** with guided walks that reveal the stories behind Mumbai's graffiti and murals.

### Performing Arts & Theatre

#### Theatre Performances

Catch live plays and performances at iconic venues such as **Prithvi Theatre** (Juhu), **NCPA** (Nariman Point), and the newly opened **Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC)**. These venues showcase everything from Marathi and Hindi plays to experimental and international theatre.

#### Classical Dance & Music Shows

Experience the rich traditions of Indian classical dance forms like **Kathak, Bharatnatyam, or Odissi**, as well as classical music concerts often hosted at venues like **NCPA and NMACC**.

#### Bollywood Dance Workshops

Explore vibrant street art in neighborhoods like **Bandra and Kala Ghoda** with guided walks that reveal the stories behind Mumbai's graffiti and murals.

### Cultural & Heritage Trails

#### Kala Ghoda Art Precinct Walks

Explore Mumbai's premier arts district on foot, visiting galleries, artisan shops, and heritage buildings. Guided tours often include stops at **Jehangir Art Gallery** and the **NGMA**.

#### Mumbai's Heritage Walks

Discover the city's colonial architecture, markets, and hidden gems with expert guides. Popular trails include **Fort District** walks, the bazaars of **Bhuleshwar**, and the **Parsi heritage walk** in South Mumbai.

#### Film City Tours

Take a behind-the-scenes guided tour of Bollywood's **Film City**, exploring film sets, studios, and maybe even catching a live shoot in action.

## Culinary Experiences

### Cooking Classes

Learn to cook authentic **Maharashtrian, Parsi,** or **Goan** dishes with local chefs, available in home kitchens or culinary schools across the city.

### Food & Spice Market Visits

Visit iconic markets like **Crawford Market** and spice bazaars with a guide, understanding local ingredients followed by tastings.

## Wellness & Spirituality

### Yoga & Meditation Sessions

Participate in yoga classes or guided meditation in serene spaces like the **Global Vipassana Pagoda** or boutique studios in **Bandra** and **BKC**.

### Spiritual Site Visits

Engage in mindful visits to sites such as the **Siddhivinayak Temple, Haji Ali Dargah,** and **ISKCON Temple** for cultural immersion and reflection.

## Shopping in Mumbai

Mumbai is a shopper's paradise, offering everything from bustling street markets to upscale malls. Whether you're hunting for unique souvenirs, trendy fashion, or luxury brands, the city has it all.

### Street Shopping

#### Colaba Causeway

A lively market popular for souvenirs, clothes, jewelry, and trinkets. Great for casual browsing and bargaining.

#### Fashion Street

Ideal for budget-friendly fashion with numerous stalls selling trendy apparel and accessories.

#### Linking Road (Bandra)

A mix of street vendors and branded stores offering footwear, bags, and accessories. Popular for style and variety.

### Luxury Malls

#### Palladium Mall (Lower Parel)

Mumbai's premier luxury shopping destination, featuring international designer labels and fine dining.

#### High Street Phoenix

Connected to Palladium, this mall offers designer stores, lifestyle brands, and gourmet restaurants.

#### Phoenix Marketcity (Kurla)

One of Mumbai's largest malls, housing global brands, entertainment zones, and a wide range of eateries.



## Bandra & BKC Shopping

### Bandra

Known as the “Queen of Suburbs,” Bandra’s shopping highlights include **Hill Road’s street stalls**, the charming **Pali Market**, and stylish designer boutiques. You can also enjoy trendy cafés like **The Bagel Shop** during your shopping breaks.

### Jio World Mall (BKC)

Convenient for delegates staying in BKC, this modern mall features international and Indian luxury brands, upscale dining, cinemas, and entertainment options – perfect for shopping close to your accommodation.

## Local Markets & Specialty Shopping

### Crawford Market

A historic market known for fresh produce, spices, dry fruits, and household goods.

### Chor Bazaar

Connected to Palladium, this mall offers designer stores, lifestyle brands, and gourmet restaurants.

### Zaveri Bazaar

The city’s renowned jewelry market, specializing in gold, diamonds, and precious stones.

## Shopping Tips

- ♦ Bargaining is common at street markets – polite negotiation can get you good deals.
- ♦ Carry cash for smaller vendors; credit/debit cards are widely accepted in malls.
- ♦ Markets tend to be busiest on weekends; early mornings are less crowded.
- ♦ Stay aware of your belongings, especially in crowded areas.
- ♦ Typical shopping hours: 10 AM to 8 PM.

Mumbai’s shopping scene offers a mix of everything, from the vibrant chaos of street markets to the refined luxury of high-end malls. Whether you’re looking for a souvenir or a designer wardrobe, you’re sure to find something unique!



# Welcome to BKC

A Curated Guide for IALA 2025 Delegates Staying in **Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC)**

Dear Delegate,

Welcome to Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC)—Mumbai's buzzing business district and a hotspot for fine food, culture, and shopping. Whether you're stepping out between sessions or exploring after hours, BKC offers a memorable mix of local flair and global sophistication.

## Softel Mumbai BKC – Conference Venue

Softel Mumbai BKC is a luxury hotel at the heart of Bandra Kurla Complex, offering world-class amenities and modern elegance. As the venue for IALA 2025, it provides excellent conference facilities, upscale dining, and luxurious accommodations. Conveniently located near business hubs and cultural spots, Softel is the perfect place to stay and connect during the event.

## Where to Eat in BKC

From Parsi cafés to world-class tasting menus, BKC caters to every palate.

## Iconic & Local Flavors

**Soda Bottle Opener Wala** – A quirky, Irani-Parsi café serving Bombay comfort food like Berry Pulao, Chicken Farcha, and Salli Boti, in a nostalgic setting with vintage decor. A crowd-pleaser with both locals and expats.

**Hitchki** – A Bollywood-themed fusion bar with playful Indian dishes and retro music.

**Biryani by Kilo (Delivery/Takeaway)** – For an aromatic and authentic biryani experience from Hyderabad or Lucknow.

## Modern Indian & Fine Dining

**Masque** – One of India's top restaurants; offers a seasonal tasting menu with locally sourced ingredients.

**O Pedro** – Goan-Portuguese food in a fun, tropical-inspired setting

**Veranda** – Indian cuisine with modern twists and artistic presentation.

**The Oberoi 361°** – All-day dining in a refined hotel environment.

## Global Cuisine & Contemporary Dining

**Yauatcha** – Michelin-quality dim sum, noodles, and teas.

**Toast & Tonic** – European-Indian bistro with gin cocktails and comfort food.

**Boteco** – Authentic Brazilian fare with a vibrant atmosphere.

## Cafés & Light Bites

**Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters** – Locally roasted coffee and artisanal snacks.

**The Nutcracker** – Friendly café offering hearty breakfasts and global comfort food.

**La Folie Lab** – Elegant patisserie for handcrafted desserts and fresh breads.

**Subko Specialty Coffee** – Trendy coffee and bakehouse with an emphasis on Indian-origin beans.



# Welcome to BKC

A Curated Guide for IALA 2025 Delegates Staying in **Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC)**

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## Shopping & Lifesty

### Jio World Drive Mall

Premium shopping destination with designer stores, curated eateries, and elegant interiors.

### Jio World Plaza (NEW)

Luxury retail space hosting global brands like Gucci, Balenciaga, Chanel, and Cartier.

## Culture & Entertainment

### Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC)

A state-of-the-art venue for live theatre, classical music, dance, and rotating art exhibitions.

Pro tip: Ask your concierge about shows or exhibitions happening during your stay.

Visit: [www.nmacconline.com](http://www.nmacconline.com)

## Wellness & Outdoors

**Spas & Gyms** – Most BKC hotels, including Sofitel, offer high-end wellness services.

**Jogging Track** – MMRDA Grounds – Great for morning walks or a sunset stroll amid green spaces.

## Getting Around from BKC

**Uber/Ola apps** are reliable and easy to use.

**Metro Line 2** (if operational) connects BKC with eastern/western suburbs.

**Hotel Cars** or concierge transport can be arranged for short trips.

## Local Favorites in a Nutshell (Shortlist)

**Type:** Parsi/Irani, Fine Dining, Goan, Coffee, Quick Bite, Shopping, Culture

We hope your time in BKC is both comfortable and culturally enriching.

For assistance, contact your hotel concierge or the IALA local organizing team.

Enjoy your stay in Mumbai!



# Essential Information for Delegates

IALA Council Meeting 2025 – Mumbai



## Arrival & Transportation

### Airport:

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (BOM) –  
The main international gateway to Mumbai.

## Local Transport:

Uber / Ola: Convenient and widely used ride-hailing apps across the city.

Taxis: Metered black-yellow taxis available, but app rides tend to be easier and more reliable.

Auto Rickshaws: Available mainly in suburbs; less common in South Mumbai & BKC.

Mumbai Metro: Efficient for select routes; always check maps before traveling.

**Tip:** Use Google Maps or the Mindicator app for navigation and transit updates.

## SIM Cards & Connectivity

SIM cards available at airport kiosks (passport and visa required).

Major providers: Jio, Airtel, Vodafone-Idea (Vi).

Data plans are affordable and offer good coverage across the city.

## Currency & Payments

Currency: Indian Rupee (INR, ₹).

Credit/debit cards are widely accepted in malls, restaurants, and hotels.

Cash: Carry some cash for street shopping, auto rickshaws, and small vendors.

ATMs are widely available, but notify your bank before traveling internationally.

## Language

English and Hindi are widely spoken and understood.

Marathi is the local state language, but generally, English suffices for communication.

## Water & Food Safety

Tap water is not potable. Always use bottled water for drinking.  
Street food: Eat from busy, popular stalls to ensure freshness.  
When in doubt, opt for cooked hot food at reputable restaurants.

## Health & Safety

Emergency Numbers:

Police: 100    Ambulance: 102    Fire: 101    Tourist Helpline: 1363

Carry any personal medications and a basic first-aid kit.

Avoid isolated areas after dark and use trusted transport options.

## Dress Code & Customs

Dress modestly when visiting religious or cultural sites.

Respect local customs and traditions.

Remove shoes when entering temples, mosques, or certain homes.

## Time Zone & Climate

Time Zone: Indian Standard Time (IST) UTC +5:30.

Weather in December: Pleasant and mild (20°C – 30°C), ideal for sightseeing.

## Time Zone & Climate

Mindicator: For live local transport updates.

Google Maps: Navigation and public transport routes.

Uber /Ola: Taxi booking.

Zomato /Swiggy: Food delivery and restaurant reviews.

This guide will help you navigate the essentials while attending the **IALA Council Meeting 2025** in Mumbai. If you need any further information or assistance, feel free to ask!

