



# HOURS IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad has reinvented itself as a vibrant, hi-tech metropolis, but its old city and many monuments bear witness to its rich history, right from the Qutb Shahi dynasty to the Nizams. Here's how to spend the perfect day in the city.

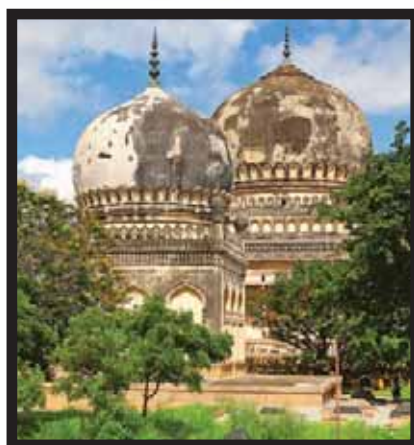
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## Daylight hours



**B**egin your day at Golconda Fort; Entry to the fort starts at 9 am. It's a good idea to get there early so that you can explore it without the hordes of tourists that will arrive later in the day. The fort was built by the Kakatiya dynasty in 1143 and later expanded by the Qutb Shahi dynasty in medieval times. After an eight-month long siege by Aurangzeb, it eventually fell into ruins around 1687. Large parts of the fort still stand, including some of the ramparts, courtyards, palaces, and domes. It may be a bit of a hike, but climb the 365 steps up to the Bala Hisar pavilion to understand how mighty the fort had once been. The view of the city from here is impressive.



Next, make your way to the Qutb Shahi tombs, which are located in the 108-acre Qutb Shahi Heritage Park near the fort. Forty mausoleums of the Qutb Shahi dynasty and 23 mosques stand amidst the shade of tamarind and mango trees. The area has recently undergone major restoration, and many of the mausoleums and mosques have returned to their past glory. The tombs sport intricate inscriptions, elaborately tiered minarets, and gleaming domes. The complex also houses six *baolis* or stepwells and a fine Persian *hamam* with delicate ornamentation, fountains, and baths.

## Noon




All that walking around must have surely worked up an appetite, so head to Sarvi Restaurant in Banjara Hills for lunch. This restaurant is one of the most popular joints for mutton biryani in Hyderabad. You'll find four kinds of dum biryani here, including a vegetarian option. If you visit during the holy month of Ramzan, sample the *haleem*—this delectable mix of meat, lentils, and wheat or barley is sure to leave an impression (there's also a vegetarian option).

Next, visit one of Hyderabad's most underrated attractions—the Chowmahalla Palace. Built in the mid-18th century, this attractive white-and-butter-yellow coloured palace was the official residence of the Nizam of Hyderabad, and is still owned by the heir of the last Nizam. The sprawling complex comprises four palaces and a landscaped garden enclosed within. The grand pillared Durbar Hall has 19 Belgian crystal chandeliers, giving it a regal air. The rest of the palace houses a museum, with an impressive collection of vintage cars used by the Nizams.



## After hours



For a dose of art, theatre, and music, visit Lamakaan, a cultural centre with a changing calendar of events that are usually free to attend or at a nominal charge ([lamakaan.com](http://lamakaan.com)). End your day Nizam-style with an elaborate meal at the opulent Dum Pukht Begum's at the recently opened ITC Kohenuur in HITEC City. Feast on melt-in-the-mouth kebabs, biryani, and other dishes fit for a king. With its design inspired by the iconic Kohinoor Diamond, the hotel is an excellent stay option in the city. It overlooks the picturesque Durgam Cheruvu Lake and is a mere 40-minute drive from the airport. 

## Twilight



The Chowmahalla Palace is located very close to the Charminar, which was built in 1591 by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah to commemorate the end of a deadly epidemic in the city. Climb up the winding stairs in one of the minarets to admire the cityscape from above. Make your way through the narrow alleys of the nearby Laad Bazaar to shop for souvenirs, such as brightly-coloured lacquer bangles that are a specialty of the city. Stop by for a cup of Irani chai and hot-from-the-oven Osmania biscuits at the popular Nimrah Café & Bakery near the Mecca Masjid.



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