

A CITY OF MUSEUMS



The Makkah Masjid can accommodate upto 10,000 people.

A bird's eye view of Telangana's capital, Hyderabad, reveals historic remnants of the city. On one side is the expansive and earthy Golconda Fort and on the other, lies small and significant structures of Mughal architecture. Since 1591 when the city was founded to date, these remnants beautifully emphasise this view of the city—without today's concrete hurting the eye.

Words: Amrita Das.



The Golconda Fort is a popular historical site in Hyderabad.

OUTDOOR MUSEUMS

Golconda Fort is Hyderabad's most eminent and one of India's most imposing fortresses. Apart from being the top tourist site in the city, it is steeped in history. Built in 1143, as a hilltop mud fort, it was only fortified between 14th and 17th century during the Qutb Shahi empire. The fort, which gradually rises 130m high, comprises palaces, mosques, tombs, gates and secret passages, four drawbridges, stables and halls, and cannons, amongst others. Fateh Darwaza (Victory Gate) is one its highlights. This gate marked the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb's victory after he laid siege at it for eight years.

Spend some time exploring the space within this stonework fortress. Since it is known for its acoustics, don't forget to clap hands once within the walls.

One kilometre away from Golconda Fort's Banjara Darwaza is Qutb Shahi Tombs. The raised tombs beautifully blend Indian and Persian architectural styles. Roam around the gardens and

walk around the tombs to indulge in Hyderabad's heritage.

In the old city, the 56-metre tall Charminar 'four minarets' graces Hyderabad's skyline. This iconic monument was built in 1591 to commemorate both the establishment of the city and the end of plague in the region. The landmark monument exemplifies Indo-Saracenic work. This is a granite and lime mortar structure which houses an Islamic school (madrassa) and a mosque. Further above the minarets, visitors can get a panoramic view of the old city, as far as Golconda Fort.

A few metres away from Charminar, Makkah Masjid also adds to the city's grand architecture. The masjid is functional till date and accommodates about 10,000 people. A line of tombs of Nizams rest in the arched gallery.



Qutb Shahi Tombs incorporate Indian and Persian architectural styles.

INDOOR MUSEUMS

Salar Jung Museum, opened in 1951 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, is one of the three national museums of India. 39 galleries feature an exquisite collection from Salar Jung III (Mir Yousuf Ali Khan). The galleries are spread across three buildings and display exhibitions of Indian, European, Middle Eastern and Far Eastern artefacts, including the 19th century sculptor titled Veiled Rebecca, the set of ivory chairs gifted to Tipu Sultan, the jade bookstand called Rehal, and Jehangir's dagger and fruit knife set in jade. Indian

Fast facts

- World famous Hyderabad biryani, which came from the Nizams, is believed to have 140 varieties.
- India's Koh-i-Noor was probably unearthed from Golconda Fort, which is now in public display in the Tower of London.
- Ramoji Film City stretches a massive 2000 acres and is the world's largest film studio complex.
- Hyderabad is the home to the seventh oldest university in India, Osmania University.

miniature paintings from 14th and 15th century, and rare Indian, Persian and Arabic manuscripts are some of the highlights.

The elegant Chowmahalla Palace was built by Nizams of Hyderabad as a recreational and entertainment space, about 150 years ago. The complex comprises four palaces, which are adorned by majestic halls, flaunted by courtyards and fountains on the outside. The pastel-coloured edifices are a mix of Persian and Arabic architectural styles. The interiors have Rajasthani lattice work, European marbles and Indo-Saracenic elements gracing it. The Durbar Hall is impressive with its low-hanging chandeliers made of Belgian crystals. It is surrounded by multiple rooms exhibiting regal furniture, historical artefacts, and other belongings of the Nizams. Don't miss the yellow Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost (originally belonging to Nizam Ali Khan) and Khilwat Clock (at the main gate, which has been operational for 250 years).

Visit the B M Birla Science Centre, which houses a planetarium, 3D Universe, science centre, Nirmala Birla Gallery of Modern Art, G P Birla Observatory and a library. The planetarium has many shows throughout the day. The science centre is a favourite among children owing to the interactive displays and Dinosaurium. 🦖



Salar Jung Museum is one of the three national museums of India.



Chowmahalla Palace has Rajasthani lattice work and Indo-Saracenic elements.