



We Like it Spicy: City Tours

Mumbai Chai Walk: A Walking Tour Tracing the City's Tea Culture

Tour Leader: Gargi Kothari

Time: 1:30 pm to 3 pm

Meeting point: walk starts at Oxford Bookstore.

Description of the walk:

Mumbai is a vibrant cosmopolitan melting pot, a city where fortunes are made and dreams are realized. And all the hard work that goes into making those fortunes and realizing those dreams is fueled by endless cups of steaming chai!

Whether you are in the business district of South Mumbai or in the suburbs (the home of Bollywood), everyone knows their Chotu, the local chaiwalla who pays them a visit multiple times a day.

Tea sommelier Snigdha Manchanda Binjola of Tea Trunk has specially curated this walking tour of iconic tea places around South Mumbai with input on the city's history and architecture from a prominent historian. The tour will conclude at the BMW Guggenheim Lab, behind the Bhau Daji Lad Museum, with an interactive chai party that includes conversations about the tea cultures and spices of various communities of Mumbai.

Instructions:

Please wear comfortable clothing and footwear. We will be walking through crowded streets, so make sure you have minimal baggage. Carry drinking water, a cap, if required, and some change and a shopping bag in case something strikes your fancy at the market.

Gujarati Food Tour

Tour Leader: Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal (APB Cook Studio)

Time: 11 am to 2 pm

Meeting point: Grant Road Station, West entrance.

Description of the walk:

Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal, of APB Cook Studio, comes from a Gujarati background, and some of her earliest memories are of time spent shopping at the vegetable market with her *dadi* (paternal grandmother). Gujarati cuisine is strictly vegetarian, and uses a range of indigenous vegetables which can only be found in select areas of the city. One of those areas is Grant Road, where our tour begins.

We will walk through the packed streets lined with small shops and vegetable vendors, talking about different types of indigenous produce, their typical usage, and the seasonal approach to eating specific vegetables. The tour will also visit a local *atta chakki* (flour mill) to look at the variety of flours used by the neighbourhood communities, and we'll visit the shop of the *bartanwalla* (utensil seller) to discuss typical utensils such as the *vaghar ni vaadki*, *sancho*, and the *masala no dabbo*—a mainstay of every Gujarati kitchen.

The tour will conclude with a scrumptious Gujarati lunch at the popular restaurant Soam, where you will get to sample some of the ingredients and dishes covered on the market tour.

Instructions:

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Lalbaug Walk and Maharashtrian Lunch

Tour Leader: Freni Avari

Timing: 11 am to 2 pm

Meeting point: Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum

Description on the walk:

The Lalbaug area is the heart of the former textile mill industry, which flourished in Mumbai from the mid-1800s to the late 1900s. This walk will offer a cultural introduction to the area and its people. We will explore the religious, economic, political and social fabric of this multi-cultural area, which is home to Marathi-speaking Hindus as well as small communities of Parsis and Muslims.

In addition to a colourful spice market, the Lalbaug area has a bustling vegetable market, an *afarsan* (fried snack) market called Chivda Galli, and a busy fish market. Shops selling everything from wedding and religious paraphernalia to daily necessities, kitchen utensils, and provisions make for an interesting introduction to local cuisine and culture.

After the walk, we will drive to a nearby restaurant that specializes in Maharashtrian cuisine. We will go back to the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum after lunch.

Instructions:

Please wear comfortable clothing and footwear. We will be walking through crowded streets, so make sure you have minimal baggage. Carry drinking water, a cap, if required, and some change and a shopping bag in case something strikes your fancy at the market.

Matunga Market and South Indian Lunch

Tour Leader: Deepa Krishnan

Time: 11 am to 2 pm

Meeting point: Astika Samaj, King's Circle

We expect participants to arrive by their own transport and return after the walk.

Description on the walk:

This will be a food- and culture-oriented bazaar walk that takes you to one of the traditional middle-class markets of the city.

The Matunga area was settled in the 1930s and '40s, as the city grew northwards from its original southern beginnings. Today this is a bustling, prosperous area, home to three different communities: Hindu Tamil Brahmins, Hindu Gujaratis from trading communities, and Jains. All three communities are vegetarian, but each follows different religious rules. As a result, their cuisines reflect their rich food traditions, evolved over the years in accordance with specific food taboos.

The Matunga area is not just a vibrant food market—it is a cultural epicenter, housing several popular temples for Hindus and Jains. The walk will cover these temples, other shops in the market (textiles, household goods, etc.) and the colourful Matunga flower market.

After the walk we will visit a popular local restaurant to taste the food (the meal will be vegetarian).

Instructions:

Please wear comfortable clothing and footwear. We will be walking through crowded streets, so make sure you have minimal baggage. Carry drinking water, a cap, if required, and some change and a shopping bag in case something strikes your fancy at the market.

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Photo: courtesy Rushina Munshaw Dhadiyal