



**BENGALURU, INDIA**  
 Bengaluru, formerly known as Bangalore, was the centre of colonial rule in South India during the British Raj. Today this growing metropolis is known as the 'Silicon Valley of India' because of its position as the nerve centre of India's software and IT industry. Behind the glitter of this bustling city however, pockets of Bengaluru that pre-date the colonial days still exist, as do vestiges of a gracious, unhurried lifestyle.

# Hitting the streets

Walking tours are an ideal way for the first-time visitor, as well as long-time residents, to learn more about a city's history, architecture and hidden attractions. Here are three of our favourite walks.

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(Clockwise from far left) Vibrant colours of the flower market at the Basavangudi enclave; one of the many stately mansions that have for the moment escaped redevelopment; there's never a quiet moment at Srinivasa Condiment Stores, as many visitors shop for an entire year's worth of goodies; the Bull Temple is one of the many temples included on the walk; a bicycle laden with coconuts speaks of a quieter and slower pace of life

**Walk the talk** The Traditional Bengaluru Walk is a two-and-a-half-hour guided walk that covers three kms of the Basavangudi enclave, with stops at important-but-now-forgotten landmarks, ancient temples and tree-lined residential neighbourhoods.

**What you see** Start at the very origins of the city, at one of the watchtowers built by Kempe Gowda, the local king who founded Bengaluru in the 14th century when he saw a hare chasing a hound and deciding that this must be heroic ground indeed. Just around the corner is Sri Gavi Gangadhareshwara temple, an ancient cave temple dating back to the 12th century that's been designed in such a manner that during the annual winter solstice, the sun's rays fall on the image of Lord Shiva that lies in the cave. You'll also stroll around a verdant park dotted with huge boulders

and rocks where the 16th century ruler Tipu Sultan ran through, bleeding, in his last battle against the British.

**Why we like it** With each stop, the very informative guide will regale you with tales of the city's origins, political intrigue in the months leading up to Tipu Sultan's final resistance against the British, how the seeds of Bengaluru's horticultural revolution was started and of the many brilliant personalities who lived in the neighbourhood. You'll also be shown some of the best eats in the city, whether it's the best *idli* and coffee or deliciously spicy *thali* meals. At the end of the walk, you'll come away knowing a little more about the city but also realising that you've barely scratched the surface of this city's story. It's no wonder then that many walkers go on repeat walks, each time delving a little deeper into the city's communities, crafts and culture.

**Highlights** Much of the walk aims to give the visitor a glimpse of Bengaluru that's fast disappearing amidst the rise of modern buildings and flyovers. You'll see examples of pre-British architectural styles and elegant homes that are nearly a century-old, that may not be around for long given the pace of development. Then there are the monasteries and schools that were built when spiritual inquiry and scientific thought was at its height in the city. Like any neighbourhood, the Basavangudi enclave has a thriving commercial area with more than a few gems, like a condiment store selling what's said to be Bengaluru's best almond toffee sweets.

**Plus** Apart from vintage Bengaluru, Bangalore Walks also offers scheduled weekend walks that take the visitor through the city's Victorian heritage and for nature lovers, not to be missed is the Green Heritage Walk through Lalbagh Botanical Gardens.

**Bangalore Walks** Year-round scheduled weekend walks start at 7am Cost Rs500 per person (Rs 300 for seniors/children under 12); private tours are also available [www.bangalorewalks.com](http://www.bangalorewalks.com)

**Malaysia Airlines** flies non-stop from Kuala Lumpur (KUL) to Bangalore (BLR)

PHOTO: SREEREMA BANOO



(Left) Brandenburg Gate lit up in colourful lights; (below) fragments of the graffiti-covered Berlin Wall

## BERLIN, GERMANY

Germany's largest city, Berlin is best known for its historical associations as the German capital, for its lively nightlife, many museums, palaces, and varied architecture, from medieval buildings near Alexanderplatz, to the modern glass and steel structures at Potsdamer Platz.

**Walk the talk** There can be no better way to take in the city's main sights than by hitting the Discover Berlin walking trail. The four-hour walking tour, conducted in English, covers all the main sights in the Mitte, the city's historical centre.

**What you'll see** Aside from important landmarks such as the Brandenburg Gate and the Berlin Wall, you'll also find out who built the Berlin Wall, where successful escapes were made over the Wall as well as see what's left of the Wall. The walk will also take you to Checkpoint Charlie, the most famous Berlin Wall crossing point between East and West Germany during the Cold War. No introduction to Berlin would be complete without a stop at Potsdamer Platz, the once no-man's land that is today the commercial hub

of 21st century Berlin.

**Why we like it** The guides' superb storytelling skills weave the themes of Prussian, Imperial, Nazi, Cold War and 21st century Berlin into a detailed narrative that will keep you enthralled throughout the tour. Visitors come away from the tours more informed of the city's complex and fascinating history, and often with a deeper appreciation of what its people have had to undergo over the years.

**Highlights** Stand above Hitler's bunker (you'll find out why there's nothing left to see of this or any other Nazi leader's shelter), walk through the new Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, and discover how and why Berlin was divided after the Second World War.

**Plus** Founded in 1993, Original Berlin

Walks is among the most highly regarded and popular sightseeing tours in Europe for independent travellers. Its newest public tour is its Nest of Spies tour that was launched in 2006, covering all of Berlin's murkier 20th century past, especially the Cold War years. For the last 10 years the company has also been offering tours of the memorial at the former concentration camp of Sachsenhausen, just outside Berlin in the town of Oranienburg.

**Original Berlin Walks Daily tours 10am and 2.30pm (April through October) and 10am (November through March) Cost EUR12 (EUR10 for under 26) [www.berlinwalks.de](http://www.berlinwalks.de)**



(Clockwise from left) The Leonard P Zakim Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge; a statue of John Harvard at Harvard University; colourful town houses

## BOSTON, USA

Boston's narrow, twisting roads that make it such a headache for drivers means that the city's sights are best seen, explored and enjoyed on foot. Founded in America's Bicentennial year of 1976, the non-profit organisation Boston By Foot has been taking visitors and residents on walking tours of particular neighbourhoods; focusing on themes that showcase the city's historical and architectural heritage.

**Walk the talk** The most popular walk, and the one most enjoyed by first-time visitors to Boston is the Heart of the Freedom Trail. The 90-minute walk is said to be the perfect introduction to Boston, beginning from the city's establishment in 1630 to its development over the next 300 years. The story of Boston begins with its founding as a Puritan settlement,

continues through the American Revolution and the growth of commercial Boston, to the present day.

**What you'll see** On this walk, you'll have an opportunity to experience Boston's history through its architectural treasures. From the protests of Samuel Adams and James Otis, the Boston

Massacre and the Boston Tea Party, to the liberation of Boston in 1776 by General Washington and his army, the Heart of The Freedom Trail takes you to the sites and tells the stories that led to American independence. Longer Freedom Trail tours can also be arranged on request.

**Why we like it** Small intimate groups, usually 15 people or less, led by trained volunteer guides visit 15 designated Freedom Trail sites, including Faneuil Hall, the Old State House, King's Chapel, Old South Meeting House and the site of the first public school in America.

**Highlights** Every Independence Day (July 4) there's Footloose On The Freedom Trail, a three-hour tour exploring the entire



Freedom Trail where you will see the honouring of John Hancock and Samuel Adams and listen to the reading of the Declaration of Independence at the Old State House.

**Plus** Each year, Boston By Foot introduces new, special tours, called Tours of the Month, of Boston's neighbourhoods, including Ashmont Hill and the Charles River Basin. One of its most popular tours, newly added to the regular schedule, is The Dark Side of Boston, focusing on the darker side of the history of Boston's North End, including historic outbreaks of influenza and the Great Molasses Flood. ☞

**Boston By Foot Daily tours at 10am and 2pm Saturdays and Sundays (May through October) Cost USD12 per person [www.bostonbyfoot.org](http://www.bostonbyfoot.org)**