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Lalitha Mahal Palace Hotel, Mysuru, India



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FILMI ESCAPES in KARNATAKA

MOVIES • CULTURE • LOCATIONS

This guide is researched and written by
Shruti Indira Lakshminarayana



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FOREWORD

Lights, Camera, Action and Travel



SHIVARAJKUMAR

Travel inspires movies, and movies inspire travel. And that's why popular films, shot in beautiful locales across Karnataka, set serious travel goals. Iconic Kannada, Bollywood and international movies have made the state a hub for travellers seeking interesting destinations.

Travelling is not only among the biggest perks of being an actor but an integral part of my career. Karnataka has something for everyone and is extremely camera friendly. Even in this age of CGI domination, nothing can ever match the beauty that awaits you at the actual locations. From David Lean's *Passage to India* and Jackie Chan's *The Myth*, Karnataka has long been a part of celluloid magic.

Hit Kannada films have helped transform many hidden travel gems into popular tourist destinations. Yana in Uttara Kannada, which was an unexplored destination, became an incredibly popular tourist spot following the release of *Nammoora Mandara Hoove* (1997). Parts of my father, Dr Rajkumar's film, *Ondu Muttina Kathe* (1987) were also filmed in Yana. I had visited the sets to meet the renowned Shankar Nag, the director. The trek to Yana was strenuous, and my father decided to spend the night in the caves where they were shooting instead of going back. It was a chilly night, but we made the most of it by talking the night away over a satisfying menu of local delicacies.

Food is a big part of any travel experience, and I cultivated my taste for local cuisine with my father. He was, in fact, partial to food prepared in small local eateries and hotels. He felt that the firewood and manual stone grinders used to prepare dishes gave them their distinct flavour. His weakness was the dosa and coconut chutney in Mahadevpura near Mysuru, which was a must-have whenever he was filming there. This apart, Hanumanthu Hotel's mutton pulav, dosa from Mylari or the well-blended, spicy sambar served in Mysuru, were all distinct tastes and aromas he enjoyed.

Mysuru and its surrounds like Mandya and Srirangapatna are a food lover's paradise, and are also home to pilgrimage and heritage sites and green spaces. The view from the top of Chamundi Hills, where the Sri Chamundeshwari Temple is located, offers splendid panoramas of the city. The climb up the hill is a photographer's delight. You can spot both nature lovers and fitness enthusiasts around the Kukkarahalli Kere Lake, which also has a jogger's track. The regal majesty of the Mysore Palace that I visited after watching the film *Mayura* (1975), will leave you impressed. For a vibrant experience, though, visit the palace during the Dasera festivities in autumn.

St Mary's Island in Udupi and the Sigandur Temple, which can be reached by taking a boat ride on the backwaters of the Sharavati, are scenic spots that you can see in films like *America America* (1995) and *Kavacha* (2019). For my father, however, Muthathi, where we shot together for *Shiva Mecchida Kannappa* (1988), remained an all-time favourite location. In fact, he got the name Mutthuraju from the Muthathi temple deity.

Turn the pages of this book and journey through the many worlds, both on celluloid and in real life, that Karnataka offers the traveller in you.

The writer is a leading Kannada film actor.

A scene from *Kavacha* captures the rustic charms of Karnataka



Karnataka Calling

Karnataka's varied topography of hills and valleys, beaches and heritage sites is as much a star in Kannada films as any of its actors. The scenic destinations in the state have inspired Indian and international filmmakers as well. Movie-inspired tourism is here to stay, and you can find both the adventure of travel and the magic of movies in Karnataka.

TRAVELS WITH KANNADA FILMS

In the late 1960s, director Puttana Kanagal (p18) first took Kannada films out of the studios and set them in inspiring locales. *Samskara* (1970), in which playwright, theatre and film actor Girish Karnad acted was shot in and around the temple town, Sringeri, in the Western Ghats and remains a travel hotspot. The hit television series *Malgudi Days* (1987) was filmed in Agumbe (p47). Jog Falls nearby, featured in *Jeevana Chaitra* (1992) and *Mungaru Male* (2006), showed the falls from an aerial view for the first time in Kannada films.

Girish Kasaravalli, a giant of Kannada cinema, set his films in beautiful locations. *Ghatashradha* (1977) was set in Theerthahalli, *Dweepa* (2002) had the River Sharavati as the backdrop, *Gulabi Talkies* (2008) was filmed in coastal Karnataka and *Thayi Saheba* (1997) in Rabakavi.

Dweepa is set by the River Sharavati



A heritage walk with 'Golden Star' Ganesh in '99

LOCATION GOALS

Janumada Jodi (1996) was set in Mahadevpura near Mysuru. The film was such a massive hit that industry insiders called it a lucky charm for movies. Sunil Kumar Desai's *Namoora Mandara Hoove* (1997), Nagathihalli Chandrashekar's *America America* (1995), Rajendra Singh Babu *Bandhana* (1984), Sheshadri's *Bettada Jeeva* (2011), and Yograj Bhat's *Mungaru Male* (2006) all featured Karnataka's inspiring travel locations. *Bayalu Daari* (1976), *Paramathma* (2011), *Antha* (1981) and *Sharapanjara* (1971) showed the beauty of Chikkamagaluru (p34), Sakleshpur (p36) and Coorg (p32). Heritage sites in Hampi. Badami caves were the settings for *Belli Kaalungura* (1992) and *Veera Madakari* (2009); Mysuru, Chamundi Hills, KRS royal palace were used in *Nenapirali* (2005) and *Mayura* (1975); and Karnataka's sanctuaries and waterfalls can be spotted in films like *Nagarahole* (1977) and *Mynaa* (2013). Uttara Kannada has been featured in films like *Mastigudi* (2017) and *Raate* (2015). Last but not the least, the capital Bengaluru (p12) has been a backdrop for many Kannada hits including *Pallavi Anupallavi* (1983), *U-Turn* (2016) and *Anand* (1986).

TRAVELLING TASTES

While many of the stars of 'Sandalwood' or Kannada film world are ardent foodies (p28), food-themed films like *Oggarane* (2014) have paid homage to its rich cuisine. Traditional eateries and historic cafes and smart restaurants add to Karnataka's culinary variety.

Need to Know



Karnataka offers many camera-friendly spots for moviemakers

WHEN TO GO

October – March (high season): The coolest months are the best to explore the state, with moderate temperatures in the range of 11°C–28°C. It is the

i Invitation to filmmakers

According to the Karnataka Film Tourism Policy, 2018, the state has announced financial assistance to filmmakers whose work highlight the tourist destinations across the state. The idea is to encourage filmmakers to use popular tourist hubs as filming locations and highlight the culture and heritage of 319 designated tourism destinations across Karnataka. Care will be taken to ensure that sensitive areas like sanctuaries and heritage monuments remain protected.

best weather to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors. You will need a light jacket or shawl as nights can get chilly.

April – May (low season): Even in these warmest months, the hilly areas are pleasant to visit. You can avail of good offers if you book early.

June – September (mid-season): During the monsoons, the incessant rains may curtail sightseeing, but you can enjoy the scenic landscapes from the comfort of a resort.

ACCOMMODATION & EATING

Accommodation: Ranges used in the book:
₹₹₹ over ₹5000; ₹₹ between ₹2000–5000; ₹ under ₹2000

Eating: Ranges used in the book include:
₹₹₹ over ₹500; ₹₹ between ₹200–500; ₹ under ₹200

i Quick Facts

LANGUAGES

The main language spoken in Karnataka is Kannada, but travellers can get around easily with Hindi and English. Tamil and Malayalam from neighbouring states are also spoken.

MONEY

ATMs of major private and state-owned banks can be found in the cities, but if you're travelling to the smaller towns and villages, it is recommended you carry cash as ATMs may be available in a few hubs only. Most hotels allow card payment, and it's best to book ahead.

INTERNET ACCESS

Mid to high-end hotels offer free wi-fi with varying degrees of speed and efficacy. In remote locations, the hotels and guesthouses may not provide Internet access.

MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

Providers such as Airtel, Vodafone and Jio offer 3G and 4G services throughout the state, except in remote locations where the signal may be weak and sporadic.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Registered tourism offices are all over the state, with the main ones in Bengaluru: The Department of Tourism (the Government of Karnataka) and Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation. Visit www.karnatakaturism.org and www.kstddc.co for more details.



BENGALURU, MYSURU & AROUND

Why Go?

Cosmopolitan Bengaluru is an exciting amalgam of sports, arts and the homegrown Kannada film industry. Mayor Muthanna (1969), Pallavi Anupallavi (1983), Aptharakshaka and Super (2010) were set here. Neighbouring Mysuru's talent pool includes Puttana Kanagal, Rajendra Singh Babu, Vishnuvardhan, Ashwath, Darshan, Yash, MP Shankar and hit movies like Bandhana (1984), Janumada Jodi (1996), Bhuddivanta (2008) and Kirik Party (2016). Mandya is a favourite movie locale too.

i Quick Facts

GETTING THERE & AROUND

BENGALURU

Kempegowda International Airport (www.bengaluruairport.com) and Bengaluru's train station (www.bangalorecityrailwaystation.in) connect to the city. Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC; www.ksrtc.in), taxis, private cabs and autos are good ways to move around the city, and also the efficient metro network.

MYSURU

A well-oiled network of trains connects Mysuru to other parts

of the state. KSRTC city bus tours, cabs and autos are a convenient ways to get to Mandya.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1–3 Explore Bengaluru with heritage walks with a halt at a Soul Sante and pubbing in the evenings.

Day 4–6 Halt at Channapatna, Srirangapatna en route to Mysuru, and visit Mandya and its surrounds.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

September – March

The Mysore Palace glows at dusk



Bengaluru's streetscape in the racy road drama *U-turn*

Sights

BENGALURU

Rangoli Metro Art Centre

MG Road's two-tiered pathway, along the 500m stretch just below the metro, is dotted with a gallery, shops, children's play area, and an artisans' hub.

www.rmac.bmrc.co.in. Boulevard MG Rd; 10am–7pm


FILMI TAKE MG ROAD RULES

The thrilling chase in **Lockup Death** (1994) was filmed at MG Road. The bank heist in **Nishkarsha** (1993) was shot at Manipal Centre. Chinnaswamy Cricket Stadium nearby popped up in a song in **Bannada Gejje** (1990). Rakesh Maiya's short film **Namma Metro** (2019) showed Bengaluru Metro, a part of MG Road's identity.

Bangalore Palace

The private residence of the Wodeyars, erstwhile maharajas of the state, the Bangalore Palace preserves a slice of bygone royal splendour. Still the residence of the current maharaja, an audio guide provides a detailed explanation of the building, and you can marvel at the lavish interiors and galleries featuring hunting memorabilia, family photos and a collection of portraits.

Palace Rd; Indian/foreigner ₹230/460, mobile/camera/video ₹285/685/1485; 10.30am–5.30pm

 **FILMI TAKE A ROYAL SHOT** **Hrudaya Sangama** (1972), starring Kannada thespian Rajkumar, showed the palace interiors. Vishnuvardhan's horror hit, **Aphamitra** (2004) and **Shanti Kranti** (1991) featured the palace's manicured outdoors.

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath

This is a superb gallery with a wide range of Indian and international art and Mysuru-style paintings and folk and Asian tribal art and paintings of Russian master Nicholas Roerich. www.karnatakachitrakalaparishath.com; Kumarakrupa Rd; ₹50; 10am–7.30pm Mon–Sat

Cubbon Park

Cubbon Park is a 120-hectare garden housing the Gothic-style State Central Library. On Sundays, there are concerts, fun runs and even a farmers market. The Indo-Saracenic architecture around the park includes

the Vidhana Soudha (Dr Ambedkar Rd) or the legislative chambers of the state government, and the neo-classical Attara Kacheri (high court). These make for arresting photo backdrops. www.horticulture.kar.nic.in/cubbon.htm; Kasturba Rd

 **FILMI TAKE GREEN CITY** Cubbon Park and Lal Bagh are delightful movie settings. In Mani Ratnam's **Pallavi Anupallavi** (1983), the chartbuster **Naguva Nayana** showed the laidback beauty of Bengaluru. *The song Tuvvi Tuvvi* in the film **Anand** (1986) showcased the city's landmarks like Central Library, Cubbon Park and the **Bangalore University Campus**.

Snapshot: The Bollywood connection

Many Bollywood films have been based in Karnataka's many locations. **Coolie** (1983) was filmed across Bengaluru. **Utsav** (1984), directed by Girish Karnad, was set in Udipi. **Pushpakana Vimana** (1987) featured the ITC Windsor Hotel. **Raja Hindustani** (1996) was filmed in Balmuri Falls, near Mysuru. **Guru** (2007) starring Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was filmed in Melkote and Badami. **Ghajini** (2008) showed the spiffy IT corridors of the city. Aamir Khan was goofing around the IIM Bengaluru campus in **3 Idiots** (2009). Priyanka Chopra's killer moves in **7 Khoon Maaf** (2011) were set across Kodagu and Mysuru. **Rowdy Rathore** (2012) was filmed across Hampi. **Gori Tere Pyaar Mein** (2013) saw Kareena Kapoor at the Town Hall and Freedom Park.

Bollywood star Deepika Padukone began her career in Kannada films





Bengaluru's night turns edgy in *Lucia*

St Mark's Cathedral

This is an atmospheric cathedral built in 1812 with a distinct domed roof and is based on St Paul's Cathedral, London. Check out the entrance's ornate carvings. www.saintmarks.in; MG Rd

Lalbagh Botanical Gardens

Spread over 96 hectares of landscaped terrain, the expansive Lalbagh Botanical Gardens were laid out in 1760 by the famous ruler Hyder Ali and have amazing centuries-old trees and a diverse species of plants. You can take a guided tour with Bengaluru Walks (p27). www.horticulture.kar.nic.in/lalbagh.htm; Lalbagh Rd; ₹10; 6am–7pm

FILMI TAKE BANGALORE BLUES
Bengaluru's charming

neighbourhoods like Malleshwaram show up in films like *Nodi Swamy Navirodu Heege* (1983) and Guruprasad's hit *Eddelu Manjunatha* (2009). *Kempirve* (2017) showcased the antique homes of Basavangudi and Chamrajpet. The romantic boat ride in *Kirik Party* (2016) and portions of *Neer Dose* (2016) were set in Sankey Tank.

Krishnarajendra Market

For a taste of traditional, urban India, dive into the bustling Krishnarajendra Market. Weave your way around this market past fresh produce, piles of vibrant dyes, spices and copperware. The colourful flower market in the centre is the highlight. City Market; Silver Jubilee Park Rd; 6am–10pm

FILMI TAKE ROAD THRILLS

The dangerous traffic junction, Double Road flyover, featured in Pawan Kumar's *U Turn* (2016). Big hit *Lucia* (2013), a zany thriller set in Bengaluru, was filmed across Peenya, JC Road, JPNagar, Hanumantha Nagar and Chamrajpet.

Bangalore Fort

This ruined 1761 fort is a peaceful escape from the chaotic city surrounds, with its manicured lawn and stone pink walls. The fort remained in use until its destruction by the British in 1791, and today

the gate and bastions are the only structures remaining. There's a small dungeon here, and a Ganesh temple.

FILMI TAKE CITYSCAPE

Nodana Bengaluru song filmed on the iconic '90s double decker bus of Bengaluru in *Yeshwanth* (2005) takes the viewers on a mini tour of the city. Former CM of Karnataka, Ramkrishna Hegde acted in *Marana Mrudanga* (1992) set in the city. Rajkumar-Bharathi's *Mayor Muthanna* (1969) featured the famous City Corporation building. Bengaluru Race Course, a city landmark, pops up in *Shiva* (2012).



Snapshot: Ramanagara and around

Ramanagara Hill Some 50km from Bengaluru, the rocky hills of Ramanagara served as the lair of the dangerous dacoit, Gabbar Singh in the iconic film *Sholay* (1975). Upendra's *Topiwala* (2013) had a cheeky spoof set in the same spot. Egelton Golf Resort in Bidadi and the Innovative Film City in the vicinity, have also drawn filmmakers.

Nandi Hills Note its misty charms in *Raja Huli* (2013) and *Srinivasa Kalyana* (2017).

Kolar Gold Fields The sooty grittiness of this location has been mined for hits like *Power* (2014), *Airavata* (2015), *Mufti* (2017) and *KGF* (2018).

Tumkuru Devarayanadurga and the Channarayana Durga Hill have showed up in *Bangarada Jinke* (1980) and *Gandu Berunda* (1984).

Topiwala has a short spoof on Gabbar Singh





Action film *KGF*'s interiors were filmed in Bengaluru's studios

Tipu Sultan's Palace

The elegant Indo-Islamic summer residence of the ruler Tipu Sultan is notable for its teak pillars and ornamental frescoes.

Albert Victor Rd; Indian/foreigner ₹15/200, video ₹25; 8.30am–5.30pm

Bull Temple

Built by Kempegowda in the 16th-century Dravidian style, the Bull Temple contains a huge stone monolith of Nandi (Shiva's bull). This is one of Bengaluru's most atmospheric temples and is located about 1km south of Tipu Sultan's Palace.

Basavanagudi; Bull Temple Rd, 7am–8.30pm

FILMI TAKE: TEMPLE TALKIES

Malleshwaram's temples like Kaadu Malleshwara, Nandi Theertha and Lakshminarasimha are considered lucky for mahurats or the auspicious start of filming. Many launch pujas take place at the Dodda Ganapathy Temple in Basavanagudi, the Anjeneya Temple in Mahalakshmi Layout, Rajajrajeshwari Temple in Rajeshwari Nagar and Someshwara Temple in Ulsoor.

HAL Aerospace Museum & Heritage Centre

For a peek into India's aeronautical history, visit this wonderful museum past the old airport, where you can see some of the aircrafts designed by HAL. Interesting exhibits include a MIG-21, homegrown models such as the Marut and Kiran, and a vintage Canberra bomber.

www.hal-india.com; Airport-Varthur Rd; ₹50, camera/video ₹50/75; 9am–5pm Tue–Sun

MYSURU

Mysuru Palace

Among the grandest of India's royal buildings, this is the seat of the Wodeyar maharajas. The lavish Indo-Saracenic interior is a kaleidoscope of stained glass, mirrors and glittering colours. Every Sunday and national holiday, from 7pm to 7.30pm, the palace is illuminated by nearly 100,000 light bulbs that accentuate its majestic profile against the night.

Maharaja's Palace; www.mysorepalace.gov.

Snapshot: Mysuru in the movies

Mysuru's wide roads, the clock tower, St Philomena's Church, KR Circle, the old Town Hall, traditional vegetable markets, DD Urs Road, KR Circle, Mysuru Golf Course, the railway station, the university, Chamundi Hills and Kukkarahalli Lake all make up a colourful landscape for films. The hit song *Kurak Kukkralli Kere* from *Nenapirali* (2005), the films *Aramane* (2008), *Milana* (2007), *Circus* (2009), *Premism* (2010), *Laali* (1997), *Veera Parampare* (2010), *Uyalle* (1964), *Rajaratha* (2018), *KGF* (2018), *Sharavani Subramanya* (2013) all showed Mysuru's unending appeal.

in; Purandara Dasa Rd; Indian/foreigner/child under 10 incl audio guide ₹40/200/free; 10am–5.30pm

FILMI TAKE ROYAL TRAPPINGS

Period drama *Mayura* (1975) headlined by Rajkumar was the only film that was shot inside the opulent Mysuru Palace, including a fleeting shot of the magnificent Durbar Hall. The palace exteriors have featured in the film, *Chandra* (2013).

Devaraja Market

Dating from Tipu Sultan's reign, this lively bazaar has local traders selling items such as flower garlands, spices and conical piles of kumkum, all of which makes for some great photo ops and shopping.

Sayyaji Rao Rd; 6am–8.30pm

FILMI TAKE: PREMIER STUDIO

The Premier Studio (demolished in 2018) was founded in the 1950s by M N Basavarajaiah. Directors like Ranga, veteran actors like Vishnuvardhan, Saroja Devi, Sivaji Ganesan, Dharmendra, Rajnikanth MGR and Jayalalitha have all worked

here. In 1989, a fire broke out during the shooting of Sanjay Khan's telefilm, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*, in Premier Studios in Mysuru.

Jaganmohan Palace

Built in 1861, this stunning palace just west of the Mysuru Palace now houses the Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery. It has a huge collection of Indian paintings, including works by noted artist Raja Ravi Varma,

The Sword of Tipu Sultan was filmed at the iconic Premier Studio



traditional Japanese art and some rare musical instruments.

Jaganmohan Palace Rd; adult/child ₹120/30; 8.30am–5pm

Rail Museum

This open-air museum's main exhibit is the Mysuru maharani's saloon, a wood-panelled beauty dating from 1899, which provides an insight into the stylish way in which the royals once rode the railways. There are also steam engines, locomotives, carriages and a toy train.

KRS Rd; adult/child ₹15/10, camera/video ₹20/30; 9.30am–6pm

Jayalaksmi Vilas Mansion Museum Complex

On the university campus west of town, this museum specialises in folklore, and you can see artefacts,

stone tablets and sculptures, including rural costumes and a wooden puppet of the 10-headed demon king Ravana. The building was originally built as a mansion for Princess Jayalakshmi Ammani, the eldest daughter of Maharaja Chamaraja Wodeyar. Mysore University Campus; 10am–1pm & 3–5pm Tue–Sun

Chamundi Hill

This 1062m hill is crowned by the Sri Chamundeswari Temple, offering spectacular views of the city below. Queues are long on weekends, so visit during the week. One-third of the way down is a 5m-high statue of Nandi that was carved out of solid rock in 1659.

www.chamundeswaritemple.kar.nic.in; 7am–2pm, 3.30–6pm & 7.30–9pm

Snapshot: Rajnikanth



Superstar Rajnikanth held his first job as a bus conductor in the Bangalore Transport Corporation. He dabbled in Kannada theatre and movies early on, such as Puttana Kanagal's new wave *Katha Sangama* (1975), parts of which were filmed in Mysuru's iconic Premier Studios. The town remains a sweet spot

and showed up in his films like *Thalapathi* (1991), *Muthu* (1995), *Baba* (2002), *Guru Sishyan* (1988), *Padayappa* (1999) and *Lingaa* (2014). *Chandramukhi* (2005) was filmed in the Helipad, *Maaveeran* (1986) in Lalitha Mahal, fight sequences in *Rajadhi Raja* (1989) on Nanjangud Road and *Polladhavan* (1980) near Chamundi Hills.

Detour: Chitradurga



Cut-out drama on the *Paddehuli* set in Chitradurga

Located 200km from Bengaluru, Chitradurga has hills, rocky boulders, caves and historic forts. It has some 18 temples, including the notable Hidimbeshwara temple. Chamayya meshtru, Ramachari, Alamelu, Margret, Jaeela – Kannada movie buffs can't forget these characters and, "Yak bul bul matadakilwa?", from *Naagarahaavu* (1972) that made Chitradurga a popular tourist hotspot or the period drama *Kallarali Hoovagi* (2006) that featured the Chandravalli caves.

Mysore Zoo

This is a well-managed zoo set in pretty gardens. Highlights include white tigers, gorillas, giraffes and rhinos. It's situated around 2km south-east of Mysore Palace. <http://mysorezoo.info>; Indiranagar; adult/child Mon–Fri ₹50/20, Sat & Sun ₹60/30, camera ₹20; 8.30am–5.30pm Wed–Mon

FILMI TAKE FORESTS & ZOOS

Gandhada Gudi (1973) on forest conservation, starring Vishnuvardhan and Rajkumar, was set in Kakanakote in Mysuru, as was *Kakanakote* (1976), a film on Kaka Nayaka, the legendary leader of the forest-dwelling Jenu Kuruba tribe. *Mrugaalaya* (1986) featured the Mysore Zoo.

Detour: Mandya and around

Srirangapatna (16km from Mysuru) On an island straddling the River Kaveri, this town was once the seat of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan's power and the capital of Mysuru state; see its glorious history come alive at the sound and light show (7–8pm) held every day at the fort. Another great option is a heritage walk, such as the 12-hour Tipu tour conducted by Wander Trails (www.wandertrails.com). One of the most impressive monuments is Daria Daulat Bagh, Tipu's intricately decorated summer palace. The Persian-style gumbaz (the resting place of Tipu and his father) and the Indo-Islamic Jamia Masjid are other highlights. The town is also famous for the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, a legacy of the Ganga rulers. The Ranganathaswamy Temple or 'Mandya Ranga' is one of the holiest Vishnu shrines near the Kaveri River.

The best place to stay (or stop for snacks) is the aptly named Mayura River View, a river-front KSTDC property.

FILMI TAKE RURAL ROMANCES

Over 200 movies have been filmed in Mahadevpura village. A Chicago University's study on 'an ideal Indian village' was based on **Janumada Jodi** (1996). Locals of Nodekoppalu acted in **Thithi** (2016), and now tourists seek selfies with village centenarian 'Century' Gowda.

Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary The 'Pakshi Kashi' of Karnataka is the largest bird sanctuary in the state with over 170 avian species.

Krishna Sagar Dam & Brindavan Gardens The lake and dam near the confluence of the River Kaveri are popular spots for picnickers.

FILMI TAKE FALLING IN LOVE

The climax in **Bhootayyana Maga Ayyu** (1974) was in Shivanasamudra Falls. Thespian Rajkumar loved this spot for the piping hot bajji and tea sold by villagers nearby. Vishnuvardhan's flood of love for heroine Suhashini is compared to the Krishna Sagar Dam in **Bandhana** (1984). An early hit was the song at Brindavan Gardens from **Krishna Leela** (1946) with many more hit numbers to follow.

Melukote An hour's drive (51km) from Srirangapatna brings you to the 12th-century Cheluvanarayana Temple and the Yoganarasimha Temple.

FILMI TAKE TEMPLE TOWNS

Srirangapatna, Sangama, and Gosai Ghat feature in **Hosabelaku** (1982) and **Katari Veera Surasundarangi** (2012). Melukote features in **Chalisuva Modagalu** (1982), **Gaalipata** (2008), **Bullet Basaya** (2015), **Anjani Putra** (2017), **Seetharama Kalyana** (2019) and other movies.



Ayogya shows Mandya's folksy charms

BENGALURU

 Accommodation


ITC Gardenia

HOTEL ₹₹₹

 080 2211 9898; www.itchotels.in; 1, Residency Rd, Ashok Nagar; d starting from ₹24500, incl breakfast, taxes additional Located in the commercial heart of Bengaluru, ITC Gardenia offers an uber luxury stay and services for travellers, including premium wellness, dining and conferences options. Along with soothing interiors and carefully curated decor, ITC is also focussed on responsible luxury practices.

Leela Palace

HOTEL ₹₹₹

 080 25211234; www.theleela.com; 23 HAL Airport Rd; s/d from ₹18,800/19,300 Modelled on Mysuru Palace, the

The ITC Gardenia is in the heart of Bengaluru

astounding Leela isn't actually a palace (it was built in 2003), but it's fit for royalty. Gleaming marble, luxuriant carpets, regal balconies and period features are done superbly, as are its beautiful gardens, classy restaurants, bars and boutique galleries. It's within the Leela Galleria complex, 5km east of MG Road next to a golf course.

Taj West End

HERITAGE HOTEL ₹₹₹

 080 66605660; www.tajhotels.com; Racecourse Rd; s/d incl breakfast from ₹12,600/13,700 Spread over 8 hectares of stunning tropical gardens, the West End flashbacks to 1887, when it was first established as a base for British officers, and it still oozes colonial class. Dining options include Blue Ginger for Vietnamese cuisine and Masala Klub for superb Indian food.

The Oberoi

HOTEL ₹₹₹

 080 2558 5858; www.oberoihotels.com; 37-39, MG Road, Yellappa Garden, Yellappa Chetty Layout, Sivanchetti Gardens; d starting from ₹13250, incl breakfast, taxes additional A classic address with exemplary rooms fronted by private balconies overlooking greens, al fresco dining options and a patio bar, the Oberoi has been a favourite option for travellers for decades.


Casa Piccola Cottage

HERITAGE HOTEL ₹₹₹

 080 22990337; www.casacottage.com; 2 Clapham Rd; r incl breakfast from ₹4400 Casa Piccola's atmospheric rooms offer a tranquil sanctuary. Its personalised rooms are cosy and the garden boasts papaya and avocado trees.

JüStä MG Road

BOULIQUE HOTEL ₹₹₹

 080 41135555; www.justahotels.com/mg-road-bangalore; 21/14 Craig Park Layout, MG Rd; r/ste incl breakfast ₹3520/4840 This stylish and intimate arty hotel has slick and spacious rooms with Japanese-inspired motifs throughout. It's well located with a metro station and shopping malls close by.

Shangri-La

HOTEL ₹₹₹

 080 4512 6100; www.shangri-la.com; No.56, 6B, Palace Rd, Abshot Layout, Vasanth Nagar; d starting from ₹7875 onwards, incl breakfast, taxes additional Each of Shangri-La's 397 rooms are fitted with the classiest amenities and comforts so guests can truly enjoy a stay here. It lies at the



Posh comforts at the Oberoi in Bengaluru

cup of the historical heart and the commercial centre of the city. This can be best be seen from the rooftop bar of the hotel which towers the area around. In truly 5-star fashion, Shangri-La has left no stone unturned towards facilities like a wellness spa, swimming pool and dining options.

Raddisson Blu

HOTEL ₹₹₹

 0821 7101234; www.radissonhotels.com; 1, MG Road, Indiranagar Extension, Fort Mohalla; d starting from ₹8500, incl of breakfast, excl taxes; also incl certain facilities. In tune with the heritage vibe of the city, Radisson Blu has classic domes and arches that house contemporary luxuries for guests. Modern rooms, in-house dining options, a swimming pool and a spa



take you into the folds of luxury, while keeping you well within close quarters of the bustling markets, heritage hoods and ample sightseeing spots.

La Marvella HOTEL ₹₹₹

☎0804333 5333; www.lamarvella.com; 14th Cross, South End Circle, 2nd Block, Jayanagar; d starting from ₹7184, incl breakfast, taxes additional This luxury boutique hotel from the Sarovar Portico camp offers 5-star services in the Jayanagar neighbourhood of the city. Accessible to the city center and yet tucked away in a relatively quiet area of city, this is a preferred option for many who want premium comfort in their rooms and amenities like a spa, conference room and dining options close at hand

Temple Tree Hotel Wilson Garden HOTEL ₹₹

☎080 46622000; www.templetreehotel.com; 9th Cross Rd, Mavalli; ₹3765–4499

A thali is a treat at Mavalli Tiffin Rooms

Ticking the right contemporary boxes, including hip bathrooms and modish design touches, this sleek hotel won't fail to impress. Garden-view rooms have great balconies, and there's a rooftop restaurant and a small gym.

Villa Camelot HOTEL ₹₹

☎9886053043; www.villa-camelot.com; Villa Camelot, 94/95, 4th Cross, ECC Road, Whitefield; d starting from ₹2400, incl breakfast, taxes additional Immaculate hospitality and privacy are the hallmarks of Villa Camelot, one of the most popular luxury homestays for guests who like a blend of homeliness with their travel. Villa Camelot is located in Whitefield, ideal for business travellers who have offices close by and those who don't want to stay in the bustle of the main city. A number of hip dining options can be accessed from here.

Mass Residency GUESTHOUSE ₹

☎9945091735; massresidency@yahoo.com; 18, 2nd Main Rd, 11th Cross, JP Nagar; r incl breakfast with fan/AC ₹1600/2000 A welcoming guesthouse run by two brothers who are world travellers themselves, this property has comfortable enough rooms. It wins rave reviews for its hospitality and free neighbourhood walking tours.

Eating

Olive Bar and Kitchen MEDITERRANEAN ₹₹₹

☎080 41128400; www.olivebarandkitchen.com; 16 Wood St, Ashoknagar ₹525–795; noon–3.30pm & 7–11pm Olive does an eclectic seasonal menu. Expect Moroccan lamb tagines, prawns pil pil (with garlic and hot peppers) and plenty of veg choices.

Karavalli SEAFOOD ₹₹₹

☎080 66604545; Gateway Hotel, 66 Residency Rd; mains ₹500–1575; 12.30–3pm & 6.30–11.30pm For the finest Indian seafood, look no further. Choose from fiery Mangalorean fish dishes, spicy Kerala-style prawns, crab milagu in a pepper masala and superb lobster balchao (cooked in a spicy sauce; ₹1495).

Fava MEDITERRANEAN ₹₹₹

www.fava.in; UB City, 24 Vittal Mallya Rd; mains ₹350–850; 11am–11pm Dine al fresco on Fava's canopy-covered deck, feasting on large plates of dishes like duck leg confit, fish



Lemongrass ginger mojito at Fatty Bao kebabs or something from the organic menu.

Sunny's ITALIAN ₹₹₹

☎080 41329366; www.sunnysbangalore.in; 50 Lavelle Rd; mains ₹350–730; 12.30–11.30pm A well-established fixture on Bengaluru's restaurant scene, classy Sunny's has a lovely terrace for al fresco dining. On the menu, you'll find authentic thin-crust pizzas, homemade pastas and some of the best desserts in the city.

Fatty Bao ASIAN ₹₹₹

☎080 44114499; www.facebook.com/thefattybao; 610 12th Main Rd, Indiranagar; mains ₹380–650; noon–3pm & 7–10.30pm This hip rooftop restaurant serves up Asian hawker





Indian Kitchen MODERN INDIAN ₹₹₹

☎080 25598995; 86 Oak Shot Pl, MG Rd; ₹250–825; noon–3pm & 7pm–1am A destination restaurant that's a big hit with the city's bright young things. The menu highlights include the chingri malai curry (Bengali-style curry with prawns and coconut) and chicken gassi (in a spicy tamarind sauce). It doubles as a bar, and has a good selection of beers and cocktails.

Koshy's Bar & Restaurant INDIAN ₹₹

39 St Mark's Rd; mains ₹160–350; 9am–11pm; Serving the city's intelligentsia for decades, this buzzy, decidedly old-school resto-pub is where you can put away tasty north Indian dishes and mugs of beer. Between lunch and dinner, it's 'short eats' only (colonial-era snacks like chicken liver on toast).

Church Street Social GASTROPUB ₹₹

www.socialoffline.in; 46/1 Church St; mains ₹170–350; 9am–11pm Mon–Thu, to 1am Fri & Sat Bringing hipsterism to Bengaluru, this industrial warehouse-style space serves cocktails in beakers. The menu features breakfasts, meze platters, southern fried chicken burgers and 'gunpowder' calamari.

Mavalli Tiffin Rooms SOUTH INDIAN ₹

MTR; ☎080 22220022; www.mavallitiffinrooms.com; 14 Lalbagh Rd; snacks from ₹50, meals from ₹130; 6.30–11am & 12.30–9.30pm, closed Mon

Infinita is a cool cafe for tea lovers

food to a crowd of fashionable young foodies in a vibrant setting. There's ramen, Thai curries and Malaysian street food, as well as Asian-inspired cocktails such as lemongrass mojitos.

Ebony MULTI CUISINE ₹₹₹

☎080 41783333; www.ebonywithaview.com; 13th Fl, Barton Centre, 84 MG Rd; mains ₹300–560; 12.30–3pm & 7–11pm Besides the delectable menu of Indian, Thai and European dishes, take in the romantic views from the rooftop and a cool lounge zone buzzing with Bengaluru's cocktail-sipping classes on weekends.

A legendary name in south Indian food, this super-popular eatery has had Bengaluru eating out of its hands since 1924. Get your fix of idlis and dosas and other popular south Indian tiffin items, finished up by frothy filter coffee.

Infinita CAFE ₹₹

www.infinita.in; 2 Shah Sultan Complex, Cunningham Rd; pot of tea from ₹100; 11am–11pm This smart yet homely place has an impressive menu including traditional teas from the best estates and a few fancy selections. Their food (soups, salads, smoked chicken wings) are popular.

Empire NORTH INDIAN ₹₹

www.facebook.com/hotelempire; 36 Church St; mains ₹120–240; 11am–11pm The famous Empire is all about authentic, inexpensive tandoori and meat dishes in unpretentious

surrounds. There are numerous other branches around the city.

Gramin INDIAN ₹

☎080 41104104; 20, 7th Block, Raheja Arcade, Koramangala; mains ₹136–180; 12.30–11pm There is a wide choice of flavourful rural north Indian fare at this cosy, eclectic all-veg place. Try the excellent range of dals and curries with oven-fresh rotis, accompanied by sweet rose-flavoured lassi.

Khan Saheb INDIAN ₹

www.khansaheb.co; 9A Block, Brigade Rd; rolls from ₹60; noon–11.30pm Famous for its terrific rolls, filled with anything from charcoal-grilled meats and tandoori prawns to paneer and sweetcorn tikka, Khan Saheb is a popular haunt for a quick bite of your favourite roll.

Social is a hipster hangout



Nightlife

13th Floor BAR

13th Fl, Barton Centre, 84 MG Rd; 5–11pm Sun–Thu, to 1am Fri & Sat Forget your superstitions and head up to 13th Floor’s terrace, with all of Bengaluru glittering at your feet. There’s an excellent selection of martini, sangria and mojito combinations.


Dyu Art Cafe CAFE

www.dyuartcafe.yolasite.com; 23 MIG, KHB Colony, Koramangala; 10am–10.30pm An atmospheric cafe-gallery in a leafy neighbourhood with a peaceful courtyard. It does good French press, espresso and

Ramesh Aravind at the iconic Lalitha Mahal Palace Hotel in Prathyartha

iced coffee to go with homemade cakes, sandwiches and mains.

Atta Galatta CAFE

 080 41600677; www.attagalatta.com; 134, KHB Colony, 5th Block, Koramangala; 11am–8.30pm This fine cafe and bakery offers good sandwiches on nutritious bread, and snacks, and also doubles as a bookshop and art venue, hosting readings and performances.

Shiro BAR

www.shiro.co.in; UB City, 24 Vittal Mallya Rd; 12.30–11.30pm Sun–Thu, to 1am Fri & Sat A sophisticated lounge to get sloshed in style, Shiro has elegant interiors. It has good Japanese food and its ‘Special Shiro’ cocktails are the bomb.


MYSURU & MANDYA Accommodation


The Windflower Resorts & Spa LUXURY ₹₹₹

 9901446666; www.thewindflower.com; Survey No. 201/P1, Kedakal Village, Sunkikoppa Hobli, Somwarpet Taluk, Madikeri; d starting ₹14580, incl meals, excl taxes. Built around a woodland area and sprawling coffee plantations, the resort is ideal for being close to nature but still having contemporary luxury facilities. Staying options include studios, suites and plantation bungalows to match every budget and preference for travellers. In-house dining, swimming pool,

nature-based activities and the spa are an added plus.

Lalitha Mahal Palace Hotel LUXURY ₹₹₹


 821 2526100, 2470222; www.lalithamahalpalace.in; Lalitha Mahal Nagar; ₹6000–50,000 This elegant building, overlooking the Chamundi Hills, was built in 1927 and is now a heritage hotel of the state government. The palace wing, with its original furnishings and fittings, gives a sense of splendour.

 **FILMI TAKE LALITHA MAHAL** The striking white Lalitha Mahal Palace doubled as a locale in films like *Bandhana* (1984), *Ranna* (2015), *Sahukara* (2004), and thrillers like *Prathyartha* (1999). *Odahuttidavaru* (1994), starring Rajkumar and Ambareesh had a massive race filmed with 40 bullock carts here.



The Mysore pak is an irresistible sweet treat

Royal Orchid Metropole HERITAGE HOTEL ₹₹₹

 0821 4255566; www.royalorchidhotels.com; 5 Jhansi Lakshmi Bai Rd; s/d incl breakfast from ₹6880/7250 Originally built by the Wodeyars to serve as the

Top Tip: River view



MAYURA RIVER VIEW HOTEL ₹₹
 0823 6252114; www.kstdc.co/hotels; d with fan/AC from ₹2300/3300 The comfy rooms are on a quiet patch of riverbank. Day trippers can pop in for lunch (mains ₹150 to ₹180) with multicuisine options.





Hotel Mayura Silent Shores Resort & Spa

HOTEL ₹₹

☎0821 2402930; www.silentshoresresort.com; BEML Road, Plot No. 85-87, Hootagalli; d starting from ₹5000, incl breakfast, taxes additional Garden and lake view rooms at Silent Shores lie in the lush acres of greenery in Mysuru. The centrally located resort is a veritable oasis in the sightseeing spots of the city, a perfect place to unwind after a long day of traipsing about.

Hoysala

HOTEL ₹₹

☎0821 2426160; www.karnatakaholidays.net; 2 Jhansi Lakshmi Bai Rd; r incl breakfast with fan/AC from ₹1550/2900 Located near the train station, the potential of this beautiful historic building remains unrealised. This government-owned hotel's rooms have plenty of character, and the rates are reasonable.

A suite at the Windflower Resorts & Spa

residence of the maharaja's British guests, this is one of Mysuru's leading heritage hotels. It has 30 rooms oozing historical character, with all mod cons.

✓ Top Tip: Royal Walks



Familiarise yourself with Mysuru's epic history and heritage. It has a range of weekend walks themes like royal history and food walks for immersive experiences. www.royalmysorewalks.com/explore@gullytours

✪ Eating

Tiger Trail

INDIAN ₹₹₹

☎0821 4255566; Royal Orchid Metropole, 5 Jhansi Lakshmi Bai Rd; mains ₹200-650; 7.30-10am, 12.30-3.30pm & 7.30-11pm This sophisticated hotel restaurant cooks up delectable Indian cuisine in a courtyard that twinkles with fairy lights at night. The north Indian dishes are particularly good. It also has a fine lunch buffet.

Parklane Hotel

MULTI CUISINE ₹₹

Parklane Hotel, 2720 Harsha Rd; mains ₹100-160 Mysuru's most social restaurant has outdoor tables lit up moodily by lanterns, and live traditional music. The menu includes delicious regional dishes from across India as well as Chinese and continental options and cold beers.

Poolside at Silent Shores Resort & Spa

🎬 FILMI TAKE FOODIE DELIGHTS

Bollywood veteran Dilip Kumar's visits to Mysuru were never complete without a visit to Guru Sweets to buy his favourite dessert, Mysore Pak. The song *Tinbedakammi* in *Lucia* (2013) describes the cuisine of Mandya. *Oggarane* (2014) starring Prakash Rai was a movie on cooking and food forming strong connections between people.

Cafe Aramane

SOUTH INDIAN ₹

Sayyaji Rao Rd; mains ₹90-110; 8am-10pm In a heritage building, this typically busy south Indian eatery dishes out steaming breakfast platters for Mysuru's office-goers, thalis for lunch (from ₹80) and welcomes them back in the evenings with aromatic filter coffee and a convoy of delicious snacks.





EXPERT RECOMMENDATION

Serving a Karnataka platter

Growing up, she lived in many parts of India, developing multicultural tastes, but award-winning Kannada actor **Shraddha Srinath** is a foodie, who's partial to the heritage cuisine of Karnataka. Here's her sampler of the state's regional specialities.

NORTH KARNATAKA Indulge in a meal of bhakri (rotti, made of rice), ennegayi (deep-fried veggies like brinjal), condiments like pudu (dal/peanut powders to go with rice), chutneys (kempu, coconut, peanuts), saaru (gravy dishes) and mosuru (buttermilk). Desserts sweetened with jaggery are atthrassu, puren holige.

Dharwad, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Belgaum, Bidar, Yadgir, Bagalkot, Raichur, Davanagere, Gadag, Haveri, Koppal, and Bellary

MYSURU & SOUTH KARNATAKA

This region offers whole grains and millets like ragi, jowar and bajra and mixed-rice or anna are a huge hit here. Ragi mudde (ragi dumplings), kosambari (light summer salad), huli (sambar) are delish.

Bengaluru, Mysuru, Tumkuru, Mandya, Hasan, Kolar and Chamrajaganara

UTTARA KANNADA & DAKSHINA

KANNADA Karnataka's coastal regions are a burst of seasonal

seafood delights that include Mangalorean and north Canarese dishes with flavourings of cashews and coconut milk. Crab masala, anjal (fish) fry, patrode (stuffed and steamed colacasia leaves), neer dose and desserts like kotte kadubu made of jaggery and jackfruit, chicken saaru, goli bajje or stuffed buns.

Karwar, Ankola, Kumta, Malnad

KODAGU The cuisine from the cool, hilly regions of Coorg provide a dash of spice and meat, providing heat and distinct flavours. The signature dish is pandi curry (pork curry), koli saaru (chicken curry), bimbale curry (bamboo shoot curry) and nool puttu (rice string hoppers).

Coorg and around

UDUPI This cuisine has put Karnataka on the food map of India and is said to be born from the satvik traditions of the region. Do eat a proper meal at a simple Udupi restaurant off a banana leaf.



Nool puttu or ottu shavige is a popular breakfast item in Karnataka



COORG, CHIKKAMAGALURU & HASSAN

Why Go?

The coffee-growing regions of Karnataka are great for travel, and their scenic beauty has made them a staple in Kannada films. Chikkamagaluru is a popular spot seen in hit films like Bandhana (1984) and Sangliyana (1988). The landscape also lent itself to horror and thrillers like Shhhh! (1993) and Aa Karala Ratri (2018). Filmmakers dig the misty beauty of Sakleshpur and the quaint spots across Hassan. Coorg was the backdrop for Edakallu Guddada Mele (1973), Sharapanjara (1971), and Muthina Hara (1990).

i Quick Facts

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Coorg Buses leave from the KSRTC bus stand for Bengaluru (5–7hr).

Chikkamagaluru Drive down the NH48 (5hr) from Bengaluru and KSRTC buses are plenty (7hr).

Sakleshpur This is 4.5hr drive on the Bangalore–Mangalore (NH75) highway.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1–3 Explore Coorg to include hikes, coffee plantation life and

visiting some key monuments.

Day 4–5 Leave for Sakleshpur (2.5hr) and settle in a plantation stay or hotel; explore Manjarabad Fort and visit curio shops and artisanal coffee spots.

Day 6–7 Arrive at Chikkamagaluru and check-in at an estate homestay and drive around.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

October – March

Travellers and moviemakers are taken in by Coorg's natural beauty



Sights

Chikkamagaluru's misty charms in the movie, *Srinivasa Kalyana*

COORG

Raja's Seat

A well-maintained garden used by the Kodava rulers, west of Madikeri, it offers stunning views of the Coorg Valley below. See the sun descend behind rolling hills in the evenings; after sunset, the musical fountains are switched on.

Fountain show 7pm Mon–Fri, 6.45pm & 7.30pm Sat, Sun festivals

FILMI TAKE KODAGU MOODS

The wedding song *Yavuravva evaa yavuravva* from **Edakallu Guddada Mele** (1973) shows the free spirited Kodavas.

Madikeri Fort & Palace

The original mud fort here was replaced by the present one built by Tipu Sultan. The stone ramparts enclose the palace of the Kodagu rulers, and within the complex is a former church doubling as a museum and a temple.

Museum 10am–5pm; photography not allowed

FILMI TAKE FLOATING CLOUDS

Gaalipata (2008) highlighted the landscape around Madikeri like the breathtaking *Mandalpati*. The film increased the footfall of tourists who landed at *Mandalpati*, called *Mugilupete*, after the film for a walk-in-the-clouds experience.

Omkareshwar Temple

This temple was built by King Lingarajendra in 1820. It is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is located in the heart of Madikeri.

6.30am–12pm, 5pm–8pm; photography not allowed

Abbi Falls

A quick drive beyond Madikeri through cardamom and coffee plantations will bring you to a point little short of the falls. A brief walk down a paved path from here takes you to a hanging bridge opposite the wide cascade of water.

8km from Madikeri

FILMI TAKE FRUITY PASSION

Sharapanjara (1971) featured Madikeri and the famous Coorgi citrus fruit. The song, *Sandeha, megha sandeha* had oranges strewn around the hill slopes.

Royal Tombs

Also called Gadduge, these early 19th-century mausoleums of the Kodava rulers are located just short of the Abbi Falls. Built in the Indo-Saracenic style, the domes and minarets tower over Madikeri.

9am–5pm

Igguthappa Temple

This holiest shrine dedicated to the presiding deity of the Kodavas is in Kakkabe, a village about 40km from Madikeri said to be southern Asia's largest producer of forest honey.

☎0827 2238400; Kakkabe; 5.30am–12.30pm, 6.30pm–7pm

FILMI TAKE TREKKING DRAMA

The 2013 first found footage horror film **6-5=2** was filmed in Coorg's Napoklu and Tadiyandamol. The plot had six young people meeting a spooky end on a trek gone wrong.

Snapshot: River of romance

Located 50km from Madikeri, on the Brahmagiri Hill near Bhagamandala, Talakaveri is the origin of the sacred river Kaveri. The song *Madikeri Sipayi* in the Suhasini–Vishnuvardhan starrer **Mutthina Haara** (1990) showcases Talakaveri and Kodagu pride.



The film's success has turned Tadiyandamol into a popular trekking trail.

Dubare Elephant Camp

This facility, an initiative of the Karnataka Forest Department near the Jungle Lodges and Resorts, by the Kaveri River makes for an interesting halt. A short boat ride takes you across to the camp, where you can watch the pachyderms being bathed, groomed and fed. Extremely touristic, it will earn you brownie points with the kids. 14km from Kushalnagar, 40km from Madikeri; 8.30am–12pm; ₹300 onwards (depending on choice of activities)

CHIKKAMAGALURU

The Big Mountain Loop

Go towards Kaimara and start in the foothills to head straight to Sheethalagiri, a 1000-year old

'Show man' V Ravichandran had triple hits with Kushboo in Chikkamagaluru



Mallikarjuna temple. Next on the 'loop' is the mist-covered Baba Budan giri (Dattagiri hill range). Here, a small temple perched at 6217ft offers breathtaking views of the valley below. Finally, there is Mullayangiri, Karnataka's highest peak (6332 feet), which affords another great view.

FILMI TAKE BELLI MODA

Director Puttana Kanagal's debut hit *Belli Moda* (1966) made Chikkamagaluru a popular fixture in Kannada films. Thippinahalli estate, where it was set, came to be known as Belli Moda estate. Actress Kalpana named her Bengaluru residence Belli Moda too.

Kemmanagundi & Hebbe Falls

The hill station of Kemmanagundi provides an access point to the picturesque Hebbe Falls. Getting to Hebbe Falls involves an adventurous off-road journey from where you'll get to see a 551ft drop from below the gushing water.

₹10; parking ₹50; 8am–4pm

FILMI TAKE LUCKY LOCALE

Superstars Ravichandran and Kushboo's *Ranadheera* (1988), *Anjada Gandu* (1988) and *Yugapurusha* (1989) were all set in Chikkamagaluru, which proved to be a third factor in their filmi hatrick.

Kalhatti Falls

From Kemmanagundi, drive 10km to Kalhatti for the Veerabhadra (Shiva) Temple. Kalhatti Falls are at their prettiest just after the monsoons.

FILMI TAKE MOVIE MAGIC

Box-office hits like *Bangaarada*



Manushya (1972), *Bhootayana Maga Ayyu* (1974), *Sangliana* (1988), *Bandhana* (1984), *Anjada Gandu* (1988), *Chaitrada Premanjali* (1992), *Bayalu Dairi* (1976), *GopiKrishna* (1992), *Sipayi* (1996) and *Mangalyam Thantunanena* (1998) made Chikkamagaluru and Kudremukh lucky locations for filmmakers.

An outdoor shooting in progress

Coffee Yatra

A Coffee Board of India initiative, the Coffee Yatra has excellent displays on the origin of coffee and its evolution in India.

Coffee Centre, Behind ZP Office, Kadur Rd; ₹20; 10am–1pm & 2pm–5.30pm, closed on Sat, Sun & general holidays

Detour: Shivamogga (Shimoga) & Jog Falls

A three-hour drive from Chikkamagaluru, Shimoga is 'picture' perfect. You can spot Kodachadri, Agumbe, Theerthahalli, Keladi and Ikkeri in *Gaalipata* (2008) *Aakasmika* (1993), *Rasarishi Kuvempu*, *Mysore Mallige* (1991) and *Amrutha Ghalige* (1985). The romantic song, *Agumbeya prema sanjeya* captures Agumbe's famed sunrise. A two-hour drive from Shimoga takes you to the popular Jog Falls. Featured in *Jeevana Chaitra* (1992) hit song *Manavanagi huttida*, the falls are a tourist magnet.



Spooky tale *Aa Karaala Ratri* shooting was set in Chikkamagaluru

FILMI TAKE CHOPPER RIDE

The song *Elliruve Manava Kaaduva* in *Bayalu Daari* (1976) was the first time a helicopter was used for filming over the Chikkamagaluru hills.

Sringeri

Devotees throng the sacred mutt founded by Adi Shankaracharya, the Sharadamba and Vidyashankara temples among other shrines in Sringeri. Neighbouring Horanadu is noted for a temple to goddess Annapurneshwari.

86km from Chikkamagaluru; dawn–dusk

FILMI TAKE PILGRIM PAEANS

Samskara was set in Sringeri in

Vaikuntapura and the rathotsava scene in Kigga. Musicals *Upasane* (1974), *Malaya Marutha* (1986) and the Sanskrit film *Adi Shankaracharya* (1983) were set in Sringeri too.

Belavadi

The 13th-century Belavadi Temple was built by the Hoysala rulers and has more than 100 soapstone pillars in the main hall. There are three shrines of Lord Vishnu: Narayana, Venugopala and Yoganarsimha.

29km from Chikkamagaluru; dawn–dusk

FILMI TAKE OH, THE HORROR!

The isolated coffee estates and

craggy hills lent shocks and screams in horror hits like *Sriramachandra* (1992) and *Shhh!* (1993). Thrillers *Kaafi Thota* (2017), *Aa Karaala Ratri* (2018) and *Last Bus* (2016) were set here too.

SAKLESHPUR

Sakleshpur offers plantation walks, coffee estate stays and a base camp for the famous temple towns Belur and Halebidu (p37).

Manjarabad Fort

Trek up to the weathered fort built by Tipu Sultan as a strategic defence. This steep hill offers a wonderful panoramic view of the entire region and is worth the trek up the steep hill.

FILMI TAKE ROM COM RULES

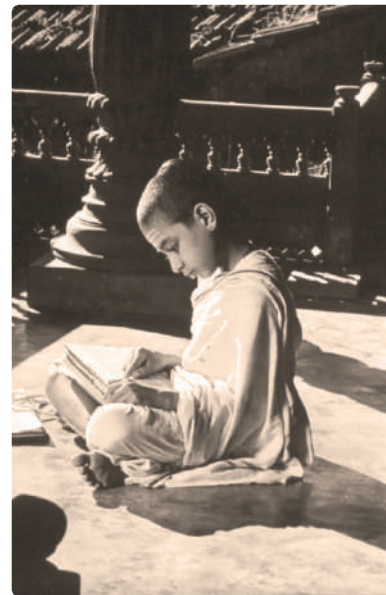
Paramathma's (2011) lead pair Puneeth Rajkumar and Deepa Sanidhi raised the heat in the song *Paravashanadenu* set in Sakleshpur. The hit number has turned the star-shaped Manjarabad Fort into a magnet for young travellers.

Bisle Reserve Forest

The rainforest cover that spills into Sakleshpur is a joy for nature lovers with its many bird and animal species. The drive through the Bisle Ghats is full of verdant views. Bangalore–Mangalore Highway approximately 7km from Sakleshpur town

Sakleshpur Railway Trek

Called the 'Green Route' this abandoned railway track is a picturesque stretch from Sakleshpur



The film *Ghatashradha* was set in Shivamogga

to Kukke Subrahmanya Temple on the Mangalore–Bengaluru sector. Tunnels, waterfalls and deep gorges dot this place.

FILMI TAKE KIDDIE FUN

The popular children's film *Nagarhole* (1977) was set in the Nagarhole and Muthodi forests. The location that stood out was the 160ft-tall bridge and the 18 tunnels, through which the Sakleshpur–Subramanya railway line passes. The climax scene featuring a baby elephant was filmed in this very spot.

Detour: Short trips from Sakleshpur

BELURU & HALEBIDU (37km/50m by road, 50km/1hr) Stunning architecture marks the Hoysala temples at Halebidu and Beluru. The 12th-century Chennakeshava Temple (Temple Rd; 7.30am–7.30pm) is a grand architectural marvel not to be missed in Beluru. The 12th-century Hoysaleswara Temple (dawn–dusk), is Halebidu's claim to fame. The temple is set in large gardens, adjacent to which is a small museum (entry ₹5; 9am–5pm Sat–Thu) with beautiful sculptures.

FILMI TAKE TEMPLE GRANDEUR

Beluru and Halebidu featured in the first Kannada film in colour, **Amara Shilpi Jakanachari** (1964) helmed by actor Kalyan Kumar. It was a biopic on the 12th-century master sculptor of Karnataka who is credited with some of the stunning Hoysala marvels like the Chennakeshava Temple.

SHETTIHALLI CHURCH (44km/1hr) Located an hour's drive from Sakleshpur, the remains of the Shettihalli Church look almost fairy tale-like in the backdrop of the Gorur Dam catchment area. The crumbling structure stands grandly on the banks while fishermen row their coracles to the middle of the waterbody. Come monsoon, the church gets flooded earning it the moniker, 'the floating church'.

FILMI TAKE IT'S RAINING LOVE

Hassan's landmark – the 19th-century Gothic Shettihalli Church that locals call it the 'floating church' as it gets marooned in the rains has formed a dramatic backdrop in the lovelorn number *Hingyake*, *hingyake* in **Patre Loves Padma** (2008). The floating church is now a hotspot for pre-wedding shootings for betrothed couples and music videos. The river Hemavati is the backdrop in **Mungaru Male** (2006), a tearjerker in which the monsoon washes over the romantic duo's heartbreak.

SRAVANABELAGOLA (2hr/90km by road) Atop the bald rock of Vindhyagiri Hill, the 17.5m-high statue of the Jain deity Gomateshvara (Bahubali), towers over Sravanabelagola. A steep climb up 614 steps takes you to the feet of the statue of Gomateshvara (6.30am–6.30pm)

FILMI TAKE BROMANCE

Sravanabelagola acts as the perfect rural landscape for Puneeth Rajkumar's buddy movie, **Hudugaru** (2011) a tale of three friends and their bromance. The film captured sweeping vistas from atop the hill, the imposing Bahubali and Jain basadis.



Sravanabelagola Temple towers over the Vindhyagiri Hill

Accommodation

COORG

With fantastic guesthouses in the surrounding plantations, there's no real reason to stay in Madikeri, unless you arrive very late.

Taj Madikeri Resort & Spa

HOTEL ₹₹₹

☎08272 265900; www.tajhotels.com/; 1st Monnangeri Galibeedu, Post, Madikeri; d starting from ₹16,000, taxes additional Nestled in 180 acres of verdant forest, this Taj property has a variety of luxury room options, all of which open out into a central courtyard. Some of the highlights include a temperature-controlled infinity pool, pottery and cookery lessons and coffee-tasting sessions.

Hotel Mayura Valley View offers a comfy stay

The Windflower Resorts & Spa

RESORT ₹₹₹

☎9901446666; www.thewindflower.com; Survey No. 201/PI, Kedakal Village, Suntikoppa Hobli, Somwarpet Taluk, Madikeri; d starting ₹14580, incl meals, excl taxes Built around a woodland area and sprawling coffee plantations, the resort is ideal to be close to nature but still have contemporary luxury facilities. Options like studios, suites, and plantation bungalows are available for every budget and preference. In-house dining, swimming pool, nature-based activities and spa therapies are an added plus.

Notting Hill Homestay

HOMESTAY ₹₹₹

☎9940052900; 1428, Stuart Hill; ₹9000 for the entire cottage Unplug and unwind in the heart of coffee

country at the simple but immersive Notting Hill Homestay, a cottage consisting of three bedrooms with attached bathrooms. This is ideal for a small group looking for privacy, and is yet in the heart of Madikeri to visit sightseeing spots easily.

Club Mahindra Madikeri Resort

RESORT ₹₹₹

☎082722 21114; www.clubmahindra.com; Galibeedu Rd, Madikeri This resort offers two categories of rooms: One-bedroom suites and studio rooms. There is also a spa, two swimming pools, gym and three restaurants and a bar for guests to entertain. Relish authentic Coorgi cuisine made using ancient recipes and the freshest ingredients.

Serene Woods

HOMESTAY ₹₹

☎94820 22348; www.serenewoods.co.in; Ibnivalavadi Village, Kodagu District, Madikeri; d starting from ₹5500, incl breakfast, excl taxes A premium homestay with five luxury cottages overlooking forested green patches and coffee plantations, Serene Woods lives up to its name. Delicious local cuisine is one of the highlights of staying here, along with its access to Madikeri town.

Hotel Mayura Valley View

HOTEL ₹₹

☎08272 228387; www.kstdc.co/hotels/hotel-mayura-valley-view-madikeri; Stuart Hill; d/ste incl breakfast from ₹3250/4950 On the hilltop past Raja's Seat, this government hotel



Coffee time at Taj Madikeri Resort & Spa

is one of Madikeri's best, with large bright rooms, a peaceful ambience and fantastic valley views. Its restaurant-bar with a terrace overlooking the valley is a great spot for a beer.

Hotel Chitra

HOTEL ₹

☎08272 225372; www.hotelchitra.co.in; School Rd; dm ₹270, d from ₹780, with AC ₹1760 This is located close to Madikeri's main intersection, so expect some background noise. It provides low-cost, no-frills rooms and friendly service.





Herbs at the spa in Trivik Hotels & Resorts

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Trivik Hotels & Resorts

RESORT ₹₹₹

☎9880552711, 9148971583; www.trivikhotels.com, Channagonanahalli, Elunoorkhan Rd, Mullayanagiri; full board from ₹24,000 Located amid 38 acres of coffee plantations near Mullayanagiri, this luxurious resort features massive suites with Jacuzzis, gorgeous views of the hills, and a good mix of local cuisine and other fare. There's also a kids' zone to occupy the little ones.

The Serai

RESORT ₹₹₹

☎8262224903; www.theserai.in; KM Rd, Mugthihalli Post; d ₹22,000–69,000 incl of full board Luxury accommodation

was first introduced to the Chikkamagaluru region by the Serai (a holding of Cafe Coffee Day). The folks here arrange visits to the plantations where you can learn about the processes of coffee making, and also get to taste coffee (only for checked-in guests). The Serai also offers an OMA Spa and personal pool (or Jacuzzi) in every villa. The best part of the property is the wide swimming pool at the end of a palm boulevard.

Flameback Lodges

RESORT ₹₹₹

☎8263215170; www.flameback.in; Billur Post, Pattadur village, Mudigere Taluk; paddy cottages ₹12,000, ste/luxury villas ₹15,000 onwards (incl of full board) Private villas, suites and cottages with wide sunny decks and personal Jacuzzis are the attractions at this exclusive boutique resort. The lodge offers views of a lake, waterfall and paddy fields, making for a welcome break from the coffee landscape. Flameback has only eight rooms, ensuring greater privacy. If you are a dog lover, you will like the place even more because of the three friendly German Shepherds on the property.

Coffee Village Retreat

HERITAGE
HOMESTAY ₹₹

☎8262229599; www.coffeevillageretreat.com; Kimmane Plantation, Billur Post, Mudigere; d ₹5000–7000 (incl of full board) Choose between a 150-year-old colonial plantation bungalow and a unit that oozes modern luxury at this unique set-up on a 300-acre coffee estate. You can

also join from activities like indoor games, cycling, birdwatching, trekking, boating and fishing.

SAKLESHPUR

The Hills

RESORT ₹₹₹

☎080 41158187; www.thehills.in; Kuntahalli village, Devaladakere Post, Sakleshpur Taluk, Hassan Distt; d ₹7000–8000 (incl of full board) The only luxury option in the area, the Hills is a combination of Indonesian-style wooden cottages and lavish tents.

The Planter's Bungalow

HOMESTAY ₹₹

☎9481925930; Kadamane Checkpost, Hassan Distt; d ₹4851 (incl of full board) This century-old, English-styled house comes with a marvellous view of tea plantations. Expect some great food, treks on the property, tea tasting and elephant sighting (they are regular visitors to the property). The 7500-acre Kadamane tea estate, on which the Planters Bungalow is located, has had illustrious owners like the Earl of Warwick and tea conglomerate Brooke Bond.

Jenukallu Valley Retreat

RESORT ₹₹

☎9241611610; www.jenukallu.com; Athibeedu, Devaladakere Post, Sakleshpur Taluk, Hassan Distt; d ₹6000 (incl of full board) The wide expanse of a bare hill dotted with four cottages is a welcome break after the thick coffee copses. Opt for the cottage right at the edge of the hill for a better view.

Tusk And Dawn

NATURE STAY ₹₹

☎9845503354; www.tuskanddawn.com; Agani Post, Hanbal; dorm per head/d ₹1800/4200 (incl of full board) Enjoy a camp-like ambience (without any real roughing out) with three comfortable twin cottages and a log house eight-bedded dormitory. There is an open pavilion for meals, hiking trails off the property and a small waterbody.

Eating

COORG

Raintree

MULTI-CUISINE ₹₹

www.raintree.in; 13–14 Pension Lane; meals ₹170–260; 11.30am–10pm A welcome surprise in a humdrum

The Coorg pandi curry is a popular dish



town, this cute converted bungalow is a homely place for a delicious meal, with solid wooden furniture and some tribal art. The food does not disappoint either, with local specialities and dishes from the coast. They also sell wine and great Kodagu coffee. It is located just behind Madikeri Town Hall.

Coorg Cuisine

COORGI ₹

Main Rd; mains ₹100–130; noon–4pm & 7–10pm Championing unique Kodava specialities such as pandhi barthadh (pork dry fry) and kadambuttu (rice dumplings), this restaurant is well worth trying. It's not exactly atmospheric, located above a shop on the main road, but the seating is comfy.

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Town Canteen

SOUTH INDIAN ₹

☎8262222325; RG Rd; 11.30am–2.30pm, 6.30–8.30pm Mon–Sun,

Chikkamagaluru offers local veg fare



after 1pm Sat Get your dosa fix at the oldest haunt in the city, the 52-year-old Town Canteen. Though the unassuming ambience of weathered wooden benches stuffed in a cosy room of this noted Chikkamagaluru landmark is far from glamorous, the food is definitely something to write home about.

Food Palace

MULTI-CUISINE ₹

☎8262228116; RG Rd; 7am–9.30pm A quick stop for south Indian snack food or slightly more elaborate Indianised Chinese.

SAKLESHPUR

The Ossoor

VEGETARIAN ₹

☎8173 318072; BM Rd; 7am–11am A pleasant option with ample parking space, the Ossoor, just outside town, is an offshoot of the estate by the same name. The restaurant is the best place for a quick vegetarian meal on the highway.

Mythri Restaurant

VEGETARIAN ₹

☎8173 245244; Puspagiri Comforts, BM Rd; 7am–11pm One among the few choices to eat out in Sakleshpur, Mythri is nothing out of the ordinary, but is nonetheless a decent stop for vegetarian food.

Surabhi's Nx

INDIAN ₹

☎8173 249113; BM Rd; 6am–10pm A branch of the famous Surabhi restaurant in town, this new eatery has more seating, and plenty of parking space.



If You Like: Temple trips



Amruteshwara Temple

The 12th-century Hoysala Amruteshwara Temple with fine architecture and sculptural beauty is located in the village of Amruthapura, 67km north of Chikkamagaluru town. **Kalabhairaveshwara Temple** The ancient Kalabhairaveshwara Temple is 30km from Chikkamagaluru in a lush cove in the village of Devaramane. The small two-tiered shrine is beautiful to behold.

Exquisite sculpture at Amruteshwara Temple



Activities

Coorg Sky Adventures

SCENIC FLIGHTS

☎9448954384; www.coorgskyadventures.com; short/long flight ₹2500/8000 Soar over plantation and paddy valleys on a microlight flight for tremendous views of Coorg's lush scenery with an experienced, professional operator.

Ayurjeevan

AYURVEDA

☎944974779; www.ayurjeevancoorg.com; Kohinoor Rd; ₹1400; 7am–7pm This is an ayurvedic outfit that offers a whole

range of intriguing and rejuvenating techniques including rice ball massages and oil baths. It's a short walk from the State Bank India.

Ballalarayana Fort Trek

TREKKING

www.indiahikes.com A trek to the 12th-century Ballalarayana Fort built by the Hoysala King on the high reaches of Bettabalige in Chikkamagaluru at 1509ft offers breathtaking views of the rolling hills below and is a great one-day trek for nature enthusiasts. If you add the Bandajje Arabi Falls to this hike, it can take up to 4–6 hours from Gowdara Mane.



EXPERT RECOMMENDATION

Karnataka's arts and crafts

Actor **Sruthi Hariharan** has won awards and accolades for her work in Kannada films. Here she lists some of the state's beautiful handicrafts that are items to treasure.

The best part of outdoor shootings for movies is travelling to the interesting locales of Karnataka. The better part of travelling is the sweet surprise of getting to appreciate artisanal arts and crafts of Karnataka's villages. Support for traditional craftspeople and artists is needed to preserve the states' rich arts and crafts.

Ilkal Textiles Steel town Ballari's pride is the unique tope teni weaving technique of Ilkal saris that dates back to the 8th century. Weavers in the Ilkal village produce cotton saris with silk borders in bright shades of red, green and ochre. The pallus sport distinct motifs.

Bangalore Silk Legend has it that Tipu Sultan was fond of sericulture and was a patron of these butterfly silks from Mysuru. They are a must in a Kannadiga bride's trousseau.

Ganjam Jewellery If Kolar shines like gold in the mining map of India, the tiny village of Ganjam in Srirangapatna produced unique handcrafted pieces of jewellery, sparkling with kempu or rubies that

reflected the majesty and opulence of the Karnataka royals who were partial to them.

Ganjifa cards Under the patronage of the 19th-century Wodeyar royals, these Persian design-inspired cards were painted in beautiful colours with motifs of gods and goddesses in Srirangapatna.

Channapatna gombe Before the days of mass-produced plasticine toys, these eco-friendly toys were made of wood and coloured with natural dyes and lacquer, from Channapatna. They make for great gifts for kids and home decor.

Bidriware This craft gained prominence under the 14th-century Badami sultans. This oxidised inlay metalcraft from Bidar is available as traditional jars, boxes, and also fashion jewellery.

Mysore paintings The technique of reverse painting on glass with mineral and natural pigments for colours and gesso work sets these paintings of beatific gods and goddesses apart. Expensive, yes, but they're gorgeous collectibles.



Ilkal saris are part of Ballari's textile heritage



BEST OF KARNATAKA

Why Go?

Movies have showcased the regional variety that the state offers in Kannada movies. Films set in coastal Karnataka and Malnad like Dweepa (2002), Akasmika (1993), Gandu Bherunda (1984) Mungarina Minchu (1997) and Gaalipata (2008); in Uttara Kannada like Mynaa (2010) and Namooru Mandara Hoove (1997); North Karnataka in Krishna Rukmini (1988), Veera Madakari (2009) and Sanju Weds Geetha (2011) all make for a double treat for travellers bitten by the movie bug.

i Quick Facts

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Air Bengaluru and Mangalore are two international airports.

Train The South Western Railway, Konkan Railway and Southern Railway connect it to the rest of the country.

Road Choose from the vast fleet of private or KSRTC buses.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 and 2 – Bengaluru

Day 3 – Mysuru

Day 4, 5 –Coorg

Day 6, 7, 8 – Chikkamagaluru, Halebidu, Belur

Day 9, 10, 11 – Mangalore, Udupi, Mulki, Agumbe, Karwar

Day 12, 13 – Hampi

BEST TIME TO VISIT

September – March

Coracle rides beckon on the River Cauvery



Beachside blues in Kasaravalli's *Gulabi Talkies* filmed at Byndoor

Sights

Mangaluru

Alternating between relaxed coastal calm and hectic towns, Mangaluru (also known Tulu Nadu) is a useful gateway to the Konkan coast and its beachside fun. It has an appealing off-the-beaten-path feel, and the spicy seafood dishes are sensational. With heritage monuments, churches and forts, the endless beach towns offer rustic coastal charm.

FILMI TAKE COASTAL CALM

Actor Pramod Shetty, recommends the chicken ghee roast at Shetty Lunch home in Kundapur and Bangda fish fry and 'saaru' anywhere around the Malpe or Marvanthe beaches.

Karwar

It is on the tourist map for its spectacular beaches, islands and lighthouses. One of Karnataka's best beaches, Gokarna Beach has a stretch that twists and turns over several kilometres resembling the outline of an Om, and is also known as Om Beach. It comprises several gorgeous coves, with wide stretches interspersed with smaller patches of sand, perfect for sunbathing and swimming.

FILMI TREATS ISLE OF LOVE

St. Mary's Island, off Malpe Beach, is a sweet spot for moviemakers. Actor Ramesh Aravind said that it was 'thrilling to reach the island on a boat to shoot' for *America America* (1995). *Shubamangala* (1975) and others were shot here.

Marudheshwar

It is a beachside pilgrimage town.

Om Beach, with its semi-circular coves joined in the middle, has hillocks surrounding the beach. Kudle Beach, Half Moon Bay and Paradise Beach are some of the picturesque and laidback beaches.

FILMI TREATS TO SEA! TO SEA!

Girish Kasaravalli's *Gulabi Talkies* (2008), filmed near Byndoor, features the coastal belt and its fishing communities. *Ondu Muttina Kathe* (1987) was shot across Karwar, Gokarna beaches, St Mary's Island and Charmadi Ghat.

Udupi

Just inland from the coast, Udupi is a holy town, home to the ancient Sri Krishna Temple and several monasteries. Udupi is famed for its vegetarian food, and is recognised across India for its sumptuous

thali, and also as the birthplace of the humble dosa.

FILMI TAKE MASKED ACTION

Yakshagana and bhoota kola traditions of the Tulu Nadu region have found a mention in *Rangi Taranga* (2015). Yakshagana expert, Satish Patla, was roped in to supervise the sequences in the film. 'Huli veshu' or the tiger dance (2008), filmed near Karavali region became hugely popular with Rakshit Shetty's *Ulidavaru Kandante* (2014). *Masanada Hovvu* (1984)'s *Kannada naadina karavali*, *Kannada deviya* showcased coastal Karnataka's unparalleled essence.

Yana

The beautiful region of Uttara Kannada offers a varied topography for travellers who have varying interests. Yana offers the extraordinary sight of gigantic black

Snapshot: Swami

Agumbe in Shivamogga (Shimoga) is verdant with its quaint villages. The iconic Shankar Nag helmed-teleseries *Malgudi Days* (1987) was filmed here. 'Today, the town may have developed but when we were shooting there was only one hotel, one barber shop and one provisional store in Agumbe,' says Manjunath who played Swami based on the RK Narayan novel.





Yakshagana performers in *Natasarvabhauma*

rock formations shooting out from the middle of the dense forest an hour's drive from Gokarna. A hike will reward you with the sight of

Bhairaveshwara Shikara and Mohini Shikara, two black karst limestone beauties that house secret temples in their caves.

FILMI TAKE ROCKY LOVE

The trail to this cave destination turned popular after it emerged as the picnic spot of the three main characters in Sunil Kumar Desai's triangular love story *Namoora Mandara Hoove* (1997).

Dandeli

Located in the jungles of the Western Ghats, Dandeli is a wildlife getaway that promises close encounters with wildlife such as elephants, leopards, sloth bears, gaur, wild dogs and flying squirrels. It's a beloved birding destination too, with hornbills, golden-backed woodpeckers, serpent eagles and white-breasted

kingfishers. Also on offer are a slew of adventure activities, from kayaking to bowel-churning white-water rafting on the swirling waters of the Kali River.

FILMI TAKE JUNGLE RULES

The forests of Dandeli are in *Raate* (2015), *Maasti Gudi* (2017) and the River Kali in Dharani Mandala *Madhyadolage* (1983).

Sirsi

Stomp past the aroma of areca nut plantations in Sirsi, a hilly town with many waterfalls, lush green hills and valleys. It's dotted with the holy sites of the Sri Marikamba Temple, the Madhukeshwar Temple at Banavasi and *Sahasralinga*, a unique spot of a thousand lingas in black granite that seem to float in the gushing waters of the River Shalmala.

FILMI TAKE SAHASRALINGA

Spot the *sahasralingas* in *Kotigonda Love Story* (2015).

Belgaum, Gulbarga

Belgaum, Gulbarga, and its surrounds have a varied mix of travel spots. A culturally diverse and rich region, North Karnataka is known for the Chalukya dynasty's heritage monuments and its famous vernacular architecture.

FILMI TAKE HERITAGE VAADE

North Karnataka's vernacular homesteads or *vaade* make, for heritage walks for tourists, and traditional sets for movies. Note these quaint homes in *Santha Shishunala Sharifa* (1990), *Onanonda Kaaladalli* (1982), *Thaayi Saheba* (1997), *Singaaravva* (2003) and *Nagamandala* (1997).

Top Tip: History in Hampi

This UNESCO World Heritage Site in central Karnataka showcases the magnificent ruins of Hampi that has captivated travellers for centuries. While it's possible to see this World Heritage Site in a day or two, plan on lingering for a while. The main travellers' ghetto has traditionally been Hampi Bazaar, a village crammed with budget lodges, shops and restaurants, and towered over by the majestic Virupaksha Temple. Tranquil Virupapur Gaddi across the river has become a new popular hang-out.

FILMI TAKE HAMPI

- *Krishna Rukmini* (1988) had Vishnuvardhan acting as a tourist guide explaining the beauty and significance of Hampi to dancer Ramya Krishnan.
- *Virupa* (2019) tells the life of three poor boys in Hampi.
- *Belli Kaalungura* (1992)'s song *Kelisade kallu kallali* Kannada nudi highlights Hampi's architecture.
- *Bhale Jodi* (1970) and *Ranavikrama* (2017) both showed Hampi's beauty.



Drumming up the music are the leads in *Virupa*, set in Hampi



Thespian Rajkumar's films showcased Karnataka's appealing locales

Bidar

This is home to some amazing ruins and monuments of the 15th-century Bahmani kingdom whose Islamic legacy is seen in mosques, minarets and forts dotted around the place.

FILMI TAKE BIDAR ROCKS

Bidar's rocky outcrops and looming fort make for striking travel hops and movie locales. The well-known *Gaganave Baagi* song from **Sanju weds Geetha** (2011) was filmed in this spot.

Aihole

Some 100 temples, built between the 4th and 6th centuries AD, speck the ancient Chalukyan regional capital of Aihole that documents the embryonic stage of south Indian Hindu architecture.

Badami

Forty kilometres from Aihole, Badami is famous for its magnificent rock-cut cave temples and red sandstone cliffs. It is 13km from Pattadakal.

FILMI TAKE STORIES IN STONE

Badami and Pattadakal temples formed a stunning backdrop in the Sudeep and Ragini hit **Veera Madakari** (2009). Mani Ratnam's *Guru* featured the iconic rock-cut cave temples.

Vijapura (Bijapur)

A historic city epitomising the Deccan's Islamic era, Vijapura (formerly Bijapur) dates back some 600 years and has a heap of mosques, mausoleums, palaces and fortifications. Set in tranquil gardens, the magnificent Gol Gumbaz mausoleum houses the tombs of emperor Mohammed Adil Shah and royal family members. Bijapur is also a centre for the Lingayat brand of Shaivism, which emphasises a single personalised god.

FILMI TAKE GOL GUMBAZ

Vijapura has lent itself to dramatic backdrops and is a prominent locale in films like **Olave Mandara** (2011). **Rama Rama Re** (2016) showcasing the rough terrain of Bijapur.



Scenes in *Guru* starring Aishwarya Rai were set in Badami

Hubli

Hubli or Hubballi or flowering creeper in Kannada is a busy city in the north Karnataka region. It's an industrialised city with few tourist interests but has been a favourite with filmmakers.

FILMI TAKE HUBLI CIRCLE

Chennamma Circle in Hubli where the song *Huttidare Kannada Nadinalli Huttabeku* from **Aakasmika** (1993) featuring Rajkumar was filmed is a popular location drawing travellers and filmmakers alike. Over 6,000 policemen were deputised when this song was filmed to manage the crowds that gathered to watch their icon Rajkumar.

Sandur

Granite rocks and hillocks below mark the former mining district of Ballari (Bellary), some 300km from Bengaluru. While the mining town is not a travel magnet its rugged topography has drawn filmmakers to turn it into a gritty locale for their many movies.

FILMI TAKE: SANDUR SAGA

The town of Sandur in Ballari, is a favourite shooting spot for filmmakers. Heartbreak saga **Manasa Sarovara** (1982) was set in Sandur; the mines made for a grim backdrop in **Mufti** (2017). **Seetharama Kalyana** (2019), **Power** (2014) and the *Elo Maleyagide Indu* song from **Manasare** (2009) were filmed here.

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