

Mumbai: City of Dreams



◀ **Mumbai's Chowpatty Beach** provides a relaxing contrast to the city's vibrant crowds and traffic.

1 The vibrant¹ city of Mumbai is a natural first stop for visitors to India's western coast. "One could say that Mumbai is the New York of India," says Mumbai native Divya Abhat. "It's a place of big opportunities, big contrasts, and big energies . . . There is always something going on."

5 Previously known as Bombay, the city was renamed Mumbai (**derived** from the goddess Mumba) in 1995 as part of a movement away from colonial² names. The traditional cultural center of India, Mumbai is today a very modern city with world-class shopping, restaurants, and business areas. It is also home to Bollywood, the world's largest movie industry.

10 India is a complex country, **culturally** rich and diverse. If you visit India, be prepared for sensory overload;³ you will experience a culture of amazing
15 depth and variety.

▼ A woman and her son walk past a Bollywood poster on a Mumbai street corner.



¹ If something is **vibrant**, it is full of life and energy.

² **Colonial** refers to countries that are controlled by a more powerful country.

³ **Sensory overload** occurs when there is too much information for our senses to manage.

Here are just a few of Mumbai's sights that visitors should not miss:

Five-star luxury can be enjoyed at **Mumbai's Taj Mahal Palace Hotel**, built in 1903 by Persian⁴-Indian businessman Jamsetji Tata. According to local legend, Tata was not **permitted** to enter the finest British-managed hotel of that time, Wilson's, because of its **policy** of serving only European guests. In response, he **established** the Taj, with a promise that it would have the world's best service. Ever since, the Taj Mahal Palace has been listed among the world's top hotels. What about Wilson's? It's long gone.

Across the street from the Taj is the famous **Gateway of India**, an arch standing about 25 meters high. The monument was built to celebrate the visit to India of England's King George V and Queen Mary in 1911. Sellers and performers, including snake charmers, can be found in the **surrounding** busy park. At night, lit up by electric lights, the Gateway **appeals** to sightseers—and lovers, too!

Just a one-hour ferry ride from Mumbai is the island of **Elephanta**. The island was named by the Portuguese, **supposedly** after a huge statue of an elephant that used to be there. It has amazing **cave** temples cut deeply into the rock, featuring sculptures **preserved** since the seventh century A.D.

Visitors leaving Mumbai can board their train at the **Victoria Terminus** (renamed Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus). This remarkable station is said to have been India's largest construction project when it was built in 1888. An impressive mixture of British and Indian building styles, the station is preserved today as a World Heritage site.



▲ The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel (left) and the Gateway of India (right) are two of Mumbai's most famous monuments and serve as reminders of the city's colonial heritage.



▲ The 19th-century Victoria Terminus (Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus) is preserved today as a World Heritage site

⁴ **Persian** means related to the area now known as Iran.