

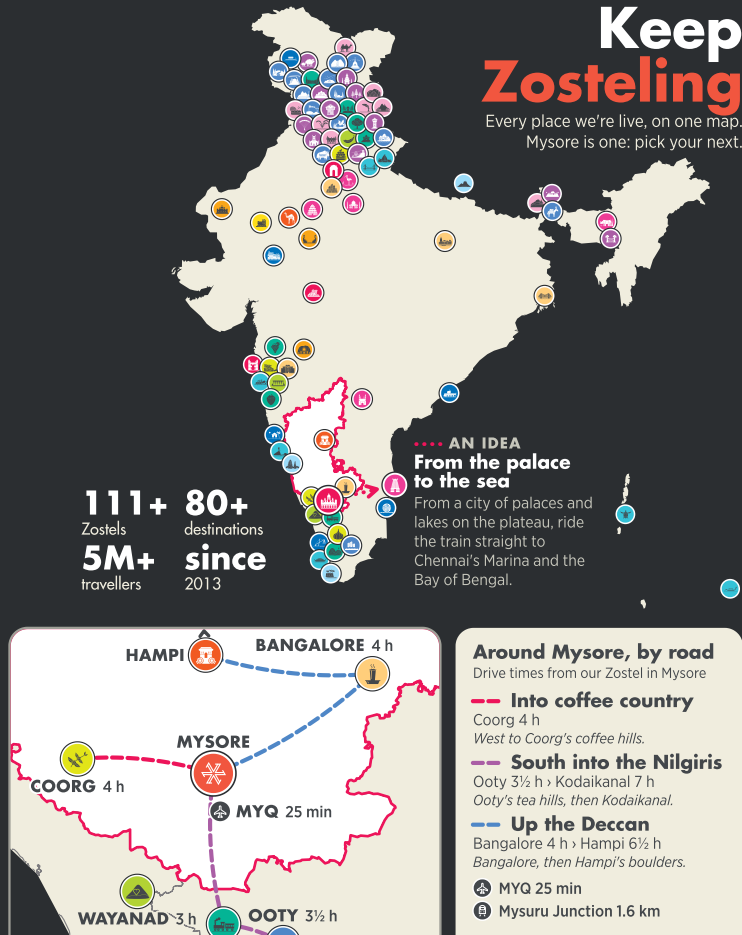
MYSORE

a map made by Zostel
for young travellers
FREE MAP • KARNATAKA



LIVE IT. NOW

ZOSTEL



India and its states: DataMeet (CC BY 4.0), the Survey of India outline. Roads, airports, station: © OpenStreetMap contributors; drive times by FOSSGIS OSRM, scaled to Zostel's own published times (2026-10). Pins nudged apart where they crowd, edge pins point the way. Flights and trains change, check before you plan.



Namaskara, Mysuru!

Stay with us in Mysore

One Zostel, on a quiet bylane of Gokulam, the yoga quarter.

Zostel Mysore

A peaceful hostel on a quiet Gokulam by-lane: a rooftop lounge, a community kitchen, common areas, mixed and female dorms. Landmark: Corner House on Valmiki Road; we're 30 metres on.

Maps: © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL), data fetched 2026-10-13 (UTC). Terrain: Terrain Tiles on AWS (Mapzen/Tilezen), from SRTM courtesy of NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey. Walk lines routed by FOSSGIS OSRM on OpenStreetMap. Drawings: the Zostel brand's own. Things change: check the day's timings at the gate.

Practical tips

Getting in

Most travellers fly into Bengaluru and come on by train or bus: trains to Mysuru Junction run often, and the expressway makes the drive quick. Mysore's own airport, at Mandakalli in the south, has a few domestic flights. Long-distance buses use the suburban bus stand.



Autos and tongas

Autos have meters, but many drivers won't use them at the station: use the prepaid counters at the railway station and the city bus stand. Tongas, the horse carts, wait by the palace for the slow tour; agree the fare first.

Trin Trin cycles

Mysuru opened India's first city-wide public bicycle share, Trin Trin, in 2017, with docks by the palace, the lakes and Gokulam. Check the app works for you before counting on it; the city is flat and good to cycle early in the day.

The palace lights

The palace is lit after dark on Sundays and public holidays, and every evening of Dasara, for about an hour. Stand on the forecourt for the switch-on. Check the day's timings at the gate.

Weather

October to March is the best time, with cool mornings and the Dasara season; April to June is hot. The monsoon months, July to September, are green and pleasant.

Temples, churches, mosques

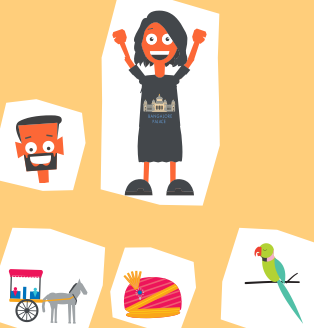
Every site is a sight: dress covered for the goddess on the hill, the cathedral and the mosques alike, leave shoes where the others do, and ask before photographing inside. Phones and cameras stay in the bag inside the palace.

Water and food

Drink bottled or filtered water and refill at the hostel. Tiffin rooms serve vegetarian breakfasts fast and early; many places close in the early afternoon, and the city goes quiet early in the evening.

Say it in Kannada

Kannada is the city's language; signs come in Kannada and English. A namaskara and a dhanyavaada open doors, and 'Mysuru' sounds better to an auto driver than 'Mysore'.



5 minutes of history

c. 1399 A small kingdom

By tradition, the brothers Yaduraya and Krishnaraya found the kingdom round Mysore, and the Wadiyars begin a rule of most of six centuries.

1610 The first Dasara

Raja Wadiyar I takes Srirangapatna, makes it his capital, and celebrates Navaratri there: the start of the Mysore Dasara.

1659 A thousand steps

Dodda Devaraja Wadiyar lays the stairway up Chamundi Hill; the great Nandi half-way up follows in 1664.

1761 Hyder Ali

Hyder Ali takes power, and with his son Tipu Sultan rules the kingdom from Srirangapatna.

1799 Tipu falls

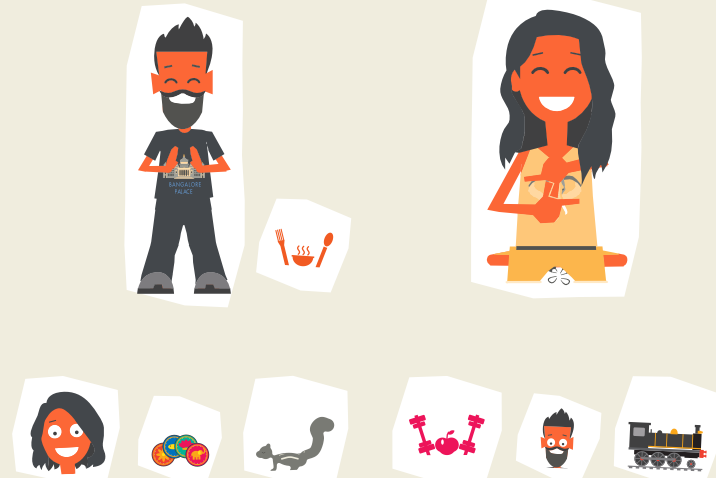
Tipu Sultan dies defending Srirangapatna; the Wadiyars are restored and the capital returns to Mysore.

1831 Ruled by commission

The British take direct control and move the capital to Bangalore; Mysore city loses its place for fifty years.

1881 The rendition

Power returns to the Wadiyars with Chamarajendra Wadiyar X, and Mysore is a capital again.



1897 The palace burns

The old wooden palace burns; the royal family moves to Jaganmohan, and Amba Vilas rises by 1912.

1916 A university

The Maharaja's government founds the University of Mysore.

1932 Gardens below a dam

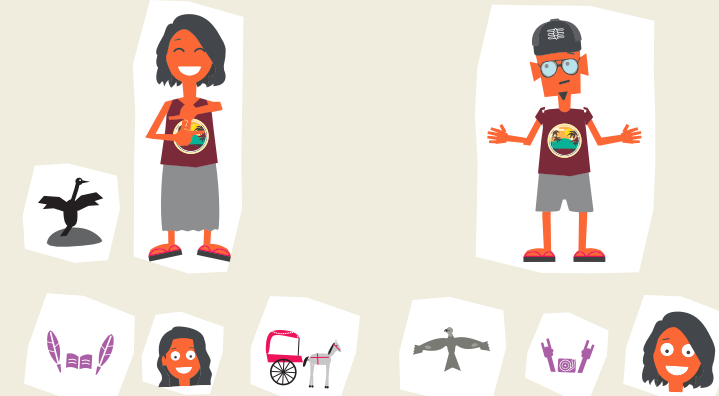
Brindavan Gardens are finished below the Krishnaraja Sagara dam on the Kaveri.

1947 Joining India

The kingdom accedes to India; its last Maharaja, Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, becomes the state's first governor in 1956.

2014 Mysuru

The city's Kannada name, Mysuru, becomes its official one; plenty of people still say Mysore.



Talk like a local

Namaskara

Hello

Dhanyavaada

Thank you

Haudu

Yes

Illa

No, or there isn't

Eshtu?

How much?

Saaku

Enough

Festivals worth timing a trip for

4 Dasara (September or October)

Ten days of the state festival: the palace lit every night, music on its forecourt, and the torchlight parade that night.

33 Jambho Savari (Vi-jayadashami)

Dasara's last day: the elephant procession from the palace to Banimantap, and the torchlight parade that night.

Dasara exhibition (into December)

The fair opposite the palace, begun in 1890, opens with Dasara and runs for months.

Markets and where to buy

7 Devaraja Market

Flowers, fruit, kumkum and spices under the arcades of 1886.

Sayyaji Rao Road

The main shopping street from the palace past the market.

Cauvery Arts and Crafts Emporium

The state's own shop on Sayyaji Rao Road: sandalwood carving, silk, incense and toys.

26 KSIC showroom

Mysore silk from the factory that weaves it.



9 Mandi Mohalla

The old quarter north of the market: meat, bakeries and the Masjid-e-Azam of 1925.

Mysore these days

A royal city that cycles and stretches.

Trin Trin

India's first city-wide public bicycle share, opened in 2017.

30 Mysore style

Students from all over the world come to Gokulam's yoga shalas to practise at their own pace.

One of the cleanest

Mysuru is counted among India's cleanest cities in the national Swachh Survekshan survey.

Mysuru

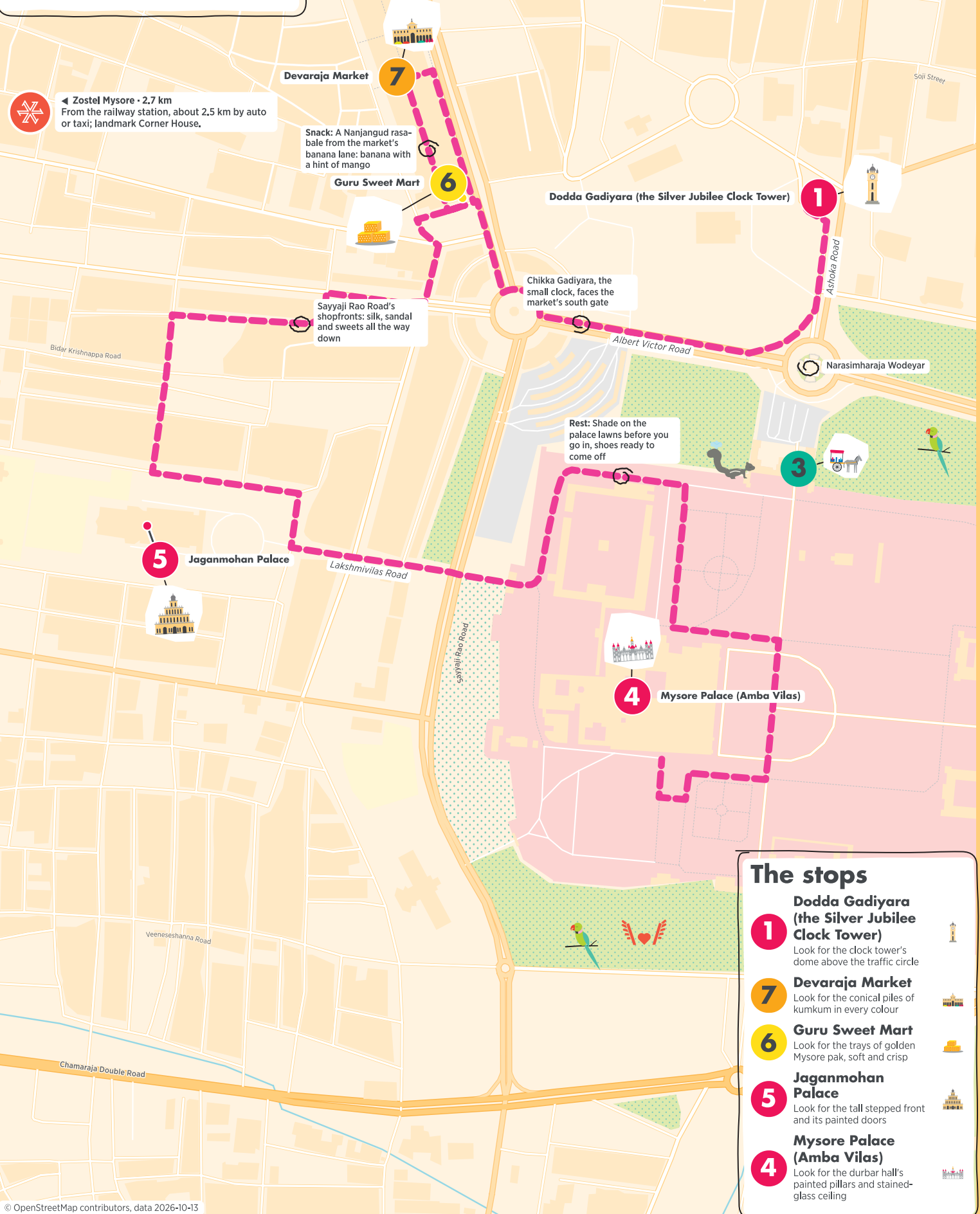
The Kannada name has been the official one since 2014.



The palace city: palace, clock and market

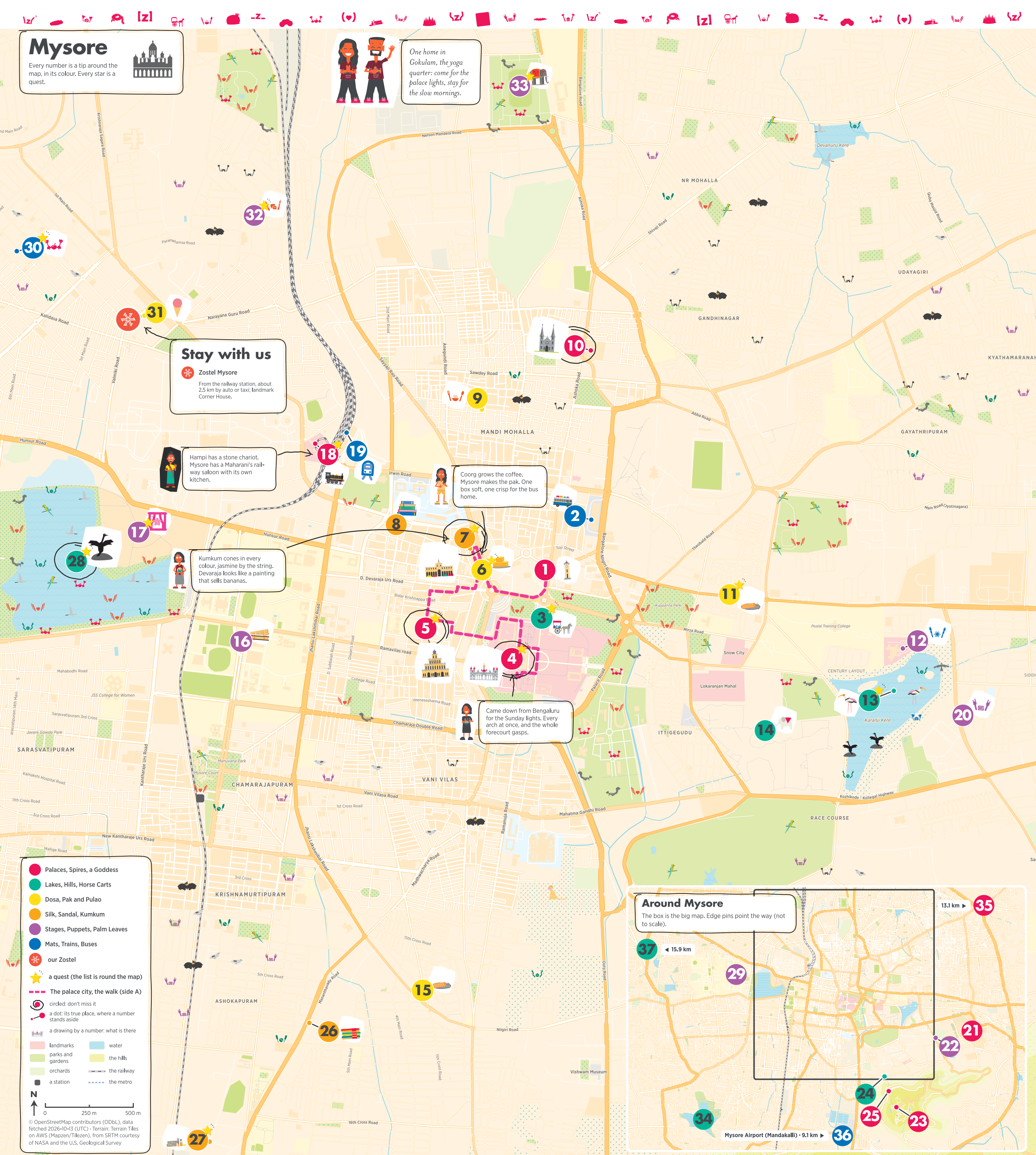
2.7 km • about 4 hours with stops • 5 stops

From the big clock into Devaraja Market's kumkum and jasmine, Mysore pak at Guru Sweet Mart, down Sayyaji Rao Road to Jaganmohan Palace's paintings, and end inside Amba Vilas. On a Sunday, stay for the lights.



Mysore

Every number is a tip around the map, in its colour. Every star is a quest.



- Palaces, Spires, a Goddess
- Lakes, Hills, Horse Carts
- Dosa, Pak and Pulao
- Silk, Sandal, Kumkum
- Stages, Puppets, Palm Leaves
- Mats, Trains, Buses
- our Zostel
- a quest (the list is round the map)
- circled: don't miss it
- a dot: its true place, where a number stands aside
- a drawing by a number: what is there
- landmarks
- parks and gardens
- orchards
- a station
- the railway
- the metro

QUESTS

Dares for the brave and the curious. The map marks each with a star; tick them off as you go.

- 4** Be on the forecourt when the palace switches on. On a Sunday or a public holiday, or any night of Dasara, stand on the forecourt after dark and wait for nearly a hundred thousand bulbs to come on at once.
- 24** Climb all thousand steps of Chamundi Hill. Start at the hill's foot early, stop at the Nandi half-way and take the bus back down from the top.
- 25** Count the bells round the Nandi's neck. One block of black granite, carved in the 1660s, walk round him slowly, shoes off.
- 6** Taste Mysore pak soft and crisp, side by side. Buy a small box of each at Guru Sweet Mart and decide which the palace cook meant.
- 11** Eat a Mylari dosa before the queue forms. Go early to beat the queue; order the dosa with saagu and a coffee.
- 7** Photograph a stall of kumkum cones, with a yes. Find the conical piles of colour, ask the seller first, and buy a pinch to say thanks.
- 7** Buy a string of Mysore jasmine. Mysore mallige is sold strung, by the length; ask for a short one and wear it.
- 5** Find Raja Ravi Varma's paintings in Jagannathan. Walk the galleries until you find the painter who gave India its gods' faces.
- 5** Find a round Ganjifa card. Mysore made its own Ganjifa cards under Krishnaraja Wodeyar III; look for them in the gallery's cases.
- 18** Peek into the Maharaja's saloon car. The royal carriage of 1899 has its own kitchen and dining car.
- 28** Walk all the way round Kukkarahalli at sunrise. About 3.5 km under the trees: count the cormorants, and the pelicans in winter.
- 13** Walk through India's biggest walk-through aviary. At Karanj Lake, then watch the painted storks come home in the late afternoon.
- 3** Go round the palace walls in a tonga. Agree the route and the fare first; choose a well-kept horse.

- 32** Read a Malgudi story in R. K. Narayan's house. Bring Malgudi Days from Sapna Book House and read one story in the town where it was written.
- 17** See a play in Kannada at Rangayana. Pick an evening show and watch the actors, words or no words.
- 30** Take a Mysore-style yoga class in Gokulam. Ask at the hostel for a drop-in class: you work at your own pace, the teacher comes to your mat.
- 33** See the torchlight parade at Dasara. On Vijayadashami evening at the Banimantap ground: get a pass ahead.
- 27** Smell real Mysore sandalwood oil. At the factory's museum, then compare it with a bazaar 'sandal' stick.

REACHING US

Gokulam, Mysore's yoga district

Zostel Mysore. A peaceful hostel on a quiet Gokulam bylane. A rooftop lounge, a community kitchen, common areas, mixed and female dorms. Landmark: Corner House on Valmiki Road, we're 30 metres on.

10 Two Gothic spires over the city

St Philomena's Cathedral. Begun in 1936, neo-Gothic after Cologne Cathedral: twin spires among Asia's tallest church towers, stained glass and a crypt below the altar. A working cathedral: dress covered and speak softly.

35 Tipu Sultan's island capital

Srirangapatna. About 15 km north on a Kaveri island: the capital from 1610, Tipu Sultan's until 1799. The Rangamahal's painted walls, the Gumbaz and the fort.

28 A lake walk between the university's trees

Kukkarahalli Lake. Dug in 1864, between the university and Rangayana: a shaded walkway of about 3.5 km, benches and birds, pelicans in winter. Half the neighbourhood's morning walk, a short ride from our Zostel.

11 Soft dosa, butter, a long queue

Original Vinayaka Mylari. In Nazard: the soft, buttery Mylari dosa with coconut chutney and saagu, idli and coffee. A short menu, a long weekend queue; many share the name, so ask for the original.

26 Mysore silk off the loom

The Government Silk Weaving Factory (KSIC). Mysore silk is a registered name: pure mulberry silk with gold zari, woven by the state's KSIC at its factory here. Its showroom sells from the source; ask to see the looms.

20 Wax musicians and their instruments

Melody World Wax Museum. Wax musicians and well over a thousand instruments from India and the world, from veenas to electric guitars, near the zoo. An hour's shelter from the afternoon heat, between the zoo and Karanj.

18 Steam engines and a Maharani's saloon

Mysore Rail Museum. Open-air since 1979, India's second rail museum: vintage engines, an Austin rail-motor car and the Maharani's saloon of 1899 with its own kitchen. Across the road from the station.

3 Round the palace by horse cart

A tonga round the palace. Horse-drawn carriages still wait by the palace and trot visitors round its walls and the old circles. Agree the route and the fare first, and choose a well-kept horse.

34 Bamboo, birds and a botanical garden

Lingambudhi Lake. The birdwatchers' lake in the quiet south-west: an hour's embankment walk through bamboo, herons and egrets, and a botanical garden of 2020 with a butterfly park. Go early with binoculars.

15 Old-school tiffin in Chamundipuram

Gayatri Tiffin Room (GTR). A breakfast institution in Chamundipuram: dosas, idli, vada and filter coffee in a room that has barely changed. Eat here on your way to the thousand steps.

27 Where the city's scent is made

The Government Sandalwood Oil Factory. The city's sandalwood oil factory, merged in 1918 into the makers of Mysore Sandal soap: now with a sandalwood museum and a shop for oil, soap and incense. Beware cheap 'sandal' elsewhere.

22 A hundred and fifty sculptures of sand

Mysore Sand Sculpture Museum. India's first sand sculpture museum, opened in 2014 at the foot of Chamundi Hill: about 150 sculptures by M. N. Gowri. A quirky half-hour on the way to the hill.

21 A white palace after St Paul's

Lalitha Mahal. Built in 1921 for the Viceroy's stays, pure white, its dome after St Paul's in London; a heritage hotel since 1974. See its front from the road on the way to Chamundi Hill.

13 Storks, butterflies and a walk-through aviary

Karanji Lake and its aviary. The zoo's lake: a nature park, a butterfly park and India's biggest walk-through aviary, painted storks and pelicans, a walkway of about 2.6 km. Come when the birds fly home.

37 Terraces and fountains below a dam

Brindavan Gardens and the KRS dam, below the KRS dam on the Kaveri, north-west of the city: flower terraces and fountains laid out 1927 to 1932, and an evening musical fountain. Check the show's days first.

31 Our landmark, with ice cream

Corner House, Valmiki Road. The ice-cream parlour on Valmiki Road is our landmark: we're 30 metres east, on the left. The easiest dessert in Gokulam after a day of palaces.

12 The south's wildlife, by Karanj Lake

The Regional Museum of Natural History. Opened in 1995 on Karanj Lake's bank: the plants, animals and rocks of southern India, and a bird-watching tower. Pair it with the lake's aviary.

29 A princess's mansion full of folk art

Jayalakshmi Vilas and the Folklore Museum. Built in 1905 above Kukkarahalli Lake for a princess; now the university's Folklore Museum: thousands of folk objects, Yakshagana costumes and puppets, under carved wooden pillars.

23 The city's goddess on its hill

Chamundeswari Temple, Chamundi Hill. On Chamundi Hill, about 1060 m up: the goddess who, by the story, slew the buffalo-demon Mahishasura, whose name the city carries. Its tower probably dates from the 1600s. Go early on a weekday; dress for a temple.

14 One of the oldest zoos in the world

Mysore Zoo (Sri Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens). Begun in 1892 from Chamarajendra Wodeyar X's menagerie: about 157 acres and some 168 species, a short walk from the palace, with more elephants than any zoo in India. Walking shoes, water, no feeding.

6 Mysore pak from where it began

Guru Sweet Mart. A tiny shop by Devaraja Market, run by the family of the palace cook who, by their story, first made Mysore pak for the Maharaja: gram flour, sugar, a lot of ghee. Buy one box soft, one crisp.

9 The pulao people queue for

Hotel Hanumanthu. In Mandi Mohalla, the city's old address for meat: mutton and country-chicken pulao, mutton chops, shared tables. There's always a lunch line, and it moves. Not one for vegetarians.

16 Palm leaves, older than the palace

The Oriental Research Institute. Since 1891: tens of thousands of palm-leaf manuscripts in the Jubilee Hall of 1887, opposite Crawford Hall. A copy of the Arthashastra was identified here. Ask at the desk what you may see.

32 Where Malgudi was written

R. K. Narayan's house. R. K. Narayan, who invented Malgudi, wrote here for decades; the city saved the house and opened it as a museum in 2016: his desk, books and awards. A short walk from our Zostel.

25 A bull carved from one rock

The Nandi on Chamundi Hill. Shiva's bull, carved in the 1660s from one block of black granite, about 4.9 m tall, half-way up the steps, bells and chains round his neck. A road reaches him too. Mind the monkeys.

24 A thousand steps before breakfast

The thousand steps, Chamundi Hill. Laid in 1659, about a thousand steps up Chamundi Hill: the city's morning workout. Start early, stop at the Nandi half-way for the view, take the bus down. Hide snacks from the monkeys.

7 Kumkum cones, jasmine and a thousand stalls

Devaraja Market. Stone arcades from 1885 on Sayyaji Rao Road, over a thousand shops: cones of coloured kumkum, jasmine by the length, spices, incense and the Nanjangud banana. Ask before you photograph.

8 Books and Malgudi near the station

Sapna Book House. A big bookshop by the station: pick up R. K. Narayan's Malgudi Days before visiting his house, and a Kannada phrasebook for the autos. Good shelter from the afternoon heat.

17 Kannada theatre by the lake

Rangayana. A theatre institute with its own repertory company and school, by Kukkarahalli Lake: the country's only government-sponsored repertory theatre. Plays mostly in Kannada, a festival every year.

33 Where Dasara's procession ends

Banimantap and the torchlight parade ground. On Dasara's last day the elephant procession ends here, and the torchlight parade fills the ground at night: bands, horses, fireworks. Stand seats are by pass, so plan ahead.

MATS, TRAINS, BUSES

- 2** Buses to Ooty, Coorg and everywhere
- The KSRTC suburban bus stand. Long-distance buses to Bengaluru, Ooty, Coorg and Wayanad, all Zostel places. City buses to Chamundi Hill and Brindavan leave from the City Bus Stand by the palace.
- 19** Trains to Bengaluru and the south
- Mysuru Junction. The station, a heritage building of the late 1940s: frequent trains to Bengaluru and Chennai. Our Zostel is about 2.5 km away: use the prepaid auto counter.
- 30** Mats, coffee roasters and quiet lanes
- Gokulam, the yoga quarter. Our neighbourhood is the yoga quarter: the Mysore style of Ashtanga, each student at their own pace, has been taught here since the 1940s. Shalas, cafes and coffee roasters in leafy lanes.
- 36** A small airport, south of town
- Mysore Airport (Mandakalli). Built by the princely state in 1940, re-opened in 2010: a few domestic flights, about 15 km from our Zostel. Most travellers fly to Bengaluru and come on by train or road.

PALACES, SPIRES, A GODDESS

- 1** The big clock, where the city meets
- Dodda Gadiyara (the Silver Jubilee Clock Tower). 'The big clock', on the circle by the palace's north gate, beside the town hall: its sister Chikka Gadiyara faces the market's south gate. Locals give directions from both: start your walks here.
- 4** The palace that switches
- Mysore Palace (Amba Vilas). The Wodeyars' palace, rebuilt 1897 to 1912 in Indo-Saracenic domes and arches: stained glass and a painted durbar hall inside. After dark on Sundays, holidays and every night of Dasara, nearly a hundred thousand bulbs light it up.
- 5** The royals' other house, now all paintings
- Jagannathan Palace. The royals' house while the big palace was rebuilt, finished in 1861: now an art gallery of Ravi Varma, Mysore-school paintings in gold leaf, old instruments and Ganjifa cards.