

Culture of Kolkata

Often called the cultural capital of the nation, Kolkata offers a rich tapestry of art and culture for visitors to explore and enjoy. Known for their welcoming nature, Kolkattans are easy going by nature and can make any outsider feel at home immediately. No wonder that many foreigners who come to the city either for work or leisure end up setting their homes here.

Adda (which is often mistaken for gossip, but is quite different from it) is yet another feature ingrained in most Kolkattans, and you will find people debating various topics with enthusiasm at tea stalls, coffee shops etc. In fact, Coffee House located on College Street was once famous as the seat of intellectuals, where students and stalwarts discussed and debated on almost everything under the sun. Though it has lost much of its sheen today, it still attracts a sizable community of adda enthusiasts who can spend hours discussing the present state of affairs in the country as well as the world scenario over a few cups of tea or coffee.

Kolkattans, especially the Bengalis, are often mocked for their love of bhaat-maach (rice and fish curry). It's often said that the way to a Bengali's heart is through his stomach. Quite naturally, food features high on the list of this city. Be it the pice hotels in different localities where pocket-friendly Bengali cuisine is served, the trendy Domino's and Mac's where burgers, sandwiches, and pizzas are the order of the day, or the roadside stalls where rolls, singharas, alur chops (potato fritters) and peyaji's ((onion fritters) fly off the shelves fast, you will find them all in this city. In fact, food in Kolkata is an amalgamation of foreign and local choices, and it's not an uphill task to find anything from Tibetan and Italian to Spanish, Mediterranean, Japanese, or any other world cuisine here.

Festivals and fairs are a staple diet of Kolkata and it's often said that people here have baro maashey tero parbon (13 festivals in 12 years)! Durga Puja is the biggest festival that's unmatched in grandeur, but the city celebrates other festivals too like Holi, Id, Christmas etc with zeal and fervor. Fairs, especially during the winter season, are another trademark of the city, and you can find garments, handmade crafts, homemade pickles, jams, and much more in these fairs. A prominent fair in Kolkata is the Book Fair, which is usually held for two weeks starting from the last week of January.

In today's age of cinemas and multiplexes, theatres and jatras are yet another significant aspect of Kolkata's cultural heritage. Drawing inspiration from recent incidents or works of literary geniuses, these stage shows still boast of a steady patronage in the city.

To experience all these and more, you must visit Kolkata - the City of Joy.