

Celebrate Diwali And Get A Taste Of Indian Culture In Durban



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Travel

I cover travel with a focus on undiscovered gems and eco-adventures



Victoria Street Market
DURBAN TOURISM

Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, is perhaps the most well-known Indian celebration. With Hindus living nearly in every corner of the world, this holiday honoring the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil is widely celebrated in autumn in the Northern Hemisphere and during spring in the Southern Hemisphere. The South African city of [Durban](#) is no exception. In fact, this bustling port city has the largest population of Indians outside of the subcontinent, making it an Afro-Indian melting pot with its own vibrant culture.

Located on the shores of the Indian Ocean in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, Durban is famous for its sun-kissed golden beaches lining the Golden Mile and the famed Victoria Street Market. Crossing the Indian Ocean to work as contract laborers on sugarcane fields in the 1860s, many Indians stayed in Durban, putting down roots, continuing with traditions and shaping the culture of the second largest city in South Africa.



Victoria Street Market
DURBAN TOURISM

It was in sunny Durban that Mahatma Gandhi, who came to South Africa as a young lawyer, spent his formative years. Here, he developed his political views, mainly “Satyagraha,” a form of peaceful resistance to injustice, that he later brought to India’s fight for freedom. It was also here in 1994 that Nelson Mandela cast his first vote in a democratic South Africa.

On a visit to Durban, you can pay tribute to these heroes, get a taste of the famous Bunny Chow and, while you are at it, celebrate Diwali alongside the city’s residents.

Durban Diwali Festival



Diwali Festival
DURBAN TOURISM

In its 21st year, the [Durban Diwali Festival](#) (October 18-20), will take place at the Durban Old Drive. Hosted by the [South African Hindu Maha Sabha](#), this free festival has everything you'd expect: delicious food, a spirited atmosphere, entertainment, rich tapestries and a colorful display of fashion and furnishings. Enjoy local entertainment, sample Indian street food and splurge on handmade souvenirs. There's a temple onsite to offer prayers and a float procession.

Shop At Victoria Street Market



Victoria Street Market
DURBAN TOURISM

The famous Indian Market, on which the current [Victoria Street Market](#) sits, started back in 1910. After being destroyed by a fire, it reinvented itself in 1973, and now attracts scores of residents and travelers to its indoor bazaar. Have your own concoction of curry powder prepared at any of the spice stores, browse garment shops, and try on Indian and Zulu jewelry. You'll find men and women in traditional kurtas and saris speaking Zulu, Hindi and English, selling spices, scarves and other treasures. On the ground floor, you'll find a food market offering fresh seafood, meat and produce.

Chow Down On Curry and Bunny Chow



Bunny Chow at Cane Cutters
DENVER GOVENDER

Spicy and flavorful Indian curry has been a fixture in Durban’s culinary scene for years. The city’s signature dish, Bunny Chow, originally crafted by indentured laborers, exemplifies the fusion that is Durban. Hallowed-out warm bread creates a portable bowl in which a savory vegetarian or meat-based curry sits. It’s served with a side of sliced carrots, onion salad and chilli. And don’t worry, no bunnies were harmed in its making; “bunny” actually refers to the Indian merchants who sold curry. This delicious treat can be enjoyed at food stands and restaurants throughout the city.

If you are looking for more authentic Indian cuisine, head to the famed curry buffet at the [Oyster Box](#) in Umhlanga Rocks, 10 miles north of the city center. Savor several curries, paired with biryani or naan, at the Mediterranean-inspired, luxurious Ocean Terrace hotel facing the ocean.

Visit Mahatma Gandhi’s Former Stomping Grounds



Phoenix Settlement
ASHLEY NORMAN

A short drive outside of Durban brings you to the Phoenix Settlement, part of the [Inanda Heritage Route](#) that winds through a valley dotted with historical sites. The original Phoenix Settlement, established in 1904, represents Gandhi's fight for justice and peace in his adopted home. Today, you'll find a replica of his home, a building turned museum that once housed the printing press of his newspaper, *Indian Opinion*, his son Manilal's house and the Phoenix Interpretation Center.

If you are looking to venture beyond the settlement, follow the Inanda Heritage Route to the [Ohlange Institute](#). This is where Dr. John L. Dube, Gandhi's neighbor and the first president of the African National Congress (ANC), established an educational institution. It was here that Nelson Mandela cast his first vote in 1994. The route also includes the Inanda Seminary, one of the oldest schools for girls in South Africa.

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I am an animal lover and globetrotter based in New York City. My love of adventure has taken me all around the world, from Australia to Zanzibar. I am passionate about ... **Read More**