

FORTS IN MAHARASHTRA AND ITS OVERVIEW

By Reshma Dhande & Shweta Satao

The literal meaning of Maharashtra is “the great nation”, which is the land of Shivaji Maharaj. The land where you can still hear the echoes of the wars fought and where you can witness the glorious past and rich culture of the Marathas and the Mughals. Both empires created many pieces of architectural wonder that remained here to tell the stories of the bygone times. There are nearly 350 forts in Maharashtra that attract many architecture enthusiasts from different parts of the nation. Here are most popular forts that’ll make you fall in love with the history of Maharashtra.

1. Sinhagad Fort



Located close to the city of Pune, the Sinhagad Fort gets its name from the Marathi word Lion. One of the more popular forts in Maharashtra, this fort is believed to have been conquered by Tanaji Malusare’s brother from the Mughals.

At the fort you will see a few old stables that were believed to have been used by the Maratha army to keep their horses. There is also a memorial built in honour of Tanaji Malusare, a brave Maratha warrior. Inside the ruins of the fort also lies the tomb of Rajaram Chhatrapati and a small temple dedicated to Goddess Kali.

- **Location:** Thoptewadi
- **Visiting Hours:** 5 am to 9 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Pune

2. Rajgad Fort



The Rajgad Fort was built on the Murumbadevi Dongar Hills in the Sahyadris range. It was the first capital of Shivaji Maharaj, and is also believed to be the place where Shivaji's wife, Saibai, spent her last few days.

Inside the fort lie the ruins of palaces, caves and a few water cisterns. The fort is a popular trekking spot for locals and tourists who throng the place in the monsoon. From the top of the Rajgad Fort, one can see landscape views of the gorgeous Sahyadris.

- **Location:** Balekilla Road
- **Visiting Hours:** Open all day
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Pune



3. Shivneri Fort



Considered to be the birthplace of Shivaji Maharaj, the Shivneri Fort holds high esteem in Maratha and Maharashtrian history. The fort was constructed in a unique triangular shape and had many mosques, ponds and a tomb inside. Here, there is a temple that is dedicated to Goddess Shivai Devi and a massive chain gate at the entrance.

Noteworthy sites here are the statues of Jijabai and a young Shivaji. The climb up to the fort is pretty easy. However, if you are good at trekking, you can try going up to the fort from the chain route located on the western side of the fort (this would be a bit challenging for amateurs).

- **Location:** Junnar
- **Visiting Hours:** All Day
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Pune



4. Tung Fort



A small fort located on the outskirts of Pune, the Tung Fort was built by Adil Shah some time before 1600 CE. It has seen plenty of wars, the famous ones being between the Marathas and the Moghuls. The Tung Fort is well known for its conical and oval shape and as a trail for experienced trekkers.

Inside the fort there are steep steps that lead to a former water reservoir that now lies in ruins. The climb up to the Tung Fort is quite difficult to navigate through, so it's best to go with a guide if you are planning a trek to the fort.

- **Location:** Pune
- **Visiting Hours:** 9 am to 6 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Pune
- Check out some amazing hotels in Pune to stay during the trip to make it even better



5. Pratapgad Fort



The Pratapgad Fort is an important fort built by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Actually, the main fort consists of two forts (one at the top of the hill and the other at the south east end). The

Pratapgad Fort is known for the battle of Pratapgad that took place between Shivaji Maharaj and Afzal Khan.

Popular attractions at the fort are the tomb of Afzal Khan and the temple dedicated to Goddess Bhavani. Just about 25 kilometres away from the Pratapgad Fort is the popular hill station Mahabaleshwar, which is an ideal place for a weekend getaway.

- **Location:** Mahabaleshwar
- **Visiting Hours:** 6 am to 8 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Pune

6. Malhargad Fort (Sonori Fort)



Named after the Hindu God Malhargad, this fort lies about 30 kilometres away from Pune. To get to the fort, one has to climb a hill in the Sonori village. Although the outer structure of the fort remains intact, the interiors are in ruins.

The only thing that remains here are the old water tanks and the Lord Mahadev and Lord Khandoba temples. From the fort you can see panoramic views of the Jejuri village.

- **Location:** Pune
- **Visiting Hours:** 6 am to 8 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Pune

7. Purandar Fort



The Purandar Fort is believed to be the place where Shivaji's son, Sambhaji, was born. Situated about 50 kilometres away from Pune, the Purandar Fort is one of the few in Maharashtra that has two levels within its premises.

The upper level is called the Balekilla, while the lower one is known as Machi. At the site of Balekilla there is big gate called the Dilli Darwaza that is a great spot for photography. The lower level does not have any noteworthy sites. In the Purandar Fort, one can also see the Kedareshwar temple that was built in honour of Shiva.



- **Location:** Near Pune
- **Visiting Hours:** 9 am to 5 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Pune



8. Korigad Fort



The Korigad Fort is located close to Lonavala and sits at a height of 923 metres above sea level. The main feature of the fort is that, till this day, most of its structure is intact.

Inside the fort, there are many temples where prayers are offered daily. Of all the forts in Maharashtra, this one is the most popular trekking spot. Adventure sports lovers come here from Lonavala and cities like Mumbai. Close to the Korigad Fort is the Aamby Valley.

- **Location:** [Lonavala](#)
- **Visiting Hours:** Open All Day
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Lonavala
- Stay in one of these amazing [hotels in Lonavala](#) that are sure to make your trip comfortable

9. Lohagad Fort



One of the most strategically important forts for the Marathas, the Lohagad Fort was conquered twice by Shivaji Maharaj. This imposing fort stands tall at a height of 1033 metres. Inside the fort, there is a massive chhatra, an elevated, dome-shaped pavilion that now lies in ruin. It is a great spot for photography.

You will also find a few old doors and carvings at the fort. From the fort, take a trip a little away and visit the Bhaja Caves, one of the most fascinating sights in the region.

- **Location:** Lohagad Trek Road.
- **Visiting Hours:** Daily till 6 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Lonavala.



10. Ghangad Fort



Perched at a height of 3000 feet above sea level, the Ghangad Fort was formerly under the Maratha Empire. It changed hands in 1818 and was taken over by the British. Once believed to be a jail, the fort now lies in ruins.

There isn't much to see at the fort except for a few ruined structures, an old water cistern and a pond. To gain access to some points at the fort, there are a few ladders installed. From the fort, one can see panoramic views of the Ekole village.

- **Location:** Ekole
- **Visiting Hours:** All Day
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Lonavala

11. Tikona (Vitandgad) Fort



A stunning fort in Maval, not much is known of the Tikona Fort. The fort is designed to resemble a triangular pyramid. This is why it is called Tikona. It was the battlefront in a few wars between the Marathas and the Mughals and once also belonged to the Nizams.

Noteworthy sites inside the fort are its large doors, the Trimbakeshwar Mahadev temple and the the Satvahan caves. The Tikona fort is also a popular trekking destination among the people of Pune and Mumbai.

- **Location:** Tikona Peth
- **Visiting Hours:** 8 am to 5 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Kamshet

12. Panhala Fort



One of the more famous forts in Maharashtra, the Panhala Fort was the battleground in many wars, the most famous being the Battle of Pavan Khind. The fort is believed to be the former home of Tarabai, the queen of Kolhapur. On the fort premises one can see the Andhar Bavadi, an underground well, the Kalavantinicha Mahal, and the Amberkhana, the site of the three granaries inside the fort.

There are also a few temples within the fort, one of them dedicated to Sambhaji II. The other is the famous Ambabai Temple, believed to be where Shivaji used to offer prayers before going on expeditions.

- **Location:** Panhala
- **Visiting Hours:** Open All Day
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Kolhapur

13. Vijaydurg Fort



The oldest fort in Sindhudurg, Vijaydurg is an imposing sea fort that lies on the coastline that was built during the reign of Raja Bhoja II. The fort was an important fortress of the Maratha Empire; it was used as a base to anchor their ships.

The fort earned the name Eastern Gibraltar, as it was almost impossible to conquer. The fort has seen many battles taking place here, but it has withstood all of them and till this day it lies intact. The best time to visit the fort is when the annual World Helium Day festival takes place in August.

- **Location:** Vijaydurg
- **Visiting Hours:** 8 am to 6 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Rajapur Road

14. Sindhudurg Fort



Situated on the shores of the Malvan region, the Sindhudurg Fort is spread over 43 acres of land. It took about three years to construct. The fort has a massive wall that served two purposes: it protected the fort from the sea and it prevented enemies from trespassing.

Within the limits of the fort are a few houses and temples dedicated to lords Maruti, Mahadeo, and Mahapurush. Entry to the fort during the monsoon is restricted because of the high tides that reach the top of the fort in the rainy season.

- **Location:** Malvan
- **Visiting Hours:** 9 am to 5 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Sindhudurg

15. Raigad Fort



This is one of the most important forts in Maharashtra. The capital of Shivaji's empire, the Raigad Fort, stands 2690 feet high above sea level in the Sahyadri mountain range. The fort has a very interesting piece of history behind it.

Did you know that it was the place where Shivaji was coronated as the King of the Maratha Empire? The Raigad Fort also happens to be the place where Shivaji breathed his last. Despite it being attacked by the British, the fort today is still intact. Some important sites here are the Hirkani Buruj and the famous Maha Darwaja.

- **Location:** Raigad
- **Visiting Hours:** 8 am to 6 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Veer Railway Station

16. Daulatabad Fort



The Daulatabad Fort is famous for its design. The fort was designed to make it difficult for intruders to find an entrance. To get to the top of the fort one needs to climb up a total of 750 steps that are carved entirely of rock.

On the premises of the fort one can see a tall tower, a few rock carvings and canons that were used to protect the fort from trespassers. Here, you can also get to see the ruins of the Chini Mahal and a long ascending tunnel.

- **Location:** Daulatabad
- **Visiting Hours:** 8 am to 6 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Daulatabad

17. Murud-Janjira



A marvellous spectacle, the Murud Janjira fort is in the sea. The fort has a few escape gates, 26 rounded bastions, a ruined mosque, and a pool that today lies empty. Inside the fort are also three gigantic cannons that are famously called Kalalbangdi, Landa Kasam, and Chavri.

To get to the fort, one has to take a boat that departs from the dock. You can either rent a private boat for Rs. 600 or choose to book a ticket for Rs. 20 per passenger.

- **Location:** Murud
- **Visiting Hours:** 7 am to 6 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Nagothane

18. Suvarnadurg Fort



The Suvarnadurg fort in Dapoli is one of the few forts to be built in the sea. It often changed hands until the British took over it completely. To get to the fort one has to take a ferry from Harnai. Just like it is with other forts in Maharashtra, the Suvarnadurg has a dry moat encircling the structure.

On the main gate of the fort, one can see a carving of Lord Hanuman and a few animals. There is another gate at the east end; however, to get through the gate, you have to pass through thorny bushes. Inside the fort a few ruined buildings believed to be granaries and ammunition godowns.

- **Visiting Hours:** All Day
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Khed

19. Prabalgad Fort



The Prabalgad fort also called the Kalavantin Durg is located between Panvel and Matheran. A visit to the Prabalgad fort is only suitable for experienced trekkers as the climb to the fort is very difficult. Although there are steps that are cut from the rock, the pathways is very steep. The climb to the fort takes about 3 hours to reach.

Once at the fort, there are many stone structures that lie in ruins and a Ganesh Temple. Once you have finished exploring the fort, you can visit the Karnala Bird Sanctuary and Zenith Falls that are located close by.

- **Visiting Hours:** All Day
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Panvel

20. Fort Bassein



Lovingly called the Vasai Fort, the Fort Bassein is located about 55 kilometres away from Mumbai in the Vasai village. Getting to the fort is very easy as you don't have to climb up any hill or mountain. The fort's main structure is predominantly intact, however, the insides of the fort now lie in ruins.

Inside the fort, one can see a few chapels that lie in ruins and a few beautiful carvings on the inner walls of the fort. The ruins of the St. Anthony's church also lie within the premises of the fort. The fort is a favorite weekend destination for many from Mumbai and Thane.

- **Visiting Hours:** 8 am to 5 pm
- **Nearest Railway Station:** Vasai Road

Bio

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