

# Spirit of Dasara

*A visitor's guide to Mysore Dasara*



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# 1. Dasara, a canvas revealed...

A lot has been written about Mysore, a lot has been witnessed at Mysore - yet, there is more; to be written and to be seen. The aura of this city is only rising with each passing year. With Dasara festival, the fervor and fascination among the visitors have increased, making them throng the city, during the September-October months.

This guide invites you to know the essence, about the city you are in, and the festival you will be witnessing. It unravels the history and heritage of Dasara for you, with rich experiences from the past and visual frames. To cherish your time at Mysore, this guide will give you a glimpse into varied attractions within Mysore: places you must see, things that you must buy, eateries you must visit and memories that you must weave...

## *Welcome to Mysore!*

It's difficult to introduce Mysore to you as there is so much it offers - ensuring a delightful time for a visitor and a resident alike. Mysore (a.k.a., Mysooru) - got its name from the resident demon of Mysore, Mahishasura, who was slain by Goddess Chamundeshwari, a story commonly narrated by grandparents to their grandchildren.



*Quaint Morning on Devaraj Urs Street, Mysore*

## 1. Dasara, a canvas revealed...



*Mahishasura: - the dreaded asura killed by Goddess Durga in a fierce battle, believed to have been fought near Mysore.*

The story goes that, Mahishasura, the evil Asura (not-God) had been granted a boon by Lord Brahma, that no man or God could conquer him. This was because he was very devoted towards Brahma. Also, he was able to change forms between a human and a buffalo ("Mahisha" means buffalo). Empowered with this boon, Mahishasura started his dread over the world by killing people mercilessly. He defeated the king of Gods, Indra, took control of Heaven and drove the other Gods out. Helpless, the Gods approached Lord Shiva for help; who suggested that each Deva or God, release their energies (or Shakti), and out of the accumulated energy, create a woman / Goddess. Thus was created Goddess Durga or Shakti. They armed her with power, armor, deadly devices, magical treasures and beauty. Goddess Durga fought Mahishasura, attacked his empire and after fighting for nine days, killed him - on the tenth of waxing moon. Durga was hence called Mahishasuramardhini, the slayer of Mahishasura. This event is said to have taken place nearby the present day city of Mysore. With Mysore famous for Chamundi Hills, this Goddess is known as Chamundeshwari, as well.

Mysore was among the most progressive princely states during the British rule. Its rulers were enlightened men who put the welfare of the people above personal or parochial interests.

**Mysore has a unique History:** From 1400 A.D, Mysore was the main city of the Hindu kings, the Wodeyars. Under a band of twenty five generations of rulers Mysore saw an era of pomp and glory. The Wodeyars belonged to Vijayanagar Empire till it collapsed in 1565 A.D. The last Wodeyar king was Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (1940-