



ILLUSTRATION CREDIT:  
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# Mumbai - Unforgettable City by the Sea

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She goes by many names and faces. The Portuguese, who shared a brief history with her, called her A ilha da boa vida or 'The island of good life'. Over time, she has been Mumbai, Mumbaim, Bombaim, Bom Bahia, Bombay, and then Mumbai all over again.

Koli fisherfolk and British officers, Portuguese traders and Parsi businessmen, Mughals and Marathas... A glorious multitude of people have lived and loved, worked and worshipped, within Mumbai's borders. To varying degrees, each have left indelible imprints of their presence on her history and geography, culture and cuisine, landscape and architecture.

It's a city that has seduced dreamers, been a playground for the rich and famous, a workplace for the ambitious, last hope for the marginalised and dispossessed, and a refuge for eccentrics... People come from anywhere and everywhere, but once settled in the city, they are Mumbaiiyyas. In that sense, there is only one Mumbai.

You could say Mumbai was stolen from the sea.

It was originally a single island, just 24 kilometres long and 4 kilometres at its widest, stretching from Dongri to Malabar Hill. Nearby, sharing the blue waters of the Arabian Sea, were six other lush, green islands: Colaba, Old Woman's Island, Mahim, Parel, Worli and Mazgaon. Over time, the seven islands were connected through a series of land reclamation projects. The nearby islands of Trombay and Salsette were also merged to form Greater Mumbai.

This dizzying megalopolis, the capital of Maharashtra, is one of the most densely peopled regions on earth. The last census, in 2011, puts the population of metropolitan Mumbai at about 21 million. And thousands of new migrants arrive every day, drawn by the hope of new opportunities.

The illustrations by Paul Fernandes in this book try to portray some of the vitality and madness that is Mumbai.