



Yuletide cheer at Park Street

Description



The entrance to the light show

As is often correctly termed, Kolkata is the city of lights. So it is not a big surprise when Yuletide cheer hits, this city lights up like a star that can be seen from heaven. It's Christmas, and in Bengali it is known as the Big Day! On this big day the happy people of Kolkata find it hard not to step out of their home dressed in their pullovers and coats; some still hang on to the age-old 'monkey cap'. But where do they go? Which is the most popular place in Kolkata during Christmas?



The heavy traffic of Park Street on Christmas evening

All the areas in general are crowded but nothing beats the popularity of Park Street when it comes to December 25th. It's not because it's the place which is decorated in the most beautiful way imaginable. It's not because it's the place with the best cafes and bakeries in town. It's not just because it's the coolest thing during Christmas. It's also a huge tradition of the city: December 25th, you have to see Park Street in its full glory.

Park Street has a heritage of being the centre of amusement for the British during their reign in this country, and part of that heritage has lived on to this day. The Christmas tradition of Park Street dates back almost a century. Of course as times have passed Christmas itself has changed and with it so has the celebration at Park Street.

Strings of soft electric blue light are hung from both sides of the road and that in a way becomes like a roof, turning the entire stretch of the street into one big, giant hallway. Then the great shops of Park Street, which by themselves are quite the legends, have their own special decoration. Be it a Christmas tree made from books at *Oxford*, or a giant star in front of *Bar-B-Q*, each place welcome you with its own unique flavour of Christmas.



Santa, the bringer of gifts and joy

But then again it's Christmas and its Park Street. You would be lucky to stand alone in the street at peace let alone find a place to sit in a restaurant or cafÃ© this day. But the crowd all in all is part of the fun. Imagine a huge pack of people bustling through the streets all wearing their own Santa Caps, and clicking photographs of each other beside the clay Santa outside Flurys or the Santa of lights opposite McDonalds. It is a joyous occasion of immense fun and pleasure.

Things change, and not just in Park Street, but everywhere. The *Music World* that was a huge attraction on Christmas, is closed now. For a lot of people who only found time to visit Park Street once a year will be disappointed after its closing. But instead, there is another to take its place, a bakery, known as *Au-bon-pain*. It serves French confectionery, and since it is in Park Street, we can all assume that it will be scrumptious.

Park Street is a lot of things to the people of Kolkata. But to many it is special only for one day. The Big Day. People expect big things from this day, since it's Christmas, people expect magic. And in a way magic does happen at Park Street on Christmas day. The street comes alive.

Christmas could signify a lot of things for a lot of people. for some its the birth of Christ, others just celebrate it as part of a popular culture and for some its just another holiday. Park Street takes all these reasons for celebration and puts them together in a box, wraps it up with a shiny wrapper and a bright red ribbon to give it a festive touch â?? like a Christmas present.

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Category

1. Potpourri

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