

Arcot is a town and urban area of [Ranipet district](#) in the [state](#) of [Tamil Nadu](#), India. Located on the southern banks of [Palar River](#), the city straddles a [trade route](#) between [Chennai](#) and [Bangalore](#) or [Salem](#), between the Mysore Ghat and the [Javadi Hills](#) (Javvadhu malai). As of 2011, the city had a population 55,955. The sweet **makkan peda** is a local speciality while Arcot [biryani](#), a rice-based traditional food, is also served here. [Arcot Mudaliars](#) and Muslims are the dominant communities followed by Naidus and Vanniyars in Arcot town.

Etymology

Its name is commonly believed to have been derived from the Tamil words *aaru* (River) + *kaadu* (forest). However, *arkaadu* meant 'a forest of fig trees'.

Jainism was flourishing in this part of Tamil Land who were otherwise known as Arugar most probably corrupted form of Arhants or the perfected souls. The word Arugar is found in many ancient literary works and places dominant with Arugars were related to them viz Arakonam, Arumbakkam, Aruvur, etc. Not far away from present day Arcot (Anglicized form of Aarkaadu) there is a place called Arungundram. Hence Arcot or Aarkaadu would have derived its name from Arugarkaadu.

History

The town's strategic location has led to it being repeatedly contested and prompted the construction of a formidable fortress. The [Nawabdom of the Carnatic](#) was established by the [Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb](#), who in 1692 appointed [Zulfiqar Ali Khan](#) as the first [Nawab](#) of the [Carnatic](#). In 1740, the [Maratha](#) forces came down upon Arcot. They attacked the Nawab, Dost Ali in the pass of Damalcherry. In the war that followed, Dost Ali, one of his sons Hasan Ali, and a number of prominent persons lost their lives. This initial success at once enhanced Maratha prestige in the south. From Damalcherry the Marathas proceeded to Arcot. It surrendered to them without much resistance. Chanda Saheb and his son were arrested and sent to Nagpur. In 1751, The English captured the town during the conflict between the United Kingdom and France for control of [South India](#). The English successfully held it with only 500 men against the French and the Nawab, [resisting for 56 days](#) (23 September to 14 November 1751). The enemy army eventually dissolved and its leader, [Chanda Shahib](#), was killed. [Mohammed Ali Khan Walajah](#) took over as Nawab, effectively serving as a vassal of the British.

His successors soon ran up enormous debts at the hands of English speculators. In 1801, the town was annexed by the [British East India Company](#).

In the 20th century, Arcot declined in importance and was incorporated into [Vellore District](#). Arcot has the tomb of the famous 18th-century Sufi Saint Tipu Mastan Aulia. The story goes that from the blessings of Tipu Mastan Aulia, Hyder Ali had a son [Tippu Sultan](#) of [Mysore](#), whom he appropriately named after the saint.

In Kaspā, Sri Vaikuntha Varadharaja Perumal Temple is situated. The speciality of this temple is that it is the only temple where the Lord Vishnu statue is erected in the middle with Sri Devi and Bamadevi at its sides. This type of posture of Lord Perumal is only present in this temple. Moreover, the three statues are designed using a single stone. This temple was built during the [Pallava](#) era.

Geography

Arcot is located at [12.9°N 79.33°E](#).^[2] It has an average elevation of 164 metres (538 ft).