



# Agra Fort



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## About the Tutorial

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Agra Fort is one of the largest forts in India. The fort was under Rajputs, Mughals, Suris, Marathas, and British. It was renovated by Mughal dynasty and in this period many structures were built inside the fort. The fort consists of many attractions like mosques, public and private halls, palaces, gardens, and other attractions. This tutorial will let you know about the history of the fort along with the structures present inside the fort.

## Audience

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This tutorial is made for the people who would like to know about the history of Agra Fort along with the interiors and design of the monument. This monument is visited by many people from India and abroad.

## Prerequisites

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Before entering the fort, the tourists must check that they are not carrying any edibles. Besides these, smoking is not allowed inside the fort. Mobile chargers, knives, pens, electronic items, wires, etc. are not allowed inside the complex though they can take camera with them. Tourists are also suggested to take an approved guide who can explain the different structures inside the fort.

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# 1. Agra Fort – Overview

Agra Fort was built by Raja Badal Singh and the fort was previously called Badalgarh Fort. Later on, Lodi dynasty captured the fort and after that the fort came under Mughal dynasty who renovated the fort. The fort is constructed in Agra and is around 3 km away from Taj Mahal.

The fort is constructed with red sandstone which was brought from Rajasthan. History says that around 4,000 builders worked daily to complete the construction which came to an end after eight years. Agra Fort is now listed under UNESCO World Heritage sites.



## Visiting Hours

The fort is opened for the public from sunrise to sunset. The fort is opened on all seven days for the public.

## Tickets

Tourists have to buy tickets in order to visit the fort. For a foreign tourist, the cost is Rs. 550 while an Indian have to pay only Rs. 40 to visit the fort. There is no ticket for the children below fifteen years.

There is also a provision for foreign tourists that if they purchase Agra Development Authority (ADA) toll tax ticket for Rs. 500, there is no need to purchase other toll tax tickets and they can visit many monuments like Taj Mahal, Akbar's Tomb, Fatehpur Sikri, Itmad-ud-Daulah Tomb on the same day. For the next day they will again have to by ADA tickets. No toll tax has to be paid on Fridays for any monument.

## 2. Agra Fort – Location

Agra Fort was a ruined fort called **Badalgarh** which was renovated by **Akbar**. Before him, **Lodis** also built many mosques and palaces inside the fort. The fort covers an area of 380,000 sq. ft. and is built on the banks of river Yamuna.

### History of Agra

Agra is one of the most popular cities in India as well as abroad as it consists of many beautiful monuments like Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Akbar's tomb, Chini ka Rauza and many others. People from various places in India and abroad come to visit the city.

### Agra under Rajputs

Agra is a very old city. It is described in the epic of Mahabharata in which its name was **Agrevana**. History also says that the city was founded by Raja Badal Singh who was a Rajput king. He was the one who built Badalgarh fort which was renovated by Akbar. In the 11th century, Mahmud of Ghazni attacked Agra. At that time Jayapala was the king of Agra.

### Agra under Lodis

Sikandar Lodi made Agra his capital in 1506 and after him his son Ibrahim Lodi ruled the city. Ibrahim Lodi was defeated by Babur in 1526 and Agra came into the hands of Mughals.

### Agra under Mughals

Babur occupied the throne of Delhi and Agra. He lived in the palace of Ibrahim Lodi that was built in the fort. He built a baoli for storing water. Humayun was coronated as a king here but in 1540, he was defeated by Sher Shah Suri. Mughals again captured the fort in 1555 but **Hemu**, the chief minister of Adil Shah again won it back. After defeating Hemu, Akbar shifted his capital to Agra. After this, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb ruled from here. Though Jahangir used to live in Delhi and Kashmir but he visited Agra and lived in Agra Fort. After Aurangzeb, Mughal dynasty declined. During the time of Mughals, the city was named **Akbarabad**.



### Agra under Suris

The Suris ruled Agra from 1540 to 1555. In 1540, **Sher Shah Suri** defeated **Humayun**, the Mughal Emperor. Sher Shah Suri built his tomb at Sasaram in Bihar. The tomb was built between 1540 and 1545. Sher Shah Suri died in 1545 and his son Adil Shah became the king. He was defeated by Humayun in 1555 but Hemu again captured the fort in 1556. Akbar defeated Hemu and recaptured the fort.

### Agra under Marathas

Marathas captured the fort in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and named the city Agra. In 1761, they were defeated by Ahmad Shah Abdali but Mahadji Shinde again captured Agra in 1785. In 1803, the Marathas were defeated by the British.

### Agra under British

After defeating the Marathas, Agra came under the control of British. In 1835, British made Agra their capital. During the mutiny of 1857, the British told that the revolt has reached Agra which was the reason of moving some of their troops to Delhi. Agra remained under the British till Independence.



### 3. Agra Fort – How to Reach?

Agra is connected to many cities through road and rail transport. Agra has also got its domestic airport called as **Agra Civil Enclave** which is five kilometres away from the city.

#### By Air

Agra has its own airport which is directly connected with Delhi, Varanasi, and Khajuraho. Nearby places connected by national and international airports are Delhi, Jaipur, Lucknow, and Gwalior. Many national and international flights arrive to and depart from these airports.



The distance of Agra from Delhi, Jaipur, Gwalior, and Lucknow are as follows:

- Agra to Delhi – 203km
- Agra to Jaipur – 232km
- Agra to Lucknow – 363km
- Agra to Gwalior – 118km

Tourists can come to Agra from these cities through road or rail transport.

## By Train

Agra has three main railway stations which are Agra Cantt, Agra Fort, and Raja Ki Mandi which are connected to all the major cities of India. Idgah and Agra City are two other railway stations but very few trains stop here. Many premium, superfast, mail and express trains pass through these railway stations.



Premium trains like Rajdhani, Shatabdi, and Double-Decker express connects nearby as well as distant places to Agra.

## By Road

Agra is connected to Delhi, Jaipur, Lucknow and other nearby cities by road. Tourists can either book taxis or take a bus to reach Agra.





The major bus stands of Agra are:

- Idgah Bus Stand
- Taj Depot
- Ford Depot
- Inter State Bus Terminal

## Local Transport

From railway station, bus stand, or airport, tourists can reach Agra Fort through various modes of local transport like cycle rickshaw, auto rickshaw, local buses, and taxis.



There are also tourist packages provided by various tour operators for visiting different places in Agra.

## 4. Agra Fort – History

Agra Fort was built by Rajput king named Raja Badal Singh who named it Badalgarh Fort. Later, Lodi dynasty built many palaces and mosques inside the fort. It was fully renovated during the Mughal dynasty. The renovation was started by Emperor Akbar. Then Jahangir and Shah Jahan built many other structures inside the fort.

### Lodi Dynasty

After the attack of Mahmud of Ghazni, Sikandar Lodi made Agra his capital. His son Ibrahim Lodi also made Agra his capital. Ibrahim Lodi was defeated by Babur in the first battle of Panipat in 1526. The Lodi dynasty built many palaces, wells and a mosque.

### Fort under Mughal Dynasty

After defeating Ibrahim Lodi, the first Mughal emperor **Babur** stayed in the fort. **Humayun** was sent by his father Babur to Agra and he captured the fort and got a huge treasure which included a big diamond. Humayun called the diamond as **Kohinoor**. This is the fort where Humayun was crowned as king. He was defeated by Sher Shah Suri in 1540 and the fort was under the Suris till 1555. Humayun defeated Adil Shah Suri son of Sher Shah Suri and again became the emperor.

Hemu captured Agra in 1556 and in the battle of Tughlaqabad. He defeated Tardi Beg Khan the leader of Mughal forces but he was defeated in the second battle of Panipat by Akbar.

Akbar then made Agra his capital and renovated the fort which was ruined. After Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan added many structures to the monument. Gardens, palaces, mosques and other structures were built in the fort. Shah Jahan was imprisoned by his son Aurangzeb in the fort and he died there after eight years.

### Post Mughal Period

After the decline of Mughal dynasty, the fort was captured by Marathas who were later defeated by Ahmad Shah Abdali in the third battle of Panipat. A Maratha named Mahadji Shinde again captured the fort in 1785. Later, the British captured the fort and it was under them till independence.

### Dimensions

The fort is built in a semi-circular way covering an area of 94 acre. It is built in front of the Yamuna River. The walls of the fort are 70 feet high.

### Monuments inside the Fort

Currently, there are more than two dozen monuments inside the fort though Akbar built around 5,000 monuments according to Abul Fazl out of which most of them are ruined. The monuments built by Akbar have the architecture of Gujarat and Bengal. Shah Jahan has also built white marble palaces and to do this he destroyed some of the monuments. The remaining monuments in the fort are Delhi Gate, Akbari Gate, Bengali Mahal, and others.

Shah Jahan built three mosques inside the fort named **Moti Masjid**, **Mina Masjid**, and **Nagina Masjid**. Besides these, Shah Jahan also built several palaces. In order to give more security to the fort, Aurangzeb built barbicans around two gates.



## 5. Agra Fort – Gates

There are four gates to enter the fort which are located on four sides.

### Khizri Gate

Khizri gate, also known as **water gate**, is in front of the river.

### Amar Singh Gate

Amar Singh was known as **Akbar Darwaza** but it was renamed by Shah Jahan as Amar Singh Gate. Amar Singh was a person who killed Salabat Khan in front of Shah Jahan and then tried to jump with his horse. He failed to jump as the horse died while jumping and Amar Singh was put to death. Shah Jahan was so admired by the bravery of Amar Singh that he renamed the Akbar Darwaza as Amar Singh Darwaza.



The gate has a drawbridge over the moat. On both sides of the gate, there are octagonal towers one on each side. The gate also has **Naubat Khana** which has pillared pavilions around it. The **bastions** on the gate are topped with **chhatris** along with inverted lotus.

### Delhi Gate

Akbar built the Delhi Gate between 1568 and 1569. Delhi Gate is on the western side and is the most sophisticated in comparison to other gates. This was the main entrance during the time of Akbar so for the security purpose, a draw bridge was made to cross the moat. The draw bridge can turn to 90 degree between outer and inner gates. There were sharp curves at the entrance to prevent invasions.



**Hathi Pol** is the inner gateway having one stone elephant on each side for security. The fort has double ramparts with circular bastions which are placed at regular intervals. Besides these trap points, ramps were also made for preventing invasion. The bastions of the gate are also very high.



### Ghazni Gate

Ghazni Gate belonged to the tomb of Mahmud Ghaznavi. The tomb stands at Ghazni which was brought by the British in 1842. At that time the governor general was Ellenborough who said that this gate belonged to Somnath temple as it was constructed with sandalwood. But it was a false claim made by the governor to win the hearts of Indian people.

There was no resemblance of Indian architecture in the gate. An Arabic script on top of the gate also proves that the gate does not belong to Somnath. The dimensions of the gate is 16.5 by 13.5 feet and weight is around half a ton. It was not brought to Somnath temple and also it has no relationship with Mughal architecture.



## 6. Agra Fort – Palaces

Many palaces were built by the kings of Lodi and Mughal dynasty. Most of them have been ruined and few are left. The description of some of them is as follows:

### Sheesh Mahal

Sheesh Mahal or glass palace was built in 1631 by Shah Jahan below Diwan-e-Khas. The palace is extra thick walled as it is said that it was used for taking baths. Mirrors have been fixed on the walls which enhances the beauty of the palace. As many numbers of mirrors have been placed in the walls and ceiling, the palace is called Sheesh mahal. The artificial lights inside the palace were used to illuminate it.

There are two chambers in the palace which have two passages. The chambers are connected with a broad arch that is placed in the center. Each chamber has a marble tank and has fountains for taking bath. The doors of the chambers are also built with marble in order to take steam bath. There are two inlets for water and two niches for lightening the candles.

### Akbari Mahal

Akbari mahal is ruined now but legends say that it was a big palace built between 1565 and 1569. The palace was built between Jahangiri Mahal and Musamman Burj. It had a large courtyard and many rooms for accommodation were built around it. Some rooms can still be seen and tourists can enter them through the gate which was designed in such a way that women can be completely veiled and secured.

There were two halls in the palace out of which one hall has three openings towards the river. The palace has Bengali Burj having a large hall with a dome. Near the burj, there is Akbari Baoli to provide water to the rooms surrounding it. The palace was built with red sandstone with flat ceilings and brackets.

### Jahangiri Mahal

Jahangiri Mahal was built between 1565 and 1569 AD. The arched portal of the palace has two windows along with towers on both sides. The palace includes rooms, corridors, verandas and many other structures which surrounded a courtyard. The entrance hall had **tibara dalans** and side rooms. It is said that the Rajput wives of Akbar lived in the palace. After that, the palace was used by **Nur Jahan**, the wife of Jahangir.



The palace also had a Peacock Hall or **Mayura Mandapa** which was a red sandstone apartment. The peacock hall had a courtyard and brackets each having a peacock with a serpent in its beak. The building includes chhajjas, brackets, and screens which enhances the beauty of the building.

### Jahangir's Hauz

Jahangir's Hauz was constructed by Jahangir in 1610. The height of the tank is 5 feet while the diameter is 8 feet. The circumference of the rim is 25 feet. The tank was movable and so it could be used inside the palace and during the camping period. There is a Persian inscription which tells that the tank was built in 1610 by Jahangir.

### Khas Mahal

Shah Jahan built the Khas Mahal between 1631 and 1640. It is also known as **Aramgah-i-Muqaddar** and was built between the Yamuna River and the Anguri Bagh. The pavilions of the palace were made up of white marbles.



Along with this, there is a tank in front of the palace which had fountains. The main hall of the palace, called **baradari**, was connected to the living rooms. The ceilings were beautifully carved while the walls had the pictures of the Mughal emperors.

### Anguri Bagh

Garden of grapes or Anguri Bagh was built in 1637 by Shah Jahan. It was built in front of Khas Mahal. The garden was divided into compartments with a fountain in the center. Good quality of grapes were grown in the garden. The garden was surrounded by apartments for royal ladies.





### Bengali Mahal

Bengali Mahal was built by Akbar having curved chhajas or Banglaur chhajjas. Two-storeyed underground apartments can be found under the table. On the northern side of this palace, Shah Jahan made other palaces which divided the Bengali palace in two parts called Akbari Mahal and Jahangiri Mahal.

### Shah Jahani Mahal

Shah Jahani Mahal is situated between Jahangiri Mahal and Khas Mahal. The palace consists of a large hall surrounded by living rooms. The palace was built with red sandstone plastered with a thick white plaster. The walls are painted with a colourful design of flowers. There is a **marble dalan** with five arches that are cusped. The double pillars support the arches which are externally protected by a chhajja.

### Musamman Burj

Musamman Burj, also known as **Saman Burj** and **Shah Burj**, is a tower in octagon shape. The structure was built near Diwan-e-Khas and it was built by Shah Jahan. During the reign of Akbar, he built a palace which was demolished by Jahangir to build other buildings. Then Shah Jahan chose this place to build Musamman Burj for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. The building was built between 1631 and 1640.



The dome of the building is crowned with copper while the floor resembled the board of a game called **pachchisi** though nobody played the game here. It was made only to cover the drains. There is a beautiful window or **jharokha** made up of marble. Along with it a chhajja was there on the support of brackets.

## 7. Agra Fort – Halls

### Diwan-e-Aam

The Diwan-e-Aam or the house of audience was built by Shah Jahan between 1631 and 1640. The hall measures 201 feet by 67 feet. The gateways of the hall are made of red sandstone. The hall is divided into three aisles. The front part of the hall has nine arches. The red sandstone building is plastered with white plaster to make it look like marble building. The emperor used to address the people from a raised rectangular chamber which is also made beautifully.



There is a throne room called **Takht-i-Murassa** which is built with marble. The royal ladies could see the ceremonies through the windows located on left and right sides of the chamber. There was a **baithak** below the chamber for the **wazir** to sit on it.

### Diwan-e-Khas

Diwan-e-Khas or hall of private audience was a hall in which the emperor dealt with ambassadors, kings, and other royal people of other kingdoms. Diwan-e-Khas was built in 1635 with two halls out of which the inner hall was called **Tambi Khana**.





The ceiling of the hall is covered with leaves made up of gold and silver to resemble sun's rays. The borders of the chambers are decorated on floral patterns while the middle portion is decorated with various types of carvings.

## 8. Agra Fort – Mosques

### Mina Masjid

Mina Masjid was built by Shah Jahan for himself and the royal ladies to offer prayers. This was the reason that the mosque was built close to the palaces of women. The mosque is surrounded with high walls and it has a very simple construction. There is a prayer chamber with a mihrab facing west. There are tiles made up of marbles and brackets to support chhajja.

### Moti Masjid

Moti Masjid was built by Shah Jahan between 1648 and 1654. The mosque is built near Diwan-e-Aam. The interior of the mosque is built by marble while the exterior is made up of bricks. Due to the usage of pearly white marble, the mosque came to be known as **moti masjid** or **pearl mosque**. The direction of the prayer chamber is in the west as Muslims face Mecca while praying.



A porch with twelve pillars and an arch covers the three sides of the mosque. The beautiful main gate has arches with three chhatris. The mosque has three domes whose parapets have been designed according to the Hindu architecture. Women prayer halls are built on either side of the main prayer hall and have marble screens.

## Nagina Masjid

Nagina Masjid was built by Shah Jahan near Moti Masjid. The mosque was built between 1631 and 1640AD. The whole mosque is built with marble and has a very simple architecture. There are three domes on top of the prayer chamber.



There is a mihrab in the prayer chamber that faces the direction of the Holy Kaaba in Mecca. There are three domes out of which the central one is larger than the other two.



## 9. Agra Fort – Nearby Places

Besides visiting Agra Fort, tourists can also visit the places nearby which are Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, and Sikandra.

### Fatehpur Sikri

Fatehpur Sikri was built by Akbar and its construction was started in 1564. While being childless, he went to **Saint Sheikh Salim Chishti** and due to his blessings, Akbar became the father of a male child.



Fatehpur Sikri was constructed in the commemoration of this event. Later, Akbar abandoned the city due to water shortage and other events. The places to visit here are Salim Chishti tomb, Buland Darwaza, Panch Mahal, Jodha bai Mahal, and other structures. Fatehpur Sikri is around 38 km from Agra fort.

### Taj Mahal

Taj Mahal was built by Shah Jahan in the memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. This monument is one of the seven wonders of the world and is built from white marble. Along with marble, red sandstone is also used to build some structures like mosque, entrance gates and others. Taj Mahal is around 7km from Agra Fort



## Sikandra

Akbar's tomb was built by Akbar in Sikandra. The construction of the building was started by Akbar and completed by Jahangir.



The tomb has lawns and arched gates. Sikandra is around 13km from Agra fort.