Agra Fort

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About the Tutorial

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. You will also get the information about best time to visit the fort along with nearby places and how to reach the fort.

Audience

This tutorial is designed 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

This is a brief tutorial designed only for informational purpose. There are no prerequisites as such. All that you should have is a keen interest to explore new places and experience their charm.

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Table of Contents

About the Tutorial ............................................................................................................. 1
Audience ............................................................................................................................. 1
Prerequisites ....................................................................................................................... 1
Copyright & Disclaimer .................................................................................................... 1
Table of Contents .............................................................................................................. 2

1. AGRA FORT – OVERVIEW .......................................................................................... 3

2. AGRA FORT – HISTORY ........................................................................................... 5

3. AGRA FORT – GATES ............................................................................................... 8

4. AGRA FORT – PALACES .......................................................................................... 10

5. AGRA FORT – HALLS ............................................................................................... 15

6. AGRA FORT – MOSQUES ......................................................................................... 17

7. AGRA FORT – HOW TO REACH? ............................................................................ 19

8. AGRA FORT – NEARBY PLACES ............................................................................ 21
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.

Agra Fort is located in the city of Agra. It is also called as the Red Fort of Agra. Agra is situated on the banks of river Yamuna and is one of the popular and populated city of UP and India. The popularity of this city is due to various beautiful monuments in and nearby the city like Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Akbar’s Tomb and many others. Agra was ruled by many dynasties who built many monuments but its golden era was during the Mughal era.

Visiting Hours

The fort is opened for the public from sunrise to sunset. The fort is opened on all seven days for the public. It takes around two to three hours to visit the fort as there are many structures inside which a tourist wants to visit. Light Shows are also organized in Agra Fort. The timings for the show in Hindi is from 7:30 pm to 8:23 pm and in English the show timing is 8:30 pm to 9:23 pm.

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.
If the tourists want to visit the light shows then they will have to purchase the ticket for the same. For Indian tourists, the tickets cost Rs. 40 while for foreign tourists, the ticket costs Rs. 150. Students are charged Rs. 25 to watch the light show. The price of the ticket is same for both the shows.

**Prohibited Items**

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.

**Best Time to Visit**

The best time to visit Agra is from February to April and from October to December as the weather remains pleasant during this time of the year. In the rest of the months, the climate is either very hot, humid or very cold which can lead to the discomfort of the tourists.
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. Skikandar Lodi ruled from 1488AD to 1517 AD and was the first ruler to shift his capital from Delhi to Agra.

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.

**Agra Fort under Suri Dynasty**

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 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**

Marathas captured the fort in the 18th 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.

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.

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

**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.

**Khizri Gate**

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

**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.
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 Jahan gir 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.

Jahangir Mahal

Jahan gir 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 Banglauar 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 Jahangir Mahal.

Shah Jahani Mahal

Shah Jahani Mahal is situated between Jahangir 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.
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.
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.
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. Besides this, Agra also has railway stations, and bus stands from where tourists can come to and go from Agra.

**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.
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 7 km from Agra Fort.
Sikandra

Akbar’s tomb was built by Akbar in Sikandra. Akbar started the construction of this tomb in 1600 and it was completed in the reign of Jahangir in 1613. The tomb has lawns and arched gates. The tomb has the combination of architectures of Hindu, Islam, Jain, Buddhist, and Christians. Sikandra is around 13km from Agra fort.
Festivals and Fairs in Agra

Agra is famous for many fairs and festivals which are celebrated each year and people participate in them enthusiastically. Some of them are as follows:

- **Taj Mahotsav** – The Taj Mahotsav was first organized in 1992 and from then it is organized every year. Many Indian and Foreign tourists participate in this festival. The festival is celebrated in the month of February in which many paintings, arts and crafts are available for sale.

- **Ram Barat** – This is a festival of celebrating the marriage of Lord Rama during Ram Lila. People decorate the chosen place with flowers and lights and procession of barat is organized.

- **Kailash Fair** – Kailash is 12km away from Agra where a fair is organized in the month of either August or September. People believe that once Lord Shiva appeared in the form of lingam and so the festival is celebrated.

Besides Agra Fort, there are many other places of interest which include Taj Mahal, Akbar’s Tomb, Fatehpur Sikri, malls, parks, gardens, and many more.