

5 Delhi destinations to visit

Delhi, India's bustling capital, divided invisibly by what is known as Old and New Delhi is a mixture of political history mixed with cultural colourfulness. From the Raj Ghat, a beautiful yet sobering memorial built for the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi to the Nehu Planetarium, both New and Old Delhi offer something for everyone who is either keen on learning or ready to explore new experiences. Needless to say, singling out just 5 must-see destinations in the nation's capital of India is next to impossible. Therefore, the list I have compiled is a humdrum of sights which hopefully will pique your curiosity and intrigue your imagination to explore more. So in no particular order, here are my top 5 New Delhi destinations to visit.

1. Humayun's tomb

Humayun was a young emperor from the 16th century who ruled over present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Northern India, and Bangladesh. When he died, in his honour, Humayun's wife Empress Bega Begum and chief consort made the first garden-tomb on the Indian subcontinent. It is also the first structure to use red sandstone which is a type of stone made from small quantities of iron-rich minerals. The iron oxidizes into hematite crystals which form a thin paint-like coating on the quartz sand grains. The crystals absorb all light except the colour red, causing them to reflect and therefore give them their colour. The Humayun tomb was designed by a Persian artist named Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, who began what is known as the Mughal architectural style which is a blend of Persian, Indian and Turkish influences. The perfectly symmetrical grandeur building with white marble double-domes, is situated on an English-style garden which was built around it in 1880 under British rule. Stemming from Islamic beliefs, the building was intended to mimic the Garden of Paradise. Since the Humayun tomb is the perfect balance of history, architectural finesse at its finest, a gesture of love beyond the grave, and also named a UNESCO world heritage site, it has made one of the top places to visit in Delhi.

2. Raj Ghat

Synonymous with Delhi, and India as a whole is who is referred to as the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Known for the many humanitarian acts he carried out while alive, Gandhi was revered and loved by all both locally and worldwide. He was best known for being a non-violent activist who fought against British rule for the independence of his beloved nation. In South Africa, he was known for advocating civil rights for Indians living there. His non-violence approach in the face of a violent regime gained him his notoriety and prestige, even though being a humble and simple man, he chose not to bask in the glory. He led so well, years later he inspired Martin Luther King, an American activist who adopted his non-violent approach. In honour of this global hero, the Raj Ghat was built as a memorial. Located west of the Yamuna River, it was here, Gandhi performed his last rites on the 31st of January 1948, the day after he died. The very place he was cremated, a black marble platform was constructed, attracting many tourists. Designed to depict the simplicity of Mahatma Gandhi, the most significant visual display is a flame which burns continuously at one end of the structure. On top of it, foreign dignitaries place beautiful flower arrangements to pay their respects.

Nehu Planetarium

If you have ever imagined what it would be like to be closer to the world of stars and planets above us, then look no further as the Nehu planetarium is the place to do just that! Fitted with state of the art telescopes, the aim is to bring the stars to your doorstep. Built in 1963 and named after India's first prime minister, it was built with the intention to promote astronomy education. Today, both

astronomers and children of all ages visit to see how fascinating and ever expanding space is. The overall planetarium is impressive, but the highlight of your visit will be the Sky Theatre which is constructed in the shape of the dome to mimic what being under a sky of stars looks like. Be sure to take notes as it is there you would find in-depth information on the stars and planets above us.

Purana Qila

During Humayun's reign as Emperor, construction of a fort called Purana Qila commenced. It was completed by the Emperor who displaced him named Sher Shah Suri. The robust building paints a picture of a rich history being rectangular in shape and built in the centre of a 2km radius. The thick barricades erected, have three gateways provided with the citadel on either side. It was surrounded by a wide moat, which connected to the Yamuna river, flowing east of the fort. Truly, something out of a history book designed to keep those within its walls safe and danger outside of its walls away. The vast magnitude and picturesque nature give it my thumbs up to visit.

India Gate

Established in the centre of New Delhi, stands a structure similar to the French "Arc de Triomphe." It was built to commemorate 70 000 soldiers who lost their lives during World War I with 13 516 names written upon it in their honour. The first stone was laid by the Duke of Connaught in 1921 and then dedicated to the nation 10 years later by Lord Irwin who was the then Viceroy. After their independence, another memorial was added, Amar Jawan Jyoti. In similar fashion to the eternal flame which burns at the memorial of Raj Ghat, another burns under the arch to remind the nation to remember those who lost their lives in the Indian-Pakistani war of December 1971.

When I think of Delhi, a number of descriptions come to mind. Colourful, vibrant, friendly and spicy in more than one sense. But it is so much more! There is a history which has been celebrated as it has made the nation who they are. A history of Empresses who loved and lost, heroes who changed the world and people who invest in the world beyond the one we know. Next, time you want to plan a trip, why not give Delhi a try, you will not be disappointed!