



Red Fort, Delhi



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Red Fort, Delhi

Red Fort in Delhi was constructed by Shah Jahan in 1639. The fort was under the Mughals for 200 years. There are many monuments inside the fort which include mosque, palaces, halls, gates, and others. As the fort is built by using red sandstone so it is called Red Fort or Lal Qila.

This tutorial will let you know about the history of the fort along with the structures present inside. You will also get the information about the best time to visit it along with how to reach the fort.

Audience

This tutorial is designed for the people who would like to know about the history of Red Fort or Lal Qila in Delhi along with the interiors and design of the fort. This fort 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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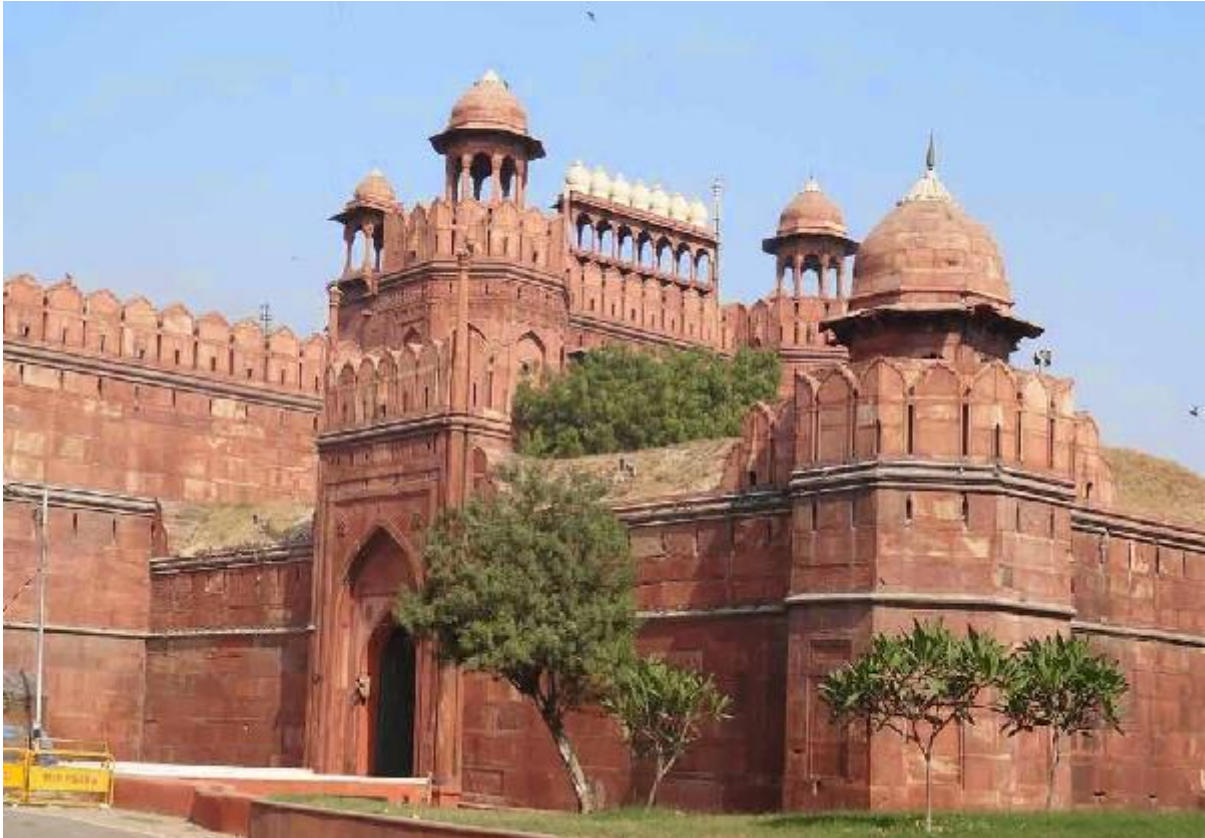
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Table of Contents

Audience.....	1
Prerequisites.....	1
Copyright & Disclaimer	1
Table of Contents.....	2
1. RED FORT – OVERVIEW.....	3
2. RED FORT – HISTORY	7
3. RED FORT – GATES.....	10
4. RED FORT – HALLS	12
5. RED FORT – PALACES	14
6. RED FORT – OTHER MONUMENTS.....	18
7. RED FORT – HOW TO REACH?	22
8. RED FORT – NEARBY PLACES	26

1. Red Fort – Overview

Lal Qila or Red Fort is called so because it was constructed with red sandstone. It was a residential area of Mughals for about 200 years. It was also used to perform various ceremonies. **Shah Jahan** constructed the fort in 1639. Nearby the fort is the **Salimgarh Fort** built by **Islam Shah Suri** son of **Sher Shah Suri**. **Nadir Shah** plundered the fort in 1747 and the **British** did it in 1857.



Delhi

Delhi is the capital city of India and is popular for many historical monuments present in the city. The city is bordered by **Haryana** and **Uttar Pradesh**. It is one of the most populous city of India and third largest urban area in the world. Delhi was ruled by many kings of different empires. It was captured, sacked, and built many times.



Visiting hours

The fort is opened for the public from **9:30am to 4:30pm**. It is opened on all days and closed on Mondays. Sound and light shows are also arranged here and timings depend upon climate. The duration of the show is one hour and the timings are as follows:

- **September & October**
 - 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm (Hindi)
 - 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm (English)
- **November to January**
 - 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm (Hindi)
 - 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm (English)
- **February to April**
 - 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm (Hindi)
 - 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm (English)
- **May to August**
 - 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm (Hindi)
 - 9:00 pm - 10:00 pm (English)

Tickets

Tourists have to pay an entry fee in order to visit the fort. For Indians, the cost of the ticket per person is Rs. 30 and for foreigners, it is Rs. 500 per person. There is also sound and light show and cost of tickets for adults on weekdays is Rs. 60 and for children of the age of 5 to 12 years is Rs. 20. On weekends, the cost of the tickets for adults is Rs. 80 and for children Rs. 30.

Best time to visit

The period between October and March is the best time to visit the fort as the weather is very pleasant. Though the month of December and January are chilly but still the tourists will enjoy their tour. In the rest of the months, the climate is very hot and humid which causes discomfort to the tourists.

Where to Stay?

There are more than 2500 hotels in Delhi which range from inexpensive budget hotels to expensive five-star hotels. Tourists can also stay in tourist hostels and guest houses which provide a comfortable stay. Good service is offered in all kinds of hotels. Some of the hotels in the city are as follows:

- **Five-Star Hotels**

- The Suryaa located at South Delhi
- Japee Siddharth located at Karol Bagh
- The Ashok located at South Delhi
- The Leela Palace located at South Delhi
- ITC Maurya located at Sadar Bazar Marg

- **Four-Star Hotels**

- Hotel Samrat located at South Delhi
- Tavisha Hotel located at Friends Colony
- Treebo Amber located at Okhla
- The Athena Hotel located at South Delhi
- Hotel City Park located at West Delhi

- **Three-Star Hotels**

- Hotel O'Delhi located at Karol Bagh
- Hotel Luck Residency located at Airport Zone
- Hotel All iz Well located at Paharganj
- Hotel Sun International located at Paharganj
- Hotel Sonu DX located at Paharganj

- **Budget or Two-Star Hotels**

- Hotel Ashoka Continental located at Paharganj
- Hotel Royal Castle located at Chittaranjan Park
- Hotel Chanchal Deluxe located at Paharganj

- Hotel Radha Krishan located at Paharganj
- The Golden Palms Hotel located at East Delhi
- **Cheap or One-Star Hotels**
 - Hotel Glow Inn located at Paharganj
 - Hotel New King located at Paharganj
 - Hotel Shreeram Deluxe located at Paharganj
 - Hotel Sawera International located at Paharganj
 - Hotel Shivlok Palace Hotel located at Paharganj

2. Red Fort – History

Red Fort of Delhi is a very popular historical monument as national flag is hoisted on 15th August and 26th January on the auspicious occasion of Independence Day and Republic Day respectively. The fort was under the Mughals for nearly 200 years then it came under Marathas and British.

Red Fort under Shah Jahan

The fort was constructed by Shah Jahan, the fifth Mughal emperor, when he wanted to shift his capital from Agra to Delhi. **Ustad Ahmad Lahauri** designed the fort and it was constructed on the banks of Yamuna River whose water filled the moats of the fort. The construction of the fort was started in 1639 and completed in 1648.



Shah Jahan

Red Fort under Aurungzeb

Shah Jahan was succeeded by his son **Aurungzeb** who added Pearl Mosque or Moti Masjid in the fort. He also built barbicans at the two main entrances of the fort. After the death of Aurungzeb, the glory of the fort began to decline.



Aurangzeb

Red Fort Post Aurungzeb Reign

Aurangzeb was succeeded by **Jahander Shah** in 1712. He was murdered by **Farrukhsiyar** who became his successor. He replaced the silver ceiling of **Rang Mahal** with copper one in order to raise money. **Muhammad Shah** took over the fort in 1719. During his reign, **Nadir Shah** attacked Delhi and defeated the Mughals. During the attack, Nadir Shah plundered the fort and took away the Peacock Throne. This attack made the Mughals weak.

Red Fort under Marathas

Mughals signed a treaty with the Marathas in 1752 who became the protectors of the fort. Marathas also attacked and conquered Lahore and Peshawar which led to a conflict with **Ahmad Shah Abdali**. In order to protect the fort, the Marathas melted the silver of the ceiling of Diwan-i-Khas constructed by Shah Jahan. The Marathas wanted to raise the fund to defend the fort from Ahmad Shah Abdali.

Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas in the **Third Battle of Panipat** in 1761. **Shah Alam** became the emperor of Delhi with the help of Marathas in 1771. Sikh attacked and conquered the fort but ready to give the fort back to Shah Alam on a condition that seven gurudwaras have to be built and protected in the city.

Red Fort under British

In 1803, Marathas were defeated by the British East India Company in the battle of Delhi which was fought in 1803. They took over Mughal territories and the Red Fort. At that time Bahadur Shah Zafar II was the Mughal Emperor.

During the mutiny of 1857, Bahadur Shah left the fort. He was later caught and brought to the fort as a prisoner. British sent him to Rangoon where he died and this ended the Mughal rule. After this, the British plundered and robbed of the wealth of the red fort and other forts and palaces.

Red Fort after Independence

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, hoisted the national flag at the Lahori gate of the fort in 1947. After independence, the fort was used as an army cantonment till 2003. After that it was given to **Archaeological Survey of India**. Today the fort is used to hoist the flags on 15th August and 26th January.

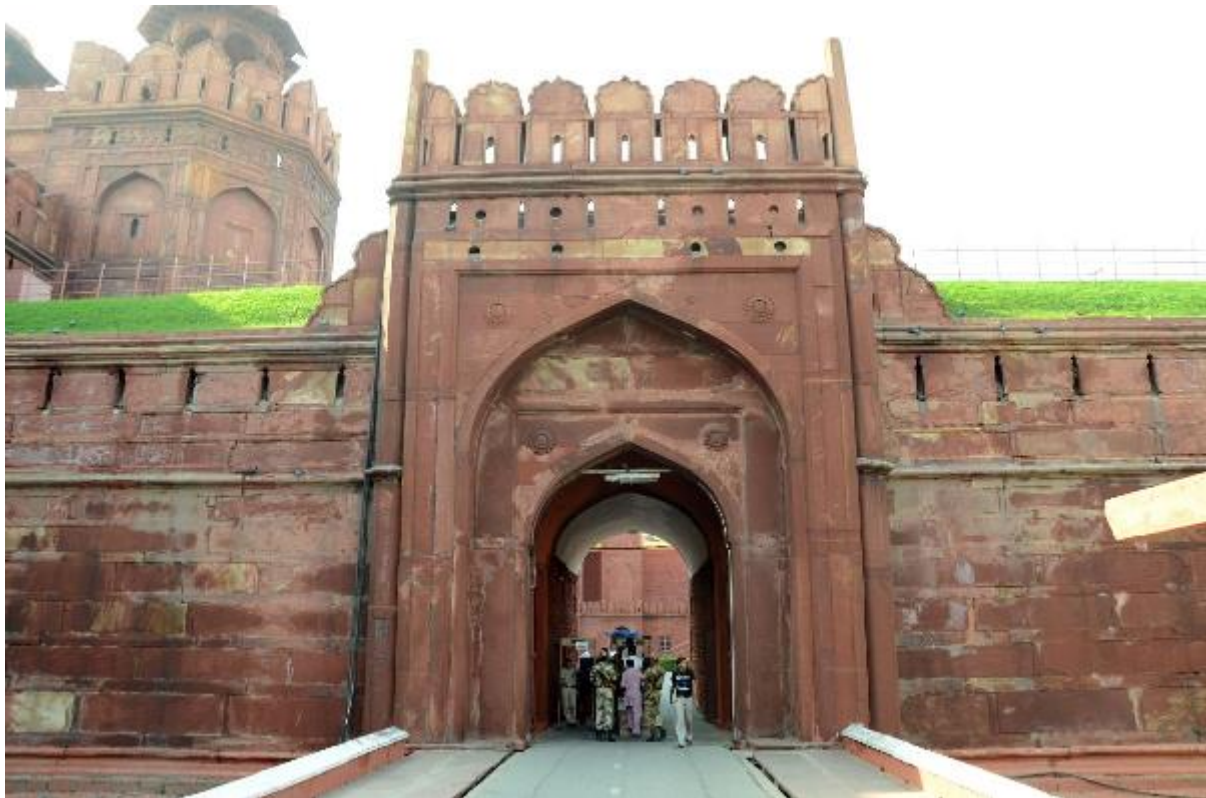
Dimensions of Red Fort

The fort is spread in an area of around 255 acres and the construction was based on Mughal architecture. The circumference of the fort is 2.41km while the walls on the river side has the height of 18m and on the city side 33m. The octagonal fort was built by using red sandstone and marbles. The buildings inside the fort like palaces, halls, mosque, and many others has floral decoration and double domes.

3. Red Fort – Gates

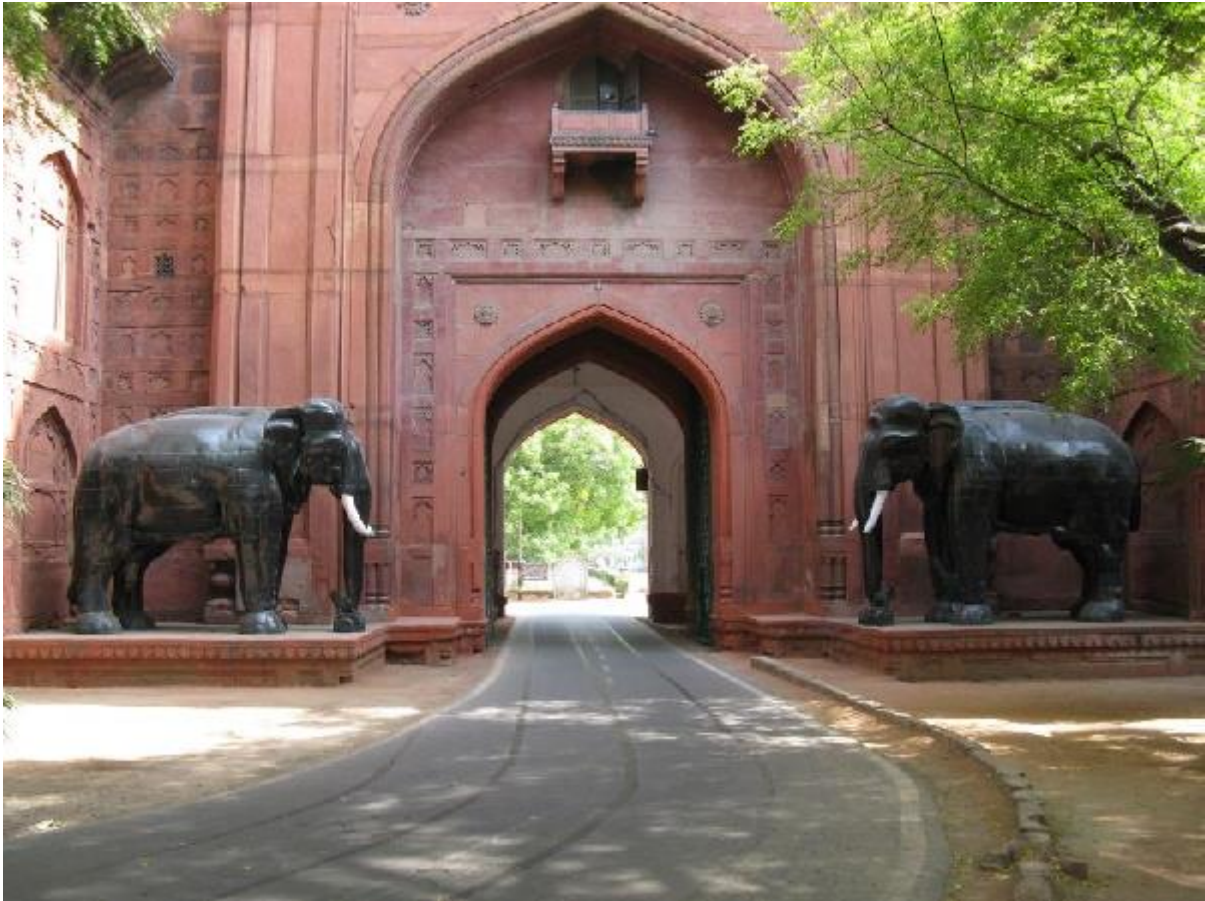
Lahori Gate

Lahori gate is named so because it faces the city of Lahore now in Pakistan. There are three storeys in the gate having arch panels of different shapes. Red sandstone is used to build the gate while the roofs of the pavilions are constructed with white stone. This is the main gate through which tourists can enter the fort. Flag is also hoisted on Independence Day and Republic Day every year.



Delhi Gate

Delhi Gate or **Dilli Darwaza** is another entrance to the fort. This gate is made in the same style as the Lahori gate. It has three storeys and each storey has arch panels which are of different shapes. These shapes include square, rectangle, and cusp. Red sandstone is used to build the gate while the roof is built with white stone.



Water Gate

Water Gate was built on the southeast walls of the fort. It is a minor gate and was built on the river bank. The river changed its course but the name of the gate remains the same.

4. Red Fort – Halls

Diwan-i-Aam

Diwan-i-Aam or the public audience hall was built by Shah Jahan and it was used to hear the problems of the public. His successors also used the hall for the same purpose. The front hall of the Diwan-i-Aam has entrance from three sides. The dimension of the hall is 100 feet x 60 feet. The hall is divided into 27 square bays with the help of columns that support the arches.



The ceiling and columns of the hall is painted with gold while lime plaster is used to plaster the wall. Marble canopy can be found in the eastern wall. The canopy is covered by **Bengal roof**. The prime minister used to receive petition on a **dais** which was located below the throne. A gold plated railing separated the king from the courtiers.

Diwan-i-Khas

Diwan-i-Khas or the private audience hall was built with white marble on which precious stones were carved. The ceiling was built using silver and now it is replaced by wood. Peacock throne was also installed here which was taken away by Nadir Shah.



5. Red Fort – Palaces

Mumtaz Mahal

Mumtaz Mahal was a palace along with five other palaces that faces Yamuna river. **Nahr-i-Bihisht** was the source of water to all the palaces. White marble was used to construct the palace. The palace has six apartments separated by arched piers.



During the British period, the palace was used as a prison. Currently the palace is converted into a museum having the things used during the Mughal period.

Rang Mahal

Rang Mahal was previously known as **Imtiyaz Mahal** or **Palace of Distinction**. It was constructed by Shah Jahan who used this palace as a harem. Due to the presence of mirrors, some of the apartments in this palace were known as **Shish Mahal**.



During the British period, the structure was used as a mess hall. Nahr-i-Bihisht was the source of water to the palace. There is a basement or **tekhana** used by women during summer season.

Khas Mahal

Khas Mahal was the private residence of the emperor. The palace was divided into three sections which are **Telling Beads** or **Tasbih Khana**, **Sleeping Room** or **Khwabgah**, and **Wardrobe** or **Tosha Khana** also known as **Baithak** or **Sitting Room**.



Marble was used to construct the interiors. These marbles were painted with coloured floral patterns. **Mussamman Burj** is located on the east of the palace and emperor used to address the public from here every morning.

Hira Mahal

Hira Mahal was constructed by **Bahadur Shah II** and is located south of **Hayat Bakhsh Bagh**. The decoration of the mahal is very simple but have carved arches. There was Moti Mahal beside the Hira Mahal which was destroyed during the mutiny of 1857.



Zafar Mahal

Zafar Mahal was constructed by Bahadur Shah Zafar in 1842 in the middle of a water tank. Red sandstone is used to build the palace. After the mutiny of 1857, the tank was used by the British as a swimming pool.



6. Red Fort – Other Monuments

Chhatta Chowk

Chhatta Chowk was a marketplace during the time of Mughals where things like silk, jewellery, and many other items were sold to the household of the emperors. It is located nearby Lahori Gate.



The 32 arch bays of the chowk were used as shops which were contained in two-storey flats. Mostly the bazaars during the Mughal period were open air but Chhatta Chowk was a covered market and was called **Bazaar-i-Musaqaf** where **saqaf** meant **roof**.

Naubat Khana

Naubat Khana is a drum house which was used to make the announcements if any law was to be enforced or any royal person is arriving to the court and many other announcements. Music was also played five times a day. It is situated between the entrance of outer and inner courts.



Moti Masjid

Moti Masjid or **Pearl Mosque** was constructed by Aurungzeb in 1659. The mosque was used by the emperor to offer prayers. It took around one year to build the mosque. White marble was used in its construction. The prayer hall of the mosque is divided into three arches. Each arch is divided into two aisles.



The domes were covered with gilded copper. The courtyard of the mosque is made with marble and prayer hall is located a little higher than the courtyard and is also built with marble. Outlines of prayer carpets have been designed on the floor which is made with black marble. A small ablution fountain can be found in the middle of the mosque.

Hayat Bakhsh Bagh

Hayat Bakhsh Bagh or **life bestowing garden** is the largest garden in the red fort. It was constructed during the reign of Shah Jahan. The garden covered the area of 200 square feet. British destroyed it during the mutiny of 1857 but **Lord Curzon** put some effort to restore some parts of the garden.



Sawan and Bhadon

Sawan and Bhadon are the mandaps or pavilions whose name have been kept as per the names of Hindu months which are the months of rain. It is not confirmed which one of them is Sawan and which one is Bhadon.



Both the pavilions are of the same size and built with white marble. During the night time small lamps were kept here for light and during the day time golden flowers were kept.

Nahr-i-Bihisht

Nahr-i-Bihisht or Stream of Paradise was a canal which was connected to the pavilions of the imperial apartments. The stream ran through the centre of each pavilion. The water of the stream was drawn from Yamuna river through **Shahi Burj. Zer Jharokha** is also there in the riverbed which is located below the apartments.

Hammam

Hammam was located to the south of Diwan-i-Khas and was used by the emperor to take bath. White marble was used to build the hammam. The hammam was divided into three parts each having a dome and are separated by corridors. Eastern part was used as a dressing room which also had a three fountain basins. The part on the west side was used for taking hot or steam bath.

Baoli

Baoli was a stepwell which British did not damage but they converted the chambers in the baoli into a prison. The baoli has staircases to go down into the well.

7. Red Fort – How to Reach?

Lal Qila or Red Fort is situated in Delhi which is connected to all parts of India through air, rail, and road transport. As Delhi is the capital city of India so it is connected with almost all parts of India.



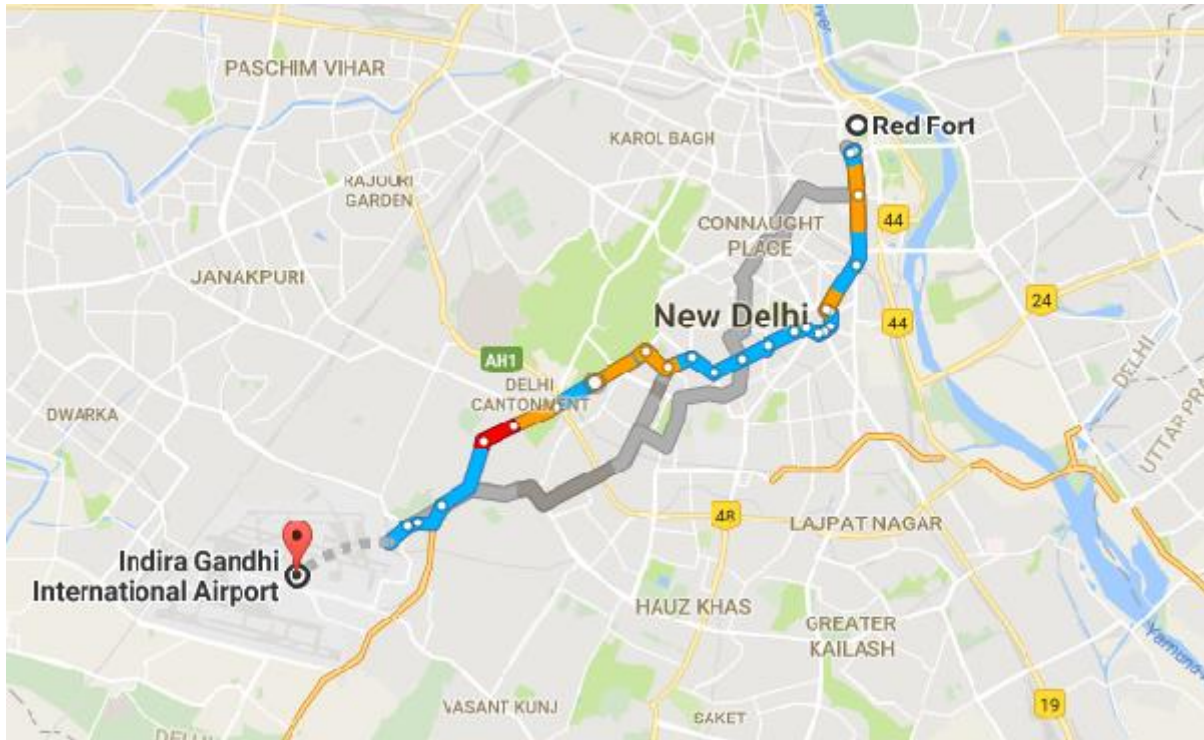
Let's take a look at the nearby cities with their approximate distance.

- **Delhi to Kanpur**
 - By air – 393km
 - By rail – 440km
 - By road – 468km
- **Delhi to Lucknow**
 - By air – 417km
 - By rail – 512km (via Kanpur) 490km (via Bareilly)
 - By road – 558km
- **Delhi to Agra**
 - By air – 180km

- By rail – 195km
- By road – 217km
- **Delhi to Jaipur**
 - By air – 241km
 - By rail – 288km
 - By road – 268km
- **Delhi to Bareilly**
 - By air – 217km
 - By rail – 258km
 - By road – 259km
- **Delhi to Moradabad**
 - By air – 154km
 - By rail – 154km
 - By road – 166km
- **Delhi to Gwalior**
 - By air – 285km
 - By rail – 313km
 - By road – 329km

By Air

Delhi is connected to most of the major cities of India and abroad through air transport. **Indira Gandhi International Airport** is situated at **Palam** a place 16km away from Delhi. Both domestic and international flights land here. There are separate terminals for catching domestic and international flights.

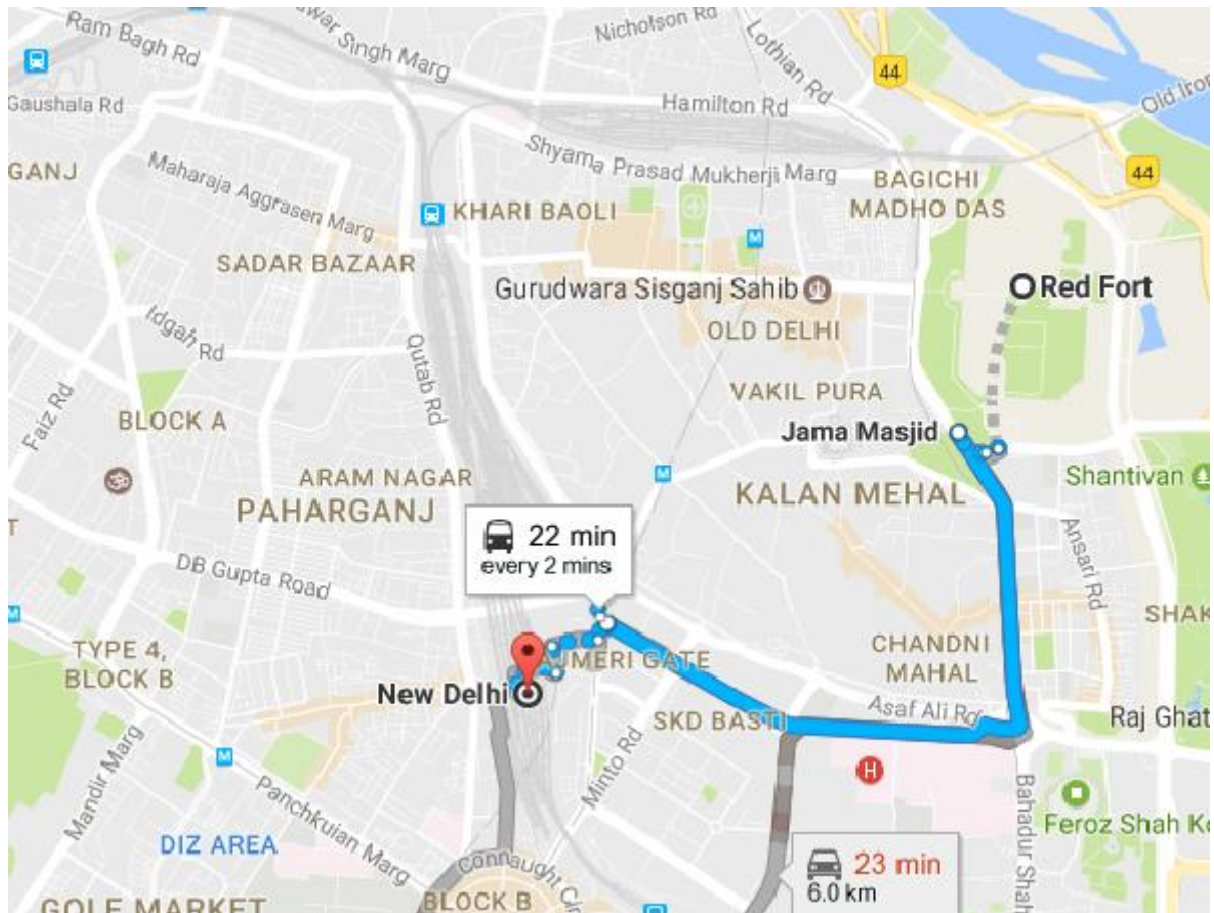


By Rail

Delhi is connected to almost all parts of India except Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram by rail. There are many railway stations in Delhi from where many trains originate, terminate or have stoppage. The main railway stations of Delhi are as follows:

- New Delhi
- Old Delhi
- Hazrat Nizamuddin
- Delhi Sarai Rohilla
- Delhi Cantt
- Delhi Safdurjung

There are other stations where only local trains have stoppage.



By Road

Delhi is connected to many cities by road transport. Tourists can catch buses from ISBT Kashmiri Gate, ISBT Anand Vihar, and ISBT at Sarai Kale Khan. Tourists can catch buses for Kanpur, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Udaipur, Agra, and many other cities. AC and non-AC buses run from these terminals. Some long distance buses also have sleeper coach.

Local Transport

Tourists can visit Red Fort through various modes of local transport. They can use auto rickshaws, taxis, and local buses to reach the fort. Metro trains also run in the city and the nearest metro station to the fort is **Chandni Chowk** on **Yellow Line** which is 1.5km away from the red fort.

8. Red Fort – Nearby Places

There are many monuments nearby Lal Qila built by various rulers. Description of some of the monuments is given here.

India Gate

India Gate is also known as **All India War Memorial**. The gate was built in the memory of 82,000 soldiers who were killed in the **First World War** between 1914 and 1921. Tourists can find names of around 13,300 servicemen including some soldiers and officers inscribed on the gate. **Sir Edwin Lutyens** was its designer.



Amar Jawan Jyoti was built after the war between India and Pakistan in 1971. In this structure, a black marble plinth with inverted rifle is there on which a war helmet is kept and is surrounded by four eternal flames.



Qutub Minar

Qutub Minar was built by **Qutbuddin Aibak** and is the tallest brick minaret in the world. In case of height, it is second as **Fateh Burj** in Punjab comes first. The height of Qutub Minar is around 73m. **Mehrauli** is the place in Delhi where the monument is located. The minaret is made up of red sandstone and marble. In order to reach at the top of the minaret, tourists have to climb around 379 stairs.



Humayun's Tomb

Humayun's Tomb was built by **Akbar** and designed by **Mirak Mirza Ghiyas**. The tomb is 8.2km away from red fort. Humayun's wife ordered to construct the tomb in 1565 and it was completed in 1572. The tomb of **Isa Khan** is also nearby.



Isa Khan was a courtier of Sher Shah Suri and fought against the Mughals. Humayun's tomb also has the graves of Bega Begum, Hamida Begum, and Dara Shikoh. The tomb was built on the banks of river Yamuna.

Jama Masjid

Jama Masjid was built by Shah Jahan between 1644 and 1645. The mosque is also known as **Masjid-i-Jahan Numa**. The mosque has three gates, four towers, and two minarets each having the height of 40 feet. The courtyard of the mosque is very large and more than 25,000 people can simultaneously pray here.



Saadullah Khan was the prime minister of Shah Jahan and he supervised the construction of the mosque. The main entrance of the mosque faces red fort and was used by emperors to enter the mosque.

Jahanpanah Fort

Jahanpanah was a fortified city built by **Muhammad bin Tughlaq** to combat the Mongol attacks. The city has now been ruined but still people can find walls and a few structures built inside the fort. Jahanpanah means **Refuge of the world**.



The city was spread from Siri to Qutub Minar. The city now comes under urban development and many modern structures have been constructed.