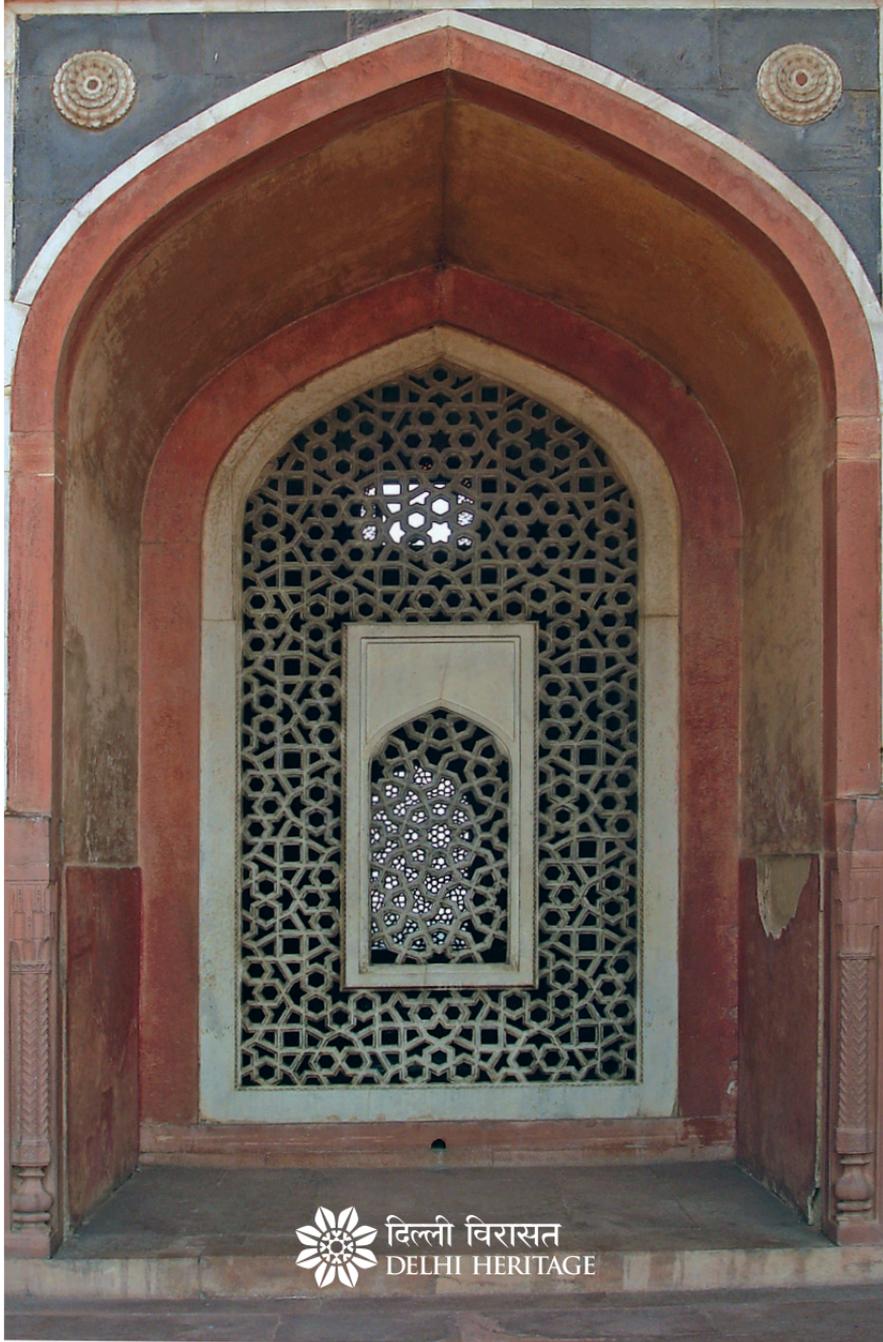


HUMAYUN'S TOMB

and its surroundings



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DELHI HERITAGE



According to traditional belief, the tomb of a saint confers sanctity on the surrounding areas, and therefore many have opted to be buried in the vicinity of a saint's tomb. The shrines or dargahs of men like Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (in Mehrauli) and Nasiruddin Mahmud 'Roshan Chiragh-e-Dehli' (in Chiragh Dilli) are surrounded by dozens of graves, of both illustrious and obscure persons. The dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is a case in point. Around it, within a radius of about a kilometre, are literally hundreds of graves – including those of some of Delhi's most famous residents.

The core of the area is the enclosure of the dargah itself, the burial place of the saint who died in 1325 but has been the object of continuous veneration. The shrine is the heart of a bustling centre of pilgrimage. Most pilgrims visit just the venerated structures in the complex – the tomb of Nizamuddin Auliya and that of his famous disciple Amir Khusro, who is buried nearby, the baoli or step-well, and the large 13th-century mosque which lies to the west of the shrine. There are within the shrine compound itself the tombs and graves of several other famous personalities, which deserve a visit.

In the immediate vicinity of the shrine enclosure is the basti. This is a residential complex as old as the shrine itself, housing those associated with the shrine. The houses themselves, being of less solid materials than the tombs or mosques, have been constantly re-built and most are therefore quite modern. Beyond the basti is a wider area across which many tombs are scattered – usually belonging to those who aspired to a bigger mausoleum than could be accommodated close to the dargah!





HUMAYUN'S TOMB COMPLEX

Humayun's Tomb and its surrounding monuments form a vast complex, with 30 acres of gardens surrounding the central *chabutara* (platform) on which the Tomb stands. In fact around the actual garden of the tomb are several independent enclosures, often centering on a tomb, like the Isa Khan Tomb or the garden of Bu Halima. The area had seen many changes over the centuries that had obscured the original character, particularly of the gardens. Humayun's Tomb was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1993, and extensive conservation work has been carried out since. This began with restoration of the garden, made possible by a grant from the Agha Khan Foundation. Extensive research preceded the works which resulted in the restoration of pathways, repairing of water channels, and even planting shrubs and other plants that were popular in the time of the Mughals. The result is a well-maintained garden tomb, with water running through the channels, hibiscus and oleander in bloom, and neatly manicured lawns all around. Work on the tomb building has followed, with another grant from the same source.

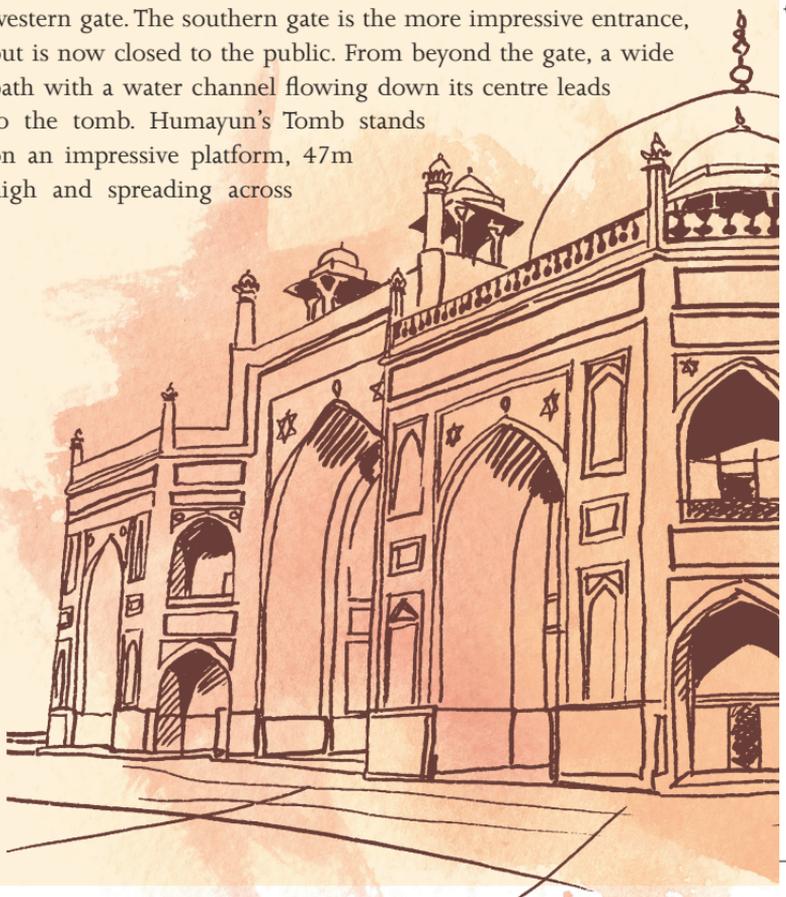
Other than Humayun's Tomb, there are a number of other structures within the complex. These include several tombs of course, but also mosques, gateways, wells and even a ruined market. They date from many different centuries and represent a wide range of materials, styles and decorative techniques. The complex merits a visit of at least a couple of hours, even if you don't while away some time resting under a shady tree and watching the birds which frequent the garden. The many thoughtfully placed benches allow you to take your time soaking up the ambience.

1. HUMAYUN'S TOMB

Humayun's Tomb was built under the aegis of Humayun's senior queen, Hamida Banu Begum, some years after the death of the emperor in 1556. Designed by the architect Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, the tomb is generally regarded as the precursor to the Taj Mahal. It is also the first major example of a Persian *char bagh* (garden tomb) in India, with the tomb sitting at the intersection of four water channels flowing in the cardinal directions through a square garden supposed to represent paradise. On the eastern side, the wall of the garden was originally washed by the river Yamuna which has since changed its course. Two wells, one outside the northern wall, and the other outside the western wall, supply water to the gardens.

The tomb was built between 1564 and 1573, using large quantities of marble and sandstone. In the centuries that followed, Humayun's Tomb also became a tomb for many of his descendants, so much so it is referred to as the 'Dormitory of the Mughals'. There are, in all, over a hundred graves in the crypt here. During the Revolt of 1857, the British captured the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah II, at Humayun's Tomb.

The tomb of Humayun is entered today through the 16m high western gate. The southern gate is the more impressive entrance, but is now closed to the public. From beyond the gate, a wide path with a water channel flowing down its centre leads to the tomb. Humayun's Tomb stands on an impressive platform, 47m high and spreading across



12,000 sq m. The tomb, with its white marble dome (topped by a brass finial), is decorated in inlay work and carving that uses red and buff sandstone along with white and black marble, mainly in geometric designs, often following the lines of architectural features like arches and columns. A prominent motif is the six-pointed star, a cosmic symbol commonly used by Mughal builders.

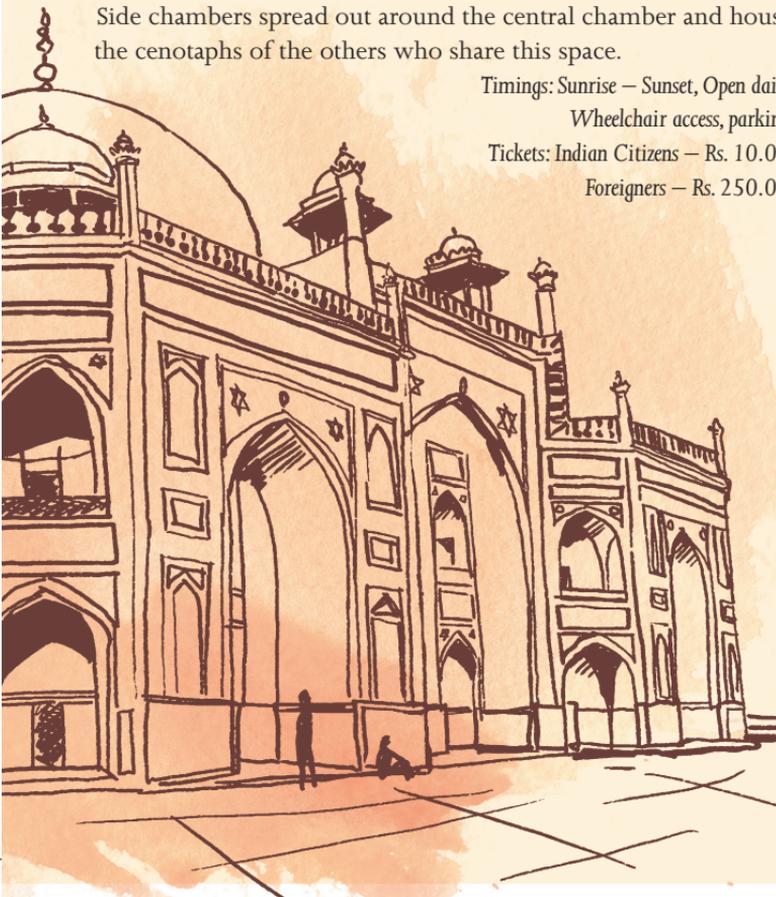
On the platform, the tomb chamber can only be entered from the southern side, aligned to the southern gate of the enclosure, which was originally meant to be the main entrance. Going through an entrance chamber with a ceiling beautifully decorated with finely incised and painted plaster, one enters the central chamber. The cenotaph is sparingly carved in white marble and sits in the middle of the chamber on a floor decorated in a simple pattern of stars in black and white marble. The chamber itself was originally heavily gilded and enamelled; today there's relatively little ornamentation to be seen. Other articles which were originally in the tomb, for instance lamps, the holy Quran, the emperor's turban, sword and shoes, are also missing – looted in past centuries during times of anarchy and disorder. The four sides of the chamber are pierced by carved stone jalis (screens). Side chambers spread out around the central chamber and house the cenotaphs of the others who share this space.

Timings: Sunrise – Sunset, Open daily.

Wheelchair access, parking.

Tickets: Indian Citizens – Rs. 10.00,

Foreigners – Rs. 250.00.





2. MOSQUE AND TOMB OF ISA KHAN

Near Humayun's Tomb is a walled octagonal enclosure with a ruined gateway. Inside are the mosque and tomb of Isa Khan Niyazi, a nobleman from the court of Humayun's nemesis, Sher Shah Sur. Both the tomb and the mosque which were built during Isa Khan's lifetime, were constructed in 1547-8, almost 20 years before Humayun's Tomb. Interestingly enough, till the early 1900's, an entire village had made its home inside the enclosure.

This is a fairly unusual style of mosque, with a large central dome flanked by a *chhatri* (a small pillared pavilion) on either side – a feature unique to this mosque. Constructed mainly of grey Delhi quartzite and red sandstone, its façade is exceptionally lovely, with some fine incised plaster work and glazed tiles in green, yellow and bright blue.

Isa Khan's tomb sits in the middle of the enclosure on a platform. This is an octagonal tomb with a deep *chhaja* (overhang) projecting outward below a dome surrounded by *chhatris*. The eight corners of the tomb are buttressed by slabs of quartzite that slope solidly up from the ground to the roof, making it even more imposing. Like the mosque, the tomb too is decorated with incised plaster and tilework. The highlight of the central chamber is the richly painted ceiling, in deep red and blue.



3. MOSQUE AND TOMB OF AFSARWALA

The mosque and tomb of Afsarwala also lie within an enclosure of their own. 'Afsar' literally means 'officer', so even though the identity of the man buried here is not known, it is probable that he was an officer of some standing in early Mughal times (the tomb and mosque were built sometime before 1566, the date on one of the graves). The mosque and tomb stand next to each other on a platform. The domed mosque, which was once probably covered all over with painted and incised plaster (you can still see traces on the façade), has three arches along the front, the central arch being the largest. Each end of the façade has a narrow staircase built into the thick outer wall.

The tomb adjacent to the mosque is better preserved and more appealing. It is in the shape of an irregular octagon, similar to a square with the four corners lopped off. The wider sides of the octagon are decorated with deep recessed arches, each pierced by a doorway. The narrower sides have a narrower, shallower recessed arches, but no entrances. The exterior of the tomb is sparingly decorated with inlays of black and white marble on a background of red sandstone.





4. BARBER'S TOMB

A lowly barber may not seem, to most people, to merit a tomb – and that too an impressive one within the grounds of an emperor's mausoleum. The reason suggested, at least by popular legend, is that the barber was a powerful man, for he was the only one who could hold a razor to the emperor's throat every single day!

Whoever the barber may have been – and whatever the actual reason for this grand tomb – this square, domed structure is worth a visit. Built in or about 1590, it stands on a platform diagonally across from Humayun's Tomb, near the South Gate of the complex. The tomb has a large recessed arch on each of its four sides, but the only entrance is through the arch on the southern side.

On the outside, the bulk of the decoration is around the dome. *Chhatris* decorated with traces of green and blue glazed tiles stand on all four corners of the building, surrounding the dome, along with pinnacles of red sandstone. Below, the façade of the tomb is decorated with carved medallions, arches and beautifully carved *jalis*. The interior houses two cenotaphs, one of a male and the other of a female (a male's cenotaph is indicated by a ridge-like wedge atop it, known as a *kalam*; a female's cenotaph, on the other hand, has a flat strip on top, called a *takhti*).

5. ARAB SARAI

Adjacent to the Tomb and Mosque of Afsarwala is an area known as Arab Sarai. Built by Hamida Banu Begum, while she was building Humayun's Tomb, one theory is that it was built for, and named after, some 300 Arabs whom Hamida Banu Begum brought back to India from Mecca. The other is that the Arab Sarai was built as housing for the artisans who were working on Humayun's Tomb. At any rate, this large enclosure, built in 1560-1, is interesting enough and is approached by two of the most striking gates in the entire complex.

The northern gate is at right angles to the gate of Bu Halima. An imposing 14m in height, it is made of grey Delhi quartzite and red sandstone, embellished with an inlay of white marble. The *jharokhas* or oriel windows still retain traces of blue glazed tile. Not much remains in the enclosure beyond but an old *baoli* or step-well and the remains of an old *bazaar* – ruined cells made of rubble masonry. The east gate of the *sarai*, which was built during the reign of Jahangir by Mihr Banu, is decorated in blue, yellow and green glazed tiles. The façade and side bays of the gate also have traces of painted plaster work.

Interestingly enough, Arab Sarai was occupied till as late as 1925 by a community so large that it merited its own post office. In 1925, the residents of Arab Sarai were ordered to vacate the area.





6. GARDEN AND TOMB OF BU HALIMA

Nothing is known of Bu Halima after whom the garden is named and who apparently is buried on the ruined grave platform within, but it is undoubtedly an early Mughal tomb and the gateway to the garden is a simple but beautiful one. Today it is also the main entrance to Humayun's Tomb, since in the nineteenth century the western wall of Bu Halima's garden was breached to allow access for visitors. Today visitors usually go through Bu Halima's gate in reverse, while entering the Tomb Complex. Bu Halima's gate has an imposing façade which is angled back on both sides and has a recessed arch in the centre. There are remains of some beautiful and intricate tilework in blue green and yellow.

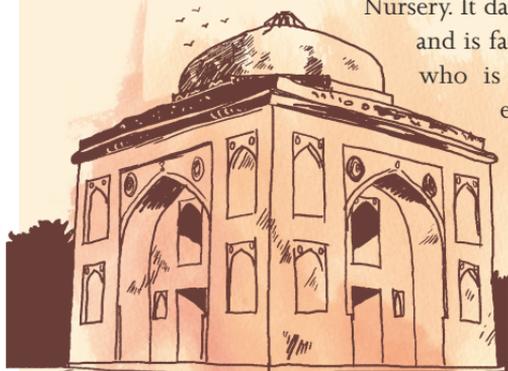
7. SUNDARWALA MAHAL

To the north of Humayun's tomb complex is the government-run Sundar Nursery for plants. Though seldom explored by tourists, it contains some treasures that definitely merit a visit. One of the buildings within is the Sundarwala Mahal, an early Mughal tomb. It is a relatively plain structure, built of rough rubble masonry, in the form of an oblong octagon: a rectangle, actually, with the corners lopped off. The building takes the form of a series of dark interconnected verandahs that surround a central chamber with a vaulted *tekhana* (an underground chamber) under it. There is minimal ornamentation – niches in the walls, and some traces of incised plaster. On one end (the southern side) two steep and somewhat dilapidated staircases lead up to the roof. The roof would once have been topped by another structure; all you can see of it today is a platform.

8. SUNDARWALA BURJ

This amazing little domed tomb is also within the Sundar Nursery. It dates back to early Mughal days and is fairly obscure – nobody knows who is buried here. It has arched entrances on all four walls; the ornamentation on the exterior consists of finely incised medallions on either side of the arch that faces the Sundar Nursery main gate. There are traces of red paint on the façade.

The small but compact interior of the tomb is



profusely and exquisitely decorated with finely incised plaster. Almost every inch of the vaulted ceiling and the walls is covered with fine plaster work. The underside of the dome is covered in a pattern of six-pointed stars filled with delicate arabesques; and larger floral patterns spread across the walls, along with bands of Quranic inscriptions.

Sunder Nursery Timings: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm.



9. BARA BATASHEWALA MAHAL

Within the Bharat Scouts and Guides complex (Bharatiyam) are two tombs: the Chhota Batashewala Mahal and the Bara Batashewala Mahal. The Bara Batashewala Mahal was constructed in 1603-4 as the tomb of Mirza Muzaffar Husain, the son of Gulrukh Begum, daughter of Humayun's brother Mirza Kamran (Humayun's grand nephew) who was married to Akbar's eldest daughter, Sultan Khanam. Mirza Muzaffar Husain's prestige and power are obvious in the sumptuousness of his tomb.

The Bara Batashewala Mahal is four-sided and stands on a high platform. Each side of the tomb has five arches that allow you to enter a series of chambers that contain traces of extensive decoration of blue, red, and white painted plaster. The dados along two of the chambers, in particular, have beautiful geometric patterns worked in white on a deep-red ground. On the ceilings there are traces of intricately painted red and blue plaster.

Nobody seems to know the reason behind the names. A *batasha* is a small disc of fine sugar, but what connection these tombs have to a *batasha* is unclear.



10. CHHOTA BATASHEWALA MAHAL

This too is a tomb dating back to the early Mughal period. It is however, smaller than the Bara Batashewala Mahal, and it is not known who is buried here – in fact, there is not even any trace of a grave within. Not very much remains now of what was probably once a fairly ornate octagonal structure surrounded by an arcade with arched doorways on each of the eight sides of the building. The central chamber of the tomb has four doorways, three of which are screened off by stone *jalis*; the fourth acts as the entrance to the tomb. Inside, you can still see traces of decoration, in the form of incised and painted plaster.

11. TOMB

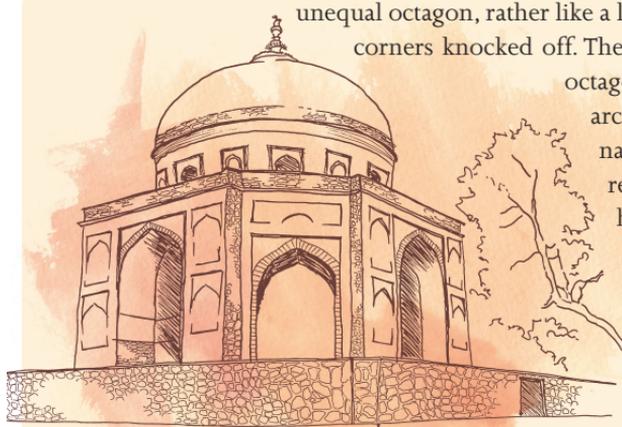
Past the Bharat Scouts and Guides enclosure, just before the road curves right towards the Gurudwara Damdama Sahib, a lane leads off through a gate on the left, to an imposing domed tomb standing atop a low hillock grown over with scrub. Built during the Mughal period, this is the tomb of an unidentified person. Around it are some old graves and even a mosque, which is in use. The square tomb has an arch on all four sides with traces of blue tilework on the outside. The interior has a stunning display of incised plaster. Quranic verses are incised in plaster in a broad strip above the dado, and in the centre of the ceiling is a very fine circular design painted in deep blue and red: exquisite. The unusual finial atop the dome: its shape, similar to a cross, is fairly unique.

12. NILA GUMBAD

The Nila Gumbad (literally, 'blue dome'), is the tomb of one Fahim Khan, an attendant of Akbar's general, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, who built the tomb in 1624-5. The tomb is an

unequal octagon, rather like a large square with its corners knocked off. The wider sides of the

octagon are pierced by arched doorways. The narrower sides have recessed arches that have unusual paint work in red and white, reminiscent of bricks. The upper half of the façade that faces the gurdwara has



a beautifully ornate geometrical design of glazed tiles in white, green, yellow and shades of blue. Combined with the duller blue of the squat dome above (which retains its original tiles), the effect is stunning.

The tomb was used as a cattle shed till the late 1800's and till very recently, it was occupied by squatters. Ever since it was cleared of encroachments a few years back, the tomb is kept locked. If you can find the caretaker to open the barred door you will see the impressive interior of the tomb. Even if the door is closed, you can see between the bars, the beautiful incised plaster on the ceiling, which is covered in a pattern known as netted vaulting.



13. BARAHPULA

South of the Nizamuddin Railway Station is one of the few structures in Delhi that was built during the time of Jahangir, in approximately 1611-12. This is the bridge known as Barahpula ('twelve bridges'). It's very literally named – the bridge consists of eleven arches resting on twelve piers – is a solid yet pleasing structure. The only ornamentation is a series of rounded minarets that stand on each pier, on both sides of the bridge.

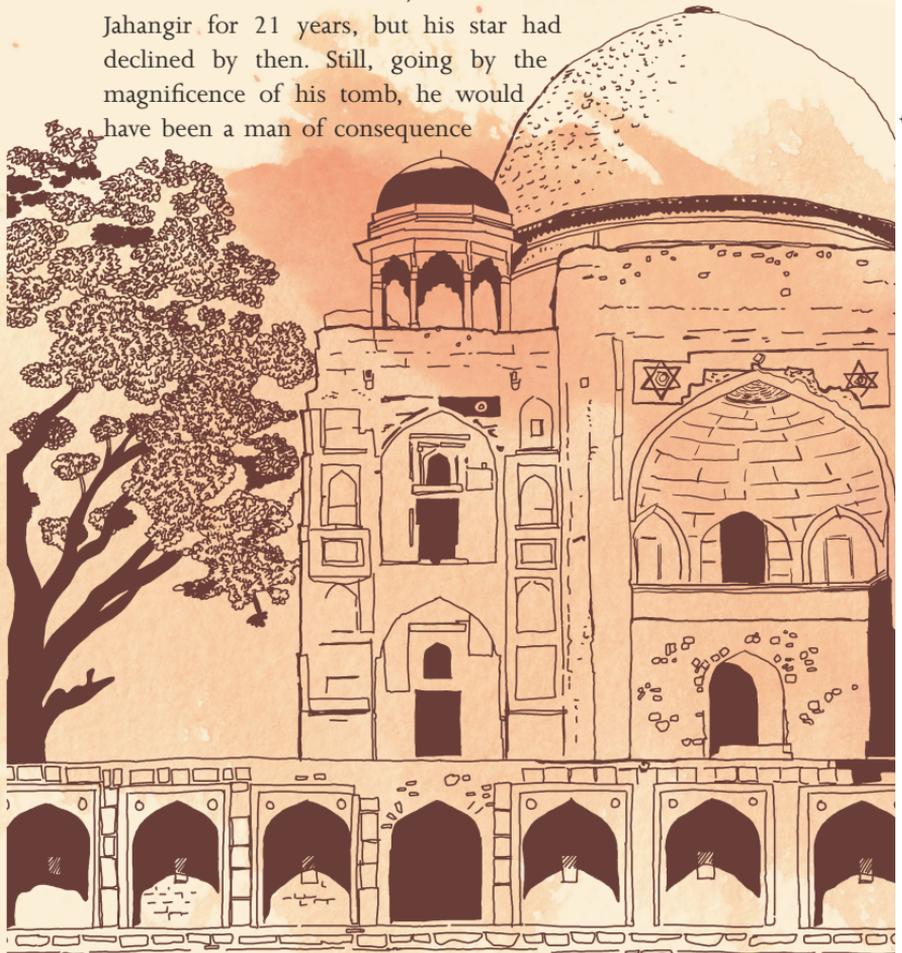
Till very recently, Barahpula was in serious danger of collapsing from the weight of the increasing traffic across it. A new bridge has since been opened parallel to it and Barahpula has been closed to vehicular traffic. It continues to be a pedestrian bridge along which some hawkers sit, and rickshaw pullers park their rickshaws.

14. TOMB OF ABDUR RAHIM KHAN-I-KHANAN

On the main road that connects Nizamuddin to Jangpura stands a large, domed tomb that looks obviously vandalised. Unlike the dressed stone or plaster finishes of other structures, the tomb has much of its rubble masonry exposed. The Tomb of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan should form part of any itinerary simply because it has so much to recommend it. The tomb is striking; its history is interesting; and the man himself was a highly accomplished person who is very well known to schoolchildren across India.

Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan was the son of Akbar's regent Bairam Khan. After Bairam Khan was murdered, Akbar took his widow into his harem and took a personal interest in the upbringing of her young son. Abdur Rahim grew up to become one of Akbar's most famous generals, as well as a renowned poet ('Rahim') in Hindi, Turkish and Persian. His Hindi couplets are still popular in India.

After the death of Akbar, Rahim served under Jahangir for 21 years, but his star had declined by then. Still, going by the magnificence of his tomb, he would have been a man of consequence



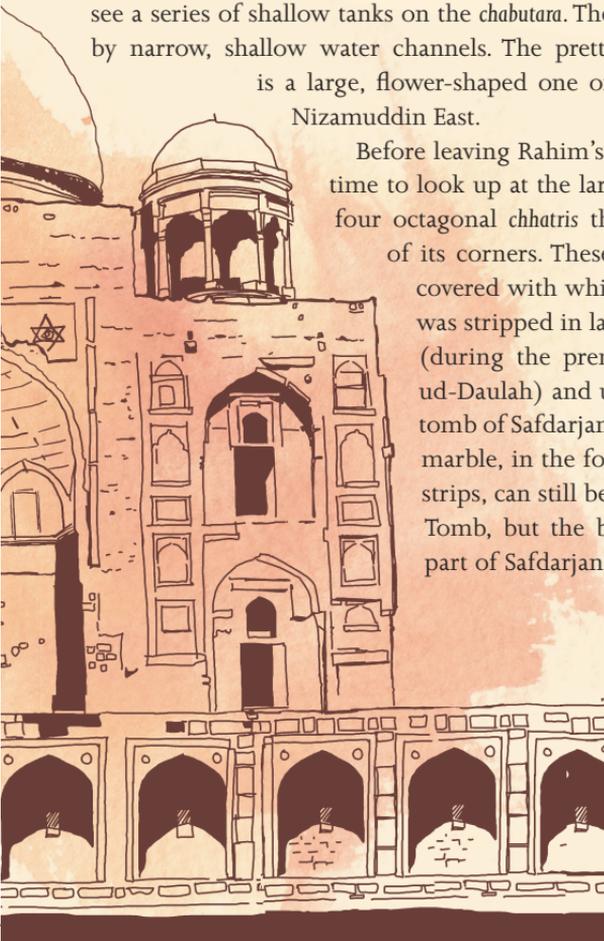


even when he died in 1626. The square tomb, built in 1626-7, stands on a 4m high *chabutara* or platform which has multiple cells – possibly for visitors and passersby to rest in – all along the sides. These cells have arched doorways decorated with carved medallions on each side of the arch. The designs of the medallions are very varied: you’ll see floral and geometric designs, the name of Allah, and even a stylised peacock. Some of the cells even retain traces of incised plaster with further interesting motifs including the swastika, an ancient Hindu symbol.

Flights of steps lead up to the top of the *chabutara* from the side facing the main road. The main chamber of the tomb, in which Rahim’s rather plain cenotaph stands, is decorated with ornate patterns in incised plaster. This would once have been painted, but little remains of the paint; all you can see is the plaster. The walls have faint traces of geometric patterns, and the ceiling has a beautiful circular design with eight floral motifs arranged radially around it. The same motifs are repeated on the walls of the arched doorways that lead out of the tomb on each of its four sides.

Moving out of the main chamber onto the platform, you can see a series of shallow tanks on the *chabutara*. These are connected by narrow, shallow water channels. The prettiest of the tanks is a large, flower-shaped one on the side facing Nizamuddin East.

Before leaving Rahim’s Tomb, take some time to look up at the large dome and the four octagonal *chhatris* that stand at each of its corners. These were originally covered with white marble, which was stripped in later Mughal times (during the premiership of Asif-ud-Daulah) and used to adorn the tomb of Safdarjang. Traces of white marble, in the form of bosses and strips, can still be seen on Rahim’s Tomb, but the bulk of it is now part of Safdarjang’s Tomb.





NIZAMUDDIN DARGAH COMPLEX

Nizamuddin's Dargah is of considerable importance as a place of pilgrimage, with thousands of visitors of all faiths visiting it every year. People come in droves to pray, present votive offerings, and often just sit in the paved courtyard of the complex, listening to the *qawwals* who sing devotional songs all day long. The most visited tombs in the complex are those of Nizamuddin and Amir Khusro.

The complex is surrounded by the densely built *basti* of Nizamuddin. Narrow winding lanes lead to the shrine itself, which is however hard to miss not only because everyone knows it, but also because the approach to the shrine is lined with those selling rose petals which are a common offering at the shrine. They also look after your shoes which have to be removed before entering the inner complex.

Timings: 5.00 am – 12.00 pm, Open daily.

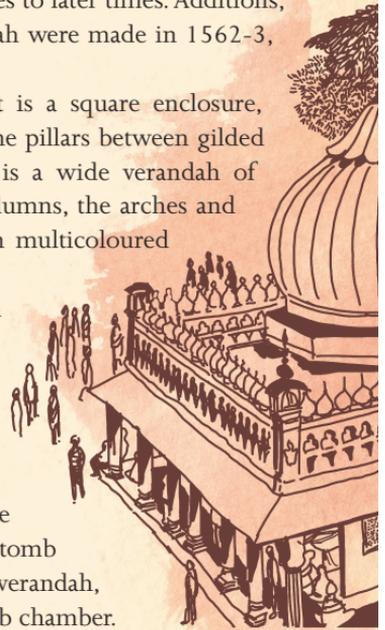
15. TOMB OF HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN AULIYA

The Sufi mystic Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya (1236-1325) was born in Badayun, came to Delhi at the age of 25, and became a disciple of Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakar. By 1325, when he died, Nizamuddin was a much revered saint of the Chishti *silsila* (order). His tomb was built by the Tughlaq emperor, Firoz Shah, in 1325; nothing, however, remains of this original structure. The present square tomb surmounted by a bulbous dome of white marble with an inlay of thin black stripes, dates to later times. Additions, repairs and modifications to the Dargah were made in 1562-3, 1652-3, 1800 and 1823-4.

Around the cenotaph of the saint is a square enclosure, pierced by carved marble *jalīs*, with the pillars between gilded and painted. Outside this enclosure is a wide verandah of white marble, supported by fluted columns, the arches and pillars ornately gilded and painted in multicoloured floral patterns.

Above the arches around the Dargah is a projecting *chhaja* which is topped by a 'pinjra parapet' – an enclosing cage-like parapet, crowned with a series of dwarf domes and gleaming finials at the four corners.

Only men are allowed to enter the chamber in which Nizamuddin's tomb stands. Women may stand or sit in the verandah, from where you can look into the tomb chamber.



16. JAMAAT KHANA

The Jamaat Khana ('congregation house') is the name given to the imposing red mosque that looms beside the Dargah of Nizamuddin, forming the western edge of the complex. Built during the reign of Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316), this is today the oldest structure in the complex.

The Jamaat Khana mosque has a low dome and an ornate arched façade with broad bands of Quranic inscriptions running along the arches. The central chamber of the Jamaat Khana was built by Khizr Khan, son of the emperor Alauddin Khalji. It is believed that he built the central chamber to house the tomb of Nizamuddin, but the saint expressed a desire to not be buried within it.

The side rooms of the Jamaat Khana were added later, probably in the reign of Mohammad bin Tughlaq. Although the Jamaat Khana is made of red sandstone with inlays and carving in white marble, all of it has been covered in a lavish coating of red paint (over the sandstone) and silver paint (over the marble). This obviously detracts considerably from the beauty of the building, but despite that this is a very impressive mosque.





17. TOMB OF JAHANARA

“...Let naught cover my grave save the green grass; for grass well suffices as a covering for the grave of the lowly...” reads the inscription on a marble slab on grave of Jahanara (1614–1681), the daughter of emperor Shahjahan and Mumtaz Mahal. She was very close to Shahjahan, and is reknowned for having voluntarily shared her father’s imprisonment after he was deposed by his son Aurangzeb.

The Tomb of Jahanara stands in the southwest corner of the Dargah Complex. Compared to the relatively opulent tombs of Mirza Jahangir and Mohammad Shah, Jahanara’s Tomb is a study in understatement. Built in 1681 while Jahanara was still alive, it stands in a four-sided enclosure of white marble *jalis* with a decorative strip of carved marble running all around the top. Decorative pinnacles project above the enclosure at the four corners. Inside the enclosure are four graves. Jahanara’s grave is sparingly carved and with a shallow receptacle on top containing earth. Traditionally, this receptacle is supposed to be filled with grass that’s kept watered and growing, but what you see today is plain earth with a few rose petals scattered on top by visitors. The other graves are those of other members of the Mughal royal family from a later date.

18. TOMB OF MIRZA JAHANGIR

The Tomb of Mirza Jahangir lies to the east of Nizamuddin’s Dargah, separated from the Tomb of Mohammad Shah by marble-paved courtyard. Mirza Jahangir was the eldest son of the Mughal emperor Akbar II, who after a failed attempt to assassinate the British Resident Seton, was exiled to Allahabad in 1808. His mother vowed that if he were allowed to return to Delhi, she would make a pilgrimage to the *dargah* (shrine) of Sheikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (in Mehrauli). This wish was granted, and the queen’s promise was duly fulfilled – and eventually became an annual event that continues even today and is known as Phoolwalon ki Sair.

Mirza Jahangir’s tomb too is an enclosure of finely carved marble screens, with two entrances. Jahangir and his brother Mirza Babar are both buried within, but oddly enough the marble graves of both were originally placed over the bodies of other people. The

grave of Mirza Babar has an inscription that mentions the name Mir Mohammad and the year 1579-80. The grave over Jahangir's body was originally that of a woman, as is attested by the *takhti* or flat rectangular tablet shaped piece carved on it.

Immediately to the east of Mirza Jahangir's tomb is what is known as the 'House of Mirza Jahangir'. It is almost certain that Mirza Jahangir never actually lived here, and the structure which consists of two arched halls on the north and south of an open courtyard today houses several graves. One of these is the fairly plain, unornamented grave of Mirza Jahangir's sister-in-law, the wife of Mirza Babar. The hall on the southern edge of the 'house' is barely recognisable any more, since it's been mostly built over.

19. TOMB OF MOHAMMAD SHAH

Next to the tomb of Jahanara stands the tomb of a later Mughal emperor, Mohammad Shah (1702-48), who is known as a lover of the arts – a love that gave him the epithet 'Rangeela' (literally, 'colourful'). During his reign the Persian invader Nadir Shah ransacked Delhi and made off with the famed Peacock Throne, amongst other treasures.

Though similar in material, size and shape to Jahanara's tomb, Mohammad Shah's tomb is much more ornate. The plinth of the enclosure is heavily carved, as is the recessed arch of the doorway. The door itself is unusual in that it actually has leaves of white marble, carved in a pattern of daffodils.

Mohammad Shah's tomb enclosure contains seven graves, of which the largest is the emperor's. One of the people buried here is Mohammad Shah's daughter who was given in marriage to the son of Nadir Shah. Her child is buried near her.





20. TOMB OF AMIR KHUSRO

'The Parrot of India', Abul Hasan, better known as Amir Khusro Dehlavi (1253-1325) was a renowned musician, poet and lyricist of Hindi and Persian. The chief disciple and a devoted friend of Nizamuddin Auliya, he is said to have pined away and died of grief six months after the death of the saint. He was buried in close proximity to Nizamuddin, and his tomb is today, after Nizamuddin's Dargah, the most visited of the tombs in this complex. It is customary to pay ones respects to the disciple before moving on to the shrine of Nizamuddin.

Amir Khusro's tomb stands south of Nizamuddin's, opposite the main entrance to the Dargah Complex. The outer sandstone enclosure has been painted green and white. The inner chamber, which dates from 1605-6, is made of white marble screens, with a vaulted roof. This replaced the earlier simpler structure that had stood there since Khusro's death. There are numerous inscriptions – most of them in praise of Amir Khusro – around the tomb.

21. DALAN OF MIRDHA IKRAM

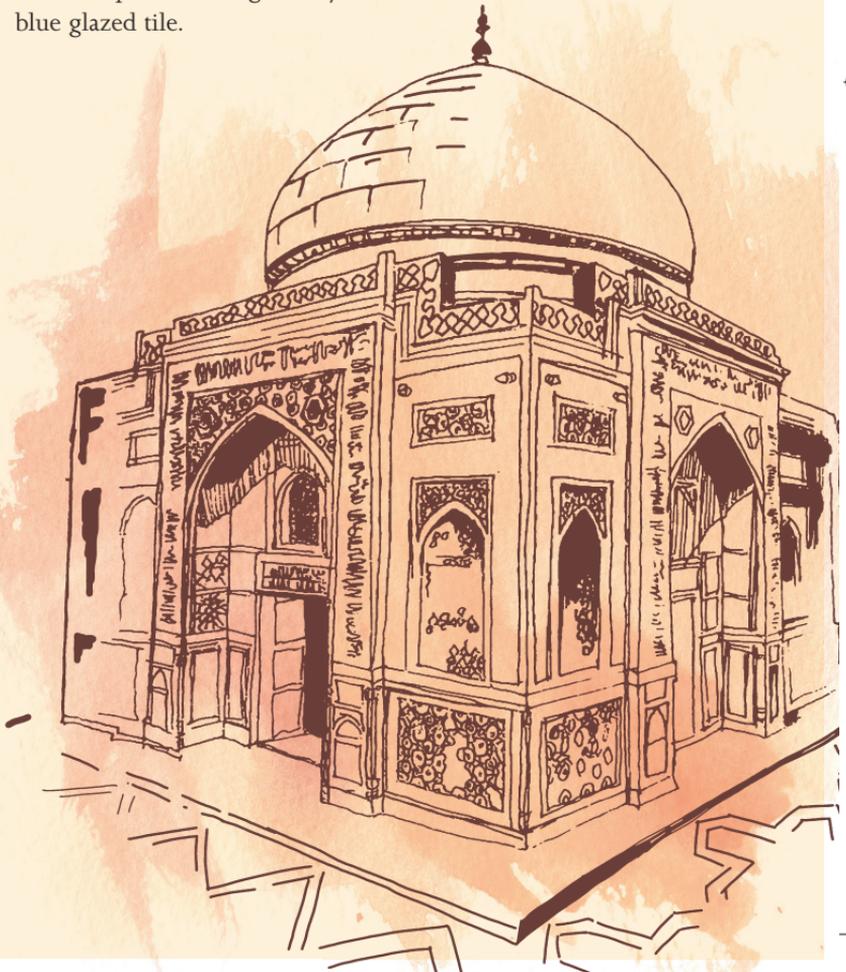
Just south of the tomb of Amir Khusro is the *dalan* (arcade) of Mirdha Ikram, who was a non-commissioned officer (a *mirdha*) in the court of the later Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II (1759-1805). The *dalan* is a pleasing rectangular structure, made of red sandstone with a floor and dado of white marble. Inside there are four graves, all of Mirdha Ikram's family. One belief is that Ziyauddin Barani, a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya and the author of the historical work *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, is also buried here.

22. TOMB OF ATGAH KHAN

The emperor Akbar ascended the throne when he was thirteen and some of the most influential people at his court were his tutors and wet nurses and their families. Atgah Khan, whose tomb lies adjacent to the Dargah complex, was the husband of Jiji Angah, one of Akbar's nine wet nurses. A close confidant of Akbar's, Atgah Khan was murdered in 1562 by Adham Khan, the son of Maham Anga, another of Akbar's wet nurses as a result of court politics. His son Mirza Aziz Kokaltash built this beautiful tomb for him.

Atgah Khan's tomb is richly decorated in a medley of materials and decorative techniques. The exterior is dressed mainly in white marble and red sandstone, with extensive inlays of everything from black marble to blue tile, marking out floral motifs and Quranic inscriptions. Remains of incised and painted plaster can be seen within the chamber, which contains the graves of Atgah Khan, Jiji Angah and a third, unidentified person.

Also within the walled enclosure of Atgah Khan's tomb is a small *dalan* (a pillared cloister), and beyond it, a wall mosque with intricate patterns in green, yellow and blue glazed tile.





23. TOMB OF MIRZA GHALIB

Just beyond the Ghalib Academy, a fenced enclosure houses the tomb of Delhi's poet laureate, Mirza Asadullah Khan 'Ghalib' (1796-1869). Generally acknowledged to be one of the greatest poets of Persian and Urdu ever, Ghalib lived most of his life in Delhi. He was buried here when he died in 1869, and his tomb was simply marked by a marble slab with an inscription on it. Later, in the 20th century, a white marble structure, designed by the architect Nawab Zain Yar Jang of Hyderabad, was built over the tomb. This is a small, sparsely decorated structure, but pleasing nevertheless. It has jalis along the four sides and forming the parapet; a wide, flat *chhaja* projects above the structure.

24. CHAUNSATH KHAMBA

Mirza Aziz Kokaltash, the son of Atgah Khan, built for himself an unusual tomb, a square pillared hall that looks more like a pavilion than a mausoleum. Constructed in 1623-4, it is known as Chaunsath Khamba ('sixty four pillars'). It stands within a raised, walled enclosure, approached through a stone gateway south of the Ghalib Academy. From the yard in front of the Urs Mahal a short flight of steps leads up to Chaunsath Khamba.

The white marble tomb spreads across twenty-five bays roofed by domes and supported by square pillars. At first glance, it doesn't look as if there are sixty-four of them, but if you look closely, you'll find that the outer rows contain double columns and the corners hold groups of four.

Each of the four walls of Chaunsath Khamba is pierced by a doorway; in addition, there are insets of carving and *jali* screens decorating the walls. Inside, the ceiling is vaulted, and there is fine carving on the graves of Kokaltash and his wife. The other graves in the Chaunsath Khamba are un-inscribed but are believed to be the cenotaphs of members of the family.

Outside the tomb, and within the walled enclosure, are many finely carved cenotaphs. A rough stone *jali* in the north wall allows a view of the Tomb of Mirza Ghalib, which is in the immediate neighbourhood. While you're on this side of the tomb, look at the lintel of the doorway leading into Chaunsath Khamba: there's a finely carved inscription on it.

25. KALI MASJID

Khan-e-Jahan Junaan Shah, who followed his father Khan-e-Jahan Telangani as the chief minister of Firuz Shah Tughlaq, was probably one of the most prolific mosque-builders that Delhi has ever seen. He is believed to have built seven mosques in the city – the Begumpuri Masjid near Malviya Nagar, the Khirki Masjid near Saket, the Kalan Masjid near Turkman Gate, and the Kalan (or Kali) Masjid in Nizamuddin, from mid to late 14th century.

Like most of Junaan Shah's mosques, the Kalan ('large') Masjid is a solid structure that resembles a fortress. It has an impressive projecting gateway that is flanked by tapering minarets that look like bastions, and the interior, with its four courtyards, is huge. Many of the domes that once covered the courtyards are now gone, and the modern painting and whitewashing of the mosque detracts from its original character. The other name for the mosque – the Kali ('black') Masjid – refers to the blackness of the surface plaster, a result of organic growth that was inevitable in buildings such as this, where ingredients such as fenugreek, Bengal gram and yoghurt helped make the mortar more porous and resilient. The blackness at the Kalan Masjid (like at the Kalan Masjid near Turkman Gate) is now obscured by whitewash and paint.





26. SABZ BURJ

The traffic island at the intersection of Mathura Road and Lodhi Road is one of Delhi's most distinctive ones – on it stands a striking blue-domed 'Baghdadi' tomb known as Sabz Burj, literally, 'green dome'. Today the name is misleading because the original tiles were replaced by the present blue ones during conservation work. Below the blue dome, the geometrical pattern of

green, blue and yellow tiles on the high drum is original, dating back to early Mughal times, when the Sabz Burj was built. During the early 1900's Sabz Burj housed the local police station,.

Sabz Burj is an irregular octagon and sits on a high *chabutara* or platform, with a few steps leading up. The four wider sides of the tomb have recessed bays and are pierced by doorways; the narrower sides still contain traces – in some cases, substantial and very well preserved – of exquisite paint work in red, black and white. There is a pair of delicately incised plaster medallions on either side of one of the arched doorways.

Inside, the tomb is decorated with squinches and niches and more incised, painted plaster. The ceiling is in poor condition, but one can still see traces of beautiful paint work in deep blue, red and white. The grave inside this chamber is of an unidentified person.

27. BARAH KHAMBA

On the north end of Nizamuddin village spreads a small, leafy park known as Mirza Ghalib Park. Within this stands Bara Khamba ('twelve pillars'), the tomb of an unidentified person. This solid domed structure of rubble masonry and stone dates back to the Lodhi period, i.e. the late 15th-early 16th centuries. It stands on a *chabutara*, with a projecting *chhaja* on all sides, below the domes crowning the building.

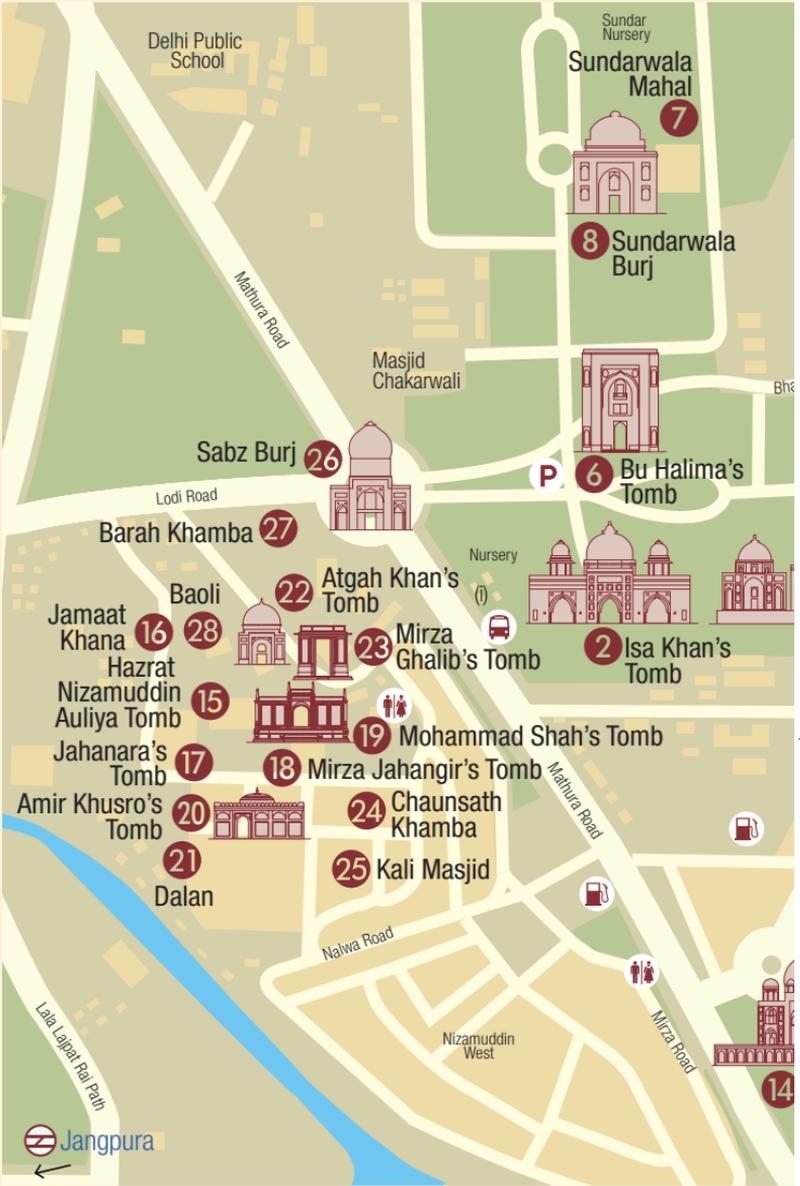
The tomb consists of a central square chamber surrounded by a verandah with arched openings –three to a side – all around. A small domed apartment stands at each corner of the tomb, acting as an interesting complement to the main central structure.

28. BAOLI OF HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN

The *baoli* or stepwell of Nizamuddin Auliya, can be approached either through the shrine complex or from the north. Once also known as Chashma Dilkusha ('heart-uplifting spring'), the *baoli* is surrounded by walls on three sides, with steps built down to the level of the water on the north side.

The *baoli* was constructed under the supervision of Nizamuddin himself, and its water therefore is believed to be sacred and to have curative powers. There is an interesting story behind the construction of the well. The building of the *baoli* (in 1321-2) had become the major bone of contention between Nizamuddin and the then ruler of Delhi, Ghiasuddin Tughlaq. The emperor was at that time building his citadel at Tughlaqabad, and he summarily forbade all labourers in Delhi from working during the day at any site other than Tughlaqabad. The labourers, however, held Nizamuddin in such esteem that they got around Ghiasuddin's ban by working on the *baoli*'s construction at night – which immediately made Ghiasuddin ban the sale of oil which was used in lamps. The story goes that the *baoli* was finally completed by labourers working by moonlight. Another story has it that the workers used the water of the *baoli* instead of oil, and effectively enough. Whichever tale you believe, it's enchanting enough to merit a visit.





Nearest Bus Stops

- (i) **Dargah Hazrat Nizamuddin:** MS (+) 40, 101, 156, 181, 323, 402, 403, 405, 410, 411, 421, 429, 436, 438, 447, 453, 454, 457, 458, 459, 470, 893, 894, 966, 0422, 055, LTD 274



11 Tomb

Bharat Scouts & Guides Trg Centre

9 Bara Batashewal Mahal

10 Chhota Batashewal Mahal

Bharat Scouts & Guides Marg

Bath

Western Gate

1 Humayun's Tomb

3 Afsar Wala Masjid & Tomb

Barber's Tomb

4

12 Nila Gumbad

South Gate

Arab ki Sarai Road

5

Arab Ki Sarai

Harsha Road

Nizamuddin East

Nizamuddin Railway Station

14 Khan-i-Khana's Tomb

Rahim Khan Road

Barahpula

13



Bus Stand



Petrol Pump



Parking



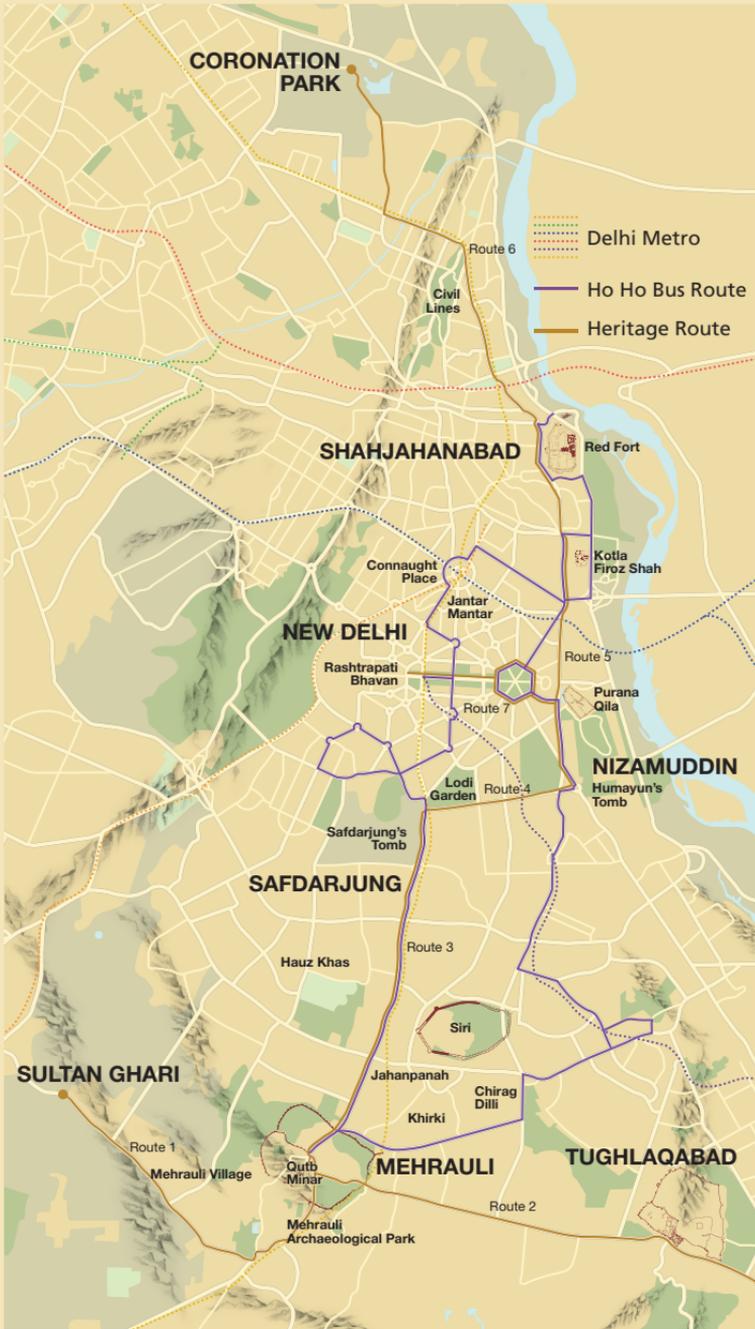
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Cafeteria



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