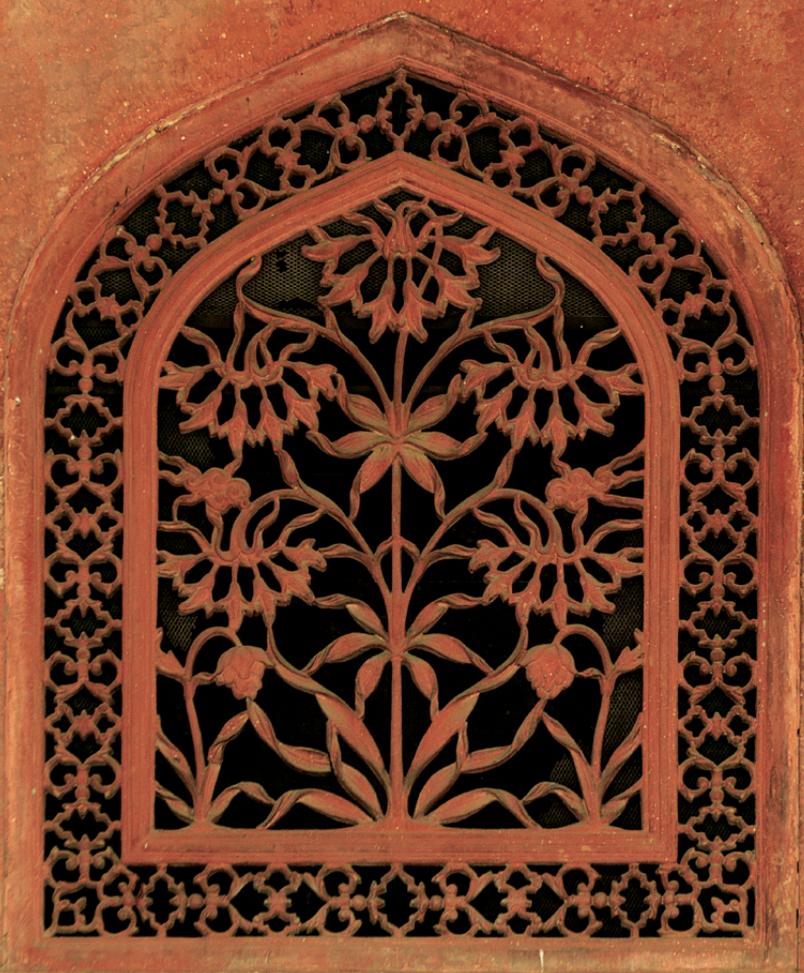


# THE RED FORT

and its surroundings



दिल्ली विरासत  
DELHI HERITAGE



For many today Shahjahanabad is synonymous with old Delhi, the heart of the city, a fascinating melange of the different eras of Delhi's history, but with a throbbing life in the present. It is a lively commercial hub, and this is where the Municipal Corporation of Delhi is still centred. Shahjahan's magnificent Red Fort, with its elegant palaces, symbolises a legacy of political power, which is why the Prime Minister's address to the nation on Independence Day is from the Red Fort.

There is much to attract the visitor to this part of Delhi. There are many places of worship – mosques, Hindu and Jain temples, gurudwaras, churches. There are markets, many of them specialising in specific types of goods and at rates lower than in other parts of the city – such as the spice market of Khari Baoli, the jewellers' street of Dariba Kalan, and the paper market of Chawri Bazar. And as you pass along you see intricately carved façades and doorways of havelis that might afford a glimpse of peaceful and green courtyards of traditionally laid out homes. This is where Delhi's best Karachi halwa, bedmi and parathas can be eaten, and where you can see what is probably India's only hospital solely for birds. Enjoy!



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## THE CITY AND HISTORY

Shahjahanabad was the imperial city founded in the mid 1600s when, having more or less completed his magnum opus, the Taj Mahal, the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan shifted his capital from Agra to Delhi.

Imperial planning of the city was restricted to the broad outlines and major landmarks. The symbolic focus was the Red Fort – the imperial palace complex. The two major streets of the city led out from its two main entrances. The one stretching in front of the Lahore gate in time came to be known as Chandni Chowk, after the square of the same name. The name literally means ‘moonlight square’ which was a reference to a large tank which reflected the moonlight. The other street, called Faiz Bazar, led from the Delhi Gate of the fort to the Delhi Gate of the city. Both were broad market avenues, lined with shady trees and with central water channels.

Another major focal point was the congregational mosque – the Jama Masjid, which was located on a natural rise in the ground. Other mosques and gardens were added by important members of the royal family: for instance the Fatehpuri Mosque by one of the wives of Shahjahan, and a large garden and *sarai* (inn) by his daughter Jahanara (the site of the last is now occupied by the Town Hall and its garden).

The other details on the ground were filled in by the people of the city. The nobility made their own *havelis* (mansions), and within them laid out gardens and allocated spaces for their



service staff. The rich also constructed places of worship, markets and gates. The spaces between the grand mansions were filled in by humbler folk – smaller traders, shopkeepers, artisans and a variety of service providers. In later times when some noble families declined, the old *havelis* came to be partitioned and the land more densely built upon.

As the city went through periods of anarchy and invasion, particularly in the eighteenth century, the practice of sealing off the heads of residential and commercial streets with gates that could be locked became common. Many of these gates still exist and still serve an important function: securing the houses and shops within against intrusion and theft, particularly at night. This organic growth lent the city its character of a rich complexity of alleys, neighbourhoods, and markets.

A major re-ordering of the physical space of the city took place in the middle of the nineteenth century. In the aftermath



of the Revolt of 1857, a large proportion of the buildings within the Red Fort were demolished by the British government. In addition, a wide swathe of land around the fort was almost completely cleared of buildings, resulting in the loss of gems like the royal Akbarabadi Mosque, which was located near the Delhi Gate of the Fort. The large Jain temple at the head of Chandni Chowk, on the other hand, survived. Esplanade Road marks the edge of these clearances. Shortly afterwards the railway line was driven through the heart of the city, not only demolishing many buildings, but cutting the north of the city off from the rest. With the partition of the country between India and Pakistan in 1947, Shahjahanabad saw a population upheaval, with many Muslim families who had lived here for generations leaving, and being replaced by new arrivals from across the new border. Since then the population and commercial activity in the old city has steadily increased, and with the disappearance of the city wall, its designation as the 'Walled City' is an anachronism.





## 1. THE RED FORT

Shahjahan's shifting of the imperial capital to Delhi necessitated the building of a fortress to house the court – a court, which was wealthy enough to be rivalled by only that of the Ming emperors of China. To showcase this wealth, and of course to show off his own undoubtedly refined aesthetic sense, Shahjahan built the Lal Qila (literally, the 'red fort', named for the deep red sandstone walls that surround it). The fort, also known as the Qila-e-Shahjahanabad and the Qila-e-Mubarak, was designed by the master-builders Ustad Hamid and Ustad Ahmed. Construction began in 1639 and ended in 1648, though additions continued into as late as the 19th century.

An oblong, irregular octagon in shape, the Red Fort has a perimeter of 2.41 km and is pierced by two main gates, the Lahore Gate and the Delhi Gate (not to be confused with the Delhi Gate of the city further south). Although the Yamuna has now

shifted its course, in Shahjahan's time it flowed along the Red Fort and water was channelled from it into the moat that surrounds the fort. The main palaces – those occupied by the royal family – were situated along what was then the river front.

Today, only a part of the Red Fort's original buildings remain; the rest were destroyed during the period after British troops occupied the fort in 1857. There is, however, enough left to give some idea of the grandeur of this splendid citadel.

Timings: 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday closed.

Tickets: Indian Citizens – Rs. 15.00, Foreigners – Rs. 150.00.

Amenities: small canteen, toilets, wheelchair access, parking, guides.

Museums within Red Fort: Entry included in cost of entry to Red Fort. Timings: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm) • Red Fort Archaeological Museum, within Mumtaz Mahal, no wheelchair access, Museum catalogue available. • Indian War Memorial Museum within Naubat Khana, no wheelchair access, Museum catalogue available for Rs. 50.00, Photography allowed, Video Cameras allowed on payment of Rs. 25.00. • Swatantrata Sangram Sangrahalaya Museum within Red Fort, wheelchair access available, Photography not allowed, Video Cameras allowed with permission and on payment of Rs. 25.00. Light and Sound Show.

### a. Lahore Gate

The Lahore Gate and the approach to it consist of at least three separate sections, each contributed by a different individual. The bridge you cross before entering the fort was built in 1811 during the British administration of the city. Shahjahan's successor Aurangzeb added the 10.5m high barbican – the fortification enclosing the Lahore Gate and making its approach less straightforward. Beyond the barbican, and at right angles to it, stands the Lahore Gate itself, so named because it faces the city of Lahore. The Lahore Gate, incidentally, is where the Prime Minister addresses the nation from on Independence Day.

### b. Chhatta Chowk

Just beyond the Lahore Gate lies the market that is today known as Chhatta Chowk, but in Shahjahan's time was also known as Meena Bazaar or the Bazaar-e-Musakkaf. In the 17th century, the shops along this covered, vaulted arcade sold relatively exotic wares: midgets, eunuchs, jewellery, brocades, etc. Today, they cater exclusively to souvenir-seeking tourists. If you make your way to the centre of the arcade, where an octagonal open court lets in sunlight, you can still see traces of the original decoration in the form of incised plaster.



### c. Naubat Khana

Past the Chhatta Chowk is the Naubat Khana, or Naqqar Khana, the drum house. Built in 1639-48, the Naubat Khana originally housed the music gallery and was the main entrance to the Diwan-e-Aam. Musicians

at the Naubat Khana would play drums throughout the day on special occasions like the emperor's birthday, five times a day if the emperor was in residence and thrice if he was travelling. Originally there was a walled square in front of the Naubat Khana, with a tank in the middle and openings to a north-south bazaar street leading to the Delhi Gate on one side and to the north of the complex on the other. A channel of water ran down the length of this street. Visitors would alight in this square, leaving their carriages, palanquins, horses and elephants here. For this reason this was also known as Hathi Pol or 'Elephant Gate'.

Upstairs, the music gallery of the Naubat Khana has been converted into the War Memorial Museum, with exhibits ranging from Mughal to World War I battles – you'll see impressive old swords, shields, maces, powder horns and armour from Mughal times. The World War I section has an eclectic display, of guns, uniforms, badges, military decorations photographs, flags etc.

### d. Diwan-e-Aam

Beyond the Naubat Khana, a stone pathway flanked by lawns leads to the Diwan-e-Aam, the Hall of Public Audience, where the Mughal emperors would receive the general public and hear their



petitions and complaints. The Diwan-e-Aam too originally had a large square before it, surrounded by arcaded apartments.

The Diwan-e-Aam is a striking, beautifully symmetrical palace with open sides and front, made of red sandstone. The hall was originally covered with polished white shell lime plaster, with gilded ceiling and columns, and railings of gold and silver separating the rank and file from the nobility.

The highlight of the hall is the magnificent white marble throne that stands in the centre of the eastern wall. The throne is exquisitely decorated, with a curving Bangalda or whaleback roof, and carvings of flowers, particularly daffodils, all along the lower front of the structure. The wall behind the throne is inlaid in very fine and extensive *pietra dura* work depicting trees, flowers and birds. These decorative panels, much damaged and partly removed and carried off to England after 1857, were restored in the early 1900's by an Italian artisan named Menegatti.

### e. Mumtaz Mahal

The Mumtaz Mahal was originally a part of the imperial seraglio. After the revolt of 1857 it was used as a prison, and later as a sergeant's mess. It now houses the Archaeological Museum, an interesting collection of artefacts from the Mughal era. The treasures include fine samples of calligraphy, *farmaans* or royal edicts by Jahangir, Shahjahan, Aurangzeb and Sultan Abu Sayyid, the grandfather of Babur, the first Mughal emperor. There are old books (a 14th century Quran and a copy of Firdausi's *Shah Nama*); some fine paintings by Govardhan and Mansur, both renowned Mughal artists; fine Persian tiles from the 13th century; weapons; and the personal effects of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar and his wife, Zeenat Mahal. These are also other items associated with the revolt of 1857: paintings, drawings, and old letters (including one from Bahadur Shah to Queen Victoria).





### f. Rang Mahal

Originally named for the paint work that decorated its walls ('rang' means 'colour'), as well as the colourful social life of its interior, the Rang Mahal

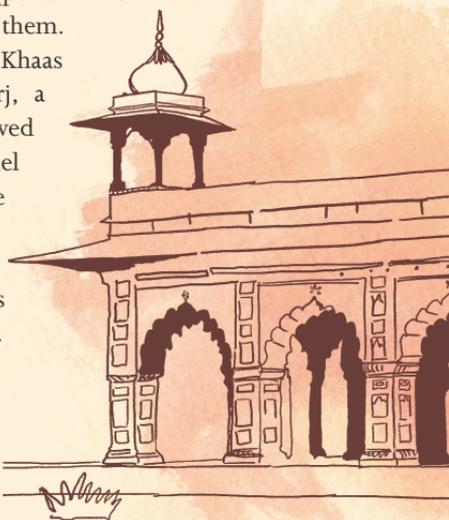
was the chief building of the imperial seraglio. The palace, made of white marble and shell plaster, was also known as the Imtiyaz Mahal (the 'palace of distinction'). In Shahjahan's time it was ablaze with paint and mirrorwork, its length partitioned by heavy drapes. A wide, shallow water channel ran through it, with a central marble basin carved into the floor. Under the Rang Mahal was a *tekhana* or basement, to which the ladies of the seraglio would move in the hot summer days. After 1857, the Rang Mahal was taken over by the military, and served as the mess room for the regiment stationed at the fort.

Today, a small chamber inlaid with fine mirrorwork still survives, fine strips of silvery mirror forming arabesques and geometrical patterns on the ceiling and upper walls.

### g. Khaas Mahal

Next to the Rang Mahal is the Khaas Mahal, the private palace of the emperor, with finely carved white marble throughout. Look out for the exquisite *jali* (screen) work and the depiction of the scales of justice on the northern side of the *Khwabgah* (sleeping chamber), which also has beautifully worked metal doors, carved all over in a pattern of flowers, with unusual doorknobs in the shape of elephants with *mahouts* (person who drives an elephant) sitting atop them.

At the east end of the Khaas Mahal is the Musamman Burj, a semi-octagonal tower with carved marble *jalis* and a *jarokha* (oriel window) in the centre. The Musamman Burj was originally topped with a dome of gilded copper – what you see today was put in by the British after 1857. The *jarokha* of the Musamman Burj was known as the *jarokha-e-darshan*, where the emperor would appear at sunrise daily to show himself to his subjects.



## h. Diwan-e-Khaas

The Diwan-e-Khaas, or the 'Hall of Private Audience', where the emperor met with his most select courtiers, is by far the most ornate of the Red Fort's many palaces. Unlike the Diwan-e-Aam, this hall is made completely of white marble and was originally embellished with carving, gilt and fine *pietra dura* inlay. In its heyday the Diwan-e-Khaas was carpeted, replete with mirrors and gold-embroidered curtains, and with a vast canopy of red cloth stretching across the front. Towards the back of the hall, on a marble platform, sat the legendary *Takht-e-Taawus*, the Peacock Throne. The Peacock Throne was described by the French jeweller and traveller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier as being surmounted by a 'peacock with elevated tail made of blue sapphires and other coloured stones, the body being of gold inlaid with precious stones, having a large ruby in front of the breast, from whence hangs a pear-shaped pearl of 50 carats or thereabouts...'.  
*peacock with elevated tail made of blue sapphires and other coloured stones, the body being of gold inlaid with precious stones, having a large ruby in front of the breast, from whence hangs a pear-shaped pearl of 50 carats or thereabouts...'*

The Peacock Throne was carried off by the invader Nadir Shah in 1739, and the Diwan-e-Khaas has suffered considerably over the years since. You can still however get an idea of its former magnificence. Traces of the gilt used to cover the ceiling in renovations during the early 1900's are visible, and the *pietra dura* inlay of flowers on the lower sections of the columns is more or less intact. Recent restoration work has also reproduced the gilded pattern on one of the pillars fronting the hall.





### i. Hammam

Near the Khaas Mahal and Diwan-e-Khaas stands an otherwise nondescript building, completely closed and with only a couple of glass windows on each side that allow visitors to peep in. Here you will be able to see some signs of what was once a favourite chamber for the Mughal emperors: the *Hammam* or bathhouse. The *Hammam* was traditionally a place where the emperor not just had his bath, but also often discussed important matters of state with the courtiers who attended him.

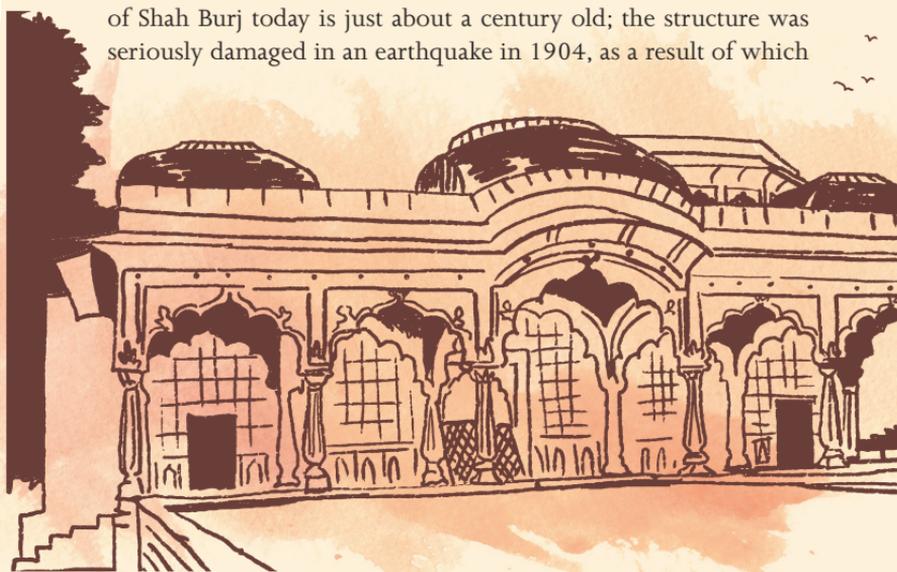
The *Hammam* comprises three main chambers, intersected by corridors, with a central basin for hot and cold baths. (Interestingly, the amount of wood consumed by the imperial *Hammam* was substantial: 125 maunds of firewood were needed at one time – a maund being about 37.3 kg – to heat the *Hammam*). The interiors of the *Hammam* are of white marble decorated with *pietra dura* inlays and carving and a floor with pretty floral designs.

### j. Hira Mahal

Beyond the *Hammam* is a four-sided pavilion of white marble, known as Hira Mahal. This small, simple, and sparingly decorated structure was built in 1842, during the lean times when the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah II survived on a pension given by the East India Company's government in India.

### k. Shah Burj

At the far end of the line of buildings along the wall stands Shah Burj, which consists of two distinct sections. At the angle formed by the northern and eastern walls of the fort is the actual burj, the tower. This was originally a domed building, but the dome was destroyed in the aftermath of 1857. In fact, what you do see of Shah Burj today is just about a century old; the structure was seriously damaged in an earthquake in 1904, as a result of which



it had to be rebuilt almost from scratch. Attached to this is a five-arched pavilion of white marble supported on fluted columns and with low whaleback roofs.

The Shah Burj originally was the point from which water was distributed throughout the fort. Water was pumped up from the river, and at least in later times, also came in a stream that through an opening in the western wall. The water flowed down a carved white marble cascade (which can still be seen), and then into the channel known as the Nahar-i-Bihisht, the 'Stream of Paradise', which flowed through the buildings and palaces of the fort.

### l. Moti Masjid

Next to the Hammam, and like it off limits to visitors, is the 'pearl mosque' that was built in 1659-60 by Aurangzeb, the son and successor of Shahjahan. It is a small three-domed mosque dressed with white marble and used as a private chapel by the Mughal emperors and the ladies of their household. The Moti Masjid is surrounded by a high wall that hides the building effectively. The domes that are visible above are not quite original – they were initially covered with gilded copper plates that were badly damaged in 1857. Later repairs, in the wake of the revolt, did away with the copper and gilt.



### m. Hayat Baksh Bagh

The largest of the gardens in the Red Fort, the Hayat Baksh Bagh ('bestower of life' garden) was laid out by Shahjahan when he built the fort in 1639-48. What you see today, however, stretching out beyond the Moti Masjid, is a version created by the British in the early years of the 20th century. The garden was destroyed by the British occupation and until 1902 had lain buried under tonnes of earth and debris, and the causeway and water channels originally put in by Shahjahan had nearly vanished. Extensive excavation and reconstruction was carried out between 1904 and 1911, resulting in the vast garden you see today. Barracks built for the use of British troops after 1857 however still occupy half of the garden.





#### n. Sawan and Bhadon Pavilions

At either end of the Hayat Baksh Bagh are two almost identical open pavilions of carved white marble, facing each other across the water channel that runs from one to the other. These two pavilions are named Sawan and Bhadon—after the two rainy months in the Hindu calendar, though it's not clear why these particular names were given. Historians have conjectured that the pavilions were perhaps used during these months; or that the water cascading down along the front of each pavilion resembled the rain in *sawan* and *bhadon*.

Both pavilions are beautifully carved, and of particular interest is the wall of small arched niches behind what would have been a cascade of water. In these niches lit lamps were placed at night, and vases of golden flowers during the day, and the effect of water flowing in front of these in a fine, shimmering curtain must have been quite picturesque.

#### o. Zafar Mahal and Tank

Midway between the Sawan and Bhadon pavilions, in the centre of the broad water channel that runs through the Hayat Baksh Bagh, stands a red sandstone pavilion known as Zafar Mahal. Zafar Mahal stands in the middle of a four-sided tank (constructed almost completely



of red sandstone). Though the tank was part of the original construction of the fort, Zafar Mahal was added two hundred years later, in 1842 by Bahadur Shah Zafar, who also added a parapet to the tank. A bridge originally connected the pavilion to the edge of the tank. Incidentally, British troops in the Red Fort used the tank as a swimming bath for many years.

## 2. SALIMGARH

Across the road from the north-eastern corner of the Red Fort, is another, older fort: Salimgarh, also once known as Nurgarh. Salimgarh is named after the man who began its construction, Salim Shah, also known as Islam Shah (r. 1545-54), the son and successor of Sher Shah Sur.

The two forts are joined by a bridge under which a branch of the river once flowed and now vehicular traffic passes. Only a now ruined mosque and the surrounding walls of the fort, with their formidable circular bastions, were completed within Salim Shah's lifetime. All the other remaining structures that can be seen inside the fort today are attributable to later builders. For instance, the gateway to Salimgarh, a largely unadorned structure dressed sparingly with red sandstone, was built by Bahadur Shah II in 1854-5, just two years before the end of the Mughal dynasty.

The British made most of the buildings that still stand in Salimgarh, nearly all of these during the early 20th century; the British also laid the railway line that runs through the fort. The British-era structures in Salimgarh include the museum, the ammunition rooms, once the magazine for the fort, and the jail. This building housed the leaders of the Indian National Army during their trials in 1944-46.

Incidentally, the British weren't the only ones to use Salimgarh as a prison; the fort also functioned as a state prison much earlier, during the reign of Aurangzeb. Earlier still, before Shahjahanabad was built, Salimgarh was a favourite spot for camping by the Mughal emperors during their sojourns in Delhi.



### 3. JAMA MASJID

The Jama Masjid, built across the road from the Red Fort on a natural outcrop known as Bhojla Pahari, was built as the main congregational mosque of the city and was patronised by the emperor himself. It stands almost 10m above the ground, an imposing building primarily of red sandstone decorated with carving and inlays in white and black marble.

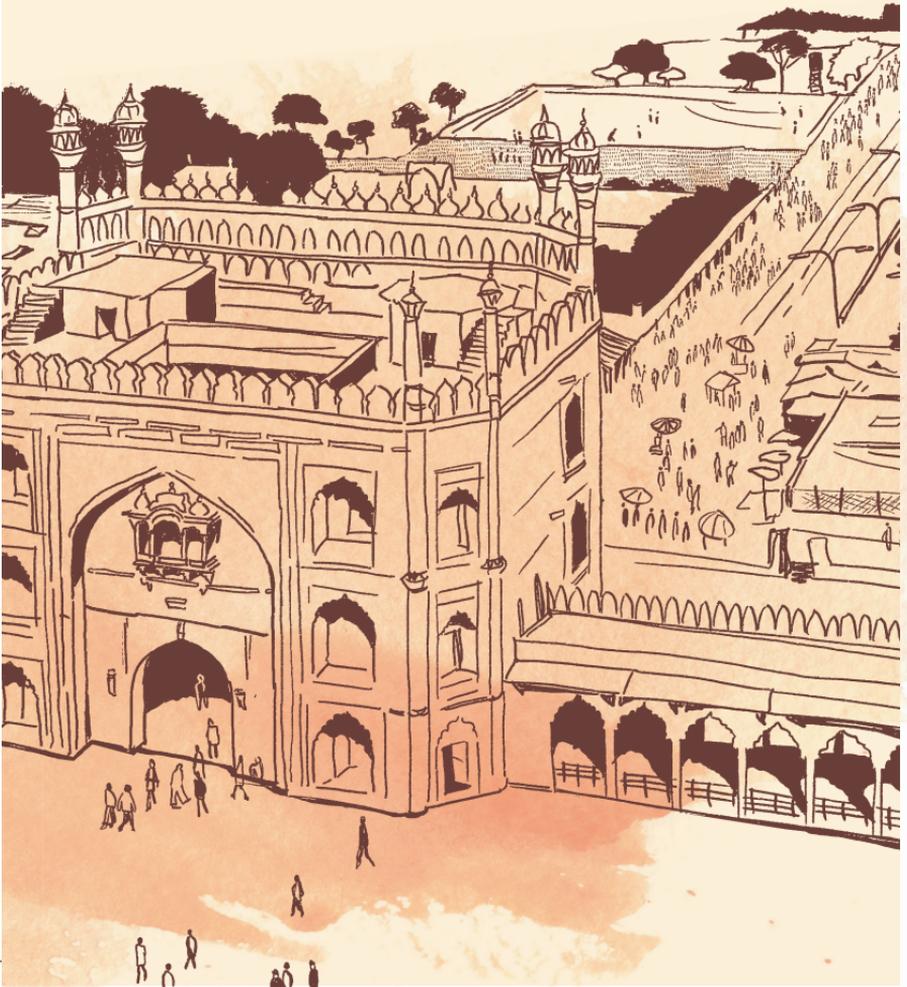
Steps lead up in a wide sweep to each of the imposing gateways to the south, east and north, which give access to the main court of the mosque. During the days of the Mughals, the gate of the mosque facing the Delhi Gate of the Red Fort was used as a royal entrance, and the two were linked by a street called Khas Bazar. The *sehan*—the main courtyard of the mosque—is a vast paved area, where flocks of blue rock pigeons peck away at grain. In the centre is a large *hauz* or tank of white marble, meant for ritual ablutions. The north-western corner of the *sehan* houses a small locked room with relics of the Prophet. The southern minaret may be climbed and provides a panoramic view of the dense patchwork of the old city surrounding the mosque.



Within the cloisters to the west, the floor is white marble, inlaid with a simple pattern that resembles a *mosalla* (a prayer carpet). The *mihrab* (the closed west-facing arch that indicates the direction of prayer) inside the main archway of the mosque is very intricately carved, all in white marble; so is the fine *minbar*—the pulpit—in front of the *façade*.

The *Jama Masjid* was a royal mosque, directly under the supervision and patronage of the emperor *Shah Jahan* and his successors. The emperor would come in a procession to pray, at least on important occasions. He would also directly appoint and invest the main functionaries of the mosque.

In the aftermath of the revolt of 1857, the *Jama Masjid* was confiscated and occupied by troops. There was even an opinion in British official circles in favour of demolishing the *Jama Masjid* as a punishment for the city's revolt against British rule. Better sense prevailed and the mosque survived, but it continued to be closed for worship for many years. Today it is not only a major place of worship but welcomes a large number of visitors daily.





#### 4. SHRI DIGAMBAR JAIN LAL MANDIR

Across from the Red Fort is another well-known and familiar landmark: the Lal Mandir, the 'red temple', named for its three red-painted spires that loom behind the trees and traffic of Chandni Chowk. Much revered by devotees across Delhi, this is a Jain temple, and believed to be the oldest in Shahjahanabad – it was constructed in the early 1700's. The temple is today the centre of a large complex that includes the Jain Sports Club and an unusual Jain Birds Hospital.

Most of what you see at the Lal Mandir today (including the finely carved red sandstone pillars on the Chandni Chowk side of the temple) is the result of additions and alterations made over the past couple of centuries. Inside, if you climb up the white marble staircase to the prayer chamber on the first floor, you'll see signs of the temple's original decoration. Fluted Shahjahani columns, with sinuous 'supports', front the balcony, while the interior of the prayer hall has a large section of carved white marble that is largely intact. The paintwork, both on the walls and the ceiling (white arabesques on a brick-red ground) is a more recent addition.

Timings: 5.30 am – 11.30 am & 6.00 pm – 9.30 pm. Wheelchair access.

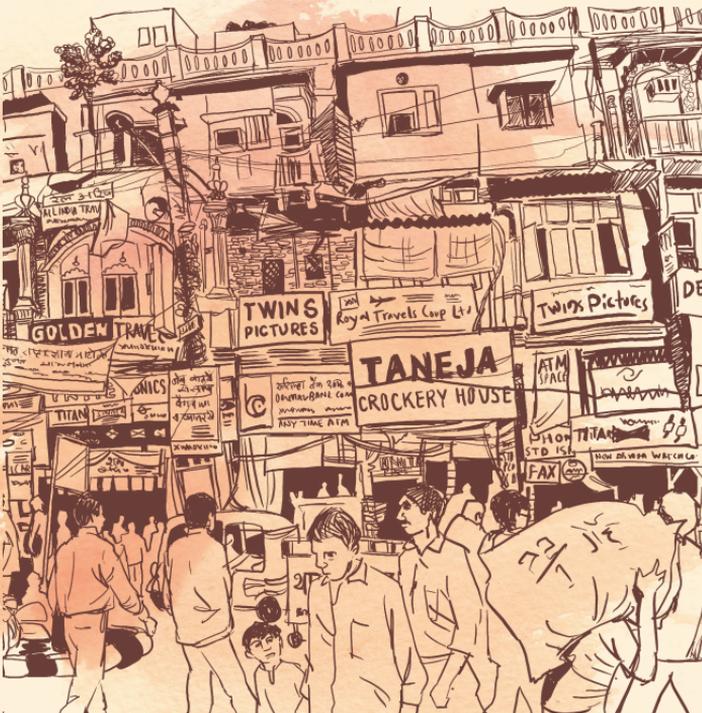
## 5. JAIN BIRD HOSPITAL

Within the Lal Mandir complex is one of Delhi's most unusual charitable institutions: a hospital for birds. Set up way back in 1929, the hospital receives injured or ill birds from whoever wishes to bring them in. On the upper floors of the hospital more sociable birds like parakeets, pigeons and budgerigars – as long as they aren't suffering from fractures – recuperate in large 'wards', cages that accommodate between 50 and 100 birds. Smaller, individual cages are used for birds with fractures, or for raptors, if needed; Raptors are treated only as outpatients (from the difficulties of feeding them their usual diet of meat which is difficult for the Jains to contemplate handling), but exceptions are made now and then.

Visitors are welcome at the Jain Bird Hospital and the staff will invariably point out formerly paralysed, injured, or otherwise ill birds that have recovered and are now ready to be released (all birds are released, even if they were formerly captive).

## 6. DARIBA KALAN, KINARI BAZAAR, KATRA KHUSHAL RAI AND NAUGHARA

Dariba Kalan ('big Dariba'), a relatively broad lane off Chandni Chowk, is the stronghold of the jewellers of Chandni Chowk, with goldsmiths and silversmiths occupying most of the space here. From Dariba, a smaller but more fascinating lane snakes off towards the west. Also earlier known as Dariba Khurd ('little





Dariba'), so narrow that motorcycles, scooters, cycles and cycle rickshaws can navigate it with difficulty. This lane is Kinari Bazaar, named for kinari (typically gold or silver edging used as a border on saris or other fabric), the main item on sale here. There are related goods too: beads, brocade, tinsel, sequins, costume jewellery, theatrical costumes, garlands, feather boas – just about anything that's glittery and bright, whether it's used in weddings or worship. The heritage part of this bazaar lies in the bylanes adjacent to it, like Katra Khushal Rai and Naugharana.

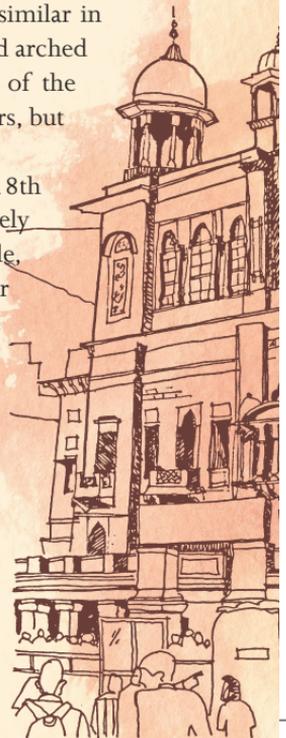
Katra Khushal Rai is much less crowded, with many well-preserved *havelis*. A number of these are now offices or other commercial establishments; many are residences, mostly dating back to the 1850's. Walking along, you will see signs of old architecture: old stone *chhajjas* (overhangs), arched doorways, wrought iron balconies – and gateways that are beautifully carved in floral patterns, with cusped arches, a high plinth, niches for lamps, and platforms on either side for people to sit. Two of the best preserved gateways are at houses 1961 and 2942, Katra Khushal Rai.

Also off Kinari Bazaar is Naugharana or Naughara (both of which mean 'nine houses'), in a cul de sac with nine houses, a temple and a well, separated from Kinari Bazaar by a solid door that could be locked at night, making the area secure. The houses in here date back to the 19th century and are similar in appearance: all, for instance, have courtyards and arched doorways with panels of floral carving. Most of the doorways have now been painted in vivid colours, but the patterns are still clearly visible.

At the far end of Naugharana is a late 18th century Jain temple with a façade of intricately carved white marble. The Jain Swetamna Temple, also known as Jauhri's (jewellers') temple after its patrons, is deceptively uninteresting on the outside, but the beautiful prayer chamber on the first floor is a gem. It is decorated in a profusion of painting and gilding, with images ranging from floral designs to depictions of Jain sages, rulers worshipping at temples, religious ceremonies, and so on.

Kinari Bazar Timings: 9.00 am – 10.00 pm, Sunday closed. Naughara Timings: Private Residences. No Entry.

Temple Timings: 5.30 am – 8.00 pm.

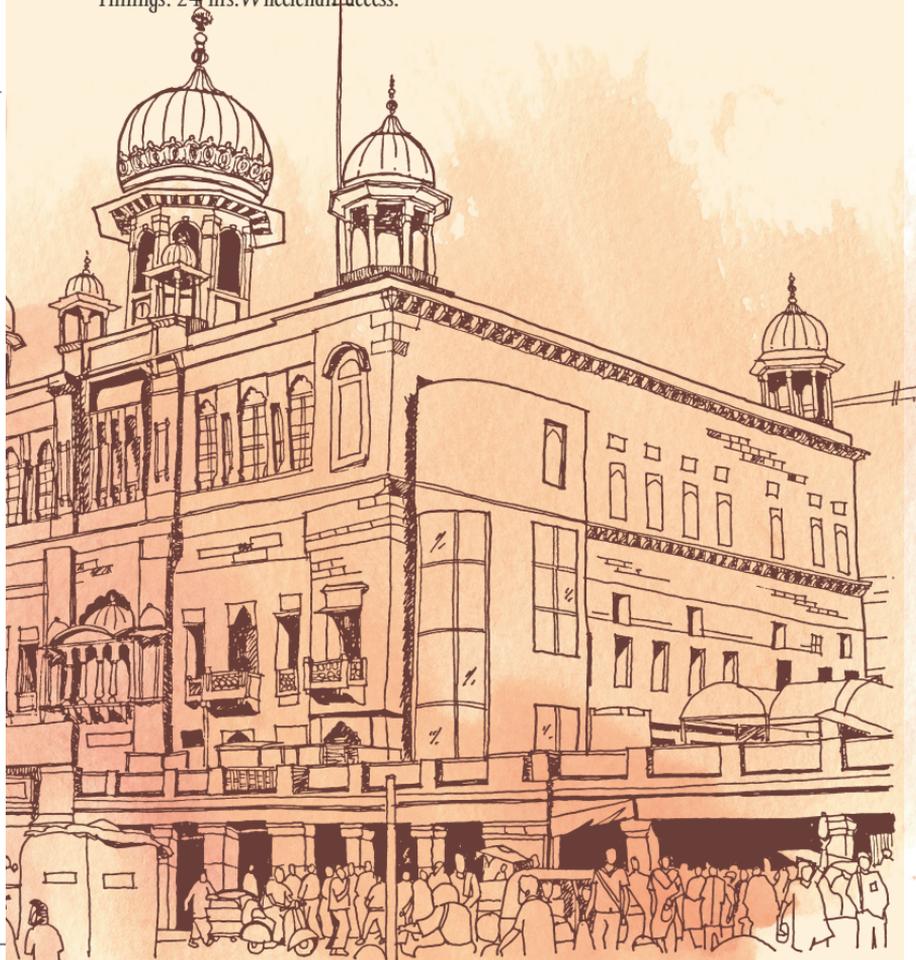


## 7. GURUDWARA SIS GANJ

Gurudwara Sis Ganj is a large rectangular building in buff sandstone and white marble which dominates a busy intersection on Chandni Chowk with its tall front and gleaming golden domes. This gurudwara (a Sikh place of worship) draws its name from the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur. 'Sis' means 'head'; the guru was beheaded here at the orders of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1675. The gurudwara was constructed at the site of the guru's execution some years after his death, in the late 17th century. A banyan tree inside the gurudwara today marks the spot of the guru's martyrdom.

Since it was originally built, the gurudwara has been expanded and altered considerably, even having swallowed up the Kotwali Chabutra, the main police station of Mughal Delhi, that stood at the southern side of the intersection, well into the twentieth century. So now the buildings you see as the gurudwara complex are a combination of old and new, from different centuries and even in differing styles.

Timings: 24 hrs. Wheelchair access.





## 8. SUNEHRI MASJID

Just beyond the gilded domes of Gurudwara Sis Ganj, rise the duller, smaller, gilded domes of another of Chandni Chowk's landmarks, the Sunehri Masjid ('golden mosque').



The Sunehri Masjid's main claim to fame is that this was where the Persian invader Nadir Shah (who attacked the city in 1739) sat and watched the ransacking of Delhi.

Named for its gilded copper domes, the Sunehri Masjid was built in 1721 by Nawab Roshan-ud-Daulah, who served during the reigns of some of the later Mughal emperors. During Roshan-ud-Daulah's lifetime itself, one of the domes of the mosque collapsed and was replaced by Roshan-ud-Daulah using a dome from another mosque (the Sunehri Masjid or Qazizadon ki Masjid, north of Faiz Bazaar) that he had built.

The mosque stands atop a high platform, which is approached through a narrow staircase that rises from beside the shops on the street below. Climbing to the top, you'll find yourself in a small courtyard paved with white marble. Beyond it stands the main building of the mosque. Such an arrangement traditionally provided for shops that could be let out and the proceeds devoted to the upkeep of the mosque.

Timings: 5.00 am – 10.00 pm. *Wheelchair access*

## 9. MIRZA GHALIB'S HAVELI

Probably India's best known Urdu poet, Mirza Asadullah Khan 'Ghalib' (1797-1869) lived and worked in Delhi during some of its most tumultuous times—and produced among the finest poetry in Urdu and Persian. No wonder then that the house in which he lived (or at least one of the houses in which he lived, since he did move around quite a bit) is a pilgrimage of sorts for lovers of Ghalib's poetry. This is house number 2298, Gali Qasim Jaan, which is a lane just off Ballimaran, a street crowded with opticians and optometrists.

Ghalib's house dates back to the early 1800's, and is made largely of plastered brick, with a few traces of the original architecture—such as jack arch vaults—still visible. Mostly, however, more modern



additions and alterations have left this building a mere shadow of what it must have been like in Ghalib's lifetime. Today a part has been made into a memorial to Ghalib, a mini museum of sorts with manuscripts, exhibits and verses from his works on the walls.

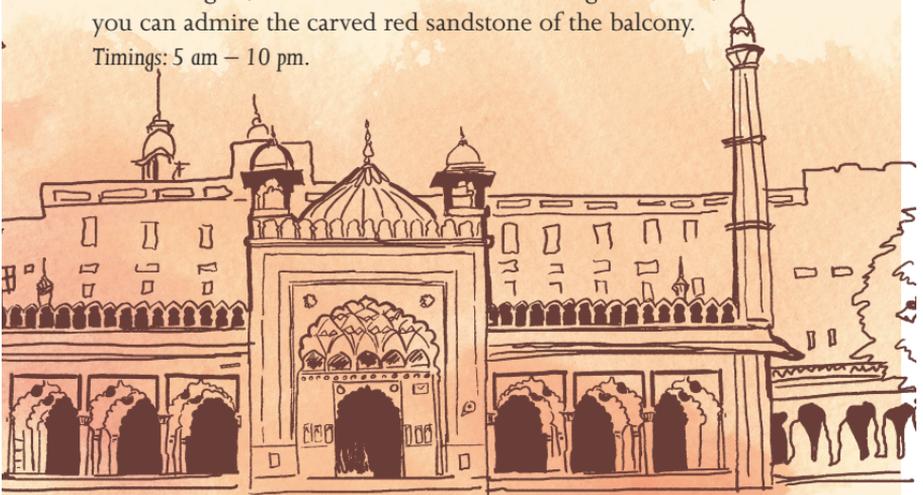
Timings: 10.00 am – 5.00 pm, Sunday closed.

## 10. FATEHPURI MASJID

Like a number of other mosques of Shahjahanabad (examples include the Sunheri Masjid outside the Red Fort, and the now non-existent Akbarabadi Masjid), the Fatehpuri Masjid at the western end of Chandni Chowk was built by a royal lady. Fatehpuri Begum, one of the wives of the Emperor Shahjahan, built this mosque in 1650. Being one of the most important mosques of Delhi, Fatehpuri Masjid attracted the ire of the British in the wake of 1857, when it was confiscated. Later, the quadrangle of the mosque, along with the shops around it, were auctioned off to Rai Chunna Mal. Twenty years later, in 1877, the mosque was restored to the Muslim community, with Chunna Mal's son Umrao Singh being given Rs 1,10,000 as compensation.

The *sehan* or courtyard of the mosque contains a large *hauz* or water tank for ritual ablutions; near it is also an enclosure containing the graves of previous *imams* (Islamic religious leader) of the mosque. Part of the cloister around the Fatehpuri Masjid functions as a *madrassa* (Islamic school), and you can still see some of the original red sandstone of the construction here. If you're facing the mosque, above the cloisters on your left is the Fatehpuri Muslim School. If you exit the mosque complex through the gate on your left, you'll be able to see the interesting and well-preserved colonial architecture of the school, with its massive columns and wooden shutters. The mosque's library, just above the gate, is best seen from outside the gate as well, where you can admire the carved red sandstone of the balcony.

Timings: 5 am – 10 pm.





## 11. ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH

Not far is a small but exquisite Anglican church - St Stephen's Church, which dates back to 1862. The facade of this vivid brick red building has intricately carved columns of sandstone, and a high bell tower looms above the main body of the church. Inside is a prominent rose window with beautiful stained glass. The walls are hung with numerous plaques, mostly in polished brass or marble. Do take the time to read through some of these: there is, for instance, a delightful plaque inscribed in Roman Urdu that recounts the electrification of the church in 1913. Other plaques act as memorials to some of the most prominent members of Delhi's Christian community from the late 19th century onward. The church welcomes visitors even on weekdays.

## 12. HAVELI BHAWANI SHANKAR OR NAMAK HARAM KI HAVELI

If you walk from Fatehpuri Masjid down Church Mission Road, the first lane on your right is Kucha Ghasiram. Walking into Kucha Ghasiram, you'll soon find yourself at a fork, where the left is a lane called Chhatta Bhawani Shankar and the right is Kucha Ghasiram.

This area was once the estate of a rich citizen of Delhi, Bhawani Shankar, who was one of the many people who abandoned the

Marathas and went over to the British during the Battle of Patparganj in 1803. Bhawani Shankar has been immortalised in the name of the mansion he built. Although the address is 316, Kucha Ghasiram, Bhawani Shankar's *haveli* is more universally known as the 'Namak Haram ki Haveli' (literally, the *haveli* of a man who was not true to his salt).

It is now difficult to make out the original building but there is interesting architecture in the area. The beautifully carved gateway at 154, Kucha Ghasiram for instance, is typical of a town house. It stands on a high plinth with the two regulation platform seats on either side of the doorway, for people to sit on. The cusped arch, the pilasters, the tiny niches for lamps, the panels along the street, are all profusely carved in patterns of flowers, foliage and birds. The ornate studded iron door is also original, made like the *haveli* during the late Mughal period.



### 13. THE SHIVALAYAS OF KATRA NIL

Katra Nil derives its name from *nil*—indigo—an important dye for the dyers who lived and worked in this narrow lane off Chandni Chowk. Today there are no dyers here, but nearly all the shops in Katra Nil still sell vividly coloured and printed fabric.

A red sandstone gateway, with a plaque inscribed with a dedication to the martyrs of the Indian freedom movement, leads into Katra Nil. Inside the *katra*, the most noticeable feature are its *shivalayas*, or small temples dedicated to an important deity in the Hindu pantheon: Shiv. In the case of Katra Nil at least, each *shivalaya* is a single-domed canopy, standing in the middle of a small courtyard, entered through a carved doorway. Most *shivalayas* open in the morning and remain open till noon, when they close; they open again around 5 pm and stay open till about 8 pm—timings for individual *shivalayas* may vary, but 10 AM or so is usually a good time to visit.



Among the most interesting *shivalayas* are Shivalaya Pandit Kunniji Maharaj, at 793, Katra Nil; 555, Katra Nil; the *shivalaya* next to 747/2 Katra Nil; and the Bada Shivalaya at 701, Katra Nil.

Timings: 8.00 am – 10.00 pm.



## 14. TOWN HALL AND COMPANY BAGH

The imposing colonial building of the Town Hall was built in 1860-5, on the site previously occupied by the Begum ki Serai and Bagh. This was a large garden and an attached *sarai* – which provided lodging for travellers – built by Jahanara, the daughter of Shahjahan. Both the building and the garden were destroyed after the Revolt of 1857. The building built on the site was originally named the Lawrence Institute, and for a long time has housed some of the most important administrative offices in Delhi. It was enlarged in 1898 and today houses the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) office. As such, its interior is out of bounds for visitors, but you can admire the façade, with its fine columns, arches and quaint wooden shutters. Or, if you're on the Chandni Chowk side of the building, you can buy birdfeed from the many vendors who sit on the pavement, and throw some of it to the flocks of pigeons that strut about in front of the Town Hall.

Next to the Town Hall is the open space that has been a garden for almost three and a half centuries now; Shahjahan's eldest daughter, the princess Jahanara Begum, first laid out a garden here in the mid 1600's. 200 years later, in the 19th century, the British redesigned Jahanara's garden, put a fence around it and planted Royal palm trees. The palms, and traces of the carved red sandstone fence, still remain. Company Bagh, as it came to be called in its colonial phase, was renamed Azad Park after independence. The main landmark of the circular park now is a large black statue of Mahatma Gandhi, which stands in the centre of the park, facing the Town Hall.

*Timings: 9.00 am – 5.30 pm, Saturday – Sunday closed. Wheelchair access.*

## 15. NORTHBROOK FOUNTAIN

In front of Gurudwara Sis Ganj is Chandni Chowk's main crossroads, which is marked by a large fountain erected in 1876. About 3m high, the fountain was named after Thomas George Baring, 1st Earl of Northbrook and Viceroy of India from 1872 to 1876. Northbrook actually contributed from his own income for the building of the fountain, which is why it was named after him. Northbrook Fountain is today also known simply as Fountain or *fawwara* (the Hindi word for fountain). The structure has, unfortunately, been painted over completely in blue and white. However, if you look closely, you can see the original decoration under the paint: leaves, tendrils, scrolls and arched niches carved into the stone.

## 16. CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

The Central Baptist Church is one of the earliest churches to have been built in Delhi. It dates back to 1858, and the walls that you see are original; the roof, which is made of stone supported on iron beams, has however been re-laid. The projecting porch of the church, atop heavy circular columns, is distinctly colonial and even reminiscent of the façade at Bhagirath Palace.

*Sunday services are held from 9 am to noon; plus every day of the week the church is open between 5 pm and 8 pm for visitors.*

## 17. BHAGIRATH PALACE

Bhagirath Palace is synonymous, not just in Chandni Chowk, but all across Delhi, for electrical goods. This entire market, one of the busiest and most crowded stretches in this part of town, teems with shops, large and small, that deal exclusively in electrical appliances, spares, wiring, and so on.

What many people don't realise is that this area actually owes its name to a building that still stands in the heart of the melee, and which was originally built as a palace. Begum Samru, the widow of a European mercenary called Walter Reinhard (nicknamed 'Sombre'—which is where 'Samru' was derived from), built this palatial residence for herself in 1823. This was one of the earliest colonial buildings in Delhi, and after Begum Samru's death housed, in succession, a number of banks: the Delhi Bank (whose manager, with his family, was killed here in 1857); Lloyds Bank; and today, the Central Bank. It came to be known as 'Bhagirath' Palace after a one-time owner of the building. The Central Bank section of Bhagirath Palace is today its best preserved section, where you can still see the massive circular columns of the façade.



## Tastes of old Delhi

While there are other areas in the city where one can find older and perhaps more impressive buildings, without doubt Chandni Chowk is the place to experience the culinary heritage of Delhi. Unfortunately only a few can be listed, but they are good places to begin!

### KARIM

Located near Jama Masjid, Karim, was established in 1913 by a chef who claimed to trace his ancestry from the chefs who cooked for the Mughal emperors. The ambience is functional but where Karim scores is in the food: in rich, fragrant curries and *kababs*, delicately perfumed *biryani*, and more unusual delicacies like *maghaz* (brain curry) and *gurda-kaleji* (liver cooked with kidneys). There are a range of breads, the sweetish and slightly chewy *sheermal*, silken *roomalis* and soft *naans*. There are also a handful of vegetarian dishes on the menu, but Karim's forte is meat. That's even the case with breakfast (served till about 10 AM), when *nahari* (a slow-cooked lamb curry) and *paaya* (trotters) are the staple, along with hot *rotis*. At every meal, including breakfast, rich creamy *kheer* is the dessert on offer. Average per person charges can range between Rs 100 to 200. Alcohol is not served.

### PARATHEWALI GALI

This lane is today the stronghold of *sari* shops but dotted here and there are the eateries that sell the delicacy for which this street is famous: *parathas*, the crisp, rich, stuffed breads so popular in much of north India. Parathewali Gali has at least three large *paratha* restaurants, all of them very basic as far as amenities goes (wooden tables and chairs, packed close together behind the stove and counter where the *parathas* are dispensed). All of the eateries date back to the late 1800's and all deep fry the *parathas* (instead of the combination roasting and shallow frying that's the norm) in pure ghee.

The *parathas* include the usual ones like potato, onion, radish, *paneer* (cottage cheese), and *methi* (fenugreek), and also less common types like tomato, *karela* (bitter gourd), *bhindi* (okra), *dal* (lentils), *papad*, lime, even *rabri*—a creamy dessert made from thickened milk—is used as stuffing for *parathas*. Complimentary accompaniments generally include pickles, chutneys, and a couple of vegetable dishes. Even with a dessert (such as *rabri*, or its more solid cousin, *khurchan*) and soft drinks, you probably won't end up spending more than about Rs 125 or 150 per person. Money well spent!



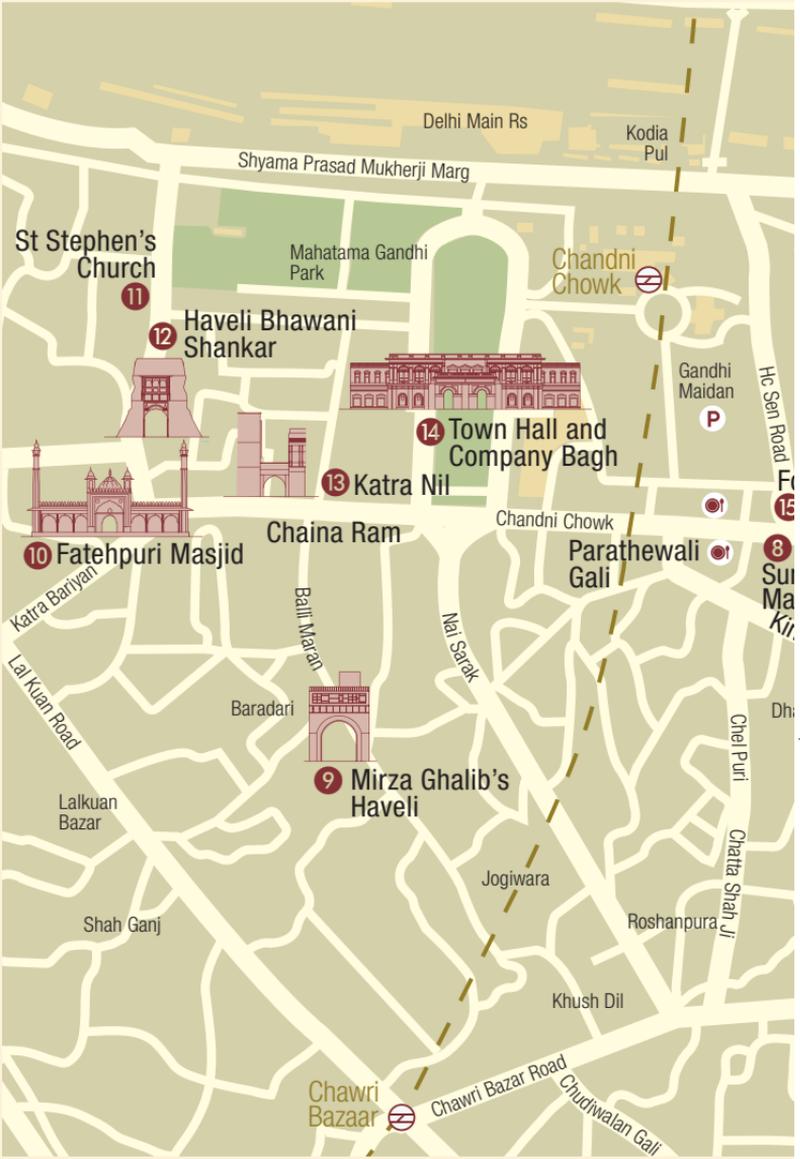
### CHAINA RAM

Practically next to Fatehpuri Mosque stands a landmark for lovers of good old fashioned north Indian vegetarian food: Chaina Ram. Chaina Ram, in the business since 1901, is basically a sweetshop, selling a range of Indian sweets and savouries, such as fried and spiced cashewnuts, spiced roasted lentils, *barfi* and *halwa*. The shop also claims to be the pioneer of Karachi *halwa*, the somewhat gaudily coloured chewy sweet. Chaina Ram's biggest draw, however, is its excellent *puri* and *aloo sabzi*. The *puris* are deep fried to a crisp golden, lightly spiced with a hint of red chilly powder. The *aloo sabzi*—boiled potatoes cooked gently with spices and chickpeas—is delicious. On the side, a little *pattal* (a rough 'bowl' made out of dried leaves) contains pickled carrots, crisp and tangy. The perfect breakfast!

### NATRAJ CAFÉ

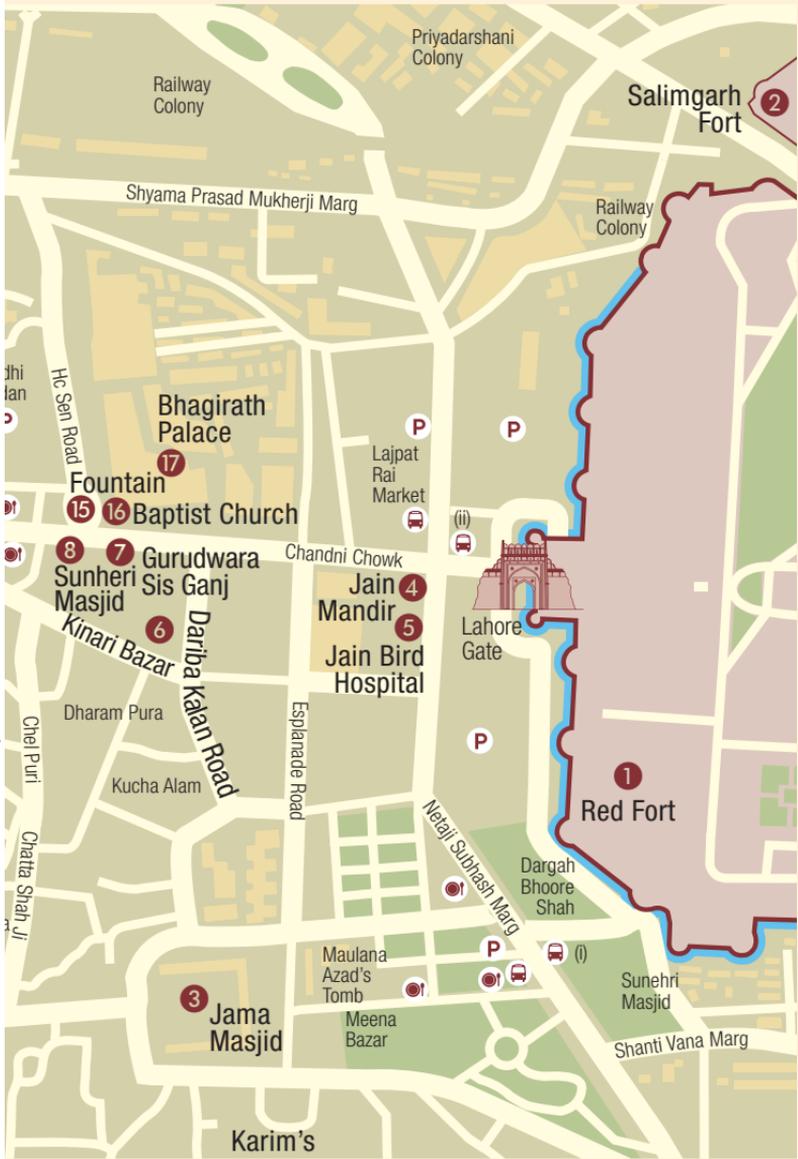
Another of Chandni Chowk's must-sample eateries, Natraj Café is at 1396, Chandni Chowk, a small place with a modest sales counter-cum-cooktop directly overlooking the pavement. Though there is some seating upstairs, the fun way of eating at Natraj is to do so standing on the pavement, with your paper plate balanced in your hand.

Natraj serves two items, and both are delicious: *dahi bhallas* and *aloo tikkis*, both for Rs 20 a plate. The *dahi bhallas*, melt-in-the-mouth fried dumplings of a Bengal gram batter, are drenched in a yoghurt sauce with loads of sweet tamarind chutney and a sprinkling of Natraj's special *masalas*. The *aloo tikkis*, spicy potato cakes, are deep fried and golden, served with a dollop of green coriander chutney and some tamarind chutney. Neither are strictly speaking full meals—more like snacks. But they're perfect as a Chandni Chowk experience.



### Nearest Bus Stops

- (i) **Jama Masjid:** 26, 51, 62, 104, 118 Ext, 164, 171, 172, 185, 204, 210, 113, 216, 241, 245, 246, 260, 261, 266, 270, 301, 312, 322, 339, 347, 363, 402, 403, 404, 404 Ext, 405, 409, 419, 425, 436, 502, 602, 605, 622, 632, 729, 753, 760, 838, 901, 012 LTD
- (ii) **Red Fort:** 26, 51, 62, 104, 118, 118 Ext, 164, 171, 172, 185, 204, 210, 213, 216, 241, 245, 246, 260, 261, 266, 270, 301, 312, 322, 339, 347, 362, 363, 838, 901, 012 LTD.



-  Bus Stand
-  Petrol Pump
-  Parking
-  Toilets
-  Cafeteria
-  Metro Station



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