

Five Unhurried Days in Agra: Monuments, Markets and Mughlai Food

Agra, Uttar Pradesh — City of the Taj

This plan spreads the Taj, the Fort and Agra's quieter tombs and gardens across five relaxed days, with a half-day trip out to Fatehpur Sikri and enough evenings free for bazaar walks and proper sit-down Mughlai meals. It is built for families travelling with children or grandparents, with rest breaks worked in and no day requiring back-to-back heavy walking.

Suits: Mid-range families and mixed-age groups who want the Taj done properly, some off-the-main-circuit history, and time to actually sit down and eat rather than rush between gates

What it costs, per person

Stay: Rs 11,000 · Food: Rs 3,200 · Local transport: Rs 1,830 · Tickets: Rs 225 · **Total: Rs 16,255**

Day 1 · Arrival and the Red Fort side of Agra

Settle in, then explore Agra Fort and the old city market

11:00 Arrive and check in

Most trains from Delhi (Gatimaan or Shatabdi) land at Agra Cantt by late morning. Check in, freshen up, and rest a bit before heading out in the cooler part of the afternoon.

Howard Plaza - The Fern, Fatehabad Road · 90 min · Rs 0 · Auto from Agra Cantt station, approx 20 minutes, approx 150 INR

With family: Ask the hotel for a family room if travelling with young children; most mid-range Agra hotels can connect rooms on request.

15:00 Agra Fort

A red sandstone fortress-palace with courtyards, halls and a distant view of the Taj across the river. Hiring an audio guide or a licensed guide at the entrance is worth it here, since the architecture needs context far more than the Taj does.

Agra Fort · 120 min · Rs 40 · Auto from hotel, approx 20 minutes, approx 120 INR

With family: Uneven stone flooring and some steps without handrails; keep small children close and pace the walk for elderly members. Going after 3pm avoids the harshest sun.

17:15 Jama Masjid, Agra

A short walk from the Fort, this striped marble-and-sandstone mosque built by Shah Jahan's daughter is a quick, free stop that leads straight into the market.

Jama Masjid, near Agra Fort · 45 min · Rs 0 · Walk, approx 10 minutes, no fare

With family: Cover shoulders and remove shoes before entering; there's a small area to leave footwear.

18:00 Kinari Bazaar walk

Dive into the lanes of Kinari Bazaar for jewellery, leather goods and street snacks before heading back for dinner. It's dense and lively rather than dangerous, but keep an eye on children.

Kinari Bazaar · 60 min · Rs 0 · Walk, approx 5 minutes, no fare

With family: Narrow lanes shared with cycle-rickshaws and stray cows; hold small children's hands rather than letting them walk ahead.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Light breakfast at the hotel or picked up en route from the station — Hotel (Rs 150)

Lunch: Simple vegetarian thali near the Fort — Local thali restaurant, Fort Road (Rs 250)

Dinner: Mughlai dinner with kebabs and dum curry — Sit-down restaurant, Sadar Bazaar (Rs 300)

Where to stay

Howard Plaza - The Fern, Fatehabad Road — Rs 2,750 a night. Comfortable mid-range hotel a short drive from the Taj East Gate, with family-friendly rooms and reliable AC and breakfast.

Save a little: If travelling as a larger family, ask the hotel for a triple or connecting rooms rather than two doubles; per-person stay cost drops noticeably.

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Day 2 · The Taj at sunrise, then its quieter cousins across the river

Taj Mahal, Baby Taj, Chini Ka Rauza and sunset at Mehtab Bagh

06:00 Taj Mahal at opening

Arrive right at opening to beat both the heat and the crowds; the first hour of light on the marble is the best of the day. No food, power banks or large bags are allowed past security, so carry only essentials.

Taj Mahal, East Gate · 150 min · Rs 50 · Auto from hotel to East Gate, approx 15 minutes, approx 100 INR (private vehicles stop short of the gate; a short walk or battery shuttle covers the last stretch)

With family: Closed on Fridays -- if this day falls on a Friday, swap this visit with Day 4's plan. Queues get long by mid-morning, so sticking to opening time matters most with children or elderly parents.

09:30 Itmad-ud-Daulah (Baby Taj)

A smaller marble tomb on the far bank, built a decade before the Taj and seen as its architectural rehearsal. It gets a fraction of the crowds and is a good calmer contrast for families who found the Taj queues overwhelming.

Itmad-ud-Daulah, east bank of the Yamuna · 60 min · Rs 40 · Auto or cab across the river, approx 20 minutes, approx 100 INR

With family: Much less crowded than the Taj, so a good stop to let children run around a bit more freely.

11:00 Chini Ka Rauza

A Persian-tiled tomb nearby, unusual for its glazed ceramic decoration and almost always empty. A quick, easy stop that shows a different Mughal style away from any crowd.

Chini Ka Rauza, east bank · 30 min · Rs 0 · Auto, approx 10 minutes, approx 50 INR

With family: Some tilework has weathered badly and footing near the base is uneven; fine for a short visit, not a long one.

17:00 Mehtab Bagh at sunset

A restored charbagh garden directly across the river from the Taj, laid out for moonlight viewing of the monument. This is the best sunset spot in the city and an easy, flat walk for children and grandparents after a long day.

Mehtab Bagh · 60 min · Rs 30 · Auto, approx 10 minutes, approx 50 INR

With family: Flat, shaded paths -- the easiest walking of the day, good for tired legs.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Early tea and light snack before the Taj visit — Hotel (Rs 150)

Lunch: Sit-down vegetarian or Jain-friendly meal — Restaurant on Fatehabad Road (Rs 250)

Dinner: Mughlai spread -- kebabs, dum curry, buttery naan — Pinch of Spice or similar mid-range restaurant, Fatehabad Road (Rs 300)

Where to stay

Howard Plaza - The Fern, Fatehabad Road — Rs 2,750 a night. Same hotel as Day 1 to avoid re-packing; central to both the Taj East Gate and Fatehabad Road restaurants.

Save a little: Hire one shared auto or small car for the whole east-bank loop (Baby Taj, Chini Ka Rauza, Mehtab Bagh) instead of separate rides for each stop; negotiate a single fare upfront.

Day total, per person: Rs 3,730

Day 3 · A day out to Akbar's abandoned capital

Fatehpur Sikri round trip

08:00 Drive to Fatehpur Sikri

Hire a car for the full day rather than negotiating fares at every stop; this is the least stressful option for families with elderly members. The road is decent and the drive itself is scenic in parts.

En route to Fatehpur Sikri · 60 min · Rs 0 · Car hire, approx 45-60 minutes, fare included in day's full-day hire

With family: Carry water and snacks for the car since the return leg will be after the heat of the day.

09:15 Fatehpur Sikri

Akbar's abandoned capital, a full sandstone city of palaces and courts built and deserted within decades due to water shortages, capped by the towering Buland Darwaza gateway.

Fatehpur Sikri · 150 min · Rs 50 · Continuation of car journey

With family: Long stretches of uneven stone flooring and steep steps up to Buland Darwaza without handrails in places; pace this one with breaks and proper shoes, especially for grandparents.

13:00 Lunch near Fatehpur Sikri

A simple sit-down meal at one of the restaurants near the complex before the drive back, since options thin out once you're back on the highway.

Fatehpur Sikri town · 60 min · Rs 0 · Walk from monument, approx 5 minutes

With family: Choose a restaurant with a visible kitchen and steady footfall rather than the first tout-recommended place at the gate.

16:00 Return to Agra

Drive back with the same hired car, arriving in time to rest before dinner. Consider a stop at a roadside dhaba for tea if the group needs a break.

Back to Agra · 75 min · Rs 0 · Car hire, approx 60-75 minutes

With family: Good day to let children nap in the car on the way back.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Quick breakfast at the hotel before the early start — Hotel (Rs 150)

Lunch: Local thali or dal-baati style meal near the complex — Restaurant, Fatehpur Sikri town (Rs 300)

Dinner: Light dinner back in Agra after a long day out — Hotel restaurant or nearby eatery, Fatehabad Road (Rs 250)

Where to stay

Howard Plaza - The Fern, Fatehabad Road — Rs 2,750 a night. Staying put avoids changing hotels for what is a single-day excursion out of Agra.

Save a little: Split the full-day car hire cost across the whole family or group -- per-person cost drops sharply with 3-4 people sharing one car.

Day total, per person: Rs 3,850

Day 4 · Sikandra, the elephants, and a quiet Mughal garden

Akbar's Tomb, Wildlife SOS and Ram Bagh

09:00 Akbar's Tomb, Sikandra

Akbar's own mausoleum, deliberately blending Hindu, Islamic, Jain and Christian architectural elements. The grounds are large, shaded and have deer roaming freely -- a relaxed stop with benches for grandparents.

Sikandra · 75 min · Rs 15 · Auto or car from hotel, approx 30 minutes, approx 200 INR

With family: Much less crowded than the Taj or Fort, and the shaded lawns make it comfortable even for a slightly longer stop with small children.

10:45 Wildlife SOS Elephant Conservation Centre

A rescue and rehabilitation centre for elephants freed from circuses and begging, near Sikandra. A good change of pace from monuments, and it shows children conservation work rather than a performing-animal experience.

Wildlife SOS, near Sikandra · 90 min · Rs 0 · Auto or car, approx 15 minutes, approx 100 INR

With family: Ground can be muddy or dusty depending on season; closed shoes recommended. Check ahead for feeding or bathing session timings if you'd like children to see those.

13:30 Ram Bagh

Said to be the oldest surviving Mughal garden in India, laid out by Babur on the Yamuna's banks. It's quiet and under-visited, a pleasant short stop for anyone tracing Mughal garden design back to its earliest form.

Ram Bagh · 30 min · Rs 0 · Auto or car, approx 20 minutes, approx 100 INR

With family: Flat and shaded, a good spot for a short breather rather than a full activity stop.

18:00 Evening at Sadar Bazaar

An easier evening after a half-day of sightseeing: browse for petha, leather goods and marble handicrafts, and let children pick their own petha flavours to carry home.

Sadar Bazaar · 90 min · Rs 0 · Auto from hotel, approx 15 minutes, approx 80 INR

With family: Bargain hard, especially at marble-inlay shops, and treat authenticity claims with some scepticism.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Hotel breakfast before the Sikandra outing — Hotel (Rs 150)

Lunch: Sit-down meal after Ram Bagh — Restaurant on the way back into town (Rs 250)

Dinner: Mughlai dinner to close out the sightseeing days — Restaurant near Sadar Bazaar (Rs 300)

Where to stay

Howard Plaza - The Fern, Fatehabad Road — Rs 2,750 a night. Second-last night in the same hotel keeps logistics simple before the final day's departure.

Save a little: Wildlife SOS entry is free, so use the money saved here for a slightly nicer sit-down dinner in the evening.

Day total, per person: Rs 3,765

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Day 5 · A local breakfast, last shopping, and departure

Bedai-aloo breakfast, petha shopping, and heading home

08:00 Bedai-aloo breakfast

Try the classic Agra breakfast of bedai (fried bread) with spiced potato curry at a small local stall -- a genuine local habit worth doing at least once before leaving.

Small breakfast stall near Sadar Bazaar · 45 min · Rs 100 · Auto from hotel, approx 15 minutes, approx 80 INR

With family: Street-stall food, so choose a stall with good footfall and freshly fried bedai rather than pre-fried stock, especially for young children.

09:15 Last petha and souvenir shopping

Pick up petha in a few flavours to carry home from one of the well-known shops around Sadar Bazaar or Loi ka Pul, along with any last leather or marble handicraft purchases.

Sadar Bazaar · 60 min · Rs 300 · Walk from breakfast stall, approx 5 minutes

With family: Petha travels well and makes a light, popular gift; buy vacuum-packed boxes if travelling by air.

11:00 Check out and head to the station

Pack up and head to Agra Cantt for the return train, building in extra time for security and platform changes, especially with luggage and elderly family members.

Agra Cantt Railway Station · 30 min · Rs 0 · Auto from Sadar Bazaar, approx 20 minutes, approx 150 INR

With family: Keep tickets and ID handy; Agra Cantt can be crowded around peak train times.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Bedai-aloo at a local stall (see above) — Sadar Bazaar area (Rs 100)

Lunch: Light meal or packed food for the train journey — Station or hotel packed lunch (Rs 300)

Where to stay

N/A -- departure day, N/A — Rs 0 a night. No overnight stay required; the trip ends with a same-day departure.

Save a little: Buy petha at shops slightly away from the main tourist stretch of Sadar Bazaar for noticeably better prices on the same quality.

Day total, per person: Rs 630

Pack for this trip

- Comfortable, closed walking shoes for uneven stone flooring at the Fort and Fatehpur Sikri
- A hat, sunscreen and reusable water bottle, since queues and walks between gates can be long
- A light shawl or scarf for covering shoulders at mosques and tombs
- Cash in small denominations for autos, tips and bazaar shopping, since not every small vendor accepts cards or UPI
- Do not carry food, power banks or large bags to the Taj Mahal -- these are not allowed past security

Stay safe

- Agree on auto and rickshaw fares before starting the ride; a Sadar Bazaar to Taj East Gate trip should cost roughly 100-150 INR, though first-time visitors are often quoted double
- The areas immediately outside monument gates are dense with touts and unofficial guides offering commissions; politely decline and use official ticket counters and licensed guides only
- Keep small children close in Sadar Bazaar and Kinari Bazaar at peak hours, where narrow lanes are shared with rickshaws, autos and stray cows
- Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri involve long uneven stretches and steps without handrails; pace visits with breaks, especially for elderly parents
- No private vehicles, including autos, are allowed right up to the Taj Mahal gates; expect a short walk or a battery-shuttle/tanga transfer for the last stretch

Local courtesies

- Cover shoulders and knees at mosques and tombs, and remove shoes where indicated
- Bargain firmly but politely in the bazaars; an opening quote is rarely the final price
- Ask before photographing individuals, especially at markets and near monuments
- Vegetarian and Jain requests are well understood at mid-range and upscale restaurants, but it helps to specify clearly (no onion, no garlic, no root vegetables) at smaller street stalls

If it rains

- Agra Fort has covered halls and courtyards that work reasonably well as a rain-day option, though some outdoor stretches will still get wet and slippery
- The Taj Mahal remains open in light rain, but marble underfoot gets slippery, so move slowly and hold children's hands
- Use the extra indoor time for a longer, unhurried session in Sadar Bazaar's covered shop-lined lanes, trying different petha flavours
- Shift outdoor-garden stops like Mehtab Bagh or Ram Bagh to a clearer day later in the trip if heavy rain is forecast