

Three Unhurried Days in Delhi: Forts, Gardens and Food Streets

Delhi, Delhi — The City of Seven Cities

A moderately paced family loop through Old and New Delhi that starts in the Mughal core around the Red Fort and Chandni Chowk, moves to the greener, gentler New Delhi of Humayun's Tomb and Lodhi Garden, and closes with the ancient Qutub Minar and the modern Akshardham and Lotus Temple. Expect a lot of walking on uneven stone, several good sit-down meals, and enough breathing room for grandparents to rest on a bench while the kids run a courtyard.

Suits: Mid-range families and mixed-age groups who want real history, good food, and a pace that leaves afternoons unrushed rather than a checklist of ten monuments a day.

What it costs, per person

Stay: Rs 18,000 · Food: Rs 2,600 · Local transport: Rs 670 · Tickets: Rs 350 · **Total: Rs 21,620**

Day 1 · Old Delhi: Forts, Mosques and Food Lanes

Mughal Delhi on foot

09:30 Red Fort (Lal Qila)

Shah Jahan's seat of power, with the Diwan-i-Aam, Diwan-i-Khas and small museums inside. Budget the full 150 minutes; the stone paths are uneven and there is no shade in the main courtyards, so morning entry beats the midday heat.

Netaji Subhash Marg, Old Delhi · 150 min · Rs 35

With family: Closed shoes only, no flip-flops; closed on Mondays so reshuffle the itinerary if your Day 1 lands on one. Prams struggle on the stone paths.

13:30 Jama Masjid

India's largest mosque, free to enter, with a vast courtyard and striking red sandstone and marble facade. Visit after the 12:00-13:30 prayer closure; the minaret climb is optional and worth skipping for anyone with knee issues.

Jama Masjid, Old Delhi · 60 min · Rs 0 · Walk or cycle-rickshaw, 10 minutes, approx 20-30 INR (agree fare before sitting down)

With family: Shoulders and knees must be covered; carry a stole for the trip. Skip the minaret staircase with elderly parents or very young children, it is steep, dim and narrow.

15:00 Chandni Chowk food and market walk

Shah Jahan's original market street: walk Paranthi Wali Gali for stuffed parathas, sample jalebi and chaat, and browse the spice and fabric lanes. Best done on foot or by cycle-rickshaw since cars cannot enter the narrow lanes.

Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi · 120 min · Rs 0 · Walk, 10 minutes, free

With family: Genuinely crowded lanes; keep a firm hand on small children and agree cycle-rickshaw fares upfront, a fair short ride is a few tens of rupees, not the hundreds first quoted.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Light breakfast at hotel or a Connaught Place South Indian chain before heading out — Near hotel, Connaught Place (Rs 150)

Lunch: Kebabs and korma at a long-running Old Delhi institution near Jama Masjid — Karim's, Jama Masjid (Rs 350)

Dinner: Street food crawl: paratha, chole bhature, golgappa and jalebi — Chandni Chowk / Paranthi Wali Gali (Rs 300)

Where to stay

Lemon Tree Hotel, Connaught Place, Connaught Place — Rs 6,000 a night. Central location cuts commute time to both Old and New Delhi sites, with family rooms available; this runs above the stated per-night budget target, so Bloomrooms @ Janpath at approx 6500 or budget options in Paharganj are alternates if cost matters

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Save a little: Skip the Jama Masjid minaret and camera fees; the free courtyard views are enough for most families, and the saved cost covers an extra round of jalebi for everyone.

Day total, per person: Rs 985

Day 2 · New Delhi: Gardens, Museum and Evening Lawns

Garden tombs and British-era Delhi

08:30 Humayun's Tomb

The 1558 garden tomb that worked out the charbagh-and-dome formula later used for the Taj Mahal. Wide grassy walkways make it easier on elderly knees than the Red Fort, but there is limited shade, so carry water.

Humayun's Tomb, Nizamuddin · 120 min · Rs 40

With family: No weekly closure, so it slots in easily; comfortable shoes matter, the stone paths are uneven.

11:00 Lodhi Garden

A landscaped park built around 15th-century Lodhi and Sayyid tombs, free entry, with shaded benches that suit grandparents wanting to sit rather than climb.

Lodhi Road · 60 min · Rs 0 · Auto-rickshaw or app cab, 15 minutes, approx 60 INR

With family: Flat paths, good for prams and slower walkers; no ticket counter, it functions as a public park.

13:30 National Museum

Harappan artefacts through Mughal miniatures, indoors and air-conditioned, a good midday break from the heat with context for the sites already seen.

Janpath, New Delhi · 90 min · Rs 20 · Auto-rickshaw or app cab, 15 minutes, approx 60 INR

With family: Closed on Mondays; confirm current hours locally before visiting.

17:00 India Gate and Rajpath, evening

The 42-metre war memorial and its lawns, a popular evening spot with ice cream vendors and open space for children to run after a museum-heavy afternoon.

Rajpath, New Delhi · 60 min · Rs 0 · Auto-rickshaw or metro plus short walk, 20 minutes, approx 70 INR

With family: Roads around it are wide and busy; keep children away from the traffic edges. Midday here in summer is uncomfortably hot, which is why this is scheduled for the evening.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Hotel breakfast — Connaught Place (Rs 150)

Lunch: Sit-down North or South Indian meal — Khan Market, near Lodhi Garden (Rs 400)

Dinner: North Indian sit-down dinner, butter chicken or dal makhani — Connaught Place restaurant (Rs 400)

Where to stay

Lemon Tree Hotel, Connaught Place, Connaught Place — Rs 6,000 a night. Same central base keeps this an easy second night without repacking.

Save a little: Khan Market can run expensive; a South Indian chain lunch near the museum area brings the cost down without sacrificing a proper sit-down meal.

Day total, per person: Rs 1,330

Day 3 · South Delhi: Ancient Minaret to Modern Temple

From the 12th century to the 21st

07:00 Qutub Minar

The world's tallest brick minaret, begun in 1199, set in a garden complex with the Iron Pillar. Early morning avoids both the heat and the crowds; the tower itself cannot be climbed but the grounds are worth a slow walk.

Mehrauli, South Delhi · 100 min · Rs 35

With family: Paved paths are partially wheelchair accessible, a good stop for elderly members of the group; go before 9am for cooler weather.

10:00 Akshardham Temple

A 2005 temple complex built without structural steel, showing Delhi's monument tradition continuing into the present. This is a genuine half-day outing once the exhibitions and grounds are included; the free cloakroom holds phones and cameras, which are not allowed inside.

Noida Mor, East Delhi · 240 min · Rs 220 · Metro with one change, approx 40-45 minutes, approx 50 INR

With family: Closed on Mondays; confirm this is not the day before travelling. No photography inside, and the food court makes lunch easy without leaving the complex.

14:45 Lotus Temple

A Bahá'í house of worship shaped like a lotus flower, open to all faiths, with complete silence expected inside the main hall.

Kalkaji, South Delhi · 60 min · Rs 0 · Auto-rickshaw or metro, 30 minutes, approx 70 INR

With family: Closed on Mondays; expect a queue, especially on weekends, and keep small children quiet once inside the hall.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Light breakfast before the early start — Hotel or a nearby stall (Rs 100)

Lunch: Pure-vegetarian thali at the on-site food court — Akshardham food court (Rs 350)

Dinner: Relaxed dinner back near the hotel to end the trip — Connaught Place restaurant (Rs 400)

Where to stay

Lemon Tree Hotel, Connaught Place, Connaught Place — Rs 6,000 a night. Central base for the final night before departure.

Save a little: Akshardham's exhibitions and boat ride are separately ticketed beyond the base entry; the temple darshan itself is free, so skip add-ons if the budget is tight and still get most of the experience.

Day total, per person: Rs 1,305

Pack for this trip

- Closed, comfortable walking shoes; flip-flops will not survive the Red Fort or Qutub Minar's stone paths
 - A stole or scarf for covering shoulders at Jama Masjid
 - Reusable water bottle and sun protection, especially for Humayun's Tomb and Qutub Minar which have limited shade
 - Small daypack, but leave phones and cameras easy to hand over at Akshardham's cloakroom, they are not allowed inside
 - Cash in small denominations for auto and cycle-rickshaw fares
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Stay safe

- Traffic is the biggest daily hazard; hold children's hands firmly near any main road, especially around India Gate and Chandni Chowk
 - Chandni Chowk and Jama Masjid get crowded enough to lose sight of a small child; agree a meeting point in advance
 - The Jama Masjid minaret staircase is steep, dim and narrow, not suited to elderly parents or very young children
 - Red Fort, National Museum, Akshardham and Lotus Temple are all closed on Mondays; if any day of this plan falls on a Monday, swap Day 1 and Day 2, or move the Qutub Minar and Lotus Temple visits to another day
 - Always insist on the meter in an auto or agree the fare before getting in; politely decline unofficial guides near the monuments
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Local courtesies

- Cover shoulders and knees and remove shoes before entering Jama Masjid
 - Stay clear of Jama Masjid's courtyard during prayer times
 - No photography or electronics allowed inside Akshardham; use the free cloakroom
 - Complete silence is expected inside the Lotus Temple's main hall
 - Ask before photographing people at markets like Chandni Chowk
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If it rains

- Swap Lodhi Garden or India Gate lawns for extra time at the indoor National Museum
- Akshardham's exhibition halls are indoor and work well as a rainy-day anchor for Day 3
- Old Delhi's lanes can waterlog; carry an umbrella and stick to the main Chandni Chowk street rather than side lanes after heavy rain
- Use app cabs instead of cycle-rickshaws in wet weather for the Old Delhi hops