

Two focused days in Delhi: Mughal Delhi and New Delhi's gardens

Delhi, Delhi — The City of Seven Cities

A tightly paced but unhurried two-day loop that takes a family from the Mughal high point of the Red Fort and Jama Masjid through Old Delhi's food lanes on day one, then out to the Qutub Minar, Humayun's Tomb and the green calm of Lodhi Garden before an evening at India Gate on day two. It is built around metro and short cab hops so grandparents and children are not stuck in traffic for hours, with enough shaded, bench-friendly stops to break up the walking.

Suits: Families and friend groups with a genuine interest in history and food who want a compact, well-paced two days without redlining on heat, crowds, or long transfers; less ideal if anyone in the group cannot manage uneven stone paths or a fair bit of walking.

What it costs, per person

Stay: Rs 6,000 · Food: Rs 1,850 · Local transport: Rs 710 · Tickets: Rs 110 · **Total: Rs 8,670**

Day 1 · Old Delhi: forts, mosques and food lanes

Mughal Delhi on foot, from the Red Fort to Chandni Chowk

09:30 Red Fort (Lal Qila)

Shah Jahan's red sandstone seat of power; budget the full two and a half hours for the palace halls and small museums inside. Wear closed shoes, the stone paths are uneven, and note the fort is closed on Mondays.

Lal Qila, Old Delhi (Lal Qila metro station, Violet Line) · 150 min · Rs 35

With family: No lifts, some steps and uneven marble; fine for children but elderly members may want to sit in the shaded garden sections rather than cover the whole complex.

12:15 Jama Masjid

Walk or take a short cycle-rickshaw to India's largest mosque; entry to the courtyard is free, shoulders and knees must be covered, and shoes are left at the entrance. Skip the southern minaret climb as a family stop, it is a tight, dim spiral staircase.

Jama Masjid, Old Delhi · 60 min · Rs 0 · Cycle-rickshaw, about 10 minutes, approx 50 INR (agree the fare before sitting down)

With family: Avoid visiting right at prayer times; the courtyard gets crowded and hot midday, so carry water and a hat.

14:30 Chandni Chowk food and market walk

Wander Shah Jahan's original market street, ending at or near Parathe Wali Gali for stuffed parathas and jalebi. Best explored on foot or by cycle-rickshaw rather than car; keep a firm hand on small children as the lanes get genuinely crowded.

Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi · 120 min · Rs 0 · Walk, about 10 minutes (Jama Masjid to Chandni Chowk)

With family: Easy to lose sight of a small child here; agree a meeting point in advance and consider one adult at the front and one at the back of the group.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Simple hotel breakfast or a Connaught Place South Indian chain before setting off — Hotel or near Connaught Place (Rs 150)

Lunch: Kebabs and korma at a long-running Mughlai name near Jama Masjid — Karim's, near Jama Masjid (Rs 400)

Dinner: Stuffed parathas, chaat and lassi eaten while walking Chandni Chowk — Parathe Wali Gali and nearby stalls, Chandni Chowk (Rs 300)

Where to stay

Lemon Tree Hotel, Connaught Place, Connaught Place — Rs 3,000 a night. Reliable mid-range chain, family rooms available, central location cuts commute time to both Old and New Delhi; figure quoted assumes two people sharing a room at approx 6000 INR total, split per person.

Save a little: Agree cycle-rickshaw fares before sitting down, a fair short hop in Old Delhi runs a few tens of rupees, not the hundreds a tour will first quote.

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Day total, per person: Rs 4,135

Day 2 · New Delhi: an ancient minaret, a Mughal garden tomb, and evening lawns

From the 12th century to the British-built capital, with a garden break in between

07:30 Qutub Minar

Go early for cooler weather and thinner crowds around the world's tallest brick minaret and the surrounding ruined mosque complex, including the Iron Pillar. The tower itself cannot be climbed, but the paved garden paths are easy walking and partially wheelchair accessible.

Qutub Minar, Mehrauli (Qutub Minar metro station, Yellow Line) · 100 min · Rs 35

With family: Good option for elderly members who want to sit in the shaded ruins rather than climb anything.

10:15 Humayun's Tomb

The 1558 garden tomb where the charbagh-and-dome design later used for the Taj Mahal was worked out. Open daily with no weekly closure; carry water as shade is limited across the grassy walkways.

Humayun's Tomb, Nizamuddin East · 120 min · Rs 40 · Auto or app cab, about 30-40 minutes depending on traffic, approx 150 INR

With family: Paths are uneven stone in places; comfortable shoes matter more here than at most other stops.

13:30 Lodhi Garden

A gentle, shaded walk around 15th-century Lodhi and Sayyid tombs predating the Mughals; there is no ticket counter and plenty of benches, making it a good slow stop for grandparents after two heavier monument visits.

Lodhi Garden, Lodhi Road · 60 min · Rs 0 · Auto or app cab, about 15 minutes, approx 80 INR

With family: Flat paths, shade, and open lawns make this the easiest stop of the two days for anyone tired of stairs.

17:00 India Gate and Rajpath

Evening stroll around the 42-metre war memorial arch and lawns, with ice cream vendors and open space for children to run; free entry, open all hours, and pleasantly lit in the evening.

India Gate, New Delhi · 60 min · Rs 0 · Auto or app cab, about 20 minutes, approx 100 INR

With family: Roads around the lawns are wide and busy; keep children well away from the traffic edges.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Hotel breakfast before an early start — Hotel, Connaught Place (Rs 150)

Lunch: Sit-down North Indian meal near the Humayun's Tomb / Lodhi Colony area — Lodi - The Garden Restaurant or a similar mid-range spot near Lodhi Road (Rs 450)

Dinner: Relaxed dinner back near the hotel — United Coffee House or a similar mid-range restaurant, Connaught Place (Rs 400)

Where to stay

Lemon Tree Hotel, Connaught Place, Connaught Place — Rs 3,000 a night. Same central base for both nights avoids repacking and keeps commute times down for the second day's spread-out sites.

Save a little: Use the metro for the Qutub Minar leg (there is a dedicated station) and save cabs for the harder-to-reach hops between Humayun's Tomb, Lodhi Garden and India Gate.

Day total, per person: Rs 4,535

Pack for this trip

- Closed, comfortable shoes for uneven stone paths at the Red Fort, Humayun's Tomb and Qutub Minar
- A scarf or stole to cover shoulders for Jama Masjid; shoes will need to be left at the entrance
- Water bottles and a hat, several sites have long stretches with little shade
- Small cash denominations for rickshaws and street food stalls, where card payment is rare
- Hand sanitiser and tissues, especially useful around Old Delhi's street food

Stay safe

- Traffic is the single biggest hazard for families; roads are chaotic and pedestrian crossings often ignored, keep a firm hand on children near any main road
- Chandni Chowk and Jama Masjid lanes get crowded enough to lose sight of a small child; agree a meeting point and keep young children within arm's reach
- Skip the Jama Masjid minaret climb with elderly parents or very young children; the staircase is steep, dim and narrow
- Politely decline unofficial 'guide' offers and inflated auto fares near monuments and walk to the official ticket counter instead

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Always insist on the meter in an auto, or agree the fare before getting in

Local courtesies

- Cover shoulders and knees and remove shoes before entering Jama Masjid; avoid visiting right at prayer times
- Bargain cycle-rickshaw and unmetered auto fares politely before the ride, not after
- Ask before assuming a restaurant dish is Jain-friendly; confirm onion and garlic are left out rather than assuming
- Keep voices low and phones away in the inner sanctums of temples and tombs
- Photography inside some monument interiors may be restricted; look for posted signs

If it rains

- Swap Lodhi Garden for the indoor National Museum, which covers Harappan artefacts through Mughal miniatures and is air-conditioned
- Chandni Chowk's food lanes have covered stretches and indoor eateries like Karim's that work fine in wet weather
- Humayun's Tomb and Qutub Minar are outdoor and best postponed if there is heavy rain; consider swapping their day order if rain is forecast for only one day
- Connaught Place has covered arcades and indoor restaurants that make for an easy wet-weather dinner or lunch stop