



Fatehpur Sikri



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Fatehpur Sikri Fort

Fatehpur Sikri fort and city was built by Mughal Emperor Akbar. He made it his capital and later shifted his capital to Agra. It was the same place where Akbar declared his nine jewels or **Navaratna**. The city is built on Mughal architecture.

This tutorial will let you know about the history of Fatehpur Sikri along with the structures present inside. You will also get the information about the best time to visit it along with how to reach the city.

Audience

This tutorial is designed for the people who would like to know about the history of Fatehpur Sikri along with the interiors and design of the city. This city is visited by many people from India and abroad.

Prerequisites

This is a brief tutorial designed only for informational purpose. There are no prerequisites as such. All that you should have is a keen interest to explore new places and experience their charm.

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1. Fatehpur Sikri – Overview

Mughal Emperor Akbar founded the city in 1569 and made it his capital from 1571 to 1585. The construction of the city took around 15 years where courts, palaces, mosques and other structures were built. Previously, it was named **Fatehabad** where **fateh** means **victory**. Later the name was changed to Fatehpur Sikri. Nine gems from his courtiers were selected here.



Visiting Hours

Fatehpur Sikri is opened for people from 6:00am to 7:30pm and it takes around one hour to visit the city. It is opened on all days even on public holidays. Tourists can also visit a museum near Diwan-i-Aam booking counter. The museum is opened from 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Tickets

In order to visit the city, tourists have to buy tickets which can be collected from the ticket counter. The price of ticket for Indian visitors, visitors from SAARC and BIMSTEC countries have to pay Rs. 40 in which Rs. 30 are charged by AIS and Rs. 10 by ADA. There is no entry fees for the children up to 15 years.

Foreign tourists, who do not belong to SAARC or BIMSTEC, have to pay Rs. 510 in which Rs. 500 is charged by ASI and Rs. 10 by ADA. On Friday, no ADA toll tax is levied. If a foreign tourist buys ADA toll tax ticket for Taj Mahal, he need not have to pay the toll tax for Agra Fort, Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's Tomb, and Itmadud-Daulah tomb but they have to visit all these places in one day. If the miss then they will again have to buy the toll tax ticket.

Where to Stay?

Tourists who need accommodation can stay in hotels in or nearby the city. Bharatpur, Agra, and Mathura are the nearby places where people can stay and can go to Fatehpur Sikri through road or rail transport. The hotels in Agra and Mathura can be categorized from inexpensive budget hotels to expensive 5-star hotels.

Best time to visit

Fatehpur Sikri can be visited between February and April and between July and November as the climate is very pleasant. In the rest of the months, the climate is either very hot or very cold which can cause discomfort to the visitors.

Prohibited Items

Tourists are not allowed to carry any edibles inside the city. Things like tobacco, cigarettes and other smoking items, liquors, knives, electrical goods etc. are not allowed but tourists are allowed to carry cameras. Besides these, tourists are not allowed to touch or scratch walls or other items.

2. Fatehpur Sikri – History

Fatehpur Sikri is near Agra and once was the capital of Mughal Emperor Akbar. The architecture of the city was designed by **Tuhir Das** and **Dhruv Chawla**. Akbar founded the city in 1569 after winning **Chittor** and **Ranthambore**. The construction of the city was completed in around 15 years and included, palaces, harems, courts, and other structures.



Construction of Buildings

Akbar was very anxious about its construction and himself looked after it. Persian and Indian architecture were used in the construction of the city. The buildings in the city were built using red sandstone. The pavilions of the imperial palace are geometrically arranged and this design was adopted from Arabian architecture.

Abandonment of Fatehpur Sikri

Akbar abandoned the city in 1585 due to shortage of water and frequent wars between Mughals and Rajputs. The capital was shifted to Lahore and in 1598, Akbar made Agra his capital. In 1601, Akbar returned to the city for a short period. Mohammad Shah and Sayyad Hussain Ali Khan Barha also came here for brief period in 1720. Sayyad Husain was the regent of Mohammad Shah.

Marathas captured the city after the conquest of Delhi and later the rule was transferred to British who made the complex as their headquarters. Currently, the mosque inside the complex is in use now. Apart from this and some imperial buildings, most of the city has been ruined. Tourists can find the ruins of the bazaars and naubat khana.

3. Fatehpur Sikri – Architecture

Fatehpur Sikri is surrounded by wall on three sides and a lake on the fourth side. The architecture of the buildings was based on Mughal and Indian architecture. The Indian architecture included the Hindu and Jain architecture.



There are many structures like mosques, palaces, tombs, etc. which the tourists can view. The name of some of them are

- Buland Darwaza
- Jama Masjid
- Ibadat Khana
- Jamat Khana
- Tomb of Salim Chishti
- Diwan-i-Aam
- Diwan-i-Khas
- Jodha Bai Palace
- Panch Mahal
- Birbal's House

- Anup Talao
- Hujra-i-Anup Talao
- Naubat Khana
- Pachisi Court
- Hiran Minar

4. Fatehpur Sikri – Buland Darwaza

Akbar built Buland Darwaza in 1601 to commemorate the victory over Gujarat. Buland Darwaza is the highest gateway of the world which is built by using red sandstone and white and black marble. The gate has chhatris on top along with minar-spires. It is a 15-storey building having the height of 54m and the entrance to the city from the southern side. Tourists have to climb 42 steps to reach the gate.



There are two structures of three storeys on each side and both of them have three kiosks with big domes. These kiosks are surrounded by thirteen more kiosks having smaller domes. There is an inscription on the front side of Buland Darwaza which shows that Akbar was very broad-minded in the case of religion. There are flower-like designs made up of white marble at the apex of the arch.

Other Gates

There are many gates to enter the city which are

- Delhi Gate
- Lal Gate
- Agra Gate
- Birbal's Gate

- Chandanpal Gate
- Gwalior Gate
- Chor Gate
- Ajmere Gate

5. Fatehpur Sikri – Places of Worship

The Jama Masjid, Ibadat Khana, and the Jamat Khana were the three buildings where people during the reign used to worship. Jama Masjid is still used to worship.

Jama Masjid

The Jama Masjid was built in 1571AD. Iranian architecture along with Mughal architecture have been used to build the mosque. It is one of the largest mosques in the world which can be entered through Buland Darwaza. The chhaja is very slanting and square chhatris surround the brackets of the chhajja.



The mosque has a large courtyard where the people can come and worship in congregation. Around 25,000 people can worship in the mosque at a time. People can enter the mosque through north, south and east sides by using stairs. The tower of the mosque is of five storeys out of which first three storeys and the fifth storey are made up of red sand stone and the fourth is made up of marble.

Ibadat Khana

Akbar built the Ibadat Khana in 1575 to hold meetings with the religious leaders of different religions. The participants include Hindu, Jains, Roman Catholics, and Zoroastrians. These discussions were held every Thursday evening. Akbar has the aim of reconciling different religions which included Sufism, Bhakti Movement of Hinduism, and Fire Ceremonies of Zoroastrianism, and Jainism.



He created a new faith called **Din-i-Ilahi**. Akbar stopped eating non-veg due to the influence of Jainism. Animal slaughtering was prohibited on **Paryushan** and **Mahavir Jayanti**, the festivals of Jains.

Jamat Khana

Jamat Khana is situated on the east of **Salim Chishti's tomb**. This was the place where Sheikh Salim Chishti used to worship with his disciples. As all other monuments, it was also built with red sandstone. **Sheikh Haji Hussain** was buried after his death in 1591 so it was made a graveyard and many followers of Sheikh Salim Chishti were buried here. The graves of males can be identified by the verses of the Holy Quran while women graves can be identified by flat bard called **takhti**.



Tourists can reach the courtyard through a magnificent gate. The chamber inside is the tomb of **Islam Khan**, grandson of Sheikh Salim Chishti. The chamber looks square in shape from outside but octagonal from inside. **Yaran Chabutra** or **friend's platform** also has the graves of the disciples of the saint. Tourists can enter this platform through **Badshahi Darwaza** situated on the east of the Jamat Khana.

6. Fatehpur Sikri – Tombs

Tomb of Salim Chishti

The tomb of Salim Chishti was built during the reign of Akbar between 1580 and 1581. It is a place where Sufi Saint Salim Chishti is buried. Akbar built it in order to respect the saint as the saint prayed for him for having a male son to become his heir.

The platform on which the tomb is constructed has the height of 1m. Tourists can enter the tomb through five steps. The tomb is surrounded by marble screens. The location of the tomb is in the center of the hall having semi-circular dome.



The platform is built by using black and yellow marble. A marble cenotaph is surrounded by **chhaparkhat** which is mostly covered by a green-colored cloth. The door of the main chamber has inscriptions from the Holy Quran. People come here to ask for blessings to fulfil their wishes.

Zanana Rouza

The entrance of Zanana Rouza or the women's tomb lies between Jamat Khana and tomb of Salim Chishti. The entrance is made up of marble and red sandstone. There is a central arch with a square opening and this arch consists of floral design. This tomb was connected by an underground pathway to Sheikh Salim Chishti house during his life time.

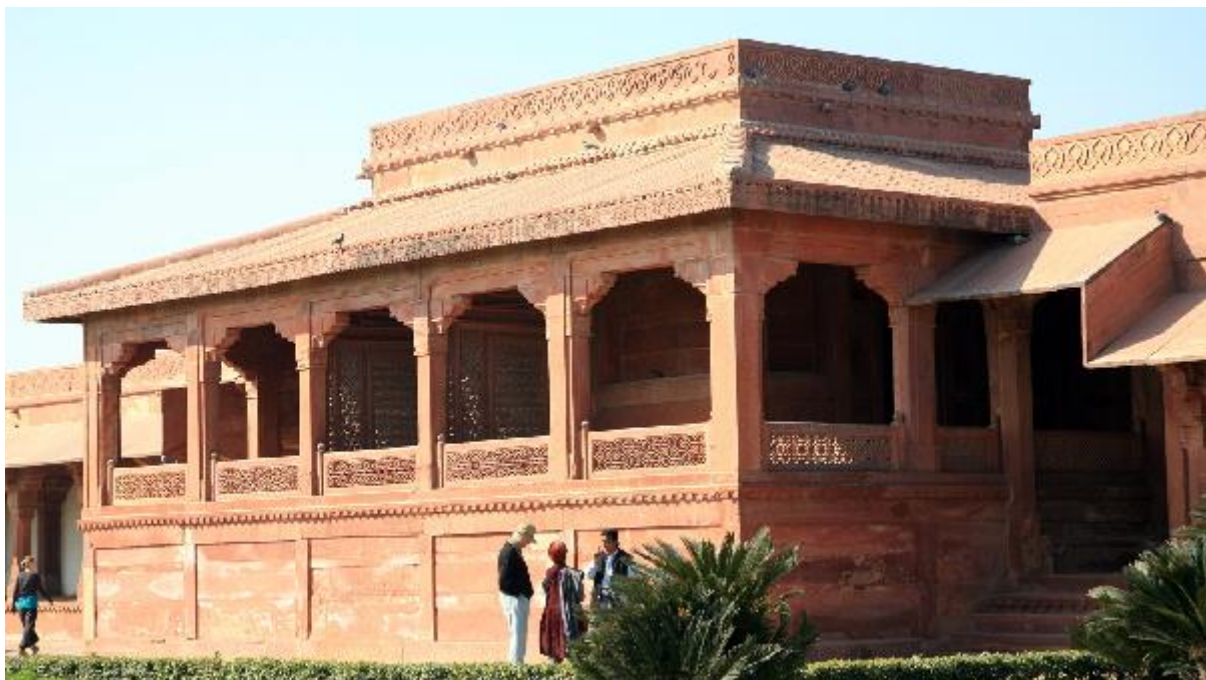
The women of the family of Salim Chishti used this path to go to the saint's house and listen to him. Two chambers are there divided into sections. These sections are divided into subsections having graves of the ladies of the house of Salim Chishti.

7. Fatehpur Sikri – Halls

Diwan-i-Aam and Diwan-i-Khas are the two halls in the complex. Diwan-i-Aam was used to address the local public, hear their complaints, and do judgement while Diwan-i-Khas was to hold meetings with royal people, courtiers, and guests.

Diwan-i-Aam

Diwan-i-Aam is situated near Agra Gate. The **dalan** of the hall is divided into 111 bays through square pillars. The throne chamber of the hall faces east. It is said that Akbar worshipped sun so it was made in such a way that it faces east. This chamber has three parts. In the center, emperor used to sit and address the people.



On one side of the center there is a wide space while on the other side there is a portion from where royal ladies can see the dealings. A beautiful screen has been used to mask this portion. There is no dome in the building but still it looks beautiful due to its pillars, brackets, chhajjas, and kiosks which are placed at regular intervals.

Diwan-i-Khas

Diwan-i-Khas is the building in the complex which was used by the emperor to welcome royal guests and hold royal meetings. The building is very close to a treasury of gold and silver which is known as **Ankh Michauli**.



The building is in square shape and is made up of red sandstone. Diwan-i-Khas has four faces and all of them are double-storied. Each corner of the building has four octagonal kiosks. Each kiosk has a dome which is topped with an inverted lotus. The main hall has 36 brackets which are arranged in a circle.

8. Fatehpur Sikri – Palaces

Jodha Bai Palace

Jodha Bai Palace is also known as **Raniwas** and **Zenani Dyodhi**. The palace is massive and is double-storeyed. There is a rectangular block in the palace whose dimension is 231.8 x 215 feet. The gateway of the palace is situated on the east side and is very magnificent. The Hindu motifs used in the construction of the palace shows that the palace was built for a Hindu lady.



Many motifs can be found in the interior like swans, elephants, parrots, srivastsa mark etc. There is a suite in the palace which served as a temple. It contains vedikas and other Hindu motifs. The suite has pillars with brackets. The palace is built with red sandstone which also makes it very beautiful.

Panch Mahal

Panch Mahal was built by Akbar. The palace was near the harem of the women and is built in such a way that it provides relaxation during summer. Going from bottom to top each floor is smaller than the other. There are 84 pillars on the first floor. Each pillar had a jali from where women can view the happenings in the city. The second floor has 56, third has 20 and the fourth floor has 12 pillars. The topmost floor has a **chhatra** with a copula.



Birbal's Palace

Birbal was a very close friend, one of the nine gems, and the prime minister of Akbar's empire. So emperor Akbar thought of making a palace for him. Though the palace was used by the queens **Ruqaiyya Begum** and **Salima Begum**. The palace was built on the basis of Mughal and Persian architecture and is of two storeys.

There are four rooms on the ground floor each having the dimensions of 16.10 feet. The rooms are interconnected by two doors one at the southwest and other at the northwest. The interior design of the palace is also beautiful.

Khas Mahal

Khas Mahal was the palace of Mughal Emperor Akbar. The ground floor has two rooms and first floor has **khwabgah**. One of the rooms at the ground floor was used as a dining hall and the other was used as a library. There is a **jharokha** from where Akbar used to contact with general public. Khwabgah was connected to ladies harem and was covered by **jaalis**.

9. Fatehpur Sikri – Other Monuments

Anup Talao

Anup Talao is a tank in front of the khwabgah. The tank is made up of red sandstone. There is a jalied balustrade at the center along with a raised seat. There was a water work system to which the tank was connected to fill it up with fresh water. The tank was also connected to the **Sukh Tal** to prevent overflowing of water. The panels in the tank has the scenes of forests and gardens.



Hujra-i-Anup Talao

Hujra-i-Anup Talao is a small structure having carvings on friezes, brackets, and pillars. The ground floor a pavilion having a verandah and a portico. This connects the tank to khwabgah. There are carvings on the structure which has floral designs along with bells and herring-bone shapes

Naubat Khana

Naubat Khana, also known as **Naqqar Khana** or **drum house**, was situated at the entrance. The court musicians beat the drums if an announcement was to be made to the public. If a royal person or king arrives to or departs from the city then also the drum was beaten. Besides the drums, musicians used to play Shehnai if there is a wedding or a festival celebration.



Pachisi Court

Pachisi is a game just like chess and was played during the Mughal period. A Pachisi Court was built by Akbar to play the game. A ground with black and white checks was built and humans were used instead of mohras to play the game.



The court was built near Diwan-i-Aam between 1572 and 1575. The slab is of the courtyard was made up of red sandstone with black and white checks. Emperor Akbar used to play this game with his queen and other important royal members.

Hiran Minar

Hiran Minar was built by Akbar to commemorate his favourite elephant that's the reason it was built on its remains. It is said that the topmost of the tower was used to put a lamp to show the way to the travellers. This lamp is called **Akash Deep** or **Heavenly Light**. The height of the tower is 80 feet.



The ground floor of the tower is octagonal, middle is circular and the top is reduced in size and has a dome crowned capital. The exterior wall includes stones which seem like elephants tusks. There is a spiral staircase inside which leads to the top of the tower.

10. Fatehpur Sikri – How to Reach?

Fatehpur Sikri does not have an airport. Railway station is there but it is not well-connected as very few trains have stoppage here. Fatehpur Sikri is well connected to nearby cities by road transport. Some of the nearby places with their approximate distance by road are as follows:

- Fatehpur Sikri to Agra – 36km
- Fatehpur Sikri to Delhi – 243km
- Fatehpur Sikri to Jaipur – 205km
- Fatehpur Sikri to Bharatpur – 25km
- Fatehpur Sikri to Achhnera – 18km
- Fatehpur Sikri to Gwalior – 140km

By Air

Fatehpur Sikri does not have airport but the nearby airports are

- Kheria Airport, Agra
- Sanganer Airport, Jaipur
- Indira Gandhi International Airport – Delhi
- Rajmata Vijay Raje Scindia Airport Gwalior

All these cities are well-connected to many Indian and foreign cities. After reaching these places people can hire a taxi or take a bus to reach Fatehpur Sikri.

By Rail

Fatehpur Sikri has its railway station but very few trains have stoppage here. Most of the trains stop at Agra from where people can come to the city by road. The nearby railway stations are Agra, Bharatpur, and Achhnera.

By Road

The roads of Fatehpur Sikri are well maintained and UPSRTC provides bus services from and to the city. The city is connected to Agra, Delhi, Noida, Bharatpur and people can catch Volvo buses, deluxe buses, and regular buses from the city.

Local Transport

Tourists only get cycle rickshaws to roam around the city. Auto rickshaws are banned in the city but tourists can either hire a car or take a bus to reach the city. If the weather is pleasant, tourists can also visit the whole city on foot.

11. Fatehpur Sikri –Nearby Places

Tourists can visit Agra and Bharatpur as there are many monuments in these places. Some of them will be discussed here.

Agra Fort

Agra Fort was built by Lodi dynasty and Mughal dynasty elaborated its construction area-wise as well as architecture-wise. The red sand stone of the fort were replaced with marbles and other Mughal art has been embedded in the fort.



Aurangzeb imprisoned his father Shah Jahan in this fort who looked at the Taj Mahal from the window of the fort. The distance between the fort and the Taj can be covered in 15 to 20 minutes as the distance between both the monuments is around 7km. Many structures like pillars, mosques, halls and others are included in the fort.

Taj Mahal

Taj Mahal was built by Shah Jahan in the memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. This monument is one of the seven wonders of the world and is built from white marble. Along with marble, red sandstone is also used to build some structures like mosque, entrance gates and others. Taj Mahal is around 7km from Agra Fort



Sikandra

Akbar's tomb was built by Akbar in Sikandra. Akbar started the construction of this tomb in 1600 and it was completed in the reign of Jahangir in 1613. The tomb has lawns and arched gates. The tomb has the combination of architectures of Hindu, Islam, Jain, Buddhist, and Christians. Sikandra is around 13km from Agra fort.



In Bharatpur, Tourists can visit Loha Fort, Laxman Ji Mandir, Ganga Mandir, Moti Mahal, Nehru Park and many other monuments.