



Purana Qila, Delhi



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Purana Qila, Delhi

Purana Qila or Old Fort in Delhi is considered to be one of the oldest fort of India. The construction of the fort was started by Sher Shah Suri and his son Islam Shah completed it. Surveys tell that some painted grey ware were found during excavations which shows that the area was in used in 1000 BC.

This tutorial will let you know about the history of the fort 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 fort.

Audience

This tutorial is designed for the people who would like to know about the history of Purana Qila or Old Fort of Delhi along with the interiors and design of the fort. This fort 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. Purana Qila – Overview

Purana Qila was built by **Sher Shah Suri** on a raised platform. The construction was completed by **Islam Shah** after he succeeded his father Sher Shah Suri. It is also believed that the place where the fort was constructed belonged to the **Pandavas**. The fort is made up of red sandstone and has a length of 2km.



Delhi

Delhi is a **Union Territory** and the **capital city** of India. Three sides of the city is bordered by **Haryana** whereas the fourth side is bordered by the state of **Uttar Pradesh**. The city is spread in a large area and the expansion is continuing. There are many historical monuments in Delhi which the people can visit. Some of these monuments are Qutub Minar, Red Fort, Humayun's Tomb, Swamynarayan Akshardham Temple, and many others. Delhi was ruled by many dynasties which include Rajputs, Delhi Sultanate, Mughals, and the British.



Visiting Hours

The fort is opened for the public from 10:00am to 5:00pm. It takes around two to three hours to visit the fort as the fort has many structures to visit. The fort is opened on all days except Fridays. Light and sound show is also arranged in the fort in Hindi and English. The duration of the show is one hour and timings are 7:00pm to 8:00pm in Hindi and 8:30pm to 9:30pm in English.

Tickets

Tourists have to pay an entry fee in order to visit the fort. Indian tourists have to pay Rs. 20 while foreign tourists have to pay Rs. 200 to visit the fort. There are no charges for carrying still camera but Rs. 25 have to be paid if video camera is being carried. Tourists have to pay a separate fees for watching light and sound show. The cost of ticket for an adult is Rs. 100 and for children it is Rs. 50.

Best time to visit

The period between October and March is the best time to visit the fort as the weather is very pleasant. Though the month of December and January are chilly but still the tourists will enjoy their tour. In the rest of the months, the climate is very hot and humid which causes discomfort to the tourists.

Where to Stay?

There are more than 2500 hotels in Delhi which range from inexpensive budget hotels to expensive five-star hotels. Tourists can also stay in tourist hostels and guest houses which provide a comfortable stay. Good service is offered in all kinds of hotels. Some of the hotels in the city are as follows:

- **Five-Star Hotels**
 - Pullman New Delhi located at Aero Hospitality District
 - Novotel New Delhi located at Aero Hospitality District
 - The Grand New Delhi located at Vasant Kunj

- Radisson Blu Hotel located at Dwarka and Paschim Vihar
- Park Plaza located at Shahdara
- **Four-Star Hotels**
 - The Muse Sarovar Portico located at Kapashera
 - The Royal Plaza located at Ashoka Road
 - Country Inn by Carlson Saket located at South Delhi
 - Radisson Blu Marina located at Connaught Place
 - Hotel Regent Grand located at East Patel Nagar
- **Three-Star Hotels**
 - Hotel Toronto located at Paharganj
 - Red Fox Hotel located at Airport Zone
 - Hotel Shimla Heritage located at Karol Bagh
 - Divine Paradise by Tavisha located at South Delhi
 - Hotel Waves located at Airport Zone
- **Budget or Two-Star Hotels**
 - Indira International Inn located at Airport Zone
 - Hotel Payal located at Paharganj
 - Hotel Maanvi located at Paharganj
 - Hotel Swati Deluxe located at Karol Bagh
 - Hotel Topaz located at Paharganj
- **Cheap or One-Star Hotels**
 - Hotel Sunshine located at Karol Bagh
 - Hotel S B Inn located at Paharganj
 - Hotel Neha Inn located at Paharganj
 - Hotel Hans International located at Paharganj
 - Bombay Palace Hotel located at Paharganj

2. Purana Qila – History

Purana Qila is built on the banks of river Yamuna and is the oldest fort of Delhi. It has been said that the fort was previously built by the Pandavas for their kingdom **Indraprastha** as some **grey ware** of that period was found during excavations.

Ancient History of the Fort

Northern Black Polished Ware of the **Mauryan** period in 300 BC were found which include glossy surfaced earthen pottery, terracotta figures of animals and humans, and other such things. Most of the things of the Mauryan period were made up of mud bricks. Then comes the **Sunga** period in which use of black polished ware continued. The houses and the floors were built with mud bricks. **Yaksas** were the semi-divine beings of that period which were made with terracotta. Coins of that period were also found.

Next comes the period of **Sakas** and **Kushans** who used copper currency. The use of burnt bricks in construction of houses and other buildings were also found. In the Gupta period, houses were built by using brickbats. Coins of that period were also discovered in which an archer is shown. Then came the period of **Rajputs** and in that period the buildings were built with rubble, brickbats, and mud bricks. During the Sultanate period, glazed ware was introduced while constructing the buildings. After this came the Mughal period.

Purana Qila under Mughals

Purana Qila was renovated by Humayun in 1533 and it took around five years to complete. The fort was built inside **Din Panah** which was a small city in Delhi. Sher Shah Suri defeated Humayun in 1540 and captured the fort. After winning again, the renovation of the fort continued by Humayun. **Shah Jahan** wanted to shift his capital from the old fort so he constructed Lal Qila or Red Fort.



Humayun

Sher Shah Suri

Purana Qila under Sher Shah Suri

Sher Shah Suri ruled for five years and in his reign he constructed many structures inside the fort and named the fort as **Shergarh**.

Purana Qila under the British

New Delhi became the capital of British India in 1920 and **Edwin Lutyens** linked Rajpath with Purana Qila.

Purana Qila after Independence

After Independence, the fort was used as a refugee camps for those people who were migrating to Pakistan. The fort was the refugee camp till 1948 as the trains going to Pakistan were started in October 1947.

3. Purana Qila – Architecture

Gateways of the fort

The walls of the fort are 18m high and the circumference of the fort is 1.5km. There are three gates in the fort which are

- Bara Darwaza
- Humayun Darwaza
- Talaqi Darwaza

The **Bara Darwaza** is still in use and it faces west. **Humayun Darwaza** was named so because Humayun's tomb is visible from here. Another view of the historians says that the gate was constructed by Humayun that's why it is named so. **Talaqi Darwaza** or **forbidden gate** is the third gate of the fort. Each of the gates has two storeys and are built with sandstone. Each gate also has two bastion towers made up of marble.



Bara Darwaza



Humayun Darwaza



Talaqi Darwaza

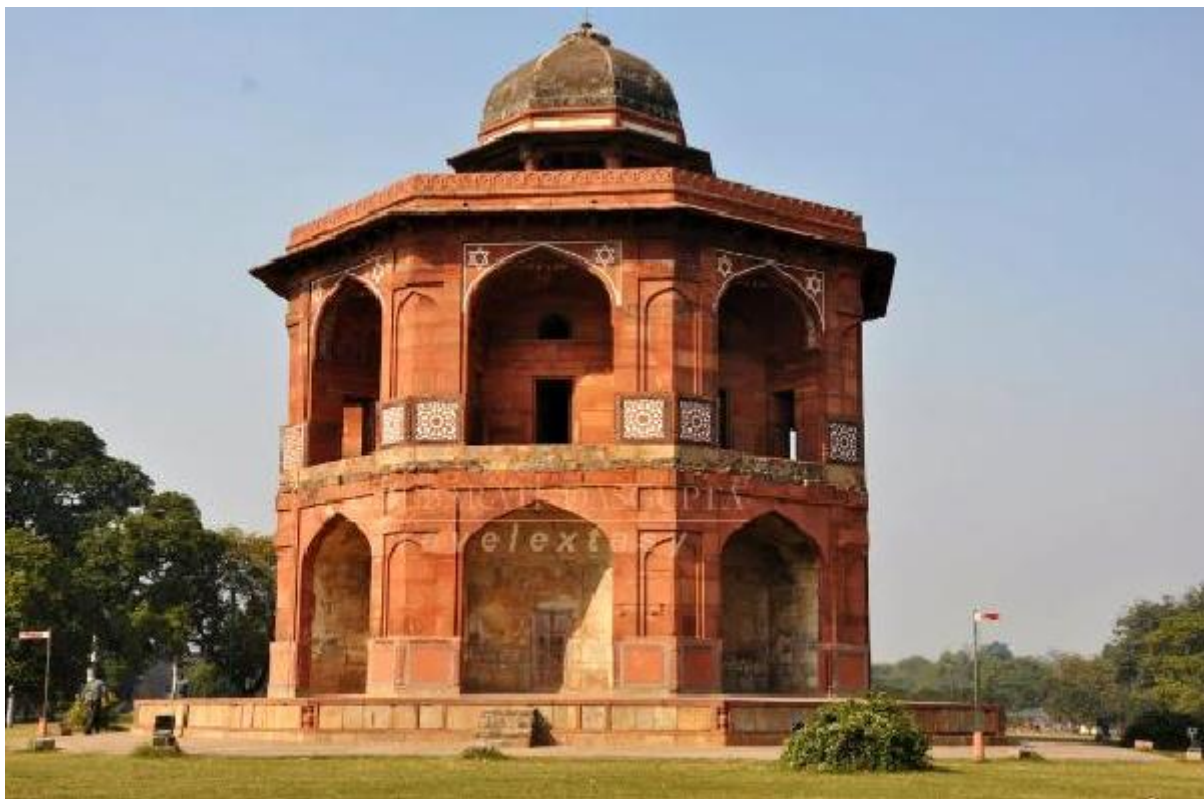
Qila-i-Kuhna Mosque

Sher Shah Suri built this mosque in 1541. Five doorways are there having pointed arch in each. In this mosque the king and his courtiers used to offer prayers. The measurement of the prayer hall is approximately 51.20m x 14.90m. There are five mihrabs in the hall that face west direction. The mosque is a two-storey building where the second storey was used by the women courtiers for prayers. There was a doorway which led to the room where the royal women used to pray.



Sher Mandal

The construction of Sher Mandal was started by Babur and completed by Humayun. The building is made up of red sandstone and is octagonal in shape. Babur used the building as an observatory and library.



The tower is supported by eight pillars and an octagonal chhatri. Along with all these, there is a spot depicting the place from where Humayaun fell down from the second storey and died after two days.

4. Purana Qila – How to Reach?

Purana Qila or Old Fort is situated in Delhi which is connected to all parts of India through air, rail, and road transport. Let's take a look at the nearby cities with their approximate distance.

- **Delhi to Kanpur**
 - By air – 393km
 - By rail – 440km
 - By road – 468km
- **Delhi to Lucknow**
 - By air – 417km
 - By rail – 512km (via Kanpur) 490km (via Bareilly)
 - By road – 558km
- **Delhi to Agra**
 - By air – 180km
 - By rail – 195km
 - By road – 217km
- **Delhi to Jaipur**
 - By air – 241km
 - By rail – 288km
 - By road – 268km
- **Delhi to Bareilly**
 - By air – 217km
 - By rail – 258km
 - By road – 259km
- **Delhi to Moradabad**
 - By air – 154km
 - By rail – 154km
 - By road – 166km

- **Delhi to Gwalior**

- By air – 285km
- By rail – 313km
- By road – 329km



By Air

Delhi is connected to most of the major cities of India and abroad through air transport. **Indira Gandhi International Airport** is situated at **Palam** a place 16km away from Delhi. Both domestic and international flights land here. There are separate terminals for catching domestic and international flights.

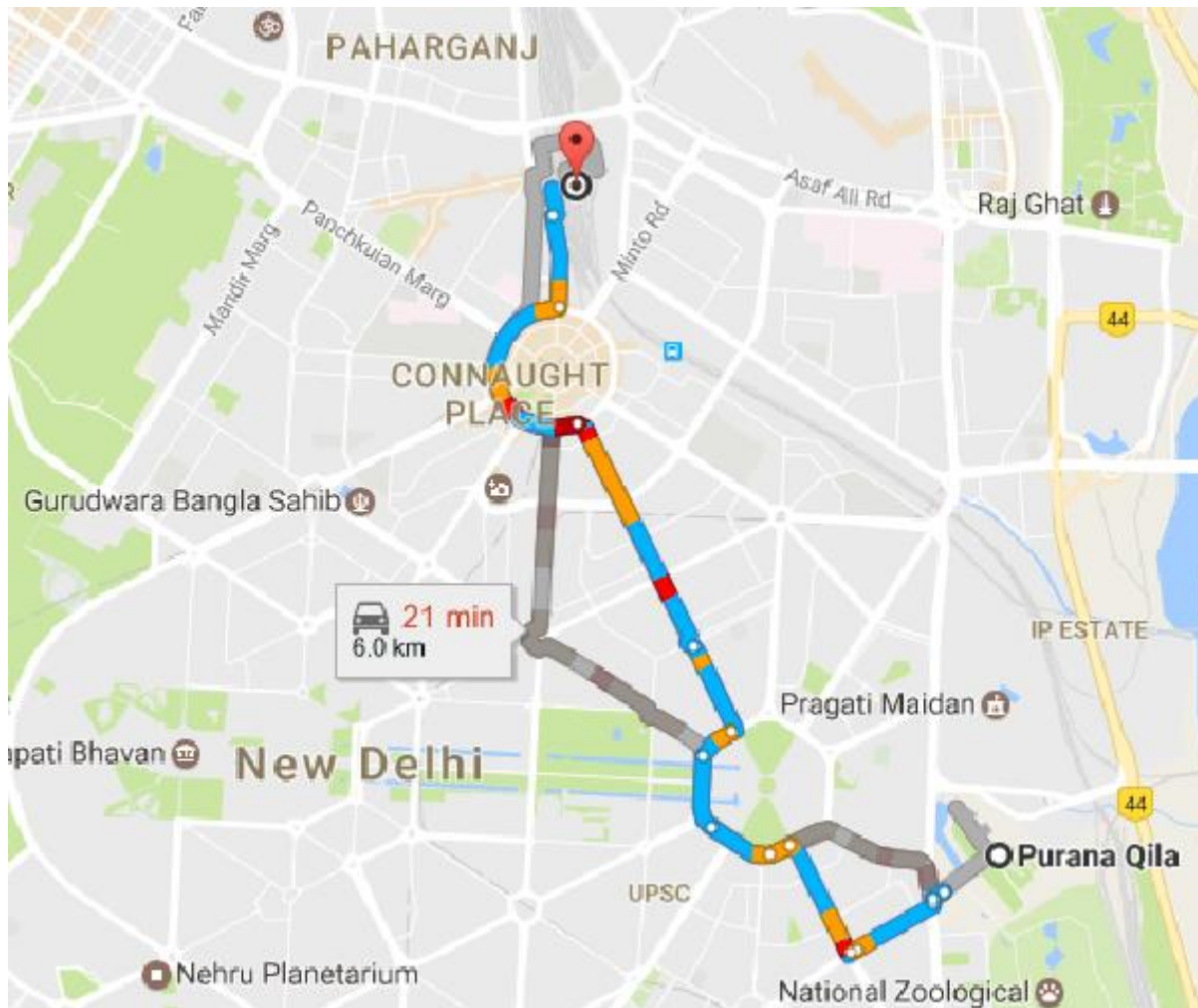


By Rail

Delhi is connected to almost all parts of India except Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram by rail. There are many railway stations in Delhi from where many trains originate, terminate or have stoppage. The main railway stations of Delhi are as follows:

- New Delhi
- Old Delhi
- Hazrat Nizamuddin
- Delhi Sarai Rohilla
- Delhi Cantt
- Delhi Safdurjung

There are other stations where only local trains have stoppage.



By Road

Delhi is connected to many cities by road transport. Tourists can catch buses from ISBT Kashmiri Gate, ISBT Anand Vihar, and ISBT at Sarai Kale Khan. Tourists can catch buses for Kanpur, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Udaipur, Agra, and many other cities. AC and non-AC buses run from these terminals. Some long distance buses also have sleeper coach.

Local Transport

Tourists can visit Old Fort through various modes of local transport. They can use auto rickshaws, taxis, and local buses to reach the fort. Metro trains also run in the city and the nearest metro station to the fort is **Pragati Maidan**.

5. Purana Qila – Nearby Places

There are many monuments nearby Purana Qila built by various rulers. Description of some of the monuments is given here.

India Gate

India Gate is also known as **All India War Memorial**. The gate was built in the memory of 82,000 soldiers who were killed in the **First World War** between 1914 and 1921. Tourists can find names of around 13,300 servicemen including some soldiers and officers inscribed on the gate. **Sir Edwin Lutyens** was its designer.



Amar Jawan Jyoti was built after the war between India and Pakistan in 1971. In this structure, a black marble plinth with inverted rifle is there on which a war helmet is kept and is surrounded by four eternal flames.



Qutub Minar

Qutub Minar was built by **Qutbuddin Aibak** and is the tallest brick minaret in the world. In case of height, it is second as **Fateh Burj** in Punjab comes first. The height of Qutub Minar is around 73m. **Mehrauli** is the place in Delhi where the monument is located. The minaret is made up of red sandstone and marble. In order to reach at the top of the minaret, tourists have to climb around 379 stairs.



Humayun's Tomb

Humayun's Tomb was built by **Akbar** and designed by **Mirak Mirza Ghiyas**. The tomb is located nearby **Purana Qila** or **Old Fort**. Humayun's wife ordered to construct the tomb in 1565 and it was completed in 1572. The tomb of **Isa Khan** is also nearby.



Isa Khan was a courtier of Sher Shah Suri and fought against the Mughals. Humayun's tomb also has the graves of Bega Begum, Hamida Begum, and Dara Shikoh. The tomb was built on the banks of river Yamuna.

Red Fort

Red Fort is located in the center of New Delhi and was the home of Mughals for nearly 200 years. The fort was built with red sandstone by **Shah Jahan**. There were royal apartments connected by **Nahr-i-Bisht** which was the source of water.



Nadir Shah plundered the fort in 1747 and destroyed many marble structures. The British also destroyed much portion of the fort during the revolt of 1857. Currently, the fort is used to hoist national flag on 15th August and 26th January.

Jama Masjid

Jama Masjid was built by Shah Jahan between 1644 and 1645. The mosque is also known as **Masjid-i-Jahan Numa**. The mosque has three gates, four towers, and two minarets each having the height of 40 feet. The courtyard of the mosque is very large and more than 25,000 people can simultaneously pray here.



Saadullah Khan was the prime minister of Shah Jahan and he supervised the construction of the mosque. The main entrance of the mosque faces red fort and was used by emperors to enter the mosque.

Jahanpanah Fort

Jahanpanah was a fortified city built by **Muhammad bin Tughlaq** to combat the Mongol attacks. The city has now been ruined but still people can find walls and a few structures built inside the fort. Jahanpanah means **Refuge of the world**.



The city was spread from Siri to Qutub Minar. The city now comes under urban development and many modern structures have been constructed.