

Delhi, Agra & Varanasi

A 6-Day Delhi, Agra & Varanasi Itinerary

DURATION	BEST TIME TO GO	FROM
	Delhi and Agra turn brutally hot and hazy by April, and the July–September monsoon can flood Varanasi's ghats — winter is cool, dry, and clear for all three cities.	for 2 people

North India's classic loop swaps the usual single-city trip for three very different cities in six days: the Mughal tombs and chaotic old bazaars of Delhi, a sunrise at the Taj Mahal reached by India's fastest train, and the burning ghats and dawn boat rides of Varanasi, the subcontinent's oldest living city. It's a lot of ground, but the connections — a 100-minute bullet train and a 90-minute flight — keep the pace sane.

Day 1 Arrive & Old Delhi

Land in the capital and ease into its oldest quarter by evening, when Chandni Chowk's lanes are at their liveliest.

Prepaid Taxi — IGI Airport to Hotel

~45 min · ₹750 (\$9) flat fare

Book at the prepaid taxi counter in the Terminal 3 arrivals hall rather than any driver who approaches you first — it's a fixed government rate and the safest way into the city.

Check-In — The Lalit New Delhi

Check-in 2pm · from \$140 USD/night

A central 5-star on Barakhamba Road, a 10-minute walk from Connaught Place, with a rooftop pool that's a welcome break from the heat most of the year.

The Lalit New Delhi · +91 11 4444 7777 · thelalit.com

Jama Masjid at Sunset

Evening · free entry, ₹400 (\$5) camera fee

India's largest mosque, built by Shah Jahan the same decade he began the Taj Mahal — climb the south minaret for a rooftop view over Old Delhi just before the evening call to prayer.

Chandni Chowk Food Walk

~2.5 hrs, evening · ~\$30 USD/person

A guided walk through the 17th-century bazaar's lane-maze for stuffed parathas at Paranthé Wali Gali and jalebi fried to order at Old Famous Jalebi Wala.

Delhi Food Walks · +91 98105 29648 · delhifoodwalks.com

Day 2

New Delhi's Tombs & Monuments

A full day moving between Mughal-era Delhi and the wide colonial boulevards the British built on top of it.

Humayun's Tomb

Morning · ₹600 (\$7)/person (foreigner)

The Mughal garden-tomb that set the template for the Taj Mahal eighty years later — red sandstone and white marble on a raised plinth, inside a Persian-style charbagh garden.

Qutub Minar

Late morning · ₹600 (\$7)/person (foreigner)

A 240-foot, 800-year-old minaret of carved red sandstone — the tallest brick minaret in the world — standing over the ruins of Delhi's first mosque and the rust-resistant Iron Pillar.

India Gate & Rajpath Drive-By

Afternoon · free

A slow drive down the ceremonial boulevard Edwin Lutyens designed, past the 138-foot war memorial arch and the sandstone domes of Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Dinner — Indian Accent

Dinner · ~\$60 USD/person tasting menu

A tasting menu that reworks Indian classics with modern technique, inside The Lodhi hotel; regularly ranked among Asia's best restaurants, so book a table well ahead.

Indian Accent · +91 11 4512 1123 · indianaccent.com

Day 3

Agra by the Gatimaan Express

A day trip to the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort aboard India's fastest train, back in Delhi in time for dinner.

Gatimaan Express — Delhi to Agra

Departs Hazrat Nizamuddin ~8:10am, ~100 min · ~₹1,500 (\$18)/person Executive Chair

India's fastest train, topping 160 km/h across the plains of Uttar Pradesh — book the Executive Chair Car for the extra legroom and an onboard breakfast.

Taj Mahal

Mid-morning · ₹1,500 (\$18)/person foreigner (incl. mausoleum)

Ustad Ahmad Lahauri's white-marble mausoleum for Shah Jahan's wife Mumtaz Mahal — arrive as close to the 6am gate opening as the train allows, since the marble's glow and the crowds both peak by midday.

Agra Fort

Early afternoon · ₹650 (\$8)/person foreigner

The red sandstone fortress-palace the Mughal emperors ruled from before Delhi — Shah Jahan spent his last years here under house arrest, looking out at the Taj Mahal he built.

Gatimaan Express — Agra back to Delhi

Departs Agra Cantt ~5:35pm, ~100 min · ~₹1,500 (\$18)/person Executive Chair

The same train covers the return leg in the evening, putting you back in Delhi in time for a late dinner near the hotel.

Day 4 Fly to Varanasi

A short flight east to the Ganges' holiest city, arriving in time for the evening's main event.

IndiGo — Delhi to Varanasi

~1h20m flight · from ₹4,500 (\$54)/person

Several daily nonstops cover the 420 miles in under ninety minutes; book an afternoon departure so there's no rush after the morning's Delhi checkout.

Check-In — BrijRama Palace

Check-in 2pm · from \$180 USD/night

A restored 18th-century palace directly on Dashashwamedh Ghat, reachable only by boat or on foot along the riverfront — ask for a Ganges-facing room for aarti views from your own balcony.

BrijRama Palace · +91 70420 74208 · brijramapalace.com

Ganga Aarti at Dashashwamedh Ghat

Evening, ~7pm · free from the ghat, ₹200 (\$2.50) for a boat seat

A nightly fire ritual performed by seven priests in unison on a riverside stage — watch from the ghat steps, or better, from a rowboat a few yards offshore as the oil lamps are raised toward the water.

Day 5

Sunrise on the Ganges & Sarnath

The ghats at their most atmospheric before sunrise, then an afternoon at the site of the Buddha's first sermon.

Sunrise Boat Ride on the Ganges

5:45am departure, ~1.5 hrs · ₹1,200 (\$14) private boat for 2

Row past the burning ghats of Manikarnika and Harishchandra as cremation pyres still smolder from the night before, while bathers and priests begin their morning rituals along eighty-some ghats.

Varanasi Guru Boat Tours · +91 85952 56696 · varanasiguru.com

Breakfast — Blue Lassi Shop

Morning · ~\$3 USD/person

A tiny, fourth-generation shop near Manikarnika Ghat serving thick lassi topped with fruit, nuts, and pomegranate in clay kulhad cups — cash only, and the line moves fast.

Sarnath

Afternoon · ₹300 (\$3.60)/person foreigner

The deer park 8 miles outside the city where the Buddha gave his first sermon after enlightenment — the brick Dhamek Stupa and the Ashoka Pillar fragments sit in quiet, grassy ruins, a world away from the ghats.

Dinner — Riverside Thali

Dinner • \$12-18 USD/person

A traditional multi-course vegetarian thali at a ghat-side restaurant — most hotels can point you to one with a Ganges view, and very few places in the old city serve meat at all.

Day 6

Free Morning & Departure

One last look at the ghats before the flight home.

Free Morning — Assi Ghat

Morning • free

The city's southernmost major ghat is calmer than Dashashwamedh and lined with cafes — a good spot for a last chai and a slower goodbye to the river.

Transfer to Lal Bahadur Shastri Airport

~30 min • ₹500 (\$6) flat fare

Varanasi's airport (VNS) handles domestic and a handful of international connections; budget extra buffer time, since the single access road can back up around flight banks.