

SOUTH SHAHJAHANABAD



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DELHI HERITAGE



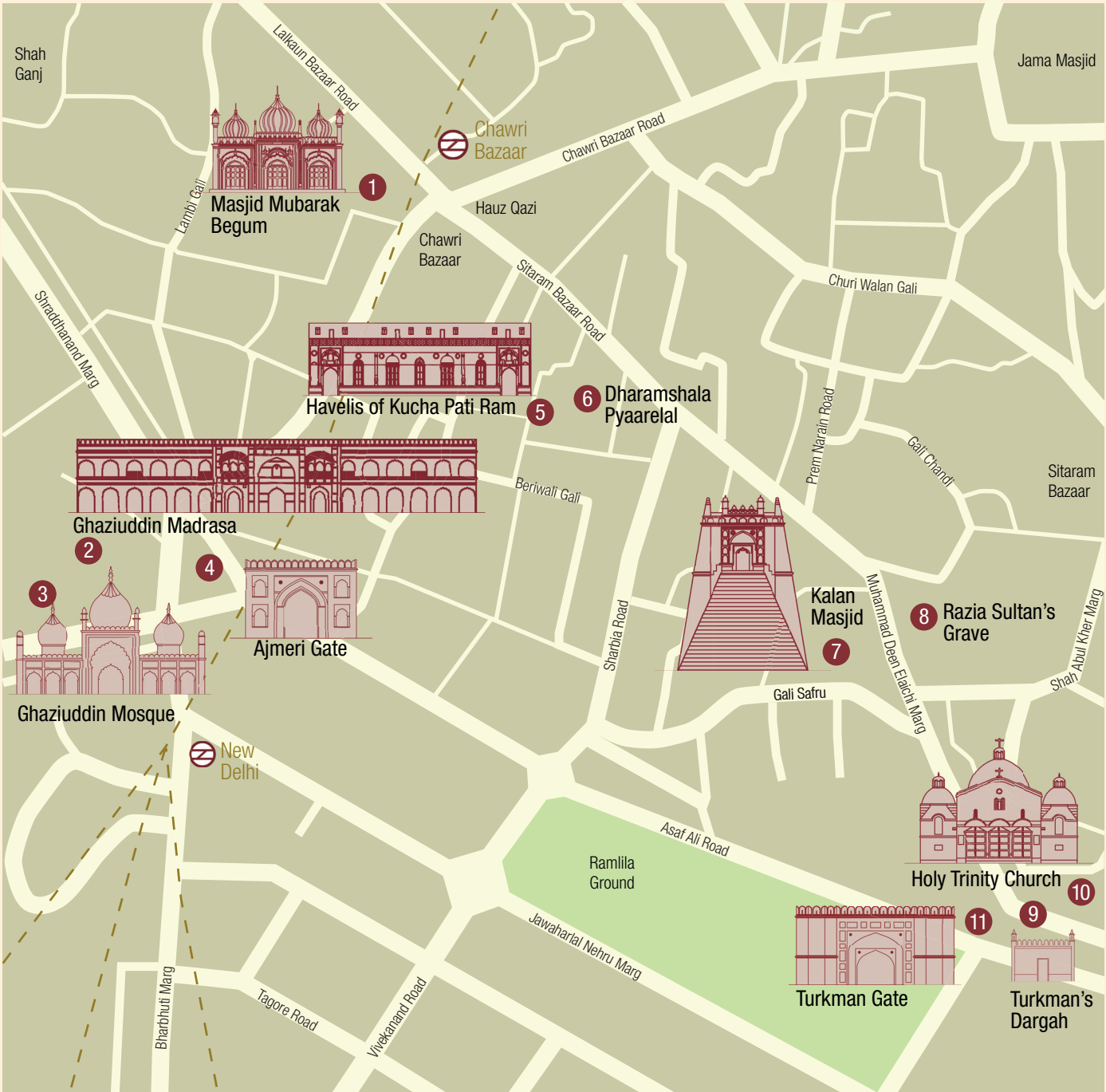
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South Shahjahanabad is a fascinating area that is a striking blend of history and contemporaneity. Before Shahjahan built the walled city, the area was well known as a site for burials around the grave of Shah Turkman (a Sufi saint who lived here during the reign of Sultan Iltutmish) and later as part of Firoz Shah's city Firozabad. In fact, some historians believe that the Kalan Masjid, built by Firoz Shah's Prime Minister Khan Jahan Junan Shah in 1387, must have been the main mosque of the city of Firozabad.

There is also considerable proof that the grave of Razia Sultan, the only female ruler before the British period to rule from the throne of Delhi, is located here within a modest enclosure. While walking in the narrow alleys surrounding Razia's grave enclosure, one can sense that the ground level here is generally higher than the surrounding parts of the walled city, perhaps owing to its continued habitation over a longer period as well as its use as a site for burials. Compared to the area north of Chandni Chowk, south Shahjahanabad

was somehow spared the wholesale destruction of the city's fabric after the Revolt of 1857. Although the city wall was demolished almost completely, the three principle gates—the Ajmeri Gate, the Turkman Gate, and Delhi Gate were retained. The rubble masonry wall connecting the three gates has now been replaced by the almost continuous row of Delhi's early Art Deco buildings on Aruna Asaf Ali Marg. Walking along this street lined with modern buildings towards Ajmeri Gate brings one to the sprawling campus of the madrasa and mosque set up by Ghaziuddin, a powerful minister in the court of Aurangzeb and his successors. The busy commercial nature of this part of the city becomes obvious as one walks along the streets here. More recently, the opening of the metro station at Hauz Qazi has made this commercial area, with wholesale hardware and paper markets, even busier. Behind this cluster of modern buildings, the internal street pattern has changed little over the years—the visitor must be prepared to stumble upon 'jewels' from different periods of Delhi's history at every turn and corner!

SOUTH SHAHJAHANABAD





1. MASJID MUBARAK BEGUM

This mosque is located a short walk from the Ajmeri Gate Metro Station (at Hauz Qazi) towards Khari Baoli. The mosque sits on a raised platform, with shops below, accessed by a narrow flight of stairs from the street. It was commissioned in 1822 by Mubarak Begum, the wife of Sir David Ochterlony, the first British Resident of Delhi, and the mosque was attached to her now-demolished house. Built of red sandstone and painted in a terracotta-red colour it is a pretty and well-proportioned building and, the scale too, is quite intimate.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free

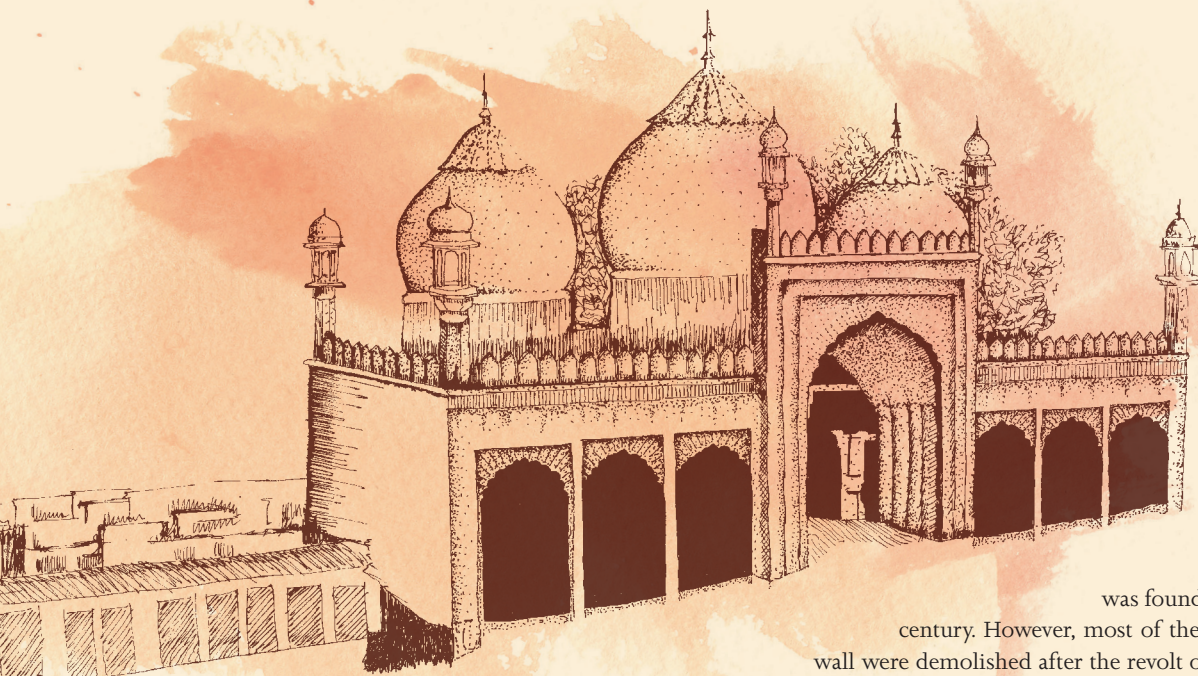
2. GHAZIUDDIN MADRASA

This Mughal building has been used as an educational centre ever since its existence. Originally a madrasa set up by Ghaziuddin in 1692, the school declined with the collapse of the Mughal Empire. In 1825 however it received a new lease of life, when the Delhi College was set up by the British administration, the first western-style college to be established in Delhi. The so-called 'Oriental section' of the institution was housed in the Ghaziuddin Madrasa and was largely funded through a grant by Itimad-ud-daula, the Nawab of Awadh. The English section was housed near Kashmiri Gate. The college was closed down after the revolt of 1857, to re-open much later, in 1924. The Delhi College was renamed Zakir Hussain College in 1975. Today the buildings are mostly occupied by the Anglo Arabic School, as the college moved to a new campus in 1986.

The entrance to this double-storeyed building, constructed around a large courtyard is through a handsome red sandstone U-shaped gateway, now used as a chemistry lab. Inside, two elegant jharokhas (overhanging enclosed balconies) face the courtyard, giving access to rooms that are used as hostel accommodation for the Zakir Husain College. Stairs at the western end give access to the upper floors. The courtyard is partially paved in red sandstone with a garden in the centre.

Timings: 2.00 pm–3.00 pm (Tuesday & Thursday only). For prior permission, call 011-23210863. Entry: Free





3. GHAZIUDDIN MOSQUE AND TOMB

Ghaziuddin was a powerful minister and nobleman in the imperial courts of Emperor Aurangzeb and his successors, Bahadur Shah, Jahandar Shah and Farrukhsiyar. His real name was Mir Shahbuddin, but he was later conferred the title of 'Ghaziuddin' by the emperor. His son became the first Nizam of Hyderabad. Ghaziuddin built a complex that included a madrasa, a large mosque, and his grave enclosure. The madrasa became operational in about AD 1692, as an institution of higher learning. The complex is located right outside the Ajmeri Gate and accessed through the gateway of what is now the Anglo Arabic School. An 1850s map of Delhi shows that this vast complex was important enough to be enclosed within its own fortification with a moat all around.

The mosque and tomb are located adjacent to each other at the very rear of this vast complex. The mosque is a finely proportioned building made out of red sandstone with white marble relief work. It is a seven bay mosque where the central archway dominates the façade. The structure is topped with three white bulbous domes. The tomb of Ghaziuddin, built during his lifetime, is made in ornate white marble surrounded by elaborately carved floral screens that are typical of Mughal architecture. There

are other smaller graves surrounding the main tomb. Although the entrance gateway to the tomb is kept locked, visitors can request to be shown around.

Timings: 2.00 pm–Sunset
(Thursday only)

Entry: Free

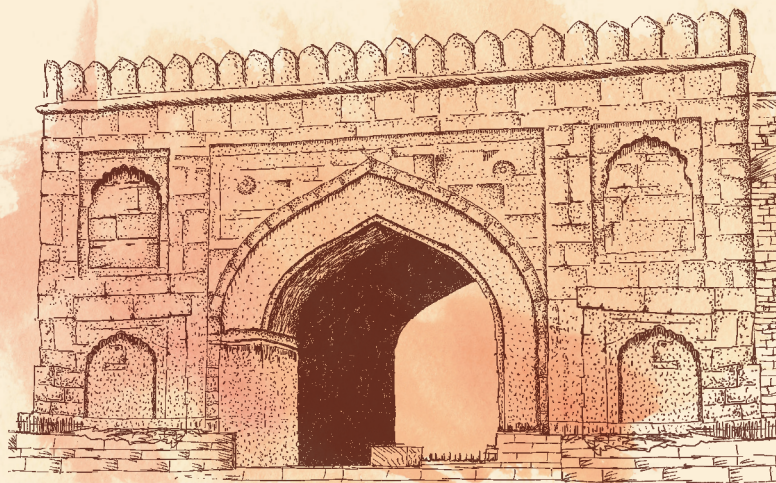
4. AJMERI GATE

Ajmeri Gate is one of the original gates that were built around Shahjahanabad when it

was founded in the mid-seventeenth century. However, most of the gates and part of the city wall were demolished after the revolt of 1857.

As its name suggests the gate faces the direction of Ajmer towards the south-west of the walled city. Today the wall around the gate is completely gone and it sits on its own in the middle of a busy traffic intersection. It is a single arched gateway with semi octagonal turrets on the outside. It's a relatively plain structure built out of quartzite and red sandstone. Some typical decorative features include carved marble rosettes, carved sandstone panels, and on the inside, some fine painted plaster work.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset. Entry: Free



5. HAVELIS OF KUCHA PATI RAM

Past the Hauz Qazi Chowk, cutting through Bazaar Sitaram lies a narrow lane known as Kucha Pati Ram on which are located a number of *havelis* or mansions. These *havelis* feature amongst the 800 structures listed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) as heritage buildings.

In the heyday of Shahjahanabad this part of the walled city was dotted with *havelis*, ranging from houses of the nobility to the residences of courtesans, where gatherings and performances of dance and music were arranged for the elite of the city. Built largely of Lakhori brick, the *havelis* were characterized by ornamental gateways, grand cusped-arch entrances, *jharokhas*, and fluted sandstone columns. A variety in the façade can be seen in terms of colour and style. One of the *havelis* has an intricately carved peacock above an arch of the main doorway, probably influenced by the peacock throne of the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan.

Haveli Ram Kutiya, the first *haveli* in Kucha Pati Ram was built in 1915 by Lala Kanhiya Lal. This double-storeyed *haveli* has two bay windows on the ground floor and decorative archways with fluted sandstone columns and floral carvings. The *haveli*, now privately owned, has a large courtyard inside with rooms on all sides.

Haveli Kucha Pati Ram, named after the lane itself, was built in the early twentieth century, right opposite Haveli Ram Kutiya. This double-storeyed *haveli* has an intricately carved sandstone façade, a projecting balcony resting on sandstone brackets, carved columns, railings, and doorways. A distinctive feature is the human figures carved over the door openings.

The *haveli* at 505, Kucha Pati Ram, lies adjacent to the Haveli Ram Kutiya. Built along the same lines, the *haveli*'s most noticeable feature includes extensive stone carving on its façade along the ground floor.

The *haveli* at 908, Kucha Pati Ram, is again a two-storeyed house raised on a 1 m high plinth, entered through a pointed-arch gateway. Constructed of Lakhori brick and sandstone, with typical sandstone brackets on the upper floor, the layout of the *haveli* follows a pattern similar to that of the other *havelis* with rooms built around a central courtyard.

Also, during the reign of Shahjahan, several temples were built here by the Jain and Hindu communities. During 1655-65 a temple was built in Kucha Pati Ram within the Imli Muhalla and was named after Qannauji Rai, the builder of the temple.

Entry to interior with prior permission only, private residence.



FESTIVALS OF SHAHJAHANABAD

The festivals of Old Delhi have been celebrated amidst much good cheer ever since the city was first established by Shahjahan in the early seventeenth century. The Muslim festivals especially have had a very different flavour because they were celebrated under royal patronage from very early times. While these festivities and celebrations are always citywide, their nerve-centre is undoubtedly the area around Chandni Chowk and Jama Masjid.

The most important amongst the Muslim festivals is the holy month of Ramzaan or Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar calendar according to the Islamic tradition. Since very early days this holy month—believed to be the time when the contents of the Quran were revealed to Prophet Mohammad—has been observed by Muslim societies around the world as the time of fasting and restraint. During this month, all are expected to observe a fast, known as *roza*, for thirty days from dawn to dusk.

In the neighbourhoods of Old Delhi, while strict discipline is followed during the day, the nights come alive as residents of the city fill the streets with the meal breaking the fast, known as *iftar*. At this time, real festive mood can be observed as the streets are illuminated and a variety of delicacies are on offer in order to observe the breaking of the fast that takes place once the call for prayer is made from the Jama Masjid. The fast is usually broken with dates, a practice that has followed from the old Arab tradition. Immediately after, prayers are recited at the mosque following which people fill the streets to eat a variety of things such as meats, sweets, and milk products for their *sehri*, their only meal for the day.

Ramadan is followed immediately by the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, or the Eid of festivity. This day marks the first day of the month following Ramzaan and is observed to mark the celebration of the virtues earned and blessings received during the previous month of fasting and renunciation. The night before Eid, known as *chaand raat*, people are in high spirits and visit bazaars around Chandni Chowk for shopping. The streets are bustling until late night as people fervently shop for new clothes for themselves, families buy gifts for each other while women buy bangles and apply henna on their hands. The day of Eid sees people meeting their relatives, greeting each other 'Eid Mubarak', and distributing alms and charity. The younger people also get gifts and money from their elders. At night, families either eat out or eat a hearty meal prepared at home. A common delicacy consumed on Eid is a sweet prepared with vermicelli, milk, and dry fruits known as *sewayyan*.

Eid-ul-Fitr is followed two months later with Eid-ul-Zuha or the greater Eid Festival. Sometimes referred to as Eid-e-Qurban,

this is a festival of sacrifice, celebrated to observe the sacrifice made by Prophet Ibrahim of his son, in order to follow the word of Allah. During the day, the celebrations take the form of sacrifice, usually of a small animal such as a goat, whose meat is later distributed amongst the poor and the needy who cannot afford the delight of such a meal. Afterwards in the evening, thousands of people gather on the lawns of the Jama Masjid to celebrate the occasion by meeting and wishing each other.

Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar and is probably the most spiritual of all Muslim festivals celebrated in Delhi. It is the first ten-day period of that month that are observed to mark the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain, the grandson of the prophet, who laid down his life for truth and justice. On the tenth day of this mourning period, colourful and elaborate structures, known as *tazias*, meant to replicate the mausoleum of the martyr, are carried around the city converging to a common spot. Many members of the Muslim community set up drinking posts to serve water and juices, free of charge, to everyone.

Celebration of Eid at Jama Masjid, Delhi



LIVING TRADITIONS OF SHAHJAHANABAD

Delhi has a rich legacy of living traditions that have survived the ravages of time and have undergone change and development through periods of political turmoil and relative social instability. Much of this legacy dates back to the period of Mughal rule, but the seeds of some of these traditions had already been sown during the Rajput and Sultanate periods; these include the traditions of craft, language, and food. The flowering of various spiritual movements in the city, such as Sufism, also gave a fillip to the development of performing arts in the city.

A rich tradition of crafts indigenous to the city came into their own during the rule of Emperor Shahjahan. Besides the two main market streets, there were distinct shopping areas demarcated for the sale of specific commodities. The constant demand for luxury goods from the royal household as well as the nobility made Delhi a centre for the manufacture of crafts and home to a great number of skilled craftsmen. The major crafts that flourished in Delhi at that time and which have survived till today are: *naqqashi* or engraving, jewellery, pottery, embroidery, wood-carving, metal work, ivory and sandalwood-carving, and making of glass products. The art of engraving was already in vogue during the Sultanate period and fine examples can be seen all over the Qutb Minar Complex.

Even during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, which saw the decline of the Mughal Empire resulting in political and economic instability in the city, there was continued patronage of the arts and architecture by the nobility, wealthy merchant class, and local rulers. They patronized the construction of a great number of new buildings, both religious and secular. Many Jain temples, with finely carved facades and profusely decorated interiors with mirror work, painting, etc. were constructed during this time. The remarkable astronomical observatory, Jantar Mantar,

was commissioned in the early decades of the eighteenth century by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur who was a keen astronomer. Music and dance too flourished, particularly under the Emperor Muhammed Shah 'Rangeela' (the 'colourful' one) owing to his inclination towards the performing arts. The eighteenth century also witnessed the flowering of the Urdu



Delhi Blue Pottery, Gurcharan Singh



Kundan Jewellery



language. It grew out of the local Hindi dialect spoken in and around Delhi and was enriched by the vocabulary of the many ethnic groups that populated the Mughal capital. Urdu finally blossomed into a literary language with a rich poetic tradition. Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797–1869), the great Persian and Urdu scholar-poet, served under the Mughal emperors and considered himself a member of the ruling aristocracy. The last emperor on the Mughal throne, Bahadur Shah Zafar, was himself a renowned poet and composed poetry under the pen name 'Zafar'.

As with all living cultures of the world, while old legacies are carried forward, new traditions emerge. The living traditions of Delhi must be seen as a *mélange* of old and new, traditions whose survival depend on their continuous evolution.



Zardozi work

HAVELIS OF OLD DELHI

Shahjahanabad today is such a maze of warrens and alleyways that for a casual visitor it is easy to think that it may have been like this since the birth of the city. The dense urban fabric is a result of relatively recent surge in urbanization. Although the skyline of the original imperial city established by Shahjahan was undoubtedly dominated by the Red Fort, but a great number of nobles and princes established their *havelis* inside the walled city which are examples of lasting beauty. Later, these *havelis* were passed on to the many descendants of the original owners, they were sub-divided into smaller houses, and some of the old plots were so large that they ended up becoming full-fledged residential neighbourhoods. Construction of *havelis* by wealthy merchants continued until the early colonial period. Many of these later *havelis* survive today, although not in their original form and use.

While the primary commercial streets of Old Delhi, namely Chandni Chowk and Faiz Bazar were lined with two-storey mansions with shops below, warehouses behind, and residences of the shopowners above, the rest of the space was filled with mansions belonging to the rich. Also, it is interesting to note that typologically, there was little difference between the mansions of the Muslim and Hindu communities; the main difference in design and style came about due to variations in the owners' personalities. In many ways the grandest of these houses were miniature versions of the Red Fort, that each of these houses sought to emulate in terms of luxury and provisions. They were literally self-sufficient universes within their walled compounds.

The *havelis* were usually entered through an elaborate gateway. The walled compound contained living apartments, gardens, a

Central courtyard of Ram Kutiya, Chandni Chowk



Interior views of Rai Lala Chunnamal ki Haveli, Chandni Chowk



temple or mosque, workshops, and bazaars for the requirements of the household. Within, there were clearly defined zones for public and private activities, demarcated by various interconnecting courtyards assigned to specific functions, their numbers depending on the size and wealth of the household. In the larger *havelis*, the gateway from the street led into a forecourt with rooms along its sides that housed the servants and stables and was often referred to as the *jilau khana*. This led into the courtyard of public audience, the central part of which was the *diwan khana*, a large and well-furnished room for entertaining guests. Through this one entered the private residential apartments, the *mahalsarai* and the *zenana* that were separate areas assigned for men and women. The rooms were arranged around this open *chowk* surrounded by two-tiered verandahs, known as the *dalan* and the *dar dalan*. *Havelis* often had a large basement known as the *tekhkhana* where the entire family retreated during the hot summer days. The terraces were equally important in the summer and monsoon months and brought welcome respite to the families that sought to enjoy the cool evening breeze.

The *havelis* were often surrounded by thatch and straw huts belonging to the retinue of servants who could not be accommodated within the walls of the *haveli* compound. Although constructed mostly out of Lakhori bricks, the *havelis* were embellished in a variety of ways depending on the architectural style of the time they were constructed in. The most traditional *havelis* had Rajasthani and Mughal features such as *jharokhas*, *chhatris* (raised dome shaped pavilions), and fluted columns, etc. Later on, the *havelis*, especially during the late Mughal times were decorated with highly ornate and carved sandstone façades. Some of these can still be seen in the streets of Shahjahanabad.



6. DHARAMSHALA PYAARELAL

Located on the main Sitaram Bazaar Street, this building, dating back to 1921 is currently being used as a dharamshala. On either side of a gateway of fawn-coloured sandstone, carved and ornamented with floral patterns and elephant motifs, there is one small room with an opening at ventilator level. The gateway leads to an entrance vestibule which opens on to a courtyard with *dalans* or open verandahs on either side that have four arched openings. The fifth opening on either side leads to a staircase; the terrace has also been partially built upon.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free

7. KALAN MASJID

This mosque, built in 1387, was nearly 300 years old before the city of Shahjahanabad was established by Shahjahan. This was possibly the principal mosque of Firoz Shah's city Firozabad and is one of the most northerly of the seven great mosques built by Firoz Shah Tuglaq's Prime Minister, Khan Jahan Junan Shah during the mid to late fourteenth century. Khan Jahan Junan Shah was the son of Khan Jahan Tilangani, Firoz Shah's powerful and loyal first *wazir* (minister) whom he had captured during his campaign to south India.

That this was an important mosque is apparent from the fact that its main courtyard was raised 20 ft above the ground level. The lower storey of the building is now used for residential and commercial purposes. The five-bay mosque is approached by a set of thirty steps and an inscription at the main entrance refers to the construction of the building. The corner towers and outer walls of the mosque are all sloped inwards and there are no minarets. Although not much has changed structurally, the coats of bright paint both on the outside and inside surfaces of the mosque is partially the reason for its rather modern appearance. The inside of the mosque consists of a courtyard surrounded on three sides by a single arcade, borne by plain squared columns. The western prayer hall has three rows of columns. The ablution tank is in the centre of the courtyard.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free



8. RAZIA SULTAN'S GRAVE

The tomb of Razia Sultan lies near the Turkman Gate area within the Bulbuli Khana locality. This area is at close proximity to Sitaram Bazaar and can be approached from the Chawri Bazaar Metro Station.

Razia was born in 1205 and her real name was Jalalat-ud-din Razia. She is known to have assisted her father during his reign and learnt about the state affairs, unlike what a girl child would have been allowed to do in that period. Iltutmish became the first sultan to appoint a woman as his successor when he designated his daughter Razia as his heir apparent, after the premature death of his eldest son.

However Razia's brother Rukn-ud-din was put on the throne after Iltutmish's death and Razia ascended the throne of Delhi after

his assassination.

Soon she became one of the most powerful rulers of the Delhi Sultanate.

As a sultan, Razia preferred a man's tunic and headdress; and contrary to

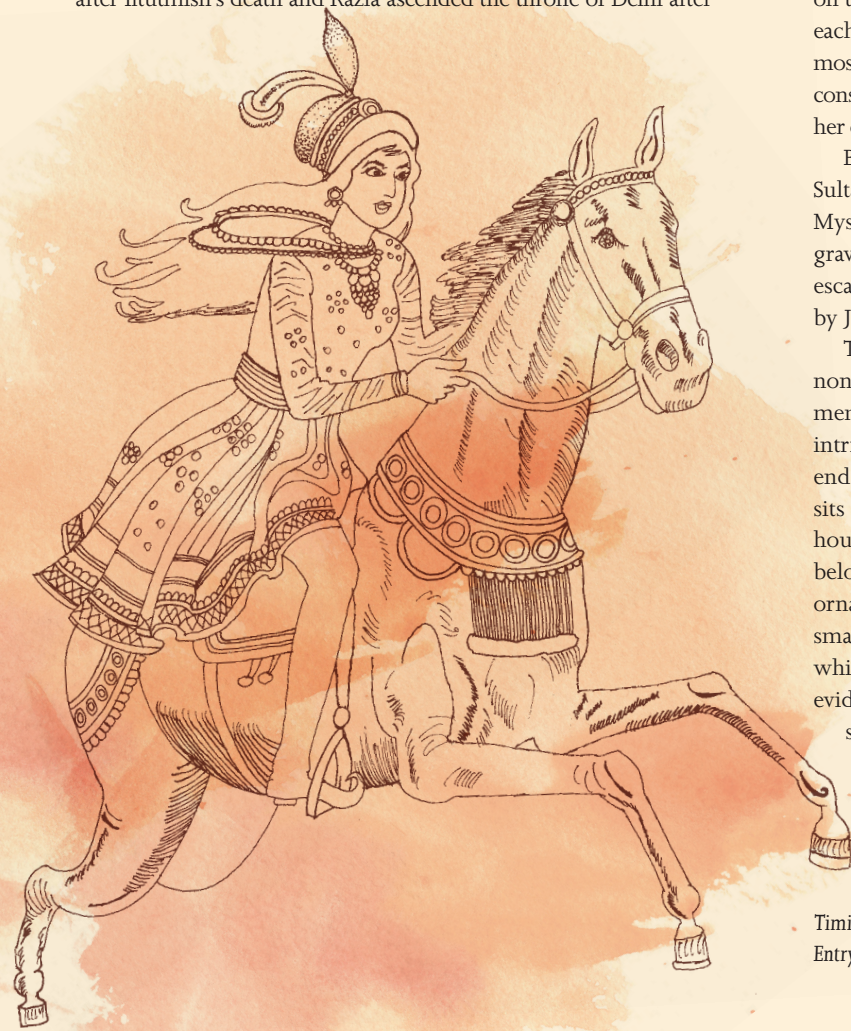
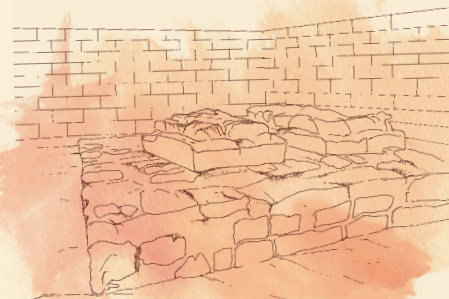
custom, she wasn't averse to showing her face when she rode an elephant into battle as the head of her army. A shrewd politician, Razia managed to keep the nobles in check, while enlisting the support of the army and the populace. Her greatest accomplishment on the political front was to manipulate rebel factions into opposing each other. At that point, Razia seemed destined to become one of the most powerful rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. But a complex political conspiracy resulted in her getting into a bloody succession battle with her other brother that led to her fleeing Delhi and her eventual death.

Being the first female monarch of the Delhi Sultanate, Razia Sultan has been the subject of many legends and controversies. Mystery surrounds both her death and the actual location of her grave. Historical accounts describe her death by referring to her escaping in a man's disguise, being given shelter but then killed by Jats near Kaithal.

There are at least three claims regarding her grave site but none of the three sites have inscriptions on the tombstone in memory of the one buried there. This particular site has as much intrigue and mystery about it as Razia's life itself. Reached at the end of a complex network of narrow winding streets, the tomb sits on a raised platform in a 35 sq ft courtyard surrounded by houses. Another tomb is seen besides Razia's and is said to have belonged to her sister, Shazia. The graves are totally devoid of any ornamentation and are merely mounds of stone masonry. Two smaller tombs are seen on the south-west corner of the courtyard which may have belonged to Razia Sultan's children. There is no evidence as to how Razia Sultan's body ended up here, but some state that Razia's brother and successor to the Delhi throne may have built these graves after her demise, near the grave of Shah Turkman, the local saint whom Razia patronized and who had died only a few months before her death. Today, part of the tomb site is being used as a mosque by the local residents.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

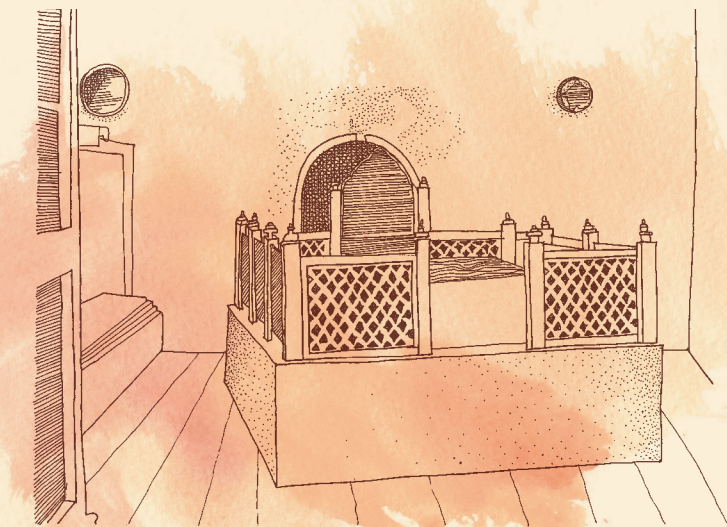
Entry: Free





9. TURKMAN'S DARGAH

The area of Turkman Gate in Shahjahanabad is surrounded by many pre-Shahjahanabad sites. The ground level in the area is also relatively higher than surrounding areas and it is possible that this is due to continued habitation over long periods. We also know that this was a favourite area for burials, mostly owing to the location of the grave of Shah Turkman who died in 1240. The saint's real name was Shams-ul-Arifin. He was also known as 'Bayabani', because he lived in a forest and kept away from society as much as possible.



The entrance to the graveyard is through a brightly painted arched opening which is below street level—further evidence of the fact that the ground level in the area has changed over the course of time. On the south of the entrance there is a small mosque with three arched entrances and a flat dome. On the east of the mosque, a large open area has many graves. Shah Turkman's grave is made of white marble.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free

10. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Located a stone's throw away from the Turkman Gate, this modest church sits within its own tranquil courtyard, quite removed from the din and chaos of the area just outside. The building was built in 1905 in Byzantine style using local quartzite stone.



Although small in size, the building is of definite architectural merit. It has a cross plan with a domed chapel and half-domed projecting bays. Buttresses have been used at the north end and all domes are topped with lanterns. A plaque announces that the foundation stone of the church was laid on 1 February 1904 in the memory of Alexander Charles Maitland by his widow Mary R. Maitland.

11. TURKMAN GATE

Turkman Gate, one of the four surviving gates of Shahjahanabad, lies to the south-west end of the walled city and is thus named because of its location in the vicinity of the *dargah* (shrine) of the sufi saint Hazrat Shah Turkman Bayabani and his tomb that dates back to 1240. The gateway is two-bay deep with a flat roof on the first bay and a domed roof on the second bay. On either side of the second bay there is a recessed alcove, as large as a room. The gateway has octagonal

bastions on the east and west, and is decorated with battlements at the parapet level, with medallions on either side of the arched openings. The north and south façades of the gateway have a combination of ashlar blocks of red and white sandstone. The gateway has undergone extensive repairs and conservation work recently.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset


Entry: Free





Nearest Bus Stops

(i) Kamla Market:
505, 526, 781, 951

-  Bus Stand
-  Petrol Pump
-  Toilets
-  Cafeteria
-  Metro Station
-  HoHo Bus Route



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