**TAH MAHAL**

The Taj Mahal is a breathtaking white-marble mausoleum commissioned by Mughul emperor [Shah Jahan](https://www.thoughtco.com/shah-jahan-195483) for his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Located on the southern bank of the Yamuna River near Agra, India, the Taj Mahal took 22 years to build and finally reached completion in 1653.

This exquisite monument, considered one of the [New Wonders of the World](https://www.thoughtco.com/the-seven-wonders-of-the-world-4147695), astounds visitors for its symmetry, structural beauty, intricate calligraphy, inlaid gemstones, and magnificent garden. More than just a memorial in the name of a spouse, the Taj Mahal was a declaration of lasting love from Shan Jahan to his departed soulmate.

It was in 1607 that Shah Jahan, grandson of [Akbar the Great](https://www.thoughtco.com/akbar-the-great-of-mughal-india-195495), first met his beloved. At the time, he was not yet the fifth emperor of the [Mughal Empire](https://www.thoughtco.com/the-mughal-empire-in-india-195498). Sixteen-year-old Prince Khurram, as he was then called, flitted around the royal bazaar, flirting with the girls from high-ranking families that staffed the booths.

At one of these booths, Prince Khurram met Arjumand Banu Begum, the 15-year-old young woman whose father was soon to be the prime minister and whose aunt was married to Prince Khurram’s father. Although it was love at first sight, the two were not allowed to marry right away. Prince Khurram first had to marry Kandahari Begum. He later took a third wife as well.

On March 27, 1612, Prince Khurram and his beloved, to whom he gave the name Mumtaz Mahal (“chosen one of the palace”), were married. Mumtaz Mahal was beautiful as well as smart and tender-hearted. The public was enamored with her, in no small part because she cared for the people. She diligently made lists of widows and orphans to ensure that they were given food and money. The couple had 14 children together but only seven lived past infancy. It was the birth of the 14th child that would kill Mumtaz Mahal.

## Destruction of the Taj Mahal

Shah Jahan was wealthy enough to support the Taj Mahal and its mighty maintenance costs, but over the centuries, the Mughal Empire lost its riches and the Taj Mahal fell into ruins.

By the 1800s, the British ousted the Mughals and took over India. The Taj Mahal was dissected for its beauty—the Britch cut gemstones from its walls, stole silver candlesticks and doors, and even tried to sell the white marble overseas. It was Lord Curzon, the British viceroy of India, who put and to this. Rather than looting the Taj Mahal, Curzon worked to restore it.

### **The Taj Mahal Now**

The Taj Mahal has once again become a magnificent place with 2.5 million visitors each year. People can visit during the daytime and watch as the white marble appears to take on different hues throughout the day. Once a month, visitors have the opportunity to make a short visit during a full moon to see how the Taj Mahal seems to glow from the inside out in the moonlight.

The Taj Mahal was placed on the [World Heritage List by UNESCO](https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/) in 1983, but this protection has not guaranteed its safety. It is now at the mercy of pollutants from nearby factories and excessive humidity from the breath of its visitors.

## Sources

* DuTemple, Lesley A. The Taj Mahal. Lerner Publications Company, 2003.
* Harpur, James, and Jennifer Westwood. The Atlas of Legendary Places. 1st ed., Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1989.
* Ingpen, Robert R., and Philip Wilkinson. Encyclopedia of Mysterious Places: The Life and Legends of Ancient Sites Around the World. Metro Books, 2000.

#### **interesting facts about the Taj Mahal**

The Taj Mahal was built by a whopping 22,000 laborers, painters, stonecutters, embroidery artists.

Legend has it that Emperor Shah Jahan intended to build another Taj Mahal in black marble across the river but a war with his sons interrupted these plans.

It intricate work of art and architectural genius took 17 years to complete.

Taj Mahal is a famous Indian landmark and tourist magnet, attracting more than a million tourists every year.

f it was to be built today, Taj Mahal would cost the Emperor about US$100 to make it as beautiful as it is.

he materials that were used to build Taj Mahal were transported to the construction site by a whopping 1,000 elephants.

Many of the precious stones on the mausoleum were ripped off from the walls of the mausoleum by the British army during the Indian rebellion of 1857.

The most recognizable feature is the white dome at the peak of the mausoleum. Often called the 'onion dome', it rises to about 35 meters (115 feet) and is surrounded by four other domes.

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| **Taj Mahal** | |
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| **Location** | [Agra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agra), [Uttar Pradesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uttar_Pradesh), [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) |
| **Coordinates** | [27°10′30″N 78°02′31″E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Taj_Mahal&params=27_10_30_N_78_02_31_E_type:landmark_region:IN-UP)[Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): [27°10′30″N 78°02′31″E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Taj_Mahal&params=27_10_30_N_78_02_31_E_type:landmark_region:IN-UP) |
| **Area** | 17 hectares[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taj_Mahal#cite_note-1) |
| **Height** | 73 m (240 ft) |
| **Built** | 1632–53[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taj_Mahal#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDuTemple200332-2) |
| **Built for** | [Mumtaz Mahal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumtaz_Mahal) |
| **Architect** | [Ustad Ahmad Lahauri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ustad_Ahmad_Lahauri) |
| **Architectural style(s)** | [Mughal architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_architecture) |
| **Visitors** | 6,532,366[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taj_Mahal#cite_note-Visitors2019-3) (in 2019) |
| **Governing body** | Government of India |