

- How might layout features, visuals and uses of language help convince a reader to visit the Taj Mahal?

Taj Mahal

Taj Mahal Guide World Heritage Photos India Guide All Guides

World Heritage Site Pictures: Taj Mahal

< 1 / 5 >



Reflecting Pool — PHOTOGRAPH BY JAN FRITZ GETTY IMAGES

Mogul emperor Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal in Agra, India, as a tribute to his favorite wife, who died in childbirth in 1631. The white marble monument, with its sprawling gardens, took more than 15 years to build.

5

Share

Site: Taj Mahal

 Like 4.1K

 Tweet

 23

 Pin it

 Email

More »

Location: India

Year Designated: 1983

Category: Cultural

Criteria: UNESCO World Heritage Masterpiece of Creative Genius

Reason: The Taj Mahal is an iconic example of Mughal architecture and one of the most well known buildings in the world.

* * *

World Heritage Sites

- Amalfi Coast
- Ancient Thebes
- Angkor
- Central Amazon
- Chichén Itzá
- Easter Island
- Great Barrier Reef
- The Great Wall
- Kremlin and Red Square
- Machu Picchu
- Petra
- Phoenix Islands
- Taj Mahal
- Versailles
- Victoria Falls
- Works of Antoni Gaudí

[See All World Heritage Sites »](#)

Top Picks for Travel

- Best Summer Trips 2016
- South Australia's Adventures of a Lifetime
- Where to Backpack in 2016
- Photos: The Marvel of Winter
- 10 Reasons to Visit Jordan
- Photos: A Mule Packer's Life on the Trail
- Top Places to Visit in 2016
- NEW! National Geographic Journeys
- Request a Nat Geo Trips Catalog

Join Nat Geo Travel's Communities



[Chosen by Our Users >>](#)

15 The Taj Mahal is widely considered one of the most beautiful buildings ever created. The exquisite marble structure in Agra, India, is a mausoleum, an enduring monument to the love of a husband for his favorite wife. It's also an eternal testament to the artistic and scientific accomplishments of a wealthy empire.

20 Shah Jahan, "the King of the World," took control of the Mughal Empire throne in 1628 very much in love with the queen he dubbed Mumtaz Mahal or "Chosen One of the Palace." The poets at Agra's Mughal court said her beauty was such that the moon hid its face in shame before her.

25 The Mughals were at the peak of their power and wealth during Shah Jahan's reign, and India's rich lode of precious gems yielded him much wealth and power. But he was powerless to stop Mumtaz Mahal's death during childbirth in 1631. Legend has it that she bound him with a deathbed promise to build her the most beautiful tomb ever known.

30 Promise or no, Shah Jahan poured his passion and wealth into the creation of just such a monument. It is said that 20 000 stone carvers, masons, and artists from across India and as far as Turkey and Iraq were employed under a team of architects to build the Taj Mahal in the lush gardens on the banks of Agra's Jamuna River. They
35 completed the epic task between 1631 and 1648.

While the arch-and-dome profile of clean white marble has become iconic, other beauties lie in the Taj Mahal's painstaking details: inlaid semiprecious stones* create an enchanting interior space where Shah Jahan came to visit his wife's remains before he was eventually entombed at her side.

40 The building is set within lush gardens, complete with an enormous reflecting pool that regularly does what no human has ever been able to accomplish—duplicate the beauty of the Taj Mahal.

Shah Jahan himself gazed upon that beautiful image until the end of his days—but as a prisoner, not a ruler. His son Aurangzeb seized the Mughal throne and imprisoned his father in Agra's Red Fort (itself a World Heritage site and popular tourist attraction). Whether as consolation or torture, Shah Jahan commanded a view of the Taj Mahal from his window.

45 **How to Get There**

Agra is a major city in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and well accustomed to visitors—some three million people visit the Taj Mahal each year. The city is accessible by bus, train, and (limited) air service and has a wide range of tourist amenities. Access to the Taj Mahal complex is on foot.

When to Visit

50 The Taj Mahal is a year-round attraction and often busy, though new ticketing systems have thinned crowds at peak times. Visitors in search of more solitude might try coming early or late in the day. One time NOT to visit is on Friday, when the Taj Mahal is closed.

How to Visit

55 The mausoleum's interior is a striking (if smallish) space that begs some leisurely exploration. But a good part of any visit to the Taj Mahal will be spent looking at the building from the outside. The mausoleum's clean white marble shifts in color and tone to match the mood of the world outside—a transformation so enchanting that it's worth lingering to gaze at the building in different conditions, such as the rosy glow of dawn or the magical light of a full moon.

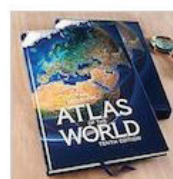
2016 National Geographic Travel Photographer of the Year Contest



Enter Today!

Show us your best photos of nature, cities, and people from your travels around the world.

Shop National Geographic



National Geographic Atlas of the World, 10th Edition - Hardcover
\$169.95

Travel Wallet
\$45.00

National Geographic "My World" Personalized Map
\$169.95

"My Town" Custom Map Puzzle
\$39.95

Geno 2.0 - Genographic Project Participation and DNA Ancestry Kit
\$199.95

[Shop Now »](#)

Adapted from the Taj Mahal Guide on the National Geographic Traveler (World Heritage Sites) website (2016)

* semiprecious stones: lesser valued gems