

Exploring the Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal is an extravagant tomb complex built in 1632. It is located on the south bank of the Yamuna River in Agra, India. In 2007, the Taj Mahal was named one of the seven wonders of the modern world.



The Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan commissioned for the Taj Mahal to be built to house the remains of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Mumtaz died while giving birth to the couple's 14th child and Shah was so heartbroken he immediately began planning the most elaborate tomb he could make for her.



The central building is made of white marble mined from Northern India. The marble is inlaid with 28 types of precious and semi precious jewels such as jade and crystals from China, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan and sapphires from Sri Lanka. These glimmer when you shine a torch against them.

The Taj Mahal's design was influenced by Persian, Indian and Islamic principles. This focused on geometric patterns and symmetry, which the gardens and reflective pool demonstrates beautifully. Either side of the main building are buildings made from red sandstone, as well as gates and fences that border three sides of the complex.

The Taj Mahal took 12 years, 20 000 workers and 1000 elephants to build. Its cost at the time is estimated to be 32 million rupees, which translates to over a trillion Australian dollars today.

Shah Jahan announced plans for a second black Taj Mahal to mirror the white one and house his remains when he died. As the first Taj Mahal had bankrupted his empire, the people revolted and he was arrested. He spent the rest of his life in Agra's red fort, in a cell that looked out to the building that got him in so much trouble. When he died, he was buried beside Mumtaz under the white Taj Mahal.

