

Ahmedabad Tourist Attraction

Jama Masjid	Ahmed Shah Tombs	Bhadra Fort & Darwaja	Sidi Saiyad Mosque
Hathesing Temple	Raj Babri Mosque	Sidi Bashir Mosque	Jhulta Minar
Ahmed Shah Mosque	Rani Sipri Mosque	Rani Rupmati Mosque	Kankaria Lake
Calico Musuem	Sabarmati Ashram	Adalaj Vav	Sarkhej Roza

Jama Masjid in Ahmedabad City



Located in the centre of the old city, this congregational mosque was built by Sultan Ahmed Shah in 1423. Built in yellow sandstone, it combines the best of Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture, standing on 260 pillars supporting 15 domes at varying elevations. It is described as the most beautiful mosque in India. The vast paved courtyard is a rectangle nearly seventy-five metres by sixty-six metres.

The whole of the western chamber is a big hall, standing on 260 pillars all carved from Hindu and Jain traditions. The central courtyard is accessible from the East, though there are three ways on the other side too. The Eastern side entrance leads to another enclosure containing the mausoleum of Sultan Ahmed Shah. Thus it is an architectural triumph. Near the Eastern entrance stands the 'roja' or the tomb of the Sultan Ahmed Shah, which was homage to the Sultan by his son Mohammed Shah II. The tomb houses the graves of three great rulers of Gujarat - Ahmed Shah I, his son, Mohammed Shah and his grandson, Qutub-Ud-Din Ahmed Shah II. After a passage of 100 years, a nobleman by the name - Farhatul Maluk repaired the tomb, who also got the walls of the mosque engraved. Today after centuries of heat and rough weather, the Masjid stands unchallenged serving as a prayer place for numerous Muslims residing in the city. Among the most popular sights of the city of Ahmedabad is the Jama Masjid, boasting of a well-proportioned architecture. It took 13 years to complete this fine example of Indo-Saracenic architecture of the Ahmed Shahi style. A white marble paved courtyard, with a pool in the middle provides a perfect pause between the raucous streets outside, and the dignity of the main sanctuary within. Nearby the Masjid are Pols and the Teen Darwaza (The Three Gates). Sultan Ahmed Shah built these arched gateways, which were meant as the royal entrance to the Maidan Shah or Royal Square. From here the Sultans used to watch the processions from the palace to the Jama Masjid. It is located in the centre of the old city.

The splendid mosque built by Muhammad Ali Shah in the typical Mughal style with two minarets and three domes, lies to the west of the Hussainabad Imambara and is entirely free from pseudo Italian art then in vogue in Lucknow. Mohammad Ali Shah started the construction of this splendid mosque in 1840 but his wife Begum Malika Jahan finally completed it after his death. It is the country's largest mosque, built in 1656, where thousands of Muslims offer prayers. It lies opposite the Red Fort and is surrounded by a large number of shops, which deal in a variety of goods. The great mosque of Old Delhi is both the largest in India and the final architectural extravagance of Shah Jahan with a courtyard capable of holding 25,000 devotees. This monument was built between 1644 and 1658 by five thousand artisans. Having three gateways, four angle towers and two minarets standing 40m high, it is constructed of alternating vertical strips of red sandstone and white marble. Originally called

the Masjid-i-Jahanuma, or mosque commanding view of the world, this magnificent structure stands on the Bho Jhala, one of the two hills of the old Moghul capital city of Shahjahanabad. Broad flights of steps lead up to the imposing gateways in the north and the south. The main eastern entrance, probably used by the emperors, remains closed on most days of the week. The main prayer hall on the west side, houses a niche in a wall that shelters the prayer leader. Worshippers use this hall on most days but on Fridays and other holy days, the courtyard is full of devotees offering namaaz. Near the north gate of the mosque stands a cupboard containing a collection of Muhammad's relics - Korans written on deerskin, a red beard-hair of the prophet, his sandals and his footprint, embedded in a marble slab. Travelers arriving barelegged can hire robes at the northern gate. Old Delhi, with the Jama Masjid is quite an experience for those willing to brave the crowds.



Ahmed Shah Tombs in Ahmedabad City

The tomb of Ahmed Shah, with its perforated stone windows, stands just outside the east gate of the Jama Masjid. His son and grandson, who did not long survive him, also have their cenotaphs in this tomb. Women are not allowed into the central chamber. Across the street on a raised platform is the tomb of his queens - it's now really a market and in very poor shape compared to Ahmed Shah's tomb.



Bhadra Fort & Darwaja in Ahmedabad City



Bhadra Fort was built by the city's founder, Ahmed Shah, in 1411 and later named after the goddess Bhadra, an incarnation of Kali. There were royal palaces and a garden inside the fort. It now houses government offices. To the east of the fort stands the triple gateway or Teen Darwaja, from which sultans used to watch processions from the palace to the Jama Masjid. The royal entrance is triple arched and richly carved.



Sidi Saiyad Mosque in Ahmedabad City

This elegant mosque is noted for its twin windows of pierced stone, worked in style of a tree with palm leaves and curving tendrils. A superb and peerless example of delicate carving that transforms stone into filigree. It was constructed by Sidi Saiyad, a slave of Ahmed Shah, and has beautiful carved stone windows depicting the intricate intertwining of the branches of a tree. Wooden models of these windows, a fine example of Indo-Sarcenic architecture are kept in the New York and Kensington museums.





Hathesing Temple in Ahmedabad City



A rich Jain merchant built this temple outside Delhi Gate in 1850. It is built of pure white marble and profusely decorated with rich carvings, dedicated to Dharmnath, the 15th Jina or Jain apostle.

Embellished with intricate carvings and built in white marble, the Hatheesing Jain temple is one of the best ornate Jain temple in Ahmedabad.

This temple was built in the nineteenth century by a rich Jain merchant. This profusely decorated temple is dedicated to 15th Jain tirthankar or Jain Apostle- Dharmnath. Built outside Delhi Gate by Sheth Hatheesing, this is the best known of Ahmedabad's many ornate Jain Temples. Built of pure white marble, it has a paved courtyard surrounded by an imposing row of cloisters containing 52 shrines, each with an image of a tirthankara, profusely decorated with rich carvings, one containing the marble image of the 15th tirthankar. The temple is a two-storied structure with elaborate porches on three sides and front porch crowned by a large dome. It was designed by Premchand Salat and is dedicated to Dharmnath, the fifteenth Jina or Jain apostle. It was built at a cost of Rs 10 Lakhs, a sum unimaginable in those days. Built outside Ahmedabads' Delhi Gate.



Raj Babri Mosque in Ahmedabad City

The Raj Babri Mosque, south-east of the railway in the suburb of Gomtipur, also has shaking minarets. The Roza of Sarkhej, in a suburb of Ahmedabad, contains the tomb of the Sultan Mahmud Begado. The adjoining tomb of Ahmed Khattu Gang Baksh, a Muslim saint, who helped Ahmed Shah to build the city of Ahmedabad, has a great central dome and a shrine with finely carved brass lattice work.

The Roza of Shah Alam is another monument built in memory of the equally important Muslim saint, Shah Alam. The Roza is supposed to have been built by the brother of the Moghul empress, Noor Jahan, the consort of Jahangir. The complex of the Roza is said to contain the Footprints of the Prohpet, in marble.



Sidi Bashir Mosque in Ahmedabad City



One of the most popular monuments in Ahemdabad is the Sidi Bashirs mosque, out side the Sarangpur gate, known as the mosque with shaking minarets or Jhulta minars. Each minaret of the mosque has three storeys, girdled by carved stone balconies, balanced and delicate. The style is a complete innovation. The master craftsmen of the period managed to design them in such a way that they respond to vibration is communicated to the other via a stone bridge joining both .The massive earth quake of 2001 had an impact on the monument.

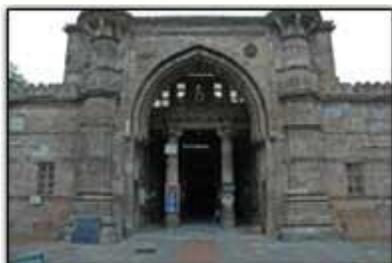


Jhulta Minar in Ahmedabad City

This is quite an unusual structure. Jhulta Minara or swaying minarets are a part of the mosque of Siddi Bashir and can be swayed by applying a little force at the topmost arch. One of the minarets was partly demolished by an Englishman in his endeavours to unravel the mystery of the swaying minarets. The mosque was obviously built by master craftsmen and the crucial mechanism that causes the vibration is still a mystery. The other interesting fact here is that these minars stand the test of the rumbling trains that pass not very far away from them.



Ahmed Shah Mosque in Ahmedabad City

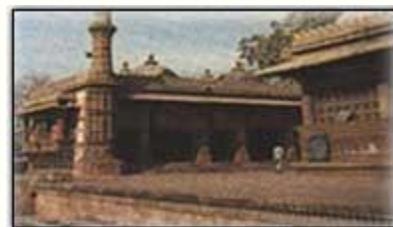


Dating from 1414, this was one of the earliest mosques in the city and was probably built on the site of a Hindu temple, using parts of that temple in its construction. It is to the south-west of the Bhadra Fort. The front of the mosque is now a garden.



Rani Sipri Mosque in Ahmedabad City

A little south-east of the centre this small mosque was built in 1514 and is also known as the Masjid-e-Nagira or 'jewel of a mosque' due to its extremely graceful and well executed design. Its slender, delicate minarets are again a blend of Hindu and Islamic styles. The mosque is said to have been built by a wife of Sultan Mehmood Begada after he executed their son for some minor misdemeanour.



Rani Rupmati Mosque in Ahmedabad City



Named after the Hindu wife of Sultan Mehmed Beghara, this mosque was built between 1430 to 1440 A. D. having three domes supported by pillars with the central dome slightly elevated to allow natural light into the mosque. The tomb of Rani Rupmati is next to it. Rani Rupmati Masjid named for the princess of Dhar who married the Sultan of Ahmedabad, is another fine example of the Indo-Sarcenic blended style.

A high central arch, 3 imposing domes, slim minarets, carved galleries and an exquisite

mihrab are the high points. Its three domes are linked together by a flat roof. However, the mosque and tomb of Rani Sipri at Astodia surpasses it for its planning and structural arrangement.

Popularly known as Masjid-e-Nagina, this mosque is the most exquisite gem of Ahmedabad. It also serves as a stylistic interlude between Achut Kuki's and Rani Sipri's mosque. The side entrances in the mosque open out in balcony windows on either side and end in a lattice window. The domes are supported with rows of 12 pillars each where as the smaller domes at the front and the rear of the bigger domes as well as the four corners of the mosque rise in gentle crescents that lend a gentility to the mosque. The central section is an elevated level that rises above the small flanks and provides for a pierced clerestory, which carries the dome above. Note how the dome is raised to allow light in around the base but cut out the glare of the sun.

Nearby are the superbly proportioned 1465 AD mosque of Muhafiz Khan, splendidly carved with a 3 arch façade and minarets, the Saiyad Usman mausoleum - said to have started a trend for corner minarets in 1460s and the 16th century mosque of Hasan Muhammad Chisti having some of the finest jali-work trceries in India.



Kankaria Lake in Ahmedabad City

Kankaria Lake is another tourist attraction of Ahmedabad. The Kankaria Lake is a circular lake constructed in AD 1451 by Sultan Qutub-ud-din. Amongst the places to be visited in the lake is the island garden at its centre with a summer palace known as Nagina Wadi. Lush green parks, an aquarium, a boat club, a natural historical museum, and a zoo surrounding the park make the lake a place to be seen in Ahmedabad. The 'Bal Vatika' or the children's park makes it a great picnic spot and attracts tourists and localities from Ahmedabad alike.



Calico Musuem in Ahmedabad City



Ahmedabad houses one of the finest textile museums in the world in one of Gujarat's famous carved wooden havelis. The museum displays a magnificent collection of rare textiles dating back to the 17th century. There is also an excellent reference library on textiles. Located in the Sarabhai Foundation, in Shahibagh the Calico Museum of Textiles, widely regarded as one of the finest textile museums in the world was constructed in 1949 AD.

It has the finest collection of not just textiles and clothes but also furniture, temple artifacts and crafts in the country. It has no less than five centuries of the finest fabrics spun, woven, printed and painted in different parts of India. It has a collection of marble, sandstone and bronze icons and busts split in two thematic sections- gallery for religious textiles and historical textiles An excellent reference library on textiles is found here. There are colourful embroidered wall hangings depicting Krishna legends hanging from the second floor right to the ground level. Cloth decorated with tie- dye, glinting mirror work, screen prints, block

prints and intricate embroidery are also seen. There is an embroidered tent and the robes of Shah Jahan, along with elaborate carpets and plump cushions that once furnished Muslim palaces.

The Jain section features statues housed in a replica Haveli Temple, along with centuries-old manuscripts and 'mandalas' painted on palm leaves.

Among exhibits are Kashmiri shawls, Kullu embroidery, glittering silk brocades from Varanasi, folk art from the Punjab and masks and large wooden temple cars (processional vehicles) from Tamil Nadu. Tribal crafts such as, Kachchhi silk and cotton 'mashru' weaving are displayed in spectacular wooden 'havelis' from Patna and Siddhpur. There are clear and labelled models and diagrams explaining the weaving, dyeing and embroidery processes. The collection also includes some of the best examples of the Patola saris woven in Patan as well as the extravagant Zari work that gilds saris in heavy gold stitching which weigh almost nine kilos.



Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad City

The Gandhi Ashram situated alongside the Sabarmati River, was the nerve center for the Indian Freedom movement. The beautiful ashram complex with its shady trees offers a refuge from the loud streets of the city. There is a museum inside the Ashram complex. During the lifetime of Mahatma Gandhi it was known as Satyagraha Ashram. After Gandhiji's return from South Africa, he decided to settle in Ahmedabad. It was for four reasons that he selected this place - In his own words "being a Gujarati, I'll serve my country best through the use of Gujarati language.



As Ahmedabad was the centre of handloom in early days, the work of spinning wheel (charkha) could be done in a better way, I believed.

Being the capital of Gujarat its wealthy persons will also make larger contribution, I hoped." And in none of this he was disappointed during his sixteen years stay in Ahmedabad. His first ashram was set up at Kochrab near Paldi of the present day Ahmedabad, which was a bungalow of his barrister friend Jivanlal Desai. This place had to be abandoned after two years in the wake of a plague epidemic. The choice now fell on a site on the bank of Sabarmati River, not far from saint Dadheechi's temple and in the vicinity of a Prison House. Laying down the objective of the Ashram, Gandhiji wrote: "To take training for the national service which is not contrary to universal well being and constantly endeavouring for such national service is the aim of this Ashram." Few dwelling units were built gradually and the Ashram soon started humming with activities. The units were simple in style but very functional. Gandhiji first stayed in the Vanatshala-a place where handlooms were installed-but later on moved to 'Hridaykunj', so named by Kakasaheb kalelker as it was the pulse of the Ashram. This Spartan accommodation was to witness Gandhiji's evolution from Mohandas to Mahatma, who rose to be the Father of the Nation.

The first struggle that he spearheaded from Sabarmati Ashram was that of textile mill workers. On the third day of his fast the mill-owners came to terms and the establishment of Textile labour Association was the far-reaching consequence of this encounter. This struggle also brought Vallabhbai Patel, Shankerlal Banker and Ansuyaben Sarabhai as close associates of Gandhiji. What distinguished Gandhiji's struggle was its penetration into social spheres of

life. His activities were not merely confined to political awakening but also targeted to social rejuvenation. His charkha and untouchability abolition campaign brought the majority of the deprived masses of India into the national mainstream. After his release from jail, Gandhiji returned to the Sabarmati Ashram where he was soon occupied with his constructive activities. Publishing of his autobiography "My Experiments with Truth" with the help of Mahadevbhai and Miraben unravelled the strength of Bapu's character. During the same time he also performed the Opening Ceremony of Gujarat Vidyapith - "an act of a rishi" in his words. The most glorious chapter of Sabarmati Ashram is the way in which he bid farewell to it. It galvanised the country into hitherto unknown sense of unity and national spirit. The moment arrived when the genesis of salt duties was unearthed. Bapu gave a call to break the Salt law and embarked on a 240-mile march with seventy-nine followers. On 12th March 1930 Bapu commenced on this trail setting nation ablaze with the spirit of defiance.

Mahatma Gandhi fondly known as Bapu lived here from 1917 until 1930. It was a human laboratory where the Mahatma could test his moral and spiritual hypotheses. The Ashram at Sabarmati displays the Mahatma's letters and other possessions and collection of photographs of his years of India's freedom struggle. It is a peaceful, serene stretch on the banks of the Sabarmati river which is a national monument today, and it is here that one gets a glimpse into the simplicity of the great man. It was from here that the Mahatma and his band of followers led various Satyagrahas, the most notable being the historic Dandi March – a journey that ultimately culminated in the ending of the British rule. The light and sound show in the evening is an added attraction for visitors to this place. It is located at the river side of the Sabarmati river, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.



Adalaj Vav in Ahmedabad City



About 19 kms north of Ahmedabad this stepwell is an architectural wonder built by Queen Rudabai and is certainly one of the finest monuments of Gujarat. It is a seven-storied structure in the form of a well with chambers one behind the other. The 'Vavs' or stepped wells of Gujarat were used as meeting and resting-places during summer since their cool interiors offered unbelievable respite from the scorching sun outside.

In the summer people warmed themselves on the spacious sunny corridors while wide verandahs offered shelter during the rains. Adalaj is a village to the north of Ahmedabad.

The 'Vav' (step-well) at Adalaj derives its name from the lady patron, Ruda, wife of the Vaghela chief, Virsinh. There is an inscription in Sanskrit, which gives the entire history with exact dates. Stepwell perhaps is a unique feature of Gujarat, which speaks of the history, culture, and architecture. It was also considered to be a religious obligation. Kings, rulers, umraos and the rich people of Gujarat spent huge money for constructing these. These step wells used to be frequented by travellers and caravans as stopovers along their trade routes. A unique characteristic of step wells was that they not only conserved water but were also cool chambers where one could rest during hot summer months. In times of drought and scarcity these wells were of great use to common man.

The 'Vav', laid out in the north-south direction, the stepwell with the well in the north and the entrance in the south, has a total length of 75.3 metres. It is the only major monument of its kind, having three entrance stairs leading to the stepped corridor. The stepwell has five

storeys and three gates to enter in. It is full of artistic sculptures. The platform rests on 16 pillars, eight on the corners, and two in front of each main side. Four built-in shrines, with doors, windows and balconies, mark the four corners of the platform. The stepped corridor begins from this square platform. The corridor is entirely surrounded by a one-metre high parapet wall with a rounded topping. It descends with four pavilion towers for five storeys. The walls of the 'Vav' are veritable showcases of sculptures and ornamentation.

The stepwell at Adalaj has been preserved by the archaeological department and developed into as a tourist spot. It provides a cool and secluded retreat during the hot summer months. The construction of a stepwell reflected the artistic sense of its promoter. There are hundreds of stepwells in Gujarat, each being unique in its construction. Most of them are simple. The prime purpose behind them could be to serve the people. These step wells attract lots of tourists every year. The carvings, construction and the architecture amaze many experts, since it was built during those days when sophisticated and meticulous engineering techniques had not developed upto the recent standards.



Sarkhej Roza in Ahmedabad City

The Sarkhej Roza is an graceful architectural creation amazing for the use of pierced stone trellises and complete absence of arches. Sarkhej Roza, the tombs of Saint Ahmed Khattu Baksh and that of Emperor Mehmud Shah Beguda and his queen. The diplomatic atmosphere makes it an ideal retreat. Sarkhej (about 10 kms. southwest of Ahmedabad) is noted for its stylish group of buildings, including the Mausoleum of Azam and Mu'assam, who were responsible for Sarkhej's architecture.



The architecture here is attractive because the style is almost wholly Hindu, with little of the Saracenic pressure so evident in Ahmedabad. As you go into Sarkhej, you pass the Mausoleum of Mahmud Begara and, beside the tank and connected to his tomb, that of his queen, Rajabai. Also by the tank is the Tomb of Ahmad Khattu Ganj Buksh, a renewed Muslim saint and spiritual adviser to Ahmed Shah. He was the revered saint whose blessings were invoked while origin Ahmedabad. The palace, with pavilions and a harem, is also around the tank.

The Roza of Sarkhej is very well-known. The architecture of the Roza is so attractive and the history of Roza is related with Ahmedabad. The main and big roza of Saint Ahmed Khatu Ganjbux is in the middle of the complex. There are attractive carvings on the walls and tombs. Traceries have been carved out in marble stones. The sunlight reflections create beautiful pictures. The buildings are remarkable for the complete absence of arches and the use of pierced stone trellises.