



travel *icon*

THE TAJ MAHAL

THE TAJ MAHAL, IN AGRA, is one of the most iconic buildings in the world and certainly the most famous in India, receiving between two and three million visitors each year. It is widely regarded as the finest example of Mughal architecture, which is a blend of Persian, Indian and Islamic styles.

The inspiration for the Taj Mahal came when Emperor Shah Jahan's third wife, Mumtaz Mahal, died while giving birth to their fourteenth child. He was completely grief-stricken and decided to build the monument in her honour. It took over 20 years to complete with thousands of artisans

and craftsmen working on the construction day and night. Shah Jahan entrusted the project to a board of architects who were under imperial supervision. Legend has it that he also planned to build a black replica of the Taj on the opposite bank of the Yamuna River in which he wished to be buried himself. This long established story originates from the fanciful writings of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, a European traveller who visited Agra in 1665, and while there is no definitive evidence, there are some ruins of blackened marble that seem to support his claim. True or not, it is believed that Shah Jahan was overthrown by his son Aurangzeb before it could be built.

