

DELHI

a map made by Zostel
for young travellers
FREE MAP · DELHI



LIVE IT. NOW

ZOSTEL



Namaste,
Dilli!

Namaste, Dilli! We're the Delhi Zobus, and our city is seven cities deep. Lal Kot's walls lie under the Qutub Minar; the Tughlaqs left forts, the Lodis left domes in a garden full of morning walkers, and Humayun got the subcontinent's first garden tomb. Then Shah Jahan walked in a city: the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid and Chandni Chowk, where a temple, a Jain temple with a bird hospital, a gurudwara, a church and a mosque share one street. Lutyens added New Delhi's arches and white circles. Eat parathas in their own lane, count Agradas ki Baoli's hundred-odd steps, ride the metro everywhere, and keep Mondays for the gardens: the Red Fort takes the day off.



Stay with us in Delhi

One Zostel, on Ara Kashan Road, opposite New Delhi railway station on the Paharganj side.

Zostel Delhi

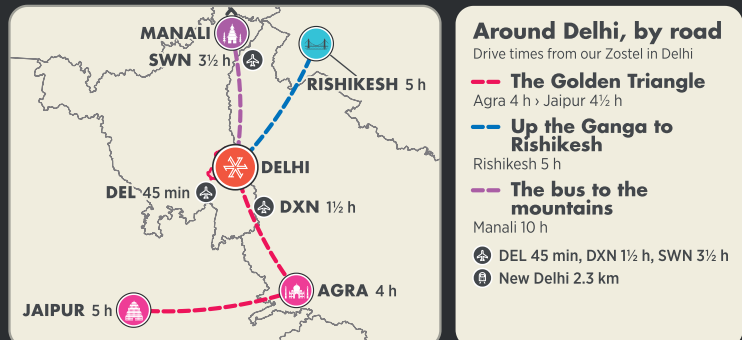
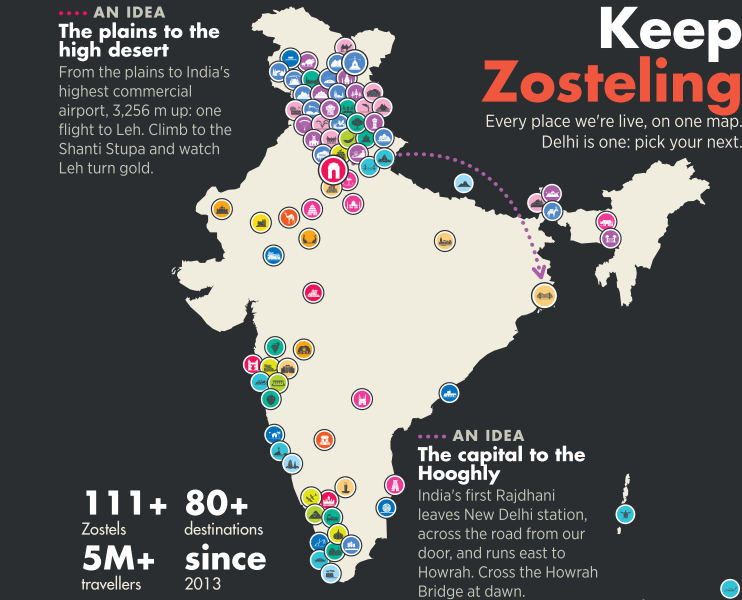
A backpacker base for Old Delhi across from New Delhi station: common areas, dorms (one female-only), private rooms, a cafe. The Airport Express starts at New Delhi metro, about a kilometre away.

Maps: © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL), data fetched 2026-10-13 (UTC). Terrain: Terrain Tiles on AWS (Mapzen/Tilezen), from SRTM courtesy of NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey. Walk lines routed by FOSSGIS OSRM on OpenStreetMap. Drawings: the Zostel brand's own. Things change: check the day's timings at the gate.

Practical tips

The metro

Colour-coded lines go almost everywhere: the Yellow Line runs from New Delhi to Chandni Chowk, Chawri Bazar, INA for Dilli Haat and on to the Qutub Minar; the Airport Express to the airport. The first coach of every train is for women only, and men in it are fined.



India and its states: DataMeet (CC BY 4.0), the Survey of India outline. Roads, airports, station: © OpenStreetMap contributors; drive times by FOSSGIS OSRM, scaled to Zostel's own published times (2026-10). Pins nudged apart where they crowd; edge pins point the way. Flights and trains change: check before you plan.

Autos, e-rickshaws, cycle-rickshaws

The green-and-yellow autos run on CNG and almost never on the meter: agree the fare before you get in, use a police-run pre-paid booth, or book one on an app. E-rickshaws charge a small fixed fare per seat; confirm it before you board. In Old Delhi's lanes, cycle-rickshaws do the short hops: agree that fare too.

Touts at the station, plainly

At New Delhi station, someone will tell you that you need a pass for the platform, or that the ticket office for foreigners is across the road. Neither is true. Never follow a stranger to an office: book and change trains on the railways' official app or at the station's own counters, and ask at the enquiry desk or a policeman in khaki.

Heat, then the winter air

April and May are fierce, up to 45 °C: carry water, cover up, and see the monuments early or late. The monsoon arrives at the end of June. From October to December the air is often very poor: check the day's air quality on the CPCB's Sameer app, and wear a good mask on the bad days.

Every number is a tip on the map overload, in the colour of its kind: ● Seven Cities Deep ● Gardens and Ruins ● Paranthas, Chaat, Kebabs ● Silver, Spice, Tinselt ● Dilwale ki Dilli ● Pure Jugad. A drawing beside a line shows what you will find there: 🏰 🍛 🍷 🍷 🍷

Dress, heads and shoes

Cover shoulders and legs at the Jama Masjid, and take off your shoes. At Bangla Sahib and Sis Gani, cover your head too: scarves are lent and shoes are kept for free. At the Nizamuddin dargah, women traditionally stay out of the inner sanctum. Ask before you photograph anyone at prayer.

Crowds and pockets

Chandni Chowk, the Meena Bazaar by the Jama Masjid and the rush-hour metro are where pockets get picked: bag in front, phone away, and only a few hours' cash on you. After dark, women travellers may prefer an app cab to a street pickup.

Water and the belly

Drink bottled or filtered water, and fill up at our water dispenser. Eat where it's busy and the food is cooked hot in front of you: the parathas and jalebis come straight out of the oil.

Mondays and Sundays

The Red Fort and the Lotus Temple close on Mondays. Many markets close on Sundays; on Sundays the old book bazaar opens instead, at Mahila Haat by Delhi Gate. Check the day's timings at the gate.



5 minutes of history

1052 Lal Kot, the first walls

Anangpal Tomar builds the citadel of Lal Kot. The Chauhans take it in 1180 and call it Qila Rai Pithora: the first of the seven cities of Delhi still on the ground.

1199 The Qutub Minar rises

Qutub-ud-Din Aibak starts a tower inside Lal Kot's walls; Iltutmish adds three storeys by about 1220. Five storeys of red and grey sandstone, 72.5 m tall, a World Heritage Site since 1993.

1321 The Tughlaqs build big

Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq raises Tughlaqabad's walls in 1321; it is abandoned by 1327. In 1354 Firoz Shah Tughlaq builds Firozabad by the Yamuna and has an Ashokan pillar brought in on a 42-wheeled cart.

1451 The Lodis' domes

The Lodi sultans rule Delhi from 1451 to 1526. Their domed tombs, with the Sayyids' before them, still stand in what is now Lodhi Garden, where the city takes its morning walk.

1538 Purana Qila

Humayun begins the citadel of Dinpanah; Sher Shah Suri, who drives him out, finishes it, his mosque dated 1541. Back on the throne, Humayun dies in 1556 after a fall on the stairs of his library there.

1565 A tomb in a garden

Bega Begum builds Humayun's Tomb between 1565 and 1572, to Persian architects' designs: the subcontinent's first garden tomb, and a World Heritage Site since 1993.

1639 Shahjahanabad

Shah Jahan begins the Red Fort, finished on 6 April 1648, inside a walled city of 14 gates. His daughter Jahanara lays out Chandni Chowk in 1650; the Jama Masjid is finished in 1656.

1857 The rising

On 11 May the rebels of 1857 reach Delhi and hold it; the British besiege the city from 8 June and retake it on 21 September. The Town Hall on Chandni Chowk follows in 1863.

1911 A new capital

At the Delhi Durbar on 12 December 1911, George V announces that the capital will move from Calcutta to Delhi. Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker design a new city beside the old.

1931 New Delhi opens

New Delhi is inaugurated on 13 February 1931, a day after India Gate is unveiled; Connaught Place's colonnaded circles, modelled on Bath's Royal Crescent, are finished by 1933.

1947 The refugees' city

At Partition, around five hundred thousand Hindu and Sikh refugees, mainly from West Punjab, come to Delhi. They build Lajpat Nagar, Patel Nagar and Rajinder Nagar, and bring Punjab's tandoori to the city's tables.

1982 The Asiad

Delhi hosts the Asian Games from 19 November to 4 December, with Appu the elephant as mascot. Doordarshan starts colour broadcasts for them, and colour television arrives in Indian homes.

2002 The metro

The Delhi Metro's first stretch, Shahdara to Tis Hazari, opens in December 2002. It is now one of the largest in the world, colour-coded line by line, and the first rail system to earn colour credits.

2002 Running on gas

After a Supreme Court order of 1998, Delhi's buses, taxis and autos switch to CNG between 2001 and 2002. The DTC still runs one of the world's largest CNG bus fleets, now adding electric buses.

Talk like a local

Namaste

Hello, with folded hands nuh-mus-tay

Sat Sri Akal

The Sikh hello, at the gurudwaras sut shree aa-kah!

Dilli

Delhi, as Delhi says it dil-lee

Bhaiya

Brother; any driver, any shopkeeper bhai-yaa

Yaar

Friend, mate, bro yaar

Jugaad

A clever fix with whatever's at hand joo-gaad

Phod diya

You nailed it phod dee-yaa

Chalo

Let's go, come on chuh-lo

Pet phat gaya

I'm so full I'll burst pate phut gay-ya

Gali

A lane, as in Paranthi Wali Gali ghul-lee

Chowk

A square; Chandni Chowk is the moonlit one chowk

Baoli

A stepwell baah-oh-lee



Ram laddoo (winter). Not a sweet: fried moong dal fritters under grated radish, green chutney and lemon.

Gajar ka halwa (winter). Grated winter carrots slow-cooked in milk with sugar and ghee.

Momos and laphing. Laphing dumplings, and laphing, cold, spicy mung-bean noodles, in the Tibetan colony at Majnu ka Tilla.

Delhi eats by the season

9 Winter: daulat ki chaat. Milk whipped into a sweet foam, sold off trays in the old city's lanes; gone with the warm days after Holi.

Winter: ram laddoo. Moong dal fritters under grated radish and green chutney.

Winter: jalebi and hot milk. Hot jalebis with a clay cup of hot milk at Dariba's corner.

Winter: chikki and gajak. Winter's brittles, at Meerut Wale in Dariba Kalan and off carts in the lanes.

Summer: kufli. Kufli began as a summer trade; in Sitaram Bazar it comes frozen inside a mango.

14 Summer: rabri falooda. Cold rabri over falooda noodles at Fatehpuri.

58 Summer: laphing. Cold, spicy Tibetan noodles, traditionally a summer food, at Majnu ka Tilla.

1947, on a plate: Partition's food

23 Tandoori and butter chicken. Men who had cooked at Peshawar's Moti Mahal opened one in Daryaganj in 1947; Delhi fell for its tandoori chicken, then its butter chicken.

Chole bhature. Sita Ram and his son Diwan Chand, from West Punjab, sold it off a bicycle; Peshori Lal Lamba, from Lahore, served it at Kwaality in Connaught Place. Both stories are told.

14 Rabri falooda. A sweet-maker from Lyaipur, at Fatehpuri.

Khan Market. Built in 1951 for refugees, many from the North-West Frontier Province.

Lajpat Nagar and Karol Bagh. Colonies and markets of families from West Punjab and Sindh, many of them traders.

10 Nai Sarak's books. Lahore's publishers and booksellers set up here after Partition.

Got a day to spare?

56 The Qutub and Mehrauli. The minaret, its iron pillar, and next door Mehrauli's park of over a hundred monuments, from Jamal Kamali to Rajon ki Baoli. Take the Yellow Line south.

Tughlaqabad. The Tughlaqs' giant ruined fort, built in 1321 and empty by 1327, with Ghiyath al-Din's tomb across its causeway.

Sultanpur National Park. A small lake in Haryana where more than a hundred kinds of migrant birds spend the winter, flamingos among them. Go between the first cold and the spring.

Agra. 210 km away, the Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort. Zostel Agra is there for the night.

Jaipur. 268 km away, the Pink City: the other corner of the Golden Triangle, with its own Zostels.

Rishikesh. About six hours north on the Ganga: yoga, rafting, Zostel Rishikesh.

Vrindavan. About two hours away by road: Krishna's town of temples and pedas.

Festivals worth timing a trip for

46 Basant (January or February). The dargah turns yellow for Basant Panchami: the story goes that Amir Khusrau dressed in yellow to make his saint smile.

Holi (March). Colours in every colony, the old city's lanes loudest. Wear clothes you can lose.

24 Eid. Thousands pray at the Jama Masjid, and the lanes round it and Chandni Chowk fill with shoppers in the days before. It comes about eleven days earlier each year.

28 Independence Day kites (August). Old Delhi takes to its terraces with paper kites on 15 August, bought in Lal Kuan's kite market.

Phool Walon ki Sair (September). Three days of the florists' procession in Mehrauli, carrying great fans of flowers to the Yogmaya temple and to Bakhtiyar Kak's dargah: one festival, two shrines, since the 1910s.

Durga Puja (September or October). Bengali Delhi's great week at Chittaranjan Park, built for families from East Pakistan: pandal after pandal, and the fish market's food stalls.

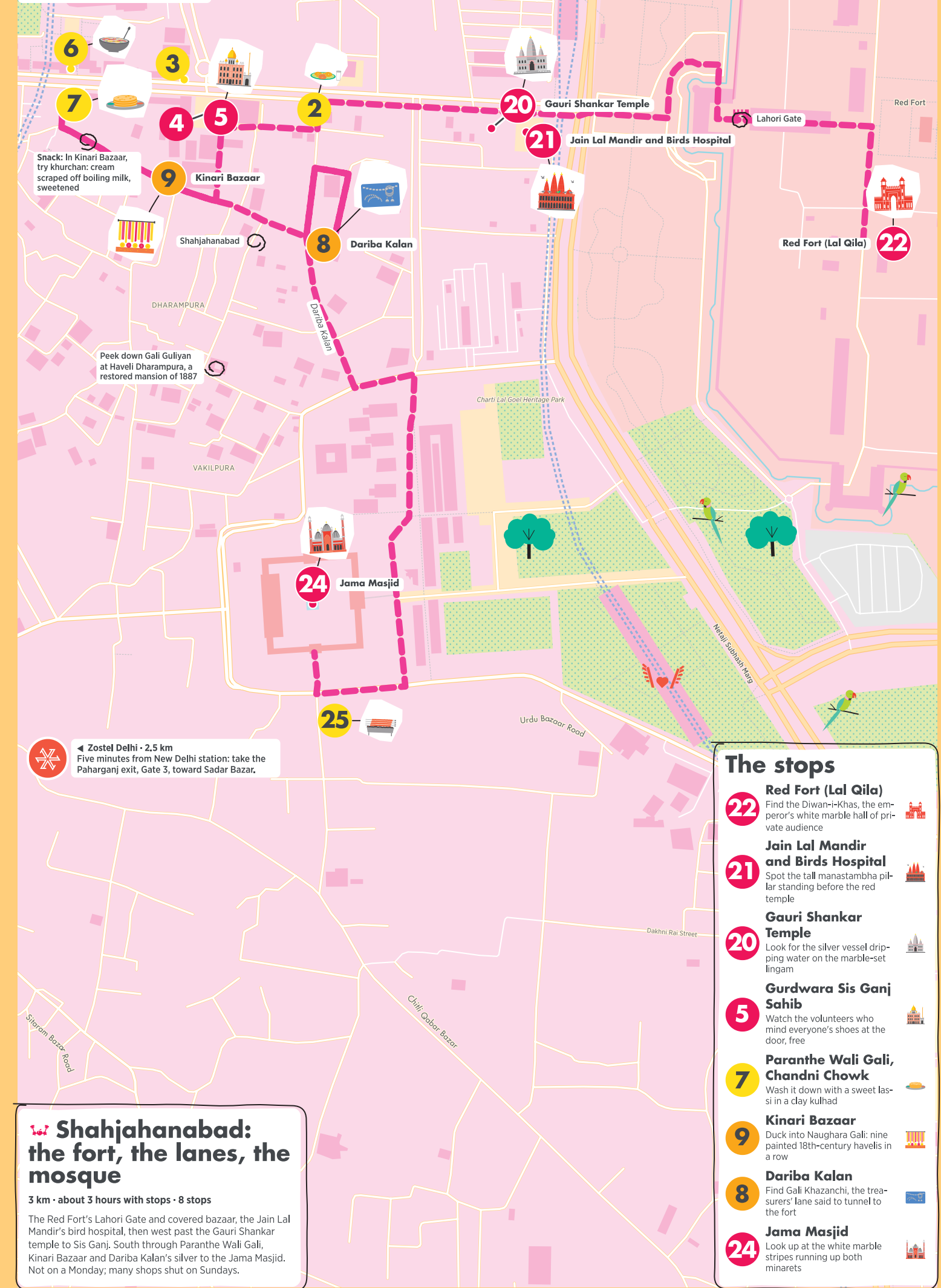
Diwali (October or November). Lamps on every balcony and sweets on every counter. The air turns heavy after: check it.

39 Gurrupar (November). Guru Nanak's birthday: dawn processions singing through the streets, and langar for all at the gurudwaras.

World Book Fair (January). Publishers from dozens of countries fill Bharat Mandapam; in 2026 the fair ran nine days, free to enter.

44 Jahan-e-Khusrau (February or March). A Sufi music festival named for Amir Khusrau, held lately among Sunder Nursery's tombs.

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Eat like you're from Delhi

Delhi eats in layers. The old city's are the oldest: parathas fried in ghee in their own lane, jalebis since 1884, kebabs and korma in the shadow of Jama Masjid, chaat on every corner and, in winter only, daulat ki chaat, milk whipped into air. Then 1947 brought Punjab's tandoori and its chole bhature, and the city made butter chicken its own. Further out, Majnu ka Tilla's momos and laphing. The old counters first, then the dishes to hunt down.

7 Paranthi Wali Gali. Parathas fried in ghee since the 1870s, some shops in a sixth generation. No onion, no garlic. "Aloo, gobi, rabri? Order two, bhai. One is never enough."

2 Old Faneer Jalebi Wala. Since 1884, by the family's telling, at Dariba's corner: fat jalebis in desi ghee, under rabri if you like; in winter, with hot milk. "Hot jalebi, cold rabri. Don't wait for it to cool, yaar."

3 Shree Balaji Chaat Bhandar. Papdi chaat on Chawri Chowk with the stall's own kachhau chutney. "Papdi, dahi, saunth. Eat it now, before it goes soft."

14 Giani di Hatti. Rabri falooda by Fatehpuri Masjid since the 1950s, where the Giani's ice-cream chain began. "Falooda first, rabri on top, and a spoon for the bottom of the glass."

23 Sita Ram Diwan Chand. Our nearest legend: chole bhature off a bicycle from 1950, by the family's telling. "Chole bhature for breakfast. Walk to CP after. Then sit back."

23 Moti Mahal, Daryaganj. Since 1947 in Daryaganj: the kitchen where Delhi fell for tandoori chicken, then butter chicken. "Butter chicken, naan, extra butter. When in Dilli."



6 Natraj Dahi Bhalle Wala.

Since 1940: dahi bhallas in whipped curd and also tikki off the griddle, and always a crowd. "Too things on the menu. Order both. Scene sorted."

25 Karim's. Since 1913 in Gali Kababian: seekh kebab, burra kebab, mamou and nargisi kofta, with khmiri roti. "Korma, khmiri roti, and nobody talks until the plate is clean."

27 Kuremal Mohanlal Kufli Wale. For over a century in Sitaram Bazar: kufli frozen inside a whole mango or orange, sliced to order. "A mango, no seed, full of kufli. Delhi summer, solved."

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Chaina Ram Sindhhi Confectioners. From Lahore's Anarkali Bazaar, 1901, to Fatehpuri: Karachi halwa, and gajar ka halwa in winter. "Karachi halwa for the train. It won't last past the station."

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9 Kinari Bazaar. Gota, zari, lace, sequins and tinselt: everything edging and everything else a wedding needs.

26 Chawri Bazar. Wedding cards, greeting cards and paper: brass and copper lamps and pots since 1840.

10 Nai Sarak. Textbooks in most Indian languages, stationery, a few sari wholesalers.

The Sunday book bazaar. Second-hand books every Sunday, at Mahila Haat on Asaf Ali Road since 2019.

40 Main Bazaar, Paharganj. Everything a backpacker needs: shawls, perfumes, tablas, rugs, jewellery, bargain.

36 Janspath and the Tibetan Market. Street fashion, Kashmiri shawls and beads by the Imperial.

53 Palika Bazaar. Clothes and electronics underground at Connaught Place; check for counterfeits.

53 Dilli Haat. Crafts from every state in rotating stalls, and a state-by-state food court.

Sarjini Nagar. Export-surplus clothes at street prices: bargain hard.

Lajpat Nagar. Clothes and textiles in the Central Market of a 1950s refugee colony.

48 Khan Market. Bookshops, Indian labels and cafés in a 1951 market built for refugees.

Karol Bagh. Saris, suits and lehengas wholesale on Tank Road. Bridal jewellery on Bank Street, phones in Ghaffar Market, second-hand books on Arya Samaj Road.

8 Dariba Kalan. Silver and costume jewellery, and a few old attar shops, on the lane to Jama Masjid.

Prabhu Chaat Bhandar. For decades, by the UPSC building: aloo tikki, stuffed gola gappe and bhalla papdi.

"Gola gappe till you tap out. Then kufli falooda."

37 Indian Coffee House, Connaught Place. A coffee house on the top of Mohan Singh Place since 1957, for coffee and long talk. "One coffee, two hours, the whole world sorted."

Baba Nagpal Corner. Chole bhature in Lajpat Nagar, for breakfast, Delhi style. "One more plate, please."

58 Majnu ka Tilla. Momos and cold laphing in the Tibetan colony's lanes, sold near its entrance and the temple. "Laphing first, momos after. Spicy, cold, then hot."

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58 Majnu ka Tilla. Momos and cold laphing in the Tibetan colony's lanes,

★ QUESTS

Dares for the brave and the curious. The map marks each with a star; tick them off as you go.

35

Count Agrasen Ki Baoli's steps. Start at the top and count down the 60 m stepwell to the bottom. Nobody knows for sure who built it, and Delhi swears it's haunted.

38

Find the instrument that finds the longest day. Jai Singh II built thirteen instruments here in 1724. The Misra Yantra, five instruments in one, was made to find the year's longest and shortest days.

39

Sit down for langar with everyone. The gurdwara's kitchen feeds anyone, free, whatever their faith; volunteers cook and serve, and you eat sitting on the floor. Cover your head and leave your shoes.

4

Find five faiths on one street. Walk west from the Red Fort; the Jain Lal Mandir, the Gauri Shankar temple, Gurdwara Sis Ganj, the Central Baptist Church and, at the far end, the Fatehpuri Masjid. Shoes off where asked.

44

Find Sunder Nursery's fifteen monuments. Ninety acres beside Humayun's Tomb, opened as a heritage park in 2018, with fifteen heritage monuments among its lawns, six of them World Heritage.

46

Listen to qawwali after the evening prayer. Qawwali is sung at the dargah every evening after the Maghrib prayer, and on Thursdays the courtyard fills. Amir Khusrau, the saint's disciple and poet, lies by the entrance.

32

Look for the wishes left for the djinns. Every Thursday, people bring letters to Firoz Shah's ruined city of 1554 for the djinns, who are said to grant wishes. Look, don't read: the letters are private.

56

Find the iron pillar that never rusts. In the Qutub complex, beside the 72.5 m minaret, stands an iron pillar 7.21 m tall from about 400 CE, still unruined, thanks to the make-up of its metal.

54

Watch the sunset from Hauz Khas Fort. Firoz Shah's madrasa of 1352 stands over Alauddin Khilji's reservoir, whose water has run clean again since 2019.

SEVEN CITIES DEEP

4

Moonlight Square, minus the moonlit pool

Chandni Chowk. Jahangir laid it out in 1650 as the walled city's spine: a canal down the middle, a half-moon square whose pool caught the moon. Still one of India's great wholesale markets. No motor traffic in the day; walk it, keep your bag in front.

5

A white gurdwara on the busiest street

Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib. One of Delhi's nine historic gurdwaras, on Chandni Chowk. It marks where Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, was martyred in 1675. All are welcome: head covered, shoes off, and the calm inside comes as a surprise.

12

The far end of Chandni Chowk

Fatehpuri Masjid. Built in 1650 by Fatehpuri Begum, one of Shah Jahan's wives, at Chandni Chowk's west end: red sandstone, one fluted dome, two minarets. A quiet courtyard after the street; Khari Baoli's spice market grew up beside it. Dress covered, shoes off.

21

The red temple with a hospital for birds

Jain Lal Mandir and Birds Hospital. Old Delhi's oldest Jain temple, red sandstone opposite the Red Fort; begun in 1656 round a statue in a Mughal officer's tent, rebuilt in 1878. Behind it, the Jain Birds Hospital treats thousands of birds a year. Leave leather at the counter.

22

Red walls, white marble halls inside

Red Fort (Lal Qila). Shah Jahan's fort-palace, 1639-48, the Mughals' home for two centuries; UNESCO since 2007. In by the Lahori Gate, through the covered Chhatra Chowk bazaar, to the hall of audience and the little Moti Masjid. Closed on Mondays.

24

Climb the steps, then the minaret

Jama Masjid. Shah Jahan's great mosque, 1650-56, on the walled city's highest point; its courtyard fills at Eid. Climb a minaret for the roofs and the Red Fort. Dress covered, shoes off; visitors wait out prayer times. Kebab lanes below Gate 1.

30

A black marble platform, and quiet lawns

Raj Ghat. Where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated in January 1948, by the Yamuna: a plain black marble platform with a flame, quiet by a stone path through lawns. Quiet in the morning; go gently, people come to pay respects.

35

A hundred-odd steps down, among offices

Agrasen Ki Baoli. A stepwell 60 m long among Hailey Road's offices; near CP, said to be the Aggarwals', rebuilt in Tughlaq or Lodhi times. A hundred and eight steps past three levels of arches. Called haunted, and loved by film crews.

37

White colonnades in two rings

Connaught Place. New Delhi's showpiece, 1929-33: two rings of white colonnades round Central Park, with Rajiv Chowk metro underneath. Renamed in 1995, still CP to everyone. Walk the shaded verandas; skip the touts offering help you did not ask for.

38

A sundial as tall as a building

Jantar Mantar. The first of Savai Jai Singh II's five observatories, finished in 1724: thirteen masonry instruments for the sun, moon and planets. The Samrat Yantra is a sundial about 21 m high. Come on a sunny day and watch the shadow move.

39

Golden dome, holy pool, lunch for all

Gurdwara Bangla Sahib. Raja Jai Singh's bungalow, where Guru Har Krishan stayed in 1664; a shrine since 1783. A golden dome, a holy pool, and a langar that serves free meals to everyone, thousands a day. Head covered, shoes off. Near CP.

45

Twenty-seven marble petals, one silent hall

Lotus Temple (Baha'i House of Worship). The Baha'i House of Worship, 1986: 27 marble-clad petals in three rings of nine round one hall. Anyone may sit and pray in its silence; no images inside. Queues at weekends; shoes off. Closed on Mondays.

46

Thursday qawwali in the saint's courtyard

Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah. The shrine of the Sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya, through the lanes of Nizamuddin West; Amir Khusrau lies beside him. On Thursday evenings qawwali fills the courtyard. Shoes off; head covered, sit at the edge and listen.

51

Five thousand years under one roof

National Museum. On Janpath since 1949: about 200,000 works over five thousand years, Harappan seals to Chola bronzes, Buddhist relics and Mughal miniatures. Pick two or three galleries. Check it is open before you go.

52

The last great Mughal garden tomb

Safdarjung's Tomb. Built in 1754 for Safdarjung, Nawab of Awadh and Mughal prime minister: the last great Mughal garden tomb, built by his son. Few visitors, good arches. Jor Bagh is the nearest metro.

44

Ninety acres of garden and Mughal tombs

Sunder Nursery. Beside Humayun's Tomb, 90 acres of Mughal-era garden, the city's nursery for a century, restored by the Aga Khan Trust and opened in 2018: fifteen monuments, 280 native trees, about 80 kinds of birds. A winter picnic spot.

50

Fifteenth-century tombs among morning walkers

Lodhi Garden. Ninety acres round the tombs of the Sayyid and Lodi sultans; Muhammad Shah's octagon of 1444, the Bara Gumbad of 1494, the Shish Gumbad, Akbar's Athpula bridge. Delhi's morning walk and picnic.

54

A royal tank, a madrasa, a sunset

Hauz Khas lake, madrasa and deer park. Alauddin Khilji's royal tank of about 1300, with Feroz Shah Tughlaq's madrasa and tomb on its bank. Climb the pavilions for the sunset over the lake. Next door, the Deer Park's spotted deer and ducks; behind, the village's cafes and bars.

26

Wedding cards, paper and brass since 1840

Chawli Bazar. Old Delhi's first wholesale market, 1840, named for a Marathi word for a meeting place. Brass and copper still, but mostly paper now: wedding cards, greeting cards, wallpaper. Then kullu in Sitaram Bazar and fruit chaat.

36

The people's path, with Kashmiri shawls

Janpath market and the Tibetan Market. Once Connaughtway: a street market from Connaught Place to Windsor Place. Junk jewellery, kurtis, shoes, Kashmiri shawls, brass. The Tibetan Market, by the Imperial, has Himalayan crafts and beads. Bargain as you like.

40

The backpacker street, at our door

Main Bazaar, Paharganj. From the station west through Paharganj: a Mughal market outside the walls, the backpackers' street since the 1970s. Shawls, perfumes, tablas, rooftop cafes; bargain for all it. Ignore touts and any 'tourist office'; book trains on the official app.

48

A refugee market, grown very polished

Khan Market. Built in 1951 to give Partition's refugees a living, many from the North-West Frontier; named for a Pashtun leader. Shopkeepers lived upstairs; many flats are shops now. Today, bookshops, Indian lobbies and cafes. Then walk on to Lodhi Garden, close by.

21

Visit the hospital where birds are patients

Opposite the Red Fort, the Jain Lal Mandir has run a charity hospital for birds since 1929. It treats about fifteen thousand a year.

22

Shop the bazaar inside the Red Fort

Through the Lahori Gate, Chhatra Chowk's domed arcade once sold silks and jewels to the emperor's household. It still sells. Not on a Monday: the fort is shut.

13

Sniff out Old Delhi's spice market

At the west end of Chandni Chowk, Khari Baoli has sold spices, nuts and herbs since the 17th century, named for a salty stepwell long gone. Expect to sneeze.

45

Count the Lotus Temple's 27 petals

Three rings of nine marble petals round one hall, with nine pools outside. Anyone may go in and sit in silence. Closed on Mondays.

42

Find the barber's tomb in the emperor's garden

Inside the complex of the subcontinent's first garden tomb stands the Nai ka Gumbad, dated 1590-91, said to be a royal barber's.

49

Count the murals of Lodhi Colony

Since 2015, artists from India and abroad have painted more than fifty walks round Meerchand Market. Go in the morning, for the light.

58

Cross into Little Tibet by the Yamuna

Tibetan colony for more than sixty years, on the river bank: a monastery, bright colours, steaming momos. Vidhan Sabha Metro is 1.5 km away.

34

Walk Kartavya Path as India Gate lights up

Lutyens' 42 m arch, unveiled in 1931, glows at dusk over lawns and canals redone in 2022. Grab an ice cream from a cart and join the city's evening walk.

15

The wall's north gate, still standing

Kashmere Gate. The walled city's north gate, named for the road to Kashmir; strengthened after 1803, battered in 1857. It names the neighbourhood, a three-line metro interchange and the bus terminal. Walk on to St James' and the Partition Museum.

17

Delhi's old church with a Florentine dome

St James' Church. By Kashmere Gate: James Skinner built it at his own cost, 1826-36, a Greek cross with three porticoes, stained glass and a dome likened to Florence's. William Fraser lies in its yard. A working church; come quietly between services.

20

Shiva's temple, one door from the Jain one

Gauri Shankar Temple. Shiva's temple at the Red Fort end of Chandni Chowk, built in 1761 by Appa Gangadhar, a Maratha officer, next to the Jain Lal Mandir. The lingam sits in marble; Mondays and Mahashivratri bring the crowds. Shoes off; ask before photographs.

31

The south gate, on a traffic island

Delhi Gate. The walled city's south gate, Shah Jahan's of 1638, now alone on a traffic island where Netaji Subhash Marg reaches Daryaganj; a stretch of the old wall still runs west of it. Look from the pavement and cross with care.

32

An Ashoka pillar on a sultan's ruins

Feroz Shah Kotla. The citadel of Feroz Shah Tughlaq's city of 1354. A polished Ashoka pillar from the third century BC, carried from Haryana in 1356, tops a ruined pavilion. On Thursdays people leave letters and wishes for the djinns.

33

Six and a half thousand dolls, eighty-five countries

Shankar's International Dolls Museum. K. Shankar Pillai, a cartoonist, opened it in 1965 upstairs in the Children's Book Trust building: about 6,500 dolls from some 85 countries in their own dress, India in one hall, the world in the other. Closed on Mondays.

34

An arch of names, and lawns at dusk

India Gate and Kartavya Path. Lutyens' arch, 1931, carries the names of Indian soldiers of the First World War, at the end of Kartavya Path's lawns and jamun trees. Its flame joined the National War Memorial in 2022. Come at dusk for ice cream on the lawns.

41

Pink sandstone, 234 carved pillars

Swaminarayan Akshardham. BAPS's temple by the Yamuna, opened in 2005: 43 m of pink sandstone and marble with no steel, 234 carved pillars, 148 stone elephants. Phones and cameras stay in the cloakroom. Check the day's timings at the gate.

42

The garden tomb before the Taj

Humayun's Tomb. The subcontinent's first great garden tomb, built from 1555 by Humayun's widow Begum; red sandstone, a white dome, a four-part garden. The Taj followed its pattern. UNESCO since 1993; come early or late for the light.

43

An old fort, older ground beneath

Purana Qila. The citadel of Humayun's Dinpanah, finished by Sher Shah Suri: the Qila-i-Kuhna mosque of 1541 and the octagonal Sher Mandal. Digs found pottery from about 1000 BC. Walk the ramparts, then paddle the old moat.

55

Home of the Fairy Queen, steam since 1855

National Rail Museum. Since 1977, India's railways on eleven acres laid out like a yard; the Fairy Queen, once listed as the world's oldest working steam engine, the Patiala Monorail of 1907, six galleries indoors. Closed on Mondays and national holidays.

56

Brick minaret, iron pillar, a thousand years

Qutub Minar and Mehrauli. Begun around 1199 and finished by 1220: at 72.5 m the world's tallest brick minaret, with an iron pillar of about 400 CE that has barely rusted. UNESCO since 1993. Then Mehrauli's park next door: Balban's tomb, Jamali Kamali, Rajon Ki Baoli.

2

Fat jalebis at Dariba's corner since 1884

Old Famous Jalebi Wala, Dariba corner. Since 1884 at Dariba's corner, by its own telling: fat jalebis fried in desi ghee and soaked in syrup. Eat them hot, alone or under rabri; in winter, with a clay cup of hot milk. Then the samosas. Keep a hand on your bag.

3

Papdi chaat, first on our own list

Shree Balaji Chaat Bhandar, Chandni Chowk. First on our own Delhi map's food list: papdi chaat on rotis, a small free museum in 2000: his couplets, books and verse in his hand. Closed on Mondays.

6

Two dishes, one corner, since 1940

Natraj Dahi Bhalle Wala, Chandni Chowk. On Chandni Chowk, across from Paranthi Wali Gali. Since 1940: dahi bhalli, a fried urad dal dumpling smothered in whipped curd with chutneys, and also tikki off the griddle. Summer or winter, there's a crowd. Join it, eat standing.

7

Parathas fried in this lane since the 1870s

Paranthi Wali Gali, Chandni Chowk. Parathas since the 1870s, a few shops in a sixth generation of one family. Pick a filling, potato to cashew or rabri, fried in ghee in an iron pan, with tamarind chutney and a potato curry. No onion, no garlic. Leave room for the jalebis.

53

India's states, one stall at a time

Dilli Haat, INA. An open-air craft bazaar of 1994, opposite INA Market: makers from across India in stalls that rotate, and food stalls by state. Our guide says try the Kashmiri and Manipuri ones. Worth it even with no budget.

11

The poet's house, down a Ballimaran lane

Ghalib Ki Haveli. Mirza Ghalib, Urdu's great poet, lived and wrote in this house off Ballimaran until he died in 1869. Restored in lakhon brick, it has a small free museum in 2000: his couplets, books and verse in his hand. Closed on Mondays.

18

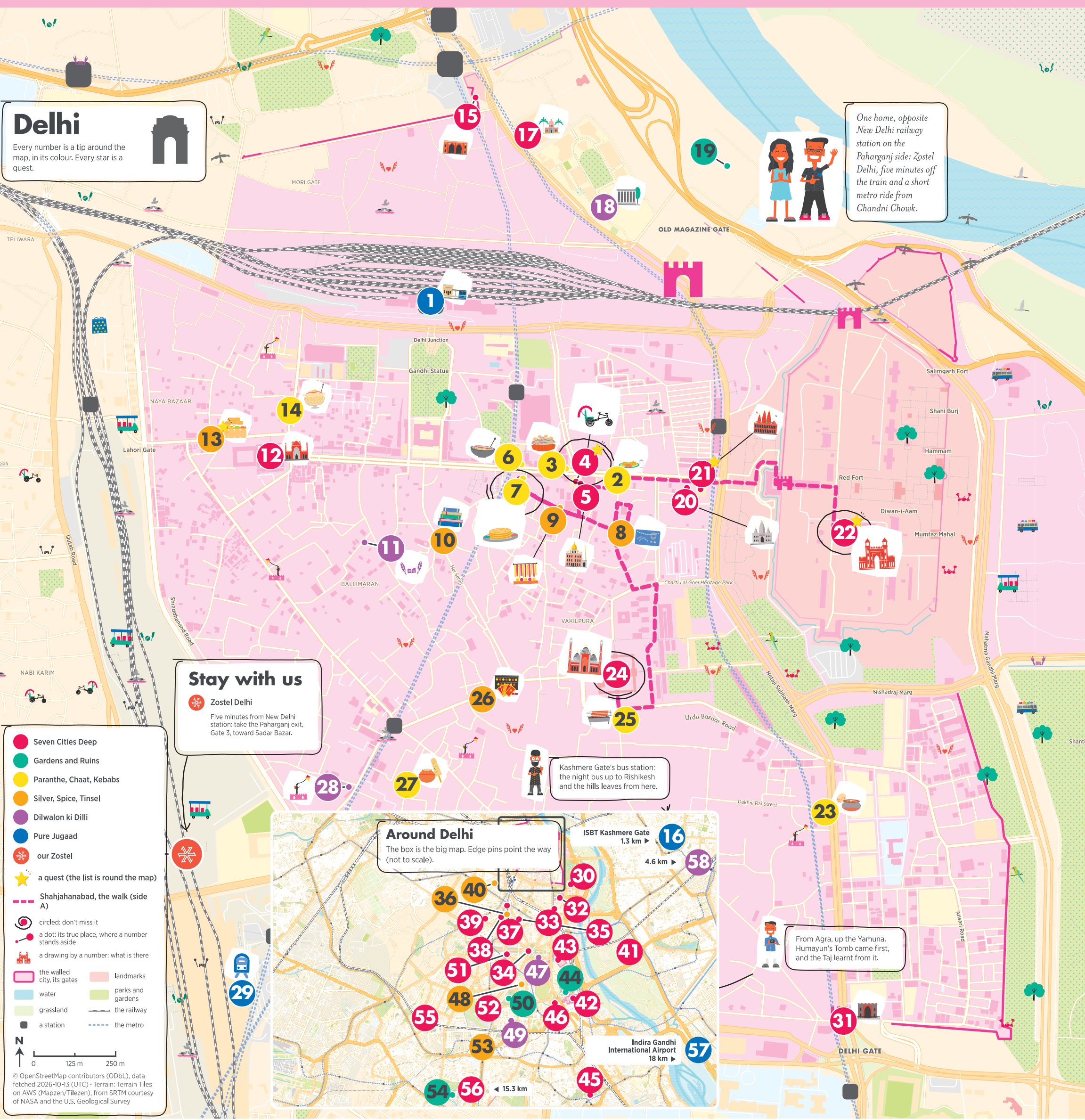
How Partition made the city you see

Partition Museum, Dara Shikoh Library. Opened in 2023 in the Dara Shikoh Library at Kashmere Gate, seven galleries tell 1947 through people's letters, objects and voices, and what came after; refugees then built Lajpat Nagar and CR Park. Closed on Mondays.

28

The whole old city flies a kite

Kites over Old Delhi on 15 August. On 15 August Old Delhi's rooftops fill with paper kites from morning to dusk, and cries of 'ai bo'. Lal Kuan's shops sell kites and string before it. Glass-coated string is banned: buy plain cotton, and go up if invited.



14

Rabri falooda, where an ice-cream chain began

Giani di Hatti, Fatehpuri. At Fatehpuri, a sweet-maker from Lyallpur who came after Partition began making rabri falooda by hand in the 1950s. Thin noodles, thick sweet rabri, cold in a glass. It grew into an ice-cream chain; this is where it began.

23

Where tandoori chicken found its fame

Moti Mahal, Daryaganj. Three men from Peshawar's Moti Mahal opened their own in Daryaganj after Partition, in 1947. Its tandoor made tandoori chicken famous; in the 1950s, butter chicken and dal makhani too. Have it where Delhi first fell for it.

25

Mughlai since 1913, in the kebab lane

Karim's, Gali Kababian, Jama Masjid. Opened by Jama Masjid in 1913 by a cook's son from the Mughal court. Mutton seekh kebab, burnt kabab, korma and nargisi kehta with khmiri roti. Called Old Delhi's most famous kitchen, still the family's. Dress for the mosque next door.

27

Kulfi frozen inside a whole mango

Kuremal Mohanlal Kuli Wale, Sitaram Bazar. One family's kulfi since 1906, in Sitaram Bazar off Chawli Bazar. From the 1980s, the stuffed ones: a mango or orange emptied of its seed, filled with kulfi, frozen and sliced. Or plain kesar and pista. Made for Delhi's summer.

47

Amrita Sher-Gil and Tagore by India Gate

National Gallery of Modern Art. Since 1954 in Jaipur House, the Maharaja's butter-free palace on the India Gate circle: Amrita Sher-Gil, the Tagores, Ravi Varma, Jamini Roy and the moderns after them. Weekend art classes too. Closed on Mondays.

49

India's first open-air art district

Lodhi Art District. Since 2015 St-art India and artists from round the world have painted Lodhi Colony's 1940s blocks into India's first open-air art district. Walk the lanes from Meerchand Market in the morning light; people live here, so keep it quiet.

58

Little Tibet on the Yamuna's bank

Majnu ka Tilla (Samyeling). Tibetan refugees settled this Yamuna bank in the early 1960s: lanes round a small monastery under prayer flags, momos, thukpa and laphing, buses to Dharamsala. Older still, the gurdwara across the road marks Guru Nanak's stay in 1505.

8

The lane of the unparalleled pearl

Dariba Kalan. Persian for 'unparalleled pearl': the 17th-century lane from Chandni Chowk to Jama Masjid. Gold and gems under Shah Jahan; now silver, costume jewellery and a few old attar shops. Compare first, then the jalebis at its corner.

9

Every sparkle a wedding need

Kinari Bazaar, Kinari means edging: gota and zari ribbon, lace, sequins, tinsel and borders, and all a wedding needs, turbans and garlands too. In winter, the dalaal ki chaat sellers stand where it meets Paranthi Wali Gali. Go slowly; the lane is narrow.

10

The new road, full of textbooks

Nai Sarak. The British cut this 'new road' after 1857; after Partition, Lahore's publishers moved in. Now one of India's biggest textbook markets: books in most Indian languages, stationery, a few sari shops. Fast shops, little bargaining: know what you want.

13

Asia's biggest spice market, they say

Khari Baoli. Spices, nuts, herbs, rice and tea since the 17th century, named for a long-gone salty stepwell. Gadodia Market, of the 1920s, is called Asia's largest wholesale spice market. Buy cardamom or a chalmi; mind your bag.

16

Where the night buses leave for the hills

ISBT Kashmere Gate. Delhi's oldest inter-state bus terminal, since 1976: about 1,800 buses a day to Himachal, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Rajasthan and the north. Night buses to Manali, Dharamsala and Rishikesh, each with a Zostel at the end.

29

Sixteen platforms and the hostel across the road

New Delhi railway station. Delhi's main station, NDLS: Paharganj on platform 1's side, where we are. Aimer Gate on 16's. Touts say trains are cancelled or lead you to a 'tourist office'; walk on. Book on the official app or at the station's own reservation office.

57

South-west, and the express runs to us

Indira Gandhi International Airport. South-west, about 17 km from Zostel Delhi. The Airport Express metro runs from Terminals 2 and 3 to New Delhi; a cab takes about 45 minutes. Use prepaid or app cabs from the official ranks; ignore offers in-side arrivals.