



IMPERIAL ARCHIVE

Qutub Minar

Delhi's earliest Sultanate ensemble on the Mehrauli ridge

ALAI DARWAZA

MINAR LAWNS

QUWWAT-UL-ISLAM

IRON PILLAR

ILTUTMISH'S TOMB

ALAI MINAR

IMAM ZAMIN

KHALJI REMAINS

DELHI TALES EDITORIAL TEAM · AUGUST 2026

A4 KEPSAKE · PRINT EDITION

A morning on the ridge

Keep this PDF for the circuit and the stories that stick. Live tickets, hours, Metro last-mile, and trap notes stay on the visit guide—rates change.

INSCRIBED

UNESCO 1993 · List 233 (criterion iv)

HEIGHT

72.5 m · five storeys · view from lawns only

ON SITE

~90–150 min for the core circuit

METRO

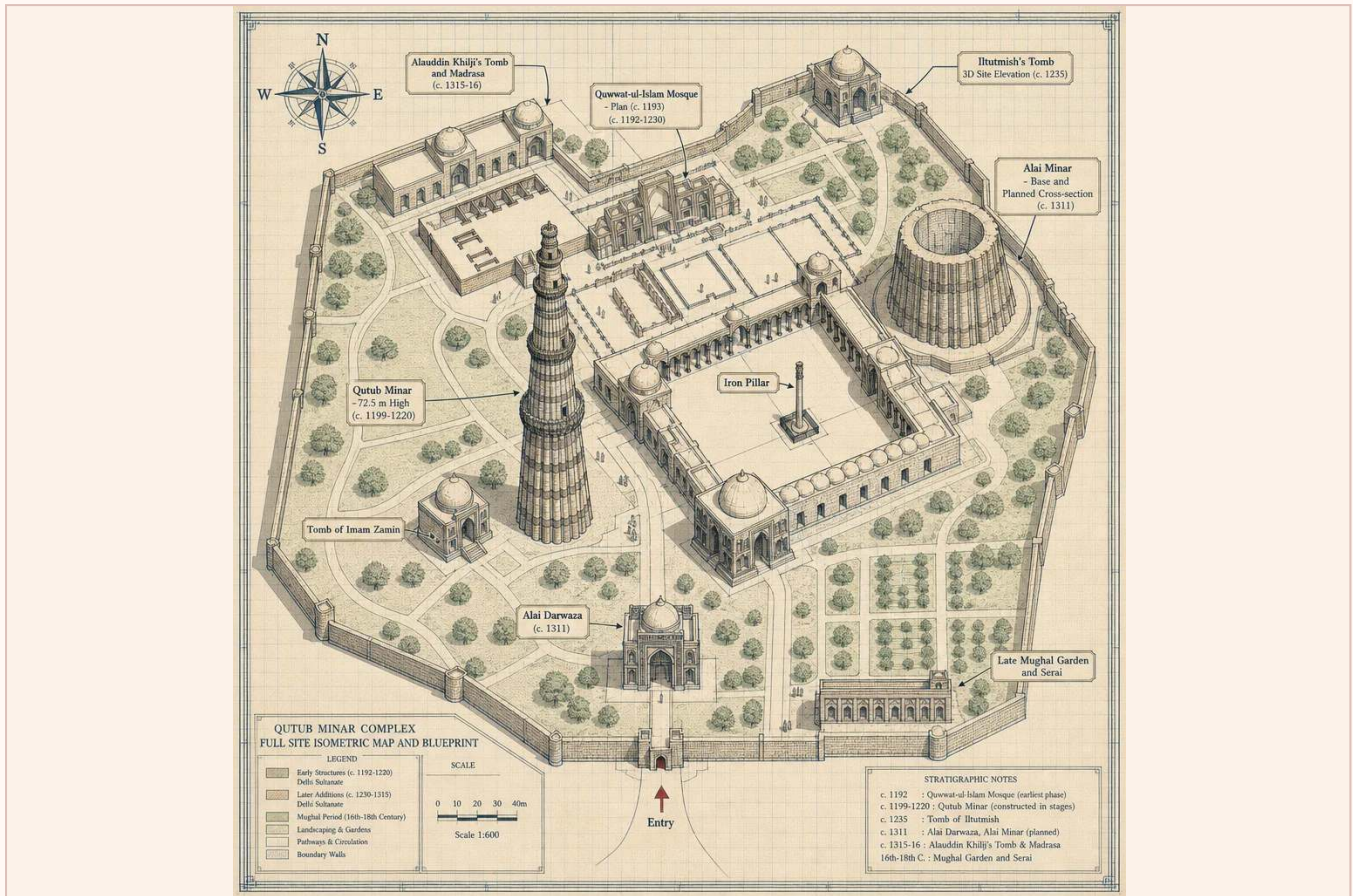
Qutub Minar (Yellow) · ~1.5 km to ASI gate

Verify ASI board & portal the week you travel · No public tower climb since 1981 · Mehrauli Archaeological Park is a separate ticket/access · Full logistics: delhitaless.com/blog/qutub-minar. Designed for colour print; black-and-white remains readable. Author: **Delhi Tales Editorial Team**. Live logistics: delhitaless.com/blog/qutub-minar

WALK SEQUENCE

ALAI DARWAZA → MINAR LAWNS → QUWWAT-UL-ISLAM → IRON PILLAR → ILTUTMISH'S TOMB → ALAI MINAR → IMAM ZAMIN → KHALJI REMAINS

Read the complex



SPECIALTY

This is not a single tower ticket. UNESCO's "Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi" (1993, List 233) is an ASI-managed ensemble: victory-and-prayer minar, Friday mosque of temple spolia, Iron Pillar courtyard, Khalji gateway, unfinished rival minar, and early royal tombs on the Mehrauli ridge.

MEANING

Institutional English prefers Qutb; Delhi Metro maps and everyday speech usually say Qutub—same place. Stand after the Darwaza and you are reading layered patronage: Mamluk foundation, Khalji expansion, Tughlaq and later repairs—not one sultan's finished drawing.

TALE

Tickets, hours, Metro last mile, and fake "park combo" pitches live on the visit guide—rates change. Mehrauli Archaeological Park and the village lanes are separate access from this World Heritage ticket.



01 · KHALJI SOUTHERN GATEWAY

Alai Darwaza

Red-and-white sandstone gateway dated AH 710 / AD 1311. ASI calls it the first building in this complex to use a coherent Islamic structural and ornament language—domed chambers, true arches, and carved screens—rather than a recycled temple colonnade alone.

It is a threshold, not a selfie frame. Pass through and the ensemble opens: lawns toward the minar, mosque court to one side, later tombs tucked east. Khalji ambition announces itself before you meet the older Mamluk shaft.

Imam Zamin's early-sixteenth-century tomb sits east of the Darwaza as signed—pause there on the way out if ropes and plaques allow, rather than inventing a side quest into unsigned rubble.



02 · 72.5 M · FIVE STOREYS

Qutb Minar from the lawns

ASI and UNESCO agree on 72.5 m height, base diameter about 14.32 m tapering to roughly 2.75 m at the top, five storeys with projecting balconies, red and buff sandstone. The silhouette is a repair palimpsest—not a single building campaign.

Experience the tower from the lawns and courtyard. The public interior staircase has been closed since a fatal stampede on 4 December 1981 (dozens dead—RP parliamentary and press record). There is no balcony climb on a standard ticket.

Upper balconies were already restricted in the mid-twentieth century for safety. After 1981 the stair stayed shut. Soft rumor about “special climb tickets” is a trap—decline it.



03 · MOSQUE COURT · TWO CLOCKS

Quwwat-ul-Islam & Iron Pillar

Earliest extant Delhi Sultanate congregational mosque (ASI: begun AD 1198). Cloisters reuse carved columns from temples demolished for the project—ASI cites an eastern-entrance inscription naming 27 Hindu and Jaina temples; UNESCO's public brief softens to materials from about 20 Brahman temples.

Lotus, bells-on-chains, and temple-column logic stand inside an Islamic courtyard plan. That is visible conquest fabric, not a metaphor for “peaceful fusion.” Dress modestly; follow ASI signage for shoes and ropes.

Metallurgical fame is real; miracle language is not. Omit Vasuki blood myths and “dhili → Delhi” folk etymology as fact. The pillar's corrosion resistance is multifactor (ICOMOS)—interesting, not magical.

04 · AD 1235 · CARVED CHAMBER

Tomb of Iltutmish

Square red-sandstone tomb dated AD 1235 (ASI). The interior carving is the reward—dense Quranic and geometric ornament in an early royal tomb tradition that UNESCO names in the property's OUV.

Iltutmish is the consolidator: more storeys on the minar, a larger mosque, and a funerary chamber that teaches how early Delhi sultans claimed permanence in stone.

Step from bright lawn into the chamber and let your eyes adjust. The density of carving is the argument; you do not need a dramatic dome myth to feel the weight of the room.



05 · UNFINISHED KHALJI STUMP

Alai Minar

Unfinished rubble-and-stone stump north of the Qutb Minar. ASI/UNESCO: extant about 25 m. Tradition holds Alauddin meant a tower roughly twice the great minar's height—publish as ambition, not as a surveyed metre target. Stand where both shafts share the frame: finished patronage versus interrupted will. The stump is the honest end of Khalji overreach after the polished Alai Darwaza.

Photographers love the juxtaposition. Use it as a teaching image: one complex, two minar ideas, only one completed skyline.



06

AS SIGNED ON SITE

Imam Zamin & Khalji remains

Imam Zamin's tomb (early sixteenth century horizon) stands east of the Alai Darwaza. Khalji madrasa and tomb fragments survive as signed ruins—follow ropes and plaques; do not invent a full reconstructed palace tour.

If a helper insists Mehrauli Archaeological Park or a village lane is “same VIP ticket,” walk away. Your QR and the ASI board define the working door.

Method & attribution

Desk synthesis against ASI World Heritage Qutb pages, UNESCO List 233 / OUV materials, inscription patronage sequences, and RP coverage of the 4 Dec 1981 interior closure. Companion PDF (keepsake); cite and plan from delhitales.com/blog/qutub-minar.

Author: Delhi Tales Editorial Team · **Last verified:** August 2026 · Delhi Tales / Imperial Archive

IMAGE CREDITS

COVER — QUTUB MINAR

Photo: Gauri Vidyadhar Parab / Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Qutub_Minar,_the_tallest_minaret_in_the_world_made_up_of_bricks,_Mehrauli,_Delhi.jpg

READ THE COMPLEX

Delhi Tales · Editorial diagram · all rights reserved

ALAI DARWAZA

Photo: Rashid Jorvee / Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alai_Darwaza_in_Qutub_Complex.jpg

QUTB MINAR FROM THE LAWNS — LAWN AREA LOOKING TOWARD QUTB MINAR

Photo: BAMINPRAJ / Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lawn_area_From_Qutb_Minar.jpg

QUTB MINAR FROM THE LAWNS — PORTRAIT OF QUTB MINAR TOWER

Photo: Gauri Vidyadhar Parab / Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Qutub_Minar,_the_tallest_minaret_in_the_world_made_up_of_bricks,_Mehrauli,_Delhi.jpg

QUWWAT-UL-ISLAM & IRON PILLAR — CARVED PILLAR DETAIL IN QUWWAT-UL-ISLAM MOSQUE

Photo: Ronakshah1990 / Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pillar_detail,_Quwwat_ul-Islam_Mosque,_Qutb_Complex_-_4.jpg

QUWWAT-UL-ISLAM & IRON PILLAR — IRON PILLAR IN THE QUWWAT-UL-ISLAM MOSQUE COURTYARD

Photo: Pavithrah / Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 3.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iron_Pillar_at_Quwwat-ul-Islam_mosque.jpg

TOMB OF ILTUTMISH

Photo: Syed Sajidul Islam / Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Inside_the_Tomb_of_Iltutmish,_Qutb_Minar_Complex.jpg

IMAGE CREDITS (CONTINUED)

ALAI MINAR

Photo: Ronakshah1990 / Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_incomplete_Alai_Minar_and_Qutb_Minar,_Qutb_Complex.jpg

IMAM ZAMIN & KHALJI REMAINS

Photo: Rashid Jorvee / Wikimedia Commons · CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alai_Darwaza_in_Qutub_Complex.jpg