

Agra: home of the Taj Mahal

We left Delhi on Monday afternoon, after witnessing the mass wedding sponsored by the Lions Club and having met the future wife of our friend Shikhar. For the first time I was on a train in India, there are different kinds and this is what the best that you can afford looks like:



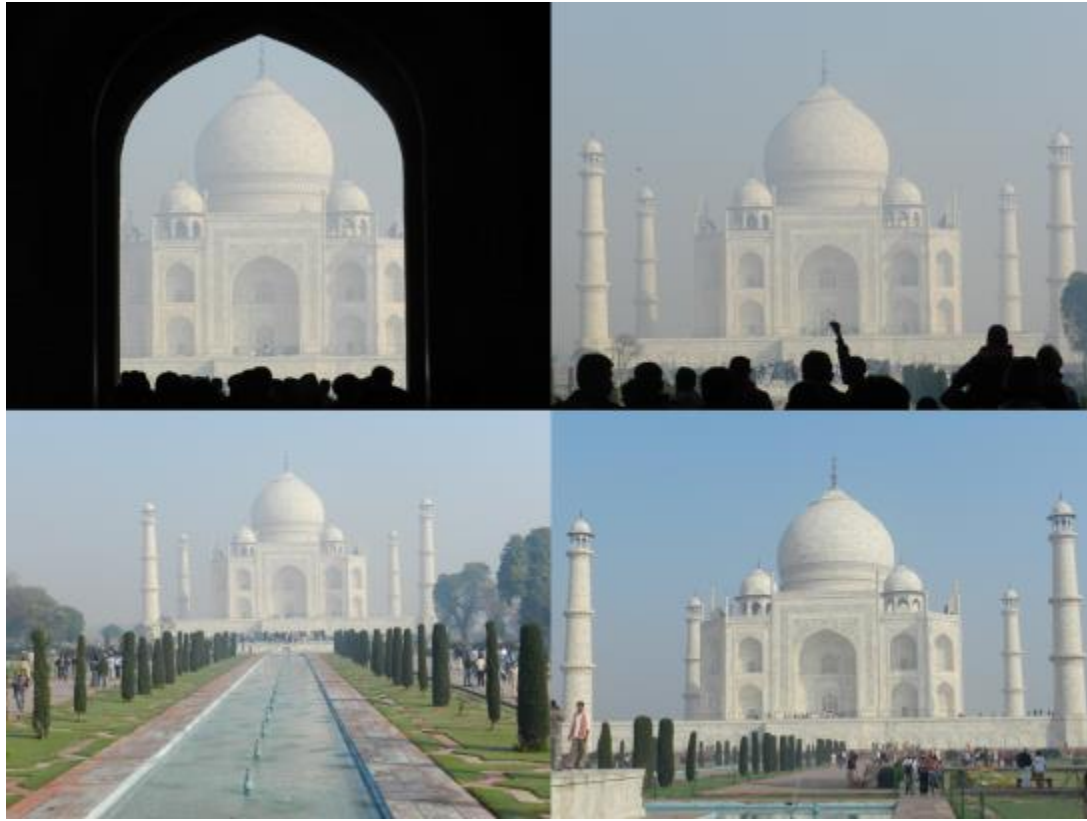
The trip lasted around 3 hours, and when we finally reached Agra, the amount of people at the station offering hotels, taxis, tours, etc. was simply overwhelming. It turned out that the hotel where we were staying was far from the station, but close to one of the gates of the Taj Mahal.

The next morning we went to the Taj. It is just beautiful ... all the beauty that you see in the pictures and more. I sincerely believe that it is the nicest I've seen in my life. A little history: It was built between 1631 and 1654 by Emperor Shah Muslim Janah, in honor of his favorite wife, Mumtaz, who died giving birth to her 14th daughter. It is said that he loved her so much that he was always faithful (I'm not sure how, considering he had other wives) and a couple of years after her death, he died too.

This is the East gate entrance:



Getting closer to the Taj:



As we wandered around the Taj Mahal, a gentleman kindly offered to take a picture ... and then another ... and another. When we realized we had tacitly hired a guide / photographer. The truth is, it was worth it.



This is the mosque inside the Taj:



After you have admired so much beauty, it's very difficult to be surprised and captivated by other places you visit. We also went to the Agra fort, which has an interesting story: It turns out that it was built by

Shah Janah's son (the man who built the Taj Mahal) where he imprisoned his father, placing him in a room with a window, where he could see the Taj Mahal every day.... And that is how he died.