



## Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



### The Things you do for Love...

by Amaru & Suzanne, November 12th 2009

The Taj Mahal, one of the modern wonders of the world!

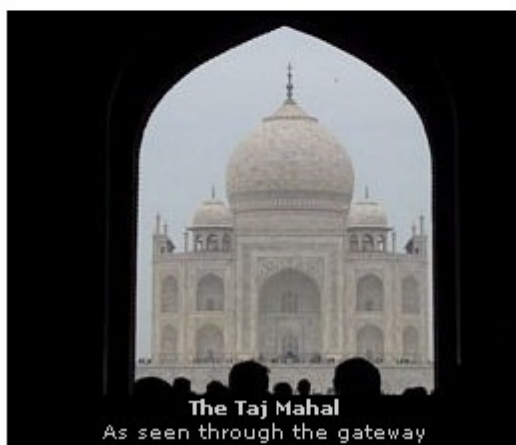
While giving birth to his 14th (!?) child, Emperor's Shah Jahan's second wife passed away... He was stricken with grief and as a memorial and in her memory he built her the Taj Mahal!!

How is anyone supposed to be able to compete with that?

Our original plan was to travel to Agra before we started our Rajasthan trip but we'd read so many negative reviews about the city of Agra (dirty, polluted and with some very aggressive touts) that we decided to just make it a day trip from Delhi. We thought about doing the express train first but ended up arranging the trip via our Delhi hotel and with our driver Anil. We knew that the distance between Delhi and Agra is not more than 200km and we were expecting the trip to not take any longer than 2-3 hours.



We're just about to see one of the Modern Wonders of the World



The Taj Mahal  
As seen through the gateway

Were we ever so wrong... It took us about 5 hours to get there as the traffic between both cities is horrendous. The average speed can't have been more than 50-60 km/h.

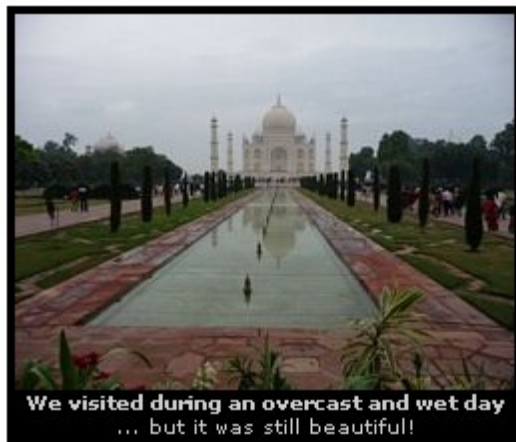
We eventually made it though and our driver had arranged for a guide for us free of charge (but of course they'll try to take you shopping where they get commission later).

The guide was great... We didn't have to worry about anything, he advised us where to get tickets, he got us some plastic slippers to put over our shoes so that we didn't have to remove them, he wanted to take photos of the two of us in front of the Taj Mahal at all times and he was also very pushy when it came to us getting the best positions for the photos... Oh and yes, he was very knowledgeable as well ;)

We walked the grounds admiring the views of the monument from different angles while he gave us the background history, he was also able to point out all the different gem stones that cover the Taj Mahal (and there are a few).

Once we'd done the grounds and the inside of the Taj he wanted us to get the so called "Lady Diana" photo... It's just a well known photo where Lady D is posing on a bench in front of the Taj. There was a line of people waiting to have their photo taken but our guide waited for one couple to finish, then walked right in and advised us to sit while he took the photo. We were a bit hesitant but no one seemed to complain and our guide kept calling us so we did.... very cheeky!

Once the trip was over he wanted to show us some carpet shops and since he was a good guide we decided to tag along.



We did tell him that we would just look at the carpets, not buy any... "Sure, no problem, you look, you like you buy..."

With that in mind we walked in and within 5min we were sold (we are so bad). We got to see the carpets being made and then shown a lot of different ones... we eventually settled on a nice small one that we can hang on the wall back home (so much for not buying one). We also had a look at fabrics but didn't find anything we liked this time...

The weather had been a bit on the wet side all morning with some very light showers during our Taj Mahal experience but now it was really coming down. We had originally planned to also see the Red Fort in Agra but decided to have lunch first and see if the weather would clear.

It didn't... We came out of the restaurant after our lunch and the rain was still coming down in bucket loads so we just decided to cut the trip short and start our journey back to Delhi.

After another 5 or so hours we were back in Delhi, tired but happy that we had the opportunity to see the Taj Mahal, truly one of the Modern Wonders of the World!!

#### **Trip Details:**

Delhi to Agra - 200km - 5 hours

Agra to Delhi - 200km - 5½ hours





**One of the many squirrels**  
running around the area



**The Taj Mahal**  
Seen from a different angle



**Suz and I**  
Once more in front of the Taj Mahal



**Plastic slippers went over our shoes**  
while walking inside the monument



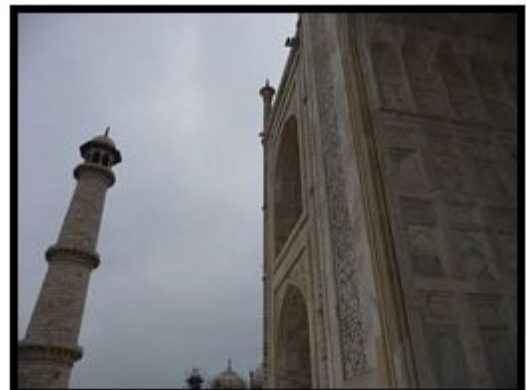
**The Taj Mahal**  
It's bigger than it looks



**The view in the other direction**  
Seen from the Taj Mahal



**Looking out over**  
The Taj Mahal



**Looking out over**  
The Taj Mahal



**These are the precious gems**  
that cover the entire building



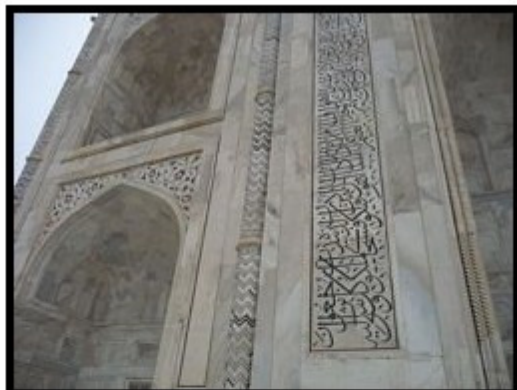
**And these are the marble carvings**  
All made from large pieces of marble



**We're in the arc**  
of the the Taj Mahal



**The view over the river**  
from behind the building



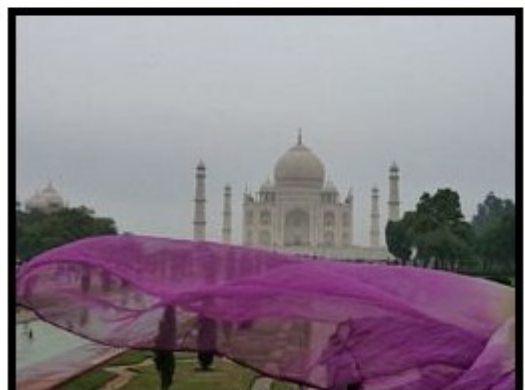
**Arabic writings**  
It's an Islamic building after all...



**Suz and I**  
...still here!



**We're getting the Lady D shot...**  
Very romantic isn't it?



**The Taj Mahal**  
One last look before we leave...



The city of Agra is such a contrast  
to the beauty of the Taj Mahal



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