

16 Hope Project

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127 Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin.

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The first time I went to Nizamuddin I raced in to listen to the devotional Sufi singers, simply looked and left, not feeling much the wiser or moved. It all changed when I went back on a Hope Project guided walk and Nizamuddin became one of my best 'Love Delhi' adventures!

The Hope Project was founded in 1980 by the Sufi teacher, Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, to help the poor in this community with education, health and livelihood programmes. The fee for their 90 minute walk is Rs.150 per person. Call the walk coordinator Rajeshwari to arrange, advance notice is preferred.

Enjoy hearing the history and sights of the *basti* (the community). Visit the *baoli* (stepwell) and the tomb of Mirza Ghalib, one of India's greatest poets, often referred to as India's Shakespeare. It is auspicious to be buried near the saint, which is why there are so many tombs in this corner of Delhi. Visit the Hope Project building and see the work they are doing and get the best view of the *basti* from their roof.

An ideal time to visit Nizamuddin is 5pm on a Thursday or Friday, so you can end your walk listening to the Sufi singers. On Thursdays you will complete the walk at the main *Dargah*, the revered tomb of the saint, where the *Nizami Bandhu* continue their 750-year-old tradition of singing *Qawwalis*, which are designed to raise the listener to a state of *haal* or spiritual trance.

DELHI WALKS

(CONT'D)

Delhi Metro Walks

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Surekha Narain is a self-described hardcore Dilliwalah, who also happens to be a conservationist conducting marvellous heritage walks. Working as a banker, she began the walks programme at the Habitat over a decade ago and then went on to work with *INTACH (pg94)* creating and guiding walks. She has opened her own business and is now fully dedicated to providing rich experiences to all of the walkers.

Her research is thorough, her passion is clear and her connections and perseverance means she manages to get her groups into rare and special places. The weekend public walks normally start at 7am and last about 2 hours with typically 15 to 25 people in the group. The tour costs range from Rs.300 to Rs.600 depending on what refreshments are offered. *Customised private tours can also be arranged.*