

# Mughal gardens



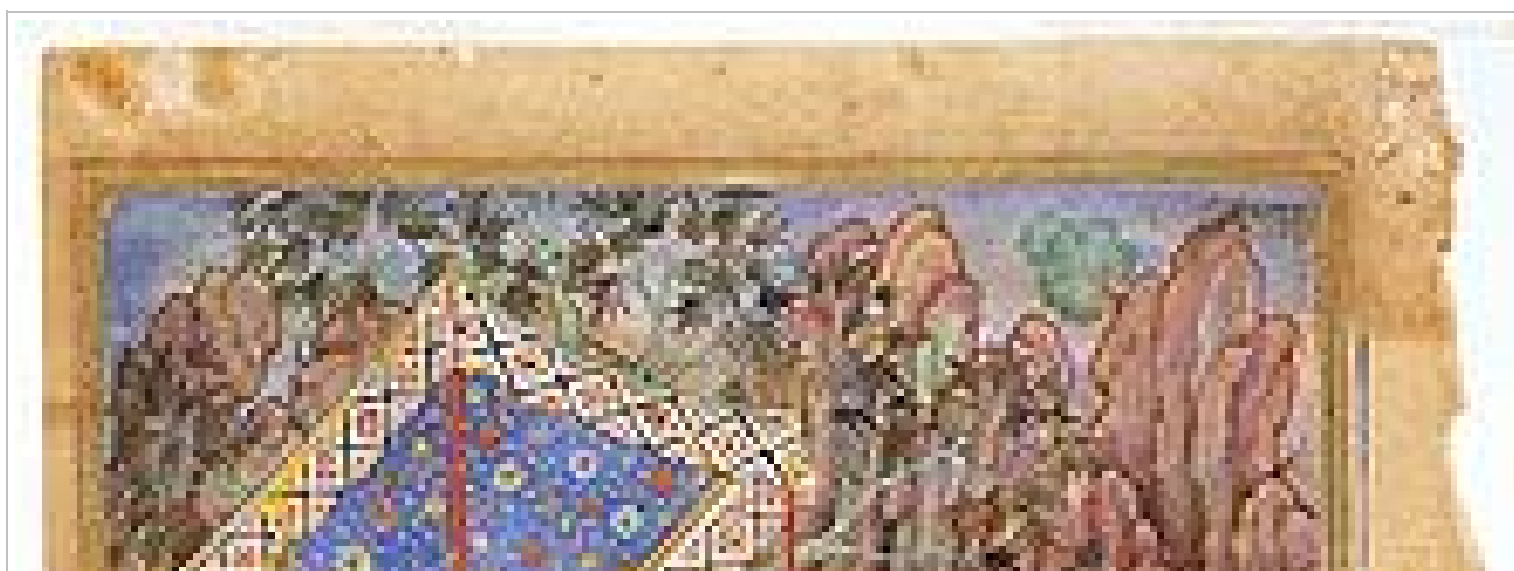
**Mughal gardens** are a type of [gardens](#) built by the [Mughals](#). This style was influenced by the [Persian gardens](#) particularly the [Charbagh](#) structure,<sup>[1]</sup> which is intended to create a representation of an earthly utopia in which humans co-exist in perfect harmony with all elements of nature.<sup>[2]</sup>



The [Shalimar Gardens](#) in [Lahore, Pakistan](#), is among the most famous of all Mughal-era gardens

Significant use of [rectilinear](#) layouts are made within the walled enclosures. Some of the typical features include [pools](#), [fountains](#) and [canals](#) inside the gardens. [Afghanistan](#), [Bangladesh](#), [India](#), and [Pakistan](#) have a number of Mughal gardens which differ from their [Central Asian](#) predecessors with respect to "the highly disciplined geometry".

## History



من چکند کاری فرمودم که در پیشتر هیچ در جهان نداشتند  
فرمودند که سر در میان پیشتر را بسبب آن که گویانند



نقش شده در وقت داشتند کل این کاران این قدر با هم بود  
که در آن وقت بود با شد از آن که در او بود پیشتر را می توان

Mughal Emperor [Babur](#) supervising the creation of a garden

The founder of the [Mughal empire](#), [Babur](#), described his favourite type of garden as a [charbagh](#). They use the term *bāgh*, *baug*, *bagecha* or *bagicha* for garden. This word developed a new meaning in South Asia, as the region lacked the fast-flowing streams required for the Central Asian charbagh. The [Aram Bagh](#) of [Agra](#) is thought to have been the first charbagh in South Asia.

From the beginnings of the Mughal Empire, the construction of gardens was a beloved imperial pastime.<sup>[3]</sup> Babur, the first Mughal conqueror-king, had gardens built in [Lahore](#) and [Dholpur](#). Humayun, his son, does not seem to have had much time for building—he was busy reclaiming and increasing the realm—but he is known to have spent a great deal of time at his father's gardens.<sup>[4]</sup> Akbar built several gardens first in Delhi,<sup>[5]</sup> then in Agra, Akbar's new capital.<sup>[6]</sup> These tended to be riverfront gardens rather than the fortress gardens that his predecessors built. Building riverfront rather than fortress gardens influenced later Mughal garden architecture considerably.



Mughal gardens at the [Taj Mahal](#)

Akbar's son, [Jahangir](#), did not build as much, but he helped to lay out the famous Shalimar garden and was known for his great love for flowers.<sup>[7]</sup> Indeed, his trips to Kashmir are believed to have begun a fashion for naturalistic and abundant floral design.<sup>[8]</sup>

Jahangir's son, [Shah Jahan](#), marks the apex of Mughal garden architecture and [floral design](#). He is famous for the construction of the [Taj Mahal](#), a sprawling funereal paradise in memory of his favorite wife, [Mumtaz Mahal](#).<sup>[9]</sup> He is also responsible for the [Red Fort](#) at Delhi which contains the [Mahtab Bagh](#), a night garden that was filled with night-blooming jasmine and other pale flowers.<sup>[10]</sup> The pavilions within are faced with white marble to glow in the moonlight. This and the marble of the Taj Mahal are inlaid with semiprecious stone depicting scrolling naturalistic floral motifs, the most important being the [tulip](#), which Shah Jahan adopted as a personal symbol.<sup>[11]</sup>

Gol Bagh was the largest recorded garden of Pakistan and India,<sup>[12]</sup> encompassing the town of [Lahore](#) with a five-mile belt of greenery;<sup>[13]</sup> it existed until as late as 1947.<sup>[13]</sup> The initiator of the Mughal gardens in India was Zaheeruddin Babur who had witnessed the beauty of Timurid gardens in Central Asia during his early days. In India, Babur laid out the gardens more systematically. Fundamentally, the Mughal gardens have had edifices in a symmetrical arrangement within enclosed towns with provisions for water channels, cascades, water tanks and fountains etc. Thus, the Mughals maintained the tradition of building fourfold (chaharbagh)-symmetrical garden. Babur, however, applied the term chaharbagh in its widest sense which includes terraced gardens on mountain slopes and his extravagant rock cut garden, the Bagh-i Nilufar at Dholpur.

After Babur, the tradition of building chaharbagh touched its zenith during the time of Shah Jahan. However, modern scholars are now increasingly questioning the excessive use of the term chaharbagh in the interpretation of Mughal gardens, since it was not always symmetrical. This view finds archaeological support also. The excavated Mughal garden at Wah (12 kms west of Taxila), near Hasan Abdal, associated with Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahah reveals that the pattern and overall design has not been symmetrical on the first and second terraces.

As for location, the Mughal emperors were much particular in selecting places of great natural beauty. Often they selected mountain slopes with gushing water to layout gardens, the finest example being Bagh-i Shalamar and Bagh-i Nishat in Kashmir, Shalamar garden at Lahore and Mughal garden at Wah (Hasan Abdal) etc.

Almost all the Mughal gardens contained some very important buildings like residential palaces, forts, mausoleums, mosques etc. The gardens became an essential feature of almost each kind of Mughal monuments and were inter related to these monuments which can be categorized as: (i) Gardens attached with Imperial palaces, forts and gardens which beautified private residential buildings of the nobles (ii) Religious and sacred structures i.e., tombs and mosques erected in the gardens, and (iii) Resort and public building in the pleasure gardens.

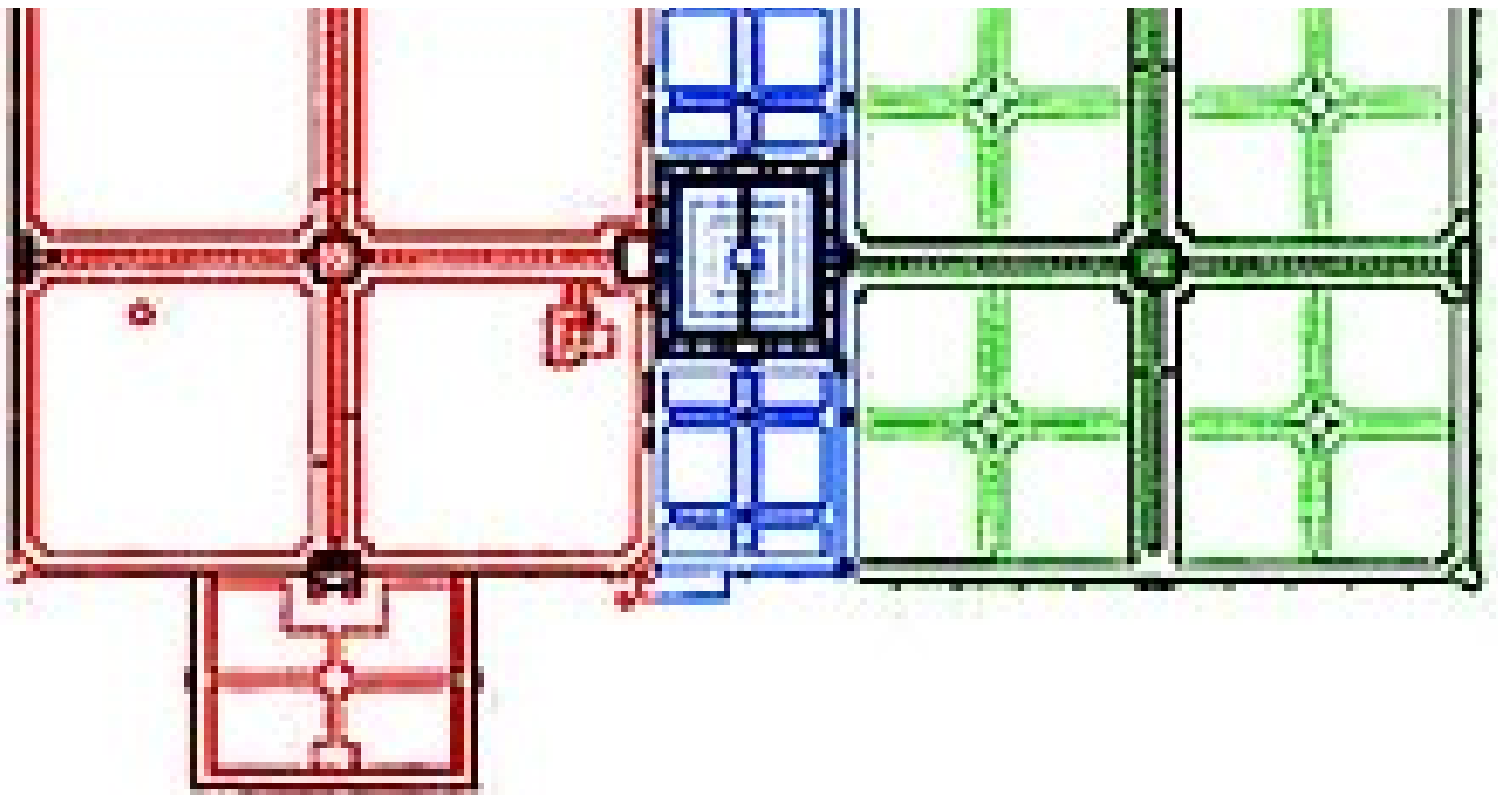
### Waterworks in Mughal Gardens

Like Persian and Central Asian gardens, water became the central and connecting theme of the Mughal gardens. Water played an effective role in the Mughal gardens right from the time of Babur. He was more interested in 'beauty' than 'ecclesiastical prescription'. The beauty of Babur's classic chaharbagh was the central watercourse and its flowing water. Most of these gardens were divided into four quadrants by two axis comprised with water channels and pathways to carry the water under gravitational pressure. At every intersecting point, there used to be a tank. In India, the early gardens were irrigated from the wells or tanks, but under the Mughals the construction of canals or the use of existing canals for the gardens provided more adequate and dependable water supply. Thus, the most important aspect of the waterworks of gardens was the permanent source of water supply. The hydraulic system needs enquiry about the 'outside water source' as well as 'inside distribution of water' in the paradisiacal Mughal gardens. The principal source of water to the Mughal gardens were: (i) lakes or tanks (ii) wells or step-wells (iii) canals, harnessed from the rivers, and (iv) natural springs.

The fountain was the symbol of 'life cycle' which rises and merges and rises again. The Paradise possessed two fountains: 'salsabil' and 'uyun'. 131 Salih Kambuh , a native of Lahore, described very artistically the water system and its symbolic meaning in the garden of Shalamar at Lahore that 'in the center of this earthly paradise a sacred stream flows with its full elegance and chanting, fascinating and exhilarating nature and passes through the gardens irrigating the flower beds. Its water is as beautiful as greenery. The vast stream is just like clouds pouring rains and opens the doors of divine mercy. Its chevron patterns (abshar) are like an institution of worship where the hearts of believers are enlightened. The Mughals developed hydraulic system by using Persian wheel to lift the water and obtained adequate pressure necessary for gardens. The main reason behind the location of gardens on the bank of river was that water was raised to the level of the enclosure wall by Persian Wheel standing on the bank from where it was conducted through aqueduct, to the garden where it ran from the top of the wall in a terra-cotta pipe which also produced adequate pressure needed to work the fountains.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Design and symbolism



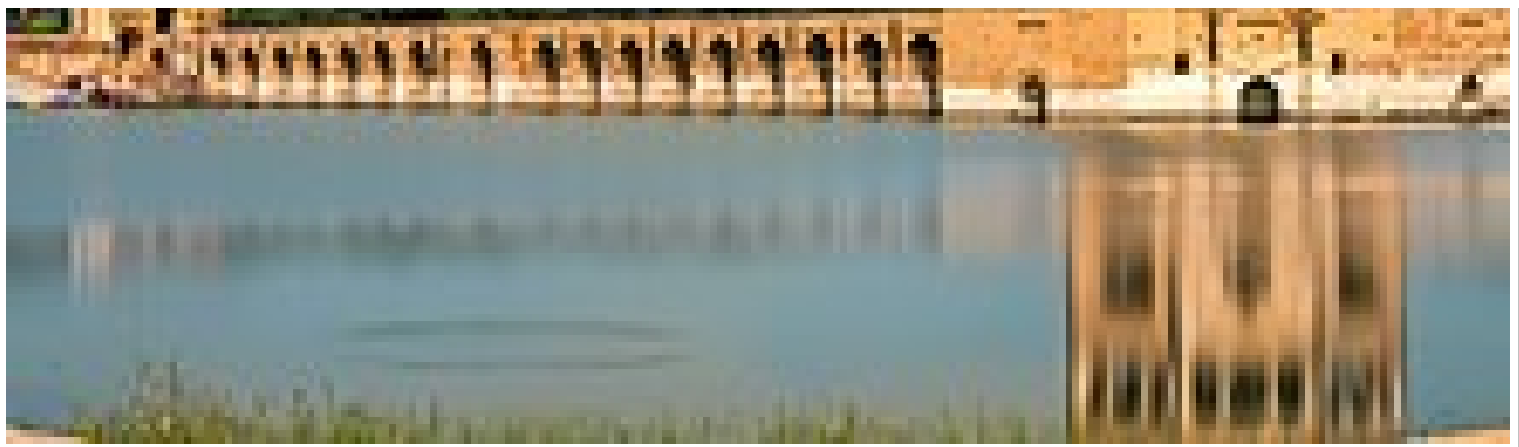


North →

The [Shalimar Gardens](#) of [Lahore](#) are divided into three distinct terraces. The area in red is the uppermost terrace, and was reserved for the Emperor's harem, while the area in blue was reserved for the Emperor. The area in green is the lowest terrace, and was occasionally open to the public.

Mughal gardens design derives primarily from the medieval [Islamic garden](#), although there are nomadic influences that come from the Mughals' Turkish-Mongolian ancestry. Julie Scott Meisami describes the medieval Islamic garden as "a [hortus conclusus](#), walled off and protected from the outside world; within, its design was rigidly formal, and its inner space was filled with those elements that man finds most pleasing in nature. Its essential features included running water (perhaps the most important element) and a pool to reflect the beauties of sky and garden; trees of various sorts, some to provide shade merely, and others to produce fruits; flowers, colorful and sweet-smelling; grass, usually growing wild under the trees; birds to fill the garden with song; the whole is cooled by a pleasant breezes.





The [Hiran Minar](#) complex in [Sheikhupura, Pakistan](#) embodies the Mughal relationship between humans, pets, and hunting. <sup>[15]</sup>

The garden might include a raised hillock at the center, reminiscent of the mountain at the center of the universe in cosmological descriptions, and often surmounted by a pavilion or palace."<sup>[16]</sup> The Turkish-Mongolian elements of the Mughal garden are primarily related to the inclusion of tents, carpets and canopies reflecting nomadic roots. Tents indicated status in these societies, so wealth and power were displayed through the richness of the fabrics as well as by size and number.<sup>[17]</sup>



[Shalimar Bagh, Srinagar](#), Kashmir

Fountainry and running water was a key feature of Mughal garden design. Water-lifting devices like geared [Persian wheels](#) (*saqiya*) were used for irrigation and to feed the water-courses at [Humayun's Tomb](#) in Delhi, [Akbar's Gardens](#) in Sikandra and Fatehpur Sikhri, the Lotus Garden of Babur at Dholpur and the [Shalimar Bagh](#) in Srinagar. Royal canals were built from rivers to channel water to Delhi, Fatehpur Sikhri and Lahore. The fountains and water-chutes of Mughal gardens represented the resurrection and regrowth of life, as well as to represent the cool, mountainous streams of Central Asia and Afghanistan that Babur was famously fond of. Adequate pressure on the fountains was applied through hydraulic pressure created by the movement of Persian wheels or water-chutes (*chaadar*) through terra-cotta pipes, or natural gravitational flow on terraces. It

was recorded that the Shalimar Bagh in Lahore had 450 fountains, and the pressure was so high that water could be thrown 12 feet into the air, falling back down to create a rippling floral effect on the surface of the water.<sup>[18]</sup>

The Mughals were obsessed with symbol and incorporated it into their gardens in many ways. The standard Quranic references to paradise were in the architecture, layout, and in the choice of plant life; but more secular references, including numerological and zodiacal significances connected to family history or other cultural significance, were often juxtaposed. The numbers eight and nine were considered auspicious by the Mughals and can be found in the number of terraces or in garden architecture such as octagonal pools.<sup>[19]</sup>

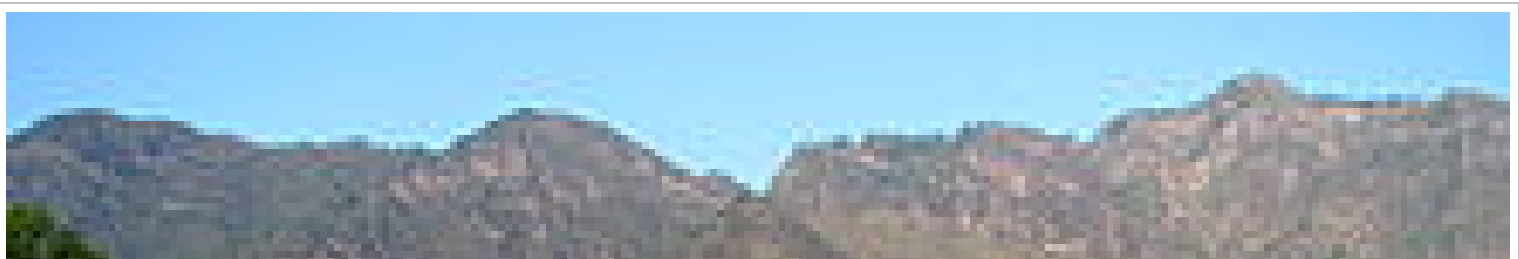
## Academic research

An early textual references about Mughal gardens are found in the memoirs and biographies of the Mughal emperors, including those of [Babur](#), [Humayun](#) and [Akbar](#). Later references are found from "the accounts of India" written by various European travellers (Bernier for example). The first serious historical study of Mughal gardens was written by [Constance Villiers-Stuart](#), with the title *Gardens of the Great Mughals* (1913).<sup>[20]</sup> She was consulted by [Edwin Lutyens](#) and this may have influenced his choice of Mughal style for the [Viceroy's Garden](#) in 1912. Some examples of Mughal gardens are [Shalimar Gardens \(Lahore\)](#), [Lalbagh Fort](#) at Dhaka, and [Shalimar Bagh \(Srinagar\)](#).

## Sites



Humayun's Tomb, Delhi





Nishat Bagh Mughal Gardens







[Rashtrapati Bhavan](#) was built in 1912 in a Mughal style



[Tomb of Jahangir gardens](#)

## Afghanistan

- [Bagh-e Babur \(Kabul\)](#)

## Bangladesh

- [Lalbagh Fort](#)

## India

- [Achabal Gardens](#)
- [Chashma Shahi](#)
- [Humayun's Tomb, Nizamuddin East, Delhi](#)
- [Khusro Bagh, Allahabad](#)
- [Lal Bagh](#)
- [Mehtab Bagh, Agra](#)
- [Nishat Bagh, Jammu and Kashmir](#)
- [Pari Mahal](#)
- [Pinjore Gardens, Haryana](#)
- [Qudsia Bagh](#)
- [Rashtrapati Bhavan \(neo-Mughal\)](#)
- [Roshanara Bagh](#)
- [Safdarjung's Tomb](#)

- [Shalimar Bagh \(Srinagar\)](#), Jammu and Kashmir
- [Taj Mahal](#), Agra

## Pakistan

- [Chauburji](#)
- [Gulabi Bagh](#)
- [Hazuri Bagh](#)
- [Hiran Minar \(Sheikhupura\)](#)
- [Quadrangle gardens at Lahore Fort](#)
- [Shahdara Bagh](#)
- [Shalimar Gardens \(Lahore\)](#)
- [Tomb of Asif Khan](#)
- [Tomb of Jahangir](#)
- [Wah Gardens](#)

## See also

- [Indo-Persian culture](#)

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12. [Dar 1982](#), p. 45
13. [Dickie 1985](#), p. 136
14. <http://www.kgnmarbleinlay.com/blog-post-history-of-mughal-gardens.html>
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## Further reading

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