

Delhi by the Book

While the usual travel guides provide all manner of useful but desiccated information, the following books are recommended for a better-rounded “thick” description of Delhi, its history, its culture and its built heritage.

Dalrymple [1] is a delightful account of the author’s interaction with contemporary Delhi and its culture, interwoven with its rich history. Many of the places visited and described by the author are quite close to the Delhi University campus and Maidens Hotel.

Dalrymple [2] is a riveting account of the 1857 revolt by Indians against the rule of the East India Company and its army. Among other things, the suppression of this massive revolt ended the Mughal dynasty and led to the British crown replacing the East India Company as the direct rulers of colonial India. Delhi, then the nominal capital of the Mughals, was the focus of the revolt. Much of the action, beautifully described in this book, took place in the immediate environs of Delhi University and Maidens Hotel.

Miller [3] is a travelogue based on the author’s extensive walking tours through the city. It is somewhat like Dalrymple [1], but more concerned with the idiosyncrasies of contemporary Delhi and less with its history.

Peck [4] is a lovely, concise account of Delhi’s built heritage. It has informative and lucid commentary about all the important architecture, ancient to contemporary. It contains lots of maps, suggested walking tours, photographs and site plans.

References

- [1] William Dalrymple: *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*, Penguin (2003)
- [2] William Dalrymple: *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857*, Vintage (2008)
- [3] Sam Miller: *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity*, Vintage (2010)
- [4] Lucy Peck: *Delhi - A Thousand Years of Building*, Roli Books (2005)