

# Mosque

In many countries across the world, the mosque in its many forms is the quintessential Islamic building. The mosque, “Masjid” in Arabic, is the Muslim gathering place for prayer. Masjid simply means “a place of prostration.” Although praying is the main act, the mosque is just not a place for prayer. Throughout history, mosques have always been a busy and active place and an integral part of the Muslim community.

# Function

The primary function of a mosque is to act as a place for prayer. However, one of the first mosques that was built was a residence for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when he migrated to Medina. Derived from these early mosques, historical mosques had multiple functions. A mosque was a place for administration where cases and trials were conducted. They were a place for learning with libraries attached providing lectures and classes. The mosque also provided services such as funerals, wedding ceremonies, public baths and a place for the poor. Because it served as a gathering place for Muslims to worship together, it naturally become a central hub of the community. Today the mosques are still an essential part of any Muslim community.

# Visit our mosques

**ICMG Emir Sultan Dandenong Mosque (VIC)**  
139 Cleeland St, Dandenong VIC 3175

**ICMG Brunswick Mosque (VIC)**  
660 Sydney Rd, Brunswick VIC 3056

**ICMG Meadow Heights Mosque (VIC)**  
15-17 Hudson Cct, Meadow Heights VIC 3048

**ICMG Guildford Mosque (NSW)**  
64 Mountford Ave, Guildford NSW 2161

**ICMG Garden Mosque (SAW)**  
92 Shepherdson Rd, Parafield Gardens SA 5107

# visit us



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# MOSQUE



# Mosque Support

The endowment of charitable institutions is an important aspect of Islamic culture, due in part to the third pillar of Islam, which calls for Muslims to donate a portion of their income to the poor. The commissioning of a mosque is seen as a pious act by a ruler or other wealthy patron, and the names of patrons are usually included in the calligraphic decoration of mosques. Such inscriptions often praise the piety and generosity of the patron. For instance, the mihrab now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art bears the inscription:

And he [the Prophet], blessings and peace be upon him, said: *“Whoever builds a mosque for God, even the size of a sand-grouse nest, based on piety, [God will build for him a palace in Paradise].”*

The patronage of mosques was not only a charitable act, but also, like architectural patronage in all cultures, an opportunity for self-promotion. The social services attached to the mosques of the Ottoman sultans are some of the most extensive of their type. In Ottoman Turkey the complex surrounding a mosque is called a 'kulliye'. The kulliye of the Mosque of Sultan Suleyman, in Istanbul, is a fine example of this feature, comprising a soup kitchen, a hospital, several schools, public baths, and a caravanserai (similar to a hostel for travellers). Although primarily you will find Muslims at the mosque, it is open to anyone and everyone. Feel free to explore and visit your local or any mosque and enjoy the serene, calm and peaceful atmosphere.

## Architecture & common Features

**The architecture of a mosque is shaped strongly by the regional traditions and styles of the time and place where it was built. As a result, style, layout and decoration can vary greatly. Nevertheless, because of the common function of the mosque as a place of communal prayer, certain architectural features appear in mosques all over the world.**

### **Sahn (Courtyard)**

The most fundamental necessity of congregational mosque architecture is that it is able to hold the entire male population of a city or town (women are welcomed to attend, but not required to do so). To that end mosques must have a large prayer hall. In many mosques this is adjoined to an open courtyard, called a sahn. Within the courtyard one often finds a fountain, its waters both a welcome in hot lands, and important for the ablutions (ritual cleansing) done before prayer.

### **Mihrab (Niche)**

Another element of a mosque is a mihrab – a niche in the wall that indicate the direction of Mecca, towards which all Muslims pray. Mecca is the city in which the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was born, and the home of the most important Islamic site, the Kaaba. No matter where a mosque is, its mihrab indicates the direction of Mecca.

### **Minaret (Tower)**

One of the most visible aspects of mosque architecture is the minaret, a tower adjacent or attached to a mosque, from which the call to prayer is announced. Minarets take many different forms – from the famous spiral minaret of Samarra, to the tall, pencil minarets of Ottoman Turkey.

### **Qubba (Dome)**

Most mosques also feature one or more domes, called qubba in Arabic. While not a ritual requirement like the mihrab, a dome does possess significance within the mosque – as a symbolic representation of the vault of heaven. The interior decoration of a dome often emphasizes this symbolism, using intricate geometric, stellate, or vegetal motifs to create breathtaking patterns meant to awe and inspire.

