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PRE AND POST CONFERENCE TOURS IN UTTARANCHAL FOR ROUND SQUARE SCHOOLS -OCT 2007



UTTARANCHAL

For many adventure travelers, the Himalayas loom as the world's ultimate destination. (The adventure-travel industry was essentially invented there in the 1960s, when the legendary Col. Jimmy Roberts began leading small groups of intrepid hikers through Nepal.) The primary attraction of the Himalayas, of course, is the stupendous scenery: the world's highest mountains, mountains so vast and imposing that the visitor accustomed to the Rockies or Alps can only gasp in disbelief at first sight of them. But don't underestimate the charms of the local people, whose deep spirituality and good cheer amid heart-wrenching poverty touch virtually everyone who meets them. Many a Himalayan visitor has gone there to see mountains but returned with the people in his heart.

The newly created state of Uttaranchal consists of the Garhwal and Kumaon Himalayas –the state is largely mountainous with stretches of flat country lying south of the foothills. Because roads are a rarity in this vertical part of the world, walking is a way of life in the Himalayas. To see the big trophy peaks up close -- Nanda Devi, Trishul, Nanda Kot -- you'll join in that way of life, making long-distance walks along well-established valley trails that have been used by local people for hundreds of years. Most Himalayan walkers hire local porters to help carry the load and to serve as trail guide. In the case of group treks, a trek staff takes care of cooking and camp chores. (This style of travel has come to be known as trekking.) Ganga, that most sacred of Indian rivers, is worshipped as the life-giving goddess who brought salvation to this land. Pilgrims bathe in the Ganga on auspicious days and her waters are used for purification rituals. This great river, emerging from the icy glaciers of the Himalayas, descended to earth with such force that the gods had to be called in to prevent a complete deluge. The mighty Ganga was split into 12 channels to temper her force and the siblings again unite into one single stream after Devprayag, where the two great streams of Alaknanda and Bhagirathi meet. Four other confluences higher up add up to form the five holy confluences or Panch Prayag, which pilgrims visit for worship.

The river Alaknanda, the main tributary of the Ganga, rises near Badrinath and flows down to meet the Dhaul Ganga River, 10 kms north of Joshimath at Vishnuprayag. Cutting a deep gorge into the mountains, the confluence is dark and mostly in the shadows.

At Nandprayag, 190 kms short of Rishikesh on the Uttarkashi road, the River Mandakini joins the Alaknanda. A temple dedicated to Gopalji (a form of Lord Krishna) marks the confluence.

21 kms below is Karnaprayag, the confluence of Alaknanda and the Pindar River which flows out of the Nanda Devi glacier. There are two temples here, one dedicated to Uma (the goddess Durga) and the other to Karna, the tragic hero of the Mahabharata. At Rudraprayag, 137 kms short of Rishikesh, the Alaknanda meets the other major stream of Mandakini. This is an important commercial centre from where a road leads to Kedarnath, the source of the River Mandakini. Temples of Rudranath and Chamunda Devi mark the confluence.

Finally, 68 kms north of Rishikesh the Alaknanda meets the Bhagirathi emanating from Gomukh to form the mighty Ganga. Known as Devprayag, this is the most spectacular of all the confluences, with a huge promontory of rock marking the meeting point.

Haridwar is one of the seven holy cities of Hinduism. Legend has it that Vishnu's footprint was found on the bank of the holy river, giving it its sanctity. Situated at the base of the Siwalik Hills, Haridwar is where the River Ganga passes through its last gorge and begins a 2,000km journey across the plains of India to the Bay of Bengal. Haridwar is a very old town and was mentioned by the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang and also the wealth of the town attracted the attention of Timur the Great, more commonly known as Tamerlane, who sacked it in 1399.

Rishikesh is the ancient road head for all pilgrim traffic and this small town in the season is hectic with groups of villagers from all over India clamouring for seats on the buses to the four hill shrines. The northern part of the town is called Muni-ki-Reti and refers to the silver shores of the river where the rishis of old meditated. Across the Ganga, large, sprawling but well-maintained ashrams teach yoga and publish books on the scriptures. Although the distance is only 15 miles or so the road is in a very bad condition and the journey can take up to an hour, without counting stops at the fantastic temples and ashrams along the road.

Joshimath which, although having none of the elegance of its sister hill resorts, does have a charm and beauty of its own. It is the site where the famous Adiguru Shankaracharya attained enlightenment before beginning his campaign for the unification of India and the revitalisation of Hinduism. There is a temple here called the Na Singh where the statue of Na Singh involves a legend that when the arm of the idol finally breaks, the road to Badrinath will be blocked.

The Capital Of Uttaranchal is DEHRADUN which boasts of many Institutes and Research Establishments and Schools, to name a few, The Indian Military Academy, The Forest research Institute, The Wadia Institute of Himalayan geology, The Institute of Petroleum Exploration; The Doon School and Rashtriya Indian Military College are also located here. Dehradun rests at the centre of the Doon valley between the sedimentary low lying hills called the Shivaliks and the Himalayas to the North. The valley is at an altitude of 2000 ft it has a moderate climate and is very green, covered with mango and Litchie orchards and patches of rice cultivation; it is bounded by the river Ganga and the Yamuna on the East and West.

In order to see the best within the short span of 7 days available to us, we are compelled to offer the quickest route to reach our main destinations, skipping some interesting spots on the sidelines. We have excluded the "Valley Of Flowers" from our options as, in October, a majority of the flowers would have gone off bloom. October is a good month for traveling in Garhwal and Kumaon, as post-monsoons, the skies are generally clear and the eternal snow peaks are visible for most of the day –so we hope that you will get some of the awe inspiring views of the great Himalayan peaks which are the source of so much peace and happiness among the people to live close to them and gaze at their beauty from afar. In all three tours we will endeavour to take you through small introductory lessons and practice of Yoga. As you are probably aware, YOGA, the ancient Indian Science of holistic living owes its beginnings to these mountains and valleys. Indeed, Rishikesh is called the Yoga capital of India.



AULI -KUARI PASS TREK

TOUR CODE : RS-2

Duration : 7 days

Season : October 2007

INTRODUCTION

AULI is one of the few developed and certainly the most modern ski-slopes in India and there is a Cable Car which runs from Joshimath to the top of the ski-run over a distance of some 4 Km . The top of the ski-run is situated at an altitude of 3049 m and affords a clear run of 3 Km of downhill ski-ing . What is really magnificent about Auli is the 180 degrees panoramic sweep of the giant peaks of the Garhwal Himalaya -starting with NANDA DEVI - the most beautiful mountain in India and the second highest in the Country after Kanchenjunga in Sikkim . Apart from NANDA DEVI (7817 m) right from Trisul (23,496 ft / 7,120 m) to the peaks of Kedarnath (22,994ft / 6,968m) with Kamet (25,595 ft / 7,756 m), Nilkanth (21,767 ft/6,596 m), Rishikot , Changabang (22,651 ft/6,864 m), Kedarnath and Chaukhamba (23,522 ft/7,128 m), to name a few. One gets close-up views of Kamet (7756m) , Mana Parvat (7273m) and Dunagiri (7066 m) , Hathi Parbat (6727 m) and Gauri Parbat (6719 m) .

The road to Auli is a scenic drive all along where one drives first along the Ganga upto the confluence of the Bhagirathi and Alaknanda rivers at Devprayag where the Ganga begins . We then take the Alaknanda valley and drive upto Pauri which is on the high slopes and from where the first views of the snows are seen before descending into the broad valley of the river at Shrinagar which was once the Capital of the erstwhile State of Garhwal - on towards the narrowing gorge and Rudraprayag where the Alaknanda is met by the Mandakini which emerges from the slopes above Kedarnath - but we continue driving along the Alaknanda to Karnaprayag where it is met by the Pindar , next as we ascend gradually to Nandprayag it is joined by the Nandakini river . From here the drive takes us to Chamoli - set on the higher slopes and past it to Pipalkothi where the valley opens up to unfold a broad amphitheatre surrounded by high grassy meadows and sheer cliffs , before we reach Joshimath which looks down onto the river below and Vishnu Prayag where the Alaknanda is joined by the Dhauliganga . The Alaknanda continues towards Badrinath . From Joshimath we begin an ascent through giant Himalayan Oak forest to the meadows of Auli with its breathtaking views and location .

The Garson meadows lying on a spur above the treeline are an enthralling trek from Auli towards the Kuari Pass - the ridge gives one fabulous views of the Peaks as one continues, walking up to the Kuari Pass at an altitude of 3658 m and down to Tapovan with its Hot Sulphur Springs and set in the Valley where the Chipko (tree protection

movement) commenced . There are many hot sulphur springs on the drive along the Dhauliganga

- HIGHLIGHTS :**
- ✚ Scenic drive into the Inner Garhwal Himalaya along the Ganga and its major tributary -the Alaknanda .
 - ✚ Auli -at 3057 m affording the most spectacular views of the Garhwal Himalayan Giants including NANDA DEVI peak (7817 m) .
 - ✚ Trek to KUARI PASS (3658m/12,000ft) through high altitude meadows and down into the Dhauliganga valley to the Tapovan Hot Sulphur Springs .
 - ✚ Rafting on the white waters of the river Ganges
 - ✚ Visit Rishikesh and Hardwar – the holiest of North Indian cities
 - ✚ Visit Reni –the village where the “chipko” movement (tree protection) began

ITINERARY

DAY 1

DELHI- SHRINAGAR / RUDRAPRAYAG

Board the Shatabdi Express at 0700 hrs and arrive Hardwar at 1125 AM . Transfer to coach for journey into the Himalayas . Drive via Rishikesh to Pauri via Devprayag - arriving Shrinagar by the evening with picnic lunch enroute. Overnight at Hotel Nand Riverside on the banks of the river Alaknanda at Shrinagar /or at the Hotel Monal at Rudraprayag . [HOTEL NAND RIVERSIDE]

DAY 2

SHRINAGAR / RUDRAPRAYAG - AULI

Drive along the Alaknanda valley to Rudraprayag ,stopping to see the spot where Jim Corbett finally shot the “Man Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag” , a quick visit to see the



confluence of the Alaknanda with the Mandakini river , Karnaprayag , Nandprayag and onwards past Pipalkothi to JOSHIMATH approx 5 hrs

- on to Auli in the Telepherique (a 4 Km ride) . Overnight at Auli - [HOTEL CLIFFTOP]

DAY 3

TREK AULI - CHITRAKANTA (6-7 hrs)

After breakfast we commence our trek to Garson meadows and on towards Chitrakantha (3310m / 10860ft) on this high trail with views of the panorama of the eternal snow peaks



on our left and sights of the soaring griffon and lamergeir as they catch the thermals or go into a dive –fairly common place on this stretch .The beautiful Monal pheasant and the Tragopan can also be seen by those who have dame luck on their side ! –a pleasant trek with a gradual ascent , taking approx 6-7 hrs walking time [OVERNIGHT IN ALPINE 3 MAN TENTS , TWO PEOPLE SHARING A TENT]

DAY 4

TREK :CHITRAKANTHA – KAURI PASS –KHULARA (6/9 hrs)

A steep ascent up to Kuari Pass after an intitial gradual ascent up to what is known as Kuari Pass base , (3658m /1200ft) –We reach the pass and return part of the way , turning right along the spur which continues down to the Dhauliganga river .For those not



feeling inclined to summit the pass , they continue walking along this spur and descend past Tali to Khulara .

[OVERNIGHT IN ALPINE 3 MAN TENTS , TWO PEOPLE SHARING A TENT]

DAY 5

TREK KHULARA – TAPOVAN (5 hrs)

Today we have a steep descent to Tapovan (1978m). Tapovan is in the Dhauliganga Valley and there are a series of boiling sulphur springs emanating like geysers at places . After bathing in the



energizing and relaxing hot water , our stiff muscles and feet are rejuvenated .We board our vehicles to take the drive upstream along the Dhauliganga to the village of **Reni** .This village gained prominence as this was where the famous “chipko” movement originated – the villagers encircled the trees with their arms and stopped the contractors from axing trees . It is easy to understand why this took place – just one look at the precarious location of the village will explain the importance of forest cover in stabilising the mud slopes from sliding down and annihilating the complete settlement . We then drive back towards Joshimath and past it to PIPALKOTHI for our night (approx 3 hrs) [OVERNIGHT AT HOTEL UDAY PALACE / BADRINATH]

DAY 6

JOSHIMATH / PIPALKOTHI – SHIVPURI CAMP

Drive back the way we came ,but with a different perspective as we follow the alaknanda river in the downstream direction .If we are enjoying the scenic drive , we can make a 2 hr detour towards Chopta , from Chamoli ascending the high slopes into the meadows of



Chopta ,past the Musk deer breeding farm affording us stupendous views of Mt Chaukhamba (four pillars) – a peak with four summits rising above the flat table top supported by a colossal buttress of snow and ice . We reach our Deluxe Tented Camp on the sandy beach of the river Ganga between Kaudiyala and Shivpuri [OVERNIGHT IN DELUX TENTS ON BEDS-TWO SHARING A TENT]

DAY 7 :

SHIVPURI – RAFTING – RISHIKESH-HARDWAR-DELHI

White water rafting down 11 rapids (varying from Grade 4 – Grade 2) and a thrilling run of approx three hours in the emerald green waters of the holy ganges .We get off our

rubber rafts at Rishikesh and after changing we walk along the holy bathing ghats at Muni-ki -reti . Later we drive through the Rajaji national Park (We cannot ride on the jungle trails yet as the park opens 15 Nov)-however , we will still see a lot of deer and bird life , and if lucky , the wild elephant herd ,as we drive onto Hardwar , in time to catch our train to Delhi –arriving late night at 2240 hrs (with dinner on board). Transferred to our Hotel at Delhi for overnight stay [HOTEL CONNAUGHT / OLD WORLD HOSPITALITY]

NOTE

Option for those not wishing to trek

DAY 3 : At leisure in Auli

DAY 4 : Excursion by Bus to Badrinath, with overnight stay at Badrinath –where you can visit the ancient village of Mana (now a “heritage” village) and see how the locals live. Also visit the Hindu religious Temple at Badrinath

DAY 5 : Drive from Badrinath to Tapovan where we are joined by the Trekkers

PRICE : *For a Minimum 20 persons: \$ 560 per person*

PRICE BASED ON :

CLIFF TOP HOTEL at AULI .

HOTEL UDAY PALACE / BADRINATH at PIPALKOTHI

HOTEL CONNAUGHT / OLD WORLD HOSPITALITY ,DELHI

PRICE INCLUDES :-

Twin sharing of a Double room

ALPINE STYLE TENTS on twin sharing during trek and while Camping

Rail fare by EXECUTIVE Class (air conditioned)

Luxury coach with push back seats (Non AC for Hill section /AC for Plains)

English speaking Escort throughout the tour

Mountain Guide during the trek

All meals during the tour

4 Star Hotel in Delhi for the last night on bed and breakfast on twin sharing

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE :

Mineral water, Tips, laundry, soft drinks , alcoholic or other beverages and beverages or items of a personal nature

Dinner at Delhi on the last day

NOTE

All the above prices are based on an exchange rate of \$ 1 = 45 INR .The current price of Gasoline has been taken at the rate of crude oil being \$70 per bbl . At the time of operating the tour there may be an escalation in the price depending on the increase of either or both of these factors PLUS inflation. We will absorb a 5% increase in the costs .However any further increase will need to be borne by the clients

IMPORTANT TOUR NOTES FOR TREKS

Timings given in the Itinerary are approximate

IMPORTANT NOTE: Whilst every effort is made to keep to the above itinerary, clients will hopefully appreciate that this is adventure travel. Weather conditions, road conditions and vehicle breakdowns can contribute to the need for changes. Your driver/guide will do everything in his power to see that you are inconvenienced as little as possible in such events.

EQUIPMENT PROVIDED. We provide 'A' frame alpine or dome tents which have room for **two people** plus all of your equipment. There is also a **dining tent, a toilet tent** exclusively for our group use, and a kitchen and staff tent. There are **camp chairs or stools, a kerosene/ gas lamp** or candles for reading in the dining tent at night, stainless steel **crockery and tableware and foam sleeping mats.** **We strongly recommend you bring your own sleeping bag, karrimat or therma-a-rest as well.** The staff complement of cooks and assistants are always in attendance. They put up and take down the tents, make the tea, cook the food, wash the dishes, load the porters and carry a load of their own. They work extremely hard and are always willing to help. If you want to join in putting up tents and taking them down, you are free to do so .

A TYPICAL DAY ON TREK

Soon after dawn you are served tea or coffee, while still in your sleeping bag. A few minutes later a washing bowl of hot water is placed outside your tent. You can wash inside or outside the tent. Once dressed you can pack your kit-bag/duffel bag and day-pack in preparation for the day's hike, and place these outside the tent. The camp staff will take down the tents. While this is happening, breakfast is served. In the Himalaya breakfast usually consists of cereals and/or porridge with milk, eggs, usually served with chapatis, (unleavened bread that is cooked on a hot iron plate) or pancakes with honey or jam. There is always plenty of tea and coffee. **The camp will be being struck while you are eating, and you will need to be packed and out of your tents before breakfast.**

You can take a leisurely breakfast while the staff prepare loads for the porters or pack animals. If you have not filled up your water bottle the night before ask the cook to fill your bottle with boiled water. You may also collect a packed lunch, although usually you may have a cooked meal at the lunch stop. Departure from camp could be from any time between dawn and 9.00am, depending on the days itinerary, but generally you will start walking at around 8.00am.

Depending on the length of the day's walk, you will walk for three or four hours before stopping for lunch. The lunch stop will last for about an hour.

You usually arrive at the next camp site by 4:00pm. Camp may already be set up by the time you get there, and tea and biscuits will be ready to welcome you. Supper will be ready soon after dark, and will be served in the dining tent or in some instances, around the camp fire. Camp fires will only be made if dead wood is available. The standard of cooking on trek is usually surprisingly good, with the style of cooking being a compromise between local and western food. Menus vary, but typically we start with soup. The main course is often a rice based meal with meat stew or mild curry, plus separate vegetable and salad dishes. A sweet dish is provided after the meal. Our meal is finished with tea, coffee or hot chocolate. Sometimes a bottle of local spirit is provided by the camp staff, but we advise clients to buy plastic half bottles from duty free. **You should only drink alcohol when you feel acclimatised.** After dinner, the usual practise is for your water bottle to be filled with hot water and used as a hot water bottle for your sleeping bag and for drinking water the next day.

We would like you to enjoy the serenity of the unhurried atmosphere that exists in these wilderness regions. Our day to day camp routine on your trekking adventure is geared to allow you to make the most of your holiday.

All itineraries are subject to change without prior notice.