



INDIA NATURE TRAILS

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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 rest 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 Litchi 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. The Corbett National Park, though officially closed until the 15th Of November is "a must see" and on one of our three options, we take you to a small part of it which is open all the year round. 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 endeavor 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.

1. CORBETT NATIONAL PARK AND THE LAKE DISTRICT

TOUR CODE : RS- 1

Duration : 7 days

Season : October 2007

The Corbett National Park is aptly called the 'Land of Roar and Trumpet', this forest of flowing rivers, blue waters and Sal-dappled christened after the famous Colonel 'Gentleman' Jim Corbett. There is something absolutely magical about being in **tiger** and **elephant** country, where unexpected sights and sounds present themselves at almost every turn. Many of Jim Corbett's enthralling tales, including the Man-eaters of Kumaon and the Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag, are set here.

In 1957, officers and locals who knew the major role Jim Corbett had played in protecting the forest, marking its boundaries and championing the survival of the animals of the Ramganga, asked for it to be renamed after the legendary hunter. It was consequently re-christened the Corbett National Park in 1957. Project Tiger was thus set up in April 1973 to protect the tiger and its habitat. Appropriately, the Corbett Tiger Reserve was the location for the launch of Project Tiger, officially inaugurated on February 1, 1974. The Corbett Tiger Reserve is also one of the world's best birding habitats and many twitchers travel here from across the world to add to their life-list of species. Just under 600 species of birds including passage migrants have been listed from Corbett. Despite the efforts of conservationists, the tiger population of India is dwindling rapidly, and Corbett National Park is one of the few parks where the tiger can still be seen. There are around 50 tigers in Corbett, besides other wildlife like leopards, several lesser cats, the wild dog, porcupines, jackals, civets, sloth bear, black bear, wild boar and a few hundred elephants.

Stretching over **520 sq km** with a core area of 330 sq km, the Corbett National Park consists of mixed deciduous and sal forests and stretches of savannah grasslands where antelope, chital, hog deer and sambar graze. The Rhesus monkey and common langur are ubiquitous, while the long-snouted gharial, marsh crocodile, cobras and pythons can be seen on the mud banks of the Ramganga.

As the larger part of the Park opens only after the 15th of November, we will visit the Southern part (open all year round) called the "Jhirna Block".

Jim Corbett's House at Kaladhungi is now a Museum and we visit it on the drive up to Nainital – a popular Hill station built around a lake at an altitude of 1938 metres which is utilised for boating and yachting. There is also a 9 hole golf course at Nainital and a cable car and a Zoo for animals which live in the temperate zones of the Himalaya. Buildings from the days of the Raj can still be seen standing on the slopes rising some 1500 ft above the level of the lake. The other lakes forming a part of the Lake District of Kumaon are Saat Tal (7 lakes), Bhimtal and Naukuchiya Tal (9 cornered lake). We drive to each of these and spend the night on the shores of the Naukuchiya Tal. We then return on our downhill journey to the Plains and visit another colossal lake next to a Historical SIKH temple – a worth see as the miracle ficus tree associated with a legend from the

travels of the founder of the SIKH religion, Guru Nanak. The routes of the tree can be seen above the ground.

The last two days see us visiting a sugar cane farm staying in an erstwhile palace at Rampur, the seat of the “Nawab of Rampur” - now a heritage hotel or the Mud Fort at Kuchesar in the palace belonging to the “Raja Of Kuchesar”, and on the last day as we return to Delhi in our coach, we stop by to visit a Brassware manufacturing factory at Moradabad which is the largest town exporting brass objects to Europe and the USA

HIGHLIGHTS :-

- + Game drives and Elephant ride in the Corbett National park for wild life viewing**
- + Stay at Nainital – a town with a colonial façade, beside a Lake at approx 2000 metres in altitude in the Himalayas**
- + Visit the pristine lakes in the lake District of the Kumaon Hills**
- + See a Historical SIKH temple associated with a miracle**
- + Visit a sugarcane farm and stay in an erstwhile Palace Hotel at Rampur**
- + Visit India’s most famous Brassware manufacturing town and visit a factory**

ITINERARY

DAY 0

DELHI – RAMNAGAR

Board the overnight train, the Corbett Link Express, departing Delhi at 2245 hrs to Ramnagar –an overnight journey, [on board train : IInd class AC]

DAY 1

RAMNAGAR –CORBETT NATIONAL PARK



Arrive at Ramnagar at 0500 hrs in the early morning. On arrival transfer to Jeeps for a half hour ride to our Hotel on the periphery of the Corbett National park. After breakfast, proceed on a jungle round of the open area of the Park at the **Jhirna** forest block in open



4x4 jeeps for wildlife viewing. Do a jungle round by Elephant in the evening. [Overnight at CORBETT JUNGLE RESORT / CORBETT HIDEAWAY]

DAY 2

AT CORBETT NATIONAL PARK

We do morning and evening rounds by Jeep / Elephant alternately for wild life viewing.



In between we visit a local village and see how the villagers living on the periphery of the park are involved in eco-friendly activities connected with wildlife tourism [Overnight at CORBETT JUNGLE RESORT / CORBETT HIDEAWAY]

DAY 3

CORBETT PARK – NAINITAL

After breakfast, drive to Nainital, visiting enroute, Kaladhungi, the house where the legendary hunter turned conservationist lived – begin the hill climb to Nainital (1.5 hrs) - North India's popular Hill resort set in the Lake district of the Kumaon Himalayas. On



arrival, the rest of the day is at leisure to walk around the bazaar surrounding the lake [OVERNIGHT AT BELVEDERE PALACE / FAIRHAVENS]

DAY 4

AT NAINITAL

In the morning we walk up to the Nainital Zoo where we get an opportunity to see many of the beautiful Himalayan birds in their colorful plumage) and the ungulates and big



cats – including the snow leopard. Later we have the option to take the cable car ride to the ridge to get views of the eternal snows and also take a drive to the Forest rest House at Kilbury for a sunset view over the high mountains

DAY 5

NAINITAL- NAUKUCHIA TAL

Today we take a short one hour drive to see the three lakes – Saat tal, Bhimtal and Naukuchiya Tal -.Overnight at Naukuchiya Tal. We visit the House of a Polish emigrant –Mr. Smetacek to view his collection of rare butterflies and numerous specimens netted in these Himalayas



[OVERNIGHT AT HOTEL LAKE RESORT, Naukuchia Tal]

DAY 6

NAUKUCHIA TAL – RAMPUR / KUCHESAR

Today we begin our journey down to the plains –we first visit the Nanakmatta lake,



a plains lake set beside the historical SIKH temple (Gurdwara) where the founder of the SIKH religion, Guru Nanak stayed for sometime on his travels. Here we see the legendary 500 yrs old Peepul Tree where he performed a

miracle –the tree can be seen with its roots exposed. Later we drive on to Rampur to stay in the Heritage Hotel in the erstwhile Palace of the “Nawab of Rampur” or the Raja of Kuchesar [KHAS BAGH PALACE, RAMPUR / THE MUD FORT KUCHESAR].



DAY 7

RAMPUR – DELHI

Today we visit a farm growing sugarcane and proceed to Moradabad, the centre of the brassware manufacturing and export Industry. We visit a factory here, and then continue our drive to Delhi –arriving at Delhi in time for dinner. TOUR ENDS

PRICE : Please contact us for details.

PRICE BASED ON:

HOTEL CORBETT JUNGLE RESORT /CORBETT HIDEAWAY; HOTEL BELVEDERE PALACE / ARIF CASTLE /CORBETT NAINI RETREAT/ FAIRHAVENS IN NAINITAL. HOTEL AAM KHAS PALACE RAMPUR / THE MUD FORT, KUCHESAR

PRICE INCLUDES :-

Twin sharing of a Double room

Rail fare by IInd Class (air conditioned)

All national Park Entrance fees ; Jungle round by 4x4 jeeps ; One Elephant ride per person; services of a trained Naturalist cum Guide at Corbett national park

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

English speaking Escort throughout the tour

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

END OF 1ST TOUR

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 day's 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.