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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 Dhaulti 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.

3. TREK TO DEORIA TAL AND CHANDRASHILLA PEAK

TOUR CODE : RS- 3









Duration : 7 days

Season : October 2007

INTRODUCTION

*This tour takes us to a lake just below the tree line in the Central Garhwal Himalayas to an altitude of over 3930 metres. We get a grandstand view of the **Chaukhamba (7138 metres)** massif as the Centre piece of the panorama which stretches before us in an uninterrupted sweep from West to East. This is one of the few places in the inner Himalayas which can be accessed in a not too long drive from Dehradun, unlike the other distant destinations of the Garhwal - a day's excursion to the Lake Deoria Tal (3298 metres) and a circuit taking us to the highest temple of Garhwal - Tungnath, (3680 metres) and an easy ascent of the highest Peak in this vicinity -the Chandrashilla Peak (3930 metres), before continuing a descent through thick forest and meadows to complete the arc from the Mandakini to the Alaknanda. The circuit passes through a part of the Musk deer sanctuary and it is quite possible to get a view of the Musk deer in the wild. The waters of the river Mandakini are a beautiful emerald green in October and the weather is generally clear giving one a chance to look out at long and gorgeous views of the eternal snow clad peaks. Auli is the other place with a gorgeous setting. A Cable Car 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 skiing. What is really magnificent about Auli is the 180 degrees panoramic sweep of the giant peaks of the Garhwal Himalaya -staring 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).*

HIGHLIGHTS

-  **Visit a region with exhilarating panoramic views of the central Garhwal Himalayas.**
-  **Trek to the highest temple in Garhwal-TUNGNATH (3680 metres).**
-  **Attempt the Chandrashilla Peak (3930 metres), above Tungnath.**
-  **Trek to Deoria Tal lake surrounded by thick forests and glorious views of CHAUKHAMBHA peak**
-  **Visit Garhwal's premier ski Resort at Auli**
-  **Scenic drives along the valleys of the mighty Alaknanda and Ganga rivers**
-  **White water rafting on the river Ganga**
-  **Scenic drive through the "Open" area of the Rajaji National Park at Chilla**

ITINERARY



Monal Pheasant

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/ Rudraprayag by the evening with picnic lunch enroute. Overnight at Hotel Nand Riverside / Hotel Monal on the banks of the river Alaknanda at Shrinagar / Rudraprayag.

We visit the Confluence and a temple cave across the river from our Hotel [OVERNIGHT HOTEL MONAL]

DAY 2

TREK: OKHIMATH-DEORIA TAL

After breakfast we drive into the lovely valley of the Mandakini river and after an



hour's gradual ascent along the emerald green waters of the river, we begin a steep ascent to Okhimath. After visiting this ancient temple (where the deity from Kedarnath is housed in the winter), we begin our trek to Deoria tal.

After breakfast, transfer to start point AT OKHIMATH for 6 Km TREK from Okhimath to Deoria Tal. Initially the trek passes through village trails giving you a chance to have a close encounter with the settlement pattern, dress, jewelry and life style of the mountain people. Later, through thick forest, a three hour trek through villages to the lake set amidst a Forest with the reflection of Chaukhamba (7138 metres) in its waters.

[OVERNIGHT IN ALPINE TENTS]

DAY 3

TREK: DEORIA TAL – CHOPTA



Today we have a long 14 trek through alpine pastures and forest, first downhill to the village Sari and then a steady ascent to Chopta – set in expansive green Alps. Encounter Himalayan species of Birds and raptors like the Lammergeir and Griffon. [OVERNIGHT IN ALPINE TENTS]

DAY 4

TREK CHOPTA –TUNGNATH – CAMP

We begin our climb to the highest point - a steep ascent to TUNGNATH (3680 m)-the



highest temple in the Garhwal himal. (for those who are up to it – they can ascend another 300m to the CHANDRASHILLA peak (3930 m). After attaining our objective, we begin the descent on the reverse slopes of the mountain along a track that takes you down to Mandal. Enroute we stop at a Camping Ground for the night. [OVERNIGHT IN ALPINE TENTS].

DAY 5

TREK : CAMP -MANDAL (3- 4 HRS) ; DRIVE TO AULI

After breakfast, trek to Mandal - on termination of the trek



get into our coach to drive to Joshimath (approx 2 hrs) from where we either board the telepherique or continue driving to Auli. [OVERNIGHT IN HOTEL CLIFFTOP]

DAY 6

DRIVE AULI – SHIVPURI ON GANGA

Today we take the cable car on the way down to Joshimath and drive back along the



Alaknanda river to Our Camp on the Banks of the Ganga at Shivpuri –[OVERNIGHT IN DELUXE TENTS]

DAY 7 :

SHIVPURI-RAFTING - 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, a wild elephant herd, as we drive on to Hardwar, in time to catch our train to Delhi –arriving late night (with dinner on board). Transferred to our Hotel at



Delhi for overnight stay. **TOUR ENDS**

PRICE : Please contact us for details

PRICE BASED ON :

HOTEL NAND RIVERSIDE / MONAL AT SHRINAGAR / RUDRAPRAYAG; CLIFF TOP HOTEL at AULI. ALPINE STYLE TENTS on twin sharing during trek and while Camping.

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
Complete trekking arrangement with Dining tent and Kitchen staff
Porterage for luggage up to a maximum of 15 Kg per person on trek
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 \$ 45 =1 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 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.