

Villages, Lake & Pass

08th May - 18th May 2015

TOUR CODE VP20150508

Walking Holidays 2015

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Shimla
WALKS



*An eleven days soft adventure holiday in the Himalayan foot hills,
your stay arrangements will be in the camps, guest house and hotels*

Tour Description

The lake here plays a vital role to rotate the life in these hills. The pass is famous for its views and the Villages have different tales to tell. This Village Walk holiday tour program is for those who are interested in nature, for those who enjoy walking & traveling without the knowledge of what is around and the next corner.

Do you want to treat yourself with a blend of cultures, landscapes, nature's creations, local traditions and remote locations? Do you want to take yourself away from the hectic schedule of your daily routine and give a chance to your muscles to get tuned back to basics? Or do you just want to be with yourself, go around, tickle your creative bone and bring some happy memories to your friends? Then follow us on this trail and fulfill your wishes?

The forest around the lake provides life to many and 'Boodhi Nagin' the serpent goddess of the temple built on the banks of the lake blesses everyone who visits her and promises to protect the area.

The walk ends at Khanag from where we drive to Shimla. Here you get an opportunity to enjoy the flavor of the Majestic Past of Shimla Hills. We make your arrangement of stay at Shimla British Resort, originally a house of Henry Irwin the famous architect during the Viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin. The house has been converted into a hotel.

There are no strenuous walks or steep hikes. Every day in the evening we shall discuss with you the programme for the following day. During this trip your stays are organized at decent homestays, well equipped camps and hotels which have four star or better ratings.

Detailed Itinerary

day 1

8th May – Friday

Arrival Delhi | Overnight Stay at Hotel / Homestay | Meal Plan: Breakfast

Welcome to India! You are met by our representative in the arrival area of the airport after you clear all immigration and customs formalities. Depart for your Home Stay to check in.

Delhi stands as the capital of Modern India. Here you can see the mingling of the Old and New India, the ancient and the modern. Delhi is made up of seven ancient cities, spanning the period from the 11th to 20th centuries. Delhi has seen the rise and fall of many emperors, which has left behind a plethora of monuments that commemorate the grandeur and glory of bygone ages. Very few cities in the world can express such a profusion of architectural styles.

day 2

9th May – Saturday

Delhi | Overnight Stay at a Hotel /Homestay | Meal Plan: Breakfast

Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan in 1650 switched the Mughal capital from Agra to Delhi. Shah Jehan possessing an exquisite talent, especially in architecture, created the seventh city and in the process brought about Delhi's glorious renaissance. Start the day with a cycle rickshaw ride through Old Delhi. Here you drive past Red Fort the most opulent Fort and Palace of the Mughal Empire. The fort is Shah Jehan's symbol of power and elegance, built behind red sandstone walls. Its main gate (Lahore Gate) faces Chandni Chowk, the perpetually congested avenue heading west from the Red Fort is filled with twisting lanes, small streets and crowded bazaars. If you peer through a portico you may see a man getting shaved, silver being weighed, or any other conceivable form of intense commerce. Also visit Raj Ghat, the memorial site of the Mahatma Gandhi; Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India; and Chandni Chowk, the bustling and colourful market of the old city.

Chandni Chowk was the commercial centre of Delhi in the old time and you will see it come alive in the morning as the trading day starts. And a special treat awaits you - take a ride through this busy market on tricycle rickshaws. Visit Raj Ghat, the memorial site of the Mahatma Gandhi; Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India; and Chandni Chowk, the bustling and colourful market of the old city. Chandni Chowk was the commercial centre of Delhi in the old time and you will see it come alive in the morning as the trading day starts.

After noon visit New Delhi was designed and built by the British in the 1920's - it's a city of wide boulevards impressive Government buildings, green parks and gardens. In 1911 King George V announced the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. The King's architects, Lutyens and Baker, set in motion the design and construction of Delhi's eighth city - New Delhi. Lutyens designed an "Imperial City" having palatial-sized buildings set amid broad tree-lined avenues punctuated by Mughal style gardens, complete with fountains and shallow pools. It took 20 years to complete this immense undertaking only to have the British pack up and relinquish the subcontinent in 1947.

Today, your drive takes you along the ceremonial avenue, Rajpath, past the imposing India Gate and Parliament House. You will visit two monuments from Delhi's past - Humayun's Tomb and Qutub Minar.

day 3

10th May – Sunday
Delhi – Chandigarh – Jibhi | Overnight Stay at a Homestay

Transfer to New Delhi Railway Station to board Shatabadi Express (Leaves at 0740 am and arrives Chandigarh at 11:20 am). On arrival pick up and drive to Jibhi. The initial drive is through the plains of Punjab and then suddenly enter the hills. Turn right from Larji and here you are in Tirthan valley. Tirthan is one of the most important tributaries of river Beas and is one of the greenest valleys of Indian Western Himalaya. It displays the actual examples of hill life in this part of the world.

On arrival check into the home stay. This place is set up at the foot of Jalori pass and is surrounded by a lush green pine forest. The gurgling sound of rivulet Jibhi keeps your attention attracted towards its waves and rapids. In the evening a group of local artists wait for us to entertain us with their local performance. These artists are present here in their local attires and with their local musical instrument*. As the performance ends our dinner waits for us. Musical Group shall be possible only for the group of minimum 6 people.

day 4

11th May – Monday
Jibhi – Keuth – Jibhi | Overnight Stay at Homestay

Get ready by 6:30 am and drive for 15 km to walk up to Village Keuth to see the traditional Pooja in the morning at 7 am. This pooja takes place every morning at a local temple. The temple is built in a Pagoda shape and local material is used in its construction.

Walk around and then return to have breakfast. After breakfast we drive to Bahu and hike up to a meadow. Pack lunch is carried along.

day 5

12th May – Tuesday
Jibhi – Salhanoo | Overnight Stay at a Camp

Morning after breakfast we begin our walk from our Jibbi Homestay. A gradual climb up to the village upper Jibbi is through the fields and scattered village houses. Here a wooden temple is the major attraction of the walk. Continue to our destination and we walk through the forest. The views keep changing and we are in the hills, with no road connections.

Village Salhanoo is settled in the lap of nature and dominates the entire valley. The traditionally built houses and people living in them are the life of this village. Camp at the village to stay overnight.

day 6

13th May – Wednesday
Salhanoo – Sarthee | Overnight Stay at Camp

Today's walk is almost gradual. After breakfast we walk to village Sarthee. This is a gradual trail, with a blended experience of ascend and descend. We walk with a normal pace and the beauty of this place will repeatedly ask you to pull out your camera. Walk through the dense forest. The distant villages which have scattered houses keep your attention drawn. Enjoy the glimpses of the Himalayan lifestyle. The mild ascend to Village Sarthee is our today's destination.

After check into your tents relax for a while and then have a walk through the narrow streets of this old village

After check into your tents relax for a while and then have a walk through the narrow streets of this old village. A temple of a local deity is an attraction. This is a large village in this valley with nearly 40 houses.

day 7

14th May – Thursday
Sarthee – Sajwad | Overnight Stay at a Camp

A mix walk of descend and ascend, mostly walking along the ridge and through the forests.

You will be surprised to see people living at these remote regions where there are no road connections and the locals are not aware of the world outside. They might come to see you, surround you and may touch you. Children are keen to pose for your camera and women, although cannot speak in English but like to interact with you.

Village Sajwaad has about 20 houses, built in a traditional way.

day 8

15th May – Friday
Sajwaar – Khanag | Jibhi – Salhanoo | Overnight Stay at a Camp

A gradual walk along the ridge passes through a middle altitude natural lake Sarolsar. The lake has a tiny temple of 'Bodhi Nagin' the old Serpent, at its banks where a fair is held every year in the month of April.

From here the walk is followed through a dense forest of Himalayan oak and you emerge at Jalori Pass. The vehicle waits to drive us to Khanag where either we stay at a Forest Rest House of Camp at its grounds..

day 9

16th May – Saturday
Khanag – Shimla | Overnight Stay at a Hotel / Homestay

Today after breakfast we drive to Shimla via Ani, Sainj and Narkanda. A 5 hour drive brings us to Shimla - A British Himalayan Town. Shimla has been the summer capital of the British Empire in India during the Raj.

Shimla came into existence after the Gurkha British wars in 1816. From then till 1947 the British used it as a holiday resort and then as their Summer Capital. Completely developed by the British Officers Shimla takes you back to the bygone era as the town is a Victorian and post Victorian architecture. Large number of buildings built by the Imperial government remain scattered and the climate of the town has a clear resemblance to Europe.

day 10

17th May – Sunday
Shimla | Overnight Stay at Hotel / Homestay

Shimla is a Walker's paradise. Many people coming to Shimla regret if they miss it, so we keep here two nights for you so that you can walk through the Heritage Lanes of Shimla with your guide. There are beautiful Churches, A Viceregal Lodge now called Institute of Advanced Study, Army Heritage Museum, Annandale Ground, Gaiety theater and of course The Mall road - a busy street but meant only for the pedestrians. Your lunch will be organized at The Ashiana Restaurant (once a Bandstand).

day 11

18th May – Monday
Shimla – Delhi | Overnight Stay at Hotel / Homestay

After a late breakfast we drive to Kalka (96 km – 3 hours) to board Shatabadi Express to Delhi. On arrival you are transferred to hotel shared rooms for wash, change and then late night transfer to the airport for flight home.

Travel Information

Please note in addition to this tour in case you want to visit Taj Mahal or the Golden Triangle, kindly let us know in advance so that we can make the arrangements.

Facilities available in tents :

- Two men all weather tents.
- Tented toilets – common.
- Hot Water in bucket.
- Dinning Tent.
- Camping furniture such as camping stools, chairs & table.

Your Guide and Companion

All our Tours are accompanied by highly professional guides who hold a complete knowledge of the area, the culture, the lifestyle, the language, the history, the flora & fauna and much more. As you advance with you Village Walks your guide accompanies you and keeps enriching you with his knowledge about the flora and fauna, the lifestyle in the hills and the legends attached with many of the Hindu epics and can be seen in these remote villages, in the shapes of temples, and local festivals.

In case you need a language speaking guide other than English, kindly let us know in advance.

Meals

A highly experience cook accompanies us to the walk. He understands the taste of his European guests and prepares meal for them with a great zeal, less spicy and nutritious.

All meals are served in dining areas or dinning tents.

Breakfast : Eggs, bread, porridge, muesli, fruits, juices, hot chocolate, jam, butter, honey, marmalade, dry fruits and Tea / Coffee are the essential parts of our morning meal.

Lunch: Generally we carry packed lunch that consists of some Pranthas (Indian Bread), Cutlets, Fresh Fruit, Fruit Juice, Chocolate, Sandwitch, French Fries, some pickle (for those who like it), Salad and cooked vegetable.

Evening Tea: Evening tea is served with cookies or some readymade snacks.

Dinner: This is the last meal of the day.

- We start with drinks, soft drinks, juice, mineral water, of a beer. (it may not be possible to carry chilled beer but we try our best to cool it down by chilling in a brook, flowing nearby).
- The drinks are followed by hot and fresh cooked dinner. It begins with the serving of Soup that is followed by the main course (rice, daal or lentil, a green vegetable, cheese cooked in gravy, chicken / mutton, chapatti, salad, papadum and pickle).
- Main course is followed by a sweet dish or a piece of fruit.
- And our dinner ends with a cup of hot tea.

Drinking Water

Sufficient amount of Mineral Water is carried for the guests. If interested you are welcome to gulp some icy chilled water from a brook or a spring.

Porters & Helpers

All our staff members are locals and are very well aware of the area, the weather conditions, language and the terrain. They understand the need so the tourists and show the best performance of their work.

What to do during the trips?

1. Make very Good use of your Camera.
2. Your Guide help's you to interact with the villagers.
3. They are keen to talk to the strangers and may invite you to their houses, so go in and have a cup of tea with the local family.
4. Teach them something that you think that is going to be helpful to them.
5. There is lots of entertainment in the village as sometime they come with their musical instruments and love to sing and dance for you, so enjoy it.
6. Your Guide will take you to the fields and pluck some of the vegetable (this is all subject to the growth of the vegetable, as it all depends at what tike of the year you are travelling in that region).
7. Go to visit a local temple and perhaps if the temple is open you may take part in a local ceremony called Pooja.
8. And at the end, a day before you descend to the last point to board the transport to proceed to your hotel in Kullu, a farewell ceremony is held.
9. Angling : It is possible on second day of the Walk.

Travel Research

This Walking Tour is for those who enjoy walking & traveling without the knowledge of what is around and the next corner. Although we run these walking programs on fixed itineraries but still we keep the trips as flexible as possible for the convenience and comforts of our clients. In these trips we offer the opportunity to walk to some remote areas where every one wishes to go at least once in his or her life but due to certain reasons, such as health, or time sometimes can't go there. The following is to inform you that these trips require a very Special Type of Traveller:

- One who enjoys in the unknown.
- One who is ready for the ups and downs of exploratory travel.
- One who does not expect silky comforts during the trips.
- One who is prepared to pitch in and help when required.
- One who does not care what is there around and after the next curve

Physical Rating

- The participant to this Walking Tour should have a certain level of fitness. You **may be** expected to walk for 5-6 hours a day with your own day pack. The luggage is left in the vehicle so no porters or mules are required to carry it.
- We shall be walking on the trails through the green area. The trails at a number of places are narrow, bumpy or dusty. At some places we might be crossing the streams or water flow. So due to these conditions we are likely to walk slowly and might become irritating for you. But only those shall enjoy this Walking Tour who know how to enjoy the Natural beauty and the landscape around.
- We are dead sure that the Geographical Carvings and the Landscape on this Walk is so stunning that it does not give you any opportunity to get irritated and leave your camera.
- Since we remain under the Tree line so the effects of altitude cannot be a problem, but sometimes if the gradient is steep for you then it is suggested to slow down and go gradually.

Accommodation and Meals

- For this particular itinerary we use only the ancestral properties of the Royal Families around Shimla. For details kindly refer to the itinerary given below.
- Since they all are the descendants of the Royal Dukes to the Hospitality is there in their blood. Not to worry about food they are serving.
- The electricity supply is 220-240V AC @ 50 Hz. You will require an adaptor of the 2 round pin variety.
- Alcohol is available at all the three units we are using so you may order separately for it.
- Except Delhi the entire tour is on Full Board basis. Packed lunches are included on our walking days. At Delhi you have to pay for your lunches and dinners.

Health

- Before you travel to India it is advised that you should consult your doctor for up to date information and prescriptions for vaccinations, anti-malarial requirements and any reasonably foreseeable illnesses.
- Although a First Aid Box is always a part of our Kit still we recommend that you carry any personal medical requirements if you have.
- Please stick to sealed bottled water. It is cheap and easily available throughout. In car we are going to keep enough water for you.
- You should be in a reasonably fit state of health for this holiday. The drives are not very long except on the day 3. Most of the drives are 3 – 4 hours drive. No early morning get up except on the day you travel from Delhi to Chandigarh by train.

Best Season for this Trip

- We have some fix departure tours for this itinerary. You may check the date given on our website. But you may also ask for a customised tour exclusively for yourself. In winter you might find snowy conditions or very cold anywhere in Himalayas in India above 8000 feet in elevation. Snow melts from spring onwards but also conditions vary from place to place.
- By the end of October onwards any place in the Western Himalayas can be very cold.
- From second half of July till third week of September is the Monsoon period in India so if you opt to go for this Walking Tour in these months you might have long rainy days.
- Remember that Himalayan climate is particularly dependant on two conditions, the elevation and the time of the year. So be prepared. A drop of 2 degree centigrade every 1000 feet gained in elevation is common.

Cultural Shock

India is a country which may be very different from something that you may have experienced before. And especially when you in the interiors of the Himalayan Foothills it might be very different from other areas you have travelled to. In most of the villages here simplicity and poverty can result in initial culture shock. Some villages are still under the poverty line but they follow their traditions and culture strictly. So all this should be seen as an exciting new challenge.

Weather Conditions

- July to September are the monsoon months in India and there could be some unforeseen problems like road blockages due to land slides or roads damages. So a change or delay in itinerary could be there or we reach the destination from some other route, however it is quite unlikely.
- Check out at www.accuweather.com for the latest news on the weather forecast in India.

Safety and Security

- Check with the embassy in your country and follow their advice for their latest travel information.
- It is recommended that you use a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash, credit cards, debit cards, ATM cards and other valuable items.
- Leave your valuable jewellery at home as you won't need it while travelling.
- Keep your baggage under lock and key.

Travel Light

- During the itinerary you will be traveling most of the time so pack as lightly as possible (stay under 10 kg/22lb). Most travellers carry their luggage in a back pack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice. **Avoid Suitcases.**
- The mountains can be cold. Night time temperatures can be as low as 5

degrees, so bring a set of warmer clothes; thermal underclothes, being small and light, can be very useful. A warm jumper/jacket, cap, gloves and sunglasses no matter what time of the year, as we travel at altitudes above 3500m.

Dressing

- It is very important that when you are travelling to India, you kindly dress up keeping in mind the respect for the locale culture, especially Ladies. In some area you might have some people gathering around you, touching you and looking at you for a long time, as you are a foreigner.
- As a general guideline full shirts and full length skirts or knee covered skirts are recommended. At some places or the religious buildings shorts are not allowed as it will restrict your entry into buildings.
- At religious places you shall be required to cover your head. The cloth is provided by the temple. So kindly follow the tradition otherwise the authorities might not allow you to enter the premises.
- In India before entering all religious places you are required to remove your shoes. You can also bring a pair of floaters footwear those are easily available in the markets in India too, these footwear are easy to remove and wear.
- Women are sometimes not allowed to enter some of the religious places in the hills.

Photography & Local Interaction

- During our walks there will be many opportunities for you to meet and talk with locals. You are allowed to take pictures but it is also suggested that you take permission before clicking their houses, lifestyle and them. One way to start any conversation is with pictures.
- Children in the villages might ask you to click their picture. If you have a

digital camera you are click and show them on screen.

- Also if possible for you to bring some photos/postcards of your family, home, city or country where you live, animals peculiar to your country to show them.

People in the hills are very simple and hospitable. They might ask you to come to their house and have a cup of tea as tea is a very common and untimely drink in India. They shall be very happy if you accept their invitation.

Your Guide and Tour Leader

- A very good English speaking Guide with excellent knowledge of the area is going to accompany you throughout the tour from Chandigarh till Shimla.
- In Delhi you will have a different Guide who keep an excellent knowledge of the history and the monuments of Delhi.

Check List for the Trip

1. Travel documents: passport, visa, travel insurance, air tickets.
2. Health requirements arranged. 1 photocopy of above documents, Money: cash/credit card/ travellers' cheques, Money pouch.
3. Your personal First-Aid kit including rehydration salts, Sunscreen, lip balm and sunglasses due to harsh sunlight and exposure to high altitudes.
4. Wide brim hat or umbrella
5. Antibacterial hand gel, when water is scarce.
6. Day pack to carry your personal needs during the day.
7. Walking Boots – light weighted.
8. Boot Protector.
9. Thin Liner socks : 3 pairs
10. Heavier outer socks.
11. Tights, for Women. At least one pair.
12. T – Shirts. Take several.
13. Light weighted.
14. Walking pants.
15. Rain Pants.
16. Warm socks.
17. Alarm clock and torch/flashlight.
18. Lightweight travel towel.
19. Refillable water bottle, for filling from thermos.
20. Ear plugs can be useful if avoid someone snoring in the group.
21. Your own sleeping bag.
22. Warm clothes. It is recommended to bring thermal under wear, and either a down or a fleece jacket.
23. A wind proof jacket.
24. A pair of gloves.
25. A scarf or face mask for dust, Sarong for covering up when washing / showering.
26. Underwear. Three pairs are enough.
27. Bras. For Women, a couple.
28. Tampons or Sanitary Napkins. They are easily available in the open market.
29. Toilet Kit
30. Insect Repellent. Bug Powder. A candle, large and small rubber bands, plastic bags, tape extra pens etc.

Revisions to this Holiday Information sheet

Please note that this Holiday Information sheet may be periodically updated and reissued.

In most cases any revisions will be minor and the overall nature of the holiday will be unchanged.

Should we need to make a major change to the holiday arrangements between you booking your holiday and your date of travel we will notify you to specifically draw your attention to any significant change.

You may wish to review the latest version of the Holiday Information sheet online prior to travel.

For Any Assistance

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