

# **CHATHURDHAMA PILGRIM TOUR 2011**

**DELHI – AGRA – MATHURA –RISHIKESH – VASHISHTA GUHA – DEV  
PRAYAG – RUDRA PRAYAG – GUPT KASHI – GAURIKUND  
– SWARNA PRAYAG – SHRI KEDARNATH – JOSHI MATH – SHRI BADRINATH  
– VYASA GUHA – GANESH GUHA –UTTARKASHI – GANGOTRI –  
YAMUNOTRI - GOMUKH.**

<b>Tour Code No.</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Starting Date</b>	<b>Charge per head</b>
<b>6 NI B</b>	<b>19 Days</b>	Sept: 13, 27	<b>Rs. 26,800/-</b>
		Oct: 18	<i>Including Food</i>

- Day 1: Pick up from Delhi Airport / Railway station. Night rest in Delhi.
- Day 2: Morning journey to Haridwar. Mansa devi temple by rope way Haridwar – Ganga Pooja. Night rest in Haridwar
- Day 3: Haridwar Ayyappa temple and proceed to Rishikesh. Rishikesh  
Lakshman Jhula, Swarg Ashram trust, Parmarth Niketan  
Geetha Mandir, Ram Jhula. Night rest in Rishikesh
- Day 4: *Vashisht Guha, Devprayag, Rudraprayag.* Night rest in GUPT KASHI
- Day 5: Journey to Gauri kund and 14 Km walk/pony back to Kedarnath.  
N/R in KEDARNATH. (*Horse charge is excluded from the total charge*).
- Day 6: Kedarnath Darsan, Sree Shankaracharya samadhista Darsan,  
Udhakatheertha etc, Return to Gupt kashi, N/R in GUPT KASHI
- Day 7: Journey to Sree Badrinath. N/R in BADRINATH
- Day 8: Sri Badrinath Temple Darsan, Thapthakunda Snanam, Pithru tharpanam,  
Saraswathy river, Beema Bridge, Vyasa Guha, Ganesh Guha, Mana  
Village. N/R in BADRINATH
- Day 9: Joshi Math, Kalpa Vriksham, Shankaracharya Thapasthalam, Sankaracharya  
Math Darshan. N/R in RUDRAPRAYAG /PIPALKOTI

Day 10 : Journey to Gangotri .(The passengers who are joining for Gangotri/, Yamunotri will be boarding from Gadwal, Srinagar .)

(The passengers returning to Delhi after Kedarnath/Badrinath , will be leaving for Delhi from Srinagar). N/R in GANGOTRI

Day 11: Trek into Gomukh (17 KMs) or Travel by Pony . Gomukh darshan and N/R in BODHBASHAH

Day 12: Return journey to Gangotri . N/R in GANGOTRI

Day 13: Journey to Uttarkashi. N/R in SYANACHETTI

Day 14: Reaches Yamunotri, Suraj Kund Darshan . N/R SYANACHETTI

Day 15: Return journey to Haridwar . N/R in HARIDWAR

Day 16: Journey to Delhi; local purchase . N/R in DELHI

Day 17: Delhi sight seeing:- Qutub Minar, Lotus temple, Teen Murti Bhavan, Indira Gandhi Museum, Rajghat, Birla temple, Shakthisthal, Veer Bhoomi, Shanthivan, Red Fort. N/R in DELHI

Day 18: Journey to Agra., Mathura temple Darsan and reaches Agra. Agra Fort, Sikandra, Taj Mahal. N/R in DELHI

Day 19: Drop at Delhi Airport / Railway station.

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
B.F	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Lunch	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X
Dinner	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X

#### Terms &Condition

1. 50% Reduction in the charge for Children between the age of 5 and 11yrs
2. For Senior Citizens who are above 60 years will be given Railway Concession and they should possess documentary evidence, failing which company will not be responsible for the fine charged by the railway.
3. Cost of Entry Tickets wherever required for sightseeing do not come under the total charge

4. The cost of Vegetarian Kerala Style Delicious food is included in the tour charge except during the Train Journey.
5. Accommodation charges in Good Double Rooms on twin sharing basis at all places of stay are included in the Tour Charge.
6. Cost of Sleeper Class Train Journey is included in the Tour Charge
7. Road Transportation cost in good condition vehicle (depending up on the number of passengers ) is included in the Tour Charge.
8. Guide Services is included in the Tour Charge
9. Company's representative as Tour Manager will accompany the journey from beginning to end .
10. Booking: - Advance of Rs.2,000/- to be remitted prior to 65 days of the date of journey and balance amount is to be remitted 15 days before the Tour starting date. Remittance could be made through the company's Bank account (details given below).
11. Refund on Cancellation : 50% of the advance amount will be lost against cancellation not received 30 days before the tour starting date.. Against cancellations received thereafter no refund will be available.
12. If the journey is blocked /diverted/ cancelled for reasons beyond our control such as Road Bandh, Train Delay Strike, Natural Calamities, (Earth Quake, Flood, Cyclone, Tsunami etc) the Company will not allow any refund.
13. Badrinath and Kedarnath are places of extreme cold and hence the passengers should carry woolen clothings, viz. monkey caps, sweaters , glouses , shoes etc..
14. Passengers who have heart decease/ Asthma/ high BP, etc, will not be able to travel in this tour package

**Name of the Bank : Axis Bank Ltd., Calicut,  
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# DELHI

Delhi is the largest metropolis by area and second largest city in India by population. It is also the capital of the Indian Union. The greater Capital Region also includes Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon and Faridabad. Located on the bank of River Yamuna, Delhi has been known to be continuously inhabited since at least the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Delhi is also widely believed to have been site of INDRAPARASTHA, the legendary capital of Pandavas. Delhi had many ancient and medieval monuments, archaeological sites and remains. Under the British Raj, a new City called New Delhi was built to the south of old City during the 1920s and that became the capital for British rulers. After independence New Delhi was declared as Free India's capital and the seat of the government.

Owing to the migration of people from across the country, Delhi has grown to be a multicultural, cosmopolitan metropolis and the city became a major cultural, political and commercial centre of India.

The following sites are worth visiting in Delhi.

## **Qutub Minar**

Towering over southern Delhi, the Qutub Minar—a triumphal minaret that marks both the coming of Islam to India and the arrival of Delhi sultans—is one of the world's tallest brick minarets, standing at a height of 73 meters. Construction of the five-tiered tower (adorned with intricate carvings and verses from the Qur'an) is said to have begun in 1193.

## **Red Fort**

Lal Qila, also known as the Red Fort, was built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in the mid-17th century in the heart of Old Delhi (Shahjahanabad) to commemorate his shift in the capital from Agra to Delhi. Today, the Red Fort is UNESCO Heritage site, a symbol of India's sovereignty and the world's largest non-functional fort.

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## **Jama Masjid**

Yet another magnificent structure built by emperor Shah Jahan, the Masjid-i-Jahan Numa, also known as the Jama Masjid is India's largest and best known mosque. With three main domes, a couple of minarets (over 40 meters in height) and a courtyard that can hold 25,000 worshippers; is it any wonder that it holds mass appeal?

## **Rashtrapati Bhavan**

Once the viceroy's residence and now home to the Indian President, the marvellous Rashtrapati Bhavan is Sir Edwin Lutyen's masterpiece, simply because it uniquely fuses both Indian and European design aesthetics.

## **Parliament House**

The mammoth Sansad Bhavan, as it is more commonly known, is a distinctively regal, circular building that was meant to serve as the Legislative Assembly but is now the seat of the Indian Parliament (for both the Lok Sabha; House on the People, and the Rajya Sabha; Council of States).

## **Rajpath**

Rajpath runs east to west, right through the heart of Delhi, from Rashtrapati Bhavan to the National Stadium, this is truly one of India's grandest boulevards. Must-see: India Gate, a 42 meter high memorial arch bearing the names of 80,000 (plus) Indian soldiers who died in World War I and the Afghan Wars.

# **Taj Mahal**



The epitome of love, the elegy in marble, Taj Mahal is one of the most graceful and extravagant monuments in India. The seventh wonder of the world, it attracts thousands of tourists every year. A symbol of endless love and devotion of Emperor Shah Jehan to his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal, the Taj is a befitting tribute to so romantic-a-love story and so divine an emotion that binds two souls forever. A visit to Taj Mahal, the mausoleum of Mumtaz, is a rare experience. It has become a signature monument of Indian architecture and someone has rightly said that Taj has been designed like a palace and finished like a jewel.

The pure white marble structure, Taj acquires different shades at different times of the day and with changing seasons. The soft pink color of the dawn and fiery shade that it acquires at dusk are all bewitching. Though, the light that presents it in the best possible manner is perhaps that of full moon, when it shines with pristine white and silver glory.

Taj seems to be as fanciful as the love story it represents of an all-mighty prince and a simple girl hawking silk and glass beads in the market and their marriage that seems so much like a fairy tale. The faithful wife marched with the prince, who was later crowned the emperor, on his every expedition and bore him fourteen children. On her deathbed, she made the emperor to promise to make a lovely monument unlike any other in the world as the tribute to their loving moments that were a treasure for her. The emperor kept the promise faithfully and thus, Taj was conceived.

## Agra Fort

**This is located on the bank of River Yamuna. Ever since Babur defeated and killed Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat in 1526, Agra played an important role for the Mughal Empire. Akbar chose Agra as his capital. It is said that he destroyed the damaged old fort of Agra and built a grand group of monuments instead in red sandstone. Started in 1565, it took many years and around Rs. 35 lacs rupees to complete the construction. Agra Fort is second only to Taj Mahal in importance and grandeur.**

**One of the large fortified residences built at various strategic points of Mughal Empire, Agra Fort had over five hundred buildings, as mentioned by Abul Fazal in his chronicles. Most of the buildings added later on used marble as the chief construction material. At the time of Akbar, River Yamuna touched the fort and thus, a number of ghats were built here. Some of these ghats were meant to load and unload goods transported through river and other covered passages were for use by the Harem inmates only.**

## Mathura

Mathura, a city in the State of U. P. widely known as the birth place of Lord Krishna is located on the western Bank of River Yamuna. It is 145 km south east of Delhi and 58 km north west of Agra, about 11 kilometers from the town of [Vrindavan](#) and 18 kilometers from [Govardhan](#) For about 3000 years Mathura was the hub of culture and civilization. it has a long history as it was ruled in turns by the Kings of solar and Lunar dynasties and became a center of three cultures. For rare creations, Mathura is the Athens of India. The great school of sculpture known as Mathura School of Art flourished here for 1200 years. A survey of this glorious School of Art can be made in the Government Museum here.

The present day Mathura abounds in Places of Religious and Historic interest. All round the year a large number of festivals and fairs are held in Mathura and adjoining areas of Vrindavan, Gokul, Govardhan etc. The [Keshav Dev temple](#) was built in ancient times on the site of Krishna's legendary birthplace. According to the [Mahabharata](#) and [Bhagavata Purana](#) epics, Mathura was the capital of the [Surasena Kingdom](#), ruled by [Kansa](#) the maternal uncle of [Krishna](#).

# Rishikesh

**Rishikesh**, also spelled **Hrishikesh**, **Rushikesh**, or **Hrushikesh**, is a city and a [municipal board](#) in [Dehradun district](#) of [Uttarakhand](#). It is surrounded by two other districts namely [Tehri Garhwal](#) and [Pauri Garhwal](#). It is located in the foothills of the [Himalaya](#) and attracts thousands of [pilgrims](#) and [tourists](#) each year, from within India, as well as from other countries. Rishikesh is a [vegetarian](#) city by law as well as an alcohol-free city. Rishikesh is also known as "Teerth Nagri" or "Yog Nagri" or "[Yoga City](#)", that is City of Temples, Yoga and Meditation. It is also known as the gateway to the [Himalayas](#) and is located around 25 [kilometres](#) north of another holy city, [Haridwar](#).

Rishikesh has been a part of the legendary 'Kedarkhand' (the present day [Garhwal](#)). Legends state that Lord Rama did penance here for killing [Ravana](#), the demon king of [Lanka](#); and Lakshmana, his younger brother, crossed the river [Ganges](#), at a point, where the present '[Lakshman Jhula](#)' bridge stands today, using a jute rope bridge. The 'Kedar Khand' of [Skanda Purana](#), also mentions the existence of Indrakund at this very point. The jute-rope bridge was replaced by iron-rope [suspension bridge](#) in 1889, and after it was washed away in the 1924 floods, it was replaced by a stronger present bridge.

The sacred river [Ganges](#) flows through Rishikesh. It is here that the river leaves the [Shivalik](#) mountains in the [Himalayas](#) and flows out into the plains of northern India. Several [temples](#), ancient as well as new, can be found along the banks of the Ganges in Rishikesh. Rishikesh, sometimes nicknamed "the world capital of Yoga", has numerous [yoga](#) centres that also attract tourists. It is believed that [meditation](#) in Rishikesh brings one closer to attainment of [moksha](#), as does a dip in the [holy](#) river that flows through it. Rishikesh is world famous for Rafting and Adventure. Rafting season starts from the month of March and ends in July.

Rishikesh is also home to the 120-year old Kailas Ashram Brahmavidyapeetham, an institution dedicated to preserve and promote the traditional Vedantic Studies. Prominent personalities such as [Swami Vivekananda](#), [Swami Rama Tirtha](#) and [Swami Shivananda](#) have studied in this institution.

Rishikesh is becoming a popular spot for [white water rafting](#) enthusiasts, both from India and abroad, as it offers medium to rough rapids in the course of river Ganges, with rapids rated class 3 and class 4. khushi. It is also a center for hiking and backpacking..

## Sri Badrinath Dham

"Badrinath Dham" Guarded on either side by the two mountains Nar and Narayan, the Neelkanth Peak provides a splendid backdrop to Badrinath, one of the '[Four Dhams](#)'. One of the most celebrated pilgrim spots in the country, it plays host to the famous Badrinath Temple. Legend has it that Lord Vishnu came to the area, called 'Badri Van', or the berry garden, to meditate after Narad rebuked the Lord for being immersed in worldly pleasures. The main deity is a meditating Lord Vishnu. Badrinath dham is considered as one of the most sacred centres of pilgrimage situated in the

lofty Himalayan heights in the Tehri-Garhwal hill tracks (Uttarakhand) at the height of 10,248 feet above sea level. The route to Badrinath is one of the most arduous one due to the lofty hilly terrain, curves and cliffs amidst the most scenically beautiful place on the earth.

### **The Temple**

The temple at the bank of Alaknanda River is a hot water spring known as "Tapt Kund", a bath in which is very refreshing to all travellers. Dedicated to Lord Vishnu, the temple of Shri Badrinathji, is 5 m high, built in the form of a cone with a small cupola of a gilt bull and spire. The temple opens every year in the month of April-May and closes for winters in the third week of November. Even though legend dates the temple back to the Vedic age, Guru Adi Shankaracharya has established the present temple. The temple has three parts - Garbha Grih (The Sanctum Sanctorum), Darshan Mandap (for pujas) and Sabha Mandap (for devotees to assemble). The Badrinath temple was constructed and renovated by Shankaracharya some time in 8th century during his pilgrimage to Badrinath and [Kedarnath](#) after he had established 'Jyotirdham' in Joshimath. Narada Kund, Surya Kund, Basudhara, Mata Murti and Charan Paduka are the other holy places of attraction for the large number of pilgrims who visit Badrinath every year. About 8 kms from Badrinath in the west, there is a group of snow peak called Choukhamba with height up to 6700 m. There is another peak called Neelkantha about 9 km. south west of Badrinath.

The temple of Badrinath is visited by about six lakh pilgrims every year. There is a plan to make a village complex for the pilgrims at an estimated cost of rupees one crore. Presently hotel Devlok has been constructed at Badrinath to provide board and lodging facilities to pilgrims.

### **Places to visit in Badrinath**

**Badri Vishal** : Main shrine of Lord Badrinath ji is known as 'Badrinath'

**Bhavishya Badri** : The temple of Bhavishya Badri is at an elevation 3641 m, and is surrounded by dense forests. It is located at Subain near Tapovan, about 17 km east of Joshimath on Joshimath-Lata Malari route. Pilgrims have to trek beyond Tapovan, up the Dhauliganga river. It is believed that a day will come when the present route to Badrinath will become inaccessible and Lord Badrinath will then be worshipped here. Hence the name 'Bhavishya Badri', which literally means the "Future Badri".

**Yogdhyan Badri** : The temple of Yog Dhyan Badri, one of the five Badris is located at Pandukeshwar (1920 m), just 24 km short of Badrinath on Rishikesh-Badrinath highway. The image, depicting a meditative posture of the Lord, is worshipped here. The Pandavas are said to have handed over Hastinapur to King Parikshit and retired here

**Vridha Badri** : Situated at an altitude of 1380 m and at a distance of 7 km from Joshimath is Animath, the place where several centuries before the advent of Adi Guru Shankaracharya, the idol of Badrinath was enshrined and worshipped. The idol is known as Vriddha (old) or the first Badri and the temple remains open throughout the year

**Adi-Badri** : Adi-Badri is 19 km away from Karanprayag on Chaukuthia Ranikhet road where a group of 16 temples dating back to Gupta age are in existence. These temples were made with the idol of lord Vishnu to spread Hinduism to every remote corner in the country by Adi-Shankaracharya

**Panch Dharas** : (a) Prahalaad Dhara (b) Kurma Dhara (c) Urvashi Dhara (d) Bhrigu Dhara (e) Indra Dhara

**Panch Shilas** : (a) Narad Shila (b) varaha Shila (c) Garurh Shila (d) Markandeya Shila (e) Narshingh Shila

**Tapt Kund** : Tapt kund is a natural hot water pool fed by a sulphur spring which is said to be the abode of Agni, the god of fire. It is customary to bathe before entering Sri Badrinath temple. This water has a temperature of 130 degrees C. To the left of this pool is the Surya Kund fed by a branch of the same thermal spring. These waters are said to be very nourishing to the body. The Alakananda flows swiftly just below these kunds and the boiling water falls into the icy waters of the river giving rise to clouds of steam.

**Narad Kund** : A recess in the river, near Tapt Kund, forming a pool from where the Badrinath idol was recovered. It is sheltered by a projecting rock which breaks the force of the river and allows people to bathe in it. Adi Shankaracharya knew this by his great powers and retrieved the idol from this pool

**Brahma Kapal** : To the north of Sri Badrinath temple is the spot known as Brahma Kapal where Lord Brahma is said to reside. Ceremonies for departed souls are performed

**Sheshnetra** : 1.5 km away is a boulder having an impression of the legendary snake, better known as the Sheshnag's eye (Shesh meaning Sheshnag and Netra meaning eye).

**Charanpaduka** : 3 km away is a beautiful meadow carpeted with wild flowers in the summer. Here is a boulder bearing the footprints of Lord Vishnu. It is said that when Lord Vishnu descended from Vaikunth (the heavenly abode of Lord Vishnu) he stepped on this boulder. The area is a steep climb from the town and is full of caves & boulders :

**Mata Murty Temple** : Devoted to the mother of Sri Badrinathji. Other important temples include Sesh Netra Temple, Urvashi Temple and Charanpaduka.

**Mana Village** : Inhabited by an Indo-Mongolian tribe, it is the last Indian village before Tibet.

**Vasundhara** : As the name suggests, vasundhara is a magnificent water fall. This place is 5 kms. from Badrinath out of which 2 kms. is motorable upto Mana.

**Bhim Pul** : On the other side of Mana village, a massive rock forming a natural bridge, lies over the roaring Saraswati river. It presents a spectacular view of water thundering down through the narrow passage under the rock and is believed to have been placed there by Bhim, the second eldest among the five Pandava brothers.

**Vyas Gufa (cave)** : Near Mana Village, this is a rock-cave where Ved Vyas is

believed to have composed the Mahabharata and the pauranic commentaries

### **KEDARNATH in Himalayas**

This is one of the best known Shivastalams in India and is considered to be one of the most sacred pilgrimage centers of the country, located in the lofty Himalayas. It is revered as one of the 12 Jyotirlingams - the Northern most one, while the Southernmost one is Rameswaram. The spiritual leader Adi Sankaracharya is closely associated with Kedarnath. Kedarnath is a shrine steeped in antiquity, rich in legend and religious significance.

Four Himalayan shrines dedicated to Shiva have been glorified by the Tamil Tevaram Hymns composed by the Nayanmars of the 1st millennium CE. These shrines are Indraneela Parvatam in Nepal, Gowrikund, Kedarnath and Mount Kailash in Tibet. Although none of the Nayanmars visited Kedarnath, Sambandar sang its praises from Kalahasti. The Tamil hymns of the Nayanmars refer to Kedarnath as Tirukkedaram.

The Temple: Located in the Himalayas at a height of 12000 feet in awe inspiring surroundings, this small shrine is accessible by foot, only 6 months a year. The temple at Kedarnath enshrining the Jyotirlingam of Shiva opens only when the sun enters the zodiac sign of Aries and it is closed when the sun enters Scorpio. The priests then go to Ukhimath, where the worship of Kedareshwara is continued during the winter season.

Kedarnath is located on a ridge which juts out at right angles from below the 23000 feet high snowy peak of Mahapanth. Kedarnath is located on the Rudra Himalaya range.

The Rudra Himalaya range is also known as the Pancha Parvata; its five peaks are Rudra Himalaya, Vishnupuri, Bhramapuri, Udgar-Kanth and Swargarohini. It is believed that four of the Pandavas died on the last of these peaks.

Legend has it that Parvati worshipped Kedareshwar to unite with Shiva as Ardhanareeswarar. Kedara Munivar is also said to have established this shrine visited by the Pancha Pandavas.

Legend also has it that Nara and Narayana - two incarnations of Vishnu practised severe penances at Badrikashramam, in front of a Shivalingam fashioned out of earth. When Shiva appeared in front of them, they requested him to take up a permanent abode as a Jyotirlingam at Kedarnath.

Legend also has it that the Pandava princes were advised to visit Kedarnath after the great Kurukshetra battle. Shiva upon seeing the Pandavas, assumed the form of a male buaffalo and entered the earth. It is believed that the rear of its body remained here, as Kedareshwar. The front part is believed to be in Nepal. This legend says that when Shiva entered the ground, he became five fold - his hind remained at Kedar, his arms Tunganatha, his face Rudranatha, his belly Madhyameswara and his Jata Kalpeswara. These five shrines together as known as the Pancha Kedara.

The Pandavas are believed to have visited this area several times. Arjuna is believed to have come here to pray to Shiva to obtain the coveted Pasupatastra. The other Pandavas are believed to have come here in search of him, where Draupadi came across the heavenly lotus Kalyana Saugandikam, and requested Bhima to bring here some more of the same. It was during his venturing out to seek these flowers that Bhima met Hanumaan.

Tradition has it that pilgrims first visit Yamunotri and Gangotri and bring with them the holy waters from the sources of the rivers Yamuna and Ganga and offer abhishekams to Kedareshwara. The traditional pilgrim route is Haridwar - Rishikesh - Devprayag - Tehri - Dharasu - Yamunotri - Uttar Kashi - Gangotri - Triyugnarayan - Gowrikund and Kedarnath. Alternatively, the route to Kedar from Rishikesh is via Devprayag, Srinagar, Rudraprayag and Ukhimath.

Shri Kedareshwar is situated on the Himalayas, on a mountain named Kedar. Before the mountains, on the banks of the Alakanada Badrinarayana is situated. And on the west, on the banks of Mandakini Kedarnath Jyotirlinga is situated. This place is approximately 150 miles away from Haridwar and 132 miles north of Hrishikesh. Nar Narayan the incarnation of Lord Vishnu has performed severe penance in Badrikashraya of Bharat Khand. He would regularly pray to the Shivirlinga and Lord Shiva used to be present there in the linga.

After some time Lord Ashutush appeared before Nar Narayan and said – I am very pleased with your undeterred faith and devotion, so you may ask a boon for yourself. Nar Narayan, said that if you are really pleased then O’ Devesha please assume form and reside here eternally so that all people who worship you shall be freed from their miseries. Granting the boon, Lord Shiva assumed form of a linga and was installed in Kedar Mountain. After that Nar Narayan worshipped him ardently and then after he was named Kedareshwar.

By praying to Kedareshwar, one can get all his desires fulfilled. Upamanyu had prayed to Lord Shiva in this place, in Satayuga. In Dwapar the Pandavas had worshipped Lord Shiva here.

## Joshimath

**Joshimath**, also called **Jyotir Math**, is a city and a [municipal board](#) in [Chamoli District](#) in the [Indian state](#) of [Uttarakhand](#). It is home to one of the four cardinal *pīthas* established by Adi Shankaracharya..

Jyotirmath is the *uttarāmnāya matha* or northern monastery, one of the four cardinal institutions established by Adi Shankara, the others being those at [Sringeri](#), [Puri](#) and [Dwaraka](#). Their heads are titled "[Shankaracharya](#)". According to the tradition initiated by Adi Shankara, this matha is in charge of the [Atharva Veda](#).

Joshimath is an ancient rest house cum praying hall established by the Adi Sankaracharya. It is located at an elevation of about 6150 feet and 14 kms from Helang, a town on the way to Badrinath.

Jyotirmath, which is close to the pilgrimage town of [Badrinath](#), has not always been an active matha. It is sometimes said incorrectly that the original northern matha was established at [Badrinath](#). This place can be a base station for travellers going to Guru Gobind Ghat or the [Valley of Flowers National Park](#).

In its most recent history, the Jyotirmath became inactive in the early 19th century. The formal occupation of the matha was restarted with the aid of the heads of some of the other mathas from about 1940 onward. However, there is an unresolved controversy over the succession to the headship of Jyotirmath. The

best known of the claimants to be the current head or Shankaracharya is Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī who is also head of the [Dwaraka matha](#). The other two claimants are Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī and Mādhavāśrama.

### **Other Attractions in Chamoli District:**

**Nandadevi National Park:** This park along with the nearby Valley of Flowers was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988. Nanda Devi National Park is a forest reserve cum national Park (established in 1982) in the area surrounding the Nanda Devi Peak and covers an area of 630 sq. kms.

**Auli:** Also known as Auli Bugyal, Auli is a recently developed Ski resort to the Chamoli territory. Auli can be reached by road or taking a ropeway from Joshimath. The months of January to March see the place covered in thick blankets of snow. This snow blanketed place then becomes the perfect location for a skiing holiday. The Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nagam (VMVN) has tied up with Club Mahindra to promote Ski training courses in Auli.

**Gopeshwar:** Gopeshwar, located at the elevation of 1308 meters in Uttaranchal, is the administrative headquarters of the Chamoli District, famous especially for its pleasant weather and temples. Gopeshwar is surrounded by major Hindu Pilgrimage such as the Tungnath, Rudranath and Badrinath on its sides.

**Hemkund Sahib:** Hemkund Sahib is one of the holiest Gurudwaras in India. Hemkund Sahib is located at a very high altitude amidst snow clad gigantic Himalayan crests in Uttaranchal. Hemkund Sahib gets its name from the nearby Hemkund Lake.

**Vasuki Tal:** Located at an altitude of 14,200 ft. Vasuki Tal can be reached by an eight kms trek through the Vyas Gufa, Ganesh Gufa, Bhimpul and Vasudhara Falls. All these places are important in Hindu mythology and form a part of the Badrinath pilgrimage.

**Tapt Kund and Surya Kund:** This place is the meeting point of two natural hot water Sulphur springs. Both have an innate temperature of 55 degree Centigrade though they are supposed to purify the soul and body before reaching the temple, this train of thought probably originated in the various medicinal properties hot Sulphur springs have with them

## **Devprayag**

Devprayag is a small town near Rishikesh. The place is famous due to being the confluence point of Alaknanda and Bhagirathi, where river Ganga is formed. The city is also known for a 10,000 years old temple of lord Rama. Devprayag is located about 75 Km from Rishikesh. on the Rishikesh-Badrinath route,

### **The Temple Town**

The small town of Devprayag can be said to be a temple town, due to presence of many temples

here. The town is at the confluence of river Alaknanda and Bhagirathi. From this confluence point onwards, the new river is called as Ganga. Before this point, Bhagirathi is considered Ganga. The place is of high religious importance, as Ganga takes its real form here. The town is named after a sage Dev Sharma, who lived here and meditated. He is said to have been blessed with a glimpse of god. Devprayag is a popular destination for Hindu pilgrims. Religious ablutions take place at two basins excavated in the rock at the junction of the holy streams. One on the Bhagirathi known as the Brahm Kund and the other on the Alaknanda called Vashisth Kund

### **Temples of Devprayag**

**Raghunathji Temple :** The temple of Raghunathji is dedicated to lord Rama. The temple is claimed to be 10,000 years old. It is one of the oldest existing temples of India. Raghunathji temple is made of huge uncemented stones, kept one over another, in a pyramid shape. The temple receives lakhs of pilgrims every year. The shrine of Rama was destroyed during an earthquake in 1803, and was later rebuilt by Daulat Rao Scindia. According to a local legend, the shrine is dedicated to lord Rama, when he came back to Ayodhya after his victory over Lanka. The temple compound also hosts Annapurna Devi temple, Hanuman temple, Shankaracharya temple and Garud temple.

**Chandrabadani Temple :** The temple of Chandrabadani is dedicated to the Goddess of power. As per legends, Sati, a consort of Shiva, accidentally dropped her torso here. Her weapons got scattered in the locality. There are some old statues and lots of iron trishuls (tridents) outside the temple. A fine view of the Sirkanda, Kedarnath and Badrinath peaks can be enjoyed from here.

**Dashrathshila :** The Dashrathshila is supposed to be the place where Dashrath, father of lord Rama, performed penance. A small water stream, Shanta, is named after the daughter of Dashratha. The seat of Dashrath is one a small hillock called Dashrathachal Peak.

Besides these temples, there are many other important temples, like Baital Kund, Brahm Kund, Surya Kund, Vashisth Kund, the Indradyumna Tirth, Pushyamal Tirth, Varah Tirth,

Pushpavatika, Baitalshila, Varahishila, the shrines of Bhairava, Bhushandi, Durga and Ishveshvara, and a temple dedicated to Bharata. A bath at Baithalshila is claimed to cure leprosy.

## **Rudraprayag**

**Rudraprayag is named after the Lord Shiva (Rudra), The entire region of Rudraprayag is blessed with immense natural beauty, lakes & glaciers , important Hindu temples such as Kedarnath, Shankaracharya Samadhi , Gaurikund , Son Prayag , Panch Kedar ,Madmaheshwar, Tungnath, Koteswar , Guptkashi etc.**

**This small town , Rudraprayag , is situated at the holy confluence of river Alaknanda and river Mandakini , at a distance of 34 kms. from Srinagar (Garhwal). The presence of two separate routes for Badrinath and Kedarnath Dham from Rudraprayag render great importance to the place. There are more than 200 shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva in district itself, the most important one is Kedarnath.**

# Kedarnath

Situated at an altitude of 3584 meters from the sea level on the head of holy river Mandakani, the great shrine of Kedarnath is amongst the holiest pilgrimages for the Hindus. Majestic Kedarnath is one of the twelve Jyotilingas of Lord Shiva who is also called Kedar. This Temple is standing in the middle of a wide plateau surrounded by white snow covered mountains and is an imposing and impressive sight. The present temple was built by Adi Shankaracharya in 8th century A.D. The temple stands adjacent to the site of an earlier temple which is believed to be built by the great Pandavas. The inner walls of the temple are decorated with figures of various deities and scenes from mythology. A large statue of the Nandi Bull stands outside the temple as a guard of Lord Shiva. The temple is believed to be more than 1000 years old. The architecture of Kedarnath temple is a wonder to the modern architects, as to how those heavy slabs of stones had been placed perfectly in those earlier days. The temple is built of extremely large, heavy and evenly cut grey slabs of stones.

## Son Prayag

On the way to Kedarnath, Son Prayag is situated at the confluence of river Basuki and Mandakani. This holy place, Son Prayag, has a great importance in religious people. It is believed that a mere touch of the holy water of Son Prayag helps one to attain the Baikunth Dham or Nirvana.

## Shankaracharya Samadhi

Shankaracharya Samadhi is in Rudraprayag District. It is located just behind the holiest temple of Hindu's Kedarnath. It is believed that after setting up the four Dhams in India, Adi Guru Shankaracharya went into his samadhi at an early age of 32 years.

## Madmaheshwar Temple

The temple of Madmaheshwar is one of Panch Kedars. The rigid journey to this place involves many sacred places and one sees the unparalleled beauty of nature. The journey is truly very adventurous. The trek starts from Guptkashi to Kalimath and then from Kalimath to Madmaheshwar. The route is full of wild unparalleled scenic beauty and engulfed by Chaukhamba, Kedarnath and Neelkanth peaks. Before reaching to Madmaheshwar one sees the Gaundar at the confluence of Madmeshwar Ganga and Markanga Ganga. Lord Shiva is worshipped here in the form of belly.

**Panch Kedar:** The five temples of Lord Shiva are called Panch Kedar and these temples are Kedarnath, Kalpnath, Tungnath, Madmaheshwar and Rudranath which form the Panch Kedar.

**Guptkashi :** Guptkashi is situated at an altitude of 1319 meters above the sea level and has a great significance in devotees. It is as revered as Kashi because the two streams of the Ganga and the Yamuna are believed to meet here. The ancient temple of Vishwanath. Ardhnareshwar and Manikarnik Kund are the main attractions in Guptkashi.

**Koteshwar Temple:** Koteshwar Temple is situated on the holy bank of river Alaknanda at a distance of 3 kms. from the heart of Rudraprayag. The Koteshwar

temple is in the form of a cave temple. There are many idols which have been formed naturally. It is said that Lord Shiva did meditation here before going to the Kedarnath . A great fair is held here in months of August and Sept. and thousands of devotees of Lord Shiva come here to worship him.

**Festivals:** As Rudraprayag is a district of temples which have a great religious importance to the Hindu's ,it hosts a number of festivals and events round the year such as the season at the "Kedarnath" temple or at "punch Kedar".The prayer at these great temple is no less than any festivals therefore there has always been festivals and events in the district Rudraprayag.

Places like Guari Kund , Son Prayag , Madmaheshwar , Shankaracharya Samadhi and Guptkashi have fairs round the year , because these places are always visited by the pilgrims and the devotees not only from India but also from around the world for religious and other reason.

## Uttarkashi,

Uttarkashi is located in Uttaranchal State of the Indian Union and is a very important center of Hindu pilgrimage. The place is bordered by a range of snow capped peaks on the northern side of Uttarkashi district, which is also known as Devbhoomi (the land of Gods and Goddesses) as the holiest of pilgrimage centres for Hindus, i.e. Gangotri and Yamunotri are located here Besides as the origin of holiest of rivers of India, Ganga and Yamuna. Originates here.

Uttarkashi is surrounded by interestingly varied places, Himachal on the north, Tibet on the North east, Chamoli on the east, Rudraprayag on the south east, Tehri on south and finally Dehradun on the east.

Famous attractions are Gangotri and Yamunotri

### Other Attractions

**Vishwanath Temple:** Vishwanath temple in Uttarkashi is one of the prime pilgrimage attractions in Uttarkashi around 300 mts from the local bus stand. An ancient temple, it is said that it was first built by Parasuram. Later, it was renovated by Maharani Khaneti, wife of Sudarshan Shah in 1857. The temple has a Shivling, 60 cms high and 90 cms in circumference. No one misses this holy shrine on their trip to Uttarkashi.

**Shakti Temple:** This temple is just opposite Vishwanath temple. A big Trishul in this temple is the centre of attraction. The trishul is 6 metres in height and 90 cms at the bottom. Different people hold different views about the trishul, it is widely believed that the trishul is made of iron in the upper part and copper in the lower part. The epics say that this trishul was thrown at devils by goddess Durga.

**Govind National Park:** A perfect getaway in case you wish to enjoy all the things at one place. Spread over an area of 953 sq. km, the park offers you everything from wildlife, rare birds to snow capped peaks and glaciers. The park is particularly attractive in May-June because of the flowers in full bloom and pleasant weather. There are approximately 150 varieties of birds in the park. Cuckoos, minivets, parakeets can be easily spotted. The animals consist mainly of Himalayan wildlife.

**Gangnani:** The place is notable for its thermal springs and the views of Himalayas it offers. It lies on route to Gangotri. It is an ideal place to meditate because of the quietness here. The spring here called Rishikund offers a refreshing bath to the pilgrims going to Gangotri. Closeby is a temple dedicated to sage Parasara, father of Veda Vyas.

**Maneri ;** Thirteen kilometres from Uttarkashi is this beautiful place called Maneri. The place has lately emerged as a tourist attraction because of a dam being built here on Bhagirathi river. The water from here is fed through a 8 km long tunnel to turbines at Uttarkashi. A lake is formed because of the dam at Maneri which has added to the beauty of the place.

**Har Ki Dun;** A famous trekking destination, Har Ki Doon is located at an altitude of 3506 metres. The place is known for its popular treks, it offers its trekkers a reasonable trek among dense forests and a mountainous landscape.

**Dayara Bugyal;** The word Bugyal according to a local language means high altitude meadow. On the route to Gangotri, a road branches off near Bhatwari, which will take one to Dayara Bugyal. The distance from Uttarkashi to Dayara Bugyal is 32 kms.. Once there one will be simply enchanted by the beauty of this large meadow. A small lake, beautiful views of Himalayas, all these make the place memorable. A 30 km trek through dense forest from here will take you to Dodi tal.

**Harsil;** 72 kilometres from Uttarkashi is the beautiful Bhagirathi valley encompassing within itself all the colours of nature. Green grassy terrains, a blue sky and the flowing waters, the natural beauty is beyond expression. One can visit Wilson cottage that was built in 1964, Sat Tal, the cluster of seven lake or be a bit adventurous and take treks from here to discover the nearby lands.

## Sri Gangotri Dham

According to an old legend, Lord Shiva rewarded King Bhagirath after his penance and Ganga came down to earth. However, due to her pride, and the fact that the earth would be devastated if Ganga came down in her full force, Lord Shiva caught her in his locks. It was then proclaimed that Goddess Uma or Parvati, Shiva's consort, would bathe in the Ganges daily and only then would she descend on the earth. The sacred stone near the temple denotes the place where Ganga first came down to earth. This is why Ganga is also called by the name of Bhagirathi .Gangotri, the source of the river Ganges and seat of the goddess Ganga, is one of the four sites in the [Char Dham pilgrimage](#) circuit. The temple was constructed in the early 18th century by a Gorkha Commander Amar Sigh Thapa The river is called Bhagirathi at the source and acquires the name Ganga from Devprayag onwards where it meets the Alaknanda. The origin of the holy river is at Gaumukh, set in the Gangotri Glacier, and is a 19 km trek from Gangotri.

Couched in the magnificent Garhwal hills, Gangotri is at an altitude of 3048 meters above

sea level. It is on the northernmost part of the state of Uttarakhand and is very near the Indo-Tibetan border. It is approximately 300 km from Dehradun, 250 km from [Rishikesh](#) and 105 km from Uttarkashi. The summers are relatively cool and winters are freezing cold, with rains in the months of May and June. For the devotees and tourists, the gates of the temple are open only in the months of May to November

**Gangotri Temple:** As the legend goes, King Bhagirath used to worship Lord Shiva at the sacred stone, near which this 18th century temple is located. The slab on which King Bhagirath is believed to have meditated is called Bhagirathi Shila. The mother Ganga is worshipped as Goddess and the holy river in the temple. Before performing the Puja rituals, a holy dip in the Ganga flowing nearby the temple is a must. The Pujari's (priest) belong to Brahmin community from Mukhwa village. Ten of them are selected by rotation every year to perform all the functions covering the temple and they also perform the duties of pandas

**Bhaironghati:** Further downstream, 10 km from Gangotri, is the picturesque forested halting place of Bhaironghati. There exists a small temple of Bhairon, appointed by Shiva to safeguard this region which gives the place its name. The bridge over the Jhanvi river at Bhaironghati is said to be the highest in Asia.

**Gaumukh :-** The Gaumukh glacier is the source of Bhagirathi (Ganga) and is held in high esteem by the devotees who do not miss the opportunity to have a holy dip in the bone chilling icy water. It is 18 Kms. trek from Gangotri. The trek is easy and at times people come back to Gangotri the same day.

**Sat-Tal :-** Sat-Tal, meaning seven lakes, is situated just above Dharali, 2 Kms. beyond Harsil. The trek of about 5 Kms. is rewarding as this group of lakes is situated amid beautiful natural surroundings. It also provides lovely camp sites.

**Submerged Shivling:** Submerged in the river, this natural rock **Shivling** is the place where, according to mythology Lord Shiva sat when he received the Ganga in his matted lock. It is visible in winter months when water level decreases.

## Gomukh,

**Gomukh,** the [terminus](#) or snout of the [Gangotri Glacier](#), from where [Bhagirathi River](#) originates. The place is situated at a height of 11,500 ft. It is one of the largest in the Himalayas with an estimated volume of over 27 cubic kilometers.

Gomukh is also referred to as "Gaumukh" or "Gomukhi" which literally means "Mouth of a Cow". According to some sayings, earlier the snout exactly looked like "Mouth of a Cow. Gomukh is mentioned in the [Puranas](#)..

Gomukh is 18 km from Gangotri in the foot hills of Bhagirathi at a height of 4255m. The Bhagirathi river here is pretty speedy. Around the snout, nature presents a wild topography. There are boulders scattered here and there with some pieces of broken snow, along with the hard clayey snow of the glacier. The Gomukh snout is rapidly moving backwards. According to the modern research the snout has

moved 1 km in just 70 years.

The trail to Gomukh begins from Gangotri, about 16 km (9.9 mi) from Gomukh.

9 km ahead of Gangotri is Chirbasa, the abode of Chir trees. After 3 km of Chirbasa comes the dangerous Gila Pahar, the place well known for landslides.

On the trail no [horses](#) are allowed, so one must take preparations to walk on foot. The trek to Tapovan and Nandanvan starts from here.

Some boulders make the route after 'Bhujbasa' quite difficult. One has to cross a boulder zone to reach near the Gomukh snout. The trek beyond Gomukh is quite difficult. Crossing the glacier & going towards Tapovan is become quite dangerous nowadays (because of the landslides). There is actually no road, one must have a guide and should be prepare to face any type of accident which can even a life-threatening one. The last climb to reach [Tapovan](#) is very stiff, within 2 km a stiff of about 70 degree, which gain a height of around 1500 foot and is quite a challenging experience.

## Yamunotri

**Yamunotri** is the source of the [Yamuna River](#) and the seat of the Goddess [Yamuna](#) in [Hindu mythology](#). It is situated at an altitude of 10,804 ft. in the Garhwal [Himalayas](#) and located approximately 30 kilometers North of [Uttarkashi](#), the headquarters of the [Uttarkashi district](#) in the [Garhwal Division](#) of [Uttarakhand, India](#). It is one of the four sites in [India's Chhota Char Dham](#) pilgrimage. The sacred shrine of Yamunotri, source of the river Yamuna, is the westernmost shrine in the Garhwal Himalayas, perched atop a flank of Bandar Poonch Parvat. The chief attraction at Yamunotri is the temple devoted to the Goddess Yamuna and the holy thermal springs at Janki Chatti (7 km. Away).

The actual source, a frozen lake of ice and glacier (Champasar Glacier) located on the Kalind Mountain at a height of 4,421 m above sea level, about 1 km further up, is not frequented generally as it is not accessible; hence the shrine has been located on the foot of the hill. The approach is extremely difficult and pilgrims therefore offer puja at the temple itself.

The temple of Yamuna, on the left bank of the Yamuna, was constructed by Maharaja Pratap Shah of Tehri Garhwal. The deity is made of black marble. The Yamuna, like the Ganges, has been elevated to the status of a divine mother for the Hindus and has been held responsible for nurturing and developing the Indian civilization.

Close to the temple are hot water springs gushing out from the mountain cavities. Surya Kund is the most important *kund*. Near the Surya Kund there is a *shila* called Divya Shila, which is worshipped before puja is offered to the deity. Devotees prepare rice and potatoes, tied in muslin cloth, to offer at the shrine by

dipping them in these hot water springs. Rice so cooked is taken back home as *prasadam*. The *pujaris* of Yamunotri come from the village of Kharsali near Janki Chatti. They are the administrators of the sacred place and perform religious rites. They are well-versed in the Shastras.

According to legends, sage Asit Muni had his hermitage here. All his life, he bathed daily both in the Ganges and the Yamuna. Unable to go to Gangotri during his old age, a stream of the Ganges appeared opposite Yamunotri for him.

The temple and the place opens every year on the auspicious day of the Akshaya Tritya, which generally falls during the last week of April, or the first week of May. The temple always closes on the sacred day of Diwali in mid-October - first week of November, with a brief ceremony. The temple staff return to their villages and for the rest of the time the valley is gripped in no-man silence and covered with a white sheet of snow. With the melting of the snow next summer, the temple re-opens to the blissful happiness of thousands of visitors again.

The daughter of the Sun god, Surya and consciousness, Sangya the birth place of the Yamuna is the Champasar Glacier (4,421 m) just below the Banderpoonch Mountain. The mountain adjacent to the river source is dedicated to her father, and is called Kalind Parvat, Kalind being another name of Surya. Yamuna is known for her frivolousness, a trait that she developed because, according to a common story, Yamuna's mother could never make eye contact with her dazzling husband.