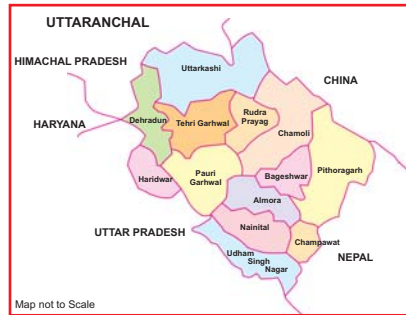


Uttarakhand



DEHRADUN

The cozy capital of Uttarakhand is your gateway to some hilly and holy stations of India besides the adrenalin-pumping adventure activities that one can undertake in the Garhwal Himalayas. The bracing climate of the city has also led to some of the most well known public schools, research institutes, and IMA among others.

City Lights

FRI or the **Forest Research Institute**, is one of the best among equals and has an extensive museum that showcases a wide diversity of botanical specimens. Open from Monday to Friday, 10 am to 5 pm, entry is free. You can also visit the Botanical Garden located in its campus. **Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology** educates visitors on the mountains, which form a backdrop to the city. Open from Monday to Friday, 10 am to 5 pm. **Malsi Deer Park** is a pleasant excursion 8 km away from the city, on the road to Mussoorie. Another popular picnic spot known for its

sulphur springs is **Sahastradhara**, 14 km from the city centre. **Robber's**



Sahastradhara

Cave is beyond the Anarwala village, 8 km away. The best way to get there is to take a bus to the village and walk the rest of the way. Largely visited for the strange phenomenon of a stream of water suddenly disappearing from sight and then reappearing again a few metres ahead as a gusty stream. The **Tapkeshwar Temple**, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is perched atop a long flight of stairs on the outskirts of the city. The river alongside the temple and shrines dotting the area, present a fascinating view. March is a good time to catch the excitement when the city holds a big fair here on Shivratri.

Shopping

The **Paltan Bazaar** is a fascinating bazaar just south of the Clock Tower. Other popular markets are on Rajpur Road and Ashley Hall.

Gourmet's Delights

Try not to miss eating typical local delicacies such as *makki ki roti* and *sarson ka saag* and *gajar ka halwa*.

Uttarakhand

Places to eat include: **Kumar's, Moti Mahal, Udipi and A-One Grill.**

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: Indian Airlines has five flights a week from Delhi to the Jolly Grant Airport, 25 km from Dehradun. **By Rail:** The main railhead of Dehradun has daily and direct trains from Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Varanasi, Lucknow etc. These include Shatabdi Express, Mussoorie Express, an overnight train service from Delhi to Dehradun and the Doon Express. Railway station is located opposite the post office and the Mussoorie Bus Stand on Gandhi Road. **By Road:** Connected to all parts of the country with good, all-weather roads, the road from Delhi to Dehradun is comfortable and there are taxis available from all nearby destinations. Deluxe buses also ply daily. **Distances:** Chandigarh 180 km, Delhi 235 km, Mussoorie 34 km, Rishikesh 42 km, Shimla 285 km, Agra 382 km, Yamunotri 279 km, Kedarnath 270 km, Nainital 297 km. **Getting Around:** Apart from local buses and autorickshaws, the most popular and cheap form of local transport is the Vikram, a large-sized autorickshaw. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 27°C, Max 41°C; Winter: Min 9°C, Max 27°C. **Best time to visit:** September-October, March-April.

City Code: 0135

Indian Airlines: 2655111

Airport: 2412053

India Tourism: 2653217

Director Tourism: 2624147

Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam:
2747898

Railway Enquiry: 2622131

Main Bus Stand: 2654237

Mussoorie Bus Stand: 2623435

Banks: SBI: 2656351, Bank of Baroda: 2652001, Canara Bank: 2659061, Central Bank: 2657849

Hospitals/Chemists: Jain Hospital: 2627766, Doon Hospital: 2659355.

Fair Deal Chemists at Darshini Gate.

Home Away From Home

Best Western Madhuban: 2749990,
President: 2657082, Great Value
Shipra: 2744762, MJ Residency:
2629591, Drona (GMVN): 2654371.

MUSSOORIE

Discovered and developed by the British to escape from the heat of the plains, Mussoorie is a premier hill station today. Occasional snow falls, a charming Mall, visages of colonial homes and a pleasant climate, when the rest of the north sings with heat, makes Mussoorie a popular destination.



Mussoorie

City Lights

Go horse-riding or walking, **Camel's Back Road** offers some of the most fascinating and memorable views of the Himalayas at sunset. A superb rock formation, with a life-like resemblance to a sitting camel, can be seen from this spot. A powerful telescope installed at the **Children's**

Lodge, provides an exciting view of the snow. Enjoy a ropeway ride to the second highest peak of Mussoorie, **Gun Hill**. It can also be negotiated by bridle path which forks-off from Mall Road near the Kutchery. **Kemty Falls** (15 km) has the distinction of being the biggest and prettiest waterfall, located in a beautiful valley and surrounded by high mountains. **Municipal Garden** is a charming garden with an artificial mini lake and boating facilities.



Kemty Falls

Gourmet's Delights

President, The Mall, for Mughlai food; **Kwality** (multicuisine and bar): 2632117, **Whispering Windows** (multicuisine), **Rice Bowl** (Tibetan and Chinese): 2631684, **Tavern** (Mughlai and Chinese): 2632829, **Madras Café**: 2632056.

Shopper's Paradise

The main shopping centres in the city are **Gandhi Chowk, the Mall, Kufri Bazaar** and **Landour Bazaar**.

Walking sticks, hand-knitted cardigans and sweaters along with antique and other memorabilia are good buys. Check out the **Nirankari Cottage Industries** at the library end of the Mall, for carved wooden boxes, brass statues, Tibetan prayer wheels, Chinese vases, hand-carved wooden walking sticks, etc. Try an antiques shop near Trek Himalayan Office for furniture and mementos from old British homes.

Excursions

Nag Tibba: 55 km away, surrounded by thick forests, it's a trekker's delight. Accommodation available in a forest rest house (2632335). **Dhanolti**: 25 km away, on Mussoorie-Tehri Road, there are deodar forests and lovely mountain ranges. A GMVN Tourist Bungalow for overnight stay.



Dhanolti

Mussoorie-Yamuna Bridge: (30 km away) is a great attraction for fishing but you need a permit for that from District Forest Offices.

Facts at a Glance

Access: **By Air:** Dehradun's Jolly Grant is the nearest airport. **By Rail:** The nearest railhead is Dehradun, about 34 km away. **By Road:** Tourism Departments of various states like Punjab, Haryana, Delhi etc, operate tourist buses to Mussoorie. **Distance:**

Uttarakhand

34 km from Dehradun. **Temperatures:** Summer: Max 32°C, Winter: Min 1°C. **Best time to visit:** April to June, September to November. Occasional snowfall in Dec-Jan-Feb recorded.

City Code: 0135

Tourist Bureau: 2632863

GMVN City Tours: 2631281

Taxi Stand: 2632115

Library Bus Stand Enquiry:
2632258

Picture Palace Enquiry: 2632259

Hospitals: St Mary's Hospital:

2632144, Community Hospital:

2632541, Dr Rana and Dr Nautiyal's
Clinic: 2632594

Chemists: PB Hamers & Co.

Home Away From Home

WelcomHeritage Kasmanda Palace: 2632424, Jaypee Residency Manor: 2631800, Savoy: 2632010, The Claridges Nabha Palace: 2631426, Connaught Castle: 2631138, The Gracemount: 2632434, Garhwal Terrace (GMVN): 2632682.

HARIDWAR

The venue of Ardh Kumbh every six years and Kumbh Mela every twelve years, Haridwar is one of the four places believed to have received drops of the nectar of immortality, *amrit!* The pious awe Haridwar commands, also stems from the fact that it is here that holy river Ganges enters the plains, after a rigorous journey through the mountains...

City Lights

Har Ki Pauri (Brahm Kund) is the main *ghat*. Locals believe that this is the spot where Ganga leaves the



Har Ki Pauri

mountains to enter the plains. Lord Vishnu's footprint on one of the stones here is revered by thousands. The Ganga *arti* in the evening is a highlight. Take a cable-car ride up to the **Mansa Devi Temple**, located on a hill above the city, to have one's wishes fulfilled. Open between 8 am to 5 pm (closed for lunch between 12 pm to 2 pm). The more enterprising can attempt to climb up the 1.5 km stretch. On another hilltop is **Chandi Devi Temple**, that can be approached by the cable car or on foot. It is believed that seven holy sages had prayed at **Sapt Rishi Ashram** for the welfare of humanity. The Ganga flows in seven



Main Entrance of the Chandi Temple

little streams here. The temple of **Pavan Dham**, 3 km away, is famous for its glass interiors. Do visit **Shanti Kunj**, a multifaceted centre with windmills, workshops, school, a medical centre, etc. Its residents manufacture candlesticks, honey and

incense sticks. About 2 km from Pavan Dham is a miniature version of Jammu's **Vaishno Devi Temple**.

Gourmet's Delight

There are cafés around the Upper Road and some restaurants on Railway Road. Try **Ahaar** (Chinese and veg *thalis*), **Gurunanak Restaurant** (Punjabi), **Chotiwala** near Laltarao (North Indian), **Kwality** (multi-cuisine) and **Bestee** (snacks). Also try *halwa-and-pua* of **Mohan Puriwalla** at Har Ki Pauri and the *pedas* of **Mathura Sweet Shop** at Moti Bazaar.

Shopping

Best buys would include *rudraksh* beads, pickles, ayurvedic medicines and precious stones. The **Bara Bazaar** and **Moti Bazaar** on Railway Road are the only good markets. Some new modern shopping complexes have come up near Ranipur Morh, which provide more options.

Travel Advice

- * Non-vegetarian food/snacks not allowed in the town. Alcohol is also banned in this town.
- * If you do not know how to swim, avoid bathing at the *ghats*, especially where the current is strong.
- * Be careful of monkeys, touts and beggars, all are in plenty around the *ghats* and temples.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is Jolly Grant, Dehradun. **By Rail:** The Dehradun Shatabdi Express is the most convenient way from Delhi. The Dehradun-Mumbai Express and

Dehradun-Varanasi Express also serve Haridwar. Kolkata and Allahabad are connected by Doon Express and Dehradun-Allahabad Link Express.

By Road: Haridwar is connected to all major cities in the region as well as other parts of the country. Hourly buses are available from ISBT in Delhi. Buses and taxis are also available from Agra, Shimla and Varanasi to the holy town. **Distances:** Mussoorie 89 km, Rishikesh 24 km, Dehradun 65 km. **Getting Around:** Haridwar Taxi Union, located opposite the bus terminus and next to the railway station, offers taxi services to neighbouring towns, cities and for sightseeing. Autos, Vikrams (large-sized autorickshaws) and cycle-rickshaws are also available; rates negotiable. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 17°C, Max 35°C; Winter: Min 10°C, Max 28°C. **Best time to visit:** April-May and October-November.

City Code: 01334

Tourist Information Centre: 2427817

GMVN: 224240

Ganga Sabha: 2427928

Central Bus Station: 2427037

Hospitals/Chemists: Har Milap

District Hospital: 2426060,

Milap Medical Hall: 2427193,

B C Hasaram & Sons: 2427860

Home Away From Home

Alaknanda (UP Tourism): 2426379,
Modi Inn Ramakrishna: 2420715,
Classic Residency: 2428005, Motel
Rahi (GMVN): 2420642.

RISHIKESH

In the 60's, the Beatles came to visit their guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, at

Uttarakhand

Rishikesh, the small town that lies at the confluence of the rivers Chandrabhaga and Ganga. Surrounded by thick green woods, it also happens to be connected to many saints and sages and is called the 'Yoga Capital of the World', thousands visit in early **February** for the **International Yoga Week**, held on the banks of the Ganga.

Rishikesh has many *ashrams*, some recognised as global centres of philosophical studies, yoga and meditation. For the adventurous, there are opportunities for white water rafting on the Ganges. Of additional significance is that it is the starting point for commencing the journey to the Himalayan shrines of the **Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath** and **Badrinath**.

City Lights

The confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati took place here and hence **Triveni Ghat** is where one can take a dip in the holy Ganges and **arti** is performed here daily at dusk. In the heart of the city is **Bharat Temple**, surrounded by massive walls. It is said that Bharat, the brother of Shri Ram had meditated at this place for many years. **Kailash Niketan Temple** is the main temple at Laxman Jhoola and one can see the sculptures of all Gods and Goddesses in this 13-storey mansion. **Ram Jhoola** is a suspension bridge across the Ganga along the old route to the holy shrines of Badrinath and Kedarnath. People believe that if one desire to visit heaven, one must go to **Swarg Ashram**, built by Swami Atma Prakash Kali Kamliwale, situated on the left bank of the Ganges right opposite **Shri Shivanand Ashram**.



Ram Jhoola

You will have to either take a boat across the Ganges or use the footbridge, **Laxman Jhoola** to reach this place. Inside is idol of Shri Badrinathji. **Gita Bhavan** is 2 km away on the left bank of the river after the Laxman Jhoola crossing. The chapters of Ramayan and Mahabharat have been inscribed in its walls.

Eating Out

The food, mostly vegetarian, is excellent at most eateries. North Indian, Gujarati and South Indian food is usually available. Try out Chotiwalla, Anjali, Tandan, Ganga View, Ganga Darshan and Madras Restaurant.

Shopper's Paradise

The main shopping centres in the city are at **Dehradun Road, Haridwar Road, Ghat Road** and **Railway Road**. The city centre also has some State Emporia. Pick up a *rudraksha mala*. In the Swarg Ashram area, stalls sell devotional accoutrements such as *prasad*, books on scriptures, and cassettes as well as shawls and ayurvedic medicines made from herbs collected from the Himalaya at the Mahesh Yogi Ayurvedic Centre.

Excursions

Originally, there was a hanging jute (rope) bridge till 1889. This was rebuilt with iron ropes into the present **Laxman Jhoola**. On the side of this famous bridge is the well known **Shri Raghunathji Temple**. **Pushkar**



Laxman Jhoola

Temple (2 km), **Shatrughan Temple** (5 km), **Antibiotics Project**, **Virbhadra**, (7 km), **Kanva Rishi Ashram** (6 km from Kotdwar) are the other attractions. The **Neelkanth Temple**, a few kilometres away, situated on top of a hill.

Facts at a Glance

Access: **By Air:** Dehradun's Jolly Grant (17 km) is the nearest airport. **By Rail:** Haridwar is the nearest railhead. The Dehradun Shatabdi Express is the best way to get to Haridwar from Delhi. The Dehradun Mumbai Express and Dehradun Varanasi Express also service Haridwar. Kolkata and Allahabad are connected to Haridwar by Doon Express and Dehradun-Allahabad Link Express. There is a regular shuttle service from Haridwar to Rishikesh, which is rather slow. **Railway Station:** Located on Railway Road in the west end of the town. **By Road:** Rishikesh has buses plying to Haridwar, Agra, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Delhi and Nainital besides

other places. **Bus Terminus:** UP Roadways Bus Stand at the junction of Agarwal Road and Bengali Road. Yatra Bus Stand (2431301) on the Dehradun Road. **Distances:** Delhi 238 km, Haridwar 24 km, Dehradun 42 km, Mussoorie 77 km, Yamunotri 288 km, Gangotri 258 km, Uttarkashi 154 km, Kedarnath 228 km, Badrinath 301 km, Chandigarh 252 km. **Temperatures:** Summer: Max 36°C; Winter: Min 4°C. **Best time to visit:** Round the year, particularly September, or February when the Yoga Week is organised.

City Code: 0135

Tourist Bureau: 2430209

GMVN: 2430372

Railway Station: 2430131

Main Bus Stand: 2430066

Taxi Stand: 2430413

Banks: PNB: 2430213, Bank of Baroda: 2430653, SBI: 2430036, Punjab & Sind: 2430449.

Money Changers: SBI changes foreign currency only at main Rishikesh Office, on the north side of the Railway Road, near Laxman Jhoola Road. Bank of Baroda at 74 Dehra-dun Road, also exchanges currency.

Head Post Office: 2430340

Hospitals: Kohli Hospital: 2430680, Govt. Hospital: 2430096,

Nirmal Ashram Hospital: 2430942

Home Away From Home

Tourist Rest House – Rishilok (GMVN): 2430373, Ganga Kinare: 2431658, Natraj: 2431099, Mandakini International: 2431081, Inderlok: 2430555, Aakash Ganga: 2430870, Basera: 2430767, Hotel Neelkanth: 2430644, Hotel Shivalik: 2431055, Ananda in the Himalayas (Narendra Nagar): 01378-227500.

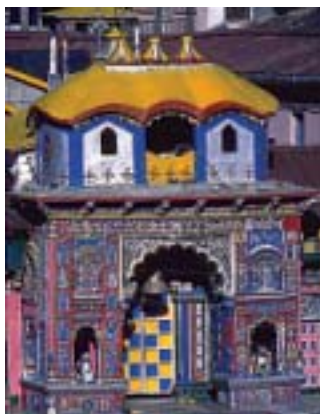
BADRINATH

Cradled in the twin mountain ranges of Nar and Narayan is the holiest of the four main shrines, Badrinath, along the left bank of river Alaknanda. With the splendid Neelkanth mountains as the backdrop, it is an important destination on the sacred itinerary of every devout Hindu. Once the spot was carpeted with 'badris', or wild berries, and hence was famous as 'Badri Van'.



Badrinath Town

Situated at an altitude of 3,133 m, the **Badrinath Temple** is believed to have been built by Adi Guru Shankaracharya – an 8th century's



The holy dhama – Temple of Badrinath

philosopher-saint, who also established a 'math' here. Also known as 'Vishal Badri', Badrinath is one of

the Panch Badris. The famous hot springs **Tapt Kund** and **Surya Kund** lie just below the temple. A dip in the warm sulphurous waters, considered a must before offering prayers to Shri Badrinathji. Is refreshing to the body as well as the soul.

Eating Out

You will find local eateries or *dhabas* (road side eateries) which offer vegetarian food. Try **Vijaya-Laxmi**, **Saket** and **Urvashi**. Non-vegetarian food and alcohol prohibited.

Excursions

Mata Murti Mandir: 3 km away, this temple on the right bank of the Alaknanda is dedicated to the mother of Shri Badrinathji. **Mana Village:** 4 km, it is the last Indian village before Tibet on this route, and is inhabited by an Indo-Mongolian tribe. **Vyas Gufa, Ganesh Gufa, Bhimpul** and **Vasundhara Falls:** 3-6 km, famous for their links with Hindu mythology which form part of the pilgrimage to Badrinath. **Govindghat, Ghangaria:** 24 km, the meeting point of rivers Alaknanda and Laxmanganga. Also the access points to the Valley of Flowers National Park (19 km) and Hemkund Sahib (20 km). **Vasuki Tal:** 8 km, a high altitude lake that can be reached by an 8 km trek that ascends upto 14,200 feet. **Bhavishya Badri:** It is generally believed that in the course of centuries, the road from Joshimath to Badrinath will be blocked. This will happen because the two hills flanking Badrinath will join due to land drift. This is when the temples at Bhavishya Badri, one of the Panch Badri's, will be worshipped. The other four are Vishal Badri (Badrinath), Yoga Badri

(Pandukeshwar), Adi Badri and Vridha Badri (at Animath, near Joshimath). **Adi Badri:** 17 km away is situated at an altitude of 3,200 metres is famous for ancient temples. Accommodation is available at a PWD Inspection Bungalow. **Hemkund Lake** is the holy lake surrounded by seven snow-capped mountains. Guru Govind Singh is stated to have meditated here. A gurudwara and a temple are located here.



Hemkund Lake

Facts at a Glance

Access: **By Air:** The nearest airport is Jolly Grant, Dehradun (317 km). **By Rail:** The nearest railheads are Rishikesh (292 km) and Kotdwar (327 km). **By Road:** Badrinath is connected by road to Rishikesh, Dehradun, Haridwar, Pauri, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Nainital and Almora. **Distances:** Delhi 518 km, Rishikesh 292 km, Joshimath 42 km, Haridwar 321 km, Karnaprayag 123 km, Rudraprayag 155 km, Deoprayag 225 km, Dehradun 343 km. **Temperatures:** April-June: Min 3°C, Max 14.5°C; July-Nov: Min 10°C, Max 18.2°C. Dec-Mar: Snow-bound. **Rainfall:** 1460 mm. **Best time to visit:** May to October. The temple remains open from first week of May till third week of November.

City Code: 01381

Sub-Post Office: 22201

State Allopathic Dispensary: 22217

Home Away From Home

Many charitable trusts maintain guest-houses and *dharamshalas* in the township, like Chand Cottage, Gujarat Bhavan, Modi Bhavan (all by Shri Kedar-Badri Temple Committee), Inspection House (advance permit from DM, Chamoli, Gopeshwar or Executive Engineer, PWD) and UP Tourism Accommodation, Hotel Devlok, (GMVN): 22212, Travellers Lodge, (GMVN), Bus Terminal.

KEDARNATH

Located at the source of the river Mandakini, Kedarnath is one of the 12 *vyotirlingas* of Lord Shiva, and one of the *Panch Kedars*. The deity here, like the rump of a bull, reflects a form assumed by Lord Shiva, when eluding the Pandavas, who had come to repent for killing their kith and kin in the battle of Kurukshetra. At the entrance of the temple is the statue of Nandi, the divine bull of Shiva. The temple houses a *shiva lingam*, worshipped by hordes of pilgrims. The temple was renovated and refurbished by the religious reformer and saint, Adi Shankaracharya in the 8th century. Every November, the holy statue of Lord Shiva is carried down to Ukhimath, and is reinstated at Kedarnath in the first week of May, when the temple opens its doors to pilgrims.

The shrine enjoys a very scenic location, surrounded by snow-covered mountains and grassy vales. The high Kedardome peak, which can be sighted from far away, forms the majestic backdrop.

Excursions

Vasuki Tal, 6 km away and at 4,135 m, this extraordinary lake, surrounded by high mountains, offers an excellent view of the Chaukhamba peaks. **Gandhi Sarovar**, 1.5 km away, is from where Yudhishtir, the eldest of the Pandavas, is said to have departed for heaven. **Bhairav Nath Temple**, in the south of the main temple, is said to guard the temple when closed due to harsh winters. There is an ancient temple dedicated to the Goddess Gauri or Parvati at **Gaurikund**. Parvati is said to have meditated here, to win Shiva as her consort. It is also said that after establishing four sacred Dhams in India, Adi Guru Shankaracharya went into his *samadhi* at an early age of 32 years. The *samadhi* lies behind the **Kedarnath Temple**.



Kedarnath Temple

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is Jolly Grant, Dehradun (239 km).
By Rail: Nearest railheads are at Rishikesh, and Kotdwar (250 km).
By Road: Kedarnath can be

approached via Rishikesh, Kotdwar, Dehradun, Haridwar and other hill stations of Garhwal and Kumaon hills. **Distances:** Rishikesh 223 km, Deoprayag 70 km, Srinagar 35 km, Rudraprayag 34 km, Rampur 9 km, Guptkashi 5 km. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 10.5°C, Max 18°C; Winter: Min 0°C, Max 4°C (snow-bound). **Rainfall:** 1,475 mm. **Best time to visit:** May to October, barring monsoons.

City Code: 01364

Home Away From Home

GMVN Tourist Bungalow, Modi Bhavan, behind the temple, Punjab Sindh, next to the Post Office, *dharamshalas*, *ashrams*, cottages and a Tourist Rest House.

GANGOTRI

The source of the holy river Ganga, Gangotri is one of the 'Char Dhams' of Uttarakhand. An 18th century temple of Goddess Ganga, in white granite, on the right bank of the Bhagirathi river and a natural rock *shivling*, which according to legends is where Lord Shiva sat to receive the Ganga in his matted locks, are the main attractions of the holy town. This is normally seen during the winter months when the waters are clearer.

Excursions

The physical source of the Ganges is **Gaumukh**, 18 km southeast of Gangotri, at the base of Bhagirathi peaks, along the Gangotri Glacier. The glacier, lying at 13,662 ft, beyond Chaukhamba extends as far as Gaumukh. The Ganges start as a steady trickle out of the glacier, here.



Gaumukh

Accommodation is available en route, at Chirbasa (11,830 ft) 10 km before Gaumukh. **Nandanvan** acts as the base camp for rigorous climbs up the Bhagirathi peaks and also offers a splendid view of the **Shivling peak**. The place is accessible only after 6 km of difficult trekking along the glacier, on the same side as Gaumukh. **Tapovan**, known for exquisite meadows encircling the base of the Shivling peak, is across the snout of the glacier and reaching there requires hard core trekking experience.



Tapovan

Bhairon Ghati, 9 km from Gangotri towards Uttarkashi, is an unforgettable picturesque sight, with the temple of Bhairav Nath being an added attraction. **Uttarkashi** is 97 km far from Gangotri. The main attraction here are the **Vishwanath and Kuteti Devi Temples**. **Gangnani**, 53 kms away and at 1,855 m, has thermal springs and close-up view of the Himalayan peaks. **Kedartal**, 18 km away and about 15,000 feet above sea level, is the lake that serves as a base camp for trekking to the surrounding peaks. **Harsil**, 24 km away, is a quiet resort amidst lofty mountain peaks. At 2,620 m, worth seeing are **Wilson Cottage**, built in 1864 and **Sat Tal** or Seven lakes. Many trekker's trails begin here that go to the meadows, waterfalls and vales.

Eating Out

Limited options, in local eateries/roadside *dhabas*. Non-vegetarian food and alcoholic drinks are strictly prohibited.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: Jolly Grant, 25 km from Dehradun and 265 km from Gangotri, is the nearest airport. **By Rail:** Accessible via Dehradun and Haridwar. The Dehradun-Shatabdi Express is the best train from Delhi, while Dehradun-Mumbai Express and Dehradun-Varanasi Express also service Haridwar. Kolkata and Allahabad are connected by Doon Express and Dehradun-Allahabad Link Express. There is a regular shuttle service from Haridwar to Rishikesh. **Railway Station:** The nearest railhead is Rishikesh, 248 km from Gangotri. **By Road:** Direct buses are available

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from Delhi, Dehradun and Rishikesh via Tehri and Uttarkashi. Buses and taxis also operate from the Main Bazaar Road of Uttarkashi. Buses run by Samyukt Rotation Yatayat Vyawastha Samiti connect Gangotri with many centres in the region like Haridwar, Rishikesh, Tehri, Uttarkashi, etc. **Getting Around:** State-run government buses, taxis and cars can be hired. One can also hire bicycles to go around this small town. **Climate:** In Summer: It is cool during day and very cool at night. In Winter: It is freezing. **Best time to visit:** May to June, September-October. The temple and the township remain closed between November and May.

City Code: 013772

Tourist Office: GMVN, near Bus Stand, Uttarkashi 22221

Mountaineering: The glacier of Gangotri is surrounded by many high peaks which attract mountaineering enthusiasts. They can contact the **Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi or Indian Mountaineering Foundation, New Delhi.**

Banks: SBI, at Main Bazaar.

Post Office: Near the temple.

Hospitals: District Hospital: Uttarkashi, Primary Health Centre: Harsil.



Mountaineering at Gangotri

Home Away From Home

Ganga Niketan Hotel: near Gangotri Temple, Forest Rest House (for reservation contact DFO Uttarkashi), PWD Inspection Bungalow, UP Tourism Accommodation, Tourist Rest House, (GMVN).

JOSHIMATH

Perched high above the confluence of rivers Saraswati and Dhauliganga, Joshimath, or the winter home of Lord Badri, was established by Guru Shankaracharya in the 8th century. Besides basic minimum tourism infrastructure of a tourist bungalow, a few small hotels and *dharamshalas*, there are a few temples too, prominent being the **Narsingh Temple**, dedicated to Vishnu in his lion form. Worth visiting to pay obeisance is the **Vasudev Temple Complex**. This pilgrim centre also forms the base for trekking to the pristine Valley of Flowers.



Joshimath at Night

Facts at a Glance

Access: The nearest airport is Dehradun's Jolly Grant Airport (221 km). Rishikesh is the nearest railhead and decent road connectivity with Dehradun, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Nainital and Almora.

Home Away From Home

Tourist Rest House: 252468, PWD Inspection House: 252122. Few hotels are: New Star, Jaydeep, Janta, Alka, Nar Narayan.

VALLEY OF FLOWERS

Pristine and exclusive, the **Valley of Flowers** has been designed by Nature for the dedicated outdoor enthusiast. We all know of brave Hanuman, who lifted and flew the entire hill of rare herbs to Ram when asked to get one twig of Sanjeevani to revive Lakshman. What we have not heard is that the said herb was sighted in the Valley of Flowers. This collection of wild and beautiful flowers was chanced upon by English mountaineer and Botanist, Frank S. Smith. The valley is 10 km long and 2 km wide with over 300 species of rare wild flowers, has river **Pushpawati** flowing in the vicinity and is overlooked by the towering **Rataban Peak** in the background. Known also as the Bhyundar valley, Himalayan Blue Poppy, Daisy, Dianthus, Calendula, white and yellow Anemones bloom and swing with life during the monsoons. Himalayan black bear, musk deer, brown bear, snow leopard, Tahr, Bharal, Serow and an amazing variety of butterflies complete the picture of life here. The



Valley of Flowers

valley can be visited only during the day - overnight stay is prohibited.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is Jolly Grant, Dehradun (319 km) and the nearest railhead is Rishikesh (302 km). **By Road:** Off the Rishikesh-Badrinath Road, 17 km from Govind Ghat and 25 km from Badrinath. Bus services are available up to Govind Ghat, from where you have to trek. Porters can be hired at Govind Ghat and Ghangharia. **Best time to visit:** Late July to end-August. **Tourist Information:** Uttaranchal Tourism, Dehradun: 0135 - 2712095, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Nanda Devi National Park, Joshimath, Dist. Chamoli, Tel: 222179.

Home Away From Home

The only options are the government rest house at Ghangharia, and forest rest houses at Govind Ghat and Ghangharia. A gurudwara at Ghangharia, allows overnight stay sometimes.

AULI

While its snow-laden slopes beckon the daredevil and adventurous spirit in you in winter, the pristine natural beauty and picture-perfect pine-dotted scenic meadows lure you in summer. Surrounded by the Girson Reserve Forest (part of the Nanda Devi National Park), snow leopard, musk deer, wild boar and jackals are known to make occasional appearances. Auli nestled in the lap of the snow-capped peaks of the Garhwal Himalayas, in the Chamoli district of Uttaranchal, lies near the sacred shrine of

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Badrinath. At an altitude of 2,500 to 3,050m, Auli's slopes are magnanimously blessed by conifer and oak forests that make the mountain view unforgettable.

Must Do

Skiing of course! The conditions are perfect. A 500 metres long ski-lift and an 800 meters long chair-lift link the upper and lower slopes, as snow-beaters and snow-packing machines maintain their smoothness. Skiers can enjoy almost 20 km of virgin slopes, where cross-country, slalom and downhill skiing events are often held.

Facts at a Glance

Access: Auli is barely 13 km away from Joshimath, from where both bus and taxi services are available for Auli.

By Ropeway: By what is known as the longest and highest ropeway, the cable ride takes just 15 minutes, and the experience of the captivating beauty of the snow-covered peaks, the alpine forests and the bracing climate is enough to last a lifetime.

Temperatures: Summer: Min 13°C, Max 29°C; Winter: Min 10°C, Max 15°C. **Annual Rainfall:** 180 cm. **Best time to visit:** Round the year.

City Code: 01389

GMVN: 223208

Tourist Office: (Dehradun)
0135-2624147

Hospitals: Medical aid available only at the army medical camp 1.5 km away, or at Joshimath.

Home Away From Home

Cliff Top Club, Garhwal Mandal
Vikas Nigam (GMVN), Kaudiyala.

NAINITAL

Imagine the setting: sailboats skimming the placid waters of a vast blue-green lake, trekking trails, temples, forest groves, jungle and mountain resorts, and an aerial ropeway...this could only be Nainital, the idyllic hill station nestling in the heart of the Kumaon Hills, around the famous Naini Lake. In fact, you are already in the Lake District because of many lakes located so closely. So Nainital is a perfect honeymoon hideaway!

City Lights

The huge, blue-green **Naini Lake** is one of the prime attractions of this hill town. Deriving its name from its eye-like shape, here in this Naini Lake you can boat or fish, or better still, stroll around the Lake. Combine this with souvenir shopping at the **Mall**.



Naini Lake – Nainital

Bordering the lake is **Naina Peak**, the highest peak in Nainital (2,611 m) and some 6 km from the town centre, it offers the best view of the valley. China Peak is another favourite and was named thus, because at one time it was possible to see the Great Wall of China, from its highest point. **Land's End**, 4 km away, gives the best view of **Khurpa Tal**, one of the several lakes scattered all over Nainital. At 2,270 m above sea-level, **Snow View** offers

spectacular sights of the northern Himalayan peaks. If not game for a healthy walk, take a ropeway from Mallital to reach the spot. **Kilbury**, 12 km, at 2,528 m makes another enchanting spot, offering memorable Himalayan sunset views. The winter home of noted hunter Jim Corbett, at **Kaladhungi**, is another spot that should be covered if time permits, some 35 km away. **Bhawali** is a famous sanatorium within 10 km.

Gourmet's Delights

The Mall lining the lake on one side is the best place to discover cuisines to satisfy different palates. Selections: **Embassy Restaurant**: 235597, **New Capri**: 235690, **Sher-e-Punjab**: 235634, **Rasoi**: 235690, **Ashoka**, **Flattis**, **Kwality**, **Mochak**, **Sakley**, **Tandoor**, etc.

Shopper's Paradise

Bazaars of the **Mall**, **Mallital**, **Tallital** and the **Tibetan Market** are the best markets. Look for woollens, candles and cane sticks. For local handicrafts, try the **Hill Top Tourist Point** on the Mall, or **Kasta Kala Kendra Collection**.

Excursions

Bhimtal: Around 23 km from Nainital, the main attraction here is the lake, one of the largest in the district. A small island houses a restaurant in the middle of the lake, where one can savour the panoramic views of the lake as well as its luxuriant surroundings. You can also explore the area around the lake by taking a walk to a large dam at one end of the lake and terraced flower gardens on the other side.



Bhimtal

Bhimtal is also known for its lovely dappled paths, ravines festooned with dog rose and wild raspberry. There is a **Folk Culture Museum** in Bhimtal, a private institution, but with a good collection of artefacts and information about the districts of Uttaranchal.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is Delhi (322 km). **By Rail:** The nearest railhead is Kathgodam, 35 km south of Nainital connected with Delhi and Kolkata. From Lalkuan (60 km), trains leave for Agra, Bareilly and Lucknow.

From April to July, Shatabdi Express shuttles between Delhi and Kathgodam twice in a week. **By Road:** There are good overnight buses from Delhi, Mussoorie and Haridwar. **Distances:** Delhi 322 km, Bareilly 141 km, Lucknow 401 km, Almora 66 km, Ranikhet 60 km, Kausani 120 km, Corbett (Dhikala) 128 km, Bhimtal 22 km, Mukteshwar 51 km, Ramgarh 26 km. **Getting Around:** Taxis can be hired from private tour

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operators at fixed rates. One can also get around in rickshaws and ponies to China Peak, Tiffin Top and Land's End. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 11°C, Max 27.5°C; Winter: Min 2°C, Max 16°C. **Best time to visit:** March to June, mid-September to October-end.

City Code: 05942

Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam:
236209

Ropeway Booking: 235772

Parvat Tours (GMVN): 235656

UA Government Tourist Office:
235337

Hospitals/Chemists:

BD Pande Hospital: 235012,

Indra Pharmacy, Tallital.

Home Away From Home

WelcomHeritage The Palace
Belvedere: 237434, Manu Maharani:
237341, Fair Havens: 236057,
The Claridges Naini Retreat: 235108,
Arif Castles: 235801, Grand: 235406,
The Palace Resorts: 236065.

ALMORA

Some 66 km from Nainital, Almora is famous for a medley of temples, religious fairs and festivals. Adventure-lovers can go on soft treks too from here.



Almora City

City Lights

The Chitai Temple is dedicated to the local deity Lord Golu, as one finds thousands of little bells hung by devotees whose wishes have been fulfilled. The walk is 8 km from Almora, but scenic pine forests en route make the effort worth it. One can go by cart too. **Bright End Corner** is the point to see the sunset and sunrise through the Himalayan peaks. Close by are **Vivekananda Library** and the **Vivekananda Memorial** where Swami Vivekananda had stopped during the course of his journey to the Himalayas. **Martola** is a fancy picnic garden, 10 km away. Buses and taxis go up to Panuwanaula, from where one has to walk. A 800 year old Sun Temple at **Katarmal** is considered as sacred as the Konark's Sun Temple. **State Museum**, near the bus stand, is closed on Mondays and other Government Holidays. Open from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Shopping

Woollens made from the fur of the Angora rabbit can be bought here. Brass and copper items too are worth looking at. Some locally made sweets are also very famous.

Eating Out

Holiday Home: Mall Road, **Shikhar:** Mall Road, **Soni:** near bus stand, **Ashoka:** main market.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is Pantnagar, (127 km). **By Rail:** The nearest railhead is Kathgodam, 91 km away. Regular train services from

Delhi, Lucknow, Kolkata, Agra and Bareilly. Romper and meter gauge trains run till Llama (112 km). Buses and taxis are available from Kathgodam and Llama. **By Road:** Almora is connected by road from all the main cities of Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. The Kumaon Motor Owners Union runs buses from Haldwani. Nainital has many travel agencies running their buses to Almora. **Distances:** Ranikhet 52 km, Nainital 66 km, Kausani 51 km, Kathgodam 90 km, Pithoragarh 122 km. **Getting Around:** Taxis and jeeps are on hire. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 11°C, Max 29°C; Winter: Min 4°C, Max 15°C. **Best time to visit:** Round the year, except monsoons.

City Code: 05962
Uttarakhand Tourist Office:
 230180
Banks: SBI: 230505
District Hospital: 230025
Police: 230323

Home Away From Home

Snow View Resorts: 233650, Kalmatia Sangam: 233625, Holiday Home: 230250, Mountain Resorts: 282111.

MUKTESHWAR

Fifty-two km from Nainital and 26 km from Ramgarh, Mukteshwar has memorable views of the magnificent Himalayas. **Indian Veterinary Research Institute**, known for its contribution to animal-related research, is located here. Trek down the ridge to nearby Sitla (5 km), to reach the ideal wilderness for pitching your tents and go camping. On the way back, climb up the stone steps to the



Indian Veterinary Research Institute

tiny white abode of the local deity, Baba Mukteshwar at the **Mukteshwar Temple**. Slide down the hillside to a beautiful little church hanging precariously above a gorgeous valley. And while here, do pick up the wonderful trinkets fashioned out of pine cones.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Rail: The nearest railhead is Kathgodam (72 km), from where Mukteshwar is a three-and-a-half hour drive by bus or taxi. **By Road:** Mukteshwar is 350 km from Delhi, a drive of about 8-9 hours via Nainital (53 km) or Haldwani (49 km). **Best time to visit:** July to September.

City Code: 05965
Hotels: Mountain Trail Resort.

RANIKHET

Incredibly panoramic views of the Western Himalayas, ancient temples, picturesque picnic spots and soft treks, this small town is only almost 60 km



Ranikhet

Uttarakhand

from Nainital and 50 km from Almora.

Excursions

Chaubattia, 20 km away, is a garden spot commanding a fascinating view of the Himalayas. An attraction is the Government Apple Garden and Fruit Research Centre here. **Baludham**, little less than 3 km from Chaubattia, is known for a small artificial lake. Four km away is **Upat Kalika**, one of the best mountain golf courses (9 holes) in



Upat Kalika – Golf Course

the country. **Hairakhan Ashram**, 12 km, is the famous temple of Baba Hairakhan. **Jhula Devi and Ram Mandir** (17 km) on way to Chaubattia garden, is famous for the temples of Goddess Durga and Lord Ram.

Shopping

Ranikhet is famous for its merino wool shawls, tweed, fresh fruit, cane and cotton shawls.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Rail: The nearest railheads are Kathgodam (80 km) and Ramnagar (96 km). Some of the important train connections for Kathgodam are : Shatabdi Express, Howrah Express, Ranikhet Express, Rampur Passenger and Nainital Express. Ramnagar is connected to Delhi by an overnight train. **By Road:**

Ranikhet is well connected by road to important centres in the region. From Delhi, it's a 10 hour drive. **Distances:** Almora 49 km, Delhi 386 km, Lucknow 453 km, Nainital 59 km, Kathgodam 80 km, Badrinath 275 km, Naukuchiatal 70 km, Jim Corbett 90 km, Ramgarh 80 km. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 8°C, Max 22°C; Winter: Min 3°C, Max 7°C. **Best time to visit:** Throughout the year, except July and August.

City Code: 05966

Home Away From Home

Tourist Rest House (KMVN): 220893, Chevron Rosemount: 221391, West View: 220261.

KAUSANI

Famous for majestic views of the snow-capped peaks, at Kausani you feel that they are almost upon you. Spectacular views spanning a 300 km range can be had from vantage points around. One of the best spots from where one can photograph the dazzling sunrise at the Nanda Devi range, is the State Bungalow at Kausani. Day trips can be ideally taken to **Baijnath Temple** (16 kms), on the banks of the Gomti river and just below the Kausani ridge. A group of



Kausani

ancient temples dating back to the 12th and 15th century, line on the banks of the river. **Katarmal Sun Temple** is 10 km from Kausani.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Rail: The nearest railhead is Kathgodam (142 km). **By Road:** The hill station is well connected by road to all nearby towns. **Distances:** Kathgodam 142 km, Almora 53 km, Ranikhet 79 km, Nainital 120 km, Bageshwar 39 km, Delhi 410 km. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 11°C, Max 25°C; Winter: Min 2°C, Max 15°C. **Best time to visit:** April-June, September-November.

City Code: 05962

Home Away From Home

Krishna Mount View: 245022, Sun & Snow Inn: 245010, Tourist Rest House: 245006.

PITHORAGARH

Nestling in a small valley, Pithoragarh is a treasure yet to be fully discovered by tourists. Bordering Tibet and Nepal from the northern and eastern sides respectively, the pilgrims heading for Kailash-Mansarovar pass through this region. There is enough to hold the interests of mountaineers as well as pilgrims as there are temples, treks and



Pithoragarh

forts too!

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Rail: The nearest railhead is Tanakpur (151 km). **By Road:** Regular bus services connect Pithoragarh to important centres in UP.

Distances: Bareilly 268 km, Nainital 190 km, Delhi 505 km.

City Code: 05964

UP Tourist Bureau: 225527

District Info Centre: 225549

Home Away From Home

Tourist Rest House: 225434.

CORBETT NATIONAL PARK

This 'Land of Roar and Trumpet', forests, gurgling rivers and Sal-dappled glades, is named after the famous Colonel 'Gentleman' Jim Corbett. The ultimate tiger haven, it also happens to be one of the last surviving stretches of untouched sub-Himalayan wilderness.

Sights & Sounds

Leopards are often seen here in the hilly terrains and outskirts of the park; the more powerful tiger dominates the prime areas. The jungle cat and the rare fishing cat frequent grassland and



Elephants at Jim Corbett



Tiger

riverine areas. Elephants can be seen bathing, drinking and feeding in the Ramganga river and surrounding greens.

In abundance and sighted easily are Chital, Sambar (the largest deer in Asia) and Barking Deer, wild boar, Bharal, Ghoral, Himalayan Tahr and Serow. The best way to catch them in their natural habitat is to take a slow drive up to Kanda and back. In the Bijrani area, chances of seeing Sloth bear are rather bright while Jackals



Greylag

come close to the Dhikala campus, even as the call of the Langur is one of Corbett's most distinctive sounds. The Gharial (a fish-eating long-snouted crocodile) and the Mugger or Marsh crocodile are both found in the Ramganga river. Tortoises and fresh water turtles, the Indian Python, Viper, King Cobra and Krait too inhabit the park.

The Corbett Tiger Reserve is one of the world's best birding habitats. Winter

migrants include the Greylag and the Barheaded Goose, Great Crested Grebe, Snipe, Sandpiper, Gull and the Wagtail. Water birds like Cormorants, Darters, Herons and Egrets, Storks, Fishing Eagles and Kingfishers, abound in the park. The variety of fauna here is endless.

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is at Pantnagar, 85-km away though not currently operational. **By Rail:** Ramnagar (50 km) is the nearest railhead. **By Road:** From Delhi, the drive could take 6-8 hours, depending on the traffic. The main route goes like Delhi-Hapur-Moradabad-Ramnagar. There are regular bus services from Lucknow, Nainital, Ranikhet and Delhi. The main entrance, at Dhargarhi, is 19 km to the north, from where the Dhikala Tourist Complex is 32 km away, inside. **Distances:** Delhi 295 km, Lucknow 345 km. **Temperatures:** Summer: Max 44°C; Winter: Max 20°C. **Best time to visit:** March to June & September to November. The Park is closed between end-June to November 15.

City Code: 05947

Government rest houses are inside the Park at Dhikala and Khinanauli. For reservations contact, GMVN Offices: New Delhi: 23350481, Ramnagar: (05947) 285489.

Outside the Park: WelcomHeritage Corbett Ramganga Resort: 281592, Corbett Hideaway: 284132, Corbett Riverside Resort: (05945) 285960, Quality Inn Corbett Jungle Resort: (05946) 285219, Corbett Infinity