Thundering rapids of snow-fed rivers, lush verdant vales, formidable mountains, exotic landscapes, snow-topped peaks, gurgling brooks, prehistoric temples, landmark buildings, rare adventure sports... Indeed, Himachal Pradesh remains one of the most gifted states on India’s tourist map.

**SHIMLA**

Once the summer capital of the British, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh's capital, is now the summer capital of practically the whole of northern India. The colonial fervour can still be felt here despite the racy stride into the new millennium. The Mall, always packed with people, has now added many new shops and restaurants, even though the distant snow-topped peaks still evoke the same charm that they used to, in the days of yore...

City Lights

The **Mall** is the main hub of Shimla, and walking up and down the Mall is everybody’s favourite pastime. The ‘Gaiety Theatre’, a renovation of an old British theatre, is a center of cultural activities; the Indira Gandhi State Sports Complex has indoor sports facilities. Shops and restaurants make the Mall a lively and enjoyable experience. The **Vice-regal Lodge & Botanical Gardens**, also known as
Rashtrapati Niwas, was once the residence of the British Viceroy, Lord Dufferin. A 45-minute walk from the Mall takes you to the highest point of the Shimla Ridge. Dedicated to Lord Hanuman is the Jakhu Temple on the Jakhu hills offering a fine view of the surrounding valleys, snow-capped peaks, and the town, besides close encounters with plenty of naughty monkeys! Surrounded by thick forests, one can reach Chadwick Falls after a 45-minutes (7 km) walk from Summer Hill Chowk. Bharari Spur is a less explored area within the town. From here, one can take a longish walk by foot through the thick cedar forest to the hot springs of Tattapani, or to the ruins of Kiar Kori.

Gourmet’s Delights

The Mall is where most of the dining action is. So try out Devicos (2806335), beyond Scandal Point, for pao bhaji; Baljee’s (2652313), on the eastern end of the Mall for Indian and Western cuisine; The Oberoi Clarke’s up-market restaurant for its buffet lunches and dinners and The Park Café, for a quick bite, thick milkshake and good coffee. Alfa (multicuisine, 2657151) and HPTDC’s Ashiana also has a bar.

Shopper’s Paradise

The Mall is packed with big showrooms. The Himachal Emporium, a little beyond Scandal Point, has Kullu shawls, caps and hand-knitted socks and gloves. The Lakkad Bazaar is flooded with wooden knick-knacks and handicrafts. Some Chinese shoe shops along the Mall are quite sought after for their goods, while Diwanchand Atmaram is famous for its collection of woollens. Some other items worth buying are carpets, rugs, shawls, leather craft and silver jewellery. The Tibetan Market, right down the lane from Scandal Point, has some very ‘genuinely’ fake imported goods, like jeans, T-shirts, bags, shoes, jackets etc.

Excursions

Fagu (22 km) offers majestic views of the inner Himalayas. Narkanda (64 km) is the popular ski destination blessed with cedar forests and spruced up landscapes. Naldehra (23 km) has a 9-hole golf course, cedar forests and picnic grounds. Accommodation is available in HPTDC log huts (2812890). Kufri (16 km) is thickly wooded, with ski slopes. Accommodation is available at Kufri Holiday Resorts (2740300), Shilon Resorts and Royal View Resorts (2733384).
Access: By Air: Jagson Airlines operates a shuttle service between Delhi and Kullu (via) Shimla thrice a week. The airport is at Jubbarbhatti, 23 km from downtown. By Rail: Kalka and Chandigarh are the closest railheads. Shatabdi Express and the Himalayan Queen connect Delhi with Kalka, and there is also the Howrah-Kalka Mail via Delhi. For the onward journey from Kalka, take the narrow gauge Toy Train. Taxis can also be hired from Kalka to Shimla at negotiable rates. The Shimla Railway Station is 1 km from downtown. By Road: Deluxe coaches leave for Shimla via Chandigarh at regular intervals from Delhi's ISBT. You may drive down the well-metalled roads. Distances: Delhi 347 km, Chandigarh 117 km. Temperatures: Summer (March to May): Min 15°C, Max 33°C; Winter (October to February): Min 0°C, Max 8°C. Best time to visit: April to mid-July and mid-September to October-end.

City Code: 0177
Jagson Airlines: 2625177
HPTDC Tourist Reception Centre: 2652561, 2658302
HPTDC: 2652561

Director, Dept. of Tourism: 2625924
ISBT: 2658765
Rivoli Bus Stand: 2811259
Kalka-Shimla Himachal Taxi Union: 2658225
Banks: SBI and State Bank of Patiala, at the Mall.
Hospitals/Medical Centres: Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital: 2803073, Shri Ram Medical Centre: 2605300, Indus Hospital: 2641401.

MASHOBRA

Apple orchards, thick woods of oak and pine, Mashobra offers a sylvan retreat with pretty walks and picnic spots just 10 km from Shimla. You can trek down to the grassy glade of Sipur or go up to Shali Peak – the highest point in the area, or to Cragnano (3 km). The Spiti Fair is held in June when the locals revel in their traditional finery. On a clear day, the mountains of the Pir Panjal range in the state of Jammu and Kashmir can be seen stretching all the way across to Nanda Devi in the Garhwal region of

Mashobra
KASULI

Cut off from the main tourist route, Kasauli is a favourite haunt of many a lazy tripper. Wild rose and hawthorn copses, cobbled paths and pine scented pathways beckon you here. Soak in the twilight hush before a crackling fire, with a hot drink… Or follow the Upper Mall, up to Monkey Point on Gilbert Hill near the air force base. Take the 4-km walk to the temple and enjoy the splendid vistas from this vantage point. Dagshai lies across the forested hills and deep ravines, and you can catch the sparkle of the Satluj river curving lazily along the plains. On a clear day enjoy the vistas of the snow-clad Dhauladhar Range and the Churi Chandni Peak. Unexplored Kasauli is for the traveller looking to step out of the madding crowd.

Baikunth Resorts pulls the crowds from both Kasauli and Chandigarh. It has a well-stocked bar. For grilled sandwiches, soups and hot samosas check out the Daily Needs store in Kasauli. The Alasia’s bar and Ros Common’s traditional Indian fare are worth a try.

Facts at a Glance

**Access:** The nearest airport and railhead is Shimla. It is 380 km from Delhi, 131 km from Chandigarh and 10 km from Shimla. Naldehra is a mere 3 km from here. **Best time to visit:** April to August, and for snow-based adventure sports, during winters. One can stay at Wildflower Hall: 2648585, Hotel Gables: 2740170.

NALAGARH

In the district of Solan, the prime attraction of Nalagarh is the Fort, located on a hillock at the foothills of the Himalayas. Rising above a 20 acre estate of forest and orchard, it also affords a panoramic view of the Shivalik range beyond the river Sirsa. Nalagarh Fort, provides a royal-
lies by the banks of the shining river Beas. Reached by NH 21, at an altitude of 4,000 ft, Kullu serves as the nerve centre of the valley and is the starting point for a number of treks, small enough to cover by foot. The open area

heritage experience amid all the trappings of luxury. From here, one can go on various treks. Alternatively, head out to the Royal Orchards, just 20 minutes away. Kinoos in season, are simply delicious. The Naina Devi Temple, tucked into the hillside, is about 60 km away. One can also go fishing at Gobind Sagar Lake, a 90-minute drive from Nalagarh Fort.

Shimla is only 135 km away.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport as well as railhead is Chandigarh (60 km). By Road: Delhi to Nalagarh is 300 km via Pinjore. Temperatures: Summer: Max 38°C, Winter: Min 1°C. Best time to visit: April, May, June & September to November.

City Code: 01795

Hospitals/Chemists: Rural

Government Hospital: 223023,
Gagan Clinic Health Centre: 223269;
Jain Medicos, Vipin Medical Centre.

KULLU

The Valley of the Gods, as the Kullu Valley has come to be known, is perhaps the most delightful region in the Western Himalayas. Once known as Kulanthapitha or the end of the forbidding heights of the greater Himalayas, this fabled silver valley

lies by the banks of the shining river Beas. Reached by NH 21, at an altitude of 4,000 ft, Kullu serves as the nerve centre of the valley and is the starting point for a number of treks, small enough to cover by foot. The open area
dussehra is celebrated in the rest of the country.

**Gourmet's Delights**

HPTDC’s Monal Cafe (puri bhajee recommended), Hotstuff (pizzas, soup and fast food), Rohtang, Shabnam Restaurant (Chinese, Continental, Tandoori & Indian Special Vegetarian thali),

**Shopper's Paradise**

The main bazaar of Kullu is Akhara Bazaar. Kullu shawls, caps, gudmas (blanket), puhlan (fur slippers), namdas, patoos (shawls), are available here in plenty. Handicrafts, especially basketry, too are renowned.

One km past the castle is the Roerich Gallery, displaying the artwork of both the eccentric Professor Nicholas Roerich, who died in Naggar in 1947, and his son, Svetoslav Roerich, who died in Bangalore in 1993. Open daily from 9 am to 1 pm and 2 to 5 pm.

Manikaran is famous for its hot springs, which apparently cure anything from rheumatism to bronchitis, and are hot enough to boil rice. Manikaran is another place which many foreigners have forgotten to leave. Manikaran means 'jewel from the ear' in Sanskrit. According to local legend, a giant snake took Parvati's earrings while she was bathing and then snorted them through its nose to create spaces where the hot springs spewed forth. Kaisdhar (15 km), is a quiet secluded spot of great beauty known for its magnificent scenery and

**Excursions**

**Naggar:** Ideal for a day-trip from Manali or Kullu, Naggar was the capital of the Kullu Valley for nearly 1500 years. The castle, built about 500 years ago as the raja’s headquarters, was converted into a hotel in 1978.

**Gurudwara Manikaran Sahib**

**Shiva Temple**

**Raghunathji Temple**
innumerable walks. Accommodation is available in the forest rest house. Kasol, on the banks of the Parvati river, is a great holiday destination also famous for trout fishing. The Shiva Temple of Gauri Shankar is at the foot of the small bazaar below the castle and dates from the 11th or 12th century. The Raghunathji Temple is dedicated to the principal god in the valley. The Jagannathji Temple (3km) is a stiff climb, but from the temple there are great views over Kullu. Take the path off the main road to Akhara Bazaar, after crossing the bridge. The temple area is now also used as a jumping off point for hang-gliding. At least once a year the image of Shiva in the Bijli Mahadev Temple is said to be shattered by lightning, and then miraculously repaired by the temple pujari. Chatar Bhuj Hill Temple is dedicated to Vishnu while the Tripura Sundri Devi Temple and the Muralidhar Krishna Temple make for interesting trips.

Facts at a Glance

**Access:** By Air: Jagson Airlines operates from Delhi. The nearest airport is at Bhuntar, 10 km from Kullu. By Rail: The closest railheads from here are Pathankot and Chandigarh, from where you can take the narrow gauge train to Jogindernagar. Usually the most convenient way is to take a taxi from either of these places to Kullu. By Road: Well connected by buses from Delhi, Leh, Shimla, Ludhiana and other cities of Punjab. HPDTC buses available from ISBT at New Delhi and other main bus terminals in northern cities. **Bus Terminus:** The new bus stand at Sarvari Bazaar is the most frequent stoppage point. Akhara bus depot is also used for certain buses. The bus stop at Dhalpur Maidan is suitable for going to nearby places to the south, such as Bhuntar, or the Parbati Valley. **Distances:** Chandigarh: 250 km. Kaisdhar 15 km, Kasol ‘42’ kmt, Mahikarhan ‘45’ kmt; **Getting Around:** Auto-rickshaw, taxis, bus, ponies and also bikes on-hire. Autos are not metered, so bargain before you get in. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 22°C, Max 38°C; Winter: Min 0°C, Max 15°C. **Annual Rainfall:** 3,800 mm. Best time to visit: April to June, September to November.

**City Code:** 01902  
**Jagson Airlines:** 265222  
**Information Centre:** 224605  
**Banks:** SBI, at Dhalpur. Also exchanges forex.  
**Hospitals:** East West Rescue: 223064  

**Home Away From Home**  

**Bus Terminus:** The new bus stand at Sarvari Bazaar is the most
222558, Vaishali: 224225.

MANALI
At 2,050 m, Manali has a picture postcard beauty. One of the most popular tourist hill stations in northern India, Manali's popularity also stems from the fact that it is a perfect destination for trekkers as well as honeymooners.

City Lights
Temple & Monasteries: Arjun Gufa is on the left bank of the river Beas. Hadimba Temple is in the city while Jagatsukh (6 km away) is a Shiva temple. Manu Temple, is supposed to be the only temple of Manu in India. The name Manali comes from the sage Manu who was said to be the creator of the human race on earth. The shiny gompas are maintained by donations from the local community and sale proceeds of hand-woven carpets in the temple workshop.

There are many scenic views that bring alive the picturesque beauty of the hill station and the magnificent sight of the snow-capped peaks and glaciers.

Solang Valley
Kothi, 12 km away and Rahala Waterfalls, 16 km, are worth a visit. For a breathtaking sight of snow-laden mountains rising far above the clouds, visit Rohtang Pass. At 3,979 m, it is the highest point on the Manali-Keylong Road. Solang Valley also takes you closer to glaciers and snow-capped mountains and peaks. It has fine ski slopes. The Mountaineering Institute has a ski-lift for training purposes. The 12-km hike up the western banks of the Beas to the Solang Valley is a remarkable experience.

Must Do
The Vashist Hot Water Springs! Across the Beas river is Vashist, a small village with natural sulphur springs. Modern bathhouses, with Turkish-style showers and piped hot water are a great hit. A pyramidal stone temple, dedicated to Vashist Muni and another temple of Lord Ram are also in the vicinity.
Gourmet's Delights

The Mall has by far the highest number of eateries. Some of the popular names include **Chopsticks** (Chinese, Tibetan, Japanese), **Gozy** (Punjabi, Gujarati), **Juniper** (HPTDC's), **Moc** (Chinese, Tibetan), **Mona Lisa** (Indian), **Mount View** (multicuisine), **Mayur Restaurant** (vegetarian), **Sher-e-Punjab** (Indian), **Swamiji's Madras Cafe** (veg. thali).

Shopper's Paradise

Woollen goods are the town's real forte, particularly shawls. **New Shopping Centre** (NSC), **Shawl Factory Shop**, have quality stuff. Hand-woven goods, pillbox, Kullu caps, Himalayan handicrafts, Tibetan curios like prayer wheels, amulets, dorjes (thunderbolts), masks, musical instruments and thangkas are worth checking out here.

Facts at a Glance

**Access:** By Air: Bhuntar airport is 50 km from Manali. Jagson Airlines connects to Delhi via Shimla. By Rail: The closest narrow-gauge railhead is at Jogindernagar, 135 km away. The closest broad-gauge railheads are Chandigarh (310 km) and Ambala (355 km). By Road: Delhi via Mandi is 585 km, and from Shimla it is 270 km. Kullu is 40 km away. Getting Around: The best way to move around by foot or take auto-rickshaw. Taxis and autos are convenient for visiting places beyond Manali.

**Temperatures:** Summer: Min 12°C, Max 25°C; Winter: Min 2°C, Max 14.5°C. Best time to visit: April to June, September to October.

**City Code:** 01902

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**Jagson Airlines:** 252843  
**Tourist Information Office:** 252175  
**HPTDC:** 253531  
**Taxi Operators Union:** 254032

**Banks:** SBI: 252177, P&S Bank: 252125  
**Hospitals:** Mission Hospital, Khanna’s Clinic

**Home Away From Home**


**MANDI**

In central Himachal Pradesh, along the left bank of the river Beas at the foot hills of the Shivalik ranges, Mandi at a height of 760 metres (2,495 ft) has a rich heritage of culture, of both historical and theological significance. Mandi, which means ‘market’, is quite a good place to break journey between Shimla and the Kullu Valley. In Mandi, there are 81 Hindu temples, and a lake. Bhutnath, Triloknath, Panchvaktra and Shyamakali at Tarna hill are some of the important temples. Also on the hill is a new temple dedicated to Tarna Devi, overlooking the valley and giving a panoramic view of the whole area. At less than 800m above sea level and
considerably hotter than other regional areas, Mandi is the gateway to the Kullu Valley, and the junction where the road branches off along the Kangra Valley towards Dharamshala.

Fairs & Festivals

Shivratri celebrations are spread over a week and deities from all over the district are brought here. **Tso-Pema**, is particularly important in the year of the Shivratri, which falls every 12 years. Buddhists because it is from here that Padmasambhava departed for Tibet. Hindus also revere the lake because it was where **Rishi Lomas** did his penance as a dedication to Lord Shiva, who, in return, gave Rishi the seven lakes in the vicinity, including Rewalsar. The **Tso-Pema Ogyen Heru-kai Nyingmapa Gompa & Institute**, built in the 9th century, has a museum and colourful murals. The Sikhs have the huge **Guru Govind Singh Gurudwara**, built in 1930 by Raja Joginder Singh, and dedicated to Govind Singh, who stayed at the Rewalsar Lake for a month. Accommodation is available at HPTDC Inn (280252). **Pandoh**: About two km north of Pandoh, the impressive Pandoh Dam diverts water from the Beas river along two 12km tunnels to Baggi. The water then joins the Satlej river near Bilaspur, eventually flowing into the huge artificial Govind Sagar. There is nowhere to stay at Pandoh or at the dam. HPTDC’s Jai Tarang Cafe serves reasonable food. **Bajaura**: 15 km south of Kullu, Bajaura is the home of **Basheshar Mahadev**, the largest stone temple in the Kullu Valley, built in the 8th century with finely carved stone sculptures.

Facts at a Glance

**Access:** By Air: The nearest airport is Bhuntar, which is about 57 km from Mandi on Mandi-Kullu Highway.

**By Rail:** The nearest railhead is Joginder Nagar, 55 km from Mandi.

**By Road:** Located at the junction of the Kangra and Kullu Valleys, NH 20 and 21, connect Mandi to all parts of the state. The bus terminus is across the river in the eastern part of the town.

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**Rewalsar Lake**

**Gourmet’s Delights**

**Copacabana Bar & Restaurant, Mandav** (fast & snack food), HPTDC’s **Café Shiraz, Mayfair, Standard, Shiva** among others.

**Excursions**

**Rewalsar Lake:** 24 km south-west of Mandi, beside the village of Rewalsar. This small lake is revered by Buddhists because it is from here that Padmasambhava departed for Tibet. Hindus also revere the lake because it was where Rishi Lomas did his penance as a dedication to Lord Shiva, who, in return, gave Rishi the seven lakes in the vicinity, including Rewalsar. The Tso-Pema Ogyen Heru-kai Nyingmapa Gompa & Institute, built in the 9th century, has a museum and colourful murals. The Sikhs have the huge Guru Govind Singh Gurudwara, built in 1930 by Raja Joginder Singh, and dedicated to Govind Singh, who stayed at the Rewalsar Lake for a month. Accommodation is available at HPTDC Inn (280252). Pandoh: About two km north of Pandoh, the impressive Pandoh Dam diverts water from the Beas river along two 12km tunnels to Baggi. The water then joins the Satlej river near Bilaspur, eventually flowing into the huge artificial Govind Sagar. There is nowhere to stay at Pandoh or at the dam. HPTDC’s Jai Tarang Cafe serves reasonable food. Bajaura: 15 km south of Kullu, Bajaura is the home of Basheshar Mahadev, the largest stone temple in the Kullu Valley, built in the 8th century with finely carved stone sculptures.

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**Facts at a Glance**

**Access:** By Air: The nearest airport is Bhuntar, which is about 57 km from Mandi on Mandi-Kullu Highway.

**By Rail:** The nearest railhead is Joginder Nagar, 55 km from Mandi.

**By Road:** Located at the junction of the Kangra and Kullu Valleys, NH 20 and 21, connect Mandi to all parts of the state. The bus terminus is across the river in the eastern part of the town.
Getting Around: Auto-rickshaws are easily available. Climate: Cold in winter and hot in summer. Best time to visit: Round the year.

City Code: 01905
District Tourist Development Office: 225036

Home Away From Home

DALHOUSSIE
Dalhousie, Chamba and Khajjiar form an enchanting little circuit of their own in Western Himachal. Dalhousie, named after a former British governor-general, is steeped in colonial atmosphere and architecture, in pockets. With wonderful views of the Pir Panjal range that is mostly snow-capped, Dalhousie is at a height of 1,530 to 2,375 m. The climate is cold in winter and pleasant in summer. A walk on the roads connecting Subhash and Gandhi Chowks from both sides of the mountain, can be very invigorating.

Gourmet’s Delights
Go to Muslim Sadar Bazaar for typical Himachali food. Kwality at Gandhi Chowk, Preet Palace at Subhash Chowk (Mughlai, Kashmiri and Chinese), Moti Mahal, also at Subhash Chowk, has a bar and is known for South Indian food.

Shopper’s Paradise
The road along Gandhi Chowk is dotted with tiny shops selling ethnic trinkets and other souvenirs. The Himachal Handloom Industry Emporium on Thandi Sarak is good for woollen shawls. The Tibetan Handicrafts Centre is about 3 km from Gandhi Chowk, along the Khajjiar Road, for Tibetan carpets made-to-order.

Excursions
Subhash Baoli, 1.6 km, has commanding views of the snow-capped mountains. Kalatope (2,440 m), 10 km, has a panoramic view, an enchanting palace, and a forest rest house. Walking along the secluded and forested road through upper Nakorota hills, one reaches Lakkadmandi. The little Kalatope Sanctuary has a variety of wildlife such as ibex, deer, bear and leopard. Dainkund (2,745m), 10 km from the town, this tall peak affords a bird's-eye view on a clear day, of the
hills, valleys and the rivers Beas, Ravi and the Chenab threading their way down to the plains. **Bara Pathar**, 4 km away and set amidst thick forest, has a small temple of Bhulwani Mata, in the village of Ahla, on the way to Kalatope. A fair is celebrated in July to venerate the goddess.

### Facts at a Glance

**Access: By Air:** The nearest airport is at Gaggal (140 km). **By Rail:** Take Jhelum Express, Jammu-Delhi Express or Himachal Express to Pathankot (80 km), the nearest railhead for Dalhousie. From here, it is a two-hour uphill drive by taxi, car or bus. **By Road:** Himachal Pradesh Tourism runs deluxe buses from Shimla and Dharamshala to Dalhousie. The route is via Ambala or Patiala to Pathankot. **Getting Around:** Taxis are the best way for excursions. Taxi stands are at Gandhi and Subhash Chowk. **Temperatures:** Summer: Max 30°C; Winter: Min 0°C. **Best time to visit:** Mid-May to mid-October.

**City Code:** 01899  
**Tourist Information Office:** 242136, At Pathankot: (0186) 220316  
**Taxi Union:** 240220  
**Hospitals:** St Joseph’s Clinic on Court Road (near Aroma & Claire Hotel).

### Home Away From Home


**KHAJJIIAR**

This picturesque spot with an emerald, saucer shaped meadow set amidst a dense deodar forest, is a picture perfect excursion that can be taken from Dalhousie or Chamba, both 24 km away. A lake at its centre with a floating island, a forest rest house, a little temple with a golden spire and a golf course complete the pretty picture. Khajjiar offers horse rides through lovely mountain landscape in mild summers and the view of snow-covered mountains in winters.

### Chamba

**Deodar (HPTDC):** 236333, Shining Star: 236336, Mini Swiss: 236364, Youth Hostel, PWD Rest House.

**Bajeshwari Temple**
emains, An erstwhile princely state, Chamba lies on the banks of the river Ravi. This 6th century kingdom has several temples nestling in a beautiful terrain. However, thanks to its location (915 m), it suffers extreme climatic conditions, akin to the northern plains.

City Lights

The Laxmi Narayan Temple Complex houses six temples dedicated to Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. The Bajeshwari Temple, in typical shikara style, is believed to be blessed by Goddess Durga. Other temples in the circuit include the Sui Mata Temple, Hari Rai Temple and the Chamunda Devi Temple.

Gandhi Gate, which was constructed to welcome Lord Curzon into the town during the British era, is at a walking distance from the Chaugan. Also worth a visit is the St Andrew’s Church – a stone structure with latticed windows. Most attractions are within walking distance of Chaugan, a large stretch of green, in the heart of the town.

Gourmet’s Delights

Chukh, a traditional preparation of chilly sauce in mustard oil, Chamba Madhra (kidney beans with ghee and yoghurt) and Khatta meat are the local special dishes here. The dining options are limited: Olive Green Restaurant, along Temple Road and Moti Restaurant, are known for veg thalis and one can also try out the Café River View, of HPTDC.

Shopper’s Paradise

Rang Mahal, once a palace, now houses the Himachal Pradesh Emporium. Exquisite embroidery on silk and wool is displayed here, an art that is over a thousand years old. The Bhuri Singh Museum exhibits paintings from the Kangra school and has murals rescued from a fire at Rang Mahal. Beautiful Chamba rumaals, which are used as covers for gifts, painted with scenes depicting the history of Chamba, make good souvenirs. Chamba chappals, metalcraft and paintings in the Kangra style are great buys from here. Brass and copper statues of gods and goddesses can also be bought from Chamba.

Excursions

Bharmour, 65 km, has 20-odd carved temple roofs that once were the pride of the former capital of Chamba. Manimahesh, 93 km, is visited by Shiva worshippers who throng the Manimahesh Lake, at the base of the Manimahesh Kailash mountain.
**Himachal Pradesh**

**Access:** By Air: Gaggal, the nearest airport, is located 181 km from Chamba. IA has flights from Delhi. By Rail: Pathankot (120 km) is the closest railhead, from where buses and taxis are available for Chamba. Trains to Pathankot include the Pathankot-Jammu Mail, Jammu-Delhi, Jhelum Express among others. By Road: Chamba is 24 km from Khajjiar and 49 km from Dalhousie. The terrain between Dalhousie and Chamba is such that it would take you at least two hours to get there. Regular and luxury buses ply from Dalhousie. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 15°C, Max 38°C; Winter: Min 8°C, Max 15°C. **Best time to visit:** Winter.

**City Code:** 018992  
**District Tourism Development Council:** 224002  
**HPRTC Bus Stand:** 222210  
**Hospitals/Chemists:** District Hospital: 222392, Shrikanth Chowfla & Sons: 222253.

**Home Away From Home**  
HPTDC's Iravati: 222671 & Champak: 222774.

**DHARAMSHALA**

Better known as the home-in-exile of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual head, Dharamshala is located in the upper reaches of the Kangra Valley, against the backdrop of the Dhauladhar range. A 10 km hilly terrain divides the town into Lower and Upper Dharamshala, also known as McLeodganj, and of course 'Little Lhasa', where the prayer flags and spinning wheels send out the message of universal harmony.

Set amidst the pine groves is a **War Memorial** that commemorates the post-independence war heroes of Himachal. The **Kangra Art Museum** showcases miniature paintings, sculptures, pottery and dresses used by the local nobility. A pleasant walk through the Kotwali Bazaar leads you to **Kunal Pathri**, a temple made out of rocks. About 11 km from Dharamshala is the **Dal Lake**, surrounded by deodar trees. The 20 km stretch of the river Beas between Nadaun and the Pong Dam offers ample opportunities of angling for mahseer.

**Gourmet's Delights**

**Green Hotel** (Chinese and Tibetan), **Khama Nirvana**, on Temple Road, for good food and music, **Dhauladhar** (Indian, Continental), **Lazeez** (mixed fare), **Potala** (Tibetan).

**Shopper's Paradise**

Typical souvenirs from Dharamshala include wooden carvings, silk and woven woollen scarves and Tibetan handicrafts. All main streets are dotted with tiny stalls selling these trinkets and handicrafts. On Jogibara Road, you can pick up prayer bells, carpets, rugs and books. **The Green Shop** at Bhagsu Road sells recycled painted cards and other such
stationery. Women can buy a bakhu, a traditional Tibetan dress for women. The Tibetan Bookshop and Information Office have books on Tibet and its history.

**Must Try**

There are adventure options if you have the time and fitness levels! The Mountaineering Institute in McLeodganj can help. Go trekking or rock-climbing in the Dhauladhar ranges between May and October.

**Facts at a Glance**

**Access: By Air:** Gaggal is the nearest airport, 13 km from Dharamshala and 23 km from McLeodganj. Jagson Airline operates flights from Delhi.

**By Rail:** Although the Kangra Mandir Railway Station, 22 km away, is closest to Dharamshala, Pathankot (85 kms) is more convenient with trains from Delhi, Punjab, Jammu and other cities arriving here. Jhelum-Jammu Express, Pathankot-Jammu and many other northern trains halt here.

**By Road:** Linked by road to all major towns nearby, Dharamshala is just off the NH 20. The 85 km distance from Pathankot to Dharamshala can be covered by taxi or deluxe bus. If driving down, you could take either Delhi-Chandigarh-Dharamshala or Shimla-Manali-Mandi-Palanpur-Dharaneshwar route. **Bus Terminal:** McLeodganj is the arrival point for luxury and deluxe buses from Manali and Delhi. State-run buses usually terminate at the bus stop at the southern end of Kotwali Bazaar.

**Distances:** Chamba 192 km, Kangra 17 km, Dalhousie 126 km. **Getting Around:** Tourist taxis or autos, rates negotiable. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 15°C, Max 30°C; Winter: Min 8°C, Max 18°C. **Best time to visit:** April to October.

**City Code:** 01892

**HPTDC:** 224928

**Tourist Information Office:** 221232

**McLeodganj Bus Terminus:** 228025

**Hospitals:** Zonal Hospital: 222133, Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute, Delek Hospital, Dr Yeshi Dhondhen (former physician of the Dalai Lama).

**Home Away From Home**

WelcomHeritage Grace Cottage: 223265, Dhauladhar (HPTDC):

LAHAUL & SPITI

Located in the dizzy heights of the Himalayas, with passes that remain closed for six months, Kinnaur, Spiti and Lahaul were till recently forbidden land. The twin valleys of Lahaul & Spiti in the north-eastern corner of Himachal, are protected by high mountains on all sides: the Himalayas in the north, Pir Panjal to the south and the Spiti Chandra watershed to the east. The threshold of the Lahaul plateau is nourished by the Chandra and Bhaga rivers. Lahaul and its sub-division Spiti, valleys are predominantly Buddhist, hence home to well-known monasteries. The villagers have small gompas in almost every village. The place derives its name from Rahul, the son of Buddha.

Eastern Valleys: From the Kinnaur side, the road goes along the Spiti river at an average height of 3500 metres. The first valley is along Gui Nallah (stream) which joins Lingti Valley in the north. The Western Valleys join Kinnaur and Kullu.

Fairs & Festivals

Halda marks the New Year in Lahaul Valley. The date is fixed by the Lamas, which usually falls in January. Phagali is another important festival celebrated in Phagun, the last month of winter and the beginning of the spring season. Ghantal Festival is celebrated on a full moon night, in the month of June at the Guru Ghantal monastery in Lahaul. Ladarcha Fair is held in July at Kaza, the old trade route to Tibet and Central Asia. Traders come to sell their produce including wool, woollen clothes and dry fruits, etc. The Lahaul Festival is also celebrated during this season. The Trilokinath temple is the centre point of the Pauri Festival, held in August, at Udaipur, Lahaul.

City Lights

Lahaul Valley: This valley is situated beyond Kullu district, bordering Zanskar and Ladakh. It has many peaks and long glaciers, easily approachable within 2-3 days. Khoksar: 67 km from Manali, this tiny village is situated at a height of 3,140 m and is also known as the gateway to Lahaul. During winter, Khoksar is the coldest place in Lahaul Valley. Keylong, the district headquarter, lies in the heart of Lahaul, on the Manali-Leh Road. This is the only place in Lahaul which has a regular bazaar, and more than 250 houses! The Khardong Monastery is 4 km from here and its attractions are barrel-like prayer drums, paintings,
ancient weapons, musical instruments and life-size statues of Lord Buddha. The other two monasteries here are Tayul and Shashur. Tandi is 8 km short of Keylong and is considered the most sacred in Lahaul Valley. In upper Lahaul and 59 km from Keylong in the Pattan Valley, Udaipur is the starting point for a number of exciting treks to Chamba, Kishtwar and Padam. It has a rest house and camping sites. Lake Chandratal is a natural lake situated at 4270 metres above sea level and is about one km in length and about half km in breadth, at its widest part. Lake Surajtal is 65 km from Keylong. This emerald green lake is the source of the river Bhaga. Spiti Valley is also called 'Little Tibet' because it has almost the same terrain, vegetation and climate. Spiti lies between Tibet, Ladakh, Kinnaur, Lahaul and Kullu. From Shimla via Kinnaur there is a motorable road, which remains open up to Kaza for almost eight months in the year. About 10 km ahead of Puh, the river Satluj enters India near Shipki La and the Spiti river joins it at Khab. The road then goes to Sumdo via Hangrang Valley, to where the Spiti Valley starts. Kaza, the sub-divisional headquarters of Spiti, is connected with Shimla and Manali by a good weather road. Manali is 214 km south-west of Kaza and Shimla is 421 km south-west. A bus service operates from Manali via Rohtang Pass and Kunzam La, and takes about 12 hrs to reach. It operates only in the months of July to October. The bus from Shimla through the Kinnaur Valley takes almost two days to reach. Kibber, 11 km away, is the highest inhabited village in the world. Tabo has the 1,000-year old Tabo Gompa, boasting a priceless collection of manuscripts and thangkas. Kunzam Pass is the other point of entry into Spiti from Manali, traversing through Lahaul, 76 km from Kaza. Kunzam provides the chief access to the Lahaul Valley, by the great Kunzam range.

**Access:**

**By Air:** The two nearest airports are Bhunter near Kullu from Manali and Jabbar Airport, near Shimla. **By Rail:** The nearest railway point is Shimla. **By Road:** Accessible from Manali (115 km), on the Manali-Leh Road, also linked by NH 22 via Shimla. Buses and taxis are available from Manali and Shimla. **Temperatures:** Minus 20°C during winter; cold during summer. **Rainfall:**