

Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is a small state tucked away between the steamy plains of North India and the massive ranges of the Great Himalaya to the north. Given its location the geographic spectrum of the state is vast, ranging from the rolling Shivalik foothills to the massive 6000m peaks of the Pir Pinjal. Not surprisingly, there is a wildlife diversity to complement this, with sub-tropical forests, temperate woodlands and alpine meadows in close proximity. Similarly, given its strategic position between the former Northwest Frontier, the sub-continent and the Tibetan plateau the region has long been a melting pot of diverse cultural and spiritual influences.

The Dhauladhar range forms part of the outermost Himalaya and rises dramatically from the low foothills to stark peaks of over 5000m. These mountains are the traditional stronghold of nomadic traders and shepherds. The Gaddis are charismatic folk of Aryan descent who raise flocks of sheep and goat between the foothills and the high grazing meadows bordering Ladakh and Tibet. The Gujjars are hardworking Muslims who tend buffalo herds, selling much of their milk based produce to the sweet makers in the plains. The steeply sloping flanks of the Dhauladhar provide winter homes for these traditional traders as well as a base for their families who make a good living from the land in their absence. Thankfully, Himachal Pradesh has escaped the notice of mainstream trekkers and is still an unspoilt part of the Himalayas with most of the local customs, cultures and landscapes still intact.

Day 1 : ARRIVE PATHANKOT, TRANSFER TO DALHOUSIE, CHECK-IN AT HOTEL

You will be reaching Pathankot railway station early morning and afterwards transferred to Dalhousie which usually takes around 3-4 hrs. We will arrange for the pick-up. After arrival at Dalhousie you will check-in in Hotel and breakfast will be served.

After light lunch there shall be an Orientation session with our management, guides and support staff. An acclimatisation of approximately 2-3 hrs in which we shall descend towards the Panjpulla valley. After the walk the activities of Mountain Rippling, River Crossing and Mountain Climbing shall follow prepare once mind and body for the upcoming trek. In evenings you can check out the local market and also have a leisure trip of Dalhousie town. Dinner will be served at the Hotel.

Day 2 : TREK TO KALATOP, WILDLIFE RESERVE, THROUGH THE PANJPULLA STREAM AND GANGI PAHARI (MOUNTAIN). CAMP AT VILLAGE KALABAN.

Approximately 5/6 hour walk. A hiking over 2500 feet through the Panjpulla waterfall stream and crossing the foothill of the Gangi Pahari (Mountain). We trek further along the Mountain ridge and come across a beautiful grazing meadow set below the stark peaks of the Gangi Pahari range of mountains. Following remote trails and crossing numerous ridges we reach Bara Pathar, temple of the local deity "Bhuvani Devi" amidst the forest thick forests of Deodar (Cedar) trees and alpine hills. We shall break for lunch and rest before resuming the trek. After 90

Dalhousie Adventure

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minutes of trekking we shall reach Lakar Mandi. There is a hamlet of Dhogria tribals. Dhogria are hardworking Muslims and have common decedents from Gujjars, but have a bit different lifestyle. From here, one trek leads to Kalatop Wild life reserve. This is a pleasant, plain walk.

Kalatop is at an altitude of 2440 meters. This reserve covers an area of 3069 hectares. Its altitude varies from 1185 meters to 2768 meters (3910 ft-9134 ft.) The terrain is steep and typical of the Outer Himalayas. It is drained by several tributaries of the Ravi River which lies just to the north. The temperature varies from -10°C to 35°C. An area that is home to leopard and Himalayan black bear. The night camp will be in a small Himalayan village known as Kalaban. Dinner will be served and the evening bonfire will mark the end of today's adventure.

DAY 3 : TREK FROM THE KALATOP WILD LIFE RESERVE FOREST THROUGH THE FOOTHILLS OF THE DHAULA DHAR MOUNTAIN RANGE TO KHIJJAR.

Your pair of sturdy trekking shoes will be tested on this day of trek, as we further descend into the Kalatop wildlife reserve into the slopes of the Dhaula Dhar mountain range. Steep ascent and descent on rocky and narrow trails, through an area that is home to the Himalayan Black Bear, Himalayan Black Marten, Leopard, Deer, Barking Goral, Squirrel, Serow, Jackal, Langur which are often spotted roaming carelessly in the reserve. The vegetation inside the sanctuary consists of blue pine, deodar and oak forests. The forest also has dense undergrowth. After crossing from various ridges we reach Khijjar.

Khijjar is located at an altitude of 1920 meters (6400 ft). This saucer-like, green meadow, with a small glacial lake in the centre, and surrounded by a dense forest

of deodar trees and mountains will be our camp site with a small cultural programme to end the evening.

DAY 4 : TREK FROM KHIJJAR TO JOT THROUGH THE DAINKUND VALLEY

Approximately 6-7 hours walk. A good day of walking along the upper ridges of the Dhaula Dhar, at about 3000m with a background of the Pir Pinjal and Panji Range ranges. While crossing through Dainkund to our south is an expansive view of the Ranjit Sagar Lake opening out in to the plains. Beyond lays the plains of Punjab, with the rivers Ravi, Chenab and Beas flowing through. On a clear night once can also see the lights of Amritsar and through binoculars one can spot the lights of Lahore as well. The walk is lush green and the path manageable. Continuing through Gujjar territory, we trek further along the ridge before descending to a sheltered summer settlement of rough stone huts in the Nauri valley.

Now heading into the realms of the Gaddi shepherd we start to traverse some of the more difficult nomad trails through the most spectacular landscape. A beautiful grazing meadow set below the stark peaks of the Dhaula Dhar range of mountains. After a comparative smooth trek of 5-6 K.M we will reach Jot.

Chowari Jot (pass) is located almost in the midst of Chamba and Chowari, this Pass (Jot) provides you with the beauty of Kainthli Dhar full of deoder and kail trees. Touching a height of almost 8000ft it snows heavily in the winter and has a pleasant season in the winter. A well-earned evening to relax around the campsite or explore the surrounding ridges and valleys. Camp with bonfire.

DAY 5 : DRIVE TO PATHANKOT

After a late morning and breakfast. Approximately 4 hours drive time. We

drive to Pathankot to proceed for our onwards journey.

ACCOMMODATION:

We shall provide Hotel Mongas (www.hotelmongas.com) or Hotel Monal (www.hotelmonal.com) for our stay at Dalhousie. Both hotels offer a clean and hygienic environment and are at a stone through distance from the town's main market Gandhi Chowk (G.P.O).

MEAL PLAN:

Bed, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner in Dalhousie. Full board on Trek.

NOT INCLUDED:

Air travel / Train travel. Alcohol, bottled water or soft drinks.

TRANSPORT:

Transport is by private car/coach/tempo with safe and responsible drivers.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST TO BE ARRANGED INDIVIDUALLY:

- ✓ Comfortable walking boots with good grip on ankles
- ✓ Rucksack / Daypack
- ✓ Waterproof warm jacket
- ✓ Woollen/tennis socks and stockings
- ✓ Personal toiletries and clothes
- ✓ Sunglasses, Headgear
- ✓ Water bottle, Swiss army knife
- ✓ Personal Identification
- ✓ Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

ACTIVITIES: *Rock Climbing*

Builds confidence of mind on capabilities of the body. It teaches every individual that undertakes the activity the skills required to hold the mind, body and spirit in unison.

Rappelling

Builds the ability to trust other people and material equipment. The descend produces butterflies in the stomach and replicates the experience of a controlled fall.

River Fording / Crossing

Enables the individual experience the power of nature and ability of human beings to overcome challenges through use of technique and material.

EQUIPMENT PROVIDED.

We provide 'A' frame or dome tents which have room for two / four people plus all of your equipment. A toilet tent exclusively for group use, and a kitchen and staff tent. There are camp chairs or stools, a kerosene/gas lamp or candles for reading in the dining tent at night, stainless steel crockery and tableware and foam sleeping mats. **We strongly recommend you bring your own karrimat or thermal-rest as well.** The staff complements of cooks and assistants are always in attendance. They put up and take down the tents, make the tea, cook the food, wash the dishes, load the porters and carry a load of their own. They work extremely hard and are always willing to help. If you want to join in putting up tents and taking them down, you are free to do so, but it is not expected.

A TYPICAL DAY ON TREK

Soon after dawn you are served tea or coffee while still in your sleeping bag. A few minutes later a washing bowl of hot water is placed outside your tent. You can wash inside or outside the tent. Once dressed you can pack your kit-bag and day-pack in preparation for the day's hike, and place these outside the tent. The camp staff will take down the tents. While this is happening, breakfast is served. In

the Himalaya breakfast usually consists of cereals and/or porridge with milk, eggs, usually served with chapatis, (unleavened bread that is cooked on a hot iron plate). There is always plenty of tea and coffee. **The camp will be being struck while you are eating, and you will need to be packed and out of your tents before breakfast.**

If you have not filled up your water bottle the night before ask the cook to fill your bottle with boiled water. Usually you may have a packed meal at the lunch stop. Departure from camp could be from any time between dawn and 9.00am, depending on the days itinerary, but generally you will start walking at around 8.00am.

Depending on the length of the day's walk, you will walk for three or four hours before stopping for lunch. The lunch stop will last for about an hour.

You usually arrive at the next camp site by 4:00pm. Camp may already set up by the time you get there, and tea/juice and biscuits will be ready to welcome you. Supper will be ready soon after dark, and will be served in the dining tent or in some instances, around the camp fire. Camp fires will only be made if dead wood is available. Menu vary, but typically we offer plain nutritional vegetarian meal. Our meal is finished with tea, coffee. After dinner, the usual practise is for your water bottle to be filled with hot water and used as a hot water bottle for your sleeping bag and for drinking water the next day.

We would like you to enjoy the serenity of the unhurried atmosphere that exists in these wilderness regions. Our day to day camp routine on your trekking adventure is geared to allow you to make the most of your holiday.

Important: We believe that the preservation of ecology is preservation of human spirit. We would appreciate if you make any honest effort in not disturbing the ecology and natural habitat, no matter. Please also respect the local tradition and culture.

All itineraries are subject to change without prior notice.