



Steady

ACROSS THE KUARI LA - THE LORD CURZON TRAIL



This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.



Kuari La

- ***A Himalayan classic following one of the best trekking routes in India***
- ***Wild ridges, deep wooded valleys, high villages***
- ***“The finest view in the Himalaya” – Frank Smythe, 1930’s pioneer***
- ***Highest point Kuari La (3640m)***
- ***Great views of Nanda Devi and Kamet***
- ***An ideal first trekking experience***

India

High Places began in India. 1987 saw our very first trip set off to trek in the Garhwal Himalayas in north India. We have gradually widened our destinations and now also go to Ladakh, Sikkim and to Kerala. If you are looking for an authentic, energetic yet sensitive holiday in India we are the specialists. Moreover we continue to hold India in great respect and have a deep regard for the land and its peoples. To travel with High Places here will disprove many of the myths you might hold and leave you with a sense of wonder and incredulity. There is a life-force in India which we may already have lost in the west. You must go and see for yourself.

Garhwal

The Ganges, the holy river of India, rises in the mountains of the Garhwal Himalaya. It is an area of steep alpine valleys and great peaks - Nanda Devi, Kamet, Trisul. In the foothills the British built their hill stations to escape from the monsoon heat of the Indian summer and from here our early mountaineers, Longstaff, Shipton, Tilman and Smythe made their great journeys and ascents. This classic route follows the historic approach made by these early expeditions to Nanda Devi and the peaks of east Garhwal.

The trip

We begin the trip with a train ride to the attractive lakeside hill station of Nainital where there is time to acclimatise to the culture as well as to the altitude. The trek is delightful as it crosses a series of wild ridges, deep wooded valleys and tiny terraced settlements perched above steep ravines. A diversion to the high pastures of Bedni Bugyal (3354m) is well worth the effort and we spend two nights at this beautiful high camp. Seven days later we cross our final and highest ridge, the Kuari La (3640m) revealing an exhilarating panorama of Himalayan giants stretching as far as Nepal. The view from here is legendary, undoubtedly making this one of the finest trekking routes in India, nowhere difficult but with some strenuous sections.

Accommodation

In Delhi and Nainital we stay in comfortable hotels and on the journey to and from the trek we stay in simple hotels or guesthouses, all rooms with ensuite facilities. On trek we camp in two person tents, with a larger communal tent for meals.

Food

Whilst 'on trek' all meals are included. In towns and on travel days you will need to buy your own lunches and sometimes dinner. See day to day itinerary for details. Eating out allows you the option of trying a wide range of local food and restaurants which is very much part of the adventure. On trek we eat Indian, Chinese or continental food prepared to a surprisingly high standard. There are always several dishes: dhals, vegetables and sometimes meat if fresh chicken or lamb is tracked down. Breakfasts and lunches are varied and appetising.



Looking towards Trisul

Transport

We travel from Delhi to Kathgodam by overnight train and from Haridwar to Delhi by day-time train. We travel to the start and finish of the trek by bus.

Language

There are 14 major languages in India and around 200 minor languages and dialects. Hindi is the most important Indian language and is spoken by about half the population. Both English and Hindi are used administratively throughout the country. Many of the people with whom you come into contact will speak English, but a willingness to pick up some basic words of Hindi will enrich your trip.

Health and hygiene

We have an excellent record of staying fit and well in India. The key seems to be our enthusiasm for Indian vegetarian food, (most of India is vegetarian), and care with water, peeling fruit, avoiding salads etc. Serious illness or accident is extremely uncommon. We recommend abstinence from meat at the start of the trip, as in our experience those who avoid it stay healthy. If sorely tempted, a visit to the meat market may do the trick!

Laundry facilities in towns are always available in India. Their ability to transform a bag of dirty and crumpled trekking 'rags' into a pile of pristine, folded and ironed 'new' clothes constantly amazes.

Tipping

It is custom and practice to tip in India. You should perhaps allow the equivalent of around £50 or so which would normally be given by the group at the end of the trek. Try to avoid giving sweets, biscuits, pens or cash to children or anyone who has not rendered a service.

Altitude

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m. Many people have some minor side effects from altitude, such as headache, nausea or general lassitude. The optional use of 'Diamox' has proved useful for some people, as this drug can reduce these symptoms. You will be given more information on 'Diamox' with your Final Information, between 8 and 10 weeks before departure.

Climate

In April/May it will be hot in Delhi, around 35°C. In October/November, it will be slightly cooler, around 25-30°C. On trek many days will be hot during the day with cool evenings, though rainfall (and snow) are always possible in the mountains. At night at the high camps, temperatures will drop below freezing, so suitable clothing is required. In October/November the air is clearer and nights are colder, in spring some hazy weather can be expected in the afternoons, particularly at lower altitudes.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. As with all travel in mountain areas, weather and local conditions can lead to changes in our daily plans. (B,L,D) refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

This trip is 16 days ex Delhi. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival and departure from Delhi, and are not necessarily the days you depart from or arrive back home.

- DAY 1 Delhi
Arrive Delhi and transfer to our hotel. Depending on your arrival time, there may be a chance to look around the city or to join an optional guided tour in the afternoon before our overnight train leaves in the evening for Kathgodam. Day rooms are provided in Delhi so you may prefer to rest and recover from the flight – or to arrive a day earlier. Indian trains have sleeping platforms so you don't have to sit up all night!
- DAY 2 Nainital
The train arrives in Kathogam at dawn and we drive the remaining 35km to Nainital, a bustling old hill station in a beautiful setting by a lake and surrounded by an amphitheatre of wooded hills. (1½ hour drive). Our stay here gives us a chance to recover from the journey and to acclimatise to the culture. There is good walking nearby. Hotel. (B)
- DAY 3 Kasauni
An early ascent of China Peak (2610m) should help us acclimatise to the altitude as well as offering a staggering first view of the Garhwal Himalayas dominated by Nanda Devi, barely 50 miles away. After noon drive to Kasauni (4-5 hr drive/120km) We stay overnight in a simple hotel. (B).
- DAY 4 Wan (2450m)
Heading up towards the hills, the bus and equipment will drive to Wan (5-6 hours) where the trekking begins, but we will hop out at Lohjang, a beautiful ridge top village, to stretch our legs with a walk to Wan (2-3 hours). By the time we arrive at camp, the tents should be up and kettle on. (B,D)
- DAY 5 Bedni Bugyal (3350m)
Its great to be off! Much of today's walk is along a ridge with excellent views. A long zig-zag ascent reaches beyond the tree line to the high summer pastures of Bedni Bugyal, a fine campsite in the company of shepherds with fantastic views of the snowy peaks of the Nanda Devi group to the north, with Trisul (7120m) and Nanda Ghunti (6310m.) dominating. 6-7 hours. (B,L,D)



Bedni Bugyal. Photo Lloyd Smith

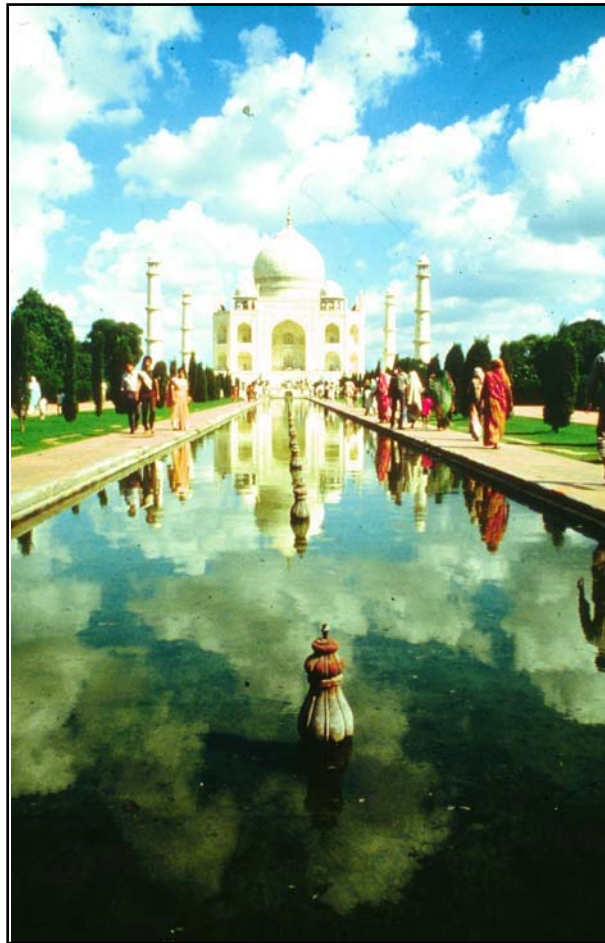
- DAY 6 Bedni Bugyal (3350m)
A rest and acclimatisation day with the option of an excursion to a high ridge for excellent views towards Trisul. (B,L,D)
- DAY 7 Kanol (2600m).
Today we cross a series of passes to then drop down through forest to reach our campsite near the village of Kanol. 7 hours. (B,L,D)
- DAY 8 Sutol (2000m)
A good traversing path through pine forest leads to a bridge over the wild Nandakini River at one of the few points on the river which is gorge free. The trail climbs easily through woodland to emerge through open fields at Sutol where we camp. 5 hours. (B,L,D)
- DAY 9 Guni (1950m)
After dropping to a river which we cross on a wooden bridge, there is a long steep climb to a temple followed by a gradual climb through forest to reach a ridge with excellent views of Trisul. The rising traverse continues and eventually a rocky path leads across the next ridge to our camp. 6 hours. (B,L,D)
- DAY 10 Jhenje (2015m)
A good zigzagging track leads to open grassy meadows and snowy peaks emerge above the forest to the north. We begin to climb more steeply through forests of rhododendron, pine and holm oak then walk through pasture past shepherds huts to reach our next camp. 5-6 hours. (B,L,D).
- DAY 11 Pana (2040m)
The trail passes small some farms then enters woodland to reach the spectacular suspension bridge across the Brithi Ganga gorge. After a steep climb the angle eases off and we walk through fine rhododendron forest before a final steeper finish leads to our next camp. 5-6 hours. (B,L,D)
- DAY 12 Dakwani (3000m)
This is a long, but spectacular day. The route starts with a steep climb up into rhododendron forest, then descends gently to open meadows with views across to the Kuari Pass, and finally plunges down steeply to a river. From there a final climb brings us above the tree-line to alpine pasture where we may see nomads with their sheep. We camp beneath a broad gully leading up the pass. 6 hours. (B,L,D)
- DAY 13 Kuari La
At last! A good trail zig zags its way up to the Kuari La (3640m) and a breathtaking panorama of high peaks including Kamet (7756m), Mana Parvat (7273m), Dunagiri (6489m), Nilkanta (6596m), Trisul (7120m) and Nanda Devi (7820m) among many others.
- There will be time to linger on the top before we head down to the



Looking towards Kamet from Kuari La

road head at Auli (2750m) where we say goodbye to the porters and crew 7-8 hours. Here we rejoin our transport for the short drive to Joshimath. Overnight in a simple Hotel. (B,L,D)

- Day 14 Rishikesh
Down and down we go leaving the hills behind to reach the holy town of Rishikesh situated on the banks of the River Ganges and with many ashrams and pilgrims. In the evening we can walk by the Ganges and mingle with the pilgrims. (280km – 7-8 hour drive). Hotel (B)
- DAY 15 Delhi
After breakfast visit some of the Ghats at Rishikesh before we head towards Haridwar to board our train for Delhi. (B)
- DAY 16 Depart Delhi, or extend your trip with more time in Delhi or a visit to the Taj Mahal, or continue with your own arrangements.



Taj Mahal. Photo Lloyd Smith

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