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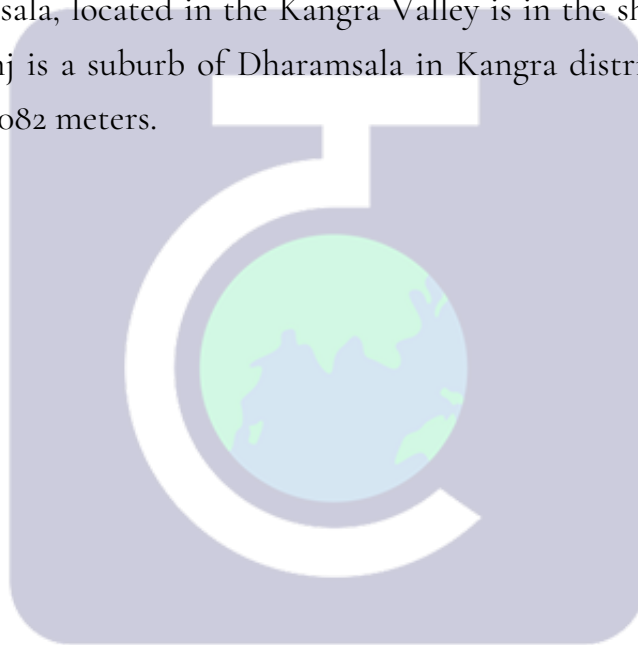
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1. Geographical location

Home to Dalai Lama and Tibetan government in exile, and starting point for some exhilarating treks into the high Himalayas Dharamsala or more correctly, its upper town McLEOD GANJ is one of the Himachal's most irresistible destinations. Divided into two distinct and separate sections, the town is separated by 10 km of perilously twisting road and almost 1000 m in altitude. Dharamsala has an average elevation of 1457 meters (4780 feet), covering an area of almost 8.51 km². Dharamsala, located in the Kangra Valley is in the shadow of the Dhauladhar Mountains. McLeod Ganj is a suburb of Dharamsala in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, India at an elevation of 2082 meters.



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2. Neighbouring cities/countries

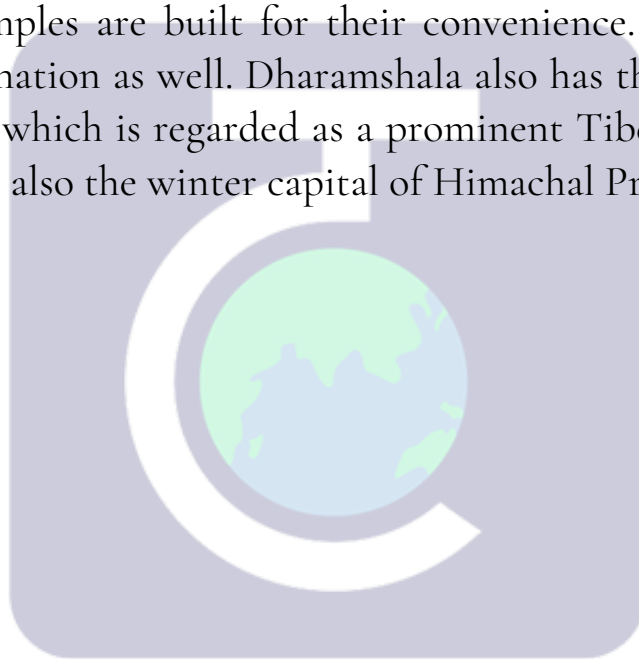
Dharamsala Formerly Known As Bhagsu Is The District Headquarters And Is 18 Kilometres Away From Kangra Which Is Surrounded By Dense Coniferous Forest Consisting Of Stately Deodar Cedar Trees. A Few Of The Places Near Dharamshala Include Dharamkot At A Distance Of 3 Km, Naddi Gaon With 1.5 Km Distance, Bhagsu Village With 1.5 Km Distance, Jogindernagar Is At A Distance Of 1,220 Meters And Palampur With 40 Kms.



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3. Significance

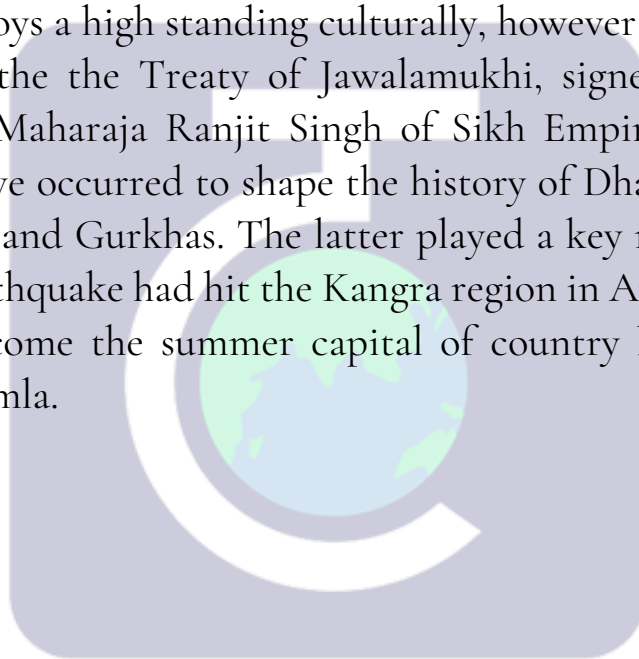
Once a favorite summer holiday spot of the colonial British, Dharamshala gained prominence when Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile made this city their base after the Chinese invasion in Tibet. Since then, Dharamshala has become an important holy place for millions of followers of Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism. There are many Tibetan settlements in the city and schools, monasteries, and temples are built for their convenience. Today, the city is a popular tourist destination as well. Dharamshala also has the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives which is regarded as a prominent Tibetology institution in the world. The city is also the winter capital of Himachal Pradesh.



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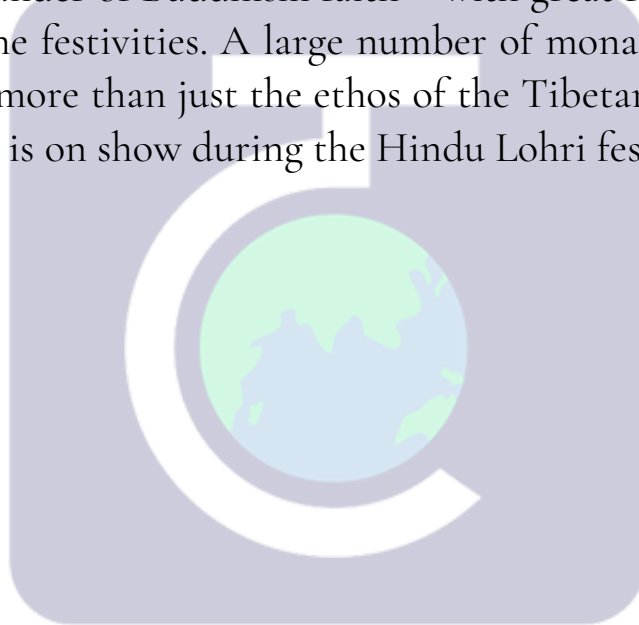
4. History

Home to the Dalai Lama, Dharamsala and its surrounding region was under the rule of the royal family, Katoch Dynasty of Kangra, for two centuries. The royals still have a residence intact in the city known as Clouds End Villa. At the time of the British Raj, the regions of Dharamsala were a part of the undivided province of Punjab which was under the governor's rule from Lahore. The Katoch clan of royalty, although enjoys a high standing culturally, however their status had been downgraded as per the the Treaty of Jawalamukhi, signed in 1810 by Sansar Chand Katoch and Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Sikh Empire. A number of key historic incidents have occurred to shape the history of Dharamsala, particularly the arrival of British and Gurkhas. The latter played a key role in rebuilding the city after a major earthquake had hit the Kangra region in April 1905. Dharamsala was supposed to become the summer capital of country but post-disaster the British opted for Shimla.



Index**5. Cultural identity**

The culture of Dharamsala is deeply inspired and influenced by Tibetan ways. A big part of Dharamsala's cultural appeal steams from the fact that this city is the home of the Dalai Lama and most tourists come to the city to get a chance to meet him in person and also get a glimpse of Tibetan culture which is so widespread in the Dharamsala region. The residents of the city celebrate the birth of Lord Buddha – founder of Buddhism faith – with great fervor. The entire city comes alive during the festivities. A large number of monasteries, museums and monuments provide more than just the ethos of the Tibetan culture. Traditional folk dance and music is on show during the Hindu Lohri festival celebrated here.



Index**6. Natural resources**

The city is surrounded by dense coniferous forest that consists of mainly Deodar cedar trees as it is influenced by the humid sub-tropical climate with up to 120 inches of rainfall. The city has an endowed deposit of natural resources and is rich in biodiversity. The large varieties of herbs, shrubs, trees, grasses and climbers are found. The main and major crops grown in the area are Rice, Wheat and Tea.



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7. Key site seeing places (paid and free)

7.1. Paid

7.1.1. Kangra Fort

Situated 20 kilometers away from the town of Dharamshala, this beautiful fort was built by the Royal Rajput family of Kangra. The Kangra Fort is the largest fort in the Himalayas and also one of the oldest in India with its origin tracing back to the time of the Mahabharata.

Address : Old Kangra, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh 176001

Zipcode : 176001

Location : 32.0873287, 76.25611630000003

Website : <http://himachal.gov.in/>

Nearest Public Transport : Kangra Railway Station (NR)

Entry Fee : Indian – INR 150 Foreigner – INR 300

Open & Close Timing : Daily 09:00hrs-18:00hrs

Time Required : 2

Expected Wait Time : 15 minutes

Buy Ticket : No

7.1.2. War Memorial

Situated right at the entrance of Dharamshala, the war memorial is set in a scenic background surrounded by forests. It was established to honor the soldiers who lost their lives guarding the country. Huge black marble slabs have been placed with the name of the martyrs inscribed on it.

Address : Kachehri Road, Jawahar Nagar, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176215

Zipcode : 176215

Location : 32.2002198, 76.32029899999998

Entry Fee : INR 5

Open & Close Timing : Daily 09:00hrs-19:00hrs

Time Required : 1

Expected Wait Time : 10 minutes

Buy Ticket : No

7.1.3. Masroor Rock Cut Temple

Built in the shikhara style of architecture, the Masroor Rock Cut Temple is a complex of rock-cut temples with dating back to the time of the Pandavas. This amazing temple complex is also known as Thakurwada, meaning Vaishnavite, and is visited by a lot of devotees of Lord Shiva and Ganesha. Situated amidst a natural backdrop with a lake in front, this temple complex is a must-visit.

Address : Lahalpur, Masroor, Himachal Pradesh 176026

Zipcode : 176026

Location : 32.0729914, 76.13756699999999

Contact : 098050 74444

Nearest Public Transport : Masroor Bus Station

Entry Fee : INR 10

Open & Close Timing : Daily 06:00hrs-18:00hrs

Time Required : 1

Expected Wait Time : 5 minutes

Buy Ticket : No

7.1.4. Kangra Art Museum(Naam Art Gallery)

The Kangra Art Museum(Naam Art Gallery) is considered as one of the most interesting museums in the city exhibiting the relics of Buddhist and Tibetan cultures. Established in 1990, this museum also displays pottery, artefacts and sculptures along with the precious anthropological items.

Address : Chamunda Main Road, Sidhbari, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176057

Zipcode : 176057

Location : 32.18867900000001, 76.35734100000002

Contact : 098160 43708

Website : <http://naamartgallery.com/>

Nearest Public Transport : Fatehpur Bus Stop

Entry Fee : Indian – INR 50 Foreigners – INR 100

Open & Close Timing : Daily 10:00hrs-19:00hrs

Time Required : 1.5

Expected Wait Time : 5 minutes

Buy Ticket : No

Index

7.2. Free

7.2.1. Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts

Established by the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts was previously known as the Tibetan Music, Dance and Drama Society. It was established with a motto to preserve the artistic heritage of Tibet, especially that of opera, music and dance.

Address : Trail to Triund Hill from Main Square, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176219

Zipcode : 176219

Location : 32.2434247, 76.3282428

Contact : +91-1892221478

Nearest Public Transport : Forsyth Ganj-Mcleod Ganj Bus Station

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.2. Gyuto Monastery

Famous for its tantric meditation and rituals, this monastery was founded in 1474 by the first Dalai Lama. With a beautiful backdrop of snow clad mountains, this place also boasts of an amazing statue of Buddha. The tranquil atmosphere of this place makes way for spiritual enlightenment.

Address : P.O. Sidhbari, Dharamsala, 176057 Dist. Kangra, India

Zipcode : 176057

Location : 32.1453063, 76.4422601

Contact : +91-1892236154

Nearest Public Transport : Fatehpur Bus Stop

Open & Close Timing : Daily 08:00hrs-23:00hrs

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.3. Chamunda Devi Temple

Chamunda Devi Temple is one of the most known temples in the Himachal housing the idol of Goddess Chamunda. There is a story behind the establishment of the temple, which states that the Devi appeared in front of the priest in a

dream and asked him to dig a certain spot and install the idol in the temple. Since then the goddess is worshipped here.

Address : Chamunda Temple Path, Padar, Himachal Pradesh 176052

Zipcode : 176052

Location : 32.1484912, 76.41880620000006

Nearest Public Transport : Chamunda Devi Bus Stop

Open & Close Timing : Daily 06:00hrs-19:00hrs

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.4. Kunal Pathri Mata Mandir

Kunal Pathri Mata Mandir is a beautiful temple graced by dense tea gardens and lush surroundings. Dedicated to Goddess Durga, this temple has a unique stone which always stays wet and is said to be immortalized by the goddess. You can also find a large number of carvings of various other gods and goddesses in the vicinity.

Address : Pat, Himachal Pradesh 176216

Zipcode : 176216

Location : 32.200001, 76.31002130000002

Contact : +91-0985751858

Nearest Public Transport : Kachehri Bus Stop

Open & Close Timing : Daily 07:00hrs-20:00hrs

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.5. Dip Tse Chok Ling

Dip Tse Chok Ling was built in the 18th century by Yongzin Yeshe Gyaltsen, the 8th Dalai Lama. Situated on a steep hillside, this monastery serves as a learning place for younger monks with 25 monk teachers. Apart from the mesmerizing view that this monastery provides to the travelers, it is also known for the illustrious statue of Lord Buddha and Padmasambhava.

Address : Camel Track Road, McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh

Location : 32.23788039999999, 76.32204660000002

Contact : 0189 222 1726

Nearest Public Transport : Forsyth Ganj-Mcleod Ganj Bus station

Open & Close Timing : Open 24 hours

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.6. Tsuglagkhang Complex

Tsuglagkhang is one of the favorite destinations for tourist, pilgrims, and monks. The Tsuglagkhang Complex consists of the Tsuglagkhang temple, the Namgyal Gompa, the magnificent Tibet Museum and a range of small monasteries and stupas. Set amidst the Dhauladhar range this place offers absolute tranquility and calmness to the visitors.

Address : McCleod Ganj, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176219

Zipcode : 176219

Location : 32.2324492, 76.3240419

Open & Close Timing : Daily 05:00hrs-20:00hrs

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.7. The Library Of Tibetan Works

Established by Tenzin Gyatso in 1970, the Library Of Tibetan Works is referred to as one of the most important libraries and institutions displaying Tibetan works in the world. The exhibits displayed here consist of sources which were relocated from Tibet during the escape of 1959, including Tibetan Buddhist manuscripts and archives.

Address : Gangchen Kyishong, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176215

Zipcode : 176215

Location : 32.2263696, 76.32532600000002

Contact : 098822 55047

Website : <http://www.ltw.net/library/>

Nearest Public Transport : Inter State Bus Terminal Dharamsala

Open & Close Timing : Monday-Saturday 09:00hrs-13:00hrs; 14:00hrs-17:00hrs;

Sunday Closed

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.8. McLeodGanj Market

Situated in the Upper Dharamsala, this marketplace is the shopping hub of the city. All kinds of Tibetan goods – cultural, decorative, spiritual and casual, are available at reasonable prices in this market. You can purchase things like designer woolens, handicrafts, Kashmiri shawls, handmade musical instruments, Buddha statues and many such items.

Address : Potala Rd, McLeod Ganj, Himachal Pradesh 176219

Zipcode : 176219

Location : 32.2385656, 76.32368989999998

Time Required : 0

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.9. Kotwali Bazar Road

This is the bustling center-point market zone for shoppers who are interested in buying Tibetan carpets and rugs. The uniqueness of these objects is that they are laden with traditional motifs and distinct artwork which give strong hints of Tibetan culture.

Address : Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176215

Location : 32.2169181, 76.31846240000004

Time Required : 0

Buy Ticket : No

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8. Key sites sports & adventure

Although little is known about adventure sports and activities in Dharamsala, the town holds a lot for adventure and wild enthusiasts. Being a hill-station, some of the adventurous sports in Dharamsala include paragliding, rappelling, rock climbing, flying fox and trekking. The best season to participate in these activities starts early May and runs all through to October though interrupted by heavy rainfall sometimes.

- **Trekking to kareri -**

Address : Kareri Lake, Kareri, Himachal Pradesh 176218

Location : 32.325704,76.2734364

Open / Close Time : Open 24 hours

Time Required : 4.00

- **Trekking to triund -**

Address : Triund, Himachal Pradesh 176309

Location : 32.2595821,76.3564928999999

Time Required : 0.00

- **Multisports -**

Address : Mohli, Near Norbulingka Sidhpur-, Khanyara Rd, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176218

Location : 32.1995623999999,76.3655848999999

Contact No : 078329 88901

Website : <http://www.sterlingholidays.com/sterling-destination-network/hill-station/dharamshala/the-sanctuary>

Entry Fees : Paragliding: 15-20 mins ~ Rs 1,500 per person. Rock climbing:

(9am-12 noon/ 4-7pm) ~ Rs 1,000. Trekking-tea garden trek via kandi to village: (7 am to 9am) ~ Rs 300. Trekking: Aganzhar mahadev temple trek ~ Rs 200. Rappelling: Rs 1,000 River crossing: Rs 1,000
Time Required : 8



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9. Adventure sports, Local sports, stadiums

There is also a wide choice of sports in Dharamsala that includes cricket, hockey, football, judo, tennis, kabbadi, marathon and others. Dharamsala is famous for hosting international (2016 ICC World Twenty20) and local cricket matches. Some of its sport complexes and stadiums include

- **Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association:**

Address : Civil Lines Rd, Jawahar Nagar, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176215

Location : 32.1976097,76.32589519999999

Contact No : 0189 222 3539

Website : http://hpcricket.org/stadium_detail.asp?gid=5

10. Spas and relaxation

- **Asia Health Resorts & Spa:**

Address : Strawberry Hills, Near Dal Lake, Mcleodganj, Dharamshala Cantt, Himachal Pradesh 176216

Location : 32.2467076,76.30105100000003

Contact No : 0189 222 0909

Website : <http://www.asiahealthresorts.com/>

- **Spring Valley Resort:**

Address : Bhagsu Nag, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176219

Location : 32.2427935,76.33168009999997

Contact No : 094180 10570

Website : <http://www.springvalleyresorts.com/>

- **Aveda Hotel:**

Address : District Kangra, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176215

Location : 32.21660480000001,76.32328439999992

Website : <http://www.avedahotels.com/>

11. Events calendar

Month

Events

Makar Sankranti @ Mcleodganj, India

This event is a very popular among the Hindus which marks the beginning of the harvest season. Unlike other events that depend on moon position, this event depends on when the sun moves from Tropic of cancer to Capricorn.

Moon Peak Ice Climbing @ Mcleodganj, Dharamsala, India


This event features winter ice climbing to the famous moon peak in Dharamsal-Mcleo Dganj
Spiritual Himalayan Camping Retreat with Monks @ McLoedganj, Upper Dharamshala, HP, Dharamsala, India

Enjoy camping in the snow peaks with company of monks as you learn about Vedic rituals, reiki initiations, mantra for peace and other rituals.

The Shoton Festival @ Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts

(TIPA)

This event features Tibetan Opera performances which are dedicated to celebrating the preservation Tibetan Culture. Himalayan Music Festival @ McLeodganj, India



This event present a one-time opportunity to interact with other tourists as you experience trance in the Himalayan festival Dharamsala Film Festival @ McLeod Ganj , India

This event is characterized by international selection of films, features, short films and documentaries. Enjoy lots of great food and fun. Birthday of the 14th Dalai Lama @ Dharamsala, India

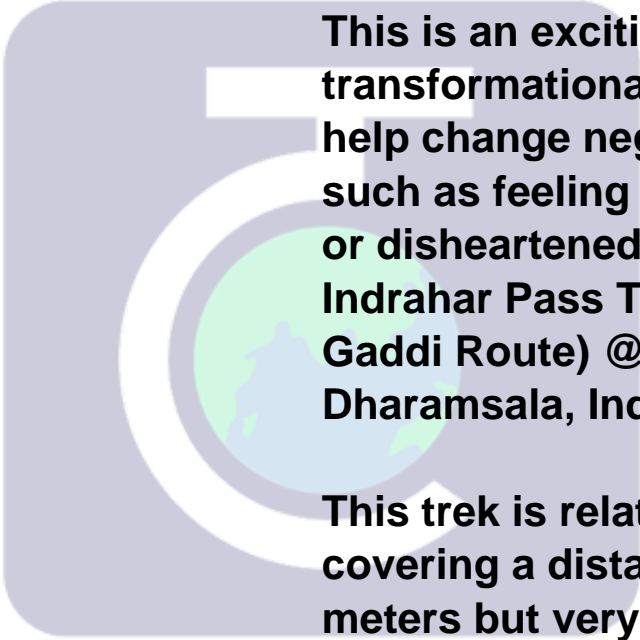
This birthday event is celebrated in style all over Dharamsala with temple services, seminars, feasts and musical performances. Trek to Triund, Dharamsala @ McLeodganj, Triund, Dharamkot, Dharamsala

Starting from McLeodganj, Naddi and Dhal lake, trek all the way to

Triund and back to Dharamot in 3 days while witnessing great scenery and fun activities like camping and bonfires.

Turning Point Basic 1

**Dharamshala, H P @ Hotel
Centre Point, Civil Lines,
Dharamsala**



This is an exciting, transformational event that will help change negative mindset such as feeling stuck, frustrated or disheartened.

Indrahar Pass Trek (Traditional Gaddi Route) @ Mcleodganj, Dharamsala, India

This trek is relatively short covering a distance of 4,350 meters but very challenging as it passes through rocks and boulder trails.

**MTB Challenge: Dhauladhar Chapter @ Bir - Billing
Paragliding site, Dharamsala**

**Better known as the Hell Race, this cycling challenge get you adrenaline pumping and test your mental strength as you will go through hanging bridges, water streams and broken rocks.
The International Himalayan**

**Festival @ Mcleodganj,
Dharamsala, India**

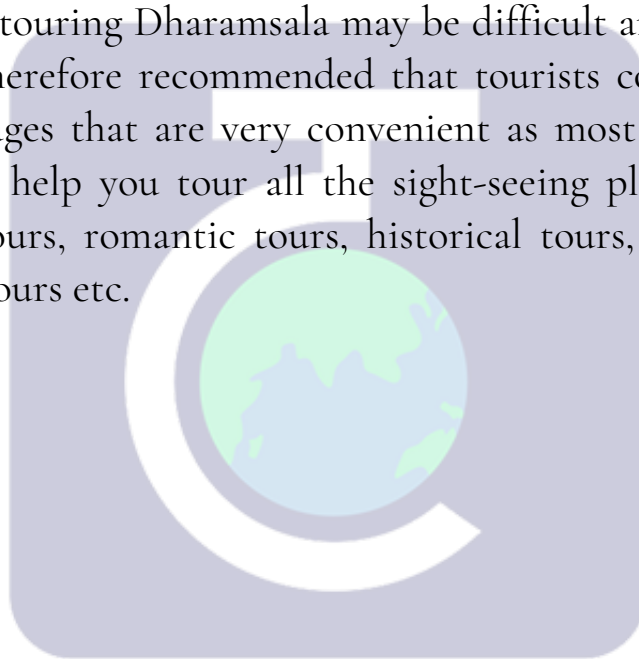
**Celebrated in 3 days, this event
is a celebrated to honor the day
Dalai Lama won a nobel peace
prize in 1985.**



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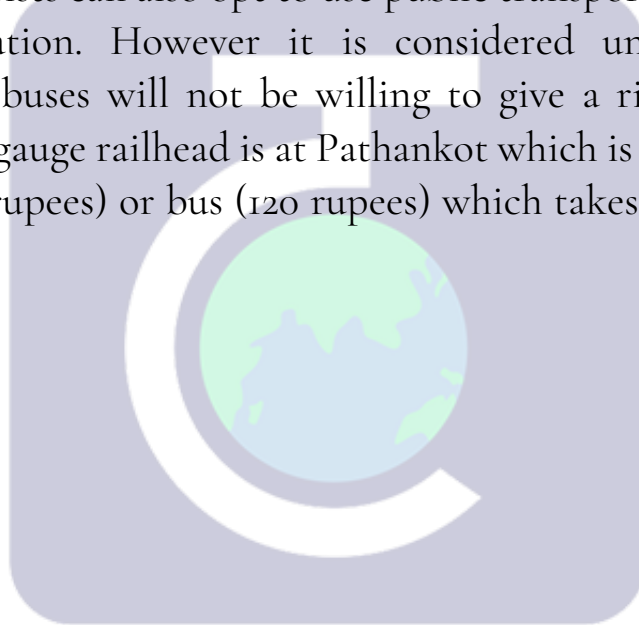
12. Key local guides and tours

Dharamshala is a renowned hill town located at the upper ends of Kangra Valley that is 1,457 meters above the sea level. This town is divided into two areas that are separated by a distance of 10 kilometers. The upper side of the town is known as McLeod Ganj which is the center of tourist activities while the lower side entails more of commercial centers, hospitals and other public institutions. Due to these circumstances, touring Dharamsala may be difficult and confusing for first time visitors. It is therefore recommended that tourists consider licensed tour guides or tour packages that are very convenient as most of them cover food, accommodation and help you tour all the sight-seeing places. These packages include adventure tours, romantic tours, historical tours, nature and wildlife, walking and hiking tours etc.



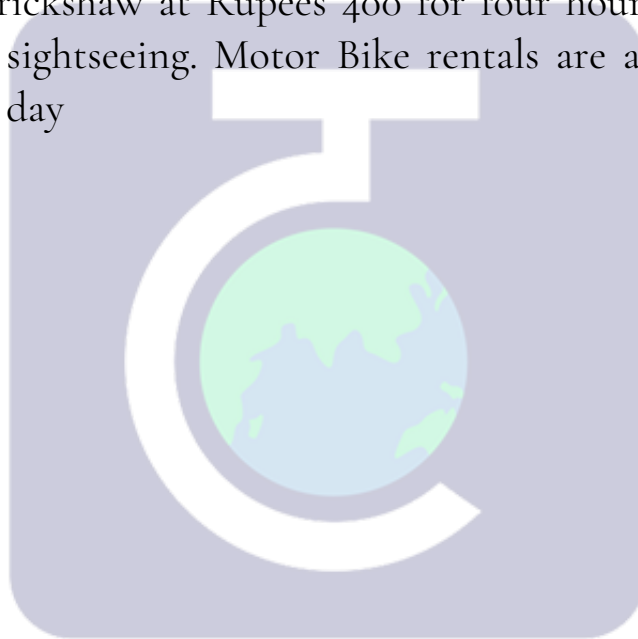
13. Transportation hubs

Gaggal Airport (DHM) is 15.1 Km away from McLeod Ganj (upper Dharamsala) through MDR₄₄ Road. The airport is served by regular flights from Jaipur, Bangalore, Delhi and other places in India. The most recommended means of getting to Dharamsala from the airport is by hiring a taxi which charges 600-760 rupees and takes approximately 34 minutes. Car rentals are also available at Gaggal Airport. Tourists can also opt to use public transport by catching a bus at the nearest bus station. However it is considered unnecessary and time consuming as many buses will not be willing to give a ride if you have extra luggage. The nearest gauge railhead is at Pathankot which is 85 Km away. You can opt for a taxi (2,500 rupees) or bus (120 rupees) which takes 3 to 4 hours to reach Dharamsala.



Index**14. Transportation cost**

Dharamsala is a small town that can be navigated easily on foot. However, regular buses are available which charge 10-15 rupees for destinations within the town. Chartered auto-rickshaws cost around Rupees 100 while taxis charge Rupees 200 for one-way trips within Dharamsala. Travelling to nearby villages (such as Dharamkot and Bhagsu) costs between 70-100 Rupees. You can also hire a taxi at Rupees 700 or auto-rickshaw at Rupees 400 for four hours which is more convenient for local sightseeing. Motor Bike rentals are also available starting from 800 Rupees per day



Index**15. Baggage allowance**

Travelling around Dharamsala with extra luggage is only convenient when using taxis. Most taxis have extra space for luggage and therefore very comfortable and safe for your bags. However they may charge some extra fee for excessive baggage that needs a lot of handling. Auto-rickshaws also have some space for luggage but are very particular on charging extra cash for baggage exceeding 10 kg. Public transport especially the buses are always reluctant to offer services to people carrying extra luggage because of space constraints and limited manpower of loading and offloading the bags. . Luggage delivery services are readily available in Dharamsala on 24 –hour basis from trusted national and international couriers such as DTDC Courier and Cargo, Overnite Express Limited, Redbox Courier and Cargo Pvt Ltd among others. Most hotels in Dharamsala provide affordable baggage storage services.

16. Restaurant & Nightlife

Most of the restaurants are located at Jogiwara Road and Potala Road.

Food -

Most of the restaurants are located at Jogiwara Road and Potala Road.

- **Namgyal Cafe:**

Address : McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh

Location : 32.238037200,76.323449799

Contact No : +91-1892-221040, +91-98161-50562, +91-94182-87668

Open / Close Time : Daily 10:00hrs-20:30hrs

- **Stalls on Jogiwara and Bhagsu Roads:**

Address : Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176219

Location : 32.220920499,76.319139299

- **Lung Ta Japanese Restaurant:**

Address : McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176219

Location : 32.2357438,76.3266913

Open / Close Time : Tuesday-Sunday 12:00hrs-20:00hrs; Monday Closed

- **Black Magic:**

Address : Jogiwara Road, Near Post Office, McLeod Ganj, Mall Road, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176219

Location : 32.237745800,76.324271400
Contact No : 078329 44016
Website : <http://blackmagicdharamshala.com/>
Open / Close Time : Daily 07:00hrs-23:30hrs

- **Carpe Diem:**

Address : Potala Rd, McLeod Ganj, Himachal Pradesh 176219
Location : 32.2370427,76.324564900
Open / Close Time : Daily 09:00hrs-23:00hrs

- **Hokka Bar & Discotheque:**

Address : Potala Rd, McLeod Ganj, Himachal Pradesh 176219
Location : 32.238619299,76.323892800

- **BobsnBarley - Hotel Bar and Restaurant:**

Address : Naddi, McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176219
Location : 32.2496207,76.305302100
Contact No : 0189 222 0170
Website : <http://bobsnbarley.com/>

Index**17. Average meal cost**

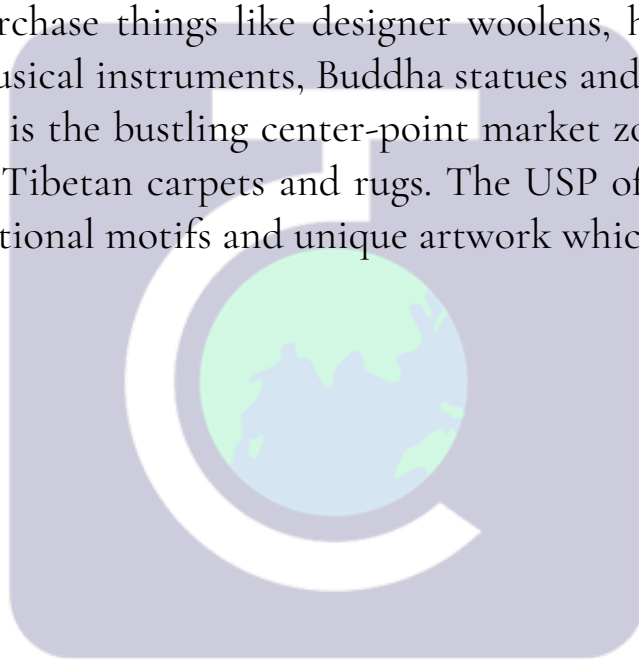
In an inexpensive restaurant a normal meal is available at 150.00 rupees. A three-course meal at a mid-range restaurant for two people is available at 600.00 rupees. A combo meal at McDonald's can be purchased at 200.00 rupees. You can have a fresh cappuccino at 84.62 rupees. 11.2 oz small bottle of water is available at 12.50 rupees. A mid-range bottle of Wine is available at 450.00 rupees.



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18. Shopping

Contrary to the popular perception that Dharamsala does not possess many shopping options, fact is there is a plethora of shopping choices to check out and take advantage of. McLeodGanj Market: Located in the Upper Dharamsala, this market place is the shopping hub of the city. All kinds of Tibetan goods – cultural, decorative, spiritual and casual, are available at reasonable prices in this market. One can purchase things like designer woolens, handicrafts, Kashmiri shawls, handmade musical instruments, Buddha statues and so much more more! Kotwali Bazaar: This is the bustling center-point market zone for shoppers who interested in buying Tibetan carpets and rugs. The USP of these objects is that they laden with traditional motifs and unique artwork which give strong hints of Tibetan culture.



Index**19. Tourist benefits**

Just like in other destinations within India, there are no VAT refunds to tourists buying items in Dharamsala. This is occasioned by lack of enabling legislation which only allows tax refunds to foreign companies that are duly registered. Tourists may not have the benefit of getting VAT refunds in Dharamsala but can alternatively purchase goods in duty free shops especially those at Gaggal Airport.



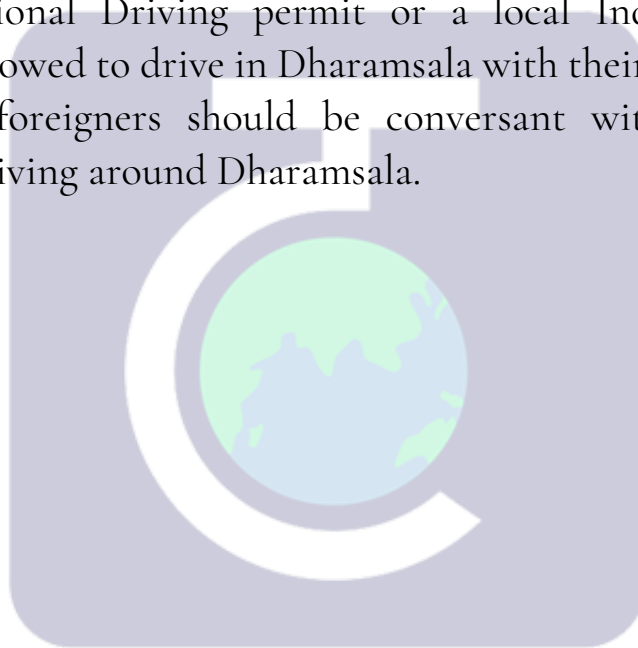
20. Essential local apps

The beautiful town of Dharamshala can be best enjoyed if explored on your own with some helpful tools like travel apps for easy guidance and navigation. HRTC Bus Himachal Pradesh helps in searching the state transport buses of Himachal Pradesh. Users can view bus services and timetable to major locations in the state and services to neighboring states. IRCTC Connect is the app of the Indian Railway to make train travel easier for the visitors. Users can search trains, book and cancel tickets, look for facilities, get time tables, and review ticket status.



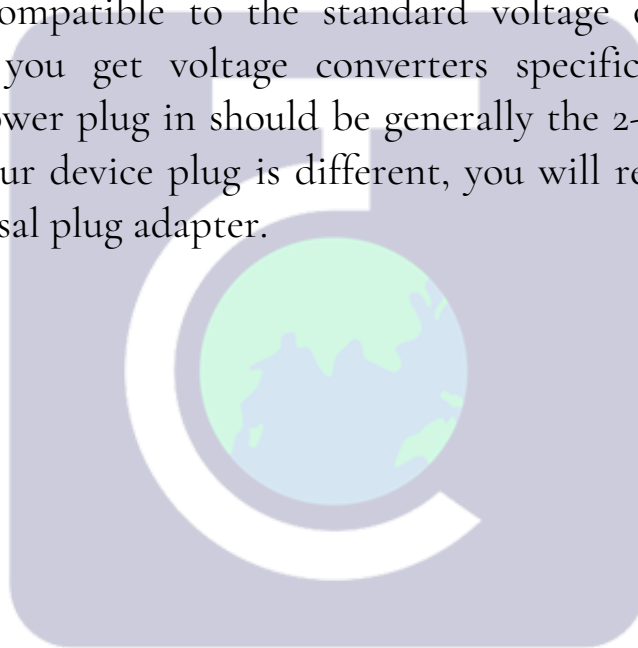
21. Driving

Almost all roads within Dharamsala have been damaged by heavy monsoon rains. Therefore most of the foreigners who have no experience of driving on damaged roads find it very unsafe to drive in Dharamsala. It is recommended that tourists hire taxis or drivers who are conversant with the terrain and more so the potholed roads. However, for those who are confident enough to drive, they will require an International Driving permit or a local Indian driving license. Foreigners are not allowed to drive in Dharamsala with their foreign licenses. It is also required that foreigners should be conversant with the local driving regulations before driving around Dharamsala.



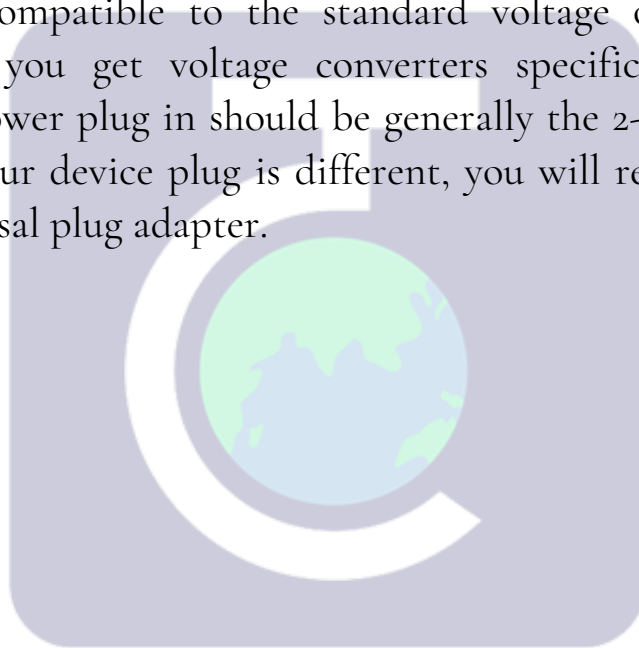
22. Travel essentials

Dharamsala has a voltage output of 220-240 that alternates at a frequency of 50 Hz. For those who are planning to carry electronic appliances, it is advisable to know the voltage specification of their gadgets. This is mostly dependent on the voltage standard of your place of origin i.e. the standard of UK, Europe and many parts of Australia is 220-240 V while that of USA and Japan is 110-120 V. If your equipment is not compatible to the standard voltage of Dharamsala, it is recommended that you get voltage converters specifically the step down transformers. The power plug in should be generally the 2-pin or 3-pin plug for type D sockets. If your device plug is different, you will require a plug adapter preferably the universal plug adapter.



23. Essential clothes

Dharamsala is has a voltage output of 220-240 that alternates at a frequency of 50 Hz. For those who are planning to carry electronic appliances, it advisable to know the voltage specification their gadgets. This is mostly dependent on the voltage standard of your place of origin i.e. the standard of UK, Europe and many parts of Australia is 220-2440 V while that of USA and Japan is 110-120 V. If your equipment is not compatible to the standard voltage of Dharamsala, it is recommended that you get voltage converters specifically the step down transformers. The power plug in should be generally the 2-pin or 3-pin plug for type D sockets. If your device plug is different, you will require a plug adapter preferably the universal plug adapter.



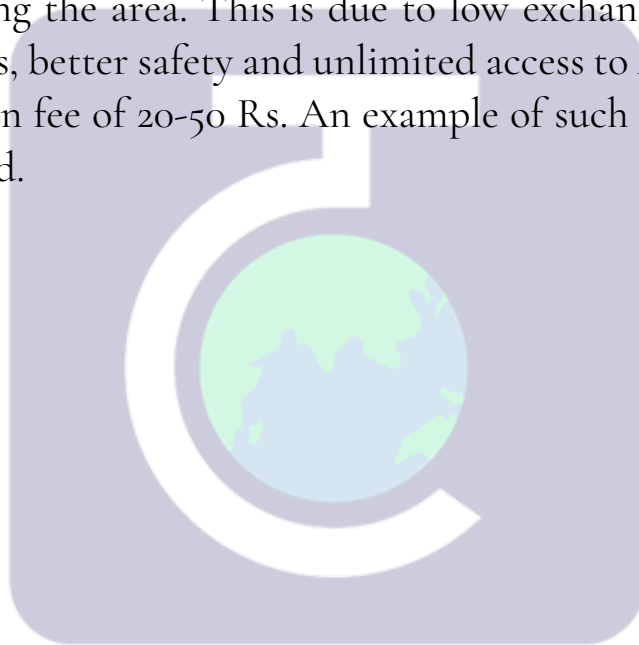
Index**24. Local currency**

The local currency of Dharamshala is Indian Rupee. It is denoted as INR. 1 USD = INR 66.99



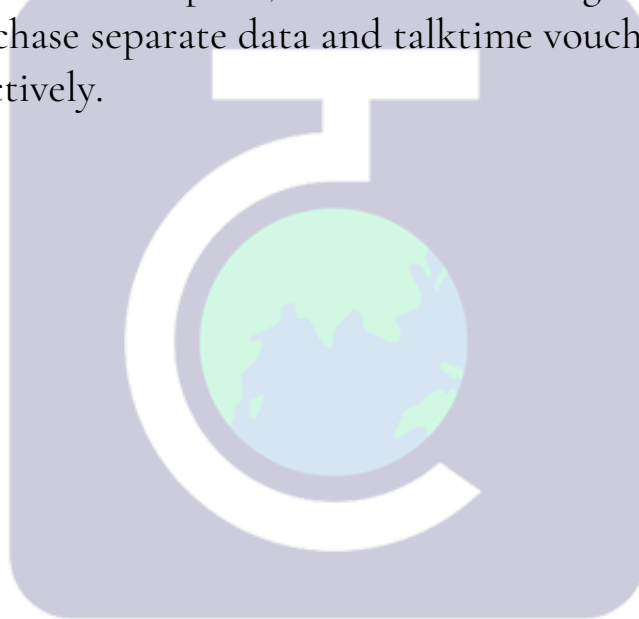
Index**25. Change vendor's commission, ATM charges**

Dharamsala has experienced increased numbers of currency exchange vendors over the last few years due to enormous influx of tourists to the region. Such vendors include banks or private companies that are available at the airport and within the town. The commission charged by these vendors always differs but ranges between 2% to 5%. However, use of foreign travel cards is more popular among visitors touring the area. This is due to low exchange rates compared to that of currency notes, better safety and unlimited access to ATM counters with a reasonable transaction fee of 20-50 Rs. An example of such international cards is the Forex Travel Card.



26. Staying connected

Telecom giants Airtel, BSNL, Reliance, Idea and Vodafone are said to be the best service providers in the city of Dharamsala. Procuring a local SIM card is easy. Visit to any of the small mobile shops and outlets and show your ID-proof and valid visa documents and you will be issued a SIM card of your choice – postpaid and prepaid. You will have to pay a standard fee between INR 50 AND INR 200. After verification process is complete, the SIM card will get activated in 24 hours. You will need to purchase separate data and talktime vouchers to access Internet and make calls respectively.



27. Time Zone

Dharamshala follows Indian Standard Time (IST) Zone with UTC + 05:30 hours.



Index**28. Languages**

Kangri, Tibetan, Hindi and Himachali are the main languages spoken in Dharamshala.



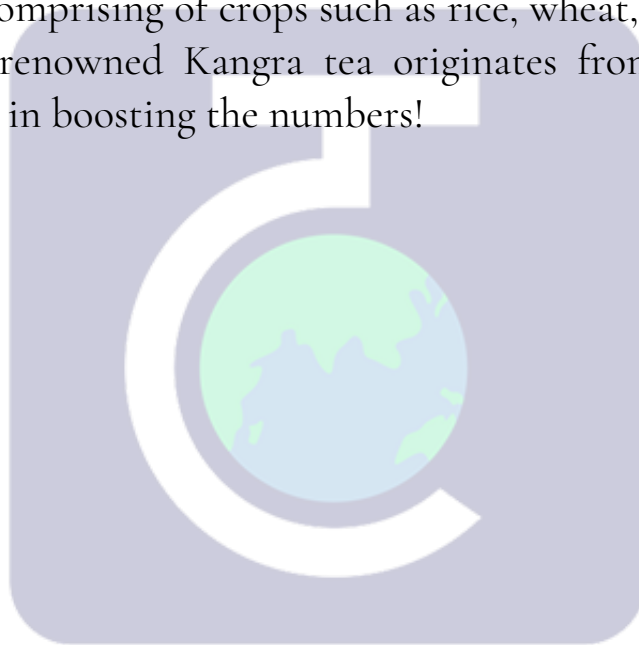
29. Political Scenario

The political scenario of Dharamsala is largely governed by the administrative powers of the state government of Himachal Pradesh. As one of the state's key cities, Dharamsala's importance is well-recognized by the state government and that is why the politics of the state continues to bring about initiatives and projects which would go a long way in further enhancing Dharamsala's image as one of the top tourist hotspots in the region and country overall.



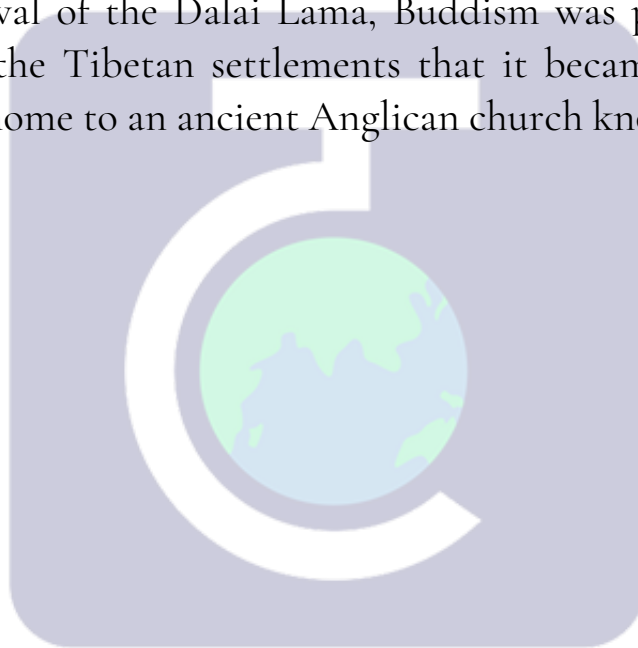
Index**30. Economic Scenario**

The economy and infrastructure of Dharamsala has seen a big change and improvement in the recent years. Tourism is obviously the mainstay of revenue for this hill station city. Interestingly, its scenic locales have triggered many sports and cultural events – of international level – to be staged here. Agriculture is the next best thing for economy of Dharamsala. As the land is naturally fertile, the agro-produce – comprising of crops such as rice, wheat, maize and barley are toppers. The world-renowned Kangra tea originates from here – overall tea cultivation also helps in boosting the numbers!



Index**31. Religious belief**

Tibetan Buddhism and Hinduism are the two major religions in Dharamshala. Most of the Hindu temples are ancient structures built centuries ago. The Gaddis form the indigenous people of Dharamshala and they are Hindus. Before the British took control of the region it was ruled by a Hindu Rajput dynasty. Then Gorkhas moved to Dharamshala and they worshipped at the Shiva temple here. Even before the arrival of the Dalai Lama, Buddhism was present in the region though it was with the Tibetan settlements that it became a strong presence. Dharamshala is also home to an ancient Anglican church known as St. John in the Wilderness.



32. Visa requirements

Entry into Dharamsala is only guaranteed to foreigners who have a valid passport and Visa. Visitors aspiring to travel to Dharamsala solely for sightseeing, recreational purposes or visiting friends and relatives can apply for a tourists Visa. The visa is normally issued to cover duration of three to six months with single or multiple entries. Multiple entries mean that the visa holder can access entry into destination that in North or South of India and also Nepal. There are no visa exemption arrangements in Dharamsala and therefore tourists visiting the area will require a valid tourist visa despite their origin.



Index**33. Essential vaccination**

It is recommended to be vaccinated for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Tetanus & Diphtheria, Typhoid, Varicella, Mumps, Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis and Routine vaccines.



Index**34. Theft and Safety**

Only the usual petty crimes like pick-pocketing and thieving are present in the place. If you go out at night, the roads and rocky steps are difficult to use without proper lighting. Stay away from deserted areas at night.



Index**35. Embassy/Consulate**

There are no foreign embassies and consulates available in Dharamshala. You can have more information at <http://embassy.goabroad.com/embassies-in/india>.



36. Accessibility

There are many wheelchair friendly hotels in Dharmshala including one run by Himachal Tourism. It may be difficult to explore the region on wheelchair though as most of the sights and spots are on hilly areas.



Index**37. Emergencies**

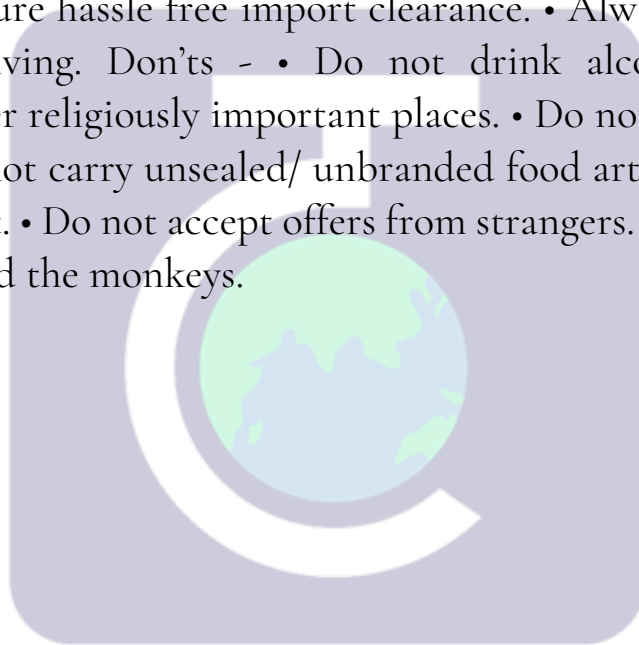
In case of emergencies you can call 100 for Police, 101 for Fire and that of Ambulance, you can call at 102. Apart from this, you can call 1099 for Traffic Police. You are provided with top-notch medical services and facilities even if you are a tourist. The hospital that provides the travel insurance is Fortis Hospital .



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38. Do's and Don'ts

Dharamshala is a sacred place for the Tibetans and followers of Buddhism, and tourists are expected to follow certain rules and customs while in the area. Do's - • Always keep passport and other identification documents with you. • Use dustbins to avoid littering . • Remove footwear while entering temples and monasteries. • It is advisable to carry a certified doctor's prescription along with the medicines to ensure hassle free import clearance. • Always wear helmets and seat belts while driving. Don'ts - • Do not drink alcohol or smoke near monasteries and other religiously important places. • Do not drink and drive. • It is advisable that do not carry unsealed/ unbranded food articles as the same may be banned for import. • Do not accept offers from strangers. • Do not go out alone at night. • Do not feed the monkeys.



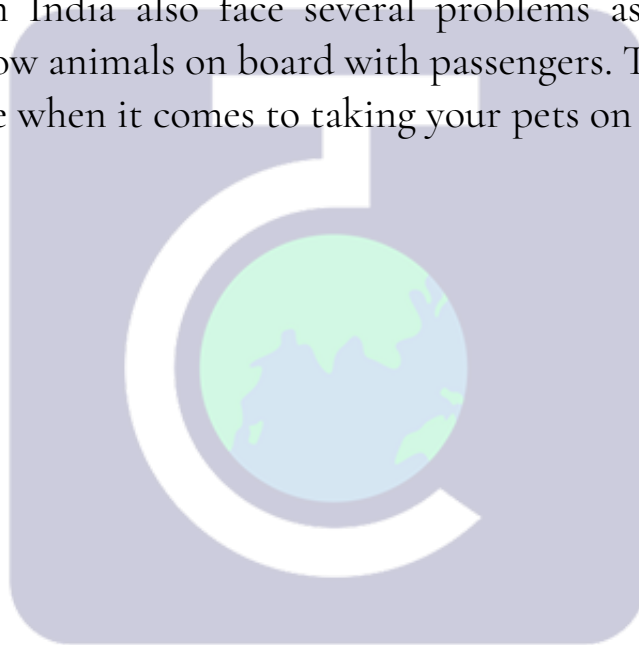
Index**39.Tipping basics**

You can tip a minimum of 10 rupees to 20 rupees at restaurants after your meal. Porters or bell boys can be tipped with 5 rupees to 10 rupees. Taxi driver, if the taxi is used for the entire day, must be tipped a minimum of 100 rupees.



Index**40.Pet info**

Pets cannot be brought to India by foreign travelers on a tourist visa. Only those who are returning to the country after two continuous years of stay in a foreign country are allowed to bring two pets as baggage. While this law puts off many international visitors who find it difficult to travel without their pets, the move is meant to put an end on the illegal trafficking of breeds from other countries into India. Pet owners in India also face several problems as none of the public transport systems allow animals on board with passengers. The attitude of people is not very supportive when it comes to taking your pets on a travel.



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Conclusion – Why to select this destination

Why choose Dharamshala ? A hill station in the lap of the Himalayas, Dharamshala is more popular as the seat of the Dalai Lama, Central Tibetan Administration, and the Tibetan community settlements. While Lower Dahramshala is a just another Indian town, it is Upper Dharamshala or McLeod Ganj that holds all the important sites and attractions for the visitors. McLeod Ganj is the headquarters of the Tibetan government-in-exile and is home to Tibetan Buddhism, craft, and culture. The Tsuglagkhang Complex or Dalai Lama's Temple is the largest Tibetan temple here with a magnificent meditation hall and ornate prayer wheels. The statues here are absolute masterpieces of art. There are many other Buddhist and Tibetan sites in McLeod Ganj with monasteries, libraries, and performing arts centers. The look and feel of the town is essentially Tibetan with its people, food and lifestyle. Dharamshala is also the place for some adventure if you have plans to explore more of the hilly city. There is great scope for activities like trekking, walking, mountain biking, and many other thrills and fun. Rides or walks through the nearby villages enjoying the amazing views of the surroundings can be quite an adventure. Dharamshala is a wonderful place to learn more about Buddhism and Tibetan culture. The city also offers courses for visitors in different forms of yoga, meditation, reiki, ayurvedic nutrition, holistic healing, Tibetan language, Indian and Tibetan cooking, painting, and Tibetan crafts. Shopping here is a different experience. More than global brands or shopping centers, it is the craft and culture of the Tibetan community that attracts the visitors with its wide array of jewelry, trinkets, prayer flags, prayer wheels, paintings, woolen shawls, and many other unique and exquisite pieces of art.

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