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Rishikesh

A paradise for adventure sports enthusiasts and devotees alike, Rishikesh is one of the most famous vacation spots in India. The place emerged as the World capital of Yoga when the Beatles paid a visit to the ashram of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.



Famous For : Weekend GetawaysCity

Located in the foothills of the majestic Himalayas, Rishikesh is settled in the picturesque state of Uttarakhand. Just 225 kms from New Delhi, Rishikesh is perfect for a weekend trip where you can indulge yourself in a variety of adventure sports like rafting, hiking, bungee jumping etc. Besides, Raja Ji National Park is just 16 kms away which attracts the wildlife fans too. The famous Laxman Jhula and the gigantic statue of Shiva meditating in the Ganges, attract millions of devotees every year.

Rishikesh has become a favourite destination for not only peace seekers but adventurous backpackers alike through white water rafting with beach camping on the silver clean beaches of the Ganges, bungee jump, zip line tour and more. Head to this beautiful city located in the foothills of the Himalayas where a new world of adventure and spirituality awaits.



Rishikesh has been an abode of ascetics since, well, time immemorial. It is also important as the gateway to the Garhwal mountains and holy spots in them like the source of the Ganga, the Badrinath and Kedarnath shrines and more. And now, Rishikesh is also the “yoga capital of the world”, as Uttarakhand Tourism would have it.

Rishikesh stands on both banks of the Ganga. There is free access to the unpolluted waters and the water temperature is just perfect most of the year. The undercurrents of spirituality are as steady here as the flow of the mighty Ganga. But do take care, every year people drown in the river and in the fraudulent schemes of pretенд spiritualists. The best way to go around is on foot as the town is hilly and consists of narrow lanes.

To cross the river take a motor ferry from the narrow iron suspension bridge known as Ram Jhula, which is near the Swargashram area, or walk across either Ram Jhula or Lakshman Jhula, which is 2 km upstream. Noisy tempos (locally called Vikrams) are affordable contraptions. Autos and Vikrams are available on the main road, also on the road converted to Badrinath. Autorickshaw drivers will take you temple sightseeing, covering the major touristy and hypnotic temples in 3-4 hrs.

Lakshman Jhula, the famous 450-foot long suspension bridge, was built in 1939. It is said that Lord Ram's brother Lakshman crossed the Ganga on a jute rope from here. The Lakshman and Raghunath temples are here. This part of town is better known for its busy bazaars and cafés. The new 13-storey Trimbakeshwar Mandir near the Lakshman Jhula has many shrines, chambers that house religious and Vedic texts and jewellery and gems shops. Nearby is the Swarg Niwas Mandir, a 12-storey temple with various idols of Hindu gods and goddesses on its many floors.

Just 2 km ahead downstream from Lakshman Jhula, at Muni-ki-Reti, is another suspension bridge, built later. This is Ram Jhula (also called Shivanand Jhula) surrounded by a cluster of ashrams on both sides. It connects Sivananda Ashram on the east bank and Swargashram on the west. Swargashram is a bustling spiritual hub with many ashrams, temples, bazaars and ghats.

While it has been a centuries-old tradition to worship the river in the morning and evening in small private ceremonies, the Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh has converted the evening aarti ritual to a spectacular show. It is alternatively called aarti. Diyas floating on the Ganga in the dark are

a sight to behold. If you are staying in an ashram, then it probably has its own timings for the aarti.

It is believed that the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati took place here. This ghat is large and clean, Many ashrams in Rishikesh offer short and long-term courses in yoga. Some of the most respected names are the Sivananda Ashram, Omkarananda Patanjala Yoga Kendra, Parmarth Niketan and Yoga Niketan Ashram.

It is advisable to join a well-known ashram or a place recommended by someone, for yoga or meditation classes mushroom all over town. Reiki, Ayurvedic massage, crystal healing and other attractions for Western tourists are on offer everywhere. An annual International Yoga Festival (March 1-7; international yogafestival.com) is organised jointly by Uttarakhand Tourism and Parmarth Niketan Ashram.

The one thing most people carry back with them from Rishikesh is the holy water of the Ganga. Plastic bottles for carrying Gangajal are sold on all the major ghats. The narrow lanes of the town are lined with shops selling gems, precious and semi-precious stones, puja items, and religious music CDs.

When To



VISIT

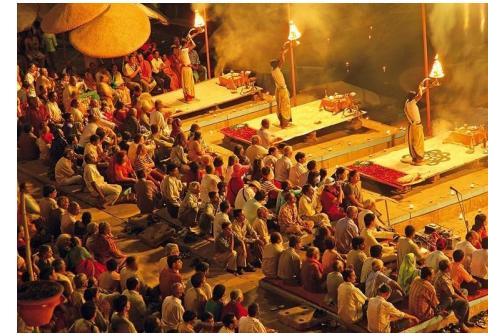
What To SEE



5 Sights

<http://www.ixigo.com/places-to-visit-see-in-rishikesh-lp-11380>

1 Ganga Aarti at Triveni Ghat



Mayakund, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
249201, India

After sunset, the famous Ganga Aarti takes place at the Triveni Ghat , which sees the whole stretch of Triveni Ghat come alive. Hundreds of leafed lamps float down the stream as divinity becomes the very air. You can buy these dias from the nearby stalls and be a part of the beautiful custom. It is believed that the aarti transports the devotee to a different world altogether. The oil lamps floating on the Ganga in the dark are a sight to behold.

2 Laxman Jhula Market



Laxman Jhoola, Rishikesh,

Uttarakhand 249302, India

Lakshman Jhula Market is one of the most popular markets in Rishikesh. The small shops and stalls attract every kind of traveller's attention with their items such as rudrakshas, idols of Gods, local jewellery and wooden items. Those who are inclined to rejuvenate themselves by following the healthy way of living can find all kinds of ayurvedic medicines and oils at this market. For those who love trinkets and other silver and brass accessories to go with their trendy clothes, this market is the place to be!

3 Lakshman Jhula



Laxman Jhula Road, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand 249201, India

The most famous attraction at Rishikesh, Lakshman Jhula is a landmark suspension bridge. Built in 1939, it has become synonymous with the town itself. Joining the banks of the majestic river Ganga, it sways with strong winds, and often vibrates with the passage of vehicles across it. Legends have it that the bridge stands at the place

from where Laxmana crossed the river on ropes in the days of Hindu epic Ramayana. Perched atop it, you will be nothing less than amazed by the scenic view of the area all around. And yes, you might swoon over in delight or a trance as you look down the bridge, into the swirling greens of the Ganga below.

4 Neelkanth Mahadev Temple



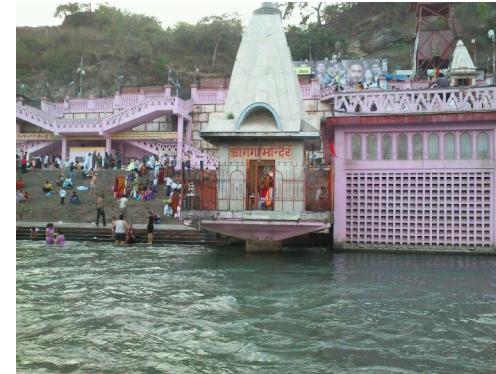
12 KM From Rishikesh, Pauri Garhwal, Kotdwara, Uttarakhand 249304, India

The Neelkanth Mahadev Temple in Rishikesh is ancient and situated at an altitude of 1675 m on a hill above the Swarg Ashram, which overlooks the Nar Narayan mountain ranges. The drive to the temple is

one of the most thrilling as well as scenic rides in the region. The temple is said to be built after a great mythological episode when Lord Shiva drank the venom that came from the ocean during 'Samudra Manthan'.

This caused Lord Shiva's throat to turn blue and thus, the name Neelkanth. This holy shrine of the Neelkanth Mahadev is now visited by tourists throughout the year, particularly during the festival of Maha Shivratri. Situated at 5,500 ft, this temple attracts many Shiva devotees. The legend goes that when the demons and gods churned the ocean in their quest for the nectar of immortality, it was here that Shiva drank the poison that surfaced and held it in his throat, which turned blue.

5 Triveni Ghat



Laxman Jhula, Mayakund, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, 249201, India

It is believed that the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati took place here. It is also a spot for the pilgrims who visit Rishikesh to take a holy dip in its water. This ghat is large and clean, and has separate changing rooms for women.

After sunset, the famous Ganga Maha Aarti takes place at around 6 PM, which sees the whole ghat come alive with divinity and religious fervour. Hundreds of leafed lamps float down the stream as divinity becomes the very air. You can buy these diyas from the nearby stalls and be a part of the beautiful custom. It is believed that a dip at Triveni Ghat can relieve one from the sins and help them attain salvation. A gigantic idol of Lord Shiva stands tall here, and is a sight to watch for in the monsoons when it is almost half-submerged in the water.

It is believed that the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati took place here. This ghat is large and clean, and has separate changing rooms for women. Near by is the Rishikund or sages' pond. This is said to have been a havan kund where the holy men performed fire rituals in ancient times. There is also a Shani Mandir here.

Where To
Eat



5 Places<http://www.ixigo.com/foods-in-of-rishikesh-lp-1138022>**1 Freedom Ganga Cafe**

Near Lakshman Jhula, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand 249302, India

Want to enjoy a cup of nice coffee along with the best pasta in town? If yes, then Freedom Ganga Cafe is just the place to be at. Walk in here to hang out with friends after a long day of sightseeing and enjoy the possibly best continental dishes in Haridwar. And for the ones in love with the traditional north Indian fare, there's the crispiest of 'paranthas' that comes with a variety of stuffing options, including cheese and more.

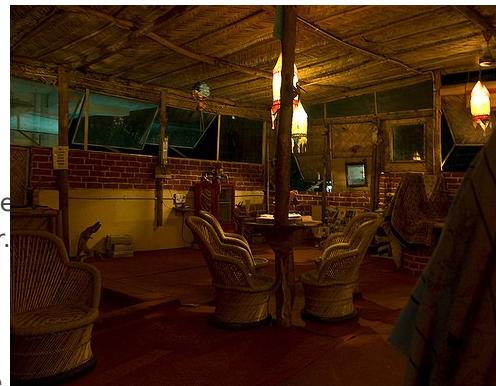
2 Mukti's Health Food

Ganga Vatika, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand 249137, India



+91-9634126644

Located a few hundred metres west of the Shivanand Jhula Bridge, Mukti's Health Food is a much loved food joint, especially for its delectable and fresh organic, health food. The specialities include home made green pasta and Indonesian Gado-Gado. You just can't miss out on the homemade frozen yoghurt, apple pie or chocolate cake for dessert.

3 Tulsi Restaurant

Near Laxman Jhula, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, 249304, India

A cosy, pub-like ambience makes Tulsi Restaurant one of the best places to hangout and treat yourself. Dimly lit, it has interiors with an old world feel, more so, with the bamboo lined interiors that it has. Gorging on multi cuisine specialities here, you can see a lot of westerners coming in. A

comprehensive menu that's mostly vegetarian, it's one of the best places for a quick bite.

4 Ganga Beach Restaurant

Shesdhara, Tapovan, Laxman Jhula Road, Rishikesh, Uttrakhand, 249201, India



+91-135-2442018

Ganga Beach Restaurant (part of the Ganga Beach Resort) is one of the best places to get amazing food at unbelievably low prices. To add to the charm, the spacious terrace and cushioned chill-out area at this restaurant make it a hit with the tourists. People come here asking for wood-fired pizzas, burritos, crepes and the ice-cold lassi. Plus, there's the uninterrupted view of the swiftly flowing Ganga from the restaurant. Apart from the snacks, there's the usually North Indian cuisine as well.

5 The Welcome Center

Muni Ki Reti, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, 249192, India



+91-135-2442337

This eating joint is a hub for amazing Ayurvedic food and teas. And yes, that's not the end of it. You can also go in for cooking and yoga classes. Most of the dishes here are made with organic and home grown grains and vegetables. It also sells natural incense sticks, neti pots along with yoga mats and other similar items. If you like the way they treat you, you can also enquire about staying at this beautiful getaway from the city's hustle bustle.

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WORLD

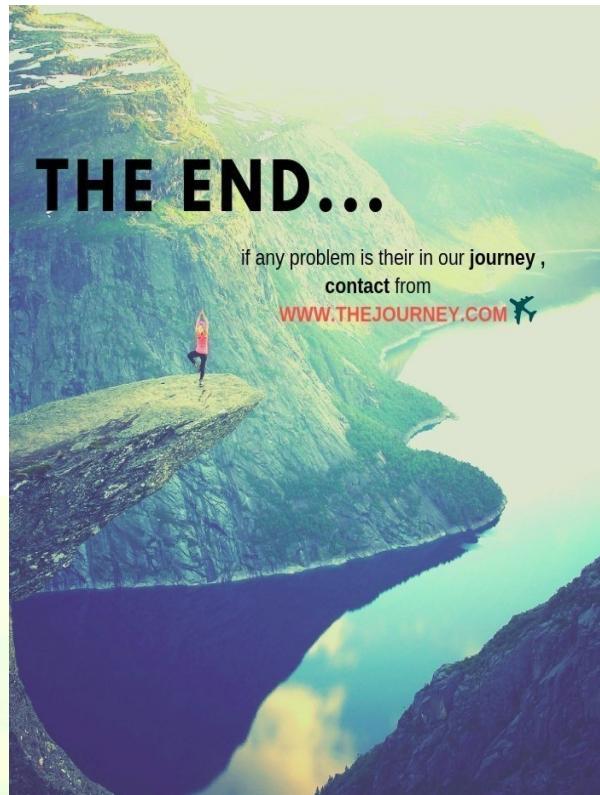
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