**A traveller Information for Shimla**

The former summer capital of the British in India, and the present capital of **Himachal Pradesh**, Shimla has been blessed with all the natural bounties which one can think of. It has got a scenic location, it is surrounded by green hills with snow-capped peaks. The spectacular cool hills accompanied by the structures made during the colonial era creates an aura which is very different from other hill.

Bulging at its seams with unprecedented expansion, Shimla retains its colonial heritage, with grand old buildings, among them are the stately Viceregal Lodge, charming iron lamp posts and Anglo-Saxon names. The Mall, packed with shops and eateries, is the centre of attraction of the town, and Scandal Point, associated with the former Maharaja of Patiala's escapades, offers a view of distant snow clad peaks.

Shimla is ideally located, and though there is an air service to the town, it is best reached by road that takes in the charms of the HIMALAYAN countryside at its best. There is a sense of nostalgia about SHIMLA, with its old

Bungalows and their gabled roofs and beautiful gardens.   
Also Known As: ***The Summer Refuge***

**Altitude**: 2202.00 Meters  
**Population**: Approx.1.25 million  
**Main Languages**: Himachali (Pahari), Hindi and English  
**STD Code**:   **0177**

**Climate  in  Shimla**

**Weather during the** **Year:** Winter are cold and chilly winds from the upper Himalayas makes the place really cold. Around Christmas or last week of December Shimla gets snowfall. Temperature varies from 15 ~27o C in summers and in winters it’s in the range 0~17 o C.

**Best Season:**. Shimla can be visited throughout the year, as each season has its charm. The snowfall during the winters attract many tourists and accommodation can prove to be difficult.  In the summers one can escape from the scorching heats of the plains and can enjoy the cool breeze at Shimla and in its vicinity.  In summer, Shimla has the attraction of excellent walks and treks against the backdrop of the scenic beauty of wooded ravines, flowers and pines. Mall of Shimla becomes alive once again with tourists strolling and shops tastefully decorated and various exhibitions, craft fair etc. organised at locations on the mall.

      In winters, it is home to winter-sports and an ice-skating carnival. Today, Shimla is the capital of Himachal Pradesh and a favourite for filmmakers who wish to incorporate its scenic romanticism in their movies. Shimla is a stark example of the diversity that India offers to tourists.

**What to Wear:** Being Hill station the weather is almost cool at Shimla. Warm clothes are required throughout the year. The summers are marked by rainfalls. The nights of summers are cool and light warm clothes are required during this time.  In the Winters Pullovers along with Warm Jacket is necessity. One has to take good care of shoes as most of the places are visited on foot, and slopes of Shimla are very steep. In the winters and mainly during snowfall shoes of firm grip are required, so that walking on snow becomes easy.

**Best Time To Visit:** April To August & December To January

**Shopping  and  Stay  at  Shimla**

**Where to Stay :**    Shimla is full of Hotels and Restaurants and there are around 500 hotels in and around Shimla, which includes One Five star hotel (**Cecil Hotel)** and many three star  hotels. There are many Govt. Guest Houses and private Guest Houses.  So accommodation is no problem in Shimla but to be on safer side one should book accommodation in advance for stay in Shimla, especially during the peak seasons of summer and Christmas.

**Where to Purchase :**   The best shopping area in Shimla are The Mall, Lower Bazaar , Tibetan Bazaar and Lakkar Bazaar. There is an enormous range of goods that Shimla has to offer. This includes handicrafts, wood, and metalwork, shawls, pullovers, local tweeds, wooden articles and Toys, caps, Tibetan carpets and pickles, jams and squashes. The Lakkar Bazaar is famous for its Wooden Crafts and Articles can be purchased from this area. There are many Emporium's and Showrooms on the Mall from where one can buy Himachali Shawls, Pahari Cap, Pullovers handicrafts and toys etc. The day today items can be purchased from the shops in the lower bazaar. The Tibetan Market is famous for imported goods mainly electronics goods and fancy items.

**What to Eat :**  Mall has many good restaurants serving Punjabi, South Indian, Chinese and Continental Foods. One can find good Punjabi Dhabas and Vaishnav Dhabas near the mall and lower bazaar having reasonable rates. There are many Fast Food Centres on the Mall, where Burgers, Pizzas, Patties etc are available.

**Specialty of the District :**   Shimla is famous for its Scenic Beauty , Apples & Wooden Craft . Among special dishes Sidku or Sidu is very famous in upper Shimla hills. It is a thick fermented Roti of wheat flour with paste of opium seeds (afimdana) mixed with either Gur or salt added to it which makes it very delicious. It is always taken with homemade pure ghee. Patandey are made of very thin paste of wheat flour and are eaten with dal and ghee or kheer (made of rice and milk).

**Important Religious  Places**

**Christ Church & St. Michael's Cathedral :** Built in 1846-1857, Christ Church is the second oldest church of Northern India. The Church overlooks the ridge and is one of the landmarks of Shimla. The clocks on Christ Church were added later but none of them are functional now. The Church's exquisite beauty comes with the stained glasses that are fitted on its windows. You can discreetly have a look inside the church, or attend English-language   
services every Sunday during the tourist season. The town's other important churches are St. Michael's Cathedral and Roman Catholic Cathedral, which is just off the Mall

**Jakhu Temple :** Dedicated to Lord Hanuman, this temple is at an altitude of 8048 feet above sea level  near the highest point of Shimla ridge. It offers a panoramic view over the surrounding valleys, out to the snow-capped peaks, and over the town itself. The temple is a 45-minute walk from the Ridge, one can also hire pony or taxi to visit temple. Jakhu is a vantage point for witnessing the changing skyline as the sun rises or sets.

**Sankat Mochan:**  On Shimla-Kalka road at a distance of around 5 KMs is the famous "Lord Hanuman" temple. Situated at an altitude of 1,975m, it commands an excellent view of Shimla town. Temple has beautiful campus and Langar is held every Sunday.  
  
**Tara Devi:**  On Shimla-Kalka road this holy place is accessible by rail, bus and car (11-km). From the station / road - one can visit the temple on foot around 5 km walk among dense forests. Temple is accessible through motor able road also and it’s around 20 KMs journey from the town. Situated on top of a hill that faces Shimla, the temple offers panoramic views of Shimla town and surrounding hills. A thick forest of oak and rhododendron surrounds it. It is famous picnic spot.

**Kali Bari:**   
  
The temple is situated near to The Mall and its 5 minutes’ walk from The Mall. The temple is dedicated to Shyamala Devi (Shimla is named after this goddess), an incarnation of Goddess Kali. Temple faces heavy rush during Diwali and Durga Puja as many Bengalis visit this temple.

**Prime Attractions**

**Himachal State Museum & Library:** The museum is located 2.5-km west of the scandal point and opens daily except on Mondays and public holidays. It has got a good collection of ancient historical sculptures, paintings, coins, photos and other items from all over the state as well as outside it. It has also got a library, which houses many historical books and manuscripts. Visiting hours are from 10 AM to 5 PM and it is closed on Monday and gazetted holidays.  
  
**Viceregal Lodge & Botanical Gardens:**  On the Observatory Hills is located Viceregal Lodge, which is also known as "Rashtrapati Niwas". This magnificent building was the residence of the British Viceroy Lord Dufferin. This lodge was completed in 1888 and it is said that every brick for the building was carried by mules. This is a six-story building and is surrounded by well-maintained gardens and lawns. The lodge has now been   
converted into Institute of Advanced Study and is further 2-km from State Museum.

**Indian Institute Of Advanced Studies:**  Housed in the former Viceregal Lodge, it was built in 1888. The style of architecture is English Renaissance, the masonry of the walling is light blue limestone and the wrought stonework is done in sandstone in a beautiful light gray tint. It has magnificent lawns.  The entry in the institute is by ticket and only on Sundays the grounds are open for the public.

**The Ridge:**  The large open space in the heart of town presents excellent view of the mountain ranges. Shimla's landmarks - the Neo-Gothic structure of Christ Church and the new - Tudor Library building is worth   
  
**The Mall:** Most of Shimla's landmarks are located here. The Mall further joins the Ridge at the ‘Scandal Point' of Kipling's Shimla, where a statue of the nationalist leader Lala Lajpat Rai has been erected. This is the main shopping centre of Shimla with restaurants. This is especially pleasant in the evenings when the views and lights are wonderful. The Gaiety Theatre, which is a reproduction of an old British theatre is a centre of cultural activities. A passenger lift of HPTDC can be taken from the Cart Road and the Mall. Lakkar Bazaar adjacent to the Ridge is popular for its wood-crafts and souvenirs.

**Prospect Hill:** Crowned by a temple dedicated to Kamna Devi 15-minutes’ walk from Boileauganj on Shimla-Bilaspur road. The hill at an altitude of 2,155m offers a spectacular view of the area.

**Summer Hill:** At an altitude of 1,283m, 1 KM from boilaeuganj. Summer Hill is a picturesque spot on Shimla-Kalka Railway line offering shady walks in quiet surroundings. The Father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi during his visit to Shimla lived in the elegant Georgian House of Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur located here. HP University is also situated over here.

**Potter Hill:** Situated at a distance of 1 Km from Summer Hill is very beautiful Picnic spot with all the natural beauty. Ecological Park is situated here.

**Glenn:**Its about 4 km walk from the Ridge through dense Forests, a sprightly stream flows through the Glen forests at an altitude of 1830 meters. It is a secluded picnic spot.

**Annandale:** Beyond the Glen is Annandale, another picnic spot. It is covered with deodar forests and was once the playgrounds of Shimla, where racing, polo and cricket entertained the Britishers. Surrounded by deodar trees, this glade has an ancient temple on the edge.

**Elysium Hill:**  On the road leading through Lakkar Bazaar, houses the famous Auckland House, the former residence of Viceroy Lord Auckland. It is a well-known girls’ school now. Nearby is the Stirling Castle, now an orphanage for the Tibetan children and a centre for the Tibetan exiles who have settled locally.

**Recreation:** Shimla has three cinema halls, near to Mall and Hindi movies are played mostly. One can visit the Roller Skating hall on the left side of the Lakkar Bazaar (open for all) and can do roller skating on melodious music. Mall has few Billiard Rooms. There are shops offering variety of Video Games. In the Tourist Season various entertainment programs are organised such as Summer Festival in June, Ice skating in Dec-Jan and Winter Carnival. Most of the time one or the other exhibition or craft fare is held around mall area.

**Sites Nearby**

**Rampur (80KM):** On the Hindustan Tibet Road. Once the capital of the Princely State of Bushahr, the town is situated on the banks of Satluj River. The whole area is a maze of lanes, shops and temples. In the month of November, the Lavi Fair is organized here. Dumgir Buddhist Temple, Padam Palace, Raghunath Temple, Ayodhya temple and Narsingh Temple, are worth visiting. Himachal Tourism runs a tourist Complex and air conditioned Cafe, Satluj.

**Wild Flower Hall (13KM):** On the Mahasu range, at Charabra, 13 km from Shimla, is the Wild Flower Hall situated at an altitude of 2,498 m. nestling among picturesque sylvan surroundings, the Wild Flower Hall commands a breath-taking view of the snows. A major fire damaged it in 1993. Serving as a hotel today, it attracts many tourists who wish to revisit the grandeur of a bygone era.

**Mashobra (10KM):** Situated on Shimla-Naldehra road at a height of 2149 mt. A place of unique beauty, Mashobra is an ideal interlude beneath the oaks and the pines. Featuring beautiful gardens spattered with the daffodils, hyacinths, asphodels and celandines, it is a popular weekend resort, dotted with delightful villas and innumerable picnic spots. Goddess Durga temple is worth seeing from here, a track leads down to Sipur, which is an exquisite glade shaded by ancient deodar trees. A fair is held here every April/May. About 3 km from Mashobra is the lovely resort of Craignano.

**Kufri (16KM):** Kufri, at distance of 16 km from Shimla and at an altitude of 2510 m above sea level, is a site offering some famous hikes and wonderful snow for skiing in winters. An enjoyable walk leads up to the Mahasu Peak. The Himalayan Nature Park here has a good collection of animals and birds found in the region.

**Narkanda (64KM):** Narkanda, offers wonderful slopes for skiing. At an elevation of 2708 m, it has dense pine forests. Hatu peak, 8 km from Narkanda, provides a striking panorama of the plains below. Narkanda offers spectacular views of snow ranges.  Ancient temple of Hatu Mata is alive with skiers. HPTDC runs Hotel Hatu and in winters short skiing courses are organised.

**Fagu (22KM):** Fagu Situated on Hindustan-Tibet Road (22-km), at a height of 2,450m Fagu is gifted with some enchanting views. Himachal Tourism runs the Hotel peach Blossom.

**Chail (43KM):** Chail is a lush green setting and was the former capital of the Patiala State. It has the world’s highest cricket ground at a height of 2250 m, built in 1893. It is also a hiker’s paradise and there is a wildlife sanctuary at a distance of 3 km from here. Himachal Tourism runs the Palace Hotel (Earlier the Palace of Maharaja Of Patiala)

**Sarahan :** On Hindustan Tibet Road beyond Rampur is a small village worth visiting. It provides a spectacular view of Shrikhand Mahadev (5227 m) and hiking opportunities to the nearby villages such as Ranwin and Bashal Peak. The Bhimakali temple, dedicated to Goddess Durga, is the finest example of Indo-Tibetan architecture. As per legend, this is where goddess Shakti destroyed the mythical demon king, Bhasmasur. It is a highly revered place of pilgrimage. Saharan is the gateway to Kinnaur. A Pheasant Breading Centre and stadium are worth visiting. The area is a rich bowl of quality apples and other varieties of delicious fruits.



**BHEEMAKALI TEMPLE SARAHAN**

**Tattapani:**  51 km from Shimla, is a spot well known for hot sulfurous springs. Shiv Goofa at Saraur (4 Km) is also worth visiting. One can enjoy fishing.

**Naldehra :** Naldehra, at an altitude of 2050 m and 23 km from Shimla on Shimla- Tattapani road, houses the oldest and the highest  golf course in India. In the middle of the course is a temple, Mahunag Mandir. It was a favourite pastime spot of Lord Curzon.

**Kotgarh:** Kotgarh It lies 82 kms from Shimla and is the apple heartland of Himachal. It was here that Satyanand Stokes, an American missionary, first sowed the apple seed brought from back home and pioneered the apple cultivation revolution in Himachal. Today Kotgarh continues to be one of the most intensive apple growing areas in the country with acres of orchards lining the slopes of this untouched dreamland. .The beautiful house with all modern amenities that one can   
think of takes one by surprise. Situated in the midst of countless acres of rolling orchards, The River View Cottage offers twin bedded luxury accommodation in the lap of solitude. The view of the Sutlej River during the day and the enchanting lights of this beautiful valley at night are a photographer's delight. The house also has a library to offer where one can read the Stokes family history, it being closely associated with the history of Himachal itself. In the evening one can explore Mr. Singha's impressive wine collection and savour some interesting apple wines too! The meals offered also include tasting some unique Pahari cuisine specially prepared under Mrs. Singha's expertise. If the explorer's instinct overtakes you, there are various options of fascinating one-day excursions and soft-treks around Kotgarh.

**Hatkoti :** KOTI (104 Km) 1400 m: Motorable on Shimla-Rohru highway. Famous for ancient temple of Mata Hateswari in the midst of paddy fields on the right bank of the Pabber River. HPTDC runs Hotel Pabber here.