

North India / Uttarakhand / Yamunotri

Char Dham Yatra 9 nights & 10 days in Uttarakhand

Yamunotri-Gangotri-Kedarnath-Badrinath-Mana village-Uttarakhand char Dham

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Haridwar

Destination	Airport	Railhead	Best time to visit
Pilgrimage	Dehradun Airport - Jolly grant	Haridwar Railway Station Grounds	April to September

- Char Dham of Uttarakhand is also called the Chhota Char Dham of India. This includes four cardinal spots of Hindu pilgrimage, namely, Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath. All four places are located in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand.
- Travelling in this region also allows pilgrims to pay reverence at other principal places of worship, such as "Panch Kedar", "Panch Badri", "Panch Prayag", etc.
- Besides ancient shrines and exclusive temples, the trip also offers magnificent views of the snow-capped Himalayan ranges and trekking trails.
- Most travellers start the journey from Haridwar which serves as the gateway to the places at higher altitudes.

- The temples of Char Dham remain closed during the winter months. Kharsali, Mukhba, Ukhimath and Joshimath are the villages at lower altitudes that serve as the winter abodes of Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath, respectively.
- Opening & Closing dates of the temples of Char Dham Yatra are predetermined as per the Hindu calendar. This must be accounted for when planning the trip. Generally, Yamunotri and Gangotri are opened for devotees around the day of Akshay Tritiya (15th of May). The gates of Kedarnath and Badrinath are opened about a week later. The shrines are closed for pilgrims around the day of Bhai Dooj (after Diwali).
- The Peak Season of Char Dham Yatra is between May and mid-June. Roads are filled with hired vehicles and hotels run to packed capacity. The rush subsides only during the monsoons when travelling in the mountains becomes challenging.
- **BEST TIME TO VISIT** - September to October may be considered as the best time to travel when the crowd is thin and the monsoon is also passed.

How to reach Haridwar?

- **Railhead** – Haridwar Junction Railway Station is connected to major cities like Delhi
- **Airport** – Jolly Grant Airport at Dehradun is 55 km from Haridwar
- **Bus Service** – Haridwar is well connected to Delhi (240 km) via NH334. Regular buses are available on this route.
- **By Taxi** may be reserved on a per-day basis. Charges for a regular four-seater car could be between Rs.2500 and Rs.2800 per day.

Highlights

- **Yamunotri Dham** – Shrine dedicated to Yamuna Ji, at an altitude of 10803 ft above sea level.
- **Gangotri Dham** – River Ganga originates in the glaciers of Gangotri. The temple is located at an altitude of 11204 ft above sea level.
- **Shri Kedarnath Dham** – One of the 12Jyotirlinga of Lord Shiva. The temple, supposed to have been built by the Pandavas, is at an altitude of 11750 ft above sea level.
- **Shri Badrinath Dham** – One of the Char Dham of India, this is the shrine dedicated to Lord Vishnu at an altitude of 10170 ft above sea level.

Brief Itinerary

- Day 1: Travel 230 km from Haridwar to Janki Chatti. The journey takes about 8hours. The route passes through the Queen of the Hills - Mussoorie.
- Day 2: Trek 5 km to Shri Yamunotri Dham and return back to Janki Chatti for an overnight stay.
- Day 3: Travel 125 km to Uttarkashi and visit the famous Shiva Temple. Overnight stay in Harsil, which is a Himalayan Hamlet, 80 km from Uttarkashi.
- Day 4: Shri Gangotri Dham is 25 km from Harsil. The destination is motorable. After Darshan, travel another 166 km to reach Budha Kedar. This journey would take more than five hours.
- Day 5: Travel 125 km to Guptkashi. The journey takes less than 5 hours' time. Visit the temples here and reach Sonprayag / Gaurikund for an overnight stay.
- Day 6: It takes a tiresome trek of 22 km to reach Shri Kedarnath Dham. Alternatively, travel in helicopter/pony/palki carried by porters. Visit the shrine and stay overnight in Kedarnath.
- Day 7: Reach Sonprayag by afternoon and travel 150 km to Pipalkoti. The journey takes around five hours.
- Day 8: Travel 35 km to reach Joshimath in around an hour. Visit the Narsingh temple, and proceed to Badrinath (which is another 40 km from Joshimath).
- Day 9: Offer reverence to the deity in Shri Badrinath Dham. This completes the four cardinal destinations of the Yatra. Visit Mana, popularly called the Last Indian Village. Head back and reach Rudraprayag. This 155 km journey would take more than 5 hours to complete.
- Day 10: On the final day of the journey, travel about 165 km to reach Haridwar. Halt at the temple of Dhari Devi and Devprayag on the way. Proceed to your hometown from Haridwar.

Itinerary

▼ Day 1 : Haridwar to Janki Chatti

(Route - Haridwar - Dehradun - Mussoorie - Barkot - Hanuman Chatti - Janki chatti)

- Start your journey from Haridwar early in the morning.
- The 230 km journey is made beautiful by the view of the mountains which welcomes travellers once they cross Mussoorie ↗.

 Reach Janki Chatti – Janki Chatti is 136 km from Mussoorie. Stay overnight at Janki Chatti. There are Guesthouses & Dharamshala available for Rs.700 to Rs.1500 per night.

▼ Day 2 Janki Chatti to Yamunotri Dham and back



Wake up early in the morning and start off on the 5 km trek to Shri Yamunotri Dham. Porters and ponies are also available.

- The trekking trail is laborious, with stairs made only in a few places. The steps being higher than usual, the uphill trek is slightly challenging. It takes about 3 hours to reach Yamunotri Dham from Janki Chatti.



Narrow & Steep Trek



Tapta Kund is a hot water spring where travellers may refresh themselves. Devotees may take bath in the Yamuna River as well.

- It could take 2 hours in queue for the Darshan if you undertake the pilgrimage during the peak Yatra season.
- If time permits, you may visit the Garud Ganga, which is an uphill trek of almost 800 metres from Yamunotri Dham.
- The downhill trek takes around one and a half hours' time. So it is advisable to return to Janki Chatti after the temple visit.



Yamunotri temple is located at a height of 10600 feet



Overnight Stay at Janki Chatti.

▼ Day 3 Janki Chatti to Harsil via Uttarkashi



Start early in the morning from Janki Chatti to reach Uttarkashi (125 km via Dharasu)

- Visit Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple – this is one of the oldest temples of the area, built on the banks of River Bhagirathi. Lord Shiva is worshipped as a swayambhu Shivalinga.

The linga is 56cm in height and it leans towards the south. Goddess Parvati is worshipped in the adjoining Shakti Temple. A 6mt high Trishul (Trident) is believed to have been preserved here for over 1500 years.



Uttarkashi is located at 155 km from Rishikesh



Harsil is a peaceful Himalayan village, 80 km from Uttarkashi. The wooden houses are a characteristic architecture of this place. It is also famous for being the shooting location of many Bollywood films.

- You may also visit the Bagori Village – just a km away from Harsil. You can buy hand-made woollen items from the villagers at reasonable prices.
- Overnight Stay at Harsil

There are many hotels, guesthouses and homestays available here.

UNEXPLORED VILLAGE, BAGORI (HARSIL)



You can buy handmade woolens from the villagers

▼ Day 4 Harsil to Gangotri Dham and Shri Buda Kedar



Travel 25 km from Harsil to reach **Shri Gangotri Dham**. It is advisable to start around 6 am from Harsil. This is a motorable road.

[Explore Hotel Options in Harsil](#)



If travelling between May and mid-June, be prepared to stand 2 hours in queue for Darshan.

- As per Hindu mythology the most sacred of all rivers, Ganga, descended from heaven to earth at Gangotri, when Lord Shiva released the mighty river from his locks.
- **The Bhagirath Temple**, near the banks of the river, is the place where Rishi Bhagirath had meditated for 1000 years so that Ganga would cleanse the sins of his forefathers.
- Pilgrims prefer to take a holy dip in the river and pay reverence to the deity in the temple.
- The actual origin of the river is at Gaumukh in the Gangotri glacier, 19 km away from Gangotri and it is accessible by trekking.



Gangotri Dham is located at 11,200 feet elevation

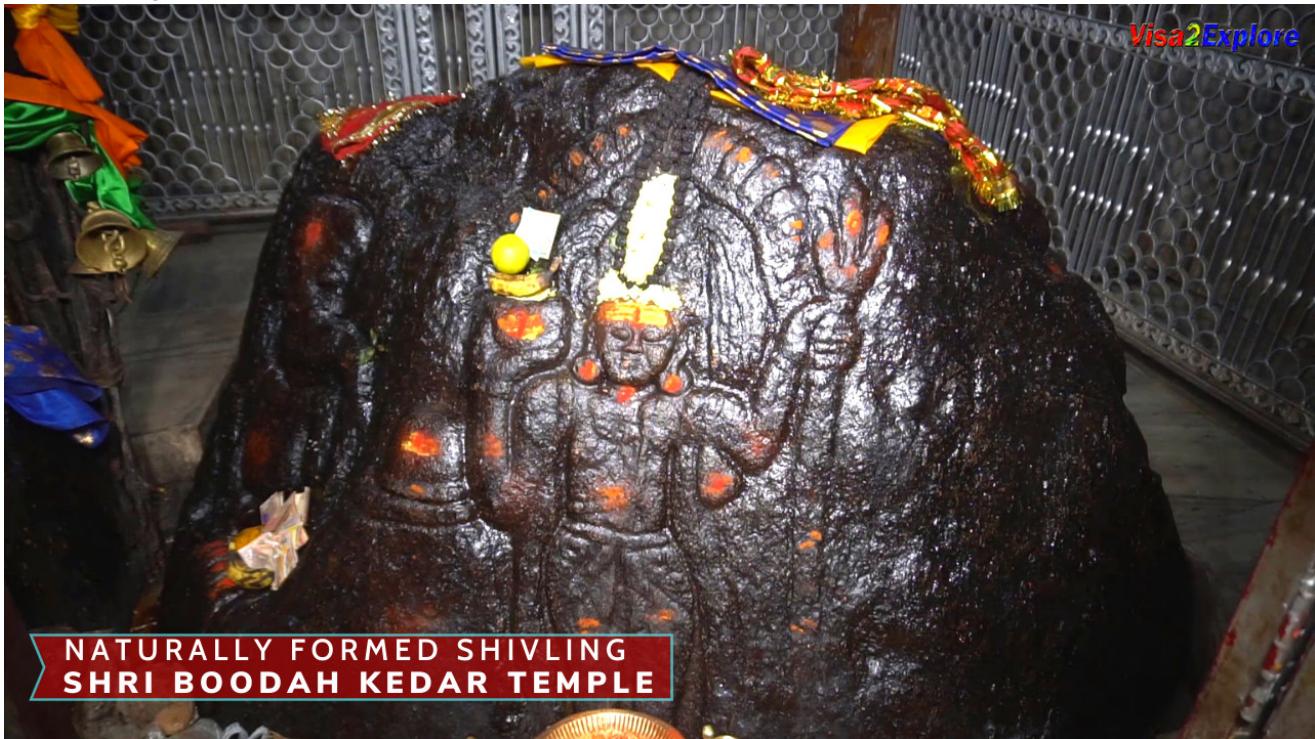


Travel 166 km from Gangotri to reach Budha Kedar.

- **Budha Kedar** is another holy temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, located at the confluence of two rivers - Bal Ganga & Dharam Ganga. The Shivling here is considered

to be the biggest in North India. It is also unique because the families of Lord Shiva and the Pandavas are engraved upon the Shivalinga.

- Overnight stay at Budha Kedar.



At this place - Lord Shiva gave darshans to the Pandavas as old man

▼ Day 5 Buda kedar to Guptkashi and Sonprayag

Travel 125 km to Guptkashi. It takes around 4 and a half hours' time.

- Guptkashi is a religiously important town of Uttarakhand. It houses ancient temples like the Vishwanath temple and Ardhnareshwar temple ↗. Also visit the Manikarnika Kund where two streams of Ganga and Yamuna meet.



People take bath at Manikarnika Kund at Guptkashi

Sonprayag is a major junction, 30 km from Guptkashi. In peak Yatra season, accommodation runs scarce in Sonprayag. Hence, tourists may stay the night in Gaurikund (4 km) towards Kedarnath. The trek to Shri Kedarnath Dham begins from Gaurikund.

- Another place of mythological importance is the Triyuginarayan Temple, which is 13 km from Sonprayag. Lord Shiva and Parvati are believed to have married at this spot.

SHRI TRIYUGINARAYAN TEMPLE TRIYUGINARAYAN



GMVN at Triyuginarayan has good facility for stay



Overnight stay at Sonprayag / Gaurikund.

▼ Day 6 Sonprayag to Kedarnath



Start off early in the morning for the yatra to **Shri Kedarnath Dham**. Shared jeeps are available from Sonprayag to Gaurikund. During the peak season, it could take up to 2 hours to get a turn in the jeep.

- It takes around 7-8 hours of trekking along a 22 km route to reach **Shri Kedarnath Dham**.



On way to Kedarnath



- Ponies and mules are also available on this route. For Children & senior citizens, porters carry tourists in palki too.
- Book your stay at Shri Kedarnath Dham. In peak season tourists must pre-book as lodging facilities are limited. Rooms with even basic facilities could cost over Rs.3000 per night.
- Pilgrims may visit the temple for evening aarti. There are basic dhabas offering vegetarian food, where pilgrims may have dinner.
- Overnight stay in Kedarnath.



27TH MAY 2019

Dormitories

▼ Day 7 Kedarnath to Sonprayag and Pipalkoti



Visit the shrine of Kedarnath Ji for morning darshan. Kedarnath is the highest of the 12 Jyotirlinga dedicated to Lord Shiva at 11750ft.

- Have breakfast and walk back towards Sonprayag. Tourists should reach Sonprayag by the Afternoon.



Shri Kedarnath Dham



- Travel 150 km from Sonprayag to Pipalkoti.
- Stay the night at Pipalkoti.

▼ Day 8 Pipalkoti to Joshimath and Shri Badrinath Dham



Start off early in the morning from Pipalkoti and reach Joshimath (35 km).

- Visit the **Narsingh Temple** ↗ - Dedicated to Narasimha Avatar of Lord Vishnu. This temple is also the winter abode of Lord Badrinath.



It is famous as part of Sapt Badri



Kalpavriksha ↗ is a century-old wish-fulfilling tree within the temple compound. Adi Guru Shankaracharya had meditated for several years at this place.

- Travel to Shri Badrinath Dham (40 km from Joshimath).
- Overnight stay at Badrinath.

**KALPVRIKSHA TEMPLE
JOSHIMATH**

Kalpvriksha Temple

▼ Day 9 Badrinath Dham Darshan and travel to Rudraprayag



Devotees bathe in the Tapta Kund (a hot water spring) and then proceed to the main temple.

- **Shri Badrinath Dham** is the final site in the circuit of Char Dham of Uttarakhand. Lord Badri Narayan is worshipped as an idol made of black stone.
- Have breakfast in any of the restaurants near the temple or in the GMVN Guest House.



Shri Badrinath Dham



You can also visit the **Manा Village** - which is popularly called the last village of India. Vyas Gufa and Bheem Pul are few spots linking legends of Mahabharata with the place.

- Return from Badrinath to reach Rudraprayag – this route would cover four of the 5 Prayag (confluence of holy rivers) in this sequence:
 - **Vishnu Prayag** - confluence of Dhauliganga & Alaknanda – 40 km
 - **Nandprayag** - confluence of Nandakani & Alaknanda – 70 km
 - **Karnprayag** - confluence of Alaknanda & Pindar River – 20 km
 - **Rudraprayag** - confluence of Mandakini and Alakananda – 35 km

Overnight stay at Rudraprayag.

MANA VILLAGE
LAST INDIAN VILLAGE

" WELCOME "
LAST VILLAGE - MANA



Last Indian Village, Mana Village

▼ Day 10 Rudraprayag to Haridwar and back



Prepare for the final day of the pilgrimage. Get ready & proceed towards Haridwar.

- Halt at **Shri Dhari Devi Temple** (20 km away). The presiding deity is considered the guardian of the Char Dham. Located in the middle of the Alaknanda River, this requires an easy trek of about a km downhill from the NH7.



Shri Dhari Devi Temple



Devprayag is the fifth Prayag that you will come across around 47 km from Dhari Devi Temple. This is the confluence of Bhagirathi and Alaknanda Rivers.

- Haridwar is another 95 km from Devprayag.
- Return to your home location from Haridwar.

Things to keep in mind: Yamunotri Dham

- Rates for Pony, palki and porter are not fixed. Between May and June, Palki could cost about 8000 Rupees, while ponies could cost Rs. 3000. Palki carriers could charge around Rs. 4000.

- Travellers may stay the night in Yamunotri Dham. There are Ashrams and Dharamshala, but no sophisticated facility would be available.

Things to keep in mind: Gangotri Dham

- The vehicle parking is about 1.5 km away from the area of hotels & guest houses. If you have heavy luggage, you might need to hire a porter to reach the Guest House.
- Trek to Gaumukh is a difficult trek and must not be attempted without a guide. For environmental reasons, the number of tourists allowed to visit the glacier is restricted by the administration. Camping and overnight stay in Gaumukh is not allowed. Instead, accommodation is available at Bhojbasa (4.5 km from Gaumukh).

Things to keep in mind: Kedarnath Dham

- If you need to return from Shri Kedarnath Dham the same day, it would be better to hire a Helicopter service.
- However, there is no certainty of service. It depends on climate conditions and bad weather could postpone flights beyond a day.
- Helicopter services, available from Phata, cost around 6000 per person for a to-and-fro journey. The duration of the flight from Sonprayag to Kedarnath is less than 8 minutes.
- You may carry dry food, water bottles and such essential things as these are expensive on the trekking route.

General Suggestions & Recommendations

- Assuming that the tourist reaches Haridwar a day earlier, he/she may decide to have a dip in the Holy water of Ganga. Har Ki Pauri ghat is the most famous and religiously revered place where lakhs of pilgrims assemble during the Kumbh Snan. Tourists may also attend the grand Ganga Aarti in the evening.
- Tourists may experience extreme weather on this route. Hence, be prepared with an umbrella/raincoat at all times. Also, carry enough woollen clothes.
- Avoid travelling in the mountains beyond the evening. Since most days require travel of over 200 km, it is advisable to begin the day's journey by 5.30 am so the traveller is able to reach the destination by 5 pm.
- Travellers must carry dry food and avoid oily food while travelling in the mountains. Altitude sickness must also be considered before undertaking the journey. Carry emergency medicines.
- In this Char Dham Route, there are Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN) Accommodations at several locations. These are reasonable options for lodging. Visit <https://gmvnonline.com> to

book stays in these properties.

- Char Dham Yatra requires Biometric identification of all tourists. This needs to be managed at the entry to Dham destinations or in mobile vans that one may find en route.
- If you want to do this Yatra economically, you can take a bus from Haridwar or Rishikesh. But this will cost you time efficiency and you would require more days to suit the public transport schedule.
- You can also book a GMVN package, in which they provide Travel + Accommodation packages in minibuses. Visit <https://gmvnonline.com/> to book these. (Cost: Adult – Rs.26000 in May / June & Rs.20000 in September / October)
- If you hire a private taxi for the entire trip, it could cost you around Rs. 3500 per day for a Swift Dzire and Rs. 5000 or more for Innova. It is advisable to prebook if you are travelling in the peak season as prices go sky-high.
- Pilgrims may visit Panch-Kedar & Panch-Badri along with Char Dham, but that will require extra you need to have spare days to complete the entire journey.
 - The Panch-Kedar are temples dedicated to Lord Shiva:
 - Kedarnath
 - Tungnath (4 km trek from Chopta to reach the highest Shiva Temple in the world)
 - Rudranath (21 km high-difficulty trek from the base point in Sagar village)
 - Madmaheshwar (18 km trek from Ransi village, which is 30 km from Guptkashi)
 - Kalpeshwar (the route is 26 km from Joshimath to Devgram via Helang)
- The Panch Badri are temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu:
 - Shri Badrinath Dham
 - Dhyan Badri (Near Pandukeshwar, 25 km from Badrinath)
 - Bhavishya Badri (5 km medium-difficulty trek from Ringi Village, which is 20 km from Joshimath)
 - Vridha Badri (10 km from Joshimath)
 - Adi Badri (20 km from Karnaprayag)

This detailed itinerary completes all the Char Dham of Uttarakhand. But since this may be hectic and tiring, we suggest travellers select two Dham in one trip and the other two Dham in the subsequent year.