Kullu; heaven on the earth

Kullu is a city in the Himachal Pradesh state of India. It was also called Kulantpeeth in ancient times due to it being considered the last frontier of human settlements. 'Kulanthpeeth' means 'the end of the habitable world'. The Kullu Valley has been the Valley of the Gods in India. It is a beautiful tourist place in Himachal Pradesh. Over the years, its beauty and greenery have been attracting tourists. Situated on the banks of the Beas (Vyas) river, this place is famous for its colourful Dussehra celebrated here. There are many pilgrimage sites of Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists in Kullu, making it very special. There is also a temple of Raghunathji built in the 17th century, a major pilgrimage centre for Hindus. Known as the Silver Valley, this place is famous for cultural and religious activities and famous for some adventure activities like rafting, mountaineering, paragliding, and trekking. Let's know more about Kullu-

## History:

Kullu was established by Vihangmanipal from Haridwar (Mayapuri). The ancestors of Vihangmanipal had settled from Allahabad (Prayagraj) to Almora and then to Haridwar. Vihangmanipal was defeated by the local vassals and established Jagatsukh in the beginning. Vihangmanipal's son Pachhpal defeated the kingdom of 'Gajan' and 'Bevala'.

The Chinese traveller Hensang visited Kullu princely state in 635 AD; he told the circumference of Kullu state to be 800 km, which was 187 km away from Jalandhar. According to him, in the princely state of Kullu, about one thousand Buddhist monks studied Myyal. In memory of Lord Buddha's visit to Kullu, Boudh Stupa was built in Ashoka.

After the First Sikh War, on March 9 1846, the princely state of Kullu came under the British. The British freely provided 'Waziri Rupi' to the rulers of Kullu to rule. Lahaul-Spiti was merged with Kullu on March 9, 1846, AD. Kullu was included as a sub-division of Kangra in 1846 AD. The first assistant commissioner of the Kullu sub-division was Capt. Hay. The headquarters of Siraj Tehsil was Banjar. Spiti was carved out of Siraj and made a tehsil of Kullu in 1862. In the year 1863, the Viceroy Lord Elgin was the first Viceroy to visit Kullu. Lahaul Spiti was formed on June 30, 1960, after separating from the Kullu sub-division. Kullu sub-division was carved out of Kangra in 1963 to form the Punjab district. The first deputy commissioner of the Kullu district was Gurcharan Singh. Kullu district was merged with Himachal Pradesh from Punjab on November 1, 1966.

## How to reach?

Roads and air well connect Kullu with other parts of the country.

* **By Road:**Buses to all major cities are available from HRTC Bus Stand at Kullu and Manali. You can also take a taxi service from the local taxi stand.
* **Air Service:** Kullu is well connected by air, and one can get flights to Delhi from Kullu-Manali Airport, located at Bhuntar. Bhuntar is 10 km from Kullu and 50 km from Manali.

## Dussehra; a famous festival of Kullu-

The famous Dussehra festival in Kullu begins on 'Vijayadashmi' and lasts for a whole week. The festival is organized in October at Dhalpur ground, recognized as an international festival by the state government. People from all over the world come to Kullu to attend this festival. The idol of Lord Raghunath Ji is kept in a beautiful chariot on the first day of the festival. This festival marks the victory of good over evil. The festival ends when the chariot is brought to the banks of the Beas (Vyas) Nahi on the seventh day. Dussehra is a sacred festival in Kullu, and it is a delightful amalgamation of glamour and culture, heritage and religion in Kullu. If you want to see something special in Kullu, then you must visit here during this festival.

## Famous travelling spots-

The city of Kullu, situated on the banks of the Vys River, is no less than Ladakh in terms of beauty. While enjoying rafting, mountaineering, paragliding and trekking etc., you can enjoy roaming in one of the best and unknown places, so let's know-

## Kaisadhar-

Kaisadhar is a major and attractive picnic spot in the Kullu Valley, surrounded by tall deodar trees. Kaisadhar, located in Khajjiar, about 15 km from Kullu, is known for its natural beauty. Kaisdhar is a good place to spend some time in the lap of nature. The place offers a splendid view of the nearby valley and the village. Kaisardhar is a great trekking destination that passes through deodar and blue deodar forest. Kaisardhar is situated at a distance of 53 km from Manikaran.

## Hanogi Mata Temple-

This is a famous religious centre of Kullu is located on Mandi -Manali Highway. The temple is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Hanogi Mata, and devotees visit here throughout the year. The location of this temple is quite picturesque as it is situated on top of a small peak and is surrounded by green mountains. Apart from religious tourists, this temple also attracts adventure lovers, making it an ideal climbing adventure with a sunset view.

## Naggar Castle:

Naggar Castle is an ancient royal fort which is about 500 years old. Famous among tourists, this place is just 21 km from Manali. This medieval fort was built around 1460 AD by Raja Siddha Singh of Kullu. In the olden times, this palace was used as the royal residence of the royal family. In 1978 this palace was converted into a rest house. Presently this palace serves as a heritage hotel. Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) is responsible for the maintenance of this palace. There are also three Hindu temples in the complex. You can enjoy the gallery of paintings by Russian artist Nicholas Roerich. This fort is beautifully built with stone and wood. This fort is built on the banks of the river Beas (Vyas). There are other attractions and places of interest to see in the premises of this fort, such as temples, art galleries, etc. The song of the Bollywood movie Jab We Met was shot in this fort.

## Dhakpo Shedupling Monastery

If you are going to visit Kullu, then definitely add Dhakpo Shedupaling Math to your list. This beautiful place is just 10 km away from Kullu. The name of the village in which this monastery is located is "Kais Village". This monastery is also famous by the name of "Kais Monastery". The monastery was built and inaugurated by the Dalai Lama in 2005. This is the reason why the monastery is dedicated to the great Nobel laureate, the Dalai Lama. You can have a panoramic view of the valley of Kullu all around the monastery. Situated on the left side of the Beas (Vyas) River, this monastery connects travellers with spirituality. Many people come here to study Buddhist philosophy. The monastery serves as a boarding school as well as a university. Many monks reside in this monastery. When you go inside the monastery, you will find a huge Buddha statue here, where you can pray. His Excellency Dhakapa Rinpoche visits the monastery every year in August. He also gives his valuable blessings to all the people present here.

## Jamula Temple:

Kullu has been called the centre of holy places; Jamula temple is also named one of those holy places. This temple is situated in Malana village of Parvati valley. This temple is situated at a distance of 48 km from Kullu. People believe that this temple was built by the descendants of the army of Alexander the Great. The name of the presiding deity of this temple is Rishi Jamula. These are given in detail in the Puranas. Those who belong to the Gaddi tribe are still following the rules and beliefs made by the sage. Anyone who comes to this temple cannot touch the wall. According to the local people, doing so makes the temple impure. The issues of the local people are also resolved in this temple. There is a group of problem solvers in which eleven people are included; these people are known as representatives of sage Jamula. In this place, you can see the confluence of historicity and religiosity. Traveller who comes here gets mesmerized, which is why you must add this place to your touring list.

## Kheerganga:

This place situated in the middle of the mountains is very famous for its panoramic view. It is about 23 km away from the main city and a small place present but, in terms of beauty, it is at the top. The lush green forest surrounding and the moment of sunset is made here. There are also many such waterfalls in Kheerganga, where you would like to experience the incredible view. This place is also very famous among couples.

## Bottom Line-

India is full of hill stations, but Kullu Valley holds a different place with diverse tourist attractions and sites. The serene monasteries, holy temples here attract the attention of the people. Get ready to jump in the lap of Kullu Valley and enjoy your summer vacation. Pack your bags.