MUSSOORIE-A JOURNEY IN TO THE LAP OF NATURE

Mussoorieis one of the scenic locations and the best hill stations in India, located in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. It lays 35 kms away from the state capital of Dehradun. It is in the foothills of the Garhwal Himalayan range.

## Demographics:

* Population: 30,118
* Male: 55 percent
* Female: 45 percent
* Literacy rate: 89 percent

The heart of the Himalayas and the Queen of the hills, Mussoorie has many places to treat travel enthusiasts.

## Best places to visit in Mussoorie:

**Landour:**

While Mussoorie is a land of mesmerising nature treats, Landour undoubtedly is its twin sister. Located in the western Himalayas, Landour gives a panoramic view to the tourists. It is covered with dense Deodar forests, a scenic lush green cover offering home in nature’s lap. It derives its name from the Welsh village Llanddowrer. However, history has the story that it got the name from the time of British rule.

The quaint county lies about 980 feet above Mussoorie, its twin town. They both together are called “The queen of hills”, thanks to the spectacular serene, beautiful nature and the tranquillity both the places offer. The capital city of Uttarakhand, Dehradun, is not very far away from this place. It just lies 33 km away from Dehradun and its adjacent towns like Chakrata, Tehri and Chamba. Other important spiritual destinations like Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri are also just 200 km away from this place. Nature lovers travel here on weekends to get away from the hustle-bustle city life. Locations in and around Landour are:

## Lal Tibba:

* **Location**: Lal Tibba Binoculars, Bazar Road, Landour
* **Timing**: 8 am- 7 pm
* **Entry fee:** INR 50 per head
* **Time required:** 1 hour

## Kellogg’s Memorial church:

The Lal Tibba is the highest point in Landour which stands at the height of 7700 feet. If you are a photography enthusiast, then this is the right place to click the soothing landscapes of Garhwal peaks. With its size and the pretty scenic natural beauty around, one would not stop capturing memorable pics. A beautiful aspect of this place is the rejuvenating colours of the sky during sunrise and sunset. Travellers surround this place early in the morning and around 6 pm for his reason. Some broadcasting channels like Doordarshan, All India Radio and Military have established their towers and transmitters here.

* **Location:** Landour, Mussoorie, about 5 km from Library bus stand, near Kasmanda palace
* **Timings:** 10 am to 12.30 pm
* **Entry fee:** no entry fee
* **Time required:** 30 minutes to one hour

## Char dukan:

The bygone era played a significant role in the church’s flourishment. It was built in 1903 by the British and acted as a place where the British learnt Hindi when ruling India. The site derives its name from Dr Samuel Kellogg, who was instrumental in designing a Hindi dictionary and Hindi vyakarana in English for a better understanding of the language for the British. He was a scholar and was a frequent visitor to Landour. As he was an American Presbyterian missionary member, the church was also built as a Presbyterian church with Gothic architecture and beautiful interiors, reminding of the Victorian era.

* **Location:** Rajmandi, Landour, Mussoorie, 5.5 kms from Library Bus stand
* **Exploration time:** 1 hour
* **Entry fee:** it is an open market, no entry fee

**Places around Char dukan:**

AS the name indicates, Char Dukan in Hindi means four shops. It is a collection of four small shops lying adjacent to each other, preparing and serving food much before Uttarakhand became famous as a tourist destination. Their pancakes, milkshakes, pakoras and wai are famous so much so that no vacationer considers their trip accomplished without visiting this place. The special snacks made by them are Bun omelette, apple cinnamon waffles and mini cakes. Anil’s café and Tiptop Township are trendy among frequent travellers who opine that the food is lip-smacking. You can also visit St. Paul’s church which is very close to this place, making perfect scenic setting.

## Mall road:

It is located in the heart of Mussoorie city and offers an excellent view of the Doon valley. For comfortable seating and enjoyable scenery, chairs and lampposts are fixed at either end of the roads. The design reminds the visitor of British architecture. There are enough recreation games like video game parlours and skating rings available for kids. Methodist church, which is again an old-style church and Cambridge store are also present on this road.

Famous author Ruskin Bond, who hails from Mussoorie, is often found in Cambridge bookstore reading books or giving autographs to fans.

Shopping enthusiasts can freak out in some of the most delicate shopping areas in Mussoorie Mall Road. The place is filled with local sellers displaying their products like clothes, winter wear like gloves, socks, caps, shawls, shoes, simple jewellery, craft and decorative items and mouthwatering food. The mall road is usually a bustling road with travellers from all parts of the country visiting Mussoorie for its pleasant chill weather and reasonable shopping. AS the streets are busy and small shops are worth halting, it is better to park your vehicle in a place outside the market and venture out for your favourite stuff.

* **Location:** center of the city, Mussoorie
* **Timings:** open from 9 am
* **Travel time:** 1 km from Library Bus stand
* **Time required:** 1 hour

**How to reach Mall Road:**

As it is located in the city's heart, one can reach the place by car, taxi, bus or auto. The nearest railway station is Dehradun Railway station, 31 kms and the Airport is Jolly Grant Airport which is about 54 kms.

## Kempty falls:

* **Distance**: 14.5 kms from Library bus stand, takes about 35 minutes
* **Location:** on Yamunotri road
* **Entry type**: free
* **Timings:** 8 am to 5 pm
* **Time needed:** one hour

Surrounded by serene mountains and scenic valleys, Kempty falls is a treat to behold. The 4500 feet height waterfalls is a resplendence for nature lovers. A British officer initially developed it for arranging Tea parties. Later it became a recreational spot for the British, and then post-Independence turned out to be a tourist's favourite destination. You can enjoy a relaxing bath under 40 feet high waterfalls for a cooling experience. There is also an artificial pond where one can enjoy boating enjoying the scenic surroundings. The place has many shops and small restaurants for savouring snacks and local food.

The best time to visit Kempty falls is June to October as there will be good rains during this period and the lake will be full of water.

**How to reach Kempty falls:**

You can reach here by taxi, car, or bus. All modes of transport are available. The nearby Railway station is Dehradun Railway station which is around 45 kms, and Airport is Jolly Grant airport, 69 kms.

## Gun hill:

Gun hill is the second highest peak of Mussoorie after Lal Tibba. It offers a picturesque view of the Himalayan ranges, alluring photographers to capture a glimpse of the rare natural beauties. Apart from providing a 360-degree view of the Himalayan ranges like Gangotri, Srikantha etc., it also gives a panoramic visual of Doom valley and the overall city of Mussoorie.

It lies about 400 feet above Mall Road and is just a 20-minute walking through the mall. One can also opt to go on a ropeway ride which is equally good concerning the scenic beauty that it offers.

The name Gun Hill is significant to the gun operation before independence. Although it has a water reservoir now, there were days when it did not have any clock towers. Instead, a gun used to be mounted on its top, and a weapon triggered by the British at mid-day to help people know the time.

**How to reach Gun hill:**

Gun hill can be reached by ropeway or by foot. It is 400 meters from the mall and is 32 kms away from Dehradun Railway station. The airport is Jolly Grant Airport which is 54 kms.

* **Location:**  Mall Road, Luxmanpuri, Landour, Mussoorie
* **Distance:** 1.7 kms from Library bus stand, 20 minutes trek up the hill from mall road
* **Time required:** 2 hours
* **Timings:** 10 am to 6 pm
* **Entry fee:** free
* **Ropeway price**: INR 75 for roundtrip

## Mussoorie lake:

This is a new attraction to the tourists constructed recently by the city board. It is an artificial lake that gives the view of beautiful landscapes and the Doon valley. It is a perfect spot for families to enjoy and relax in a serene atmosphere. The clean water of the lake and the aquatic animals make for a pleasant watch. Though this is a recent addition to the tourist list, it is considered the best among other lakes in Mussoorie.

## **How to reach Mussoorie lake:**

As the lake is 6 km away from the central city, all kinds of transport are available easily. Hire a local taxi or auto or take a bus from Mussoorie to Dehradun till Dhobi ghat. It is just a walkable distance from Dhobi ghat. The nearby railway station is Dehradun railway station which is about 28 kms, and the nearest airport is Jolly Grant Airport which is 50 kms.

* **Location:** Dhobi ghat, 6 km from Mussoorie city
* **Distance:** 6 kms from Library bus stand, Mall Road
* **Time required:** 30 minutes

## Soham heritage art center:

**Soham heritage centre is the home to many cultures and traditions of the Himalayan valley. It displays all kinds of arts in paintings, canvasses, scrap art, pottery, sculptures and murals. The motto behind establishing to create awareness among all the tourists about the diverse aspects of Himalayan valleys. There is unity among all groups irrespective of the diversities that exist among them.**

**Here you can find the unique religious scriptures, the culture of Himalayan tribals, the folklore, and their stand out jewellery art, pottery shapes and their traditional equipment used for different purposes. You can also experience the wildlife of the Himalayan regions with the materials displayed. Some of the art pieces are one of its kind and specific to this area. It is a visual treat for art lovers as some of the items are kept for sale too.**

* **Location:** Chamunda peeth temple road, big bend bala, Hisar
* **Distance:** 3 kms from Library bus stand, Mall Road
* **Time required:** one hour

## George Everest house:

**This is an ideal hang out place for families and friends alike. It was built in 1832 and is famous for camping, adventure rides and picnics.**

The name George Everest house derives from Sir George Everest as it served as his home during his stay in Mussoorie. Mr George was the surveyor-general of India from 1830 to 1843. Though most of the building is damaged, the interiors are still good and worth a visit. It is presently under the jurisdiction of the Archeological Survey of India.

* **Location:** Park estate near Hathipoan, about 6 kms from main city Mussoorie
* **Distance:** 5.9 kms about 20 minutes from Library bus stand, Mall Road
* **Entry type:** free
* **Time required:** 3 hours

**Highlights of the place:**

* One of the best views of sunrise and sunset
* Winter line can be seen after sunset
* Trekking of 500 mts uphill from George Everest house
* Good place for picnics and day outs
* Good view of the snowy Himalayas from the top.

# Best eateries in Mussoorie:

## Trout house grill and bar:

This unique restaurant offers the snow-capped mountains and the deep valleys as you feel like eating under the stars. The cocktails and crispy snacks served here are worth a taste, and the fresh air that hits the eatery is another great experience.

* **Location:** Siya village, Kempty fall road, Mussoorie
* **Cuisines:** Indian, bar and grilled items
* **Prices:** INR 2000 to 2500
* **Famous for:** non vegetarian items especially trout fish

## The writer’s bar:

This is an antique restaurant which is tourists’ favourite. It combines both traditional and contemporary tastes concerning the food and ambience.

* **Location:** Spring Road, Mussoorie
* **Cuisines:** Finger food and Beverages
* **Prices**: INR 1500 app
* **Famous for**: first class cocktails

Other famous restaurants are Regency restaurant on Barlowganj, famous for authentic Indian cuisine and well-maintained air-conditioned rooms and Pocket-friendly restaurants like Urban Turban Bistro, famous for Indian, Chinese and contemporary foods and cocktails, Tavern restaurant for Italian dishes and Kalsang for Thai and Tibetan cuisines.

On the whole, “the queen of hills”, as aptly named, Mussoorie is a pride of Uttarakhand and India. The place does not just hold historical legends but also modern metamorphosis.