**HRISHIKESH- A YOGI’S TRUE DESTINATION**

The northern state of Uttarakhand is the home for many spiritual centers and holy temples. Apart from the scenic beauty that these places offer because of the Himalayan peaks and beautiful valleys in and around, they are also known for their spiritual connectivity. Rishikesh is an abode of many holy places and is considered the Gateway of spiritual journey. It is also the “Yoga capital of the world”. One can witness many Yoga centers in and around the city. It is located in the foothills of the Himalayas and falls to the southeast of the capital city of Uttarakhand, Dehradun. Its twin city Haridwar is 21 km north from Hrishikesh.

**Demographics according to 2011 census**

**Total population:**1,02138

**Male**/; 54,466

**Female**: 47, 672

**Literacy rate:** 86.86 percent

**Yoga and Hrishikesh:**

There is undivided bonding between Yoga and Hrishikesh. Since 1989, the city has been hosting the annual international Yoga festival. Due to the religious significance that the place has acquired and the inscriptions in the Yogic books, non-vegetarian food and alcohol is strictly not allowed in the city. There are many Yoga centers in the city where you can join as a disciple or enter any Yoga teacher training program. To name few of the best are Swami Vivekananda Yoga and Reiki school, Yoga capital Rishikesh, Arti Yoga center, Anand Prakash Yoga ashram, Patanjali International Yoga foundation.

**Best places to visit in Hrishikesh:**

Rishikesh is known for its religious and spiritual centers. Hence one can find lot of temples and ashrams connected to spirituality. Places like Gita Ashram, Neelkanta Mahadev temple, Kunjapuri Temple are known for their spiritual activities and attract large number of devotees from various parts of the world. There are many pilgrim spots for devotional activities and equally good tourist spots that one cann enjoy. Apart from the above, one can also find picnic spots, zoos, safaris, and rides for leisure.

**Lakshman Jhula:**

**Location:** on the way to Triyambakeshwar temple

**Travel time:** It takes 12 km from Inter state Bus terminus, Adarsh gram, Hrishikesh

**Entry fee:** free

**Time required for exploration:** 2 hours

As the name signifies, it has connection with the famous Hindu epic Ramayana. This is a very famous place which offers a good view of the city and the holy Ganga River. It is a suspension bridge made of Iron which spreads along 450 feet in length. According to the holy Hindu epic Ramayana, Lord Rama’s younger brother crossed river Ganga on a jute rope. Until 1889, there was a jute rope which was 284 long. Later because of heavy floods in 1924, the jute rope was washed away, and a new bridge made of iron was replaced.

**Nearby places:**

Once you visit Lakshman Jhula, you can find many other places around the area. Triyambakeshwar temple, Raghunathji’s temple, Akhileshwar Mahadev temple and Lakshman temple are other places within 10km radius.

**Ganga Aarti:**

**Location:** Triveni ghat, Parmarth Niketan

**Timing**: 6pm to 7pm

River Ganga has significant place in Hindu religious texts and is worshipped a lot. Hrishikesh, famous for its ghats witnesses many aartis for the holy river where the banks of the river are situated. Ganga aarti at Parmarth Niketan and Triveni Ghat are among the most prominent ones. A glance at the aarti fills one’s heart with unknown spiritual feeling. The aarti is accompanied by distinct music of bells, drums and certain very own temple musical instruments which awaken the hidden soul.

You can see many lights shining and floating in the holy water. It is believed that by doing so, the internal darkness is destroyed and gyan or knowledge is awakened. The aarti is a holy ritual performed by the priests especially by the pupils who are learning vedas there.

**How to reach Parmath Niketan:**

Parmarth Ashram is situated on the banks of river Ganga and is 20 km away from Dehradun airport, Joly Grant.

**Triveni Ghat:**

**Location:** Triveni Ghat, Hrishikesh

**Timings:** 9am- 5pm

**Time needed:** 2 hours

**Entry fee:** no entry fee

This is another ghat where Ganga aarti is very famous. Apart from the Ganga aarti every morning and evening, there are other rituals that the ashram authority undertakes. Some of them are Mundan(shaving off hair), Pinda shraddha( a Vedic ceremony where ancestors are invited and worshipped). Devotees take holy dip in the serene water of Ganga on various important occasions and special days. Festivals like Dusshera are celebrated in a grand manner and bath on these special days is considered auspicious. Also, certain days like pournami (full moon day) and Ekadasi ( 11th day of the Hindu calendar) are also considered special. According to ancient Hindu texts, a holy dip in Ganga water with pure heart washes away all our sins and helps in attaining salvation after death. The sunrise scenery in Triveni Ghat is another spectacular sight to behold.

**How to reach Triveni Ghat?**

Many modes of transport are available to reach to Triveni Ghat. It is very close to the main bus station, Adarsh Gram(about 3 km) and you can hire an auto, taxi or even public transport. If you wish to travel by your own vehicle, parking is available in Triveni Ghat. But because of the constant busy roads that lead to the Ghat, it is not advisable to travel in large vehicles.

**Jumpin heights:**

**Location:** Mohan Chatti near Rishikesh, Musarali region about 25 km from Rishikesh

**Distance from interstate Bus terminus:** 21.3 km almost one hour from Adarsh Gram, Rishikesh

**Entry fee:** INR 100

Adventuretrips are no scarce in Hrishikesh. After days of spiritual visits, you can turn on to some adventure rides to thrill your hearts. Jumpin heights is the ideal destination for such adventurous sports

Imagine flying like a bird in the serene lands of Rishikesh having sky view of the exotic places!! Feels amusing! Jumpin heights has many adventure rides and jumps to enthrall the adventure lover in you.

**Bungee jumping:**

Bungee jumping is one of the very sought-after sports in Jumpin heights. With a height of 83 meters, it is the highest fixed platform jumping in India. In this, you leap from a height connected to a large elastic rope which is tied to the feet.

**Flying fox:**

Flying fox is also a fly high game which involves ultrasound steel cables fixed by a harness and a pulley where you can have a bird watch of your surroundings and the beautiful nature. In Jumpin heights it is usually done by three people but you can opt for flying single if you pay extra. The Flying fox in Hrishikesh is the longest in Asia with a height of 120 meters. The fee for Flying ox if doing single is 3000 and if you share the ride, it is 1800.

**Giant swing:**

At a height of 83 meters, giant swing is also done just like Bungy jumping but the difference is here the cord attached to ankles whereas in Bungy jumping seat harness is given and two ropes are attached. The fee for giant swing is INR 3000.

**Minimum age for all adventures: 12 years**

**Weight**: Minimum weight is 35 kgs and maximum 120 kgs

**Timings:** 9.30 am to 3.30 pm

**Holiday:** Tuesday

Combos are also available if you want to choose two or three rides.

Bungy jumping remains closed during Monsoon from July to September. So plan accordingly.

**Kaudiyala:**

Kaudiyala is a small village situated 40 kms away from Rishikesh on Badrinath road. This place is very famous for white rafting and camping rate.

**Location:** on the way to Devprayag

**Distance:** 37 kms from Inter state Bus terminus. Takes around 70 minutes to reach Kaudiyala

**Time needed for exploration:** 2 hours

Kaudiyala is a true boon to adventure lovers as one can find many adventure sports and rides here. In the open lush green lands, it is just next to heaven to have challenging rides here. Rock climbing, trekking, river rafting, beach volleyball are only things to name few. After exhausted day of sports, you can relax in the campfires watching the river. It also offers a true romantic feeling if you are traveling as a couple.

**Best time to visit Kaudiyala:**

March to June; September to November. Mountain valleys experience heavy rains and also there are chances of rock eruptions to happen. So try to make your trip during these months to make your stay a pleasant one.

GMVM guest house is an ideal place for your stay. There are also good hotels around this area for a comfortable stay.

**Reaching Kaudiyala:**

Kaudiyala is 40 km away from Rishikesh on Srinagar Road. You can hire a taxi or auto rikshaw or even a public service bus. All adventure bookings can be done online.

**Nearest Railway station:** Rishikesh railway station which is about 40 kms from here

Dehradun airport, Joly Grant airport

Other worth visiting places for adventures are Byasi, which is also a small village known for adventure sports, Neelkanth Mahadev temple, famous shiva temple, 32 km from Rishikesh, Ram Jhula, which is also a suspension bridge just like Lakshman Jhula, Bharat mandir, an ancient temple of Hrishikesh Narayan, known for its spectacular scenic beauty and the architecture.

**Eateries in Rishikesh:**

Keeping in view the spiritual consciousness of the city, Rishikesh does not allow non veg food and alcohol in the city. So it is unlikely to find non veg restaurants and bars. But by saying so, one cannot deny on the fact that it has very pleasant platters to offer. Some of the top places where you can find good food are:

**The sitting elephant:**

Youcan find good north Indian food with the breath-taking river Ganga view on its side. The food is best to its quality and the ambience is relaxing.

**Location**: no 355, Hardwar road, Palika nagar

**Varr- Temple food of India**

The thalis served hereare moth watering and great to look at. They serve veg Indian dishes with more of local flavors in it. Their thali consists of temple offerings(prasadams) from various regions. It must recommend for anyone.

Location: no7, Virbhadra road, Avas Vikas colony, Rishikesh

**Ayur park:**

**Location:** Ayur park restaurant, Tapovan, Rishikesh

The food is delicious with minimum spices. The ambience is good with wooden seating and nice outdoor view. The best part of their food is the affordability.

Other important eateries are Bistro Nirvana, famous for snacks and and drinks with soothing leafy trees offering great retreat, Pink café Rishikesh, Chatsang café where you can get good vegetarian snacks and chats.

**Best season to visit Rishikesh:**

Himalayan ranges experience heavy rainfall during Monsoon. Also the roads are muddy and soggy. To avoid these inconveniences, try to plan your trip during summer or autumn to have the best travel experience.