Shillong; heaven on the earth

Shillong is a beautiful city that is encircled by many pine trees. Shillong is the city which is also famous as 'Scotland of the East.' This city is the capital of Meghalaya. If you want to get through the summer season, then you must come to this place. Shillong is a hill station that is known for its unique traditions. The picturesque places of Shillong will enchant you. The climate here captivates the minds of tourists. You can visit Shillong in any season. Drizzle and cool breeze during the monsoon season further enhance the beauty of this hill station. Here you can find the descendants of tribes like Mailim, Khirim, Mahram, Bhowal, Mallaisohmat, Langrim etc.

You will find many types of waterfalls in Shillong. The exciting mountain peaks, breathtakingly beautiful golf courses, crystal clear lakes, museums etc., are the major attraction centres that compel tourists to come here. The natural beauty here is worth seeing; apart from this, Shillong is also the gateway to Meghalaya. You will be surprised to know that western culture is prevalent in Shillong. Many prominent musicians are associated with Shillong; hence this place is also known as the music capital of India. Various types of concerts are held here throughout the year. Through this article, you will learn some essential things about Shillong and the major attractions here-

## History of Shillong:

Shillong Cantonment was established in 1885 AD; Shillong is the capital of Meghalaya state. This beautiful place is situated at an altitude of about 1520 meters above sea level. In 1864 AD, the city of Shillong was established by the British Government. The whole town was destroyed by an earthquake in 1897. Due to its destruction, the city of Shillong was rebuilt.

Shillong is a romantic city that is one of the major tourist destinations in North East of India. The city is compared with the Scottish Highlands.

## Demographics:

As of the 2011 India census, Shillong has a total population of 143,229. According to the report, the native language of the city of Shillong is 'Khasi', which is spoken by most of the people living here. Apart from this, languages like Bengali, Hindi, Nepali, Assamese, Punjabi, Garo, Urdu etc., are also spoken in the city. The total number of literates in Shillong is 119,642.

## How to reach?

Shillong is a small town due to which there is no airport in the city. The nearest airport to Shillong Hill Station is Umroi Airport, about 25 kilometres from the city. The connectivity of Shillong is not much with other cities.

Similarly, there is no central railway station in Shillong which is connected to major cities of India. Therefore, if you want to come by train, you have to first come to Guwahati Railway Station, from here taxis will be readily available which will take you to Shillong. After reaching Guwahati, you will easily find buses to Shillong.

## Must try in Shillong:

If you are going to Shillong, then you must try Kyat, prepared from rice. Kwai prepared from betel nut is a traditional and refreshing item. Apart from these, restaurants in Shillong have ample options of Chinese, Indian and Tibetan cuisines. The nightlife of Shillong itself is unique. People generally like to relax and have a drink or two at some of the bars in Shillong. There are many pubs, bars and discos in Shillong. Some of the best places to experience the nightlife in Shillong are Cloud 9, Cafe Shillong, Tango and Platinum.

# Tourist's attractions in Shillong:

## Don Bosco Museum, Shillong,

You must have seen many museums, some small and some other big. Most museums keep only archaeology; some modern museums also show audio-visual exhibits related to art and culture. One such sizeable modern museum is located in Shillong in Northeast India, which is the most significant cultural museum in India and the whole of Asia. If you don't have time to visit the whole of Northeast India, then visit the Don Bosco Center for Indigenous Cultures (DBCIC), also colloquially known as the Don Bosco Museum.

Don Bosco Museum was built by the Roman Catholic Salesian Society and is named after a famous Roman Catholic saint from Italy named Don Bosco. In this museum, artefacts related to the seven northeastern states, the colours of the tribes, their lifestyle, music, weapons, food, etc., have been displayed very beautifully. This museum is of seven floors, in which there are about twenty galleries named -

Alcoves Gallery, Mini Museum, Our Neighbors Gallery, Photo Gallery, Mission & Culture Gallery, Pre-Historic Gallery, Land and People Gallery, Fishing, Hunting & Gathering Gallery, Agricultural Gallery, Traditional & Technology Gallery, Basketry Gallery, Musical Instruments Gallery, Religion and Culture Gallery, Weapons Gallery, Costumes & Ornaments Gallery, Don Bosco & Culture Gallery, Housing Pattern Gallery, Art Gallery, Media & Culture Gallery, and Skywalk.

* **Opening hours :** Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 5.30 pm in summers, 9 am to 4.30 pm in winters.
* **Entry Fee:** Rs.100

## Umiam Lake; a must-see place in Shillong

Umiam Lake, located in Shillong, is one of the mesmerizing lakes in India, which is slowly becoming popular among residents and tourists.

Umiam Lake is a manufactured reservoir located in the hills. This lake was created to generate hydroelectric power. The sunrise over the lake is a sight to behold and should not be missed. There is a park near Umiam Lake, which is a hotspot for picnics.

Tourists can enjoy many water sports around this lake, including boating, fishing, water cycling and kayaking. Apart from water sports, tourists can also enjoy trekking on Khasi hills here. If you are a fan of photography, do not forget to capture the breathtaking views here with your best photography art.

**Timings:**

All water sports activities are open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

**Entrance fees:**

* Pedal Boat– (30 mins) – INR 20
* Skiing- INR 200
* Scooter- INR 50
* River Bus- INR 50

## Wards Lake, Shillong:

Wards Lake, situated in the heart of the city, is another popular tourist destination of Shillong. It is equally popular among the locals, and they come here on weekends and holidays. William Ward used to be the Chief Commissioner of Assam during British rule. At the same time, this lake was created, from which it was named Vardas Lake.

This horseshoe-shaped lake was once a part of the Raj Bhavan. According to legend, a Khasi prisoner made this lake. It is said that his early work inspired the administration to build this lake.

The local people also call this lake 'Nan Polok' or 'Polok Lake'. When you come to Shillong, don't forget to visit this beautiful lake and its bridge. Tourists can see some of the rarest species of plants in the Botanical Garden located next to the lake. Stone trails and colourful flowers add to the beauty of the place. Light and sound have also been installed here recently, which is a major attraction of the evening. If you are going to visit the lake, then definitely enjoy boating.

## Shillong Peak - the highest peak of Shillong:

Shillong Peak, 1966 meters above sea level, is the highest peak in Shillong. From here, you can get a panoramic view of the entire city. This is one such tourist destination of the city, where most tourists come. Tourists are interested in the views of the city visible from this peak. Historians believe that due to this mountain, the city got its name 'Shillong'. The local tribal people here believe that their deity Leishilong resides on this mountain. From here, he (the God) keeps an eye on the whole city and saves people from all kinds of troubles. Apart from the spectacular viewpoint of Shillong Peak, India Air Force radar is also installed here. The views here is located on the premises of the Indian Air Force.

## Lady Hydari Park:

This is one such tourist place in Shillong, which you cannot ignore. It is a lush green garden, which is decorated with colourful flowers throughout the year. Also, the mini zoo with a deer park adjacent to it makes Lady Hydari Park even more special. Tourists and locals can spend hours in this place. While children can play in the open area, they can also enjoy playing different games in the play area. Apart from this, adults can enjoy nature by sitting on the grass. The credit of this park goes to Lady Hydari, a nature lover of Assam during the British rule. This park is built in Japanese style, in which, apart from flowers, a large area is covered with greenery. Apart from deer, there are many birds, reptiles and mammals in the mini zoo here. The Forest Department maintains the park. Different types of roses are also the speciality of this park. The city's only public swimming pool, 'the Crinoline Swimming Pool' near the park.

## Elephant Falls; one of the best places in Shillong:

Elephant Falls is a popular tourist destination in Shillong. While visiting here, you will not be able to remain mesmerized by the sight of the beautiful roads. The local name of this waterfall is 'Ka Kasaid Lai Pateng Khohsu', which means 'fall of water in three steps'. The British named this waterfall Elephant Fall because a rock here was very similar to an elephant. Part of this rock was destroyed by a terrible earthquake in the region in 1897. In this waterfall, milky water flows from the top of the black stone; this is a unique speciality. Elephant Falls is also a biodiversity hot spot of Shillong. Here you can see many species of plants, some of which are found only in this area. Here you will also find many local shops, which are managed by women. You will find some of the most exquisite handicrafts from the state and the region in these shops. Apart from this, Elephant Fall is also an excellent place for trekking. One more thing, if you go here, don't forget to get photographed wearing local costumes.

## Cathedral of Mary Help of Christians:

Mary Help of Christians Cathedral, also known as Latumkhara Church, is one of the most beautiful churches in Shillong. The church is named after Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. The cathedral is the principal place of worship for the over 300,000-strong Catholics of the Shillong Archdiocese, covering the Ri Bhoi and East Khasi Hills districts of Meghalaya. Inside the cathedral church is another set of 14 Stations of the Cross. Made of terracotta in relief, these works of art also depict scenes of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

The church has two levels, the lower level, which is a small chapel with a prayer hall filled with candles and prayer books, and the upper level, which is a cathedral with ample seating areas. Also, don't miss out on the Grotto Church, which is located just below it and can be best viewed from the viewpoint near the church. There are also several works of church art inside the church that depict scenes from the Holy Scriptures and the lives of the saints.

* Timings: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
* Entry Fee: No Entry Fee

## Shillong Golf Course:

The name of the golf course is not less famous in the tourist places of Shillong. This place is located just 3 kilometres away from the city; the foundation stone of the golf course was laid in 1898 by a golfer who was a British citizen; it was 5200 feet above sea level. And it is said that it is the highest golf course in the country, which is covered with pine and birch trees from all sides, here a large crowd of tourists gathers. This golf course is more crowded when golf tournaments are organized every year in this golf ground; this golf course is decorated in a very natural way, which is why it is called the second-largest natural golf course in Asia.

## Bottom Line:

So, guys, these are the most popular destinations in Shillong. So, whenever you plan for the trip, don’t forget to visit these places and gather unforgettable memories.