**Visiting Palampur and exploring beyond the mountains**

Himachal Pradesh has several places for visitors to explore. One such is Palampur. The mountainsides and valleys of the place will tug at your heartstrings because you will never get to so much beauty anywhere else. All this seems like a scene from a painting and you walked into a canvas where is so amazingly perfect and untouched. As nature has weaved it up and down the valley, with beautiful flora and fauna around the entire place, you will feel yourself step into paradise.

**Places to visit**

*Chamunda Devi temple*

It is fascinating to visit a temple high on a mountain, it is a climb that you would love to take with fresh mountain air and sturdy pair of shoes will give you a great advantage on this trek. The place is renowned as Chamunda Nandikeshwar Dham. It is one of the prominent temples of Palampur and can be one of the must-visit places dedicated to Chamunda Devi, an incarnation of the goddess Durga. The divinity in the temple is the main draw for several hundred devotees flocking the place to have a glimpse of the goddess adorned in rich garments. The entry has a unique concept of images of two gods Lord Hanuman and Lord Bhairav, before you enter to see the goddess herself.

*Tashi Jong Monastery*

The monastery is an old structure with ornate wooden carvings complete with religious motifs of the Buddhist practices. It is one of the monasteries situated atop a mountain among other lush green hills. You will find the carvings of Buddha statues and paintings in and around the monastery. You find an arts and crafts emporium attached to the place where you can buy souvenirs to take home. Inside the monastery, you will experience a sense of calm and peace as the serene atmosphere makes this the divine place.

*Neugal Khad*

Located on a wide stream of water over a rustic iron bridge, you will find its amazing scenery and an ideal place to picnic with friends and family. The murmuring of the stream nearby and the chirping of the birds and cool breeze add to the ambiance of the place. It’s a great place to click some amazing pictures that will always be a place to look for and reminisce the beauty of Palampur.

*Norbulingka Institute*

The institute is solely built to preserve the culture of Tibet and heritage it upholds over the years. It’s an ideal place to learn about Tibetan culture and its history. You can get a beautiful narrative from the people working there and understand the perspective associated with the unique culture of the people who have assimilated with the locals yet are trying to keep theirs alive.

*St. John’s church*

You will find an old church which belonged to the British era. The relic is well known in these parts found in a serene spot called Mcelodgnaj found among the Deodar forests of the region. The design is the big draw, with rarely any structure which is made so architecturally beautiful. You can soak in the piety of the place holds till today. The church has been dedicated to one of the British viceroys. Now it’s flocked with tourists worldwide to check out the beauty of the structure that houses beautiful stained glass windows. You can catch a glimpse of the beautiful mountains and rising sun.

*Andretta Pottery*

It’s a great place to check the work of terracotta and more, how the wheel is still an integral part of making interesting works of art. There is a dedicated museum to showcase the pottery works. You buy some of the great works on display and take them home for your personal collection. You will find some ancient pottery that you check out while you are there.

*Naam Art Gallery*

This art gallery holds European art collections. The paintings belong to legendary artists. The artworks not only boasts acrylic but watercolors contemporary works that showcase their talents in a different light. The theme mostly depicts Europe, but certain artworks also capture the sublime valley and culture of the Himachal landscape. The interiors of the gallery are wonderfully done to highlight the artworks better. The lighting and arrangement for visitors make it a special place to visit.

*Triund*

Triund is nestled in the Dhauladhar mountains, wherein you can get a bird’s eye view of the Kangra valley. It’s one of the best places to spend time with nature. The peacefulness of the place with lush greenery is what enamors the visitor the most. You pick any tails of Triund for the trek and you will come across rows of trees of Oak, Deodar, Rhododendron. It is a steep trek wherein you may feel a little out of steam when you reach the top, but it’s well worth it as you get to see the spectacular view which will tug at your heartstrings as you see down the valley cozy little houses and people moving about their work looking like busy ants. It is the most relaxing time with nature one can have.

*Bir*

This place is immensely popular and also known as the paragliding capital of the north. You will find it among several valleys of Himachal and it’s the right place for having some adventure, as a lot of visitors are attracted to the chance to paraglide at high altitudes. You can see the deep valleys and enchanting peaks of mountains. It’s the village that you will never forget for the quaint but panoramic views.

**Places to shop in Palampur**

*Lama market*

The Tibetan culture has greatly influenced the market, and you will find that in all the wares from handicrafts to the weaves sold in the market. You will find that many of the authentic designs from this mountainous region are showcased with such clever craftsmanship. You will fall in love with the wares they have to sell. The market is blissfully surrounded by nature, and you can enjoy the cool breeze at sundown and do your shopping at leisure or come early morn and check out eh awesome Tibetan jewelry collection that you can take back home and flaunt.

*Durga Handloom*

The mountain region gets quite chilly. It’s the apt place to buy shawls and stoles to keep you warm when temperatures dip. These have been specifically made in traditional handlooms for several years now. The design and pattern are unique to the place and specially made of wool from the region itself. You will find that they have a heavy influence on central Asia. There is so much to shop right from pashmina shawls, Kullu shawls, mufflers and Kullu caps.

*Palampur cooperative tea factory*

The world’s best tea is grown in this region, and you will find the luscious tea plantations as far as the eyes can see. Fresh leaves are picked and processed in a factory adjacent to the plantation, packaged and sold. You could feel the freshness of the mountain in every sip. The Assam, Darjeeling and Nilgiris teas each have a unique taste. The tea grown in the Kangra is special, has a unique flavor of its own, unlike the above three and is widely known because of the Geographical indication Tag. They produce 500 tonnes of tea powder per annum.

*Shobha Singh art gallery*

For those who are fond of art and history, this is the place to be. You will love the place and ambiance in which the entire gallery is set up. A two-storied edifice is a sprawling place for displaying various artworks. You will many young and budding as well renowned artists of the region showcase their talent here. You can buy some of the works for a reasonable price. You not only find paintings but sculptures adding to a fulfilling experience.

*Mini super Ette Himachal fruit wines*

Several fruit wines are used in this part of the country. They are quite in demand and each wine has a unique taste and they have been fermented with perfection to exact a distinct flavor. The finest quality of fruits grown in the region gets converted into fine wines, which are carefully packaged and sold all over the country. You will purchase the best ones at a good price and take home some of this fine wine to toast to later.

**Popular delicacies of Palampur**

The mountainside dishes are unique, and they come to have distinct tastes and flavors of the place. People are warm and hospitable and love to share their modest meals with weary travelers as you hike the mountainside. A hearty meal will long stay in your mind and heart even after you leave the place.

The delicious food is the calling card, and it must you try out all the local dishes as you travel through Palampur. There are fine dining restaurants to street food that you should have a go-to because every one of the dishes will have something you have never tasted before. Be it the ingredients or just the tempering of spices.

A very popular dish that gets made throughout Palampur, especially during marriages, is the Kangri Dham. The dish is made without using onion or garlic. Curd is used as the base for the rest of the spices to blend in. Copper vessels are specifically used to give the dish a distinct taste and flavor. The preparation is done well in advance and begins the night before. Many of the local eateries serve delicious, homely food and you could get them at affordable rates.

You check out Suryash Bhojanalaya for some traditional Himachali food on the menu, such as Badi Madra, Anardane ki chutney, kheer, etc. Most vegetables are cooked on the tandoor, which a very much a Himachali way of cooking. While in Palampur, you shouldn’t miss out on the Patroida, Braha flower and Lasiada, which usually get served with Lugru pakoras. They are a specialty of the place. These all get savored with an aromatic cup of Kangra tea.

Other restaurants cater to modern food cravings that the young crowd likes, such as pizzas, pastries, muffins, etc. You could find wonderful cafes as you walk down the mountain tops with a steaming cup of coffee, rejuvenate you for the next exploratory trail.

Palampur has so much for a visitor to check out. You will never feel satiated by nature’s bounty as you check out the alluring peaks or plantations often covering the slopes. The acres of rice cultivation so much greenery in various hues are mesmerizing. Faraway temples, monasteries add to the charm of the place.