

Sightseeing in Sonamarg

Sonamarg : This "Golden Meadow" mesmerizes visitors with its picturesque beauty. The sunrays falling on the snow capped mountains reflect a golden sparkle, giving the hill station its name.

The Meadow Of Gold

At a height of 2,740m, Sonamarg is the last major point in the Kashmir valley before the Zoji La pass into Ladakh . At the pass the green, lush Kashmiri landscape abruptly switches to the barren, dry landscape of Ladakh. Sonamarg is thus not only a good base for treks but also a jumping off point for trips into Ladakh.

The name means 'Meadow of Gold' and although this could be due to the profusion of flowers that carpet the meadow in the spring it is also possible that the name derives from Sonamarg's strategic trading position in the days when this was a major route into central Asia. The Sindh River meanders along here and abounds with Trout and Mahseer.

Thajiswas Glacier:

Sonamarg is the base of a major trek that passes along several mountain lakes –Vishansar, Kishansar, Gadsar, Satsar and Gangabal. Sonamarg is also the take off station for the drive to Ladakh across the Zojila, a major pass in the Great Himalayan Range, through which the Srinagar-Leh Road passes.

Walks From Sonamarg

One of the most popular short walks from Sonamarg and a major attraction during the summer months is the 4-km route to Thajiswas, a small valley at the foot of the Sonamarg glacier. A path leads up to the Shakhdar hill, overlooking the glacier from the northeast. It is dangerous to climb the steep slope leading up to the glacier. Ponies can be hired for the trip up to Thajiswas glacier. Often in early summer one will meet groups of Gujar passing through Sonamarg on their way to the alpine meadows for the summer.

Nilgrad :6 km away from Sonamarg, Nilgrad is the place where confluence of a mountain river and Indus river takes place. The locals believe that the water of this river, noted for its

reddish color, has curative powers of many diseases. On Sundays, people throng the banks of the river to take a dip in its medicinal waters. The region is bounded by other lakes and picturesque meadows and thus is an ideal destination for family holidays.

Bisansar Lake & Krishnasar Lake

There is a lake in every corner of the Himalayas and there is one at Sonamarg also. The road proceeds from Sonamarg to Bisansar Lake via Nichinai Pass. Crossing the river at Nichinai Pass stands the Bisansar Lake at an altitude of 4,084m, with its lovely natural beauty. Beside the lake is the Krishnasagar Lake at an altitude of 3,801m, popular for Trout fishing.

Baltal

This beautiful meadow is right at the foot of the Zoji La pass and thus is the final place in Kashmir. The river from the foot of the Amarnath glacier meets the Indus near Baltal. It stands at a height of 2,743m and during the Amarnath pilgrimage there are tents set up here. It is possible to walk to the Amarnath cave, more usually approached from Pahalgam, in one day. Check about conditions before departing, though. The weather can be treacherous and at other times melting snow and ice make the route very dangerous. There's now a jeep road most of the way to the cave. The turn off to Baltal is at 94-km on the Leh road, and then it's 3-km or so downhill.

Yushmarg

If one can take some time out, then take tour of Yushmarg in daytime. Buses on conducted tours run to Yushmarg thrice a week. 47-km southwest of Srinagar amidst pines and firs lies the vale - Yushmarg (2,700m) at the slope of the Pir Panjal ranges. Its is a beautiful pasture as well as a nice picnic spot