

The tourist attractions of Kashmir consist of some of the finest places in and around the valley. It is one of the most charming and scenic places in India. Sightseeing in Kashmir is mainly about appreciating the beauty of the nature. Glittering glaciers, snow covered mountains and picturesque hill stations all add to the tourist appeal of Kashmir. As you take a trip to the Kashmir valley you will get to know various untouched facets of the wonderful "Paradise on Earth". Have a look at some of the popular tourist spots in the Kashmir valley.

Other Sightseeing in Srinagar

Burzahom: Burzahom is an interesting place as it shows remnants of the Neolithic period, the very first site at Jammu and Kashmir. Its name means 'place of birch' locally and is situated within a dried up old lake. It is situated to the north west of the picturesque Shalimar Gardens. Many ancient artifacts like tools, pots, arrowheads and skeletons have been found pertaining to the Neolithic times which is dated to be at least 5000 years old.

Jama Masjid: Another religious place to see is the Jama Masjid, a beautiful mosque that reflects the Islamic style of architecture. It has been destroyed and rebuilt over centuries. The latest one was built in 1674 and is of impressive architecture but is without a dome. It has four tall spiral towers which can be seen over the rooftops and many prayer halls covered by 370 pillars, each made of a piece of deodar tree trunk. It also has a garden and a place for those seeking peace and solitude.

Jyeshtheswara temple: Jyeshtheswara temple is yet another religious place whose creation has been credited to many myths. Some legends related the construction of the temple to the Pandavas in 5th century, while others connect King Gopaditya in 6th century. Another legend mentions Jaluka, considered son of King Ashoka to have built the shrine. However, there is written documentation that during the 8th century, it was renovated by King Lalitaditya. It has undergone many renovations since then stands as a witness to the evolving culture and traditions.

Rainwari: Another historical place to sightsee is Rainwari, which is also religious place of Sikhs as their sixth Guru built a Gurudwara, Chatti Padshahi at this place. It is the most significant Gurudwara of Srinagar. The charming, peaceful and tranquil scenery along with pleasant weather makes Rainwari worth visiting. You can get a chance to mix up and observe

the locals lifestyles.

Rozabal shrine: India's largest fresh water lake, Wullar Lake, a natural body of water as the excess water of Jhelum River flows here through the streams Aarah, Harbuji, Pohru and Erin. It has been untouched and unexplored and is at its nature's best and beauty. Bird lovers can see numerous bird species here. In the midst of the lake lies the remnant of an island created by King Zain-ul-abidin. Nearby is the Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, another wonderful place to visit.

City Of Lakes

Srinagar's lakes are the reason why the city receives so many tourists. Not just expanse of water, the lakes are filled with houseboats, villages, narrow water canals, lotus and vegetable gardens and houses and shops.

Life on the lakes, as witnessed from the confines of a Shikara, is unique. It is possible to book a Shikara for the whole day and sightsee Nishat Garden, Nasim Bagh, Hazratbal Mosque, Pathar Masjid and Shah Hamdan's Shrine, having a picnic lunch in the boat.

Wullar Lake

Srinagar is located in the heart of the Kashmir valley at an altitude of 1,730 m above sea level, spread on both sides of the river Jhelum. The Dal and Nagin lakes enhance its picturesque setting, while the changing play of the seasons and the salubrious climate ensures that the city is equally attractive to visitors around the year.

DAL LAKE

The Dal is famous not only for its beauty, but for its vibrance, because it sustains within its periphery, a life that is unique anywhere in the world. The houseboat and Shikara communities have lived for centuries on the Dal, and so complete is their infrastructure on the lake, that they never have to step on land! Doctors, tailors, bakers- one can see them all in tiny wooden shops on the lake, near picturesque vegetable gardens and acres of lotus gardens

The most confusing parts of Srinagar for it's not really one lake at all, but three. Further more much of it is hardly what one would expect a lake to be like - it's a maze of intricate waterways and channels, floating islands of vegetation, houseboats that look so firmly moored they could almost be islands and hotels on islands which look like they could simply float away.

Dal Lake lies immediately to the east and north of Srinagar and stretches over 5-km. The lake is divided into Gagribal, Lokut Dal and Bod Dal by a series of causeways The main causeway across the lake carries the water pipeline for Srinagar's main water supply. Dal gate, at the city end of Dal Lake, controls the flow of the lake into the Jhelum river canal. It's the steady flow of water through the lake, combined with its relatively cold temperature, which keeps it so clear looking.

NAGIN LAKE

Nagin is generally held to be the most beautiful of the Dal lakes. Its name comes from the many trees, which encircle the small, deep blue lake. Nagin is only separated from the Larer Dal lakes by a narrow causeway and it also has a number of houseboats moored around its perimeter. Nagin Lake, which is usually thought of as a separate lake, is also divided from Dal Lake only by a causeway. The causeways are mostly suitable for walkers and bicycles only so they make a very pleasant way of seeing the lake without having to worry about traffic or Shikaras.

A Nice Getaway

If one wats to really get away from the chaotic city life all then Nagin is a good place to find a house boat and do it the surroundings are much more serene and isolated than on Dal Lake. One can rent rowboats from the camping site here - either to simply row around the lake or to look around for a houseboat.

MUGHAL GARDENS

Kashmir was a favourite of the Mughal emperors who visited it as often as they could. Cool and refreshing after the plains of North India where the business of governance kept them, they planted gardens with stepped terraces and flowing watercourses. When they rested in their gardens, they dreamt they were in paradise.

The next garden along the road that encircles the Dal is the Nishat, built by empress Nur Jahan's brother Asaf Khan. The largest of the gardens, Nishat has several terraces, a central watercourse and a majestic site between the Dal and the Zabarwan hills.

The third Mughal garden - the Shalimar - was planted by Jehangir, the Mughal emperor, whose

love for Kashmir was legendary. Shaded by magnificent Chinar trees, the Shalimar is a series of stone pavilions and flowing water with paint box bright flowerbeds.

SHALIMAR BAGH

The Shalimar were built by Emperor Jehangir for his wife Nur Jahan, 'light of the world' in 1616. Although it is known today as the 'garden of love' it was originally named the Farah Bakhsh or 'delightful garden'.

The garden is built in four terraces with traditional water channel running down the middle. The gardens measure 540 by 183 metres. During the Mughal period the top terraces used be reserved for the emperor and the ladies of the court and was the most magnificent. It included a pavilion made of black stone in the middle of the tank. Black Marble fluted pillars supported the pavilion, which was used as a banquet hall.

Shalimar Bagh has an air of seclusion and repose, and its rows of fountains and shaded trees seem to recede towards the snowcapped mountains. A Son Et Lumeiere or sound and light show is put on here every evening during the May to October tourist season.

PARIMAHAL

The old Sufi college of Pari Mahal, the 'palace of the fairies', is only a short distance above the Chasma Shahi gardens. One can easily walk from the gardens up to the Pari Mahal then follow a footpath directly down the hill to the road that runs by the Oberoi Palace Hotel. The Pari Mahal consists of a series of arched terraces. Recently it has been turned into a very pleasant and well-kept garden with fine views over Dal Lake. It's attractively sited on a spur of the Zabarwan Mountains. The gardens are beautifully kept even today and a Son Et Lumiere show is put on here every evening during the May to October tourist season.

NISHAT BAGH

The Nishat Bagh is another lovely garden with its 12 terraces representing the 12 signs of the zodiac, which descend gradually and seem to almost merge into the lake. It is situated on the banks of world famous Dal Lake in the backdrop of Zabarwan hills. With its flowerbeds, trees, fountains, the Nishat presents a dramatic sight. The gardens were designed in 1633 by Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jahan, and follow the same pattern as the Shalimar gardens with a polished stone channel running down the centre and a series of terraces.

It's the largest of the Mughal gardens measuring 548 metres by 338 metres, and often the most crowded. The walks beside the channel are bordered with lines of cypresses and Chinars. Also found within its vicinity are some remains of Mughal period buildings including a double storey pavilion enclosed on two sides latticed windows.

Directly behind the garden is the Gopi Tirth, a small spring gushing forth crystal clear water, which feeds the garden water.

CHASMA SHAHI

Cheshma Shahi is the first Mughal garden one will pass after Nehru Park. Built at a height above the city, its views are as stupendous as its layout. The smallest of Srinagar's Mughal gardens, Cheshma Shahi has only three terraces in addition to a natural spring of water enclosed in a stone pavilion.

Smallest of the Srinagar Mughal gardens, measuring just 108 metres by 38 metres, the Chasma Shahi, or 'Royal Spring', are well up the hillside, above the Nehru Memorial Park. The fresh water spring in these pleasant, quieter gardens is reputed to have medicinal properties.

The gardens were laid out in 1632 by Ali Mardan Khan and include three terraces, an aqueduct, waterfalls and fountains. The water from the spring supplies the fountains and then goes through the floor of the pavilion and falls to the lower terrace in a fine cascade of five metres, over a polished black stone chute.