

Travel Himalayas Dusshera Holiday Special

6 Nights / 7 Days

For years the Kullu Dusshera festival has brought thousands of Indian and International visitors to witness its colourful and exciting celebration permeated with an air of gaiety and joy felt more than seen. A large number of tents come up selling sweet meats and other snacks and meals. Other tented shops sell a variety of other merchandise including clothing and household knick-knacks. Entertainment comes in its various forms akin to other fairs all over the country. This is a time to visit the Valley of the God for an experience of a life time. Travel Himalayas is now offering special packages just on this occasion.

Day 1: Delhi / Chandigarh – Manali

Pick up from Chandigarh Railway station or Airport . Drive to the picturesque hill resort of Manali deep in the Himalaya below the mighty Pir Panjal ranges. The drive takes you from the semi arid foothills into the higher hills and mountains with an abundant variety of flora and fauna. Passing by the town of Kullu the venue for the famous Kullu Dusshera you get glimpses of the hurried setting up of tents for the next days opening ceremony. You check into your hotel by late evening.

Day 2: Opening Ceremony

Today we drive down to Kullu early in the morning in time for the opening ceremony. This is initiated by the erstwhile Maharajah of what was Kullu state before Independence. A heavily decked chariot carrying the image of Lord Ragunath the presiding deity of the valley is pulled with enormous heavy ropes to a green grassy patch in the middle of upper Kullu. Here you can see the numerous palanquins of over 200 gods from different villages waiting to pay homage to Lord Ragunath. Once the ceremony is over the crowds disperse to stroll around this large Maidan (grounds). Spend the day exploring the numerous make shift stalls with their astounding array of merchandise. Have lunch at the comfortable Tourism restaurant just across the grounds. By evening we return to your hotel in Manali for the night.

Day 3: Rohtang Pass

After a leisurely breakfast we leave for the 13,050 ft high Rohtang Pass slicing its way through the towering Pir Panjal mountain range into the adjacent hi altitude desert regions of Lahaul & Spiti. On the way you stop over at the cascading Rahalla Falls and then at the bustling hamlet of Murhee with its numerous tea and snack shops. From here you get fabulous views of the upper Kullu valley spreading out far below. Murhee is also a spot for paragliding during the season. A short drive away is the Rohtang Pass. At this time of the year there are good possibilities of catching glimpses of snow covered slopes close by. In the distance to the north you are afforded with spectacular views of stark, barren mountains rising to the sky poles apart from the lush green hillsides of the Kullu vale. Spend your time walking around and if there's snow take a snow scooter ride on the slopes. After a snack we return to Manali and your hotel by early evening. Your evening is free to either just laze around in your hotel or take a stroll in the mall road with its handicraft shops and fine restaurants.

Day 4: Naggar Tour

Today we drive south on the left bank of the River Beas to the pretty little village of Naggar which was once also the capital of the Kullu Kingdom. The drive is extremely scenic with tiny waterfalls gushing down into streams that race their way to join the River Beas far below. Before reaching Naggar we drive through a shady patch of thick Deodar forests and after taking a turn in the road reach the ancient Naggar Castle. Now a deluxe hotel but still open to visitors it has a small museum housing a number of local artifacts besides portraying the simplistic lifestyle of the local inhabitants. The castle also has a fine restaurant with magnificent views of the valley at its widest stretch. We climb up to the nearby Roerich Art Museum that displays the haunting early 20th century paintings of the famous Russian landscape artist, philosopher and mystic Nicholas Roerich. After his death in the 40's his son Svetoslav lived here for a while. The museum is now being taken care of by a Russian Curator accompanied by a small team. After having a sumptuous lunch at the Castle Restaurant we return to Manali after passing the busy settlement of Patlikuhl – meaning thin stream with its excellent Trout farm and hatchery.

Reaching Manali we drop you off at your hotel for a relaxed evening.

Day 5: Manali Local Sight Seeing Tour

The day is spent taking in the local sights around Manali town. High up on a hillside surrounded by a grove of gigantic Deodar trees is the 500 year old Hadimba Devi Temple built in the Pagoda architectural style. Legend has it that Hadimba was the sister of a Demon who fell in love with Bhima one of the Pandava brothers characters in the famous Hindu tome – The Mahabharata. She married him after he destroyed her demon brother. The temple is revered among all the valley inhabitants and each year a fair is held in its grounds. Driving down to the main bazaar we then visit the two Buddhist Monasteries. One was built in the early 1960's and built in the traditional style while the newer one has a glided pagoda and has an enormous Buddha within. We then drive to the Club House on the banks of the shimmering Manalsu Rivulet near its confluence with the Beas further downstream. Have a refreshing lunch in the lush lawns before returning to your hotel for the evening.

Day 6: Vashisht and Solang Valley

Today we drive 3 Kms to the ancient village of Vashisht to take a dip in the

Healing waters of the hot Sulphur springs. A walk through this still traditional village offers you good insights into the local lifestyle of the people. After Vashisht we head down to join the main Manali-Leh Highway and drive further north for about 13 Kms to the beautiful Solang Valley a ski resort in the winters. Here you get some excellent views of the numerous upper Kullu valley mountain peaks like Hanuman Tibba, Friendship and Patalsu. You can also take a short paragliding flight for some extra thrill. After spending the afternoon here, enjoying the green expanse of this tranquil spot, we return to your hotel by late evening.

Day 7: After breakfast we drive you down to Chandigarh/ Delhi.