उत्तराखण्ड शासन

Uttarakhand
Simply Heaven!

WINTER TOURISM IN CHAMOLI

Where snow preserves faith, silence and stories.

Faith | Adventure | Nature | Community

District Tourism Development Office, Chamoli | Uttarakhand

WINTERS IN CHAMOLI

Where Mountains, Memory & Meaning Meet

Chamoli in winter is not just a destination - it is a season shaped by snow, silence and story.

Watched over by the great Himalayan peaks of Nanda Devi and Kamet, the district unfolds through alpine slopes like Auli, sacred valleys leading to Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib, ancient Panch Badri shrines, flowing rivers such as the Alaknanda, and villages where Pahadi culture lives on as everyday tradition. As winter arrives, forests grow quieter, temples turn inward, and travel becomes more reflective.

For centuries, Chamoli has stood at the crossroads of nature, mythology and movement. Historic routes through Mana and Niti Pass once carried traders and pilgrims across the Himalaya, shaping belief, ritual and cultural memory long before borders existed.

Winter reveals this legacy most clearly - through snowbound shrines, silent meadows, winter treks, river adventures and star-filled skies. This brochure invites travellers to explore Chamoli responsibly, experiencing its spiritual depth, natural diversity and living heritage while supporting local communities.

SKIING IN AULI

India's Premier Winter Playground

Located above Joshimath, Auli is defined by its expansive snow-covered meadows and gently rolling ski slopes spread across elevations of roughly 2,500 to 3,000 metres. The area's south-facing slopes and open terrain help retain good snow conditions through the winter months, making Auli India's most established centre for alpine skiing.

Winter in Auli offers visitors opportunities for skiing, snowboarding, sledging, and short snow treks across broad alpine pastures, supported by clear weather windows and wide Himalayan views of peaks such as Nanda Devi, Mana Peak, and Kamet. Each winter, Auli hosts short beginner courses as well as longer ski and snowboard training programmes through authorised operators. Backed by its legacy of national-level ski training and competitions, Auli remains a cornerstone of India's winter tourism, defined by its altitude, open slopes, and naturally consistent snow conditions.

Tourism Accommodation at Auli

Nanda Devi Adventure Resort Auli
Address: Auli, Joshimath, Auli Laga Salude, Uttarakhand 246443

RIVER RAFTING ON THE ALAKNANDA

Cold Currents, Clear Thrills

Winter rafting on the Upper Alaknanda delivers a calmer yet thrilling river run, with Grade II–III rapids that offer excitement without overwhelming intensity. The raft cuts through clear winter waters, flowing past forested slopes and rugged mountain faces - ideal for those who want the rush of rafting without tackling wild rapids.

Base: Devlibagar, 15 km from Karnprayag towards Chamoli

Access: Taxis are easily available from Karnaprayag and Gopeshwar Premium tourism department lodging is available near the river, rafting enthusiasts can stay close to the action while enjoying reliable facilities.

Tourism Accommodation at Devlibagar

Alaknanda Adventure Resort and Rafting Camp

Address: NH-07, Badrinath highway, Dewali, bagar, Girsa, Uttarakhand 246446

WINTER TREKS & HERITAGE TRAILS

Where Snow Reveals the Himalaya's true Form

Winter trekking in Chamoli is about clarity - clearer skies, quieter forests and unobstructed views of some of the most iconic Himalayan peaks. These routes are ideal for travellers seeking short, meaningful winter hikes as well as high-altitude snow treks with professional support.

MONAL TOP TREK

A Quiet 360° Panorama of the Garhwal Himalayas

The Monal Top Trek is a high-altitude forest and ridge walk in Chamoli district, beginning from Wan Village. Named after the Himalayan Monal pheasant found in these forests, the trail moves through oak and rhododendron woodland, alpine clearings, and remote ridgelines before opening into a wide 360° panoramic viewpoint deep in the Garhwal Himalaya.

From the upper ridges, trekkers are rewarded with expansive views of major Himalayan peaks including Chaukhamba, Neelkanth, Trishul, Nanda Ghungti, Kamet, Kedarnath & Kedar Dome, Sumeru Parbat, Jogin Group, Gangotri peaks, Bharte Khunta, and Hathi-Ghori Parbat, making Monal Top one of the most scenic viewpoint treks in the region.

Base Access: Wan Village
Maximum Elevation: ~3,600 m
Trek Duration: 6 days
Total Distance: ~19 km
Difficulty: Easy-Moderate

Monal Top Trek is ideal for trekkers looking for a panoramic Himalayan route combining forest walks and open ridge views, best undertaken with certified local or professional trekking guides.

CURZON TRAIL / KUARI PASS TREK

The Historic Walk into the Greater Himalaya

First explored by Lord Curzon in the early 20th century, the Kuari Pass route—often referred to as the Curzon Trail—is one of Garhwal's most iconic Himalayan walks. The trail rises steadily through oak and rhododendron forests, alpine meadows and snowfields, before opening into a dramatic amphitheatre of peaks including Nanda Devi, Dronagiri and Kamet.

In winter, the landscape turns stark and silent, revealing long ridgelines and clear mountain profiles that make this trek especially rewarding for experienced walkers seeking classic Himalayan views without technical climbing.

Base Access: Joshimath (approach villages include Dhak / Tugasi via Karnaprayag)
Maximum Elevation: ~3,800 m (Kuari Pass)
Trek Duration: 5–6 days
Total Distance: ~30–33 km
Difficulty: Moderate

Kuari Pass is ideal for trekkers looking for a heritage route with sustained mountain views, best undertaken with certified local or professional trekking guides, particularly in winter conditions.

BRAHMATAL SNOW TREK

Frozen Lakes Iconic Himalayan Peaks

Brahmatal is among India's most celebrated winter treks, known for its two alpine lakes - Brahmatal and Bekaltal - set amid snowfields and forests. The summit ridge offers wide-angle views of Mt. Trishul, Nanda Ghunti and Maiktoli, making it a favourite for winter photography.

Base Camp: Lohajung (via Karnaprayag)
Trek Duration: 4–5 days
Max Elevation: ~3,700 m
Total Distance: ~24 km
Difficulty: Moderate

USP:

- Two high-altitude lakes (Brahmatal & Bekaltal)
- Consistent snow cover in winter
- Grand summit views without technical climbing

Recommended to undertake with certified trekking organisations or local guides, especially during winter months.

Brahmatal Trek 12,650 Ft

TEMPLES & TIMELESS FAITH

the Sacred Continuum of Chamoli

In Chamoli, devotion is not static - it moves, endures, and adapts with the mountains. Long before modern pilgrimage circuits, worship here followed a seasonal rhythm, giving rise to the Panch Badri and Panch Kedar traditions, where deities shift to lower altitudes during the winter months, ensuring the continuity of faith for pilgrims. This sacred order was later systematised and preserved by Adi Shankaracharya, anchoring Chamoli as a living centre of Sanatan spiritual tradition across time.

TIMMERSAIN MAHADEV YATRA

Chhota Amarnath of Uttarakhand

Hidden deep in the Niti Valley, Timmersain Mahadev is a sacred cave shrine where a naturally formed ice Shivling appears during peak winter. Situated within the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, the yatra is as much a spiritual journey as it is a Himalayan wilderness experience.

Altitude: ~3,800 m
Darshan Period: January–March (weather & ice formation dependent)

Route:
Joshimath → Malari (road) → Base Point → Short snow trek to cave

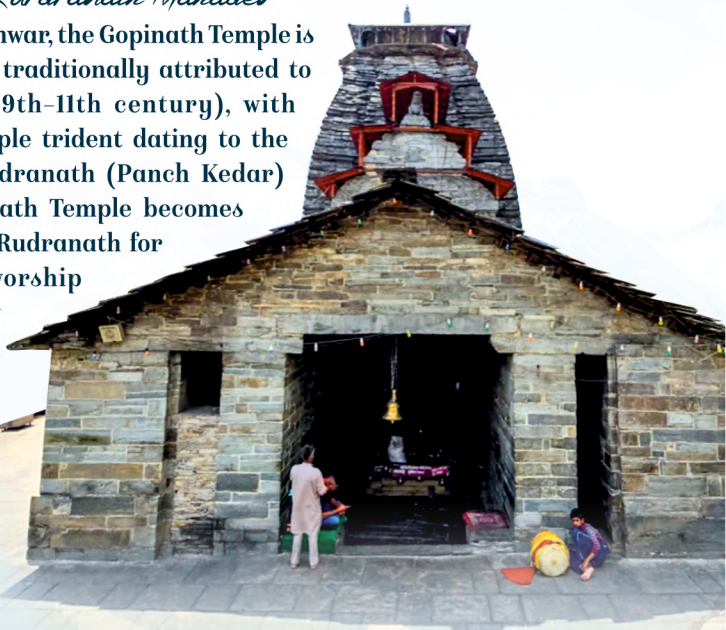
⚠ Mandatory registration through DTDO Chamoli. (Check Contact Us section)
This is a regulated winter pilgrimage as the shivling formation depends on weather.

GOPINATH TEMPLE

the Winter Seat of Rudranath Mahadev

Set in the heart of Gopeshwar, the Gopinath Temple is a revered Shiva shrine, traditionally attributed to the Katyuri kings (c. 9th–11th century), with inscriptions on the temple trident dating to the 12th century. When Rudranath (Panch Kedar) closes for winter, Gopinath Temple becomes the winter seat of Lord Rudranath for six months, keeping worship alive through the snow months.

Distance: Located in Gopeshwar



ADI BADRI

the Original Badri

Adi Badri situated close to Karnaprayag, is a cluster of 16 ancient stone temples, believed to date back to the Gupta period (5th–6th century CE).

Adi Badri is regarded as one of the earliest centres of Lord Vishnu worship in the Himalaya, believed to have existed long before the emergence of Badrinath as the principal shrine. Infact in mythology its believed Lord Vishnu resided here before the Kalyug period began.

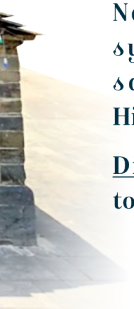
Distance: ~18 km from Karnaprayag

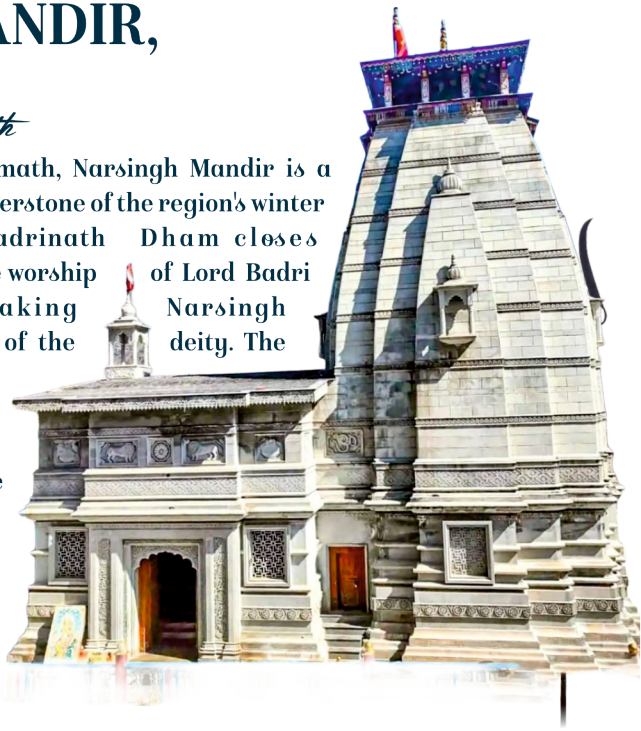
Premium tourism department lodging is available near the river, rafting enthusiasts can stay close to the action while enjoying reliable facilities.

NARSINGH MANDIR,
JOSHIMATH

Winter Abode of Badrinath

Situated at the heart of Joshimath, Narsingh Mandir is a sacred Vishnu shrine and a cornerstone of the region's winter religious tradition. When Badrinath Dham closes after the pilgrimage season, the worship of Lord Badri Vishal continues here, making Narsingh Mandir the living winter seat of the deity. The temple's presiding form of Lord Narasimha is believed to symbolically protect the sacred geography of the Himalaya.





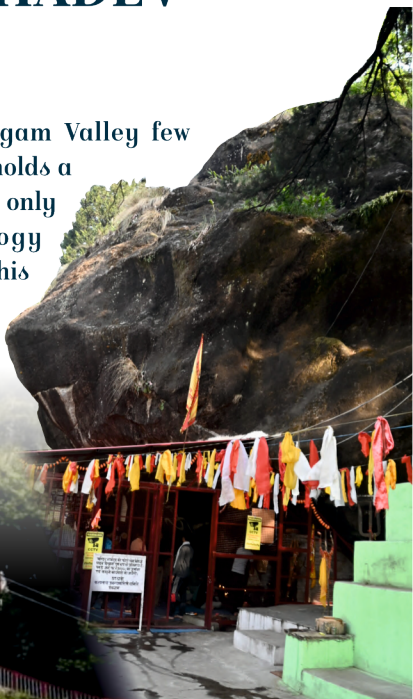
Distance: Within Joshimath town

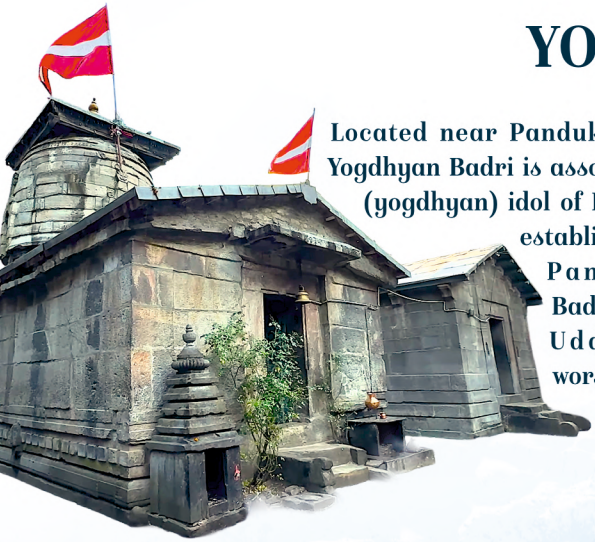
KALPESHWAR MAHADEV
(URGAM VALLEY)

The Eternal Kedar

Set amid forests and terraced fields of the Urgam Valley few kilometers from Joshimath, Kalpeshwar Mahadev holds a unique place among the Panch Kedar shrines as the only one accessible throughout the year. Mythology mentions that when Lord Shiva eluded the Pandavas, his matted hair (jata) manifested here, giving the temple its sacred identity.

Distance: ~25 km from Joshimath





YOGDHYAN BADRI

Badri in Deep Meditation

Located near Pandukeshwar on the Badrinath route, Yogdhyan Badri is associated with the meditative posture (yogdhyan) idol of Lord Vishnu, believed to have been established by King Pandu, father of the Pandavas. During winter, when Badrinath Dham closes, the idols of Lord Uddhava and Lord Kubera are worshipped at Yogdhyan Badri,

Distance: ~24 km from Joshimath

BHAVISHYA BADRI

Future abode of Badrinath

Situated near Joshimath in a quiet Himalayan village of Subhai, Bhavishya Badri holds prophetic significance as mythology states that it will become the main seat of Badri Vishal in the future as present Badrinath dham will become inaccessible. It is said that the present image of the deity will gradually manifest over time.

Distance: ~17 km from Joshimath

VRIDDHA BADRI

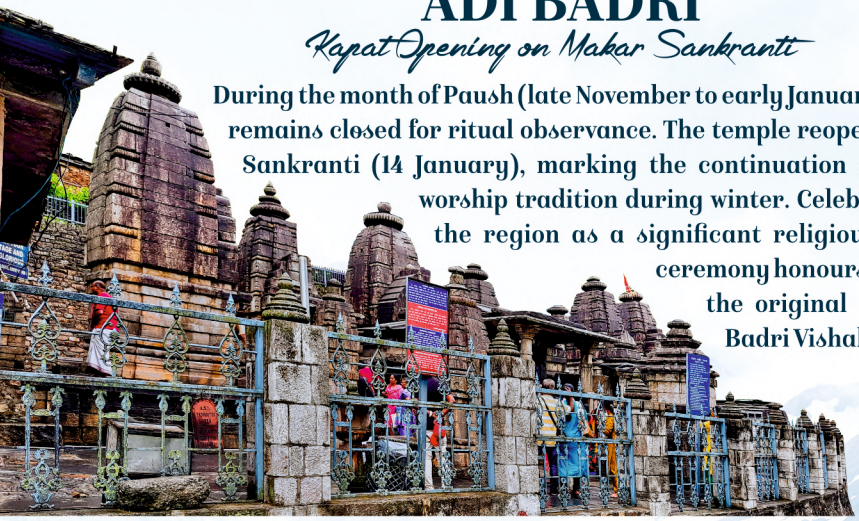
The Ancient Badri

Located a short distance from Joshimath, Vriddha Badri, meaning "Old Badri," is believed to be the site where Lord Vishnu was worshipped in his elder form before the establishment of the Badrinath shrine. Unlike Badrinath, Vriddha Badri remains accessible and active throughout the year.

Distance: ~7 km from Joshimath

ADI BADRI

Kapat Opening on Makar Sankranti



During the month of Paush (late November to early January), Adi Badri remains closed for ritual observance. The temple reopens on Makar Sankranti (14 January), marking the continuation of the Badri worship tradition during winter. Celebrated across the region as a significant religious event, the ceremony honours Adi Badri as the original seat of Lord Badri Vishal.

BENITAL

Uttarakhand's First Astro Village

When Darkness Becomes an Experience

Benital was identified as Uttarakhand's first Astro Village for its naturally dark skies, open meadows and extremely low light pollution. At an altitude of around 2,600 metres, winter air clarity and long nights create ideal conditions for observing stars, planets and seasonal constellations - an experience that connects science, nature and ancient sky knowledge.

Altitude: ~2,600 m
Distance: 30 km from Karnaprayag
Experiences: Stargazing & telescope observation
Mobile & DSLR astrophotography
Night-sky learning sessions
Guided astro walks

Local youth are being trained as astro-guides, creating year-round livelihood opportunities rooted in science and nature.

GWALDAM

A Himalayan Gateway Linking Garhwal and Kumaon

Located at the meeting point of the Garhwal and Kumaon regions at an elevation of 1700 m, Gwaldam has historically functioned as a strategic halt for seasonal movement, pilgrimage, and access towards prominent Himalayan corridors. Surrounded by forests and seasonal apple orchards, winter here brings clear views of peaks such as Nanda Devi, Trishul, and Nanda Ghunti from nearby vantage points. A short walk leads to the Badhangarhi Temple, an ancient hilltop shrine reflecting the region's enduring faith traditions. Gwaldam continues to serve as an important gateway for routes towards Kuari Pass and Roopkund, forming a quiet yet significant pause in Chamoli's winter landscape.

BIRDING & FOREST WALKS

For early risers, Benital's open meadow, encircled by oak and rhododendron forests, offers nearly 270° Himalayan views. Clear winter mornings reveal peaks like Nanda Devi, Trishul, Hathi-Ghoda, Kamet and Kedarnath, making walks especially scenic.

With over 30 bird species already recorded and many more yet to be documented, early-morning birding and nature walks blend avian sightings with sweeping mountain vistas - ideal for birders, nature lovers and landscape photographers.

RESPONSIBLE & SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Kindly keep note of following actions to ensure your safety and natures safety:

- Travel in small groups
- Respect silence & dark skies
- Avoid litter and single-use plastic
- Use reusable water bottles
- Follow local guidance
- Minimise artificial lighting at night

Dark skies, forests and traditions survive only through mindful travel.

STAY WITH THE HIMALAYAS

Homestays & Local Hospitality

Winter is the best time to experience **Pahadi warmth and culture** through local homestays.

Homestays are available across **Joshimath, Gopeshwar, Karnaprayag, Benital and nearby villages.**

Platforms like **Uttarastays.com** and verified Google listings help travellers connect directly with hosts.

Staying local supports families, preserves culture, and deepens the travel experience.

Tourism Accommodation at Joshimath

Tourism Nandadevi Expedition Hostel
Address: HH34+MHF, Joshimath, Uttarakhand 246443

GUIDES & LOCAL SUPPORT

- For a safe, informed and enriching journey, travellers are encouraged to engage:
- Certified trekking guides
- Local birding guides
- Trained astro-guides at Benital

Details and contacts are available through **DTDO Chamoli.**

GETTING TO CHAMOLI

- **Nearest Airport**
  Jolly Grant Airport, Dehradun
  (Approx. 7–9 hours by road, depending on weather)
- **Nearest Railway Stations**
  Haridwar | Rishikesh | Dehradun
- From key Chamoli transits, **buses and shared taxis** connect to Chamoli
  Karnaprayag – major transit junction
  Gopeshwar – district headquarters
  Joshimath – gateway to Auli, Niti Valley and winter temples
- Winter Travel Advisory:
  Travel during daylight hours, check local weather updates, and keep buffer days for snow or road conditions.

TREKKING EQUIPMENT SUPPORT

For trekking enthusiasts, regulated trekking and mountaineering equipment is available on hire through the District Tourism Development Office (DTDO), Chamoli, supporting winter treks and alpine routes. Essentials such as tents, rucksacks, sleeping bags, mountain bikes, climbing gear, GPS devices, and oxygen support can be arranged, subject to availability and prior request. Travellers are advised to plan requirements in advance and base themselves near authorised lodging and backpacker hostels for ease of coordination.

BASE STAY

Tourism Nandadevi Expedition Hostel
Address: Joshimath, Uttarakhand 246443

Conveniently located for early starts, equipment coordination, and transit to trekking routes.
Contact for Support
District Tourism Development Officer, Chamoli
01372-253185 | +91 84491 67823
tourismchamoli@gmail.com
Instagram: @visitchamoli
www.visitchamoli.com

EQUIPMENTS AVAILABLE ON RENT

S. No.	Name of Goods	Available Items	Proposed Rates (per day)
	ROCK CLIMBING & RAPPELING		
1	Climbing Rope (60 Mtr.)	1	97.00
2	Rappling Rope (60 Mtr.)	2	97.00
3	Belay Rope (Multipurpose & safety Rope) (60 Mtr.)	1	97.00
4	Seat Harness	18	36.00
5	Helmet	20	36.00
6	Descender	4	24.00
7	Jummar	4	61.00
8	Carabinner	10	36.00
9	Rock Climbing Shoe (In Pair)	25	303.00
10	Pully Double	2	24.00
	NAVIGATION		
1	GPS	2	182.00
2	Radio Set	2	303.00
	TREKKING EQUIPMENTS		
1	Rucksack	18	121.00
2	Sleeping Bag	15	85.00
3	Mattress	22	24.00
4	4 Men Alpine Tent	3	182.00
5	3 Men Alpine Tent	4	121.00
6	Oxygen Cylinder with Mask	2	242.00
	MOUNTAIN BIKING EQUIPMENTS		
	Mountain Bike-Expert		
1	Cross way 20-D	2	300.00
	Cross way 20-MD	1	
	Cross way 40-D	1	
	Cross way 100	2	
	Mountain Bike-Advance		
2	BIG SEVEN 20D	2	250.00
	MATTS 40D	1	
	BIG SEVEN 40D	3	
	Mountain Bike-Basic		
3	BIG SEVEN 20MD	2	200.00
	BIG NINE 15MD-PL	3	
	BIG NINE 20MD	5	

CONNECT WITH US

District Tourism Development Office, Chamoli
Gopeshwar, Uttarakhand
Follow us for seasonal updates, routes, events and responsible travel stories.

Instagram: /visitchamoli Website: www.visitchamoli.in