EDITION 2026–27

❄ WINTER IN INDIA ❄
❄ A FIELD GUIDE 2026–27 ❄

The snows of Kashmir and Ladakh, the quiet Himalayan valleys, the festivals of the north east and the desert winters of Rajasthan and Kutch, set out season by season from November 2026 to March 2027.

COMPILED BY THE AGRIMA HOLIDAYS TEAM FOR THOSE WHO TRAVEL WELL

This is a guide, not a sales brochure, and it serves you equally whether you travel with us or on your own.

AGRIMA HOLIDAYS RESEARCH · NOVEMBER 2026

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This edition

The India Winter Travel Report 2026–27 covers winter travel in India from November 2026 to March 2027. The Agrima Holidays Team wrote it from our 51 winter guides on agrimaholidays.com and from planning winter trips from our Delhi office since 2007.

Who it is for

Travellers choosing where to go this winter, and travel partners who plan winter trips for their clients. Each region has a profile, a quick-reference panel and the Agrima packages that suit it.

How the figures work

Temperatures are long-term averages for the main town, not a forecast for this winter. Snowfall is described as a window of weeks, because no place promises snow on a given day. Elevations are approximate for the town centre.

Check before travel

Road status, permits, festival dates and some opening times change every season. Items like these carry a CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL tag. Confirm them with us or the official source shortly before you travel.

Prices

Package prices are per person on twin sharing in a standard room, 5% GST extra, airfare excluded, valid for travel till 31 March 2027. Peak dates from about 20 December to 5 January carry supplements.

Using this report

Part I gives the national picture. Part II profiles each region. Part III compares snow, temperature, roads, skiing, treks and festivals. Part IV turns it into trips. Part V explains how to book.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Winter in India is five holidays, not one

Most winter enquiries we receive start with one word: snow. Snow is one part of the season. From November to March, India offers sub-zero high deserts, ski slopes, frozen lakes, warm desert days, clear Himalayan views from the eastern hills and a calendar of festivals. This report sorts the country by what a traveller wants from winter, then explains when, how and for how long to go.

Snow is a window, not a date

The surest snow on the ground runs from late December to March in Gulmarg, Solang, Auli, Lachung and Tawang. No place promises snowfall on a given day.

Access shapes the plan

Spiti is open only through Kinnaur. Ladakh is reached by air. Sonamarg stays open through the Z-Morh tunnel. Tawang relies on the Sela Tunnel.

Mild winter is peak season

Rajasthan, Kutch, Meghalaya and Darjeeling have their best weather of the year in winter, with warm days and cool nights.

Late December costs the most

Peak supplements, gala dinners and minimum stays apply from about 20 December to 5 January. Mid January to February gives snow at lower prices.

Cold and altitude together

Above 3,000 m, winter cold makes altitude sickness more likely. Rest days, heated rooms and sensible routes matter more than in summer.

Forecasts come later

Temperatures in this report are long-term averages, not forecasts. Watch the IMD outlook and local forecasts in the week before you travel.

FIVE KINDS OF WINTER TRIP

Start with the kind of winter you want. In the same week, Kaza sits at −20°C and Jaisalmer at 25°C.

01 Snow holidays

Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Solang, Sissu, Auli, Narkanda, Lachung

Snow underfoot, gondolas, skiing and sledging, with heated hotels. Best late December to March.

SUITS
Families, couples, first-time snow visitors

02 High cold deserts

Ladakh, Spiti

Frozen rivers, quiet monasteries, snow leopards and nights far below zero. Best January to March.

SUITS
Fit adults, photographers, wildlife watchers

03 Mountain views without deep cold

Darjeeling, Shillong, Mussoorie, Nainital, Gangtok

Clear Himalayan views, tea gardens and cosy evenings, with days above freezing. Best December to February.

SUITS
Older travellers, families with young children

04 Warm winter heritage

Rajasthan, Kutch

Forts, palaces, desert camps and the White Rann at their best, with warm days and cool nights. Best November to February.

SUITS
Everyone, including those who dislike cold

05 Festivals and celebrations

Nagaland, Shillong, Kutch, Jaisalmer, Ladakh, Sikkim, Gujarat

Hornbill, Christmas, Rann Utsav, Losar, the Desert Festival and Uttarayan, plus New Year in the hills.

SUITS
Culture lovers, groups, photographers

WINTER MONTH BY MONTH

November

Rajasthan and Kutch reach their best weather. Rann Utsav opens at Dhordo. High passes such as Kunzum and Rohtang close for the season, so Spiti switches to the Kinnaur road. Early snow sometimes dusts Gulmarg and Solang late in the month.

December

Snow settles in Gulmarg, Solang, Auli, Tawang and on the high passes. Lower hill towns stay dry most years. Christmas and New Year crowds peak in Manali, Shimla and Gulmarg, with the highest prices of the season. Book early.

- Surest snow: Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Sela
- Good chance: Solang, Auli, Tsomgo Lake
- Low chance: Shimla, Mussoorie, Nainital

January

The coldest month. Chillai Kalan in Kashmir runs to 31 January. Heavy snow across Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand. Shimla and Mussoorie get their best chance of snow. Pangong and Tsomgo freeze. Roads close for a day or two after big storms. Flights into Srinagar and Leh face fog and snow delays.

- Surest snow: Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Solang, Auli, Lachung, Kaza
- Good chance: Shimla, Kufri, Narkanda, Dhanaulti, Chopta
- Low chance: Nainital, Dalhousie

February

Deep snow cover and more clear days. The best month for skiing in Gulmarg and Auli. Fewer crowds after the New Year rush, and prices fall. Losar falls in February or March in Sikkim and Arunachal.

- Surest snow: Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Solang, Auli, Lachung, Yumthang
- Good chance: Narkanda, Kufri, Chopta

March

Snow lingers in Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Auli and Lachung. Lower towns thaw. Days warm up and the light turns soft. A good month for families who want snow without the hardest cold. Roads to some high passes stay shut.

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL Pass closures and opening dates move with each season's snowfall.

FROM OUR GUIDES Snowfall calendar for India ↗

MASTER DESTINATION COMPARISON

Destination	State / UT	Elevation	January, day / night	Snow	Best window	Access	Nights
Srinagar · Gulmarg	J&K	1,585 · 2,650 m	4–8 / −2 to −6°C · ~0 / −8 to −12°C	Reliable	Late Dec–Mar	Air to Srinagar	5–7
Leh · Pangong	Ladakh	3,500 · 4,225 m	−5 to 0 / −15 to −20°C	Light, dry cold	Jan–Feb	Air only	5–9
Kaza · Kibber	Himachal	3,800 · 4,270 m	~−5 / −20 to −25°C	Cover from Jan	Jan–Mar	Road via Kinnaur	9–10
Manali · Solang	Himachal	2,050 · 2,500 m	5–9 / −4 to −6°C	Solang reliable	Dec–Mar	Road from Delhi	3–5
Shimla · Narkanda	Himachal	2,200 · 2,700 m	6–10 / −1 to −3°C	Some days	Jan	Road, toy train	2–3
Auli · Chopta	Uttarakhand	2,500–3,050 · 2,700 m	Below 5 / below 0°C	Reliable	Late Dec–Mar	Road via Rishikesh	4–6
Gangtok · Lachung	Sikkim	1,650 · 2,700 m	10–14 / ~4°C in Gangtok	Higher up	Jan–Mar	Air to Bagdogra or rail to NJP, then road	5–6
Darjeeling	West Bengal	2,050 m	7–10 / 1–4°C	Rare in town	Dec–Feb	Bagdogra, NJP	3
Tawang	Arunachal	3,050 m	8–10 / below 0°C	Sela, high lakes	Dec–Feb	Road from Guwahati, ILP	5
Shillong · Sohra	Meghalaya	1,500 m	14–16 / ~4°C	None	Nov–Feb	Road from Guwahati	5
Jaisalmer · Udaipur	Rajasthan	225 · 600 m	20–25 / ~5°C on the dunes	None	Nov–Feb	Air, rail, road	6–9
Bhuj · White Rann	Gujarat	Near sea level	25–28 / ~10°C	None	Nov–Feb	Air to Bhuj	5

BASIS OF THE FIGURES Temperatures are indicative long-term January ranges for the main town in each row, from Agrima's published guides. They are historical averages, not a forecast for winter 2026–27. Elevations are approximate for the town centre. Access CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL

KASHMIR

What winter looks like ↗

Snow arrives in Gulmarg in December and settles across the valley by January. Srinagar sees days of 4 to 8°C and nights well below freezing. The edges of Dal Lake ice over on the coldest mornings, and shikaras still carry visitors across the open water.

The hardest stretch is Chillai Kalan, the 40 days from 21 December to 31 January. Expect the heaviest snow, the lowest temperatures and the clearest mountain views after each storm. Chillai Kurd and Chillai Bachha follow, shorter and milder spells into early March.

Where to go ↗

- Gulmarg: the snow base for most trips. The gondola climbs to Kongdori and, on clear days, to Apharwat, close to 4,000 m. Skiing, sledging and snow walks start at the hotel door
- Pahalgam: quieter than Gulmarg, with snow on the pine slopes and the Lidder river running low. Aru and Betaab valleys open when roads allow
- Sonamarg: reachable all winter since the Z-Morh tunnel opened in January 2025, with deep snow around Thajiwas
- Srinagar: houseboats, the old city, Mughal gardens under snow, and kahwa by a bukhari

Compare the three snow bases in our Gulmarg, Sonamarg or Pahalgam guide.

Temperatures ↗

- Srinagar: days 4 to 8°C, nights −2°C to −6°C
- Gulmarg: days around 0°C, nights −8°C to −12°C
- Pahalgam: days 2 to 5°C, nights −6°C to −10°C
- Sonamarg: colder than Pahalgam, with deep snow

AT A GLANCE

Base	Srinagar 1,585 m · Gulmarg 2,650 m
January	Srinagar 4 to 8°C by day, −2 to −6°C at night
Best	Late December to March
Access	Air to Srinagar
Nights	5 to 7
Suits	Families, couples, skiers

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-JK-105 · 5N / 6D
Kashmir Winter Snow ↗
From ₹24,699 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-JK-101 · 4N / 5D
Kashmir Valley Circuit ↗
From ₹21,799 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

→ Skiing and snow activities 41
→ Festival calendar 45
→ Sample winter itineraries 52

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL Road openings to Gulmarg and Sonamarg after heavy snow.

FROM OUR GUIDES Kashmir in winter ↗

KASHMIR · PLANNING

How many nights

Six nights covers Srinagar, Gulmarg and one of Pahalgam or Sonamarg:

- Srinagar, 2 nights, one on a houseboat
- Gulmarg, 2 nights
- Pahalgam, 2 nights

Keep one spare day. Heavy snow shuts the Tangmarg to Gulmarg road for a few hours at a time, and fog and snow delay flights into Srinagar.

Staying warm

Ask for rooms with central heating or electric blankets, and check the hotel runs a generator. Power cuts are common in snowstorms. Houseboats use bukharis and heated mattresses. Kashmiris carry a kangri, a small clay pot of embers inside the pheran. Try one, carefully.

Carry thermal inners, a down jacket, waterproof boots and gloves. See our winter packing list.

Getting around

Book a vehicle with snow chains. Our drivers fit chains at Tangmarg for Gulmarg and on the Pahalgam road after fresh snow. Avoid self-driving unless you have driven on ice before. Read our driving in snow guide.

Food in winter

Winter is the season for harissa, slow-cooked mutton sold at dawn in old Srinagar shops, and for nadru, lotus stem, in many forms. Wazwan dinners run through the season. Kahwa and noon chai keep you going between meals.

Gulmarg, Sonamarg or Pahalgam

- Snow depth: Gulmarg and Sonamarg deepest, Pahalgam lighter
- Activities: Gulmarg most, Pahalgam some, Sonamarg few
- Crowds: Gulmarg busiest, Sonamarg quietest
- Drive from Srinagar: Gulmarg 2 hours, Sonamarg 2.5 hours, Pahalgam 3 hours
- Hotels: Gulmarg and Pahalgam have more choice than Sonamarg

How to choose

- Two nights for snow: Gulmarg
- Snow with a quiet stay: Pahalgam
- One more snow day from Srinagar: Sonamarg
- Six nights: all three, with Srinagar

A sample six-night plan

- Day 1: Srinagar, shikara ride and a houseboat night
- Day 2: old city, Jamia Masjid and the Mughal gardens
- Day 3: drive to Gulmarg, afternoon snow walk
- Day 4: gondola to Kongdori and, if open, Apharwat
- Day 5: drive to Pahalgam, walk by the Lidder
- Day 6: Aru or Betaab valley if open, back to Srinagar
- Day 7: fly home

What it costs

Our Kashmir packages, including Kashmir Winter Snow, are on page **8** with current prices. Christmas and New Year dates carry a supplement, and hotels in Gulmarg fill early for the last week of December.

Tell us your dates and we send a winter plan within 24 hours on working days.

FROM OUR GUIDES Kashmir in winter · Gulmarg, Sonamarg or Pahalgam in winter

LADAKH

Why winter ↗

From December to February, Ladakh empties of tourists. Leh is cold and quiet. Monasteries hold winter festivals, the Indus freezes at the edges and snow leopards come down into the valleys after their prey.

The roads from Manali and Srinagar close, so flights are the only way in. Hotel rooms cost less, the light is sharp and clear, and you see daily life in Ladakh at its most local.

Getting there ↗

Daily flights from Delhi reach Leh in about 1 hour 20 minutes. Morning flights land in clear weather on most days. Snow or wind at Leh delays flights now and then, so keep a buffer day before any onward connection.

The Zojila on the Srinagar road and the passes on the Manali road close in winter. Read our Zojila and Leh road guide for the details.

Cold and acclimatisation ↗

Leh sits at about 3,500 m. In January, days reach −5°C to 0°C and nights fall to −15°C to −20°C. Nubra and Pangong run colder.

Rest for the first 36 to 48 hours. No sightseeing on day one, a gentle walk on day two. Drink 3 to 4 litres of water a day and avoid alcohol. Hotels open in winter have central heating or electric heaters and hot water for set hours.

Read our altitude sickness guide.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Leh 3,500 m · Pangong 4,225 m
January	−5 to 0°C by day, −15 to −20°C at night
Best	January and February
Access	Air only in winter
Nights	5 to 9, with 2 rest days in Leh
Suits	Fit adults, wildlife watchers

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-LA-103 · 7N / 8D
Frozen Pangong Winter ↗
From ₹44,399 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

→ Tunnels and passes 39
→ Festivals in detail 46
→ Health and safety in the cold 55

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL Flights, Zojila status and Pangong access.

FROM OUR GUIDES Ladakh in winter ↗

LADAKH · PLANNING

What stays open

- Leh town, the main market, Leh Palace and Shanti Stupa
- Thiksey, Hemis, Shey, Stakna and Spituk monasteries
- The Indus and Zanskar confluence near Nimmu
- Pangong Lake, often frozen solid by late January, when Chang La is clear
- Nubra Valley, when Khardung La is clear

Many guesthouses and cafes close. A smaller set of heated hotels stays open in Leh.

Frozen Pangong

By mid to late January, Pangong Lake freezes into a sheet of blue and white ice. Day trips from Leh over Chang La take about 5 hours each way. A night at Pangong in winter means temperatures near −25°C, in basic heated camps or homestays. Most people go and return the same day, or stay one night with full winter kit.

Snow leopards

Hemis National Park, the Rumbak valley and Ulley are the main areas. Trips of five to seven days with experienced local spotters give good chances but no guarantee. You spend long hours scanning slopes in the cold, often watching through a spotting scope. Homestays in Rumbak and Ulley host spotting trips and earn from them.

Festivals

Losar, the Ladakhi new year, falls in December or January by the Ladakhi calendar. Monastery festivals with masked cham dances run through winter at Spituk, Likir, Thiksey and Stok. Dates follow the lunar calendar. We confirm them when you enquire. See our Losar guide.

How many nights

- Leh with Pangong: 5 nights
- Leh, Pangong and Nubra: 6 to 7 nights
- Snow leopard trip: 7 to 9 nights, with 2 in Leh to start
- Chadar trek: about 9 nights including acclimatisation

A sample week

- Day 1: fly to Leh, rest
- Day 2: rest, short walk to Shanti Stupa
- Day 3: Thiksey, Shey and Hemis monasteries
- Day 4: Leh Palace, the old town and the market
- Day 5: Pangong day trip over Chang La
- Day 6: Indus and Zanskar confluence, Likir or Alchi
- Day 7: fly back

What it costs

Our Ladakh packages, including Frozen Pangong Winter, are on page **10** with current prices. Snow leopard trips and the Chadar trek are quoted on request.

Tell us your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

FROM OUR GUIDES Ladakh in winter

SHIMLA, KUFRI AND NARKANDA

Why go

Shimla sits about 350 km from Delhi, and snow falls on the Ridge and Mall Road most winters between late December and February. Kufri and Narkanda, higher up, get more snow and hold it longer. For a short snow trip from Delhi or Chandigarh, no other place is closer.

The places

- Shimla: the Ridge, Mall Road, Christ Church, Jakhu temple and the colonial buildings of the old town. Snow turns the town white for a few days at a time
- Kufri: 16 km from Shimla at about 2,500 m, with snow slopes, pony rides, the Himalayan Nature Park and a small ski area
- Narkanda: 60 km from Shimla at about 2,700 m. Hatu Peak, the apple orchards and the slopes sit under snow, and local operators run beginner ski courses in January and February
- Mashobra and Naldehra: quiet pine forests close to Shimla, good for a calmer stay

Getting there

- Drive from Delhi in 7 to 8 hours, via Chandigarh and Solan
- Take the Kalka to Shimla toy train, a UNESCO World Heritage line, from Kalka. The train takes about 5 hours and runs through more than 100 tunnels
- Fly to Chandigarh and drive about 3 hours

After heavy snow, the road beyond Kufri to Narkanda shuts for a day or two until crews clear it. Hatu Peak road stays closed longer.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Shimla 2,200 m · Narkanda 2,700 m
January	6 to 10°C by day, −1 to −3°C at night
Best	January
Access	Road from Delhi, toy train from Kalka
Nights	2 to 3
Suits	Weekend trips from Delhi

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-HP-116 · 2N / 3D
Shimla & Narkanda Weekend
From ₹14,999 per person
View itinerary · Download PDF

AGH-HP-101 · 5N / 6D
Shimla & Manali with Kufri and Solang
From ₹22,299 per person
View itinerary · Download PDF

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

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→ Driving in snow 40
→ Sample winter itineraries 52

FROM OUR GUIDES Shimla, Kufri and Narkanda in winter

SHIMLA, KUFRI AND NARKANDA · PLANNING

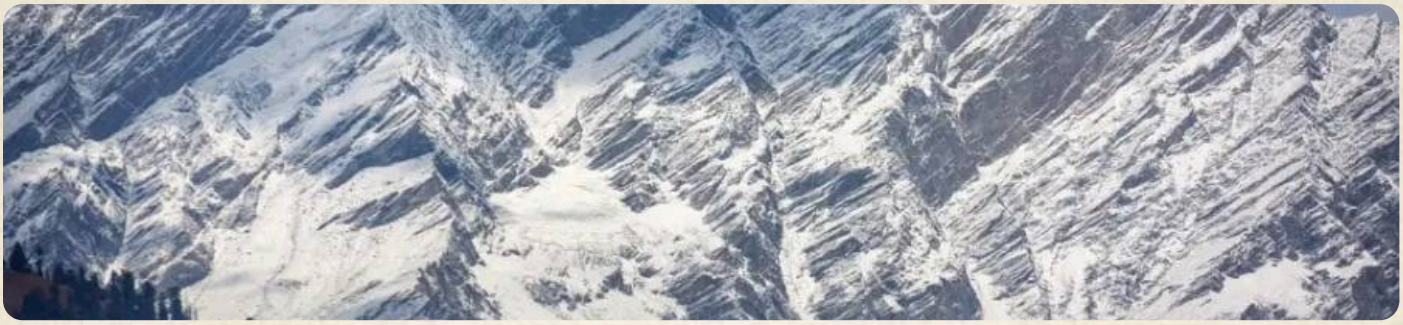
What it costs ↗

Our Himachal packages, including Shimla and Narkanda Weekend, are on page **12** with current prices. Peak dates carry a supplement.

We plan Shimla trips with a car and driver from Delhi. Tell us your dates and we send options within 24 hours on working days.

FROM OUR GUIDES Shimla, Kufri and Narkanda in winter ↗

MANALI, SOLANG AND SISSU



When the snow comes ↗

Snow reaches Solang Valley, 14 km above Manali, in December most years and stays until March. Manali town gets its first proper snow between late December and January. February usually brings the deepest cover and clear days between storms.

The heaviest snowfalls come with western disturbances, weather systems from the west that bring two or three days of snow followed by sunshine. Watch the forecast a week before you travel and keep your dates a little flexible if snow in town matters to you.

Solang Valley ↗

Solang is the main snow point near Manali. In winter you find:

- Ski lessons on the gentle lower slopes
- Snow tubing on groomed lanes
- Snowmobile rides
- The Solang ropeway, up to about 3,200 m, with views over the valley
- Paragliding on clear days, weather permitting

Agree every price before you start. Rates rise on weekends and in the New Year week. See our Solang Valley guide.

Temperatures ↗

- December: days 8 to 12°C, nights near −2°C
- January: days 5 to 9°C, nights −4°C to −6°C
- February: similar to January, with more snow on the ground
- March: days warm to 12 to 15°C and the snow line climbs

Solang and Sissu run several degrees colder than Manali town.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Manali 2,050 m · Solang 2,500 m
January	5 to 9°C by day, −4 to −6°C at night
Best	December to March
Access	Road from Delhi or Chandigarh
Nights	3 to 5
Suits	Families, couples, first snow

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-HP-115 · 2N / 3D
Manali & Atal Tunnel Weekend ↗
From ₹15,399 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-HP-101 · 5N / 6D
Shimla & Manali with Kufri and Solang ↗
From ₹22,299 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

→ Tunnels and passes 39
→ Skiing and snow activities 41
→ Winter honeymoons 47

FROM OUR GUIDES Manali and Solang in winter ↗

MANALI, SOLANG AND SISSU · PLANNING

The Atal Tunnel and Sissu

The Atal Tunnel runs about 9 km under the Pir Panjal range from near Solang to Sissu in Lahaul. It stays open in winter, except during heavy snow or avalanche warnings, when police close the approach roads.

Sissu lies in a white bowl with a frozen waterfall above the village. Most visitors go and return the same day. You need no permit for the tunnel or Sissu. Stopping inside the tunnel is not allowed. Read our Atal Tunnel guide.

Snow at Sissu

Sissu, at about 3,100 m, holds snow from December to March. Snow play here is quieter than at Solang. Lahaul has few open hotels in winter, so most visitors return to Manali.

Rohtang Pass

Rohtang Pass closes from about November to May. In winter you skip it and use the tunnel instead.

Traffic and timing

Weekends and the week from Christmas to New Year bring jams of several hours between Manali and Solang. Leave your hotel by 8 am. After fresh snow, police stop private cars short of Solang and taxis run only up to the barrier. Our drivers carry chains and know where the barriers go up.

Getting there

- By road from Delhi: about 540 km, 12 to 14 hours. Overnight Volvo buses leave Delhi in the evening
- By air: flights to Bhuntar near Kullu, 50 km from Manali, are few and often cancelled in winter weather
- From Chandigarh: about 8 to 9 hours by road

Fog slows the plains on December and January mornings. Snow slows the last stretch.

A sample four-night plan

- Day 1: arrive from Delhi, rest, Mall Road in the evening
- Day 2: Solang Valley by 8 am, snow activities, ropeway
- Day 3: Atal Tunnel to Sissu if open, back by afternoon
- Day 4: Hadimba temple, Old Manali and Vashisht
- Day 5: drive back

What it costs

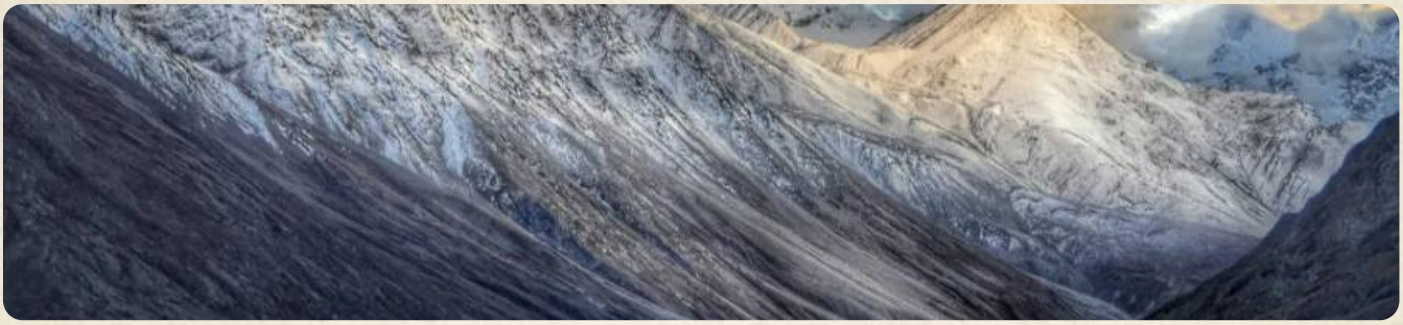
Our Himachal packages, including Manali and Atal Tunnel Weekend, are on page **14** with current prices. Peak dates around Christmas and New Year carry a supplement.

Share your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL Atal Tunnel timings and road closures.

FROM OUR GUIDES Manali and Solang in winter · Atal Tunnel and Rohtang in winter

SPITI AND KINNAUR



Why Spiti in winter ↗

From December to March, Spiti turns into a white high desert. The villages sit between 3,600 and 4,500 m, the rivers freeze at the edges and most visitors stay away. You share the valley with farming families who stay through the cold, monks at Key and Tabo, and snow leopards that follow the blue sheep down to lower slopes.

Winter Spiti is hard travel. Nights fall to −20°C and lower. Water pipes freeze. Power cuts last hours. If you want comfort, choose Manali or Shimla in snow. If you want silence, empty roads and a real chance of a snow leopard, Spiti in winter has no equal in India.

The only road in ↗

The Manali side closes in winter. Kunzum Pass shuts from about November to June, and the Atal Tunnel leads only into Lahaul, not Spiti.

The winter route runs from Shimla through Kinnaur along the Sutlej:

- Shimla to Narkanda and Rampur
- Rampur to Reckong Peo or Kalpa, with views of Kinner Kailash
- Kalpa to Nako, past the Khab confluence
- Nako to Tabo
- Tabo to Kaza

The drive from Shimla to Kaza takes three days at a sensible pace. Fresh snow, rockfall at Malling Nala and black ice near Nako stop traffic for hours at a time. Our drivers know these stretches and carry chains.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Kaza about 3,800 m
January	About −5°C by day, −20 to −25°C at night
Best	January to March
Access	Shimla and Kinnaur road only
Nights	9 to 10, plus 1 spare
Permit	None for Indians. Foreign nationals need one for Nako to Sumdo
Suits	Adventurous adults, photographers

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-HP-112 · 10N / 11D
Winter Spiti ↗
From ₹50,999 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-HP-114 · 5N / 6D
Kinnaur & Sangla Valley ↗
From ₹29,999 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

→ Himalayan road access 38
→ Health and safety in the cold 55
→ Gear, stays and staying connected 56

FROM OUR GUIDES Winter Spiti ↗

SPITI AND KINNAUR · PLANNING

How cold it gets

- Kaza in January: days near −5°C, nights −20°C to −25°C
- Kibber and Langza: a few degrees colder than Kaza
- Tabo and Nako: slightly milder, still well below freezing at night

The air is dry and the sun is strong. Midday on a clear day feels pleasant in the sun and freezing in the shade. Wind makes everything colder.

Snow leopards at Kibber

Kibber, above Kaza, sits beside the Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary. From January to March, local spotters scan the cliffs above the village and the gorge towards Chicham for snow leopards, ibex and blue sheep.

Plan four to five days at Kibber for a good chance. Sightings often come through a spotting scope at a distance. Days start at sunrise and you spend hours outside, so dress for −20°C. Local homestay families run most spotting trips, and your money goes into the village.

Places to see

- Key monastery: the white monastery on its hill above the Spiti river
- Kibber, Chicham bridge and the gorge below
- Langza, with its Buddha statue and fossil beds
- Hikkim, home of one of the highest post offices in the world
- Komic, one of the highest villages reachable by road
- Dhankar monastery on its cliff above the confluence of the Spiti and Pin rivers
- Tabo monastery, founded in 996, with old murals in mud-walled halls
- Nako village and its lake, frozen through winter

Some roads to the high villages close after snowfall. Your driver checks each morning.

Where you stay

Hotels in Kaza mostly close for winter. You stay in homestays heated by a bukhari, a wood or dung stove in the main room. Rooms get blankets and quilts, and some have electric heaters when power is available.

Expect dry toilets in many places, as pipes freeze. Hot water comes in buckets. Food is simple and filling: dal, rice, thukpa, momos and butter tea.

Altitude and health

Kaza sits at about 3,800 m. Altitude and cold together are hard on the body. Take two easy days after you reach Kaza. Drink 3 to 4 litres of water a day, avoid alcohol and walk slowly. Never sleep with a coal or wood stove burning in a closed room.

Read our altitude sickness guide and cold weather health guide before you go. People with heart or lung conditions should check with a doctor first.

FROM OUR GUIDES Winter Spiti

SPITI AND KINNAUR · PLANNING · CONTINUED

How many nights

Nine to ten nights from Delhi or Chandigarh works best:

- Shimla or Narkanda, 1 night
- Kalpa or Reckong Peo, 1 night
- Nako or Tabo, 1 night
- Kaza and Kibber, 4 to 5 nights
- Back through Kalpa and Shimla, 2 nights

Add a spare day for road closures. Shorter trips leave too little time at Kaza to acclimatise.

What it costs

See the Winter Spiti package on page **16** for the current price per person on twin sharing. Snow leopard spotting days, extra nights at Kibber and private spotters are quoted on request.

Tell us your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL Road status near Malling Nala and Nako.

FROM OUR GUIDES Winter Spiti

UTTARAKHAND

Where the snow falls ↗

- Auli: the main ski slope in Uttarakhand, from about 2,500 to 3,050 m. Snow from late December to March
- Chopta: snow from January, base for the Tungnath and Chandrashila winter walk
- Dhanaulti: 25 km past Mussoorie, with snow on the deodar forest in January in good years
- Munsiyari: far Kumaon, with views of the Panchachuli peaks and snow from January
- Mussoorie and Nainital: snow on a few days each winter, not every year

Auli and the ropeway ↗

Auli faces Nanda Devi, Dronagiri and Kamet. The Joshimath to Auli ropeway shut in early 2023 during the Joshimath land subsidence. Ask us for its current status. The road from Joshimath reaches Auli in about 45 minutes, and a chair lift runs on the slopes when snow allows. Read our Auli skiing guide.

Chopta and Tungnath ↗

Tungnath temple closes for winter, but the trail to the temple and on to Chandrashila stays open to walkers on clear days. Expect knee-deep snow in places in January. Hire a local guide and start early. Chopta has simple lodges and camps, so pack warm.

Mussoorie and Nainital ↗

These hill towns stay cold and clear through winter. Mussoorie's Mall Road and Landour lanes are quiet on weekdays. Nainital's lake is calm and the views from Snow View point are best in the morning. Treat snow here as a bonus. See our New Year in the mountains guide for the busy week.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Auli 2,500 to 3,050 m · Chopta 2,700 m
January	Below 5°C by day, below 0°C at night
Best	Late December to March
Access	Road via Rishikesh and Joshimath
Nights	4 to 6
Suits	Skiers, trekkers, families

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-UK-104 · 7N / 8D
Rishikesh, Chopta & Auli ↗
From ₹25,799 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-UK-114 · 3N / 4D
Mussoorie & Dhanaulti ↗
From ₹18,399 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

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→ Winter treks 43
→ Sample winter itineraries 52

FROM OUR GUIDES Uttarakhand in winter ↗

UTTARAKHAND · PLANNING

Ski courses at Auli ↗

The state tourism body and private schools run beginner courses of a few days. Instructors also take day lessons. Book a course before you go in peak weeks.

The slopes ↗

Auli's main slope runs about 3 km through oak and deodar, with views of Nanda Devi straight ahead. The gradient suits beginners and improvers. An artificial lake near the top feeds snow guns that help in thin years.

Getting there ↗

- Delhi to Rishikesh or Dehradun: 5 to 6 hours by road, or a short flight to Dehradun
- Rishikesh to Joshimath and Auli: about 9 hours
- Rishikesh to Chopta via Ukhimath: about 7 hours
- Delhi to Nainital: 7 to 8 hours by road, or train to Kathgodam

Mountain roads close briefly after snow and landslides. Keep a spare day.

How many nights ↗

- Mussoorie and Dhanaulti: 3 nights
- Auli with Rishikesh: 5 nights
- Chopta and Tungnath: 4 nights
- Nainital and the Kumaon lakes: 3 nights

A sample five-night plan ↗

- Day 1: Delhi to Rishikesh, evening Ganga aarti
- Day 2: drive to Joshimath
- Day 3: Auli, ski lesson or snow walk
- Day 4: Auli, views of Nanda Devi
- Day 5: back to Rishikesh
- Day 6: Delhi

What it costs ↗

Our Uttarakhand packages, including Rishikesh, Chopta and Auli, are on page **19** with current prices. Ski lessons and equipment hire are extra and paid at Auli.

Tell us your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

FROM OUR GUIDES Skiing in Auli ↗ · Uttarakhand in winter ↗

SIKKIM

What to expect

Gangtok stays mild, with days of 10 to 14°C and nights near 4°C. Higher up, the cold bites. Tsomgo Lake at about 3,750 m freezes from January, and Lachung and Yumthang sit under snow. Skies are clear on most mornings, and Kanchenjunga shows from Gangtok and Pelling.

Tsomgo Lake and Nathu La

Tsomgo Lake is a day trip from Gangtok on a permit we arrange with your ID. Baba Mandir sits beyond the lake. Nathu La, the pass on the China border at about 4,300 m, opens to Indian nationals on set days of the week with a separate permit. After heavy snow the army shuts the road past Tsomgo, sometimes for days.

North Sikkim

Lachung is the base for Yumthang Valley and Zero Point. In winter Yumthang lies under snow, and Zero Point opens only when the road is clear. Permits for North Sikkim depend on road conditions, which changed after the Teesta flood of October 2023. We confirm before you book. See our Zero Point and Yumthang guide.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Gangtok 1,650 m · Lachung 2,700 m
January	10 to 14°C by day, about 4°C at night in Gangtok
Best	January to March for snow
Access	Air to Bagdogra or rail to NJP, then road
Nights	5 to 6
Permit	Protected area permits for Tsomgo, Nathu La and North Sikkim

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-SK-102 · 4N / 5D
Gangtok, Lachung & Yumthang Valley
From ₹26,199 per person
View itinerary · Download PDF

AGH-SK-101 · 3N / 4D
Gangtok & Tsomgo Lake
From ₹20,299 per person
View itinerary · Download PDF

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

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→ Festivals in detail 46
→ Families, children and seniors 48

FROM OUR GUIDES Sikkim in winter

SIKKIM · PLANNING

Zero Point

Zero Point, at Yume Samdong, sits above 4,500 m and is the end of the civilian road. In deep winter the road often stays shut. When open, you see a white plateau ringed by peaks. Thin air: walk slowly and limit your time there to about 30 minutes.

Zero Point, also called Yumesamdong, is at about 4,700 metres, where the road ends. Snow is almost certain from December to March. The road may close after heavy snow. Spend no more than an hour there because of the altitude.

Permits and roads

North Sikkim needs a Restricted Area Permit, issued through a registered agent. Road conditions decide whether permits are issued. The Teesta flood of October 2023 damaged roads in the north, and access has changed season to season since. We check before you book and plan an alternative.

Safety

Altitude is the main risk at Zero Point and Nathu La. Do not go on the day you arrive in Gangtok. Carry water and warm layers, and turn back if anyone feels unwell. Children under five and people with heart or lung conditions should skip the highest points.

Gangtok

MG Marg is a walking street with cafes and shops. Rumtek monastery, Enchey monastery, the Ropeway and the Do Drul Chorten fill a relaxed day. Winter is quiet in Gangtok outside the Christmas and New Year week.

Losar

Losar, the Tibetan new year, falls in February or March. Rumtek and other monasteries hold prayers and dances. Dates follow the lunar calendar. See our Losar guide.

How many nights

Five nights works well: three in Gangtok with the Tsomgo day trip, and two in Lachung. Add Pelling for views of Kanchenjunga, or Darjeeling for the toy train.

A sample five-night plan

- Day 1: Bagdogra to Gangtok
- Day 2: Tsomgo Lake and Baba Mandir, Nathu La on permit days
- Day 3: Gangtok monasteries and MG Marg
- Day 4: drive to Lachung
- Day 5: Yumthang, Zero Point if open, back to Gangtok
- Day 6: Bagdogra

What it costs

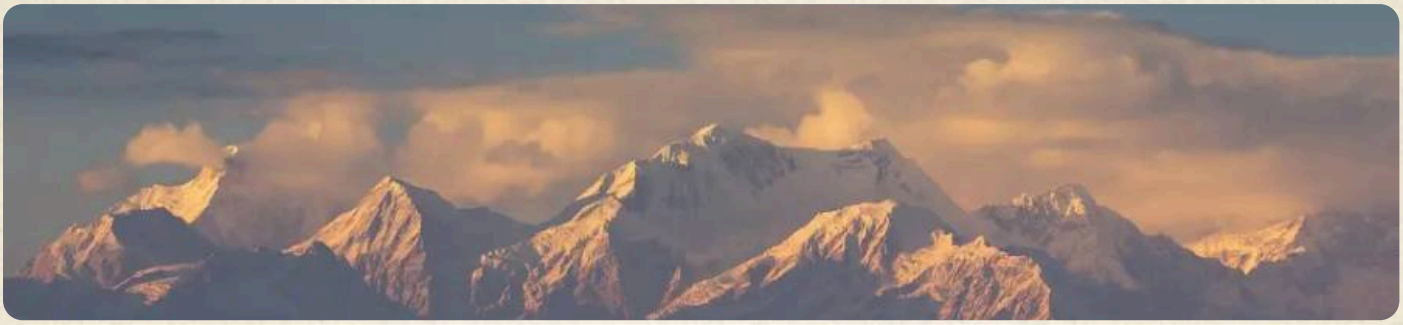
Our Sikkim and Darjeeling packages, including Gangtok and Tsomgo Lake, are on page **21** with current prices. Permits and the Nathu La trip are quoted with your package.

Tell us your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL North Sikkim road and permit status.

FROM OUR GUIDES Snow in Sikkim · Sikkim in winter

DARJEELING



Why winter ↗

Winter brings the clearest skies in Darjeeling. On most mornings you see Kanchenjunga from the Mall, and from Tiger Hill the sunrise lights the whole range. On good days you see the summit of Everest far to the west.

Snow in Darjeeling town is rare. You see snow on the peaks, and on the Sandakphu ridge if you go higher.

Things to do ↗

- Tiger Hill at 4:30 am for sunrise. Carry a flask of tea and dress for near-freezing wind
- The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway joy ride to Ghum and the Batasia Loop, a UNESCO World Heritage line
- A tea estate walk. Winter is the dormant season, so factories run short hours
- Ghum monastery, the Peace Pagoda and the Japanese temple
- The Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, with red pandas and snow leopards, and the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute next door

Tea in winter ↗

Winter is the dormant season, and picking stops until the first flush in March. Tasting rooms in town still sell the year's first and second flush teas. Ask for a guided tasting.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Darjeeling 2,050 m
January	7 to 10°C by day, 1 to 4°C at night
Best	December to February for clear views
Access	Bagdogra airport or NJP station
Nights	3
Suits	Older travellers, families

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-WB-101 · 3N / 4D
Darjeeling & Kalimpong ↗
From ₹20,299 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-WB-103 · 3N / 4D
Darjeeling Toy Train Holiday ↗
From ₹18,799 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

→ Winter treks 43
→ Families, children and seniors 48
→ Christmas and New Year 50

FROM OUR GUIDES Darjeeling in winter ↗

DARJEELING · PLANNING

A sample three-night plan ↗

- Day 1: Bagdogra to Darjeeling, evening on the Mall
- Day 2: Tiger Hill sunrise, Ghum, Batasia Loop, the zoo and HMI
- Day 3: toy train joy ride, tea estate walk, Peace Pagoda
- Day 4: drive to Gangtok or back to Bagdogra

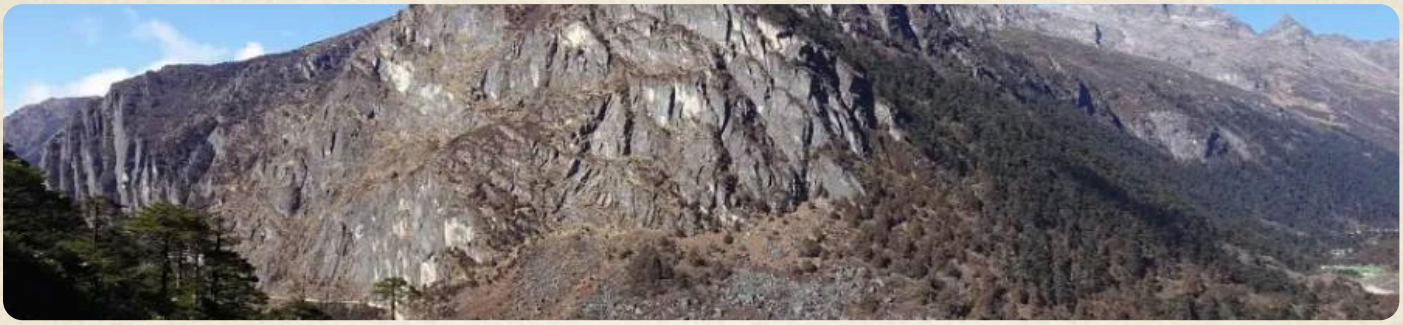
What it costs ↗

Our Darjeeling packages, Darjeeling & Kalimpong and Darjeeling Toy Train Holiday, are on page **23** with current prices.

Tell us your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

FROM OUR GUIDES Darjeeling in winter ↗

TAWANG



Why go in winter ↗

Tawang sits at about 3,000 m in western Arunachal Pradesh. In winter the high lakes freeze, Sela is white and the town is quiet. Days reach 8 to 10°C on clear afternoons. Nights fall below zero.

Permits ↗

Indian citizens need an Inner Line Permit for Arunachal Pradesh, applied online before you travel. We help with the application. Foreign nationals need a Protected Area Permit. Bum La, the pass on the China border, needs a separate permit issued in Tawang, and closes after heavy snow.

The road ↗

Guwahati to Tawang takes two days by road, with a night at Dirang or Bomdila. The Sela Tunnel, opened in March 2024, runs below the 4,170 m pass and keeps the road open on most winter days. You still stop at Sela Lake on the old road when conditions allow. Read our Sela road guide.

The Sela Tunnel ↗

See Tunnels and passes, page **39**.

What to see ↗

- Tawang monastery, the largest in India, founded in the 17th century
- Sela Lake and the frozen lakes on the Bum La road, including Sangetsar, often called Madhuri Lake
- Jaswant Garh war memorial
- Urgelling monastery, birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama
- Nuranang falls near Jang

AT A GLANCE

Base	Tawang 3,050 m
January	8 to 10°C by day, below 0°C at night
Best	December to February
Access	Road from Guwahati, about 2 days
Nights	5
Permit	Inner Line Permit for Indians, PAP for foreign nationals

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-ARAS-101 · 5N / 6D
Tawang & Sela Pass ↗
From ₹31,099 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-AR-104 · 5N / 6D
Tawang with Bumla Pass ↗
From ₹31,999 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

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→ Health and safety in the cold 55

FROM OUR GUIDES Tawang in winter ↗ · Sela Pass and the road to Tawang in winter ↗

TAWANG · PLANNING

What it costs ↗

Our North East packages, including Tawang and Sela Pass, are on page **25** with current prices. Tawang trips are planned around your dates and the permit days.

Tell us your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

FROM OUR GUIDES Tawang in winter ↗

MEGHALAYA

Why winter ↗

Winter is the dry season in Meghalaya. The rain that makes Sohra one of the wettest places on earth stops, the trails firm up and the rivers run clear. Shillong sees days of 14 to 16°C and nights near 4°C. Sunny mornings and cool evenings make walking easy.

Dawki and the Umngot ↗

The Umngot river at Dawki is clearest from November to March. Boats seem to float on air over the stones below. Go early, before the crowds and the midday glare. Shnongpdeng, a short drive upstream, has quieter stretches for a swim in the morning sun and simple riverside camps.

Living root bridges ↗

Khasi villages train the roots of rubber trees across streams to form bridges.

- The double-decker root bridge at Nongriat sits at the bottom of about 3,500 steps from Tyrna. Allow a full day, or stay a night in the village guesthouses
- The single root bridge at Riwai near Mawlynnong is a short walk

Winter is the best season for Nongriat. The steps are dry and the pools below the bridge are clear blue.

Christmas in Shillong ↗

Most people in Meghalaya are Christian, and Christmas is the biggest event of the year. Shillong lights up from mid December, with carols, church services, and markets on Police Bazar. Book hotels early for the week from 20 December. See our Christmas in India guide.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Shillong 1,500 m
January	14 to 16°C by day, about 4°C at night
Best	November to February
Access	Road from Guwahati, 3 hours
Nights	5
Suits	Families, couples, Christmas trips

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-ML-102 · 4N / 5D
Meghalaya: Dawki, Mawlynnong & Root Bridges ↗
From ₹24,199 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-ML-101 · 4N / 5D
Shillong & Cherrapunji ↗
From ₹23,199 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

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→ Christmas and New Year 50
→ Sample winter itineraries 53

FROM OUR GUIDES Meghalaya in winter ↗

MEGHALAYA · PLANNING

What it costs ↗

Our North East packages, including Meghalaya: Dawki, Mawlynnong and Root Bridges, are on page **27** with current prices.

Tell us your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

FROM OUR GUIDES Meghalaya in winter ↗

RAJASTHAN

The best season

Winter is the main season in Rajasthan. Days of 20 to 25°C suit long fort visits and walks through old bazaars. Nights turn cold: close to 5°C in Jaisalmer and lower on the dunes. Mount Abu touches freezing in January, and Jaipur sees foggy mornings in late December.

The classic circuit

- Jaipur: Amber Fort, City Palace, Hawa Mahal and the bazaars
- Jodhpur: Mehrangarh Fort and the blue houses below
- Jaisalmer: the living golden fort and the havelis
- Udaipur: City Palace, Lake Pichola and sunset boat rides
- Pushkar: the lake, ghats and the camel fair season

Desert nights

A night in a camp at Sam or Khuri near Jaisalmer brings folk music, a camel ride at sunset and a bonfire. Tents get cold after midnight. Ask for a camp with heaters or extra quilts, and carry a warm jacket for the evening.

Festivals

- Pushkar Camel Fair in October or November
- Bikaner Camel Festival in January
- Jaisalmer Desert Festival in February
- Makar Sankranti kite flying in Jaipur on 14 January

See our guides to the Jaisalmer Desert Festival and the Bikaner Camel Festival.

Crowds and booking

Late December and early January are the busiest weeks. Heritage hotels and palace stays sell out early. Book at least six weeks ahead for New Year.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Jaisalmer 225 m · Udaipur 600 m
January	20 to 25°C by day, about 5°C at night on the dunes
Best	November to February
Access	Air, rail and road
Nights	6 to 9
Suits	Everyone, including those who dislike cold

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-RJ-102 · 8N / 9D
Royal Rajasthan: Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur & Jaisalmer
From ₹48,699 per person
View itinerary · Download PDF

AGH-DLUPRJ-102 · 6N / 7D
Golden Triangle
From ₹32,399 per person
View itinerary · Download PDF

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

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→ Winter honeymoons 47
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FROM OUR GUIDES Rajasthan in winter

RAJASTHAN · PLANNING

What it costs ↗

Our Golden Triangle and Rajasthan packages are on page **29** with current prices.

Tell us your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

FROM OUR GUIDES Rajasthan in winter ↗

KUTCH

Why winter ↗

Kutch is too hot for most of the year. From November to February, days sit at 25 to 28°C and nights drop to 10°C. The salt of the Great Rann turns white once the water dries in November.

The White Rann ↗

The salt flat at Dhordo is the main sight, best at sunset and on full moon nights. You need a permit, bought online or at the Bhirandiyara check post. See our Rann Utsav guide for the tent city.

Beyond the Rann ↗

- Bhuj: Aina Mahal, Prag Mahal and the Kutch Museum
- Kala Dungar: the highest point in Kutch, with views over the Rann
- Dholavira: the Harappan city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2021
- Mandvi: a quiet beach, the Vijay Vilas Palace and the shipyards where wooden dhows are still built
- Lakhpat: an old walled port and gurudwara on the edge of the Rann

Artisan villages ↗

Kutch holds some of the finest handwork in India. Visit Nirona for Rogan art, Bhujodi for weaving and Ajrakhpur for block printing. Hodka and Dhordo have mirror work and embroidery. Buy direct from the artisans.

AT A GLANCE

Base	Bhuj, near sea level
January	25 to 28°C by day, about 10°C at night
Best	November to February
Access	Air to Bhuj, or Ahmedabad by road
Nights	5
Suits	Families, photographers, craft lovers

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-GJ-101 · 3N / 4D
Rann Utsav: White Desert of Kutch ↗
From ₹28,099 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

IN THIS REPORT

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FROM OUR GUIDES Kutch in winter ↗

KUTCH · PLANNING

Wildlife ↗

The Little Rann of Kutch is home to the Indian wild ass. Stay at Dasada or Bajana for jeep safaris at dawn. Flamingos, cranes and pelicans winter on the wetlands.

The Little Rann of Kutch is home to the Indian wild ass and migratory birds in winter. Book a safari from Dasada or Zainabad.

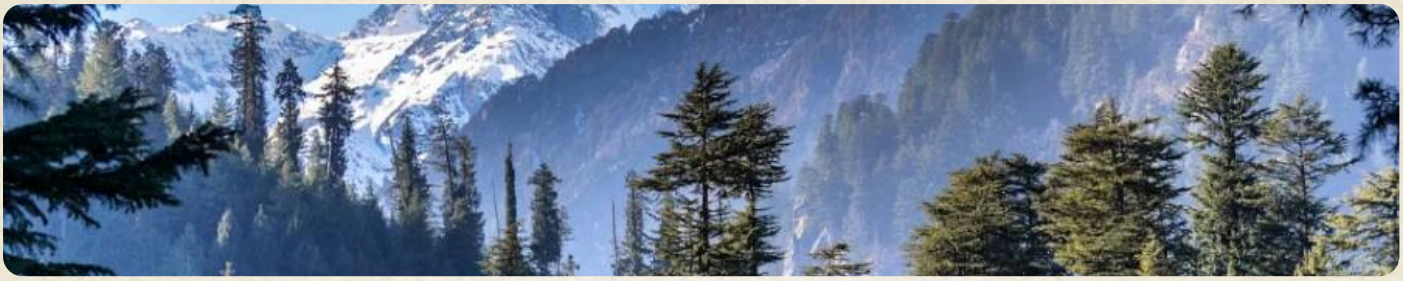
What it costs ↗

Our Gujarat packages, including Rann Utsav: White Desert of Kutch, are on page **31** with current prices.

Tell us your dates and we send a plan within 24 hours on working days.

FROM OUR GUIDES Kutch in winter ↗

SNOW NEAR DELHI



Within 8 hours ↗

- Shimla and Kufri: about 350 km, 7 to 8 hours. Snow on some days from late December
- Mussoorie and Dhanaulti: about 290 km, 7 hours. Dhanaulti gets more snow than Mussoorie
- Chakrata: about 320 km, 8 hours. A quiet cantonment town with snow in January in good years
- Kanatal: near Dhanaulti, with camps and Surkanda Devi temple on a hilltop

Within 12 hours ↗

- Narkanda: 60 km past Shimla, 9 to 10 hours. Better snow odds and beginner skiing
- Dalhousie and Khajjiar: about 560 km, 11 hours
- Chopta: about 450 km via Rishikesh, 11 to 12 hours, with snow walks to Tungnath

The surest snow ↗

Manali and Solang, about 540 km and 12 to 14 hours, hold snow from December to March. Take an overnight Volvo bus or leave by car at 4 am. See our Manali and Solang guide.

Weekend plans ↗

- Friday night to Sunday: Shimla and Kufri, or Mussoorie and Dhanaulti
- Three nights: Narkanda via Shimla, or Chopta via Rishikesh
- Four nights: Manali and Solang by overnight bus

Leave Delhi by 5 am to clear the plains before traffic and fog thicken.

Where to stay ↗

Book heated rooms close to the snow point: Kufri or Narkanda rather than central Shimla, Dhanaulti rather than Mussoorie Mall. You save the morning drive and get snow from the window.

FROM OUR GUIDES Snow near Delhi ↗

AT A GLANCE

Closest	Kufri, Dhanaulti, Chakrata
Surest	Solang and Sissu, late December to February
By road	7 to 14 hours from Delhi
Nights	2 to 4
Tip	Start before dawn to beat hill traffic

AGRIMA PACKAGES

AGH-HP-116 · 2N / 3D
Shimla & Narkanda Weekend ↗
From ₹14,999 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-HP-115 · 2N / 3D
Manali & Atal Tunnel Weekend ↗
From ₹15,399 per person
View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Per person, twin sharing, standard hotels, 5% GST extra.

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WHY NOBODY PROMISES SNOW

पहाड़ का मौसम है।

“Pahad ka mausam hai.”

It is mountain weather. You never quite know when it will change.

Ask someone in a Himalayan town when it will snow and you will often hear the same reply: *pahad ka mausam hai*. Then a shrug. Nobody knows. It might snow tomorrow, next week or not at all.

This is not gloom. It comes from generations of living with mountain weather. A clear morning clouds over within hours. Sunshine turns to freezing wind, rain, sleet or snow. Two valleys side by side often have different weather on the same day.

The mountains do not follow a traveller’s itinerary, and even people who have lived there all their lives are careful not to promise snowfall.

Cold is a condition. Snowfall is an event. The temperature often stays several degrees below zero for days without a single flake falling.

For a Himalayan winter trip, the lesson is practical. Travel for the mountains, the cold, the quiet and the views. Welcome snow if it comes, but do not let the whole trip depend on it. If snow underfoot matters most, choose places where it lies on the ground through the season, such as Gulmarg, Solang, Auli or Lachung, and go between late December and March.

WHERE AND WHEN IT SNOWS

How snowfall works in the Himalaya

Most snow in the Indian Himalaya arrives with western disturbances, storm systems that travel from the Mediterranean region between December and March. Each one brings two or three days of cloud and snow, then clear blue skies.

No place guarantees snowfall on a fixed date. Higher places give you better odds of fresh snow, and snow already on the ground lasts longer. If you want to watch snow falling, go for five or six nights and keep your plan loose. If you want to walk in snow, pick a place where snow settles from December to March.

The surest places

- Gulmarg, Kashmir: snow on the ground from late December to March. The gondola takes you higher
- Sonamarg and Pahalgam, Kashmir: snow from late December, deep in January and February
- Solang Valley and Sissu, near Manali: December to March
- Auli, Uttarakhand: late December to March, with skiing
- Tsomgo Lake and Lachung, Sikkim: January to March
- Tawang and Sela, Arunachal Pradesh: December to February
- Kaza and Kibber, Spiti: snow cover from January, with extreme cold
- Leh and Pangong, Ladakh: dry cold with lighter snow and frozen lakes

Snowfall you might catch

These hill towns get snow on a handful of days each winter, not every year:

- Shimla and Kufri
- Mussoorie and Dhanaulti
- Nainital
- Dalhousie and Khajjiar
- Narkanda, higher and more reliable than Shimla

Plan these for the hills and the cold, and treat fresh snow as a bonus.

Best weeks

The second half of January and the first half of February give the best mix of fresh snow, settled cover and roads that crews keep open. Late December brings the first snow but also the biggest crowds. March gives snow in Gulmarg, Sonamarg and Auli with softer cold, which suits families. See our snowfall calendar.

FROM OUR GUIDES Where to see snowfall in India

WHERE AND WHEN IT SNOWS · CONTINUED

Snow without the extreme cold ↗

March in Gulmarg, Sonamarg or Auli, and February in Solang or Kufri, give snow on the ground with milder days. Good for elderly travellers and young children.

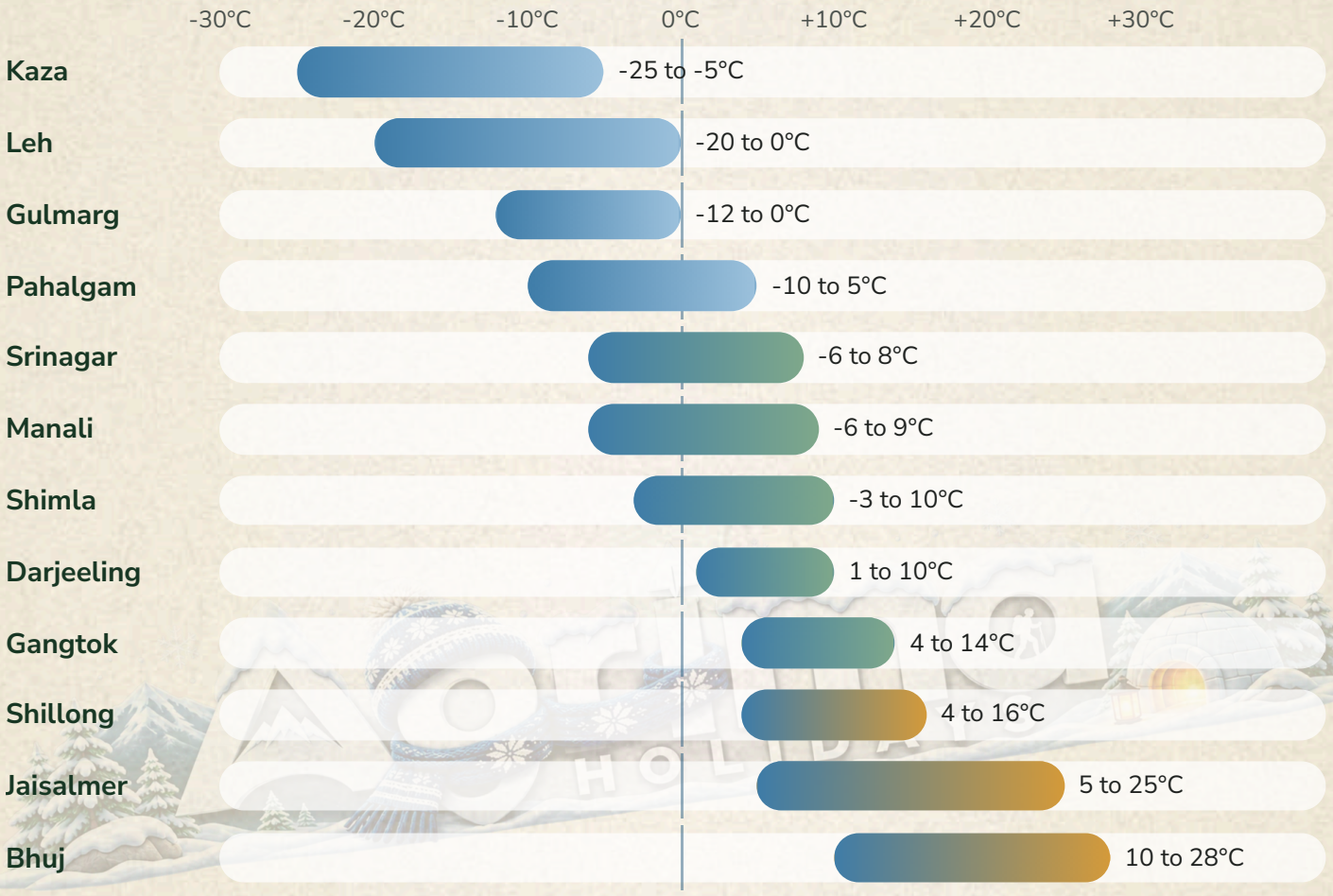
Watching the forecast ↗

Check the India Meteorological Department forecast a week before you travel. A western disturbance on the map means snow in the hills two or three days later. Our team tracks it and tells you which day to be at the snow point.

FROM OUR GUIDES Where to see snowfall in India ↗

JANUARY TEMPERATURES

Typical January night lows and day highs, coldest first. The bar runs from the night low to the day high.



Long-term January ranges for the main town, from Agrima's published guides. Where a guide gives a single figure, the range uses that figure. Wind and altitude make it feel colder, especially on passes and lakes. Pack for the night figure, not the day.

HIMALAYAN ROAD ACCESS

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL

Closed for winter

- Rohtang Pass, Himachal: about November to May
- Kunzum Pass, Spiti: about November to June
- Manali to Leh highway beyond Darcha: October or November to May
- Zojila on the Srinagar to Leh road: closes for the deepest winter months, the dates set each year by the road authorities

Open with interruptions

- Atal Tunnel to Lahaul: open, except in heavy snow or avalanche warnings
- Srinagar to Sonamarg: open through the Z-Morh tunnel
- Shimla to Kaza through Kinnaur: open, the only winter road into Spiti
- Khardung La to Nubra: cleared after each snowfall
- Sela Tunnel to Tawang: open on most days since March 2024
- Nathu La and Tsomgo Lake: closed after heavy snow

How closures work

After a snowstorm, the Border Roads Organisation and state crews clear the main roads in order of priority. Small roads wait longer. Police stop traffic at barriers until a road is safe.

Spiti and Kinnaur

The road from Shimla through Kinnaur to Kaza stays open as the only winter way into Spiti. Rockfall at Malling Nala and black ice near Nako stop traffic for hours. Read our Winter Spiti guide.

Uttarakhand

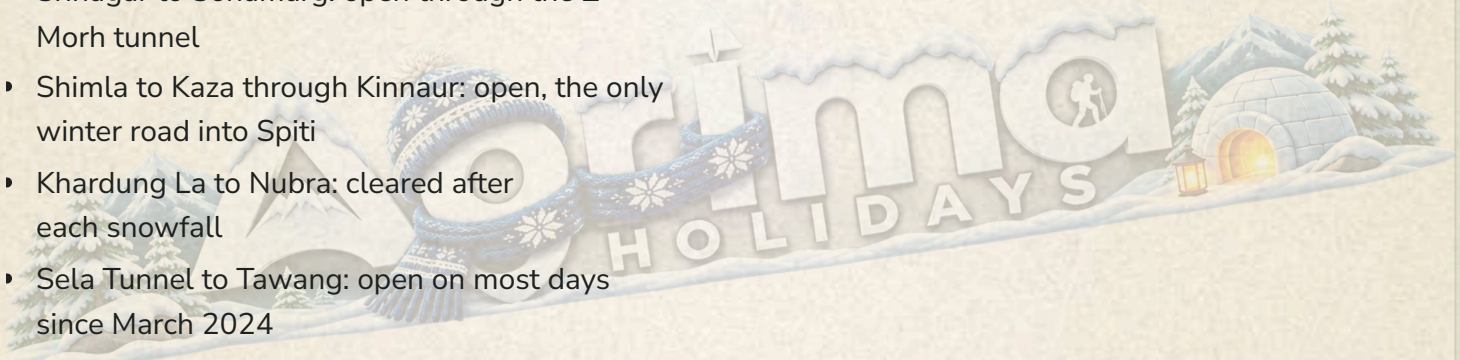
The roads to Auli, Chopta and Munsiyari close briefly after snow and reopen once cleared. The Char Dham temples close for winter from about November to April.

Sikkim and Arunachal

Nathu La and the North Sikkim roads close after heavy snow. The Sela Tunnel keeps Tawang open on most days, and Bum La closes in deep snow.

What we do

We check road status each evening before a drive day and adjust the plan if needed. Keep one spare day in any winter trip to the high Himalaya.



FROM OUR GUIDES Himalayan road and pass closures in winter

TUNNELS AND PASSES

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL

Atal Tunnel

The Atal Tunnel runs about 9 km under the Pir Panjal range, from near Solang to Sissu in Lahaul. Opened in 2020, it replaced the Rohtang Pass road as the main route into Lahaul.

Rohtang in winter

Rohtang Pass closes from about November to May. In season it needs an online permit with a daily cap. In winter you skip Rohtang entirely.

Atal Tunnel timings and rules

Police manage traffic at the south portal near Solang. After snow, they let vehicles through only once the roads on both sides are clear. Carry ID, keep your headlights on and do not stop inside the tunnel.

Zojila in winter

Zojila, at about 3,500 m, connects Sonamarg in Kashmir to Drass and Kargil. Heavy snow shuts the pass for the deepest winter months. The road authorities announce the closing and reopening dates each year.

The Z-Morh tunnel

The Z-Morh tunnel, opened in January 2025, keeps the road from Srinagar to Sonamarg open all winter. Beyond Sonamarg, the road climbs to Zojila.

The Zojila tunnel

A longer tunnel under Zojila is under construction. Once complete, the road to Ladakh will stay open through the year.

When Zojila reopens

Crews start clearing Zojila in late winter. The pass reopens for traffic in spring, the date set each year by the road authorities. Early season drives pass between walls of snow.

The road to Tawang

Guwahati to Tawang is about 450 km. Most trips take two days, with a night in Dirang or Bomdila. The road climbs from the Assam plains through Bhalukpong, Bomdila and Dirang, then over Sela to Tawang.

The Sela Tunnel

The Sela Tunnel opened in March 2024 and runs below the pass. The road stays open on most winter days. Heavy snow still closes the stretch for short spells.

Sela Lake

Sela Lake, at about 4,170 m, freezes in winter. You reach it by the old road over the pass when conditions allow. Stop for 20 minutes, not longer, at this height.

FROM OUR GUIDES Atal Tunnel and Rohtang in winter · Zojila and the Srinagar to Leh road in winter · Sela Pass and the road to Tawang in winter

DRIVING IN SNOW

Should you drive yourself ↗

If you have never driven on ice, hire a car with a local driver. Our drivers know where black ice forms, where to fit chains and when to turn back.

Hire a local driver ↗

Hill drivers know where ice forms, which bends to avoid at night and where the police barriers go up. All our winter packages include an experienced hill driver.

Snow chains ↗

Chains fit on the drive wheels and give grip on packed snow. Shops in Tangmarg, Manali and Joshimath rent them. Police often refuse entry past barriers without chains.

Black ice ↗

Black ice forms on shaded bends in the early morning and after sunset. Drive between 9 am and 4 pm in winter. Brake gently and early.

4x4 or not ↗

A 4x4 helps on unploughed roads. On main roads cleared by crews, a car with good tyres and chains does the job.

Before each drive ↗

- Check the road status the evening before
- Fill the tank in the last big town
- Carry water, snacks and a blanket
- Download offline maps. Phone signal drops in valleys

If you get stuck ↗

Stay with the vehicle. Keep the engine off except for short spells to warm up, with a window open a crack. Call your hotel or the local police. Wear all your layers.

Tyres and fuel ↗

Ask for good tyres before the trip. Diesel thickens in extreme cold in Spiti and Ladakh, so drivers there use winter-grade fuel or additives. Fill up in every big town.

FROM OUR GUIDES Driving in snow in India ↗

SKIING AND SNOW ACTIVITIES

Where to learn

- Gulmarg, Kashmir: the best snow and the longest season. Private instructors and the government ski school
- Auli, Uttarakhand: gentle slopes and courses run by the state tourism body
- Solang, Himachal: short slopes close to Manali, good for a first taste
- Narkanda, Himachal: small, quiet, and close to Shimla

When to go

January to early March. February gives the most reliable snow. Courses run only when cover is deep enough.

How long

One day on the snow teaches you to stand, slide and stop. Three to five days with an instructor gets most beginners down a gentle slope with control. Government courses run 7 to 14 days.

A first day on skis

Your instructor starts on flat snow. You learn to put on boots and skis, to walk sideways uphill, and to stop with the snowplough, tips together and tails apart. By the afternoon most beginners slide down a gentle slope and stop on their own.

Day two adds turns. Day three takes you onto a longer slope or a short lift. Fear fades fast once you learn to stop.

Equipment

Hire skis, boots and poles at the slope. Bring your own waterproof trousers, a warm jacket, gloves, goggles and a helmet if you have one. Rental shops in Gulmarg and Auli stock jackets and boots too.

Costs to plan for

Instructor fees, equipment hire and lift or gondola tickets are paid at the slope and change each season. Government courses in Gulmarg and Auli cost less per day but run longer and fill early. Ask us for current rates when you book.

The Gulmarg gondola

Phase 1 runs from Gulmarg to Kongdori. Phase 2 continues to Apharwat, the top of the mountain, and opens when weather and snow allow. Queues build by 10 am. Buy tickets online the evening before.

Gulmarg slopes

Beginners use the nursery slopes near the hotels and the lower Kongdori bowl. Intermediate skiers ski down from Kongdori. Apharwat is for experienced skiers and off-piste riders, always with a guide.

Off-piste and avalanches

Apharwat is famous for deep powder off the marked runs. Go off-piste only with a certified guide who carries avalanche gear, and never after heavy snowfall until the slopes settle. Check the daily avalanche warning posted in Gulmarg.

Solang activities

- Ski lessons on the gentle lower slopes
- Snow tubing down a groomed lane
- Snowmobile rides
- The Solang ropeway to a viewpoint at about 3,200 m
- Paragliding on clear days, weather permitting

FROM OUR GUIDES Skiing in India for beginners · Skiing in Gulmarg · Solang Valley in winter

SKIING AND SNOW ACTIVITIES · CONTINUED

Solang prices ↗

Activity operators at Solang charge per ride or per hour. Rates change with demand and rise on weekends and around New Year. Agree the price before you start. Hire snow suits and boots at the counters along the road.

Safety ↗

- Wear a helmet. Rent one if you have none
- Keep to slopes that match your level
- Stop at the side of a run, never in the middle
- Drink water. Cold air dries you out
- Wear goggles and sunscreen. Snow glare burns

FROM OUR GUIDES Solang Valley in winter ↗ · Skiing in India for beginners ↗

WINTER TREKS

Easy

- Nag Tibba, Uttarakhand: 2 days, about 3,000 m. Weekend trek from Delhi
- Dayara Bugyal, Uttarakhand: 4 to 5 days, about 3,400 to 3,600 m. Wide snow meadows

Easy to moderate

- Kedarkantha, Uttarakhand: 6 days, about 3,800 m. Summit views
- Kuari Pass, Uttarakhand: 6 days, about 3,800 m. Views of Nanda Devi
- Har Ki Dun, Uttarakhand: 7 days, about 3,600 m. Old villages in a deep valley

Moderate

- Brahmatal, Uttarakhand: 6 days, about 3,700 m. Frozen lakes and a ridge walk
- Sandakphu, West Bengal: 6 days, about 3,640 m. Kanchenjunga and Everest from one ridge

Hard

- Chadar, Ladakh: about 9 days with acclimatisation. Walking on the frozen Zanskar river

Best months by trek

- Nag Tibba, Kedarkantha, Brahmatal, Dayara Bugyal: late December to March
- Kuari Pass: December to March
- Sandakphu: December to March, snow from January
- Chadar: mid January to February

How to choose

Pick a trek a level below your summer limit. Snow makes every trail slower and colder. First-timers should start with Nag Tibba or Dayara Bugyal.

The Chadar trek

The Chadar is the sheet of ice that forms over the Zanskar river in deep winter. Trekkers walk on the ice through a gorge, camping on the banks, with nights near −25°C.

Chadar rules

Ladakh requires every Chadar trekker to spend three days in Leh to acclimatise, pass a medical check and buy insurance and permits through the local authorities. Plan these days into your trip.

Who should not go

Skip the Chadar if you have heart or lung conditions, high blood pressure, or have never trekked at altitude. Try Kedarkantha or Brahmatal first.

Safety

Turn back in bad weather. Listen to your trek leader. Report headaches and nausea early, as they signal altitude sickness. Carry your own basic medicines.

FROM OUR GUIDES Winter treks in India · Chadar trek on the frozen Zanskar

HIMACHAL AND UTTARAKHAND TREKS

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL

Triund ↗

Easy to moderate

McLeodganj, Kangra · About 2,850 m · 1 to 2 days · December to February

A 9 km climb from McLeodganj or Dharamkot to a grassy ridge facing the Dhauladhar. Snow often covers the top after a storm. Few camps stay open in deep winter, so many people walk up and back in a day.

View the McLeodganj and Triund Trek package ↗

Kheerganga ↗

Moderate

Barshaini, Parvati valley · About 2,950 m · 2 days · December to February

About 12 km from Barshaini through forest to a meadow with a hot spring. Snow covers the upper trail in winter, and most cafes and camps at the top close. Go with a local guide and carry your own food.

View the Kasol and Kheerganga Trek package ↗

Prashar Lake ↗

Easy

Mandi district · About 2,730 m · 1 to 2 days · January and February

A short walk from Baggi, or from the road head near the top, to a lake with a pagoda-style temple and a floating island. The lake often freezes in midwinter and the meadow lies under snow.

View the trek itinerary ↗

Jalori Pass and Serolsar Lake ↗

Easy

Above Jibhi and Shoja, Kullu · About 3,120 m at the pass · 1 day · December to March

A 5 km forest walk from Jalori Pass to Serolsar Lake and its temple. The road over Jalori shuts for days after heavy snow, so stay in Jibhi or Shoja and walk up from the snowline.

View the trek itinerary ↗

Kareri Lake ↗

Moderate

Near Dharamshala · About 2,950 m · 2 to 3 days · December to March

About 13 km from Kareri village along a stream to a glacial lake that freezes in winter. The upper trail is icy, so it suits fit walkers with a local guide and microspikes.

View the trek itinerary ↗

Kuari Pass ↗

Easy to moderate

Joshimath and Auli, Uttarakhand · About 3,800 m · 4 to 6 days · December to March

Camps through oak and rhododendron forest to a pass with wide views of Nanda Devi, Dronagiri and the Garhwal peaks. Deep snow on the upper camps in January and February.

View the trek itinerary ↗

Dayara Bugyal ↗

Easy to moderate

Raithal or Barsu, Uttarkashi · About 3,400 to 3,600 m · 4 to 5 days · December to March

A wide high meadow above the Bhagirathi valley. In winter the slopes fill with snow and suit a first snow trek, with short walking days and big views of the Gangotri peaks.

View the trek itinerary ↗

Before any winter trek

Snow, ice and closed camps change a trail quickly. Go with a registered local guide, carry microspikes, and keep a spare day. Altitudes are approximate.

WINTER FESTIVAL CALENDAR

Dates follow lunar calendars or organisers' announcements and move each year.
Every row is CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL

Festival	Where	When	What you see
Hornbill Festival	Kisama, near Kohima, Nagaland	1 to 10 December	Naga tribes, dances, food, music
Christmas	Shillong, Darjeeling, Kolkata, Goa	25 December	Midnight mass, lights, carols
New Year	Hill towns and Rajasthan	31 December	Gala dinners, peak prices
Uttarayan	Ahmedabad and Gujarat	14 January	Kites from every rooftop
Bikaner Camel Festival	Bikaner, Rajasthan	January	Camel parades, folk music
Torgya	Tawang monastery	January	Monastic masked dances
Losar	Ladakh, Sikkim, Tawang	December to March by region	Tibetan new year
Magh Mela	Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh	January and February	Bathing days at the Sangam
Jaisalmer Desert Festival	Jaisalmer and Sam dunes	February	Camel races, Mr Desert, folk evenings
Rann Utsav	Dhordo, Kutch	November to February	Tent city on the White Rann

Festival weeks fill hotels fast. Book six weeks ahead. Check dates with us, as most festivals follow lunar calendars.

FROM OUR GUIDES Winter festivals in India ↗

FESTIVALS IN DETAIL

Hornbill Festival ↗

The Hornbill Festival at Kisama near Kohima brings together the Naga tribes from 1 to 10 December each year, with dances, games and food. See our Hornbill guide.

Rann Utsav ↗

The tent city at Dhordo runs from November to February, with folk music and the White Rann at full moon.

Losar ↗

Losar marks the new year in the Tibetan Buddhist calendar. Families clean their homes, monasteries hold prayers and masked dances, and villages gather for food, archery and music.

Losar in Ladakh ↗

In Leh, Losar begins with families lighting fires at home, then carrying flaming torches through the streets on the first night, called metho. Monasteries hold prayers, and families visit each other with gifts of food.

Losar in Sikkim and Tawang ↗

Losar in Sikkim and among the Monpa of Tawang follows the Tibetan calendar. Houses are cleaned, butter lamps are lit and prayer flags renewed. Monks perform cham dances at Rumtek, Pemayangtse and Tawang monasteries.

Festival etiquette ↗

- Ask before photographing people or rituals
- Walk clockwise around stupas and prayer wheels
- Dress modestly inside monasteries

Jaisalmer Desert Festival ↗

- The opening parade from the fort to Shaheed Poonam Singh stadium
- The Mr Desert contest, with the best-turned-out man in Rajasthani dress
- Turban tying, moustache and tug of war contests
- Camel decoration, races and polo
- Kalbelia and Manganiyar music in the evenings
- The final night under the full moon on the Sam dunes

Bikaner Camel Festival ↗

Decorated camels parade through the city. Camel dances, fur-cutting art, milking contests and folk performances follow. The evening events move to the Ladera dunes outside town.

Uttarayan ↗

On Makar Sankranti, Gujarat takes to its rooftops. From dawn to dusk on 14 January, and again on 15 January, the sky over Ahmedabad fills with kites. At night, paper lanterns float up.

Magh Mela ↗

The Magh Mela at the Sangam in Prayagraj runs from January to February, with pilgrims bathing on key dates. See our Magh Mela guide.

FROM OUR GUIDES Winter festivals in India ↗ · Losar ↗ · Jaisalmer Desert Festival ↗ · Bikaner Camel Festival ↗ · Uttarayan ↗

WINTER HONEYMOONS

For snow ↗

- Gulmarg and Pahalgam, Kashmir: a houseboat night in Srinagar and snow walks
- Manali and Solang: cosy cottages and snow play
- Auli: ski lessons and views of Nanda Devi

For warmth and heritage ↗

- Udaipur: lake palaces and sunset boat rides
- Jaisalmer: a desert camp under the stars
- Jaipur: palace hotels and old bazaars

For quiet mountains ↗

- Darjeeling and Gangtok: clear views of Kanchenjunga, tea and calm
- Shillong and Sohra: clear rivers and living root bridges

Choosing ↗

Pick by the pace you want. Snow trips mean cold nights and long drives. Rajasthan gives easy days and grand stays. The North East suits couples who want fewer crowds.

Manali, Gulmarg or Auli ↗

- Snow certainty: Gulmarg highest, then Auli, then Manali
- Getting there: Manali by road, Gulmarg by air, Auli by long road
- Crowds: Manali busiest, Auli quietest
- Stays: Manali most choice, Auli fewest

Budget and pace ↗

Snow honeymoons cost more in late December and less from mid January. Rajasthan and Meghalaya give easy days and fewer long drives. Pick two places, not four.

Honeymoon touches ↗

Ask for a lake or mountain view room, a candlelit dinner, cake and a flower bed decoration. We arrange these on request.

Sample plans ↗

- Snow: Srinagar 2, Gulmarg 2, Pahalgam 2
- Palaces: Udaipur 2, Jodhpur 1, Jaisalmer 2, Jaipur 2
- Mountains: Gangtok 3, Darjeeling 2
- Hills and rivers: Shillong 2, Sohra 2

FROM OUR GUIDES Winter honeymoon in India ↗ · Snow honeymoon ↗

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SENIORS

Easiest places

- Shimla and Kufri: short drive, gentle snow points
- Manali and Solang: snow tubing and sledges
- Gulmarg: the gondola and snow play close to the hotels
- Gangtok and Tsomgo Lake: a day trip to snow from a mild base

Best age

Children from four years enjoy snow play. Younger children feel the cold fast. For toddlers, choose short sessions and a warm hotel close to the snow.

Clothing

A one-piece snow suit, waterproof mittens, a warm cap, two pairs of socks and waterproof boots. Pack two spare sets of gloves. Kids soak them in minutes.

Pace

One snow outing a day of two to three hours is enough. Plan indoor time after lunch. Hot chocolate and a warm room make the day.

Safety

- Keep kids away from snowmobile and tubing lanes
- Sunscreen and sunglasses, even on cloudy days
- Avoid places above 3,500 m with young children
- Keep car journeys under five hours a day

Toddlers and grandparents

Choose snow below 3,000 m with short drives: Kufri near Shimla, Solang near Manali, Gulmarg from Srinagar, Tsomgo Lake as a day trip from Gangtok. Avoid Ladakh, Spiti and North Sikkim with toddlers or elderly travellers.

Rooms

Ask for central heating or room heaters with electric blankets, a lift or ground floor room, and a hotel close to the snow point.

Health

Older travellers with heart or lung conditions should check with a doctor before the trip. Carry regular medicines and a basic first aid kit. Read our cold weather health guide.

Gondolas and lifts

The Gulmarg gondola Phase 1 to Kongdori suits most seniors and children. Skip Phase 2 to Apharwat with toddlers.

Without the deep cold

- Under 5: Rajasthan and Kutch
- 5 to 12: Rajasthan forts, Kutch, Darjeeling, a snow day in Shimla
- Teens: Meghalaya walks, Ranthambore safaris

Rajasthan

Forts, palaces, camel rides and a desert camp. Children enjoy Jaisalmer's dunes and the forts of Jaipur and Jodhpur. Days are warm and sunny.

Meghalaya

Clear rivers at Dawki, caves at Mawsmai and living root bridges. Older children enjoy the walks. Read our Meghalaya in winter guide.

FROM OUR GUIDES Snow trip with kids · Snow trips with toddlers and grandparents · Family winter holidays in India without the deep cold

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SENIORS · CONTINUED

Tips for families ↗

- Keep drives under five hours a day
- Plan two nights in each place
- Carry snacks and a basic medicine kit
- Pick hotels with family rooms or connecting rooms

FROM OUR GUIDES Family winter holidays in India without the deep cold ↗

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL

Which dates are peak

Most hotels treat 20 December to 5 January as peak. Some extend to the long weekend around 26 January.

What changes

- Room rates rise, often sharply around 31 December
- A compulsory gala dinner on New Year's Eve
- Minimum stays of two or three nights
- Stricter cancellation, often non-refundable

Peak-date rules

- Hotels add a compulsory gala dinner on 31 December, charged per guest
- Most ask for a minimum stay of two or three nights over New Year
- Prices for the week from 24 December run highest
- Many bookings over New Year are non-refundable

Our published package prices exclude these supplements. We quote them in writing before you pay. Read our peak dates guide.

A booking timeline

- September: decide the place and dates
- October: book hotels and flights
- Mid November: last good choice of rooms
- December: book only what is left, at peak prices

Snow and celebrations

- Manali and Solang: the busiest New Year destination in north India. Mall Road crowds, hotel parties and snow at Solang. Book by early November
- Shimla and Kufri: a short drive from Delhi and Chandigarh. Mall Road and the Ridge fill up on 31 December
- Gulmarg and Pahalgam: snow almost certain, fewer parties and a calmer feel. Fly to Srinagar
- Auli: small, quiet and snowy, with views of Nanda Devi

Desert and palaces

- Jaisalmer: desert camps at Sam with a gala dinner, folk music and a bonfire
- Jaipur: palace hotels and heritage havelis with New Year dinners
- Udaipur: lake-view rooms and rooftop restaurants

Days in Rajasthan stay pleasant in late December, and nights in the desert drop close to 5°C. Read our Rajasthan in winter guide.

Calmer choices

- Rishikesh: riverside camps, yoga and the Ganga aarti
- Mussoorie and Dhanaulti: cedar forests and hill views, with a better chance of space than Shimla
- Shillong and Meghalaya: Christmas lights, clear rivers and dry December weather
- Darjeeling: mountain views, tea gardens and the toy train
- Chopta: a small hamlet in Uttarakhand with snow walks to Tungnath

FROM OUR GUIDES Booking Christmas and New Year · New Year trips from Delhi

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR · CONTINUED

Christmas in Shillong ↗

Meghalaya celebrates Christmas across the state. Shillong's churches hold midnight mass, and Police Bazar fills with lights, carols and markets. Clear, dry December weather helps.

Questions to ask before you pay ↗

- Is a gala dinner compulsory, and what does it cost?
- What is the minimum stay?
- What is the cancellation policy?
- Are children charged for the gala dinner?
- Does the hotel have heating and power backup?

FROM OUR GUIDES Christmas in India ↗ · Booking Christmas and New Year ↗

SAMPLE WINTER ITINERARIES

Ready Agrima itineraries for this winter. Each one has a day-by-day PDF on agrimaholidays.com, free to download.

AGH-JK-105 — 5N / 6D · Late Dec–Mar

Kashmir Winter Snow

- Srinagar 2N
- Gulmarg 2N
- Pahalgam 1N

From, per person **₹24,699**

View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-LA-103 — 7N / 8D · Jan–Feb

Frozen Pangong Winter

- Leh 3N
- Pangong 1N
- Leh 1N
- Ulley 2N

From, per person **₹44,399**

View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-HP-112 — 10N / 11D · Jan–Mar

Winter Spiti

- Shimla 1N
- Kalpa 2N
- Tabo 1N
- Kaza 4N
- Kalpa 1N
- Narkanda 1N

From, per person **₹50,999**

View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-HP-101 — 5N / 6D · Dec–Mar

Shimla & Manali with Kufri and Solang

- Shimla 2N
- Manali 3N

From, per person **₹22,299**

View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-HP-115 — 2N / 3D · Dec–Mar

Manali & Atal Tunnel Weekend

- Manali 2N

From, per person **₹15,399**

View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-HP-116 — 2N / 3D · Jan

Shimla & Narkanda Weekend

- Shimla 2N

From, per person **₹14,999**

View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

Prices per person on twin sharing in a standard room, 5% GST extra, airfare excluded, valid for travel till 31 March 2027. Peak-date supplements apply from about 20 December to 5 January.

SAMPLE ITINERARIES · CONTINUED

AGH-UK-104 — 7N / 8D · Late Dec–Mar

Rishikesh, Chopta & Auli

Rishikesh	1N
Chopta	2N
Auli	2N
Rudraprayag	1N
Rishikesh	1N

From, per person **₹25,799**

View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-SK-102 — 4N / 5D · Jan–Mar

Gangtok, Lachung & Yumthang Valley

Gangtok	2N
Lachung	1N
Gangtok	1N

From, per person **₹26,199**

View itinerary ↗ Download PDF ↗

AGH-ARAS-101 — 5N / 6D · Dec–Feb

Tawang & Sela Pass

Bhalukpong	1N
Dirang	1N
Tawang	2N
Bomdila	1N

From, per person **₹31,099**

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AGH-ML-102 — 4N / 5D · Nov–Feb

Meghalaya: Dawki, Mawlynnong & Root Bridges

Shillong	2N
Cherrapunji	2N

From, per person **₹24,199**

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AGH-RJ-102 — 8N / 9D · Nov–Feb

Royal Rajasthan: Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur & Jaisalmer

Jaipur	2N
Udaipur	2N
Jodhpur	2N
Jaisalmer	2N

From, per person **₹48,699**

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AGH-GJ-101 — 3N / 4D · Nov–Feb

Rann Utsav: White Desert of Kutch

Bhuj	1N
Dhordo	2N

From, per person **₹28,099**

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Prices per person on twin sharing in a standard room, 5% GST extra, airfare excluded, valid for travel till 31 March 2027. Peak-date supplements apply from about 20 December to 5 January.

CLOTHING AND PACKING

The three-layer system

- Base layer against the skin: thermal wear that moves sweat away
- Mid layer for warmth: fleece, wool or a light down jacket
- Outer layer against wind and wet: a waterproof jacket and trousers

Fabrics

Choose wool, fleece and synthetic thermal fabric. Avoid cotton next to the skin in snow. Cotton holds sweat and makes you cold once you stop moving.

What to pack: layers

- Thermal top and bottom, two sets
- Fleece or wool mid layer
- Down or synthetic insulated jacket
- Waterproof outer jacket and trousers for snow play

Head, hands and feet

- Woollen cap and a neck warmer
- Inner gloves and waterproof outer gloves
- Woollen socks, three or four pairs
- Waterproof boots with good grip. Sports shoes soak through in snow

Small things

- Sunglasses or goggles. Snow glare burns the eyes
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Moisturiser for cracked skin
- Power bank. Cold drains phone batteries fast
- A thermos for hot water

Medicines

Carry your regular medicines, plus something for colds, headaches and stomach upsets. For high places such as Ladakh, Tawang or North Sikkim, read our altitude sickness guide.

Documents

Carry your photo ID and printed copies. Permits for Tsomgo Lake, North Sikkim, Arunachal and Ladakh need ID details in advance.

For high places

For Ladakh, Spiti, Tawang and North Sikkim add: a down jacket rated well below zero, a balaclava, liner gloves, a sleeping bag liner, a hot water bottle, lip balm with SPF and a thermos.

For children

A one-piece snow suit, waterproof mittens on a string, two spare pairs of gloves, a warm cap that covers the ears and extra socks. Children feel cold faster than adults.

Common mistakes

- Wearing jeans in snow
- One thick coat instead of layers
- Cotton socks
- No spare gloves

FROM OUR GUIDES How to dress for snow · Winter packing list for the Himalaya

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE COLD

Hypothermia ↗

Body temperature drops when you stay cold and wet. Early signs: shivering, clumsy hands, slurred speech. Get the person indoors, replace wet clothes, give warm sweet drinks and wrap them in blankets.

Frostbite ↗

Fingers, toes, ears and noses go white or grey and numb. Warm them slowly against the body or in lukewarm water. Do not rub with snow. See a doctor for blisters or skin that stays hard.

Cold and altitude ↗

Above 3,000 m, cold makes altitude sickness worse. Rest on arrival, drink plenty of water and climb slowly. Read our altitude sickness guide.

Altitude sickness signs ↗

Headache, nausea, poor sleep and breathlessness at rest. Rest, drink water and do not go higher. Go down if symptoms worsen, or if you see confusion or breathlessness at rest.

Acclimatising in Ladakh ↗

Leh sits at about 3,500 m. See Ladakh planning on page **10** for acclimatisation.

Room heaters ↗

Never sleep with a coal or wood heater burning in a closed room. Carbon monoxide kills without warning. Electric heaters and heated mattresses are safe. Keep a window open a crack.

Daily habits ↗

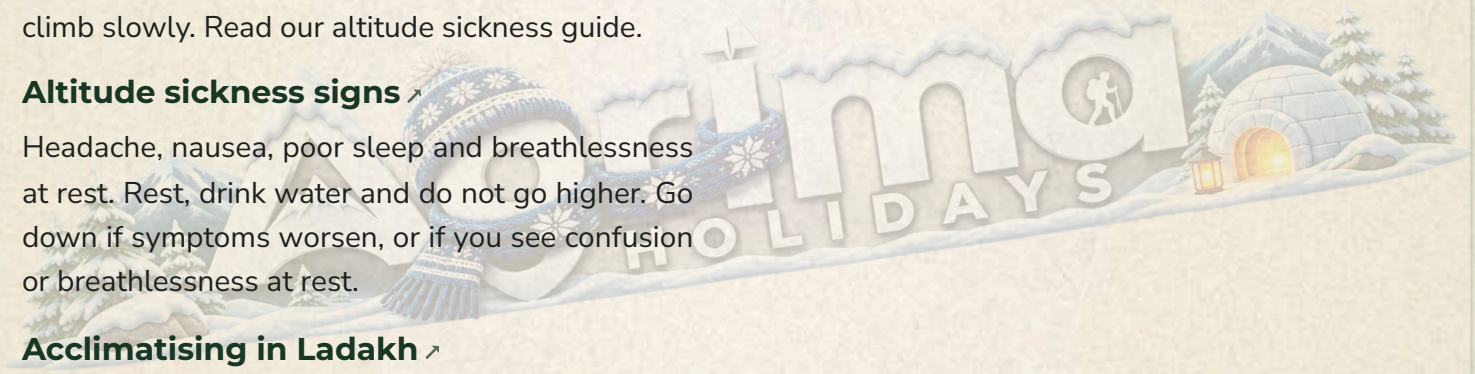
- Drink 3 litres of water a day. You lose fluid in cold, dry air
- Eat regular hot meals
- Avoid alcohol in the evening at altitude
- Protect eyes and skin from snow glare

Who should check with a doctor ↗

People with heart or lung conditions, high blood pressure, pregnant women and older travellers should check with a doctor before going above 3,000 m in winter.

Children and elderly travellers ↗

Children and older travellers chill faster and often do not say so. Check hands and feet often, keep them fed and warm, and keep trips above 3,500 m short or skip them.



FROM OUR GUIDES Staying healthy in the cold ↗ · Ladakh in winter ↗

GEAR, STAYS AND STAYING CONNECTED

Renting snow gear ↗

- Long snow coats and snow boots for a day of snow play
- Skis, boots and poles for lessons
- Goggles if you forgot your own
- Sledges at the snow points

Where ↗

Rental shops line the road at Tangmarg below Gulmarg, at Solang and along the Manali to Solang road, and in Auli near the slopes.

Checking fit ↗

Boots should hold the heel firm with room to wiggle your toes. Walk around the shop before you pay. Check zips on coats and the soles on boots.

Rental prices ↗

Rates change with the season and rise on weekends and in the New Year week. Agree the price per day before you take the gear.

Staying warm in your room ↗

Room heating in Kashmir: see page **9**.

Homestays in the high valleys ↗

Homestays in Spiti: see page **17**.

Batteries ↗

Cold drains batteries in minutes. Keep your phone in an inside pocket, close to your body. Carry a power bank and a spare camera battery in the same pocket.

Condensation ↗

Moving from cold air into a warm room fogs lenses and wets electronics inside. Put your camera in a closed bag before you go indoors and let it warm up for an hour.

Mobile network ↗

Postpaid SIMs work in Ladakh and Kashmir. Prepaid SIMs from outside Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh do not. Spiti and North Sikkim have long gaps without signal.

Snow photos ↗

Snow fools the camera into dark, grey photos. On a phone, tap the snow and slide the exposure up a little. On a camera, add +1 exposure compensation.

FROM OUR GUIDES Renting snow gear in Gulmarg, Manali and Auli ↗ · Kashmir in winter ↗ · Winter Spiti ↗ · Phones and cameras in the cold ↗

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