



Kullu: Silver Valley

Nestling in the foothills of the snow-capped Himalayas, Kullu is a spectacular summer resort, famous for its breathtaking beauty. The pristine beauty of this place, promises its visitors a relaxed holiday.

Formerly known as “Kulanthpitha”, which means the end of the habitable world, Kullu now attracts thousands of visitors, which includes foreign nationals.

Around 240-km away from Shimla, in the North Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, this popular tourist spot is located at an altitude of 1,220 meters.

Kullu is situated on the bank of the river Beas. The fabled ‘Silver Valley’ of Kullu forms the core of an intricate web of valleys — each of which is a sight for the sore eyes and each more beautiful than the other. This beautiful valley offers a marvelous view of the mighty snow-capped Himalayan ranges. They are a real spectacle: whether in brilliant sunshine or through the haze of the mist.

The town of Kullu has long been a centre of faith. In the 17th century, an

idol of Lord Raghunathji (Ramchandra), was installed here by Raja Jagat Singh. He had brought the idol from Ayodhya.

A great devotee of Lord Ramchandra, the king as a mark of his penance placed the idol on his throne and it became the presiding deity for the people of the valley.

The festival of Dussehra, which marks the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana, is celebrated with much gaiety. The town of Kullu is actually quite famous for its colourful Dussehra festival.

The idols from temples are carried around in decorated palanquins in a colourful processions to pay homage to the reigning deity, Raghunathji.

Major Attractions

Raghunathji Temple: Raja Jagat Singh of Kullu built this temple in the 17th century to atone for his sins. This temple was built to house the image of Lord Raghunath — Lord Ram, which was brought from Ayodhya and even today is greatly revered. The shrine houses the image of Shri Raghunath in his chariot.

Bijli Mahadev Temple: Set on a spur that offers some spectacular views, this temple is famous for its 20m high rod that periodically draws lightning, which shatters the ‘Shivalinga’ and scorches the building. Using only butter as adhesive, the ‘linga’ is then carefully pieced together by the temple pundit.

Naggar: For 1,400 years Naggar remained the capital of Kullu. Its 16th century stone and wood castle is now a hotel run by Himachal Tourism. Here, a gallery houses the paintings of the Russian artist, Nicholas Roerich. Naggar also has three other old shrines.

Parvati Valley and Manikarna: At 1,737 metres, there are hot sulphur springs that bubble next to the Penal river. Both Hindus and Sikhs revere this place.

Deo Tibba: Also known as Indralika, this 2,953 metres (9,687 ft.) high peak Jagatsukh, has a legend around it, with Arjuna. He started performing ‘tapa’ at this mountain, under the guidance of Maharishi Vyas, in order to obtain the powerful Pasupata Astra (a powerful weapon) from God Indra.



TOURIST INFORMATION

HOW TO REACH

Air: Nearest airport at Bhuntar is 10 kms from Kullu.

Rail: Nearest convenient rail heads are Kalka, Chandigarh and Pathankot.

Road: Well-connected by road with other important cities.

Kumari Selja is new Tourism Minister



Kumari Selja has been appointed the new Union Minister for Tourism. After assuming charge, she had detailed discussions with senior officers of the Ministry. She emphasised the need for monitoring and review of projects sanctioned by the Ministry so that their timely-implementation is ensured. She mentioned that the requirement of accommodation for tourists visiting Delhi during the Commonwealth Games 2010 needs to be met at all cost. She stressed that tourism should be developed in a sustainable and inclusive way, which ensures benefit to all stakeholders, in particular the weaker sections of society.

Novotel set to make debut in Mumbai



Novotel is set to make a debut in Mumbai with the launch of the

Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach. Located in the heart of Mumbai's social and commercial hub, Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach will enjoy a soft launch in July 2009.

This is Novotel's third hotel in India after Novotel Hyderabad Airport and Novotel Hyderabad. Heinz Egli has been appointed General Manager to spearhead operations of the hotel.

A new ibis hotel for New Delhi

Accor has announced a strategic hotel development – ibis New Delhi, within Delhi



International Airport “Aerocity”. The site was won by Accor's joint venture for ibis hotels for the Indian sub-continent — InterGlobe Hotels, in a bidding process recently conducted by the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL). Construction is to begin on the 1.7 acre site for a 315 room ibis hotel later this year. The hotel is expected to be opened in 2011 with an estimated project cost of \$38 million for the first phase.

(Source: India Travel Online)