



Pilgrims at the sacred Shivalinga — Shrikhand Mahadev, 5,227 m

■ SHRIKHAND MAHADEV YATRA

The Sacred Himalayan Pilgrimage

Altitude 5,227 m (17,150 ft) • Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, India

Har Har Mahadev • Bhole Baba Ki Jai • Om Namah Shivaya

Complete Trek Information • Itinerary • Altitude Stops • Expert Tips

■ About Shrikhand Mahadev Yatra

Shrikhand Mahadev is one of the most challenging and sacred Hindu pilgrimages in India. Situated in the Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh, the yatra leads devotees to a naturally formed 75-foot tall rock formation resembling a Shivalinga at an altitude of 5,227 metres (17,150 feet) above sea level. Every year, thousands of devout pilgrims undertake this arduous trek, chanting '*Har Har Mahadev*' and seeking the blessings of Lord Shiva.

The trek is not merely a physical journey — it is a profound spiritual experience. The route passes through dense forests, alpine meadows, glaciers, snowfields, and high-altitude passes before culminating at the divine Shivalinga surrounded by offerings, saffron flags, and the ringing echo of devotional chants.

Quick Facts

Detail	Information
Location	Kullu District, Himachal Pradesh, India
Summit Altitude	5,227 m (17,150 ft)
Base Camp	Jaon Village (~2,100 m / 6,890 ft)
Trek Distance	~32 km one way (Jaon to Summit)
Total Trek (Return)	~64 km
Trek Duration	5–6 Days (recommended)
Best Season	Mid-July to Mid-August (Yatra Period)
Difficulty Level	Very Difficult / Expert
Permits Required	Yes — registration at Jaon base camp
Nearest Town	Rampur Bushahr / Anni
Nearest Airport	Bhuntar Airport, Kullu (~80 km)

■■■ IMPORTANT: Visit Devdhank Before Shrikhand

Tradition & Spiritual Protocol: Every pilgrim MUST visit Devdhank before proceeding to Shrikhand Mahadev. This is both a religious requirement and a deeply revered tradition.

What is Devdhank?

Devdhank is a sacred spot located on the trail to Shrikhand Mahadev at approximately 3,600 metres (11,800 ft). It is considered the seat of the divine — a place where the gods reside. The site features a natural spring, sacred rocks adorned with offerings, and an atmosphere of immense spiritual energy.

Why Must You Visit Devdhank First?

- **Religious Sanction:** Pilgrims must seek permission from the deity at Devdhank before ascending to the summit.
- **Spiritual Significance:** Devdhank is the gateway and guardian of the Shrikhand pilgrimage — skipping it is considered disrespectful.
- **Acclimatisation:** Visiting Devdhank naturally allows your body to acclimatise to mid-altitude before the big push.
- **Community Practice:** Local guides and priests will not accompany anyone who skips this stop.
- **Seeking Blessings:** Priests perform a brief puja, tying sacred threads and blessing pilgrims for a safe onward journey.

Practical note: Devdhank lies roughly 12 km from Jaon base. Plan to camp overnight here or at Thachru (just below), complete the puja in early morning, then continue your ascent.

■ All Stops & Altitudes on the Trail

Stop	Altitude	Dist. from Jaon	Notes
Jaon Village (Base Camp)	~2,100 m (6,890 ft)	0 km	Registration, rest & preparation
Bagipul / Forest Entry	~2,400 m (7,874 ft)	3 km	Dense deodar forest begins
Singh Gad / Thachru	~2,900 m (9,514 ft)	8 km	First major campsite; water & tea stalls
Devdhank ■ MUST VISIT	~3,600 m (11,811 ft)	12 km	Sacred stop — puja & blessings. Camp here.
Bhim Dwar	~4,300 m (14,108 ft)	20 km	Gateway rock; key camping zone. Altitude hits hard.
Parvati Bagh	~4,700 m (15,420 ft)	25 km	Beautiful alpine meadow of Parvati
Kali Ghati (Pass)	~4,900 m (16,076 ft)	27 km	Very steep snow slope — most demanding section
Shrikhand Mahadev ■	~5,227 m (17,150 ft)	32 km	The sacred Shivalinga — goal of the pilgrimage



Trekkers crossing snowfields — approaching the high-altitude passes

■ ■ Acclimatisation Walk — Why It Matters

Before beginning your ascent to the summit, your itinerary includes a dedicated **Acclimatisation Walk** — typically conducted at Thachru/Singh Gad (Day 2) or at Bhim Dwar (Day 3/4). This walk is not optional; it is a crucial health protocol for high-altitude trekking.

What Is an Acclimatisation Walk?

An acclimatisation walk involves ascending 200–400 metres higher than your current campsite altitude, spending 1–2 hours at that elevation, then descending back to camp to sleep. This follows the golden rule: *'Climb High, Sleep Low.'*

Why Is This Walk Important?

Reason	Explanation
■ Oxygen Adaptation	At 3,500+ m, oxygen levels drop significantly. The walk trains your lungs and red blood cells to extract more oxygen from thinner air.
■ AMS Prevention	Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) — headache, nausea, dizziness — is the biggest risk. Acclimatisation dramatically reduces its onset.
■ Heart & Circulation	Gradual ascent lets your cardiovascular system adapt, reducing risk of HAPE (pulmonary edema) and HACE (cerebral edema).
■ Performance Boost	Well-acclimatised trekkers show dramatically less fatigue, better breathing and clearer mental focus on summit day.
■ ■ Safety on Trail	The Bhim Dwar to Kali Ghati section involves steep snow slopes. An acclimatised body handles this technical terrain far more safely.

Symptoms to Watch — When to Descend Immediately

- Persistent headache not relieved by paracetamol
- Vomiting or severe nausea
- Loss of coordination or confusion
- Shortness of breath at rest
- Chest tightness or persistent cough

■ ■ If any of these symptoms appear, **descend immediately** by at least 500 metres. Do not push forward. Your life is more important than any summit.

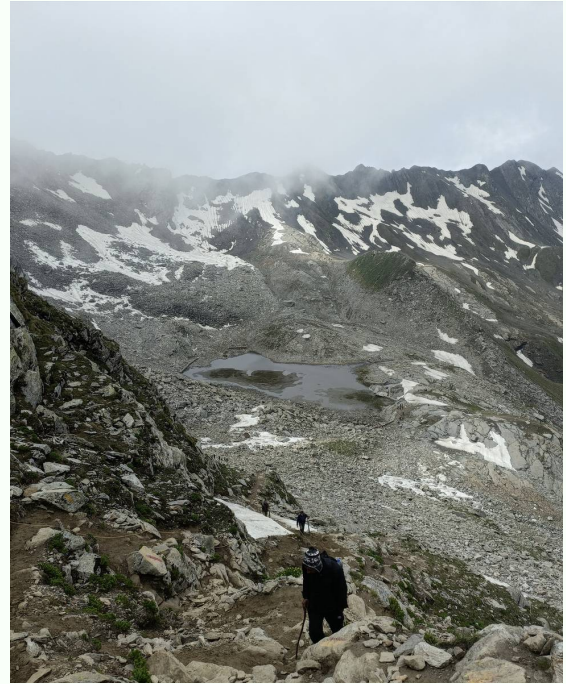
■ ■ Recommended 6-Day Itinerary

Day 0	Arrive at Rampur / Anni / Jaon	~2,100 m
Travel from Delhi/Chandigarh/Shimla to Rampur Bushahr (train/bus). Drive to Anni then Jaon village. Register at base camp. Rest, hydrate well, and review gear. Sleep early.		
Day 1	Jaon → Singh Gad / Thachru Camp	2,100 m → 2,900 m
Trek through dense deodar and oak forest via Bagipul, following the Shrikhand Gad river. Distance: ~8 km Time: 4–5 hrs. Set camp at Thachru. Acclimatisation walk in the evening — ascend 250 m and return.		
Day 2	Acclimatisation + Thachru → Devdhank ■	2,900 m → 3,600 m
Morning acclimatisation walk first. Then proceed to Devdhank — the MANDATORY sacred stop. Attend puja, receive blessings from the priest. Do not skip this. Camp at or near Devdhank. Distance: ~4 km Time: 3–4 hrs.		
Day 3	Devdhank → Bhim Dwar Camp	3,600 m → 4,300 m
Trail steepens significantly. Cross snowfields and moraines. Bhim Dwar is a massive natural rock gateway and key campsite. Distance: ~8 km Time: 5–7 hrs. Microspikes required. Monitor altitude sickness closely.		
Day 4	Bhim Dwar → Parvati Bagh → Summit → Return to Bhim Dwar	4,300 m → 5,227 m → 4,300 m
SUMMIT DAY — start at 2:00 AM with headlamps. Climb through Parvati Bagh (4,700 m) and tackle Kali Ghati pass (4,900 m) — steep icy slope needing extreme care. Reach the Shrikhand Mahadev Shivalinga. Offer prayers and descend carefully back to Bhim Dwar. Total: ~18–20 km Time: 12–16 hrs.		
Day 5	Bhim Dwar → Devdhank → Singh Gad	4,300 m → 2,900 m
Descend back. Revisit Devdhank to offer thanks. Continue to Singh Gad. Use trekking poles — descent is hard on knees. Distance: ~12 km Time: 5–6 hrs.		
Day 6	Singh Gad → Jaon Village → Departure	2,900 m → 2,100 m
Final descent through forest to Jaon base camp. Distance: ~8 km Time: 3–4 hrs. Collect vehicle and drive to Anni/Rampur. Celebrate — Har Har Mahadev! ■		

■ Journey in Pictures



Trishul shrine atop the summit amid clouds



View of the glacial lake from the descent trail



H.P. Forest Dept. sign at 5,182 m — Shrikhand Kailash



Snowfield and waterfall on the trail to the summit

■ Essential Gear Checklist

Clothing & Protection

Item	Details
Thermal base layer	Top & bottom — moisture-wicking
Fleece / Down jacket	Essential for nights above 3,500 m
Waterproof shell	Jacket & pants — rain is common
Trekking pants	2 pairs recommended
T-shirts	3–4 moisture-wicking
Woollen hat / balaclava	Critical above 4,000 m
UV sunglasses & sun hat	Snow glare is intense at altitude
Trekking gloves	Inner liner + outer waterproof pair
Warm socks	4+ pairs, wool preferred
Trekking boots	Ankle-support, waterproof
Microspikes / crampons	Mandatory for Kali Ghati snow section
Gaiters	Keeps snow/debris out of boots

Equipment & Safety

Item	Details
Trekking poles	Pair — essential for steep descents
Headlamp	+ spare batteries (2:00 AM summit start)
Sleeping bag	Rated -10°C or below
Sleeping mat	Insulated foam or inflatable pad
Daypack	35–45 L with rain cover
Water bottles	2x1 L + hydration bladder
Water purification	Tablets or filter pump
Sunscreen & lip balm	SPF 50+ — UV is intense at altitude
First Aid Kit	Diamox, Dexamethasone, paracetamol, bandages
AMS medication	Consult doctor before trek
Emergency gear	Whistle, space blanket, lighter
Navigation	GPS device / offline maps downloaded

■ Permits & Registration

- Registration is mandatory at Jaon base camp before the trek begins.
- Carry valid government-issued photo ID (Aadhar Card / Passport).
- A medical fitness certificate may be required during peak season.
- Registration fee is minimal but compulsory — enables administration to track trekkers for safety.
- Local guides are strongly recommended and can be hired at Jaon village.

■ Expert Tips for a Successful Yatra

Start Early Every Day: Leave camp by 4–5 AM on summit day. Weather deteriorates rapidly — afternoon thunderstorms are common in July–August.

Hydrate Constantly: Drink 3–4 litres of water per day. Altitude causes increased fluid loss. Avoid alcohol and sleeping pills.

Never Skip Meals: High-altitude trekking burns enormous calories. Eat carbohydrate-rich foods even if you have no appetite.

The Golden Rule: Climb High, Sleep Low. Never ascend more than 300–500 m per day above 3,000 m.

Respect the Trail: This is a sacred pilgrimage. Do not litter, play loud music, or behave disrespectfully. Carry all waste back.

Snow Section Safety: Kali Ghati involves steep snow/ice. Use microspikes and trekking poles. Move slowly — one slip can be fatal.

Weather Awareness: Check forecasts before summit day. Do not attempt the summit in fog, rain or thunderstorm.

Buddy System: Never trek alone. Always inform your guide or camp manager of your plans.

■■ Spiritual Significance

Shrikhand Mahadev is believed to be one of the 12 most powerful Shiva shrines in the Himalayas. The Shivalinga is not man-made — it is a naturally formed 75-foot tall rock that devotees believe is the actual abode of Lord Shiva. Legend holds that the Pandavas from the Mahabharata passed through this region during their final journey, and Lord Shiva himself blessed this peak as a sacred pilgrimage destination.

The vibration of thousands of pilgrims chanting 'Har Har Mahadev' in unison across snowfields, the smell of incense on mountain winds, saffron flags fluttering against glaciers — the Shrikhand Mahadev Yatra is not just a trek. It is a **tapasya** (penance) offered to Lord Shiva.

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May Lord Shiva bless your journey and bring you safely to His feet and back.