

DAYARA BUGYAL TREK

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Drive from Delhi to Haridwar (215 Kms, 5 to 6 hrs), Overnight stay in hotel at Haridwar.

The drive from Delhi to Haridwar is via NH 58, skirting past Meerut and Muzaffarnagar. It takes about 4-6 hours depending on the traffic, with Haridwar making its presence known as you see the wide banks of the river Ganga and the sacred bathing ghats with their numerous temples along it. We will check in to the hotel and later in the night proceed for a walk along the river banks to take in the sights of the holy city.

Day 2: Drive from Haridwar to Barsu^{2300 mtrs}(157 Kms, 5 to 7 hrs), Overnight stay in hotel/camping at Barsu.

From Haridwar, we will have to leave early since the drive all the way till Barsu is pretty time consuming. We will start climbing upwards via Mussoorie, Dhanaulti, Chamba, Chinyalisaur and Dharsu to reach Uttarkashi. From Uttarkashi onwards, the road becomes rough and steep, passing via Bhatwari before finally ending up at Barsu. 13 kms further ahead, where we will be staying overnight.

Day 3: Trek from Barsu to Barnala^{2600 mtrs} (4 Kms, approx 3.5 hrs), Overnight camping at Barnala Tal.

The trek today is easy and relatively short, and is a precursor of the natural bounty that lies ahead. We will walk around the artificial pond that lies close to the GMVN Resort, until we meet a well defined path that leads into a thick oak, deodar and rhododendron forest. In autumn, leaves shed by the trees make a delightful carpet to walk on and it's a soothing walk as you walk along, softly crunching the leaves underfoot.

After about half an hour, you will come across the Herbal garden to your right which you can visit on the return leg of the journey. After this, the walk continues along gradually undulating slopes with a few steep sections that are fairly short and easy to negotiate. After almost an hour you will reach the top of the first ridge from where Barsu can now be seen in the distance as a collection of toy-like miniatures.

The trail levels out now and four gujjar (shepherd) huts make their appearance, spaced out by a few metres. From here the trail will curve away to the right and after hardly 5-10 minutes of walking, the lovely green and inviting Barnala meadows will spread out in front of you.

To the left, in the shadows of the thick oak trees that fringe the meadows, you will see the lovely Barnala Tal (lake) and soaring behind the oak trees is the first glimpse of the striking Gangotri range of mountains that beckon invitingly. They will however need to wait for the next day, as we will be camping here for the night.

Day 4: Trek from Barnala to Dayara Bugyal^{3564 mtrs} (5 Kms , approx 3 hrs), Overnight camping at Dayara Bugyal

Today the trek will be more strenuous than yesterday, but the view at the end will leave you mesmerized and make you forget the effort you put in. We begin our trek continuing along the same path further ahead into the tree line. The hike is noticeably steeper and switches back and forth regularly, gaining height rapidly. The meadows of Barnala and Barnala Tal will soon be looking small behind you, while every switchback tantalizes you with the Gangotri peaks getting larger and new peaks starting to appear peeking above the ridge. The pace will increase noticeably as the anticipation increases and finally at the top of the ridge, you get the complete spell-bounding vista of the incredibly beautiful Dayara Bugyal laid out in front of you for as far as the eye can see and the spectacular Gangotri range now completely framing the horizon stretching to 180 degrees from the left to the right.

The most stunning peaks are the Bandarpoonch and Kalanag (Black Peak) that will take your breath away with their appearance so close to you.

Enjoy the sights for a while and then move ahead to the campsite which is at the fringes, past the shepherd huts, since that is where the water-bodies are. The meadows get quite windy at times and it's important to make sure the camp is well set up as you turn in for the night.

Day 5: Trek from Dayara Bugyal to Bakaria top^{3810 mtrs} and back to Dayara Bugyal(4 Kms,3 hrs), Overnight camping at Dayara Bugyal

From the campsite you can see various trails. The trail directly ahead splits into two. One trail leads to a small village called Raithal, while the other leads to a water body. The trail we will be taking today, however, is the well defined trail that passes through the middle of the meadows. We will move up and to the right gradually till we reach the base of the first ridge line called Moosa Dhanggi, thus named for its proliferation of burrowing rats and moles a long time ago. Although we are not yet at Bakaria Top, the Bandarpoonch and its companion peaks already seem even closer than before and look spectacular against the morning sun.

From here, Bakaria Top is at a corner of the meadows and is the highest point, 3 ridges away. We scramble over the ridges and onto the other side until finally we reach the final ridge where a really spectacular view awaits us in all directions. On one side is the village of Agoda in the distance and the alternate trek route to Dodital, while on the other side you can see the entire Dayara Bugyal with the truly mesmerizing Gangotri peaks all around you. The town of Uttarkashi can also be seen far away on a clear day.

We can now spend some time exploring and enjoying the beautiful meadow, hoping for a glimpse of the unique wildlife such as the elusive mountain cat or a sporadic deer and the colourful pheasants that are denizens of the high Himalayan meadows. You can also see a few beautiful water bodies dotted along the bugyal where you can try and catch a glimpse of the peaks in the placid water.

After a while of exploration, we will have to turn back and descend to our camp which will be a fairly easy walk as most of it is downhill.

Day 6: Trek from Dayara Bugyal to Barsu via Barnala(10 Kms,4 hrs) & Drive from Barsu to Uttarkashi(19 Kms, 1 hr), Overnight stay in hotel at Uttarkashi

While returning we will be taking the same route down to Barsu. It will of course be much easier and faster since most of it is now downhill and level. If we are lucky, we might catch a glimpse of grazing cattle and sheep, which make for excellent photo opportunities.

On our return, we can stop by the Herbal Garden near Barsu for a short while and explore the various indigenous herbs found in the region. By around noon or a little later, we will drive back to Uttarkashi.

Day 7: Drive from Uttarkashi to New Delhi (450 Kms, 10 to 12 hrs)

The return drive to New Delhi is along the same road we had taken while coming, down the slopes of Garhwal and finally onto the plains from Haridwar onwards till Delhi.