

# TRIYUGINARAYAN- PANWALIKANTHA TREK

## INTERESTING FACTS/INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLACE

### **Triyuginarayan Temple Legend and Gauri Kund**

According to Hindu legend, the Goddess Sati, the first wife of Lord Shiva, gave up her life on finding out that her father had insulted her husband. Lord Shiva, in grief carried her charred remains to his holy abode of Mt. Kailash but on the way, Sati's body parts came to rest at various places forming towns of great religious significance.

The Goddess was reborn as Parvati, the daughter of Himavat and sought to woo her husband again by her beauty, which did not succeed, after which she did severe penance at Gauri Kund. Seeing her penance, Lord Shiva relented and proposed marriage to her at Guptkashi after which the couple travelled to Triyuginarayan, the capital of Himavat's kingdom where they got married in the temple in the presence of the holy fire in the Havan Kund during the first Yuga – the Satya Yuga (which as per the Hindu calendar was more than a million years ago!). The fire is said to have been kept burning since then, through the 3 yugas (Satya Yuga, Dwapar Yuga and Treta Yuga) till the current Kali Yuga, and hence the temple has been christened as Tri-Yugi with Narayan standing for Lord Vishnu who was the witness to the marriage and to whom the temple is dedicated.

### **Srinagar**

Srinagar lies on the left bank of the Alaknanda river in Pauri district of Garhwal and is the last big city before the Garhwal Himalaya mountain ranges begin. It is the largest city in Garhwal and one of the largest in the state of Uttarakhand. Other than its bustling market, it is also famous for its educational institutions and the Garhwal University.

The city came into prominence during the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD when the Garhwal Kings made it their capital city. Its location also makes it a prominent town for pilgrims enroute to Badrinath and Kedarnath yatras.

### **Chopta**

Chopta is also known as the "**Mini Switzerland of Uttarakhand**" due to its varied flora and fauna, with plenty of Rhododendron and Deodar trees all around. It is a sleepy hamlet at approximately 2700 metres and is not yet as crowded as compared to the other tourist spots. It is becoming quite popular of late due to the possibility of summer and winter weekend treks upto 4000 metres, with uninterrupted views of the Himalayan ranges.

## **Devprayag**

Devprayag lies about 40 kms before we reach Srinagar and is one of the 5 (Panch) Prayags (confluences). This is where the holy rivers of Alaknanda and Bhagirathi meet to form the holiest river of India – the Ganga, before it flows down into the plains.

The town is well known for its religious sentiment and famed temples such as the pyramidal temple of Lord Raghunathji built of massive stones, and said to be the location where the famed Bhagirathi river was said to flow out from and complete the trinity to form the Ganga. The town also has the famed Ram Kunda where the footprints of Lord Ram can be found set in stone.

In addition to its religious significance, the town is also home to the Nakshatra Ved Shala (an observatory) located on top of the Dahrathanchal hill. This is a well equipped observatory with two telescopes and thousands of ancient manuscripts in Sanskrit holding the astronomical research and charts collected from various parts of the country and dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and beyond.

## **Rudraprayag**

Enroute to Joshimath, we come across five holy confluences (Panch Prayag) of the Alaknanda river (that later on forms the river Ganga). Among these five confluences, perhaps the most popular is Rudraprayag (where the Mandakini river joins the Alaknanda river). It is known not only in legends but also in popular English literature, having found mention in Jim Corbett's diaries about the man eating leopards of Rudraprayag. It has a number of interesting places worth visiting, a few of which are listed below

### Koteshwar temple

This is a unique temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, built within the natural caves along the rocky cliffs. It literally means the temple of 10 million Gods! ("Koti" means a crore or 10 million, while "Ishwar" means God)

### Rudranath Temple

Another temple dedicated to the Rudra (Lord of Music) form of Lord Shiva. Ancient mythology talks about a black rock called Narad Shila where Narad Muni worshipped Lord Shiva in order to learn music (unfortunately this rock is no longer visible as it got submerged during the 2013 Uttarakhand floods)

### Basukedar

This is a very old (almost 1000 years old) temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, believed to have been built by the Pandavas. It is off the usual route, about 35 kms away from Agastyamuni and due to its secluded location, it is an amazing spot for meditation. The name Basukedar was given to the temple as it is believed that Lord Shiva stayed for a while at this location enroute to mount Kailash (Kedarnath)

### **Joshimath**

The name Joshimath is derived from “Jyotir-math” where “math” can be translated as a monastery. It is the northernmost monastery among those established by the seer Adi Shakaracharya, who had travelled extensively in the Garhwal Himalaya. It lies in the Chamoli district, and is the base for a number of treks and expeditions to some of the highest and most picturesque peaks in India. It has a number of interesting temples with their associated myths, none more so than the Narsinh Temple.

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