

A WALK THROUGH THE BAZAARS OF ALMORA

Attractions: Chaughanpatha, Lala Bazaar, Chowk Bazaar, Karkhana Bazaar, Kutchery Bazaar, Shah Residence, Khazanchi Mohalla, Johari Bazaar, Thana Bazaar, Paltan Bazaar, Clock Tower

Duration: 2 hours

For family & groups

Experience: Walking

Budget: Approx INR

Start

Day 01 CHAUGHANPATA TO KARKHANA BAZAAR

The bazaars of Almora are a fascinating mix of traditions and serve almost as a textbook on the history of the town! We commence this trail from Chaughanpata, the heart of Almora always bustling with activity due to its numerous tourist accommodations. It is the focal point where routes coming from Pithoragarh, Bageshwar, Nainital and Malla bazaar converge. The bazaars of Almora started to be established from the period of Raja Kalyan Chand (1560 – 1568) of the Chand dynasty who shifted his capital from Champawat to Almora in 1563. During Holi, come to Lala Bazaar to enjoy the famous Baithaki holi. The narrow path from the Lala Bazaar leads to the Karkhana (workshops) Bazaar. Besides the workshops that manufacture several items, it has beautiful houses of wood. The architecture of these dwellings has religious sentiments too. Their front doors known as 'kholli', carved with images of Lord Krishna, Ganesh, Durga and Bhairav. On a walking trail, the time doesn't matter, as you can stop and meander around at your will.

By Road: Lala bazaar is pedestrian friendly walk with its walkway made of corbelled stone. One can find convenient parking spaces in Chaughanpata.

Day 02 KUTCHERY BAZAAR

Adjoining the Karkhana bazaar is the Kutchery Bazaar or the bazaar of the court. Almora is known for its exquisite copper-ware which is a must for shoppers! Traditional coppersmiths, called 'tamtas', were royal coin-makers 500 years ago. After the downfall of the Chand dynasty, they diversified into making copper utensils and decorative items. An entire locality is inhabited by them called the Tamta Mohalla, which is close by.

Day 03 LALA BADRI SAH HOUSE

The Kutchery Bazaar has the residence of the Sah Family. Lala Badri Sah's residence hosted not only Swami Vivekananda who came here for spiritual solace. Numerous stories of his times still reverberate in the region. Swami Vivekananda came here in August, 1890 and a curious incident happened. A man became possessed and Lala Badri Sah was asked to come and see him. Swami Vivekananda, on being asked to intervene, blessed the man with his hand. It is said that the man was cured of his illness and this incident made him famous in Almora.

Day 04 KHAZANCHI MOHALLA

Since Almora was the royal capital, it was abundant with gold, silver and other valuable items. The Khazanchi Mohalla, still seems to some of these treasures. Famous freedom fighter Mohanlal Shah was born here on 31 May 1895. His father Durgalal Shah was a famous Khazanchi or treasurer in the area.

Close to the colony of the treasurers is the colony of goldsmiths and gold merchants! The Johari market nearby is the market of the jewelers of Kumaon, where one can still buy traditional jewellery, including 'nath' or nose rings, 'chaarau' or necklaces of black beads and bangles of glass, silver and gold. The Johari Market is a shopper's delight since it also has some shops selling pashmina and angora wools. These are used to stitch the traditional costume of Almora especially those for women. Kumaoni women usually wear a skirt tied around their waist called 'ghagra' and a colourful shawl called 'pichaura'.

Day 05 PALTAN BAZAAR

The shopping street ends at Paltan Bazaar, established under the reign of Raja Kalyan Chand in the 16th century. The slate road of the Paltan Bazaar leads one to the Clock Tower of Almora. The eclectic Clock Tower is made up of stone and has a tin roof with a clock in the centre. One can end the trail at a compound nearby which has the statues of freedom fighter Victor Mohan Joshi and Dr BR Ambedkar, reminiscent of the immense contribution of Almora to the country's freedom struggle.