

GANGOTRI, GAUMUKH TO TAPOVAN

Duration: 5 nights, 6 days

Destinations: Gangotri, Chirbasa, Bhojbasa, Gaumukh, Tapovan

Distance: Over 338 km from Dehradun

For Group Travel

Experiences: Trekking (moderate to challenging)

Budget: Approx INR 20,000 (per person)

Start

Day 01 DEHRADUN TO GANGOTRI

The ideal way to travel from Dehradun to Gangotri is by road. Start early from Dehradun so that you reach Gangotri by early evening, in time to enjoy the 'aarti' (divine ritual) at River Bhagirathi and also visit the Gangotri temple. To trek to Gaumukh and beyond, you will need permits as you will be walking through the Gangotri National Park. Permits are easily available at Rishikesh and Gangotri. If you are travelling with a tour operator they will arrange for your permits. For Tapovan, a guide is a must and you will need to mention that while applying for a permit. Stay overnight here. For permits, visit <https://uttarkashi.nic.in/service/online-single-window-system/>

Car: Book a taxi or drive yourself to reach Gangotri, which is around 300 km from Dehradun. It takes about 8 hours to cover the distance. The roads are beautiful and as you approach Gangotri, the Himalayan landscape around you gets even prettier.

Rail: The nearest railway station to Gangotri is Rishikesh 234 km before Gangotri, and is well connected by railway network with major destinations of India. From Rishikesh you will have to take a taxi to Gangotri.

Air: Jolly Grant Airport is the nearest airport to Gangotri situated at a distance of 250 km. Jolly Grant Airport is well connected to Delhi with daily flights and Gangotri is well connected by motorable roads with Jolly Grant Airport. You can also hire helicopters to fly to Gangotri from Dehradun.

Day 02 GANGOTRI TO BHOJBASA

This is the first day of trekking and you will be covering around 14 km. Start early so that you can enjoy the trek at leisure and also because only a certain number of visitors are allowed to enter the park every day. The park check-post, around 2 km away, opens at 6.00 am. Therefore, it would be best to leave Gangotri around 5 am so that you reach the check-post by the time it opens. The permits are checked here and you can pay the permit fee here if you have not already paid online. The administration will also check your bags to see how many plastic goods you are carrying – bottles, food packets etc. The count is written on your permit. They will collect a deposit fee from you (which will be refunded when you show them the exact count on your return). This method has stopped people from littering. After walking for one km more, the Bhagirathi river will join you and will accompany you for a long time. After walking for around 6 km more, you will reach Chirbasa (at an altitude of approx 3,400 m) in five hours. This is where you can break for lunch. The route gets adventurous from here, passing through a couple of rock-fall zones. The ascent is gradual and the trek, comfortable. Carry a water bottle, which you can refill from the waterfalls and mountain streams on the route. The around 6-km trek from Chirabasa will bring you to Bhojbasa (3,800 m), in about four hours. This is where you will stay for the night. You can also set up your camp at Bhojbasa. Camping after Bhojbasa up to Gaumukh is prohibited.

Day 03 BHOJBASA TO TAPOVAN, GAUMUKH

The 4-km trek to Gaumukh (at an altitude of 4,000 m), is very interesting; you will cross unnamed streams, hop across boulders and you will be constantly accompanied by jaw-dropping views of snow-clad mountains. The trail starts from behind the GMVN rest-house, where you climb a bit to reach the trail. From here, at most places, the trail is well marked, and in some places, you have to find your way. The Bhagirathi river flows along the way. The gradient is steep between Bhojbasa and Gaumukh. Enjoy the stark yet dramatic scenery; lookout for native bharal or blue sheep, and also birds. Within a few minutes of crossing Bhojbasa, the Shivling peak appears on your right, and straight ahead, looms up the Bhagirathi group of peaks. Carry enough water. The Gangotri glacier is visible from a distance and you shouldn't go closer than 500 m. It should take you around 3 hours to reach Gaumukh from Bhojbasa. Once you reach, you can visit the small Shiva temple here and take in the stunning views.

From Gaumukh, start the 5-km trek to Tapovan (at a height of 4,460 m), one of the finest high altitude alpine meadows in the region. The trek is a steep ascent with clear views of the surrounding peaks. The last kilometre is a near vertical climb to reach the top and involves crossing the Akash Ganga stream. It is a challenging climb and is best done with a guide. Tapovan is where you can camp for the night. You will have to carry camping gear, food and water. If you want, you can camp here for one day and trek to Neel Tal and Vasuki Tal.

Day 04 TAPOVAN TO BHOJBASA

On day four, start early to trace your route back to Bhojbasa, which is 9 km away and the trek will take about 5 hours.

Day 05 BHOJBASA TO GANGOTRI

From Bhojbasa on the way back to Gangotri, a 14-km trek, it will take you about 8 hours. Reach Gangotri and check into an accommodation. The next day you will drive back to Dehradun with some of the finest travel memories.