



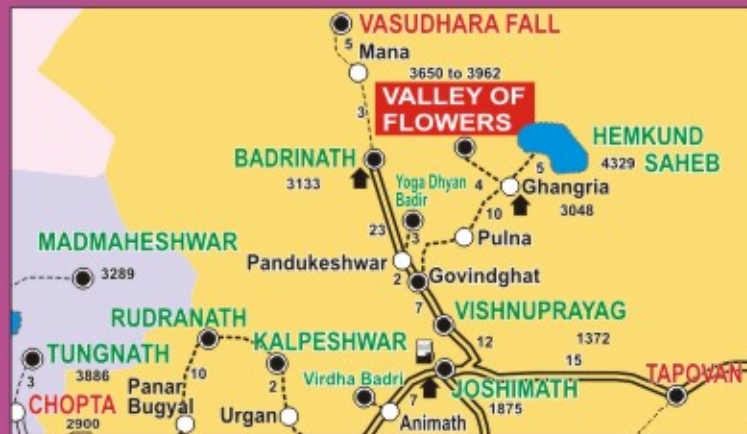
A View of Hemkund Sahib

Delphinium, Ranunculus, Corydalis, Inula, Saussurea abvallata, Campanula. Pedicularis, Trysimum, Morina, Impetiens, Bistorta. Ligularia. Anaphalis Saxifraga, Lobelia, Thermophis, Trolises. Aquilogia, Codonopsis. Dactylorhiza, Cypripedium. Straw berries and Rhododendron.

Apart from the flowering plants, various Himalayan birds, butterflies, Musk Deer, Bharal (Mountain goats), Himalayan bear, tail less rat etc. are the rare inhabitants of the valley. It is in the winter, the valley freezes with the view of heavenly glaciers. The entire valley lies beneath, like the polished steel. The meadows get quilted under thick layers of snow.

Beyond Valley of Flowers

Hemkund Lokpal, at a height of 4,329 mt is one of the holiest Sikh Shrines dedicated to Guru Govind Singh, the 10th Guru of the Khalsa Panth. It is a very picturesque place, serene and scenic. The Lakshman temple is also nearby.



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Valley Of Flowers

Playground of the Fairies



Valley of flowers: the mysterious land

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God's own land! No other word can aptly describe the wonderful Valley of Flowers. Hidden from the outside world and known only to some mountain inhabitants of the Bhyundar Valley, it was traditionally avoided by the shepherds of the hills, believing it to be the celestial playground of the Gods, nymphs and fairies!

This mysterious valley was discovered by the world renowned British explorer, Botanist and mountaineer Frank S. Smythe, in 1931 while returning from Mt. Kamet expedition. His book "The Valley of Flowers" lifted the veil of this hidden beauty for the outside world. In 1939, the British Botanical Association sent their botanist Margaret Legge for further study of the valley. She never returned. She slipped off and was lost forever in the valley. It has now become the part of Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve.

An alpine valley formed by retreating glaciers, whose

movements through millions of years have shaken the hard rocks beneath, forming a unique u-shaped valley. It houses some of the rarest flora and fauna, that have gone through the wonderful evolutionary process to adapt to the harsh geographical and climatic conditions. It's one of India's most coveted National Natural Parks.

Best time to visit the valley is from mid July to mid August

How to Reach

Air: Nearest airport is Jolly Grant, 306 km away and Dehradun 333 km.

Rail: Nearest railhead is Rishikesh, 300 km.

Road: The Valley is approachable from Govindghat. There are two ways to reach Govindghat.

- (1) Rishikesh - Srinagar - Karnprayag - Joshimath - Govindghat - (Distance approx. 270 km on Haridwar - Badrinath highway)
- (2) Haldwani - Ranikhet - Karnprayag - Joshimath - Govindghat (Distance approx. 332 km)

After crossing the Alaknanda river at Govindghat, an ascending bridle path along Bhyundar Ganga leads to Ghanghria which is 14 km away from Govindghat, from where the Valley is only 3 km. Walk through this majestic valley, cross the hill streams and rivers accompanied by butterflies, birds, Himalayan bear, leopards and musk deer.

Where to Stay (STD code: 01389)

- **Tourist Rest House - GMVN, Ghanghria**
- **Forest Rest House, Ghangaria, Ph.:01389-222179**
- **Gurudwara Guest House, Ghangaria**
- **Private Lodges and Hotels.**

What to see

The Valley of Flowers is flanked on either side by majestic peaks, capped with snow. The Pushpawati river, emerging from

the glacial deposits around Rataban and Nilgiri ranges, cuts through the Valley and divides it into two sectors. The major portion of the Valley is on its right bank and is a paradise for trekkers.

Many streams flowing from glacial deposits in and around the Valley irrigate it and merge finally into the Pushpawati river. While exploring the Valley, the smaller streams can be easily crossed by wading across but the larger ones need to be crossed on a log bridges. In case those which have not been put up in time, thick glacial bridges across the streams also serve the purpose.

There are no side tracks for viewing colonies of flowers away from the main track so you can either try to wade through knee-deep flowers and foliage, crushing some on the way or stay on the single track running through the length of the valley without seeing the best. There are many smaller valleys carved out by streams of melting glaciers. On the banks of these Valleys, you can encounter the most exciting pattern of flowers.

An irresistible wonder for nature lovers, botanists, ecologists, zoologists, ornithologists and trekkers, the Valley remains snow covered from November to May but when the ice envelope thaws in June it is a signal for the profusion of colours hidden in petals of alpine during July and August. Some important flowering plants having tremendous medicinal and aromatic values are: Anemone, Geranium, Marsh, Marigold, Primula, Potentilla, Geum, Aster, Liliium, Himalayanblue poppy, Aconite,

