

Shimla-Manali Educational Tour

Shimla, also known as **Simla**, is the capital and the largest city of the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. In 1864, Shimla was declared as the summer capital of British India, succeeding Murree, northeast of Rawalpindi. After independence, the city became the capital of Punjab and was later made the capital of Himachal Pradesh. It is the principal commercial, cultural and educational centre of the state.^[8]

Small hamlets were recorded prior to 1815 when British forces took control of the area. The climatic conditions attracted the British to establish the city in the dense forests of Himalayas. As the summer capital, Shimla hosted many important political meetings including the Simla Accord of 1914 and the Simla Conference of 1945. After independence, the state of Himachal Pradesh came into being in 1948 as a result of integration of 28 princely states. Even after independence, the city remained an important political centre, hosting the Simla Agreement of 1972. After reorganisation of state of Himachal Pradesh, the existing Mahasu district was named Shimla.

Shimla is home to a number of buildings that are styled in the Tudorbethan and neo-Gothic architectures dating from the colonial era, as well as multiple temples and churches. The colonial architecture and churches, the temples and the natural environment of the city attracts tourists. Attractions include the Viceregal Lodge, the Christ Church, the Jakhoo Temple, the Mall Road, the Ridge and Annadale which together form the city centre. The Kalka–Shimla Railway line built by the British, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is also a major tourist attraction. Owing to its steep terrain, Shimla hosts the mountain biking race MTB Himalaya, which started in 2005 and is regarded as the biggest event of its kind in South Asia. Shimla also has the largest natural ice skating rink in South Asia. Apart from being a tourism centre, the city is also an educational hub with a number of colleges and research institutions.

Geography

Shimla is on the south-western ranges of the Himalayas at 31.61°N 77.10°E. It has an average altitude of 2,206 metres (7,238 ft) above mean sea level and extends along a ridge with seven spurs. The city stretches nearly 9.2 kilometres (5.7 mi) from east to west.^[21] Shimla was built on top of seven hills: Inverarm Hill, Observatory Hill, Prospect Hill, Summer Hill, Bantony Hill, Elysium Hill and Jakhoo Hill. The highest point in Shimla is the Jakhoo hill, which is at a height of 2,454 metres (8,051 ft).

The city is a Zone IV (High Damage Risk Zone) per the Earthquake hazard zoning of India. Weak construction techniques and an increasing population pose a serious threat to the already earthquake prone region.^{[22][23]} There are no water bodies near the main city and the closest river, the Sutlej, is about 21 km (13 mi) away.^[24] Other rivers that flow through the Shimla district, although further from the city, are the Giri, and Pabbar (both tributaries of Yamuna).

The green belt in the Shimla planning area is spread over 414 hectares (1,020 acres).^[16] The main forests in and around the city are of pine, deodar, oak and rhododendron.^[25] Environmental degradation due to the increasing number of tourists every year without the infrastructure to support them has resulted in Shimla losing its popular appeal as an ecotourism spot.^[26] Another rising concern in the region are the frequent number of landslides that often take place after heavy rains.^{[22][27]}

The city is situated 88 km (55 miles) northeast of Kalka, 116 km (72 miles) northeast of Chandigarh, 247 km (154 miles) south of Manali and 350 km (219 miles) northeast of Delhi, the national capital. Kalka can be reached within 2.5 hours, Chandigarh can be reached in 3 hours and 15 minutes. Delhi and Manali are both around 7 hours away from Shimla.

Climate

Shimla features a subtropical highland climate (Cwb) under the Köppen climate classification. The climate in Shimla is predominantly cool during winters and moderately warm during summer.^[28] Temperatures typically range from −4 °C (25 °F) to 31 °C (88 °F) over the course of a year.^[29]

The average temperature during summer is between 19 and 28 °C (66 and 82 °F), and between −1 and 10 °C (30 and 50 °F) in winter. Monthly precipitation varies between 15 millimetres (0.59 in) in November and 434 millimetres (17.1 in) in August. It is typically around 45 millimetres (1.8 in) per month during winter and spring, and around 175 millimetres (6.9 in) in June as the monsoon approaches.

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The average total annual precipitation is 1,575 millimetres (62 in), which is much less than most other hill stations but still much heavier than on the plains. Snowfall in the region, which historically has taken place in the month of December, has lately (over the last fifteen years) been happening in January or early February every year.^[30]

The maximum snowfall received in recent times was 38.6 centimetres (15.2 in) on 18 January 2013. On two consecutive days (17 and 18 January 2013), the town received 63.6 centimetres (25.0 in) of snow.^[31]

Climate data for Shimla (1971–2000)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °C (°F)	21.4 (70.5)	22.6 (72.7)	25.8 (78.4)	29.6 (85.3)	32.4 (90.3)	31.5 (88.7)	28.9 (84.0)	27.8 (82.0)	28.6 (83.5)	25.6 (78.1)	23.5 (74.3)	20.5 (68.9)	32.4 (90.3)
Average high °C (°F)	9.3 (48.7)	10.3 (50.5)	14.5 (58.1)	19.8 (67.6)	23.0 (73.4)	23.8 (74.8)	21.3 (70.3)	20.5 (68.9)	20.4 (68.7)	18.9 (66.0)	15.4 (59.7)	11.9 (53.4)	17.5 (63.5)
Average low °C (°F)	−1.2 (29.8)	2.4 (36.3)	6.1 (43.0)	10.8 (51.4)	13.6 (56.5)	15.1 (59.2)	14.6 (58.3)	14.2 (57.6)	12.9 (55.2)	10.5 (50.9)	7.0 (44.6)	4.0 (39.2)	9.5 (49.1)
Record low °C (°F)	−10.6 (12.9)	−8.5 (16.7)	−6.1 (21.0)	−1.3 (29.7)	1.4 (34.5)	7.8 (46.0)	9.4 (48.9)	10.6 (51.1)	5.0 (41.0)	0.2 (32.4)	−1.1 (30.0)	−12.2 (10.0)	−12.2 (10.0)
Average precipitation mm (inches)	53.0 (2.09)	63.8 (2.51)	68.9 (2.71)	61.3 (2.41)	83.8 (3.30)	185.3 (7.30)	333.0 (13.11)	296.7 (11.68)	148.7 (5.85)	36.3 (1.43)	22.5 (0.89)	21.4 (0.84)	1,374.6 (54.12)
Average snowfall cm (inches)	42 (1.7)	43 (1.7)	7 (2.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (2.8)	99 (39.6)
Average rainy days	4.5	5.3	5.9	4.6	6.3	10.1	17.2	16.2	8.8	2.2	1.5	1.8	84.5
Average snowy days	4.2	4.2	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.3	11.2

Source: India Meteorological Department (record high and low up to 2010, snow, 1990–2010)^{[32][33][34]}

Economy

Employment is largely driven by the government and tourism sectors.^[35] Education sector and horticultural produce processing comprise most of the remainder. Recently a Model Career Centre has been set-up at Regional Employment Exchange, Shimla to enable bridging the gap between job-seekers and employers.

In addition to being the local hub of transport and trade, Shimla is the area's healthcare centre, hosting a medical college and four major hospitals:^[36] Indira Gandhi Hospital (Snowdown Hospital,) Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital (formerly called Ripon Hospital), Kamla Nehru Hospital and Indus Hospital. The city's development plan aims make Shimla an attractive health tourism spot.^[35]

The hotel industry is one of the major source of income generation for the city. Shimla leads the list of Indian cities with the highest ranked hotels.^[37]

Shimla had always been famous for its quality of education and many important schools have been imparting quality education throughout the state. Along with schools of higher education, several institutes are also present, namely Himachal Pradesh University and Indian Institute of Advanced Study. Recruitment to the IAAS is through the joint competitive examinations (the Civil Services Examination) and through promotion from the subordinate cadre. Once recruited to IAAS, the directly recruited officers are trained mainly at the National Academy of Audit and Accounts, Shimla.^[38] Students from across India prefer to study in Shimla because of its climate and Queen of Hill Stations status. These have added to the economy of the district as well as the state.

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Government is trying to promote technology and IT sector as the new area for growth and promotion^[39] although not many companies have yet settled in Shimla. There are many new startups in and around Shimla. There are over six call centres in Shimla, including Alturist Technologies and 31 Parallel. Two notable companies that are registered in Shimla are Netgen IT Solutions, an international website development startup with partner offices in the US and Australia, and Himachal Media, a company that deals with content and media publishing.

Civic administration

The administrative responsibilities of the city of Shimla and merged areas of Dhalli, Totu and New Shimla reside with the Shimla Municipal Corporation (SMC). All three areas were taken under SMC in 2006–07. Established in 1851, the Shimla Municipal Corporation is an elected body comprising 27 councillors, three of whom are nominated by the government of Himachal Pradesh.^[21] The nominations are based on prominence in the fields of social service, academics and other activities. Thirty-three percent of the seats are reserved for women. The elections take place every five years and the mayor and deputy mayor are elected by and amongst the councillors themselves. Kusum Sadrate and Rakesh Kumar Sharma of BJP are the present mayor and deputy mayor respectively.^[40]

The administrative head of the corporation is the commissioner who is appointed by the state government.

The two major political parties are the Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian National Congress with a third party, Communist Party of India (Marxist), emerging.^[41]

The city contributes one seat to the state assembly (Vidhan Sabha) and one seat to the lower house of parliament (Lok Sabha).^[42] Law and order in the city is collectively maintained by the police force, Vigilance Department, enforcement directorate, forensics, fire brigade, prisons service and Home Guard. There are five police stations and three fire stations in Shimla.^[43] The Superintendent of Police, Shimla heads the police force. The First Armed Police Battalion, one of the four armed police battalions in the state, is available for assistance to the local police.^[44]

There are eleven courts in the district including a fast-track court.^[45]

Demographics

Population

According to 2011 census, Shimla city spread over an area of 35.34 km² had a population of 169,578 with 93,152 males and 76,426 females.^{[3][4]} Shimla urban agglomeration had a population of 171,817 as per provisional data of 2011 census, out of which males were 94,797 and females were 77,020.^[46] The effective literacy rate of city was 93.63 percent^[4] and that of urban agglomeration was 94.14 per cent.^[46]

The city area has increased considerably along with passage of time. It has stretched from Hiranagar to Dhalli from one side & from Tara Devi to Malyana in the other. As per the 2001 India Census,^[47] the city has a population of 142,161 spread over an area of 19.55 km².^[21] A floating population of 75,000 is attributed to service industries such as tourism.^[21] The largest demographic, 55%, is 16–45 years of age. A further 28% of the population are younger than 15 years. The low sex ratio – 930 girls for every 1,000 boys in 2001^[48] – is cause for concern, and much lower than the 974 versus 1,000 for Himachal Pradesh state as a whole.

The unemployment rate in the city has come down from 36% in 1992 to 22.6% in 2006. This drop is attributed to recent industrialisation, the growth of service industries, and knowledge development.^[49]

Language

Hindi is the *lingua franca* of the city, it is the principal spoken language of the city and also the most commonly used language for the official purposes. English is also spoken by a sizeable population, and is the second official language of the city. Other than Hindi, Pahari languages are spoken by the ethnic Pahari people, who form a major part of the population in the city. Punjabi language is prevalent among the ethnic Punjabi migrant population of the city, most of whom are refugees from West Punjab, who settled in the city after the Partition of India in 1947.

Religion

According to 2011 census, the majority religion of the city is Hinduism practised by 93.5% of the population, followed by Islam (2.29%), Sikhism (1.95%), Buddhism (1.33%), Christianity (0.62%), and Jainism (0.10%).

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Culture

The people of Shimla are informally called Shimlaites. With largely cosmopolitan crowds, a variety of festivals are celebrated here. The Shimla Summer Festival, held every year during peak tourist season,^[50] and lasting 3–4 days, is celebrated on the Ridge. The highlights of this event include performances by popular singers from all over the country. Since 2015, 95.0 BIG FM^[51] and Himachal Tourism have been jointly organising a seven-day long winter carnival on the Ridge from Christmas to New Year's.^{[52][53][54]}

Shimla has a number of places to visit. Local hangouts like the Mall and the Ridge are in the heart of the city. Most of the heritage buildings in the city are preserved in their original 'Tudorbethan' architecture. The former Viceregal Lodge, which now houses the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, and Wildflower Hall, now a luxury hotel, are some of the famous ones. A collection of paintings, jewellery and textiles of the region can be found at the State Museum (built in 1974).

Lakkar Bazaar, a market extending off the Ridge, is famous for souvenirs and crafts made of wood. Tatta Pani, 55 kilometres (34.2 mi) from the main city, is the name of hot sulphur springs that are believed to have medicinal value located on the banks of the River Satluj. Shimla is also home to South Asia's only natural ice skating rink.^[55] State and national level competitions are often held at this venue. Shimla Ice Skating Club, which manages the rink, hosts a carnival every year in January, which includes a fancy dress competition and figure skating events. Due to the effects of global warming and increasing urban development in and around Shimla, the number of sessions on ice every winter has been decreasing in the past few years.

Shimla has many temples and is often visited by devotees from nearby towns and cities. The Kali Bari temple, dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali is near the mall. Jakhoo Temple, for the Hindu god Hanuman is located at the highest point in Shimla.^[56] Sankat Mochan, another Hanuman temple, is famous for the numerous monkeys that are always found in its vicinity. It is located on Shimla-Kalka Highway about 10 kilometres (6.2 mi) from the city. The nearby temple of Tara Devi is a place for performing rituals and festivals. Other prominent places of worship include a Gurudwara near the bus terminus and Christ Church on the Ridge.

Shimla arts and crafts are highly in demand by the tourists. They range from excellent pieces of jewellery, embroidered shawls and garments to leather made articles and sculptures. Shimla is full of pine and deodar trees. The wood has been extensively used in all major buildings of Shimla. The various kinds crafts of Shimla made out of wood includes small boxes, utensils, image carvings and souvenirs.

Carpet making of Shimla is a great attraction for the tourists. Different floral and other motifs are used. Wool is used to make blankets and rugs. The embroidery includes handkerchiefs, hand fans, gloves and caps.

The shawls of Shimla are very well known for their fine quality. The leather craft of Shimla comprises shoes, slippers and belts. The other arts and crafts of Shimla includes a huge collection of beaded and metal jewellery.

The culture of Shimla throwbacks religious, agnostic Kumauni people with simple lifestyle living away from the hustle and bustle of metro cities.

Shimla has the largest natural ice skating rink in South Asia. The ice skating season usually begins in the start of December and goes on till the end of February. The city has sporting venues like the Indira Gandhi Rajya Khel Parisar, the main sports complex. Further out from the city is the Naldehra nine-hole golf course, the oldest of its kind in India.^[57] Kufri is a ski resort (winter only) located 19 kilometres (11.8 mi) from the main city.

Education

The city has 13 anganwadis and 64 primary schools.^[21] There are many schools from the British era. Some of the popular convent schools in the city are Bishop Cotton School, St. Edward's School, Shimla, Auckland House School, Shimla Public School, Sacred Heart Convent, Tara Hall, Convent of Jesus & Mary (Chelsea). Other public schools include Kendriya Vidyalaya Jakhoo, DAV New Shimla, Hainault Public School, DAV Lakkar Bazaar, S.D. Sr. Sec. School, DAV Totu, Dayanand Public School, Shimla, Himalayan Public School, Upper Kaithu, Himalayan International School and Chapslee Garden School. Bishop Cotton School and St. Edward's School, Shimla are for boys only, whereas, Tara Hall and Convent of Jesus & Mary (Chelsea) are for girls only.

The medical institutes in Shimla are Indira Gandhi Medical College. St. Bede's and Rajkiya Kanya Maha Vidyalaya (RKMV) are girls-only colleges. Government College, Sanjauli, and Government College Chaura Maidan are also located in the city. The Indian Institute of Advanced Study, housed in the Viceregal lodge, is a residential centre for

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research in Humanities, Indian culture, religion and social and natural sciences. The Himachal Pradesh University (state university of Himachal Pradesh) is also located in Shimla. Himachal Pradesh University Business School (HPUBS) and University Institute of Information Technology, Himachal Pradesh University (UIIT), a premier technical education institute, are also located here.

There is one private university by the name of APG (Alakh Prakash Goyal) Shimla University. It was awarded as the Best University in Hills by Assocham India. Shimla has two state libraries with a collection of over 47,000 old books divided between them. The one at Gandhi Bhavan in the university has over 40,000 books and the other library, also a heritage building on the ridge, has 7,000.^[60] Other institutes of higher education and research located in Shimla are the Central Potato Research Institute, a member of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and National Academy of Audit and Accounts for training of officers of the Indian Audits and Accounts Service (IA&AS).

Places of interest

- The Mall: The Mall is the main shopping street of Shimla. It has many restaurants, clubs, banks, bars, post offices and tourist offices. The Gaiety Theatre is situated there.
- The Ridge: The Ridge is a large open space, which is situated alongside the Mall Road and hosts all the cultural activities in the city. Christ Church, The State Library and Gaiety Heritage Cultural Complex are some of the notable buildings located here.
- Christ Church: Situated on the Ridge, Christ Church is the second oldest church in Northern India. Inside there are stained glass windows which represent faith, hope, charity, fortitude, patience and humility.
- Jakhoo: 2 km from Shimla, at a height of 8,000 ft, Jakhu Hill is the highest peak in the city and has views of the city and of the snow-covered Himalayas. At the top of the hill is an old temple of Lord Hanuman, a Hindu deity which is popular among tourists and locals alike. A 108 feet (33-metre) statue of Lord Hanuman, at 8,500 feet (2,591 metres) above sea level, is the statue standing at the highest altitude among several other masterpieces in the world, overtaking the Christ Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.^[61]
- Jakhu Ropeway: This ropeway connects Jakhu temple to the ridge ground and is the first ropeway in Shimla.
- Badi ki dhar: Badi Dhar is situated at an altitude of 6781 feet above sea level. Beautiful sights of Shimla can be seen from the top of the hill. The place is famous for its Lord Shiva temple and annual fair which is organised on 14/15 June.
- Jutogh: Located 8 km from the city centre, this army cantonment is near Tutu, an important suburb of Shimla city.
- Shimla State Museum: The museum, which was opened in 1974, has tried to protect hill-out and the cultural wealth of the state. There is a collection of miniature Pahari paintings, sculptures, bronzes wood-carvings and also costumes, textiles and jewellery of the region.
- Indian Institute of Advanced Study: This institute is housed at the former Viceregal Lodge, built in 1884–88.
- Summer Hill: The township of Summer Hill is at a height of 6,500 ft on the Shimla-Kalka railway line. Mahatma Gandhi lived in these quiet surroundings during his visits to Shimla. Himachal Pradesh University is situated here.
- Annadale: Developed as the racecourse of Shimla, Annadale is 2–4 km from the Ridge at a height of 6,117 ft. It is now used by the Indian Army.
- Tara Devi: 11 km from the Shimla bus-stand. Tara Devi Hill has a temple dedicated to the goddess of stars on top of the hill. There is a military Dairy Town here as well as the headquarters of Bharat Scouts and Guides.

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- Sankat Mochan: It is a famous Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Hanuman.
- Junga: Junga is nearest Tehsil, 26 km from Shimla. Its original name (with diacritics) is "Jūnga", and it is a former royal retreat of the princely state of Keonthal. It is known as the Keonthal Estate.
- Anand Vilas: Midway between Shimla and Junga. "Sarva Dharma Mandir", Temple of all faiths, is a spiritual group dedicated to Mother Nature. Thousands of visitors and devotees come here every year. There is an "Art is Values" school with pupils from all over India. Classes are provided free of cost.
- Totu: A major suburb of Shimla on NH-88. Houses Jutogh railway station and HimFed under government of Himachal Pradesh.
- Mashobra: 13 km from Shimla, site of the annual Sipi fair in June.
- Kufri: 16 km from Shimla at a height of 8,600 ft, Kufri is the local winter sports centre, and has a small zoo.
- Chharabra: 13 km from Shimla on route to Kufri.
- Naldehra: 22 km from Shimla, with a nine-hole Naldehra Golf Club. The annual Sipi fair in June is held in Naldehra.

- Chail: Situated at 45 kilometres from Shimla, Chail was built as summer retreat by the Maharaja of Patiala during the British Raj, it is known for the world's highest cricket ground at a height of 7220 feet situated in the cantonment area.
- Sanjauli: The main suburb of Shimla.
- Rashtrapati Niwas, Shimla

Transport

Local transport in Shimla is by bus or private vehicles. Buses ply frequently on the circular road surrounding the city centre. Like any other growing city, Shimla is also expanding with new habitats in the vicinity. Transport services in these areas are also expanding rapidly. Tourist taxis are also an option for out of town trips. Locals typically traverse the city on foot. Private vehicles are prohibited on the Mall, Ridge and nearby markets. Due to narrow roads and steep slopes, the auto rickshaws which are common in other Indian cities are largely absent.

Road

Shimla is well-connected by road network to all major cities in north India and to all major towns and district headquarters within the state. [[NH-5]]National Highway 5]] (Formerly NH 22) connects Shimla to the nearest big city of Chandigarh. The scenic Kalka Shimla Railway, a narrow gauge track, is listed in the *Guinness Book of Records* for the steepest rise in altitude in a distance of 96 km.^[63] Kalka, the plains rail terminus, has daily departures to major Indian cities. The city has a total of three railway stations with Shimla the main station and two others located at Summer Hill and Totu (Jutogh) respectively. It was built to connect Shimla, the summer capital of India during the British Raj, with the Indian rail system. The route is famous for its scenery and improbable construction. In 2007, the government of Himachal Pradesh declared the railway a heritage property.^[64] For about a week starting on 11 September 2007, an expert team from UNESCO visited the railway to review and inspect it for possible selection as a World Heritage Site. On 8 July 2008, the Kalka–Shimla Railway was listed as the World Heritage Site.^[65] alongside Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, Nilgiri Mountain Railway, and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus.^[66]

Manali is a resort town nestled in the mountains of the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh near the northern end of the Kullu Valley in the Beas River Valley. It is located in the Kullu district, about 270 km (168 mi) north of the state capital, Shimla, 309 km (192 miles) north east of Chandigarh and 544 km (338 miles) northeast of Delhi, the national capital. The small town, with a population of 8,096,^[1] is the beginning of an ancient trade route to Ladakh and from there over the Karakoram Pass on to Yarkand and Khotan in the Tarim Basin. It is a popular tourist destination and serves as the gateway to Lahaul and Spiti district as well as Leh.

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