

How to Plan Your Char Dham Yatra



This comprehensive guide provides all the necessary details for planning your Char Dham Yatra, ensuring a safe and fulfilling pilgrimage. The information is updated as of March 2025, incorporating the latest travel and health advisories.

Overview of Char Dham

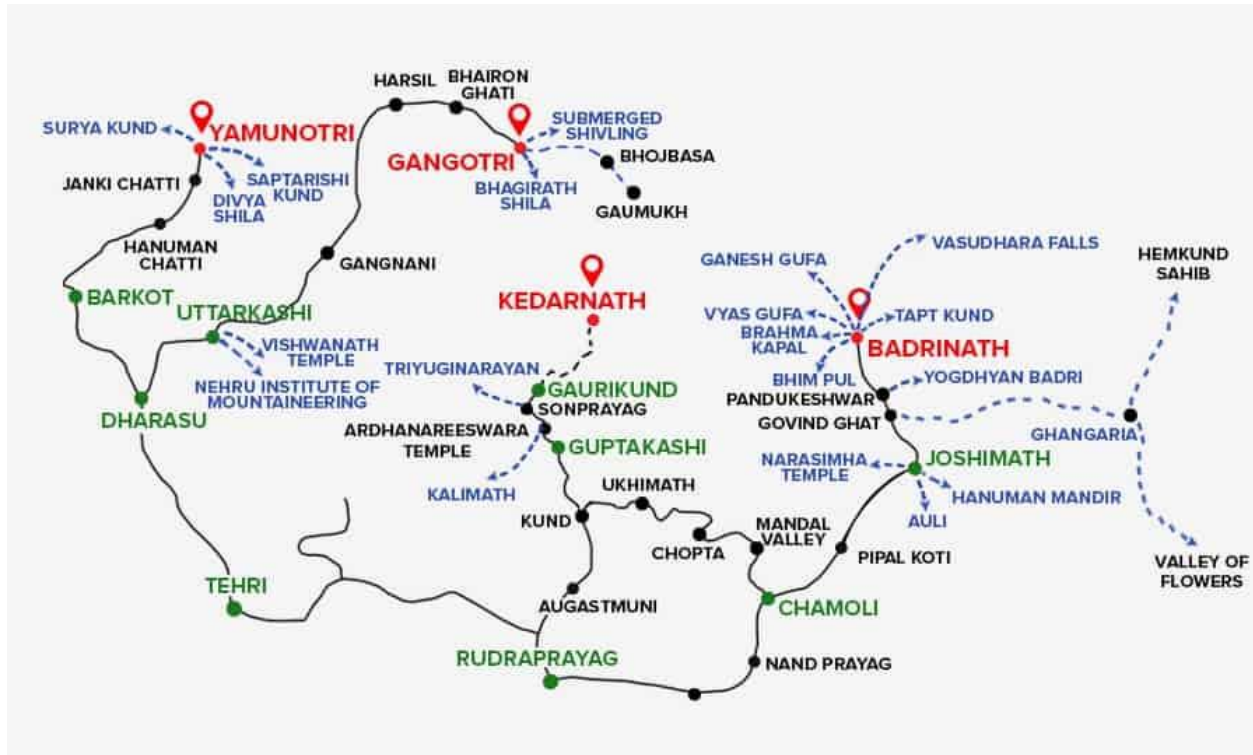
Char Dham, often called Chota Char Dham to distinguish it from the larger Bada Char Dham (Rameswaram, Puri, and Dwarka), is a revered Hindu pilgrimage circuit in Uttarakhand. It comprises four sacred sites: Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath, nestled in the Garhwal Himalayas. This yatra is believed to purify the soul and pave the way to moksha, drawing millions of devotees annually.

Spiritual Significance of Each Dham

- **Yamunotri** (3,293m): The source of the Yamuna River, dedicated to Goddess Yamuna. Pilgrims often bathe in the Surya Kund hot spring.

- **Gangotri** (3,100m): The origin of the Ganges River, dedicated to Goddess Ganga. The temple, dating back to the 18th century, is a major attraction.
- **Kedarnath** (3,583m): A revered Jyotirlinga of Lord Shiva, known for its serene atmosphere and a challenging 16-km trek from Gaurikund.
- **Badrinath** (3,133m): Dedicated to Lord Vishnu, it is considered the most important of the four, with a temple accessible via road from Joshimath.

The traditional route follows a clockwise direction, beginning at Yamunotri, in accordance with Hindu pilgrimage customs.



Best Time to Visit

The yatra is open from April to November. The ideal months are **May-June and September-October**, with temperatures between 20-35°C. The monsoon season (July-August) is risky due to landslides and roadblocks, making travel hazardous.

Opening & Closing Dates (2025)

Expected opening dates based on past trends:

- **Badrinath:** May 4, 2025, at 6:00 AM (exact dates for other dhams to be confirmed).
- Closures usually occur around Bhai Dooj/Yama Dwitiya (October-November).

For real-time updates, check official portals like **SacredYatra Opening Dates**.

How to Reach

- **By Air:** Nearest airport – **Jolly Grant Airport, Dehradun** (20 km from Rishikesh), connected to major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore.
- **By Train:** Nearest railway stations – **Haridwar (120 km from Kedarnath) and Rishikesh (200 km from Kedarnath).**
- **By Road:** Buses and taxis from Haridwar/Rishikesh; GMVN Ltd. and private operators run services to all dhams.



**Book your Char Dham Yatra by Helicopter with
Odin Tours, India's Leading Luxury Tour Operator
Call: +91 9810594172 / +91 9350371499
Website: www.yatrachardham.in**

Registration Process

Registration is **mandatory** for crowd management and safety, introduced post-2013 Kedarnath floods.

- **Online:** Register via **Tourist Care Uttarakhand** website or mobile app (requires Aadhar, name, and travel dates).
- **Offline:** Available at **Haridwar, Rishikesh, Barkot, Sonprayag, and Pandukeshwar** (biometric registration included).

Modes of Transportation

- **By Road:** Traditional mode, covering 1,600 km in **10-12 days**. Buses (27-41 seaters), private cars, and taxis are. Reputed travel operators like Odin Tours – www.odintours.com and Indus Trips – www.industrips.com offer luxury tours / group tours for those looking for comfort and convenience within budget.
- **By Helicopter:** Faster, ideal for elderly or time-constrained pilgrims. Packages from **Dehradun. Advance booking required** due to high demand. You can contact Odin Tours – www.odintours.com for booking Helicopter tours of Char Dham.

Detailed Char Dham Yatra Itinerary (10-12 Days)

This comprehensive itinerary ensures a well-planned and comfortable journey to the four sacred shrines of **Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath**, with adequate time for darshan and acclimatization.

Day 1: Haridwar → Barkot (236 km, 7-8 hours)

- **Start:** Early morning from Haridwar/Rishikesh by road.
 - **Route:** Haridwar → Rishikesh → Dehradun → Mussoorie → Barkot.
 - **Stops:**
 - **Kempty Falls (Mussoorie)** – A scenic waterfall for refreshments.
 - **Lakhamandal (Near Barkot)** – An ancient Shiva temple linked to the Mahabharata.
 - **Arrival at Barkot (Evening).** Check into a hotel/guest house.
 - **Dinner & Rest:** Overnight stay at Barkot to prepare for the trek to Yamunotri.
-

Day 2: Barkot → Yamunotri (6 km trek) → Return to Barkot

- **Morning Drive:** Barkot → Janki Chatti (45 km, 2 hours).
 - **Trek to Yamunotri:**
 - **Route:** Janki Chatti → Yamunotri (6 km trek, 2-3 hours).
 - **Options:** Trekking, Pony, or Palki services available.
 - **Places to Visit:**
 - **Yamunotri Temple** – Dedicated to Goddess Yamuna.
 - **Surya Kund** – A hot water spring for cooking rice as a prasad offering.
 - **Divya Shila** – A sacred rock near the temple.
 - **Return Journey:** Trek back to Janki Chatti → Drive to Barkot.
 - **Overnight Stay:** Hotel/guest house in Barkot.
-

Day 3: Barkot → Uttarkashi (100 km, 4-5 hours)

- **Morning Drive:** Leave Barkot early for Uttarkashi via Dharasu Bend.
 - **En route attractions:**
 - **Prakateshwar Cave Temple** – A cave with naturally formed Shivlinga.
 - **Arrival in Uttarkashi** (Afternoon). Check-in at a hotel.
 - **Evening Darshan:**
 - **Vishwanath Temple** – Dedicated to Lord Shiva.
 - **Shakti Temple** – Famous for the massive trident.
 - **Rest & Overnight Stay:** Hotel in Uttarkashi.
-

Day 4: Uttarkashi → Gangotri (100 km, 3-4 hours) → Return

- **Early Morning Drive:** Uttarkashi → Gangotri along the Bhagirathi River.
 - **Places to Visit in Gangotri:**
 - **Gangotri Temple** – Dedicated to Goddess Ganga.
 - **Bhagirath Shila** – The stone where King Bhagirath meditated.
 - **Surya Kund & Gauri Kund** – Scenic waterfalls and sacred bathing spots.
 - **Afternoon Return:** Gangotri → Uttarkashi.
 - **Overnight Stay:** Hotel in Uttarkashi.
-

Day 5: Uttarkashi → Guptakashi (220 km, 8-9 hours)

- **Morning Drive:** Uttarkashi → Guptakashi via Tehri and Rudraprayag.
 - **Stops & Attractions:**
 - **Tehri Dam Viewpoint** – One of the highest dams in India.
 - **Rudraprayag Sangam** – Confluence of the Mandakini and Alaknanda Rivers.
 - **Arrival at Guptakashi** (Evening). Check-in at a hotel.
 - **Evening Visit:**
 - **Ardh Narishwar Temple** – A temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.
 - **Rest & Overnight Stay:** Hotel in Guptakashi.
-

Day 6: Guptakashi → Kedarnath (16 km trek) → Return

- **Morning Drive:** Guptakashi → Gaurikund (30 km, 1-2 hours).
- **Trek to Kedarnath** (16 km, 5-6 hours, or Helicopter option).
 - Trekking, Ponies, and Palki available.
 - Helicopter service available from Phata, Sirsi, or Guptakashi.
- **Places to Visit:**
 - **Kedarnath Temple** – One of the 12 Jyotirlingas.
 - **Adi Shankaracharya Samadhi** – Behind the temple.
 - **Bhairavnath Temple** – A short trek from Kedarnath.

- **Return Journey:** Trek back to Gaurikund → Drive to Guptakashi.
 - **Overnight Stay:** Hotel in Guptakashi.
-

Day 7: Guptakashi → Joshimath (190 km, 7-8 hours)

- **Morning Drive:** Guptakashi → Joshimath via Chopta.
 - **Stops & Attractions:**
 - **Chopta** – Known as "Mini Switzerland" for scenic beauty.
 - **Narsingh Temple (Joshimath)** – Winter seat of Badrinath deity.
 - **Arrival at Joshimath** (Evening). Check-in at a hotel.
 - **Rest & Overnight Stay:** Hotel in Joshimath.
-

Day 8: Joshimath → Badrinath (45 km, 2 hours) → Return

- **Morning Drive:** Joshimath → Badrinath.
 - **Places to Visit in Badrinath:**
 - **Badrinath Temple** – Dedicated to Lord Vishnu.
 - **Tapt Kund** – A hot spring for bathing.
 - **Brahma Kapal** – A ritual site for ancestors.
 - **Mana Village** – The last Indian village before the Tibet border.
 - **Afternoon Return:** Drive back to Joshimath.
 - **Overnight Stay:** Hotel in Joshimath.
-

Day 9: Joshimath → Rishikesh (260 km, 8-9 hours)

- **Morning Drive:** Joshimath → Rishikesh via Rudraprayag and Devprayag.
 - **Stops & Attractions:**
 - **Vishnuprayag, Nandprayag, Karnaprayag, Devprayag** – Confluences of rivers.
 - **Evening Arrival at Rishikesh.** Check-in at a hotel.
 - **Optional Evening Activities:**
 - **Ganga Aarti at Triveni Ghat.**
 - **Visit Laxman Jhula & Ram Jhula.**
 - **Overnight Stay:** Hotel in Rishikesh.
-

Day 10: Rishikesh → Haridwar (25 km, 1 hour) → Departure

- **Morning Visit:**

- **Neelkanth Mahadev Temple** – A revered Shiva temple.
 - **Return Journey:** Drive to Haridwar.
 - **Optional:** Visit Har Ki Pauri for a final Ganga darshan.
 - **Tour Ends:** Drop-off at Haridwar Railway Station or Jolly Grant Airport (Dehradun).
-

Additional Notes

- **Helicopter Option:** Available from Dehradun for a shorter **5-day itinerary** covering all four dhams.
- **Best Time to Visit:** May-June & September-October (Avoid monsoons due to landslides).
- **Accommodation:** Mix of budget, mid-range, and luxury stays available.
- **Packing Essentials:** Warm clothes, rain gear, comfortable trekking shoes, ID proofs, medicines, and snacks.
- **Registration:** Mandatory for all pilgrims (Online/Offline).

This itinerary ensures a **smooth, spiritually fulfilling, and well-paced** Char Dham Yatra in **10-12 days** with a mix of adventure, devotion, and breathtaking Himalayan landscapes. ☐☐

Choose Helicopter Tour if you are short on time and want VIP experience. It costs, but is well worth the comfort and convenience.

Essential Packing List

- **Clothing:** Warm layers (jackets, thermals) for cold temperatures.
- **Rain Gear:** Umbrella, raincoat for unexpected showers.
- **Footwear:** Sturdy, comfortable walking shoes for treks (Yamunotri – 6 km, Kedarnath – 16 km).
- **Documents:** ID proof (Aadhar, Voter ID, Passport) for registration.
- **Health Essentials:** Medicines for altitude sickness, pain relief, and a first-aid kit.
- **Accessories:** Power banks and snacks for remote areas with limited facilities.

Dos & Don'ts

☐ **Dos:**

- Register in advance.
- Respect local traditions.
- Stay hydrated and eat light meals.
- Follow temple darshan timings.

☐ **Don'ts:**

- Do not litter.

- Avoid alcohol and non-vegetarian food.
- Refrain from disturbing wildlife.
- Avoid solo trekking without a guide.
- Avoid monsoon travel due to safety risks.



**Book your Char Dham Yatra by Helicopter with
Odin Tours, India's Leading Luxury Tour Operator**
Call: +91 9810594172 / +91 9350371499
Website: www.yatrachardham.in

Religious Rituals & Practices

- **Yamunotri:** Bathing in hot springs, offerings to Goddess Yamuna.
- **Gangotri:** Ganges source rituals, prayers to Goddess Ganga.
- **Kedarnath:** Special prayers at the Jyotirlinga, meditation focus.
- **Badrinath:** Darshan of Lord Vishnu, rituals like **Badri Kedar Yatra**.

Accommodation Options

- **Budget:** Dharamshalas, ashrams, and guesthouses with basic amenities.
- **Mid-range:** Hotels like **Hotel Vivek Palace (Barkot)**, **GMVN guest houses** (suitable for families).
- **Luxury:** Resorts and premium hotels near Badrinath/Gangotri (**Basanti Hotel**).
- **Advance booking is recommended**, especially for peak months (May-June, September-October).

Note: It is difficult to get confirmed hotel bookings due to heavy rush, so book with reputed travel operators like Odin Tours – www.odintours.com and Indus Trips – www.industrips.com

Health Considerations

- High-altitude locations (**3,000+ meters**) pose risks of altitude sickness, cardiac, and respiratory issues.
- **Acclimatization:** Spend **24-48 hours** at each site before proceeding.
- **Medical Facilities:** Health posts available along the route (**eSwasthya Dham for health monitoring**).
- **Fitness:** Pilgrims with health conditions (especially elderly) should consult doctors before travel.

Additional Notes

- The Char Dham Yatra is a physically and mentally **demanding** journey but offers breathtaking Himalayan views.
- Over **1 million pilgrims** undertake the yatra annually, making **crowd management and infrastructure** improvements crucial.
- **Government initiatives:** Road developments, medical facilities, and safety enhancements continue to improve the yatra experience (**Uttarakhand Tourism Updates**).

This detailed guide ensures you're **fully prepared** for a memorable Char Dham Yatra! □