



COMMUNITY ACTION TREKS LTD

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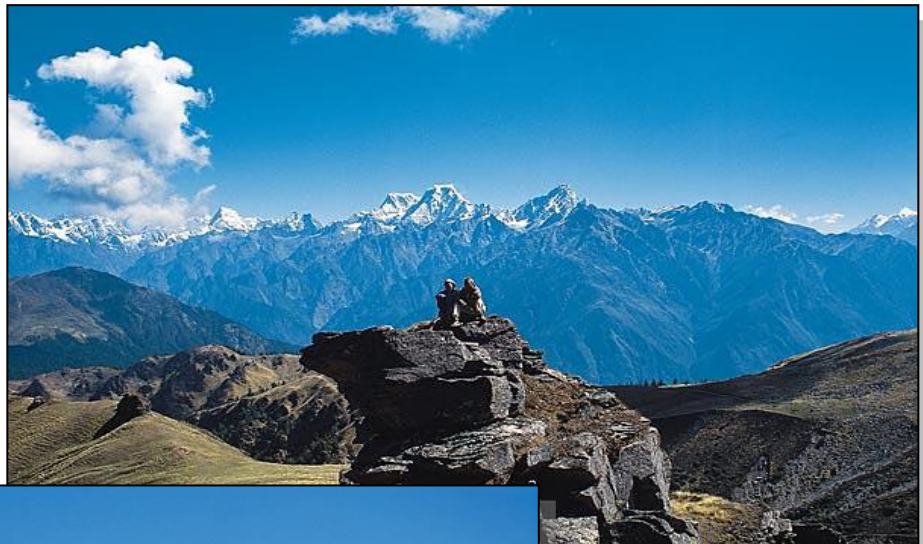
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NANDA DEVI – MILLAM VALLEY

- Grade:** Moderate
- Land-only duration:** 22 days Delhi - Delhi
- Trekking days:** 15
- Maximum altitude:** 3835m (4500m optional)
- Minimum numbers:** Requires just 4 participants to guarantee these departures at the advertised price.
- Dates and prices:** Our latest dates and prices list is available at www.catreks.com or from the CAT office.



The twin peaks of 7818m Nanda Devi, the bliss-giving goddess, form India's second highest mountain, situated in a remote region bordering Nepal and Tibet. The alpine glaciers, high valleys and flower-strewn meadows on the eastern approach to this magnificent mountain are an enticing world apart, and ideal for trekking. Once explored and lauded by mountaineering gurus Longstaff, Shipton and Tilman, they are largely ignored by today's visitors to the Himalayan region and therein of course lies their appeal!

After a fascinating drive from Delhi across the northern plains of India, we arrive in the foothills of the Himalaya and border region of Kumaon. Our trek begins at the quiet hill town of Munsiri where we descend to the lush Milam Valley, whose semi-tropical rainforests are alive with huge butterflies, exotic birds and large lizards. Once an important trade route, the broad trail was built by the British and is still used by local people to travel from village to village. Following the gorge of the Gori Ganga, we weave high above its foaming waters, climbing steadily among rhododendron forests, which support a botanist's paradise of ferns orchids, peonies and hydrangea.

The Hindu shrine of Naha Devi heralds new vistas as the valley opens up to reveal the snow-capped peaks that tower above it. In the rain shadow of these mountains, the vegetation of the upper valley is sparser and the villages are only inhabited in the summer months. We now leave the main trail to explore some of the side valleys, whose lure is irresistible. The beautiful Lawan Valley is the usual approach to the base camp for 7340m high Nanda Devi East while the Pachu Valley leads to the glacier of the same name, which lies 4000m below the summit of the mountain. We make camp in this spectacular setting and with luck enjoy magical views of Nanda Devi and Nanda Devi East bathed in the warm glow of sunrise, before exploring along the edge of the glacier.

Back in the main valley, we continue to Milam village, from where we explore the upper valley and its glacier, set to a splendid backdrop of 7000m peaks of Hardeol and Trisuli.

During most of this trek we follow broad well graded trails, which make for pleasurable walking. Several days are spent exploring side valleys, where the trekking is more demanding. There is an option to climb to 4500m or higher

• Important note – minimum numbers:

Before booking flights, please note that this trip requires a minimum of 4 trekkers before we can guarantee the departure at the advertised price. Please note that should you decide to book your own flights, it is essential that you check with the Community Action Treks office to ensure that the departure is guaranteed before committing financially to any flights or travel arrangements.

• Land-only prices:

Flight costs are less predictable than they used to be. Airlines now request full payment upfront. As a result, we will quote you a land-only cost, and quote separately for the cheapest flights we can find at the time of your booking. We will, however, require full payment for the flights prior to booking them. If you prefer to search for alternative flights yourself, we can sell you the trek at the land-only price.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

Walking and journey times are approximate

Day 1 **Delhi 215m**

Early morning arrival in Delhi, where we are met and transferred to our hotel. Delhi, the capital of India, has a fascinating history. It has been the seat of power of numerous dynasties - Rajputs, Muslim invaders, Afghans, Tughlaqs, Sayyids, Lodis and Mughals, who continued the imperial line until the British Days. Today this vibrant and bustling city is the political capital of the world's largest democracy. We have time to relax and perhaps explore Connaught Place before an afternoon sightseeing tour of some of New Delhi's places of interest including Rashtrapati Bhavan, once the Viceroy's residence, Sansad Bhavan, India's Parliament, India Gate, the war memorial to 90,000 Indian Army soldiers who died in World War 1 and Humayun's Tomb, the inspiration for the Taj Mahal. After dinner we take the overnight sleeper train to Kathgodam.

Its lush broadleaf forest is alive with birds and huge Lammergeyer and Himalayan Griffon Vultures are a common sight.

Descending through terraces growing wheat, barley, mustard seed and potatoes, we will be sharing the paved trail with villagers from the lower Ralam valley. Along this initial part of the trail there are several simple teahouses. Behind one you will see an "Inner Line" foreigner's prohibition sign, dating from before the 1994 re-alignment of the "Inner Line". We stop for lunch at Jimighat 1445m. As we approach Lilam, the valley becomes narrower, the temperature and humidity increase and the vegetation is now increasingly luxuriant. Some interesting fauna can be observed, with huge butterflies, exotic birds and large steel-blue lizards often spotted along the trail. We should arrive at Lilam village and our overnight camp by mid-afternoon.

Day 2 **Almora 1810m**

The train arrives at Kathgodam early (around 6am), and meet our vehicles for the drive out of the plains for around 45 minutes. We stop for breakfast at a hotel en route, before continuing for about 2½ hours to Almora / Khali estate where we will stay for the night. The afternoon can be spent relaxing or by taking a walk to the Binsar sanctuary.

Day 5 **Lilam to Bugdiar 2410m 6 / 7 hours walking**

From Lilam we walk through the Milam valley gorge, keeping to the left bank of the Gori Ganga. Our trail is cut into the cliff face above the river's roaring, foaming waters. We climb steadily through dense semi-tropical rain forest and thickets of dwarf bamboo throughout the morning until we reach "the Bamboo Palace" teahouse at Radgari 2100m where we break for a picnic lunch. Rhododendrons, ferns, orchids, peonies and climbing hydrangeas are prevalent on the surrounding cliff faces.

Day 3 **Munsiari 2050m**

We start around 6am. We should get good views of the three-pronged Trisul or Shiva's Trident and Nanda Devi soon after leaving Almora. Driving deeper into the Kumaon hills, we pass through a wide altitudinal range, dropping to as low as 500m and getting as high as 2700m, with equally varying vegetation and birds. Lunch will probably be at the large town of Pithoragarh.

We continue ascending along a well paved trail, at times making our way up stone staircases. We pass many rhododendrons which during the spring provide a riot of colour, as do the peonies and primulas; large lizards dash across our path. Once we pass the teahouse at Bugdiar, our camp is nearby.

We cross two intervening ridges before ascending the final 2700 metres high Kalamuni pass and reaching Munsiari. A quiet hill town, Munsiari received its first foreign trekkers in 1994 when travel restrictions were withdrawn. The five prominent peaks of the Panch Chuli group overlook the town and there is a well situated rest house with open views, whose grounds we use for setting up camp. (10 hours travelling including stops).

Day 6 **Bugdiar to Rilkote 3045m 6 / 7 hours walking**

From Bugdiar the trail climbs to 2655m before dropping to the Hindu shrine at Naha Devi. Descending to the fields of Naha Devi, the valley sweeps around to the right, opening up to reveal impressive mountain vistas. We have left the luxuriant vegetation behind and the slopes become bare as the rain shadow effect is more apparent. The valley sides are very susceptible to major landslides; some of the boulders that have crashed down recently around the trail are bigger than houses. We camp at Rilkote, from where we can clearly see the approach to the Brijganja pass on the other side of the valley.

Day 4 **Short drive to Salopani, trek to Lilam 1730m 6 hours walking**

Many of the trek loads will have been sorted out the previous evening, so we should have a smooth start to our first trekking day. We will drive the short distance to Salopani (15 mins) and the start of the trek. From here we follow the well paved trail to the Gori Ganga valley.

Day 7 Rilkote to Martoli 3385m

We are quite obviously in the barren trans Himalayan zone now, characterised by low growing scrub vegetation, such as cotoneaster. We walk past villages, which are usually completely deserted from mid October to mid April. Winter here is very hostile and the villagers go down to Munsiri and beyond during that time. However, many fields are used for cultivation; barley and potatoes are grown along with chives, for the urban market. We should arrive at Martoli by lunch time. This village is situated at the junction of the Lawan valley, an important tributary valley which flows down from the Nanda Devi group of peaks to the west.

Day 8 Lawan Valley - Martoli

A day to explore the beautiful Lawan Valley, which leads to the Shalang Glacier. This is a beautiful open valley with lush vegetation and is the approach route to the usual Nanda Devi base camp area around the Lawan glacier.

**Day 9 Martoli to Ganaghar 3310m
6 / 7 hours walking**

We press on to our campground at Ganaghar at the mouth of the Pachu valley. En route we pass a bridge crossing the Gori Ganga to Burphu on the opposite bank. Both Ganaghar and Pachu on the opposite side of the Pachu valley were once home to many families but are now only occupied from spring to autumn. Many of the stone houses in both villages are surprisingly still quite structurally sound whilst others are in ruins having perhaps not been occupied for 35 years. Many have lovely intricately carved wooden doors and window frames. From here we get our first views of the summit of Nanda Devi East and Milam village further up the Milam valley.

**Day 10 Ganaghar to Pachu Glacier, Alpine Meadows of Nanda Devi East 3835m
3 / 4 hours walking**

Depending on the trail conditions, we may walk up the Pachu valley on either its left or right side. A narrow and steep trail leads into the valley at the head of which lies the gigantic northeast face of Nanda Devi East towering almost 4000 metres above the Pachu glacier. We walk through dwarf rhododendron and stands of birch trees immediately below the 5900 metre high Nanda Bhanar peak, which give way to alpine meadows below the debris of the actual glacier. In the spring the hillside is a riot of colour with pink rhododendrons in full bloom.

Longstaff was the first outsider to see this valley in 1905, when he attempted to climb up this route to Nanda Devi East. Having failed, he went to the valley parallel and to the south of Pachu. Here he climbed to a high ridge, known as Longstaff's Col, that ultimately leads to the summit of Nanda Devi East, climbed alpine style in 1994 by the British husband and wife team of Roger Payne and Julie-Ann Clyma. Camp is set up on these meadows in what is truly a spectacular setting not 3 kms

from the foot of Nanda Devi East, with the main Nanda Devi summit and the well known ridge connecting the two also clearly visible.

Day 11 Pachu Glacier, Alpine Meadows of Nanda Devi East

An early wake-up is recommended today. From our campsite, Nanda Devi East looks massive as it rises skywards, overshadowing the camp like a giant sentinel. It is most spectacular at sunrise when its snow covered summit and that of Nanda Devi are suddenly hit by the first rays of the sun, turning crimson. Gradually both mountains and the ridge joining them are glowing orange. After breakfast we have all day to enjoy the magnificent beauty of this place. It is usually possible to walk further up the side of Pachu glacier. There are other numerous walk options up the valley sides for the really energetic.

**Day 12 Pachu Glacier, Alpine Meadows of Nanda Devi East to Burphu 3180m
3 / 4 hours walking**

We retrace our steps back to Ganaghar and down the main Milam valley until we cross the Gori Ganga on a wooden bridge to Burphu, where we camp.

**Day 13 Burphu to Milam 3360m
3 hours walking**

We continue up the valley to the once important trading post of Milam. The terrain becomes wilder and more arid, in places almost canyon-like, though elsewhere the vistas open up onto a vast scale. However, because we are now back on the main mule trail the walking is easy. As we near Milam village all foreigners must register at the large Indian-Tibet Border Police base. We pass a sign pointing left to the Milam glacier and right to two 'restricted permit only' passes towards Tibet. Depending on water availability we will camp at the beginning of the village or at a beautiful grassy spot around 30 minutes beyond the village.

**Day 14 Milam Glacier 3500m, Milam 3360m
2 / 3 hours walking**

Today we walk to the Milam Glacier (2 to 3 hours). The trail is gentle initially then climbs to the terminal moraine of the glacier. This valley is stunning, with a backdrop of the 7000m peaks of Hardeol and Trisuli. It is possible to walk around to the left of the terminal moraine to see the ice and crevasses of the glacier but care is needed. The condition of the glacier changes from season to season and this will dictate how far we can walk.

For the energetic it may be possible to ascend the shepherds' track to the north-east of the moraine, so gaining height to a grassy ridge, which overlooks the glacier. This will give extensive views of the glacier as well as the junction where three smaller glaciers join the main Milam glacier. After a picnic lunch we return to our camp.

**Day 15 Milam 3360m to Rilkote 3040m
7 / 8 hours walking**

We retrace our route to Burphu where we cross to the right bank of the river. Soon after passing below Martoli, we descend towards the river before climbing up to Rilkote.

Day 16 Rilkote to Bugdiar 2410m
Retrace our route to Bugdiar.

Day 17 Bugdiar to Lilam 1730m
Retrace our route to Lilam

Day 18 Lilam to Munsiri 2050m
Starting early from Lilam to avoid the heat of the day, we ascend past a succession of villages to the road at Salapani. Here our

jeep(s) will be waiting to take us the short distance to Munsiri and our camp. (4 hours)

Day 19 Drive to Kausani / Almora.
Overnight in hotel.

Day 20 Drive to Kathdogam for the overnight train to Delhi.

Day 21 Free day in Delhi
Arrive Delhi first thing in the morning. Transfer to hotel. Breakfast on arrival from Kathdogam. Free day in Delhi. This day may be needed should we need to take the day train to Delhi.

Day 22 Depart Delhi
Transfer to the international airport.

Important Note: Whilst we expect that the trek will run as per the itinerary, participants should accept that there is a possibility of changes being necessary subject to local conditions.

The Price Includes:

- Arrival and departure transfers in India
- Accommodation for 3 nights in Delhi in rooms with shower and w.c. and inclusive of breakfast
- All meals included on trek
- Train between Delhi and Kathgodam and return by overnight sleeper train where possible.
- Internal transportation as described in the itinerary.
- All entrance and camping fees
- Sight-seeing on Day 2
- Support staff on Trek
- English speaking Indian tour leader
- Trekking equipment i.e. tents/mattresses etc

Not Included:

- International flights
- Airport taxes (please refer to our document "Preparing for your trek: India" for latest prices)
- Indian visa (please refer to our document "Preparing for your trek: India" for latest prices)
- Meals other than breakfast whilst in Delhi
- Travel insurance
- Tips
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls and souvenirs