

A Guide to Himachal

This 7-day circuit is a quiet yet dramatic journey through Himachal's northwestern frontier — where slate-roofed villages cling to pine ridges, and the ascent to Sach Pass offers one of India's most thrilling drives. From the hidden meadows of Bhandal to the snow walls of Satrundi, this loop is perfect for nature lovers, photographers, and slow travelers seeking solitude and scale.

Trip Overview

Duration: 7 Days

Best Season: Mid-June to early October (*Sach Pass open; meadows accessible*)

Total Distance: ~500–600 km

Vehicle Type: SUV / High Clearance (*essential for Sach Pass and Bhandal stretch*)

Difficulty: Moderate to Challenging (*steep climbs, narrow roads, remote terrain*)

Permits: No permits required for Indian nationals

Mobile Network: BSNL in Chamba, Salooni, Tissa; no signal in Bhandal, Satrundi, Sach Pass

Fuel Planning: Reliable pumps in Chamba, Tissa; carry 20–30 L spare for Sach Pass leg

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1: Chamba → Bhandal Valley

- **Distance/Time:** ~80 km | 4–5 hrs
 - **Highlights:**
 - Forested ascent through **Kihar, Koti, and Bhandal**
 - Slate-roofed homes, pine ridges, and river meadows
 - **Adventure:** Walk to **Bhandal meadows** and **Chamera tributary**
 - **Stay:** Bhandal homestay
 - **Tip:** Carry supplies — no shops beyond Koti
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Day 2: Bhandal → Salooni

- **Distance/Time:** ~60 km | 3–4 hrs
- **Highlights:**
 - Scenic descent through forested ridges
 - Visit **Salooni market, local temples, and ridge viewpoints**

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- **Adventure:** Sunset walk to **Salooni ridge**
 - **Stay:** Salooni guesthouse
 - **Tip:** Try local rajma and siddu
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Day 3: Salooni → Satrundi → Sach Pass → Bairagarh

- **Distance/Time:** ~100 km | 6–8 hrs
 - **Pass:** **Sach Pass (4,420 m)**
 - **Highlights:**
 - Snow walls, waterfalls, and cliff-hugging roads
 - Stop at **Satrundi Helipad** for panoramic views
 - **Adventure:** Controlled-speed drive with frequent photo stops
 - **Stay:** Bairagarh
 - **Caution:** Landslide-prone; drive slow and avoid late crossings
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Day 4: Bairagarh → Tissa

- **Distance/Time:** ~60 km | 3–4 hrs
 - **Highlights:**
 - Forested descent into **Tissa Valley**
 - Visit **Tissa Fort**, **local temples**, and **apple orchards**
 - **Adventure:** Walk to **Tissa ridge viewpoint**
 - **Stay:** Tissa homestay
 - **Tip:** Fuel up here for return leg
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Day 5: Tissa → Chamba

- **Distance/Time:** ~80 km | 3–4 hrs
- **Highlights:**
 - Scenic drive along Ravi River
 - Return to **Chamba town**

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- **Adventure:** Visit **Lakshmi Narayan Temple, Bhuri Singh Museum**
 - **Stay:** Chamba
 - **Tip:** Explore old bazaar for handicrafts
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Day 6: Chamba exploration

- **Options:**
 - Visit **Chamunda Devi Temple, Rang Mahal, Chamera Lake**
 - Walk along **Chowgan** — Chamba's central promenade
 - **Stay:** Chamba
 - **Tip:** Try local chukh and mint chutney
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Day 7: Buffer / Return

- **Options:**
 - Rest day, shopping, or buffer for weather delays
 - **Finish:** Chamba (*trip end*)
 - **Tip:** Visit **Bharmour** (*optional extension*)
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Essentials to Carry

- **Documents:** DL, RC, insurance, ID proofs
 - **Clothing:** Warm layers, gloves, rain jacket
 - **Footwear:** Waterproof trekking shoes
 - **Health:** Diamox (if advised), ORS, basic meds
 - **Gear:** Tyre inflator, puncture kit, tow strap, jerrycans (20–30 L), headlamps, power banks
 - **Navigation:** Offline maps, paper backup of routes
 - **Misc:** Sunglasses, SPF 50+, lip balm, snacks, thermos
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Permits, Fuel & Checkpoints

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- **Permits:**
 - No permits required for Indian nationals
 - **Fuel:**
 - Reliable pumps: Chamba, Tissa
 - Carry 20–30 L spare for Sach Pass leg
 - **Checkpoints:**
 - Police checks near Satrundi and Bairagarh
 - **Timing Tips:**
 - Sach Pass best crossed before noon
 - Avoid driving after dark in cliff zones
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Insider Tips

- **Best season:** Mid-June to early October
 - **Photography:** Sach Pass snow walls, Bhandal meadows, Salooni ridges
 - **Local eats:** Try rajma-chawal in Tissa, siddu in Salooni, and chukh in Chamba
 - **Eco-ethic:** No littering; respect temple zones and village customs
 - **Road caution:** Sach Pass and Bhandal stretches require slow, careful driving
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Route Map Overview (Text)

Chamba → Bhandal Valley → Koti → Salooni → Satrundi → Sach Pass → Bairagarh → Tissa → Chamba