

A Guide to Himachal

This 7-day circuit is a deep dive into Himachal's eastern frontier — where deodar forests meet apple orchards, and remote villages like Dodra Kwar preserve centuries-old traditions. From the ridge roads of Kotkhai to the high-altitude drama of Chanshal Pass, this loop is ideal for slow travel, cultural immersion, and offbeat exploration.

Trip Overview

Duration: 7 Days

Best Season: April to November (*Chanshal Pass open; apple season peaks Aug–Oct*)

Total Distance: ~500–600 km

Vehicle Type: SUV / High Clearance (*essential for Chanshal–Dodra stretch*)

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

Permits: No permits required for Indian nationals

Mobile Network: Jio/BSNL in Shimla, Rohru, Theog; patchy or no signal in Dodra Kwar and Chanshal stretch

Fuel Planning: Reliable pumps in Shimla, Rohru, Theog; top up before Chanshal leg

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1: Shimla → Kotkhai → Kharapathar

- **Distance/Time:** ~90 km | 4–5 hrs
 - **Highlights:**
 - Forested drive through Cheog and Kotkhai
 - Visit **Giri Ganga Temple** near Kharapathar
 - **Adventure:** Short hike to Giri Ganga meadow
 - **Stay:** Kharapathar guesthouse
 - **Tip:** Carry snacks; limited food options en route
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Day 2: Kharapathar → Rohru

- **Distance/Time:** ~40 km | 2 hrs
- **Highlights:**
 - Apple orchards, riverside charm
 - Visit **Shikru Devta Temple**

A Guide to Himachal

- **Adventure:** Walk along Pabbar River
 - **Stay:** Rohru homestay
 - **Tip:** Try local siddu and red rice
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Day 3: Rohru → Chanshal Pass → Dodra Kwar

- **Distance/Time:** ~80 km | 5–6 hrs
 - **Pass:** Chanshal Pass (3,700 m)
 - **Highlights:**
 - Panoramic views from Shimla's highest motorable pass
 - Remote descent into **Dodra Kwar**
 - **Adventure:** Ridge walk at Chanshal summit
 - **Stay:** Dodra or Kwar village homestay
 - **Tip:** Drive slow — no guardrails, landslide-prone
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Day 4: Dodra Kwar → Pabbar Valley → Sungri

- **Distance/Time:** ~100 km | 5–6 hrs
 - **Highlights:**
 - Forested descent into **Pabbar Valley**
 - Visit **Gadsari, Saru Lake trailhead** (*optional*)
 - **Adventure:** Sunset walk at Sungri ridge
 - **Stay:** Sungri cottage
 - **Tip:** Carry cash — no ATMs beyond Rohru
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Day 5: Sungri → Theog

- **Distance/Time:** ~80 km | 3–4 hrs
- **Highlights:**
 - Scenic drive through apple belt
 - Visit **Stokes Farm** (*seasonal*)

A Guide to Himachal

- **Adventure:** Orchard walk and photography
 - **Stay:** Theog
 - **Tip:** Try Himachali thali at a local dhaba
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Day 6: Theog → Mashobra

- **Distance/Time:** ~40 km | 2 hrs
 - **Highlights:**
 - Colonial-era charm, pine forests
 - Visit **Craignano Nature Park**
 - **Adventure:** Short hike to **Bekhalti Ridge**
 - **Stay:** Mashobra boutique stay
 - **Tip:** Book sunset dinner with valley view
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Day 7: Mashobra → Shimla

- **Distance/Time:** ~15 km | 1 hr
 - **Highlights:**
 - Visit **Jakhu Temple, The Ridge, Mall Road**
 - **Finish:** Shimla (*trip end*)
 - **Tip:** Stop at **Annandale Army Museum** (*optional*)
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Essentials to Carry

- **Documents:** DL, RC, insurance, ID proofs
 - **Clothing:** Warm layers, rain jacket, trekking gear
 - **Footwear:** Hiking shoes, sandals for temple visits
 - **Health:** Basic meds, ORS, insect repellent
 - **Gear:** Power banks, torch, offline maps, camera
 - **Misc:** Sunglasses, SPF 50+, lip balm, reusable water bottle
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A Guide to Himachal

✔ Permits, Fuel & Checkpoints

- **Permits:**
 - No permits required for Indian or foreign nationals
 - **Fuel:**
 - Reliable pumps: Shimla, Rohru, Theog
 - Top up before Chanshal–Dodra leg
 - **Checkpoints:**
 - Occasional forest check near Chanshal and Dodra
 - **Timing Tips:**
 - Chanshal Pass best crossed before noon
 - Temple visits close by 6 pm
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💡 Insider Tips

- **Best season:** April–June for bloom; Sept–Oct for apple harvest
 - **Photography:** Chanshal summit, Dodra rooftops, Sungri ridge views
 - **Local eats:** Try siddu, red rice, and apple chutney in Rohru and Sungri
 - **Eco-ethic:** No littering on trails; respect temple zones
 - **Road caution:** Chanshal and Dodra stretches require slow, careful driving
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📍 Route Map Overview (Text)

Shimla → Kotkhai → Kharapathar → Rohru → Chanshal Pass → Dodra Kwar → Pabbar Valley
→ Sungri → Theog → Mashobra → Shimla