

A Guide to Himachal

This 6-day circuit is a quiet escape into Himachal's lesser-known gems — where rivers run clear, forests whisper ancient tales, and villages like Shoja and Gushaini offer a glimpse into mountain life untouched by crowds. From trout fishing in Tirthan to alpine treks near Jalore Pass, this loop is ideal for those who seek nature, solitude, and slow travel.

Trip Overview

Duration: 6 Days

Best Season: March to December (*Jalore Pass open; Serolsar Lake accessible*)

Total Distance: ~350–400 km

Vehicle Type: SUV / High Clearance (*small cars possible but not ideal for Jalore stretch*)

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate (*steep climbs, narrow forest roads*)

Permits: No permits required

Mobile Network: Jio/BSNL in Aut, Banjar, Jibhi; patchy or no signal in Gushaini, Shoja

Fuel Planning: Reliable pumps in Aut and Banjar; top up before Shoja–Jalore leg

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1: Aut → Banjar → Tirthan Valley (Gushaini)

- **Distance/Time:** ~50 km | 2–3 hrs
 - **Highlights:**
 - Scenic drive along the Tirthan River
 - Arrival in **Gushaini** — gateway to Great Himalayan National Park
 - **Adventure:** Riverside walk; trout fishing (with permit)
 - **Stay:** Gushaini homestay or riverside cottage
 - **Tip:** Stop at Banjar for local snacks and supplies
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Day 2: Gushaini → Pekhri → Sarchi → Bathad (local exploration)

- **Distance/Time:** ~40–50 km round trip | 4–5 hrs
- **Highlights:**
 - Offbeat villages: **Pekhri, Sarchi, Bathad** — wooden homes, old-world charm
 - Forest trails and cultural immersion

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- **Adventure:** Guided walk to GHNP buffer zone; birdwatching
 - **Stay:** Gushaini
 - **Tip:** Carry cash; no ATMs beyond Banjar
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Day 3: Gushaini → Shoja

- **Distance/Time:** ~40 km | 2–3 hrs
 - **Highlights:**
 - Climb through dense deodar forests
 - Arrival in **Shoja** — quiet village with panoramic views
 - **Adventure:** Sunset walk to **Waterfall Point**
 - **Stay:** Shoja (2,600 m)
 - **Tip:** Shoja is ideal for stargazing — minimal light pollution
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Day 4: Shoja → Jalori Pass → Serolsar Lake → Shoja

- **Distance/Time:** ~30 km round trip | 4–5 hrs
 - **Pass:** Jalori Pass (3,120 m)
 - **Highlights:**
 - Drive to Jalori Pass; trek to **Serolsar Lake** (5 km one way)
 - Dense forest, alpine lake, sacred temple
 - **Adventure:** Trek to Serolsar Lake (*easy–moderate, 3–4 hrs round trip*)
 - **Stay:** Shoja
 - **Tip:** Start trek before 10 am; carry water and snacks
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Day 5: Shoja → Jibhi → Chehni Kothi → Shoja

- **Distance/Time:** ~40 km round trip | 3–4 hrs
- **Highlights:**
 - Visit **Jibhi Waterfall**, **Kulhi Katandi**, and **Chehni Kothi** (350-year-old wooden fort)

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- Explore **Shringa Rishi Temple**
 - **Adventure:** Short hike to Chehni Kothi (*steep but rewarding*)
 - **Stay:** Shoja or Jibhi
 - **Tip:** Try local trout at a Jibhi café
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Day 6: Shoja → Banjar → Aut (return)

- **Distance/Time:** ~50 km | 2–3 hrs
 - **Highlights:**
 - Forest descent to Banjar
 - Final riverside views before reaching Aut
 - **Finish:** Aut (trip end)
 - **Tip:** Stop at **Chaini village viewpoint** for final photos
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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 riverside walks
 - **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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Permits, Fuel & Checkpoints

- **Permits:**
 - No permits required for Indian or foreign nationals
 - Fishing permit available in Gushaini (local forest office)
- **Fuel:**
 - Reliable pumps: Aut, Banjar
 - Top up before Shoja–Jalori leg

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- **Checkpoints:**

- Occasional forest check near GHNP buffer zone

- **Timing Tips:**

- Jalori Pass best crossed before noon
 - Trek to Serolsar Lake ideally starts by 9–10 am
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Insider Tips

- **Best season:** March–June for spring bloom; Sept–Nov for clear skies
 - **Photography:** Serolsar Lake reflections and Chehni Kothi's wooden architecture are must-captures
 - **Local eats:** Try siddu, trout curry, and red rice in Shoja
 - **Eco-ethic:** No littering on trails; carry back all plastic
 - **Road caution:** Jalori Pass is steep and narrow — drive slow and honk before blind bends
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Route Map Overview (Text)

Aut → Banjar → Tirthan (Gushaini) → Pekhri → Sarchi → Shoja → Jalori Pass → Serolsar Lake
→ Jibhi → Chehni Kothi → Shoja → Banjar → Aut