

## The Great Lakes in Kashmir

<b>Trip code</b>	
<b>Package name</b>	The Great Lakes in Kashmir
<b>Duration</b>	8
<b>Max. elevation</b>	4000 m
<b>Level</b>	MODERATE
<b>Transportation</b>	All grounded vehicals depending on group size.
<b>Accomodation</b>	Hotel and Lodge twin sharing bed basis during the Tour.
<b>Starts at</b>	Sonamarg
<b>Ends at</b>	Narang
<b>Trip route</b>	Srinagar - Sanamarg - Nicchai - Vishansar lake - Godsar - Satsar - Gangaba - Nanang
<b>Cost</b>	USD 1,550 per person

## Highlights

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- Explore five stunning lakes in the world at a high altitude.
- Witness the high mountain passes and the snow patches that feed the lakes
- Innumerable meadows, snow-clad glaciers and pinnacles passes.
- Rocky barren lands & streams.

## Overview

The trek to the Kashmir Great Lakes offers a lifetime experience of vintage memories that are so wonderfully tiring. The thundering silence of the Kashmir lakes and its virgin beauty is spell bound. Apart from the lakes, even the barren milky snow clad mountains stand out in

**might and proud.**

Kashmir is a surreal destination for trekking there are many natural gems tucked away here. Alpine and snow clad mountains, green meadows, rocky terrains, gurgling streams, silver birch and other untouched beauties of Mother Earth make for a varied and complete trekking experience of around 63km. Rediscover serenity and uncover what makes Kashmir Great Lakes Trek a trove for adventure and nature enthusiasts seeking a thrilling experience of trekking in India. This amazing trek takes you through some of the most beautiful sights that are hidden from the normal eyes. The best part about the trek is that you will get a chance to see five beautiful lakes together and each reflecting the beauty of the other. Then there are the stunning meadows of Kashmir. They are present on each day of the trek. These meadows come in every shape and size, sometimes many in a day. What are even lovelier are the lush green, grassy shores of the lakes. To get a chance to go for a long walk on the shores of these lakes is pure trekking bliss. On the first day, clumps of maple and pine grow like an oasis in these meadows. On the second day, they roll off a pass descending down a wide valley where horses run and sheep graze. On the third day, just below the Gadsar pass, wildflowers grow in wild abandon on these meadows. On the fourth day, the grassy plain of Satsar looks almost manicured – with a twinkling stream gliding through it. What make these lakes even prettier are the snow patches that feed these lakes. You see them sliding off the mountain into the lakes. Sometimes you'll see milky white icebergs floating on the lake's inky blue surface. As you continue you will find that the mountains in the background make the whole place looks majestic. Witness the beauty of the lakes with the snowflakes on the top making the lake much prettier. Adding to it the golden flowers in bloom, the dark blue sky and the lush green grass will seem like just another heaven on earth. Each day of the trek holds something new for you which you will cherish for a lifetime.

## **Trip Itinerary**

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### **Day 1 : Srinagar to Sonamarg (9,000ft) (approx. 80km/2 hrs drive)**

Take flight from Delhi to Srinagar in the morning. Upon arrival to Srinagar, have lunch and start your day exploring the mesmerizing Srinagar. After the sightseeing of Srinagar, drive to Sonamarg along Sindh river in the afternoon. Upon arrival to the Sonamarg check into hotel and take a rest. Our trekking guides will brief you about the trek. Overnight stay in the hotel.

### **Day 2 : Sonamarg (9,000ft) to Nichnai (12,000ft) (11km trek/6 hrs)**

Today is the first day of the trek. After having breakfast at the hotel, start with a 3-4km trek from the Sonamarg and reach a roadside eatery, from where you can bag up all the required commodities for the day. Here onwards, the trek will be a gradual one and alongside the Sindh River, it will take you through maple and pine forests. Completing the hike through the forests, you will be rewarded with the stunning views of the Sonamarg Valley and pictorial streams. Here onwards, the trek will descend down and will take you to the snow-covered Shekdur Range. Relax around the vicinity for a while before you start trekking towards the Nichnai, which is located at around 12,000ft above the sea level. Upon arrival in Nichnai, have dinner and overnight stay in the camp.

### **Day 3 : Nichnai (11,500ft) to Vishansar Lake (12km trek/6 hrs)**

Today trek is a long walk on meadows with the scenery changing for the better all along. Start by 8:00 am to give yourself enough time en route to enjoy the meadows. Your first milestone for the day is the Nichnai pass or Vishnugar Berry. The pass is visible at a distance from the camp site. It lies just to the right of the twin snow-clad peaks. After half an hour of walking along the river, cross the river. For the next one hour, walk on the left bank. Notice that the trail slowly starts ascending as you traverse through the meadow. The following one hour is a climb to the pass. It is a medium climb to Nichnai pass, 13,500 ft, followed by a small descent followed by a long flat meadow walk ending near Vishnugar Lake. As you climb, notice a small lake at the foot of the mountains. It is a deep blue lake and you can sense your expectations rising with regards to the lake. On the arrival to the Nichnai pass stop here and observe the Sonamarg valley and the trail you came on. From here the trail descends down. The rocky trail descends rapidly. In the next hour the rocks give way to grass. Red flowers spring out next to your feet. What you see ahead is a wide green meadow stretching for miles with mountains lining the sides. A new river flows down from the pass into the meadow ahead. Stop here and take a view of the peaks, the river below and the flowery meadow. Stop here and take a view of the peaks, the river below and the flowery meadow. Walk along over the lush green carpet of grass and wide meadow. Continue in the meadow for an hour and a half until you reach the end of the valley. Another stream flows perpendicularly from your left to your right. This stream originates at the Vishnugar Lake which is a bit higher on your left. This is the first big alpine lake on our trek. Named after Lord Vishnu, this lake is around a kilometer across. On the far end one can see the small glaciers that feed this lake. Overnight stay in the tent.

### **Day 4 : Vishansar Lake (12,500ft) to Gadsar (13,750ft) via Gadsar Pass (10km trek/6-8 hrs)**

Gadsar Pass (10km trek/6-8 hrs)

Today is probably one of the prettiest days on this trek and the longest. Crossing Vishansar, we gradually ascend towards Krishnagar, the other great lake on this climb up to Gadsar. Krishnagar named after Lord Krishna is about the same size as Vishansar and slightly prettier. All these lakes are classified as Oligotrophic lakes (with low organic content and a greater level of oxygen these lakes have very clear and drinkable water). After crossing this beautiful lake we climb towards Gadsar Pass. At over 4000 metres, this is the most dangerous part of the trek. As we

ascend, we can see both the Vishansar and Krishnasar lakes in the background – a sight for sore eyes. After crossing the Gadsar Pass we descend gradually towards the Gadsar lake. On the way we find a beautiful meadow of wild flowers and if you're lucky you will be able to spot Himalayan Marmots in the background. Gadsar Lake with its glacier and wild flowers in the background is stunning. Continue on the downward trail from Gadsar and in half an hour the valley widens up. Spot another blue lake on the left of the valley. Notice the snow clad mountains now give way to lower barren mountains. You have lost considerable altitude again. In another half an hour down the trail, a few shepherds' huts come up. Continue downhill and at the end of the third half hour, the army camp comes up. Report to the Army Camp and complete the formalities of getting permission to pass Gadsar; ID proofs are a must for this. After the completion of permission, settle down a camp and stay overnight in the camp.

### **Day 5 : Gadsar (12,000ft) to Satsar (12,000ft) (12km trek/4-5 hrs)**

Your day will begin with a walk from the army camp towards the stream. After crossing the stream, take the trail that goes up the mountain. The terrain feels very similar. You are just above the tree line. Trees and the river valley are visible below to you. The hour and a half long climb takes you up by 1,100 feet. Once beyond the 11,500 feet altitude, the climb graduates to a traverse. The trail bends round to the left and leaves the river valley. You are now walking on a flat trail surrounded by mountains on a meadow. This place is called as Maengandob. The landscape ahead is captivating. Isolated mountains stand in front. Stay here for a while and take a close view of the mesmerizing environment around. Cover a little more distance and camp near the first of the Satsar lakes. Satsar is actually a collection of 7 lakes. You can find 4 or 5 lakes with water, depending on the season. Beyond the ridge, on the right, is the Satsar army check post. The same process of identity checking, collection and questioning repeats here. Finish this today so that tomorrow is a clean day of trekking. Ten minutes out of the army camp is the first of the Satsar lakes. The lake is pretty big and looks picturesque in its green setting with mountains in front. Choose a place to camp here for the day.

### **Day 6 : Satsar (12,000ft) to Twin Lakes of Gangabal (11,500ft) (9km/6 hrs)**

After the breakfast you will walk through mild ascent followed by gradual descent followed by long steep ascent and long steep descent followed by gradual up and down walk. Today trek goes up and down replicating the trek as a whole which mostly goes up and down. Trek up half an hour out of camp, to reach the biggest Satsar lake. The biggest of the Satsar lakes is also the last in the sequence. After the last lake the trail starts to descend. Continue for half an hour on the main trail until you see the forest line ahead. The right side is a ridge line, about 1,000 ft higher. It is time to gain height again. The altitude at the base of the climb is 11,800 feet. A 45 minute trek with limited breaks will see you on top of the first ridge. Once on top, you see two more ridges to climb. The trail from the base to top is barren and rocky. A total two hour ascent brings you to the top of the 3rd ridge. From here you will notice spectacular view lakes below you. A stream takes water from the higher lake to the lower. If you look keenly, two more blue lakes are seen, one on either side at a distance. The smaller lakes are nameless but the biggest amongst the set is the Gangabal. Its companion is the Nandkol. It is 1,400 feet below you. The route descends a bit more and ascends again to the lake. On descending down fill your empty bottles with cold water and move on. An hour and a half steep descent brings you to green

meadows again. Once at the base, the lake shore is still a good distance. The destination is seen but seems far away. A quick climb, a shorter descent and a stream crossing over a wooden log bridge brings you to the shores of Nandkol lake. Lot of people trek up from Naranag to Gangabal and go back as a weekend outing. The Nandkol lake lies at the base of the Harmukh peak. The Harmukh glacier hangs on the the sides of the rocky edges of the mountain. Both the Gangabal and Nandkol are famous for trout fishing. The Gangabal lake is about 20 minutes away from Nandkol. A fiery stream flows on the right of the two lakes connecting them. The stream has to be crossed to go to Gangabal from Nandkol. Do not try to cross the stream at the lower levels but go all the way to the bank of Gangabal and on the right you find a good man-made bridge laid out. Gangabal is huge and roundabout of the lake will easily take an hour. Camp here and stay overnight in the camp.

## **Day 7 : Gangabal (11,500ft) to Naranag (7,450ft) (11km/6 hrs). Drive to Srinagar.**

Today trek is a killer on your toes and knees, it is a gradual descent followed by steep descent. From the Gangabal camp site head down along the stream towards the tree line. After the 30 mins descend the ridge ends and you descend to a green, flat meadow on the right. The Harmukh peak looks impressive when you look back. The green meadow has little yellow flowers growing all over and you start walking gingerly to avoid stepping over them. After an hour, you hit the fringes of the tree line. Pine trees line the meadows and you also see traces of civilization with the presence of a log hut. You drop to 10,800 feet at the tree line but climb again to 11,000 feet. For about 6 km you never really lose altitude and you are forever around the 10,800 feet mark, making your way in and out of the Pine forest and finally entering it fully. Only after walking for 2/3 of the distance does the true descent begin. The descent is now really steep. The trail is a well-trodden, muddy one through the thick of the pines. The last 4 km see you dropping more than 3,000 ft. It is not rare to spot a lot of people trekking up here from Naranag, headed to Gangabal. Naranag slowly comes in sight at around 8,500 ft but there is quite a bit more to go. The last stretch of the last day does become an endurance test but soon the stone paved village track comes up and in no time you enter the main road of Naranag. Drive to Srinagar and reach by 6.30 pm. Stay overnight at Srinagar.

## **Day 8 : Departure**

Today either you can take a city tour of dreamlike city of Srinagar or early flight to Delhi. Upon arrival to Delhi you will be transferred to the international airport for the flight to onward destination.

## **Inclusions**

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### **What is included?**

Accommodation in Hotel and Lodge twin sharing bed basis during the tour.

All Transportation AC / Qulise, Innova / Xylo / Mini Tourist Bus

Guide/ leader (Experienced Tour and Trek Guide will lead the tour).

All monument fees, Permit arrangement, All taxes and VAT in Darjiling ,Skkim

All meals (lunch, Dinner and Breakfast) during the tour.

Basis medical kit.

### **What isn't included?**

Entry Visa fees India.

Travel and medical insurance.

Personal expenses (laundry, bar bills, snacks, phone calls, internet.)

Tips for guide and driver (tipping is expected)

Loss, theft or damage to baggage and personal effects. (We strongly advise you to get personal travel insurance.)

### **Complimentary**