KHATLING GLACIER- VASUKITAL-KEDARNATH TREK

INTRODUCTION

The Khatling glacier situated in Tehri district is a lateral glacier which is the source of the river Bhilangna. According to the legends Bhilangna was actually a maiden who tried to capture Lord Shiva's attention while he meditated and upon being rebuked was dissolved into water. The Valley of Bhilangna delights us with a panoramic view of snow capped peaks and hanging glaciers. The Khatling glacier is surrounded by snow peaks of the Jogin group (6466 m), Sphetic Pristwar (6905 m), Barte Kauter (6579 m), Kirti Stambh (6902 m) and Meru. The moraines on the side of the glaciers look like standing walls of gravel mud.

The entire trek passes through thick kharsao forests and beautiful lush green grassy meadows in the beginning. Later, it crosses two passes above 17,000 ft. and negotiates glaciers moraines and a snow patch. The entry to the Bhilangna valley provides excellent spots for camping.

The Khatling Glacier trek provides options on routes. One option being the trek beyond Khatling Glacier towards Kedarnath. The shrine of Kedarnath which is dedicated to lord Shiva is amongst the holiest pilgrimages for the Hindus. The holy pilgrimage is captivating, and there are a number of very beautiful lakes that fall in this area.

Negotiating high passes and Close views of high Himalayan peaks are the highlights of the trip.

TREK DETAILS

Season: May- June and Mid September - Mid october
Maximum Altitude: (4590 m) Masar Tal
Grade: Hard
Duration: 10 days
Roadhead for trek: Train/drive from Delhi to Haridwar. From Haridwar its approx 170kms/6 hrs drive to Ghuttu. On return drive from Gaurikund to Haridwar via Rudraprayag (237 kms). Train/drive back to Delhi.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1: Ghuttu -Reeh (2130 m/6987 ft) *(10 kms/4-5 hrs)*
The trek starts following the village trail on the right of the river to Devling, before a gradual ascent through chir pine, rhododendron and bamboo. The trail generally follows the course of the river to the village of Reeh. Over night stay in tents/ rest house.

Day 2: Reeh – Gangi (2590 m/8496 ft) *(12 kms/4-5 hrs)*
Today we start trekking towards Gangi. After crossing the bridge over the tributary just beyond Reeh and following a steady 500 m, we ascend to a series of meadows high above the valley. The trail continues through oak and rhododendron forests to Nerlan (2550 m).Trek another 4 kms to reach Gangi one of the remote and largest villages in Bhilangna valley. Overnight stay in tents/ rest house.

Day 3: Gangi – Kharsoli (2890 m/9480 ft) *(13 kms/5-6 hrs)*
Today we start descending towards village Deordi (2450 m), the last village in the valley. Trek along the Bhilangna Valley for another 2 kms leads to Kalyani. At Kalyani there originates another path which leads to Shastru Tal. We follow the lower trail along the lower bank which leads to the beautiful meadow of Kharsoli. Over night stay in tents.

Day 4: **Kharsoli- Chowki (3600 m/1178 ft)** *(14 kms/4 -5 hrs)*
The trail follows the river and later enters a forest of oak, spruce and silver birch. The impressive water falls on another side of the valley adds to the beauty of the trek to Bhelbagi (3100 m). From Bhelbagi there is a steep ascent to reach Tambakund. Trail further descends and crosses over the river and ascends to reach Chowki . On arrival set campsite for overnight stay.

Day 5: Chowki – Khatling Glacier (3710 m/12170 ft) - Chowki (10 kms / 5-6 hrs)
Start morning trek towards the Glacier. Enjoy the beautiful scenic views of the hanging peaks all around. In the afternoon start retracing steps towards Chowki. Over night stay in tents.

Day 6: Chowki
The day is for rest and acclamitisation.

Day 7: Chowki - Masar Tal (4590 m/ 16186 ft) (7 Kms; 5-6 hrs)
Today's trek is ascent towards Masartal a high altitude lake . From Masar tal one can have panoramic views of Jogin group of peaks.The other peaks i.e. Jaonli (6630 m),Thalay Sagar (6361 m), Kirti Stambh (6270 m), Bharte Khunta (6578 m) dominates the horizon. Overnight in tents.

Day 8: Masartal - Vasuki Tal (4150 m/13612 ft)-(12 Kms/ 6-7 hrs)
The trail from here is generally downhill. The trail crosses over a high pass and through glacier and over the moraines to reach Vasukital.. From here magnificient views of the high mountain peaks of Northeast of Himalayas is visible.. Overnight in tents.

Day 9: Vasuki Tal - Kedarnath (3584 m/11756 ft) (6 kms / 3-4 hrs)
Proceed to the holy pilgrim centre of Kedarnath . The ancient temple of Kedarnath is the is the main centre of attraction for tourists.. Overnight in guest house/ tents.. (6 Kms/3 -4 hrs)

Day 10: Kedarnath - Gaurikund *(14 kms/4-5 hrs)* **-**
Early morning start retracing steps towards Gaurikund. From here proceed for the onward destination.