

APPLE COUNTRY, THANEDAR, SHIMLA DISTRICT

LONG WEEKEND, SHORT GETAWAY

OCT 2-6, 2014;

4 NIGHTS, 5 DAYS



Enjoy this long weekend at apple country of Thanedar. Thanedar (ahead of Shimla) is a lovely little hamlet where Mr. Stokes brought first apple sapling into India from Philadelphia. Today, it is a town full of cherry trees and apple orchards. We spend 4 fun filled days of exploring the orchards and forests and of leisurely walks, lazy evenings and sumptuous food and beautiful mountains views.

Dates:	Oct 2-6, 2014
Start from:	Chandigarh
End at:	Chandigarh
Dist. from Delhi/ Chandigarh	440/ 200 kms
Distance covered:	450 kms
Maximum altitude reached:	Hatu peak
Best time to Visit:	Mid- June to Mid- October
Meals:	Lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 5
Min/ Max group size:	8-16
Grade of trip:	Easy
Permits required:	No
Booking deadline:	Sep 2, 2014

ITINERARY:

Day 01: Chandigarh- Thanedar (7500ft) - 195 kms/ 6 hrs

Reach Chandigarh airport/ Chandigarh railway station around 1100 hrs. Meet rest of the team and drive on to Thanedar. We meet others in Chandigarh and carry on. Lunch en route to Thanedar. Drive to Thanedar via Barog, Shimla and Narkanda. Reach Thanedar in the evening. There is a very good possibility of seeing apples still on trees. Evening around bonfire. Night stay in Banjara Retreat.

Day 02: Thanedar

Saroga forest walk (2 hrs) and apple trail walk (2 hrs)- We go for a hike in Saroga forest before breakfast and take a walk around the orchard of Thanedar after breakfast. Rest of the afternoon at leisure. Evening around a bonfire.

Saroga forest- *This is one of the more popular walks with people who stay with us in our Thanedar Retreat. The trail through the forest introduces you to the rich flora of the inner Himalayas. The forest is full of Blue pine, Silver Spur, Christmas tree, Spruce, Oaks, Rhododendron and Taxus Himalayana (the tree from which Taxol is derived and used for curing cancer).*

Apple Trail- *A walk around the town with Mr. Prakash Thakur who explains all about apple harvest. You might be able to pluck apples and also see the process of grading, packing.*

Day 03: Thanedar

Hatu peak hike- 3-4 hrs hike and 45 mts drive- a good hike after breakfast with packed lunch at the top. Afternoon at leisure. Evening around a bonfire with barbecue.

Hatu peak- *The 3136 mt high Hatu Peak offers a panoramic view of the Pir Panjal and the Dhauladhar ranges of Himalayas. There are two ways of reaching the peak. The easier option is to drive towards Narkanda for 14 km and from there one can either drive or walk up the winding road through dense alpine forest for another 6 km. The conventional and more adventurous way of reaching the top is to drive to Sidhpur; 10 km from the Banjara Retreat and then climb up through the Conifer and Oak forests. The climb to the peak with a small break for a packed lunch, generally takes about 3 hours. The forest around Hatu is famous for its flora and fauna/ Avi-fauna. One can see Silver fir, Birch, Oaks, Himalayan Cedar, Himalayan Yew, Rhododendron, herbs and wild flowers. It is also rich in wildlife and if you are lucky you may see Leopards, Black Bear, Jungle Cats, Himalayan Weasel, Flaying Squirrel, Himalayan Pheasants like Monal- state bird of Himachal, Red Jungle Fowl, Magpie Robin, Laughing Thrush, Minivets and Whistling Thrush to name a few. The Hatu Mata Temple, located on the ridge of the top, is very popular with the locals during the local melas in September and October.*

Day 04: Thanedar

Rappelling and walk to St. Mary's church- 2-3 hrs in the morning and 1 hr walk late in the afternoon. Freshen up and join the locals for Himachali dance. Evening around a bonfire. Night stay in Banjara Orchard Retreat

About St. Mary's church- *While in the Apple country in Shimla Hills that is dominated by the Hindu community, the sight of a slightly built church in the neighbourhood of our retreat in Thanedar comes as quite a surprise. How the Church came about has an interesting history. In the year 1815, the rulers of this region invited the Britishers to fight the mighty Nepalese General Amar Singh Thapa who had annexed large parts of the Western Himalayas. The Britishers came and killed the General and captured his Gorkha soldiers. In lieu of services rendered, a large tract of land was gifted to them by the rulers of Kotgarh. A British garrison was established at Kotgarh in 1843, which was their last outpost beyond Shimla. In 1872, a pretty little wood and stone church was built, which today is the only living monument of that bygone era. An hour's walk to the church from the Retreat takes you through a typical Himachali village, apple orchards and conifer forests. On the way, one comes across the cave where once Samuel Stokes lived as a hermit. Rudyard Kipling once called Kotgarh 'The Mistress of the Northern Hills'. One of his stories-Lispeth- from the book 'Plain Tales from the Hills', is based on this church. The great Christian Sadhu missionary Sundar Singh was associated with this church for a long time. It was at Kotgarh that he had his first mystical experience which he mentions in his book 'Spiritual World'.*

Day 05: Drop at Chandigarh railway station/ airport- 6-7 hrs

Cost per person on twin share: INR 21,000/-

Cost includes:

1. Accommodation on twin share with meals (morning tea, breakfast, lunch, evening tea and dinner)
2. Transport from Chandigarh- Chandigarh in Innova or similar.
3. Services of a guide for walks as per itinerary.
4. Charges for rappelling.
5. Service charges.
6. All applicable taxes.

Cost does not include:

1. Any beverages except those served on buffet table.
2. Any En route/ personal expenses.
3. Any expenses incurred due to factors beyond our control like a natural calamity/ man-made calamity.
4. Any air/rail fares.
5. Bottled mineral water (Aquaguard purified water is served free of cost at all our properties).

About Satyanand Stokes; An American in Khadi- Over a hundred years ago, an American named Samuel Evan Stokes came to India with the intention of working at a home for lepers. He faced a lot of opposition from his family because he was heir to the family's prosperous business of elevators. Incidentally, Stokes and Parish Elevator Company later merged with Otis Elevators. But young Stokes was determined and his family relented to let him follow his heart and Samuel landed in Bombay on the February 26, 1904. After sometime in Punjab, he landed in Thanedar to recuperate from heat and dust of the plains. He found himself completely in love with the place. In a drastic step, he decided that he wanted to spend the rest of his life here. On September 12, 1912, he married a local Rajput-Christian woman called Agnes.

Samuel's mother Florence Stokes came visiting in 1911. Stokes's mother bought him the entire plantation of Thanedar as a gift on February 6, 1912 for the princely sum of Rs 30,000. It was during a visit to America in 1915 that Samuel Stokes heard about the new strain of apples patented by the Stark Brothers nursery in Louisiana called the Red Delicious. He bought a few saplings and planted them at his Barobagh orchard in Thanedar in the winter of 1916. Five years later his mother sent him a consignment of saplings of the Stark Brothers Golden Delicious Apples as a Christmas gift. The first apples bore fruit a few years later and were sold in 1926.

They were an instant hit. The divinely sweet taste and the inviting colour had the Indian market going crazy over them. Their popularity even spurred locals into planting these, rather than their usual crops of potato and plums. Also, because they considered Samuel Evans Stokes as one of them, they sought his advice and he helped them achieve rich dividends with their harvest. Soon the demand for the Kotgarh apples sky-rocketed and orchards cropped up all over the valleys of what is today Himachal Pradesh, to meet this demand. It is from these first few saplings that the Sweet Delicious Apples of Shimla and the Golden Delicious of Kinnaur became popular and Himachal Pradesh grew to become one of the largest producers of the fruit today.

During his rest and recuperation days at the Kotgarh church, young Samuel came in contact with a lot of Sadhus on the Hindustan-Tibet road making their way to Kailash Mansarovar. While the priest of the church was finely robed and had three meals a day, the simplicity of these Sadhus perturbed him and set him thinking about the Hindu religion. Later on in his life he also studied the Bhagvad Gita in English and then in an endeavor to understand it, he learned Sanskrit and studied it again in that language. In 1932, he became an Arya Samaji and changed his name to Satyanand Stokes. The temple he built in 1937 was to be his legacy to Thanedar. Juggal Kishore Birla, a scion of Indian industry at that time contributed Rs 25,000 to encourage him. Called the Paramjyoti Mandir or the Temple of Eternal light, he wanted it to be a storybook in wood and stone. Samuel Evans Stokes was the only American to participate in the Indian freedom movement.

TOUR NOTES

Accommodation:

Classic/ retreat rooms in Banjara Orchard Retreat

Food & Hygiene:

Food is a mix range from vegetarian/ non- vegetarian meals to good food with a choice of Indian, Continental & Chinese food. All meals are buffet meals. There is no room service.

Fitness:

You should be in decent health if you wish to hike. We advise jogging and breathing exercise. Please note that you will have to climb down about 90 odd steps to reach the retreat.

Tipping & Porterage:

We charge a service charge of 5% for the rooms. Tipping/ service charge is already taken care of in this trip. Our staff will carry your bags down to retreat and back up to car on day of departure.

Photography:

The retreat is at 7500 ft. and we will travel up to about 11000 ft. If you plan to take photos then please keep sunlight according to this altitude in mind. Please ask your guide before taking photographs inside any temple and if you plan to photograph any locals, please take their permission before doing so. You could charge your camera at the retreat.

Medicine:

There is a doctor in the town. We also keep a first aid kit. It would be anyway a good idea to bring your own basic first aid kit with medicines for motion sickness, nausea, some painkillers etc. Please carry sun block and chapstick. Keep your face, feet and hands well protected. Request your doctor to prescribe effective medicines to cover the following: Fever, Body and joint pains, Cold, Cough, Sore throat, Headache, Acidity, Stomach cramps, Vomiting, Dysentery, Loose motion, Constipation, Diarrhea, Swelling, Muscle Pulls & Sore eyes. We do carry a first aid box though. In case you have any illness of any sort, please do inform us in advance so that we can take necessary precaution. You could also carry vaseline, Band Aid, Cotton, Badge roll, Dettol, Mouth freshener, Nose inhaler, Cough drops, Lip balm, Vicks, Elastoplasts, Adhesive tape, 4" crepe bandage.

List of things to bring:

1. Duffel bag (avoid suitcases if you can)
2. A small day backpack to carry water, food, jacket and camera
3. Hiking shoes- you need good traction in shoes and these should be at least water resistant. Forclaz 500 is a good. Your shoes should be well broken-in and not new. Otherwise, your regular sports shoes will also do.
4. 2 pairs of lowers.
5. 4-5 full sleeves T-shirts
6. A fleece jacket
7. A full sleeve thick jacket
8. Underclothing
9. 1 pairs of thermal inners
10. 2-3 pairs of sports socks. 2 pairs of woolen socks
11. Woolen cap/ balaclava that covers the ears
12. Gloves
13. Sun glasses
14. Lip balm
15. Cold cream and sun screen lotion (SPF 40+).
16. Water bottle.
17. Flash light
18. Personal toilet kit.
19. Personal medicine
20. Small repair kit consisting of safety pins, needle, thread and string.
21. Camera, memory-cards, batteries etc (carry enough spare batteries. Electricity is not available on the slopes.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE TO USE A LOT OF WOOLENS LISTED ABOVE BUT, WEATHER IN THE HIMALAYAS CAN BE RATHER UNPREDICTABLE HENCE, BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY.

BOOKING, PAYMENT AND CANCELLATION POLICY

CONFIRMATION:

100% advance to confirm booking.

CANCELLATION CHARGE:

Minimum : 20% of full amount.
Less than two weeks of arrival date (or tour start date) : 50% of full amount.
Less than one week of arrival date (or tour start date) : Full amount.

PAYMENT MODES & METHODS:

1. ONLINE TRANSFER into our **current** accounts in Axis Bank **or** Standard Chartered Bank
2. DIRECT CHEQUE DEPOSIT into our **current** accounts in Axis Bank **or** Standard Chartered Bank at any branch/ ATM in India
3. DIRECT **CASH** DEPOSIT, into our **current** account at any branch in India
4. By CASH or CHEQUE handed over personally (or by your rep) AT OUR DELHI OFFICE
5. OUTSTATION CHEQUE payments are acceptable **only if** they are delivered (or we get a scan of the bank deposit slip) at least 4 working days before the payment due date.
6. OUTSTATION PAYMENTS by a **Payable at Delhi** DD sent to our Delhi Office by courier/post.

IMP: CHEQUE / DD to be made in **favour of "Banjara Camps & Retreats Pvt. Ltd."**

AXIS BANK:

- A/c name : Banjara Camps & Retreats Pvt. Ltd.
- A/c no. : 015010200017806
- Branch address : K-12; Green Park Main; New Delhi – 110016
- Branch Code : UTIB0000015 (for direct cheque deposit)
- IFSC Code : UTIB0000015 (for online transfer)

STANDARD CHARTERED BANK:

- A/c name : Banjara Camps & Retreats Pvt. Ltd.
- A/c no. : 525-0-509-319-3
- Branch address : 10 Sansad Marg; New Delhi – 110 001
- Branch Code : SCBL0036027 (for direct cash/ cheque deposit)
- IFSC Code: : SCBL0036027 (for online transfer)





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