

Jammu and Kashmir Trip Experience

Jammu and Kashmir... A MUST visit TRAVEL destination for all.

Day 1: We were a family group of 10 members, who started our sojourn from Bangaluru to Jammu, via Delhi. After Lunch, enroute to “Hotel Lemon Tree”, we first took the blessings of Lord Rama by visiting “Sri Ram Temple” in Jammu. We retired for the day after a very delicious dinner.

Day 2: 6 of us had an early morning start at 2:30 am who decided to go on trek to **Vaishno Devi Temple**. We reached the starting point by 4:30 am & stood in the Q to complete the registration formalities. It took a lot of time, as there was a huge crowd for registration wherein we finally could collect our ID Cards!! Finally, after 2 hours of wait, we got our ID cards & we started our Trek Journey at 6:30 am which ended at 12:30 pm. Trek was very enthralling & even though tedious, **Jai Mata Di** chants made all the climb of the hill, go through with ease. We had a gala time during the trek & the Monkeys enroute ensured that we did not wink a bit (as we had very little sleep previous night)!!!

While we reached early, we had to wait for other 4 family members who reached the Temple late. They came riding on the horse/mule. With the chilly weather around, hot Rajma Chaval was very well relished after which we went to have Darshan of Mata Vaishno Devi. It was a very spiritual & divine experience inside the Cave with the entry & exit points fully decked up as we visited during the auspicious period of Chaithra Navaratri.

Post the darshan, we were all so exhausted that we all booked for horse/mule riding to the foot of the hill. The weather was very chilly & we had to buy some warm clothing to protect ourselves. It was dawn on the next day when we reached the foot of the hill & took an auto to reach the hotel. Even though the whole day-night was so exhaustive, the experience was very memorable!!

Day 3: After reaching hotel by around 8 AM, we freshened up and had a sumptuous breakfast. We had to catch up with the tour itinerary & hence after a brief rest of about 2 hours, we started towards Sonmarg which was quite a long journey. This long travel could help in most of us catching up with the lost sleep. By the time we reached Badar Resort & Spa, Sonmarg, it was dinner time.

Day 4: We woke up fresh, had a quick breakfast and took some memorable pics at the resort, where there was a river flowing amidst the serene hills. It was very picturesque to see the snow laced mountains behind. We went to a favourite tourist place wherein the locals engage us in lots of Snow Activities, which was great fun. We had to hire warm clothing, snow boots, gloves etc & had a great time riding on the snow-bikes, throwing snow at each other etc., We also saw the Bhajrangi Bhaijan setup which was created whilst the film shooting, to create a India-Pak border scene. Amidst this, we had some piping hot Kashmiri Kawa tea which was very refreshing. We spent lot of time & had lunch enroute, before going to the Houseboats positioned beside the very famous Dal Lake for sleepover. Rooms were very spacious & hospitality of the Dad-Son duo who managed the houseboat was very warm. Kashmiris were found to be very nice people & made us feel at home. We had a hot dinner & enjoyed our stay at the Houseboat.

Day 5: We had a tasty breakfast & checked out of the Boat House and headed towards “Sri Shankaracharya Temple”. We had to climb about 200+ steps to reach the temple. CRPF security was very beefed up, after which we visited the world-famous Dal Lake for a Shikara (boat ride). We did some shopping during Shikara & all women folk hired the Kashmiri dress for a “Kashmir Ki Kali” look & took some wonderful photos. We had some fast food on the boat itself in one of the fast-food joints located amidst the scenic lake.

We went to the world-famous Tulip gardens wherein the iconic Silsila song has been shot. We spent a lot of time taking photos after which

we headed to Nishat Gardens located nearby. Later, we did some serious shopping of the famous Kashmir dry fruits & Kashmir Heritage clothing. We dozed off in the bus & reached “Hotel Pine Heritage” at Patnitop by around 01.30 am & had our dinner.

Day 6: After a delicious breakfast we did some scenic sightseeing & departed towards Jammu Airport to catch the flight to Delhi. We landed in Delhi by dinner time & rested for the day

Day 7: We had breakfast & caught a flight Shirdi & landed during lunch time. We had some tasty Maharashtrian cuisine enroute to Shani Shinganapur. Post darshan we were dropped off to the Hotel at Shirdi which was located within walkable distance from the Saibaba Temple. We finished darshan of Saibaba before retiring for the day.

Day 8: We had to wake up at 02.30 AM to catch up for the Kakad Aarti scheduled at 05.30 AM. It was a wonderful sight of Shirdi Saibaba. We had breakfast in a south Indian restaurant, did some shopping & reached hotel to relax for a few hours. We checked out & headed to airport to catch the return flight to Bengaluru via Chennai. We landed in Bengaluru at 1:30 am on Day-9 & reached home by 3.00 AM.

Biggest Takeaway: We were all reminiscing the great time we had during our Kashmir trip. We were feeling so happy that we were finally able to go to Kashmir & everything was so peaceful & normal. Within a few days of reaching home, this dastardly Pahalgam attack on tourists by armed terrorists near Pahalgam took place on 22 April 2025, in which 26 civilians were killed. The militants targeted Hindu tourists & we are all very fortunate to be alive & kicking. We thank the almighty & our prayers for all those departed souls & their family members. We want to & will re-visit Kashmir, which is worth going as many times as you can.

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