

Badrinath Dham

Being one of the Char Dham of the tirtha yatra, Badrinath is also one of the holiest pilgrimage in India, located in the Garhwal Hill tracks in Chamoli District in Uttarakhand at a height of 3133 meters (about 10278 feet) above the sea level, along the banks of Alaknanda River. The other Char Dham sites are, Dwarka, Puri and Rameshwaram.

Badrinath temple, also known as Badrinarayan Temple, a Hindu temple dedicated to Bhagwan Vishnu is also one of the 108 Divya Desam dedicated to Vishnu ji.

Legend behind the temple

According to Hindu Mythology, Bhagwan Vishnu did meditation at this place, but during his meditation he was unaware of the climatic conditions here and in order to protect him his wife, Devi Lakshmi took form of Badri tree and spread around him. Vishnu ji was impressed by her devotion and named the place after her, Badrika Ashram. It is believed Vishnu ji is depicted in the temple sitting in Padmasana. According to legends, Sage Narad witnessed Lakshmi ji massaging Vishnu ji feet.

Another version narrates the origin of Badrinath where two sons of Dharma, Nar and Narayan (modern names of Himalayan Mountains) chose the place to spread their religion and each of them went to spacious valleys of the Himalayas. They went into great penances for the well being of the universe and Bhakt Narad was able to attain salvation. Searching for the perfect place they found the four Badris of Panch badri, which are Bridha badri, Bhavish Badri, Dhyan Badri and Yog badri. They also named the hot and cold spring behind Alaknanda River as Badri Vishal.

Another version narrates story of Shivji and Mata Parvati, when they were meditating in Badrinath, and were disturbed by a small boy who cried during the meditation. Knowing that the little boy is Vishnu ji, Shivji and Mata Parvati moved to Kedarnath to grant his wish of meditating on the site.

Yet another story narrates that Pandavas during their route to heaven climbed via 'Swaragrohini', known as ascent to heaven and Mana town north of Badrinath.

History behind the dham

Different accounts speak different stories of the temple and the history describes the same. For some it is believed that first the shrine was worshiped as Tirthankar Adinath as Bhagwan Vishnu, later it was converted into Buddhist Shrine till the 8th century and was revived by Adi Shankara in ninth century and he then converted into Hindu temple. However the architecture of the temple resembling Buddhist designs leads to arguments.

It is also believed that Queen of Indore ruled the village here and she donated a lot to the temple, it's infrastructure and welfare.

During 2006 the state government announced the area around Badrinath as no construction zone because of illegal encroachment and risk of natural disasters.

Architecture

Located in the Garhwal Hill tracks along the banks of Alaknanda River, the temple witnesses Nar Parbat Mountain on its opposite direction and Narayana Parbat behind the Neelkanth Peak.

The temple includes three main structures, which are Garbhagriha; the sanctum above which the conical shaped roof is approximately 15m (49feets) taller with a small cupola on top, covered with a gold glit roof, the Darshan Mandap ; worship hall and the Sabha Mandap; the convention center. The walls and pillars are covered beautifully with intricate carvings.

The main shrine of Shivji, the Shaligram is about 1 ft in black stone deity of Badrinarayan with a Shankha and Chakra in each arm and the other two arms resting on the laps in a Yogamudra Posture, along with 15 other idols of god's in the temple including those of Lakshmi, Garuda, Navadurga, kubera, Nar Narayan, Sage Narad and others. The devotees can also witness a calm and meditative posture of Lord Vishnu, flanked by Nar and Narayan.

The temple is about 50 feet tall with the most colorful carvings and designs on walls, pillars and gates.

Right below the temple there is a natural thermal spring, Tapt kund, which is believed to be infused with healing properties. It is advisable to the devotees to take a dip in the holy water before visiting the shrine of Badrinath. There are five boulders which are known as, Narad, Varah, Narsingh, Garur and Markanday.

Festivals celebrated at the temple

The most celebrated festival at the Badrinath temple is the Mata Murti ka Mela, commemorating the descent of river Ganga on earth. Badrinath Mother is believed to had divided the river into twelve channels for the welfare of earth and living beings.

Badri kedar is another festival celebrated during the month of June in both Badrinath and Kedarnath Temple which lasts for 8 days and artists from all over country performs here.

The other festivals includes celebrations of Akshaya Tritiya, during April-May when the temple reopens, the temple remains closed during Bhatridwitya and Vijya dashmi during winters because of climatic conditions.

The other puja includes Mahabhishek, Rudra Abhishek, Bhagvat puja, Geet Govinda and aarti. Ashtoram and Sahasranama is practiced during the rituals in Vedic scripts. Sugar balls and dry leaves are common Prasad offered to devotees. The temple also witness Akhanda Jyothi on the first day of opening of temple after winters and also on the day of closure filled with ghee to last for the next 6 months.

Significance of visiting the temple

Being one of the Char dham of the Tirth Yatra, Badrinath is also a part of the Chota char dham of Uttarakhand along with Kedarnath, Yamunotri, and Gangotri.

It is also one of the Panch Badris temple situated in the Garhwal Himalayas and one of the 107 Divya desams of the Vaishnavites. Taking a holy bath at the Alaknanda River and praying to Badrinath is believed to purify one's soul.

The nearby locations like Vasundhara das or Mana Village which is the last Indian Village at the Indo-China Border is a must visit during the trip, Neelkanth Peak covered with snow and which receives the first rays of sun at the crack of dawn, Mata Murti mandir which is 3 kms from Badrinath temple, Charanpaduka (3kms from the temple), and Sheshnetra (1.5kms from the temple).

How to reach the temple?

The route to reach Badrinath temple is quite long and the trek is considered as one of the longest trek in India.

The distance from Delhi is approximately 536 kms, from Rishikesh is approximately 298kms and from Dehradun is approximately 335 kms to Badrinath.

By Air, one can take flight to Jolly Grang Airport at Rishikesh, Dehradun, the nearest airport to Gangotri. It is easy to find bus or cab from the airport to reach the temple.

By Train, regular trains to Haridwar and Dehradun are available.

By Road, one can take Bus or Cab from important destinations of Uttarakhand to reach the temple.

Timings

The temple is open for around 6 months during the year for the devotees that is, mostly April end or beginning of May to June and September to October end or November beginning.

During the other six months the area is considered inappropriate for tours as the risk of floods, landslide, high temperatures, and other monsoon related problems is high.

The temple is open from morning 6am to evening 8pm during the whole week.

The kapat of Shri Badrinath Temple for the year 2022 was 8th May 2022 at 6:15 am and witnessed approximately 20000 devotees visiting the opening day and within 2 days the temple witnessed approximately 35000 pilgrims visiting the Temple. The closing date is yet to updated in October.

Contacts

Address – Badri to Mata Murti road,

Badrinath, Uttarakhand.

Pincode – 246422

One can also contact Shri Badrinath Kedarnath Temple committee on their email – support-ucdb@uk.gov.in for related queries.