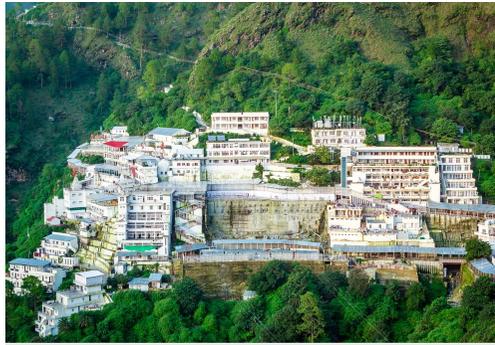


Katra

“ One of the most sacred destinations in northern India, Katra is famously associated with the Maa Vaishno Devi Shrine. Escape the madness of the city and rejuvenate in clean, fresh and natural environment.



Famous For : City

”

Visit the magical and scenic Mata Vaishno Devi cave-shrine, after a 14kms steep, hilly trek from Katra, while enthusiastically chanting "Jai Mata Di" with other pilgrims. Pay your respects to Maa Vaishno Devi, a reincarnation of Goddess Shakti, and soak yourselves in all its legend and culture. Picturesque surroundings and the verdant, green surroundings keep company to tourists and pilgrims on their journey to the temple. Don't miss the delicious food served at several dhabas here.



When To VISIT



<http://www.ixigo.com/weather-in-katra-lp-1139071>

Jan

Very cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 12.89999961	Min: 4.300000190	Rain: 3.0mm
8530273°C	734863°C	

Feb

Very cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 13.69999980	Min: 4.199999809	Rain: 6.0mm
9265137°C	265137°C	

Mar

Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 16.70000076	Min: 5.900000095	Rain: 21.0mm
2939453°C	367432°C	

Apr

Very cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 17.89999961	Min: 4.0°C	Rain: 27.0mm
8530273°C		

May

Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 18.5°C	Min: 13.0°C	Rain: 6.0mm
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Jun

Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 20.29999923	Min: 14.19999980	Rain: 6.0mm
7060547°C	9265137°C	

Jul

Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 15.69999980	Min: 11.30000019	Rain: 36.0mm
9265137°C	0734863°C	

Aug

Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 16.89999961	Min: 10.19999980	Rain: 42.0mm
8530273°C	9265137°C	

Sep

Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 17.70000076	Min: 10.80000019	Rain: 9.0mm
2939453°C	0734863°C	

Oct

Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 18.20000076	Min: 10.10000038	Rain: 0.0mm
2939453°C	1469727°C	

Nov

Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 14.30000019	Min: 9.100000381	Rain: 0.0mm
0734863°C	469727°C	

Dec

Very cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.

Max: 12.0°C	Min: 6.400000095	Rain: 9.0mm
	367432°C	

What To SEE



5 Sights

<http://www.ixigo.com/places-to-visit-see-in-katra-lp-1139071>

1 Vaishno Devi Mandir



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 Katra, Jammu & Kashmir 182301, India

One of the holiest and most revered pilgrim centres in the country, Vaishno Devi Mandir in

Katra is the second most visited temple in India. Dedicated to Goddess Shakti (also called Mata Rani and Vaishnavi), the shrine is visited by more than 8 million pilgrims every year and has a number of mythological legends associated with it.

One of them is as follows--known as Trikuta, during young age, she gradually began being called Vaishnavi as it was believed that she was a divine child and belonged to Lord Vishnu's lineage. Years later in an act of penance, she prayed to Lord Rama (incarnation of Lord Vishnu). Rama came upon her during his search for Sita, his wife, and was impressed with her dedication, granting her a boon, to which she asked him to take her as his wife. Being already devoted to Sita in that life, Rama promised her that in his final human incarnation on earth as Kalki, he will marry her.

Before leaving, he asked her to continue her meditation up on the Trikuta mountain cave (the site of the present shrine) and gave her a bow, arrows, an army of monkey and a lion for her protection. She went to the cave to meditate and took the shape of a three-headed rock (pindis). The rock is still present at the site and is believed to be the goddess, still in the act of meditation. Unlike the usual Hindu temples, the sanctum sanctorum (the cave) has no idol or picture of Gods and Goddesses, but only the three-headed rock formation, representing, Goddess Kali, Goddess Laxmi and Goddess Saraswati. The way to this shrine (Bhavan) is very steep and is a hard walk. However, palanquins, ponies and helicopters are available to carry pilgrims up to the shrine. The pilgrims of

Vaishno Devi Mandir also believe that the Goddess herself calls to her children (devotees), and if she wishes they are pulled to her, no matter where they are. Conversely, it is also believed that no matter how high and mighty you may be, or how keen you are to take darshan of the devi, you will not be able to succeed in your journey, unless you get the call of the Goddess. On your way to the cave, you will pass the original entrance to it (closed for most of the year), which is a small and narrow hole through which one has to crawl for several minutes to reach the Pindis. Due to easier access and more efficient management of the darshan line, an entry and exit tunnel has been

created. Once you enter the tunnel, absolute silence is to be maintained. The walls of the tunnel are lined with pictures and photographs which explain the history of the shrine and act as guidance for the final darshan.

However, going through the original cave entrance to reach the natural rock formations (Pindis) is an experience by itself. This entrance is opened only during lean seasons and festive occasions. The temple management board also offers free and rented accommodation and a subsidised 'no-profit' vegetarian eatery. The

Vaishno Devi Mandir is believed to be the most important Shakteepeetha (place where the eternal energy of the Goddess has concentrated and taken abode, as many claim that the skull of Mata Sati fell at this place during her self-immolation, while others believe that it was her right arm that fell here. Indeed, one does find a stone hand in the cave, which devotees call as 'the hand that grants boons and blessings'.

2 Ardh Kuwari Cave



 Trikuta Parvat, Reasi District, Katra, Jammu and Kashmir 182301, India

Ardh Kuwari Cave lies about mid way to the main Vaishno Devi shrine. While hiding from a malicious sage, Ma Vaishno found this narrow cave and spend around 9 months meditating. When Bhairavnath finally found out about this cave, legend has it that the Goddess used her trident at the other end of the cave to create an opening, which lead to the Bhavan (or the main shrine). When Bhairavnath followed her there, she took the form of Mahakali and beheaded him. Today, this cave acts as a stopover for the pilgrims on their journey up to the Bhavan. There is a long queue leading to a narrow opening at the base of the rock wall, through which one has to crawl for a few minutes to reach the other side. A large shrine dedicated to the three Goddesses--Kali, Laxmi and Saraswati is also built here. The darshan route is semicircular, so that you exit from a different opening at a small distance from the entry route.

3 Bhairavnath Temple



 Trikuta parvat, Reasi District, Katra, Jammu and Kashmir 182301, India

Another important shrine near the Vaishno Devi temple, is the Bhairavnath Temple, a cave temple dedicated to a saint by that name. Years ago, a poor Vaishnav named Shridhar lived in the region and was a faithful devotee of Ma Vaishno devi. Pleased with his devotion, the Goddess appeared to him and asked him to call everyone from the neighboring villages for a Bhandara (collective lunch). When he expressed his doubts about handling the preparations for so many people, the Goddess assured him that everything would be taken care of. Obeying her wishes, Shridhar went and invited everyone to the Bhandara. Amongst the list of invitees was, a malicious sage. On hearing Shridhar's story about the divine Goddess and the Bhandara, he decided to come and check out her powers. When everyone assembled in front of Shridhar's small hut, the Goddess appeared at the entrance in the form of a small girl, and invited everyone inside. Surprisingly, the tiny little hut was able to hold all the people and as the devi started serving food from a small container, each villager got a hefty portion of his/her favourite food. Astonished by all this, tried to further test the powers of the Goddess and asked her for meat and wine, to which she politely replied that the hut belonged to a Vaishnav and only vegetarian food will be served here. However, Bhairavnath continued to rile her, till she disappeared. Using his tantrik powers, he

followed her to the caves in the Trikuta mountain (where the shrine of Vaishno devi lies). On seeing him, the Goddess threw her trident (trishul) at Bhairavnath with so much force that his head fell about two kilometers away from the cave. In his last breath he begged Ma Vaishno devi to forgive him and asked for salvation. The devi acquiesced and promised him that all the devotees coming to her to seek blessings, will also have to visit his temple in order to complete their holy journey. The place where his head fell became the site of the temple.

4 Shiv Khori



 Ransoo village, Reasi district, Sangar, Katra, Jammu & Kashmir 182301, India

One of the many temples in the Reasi district, Shiv Khori in Katra is dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple is actually a natural cave with a self-made lingam. The shrine itself is quite a marvel. One can

find natural rock formations, roughly resembling the figures of Goddess Parvati, Lord Ganesh, Nandi and many other deities. Right above the lingam, a constant dribble of milky water emerging from a crevice in the cave walls is said to fall. On the roof one can see etchings of snakes - an animal closely associated with Lord Shiva. A number of pigeons roost near the cave, which is considered to be a good omen by the pilgrims.

The route to Shiv Khori is filled with a number of other shrines which have their own legends. The cave temple of Shiv Khori was once believed to lead into Kashmir, into the Swami Amarnath caves, but have been closed off beyond a certain point, after some people went missing while exploring the caves.

5 Baba Dhansar



 Karau Village, Reasi District, Katra, Jammu and Kashmir 182301, India

Set in a beautiful location, right by a pond, the holy shrine of Baba Dhansar attracts a lot of pilgrims every year. Baba Dhansar is

the son of Vasudeva, the serpent king. It is believed that many years ago, a demon lived near this pond, and created havoc and destruction amidst the local community. The villagers came and asked Baba Dhansar to help them out. Baba then prayed to Lord Shiva, who agreed to help him kill the demon. After peace was restored in the area, the villagers built a Nag temple and a Shiva temple in honor of the Gods. The Karua Jheel or pond is considered sacred and bathing is not allowed in the waters. However, many devotees take a bath further downstream, believing their sins will be washed away and their wishes will be fulfilled if asked with an earnest heart. A spring emerges from the rocks present in the thick groves of trees and cascades as a waterfall into the stream. The festival of Mahashivratri is celebrated in a big way at this temple.

Where To Eat



5 Places

<http://www.ixigo.com/foods-in-of-katra-lp-1139071>

1 Punjabi Haveli



 Katra Jammu Road, Katra, 182301, India

Located on the Katra - Jammu highway, this inviting restaurant offers not only great food but a rejuvenating and relaxing experience. As the name suggests, Punjabi Haveli, is your one stop for mouthwatering Punjabi food. From the good old dal makhni, laccha parantha to the wide variety of paranthas, the restaurant is a pure delight. Spacious and comfortable, the restaurant is a welcome change from other crowded eating joints. A pleasant experience awaits you at Punjabi Haveli.

2 Gulshan Da Dhaba



 Main Market, Katra, Jammu & Kashmir, 182301, India

Gulshan Da Dhaba is highly recommended for its various combinations of vegetarian thalis. After an exciting sightseeing trip, head here for a delicious meal. You must try the dal fry and paneer masala along with the crispy, garlic naan. If you are looking for after meal snacks, the samosa with chana and alu tikki will not disappoint.

3 Kens Food Planet



 Kashmir Road, Katra, 182301, India

From dal makhni to pulao biryani, the food at Kens Food Planet is highly recommended by locals and tourists alike. The restaurant overlooking the valley, offers you a panoramic view of the small town. You can also sit outside in the beautiful garden for a refreshing meal or head indoors for a warm relaxing meal. The Paneer masala and dry mushrooms are a must try.

4 Prem Lahori Vaishno Dhaba

 Ban ganga road, Katra, 182301, India

Away from the hustle bustle of the main market, this inviting restaurant is sure to surprise you. Take a break from long sightseeing sprees and head to Prem Lahori Vaishno Dhaba for an enjoyable meal. Serving a variety of cuisines, including Indian and Chinese, the food here is certainly one

of the best. Dim lighting and comfortable seating make the experience a wee bit more special. Enjoy a lavish spread and complete the meal with a savoury plate of gajar ka halwa cooked in pure desi ghee.

5 Pooja Vaishno Dhaba



 1st Street, Main Bazar, Katra, 182301, India

 +91-1991-233698 | +91-94191-64032 | +91-94692-77852

The small town of Katra is a bundle of surprises when it comes to delicious food. This quaint eatery is a fine example of home made, mouthwatering food. If after a long day, you are craving for a wholesome meal, you are in luck. From aloo parantha to veg manchurian, Pooja Vaishno Dhaba doesn't disappoint. If you are in the mood to experiment, you can try the surprising variety of Chinese dishes offered here. Their rendition of pan fried vegetables is a pleasant surprise. Don't forget to order a hot, refreshing cup of special tea to complete your meal.

Quick LOCATE



<http://www.ixigo.com/hotels-in-katra-lp-1139071>



See

- A: Vaishno Devi Mandir
- B: Ardh Kuwari Cave
- C: Bhairavnath Temple
- D: Shiv Khori
- E: Baba Dhansar



Food

- F: Punjabi Haveli
- G: Gulshan Da Dhaba
- H: Kens Food Planet
- I: Prem Lahori Vaishno Dhaba
- J: Pooja Vaishno Dhaba

