

# McLeodganj Travel Guide



Only 3 km from Dharamshala lies the picturesque hill station of McLeodganj. Nestled amidst the majestic Dhauladhar mountain range in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, this destination gained prominence as the residence of the [14th Dalai Lama](#) and the Tibetan government-in-exile who fled Tibet in 1959.

Consequently, McLeodganj has become a vibrant hub of Tibetan culture attracting tourists from all over the world. Its unique blend of natural beauty and Tibetan heritage has made it a cherished destination for spiritual seekers and nature lovers.

## Rendezvous with the Tibetan culture in McLeodganj

McLeodganj offers a captivating rendezvous with Tibetan culture which is why the town is also known as the Little Lhasa. Visitors can explore the Tibetan Monasteries like Namgyal and Tsuglagkhang, where the Dalai Lama resides.

The vibrant color of Tibetan culture blends seamlessly with the backdrop of the Dhauladhar range making McLeodganj a unique and enriching destination for those seeking to immerse themselves in Tibetan culture.

## Best places to visit in McLeodganj

- **[Bhagsu Falls](#)**: This beautiful waterfall is a short 2.2 km trek from McLeodganj town and is a must-visit for its scenic beauty and a quick dip in its cool waters.
- **Namgyal Monastery**: Established by the third Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyatso, in 1575, it is now the personal monastery of the 14th Dalai Lama and ranks among the top places to visit in McLeodganj.
- **Bhagsunag Temple**: It is an ancient temple nestled in the heart of a lush green forest and encircled by sacred pools is just a 3 km trek from McLeodganj. This temple holds great significance for the local Hindu and Gorkha communities.

- **Triund Trek:** The 9 km trek route is ideal for adventure lovers. This trail offers breathtaking panoramic views of the Dhauladhar Range. It is also a popular camping site for adventurers.
- **Naddi View Point:** Situated at an altitude of 2000 meters the Naddi View Point provides one of the most stunning vistas of the Dhauladhar Range and Kangra Valley. It is an ideal spot to imbibe the most mesmerising sunset.
- **Dal Lake:** This small high-altitude lake is renowned for its serene beauty amidst the lush green deodar forest. The Shikara ride and floating vegetable garden are a must-have experience.

## Things to do in McLeodganj

- **Visiting Local Markets:** Here you can find Tibetan handicrafts, jewellery, prayer flags, woollen clothing, idols, incense, local art, and delicious street food.
- **Camping:** [McLeodganj](#) offers numerous camping sites with stunning views of the Dhauladhar range for camping enthusiasts. You can camp at Triund Trek, Kareri Lake, near Bhagsu Nag, Indrahara Pass, and Dharamkot.
- **Star Gazing:** Stargazing in McLeodganj is a mesmerising experience. The pollution-free environment and clear skies in this hill station make it an ideal spot for observing celestial wonders.
- **Yoga Sessions and Spa Therapies:** You can take various yoga sessions and indulge in Tibetan spas to rejuvenate both body and mind.

## Trekking in McLeodganj

McLeodganj is a trekkers paradise that is suitable for all level hikers offering both beginner-friendly and challenging trails. Each trail provides a unique experience, from dense mystical forests to waterfalls and alpine landscapes.

- **Bhagsu Waterfall and Triund Trail:** For Beginners the Bhagsu Waterfall and Triund Trail is an easy introduction. Bhagsu Fall is a short 3 km trek from McLeodganj and leads to an enchanting waterfall. Slightly more challenging is the Triund trek, which is a 9 km trek from McLeodganj.
- **Kareri Lake and Indrahara pass:** Moving on to moderate trails, the glacial Kareri Lake presents a 2-3 day trek through dense forests and alpine meadows. Indrahara Pass is another moderate-to-challenging option with mesmerizing vistas, but it requires proper acclimatization.
- **Snowline Trek and the Minkiani Pass:** For experienced trekkers, the challenging Snowline trek offers a glimpse of Dhauladhar's snow-clad peaks. The ultimate challenge lies in conquering the treacherous Minkiani Pass or the multi-day trek to the majestic Mani Mahesh Lake.

## Nightlife in McLeodganj

The nightlife of McLeodganj is a vibrant experience. Local markets spring to life, offering an array of shopping options. Street vendors serve steaming momos and thukpa, filling the air with their warm aromas.

Visitors and locals gather around campfires, sharing stories and savouring the serene night.

Stargazing in McLeodganj is a popular attraction as it reveals a dazzling display of stars rarely seen in cities, completing the enchanting experience of a night in McLeodganj.

## Restaurants and local food in McLeodganj

McLeodganj is a street food paradise, offering a diverse experience with its unique blend of Tibetan and Indian flavours. Whether you are a food adventurer or a comfort food seeker, McLeodganj's diverse cuisine ensures that you will find something to satisfy your cravings.

- **Thupka and Momos:** While exploring the mini-Tibet, you will come across an array of restaurants and street vendors serving 100% authentic Tibetan momos and thukpa with a combo of spiced veggies and spicy sauce.
- **Thenthuk:** It is a hand-pulled wheat noodle cooked in a broth of vegetables and meat. It is similar to thukpa but is on the spicier side making it more enjoyable in the cold weather.
- **Bok Choy Soup:** This bitter stew is made with a mixture of vegetables like Bok Choy, ginger, mushrooms and carrots.
- **Tibetan Breads:** Do not ignore the aroma of freshly baked bread while strolling the streets of McLeodganj, chances are you are near a Tibetan bakery! Balep Korkun and steamed Tingbo bread go heavenly with a bowl of thukpa or pork chilli.
- **Tibetan Butter Tea:** For tea lovers, Tibetan Butter tea is a must try.
- **Yak Cheese Slice:** If you are a turophile who loves trying new recipes with cheese, you must sample the Yak cheese slice! Make a quick stop at Tibet Quality Bakery to savor this rich and creamy cheesecake muffin.

### **Best time to visit McLeodganj**

The best time to visit McLeodganj is during the summer (March to June) and early winter (September to November) seasons. These months offer pleasant weather, clear skies, and ideal conditions for outdoor activities and trekking, making it a popular choice for travelers to enjoy the natural beauty and cultural experiences the region has to offer.

### **The best way to reach McLeodganj**

To get to McLeodganj, you can either fly to Gaggal Airport or take a train to Pathankot Railway Station. From there, it's just a short 9 km drive or bus ride to McLeodganj. You can also hire a taxi or use public buses from cities like Delhi or Chandigarh to reach McLeodganj by road.

### **Things to know before you travel McLeodganj**

- It's best to avoid traveling to McLeodganj during the monsoon season (July to August) due to heavy rainfall.
- McLeodganj is at a higher altitude, so be prepared for potential altitude-related effects such as shortness of breath. Allow yourself time to acclimatize before exploring these beautiful trails.
- Check weather conditions and pack accordingly, with layers for sudden weather changes.
- Carry enough cash as ATMs may be limited in some areas. Debit cards are not widely accepted, so cash is essential.
- Carry any necessary medications, and be aware of healthcare facilities in the area.
- If you plan to trek, ensure you have appropriate clothing, trekking shoes, and gear. You can rent some equipment locally.
- Check if there are any local festivals or events during your visit to be part of a unique cultural experience.

### **Suggested itinerary for McLeodganj**

#### **Day 1:**

- Arrive in McLeodganj and check into your accommodation.
- Explore the local markets and enjoy Tibetan cuisine at a local restaurant.
- Visit the Dalai Lama Temple and soak in the spiritual atmosphere.

#### **Day 2:**

- Start the day with breakfast at a Tibetan Bakery and butter tea and head out for a short trek to the Bhagsu Falls and Triund. Enjoy a bowl of hot thukpa for lunch as a reward at the top.

- Return to McLeodganj by evening and relax.
- Take a lazy stroll at night to witness the dazzling stars in the sky.

### **Day 3:**

- Head to Bhagsu Nag to visit Bhagsunath Temple and [Bhagsu Waterfall](#). Enjoy a refreshing dip.
- Explore the quaint village of Dharamkot.
- In the evening, attend a meditation or yoga session.

### **Day 4:**

- Take a day trip to the scenic [Kangra Valley](#) and visit Kangra Fort and Masroor Rock Cut Temples.
- Enjoy a picnic lunch amidst the picturesque surroundings.

### **Day 5:**

- [Explore St. John in the Wilderness Church](#) and other temples and monasteries.
- [Visit the Norbulingka Institute](#) to witness Tibetan art and culture.
- Shop for souvenirs and handicrafts in the local markets.

### **Day 6:**

- If you're interested in a challenging trek, you can embark on the Kareri Lake trek, or you can rent a car, relax, and enjoy sightseeing.
- Alternatively, spend the day at leisure, exploring cafes or taking a Tibetan spa.
- Depart from McLeodganj with beautiful memories.