

SIMLA
TO
MUSCOORIE
OVER THE HILLS

Major C. DAVENPORT

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TO
MUSSOORIE

Over the Hills

*A detailed description of the route
together with complete information
regarding the preliminary arrange-
ments necessary*

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INTRODUCTION.

“**F**OOTSLOGGING” admittedly, is not everybody’s game, but for those for whom trekking in the outer Himalayan Hills has a strong appeal, the march described in this little book will be found worthy of consideration.

Route.—Chief among the advantages claimed for it may be mentioned the following. The district concerned is readily accessible to most Stations in Northern India and no lengthy journey to the starting point is involved. The scenery throughout almost the whole route is delightful. Much of it is indeed magnificent and one of the stages passes through some of the finest to be found in the whole length of the Himalayas. The cost compares favourably with that of a similar trek in other parts. The necessity for camping does not arise. Finally, the complete programme can be carried through on “short leave” if desired.

Season.—Undoubtedly the best seasons in which to make the march are late April or early May, and late October. The country will then be at its best and views of the snows almost certain. Late May and November will answer too, but not quite so well. In June much of the view will be obscured by heat haze. The monsoon season is out of the question and in winter some of the road will be under snow.

Starting Point.—The route described involves a start at Simla, but the march can equally well be made in the opposite direction. There are however certain advantages in making Simla the starting point and it is recommended that the march be made from there, if possible.

Distances.—The total distance is 142 miles, which is divided into fourteen stages of an average length of 10 miles. The trek is thus sufficiently long to justify the trouble and forethought required for the preliminary “bandobast.” It is not so long however that the daily move becomes monotonous.

The Road.—It may be stated at once that there are no difficulties to contend with whatever. The road is good throughout and in constant use by the hill people. The route is a favourite one among Europeans, particularly those stationed in Simla. Thus a proposal to undertake the trek is not met with blank amazement by the many people to whom the preliminary arrangements must first be referred.

Stages.—The details of the various stages will be found on page 12. It is strongly recommended that the programme of stages given be adhered to, except where it is stated otherwise. In cases in which a certain stage appears to be unduly short, it is to be noted that probably some special reason for this exists, that is to say it may involve a sharp descent and ascent, or some special advantage is secured by completing the march early in the day. Presumably the average traveller is marching for pleasure or sport and is not pressed for time. No useful object is therefore served by making two stages in one day. Indeed any such proposal is certain to lead to trouble with the coolies and opposition from the mule men.

Halting Places.—The enjoyment of the trip may be greatly increased by making it a rule, if time permits, to halt for a day or two periodically, for rest or sport, at certain carefully preselected spots. The Kotkhai, Kathyan, Mandali and Deoban bungalows for example are situated in delightful surroundings, and most will agree that a halt for a single night will hardly do justice to these lovely places. Fishing is obtainable at Sainj, Arakot and Tiuni. Shikar, small and large game, is good at Kathyan and Mandali, though a permit is necessary. Bathing is possible at Tiuni.

Bungalows.—At each stage there is a bungalow, and any bungalows which exist in addition to those shown on page 12 will be found noted in the description of the daily marches. In the majority of cases permission to occupy these bungalows must be obtained beforehand, particularly as several belong to Native States. The addresses to which such applications should be sent is also given on page 12. In making these applications the exact dates for which occupation is desired should be stated.

Riding Ponies.—The whole trek can quite easily be made on foot and nowhere is the going in any way arduous. A riding pony, even if shared, will add somewhat to the expense and must really be regarded as a luxury. For ladies who do not ride a dandy might be a necessity, a somewhat large addition to the cost of the trip. Rickshaws can only traverse the first and last stages.

Transport.—For the transport of baggage mules are recommended. They move far more quickly than coolies, and where employed there is a reasonable chance that the baggage will arrive at the new stage each day about the same time as the traveller—a great advantage. A mule carries 160 lbs., which must be divided into two equal loads not exceeding 80 lbs. each. These should be as compact as possible and balance exactly. Mules may be obtained at Simla from the Government Contractor, Mule Chaudhri Nathu Ram Ahluwalia of Edward Gunj. This man will also assist in procuring for the traveller any riding ponies, coolies or dandys that he may require. In fixing the rate of remuneration to

be made, the Government rate prevailing, a statement of which will be in his possession, should be taken as a guide. A certain amount of bargaining will however be necessary. Pay at a reduced rate for the return journey and for each day on which no march is made, is the rule. This is the local custom and must be accepted.

It is recommended that transport taken on at Simla be engaged as far as Chakrata only, where a change can be made, but not before. Transport can be secured at Chakrata on application to the Thesildar. The rates are somewhat lower than those prevailing at Simla.

Baggage.—Little baggage is needed on this trip however and in consequence the number of mules that will be taken will be few. A bedding roll well protected against weather, a small yakdan for kit, another for messing equipment, and one for stores should complete the list. English leather bags suffer sadly in transportation in the Hills and should not be taken. Packing cases that require nailing down daily must be avoided. Yakdans on the other

hand are ideal. They are cheap, stand any amount of hard wear and are practically waterproof. They are designed for pack transport and are sold in pairs for the purpose.

The most important item of kit is, of course, footgear. The wear and tear on this is considerable and the whole trip will be spoilt if uncomfortable or unserviceable boots and shoes be taken. If a halt is to be made at Chakrata (and such will probably be the case), some clothes should be included somewhat more respectable than the old ones that answer for the purpose of the daily march.

Servants should be limited to one small bedding roll apiece and a sack for their food and cooking pots. It is recommended that they be equipped with a serviceable pair of chaplies before starting out.

Before leaving Simla, items of kit which will not be required again until the march is over should be railed on by passenger train to Mussoorie from Simla Station. They should be consigned either to an hotel or to the East India

Railway Out-agency, Mussoorie, there to await the traveller's arrival. With this the Bearer's inevitable tin box may be included.

Furniture.—All bungalows are fully furnished, but in some of the smaller ones only two beds are provided. It is thus recommended that a camp bed be included in the kit taken, as otherwise a night spent on the floor may result from the presence at the bungalow of officials travelling on duty and possessing a prior right to occupation. Such a precaution is of course essential if the number marching together exceeds two. None of the beds, except those at Jubbal, are equipped with mattresses, and thus a "kapok" camp bed mattress should be included in the bedding roll, or, what answers equally well, a quilted cotton mattress, camp bed size, made for a few rupees in any bazaar.

Messing Equipment.—Complete messing equipment must be taken as very few of the bungalows are supplied with cutlery, crockery or cooking pots. Further, as in most instances the stages are too long to be made between breakfast and lunch, one picnic meal *en route* will generally

be the daily rule, and thus a tiffin box becomes a necessity also. This involves the engagement of a tiffin cooly. It is recommended that this man be equipped with a basket to carry on his back after the pattern in common use in the Simla Hills and which costs about one rupee. This basket, in addition to accommodating the tiffin box, can also be made the depository of the water-bottles, camera, mackintoshes and other odds and ends required in the course of the daily march. This man, of course, accompanies the traveller, being usually the only member of the staff to do so. Someone who knows the route should be chosen ; he can then act as guide, and the undesirable consequences of taking the wrong turning will be avoided.

Lamps.—Lanterns, with oil or candles, for use at the bungalows must be included in the items taken, and it is advisable also to add a tin of Flit and a Flit spray.

Supplies.—On page 30 will be found a list of supplies. It must be emphasised that fresh supplies on this route, except at Chakrata, **are exceedingly difficult to obtain.** Meat is

unobtainable. A few eggs and an occasional chicken may be secured. Fresh fish is usually available at Arakot. Everything necessary, however, is readily obtainable at Simla beforehand, and also at Chakrata *en route*.

Water is available all along the road, and though many safe mountain streams are to be found, one is well advised to adhere to the accepted rule of boiling all drinking water before use.

Servants.—A man who can cook and a sweeper must be taken. This is essential. For a few annas a day (paid daily) one of the mule men or coolies will be willing to act as *bhisti* at the various bungalows.

Cost of the trip.—A fair estimate of the cost of the trip is Rs. 12 per head per day. This allows for the hire outward and return empty of two baggage mules with driver, one tiffin cooly, a sweeper, for the bungalow charges and tips, and for messing. The last item will account for about Rs. 4 out of the Rs. 12 mentioned.

A limited amount of cash, mostly in coin, should be taken to meet expenses *en route*. The chief items are the payments and tips at the various bungalows and the purchase of whatever supplies may be obtainable. Tolls are levied on two occasions within a short distance of each other on the last stage only. For this, small change amounting to about Rs. 4 per head should be held ready.

Maps and Books.—Maps of the country traversed are obtainable at Simla.

Nearly all the bungalows are equipped with good libraries. No large number of books need thus be taken.

Alternative Route.—An alternative and slightly longer route is as follows :—Simla—Fagu—Theog—Matiana—Narkanda—Bagi—Khadrala—Rohru—Arakot and thence onward by stages 6 to 14 as described in the itinerary given in this book. Particulars of this route are obtainable at the office of the Deputy-Commissioner, Hill States, Simla.

STAGES.

| Stage. | Miles. | Miles from Simla. | Name. | Bungalow. | Permission to occupy obtainable from :— | Approximate altitude. |
|--------|--------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | 12 | 12 | FAGU ... | Dak Bungalow | Not necessary | 8,200 |
| 2 | 8 | 20 | SAINJ ... | State Bungalow | Wazir, Theog State, Simla Hills ... | 4,400 |
| 3 | 13 | 33 | KOTKHAI... | Civil Rest House (P. W. D.) | Deputy Commissioner, Hill States, Simla. | 5,000 |
| 4 | 12 | 45 | JUBBAL ... (Deorha) | State Guest House. | Wazir, Jubbhal State, Simla Hills. | 6,000 |
| 5 | 15 | 60 | ARAKOT ... | Forest Bungalow | Chief Secretary, Tehri-Garhwal State, U. P. | 3,650 |
| 6 | 9 | 69 | TIUNI ... | Ditto ... | Divisional Forest Officer, Chakrata, U.P. | 3,000 |
| 7 | 12 | 81 | KATHYAN | Ditto ... | Ditto ... | 6,600 |
| 8 | 7 | 88 | MANDALI | Ditto ... | Ditto ... | 8,500 |
| 9 | 12 | 100 | DEOBAN ... | Ditto ... | Ditto ... | 9,000 |
| 10 | 4 | 104 | CHAKRATA * | Ditto ... | Ditto ... | 6,900 |
| 11 | 11 | 115 | CHURANI † (Chauranpani) | District Board Bungalow. | Chairman, District Board, Dehra Dun. | 7,200 |
| 12 | 12 | 127 | LAKHWAR | Ditto ... | Ditto ... | 3,700 |
| 13 | 6 | 133 | SANJI ... | Ditto ... | Ditto ... | 4,000 |
| 14 | 9 | 142 | MUSSOORIE | None ... | | 6,500 |

* One mile further on there is an M. E. S. Bungalow. Three miles further on at Kailana Cantonment there is a Dak Bungalow.

Five miles further on at Nagthat there is another District Board Bungalow.

ITINERARY.

1. SIMLA to FAGU. 12 miles.

THE march is made along the main Hindustan-Tibet road. Leaving Simla by the Mall on the north side of Jakko, the little bazaar of Sanjauli is traversed. Just beyond this a turning to the left takes one through a long tunnel. The open country is now reached. For the next mile or so the road is open and bare. At $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles the road forks, that to the left leading to Mashobra, the one to the right going to Narkanda. The latter is the one required. There is now a long but gradual ascent through pretty wooded country. At 6 miles Wildflower Hall is passed. Beyond this, at 8 miles, lies the bazaar of Kufri. A steady gradual decline brings one to Fagu.

The road is broad and excellent throughout and passable for a rickshaw.

The bungalow at Fagu is a Dak Bungalow and contains several quarters. There is a khansamah in attendance. It is situated on a bare ridge with a fine view over country. There is a small village, but supplies are difficult to obtain, probably owing to the proximity of the Simla market.

British territory.

2. FAGU to SAINJ. 8 miles.

The march lies through the valley to the east of Fagu. About half a mile beyond the bungalow the Hindustan-Tibet road is left and a descent made down the mountain side. The road, now mostly a track, is very rough in parts and the descent rather steep. This continues for six miles when, finally, after crossing a nullah at the bottom, the road traverses practically level ground through cultivated country. The march is bare the whole way.

The bungalow is small, consisting of two suites of rooms only. There is a chowkidar in charge. It is situated on a small plateau overlooking the bend of a river. The site, though

bare, is attractive. Being some 4,000 ft. lower than Fagu, the place will be found considerably warmer. Fishing is obtainable here.

Theog State territory.

3. SAINJ to KOTKHAI. 13 miles.

The road winds up a narrow valley to the north-east. There is a steady ascent the whole way. The path is good and well bridged throughout. At rather less than half-way the river is crossed and thereafter the road follows the other bank. The first half of the march is rather bare, it then becomes more pleasant, and the last part runs through pretty forest.

The bungalow, which is a new one and particularly well built, contains two suites of rooms. There is a chowkidar in charge. It is situated high up the mountain side, in a pine forest, and overlooks the valley. The altitude is such that it is pleasant at any season of the year. The village of Kotkhai is about half a mile further on and has a Post Office and a Dispensary. A few supplies are usually obtainable.

An isolated piece of British territory.

4. KOTKHAI to JUBBAL. (Deorha). 12 miles.

The road continues up the valley, winding first through the pretty village of Kotkhai. A little further on the head of the valley is reached and the road makes a turn to the right into a side valley. After traversing a pretty piece of forest beside a stream, a crossing is made at a ford. Now commences, rather suddenly, a long ascent of five miles. The first mile is rather steep, but thereafter the path runs at an easier gradient. The ascent is somewhat tedious, but the country becomes grander at each mile, and the final stretches before the pass is reached are magnificent. From the top of the pass a grand view over country on both sides is obtained. From this point it is an easy $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles descent to Jubbal, the capital of a State of that name.

Jubbal is a small but very attractive little town situated on a plateau tucked away in a nullah. The Raja's Palace, the Temple and Government Offices are conspicuous features.

Accommodation is provided at the State Guest House, a particularly sumptuous building,

considering that it is located somewhat far from civilization. The house contains several suites of rooms each equipped with electric light, carpets, spring beds and mattresses, English baths and sanitation. There is a khansamah in charge.

A few eggs, potatoes, a chicken and food for the servants should be procurable here.

Jubbal State territory.

5. JUBBAL to ARAKOT. 15 miles.

Leaving Jubbal on the other bank of the nullah, the road winds down hill through pretty country for a few miles. At the bottom this valley opens into another, and here a turn to the right is made, and the road follows the Pabar river the rest of the way. The country is now bare, the track rough, and the valley rather closed in. The last two miles lie through a thin forest of pine. It is a gradual descent the whole way.

Arakot bungalow is a small Forest Bungalow in a bare situation with rather an uninteresting

outlook. A police constable or Forest Department official will probably be found in charge, having been specially detailed to meet the traveller. There is a small village beyond the bungalow where fresh fish is obtainable.

Tehri-Garhwal State territory.

6. ARAKOT to TIUNI. 9 miles.

The path continues in the valley of the Pabar river up to the point at which the Tons river flows in. A gradual descent the whole way. The valley is more open and less bare than on the previous march and the route is pretty and pleasant. Finally the river is crossed by a suspension bridge, on the far side of which the bungalow stands.

A Forest Bungalow with a chowkidar in charge. There are two suites of rooms and a dining-room. A good bungalow in a large level compound with many walnut trees. This bungalow is situated at a lower altitude than any other occupied on the trek and will be found warm, hot or very hot according to the season

of the year. Provided the river is not too muddy, good bathing is to be had here on a sandy strand below the bungalow.

A few eggs may be obtainable. There are some poor huts in the vicinity, but no village.

British territory.

7. TIUNI to KATHYAN. 12 miles.

There is however a short cut of 9 miles up over the hill which might be preferable if the march were made in the opposite direction.

The first four miles are level and run beside the Tons river. Then after a turn to the right a long but gradual ascent commences which becomes slightly more marked towards the end of the march. The road runs through forest practically the whole way and the scenery is delightful. Finally the bungalow is reached high up in the valley, about half a mile from the top of the pass.

This also is a Forest Department Bungalow. There is a chowkidar in charge. It is built in a clearing in the forest and the situation is lovely. The bungalow is a good one with two suites of

rooms in addition to a large and pleasant dining-room with a handsome fireplace. Good shooting, both small and large game, may be had from here, as the Visitors' Book clearly shows.

There is no village and no supplies are obtainable.

British territory.

8. KATHYAN to MANDALI. $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles by the short cut.

There is however an alternative route round by the road, a distance of fourteen miles. As the short cut, known as the Pagdandy, is provided with a good path and the going is not unduly severe, nothing is to be gained by taking the longer route. The Pagdandy route will be described.

After leaving the bungalow a short ascent of half a mile brings one to a clearing at the top of the pass. From this point the Mandali bungalow may be seen on a clear day among the trees high up on the distant mountain side. The path drops down into the intervening valley by a short but rather steep descent. Thereafter the going

is easy, and in the next three miles a stream is crossed and recrossed by stepping stones or small bridges. The nullah—almost a gorge—is very pretty. Then a long climb of three miles begins. For a short distance half-way up the gradient is a little steep and the path rough. The forest is then entered, a forest nursery garden is passed, and after a further climb the bungalow suddenly comes into view in a clearing which at certain seasons of the year will be found carpeted with flowers.

The bungalow, a Forest Department Bungalow, is a good one, though small. The Forest School building however, situated just below, serves as an annexe.

Two varieties of raspberries, the Indian yellow and the home red one, will be found growing wild on the edge of the forest around the bungalow clearing.

Small and large game are obtainable from here.

No village. No supplies.

British territory.

9. MANDALI to DEOBAN. 12 miles.

This is beyond doubt the most beautiful march of all and runs through magnificent country the whole way. Immediately on leaving the bungalow the forest is entered. The road rises steadily for the first three miles until the pass is reached. Here the mountain sides are carpeted with wild strawberry plants and the banks are thick with ferns. The pass lies at 10,000 ft., the highest point on the whole trek.

The road descends slightly on the far side, and thereafter for several miles runs almost level along a ridge connecting together several mountains of the range. The path alternates between one side of the ridge and the other. The views of the snows and distant hills are wonderful and at almost every turn of the road a lovely subject for the camera is disclosed. The last mile to the bungalow lies through thick forest and involves a slight ascent.

The bungalow is a Forest Department Bungalow. There is a chowkidar in charge. In addition to the main building containing three

suites and a dining-room there is a cottage annexe. The spot is a favourite one among residents at Chakrata. The bungalow is at an altitude of 9,000 ft., the highest to be occupied on the trek. The situation is lovely and tempts one to linger for days. Here a fire in the afternoon and evening is welcome at almost any time of year.

By a short climb to a point known as " Snow View " a grand view of the whole stretch of the Kumaon-Garhwal snowy range can be obtained. Unfortunately at certain seasons of the year, owing to the high altitude, the situation is often enveloped in cloud.

British territory.

10. DEOBAN to CHAKRATA. 4 miles.

A sharp descent the whole way, first through bare stony country, then through forest. The path is rough in places. Chakrata is entered at the north end near the Forest Bungalow.

This bungalow is a good one and contains four rooms and a dining-room. A chowkidar and sweeper are provided. In addition there is a M. E. S. Bungalow about a mile further on, permission to occupy which must be obtained beforehand from the Garrison Engineer, Dehra Dun. At Kailana Cantonment, a further two miles on, there is a Dak Bungalow containing two rooms. There is also one hotel in Chakrata, "Snow View."

Chakrata is a clean attractive Cantonment prettily laid out. The population is small. There is a Post Office, Telegraph Office and Hospital.

If the Simla transport is to be paid off here, application should be sent to the Thesil as soon as possible for the men and mules required for the march on to Mussoorie. For this normally 24 to 48 hours' notice will be necessary.

A fresh stock of supplies can be secured here either at the military canteens in Chakrata or at the Kailana bazaar.

British territory.

11. CHAKRATA to CHURANI.**(Chauranpani). 11 miles.**

A good broad road the whole way, dipping slightly at first, then rising again. The country is mostly bare but attractive, and in parts calls to mind the Sussex Downs. By taking a short cut at about the eighth mile up over a hill, about one mile of road may be saved. The ascent however is rather rough and somewhat steep.

The bungalow, which belongs to the District Board, contains two rooms and a dining-room. There is a chowkidar in charge. The situation, on the slope of the mountain side, is pretty and the view very fine.

No village and no supplies obtainable.

British territory.

12. CHURANI to LAKHWAR. 12 miles.

The road circles a prominent point and then makes a long detour on the other side of the mountain. There is a slight decline the whole way. The country is bare except for some scrub bushes.

At the fifth mile the little bungalow of Nagthat is passed, a small but excellent bungalow in a pretty compound.

From this point the descent becomes more marked and the country almost completely bare. Fine views however are obtained, and across the distant valley may be seen the little bungalow of Sanji. Deep in the nullah beds are the carefully tended rice-fields with their clever systems of irrigation affording one of the rare green patches *en route*. The village of Lakhwar contains some pretty houses with gaily decorated verandahs, all facing in the same direction. A short distance beyond the village the bungalow is reached.

The bungalow belongs to the District Board. It is a particularly good one, containing four suites of rooms. The situation is bare and, being at rather a low altitude, will be found hot at certain seasons of the year.

No supplies are obtainable.

British territory.

13. LAKHWAR to SANJI. 6 miles.

The road descends rather steeply for three miles to the valley of the Jumna river which is crossed by a suspension bridge. This is the lowest point on the trek, being only about 2,000 ft. altitude. The march is consequently a hot one at most seasons of the year. The country is bare, but the scenery rather fine. A clear pool in the bed of the river below the bridge provides an excuse for a halt and a bathe, a pleasant diversion if the day is hot.

On the far side the ascent commences at once and proceeds by easy stages right up to the bungalow. The country is less bare on this side of the valley.

The Sanji Bungalow is a very small one and belongs to the District Board. It is situated on the summit of a small hill with a fine view in all directions, including practically the whole of the road traversed on this march. It lies slightly higher than Lakhwar. There are only two rooms. There is a chowkidar in charge.

A small village below the bungalow, but no supplies available.

British territory.

14. SANJI to MUSSOORIE. 9 miles.

A steady rise the whole way, a little stiff in parts. The road is good and broad. The country improves at each mile and the latter stages lie in thick forest. At half-way the Kempti Falls are passed. Here is a Café where refreshments may be obtained. Accommodation for one or two persons for the night is also available. There is a short cut to this point which takes off from the main road shortly after leaving the Sanji Bungalow. It is not recommended, however, as it is rough, steep and a long climb. Just beyond the Café toll is levied by Tehri State. A few miles further on toll is again payable, this time to the Mussoorie Municipality.

Mussoorie is entered midway between the Charleville and Savoy Hotels. There are no Dâk Bungalows or other rest houses. As the place is normally very full in the season, accommodation should be secured beforehand.

Note.—For a good walker the march from Chakrata to Mussoorie may be reduced to three stages as follows :—

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----------|
| Chakrata to Nagthat | ... | 16 miles. |
| Nagthat to Sanji | ... | 13 „ |
| Sanji to Mussoorie | ... | 9 „ |

This alteration in the programme would also be desirable if the season were hot, as the bungalow at Lakhwar is thereby avoided. A very early start should however be made on the day on which the Jumna is crossed.

A LIST OF SUPPLIES.

Fresh Supplies.

Bread for three days.

Meat for three days.

Butter for three days.

Eggs.

Cakes.

Potatoes for a week.

Vegetables.

Currants and raisins.

Rice.

A basket of fruit.

Stores.

Tea.

Cocoa.

Sugar.

Stores—(contd.)

Flour (To include sufficient for making bread or scones).

Raisley.

Cornflour.

Egg substitute.

Tinned butter.

Fat for cooking.

Tinned milk or milk powder.

Jam or marmalade.

Potted meats.

Tinned corned beef.

Tinned sausages.

Tinned fish.

Sardines.

Tinned fruits (8 oz. size).

Quaker oats.

Biscuits.

Cheese.

Stores—(concl'd.)

Bovril.

Chocolate.

Salt.

Pepper.

Mustard.

Lamp oil.

Candles.

Matches.

Soap.

Flit.

Paper serviettes for sandwiches.

