# KASOL

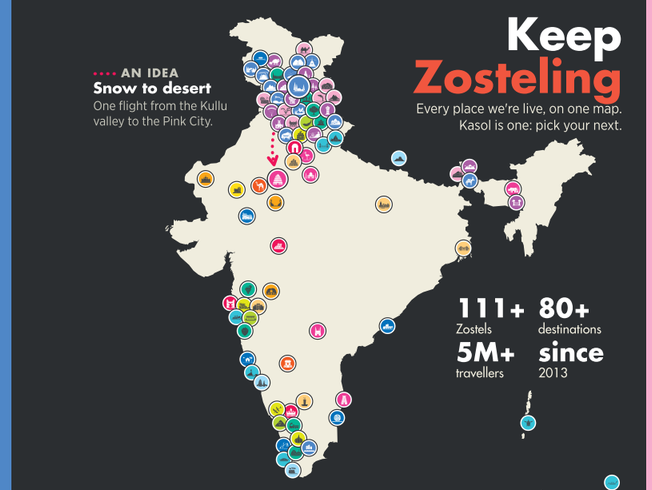
**a map made by Zostel for young travellers**

**FREE MAP · HIMACHAL PRADESH**



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ZOSTEL

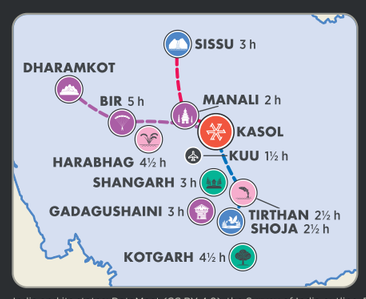


**AN IDEA**
**Snow to desert**
One flight from the Kullu valley to the Pink City.

## Keep Zosteling

Every place we're live, on one map.
Kasol is one: pick your next.

**111+** Zostels · **80+** destinations
**5M+** travellers · **since** 2013




### Around Kasol, by road

Drive times from our Zostels in Kasol

**Up the Beas to Lahaul**
Manali 2 h › Sissu 1½ h

**South to the Banjar valleys**
Tirthan 2½ h › Shoja 30 min

**Fly, then hike**
Bir 5 h › Dharamkot 2½ h

*...and 5+ more Zostels a drive away*

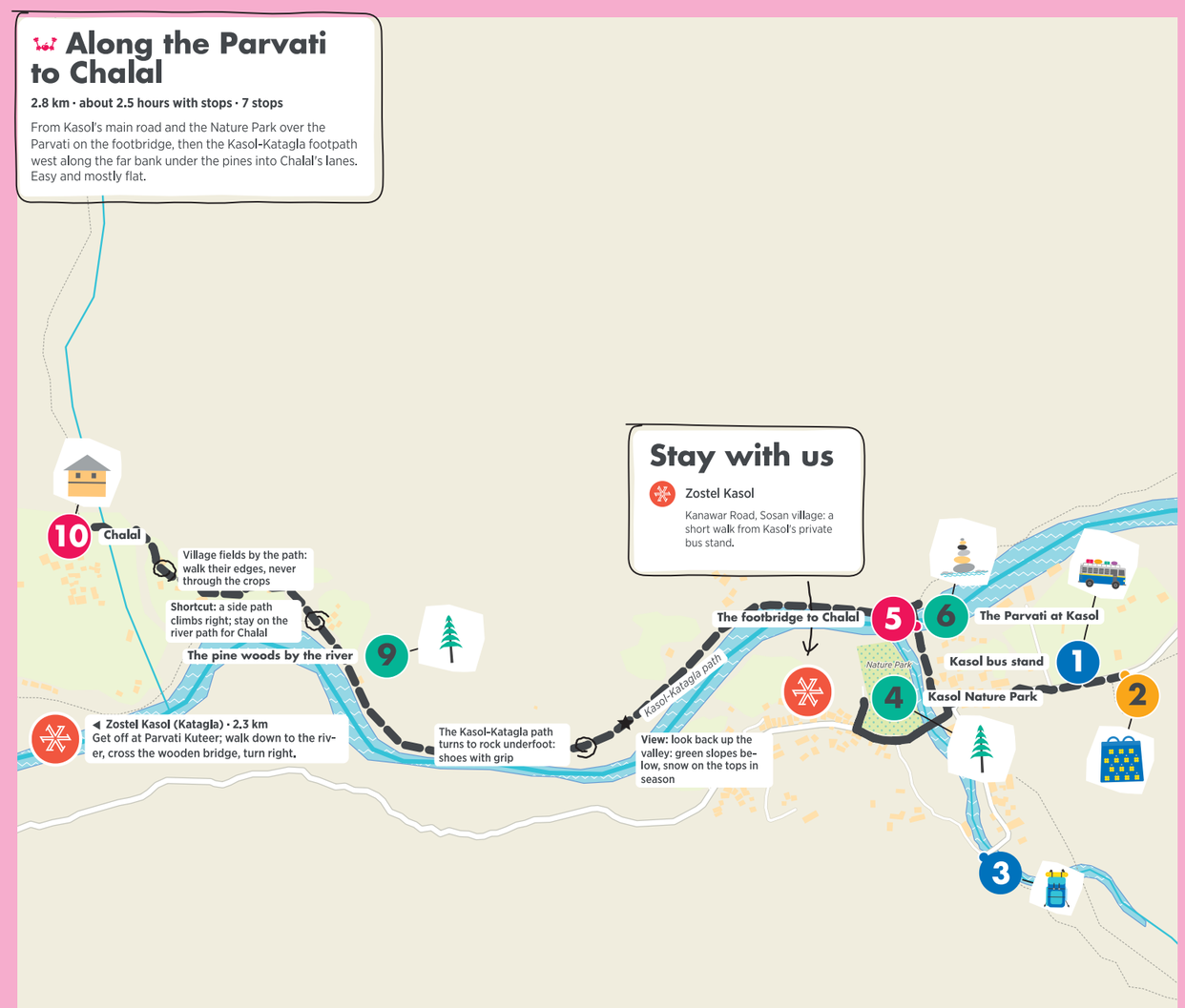
KUU 1½ h

India and its states: DataMeet (CC BY 4.0), the Survey of India outline. Roads, airports, station: © OpenStreetMap contributors; drive times by FOSSGIS OSRM, scaled to Zostel's own published times (2026-10). Pins nudged apart where they crowd; edge pins point the way. Flights and trains change: check before you plan.

## Along the Parvati to Chalal

**2.8 km · about 2.5 hours with stops · 7 stops**

From Kasol's main road and the Nature Park over the Parvati on the footbridge, then the Kasol-Katagla footpath west along the far bank under the pines into Chalal's lanes. Easy and mostly flat.




## Namaste, Kasol!

*Namaste! We're the Kasol Zobus, and this is our valley: the Parvati roaring down from its glacier between pine slopes and snow, and Kasol the trekkers' base on its bank. Walk the river path to Chalal, sit on the river stones, watch rice cook in Manikaran's hot springs and eat at its gurdwara's langar. Then go higher: Grahan, Rasol, Tosh, and Kheerganga's hot pool at the top of the trail. Eat siddu and the river's trout, wear a Kullu topi, keep the villages quiet and the trails clean. And stay out of the river: sit on its stones and listen.*



Every number is a tip on the map overleaf, in the colour of its kind: Look Up · Out by the River · Wool and Gear · Pack Up, Go Higher. A drawing beside a line shows what you will find there:

## Stay with us in Kasol

*Two Zostels on the Parvati: one in Kasol itself, on Kanawar Road in Sosan village, and one among the pines by the river at Katagla, down the valley.*

### Zostel Kasol

In Kasol itself, on Kanawar Road: valley-view balconies, dorms where the treks get planned. A short walk from the private bus stand.

### Zostel Kasol (Katagla)

White and teal among the pines by the river, with a rooftop common room. From the Parvati Kuteer stop, walk down and cross the wooden bridge.

Maps: © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL), data fetched 2026-10-13 (UTC) · Terrain: Terrain Tiles on AWS (Mapzen/Tilezen), from SRTM courtesy of NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey. Walk lines routed by FOSSGIS OSRM on OpenStreetMap. Drawings: the Zostel brand's own. Things change: check the day's timings at the gate.



## Practical tips

### Getting in

Overnight buses run from Delhi and Chandigarh to Kasol. The nearest airport is at Bhuntar, about 30 km down the valley; Chandigarh is about 260 km. The last of every way in is the valley road from Bhuntar, by bus or cab.

### Getting around

Walk: Kasol, Chalal and Katagla are joined by paths and the valley road. Himachal buses and shared taxis run up to Manikaran and Barshaini and down to Jari and Bhuntar. For Katagla, get off at Parvati Kuteer and walk down to the wooden bridge.

### When to come

October to June is the pleasant stretch; March to May is best for treks. Snow comes from late December to February and closes the upper valley some days. July is the wettest month: landslides close roads, so keep a spare day.

### The river

The Parvati is fast and freezing all year, and it carries people away. Sit on the edge stones, never wade or swim, and keep children of any age off the wet rocks.

### Trek with company

Travellers have gone missing in this valley over the years. Trek with a friend or a local guide, tell the Zostel desk your route and when you'll be back, and keep to the trail.

### Money and network

Carry some cash for the villages and the trails; in town most places take UPI, as our Zostels do. The network and the power drop in heavy rain and snow, so keep a battery charged.

### The villages' rules

These are farming villages with their own gods: keep your voice down in the lanes, ask before photographing people or temples, don't touch a shrine, and keep off the fields.

### Leave no trace

Everything you carry up, carry down: wrappers, bottles, batteries. Refill your bottle at the Zostel instead of buying plastic, and keep the river clean.



## The stops

**2 Kasol's main road** — Look for woollen caps, Kullu shawls (look for the GI label) and trekking gear to rent

**1 Kasol bus stand** — Look for the Himachal buses up the valley to Manikaran and Barshaini

**4 Kasol Nature Park** — Look for riverview gazebos, treehouses and the herb garden

**5 The footbridge to Chalal** — Look for the Parvati upstream, from the middle of the bridge

**6 The Parvati at Kasol** — Look for flat edge stones to sit on, and the roar you'll hear all the way

**9 The pine woods by the river** — Look for morning light through the pines over the river

**10 Chalal** — Look for old Himachali village life: houses, fields and quiet lanes

Kanawar WLS

© OpenStreetMap contributors, data 2026-10-13

## 5 minutes of history

### Legend
**Parvati's lost earring**
Shiva and Parvati are said to have spent 1,100 years in this valley. When Parvati lost an earring in the water, the serpent Shesha hissed, the springs boiled up, and jewels rose with them: Manikaran, the jewel's town.

### Legend
**Manu after the flood**
Hindu tradition says Manu began human life again at Manikaran after the great flood, which makes the springs holy to the valley.

### 16th c.
**Guru Nanak's langar**
Sikh tradition holds that Guru Nanak came to Manikaran with Bhai Mardana on his travels, and that a hot spring rose to cook their langar. A gurdwara marks the spot, its food still cooked with the springs.

### 1637
**A god for king**
Raja Jagat Singh begins his reign over Kullu. He moves the capital from Naggar to Sultanpur, today's Kullu, and installs Raghunath as the valley's ruling god; Manikaran's Ram temple is attributed to him.

### 1820
**A traveller from far away**
William Moorcroft, the East India Company's horse-buyer bound for Central Asia, passes through Kullu: one of the first Europeans to reach these valleys.

### 1846
**From the Sikhs to the British**
Kullu, a Sikh possession since 1839, passes to the British by the Treaty of Lahore and becomes a subdivision of Kangra district in Punjab.

### 1905
**The springs go quiet**
The Kangra earthquake shakes the valley. Manikaran's springs, said to have shot up as fountains before it, settle down, and the Shiva temple is left with a tilt it keeps today.

### 1909
**Trout in the rivers**
The British bring trout to Himachal's rivers for game fishing. The valley's kitchens have served it ever since.

### 1954
**Kanawar protected**
The forests above Kasol up the Garahan nala become the Kanawar Wildlife Sanctuary, 107 sq km of deodar and fir, home to the Himalayan tahr.

### Since 2010
**From hamlet to base**
Kasol, long a quiet stop for foreign backpackers, fills with travellers from across India; guesthouses and cafes line the valley road and the treks fan out from here.

### Today
**Zostel by the river**
Two Zostels stand in the valley at Kasol, one in Sosan by the town and one among the pines at Katagla, with Zostel Pulga up at the road's end.



## Talk like a local

**Namaste**
Hello (Hindi, understood by all)
*nuh-mus-tay*

**Khara**
Good
*khuh-raa*

**Ho / Naain**
Yes / No
*ho / naa-een*

**Ki?**
What?
*kee*

**Paani**
Water
*paa-nee*

**Ghor**
House, home
*ghor*

**Ujjhe / Bunhe**
Up / Down
*ooj-jhay / boon-hay*

**Nala**
A stream: Garahan nala, Tosh nala
*naa-laa*

**Devta**
A village god
*dayv-taa*

**Hau nosha sa**
I'm going
*haun no-shaa saa*

## Eat like the Parvati valley

*The valley eats warm: steamed siddu with ghee, trout from cold water, a thali of madra and rajma, momos by the plate, and the bakes Kasol's cafes are known for. And at Manikaran, a free meal cooked with the earth's own heat.*

**11 The langar, Manikaran Sahib.** Free for anyone who sits down in the row: dal, rice and roti, cooked partly with the hot springs.

**Moon Dance Cafe & German Bakery.** Waffles, crepes, pancakes and cakes from the bakery, strong coffee, a garden to sit in.

**Evergreen Cafe.** Indian, Chinese, Mexican and Italian, with shakshuka and hummus on the menu.

**Bhoj Cafe.** One of Kasol's oldest cafes: Indian food, and a big breakfast before the bus up the valley.

**Riverview Cafe.** A continental menu at tables right beside the crashing Parvati.

## Dishes to hunt down

**Siddu.** Steamed wheat bread stuffed with poppy seed and walnut or spiced potato, torn open hot with ghee.

**Trout.** In Himachal's rivers since 1909: tawa-fried, grilled or curried with red rice.

**Madra.** Chickpeas slow-cooked in yoghurt: the heart of a dham, and of a simple thali.

**Momos and thukpa.** Dumplings by the plate and noodle soup by the bowl, for cold evenings.

**Bakes.** Apple pie, cinnamon rolls, waffles and crepes from Kasol's bakeries, with strong coffee.

## Got a day to spare?

**11 Manikaran on foot.** About an hour's walk up the valley from Kasol, or a short drive: the springs, the gurdwara, the langar and the temples, and a bus back if your legs say so.

**16 Kheerganga.** From Barshaini about 12 km up to a meadow and its hot pool; five to seven hours up, by Zostel's guide.

**14 Tosh.** Twenty minutes by road above Barshaini, or an hour and a half on foot: a village stacked up its slope, and Kutla close by.

**17 Pulga, Tulga, Kalga.** An hour's hike from Barshaini to Pulga, then 650 m to Tulga and 850 m more to Kalga. Zostel Pulga is there for the night.

**18 Grahan.** From the Old Kasol bridge about 8 km up a side valley, three to four hours one way; a shared cab takes the first part.

**Banjara waterfall.** Zostel's own Kasol map marks it as a hiking adventure out of town: go with someone who knows the path, and keep off the wet rock.

**13 Rasol.** About three and a half hours up from Kasol, strenuous and rewarding, to a village above the valley.

## The valley from here

*Kasol sits midway up the Parvati, so the valley's homes are a ride away: up the road to Pulga, down to Bhuntar for Manali and the tunnel, or south past Aut to the Tirthan, the Sainj and Jalori.*

**Zostel Pulga.** 19 km, about an hour by road, by the Parvati valley road. Up the valley past Manikaran to the road's end at Barshaini, then a short climb: painted wooden houses, apple orchards and the Fairy Forest from the door.

**Zostel Dobhi (Manali).** 59 km, about 2½ hours by road, by Bhuntar. Down to Bhuntar and up the Beas: our quiet home in the Fojal valley, 20 km before Manali and 9 km from Naggar.

**Zostel Homes Tirthan (Gushaini).** 76 km, about 3 hours by road, by Aut (for Banjar and Sainj). A few steps from the Tirthan river and its trout, in Gushaini, the gateway to the Great Himalayan National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Zostel Shangarh.** 80 km, about 3 hours by road, by Aut (for Banjar and Sainj). Up the Sainj valley to a meadow locals hold sacred, the Shangchul Mahadev temple at its edge and the Great Himalayan National Park all round. Then count stars.

**Zostel Shoja (Jibhi).** 86 km, about 3½ hours by road, by Aut (for Banjar and Sainj). On the winding road to Jalori Pass, 5 km below it. Walk on from the pass to Serolsar lake or Raghupur Fort, then come home to the view.

**Zostel Homes Gadagushaini (Jibhi).** 107 km, about 4½ hours by road, by Aut (for Banjar and Sainj). Not Gushaini: Gadagushaini, in the Seraj valley. Slate-roofed cottages, deodar forest, wide meadows under snow peaks, and a stream that splits the village in two.

**Zostel Sissu.** 127 km, about 5 hours by road, by Bhuntar. Up the Beas past Manali and through the Atal Tunnel into Lahaul: a waterfall across the Chandra and glaciers all round.

## The gods of the valley

**11 Shiva and Parvati's valley.** The river carries the goddess's name, and Manikaran's springs her lost jewel; the couple are said to have lived here 1,100 years.

**11 Raghunath, the valley's king.** Raja Jagat Singh made Raghunath Kullu's ruling god; at Manikaran his temple stands beside the gurdwara.

**11 The temple the earthquake tilted.** Manikaran's Shiva temple was damaged in the Kangra earthquake of 1905 and still leans; the valley's village gods visit it on set days.

**A god's household.** A devta rules with help: a kardar who manages its affairs, a gur through whom it speaks, a pujari, a storekeeper and its musicians. The state's records even count devtas as landowners.

**The rath and its faces.** On fair days a devta travels in its rath, a palanquin on men's shoulders dressed with mohras, the metal faces in which the god is said to abide. Watch from the side; never cut across its way.

## Festivals worth timing a trip for

**Kullu Dussehra (October).** From Vijayadashami, a week on Kullu's Dhalpur ground: Raghunath's chariot pulled through town, the valley's gods come to greet him.



## Kullvi, the valley's own tongue

**A Pahari language.** Kullvi, or Kullui, is a Western Pahari language; people often just call it Pahari or Himachali. In the 2011 census, 44 per cent of Kullu district named it their first language.

**Kullvi at home, Hindi at the counter.** Locals speak Kullvi among themselves; Hindi, Punjabi and English are what the tourism trade speaks. Open with a namaste, then try a word from this sheet.

**Takri, the old hand.** Kullvi was written in a local Takri script until the mid-20th century. After Himachal Pradesh was formed in 1948, Devanagari replaced Takri across the hills.

**The devta's words.** Gur, the god's medium; kardar, its manager; rath, its palanquin; mohra, its metal face. At any fair the dhol leads, and the long karnal horn sounds happy tidings.

## Peaks, passes and rivers

**6 The Parvati.** It rises from the Man Talai glacier below the Pin Parbati pass and runs past Kheerganga's and Manikaran's hot springs to meet the Beas at Bhuntar.

**The Pin Parbati pass.** At the valley's head, the old way over into Spiti; the trek to it starts beyond Pulga, on foot all the way.

**The Parvati glacier.** About 425 sq km of ice at the head of the valley, losing mass and retreating for decades.

**19 The Garahan nala.** The stream that comes down past Grahan to meet the Parvati at Kasol; its slopes are the Kanawar sanctuary.

**The dam at Pulga.** Past Barshaini, the Parvati hydel project's dam stands below Pulga; above it the valley is reached only on foot.

**Over 6,000 m.** From about 1,100 m at Bhuntar the valley climbs past 6,000 m at its head: Dibibokri Pyramid stands 6,400 m.

## Only in the Parvati valley

**11 Rice from the ground.** Manikaran's springs come up at 64 to 80 degrees beside the cold river: rice goes in raw in cloth bundles and comes up cooked. Watch, hands off.

**11 The earring legend.** Parvati lost an earring in the water; the serpent Shesha hissed, the springs boiled up, and jewels rose until the earthquake of 1905, the story goes.

**11 A free meal, cooked by the earth.** The gurdwara's langar feeds anyone who sits in the row, cooked partly with the springs' heat. Cover your head; offer to wash up.

**6 A river you only listen to.** The Parvati is fast and freezing all year: sit on its edge stones and let the roar be the show. Never wade or swim.

**A strip of stars.** On a clear night out of the lights, the valley walls frame the Milky Way; Zostel's own map sends you to Tosh for it.

**Songs, not noise.** Evenings are for a fire, a guitar and the day's trekking stories; the village wakes at dawn, so keep it down after the quiet hours.

## Kanawar's wild side

**19 Himalayan tahr.** The sanctuary above Kasol is known for its large population of tahr, wild goats of the cliffs.

**Musk deer, serow, goral.** Shy hoofed animals of the higher forest: you are lucky to see one, and luckier to see it twice.

**Black and brown bear.** Both Himalayan bears live in Kanawar's forests: trek with company, keep food packed away, and make noise on the trail.

**Snow leopard and blue sheep.** At the sanctuary's top, up to 5,000 m, far above any day walk from town.

**Birds by the path.** Black kite, hoopoe, the yellow-billed blue magpie, the verditer flycatcher and the long-tailed minivet.

**Deodar and fir.** The walk up the Garahan nala from Kasol climbs through dense deodar and fir forest.

## Wool and wood

**The Kullu shawl, GI No. 19.** Geometric bands at both ends, up to eight colours, in sheep wool or pashmina. It was among India's first Geographical Indications, No. 19, filed in December 2004. Look for the GI mark.

**The topi.** The round woollen Himachali cap with its coloured band: daily wear for many, a must at fairs and weddings. In Kullu's Nati, men add garlands of flowers.

**The pattu.** For fairs and the Nati, Kullu women wear the pattu, a one-piece woollen drape over the shirt, with traditional jewellery: chandrahaar, bumni, jhanjhar.

**Kath-kuni, built to bend.** Deodar and stone laid turn and turn about, no mortar and no nails, so walls flex in an earthquake. A saying gives deodar a thousand years in water, ten times that in air.

## Markets by what they sell

**2 Kasol's main road.** Trekking gear and rentals, woollen caps and shawls, jewellery, souvenirs of marble and granite.

**Caps and shawls.** The Himachali topi and the GI-tagged Kullu shawl: look for the tag.

## Kasol these days

**A base for treks.** Kasol is the start of the valley's treks: Kheerganga, Grahan, Rasol, Tosh and the villages at the road's end.

**Work from the hills.** Zostel tags Kasol for workations; the Katagla Zostel has a rooftop workspace.

**From backpackers to everyone.** Since about 2010 travellers from across India have outnumbered the long-staying foreigners, and the valley road has filled with guesthouses.

**Kullu's busy year.** In 2024 Kullu district was Himachal's most visited, with about 3.5 million arrivals: come off-season for the quiet.

**A rainy-season caution.** Monsoon rain and landslides cut the roads and the power some days: check with the Zostel before you set off in July and August.

## Good to know

**Kasol's height.** Kasol sits about 1,580 m above the sea, on the banks of the Parvati, roughly 30 km up the valley road from Bhuntar. Manikaran, a short way on, sits a little higher still.

**21 Where two rivers meet.** The Parvati ends its run at Bhuntar, about 10 km south of Kullu, where it pours into the Beas. The Parvati Valley begins right there and climbs east, past Kasol and Manikaran, towards the snows.

**Snow, maybe.** Snow is never promised in Kasol itself. The best chance runs from late December to February, and villages up the slopes, like Tosh, Pulga and Grahan, usually turn white before the main market does.

**11 Manikaran, a step up.** Manikaran lies about 4 km beyond Kasol and nearly 200 m higher, at about 1,760 m. The springs there burst out of the ground hot and under pressure, and their steam drifts over the temples and the gurdwara.

**11 Little or no sulphur.** Manikaran's springs are known for having little or no sulphur smell, unlike many hot springs; the water is described as slightly alkaline and fizzy with carbon dioxide.

**11 Bathing at Manikaran.** You can bathe in the spring water at Manikaran, in separate enclosed pools for men and women at the gurdwara and the Shiva temple. Water at the vents can burn, so it is cooled with river water first. Never touch a vent.

**11 Shrines side by side.** Manikaran's shrines stand close together: the gurdwara, the Shiva temple, the Ram temple and the Naina Bhagwati temple, a shrine to the goddess. Walk the lanes slowly.

**16 The pool at Kheerganga.** Kheerganga sits near 2,960 m, almost twice Kasol's height. At the top a hot spring fills Parvati Kund, a warm pool beside a small Shiva temple, with separate bathing areas for men and women.

**16 A river of kheer.** Kheerganga's name is usually read as 'river of kheer', the rice pudding, after the milky white look of the water that runs through the valley there.

**16 The snake waterfall.** On the Kheerganga trail, past Nakthan village, the Rudranag waterfall twists down the rock like a snake, which is said to give it its name. A small temple and a dhaba sit beside it.

**16 A park of its own.** Since 2010 the upper Parvati country around Kheerganga has been protected as Khirganga National Park, about 710 sq km. Wildlife boards have approved folding it into the Great Himalayan National Park next door.

**A World Heritage neighbour.** Over the ridges south of the Parvati lies the Great Himalayan National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2014. Its own website counts the Parvati among its four valleys.

**The pass at the top.** At the very head of the valley, the Pin Parvati Pass stands about 5,319 m up. The first recorded crossing was by a British official, Louis Dane, in 1884, though Spiti's shepherds had used it long before.

**Sar Pass starts here.** The Sar Pass trek starts right in Kasol, climbs through Grahan and the meadows above, and tops out around 4,200 m. 'Sar' means a lake: near the top, trekkers cross a frozen, lake-like stretch.

**14 Tosh and its glacier.** Tosh sits about 2,400 m up, on a slope above the Parvati's right bank. Meltwater from the Tosh glacier makes the Tosh river, which rushes past the village and feeds the Parvati below.

**15 Barshaini, end of the bus.** Barshaini is the valley's last big roadhead: buses and taxis from Bhuntar and Kasol end their run here, by the Tosh river's meeting with the Parvati. The paths to Pulga and Kheerganga, and the road on to Tosh, set off from it.

**10 Chalal: feet only.** No road goes to Chalal. You cross the Parvati on the footbridge in Kasol, then walk a riverside forest path, so the village stays free of cars and horns.

## Through town and over to Choj

**5.1 km · about 2.5 hours**

From the main road to the Nature Park by the river, then east along the valley road to the Choj footbridge, over the Parvati and up into the village. About half an hour, by Zostel's own map.

1 2 4 8 7





# QUESTS

*Dares for the brave and the curious. The map marks each with a star; tick them off as you go.*

**5 — Cross the Parvati on the footbridge.** Walk the footbridge in Kasol on the way to Chalal and stop dead centre. Count the boulders you can see from there; a dozen is cheating.

**11 — Watch rice cook in the ground.** At Manikaran, find the tanks where cloth bundles of rice hang in the spring. Watch one go in and come out. Hands off: the water runs at 64 to 80 degrees.

**11 — Eat the langar, then wash up.** Cover your head, sit in the row, eat what's served, then offer an hour in the kitchen or at the sinks.

**11 — Spot the temple the earthquake tilted.** Manikaran's Shiva temple has leaned since 1905. Stand back and line it up against a straight wall.

**6 — Find the bird that fans its tail.** Sit on the river's edge stones and wait for a small slate-blue bird that flicks a rusty tail: the plumbeous water redstart.

**9 — Spot a tail longer than its bird.** The yellow-billed blue magpie moves through the pines in noisy flocks, tails up. Count the flock.

**2 — Eat a siddu with ghee.** Steamed bread, stuffed, broken open hot with ghee poured in. Say khara: Kullvi for good.

**11 — Walk from Kasol to Manikaran.** About an hour up the valley on foot, the river beside you all the way. Tired legs? It's a short bus back.

**18 — Walk the 8 km to Grahan.** From the Old Kasol bridge, up a side valley to the village: three to four hours, the last 3 km steep. Start early and be down before dark.

**17 — Collect Pulga, Tulga and Kalga in one walk.** From Pulga, about 650 m to Tulga, then 850 m more to Kalga. Three villages before your chai goes cold.

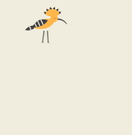
**16 — Earn the hot pool.** Walk up from Barshaini past the Rudranag waterfall to Kheerganga's meadow and soak your legs in the spring. Carry every wrapper down.

**6 — Read the river's stones.** Sit on an edge boulder and pick out the stones the Parvati has rolled smooth: grey, striped, speckled. Leave them where they lie.

**12 — Find the Milky Way over the valley.** On a clear, dry-season night, walk out of the lights, switch off your torch, wait ten minutes and look up between the valley walls.

**2 — Wear a topi the valley's way.** Buy a Himachali topi with a bright band: daily wear here, and a must at fairs and weddings.

**19 — Look for the tahr.** Walk up the Garahan nala with a guide and scan the cliffs: the Kanawar sanctuary is known for its Himalayan tahr.



# REACHING US

## Valley views on Kanawar Road

**Zostel Kasol.** Our home in Kasol, on Kanawar Road in Sosan village, a short walk from the private bus stand. Dorms where the treks get planned, private rooms with valley balconies, and a desk that knows every trail.

## White and teal in the pines

**Zostel Kasol (Katagla).** Our riverside home in Katagla among the pines: murals, a rooftop common room and a library corner. From the Parvati Kuteer stop, walk down to the river, cross the wooden bridge, turn right. The path is rough: go carefully.

# LOOK UP

## 5 — Over the Parvati, the Chalal way

**The footbridge to Chalal.** The Chalal walk crosses the Parvati here, in Kasol itself, then follows the far bank west. Stop in the middle: white water below, pines both sides, snow on the tops in season. Keep to one side; don't climb the railings.

## 7 — Quiet, half an hour away

**Choj.** Zostel's guide: a peaceful mountain retreat, a picturesque half-hour hike from Kasol, untouched nature round it and a few small cafes. The walk for when Chalal feels busy. Keep to the paths between the fields.

## 8 — The bridge over to Choj

**Choj bridge.** The footbridge over the Parvati to Choj, the quiet side of the valley: about half an hour on foot from Kasol, by Zostel's own map. Stop for the river below, then climb into the village.

## 10 — Old village, half an hour away

**Chalal.** Zostel's guide: a short half-hour hike over the Parvati and along its far bank under the pines, into a village with a peek at the old Himachali life and snow peaks above. Ask before you photograph anyone; carry your rubbish back.



# OUT BY THE RIVER

## 4 — Treehouses, trails, a herb garden

**Kasol Nature Park.** Zostel's own Kasol map sends you here for a slow afternoon: riverview gazebos, walking trails, treehouses and a herb garden. The easy green hour on a rest day. Check the day's timings at the gate; keep to the paths.

## 11 — A gurdwara cooking with the earth

**Manikaran.** A pilgrim town for Hindus and Sikhs: the gurdwara rising off the river in its springs' steam, rice cooking in the tanks, the langar for all, the stone Ram temple and a Shiva temple tilted in 1905. Cover your head; about an hour's walk from Kasol.

## 12 — The quiet end of the valley road

**Katagla.** The village down the valley where our riverside Zostel stands among rolling hills and woods. Its listing sends you on nature strolls and into the village's life. The paths are rough and unpaved: mind them after rain and dark.

## 6 — Sit on the stones, never in it

**The Parvati at Kasol.** A fast, cold, boulder-strewn river from a glacier below the Pin Parbati pass. Sit on an edge stone and listen. Stay out of the current: it is fast and freezing all year, and it carries people away.

## 9 — An evening walk under pines

**The pine woods by the river.** Between Katagla and Kasol the valley floor is pine wood: tall trunks, needles underfoot, the river heard between them. Walk it in the late afternoon light and look for the blue magpie's long tail.

## 19 — Tahr country above the town

**Kanawar Wildlife Sanctuary.** The slopes up the Garahan nala, protected since 1954: deodar and fir forest, known for its Himalayan tahr, with musk deer and black bear higher up. Walk in with a local guide and stay on the trail.

## 20 — Two valleys turn off here

**Aut and its tunnel.** Where two valleys begin. The highway to Banjar climbs the Tirthan to Jibhi, Shoja and Jalori, with Gushaini off to the side; the Sainj road leads to Shangarh. From Kasol: down to Bhuntar, south to Aut, and ask for the turn.

# WOOL AND GEAR

## 2 — One road, the whole town

**Kasol's main road.** The valley road through town, lined with flea shops and cafes, mostly run by local people: pyjamas, gemstone jewellery, souvenirs of marble and granite. Walk it end to end before you buy, and haggle with a smile.

# PACK UP, GO HIGHER

## 1 — Where every Kasol story starts

**Kasol bus stand.** The Delhi and Chandigarh buses stop here, and the valley's buses run west to Bhuntar and east to Manikaran and Barshaini. Shared taxis wait. Kasol is small enough to walk end to end; check the day's buses at the stand.






# Kasol

Every number is a tip around the map, in its colour. Every star is a quest.





*Namaste! Sit on the river stones, cross the bridge to Chalal, watch rice cook at Manikaran. Then go higher.*

NILJI WARAM

BIJLI WERAM

GARGI

Kalagala-Rahla path

Parvati River

GOJ

KASOL



From Manali, down the Beas and up the Parvati: this bridge is the picture everyone takes. I took three.

## Zostel Kasol

Kanawar Road, Sosan village: a short walk from Kasol's private bus stand.



From Tirthan, where the trout swim: the Parvati runs faster and colder. Sit on its stones; I approve.



From Gadagushaini: Chalal's wooden houses feel like home. Half an hour's walk, all of it lovely.



From Pulga, I'll say it: Kasol's bus stand is where my valley starts. A chai, then the last bus up to Barshaini.



From Sissu, through the tunnel and down the valleys: the Grahan trail starts here. That way, uphill.



From Shangarh: rice that cooks itself in the ground. The valley never stops surprising.

## Zostel Kasol (Katagla)

Get off at Parvati Kuteer; walk down to the river, cross the wooden bridge, turn right.

- Look Up
- Out by the River
- Siddu and Seconds
- Wool and Gear
- Songs and Stories
- Pack Up, Go Higher
- our two Zostels
- a quest (the list is round the map)
- Along the Parvati to Chalal, the walk (side A)
- circled: don't miss it
- a dot: its true place, where a number stands aside
- a drawing by a number: what is there
- water
- parks and gardens
- the hills

N

0 — 125 m — 250 m

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*Kanawar WLS*

## Around Kasol

The box is the big map. Edge pins point the way (not to scale).

- Tosh · 12.8 km ▶ 14
- Barshaini · 11.7 km ▶ 15
- Kheerganga · 18.3 km ▶ 16
- Pulga, Tulga and Kalga · 11.9 km ▶ 17
- 21 ◀ Bhuntar · 21.4 km
- 20 ◀ 31.5 km
- Grahan · 5.2 km ▶ 18
- 8.4 km ▶ 19

## 3 — The Grahan trail starts here

**Old Kasol bridge.** Zostel's guide starts the Grahan trek here: about 8 km one way up a side valley, cab-able for the first part, steep for the last 3 km. Start early, carry water and a warm layer, tell the desk where you're headed.

## 13 — Three and a half hours up

**Rasol.** Zostel's guide: a strenuous, rewarding hike of about three and a half hours from Kasol, through woods and over streams, to a small village above the valley. Start early, wear real shoes, carry water, be down before dark.

## 14 — A village stacked up the slope

**Tosh.** Wooden houses stacked up a steep slope above Barshaini, snow peaks at the valley's end. Zostel's guide: 20 minutes by road or an hour and a half's walk from Barshaini. Go easy on the climb if you're fresh from the plains.

## 15 — Where the road gives up

**Barshaini.** The end of the road up the Parvati, where the buses turn and the walking starts: Kheerganga, Tosh, and Pulga, Tulga and Kalga are each an hour or more on foot. Stock up on water before you set off.

## 16 — Hot water at the top of the trek

**Kheerganga.** From Barshaini about 12 km up, past the Rudranag waterfall, to a meadow with a hot spring, a stone pool and a small temple. Zostel's guide: beginner-friendly, five to seven hours up. Start early; carry every wrapper back.

## 17 — Three villages, one hike

**Pulga, Tulga and Kalga.** An hour's hike from Barshaini to Pulga, with Tulga and Kalga a short walk beyond: painted wooden houses, apple orchards and the Fairy Forest. Pulga has a Zostel of its own: make the hike a night, or a week.

## 18 — A village at the top of the trail

**Grahan.** The village at the end of the trail from the Old Kasol bridge: about 8 km up a side valley to wooden houses and terraces. Three to four hours up, the last 3 km steep. Some stay a night and walk down at sunrise.

## 21 — Airport, junction, and the way in

**Bhuntar.** Where the Parvati meets the Beas: the valley's airport and the junction for the Kasol road. About 30 to 40 km and an hour and a half to Zostel Kasol by cab; buses too. Check the road in the monsoon.