

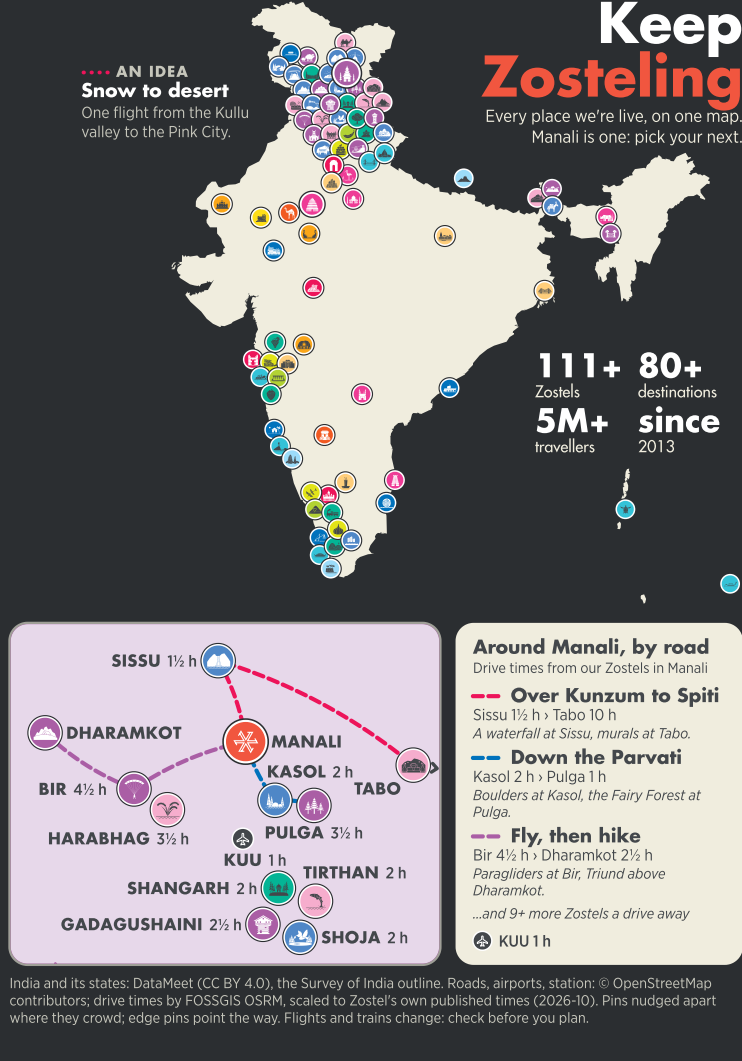
MANALI

a map made by Zostel
for young travellers
FREE MAP • HIMACHAL PRADESH



LIVE IT. NOW

ZOSTEL



Namaste, Manali!

Namaste! We're Manali's Zobus, and this is the top of our valley: where the Beas comes down cold off Rohtang, the deodars stand as tall as the temple in their middle, and a goddess keeps her house in the woods. The town comes with a village across each stream: Old Manali's orchards and cafes across the Manalsu, Vashisht's hot springs across the Beas, the Mall's bazaar in between. Eat siddu with ghee, walk to a waterfall before lunch, learn three words of Kullui and count a temple's roofs twice. Then go higher: under the pass to Lahaul, up to the snow. Come home to one of our three roofs with stories.

Every number is a tip on the map overleaf, in the colour of its kind: Look Up Out in the Valley Siddu and Secondos Wool and Wares Nati and Nights Pack Up, Go Higher. A drawing beside a line shows what you will find there:

Stay with us in Manali

Four Zostels: two in Old Manali across the Manalsu, one in Vashisht across the Beas, and Dobhi, 20 km down the valley towards the airport.

Zostel Old Manali
Our first in Manali, in Old Manali's lanes among apple orchards, with the Garden Café. Park by Drifter's Café and walk about 150 m.

Zostel Old Manali (Goshal Road)
Old Manali's newest, off Goshal Road, with peaks out of the window and a bonfire by night. Cars park at the Clubhouse while the road is repaired.

Zostel Manali (Vashisht)
A minute from Vashisht's hot springs, with a sunny front yard and valley balconies. Park at Shiva Parking and walk about 100 m.

Zostel Dobhi (Manali)
Twenty kilometres before town in the quiet Fojal valley, 9 km from Naggar, and the closest of us to the airport.

Cold, height and weather
Manali sits at about 2,050 m, Rohtang near 4,000. Weather turns fast in the valley: a storm or sudden snow can make a warm day cold in minutes. Bring woollens even in summer, a scarf for the evenings, and go up slowly if you go high.

Temples and hot water
Hadimba, Manu and Vashisht are working temples: dress for them, follow what the gate asks, and keep your camera down where it says so. Vashisht's hot springs are sacred to the village and have separate baths for men and women.

5 minutes of history

Legend
Manu's landing
Hindu tradition says Manu, the first man, stepped off his ark here after the great flood and began human life again. The town's name is read as Manu-alaya, Manu's home, and Old Manali keeps a temple to him.

c. 1460
Kings at Naggar
Raja Sidh Singh builds the castle at Naggar, downriver from Manali, and for two centuries it is the seat of the kings of Kullu.

1553
A temple in the deodars
Raja Bahadur Singh raises a temple to Hadimba over a rock in the Dhungri forest: three square roofs of timber tiles and a fourth, a brass cone, 24 m high.

1650s
A god for king
Raja Jagat Singh moves the capital from Naggar to Sultantpur, today's Kullu, and installs Raghunath on the throne as the valley's ruling god. Kullu's Dussehra begins with him.

1846
The British valley
After Ranjit Singh's invasion of 1839, the Sikhs cede Kullu to the British, and it becomes a tehsil of Kangra district.

c. 1875
A captain's apples
Captain A. T. Banon, retired, comes to Kullu and settles at Manali, his friend Captain Lee at Bhandrol. Banon is among Manali's first apple growers; their families still own the orchard estates.

1970s
Travellers move in
Backpackers from abroad rent village houses in the old village for months. A new town grows by the Mall, and the village becomes Old Manali.

1989
The road to Leh
The Manal-Leh road, built by the Border Roads Organisation from 1964, becomes Ladakh's second way in, and foreign travellers are allowed on it.



Festivals worth timing a trip for

Winter Carnival (first week of January). Since 1977: a parade down the Mall, folk dance and song from the valley and beyond, five days of it in the cold.

23 Phagli (late winter). The upper valley's masked festival: villages, Old Manali among them, dance in carved wooden masks to win winter out.

12 Dhungri fair (mid-May). Hadimba's birthday: three days by her temple, the village gods carried in on palanquins; Manu's among them from Old Manali.

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. In 2026 it starts on 20 October.

A god's household. A devta rules with help: a kardar who manages its affairs, a gur through whom it speaks in trance, a putari, 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 draped with mohras, the metal faces in which the god is said to abide. Watch from the side; never cut across its way.

22 Manu of Old Manali. Manu Rishi is listed among Hadimba's companion gods. Her spring fair at Dhungri brings the villages' gods in on palanquins; on its fourth day, the fair moves to Manu's temple in Old Manali.

26 The sage of the hot springs. Vashisht is a village devta too, with a slanting rath and eleven mohras. His temple was renovated in 1981, and on its feast days the village cooks klichidi and kheer.

Nine quiet villages. From Makar Sankranti, nine villages up the valley, Goshal among them, go quiet for 42 days: no entertainment, no farming, no apple pruning, the temple shut. Gautam Rishi is away at the gods' council.

Jamlu, the one apart. Malana's god, held a little apart by the valley's other gods. The state's list of Manali's devtas still counts a dozen Jamlus; one, the story goes, came from Malana and settled at Jaundi.



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

Practical tips

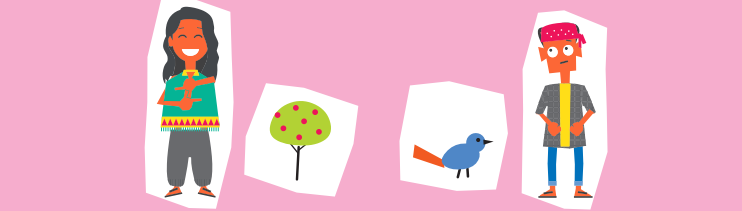
Getting in
Most people come by road: Volvo and deluxe buses run overnight from Delhi and Chandigarh to the Manali bus stand. The airport is at Bhuntar, about 50 km south, with taxis and buses into town. The nearest big railway stations are Chandigarh and Patna; the last of the way is always by road.

Getting around
Walk. Old Manali, Hadimba and the Mall are joined by footpaths through the deodars, and the last stretch to most guesthouses is on foot anyway. Autos and taxis wait at the bus stand for Old Manali and for Vashisht, across the Beas. For Solang, the tunnel and Lahaul, it's a taxi or a motorbike. Snow and ice change every road in winter: ask at our desk before you ride.

When to come
March to June is mild and green, the season for walks and treks. July to September is the monsoon; fewer people, lush hills, and landscapes that can close roads, so keep a spare day. Snow falls mostly from December to early March; winter nights go well below zero. October and November are clear and cold.

Rohtang and the tunnel
Since the Atal Tunnel opened, Lahaul is a day trip, winter included. Rohtang itself is different: a tourist vehicle needs an online permit from the state for a one-day return, there is a daily cap, and the permits go fast in season. The pass road is open roughly May to November. Book a taxi that already holds a permit, or take the tunnel instead.

Money
Town has ATMs, and one stands by the lane to our Vashisht home, but carry cash before you head for the high valleys, where machines are fewer. The best things here are free: the deodar walk to Hadimba, Old Manali's lanes, the Beas bank, the path to Jogini falls.



2020
Under the pass
On 3 October the Atal Tunnel opens: 9.02 km under the Rohtang, Lahaul in about two hours instead of five or six, and in winter too.

2023
The river moves
On 9 July the Beas changes course at Manali's Aloo Ground and takes long stretches of the Kullu road with it. In August 2025 the Manalsu takes Old Manali's bridge, and a Bailey bridge is built to replace it.

Talk like a local

Namaste
Hello (Hindi, understood by all)
nah-mas-tay

Khara
Good
khuh-rah

Ho / Naain
Yes / No
ho / naa-eeen

Ki?
What?
kee

Kun?
Who?
koon

Paani
Water
paa-nee



Ghor
House, home
ghor
 Ujijhe / Bunhe
Up / Down
ooj-jihay / boon-hay
 Dhiara
The sun
dhie-aa-rah
 Hau nosha sa
I'm going
haun no-shaa saa

Eat like a Manali local

The valley eats warm: steamed siddu with ghee, trout from cold water, Tibetan bowls from the families who settled here, and a cafe scene that has fed backpackers for decades. The old tables first, then the dishes to hunt down.

Johnson's Cafe. Over a decade of the valley's trout: baked with almond sauce, grilled, or curried with Himachali red rice.

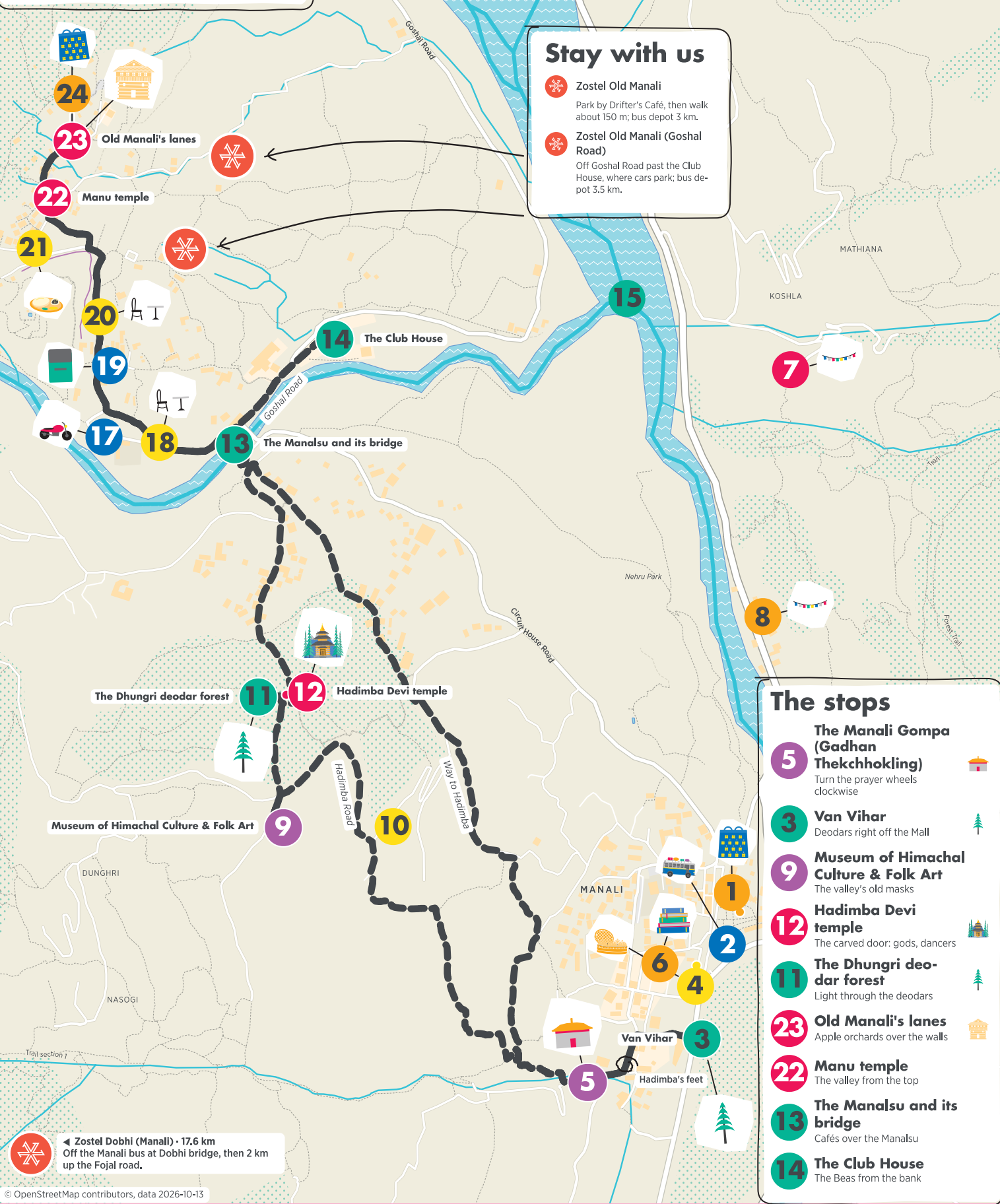
18 Dylan's Toasted & Roasted Coffee House. About twenty years on the Old Manali lane. Indian coffee and the cookie everyone talks about: ask for it warm.

20 Drifters' Cafe. Where the cars stop on Manu Temple Road. Eggs benedict, waffles and pancakes under maple syrup, on the roof if it's sunny.

Through the deodars to Old Manali and back over the Manalsu

6.9 km • about 4 hours with stops • 9 stops

A morning loop from the Mall: the gumpa at prayer time, Van Vihar's deodars, the museum, Ghatokacha's tree and Hadimba before the crowds, then the forest path to Old Manali and up to the Manu temple, back over the Manalsu past the Club House.



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4 Chopsticks. Opposite the bus stand. Momos and thukpa, or the gyakok: a Tibetan hot pot in copper, over a flame, for the table.

10 Il Forno. Wood-fired pizza in an old kathi-kuni house below Hadimba, said to date from 1860.

16 Rose Garden. Summer only, on the way up to Vashisht: an Italian family's wood-fired pizza and tiramisu.

Rasta Cafe. By the Vashisht temple: momos, reggae and plenty for vegans, looking north up the valley.

Kalzag Dhaba, Sethan. Up in Sethan: siddu, Maggi and chai with the whole village in front of you.

Martin's (Himalayan Sports Club). Sundays only, spring to November, in Shanag: grilled chicken people book ahead for, and smoked trout.

Dishes to hunt down

21 Siddu. A yeasted wheat bun stuffed with poppy seed, walnut or spiced lentils, steamed, torn open and drowned in ghee. Winter's favourite.

Trout. From the valley's cold streams and farms: roasted, steamed or in a curry, the Kullu-Manali way.

4 Momos. Tibetan dumplings of vegetables or minced meat, steamed and eaten with a hot chutney: Manali's favourite street snack.

4 Thukpa. A Tibetan noodle soup with vegetables or meat, made for cold evenings.

Kullu dham. The valley's feast, cooked by hereditary cooks for weddings and fairs and served on leaf plates. Not a menu dish: if you're invited, go.

Eat like the valley

Dham, the feast. Himachal's feast for weddings and fairs, cooked over firewood by hereditary Boti cooks and served on leaf plates to guests sitting on the floor. Every valley has its own; if you're invited, go.

Madra, beans or chickpeas slow-cooked in yoghurt in a big brass pot over a low fire: the heart of every Himachali dham, and on simple tables in the Kullu valley too.

Mittha. The dham's last course: sweet rice, rich with raisins and dry fruit. Leave room.

Rajma-chawal. Kidney beans and rice: the simple, seasonal plate of the valley's villages (Shangari's, for one), with madra and siddu beside it.

Trout, since 1909. The British brought trout to Himachal's rivers in 1909 for game fishing. Brown trout still swim the Beas; Kullu-Manali cooks it roasted, steamed or in a curry.

Kodra and buckwheat. Hill grains: kodra, a millet, still goes into rotis in Kullu village kitchens, and buckwheat grows in the district, harvested from July to October.

Hanuman Tibba and Friendship Peak. West above Solang: Hanuman Tibba, 5,982 m, a steep pyramid and the Dhauladhar's highest. Friendship Peak, 5,289 m, is a first summit for many mountaineers.

Only in Manali

23 An apple tree per family. Zostel's favourite Manali fact: every local family is said to own at least one apple tree. In season, cherry, apple, peach and apricot blossom paint the town.

12 The goddess who wouldn't move. After a fire, people wanted to rebuild Hadimba's temple somewhere else. The goddess refused, the story goes, so in 1553 it went up again over the same great rock.

25 The cord-breaker. The sage Vashisht, the story goes, tied himself with cords and leapt into the river. It broke them and saved him; he named it Vipasha, cord-breaker, and settled here.

When the gods said no. In 2006 the valley's gods were called to a grand council at Naggar over a giant ski resort planned above Manali. Their refusal, and the villages' protests, sank it.

34 A goddess for the weather. At Jagatsukh, the old capital, Sandhya Gayatri is said to bring rain and stop it at will. Her feasts serve kheer, kichdi and rice-flour bread.

Got a day to spare?

Solang valley. An open meadow ringed by deodar and peaks, about 14 km up the valley: skiing in winter, paragliding, zorbing and a gondola from May; the base for Patalsu and Hanuman Tibba. Go early; fly only with a registered operator.

Gulaba. Meadows past Kothi on the Rohtang road: the Bhruig lake trail starts here and paragliders fly towards Solang. In heavy snow the road stops at its barrier. Picnic, watch the stars; take your rubbish down.

The valley from here

Manali sits at the top of the valley, so every trip to our homes nearby starts here. North through the mountain to Lahaul, or down the valley for the Parvati, the Tirthan and the Saini.

Zostel Sissu. 49 km, about 1½ hours by road, by the Atal Tunnel. Out of the Atal Tunnel into Lahaul: a waterfall across the Chandra, potato and cauliflower fields, glaciers all round, and the road on to Spiti and Ladakh.

Zostel Kasol. 75 km, about 3 hours by road, by Bhuntar and the Parvati valley road. Hop the boulders and hear the Parvati roar. The valley's walks start here. Chahal half an hour away on foot, Manikaran's hot springs about an hour.



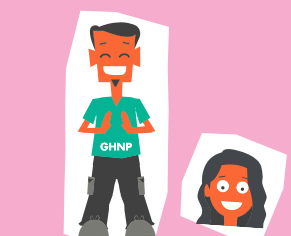
Zostel Pulga. 95 km, about 4 hours by road, by Bhuntar and the Parvati valley road. Twenty kilometres past Kasol: painted wooden houses, apple orchards and old deodars. Walk into the Fairy Forest: from the deodar, then on to Tulga and Kalga.

Zostel Homes Tirthan (Gushaini). 95 km, about 4 hours by road, by Aut (for Banjar and Saini). 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 Shanghar. 99 km, about 4 hours by road, by Aut (for Banjar and Saini). Up the Saini valley to a meadow locals hold sacred, the Shengchal Mahadev temple at its edge and the Great Himalayan National Park all round. Then count stars.

Zostel Shoja (Jibhi). 105 km, about 4½ hours by road, by Aut (for Banjar and Saini). 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). 126 km, about 5 hours by road, by Aut (for Banjar and Saini). 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.



Manali these days

A tunnel under the pass, a river that moved, and a village bridge built again.

41 Under the Rohtang. Since October 2020 the Atal Tunnel takes the road 9 km under the pass: Sissu in about two hours, all year.

The Beas, rerouted. In July 2023 the river cut a new course through the Aloo Ground and took stretches of the Kullu road. The road is back in use.

13 Old Manali's bridge. The Manalsu took the old bridge in August 2025: a Bailey bridge replaced it, and a permanent one is planned.

29 Rohtang by permit. Tourist cars and taxis go up with an online permit, a one-day return, under a daily cap.

Vashisht to Jogini falls

1.5 km • about 2 hours
A minute from Zostel Manali (Vashisht) to the springs and temples, then up through the village, the orchards and the pines to Jogini falls and its shrine: half an hour to an hour up. Picnic, come back down, soak in the springs.



★ QUESTS

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

12★

Count Hadimba's roofs. Stand back in the deodars and count. Three square roofs of timber tiles, and a brass cone on top. Is it three or four? Argue it out on the walk down.

12★

Find her son's tree. A short walk from Hadimba's temple, her son Ghatokacha has an open-air shrine at the foot of a great tree. Find it, then look up.

27★

Feel water the mountain warmed. At Vashisht the springs come up hot beside the temples. Use the bath that's yours (men's and women's are separate) and come out pink.

11★

Spot a tail longer than its bird. Yellow-billed blue magpies move through the deodars in noisy parties of seven or eight, tails held high. Count the party.

25★

Eat a siddu with ghee. Steamed wheat bread, stuffed, broken open hot with ghee poured in. Zostel's own Vashisht map asks if you tried it. Answer yes.

22★

Visit the man the town is named for. Climb Old Manali's lane to the Manu Temple. Manali, the story goes, is Manu-alaya: Manu's home. The valley view is the reward.

42★

Walk to Jogini falls. From Vashisht, through orchards and forest, to a fall that drops about 150 feet in tiers, with a small shrine at its foot.

23★

Count a wall's layers. Find an old kath-kuni house: deodar beams and dry stone laid turn and turn about, no mortar. Count the layers from the ground to the gallery.

24★

Call something 'khara'. Khara is Kuluvi for good. Try it on a siddu, a shawl or the view, and see who smiles.

15★

Hear the Beas before you see it. Take a forest path down to the river and listen: the rush arrives first. Sit on a rock, dip your feet if you dare. It is snow, recently.

41★

Walk an hour to Sissu's waterfall. At Sissu, through the tunnel: take the trail from Zostel Sissu to the foot of the falls and stop there: going closer, and diving, are not allowed, for religious reasons.

32★

Walk from Kasol to Manikaran. Down the valley at Kasol about an hour on foot up the valley to the hot springs, which run at 64 to 80 °C: feel the steam and keep your hands out. Tired legs? It is a short drive back.

32★

Collect Pulga, Tulga and Kalga in one walk. Beyond Kasol, at the road's end: from Pulga, about 650 m to Tulga, then 850 m more to Kalga, on a trail few people take. Three villages before your chai goes cold.

35★

Find the lake a bird keeps clean. South past Aut, at Shoja: from Jabori Pass, walk a few kilometres through the forest to Serolsar. Not a leaf floats on it, and local say a little bird keeps it so. Look for one, leave none.

35★

Spot a trout in the Tirthan. South past Aut, at Tirthan: walk down to the river, a few steps from Zostel Homes Tirthan, and watch the clear water. Want to cast a line? You need permission from the local authorities: the team can help, and a guide comes with the gear.

35★

Stand in two districts at once. At Gadagushaini, beyond Aut: find the stream that runs through the village: one bank is Kullu district, the other Mandi. One foot on each side counts.

11★

A cedar wood older than the town. The Dhungi deodar forest. The cedar wood round Hadimba, Dhungi Van Vihar. Deodars close over the paths between the temple, the Mall side and Old Manali, and a bridge path climbs on into the wildlife sanctuary. Keep to the paths and carry your rubbish out.

13★

The torrent between new and old. The Manalsu and its bridge. The Beas's side torrent, down from the sanctuary, and the bridge that marks where the town ends and Old Manali begins. Cafes on its banks. Look upstream from the bridge: stay off the boulders, the current is stronger than it looks.

16★

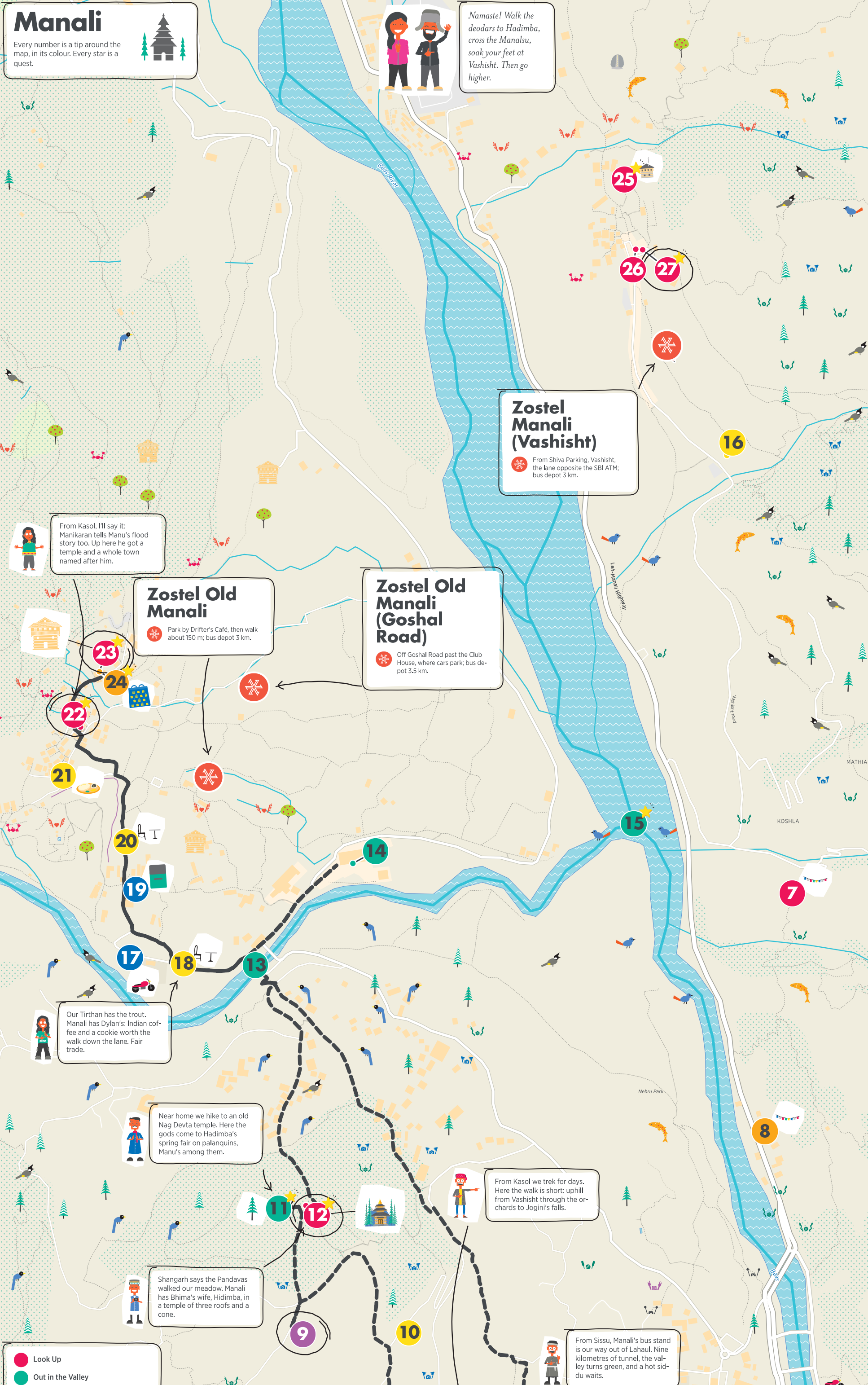
A summer-only Italian kitchen in Vashisht. Rose Garden. An Italian family's restaurant on the way up to Vashisht, open only from about the end of April to mid-October. Wood-fired pizza, mostly organic herbs and fruit, trismus and poached pears for after. An easy dinner after the hot springs.

18★

Coffee and cookies, two decades running. Dylan's Toasted & Roasted Coffee House. The Bob Dylan cafe, to everyone, for about twenty years. Coffee from Indian beans, a chocolate chip cookie people cross the valley for (ask for it warm), pancakes and cheesecake. A short walk down the lane from our Old Manali homes: shut one day a week.

Manali

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



● Look Up

● Out in the Valley

● Siddu and Seconds

● Wool and Wares

● Nati and Nights

● Pack Up, Go Higher

● our four Zostels

★ a quest (the list is round the map)

--- Through the deodars to Old Manali and back over the Manalsu, 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 at the edge: beyond the map, its way and distance

● water

● the hills

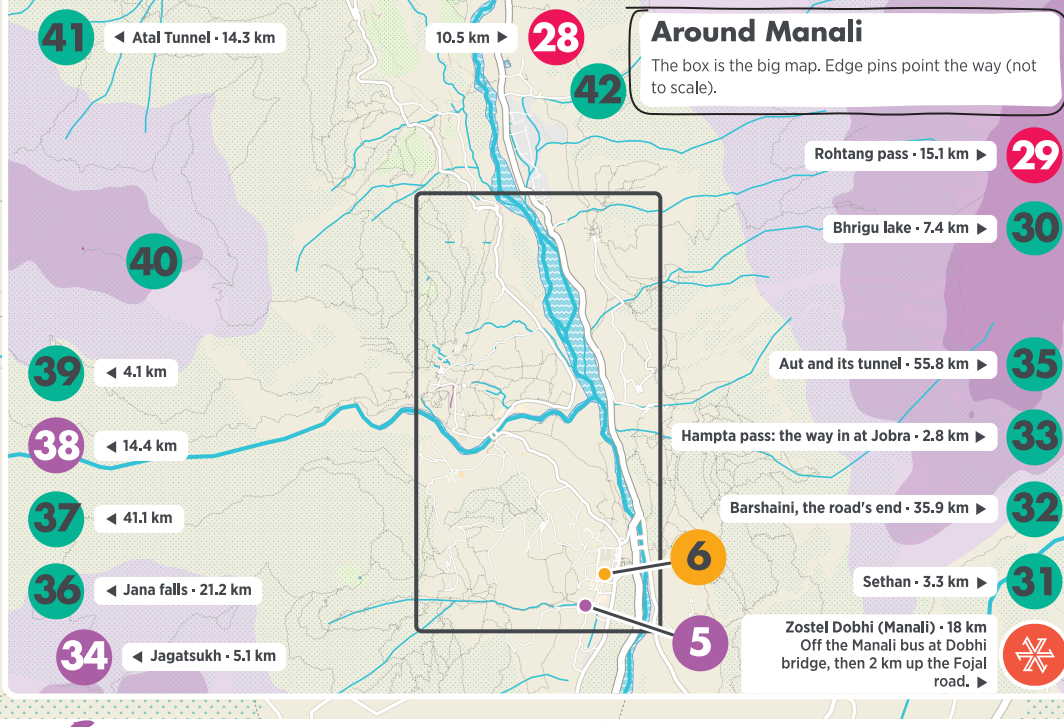
● a cliff

● bare rock

● orchards

0 100 m 200 m

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REACHING US

By Drifter's Café

Zostel Old Manali. Our first in Manali, in Old Manali's lanes among apple orchards, with the Garden Café. Park by Drifter's Café and walk about 150 m.

By Clubhouse

Zostel Old Manali (Goshal Road). Old Manali's newest, off Goshal Road, with peaks out of the window and a bonfire by night. Cars park at the Clubhouse while the road is repaired.

By Vashisht Temple

Zostel Manali (Vashisht). A minute from Vashisht's hot springs, with a sunny front yard and valley balconies. Park at Shiva Parking and walk about 100 m.

Zostel Dobhi (Manali)

Zostel Dobhi (Manali). Twenty kilometres before town in the quiet Fojal valley, 9 km from Naggar, and the closest of us to the airport.

LOOK UP

7 A second gompa, in the Tibetan market

Himalayan Nyingmapa Buddhist Monastery. The town's second gompa, among the stalls of the Tibetan market: Tibetan-style, calm, and a good place to sit for ten minutes. On Zostel's own Old Manali map. Clockwise round it, shoes off where asked. Check the day's timings at the gate.

12 Three roofs and a cone, tall as deodars

Hadimba Devi temple. Dhungi, as lo-caks call it, built in 1553 round a great rock in the deodar forest, its three shingle roofs and brass cone as tall as the trees. A living cave shrine to Hadimba, wife of Bhima. Shoes off, voice down; come early.

22 The temple the town is named for

Manu temple. At the top of Old Manali's lane, a temple of stone and wood under slate to the sage Manu, who in the old story stepped off his ark here after the flood. Manali is named for him. Come for the view too; shoes off.

23 Cross the bridge, the town changes

Old Manali's lanes. Over the Manalsu the town turns village: a lane of cafes and shops up to the Manu temple, and behind it old kath-kuni houses of deodar beam and dry stone under slate, with orchards between. Homes, not sets: look from the lane.

25 Across the river, a village of rooftops

Vashisht village. Across the Beas, three kilometres from town: a steep village of rooftop cafes, the hot springs and temples in its square, houses and orchards above. Zostel Manali (Vashisht) is a minute from the springs. The Jogini path starts at the top.

26 Two old temples across a square

The Vashisht and Rama temples. Beside the springs, two old stone temples face each other across the square: one to the sage Vashisht, named in the Rig Veda, one to Rama, with a Shiva temple close by. Working village temples: shoes off, no photos inside.

27 Sulphur water, straight out of the hill

Vashisht's hot springs. Sulphur springs run hot out of the hill into bathing tanks beside the temple, separate for men and women. Believed to heal; certainly the best thing after a cold walk.

from Jogini. A sacred bath, not a pool: bathe as locals do. Valuables stay home.

28 A roadside fall in birch and deodar

Rahala falls. About 16 km north, at the foot of the Rohtang climb, a fall tumbling out of birch and deodar beside the road; it freezes in deep winter. An easy stop. Pull fully off the road and keep off the wet rocks.

29 Where the green valley ends

Rohtang pass. At 3,980 metres, about 51 km up the hairpins, the pass between green Kullu and the dry valleys of Lahaul and Spiti. Shut by snow from about November to May; vehicles need an online permit. Take a warm layer and don't linger.

OUT IN THE VALLEY

3 Deodars and a boat, off the Mall

Van Vihar. A public garden of tall deodars just off the Mall, with a small lake and boats: about a kilometre and a half from Zostel Old Manali. The easy green start of the loop to Hadimba. Check the day's timings at the gate.

31 The snow village up the side valley

Sethan. A small high village up the Hamptha side valley: bouldering, paragliding, skiing and snowboarding when the snow comes, short walks like Pandu Ropa, igloos in deep winter. The road can close after snow; ask the desk first. Litter nothing.

32 The end of the Parvati road

Barshaini, the road's end. Bhuntar to Kasol, Manikaran's hot springs, then Barshaini, where the bus stops and the road gives up. Pulga is 1.5 km on foot or by cab; the Kheerganga trek starts here. The last stretch is rough.

33 Green Kullu to bare Lahaul, on foot

Hamptha pass: the way in at Jobra. A drive up from Prini to Jobra, then three to five days over the pass from green Kullu's pine and wildflowers to the bare high desert of Lahaul, under Deo Tibba and Indrasan. Fine for fit beginners with a registered team.

35 Two valleys turn off here

Aut and its tunnel. Where two valleys begin. The highway to Banjar climbs the Tirthan to Jibhi, Shoja and Jabori, with Gushaini off to the side; the Saini road leads to Shangharh. Coming from Manali, go through the tunnel and ask for the turn.

36 A waterfall and a village lunch

Jana falls. Past Naggar, about 35 km from Manali: a waterfall by the road at Jana village and two quieter ones beyond, wide valley views, and Himachali food at small stalls by the falls. Pair it with Naggar; ask locally for the upper path.

37 Where the Parvati meets the Beas

Bhuntar and the Kullu-Manali Airport. The valley's airport, 52 km south, where the Parvati joins the Beas. The Parvati valley road turns off here; buses for Barshaini leave from the bus stand. Every Zostel south of us gives its directions from Bhuntar.

39 A day's climb to a high meadow

Lamadugh meadow. The state's trekking portal calls it easy; a day, about seven hours up through Dhungi's deodars to a meadow at 3,018 m. Birds, big views, a night out if you camp. Carry food and water; be down before dark.

40 Find the gods' snow dome

Deo Tibba viewpoint. West of Old Manali, look across the Beas to Deo Tibba, 6,001 m, a dome of snow the valley calls the gods' hill, with Indrasan, Indra's seat, beside it. Come on a clear morning, before the clouds settle.

41 Under the Rohtang, into Lahaul

Atal Tunnel. Nine kilometres under the Rohtang, its south mouth about 25 km up the valley. Come out on the Chandra a few kilometres from Sissu, in Lahaul. In deep winter, a 4x4 and your booking confirmation.

42 A fall fall at the top of Vashisht

Jogini falls. Half an hour to an hour up from Vashisht, through orchards and pine, the valley opening behind you. The fall drops in tiers to a small shrine to Jogini Mata at its foot. The path narrows over drops: proper shoes, back before dark.

SIDDU AND SECONDS

4 Tibetan bowls across from the buses

Chopsticks. A Tibetan and Chinese kitchen opposite the bus stand: the first hot meal off many an overnight bus. Momos, thukpa, or for a group the gyasak, a Tibetan hot pot in a big copper vessel over a flame.

10 Pizza in an old timber house

Il Forno. In an apple orchard below Hadimba, an old kath-kuni house of deodar and stone (said to date from 1860) bakes wood-fired pizza. Iassagne and calzones, with greens from its own garden. The stop on the walk back through the deodars.

WOOL AND WARES

1 A small market with a bit of everything

Manu Market. Small busy and just off the Mall: books, clothes, shoes, crockery and pots, handloom and costume jewellery. The socks you forgot for the trek are here, and prices are generally fixed, a relief after the haggling on the Mall.

6 Trail reading behind the bus stand

Bookworm. A bookshop in the NAC market behind the bus stand, with travel writing and paperbacks that survive a rucksack. Pick up a mountain story for the long ride to Sissu or Kasol: it's the best use of the wait you'll have anyway.

8 Thangkas, turquoise and Tibetan everything

Tibetan Market. On the Mall side of town, near the Tibetan colony and its monastery: stalls on both sides of the street selling thangkas, prayer wheels, bamboo pipes, silver and turquoise, warm clothes. Calmer than the Mall. Walk the whole row first.

24 Hippie threads up the Old Manali lane

Old Manali market. Manu Temple Road, the lane through Old Manali, is also its market: loose cotton clothes, woollens, silver and bead jewellery, bags and souvenirs between the cafes. Browse on the way down, buy on the way back up.

NATI AND NIGHTS

5 Yellow roofs, prayer wheels, a quiet hall

The Manali Gompa (Gadhan Thekchokling). Near the Mall, built in the 1960s by Tibetan refugees: a yellow pagoda roof, white walls painted with the Buddha's life, a golden Buddha and prayer wheels inside. Walk round clockwise. Come at prayer time, morning or evening, and listen.

9 The valley's old life, room by room

Museum of Himachal Culture & Folk Art. Two minutes below Hadimba: pots, tools, carving, textiles, instruments, the masks of the village gods and models of how the valley's temples were built. A bit dusty; worth it straight after the temple. Check the day's timings at the gate.

34 The valley's first capital

Jagatsukh. Six kilometres down the left bank, Kullu's first capital before Naggar and Sultanpur: the Gauri Shankar temple to Shiva and the Gayatri temple among old village houses most people drive past. Stop for an hour; shoes off at the temples.

38 An old capital and a painter's house

Naggar: the castle and the Roerich estate. Down the left bank, 22 km: the old capital of the Kullu rajahs, with Raja Sidh Singh's stone-and-timber castle, which survived the 1905 earthquake, and up the hill the house of the painter Nicholas Roerich, his mountain canvases inside. Give it half a day.

PACK UP, GO HIGHER

2 Buses out: Sissu, Kasol, Leh

Manali bus stand. State buses from the bottom of the Mall. For Sissu, take the Keylong bus and get down after the Atal Tunnel; for Kasol, change at Bhuntar. Snow shuts the Keylong road some winter days; ask at the counter first.

17 Rent a motorbike and ride the valley

Motorbike rentals. Royal Enfields and smaller bikes from shops by the Old Manali bridge. In bringing a licence and ID, photograph every scratch, fuel is yours. Rohtang's two-wheeler rules change; ask before you plan it.

19 Book the Hamptha crossing in the village

Book the Hamptha Pass trek. The crossing from green Kullu to bare Lahaul: forest, flowers, glaciers, then desert. Treks start at Jobra and take a few days. Book in Old Manali or Vashisht; ask what's included and meet your guide before you pay.