

Three Mid-Range Days in Manali: Temples, Cafés and Snowy Adventure

Manali, Himachal Pradesh — The Valley of the Gods

A moderately paced three-day loop built around Manali's easy-to-reach culture (Hadimba and Vashisht temples, Old Manali's café lane) and one full adventure day at Solang Valley. It suits families with a mix of ages, since the first two days involve gentle walking and short village visits, while day three lets the more adventurous members try snow play or paragliding while others simply enjoy the mountain views.

Suits: Mid-range families and groups with a mix of ages, including grandparents for the in-town days and older kids or honeymooners for the Solang adventure day

What it costs, per person

Stay: Rs 7,800 · Food: Rs 2,350 · Local transport: Rs 1,250 · Tickets: Rs 3,950 · **Total: Rs 15,350**

Day 1 · Temple, Old Manali Cafés and Mall Road Lights

Getting oriented: temple culture, café charm and a market evening

09:00 Hadimba Devi Temple visit

A 500-year-old pagoda-style wooden temple set inside a cedar forest, dedicated to Hidimba from the Mahabharata. There's no entry fee, and the architecture and forest setting are the real draw rather than any ritual.

Hadimba Devi Temple, Log Huts area · 60 min · Rs 0 · Short walk from a Log Huts-area hotel, about 10 min, free

With family: A short uphill stretch on stone steps from the parking area; wooden doorways are low, so mind heads and knees for grandparents. No footwear allowed inside.

11:00 Old Manali village walk, cafés and Manu Temple

Cross the river to Old Manali's slower-paced lane of backpacker cafés, small shops and the wooden Manu Temple dedicated to the sage Manu. Good for a relaxed lunch and photographs rather than a formal sight.

Old Manali · 150 min · Rs 0 · Taxi, 15 min, approx 150 INR per person (or a 25-min walk if the whole group is comfortable with a mild incline)

With family: Cover knees and shoulders at Manu Temple. The lanes are narrow and get crowded with backpackers by afternoon, which is fine for older kids but less relaxed with toddlers or wheelchairs.

17:00 Mall Road evening stroll and shopping

Manali's flat, lit-up main market street for shawls, dry fruit and woollens, with restaurants lining both sides.

Mall Road, central Manali · 90 min · Rs 0 · Taxi, 10 min, approx 100 INR per person

With family: The easiest stretch in town for elderly members - flat, short and well lit. Bargain outside fixed-price shops; go before 8pm to avoid the weekend crush.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Simple hotel breakfast — Hotel dining room (Rs 150)

Lunch: Wood-fired pizza or momos — Old Manali café strip (Rs 350)

Dinner: Himachali or North Indian thali — Restaurant on Mall Road (Rs 300)

Where to stay

Snow Valley Resorts, Log Huts Area, near Hadimba Temple — Rs 2,600 a night. Close enough to walk to Hadimba Temple, quiet at night, and mountain-facing rooms that give mid-range comfort without a big spend.

Save a little: Walk the roughly 20 minutes between Old Manali and Mall Road instead of taking a taxi if the weather is dry and no one in the group struggles with a gentle slope; saves about 100 INR per person.

Day total, per person: Rs 3,650

Day 2 · Hot Springs, Waterfall Walk and a Himachali Fort

Village temples, a short trek and mountain architecture

08:30 Vashisht Temple & Hot Springs

A village 3 km from central Manali built around a temple said to be around 4,000 years old, alongside sulphur hot spring baths with separate sections for men and women. No entry fee for either.

Vashisht village · 90 min · Rs 0 · Taxi, 10 min, approx 100 INR per person

With family: Steep stone steps lead up to the temple and springs; take it slowly with elderly members. Carry a change of clothes if anyone wants to try the baths.

10:15 Jogini Waterfall walk

A moderately steep 4 km round-trip walk from Vashisht to a waterfall, a good taste of trekking without committing to a full-day trail.

Trailhead just above Vashisht village · 150 min · Rs 0 · Walk, 5 min from the temple to the trailhead, free

With family: The path gets slippery when wet and isn't stroller- or wheelchair-friendly; sturdy shoes are essential. Anyone unsteady on their feet could wait at a Vashisht café instead.

14:30 Naggar Castle visit

A 15th-century stone-and-wood Kathkooni castle built by Raja Sidh Singh of Kullu, now partly a heritage hotel, with a courtyard temple worth a look for Himachali architecture.

Naggar, about 20 km from Manali · 90 min · Rs 50 · Taxi, 45 min, approx 500 INR per person for a shared round trip

With family: Quieter than the in-town sights and a good sit-down stop for grandparents. Confirm the entry fee and closing time locally since both vary slightly by season.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Simple hotel breakfast — Hotel dining room (Rs 150)

Lunch: Dham-style thali with rajma, madra and sidu — Vashisht village dhaba (Rs 300)

Dinner: Simple North Indian dinner — Restaurant near Mall Road (Rs 300)

Where to stay

Snow Valley Resorts, Log Huts Area, near Hadimba Temple — Rs 2,600 a night. Same convenient base as Day 1, saving the hassle of changing hotels mid-trip.

Save a little: Ask your hotel to book the Vashisht-Jogini-Naggar route as one combined round trip rather than three separate short hops; drivers usually quote a lower total fare this way.

Day total, per person: Rs 4,000

Day 3 · A Day of Snow and Adventure at Solang

Adventure hub day trip with optional adrenaline add-ons

09:00 Travel to Solang Valley & cable car/gondola ride

Manali's adventure hub, about 14 km out, with a ropeway ride giving valley views without the adrenaline of paragliding.

Solang Valley · 60 min · Rs 400 · Taxi hired for the whole day (round trip), about 40 min each way, approx 400 INR per person total - agree the exact stops and price before starting

With family: Book through the taxi union stand or your hotel rather than an unaffiliated driver at Solang. Expect long queues for the gondola on winter weekends.

10:15 Snow play or zorbing

Depending on the season, either snow slopes for sledging and short ski lessons, or zorbing and other slope activities in warmer months.

Solang Valley slopes · 90 min · Rs 500

With family: Gear is rented on the spot from stalls; agree the price before wearing anything, since touts here are known to inflate rates for tourists and push extras like GoPro footage.

12:00 Optional tandem paragliding

A short tandem flight over the valley, run by licensed operators near the launch point.

Solang Valley launch point · 30 min · Rs 3,000

With family: Optional, priced roughly 2,500-3,500 INR per person depending on flight length. Not suitable for very young children, anyone with a heart or breathing condition, or those uneasy with heights - entirely fine to skip.

15:30 Return to Manali & farewell stroll on Mall Road

A relaxed close to the trip with last-minute shawl and dry fruit shopping before dinner.

Mall Road, central Manali · 90 min · Rs 0 · Included in the day's taxi hire, part of the round trip back into town

With family: A calm, flat stretch to end the day, easy on tired legs after the snow and drive.

Where to eat

Breakfast: Simple hotel breakfast — Hotel dining room (Rs 150)

Lunch: Maggi, momos or a full meal at a slope-side stall — Solang Valley café stalls (Rs 350)

Dinner: Farewell dinner — Restaurant on Mall Road (Rs 300)

Where to stay

Snow Valley Resorts, Log Huts Area, near Hadimba Temple — Rs 2,600 a night. Same base for the whole trip, a short drive from the Solang road out of town.

Save a little: Skip the optional paragliding (saves roughly 2,500-3,500 INR per person) and stick to the gondola ride and snow play if you want to keep the day closer to a mid-range budget.

Day total, per person: Rs 7,700

Pack for this trip

- Layered warm clothing even outside winter, since Solang and Vashisht can be noticeably cooler than the plains
- Sturdy closed shoes for the Jogini walk and the stone steps at Hadimba and Vashisht temples
- A pair of socks or slip-on shoes for temple visits where footwear must come off
- Sunglasses and sunscreen for snow glare at Solang
- A light rain jacket, since hill weather can turn quickly outside monsoon too
- Cash in small denominations for dhabas, temple donations and taxi fares

Stay safe

- The stone steps up to Hadimba Temple and at Vashisht can be slippery after rain or in winter; elderly members should take them slowly and use handrails where available
- The Jogini Waterfall trail is not suitable for toddlers in strollers, wheelchairs, or anyone with serious mobility issues
- At Solang, agree gear rental and photo/GoPro prices upfront with stalls before starting, as overcharging touts are common
- Old Manali's café lane gets loud and drink-heavy after dark, which families with young children may prefer to avoid in the evenings
- Avoid road travel to and around Manali during the monsoon months (roughly July-September) due to landslide risk

Local courtesies

- Cover knees and shoulders when visiting Manu Temple in Old Manali and the temple at Vashisht
- Remove footwear before entering any temple premises, including Hadimba Devi Temple
- Fixed taxi fares from the union stand are not meant to be haggled over; check the displayed chart instead
- Jain travellers should ask in advance for onion-garlic-free food, as few places are formally Jain-certified even though most can accommodate the request

If it rains

- Swap the Jogini Waterfall walk for extra time in Old Manali's covered cafés, since the trail gets slippery and less enjoyable when wet
- Mall Road's shops and restaurants are a reasonable rainy-day fallback since most have awnings or indoor seating
- Naggar Castle's restaurant section makes for a cosy indoor lunch stop if the Naggar visit coincides with rain
- On the Solang day, prioritise the gondola ride and skip open-air snow play or paragliding if conditions turn wet or windy