

Itinerary (Chhattisgarh Jungle Trek)

The Chhattisgarh Jungle Trek, a four-day journey through Guru Ghasidas National Park, unfolds like a story. Every day presents new landscapes, ancient wonders, and unique experiences. Here's a day-by-day breakdown of the trek itinerary, with detailed insights into each segment to help you visualize what this adventure entails and how to prepare.

Day 1: Arrival at Ramgarh Post and Trek to Turripani

- **Start Point:** Baikunthpur Road Station
- **End Point:** Turripani Campsite
- **Total Trek Distance:** 11 km
- **Duration:** Approximately 7–8 hours
- **Terrain:** Deciduous forests, rolling hills, scenic riverbeds

The first day marks the official beginning of the Chhattisgarh Jungle Trek. After an overnight train ride to Baikunthpur Road Station, you'll be picked up in the early morning by a designated vehicle that will transport you to Ramgarh Post, the trek's starting point. The 70-km journey from the station to Ramgarh takes around two hours and serves as a prelude to the scenic beauty that awaits. You'll pass through the bustling town of Sonhat before reaching the forest gate at Mendra Check Post, where the dense sal trees and a sense of wilderness begin to set the scene.

The trek itself commences at Ramgarh village, which lies just beyond the forest gates. Here, surrounded by sal trees and vibrant butterflies, trekkers are introduced to the mesmerizing Chhattisgarh landscape. The trek initially takes you through expansive deciduous forests, offering open views and an endless stretch of greenery. About halfway through the journey, you'll reach a dry riverbed, where a unique elliptical rock formation serves as a lunch spot. Adding a touch of thrill, this spot also lies in an elephant corridor, where trekkers can see the distinct pugmarks left by elephants as they move through the area.

In the second half of the day, the trek shifts to denser forest landscapes with more complex terrain. A gentle ascent leads to a vantage point with panoramic views of the National Park, a perfect opportunity for photography. The highlight of Day 1 is the Cheramada caves, known for their 15,000-year-old Heliographs and unique rock textures that resemble tiger stripes. After exploring the caves, you'll proceed toward Turripani, a serene campsite near a small pond, where you'll pitch tents and settle in for a peaceful night.

Day 2: Trek from Turripani to Tadiyabaan

- **Start Point:** Turripani
- **End Point:** Tadiyabaan Lake Campsite
- **Total Trek Distance:** 7 km
- **Duration:** Approximately 4 hours
- **Terrain:** Mixed forests, gentle slopes, lake views

The second day's journey is shorter and less demanding, but no less captivating. Leaving the Turripani campsite, the trail takes you through rolling terrain marked by red soil and sparse sal forests. As you walk through this part of the jungle, you'll notice the remarkable openness of the Chhattisgarh landscape, which allows you to see across surprisingly long distances. Along the way, trekkers pass various types of trees and undergrowth, giving a sense of the jungle's biodiversity.

About halfway through the trek, you'll encounter Raja Pahad, a prominent hill covered with trees. This landmark is significant for its natural beauty and offers an excellent vantage point. Following the trail for another few kilometers, you'll reach Tadiyabaan Lake, a large body of water with a picturesque setting. Trekkers often find this part of the trek refreshing, as the forest opens to reveal the vast lake, where the soft sunlight reflects off the water, creating an almost magical atmosphere.

The Tadiyabaan campsite lies along the banks of the lake, where trekkers can relax and enjoy the serenity of the surroundings. The lake itself serves as the primary water source for the night, and the campsite's location offers a breathtaking view of the water, making it a tranquil end to a memorable day. This campsite is an ideal spot for stargazing, as the absence of artificial lights allows the night sky to illuminate with countless stars, creating an unforgettable camping experience.

Day 3: Trek from Tadiyabaan to Pandupara

- **Start Point:** Tadiyabaan Lake
- **End Point:** Pandupara Riverbed Campsite
- **Total Trek Distance:** 10 km
- **Duration:** Approximately 7–8 hours
- **Terrain:** Dense forests, steep ascents, boulder formations, and riverbeds

The third day of the trek is both the most challenging and the most rewarding. Known for its tough terrain and steeper climbs, this day pushes trekkers to experience the

jungle's raw intensity and diverse landscapes. The day starts with a gentle trail around Tadiyabaan Lake before moving onto a steep ascent that gains almost 800 feet in elevation over a single kilometer. Here, the dense canopy and narrow trails create a more secluded and adventurous atmosphere, resembling the forests of Northeast India.

As you climb, you'll encounter the "Cobra Rock," a naturally shaped boulder resembling a cobra in mid-strike. This natural formation is iconic for its unique appearance, often drawing comparisons to the rock where Simba was crowned in *The Lion King*. Trekkers pause here not only to catch their breath but also to admire the view across the jungle from this vantage point. Upon reaching the trek's highest point at around 2,820 feet, trekkers are rewarded with sweeping views of lush green forests that stretch as far as the eye can see.

After soaking in the views, you'll begin the descent toward Pandupara, which presents its own challenges due to the rugged and slippery terrain. The trail gradually levels out, leading to a riverbed where the Pandupara campsite is located. This campsite is unique, as it sits directly on the riverbed, where clear waters flow gently over smooth stones, creating a peaceful and reflective atmosphere. Trekkers are encouraged to rest, enjoy the natural sounds of the river, and unwind in this serene setting.

Day 4: Trek from Pandupara to Singhor Roadhead, Drive to Ramgarh Post, and Return

- **Start Point:** Pandupara Riverbed
- **End Point:** Singhor Roadhead, followed by Baikunthpur Road Station
- **Total Trek Distance:** 5 km
- **Duration:** Approximately 4 hours trekking, plus 2 hours by car
- **Terrain:** Riverbed walk, gentle slopes

The fourth and final day of the Chhattisgarh Jungle Trek is a fitting reward for the efforts of the previous days. The day's trail follows the Gopat River, a unique experience that allows trekkers to walk directly on the riverbed for over four kilometers. With water flowing just ankle-high, many trekkers opt to go barefoot, finding the sensation of cool river water refreshing and almost therapeutic. The gentle currents and soft riverbed sands create a tranquil atmosphere, making it a memorable experience that stands out among other trekking destinations.

Walking along the river, surrounded by dense greenery, feels like a journey through a hidden paradise. The clear water, shaded by the forest canopy, reflects the trees, creating an enchanting, mirrored landscape. Trekkers find themselves captivated by the

beauty of the surroundings, often pausing to take in the tranquility and reflect on the adventure.

The trek officially concludes upon reaching the Singhor Roadhead, where a vehicle awaits to transport trekkers back to Ramgarh Post. After a quick break, the journey continues to Baikunthpur Road Station, marking the end of the Chhattisgarh Jungle Trek. By the time trekkers arrive at the station, the sense of accomplishment and the memories made over the past four days linger, leaving them with lasting impressions of the trek's natural beauty and cultural richness.

Key Highlights of the Itinerary

- **Diverse Landscapes:** From dense sal forests to riverbeds and ancient caves, each day offers new terrain, creating a dynamic experience that keeps trekkers engaged.
- **Historical Sites:** The Cheramada caves on Day 1 provide a glimpse into prehistoric human life, with rock art estimated to be around 15,000 years old.
- **Scenic Water Features:** Tadiyabaan Lake and the Gopat River offer unique opportunities for relaxation, stargazing, and a barefoot river walk, enhancing the trek's appeal.
- **Iconic Rock Formations:** Natural landmarks like Cobra Rock add an element of surprise and make for memorable photo spots.
- **Exclusive Access:** The trek's location within a protected national park, only accessible with the Forest Department's approval, lends an air of exclusivity and adventure to the experience.

By the end of the Chhattisgarh Jungle Trek, trekkers are not only physically rewarded but also enriched by the journey through India's lesser-known wilderness. Each day brings unique encounters with nature, history, and culture, providing an experience that is at once grounding and transformative. The trek's itinerary is meticulously crafted to showcase the best of Chhattisgarh's natural beauty and cultural heritage, making it a memorable adventure for those who embark on this remarkable journey.