

# HEART OF INDIA - MAHA KUMBH MELA, HARIDWAR – 2010



## Day 01 Welcome to Delhi

Arrive Delhi in late evening and check-in at hotel. Overnight at hotel.

## Day 02 Delhi – Haridwar

After breakfast, drive to Haridwar. Reach Haridwar and transfer to MJI Camp. In the evening, experience the Ganges Aarti at Har ki Pauri. Overnight in Deluxe Tents.

## Day 03 Haridwar

After breakfast, full day take a round trip of Haridwar and Kumbh Mela grounds. Overnight in Deluxe Tents

## Day 04 Auspicious Bathing Date

This day is one of the main auspicious day and early morning visit Har ki Pauri to see the auspicious bathing by different sages of naga sadhus (Thousands on them) followed by the auspicious bath in Ganges. Later, take a round trip of Haridwar and meet holy saints and sages. Overnight in Deluxe Tents.

## Day 05 Haridwar – Rishikesh

After breakfast, leave for Rishikesh, Arrive Rishikesh and transfer to hotel, rest of the day at leisure or Rafting (OPTIONAL), Overnight at hotel.

## Day 06 Rishikesh

After breakfast, personal meeting with Teath Maharaj Ji, an ageless mountain yogi (subject to availability). Later, visit Parmarth Ashram, Gita Ashram and Sivananda Ashram. Overnight in Deluxe Tents.

## Day 07 Rishikesh – Delhi

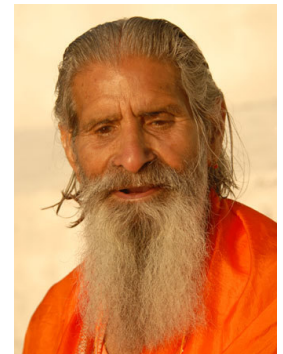
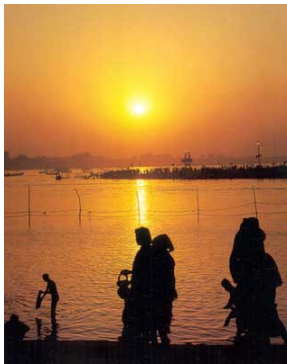
After breakfast, drive back to Delhi by surface, Reach Delhi and transfer to hotel. Evening is free for shopping. Overnight at hotel.

## Day 08 Delhi

Early morning, transfer to international airport and tour terminates.

**END OF TOUR**





### **The Kumbh Mela**

The observance of Kumbh Mela dates back many centuries in ancient India, to the Vedic period, where the river festivals first started getting organized. In Hindu mythology, its origin is found in one of the popular creation myths and the Hindu theories on evolution, the *Samudra manthan* episode (Churning of the ocean of milk), which finds mention in the Shrimad Bhagavatam, Vishnu Purana, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

The Gods had lost their strength, and to regain it, they thought of churning the Ksheera Sagara (Primordial Ocean of milk) for amrita (the nectar of immortality), this required them to make a temporary agreement with their arch enemies, the demons or Asuras to work together, with a promise of sharing the nectar equally thereafter. However, when the *Kumbha* (urn) containing the amrita appeared, a fight ensued. For twelve days and twelve nights (equivalent to twelve human years) the gods and demons fought in the sky for the pot of amrita. It is believed that during the battle, the celestial bird, Garuda the vehicle of Vishnu flew away with the Kumbha of elixir, and that is when drops of amrita fell at four places on earth: Prayag, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nashik, and that is where the Kumbh Mela is observed every twelve years.



First written evidence of the Kumbha Mela can be found in the accounts of Chinese traveler, Huan Tsang or Xuanzang (602 - 664 A.D.) who visited India in 629 -645 CE, during the reign of King Harshavardhana. According to *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, an outbreak of cholera occurred at the 1892 Mela at Haridwar, which led to the rapid improvement of arrangement by the authorities and the formation of Haridwar Improvement Society, and in 1903 about 400,000 people attended the fair. During the 1954 Kumbh Mela stampede at Allahabad, around 500 people were killed, and scores were injured. Ten million people gathered at Haridwar for the Kumbh on April 14, 1998.

The 1998 Kumbh Mela saw over 10 million pilgrims visiting Allahabad, to take a dip in the holy river, Ganga. Around 1 million people from around the world participated in the 'Maha Kumbh Mela' at Prayag (Allahabad) in 2001, with planetary positions that repeat only once in 144 years.



### **Ritual of Kumbh Mela**

Kumbh Mela is attended by millions of people on a single day. The major event of the festival is a ritual bath at the banks of the rivers in each town. Other activities include religious discussions, devotional singing, mass feeding of holy men and women and the poor, and religious assemblies where doctrines are debated and standardized.

Kumbh Mela (especially the Maha Kumbh Mela) is the most sacred of all the pilgrimages. Thousands of holy men and women (monks, saints and sadhus) attend, and the auspiciousness of the festival is in part attributable to this. The sadhus are seen clad in saffron sheets with plenty of ashes and powder dabbled on their skin per the requirements of ancient traditions. Some called *nanga sanyasis* or 'Digambars (sky-clad)' may often be seen without any clothes even in severe winter, generally considered to live an extreme lifestyle. This tends to attract a lot of western attention as it is seemingly in contrast to a generally conservative social modesty practiced in the country.

After visiting the Kumbh Mela of 1895, Mark Twain wrote:

“It is wonderful, the power of a faith like that, that can make multitudes upon multitudes of the old and weak and the young and frail enter without hesitation or complaint upon such incredible journeys and endure the resultant miseries without repining. It is done in love, or it is done in fear; I do not know which it is. No matter what the impulse is, the act born of it is beyond imagination, marvellous to our kind of people, the cold whites.”



### **Why Kumbh Mela**

#### **Kumbh Mela – The Largest Congregation of Humanity**

Kumbh Mela is a unique festival that is held in the holy town of Haridwar in Uttarakhand State of India. It is the largest concentration of religious gathering in the world. Held once in 12 years this festival is a must visit during a trip to India.

#### **Take a Dip Make a Wish**

If you go by the Hindu mythologies, then this is the only time and place in the world where you can unburden your sins and achieve 'Nirvana' from the vicious cycle of birth and re birth. Take dips in the holy water of Ganges that is said to wash away all the sins of a person. Light a Diya and make a wish, they do come true!



#### **Sojourn on the Ashrams on the Banks**

To live among the Sadhus, who have dedicated their entire lives in meditation and fulfilling spiritual deeds is indeed a unique experience of life. In Haridwar there are many such Ashrams where tourists can stay to enjoy the life of a saint besides indulging into various Yoga and Meditation regimes.

