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PHALGUNANDA TRAIL

Where History, Spirituality & Biodiversity Converge



TRAIL-BASED TOURISM
Development Project

INTRODUCTION

The Phalgunanda Trail is a 56 km spiritual and natural trekking route in eastern Nepal, named after the revered Kirat leader Phalgunanda Lingden. Stretching from Phidim to Sandakpur, it passes through key sites such as Labrekuti, Sukepokhari, and Chhintapu, offering scenic views, rich biodiversity, and deep cultural experiences. Furthermore, a 14 km trail from Maipokhari joins the same route at Chhintapu, and from Ahal, a 5.3 km branch leads to Char-rate, known for the Yak Festival.

BRIEF HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR DESTINATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Phidim

As the headquarters of Panchthar District, Phidim marks the trail's starting point. Immerse yourself in the historical and spiritual legacy of Mahaguru Phalgunanda, whose teachings are rooted in this region.

Labrekuti and Silauti

These sites hold profound spiritual significance as the karmabhumi (land of work), teaching grounds, and final resting place (samadhi) of Mahaguru Phalgunanda, making them vital destinations for cultural and historical exploration.



Pauwabhanjyang

Perched at an elevation of 2,500 meters, it transforms into a winter wonderland with snowfall. This place is perpetually enveloped in mist, except during winter. Nearby, Sadhutar captivates visitors with its serene lake that mirrors the majestic Mt. Kanchenjunga, offering an unforgettable experience.

Lohakil

A historic site dating back to the Indo-British era, Lohakil is known for its iron fort (killa). Visitors flock here for stunning sunrise views and opportunities for camping amidst serene surroundings.



Sukepokhari

This is a popular weekend getaway, ideal for picnics and overnight stays that offers stunning views of the Kumbhakarna and Kanchenjunga mountains, which further enhance its appeal.

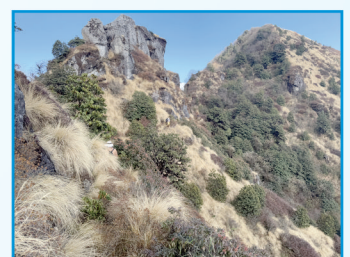


Bikhebbhanjyang

Bikhebbhanjyang serves as a key stop along the trail, offering a glimpse into the simplicity of rural life. Stay at one of the farm accommodations to experience the daily lives of shepherds, enjoy local delicacies, and soak in the warmth of genuine hospitality.

Chhintapu

This junction point between the two starting trails sits at a breathtaking elevation. With nearby Jorpokhari and Talpokhari lakes, Chhintapu offers panoramic views of Ilam and Panchthar districts, along with cool, and refreshing weather.



Goruwale

Another great place for trekkers to spend the night, Goruwale offers a peaceful escape with farm stays that allow visitors to experience the simplicity and beauty of rural life. The stopover point is nestled in the forest, with no settlements in the vicinity.

Ahal

Ahal provides an extraordinary experience with its breathtaking viewpoint and the "no man's land" (dashgaja), a symbolic border landmark. Immerse yourself in the stunning landscapes and feel as though you're floating above the clouds, surrounded by the heavenly panorama of the Himalayan ranges. This place is known for its sunset viewpoint.



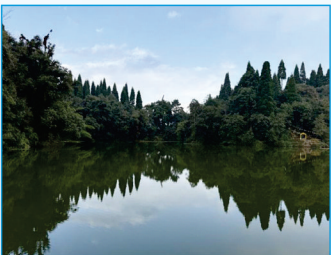
Chār-Rāte

Chār-Rāte, a culturally rich village in Phalelung RM, is renowned for its yak farming and the annual 'Chauri Mahotsav' held during the Nepali New Year. This highland settlement not only preserves the indigenous Limbu and Rai traditions through folk dances, rituals, and storytelling but also showcases its unique mountain lifestyle through yak exhibitions, yak milk products, and traditional sports. Surrounded by scenic beauty, Chār-Rāte offers a rare blend of cultural immersion and agro-tourism.



Sandakpur Danda

The trail's destination and the highest point, Sandakpur Danda, stands at an elevation of 3,636 meters. This crowning destination is famed for its unparalleled views of majestic mountains, rolling landscapes, and mesmerizing sunrises. Sandakpur Danda, situated on the Nepal-India border, is a dream destination for nature lovers and trekkers alike.



Maipokhari

A sacred site for Hindus and Buddhists, Maipokhari is another starting point for the trail. This place is known for its religious significance; this serene location attracts thousands of pilgrims during festivals and connects to the scenic Chhintapu.



TRAIL STATUS UPDATE (2024): UNDER DEVELOPMENT

About 20% route is challenging on Day 3 (Sukepokhari to Chhintapu)



TREK HIGHLIGHTS

Sacred Sites

- Labrekuti and Silauti (Mahaguru's Samadhi)
- Maipokhari (holy lake)

Himalayan Vistas

- Kanchenjunga, Phaktanglung (Kumbhakarna), Everest, Makalu views from Sandakpur Danda (3,636m)

Unique Ecosystems

- Rhododendron forest
- Red panda habitats
- More than 200 species of birds
- Medicinal herbs

Cultural Immersion

- Limbu/Rai traditions
- Annual Yak Festival at Chār-Rāte on Nepali New Year

Sunrise/Sunset Spots

- **Best viewpoints:** Lohakil, Chhintapu, Ahal and Sandakpur Danda

Cultural Treasures

- **Silam Sakma:** Sacred Limbu ornaments believed to protect wearers from misfortune or death
- **Bunchhat:** Ancient Rai symbol representing the cycle of enlightenment, luck, and protection

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



HOW TO ACCESS:

Kathmandu - Bhadrapur (45min flight)
6hr drive to Phidim



Level:

Moderate (altitude ranging between
1200 m to 3636 meter)
Suitable for trekkers with basic fitness.



Kathmandu to Phidim (20-22hrs)



Best Seasons to Visit:

October - December:

Clear Mountain views, possible snow

March - May:

Rhododendron blooms, mild weather



What to Pack:

Footwear: Sturdy boots + trekking sticks
Clothing: Layers (-5°C to 25°C range) + rain gear
Protection: Sunscreen, hat, gloves
First Aid Kits

LOCAL EXPERIENCES:



Food: Wachipa, local chicken, local pork sausage, Kinema, Jhyau, corn mixed rice, wheat rice, White maize, small size Chayote, Potato, Dhido, Gundruk, and Selroti.



Beverages: Regular drinks are Tongba, Chhyang, Nigar and local herbal teas. Special alcoholic drinks of millet, mixed jadibutti, Kiwi, Timur and Padamchal, Gurans wine and Raspberry wine are produced by the local communities.



Diverse Stays: Trek, camp, or unwind in cozy homestays (Batase, Goruwale), rustic lodges (Sandakpur, Maipokhari), or scenic campsites (Lohakil for sunrise, Dhupitar amid clouds, Chhintapu for Sunset) – blending adventure with authentic local hospitality.



IMPORTANT NOTES:

Altitude: Gradual climb
(1,200m-3,636m)



Be respectful of local traditions and communities.



Carry reusable items to minimize waste.



Carry snacks for snacking while trekking.



Follow local guide instructions



ITINERARY



Day 1: Arrival in Phidim - Fly to Bhadrapur and drive to Phidim (6-7 hours)

Day 2: Phidim → Sukepokhari (17km | 8-9 hours | Easy-Moderate)

Day 3: Sukepokhari → Goruwale (15.5km | 9-10 hours | Moderate to Challenging)

Day 4: Goruwale → Sandakpur Danda (9.5 km | 6-7 hours | Easy-Moderate)

Optional: Chār-Rāte branch trail (Separates from Ahal 5.3 km | 2-3 hours | Easy-Moderate)

Day 5: Sandakpur Danda → Chhintapu (12km | 6-7 hours | Easy-Moderate)

Day 6: Chhintapu → Maipokhari (15km | 7-9 hours | Moderate)

Day 7: Departure - Return to Bhadrapur airport (4 hours from Maipokhari)



Local and organic food
at Batase Pahuna ghar

PHALGUNANDA TRAIL MAP



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