

## Bhadraj

Bhadraj is a peak at the far Western edge of Mussoorie, sacred to both Muslims and Hindus, from where you can look down on the Jumna River cutting through the outer Himalaya and entering the plains. There is a temple on top of the peak that looks very different from the other temples in the area. There is an interesting legend behind the temple. The hike begins either at Clouds End from where you drop steeply down to Dudhli village that straddles a ridge with a steep drop towards the Dehradun valley- facing South side and a gentler drop on the North- facing side. The hike climbs up the ridge and is really interesting. It seems to take you across three different mountains, and keeps alternating between the sunny, open, steep, grassy, South- facing edge of the ridge and the shady, forested, gentler, North- facing side. The gradient also keeps alternating between climbing steeply and gently. One of the highlights is to see a Common Kestrel- a bird of prey that hovers in mid- air on the edge of the cliff, and then folds its wings and dives suddenly.

## Thatyur

Thatyur is a small bazaar, town, and government administrative centre located on the banks of the Aglar River. It is the starting point for many hikes in the area including Nag Tibba, Deolsari and Lurntsu. The hike usually begins at the ruins of Old Suakholi- about 8 km from school along Tehri Road. The path drops through the horticultural department farm at Magra, crosses two streams where you can see some of the largest ferns in the area, and then follows the slope of the deep ravine right down to the Aglar River, with good snow views from the top. On the way you walk through a variety of ecosystems including Oak- Rhododendron forest, Chir Pine forest, and finally xerophytic (desert- like) scrubland with succulents that look like cactus, before hitting rice paddy fields and then finally the bazaar. Before the motor road was built, this trail was the local trade route between the villages in the Aglar valley and Dehradun for the last two hundred years, and locals used to do the journey there and back in a day and still find time to sell their produce and do some shopping for the household on the side.