



### HIGHLIGHTS

This forest trek has an altitudinal variation of 450 m to 2500 m, giving the whole region a diverse bird and mammal life. You hike along old pony trails, camp at scenic spots or stay in colonial era forest bungalows. The trek leads through dense broadleaf forest rich in wildlife, forging through shallow streams and ends in conifer forests of oak and pine that open into scenic valleys & gorges with glimpses of the magnificent Himalayas.

The ever-changing biodiversity, rich wildlife and the dramatic difference in forest types each day is quite remarkable.



CORBETT TIGER RESERVE, INDIA

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### BEST TIME

Mid-October to March



### OUTLINE ITINERARY

- Day 0 Overnight in the train boarded at Delhi.
- Day 1 Arrive at Ramnagar and transfer to Camp. Free day to acclimatise in Camp with a short hike into the forest in the afternoon. Night in Camp.
- Day 2 Full day hike from Camp to Akashkanda with overnight camping in the forest.
- Day 3 Full day hike from Akashkanda to Kunjakharak with overnight camping in the forest.
- Day 4 Full day hike from Kunjakharak to Vinayak with overnight stay at the Forest Rest House.
- Day 5 Free day at Vinayak with overnight stay at the Forest Rest House.
- Day 6 Full day hike from Vinayak to Pangot with stay at a Lodge.
- Day 7 Free day at Pangot and Nainital. Late afternoon depart for Kathgodam railway station for the train back to Delhi.

### PLAN WOULD INCLUDE

- Accommodation at Camp for one night and at a various camp sites within the forest in mobile tents or Forest Rest Houses for five nights.
- All meals from breakfast on Day 1 to packed dinner on Day 7, aerated drinks, mineral or filtered drinking water, tea/ coffee.
- A dedicated naturalist and tracker for the multi-day hike.
- A pilot jeep/ porters with supplies, chef and other assistants from Camp for the duration of the hike.
- Arrival and departure transfer from respective train stations.

### EXTRA EXPENSES

Expenses of a personal nature such as beverages (except those mentioned above) laundry, telephone calls, internet, souvenirs and tips.



### INFORMATION ON FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION

**Camp Forktail Creek** is a small jungle camp located on the north-eastern periphery of Corbett Tiger Reserve, India (23 kms from the town of Ramnagar). It is set amidst dense Sal forests and accommodation is in locally handcrafted ensuite mud huts. Elaborate and sumptuous home-cooked meals accompany each trip with enjoyable, courteous and knowledgeable naturalists, who have been in the region most of their lives. Camp is in a village which does not have electricity but ample lighting is provided with solar powered lamps and lanterns and candles.



**Camping in the forest** would be in two-men tents which are fully functional complete with mattresses, pillows and duvet. The toilet tent would be a dry pit with a thunder box on top. Meals would be taken care of by the team from Camp and would be a lavish mix of Indian or Continental cuisine. Our resident naturalist, cook and Camp staff would escort the whole trip and reach each place before us in pilot jeeps with all supplies. They would have each place ready for us by the time we get there.

In some places along the hike we may be able to use the premises of an old Forest Rest House or the Rest House itself, which normally have two rooms and date back to the early 1900's or even earlier, with architecture typical to the smaller forest bungalows made in those days; 2 ensuite bedrooms with a central dining area and a deep verandah running all along the front of the structure.



Here again, our team from Camp would assist with all creature comforts.

### DETAILED ITINERARY



#### Day 1: Arrive at Camp.

Arrive at Ramnagar Railway Station at 0500 hrs. Our jeep and driver would assist with transfer to Camp, a drive of 40 mins- 23kms.

After a wash and change, have breakfast, relax, read in the Machan from our library and explore the environs of Camp.

After a sumptuous lunch, we would take you on an escorted nature and bird walk into the Sal forests surrounding Camp. It is an excellent opportunity to walk in the cool of the forest, to be close to nature and to appreciate the varied plants, insects, birds, mammals and reptiles that inhabit this part of the country.

THE QUIETER YOU ARE, THE MORE YOU WILL SEE.

The walk will offer an in-depth knowledge on animal and bird signs in our jungles. We shall help identify some key plant, animal and bird species. Identification of hoof, pug and pad marks; forest smells, from tracking in our forests to jungle survival skills...

Most walks are rewarded with a leopard or tiger pug mark and should we find one on this walk, plaster casts could be made.

Back to Camp by sundown for campfire and dinner, which is leisurely and personal.

Along with the excellent cuisine, your guide and hosts will amuse and amaze you with their stories of exciting experiences. Then it is time to relax once again and enjoy carefree chatter by the fireside whilst feasting on the unique sounds and smells that your exclusive location offers, before retiring to bed in a mud hut.

**Day 2: Full day hike from Camp to Akashkhanda**

Early breakfast at Camp and then a short drive to Kumeria from where a foot suspension bridge over Kosi River will lead us to the trail that cuts right through the riverside village of Kunkhet. After crossing the village we walk along the irrigation canal, which runs parallel to the river for about half an hour, before reaching the head of the canal. From here starts the uphill climb through narrow broken trails that soon merge with a fire lane and lead to the village of Okhaldhunga (500m). Soon after crossing the village we come across the old district board road that meanders along the Kosi and is still used by villagers to carry supplies on packhorses and mules.

**8 hours walk**

This is a fairly broad trail and leads to the village of Babas (600m). There is a small tea stall here, which is of strategic importance because it is the only one in the area! From here the vegetation gets scanty and the steep ascent can get you quite exhausted by the time you reach the small village of Mon. The verandah at the primary school of Mon is a welcome site to rest for a while and grab a quick bite. After Mon the trail gets narrower and the climb gets steeper. The vegetation transforms to coniferous forest all the way till the campsite within the premises of Akashkhanda Forest Rest House (1600 m).

Being miles away from the road head, the forest bungalow at Akashkhanda is seldom visited by tourists or even forest officials. Though in a dilapidated state right now, this beautiful bungalow is set amidst pine forests and offers complete solitude. On a clear day you can get spectacular views of Nanda Ghunti (20,700 ft) and Trishul (23,360 ft). Hot tea would be waiting for us with much needed hot water for a wash. After a nice hot meal we rest our weary bones in the tent.

**Day 3: Full day hike from Akashkhanda to Kunjkharak****6 hours walk**

Breakfast and then we start the hike through dense temperate forests dominated by oak, chestnut and rhododendron, which is a riot of red when in bloom.

Birds commonly seen here include the colourful Jays, Magpie and Thrushes.

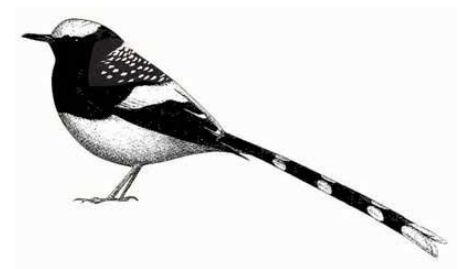
This area also supports rich mammal life. On the hill slopes you can try to spot the *ghoral* (goat antelope) and on the trail you stumble upon the occasional pugmarks of the leopard.

The last part of the hike is quite steep, though enjoyable as the temperature begins to drop and the views get spectacular. We camp for the night at the clearing in the forest department compound of Kunjkharak, *kharak* in Kumaoni meaning pass.

Since this area is actually a high pass, it can get very windy and winter temperatures may drop to 0 degrees, with occasional snowfall in the area. Huge rocks in forested ridges make it a good place to sight high altitude birds like Lammergeier, Himalayan and Eurasian Griffon. Other raptors you may see are Tawny Eagle, Steppe Eagle and Kestrel.

**Day 4: Full day hike from Kunjkharak to Vinayak****5 hours walk**

Wake up at ease, have breakfast and then we approach the main trail that runs all along the ridge to Vinayak, our next campsite. Though this is a motorable track, chances of coming across any vehicle are very slim. Barely a kilometer after Kunjkharak you get a magnificent panoramic view of the Himalayan range. A unique feature of this moist temperate forest is the *Khoola* moss that carpets the floor below. This moss absorbs water and helps in retaining moisture in the forest. However, due to indiscriminate extraction and collection for its use in several cosmetic products, this moss has become highly endangered. At Vinayak (2300m) we will stay in the beautiful forest bungalow or camp out in the compound of the bungalow. Evenings are magical as the setting sun transforms the icy Himalayas across Vinayak into gold.

**Day 5: Free day at Vinayak**

Wake up at leisure and have breakfast. Today is a free day to relax and explore the immediate environs and stretch those weary bones. We could hike to the highest ridge of Vinayak (2600m) that starts in front of the bungalow. All meals would be served hot by our team from Camp. Night in Vinayak Forest Rest House.

**5 hours walk**

**Day 6: Full day hike from Vinayak to Pangot**

This day's hikes will take us through one of the finest patches of cedar forest, crisscrossed by streams. Here is our best chance to find the elusive serow and for signs of the Himalayan Black Bear.

An hour's hike takes us to the top of the ridge which offers stunning views of the Himalayas. From here we move onwards on a narrow trail and head southeast along the ridge to get to the main road at Sigri (2350m).

We walk the next 3 km on an unpaved road till a culvert ahead of Guhugu Khan, from where a right turn onto a pony trail will take us to the tiny but well-stocked market of Pangot (2150 m). Situated in a pass, this market served as an important trading centre between the valleys in olden days.

Hot lunch awaits our arrival at the Lodge and then a much needed bath!

Free afternoon to explore Pangot with overnight stay at a Lodge.

**Day 7: Pangot, Nainital and depart by overnight train**

Free morning at Pangot and then we depart by car, post breakfast for the busy hill station of Nainital.

Explore Nainital, have lunch and then depart in the late afternoon for Kathgodam Railway Station for the overnight train back to Delhi.

