



SHINKULA PASS

ZANSKAR GATEWAY

Connecting Lahaul Valley (HP) • Zaskar (Ladakh) • 16,580 ft

ALTITUDE

16,580 ft / 5,050 m

DISTANCE

~140 km from Manali

DURATION

Full Day 11–13 hrs

BEST TIME

June to September

Private 4x4 Taxi

Day Trip from Manali

No Permit Required

Indian Nationals

June – September

Best Season

Manali → Atal Tunnel → Sissu → Keylong → Jispa → Darcha → Shinkula Pass



OVERVIEW

Shinkula Pass (also known as Shingo La) sits at 5,050 metres (16,580 feet) on the Nimmu-Padum-Darcha motorable road, marking the dramatic border between Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. It connects the green meadows of Lahaul Valley with the stark, moon-like landscape of Zaskar — making it one of the most visually arresting high passes in India.

A day trip from Manali by private 4x4 taxi is the ideal way to experience this offbeat gem — prayer flags at altitude, river crossings, glaciers, and the silence of one of the Himalaya's most remote corridors.

16,580 ft Altitude	~280 km Round Trip	11–13 hrs Duration	4x4 Vehicle Required
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AT A GLANCE

Pass Name	Shinkula Pass (Shingo La)
Altitude	5,050 m / 16,580 ft
Location	Lahaul (HP) — Zaskar (Ladakh) Border
Distance from Manali	~140 km one way ~280 km round trip
Trip Type	Day Trip by Private 4x4 Taxi
Total Drive Time	Approx. 11 to 13 hours round trip
Best Season	June to September (July–Aug peak)
Vehicle	4x4 SUV — Innova, Scorpio, Thar, Jimny
Permit	No permit needed for Indian nationals (subject to change)
Connectivity	Very limited — BSNL & Jio post-paid (patchy)

ROUTE MILESTONES

Manali → Atal Tunnel → Sissu → Keylong → Jispa → Darcha → Shinkula Pass

Stop	From Manali	Altitude	Notes
Manali	0 km	2,050 m	Starting point — Mall Road / Volvo Bus Stand
Solang Valley	~14 km	2,480 m	Scenic meadow; optional photo stop
Atal Tunnel (South)	~25 km	3,060 m	World's longest tunnel above 10,000 ft
Sissu	~34 km	3,100 m	Sissu Waterfall, lush Lahaul valley
Tandi	~70 km	2,700 m	LAST reliable petrol pump on this route



Keylong	~85 km	3,080 m	HQ of Lahaul & Spiti; Kardang Monastery
Jispa	~105 km	3,200 m	Campsite hub on Bhaga River
Darcha	~120 km	3,360 m	Border security check; road forks to Zaskar
Shinkula Pass	~140 km	5,050 m	Summit — prayer flags & Zaskar vistas

■ Fill your tank at Tandi — it is the LAST reliable petrol pump before Shinkula Pass.

SUGGESTED DAY ITINERARY

4:30 AM	Departure from Manali Early start is essential for a safe return before dark.
5:30 AM	Atal Tunnel Crossing 9 km tunnel bypasses Rohtang Pass — reach Lahaul in ~45 mins.
6:00 AM	Sissu Waterfall Stop Quick photo stop at the iconic Sissu Waterfall.
7:30 AM	Keylong & Jispa Dramatic cliffs. Optional breakfast at Keylong.
8:30 AM	Darcha Checkpoint Security check. Road forks toward Shinkula.
9:00–10:00 AM	Shinkula Pass Summit Explore at 5,050 m — prayer flags, Zaskar vistas, Gumburanjon peaks.
10:30 AM	Optional: Gonbo Rangjon Sacred standalone peak ~30 mins beyond. Famous for photography.
11:30 AM	Begin Return Journey Retrace via Darcha, Jispa, Keylong, Sissu.
5:00–6:00 PM	Back in Manali Round trip complete — ~280 km, ~13 hrs.

HIGHLIGHTS & EXPERIENCES

- Stand at 5,050 m with panoramic Zaskar vistas
- Cross the legendary Atal Tunnel (9.02 km)
- Sissu Waterfall in lush Lahaul Valley
- Drive through river crossings & glaciers
- Prayer flags fluttering at the summit
- Views of sacred Gumburanjon peaks
- Optional Gonbo Rangjon mountain visit
- Remote Himalayan villages on route
- Stark contrast: green Lahaul vs barren Zaskar
- Photography in one of India's most isolated passes



WEATHER & BEST TIME TO VISIT

Month	Manali Temp	Pass Temp	Road Status
April–May	0–15°C	-5 to 5°C	BRO clearing snow; risky until May
June	10–20°C	0–8°C	Pass opens; some patches unstable
July–August	15–25°C	5–15°C	BEST SEASON — clear roads & weather
September	10–20°C	0–10°C	Good; early snowfall possible late Sep
October+	0–10°C	Below 0°C	Pass closes — heavy snowfall

INCLUSIONS & EXCLUSIONS

Inclusions	Exclusions
+ Private 4x4 taxi (round trip — Manali to Shinkula Pass)	- Meals, refreshments & snacks (own expense)
+ Experienced mountain driver	- Entry fees at monuments or temples
+ All toll taxes, state taxes & parking charges	- Personal travel insurance
+ Flexible timing at Shinkula Pass	- Any expense due to road closure or weather

ESSENTIAL TRAVEL TIPS

- **Start Early:** Depart Manali by 4:30 AM to ensure daylight for the return.
- **Fuel at Tandi:** Last reliable petrol pump — do not skip it.
- **Vehicle:** Always use a 4x4 SUV. Sedans are not suitable for this route.
- **Acclimatise:** Spend at least 1 night in Manali (2,050 m) before the trip.
- **Warm Layers:** Pass temperatures can drop to 0–5°C even in summer. Carry woolens, gloves, wind jacket.
- **Cash:** No ATMs beyond Keylong. Carry enough cash for the full day.
- **Connectivity:** Only BSNL & Jio post-paid SIMs work (patchy). Inform family before departure.
- **Road Status:** Confirm with BRO or your operator before departure.
- **Health:** Not suitable for those with heart or breathing conditions. Consult a doctor.
- **AMS:** Watch for altitude sickness — headache, nausea, dizziness. Descend if symptoms appear.