




NĀMARŪPA

# PANCHA PRAYAG YATRA

OCTOBER 9 - 29, 2016



*"In the Waters there is healing balm;  
Be swift, ye Gods, to give them praise.  
The Waters hold all medicines. ....  
The Waters I this day have sought,  
and to their moisture have we come ..."*

*Rigveda I.23.19-23*

**PANCHA PRAYAG: DEVPRAYAG • RUDRAPRAYAG • KARNAPRAYAG • NANDAPRAYAG • VISHNUPRAYAG  
PLUS: HARIDWAR • RISHIKESH • BADRINATH • KEDARNATH • UTTARKASHI • GANGOTRI • VRINDAVAN**



**Yatra** The ancient Puranas of India are huge volumes containing stories of the makings of the universe as well as thrilling tales of innumerable gods and goddesses. The geography of the Puranas coincides with that of the entire Indian sub-continent. Countless places mentioned in these ancient texts are fully alive today and are important places of yatra (pilgrimage). Often there are temples at these places and within their sanctums worship of the resident gods and goddesses is performed daily in a tradition that reaches back to antiquity and beyond. These places where the sacred stories unfolded are called tirthas; the confluences of sacred rivers are called prayags.

**Tirtha** Tirtha is a place of crossing over and most literally refers to river fords. It also refers to a spiritual crossing place, where the divine is more easily intuited, recognized, or experienced. Daily, vast numbers of yattris (pilgrims) visit the sacred places to have darshan of their favorite gods or goddesses. Darshan is both seeing and being seen by the deity. It is a source of spiritual renewal. Nāmarūpa Yatras are centered around the experience of darshan.

**Prayag** Prayag is a confluence of rivers, usually two, sometimes more—as in the case of the most famous prayag, at modern day Allahabad, where the Ganga, the Yamuna and a third river, the unseen Saraswati, meet. Prayags are places of particularly powerful spiritual influence where pilgrims go to bathe away their sins, purify and heal their bodies and minds, pray for their ancestors, perform rituals, and possibly meet saints who frequent the prayags. or simply to sit spellbound in the natural beauty and peacefulness that permeates the atmosphere.

**Pancha Prayag** On the **Nāmarūpa Pancha Prayag Yatra** our **main purpose** will be to travel as pilgrims and visit the **Pancha Prayag** (5 Confluences) of the Garwhal Himalaya. We will bathe in each of these prayags in sequence before worshipping Lord Vishnu (Badri Vishal) at the sacred shrine of **Badrinath**. Water is purifying on so many levels: physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. It has been recently discovered that water molecules have a '**memory**'\* that carries the vibrations of sounds (prayers) and even thought waves along with its flow from source to ocean. (*\*Aerospace Institute in Stuttgart, Germany*)

**Kedarnath** There are also Five Kedars, places sacred to Lord Siva in the Garwhal Himalayas. The Pandavas were seeking darshan of Lord Siva to request absolution from their sins committed during the Mahabharata War. Siva was hiding from them at **Guptakshi** in the form of a bull, Nandi. Bhima saw him but Nandi dove into the earth, whereupon Bhima caught hold of his tail in **Kedarnath** and Nandi's hump is now worshipped there as a Jyoti Lingam. His arms appeared at **Tungnath** which we will trek to. The other places where Siva re-appeared are at Rudranath, Madhyamaheshwar and Kalpeshwar, places too remote to reach on this yatra.

**Plus** We will also cross the Garwhal Himalayas to **Uttarkashi**, home to many sages and ashrams, where the swayambu lingam of Lord Vishwanath has arisen. From there we can journey to **Gangotri** to bathe in the Her waters and have darshan at the Ganga Mata temple. Our return journey will take us through **Rishikesh** and then by train to Mathura to visit **Vrindavan** and so many temples to Sri Krishna and Radha.

**\$3045**  
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place go [here](#)  
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The Temple of Badri Vishal nestled in the sacred town of Badrinath. The hot sulphur spring baths can be seen on the lower left. Pilgrims bathe here before proceeding for darshan of Lord Vishnu who is seated in padmasana. October 2015 ©robertmoses.



**Sacred waters** It is considered highly beneficial to take a 'holy dip' at the sacred tirthas and prayags. Bathing, worshipping and meditating with proper intention here helps oneself and one's family and friendly connections to become purified of past negative karmas, known and unknown. The effects are felt immediately and have far reaching consequences. As Swami Sivananda says about Ganga: "How she instantaneously withdraws your mind and conscience from the physical world to the regions of immortality, only to suckle you with bliss and blessedness! Invoke Her blessings whenever you sit on Her glorious banks. You will enter into deep meditation without much effort." *When a river approaches Brahma and appeals to Him to purify her, He entreats her to go to another river and bathe and remain there. From merely washing our hands to growing all our food, and even washing away our past sins, there is no doubt about the wholesome healing and nourishing power of water. Join us to bathe at these prayags.*

**Har Ki Pauri** at Haridwar is the starting point for pilgrimages to the holy places in the Garwhal Himalaya. Here one bathes in the Ganga and attends evening Ganga Arati. We will be here on Dusserah, the victory day of Navaratri and will be able to witness a festival during which an effigy of Ravana is burnt. From there we will travel north and bathe at each of the five prayags described below before reaching Badrinath.

**Devprayag** Here the swirling whiter waters of the Bhagirathi, flowing from Gomukh through Gangotri and Uttarkashi meet the calmer greener waters of the Alaknanda which begins at Badrinath. This prayag is named after a brahmin who was blessed by Rama here. There is a beautiful ancient Rama temple in Devprayag. From here the united rivers are now known as Ganga and proceed all the way through north India to the Mouths of the Ganga in the Bay of Bengal.

**Rudraprayag** Here the Bhagirathi meets the Mandakini which has its source in the glacier behind Kedaranth temple. This prayag is named after Siva (Rudra) and it is said that He performed the Tandava dance here.

**Karnaprayag** The Alaknanda which has its source in a glacier near Badrinath meets the Pindar river flowing from Nanda Devi mountain. Here Karna did tapas and received protective armor and earrings from his father the Sun.

**Nandaprayag** The Nandakini meets the Alaknanda here. It is named either after King Nanda who performed a sacrifice here or perhaps after Nanda, the Yadava King and foster father of Sri Krishna. Thus there is a temple to Gopal.

**Vishnuprayag** The Alaknanda is joined by the Dhaul Ganga River at this prayag. It is where the celestial sage Narada worshipped Lord Vishnu.

Radhakunda das, Nāmarūpa Yatra guide, applying tilak with Gopi Candana after having taken a holy dip at Karnaprayag. The Alaknanda from Badrinath is on his right and the Pindar is on his left side. October 2015 ©robertmoses











*The Temple of Kedarnath, one of the 12 Jyotilingams where Lord Siva manifested on a large triangular shaped lingam. The present structure was built in the 8th C. It is here that the Pandavas ascended to heaven after the Mahabharata war. October 2015 ©robertmoses.*





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*Having made the trek to Tungnath, members of the Nāmarūpa Yatra 2015 take chai.  
In the middle is Yoginder Rana, our guide for the Himalayan section of the Pancha Prayag Yatra 2016.  
Photograph October 2015 ©robertmoses*



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Resthouse on the pathway to Tungnath,  
 the highest Lord Siva temple in the world.  
 October 2015 © robertmoses

### **9 Sunday New Delhi • Arrival**

We'll pick you up from Indira Gandhi International Airport and take you to a nearby comfortable hotel where you can relax and sleep off your flight. Accommodation begins from Sunday night so plan to arrive then or at the latest early Monday morning.

### **10 Monday New Delhi to Haridwar**

Rest, meet the group, purchase some Indian-style pilgrimage clothes and then take the afternoon train to reach Haridwar by evening.

### **11 Tuesday Haridwar**

Haridwar is the 'Gateway to the Abode of God' and all pilgrims to the sacred places of the Garwhal Himalaya pass through here. Luckily for us, our visit coincides with Lord Ramacandra Vijayotsav or Dusserah and we can witness the burning of Ravana's effigy. We will also take our first purifying bath in Ganga before the evening Ganga arati.

### **12 Wednesday Rishikesh to Devprayag**

We will proceed to the samadhi shrine of Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh to pray for a safe journey and return for our yatra. Then on to Devprayag, the first of the Panch Prayags, confluence of Bhagarati and Alaknanda. Night halt at Srinigar, a large bustling town.

### **13 Thursday Srinigar to Rudraprayag**

We will look for the cave of Goruknath, the 6th century yogi who lived here. Proceeding through the beautiful Himalayan foothills alongside swiftly flowing rivers we will reach Rudraprayag for our next dip at the confluence of Mandakini and Alaknanda.

### **14 Friday Karnaprayag and Nandaprayag to Jyoshimath**

Onwards to the where Karna prayed to the Sun at the confluence of Alaknanda and Pindar and then to where Alaknanda joins Nandakini, with its temple of Gopal. Overnight halt at Jyoshimath in spacious tents with bathrooms.

### **15 Saturday Jyoshimath to Vishnuprayag to Badrinath**

Jyoshimath is where Adiguru Sankaracarya established his northern monastery and where he wrote Sankara Bhasya on Advaita Vedanta. An ancient wish fulfilling tree and the cave where Sankara lived are

to be found here. There is also a temple of Lord Narasimhadeva to which the priests from Badrinath come to worship when Badrinath is snowbound. We will take a bath at Vishnuprayag and proceed to Badrinath via Hanuman Chatti where Bhima met Hanuman.

### **16 Sunday Badrinath**

Badrinath is considered one of the holiest places in India, where the spiritual realm manifests on earth. Narada, Vyasa, Sankara, Ramana, Madhvacharya, Sri Nityananda and many other sages have meditated here. We can visit Mana, the last village in India, and the cave where Vyasa dictated the Mahabharata to Lord Ganesha.

### **17 Monday Badrinath to Chamoli**

After an early morning hot sulphur spring bath we can have darshan in the sacred temple where Vishnu is known as Badri Vishal. Sankaracarya reinstalled this image after he recovered it from a pond where it had been thrown and to this day the priests hail from his Kerala Nambudri caste of priests. After darshan we descend to Chamoli.

### **18 Tuesday Tungnath to Guptakashi**

Now we head westward and trek through forests and above treeline to Tungnath, highest temple in India and one of the Panch Kedars of Lord Siva. On to the spectacular campsite at Guptakashi.

### **19 Wednesday Kedarnath**

Kedarnath can be reached from our camp at Guptakashi by helicopter (extra charge) or by road to Gaurikund, then a strenuous 18 Km uphill trek on foot or by pony. One way or the other we will all reach there in time for evening arati.

### **20 Thursday Kedarnath to Guptakashi**

We will attend early morning worship of Lord Siva within the temple sanctum where one is permitted to bathe the Jyotilingam. Head back down either by foot, pony or helicopter to rest at our camp.

### **21 Friday Kalimath • Triyuga Narayan • Guptakashi**

Visit Kalimath, Sakthi Peeth of Mother Kali, and then on to Triyuga Narayan where Siva and Parvati were married and Lord Vishnu was the best man. A homa fire has been burning here since the Treta Yuga.

### **22 Saturday Rudraprayag to Uttarkashi**

October is the best time of the year to enjoy travel through the mountains and valleys, wheat and rice terraces, alongside rivers and over bridges. Stops for meals and chai and then to rest in Uttarkashi.

### **23 Sunday Uttarkashi**

Rest and relax in this haven of ashrams and sadhus. Afternoon sat-sang with the Swamiji's of Uttarkashi and evening darshan in the ancient temple of Vishwanath with shrines to Durga.

### **24 Monday Gangotri • Jaspur village, Harsil District**

A day trip to Gangotri and temple of Mata Ganga with a stop to soak in the hot sulphur baths at Gangnani. Visit the village of Jaspur where Nāmarūpa is helping build a community center.

### **25 Tuesday Uttarkashi to Rishikesh**

Down from the mountains via Vashishta Guha to Rishikesh. Enjoy kirtan and Ganga Arati at the kutir where H.H. Swami Sivananda lived.

### **26 Wednesday Rishikesh**

Free day to explore and shop in Rishikesh. In the evening we will attend the Ganga Arati at Paramath Kiketan across Lakshman Jula.

### **27 Thursday Haridwar to Mathura to Vrindavan**

After sight seeing and shopping in Rishikesh we will take a train from Haridwar to Mathura and drive to Vrindavan in time for darshan.

### **28 Friday Vrindavan**

There are many temples in Vrindavan, playground of Lord Krishna. Also places associated with Sri A.C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada. We will also visit Gopeshwar Mahadeva temple where Siva dressed as a Gopi to see the Rasa Lila of Lord Krishna, meditate at the samadhi of Neem Karoli Baba, and witness Yamuna arati at sundown.

### **29 Saturday Vrindavan to Delhi International Airport**

We will have a final feast in Vrindavan before departing to Indira Gandhi International Airport in the afternoon. Reserve your outward bound flights for the night of 29th. onwards. **Om Shantih! Peace!**  
**Note:** There will be an optional visit to the Taj Mahal on our last day. Cost will be covered unless you want an extra day. ❄️





Kedarnath, Garhwal Himalaya, Uttarakhand, North India. The temple flag can be seen behind the lodging on the left. The temple, one of the 12 Jyotirlingams of India, is at an altitude of 3,583m (11,755 ft). It is near the glacier from which the Mandakini River flows. It is here that the Pandavas did penance to please Lord Siva after the Mahabharata War during which they had committed many sins. Here they found a bull which dove into the earth, but Bheema caught its tail and the hump remained. Lord Siva appeared there as a Jyotirlingam and the Pandavas were absolved of their sins. Today there is a large triangular lingam which is worshipped within the sanctum. The present structure is believed to have been built in the 8th Century AD and survived the massive flooding of 2013 during which thousands perished and many structures were washed away. October 2015 ©robertmoses



## Sadhana on a Nāmarūpa Yatra

Throughout the yatra, we hold early morning Mysore-style ashtanga yoga classes. Beginners will be guided through the basics. Yatris who practice a different style of yoga are welcome to do self-practice along with the group. We will practice sitting meditation and pranayama as much as is practically possible. We discuss Advaita Vedanta, the philosophy of non-duality. We immerse ourselves in devotion through darshan of the deities we visit. Where we can, we sit in silent meditation to help still the mind. Meals are vegetarian. We abstain from alcohol and narcotics and dress Indian style and modestly at all times.

### Daily schedule on a Nāmarūpa Yatra

Days begin early with yoga class according to the Ashtanga Yoga system and taught by a qualified teacher. After an Indian breakfast, we venture out on a temple or prayag visit and spend some time exploring the temples and most importantly going for darshan. In the afternoons there is time to rest, reflect, or explore and shop. Our main meal is in the early evening. In the evenings, we sit for silent meditation and have talks about philosophy and aspects of the temple visits. Each locality has unique demands and changes to the schedule are made accordingly.

### Nāmarūpa Yatra guides

**Robert Moses** is a veteran guide of multiple yatras throughout India. On the yatra, Robert will facilitate talks and discussions on aspects of philosophies, as well as on the myths and legends of the temples and tirthas we visit. He will also lead meditation sessions. Robert has spent much time learning and travelling in India since 1982, including many years as a renunciate student of Swami Vishnudevananda, teaching Yoga Teacher Training courses worldwide. He currently lives with his wife and three children in New Hampshire, USA. He is copublisher, with Eddie Stern, of the journal, Nāmarūpa, Categories of Indian Thought. **Radha-kunda das** is a renunciate disciple of Sri Radhanath Swami of Sri Sri Radha Gopinath Temple in Chowpatty, Mumbai, and is our indispensable guide, ever ready with alternate plans as travel in India demands. He manages Sacred Journeys India which facilitates countless yatras for groups large and small all over India.

**Barry Silver** is an authorised Ashtanga Yoga teacher and also the creator of the beautiful [GBSK](#) T-shirts. Barry will be teaching the morning Ashtanga Yoga class and lending an adept helping hand throughout having already been on a number of our yatras.

### Included in the cost of \$3,045

We want to keep your expenses reasonable but your stay comfortable. Lodging will be Indian-style, comfortable but not luxurious.

Meals will be Indian vegetarian. Internal travel will be by comfortable vehicles (A/C mini-vans) and one train journey. The cost includes accommodation, two full vegetarian meals and a light snack each day. Also included are individual and group pick up from IGA Terminal T2 and group drop off at Yatra's end, but not individual drop off.

### Not Included in The Cost

Air-fare to and from India (contact us for recommended flights), visa costs, airport taxes, tips, temple fees and offerings. Additional collections will be made for tipping bus drivers and assistants, and to engage local priests or guides. Helicopter or pony ride to Kedarnath are local charges, as are drinking water, laundry and all personal requirements during the yatra. Individual drop off at IGA is extra.

### Reservations

To secure a place on the yatra we require a non-refundable deposit of **\$108** per person along with your registration form and a signed Travel Waiver. Once received, we will assist you with further information regarding international flights, visas, immunizations, suggestions for on-going travel should you stay for a longer period, and other travel requirements. We also send a suggested reading list, a packing list, and good information about temple visits and travel in India.

**Full payment will be due by July 1, 2016.**

**Reservation Form & deposit payment:** [Click here to register.](#)

Or you can print out the reservation form and waiver and mail it with a check or money order to Nāmarūpa LLC at Nāmarūpa, P.O. Box 271 Dublin, NH 03444, USA. We will accept US and international wire transfers in US \$. [Contact us](#) for our bank information.

### Balance Payments:

Balance payments only by check, money order or wire please. We can accept credit card payments via Pay Pal, however Pay Pal takes a large percentage for the convenience of using their services. We will be obliged to add their fees to your payment. All banks charge wire fees which will also be added to your payment if you pay by wire transfer.

### Refunds

A 50% refund, excluding deposit, will be made up to August 15, 2016. No refunds thereafter. Since the cost is based on group participation, no refunds can be made for any features not taken. If cancellation occurs while the yatra is in progress, there will be no refund.

### Visas

Visas are required for US citizens. Citizens of other countries please check. For more information see <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in>. You are responsible for obtaining your visa if required.

## Health Concerns

Parts of the yatra are fairly strenuous and you will be subject to jet lag, varied climatic conditions, fairly bumpy, winding bus rides, dust and air pollution, very different food, crowds of people, unfamiliar sites and sounds. These all take their toll. On a subtler level, darshan in the temples and the sacred baths are often powerfully moving experiences and hidden feelings and emotions can be brought to the surface. These can be overwhelming for the first-timer to India, but Her incredible hospitality, warm humanity and abundant spirituality always come through and touch everyone in a deep and mysterious manner. Bring what comforts you in the way of any health needs or medications: anti-diarrhea tablets, mosquito repellent, sun block, basic first-aid items, etc. We also recommend bringing tea tree oil, Bach Rescue Remedy, and hand sanitizer. In case of emergencies, doctors and pharmacies can be found. If you have any medications that you need you must bring them with you. Bottled water is always available for you to purchase. Contact us if you have any special health concerns.

### Immunizations and Travel Waiver.

No immunizations are required but several are recommended by the Atlanta CDC. Please read, sign and return the travel waiver.

### What to Bring

You can check 2 bags on most international flights, but if possible bring only one check on bag and one small backpack for day/overnight trips. We will send you a detailed packing list once you sign up. You will require clothing for hot as well as quite cool weather at altitude. You will be able to purchase temple-appropriate clothing in India. Other items to bring include: Light yoga mat, conservative yoga practice clothes (please), lightweight rain jacket, small flashlight or head lamp, water bottle, clothesline and pins, camera, computer, iPad, mobile, etc. A travel umbrella is great for both rain and heat. A sun hat or scarf is a good idea. Try to travel as lightly as possible. Passport and money must be kept secure in a neck pouch or money belt. Have a copy of the info page of your passport. Call your bank to tell them that you are traveling in India at such and such dates so they do not block your ATM card for cash. There are ATMs everywhere and they are the easiest way to get Rs. Carry about \$200 US cash for any emergencies.

### Nāmarūpa, Categories of Indian Thought:

An important aspect of the yatra will be to gather audio-visual and literary material that may appear in future issues of Nāmarūpa. Your ideas and input are very welcome. ♪♫

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Early morning yoga class at Guptakashi Chardham Camp. Devbhumi Aviation ([devbhumiaviation.com](http://devbhumiaviation.com)) is based here for short flights to Kedarnath and other pilgrimage places.  
 Insets: Left: Bhagirathi flowing swiftly from Gangotri. Middle: Swami Janardanandaji at Sadhu Sunday Kirtan in Uttarkashi. Right: Vrindavan where Lord Krishna danced with the Gopis.  
 All photographs taken during previous Nāmarūpa Yatras. ©robertmoses