

International Folk Dance Festival

# Kullu Dussehra

(24 to 30th October 2023)



Nicholas Roerich in Kullu Dussehra 1930

## HISTORY

The International Kullu Dussehra Festival is celebrated annually at the historic Dhalpur ground since the 16th century and hundreds of local deities along with their hariyans (Followers) take part in this week long festival and pay their respectful obeisance to the Chief presiding deity “Lord Shree Raghunath Ji Maharaj” in his temporary abode at Dhalpur ground. All these local deities along with their hariyans (Followers) take part in the grand Rath Procession of Lord Shree Raghunath Ji, which is a great spectacle for the visitors.

The Dussehra Festival symbolizes not only the ancient cultural and social traditions but also cherished legacy. A part from this, traditionally the Kullu Dussehra has also been renowned as the commercial trade centre for the traders as well as the villagers.





Raghunath Temple, Kulu

## TRADITIONAL HERITAGE:

The procession then starts from the temple. The decorated horse of Narsingh remains in the front, at the foremost, after this come the raths (palanquines) of the devatas, band of the musicians and those who are traditionally required to accompany. Bijli Mahadev and Hidimiba attend it with their complete nishan (the retinue). After them come the members of the royal family, the band of priests, palanquin of Raghunath ji, the Raja and thereafter come the others.

The wooden rath (chariot) of Raghunathji which is placed permanently at the northern end of Dhalpur ground is decorated with coloured clothes, ornaments and bells. According to the tradition some deities stay on the left, some on the right and others on the backside of the rath along with their bands of musicians, priests and kardars (manager of a devata). On the arrival of the statues of Rama and Sita they are placed in the rath. After performing prayer the Raja, members of his family, the priest of Raghunath and his sevaks, with the band of musicians take round of the rath five or seven times. On the last round the Raja touches the rope attached with the rath. Immediately the people shouting the slogans like Jai Siya Ram, Jai Hanuman, pull the rath and take upto the lower ground where it is stationed during the Dussehra period in the centre of the ground.

# CULTURAL & RELIGIOUS ENSEMBLE

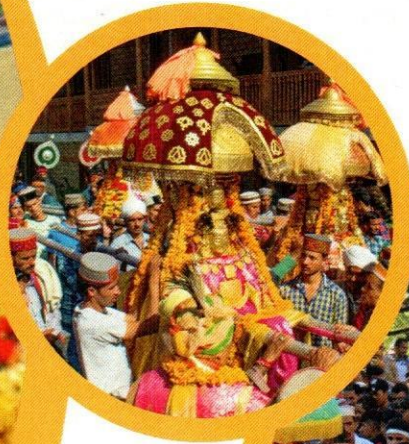
## JALEB ( PROCESSION )

During Dussehra, the Raja sits in a palki (palanquin) and begins his Jaleb (procession) from his channhi (camp). About three or four devatas also accompany the procession with their musical band. Well decorated horse of Narsingh remains in the front and they visit all the devatas in the Dhalpur ground.



## MUHALLA ( DEV MILAN )

2nd last day of Dussehra is called Muhalla. This is the most entertaining and attractive day of the whole Dussehra. On this day and also in the night the most interesting part of the festival is held. Villagers come in large numbers from whole of the Kullu district to enjoy the mela, even leaving their important works. On this day all the devatas pay attendance before Raghunathji. They come with numerous musical instruments and flags.



## LANKA-DAHAN

The seventh or the last day of the festival is known as Lanka-dahan. This is the day of return for the devi-devatas to their home. But ordinarily no devi-devta leaves Dhalpur before the completion of the last rites. Near about 300 deities alongwith their followers participate in this last day ceremony.

On the other hand devatas start gathering in front of the temple of Raghunath ji. All the devatas gather with their complete retinues. As soon as the Raja reaches near the Raghunathji all the music and dances stop. The tune of the music changes to a different tone, becoming harsh. The Raja takes circumambulation of the rath. People drag the rath to the edge of the ground towards the Lanka, a ground at a lower level on the bed of the river Beas situated towards Bhuntar. There some bushes and grass are burnt symbolising the burning of Lanka.





## **CULTURAL PERFORMANCES (FOLK, DANCE & MUSIC)**

**D**uring this festival period, cultural troupes from various States and folk dancers from abroad showcase their performances. A large number of National & International tourists also visit Kullu during this festival. Rath yatra, local folk and other cultural performances, Exhibition by various Govt. Departments and NGOs, Sports meet and local marts displaying local Handicrafts and other local products etc. are the main attractions of this festival. This year, the period of celebration of this festival is w.e.f 24th October to 30th October, 2023. In this festival, International cultural troupes also give their performance besides playback singers from Bollywood as well as cultural troupes from the other States of India and from various parts of Himachal Pradesh.

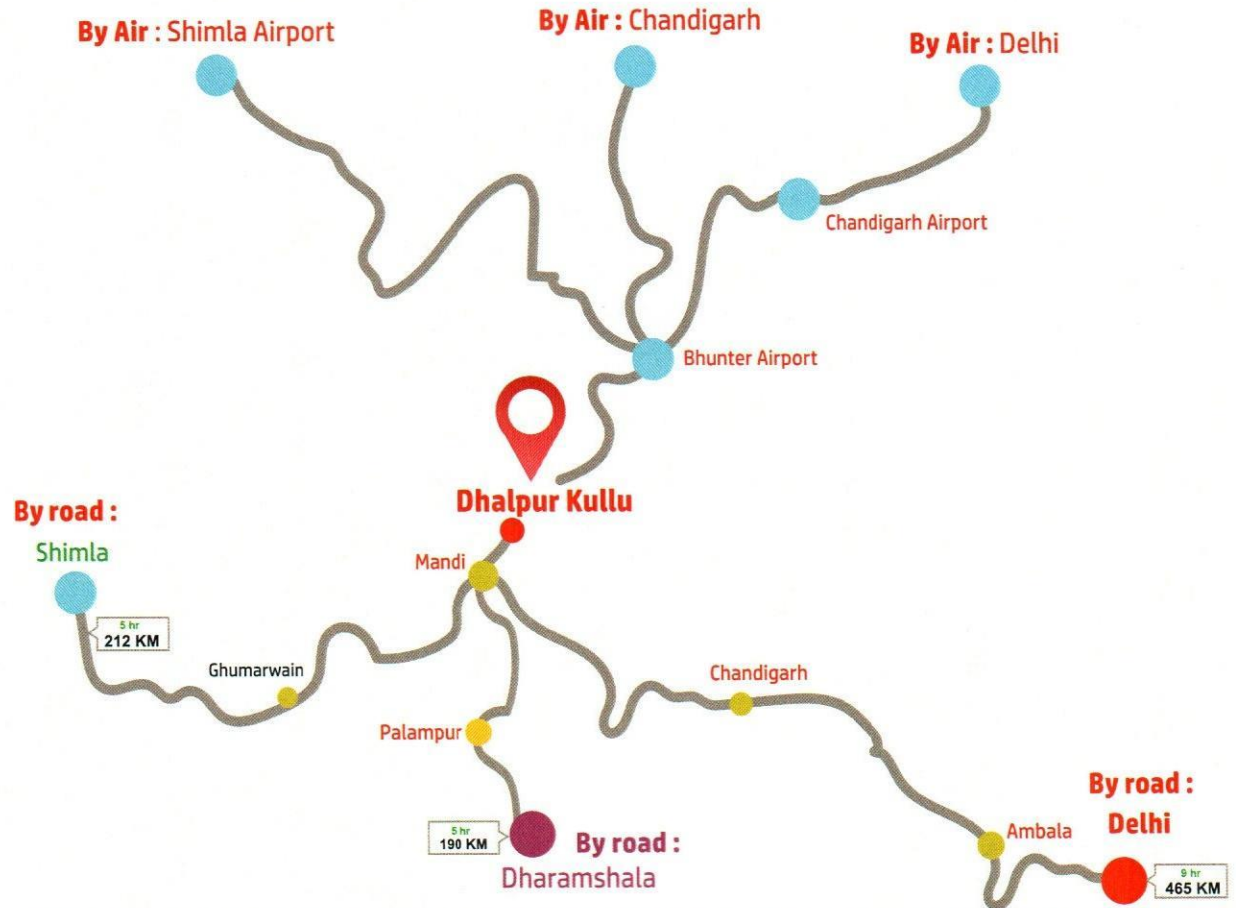




## LOCAL CUISINE

During this week long festival period a food court is established in exhibition ground where local and traditional delicious cuisine are available which is also a attraction to the food lover in this festival.

# CONNECTIVITY



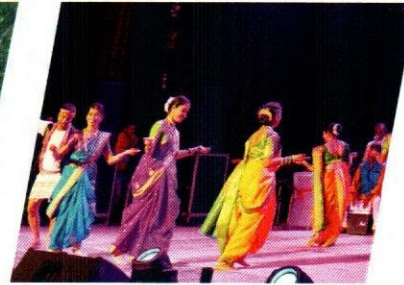
## COMMERCIAL TRADE CENTRE

Traditionally, kullu dussehra was renowned as the commercial trade centre for the traders as well as the villagers. The villagers used to sell their crop produce, local crafts like blankets, pattu-pattis, wooden crafts, shingli-mingli, kadu, patish and many types of herbs were traded. The products from Lahaul and Ladakh were also traded in this festival like pashmina, carpets etc. The traders used to bring foreign goods to sell here and buy local goods to sell them in the plains. Due to convenience of transport and connectivity, many traders have started coming to dussehra. Commercial trade has now increased manifold.



## AMUSEMENT ACTIVITIES

There is an open air auditorium called “Lal Chand Prarthi Kalakendra” where during the seven days cultural programme are held till 10.00PM and one night till 12.00 PM. In this stage, Local performer, State performer, National performer, Bolly wood star and International performer entertain the public. For amusement of children's Jhulas, Toy train & Mickey Mouse and so many amusement activities are available in this festival. National level competition of valley ball, Kabaddi, & Women Tug of war are the main attraction of the sports event in this festival. Sports lover can enjoy the sports during the festival.



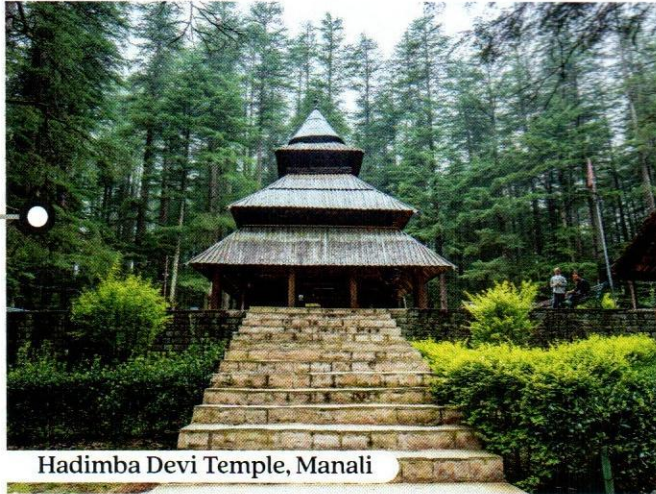
## VIBRANCY OF KULLU VALLEY

The Kullu valley is renowned for its natural scenic beauty, Himalyan Landscape and cultural heritage. Kullu valley has huge potential in terms of tourism, handicraft, horticulture and so on. The Kullu Dussehra is the melting pot of the valley culture, traditional, legacy, commerce, tourism & natural heritage.

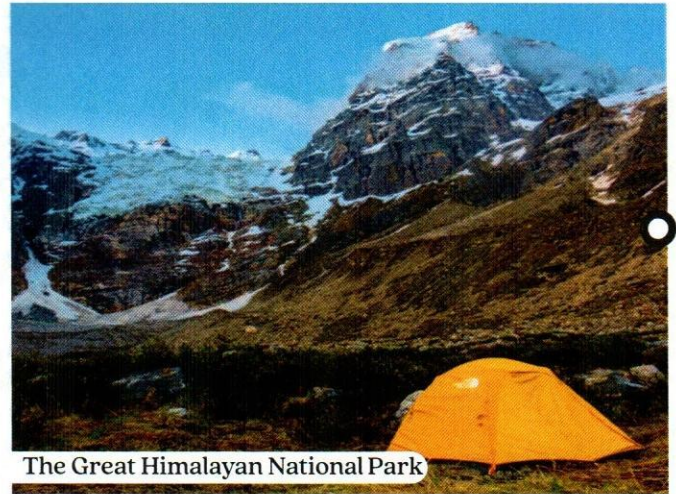
The Atal Tunnel Rohtang, Great Himalyan National Park ( UNESCO World natural heritage) and their are other attraction of the valley which added to great valure and richness to the Kullu Dussehra festival.

Atal Tunnel, Rohtang





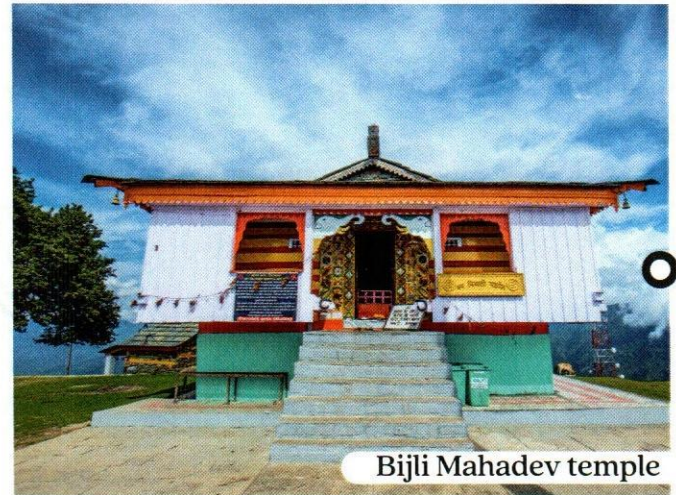
Hadimba Devi Temple, Manali



The Great Himalayan National Park



Shangarh, Kullu



Bijli Mahadev temple



Sareolsar Lake, Jalori Pass

# चौला दुशहरै बै

( चलो कुल्लू दशहरा )



## Organizer: \_\_\_\_\_

### Dussehra Festival Committee

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