

Holy Lakes of India
Narayan Sarovar | Nakki Lake
Prashar Lake | Pushkar Lake | Suraj Tal

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India is a land that abounds with temples; religious pilgrimage sites; and holy springs and lakes. The most sacred spots are, in fact, so powerful that their spiritual intensity is actually palpable and visitors get to feel the heightened energy there.

In this post, we bring you a feature on some of the holiest lakes of India. Many of these lakes are associated with temples and interesting legends as well. Here is Part I of our article. We will continue with the feature in our next post.

Narayan Sarovar

Narayan Sarovar or Narayansar is a sacred land for Hindus and is situated on the Kori Creek. This lake is located in the Lakhpat Taluka of Kutch District, Gujarat. The ancient temple of Koteswar, which lies just 4 kilometers ahead, is associated with this site.

Narayan Sarovar is one of the 5 holy lakes of Hinduism, collectively referred to as the Panch-Sarovar. The others are Mansarovar in Tibet, Pampa in Karnataka, Bhuvaneshwar in Orissa and Pushkar in Rajasthan. According to legend, a long time ago, the Saraswati River had an outlet into the sea, near present-day Narayan Sarovar. The waters of this lake were filled with the holy waters of River Saraswati.

This lake is mentioned in the Puranas. At one time, a drought hit the area and so, it was dry and arid all around. The people, animals and birds living there suffered and many died due to extreme dehydration.

The Devas and sages fervently prayed to Lord Sri Maha Vishnu to bring relief to the region. The Lord, in all his splendour, descended there and touched the land with his toe. Immediately, a lake sprang up there, bestowing the much-needed relief for everyone there. To this day, the land and the lake are revered as a holy place of pilgrimage.



Mahavishnu
(Temple Mural Reprint)

The Sarovar (lake) is known to be very ancient and is considered to have existed since several centuries. Some accounts suggest that it was discovered by Alexander the Great and lasted till the change of the course of the Indus River. It was renewed in part after the great earthquake in 1819.

There was also an ancient temple of Adinarayan in the village, which was looked after by priests from the Kanphata sect. It was seized by a Sanyasi or Atii named Narangar, from Junagadh. Narangar created long and broad embankments, dividing the water into a number of bathing spaces. He furnished all the sides, except the east, with flights of stone steps; also building rest-houses everywhere.

Temples

In Narayansar, one can find temples dedicated to the worship of Shri Trikamraji, Laxminarayan, Govardhannathji, Dwarkanath, Adinarayan, Ranchodraji and Goddess Lakshmi. The entire temple complex is surrounded by a fortified wall, outside which there is a cluster of small village houses. Formerly, it was connected to the mainland by a yellow stone causeway, about 3000 feet long and 15 feet wide, built in 1863 by a Bhatia from Bombay, named Gokaldas Liladhar Padsha. Now, there is a new causeway in place of it.

The temples complex comprises seven stone temples, situated along a paved courtyard. They can be approached from the lake by flights of stone steps. Vagheli Mahakunvar, the wife of Rao Deshalji I, the Rao of Kutch State, was displeased with the priest of Dwarka. After discussing with her Brahmans, she vowed to build Narayansar in order to rival the beauty of Dwarka.

Accordingly, she built the first temples of Lakshminarayan and Trikamray in 1734. They were constructed in the same style as of the temples of Dwarka. She used the revenues and taxes collected from the adjoining villages to build the places of worship.

The temple of Trikamray resembles that of Koteswar in style and shape. The earthquake of 1819 brought down the central dome, but has since been rebuilt. The space between this central dome and the shrine is ornamented in black and white marble. The doors are silver-plated. In the main shrine, on a silver throne, stands the image of Trikamray in black marble. Under the throne is a figure, again in black marble, of Vishnu's vahana (vehicle), Garuda. Over the image are forty gold and silver parasols, which have been offered by devotees.

The other five temples built by Vagheli Mahakunvar form a row of six domes, supported by 14 pillars and 48 pilasters. They are ornamented with carving on their bases, shafts and capitals. The sides of each pillar support the lintel of the next, thus forming an imposing, continuous pattern of scrolled volutes. The temples have a common verandah, with entrances in the front. Each temple has its own inscription.

The shrine of Goddess Lakshmi does not have any special feature. That of Dwarkanath or Ranchhodji has a small shrine opposite to it, with a large image of Garuda, holding a weapon, impaling a cobra.



Garuda
(Brass Statue)

The third shrine, dedicated to Govardhannath, is again simple in construction. The fourth is dedicated to Adinarayan and has a black stone pavement in the gallery. Opposite that is a small, recently built shrine, dedicated to Gopalji.

The last shrine, dedicated to the worship of Lakshminarayan, has silver-plated doors and a throne and canopy of silver. In line with this shrine is that of Kalyanray, built in 1828, by Rao Deshalji II. This temple is richly carved and ornamented in stone and wood and the doors are silver-plated. The canopy inside the shrine stands on a pedestal and is supported by four silver pillars, which are richly engraved and carved. The idol is made of polished black marble.

Apart from these main temples, the soft sandstone near the fort has been hollowed and sculpted through the centuries, to form caves and shrines. They are known as the Ramgupha, Lakshmangupha, and Sheshgupha caves.

It is said that Vallabhacharya visited this place - this further raises its spiritual significance. This pilgrimage site is considered sacred also for followers of Pushtimarg.

Yet other attractions of this site are the two annual fairs held here. One is in the month of Chaitra (April-May) and the other, from the 10th to the 15th days of the month of Kartik (November-December). These fairs attract scores of tourist pilgrims, who gather to perform funeral ceremonies on the bank of the Narayan Sarovar.

Narayan Sarovar Chinkara Sanctuary

In 1981, the area around the village was identified as wildlife sanctuary. Narayan Sarovar Chinkara Sanctuary, also referred to as Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary or Narayan Sarovar Wildlife Sanctuary, is a unique desert forest ecosystem, which is said to be the only one of its kind in India. Situated in the arid zone, it comprises 15 endangered wildlife species and has desert vegetation, consisting mostly of thorn and scrub forests.

This biodiversity encourages the growth and nurturing of some rare flora and fauna. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has identified this region as one of the last remaining habitats for the cheetah and is trying to encourage the growth of the species here.

The most sighted animal here is the Chinkara or the Indian gazelle, after which the sanctuary is named. This place is estimated to have 1200-1500 of these creatures here.

How to Get Here

Narayan Sarovar is located about 125 kilometers away from Bhuj. Buses are the only available means of public transport for tourists to commute across the barren land of Kutch. Those wishing to visit the sanctuary will have to hire a private car or other vehicle, which can be booked from Bhuj. Accommodation and food are available only in the Narayan Sarovar area.

Nakki Lake

Nakki Lake is a lake nestled in the hill station of Mount Abu in the Aravalli Range of the Sirohi District of Rajasthan. The lake is about half a mile in length, about quarter of a mile in width and about 20-30 feet deep towards the dam on the west. This is one of the major tourist spots of Mount Abu.

Legend

According to Hindu legend, the Nakki Lake is very ancient. It is so named, as it is believed to have been dug out with nails (or Nakh in Hindi). According to one story, the lake was dug by Gods to live in, to protect themselves against the evil demon Bashkali.

Yet another tale states that a sculptor called Rasiya Balam dug the lake to impress the ruling King there. The King had promised to marry off his daughter to anyone who could dig a lake with his bare nails, and that too, within one night. Though Balam succeeded in his mission, the Queen refused to let her daughter marry him. The temple of Rasiya Balam and Princess Kunwari Kanya is located just behind the famous Dilwara Jain Temple in Mount Abu.

Some believe that Rasiya Balam was an aged sage and also an incarnation of Lord Shiva himself. They also say that the Princess was the embodiment of Mata Parvati, the Divine Consort of Shiva. It is said that, due to the betrayal of the Queen, the couple would come back again and again, in order to complete their love story.



Shiva Parvati

(Poster)

Hence, Nakki Lake is an important symbol of romance in Rajasthan. Incidentally, it is also the largest man-made lake in India, situated at the height of 11,000 meters.

Significance

The Nakki Lake is revered as a sacred body of water by the Garacia Tribe of Rajasthan. During their festival in Shukla Paksha, which falls in the month of April, the members of this tribe visit the lake and offer obeisance to their ancestors. They even consecrate their nails in the lake in commemoration of the love of Rasiya Balam for the Princess.

Apart from all of the above, the lake is very significant, as Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were immersed here on February 12, 1948. The Gandhi Ghat was constructed around it thereafter.

Attractions near Nakki Lake

- The Raghunath Temple and the Majaraja Jaipur Palace are situated on the hill near the Nakki Lake.
- A rock, in the shape of a toad, actually called Toad Rock, is yet another attraction here. This rock looks very much like a toad is about to plunge into the lake from the side of the rock facing the hill.
- By the side of the lake lies a path leading to Bandits Love, Sunset Point.
- The Temple of Rasiya Balam and Kunwari Kanya is also a much-visited tourist spot.
- Like most lakes, boating is a major tourist-pleaser in Nakki Lakes and is one of the must-do things here. This ride gives visitors the entire experience of the serenity of the lake and its surrounding environs. Boating timings are from 9:30am-6:00pm. Horse riding is yet another enjoyable activity.

Prashar Lake

Prashar Lake, also known as Parashar Lake, lies 49 kilometers north of Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, India. A serene, peaceful spot, its main feature is a pagoda-like temple, dedicated to the worship of sage Parashar. The lake is oval in shape and is one of the most offbeat, yet paradise-like places in Himachal Pradesh. The lake has crystal clear water and its surface elevation is about 2,730 meters. It also has a small Phumdi island or floating island within itself.

Details

The Prashar Lake is a sight for the Gods, with its deep blue waters, greenery all around and snow-capped peaks in the distance. It is believed that sage Prashar meditated here. Looking down at the fast-flowing Rives Beas, this lake can be approached via Drang.

The unique, round floating island inside the lake is a natural phenomenon. It is composed of decomposed plant matter, held together by the oxygen in the plants' roots. It covers about 7 percent of the lake area and keeps moving freely around the body of water.

Legend

Legend has it that the Pagoda-style temple near the Prashar Lake was built in the 13th century. It is unclear how deep the body of water is. No diver has yet been able to accurately determine its depth.

Bhima, one of the Pandava Princes, is said to have created the lake. As the story goes, after the Kurukshetra War in the Mahabharata, the Pandavas were returning, along with Lord

Kamrunag. During their travel, they reached this place and loved the tranquility here. Utterly charmed, they decided to live here permanently.

Bhima, the strongest of the brothers, rammed his elbow into one of the mountains and thus, created a big dent in the land. He fractured his elbow in the process, but the dent eventually became the Prashar Lake.

The Prashar Lake Trek

Nestling amongst mountains and far enough from civilization, the Prashar Lake is a popular destination for trekkers and campers. If you are up for it, you can pitch a tent on the hills surrounding the lake, outside the barricades set up by the temple authorities.

How to Get Here

There is a direct bus service from Mandi to Prashar Lake, during dry seasons. The bus drops visitors at around 1130am and halts till 1:00pm. During winters, the area receives snowfall, thus interrupting the bus service. At this time, one can travel till Baggi and then trek for about 7.5 kilometers to arrive at Prashar Lake. This is a simple trek, which would last about 5 hours or so.

For those wishing to travel by car, bike or private vehicle, there is a road going all the way to the Lake. So this makes for an ideal weekend getaway for those living close by, like in Chandigarh or Delhi. You could leave your vehicle at a nearby village and trek from there as well.

If you are looking to stay at Prashar Lake, you have several options to choose from. You can find two guest houses, run by the Government. Alternatively, you can even reside at the Dharamshala, run by the temple. This is available at a nominal cost. Further, you can also stay at one of the couple of camp sites on the hill or keep Mandi as the base and cover the lake area within one day.

Pushkar Lake

Pushkar Lake or Pushkar Sarovar is situated in the town of Pushkar in the Ajmer district of Rajasthan. This lake nestles in a valley formed by two parallel ranges of the Aravalli hills. It lies at an elevation of about 650-856 meters. The mountain range surrounding it is called the “Nag Parbat”, which means, “Snake Mountain”. It separates the lake from the city of Ajmer.

This sacred lake is mentioned in ancient Hindu scriptures as early as the 4th century BC. It is described as “Tirtha-Raj” or the king of pilgrimage sites. This lake is associated with a legend of Brahma, who has a temple here, which is famous not only in India, but also all over the world.

Pushkar Lake is surrounded by 52 bathing ghats, where pilgrims gather in large numbers to take a holy dip, especially around the time of Kartik Poornima (October-November), when the Pushkar Fair is held. Over 500 temples can be found around the lake area.

The lake has a water surface area of 22 hectares and is a perennial lake, sourced by rainfall over the catchment area. As its periphery is surrounded by the bathing ghats, the surface water flow from the catchment into the lake is channeled by various arches under a footbridge. This footbridge is built to help pilgrims perform a parikrama (circumambulation) around the entire lake, including all its ghats.

Flora and Fauna

When the lake is full, it is rich in many types of fishes, aquatic and plant life. Since it is situated in an arid environment, the flora and fauna largely feature desert types of plants, including cactus and thorny bushes. One can also find camels and cattle here.

Man-eating crocodiles used to be a constant menace at one time in this area. However, they were captured by the British and were shifted to a nearby reservoir.

History

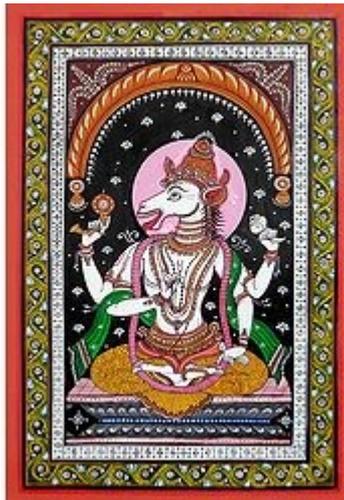
As mentioned earlier, the existence of Pushkar Lake has been recorded right from the 4th century BC. Inscriptions found in Greek and Kushan coins and also those found at Sanchi are proof of the lake's existence as early as the 2nd century BC.

As per legend, a 9th century Rajput King, Nahar Rao Parihar of Mandore was once chasing a white boar to the lakeshore, while on his hunting expedition. He felt thirsty and so, he dipped his hand into the lake. No sooner had he done so than the leukoderma marks on his hand disappeared. Realizing that this lake was sacred, he got it restored to its previous glory. It has since become a holy site for pilgrims, who consider that this water will heal them of all their skin problems.

Creation and Restoration of Pushkar Lake

Pushkar Lake is an artificially created body of water. In the 12th century, a dam was built across the headwaters of the Luni River. The 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh is believed to have recited the Guru Granth Sahib on the banks of this lake.

The lake lost a bit of its importance during the Mughal Rule. In around 1615, the Mughal Emperor Jahangir built his hunting lodge on the shores of this lake. At present, it lies in ruins. He kept coming here during several hunting trips. This act violated the local tradition of not killing the animals residing here. He committed yet another heinous crime - that of breaking the image of Varaha, the boar Avatara of Lord Vishnu.



Varaha Avatar
(Orissa Patta Painting)

Thereafter, Jahangir's son, Aurangzeb, destroyed several temples around the area, which were rebuilt later. However, during the rule of Jahangir's father, Emperor Akbar, there was a revival of the lake and the Ajmer Dargah, dedicated to Sufi saint Moinuddin Chishti, whom Akbar ardently followed.

The Rajput rulers of Amber, Bundi, Bikaner and Jaisalmer then worked tirelessly to restore the sanctity of the lake and its temples. Modern additions of ghats and the footbridge; plus the restoration of the Varaha and other temples by several others has also vastly contributed to bringing the area back to its glory.

Legend

According to the Padma Purana, Brahma saw the demon Vajranabha trying to harass and kill people and children. He slew the demon with his Padma-astra (lotus-flower weapon). In the process, the lotus petals fell to the ground at three places. There immediately emerged three lakes in these places, namely, Pushkar Lake or Jyeshtha (elder or greater) Pushkar, Madhya (middle) Pushkar and Kanishta (lowest or youngest) Pushkar.

When Brahma descended on Earth, he named the place as Pushkar, the place where the flower (Pushpa) fell. It is also said that the sacred River Saraswati emerged at Pushkar as five streams.

The three lakes were assigned to the Hindu Trinity, namely, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, respectively.

Brahma then decided to perform a yagna at the main Pushkar Lake. However, his wife

Saraswati could not be present there at the time, to perform vital karmas during the yagna. Brahma therefore married a Gujjar, a woman from an agricultural race, named Gayathri. He then completed his yagna with Gayathri sitting beside him.



Lord Brahma
(Temple Mural Reprint)

When Saraswati arrived at the venue, she was upset to see Gayathri and cursed Brahma that he would be worshipped only and only in Pushkar, and nowhere else. It is now considered to be one of the five holiest centers of pilgrimage for Hindus. The scriptures mention that doing a parikrama (circumambulation) of these three lakes is very auspicious and would wipe out the devotee's sins.

Other Legends

- Kalidas referred to this lake in his famous work, Abhijnanashaakuntalam.
- The Ramayana narrates that Sage Vishwamitra performed penance at this lake for a thousand years, in order to appease Brahma. In spite of Brahma appearing before him and offering him the status of Rajarishi (Royal Sage), he continued his penance. But the apsara (celestial nymph) Menaka came there to take a bath. She was sent by Indra, the King of the Devas, to distract the sage. Vishwamitra was charmed by her beauty and they ended up living together for a period of ten years. Thus, Vishwamitra's severe penance was broken. Once he realized what had happened, the sage left Menaka to go to the North and continue his meditation. But before leaving, he built the temple for Brahma at Pushkar.
- The Mahabharata states that Pushkar is the holy place of Lord Vishnu and is the Adi Tirtha, where millions of Tirthas or holy places are united during sunrise and sunset.

Attractions in Pushkar

Pushkar offers pilgrims and tourists several monuments of national importance. The Pushkar city itself; the Brahma Temple and other temples; and the ghats on the periphery of the lake are some of the major attractions here. Needless to say, the lake itself is the center of attraction.

Pushkar City

Pushkar City is one of the most ancient cities of India. Though the actual origin of this city is unknown, the numerous legends associated with its and its socio-cultural-historical background attract several hundreds of tourists every month. Apart from that, the annual Pushkar Fair held here brings in scores of visitors from all over the world.

Temples

Apart from the main Brahma Temple, one can find over 500 temples in this region. Of these, 80 are large temples and the rest are quite small. The Brahma temple, which was restored in the 14th century, is believed to be over 2000 years old. This was once said to be the only Brahma Temple in the world, thus making it even more significant. Though there are a few more temples dedicated to Brahma at present, this is by far the most ancient and the most sacred as well.

Other major temples around the area are the Varaha Temple, the Savitri (or Saraswati) Temple and the Gayathri Temple.

Ghats

The Ghats or the stone steps constructed on a gradual slope, in order to descend to the lake, are the other main attraction in Pushkar. These ghats are also used for sacred rites, such as taking a holy dip in the lake, worshipping ancestors and so on.

Of the 52 ghats, 10 are very important. They have other contiguous ghats adjoining them. These 10 ghats are the Varaha Ghat, Dadhich Ghat, Saptarishi Ghats, Gwalior Ghat, Kota Ghat, Gau ghat, Yag Ghat, Jaipur Ghat, Karni Ghat and Gangaur Ghat. Along with the Lake, these main ghats; which have constantly been refurbished over the centuries; have also been declared as national heritage monuments. The Government of Rajasthan has stipulated a strict code of conduct while taking a dip in these ghats.

Pushkar Fair

The city of Pushkar and the lake in particular witnesses hordes of visitors during the annual Pushkar Fair or Pushkar mela, a mega event held in honour of Lord Brahma. The main fair starts on Prabodhini Ekadashi, the 11th lunar day, and ends on Kartik Poornima, the full moon day of the month of Kartik (October-November). Visitors bathe in the ghats and perform 3

parikramas of the lake and sadhus (holy men) gather and stay in caves, till the Poornima day.

The Camel Fair; which is believed to be the largest camel fair in the whole of Asia; is also quite popular at this time. The animals are colourfully decorated and paraded on the sand dunes in the southern part of the lake. Tribals, dressed up in their traditional attire, also arrive here from adjoining village. Visitors are regaled with several colourful and vibrant cultural events, folk music and dance shows, camel races and a cattle fair as well. The tug-of-war competition held at this time is one of the most popular sports for tourists to indulge in.

The Fair is now jointly organized and conducted by the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC), the Pushkar Municipal Board and the Animal Husbandry Department of Rajasthan.

Environmental and Conservation Issues

The natural environment of Pushkar Lake and its surrounding have been deteriorating at an alarming rate since the last few decades. The rise in tourists and tourist facilities are cited to be the main cause of the destruction and decay of flora and fauna in the area; as also deforestation. The emergence of new buildings and market areas, the resultant rise in the inflow of sewage and so on, has caused serious weather and water pollution issues.

In recent years, the water level of the Lake has reduced considerably, leaving very little water during the festival season, for devotees to bathe in. In 2009, alternate arrangements had to be made to facilitate sacred bathing, by sourcing water from one of the upper ghats, fed by tube wells.

As part of conservation measures, the Government of Rajasthan is undertaking de-silting, de-weeding, afforestation and water treatment. Besides, it is also doing its best to educate people by conducting mass environmental awareness programmes.

Suraj Tal

Suraj Tal, also known as Surya Taal, literally means “Lake of the Sun God”. Situated just below the Bara-lacha-la Pass in the Lahaul and Spiti valley of Himachal Pradesh, it is considered very sacred. Suraj Tal is the third highest lake in India, being about 4,890 meters above sea level. It is also the 21st highest one in the world.

This lake is the source of the Bhaga River, which joins the Chandra River downstream to form the Chandrabhaga River in Himachal Pradesh. As it enters Jammu and Kashmir, it is called the Chenab River. All the other major tributaries of the Chandrabhaga originate from the glacier, which lies close to the Chandra Taal Lake in the Spiti district.

Suraj Tal is fed from the glaciers and torrential streams coming from the Bara-lacha-la pass,

which is about 8 kilometers long. The Bara-lacha-la Pass also feeds the Chandra and Yunan Rivers, which flow from the northwest and north, respectively.

Terrain

Suraj Tal is located in the Upper Himalayan Zone, which is sparsely populated, due to its extreme cold weather and difficult terrain. The area is said to receive snowfall all the year round. The highest recorded temperature here is 13 degrees centigrade, whereas the lowest was -27 degrees centigrade. The snow on the slopes is loosely bonded, with high winds redistributing it. The precipitation of snow usually starts melting in May.

The Bhaga Valled formed from this lake up to Tandi is essentially a long, narrow gorge, which is devoid of any form of vegetation. As it approaches Chandra River at Tandi, it widens with some of the middle slopes having some greenlands. The lower hill slopes feature trees and plantations, which are cultivated to meet food, fodder and wood requirements.

Suraj Tal is surrounded by imposing mountains on all sides. It combines a stunning visual display of snow-capped mountains, arid hills and clear blue waters in their midst. During winters, the mountains are entirely covered with snow, thus making the terrain frigid and unapproachable.

Legend

According to legend, Chandra was the daughter of Chandra Deva, the Moon God. Bhaga was the only son of Surya Deva, the Sun God. Both of them happened to see each other at the Bara-lacha-la and it was instant love for them. Their parents, however, did not approve of their love and were against them marrying each other.



Sun God
(Brass Wall Hanging)

Surya Deva wanted his son to take care of the aspect of bringing light to the world by creating bright, sunny days. Chandra Deva, on the other hand, wanted his daughter to light up the nights with his cool light. The parents' disapproval of their relationship saddened Chandra and Bhaga. They finally decided to meet at the Bara-lacha-la Pass, elope and get married.

Suraj means the Sun and Tal means Lake. This is the reason why this lake is so much revered. It is believed that taking a holy dip in the waters of this lake absolves one of all sins, thoroughly cleansing him or her, right down to their soul.

Tourist Attractions

Lahaul Spiti valley is a popular destination for Indian and foreign tourists who are fond of indulging in road trips, trekking and motorcycling. This area covers the Suraj Tal and the Bara-lacha-la Pass, on the route from Manali to Leh.

Those wishing to go on treks can join a trekking tour group of their choice. One of the more popular routes is the Zingzingbar - Suraj Tal - Bara-lacha-la route, which involves a 3-kilometer trek along the Bhaga River, crossing a bridge to the North bank and then a further 2.5-kilometer climb on a steep foot trail, right up to Suraj Tal.

Motorcyclists undertake tours when the weather is good enough and the area is still approachable. During trips from Manali to Leh, the route between Patseo to Bara-lacha-la is rough and about 30 kilometers long. Along this route, one also gets to see another small lake, called Deepak Tal; just before Suraj Tal.

How to Get Here

Suraj Tal is situated 65 kilometers from Keylong, the district headquarters of the Lahaul Spiti district. This region can be approached by the National Highway NH 21, also referred to as the Leh-Manali Highway.

The NH 21 is a vital road link for the residents of that district. This road skirts Suraj Tal and is only 3 kilometers short of the Bara-lacha-la Pass. It is important to note that it remains inaccessible from the Rohtang Pass to Leh during winter months, that is, from November to April, since it is completely snowbound during this time.

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