DISCOVER VOYAGE CHRONICLES

Kashmir

A classic Srinagar–Gulmarg–Pahalgam–Sonamarg route with enough time for Dal Lake and the Mughal Gardens, plus realistic mountain-road buffers.

7 DAYS	Best for: first-time Kashmir travellers who want the iconic valleys without changing hotels every night.
ROUTE	Srinagar (2N) → Gulmarg (1N) → Pahalgam (2N) → Srinagar (2N with Sonamarg day trip)

CURATED WITH CURRENT OFFICIAL TOURISM GUIDANCE + PRACTICAL ROUTING + VEGETARIAN FOOD PICKS

Research refreshed: 13 September 2026 • Always re-check opening hours, transport and local advisories before booking.

Trip at a glance

Ideal trip length	7 days / 6 nights
Pacing	Use Srinagar as anchor, but allow 1 Gulmarg night + 2 Pahalgam nights for less daily road fatigue
Transport	Pre-book reliable local cab / package; local union vehicles may be required for some Pahalgam valley sightseeing
Book first	Good Srinagar hotel/houseboat, Gulmarg stay / gondola tickets when available, Pahalgam stay, airport transfers
Vegetarian ease	Good in Srinagar and Pahalgam; more limited but manageable in Gulmarg/Sonamarg
Safety/weather	Conditions can change quickly. Review current government / local travel advisories and weather before each mountain excursion

Route overview

Day	Route / Focus	Overnight
1	Arrive Srinagar • Dal Lake + Mughal Gardens	Srinagar
2	Old Srinagar + Shankaracharya / Hazratbal	Srinagar
3	Srinagar → Gulmarg	Gulmarg
4	Gulmarg → Pahalgam	Pahalgam
5	Pahalgam valleys + Lidder	Pahalgam
6	Pahalgam → Srinagar • slow evening	Srinagar
7	Sonamarg day trip OR Srinagar buffer + departure	—

DVC route rule: this itinerary is built around geographic flow and realistic energy, not maximum pin-count. If weather, queues or road delays hit, protect the major experience and drop the lowest-priority stop.

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1 • Arrive Srinagar + Dal Lake

Base	Srinagar
Morning	Airport transfer; check in and rest.
Afternoon	Mughal Gardens cluster - Nishat / Shalimar / Chashme Shahi depending time and season.
Evening	Shikara ride on Dal Lake near sunset.
Vegetarian pick	Krishna Vaishno Dhaba for a well-known vegetarian option; hotel can also prepare simple veg meals.
Sleep	Srinagar
DVC note	Use a houseboat only if you specifically want the experience; a hotel can be easier for multi-day transfers.

DAY 2 • Srinagar heritage + viewpoints

Base	Srinagar
Morning	Shankaracharya Temple viewpoint early if accessible and suitable for your group.
Afternoon	Old City / Jamia Masjid area or Hazratbal; add Pari Mahal if you prefer views over markets.
Evening	Boulevard Road and local shopping - saffron, dry fruits, crafts from reputable shops.
Vegetarian pick	Krishna Vaishno Dhaba or vegetarian options in modern Srinagar cafés.
Sleep	Srinagar
DVC note	Keep Old City plans flexible around local conditions and prayer/event timings.

DAY 3 • Srinagar → Gulmarg

Base	Gulmarg
Morning	Drive to Gulmarg; settle in before the main activity window.
Afternoon	Gondola if operating and tickets confirmed; otherwise meadow walks / viewpoints.
Evening	Quiet hotel evening.
Vegetarian pick	Bakshi Restaurant / hotel vegetarian menu; pre-confirm Jain needs.
Sleep	Gulmarg
DVC note	Weather can shut high-mountain activities; never make the whole day depend on one cable-car slot.

DAY 4 • Gulmarg → Pahalgam

Base	Pahalgam
Morning	Depart after breakfast; route toward Pahalgam with comfort breaks.
Afternoon	Check in and walk beside the Lidder River / main market.
Evening	Early dinner and relaxed evening.
Vegetarian pick	Dana Pani is widely listed as a pure-veg/vegetarian-friendly option; Punjabi Rasoi is another simple choice.
Sleep	Pahalgam
DVC note	Do not add a full valley sightseeing circuit on the same day as the inter-town drive.

DAY 5 • Pahalgam valleys

Base	Pahalgam
Morning	Use local union taxi as required for Betaab Valley / Aru Valley / Chandanwari combinations; choose 2-3 stops.
Afternoon	Return for late lunch and rest; optional Baisaran pony visit only if you are comfortable with animal-use conditions and trail quality.
Evening	Riverside walk.
Vegetarian pick	Dana Pani / Nathus Rasoi / hotel vegetarian dinner.
Sleep	Pahalgam
DVC note	Aru + Betaab usually give a strong scenic day without trying to tick every valley.

DAY 6 • Pahalgam → Srinagar

Base	Srinagar
Morning	Slow breakfast, then return to Srinagar.
Afternoon	Stop at an appropriate en-route site only if road conditions and energy allow.
Evening	Final Dal Lake / shopping evening.
Vegetarian pick	Vegetarian Kashmiri-style dum aloo, nadru, haak-style greens; confirm cooking medium / stock.
Sleep	Srinagar
DVC note	This return day acts as a weather / road buffer before the final excursion or flight.

DAY 7 • Sonamarg OR departure buffer

Base	—
Morning	If flight is late and roads/weather are stable, Sonamarg day trip can work; otherwise keep Srinagar local and stress-free.
Afternoon	Return with a large airport buffer.
Evening	Depart.
Vegetarian pick	Eat before the airport if timing allows.
Sleep	—
DVC note	For an early flight, skip Sonamarg entirely and move that excursion to Day 6 on a longer itinerary.

Vegetarian food plan

Restaurant operations change, especially in mountain / seasonal destinations. Treat the names below as a strong shortlist, then re-check the latest hours and reservation policy close to travel.

Area	Vegetarian-friendly options	What to order / note
Srinagar	Krishna Vaishno Dhaba + hotel restaurants	A long-running vegetarian option with vegan choices listed in current traveller data.
Pahalgam	Dana Pani, Nathus Rasoi, Punjabi Rasoi	Current listings show multiple vegetarian / vegan-friendly choices.
Gulmarg	Bakshi Restaurant + hotel kitchens	Pre-confirm pure-veg/Jain needs; options are fewer than Srinagar.
Sonamarg	Tourist-market dhabas / hotel restaurants	Carry backup snacks because seasonal operations vary.

Practical planning checklist

- Layered clothing - mountain temperatures swing
- Water-resistant shoes
- Sunglasses + sunscreen
- Personal medicines
- Power bank
- Printed/downloaded booking confirmations and IDs

Where to stay - quick framework

Choose location before hotel brand: prioritise a base that reduces repeated cross-city driving, has easy evening food access, and matches your earliest sightseeing starts. For road trips, secure parking / driver accommodation and a reliable breakfast can matter more than a decorative “view room”.

Booking sequence

1. Lock trip dates and intercity transport.
2. Book the hardest-to-replace experience / attraction.
3. Book hotels by neighbourhood / route logic.
4. Add local transport / guide.
5. Re-check restaurant hours, weather and local advisories 48-72 hours before each key day.

Planning notes & research sources

This guide is a curated planning document, not a live booking confirmation. Attraction timings, roads, weather, prices and restaurant operations can change. Re-check official sources close to travel.

Incredible India - incredibleindia.gov.in

Current official Kashmir route suggestions covering Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg and Mughal Gardens.

JKTDC - jktdc.co.in

Official package patterns and destination sequencing for Srinagar / Pahalgam / Gulmarg / Sonamarg.

Current traveller restaurant data - Tripadvisor / current local listings

Cross-checked Krishna Vaishno Dhaba in Srinagar and Dana Pani / other vegetarian choices in Pahalgam.

Travel advisories - Official government / airline / local administration channels

Review close to travel because weather, security and road access can change quickly.

Save this guide, customise the hotel layer, then book the fixed-date pieces first: intercity trains / flights, high-demand attractions, and any guided mountain/desert transport.