

Trip To Kashmir 2021

My six-week trip to India was a boutique of reciprocated sentiments for my motherland, especially the part spent in Kashmir. As the nature of human life is, it was not perfect. Along with the flowers there were some thorns.

I spent seventeen glorious days in the lap of my mother, Kashmir, in spite of it being in the throes of winter. I visited the sites that are usual for me when I visit it. Place of my birth in Malik Angan, place where I lived Malikyar, my college Amar Singh College, my later *matamal* sites at Mandir Bagh and Jawahar Nagar. Also, visited our close relative Shangaloo's house at Kralkhud, near Habba Kadal. Visited also Tullamulla, Hariparbat, Zyeshta Devi temple, and Shankaracharya. Went also to Shalimar, Nishat, and Chashmashahi, visiting the first two more than once. Throughout my stay Srinagar was under the blanket of fog, which diminished the beauty of Dal Lake. But in spite of it I had three *shikara* rides on it, and its beauty was still enthralling, though reduced. I made umpteen visits to Ahdoo's for their authentic Kashmiri cuisine.

Outside Srinagar I visited Sonamarg, Baltal, Pahalgam, and Gulmarg. Baltal was stunning, its grandeur especially under snow is awesome. Pahalgam was the same paradise as it has been before. A pearl of beautiful small valleys studded with awesome mountains and ethereal pine trees. I first time went to Betab Valley, Chandanwari, and Ashmukam. Also visited the temple at Mamleshwar, and Chris Zasndee's Himalayan Cheese Factory. Pine and Peaks hotel where I stayed, which was recommended by my travel agent, was excellent. Its view of Pahalgam from its rear side is great. Their food was excellent.

Gulmarg was beautiful too, but I am repelled by its 3.5 square mile central valley, which has been neglected, I believe, throughout its history. I have written about how it can be converted to a beautiful valley studded with gardens, trees, picnic spots, walkways, etc. My friends have urged me to send it to the government for their action. But knowing its caliber I have been reluctant to do that. Rest of

Gulmarg is awesome, especially when you go up on the Gondala to Kongdoori. I also went to a waterfall in Tangmarg.

I spent seventeen very beautiful days in Kashmir. My micro-planning of the trip paid off. The selected hotels were very good, but Shaw's Inn at Gulmarg was off the mark. Four days at the fabled Taj Vivanta at Srinagar, at about 30,000 INR per day, were great. It has a great location atop a hill overlooking Dal. But due to the persistent fog that was not visible, the sole reason of my selecting it. But otherwise the hotel is very good.

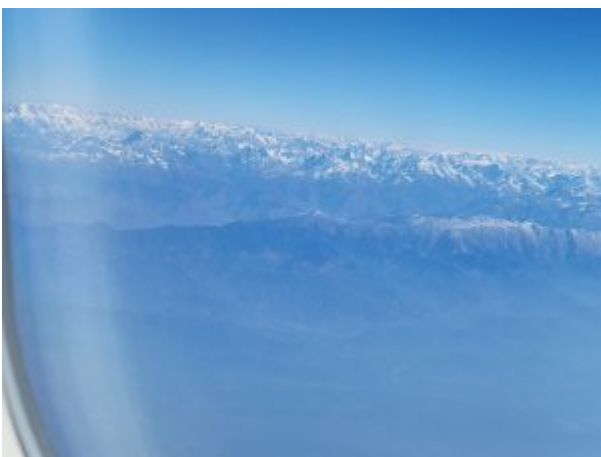
I took about two hundred pictures of the trip to Kashmir. I am vicariously reliving it through them. I have put them on FB.

Here are the pics. Best way to see them is to use the slideshow option, located in the settings section, top right of the Google Photo page.

1. Trip To Kashmir, 2021 (Pics From The Flight To Srinagar, 25 Minutes Before Landing)

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/spXoemygwWYZjBL66>





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www.kaulscorner.com

maharaj.kaul@yahoo.com

