



Hidden Gems in Manali You Must Explore: Discover Manali Beyond the Tourist Trail

Description

Manali, a charming hill hamlet in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu Valley, is well-known for its Solang Valley, Rohtang Pass, and Mall Road. A universe of lesser-known but breathtakingly gorgeous locations that provide peace, quiet, and a more genuine Himachali experience may be found beyond the usual tourist sites.

[Getaway Experiences](#) shares some unique places in and around or Hidden Gems in Manali that are just waiting to be discovered, whether you're an experienced tourist returning to the city or a first-timer hoping to avoid the throng.

1. Sethan Village – A Snowy Buddhist Hamlet

Just 15 km from Manali lies the peaceful and almost untouched village of **Sethan**. Located at around 2,700 meters above sea level, this Buddhist village is inhabited primarily by a small community of immigrants from Spiti.

Why It's a Hidden Gem:

- Offers **uninterrupted views of the Dhauladhar range**
- **Less crowded than Solang or Rohtang**, even in peak seasons
- Ideal for snow activities in winter — you can even try snowboarding here

Best Time to Visit:

Winter for snow activities, or late spring for serene landscapes.

2. Jana Waterfall – A Picnic Spot in Paradise

Located about 35 km from Manali, **Jana Falls** is hidden amidst dense deodar forests and apple orchards. The waterfall may not be massive, but the real magic lies in the setting — it's a great place for a picnic or short trek.

Why It's a Hidden Gem:

- Far from the crowds of major waterfalls like Jogini
- Enjoy **traditional Himachali food** at local dhabas (try siddu and makki ki roti)
- Perfect for a **day trip on a bike or car**

Pro Tip: Combine your trip with a visit to Naggar Castle or the Nicholas Roerich Art Gallery nearby.

3. Hamta Village – Tranquility Meets Raw Beauty

Most people know **Hamta Pass** for its famous trek, but few know about the **tiny village of Hamta**, located just 14 km from Manali. It serves as a base for the Hamta Pass trek but is worth visiting even if you're not trekking.

Why It's a Hidden Gem:

- **Terraced fields**, wooden houses, and Himalayan serenity
- Ideal for **slow travel**, writing, or connecting with nature
- Rich local culture and close-knit community vibes

Where to Stay: Eco-lodges and homestays offer a quiet, authentic experience.

4. Kalath Hot Water Springs – Natural Healing Near Manali

While the Vashisht hot springs are well known, few travelers stop by the **Kalath Hot Springs**, located just 6 km before Manali on the way from Kullu.

Why It's a Hidden Gem:

- Less commercial and more natural than Vashisht
- Nestled beside the **Beas River**, surrounded by pine forests
- Great for a **relaxing soak after a day of travel**

Tip: Take a swimsuit and towel with you — the spring is open to the public, and

small private enclosures are available too.

5. Lamadugh – The Forest Hike You’ve Never Heard Of

If you love hiking but hate crowds, the **Lamadugh trek** is for you. This day hike starts near Hadimba Temple and takes you through dense forests to a high-altitude meadow.

Why It’s a Hidden Gem:

- **Unspoiled alpine landscapes**, perfect for photography
- Gentle trail, suitable for beginners
- Ends in a meadow with **stunning views of the Solang Valley and Deo Tibba**

Best Time to Go: May to October for clear skies and wildflowers.

6. Kais Monastery – A Spiritual Retreat in the Hills

Hidden in the Kullu Valley, about 25 km from Manali, the **Kais Monastery** is a peaceful Buddhist retreat perched on a hilltop. Unlike the busy monasteries in towns, Kais offers a deep sense of silence and spirituality.

Why It’s a Hidden Gem:

- Very few tourists visit here
- **Panoramic views** of the valley below
- You can **interact with monks**, meditate, or simply enjoy the peace

How to Reach: Hire a taxi or take a scooter ride for a scenic trip.

7. Gadhan Thekchhokling Gompa – A Monastery in Plain Sight

Located on Mall Road itself, many people walk past the **Gadhan Thekchhokling Gompa** without realizing the spiritual sanctuary inside. Built in the 1960s by Tibetan refugees, this monastery is a haven of calm amidst the bustling market.

Why It’s a Hidden Gem:

- **Beautiful murals and prayer wheels**
 - Lesser known compared to other attractions
 - A great place for quiet contemplation after shopping or exploring Mall Road
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8. Van Vihar National Park – Forest Escape Within the Town

Located near Mall Road, **Van Vihar** is a peaceful forest park that few tourists explore in depth. It's more than just a patch of green — it offers a refreshing nature walk, boating, and perfect picnic spots.

Why It's a Hidden Gem:

- **Tall deodar trees** and shaded pathways
- Home to **birds, butterflies, and occasional wildlife**
- You can enjoy **boating on a small lake** inside the park

Ideal For: Families, couples, nature lovers looking for a quick break from the hustle.

9. Baror Parsha Waterfall – A Secret Trail to Serenity

Tucked away near the Baror village on the outskirts of Manali, **Baror Parsha Waterfall** is truly off the beaten path. The trail to this waterfall involves a bit of a hike, but it's worth every step.

Why It's a Hidden Gem:

- No crowds — just you, the forest, and the water
- Great for nature photography and peaceful meditation
- **Clean, untouched atmosphere**

Tip: Wear trekking shoes and carry water. No commercial setup, so plan ahead.

10. The Castle in Naggar – A Royal Secret Overlooking the Valley

Though not exactly unknown, **Naggar Castle** is often overshadowed by other Manali attractions. This 15th-century castle-turned-heritage hotel offers a unique blend of history, architecture, and views.

Why It's a Hidden Gem:

- Offers **incredible views** of the Kullu Valley
 - Features ancient **stone and wood Himachali architecture**
 - Houses the **Nicholas Roerich Art Gallery** nearby
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Great For: History lovers, artists, and those seeking a scenic day trip from Manali.

Why Explore the Hidden Side of Manali?

While popular tourist spots have their own charm, **hidden gems offer something deeper** — tranquility, authenticity, and often a stronger connection to the natural and cultural beauty of the region. You'll avoid crowds, enjoy richer experiences, and maybe even discover something about yourself along the way.

Quick Travel Tips for Offbeat Exploration:

- **Transport:** Rent a bike or hire a local cab for flexibility in reaching remote spots.
 - **Clothing:** Carry layers, especially in higher altitudes — weather changes quickly.
 - **Connectivity:** Some remote areas may lack mobile signal, so inform someone of your plans.
 - **Respect Local Culture:** Dress modestly in villages and monasteries, and ask before taking photos of locals.
 - **Sustainability:** Leave no trace. Carry back plastic, don't litter, and support local businesses.
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Final Thoughts

Manali is much more than a postcard-perfect tourist town. Its true magic often lies in the narrow trails, hidden waterfalls, quiet monasteries, and forgotten villages. These **hidden gems offer an intimate, more meaningful travel experience** — one that goes beyond sightseeing into soulful exploration.

So the next time you're in Manali, ditch the crowd and take the road less travelled. You'll find not just places, but stories – the kind that [stay in Manali](#) with you long after the trip ends.