

Exploring Dehradun - Past, Present and Fascinating Trivia

Hey aspirants! We're back with another blog on the blog series '**Know Your City**'. The city you're going to learn about is '**Dehradun**'. So, without a further delay, let's start exploring the city.

Nestled in the heart of the Indian state of Uttarakhand, Dehradun beckons with its serene landscapes and vibrant cultural tapestry. A city ensconced amidst the Garhwal Himalayas, Dehradun delights with a population of approximately 800,000 residents, fostering a rich diversity and a blend of tradition and modernity. This picturesque valley town, spanning an area of 300 square kilometres, boasts a moderate climate, attracting countless visitors each year. Known for its educational institutions, including the esteemed Forest Research Institute, Dehradun offers a gateway to nature's splendour with its proximity to renowned hill stations and the majestic beauty of the Himalayas.

Before looking at the different aspects, one must know the city symbols of the particular city. The city symbols of Dehradun are:

Dehradun	
State	Uttarakhand
Official Language	Hindi
City Bird	Monal
City Animal	Musk Deer
City Tree	Buransh (Rhododendron)
City Flower	Brahma Kamal
Mayor	Sunil Uniyal
Municipal Commissioner	Manuj Goyal

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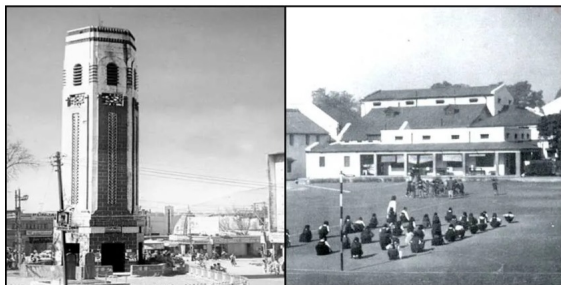
[Source: Scroll.in]

So now, let's move on to the first aspect of the blog i.e., **History of Dehradun.**

History of Dehradun

The history of Dehradun, also known as "Doon Valley," intertwines with ancient Indian epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata. Linked to the tales of Rama, Lakshmana, and Dron Acharya, relics and ruins approximately 2000 years old signify its historical relevance. Even after the Mahabharata, the Pandavas influenced the region, ruling it as a subsidiary to Hastinapura. Rishikesh's connection to Vishnu's deeds further enriches the area's mythological significance.

- **Early Civilizations and Invasions:** Known as Sudhanagara in the 7th century, the region was described by the Chinese traveller Huen Tsang. Edicts of Ashoka found in Kalsi and ruins in Haripur reflect the area's ancient prosperity. Invaded by Mahmud of Ghazni, Timur, and others, it witnessed battles between Garhwal and Gorkha kings in the early 19th century.
- **Colonial Era and Independence Movement:** Dehradun transitioned from Nepalese control to the British in 1816, becoming part of the United Provinces of India. Influential leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Rash Behari Bose had connections to the city during the independence movement.
- **Modern Dehradun and Afghan Ties:** Post-independence, it merged with United Provinces, later becoming part of Uttarakhand in 2000. The city's Afghan connection, dating back to the Anglo-Afghan Wars, witnessed exiled Afghan rulers settling in Dehradun, leaving a cultural legacy that persists till today.



[Source: rajyasameeksha.com]

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This historical narrative paints Dehradun as a city steeped in mythology, invaded by different rulers, and marked by an intriguing blend of colonial history and diverse cultural influences.

Timeline for the major events that occurred in the History of Dehradun:

- **Ancient Times:** Dehradun's history is intertwined with the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, with relics and ruins dating back approximately 2000 years.
- **7th Century:** The region was known as Sudhanagara and was described by the Chinese traveller Huen Tsang.
- **13th-18th Century:** Dehradun faced invasions by Mahmud of Ghazni, Timur, and others.
- **Early 19th Century:** Battles, including the Battle of Khurbura, took place between Garhwal and Gorkha kings.
- **1816:** Dehradun came under British control after the Anglo-Nepalese War.
- **2000:** Uttarakhand state (earlier Uttaranchal) was created, with Dehradun as its interim capital.

This timeline encapsulates the city's rich and diverse history, spanning from ancient legends to colonial rule and its modern-day significance.

Let's move on to the next aspect of this blog i.e., **Geographical aspects.**

Geographical Aspects of Dehradun

Dehradun, a city of captivating geographical diversity, is nestled in the enchanting Doon Valley. Let's explore its unique features:

- **Altitude Range:** Dehradun's elevation varies from 410 metres (1,350 feet) in Clement Town to over 700 metres (2,300 feet) in Malsi, with an average of 450 metres (1,480 feet) above sea level.
- **Himalayan Influence:** Malsi marks the entry to the Lesser Himalayan Range, extending to picturesque Mussoorie, while Jaunsar-Bawar hills in the district rise to 3,700 metres (12,100 feet).
- **Ecological Riches:** The Doon Valley encompasses Terai and Bhabar forests, Shivalik hills, Lesser Himalayan Range, and renowned hill stations like Mussoorie and Chakrata.
- **Borders:** Bounded by the Himalayas in the north, Shivalik Hills' Rajaji Range in the south, the Ganges River in the east, and the Yamuna River in the west.

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[Source: India Net Zone]

Dehradun's diverse geography offers a rich natural tapestry, from lush forests to majestic hills, making it a region of both beauty and natural challenges.

Physiographic Aspects:

Nestled in the Doon Valley, Dehradun boasts varied physiographic features, from heights of 410m to over 700m above sea level. It's a terrain of breathtaking diversity.

- **Climate:** Dehradun experiences a humid subtropical climate, with temperatures ranging from pleasant summers to chilly winters.
- **Temperature:** Summers pleasant in hills, occasional intense heat reaching 44°C (111°F), while winters range from 1-20°C (34-68°F).
- **Rainfall:** Annual average of 2,073.3mm (81.63in), with monsoons from June to September, receiving heaviest rainfall in July and August.

Dehradun's physiographic features create a unique blend of climatic conditions, from balmy summers to snowy winters, making it a city of diverse natural characteristics.

Demographic Snapshot:

Dehradun reflects a tapestry of demographics. Its population, literacy, sex ratio, and unemployment depict a city buzzing with diversity and prospects.

- **Population:** In 2011, Dehradun city housed 578,420 people, with a sex ratio of 906 females per 1000 males.
- **Population Density:** With a land area of 300 square kilometres, Dehradun's population density is approximately 1,928 people per square kilometre, reflecting its urban vibrancy.
- **Literacy Rate:** The city boasts an impressive literacy rate of 89.32%, with male literacy at 92.65% and female literacy at 85.66%.
- **Child Sex Ratio:** It recorded 873 girls for every 1000 boys, slightly below the national average.

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This diverse populace with a high literacy rate and balanced sex ratio represents a city with abundant potential and social diversity.

Soil and Vegetation:

Dehradun boasts a rich tapestry of soil types and diverse vegetation that shape its unique ecological landscape.

- **Alluvial Soil:** Dominant soil type, rich in minerals, covers approximately 78% of the region.
- **Bhabar Soil:** Found at the foothills, porous in nature, enhancing water percolation.
- **Terrace Soil:** Along river terraces, excellent for agriculture due to its fertility.
- **Forests:** Comprising Terai, Bhabar, and Shivalik forests.
- **Varied Flora:** Rich in Sal, Teak, Oak, and Pine trees, supporting diverse wildlife.

The soil diversity and lush vegetation, including varied forests and a plethora of flora, contribute to Dehradun's ecological richness, fostering a vibrant ecosystem.

Dehradun boasts several famous landmarks. Notable among them is the iconic Indian Military Academy (IMA), where future military leaders are trained. The Forest Research Institute (FRI), a magnificent colonial-era structure, is renowned for its vast collection of botanical specimens. The exquisite Robber's Cave offers an enchanting natural rock formation. Malsi Deer Park captivates visitors with its serene atmosphere and resident deer. The Clock Tower, an enduring symbol of the city, stands tall in the heart of Dehradun. These landmarks showcase Dehradun's blend of heritage, education, and nature.

Now let's move on to the **political aspects of Dehradun**.

Political Aspects of Dehradun

Dehradun, as the capital of Uttarakhand, plays a pivotal role in the state's political landscape. It houses crucial state government facilities, including the Vidhan Sabha, where the Uttarakhand state legislature convenes, and Raj Bhavan, the official residence of the governor. The city also accommodates numerous government establishments and institutions.

- **Administrative Hierarchy:** Dehradun is part of the Garhwal division of Uttarakhand, and it is presided over by a divisional commissioner who is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of high seniority. The district magistrate and collector report to the divisional commissioner, along with several additional district magistrates overseeing different aspects of governance.
- **Representative Governance:** Dehradun is represented at the national level in two Lok Sabha constituencies, with MPs elected to these seats. The city is also represented by four MLAs in the state assembly, ensuring a voice in state-level politics.
- **Civic Governance:** Dehradun Municipal Corporation, the local governing body, administers the city's affairs. It covers an area of approximately 196.48 square kilometres and manages a population of around 803,983 residents. The corporation consists of 100 wards, each represented by elected corporators and led by a mayor.
- **Law and Order:** The police administration of Dehradun is headed by the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) for Garhwal. The city's police force is responsible for maintaining law and order within its jurisdiction.

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Dehradun's political landscape reflects its significance as the state's capital, with various administrative bodies ensuring the city's governance and security.



[Source: The wire]

Now let's discuss the culture of Dehradun.

Culture of Dehradun

Dehradun boasts a vibrant and diverse cultural tapestry that has evolved over the years. The city has become a hub for education, communication, and administration, fostering an enriched cultural environment.

- **Language and People:** The cultural fabric of Dehradun reflects its linguistic diversity, with Hindi being the primary language. The city embraces a mix of communities, predominantly Uttarakhandis, Punjabis, and Garhwalis, contributing to a vibrant social milieu.
- **Attire:** The traditional attire in Dehradun is a blend of modern and ethnic wear. While locals often opt for regular urban clothing, during cultural events, traditional Garhwali attire, featuring vibrant colours and intricate designs, is celebrated.
- **Cuisine:** Dehradun offers a delectable array of Garhwali cuisine, with specialties like Kafuli, Phaanu, and Bal Mithai, local favourites enjoyed for their unique flavours and ingredients.
- **Handicrafts:** The city is renowned for its exquisite wooden handicrafts, showcasing intricate designs and skilled craftsmanship.
- **Temples:** Dehradun houses temples such as Tapkeshwar and Santala Devi, adding to its religious significance.
- **Literature:** The city has nurtured a rich literary tradition, with renowned writers like Ruskin Bond calling Dehradun home.
- **Festivals:** It hosts various festivals, including the Magh Mela and Jhanda Mela, each celebrating unique cultural aspects and drawing in people from diverse backgrounds.
- **Religion:** Dehradun embraces multiple religions, with Hinduism being predominant.
- **Music and Dance:** Music and dance form an integral part of cultural celebrations, with Garhwali folk music and traditional dances showcasing the essence of local heritage.

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[Source: uttarakhandi.com]

The city's vibrant cultural tapestry weaves together diverse traditions, offering a unique blend of customs, flavours, and artistic expressions that make Dehradun a melting pot of cultural richness.

Now let's talk about the next aspect i.e., **Environment in Dehradun.**

Environment in Dehradun

Dehradun strikes an exquisite balance between urban development and preserving its natural environment. It has earned its moniker as the "Oxford of India" not only for its educational institutions but also for its green cover and urban biodiversity.

- **Urban Biodiversity:** Dehradun boasts a diverse urban ecosystem. Its green lungs include parks, gardens, and forested areas that provide refuge to a variety of flora and fauna. The Rajaji National Park, on the city's outskirts, shelters elephants, tigers, and leopards, enhancing the region's biodiversity.
- **Green Cover:** The city prides itself on its green spaces. Dehradun's tree cover exceeds the national average, contributing to cleaner air and a cooler microclimate. Over 70% of the city's geographical area is under vegetation, nurturing an environment conducive to human well-being.
- **Flora and Fauna:** The region's lush vegetation features species like Sal, Teak, Oak, and Pine trees. This rich flora supports a vibrant fauna, with birdwatchers delighting in the avian diversity.
- **Environmental Challenges:** While Dehradun celebrates its green heritage, it also grapples with challenges such as solid waste management and groundwater depletion. The city seeks sustainable solutions to maintain its ecological harmony.

Dehradun, with its urban charm and natural serenity, stands as a testament to the harmonious coexistence of urbanity and the environment, where greenery flourishes amidst bustling city life.

Let's talk about the economic aspects of the city Dehradun.

Economy of Dehradun

Dehradun's economic landscape is as diverse and enchanting as its natural beauty. The city has leveraged its proximity to national parks, mountain peaks, and historical sites to bolster its economy. With a per capita income of approximately 2,993 dollars, Dehradun has witnessed remarkable economic growth over the past two decades.

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- The city thrives on its tourism industry, benefiting from its proximity to national parks, historical sites, and mountain peaks. The region is witnessing a commercial and IT surge, fostered by the establishment of Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) and Special Economic Zones (SEZs).
- Agriculture remains a cornerstone, with rice, dal, and famed lychees dominating the agricultural landscape. The city also serves as a hub for training institutions of national significance, including the Indian Military Academy, Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), and numerous defence and research establishments such as Ordnance Factory Dehradun and Instruments Research and Development Establishment (IRDE).
- Furthermore, Dehradun boasts a strong foundation in educational and research institutions, contributing significantly to its economic tapestry. Major defence production establishments, including Ordnance Factory Dehradun and Defence Electronics Application Laboratory, contribute significantly to the Indian Armed Forces, strategically placed amidst the city's mountainous landscape.



[Source: The statesman]

The city's economic diversity, with tourism, agriculture, education, and technology sectors, ensures a thriving and resilient economy.

Now let's delve into a few **Interesting Facts about Dehradun**.

Some Interesting Facts about Dehradun

Here are some lesser-known and interesting facts about Dehradun:

- Dehradun is known as the "Litchi capital of India" due to its favourable climate for litchi cultivation.
- The city is home to temples and religious places that date back as far as 2000 years, showcasing its rich cultural heritage.
- Dehradun boasts India's first indoor ice rink, used for ice hockey, figure skating, and other related sports.
- Surprisingly, Dehradun is situated at a lower altitude (435 metres above sea level) than Bangalore (920 metres).
- In the 1960s, Dehradun was one of the few places in India where Cabaret shows were organised, reflecting its vibrant entertainment history.

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[Source: Doon circle]

These intriguing facts shed light on the city's diverse and unique characteristics.

In conclusion, Dehradun, the "Oxford of India," unveils a captivating tapestry of history, geography, culture, environment, politics, and economics. From its ancient roots intertwined with Indian epics to its lush green cover and vibrant urban biodiversity, Dehradun is a city that harmoniously blends tradition and modernity. Its diverse population, impressive literacy rates, and economic growth reflect a city teeming with possibilities. Dehradun's unique soil types, rich vegetation, and ecological diversity enhance its natural charm. With an economy propelled by tourism, agriculture, education, and technology, this city offers a rich and resilient future. As Dehradun continues to thrive, it remains a testament to the splendours of India's heartland.