

Hiking Trails of Islamabad

MARGALLA HILLS ISLAMABAD



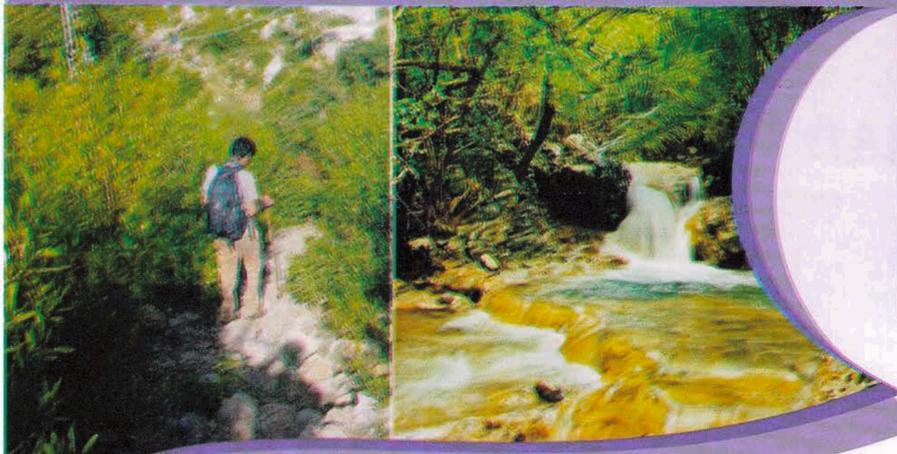
SCALE 1:11,000



LEGEND

Trail 1.....	Trail 2.....	Trail 4.....	Trail 6.....
Fire Line(Steep Slope).....	Roads.....	Tracks.....	Stream.....
Spot Height in Metres.....	Tree;Ficus,Pine,Palm,Other.....	Coordinates UTM(X,Y).....	

Height Index	Height Index
1 588.7	13 1156.8
2 664.0	14 1063.1
3 727.1	15 774.1
4 609.3	16 602.2
5 652.1	17 628.8
6 833.5	18 671.2
7 998.1	19 835.6
8 1007.8	20 615.2
9 891.8	21 1001.1
10 764.8	22 935.4
11 906.5	23 602.2
12 1094.2	24 684.7



Hiking Trails of Margalla Hills

"It's not the mountains but ourselves that we conquer"
(Sir Ed Hillary, mountaineer)

Residents of Islamabad are lucky to be located very close to beautiful Margalla Hills. These hills not only are a source of pleasant weather of the capital city but are also famous for the trails used by hiking lovers.

The word Margalla is formed from (Mar snake and galla home) i.e home of snakes. The name is attributed to presence of a small sized local rattle snake (Khar Kharya) in this area. Margalla is a 40 km long hill range that covers an area of approximately 12,605 hectares. Highest peak of the range is Tilla Charouni with an elevation of 1604 metres. Margalla Hills stretch from Shahdara Valley in the east to Shah Allah Ditta village in the west covering area between shrines of 'Bari Imam' in the east and 'Golra Sharif' in the west. Margalla Hills almost stand like a wall between two lakes of 'Khanpur' in the far north and 'Rawal' in near south.

There are about thirty well identified trails in Margalla Hills and most of them are used by the locals. Administration of the capital city has worked on six hiking trails and has developed them. All of these trails offer unique hiking opportunities and can be easily managed as half-day weekend hikes. Here is a brief review of each of them based on personal experience.



TRAIL-1 (VILLAGE KALINGER/SINYARI)

It starts behind Sectors E-8 and E-9 and consists of three interlinked sub-trails. Easiest way to the trail head is by

reaching village Kalinger from the junction of Agha Shahi Avenue and National Defence University. Hiking can be commenced from a small mazar complex in village Kalinger. Initially the trail moves along a water stream that leads into the mountains. Unlike other officially recognized trails, this is not marked well and it takes considerable effort to explore the path. A rigorous hike of almost two hours takes you to the shoulder of the ridge until the descent starts. Trail is used rarely by hikers, however, locals are found frequently on the way and are quite friendly. Occasional presence of cattles blocking the way as well as presence of small snakes locally called khar-kharya saanp should not be ruled out. This trail being mainly used by locals is free of any litter.

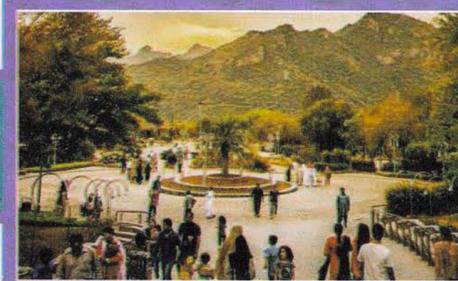
Last hour of downhill climb involves crossing a seasonal stream at few places and offers beautiful vistas. After about four hours of hiking, trail ends at a small graveyard in village Sinyari near a famous clump of Banyan trees. From here the metal road leads to the exit point on the main Margalla Road, opposite F-9 Park.

Owing to the relative isolation, lack of drinkable water and a rigorous long hike, it is not recommended for kids and families. A group of four or five people, properly rationed can undertake this exciting half-day hiking trip.

TRAIL-2 (DAMN-E-KOH/ ZOO)

(DAMN-E-KOH/ ZOO)

Among all the six officially recognized trails,

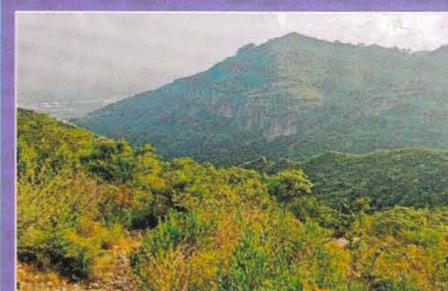


Trail-2 leading up to Damn-e-Koh is the shortest. It has two distinct trail heads. First is located at a narrow dirt track astride Marghazar Zoo. Alternately, a well-marked trail head is present at the start of Pir Sohawa Road, short of Trail-4 parking area.

No matter which starting point is chosen, trails subsequently merge mid-way and lead to the finish point at

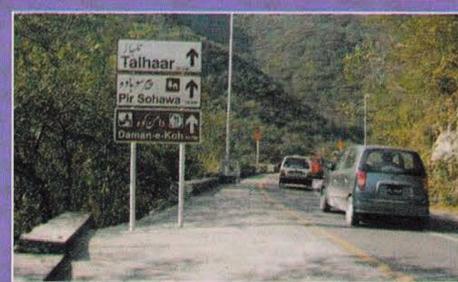
Damn-e-Koh. The trail is short but steep and it takes almost 45 minutes to reach the top. It can be a good choice if one is looking for a short Sunday hike with family. The track doesn't finish at Damn-e-Koh and also has an extension towards Cactus Ridge. 1.4 km long trail starts just across the road, opposite Damn-e-Koh main parking and leads to Cactus Ridge. The top of Cactus Ridge offers breathtaking panoramas of Islamabad including the site where Air Blue Flight 202 crashed in July 2010.

Trail-4 is quite challenging and strenuous. Initially it moves along the Pir Sohawa Road and then takes a westward turn further into the Margalla Hills. In the start, water stream moves along the trail but remaining part of trail is surrounded by jungle with no significant water source nearby. At the top, trail offers beautiful scenes of the city including rare glimpse of Faisal Mosque. There are no significant rest areas, milestones and trail is not well maintained. Although it is in common use by locals, it receives lesser number of hikers mainly due to its difficulty and isolation. The trail is not suggested to be used by kids and families, however, for group of four to five adults looking for a strenuous weekend workout, this trail can be quite rewarding.



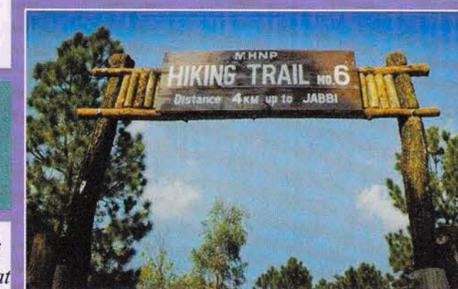
TRAIL-4 (DHOK JEEVAN)

This trail starts from an appropriately marked parking area at the start of Pir Sohawa Road. It is looping around the local mountain village called 'Dhok Jeevan' with the same start and finish point. Trail-4 is linked laterally with Trail-6 through a well marked path. Depending upon the preference, hiking on Trail-4 can also be finished at the start point of Trail-6 located in the rear of Faisal Mosque.



TRAIL-6 (CHAK JABBI)

Trail-6 or the Chak Jabbi Trail is one of the latest trails that has officially been recognized and made available to general public after necessary works. Trail head is located at the rear of Faisal Mosque near car parking. It is about 4km long and leads up to Village Jabbi. This trail gradually gains height and passes through thick jungle. After about half an hour from the start point, it takes you to a beautiful water spring with date and palm trees around it. The upper half of trail consists of steep climb and reaches to the small village of Jabbi. Trail is surrounded by thick trees and water spring is also accessible during the hike at different places. It also links up with the adjacent Trail-4 and leads up to the parking at Pir Sohawa Road. Trail has been appropriately marked, is well maintained and can be done with family in about 3 hours time from start to finish



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MAP OF TRAIL 1,2,4 & 6

MARGALLA HILLS ISLAMABAD

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SURVEY OF PAKISTAN

