

Stok Kangri Trek Ladakh



Activity: Trekking and Walking

Tour Duration: 16 Days

Min Age for trips: 16+

Group Size: 4-12

Inclusions:

- 7 Nights Hotel, 7 Nights Camping
- 15 Breakfasts, 7 Dinners, 7 Lunches
- Fully supported trekking
- Flights Delhi to Leh return



This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.

Highlights

- Classical trekking in the Indian Himalaya
- Climb Stok Kangri 6150m
- Enjoy spectacular mountain scenery
- Optional jeep trip to the Khardung La, the highest motorable road pass in the world
- Visit remote villages in Ladakh
- Spectacular Tibetan Buddhist monasteries

India and Ladakh

High Places began in India. 1987 saw our very first trip set off to trek in the Garhwal Himalayas in north India. We have gradually widened our destinations and now also go to Ladakh, Sikkim and to Kerala. If you are looking for an authentic, energetic yet sensitive holiday in India we are the specialists. Moreover we continue to hold India in great respect and have a deep regard for the land and its people. To travel with High Places here will disprove many of the myths you might hold and leave you with a sense of wonder and incredulity. There is a life-force in India, which we may already have lost in the West. Go and see for yourself.

The mountain kingdom of Ladakh is in the far north of India and is a remote region of wild arid valleys, rocky gorges and ridges leading to peaks over 6000m. It lies in the rain shadow north of the Himalayan divide and so avoids the influence of the monsoon. It is subject to extremes in temperature, with hot summers and very cold winters. Little wonder that the Ladakhis are a hardy

and self-sufficient people. Through ingenious irrigation systems, the villages in summer are oases of green barley fields; isolated splashes of colour in the desert landscape. Prayer flags, chortens, and mani walls of carved prayer stones are a constant reminder that Buddhism is a way of life, with symbols and spirits from pre Buddhist times incorporated into the present day faith.

The Trek

This wonderful trek to the summit of India's magnificent mountain, Stok Kangri (6,141 m) is the perfect challenge for trekkers who want to summit a Himalayan peak. It is probably the most famous peak in the Ladakh range being visible from Leh itself. The trip starts with a flight across the Himalaya to Leh, the capital of Ladakh. There is time to explore the bustling bazaars of Leh and some of the magnificent Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in the Leh Valley. The trek takes us through remote valleys, scattered high villages and past hilltop monasteries to the base of Stok Kangri. From here we have a tough summit day but well worth the effort for the views from the top. Even though the climb is classed as non-technical, it requires the use of crampons and ice axe, and usually we rope up along the ridge. We return to Leh for a celebration.

Itinerary

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. **(B,L,D)** refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**.

This trip is 15 days ex DELHI. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival in and departure from INDIA, and may not be the days you leave or return home.

DAY 1

Arrive Delhi. Transfer to Hotel

DAY 2

An early morning flight across the Himalayas to Leh - a tremendous experience! There is time to relax and recover in Leh before the trekking starts. **(B)**

DAY 3 - Acclimatisation in Leh (3505m)

Leh lies on a centuries old trade route along the mighty Indus valley and while the trading has greatly changed the magnificent Buddhist monasteries remain. Today we will visit Thikse monastery, Stok Palace and Hemis monastery. **(B)**

DAY 4 - Acclimatisation walks in Leh

We take an acclimatization walk in and around the Leh town, with walks to Shankar Gompa, Shanti Stupa and Leh Palace. **(B)**

DAY 5 - Acclimatisation in Leh

Leh is a colourful and vibrant town full of interest. This morning there is an optional trip by jeep to world's highest mountain pass, the Khardungla (5660m). In the afternoon there will be a guided

walking tour around some of the local landmarks including the Royal Palace and Tsemo Monastery, situated above the town. **(B)**

DAY 6 - Drive to Chilling and camp at Skiu

Today we leave Leh and drive to Chilling (3150 m), visiting Spituk and Phyang monasteries en route. For a short while we drive along the Indus River before turning off into a tiny track near the confluence with the Zaskar River. The valley narrows into a gorge and the scenery is spectacular. We start the day crossing the Zaskar River in a secure but exciting cableway box to meet up with our ponies and crew. A short and easy walk on a good path leads to our campsite at Skiu (3400m). There will be time to visit Skiu Gompa in the evening. 4 hours. **(B,L,D)**

DAY 7 - Trek from Skiu to Shingo (4,150m)

We follow the Shingti River up into an impressive gorge to the village of Shingo. In this barren landscape, the only shade is from the willows that grow near the Shingti River. The valley is quite spectacular and the rock colours range from pale greys and browns through yellows, greens and shades of purple. Around noon we reach our camp, located at 4,150 meters in a large green field just before the village of Shingo. The afternoon can be used to relax or take a walk in the area - either on one of the peaks near or a trip to the charming little village of Shingo, where about 10 families cultivate barley. **(B,L,D)**

DAY 8 - Cross the Ganda La (4,900m) to Rumbak (4,050m)

After a hearty breakfast we are ready for our first pass. From the camp we have about four hours ascent gradually up to the pass. At last we see the prayer flags that mark the top. The climb is well worth it and from the top we have breathtaking views of the snowy peaks of both the Zaskar and Stok ranges. The descent is long and winds down the valley – look out for the charming Himalayan marmots and Bharal (Blue Sheep), which roam the area. The trail brings us past a tea shop and further down past the one house village of Yurutse. We continue on down to Rumbak, one of the largest villages in the area. The houses are typical whitewashed mud brick houses with colorful prayer flags fluttering from the roof. Rumbak is home to many varieties of birds and foxes and the Snow Leopards have been spotted in the area. There will be a chance to visit a local house and sample the traditional Ladakhi butter tea. Our camp is just beyond the village at the base of our next pass. **(B,L,D)**

DAY 9 - Cross the Stok La (4,900 m) to Kichapulu (4,270 m)

From Rumbak we begin our ascent to the second high pass on the trip, Stok La pass (4800m), The scenery is magnificent with fold upon fold of reddish, rugged cliffs - home to the elusive snow leopard. The day starts quite gently as we wind our way to the foot of the pass. The trail then becomes steeper and steeper as we zigzag our way to the top. Eventually the prayer flags marking the top come into view and what a view! Ahead are the Stok mountains, but it is the countless layers of multi-colored rock 'cathedrals' around us, which steal the picture. From the pass we descend to our camp. **(B,L,D)**

DAY 10 - To Mankarmo (4,300m)

Today we have a very short walk as we follow the river up to our camp, surrounded by the area's distinctive vertical rock walls. We spend the afternoon acclimatizing and have a walk into the surrounding hills with a good chance to see blue sheep. **(B, L, D)**

DAY 11 - Trek to Stok Kangri Base Camp (5,000m)

Today is a short but important day for acclimatization as we trek to our Base Camp. The route climbs gradually for 3-4 hours following the Cane River all the way to Base Camp. There is usually quite busy with mountaineers from around the world and a mood that is seething with anticipation. The afternoon is set aside for preparations for our climb. There will be an equipment check and the leader and climbing guides will demonstrate the use of ropes, crampons and ice axe. We will be in bed before 8pm tonight ready for tomorrow's early wake up. **(B, L, D)**

DAY 12 - Stok Kangri (6,150m)

We will be woken around midnight and after a cup of hot tea and a bite to eat, we set off in the dark. The route starts with a nasty steep climb out of Base Camp for an hour. The gradient then eases off as we continue along the side of the valley onto the rocky moraine. 2 to 3 hours brings us to the glacier, which we cross to the foot of the climb. From here the gradient increases and we have a very steep climb up for about 2 hours onto the ridge. The light slowly begins to emerge as we climb and we can sense the mountains around us. Far below us see now the great glacier, which we crossed in the early morning hours. About an hour and a half before the summit we reach the ridge, and here the terrain becomes more demanding – we need to take care as the rock is loose and there is usually snow around. The ridge takes us all the way to the summit, marked with colourful prayer flags. The ascent of Stok Kangri is exciting, challenging and long - but the reward is waiting at the top from where the views are worth every single step. In the far distance we can see Leh in miniature and all around us are towering Himalayan snow-capped peaks. The Ladakh and Zaskar ranges disappear beyond the horizon to the south and to the north we can clearly see the Karakorums. We spend a little time here to relish the beauty and regain our breath before descending slowly and carefully back to Base Camp, where our chef will be waiting for us with a warm meal. From Base Camp to the summit of Stok Kangri takes about 7-8 hours, and then it takes about 5-6 hrs to descend back to Base Camp. **(B, L, D)**

DAY 13 - Trek from Base Camp to Stok and drive back to Leh

After breakfast, we head down towards Stok. It's an easy walk today, but no less spectacular than any other, as we descend the valley all the way to Stok village. Here we will meet our transport for the short one hour drive back to Leh and a welcome hot shower. **(B, L)**

DAY 14 - Back to Delhi

We fly back to Delhi and have the rest of the day to explore this fascinating city. **(B)**

DAY 15

The trip ends this morning after breakfast, OR you can extend your trip to spend an extra night or two in Delhi, with the chance to visit the Taj Mahal or continue with your own arrangements. **(B)**

Accommodation

In Leh, the hotel is simple, but clean with en suite facilities. On the trek, we use two person tents, with a larger communal tent for meals. In Delhi we stay in a comfortable hotel.

Food

Whilst on trek all meals are included. In Delhi and Leh we provide bed and breakfast only. This allows you the option of choosing where you would like to eat, which is very much part of the adventure. On trek we eat a mix of Indian, Chinese and continental food prepared to a surprisingly high standard. There are always several dishes: dals, vegetables and sometimes meat if fresh chicken or lamb is tracked down. Breakfasts and lunches are varied and appetizing.

Transport

To and from the trek/climb we travel by jeep.

Health and Hygiene

We have an excellent record of staying fit and well in India. The key seems to be our enthusiasm for Indian vegetarian food, (most of India is vegetarian), and care with water, peeling fruit, avoiding salads etc. We would recommend abstinence from meat in Leh before the trek. Laundry facilities in towns are always available in India. Their ability to transform a bag of dirty and crumpled trekking 'rags' into a pile of pristine, folded and ironed 'new' clothes constantly amazes.

Language

There are 14 major languages in India and around 200 minor languages and dialects. Hindi is the most important Indian language and is spoken by about half the population. Both English and Hindi are used administratively throughout the country. In Ladakh, Ladakhi, Hindi and English are used. Many people will speak English, but a willingness to pick up some basic words of Hindi and/or Ladakhi may enrich your trip.

Currency

Indian Rupee or INR (₹) is the national currency of India. Its exchange rate is of around 90 to the UK£ and of around 60 to the US\$ (actual rates apply on the day of exchange are subject to fluctuations). While changing the money, be advised to ask for lower denomination notes of 50/100/500, its easier to use them than 1000 rupee notes in most shops in India. On arrival money changers are available in the arrivals hall at the Delhi airport and there are plenty ATM machines available as well. It is better to change money in Delhi itself; your hotel in the city may offer a better exchange rate than the airport money exchangers. In Leh, money changers will accept cash, ATMs also available but their operations are subject to network connectivity and electricity supply. It is illegal to export/import Rupee, while returning home INR can be exchanged for UK£ or US\$ at airport (before you proceed for immigration) but remember to produce a receipt that the currency was obtained in India.

Tipping

It is custom and practice to tip in India. You should perhaps allow the equivalent of around £60/US\$100/NZ\$120 per person or so which would normally be given by the group at the end of the trek. Try to avoid giving sweets, biscuits, pens or cash to children or anyone who has not rendered a service.

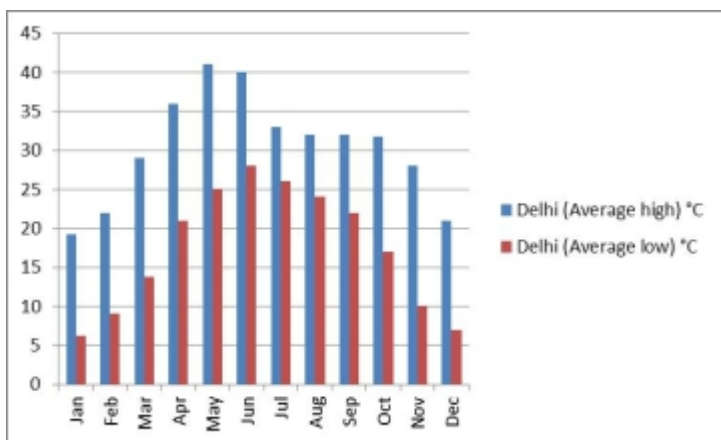
Indian Visas

A full passport is required to apply for the Indian visa, with a validity of at least 6 months beyond the intended duration of stay in the country. It is the client's responsibility to complete all the application procedures and obtain their visas before the intended date of departure. A simplified facility of applying for an eVisa is now available to British passport holders, this will entitle the applicants to a 60 day tourist visa, for more details please log on to the official website of Indian Government <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/> Alternatively UK passport holders can apply themselves for Indian Visa through India High Commissions Visa service VFS by logging on to <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/>. Current visa fee for British passport holders

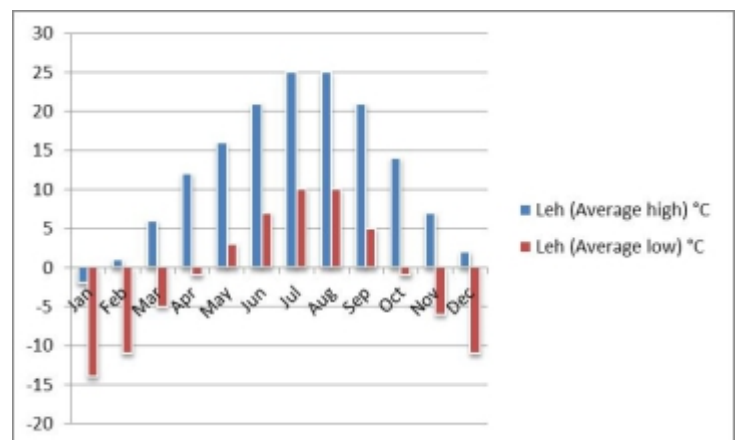
Climate

In Delhi it will be hot around 35°C, and wet. During the monsoon (June to mid-September) it rains almost every day, often in a downpour, but the sun comes out between showers. Beyond the monsoon in Leh and on the trek it should mostly be hot and dry, but rainfall (and snow) are always possible in the mountains. At night on the trek, temperatures could drop well below freezing, especially at the high camps so suitable clothing is required.

Temperatures in Delhi



Temperatures in Leh



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