



TREK THE MARKHA VALLEY & SUMMIT UT KANGRI (6070M)

TOUR INFORMATION

Activity: Trekking & Walking

Tour Duration: 16 Days

Min Age For Trips: 16+



STEADY PLUS

INCLUSIONS

- 6 Nights Hotel, 9 Nights Camping
- 14 Breakfasts, 9 Lunches, 9 Dinners
- Fully Supported Trekking
- Flight 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

- Trek through the high-altitude desert landscapes of the Hemis National Park, home to blue sheep, wolves and the elusive snow leopard.
- Pass through remote villages and witness the quiet pastoral life of Ladakhis.
- Ascend a 6070m Himalayan peak, UT Kangri. This is a non-technical peak and an ideal first 6000m peak. The climb is led by expert local mountain guides.
- Fly over the Indian Himalaya from Delhi to Leh. On a clear day this is one of the most spectacular mountain flights on earth.
- Experience the Tibetan Buddhist culture of Ladakh with its spectacularly situated hilltop monasteries.

The trek is led by **Valerie Parkinson**. Valerie has been leading treks and expeditions in the Himalaya for over 40 years and her knowledge of the culture, religion, people and mountains is second to none. In 2008 Valerie became the first British woman to summit Manaslu (8163m) without the use of supplementary oxygen. She spends every summer (and most winters) guiding in Ladakh.

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.

OVERVIEW

Ladakh, often called the Land of High Passes, is located in the Indian Himalayas. It is known for its beautiful landscapes, rich culture, and peaceful atmosphere. Ladakh is a Union Territory of India and one of the last places where Tibetan Buddhism is still widely practiced. It's dramatic scenery with windy valleys, sharp mountain ridges, old monasteries built on cliffs and is one of the best adventure travel destinations on earth. Join us on this wonderful trek through the Hemis National Park with a challenging (entirely optional) ascent of UT Kangri, 6070m.

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 and Dinner**.

Day 1 - Arrival in Delhi

You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel.

Day 2 - Fly Delhi to Leh 3500m

Early morning transfer to airport for sensational flight over the Himalaya to Leh (3500m). On arrival in Leh, transfer to hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax and acclimatise to the altitude (3,500m). We rest and catch up on some sleep and in the afternoon there will be a gentle orientation walk around Leh and its bazaars.

Overnight Hotel

Meals included: (Breakfast)

Day 3 - Sightseeing in and around Leh

After breakfast we drive along the Indus Valley to Shey where we stop and visit the old Royal Palace and temple with a 2 storey gilded Buddha. From Shey we have a pleasant warm up walk across the fields to Tikse monastery. Set high above the village, this is one of the most magnificent monasteries in Ladakh. After a late lunch we drive back to Leh.

Overnight Hotel

Meals included: (Breakfast)



DAY4: Acclimatisation walk Leh valley

Today we will take a circular walk of the Leh Valley. We make our way past Leh Palace and up to Tsemo Hill, with great views over Leh. We descend past the large Lamdon School and walk across the valley to the Shanti Stupa, a beautiful white domed stupa with great views of Leh and the peaks across the valley. Built in the 1990's by Japanese monks it was part of a mission to promote world peace. We descend back to Leh for lunch and the afternoon is free to explore Leh. There will be a full trek briefing today. There is also the opportunity to do an early morning jeep drive to the Khardung La, one of the highest

motorable road passes on earth at over 5,000m. This is an optional trip which you can book and pay for locally. (If you do the jeep trip in the morning, you can do the walk later in the day).

Overnight Hotel

Meals included: (Breakfast)

DAY 5: Into the Markha Valley (3750m)

Time to head for the mountains! We drive to the village of Hamurja at the head of the Markha Valley. After lunch we follow the Markha River upstream through Sara and Chalak to Markha, the largest village in the Hemis National Park. We spend our first night camping and get to know our trekking crew. Mornings and evenings will present you with the most breathtaking views of softly lit mountains towering above, endless panoramic vistas and chance encounters with the local wildlife. Evening walk around the village and visit the monastery.

Accommodation: TENTS

Meals included: (Breakfast/ Lunch / Dinner)

Driving: 4 hrs

Hiking: 2-3 hrs / 10km / 200m ↑



DAY 6: Markha to Thachungtse (4250m)

We continue following the Markha River, crossing it a couple of times – there might be bridges or we might have to paddle. Rounding a corner, we stop off at the precariously positioned Tache Gompa, another stunning Buddhist monastery perched on a seemingly inaccessible cliff top but reached via a short, steep climb. We can admire the incredible views down the valley before continuing on, to Hankar village for lunch. After lunch a side valley takes us past the ruins of Hankar Fort before descending into the Upper Hankar and further to a stream-side camp. Stunningly remote, the camp here is often shared with the resident Himalayan blue sheep.

Overnight TENTS

Meals included: (Breakfast/ Lunch / Dinner)

Hiking: 6-7hrs · 15km · 500m ↑

DAY 7: Thachungtse to Nimaling (4854m)

Today is a shorter half day walk as we gain altitude. The trail climbs steeply to a plateau where the valley opens out. Ahead we have spectacular views of Kang Yatse (6400m), the highest peak in the valley. People do not live permanently in this region, but during the summer months the shepherds bring their flocks of goats, sheep and dzos (a hybrid of cow and yak) to graze on the pastures. Throughout the summer, the shepherds stay in stone shelters – you can often buy local yogurt from them. We will reach Nimaling by lunchtime and your trek crew will set up the camp. In the afternoon, there is time to explore the Kang Yatse region behind the campsite as further acclimatisation. Overnight TENTS

Meals included: (Breakfast/ Lunch / Dinner)

Hiking: 4 -5 hours / 8km / 600m ↑

**DAY 8: Nimaling to Chaktsang (4700m)**

A tough day today as we cross our first pass. The trail takes us further up the valley and over the Lalung La (5300m), with jaw-dropping views of the snow-topped peaks of three six-thousanders, Dzo Jongo, Kang Yatse and Regoni Malari, as your reward. Look out for the high-altitude glaciers that are the main water source for the people of the Markha Valley. Descending the other side of the pass we reach our spectacular camp at Chaktsang, surrounded by wonderful rock formations.

Overnight TENTS

Meals included: (Breakfast/ Lunch / Dinner)

Hiking: 5 - 6 hours / 13km / 470m ↑ 620m ↓

DAY 9: Chaktsang to Lato (4000m)

Another challenging day of up and down awaits. We start with a steep climb over the Chaktsang La Pass (5200m) and then we contour round the valley before dropping into a side gorge. We now descend all the way to Lato. There will be several river crossings this afternoon so you will need to carry your river crossing shoes. We camp at Lato and the valley from which you will approach UT Kangri.

You have now left the traditional Markha Valley trail and have several days of quieter paths where you'll be joined only by nomadic herders and intrepid mountaineers. Tonight's camp is situated on the Kyamur River on the quiet outskirts of Lato village. Overnight TENTS

Meals included: (Breakfast/ Lunch / Dinner)

Hiking: 5 - 6 hours / 18km / 500m ↑ 1200m ↓



DAY 10: Lato to Rumtse Phu (4854m)

Having completed the trek through the Markha Valley, and now well-acclimatised to the higher altitudes, it's time to ascend the Lato Valley on the approach to UT Kangri. Your trail follows old nomadic routes between several farming villages, exploring more of the traditional Ladakhi culture on your way to Rumtse Phu. Here, the locals are known for their horse riding and traditional dance of Gya-Pa-Cho. Although still in remote, high mountain terrain, both the villages of Lato and Rumtse Phu are connected by road, so we may have to cross the road several times today.

Overnight TENTS

Meals included: (Breakfast/ Lunch / Dinner)

Hiking: 5 - 6 hours / 17km / 850m ↑

DAY 11: Trek up to UT Kangri Base Camp (5300m)

Tackle the short but steep morning walk up to base camp where you'll spend the next two nights. At over 5000m you'll need to take today slowly as your body acclimatises further. Enjoy views of surrounding unclimbed peaks and the green pasturelands below. After lunch, your mountain guide will deliver a session introducing you to the techniques you will use on the snowy slopes above, including walking roped up and how to use crampons and ice-axes. We will pack our daypacks and get everything ready for tomorrow. We have an early dinner and get to bed for a few hours sleep in preparation for tomorrow.

Overnight TENTS

Meals included: (Breakfast/ Lunch / Dinner)

Hiking: 4 hours / 6km / 450m ↑

DAY 12: Rest and acclimatisation day at base camp

A full day to rest and allow your body to adjust to the altitude. Use the time to hydrate, relax, and prepare both physically and mentally for the upcoming summit day. After lunch, your mountain guide will deliver a session introducing you to the techniques you will use on the snowy slopes above, including walking when tied into a rope and how to use crampons and ice-axes. An early supper and to bed to try to grab a few hours before our early rise .

Overnight TENTS

Meals included: (Breakfast/ Lunch / Dinner)

DAY 13: Summit day!

We set off very early (usually 1/2am) for our summit bid. A challenging climb awaits as you ascend steep scree and moraine before crossing snow fields on the way to the top. Finally, reach the summit at 6070m to be rewarded with views of Kang Yatse and many other high peaks of Ladakh. Take in the achievement of summiting a huge 6000m mountain before making the descent back to base camp where you can enjoy a well-earned HOT meal.

Overnight TENTS

Meals included: (Breakfast/ Lunch / Dinner)

Hiking: 10 - 12 hours / 800m ↑ 800m ↓

**DAY 14: Hike out and back to Leh**

Enjoy your last morning in the high mountains before hiking back down to Rumtse Phu, where you say goodbye to your trek crew and will be picked up for the return journey to Leh. We will be back in Leh by lunchtime for a welcome hot shower and there is time for last minute exploration of Leh in the afternoon. Overnight in Leh.

Overnight Hotel

Meals included: (Breakfast)

Hiking: 2-3 hours / 6km / 450m ↓

Driving: 80 Kms / 2-3 hours

DAY 15: Fly to Delhi

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flight back to Delhi which is usually in the morning. Depending on the timing of the flight from Leh, it may be possible to do a short sightseeing tour.

OPTIONAL Guided tours to include the India Gate, Lutyens Delhi, Raj Ghat, the Red Fort. Or a walking tour of Old Delhi to include the Spice Market and Rickshaw ride. Alternatively, you may choose to take it easy at the hotel! Overnight Hotel

Meals included: (Breakfast)

DAY 16: Depart Delhi

Transfer to Airport

PRICE INCLUDES

- Twin bedded accommodation in Delhi & Leh 3 star hotels and two-man tents during the trek
- Breakfast only in Delhi and Leh hotels
- Full board for 9 nights– breakfast, lunch and dinner - during trek in dining tent
- Return flights to Leh from Delhi (7kg hand luggage & 15kg checked in hold luggage)
- Expert local climbing guide throughout trek and support team with ponies to carry heavy luggage and all camp/cooking equipment.
- Valerie Parkinson will lead the trip
- All transfers from/to airports/hotels in Delhi and Leh, including jeep transfers beginning & end of trek in Leh
- All applicable local taxes

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights to Delhi
- India Visa
- Personal travel insurance
- Extra meals in Delhi and Leh, as detailed in the itinerary
- Optional sightseeing tours in Delhi
- Monastery entrance fees in Ladakh
- Local tips for drivers/hotel staff/guide and trek support team, leader
- Personal expenses such as laundry, drinks etc
- Extra warm jackets and sleeping bags for the trek are available to hire (see below for hire list details)
- Any expenses caused by reasons beyond our control such as road blocks, weather conditions, natural calamities, flight cancellations and rescheduling, delays etc

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

The trip starts and ends in Delhi. Transfers are provided on arrival from Delhi airport to the hotel in Delhi and on departure from the hotel in Delhi to the airport. Please let us know your flight details so we can pass this on to our local partner.

ACCOMMODATION

2 nights in a 3 star hotel in Delhi on bed and breakfast. We usually use the Regent Grand Hotel.

4 nights in the Glacier View Hotel in Leh on a bed and breakfast basis.

9 nights are spent camping. Camping is full service. Tents and foam mattress are provided. We have a full camp crew of guide, cook and camp assistants who will do all the camping chores. Ponies will carry the loads and pony men will load and unload the ponies.

All accommodation is on a twin share basis. If you would like a single room and tent there is a single supplement of £390.

If you would like extra nights in the hotel in Delhi at the start or end of the trip please contact us for details

VACCINATIONS: INDIA

- There are no required vaccinations. However, you may want to consider vaccinations for tetanus, hepatitis A, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, rabies and tuberculosis. The risk of malaria is slight, but you may wish to consult your doctor or travel clinic for further advice.
- Additionally, dengue, a viral disease spread by mosquitoes, is a known risk in India. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available, so we strongly recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.
- In regions over approximately 6,560ft (2,000m), there is little risk of mosquito-borne diseases. For trips above 9,840ft (3,000m), there is a risk of being affected by acute mountain sickness. Our itineraries are designed to enable everyone to acclimatise to these altitudes, but you should be aware that it is still possible for you to be affected.
- For more information the website of the National Travel Network and Centre has very good information. www.travelhealthpro.org.uk

CLIMATE

During July and August, the temperature in Delhi will be hot (35°C) and humid. In Ladakh the summer is usually hot and dry. Temperatures can get to 25°C-30°C, with nighttime down to about 10°C. At our highest camps it will be cooler and nighttimes can be as low as minus 5°C at base camp. Summit night will be cold as we start around 1 am. At high altitude, the sun has a very strong effect. Ladakh is not normally affected by monsoon, and we can usually expect stable weather. However, mountains do generate their own weather systems, and some rain or snowfall cannot be ruled out.

DIFFICULTY RATING

This is a challenging trek at high altitude and ends in a tough ascent of a 6070m peak. You need a decent level of fitness and previous experience of trekking over 4000m would be useful. We recommend you do as much walking as possible before the trek and wear the boots you will be hiking in, so they are worn in and comfortable. UT Kangri is a non-technical peak using ice axe and crampons and involves walking roped up. Your mountain guide will go over the techniques at base camp, but we recommend you do a winter skills course beforehand. UT Kangri is an ideal first 6000m peak to attempt as it is non-technical. The ascent of UT Kangri is entirely optional. Anyone not wanting to climb can enjoy the trek and have a rest day at base camp on summit day or one of the guides will take you for a walk on summit day.

EATING AND DRINKING

India is famous for food and there is ample chance to try various Ladakhi favourites, which are often influenced by the cuisines of Tibet and China thanks to the passing Silk Road traders of yesteryear. Momos (filled dumplings) and yaks cheese are popular. Other favourites (but there are plenty more) are: thukpa, a clear vegetable soup with noodles and mutton, chicken or yak meat; tingmo (pronounced tee-mo), a steamed bread eaten with dal; and chutagi, a thick soup of local vegetables with bow tie-shaped pieces of dough cooked in broth (also served with meat).

Allow about £25/30 per day for lunch and dinner, where it is not included. You can eat out very cheaply in India, but if you go to the more expensive restaurants most of the time, you will spend more than the suggested amount. Please note, service in restaurants can be quite slow. Tea and soft drinks are very cheap. A large bottle of beer is approximately 300 rupees.

While camping, staff bring a hot drink (t & coffee) to your tent each morning. When you reach camp in the afternoon, tea/coffee/hot chocolate and cake/biscuits are served. At breakfast, dinner and in the afternoons, there is a choice of hot drinks. Breakfast typically includes cereal, toast and jam, eggs and porridge. Lunch on trek is usually served as a picnic en route (except on shorter days when it is in camp). Lunch and dinner typically include soup to start, followed by a variety of hot dishes (both local and Western) such as potatoes, vegetables, curry, pasta, rice, dahl and paneer (cottage cheese). At dinner, a dessert such as tinned fruit and custard, fritters or cake is also served.

Dietary requirements can be catered for – please advise in advance.

MONEY AND TIPPING

The currency in India is the Indian Rupee (INR). You can change money in Delhi and Leh. There are ATM machines in Delhi and in Leh, but please note that often they do not work, or they are empty. We advise you to bring at least half the money you will need in cash (if not all). You will need money for lunches and dinners in Delhi and Leh, a small amount for entry fees in Leh, incidentals such as drinks and snacks plus tipping. We suggest that you allow £150 for tipping for the whole trip. Your leader will advise on tipping for Delhi and Leh and the trek. All tipping (including the leader) is of course at your discretion.

ALTITUDE

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m.

TRANSPORT

We fly from Delhi to Leh and use buses, jeeps or taxis for the sightseeing round Leh and the journey from Leh to the start of the trek and from the end of the trek to Chandigarh. We use an air conditioned carriage on the train from Chandigarh to Delhi.

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.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We recommend you buy travel insurance as soon as you book. Please check it covers you to the maximum altitude the trip goes to (6070m) and covers you for the use of ice axe and crampons and walking roped up. We recommend you carry a copy (paper or on your phone) of the policy and make sure you have the 24hr medical emergency telephone numbers. Your leader will need to check your insurance details.

INDIAN VISAS

You will need an Indian visa. CLIENTS NEED TO APPLY FOR NORMAL TOURIST VISA (E VISA)

You can apply within 30 days of travel for (30 days visa) AND 120 days prior for (365 days visa)

You will need to ensure you have a valid passport to travel to India and the best way to apply is using the official Indian Government website link here

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>



What do I need to bring?

- You will need one piece of luggage which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag which weighs a maximum of 15kg for the ponies to carry throughout the trek.
- You will carry your own day pack on trek with waterproofs, water, snacks etc – a 35/50- litre day pack is suggested for this trip.
- On the flights to and from Leh there is a baggage limit of 15kg for hold baggage and an additional 7kg for cabin baggage.
- The hotels in both Delhi and Leh will store luggage free of charge.
- Some items can be hired in Leh (see below)
- Your climbing gear will be left in Leh when you start the trek and it will be brought separately to the base camp for the climb.

The following items are essential and we recommend you bring them

- Travel insurance policy (including the details of the 24 hour medical emergency telephone number)
- Daypack 30 to 50 litres
- Sleeping bag (4 season) and liner
- Hiking boots – worn in and waterproof with ankle support
- Trainers/sandals for river crossings and camp use
- Walking socks – thin and thicker for summit day
- Trekking trousers and shorts/skirt
- Long-sleeved base layers (merino wool is great)
- Leggings
- Shirts or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Warm jacket (at least 3 season)
- Sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen
- Gloves – thin and good thicker ones for the summit day
- Warm hat
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Water bottles 1 litre (x 2)
- Water purification - tablets/liquid/steri-pen device
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Travel towel (campsites are always by a source of water/river)
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Power bank, plug adaptor, chargers
- Toilet paper for the trek
- Snacks

Please note the climb is entirely optional – if you are attempting the summit, you will need the following:

- Trekking pole(s)
- Gaiters
- Warm gloves/mitts and socks
- Boots to fit crampons (preferably B2)
- Crampons to fit your boots (C2 will fit a B2 boot)
- Ice axe
- Harness and carabiner
- Helmet

You can hire the following in Leh (paid locally in rupees INR)

• R 4 season sleeping bag	INR 3,300
• 4 season down jacket	INR 3,300
• Crampons	INR 1,100
• Ice axe	INR 1,100
• Harness and carabiner	INR 1,100
• Helmet	INR 1,100
• Trekking pole(s)	INR 1,100

It is also possible to hire boots in Leh for the climb but please note that sizes and quality cannot be guaranteed.

If you need to hire gear, please let us know in advance.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

If you need any pre or post-trip accommodation in Delhi or Leh we can book extra nights. There is plenty to see and do in Delhi and Leh. We can change the dates of your flight to and from Leh if you wish to arrive early or stay longer.

We can arrange a trip to Agra to see the Taj Mahal or a longer trip to visit Jaipur and Agra. Please ask us for details of itineraries and costs