



## THE VALLEYS AND FLOWERS OF LAHAUL

The unspoilt Miyar Nullah (nullah~valley) is situated in Lahaul and beyond the major effects of the monsoon rains of lowland India. It is very similar to Ladakh and Zaskar, both in its high and dry mountain scenery and Buddhist culture. During July and early August it is also home to a multitude of Himalayan flowers, including the rare blue poppy. This is an excellent trek for those interested in superb scenery, unique culture and flora, but who do not want the tough trekking normally involved when visiting Zaskar. There are no high passes as the

trek is designed as an exploration of the valley itself. The mountain scenery is second to none, as the valley is flanked on its north eastern side by the Great Himalayan Range, which separates it from the valley of Zaskar. As a contrast it also offers the chance to see part of the beautiful alpine scenery of the Kulu Valley and to cross the Rhotang Pass, which is only open for 4 months of the year.

**Duration:** 17 Days. 9 Days Camping.

**Grade:** This trek is graded moderate, and will be enjoyed by those who take some regular exercise and who are in good health. **No previous experience is necessary.**

## DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

**Day 1-: DELHI.** After clearing customs you will be met by our representatives) who will be holding a placard (with your name on it) and transferred by taxi to your hotel. In the afternoon there is a guided tour of Delhi.

Delhi basically is 7 cities all merged into one and laced together by the new city of the British Raj, designed by Lutyens & Baker. It was one of the boldest expressions anywhere in the world of British Imperial ambitions and has endless sightseeing possibilities. Our tour of Delhi will include the Raj Ghat memorial, the Red Fort, once the most lavish fort and palace of the Mughal Empire and the Qutb Minar, the 73m high tower of victory.

**DAY 2-: TRAVEL BY TRAIN TO CHANDIGARH, AFTERNOON AT LEISURE, THEN BEGIN DRIVE TO MANALI.** You make an early morning transfer to the station for the morning Shatabdi Express, air conditioned train to Chandigarh. (Timings are usually 07.40 depart, arrive at 11.00 am.) The city, purpose-built in the 1950s as the new capital of the Punjab after Lahore was handed over to Pakistan, was largely designed by Le Corbusier. The result is not yet the forward-looking statement of faith in a modern Indian society it was designed to be, although for visitors it is a fascinating view of 1950's utopian town planning.

Later you begin the drive to Manali, stopping in Mandi (approx 5 hours drive time) where you will stay tonight. Overnight Hotel.

**DAY 3-: CONTINUE DRIVE TO MANALI.** (6,430ft/1,960m). The remaining 110km road journey should take about 4 hrs. The road winds upwards through to Manali. Overnight Hotel.

## THE KULU VALLEY

The Kulu valley is one of the most enchanting parts of Himachal Pradesh. Through the Valley runs the Beas River, bordered by paddy fields in the monsoon and wheat fields in the winter. Conifers and rhododendrons grow on the upper slopes which are covered by snow in winter. To the northwest of the valley is the white mass of the Solang Valley and to the north is the Rohtang Pass (4,075 meters (13,370 feet), the gateway to the Great Himalayas. The road to Lahaul and Leh in Ladakh crosses the Rohtang Pass.

**DAY 4-: DRIVE TO KEYLONG.** (Approx 5 hour drive time)

We follow the Leh Highway across the spectacular Rohtang Pass (3978m.) with impressive views of the Pir Pinjal and the Great Himalaya en route. Descending from the pass we cross the Chandrabhaga river and enter the Lahoul & Spiti district. Beyond the reaches of the heavy summer monsoon, this is an area more akin to high altitude desert and contrasts markedly with the fertile alpine scenery we have left behind. We spend the night at Keylong (3350m), the districts' headquarters and time permitting can visit the 16th century Sha-shur gumpa nearby.

**Day 5-: DRIVE TO UDAIPUR.** (2800m) (Approximately 3 hour drive time) A brisk start after breakfast for the last stretch of our road journey along the dramatic Pattan Valley to Udaipur (2800m) with its unique wood carved Mrikula Devi temple of Hindu and Buddhist origin. Our trek now begins as we follow a track from the edge of the town into a narrow rocky gorge, the entrance to the Miyar Nullah. A steady climb brings us to the head of the gorge and the first village. Most Lahoulis follow a curious blend of Hindu and Buddhist traditions with stupas, mani stones and chortens being found in every settlement. The flat-roofed, whitewashed houses with tiny windows and heavy wooden doors are built to withstand extremes of climate and are often interconnected, enabling contact with neighbours during the winter season when snow is piled high outside. We camp in woodland just beyond the village.

**DAY 6-: TREK TO CHAMRAT.** Our trek starts by following a mule track from the edge of the town. This quickly enters a deep rocky gorge, which marks the southern gates of the Miyar Nullah. We camp at the northern end as the valley begins to widen, close to the small village of Chamrat. Camp in forest glade. (Approximately 4 hours walk)

**DAY 7-: TREK TO DOKSHA VIA CHALLING.** A morning's walk further up the valley lies Urgos with its *gumpa*, or monastery. This area is actively Buddhist, and many of the intricate murals have been recently restored. The monastery is alive with bright colours and has an intimate atmosphere compared with the vastness of the scenery outside. Walking onwards in the afternoon we reach the small settlement of Doksha. We camp for the night on a meadow. (Approximately 6 hours walk) Lunch en-route.

**DAY 8-: TREK TO TANPATTAM.** (3800m) As we trek higher up the valley we leave the last settlements behind and our only companions, apart from wild Yaks and the odd shepherd with their flocks of sheep and goat, are the observant but elusive

marmots. We are now right under the great Himalayan range, with huge peaks towering above the valley.

**DAY 9/10-: CAMP TANPATTAM. OPTIONAL WALKS TO EXPLORE THE SIDE VALLEYS.** A chance to explore the vast and uninhabited upper reaches of the Miyar valley. During our time here, we will also visit the centuries old and now abandoned Tibetan Monastery, perched upon a high ridge overlooking the valley and are treated to fine views of snow covered mountain peaks. (Approximately 6/7 hours walk per day)

**DAY 11-: TREK TO ALPINE MEADOW.** Retracing our steps down the valley, we walk through a myriad of Himalayan flowers that dot the edges of cultivated fields. Lunch en- route. (Approximately 5 hours walk)

**DAY 12-: TREK TO URGOS MONASTERY.** We take time to stop in villages where the villagers knit and sell brightly coloured woollen gloves before reaching our campsite near the Urgos monastery in Challing. (Approximately 5 hours walk) Lunch en-route.

**DAY 13-: TREK TO FOREST GLADE AND DRIVE TO KEYLONG** We exit this magical valley by following a mule track until we reach a forest glade where we will rejoin our transport and drive to Keylong. Overnight hotel. Approx 3 hours drive time.

**DAY 14-: DRIVE TO MANALI.** We set off for the return drive back over the Rhotang pass and into the alpine lushness of the Kulu Valley and spend the night in Manali. Arrive at Bannons Resorts at lunchtime. Approx 5 hours drive time.

**DAY 15-: RETURN DRIVE TO MANDI.** (Approximately 4 hours drive time) After breakfast drive by private transport to Mandi. Overnight at the Visco Resorts Hotel.

**DAY 16-: DRIVE TO DELHI.** (Approximately 6 hours drive time). Arrive Delhi midday and check into your Hotel. Rest of day at leisure. Overnight hotel.

**DAY 17-: FLY DELHI – LONDON.** Early morning transfer to the Airport to board your return flight home.

**WEATHER:** In July it can be quite hot during the day (up to 25°C) at lower altitudes. At night it can drop to freezing at higher altitudes (11,000ft)

**ACCOMMODATION:** Twin sharing. Delhi The Oberoi Maidens: Comfortable 4 star property with en-suite accommodation and swimming pool, bar and restaurants as standard. In Manali (Bannons Resorts) and Mandi we use comfortable en-suite accommodation with dining hall and gardens. In Keylong we use the Chandra Hotel. A newly appointed hotel with en-suite accommodation and restaurant.

#### Trek Notes:

A "moderate" trek at high altitude.  
18 day trip, London to London. 8 nights Camping with full portage.  
Maximum altitude 4075m. Average 3300m.  
4 nights hotels, 4 nights Lodge.

#### EQUIPMENT & SERVICES PROVIDED.

When we receive your booking we will send you a full India travel guide, which contains a suggested gear and clothing list. If you do have queries at this initial stage do ring us and we will be pleased to offer advice.

**MEAL PLAN AND HOTELS:** Twin sharing bed and breakfast in Delhi and elsewhere. Full board on trek.

**TRAIN TRAVEL.** Overnight train travel is by 4 or 6 berth air-conditioned sleeper compartments. Depending on availability, train\* travel is usually in 1<sup>st</sup> A/C (fifties style 4 berth cabins with cabin doors) or 2<sup>nd</sup> A/C (4 & 6 berth cabins with pull to curtains for privacy) On some routes the only class available (apart from 2<sup>nd</sup> class non a/c) is 3<sup>rd</sup> class A/C which is 3 tier on either side of the carriage with a shared passage. Bedding is normally supplied free of charge. (pillows, sheets and blankets) \* Train times are subject to confirmation by our agents in India.

**TIPPING:** If you are trekking with us it is customary at the end of the trek for members of the group to pool a small sum of money and any surplus clothing, which is then given to the Trek Leader for distribution among the staff. Of course, tipping is a privilege and not a right and you are at liberty to give as much or as little as you wish. Your Trek leader will be happy to field a discussion as to what you may like to give, generally we advise about £1.50 per client for each day on trek in local currency or the dollar equivalent. In the event that you are not entirely satisfied with the service provided, you are asked to make your feelings known to the Trek Leader.

**NOT INCLUDED:** Entry fees\* to monuments of historical importance. \*Expect to pay between £2.00 and £6.00 per person for entry fees to monuments of historical importance in Delhi and elsewhere.

**RECOMMENDED READING:** The Lonely Planet India Travel Guide and Rough Guides Travel To India.

**EQUIPMENT PROVIDED.** We provide 'A' frame or dome tents which have room for two people plus all of your equipment. There is also a dining tent, a toilet tent exclusively for our group use, and a kitchen and staff tent. There are camp chairs or stools, a kerosene/gas lamp or candles for reading in the dining tent\* at night, stainless steel crockery and tableware and \*foam sleeping mats. (\*subject to availability) **We strongly recommend you bring your own karrimat or therma-a-rest as well.** The staff complement of cooks and assistants are always in attendance. They put up and take down the tents, make the tea, cook the food, wash the dishes, load the porters and carry a load of their own. They work extremely hard and are always willing to help. If you want to join in putting up tents and taking them down, you are free to do so, but it is not expected.

\*Dining tents are heavy to carry and are only provided for a minimum of 4 people. For under 4 people a smaller tent will be provided.

## A TYPICAL DAY ON TREK

Soon after dawn you are served tea or coffee while still in your sleeping bag. A few minutes later a washing bowl of hot water is placed outside your tent. You can wash inside or outside the tent. Once dressed you can pack your kit-bag and day-pack in preparation for the day's hike, and place these outside the tent. The camp staff will take down the tents. While this is happening, breakfast is served. In the Himalaya breakfast usually consists of cereals and/or porridge with milk, eggs, usually served with chapatis, (unleavened bread that is cooked on a hot iron plate) or pancakes with honey or jam. There is always plenty of tea and coffee. **The camp will be being struck while you are eating, and you will need to be packed and out of your tents before breakfast.**

You can take a leisurely breakfast while the staff prepare loads for the porters or pack animals. If you have not filled up your water bottle the night before ask the cook to fill your bottle (before breakfast is served) with boiled water. You may also collect a packed lunch, although usually you may have a cooked meal at the lunch stop. Departure from camp could be from any time between dawn and 9.00am, depending on the days itinerary, but generally you will start walking at around 8.00am.

Depending on the length of the day's walk, you will walk for three or four hours before stopping for lunch. The lunch stop will last for about an hour.

You usually arrive at the next camp site by 4:00pm. Camp may already be set up by the time you get there, and tea/juice and biscuits will be ready to welcome you. Supper will be ready soon after dark, and will be served in the dining tent. The standard of cooking on trek is usually surprisingly good, with the style of cooking being a compromise between local and western food. Menus vary, but typically we start with soup. The main course is often a rice based meal with meat stew or mild curry, plus separate vegetable and salad dishes. A sweet dish is provided after the meal. Our meal is finished with tea, coffee or hot chocolate. Sometimes a bottle of local spirit is provided by the camp staff, but we advise clients to buy plastic half bottles from duty free. However, you should only drink alcohol when you feel acclimatised. After dinner, the usual practise is for your water bottle to be filled with hot water and used as a hot water bottle for your sleeping bag and for drinking water the next day.

We would like you to enjoy the serenity of the unhurried atmosphere that exists in these wilderness regions. Our day to day camp routine on your trekking adventure is geared to allow you to make the most of your holiday.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Whilst every effort is made to keep to the above itinerary, clients will hopefully appreciate that this is adventure travel in a remote mountain region. **Given the nature of these treks there will quite likely be changes to the itinerary in terms of anything from on the spot choice of camp site to the day that a rest day is taken.** Weather conditions, road conditions, vehicle breakdowns off the beaten track, local availability of porters, can contribute to the need for changes. Your trek leader will do everything in his/her power to see that you are inconvenienced as little as possible in such events. **Timings given are approximate.**

**Important:** Before you travel please check your **Tour Voucher** and **Arrival Information** for the latest joining instructions. This will be sent to you upon receipt of final payment.

**All itineraries are subject to change without prior notice.**