



THE ZANSKAR VALLEY TREK

This is one of the best adventure treks in the Himalayas. From the heat of Delhi you experience the joys of an Indian train journey and a drive through the cooler foothills of the Himalaya. You drive up the Kulu valley to Manali, surrounded by pine forests, terraced fields and orchards of apple and orange trees. After a rest in Manali you drive over the famous Rohtang Pass and descend into the Lahaul valley, which is surrounded by snow capped mountains. At Chika you meet your trek staff and horses, and set off on foot into the Himalaya. The terrain immediately becomes dramatic and arid as you enter a land of Tibetan Buddhism. The white chortens and prayer flags form part of this striking landscape with its ancient monasteries and friendly local people in their colourful traditional dress.

After the trek you will have time to relax in Leh, the capital of Ladakh, before your flight back to Delhi.

Duration: 20 Days

Grade: *Moderate/Strenuous

***GRADE:** This trek is graded moderate/strenuous and will be enjoyed by those who are in good health and who take regular exercise. Some previous trekking experience is highly recommended.

HOW THE TREKS ARE ORGANISED: All food supplies, camping equipment and personal belongings are carried by porters and/or pack horses. A camp crew is designated to oversee all cooking arrangements.

Day 1: DELHI.

Arrive in the early morning and after clearing customs you will be met by our representative who will be holding a placard 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. In the afternoon we will tour Old Delhi, visiting the Raj Ghat memorial at the site where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated, the Red Fort, once the most lavish fort and palace of the Mughal Empire and the Qutab Minar, or tower of victory rising five storeys and impressively ornate.

RED FORT. This imposing monument to the rule of Shah Jahan was begun in 1639 and completed in 1648, taking its name from the red sandstone used in its construction. It is said to have cost 10 million rupees to build, much of it spent on the opulent marble royal palaces within. Here the Emperor exercised his divine authority in the Halls of Public and Private Audience - seated in the latter on the fabulous gold-canopied Peacock Throne that was inlaid with a vast number of sapphires, rubies, emeralds and diamonds.

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 after about an hour at Nalagarh, the gateway to Himachal Pradesh, where you will stay tonight. This fort on a hillock was built in 1421 during the reign of Raja Bikram Chand, and stands amid acres of greenery with a panoramic view of the Shivalik Hills. It is now a hotel with air-conditioned rooms, and facilities include a swimming pool, golf course and health club. Overnight at the Nalagarh Fort Resort.

DAY 3: CONTINUE DRIVE TO MANALI. (6,430ft/1,960m).

The remaining 250km road journey should take about 7 hrs. The road crosses the northern plains - dead flat, highly cultivated and bustling with life - before reaching the foothills that begin abruptly at Kalka. From then on 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 : DAY AT LEISURE IN MANALI.

A free day in Manali; it is a great place to relax after a trek with good souvenir shopping, a Tibetan monastery and lots of good restaurants. You could also make the hour long drive by taxi to the village of Naggar, once the capital of the Kulu district. Naggar is noted for its old fort with spectacular views over the valley below, the Roerich art gallery and several interesting Hindu temples. Overnight hotel.

DAY 5: DRIVE TO CHIKA. Manali - Chika (3375 mts) - 165 Kms

Today we drive northwards over the spectacular Rohtang Pass(13,370 ft.) and into the Buddhist land of Lahoul. Beyond the reaches of the monsoon, it is an area more akin to the high altitude desert of Tibet than the alpine scenery we have left behind. Following the Chandra river towards Keylong, the capital of Lahoul, This journey is on rough roads, but the spectacular scenery fully makes up for any discomfort. Stop for lunch in Keylong. Beyond Keylong we drive to Chika (approximately 2.5h hours drive time) Camp in Chika and meet the rest of the camp crew. Overnight camp.

DAY 6: TREK TO ZANKAR SAMDO (3860m) Approximately 5 hours Walk.

We follow the river bank and cross over a suspension bridge before reaching our campsite.

DAY 7: TREK TO CHUMINAKPO (4380m) Approximately 6 hours walk.

There is a gradual ascent along the Shingo Chu river before we climb up towards the high peaks of the Zanskar range of Mountains and camp at the base of the Shingo La pass.

DAY 8: TREK TO LAKHANG VIA THE SHINGO LA PASS (Shingola 5050m) (Lakhong 4400m)
Approximately 7 hours journey.

This is a demanding days walk upto the Shingo La pass, gateway to the Zanskar valley. After crossing this pass we descend down into Zanskar and camp in Lakhong by the banks of a river.

DAY 9: TREK TO KARGYAK (4150m)
Approximately 6 hour walk.

Early this morning you will cross over the Shingo river and walk along grassy meadows. Camp in Kargyak.

DAY 10: TREK TO TESTA (4203m) Approximately 5 hour walk.

We follow an easy trail along the valley floor, past the village of Kuru to our campsite near the village of Testa.

DAY 11: TREK TO PURNE (3660m) Approximately 4 hours walk.

You finally meet the main Zanskar valley and pass through the villages of Tabla and Testa before a steep descent takes us to a further bridge that you cross to your campsite at Purne. There are a couple of shops in Purne selling soft drinks, chocolate and a few other items.

DAY 12: TREK TO PHUKTAL (4132m)
Approximately 4.5 hours walk.

You walk up a very deep and impressive gorge with a fast flowing river to this remarkable and remote monastery. The 500 hundred year old Gompa is built literally on the side of a cliff. Here you can visit the inner temples and see a stone tablet left by the Hungarian, Alexander Csoma de Koros, one of the first explorers in Tibet, 1826-27.

Day 13: TREK TO MUNE (3893m) Approximately 7 hours walk.

A long day as we walk along the Zanskar valley along the banks of the Lungnat River. We reach camp in the late afternoon. Our campsite will be close to the village monastery.

DAY 14: REST DAY. AT LEISURE.
Overnight camp

DAY 15: TREK TO PADUM. (3637m)
Approximately 6 hours walk.

From Mune the trail leads us past another impressive monastery, the Barden Gompa, which is perched upon a tall rock with fine views of Padum, our final trek destination. Arrive Padum in the late afternoon. Overnight camp.

DAY 16: DRIVE BY JEEP TO KARGIL. (2800m)

A days drive by jeep to Kargil. En-route stop for Lunch. The road, which opened in 1980, goes through the fertile Suru Valley and continues over the Pensi La pass (4200m) before descending down to Kargil. Overnight the Hotel Siachin.

DAY 17: DRIVE TO LEH. (3520m)

We continue our drive to Leh via the Fatu La pass (4000m) and en-route we will visit the Lamayuru Gompa. Perched upon a drained lake on an eroded crag and overlooked by massive mountains, makes this a special place. The Lamayuru Gompa is the oldest known Gompa (monastery) in Ladakh and dates back to the 10th century. There are renowned collections of carpets, thangkas (Buddhist murals) and Frescoes. Arrive Leh in the early evening and stay at the Padma Hotel and Guest House.

DAY 18: AT LEISURE IN LEH.

Time to relax or explore the main bazaar, where there are many shops and good restaurants.

LEH The capital of Ladakh, has long been a remote and fascinating outpost. Its situation in the upper Indus Valley made it an important crossroads for pilgrims and traders. Pilgrims continued from here along the Indus Valley to Mt Kailash and Tibet, while traders would set off with their caravans over the Karakoram pass to the markets of Yarkland, Kashgir and central Asia.

DAY 19: FLY TO DELHI.

Transfer to the Domestic airport to board the 10:30am Alliance Air Flight to Delhi. Arrive Delhi at 11:45hrs. This spectacular flight over some of the highest mountains in the world is one of the highlights of this trek. On your arrival in Delhi you will be met by our agents and transferred by taxi to the 4 star Park Hotel. Rest of day at leisure. Late evening transfer by taxi to the airport to board your return flight home.

DAY 20: FLY DELHI - LONDON.

TREK NOTES:

A "moderate/strenuous" trek at high altitude.
21 day trip, London to London. 9 days Camping with full portorage.
Maximum altitude 4380m. Average 3400m.

TREK LEADER: Sunder Khampa. Sunder speaks English fluently and for many years he has been leading treks for Embassy personnel based in Delhi.

TRAIN TRAVEL. Train travel is by air-conditioned carriage. Bedding is normally provided free of charge on the train (sheets, pillows and blankets)

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.

Meal Plan: B&B in Delhi and elsewhere. Full board on Trek

Not Included: Entry fees to monuments of historical importance.

ACCOMMODATION: En-suite. twin sharing. Delhi The Park Hotel: This 4 star property is a 10 minute walk away from Connought Place in the centre of town. Facilities include en-suite accommodation with swimming pool, bar and restaurants as standard. Nalagarh (3 star) In Manali we use Bannons Lodge. (3 star) Elsewhere we use the best available Guest House and Lodge accommodation.

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. **We strongly recommend you bring your own karrimat or therma-a-rest as well.** (*Subject to availability) 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 breakfast will 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 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 5:00pm. Camp may already 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 or in some instances, around the camp fire. Camp fires will only be made if dead wood is available. 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.

LEADERS: Sunder Khampa will Lead this trek for a minimum of 4 people Under 4 will be led by our English speaking Sirdars.

WEATHER: In August it can be quite hot during the day (up to 30°C) at lower altitudes. At night it can drop to freezing at higher altitudes (11,000ft)

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.