

23-DAY ADVENTURE

## CHANGTANG LAKES TO SPITI VALLEY

Ladakh

Spend three weeks trekking through lush greenery, set within ochre-streaked peaks, where nomadic herders swaddled in traditional dress, are the only other people you will meet for days on end. Winding your way over ancient glacial moraines and past the divine Changtang Lakes, experience a remote landscape that dominates the tiny villages set within it. The beauty of Ladakh lies within its quiet nature and unfamiliarity; the chanting from monasterial buildings, spiralled around small peaks on the hillside, is the only thing penetrating through the stillness of these lands. After marvelling at the vast, open plains of the Changtang Plateau, delve deep into Spiti Valley, following the meandering line of the river before ascending to the snowy pass of the Parang La glacier. Then spend your final few days indulging in Indian culture as you travel via Chandigarh to the bustling capital of New Delhi.

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Ascend the snowy glacier of Parang La at the head of the beautiful Spiti valley.
- Trek along the shores of the majestic Changtang lakes.
- Meet nomadic Tibetan refugees who have built their homes high in the mountains.
- Keep your eyes peeled for the illusive snow leopards who roam these lands.





# ITINERARY

## DAY 1

### ARRIVE IN LEH

Welcome to Ladakh! On arrival in Leh, a member of our team will be waiting to collect you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel, where you will meet your guide and the other members of your group.

Accommodation: **Hotel**

## DAY 2

### STOK PALACE & MATHO MONASTERY

After breakfast, we hop in our private transfer and drive to the majestic Stok Palace, it's fortress like presence a prominent feature of Leh and it's surrounding areas. Constructed by King Tsespal Tondup Namgyal in 1825, the palace beholds a huge collection of ancient royal ornaments, Thankas and old statues. After spending time at Stok Palace, we drive to Matho village and visit the Matho monastery, built in the 13th century. It is said that two famous oracles, invited from Tibet by the founder of this monastery, are said to inhabit the bodies of monks during the Matho Nagrang festival, held each year. After visiting Matho, we drive back to Leh and wander up to the Shanti Stupa view point before having a relaxed evening in Leh town.

Transport: **Private transfer**

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included: **Breakfast**

## DAY 3

### SHEY PALACE & THIKSEY MONASTERY

This morning we continue acclimatising with a visit to Shey palace & Thiksey Monastery. These ancient, spiritual villages, perched on their mounds, are filled with a host of Buddhist art; including wall paintings, Thangkas, statues of different Bodhisattvas and sacred shrines, as well as a large scale Maitreya Buddha. After exploring all these hidden treasures, we return to Leh for an afternoon of trekking preparation and market exploration.

Transport: **Private transfer**

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included: **Breakfast**

## DAY 4

### LEH – HEMIS – RUMTSE

This morning we begin our journey into the mountains, stopping first at Hemis monastery, the largest monastery in Ladakh. Founded in the early 17th century, this beautifully, colourful monastery belongs to the Drukpa order. We then follow an idyllic valley, surrounded by rushing streams and fronted by long Mani stone walls, we pass through spectacular gorges and several charming villages before arriving at the remote village of Rumtse.

Transport: **Private transfer (2 hours)**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 5

### RUMTSE – KYAMAR

Today we embark on our fifteen day trek, beginning with the Kyanmar Lungpa valley, it's barren landscape flecked with pockets of green, leading us to the entrance of the Changtang plateau. We leave behind the quaint rooftops of Rumtse for the gentle slopes of the plateau, taking in the beautiful scenery and enjoying a steady start to our epic adventure.

Hiking time: **4 - 5 hours**

Ascent: **280 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 6

### KYAMAR – TISALING

This morning we start by ascending a long steady climb leads to the Kyamri La pass. As we step into the truly, remote high mountains keep your eyes peeled for the illusive snow leopard; these shy animals call the Changtang mountains home. We continue to walk up to Mandalchan La pass; officially arriving at the Changtang plateau. Here the scenery takes a sharp turn; lovers of wide-open spaces will be delighted as the landscape opens out and countless species of wild flowers decorate it's floor.

Hiking time: **5 hours**

Ascent: **810 m**

Descent: **390 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 7

### TISALING – PANGUNAGU

Beginning the day by conquering the imposing Shingbuk La pass, we are honoured with an awe inspiring view of Tsokar lake; the heart of Changtang. During the summer, many nomads migrate here from different areas to graze their herds of goats, sheep, horses and yaks in the meadows. The ensemble of animals and people bring a community feel to the depths of remote Himalaya. The Lakes of Changthang are also home to many protected species of migratory birds, so bird watchers, bring your binoculars!

Hiking time: **4 - 5 hours**

Ascent: **520 m**

Descent: **740 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 8

### PUNGANAGO – NURUCHEN

Enjoy an easy trek wandering the blissful shores of Tsokar Lake, along the vast, open plateau as far as Nuruchan, where the spectacular landscape of the valley is smattered with various birds, Yaks and wild donkeys. The route then follows the gentle meandering of the deliciously green riverside, through Nuruchan village and across alpine meadows to reach the campsite for the night.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**

Ascent: **110 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 9

### NURUCHAN – RACHUNGKARU

Today we cross the small pass of Horlamla at 4,900m. It is an easy ascent and once at the top we reach Rachungkaru where we find the nomadic camps of Tibetan refugees, clad in beautifully hand woven garments. Grazing yaks, sheep and pashmina goats fill the pastures surrounding the clusters of traditional cow-hair-felt tents. We can see first hand, the interesting life style of these nomadic people as we camp alongside them, learning through an exchange of cultures.

Hiking time: **4 - 5 hours**

Ascent: **210 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 10

### RACHUNGKARU – GYAMA

Heading through the nomadic camp we ascend steeply to Kyamayuri-La, the current high point on the trek so far, sitting tall at 5,300m. From the pass, we marvel at the wilderness stretching out before us, then easily descend to the summer pastures of another Tibetan refugee camp. We traverse around the small pass of Kartse-La, the snow blanketing it's tops, before arriving to a warm welcome at Gyama nomadic camp. We spend the evening getting to know these incredible people as we yet again camp alongside them.

Hiking time: **6 hours**

Ascent: **400 m**

Descent: **120 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 11

### GYAMA – KORZOK

Today the Yarlung Nyaula pass is a steady ascent from camp. We follow along a small stream, trending eastward across the valley floor before gaining height to the pass. From the top, the dusty oranges of the barren foreground contrast with the radiant blues of Tsomoriri in the distance, creating incredible views. It is then an easy descent to the fluttering prayer flags of Korzok Phu, before we continue downhill, tracing the river until the majestic Tsomoriri Lake stretches out before us. This evening we visit the Korzok Monastery and take a short hike around the village.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**

Ascent: **260 m**

Descent: **820 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 12

### REST DAY

Take a day to rest and recuperate in the stunning surroundings of Tsomoriri. Located on the northern plains of Leh, this high-altitude lake is the largest in the Trans Himalayan region, covering a vast 23km, with Ladakh to the North and Tibet to the East. Fed by the snowy peaks of the Changtang Plateau, the glacial waters are a common breeding ground for a variety of birds, including; bar-headed geese, the great crested grebe and brahmin ducks.

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 13

### KARZOK – KIANGDAM

Today we continue trekking along the magnificent lakeshore of Tsomoriri as far as Kiangdam. Keeping our eyes peeled for Lynx, Nayan, Bharal (Himalayan blue sheep) and the Great Tibetan sheep that roam freely along these shores, we observe the crystal clear waters change from the various shades of beige pebble, to an exotic turquoise green, to deep navy. We trek along the vast plateau before crossing delightful meadows, sprung with the odd long-stemmed wildflower, until we reach our campsite.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 14

### KIANGDAM – NURBO SUMDO

This morning, after a hearty breakfast, we leave camp for Norbu Sumbo. Leaving behind the lake, we follow a gentle path over the expansive plateau. Wild animals, like Skyang (wild donkeys) are dotted across the hillside as we pass Tibetan nomad's camps, settled in the beautiful meadows near the spring. Our campsite this evening sits on the edge of the spring, boasting clean, fresh water.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**

Descent: **130 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 15

### NURBO SUMDO – UMLUNG

This morning we start along the familiar ground of the plateau before entering into an imposing gorge, cut dramatically into the valley. We cross the azure hues of the Parang River, enjoying the spectacular view of this enchanting landscape, before continuing on a pleasant trek, reverse of the river as it flows downstream.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**

Ascent: **50 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 16

### UMLUNG – DAKPO PHIRTSE

Today is a day of river crossings, as we zig-zag our way up the gorge. There are noticeable changes in the landscape as we move into the higher regions of the Himalaya. Marmot calls provide the soundtrack as the shadows of Himalayan Mountain eagles soar across the ground. The snowy peaks are now within touching distance.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**

Ascent: **510 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 17

### CROSSING THE PARANG LA

An hours gradual ascent leads us to the glacier that blankets the Parang La. We cross this with care, marvelling at the splendid views of the awe-inspiring Spiti valley landscape and the spectacular mountains that encircle it. After a brief stop to soak up the surroundings, we descend steeply for an hour or so, crossing a patch of greenery before arriving at our campsite.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**

Ascent: **530 m**

Descent: **560 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 18

### JUKSTOK – THALTA – KIBER

After breakfast, we start by descending steeply down an awesome landscape as far as a small river. We then follow it's winding pathway for two hours until the gorge opens out and merges into another enchanting valley. Heading up from the confluence of the valleys, we set up camp astride a small rise.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**

Descent: **770 m**

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 19

### KIBER – KIE – KAZA

This morning we begin with a short and gradual ascent for about an hour, then an easy descent to the river. After crossing the river we can see the beautiful white washed houses of the charming Kibber village. Known for being one of the highest motor-able villages in the world, Kibber is situated in a narrow valley surrounded by spectacular mountains. From this beautiful end point, we hop in our private transfer and drive to the bustling town of Kaza. On route, we stop to visit Kie monastery, perched in a classic Ladakhi fashion on a hill, it's white walls streaked with dust and embellished with hints of gold.

Transport: **Private transfer (3 hours)**

Hiking time: **2 - 3 hours**

Descent: **830 m**

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 20

### KAZA – MANALI

Today we rest our tired feet, as we embark on the long drive to Manali. On route, we visit the remote Losar village, considered to be the first inhabited village in the Spiti Valley, located at an altitude of 4085m. We then continue driving through the spectacular scenery of different valley's landscapes, crossing the Kunzum La and entering the Lahul valley. We reach the colourful rooftops of Manali as evening falls.

Transport: **Private transfer (7 - 8 hours)**

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 21

### MANALI

After a leisurely breakfast, today we embrace the culture of our surroundings. A visit to the Roerich gallery museum is followed by an evening walk around old Manali, taking a tour of the Hadimba temple and an exploration of the local market to buy some souvenirs.

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included: **Breakfast / Dinner**

#### DAY 22

### MANALI – CHANDIGARH – DELHI

On our final full day in India, we drive to Chandigarh, known as "the city of beauty" and capital of the Punjab state. We make our way through the winding roads of the foothills at the base of the Himalaya. On arrival in Chandigarh, if time permits, we visit the beautiful Rock Gardens and explore the city before taking an evening transfer to the railway station to catch a train to Delhi. Onboard the train we will have a delicious evening meal before arriving at Delhi fairly late and transferring to our hotel.

Transport: **Train (3 hours)**

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAY 23

### DEPARTURE

Transfer from hotel to airport to catch return flight.

Meals included: **Breakfast**

# TRIP INFORMATION

## DIFFICULTY

On this trip you will be visiting a remote and isolated region and committing to a long trekking program. You will be walking on difficult terrain at high altitude for 15 consecutive days and this will place a huge strain on your body. As well as the rigors of the walking, spending an extended period of time at high altitude and sleeping in a tent for 15 nights will add to your fatigue. You will be trekking to altitudes up to 5700m. To participate in this trip it is essential that you have past experience of altitude and mountainous trekking. You must be in good physical shape with high levels of determination and an understanding that this trek will be highly demanding. In the three to six months before departure you should undergo a training program with special emphasis on endurance training. If you have any questions about your suitability for this trip please do not hesitate to contact us.

## FOOD & DRINK

During your trek this trip is full board and our cook will provide you with three meals per day and snacks for while you are trekking. The food in Ladakh is mainly Indian in style with curries, flat breads, rice and lentils featuring highly on any menu. The food is fragrant and rich in flavours but not necessarily spicy! Breakfasts and dinners are provided at camp and your cook will provide you with a picnic lunch each morning.

Before and after your trek, some meals will be your own responsibility. You can order food at the hotel or head out in the town to find a restaurant. Leh, Chandigarh and Delhi offer a wide range of cuisine to suit all taste's with western style burgers and chips available, along side traditional Indian curries and delicious momo dumplings. Vegetarians and vegans are very well catered for here and there is a good understanding of dietary requirements.

During the trip all drinks, including water, are your own responsibility. Your team will boil water at each camping spot and keep it in a fresh container for you to drink once it has cooled. This will be accessible each evening and morning for you to fill up water bottles or hydration bladders. You may wish to carry a water purification system such as a filter or tablets to treat water from natural springs or villages whilst trekking. There are plenty of places to refill your water bottles both in towns and in remote mountain areas, your guide will advise you when and where to refill.

## ACCOMMODATION

We stay in basic but comfortable 3 star hotels in double or twin ensuite rooms. The hotels will have hot water and WiFi available. Please be aware that 3 star standards in Ladakh may be lower than you would expect in your home country. Power cuts and internet outages are common in Ladakh and you should be prepared for the possibility of this.

During the trek you will have a 3 man tent to share with one other person in your group. You will be provided with a foam camping mattress to sleep on and should bring your own sleeping bag with a comfort rating of -20 degrees centigrade. We will also provide a large dining tent with a table and chairs that is used for taking meals but also as a communal space to relax in the evenings. Hot water in a bowl can be provided by your support team so you can have a wash in the evenings. The camp is setup and taken down each day by our local support team and mules are used to transport all the equipment along the trekking route.

The toilet situation is something a lot of our guests want to know about! In Ladakh, the hotel we use has western flushing toilets. Toilets in Ladakh have a mixture of hoses and toilet roll for cleaning purposes. If using a hose is not your cup of tea then it might be worth bringing your own toilet roll. On the trek itself, toilets at the campsites will be very basic with a hole in the ground covered by a small toilet tent for privacy and on route this will be a case of finding somewhere hidden, off the path and going wild. We can guarantee it will be the most scenic toilet break you've ever had!



## YOUR GUIDE

For the full duration of your trip you will be accompanied by an experienced English speaking guide. During the trek, your guide will be assisted by our local support team which will include an assistant guide, driver, cook and muleteer.

## TRANSPORT

Our airport transfers will be a local taxi as Ladakhi law states that tourists may only travel from the airport by taxi. A member of our team will greet you at the airport and travel in the taxi with you.

All our transfers between locations will be taken in a privatised vehicle. Although we do our best to provide vehicles with seatbelts this isn't always possible due to the standard of vehicle in Ladakh.

The only time we will not be travelling by vehicle is between Chandigarh-Delhi where we will travel by train. Our guide will travel with us on this journey and assist in helping us reach our hotel in Delhi.

## LUGGAGE

During the trek your luggage along with all the group equipment will be transported by mules. You should bring two bags with you, a large 80-100 litre duffel bag and a smaller 30-50 litre daypack. Your duffel bag will be transported by the mules each day and made available for you at camp each afternoon once the mules have arrived. Your daypack will stay with you at all times and should be used to carry spare clothing, water, lunch etc. At all other times your luggage will be transported by vehicle. Please do not bring a rigid suitcase which is not suitable for carrying by the mules. A flexible duffel bag or backpack is best. **Your main luggage must not exceed 15kg.** This is the maximum weight for a bag on most domestic flights in India and also allows us plan for the number of mules required on your trip.

## HOW DO I GET THERE?

You will need to arrive at Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport code (code IXL) on day 1 of your itinerary. If you would prefer to arrive a few days earlier, we would be happy to book additional hotel accommodation for you on request. Your **return flight will need to be booked from Delhi.**

In order to reach Leh, it is necessary to fly first to Delhi and then take a domestic flight up to Ladakh. For those traveling from the UK, there are direct flight to Delhi from London Heathrow with Air India, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic. From Manchester or Glasgow, there are indirect flights to Delhi with Emirates, Lufthansa and KLM.

For travellers from the east coast of the US, there are direct flight to Delhi with Air India from JFK and United Airlines have a direct flight from Newark. From the west coast, Air India also have direct flights from San Francisco and there are indirect flights from LAX with KLM, Virgin Atlantic and Singapore Airlines.

Domestic flights from Delhi to Leh depart in the mornings and take roughly 1 hour 20 mins. Remember that if you book your international and domestic flight separately, you will need to collect your luggage and check in again for your domestic flight. Be sure to allow enough time for this in between flights! There are a range of domestic airlines providing flights to Leh including Spice Jet, Vistara and Indigo. Most flights depart between 6am and 11am daily.

On arrival at the airport, once you have collected your luggage, please look out for a member of our local team in the arrivals area. Our partner in Ladakh is Riwang Treks, please look out for a sign reading "Riwang Trek welcomes Kandoo guest". They will then travel with you via taxi to our hotel in Leh.

## PRE-TREK BRIEFING

It is a requirement of joining any of our treks that you attend a pre-trek briefing the evening before the trek begins. This gives our guides the opportunity to speak to you about your adventure, and sort out any last-minute queries or concerns. We will also carry out a pre-trek health check which must be completed before you trek to high altitude. In Ladakh this is held at 5pm on the evening of Day 1 at your pre-trek hotel, your guide will meet you there.

## BUDGET & CHANGE

To see the latest conversion rates visit [xe.com](https://www.xe.com).

The currency in India is the Indian Rupee (INR). India has a closed currency which means Rupees cannot be imported or exported from the country. You can exchange money at the airport in Leh on arrival, or at banks and some larger hotels. The State Bank of India and the J&K Bank have their main branches in Leh and foreign exchange is also available at the Tourist Information Centre located in the Dak Bungalow Complex in Leh. It is worth noting that there is no foreign exchange facility outside of Leh. Credit and debit cards are generally widely accepted. If you are planning to carry a credit card for emergencies, please inform your card provider in advance. US Dollars and GB Pounds are the easiest currencies to exchange. Please note that payments at restaurants must be made in Indian Rupees, whereas US Dollars are generally accepted in shops for specific merchandise such as Pashmina and rugs.

In Leh, the price for a taxi shared between 6 people is around 850 INR (\$10) per person. A meal will vary in cost dependng upon where you choose to eat. Dhaba tents are the local, and slightly cheaper, option offering traditional lentil curry and flatbread dishes. A meal in a Dhaba tent will generally cost around 200 INR (\$2.40) per person, crazy cheap! That said, a meal in one of the cafes on Changspa Road, or in upscale restaurants in Leh will still only cost around 500 INR (\$6) so eating out will not be a costly affair. Similarly, the cost of souvenirs will not break the bank, particularly if you are prepared to haggle down the price.

## TIPS

In India, tipping is a common practice and highly appreciated. The amount you tip depends on the level of service you feel you have received.

We recommend budgeting roughly USD50 per person per week for tips. The amounts given below are not exact and are only given as an indication.

- Guide - \$4 per person per day
- Drivers and assistants - \$3 per person per day
- Porters/ Mule drivers - \$2 per person per day

# FORMALITIES & HEALTH

## PASSPORT

All travellers will need a passport which will remain valid for at least 6 months longer than your expected visit. You will also need to present proof that you have a return ticket, and proof that you have sufficient money to support yourself during your stay in India.

Each traveller is responsible for sorting out their own passport and visa requirements, and we cannot offer much assistance in this matter. If you do not yet have a passport, apply for one early, as they can take some time to arrive. If you already have a passport, double check when it expires.

## VISA

UK and US passport holders require a visa to enter India for tourism purposes. Your visa must be approved in advance, you will not be permitted to board a flight to India if you do not have a valid visa. You can apply for a visa online by visiting <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>

## VACCINATIONS

Below we have set out what is the general guidance for travel to India. We strongly advise you to consult with your own GP or travel clinic near you before travelling. They will have the most up to date and medically accurate information relevant to you, and should be relied upon over these recommendations.

### Strongly Advised Vaccinations

- Hepatitis A: This can be spread via contaminated food and water.
- Tetanus: Tetanus is often present in the soil, and can contaminate open wounds easily. Tetanus vaccine should be used every ten years if travelling.
- Typhoid: Typhoid can also be spread via contaminated food and water, and poor hygiene.
- Diphtheria: This potentially fatal disease is spread mainly via spit, but occasionally through contact with cuts on the skin.
- Yellow Fever: This can be contracted by being bitten by a contaminated mosquito. This vaccination is not essential if you are arriving directly in India. You do need it though if you plan to arrive through any country that is subject to yellow fever. Simply stopping over at an airport in an affected country should not require vaccination, but leaving the airport even briefly would make it necessary

## INSURANCE

Trekking at high altitude does have dangers. You should ensure that you have good insurance to cover these risks. It is a condition of booking with Kandoo Adventures that you have medical and accident insurance.

Your insurance must cover helicopter evacuation if it becomes necessary. It should also cover the costs of getting home should you miss your scheduled flight due to accident, injury, illness or simple bad luck.

Your insurance must specifically include cover for you to climb up to 6500m if you are climbing Kang Yatse, 5500m if you are joining our Indus Valley trek and 5,700m for our Changtang Lakes and Spiti Valley trek .

Your insurance should also protect against the standard travel dangers, including: baggage delay, loss of personal items etc.

We recommend the global supplier of travel insurance, World Nomads. Make sure to add 'hiking up to ..... (your required altitude)' on check out and be sure to read the small print carefully for any policy you are considering. Different policies provide different levels of cover, so make sure you understand what is and is not included in your policy.

Sorry but we are not insurance experts so we do not review policies.

## HEALTH

### Avoiding diarrhoea

Make sure that your hygiene is as good as possible to avoid picking up a stomach upset. Needless to say, a bout of diarrhoea can make a two week-long strenuous trek unpleasant or even impossible.

On the trek itself, we make sure that your food is pure and uncontaminated. You will need to carry a water purification filter or tablets to ensure all water that you drink is safe.

Make sure you follow these simple rules at all times:

If you are not absolutely certain water is pure, do not drink it.

Wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet, and before eating or handling food of any kind.

Do not eat raw vegetables or salads. Cooked, preferably boiled veggies only.

Avoid any cold drinks, and ice of any kind.

Water from sealed bottles is generally fine, as are fizzy drinks, wine and beer. Hot tea and coffee are good, as they have just been boiled.

If you do get diarrhoea, the most important thing you can do is to stay hydrated. The best thing to drink is a rehydration solution like Dioralyte. Read more about dehydration below.

Over the counter medicines like Immodium (or anything containing loperamide) are only for short term, mild diarrhoea. Some doctors recommend taking a single, 500mg dose of Ciprofloxacin, or any ciprofloxacin antibiotic in an emergency situation. This is a prescription medicine, and you should discuss it with your doctor before your trip.

### Preventing dehydration

Even if you avoid diarrhoea, you can easily become dehydrated at high altitudes. The lower air pressure forces you to breathe more quickly and deeply, and you lose a lot of water through your lungs. You will also be exerting yourself, and sweating.

The upshot is, as you might expect, that you will have to drink more water. You need to drink at least 3 litres of fluids every day while trekking. Even when you don't feel thirsty you have to drink this amount as a minimum - preferably more.



Stay on the look-out for signs of dehydration in yourself and your fellow trekkers. The most common symptoms include thirst, dry lips, nose or mouth, headache and feeling fatigued or lethargic. If you think you may be dehydrated, there are two ways to tell:

The colour of your urine. Clear or light straw-coloured urine means you are probably not dehydrated. Yellow or orange wee means you have not been drinking enough, and you need to up your fluid intake quickly.

Pinch or press firmly on an area of exposed skin. If it does not spring back instantly, or stays pale and bloodless for more than a second or two, you are probably dehydrated.

## Sunburn and UV Protection

While a high altitude trek is hardly a day at the seaside, you will be vulnerable to sunburn if not properly protected. The thin atmosphere at high altitudes blocks much less UV radiation, even on cloudy days.

The three most important things you can do to avoid sunburn are:

Apply SPF 30 or higher sunscreen to your face, nose and ears at least 30 minutes before going out into the sun, and reapply regularly. High SPF lip balm is also a must.

Wear a wide-brimmed hat that shades your face, nose and ears.

Wear UV-protective sunglasses, category 2-4.

At higher altitudes the sun's rays are intensified and even on a cloudy day they can penetrate through and still burn you. And do not forget that the sun is at its strongest between 10:00-14:00 hours each day.

## Eating well

Many trekkers experience loss of appetite at high altitudes. This is a real problem, as you will be burning an extra 2000 or more calories a day, and not replacing them can cause real problems.

Just like staying hydrated, you have to eat heartily even if you are not hungry. Meals heavy in carbohydrates are best, because they are easier to digest at high altitudes and provide long-term energy.

It is important to keep plenty of small snacks with you, as you will have to keep your energy levels high. Take a favourite treat to make it easier to eat when you do not feel hungry, but avoid anything with honey or syrup, or anything chewy as they are likely to freeze tooth-crackingly solid above 5000 metres. Chocolate, nuts and seeds, biscuits, savoury snacks and boiled sweets are generally better choices.

## Body temperature

Every mountain environment has its own climate, and Ladakh has several different weather zones at different heights. Conditions change quickly, and you will be moving between zones as well. A hot and dry day can be followed immediately by snow or rain. Wearing a layered outfit is generally the wisest way to make sure you stay healthy and reasonably comfortable in all conditions.

Above all, make sure to wear warm, wind-and water-proof, breathable clothing on your trek. Get high quality gear too, as this is definitely the real thing. Storms, high winds and freezing temperatures must be expected, and poor quality equipment will fail.

## Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness, also called Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), hypobaropathy and soroche, is an illness caused by exposure to the low air pressure, especially low partial pressure of oxygen, which many trekkers experience at high

altitudes.

AMS is caused by exerting yourself at high altitudes, especially if you have not been properly acclimatised. It is most common at altitudes above 2400 metres. Over 6000m above sea level, the air pressure (and the amount of oxygen it contains) is less than half that at sea level, and has been said to be comparable to working with only one lung.

AMS can be serious, especially as it can be debilitating, and it generally occurs far from places where medical treatment can be easily administered.

Not everyone suffers from AMS, of course, and it is very difficult to predict who is or is not vulnerable to it. Generally speaking, a fit person is less vulnerable than an unfit person, because their cardiovascular system can operate at low pressures longer without as much strain. Even so, anyone can be vulnerable at altitudes above 3500 metres, no matter their fitness level, if they have not spent some time getting used to the low atmospheric pressures first.

### Avoiding Altitude Sickness

1. Walk high, sleep low. It is best to gradually climb higher each day, then descend lower to sleep. This lets you gradually become accustomed to lower pressures, and then recover somewhat overnight.
2. Slow and steady. You need to keep your respiration rate low enough to maintain a normal conversation. If you are panting or breathing hard, you must slow down. Overworking your heart and lungs substantially increases your chance of becoming ill.
3. Drink much more water than you think you need. Proper hydration helps acclimatisation dramatically. You need to drink at least three litres each day. As dehydration presents many of the same symptoms as altitude sickness, your chances of being allowed to continue are best if you stay hydrated.
4. Diamox. The general consensus of the research is that Diamox is helpful in avoiding AMS. We recommend you google Diamox and its effects yourself. It is a prescription drug, and you should consult with your doctor before taking it.

# EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

## EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY KANDOO ADVENTURES

- 3 man tent per two people
- Foam sleeping mattress
- Communal dining tent
- Table, chairs and cutlery
- Toilet tent

## CLOTHING TO BRING

- Warm beanie style hat – knitted or fleece
- Neck gaiter or scarf. It can get dusty in Ladakh and the air very cold. A scarf or balaclava comes in useful for keeping dust out and can double as a warm layer for your neck / face!
- Sun hat – preferably wide-brimmed for protection
- Sunglasses – high UV protection
- Headlamp (plus extra batteries)
- 

## UPPER BODY

- Thermal or fleece base layer (x2)
- Long sleeve shirt/tshirt – light or medium weight, moisture wicking (x3)
- Short sleeved shirt/tshirt – lightweight, moisture wicking (x2)
- Fleece or soft shell jacket (x2)
- Insulated jacket – down or primaloft
- Lightweight water/windproof hard shell outer jacket
- Gloves – lightweight, fleece or quick drying fabric

## LEGS

- Leggings – thermal or fleece base layer (x1)
- Trekking trousers – light or medium weight (x2) – convertible trousers work well
- Waterproof hard shell trousers – ski pants work fine (x1)
- Gaiters

## FEET

- Trekking boots – mid weight with good ankle support
- Training shoe or similar – to wear around the campsites
- Mid-weight trekking socks (x5 pairs)
- Breathable, high-wicking liner socks (x3 pairs)
- Thermal trekking socks for upper reaches of your trek (x2 pair)

## **EQUIPMENT TO BRING**

### **TREKKING GEAR**

- Small Rucksack or Daypack (30-40 litres) to carry water and personal items
- Waterproof duffle bag (approx 80-100 litres)
- Sleeping bag (4 season or -20 Deg C) and compression sack
- Trekking poles
- Water bottle or hydration bag – must be able to carry 1.5-2L of water

### **OTHER ACCESSORIES**

- Sunscreen and lip balm - high SPF
- Toiletries, including toilet paper, wet wipes and hand sanitiser
- Camera and spare batteries
- Plug adapter, for charging devices in hotels
- Personal medication and first aid kit
- Personal snacks and energy bars – dried fruit and nuts are a good option
- Isotonic drink powder / energy drink powder to mix in with your water
- Microfibre towel for wiping hands and face each day
- Pee bottle, useful for late night toilet needs

## **GEAR RENTAL**

We recommend that wherever possible you use your own gear for your trek as this is the best way to ensure your comfort and enjoyment. We recognise though that the cost of some items is very high and this may not be possible. We do not have our own gear available for rental but there are many places offering gear for rental in Leh. The quality of rental gear is variable and it is your responsibility to check carefully the condition of any item you rent. We accept no responsibility for the quality of equipment hired. An indication of the likely rental costs is below.

- Hiking Boots = 3 \$ per day per pair
- Crampons = 2 \$ per day per set



# HOW TO BOOK THIS TRIP

## **1 CHOOSE YOUR DATE AND CHECK AVAILABILITY**

A full list of available dates can be found on our website.

## **2 CONTACT US**

Contact us by phone, email or through our website. We will answer any questions you may have and send you a personalized itinerary and quote.

## **3 COMPLETE BOOKING AND PAYMENT**

When you are ready to book, we will send you a link to our online booking forms and participation agreements. We accept all major credit and debit cards and require a low 20% deposit to secure your place.

