

## Zanskar Lamayuru Trek



The ancient Buddhist kingdom of Zanskar is hidden deep in the western reaches of the great Himalayas. For most of the year, the high passes are inaccessible because of snow, making the frozen Zanskar River the only way of transport by walking. Villages nestled high on cliffs, the greenest of fields where peas and buckwheat are grown, and ancient monasteries are just some of the attractions on this spectacular trek.

**Area:** Ladakh

**Season:** July to October

**Duration:** 17 Days

**Grade:** Strenuous

**Altitude:** 4950 mts/16236 ft

### **Day 01: Delhi - Leh**

Early morning catch a flight for Leh. Upon arrival at Leh Airport our representative would assist you at the Airport and transfer to Hotel. Check into the hotel. Full day relax at the hotel for the acclimatisation.

### **Day 02: Leh - Shey - Thiksey - Hemis**

On this day you will go a sightseeing trip to some ancient monasteries in this area.

**Shey Gompa** is about 15 kms from Leh. It used to be the summer palace of the kings of Ladakh. There are lots of Stupas and Gompas built around the palace. Shey palace was built by Deldan Namgyal in the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century AD. Main attraction in Shey is the 12m Shakyamuni Buddha statue inside the Dresthang Gompa.

**Thiksey Gompa**, close to Shey is about 17 kms from Leh. The monastery is considered to be one of the most beautiful in Ladakh and belongs to the Gelukpa order.



**Hemis**, about 45 kms south of Leh it is one of the most famous and largest monastery in Ladakh. It belongs to the Drukpa order and was founded in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The setting is perfect with the monastery cradled in a lovely valley, surrounded by streams and fronted by long Mani walls. Overnight stay at the guest house.

**Day 03: Leh - Lamayuru** (3 ½ hrs drive)

We leave Leh in the morning for Lamayuru. Along the way, we come across some of the oldest and most famous monasteries in Ladakh, founded around 11<sup>th</sup> century by Lotsawa Rinchen Sangpo Lamayuru, Likir and Alchi offer truly memorable visits on account of their age and history. After reaching Lamayuru (3420m) we will spend the day exploring the ancient monastery and to prepare for the next day.

**Day 04: Lamayuru - Wanla** (3-4 hrs)

We pack our small backpacks, watch the horses get ready, and set off for this first day of our adventure. A gentle trail leads up to the small pass of Prinkti La (3750m) before heading down to the village of Shilla and the last 3 km to Wanla (3250m). Here we set up camp for the night and spend the afternoon relaxing in the sun or exploring the Gompa in Wanla, before we gather around for a good dinner.

**Day 05: Wanla - Hanupatta** (6 hrs)

An easy walk towards Phansila (3410m) will lead us to a beautiful valley. From here we descend to a pass beyond which the valley starts to narrow, with mountain towering above our heads and the Zaskar River making its way deep

down in the gorge. In this barren, harsh landscape, beautiful rosebushes give your senses an unforgettable experience. We camp close to the river, just after



the village of Hanupatta (3760m), where we have a great view down the valley.

**Day 06: Hanupatta – Sirsir La (4850 mts) - Photoskar (6 -7 hrs)**

We follow the river and the wide valley up for some time before we cross the river and start the long and gradual ascent to SirSir La (4850m). From the top of the pass we can get panoramic view of the main Zaskar range as well as our next pass, the Singe La (5090m). It is another 2 - 2 ½ hr of walk down to the village of Photoskar (4200m), situated in the cliff of mountains virtually piercing the sky and surrounded by green fields. The trail towards Sumdo disappears in the deep gorge down to the right of the village. We spend the night close to the village and enjoy a well-deserved rest.

**Day 07: Photoskar – Singge La (5090 m) – Foot of Singge La (7-8 hours)**

After crossing the small pass of Bumiktse La (4200) this morning, we enter the broad and lush Photang valley. A gentle trail leads us through this beautiful landscape, where villagers graze their yak/dzo and horses. One of the most fascinating things about the Zaskar trek is the ever-changing landscape. Every time you turn a corner, or cross a pass, a new world appears in front of you. Passing through the deepest of gorges and meandering through the greenest of fields, the majestic Zaskar River assume a fascinating form and life of its own. With color and shadows changing with the sun, one never gets bored!

Slowly we ascent towards Singe La, or the “Lion Pass”. The last few meters are steep, but will give u an incredibly rewarding view on the top. From the pass it is an easy walk down to our camp site.

**Day 08: Foot of Singge La - Ingshed (5 hours)**

We follow the trail high above the Zaskar River; the mountains take a greener and gentler formation, before we descend from Kiupa La (4400 m) down the

steep zigzag trail to the village of Gongma (3840m) and Skiumpata. From here we climb up a gentle trail to the Margum La (4400m), from where we can see



Lingshed an hour or so away. The campsite in Lingshed is just by the monastery belonging to the Gelugpa order and housing around 60 monk .The village itself is spread out over a big area, enclosed in green fields of barley.

**Day 09: Lingsed - Snertse via Hanuma La (4950 m (8 hours)**

A long day, we walk through the green fields of Lingshed early in the morning. It takes some ups and downs before we reach the base of the Hanuma La, from where we start climbing the many steep zigzags that lead to the top of the pass. The walk down is gentle before we enter a rocky, spectacular gorge and soon the valley flattens out, the trail following a lush riverbed with rosebushes. Just above the campsite of Snertse, there is a herder 'camp, and sometime fresh cheese, milk and curd is available here.

Down in the riverbed it is possible to go hunting for fossils. The locals sometimes show nice collections of their findings. When the Indian plate slammed into the stationary mass of Asia some 50 millions year ago, the Great Himalayas were formed from the base material of the Indian plate. The Zanskar range consists of layer of sediments from the ocean floor and the Ladakh range is granite born out of the immense heat generated by the friction between the two plates.

**Day 10: Snertse - Hanumil via Purfi La (3950 m (5 hours)**

Today we head for another pass: Parfi La .A short walk after Snertse, there is a wonderful lookout from where we can see the pass and down the valley, the Oma Chu River .We follow the trail 500m down the valley, cross the bridge and tart on the juniper covered zigzag trail up to Parfi La. Red alert! If fortune strikes, we may come across a rare species of the Himalayan region: the majestic brown bear. We may also see herds of attractive Himalayan blue sheep. Here we

walk down to the bank of the Zanskar River and follow it all the way to the village of Hanumil (3380 m), where we will camp for the night.



**Day 11: Hanumil - Pishu (4-5 hours)**

We will start with an easy walk on plain and barren land along the Zanskar River and follow it all the way to Pishu (3470 m), passing Pidmo (3420m), an exotic landlocked hamlet of 8-9 families leading a simple traditional life. Pishu is located on the west side of the Zanskar River and opposite of Zangla (formerly a tiny kingdom). Here we will come across a 55m hanging bridge, the longest on Zanskar River. Our day will end at a lush green camp site with a spring situated nearby where we can quench our thirst.

**Day 12: Pishu - Karsha (4-5 hours)**

After a hearty breakfast we will begin our day with another effortless stride towards our next destination. From Pishu the trail ascends gradually to Rinam (3550 m.) along the bank of the Great Zanskar River. We will have a view of the stunning monastery of Tongde. Once reaching Karsha (3600 m), we can reinvigorate ourselves at the bank of Zanskar River.

**Karsha monastery:** Karsha monastery is one of largest monasteries of Gelukpa sect, located on a hillside with an imposing view of the entire valley. Believed to have been founded around 10th century A.D, a visit to the monastery to get its blessing is recommended.

**Day 13: Karsha – Padum (3531m /2hrs)**

Our trail begins with the crossing of the bridge, where we inhale fresh air to gear up for a trip to the capital of the Zanskar valley .We will follow the route to Pipiting village on the unmetalled, dusty road from Karsha. Padum is the major hub of activities of the entire valley, whose population gathers here on every

auspicious occasion. It is a high time to have a good rest on this short day before we begin a drive back to Leh.



#### **Day 14: Padum - Kargil (234 kms)**

We drive towards Kargil, passing Sani monastery (6 km ) after turning west and cross the Doda River at Dhungri .We will be driving along the right bank of the River. Further on, we will cross a beautiful valley covered with comprehensive green patches. Between Padum and Aksho, we will come across a few small villages : Dhungri, Phay and Hamuling. As we pass, we will be slowly leaving Zanskar valley and Drang Drung Glacier beside the Penzila. In the middle of the next valley next we can see Rangdum monastery situated on a rock hill. After that we will pas through the village of Shakar, Parkachik and Panikhar. At Thangbu village, about 12 km before reaching the Panikhar, we can have an incredible photographic view of Nun (7135 m) and Kun (7080) mountains before reaching Kargil.

#### **Day 15: Kargil - Leh via Sham Valley (230 kms)**

Today will be our last traveling day before coming back to Leh, and we will pass some of the most beautiful monasteries and villages of Sham.

#### **Day 16: Leh (Local Sightseeing)**

Today we proceed for Indus Valley monastery tour. We start with a visit to Shey, the ancient capital of Ladakh. The monastery here has a huge gold-gilded statue of Buddha Sakyamuni with a large silver lamp burning in front of the statue. Then we visit Thiksey Gompa, an impressive complex rising tier upon tier on a hill above the village. The monastery has a beautiful 30 m high gold-plated statue of Maitreya Buddha, the Buddha of the future. Drive further to visit the famous Hemi Gompa, founded in 1630's by Stag-t sang-ras-pa under the royal patronage of Sengge Namgyal. Hemis is one of the largest and richest Gompas

of Ladakh. The two-day festival of monastic dance in June-July has raised the reputation of Hemi particularly high. The festival is dedicated to Guru



Padmasambhava, popularly known as second Buddha and responsible for spreading Buddhism in the Tibetan world. Later we visit the Stok Palace the Royal residence of the King of Stok & the Museum that has a rich collection of Ancient Ladakhi artefact including old Thangkas, precious stones, arm and armory, the Queen ' necklace and the crown of the King of Ladakh among others. Overnight stay at the hotel in Leh.

#### **Day 17: Leh - Delhi**

Transfer to the Airport to catch the flight for Delhi.

**Trip & Services Ends Here**

#### **Cost of the Trip**

**USD 1485 per person\*** (for a minimum of 2-4 people)

**INR 68500 per person\*** (for a minimum of 2-4 people)

\*4.9 % service tax extra

#### **Cost includes**

- **Accommodation:** Hotel/Guest House on bed and breakfast basis as per itinerary.
- While on trek dome/alpine tent, carry mat, kitchen tent, dining tent, table, camping stool, toilet tent etc will be provided.
- **Transport:** Arrival, departure transfer at Leh. Toyota Qualis/Tata Sumo from Leh to trek point and back. Also all sightseeing in Leh.
- **Meals:** At Hotel only breakfast will serve.
- **Trek:** All meals will be provided. Meal will freshly prepare and will be a mix of Indian, Chinese, Continental & Ladakhi.

- **Mules/Porters:** For carrying camping equipment, rations, vegetables and some amount of personal gear of the clients (one bag not weighing more than 14 kgs).
- **Professional local trekking guide & cook** would accompany the group
- **Trekking permit fees**
- Camping fees

#### **Cost does not includes**

- Air fare
- Enroute Meal,
- Any charges for carrying still/video cameras etc.
- Alcohol, soft drinks, bottled water, beverages, etc.
- Entrée fee if any
- Personal expenses like tips, telephone calls, laundry, etc.
- Any meals/services not mentioned above
- Any costs arising out of unforeseen circumstances like landslides, road blocks, bad weather, etc.
- Travel insurance

#### **Trekking Equipments List**

1. Trekking boots - well broken in and waterproofed
2. Down jacket or equivalent with hood
3. One heavy wool shirt or sweater
4. Two cotton shirts
5. One pair cotton trousers or shorts
6. One pair woolen trousers
7. One pair shorts or calf-length skirt for women
8. Three pairs of regular underwear
9. Long underwear - thermal or wool
10. Wind- and rain-gear with hood, Sun hat with brim
11. Woolen hat or balaclava, Woolen gloves
12. Woolen socks to wear with boots, Cotton socks
13. Personal first-aid kit including medication for common ailments
14. Flashlight with extra batteries
15. Sunglasses or snow goggles (an extra pair is recommended)
16. Water bottle, preferably wide mouthed, with at least one liter capacity
17. Pocket knife
18. Note book with pens and pencils
19. Plastic bags - small size for books, film etc., larger bags for clothes, sleeping bags
20. Well fitting strong shoes with a couple of woolen socks. The shoes should be used before treks to avoid blisters.
21. First aid set for minor accidents and sickness.
22. A raincoat is necessary to meet uncertainties of weather.
23. Chocolates, lozenges, candies, glucose and dry fruits provide extra pep and energy.
24. It is advisable not to exhaust energy by walking fast, as otherwise the trek will be not enjoyable.