

LADAKH MONASTERIES & MOUNTAINS

9 days/8 nights

Nestled in the Himalayas, Ladakh is one of the highest inhabited places in the world. It is renowned for its remote mountain beauty and Tibetan Buddhist culture, with more than 100 Gompas or monasteries; it is sometimes called 'Little Tibet'. The flight into Leh, the capital of Ladakh, is an unforgettable experience over the dramatic expanse of the Himalayas. This is the highest inhabited region in India, a moonscape land — an arid, high altitude desert with high snow-capped peaks and bare multi-hued hills, the River Indus and its tributaries slicing their way through the ranges. At an altitude of 14,000 feet, it is essential that you acclimatise yourself if the rarified air is not to overwhelm you. Accommodation is simple, even basic, but comfortable.

Driving out of the capital, Leh, you are faced with the everchanging palate of the mountains...unbelievable hues of purple and red that stand out in sharp contrast to snow-capped peaks. Scrub and rough tenacious ground-cover do little to clothe the starkness. The land seems empty until a faint tinkle of bells heralds the arrival of pashm goats, whose coat yeilds the famous pashmina, followed by the nomadic herdsmen with their yak and sheep. This predominantly Buddhist region has Gompas (monasteries) clinging to mountaintops in what seem the most precarious locations.

Day 1 Delhi

Welcome at Delhi Airport followed by transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Delhi

A full-day tour of Delhi introduces you to New and Old Delhi. B

Day 3 Delhi-Leh

Take an early morning flight to Leh, a town located high in the foothills of the Himalayas and dominated by the ruins of Leh Palace. A day to acclimatise to the change in altitude is essential. B

Day 4 Leh

Your journey to explore Leh begins today with a visit to the Shanti Stupa, a beautiful pagoda on a small hilltop offering panoramic views of Leh town. Also visit the 16th century Leh Palace, home to the former king of Ladhak, followed by a walk through the narrow, bustling market of Leh. B

Day 5 Leh

A full-day visit to the Indus Valley including visiting Shey Palace, the 555-year-old summer palace of the kings of Ladhak; the 12-storey Thiksy Monastery to see the finest Ladakhi architecture; home to one of the largest Buddha statues; Hemis Monastery, the Tibetan Buddhist Monastery; and the Palace Museum of the Royal Family showcasing royal artefacts including 16th century Thangkas. B

Day 6 Leh

Today you will be driven higher still to the Khardongla Pass (5600 metres) on the Nurba Valley Highway, the world's highest motorable pass that has earned its place in the Guinness Book of World Records. This afternoon you will visit the 11th century Spituk Monastery and 17th century Phiyang Monastery. B

Day 7 Leh

Early this morning you will be driven to Pangong Lake in the Changthang region. You will travel east of Leh, across the Changla Pass and through Durbuk and Tangtse villages to reach

the Lake. Pangong Lake changes its colour four to five times a day and is considered to be one of the most amazing lakes in Asia. B

Day 8

Leh-Delhi

Take the morning flight to Delhi; the day is yours to explore or shop. Stay overnight in Delhi. B

Day 9

Delhi

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home. B