



The Markha Valley Trek

DAY 1 Depart UK

We depart from the UK for our overnight flight to Delhi. We arrive into in the early hours and transfer to our hotel.

DAY 2 Fly to Leh

We return to the airport very early in the morning for our flight to Leh (3500m) which departs at 05.40 hours. All flights to Leh leave Delhi very early in the morning to take advantage of the best flying weather as in the afternoon the weather is often bad at Leh which can prevent flights from landing. We arrive in Leh at 06.55 and transfer by private bus to our hotel where we can enjoy a morning of rest and relaxation after the long and tiring journey. Leh is the ancient capital of Ladakh and has many imposing hilltop forts and palaces to visit. Having been situated on the southern route of the old Silk Road, Leh has a colourful history and its position as a trading centre lives on. All manner of goods from both India and China can be found in its colourful bazaar which we can wander around at our leisure. The Royal Palace, which dominates the town, is an ideal excursion for the afternoon. Built in the 17th century, the Palace was occupied by the Ladakhi royal family until the 1830s before they were exiled.

DAY 3 Leh

We have a further day in Leh for sight-seeing and can visit the monasteries at Shey and Thiksey. Shey gomba is situated on a small hill 10 miles south of Leh and was once the residence of the royal family. It was constructed by the first king of Ladakh, Lhachen Palgyigon, and was the seat of power of the pre-Tibetan kings. Thiksey gomba is located 15 miles from Leh. It is a very imposing monastery and one of the finest example of Ladakhi architecture of any type. The 12 storey building contains numerous stupas, statues, thankas and wall paintings as well as a large pillar engraved with the Buddha's teachings. The main prayer hall has a 50 feet high seated Buddha figure.

DAY 4 Drive to the Khardung La

As part of our acclimatisation process we take a jeep drive up to the Khardung La, a spectacular pass which at 5300 metres is probably the highest motorable road in the world. This remote road leads to the Nubra valley and the mountains to the north of Leh, and until recently it was closed to foreign travellers. The panoramic views from the pass extend right into the Zaskar Range beyond the Indus River. We can spend an hour or so at the pass, gasping in the rarefied atmosphere, before returning to our hotel in Leh.

DAY 5 Drive to Choksi

We depart from Leh by road, travelling in jeeps we follow the Indus River before turning off along the Zaskar River. The valley quickly narrows to a gorge and soon we arrive at the remote village of Choksi where we will be camping for the evening. We have the afternoon to explore the area.

DAY 6 Ascend from Choksi

A tough start to our trek, we leave Choksi and immediately start a steep ascent up the valley. The valley gets increasingly narrow and dramatic as we climb and there are many Himalayan Blue Sheep to look out for. We set up camp tonight near a shepherd's hut after an afternoon acclimatising and admiring the views of the surrounding peaks.

DAY 7 Acclimatisation trek

Today we have an acclimatization walk to the base of the Kang La. We will be climbing a small peak for spectacular views of the surrounding mountains including the nearby Palam Peak, the Ladakh range and the mighty Karakorum.

DAY 8 Cross the Kang La

Today we will be crossing Kang La, a high pass taking us to 5,260m. This is a tough day, the climb is long and the paths are not well distinguished. Once we reach the pass we have the option of walking up Palam Peak (5,360m) for views that are only eclipsed by those from Stok Kangri on this trek. After a short descent we make camp near the Ganda La pass.

DAY 9 Descend via Ganda La

After yesterday's long climb, today will be easier. We follow the trail to the next pass, the Ganda La (4,980m) from where we descend into a picturesque valley. We pass the traditional villages of Yurutse and Rumbak before starting our ascent to the Stok La.

DAY 10 Cross the Stok La

Our last pass of the trek, we start on a gentle trail that becomes steeper as we climb to the top of the pass. The surroundings are stunning. As we cross the pass we descend steeply to the river that flows off Stok Kangri which we follow until reaching the settlement of Mankarmo where we camp for the night.

DAY 11/12 Summit Stok Kangri

We have these two days for our ascent of Stok Kangri. This ascent is totally optional and there are plenty of incredible treks around the base camp for those not intending to climb. After setting up base camp we can climb some nearby ridges to help with acclimatization and for more amazing views. The summit day is long and hard as we will be climbing for around 12 hours. We will be setting off in the dark and cross the glacier to reach the foot of the climb. The climb is not technical, although the use of ice axes and crampons may be necessary. The route is steep and exposed with some scrambling at times, although altitude will be the greatest difficulty. The climb takes about six hours, and after a tricky last few hundred metres we are rewarded with spectacular views from the summit, all around us are the snow capped peaks of the Himalaya, the Karakorum and the Ladakh Range as well as views down to Leh. After some time taking in the views we head back down to basecamp for a well-earned meal and rest.

DAY 13 Trek to Stok, Drive to Leh

Today we will have a leisurely walk to the village of Stok where we meet our transport that takes us back to Leh for a welcome shower and a celebratory meal.

DAY 14 Fly to Delhi

We leave our hotel very early in the morning for our flight back to Delhi. We transfer by private minibus to our hotel.

DAY 15 Delhi

At leisure in Delhi. We will have a full day free for sight seeing in India's vibrant capital city. We can visit the Red Fort and colourful bazaars in Old Delhi, or simply stroll around the shops at Connaught. It is also possible to arrange an optional full day excursion to visit the Taj Mahal

DAY 16 Arrive in UK

We depart Delhi and arrive into London the same day.