

Ladakh Explorer

Country(ies): India

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: Car, minivan or minibus, domestic flight

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 12

Days: 11 days

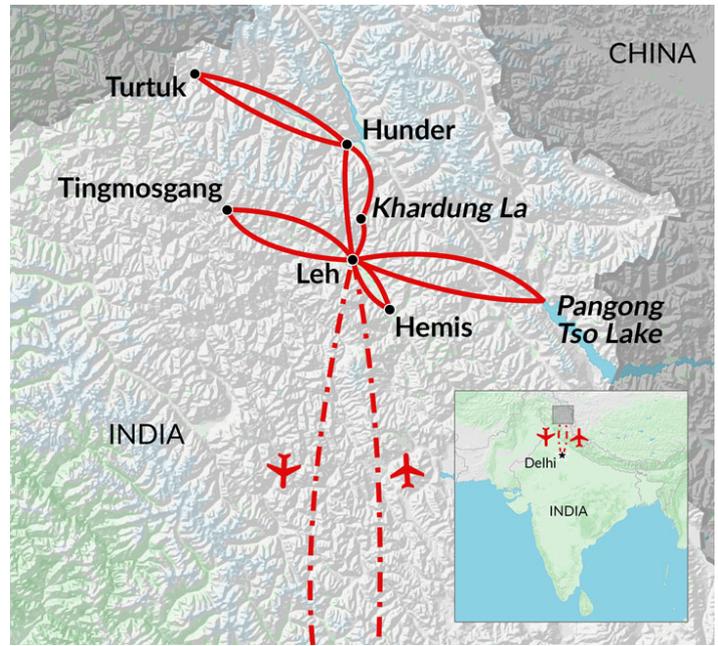
Start Location: Delhi, India

End Location: Delhi, India

Meals: Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 0

Highlights:

Old & New Delhi tours, Leh, Magnetic Hill, Hemis Monastery, Shey Palace, Nubra Valley, Turtuk village, Pangong Tso Lake



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Delhi, airport to hotel transfer included

Once you arrive in Delhi, one of our staff members will be there to meet and greet you at the airport, before transferring you to your hotel for the day. We'll make sure you settle in OK, and confirm your pick up time for tomorrow morning.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Extra day in Delhi - pre-tour Single room supplement (INSGLE)

Day 2: Exploring Delhi, Rickshaw Ride & Street Food Tasting

Your day starts with a morning tour of India's capital, New Delhi. Built on the banks of the Yamuna river, New Delhi is a beautiful blend of a historical past and a vibrant present.

We start at India Gate in the centre of New Delhi, a 42-metre high "Arc-de-Triomphe" like archway, a war memorial built to commemorate the 82,000 soldiers who partook in the undivided Indian Army. We'll drive past various government buildings such as the President's Palace and the Parliament of India, before passing Humayun's Tomb - a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the Bangla Sahab Gurudwara Sikh Temple.

We'll stop at Connaught Place Station and join the locals on the metro to Old Delhi where we'll walk through one of the oldest and busiest markets in Old Delhi, Chandni Chowk, before exploring the narrow streets of Chawri Bazar which specialises in selling brass, copper and paper products. Throughout the afternoon our guide will also introduce you to the wide range of street food snacks and delicacies so you can get your first authentic taste of the delicious and varied Indian cuisine. Our walking tour will also take in a rickshaw ride and the Jama Masjid mosque, one of the largest in India.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Fly to Leh and transfer to hotel. Afternoon visits to Leh Palace and Shanti Stupa

Our day begins with an early transfer to the airport for your flight to Leh, the capital of Ladakh. Upon arrival, we will take you to your hotel, allowing you time to settle in and begin acclimatising to the high altitude of 3,500 metres.

After a welcome drink, you will have a complete rest to help with acclimatisation. In the late afternoon, we will take a short drive to the city for an orientation walk through the markets. This will be followed by a visit to Shanti Stupa and Leh Palace. You will spend the night at the hotel.

Perched on a hilltop in Chanspa, Shanti Stupa is a white-domed Buddhist monument built in 1991 by Japanese Buddhist Bhikshu Gyomyo Nakamura. It holds relics of the Buddha at its base, which were enshrined by the 14th Dalai Lama. The stupa offers a beautiful panoramic view of the surrounding landscape, making it a popular tourist attraction for both its spiritual significance and scenic beauty.

Also known as 'Lhachen Palkhar,' Leh Palace is a former royal palace from the 17th century. Built by King Sengge Namgyal, this nine-storey, dun-coloured building once housed the royal family. Today, it features a museum and a prayer room, with its main highlight being the sweeping view of Leh and the surrounding Zaskar mountain range from the rooftop.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Head to the Sham Valley via Gurudwara Patthar Sahib, Magnetic Hill, Sangam, Likir and Ridzong Monasteries

After breakfast, you will drive downstream along the River Indus on the Leh–Kargil Highway. Our first stop will be the Gurudwara Patthar Sahib, a highly revered sacred site. Devoted to Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of the Sikh religion, this beautiful monument commemorates his visit to Ladakh. Dating back to 1517, the gurudwara houses a boulder with imprints of Guru Nanak Dev's head, shoulders, and backside.

From there, we will continue for another 4 km to the Magnetic Hill, a truly intriguing spot perched at an altitude of 14,000 ft. It is said to defy gravity, appearing to pull vehicles uphill. The scientific theory suggests this is caused by a strong magnetic force emanating from the hill, while local superstition believes it to be a stairway to heaven.

Next, we will drive through the picturesque landscape to the Confluence of the Indus and Zaskar Rivers. The shiny blue waters of the Zaskar meet the slightly green Indus, which originates from the great Himalayan ranges. This creates a stunning visual contrast that visitors find fascinating.

Just before the village of Saspul, a road to the right will take us to Likir Monastery, one of the most active monasteries in the region. As you drive up, you will be greeted by the colossal gilded image of the Maitreya Buddha, one of the most impressive sights in Ladakh.

We will then continue our drive to Tingmosgang, stopping en route to visit the Ridzong Monastery. Hidden at the end of a steep valley, the first view of the monastery is dramatic. Those who wish to can walk up to the monastery.

After a day of sightseeing, we will drive to our hotel in Tingmosgang for an overnight stay.

OVERNIGHT: Tingmosgang hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Return to Leh via Lamayuru

After breakfast, you will begin your drive to the Lamayuru Monastery, a stunning 11th-century Buddhist monastery. The journey itself is an experience, as you will pass through the mesmerising Moon Landscapes. Here, you will see a unique terrain with barren, eroded hills that look strikingly similar to the surface of the moon.

The monastery is spectacularly located along the valley plain, surrounded by jagged mountains. After exploring this historic and spiritual site, you will begin the drive back to Leh for an overnight stay at your hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Cross the Khardung La Pass and head to the Nubra Valley

After breakfast, you will begin your scenic drive to the Nubra Valley. The road journey is an adventure in itself, taking you over the Khardung La, which, at 5,602 metres, is one of the highest motorable roads in the world. This high-altitude pass is roughly 39 km from Leh and offers breathtaking panoramic views. From the summit, you can see the seemingly endless peaks and ridges of the Zaskar range to the south and the majestic Saser massif to the north.

Nubra Valley, also known as 'the valley of flowers' (Ldumra), is a beautiful region situated between the Karakoram and Ladakh mountain ranges. The average altitude of the valley is 10,000 ft. Upon arrival in the village of Hunder, you will check into your camp. In the evening, you will have the opportunity to take a walk through the small villages and observe the daily life of the local people in this remote part of the world.

OVERNIGHT: Nubra Valley camp

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 7: A visit to Turtuk Village. Possible views of K2

After an early breakfast, you will take an excursion to Turtuk, a fascinating village located very close to the Pakistan border. This village holds historical significance as it was part of Pakistan until it was captured by the Indian Army during the 1971 war.

In Turtuk, you will have the opportunity to visit a 16th-century mosque that showcases a unique blend of Turkish and Iranian cultural influences. You can also explore the ancient ruins of the Dhard's fort and a local monastery. The area also offers a magnificent view of Mount K2, the second-highest peak in the world after Mount Everest.

Following your tour of the village and its surrounding sites, you will drive back to your camp in the Nubra Valley.

OVERNIGHT: Nubra Valley camp

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Head to the beautiful Pangong Tso Lake

After an early breakfast, you will check out from your camp. Our first stop will be the Hunder Sand Dunes, where you'll have the opportunity to see Bactrian camels (double-humped) in the high altitude desert landscape, with snow-capped mountains on the horizon, this is a truly unique experience.

Next, we will stop at Diskit, the main town in Nubra Valley. Here, you can take some time to wander through the local bazaar, observing the shops and the daily lives of the local people.

From Diskit, we will begin our drive towards Pangong Tso, travelling through the beautiful and scenic Shyok Valley. While some sections of the road can be quite challenging, the spectacular views make the journey

worthwhile.

After navigating this adventurous part of the route, we will continue through the small villages of the Changthang region, passing through Durbuk and Tangtse. Suddenly, you'll be greeted with your first view of the stunning Pangong Lake, situated at an altitude of 4,267 metres.

Upon arrival, we will check you into your camp or cabin near the lake for an overnight stay (please note that accommodations in this part of India are limited, therefore this night may be spent in a cabin or tented camp).

OVERNIGHT: Pangong Tso Cabin or Camp

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 9: Free time at Pangong Tso. Return to Leh via the Changla Pass, Hemis Gompa and Thiksey Monastery

We'll spend the morning exploring the Pangong Tso Lake, which sits at an elevation of 4,350m. Pangong Tso is Tibetan for 'high grassland lake', however it's often referred to as the hollow lake.

Pangong Tso is one of Asia's largest brackish lakes, with its crystal clear waters spanning over the borders of India and China. Both the sky and the lake create an amazing shade of blue. A visit here will make you understand why it's the most sought after destination in Leh.

Later, we will drive back to Leh. Our route takes us over the Changla Pass, which stands at an elevation of 5,486 metres.

On our way, we will stop at Hemis Gompa, the largest monastic foundation of the Drukpa Kagyu order of Tibetan Buddhism. We will then visit Thiksey Monastery, an impressive complex that rises in tiers on a hill overlooking the village.

A further 5 km drive will take us to Shey Palace, the ancient capital of Ladakh, also known as the '3 Idiots Rancho School'. We will end the day with a visit to the Stok Palace Museum.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 10: Return from Leh to Delhi

You'll say goodbye to Leh as you board a flight to Delhi. One of our staff members will be there to meet you before transferring you to your hotel. You then have the rest of the day free to yourself.

Several half-day tour options are available for this afternoon which you can either pre-book or arrange while in India (a few days notice is required) or you can go shopping or do some more sightseeing on your own.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: New Delhi half day by car Old Delhi half-day walking tour Salam Balak Trust walk

Day 11: Bon Voyage! Transfer to airport included

Unfortunately, all good things come to an end and your time is free until we transfer you back to the airport to board your flight back home. Further options are available in Delhi this morning, subject to your flight departure time. You can also add extra days to your tour, or extensions including visits the holy city of Varanasi or the beaches in Goa.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Goa beach extension Extra day in Delhi - post-tour Spinmonkey cycling tour

Included:

- Accommodation in mid-range hotels and comfortable guesthouses/camps
- All transport and transfers
- Return domestic flights between Delhi and Leh
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Sightseeing tours and activities as per the itinerary
- Services of local tour leaders and specialist local guides
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded:

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for driver and/or tour guide
- Entrance Fees (budget approx. \$35 p/p)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Extra day in Delhi - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Delhi - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Single room supplement (INSGLE)

Min numbers: 1

This group tour is based on twin-share accommodation. If you are a single traveller and would like to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, please add this option onto your booking. If you are happy to share a room, please let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you pay your balance, then 50% of the single room supplement fee will be payable. If a room share becomes possible after you have paid your balance then your payment towards the supplement will be refunded. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Indian 3-level on this tour in Delhi and Leh, and a guesthouse or camp style hotel in the Nubra Valley and at Pangong Tso Lake which will be comfortable but more basic. Local star ratings may vary slightly from international standards but we ensure we use some of the best hotels available at the level stated.

The specific hotels listed on our website are our preferred hotels for our small-group tours. However, these may be changed from time to time based on current availability and other logistics. In this event alternative hotels of a similar standard will be used. If you would like to guarantee any particular hotels for your trip, please contact us to request a tailor-made tour.

2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. Due to the somewhat chaotic nature of Indian roads, we only use private vehicles for all road journeys on this tour.

All vehicles used in Delhi have air-conditioning for use in the summer, though in Ladakh this is not guaranteed (or usually at all necessary!). Subject to the group size, minibuses may be used in Delhi, but in Ladakh 7-seat cars/MPVs will be used, with a maximum of 3 or 4 travellers per vehicle to ensure everyone is comfortable and has a window seat.

Delays are possible to some of the long journeys in Ladakh due to poor weather and snowy roads, especially at either end of the season (April/May, early September) and it should be noted that this tour does include a significant amount of driving due to the distances between these remote locations.

The tour also includes return domestic flights between Delhi and Leh.

3. Transfers

The tour price includes a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in New Delhi airport, your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers.

4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our India small-group departures to have a maximum of 12 travellers. The minimum group size is 2.

In India we provide a fully trained, local English-speaking tour leader/driver to accompany our groups. On this tour you will have one driver in Delhi and another in Ladakh. Additional specialist local guides may be used for some of the sightseeing tours and activities included in the tour.

At Encounters Travel we have a policy of aiming to use only local Indian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

5. Entrance Fees

The tour price does not include entrance fees to the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. This allows for fluctuations in the prices set by the local authorities, which do change from time to time.

You should currently allow approx. US\$15 per person to cover these entrance fees. You will also need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit that are not listed in the main tour itinerary. Your guide will offer to collect the entrance fee cost from everyone at the start of the tour and pay on your behalf, or you can arrange them yourself as you go along.

6. Dates & Prices

We run small-group departures on this tour through the main summer season in Ladakh, which runs from mid-April until mid-September. The ideal months for travel are July, August and early September. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 travellers. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website (please check the website for up-to-date prices and special offers).

Private and tailor-made tours are available on any dates and may be adjusted to fit your personal requirements, available time and budget.

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Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
