

short stay: leh and ladakh

go guide

don't leave home without it



short stay spotlight

what you see

Leh:

- Sengge Namgyal's palace
- Leh bazaar
- Stok Palace
- Shey monastery
- Thiksey monastery
- Hamis monastery

what you get

- 3 nights - boutique guesthouse accommodation including 3 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 3 dinners
- Guided sightseeing in Leh
- Economy class flight - Delhi - Leh - Delhi
- Airport arrival and departure transfer days 1 and 4
- Touring and excursions as per itinerary
- Local English speaking specialist guides at local sights
- Entrance fees to all relevant monuments
- Chauffeur driven vehicle



on location

Your guide to on the ground...

visa requirements

Visas are required by all visitors to India. It is essential the visa is procured prior to travel. Visa forms are available from us and also supplied upon booking. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from India. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change. Visa procurement is also the responsibility of the traveller and not of on the go.

climate

India has a three-season year known as the hot, the wet and the cool. The coolest time to visit is late September through April. Temps during this time are ideal for sightseeing. The hot season runs from around April through July. Conditions are hot and dry, especially in Rajasthan. July signals the start of the monsoon or wet season that continues until around end September. Although the weather is humid, the days are punctuated by intermittent rainfall.

time

India is 5 hours 30 mins ahead of GMT.

money

USD\$1 = INR46 (subject to fluctuation). The Indian Rupee is exchangeable only in India. Exchange facilities are available at various bureau de changes and banks. A few ATM machines exist in major towns and cities.

health requirements

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven't had a booster in the last ten years. We recommend vaccinations for Typhoid and Hepatitis A. You are also advised to take anti-Malarial medication. Information can change so please check with your local health care provider.

how much?

- **TIPPING**
INR400 (USD\$8.50) if the day includes local guide & sightseeing
INR200 (USD\$4.50) if the day excludes local guide & sightseeing
- **CAMERA FEES**
Please note that nearly all temples, museums, game parks and sights has a fee for camera use.
- Can of coke (330ml) INR40-50
- Mineral water (local, 500ml or 1L) INR30
- Meal for 2 (entree, main, local beer,) INR1200
- Beer (local brew Kingfisher - 650ml) INR150

things to bring

- Insect repellent to guard against pesky mosquitos
- Spare camera batteries/film so you can go snap happy.
- If you fancy a tipples, take advantage of Duty Free buys.
- Buy some Indian Rupees at the airport on arrival.
- Buy a phrasebook and practice your holiday Hindi.
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- Keep a supply of small notes for local transactions.
- Keep a photocopy of your passport data pages.

top experiences

- Climb up to the now derelict palace for views of the old town
- Wander through Sengge Namgyal's nine storey palace, traditional Tibetan architecture
- Check out the two storey high Buddha at Shey monastery
- See the stunning views of the Indus valley from Thiksey monastery
- Marvel at the statues & paintings in Hemis monastery





leh and ladakh: itinerary

day 1

Delhi - Leh. Early morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Leh; upon arrival, transfer to your hotel. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight - Leh.

day 2 - the capital

Leh - breakfast. Leh is the capital of Ladakh - a vast highland desert lying between the Karakoram and the Himalayan ranges. Ladakh is the name of the eastern two-thirds of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It's in a beautiful Himalayan range, characterised by a desolate moonlike landscape and snowy peaks (it's inaccessible by road during winter). Ladakh is extremely dry - with rainfall levels as low as in the Sahara - because the mountains keep clouds out. In some ways, it's more purely Tibetan than the Tibet of today. When Tibet was swallowed by China in the 1950s, the Chinese did their best to dilute Tibetan culture, but Ladakh's Tibetans have carried their traditions forward unimpeded. That's not to say Ladakh is untouched by outside influences. The area has been open to tourists since the mid 1970s, and substantial changes have occurred. There are still sections, however, that seem to have remained unchanged for centuries.

As the sky-high (11,499 ft) capital of Ladakh, Leh is where most travellers stay while visiting the area's monasteries. It's a fun town to walk about - you may see sidewalk magicians, monks chanting, elderly women spinning prayer wheels and Tibetan refugees selling wares in the market. Leh Palace, which resembles Tibet's Potala Palace, is in such disrepair that it's not worth going inside, but the view from the entrance is quite grand. The 4-mile walk to the town of Saspol is surreal. Nowhere is the austere landscape of Ladakh more pronounced: There's no vegetation, only stone chortens (small religious totems) dotting the sandy countryside. Leh is inhabited predominantly by the Buddhists and accordingly is the centre of Buddhist culture. At an altitude of 3500 meters and a population of approximately 14000, Leh today is an important military base and a tourist attraction.

Enjoy a morning sightseeing tour of the town. The main town is dominated by Sengge Namgyal's nine-storey palace, a building in the grand tradition of Tibetan architecture. Above it, on Namgyal Semo the peak overlooking the town, are the ruins of the earliest royal residence at Leh a fort built by king Tashi Namgyal in the 16th century. In the bazaar the main sites to visit are the jo khang a modern

ecumenical Buddhist temple, and an imposing mosque dating from the late 17th century situated opposite each other.

Stok Palace is about 11 kilometres from Saboo, seat of Namgyal Family, after they had been deprived of their royal authority by the Dogra conquest (from Jammu), now houses a museum, wherein family's heirlooms and relics are displayed, a poignant evocation of Ladakh's vanished past as an independent Kingdom. Rest of the day is at leisure. Overnight - Leh.

day 3 - monasteries

Leh - breakfast. Enjoy a full day excursion to Shey, Thiksey & Hemis monasteries.

Shey monastery situated on a hilltop is about 15km from Leh on the way to Hemis. It was the summer palace of the royal family of Leh. The monastery houses a two storey high-seated image of Buddha cast from copper and covered with gold leaf. Kings of Leh were supposed to be born in the monastery. Shey along with Thiksey, is also regarded as an auspicious place for cremation.

Thiksey monastery is at distance of 17 kilometres from Leh. Thiksey's paintings, although quite different and generally newer, are at par with those of Alchi. Thiksey monastery is situated on a hilltop and the views of the green Indus valley from its rooftop are splendid. This monastery has a number of chambers full of statues and stupas. Courtyard murals are bright and this imposing structure is in many respects a replica of Potala Palace in Lhasa.

Hemis Gompa is the biggest and wealthiest monastery in Ladakh and was founded in 1600 AD. It belongs to Druk lineage of Tibetan Buddhism and contains a large number of gold statues, stupas and thangkhas, one of which is reputed to be the largest in existence and is exhibited once every 12 years. One can see striking paintings on walls of the monastery known as the 'Great Renunciation' depicting Gautam's renunciation of the worldly life. Overnight - Leh.

day 4 - back to delhi

Leh - Delhi - breakfast. You will be transferred to the airport in time for your flight for Delhi. Late evening you will be transferred to the airport in time for your onward flight.

environmental commitment

Preserving the natural state and beauty of the areas we pass through is essential. In helping to preserve the historical and religious legacy of India; it's coastlines and waterways, local cultures, flora and fauna, please read on and see how you can do your bit. Please respect the following:

- Take no relic from historical sites with you, be it a small chunk of fluted marble, stonework or carving.
- Dress appropriately if entering a place of worship such as a Hindu temple. Show respect for the sacred beliefs of others.
- Stick to designated paths. Erosion is a problem on hill and mountainsides, especially at high altitudes.
- Avoid removing or disturbing any plant life that keeps topsoils in place..
- Do not engage in hunting or the purchase of trophies of endangered species. It's illegal in India's parks and sanctuaries, and to import the hide of an endangered species is also illegal into many Western countries including the UK, Australia and New Zealand.
- Take all personal litter with you.
- Sanitary products should be wrapped and disposed of in a bin, to avoid blocking sometimes temperamental plumbing systems.
- If needing to perform your ablutions beyond the confines of a WC, be sure to bury any waste.

altitude sickness

Some travellers can experience mild altitude sickness. The symptoms are persistent headaches, dizziness, nausea, insomnia, loss of appetite and shortness of breath.

The best way to avoid this is to rest for 24 - 48 hours on arrival, drink 3 - 4 litres pf water a day, avoid alcohol and dont over exert yourself - take it easy.

The go guide & information contained herein has been compiled with care and in good faith. It is as accurate an illustration as can be given with regard to the proposed itinerary. Circumstances beyond our control such as inclement weather or local conditions could force us to amend the proposed itinerary. This document does not form part of a contract between the client and on the go and their affiliates. Any costs shown may be subject to change but are an accurate reflection of costs at the time of writing this go guide. Please also be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and remain the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go.



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updated June 2010