



WORLD DISCOVERY

HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE

Ladakh in Style

Private journey – 9 days/8 nights



Meals: 8 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners

Delhi Aerocity	Holiday Inn	1 night
Thiksey	Chamba Camp	5 nights
Delhi	The Imperial	2 nights

DAY 1 – Arrive Delhi.

On arrival in Delhi you will be met by a representative of World Discovery outside immigration and customs. You will then be taken by private car direct to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

DAY 2 – Fly to Leh (Ladakh). Transfer to Thiksey.

Transfer to Delhi Airport for the morning flight to Leh (altitude 3,500 metres), gateway to Ladakh, a land often referred to as 'Little Tibet' and closed to the outside world until 1974 when tourists were first allowed to visit. You will be met and taken to the Chamba Camp, Thiksey, 19km southeast of Leh. You will be guests of the Thiksey Monastery. Soak in the serenity of the surroundings as you are accorded the traditional welcome of Ladakh. You will be accompanied to your well-appointed luxury tents, where the check-in formalities will be completed by the Guest Relations hostess. There will be no activity on this first day in Ladakh as it is important that you relax to enable you to acclimatise to the rarefied oxygen levels at this high-

altitude. At your convenience, the Excursion Specialist at the camp will meet with you to discuss the itinerary suggested and help you plan your excursions and make changes if required, as the excursions mentioned in the programme can be customised to suit your interests, choices and leisure.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 3 – Leh.

Today brings a late start, leaving the morning free for you to enjoy a leisurely breakfast and walk around the camp site. Or, if you are an early riser, may we suggest setting out on an optional bird watching excursion with the camp naturalist, spotting and identifying a variety of birds of the Trans-Himalayan region. In the afternoon enjoy a gentle orientation tour of the Ladakhi capital, Leh. Begin with the magnificent 17th century Leh Palace, before continuing on foot to the LAMO (Ladakh Arts & Media Organisation) Centre, passing some enchanting old houses en route. The centre is housed in one of the most important heritage houses - Munshi House - situated below Leh Palace. Following a tour of the house there will be a short presentation by a Ladakhi scholar on the architectural heritage of the old city. Enjoy a view of the old city from the terrace of Munshi House as you sip Ladakhi tea with light snacks. The exploration continues from Munshi House through the old city ending in the bazaar. Conclude your tour at the Shanti Stupa, perched upon a great vantage point over Leh, with spectacular views of the stone-strewn landscape, before returning to the camp.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 4 – Thiksey and Hemis Monasteries.

An early morning start with tea and coffee followed by a visit to the Thiksey Monastery, which stands about a kilometre from the camp. This beautiful monastery houses a statue of the Maitreya Buddha seated on a lotus and boasts a spectacular view of the valley. At the monastery, you will have the privilege of participating in the morning prayer ceremony at sunrise. Continue on a guided tour of the monastery, visiting the beautiful prayer room which has many handwritten and painted books as well as the temple dedicated to the goddess Tara with her 21 images placed in glass-covered wooden shelves. You will also see small shrines devoted to the guardian divinities including Cham-Sing, the protector deity of Thiksey. Return to the camp for a late breakfast. The rest of the morning is free, allowing you time to relax and take in the pristine beauty around you. Or you may like to indulge in an optional cycling trip in the vicinity of the Thiksey village and its surroundings. Alternatively you could choose to drive to the nearby village of Saboo for a séance session with 'The Oracle' (N.B. This optional excursion will be confirmed a day prior subject to The Oracle being willing to give an audience). This afternoon explore the jewel in the crown of the Drukpa lineage, the Hemis Monastery, the oldest monastic institution in Ladakh, situated about an hour's drive from Thiksey. Built in a secluded valley, the monastery belongs to the Drukpa School or Dragon Order of Mahayana Buddhism. Explore the many interesting facets of this institution, established under the patronage of King Senge Namgyal in the 13th century, where young lamas are taught literature, history, philosophy, yoga and tantra. The monastery halls are adorned with beautiful statues and mural paintings. This evening enjoy a drink as the sun dips under the horizon, casting exquisitely coloured shadows on the surrounding snow peaks.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 5 – Walking in Thiksey.

Today you will take a walk from the campsite through the rocky moraine towards the north, skirting the periphery of the camp wall; the walk takes you along an ancient trade path surmounted by a series of chortens and 108 stupas, which line either side of the narrow trail. You soon would be entering the green farmlands of Nyerma, where the trail now turns into a pathway leading up to a Nunnery. The Nunnery also belongs to the Yellow Hat Sect and approximately 25 nuns from various parts of Ladakh reside and practise Buddhists teachings

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 5 – A Choice of Activities.

A choice of activities is available today. You may simply choose to enjoy a day at leisure, or you may take one of three excursions.

1. **In the footsteps of Buddha** - Drive through picturesque landscape along the banks of the mighty River Indus to the fabled Alchi Monastery, built in the 11th century. Founded by Ringchen Zangpo, the 'Great Translator', the Alchi Gompa displays a Kashmiri influence in its art and architecture. Enjoy a picnic lunch. On your way back you will stop by at the 16th century Basgo Fort, the centre of power and politics in this region, whose ruins bear evidence of the invasions of the Mongols. N.B. The visit to Alchi can also be combined with an optional rafting excursion on the Indus, missing out Basgo Fort.
2. **Visit the 'Enchanted Lake'** - Drive to the amazing Pangong Lake to the east of Leh, crossing Changla Pass (5,300m/17,500ft). This is one of the largest lakes in the Himalayas, half of which is in Tibet. Explore the crystal clear blue salt water lake. After lunch, drive back to Thiksey.
3. **Cycle the Wari La** – This is one of the most scenic passes in Ladakh and is also the world's fourth-highest motorable road. This pass connects the two most exotic and most travelled valleys in this Trans-Himalayan region. You get a breathtaking view of the Nubra Valley, which lies beyond the pass, as well as the many villages dotting the Indus valley. This route opened up only in 2008. After a short safety briefing at the top you will cycle down the best track the Ladakh Himalayas have to offer. The road criss-crosses its way on the mountain side into the green oasis of Shakti village, where you will end your trip and then drive back to camp for a late lunch.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 7 - Fly back to Delhi.

In the morning fly to Delhi and transfer to your hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast.

DAY 8 - At leisure.

At leisure in Delhi. We always recommend building in an extra day at leisure in Delhi as occasionally there are delays with the flights back from Leh and this extra day gives you a 'cushion' in case of problems. A variety of optional excursions is available.

Meals included: Breakfast.

DAY 9 – Depart.

Private transfer to the airport for your international flight home.

Meals included: Breakfast.

The price includes:

- Scheduled domestic flights Delhi/Leh/Delhi, including airport taxes.
- Hotel and Tented accommodation as listed above in double or twin-bedded rooms (please advise us which you prefer) with private facilities.
- 8 full breakfasts 5 lunches and 5 dinners as shown in the itinerary.
- Private transportation throughout. In Delhi you will have the services of a private English-speaking driver, selected by World Discovery. In Ladakh, allocation of both vehicles and drivers is controlled by the strong local transport union and we have no control over the quality provided, although your own private guide (see below) will coordinate the transport on your behalf.
- All sightseeing as shown (unless indicated as 'optional'), including entrance fees
- The services of a private English-speaking guide for the included sightseeing in Ladakh.

Not included in the price:

- International flights (see website page). We are happy to discuss the flights with you and give you further guidance.
- International airport taxes.
- Optional sightseeing.
- Tipping. We will give you guidance in this often sensitive matter
- An Indian Visa. This should be obtained before departure from the United Kingdom. Applications should be made online through VFS Global, the official representatives of the High Commission in London - <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/>.

A deposit of £250 per person is required at the time of booking, plus the cost of the international airfare and service charge if World Discovery is booking the flights on your behalf. The balance of the price for your India holiday must be paid at least 8 weeks before your departure date.