



LADAKH: A BREATHTAKING HIMALAYAN JOURNEY

Venture into India's far-flung northern reaches to Ladakh and experience an extraordinary life amidst the cloud-conquering peaks of the Himalayas.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



India, Indian Subcontinent



9 days from AU\$10,485 pp



Private

Journey Overview

Venture into India's far-flung northern reaches to Ladakh and experience an extraordinary life amidst the cloud-conquering peaks of the Himalayas. Witness the magnificent palaces, colourful markets and rich cultures of Leh. Hike into colossal mountains to find ancient hidden monasteries and fluttering prayer flags. At the end of each day, bed down in the most beautiful spots, surrounded by every luxury imaginable.

Journey Highlights

- Soak up the sunrise at the enchanting Thiksey Monastery
- Marvel at the impressive Leh Palace
- Meet local families and immerse yourself in a remote village culture
- Cross the impossibly high Khardung La Pass, the world's second highest motorable road



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Leh

Jullay and welcome to Leh, the high-altitude capital of the remote region of Ladakh (The Land of High Passes) on the Himalayan plateau and one of India's least populated regions. Receive a warm A&K welcome and private transfer to the luxury of Saboo Resorts, set in a rural village outside the city. Take some time to time to relax and acclimatise before an evening spent with a Buddhist scholar who will share fascinating insights into the city, culture and Tibetan Buddhism.

Saboo Resorts / Meals: LD

Day 2: Leh

Set off on foot to explore the intriguing communities and breathtaking landscape of the Saboo Valley. Enjoy a glimpse of life in local villages before joining a local family for a unique culinary experience as you journey through Ladakhi delicacies, discovering the traditions, history and significance of the ingredients and dishes.

Later, join your guide to explore the old city of Leh. Take in the nine-storey Leh Palace which dates to the 16th century, a mini version of Lhasa's famous Potala Palace. Then step inside the beautifully restored workshops and galleries of the LAMO (Ladakh Arts & Media Organisation) Munshi House, parts of which are almost 400 years old.

Continue to the Central Asian Museum, built on the site of an old caravan camp. The museum highlights Leh's role in Silk Road trade, with rooms focused on Ladakh, China, Turkestan and Tibet. The museum stands in a courtyard that also contains Leh's oldest mosque.

Saboo Resorts / Meals: BLD

Day 3: Leh

Venture to the 12th century Alchi Monastery, standing proudly on the banks of the mighty Indus River. See some of the world's last remaining early Mahayana Buddhist frescoes. Then head to beautiful ancient Lamayuru Monastery, perched atop a cliff. Legend has it this region was once under a lake that was made to dry up by a holy man. The main sanctum of the monastery houses a cave where Mahasiddha Naropa meditated for years and a visit is believed to liberate people from their sins.

Lunch at Alchi Kitchen, and meet Ms. Nilza Angmo, a celebrated chef introducing Ladakhi cuisine across India. Return to your resort, and choose to partake in an optional walk, to the nearby hilltop castle with breathtaking views of the majestic Indus valley.

Saboo Resorts / Meals: BLD

Day 4: Leh - Nubra Valley

Journey north into the enchanting Nubra Valley travelling over the beautiful Wari La pass through the Digar Valley, where a tree-lined river flows past small farms and charming stone cottages. Keep an eye out for marmots and Himalayan foxes and yaks grazing in the high meadows cradled by enormous glaciated peaks. Pause for photos and a picnic lunch before finding sanctuary at super-luxury Chamba Camp near the tranquil village of Diskit. Bask in the comforts of this luxurious camp and admire the incredible views of the Nubra Valley and the Diskit monastery in the distance.

Later this afternoon, drive to Diskit monastery, and view the Chamba statue where you can sip a sundowner whilst enjoying panoramic views of Shyok as the sun sets over the horizon.

Chamba Camp at Diskit / Meals: BLD

Day 5: Nubra Valley

Enjoy a sumptuous breakfast before journeying by road to the village of Panimik to begin your hike to Ensa Monastery, surrounded by natural cliffs, mountains and grazing Dzo (cow yak hybrid). Later, get a taste of local village living with a visit to the Women's Alliance of Nubra, meeting the women who work together on handicrafts and traditional performing arts. Stop in the Sumur farmlands for a homely lunch before returning to your camp.

Chamba Camp at Diskit / Meals: BLD

Day 6: Nubra Valley - Thiksey

Embark on a drive into the heavens through impressive landscapes and over the Khardung La pass, one of the highest stretches of road in the world, keeping an eye out for the local two-humped Bactrian camels. On arrival into the Leh Valley, check into the Chamba Camp in Thiksey, an idyllic meadow setting. Spend the rest of the evening unwinding at camp and admiring the view of the Thiksey Monastery framed by rugged, snow-capped mountains.

Chamba Camp at Thiksey / Meals: BLD

Day 7: Thiksey

Rise early and venture to the nearby Thiksey Monastery, one the most important Buddhist landmarks in the region. Hear the call of the conch and watch the monks gather peacefully for morning prayers. Be mesmerised by the chanting and the beautiful surrounds of the prayer hall. Marvel at the shimmering Maitreya Buddha statue, which stands an impressive 32 metres tall, before returning to camp for breakfast.

Later, climb to the nearby ruins of the Shey Palace and Monastery to stand in awe of a giant copper and gold Buddha and spectacular views of the valley below. This evening, witness a poignant display of Ladakh's vanished past as an independent kingdom at the Stok Palace.

Chamba Camp at Thiksey / Meals: BLD

Day 8: Thiksey

Start your day with a relaxing morning at the camp. Alternatively, if you are feeling adventurous you can choose to embark on a mountain biking journey (additional cost). Peddle downhill from Spituk monastery to Cholamsar village crossing the Indus River and cycling through the beautiful village of Chushot before returning to your resort by car.

In the afternoon, journey to the Hemis Monastery, the largest and wealthiest in Ladakh perched on a mountain standing on the banks of the River Indus. Admire the beautiful architecture and explore the museum filled with precious statues, texts and relics brought here by the Dugpa Kargyutpa or Red Hat order of monks who fled occupied Tibet over the high mountain passes.

Chamba Camp at Thiksey / Meals: BLD

During June or July each year, the two-day Hemis Festival is held. During this time, one can witness the famed Cham Dance and displays of age-old Thangkas (historical paintings).

Day 9: Thiksey - Depart Leh

Bid farewell to your breathtaking Himalayan journey as you transfer privately to the Leh airport for your onward journey.

Meals: B

Map



Accommodation

Saboo Resorts, Leh



Surrounded by terraced fields of alfalfa, poplars and willows, Saboo Resort in the idyllic Ladakhi village of Saboo is just seven kilometres from Leh Town and offers guests the opportunity of experiencing the authentic Ladakhi lifestyle, while still within easy reach of bustling Leh.

Days are devoted to walks around the village, trekking from monastery to mountain, and exploring the incredible landscape. At night, bed down in one of the fifteen cottages which blend seamlessly into the dramatic landscape of the Stok Range, lush fields and glacier-melt rivers. Built in traditional Ladakhi style, each cosy cottage has a simple living room, en suite bathroom, tea-and-coffee-making facilities and private verandah. Additional comforts include heating, complimentary Wi-Fi, LCD TV, and 24-hour room service.

The resort's multi-cuisine restaurant offers a delicious menu of wholesome home-style Ladakhi, Tibetan, Chinese, Indian and Continental dishes, which won't disappoint. For something lighter, there's a coffee shop serving freshly-baked treats from the local bakery. But, perhaps the true highlight is the rooftop terrace with its open fire pit and breathtaking 360-degree vistas.

Why we like it

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- Snug and homely cottages at a family run establishment
 - A traditional experience of the Ladakhi lifestyle
 - Tranquil village setting
 - Rooftop terrace with open fire-pit and 360-degree views
 - Only seven kilometres from bustling Leh Town

Chamba Camp Diskit, Ladakh



This colonial-style luxury camp brings luxury to an extraordinarily remote destination. Chamba Camp Diskit is nestled in the enchanting Nubra Valley, where the Nubra and Shyok Rivers meet, providing the perfect platform from which to discover the wonders of wild Ladakh. Open May to October.

Set against the backdrop of dramatic mountain peaks, the elegant spacious tents are furnished with four-poster beds, campaign furniture, en suite bathrooms, timber floors and hand-loomed rugs. All tents have large windows and a private deck from which to enjoy the breathtakingly beautiful surrounds. There's air-conditioning and heating, and even a personal butler service to ensure that your every need is attended to.

When it comes to dining, Chamba Camp Diskit indulges with the best of authentic local cuisine interspersed with fusion cuisine, often home-cooked by local chefs using produce from the organic garden. There's also an outdoor barbecue and kitchen area.

Why we like it

- Colonial-style luxury camp brings indulgent amenities to remote wilderness
- Jaw-dropping views from every tent
- Elegant tents with four-poster beds, en suite bathrooms and private decks
- Personal butler service

Chamba Camp Thiksey, Ladakh



Chamba Camp, Thiksey is one of the most luxurious camps in the Himalayas. A bold claim, but guests regularly return surprised at the high standards of accommodation: each of the 14 suite tents, 11 luxury suite tents and three Presidential suite tents are individually designed, with en suite bathrooms, private decks, crisp linens and even the services of your own butler. Impressive, considering the camp defines the meaning of the phrase 'off the beaten track'. It's the ultimate glamping experience in the Himalayas, erected when the weather is at its best (open 15th May to the 10th October), meaning its season is unaffected by monsoons. It's also the best time to visit Ladakh.

Ladakh itself is an incredible draw: stunning vibrant colours thanks to the purest air and seasonal rains, ancient monasteries, the bluest lakes, high passes from which to gaze down onto the vistas below and nomadic tribes that lead a simple lifestyle across a landscape that's hemmed in by snow-capped mountains. By day, explore the surrounding area to your heart's content: watch a game of polo (a popular sport for this region), take picnic lunches amid the picturesque valleys, visit the many Buddhist monasteries of the area or perhaps raft down the River Indus – the choice is yours. By night, retreat to your luxury camp and enjoy platefuls of delicious home-cooked food and the stillness surrounding your relaxing tent. The concept is to take you far off the beaten track, so modern amenities are hard to come by, but this merely adds to your incredible experience.

This is the ultimate glamping experience, possible only between May and October.

Why we like it

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- Indian safari chic high in the Himalaya
 - Located in a verdant meadow with breathtaking views
 - Butler service 24/7
 - Thoughtful attention to detail
 - Enjoy delicious traditional family recipes and picnic lunches

Abercrombie & Kent

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