

IN THE SEARCH OF THE ELUSIVE SNOW LEOPARD



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ITINERARY:

Duration: 13 days /12 Nights

Highest pass: No passes involved/except while tracking, you may have to climb uphill, depending on wildlife movement.

Grade: Moderate/strenuous (may have to climb a ridge)

Best period: End of November - December /February/March/Early April

The Trans-Himalayan region of Ladakh is one of the last frontiers for wildlife tourism. A winter trip meets the elements head-on in a stunning and apparently bleak landscape. But within these high valleys created by folds of the Great Himalaya is perhaps the highest density of the most elusive of the great cats - the snow leopard. The very name evokes all that is most wild, mysterious and elusive in nature - for this is an animal that comes cloaked not just in the subtle beauty of its own coat but

also in all the high drama of the harsh and magnificent environment that it dominates. The Ladakh region is a high altitude cold desert and for the snow leopard to survive it has a prey base of bharal (blue sheep), ibex and marmots. Wolves, foxes and wild dogs are other predators in the same area.

An attractive contrast also lies between these stone-hard mountain people and the gentle and compassionate Buddhism that they practice. You will have time to visit some of their great monasteries as well as their picturesque villages. Small settlements of Tibetan farmers and their livestock occupy isolated villages on the valley floors.

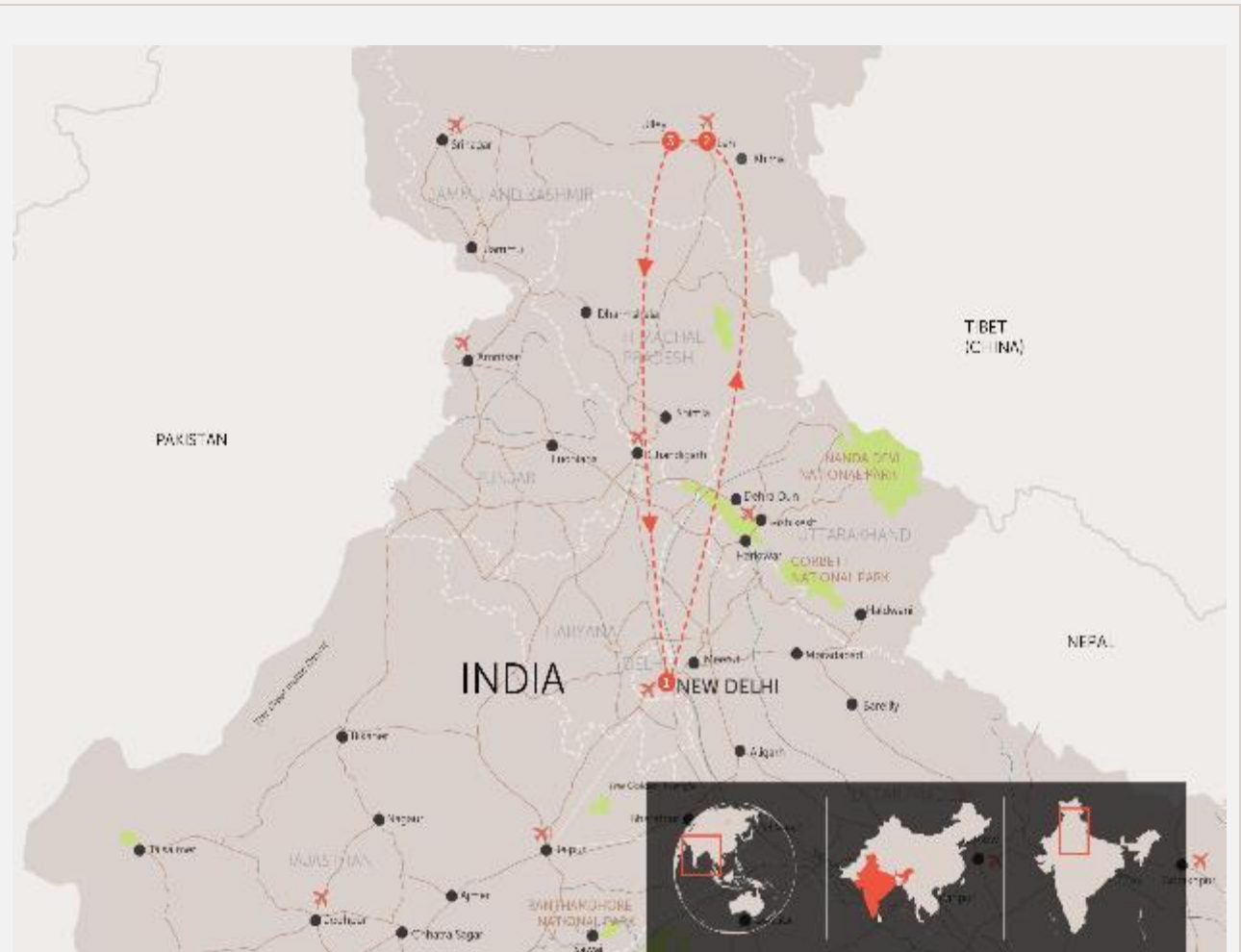
Please note: Please do note that the trek route is one that is based on experience of your leaders and they have full discretion to change it or alter it as per their wish. The weather will also be a crucial factor in deciding which places will eventually be visited and what will be dropped from the program.

The majority of time in Ladakh is spent at elevations of 11,800 feet or higher, with the highest sleeping altitude at 13,000. Anyone with a history of medical problems, particularly cardiac or respiratory, should consult a doctor before considering this trip. We always require a release of liability and medical certificate from our clients.

FAST FACTS:

- Opportunity to see other animals like Ibex, Tibetan Antelope, Blue Sheep, Shapo, Tibetan Hare.
- Enjoy the company of one of the most seasoned Snow Leopard Guide on the entire trip.
- Known as the 'Little Tibet', Ladakh has its own culture and identity and has never ceased to enchant travellers.
- The isolated barren wilderness of Ladakh with the snow-capped Himalayas mountains, bright blue water lakes, ever-changing sand dunes reminds that you are on the "Roof of the World".

YOUR INDIA TRAVEL MAP



ENTRY / VISA REQUIREMENTS

- As for all international travel, the visitor to India is required to be in possession of a valid passport and visa. Travellers from all countries need a visa. Enquire about this from the Indian diplomatic Representatives abroad OR apply online at <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>
- ***Boarding or immigration can be denied if there is a mismatch of passport details mentioned on the visa letter issued by the Government of India and the passport presented at these checks.***

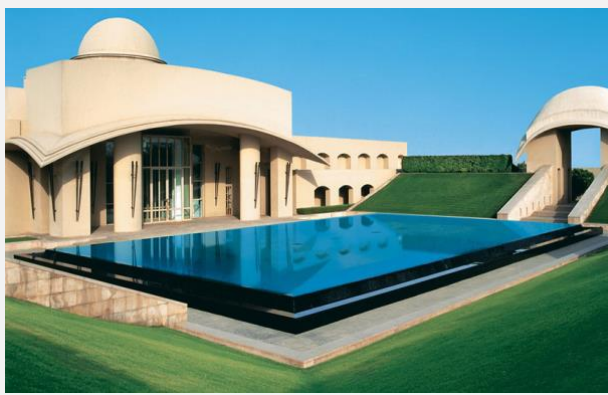
The passport has to be valid for a minimum of 6 months AFTER the departure date from India and atleast 2 (two) clear pages available in the passport for immigration stamping.

DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI

Upon your arrival in bustling Delhi, you will be warmly welcomed by our who will assist you through the customs / immigration and baggage collection process. Afterwards, you will be chauffeured to your hotel, Trident. Gurgaon

The Trident Gurgaon is a beautifully designed hotel with set in Gurgaon, neighbouring the Delhi border with Haryana 10 kilometres from the international airport. The hotel was voted 'India's Leading Business Hotel' in 2005 and 2006 at the World Travel Awards.

Spend overnight at the Trident Hotel, Gurgaon. Accommodation is in a Superior Garden view Room. Your stay is on bed and breakfast basis.



Trident Hotel, Gurgaon

DAY 2: DELHI /LEH

This morning you will be met and transferred to the Delhi airport for your flight to Leh. Upon arrival at Leh Airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Located in the heart of the ancient city of Leh, The Grand Dragon Ladakh is amongst the first luxury hotels in Ladakh. The hotel is decorated magnificently with handmade paintings by Gulam Mustafa (First modern Artist of Ladakh) around every corner, and fixtures that are reminiscent of royalty. The entire hotel is wheelchair accessible, for providing differently abled guests with a comfortable sojourn.

The hotel is also centrally heated and solar powered, not only ensuring warmth but also ensuring that all the services are eco-friendly. Rest of the day is at leisure to acclimatize to the high altitude and rarefied air. Leh is at 11400 feet and the flight up from the plains means that you have to acclimatize gently without pushing yourself.

The 2 ½ days scheduled here is the minimum required as you will be going to a higher altitude and will be doing a fair amount of walking. At some point over the next few days in Leh, meet with staff from the Snow Leopard Conservancy for a briefing on the history of snow leopard conservation in Ladakh with insight given into the current threats to snow leopards and the strategy's adopted to combat these threats.

Spend **Three overnights** at **Grand Dragon**. Accommodation is in a **Deluxe Room** with ensuite facilities. Your stay includes meals.



Grand Dragon

DAY 3: LEH- INTRODUCTORY TOUR

Leh is a fascinating labyrinth of winding streets and quaint bazaars retaining much of its atmosphere of a Central Asian trading town. The main street is open and airy, with rows of shops on either side. Leh is very Tibetan; the national dress, 'stove-pipe' hats and felt boots with turned-up toes are much in evidence. The Royal Palace, which dominates the town, is very reminiscent of the Potala in Lhasa and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, large chortens, prayer flags and mud brick houses with flat roofs are a dramatic culture change from the hot, teeming frenetic rush of Delhi. This morning you will visit the Snow Leopard Conservancy; here you will see the efforts made by the authority with the help of the local community to conserve the endanger snow leopard.



Thiksey Monastery



Leh Town

In the afternoon, we visit the Thiksey monastery. Thiksey Gompa is the most picturesquely situated monastery in Ladakh, perched high on a hill above the Indus. Its buildings are arranged at various levels, leading up to the private apartments of the incarnate lamas on the summit. From here one commands a magnificent view of the valley. The gompa possesses a rich and beautiful collection of hundreds of hand-written or painted prayer books. A new temple contains a 15-meter tall Buddha statue, constructed in 1970 to commemorate a visit to Thiksey by the Dalai Lama. The statue, made of clay and covered with gold paint, is the largest Buddha figure in Ladakh and took four years to

construct. Inside, the statue is filled with the Kandshur and the Tandshur - volumes of Buddhist canonical texts.

The statue was made entirely by local craftsmen and represents Maitreya, ("compassion" in Sanskrit) the Buddha of the Future. The prophecy made of the Future Buddha is that the world will be undergoing such chaos that He will teach compassion to the people.

Overnight Leh.

DAY 4: LEH

Today you set out for an extraordinary drive East heading towards Taglang La and the villages of Gya, Lhato and Meru. It's a fantastic drive taking you away from the valley of the Indus up a subsidiary valley to an extraordinary area even by Ladakhi's standards that marks the line where the Indian mainland collided with and drove under Asian land mass. There is some dramatic scenery here and you have a chance of sighting wildlife including Blue sheep, Golden eagles and Bearded vultures. Rafts of Red-billed Choughs perform synchronized aerobatics and in the fallow fields you have the chance of seeing the very beautiful Tibetan Partridge and the more common Chukor partridge.

Overnight in Leh.



Landscapes

DAY 5/11: DRIVE TO ULLEY / ULLEY

Drive west today on the road to Kargil and Srinagar, generally following the Indus River. You pass through the small town of Nimmu - one of the most important in Ladakh, where the Zaskar river meets the Indus. After a little over an hour you head north on a road marked to Likir- one of Ladakh's famous Buddhist monasteries. This is all snow leopard country. The landscape here is even bigger, more expansive and open, until you turn off onto a dirt road, winding up a narrow valley, following a stream called the Ulley Chhu. Smaller valleys intersect and the guides have their heads craned all the time, scanning the hill sides and the skyline for any silhouette. This is excellent Ibex country and there are few more evocative sights than a magnificently horned male Ibex standing vigil on some impossibly narrow outcropping, a few thousand feet over a plunging cliff.

Ulley village, west of Leh is an area that is only recently being developed for Snow Leopard watching.

You will have 07 nights here.

You will be staying at the Snow Leopard Lodge - The home stay consists of 6 bedrooms, built separately from the main house with a dining room and kitchen - all in the same low stone built building. Add to this the interest of living with a Ladakhi family in the depths of winter and understanding their life-style and you have a very special experience in store - especially sharing the large and warm kitchens that are the heart of a Ladkahi home in winter and resplendent with brass, copper and silver ornaments.

Settle in on arrival and acclimatize to the higher altitude of Ulley. You will be based here over 7 nights. You will explore 3 valleys, which, apart from snow leopards, are great for finding urial, Ibex, wolf and Himalayan fox.



Snow Leopard

Over the next few days you explore the area on foot and SUV's with your expert guide. You will be amazed at the sheer dedication and commitment he brings to his trade and the effort he makes to ensure that his guests leave happy. Your guide will interact closely with the local people and use the network of local intelligence to narrow down the likely sites. In the process there will also be plenty of opportunity for you to get insights into local folklore, as well as learn about local customs and traditions.

Overnight stay at Snow Leopard lodge.

DAY 12: ULLEY- LEH

This morning, after breakfast, we say our goodbyes to our host and drive back to Leh town. En-route we visit the Alchi monastery. Alchi Gumpa is located near the small village of Saspol. It is one of the earliest monasteries built in Ladakh, dating from the 11th century. Because it was built before the invading wars began in the 15th century, Alchi was built on lowlands, rather than on a hilltop as others were, in order to protect them from marauding armies.

After the visit, we carry on our journey to Leh.



Alchi Monastery

Spend One overnight at Grand Dragon. Accommodation is in a Deluxe Room with ensuite facilities. Your stay includes meals.

DAY 13: DEPART LEH /DELHI

Today connect for your morning flight to Delhi. Upon arrival, you will be driven to the Trident Gurgaon Hotel (close to the airport), where you can freshen up before your homeward flight later this evening.

“END OF SERVICES”

QUOTE PER PERSON IN USD (BASED ON MAXIMUM 2-8 GUESTS TRAVELLING) ON TWIN SHARE

USD

GUESTS

PER PERSON IN USD

2 GUESTS

10,187 USD PER PERSON

4 GUESTS

8615 USD PER PERSON

6 GUESTS

7875 USD PER PERSON

SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENT USD 3062 PER PERSON

EXPEDITION DATES:
15 /27 MARCH 2019

INCLUDES:

- Meals as mentioned in itinerary
- Internal flights in economy (Baggage Allowance 15 Kgs per passenger)-Guest can pre-purchase excess baggage on request at an extra cost.
- Day 1 in Delhi hotel on Bed and Breakfast
- All sightseeing activities in Ladakh as mentioned.
- Entrance fee in monasteries
- Transportation for snow leopard sightings
- Donation fee for snow leopard conservation
- Services of a Tour leader from Day 2-12 in Ladakh only

EXCLUDES:

- Any expenses of personal nature including alcohol, laundry, gratuities etc.
- International Airfares
- Medical /Travel Insurances
- Any expenses arising due to unavoidable circumstances beyond our control.
- Any change in tax structure

IMPORTANT REMARKS

- Rates include only those items specified in your itinerary.
- Please note, the names of hotels mentioned above only indicate that our rates have been based on usage of these hotels. It is not to be construed that accommodation is confirmed at these hotels until and unless we convey the confirmations to you on receipt of your acceptance. However in the event of any of the above mentioned hotels not becoming available at the time of initiating the reservations, we shall book alternate accommodation at a similar or next best available hotel and shall pass on the difference of rates (supplement/reduction whatever applicable) to you.
- In case on any currency fluctuations or amendment in local Government taxes, or any fuel hike, we reserve the right to adjust the tour price accordingly. The due increase or decrease will be communicated accordingly.