

STOK KANGRI

Journey deep into the Indian Himalaya to the summit of Stok Kangri, one of India's most beautiful and fascinating mountains



Day 0 Depart UK

You will be flying from London Heathrow direct to Delhi. Flight times to be confirmed.

Day 01 Arrive Delhi; Afternoon Sightseeing in and around Old Delhi

After landing in Delhi you will be met at the airport and taken to your hotel to freshen up and rest. This afternoon you will have a guided tour of Old Delhi, by metro or cycle rickshaw. The former capital of the 17th century Mughal emperor Shah Jahan is a magnificent fusion of grandiose architecture and vibrant chaos, centred around the Chandni Chowk Bazaar, a cacophony of noise, colour and deafening barter – quintessential India! Our sightseeing takes in the spectacular Jami Masjid Mosque, the largest in India and Shah Jahan's magnificent swansong, from the top of which you can get a clear view of the colonial designs of Edward Lutyens across the city. Overnight stay at hotel.

Day 02 Fly Delhi to Leh, Ladakh (3,200m)

FB

After an early breakfast you will be transferred from the hotel to the airport, where you will board a small aircraft for the flight to Leh (1hr). The flight takes you over the Greater Himalayas before landing at Leh, one of the highest airports in the world. You can hope to get excellent views of Stok Kangri as you fly-in. Once in Leh you will have gained an altitude of almost 3,200m, and so you can expect to feel the effects of the rarefied atmosphere.

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.
For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

This afternoon you will have the chance to relax and adjust to the altitude, or to explore the hotel surroundings and local bazaar. A memorable sight, the bazaar is daily thronged with traditionally attired women selling local produce and textiles while exchanging gentle banter between themselves and with passers-by. Dinner and overnight stay at hotel.

Day 03 Leh Sightseeing – ¾ hrs acclimatisation walk

FB



Leh is situated on the banks of the Indus, amidst starkly beautiful and majestic mountains. With a population of 10,000 people – mainly Buddhist, though some Argoos (Muslim descendants of Yarkandi traders) and a small Christian community – Leh bears the distinct stamp of its history as the commercial and cultural capital of Ladakh. This morning you will have the chance to take a sightseeing tour of the area, beginning with the Shey monastery. Until the 16th century, Shey was a royal residence (Kings of Leh were typically born in monasteries), and is home to the largest statue of Maitreya Buddha in Ladakh. From here you visit the monasteries of Thikse, one of the finest examples of Ladakhi architecture, and Hemis, among the richest, largest and most famous gompas in Ladakh. Hopefully whilst visiting one of these beautiful monasteries you will have the opportunity to witness a Buddhist prayer ceremony.

Following your morning sightseeing you will have lunch, before taking a warm-up hike to Leh Palace & Tsemo Gompa. A miniature version of the Potala

in Lhasa, Leh Palace is one of the major attractions in Ladakh. The palace was built in the 17th century and had nine storeys, but it is now dilapidated and deserted. From here it is a short walk to Tsemo Gompa. The Namgyal Tsemo Gompa was built in 1430 by King Tashi Namgyal on Namgyal Tsemo Peak overlooking the town. The monastery contains a three-story high solid gold idol of Maitreya Buddha (laughing Buddha) and a one-storied statue of Avaloketesvara and Manjushri, along with ancient manuscripts and frescoes. The fort above this gompa is in ruins, but the views of Leh from here are breathtakingly beautiful. If you are still feeling capable after this, you can continue on to Sankar monastery and to the Japanese Peace Pagoda. Dinner and overnight stay at hotel.

Day 04 Khardung La Pass (5,359m)

FB

Today you drive (39kms / 1.5-2hrs) to Khardungla, the highest motorable road in the world, where we stop briefly in order to acclimatise and enjoy the views (NB: cold winds blast across this point so please take warm clothes). Khardung La ('La' meaning 'pass' in Tibetan) is the route between Leh and the Shyok and Nubra valleys, making it the gateway to the Karakoram, or the 'land of black gravel'. Formerly this was the major caravan route from Leh to Kashgar in Chinese Central Asia. About 10,000 horses and camels used to take the route annually, and a small population of Bactrian camels can still be seen in the area north of the pass, mute witnesses to history.

This afternoon you will return to Leh (1hr), where you will enjoy a warm up walk to Shanti Stupa. The view from the stupa is spectacular, taking in the town of Leh, the Indus Valley and River, and the surrounding snow-capped peaks. Dinner and overnight stay at hotel.



Day 05 Drive to Chilling (3,200m)

FBA

This morning you can take an optional excursion to white water raft along the Indus River (approx. US\$60 to be booked and paid locally). You will raft for 3hrs on grade 2 rapids from point to point ending just after the confluence of the Indus and Zaskar Rivers. Here you will have a lunch, before driving (70kms / 3-4hrs) to Chilling and the starting point of your trek! The road travelled is set within the confluence of River Indus and River Zaskar and is rough all the way. If you choose not to raft, you will depart with your support team this morning from Leh and drive straight to Chilling in time for lunch. On reaching the camp you can visit the small village of Chilling, famous for its copper work. Dinner and overnight stay at camp.

Day 06 Crossing Zaskar River & trek to Skiu (3,500m) - 5hrs

FBA

This morning you will rise early from your first night's camping and begin your trek. You will cross over the Zaskar River and trek to Skiu. The frigid Zaskar River originates from the high altitude plateau of Sarchu on the border of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. Originally known as the Tsarap, the river gorges a path out of the rocky mountains of the western Himalayas, dropping in a continuous torrent of class 5 rapids. The river then eases into the forbidden Kingdom of Zaskar and slowly flows past the capital at Padum. Here it joins with the Stod River which flows down from the Pensi La pass on the road from Kargil to Padum. It is from this confluence of the Tsarap and Stod rivers that the mighty Zaskar takes birth. You will cross the Zaskar River by way of a box and cable bridges and meet your trekking team on the opposite riverbank for the trek to Skiu in the Marka Valley.



Overnight camping.

Day 07 Skiu to Ganda La Base Camp (4,100m) – 7/8 hrs

FBA



The trek today is through a narrow valley with a gradual ascent. We will keep to a moderate pace, as some of the valleys in this region are small and narrow, and the temperature can be especially high during the day. You will walk slowly, criss-crossing small streams with trees overhead to shield you from the heat of the blazing sun. Ladakhi scenery is exceptional – wherever there is a water source or small stream you can expect to see beautiful green vegetation. When you look up, you will see barren hills and looking down into the valley you can see trees and green pastures, home to grazing animals. As you spy the village of Shingo ahead you will know that your camp is not far away. You will camp just beyond the village at the base of Ganda La base camp. Overnight camping.

Day 08 Trek to Rumbak via Ganda La (4,980m) – 7hrs

FBA

The trek starts today with a gradual ascent towards Ganda La. The views from this pass are excellent, taking in the whole of the Indus valley with a fantastic view of Stok Kangri and its other peaks, including Gulab Kangri and Kangyantse. On a clear day you should have an excellent view of the entire mountain range from the top. If you are feeling up to it, you can take an extra walk (1hr) over the ridge for more great views from a higher point. You then follow an easy descent towards the base of the mountain, passing through the beautiful valley and Yurutse village. You will continue to trek until you reach Rumbak village. Overnight camping.



Day 09 Trek to Mankarmo via Stok La – 7hrs

FBA

Today's trek follows on through the valley and ascends towards Stok La via a very steep and zig-zagging path for about 3hrs. The path uphill can be tiring as the ground consists of soft sand and one step up may be two steps down! But keep looking down and sideways for the views of the spectacular rocky and eroding valleys on the way to Stok La. Again, you can carry on up the ridge to get even better views. After the pass you will continue to trek with a gentle descent towards Mankorma, the summer shepherds' encampment. Overnight camp at Mankarmo.

Day 10 Trek Mankorma Valley to Stok Low Base Camp (4,900m) – 5hrs

FBA

After breakfast you will start walking to Low Base Camp. Today you will take it slowly, as every step is difficult at this altitude. You will reach Low Base Camp by lunchtime and have a rest and stroll in the afternoon. Overnight camping.

Day 11 Trek to Advanced Base Camp & Acclimatisation (5,200m) – 3hrs

FBA

Today you will trek to Advance Base Camp where you will spend the remainder of the day resting before your summit attempt tomorrow. Our experienced team will help you try on your camping equipment and show you how to use it. You can also take an optional acclimatisation walk. This trek should increase your chances of reaching Stok Kangri summit and give you time to get used to your climbing gear. Overnight camping.

Day 12/13 Summit Stok Kangri (6,114m) and return to Low Base Camp – 10-13hrs or Contingency Day

FBA



Today you will tackle Stok Kangri summit before returning to Low Base Camp. Rising early morning, your journey to the summit will take 6-7hrs, with tough trekking towards the top. Once at the summit you will feel as if you are on the top of the world, with the majestic peaks of the Karakoram Range surrounding you. The summit is a superb reward for your efforts, giving you magnificent views in every direction. From the top, the

city of Leh appears so small that you can barely see it. After a rest and photo opportunity, you will begin your descent (3-4hrs) back to Advanced Base Camp, where celebratory refreshment will be served! You will then make the return trek (1-2hrs) back to Low Base Camp, where you will have an early dinner and overnight at the camp.

***NB:** If the weather is poor on day 13 or you are personally unable to summit, day 14 has been left free to provide the opportunity for a second summit attempt. If a second attempt is not needed, you will return to Leh one day early to rest and relax after your challenge.*

Day 14 Low Base Camp via Stok Leh – 4hrs

FBA

Today you will take your final trek out of the valley and back to Stok village. The trek downhill to Stok village will take nearly 4hrs, and offers exceptional views of the valley. Your trail runs besides a stream, with plenty of chances to see blue sheep, ibex & marmots. After reaching the summit of Stok Kangri, walking downhill to Stok village should be child's play. Your vehicles will meet you at the end of the trail and will drive you to Leh (45mins). Once back in Leh you can check into your hotel and have a well-deserved hot shower and relax. Overnight in a hotel in Leh.

Day 15 Fly to Delhi

HB

This morning you will fly back to Delhi. On arrival at Delhi airport you will be transferred to a hotel. After check-in you have the rest of the day for shopping and/or sightseeing. Overnight stay at hotel.

Day 16 Fly to UK

After breakfast you will transfer to Delhi Airport for your flight back to the UK.