

# Markha, Kharnak and the Zalungkarpo La Trek

Trip Code: MAZ

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Views from the Zalungkarpo La (5195m) of nearby Kang Yatze (6400m)
- Trek on shepherds' trails from the Markha Valley to the edge of the Chang Tang
- Acclimatise at Leh, visit Alchi Monastery and drive to the Khardung La

- Look out for eagles and vultures and for signs of wolves and snow leopards

## AT A GLANCE

- 6 days trekking
- Max altitude - 5195 metres
- Join at Delhi

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

In the remote north-western corner of India, the Himalayan region of Ladakh is an inspirational destination for a trekking holiday. Connecting the Markha Valley to the Kharnak Valley across the Zalungkarpo La (5195m), this superb trek leads through a dramatic and generally arid mountain landscape, coloured by green irrigated fields and the red of the monks' robes at the villages and monasteries en route. After acclimatising and sightseeing at the monasteries around the ancient regional capital of Leh and taking a jeep ride up to the Khardung La, we drive on a jeep road to Markha at the heart of a valley where the traditional way of life has been based around growing a few hardy staples and herding sheep, goats, yaks and horses. From our first camp at Hangkar, we hike up onto the Nimaling Plain for views of Kang Yatze (6400m), before trekking through the Langthang Valley in the realm of the snow leopard and impressive lammergeier or bearded vulture. Crossing the Zalungkarpo La, where the views extend to the peaks on the Tibetan border, we enter the remote Kharnak Valley, home to nomadic Changpa shepherds who graze their flocks on its streamside pasture during the summer months. Trekking out to Dat, we return to Leh at the end of a splendid holiday that highlights the culture and magical landscapes of Ladakh.

## Is this holiday for you?

This is not a long or sustained trek and we have allowed 4 days and nights in and around the town of Leh (3500m) to help us acclimatise to the altitude, before setting off. Throughout the trek we will follow trails used primarily by local shepherds and their animals. There will be stream crossings and sections of more challenging trail including zig-zag paths on scree, but any regular hillwalker will cope well with the underfoot conditions. There are a couple of half-day walks and several where you can expect to be walking for 6 or 7 hours. Daily distances are not great, but at elevations of between 4000 and 5000 metres, the trek will provide a reasonable challenge.

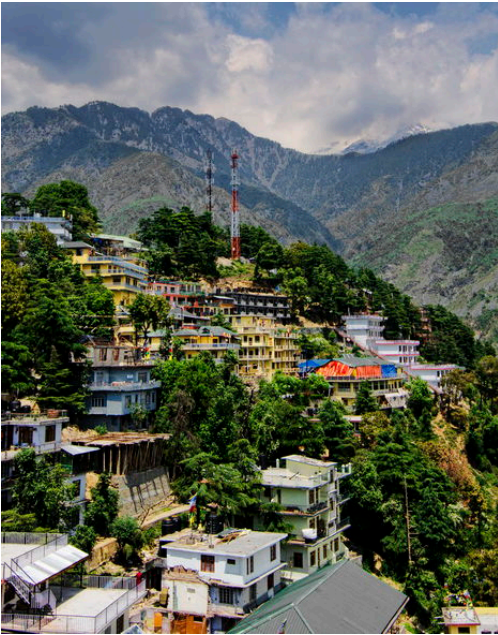
# Itinerary

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Version:

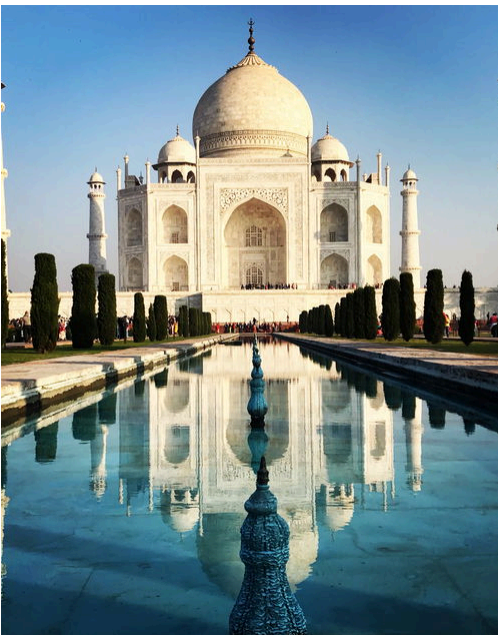
# Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



## Dharamsala and the Dalai Lama

Dharamsala is a former British Raj hill-station in the Dhauladhar mountain range and currently home to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile. On this four day extension, you will be able to sample a flavour of life in Tibet and enjoy visits to the Dalai Lama's temple complex; the Norbulingka Institute; the Tibetan children's village and visit a local Gaddi Tribal village to experience the life of the people who traditionally inhabit the lower reaches of the Dhauladhar.



## One day tour of Agra and the Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal needs little introduction. Built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz, it is widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world. Nearby is the oft overlooked Agra Fort, itself an awe-inspiring and magnificent complex of palaces and ancient forts. Traveling from Delhi on the express train and returning by private vehicle, our one-day extension to Agra is perfect for those with limited time who wish to complete their India experience with exploring one of the most admired and loved buildings on the planet.



### **Agra & the Taj Mahal two day tour**

Our two-day extension is for those who wish to explore Agra and the surrounding area at a relaxed pace. We start by exploring the oft overlooked Agra Fort, itself an awe-inspiring and magnificent complex of palaces and ancient forts, before waking before the next day to see the sunrise break over the Taj Mahal. Needing little introduction, the Taj Mahal was built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz. It is widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world. This tour also gives us an opportunity to explore the fascinating abandoned ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri.



### **Agra and Jaipur four day extension**

The Golden Triangle needs little introduction and is rightly considered a classic trip in its own right. Easily accessible from Delhi, this excursion takes in the wonders of the majestic Agra Fort, the incomparable Taj Mahal, the abandoned ghost-city of Fatehpur Sikri and the architectural jewels of Jaipur and Amber. This four day trip ensures you get the most out of these stunning attractions at a relaxed and unhurried pace.

## **Holiday Information**

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## What's Included

- A professional English-speaking local leader
- Delhi Airport transfers (on group arrival and departure days only)
- Internal flights
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described
- All meals throughout the holiday
- Full trekking service including food and all equipment (excluding personal equipment)

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Delhi Airport transfers (other than on group arrival and departure days)
- Indian Visa
- Tips for trek staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Delhi.

Transfers are provided from/to Delhi Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 14.

## Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

The food served during the trek is a mixture of local and Western, mostly purchased locally and cooked for us by highly trained trek cooks. The emphasis is on providing a high-carbohydrate and largely vegetarian diet, which we have found to be easily digestible at high altitude. In Delhi, we take our meals in the group hotel or in nearby restaurants. All meals while on trek and while staying in hotels are included in the trip price.

## Accommodation

On arrival in Delhi and for one night after the trek, we stay at a hotel close to the airport which provides convenient and comfortable accommodation. Being near the airport makes the whole travel experience more relaxing. In Leh, we have 4 nights in a good standard of hotel. Whilst on trek there are 7 nights camping. All accommodation is allocated on a twin sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. It is possible to hire a single tent while on trek. Depending on availability it may be possible to book single rooms. For hotel prices and single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website. Please note that you may not be able to access your hotel room on Day 1 until 2pm. If you are arriving early and would like more direct access to your room there is the option to book an extra night.

## Internal flights

### Deposits for internal flights

The cost of the internal flights between Delhi and Leh are included in the trip price. To allow us to pay for these flights as soon as the trip is guaranteed, a higher than normal deposit is required for this trip which includes the internal flight payment. Once these flights have been booked the deposit cannot be refunded if subsequently you cancel your booking. In the unlikely event that KE have to cancel the holiday for any reason, this deposit will be refunded in full.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be accompanied by an experienced English-speaking local leader throughout the trip, and on trek will have the services of a full trek crew, including a local guide or sirdar and several Nepalese Sherpas employed by our Indian agent, as well as a team of pack-ponies and their handlers.

## Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

## Spending Money

Approximately £150 (or equivalent in Euros / US dollars etc.) changed into local currency, should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses, including porter and trek crew tips (allow approximately £60) and soft drinks, etc. (allow approximately £40). It is not necessary to purchase local currency (Indian Rupees) before you travel. We recommend taking your personal spending money in cash since you will be changing the majority of this into local currency on the day of arrival, and changing travellers' cheques can prove time consuming. Sterling, US dollars and Euros are readily exchanged in Delhi. Credit cards can be used to purchase many goods in Delhi and are particularly useful for more expensive souvenirs. It is also possible to withdraw cash (rupees only) from cash machines in certain banks in Delhi using credit and debit cards.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides and porters. They do not form part of their wages. KE always pays local crews the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that was given. Most people will want to tip the people who work so hard to make the trip a success and we suggest that any tips are given at the end of your trip and by the group as a whole rather than from individuals. Although the level of tip is at your discretion, we understand that you will want some guidance on this. As a rough guide we suggest a contribution from each group member of approximately £60 (or equivalent in Euros / US dollars etc.) changed into Indian rupees, should provide good tips when distributed among the crew.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag and a daypack. Your bag on trek will be carried by porters or pack animals. The packed weight of your trek bag whilst trekking should be no more than 15kg. Please note that the check-in baggage limit on all internal flights within India is now 15kg with a maximum cabin baggage limit of 7kg and you are responsible for any excess baggage fees that the airline may apply. From time to time cabin baggage (other than laptops, cameras and valuables) is not allowed on the Leh flight for security reasons. In this event, the limit for check-in baggage may be increased to 20kg at the discretion of the check-in staff. It is possible to leave travel clothes and any other items not required on trek at the group hotel.



## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Visa India

Most nationalities, including travellers from the UK, the USA and many European countries can apply for their Indian Visa online through the **E-Visa Application** process. You must make your application at least four days prior to departure. Please download the detailed information document for details of how to apply for your visa: [Visa India PDF](#)

## Health & Vaccinations

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Zika virus has been confirmed as active in this country. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The mosquitoes that transmit ZIKV are unlikely to be found above 2,000m altitude. For more information, visit the website of the National Travel Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) at <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk>

## Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid.

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

VACCINATIONS You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you specifically require any vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella), along with hepatitis A and typhoid. Malarial prophylaxis are required. There is risk of yellow fever and you must carry a current vaccination certificate. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## Currency

The currency of India is the Indian Rupee.

## Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. For this trip you need to be aerobically fit and also comfortable with walking up to 7 hours on some days. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Regular hiking in hilly country is the best training but running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina. Before departure, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country.

## Climate

During July and August the temperature in Delhi will be hot (35°C) and humid. On the high plateau of Ladakh, the maximum daytime temperature low down on our trek (and at Leh) will be around 25°C, with night-time lows around 10°C. At our highest camps, the night-time temperature may fall as low as minus 10°C. At high altitude, the sun has a very strong effect and it will feel hotter than the indicated temperatures. Ladakh is not affected by the monsoon and we can usually expect stable, weather. However mountains do generate their own weather systems and some rain or snowfall cannot be ruled out.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- *Leh and Trekking in Ladakh*. Charlie Loram
- *Trekking in the Indian Himalaya*. Lonely Planet
- *Ladakh, Crossroads of High Asia*. Janet Rizvi

## Maps

### India - 150K Ladakh and Zaskar Tekking Maps Editions Olizane. Scale: 1:150,000

These are excellent topographic trekking maps of the Ladakh - Zaskar region from the Geneva based Editions Olizane. Printed on light, waterproof and tear-resistant plastic paper, each map is double-sided, covering a large area of 90km x 240km. The maps have exceptionally clear cartography with contours at 100m intervals, enhanced by relief shading, additional spot heights for peaks and passes. The legend is in English and French. For this trek you will need the following sheet: Ladakh and Zaskar Centre: Indus - Zaskar - Pangong.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. There is a baggage limit on the flight to Leh of 15kg for hold baggage and an additional 7kg for cabin baggage. The packed weight of your bag whilst trekking should be no more than 15 kgs.

### You must bring the following items:

- A photocopy of your travel insurance policy (required by authorities in Leh)
- Daypack 30 to 40 litres
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -15°C)\*
- Hiking boots
- Trainers / sandals for river crossings and camp use
- Walking socks (2 or 3 pairs)
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Thermal baselayer - leggings

- Thermal baselayer shirts (2 short sleeve, 2 long sleeve)
- Shirts or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm jacket (down)
- Sunhat
- Warmer over gloves or mittens
- Thermal gloves
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Basic First Aid Kit containing pain-killers, plasters, blister treatment and rehydration salts. We also recommend altitude medicine such as Diamox.

## The following items are optional:

- Thermarest (note that foam mattresses are provided)
- Trekking poles
- Gaiters
- Insect repellent
- Scarf or buff
- Sleeping bag liner
- Travel clothes
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## Equipment hire / rental

Items marked \* can be hired / rented through KE Adventure Travel. Please make requests at least 6 weeks prior to the trip departure.

Note all hire / rental equipment will be issued in Leh.

## Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Delhi. Transfers are provided from/to Delhi Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Delhi. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving in the morning on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Delhi on the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

The Best New Itineraries With the recent establishment of a jeep road into the heart of the Markha Valley, it was inevitable that we would want to take advantage... with the result being this excellent new 2-week trekking adventure which makes the most of the fascinating region of Ladakh.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 21/12/2024 and the trip is subject to change