

Himalaya
Indian
Sub-continent

beyond the markha valley



trip highlights

- Explore trails linking whitewashed settlements and tiny monasteries to the vast pastures of Rupshu
- Head off the beaten track to the Zalung Karpo La and remote Tibetan borderlands
- Traverse passes fluttering with prayer flags that reflect the deep Buddhist heritage
- Visit ancient monasteries and forts in the upper Indus Valley
- Enjoy a fully supported trek staying in beautifully situated campsites
- Experience traditional hospitality in our hotel in Leh



Trip Duration	15 days	Trip Code: MVT
Grade	Moderate	
Activities	Trekking	
Summary	15 day trip, 9 day trek, 9 nights camping, 5 nights hotels	

welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our Beyond the Markha Valley trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience.

why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to a remote and challenging destination, many factors need to be considered. World Expeditions have been pioneering treks in the Indian Himalaya since 1975. Our extra attention to detail and seamless operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable trekking experience in the Himalaya.

Every trek is accompanied by an experienced local leader who is highly trained in remote first aid, as well as knowledgeable crew that share a passion for the region in which they work, and a desire to share it with you. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics. We use comfortable 3 star accommodation in hand picked hotels, and well maintained, good quality camping equipment on trek. The highest standards of hygiene are strictly maintained, and our cooks will surprise you with a varied menu that's sure to please at the conclusion of each trekking day. World Expeditions are also the only company to provide food for our porters on trek.

Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to benefit the local peoples we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience. World Expeditions pioneered the use of kerosene as an alternative to wood, in an effort to combat the growing problem of deforestation in the Himalaya.

We invite you to read more on our philosophies and projects further in these trip notes.



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World Expeditions does not require single travellers to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. Please refer to our website for the additional cost.

For competitive airfares to Delhi and stopover ideas, contact our expert staff today to receive a detailed quote.

the trip

This is the finest introduction to trekking in Ladakh. The itinerary reflects over 30 years experience in Ladakh and in our constant search for upgrading treks our 'Beyond the Markha Valley' would be hard to beat. In essence we extend our classic trek from the Markha Valley, following established trails linking whitewashed settlements and tiny monasteries to the vast grazing pastures of Rupshu. Rupshu is the home of the Khampa, the original mountain nomads and is perfect for those looking for an unusual and remote trek. This is a stunning trek that explores the Ladakh heartland, where the flutter of prayer flags and the ancient mani walls reflect the deep seated Buddhist heritage and where views of the Zaskar Range stretch to the borderlands of the Tibetan Plateau.

at a glance

DAY 1	JOIN DELHI
DAY 2	FLY TO LEH
DAYS 3-4	IN LEH
DAY 5	LEH TO ZINCHEN AND TREK TO RUMBAK (1HR DRIVE & 3HRS TREK)
DAY 6	IN RUMBAK (ACCLIMATISATION WALKS)
DAY 7	RUMBAK TO CAMP BELOW GANDA LA (WALK APPROX. 3HRS)
DAY 8	BASE CAMP TO SHOGDO VIA GANDA LA (WALK APPROX. 6HRS)
DAY 9	SHOGDO TO NARDING (4-5 HRS)
DAY 10	NARDING TO HANKAR VIA MARKHA(6-7 HRS)
DAY 11	HANKER TO THE BASE OF THE ZALUNG LA (6 HRS)
DAY 12	CROSS THE ZALUNG LA TO TSORKA (6-7 HRS)
DAY 13	TREK TO DAT SETTLEMENT (WALK APPROX. 7-8 HRS)
DAY 14	DRIVE TO LEH VIA HEMIS MONASTERY(DRIVE 7-8 HRS)
DAY 15	FLY LEH TO DELHI

what's included

- 14 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 13 dinners
- airport transfers on Day 1 & Day 15
- expert bilingual guide
- group medical kit
- good quality accommodation in Delhi & Leh
- the use of a World Expeditions trek pack which includes a quality sleeping bag, down or fibre fill jacket and insulated mat (valued at over US\$500)
- private transportation
- all park entrances & permits
- mules to carry all personal and group baggage
- souvenir World Expeditions kit bag

Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators in the adventure travel industry. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices we have chosen a policy not to ask for such payments.

what's not included

- Lunch & dinner in Delhi
- Aerated and alcoholic drinks on trek
- Items of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry etc
- Tips

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trip dates

2020 22 Aug - 05 Sep

2021 26 Jun - 10 Jul
21 Aug - 04 Sep

important notes

NB: - Flights Delhi/Leh/Delhi not included

fast facts

Countries Visited:

India

Visas:

Yes*

Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

Private Groups:

Private group options are available for this trip*

Singles:

A single supplement is available for this trip*

Leader:

Expert local leader

Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

- Airport & departure taxes
- Visa
- Travel insurance
- International flights
- Flights Delhi/Leh/Delhi

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Join Delhi

On arrival in Delhi you will be met by a World Expeditions representative and transferred to your hotel. Should you arrive earlier in the day we are happy to assist with any optional sightseeing.

Due to the differing times of arrival of group members and the early morning departure to Leh the following morning the initial briefing will be on 'a need to know basis' such as what to pack, ordering a packed breakfast, what time for departure from the hotel, arrangements for leaving gear in Delhi etc. Your World Expeditions kit bag will also be distributed after the briefing.

Overnight group hotel.

Note: The main briefing will be on arrival in Leh and sleeping bags, liners, insulated mattress and down jackets will be distributed.

Note: If you are arriving in Delhi on a late night flight, you may like to arrive the day before the trip commences. Please talk to your World Expeditions reservations consultant or travel agent for pretour accommodation options.

Overnight: The Lalit Hotel or similar

meals: NIL

DAY 2 Fly to Leh

We take the early flight from Delhi to Leh in the Indus Valley. If the conditions are clear you will be rewarded with grand views across the Great Himalaya and Zaskar ranges before landing at the capital of Ladakh. On our first day in Ladakh we spend time wandering the bazaar and imposing Leh Palace. We have the opportunity to climb to the Victory Fort (above the Palace) built in the 17th century to commemorate Ladakh's independence from the invading armies from Baltistan and Kashmir. From the Palace we can also appreciate the alleyways that comprise the old town of Leh, located to the east of the main bazaar.

Overnight: Hotel Omasila or similar

meals: B,L,D

DAYS 3-4 In Leh

Among other options is a visit to the Shanti Stupa at Chanspa, just up the road from our hotel that affords fine views up the Indus Valley. It is also recommended to visit the Ladakh Ecological Centre to appreciate how the Ladakhi people have been able to incorporate new technology into their traditional lifestyles. On the second day we include a trip to Shey Palace and Tikse monastery. Shey Palace originally housed the Ladakh royal family before they moved to Leh in the 17th century. A few km up the Indus valley is the spectacular setting of Tikse monastery perched on the summit of a sugarloaf mountain. Our guides will show you around this ancient monastery and provide you with insights as to how the monks conduct their life and their day

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thoughtful travel

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence.

World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our Responsible Travel Guidebook.

This detailed guide to responsible & sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel.

Please ask your consultant if you have not received your copy of our award winning book. Alternatively, you may like to download a copy from our website

www.worldexpeditions.com

trip grading Moderate

To determine the grade of a particular adventure we consider a number of factors. These include the condition of the walking terrain, the altitude, the number of passes crossings and the length of the trek. Beyond Markha Valley Trek is graded moderate.

This is primarily due to the altitude as we commence the trek from 3500 metres. While the stages are not unduly demanding the trail is ill defined in places and both pass crossing – the Ganda La (4950m) and the Zalong La (5190m) may test your resolve. You will need a good level of fitness and be in good health. The majority of our moderately graded treks involve the carrying of a day pack only. Be prepared for potential variable weather conditions.

Suggested preparation; 1 hour of aerobic exercise, three to four times a week and extended periods of exercise during the weekend will accustom you to regular exercise, at least three months prior to your departure. Hill walking with a pack in variable weather conditions will be beneficial if you are taking part in a trekking adventure, kayaking or road cycling is also recommended depending upon the activity you plan to undertake.

to day monastic routine. On the third day in Leh we head to Stok Palace due south of Leh where we undertake short hike up the gorges leading into the Stok Range. An invaluable day to assist with our acclimatization before we commence our trek.

Overnight: Hotel Omasila or similar

meals: B,L,D

DAY 5 Leh to Zinchen and trek to Rumbak (1hr drive & 3hrs trek)

We drive via Stakna village and alongside the Indus River to reach the tiny settlement of Zinchen (3380m). It will not take long for our packhorses to be loaded before commence our trek that gradually ascends a spectacular gorge to the village of Rumbak (3960m). Our camp (3850m) is located just below the village.

Overnight: Tented camp

meals: B,L,D

DAY 6 In Rumbak (acclimatisation walks)

A further opportunity to acclimatise. We undertake day walks to Rumbak village and up side valleys leading to the base of the Stok La that afford spectacular views of the Trans Himalaya.

Overnight: Tented camp

meals: B,L,D

DAY 7 Rumbak to camp below Ganda La (Walk approx. 3hrs)

From Rumbak we ascend to the settlement of Yurutse. The peak of Stok Kangri looms above the stark mountainscape. Our campsite (4350m) is well located in a tiny meadow within striking distance of the Ganda La. That afternoon we undertake a short walk to further assist with acclimatisation and to also gain striking views across the upper Rumbak Valley.

Overnight: Tented camp

meals: B,L,D

DAY 8 Base Camp to Shogdo via Ganda La (Walk approx. 6hrs)

Above our camp we gain views of the snow-capped Stok Range. After gradually ascending a series of switchbacks we make the final gradual ascent to the Ganda La (4950m). From the pass there a views south across the endless folds of the Zanskar Range and the snow capped summits of the main Himalaya Range before completing the gradual descent to the village of Shingo (4150m).

Overnight: Tented camp

meals: B,L,D

DAY 9 Shogdo to Narding (4-5 hrs)

Below Shogdo the trail enters a narrow gorge where willow, poplar and rose bushes provide a natural canopy alongside the river course. The Skui monastery (3435m) marks the confluence of the stream coming from Shogdo and the Markha Valley. We then head up the Markha Valley to Narding (3530m) and a comfortable, grassy campsite.

Overnight: Tented camp

meals: B,L,D

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adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant of travel agent.

important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price.

DAY 10 Narding to Hankar via Markha (6-7 hrs)

The trail gradually ascends the Markha Valley passing a few small settlements en route to Markha (3770m) the largest village in the valley where we will visit the derelict fort above the village and the gumpa that has recently been renovated by funds from trekkers and Hemis monastery. From Markha we continue up valley (with one river crossing) just before the village of Umlung. A few km beyond the village the valley widens and the imposing peak of Kangyaze (6400m) can be appreciated before reaching Hankar (3980m), the highest village in the Markha Valley.

Overnight: Tented camp
meals: B,L,D

DAY 11 Hankar to the base of the Zalong La (6 hrs)

From Hankar we divert from the main trail and commence our ascent across yak herders pastures to our camp at the base of the Zalong La (4650 metres).

Overnight: Tented camp
meals: B,L,D

DAY 12 Cross the Zalong La to Tsorka (6-7 hrs)

From camp it is a gradual haul to the summit of the Zalong La (5190 metres). It is a windswept pass that affords impressive views of the peaks and jagged ridges of the Zaskar Range. From the pass it takes about three hours to reach a delightful grassy camp near to the abandoned encampment known as Tsorka (4200 metres).

Overnight: Tented camp
meals: B,L,D

DAY 13 Trek to Dat settlement (walk approx. 7-8 hrs)

From Sorro we trek to the head of a nearby gorge. Anticipate a cold start to the day as this section necessitates two or three river crossings. We then enter a side gorge that we follow for three hours to the settlement of Dat (4340 metres). During the summer the settlement is practically deserted as most of the villagers are grazing their yaks and goats on remote grazing pastures. The shepherds are known as Changpa and follow lifestyles similar to their counterparts in nearby western Tibet.

Overnight: Tented camp
meals: B,L,D

DAY 14 Drive to Leh via Hemis Monastery (drive 7-8 hrs)

From Dat we drive along a dirt road across a vast grazing area populated by the Changpa shepherds for two hours until we reach the Manali to Leh 'highway'. We ascend to the Taglang La (5328m) - the second highest motorable road crossing in the world - before descending to the Indus Valley with time to visit the ancient Hemis monastery before completing our drive back to Leh.

Overnight: Hotel Omasila or similar
meals: B,L,D

DAY 15 Fly Leh to Delhi

We board the early morning flight to Delhi, on arrival trip concludes. If you are departing India today please don't book a flight out until mid afternoon in case there are delays on the Leh-Delhi flight.

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

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country information

India has fascinated travelers for thousands of years. It's exotic, romantic and diverse – from the Himalayan mountains in the north, to the barren deserts in the west, to lush rainforests and sandy beaches in the south. India's population of around 1.3 billion people are predominantly Hindu, however many cultures and traditions have greatly influenced modern Indian life, including Islam. Some of the most impressive temples, particularly in the north, have been built by the smaller Jain and Buddhist communities. While many regional languages are spoken in India, Hindi is the national language. English is the second language and is widely taught and spoken throughout India. Ladakh is often referred to as 'Little Tibet' on account of its close cultural and geographic ties with Tibet. It is a spectacular landscape of high mountain passes, remote villages, ancient Buddhist monasteries and lush valleys fed by glacial streams contrasted against the otherwise rugged and barren high Himalayan landscape.

climate

Ladakh, situated to the north of the main Himalaya Range is beyond the influence of the Indian monsoon. Humidity is low and rainfall no more than a few centimetres each year. Throughout the season the temperatures will vary considerably. Day time temperatures will be from low to high 20's while at night there can be cold snaps at any time during the season (it can just as easily snow at high camps even in mid summer in July and August) when temperatures can drop to 10C below. On the trek we provide excellent tents and sleeping bags and down jackets to combat any variations on these conditions.

a typical day

You will be woken with a cup of tea brought to your tent around 6:30am, followed by a small bowl of warm water for washing. Before breakfast you pack your gear into your kit bag which is then taken by the pack-animals or porters and will not be available to you until you reach camp that afternoon. After a wholesome breakfast we are usually on the trail between 7.30 – 8am, depending upon the duration and nature of the day's walk. We will walk for around 3-4 hours and then generally break for lunch for about 1 hour. Some of our staff will walk ahead and select a suitable place to stop. The afternoon walk is generally a little shorter and camp is usually reached by around 3.30 - 4.30 pm. Once we have reached camp and the kitchen is set up, afternoon tea will be prepared. From then until dinner there is time to rest or explore the surrounding area. Dinner is usually served between 6-7 pm. Remember to bring your headlamp and your water bottles to the dining tent so they can be filled with boiling water. Trekking evenings afford some of the best memories of your trek, whether it is talking, playing cards, chatting with the crew or joining in some singing and dancing with the local people. Much of the enjoyment of an expedition is in the journey itself.

dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

beyond the markha valley

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equipment provided

You will be provided with use of a World Expeditions trek pack which includes an 80L duffel bag, quality sleeping bag, down or fibre insulated jacket and foam sleep mat.

what you carry

In your daypack you will need to carry extra warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and weather), a rainjacket, water bottle, camera gear, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze etc. Porters and mules carry all group gear and your trek pack.

equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking boots and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

acute mountain sickness

When we ascend above 2500 metres our bodies have to acclimatise to the decreasing amount of the oxygen available. To allow our bodies to adjust we have structured our treks so that you ascend slowly, allowing acclimatisation to occur. However, during the acclimatisation process, you may experience some of the following symptoms.

- Headache
- Tiredness
- Disturbed sleep
- Loss of appetite/nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Palpitation
- Swelling of the hands and face

Individuals acclimatise at different rates. Your best strategy is to take your time and drink plenty of water. These symptoms may not indicate the onset of A.M.S. and if you experience them it does not necessarily mean that you should not continue. All our group leaders have extensive first aid training and we urge you to communicate with the group leader at all times should you believe you have any symptoms in order that we can effectively monitor your symptoms. The only cure for Acute Mountain Sickness is to descend.

Please note that your group leader has ultimate responsibility and may ask you to descend if symptoms persist.

vehicles & safety

During the course of your trip, we will use a variety of vehicles, all of which are fit for purpose and the conditions encountered. It should be noted that laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and whilst wherever possible, vehicles with seatbelts are provided, on occasion some vehicles may not have seat belts fitted.

visas

When applying for an e-visa we recommend that you go into the Smart Traveller website smarttraveller.gov.au. The Smart Traveller website will direct you to the official Government of India e-visa application website.

Please note that this will avoid downloading one of the many fake websites that add additional charges to your application.

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info nights

World Expeditions invites you to attend our inspiring adventure travel slide shows. These special evenings are designed to inform and entertain and are hosted by our most experienced and passionate adventure travellers and mountaineers. Ask our staff for a slide show schedule or register on our website - www.worldexpeditions.com. Shows can fill early so it is important to register your attendance so we know to save a seat, or two!

private groups

The adventures featured in our brochures, and on our website, are just a starting point for many of our private group travellers. Working closely with our Groups Department we can organise custom designed itineraries for groups of friends, clubs, charity's, schools or even work colleagues. Our team will assist you with all aspects of your private group adventure from itinerary design to group flights. Contact our team today.

subscribe to our e-newsletter

Subscribe to our enewsletter! To keep up to date with our new and exciting adventure opportunities, special promotions and adventure news, subscribe to our monthly enewsletter! You can do this online through our website, www.worldexpeditions.com or contact our office.

social networking

Connect with us on social

FACEBOOK: [@worldexpeditions](https://www.facebook.com/worldexpeditions)

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Follow us at [instagram.com/worldexpeditions](https://www.instagram.com/worldexpeditions)

YOUTUBE: World Expeditions

Subscribe to our channel at [youtube.com/worldexpeditions](https://www.youtube.com/worldexpeditions)

Share the love

Use the hashtag #WorldExpeditions on your best travel photos and videos to be featured.

trip availability

If this trip seems right for you then we encourage you to call us now to check availability as we operate strictly small group adventures. Many of our adventures require us to secure services on your behalf; such as permits, hotels and flights to name but a few. The demand for these services is increasing each year making it difficult to join a trip last minute. To ensure we can assist you onto your adventure of a lifetime we ask that you check your trip availability with our team at your earliest convenience.

how to book

To book a World Expeditions trip, you will need to complete a booking form which is found at the back of our brochure or can be downloaded from our website www.worldexpeditions.com. On completion, fax or post the form to your nearest World Expeditions office along with your non-refundable deposit. World Expeditions has access to competitive airfares to Delhi. Call your nearest World Expeditions office or travel agent for assistance with your travel arrangements including flights, travel insurance and additional accommodation.

