

14 Days

India

Mountains, Desert, Ladakh

An unrivalled high-altitude desert in the Indian Himalayas Ladakh also known as Little Tibet. Our trip encompasses a challenging trek with breath taking views over the Karakorum and Indian Himalayas. Witness snow-capped peaks, glaciers, alpine pastures and shepherd's trails.

We also engage with the local people and their customs. The isolated former kingdom of Ladakh takes strong religious and cultural influences from Buddhism. We'll spend time in Leh, the capital of Ladakh, and explore its vibrant culture and impressive monasteries. A true all-round destination that offers a fascinating insight into a different side of India.



Recommended expedition itinerary

Day
1-2

Arrive Delhi

We meet our local STC Expedition Leader on arrival in Delhi and transfer to the hotel for a welcome briefing and to freshen up. Stretching our legs this afternoon, we set off to explore some of Delhi's best attractions including Jama Masjid, Gandhi Samadhi and India Gate.

Day
3

Delhi sightseeing

Today after breakfast, we visit Gandhi Nagar, known to most as the Asia's biggest readymade garments/textile market. We will see a large number of shops and factories in its lanes and market places manufacturing and selling readymade garments at a frantic pace. Later we ride the metro and get a feel for Delhi's efficient and clean train services – that's despite millions travelling each day! After lunch take a rickshaw ride to explore the old city including Chandni Chowk, the oldest spice bazaar in the city and Raj Ghat, the cremation place of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern India. Back to the hotel for an early dinner.

Day
4-5

Fly to Leh, acclimatization, sightseeing

We will take an early morning flight from Delhi to Leh. Weather permitting we should be able to enjoy spectacular views of the Himalayas as we land at Leh Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport which, situated at 3,256m, is one of the world's highest commercial airports. We transfer directly to our hotel and the rest of the day will be spent relaxing and acclimatising to the altitude with a gentle orientation walk of Leh. You can expect to feel the effects of the rarefied atmosphere, so we advise to take it easy for the first day or two and drink lots of water.

Day
6-7

Leh community project

These days are set aside for project working days and shadowing local families - the exact nature of the project will depend on what the local community needs at the time of our visit. Teams have in the past completed community projects involving the restoration of important cultural and religious stupas. A stupa is a dome-shaped building erected as a Buddhist shrine, usually containing relics, and used as a place of meditation. There are many dotted around Ladakh and our project is to restore, clean-up and white wash those surrounding Leh.

Day
8

Spituk Monastery to Rumbak Lato, begin trekking

Visit Spituk monastery and from there we drive for about an hour to Rumbak Lato. This marks the start of our trek! The trek begins gently, approx. 2.5 hrs along to camp near Rumbak (3878m). This area is famous for blue sheep, snow leopards, Tibetan wolves, wild dogs and red fox. Homestays are becoming popular in this village and we can visit one of the homes for a cup of traditional tea. This afternoon we explore the local area.





Day
9

Rumbak Lato to Yurutse trekking

Continue on to the lovely little settlement of Yurutse (4178m). Follow a well-defined path along the mountainside to a small valley and on to the base of Gandala (4543m), our camp for tonight, arriving in time for lunch.

Day
10

Gandala Pass to Skiu

Today is the biggest trekking day! We follow the path up the mountainside to the top of Gandala pass (4979m) where we are rewarded with excellent views of the Stok mountain range. Afterwards there is a long but easy descent to Shingo (4170m). The route is now through wonderful gorges on to camp near the village of Skiu (3360m), approx. 5hrs of trekking.

Day
11

Finish trek in Chilling, white water rafting

The trek finishes today along a rough jeep track to the village of Chilling, approx. 3 hrs. A short drive brings us to the start of our white-water rafting adventure along a more gentle section of the Zanskar river!

Day
12

Fly to Delhi

Today we fly back to Delhi and transfer by road to Agra, 3.5hrs. This evening we explore the sights and sounds of Agra before a well-earned traditional feast!

Day
13

Agra Fort & Taj Mahal

An early morning start today sees us hopefully beat the crowds to witness one of the world's most extraordinary sights – the Taj Mahal at sunrise. After, we start our journey back to Delhi, visiting en-route the Agra Fort, which lies across the river Yamuna. It was here that Aurangzeb, the third son of Shah Jahan, kept his father under house arrest. One can get a fantastic view of the Taj from the little octagonal tower at the fort. We then continue in to Delhi, reaching the city in time for dinner.

Day
14

Depart Delhi

There should be time for final souvenir shopping this morning before we catch our return flight to the UK. Depending on flight times, this may arrive early the next day.

Further information

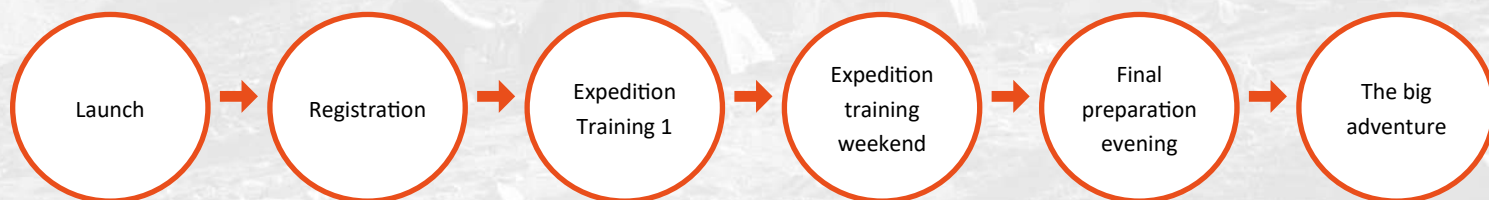
Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local expedition leader
- Parent and student expedition launch evening
- Comprehensive pre-expedition training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

Your expedition timeline



Physical expedition rating:

● ● ● ● ● 5/5

A high level of fitness is required to participate on a trip of this level. We recommend previous multi-day trekking experience at this level, either in the UK or internationally. You need complete confidence in your ability to trek for multiple days over difficult terrain and cope with significant variations in temperatures throughout the tour. Altitude could be higher than 4,500m but good acclimatisation will be built into the programme. Longer periods of trekking could be of a sustained nature, but rest days will be planned. A pre-travel fitness programme of four to six months is essential to ensure you are in optimal fitness to make the most of this trip.

Culture shock rating:

● ● ● ● ● 5/5

Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your expedition journey



1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your expedition itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

3 Arrange an expedition launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening with opportunity for questions.



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