

## Markha Valley Trek, India

Dramatic and varied scenery make this Ladakh's most celebrated trek.



### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Camping
Grade	Vigorous
Duration	14 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 7 days
Min/Max group size	5 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 5
Trip Leader	Local Leader Ladakh
Land only	Joining in Delhi, India
Max altitude	5,216m/17,113ft, Kongmaru La, Day 11

**Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available**



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## Departures

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### Group departures

#### 2022 Dates:

Mon 04 Jul - Sun 17 Jul      With Hemis Festival  
Tue 02 Aug - Mon 15 Aug      With Dakthok Festival

#### Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

#### No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

#### Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 5 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

#### Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

#### Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

#### Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

## Your guide

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Your leader will be a knowledgeable, English speaking guide, most likely from Ladakh. However, sometimes Sherpas come over from Nepal in the summer season and you may therefore have a Nepalese guide. In addition to helping you get the most out of your visit to Ladakh and taking care of you, your leader will co-ordinate all your arrangements, ensuring that everything runs as smoothly as possible.

## Your trip highlights

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- A classic summer trek in the dramatic Indian Himalaya
- Perfect for those keen to undertake a vigorous hike within just two weeks London to London
- The trek itself takes a week and crosses a pass of 5,216m/17,113ft with fantastic panoramic views
- There is plenty of pre-trek acclimatisation time sightseeing in and around Leh
- You can join the festivities at a traditional Ladakhi festival
- A sightseeing tour of Delhi to start your holiday

## At a glance itinerary

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Days 1-3	Fly London to Delhi. Arrive Delhi. Half day sightseeing tour of Qutab Minar. Fly to Leh.
Days 4-5	Sightseeing in Indus Valley visiting Thikse and Shey Monasteries. Time at leisure. Attend either the Hemis or Dakthok Festivals (depending on departure date).
Day 6	Visit Phayang Monastery. Drive to Skiu.
Day 7	Trek to Markha.
Days 8-9	Trek to Hangkar and trek to Nimaling.
Day 10	Rest day at Nimaling.
Day 11	Trek to Chogdu across the Kongmaru La Pass, 5,216m/17,113ft.
Day 12	Trek to Sumdo. Drive to Leh.
Days 13-14	Fly to Delhi and on to London.

## Trip summary

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Ladakh is often called 'Little Tibet' as, lying north of the main Himalaya chain, it receives little rainfall, and unlike other parts of the Himalaya, this means that the best time to visit is in the summer months. The scenery of Ladakh is stark and dramatic characterised by deep gorges, alluvial fans, contorted strata, large Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, flat-topped mud-brick houses in verdant oasis-like villages, snow-capped mountains and grand vistas.

The Markha Valley epitomises the best of this scenery and is perhaps Ladakh's most celebrated trek. It has giant rock pinnacles, spectacular cliffs, narrow defiles, prayer-flagged passes and evidence of a much older civilisation, the history of which has been lost in antiquity. As you trek up the valley, there are the ruins of many forts and castles, some built in the most unlikely of places, whilst the many monasteries and gompas that are still central to the lives of the Ladakhi people, illustrate the deep Buddhist heritage of the region.

Before the trek begins, there is plenty of time to acclimatise whilst exploring the sights and sounds of Ladakh's ancient and modern capital, Leh. You will then spend a further day visiting the major cultural attractions of the Indus Valley including Shey Gompa and Thikse Monastery. Both departures attend a Ladakhi Festival which are wonderful social and spiritual occasions full of music, dance and colour.

Your trek begins by driving up the Zaskar River gorge to the village of Skiu from where you begin trekking up the Markha Valley. This route offers the best acclimatisation as it avoids having to make the demanding crossing of the Ganda La.

You now have three fabulous days walking up the valley, gradually gaining altitude, passing by villages, occasionally wading through shallow streams, admiring the awesome cliffs and canyons. You then gradually climb to Nimaling to find yak herders grazing their animals in the wide verdant pastures. From here you can look across to the towering summit of Kang Yatse and the other peaks of the Zaskar range. Finally, you will cross the Kongmaru La, the highest point of the trek at 5,216m/17,113ft, before descending back down into the Indus Valley and the village of Sumdo, near Hemis. You drive back to Leh for a well-earned rest and celebration of your achievement.

The Markha Valley Trek represents a great value 'classic' trek and provides a superb opportunity to enjoy a Himalayan trek in the summer months.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London to Delhi.

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Fly overnight from London to Delhi.

**Overnight: In flight**

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## Day 2: Arrive Delhi. Half day sightseeing tour of Qutab Minar.

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You will arrive in Delhi in the morning and you will be met and transferred to your hotel which is situated not far from the airport. Although Delhi can still be quite a culture shock, it is nowadays a vibrant and cosmopolitan modern city with thriving business areas, an excellent metro system and plenty of reminders of its exciting history and ancient civilization.

In the afternoon, you will have a sightseeing tour. You will visit Qutab Minar, a 73m high tower built in 1193 by Qutub-ud-din Aibak to celebrate his victory over Delhi's last Hindu King. It is considered to be one of the finest monuments in India.

Our local representative will let you know details of your flight to Leh tomorrow and will arrange an early breakfast for you, if you wish.

**Overnight: Red Fox Hotel or Similar, Delhi**

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## Day 3: Fly to Leh.

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An early morning transfer to the domestic terminal of the airport for the flight north to Leh. This surely is one of the most sensational scheduled flights in the world, taking you right over the Greater Himalaya before dropping in a series of steep turns to land at the small military airport at Leh; flight time about 70 minutes.

You will be met on arrival and driven through Leh to check into your hotel. Leh is 3,505m/11,500ft above sea level and therefore we recommend that the rest of the day is spent resting to help you adjust to the altitude.

**Overnight: Ladakh Residency Hotel or Similar, Leh (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 4: Half day sightseeing in Indus Valley visiting Thikse Gompa and Shey Palace. Afternoon at leisure.

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Today you will be driven in jeeps to see a couple of the largest monasteries and palaces in the Indus valley, Thikse Gompa and Shey Palace.

### Thikse Gompa

The 500-year-old Thikse monastery, perched on a hill high above the Indus, has the largest contingent of monks in Ladakh. On the right of the entrance to the main courtyard a new chapel houses an enormous 15 metre high figure of Chamba, Buddha of the Future. About 100 yellow-cap monks belong to the gompa. If you get there by 6.30am you can witness the daily morning prayers but there are also prayers closer to noon, preceded by long, mournful sounds from the horns on the roof.



### Shey Palace

Located 15km from Leh, the old 'summer palace' of the kings of Ladakh was built about 550 years ago by Lhachen Palgyigon, the first King of Ladakh. From the palace you can see over the fertile Indus plain north east to Thikse Gompa and over the Indus to the Zaskar mountain range. The old Shey Palace has the largest golden Buddha statue in Ladakh in its gompa. The 18th century statue worked out of gold and gilded copper sheets stands 12m high and has blue hair. The most important moment in the construction of such a figure is when the eyes are painted in and the statue can 'see'. No artist, or monk would dare to look the Buddha in the eye, so the pupils are painted over the artist's shoulder, with his back to the idol, using a mirror.

**Overnight: Ladakh Residency Hotel or Similar, Leh (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 5: Attend a Ladakhi festival.**

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Ladakhi festivals are a highlight of the year for the local people. These festivals are very colourful and cheerful affairs. People from all over the region flock to them to celebrate, to achieve religious merit and to socialise. Festivals are always great fun to attend and you can expect large crowds of local Ladakhi people to be there in all their finery. At the centre of the celebrations are the sacred dances and plays where monks in incredible colourful costumes and masks perform elaborate, highly choreographed dances to an accompaniment of drums, cymbals and horns. These dances, which act out stories and philosophies of Tibetan Buddhism, represent the triumph of good over evil and the illusory nature of life.



If travelling on our June 2021 or July 2022 departures you will visit the Hemis festival, held in Hemis Monastery, the largest and richest monastery of all Ladakh. The festival is held in honour of the anniversary of Guru Padma Sambhava.

On our July 2021 or August 2022 departures you will visit the Dakthok festival, a major festival of Ladakh and always well attended by locals as well as visitors. It is held at Dakthok Monastery, the only Nyingma Monastery in Ladakh, founded around a cave where Padmasambhava (Guru Rimpoche) is said to have meditated in the 8th century. The festival is famous for its sacred masked dances.

**Overnight: Ladakh Residency Hotel or Similar, Leh (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 6: Visit Phyang Monastery and drive to Skiu, 3,290m/10,794ft.**

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Today you will drive west along the Indus and turn north up a valley to visit the spectacular Phyang Monastery, which like so many such buildings in Ladakh is set on a hill overlooking the valley. Phyang is one of the most important monasteries of the Indus Valley though it tends to be less visited than those to the east of Leh. It is one of the earliest monasteries in Ladakh and is believed to date back to the 16th century. It is one of the few monasteries belonging to the Kagyu-pa sect of Buddhism (Red Hat) and it houses some magnificent paintings and images as well as showcasing a collection of Chinese, Tibetan and Mongolian fire arms and weapons in its museum.

After your visit you will drive back down to the Indus and follow it to its confluence with the Zaskar River. You drive down alongside the Zaskar River, cross a bridge onto the east side and enter the Hemis National Park. You then drive up the valley to the village of Skiu, the starting point for your trek. This is a pleasant, sprawling village set amidst poplar, apricot and willow trees. Your first camp will be set up here and you will meet your ponies and pony-man.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 7: Trek to Markha, 3,750m/12,303ft - 7-8 hours.**

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Today is a very pleasant walk up one of the loveliest sections of the Markha valley. The trail follows the river bed, occasionally climbing up the valley sides, through this dramatic steep sided valley. Woody bushes, roses, poplar and willow trees grow thickly along the river, which is spanned by several plank bridges. Beyond Thinlespa the trail continues eastwards climbing steadily up the valley until a river crossing (have your sandals at the ready) before you enter the picturesque village of Markha. It is worth walking up to visit the fascinating monastery and ruined palace here if you have time.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 8: Trek to Hangkar, 3,900m/12,795ft - 6-7 hours.**

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The trail continues eastwards climbing steadily up from Markha and is joined from the south by the trail from Rubering La, one of the routes from Zangla. From Markha the country changes and the warm, relatively heavily wooded section of the lower valley is left behind. As you ascend you will notice that the further you travel up the valley, the smaller and seemingly poorer the villages become and the houses are correspondingly simpler.

Between two villages is a ruined fort, the walls of which climb sharply up a crag to an eyrie lookout tower - worth visiting for those with a good head for heights. There are also great views across Upper Hangkar from the ridge towards Kang Yatse, particularly in the evening light. The camp below the twin villages of Lower and Upper Hangkar is distinctly cooler than at Thinlespa.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 9: Trek to Nimaling, 4,720m/15,485ft - 8 hours.**

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From Hangkar the trail climbs steadily up the now narrow valley, past villages which appear smaller and seemingly poorer than those in the lower areas. The Nimaling plain is a broad undulating meadow, sloping upwards to the base of the ice-clad Kang Yatse, 6,400m/20,997ft, which dominates the area. Nimaling, with tiny ponds and rivulets flowing all over its meadows, provides pastures in the summer for an astonishing number of animals; yaks, sheep, goats, dzos and horses, not only from the Markha, but also from villages all around. Himalayan marmots and white-tailed hares are seen in abundance and it is not unusual to spot the occasional blue sheep or wolf.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 10: Rest day at Nimaling.**

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Today you can relax in Nimaling and enjoy the superb scenery and surroundings. There is the chance to walk to the base camp of Kang Yatze, the highest peak in the Zanskar range, 6,400m/20,997ft. Alternatively you might like to walk up the ridge behind the camp for a birds-eye view of this beautiful valley.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 11: Cross the Kongmaru La Pass, 5,216m/17,113ft. Trek to Chogdo, 4,133m/13,560ft - 7 hours.**

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Today you cross to the north of the Markha Valley, climbing to the top of the highest of the three passes, the 5,216m/17,113ft Kongmaru La. From here there are wonderful panoramic views, with snow-capped peaks stretching away as far as the eye can see. On a clear day you can see K2 and many other famous peaks of the Karakoram. The trail from the pass then descends steeply to the head of the Martselang valley past the sulphur springs of Chyushkarmo, and follows the Martselang stream to the village of Chogdo.



**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 12: Trek to Sumdo, 3,880m/12,730ft - 3-4 hours. Drive to Leh.**

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This morning you end your trek by descending the short distance to Sumdo, or Shang-Sumdo. Transport will be waiting here for the two hour drive back to Leh.

On the way you will have a chance to visit Hemis Gompa which is one of the largest and most important in Ladakh. It was founded about 350 years ago by Stagtshang Rinchen, who was invited to Ladakh by King Senge Namgyal. Hemis Gompa is renowned for its annual festival at which, every 12 years, the largest thangka in the world is displayed. For those travelling on our June departure, you will drive straight to Leh having already visited the gompa.

**Overnight: Ladakh Residency Hotel or Similar, Leh (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 13: Fly to Delhi. Transfer to hotel. At leisure.**

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An early start for the short drive to the airport. This is one of the most sensational flights in the world. Within minutes the aircraft flies over a sea of ice-cold peaks and glaciers as it crosses the Greater Himalaya range. On one side can be seen in the distance the peaks of possibly K2, Nanga Parbat, Gasherbrum and on the other side, so close that you feel you could reach out and touch it, is the Nun Kun massif. On arrival in Delhi, you will be met and transferred to your airport, the rest of the day is at leisure.

**Overnight: Red Fox Hotel or Similar, Delhi (Meals: B)**

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**Day 14: Group transfer to airport. Fly to London.**

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After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your return flight to London. **(Meals: B)**

## Our grading system

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Markha Valley Trek is graded as a Vigorous trekking holiday, as described below.

**Vigorous**

Typically these trips involve 8 to 14 days (occasionally more) trekking in relatively remote landscapes. High passes up to 4,900m/16,000ft may be crossed (sometimes snow-covered) and there may also be glacier travel and peak ascents. Walking days can be between 5 and 8 hours with considerable ascents and descents. This grade also covers some European treks of shorter durations. Overnight stops on trek could be in tea houses, mountain huts or camping.

These holidays would suit enthusiastic hill/mountain walkers.

## Trip altitude

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**Important** - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend [www.medex.org.uk](http://www.medex.org.uk) as a good source of information.

## What the price includes

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**Mountain Kingdoms** aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ A local English-speaking leader
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from London & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ All internal flights and domestic airport transfers
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation (3 star) in Delhi, twin share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ Best available hotels in Leh on full board
- ✓ All camping facilities and all meals on trek
- ✓ Camp staff to carry out all camp work
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Full portorage
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- × Travel insurance
- × Indian Visa fees
- × Lunch and evening meals in Delhi
- × Tips

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.



## Your accommodation

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We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### **Red Fox Hotel or Similar, Delhi**

This is a pleasant, modern hotel conveniently located next to Delhi airport. Rooms are comfortable with all facilities.



### **Ladakh Residency Hotel or Similar, Leh**

We stay at the very pleasant Ladakh Residency. This is one of the best hotels in Leh with 23 en-suite rooms, decorated and furnished in traditional style. Alternatively we may use the Kang Lha Chen Hotel, the Spick & Span Hotel or similar.



### **Camp**

On our camping treks the following are provided: a sleeping tent, a dining tent, a kitchen tent and a toilet tent exclusively for your group to use. There are camp chairs or stools, a kerosene/gas lamp or candles for reading in the dining tent after dark, a dining table, crockery and tableware. The staff put up and take down the tents, make your tea, cook the food, wash the dishes and load the porters or pack animals. Your kit bag is carried for you so that you trek with just a light day sack.

## Meal arrangements

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Bed and Breakfast in Delhi, all meals included in Leh and on trek: 12 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 10 dinners.

## Flight arrangements

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### Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

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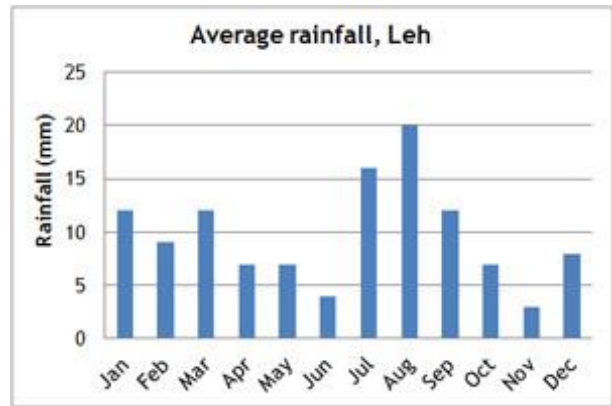
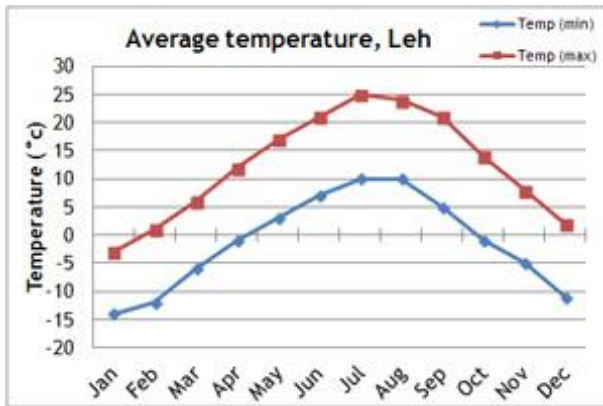
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

## The nature of adventure travel

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

# Climate information



## Extensions

### Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



### Additional accommodation in Delhi

If you would like to stay longer in Delhi we can arrange additional nights and upgrades from our selection of first rate hotels such as the Oberoi Maidens in the city or Claridges Hotel in New Delhi.



### Agra, Taj Mahal & Jaipur

We offer various extensions to Agra, from a one-day visit to see the majestic Taj Mahal to a six-day trip to visit both the Taj and the Amber Fort at Jaipur. All options travel to Agra on the Shatabdi Express and include the services of an English speaking guide, sightseeing and private transport.

## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- We place a premium on good acclimatisation to ensure that all of our clients have the best possible chance of successfully crossing the Kongmaru La. We include three acclimatisation days in and around Leh.
- Our route also avoids the strenuous crossing of the Ganda La which others may include at the start of their treks.
- Your trek will be led by a knowledgeable, well-trained English-speaking guide supported by an experienced trekking crew who will provide an excellent standard of service. Your gear will be portered for you so all you need to carry is a small daypack.
- We use the best camping equipment available and include many small touches that add greatly to the level of comfort you will experience on this trek.
- We include internal flights to Leh, plus all necessary permit fees in our trip cost.
- We include a visit to a major Tibetan Buddhist Festival on each departure, where large numbers of Ladakhi people gather to watch traditional performances.
- We include sightseeing tours in Delhi and the Indus Valley.
- We have a maximum group size of 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects associated with larger trekking groups.
- If you have any questions about this trip, please contact Steve Berry or Jude Limburn Turner at the Mountain Kingdoms office. Steve in particular has travelled extensively in Ladakh, is familiar with this trek and should be able to answer any queries you may have.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- We are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

## What our clients say

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*Had a great time, had it so hot! Then saw snow, thunder storms but some great views and memories throughout.*

*-Mr P B, Powys*

*Our guide was outstanding - the best we have had - his knowledge of the culture and wildlife was unrivalled.*

*- Mr & Mrs K, St Albans*

*Our guide knew everyone in the Markha Valley and was extremely knowledgeable about the culture, flora and fauna.*

*- Mr & Mrs H, London*



*Personal service when we emailed or phoned. Efficient pick-ups etc.during the trip. No compromises on quality.*

*-Mr & Mrs M, Surrey*

*The itinerary was well planned - we had plenty of time to acclimatise in Leh before the trek. Accommodation in Delhi and Leh very good, great food and friendly service.*

*-Ms G, Bicester*

# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### **Carbon Offsetting**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### **Reducing Carbon Emissions**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

