

## Himalayan Wildlife Tour, India *New*

An exciting adventure deep into Western Ladakh in search of Himalayan brown bears and snow leopards.



### Group departures

*See overleaf for departure dates*

### Holiday overview

Style	Tour
Accommodation	Hotels, lodges
Grade	Tour
Duration	14 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader India
Land only	Joining in Delhi, India
Max altitude	4,150m/13,616ft, Fotu La Pass, day 5

**Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available**



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## Departures

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### 2026 Dates:

Sun 29 Mar - Sat 11 Apr

Sun 02 Nov - Sat 15 Nov

### 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 4 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. 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. Pictured here is Tashi, one of our expert Ladakh guides/drivers.

Whilst staying at Drenmo and Snow Leopard Lodges you will also have expert naturalists and spotters from the lodges to accompany you.

## Your trip highlights

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- Enjoy fantastic wildlife viewing in two of the most remote regions of the Indian Himalaya.
- Maximise your chances of seeing snow leopard and brown bears with first class 'spotters' and naturalists.
- Explore the dramatic mountain landscapes and picturesque fertile valleys of Ladakh
- Stroll the narrow streets of old Leh and visit some of Ladakh's key Buddhist monasteries.
- Relax in comfortable, cosy accommodation in two of Ladakh's foremost wildlife lodges.

## At a glance itinerary

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Days 1-2	Fly to Delhi. Fly to Leh. Time at leisure to acclimatise.
Day 3	Explore Leh Old Town and visit the Snow Leopard Conservation centre.
Day 4	Visit Thikse Monastery. Drive to Gya and explore Gya village.
Day 5	Drive to Drenmo Lodge via Lamayuru Monastery and the Fotu La Pass.
Days 6-7	Wildlife spotting in the Drass valley.
Day 8	Drive to Snow Leopard Lodge via the Aryan Valley.
Days 9-11	Wildlife spotting in the remote valleys surrounding the Snow Leopard Lodge
Day 12	Return to Leh via Alchi Monastery.
Days 13-14	Fly to Delhi. Transfer to Hotel. Return to the UK.

## Trip summary

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Ladakh is justly famed for its dramatic landscapes and ancient Tibetan culture as well as for its isolated Buddhist monasteries and hospitable people. What it is perhaps less well known for is its wealth of rare, high altitude Himalayan wildlife, including the elusive and solitary snow leopard, the endangered Himalayan brown bear, and a host of other creatures and bird life. On this trip, in the company of expert naturalists, you will hunt for bears in a little-visited region of western Ladakh, beyond the Fotu La Pass. Closer to Leh you will search for snow leopards in the mountains near the village of Ulley, where naturalists and the people of the village cooperate in a landmark effort to help conserve these splendid creatures.

Beginning your trip you fly into Leh, the capital of Ladakh. There, you have time to acclimatise to the high altitude whilst exploring the city and surrounding area including ancient Thikse Monastery. You will then head west, visiting another impressive Monastery at Lamayuru, and crossing the Fotu La Pass, before descending into a rather different world. Arriving in Drass, beyond the town of Kargil, you will find the high meadows and mountains where the rare Himalayan brown bear lives. From your comfortable lodge near Drass, you will have the opportunity to seek out these powerful creatures and learn of their impact on the local community and of the efforts being made to ensure their survival.

From Drass, you turn back east to cross the Hambuting Pass, descending through the beautiful Aryan valley and beyond to the village of Ulley. This region of Ladakh is known for its snow leopard population and Ulley is famed for its conservation efforts. From the comforts of your lodge, the first dedicated wildlife watching lodge in Ladakh, you will have time to revel in the high mountain scenery and its wonderful wildlife viewing opportunities. In the company of expert naturalists you will comb the area looking not just for snow leopards but for an array of rare and unusual birds and creatures such as ibex, urial, lammergeier and golden eagles.

Finally you return to Leh, via Alchi Monastery, to take the fantastic flight once more over the high Himalaya to Delhi. Here you have a final night to reflect on your wild and wonderful experience.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London to Delhi.

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On arrival at Delhi International Airport you will be met and transferred to a hotel near the airport.

**Overnight: Roseate House, Delhi**

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## Day 2: Fly to Leh. Time at leisure for acclimatisation.

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Flights to Leh leave very early in the morning, so set your alarm or ask reception for an early wake-up call. You will be picked up from your hotel and taken to the domestic terminal at the airport for your flight. This is surely one of the most sensational scheduled flights in the world, taking you right over the Greater Himalaya before dropping down to land at the small military airport at Leh. The flight time is about 70 minutes. You will be met and driven through Leh to check into your hotel.

Leh is located at over 3,500 metres and you will immediately notice how thin the air is. It's best to take it easy for the day, with plenty of rest to help adjust to the altitude. Later, if you're feeling ok, you might like to take a short orientation stroll from your hotel. The hotel is well located so you can easily take a leisurely walk into town.

**Overnight: Dolkhar Resort, Leh (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 3: Morning walking tour of Leh Old Town. Afternoon visit to the Snow Leopard Conservation Centre.

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Today you will enjoy a walking tour of the sights of Leh in the company of a knowledgeable, English-speaking guide. Leh was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Ladakh and the kings of Leh once commanded a huge civilisation stretching from Baltistan in the west, almost as far as Lhasa in Tibet. Leh is full of interest with its semi-ruined, Potala-like palace and in the old town a maze of narrow streets filled with shops, several temples, a mosque and bustling bazaars. It's a great place to explore. You will see the backstreets, bazaars and temples of Leh as well as the Royal Palace which dominates the town. The tour will give you a real sense of the mediaeval character of Leh before the advent of the modern age.



This afternoon you will visit the Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust office in Leh. You will have a short talk from the naturalists about their mission and the work that they are doing to conserve this beautiful Himalayan creature.

**Overnight: Dolkhar Resort, Leh (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 4: Early morning visit to Thikse Monastery. Continue to Gya. Explore Gya village.

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This morning you will have a very early start to visit Thikse Monastery for the Morning Prayer Ceremony. It is a short drive of 20km to Thikse which will take about half an hour. Thikse is famous for its fabulous statue of Chamba Buddha, an enormous figure, 15 metres and three storeys tall. Thikse is considered one of the most splendid of all the gompas of the Indus valley and is full of Buddhist art, statues, thangkas, wall paintings, swords etc. The gumpa has the largest contingent of monks in Ladakh, with about 120 yellow-cap (Gelugpa sect) monks. You will visit the Morning Prayer Ceremony which features the blowing of horns and banging of drums along with prayers and chants from the assembled monks. It's all very atmospheric. The ceremony lasts about an hour after which you can climb to enjoy the marvellous views of the valley from the roof.

Once the morning ceremonies have come to an end you will have breakfast in a nearby restaurant before continuing on to Gya. The drive to Gya offers some stunning scenery as you travel through deserted landscapes veering away from the Indus and up a subsidiary valley. Upon arrival in Gya you will have some time to explore the village and visit a small locally run museum. For lunch you will spend time at a local homestay. The family who owns this have been farming and practicing weaving for over 27 years.



After a delicious local meal there will be chance to watch the locals weaving skills being put to practice. You will then return to Leh.

**Overnight: Dolkhar Resort, Leh (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 5: Drive to Drass via Lamayuru Monastery and the Fotu La Pass, 4,150m - 7½ hours.**

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Leaving Leh, today you will head west along the main highway which leads towards Srinagar in Kashmir. Initially you follow the Indus River Valley passing through the village of Nummu, a picturesque village surrounded by orchards and located close to the confluence of the Indus and Zaskar rivers. Continuing west you arrive at Lamayuru one of the most famous monasteries of Ladakh, spectacularly situated in a weird moonlike landscape. This fine monastery is made up of a number of temples which house some magnificent wall paintings and an exceptionally rich collection of thangkas. The oldest part of the monastery dates back to the 11th century, and part of this older monastery can be visited by venturing downwards from the newer buildings, through crumbling, narrow streets where you can see an interesting temple with some rather spooky protector images.

From Lamayuru you drive through an increasingly wild landscape to reach the prayer flag decorated Fotu La Pass. At 4,150m/13,479ft it is the highest point on the road from Leh to Srinagar. As you drive west today you will notice Buddhist culture giving way to a majority Muslim population, until you arrive at the town of Kargil, the only Muslim majority district in Ladakh. You continue past the town of Kargil to arrive at the town of Drass, considered the gateway between Kashmir and Ladakh. The town of Drass is again majority Muslim being home to Dard and Balti communities, thought to have originally migrated from central Asia and Tibet. The town is renowned for its breathtaking location being surrounded by snow-capped peaks. It has the distinction of being known as one of the coldest places on earth in the winter, so don't be surprised if you experience snow on the ground during your stay. Other seasons are comparatively mild.

In Drass you will stay in the nearby Mushkow valley at the Drenmo Lodge - named for 'drenmo', the Himalayan Brown Bears which inhabit this region. This lodge was founded in 2016 and is a comfortable base for your time here. Rooms are warm and cosy and it's a good place to return to after your rather chilly excursions. Drenmo was the first ever dedicated wildlife lodge in western Ladakh and was set up specifically to introduce wildlife tourism to the valley, to help conserve the Himalayan Brown Bear, and where there might otherwise have been conflict, to raise awareness of their importance with the local people. The lodge has a dedicated team of local experts with a decade of experience in the field who are passionate about wildlife conservation and ensuring that guests at the lodge have the best possible experience during their stay. This is a unique location to enjoy the wild beauty of the area and for some incredible wildlife spotting.

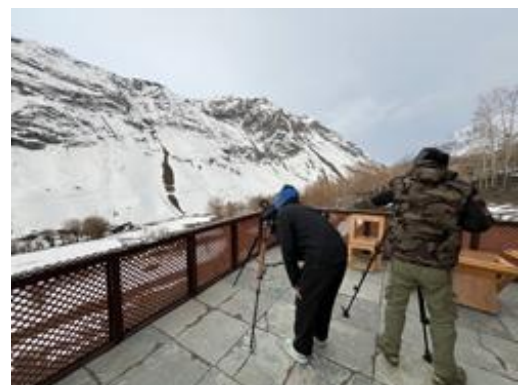
**Overnight: Drenmo Lodge, Drass (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 6: Wildlife watching activities from Drenmo Lodge.**

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You will be awakened bright and early to ensure your best possible chances of good wildlife sightings - you will be offered tea or coffee either in your room or in the dining room. Bears are most active during the early morning hours or in the evening which means there are increased chances of spotting one during these times. As the sun rises you may enjoy views of the snow-capped mountains from the lodge's balcony. While you are enjoying your coffee, 'spotters' will have been positioned throughout the valley on your behalf, scouring the surrounding area for bears. If bears or other wildlife are spotted, depending on where they have been seen, you will head off, either on foot directly from the lodge or by vehicle. The crew will bring binoculars and a telescope with them to assist you in optimal wildlife viewing.



The Mushkow Valley, where the Drenmo lodge is located, is prime Himalayan brown bear habitat. Brown bears occupy the high altitude pasture and shrub land and tend to avoid dense forests so the area round the lodge is ideal terrain to spot bears. These bears hibernate every year through the cold winter months from December to late March, and it's also the time when the female bears have their cubs. So, when they emerge in March, they are hungry and come down to look for food which makes it easier to be sure of seeing them. Your stay at Drenmo provides a unique opportunity see these bears. While brown bears will be your main focus, you may also spot other wildlife such as blue sheep, Asiatic ibex, Himalayan wolf, Himalayan fox and long tail marmots. There are also good opportunities for birdwatching in the area with the most spectacular being large raptors such as the Himalayan griffon vultures or bearded vultures (lammergeier).

After your wildlife watching you will make your way back to the lodge for a hot breakfast and some well-earned rest. You will then have some free time to relax at the lodge before you head out again later in the afternoon to look for more animals or birds, or just to enjoy the high mountain scenery.

In the evening you will have a hearty meal before an early night ready to be up bright and early in the morning!

**Overnight: Drenmo Lodge, Drass (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 7: At Drenmo Lodge - more opportunities for wildlife spotting or local exploration.**

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In the early morning, and then during the day, you will again have excellent opportunities to spot brown bears and other wildlife. It might also be possible to hike up a nearby hill to try to get closer sightings of bears.

Besides being a wildlife hotspot, Drass is very much a frontier region and in the not too distant past has witnessed various wars between India and Pakistan. You may see various reminders of the conflict as you travel around, and if you talk to local people they will no doubt have some good stories to tell of this time of hostilities.



You will also have time to explore Drass town and learn more about the potential for developing eco-tourism here which will help create jobs for the community and give local people reasons to protect and embrace the bears.

**Overnight: Drenmo Lodge, Drass (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 8: Drive over the Hambuting La Pass, 4,024m, and descend to the Aryan Valley. Continue drive to Ulley, 4,000m. Total journey time - 7½ hours.**

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After your final chance this morning to spot bears, you will bid a fond farewell to Drenmo Lodge and make your way over the Hambuting Pass to the Aryan Valley. This is a 3½ hour drive and takes you along a much less travelled route and through some really remote country. Firstly you head back to Kargil and then turn off the main Leh-Srinagar Road to zig zag up to cross the high Hambuting La pass at 4,024m. This is an incredibly wild and scenic route. You descend towards Lamrung village and continue downwards to the picturesque Aryan valley. This lovely valley is known for its orchards of apricots which are especially beautiful in spring with their pink blossom. The people here are called Brokpa, and are thought to be descendants of an ancient Aryan race believed to predate other ethnic groups of Ladakh and possibly dating right back to the time of Alexander the Great. You will stop for a picnic lunch in Garkone, a village on the banks of the Indus River, where you will have the opportunity to visit The Himalayan Museum of Labdak Culture and Heritage. This is a small but interesting museum, which gives an insight into the colourful history of the area and its people. Before you continue on your journey you should also have time to have a walk around this beautiful, pristine village.

From Garkone a further 4 hours drive takes you back in the direction of Leh, before you bear left off the main road and up into the Ulley valley. You will notice a distinct change in scenery from what you saw around Drass - the Ulley valley is far more barren with rugged, tawny landscapes and spectacular towering rock pinnacles and looming cliffs. Above the village are summer pastures for yaks and dzhos. The abundant grasses growing in the Ulley Valley mean it is a perfect natural habitat for wild ungulates like ibex and urials, which in makes it an attractive area for apex predators like the Snow Leopard.

The small village of Ulley is set beneath crags and is home to a small, close-knit community of seven families, many of whom work at the wildlife lodge or in tourism. Ulley village and surrounding area, have in recent years gained a reputation for wildlife watching and more especially for tracking snow leopards, with many being seen in the area. But the area is also notable for other Himalayan wildlife including Asiatic ibex, urial (wild sheep), Himalayan red fox and wolf. Amongst birds to be seen in the area are two sorts of partridge: chukor and Tibetan, golden eagle, red-billed chough and also lammergeyer and Himalayan griffon vultures.

In Ulley you will stay at the Snow Leopard Lodge. This was the first dedicated wildlife lodge in Ladakh and it's a very comfortable base for your exploration of the area. Your host at the lodge is an expert naturalist with a real understanding of conservation and its value to the area. The conservation of the snow leopard in Ulley brings in income to the villagers and they have become very much engaged in these efforts, They benefit by being given assistance in building predator proof corrals against snow leopards and wolves and knowing that they will be compensated for any loss of livestock. They become more involved with conservation efforts and so

less hostile to predators having a genuine incentive to encourage wildlife, knowing that it brings in tourism Rupees.

In the evening at the lodge there is often a presentation or a documentary film about the wildlife in the Ulley Valley and Ladakh. This is followed by an excellent dinner. Later there is the chance to share stories with your fellow travellers before you head off to bed in your cosy room - hot water bottles are provided!

**Overnight: Snow Leopard Lodge, Ulley (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 9: Wildlife watching activities around Snow Leopard Lodge.**

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This morning after the treat of 'bed tea', should you wish to rise early you may do so, and before breakfast perhaps join fellow wildlife seekers in the valley. Alternatively, you may drive to one of the nearby valleys and have an initial search for any animals. Hopefully you will at least have some good views of the mountains perhaps finding some clues as to whether there are snow leopards nearby, such as recent footprints, even if not the animals themselves. Your naturalists will be doing their best to ensure you have a rewarding experience. You will then head back to the lodge for breakfast hopefully having spotted some wildlife, or tracks at the very least.



After breakfast you will rely on the spotter's expertise and information that they have gathered to decide where you should head this morning. You will jump into your vehicle along with your spotter/naturalist and local guide then descend down the valley; the scenery as ever impressive. Your guides will take you where they feel there is the best potential for animals. You might drive towards Hemishuka Chan a small village where Ladakh urial and snowcock can be seen, as well of course the potential to see snow leopard. The abilities of the local naturalists are nothing short of amazing - with their experience and quick eye they have the uncanny ability to pick out creatures, sometimes as much as 2km away. They will be able to direct your gaze to see things that would otherwise be all but invisible to the naked eye, and with the aid of binoculars or telescope, you will have the chance of some great sightings. During the morning, refreshments will be brought to you and depending on wildlife viewings and the weather, you may stay out to have lunch in the field, or return to the lodge for a bite to eat. There is an element of flexibility built into your program.

In the afternoon you will have some down time to relax before heading back out for further viewing. You may well spot birds such as Himalayan partridge, Tibetan snow cocks, golden eagles and two sorts of vultures as well as animals like Himalayan fox, with of course the added frisson of the possibility of a snow leopard.

As the sun begins to set you will return back to the lodge for another documentary or presentation, and then dinner. Culinary offerings at the lodge showcase local dishes with organic ingredients sourced locally providing a true taste of Ladakhi cuisine.

**Overnight: Snow Leopard Lodge, Ulley (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 10: Further day at Snow Leopard Lodge.**

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You have three full days in Ulley which gives excellent chances for really good wildlife sightings. Of course, snow leopard sightings cannot be guaranteed, but with your extremely well informed host and your expert local naturalists you will have the best chance. You may follow paths on foot out of the village or take your vehicles to explore further afield.

You will also have the opportunity to visit some of the friendly locals in their homes. At this time of year it is still too early for much work in the fields but the local women, many of whom run cosy village homestays, will no doubt welcome you into their traditional 'chansa' - the typical kitchen of a Ladakhi home. Here the ladies cook and look after their children, in addition to other tasks involved with livestock and tending their domestic animals. The women of Ulley are also skilled at knitting, often creating knitted animals which snow leopard toys made from locally sourced yak and sheep wool. They make excellent souvenirs if you want to purchase one!

**Overnight: Snow Leopard Lodge, Ulley (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 11: In and around Snow Leopard Lodge.**

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Today you will again have vehicles at your disposal to scour the area for wildlife. Again your expert naturalists will know the best place to go for optimum possibilities of spotting animals.

Your guide might also arrange an excursion to the village of Likir with its ancient monastery. Likir Gumpa dates back, in part, to the 11th century. It sits majestically on a hilltop dominating the valley and is attractively set amongst running water and willow trees which make a pleasant contrast to the surrounding barren landscape. Likir is famous for its imposing 25m high golden figure of the Matraiya Buddha, which sits behind the gumpa looking towards the east. Take some time to explore the many finely decorated halls and temples. The gumpa also contains a small museum with a very interesting collection of artefacts.

**Overnight: Snow Leopard Lodge, Ulley (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 12: Drive to Leh - 2-3 hours, with a visit to Alchi Monastery on the way.**

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This morning you will have a final opportunity to seek out wildlife and , before regretfully saying farewell to this mountain eyrie which has no doubt provided some unforgettable wildlife memories.

From Ulley you will drive back down to the valley of the River Indus and continue along its banks before you cross a bridge to reach the village of Alchi on the opposite bank. Alchi is an extremely pretty village set among apricot orchards above the river. At Alchi you will find one of the oldest and most beautiful temples of this entire region. Alchi has somehow miraculously survived war and earthquake relatively intact. The temples date back to the 11th century and have some of the oldest surviving wall paintings in Ladakh. Many of these wall paintings are in a different style to those you see in other monasteries of the Indus Valley - said to be more 'Indian' in style with possible links back to the times of Alexander the Great. The various chapels which make up the complex, house a stunning array of images and statues. The sheer artistry found at Alchi sets it apart from other monasteries in Ladakh.



You then return to the main highway to drive back to Leh where you will check into your resort. In the evening you will have last meal to celebrate your epic Himalayan journey and hopefully lots of wonderful tales of rare wildlife sightings.

**Overnight: Dolkhar Resort, Leh (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 13: Fly to Delhi over the Greater Himalaya. Transfer to hotel.**

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It's another early start this morning for the short drive to the airport for the return flight to Delhi. Within minutes of taking off 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 the distant peaks of K2, Nanga Parbat and Gasherbrum, and on the other side is the Nun Kun massif - so close that you feel you could reach out and touch it,

On arrival in Delhi you will be transferred to your hotel and rest of the day is yours at leisure.

**Overnight: Roseate House, Delhi (Meals: B)**

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**Day 14: Transfer to airport. Fly to London.**

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After breakfast there will be a group transfer to the airport where you will check in for your flight to London.

**(Meals: B)**



## 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:

- ✓ 12 x breakfasts, 11 x lunches, 11 x dinners
- ✓ 5\* hotel in Delhi on a twin-share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ Comfortable lodge accommodation in Drass and Ulley
- ✓ All internal flights and domestic hotel/airport transfers
- ✓ Local English-speaking leader
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicle/s
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Economy class non-stop return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go Bottle
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)

### 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 [For further information about our campaign visit https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign.](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign)

## Your accommodation

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Please be aware that in some of the more remote parts of Ladakh the hotels are fairly basic and may not have 24 hour water or electricity. We use them for their location to enable the trip to flow without driving backwards and forwards and thus spending more time than necessary in a vehicle, but instead optimising the walking and sightseeing.

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.



### **Roseate House, Delhi**

This upscale hotel is situated in Aerocity, conveniently close to Delhi's international airport. With contemporary styling and uber-modern architecture inside and out, it has a wellness centre, garden lake, a bistro and speciality restaurants. The large guestrooms are styled in muted tones and come complete with all modern amenities.



### **Dolkhar Resort, Leh**

Within walking distance of Leh's principal market, the Dolkhar is a seven-villa property and an ideal place to start your trip in Ladakh. Rooms have been carefully designed incorporating local materials and Ladakhi styling, and utilise eco-friendly products in line with the hotel's sustainable approach. Each duplex villa has a balcony and private patio from where you can enjoy views of the surrounding mountains. A vegetarian restaurant is set amidst the trees of the resort's orchard and there is a terrace bar and wellness centre for full relaxation.



### **Drenmo Lodge, Drass**

The Drenmo Lodge, located in the remote Mushkew Valley, is a converted local home that makes a comfortable base for exploring the area. Rooms are warm and cosy with en suite facilities and hot water.. There is a lounge and dining area and an outside deck to enjoy sunrise or sunset over the mountains. Drenmo was the first ever dedicated wildlife lodge in western Ladakh and was set up in 2016 to introduce wildlife tourism to the valley and specifically to help conserve the Himalayan Brown Bear. The lodge has a dedicated team of local experts who are passionate about wildlife conservation and ensuring that guests at the lodge have the best possible experience during their stay.



### **Snow Leopard Lodge, Ulley**

Snow Leopard Lodge is located in the small village of Ulley in West Ladakh, north of the Indus River at the head of the valley of the Ulley Chhu. The lodge has nine twin-bedded bedrooms that have modern, en suite showers. It also has a communal area for meals and nightly presentations. There is heating in the lounge and most rooms. The lodge is dedicated to wildlife spotting and conservation and allows the use of their spotting scopes, but we highly recommend bringing your own binoculars. Wi-Fi is available, but very limited.

## Meal arrangements

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12 x Breakfasts, 11 x lunches, 11 x dinners. All meals included except lunch and dinner in Delhi.

## 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.

## 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.

## Our grading system

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This Himalayan Wildlife Tour is graded as a Tour, as described below.

### Tours

Tours may include any of the following activities: sightseeing, visiting local villages, exploring temples, game viewing, birdwatching, husky sledding, mountain flights, city tours and dramatic journeys by road, rail, or river. Occasionally there will be short, gentle walks so that you can properly explore the cultural sites you are visiting.

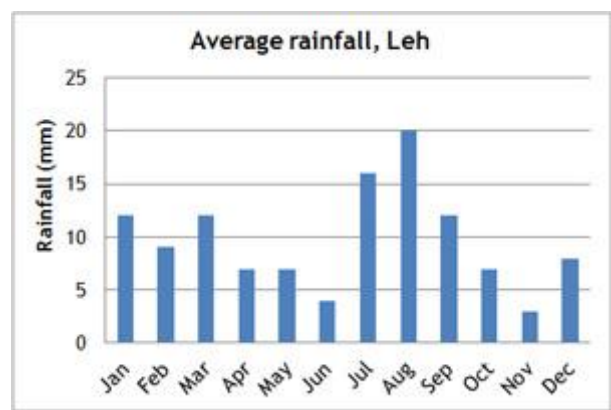
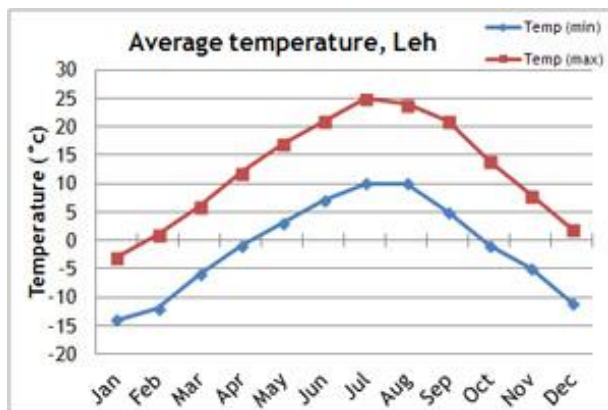
## Trip altitude

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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.

## Climate information

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## Extensions

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### Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400.



#### 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.



## 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.



## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- This wildlife trip is unique to Mountain Kingdoms and has been designed to give the best possible chance to spot Himalayan brown bears and snow leopards in their natural habitats.
- We have included time to acclimatise in Leh and visits to several of the region's most notable, and atmospheric, monasteries.
- Expert naturalists and wildlife spotters will accompany you on all your wildlife hunts.
- For the main accommodation, we have selected two remote, yet comfortable, lodges specialising in wildlife viewing activities.
- Opportunities to learn about local conservation work and projects have been included in to the itinerary.
- Domestic flights and all meals in Ladakh are included in the cost of the holiday.
- We have a maximum group size of 12 to ensure all the benefits of a genuine small group experience.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and exciting activities such as a visit to Agra and the Taj Mahal.
- 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.
- 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 we say

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*This was a genuine trip of a lifetime for me. To travel through so many stunning landscapes and to be treated to such warm Ladakhi hospitality was a highlight in itself. The cherry on the top however, was getting to see such rare and wonderful wildlife including the beautiful snow leopard and Himalayan bear. It was a truly amazing experience!*  
-Harry Gray, Ops Manager, Mountain Kingdoms

# 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.



