

Gentle Walking Little Tibet & Indian Himalaya

A perfect summer walking holiday to the mountains and monasteries of 'Little Tibet'.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Walking
Accommodation	Hotels
Grade	Gentle / Moderate
Duration	14 days from London to Delhi
Trekking / Walking days	Walks on: 9 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Ladakh
Land only	Joining in Delhi, India
Max altitude	3,700m/12,139ft, Prikti La, Day 9 (or optional pass on day 5 - 4,000ft/13,127ft)

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



tel: +44 (0)1453 844400 fax: +44 (0)1453 844422 info@mountainkingdoms.com www.mountainkingdoms.com

Mountain Kingdoms Ltd, 20 Long Street, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire GL12 7BT UK
Managing Director: Steven Berry. Registered in England No. 2118433. VAT No. 496 6511 08

Departures

Group departures

2021 Dates:

Fri 18 Jun - Thu 01 Jul With Hemis Festival
Sat 17 Jul - Fri 30 Jul With Dakthok Festival

2022 Dates:

Tue 05 Jul - Mon 18 Jul With Hemis Festival
Thu 04 Aug - Wed 17 Aug With Dakthok Festival

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.

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.

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



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

- Explore the sights of Leh - the fascinating capital of Ladakh
- Enjoy pretty walks in lovely countryside
- Visit some of the most stunning monasteries and palaces of Ladakh
- Stay in comfortable hotels that reflect the character of the region
- Each departure attends a festival - One visits the Hemis Festival and the other Dakthok Festival.

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-2	Arrive Delhi. Afternoon sightseeing to Qutab Minar.
Day 3	Fly to Leh, 3,505m/11,500ft. Afternoon walk.
Day 4	In the Indus Valley: Visit Hemis Festival or Dakthok Festival (depending on departure date).
Days 5-6	Exploration and valley walks near Leh. Visit Stok Palace.
Day 7	Visit copper works at Chiling. Lunch with family and drive to Alchi.
Days 8-9	Walks from Likir Monastery and Lamayuru. Walk along Old Zanskar Trail.
Day 10	Walk to Tar from Nurla. Drive to Phyang Monastery and on to Gyamsha.
Day 11	Nature walk along the valley. Return to Leh. Evening meal with local family.
Day 12	Attend prayer ceremony at Thikse Monastery. Heritage walk in the old town.
Days 13-14	Fly to Delhi. At leisure. Fly to London.

Trip summary

This trip is a perfect short summer walking holiday including as it does some wonderful Himalayan vistas and the vibrant culture and distinctive monasteries of this area of India known as 'Little Tibet'.

After a brief stop in Delhi, you take the short flight northwards over the Himalaya to Leh, capital of the Himalayan territory of Ladakh. Culturally this region, which is the highest and most remote part of the country, has more in common with Tibet than with India. Its wonderful mountain landscapes, many palaces and monasteries and its distinctive cultural heritage make this a fascinating area to explore on foot. The rather stark landscape is relieved by numerous oases of green where sparkling streams tumble through groves of willow trees.

The town of Leh is situated at an altitude of 3,505m/11,500ft, so on arrival you need to take it easy for the first few days while you acclimatise and a bit of gentle sightseeing and some short walks make an enjoyable start. You will explore Leh and then, travelling along the Indus, visit some of the fine monasteries and ancient palaces of the Indus Valley and along with some easy walks this will give you a gentle introduction to the area.

Once acclimatised you can then explore further afield, staying in some charming small hotels as you make longer, higher-level walks into flower filled valleys and alpine terrain. Later still, you travel even further west to visit the great monasteries of Lamayuru, Alchi and Phyang. The trip finishes with the sensational return flight back over the Greater Himalaya to Delhi.

Festivals, where locals get together to enjoy traditional music and costumed dance, are a highlight of any visit to Ladakh and on this holiday you will attend either the Hemis Festival or the Dakthok Festival (depending on your departure date).

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London to Delhi.

Depart from London for the overnight flight to Delhi.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Delhi. Group transfer to hotel. Afternoon sightseeing to Qutab Minar.

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: Lemon Tree Premier Hotel, Delhi Airport

Day 3: Fly to Leh, 3,505m/11,500ft. Afternoon walk.

Flights to Leh leave very early in the morning, so 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. Leh is 3,505m/11,500ft above sea level and, therefore, we recommend that you take it easy today to help you adjust to the altitude. On arrival you will immediately notice how thin the air is. You will be met and driven through Leh to check into your hotel.



After lunch, for a bit of exercise, you will have an orientation walk round town. The centre of Leh is just a short walk from your hotel and with the ancient Leh Palace looming above you (a visit up to it is best left till you are better acclimatised!) you will walk through the back streets and the bazaar where many stalls, handicraft shops and the Tibetan market offer goods from all over the Himalayan region. You can also visit the Ecological centre where you will discover from various exhibits how a relatively fragile Ladakhi culture is being threatened by a rapidly changing outside world. Before returning to your hotel you could relax in town at a rooftop café, or do a bit of shopping. Leh has some good bookshops.

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

Day 4: In the Indus Valley: Visit either Hemis Festival or Dakthok Festival (depending on departure date).

Leh and the Indus Valley are surrounded by the mountains of the High Himalaya and many snow peaks such as Stok Kangri are visible from town. The Indus Valley cuts a wide swathe through these mountains and the various valleys which come down from the high mountains to meet this main valley are cultivated and fertile in their lower reaches with distinctive ancient palaces and monasteries watching over the villages and fields below.

June 2021 or July 2022 departure

Today you drive to Hemis Monastery, a journey of around an hour. The monastery stands above the Indus River, approximately 47 kilometres from Leh. This monastery, which dates back to 1630 is the largest and most wealthy monastery of Ladakh and belongs to the Drukpa Lineage, or Dragon Order, of Mahayana Buddhism. The Hemis Festival is one of the most popular in Ladakh. The festival is thought to have its origins back in the 8th Century with the belief that Padmasambhava, a Buddhist teacher also known as Guru Rimpoche, acts as a local protector who banishes demons and evil spirits. Such festivals are very colourful and cheerful affairs with

dances and plays performed by masked lamas, representing the triumph of good over evil. People from all over the region flock here in their best clothes to celebrate, achieve religious merit and to socialize.

July 2021 or August 2022 departure

This departure will visit the Dakthok Festival - a 46km, 1 hour drive from Leh. Festivals are a highlight of the year for Ladakhis. They provide the excuse to dress up, socialise, drink, have fun and at the same time earn religious merit. The Sacred Dance Dramas, or 'Chhams', are at the centre of the celebrations where monks in incredible costumes perform elaborate highly choreographed dances to an accompaniment of drums, cymbals and horns. Dancers act out the destruction of evil and the illusory nature of life.



Time permitting, after you leave the festival, you may also visit Hemis or Thikse.

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

Day 5: Walk near Leh. Visit Shanti Stupa, walk to Tsemo Gompa. Optional walk to Sabu over pass, 4,000m/13,124ft - 4 hrs. Alternatively, drive to Sabu and valley walk.

After breakfast, you will leave the hotel and walk the short distance to Shanti Stupa. It's a bit of a heave to the top but you will be rewarded with great views over Leh town and the surrounding countryside. Then you will pass through fields and gardens beneath Shanti Stupa to arrive below the ridge on which sits the Tsemo Gompa and old fort above Leh Town. You make the steep ascent up to visit the gompa. Tsemo is a collection of chapels and a fort set on a peak above the town and parts date back to the 15th and 16th centuries. After your visit, depending on how fit and acclimatised the group are feeling you have a choice - discuss your options with your guide.

If feeling fit you can continue round high above the town to take the trail over to Sabu, ascending to one pass at 4,000m/13,127ft and then over a smaller pass which brings you out above the Sabu Valley. You then descend to the valley and to your hotel.

Alternatively from Tsemo Gompa you may descend to visit Leh Palace and then walk back down into town to meet your vehicles to drive round to the Sabu Valley. You then drive further up the valley in which Sabu is located, to a point above the village where you may leave your vehicles. The trekking trail which leads up over the Digar La and down into the Nubra Valley to the north starts from above Sabu. From this point you may walk along a footpath back down the valley to your hotel in Sabu village. Sabu is a very pretty and fertile spot, with bubbling streams, willow groves and apricot and poplar trees.

Overnight: Saboo Resorts, Sabu (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Drive to Stok - 13 km, 20 minutes. Visit Stok Palace, 3,650m/12,180ft, and valley walk - 2-3 hours.

Today you do not have far to drive to visit the village of Stok. This is a lovely village with fertile fields overlooked by Stok Palace. Firstly, you will visit the palace. From here there are spectacular all round views, south to the Zaskar range and north to the Ladakh range of mountains. This palace was where the Ladakh royal family was exiled after they lost power with the Dogra invasion of the 1830's. A visit to Stok Palace is a step back in time; the family still live here and run it as a small guesthouse with a couple of rooms. There is also an excellent museum which has a remarkable display of royal memorabilia and many fine 'thangkas' (Buddhist religious paintings) along with traditional Ladakhi clothing and jewellery. Much of this collection formerly belonged to the Ladakhi royal family, including the queen's spectacular turquoise headdress, along with the wooden case in which it was carried.

After your visit to the palace, you will walk up the main trail out of Stok, heading toward the Namling La and Stok Kangri mountain. Along the way you will see local villagers working in their fields. As the summer is very short in Ladakh, farmers have to work very hard for these few months. As you climb the valley there are many fine views. To return, you cross a small stream and descend along the other side of the valley.

Back once more in Stok village, you will enjoy the hospitality of a local family and have lunch in the lovely dining room/kitchen at the Gyab Thago Heritage Home. The family who live here built this relatively new house, but set just above it is their old home, an ancient house no longer lived in, which you may visit after

lunch. Here you will see the traditional layout of a Ladakhi home, with accommodation for the animals downstairs, and upstairs the kitchen with its central fire and the walls lined with all sorts of pots and old utensils. There is the store for keeping barley during the winter months and a prayer room, while up on the roof is a sheltered space where the family could sit in the sunshine out of the wind during the cold winter months.

You will drive back to Sabu, around 20 minutes away and the rest of the day will be free to relax at your hotel or to explore the village.

Overnight: Saboo Resorts, Sabu (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Drive to Chiling - 56 km, 1½ hours. Visit copper workshops. Walk 3-4 hours. Picnic or lunch with local family. Drive to Alchi, 3,100m/10,171ft - 50 km, 1 hour.

Today you drive west on the main highway, alongside the River Indus, to reach the confluence with the Zaskar River, where you turn south to drive alongside the Zaskar River. You arrive at the village of Chiling set a little above the road so a bit of a walk up to reach it. Chiling is a very pretty little village which has been famous for centuries for its metal workers who traditionally provide utensils in copper, bronze and tin for many Ladakhi kitchens. The village is exceptionally pretty, with well-kept orchards and fields and attractive traditional houses. Here you will be able to visit some of the copper workers in their small workshops and perhaps buy an item or two. There are some pleasant walks out of the village and you will either have a picnic here or take lunch with a local family.

Later you will drive back to the main road and continue to Alchi, an extremely pretty village set among apricot orchards above the River Indus. You will spend three nights here. At Alchi you will find one of the most ancient and most attractive temples of this entire region. It 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. The various chapels which make up the complex house a stunning array of magnificent images and statues. The sheer artistry found at Alchi sets it apart from other monasteries and makes a visit there unforgettable.

Overnight: Zimskhang Holiday Home or Similar, Alchi (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Drive to Likir, 3,767m/11,483ft - 19 km, 30 minutes. Visit gompa and walk to Yangtang via Sumdo - 4-5 hours.

Today you drive back to the main highway and then turn off the main road to drive up a short way north to Likir, a drive of around half an hour. Likir Gompa is a very ancient monastery dating back in part to the 11th century. It sits majestically on a hill top 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 gompa looking towards the east. Take some time before you set off on your day's walk to explore the many finely decorated halls and temples. The gompa also contains a small museum with a very interesting collection.



From Likir you will start your walk, taking the trail down first to Likir village below, where, at this time of year, water will be flowing and sweet smelling herbs and shrubs line the path. Leaving the village you emerge up onto a rather dusty plain before climbing to a small pass, the Pobe La, 3,550m/11,647ft. You then descend to the village of Sumdo where locals often run a 'parachute' tea shop where you could stop for a cup of tea. You then continue through Sumdo Village and climb to another pass, the Charutse La at 3,650m/11,975ft. Watch out for flocks of blue sheep along here. From the pass a trail leads down the middle of the valley, crosses a small ridge and then finally climbs up to the village of Yangtang; 4-5 hours walking. Yangtang is a very pretty and friendly village, so it is well worth having a walk through its narrow streets before you finally meet up with your transport for the 1 hour drive back to Alchi.

Overnight: Zimskhang Holiday Home or Similar, Alchi (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Drive to Lamayuru, 3,500m/11,483ft - 57 km, 1 hour 10 minutes. Walk along old Zanskar Trail to Prikiti La. Visit Lamayuru Monastery.

Today you will drive further west, to Lamayuru, which has one of the most famous monasteries of the region. Generations of trekkers along the Zanskar trail used to know Lamayuru as either the distinctive starting or ending point for the traverse of Zanskar. The monastery and village have one of the most spectacular settings in Ladakh, being surrounded by a moonscape of strangely eroded spires, columns and organ pipes. For your walk today you cross the river below the monastery to where three chortens stand beside the path, marking the old Zanskar Trail. Nowadays, groups tend to drive to join the trail further on, but you will get a taste on this section of the old Zanskar trail. You should have time to make it as far as the first pass along the trail, the Prikiti La at 3,700m/12,139ft, with a picnic lunch taken along the way.



Returning to Lamayuru, you will visit the monastery. Lamayuru Monastery belongs to the Red-Hat sect of Buddhism and today houses around 150 Buddhist Monks. The monastery itself is made up of a number of shrines and has a very rich collection of thangkas and some magnificent wall paintings. The oldest part of the monastery dates back to the 11th Century and part of this older monastery can be visited by venturing down crumbling, narrow streets. Below the main monastery complex there is an interesting temple with some rather spooky protector images. You then return to Alchi for the night.

Overnight: Zimskhang Holiday Home or Similar, Alchi (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Drive to Nurla, 25 km, 30 minutes, and walk up to Tar. Drive to Phyang, 75 km, 1½ hours, and visit gompa. Drive to Gyamsha, 3,657m/12,000ft - 1 hour.

Another full day of walking and culture. This morning you will drive down the Indus Valley to Nurla village and from there make a fine walk up to Tar village. Firstly you cross the River Indus by a wooden footbridge and then climb up a narrow gorge beside the Tar stream to reach the Village. Here you will find a typical village of Ladakh where about 10 families still farm by traditional organic methods, growing mainly barley, wheat and vegetables. You explore the village and have the opportunity to meet the locals and perhaps visit a village house for a cup of local tea or chang (local barley beer).

Returning to Nurla you rejoin your transport and drive to Phyang Gompa, which like so many such buildings of the region is set on a hill overlooking the valley. Phyang is an important monastery of the Indus Valley 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 and it houses some magnificent paintings and images.

After visiting the gompa you drive round to take a road heading north out of Leh up the valley to the hamlet of Gyamsha. Here there is a lodge set amongst poplar and willow trees where small streams of water babble through the gardens. Dinner may be a barbeque in the delightful garden with lovely views down the valley to Leh town.

Overnight: Lharimo Retreat, Gyamsha (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Morning nature walk up valley, 2-3 hours. Afternoon at leisure in Leh. Visit Ladakhi family.

This morning you may relax and enjoy these pretty surroundings. From Gyamsha you may take a delightful walk up the valley through flowery meadows and sweet smelling aromatic herbs. Ibex and many other wild animals are said to be often seen along here. In the old days they were enthusiastically hunted but today they are protected and so are less shy and more frequently seen.

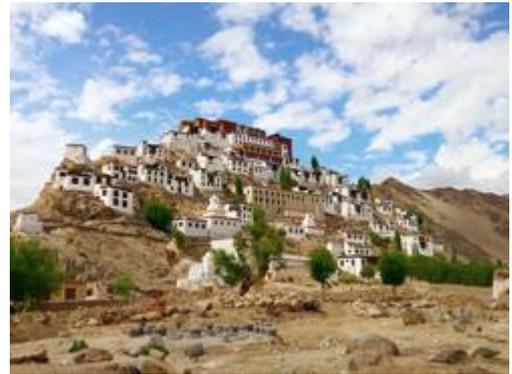
Returning to the lodge you will then drive back to Leh where you will have an afternoon for some sightseeing.

In the evening you will visit a traditional Ladakhi home in Leh. You will join members of the family in the 'chansa', the typical kitchen of a Ladakhi home, where you may help with the preparation of some traditional Ladakhi dishes as well as sampling some local beverages. You will then enjoy a typical Ladakhi meal with your hosts.

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

Day 12: Prayer ceremony at Thikse Monastery, 3,600m/11,811ft. Heritage walk in the old town and visit Lamo Centre.

This morning you will have a very early start to visit Thikse Monastery for the Morning Prayer Ceremony. It is a short drive of 20 km to Thikse which will take about half an hour. Thikse is a wonderful monastery famous for its fabulous three storey high statue of Maitreya Buddha. 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. All very atmospheric. The ceremony lasts about an hour after which you can enjoy the marvelous views of the valley from the roof before returning to Leh.



Later you will join a guide from the LAMO centre in Leh for a heritage walk. This walk will give you a real insight into the architecture and traditions of Leh. The LAMO centre is housed in the lovingly restored 17th Century Munshi house below Leh Palace and is a centre for arts of all kinds and a place to celebrate local talent and culture. Your walk will start from the mosque in the main market. Your guide will take you through the by-lanes of the old town to bring you to the LAMO centre. They will tell you about the different houses of the old town, including those of families from far Yarkand in Central Asia. Your guide will also take you through the two restored houses that make up LAMO, and will explain the traditional architecture of the region.

The rest of the day will be at leisure for some last minute shopping and relaxation.

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

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

An early start for the short drive to the airport, 3,256m/10,682ft, for the return flight to Delhi. 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 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 transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is yours at leisure.

Overnight: Lemon Tree Premier Hotel, Delhi Airport (Meals: B)

Day 14: Transfer to airport. Fly to London.

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

(Meals: B)

Our grading system

Gentle Walking Little Tibet & Indian Himalaya is graded as a Gentle/Moderate walking holiday, as described below.

Gentle

Trips within this grade typically mix sightseeing with easy-paced half and/or full day walks. On these trips, walks will be on relatively low altitude trails, for a duration of around 4-6 hours. On all of our Gentle graded trips, some ascent and descent should be anticipated, and there may occasionally be a longer walking day. Holidays within this grade generally use hotels and comfortable lodges although a few do have some nights camping.

These holidays are suitable for people who enjoy easy-paced walks in the British countryside or exploring on foot rather than in a vehicle.

Moderate

Holidays in this grade typically involve 5 to 10 days of walking or trekking. They will often venture into more remote country and can cross mountain passes. Altitudes though are still relatively low, going no higher than around 4,300m/14,000ft. Accommodation can include simple hotels, tea houses, lodges and camping.

Trip altitude

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 as a good source of information.

What the price includes

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:

- ✓ Local English-speaking leader.
- ✓ All internal flights and domestic hotel/airport transfers
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation (4 star) in Delhi, twin share bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ Best available hotels in outlying towns, on full board including picnics on walking days.
- ✓ All meals included except lunch and dinner in Delhi.
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Carbon offset for clients taking our flight-inclusive option
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go Bottle
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ Opportunity to join one of our pre-trip meets in the Cotswolds

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

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.



Lemon Tree Premier Hotel, Delhi Airport

The Lemon Tree Premier offers good facilities and a high level of comfort only 4km from Delhi's international airport. Rooms are bright and spacious with tea/coffee makers, mini bars and free Wi-Fi. The hotel has a spa, pool, cafe, pan-Asian restaurant and trendy bar.



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.



Saboo Resorts, Sabu

The Saboo Resort is a stylish hotel offering a traditional Ladakhi ambience but with all creature comforts and great service. The resort comprises 16 separate cottages built with traditional, locally available materials such as mud bricks and wooden floors. All rooms have en suite facilities and a veranda with views over the beautiful gardens and towards the surrounding mountains, including the peak of Stok Kangri. Food at the resort is excellent and includes many local products.



Zimskhang Holiday Home or Similar, Alchi

The Zimskhang Holiday Home is a pleasant hotel in the heart of Alchi village.



Lharimo Retreat, Gyamsha

This lodge is set in a grove of trees in the valley looking down to Leh and has good rooms in various buildings scattered about the grounds. There is a pretty dining room with good views and dinner is often a barbeque in the lovely grounds.

Meal arrangements

12 x Breakfasts, 10 x lunches, 10 x dinners. All meals included except lunch and dinner in Delhi.

Flight arrangements

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.

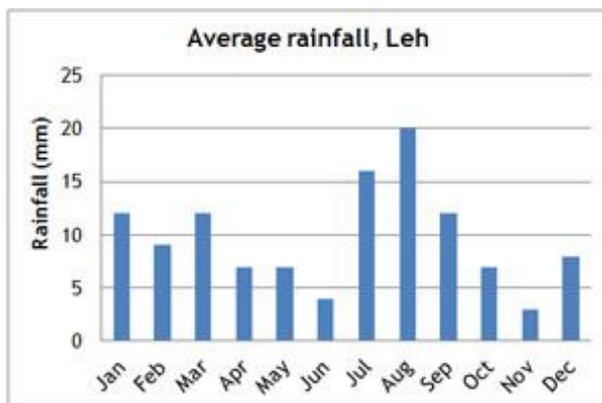
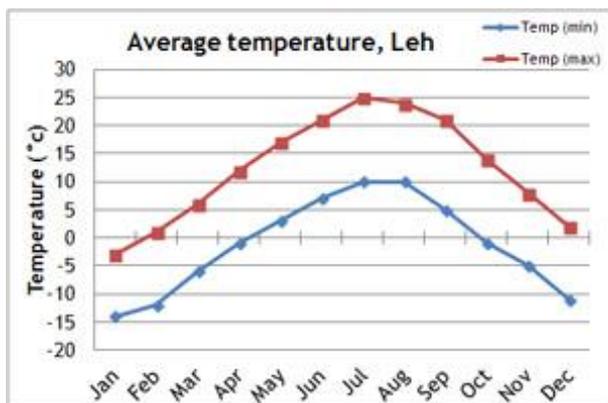
Further information

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

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.



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?

- This holiday is an easy way to visit Ladakh with some delightful day walks at the nicest time of the year when the meadows are filled with flowers and the weather is warm and sunny.
- Accommodation is in characterful hotels and lodges with a good deal of comfort and local ambience.
- Our itinerary has been carefully designed to include all the spectacular gompas and monasteries in the region as well as going off-the-beaten-track.
- We include a visit to either the Hemis or Dakthok Festivals which are colourful and joyous occasions.
- Excellent acclimatisation is integral to the itinerary, allowing you to enjoy your holiday to the full.
- 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.
- 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 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



Each day seemed better than the one before, a superb waking and sightseeing holiday. Just perfect.
-Pat, Cumbria

There were lots that I loved about the holiday! The walks were terrific. The temple at Alchi was superb. Ladakh retreat was magical.
-Mr D, London

The quality of the holiday experience, very well thought out itineraries, good standards of local staff, accommodation and I think, excellent value for what is provided. Oh and also very helpful and knowledgeable MK office staff!
-Mr H, Middlesex



Really enjoyed the small group of like minded people, the scenery and walks were brilliant.
-Ms T, London



Trek guide was a lovely man and his knowledge and information was excellent. I enjoyed being looked after very well with good organisation, accommodation, the landscape, local people and being taken to local cafes for tea.
-Ms F, Wiltshire

Beautiful location, interesting walks, good small group. Our tailor made extension was well organised and really enjoyable.
-Mr & Mrs H, Wiltshire

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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.

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

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.

