

Ladakh with Zaskar Valley

Duration: 12 Nights / 13 Days (Validity: May to September)

Destinations Covered: Leh, Tingmosgang, Lamayuru, Kargil, Zaskar – Rangdum, Padum & Monasteries

The Journey Begins Now!

DAY 01: ARRIVE LEH

Arrival Leh Kushok Bakula Airport (This must be one of the **MOST SENSATIONAL FLIGHTS IN THE WORLD**. On a clear day from one side of the aircraft can be seen in the distance the peaks of K2, Nanga Parbat, Gasherbrum and on the other side of the aircraft, so close that you feel you could reach out and touch it, is the Nun Kun massif.)

Upon arrival you will be met by our representative and transfer to Hotel for Check in. Complete day for rest and leisure to acclimatize followed by Welcome tea or Coffee at the Hotel.

Evening Visit to **LEH MARKET & SHANTI STUPA**. Dinner & Overnight at Hotel.

DAY 02: LEH - EXCURSION TO MONASTERIES (50 KMS / 02 HRS - ONE WAY)

Post Breakfast we proceed for Indus Valley Monastery tour including **SHEY PALACE**, The ancient capital of Ladakh, **THIKSEY** an impressive complex rising tier upon tier on a hill above the village, **HEMIS GOMPA**, the largest monastic foundation of Drukpa Kagyu Order of Tibetan Buddhism, **SINDHU GHAT & STOK PALACE**. Dinner & Overnight at the Hotel

DAY 03: LEH TO TINGMOSGANG (92 KMS / 4 HRS)

After breakfast you drive downstream along the River Indus on Leh – Kargil Highway. Enroute visiting **GURUDWARA PATTHAR SAHIB** Nestled deep in the Himalayas, which was built by the Lamas of Leh in 1517 to commemorate the visit of Guru Nanak Dev. A drive of another 4 km took us to **MAGNETIC HILL** which defies the law of gravity. It has been noticed that when a vehicle is parked on neutral gear on this metallic road the vehicle slides up & further Driving through a picturesque landscape we reached the **CONFLUENCE OF THE INDUS AND ZANSKAR RIVER** 4 km before Nimmu village, Just before Saspul a road to the right takes you for your visit to the **LIKIR MONASTERY**. The name Likir derives from the word Lukhgil (coiled snake) as the site appears to be encircled by two great serpent spirits – Nanda and Taksako. Likir is one of the most active monasteries in the

region. As you drive up to the monastery a recently installed colossal gilded image of the Maitreya out in the open is one of the most impressive sights in Ladakh. After visiting the Monastery you continue your drive along the River Indus to **TINGMOSGANG**, where on arrival you check into a Fixed Camp.

In the afternoon you visit **RIDZONG** Monastery. There is the option to walk up to the Monastery for those that wish to do so. Hidden at the end of a steep valley, the first view of the Monastery is dramatic. There are fine silver chortens that contain the relics of the founder and his son. Later we drive to Tingmosgang for an overnight stay at a Fixed Camp.

DAY 04: TINGMOSGANG TO KARGIL (VIA LAMAYURU) 143 KMS / 5 HRS

Post breakfast you proceed Kargil enroute visiting the 11th century **LAMAYURU MONASTERY** enroute visiting the mesmerizing **MOON LANDSCAPES** (you will believe why the name of this area is Moonland. Exactly the same formations of Land are visible as on the moon), Lamayuru is spectacularly located along the valley plain and surrounded by mountains on all sides. The monastery has gradually expanded over the years and newer structures have been built around a large courtyard. The antiquity of this site is evident from the large number of chortens, similar to those at Alchi.

Later Drive to **KARGIL** over Fatu-la [13,489 ft] which is the highest pass on Srinagar – Leh road. Upon arrival in Kargil we check in at our Hotel for an overnight stay.

DAY 05: KARGIL TO RANGDUM (130 KMS / 6 HRS)

Post breakfast, In the morning we drive towards Rangdum. **RANGDUM VILLAGE** is an elliptical expanded plateau that is situated midway between Kargil and Padum. Located 130 km south-east of Kargil, in the beautiful **SURU VALLEY** in Leh District, Rangdum is surrounded by steep hills, pastures, streams and rocky mountains. Being the farthest region of the Suru Valley at an altitude of **3657 meters**, it has evolved with a wild beauty. This isolated place is known for an old monastery, which is one of the most revered Buddhist places in Leh-Ladakh.

Upon arrival at Rangdum we check in at our Camp / Hotel / Guest House for Overnight stay. Rest of the day free for relaxation

DAY 06: RANGDUM- PADUM VIA SURU VALLEY (131 KMS/5 HRS)

Drive to Padum, **PADUM** the capital of the ancient kingdom of **ZANSKAR**, Padum (3505 m) is the present day administrative headquarters of the region. With a population of nearly 1500, Padum can be described as the most populous settlement of Zanskar,

otherwise a very scarcely inhabited valley. Incidentally, it is only in Padum that there is a community of Muslims constituting nearly half the township's population, its origin in the area dating from mid 17th century. Lately, Padum has become famous as a major trekking base and a popular tourist destination. Several places of tourist interest in the vicinity of the township can be visited in the course of entertaining walks.

On way to Padum we visit **SANI MONASTERY**, of Ladakh belongs to the southern branch of the Drukpa Kagyupa School. It is situated approximately 6 km to the west of Padum. The entire Sani Monastery of Ladakh has been built in parts, each dating back to a different century. Upon arrival in Padum we check in at our Camp / Hotel / Guest House for Overnight stay.

DAY 07: IN PADUM (EXCURSION TO KARSHA & BARDAN GOMPA) APPROX 5 – 6 HRS

After Breakfast leave for Full Sightseeing of Karsha & Bardhan.

The **KARSHA MONASTERY** of Ladakh is situated in the Karsha village of the Zaskar region (9 km long link road, across an iron bridge over the Stod river). Built picturesquely along the steeply rising mountainside above Karsha village, the monastery can be seen from far. The central building is a large assembly hall housing an array of figures and the ornate throne of the Head Lama-incarnate. Three adjoining chapels contain numerous statues and other art objects, among which a set of exquisite silver and copper chortens are worth noting for their beauty. Other places of interest in the Karsha area include an old nunnery called Dorje Dzong, occupying a hilltop to the west of the main monastery. The ruins around this nunnery are believed to be the original monastic foundation of Karsha: the present monastery was founded during the 14th century.

After visiting Karsha we proceed further towards **BARDAN GOMPA** is a 17th century Buddhist monastery., approximately 12 kilometres south of Padum, in Zaskar, Ladakh, northern India. Bardan Monastery of Ladakh, standing atop a rocky crag, belongs to the Dugpa-Kargyud monastic order and was one of the first monasteries of this sect to be established in Zaskar. The monastery also ran several smaller hermitages in the area. A number of smaller monasteries in the region come under the management of Bardan.

After visiting above monasteries we drive back to our Camp. Dinner & Overnight stay at the Camp / Guest House / Hotel.

DAY 08: IN PADUM (EXCURSION TO STONGDE & ZANGLA) APPROX 6 – 7 HRS

After an early breakfast we Drive to The monastery of **STONGDEY** lies 18-km to the north of Padum, on the road leading to Zangla. An old foundation associated with the Tibetan

Yogi, Marpa, Stongdey is now the second largest monastic establishment of Zanskar, inhabited by the resident community of about 60 Gelukpa monks.

The sprawling whitewashed complex has a number of temples, each a repository of the region's rich monastic legacy. The climb up to the monastery is rather strenuous, but it is worth the trouble for the breathtaking scenery of the valley available from here.

After visiting above monasgtery we drive further towards **ZANGLA**, Lying deep in the northern arm of Zanskar at the end of the 35 km. Long rough road from Padum, Zangla was being ruled by a titular king till his death a few years back. The old castle now in ruins except from a small chappel, occupies a hill, overlooking the desertic valley below. Nearby is the old Nunnery worth a visit for the austere life style of the small monastic community of nuns. An old monastery situated in the nearby village of Tsa-zar has exquisite frescos that should be missed. After visiting above monasteries we drive back to our Camp. Dinner & Overnight stay at the Camp / Guest House / Hotel.

DAY 09: PADUM – RANGDUM VIA SURUVALLEY (131 KMS/5 HRS)

Post breakfast we check out from our Camp & Drive to Rangdum. Dinner & Overnight at the Camp.

DAY 10: RANGDUM- KARGIL (130 KMS / 6 HRS)

Post breakfast we check out from our Camp & Drive to Kargil. Dinner & Overnight at the Hotel.

DAY 11: KARGIL TO LEH (210 KMS / 6 – 7 HRS)

Post breakfast we check out from the Hotel and Drive back to Leh enroute visiting **MULBEK** and visit the **ALCHI GOMPA**. The complex of temples located within the village is the most celebrated of Ladakh's monasteries and dates back to the 11th century.

After Alchi you proceed to **BASGO**, which lies astride the road to Leh. The jagged skyline of the ruins of the 15th century capital of Ladakh dominates the village of Basgo. It was an important center in the old days, having been the capital of lower Ladakh when the kingdom was divided in the 15th & 16th centuries, and the seat of that branch of the dynasty, which eventually unified Ladakh and took the surname Namgyal.

Finally you arrive back at Leh for an overnight stay at your Hotel.

DAY 12: LEH

Complete day at leisure to explore the destination on your own & in the evening you can stroll around the market place for some last minute souvenir shopping. Dinner & overnight at the Hotel.

DAY 13: DEPART LEH (FLY OUT)

Tour concludes. Himalaya Insight thank you for your patronage and ensure a punctual transfer to Domestic Airport to catch the flight for your onward Destination.