

14-DAY ADVENTURE

MARKHA VALLEY AND KANG YATSE II

Ladakh

Our adventure begins in the town of Leh, in the heart of the Indus Valley, famous for its dramatic monasteries and traditional villages. After two days of acclimatization spent discovering the must-see sites of the region, including the monasteries of Lamayuru and Alchi, we start our trek.

For seven days we hike through the remote and beautiful Markha Valley bordered by the Zanskar range on one side and the Stok range on the other. The local inhabitants live a traditional life, defined by their Buddhist religion and the seasons of their mountainous and high altitude home. Incredible landscapes and a fascinating and welcoming local culture make the Markha Valley one of the most amazing treks in the Indian Himalaya. Our journey through the mountains and villages of the region culminates in an ascent of 6250m Kang Yatse II for unforgettable views of the Zanskar, Ladakh and Karakoram ranges.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience the unique Bhuddist culture of Ladakh
- Reach the summit of 6250m Kang Yatse II
- Trek through the remote Markha Valley
- Trip fully carbon offset as standard


KANDOO
ADVENTURES
Leh
Zingchen
Thiksey
Shingdo
Stok Kangri
6134m
Skiu
Markha Village
Chogdo
Hankar
Nimaling
Trek
Trans
Kang Yatse II
6250m

ITINERARY

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN LEH

Welcome to Ladakh! Today you should fly from Delhi to Leh where a member of our team will be waiting to collect you at the airport. You will transfer to your hotel where you will meet your guide and the other members of your group. There will be a pre-trip briefing this evening at 5pm.

Accommodation: **Hotel**

DAY 2

LEH AND THIKSEY

First day of discovery of Ladakh, on the northern borders of India. Today, we leave to follow the valley of the Indus, which follows the river of the same name, and discover its postcard landscapes dotted with remarkable monasteries. We start with the magnificent monastery of Thiksey, perched on a hill overlooking the Indus, this complex of temples and chörtens contains beautiful Buddhist art work including paintings, masks and thangkas.

In the afternoon, we cross the Indus to reach its western bank and visit the small monastery of Matho, standing on a ridge above the town. The view of the valley is magnificent! We take some time to explore the museum here and learn more about the local Buddhist culture. On the way back to Leh, we visit Stok Palace. Built in 1825 to house the Namgyal dynasty, it is still the home of the royal family who retire to Manali during the severe winter cold. We end our day back at our hotel in Leh.

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included: **Breakfast**

DAY 3

LEH TO LAMAYORU

We leave Leh this morning and set off on the road to Lamayuru, a village located halfway between Leh and Kargil, the biggest town in Jammu and Kashmir State. After a few kilometers, we stop at the Spituk monastery, which overlooks the fertile lands of the River Indus in the base of the valley. This monastery of Tibetan Buddhism is still the place of residence and meditation for hundred monks. We then continue along the Kargil road to the confluence with the river Zanskar. A small detour on the road allows us to admire the superb monastery of Alchi. They contain murals and sculptures by artists from ancient Tibet, Kashmir and Afghanistan. The carved wooden porches display some of the most interesting statues and frescoes in Ladakh, built by the scholarly monk Ringchen Zangpo.

Around midday we reach Lamayuru and its extraordinary landscapes, including the famous "Moonland", eroded mountains covered with a layer of yellow sedimentary rocks, with extravagant patterns. We pause for Lunch before taking some time to explore the pretty village and its monastery, perched at an altitude of 3800 meters facing the Zanskar range.

Accommodation: **Hotel**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 4

LAMAYURU TO YURUTSE

This morning we continue our journey by vehicle to Zingchen, the starting point of our trek to the Markha Valley. We depart on foot along the river, gradually ascending to the beautiful village of Rumbak, gateway to the Hemis National Park. After a little tea break, we can visit the village and its gompa, before continuing our journey.

We continue our ascent following another fast flowing mountain stream up a side valley before arriving at the small hamlet of Yurutse. This is the perfect location to spot the local animal life such as the bharal or argali.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**
Ascent: **400 m**
Max. altitude: **4150 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 5

YURUTSE TO SHINGDO VILLAGE

We continue our ascent up the valley gradually rising to the base of Ganda La. from here the climb is steeper to the top of the pass where, from 4950 meters, the view is mezmerising. The peaks of the Zanskar range can be seen to the south and the Ladakh range to the north, a truly breath taking moment that makes the grueling ascent worthwhile! After savoring this astonishing position for a while, we begin our descent towards the village of Shingo.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Ascent: **800 m**
Max. altitude: **4950 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 6

SHINGDO TO SKIU

We leave Shingdo and begin our descent through a narrow canyon to reach the Markha River. We have a short day walk to Skiu, one of the largest villages in the valley. Many chortens decorate the entrance to this beautiful village located on the right bank of the Markha. We have a free afternoon to rest, meet the inhabitants of the village and explore our surroundings.

Hiking time: **4 - 5 hours**
Descent: **600 m**
Max. altitude: **3950 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 7

SKIU TO MARKHA

Today we begin climbing up the superb Markha valley where the forested river banks contrast with the ocher colour of the surrounding mountains. We cross the river several times on bridges or sometimes with feet in the freezing waters. From Skiu to Markha the walk is easy along the base of the valley but this is a long day with a significant distance to cover. In the afternoon we will reach Markha village, the largest in the valley, surmounted by a monastery overlooking the cluster of building below. At the end of the day we can visit the monastery which offers incredible views of the surround valley.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Ascent: **450 m**
Descent: **50 m**
Max. altitude: **3800 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 8

MARKHA TO HANKAR

We go up the Markha valley, still relatively green, on the right bank. In the distance we see the monastery of Tanzé perched on top of a cliff. Possibility of going up to the monastery there and back to have an overhanging view of the Markha Valley. We repeatedly cross the tributaries of the Markha River by fording or over bridges and arrive at the village of Humlung crowned with its monastery. The valley then narrows and just before reaching Hankar, the majestic peak of Kang Yatse comes into view and excitement builds as we see our objective for the first time.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**
Ascent: **300 m**
Descent: **50 m**
Max. altitude: **4030 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 9

HANGKAR TO KANG YATSE BASECAMP

We start today with a steady climb through pastures to the Kang Yatse base camp located on the Nimaling plains, where large herds of yaks often pass. This is a nice opportunity to meet the shepherds of the Markha valley who know these mountains and valleys better than anyone.

Once we arrive at basecamp we meet our high altitude guides who will accompany us for the ascent of Kangyatse. This afternoon there will be a briefing by our guides and we spend some time checking equipment and ensuring we are all ready for the challenge ahead. There is the option to hike up to a small shoulder (5400 m) offering beautiful views of the surrounding mountains and a good acclimatisation trek.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**
Ascent: **425 m**
Max. altitude: **5045 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 10

ACCLIMATISATION HIKE

This morning we prepare for our ascent with an acclimatisation hike. After breakfast we climb for 3 hours to reach a new high point on the mountain. Arriving here, we have some lunch before descending back down to Base Camp. After an early dinner, our high mountain guides will give a briefing for the next day. We then settle into our tents in preparation for an early start on our summit day.

Hiking time: **4 - 5 hours**
Ascent: **425 m**
Max. altitude: **5470 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 11

BASE CAMP – KANG YATSE II – NIMALING

We depart around 1am to begin our ascent to the summit. A steady climb for 2 hours on paths, then an hour on loose scree, takes us to the glacier and we continue on steeper ground (about 35-40°) to reach the ridge that leads to the summit of Kang Yatse II at 6250m.

At the top, the views of the Zanskar, Stock and Karakoram massifs are breathtaking. In clear conditions it is possible to see the enormous 8000m peaks of K2 and Nanga Parbat in the far distance. After taking time to absorb the sheer enormity of our location, we descend to base camp for a well-deserved rest and a good meal. In the afternoon, easy descent towards the sheepfolds of Nimaling and our camp for the night.

Hiking time: **11 - 12 hours**
Ascent: **1150 m**
Descent: **1355 m**
Max. altitude: **6250 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 12

NIMALING TO CHOGDO

Today starts with a steep climb to Kongmaru La Pass at 5150m, a steep and difficult ascent but we are well rewarded with views of the north face of Kang Yatse and the various peaks of the Zanskar range. We descend a very steep trail and drop into a deep canyon where rock formations in a wonderful array of colors are fascinating to look at. A long descent of 1400m takes us finally to the village of Chogdo.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Ascent: **500 m**
Descent: **1400 m**
Max. altitude: **5150 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 13

CHOGDO TO LEH

Short morning hike to reach the end of the trek at Shang Sumdo, a village of about ten houses scattered in wheat and rapeseed fields. The vehicle is waiting for us here to take us to Hemis, whose monastery is considered the largest and most revered in Ladakh. Built in 1670 by Buddhists of the Drukpa lineage, it is home to over 500 monks and governs all Ladakhi monasteries. Above all, it celebrates Padmasambhava, the great Indian sage who introduced Buddhism to Himalayan India.

We return to our hotel in Leh and enjoy some free time to relax and explore the town. Anyone with energy still remaining can climb to the Shanti Stupa for magnificent views over the Indus valley and Stok massif.

Hiking time: **2 - 3 hours**
Ascent: **250 m**
Accommodation: **Hotel**
Meals included: **Breakfast**

DAY 14

DEPARTURE

Transfer to the airport for your return flight. Meals included: **Breakfast**

PLEASE NOTE

It is in the nature of a trip of this kind that arrangements and participants have to be flexible. While we use all reasonable endeavours to ensure a trip runs according to your itinerary, the day-to-day agenda and ultimate goal of the trip are taken as aims and not as contractual obligations. It is a necessary condition of your joining any of our trips that you accept this flexibility. Occasionally, we may have to make changes and we reserve the right to do so at any time.

TRIP INFORMATION

DIFFICULTY

On this trip you will be visiting a remote and isolated region and committing to a long and strenuous trekking program. You will be walking on difficult terrain at high altitude for 10 consecutive days and this will place a huge strain on your body. As well as the rigors of the walking, spending an extended period of time at high altitude and sleeping in a tent for 9 nights will add to your fatigue. You will be trekking at altitudes over 5000m and up to 6250m. To participate in this trip it is essential that you have past experience of altitude and mountainous trekking. There is **no technical climbing** on the route up Kang Yatse II. You will be **walking in crampons** and with the use of a **mountaineering ice axe** but nothing more. You must be in good physical shape with high levels of determination and an understanding that this trek will be highly demanding. In the three to six months before departure you should undergo a training program with special emphasis on endurance training. If you have any questions about your suitability for this trip please do not hesitate to contact us.

Looking for training advice or a training plan in preparation for this trip? We'd recommend checking out Kate Sielmann and her coaching programs that are specific to mountaineering and trekking training. Find more details here.

FOOD & DRINK

During your trek this trip is full board and our cook will provide you with three meals per day and snacks for while you are trekking. The food in Ladakh is mainly Indian in style with curries, flat breads, rice and lentils featuring highly on any menu. The food is fragrant and rich in flavors but not necessarily spicy! Breakfasts and dinners are provided at camp and your cook will provide you with a picnic lunch each morning.

Before and after your trek, meals are your own responsibility. You can order food at the hotel or head out in the town to find a restaurant. Leh offers a wide range of cuisine to suit all taste's with western style burgers and chips available along side traditional Indian curries and delicious momo dumplings. Vegetarians and vegans are very well catered for here and there is a good understanding of dietary requirements.

During the trip all drinks, including water, are your own responsibility. Your team will boil water at each camping spot and keep it in a fresh container for you to drink once it has cooled. This will be accessible each evening and morning for you to fill up water bottles or hydration bladders. You may wish to carry a water purification system such as a filter or tablets to treat water from natural springs or villages whilst trekking. There are plenty of places to refill your water bottles both in towns and in remote mountain areas, your guide will advise you when and where to refill. On Kang Yatse II your team will be able to melt snow for drinking water.

ACCOMMODATION

In Leh, we stay in basic but comfortable 3 star hotels in double or twin ensuite rooms. The hotel will have hot water and WiFi available. Please be aware that 3 star standards in Ladakh may be lower than you would expect in your home country. Power cuts and internet outrages are common in Ladakh and you should be prepared for the possibility of this. In Lamayuru we will again use a 3 star hotel with ensuite rooms, hot water and WiFi.

During the trek you will have a 3 man tent to share with one other person in your group. You will be provided with a foam camping mattress to sleep on and should bring your own sleeping bag with a comfort rating of -20 degrees centigrade. We will also provide a large dinning tent with a table and chairs that is used for taking meals but also as a communal space to relax in the evenings. Hot water in a bowl can be provided by your support team so you can have a wash in the evenings. The camp is setup and taken down each day by our local support team and mules are used to transport all the equipment along the trekking route.

The toilet situation is something a lot of our guests want to know about! In Ladakh, the hotel we use has western flushing toilets. Toilets in Ladakh have a mixture of hoses and toilet roll for cleaning purposes. If using a hose is not your cup of tea then it might be worth bringing your own toilet roll. On the trek itself, toilets at the campsites will be very basic with a hole in the ground covered by a small toilet tent for privacy and on route this will be a case of finding somewhere hidden, off the path and going wild. We can guarantee it will be the most scenic toilet break you've ever had!

YOUR GUIDE

For the full duration of your trip you will be accompanied by an experienced English speaking guide. During the trek, your guide will be assisted by our local support team which will include an assistant guide, driver, cook and muleteer. AT Kang Yatse II basecamp, you will meet your specialist high altitude climbing guides who will take over at this point to take you safely to the summit. You will rejoin your main trekking guide after the ascent to complete the trip.

TRANSPORT

Our airport transfers will be a local taxi as Ladakhi law states that tourists may only travel from the airport by taxi. A member of our team will greet you at the airport and travel in the taxi with you.

All our transfers between locations will be taken in a privatised vehicle. Although we do our best to provide vehicles with seatbelts this isn't always possible due to the standard of vehicle in Ladakh.

LUGGAGE

During the trek your luggage along with all the group equipment will be transported by mules. You should bring two bags with you, a large 80-100 litre duffel bag and a smaller 30-50 litre daypack. Your duffel bag will be transported by the mules each day and made available for you at camp each afternoon once the mules have arrived. Your daypack will stay with you at all times and should be used to carry spare clothing, water, lunch etc. At all other times your luggage will be transported by vehicle. Please do not bring a rigid suitcase which is not suitable for carrying by the mules. A flexible duffel bag or backpack is best. **Your main luggage must not exceed 15kg**. This is the maximum weight for a bag on most domestic flights in India and also allows us plan for the number of mules required on your trip.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

You will need to arrive at Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport code (code IXL) on Day 1 of your itinerary. If you would prefer to arrive a few days earlier, we would be happy to book additional hotel accommodation for you on request.

Please aim to arrive in the morning as afternoon flights to Leh can sometimes be delayed or cancelled due to unstable weather conditions occurring at this altitude. Mornings are usually more stable and provide opportunities to transfer onto later flights if necessary.

In order to reach Leh it is necessary to fly first to Delhi and then take a domestic flight up to Ladakh. For those traveling from the UK, there are direct flight to Delhi from London Heathrow with Air India, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic. From Manchester or Glasgow, there are indirect flights to Delhi with Emirates, Lufthansa and KLM.

For travellers from the east coast of the US, there are direct flight to Delhi with Air India from JFK and United Airlines have a direct flight from Newark. From the west coast, Air India also have direct flights from San Francisco and there are indirect flights from LAX with KLM, Virgin Atlantic and Singapore Airlines.

Domestic flights from Delhi to Leh depart in the mornings and take roughly 1 hour 20 mins. Remember that if you book your international and domestic flight separately, you will need to collect your luggage and check in again for your domestic flight. Be sure to allow enough time for this in between flights! There are a range of domestic airlines proving flights to Leh including Spice Jet, Vistara and Indigo. Most flights depart between 6am and 11am daily.

On arrival at the airport, once you have collected your luggage, please look out for a member of our local team in the arrivals area. Our partner in Ladakh is Riwang Treks, please look out for a sign reading "Ri Wang Trek Leh Ladakh welcomes Kandoo Adventures". They will then travel with you via taxi to our hotel in Leh.

If you are changing airlines or re-checking your luggage at an airport on route, please ensure you leave a minimum of 3 hours between flights. This will account for any delays on arrival, travel time across airports (this can take longer than you think) and time taken to re-check baggage.

Travelling Responsibly

Here at Kandoo, we like to support our guests to make their travel more sustainable. As of 2025, we are offsetting the carbon on all of our trips from arrival in destination to dropping you back off at the airport. As we don't include flight travel in our trips these aren't included in our offsetting calculations, so we are providing you with the calculator below for you to do this yourselves.

eC02 Flights Calculator

PRE-TREK BRIEFING

It is a requirement of joining any of our treks that you attend a pre-trek briefing the evening before the trek begins. This gives our guides the opportunity to speak to you about your adventure, and sort out any last-minute queries or concerns. We will also carry out a pre-trek health check which must be completed before you trek to high altitude. In Ladakh this is held at 5pm on the evening of Day 1 at your pre-trek hotel, your guide will meet you there.

BUDGET & CHANGE

The currency in India is the Indian Rupee (INR). India has a closed currency which means Rupees cannot be imported or exported from the country. You can exchange money at the airport in Leh on arrival, or at banks and some larger hotels. The State Bank of India and the J&K Bank have their main branches in Leh and foreign exchange is also available at the Tourist Information Centre located in the Dak Bungalow Complex in Leh. It is worth noting that there is no foreign exchange facility outside of Leh. Credit and debit cards are generally widely accepted. If you are planning to carry a credit card for emergencies, please inform your card provider in advance. US Dollars and GB Pounds are the easiest currencies to exchange. Please note that payments at restaurants must be made in Indian Rupees, whereas US Dollars are generally accepted in shops for specific merchandise such as Pashmina and rugs. In more remote parts of Ladakh, local currency is preferred.

In Leh, the price for a taxi shared between 6 people is around 850 INR ($10) per person. A meal will vary in cost depending upon where you choose to eat. Dhaba tents are the local, and slightly cheaper, option offering traditional lentil curry and flatbread dishes. A meal in a Dhaba tent will generally cost around 200 INR ($2.40) per person, crazy cheap! That said, a meal in one of the cafes on Changspa Road, or in upscale restaurants in Leh will still only cost around 500 INR ($6) so eating out will not be a costly affair. Similarly, the cost of souvenirs will not break the bank, particularly if you are prepared to haggle down the price.

TIPS

In India, tipping is a common practice and highly appreciated. The amount you tip depends on the level of service you feel you have received. We recommend budgeting roughly 4500 INR (equivalent to US$50 / £40) per person per week for tips. The amounts given below are not exact and are only given as an indication:

- Guide – 400 INR per person per day
- Drivers and assistants / porters – 300 INR per person per day
- Porters/ Mule drivers – 200 INR per person per day

We say goodbye to our porters at the end of our trek. Any tips that you wish to give to the porters will need to be carried on the trek with you. Your guide and driver will accompany you back to your hotel and can be tipped after you return to Leh at the end of the tour.

FORMALITIES & HEALTH

PASSPORT

All travellers will need a passport which will remain valid for at least 6 months longer than your expected visit. You will also need to present proof that you have a return ticket, and proof that you have sufficient money to support yourself during your stay in India.

Each traveller is responsible for sorting out their own passport and visa requirements, and we cannot offer much assistance in this matter. If you do not yet have a passport, apply for one early, as they can take some time to arrive. If you already have a passport, double check when it expires.

You will also need to bring the following document requirements so that our team in Ladakh can get you climbing or restricted area permits:
For the Markha Valley Trek (Kang Yatse II climbing participants)
Each participant needs to carry 2 passport-sized photos and a copy of their insurance policy.
For the Indus Valley Trek (non-climbing participants):
Each person needs to bring 1 passport-size photo

VISA

UK and US passport holders require a visa to enter India for tourism purposes. Your visa must be approved in advance, you will not be permitted to board a flight to India if you do not have a valid visa. You can apply for a visa online by visiting https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html

VACCINATIONS

Below we have set out what is the general guidance for travel to India. We strongly advise you to consult with your own GP or travel clinic near you before travelling. They will have the most up to date and medically accurate information relevant to you, and should be relied upon over these recommendations.

Strongly Advised Vaccinations

- Hepatitis A: This can be spread via contaminated food and water.
- Tetanus: Tetanus is often present in the soil, and can contaminate open wounds easily. Tetanus vaccine should be used every ten years if travelling.
- Typhoid: Typhoid can also be spread via contaminated food and water, and poor hygiene.
- Diphtheria: This potentially fatal disease is spread mainly via spit, but occasionally through contact with cuts on the skin.
- Yellow Fever: This can be contracted by being bitten by a contaminated mosquito. This vaccination is not essential if you are arriving directly in India. You do need it though if you plan to arrive through any country that is subject to yellow fever. Simply stopping over at an airport in an affected country should not require vaccination, but leaving the airport even briefly would make it necessary

INSURANCE

Trekking at high altitude does have dangers. You should ensure that you have good insurance to cover these risks. It is a condition of booking with Kandoo Adventures that you have medical and accident insurance.

Your insurance must cover helicopter evacuation if it becomes necessary. It should also cover the costs of getting home should you miss your scheduled flight due to accident, injury, illness or simple bad luck.

Your insurance must specifically include cover for you to climb up to 6500m if you are climbing Kang Yatse, 5500m if you are joining our Indus Valley trek and 5,700m for our Changtang Lakes and Spiti Valley trek .

Your insurance should also protect against the standard travel dangers, including: baggage delay, loss of personal items etc. Make sure to add 'hiking up to ..... (your required altitude)' on check out and be sure to read the small print carefully for any policy you are considering. Different policies provide different levels of cover, so make sure you understand what is and is not included in your policy.

Sorry but we are not insurance experts so we do not review policies.

HEALTH

Avoiding diarrhoea

Make sure that your hygiene is as good as possible to avoid picking up a stomach upset. Needless to say, a bout of diarrhoea can make a two week-long strenuous trek unpleasant or even impossible.

On the trek itself, we make sure that your food is pure and uncontaminated. You will need to carry a water purification filter or tablets to ensure all water that you drink is safe.

Make sure you follow these simple rules at all times:

If you are not absolutely certain water is pure, do not drink it.
Wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet, and before eating or handling food of any kind.
Do not eat raw vegetables or salads. Cooked, preferably boiled veggies only.
Avoid any cold drinks, and ice of any kind.
Water from sealed bottles is generally fine, as are fizzy drinks, wine and beer. Hot tea and coffee are good, as they have just been boiled.

If you do get diarrhoea, the most important thing you can do is to stay hydrated. The best thing to drink is a rehydration solution like Dioralyte. Read more about dehydration below.

Over the counter medicines like Immodium (or anything containing loperamide) are only for short term, mild diarrhoea. Some doctors recommend taking a single, 500mg dose of Ciprofxin, or any ciprofloxacin antibiotic in an emergency situation. This is a prescription medicine, and you should discuss it with your doctor before your trip.

Preventing dehydration

Even if you avoid diarrhoea, you can easily become dehydrated at high altitudes. The lower air pressure forces you to breathe more quickly and deeply, and you lose a lot of water through your lungs. You will also be exerting yourself, and sweating.

The upshot is, as you might expect, that you will have to drink more water. You need to drink at least 3 litres of fluids every day while trekking. Even when you don't feel thirsty you have to drink this amount as a minimum - preferably more.

Stay on the look-out for signs of dehydration in yourself and your fellow trekkers. The most common symptoms

include thirst, dry lips, nose or mouth, headache and feeling fatigued or lethargic. If you think you may be dehydrated, there are two ways to tell:

The colour of your urine. Clear or light straw-coloured urine means you are probably not dehydrated. Yellow or orange wee means you have not been drinking enough, and you need to up your fluid intake quickly.
Pinch or press firmly on an area of exposed skin. If it does not spring back instantly, or stays pale and bloodless for more than a second or two, you are probably dehydrated.

Sunburn and UV Protection

While a high altitude trek is hardly a day at the seaside, you will be vulnerable to sunburn if not properly protected. The thin atmosphere at high altitudes blocks much less UV radiation, even on cloudy days.

The three most important things you can do to avoid sunburn are:

Apply SPF 30 or higher sunscreen to your face, nose and ears at least 30 minutes before going out into the sun, and reapply regularly. High SPF lip balm is also a must.

Wear a wide-brimmed hat that shades your face, nose and ears.
Wear UV-protective sunglasses, category 2-4.
At higher altitudes the sun's rays are intensified and even on a cloudy day they can penetrate through and still burn you. And do not forget that the sun is at its strongest between 10:00-14:00 hours each day.

Eating well

Many trekkers experience loss of appetite at high altitudes. This is a real problem, as you will be burning an extra 2000 or more calories a day, and not replacing them can cause real problems.

Just like staying hydrated, you have to eat heartily even if you are not hungry. Meals heavy in carbohydrates are best, because they are easier to digest at high altitudes and provide long-term energy.

It is important to keep plenty of small snacks with you, as you will have to keep your energy levels high. Take a favourite treat to make it easier to eat when you do not feel hungry, but avoid anything with honey or syrup, or anything chewy as they are likely to freeze tooth-crackingly solid above 5000 metres. Chocolate, nuts and seeds, biscuits, savoury snacks and boiled sweets are generally better choices.

Body temperature

Every mountain environment has its own climate, and Ladakh has several different weather zones at different heights. Conditions change quickly, and you will be moving between zones as well. A hot and dry day can be followed immediately by snow or rain. Wearing a layered outfit is generally the wisest way to make sure you stay healthy and reasonably comfortable in all conditions.

Above all, make sure to wear warm, wind-and water-proof, breathable clothing on your trek. Get high quality gear too, as this is definitely the real thing. Storms, high winds and freezing temperatures must be expected, and poor quality equipment will fail.

Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness, also called Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), hypobaropathy and soroche, is an illness caused by exposure to the low air pressure, especially low partial pressure of oxygen, which many trekkers experience at high altitudes.

AMS is caused by exerting yourself at high altitudes, especially if you have not been properly acclimatised. It is most common at altitudes above 2400 metres. Over 6000m above sea level, the air pressure (and the amount of oxygen it contains) is less than half that at sea level, and has been said to be comparable to working with only one lung.

AMS can be serious, especially as it can be debilitating, and it generally occurs far from places where medical treatment can be easily administered.

Not everyone suffers from AMS, of course, and it is very difficult to predict who is or is not vulnerable to it. Generally speaking, a fit person is less vulnerable than an unfit person, because their cardiovascular system can operate at low pressures longer without as much strain. Even so, anyone can be vulnerable at altitudes above 3500 metres, no matter their fitness level, if they have not spent some time getting used to the low atmospheric pressures first.

Avoiding Altitude Sickness

1. Walk high, sleep low. It is best to gradually climb higher each day, then descend lower to sleep. This lets you gradually become accustomed to lower pressures, and then recover somewhat overnight.

2. Slow and steady. You need to keep your respiration rate low enough to maintain a normal conversation. If you are panting or breathing hard, you must slow down. Overworking your heart and lungs substantially increases your chance of becoming ill.

3. Drink much more water than you think you need. Proper hydration helps acclimatisation dramatically. You need to drink at least three litres each day. As dehydration presents many of the same symptoms as altitude sickness, your chances of being allowed to continue are best if you stay hydrated.

4. Diamox. The general consensus of the research is that Diamox is helpful in avoiding AMS. We recommend you google Diamox and its effects yourself. It is a prescription drug, and you should consult with your doctor before taking it.

EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY KANDOO ADVENTURES

- 3 man tent per two people
- Foam sleeping mattress
- Communal dining tent
- Table, chairs and cutlery
- Toilet tent

CLOTHING TO BRING

HEADGEAR

- Warm beanie style hat – knitted or fleece
- Neck gaiter or scarf. It can get dusty in Ladakh and the air very cold. A scarf or balaclava comes in useful for keeping dust out and can double as a warm layer for your neck / face!
- Sun hat – preferably wide-brimmed for protection
- Sunglasses – high UV protection
- Headlamp (plus extra batteries)
- Climbing helmet

UPPER BODY

- Thermal or fleece base layer (x2)
- Long sleeve shirt/tshirt – light or medium weight, moisture wicking (x2)
- Short sleeved shirt/tshirt – lightweight, moisture wicking (x2)
- Fleece or soft shell jacket (x2)
- Insulated jacket – down or primaloft
- Lightweight water/windproof hard shell outer jacket
- Gloves – lightweight, fleece or quick drying fabric
- Gloves – heavyweight, insulated, preferably water resistant
- Over mittens – with safety straps

LEGS

- Leggings – thermal or fleece base layer (x1)
- Trekking trousers – light or medium weight (x2) – convertible trousers work well
- Waterproof hard shell trousers – ski pants work fine (x1)
- Gaiters

FEET

- Climbing boot – insulated, stiff-soled (B2 standard minimum)
- Trekking boots – mid weight with good ankle support
- Training shoe or similar – to wear around camp in the evenings
- Mid-weight trekking socks (x5 pairs)
- Breathable, high-wicking liner socks (x7 pairs)
- Thermal trekking socks for upper reaches of your trek (x2 pair)

EQUIPMENT TO BRING

TREKKING GEAR

- Small Rucksack or Daypack (30-40 litres) to carry water and personal items
- Waterproof duffle bag (approx 80-100 litres)
- Sleeping bag (4 season or -20 Deg C) and compression sack
- Trekking poles
- Water bottle or hydration bag – must be able to carry 1.5-2L of water

CLIMBING GEAR

- Crampons – to fit your climbing boots
- Ice axe
- Climbing harness
- Ascending (jumar) and descending (belay) devices
- Carabiners – 2 x locking, 2 x non-locking
- Prussik loop and tape sling

OTHER ACCESSORIES

- Sunscreen and lip balm - high SPF
- Toiletries, including toilet paper, wet wipes and hand sanitiser
- Camera and spare batteries
- Plug adapter, for charging devices in teahouses and hotels
- Personal medication and first aid kit
- Personal snacks and energy bars – dried fruit and nuts are a good option
- Isotonic drink powder / energy drink powder to mix in with your water
- Microfibre towel for wiping hands and face each day
- Pee bottle, useful for late night toilet needs

GEAR RENTAL

We recommend that wherever possible you use your own gear for your trek as this is the best way to ensure your comfort and enjoyment. We recognise though that the cost of some items is very high and this may not be possible. We do not have our own gear available for rental but there are many places offering gear for rental in Leh. The quality of rental gear is variable and it is your responsibility to check carefully the condition of any item you rent. We accept no responsibility for the quality of equipment hired. An indication of the likely rental costs is below. The only item of kit you cannot find in Leh is high altitude boots. If you do not have appropriate B2 or B3 boots for the ascent of Kang Yatse, we recommend you rent these in your own country.

- Hiking Boots = 3 $ per day per pair
- Crampon = 2 $ per day per set
- Ice Axes = 3 $ per day per axe
- Helmet = 2 $ per day
- Harness = 3 $ per day

HOW TO BOOK THIS TRIP

1 CHOOSE YOUR DATE AND CHECK AVAILABILITY

A full list of available dates can be found on our website.

2 CONTACT US

Contact us by phone, email or through our website. We will answer any questions you may have and send you a personalized itinerary and quote.

3 COMPLETE BOOKING AND PAYMENT

When you are ready to book, we will send you a link to our online booking forms and participation agreements. We accept all major credit and debit cards and require a low 20% deposit to secure your place.