12-DAY ADVENTURE

INDUS VALLEY & PHYANG FESTIVAL

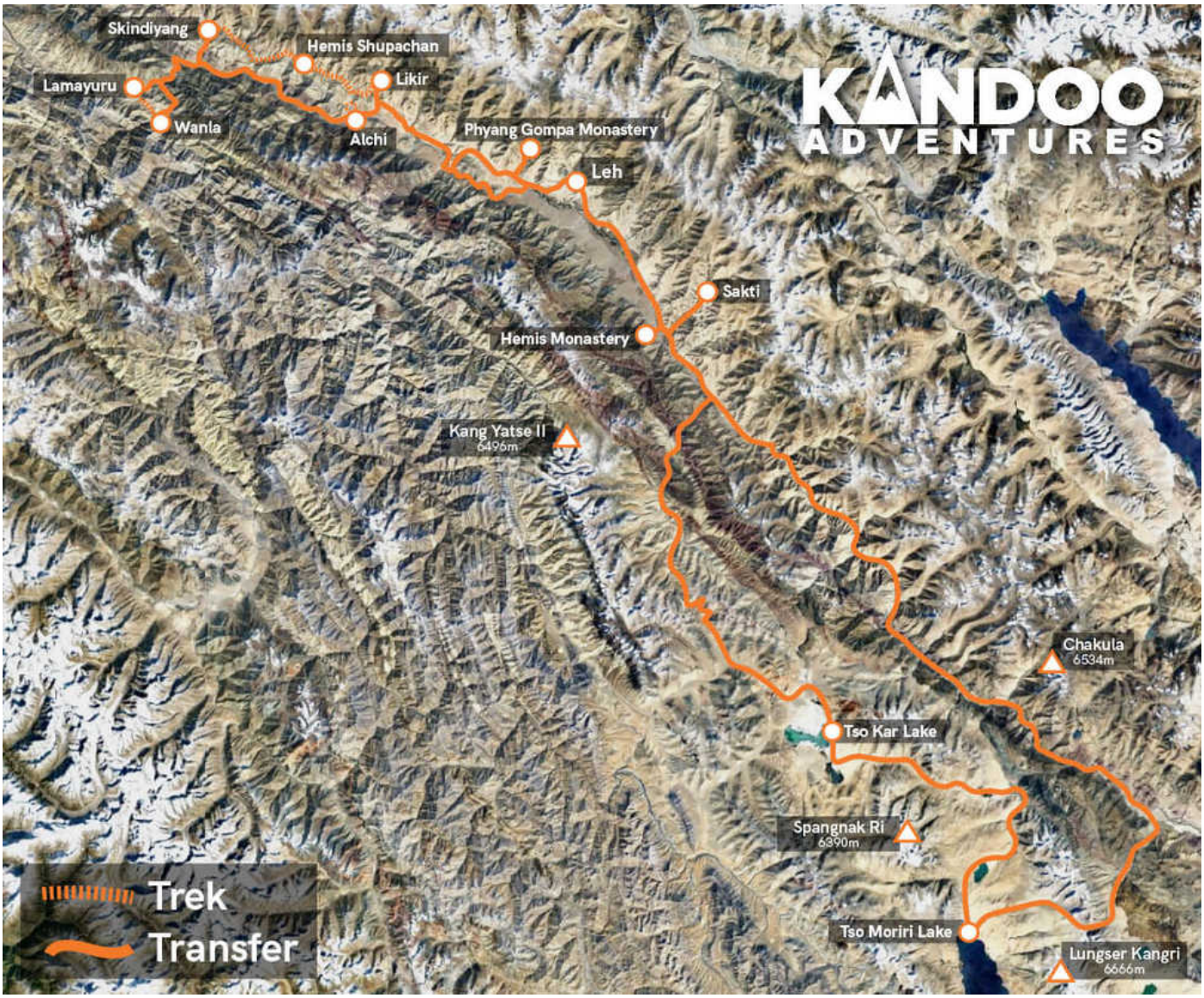
Ladakh

A complete discovery of Ladakh; trekking in the elusive Sham valley and the visiting the oldest and most beautiful monasteries of the Indus before wondering at the stunning Changtang lakes.

This trip soaks up the culture of mountainous India without the strenuous climbs of a summit route. Taking a steadier, people and places orientated approach, we begin with a cultural immersion into the flamboyant costumes and eclectic dances of the Phyang Tsedup Festival. We then don our trekking boots and explore on foot the unique remoteness of the Sham Valley. Taking the opportunity to soak up local life, away from the crowds whilst wondering at the soaring peaks of Zanskar, as we visit the traditional villages and monasteries of the Indus Valley along the way, before heading by road to the world renowned Tibetan highlands. Here, steep mountains give way to wide open spaces as we reach the banks of two of Ladakh's most beautiful lakes: the Tso Kar and the Tso Moriri. After some time relaxing on the shores of these fascinating lakes, we return to Leh for a final night to indulge in the colourful vibrance of this small, mountain town.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Trek through the remote Sham Valley shadowed by ochre and majenta streaked peaks
- Relax on the shores of the stunningly beautiful Changtang Lakes
- Trip fully carbon offset as standard
- Attend the Phyang Festival near Leh and experience a true Ladakhi cultural immersion


KANDOO
ADVENTURES
Skindiyang
Hemis Shupachan
Likir
Lamayuru
Wanla
Alchi
Phyang Gompa Monastery
Leh
Sakti
Hemis Monastery
Kang Yatse II
6496m
Chakula
6534m
Tso Kar Lake
Spangnak Ri
6390m
Tso Moriri Lake
Lungser Kangri
6666m
Trek
Transfer

ITINERARY

DAY 1

WELCOME TO LEH

Fly into Delhi before changing to a smaller airline for a scenic flight to Leh. Here your guide will meet you at arrivals and you will be transported through the vibrant, mountain town to your accommodation. After a briefing with your guide, you will then be free to roam the town and get acquainted with it's charm.

Transport: **Private transfer**
Accomodation: **Hotel**

DAY 2

A DAY OF MONASTERIES

Today will be a full day of exploration, taking place in the outreaches of the upper Indus valley; its beautiful monasteries taking pride of place as symbols of the region. From Leh, we will take a short drive up the valley to begin our tour of local culture and heritage. We start with Shey monastery, former royal capital of the kingdom, whose palace contains an 8-meter high golden Buddha. We will then be treated to a visit to Thiksey monastery. This architectural marvel, miniature of the famous Potala, is incredibly photogenic. It's beautiful works: paintings, masks and thankas all attributed to the monks who live or have lived within it's walls. After perusing these spiritual walls, we then continue our journey to the small monastery of Matho. We then return to Leh to sample more of the local cuisine.

Transport: **Private transfer**
Accomodation: **Hotel**
Meals included: **Breakfast / Dinner**

DAY 3

LEH TO LIKIR

We take the road today and descend the great Indus valley. This is an opportunity to appreciate the unique landscapes of the region, roaming between gorges and desert plateaus. Near Nimmoo, we admire the confluence between the two major rivers of Ladakh: where the crystal clear waters of the Zanskar mingle with the turbulent waves of the Indus. We then stop to visit the remote monastery of Basgo, teetering on it's precarious perch, before arriving in the beautiful village of Likir for lunch. In the afternoon, we reach the small settlement of Saspol, it's green pastures a harsh contrast to the dusty, red mountains that tower over it. Here, we explore the caves of hermits, whose walls are adorned with intricate murals. Dating from the 12th century, these are a subtle blend of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist art.

Transport: **Private transfer**
Accomodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 4

LIKIR TO YANGTHANG

Back on foot, we begin today with a trek up through the stupa lined streets of local villages before gradually ascending to the Phobe La pass, sitting at 3650m. From there, we then descend by a gentle path that winds through an arid valley, framed by mountains streaked in ochre and pink. We arrive at the village of Sumdo and again find some explosive greenery amid the desert-like surroundings. After having rested, we begin the steady ascent up to the Charatse La pass. Here we arrive at the delightful village of Yangthang, settled amid the towering peaks of the Zanskar massif, we set up our camp for the night.

Hiking time: **4 hours**
Ascent: **500 m**
Descent: **420 m**
Accomodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 5

YANGTHANG TO THEMISGAM

Waking amongst the stunning views of Yangthang, we cross the village and join the river as it meanders it's way through the steep sided valley, then climb the winding path to the sun-baked high point of the Sarmathang La pass. At the top of the pass, we admire the panorama of sandy peaks, regaining our energy, before descending to the pretty village of Hemishukpachan, arguably the most beautiful in Ladakh. We continue the hike traversing the rocky outcrops of the Mebtak La, before descending to the village of Themisgam. Here we can relax and explore the traditional atmosphere of this rural village, a patchwork of barley fields interspersed with sumptuous apple and apricot trees. This marks the end of the Sham valley section ofour trek.

Hiking time: **6 hours**
Ascent: **800 m**
Descent: **850 m**
Accomodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 6

THEMISGAM TO LAMAYURU

After breakfast we continue to hike along the web of barley fields, following the crystal, clear waters weaving along the valley bottom, until we reach Tia village. From here we climb gently for an hour or so to the dusty outcrops of the Chamla pass, before descending past white-washed Chortens to the charming Skindiyang village. After a short, steep descent, we reach the valley floor and our vehicle. Load up bags and relax whilst we follow the winding road, marvelling at the ochre peaks before arriving at Lamayuru. Here, we visit the Lamayuru monastery, an eleventh century monastery which has three important temples perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking the village. Spend the afternoon taking in the traditional, local culture or embark upon one of the numerous hiking opportunities available around the village of Lamayuru.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**
Ascent: **750 m**
Descent: **450 m**
Accomodation: **Hotel**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 7

LAMAYURU TO ALCHI

We leave Lamayuru on foot this morning, heading for the lower slopes of the formidable Zanskar range. Trekking up a narrow valley, we gradually reach the Prinkiti La, a pass of 3700 m. From the top, we admire a stunning panorama that overlooks all the mountains of the majestic North Zanskar. We then descend into a steep-sided, narrow canyon which opens out as we arrive into the village of Wanla. Here the rugged peaks of the Zanskar give way to the alluring greens of the valley floor. Our vehicle awaits us and we make the drive to Alchi, a traditional village in the Indus Valley renowned for having the oldest monastic complex in Ladakh (founded between 958 and 1055 AD). The particularly magnificent mural frescoes, jewels of Indo-Tibetan art are classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

Hiking time: **4 - 5 hours**
Ascent: **350 m**
Descent: **530 m**
Accomodation: **Hotel**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 8

PHYANG TSEDUP FESTIVAL

This morning we will head to the village of Phyang to experience the vibrant performances and exquisite costumes of the Phyang Tsedup festival. This festival is marking the celebration of good over evil and culminates with the destruction of the Storma on the final day. We then follow the winding road up the Indus Valley taking in the beautiful mountain vistas at each turn. If we have time on route, we will visit the monastery of Hemis, one of the most affluent in the region. Built in 1605, it has nearly 500 monks and a unique collection of small paintings retracing the life of the great masters of Lamaism. We then end the day with a last road trip, to reach the village of Sakti.

Transport: **Private transfer**
Accomodation: **Guesthouse**
Meals included: **Breakfast / Dinner**

DAY 9

TSOMORIRI LAKE

This morning we venture into one of the wildest regions of the Indian Himalayas, the Changtang highlands. Here we are a stone's throw from Tibet, in an area that only Changpa nomads roam during the summer months. We arrive on the shores of one of the most beautiful lakes in the region, the Tso Moriri. The waters of this large lake offer incredible shades of blue, similar to those of the famous Nam Tso and Yamdrok Tso lakes in central Tibet. We take advantage of the surroundings with a short walk on the gentle shores of the lake and admire the electric hues of the setting sun reflected in the water.

Transport: **Private transfer**
Hiking time: **1 hour**
Accomodation: **Equipped Camp**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 10

TSO KAR LAKE

Wake up early with the possibility of visiting the elusive nomads who generally reside in a valley not far from here, then there is the option to stroll along the shores of this mesmerising lake. Take the time to soak up the calm, serene atmosphere of the lakeshore, keeping your eyes peeled for the endangered Goa antelope and Tibetan Gazelle which graze the nearby pastures. In the afternoon, take a scenic drive to Lake Tso Kar, the "white lake" in Ladakhi, given this name due to the amount of salt present in its waters. It's richness in minerals causes it to be an important stage in the migration of many birds, and a well-known breeding ground for all bird watchers.

Transport: **Private transfer**
Hiking time: **1 hour**
Accomodation: **Equipped Camp**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 11

TSO KAR TO HEMIS TO LEH

This morning we take a short hike along the shores of Lake Tso Kar, in landscapes of contrasting colours, from the ochre of the mountains to the azure blue of the lake, to the dazzling white of the salt crystals. After savouring our last moments in the solitude of the Changtang highlands, we take the road to return to Leh via the pass of Tanglang La. On route, we will visit the monastery of Hemis, one of the most affluent in the region. Built in 1605, it has nearly 500 monks and a unique collection of small paintings retracing the life of the great masters of Lamaism. We then end the day with a last road trip, to reach the village of Sakti. A free evening in the capital gives you the opportunity to browse it's vibrant bazaar and bustling restaurants.

Transport: **Private transfer**
Hiking time: **1 hour**
Accomodation: **Hotel**
Meals included: **Breakfast**

DAY 12

DEPARTURE

We will collect you from your hotel and transfer you to Leh Airport for your departing flight.

Transport: **Private transfer**
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

The Indus Valley trek is considered **moderate**. It's a great **introduction to trekking around the Tibetan Plateau**, particularly if you are nervous of the longer trekking expeditions. The trek generally follows the Sham valley and other tributary valleys to the Indus, taking in some passes but missing out the high summits. It includes short and accessible walks, however the high altitude of the region (between 3500 and 5000 m) requires you to be in very good health. The highest point on whole the trip is 5,300 meters, however this is reached in a vehicle. The highest trekking point is 4040m. We would recommend getting out in your local hills for 6-7 hours per day, over consecutive days prior to departure to allow you to build up a good level of mountain fitness.

This trek can be completed by anyone with a good fitness level and some determination, however a training plan over a few months is recommended to ensure you have an enjoyable experience. If you would like to talk through your suitability for this trip feel free to give us a call and speak to one of our team members.

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 flavours 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.

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 outages 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 -4 degrees centigrade. We will also provide a large dining 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 an all terrain vehicle is used to transport all the equipment along the trekking route.

Fixed camps at Lake Tsomoriri provide large, canvas tents for two people, equipped with comfortable beds (real mattresses), pillows, sheets and towels. Each tent has a private bathroom with cold water. Hot water in a bowl can be provided here as well so you can have a wash in the evenings.

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 and cook.

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 an all-terrain vehicle. 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 vehicle 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. A flexible duffel bag or backpack is best for your main luggage. **Your main luggage must not exceed 15kg**. This is the maximum weight for a bag on most domestic flights in India.

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)

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

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

- Trekking boots – mid weight with good ankle support
- Training shoe or similar – to wear around the teahouses
- Mid-weight trekking socks (x5 pairs)
- Breathable, high-wicking liner socks (x7 pairs)
- Thermal trekking socks - for cold nights (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 -4 Deg C) and compression sack
- Trekking poles
- Water bottle or hydration bag – must be able to carry 1.5-2L of water

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.

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.