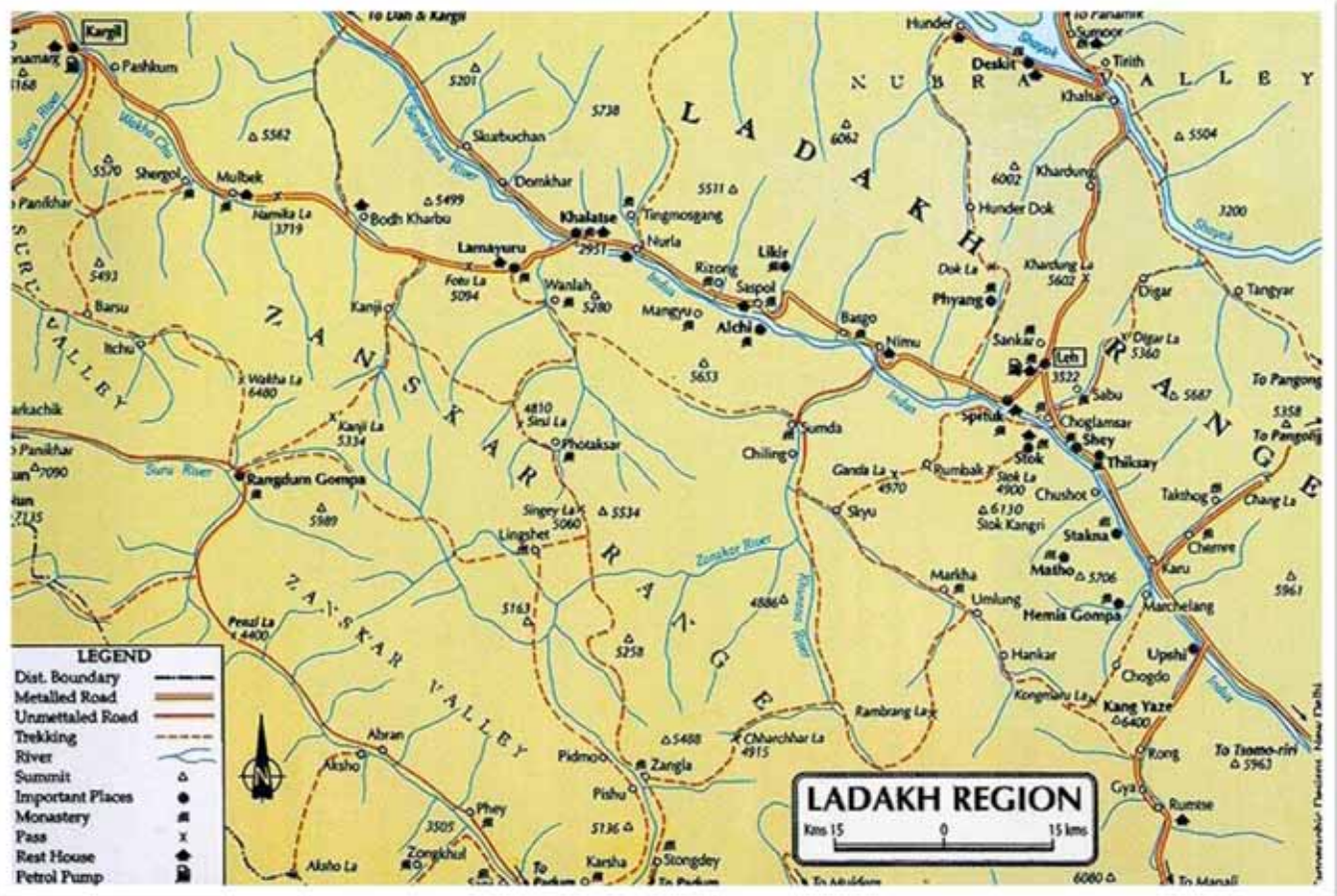


Ladakh, India

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION



A trip to Ladakh in northernmost India brings you to the most authentic, traditional, fascinating Tibetan Buddhist communities on earth. Ladakh is separated culturally, geographically, and politically from Hindu and Muslim areas of India. In Ladakh you can explore the tranquility of remote Buddhist communities, ancient monasteries, and wild mountains where snow leopards still roam. Ladakh is the best place in India to travel for cultural interactions with highland Buddhist people. Ladakh trips reward the patient and persistent ecotourist with incomparable experiences, friendships and memories.

GETTING READY FOR YOUR TRIP

Passports

- ❖ Passports are required of U.S. Citizens to enter
- ❖ Must be valid for at least 6 months after your trip – if not, apply or renew immediately
- ❖ Keep a copy of the picture page of your passport in a separate place while traveling
- ❖ Carry an extra passport photo in case you need to apply for a quick replacement

Visas

- ❖ Visas are required for entry into India
- ❖ You must apply no sooner than 3 months ahead of your departure date
- ❖ The Indian Embassy & Consulates are not always reliable – a visa service is highly recommended
- ❖ You should NOT mention that you are traveling to Ladakh on your visa application since this may slow your visa processing. Special permits for travel within Ladakh are acquired by our office in Leh when you arrive
- ❖ Nationalities of other countries please inquire regarding visas

Health, Immunizations

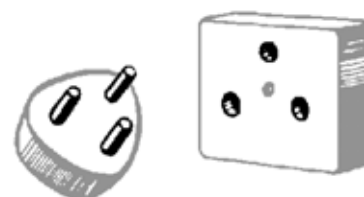
- ❖ Some immunizations are highly recommended, but none are required for entry
- ❖ Recommended immunizations include: polio, tetanus, typhoid, MMR, hepatitis A & B
- ❖ A vaccination certificate for yellow fever is required for entry, if arriving from other infected countries
- ❖ SEEK INDEPENDENT MEDICAL ADVICE from your physician or local travelers health service
- ❖ For the latest recommendations for immunizations or malaria prevention contact the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia: 800-311-3435, or visit their website: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>
- ❖ Many universities have immunization clinics that can assist you

Time Difference

- ❖ India's time zone is 5 1/2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +5 1/2)
- ❖ India does not follow Daylights Savings Time
- ❖ It is 13 1/2 hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time, and 10 1/2 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time
- ❖ If it is 10:30 PM in Delhi, it will be 12 Noon in New York and 9 AM in Los Angeles, on the same day

Electricity

- ❖ Voltage all over India is 230V, 50Hz
- ❖ A variety of electrical plugs can be found in India, so a good all-around adaptor plug set is recommended.
- ❖ Plug types with 2 round pins, or 3 round pins with ground, shown here, is the most common.



ARRIVAL

Entry

- ❖ You will be met upon arrival by your tour leader or representative just outside the airport in Delhi and transferred to your hotel. They will have your air ticket along with instructions for your flight to Leh
- ❖ You will be met at the airport in Leh by a JOURNEYS representative and transferred to your lodging
- ❖ You guides are generally only allowed to meet arriving passengers after clearing all Customs and Immigration formalities. They are also not allowed inside the departure check-in areas to assist
- ❖ Contact information is sent with your Last Minute Reminders from JOURNEYS

Customs

- ❖ Before arrival in India, you will receive a Passenger Declaration Form
- ❖ Anything you are bringing for personal use - camera gear, binoculars, etc. - will be allowed



- ❖ Forbidden are: fire arms, ammunition and explosives; pornography; drugs and narcotics such as opium, morphine, heroin, etc.; unsanitary food items
- ❖ Indian currency is not allowed to be brought in or taken out of the country
- ❖ It is forbidden to take out species of wildlife and articles made from wild flora and fauna such as ivory, musk deer, reptile skins, furs, shahtoos shawls (made from fur of endangered Tibetan antelopes), etc.

GETTING ALONG AS A VISITOR

Food & Restaurants

- ❖ Breakfasts are included in Delhi & Leh (as listed on your itinerary) and all other meals are included in the trip cost while traveling in Ladakh
- ❖ A wide variety of food is offered in India and can accommodate vegetarians
- ❖ You can expect to spend around 130-550 Rupees (\$3.00-12.00 USD) per meal, per person in Delhi & Leh
- ❖ Look for a restaurant where lots of locals are eating - chances are the food will be delicious and reasonable
- ❖ Eat only foods that are thoroughly cooked, and raw fruits and vegetables that you have peeled yourself
- ❖ Drink only bottled drinks, and avoid tap water, fountain drinks and ice cubes
- ❖ Don't buy food from street vendors or stalls, and don't eat food that is no longer hot
- ❖ Avoid fresh salads unless the vegetables are washed with purified water, and avoid dairy products that are unpasteurized or may not have been refrigerated properly

Money and Currency Exchange

- ❖ The Indian currency is the Rupee (R or INR)
- ❖ Indian currency can be obtained freely from hotels, banks or local money changers in major cities
- ❖ Check the current exchange rates at: <http://www.xe.net/ucc/>
- ❖ It is a good idea to bring newer dated currency that has no rips, marks, folds, or holes
- ❖ Visa, American Express and Barclay's Bank Traveler's Checks are widely accepted at most major banks
- ❖ American Express, Visa and Diner's Club credit cards are accepted throughout India, though a surcharge may be added to the purchase price
- ❖ Be aware that you may need to show your passport when using a credit card. Also, credit card companies are now charging a 3%+ surcharge on all foreign currency purchases (purchases of goods made outside of the US). Check with your credit card company before you travel as the charges change frequently without notice and vary with card and destination.
- ❖ ATM machines are available in the larger cities
- ❖ Banking hours are typically 10:00 am to 2:00 pm Mon-Fri and 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Saturdays
- ❖ We suggest bringing \$500-600 for items not included in the trip cost, emergencies, and for shopping
- ❖ A 10-20% luxury tax is levied by the government on sales and services not already included in trip costs
- ❖ International airport departure tax from Delhi will be approximately R550 (\$12 US); domestic departure tax from Delhi and Leh will be just a few dollars

Tipping

- ❖ Our guides in Ladakh lead our tours because they enjoy it and consider all of their travelers friends. They are not motivated by gratuities. We suggest the following guidelines for tipping in appreciation of good services:
- ❖ Guide: \$8 per person/per day
- ❖ Driver (or horseman): \$4-5 per person/per day
- ❖ Cook & staff combined: \$5 per person/per day
- ❖ Tipping in the rest of India has become an expected reward for good service
- ❖ In tourist restaurants or hotels, there is typically a service fee of 10%, tip not included but optional
- ❖ In other places where there are no service fees, a small tip is appreciated
- ❖ 20-50 Rupee tips are appropriate in baggage handling situations when on your own. These tips are included when your baggage is handled as a group/on a group trip
- ❖ Tipping taxi or rickshaw drivers is not mandatory



- ❖ Tip money may be in local or U.S. currency
- ❖ Anytime you especially appreciate someone particularly informative or helpful, an extra tip is always gratefully accepted.

Altitude Sickness

- ❖ **PLEASE NOTE:** The information below is provided to increase awareness of symptoms that some travelers experience, and is not meant to be alarming. Most people experience few, if any, symptoms.
- ❖ Altitude sickness is caused by abrupt change from low elevations to high altitudes. Mild symptoms include: headache, shortness of breath, light-headedness, difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite, mild nausea or vomiting, and fatigue.
- ❖ Take it easy the first day or two upon arrival at high altitude. Be sure to drink fluids, avoid alcohol, eat regularly and get plenty of rest. Your body will soon acclimatize and you will feel fine.
- ❖ Trekkers hiking up to high elevations may feel the continuing effects of altitude as they make their ascent. Our itineraries are planned to allow for a slow pace and plenty of time for acclimatization to minimize these effects. Local guides will not allow you to go too high too fast and are prepared to adjust the pace if necessary, so the risk of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) is extremely low. On rare occasions, extreme symptoms may manifest themselves. If this occurs in yourself or if you notice symptoms in a fellow trekker, please tell your guide immediately.
- ❖ The first response to severe symptoms should be a quick descent to a lower altitude. Most cases, if they occur, are mild, and symptoms improve promptly with a return to lower altitude.
- ❖ Some travelers ask us about Acetazolamide (Diamox), which can help to speed acclimatization and reduce minor symptoms. Be aware that some people have a severe reaction to Diamox. Consult your physician for further information about this drug.

Emergency Services

- ❖ India offers quality medical care in major cities
- ❖ Outside of major cities, medical care may be limited
- ❖ Prevention of injury is always the best policy
- ❖ Your guide will advise you in the case of urgent medical need during your tour

SPECIAL REMARKS

People

- ❖ You will find most Indians & Ladakhis to be very hospitable and friendly
- ❖ If Indians stare at you, do not consider it rude, but a matter of curiosity
- ❖ It is best to ask permission before entering houses, or before taking portrait photos.
- ❖ DON'T throw food into a fire
- ❖ DON'T use your left hand for any kind of social interaction
- ❖ DON'T touch local people on the head
- ❖ DON'T point your finger; instead, use your palm facing upwards
- ❖ DON'T touch a deity statue or holy object
- ❖ DON'T wear shorts or sleeveless shirts in places of worship
- ❖ DON'T wear shoes in places of worship or people's homes
- ❖ DON'T give alms to beggars; instead, donate to a recognized charitable organization
- ❖ If in doubt, ask the guide!

Time

- ❖ Relax and enjoy the easy-going rhythm of Ladakh
- ❖ Do not expect everything to happen on time; remember that in some places time is not as important as it is back home, and there is often little concern for punctuality
- ❖ Despite best efforts, departures and arrivals could be a little before or after the time given. This applies



particularly to aircraft movements. Operating requirements, weather and terrain sometimes present problems, and on these occasions, to ensure your safety, flight times may vary

Restroom Facilities

- ❖ It is a very good idea to carry your own small supply of toilet paper. In cities where there are flush toilets you will usually find a wastebasket next to the toilet - most sewage systems can't handle paper. Most bathrooms will neither look nor smell as sanitary as those you are used to.

Safety

- ❖ Observe the same precautions taken at home
- ❖ Do not flaunt a bulging wallet, always lock unattended vehicles, do not leave baggage unattended in public
- ❖ Make use of security facilities provided for valuables in your accommodation
- ❖ In towns, the best place to carry your passport and money is in a pouch worn around the neck inside of the shirt or in a money belt around the waist
- ❖ It is highly recommended that you buy travel insurance that covers your baggage before you leave
- ❖ Don't take anything you can't afford to lose or can't replace

Shopping

- ❖ Popular souvenirs include: Woodcarvings, Carpets, Jewelry, Leatherwork, Metalwork & marble, Musical instruments, Paintings, and Silk, saris & textiles, Thangkas, and Hats
- ❖ ****Note**** Antiques over 100 years old are not allowed to be bought from India without an export clearance certificate
- ❖ Bartering is the norm at street markets. Ask your guide for tips on local bartering. But don't push too hard - remember that what is only a few dollars to you may mean a great deal to the average seller or artisan. Never barter unless you intend to buy.

Climate

- ❖ Temperatures tend to be much cooler in Ladakh/the north, versus the year round warmth of the south.
- ❖ Best time to travel to Ladakh is between June and October, it cannot be visited November through April
- ❖ Ladakh receives very little rainfall
- ❖ The cool season runs from November to March, and is the best time to visit much of India. However, during this time, temperatures in the north can reach below the freezing point and roads are impassable in the far north. It can even get quite cold in the northern central parts of India.
- ❖ In the far south where it never really gets cold, the temperatures are pleasantly warm. The dry, hot season runs from March to June when temperatures can soar to over 110°F, though it can be quite pleasant in some parts of the Himalayas.
- ❖ The hot monsoon season usually begins sometime in June and typically lasts until October, though the southeast coast receives most of its rain from October to early December due to the northeast monsoon.

Equipment & Packing

- ❖ A good goal is to fit everything into a single piece of checked luggage and a carry-on daypack
- ❖ For treks you will need a durable, water-resistant, soft duffel bag without wheels as your luggage - bags are carried on horseback and wheels may get accidentally broken off
- ❖ On cultural and non-trekking trips, a lightweight soft-sided suitcase or duffel with wheels would be fine
- ❖ A small backpack or hip-pack is ideal for carrying bottled water, camera, extra sunblock, etc, while on excursions where the terrain requires your hands to be free.
- ❖ Choose a distinctive, easily identified bag, and use a JOURNEYS luggage tag for bag identification by staff, and your name and address should be also indelibly affixed inside the luggage.
- ❖ Keep in mind that synthetic fabrics dry faster than natural fibers like cotton, especially in humid areas, so you can pack less if you are able to wash and dry your clothes easily, if you need to wash out some clothes en route
- ❖ Casual clothing is appropriate at all times
- ❖ Be aware of weight limits on checked luggage and pack accordingly



- ❖ You may want to bring an extra smaller, collapsible (lockable) duffel, to leave items in a city hotel while you are on an excursion or to use on your return for souvenirs



CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT SUGGESTIONS CHECKLIST

Pre-Departure Tasks

- Obtain or renew passport
- Buy travelers checks in low denominations
- Evaluate and obtain trip cancellation, baggage and medical insurance
- Consult with physician for immunizations and prescription medicine recommendations
- Break-in primary footwear
- Make final payment to JOURNEYS at least 60 days before trip departure

Clothing

- Lightweight hiking boots or comfortable athletic or walking shoes (washable)
- Extra shoes or sandals that can get wet/muddy
- Socks; Wool blend socks & Polypropylene liner socks for trekking
- Shorts (quick dry)
- Comfortable, lightweight pants
- Nicer pants or skirt (optional)
- Lightweight long-sleeve shirt
- T-shirts, short sleeve shirts
- Heavy sweater/sweatshirt or fleece
- Warm jacket
- Sturdy rain gear - poncho or jacket and pants
- Wool hat or hood
- Gloves/mittens
- Sun hat or cap with wide brim
- Bandana
- Swim suit
- Sleepwear
- Under clothes
- Long underwear, insulating polypropylene or fleece

Personal Items

- Sleeping bag rated at least 15-25°F or warmer
- Fleece sleeping bag liner (optional)
- Towel & washcloth
- Sunblock (waterproof, high SPF)
- Lipbalm with SPF
- Insect repellent with DEET content
- Biodegradable bar soap
- 2 spare passport photos (in case of lost passport)
- Wrist watch and/or travel clock
- Sunglasses (with strap, case)
- Extra eyeglasses/contacts
- Money belt or pouch for valuables
- Small flashlight with extra batteries
- Copies of all important documents
- Day pack (can also serve as an airline carry-on bag)
- Camera, memory cards, film, batteries, charger
- Underwater camera (disposable kind is very handy)
- Lead bag/containers to protect film in X-ray machines
- Lightweight binoculars



- Plug adapter (if needed)
- Soft duffel with shoulder strap or durable suitcase
- Luggage tags
- Ziploc-type bags for packing shampoo or other liquids
- Stuff sacks or plastic bags for organizing inside luggage (also useful for dirty laundry)
- Thread, needles, safety pins for minor repairs
- Small packable umbrella

Personal First Aid Kit

- Aspirin or other pain killer
- Cold relief tablets, antihistamine, cough drops
- Band-aids, gauze pads
- Antibiotics
- Prescription medicines
- Aloe gel or lotion in case of sunburn
- Anti-diarrhea medicine
- Antibiotic cream/ointment
- Supply of feminine hygiene items
- Motion sickness tablets
- Earplugs

Essential Items For Your Carry-On Bag

- Passport
- Domestic and international air tickets
- Travelers checks, money and credit cards
- Insurance certificates
- Address and telephone number of emergency contact
- Prescription medicines
- Extra set of underclothes
- Toiletries in small leak-proof bottles
- Camera gear, film and other valuables

Optional Items

- Binoculars
- Address book, writing paper, or journal, pen/pencil
- Small washcloth
- Wet wipes/moist towelettes and Kleenex
- Favorite snack foods (pre-packaged)
- Pictures of your house and family
- Mask, snorkel, fins, wetsuit (if applicable)
- Map
- Silica bags for moisture (protect camera equipment)
- Video camera
- Phrase book



INDIA: AVERAGE TEMPERATURES (°F) & RAINFALL (Inches)

Agra 533 ft. above sea level

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High	73	78	90	101	107	105	95	92	93	94	85	76
Average Low	43	46	55	67	77	83	80	78	75	62	49	44
Rain	.51	.49	.32	.21	.38	2.44	8.55	8.11	4.58	.71	.14	.30

Bangalore 3021 ft. above sea level

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High	80	86	90	93	91	84	81	81	82	62	79	78
Average Low	57	60	65	69	69	67	66	66	65	65	62	58
Rain	.24	.25	.40	1.61	4.16	2.86	3.93	4.98	6.66	5.87	2.76	.44

Delhi 714 ft. above sea level

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High	71	75	85	97	105	102	95	93	94	93	83	74
Average Low	43	49	57	68	79	83	80	78	75	64	52	45
Rain	.99	.83	.51	.33	.52	3.03	7.03	7.23	4.84	.4	.1	.43

Mumbai 37 ft. above sea level

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High	83	83	86	89	91	89	86	85	86	89	89	87
Average Low	67	67	72	76	80	79	77	76	77	76	73	69
Rain	.14	.08	.05	.03	.65	19.06	24.3	13.4	10.4	2.54	.53	.08

Varanasi 250 ft. above sea level

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High	74	79	92	102	105	101	92	90	91	100	83	75
Average Low	48	52	62	72	79	82	80	79	77	68.	56	48
Rain	.74	.71	.37	.2	.53	4.56	11.8	12.0	7.22	2.18	.37	.27

