



Ladakh - Snow Leopard Expedition

Nature Trails India Tour Itinerary

2009 - 2010

Dates

2009

Sunday 20th December – Saturday 02nd January 2010

2010

Sunday 21st February – Saturday 06th March 2010

Cost

2009 - £1899 (Delhi/Delhi) Per Person based on 4 people travelling together

A **£99** contribution to Planet Era Foundation of India for Leopard and Tiger Conservation programme.

2010 - £1999 (Delhi/Delhi) Per Person based on 4 people travelling together

Grading

You must be accustomed to regular, very strenuous, hill treks and have a level of fitness compatible with trekking in mountainous terrain. Treks will cover rough, uneven, snowy ground at altitudes of up to 4,000 metres, where even gentle activity feels more tiring than usual.

Focus

Snow Leopards and other Himalayan wildlife

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1

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On arrival in Delhi we will transfer to the Hotel Free for Evening. Optional day visit in Delhi.

Day 2

Catch Morning Flight for Leh. Arrival at Leh Airport. Overnight at Leh

We will be acclimatising to the altitude today, spending time in and around Leh. For those who wish, there will be a chance to go for gentle strolls in the town's alleyways and shops. Leh is a fascinating place and you will have time to explore its winding streets and bazaars. You will see Ladakhi women wearing traditional dress and colourful jewellery. The impressive 16th century Leh Palace raises eight floors high and dominates the views from town.

Day 3

Sightseeing in Leh; cultural visits to Shey & Thiksey

We will spend a whole day acclimatising to the altitude and exploring the area. Today we will visit Shey, which was once the residence of the royal family. The monastery here is famous for its high gilded statue of Buddha.

Twelve miles from Leh, and spectacularly situated, is one of the finest examples of Ladakhi architecture –Thiksey. This is one of the largest and most impressive Gompas in the area and has several temples containing images, stupas and exquisite wall paintings. Thiksey monastery has an outstanding collection of art in its Chambers.

Day 4

Sightseeing in Leh.

Day 5

Drive to Latho; trek to Zingchen, Hemis (High Altitude) National Park

Today we will drive to Zingchen, a distance of sixteen kilometres across the Indus in Spituk. We will follow a zig-zag trail along the Indus River until we enter a gorge. We'll continue along the stream coming out of the Rumbak gorge to where it joins the Indus and here we will be looking for the first signs of Snow Leopard.

Day 6

In Search of Snow Leopard at Hemis National Park

The schedule for our trek over the next five days will be decided on by our expert guide. There will not be a fixed itinerary and the emphasis will be on flexibility – this will be to maximise the possibilities of seeing Snow Leopards. Please note that sightings cannot be guaranteed, however, as the Snow Leopard is one of the most elusive animals on the planet!

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Our days will be spending searching for Snow Leopards. Forced down from high altitude summer haunts, the Snow Leopards in this region make their way down to the valleys and gorge sides in Hemis National Park during mid-winter to search for prey. For this reason we have scheduled our trip to take place year here. Opportunities for sightings are most likely to arise from staking out a kill and waiting for an individual to return to it, following tracks and other signs of activity as we hike up narrow side valleys.

Hemis National Park, also known as the 'Snow Leopard Capital of India', is situated at an altitudinal range of 3,300 to 6,000 m, and hosts a remarkable variety of wildlife. The Park, established in 1981, is bounded by the Indus River and encloses a range of habitats including dry forests of Juniper, Birch, fir, alpine grasslands and Scrub lands.

The Park is full of many endangered animals normally found in cold regions, along with an interesting assemblage of cold desert flora. Hemis Park is home to Snow Leopard, Tibetan Ibex, Pallas's Cat, Bharal, Red Fox, Wolf, Marmot, Tibetan Argali and Ladakh Urial.

Day 7 to Day 11

Trekking the Snow Leopard.

Day 12

Return to Leh

Today we will trek Zingchen. From there we will drive to Leh and stay at the Hotel for the night.

Day 13

Fly Leh to Delhi

Today we will say goodbye to our trekking team and catch a morning internal flight to Delhi, arriving there midmorning.

We will then transfer to the 4-star Hotel, which enjoys a good location and has Comfortable rooms with air-conditioning.

There may be a chance to do some bird watching today, with your tour leader, in the city's attractive wooded parks and along the Yamuna River.

Day 14

Morning Sightseeing, Delhi

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There may be time for some city sightseeing today and to sample some of Delhi's historical sights. Old Delhi pulses with energy and colour – the hustle and bustle of bazaars thronging with people assaults the senses and narrow lanes twist and turn between tall leaning houses, from which the sounds and aromas of the Indian Subcontinent emanate, enveloping the visitor.

Free for onward journey

Weather

It will be very cold. You are visiting one of the world's highest and most remote mountain ranges, where conditions are unpredictable – snow may fall at any time.

For much of the winter the sun does shine in this region, to the north of the Himalayas, and at altitudes between 3,700 and 4,500 metres, where we will be in Hemis National Park, we will expect sunny weather with a chill wind. Temperatures could drop as low as -20°C at night but are more typically between -8°C and -15°C. Heavy snow can of course fall at any time at this season.

Food & Accommodation

The cost of all meals and accommodation is included in the price of this holiday except for lunches and dinners in Delhi. The accommodation will be basic, and on trek will take the form of camping or a village home stay.

We will eat local food of a generally reasonable standard – typically rice and curry, with some Ladakhi specialities.

Flights / Transport

All Domestic Flights and local transport is included in the cost.

Clothing

You will need to be very well equipped for this holiday. Essential equipment: A good 4-season sleeping bag with hood suitable for Alpine winters, a down jacket, woolly hat/balaclava, skiing type gloves, waterproof jacket and warm outdoor-wear trousers, fleece (and many other warm layers), thermal underwear – more than one set recommended.

To book your place

You are just a call away to book your place please **call** UK: +44 – 2030516839. US +1 – 347 468 8439, India: +91 – 9826700588 or email us if you any queries regarding the tour at enquiries@naturetrailsindia.info

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Note: The above mentioned is the tour plan, We can customize trip, as per the destination, Number of days. Guest can extend their trip by including the destination of your own choice.

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