

Classic Journeys **ADVENTURE TRAVEL**

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- ◆ **CHALLENGING TREK CROSSING SEVERAL HIGH PASSES IN LADAKH**
- ◆ **SPECTACULAR VIEWS TO THE KARAKORAM PEAKS**
- ◆ **EXPLORE MONASTERIES AND FORTS OF 'LITTLE TIBET' AND VISIT THE COLOURFUL BUDDHIST FESTIVAL AT PHAYANG MONASTERIES**
- ◆ **TECHNICALLY EASY CLIMB TO OVER 6000 METRES FULLY SUPPORTED WITH EXPERIENCED GUIDES**

Tailor-made itinerary. Choose to travel on a departure date of your choice

Best time to travel: July through to end of September

This itinerary can be operated for groups on a private tailor-made basis. The cost will be advised depending on group size and dates of departure. Please contact the Classic Journeys office to discuss your travel plans.

Introduction

Known as "moonland" or "Little Tibet", Ladakh is a remote and rugged land, situated deep in the Himalaya, on the borders of Tibet, China and Pakistan. Large Buddhist monasteries continue to operate in the Indus valley and within side valleys hidden among jagged ridges. This large region, with its high, arid landscape and Buddhist culture is geographically and culturally an extension of western Tibet. The Karakoram and Kailas mountain ranges form the northern and eastern borders of Ladakh while the main Great Himalaya range isolates Ladakh from the south.

The region is so full of precipitous mountains and steep ridges that the word Ladakh means, "Land of the Passes." The lowest elevation in all of Ladakh outside the Suru Valley is higher than 3000 metres where the Indus flows north into Baltistan. Agriculture is only possible where there is irrigation from glaciers, melting snow or perennial streams. Scattered mountain villages with their crops of barley and potatoes add a splash of colour to the barren landscape. This incredible landscape offers almost limitless opportunities for trekking and exploration.

For more than a thousand years Ladakh was part of the vast region of western Tibet. Buddhism came to Ladakh from what is now the Swat Valley in Pakistan and Ladakh has retained the monastic Buddhism, which has been forcefully suppressed within Tibet. The image of Tibetan culture we imagine to exist in Tibet is perhaps now more appropriate to Ladakh than to Tibet, since the monasteries and temples of Ladakh were never destroyed or closed as they were in Tibet following the Chinese invasion. The Muslim religion is also represented in Ladakh, mostly in the Kargil district and along the Indus Valley.

Our varied itinerary starts with the exciting flight from Delhi into Leh, over the Himalaya, we have several days in Ladakh's capital for essential acclimatisation and sightseeing including the most important monasteries of Hemis and Thiksey. Our time in Leh has been planned to coincide with the colourful festival at Phayang Monastery, which we will visit. The monks perform various dances wearing multi-coloured costumes and fearsome masks which will provide many photographic opportunities.

Our trek into the Markha Valley starts from the village of Spituk, ascending magnificent winding canyons where Blue Sheep are regularly seen on the steep rocky slopes. Crossing several high passes with magnificent views across to the jagged Zaskar Mountains and the snow capped Karakoram before descending a beautiful willow and wild rose choked gorge to enter the Markha Valley. Following the Markha River we pass through lush vegetation and spectacular Grand Canyon style scenery. The head of the Markha valley is dominated by the glaciated Kang Yatze peak (6400 metres) rising above the idyllic Nimaling Plains. Here shepherds bring their sheep and yaks to graze during the summer months. Himalayan Marmots are common as are the huge Himalayan Griffon and Lammergeier Vultures. Crossing the Kongmaru La (5274 metres), with its wonderful views from the top, we follow a high level route to Stok Kangri Base Camp. A superb approach to the mountain provides fantastic views towards Tibet. The climb on Stok Kangri (6120m) is fully supported and is technically straightforward involving scree and easy snow slopes. At over 6000 metres it is quite a challenge but the rewards are fantastic, a fitting end to a splendid trekking adventure.

The climb of Stok Kangri is optional and you may choose to explore the fascinating area around base camp rather than climb the mountain. This is the land of the Snow Leopard and if you are lucky you just might see one of these magnificent animals.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Depart UK

Depart UK on flight to Delhi.

Day 2 - Delhi (215 metres)

Arrive Delhi. Met and transferred to our hotel, the very comfortable Hotel Oberoi Maidens. There is time to relax before a guided sightseeing tour. Delhi, the capital of India has a fascinating history and a stimulating present. It has been the seat of power of numerous dynasties - the Rajputs, the Muslim invaders, the Afghans, the Tughlaqs, Sayyids, the Lodis and the Mughals, who continued the imperial line until the British Days.

Today it is the political capital of the world's largest democracy. Our guided sightseeing tour will visit some of New Delhi's places of interest including Rashtrapati Bhavan, once the Viceroy's residence, Sansad Bhavan, India's Parliament, India Gate, the war memorial to 90,000 Indian Army soldiers who died in World War 1 and Humayun's Tomb, the inspiration for the Taj Mahal. Overnight Hotel.

Day 3 – Fly to Leh (3500 metres)

Early morning we are transferred to the domestic terminal for the flight to Leh. The flight is just over an hour and is quite spectacular, providing excellent views of the 7000 metre high mountains of Nun and Kun. On arrival we are met and transferred to our hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax and to become adjusted to the altitude. Overnight hotel, Leh. (BLD)

Days 4 to 6 – Leh

In Leh, sightseeing. Leh is a fascinating town, which developed as a trading centre attracting a wide variety of merchants from Yarkand, Kashgar, Kashmir, Tibet and North India. Leh has a wide main bazaar street where colourful Ladakhi ladies sell vegetables at the roadside. There are many craft shops, restaurants and cafes. Leh Palace has been described as a miniature version of Lhasa's Potala Palace and houses a museum containing old Buddhist paintings. The white Shanti Stupa, high on a hill is worth a visit for the views overlooking Leh. Polo is the national sport and is popular in the summer. The Polo ground is beyond the main bus stand and you may be lucky to be in town when a Polo match is scheduled. We will visit some of the areas most important monasteries at Shey, Thiksey and Hemis and have time to explore Leh town. We will also visit Phayang Monastery and we have timed our visit to coincide with the colourful festival.

There is also the optional opportunity to take a jeep drive (and a further acclimatisation aid) to the 5300 metre high Khardung La, one of the world's highest road passes. This pass to the north of Leh leads into the Nubra Valley and the views from the top of the Zaskar range beyond the Indus Valley are magnificent. Stok Kangri being one of the higher peaks can easily be picked out. These days are also essential acclimatisation days before our trek. Overnight hotel, Leh. (BLD)

Day 7 – Spituk to Jingchan (3380 metres)

We load our gear into jeeps and drive out of Leh for 7km to Spituk, crossing the Indus River before turning right along a bumpy track crossing a flat desolate plain. At the roadhead we meet our trekking crew and pack ponies. After sorting out the loads for the ponies we begin trekking, following the Indus into a narrower valley and soon reach the entrance to the Hemis National Park. Just beyond is a Chorten (Buddhist monument) and prayer flags from which you get impressive views down the Indus gorge. Soon we leave the Indus behind and head into the mountains along the willow-lined Jingchan gorge to the village of Jingchan. (6 hours walking). Overnight camp. (BLD)

Day 8 - Jingchan to Yurutse (4120 metres)

We follow the Jingchan Nala upstream. The valley soon narrows as we pass between two rock buttresses and are treated to lovely views ahead of a spectacular jagged ridge. A couple of stream crossings brings us to a willow plantation and a little further to the village of Rumbak. The trail, keeping to the right bank of the Rumbak Nala, passes through the village of Rumbak upstream to a watermill and a bridge. The mill is used for grinding barley; this simple technology has remained unchanged for centuries. Crossing to the right bank our trail climbs up the valley of a subsidiary stream to the tiny settlement of Yurutse. Camp is set a little beyond at the foot of the Ganda La pass. (5 hours walking). Overnight camp. (BLD)

Day 9 – Yurutse to Shingo (4150 metres)

The trail climbs steadily to the Ganda La 4878metres, it is not steep but it is long. As we climb higher Stok Kangri dominates the southeastern skyline. From the pass, a spectacular panorama of white-fringed mountains, merging into the distant ranges of the Karakoram, is revealed. The trail descends steadily to the head of the Skiu valley where a number of rivulets join to form a small stream. The broad grassy shoulders of the upper valley narrow sharply to the pinched waist at Shingo with its few houses and fields at the junction of a small stream with the Skiu Nala. Our camp is about 20 minutes beyond Shingo on a lovely grassy site. (7 hours walking). Overnight Camp. (BLD)

Day 10 - Shingo to Penchey (3000 metres)

From Shingo the river swoops exuberantly down a tight, narrow gorge choked with willow and wild rose with the trail leaping from bank to bank all the way to the village of Skiu on the banks of the lower Markha. Since Skiu is only at about 3000 metres and the Markha valley is quite narrow, the temperature is higher here. We continue through the Markha valley to our camp on a rocky shoulder above the river. (7 hours walking). Overnight Camp. (BLD)

Day 11 – Penchey to near Markha (3600 metres)

A very pleasant walk up one of the loveliest sections of the Markha Valley. Woody bushes grow thickly along the river that is spanned by several bridges over which the trail marches to Thinlespa, a village with very basic dwellings but well kept fields. At the top of the rise out of the village we reach a collection of large Chortens and Mani walls. There are wonderful views back down the valley. As we progress we get our first views of the snow-covered slopes of Kang Yatze (6400m). This magnificent mountain commands the view for the next two days. There is a wolf trap on the outskirts of the village, which is an enclosure with overhanging sides. We continue to our camp on the right bank of the river about 10 minutes before Markha Village. (7 hours walking) Overnight Camp. (BLD)

Day 12 – Markha to Tahungtse (4000 metres)

The trail continues eastwards climbing steadily up the valley through the picturesque village of Markha and its interesting monastery, which is well worth visiting. Coming in from the south is the trail from Rubering La, one of the routes to Zanskar. From Markha the country changes and the warm, relatively heavily wooded section of the lower Markha is left behind. The trail continues past the twin villages of Lower and Upper Hankar. Between the two villages is a ruined fort, the walls of which climb sharply up a crag to an eerie lookout tower - worth visiting for those with an exceptionally good head for heights. We leave the Markha Valley and climb through a canyon to our alpine meadow camp at Tahungtse. (7 to 8 hours walking). Overnight Camp. (BLD)

Day 13 – Tahungtse to Nimaling (4878 metres)

From Tahungtse the trail climbs steadily through alpine meadows towards the broad, undulating Nimaling plains at the base of the ice-clad Kang Yatze peak, which dominates the area. Nimaling with tiny ponds and rivulets flowing all over its meadows provides pasturage in the summer for an astonishing number of animals - yaks, dzos, sheep, goats, horses – not only from the Markha but also from villages all around. Himalayan marmots and white tailed hares are seen in plenty and overhead huge Himalayan Griffon and Lammergeier vultures are common. (4 hours walking). Overnight Camp. (BLD)

Day 14 – Nimaling (4878 metres)

An opportunity to relax or explore the area around the beautiful Nimaling plain. An interesting alternative is a walk to the base of Kang Yatze. There are several possibilities for half or full day excursions from our camp. Overnight Camp. (BLD)

Day 15 – Nimaling to Chogdo (3973 metres)

Crossing to the north of the Markha, we begin the climb up to the highest of the passes - Kongmaru La (5274m) with its wonderful views from the top. It is a steady climb of around 2 hours to the pass on good trails. As we gain height the unfolding views are amazing. From the pass a never-ending series of ridges leads the eye to distant snow capped peaks. To the north are the mountains of the eastern Karakoram and China and to the south above Nimaling Kang Yatze dominates. There is time to absorb the view and take photographs from the pass before descending to the head of the Martselang Valley. Look out for blue sheep as you begin to descend from the pass.

The sulphur springs of Chyushkarmo are passed as we follow the Martselang stream to Chogdo and our camp. (6 to 7 hours walking). Overnight Camp. (BLD)

Day 16 – Chogdo to Shang Po (4350 metres)

From our camp at Chogdo we turn west to enter a tributary valley, which takes us to the Gyuncho La (4600m). We descend from the pass to our camp at Shang Po. (6 to 7 hours walking). Overnight camp. (BLD)

Day 17 – Shang Po to Gangpoche (4320 metres)

A day for crossing a number of minor passes as we pass through a rarely visited region. After crossing the Shang La we descend to the Topko River. From here it is mostly downhill to our camp at Gangpoche. (6 to 7 hours walking) Overnight Camp. (BLD)

Day 18 – Gangpoche to Stok Kangri Base Camp (5000 metres)

We start today's walk with a gradual climb to the Mato La (4860m) before descending into the valley to the north of Stok. This is a beautiful valley where local people graze their sheep and goats and live during the summer months in small stone huts. Snow Leopards are known to inhabit this region although seeing them is not easy. You are much more likely to see herds of bharal (blue sheep). Golden Eagles can also be seen in this area. The Base Camp for Stok Kangri is at 5000 metres on a pleasant grassy area. We can take a short acclimatisation walk (30 mins.) to the top of the pass above our camp. This is the route we take when climbing Stok Kangri and there are impressive views of Stok Kangri from this pass. (5 to 6 hours walking). Overnight camp. (BLD)

Days 19 & 20– Climb of Stok Kangri (6153 metres), Return to Base Camp (5000 metres)

We have allowed two days for the ascent of Stok Kangri, which will give everyone the best chance of climbing the peak. Much of the climb involves walking up scree and boulder slopes. If there has been some unseasonable snow then there may also be snow on these slopes but normally at the time of year we are climbing the slopes are free from snow. We will make an early start (4 to 5 am) from base camp, climbing to the pass above our camp and then crossing a glacier before heading up scree and boulder slopes. The final part of the climb may involve the use of crampons and an ice axe on easy angled snow slopes to the summit ridge. Although this is technically an easy climb, the altitude does make the climb very strenuous. The views from the summit are spectacular with the Indus Valley and Leh far below us to the north behind which an impressive mass of peaks stretch from the Karakoram to Tibet.

The climb of Stok Kangri is optional and you may choose to explore the fascinating area around base camp rather than climb the mountain. This is the land of the Snow Leopard and if you are lucky you just might see one of these magnificent animals. Overnight camp. (BLD)

Day 21 – Base Camp to Leh

From our base camp we descend on an easy trail to cross a small pass into the Stok Valley and down to Stok village through fields of barley and buckwheat. This should take 3 to 4 hours. Transport will be waiting to take us back to Leh and the afternoon is free for shopping and further explorations of Leh town. Overnight hotel, Leh. (BLD)

Day 22 – Leh to Delhi

Transfer to the airport for the spectacular flight across the main chain of the Himalaya to Delhi. On arrival we transfer to our hotel, the Oberoi Maidens. Overnight hotel. (B)

Day 23 – Depart Delhi

Transfer to the international airport for the flight to UK. (B)

B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner

The day-to-day schedule should be taken only as a general guide. A variety of factors, including adverse weather conditions, difficulty with transportation and politics can lead to enforced changes. Because of this it is not possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the planned itinerary. The trip leader will make any changes, which are necessary.

INDIA EXTENSIONS

There are many interesting destinations, which offer an enjoyable variation to your holiday. The programmes can be tailored to suit individual requirements and we will be happy to suggest destinations and itineraries to compliment your own ideas. Here are a few suggestions.

Agra & the Taj Mahal: It is possible to visit Agra and the Taj Mahal and return to Delhi in a day. We will organise transport to and from Agra (by train or road) and provide an English-speaking guide for sightseeing in Agra. This is a long day and if you have the time you may prefer to overnight in Agra.

The Golden Triangle: This is one of the most popular extensions for adding on to your holiday in India. The Golden Triangle itinerary allows you to take in three of the best known sights of northern India, the incredible Taj Mahal in Agra, the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri and the 'pink city' of Jaipur in the colourful and romantic state of Rajasthan.

The Tiger Trail: Ranthambhore, Bandhavgarh, Pench, Kanha & Corbett Tiger Reserves need little introduction and are amongst the best places to see Tigers anywhere.

Kaziranga National Park: lies to the south of the mighty Brahmaputra river in the heart of Assam and is without doubt one of the most beautiful and unspoilt national parks in the whole of Asia.

Bhutan: A five-day cultural visit to include Paro, Thimpu and Punakha.

Please contact the Classic Journeys office if you plan to extend your stay in India.
Please ask for our India extension sheet for some suggestions.

Please Note: If you plan to extend your stay in India it is essential we are informed at the time of booking so that alternative international flight dates can be booked.

TREKKING IN INDIA WITH CLASSIC JOURNEYS

- With over 25 years experience we believe the quality of our India treks is second to none.
- We operate fully supported, environmentally sustainable group treks.
- Our itineraries are carefully planned to provide extra rest and acclimatisation days and as a reserve against bad weather.
- Our Indian leaders are professionally trained and are among the most experienced in India. Who better to look after you than your professional local leader, who speaks the language and knows the culture, intimately?
- Our friendly trekking crews are dedicated to ensuring your holiday is the best it can be. They will accompany you along the trail, set up camp and prepare your meals.
- Porters or pack animals carry your main baggage for you.
- Sleeping bags, cotton liners, mattresses, kit bags and medical kits are provided on all of our India treks.
- We provide insurance, equipment and gear for our crew and porters and aim to keep our impact on the environment to a minimum.

The International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) works to improve the conditions of the mountain porters in the tourism industry worldwide. Classic Journeys supports the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) and were the first trekking company to make a commitment of donating on an annual basis. For more information about the IPPG check out their website: www.ipg.net

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

If you would like Classic Journeys to book your international flights, please tick the flight inclusive package box on the booking form. Please advise if you have a preferred airline you would like to travel with or if you have a preferred airport you would like to travel from. Classic Journeys will then book your international flights and advise you of the actual cost.

There is a wide choice of airlines flying to and from Delhi from the UK. Jet Airways, Virgin Atlantic and British Airways offer non-stop flights to Delhi. Emirates and KLM offer flights starting from a UK regional airport. Qatar Airways and Gulf Air are normally good value but there is a change of plane en-route. Depending on flight arrival times in India, you may require an additional nights hotel accommodation to allow you immediate access to your hotel room.

To discuss your international flight options, please give the Classic Journeys office a call and we will advise on up to date flight prices and timings for your chosen trip.

Baggage Allowance: For hold luggage this is normally around 20kg and you should aim to keep to this weight. Classic Journeys is not responsible for any excess baggage charges incurred.

Land Only Clients: Land only clients who are making their own flight arrangements should meet up with the group at the hotel in Delhi. We can arrange airport transfers if needed and will provide hotel contact details.

If you have booked on a land only basis and are making your own flight arrangements, you must check with the Classic Journeys office that your chosen holiday has reached the minimum numbers required and is **guaranteed to operate** before paying for your air tickets. We cannot be held liable, in cases where we cancel your trip, for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made.

PRICING

If you choose the Land Only plus international flights package Classic Journeys will book your international flight and advise you of the cost. The price of the tour will be the Land Price plus the cost of international flights on your chosen airline. With most airlines, flights have to be paid for on making the flight booking and we will require full payment for the air tickets in order to purchase the tickets. In this situation we advise paying for your air tickets as soon as possible to secure the lowest fare.

Airfares and taxes are subject to change and if the fare has increased before the final balance has been paid, the additional cost will be passed on and detailed on the invoice.

INCLUDED IN THE COST

- Hotel accommodation on a twin share basis (unless single has been requested) for the nights listed in the itinerary
- All meals as specified
- Airport – Hotel – Airport Transfers if travelling on the group flight
- All internal transport as the itinerary
- Sightseeing tours where specified
- All trekking arrangements including trekking permits, National Park entrance fees, tents (2 people sharing unless single has been requested), sleeping bags, basic karri mat (mattress), guides, porters & cook
- Tour leader
- Cordura kit bag
- Basic first aid kit carried by your guide

NOT INCLUDED IN THE COST

- International flight from the UK
- Airport taxes
- Transfers for Land Only clients when travelling on a different flight to the main group
- Visa fees
- Medical examination (if required) & vaccination costs
- Personal expenditure, bar bills, laundry, telephone calls, etc
- Porters, guides & other tips
- Meals not specified
- Personal clothing & equipment
- Travel insurance
- Optional trips
- Charges incurred as a result of delays beyond Classic Journeys control
- Anything not specified in the Cost Includes section

GROUP SIZE

This itinerary can be operated for groups on a private tailor-made basis. The cost will be advised depending on group size and dates of departure. Please contact the Classic Journeys office to discuss your travel plans.

GUIDE / TOUR LEADER

On arrival in India you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The trek will be led by a local leader and supported by a trekking crew to look after the group. Your leader will be with you throughout the trip to guide you along the route, help organise and interpret in the villages and assist the group in any other way possible. Our leaders are fluent in English and Hindi or Punjabi as well as often another language, and have walked in the area many times. They will try and give you a real insight into the local way of life and, for those interested, will happily give some basic Hindi or Punjabi lessons while walking or over evening drinks. Although not specialists, they are interested in the area's mountains, flora and fauna. Please ask your guide/leader if you have any queries during your holiday e.g. rest breaks, type and quantity of food or any other specific requests, as they will do their best to adjust the trip accordingly and cater for your needs and tastes.

TREK GRADE

DEMANDING TREKKING: A hard trek, suitable for regular, longer distance hill walkers, this is a generally more challenging and remote trek in the Indian Himalaya. The days average 7 or 8 hours walking with a maximum altitude of 5274 metres but the Markha Valley can be very hot therefore adding to the difficulty. Previous trekking experience is advisable but not essential if you are confident in your physical ability and have completed essential and appropriate preparation (Lake District, Peak District, North Wales or similar). It is important to be in good physical condition and to have built up a reasonable level of fitness before the trek. You will certainly enjoy the trek much more if you are fit to begin with.

CLIMBING STOK KANGRI: The climb of Stok Kangri is not technically demanding although any climbing at altitudes approaching 6000 metres is very strenuous and will be quite a challenge even to the fittest group members. The altitude makes the going very strenuous and those planning to climb the peak should be very fit and determined. In good conditions the climb involves walking up scree and boulder slopes to an exposed ridge, which leads to the snow covered summit. Our efforts to reach the summit are rewarded with spectacular scenery and ultimately one of the finest viewpoints in the Indian Himalaya. Those planning to climb Stok Kangri should ideally have previous experience of winter hill walking and basic experience of using ice axe and crampons.

A TYPICAL DAY

The day normally starts with an early morning mug of tea (or coffee), enjoyed while still in our sleeping bags at around 6.00 am. During breakfast camp will be struck and the porters or ponies and pony men set off. We start walking after breakfast, between 7.00 and 8.00 am although during the hotter parts of this trek in the Markha Valley we try to get away as early as possible to take advantage of the cool mornings.

Everyone is free to walk at the pace, which is comfortable for them, stopping along the way to explore villages and take photographs. You will have been given a lunch box at breakfast time and we will stop at around 11.00 am for our picnic lunch. Camp is usually reached at around 3 to 4 pm afternoon tea and biscuits or snacks are served and at around 6.30 to 7.00 pm. the evening meal is ready.

When sightseeing we generally leave after breakfast. Some of the sightseeing involves easy walking although not always on paved level ground. There will be many photographic opportunities, although please respect local people and either ask permission or use a telephoto lens before taking their photograph. Remember many people do not like their photograph taken.

HEALTH & FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

The fitter you are before embarking on a trekking holiday the more enjoyment you are going to get out of it. You should be in good condition for the activity you are going to do - lots of walking. Once you decide you are going on a trek, it is wise to begin a fitness programme. The best way for you to prepare is to take a lot of walks, particularly up and down hills. Jogging, aerobics, cycling and fast swimming will also help but should be in addition to walking outdoors.

We carry a basic first aid kit but recommend that each person also carry a personal first aid kit including any prescription medication they require; a suggested contents list will be provided on booking in the country information dossier. We also provide details of the recommended vaccinations needed however you will need to talk to your doctor, practice nurse or a travel clinic for the latest advice on health recommendations.

ACCOMMODATION

7 nights hotels, 14 nights camping

In Delhi we stay at small friendly hotels, typically the hotel Oberoi Maidens, hotel Connaught, hotel Thirty Three or the Ashok Country resort. In Leh we stay in a comfortable hotel with private facilities.

On trek we will be camping; we use spacious 2 person, Vango Mk V tents (or similar), provide sleeping mattresses, chairs, tables, cutlery and toilet tents. Our trekking crews set up and break camp for you. Please note that sometimes the mentioned accommodation is fully booked in which case we will use similar standard accommodation.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS

If you are a single person booking this holiday you do not have to pay single supplements, if you are happy to share. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with another single client of the same gender. However your booking is accepted only on the understanding that if no roommate is available then you accept a single supplement will be levied. Single supplements are payable if you specifically request to have a room/tent to yourself. If you have requested single accommodation we will do our best to secure this although this may not always be possible.

FOOD

Breakfast in Delhi and all meals elsewhere included.

Most hotel and lodge restaurants usually provide both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, continental, Indian and traditional cuisine. Please ask the staff if you have any specific request, especially regarding spices, as they will do their best to adjust menus accordingly and cater for your tastes.

Our cooks provide varied and delicious local and western food while on trek. There are continental menus as well as local cuisine such as tasty curries, chapattis, vegetables, samosas, lentils and variety of rice dishes and other nourishing meals. As much as possible, locally bought fresh vegetables are used although in some remote areas they are not available. Fresh fruit should always be peeled and avoid salads or raw vegetables. Our staff ensure a good levels of hygiene for all food preparations.

WEATHER

Summer daytime temperatures range from 20°C to 27°C but rarely exceed 27°C in the shade (min temperature 5°C), yet in winter they can plummet to -20°C even in Leh. The thin air makes the heat of the sun even more intense. Ladakh stays relatively dry as the monsoon rain rarely fall here. Snow falls from the end of September melting by mid June, therefore the only time to travel to Ladakh is the short trekking season between end of June and the mid September.

EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

We will provide all camping equipment including spacious two person tents, a mattress and sleeping bag (if required). You may want to bring along a Thermarest for added comfort. You will need to provide personal equipment and clothing including a pair of training shoes or performance sandals to wear on any river crossings, this is very important, as crossing with bare feet is not safe. Basically you need similar clothing to what you would take on a winter walk in the British hills. We also provide a spacious Cordura kit bag, which will be given to you before your trek and is yours to keep. We provide a comprehensive equipment list in the country information dossier, which we send you on confirmation of booking.

You will also need personal climbing equipment for the climb of Stok Kangri:

Boots (stiff enough to take crampons), Crampons (ten or twelve point, quick fit is recommended), Ice / walking axe, Harness (fully adjustable), Ski sticks (one or two ski sticks are very useful, some people think essential, during the trek and climb of Stok Kangri. Telescopic are best for ease of transport).

PASSPORT & VISA REQUIREMENTS

You will require a passport valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry into India; British Nationals also require an Indian entry visa, which should be obtained prior to departure. In June 2008, the India High Commission outsourced their visa processing to a third party agency called VFS. For up-to-date information on how to apply for your India visa, please visit the VFS website: <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk>. You may also want to check the High Commission of India's website at www.hcilondon.net

INSURANCE

Insurance is essential and is a condition of booking with Classic Journeys that you have adequate travel insurance cover. It is very important that you obtain insurance cover against the usual risks associated with travel, from the time of booking your holiday until the time you return home. Please ensure that your insurance provides adequate protection against the two major concerns: medical/repatriation expenses while abroad and cancellation/curtailment charges in the event that you, a travelling companion or a close relative fall ill either before or during the tour. For trekking holidays your travel insurance must contain evidence of satisfactory cover for repatriation and helicopter rescue.

Classic Journeys do not provide any advice on travel insurance. Classic Journeys is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd. who are Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Campbell Irvine is a specialist travel insurance broker. The comprehensive policy they issue provides 24-hour medical emergency assistance and covers altitude and all adventurous activities undertaken on our holidays. For single-trip policies, the insurance provides cover for both UK and worldwide residents at very competitive rates. In addition an annual policy is available to United Kingdom residents.

To obtain insurance cover visit the insurance section of the Classic Journeys website and follow the links to the Campbell Irvine Ltd. website. Alternatively contact the Classic Journeys office and we will send you details and an application form.

We require confirmation of your insurance, the policy number and 24-hour emergency telephone number who ever you take insurance with.

SUGGESTED READING

Into India: John Keay (John Murray)

India: Berlitz Pocket Guide

India, A Travel Survival Kit: (Lonely Planet Publications)

Insight Guides: India

Leh & Trekking in Ladakh, Charlie Loram (Trailblazer)

The Trekkers Guide to Pakistan & India: Hugh Swift (Hodder & Stoughton)

Trekking in the Indian Himalaya: Gary Weare (Lonely Planet Publications)

Exploring the Hidden Himalaya: Soli Mehta & Harish Kapadia (Hodder & Stoughton)

Ancient Futures: Helena Norberg-Hodge

Travellers Tales: India by James O'Reilly

MAPS

Ladakh-Zaskar Trekking Map (Carte Artou): 1:350 000

BOOKS & MAPS AVAILABLE FROM:

Stanfords, 12 Long Acre, London, WC2E 9LP 020 7836 1321

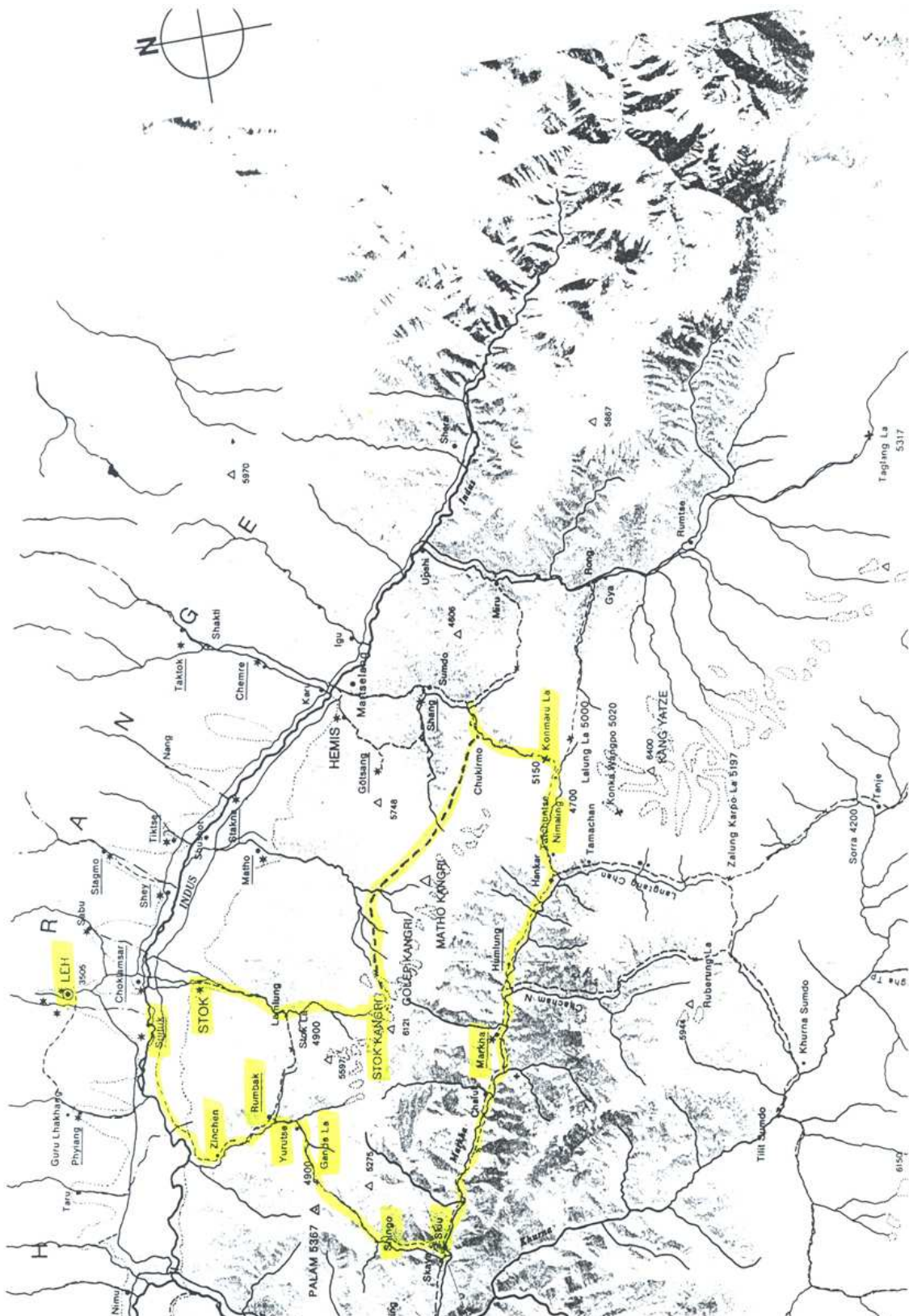
Cicerone at Booksource, 50 Cambuslang Road, Cambuslang, Glasgow, G32 8NB

Amazon, www.amazon.co.uk

Cordee, 3A De Montfort Street, Leicester. Tel: 0116 2543579

If you have any questions or would like to know more about any aspect of this trek please do not hesitate to contact the Classic Journeys Office.

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Before making your booking please make sure that you have read the relevant tour itinerary. This can be downloaded from the tour page on our website, or you can request a copy to be posted to you from the Classic Journeys office. You should also read our General Information and Booking Conditions on our website. It is important that you choose a trip that is well suited to your experience and abilities. If you have any doubt or need to chat through any of our tours, please call the Classic Journeys office. Our advice is based on first hand experience and we are always happy to talk about our journeys.

Provisional Booking: It is sensible to check if places are still available on any Classic Journeys tour you are interested in before sending your booking form to us. We will be happy to hold open space for you for up to 7 days (up to 14 days if you live outside Europe) in order to give you sufficient time to send in your booking form and deposit.

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