



Ladakh Trip Advisory

Ladakh experiences considerable fluctuations in the day and night temperatures, even during the summer. While the days are pretty warm, sometimes even hot due to the effect of the rugged topography, the evenings can become chilly, requiring additional clothing. It is, therefore, advisable to keep a pullover and / or an anorak or jacket handy. Sturdy walking shoes with strong rubber / synthetic soles for grip, cotton socks (woolen for late autumn tours besides and trekking trips are some of the other items required for the trip.

Following is a list of some recommendations for your Ladakh visit:

Dress / Equipment:

- Comfortable trousers, preferably of warm material (cotton or wool mix) and / or Jeans.
- Thermal undergarments & sweat shirts / warm shirts for trips during April - May & from Mid September onwards).
- A full-sleeved pullover as well as a half sleeved sweeter (for use during warm days).
- Wind proof outer wear / jacket / parka, sun hat and a pair of good quality sunglasses with sufficient filter-factor to check the sun's ultraviolet rays.
- A cap or balaclava (for use when the weather turns bad especially for trips to the higher places such as Pangong Lake, Tsomo-riri, Khadongla and the Manali-Leh road journeys.
- Comfortable walking shoes/sneakers with thick cotton socks (avoid fancy shoes/sandals).
- **For ladies:** Trousers or Shalwar suite (worn over thermal inner or tights during April through May & from September onwards only), woolen sweaters / cardigans, a windproof jacket or a shawl, walking shoes with comfortable soles / sneakers. (Avoid Saris & Sandals).
- It is also suggested to carry a flashlight on the tour, especially for those spending nights outside Leh town such as Pangong Lake, Tsomoriri Lake, Nubra Valley and on trekking trips.

Miscellaneous:

- All essential medicines, including those prescribed by personal physician (if any)
- Sun screen, lip- salve, moisturizers, antiseptic creams, etc.
- Medicines for altitude sickness, if required.

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Acclimatization:

If you are traveling to Leh by air, you must take complete rest for a day for adjustment to the high altitude and low oxygen level of Ladakh. High altitude sickness or Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) is a risky condition faced by tourists who do not allow sufficient time for acclimatization upon reaching Leh. The most common symptoms of altitude sickness are breathlessness, coughing, disturbed sleep, headache, inability to concentrate; lassitude, loss of appetite, nausea etc. Following precautions are recommended to avoid being affected by high altitude problems:

- Take complete rest at least for a day after arrival;
- Move about slowly and breathe deeply till your body becomes used to the high altitude and low level of oxygen.
- Take plenty of fluid.
- **Important** – It's generally suggested that one **Diamox** tablet per day should be taken for 2- 3 days prior to your departure for Leh by air, and continue it within Ladakh for a day or two, if required, to overcome the effect of high altitude. However, you **MUST** consult your doctor and confirm if you can take diuretic medicines like Diamox.
- **Remember:** You might feel '**normal**' upon landing at Leh, but that's an illusion which needs to be ignored because the effect of the altitude and low oxygen level hits you slowly. It is important that you do not exert yourself on the first couple of days after reaching Leh, as your body needs time to acclimatize.

Visa and Permit: Foreign Tourists can visit Ladakh on a normal Indian tourist visa and no special visa or permit is required to visit Ladakh. However, all tourists to Ladakh, whether domestic or foreigner, are required to obtain Protected Area Permit / Inner-line Permit from the Deputy Commissioner Leh's office for visiting the restricted areas like Tsomoriri, Tsokar, Pangong Lakes, Dah-Hanou and the Nubra Valley. The services of a registered travel agency should be taken to get these permits.

Credit Card / Cash: For purchase of commodities or services or souvenirs cash is generally sought as Credit Card charging is not common and is uncertain due to frequent connectivity problems.

ATM: State Bank of India & J&K Bank has ATM points in Leh & Kargil town. Punjab National Bank operates an ATM point in Leh. These remain mostly crowded with long queues. Sometimes they even run out of cash.

Mobile Phone Service: Mobile phones with post-paid connection of BSNL are operational in most parts of Ladakh. In Leh Town area postpaid connections of Airtel & Vodafone Networks also work fairly well.

ID Card / ID Proof: Remember to carry a valid photo ID Card with you. This will be useful for a variety of purposes – identification at checkpoint, getting Restricted/ Protected Area Permits, Check-in at airports / hotels etc.

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For Trekking / Adventure tours:

If you are planning to go on a trek or any related activity, the following items may be required to be carried:

- **Ruck Sack:** If you intend to go on a trekking or adventure trip, you need to get two rucksacks: a smaller one for carrying your camera, water bottle, lunch box and space for change of clothes / jackets during the day. A bigger or standard sized rucksack is needed for packing your clothes and other accessories. This one should have extra layer of waterproof material for protection from rain etc.
- **Sleeping Bags:** For travelling between June and mid September, light summer sleeping bag is enough. Warm winterized sleeping bag is required if you are travelling between mid September through May. You can also rent good sleeping bags from trekking equipment outlets in Leh.
- **Shoes:** For trekking, you need to bring good quality waterproof shoes with strong sole for walking in the mountains and dirt paths. An extra pair of light shoes or sandals is will be required for crossing rivers.

Useful Tips: In Ladakh, you will find a culture in rapid transition, yet one in which the traditional values are still largely intact. In order to make your visit to Ladakh more pleasant, both for yourself and for the host community, following steps / precautions may be helpful.

- **Dress Code:** Please avoid wearing shorts and sleeveless shirts, blouses, tops, undershirts etc. in public and especially in monasteries, mosques, temples, gurudhwaras, and churches. The same holds true on the trekking routes. While short clothing is acceptable in camp-sites away from human habitation, they should be changed for trousers, slacks and blouses in villages where you might stop. Under no event should swimwear (and for women bikini tops) be worn in public as these may be taken as sexually provocative and be a cause of possible harassment.
- **Behaviour Code:** Please keep your affection for your partner as a private matter and confined to your own rooms or tents, but not for public display, on the street, in religious buildings, in restaurants or at public events.
- **Photography:** Please do not take photographs of local people without seeking permission, nor of, or within, any religious building and of any religious ceremony, without permission of the official in-charge of the concerned religious place. Remember that the intense light of flash photography is damaging to ancient wall paintings and tapestries placed in the monasteries.

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