

NORTH INDIA · COMPLETE TRAVEL GUIDE

Leh & Ladakh

High-altitude desert, turquoise lakes and monasteries older than most nations — Ladakh needs slow days and a doctor's nod, not a rushed itinerary.

BEST MONTHS	FROM AHMEDABAD	IDEAL DURATION	VEG & JAIN FOOD	GOOD FOR
Mid-May to September; June–August is peak, when all passes are open	Fly Ahmedabad → Delhi → Leh, about 4–5 h total including the Delhi layover	6–8 nights, plus acclimatisation built in	Good in Leh town — many Punjabi/Gujarati-run dhabas in season; limited at Nubra and Pangong camps, carry snacks	Adventurous families, groups of friends; seniors and young children only on the relaxed pace with a doctor's clearance

Ladakh is unlike anything else we sell out of Ahmedabad. Leh town sits at 3,500 m and the passes and lakes we visit go higher still, so this is the one trip where the itinerary is built around the body, not the sightseeing list. Two clear acclimatisation days in Leh before Khardung La or Pangong is not a suggestion — it is how we avoid altitude sickness ruining the holiday.

Once the body has settled in, the landscape is extraordinary: the moonscape of Sham Valley, the sand dunes and double-humped camels of Nubra, the impossible blue of Pangong Tso, and gompas — Thiksey, Hemis, Diskit — that have stood on these hills for eight hundred years. Vegetarian food is easier to find than most people expect in Leh town itself, though it thins out fast once you are camping beside a lake. We run this trip May to September only; the rest of the year the passes are shut.

What to see

Leh town and Leh Palace

A nine-storey 17th-century palace modelled on the Potala, overlooking the town; walk the old bazaar and Shanti Stupa at sunset for your first evening at altitude.

Khardung La

One of the world's highest motorable passes at 5,359 m, the gateway to Nubra Valley; a 15–20 minute photo stop is enough, the air is very thin.

Nubra Valley

Sand dunes at Hunder with double-humped Bactrian camels, the river confluence at Diskit, and Diskit Monastery's 32 m Maitreya Buddha looking down the valley.

Sham Valley monasteries

A gentle low-altitude loop from Leh covering Magnetic Hill, the Sangam of the Indus and Zaskar rivers, and the monasteries at Likir and Alchi, good for the first acclimatisation day.

Khardung La and Chang La views

The high passes themselves are part of the experience — prayer flags, glaciers close enough to touch, and army canteens serving hot tea and Maggi.

Pangong Tso

A 135 km-long lake straddling the India–China border, changing colour through the day from deep blue to green; the Shyok road via Nubra is the route we use, avoiding Chang La on the way in.

Thiksey and Hemis Monasteries

Thiksey, built like a mini-Potala 19 km from Leh, has the best morning prayer session; Hemis, Ladakh's largest and wealthiest gompa, hosts a major masked-dance festival in June or July most years.

Hanle and Tso Moriri (optional)

For groups with an extra 2–3 days: India's highest-altitude dark-sky reserve at Hanle (4,500 m) and the remote, less-crowded lake at Tso Moriri — for those who have done Ladakh once already.

Getting there from Ahmedabad

Fly: There is no direct Ahmedabad–Leh flight. Fly Ahmedabad–Delhi (about 2 h) and connect to Delhi–Leh (about 1 h 20 m); total travel time including the layover is usually 4–5 hours. Book Delhi–Leh for a morning slot — afternoon flights are more prone to weather cancellation as winds pick up over the Leh valley.

Road via Manali: The Manali–Leh highway (about 470 km, 2 days with an overnight at Sarchu or Keylong) is open roughly mid-June to early/mid-October depending on snow clearance; it crosses Rohtang/Atal Tunnel, Baralacha La and Tanglang La. We arrange this only for groups who specifically want the overland adventure, not as the primary route.

Road via Srinagar: The Srinagar–Leh highway (about 434 km, usually done in 2 days via Kargil) opens around late May/early June and closes by November; it is the lower and gentler of the two road routes for altitude, and pairs well with a Kashmir extension, but we check current security advisories before including it in any itinerary.

Getting around. All sightseeing and inter-town travel is by private SUV (Innova, Xylo, Scorpio or similar) with a local driver experienced on high-altitude roads — this is not a self-drive or shared-taxi destination for visitors unfamiliar with the terrain. Within Leh town, autos and short walks work for the market and palace; for the passes, Nubra and Pangong, only the private vehicle in your itinerary is used, arranged through the Leh taxi union's fixed rate card, which all operators (including us) work within.

When to go

SEASON	MONTHS	WHAT TO EXPECT
Late spring	Mid-May – June	Daytime 15–20°C in Leh, nights near freezing; some higher passes and Pangong may still be affected by late snow early in the window.

SEASON	MONTHS	WHAT TO EXPECT
		Fewer crowds than peak, landscape still has patches of snow on the mountains.
Peak summer	July – August	Best weather and all passes reliably open; Leh days 20–25°C, nights 8–12°C, Pangong and Nubra colder. This overlaps with monsoon in the rest of India but Ladakh, being a high-altitude desert, stays largely dry — though occasional cloudbursts do happen and can disrupt roads. Hotels and camps get busiest and priciest.
Early autumn	September – early October	Clear skies, golden poplar and willow trees, thinner crowds and better rates. Nights get noticeably colder, especially at Pangong and Nubra (can drop below 0°C by late September). Our preferred window for photography and for slightly older travellers wanting fewer crowds.
Winter	November – April	All road routes and most flights become unreliable; Khardung La, Chang La and both highways close. Leh town survives on its winter Chadar-trek and monastery-festival tourism, but this is a specialised trip we do not organise on our standard itineraries.

Permits, rules and packing

An Inner Line Permit (ILP) is required for Indian nationals to visit Nubra Valley, Pangong Tso, Khardung La beyond a point, and Tso Moriri/Hanle; foreign nationals need a Protected Area Permit through a registered agent. Permits are applied for online (the Ladakh administration's ILP portal, or through us) using a scanned Aadhaar card and passport-size photo for each traveller; the fee is nominal, roughly ₹30–40 per person per permit plus a small environment fee, and processing normally takes a few hours to a day. We handle this for every group and carry printed copies, since photocopies are checked at multiple army and police checkpoints along the way — carry original Aadhaar cards too, not just the copies.

What to pack

- Warm layers even in summer — fleece and a windproof jacket for evenings and passes, thermal wear if travelling before June or after mid-September
- Diamox (acetazolamide) only after consulting your doctor before travel, especially if anyone in the group has heart, BP or breathing conditions
- High-SPF sunscreen and lip balm — UV at this altitude is far stronger than it feels, even on cool or cloudy days
- Sufficient cash in small denominations — carry more than you think you need (see Food and FAQs)
- A refillable water bottle and electrolyte sachets to help with hydration and acclimatisation
- Sunglasses with UV protection and a warm cap or monkey cap for wind at the passes
- Personal medication in original packaging with a doctor's prescription, plus basic motion-sickness tablets for the mountain roads

Veg and Jain food

- Leh town itself is comfortable for vegetarians — several Punjabi- and Gujarati-run dhabas and restaurants operate through the season, and most hotels can arrange a simple Gujarati-style thali on request.
- Nubra Valley guesthouses and camps offer simpler thali-style vegetarian meals; choice narrows but pure-veg is generally available with advance notice.
- Pangong Tso camps have the most limited kitchens of the trip — expect basic dal-rice-sabzi meals, sometimes with a wait, and very little variety; we always brief camps in advance about vegetarian and Jain requirements.
- Carry dry snacks, namkeen, biscuits and instant food (cup noodles, khakhra) for the drive days and for anyone whose appetite drops at altitude, which is common and normal in the first day or two.

What it costs

Indicative per-person costs on twin sharing for a 6–7 night Ladakh trip in 2026, including flights via Delhi, private SUV, hotels/camps and meals as specified per itinerary. Actual costs shift with fuel prices, flight fares and the Leh taxi union's seasonal rate revisions; a group of 4–6 sharing one vehicle brings the per-person car cost down significantly.

VALUE

₹36,000 – 44,000

Budget hotels and basic camps, shared/standard SUV, economy flights booked 8+ weeks ahead

COMFORT

₹46,000 – 60,000

3★/4★ hotels in Leh, better-appointed Swiss tents at Pangong and Nubra, flexible flight timings

PREMIUM

₹68,000 – 90,000

4★/5★ Leh properties, premium heated camps at Pangong and Nubra, dedicated vehicle rather than a shared/pooled one

Where the money goes

- Flights are the largest single cost: Ahmedabad–Delhi–Leh return runs roughly ₹16,000–24,000 in June–August booked early, and can exceed ₹30,000 close to departure or during festival-linked peak dates.
- Vehicle: an Innova or Xylo with driver through the Leh taxi union runs roughly ₹5,500–7,500 per day for local sightseeing and ₹8,000–11,000 per day for the Nubra/Pangong circuit, reflecting the union's fixed seasonal rate card rather than open-market pricing.
- Camps at Pangong Tso are priced per tent, not per person, roughly ₹4,500–8,000 a night for a standard Swiss tent with attached bath, rising to ₹9,000–15,000 for heated premium tents — this is the single highest per-night accommodation cost of the trip.
- Oxygen cylinder rental (a precaution we keep in every vehicle) runs about ₹500–1,000 for a small canister for the trip; hotels in Leh and Nubra also keep cylinders on call, usually at an added charge if actually used.

Travelling with parents and children

- Rest strictly for the first 24–36 hours in Leh — no sightseeing, no exertion, and definitely no alcohol; altitude sickness (headache, nausea, breathlessness) is common in the first two days and almost always settles with rest and fluids.
- Drink far more water than usual and go easy on tea, coffee and alcohol throughout the trip, not just on day one — dehydration at this altitude makes acclimatisation harder.
- Anyone with a heart condition, high or low blood pressure, or a respiratory condition should consult their doctor before booking, and again a few days before travel; we ask for this in writing when we quote a Ladakh trip.
- We advise against taking children under 5 and pregnant women to Khardung La or Pangong Tso — the altitude and cold at these specific stops carry more risk than Leh town or the Sham Valley loop, both of which sit lower and are gentler.
- If anyone develops a bad headache, vomiting, confusion or real breathlessness that doesn't ease with rest, treat it seriously and descend — our drivers and hotels know the nearest medical facilities in Leh, and we build a buffer day into every itinerary for exactly this reason.
- Pack one seat with extra warm layers and motion-sickness tablets for elders — passes are cold and winding, and cabin heating in shared SUVs is inconsistent.

Questions families ask us

How serious is altitude sickness, really?

It is common and usually mild — most people get a headache or feel unusually tired on day one, which passes with rest, water and time. It becomes serious only if ignored: worsening headache, vomiting, confusion or real breathlessness need descent and medical attention, which is why every itinerary we run has two full acclimatisation days before any pass crossing. Consult your doctor before travel, especially with any heart, BP or lung condition, and ask about Diamox as a preventive measure — only on medical advice, never self-prescribed.

What is the right age for senior parents to attempt Ladakh?

There is no fixed cut-off, but fitness matters more than age. Seniors who walk comfortably and have no major heart, BP or breathing issues do well on our relaxed 7-night itinerary, especially with a doctor's clearance beforehand and skipping the Pangong overnight. We'd steer anyone with significant health concerns towards Leh, Sham Valley and Nubra only, and away from Khardung La and Chang La crossings on the same day.

Will my phone work in Ladakh?

Only postpaid SIMs work reliably in Leh and further out — BSNL and Jio postpaid connections function across most of the region including Nubra and, less reliably, Pangong; prepaid SIMs from other circles generally do not work at all due to security regulations near the border. If your trip depends on staying connected, get a BSNL or Jio postpaid SIM active before you fly, or buy a local postpaid SIM in Leh on arrival.

Is cash easy to access?

Leh town has ATMs (State Bank of India, HDFC, others) but they run out of cash often, especially on weekends and in peak season, and there are none at all in Nubra or Pangong. Carry enough cash for the whole trip before leaving Leh — most guesthouses, camps and dhabas outside Leh town do not accept cards or UPI reliably.

How do the permits actually work?

We apply for the Inner Line Permit online on your behalf using each traveller's Aadhaar and a photo, and it is normally ready within a day. You'll need original Aadhaar cards (not just photocopies) at checkpoints along the way to Nubra, Pangong and beyond — army and police posts do check them, so keep them accessible, not packed away.

How reliable are the roads and flights?

Leh flights are occasionally delayed or cancelled by weather, particularly in shoulder season (May, late September/October); we build a buffer day into every itinerary partly for this reason. Roads to Nubra and Pangong can also close temporarily after heavy rain or landslip, even in summer — our drivers track conditions daily and we will re-route or adjust the plan rather than push through a closed or unsafe road.

Classic Ladakh

The itinerary most of our groups take: two full days to acclimatise in and around Leh, two days across Khardung La into Nubra, one night at Pangong, then back to Leh with a buffer day before the flight home.

6 nights / 7 days Route: **Leh – Sham Valley – Nubra (via Khardung La) – Pangong (via Shyok road) – Leh**

From **₹42,000** pp, indicative

Day

1

DELHI → LEH

Arrive and do nothing

Fly Ahmedabad–Delhi–Leh, landing by late morning. This is the single most important day of the trip for altitude: go straight to the hotel, rest, drink plenty of water, and avoid any exertion or alcohol. A short walk to a nearby market in the evening is fine if you feel well; anything more can wait.

Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Dinner**

Day

2

LEH

Sham Valley and monasteries

A low-altitude day to keep acclimatising while still sightseeing. Visit Magnetic Hill, the Sangam of the Indus and Zaskar rivers, Gurudwara Pathar Sahib, and the monasteries at Likir and Alchi. Back in Leh by evening for a visit to Leh Palace and Shanti Stupa at sunset.

Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

3

LEH → NUBRA VALLEY

Over Khardung La

Drive to Nubra via Khardung La (5,359 m, about 40 km/2 hours from Leh), stopping briefly at the pass for photos and tea. Descend into the valley to Hunder or Diskit (total drive about 120 km, 5 hours). Afternoon at the sand dunes with a double-humped camel ride, and a visit to Diskit Monastery's giant Maitreya Buddha statue.

Stay: **Nubra (Hunder/Diskit)** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

4

NUBRA → PANGONG TSO

To the lake via Shyok

Take the Shyok river road from Nubra to Pangong Tso (about 150 km, 5–6 hours) — a longer but lower and generally smoother route than crossing back over Khardung La and Chang La. Arrive by late afternoon to watch the lake change colour at sunset. Nights here are cold (near freezing even in summer) and camp facilities are basic.

Stay: **Pangong Tso (camp)** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
5

PANGONG TSO → LEH

Back over Chang La

Sunrise at the lake before the tour buses arrive, then return to Leh via Chang La (5,360 m, the third-highest motorable pass), about 160 km and 5–6 hours with stops. Rest on arrival; a free evening in Leh market for shawls, apricots and souvenirs.

Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
6

LEH

Hemis and Thiksey, buffer day

A relaxed day serving as a weather buffer for the road trip just completed. Visit Thiksey Monastery for the morning prayer session and Hemis Monastery in the afternoon. Those who prefer to rest can simply stay in Leh — this day is deliberately unhurried before the flight out.

Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
7

LEH → DELHI → AHMEDABAD

Fly home

Morning flight from Leh (flights depart early due to wind patterns, often before 9 am) connecting through Delhi to Ahmedabad. Leh airport security is slow for a domestic airport; report at least 2.5 hours before departure.

Stay: — · Meals: **Breakfast**

Included

- + Return Ahmedabad–Delhi–Leh flights
- + 6 nights: hotels in Leh, guesthouse/camp in Nubra, Swiss tent camp at Pangong Tso
- + Private SUV (Innova/Xylo/Scorpio) with driver for the full circuit
- + Inner Line Permit arrangement for Nubra and Pangong
- + Daily breakfast and dinner throughout
- + Airport pickup and drop, oxygen cylinder kept in the vehicle

Not included

- Lunches (paid at dhabas/camps en route, ₹250–400 per person)
- Camel ride at Hunder and any optional activities
- Travel and medical evacuation insurance (strongly recommended)
- GST 5%

STANDARD

₹42,000–50,000

Per person, twin sharing

PREMIUM

₹62,000–78,000

Per person, twin sharing

Per person on twin sharing, indicative for 2026, including flights at normal fares booked 6–8 weeks ahead. Peak season (June–August) and any last-minute booking run 15–25% higher; road closures due to weather can add unplanned hotel nights.

Relaxed Ladakh

Built for families travelling with senior parents or young children: an extra acclimatisation day in Leh, only one high pass crossing each way, and no overnight at Pangong — visit it as a long day trip if the group is comfortable, or skip it altogether.

7 nights / 8 days

Route: **Leh – Sham Valley – Nubra (via Khardung La) – Leh, with Pangong as an optional day trip**

From **₹48,000** pp, indicative

Day

1

DELHI → LEH

Arrive and rest completely

Fly in via Delhi, landing by late morning. No sightseeing today under any circumstances — go to the hotel, hydrate, rest, and let the body adjust to 3,500 m. Order light meals; avoid tea, coffee and alcohol on this first day.

Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Dinner**

Day

2

LEH

Continue acclimatising

A second full rest day, unusual for most Ladakh itineraries but important for seniors and children. A short, slow walk to Leh market in the late afternoon if everyone feels well; otherwise stay at the hotel. This extra day is what makes the rest of the trip comfortable.

Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

3

LEH

Sham Valley, gently paced

Now that the group has settled in, drive the low-altitude Sham Valley loop: Magnetic Hill, Sangam viewpoint, Gurudwara Pathar Sahib, and Likir Monastery. Return by mid-afternoon with time to rest before an early dinner.

Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

4

LEH → NUBRA VALLEY

Over Khardung La to Nubra

Drive to Nubra via Khardung La, with a brief stop at the top only if everyone is comfortable — the guide will keep this short. Reach Hunder or Diskit by afternoon; a gentle walk at the sand dunes, camel ride optional and skippable for anyone not up to it.

Stay: **Nubra (Hunder/Diskit)** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
5

NUBRA VALLEY

Diskit Monastery and a free day

No further pass crossing today. Visit Diskit Monastery's Maitreya Buddha statue in the morning; the rest of the day is free by the river. This is a good day for anyone who felt the altitude at Khardung La to recover fully before the drive back.

Stay: Nubra (Hunder/Diskit) · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
6

NUBRA → LEH

Back to Leh, Pangong day trip optional

Return to Leh over Khardung La (about 5 hours). Families who are travelling well and want to see Pangong Tso can instead take the longer Shyok-road day trip to the lake and back to Leh in a single very long day (12–13 hours round trip) — we only recommend this for fit adults; seniors and children are better off skipping Pangong this visit and enjoying Leh at a slower pace.

Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
7

LEH

Thiksey and Hemis Monasteries

An easy day near Leh: Thiksey Monastery for the morning prayers, Shey Palace, and Hemis Monastery in the afternoon. Evening free in Leh market for last-minute shopping — pashmina shawls, apricots, Ladakhi handicrafts.

Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
8

LEH → DELHI → AHMEDABAD

Fly home

Early morning flight via Delhi. Leh airport can be slow; arrive at least 2.5 hours before departure and keep valuables in hand luggage as checked bags are screened separately.

Stay: — · Meals: **Breakfast**

Included

- + Return Ahmedabad–Delhi–Leh flights
- + 7 nights in Leh (5) and Nubra (2), hotels chosen for ground-floor or lift access where possible
- + Private SUV with driver for the whole trip, kept slower-paced by design
- + Inner Line Permit arrangement for Nubra (and Pangong if the optional day trip is taken)
- + Daily breakfast and dinner throughout
- + Oxygen cylinder and a basic first-aid kit kept in the vehicle at all times

Not included

- Lunches en route
- Optional Pangong day-trip vehicle supplement if added (₹4,500–6,000)
- Travel and medical evacuation insurance (strongly recommended for this itinerary)
- GST 5%

STANDARD

PREMIUM

₹48,000–56,000

Per person, twin sharing

₹70,000–88,000

Per person, twin sharing

Per person on twin sharing, indicative for 2026. Slightly higher than the classic itinerary because of the extra night and slower vehicle use; the optional Pangong day trip is quoted separately since not every family takes it.

Ladakh Short Break

For groups with limited leave who still want the high-altitude experience — one core excursion beyond Leh rather than both. We steer most short-break groups towards Nubra, which is the gentler and more reliably open of the two routes; Pangong can be swapped in for fitter groups.

4 nights / 5 days

 Route: **Leh and Nubra Valley (or Leh and Pangong Tso)**

 From **₹34,000** pp, indicative

Day

1
DELHI → LEH

Arrive and rest

Fly Ahmedabad–Delhi–Leh, landing by late morning. Complete rest for the day — this is non-negotiable on a short trip, since there is no slack later to recover from skipping it. Hydrate well and keep the evening low-key.

 Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Dinner**

Day

2
LEH

Sham Valley and Leh sightseeing

Low-altitude Sham Valley loop — Magnetic Hill, Sangam, Gurudwara Pathar Sahib, Likir Monastery — followed by Leh Palace and Shanti Stupa in the late afternoon. This keeps the group at safe altitude while still covering ground before tomorrow's pass crossing.

 Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

3
LEH → NUBRA VALLEY

Khardung La and the dunes

Cross Khardung La to Nubra (about 5 hours with the stop at the pass). Afternoon at Hunder's sand dunes and an evening at Diskit, close to the monastery for a morning visit before heading back. (Groups choosing Pangong instead follow the Shyok route from Leh directly, a similarly long single day, and stay overnight at a lake-side camp.)

 Stay: **Nubra (Hunder/Diskit)** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

4
NUBRA → LEH

Diskit Monastery and return

Morning visit to Diskit Monastery's Maitreya Buddha, then drive back to Leh over Khardung La, arriving by afternoon. A last look at Leh market for shawls and dried apricots before an early dinner ahead of tomorrow's early flight.

 Stay: **Leh** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
5

LEH → DELHI → AHMEDABAD

Fly home

Early morning flight via Delhi — Lehigh departures are almost always before mid-morning because of afternoon winds. Arrive at the airport at least 2.5 hours ahead; security here takes longer than most domestic airports.

Stay: — · Meals: **Breakfast**

Included

- + Return Ahmedabad–Delhi–Lehigh flights
- + 4 nights: hotel in Lehigh, guesthouse/camp for the Nubra (or Pangong) night
- + Private SUV with driver for the full trip
- + Inner Line Permit arrangement
- + Daily breakfast and dinner
- + Oxygen cylinder kept in the vehicle

Not included

- Lunches en route
- Camel ride at Hunder or boat/photography add-ons at Pangong
- Travel and medical evacuation insurance (strongly recommended)
- GST 5%

STANDARD

₹34,000–40,000

Per person, twin sharing

PREMIUM

₹50,000–62,000

Per person, twin sharing

Per person on twin sharing, indicative for 2026. This is a compressed itinerary with only one clear acclimatisation day — we only recommend it for fit adults, not for seniors or young children; use the relaxed 7-night version for them instead.

Want this booked properly?

Send this PDF to us on WhatsApp with your dates and the number of travellers. Hotel names and a firm price within 24 hours.

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