

# Whispers of Ladakh: Monks, Mountains & Homestays

📅 16 Nights / 17 Days

Main Image

## Overview

Jullay! The warm, buttery aroma of Gurgur Cha fills a sunlit Ladakhi kitchen as your smiling homestay hostess welcomes you with a steaming cup. Here in the land of high passes and ancient prayers, hospitality is not an act—it's a way of life. You sit on woven rugs in a mud-brick village kitchen, sip tea that's more broth than brew, and listen to stories of snow leopards and sacred chants.

Your journey begins in the heart of the Sham Valley, where whitewashed houses nestle between barley fields and mountain shadows. Trekking between villages, you'll pass through walnut orchards, discover sacred rock paintings, and help your homestay family prepare traditional dishes like skiu, momos, and chutagi. In the evenings, laughter mingles with the clanging of prayer bells as stars pierce Ladakh's crystalline night sky.

As your soul grows lighter, you move deeper into the wild. A tent trek from Lamayuru to Chilling carries you past craggy passes—Prinkiti La, Konzke La, and Dundunchen La—and into surreal silence. You'll cross alpine streams, gaze across red-rock valleys, and sleep under wool blankets as yaks graze nearby.

But Ladakh is not just nature—it's spirit. In towering monasteries like Hemis and Thiksey, red-robed monks recite ancient mantras while butter lamps flicker in the shadows. Hidden caves whisper the wisdom of Buddhist hermits, while ancient murals reveal visions of deities, wrathful and serene.

This is more than a tour. It's a pilgrimage into Ladakh's cultural soul—one step, one sip, and one sacred smile at a time.

## Highlights

- 🏔️ Trekking through Sham Valley's ancient villages
- 🏠 Stay with Ladakhi families in traditional homestays

- ☑ Help cook Ladakhi dishes: skiu, chutagi, and momos
- ☑ Taste authentic Gurgur Cha (butter tea)
- ☑ Multi-day tent trekking from Lamayuru to Chilling
- ☐ Cross high mountain passes: Prinkiti La, Konzke La, Dundunchen La
- ☑ Visit centuries-old monasteries: Hemis, Thiksey, Alchi
- ☑ Attend prayer ceremonies and pujas with monks
- ☑ Explore hidden Buddhist caves and hermitages
- ☑ Encounter Himalayan wildlife and stargaze under clear skies

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1 - Soaring Over the Himalayas - Flight to Leh (3500m)

This morning, board a breathtaking panoramic flight to Leh, soaring over the snow-covered Himalayas. On arrival, the dramatic mountain vistas, fluttering prayer flags, and the high-altitude air welcome you to Ladakh. Enjoy a gentle drive to your accommodation and spend the day acclimatizing to the altitude. Absorb the unique Tibetan Buddhist charm of Leh.

### Day 2 - Sacred Paths - Nyerma to Thiksey Hike & Royal Palaces

Begin your day with a visit to the peaceful nunnery at Nyerma, nestled next to ancient university ruins. Hike through scenic trails to the majestic Thiksey Monastery, known for its striking resemblance to Lhasa's Potala Palace. Later, explore the historic summer palace of Shey and its royal past. Return to Leh for a cozy evening rest.

### Day 3 - Hemis Monastery & Gothsang Hermitage - Echoes of Spirituality

Today's journey takes you to Hemis, Ladakh's largest and wealthiest monastery. Marvel at the ancient thangkas and wander its peaceful courtyards. Then hike up to Gothsang Hermitage, a secluded retreat perched at 4020m where monks meditate in silence. End the day with a quiet stop at the serene Stakna Monastery before returning to Leh.

## **Day 4 - The Sham Valley Trail - Alchi Oasis and Ancient Caves**

Venture into the Sham region, following the Indus to the mystical Sangam – the confluence of the Zaskar and Indus rivers. Climb to the ancient caves at Saspol adorned with sacred paintings. Visit the hidden Rizong Monastery, then explore Alchi, home to thousand-year-old Buddhist artwork and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## **Day 5 - Homestay Trek Begins - Alchi to Yangtang**

Trek through apricot orchards and wheat fields as you cross over small streams and stone bridges. Arrive at the village of Yangtang, known for its warm hospitality. Enjoy local cuisine, try on traditional Ladakhi attire, and witness everyday life in the mountains firsthand.

## **Day 6 - Across Passes - Yangtang to Hemis Shukpachan**

Hike across scenic mountain passes through walnut and poplar groves. Visit Buddhist stupas and prayer walls on the way to Hemis Shukpachan, nestled beneath dramatic rock cliffs. Learn to cook traditional dishes like Chutagi and interact with villagers during your stay.

## **Day 7 - To Temisgam - Through Legends and Lu Spirits**

Trek down lush valleys dotted with prayer flags and hidden Lu (water spirit) stones. Reach Temisgam, one of the most charming villages in Ladakh, home to royal ruins and friendly hosts. Explore the monastery and relax in the serene rural surroundings.

## **Day 8 - Lamayuru - Monastery by the Moonland**

Drive to Lamayuru Monastery, dramatically perched in a moonscape-like terrain. Explore its ancient chambers and meditate in silence amidst whispering winds. Begin preparations for your tent trek tomorrow.

## **Day 9 - Tent Trek Begins - Lamayuru to Wanla (3,150m)**

Begin your high-altitude trek from Lamayuru. Walk along dusty trails flanked by jagged ridges, passing chortens and goat herds. Camp beneath the stars in Wanla, surrounded by raw Himalayan beauty.

### **Day 10 - To Hinju - A Glimpse of Traditional Ladakh**

Cross streams and ascend gently through narrow gorges and village fields. Reach Hinju village, where you can watch locals weaving wool and spinning prayer wheels. Overnight in tents near the riverbed.

### **Day 11 - Konzke La Pass (4,920m) - To Sumdo**

Today's the most challenging climb! Cross Konzke La, one of the highest points of your trek, with jaw-dropping panoramas. Descend carefully through remote wilderness to Sumdo valley.

### **Day 12 - Dundunchen La (4,610m) - To Chilling (3,550m)**

Conquer your final pass today! Reach the beautiful village of Chilling, known for its metal artisans. Celebrate your trek's end with warm food, storytelling, and riverside rest.

### **Day 13 - Back to Leh - Rest, Reflection & Local Life**

Drive back to Leh along dramatic roads carved into the mountains. Spend the evening at your own pace – visit the market, try local cafés, or rest with mountain views.

### **Day 14 - Free Day in Leh - Optional Rafting or Cultural Walk**

Enjoy a relaxed day. Optional: white-water rafting on the Zaskar River or a heritage walk through old Leh town with its mud-brick houses and Ladakhi bakeries.

### **Day 15 - Departure - Leh to Delhi**

Your Himalayan odyssey comes to a close. Take your return flight to Delhi with a heart full of memories, fresh perspectives, and stories worth sharing.

## **Day 16 - Delhi Sightseeing or Optional Excursion to Agra**

Awaken to the vibrant charm of Delhi or opt for an enriching day trip to Agra (advance booking required). If you choose Agra, a comfortable train ride brings you to the iconic Taj Mahal at sunrise — a breathtaking monument of love carved in white marble and surrounded by elegant minarets. Afterward, explore the magnificent Agra Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, before returning to Delhi in the evening. Your hotel room remains available for rest and refreshment until your late-night airport transfer.

## **Day 17 - Departure**

After a soul-stirring journey through India's cultural and Himalayan heartlands, transfer to the airport for your return flight. Farewell and safe travels!

## **Accommodation Used**