

ZANSKAR RIVER ICE TREK, CHADAR



walking on the Frozen Zanskar river (also know as the Chadar)



HIGHLIGHTS

- Trek along the traditional winter trading route connecting Padum to Ladakh along the frozen Zaskar river.
- This is a real adventure with only a couple of groups making the trek every year. The conditions on the river can be variable so a flexible approach is required!
- Gain an insight into the remote cultures of Zaskar and Ladakh and you will have the chance to stay with local Zaskaris along the way.
- There is also plenty of time to explore the gompas and forts around Leh as you let your body acclimatise to the altitude.
- The maximum overnight low could be around **-30 degrees Celsius** although it will warm up when the sun during the day comes out, probably to around freezing. You will need very warm clothes and equipment for this trek, please see our detailed equipment list in the Appendix.



ZANSKAR ICE RIVER TREK (CHADAR)

Total number of days	24 days
Grade & days trekking	Strenuous, 18 trekking days
Accommodation	5 nights hotel, 18 nights camping
2011 price ex Delhi	US\$4,200
Minimum group size	2
Dates	January 2 nd to 25 th 2011 January 2 nd to 25 th 2012



THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP

- Internal flight to/from Leh and Delhi.
- All transfers including airport collections.
- Twin share room at Hotel White House in Delhi and Hotel Pangong (or equivalent) in Leh.
- Breakfast only at hotels in Delhi and Leh, all meals included while on trek.
- Twin share tents while on trek.
- All trekking arrangements including permits and fees, tents, Western and Sherpa guides, ponies and cook.
- Financial protection insurance with International Passenger Protection.

THE FOLLOWING SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IS AVAILABLE:

Single room supplement	£POA
Single tent supplement	US\$150

Please note that if you are a single person booking on one of our trips you do not have to pay the single room supplement, this is only payable if you specifically request to have a room or tent to yourself. You will not have to pay this for this option if you happen to end up with a single room or tent due to odd numbers on the trip.

THE FOLLOWING IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP

- International flight to/from Delhi (from £400).
- Travel & trekking insurance (Snowcard from £74).
- India visa up to 6 month (£30).
- Lunch and evening meals in Delhi and Leh.



- Personal clothing & equipment please see the Appendix for suggested kit list.
- Tips.
- Other items not listed in “What is included”.

YOUR COMPLETE FINANCIAL PROTECTION

In accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992" all passengers booking with The Mountain Trekking Company Ltd (“The Mountain Company”) are fully protected for the initial deposit and subsequently the balance of all monies paid to us, including repatriation if required, arising from cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements due to the insolvency of The Mountain Company.



For further information about our financial protection insurance with International Passenger Protection please see Appendix 2.

PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Participants should be aware trekking, mountaineering and travelling in a developing country are activities that involve a risk of personal injury or death. As a condition of booking you must accept these risks and be responsible for your own actions and involvement.

Adventure travel requires an open and flexible attitude. You may experience extreme conditions, unpredictable weather and last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. Lack of acclimatisation to high altitudes could also be a risk factor. Our itineraries allow optimum time for acclimatising although it is possible that some individuals might be slow acclimatisers.



The majority of our trips visit remote areas where you are away from normal emergency services and medical facilities. In case of a serious injury requiring hospitalisation, it has to be accepted by you, evacuation could take up to several days and may impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the most usual means of evacuation, however they are not always available or they may be hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

INTRODUCTION

This is an adventurous winter trek on the frozen Zaskar river following the traditional trading route.

The trek on the frozen River Zaskar, traditionally called the Chadar, is an unforgettable journey. You will be exploring a remote area that is cut off from the outside world for over half the year and can only be visited in winter by following the old trade route along the frozen Zaskar river. One of the most interesting parts of the trek will be the insight into the cultures of Zaskar and Ladakh.

We walk through the kingdom of Zaskar visiting the small towns of Pishu, Pidmo, Stongde and Zangla and their impressive gompas and forts. This is a truly adventurous trek due to the unpredictability of the conditions encountered and the remoteness of the area visited. The amount and condition of the ice on the Zaskar river can vary year on year and also day to day so a flexible attitude to the trek is essential. The maximum overnight low could be around -30 Celsius although it will warm up when the sun during the day comes out probably to around freezing level.

DETAILED ITINERARY

It is our intention to keep to the day by day itinerary detailed below, although there might be some flexibility due to local conditions or other factors beyond our control. If this is the case the trek leader will do everything possible to work out the changes to the itinerary in order to minimise your inconvenience.



Day 1. Arrive Delhi and join the tour at the hotel.

A driver will be sent to collect you on your arrival at Delhi airport and to bring you back to the hotel. Please provide travel plans on booking and we will arrange the pick up and transfer.

Day 2. Fly to Leh (3,505m).

Transfer to the airport for an early morning flight to Leh. The rest of the day you can rest from altitude and the early start or start exploring Leh. Overnight hotel.

Day 3. Sightseeing around Leh.

Leh is the ancient capital of Ladakh and has many hilltop forts and palaces to visit including the Royal Palace which overlooks the town. The town is situated on the old Silk Route and still has a trading tradition- it is well worth wandering around the colourful bazaar.

Day 4. Drive to Chilling- visit village and meet porters.

Transfer by jeep on a tarmac road to Neemu, then drive on a track to Chilling.

Day 5. Trek to Tilad Do.

We start the trekking from Chilling and continue on to the campsite at Tilad Do.

Day 6. Trek to Gyalpo Skyalsos.

Day 7. Trek to Dib Cave.

Day 8. Trek to Neeraq cave.

Day 9. Trek to Dib Gongma.

Day 10. Trek to Hanumil.

Day 11. Trek to Pidmo.

Day 12. Trek to Zangla.

Day 13. Trek to Karsha.

Day 14. Rest day in Karsha.

Day 15. Trek to Pishu.

Day 16. Trek to Hanumil.

Days 17 to 21. Trek to Chilling

Day 22. Drive to Leh.

Day 23. Fly to Delhi

Day 24. Fly back home.



ETHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Mountain Company is committed to adopting a responsible attitude to the areas we visit. We are guests of the communities visited and with some thought and care we can ensure that everyone benefits from the experience.

We work closely with the International Porter Protection Group (www.ippg.net) who we support as a Camp 1 sponsor- we abide by their 5 guidelines for porter protection.

We also work with other organisations such as Climate Care (www.climatecare.org), Tourism Concern (www.tourismconcern.org.uk), Friends of Conservation (www.foc-uk.com) and Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (www.keepnepal.org).

We have developed a Responsible Tourism policy which aims to ensure that The Mountain Company and its clients act in a way that is socially, environmentally and culturally sound.

The Mountain Company has joined the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Know Before You Go campaign. The aim is to make sure travellers are properly prepared before travelling overseas. The best way to get the FCO latest advice is to visit their website at: www.fco.gov.uk/travel.





PRACTICAL INFORMATION

ACCOMMODATION IN DELHI & LEH

In **Delhi** we normally use the White House hotel which is located centrally in the Karol Bagh district of New Delhi. It is a short walk from the hotel to the Metro station and 5 minutes into Connaught Place. For more information take a look at their website www.hotel-whitehouse.com

In **Leh** we use the Pangong Hotel (Category A rated) which is located in a grove of poplar trees only 5 minute walk from the centre of Leh. The hotel has a beautiful garden with views of Stok Kangri. There are 18 well furnished spacious double rooms with attached bathrooms and running hot & cold shower facility with Cable TV.

We also will use other hotels of a similar quality if unable to get reservations in these.

A TYPICAL DAY ON TREK

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the cook's helpers. Before heading over to the mess tent for breakfast it is best to pack your overnight gear into your duffel bag. During breakfast the tents will be packed away and, after the pony men have arranged their loads, they will set off on the trail in the cool of the morning.

After breakfast, probably between 7am and 8am, we start walking. The pace of the trek is leisurely with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos and explore the local villages. Lunch will be around 11am at a spot by the side of the trail and is prepared for us by the cooks.

There is more walking after lunch and normally you will get into camp by mid afternoon with the tents already put up by the local staff. In the evening a three course meal is served in the mess tent around 7pm. After supper the western



leader will discuss the plan for the next day with the group. People might stay in the mess tent chatting about the day's events for a while before retiring to their tent for the night.

FOOD

In **Delhi** there is a wide range of excellent restaurants close to the hotel in Connaught Circus from upmarket, local dhabas to western style. Some of the more popular ones are: Spice Route (in the Imperial hotel), Banana Leaf, Nirulas, Baristas, Parikrama, United Coffee House and Standard. Breakfast is provided each morning by the hotel.

In **Leh** there is also a wide range of good restaurants, our favourites include Dreamland, La Terrasses and the Tibetan kitchen.

While on the trek you will get breakfast with porridge and cereal, toast or chapattis, omelettes and a range of hot drinks. Normally a hot lunch is prepared by the trek crew or on the longer days a pack lunch is provided after breakfast. On arrival at the camp in the afternoon you will be given tea and biscuits and a three course meal will follow later in the evening.

CLIMATE

Usually sunny days but with dry chilly winds, the temperature can drop to minus 30 Centigrade at nights but will warm up as the sun comes out during the day.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

A list of suggested clothing and equipment for the Frozen Zaskar river trek has been included in the Appendix below. This is a comprehensive list and experienced trekkers will often take only a selection of these items based on what has worked in the past. It is worth pointing out that you will need a sleeping bag for this trip.



If you do not have the clothing and equipment contained in this list then a good option might be to rent from the UK. Trek Hire is a company that rents out high quality items at competitive prices which would save you the expense of buying. The link to their website is <http://www.trekhireuk.com/>

Alternatively if you are going to buy then please contact the office for the Cotswold Outdoor promo code that entitles you, as a client of The Mountain Company, to a 15% discount in their stores and online.

Each trekker should bring one backpack for items required during the day. Your day backpack will contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and snacks.

The rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel bag or backpack will be carried by a porter. **The maximum weight allowance is 15kgs.** Please ensure that your bag is marked clearly on the outside for easy identification.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Citizens from the UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand require an entry visa, it is your responsibility to obtain the entry visa. The Indian High Commission in London has updated the procedure for obtaining tourist visas. The decision on whether to grant a visa has been retained by the High Commission; however the application and collection process has been outsourced to VFS Global.

All applications have to be made online at <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/> You still have to apply online if you are submitting your application by post or using a visa agency. Walk-in applicants also need to fill out the online form before visiting VFS's office.

It should take 2 to 3 days to process your visa from submission although many people have experienced delays so please allow longer than this. Postal applications might take up to 15 days plus postage time. We suggest you carefully read the VFS website taking particular care in calculating the fee payable and also the rules for acceptable passport photos in order to avoid further delays.



VACCINATIONS AND MEDICAL

You should obtain professional advice from a travel clinic or your local GP about which vaccinations to have before you arrive in Nepal. A dental check-up is a good idea as there will be no dental facilities while on the trek.

We bring a comprehensive first aid kit from UK (Life Systems Mountain Leader) plus high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines.

FLIGHTS

We recommend Max Travel (ATOL bonded license# 4705) for booking international flights and other travel arrangements. Please take a look at their website at <http://www.maxtravel.co.uk/> or give them a call on 020 7095 0920.

There are a number of good online agents that we also recommend, they are:

Kayak: *an excellent flight cost comparison website* <http://www.kayak.co.uk/>

Traveljungle: *another good flight cost comparison website*
<http://www.traveljungle.co.uk/>

Cheap Tickets: this site quotes airfares in USD\$ & often is very competitive when translated back to GBP£ <http://www.cheaptickets.com/>

Southall Travel: very competitive prices for India, Pakistan and Nepal both online and telephone support <http://www.southalltravel.co.uk/>

INSURANCE

Travel insurance for any Mountain Company itinerary is a condition of booking a holiday. At the very least you should have emergency medical and repatriation insurance which must include the cost of mountain rescue. Cancellation insurance is strongly recommended as all deposits paid to The Mountain Company are non-refundable.



To get an online quote for your personal travel and trekking insurance (UK residents only), take a look at Snowcard's website at http://www.snowcard.co.uk/pages/d_select1.asp?referrer_id=MC

Snowcard activity level for Zanskar Frozen river trek is 3 and prices start from £74.



Please note that The Mountain Company do not act as an agent of Snowcard Insurance and any policy bought via this web link is effected directly with Snowcard Insurance Services Limited.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

For those of you who are visiting India for the first time we have provided some cultural information to help ensure your behaviour is acceptable to your hosts in India:

- Both men and women should dress conservatively wearing full length trousers and a shirt.
- There are many hot springs, rivers and lakes where it is pleasant to take a dip, it is fine for men to go bare-chested while bathing but should not go nude. Women should try and be as modest as possible in these situations.
- Indians consider the left hand to be unclean, therefore do not eat food with your left hand and make sure you give or receive food only with your right hand
- Shoes are considered degrading so keep them on the ground and remove them before putting your feet on anything and on entering a temple you should remove your shoes.
- You will pass Buddhist mani walls, chortens, and stupas along the trek and to follow local traditions you should pass them on your right.



- When visiting a monastery or gumpa it is customary to give a donation for its upkeep.

SUGGESTED READING

Please take a look at The Mountain Company's bookstore for a wide selection of books and maps to Nepal, the link is at: <http://astore.amazon.co.uk/themountainco-21>

- Ladakh: Crossroads of High Asia by Janet Rizvi
- A Journey in Ladakh by Andrew Harvey
- Ladakh by Prabuddha Das Gupta
- Tibetan Foothold Dervla Murphy
- Quest for Kim: In Search of Kipling's Great Game by Peter Hopkirk
- City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi by William Dalrymple

MAPS

- Ladakh - Zaskar Centre by Editions Olizane Scale: 1:150,000
- Leh, Zaskar and Nubra Valley by West Col Productions Scale: 1:200,000



APPENDIX 1

SUGGESTED CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST

Footwear:

- Insulated walking boots such as North Face Baltoro or Chilkats boots. Sorel specialise in insulated boots so take a look at www.sorel.com . If you have a pair of Millet One Sports for high altitude mountaineering you could use these but expensive to buy.
- Robust gaiters such as Berghaus Yeti Extrem.
- Wool or Pile Socks. Heavyweight wool to be worn over the liner socks.
- Liner Socks. Pair of smooth thin liner socks to be worn next to the skin which reduce the likelihood of getting blisters and hot-spots.
- Down booties to wear in the evening.

Clothing:

- Waterproof jacket and trousers (goretex or similar).
- Heavy weight down jacket.
- Insulated trousers for the evenings (down or synthetic)
- Soft shell trekking trousers
- Long sleeve, light coloured polypropylene shirts.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece jacket.
- Expedition weight synthetic long underwear for both top & bottom.
- Light to mid weight fleece pants.

Handwear:

- Polypropylene liner gloves.



- Fleece gloves.
- Ski gloves.
- Down mittens.

Headwear:

- Wool or fleece hat
- Balaclava
- Fleece neck scarf
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf.
- Headtorch. Bring extra batteries.
- Sunglasses.

Personal Equipment:

- 5 season sleeping bag with hood (rated to -30C).
- Sleeping bag liner.
- Thermarest self inflating pad and foam mat.
- Largish backpack large enough to carry down jacket, fleece, goretex, water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing.
- Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised.
- Two water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best).
- Pee bottle- to avoid chilly evening visits!
- Sunscreen and lipsalve with an SPF 30 or better.
- Water purification tablets (iodine or Pristine- solution of activated chlorine dioxide)
- Favourite snack food



- Paperback books, walkman/ipod and cards
- 1 pair adjustable trekking poles (essential)
- Camera and film
- Passport photos
- Insurance certificate
- Insulated plastic mug (optional)
- Pocket knife swiss army style (optional)
- Earplugs (optional)
- Baby wipes (optional)
- Anti bacterial hand gel (optional)

Travelling:

- Duffle bag or large backpack for your personal gear on the trek (carried by a porter). Bring a small combination padlock to secure the bag.
- Several large plastic bin bags for keeping gear dry in the duffel and backpack.
- Travel clothes. You will need street/casual clothing for air travel days and time spent in Delhi.
- Toiletry bag include toilet paper, soap, towel, toothbrush, etc.

Personal first aid kit:

Note: we provide a comprehensive group first aid kit but please bring personal medications and other items you might use regularly such as:

- Any personal medications.
- Blister treatment- Compeed patches are the best.
- Rehydration powder eg Dioralyte.
- Analgesic- paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin.



- Plasters and zinc oxide.
- Throat lozenges.
- Diamox (optional)- helps with acclimatisation.
- Heat packs.



APPENDIX 2

INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER PROTECTION

In accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992" all passengers booking with The Mountain Trekking Company Ltd ("The Mountain Company") are fully protected for the initial deposit and subsequently the balance of all monies paid to us, including repatriation if required, arising from cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements due to the insolvency of The Mountain Company.

There is no requirement for Financial Protection of day trips, and none is provided. This insurance is only valid for packages booked that DO NOT include flights.

Consumer aware: Your booking is insured by IPP Ltd and its panel of insurers. This insurance is only valid for passengers who book and pay directly with/to The Mountain Company. If you have booked and/ or paid direct to a Travel Agent for a holiday with The Mountain Company please request proof of how the booking is secured as this will not be covered by IPP Ltd in this instance. For further information please go to www.ipplondon.co.uk

This Insurance has been arranged by International Passenger Protection Limited and underwritten by Insurers who are members of the Association of British Insurers & Lloyds Syndicates.

Claim procedures: download claim form from www.ipplondon.co.uk, any occurrence which may give rise to a claim should be advised within 14 days to: International Passenger Protection Limited, Claims Office, IPP House, 22-26 Station Road, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0PR, United Kingdom. Telephone: +44 (0) 208 7763752. Fax: +44 (0) 208 7763751.

In order to deal promptly with any claims hereunder it is essential that you retain all bills, receipts and other documents relating to your travel arrangements. Claims forms must be submitted to IPP within six months of date of insolvency they cannot consider or pay claims received after this date.