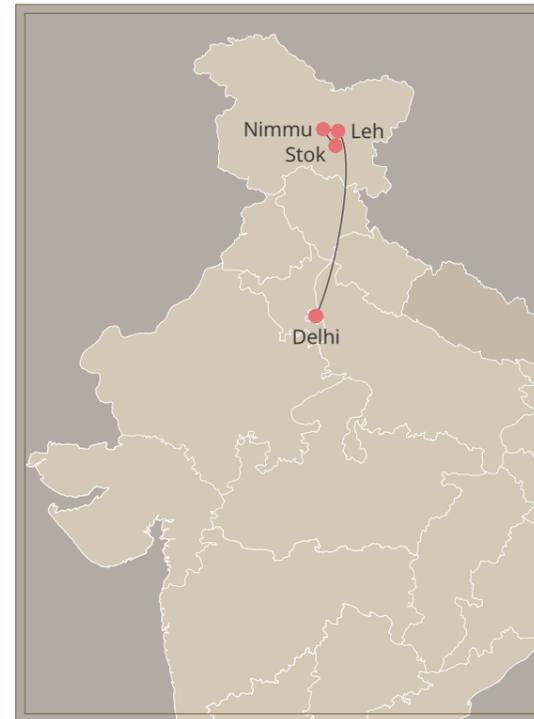
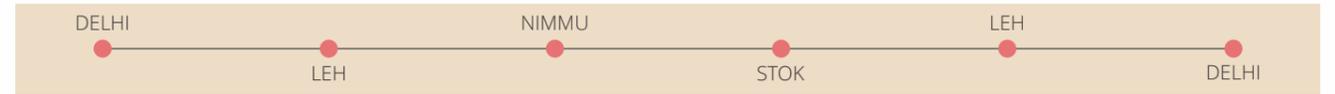


NRT8 > 9 DAY TOUR

ESSENTIAL LADAKH

For centuries Leh was an important stopover on trade routes along the Indus Valley between Tibet to the east, Kashmir to the west, and also between India and China. It is one of two districts of Ladakh, an extension of the Gobi Desert and Tibetan Plateau, comprising some of the world's highest and harshest terrains. Large stretches of stark high altitude cold deserts and 'moonscapes' makes this a forbidding landscape to view even from within the safety of an aircraft – but there is also a strange beauty, so endearing that one could fall in love with it. Unlike the popular perception that accommodation in Ladhak is simple or even basic, we have kept some beautiful, charming and very comfortable properties as the base for discovering this unique destination.



Insider Tips:

- This itinerary is operational only during mid-May to mid-September.
- Visiting Leh during the Hemis Festival in the month of July offers a rare opportunity to see Ladakhi culture and the ancient monastic traditions of Himalayan Buddhism. Make sure to book way in advance to secure accommodation and flight tickets to and from Leh. The flight tickets in particular can get really expensive if left to be booked closer to the date of the festival.
- Shop at the fair price Ladakh Natural Products in Leh. They offer a range of authentic Ladakhi clothing and souvenirs in traditional and creative modern designs.
- Head out to Nubra Valley northwest of Leh, crossing the Khardungla Pass at 18,380 feet (5603 metres) for a raw and magnificent experience of the Himalayan cold desert. Add three more nights to discover Nubra Valley nestled between the Himalayas to the south and the Karakorams to the north.
- Add one night to visit the gorgeous Tsomoriri Lake. Very few go to Tsomoriri and the drive from Leh is beautiful.
- Leh is the starting point of many high altitude treks including the ones in search of the elusive and the highly endangered Snow Leopard. Snow Leopard treks are best done during the month of October, and again in February – March. The shortest trek lasts for seven days. Expect freezing temperatures which could dip up to -20C (-4 F) on a given day and an average of 5-6 hours of daily trek. Grade: Medium. Average Height: 12,000 feet (3700 metres). Be prepared to trek through light to medium snowfall for up to several hours a day.



THE YAK

The Yak is almost revered among Ladhakis and other highlanders of the Trans Himalaya. Indeed, their lives depend upon this sturdy animal – not only is it the beast of burden, it also provides meat, milk for butter, hair and hide for tents and boots, ropes and dung for fuel and manure.

TOUR ITINERARY | NRT 8

DAY 01 ARRIVAL DELHI

Arrive Delhi (961 feet above sea level). Warm welcome at the airport by our representative and transfer to the hotel.

DAY 02 IN DELHI

Depending on the month of travel, we will customise sightseeing at the time of booking. While Delhi is blazing hot in May and June, it is hot, sweaty and humid in July, August and September. It might be a good idea to explore the local *bazaars* and shop for souvenirs today.

DAY 03 DELHI – LEH – NIMMU

Early morning fly to Leh (11,800 feet above sea level). Drive straight to Nimmu Village close to Indus and Zaskar rivers. Take it easy for the rest of the day to acclimatise at Nimmu House, a typical example of

traditional architecture of Ladakh. With its two Buddhist temples and lovely orchards of apricot, apple and walnut trees, it makes for an ideal retreat.

DAY 04 IN NIMMU

Drive along the river Indus to visit the 11th century Alchi Monastery with its beautiful murals and frescoes. These are some of the oldest surviving paintings in Ladakh that have imbibed both Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Later, drive to the stunningly located Likir Monastery with its three-storey high Buddha statue.

DAY 05 NIMMU – STOK PALACE

Drive to Stok. Stay for two nights at the 19th century Stok Place, the official residence of the Royal Family of Ladakh. This elegant four storey

palace is a perfect mix of the old and the new with lovely panoramic views. Go for a walk in Stok Village.

DAY 06 IN STOK PALACE

Spend the day exploring the palace at a leisurely pace – take a stroll around the Palace, hear the chanting of the monks in the monastery and visit the eccentric family museum, one of the best in Ladakh.

DAY 07 STOK PALACE – LEH

Drive to Leh town. Later in the afternoon, head to the terrace of Lala's Café to listen to the history of Leh over a cup of coffee. Walk around the old town to see the ruins of the 17th century Leh Palace. Continue on foot to LAMO (Ladakh Arts & Media Organisation Centre) a public charitable trust that

showcases Ladakhi culture. End the day watching the sunset from Shanti Stupa which is located elegantly on a hilltop.

DAY 08 IN LEH

Visit the Shey Palace which was the residence of the royal family before they moved to the Stok Palace in 1834. Later, continue to Thiksey Monastery also known as Little Lhasa for its resemblance to the Little Potala Palace in Northern Tibet. End the day at Hemis Monastery, the biggest and the wealthiest in entire Ladakh, for an insight into the ancient tradition of Tantric Buddhism. Buy postcards, books, prayer flags and other such souvenirs from the Hemis museum shop for friends back home.

DAY 09 LEH – DELHI – DEPARTURE

Morning flight to Delhi. Day at leisure. Later, transfer to the airport in time for the international flight.



Ladakh is a cold and dry region.



All our Guides are fluent in the local language - Ladakhi. While most locals understand Ladakhi, English may not be understood by all.

Most used phrase is: 'Jullay! Khamzang ina-le??', which means 'Hello! how are you' in Ladakhi.