



Kedar Gogte

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## CHADAR TREK 2018

Chadar was traditionally used by the people of Zaskar to migrate up & down. Those days there were no roads & Chadar was the only way to move up & down. Kids from Zaskar studying in Leh would come back home when the Chadar would form for the winter & go back before it would melt. This trek involves mostly walking on ice sheets formed over the flowing water of the river Zaskar, which connects the Zaskar valley to the Ladakh region and its people. Chadar was also used to transport goods & general commodities and was the only way for Zaskar to connect with the outside world. The Chaddar is the pride and prestige of the Zanskari which connects them to people of different cultural and traditional background which would traditionally allow them to exchange life saving techniques during the harsh winters when temperatures goes down to -40 C. Zanskari people praise the Chaddar trail rather than complaining to the Almighty about remaining isolated from the rest of the country, because it gives them an opportunity to spend most of their time with their family and friends, cheering Local butter tea and playing local games during winter. The Chaddar also gives them an opportunity to generate income and earn a livelihood. The Zanskari feel pride in leading the trekkers over the Chaddar, which also makes them the finest guides in exploring and experimenting with new and challenging routes. The Zanskari will tell you the mountain ghost stories and the deities which protects the Zanskari from failing during the winter harsh climate.

These days there is a road which comes into the Zaskar in the summers but if you walk the entire Chadar you will see the importance of the frozen river for the kingdom of Zaskar.

### Itinerary

#### Day 01 – 18<sup>th</sup> Jan: Arrival Leh Ladakh.

Arrival Leh K B Rinpoche Airport (world highest airfield). Upon arrival transfer to Guest House/Hotel. Complete rest is recommended for acclimatization to avoid High Altitude Sickness which is common in guest flying from very low attitude to high altitude areas like Leh which is at 3358 m above sea level. Dinner and Overnight stay at guest house/Hotel in Leh.

#### Day 02: Local sightseeing - 19<sup>th</sup> Jan: Leh Palace and sunset at Shanti Stupa. (Full day tour.)

You will visit Ladakh's richest and famous architectural sites. The first destination is Leh Tsasoma Mosque, built in 15<sup>th</sup> century. When the silk route of central Asia was still being used, Leh was the transit camp between the different countries. The Central Asian Museum lies in the same compound and is run by Anjuman-moin-ul-Islam of Leh, which is the sole owner of the Museum. The three storied building reflects 03 different cultures, those of Ladakh, Kashmir and Tibet which has significant influence on the Ladakhi culture and tradition. Next destination is the Leh Jamia Masjid, situated in the heart of the Leh city, built in 1666-67 AD. Mughal king Aurangzeb and Ladakhi ruler Deldan Namgyal made an agreement to construct this Mosque in Ladakh. Initially the architecture of the mosque was of Tibetan, central Asian, and Ladakhi style, but with the passage of time and increase in Muslim population now it has been reconstructed with multiple stories with modern facilities and minarets and domes inspired from Iranian architecture.



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Leh Palace, a nine storied building erected on a hill with Ladakhi style architecture is a recommended tourist spot for students and architecture disciples. Below the palace lies Leh old Town, a must see Ladakhi settlement consisting of about 396 registered homes with 120 heritage listed buildings. In the end you will visit the Shanti Stupa for a splendid view of the setting sun. Dinner & Overnight stay at the Hotel in Leh.

### **Day 03 / Trek day 01 - 20<sup>th</sup> Jan: Drive to Chilling Village, trek to Tilad Dho. (5-6hrs)**

We will start early in the morning from the guest house/ homestay/hotel for Chilling. The drive is of about 2 hours and takes you along the Indus River. The confluence of Indus and Zaskar River is at Nimoo village. The trek over the frozen Zaskar starts at Tilad Dho. On reaching the camp site, you will be given basic information on how to survive in the harsh, cold climate. Enjoy the huge peaks all around you while sipping hot coffee/herbal tea. To keep warm take a short hike and capture the overwhelming frozen river. The temperature drops down in the night. Have dinner and go to bed early.

### **Day 04 / Trek day 02 – 21<sup>st</sup> Jan: Tilad Dho to Gyalpo. (Distance to be covered 12km, 5-6hrs).**

Today we will walk the distance of 12km approximately, you will be given instructions on how to walk on the frozen river. Formation of ice on the river is dependent on the weather and the temperature during the nights. Sometimes the ice layer is thick and sometimes the formation of ice is very thin or not at all, in which case, you might have to step into the freezing, flowing water that could come up to your knee or waist; or climb on the cliffs on the mountains to cross to the other side to continue the trek. You will also encounter the dusting of snow on the ice which makes the surface slippery and very hard for one to walk on. The first rest point is the Shingra Kongma, which is a small beautiful place near the river. Keep walking to reach the first camping site-Gyalapo. Dinner and Night halt at Gyalapo.

### **Day 05/ trek day 03 – 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan: Gyalpo to Tibb Cave (distance to be covered 14km).**

Wakeup call for today's trek is at 6:00am in the morning, the distance we have to cover today is 14km in total. Eat proper breakfast and get yourself ready to start the trek by 8:00am. Follow the instruction of your guide and keep walking. While on the trek you will come by a number of small and big caves in the mountains which the Zanskari people have been using for centuries to take shelter in and keep warm during the nights. Look out for frozen waterfalls on your way. The Tibb cave is large enough to accommodate the group. Enjoy the born fire in the cave which will make the space warm. Dinner and Night halt at Tibb cave.

### **Day 06/ Trek day 04 – 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan: From Tibb Cave to Nyeerak village.**

Start little early to spend more time at the biggest water fall which is on the day's trail. The reflection of the sunlight, mountains and the sky gives the big ice structure which is meters in height and equally wide in size, various colours. You will find a variety of shrubs and herbs on the cliffs. The herbs are of medicinal value used by the local Amchi (traditional local doctors) to heal different ailments. You will also find big trees of Juniper which are listed in protected flora chart and. The Juniper tree is considered holy in Buddhist philosophy. The twigs and the branches are used by the Buddhist in every ceremony as an incense stick.

There is a bridge on the right side of the waterfall which is used as a road in summer by the people of Leh and Zaskar. The village settlement lies above the Zaskar River. If you wish to



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experience the lifestyle of the locals, an extra hour will take you into the village. The locals are warm hearted and will offer you a cup of butter-salt tea. We will pitch our tents close to the river. Dinner and Night halt at Camp on the Nyeerak camp site.

#### **Day 07/ trek day 05 - 24<sup>th</sup> Jan: Naerak to Tibb.**

From day 06, the return journey begins.

From Nyeraak back to Tibb cave is the distance you have to cover today. There is chance to meet the locals who might be travelling to Leh via the same route You will notice the locals wearing the traditional dresses from head to toe to keep themselves warm during winters. They are well adapted to the harsh climate. The smile on their faces will encourage you to keep going.

#### **Day 08/ trek day 06 - 25<sup>th</sup> Jan: Tibb to Gyalpo (distance to be covered 14km).**

The valley is rich in flora and fauna. The wild animals like ibex, red fox, Tibetan snow cook and also the big cat popularly known as the "ghost cat" or snow leopard owns the territory of this region. You will find the its pugmarks on the snow or the footprints of other animals, and if you are lucky enough you will spot the snow leopard on the cliffs hunting its prey while the other wild animals roam in the valley in search of food.

#### **Day 09/ trek day 07 - 26<sup>th</sup> Jan: Gyalpo to Tilad Do, and drive back to Leh.**

After having breakfast start packing all your extra gears and get yourself ready for the last day on the ice sheet. The trekking staffs will sing local folk songs to show gratitude to Mother Nature for the success of the trek.

And from Tilad-Dho, you will be driven back to Leh. Transfer in to Guest house/Hotel. Dinner and overnight stay at Leh.

#### **Day 10 - 27<sup>th</sup> Jan: Depart from Leh.**

Transfer to Leh KBR Airport. Fly home with fond memories of the Chaddar Frozen River Trek.

#### **Things to Carry:**

1. Backpack with sturdy straps and supporting frame.

Daypack (20 L) is required only if you wish to offload your backpack to our support team. If you don't want to carry your backpack you can give it to porter, but you have to inform us in advance and charges would be Rs. 500/- extra per day per bag. Please also do inform us about this at least 15 days in advance.

2. Trekking shoes –Ensure the shoes are well broken in before the trek. Good standard trekking shoes are sufficient for the trek. On Chadar, which is solid ice or a slight cover of snow on slippery ice, trekkers have found to their amazement that a simple gumboot finally is the best for Chadar. Most of the outside agencies in order to impress tell about crampons. But on Chadar, crampons can be quite dicey - as crampon can get stuck on the fine cracks in the ice. Gumboots are available in Leh hardware shop and can be purchased in Leh. If your shoe size is 9-10, getting a pair might be tough, so start searching as soon as you land in Leh. Trekkers will soon learn and modify their trek to the "penguin walk" style on seeing from the porters and guide! It is a kind of dragging your foot and not lifting much.



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3. Gumboot, if not purchased from Leh.
4. 2 pair of synthetic track pants. Track pants are light and when things get cold you can wear one over the other.
5. 2 Full sleeve tees with collar.
6. Fleece jacket - sweaters are highly discouraged.
7. A full sleeve thick jacket.
8. 4 pairs of undergarments.
9. 2 pairs of thermal inners.
10. 2 pairs of sports socks. 2 pairs of woollen socks.
11. Woollen monkey cap/balaclava that cover the ear.
12. Woollen hand gloves + synthetic glove (water proof). If you don't have synthetic gloves, get two pairs of woollen gloves and a surgical glove.
13. Hot water bottle/Bag - available at any medical store.
14. Sun glasses, branded company with 100% UV protection. Curved ones will cover your eyes well. Sunglasses prevent snow blindness. Sunglasses are mandatory for this trek.
15. A woollen head-scarf or muffler.
16. Trekking pole is mandatory.
17. Light towel (should be thin, quick drying kind).
18. Chap Stick or lip balm.
19. Cold cream and sun screen lotion (SPF 40+). While sun screen help prevent sun burns, a better option is to stay covered.
20. 2 Water bottles (1 L each). The insulated water bottles are good but even normal water bottles will suffice.
21. Personal medicine kit containing:



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- a. Crocin
- b. Avomine
- c. Avil 25mg
- d. Combiflam
- e. Disprin
- f. Norflox
- g. Crepe bandage
- h. Band aid
- i. Digene
- j. Gauze cloth - 1 small role
- k. Leukoplast - 1 small roll
- l. Cotton - 1 small roll
- m. ORS - 5 packets
- n. Betadine or any antiseptic cream
- o. Volini or Moov or Relispray.
- p. Diamox - 20 tablets

22. Personal toilet kit (minimal) and toilet paper.

23. LED Torch with extra set of cells (head lamps are much more preferable).

24. Small repair kit consisting of safety pins, needle, thread and string.

25. Camera, memory-cards, batteries etc. (carry enough spare batteries. Electricity is not available)

26. While packing, use plastic bags to compartmentalize things and carry few extra plastic bags for wet clothes

### Some general advice about clothing...

To protect yourself from cold, dressing in layers is the mantra. Two T-shirts worn one over the other is warmer than a T-shirt that is thick. 3 T-shirts worn one over the other is as good as a full sweater. This is just a guideline. If you are prone to cold carry extra warm clothing. Along with the above list, please ensure you also carry the following documents:

1. **An identification card (like driving license, voters ID card etc), along with a photocopy**
2. **A passport size photo.**