

# Markha valley trekking in Ladakh

<https://www.nectravels.com/package/markha-valley-trekking/>

Markha Valley is wedged between the Ladakh and Zaskar ranges behind the Himalaya which it runs parallel. The wild and barren, yet hauntingly beautiful landscapes of this hidden land are often likened to Tibet. Ladakh used to be known as 'Little Tibet' and is every bit as dramatic and enticing.

This tour starts in the fascinating capital of Leh, which developed as a trading centre, drawing merchants from Yarkand, Kashmir, Tibet and North India. During our stay which is essential for proper acclimatisation. You will explore its colourful bazaars, backstreets, dominated by splendid Leh Palace, which is like a miniature version of Lhasa's Potala. We also visit several of the outlying historical and cultural gems of Ladakh, including the 500 year old Shey palace and gompa, Tikse, Hemis monasteries and the royal palace at Stok all of which provide an insight into the rich heritage of the region.

The circular trek itself starts from Stok, climbing steadily to cross the first of the passes, the 4848m Stok La. Following a rocky ridge, we keep the views for a while, then descend to the hidden Rumbak Valley. From the next pass, 4878m Ganda La, the views are equally rewarding – a sea of snowy peaks merging into the distant Karakoram ranges. Reaching the lower Markha Valley, we follow the wooded banks of its river upstream as the trail meanders from village to village. We will visit the monastery at Markha and ruins of a fort strategically positioned atop a crag between the twin settlements of Lower and Upper Hankar. Climbing out of the valley through alpine meadows, we are in view of the highest peak in the area, 6400m ice-clad Kang Yatze, which rises from the Nimaling plains. Yaks, dzos, sheep, goats and horses from the lower villages graze the high pastures, while marmots and white-tailed hares can often be spotted, along with Himalayan griffon vultures and lammergeiers, which soar overhead. A free day in these magnificent surroundings allows time to walk to the base of Kang Yatze or take a well-earned rest in preparation for the long climb to the 5274m pass of Kongmaru La. The highest pass of the trek offers predictably fabulous views and on the descent, we may be lucky and see blue sheep. The trek ends at Martselang, from where it is a short drive back to Leh.

## Itinerary

### **Day 01: Arrival in Delhi, flight to Leh.**

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### **Day 02: Tour of Leh city, including the seventeenth century Palace and Gompa.**

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### **Day 03: Tour of Spitok and Phyang gompas.**

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**Day 04: Tour of Shey and Matho gompas and Stok palace, the home of Ladakhi royalty.**

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**Day 05: Tour of Tikse and Hemis gompas, two the wealthiest and most influential institutions in Ladakh. Camp at Hemis.**

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**Day 06: Trek from Hemis to the village of Chogdo.**

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**Day 07: Trek to Kongmaru La base camp.**

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**Day 08: Rest day for acclimatization.**

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**Day 09: Trek over Kongmaru La (5150 metres) to the plain of Nimaling, a vast high altitude pasture.**

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**Day 10: Trek through the tiny settlements of Hankar and Umlung to the valley's largest village, Markha.**

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**Day 11: Trek to the lovely oasis at Tunespa.**

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**Day 12: Trek to the village of Skiu, with its medireview gumpa.**

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**Day 13: Trek to Zanskar river**

Take the pulley bridge across before boarding the rafts on the Zanskar river. Ride the river to its confluence with the Indus at Nimu, then board jeeps for the trip to Alchi. Overnight at Alchi village.

**Day 14: In Alchi, we tour the remarkably well preserved 11th -century gumpa and the famed frescoes within. In the afternoon, we return by jeep to Leh.**

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**Day 15: Rest day in Leh.**

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**Day 16: Morning flight to Delhi. Check into hotel there. Stay overnight at Hotel.**

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**Day 17: Transfer to Airport for flight to onwards journey**

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