

Ladakhi Women's Travel Company

The first female owned and operated travel company in Ladakh

What to Bring

The key to staying comfortable on a trek is layering. Suggested items to bring include:

- Boots - the single most important item to pack - comfortable, sturdy hiking boots
- Sleeping bag - only needed for camping treks as homestays provide bedding, with one exception: light sleeping bag (July/August) or good sleeping bag (other months) recommended for treks via Nimaling tented camp (blankets provided, but can be in short supply during peak season)
- Sleeping bag liner (optional) – useful for homestays as no top sheet is normally provided
- Backpack to carry your belongings in, or daypack for you and backpack for porter
- Sandals for stream/river crossings
- Socks - 2 pairs outer socks, one pair liner socks
- Quick-dry trekking trousers
- T-shirts/long sleeved shirts (long sleeves keep the sun off your arms – it's easy to burn at high altitude) – layers are useful
- A spare pair of trousers
- Thermal underclothes are a necessity off-season (September – June)
- Warm lightweight fleece
- Sun hat (and off-season – wool/fleece hat, gloves or mittens, scarf)
- Cotton scarf to use as a mask to protect against wind, dust and sand
- Lightweight wind-/rain- proof jacket
- Waterproof trousers – depending on trek and season
- Down jacket recommended for treks staying at Nimaling tented camp and camping treks
- Trekking poles if you use them
- Gaiters if you're coming when there may be snow on the high passes
- Sunglasses, sunscreen, chapstick/lip balm
- Quick dry small towel, soap, moisture cream for your skin
- Flash light for midnight toilet trips and powercuts (good **batteries***)
- Toilet paper
- Water bottles – enough to carry a day's supply (2 – 3 litres, depending on the trek).
*Note: aluminium or nalgene or similar bottles are recommended as sometimes you get boiled water that is still very hot at the homestays. **New in 2012 – plastic bottle ban in Leh!***
- Water purification – Filter, tablets or drops (see Water information below)
- First Aid kit
- Camera, spare **batteries***, film if needed
- Snacks, e.g. dried fruit, nuts

Many of the above items can be purchased or hired in Leh, but we do not recommend hiring sleeping bags as they are not always clean. LWTC has fleece sleeping bag liners, trekking poles and water bottles for hire.

***GREEN Note:** Use rechargeable batteries whenever possible. If you must use disposable batteries, please take the used ones with you to dispose of safely in your home country.

Water – Help Support the Environment

Don't buy mineral water in plastic bottles! Some guesthouses in Leh provide filtered water for guests. You can also fill up your water bottles with safe drinking water for a small charge at the Dzomsa Laundry. Alternatively, water purification tablets or a good water filter will save you money and help reduce plastic waste (especially necessary on camping treks). Homestays provide filtered or boiled water.

Tips: Best to bring water purification tablets with you as they're not readily available in Leh. Reusable bottles can be bought in Leh. **NEW in 2012 – plastic bottle ban in LEH!**

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Altitude Sickness

When you arrive in Leh, remember that you are at an altitude of 3500m. Rest at your guesthouse on the day you arrive in Leh and drink lots of water – great excuse to read a book, sit around and chat and just be lazy. **Listen to your body!** If you feel fine on the second day then explore Leh on foot, but still take it easy. Suggestions for the third day: go for a walk around the back of Leh, visiting some sites along the way; head out of Leh for a one day monastery tour. Do NOT start a trek until at least the fourth day. **Allow your body the time it needs to acclimatise.**

Altitude sickness is caused by a lack of oxygen at high altitudes (3,000m and above). It occurs as the result of our bodies' inability to adapt to a sudden increase in altitude. If given time, our bodies will adjust and a gradual ascent will decrease the possibility of altitude sickness. **Prevention:** go slowly, drink a lot of water, and pay attention to the sensations of your body. If symptoms occur you have climbed too far for the day. Rest at the same altitude will give you time to acclimatise and usually relieve mild symptoms. Mild symptoms include headache, nausea, loss of appetite, mild shortness of breath with minimal exertion, difficulty sleeping, dizziness or light-headedness, mild weakness, fatigue or a general unwell feeling. More serious symptoms that may be a sign of HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema) or HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema) require immediate descent as these are life threatening conditions. The best way to avoid AMS is to **walk slowly, carry a light pack** and just take it easy.

Rabies

We strongly recommend being vaccinated against rabies before visiting Ladakh. There are many stray dogs here and we recommend caution when approaching any dog. Be particularly careful with dogs when out and about in the evening in Leh.

Cultural Considerations

The challenge for you as a visitor to Ladakh is to respect the rights and beliefs of the local people and to minimize your impact, both culturally and environmentally. Be aware of your actions and how they will affect the people and environment around you. Here are just a few suggestions of things you may like to consider while visiting Ladakh:

- **Dress appropriately** – “more is better”, revealing clothing is not suitable, especially for women, but men should also not go shirtless. T-shirts and trousers/long skirt are the recommended dress. Sleeveless and/or low-cut tops, and shorts are not suitable for either men or women – always cover your shoulders and legs. Demonstrating an effort to be sensitive to their culture will enhance your experience with the Ladakhi people. You will also avoid sunburn if you cover up!
- **Please don't encourage begging** - don't hand pens, money or sweets directly to the children. This not only encourages begging, but also causes conflict between the children themselves. One of the many organizations in Ladakh set up to help children could put your kind donation to better use. Every school in the rural areas would gladly accept your gift of pens and distribute them amongst the children.
- **Leave nothing but footprints....** Let's help to keep unnecessary rubbish from accumulating in these magnificent mountains. Avoid buying anything in plastic bottles as there is no recycling available and plastic is often burned, polluting the environment further – instead fill up your own water bottle with boiled, filtered or treated water.
- **Smile...** easy to give, wonderful to receive. A smile surpasses all cultural boundaries.

Tips for visiting a Ladakhi home: remove your shoes before entering; do not sit on the low-level tables.