

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 (easy to rent in Leh) - only needed for camping treks as homestays provide bedding
- ❖ Sleeping bag liner (optional) – useful for homestays as no top sheet is normally provided
- ❖ Backpack to carry your belongings in
- ❖ Lightweight shoes or sandals for changing into at night
- ❖ Socks - 2 pairs outer socks, one pair liner socks and one pair for night time
- ❖ Loose cotton trousers/Calf length skirt
- ❖ T-shirts/long sleeved shirts (long sleeves keep the sun off your arms – it's easy to burn at high altitude)
- ❖ Cosy shirt for the evenings
- ❖ Thermal underclothes are a necessity off-season (October – May)
- ❖ Warm lightweight fleece
- ❖ Sun hat (and off-season – wool/fleece hat, gloves or mittens, scarf)
- ❖ Lightweight wind-/rain- proof jacket
- ❖ Waterproof trousers – depending on trek and season
- ❖ Down jacket – depending on trek and season
- ❖ Day pack (optional) – bring one if you are going to have a porter or pony carry your main pack
- ❖ Sunglasses, sunscreen, chapstick
- ❖ Quick dry towel
- ❖ Flash light for midnight toilet trips and powercuts (good **batteries***)
- ❖ Soap, moisture cream for your skin
- ❖ Water bottles – enough to carry a day's supply (2 – 4 litres, depending on the trek)
- ❖ Water purification – Filter/Iodine (see Water information below)
- ❖ First Aid kit – essentials
- ❖ Camera, spare **batteries***, film if needed

***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.**

Many of the above items can be purchased or rented in Leh.

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 a lot of money and help keep unnecessary plastic from our environment. Iodine tablets or drops, known to kill all those little nasties in the water, are very convenient for trekking (especially necessary on camping treks) and will purify 1 litre of water in 20-30 minutes. Homestays provide filtered or boiled water.

Tips: Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) or Tang powder will remove that unpleasant iodine taste. Best to bring iodine with you as it's not always available in Leh. Reusable bottles can be bought in Leh.

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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.

Tip: remove your shoes before entering a Ladakhi home.

Altitude Sickness

When you arrive in Leh, remember that you are at an altitude of 3500m. Rest for the first 2 days – great excuse to read a book, sit around and chat, drink lots of water (at least 4 litres per day). If you must do something, try to wait until the second day and use taxis to get around. Explore Leh on the third day and see how you are feeling. **Listen to your body!** Do NOT start a trek until at least the third day, preferably the fourth day. **Allow your body the time it needs to acclimatise.**

Altitude sickness, also known as AMS (acute mountain 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 of AMS:** 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, a general unwell feeling. More serious symptoms include: inability to recover from shortness of breath with rest, severe persistent headache, low urine output, vomiting, confusion, delirium, loss of coordination. These require immediate descent as acclimatisation will not take place at the same altitude. The best way to avoid AMS is to **walk slowly, carry a light pack** and just take it easy.