

Stok Kangri Trek

Summit your first Himalaya Peak at 6120m



Ultimate Challenges

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Stok Kangri Peak (6120m)

2 to 16 September 2018

Explore the hidden kingdom of Ladakh with Stok Kangri Peak

Stok Kangri is a perfect objective for fit trekkers without climbing experience, and is one of the few achievable Himalayan peaks. It is one of the dominant peaks in the Zasker range, situated in the fascinating region of Ladakh, north India. This high and arid landscape has captured the imagination of travellers since it first opened to visitors in 1974.

The expedition travels through remote valleys, scattered high villages and past hilltop monasteries to the base of the mountain. The South Ridge provides an exhilarating climb in these fantastic surroundings. Although technically straightforward, the route is challenging, giving spectacular views of the Karakoram Range and on a clear day, even K2 in the far distance.

One of the highlights of the trip is the exciting flight into Leh, and spending time exploring the ancient capital of Ladakh. The regal air of the city, with its 'potala-like' palace and the charm of the friendly and traditionally dressed Ladakhi people, all contribute to the experience of this breath-taking expedition.



Detailed itinerary

2 September: London to Delhi

Depart London on overnight flight to Delhi.

3 September: Delhi to Leh

We connect with our flight to Leh, the capital of Ladakh. We fly over the Greater Himalaya before landing at one of the highest airports in the world. We can hope to get excellent views of Stok Kangri as we fly in, and on a clear day the great peaks of the Karakoram are visible to the north. Upon arrival in Leh at 3505m we will be met and transferred to our traditional Ladakhi-style hotel. The remainder of the day is best spent relaxing and acclimatising to the rarefied air at this altitude. Or you can explore the towns fascinating markets and the wonderful 17th century fort that dominates the skyline. Lunch and dinner will be provided in the hotel

4 September: Leh, Acclimatisation

Spend the day acclimatising to the altitude in Leh.

5 September: Leh, Acclimatisation

A day trip to Khardungla for further acclimatisation.

6 September: Leh to Shang Sumdo

4hrs trekking (3800m)

After breakfast a transfer to Shang Sumdo (3800m) via Thiksey monastery which is perched on the summit of a sugarloaf mountain. For further acclimatization, we walk from camp up towards Chuskyurmo and return to Shang Sumdo for our first night in camp.

7 September: Shang Sumdo to Shang Phu

6-7hrs trekking (4350m)

After breakfast we start our trek through stonewalled fields and irrigation channels of Shang village. As we go further up the valley becomes narrow. A clump of juniper trees with a small shrine marks the pasture. This is a typical Ladakhi pastoral setting with small stone-huts called Phu or Lus that serve as summer dwellings. Visit to a shepherd camp following supper in the evening. Overnight camping.

8 September: Shang Phu to Gangpoche

(Matho Valley) via Shang La

5-7hrs trekking (4300m)

Our route traverses an area rarely visited and crosses many spurs and minor passes with some views northwards towards the Indus Valley.

8 September cont.

We climb gradually to reach the Shang La pass at 4800m passing scrubs and wild rose bushes and may see Himalayan Marmots. From the pass there is a tremendous view of the route ahead with Stok Kangri getting quite close. We descend to the Tokpo River, and the afternoon is spent crossing wonderful ridges to drop to our camp under the shadow of the Matho group of Peaks. Overnight camping.

9 September: Mathopu to Smankarmo

5-6hrs trekking (4380m)

A steady climb this morning up to the Matho La (4965m). The first views of Stok Kangri (6137m) appears 150m before this pass, where if clear, you can see the 8000m Gasherbrum peaks in Pakistan. As we trek along the scenic Mathola Pass Saltoro Kangri comes into view before descending into the valley to the north of Stok Village. This lovely valley is a high and wild area which is visited only by climbing groups and by the local people who spend some of the summer months in picturesque villages of stone huts, from where they tend their flocks of sheep and goats. Overnight camping at Smankarmo.

Detailed itinerary

10 September: Smankarmo to Base Camp 2-3hrs trekking (4980m)

A gradual climb to Base Camp. We will reach camp before lunch. The afternoon is spent checking your climbing equipment. You will be given training on how to use crampons and ice axes and how to walk with a rope, which may be needed. Your guide will give you a small demonstration and briefing about the summit night. Tonight we will have an early dinner and bed. Overnight camping.

11 September: Rest day Overnight at Base Camp.

12 September: Summit day, Stok Kangri 11-12hrs trekking (6120m)

Our day begins before dawn, to give us ample time for the climb. It is most likely that we do not need our crampons for the majority of the trek as we scramble over scree and boulders, which lead up to the south ridge. The 1500ft ridge that stretches up to the summit is exciting and superbly exposed, although never particularly steep and very straight forward.

12 September cont.

Most of the ridge is like a steep path, so ropes are not usually necessary, although some scrambling is required. At an altitude approaching 20000ft it is extremely tiring and anybody who needs a rope will be able to use one. The summit is a superb reward for your effort. From the top you get a magical 360-degree view of the whole of Ladakh - the twin peaks of Nun (7132m) to the east, the Karakoram range to the north.

After spending some time on the top we will descend down from same way to base camp. The way down is very tricky so we have to be very careful. Overnight camping.

13 September: Spare day for acclimatisation or bad weather

14 September: Base Camp to Stok Village 4-5hrs trekking / Transfer to Leh

Today after breakfast, we will say goodbye to this magical peak. From our base camp we descend on an easy trail passing spectacular layered multicoloured rock formations into the Stok Valley and down to Stok village through fields of barley and buckwheat, where our transport will be waiting for us. We will have lunch and visit Stok Palace before the short drive back to Leh. In the evening we will enjoy a cultural show performed by local people in hotel. This will be followed by our celebration dinner. Overnight in hotel.

15 September: Leh to Delhi

Early morning transfer to the domestic airport for the short but spectacular flight southwards back to Delhi. On arrival into Delhi we will connect to our day flight back to London.

Detailed itinerary

Experienced required

Stok Kangri is considered to be a trekking peak, this means that no technical climbing is involved in summiting the peak. It is an excellent first Himalayan peak and previous experience of altitude is recommended although not required.

The expedition would appeal to those that want to trek in the Himalayas but also want more of a challenge with a specific objective. Those that have climbed in the Alps may also feel comfortable tackling their first high altitude peak by a straightforward ascent.

Participants will need a good level of fitness and hill walking/trekking experience, and be fully prepared for the extreme cold, and level of technicality of this trek. We recommend a basic knowledge of the use of ropes, ice axes and crampons. Please note the summit attempt involves walking up an exposed ridge and therefore not recommend for people who suffer from vertigo.

Challenge grade

Tough

Best time of year

July to September

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This itinerary is complex and subject to change

