

# GREEN & GOLD: AUTUMN IN LADAKH



*Ladakh is a land brimming with magic and mystery - a land of snowcapped mountains, vast barren plateaus and deep turquoise lakes. Remote, ancient and relatively untouched, a visit to Ladakh will leave you exhilarated and will stay with you forever. On our experience, explore some of the much-loved and some lesser-known destinations, taking in the best of it all. This is a land like no other.*

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## **Day 1: 27 September – Arrival in Leh**

On arrival, you will be met at the airport and the transfer to the hotel in the Sham Valley ( 2 hours) will be arranged for you. Land and soak in the landscape.

Depending on the arrival of your flight, the morning will be at leisure. Early check in will be on request.

Lunch today will be overlooking the river.

In the evening, enjoy a leisurely walk



Dinner at the hotel

Overnight Stay: **Apricot Tree or similar**

## **Day 2: 28 September - Ancient temples adorned in Gandhar Art**

This morning, enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the hotel.

Post breakfast, you will be driven to the beautiful **Lamayuru Monastery** known for its lunar-like landscape. Lamayuru monastery is an ancient monastery with some beautiful frescoes and masks. One can also see the meditation cave of the Lama Naropa. Lamayuru is a part of the Dri-Gungpa sector in western Ladakh.

From here, we will head out towards Alchi for a lovely lunch at the Alchi Kitchen which offers fusion Ladakhi food.

Post lunch, we will visit **Alchi Choskor**, a beautiful 11th century temple, widely believed as the very first Buddhist temple in Leh Ladakh. Every inch of wall surface of this monastery is occupied by benign images of the Buddha and royal scenes. Artists and craftsmen decorated these paintings and images under the supervision of Lostava Rinchen Sangpo. It is the only monastery that has preserved 10th century Buddhism arts and crafts.

From here, we return to the hotel.

Dinner and overnight at **Apricot Tree** or similar.



## **Day 3: 29 September - Brokpa villages along the river Indus**

After an early breakfast, we will drive north towards the Aryan Valley (approx. 5 hours)

This valley features the villages of Dha, Hanu, Garkon and Darchik located on either side of the Indus River and together they comprise what is known as the “Aryan Valley”.

*These villages are home to the unique Buddhist Dard tribes, whose members are known as Brokpas. With just under 4000 of them left in the world, the Brokpas are said to be “last pure specimens” of the Aryan race, thanks to their height and sharp physical features. Some believe they are direct descendants of soldiers of Alexander the Great’s army which stayed back in the region nearly 2,000 years ago, while some suggest that they migrated from Gilgit in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.*

Enroute, we will make a stop at Chiktan Razi Khar, an abandoned fortress / castle. Built in the 16th century by Balti craftsmen, Chiktan Castle was a symbol of unity, strength, and community for the peoples of the region. The castle was attacked several times during its history, but was not abandoned until the late 19th century.

We will have lunch in a local homestay and post lunch, we will talk through the lovely Aryan villages learning about their way of life and history.

We will then head on towards Kargil, hopefully seeing some beautiful autumnal colours enroute.



*Kargil used to be important trading post on the Silk Route and besides being home to many local tribes, it also boasts a rich heritage and culture. It features beautiful valleys, snow-capped peaks, glacial lakes and ancient Buddhist rock reliefs.*

Dinner and overnight at **Hotel The Kargil** or similar.



#### **Day 4: 30 September – The future Buddha, overlooking Islamic Ladakh**

This morning, post breakfast, we will visit **Mulbekh Chamba** dating back to the Kushan period. This is a 30 ft long rock sculpture of the “Future Buddha” or Maitreya Buddha featuring a Kashmiri and Kushan influence in the designs and style of the carving. The statue is believed to have been carved in the 8th-Century and has been guarding travelers on this path over the centuries.

We then drive to the **Hunderman village** to visit the Museum of memories that has documented the life of the border village families. This Village has exchanged hands between India and Pakistan a few times over. Once an outpost on the historic Silk Route, this strategically-sensitive area has witnessed innumerable skirmishes and four wars with Pakistan (including the most recent Kargil war) and its families live under the whimsical reign of the Line of Control between India and Pakistan.

After lunch at the hotel, we will walk along the old town of Kargil along the Suru River through Apricot Orchards colored in Autumn hues.

Dinner, Bonfire and overnight at **Hotel The Kargil** or similar.



#### **Day 5: 1 October – Suru Valley**

After an early breakfast this morning, we will drive out to **Kartsey Khar** to visit the Second Maitreya Buddha relic in the verdant Suru Valley, standing 7m tall in the erstwhile kingdom of Purig. Kargil was once known as Purig. Since the

Taliban destroyed the famous Buddhas of Bamiyan in 2001, only very few such relics remain in the world. This relic is the work of a master craftsman.

We will enjoy a lovely **picnic lunch by a stream** as we mull over the history of this ancient land. A special experience.

Post lunch, take a stroll through groves of willow turning gold, beneath which lie barren freshly harvested fields as magpies weed the fallen seeds.

We will then drive to Panikar en our way back to Kargil

Dinner and overnight at **Hotel The Kargil** or similar.



#### **Day 6: 2 October – Tracing our way back**

This morning, we will work our way back towards Leh. A beautiful drive where, once again, we hope to see the changing of the colours on the trees.

On arrival, we will head straight to Leh town and have lunch at the amazing Namza Café.

The rest of the afternoon is free for you to enjoy a little shopping in Leh or head back to the hotel for some rest.

Later, we will head out for a specially curated farewell dinner in Leh.

Overnight at the **Hotel Grand Dragon** or similar.

#### **Day 7: 3 October – Departure from Leh**

This morning, the transfer to the airport will be arranged for you for your flight back home.

**\*\*\* Return home with wonderful memories \*\*\***

**Price per person on a twin sharing basis: Rs 89,900**

**Single room supplement: Rs 31,800**

#### **Inclusions**

- Accommodation in the hotels mentioned in this itinerary for 6 nights
- Assistance on arrival and departure
- Transportation for the entire journey



- All meals from Lunch on Day 1 to Breakfast on Day 7
- Oxygen cylinders in cars
- English speaking guide
- Services of a tour escort
- Monastery Entrance fees
- Entry fees at the Monasteries
- Inner Line Permit for Restricted area

#### Exclusions

- Airfare to Leh & back
- Tips to the driver / guide
- Any alcoholic / non alcoholic drinks
- Optional Massages
- Personal expenses
- Expenses arising from unexpected circumstances beyond our control.
- Medical or Travel Insurance
- Costs towards evacuation of customers for medical or any other reason
- 5% GST

#### Please note

- All guests will be required to submit a Covid Negative test report 72 hours prior to the start of the tour
- We need a minimum of 8 guests to operate the tour
- Your well being is of utmost importance. We therefore may need to change, alter or cancel a trip due to any reason which might not be in the best interest of your safety, like dangerous water levels, landslides and extreme weather conditions etc.



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