

FMC Travel Club

economy tramping and travel overseas

A subsidiary of Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (Inc.)

Club Convenor : John Dobbs

Travel Smart Napier

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***** Ladakh and Spiti *****

tramping in the Himalayas of northern India

15th July to 16th August 2010. 33 days ex Auckland, 34 days ex Christchurch. \$6850 Leader : Margaret Clark

Ladakh, or "Little Tibet" is high in the Indian Himalaya between Kashmir and Tibet. A visually stunning landscape of peaks rising to 7000m, arid, but with verdantly cultivated valleys. Rich culturally, Ladakh has been on the Buddhist pilgrimage trail linking Kashmir and Tibet through the Himalayas, plus a crossroads for traders on the fabled Silk Road, for centuries. Buddhist monasteries, ancient forts and colourful festivals abound. This very inclusive exceptional trip combines the best trekking and cultural experience this region can offer. It logically combines with your own choice of additional travels in India.

PRICE INCLUDES :

- *International flights to/from Delhi on Singapore Airlines inclusive of all flight taxes, plus one internal flight to Ladakh inclusive of all flight taxes*
- *All accommodation – a mix of guesthouses, a homestay and camping*
- *All transport – 4 X 4's, buses, trains and one internal flight*
- *All meals from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 32*
- *Fully supported trekking – guide, horses and horsemen, transport, camping equipment, meals, including tips for trek staff*
- *All park fees and trekking permits, airport transfers in India*
- *Visa to enter India*

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE :

- *Personal spending outside the itinerary – laundry, internet, alcohol, etc*
- *Travel insurance (mandatory)*

- **Departure tax from Christchurch (Auckland Dep. Tax is now included in the air tickets)**

Trip Leader :

Margaret Clark has been a trumper and mountaineer for many years and has led and organized many adventures around the world. These achievements include :

- Member of the successful all women Mt McKinley Alaska expedition of 1970
- Leader of the joint Indo - NZ Woman's Expedition to Mt Hardeol in the Indian Himalaya of 1974
- Mountaineer – leader of a Geological Expedition to the Royal Society Range, Antarctica, summer of 1977/1978
- Instigator, planner and leader of 4 X 10 week long Youth Expeditions to India (YETI) for adventure and cultural immersion, 1980's
- Leader of Women Climbing Inc. Expedition to Indian Himalaya, 1992
- Sole travel operator of Tikanga Treks, taking clients on adventure treks to less travelled areas in Indian Himalaya, Ladakh, Pakistan, Nepal and China – 1991 to 1996

These days Margaret and her husband enjoy their retirement doing independent long distance biking trips and other really interesting adventurous trips, all over the world.

I am delighted that Margaret is once again available to lead our programme in Ladakh, an area she knows and loves very much. She welcomes any questions to : margaret.clark@xtra.co.nz

Introduction :

Ladakh is the western extension of the Tibetan Plateau, but being politically part of India, it has escaped the cultural decimation of Tibet during the 1960's and 70's. It is a land of high passes and deep gorges, where streams flow to the wide Indus river valley, which forms the core of modern Ladakh.

Spiti lies to the south east of Ladakh, wedged between the western Himalayas and the rugged mountains bordering Tibet. Both areas are cut off from road access to the rest of India by snow blocked passes for more than six months of the year. But in summer, whitewashed monasteries perched on clifftops and villages with patchwork irrigated fields nestled at mouths of side streams, create green oases and drama in the clear air, and sweeping vistas of upland deserts.

Trip Organisation :

The two high altitude treks of this trip, exploring areas beyond Ladakh's Indus valley, are designed to capture the essence of the remoteness of the region and the ingenious people who wrest a living from these lands. For this trip you need to be an experienced trumper, used to minimal trails, varying conditions underfoot and the changeability of mountain weather.

Trek One heads north from Leh over the Ladakh Range into the restricted Nubra region, where apricot orchards shade mud brick villages.

Trek Two heads south from the enormous upland lake of Tso Moriri and the surrounding nomadic yak herder's camps, to the restricted and remote northeast corner of Spiti, from where we descend to the compact world of the Spiti valley and its clifftop monasteries, pasturelands and villages.

Accommodation includes guesthouses in the cities of Dehli, Leh, Manali and Kaza. These are chosen where possible to provide the ambience of the places visited and travelled through. Twin sharing or similar standard. Tents are provided while trekking, and small guesthouses in other places.

Transport. The trekking company arranges 4 X 4 Toyota jeeps to connect the treks with Leh and Manali. Public buses are used for the journey from Manali to Chandigarh, and a train from there to Delhi. From Delhi to Leh we fly on standard scheduled services.

Weather. We travel in the short summer months, but due to the altitude, a wide variety of weather conditions may be encountered. Expect temperatures from zero to 30C. Snowfall is possible on the high mountain passes and the easy angled glaciers on northern sides. The effects of high altitude walking are managed by slow and steady altitude increases and time in strategic places to acclimatize to the thinner air.

Cultural events in Ladakh include the masked dance festival at Taktok Monastery; morning prayer session with bursts of drums, horns, cymbals, bells and flutes at Thiksey Monastery; and a homestay night in Matho village. In Spiti, options include crossing a canyon by flying fox; descending an airy cliff trail to Ki Monastery; and an uphill hike from Dhangkar village to the water supply lake with great down valley views. Finally we travel by 4 X 4 Toyotas over two passes out of Spiti down to Lahaul then up again and down to Manali. From there it's a sleeper bus to Chandigarh and a fast train back to Delhi.

International Flights. The best flight connections to Delhi are on Singapore Airlines, they offer through flights via Singapore from both Auckland (for the North islanders) and Christchurch (South Islanders). Both 'groups' meet up at Singapore Airport for the same onward flight on to Delhi.

On the return, everyone is on the same flight Delhi to Singapore, then split into separate flights to Auckland or Christchurch.

Singapore Airlines are a first rate airline and luggage can be checked all the way through from Auckland or Christchurch. As at mid October 2009, the following are the schedules :

Outward flights :

15th July Auckland to Singapore 0110 0700
15th July Christchurch to Singapore 1050 1745
15th July Singapore to Delhi 1850 2155
Aucklanders have an 11hrs 50mins transit in Singapore

Return flights :

15th Aug Delhi to Singapore 2310 0720 the next day
16th Aug Singapore to Auckland 0845 2225
16th Aug Singapore to Christchurch 1950 0930 the next day
Christchurch people have a 12hrs 30mins transit in Singapore

If you would like to fly on different dates, perhaps have a longer stopover in Singapore in either direction, etc, please discuss with John Dobbs promptly after he has confirmed viability of the trip. Unless you advise otherwise, the above flight schedules will be booked for you. Once booked, any date changes attract fees.

Glossary.

Pronunciation : All vowels are rounded long forms. In words with "th" the "h" is not sounded. – "ey" is pronounced as "ay".

Chorten : Tibetan for stupa

Chu : A river

Gompa : Tibetan Buddhist monastery

Juley : Traditional Ladakhi greeting (hello, goodbye, thank you)

La : A mountain pass

Mani walls : Tibetan stone walls with sacred inscriptions

Stupa : Buddhist religious monument composed of a solid hemisphere topped by a spire, containing Buddhist relics

Thangka : Tibetan cloth painting

Tso : A lake

Itinerary :

Day 1. Thu 15th July

Arrival day into Delhi, transfer to the guesthouse and meet up with Margaret and the remainder of your group.

Day 2. Fri 16th July

Orientation in Delhi. Here you will find wide streets, cluttered footpaths and park-like roundabouts all contrasting with the chaotic huddle of streets in Old Delhi and the bazaars of bustling Chandni Chowk. Delhi is a culture shock, but completely fascinating!

Day 3. Sat 17th July

Early flight to Leh, capital of Ladakh at around 3500m. We take it easy this first day to acclimatize. Although excessive tourism and traffic are changing Leh, the laid back Ladakhis and their cultural traditions help retain the small town feel and charm.

Day 4. Sun 18th July

Orientation walks around town and up to the old palace and fort for views over the town and vast expanse of the Indus valley.

Day 5. Mon 19th July

Travel up valley to Taktok monastery for their masked dance festival. Return to Thiksey gompa guesthouse for the night.

Day 6. Tue 20th July

Explore Thiksey monastery after attending the early morning prayer session. After lunch, travel across the Indus river to Matho for a homestay night in this less visited village.

Day 7. Wed 21st July

Explore Matho village, agriculture and monastery before returning to Leh. The afternoon is free, plus pack and prepare for Trek One.

Day 8. Thu 22nd July

Trek one, day 1. From Leh we cross into the valley that leads down to Phyang village but we go upstream to camp.

Day 9. Fri 23rd July

Trek day 2. We continue up river, slowly gaining height to camp at the last water before tomorrow's climb over Lasirmou La

Day 10. Sat 24th July

Trek day 3. An early start for the climb to Lasirmou La and long descent through the often swampy hanging valley, then down the hillside trail to camp near Brok Goma village.

Day 11. Sun 25th July

Trek day 4. We continue down valley, high above the deeply incised river, to eventually emerge into the wide Shyok valley and camp beneath apricot trees near Hunder village.

Day 12. Mon 26th July

Trek day 5. A flat valley walk today on an often dusty trail to Deskit village and another apricot orchard camp.

Day 13. Tue 27th July

Trek day 6. Continue up the Shyok valley until we meet our transport for the drive over Khardong La (highest motor road in Ladakh at 5600m) and back to Leh.

Day 14. Wed 28th July

Free day in Leh, perhaps a little retail therapy! Pack for Trek Two to Spiti tomorrow.

Day 15. Thu 29th July

Drive up Indus valley for about 4 hours, to camp near a spring at Chumotang.

Day 16. Fri 30th July

Drive further up valley then south through nomad country to the north end of huge Tso Moriri. Camp near the tiny Karzok hamlet and monastery.

Day 17. Sat 31st July

Trek Two. Day 1. Trek south along slopes on the western side of the lake, to camp near the southern end. We may see nomad camps on the way.

Day 18. Sun 1st Aug

Trek day 2. We cross the vast (probably dry) delta of the lake and continue southward to camp near the junction with the Parang river.

Day 19. Mon 2nd Aug

Trek day 3. Here we enter Spiti, cross the river and start our 3 day ascent up the narrowing river gorge towards Parang La, on an old trading route between Ladakh and Spiti. Camp at Torang Yogma.

Day 20. Tue 3rd Aug

Trek day 4. Continue up river to camp near isolated Karsha Gompa.

Day 21. Wed 4th Aug

Trek day 5. Rest day to acclimatize for the pass ahead, and enjoy the first welcome greenery since leaving the Indus valley.

Day 22. Thu 5th Aug

Trek day 6. A very early start for the long climb up a gently sloping glacier to Parang La (about 5300m). Possible new snow on the glacier will make it harder for our horses. A steeper rocky descent leads down to our camp at the base of the south side moraines.

Day 23. Fri 6th Aug

Trek day 7. Down the gorged Paralungbi valley, to camp on a meadow some distance above river level.

Day 24. Sat 7th Aug

Trek day 8. We head further down valley, across the stream then uphill through fields of peas and ripening barley to Kibber, a well ordered village with a small café and a handicrafts shop. Our last camp tonight, where we farewell our hard working support staff and their horses.

Day 25. Sun 8th Aug

Contingency day. If we don't need to use this on the trek we will have an extra day in the Spiti valley.

Day 26. Mon 9th Aug

A choice of morning adventures before the afternoon drive down to Ki monastery, then on down to the valley floor and our guesthouse in Kaza, administrative centre of Spiti.

Day 27. Tue 10th Aug

We travel down the Spiti valley to the ancient fort and monastery of Dhangkar, perched high up the valley side on crumbling pinnacles. There is an optional one hour walk up to the lake overlooking the village.

Day 28. Wed 11th Aug

All day drive to Manali. We cross Kunzum La out of Spiti into the deep Chandra valley, then over Rohtang La and down to this chaotic tourist town.

Day 29. Thu 12th Aug

Free day in Manali until we take the night sleeper bus to Chandigarh.

Day 30. Fri 13th Aug

In Chandigarh city all day until the 6pm express train to Delhi, where we return to our guesthouse around 10.30pm.

Day 31. Sat 14th Aug

Free day for last city shopping, as tomorrow many shops are closed. Options for sightseeing too. End with a restaurant dinner to celebrate our adventure. Lunch is your cost today.

Day 32. Sun 15th Aug

Final day in Delhi. There are many sightseeing options – Chandni Chowk in teeming old Delhi, a bicycle rickshaw ride, Jami Mashid and other sites. Group farewell lunch. Reassemble for an 8pm transfer to Delhi Airport and begin the flights home. Dinner is your cost today.

Day 33. Mon 16th Aug

Morning arrival into Singapore Changi Airport and onward flights to Auckland or Christchurch. Auckland people arrive home this evening.

Day 34. Tue 17th Aug

Christchurch people arrive home this morning

Booking Conditions :

1. The FMC Travel Club (FMC) offers this small group trip in conjunction with Travel Smart Napier (TSN). All travel arrangements are made through TSN. Participants must agree to all terms and conditions by signing the Registration Form.
2. FMC and TSN are not liable for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may arise from weather, defect in any vehicle, vessel or aircraft, or through the acts or default of any person or company engaged in conveying passengers or in carrying out the trip arrangements.
3. FMC and TSN reserve the right to cancel the trip if minimum numbers required to operate are not reached. In this event, all monies paid by participants will be fully refunded. An amended trip at an adjusted price may be offered if 6 or less registers.
4. The trip includes a payment to FMC.
5. TRAVEL INSURANCE IS MANDATORY. A brochure/application for QBE Travel Insurance is available to everyone. TSN will provide a discounted price on receipt of a signed application. Alternative policies are acceptable, with evidence provided. When trip viability is confirmed, travel insurance should be arranged. Please note that any policy must provide repatriation services from a remote mountainous environment, not all policies do this.
6. Registrations are accepted in good faith on a first comers basis and open to all ages, on receipt of the Registration Form and deposit of \$1000 per person. This is due by 31st December 2009. A progress payment of \$2500 per person towards flights is due by 31st January 2010. The trip balance will be due by 30th April 2010. All payments may be made by cash, cheque, EFTPOS, visa or mastercard, or direct credit to the office account of TSN. Cheques must be payable to Travel Smart Napier. No other method or place of payment is accepted.
7. The trip price is expressed in NZ Dollars. Events beyond our control such as adverse currency fluctuations, may result in a variation to the trip price until final payment has been made. A small allowance for adverse currency exchange has been included. On full payment, the price as stated is guaranteed, but not before.
8. Cancellations. If you need to cancel for any reason you must advise TSN in writing as soon as possible. An email is acceptable but a phone call is not. TRAVEL INSURANCE WILL COVER YOU FOR UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES BUT WILL NOT COVER YOU FOR CHANGING YOUR MIND AFER COMMITTING TO THE TRIP. Per person cancellation fees apply as follows :
 - Cancellations received up to 31st December 2009 will be fully refunded.
 - Cancellations received from 1st January to 31st January 2010 will incur a fee of \$1000 per person
 - Cancellations received from 1st February to 31st May 2010 will incur a fee of \$2500 per person
 - Cancellations received from 1st June 2010 onwards will incur a fee of 100% of the trip cost
9. Please provide a photocopy or scan of your passport when completing registration. NZ passport holders do require a visa to enter India and the cost of acquiring this is included. Visas will be actioned close to departure on a group basis, when you will be advised the paperwork needed. Pleas ensure you have six months until expiry of your passport at the end of your trip, or a replacement may be required. For any questions relating to passports and visas and any travel arrangements outside the core trip, discuss with John Dobbs at TSN

Registration Form :

Request you place on **Ladakh and Spiti 2010** by completing this form and send to John Dobbs before the closing date of 31st December 2009. The minimum group size is 7. Please register early so we can ascertain group viability, and be fair to others who do register early. Thank you.

Name(s) as per passport(s), please underline your preferred first name.....

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Mailing address.....

Day phone.....Night phone.....Mob.....

Email.....Date(s) of birth.....

Dietary requirements, allergies, medical conditions etc?.....

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Are you affiliated to FMC through a tramping club? Which club?.....

If not, are you a private member of FMC?YES.....NO (circle)

If neither, we encourage you to join FMC as a private or club member. See www.fmc.org.nz

(direct or affiliated membership of FMC is not a pre-requisite of joining this trip, however)

Contact person in NZ in an emergency (name, address, relationship to you, email, phone nos including mob)

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PTO to answer a few questions about your tramping experience.....

I / We have read the full trip dossier and I / We accept fully the booking conditions of this trip. I / We enclose My / Our registration payment of \$1000 per person. I / We agree to pay the remainder of trip costs by due dates, as advised by invoice. I / We understand that the final trip price cannot be guaranteed until full payment has been made.

.....signed and dated by each per registering

CHECKLIST :

Registration Form / Deposit / Passport scan or photocopy / Travel Insurance application

Please send everything to :

Questions :

We aim to find out the abilities of the party. Your answers may be written here or emailed, thank you.

1. How frequently do you tramp in NZ?

2. Are these day trips, weekend or longer, or a mix?

3. Are you happy to tramp in a group with the tolerance needed within a group?

***4. Have you been on previous overseas group tramping trips or treks?
If so, where?***

Country(s).....

Trek route(s).....

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Trek length(s).....

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Which year(s).....