

Open Heart, Open Road - 2019

Himalayan Journey on Motor Bike

14th - 31st July 2019, 18 days/17 nights

Day 1 : 14th July, Delhi Arrival

On arrival at Delhi airport, you will be welcomed by our Druk Expeditions representative and transferred to your guest-house in Majuka-tilla, the Tibetan settlement in Delhi.

Day 2 : 15th July, Delhi - Manali

Full day to rest and to explore Majuka-tilla, the Tibetan Settlement, with its many local craft shops and restaurants. We will arrange as late a check out as possible (usual time is noon, however if you would like to stay till 6pm additional charge applies). At 6pm you will be met at the guesthouse lobby and transferred to the Volvo bus stand for overnight journey to Manali. There is also an option to fly to Manali in the early morning (airfare not included). As flights are conditional on the weather, if the flight is cancelled then you may still take the bus or overnight car.

Day 3 : 16th July, Manali

Bus arrives early in the morning at Manali. You will be met and transferred to your hotel, where you may settle into your room for rest. Explore the town at your leisure. Our first group gathering will be the welcome dinner at 7pm.

Day 4 : 17th July, Hamta Valley – Day trip from Manali

After breakfast, our tour escort will introduce you to your bike (the famous Royal Enfield!) and the overall journey. It is now time for enjoying a ride on your bike exploring the peaceful Hamta Valley! Familiarize yourself with the challenges of driving on dirt roads with meandering bends through a rugged landscape. Savor the scenery. By evening we head back to the hotel.

Day 5 : 18th July, Manali to Spiti

Depart Manali, early morning for our first days drive in the higher Himalayas. Our local roads bend and soar through forests, waterfalls and beautiful mountain ridges until we reach Rohtang Pass (approx 4000 m). Here we stop for sightseeing and photo opportunities. Down the mountain we continue towards Batal where we stop for lunch. Afternoon drive continues to the beautiful Chandrataal Lake for overnight camp.

Day 6 : 19th July, Chandrataal to Kunzum-la to Kaza, Spiti

From Chandrataal we'll drive towards Kunzum-la, (4550 m) - a major landmark where a temple, dedicated to Goddess Kunzum sits in the middle of the pass. Continue to Kaza, capital of Spiti. Kaza sits on the eroded flood plain of the Spiti River, with jagged mountains rising on either side. It is the biggest settlement you'll encounter in this empty corner of the planet. It feels like a small frontier town with an easygoing pace. The often-dry Kaza Nullah stream divides New





Kaza (west of the nullah) from the bazaar area aka Old Kaza, to the east. Here we will stay for 4 nights and make day trips to interesting sites.

Day 7 : 20th July, Key Gompa– Day trip from Kaza

After breakfast we will tour towards Key Gompa - a Buddhist monastery located on top of a hill at 4,166 m above sea level. It is the biggest centre of Buddhist learning in Spiti Valley and home to around 300 monks who receive religious education here. Later we visit Keber village and Langza before heading back.

Day 8 : 21st July, Pin valley (3,500 m)– Day trip from Kaza

Pin Valley is famous for its wildlife, which includes critically endangered snow leopards, ibex, Himalayan bears and wolves. We'll spend some time in Dangker to visit their local Gompa, situated high above the valley. In days gone by it was a fort and residence of the king of Spiti. Today we may have an audience with the present King of Spiti. The view from the palace is mind blowing.

Day 9 : 22nd July, Tabo Monastery (3,280 m) – Day trip from Kaza

Today we'll drive to Tabo Gompa, also known as the 'Ajanta of the Himalayas'. It is considered one of the holiest Buddhist sites in the world. This well-preserved, ancient structure stands on the barren, cold, and rocky desert of the Tabo valley at a dizzying height of 3,050m above sea level. It was established in 996 AD by the great king, teacher and translator Lotsawa Rinchen Tsang Po. There are several caves nearby which are still used by Buddhist monks for meditation in solitude. We will do some meditation in these secret holy places.

Day 10 : 23th July, Kaza to See–Su, Lahoul

We'll ride back to Lahoul from Kaza along the same route passing Kunzum Laa, Batal, Chatru and See –su. Overnight at See–su Camp.

Day 11 : 24th July, See-su to Sarchu (4,300 m) Lahoul to Leh

Today we ride to Sarchu, leaving Jispa Village behind as we travel one of the most spectacular roads in the high Himalayas, with a splendid view as we pass through the Baralachha Pass (5000 m). Continuing towards Sarchu we ride along the borderline between Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Overnight at Sarchu camp.

Day 12 : 25th July, Sarchu to Leh. (3,500 m)

The day starts with many challenges, riding through flatlands into the mountainous horizon. We ascend through the Tanglang-la Pass, which is the second-highest motorable mountain pass in the world at the height of 5300 m. After crossing this pass, you will ride through well-maintained roads all the way to Leh. En-route we will visit the monasteries of Thiksey and Shey, before finally arriving at our hotel in Leh.

Day 13 : 26th July, Leh Palace and Shanti Stupa - Leh

Relax and acclimatize in Leh. We sadly bid farewell to our bikes as the remaining Ladakh tour will be done by car. After lunch we will visit Leh Palace and Shanti Stupa from where we can enjoy an aerial view of Leh.



Day 14 : 27th July, Hemis / Thiksey / Shey Monasteries - Day Trip from Leh

Today we will proceed for a tour of monasteries around Leh. In the morning we will drive to Hemis monastery, and on the way back we will again visit Thiksay monastery, enjoying picnic lunch there at Chamba restaurant. We will also visit Shey palace, the ancient Capital of Ladakh, which stores one of the largest Shakyamuni Buddha statue outside of Tibet.

Day 15 : 28th July, Pangong Tso (4300 m) – Day Trip from Leh

We depart early in the morning to Pangong Tso, a sacred lake 160 km from Leh. On the way, we will cross the spectacular Chang-la Pass (5475m). Pangong Tso's breathtaking expanse of blue-green water reflects the entire mountain panorama of the Chang-chenmo range. Pangong Tso, at 150km long and up to 10km wide, is the largest brackish water lake in Asia. We will enjoy the afternoon there before returning in the evening.

Day 16 : 29th July, Rafting in Indus river – Day trip from Leh

After breakfast we drive towards western Ladakh for a rafting adventure on the river Indus. Our scenic float down the river ends at Nimo village, from where we drive to Alchi monastery before returning. The rest of the evening is free for shopping and resting.

Day 17 : 30th July, Leh to Delhi

After and early breakfast we will head to Leh airport to board the flight for Delhi. Reaching Delhi in the morning, we will transfer to our guest-house in Majukatilla. You can then go on a sightseeing tour of Delhi (additional charges apply) or rest in your rooms during the day.

Day 18 : 31st July, Delhi – Open day

Again you can go on a sightseeing tour of Delhi (additional charges apply) or rest in your rooms during the day. In the evening we will say our good-byes before transferring you to the International Airport for your journey homeward (unless you have planned other adventures in India).

May you take many beautiful memories home with you!

