



LUXURY EXPLORER'S
**Snow Leopard
Expedition**

In the search of the elusive Snow Leopard

Luxury Explorer's Exclusive Snow Leopard Expedition – February 2020



It is with great excitement that we announce our first exclusive expedition to witness one of the most beautiful creatures on earth – the Snow Leopard in its natural Himalayan habitat. Together with &Beyond's expert guide, I will be leading this trip and look forward to being joined by equally passionate and adventurous explorers. With only 10 places available, it really is a matter of first come first served...

Sophie

Itinerary highlights

Date of expedition

2nd-13th February 2020

Duration

12 days /11 nights

Highest pass

No passes involved except while tracking, you may have to climb uphill, depending on wildlife movement

Grade

Moderate/strenuous (may have to climb a ridge)

The trans-Himalayan region of Ladakh is one of the last frontiers for wildlife tourism. April is an excellent time in the high valleys to observe the most elusive of the great cats – the snow leopard. The very name evokes all that is most wild, mysterious and elusive in nature, for this is an animal cloaked in the subtle beauty of its own coat, but also in all the high drama of its remote and magnificent environment. The Ladakh region is essentially a high-altitude desert where the snow leopard survive on prey that includes bharal (blue sheep), ibex and marmots. Wolves, foxes and wild dogs are the area's other predators.

This is a land of fascinating contrasts, evident in the hard life of the local mountain people who, nonetheless, practice a very gentle and compassionate form of Buddhism. You will have time to visit some of their great monasteries, as well as their picturesque villages with Tibetan farmers tending their livestock on the valley floor around their isolated settlements.

Please note: Please do note that the trek route is one that is based on the experience of your guides, who have full discretion to change or alter according to circumstances. As you would expect the weather will be a crucial factor in deciding the final itinerary.

The majority of your time in Ladakh will be spent at elevations of 11,800 feet or higher, with the highest sleeping altitude at 13,000. Anyone with a history of medical problems, particularly cardiac or respiratory, should consult a doctor before considering this trip. We always require a release of liability and medical certificate from our clients.

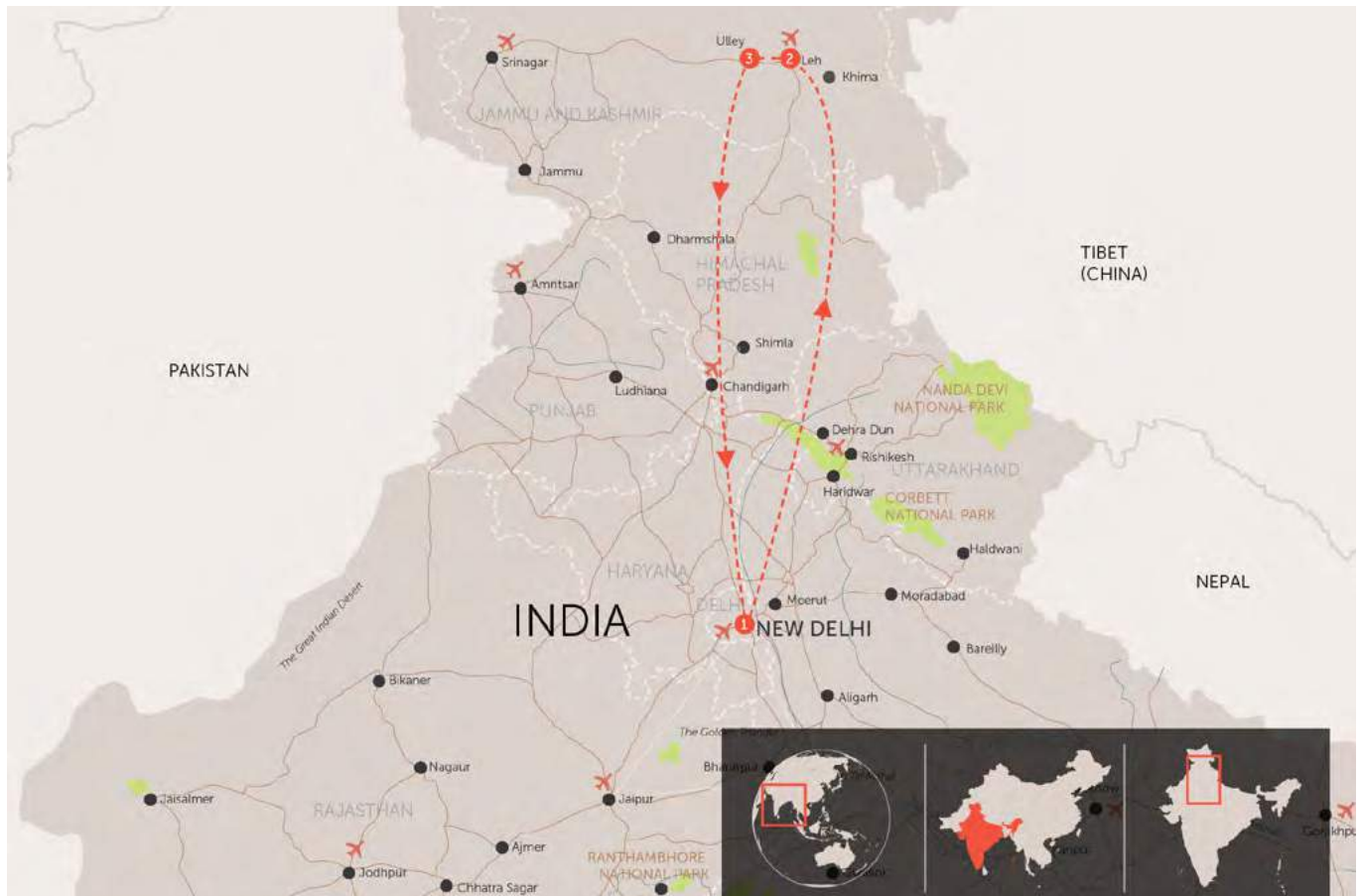
Some facts

- Opportunity to see Ibex, Tibetan Antelope, Blue Sheep, Shapo and Tibetan Hare.
- Enjoy the company of one of the most seasoned Snow Leopard Guides for the entire trip.
- Known as the ‘Little Tibet’, Ladakh has its own culture and identity and has never ceased to enchant explorers.
- The isolated barren wilderness of Ladakh with the snow-capped mountains of the Himalayas, bright blue water lakes, ever-changing sand dunes reminds that you are close to the “Roof of the World”.

Entry and visa

- All visitors to India are required to be in possession of a valid passport and Indian visa. Enquire about this from the Indian diplomatic Representatives abroad OR apply online at <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>
- Boarding or immigration can be denied if there is a mismatch of passport details mentioned on the visa letter issued by the Government of India and the passport presented at these checks.
- Your passport has to be valid for a minimum of 6 months AFTER the departure date from India and at least 2 (two) clear pages available in the passport for immigration stamping.

Travel map



Day 1 Arrive Delhi

Upon your arrival in New Delhi, you will be warmly welcomed by a Luxury Explorer representative from &Beyond, who will assist you through the customs / immigration and baggage collection process. Afterwards, you will be chauffeured to your hotel. We recommend the Trident in Gurgaon due to its proximity to the international airport, although we can arrange for you to stay at the Taj Mahal, Oberoi or the Lodhi at extra cost, as long as you don't mind the additional transfer time.

The Trident Gurgaon is a well-designed hotel in Gurgaon, neighbouring the Delhi border with Haryana, 10 kilometres from the international airport. The standard itinerary includes an overnight stay here in a Superior Garden-view Room, with breakfast included.

Trident Hotel, Gurgaon



Day 2 Delhi / Leh

Our party will be met at the hotel and transferred to Delhi airport for the flight to Leh. Upon arrival at Leh Airport we will be met and transferred to our hotel, which is located in the heart of the ancient city of Leh.

The Grand Dragon Ladakh is family-owned and one of the first luxury hotels in Ladakh. The hotel is decorated magnificently with handmade paintings by Gulam Mustafa (Ladakh's first contemporary artist) with furnished in regal style. The hotel is centrally heated by solar power, ensuring eco-friendly warmth.

Here you will be at leisure for the rest of the day to acclimatize to the high altitude. Leh is at an altitude of 11,400 feet and the flight up from the plains means that you will need to acclimatize gently.

We have scheduled two days here, which is the minimum required before driving to a higher altitude, where you will be walking in the mountains. While in Leh we will be introduced to staff from the Snow Leopard Conservancy for a briefing on the history of snow leopard conservation in Ladakh, with insights shared on the current threats to snow leopards and the strategies adopted to combat these threats.

We will spend three nights at the Grand Dragon in a Deluxe Room with ensuite facilities. Your stay will include all meals.



Grand Dragon

Day 3 Leh introductory tour

Leh is a fascinating labyrinth of winding streets and quaint bazaars retaining much of the atmosphere of a Central Asian trading town. The main street is open and airy, with rows of shops on either side. Leh feels Tibetan; the national dress, 'stove-pipe' hats and felt boots with turned-up toes are much in evidence. The Royal Palace, which dominates the town, is reminiscent of the Potala in Lhasa and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, large chortens, prayer flags and mud brick houses with flat roofs are a change from the hot, frenetic rush of New Delhi. During the morning you will visit the Snow Leopard Conservancy. Here you will see the efforts made by this authority, with the help of the local community, to conserve the endanger snow leopard.



Thiksey Monastery



Leh Town

In the afternoon, we will visit the Thiksey monastery. Thiksey Gompa is the most picturesquely situated monastery in Ladakh, perched high on a hill above the Indus. Its buildings are arranged at various levels, leading up to the private apartments of the incarnate lamas on the summit. From here one commands a magnificent view of the valley. The gompa possesses a rich and beautiful collection of hundreds of hand-written or painted prayer books. A new temple contains a 15-metre tall Buddha statue, constructed in 1970 to commemorate a visit to Thiksey by the Dalai Lama. The statue, made of clay and covered with gold paint, is the largest Buddha figure in Ladakh and took four years to construct. Inside, the statue is filled with the Kandshur and the Tandshur – volumes of Buddhist canonical texts.

The statue was made entirely by local craftsmen and represents Maitreya, (“compassion” in Sanskrit) the Buddha of the Future. The prophecy made of the Future Buddha is that the world will be undergoing such chaos that He will teach compassion to the people.

Overnight in Leh.

Day 4 Leh

On Day 4 we will set out for an extraordinary drive East, heading towards Taglang La and the villages of Gya, Lhato and Meru. This is a stunning drive away from the valley of the Indus, up through a smaller valley to an extraordinary area – even by Ladakhi standards – that marks where the Indian mainland collided with, and was forced under, the Asian land mass to create the Himalayas. The scenery here is dramatic, with a good chance of sighting blue sheep, golden eagles and bearded vultures. Rafts of red-billed choughs perform synchronized aerobatics and in the fallow fields you have the chance of seeing the very beautiful Tibetan partridge and the more common Chukor partridge.

Overnight in Leh.

Grand Dragon



Day 5-10 Drive to Ulley / Ulley

We will drive west on day 5 towards Kargil and Srinagar, following the Indus River. We will pass through the small town of Nimmu – one of the most important in Ladakh, where the Zaskar river meets the Indus. A little over an hour later we will head north, on a road marked to Likir – one of Ladakh's famous Buddhist monasteries.

This is now snow leopard country. The stunning landscape, here, is even more expansive. We will turn off onto a dirt road, winding up a narrow valley, following a stream called the Ulley Chhu. Smaller valleys intersect the main valley and our guides will be scanning the hillsides and the skyline for any animal silhouette. This is also excellent Ibex country and there are few more evocative sights than a magnificently horned male standing in vigil on some impossibly narrow outcrop of rocks, a few thousand feet over a plunging cliff.

Ulley village, west of Leh, is an area that is only recently being developed for Snow Leopard watching.

Here we will stay 6 nights in the Snow Leopard Lodge. Of course, this is not a 5-star luxury hotel, but a comfortable homestead consisting of 6 bedrooms, built separately from the main house, all built in local stone. You will experience living with a Ladakhi family and understanding their life-style, often sharing the large and warm kitchens that are at the heart of a Ladakhi home, resplendent with brass, copper and silver ornaments.

Snow Leopard



We will settle-in on arrival and acclimatize ourselves to the higher altitude of Ulley. From here we will explore 3 valleys, which, apart from Snow Leopards, are great for finding Urial, Ibex, Wolf and Himalayan Fox.

Over the next few days we will explore the area on foot and in SUV's with an expert guide. You will be amazed at the sheer dedication and commitment our guide brings to his trade and the effort he makes to ensure that his guests are happy. Our guide knows the local people and uses his network of local intelligence to narrow down the likely sites for sighting the elusive snow leopard each day. In the process there will also be plenty of opportunity to gain insights into local folklore, as well as learn about local customs and traditions.

Overnight stay at Snow Leopard Lodge.

Day 11 Ulley – Leh

After breakfast, we will say our goodbyes to our host and drive back to Leh town. En-route we visit the Alchi monastery. Alchi Gompa is located near the small village of Saspol, which is one of the earliest monasteries built in Ladakh, dating from the 11th century. Because it was built before the invading wars began in the 15th century, Alchi was built on lowlands, rather than on a hilltop, as later monasteries were, in order to protect them from marauding armies.

After the visit, we will carry on the journey back to Leh.

We will spend one more night at the Grand Dragon, in the same accommodation as at the start of our trip.

Alchi Monastery



Day 12 Depart Leh / Delhi

We will leave Leh on the morning of February 13th to catch our morning flight to Delhi. Upon arrival, we will be driven to the Trident Gurgaon Hotel (close to the airport), where you can freshen up before your homeward flight later that evening.

Quote

Per person in US\$ (based on maximum 10-11 guests travelling) on twin share

Guests	per person in US\$
Exclusive party of 10	\$9,616 per person (based on 2 sharing a twin room)
Single room supplement	\$2,650 per person
Expedition dates	2 nd -13 rd February 2020

Includes

- Meals as mentioned in itinerary
 - Internal flights in economy (Baggage Allowance 15 kg per passenger)
Guest can pre-purchase excess baggage on request at an extra cost
 - Day 1 in Delhi hotel on Bed and Breakfast
 - All sightseeing activities in Ladakh as mentioned
 - Entrance fee in monasteries
 - Transportation for snow leopard sightings
 - Donation fee for snow leopard conservation
 - Services of a Tour leader from Day 2-11 in Ladakh only
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Excludes

- Any expenses of personal nature including alcohol, laundry, gratuities etc
- International Airfares
- Medical /Travel Insurances
- Any expenses arising due to unavoidable circumstances beyond our control
- Any change in tax structure

Payment policy

1. 25% Non-refundable advance payment to be remitted within 15 days on receiving confirmation for the hotels booked.
2. 75% of the balance payment to be remitted 60 days prior to arrival into India

Booking made within 45 days of arrival
100% payment at the time of booking (within 72 hours)
(non-refundable)

Booking made more than 45 days prior to arrival
25% payment at the time of booking (within 7 days) and
balance 75%, 60 to 100 days prior to arrival

Cancellation within 60 days or more prior to arrival
No cancellation/retention charge, except for cancellation fee
on air tickets/train tickets or deposits made for Game drives
in National Parks.

Cancellation within 45 days of arrival
Retention of full deposit levied as cancellation charge

&Beyond India reserves the right to cancel all services
booked should full payment not be received 60 days prior
to arrival date.

Should it be a last minute booking, &Beyond India will allow
for 3 days from time of confirmation until payment (100%)
reaches us before &Beyond India will cancel any services
booked. The amount is NON-REFUNDABLE.

Until such time as confirmation of services is received from
&Beyond India this is a Quotation only and is subject to
availability as no reservations have been made.

Kindly note that payments may be processed with Visa and
MasterCard credit cards. Payments may also be paid directly
into &Beyond India bank account details.

All payments received through credit card will attract an
additional 2.50% transaction fee on the total invoice amount
being paid.

Important general notes

The rates quoted are subject to change without prior
warning, should there be any increases in Park Fees,
Fuel, Sales Tax or VAT, third party services, or any other
circumstances beyond our control in the regions featured
in this quote/booking.

All guests must take out comprehensive travel insurance
covering them for personal effects, personal accident,
medical and emergency travel expenses, cancellation
and curtailment.

In order to comply with international insurance requirements
all airline tickets must clearly show the passenger's title,
surname, name and initial (as indicated in their passport).
As this applies to both scheduled and charter flights
we would be grateful if you could provide us with this
information at the time of confirmation.

Your internal flights have been organized by us. While we
take the maximum care to ensure a safe and comfortable
journey for you &Beyond India Private Ltd. is not responsible
for the fitness of the carriers or the safety standards of the
carrier company.

In order to comply with International Insurance requirements
&Beyond India can only reserve seats, be it on a provisional
or confirmed basis, on both domestic/scheduled or charter
flights.

Please note that fares may increase between time of
booking, time of payment and the ticket being issued.
Any costs incurred due to amendments will not be borne
by &Beyond India.

&Beyond India cannot be held responsible should airlines
discontinue flights on certain routings or change scheduled
timetables, resulting in missed connections etc. Should an
amendment in a routing or itinerary be necessary we will
re-quote you accordingly.

Dietary Requirements: All dietary requirements can be
catered for. When making your reservation, please advise
us of any specific dietary requirements that you may have
and these will be communicated through to the respective
establishment.

Gratuities: Tipping is at your discretion. However
management of the establishment will be able to assist
with guidelines.

