



LUXURY EXPLORER'S

Snow Leopard Expedition

April 5th - 17th 2019

In the search of the elusive Snow Leopard

Luxury Explorer's Snow Leopard Expedition – April 2019

A Luxury Explorer exclusive expedition with &Beyond



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 gets to go...

Sophie

Itinerary highlights

Date of expedition

5th - 17th April 2019, excluding travel to and from New Delhi

Duration

13 days/12 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 snow leopards survive on prey including bharal (blue sheep), ibex and marmots.

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, where Tibetan farmers tend their livestock around their isolated settlements on the valley floor.

Please note: The exact trek route is based on the experience of your guides, who have full discretion to change or alter the route according to local 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 feet. 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.

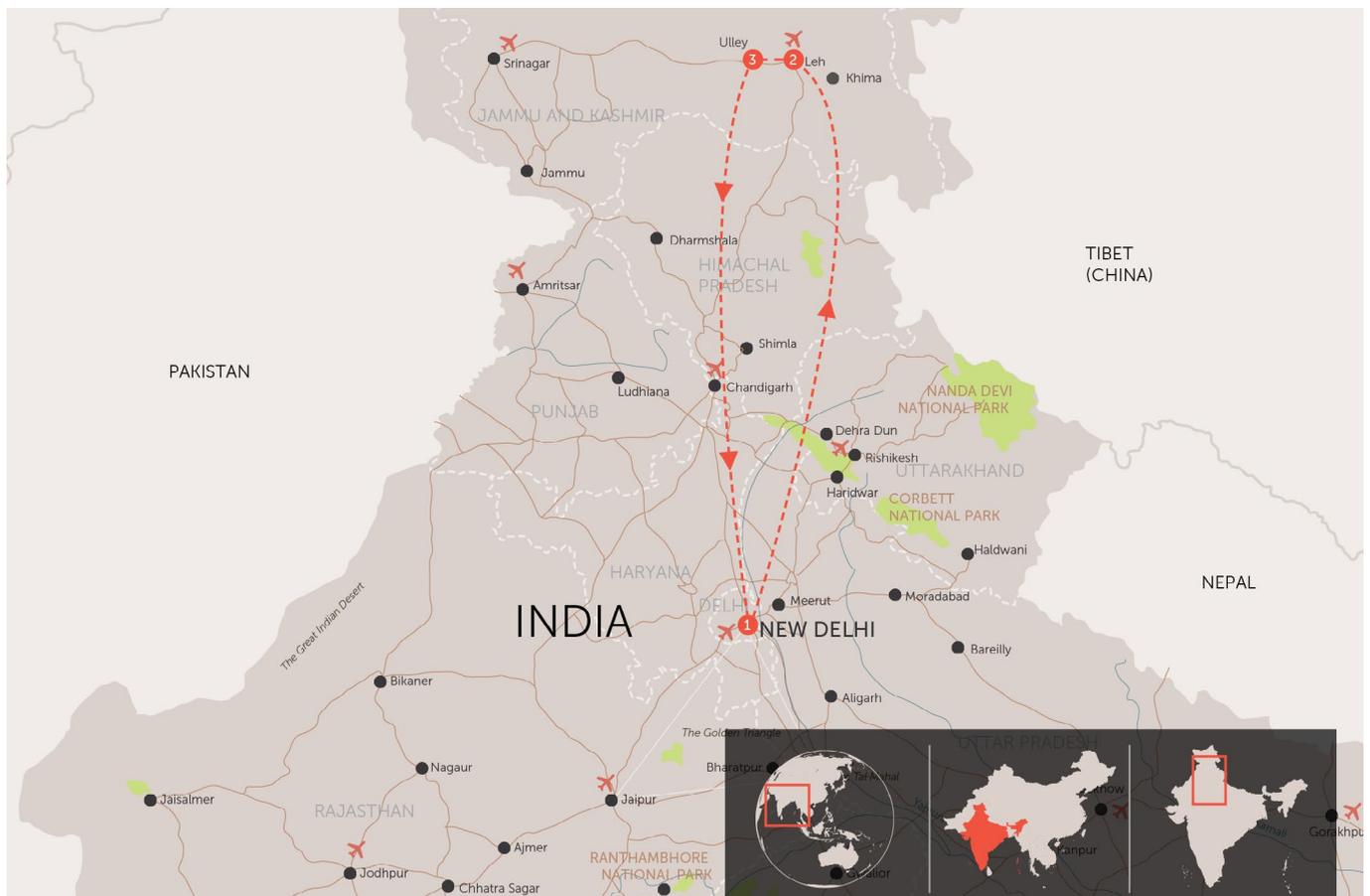
Some facts

- 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 lakes and ever-changing sand dunes reminds you 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 an 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 must be valid for a minimum of 6 months AFTER the departure date from India and there must be at least 2 clear passport pages available for immigration stamping.

Travel map



Day 1 Arrive Delhi - April 5th

Upon 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 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) and 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 acclimatise 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 acclimatise gently.

We have scheduled two full 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 almost 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 endangered 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.

We will stay a second night 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 synchronised aerobatics, and in the fallow fields you have the chance to see the very beautiful Tibetan partridge and the more common Chukor partridge.

We will stay our third night in Leh before departing to Ulley.

Grand Dragon



Day 5-11 Drive to Ulley / Ulley

On the morning of Day 5, we will drive west towards Kargil and Srinagar, following the Indus River and passing 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 - 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 7 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 lifestyle, 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 acclimatise 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 SUVs 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 stays at Snow Leopard Lodge.

Day 12 Ulley – Leh

After breakfast, we will say our goodbyes to our host and drive back to Leh town. En-route, we will 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 13 Depart Leh / Delhi - April 17th

We will leave Leh on the morning of April 17th 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.

Rates

Rates per person in US\$, based on 2 guests sharing a twin room.

	per person in US\$
2 guests sharing a twin room	\$7,950 per person
Single room supplement	\$4,950 per person

Expedition dates 5th - 17th April 2019 (excluding flights into/out of New Delhi)

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
 - Accommodation - Day 1 in Trident Gurgaon on Bed and Breakfast basis (upgrades available). Other hotels as stated in the itinerary
 - 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 - 12 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

Luxury Explorer 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, Luxury Explorer will allow for 3 days from time of confirmation until payment (100%) reaches us before Luxury Explorer 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.

Payments should be made directly to Luxury Explorer. Bank account details can be found below:

Luxury Explorer Payment details:

Barclays Bank	Bank Sort Code: 20-72-17
GB£ Account No: 73483851	IBAN: GB47BARC20721773483851
US\$ Account No: 88940255	IBAN: GB45BARC20721788940255

Important general notes

Luxury Explorer Ltd is organising this expedition with &Beyond India.

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 organised by &Beyond India. 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.

The Government of India has banned the use of satellite phones across the country - it is a criminal offence to be in possession of and to use such a phone in India.

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.

