

SNOW LEOPARD TOUR RUMBAK & ULEY

14 Nights / 15 Days

TRACKING THE ELUSIVE SNOW LEOPARD



SNOW LEOPARD, the very name evokes all that is most wild, mysterious and elusive in nature - for this is an animal that comes cloaked not just in the subtle beauty of its own coat but also in all the high drama of the harsh and magnificent environment that it dominates. The chances of actually seeing a snow leopard, especially in a relatively short period, are slim indeed. The reclusive and shy nature of the animal, the inhuman scale and vertical topography of the habitat, the relative sparseness of snow leopards on the ground all combine to frustrate the seeker. But the snow leopard does not occupy this environment alone, it sits at the apex of a rich and diverse pyramid and in searching for this master predator you will be exploring its environment and all that live in it in some detail.

The snow leopard feeds mostly on blue sheep or Bharal, Ibex, Marmots, Tibetan hare, the Pika or mouse hare, wolf, wild dog and fox. We take you on the trail of tracking the elusive Snow Leopard in the Rumbak area of the Hemis National high altitude park considered to be the "World capital of Snow Leopard" where according to the latest census only 9 of these rare and endangered animals are alive. Please note that the best time to spot the Snow Leopard is in the winter months of December to February as during this time it comes down to the lower reaches in search of food and this is also the mating season of the animal.

Day - 01: Arrive Leh

Early morning transfer to the Delhi domestic airport for a spectacular flight to Leh, capital of Ladakh (3500m). The dramatic views of this high altitude desert are punctuated by sharp snowy peaks. Transfer to your hotel where you'll receive welcome tea. Rest till noon. After lunch, join our local crew for a briefing, then free time to explore Leh on your own. It is important to rest on these first few days at high altitude. Enjoy a welcome dinner with the Conservancy and stay overnight at the hotel.

DAY-02: Excursion to monasteries

Full day visit to monasteries (104 Kms). After breakfast, drive for full day of sightseeing to the Shey Palace, Thiksey, Hemis monasteries and Stok Palace Museum. Packed or hot lunch will be provided.

- Shey - Shey was the old capital and the home of the kings of Ladakh before the new capital became established in Leh. The palace sits in a strategic position on a spur jutting out into the Indus valley. The main temple contains a large Buddha statue sculpted by Nepalese craft men.
- Thiksey monasteries - This large Gumpa is an impressive sight, situated on top of a craggy hill while the rest of the complex sprawls down beneath it. It was founded in the 15th century by Gelukpa monks.
- Hemis is one of the most important monasteries in Ladakh. The Hemis monastery was established in 1672 AD by the then king Senge Nampar Gyalva. Across the stillness of the wide expanse, the Hemis gumpa stands upright built in Tibetan style, jutting out of the mountain top. The practices at the Hemis monastery are a direct lineal descent of the teachings expounded in the Mahayoga Tantra School, or the esoteric school of vajrayana.

After having visited these sights, return to the hotel and stay overnight.

DAY-03: : Leh to Zingchen

ALTITUDE – 3800M; 02 HRS DRIVE; 02-03 HRS TREK

After breakfast drive to Zingchen and then start trek Husing. Husing, also known globally as "the world capital of Snow Leopard" is the epicenter of three prominent valleys well known for sighting of the Snow Leopard. We will make the Husing campsite as our base camp as we venture out for the next 6 days towards the many bye-valleys that vein out of the Husing pastureland. Overnight at the camp.

DAY-04 to 06: In Husing area

The local expert will take you on an early morning excursion to the trails frequented by the ever elusive Snow leopard and will teach you how to interpret through local art and techniques of smelling of rock sand (smell of urine of the leopard), reading of pug mark, scrape (digging of ground by the animal), scat (stool) and rock-face rubbing of the snow leopard. The expert will also share local traditional knowledge on how to identify the hunt patterns and kill spots of the snow leopard.

Some prime examples are as below:

- (a) Alert calls of deer, blue sheep or barals.
- (b) Hovering of the golden eagle over kill spots.
- (c) Excited screaming of magpies indicating kills.
- (d) Nervous movement of the red fox in the nearby vicinity of the kill.

Overnight at the camp.

Day 07 to 09: Husing to Rumbak

Today we break camp and shift towards the upper Rumbak Valley towards a campsite locally known as "Rumbak Doh." Rumbak Doh offers excellent vistas into the higher ridges where the snow leopards hunt so we can avail of a better sighting percentage. Identify "hot spots" (marchans) vantage points through mapping and tracking; also, techniques in gaining confidence of the villagers so that they can alert and relay instant information of any signs and actual sightings of the snow leopard. During this period, we will proceed for a full day of tracking the snow leopard and its wildlife prey. Hemis National Park is home to blue sheep, argali (a large horned sheep), numerous mountain and migratory birds, as well as an occasional Tibetan wolf. You are likely to see signs of snow leopards as winter is the time that they descend to lower elevations. If lucky, you'll actually see one perched high in the rocks or balanced on a near vertical ridge. Return to the camp for some warming tea and share tales of the day. The camp elevation is approx. 3800m. Stay overnight at the village home.

Day 10 to 12: Uley area

Spend 03 more days for watching snow leopard and its prey. The views of this stark landscape, the sky pierced by upward tilted strata and – on snow-free days -- the ground adorned with hardy alpine plants, provides constant fascination. The camp elevation is approx. 3800m.

Day 13: Uley to Leh

Say goodbye to your hosts and hike down-valley past familiar snow leopard haunts and piles of carved Tibetan prayer stones to the road head at Uley Tokpo. The vehicle will pick you up from the end of the trekking point and drive on to Leh. Check into a hotel for your first real bed in a long time! Stay overnight at the hotel.

NOTE: Please bear in mind that this is a tentative itinerary for we will certainly be changing the set date activities as per the findings and daily information updates of the movement of the snow leopard in the local area.

Guidelines to remember:

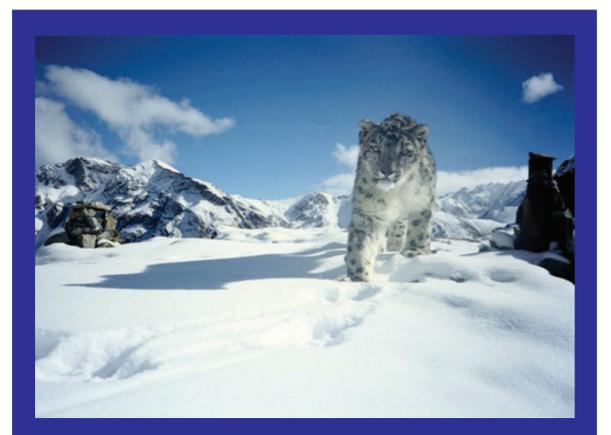
1. Warm and weather proof clothing.
2. Camping, equipment and clothing not to be bright and in loud colours.
3. Perfumes, deodorants, after shave lotions etc should be avoided.
4. Carry good spotting scopes and binoculars and some reading material.
5. Follow the instructions of the guide and experts to maximize spotting percentage.

Day 14: Free day in Leh

The full day will be free for leisure and individual activities without car & driver. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 15: Depart Leh

After breakfast transfer to Leh airport and fly to Delhi.



TAMARIND
GLOBAL

* For customizations please feel free to get in touch with us at info@tamarindglobal.com

* All the above information is correct at time of uploading on the website and is subject to change without notice