

3rd to 11th  
October  
2026

# INDIAN HIMALAYAN TREK

Six children's charities,  
one trek: Himalayan adventure

Information pack

**acorns**  
children's hospice

 **children's hospice**  
**SOUTH WEST**  
Registered Charity No. 1003314

 **demelza**  
extraordinary care for extraordinary children

 **Helen & Douglas House**  
**your local children's hospice**



**Ngami House  
& Jacksplace**  
hospices for children  
and young adults  
Registered charity no. 1002002

 **Shooting Star**  
children's hospices



## Indian Himalayan Trek: Six Children's Charities, One Trek: Himalayan Adventure 3 – 11 October 2026



### Trip overview

*Six leading children's charities – Acorns Children's Hospice, Children's Hospice South West, Demelza, Helen & Douglas House, Naomi House & Jacksplace, and Shooting Star Children's Hospices – have partnered for a unique trek. This collaboration aims to maximise fundraising, raise awareness of hospice care for children and young adults, build community among supporters, and share expertise to enhance care for children and young adults with life-limiting conditions and their families.*

### About India

India conjures images of lush green tea plantations, brightly coloured saris, jasmine-scented incense, ancient palaces and adorned maharajahs. India is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest country by landmass on earth and borders Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. There are many highlights in this vast country including the stunning backwaters of Kerala, the mighty Himalayas, the inhospitable deserts, the bustling cities, the magnificent coastline and of course the delicious cuisine.

### Delhi

Delhi is the capital city of India and a buzz of sights, sounds and smells. From busy highways where sacred cows cross the street to peaceful temples and lush gardens, Delhi is a contrast like no other. Spicy aromas and the sizzle of street food tantalise your senses and the beautiful ancient monuments will leave you breathless. Take a visit to the imposing India Gate or the Qutub Minar – the tallest stone tower in India at 72.5m high or just get lost in one of the bustling marketplaces where you can haggle for silks, spices, carvings and other gifts.

### Trek Overview

Take on this four-day trek through the Indian Himalayas and home of the Dalai Lama – Dharamshala. On arrival in Delhi you will freshen up before boarding the overnight train to Pathankot. After a night on the train, you transfer to the stunning hill station of Dharamshala, home to the Tibetan Government in exile and the Dalai Lama, and surrounded by dense forest and in the shadow of the Dhauladhar mountain range.

From here you will commence your journey into the Lesser Himalayan range of Northern India where, during four days of trekking, you will be awed by lush green forests, views of snow-capped peaks, deep valleys, gushing rivers and small villages with friendly and welcoming local people. You will reach a maximum altitude of 2875m (at Triund) and will walk approximately 14km per day, taking around 6-8 hours.

After your trek ends, you will return to Delhi for the night for a celebratory meal to celebrate your achievements of the week.



## What is the experience like?

### How tough is it?

The trek is graded *moderate to challenging*. You will trek over varying terrain for up to 8 hours a day, carrying a small daypack which may weigh up to 6kg, and camping in basic campsites along the way. You will also be exposed to altitudes up to a maximum of 2875m (9429ft). Whilst it is difficult to specifically prepare for trekking at higher altitudes, it helps to be physically prepared for the exertions of the trekking day by training in advance. It is advised that you arrive for the trek feeling comfortable trekking for periods of up to 7 or 8 hours for at least two days consecutively. Having a positive and determined attitude is also a key element to your success on the trek.

### What is the terrain like?

The terrain will vary throughout the trek but in general, will be undulating (uphill and downhill). There are very few flat sections so you should ensure your training includes plenty of hills. Underfoot there will be stony pathways, grass, rocks and perhaps a few small streams to cross too. Each day you will cover approximately 12-15km (7-9 miles) which, because of the variable terrain, can take up to 8 hours to cover.

### Where will we sleep?

At camp, you will stay in 3-man tents (two people to a tent). You will be provided with sleeping mats, but you are welcome to bring your own if you prefer. While in Delhi and Dharamshalayou will stay in hotels on a twin or triple-share basis. We will also travel to and from Pathankot on a sleeper train where you have your own privately screened bed, in a compartment containing up to 5 other beds.

### What is the climate like?

In Delhi , temperatures can reach 33°C during the day, dropping to 17°C at night. The temperature in Dharamshala and during the trek is cooler with temperatures of approx. 20-28°C during the day, dropping down to approx.0°C at night. Temperatures will depend on the weather which varies and can be bright and sunny, rainy, cloudy or humid. Please note that conditions in mountainous regions are unpredictable so you should be prepared for all climatic eventualities. Although the conditions mentioned are historically accurate, climate change can impact the seasons so you may experience uncharacteristic weather during the trip which is out of our control. The guides will assess the situation and make decisions to ensure the best enjoyment and ultimately the safety of the group.

### What about bathroom and toilet facilities?

During the trek, bathing facilities will be limited although you may be able to freshen up at rivers or streams along the way. You are recommended to bring eco-friendly toiletries. Each morning you will be provided with a bowl of hot water to freshen up, but baby wipes are strongly recommended for maintaining general personal hygiene.

Toilet facilities at camp will be a hole dug into the ground with a small privacy tent surrounding it. Toilet paper is not provided so you will need to bring your own; consider biodegradable toilet paper. To use the toilet during the trek day you will find a private area off the main trail; any toilet paper you use along the trail must be placed into a nappy sack and disposed of properly at camp. You should NEVER leave toilet paper or other litter (including fruit peel, seeds, food wrappers etc.) on the trail. At the hotels, there will be flushing Western sit-down toilets.

### What is the food like?

Meals during the trek are cooked by your trek chef and will be eaten in a mess tent where a table, chairs, plates, mugs and cutlery are provided. Meals are delicious and plentiful and mainly Indian style (although there may be some Western-style meals). Meals in Delhi and Dharamshala will be at your accommodation and local restaurants. Special dietary requirements can be accommodated if we are advised in advance but please note that we cannot guarantee that food preparation will take place in a contamination-free environment.

### Practical information

#### Who accompanies us?

The trek is accompanied by English-speaking local guides who have an excellent knowledge of the local culture and hiking in the region. You will also be supported by a team of cooks and porters and a UK Different Travel Company tour manager.

#### Who can take part?

The trek can be undertaken by anyone with a good level of fitness, who is healthy and determined. Adequate preparation, planning and training is important because the fitter you are the more you will enjoy this experience. An ideal candidate would be a hillwalker, an open-minded person with a sense of adventure or someone who would like to take part in a life-changing fundraising experience in the beautiful landscape.

#### Is there an age limit?

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this trek unaccompanied. It may be possible for you to participate if you are 16 or 17 years old, but you must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. There is no upper age limit.

### Altitude

The altitude you experience on this trek is up to 2875m which is slightly under the threshold that is considered high altitude (3000m). However, there is a possibility that some people may notice altitude-related symptoms. The local guides are very experienced in spotting signs of altitude sickness but it is important that you also research the effects so you can be aware of how your body is adjusting. A great source of information can be found at <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Altitude-sickness/Pages/Introduction.aspx> or <http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/altitude.htm>.

Common mild symptoms of altitude sickness include headache, nausea, loss of appetite, disturbed sleep and fatigue. You must make your guides and tour manager aware of any symptoms immediately so you can be monitored.

#### Important information about altitude:

- If you begin to show symptoms of moderate altitude sickness, don't go higher.
- If symptoms increase, descend immediately. Your tour guide and tour manager's decision for you to descend must be respected.
- People acclimatise at different rates. Keep aware of your symptoms.
- Stay hydrated. Drink lots of fluids to remain properly hydrated (water, soup, tea, juices etc.). Urine output should be copious and clear to pale yellow.
- Take it easy and don't overexert yourself. Acclimatisation is inhibited by overexertion, dehydration, and alcohol.
- Avoid tobacco, alcohol and other depressant drugs including, barbiturates, tranquillisers, sleeping pills and opiates such as codeine. These decrease the respiratory drive during sleep resulting in a worsening of symptoms.







## Medical Declaration

We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used, and other medical issues must be specified. All your medical details are treated in the strictest confidence.

The information will be securely screened by a qualified medical professional, and details provided to your tour manager and local guides, so our staff are adequately informed and prepared to support you during the trip. By completing this booking form, you are giving consent for us to contact you confidentially with any follow up questions regarding your health.

If you declare any medical conditions, you may be asked to provide more information, or we may request to contact your GP. We must be informed if any conditions or medication change, or if new conditions develop. If necessary, confirmation of fitness to travel from your GP or specialist may be required. If your medical issues represent a concern for your safety and wellbeing, or the safety and wellbeing of others in the group, you may be recommended not to take part. If this happens your deposit will be refunded. Please note that we will never unreasonably deny participation on a trip nor contravene the Equality Act 2010.

## Health and safety assurance

Your health and safety is our top priority so rest assured that we are taking steps to ensure you not only have a memorable experience, but a safe one too. We constantly monitor and follow the advice of the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) who provide recommendations and advice to British travellers about travel to a certain destination.

Health and safety is our top priority so we will NEVER operate a trip in an area where there is clear and present risk to our team members, whether that is due to a health outbreak, political instability, natural disasters or anything else. If travel restrictions either in the UK or India prevent safe travel we will look to either postpone or cancel your trip at no cost to you.

Please note that at the time of travel, there may be enhanced safety and security measures in airports, bag drop may take longer, and you may need to provide a certificate of health or proof of vaccination. We will inform you about any information pertinent to your travel arrangements. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at [info@different-travel.com](mailto:info@different-travel.com).

## ATOL

This trip is operated by The Different Travel Company (ATOL 6706). All the international flights in this brochure are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it.

Please see our booking conditions for further information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk).

### Days 1-2 (Saturday 3 October – Sunday 4 October 2026):

#### London – Delhi

Depart London for Delhi on an overnight flight. Upon arrival the next day, transfer to a central hotel and depending on arrival times we may have a sightseeing tour of Delhi before transferring to the railway station for the overnight sleeper train to Pathankot (2nd class air-conditioned).

*Overnight: Sleeper Train*

*Meals: Dinner*

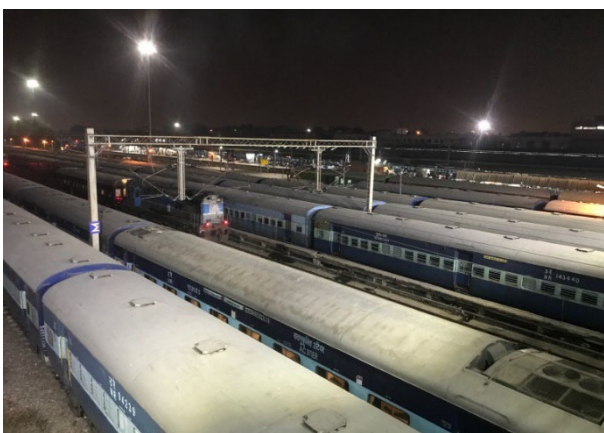
### Day 3 (Monday 5 October 2026):

#### Pathankot – Dharamshala

The train arrives in Pathankot in the morning and from the station, you will transfer by road to Dharamshala (approximately 3 hours), where you will check in at the hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure; and perhaps visit the Dalai Lama Palace and the Tibetan government-in-exile buildings, or simply enjoy the atmosphere and browse for souvenirs in the handicraft stalls before enjoying a Tibetan dinner this evening.

*Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

*Overnight: Hotel*



### Day 4 (Tuesday 6 October 2026):

#### Dharamshala – Salli – Kareri Village

After breakfast we drive for approximately 1.5 hours to our starting point of our trek, Salli. A slow and gradual climb takes us to the top of the hill from where we enjoy fantastic views, before continuing towards Kareri stream. Following the stream this afternoon we arrive at Kareri village where we set up camp for the night in a beautiful and peaceful spot by the river.

*Approx. 6km trekking / 5 hours.*

*Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

*Overnight: Camping*

### Day 5 (Wednesday 7 October 2026):

#### Kareri Village – Bahl

After breakfast, we start today's walk with a relatively steep ascent through several small villages, enjoying fine views of beautiful meadows and dense pine forests along the way. We descend to a mountain stream to stop for lunch before continuing with a sharp ascent to Bahl, and our second campsite.

*Approx. 9km trekking / 6-7 hours.*

*Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

*Overnight: Camping*



### Day 6 (Thursday 8 October 2026):

#### Bahl – Triund

Today is our toughest day of trekking to Triund, the highest point on the trek at 2843m. The day starts with a steep ascent through a mixed forest of oak, rhododendron and cedar trees, stopping at a local chai shop along the way. After lunch, our ascent continues along a winding path until we finally reach Triund, an alpine meadow situated on top of a ridge from where we have amazing views of the peaks of Dhauladhar on one side and the Kangra valley on the other. This is the perfect spot to enjoy the sunset and our final night in the mountains.

*Approx. 12km trekking / 8 hrs.*

*Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

*Overnight: Camping*





**Day 7 (Friday 9 October 2026):**  
**Triund – Mcleodgunj – Pathankot**

After rising early to witness the sun rising over the mighty Dhauladhar mountain range we set off for our final day of trekking. Initially, we have a gradual descent over a grassy ridge for a few kilometres, then a steep descent takes us down to Bhagsu waterfall where we stop to enjoy lunch. A further short walk brings us to Bhagsu village where we end our trek and return to Pathankot to take the overnight train back to Delhi.

*Approx. 6km trekking / 4 hours.*

*Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

*Overnight: Sleeper train*

**Day 8 (Saturday 10 2026):**

On our return to Delhi this morning we will have breakfast before enjoying a city tour. We will check into our hotel for the night and enjoy a celebratory farewell dinner this evening

*Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

*Overnight: Hotel*

**Day 9 (Sunday 11 October 2026):**

**Delhi – London**

Transfer to the airport for your return flight to London. Your flight may arrive in London the next morning depending on schedules.

*Meals: Breakfast*

N.B. This itinerary may change due to unusual weather, the ability of the group and so on. We will do our best to keep to the itinerary, but we cannot be held responsible for changes that occur outside of our control. In all circumstances, your guide and tour leader will have the final say in the interest of the group's health and safety.



## Before You Go!

### Important information to help you prepare for your trip

#### Country tips and practicalities

##### Visas

Visas are required for most visitors to India unless you are an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder. Passport holders who meet the eligibility criteria can apply for an e-Tourist Visa (e-TV). You may apply using the online application system via this link: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>. You must check carefully whether or not you're eligible for an e-TV before you apply. The current cost is currently US\$100 for a 30-day e-Tourist Visa plus an additional bank transaction fee of 2.5%, payable by credit/debit card on the e-TV website.

NB. If you are not a British citizen, or if you are of Pakistani or Sri Lankan origin (or dual British-Pakistan / British-Sri Lankan nationality) there may be different visa requirements, and the processing time can be considerably longer than normal. You should check the advisory notes found on the e-visa website here to find out if you are eligible. The Different Travel Company will provide all participants with the necessary details to support your visa application 8 weeks before departure.

##### Travel insurance

The Different Travel Company will do everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip however unexpected things can occur such as delays, medical problems, baggage loss, cancellation by you etc. The purchase of travel insurance is mandatory; you are advised to organise it at the time of booking to ensure you are covered immediately. Different Travel is an authorised introducer for Campbell Irvine Direct insurance policies. You can find out more here: <http://www.campbellirvine.com/DifferentTravel>

Please note: most travel insurance policies protect you before departure too so it is advised to buy insurance as close to booking as possible as it may protect you against the loss of your non-refundable, non-transferable registration fee if you cancel due to injury, illness etc. Your travel insurance must include: Trekking (at altitudes up to 2875m) and medical evacuation.

##### Phone and Wi-Fi access

Staying in touch is easy from Delhi and Dharamshala. Wi-Fi is available in hotels (although it may be very slow and unreliable). During the trek, mobile phone access will vary depending on your home network, roaming capabilities, contract type and mobile handset. In general, you should have reception for some of the route but there are no charging opportunities. Please ensure you switch off mobile data (internet) to avoid coming home to unexpectedly high bills. You may want to consider purchasing an eSim for use abroad. Different Travel participants can receive 15% off their first purchase with EasySim. See the discount vouchers booklet for more details.

##### Electricity

Mains electricity is 230v/ 50 Hz but is subject to fluctuations and power cuts. Plugs are European 2-pin style and rarely, 3 large gold pin (old UK). There *are no* electric sockets during the trek so if access to electricity during the trek is important to you, you are advised to bring a portable power pack (power bank or battery pack) which when fully charged allows you multiple charges of USB-powered devices such as phones. You should buy a power pack with a minimum capacity of 15,000mAh and these are widely available online.

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## Money

The currency of India is the rupee. At the time of writing, there were 109 rupee to the pound. You will need to bring money for tips (approx. £35-40), drinks and souvenirs; around £150 should suffice depending on how much you wish to buy.

## Accessing cash

There are ATMs in Delhi and Dharamshala you can use to withdraw cash, but your bank may charge you for withdrawals and transactions, or possibly even block your card so please inform them in advance to let them know your travel plans.

If you wish to exchange cash locally you should bring pound Sterling which can be exchanged in at the hotel or on arrival in Delhi at one of the banks or authorised money changers. Insist on a receipt as it will help you reconvert unused rupees into the original foreign currency at the time of departure. All unspent monies can be exchanged during departure at the airport. Small denominations should be purchased for tips etc. Scottish and Channel Islands notes will not be accepted for exchange.

## Tipping

When you arrive at Delhi airport and exit the airport you will be inundated with offers by baggage porters trying to make a living by carrying your bag. You **MUST** tip anyone who carries your bag, pushes the luggage trolley or helps load your bags onto the bus (50 rupees per bag – approx. 50p or US\$0.70). If you are not willing to tip you must not let those people carry your bags or it will cause a lot of upset. British coins will not be accepted and rupees cash from ATMs upon arrival is likely to be in denominations of 500 or more (and the porters won't give change).

US\$1 notes may be useful so you may wish to obtain US\$5 worth of \$1 notes before departure as this will be the case at all transport hubs. In addition to tips for baggage porters in transport hubs and at hotels, tipping your driver and local guides is expected and appreciated (£35-40). Please liaise with your tour manager for information.

## Photocopies

Remember to photocopy all your documents (insurance details, passport, credit/debit cards etc.) and take a copy with you during the trip, stored separately from the original copies. You should also consider leaving a copy with a trusted family member or friend. You may also wish to upload your documents to cloud storage such as Dropbox or Google Drive. If you lose any of your documents, you will then have access to a copy with you and online.

## Photography

When taking photographs of the local people, you must ask their permission. Taking a photograph of someone without their permission can offend. In contrast, taking photographs of someone you have become friendly with is usually very welcome.

## Language

India's official language is Hindi although it is only understood by 30% of the population, predominantly in the north. Efforts have been made to promote Hindi as India's national language, and this has met with opposition in the south of the country. Many educated Indians speak excellent English, and many Indians speak more than one language.

A few Hindi phrases:

Hello:	Namaste	Please:	Kripya
Thank you:	Shukriyaa	Alright/OK:	Acha
Yes:	Jee	Excuse me:	Maaf kjiyeh
No:	Nahin	How much?:	Kitneh paisah?

## Religion

A total of 94% of the world's Hindus live in India and Hinduism is considered as the main religion of the country. There are substantial populations of Muslims (around 15%); Christians (2%) and Sikhs and Buddhists (3%). For most Indians faith is very important.

## Trek knowledge

### Accommodation and campsite facilities

You will stay in basic hotels while in Delhi and Dharamshala on a shared basis (twin or triple rooms) with en-suite facilities, and an overnight train between Delhi and Dharamshala with shared toilets. During the trek, you will stay in tents (two people per tent) at campsites. There will be a dining tent with tables and chairs, cutlery and crockery.

### Hygiene and toilet facilities

Western sit-down toilets are found in hotels, chain restaurants and guesthouses but squat toilets are found everywhere else. Toilet paper is rarely used in India, with water from a tap in the bathroom being used to cleanse instead.

Toilet paper must be disposed of in the bins provided and never flushed down the toilet. Toilet paper is never provided in public toilets so you must bring a supply of your own and carry it with you. During the trek, a pit toilet will be dug in the campsite covered by a 'toilet tent' for privacy.

There are no showers during the trek but there may be snow-melt pools or rivers you are able to bathe in along the way. You will also be provided with a small bowl of water to freshen up in the morning.

You will need to bring your own towel; trek towels are highly absorbent but lightweight and fast drying; do not bring cotton towels. You are requested to use natural or biodegradable soap/shampoo so as not to contaminate the ground or nearby water sources which may be used for irrigation or consumption. You are advised to bring a pack of baby wipes to maintain general hygiene during the trek.

### Altitude

The maximum altitude reached is 2875m. You are unlikely to suffer any effects of the altitude however you may notice a mild headache, some nausea or restless nights but this can be minimised by drinking lots of fluids, eating plenty, going to bed early each night and taking a gentle pace set by the guide. Please read the altitude feature above for more information.

### Time difference and daylight hours

India is 5.5 hours ahead of the UK. At this time of year, there are around 12 hours of daylight with sunrise around 6.30am and sunset at 6.30pm.

## Food and drink

### Water

Tap water in India is not safe to drink or brush your teeth with. This includes the tap water at the hotel. Never drink, brush your teeth or rinse your mouth with tap water **only use bottled or purified water**. Avoid getting water in your mouth when showering.

You should bring a supply of water purification for the trip; a highly recommended purification is 'Biox Aqua' tablets which contain chlorine dioxide. Please allow the correct designated purification time to pass before adding flavouring or electrolytes to your water. By purifying water where possible, you will also use fewer plastic bottles which will eventually end up in landfills.



## Keeping hydrated

During the trek, you will need to drink at least 3 litres of water per day to stay hydrated, *plus* any soups or hot drinks served. Electrolyte tablets (e.g. Nuun, High5, PowerBar etc.) are flavoured effervescent tablets which contain salts and minerals which are naturally lost from your body when you sweat. Adding these tablets to your water, not only offers flavour to your water, but it can help prevent dehydration before it begins. Electrolyte tablets are widely available in outdoor stores and online for around £8 for 12 tablets. You may also wish to bring a small supply of rehydration salts (e.g. Dioralyte) which treat dehydration.

## Water bottle

You will need to bring your bottles to carry at least three litres of water per day. Some people will bring a 2-3 litre CamelBak hydration system (for effortless access to water while you trek) plus one 1-litre water bottle (e.g. plastic Nalgene or metal Sigg bottle). Some people prefer to bring three 1-litre bottles. The choice is yours. If you're bringing a CamelBak hydration system, a separate 1-litre bottle is essential as it can be used as a backup if your hydration system fails. **Please write your name on all your bottles in marker pen.** Please note that 'own brand' and cheap hydration systems are notorious for splitting, leaking or valves not functioning properly. CamelBak and Platypus are the leaders in this market because their products are significantly better quality and more reliable.

## Dietary requirements

The majority of special diets, such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, etc., can be catered for if we are notified in advance. Please ensure that you notify us of any dietary requirements at the time of booking or as soon as possible. Please note that we cannot guarantee that food preparation will take place in a contamination-free environment.

## Food

During your visit to India, you will try a variety of Indian cuisine at local restaurants and prepared for you by your own cooks during the trek. There are considerable regional variations amongst food in India, due partly to historical influences and partly to climatic conditions. Beef is taboo as cattle are considered sacred. All meals are included per the itinerary.

## Snacks

You may wish to bring a selection of snacks for energy, a pick-me-up or a little taste of home. Please bring snacks you have tried before (and enjoy!) so they are appetising to you. Items such as sweets, individually wrapped cake bars, protein bars and dried fruit are ideal but don't forget to bring savoury treats also such as salted nuts, Cheddar biscuits or salted crackers.

## Kit tips

## Discount

When you book you will receive a discount vouchers booklet. Please check the documents section of your online profile.

## Footwear

You should bring lightweight, breathable trekking boots with good ankle support and a high-quality flexible sole such as Vibram; walking trainers are unsuitable. If you are buying a new pair of boots, please try on lots of pairs before you buy; don't buy online unless you've tried them on first. Please ensure you buy new boots well in advance of departure, so you have time to break them in properly.

You are strongly advised to wear your boots on the plane (or take in your hand baggage) in case there are any problems or delays with your luggage. Comfortable boots are the most difficult item to replace at short notice.

For the project bring a pair of comfortable trainers that you don't mind getting dirty!

## Clothing

You are recommended to invest in trekking gear which can be worn in layers (base layer, warm layer, shell layer) which can be added and removed easily to manage your temperature and the climate. Your clothes should be made of technical fabrics designed to wick sweat away from your body which keeps clothes dry and smelling fresh. Merino wool, nylon, polyester, polypropylene and bamboo fabrics are all effective technical fabrics. Cotton clothes absorb sweat, stay damp and can lead to chafing, and discomfort (and also get smelly fast). Technical items can be worn for days without smelling meaning you don't need to buy, or pack, as many items of clothing.

Sports, gym or running clothes are usually non-cotton so check what you have already before you go shopping. If you select the right garments, you can comfortably wear these for the entire trek. Remember it gets cold at night and in the mornings so please bring warm layers (e.g. fleece, hoody, insulated jacket) and a hat. Good quality Gore-Tex waterproofs are important just in case there are showers. Most people will trek in the same outfit for the duration of the trip and have one or two spares in their kit bag.

## Clothing for the project and in cities

For the project, you should bring old clothes that you don't mind getting dirty or paint stains on. You should also bring a pair of protective gloves, such as gardening gloves.

India is a conservative place so women should avoid wearing shorts (unless they are knee-length), mini-skirts or other revealing outfits to avoid unwanted attention and comments. Women are advised to wear long skirts or trousers, loose t-shirts or kaftans or tops teamed with a pashmina that is worn over the shoulders. You may wish to buy a sari or salwar kameez, a local outfit, which will make a great souvenir. Men should dress in a smart casual manner such as in lightweight trousers, long shorts and shirts or smart t-shirts. T-shirts must not have any obscene, offensive, suggestive or potentially insulting writing or logos.

## Top clothing tips!

A loose-fitting, non-cotton long-sleeved shirt will keep you cool better than a short-sleeved t-shirt as technically covering your skin keeps you in the shade. It also helps prevent sunburn. A long-sleeved shirt also offers the flexibility to roll sleeves up and down as required. A t-shirt is also fine, but you must be vigilant about applying sunscreen. Shoulders must be covered if you pass through any desert villages. Lightweight non-cotton zip-off/convertible trek trousers are also ideal for the same reason as bringing a non-cotton shirt in that it keeps your skin in the shade; however, sports leggings and shorts are fine too.

## Socks

The socks you choose must be high quality, non-cotton and will not slip down in your boots which causes blisters. Never wear cotton socks which absorb sweat making them damp and more likely to rub against your feet, causing blisters. Socks containing Coolmax (a brand of polyester) or nylon have wicking properties which means that they pull sweat away from the skin for it to evaporate. Good brands to consider include Bridgedale, Smartwool and Brasher.

## Headwear

A hat with a wide brim is recommended and/or a Buff (see <https://www.buff.com/>).

## Head torch

This is a vital piece of kit. Petzl is one brand which makes good quality headlamps but there are many head torches available from other companies. Please ensure you take an LED torch as the ones with bulbs are not bright enough. Bring your head torch with fresh batteries inside it and take a full set of spare batteries. Do not bring a wind-up head torch as these are unreliable. Keep your headtorch in your backpack every day.

## Cobber neck cooling wrap

A highly recommended accessory for the trek is a body-cooling neck wrap known as a 'Cobber'. You wear it around your neck, and it cools the blood flowing through your carotid arteries and keeps your body temperature down. One 30-minute submersion in water keeps the crystals cool and moist for 3 days before they start to dry out. They can be purchased for less than £10 from eBay or Amazon.



## Hiking poles

Hiking poles can be very useful on ascents and descents, particularly when carrying a heavy pack on uneven terrain. Poles are also very useful for stability. They are not mandatory but are recommended. You should use them on your training walks to familiarise yourself with how to use them. If you bring hiking poles they must fit inside your suitcase/kitbag for the international flight.

## Sunglasses

These are important even on overcast days. They must offer a minimum of 100% UV protection, and polarized sunglasses are ideal. Taking a spare pair is recommended.

## Sleeping bag

The expected nighttime temperature is approx. 0°C so you need to bring a sleeping bag with a 'comfort' rating of 0°C or lower, not an 'extreme' rating of 0°C. There is a critical difference between the two ratings, as outlined here:

- Comfort – the temperature at which you can expect to sleep comfortably in a relaxed position.
- Extreme – the minimum temperature at which you can remain for six hours without risk of death from hypothermia.

### Some sleeping bags with a comfort of 0°C or warmer:

Snugpak 'The Sleeping Bag' (comfort -2°C, £34.95);  
Snugpak Tactical 2 (comfort 0°C, £129.95);  
Snugpak Softie 6 Twilight (comfort 0°C £114.95);  
Snugpak Travelpak 3 (comfort -3°C, £54.95);  
Snugpak 'The Navigator' (comfort -2°C, £34.95);  
and many more.

Ayacucho Sirius 200 (comfort 0°C £80);  
Women's Starlight II (comfort -2°C £100)  
Mountain Hardwear Lamina20 (comfort -2°C £135);

## Sleeping bag liner

You should bring a sleeping bag liner to use in combination with your sleeping bag, to keep it clean and to have the option to unzip your sleeping bag but stay covered if the conditions are warmer than expected. Silk sleeping bag liners are quite expensive if purchased on the high street, so consider eBay where you can purchase directly from the manufacturers (usually Vietnam or China) at a fraction of the price. Make sure you search for 'pure silk' sleeping bag liners, not 'satin' (which is usually low quality and synthetic).

## Sleeping mat

You will be provided with a sleeping mat, but you may wish to bring your own for comfort. Inflatable mats such as Thermarest style mats are a good option and are more comfortable than standard foam roll mats.

## Luggage

This trip is different to a standard holiday so you will need the following luggage items:

### 1. A small daypack

You are responsible for carrying your daypack containing essentials for each day. We recommend you bring a 25-litre rucksack which **must** have a hip belt and a chest strap. High-quality brands to consider when looking for a suitable pack include Osprey, Berghaus and Lowe Alpine (amongst others) and you are strongly advised to visit a reputable store like Cotswold to have your backpack fitted, as they come in a variety of sizes, and some brands offer male and female specific fits.

You can expect to carry your first aid kit, sun cream, three litres of water, snacks, toilet paper, wet wipes and camera. It could weigh 6-8kg when packed, so you should make your backpack selection carefully and ensure it fits correctly and is comfortable. You will not have access to your main pack while trekking.

## 2. A kit bag/holdall

You will need a soft-sided kit bag to hold your trek-specific items such as your sleeping bag, change of clothes, toiletries and so on. This kitbag will be carried by the camels and must weigh no more than 8kg. This can be a holdall, duffle bag or large rucksack and it doesn't matter what size it is as long as all your kit fits inside (60 litres is enough for most people). A suitcase or holdall with wheels is not suitable. If you wish you can use this bag to hold your checked luggage for the flights; just ensure you bring a small separate bag you can store items in not required for the trek at the hotel while you're trekking.

## 3. A suitcase (optional)

For the flights, you may be more comfortable packing all your items (including your empty trek kit bag) into a suitcase. This is entirely your choice. If you bring a suitcase, it will be stored at the hotel along with anything not required for the trek (e.g. toiletries, travel clothes, books etc.).

**4. A lightweight dry bag or rucksack liner (optional)** to keep the contents of your daypack dry is an optional but recommended accessory (e.g. Exped dry bags). Rucksack waterproof covers tend to fly off in the wind or leave areas of your rucksack exposed to the elements so water soaks through.

**5. Combination padlocks** to secure your luggage.

## Responsible travel

### Culture shock

India is incredibly diverse and is different to other countries around the world. Many visitors are surprised when their first visit is not only the exotic glamour of palaces and maharajahs, but also poverty and apparent chaos. It is very different to countries in Europe so you may experience a little culture shock. Take your time, ask questions to your guide, and keep an open mind.

A few things to consider:

- Many local people will unabashedly stare at foreign tourists. As a group of travellers, we may attract a lot of attention.
- Indian streets, markets, and bazaars are packed with people, vehicles and animals (particularly cows, which are sacred), and streets tend to be narrow.
- Dirt, garbage and insects proliferate in the cities. Roadsides and fields are often used as public lavatories. Exhaust fumes combined with dust can make the drier seasons a nightmare for asthma sufferers. The sewer systems can be primitive and when the temperature rises, the smell can be very strong.
- Expect it to be noisy. Particularly in the cities! Drivers lean on horns, radios and TVs blare, even temples, mosques and churches use loudspeakers to spread their message.
- Regardless of your beliefs you should show respect inside places of worship and at religious monuments. Always remove your shoes at the entrance of any holy shrine. Please note some monasteries do not permit women to enter between sunset and sunrise; cigarettes, alcohol and non-vegetarian foods are strictly prohibited in monasteries, and you must not enter places of worship in sleeveless shirts or shorts.
- It is not unusual to see men holding hands with other men, or with their arms around each other's waists. This is a display of sincere friendship however Western men holding hands may be considered a display of homosexuality. See Relationships & LGBT+ section below.
- Indian women are very reserved so men should be cautious about approaching an Indian woman (even for asking directions). Female visitors may feel more comfortable communicating with Indian women. Indian men may be very keen to interact with foreign men and women, but women, please be aware that friendly conversation with Indian men can be considered a flirtation and eye contact with men is also considered as a sexual invitation. Wear sunglasses and/or avoid eye contact to reduce unwanted attention.
- Incidences of petty theft such as pick-pocketing and bag snatching can occur in larger cities and tourist areas so common-sense precautions apply (no flashy jewellery, keep wallets out of sight, don't leave bags unattended etc.).



## Relationships & LGBT+

Attitudes towards the LGBT+ community around the world can be very different from those in the UK. In India, homosexual acts are not explicitly prohibited by law, a third gender (hijras) are recognised in some states and the LGBT+ community are afforded greater protections than in many other Asian countries. However public attitudes can be less tolerant than in the UK. You should respect local traditions, customs, laws and religions to ensure your actions do not offend.

As such we would advise couples, regardless of sexual orientation, to avoid public displays of affection. For further advice from the FCDO [click here](#).

## Begging

It is important not to underestimate the psychological impact of seeing poverty and the sense of helplessness and guilt that often comes from it.

Begging is common in India and foreigners can be magnets for touts and beggars, especially malnourished children and badly deformed people.

As part of our responsible tourism policy, we advise strongly against giving directly to beggars or offering gifts to children. Gift-giving can lead to individuals pestering other travellers as they believe begging is more profitable than searching for work or attending school.

Take note of people who may approach you offering to have your photo taken with them, and once you have taken the photo, they will insist on payment. Similarly, be cautious when purchasing items from street vendors who approach you.

## Haggling

There are many excellent handicrafts including brassware, terracotta, carved furniture, papier-mâché, textiles, carpets etc. These are available at shops and stalls near tourist spots. Remember to haggle! In Dharamshala you will also find Tibetan handicrafts for sale, and this may be the best place to buy your souvenirs as you can leave them at the hotel while you're trekking and take them back to Delhi with you on the train. When shopping for gifts in marketplaces where there are no price tags on items it is expected that you will haggle. The first price is often double (or more) the value of the item but remember that you should engage with the vendor to encourage rapport before haggling then only pay what you think is a good price for the item, not trying to get the lowest price possible.

## Environment

The wonderful environment of the Himalaya is also a fragile one. We are extremely environmentally conscious and aim to minimise our impact. Please take steps to protect your environment including (but not limited to) the following tips:

- Never attempt to touch or feed any animals you encounter.
- Never leave toilet paper or litter on the trail.
- Don't dispose of fruit peel, cores or seeds on the ground; although they decompose eventually, they are unsightly and may attract animals.
- You are trekking in a fragile ecosystem. Do not destroy or pick plants.
- Pick up any litter you see.
- Minimise your water usage by having short showers.
- Use biodegradable toiletries.
- Turn off lights when not in rooms.

## Etiquette

- Always endeavour to be polite and respectful. If you show respect, then it will be reciprocated.
- Keep noise to a minimum, while trekking but also especially early in the morning and late at night when staying at hotels and guesthouses.

- Be respectful to your guides and hosts; don't forget to say please and thank you.
- Be considerate of the feelings of other group members.
- When taking photographs of the local people, it would be wisest to ask their permission. Taking a photograph of someone without their permission, especially in rural areas, can offend. Older people, particularly ladies prefer not to be photographed but in contrast, young children are often very keen to be photographed.

### Animal welfare

Travelling to different countries is an incredible and memorable experience however on occasions animals are taken from their natural habitats and used for entertainment while being subjected to cruelty. The Different Travel Company does not condone any form of animal cruelty or exploitation, and we ask that you make educated and positive choices when travelling to avoid being part of exploitation, even unknowingly. Please consider visiting the World Animal Protection website for advice on how to travel responsibly:

<https://www.worldanimalprotection.org.uk>

## Fitness, health and safety

### Fitness training

You must arrive in India fit and prepared for this challenge. You should start a training programme at least 9 months before your departure including hill walking while carrying a heavy backpack, general cardio workouts, and exercise to strengthen your legs and core. If you are unfit at the time of booking you should consider starting training 12 months before departure. By the time of departure, you should feel confident in your ability to walk up and down steep gradients for many hours per day on consecutive days.

It is recommended that you train wearing the same boots and rucksack that you will be trekking with. If you're not a regular walker, start slowly with short distances then as you get more comfortable, increase your mileage and add in more challenging terrain until you can comfortably walk for several consecutive days, for around 8 hours at a time, on hilly terrain while maintaining a comfortable pace without needing to stop more than frequently than once an hour for a 5-minute rest.

Other activities which can complement hill walking include running, cycling, gym workouts and boot camps etc. Developing your core and leg muscle strength is also important so exercises such as squats, lunges, push-ups, planks and crunches will really enhance your training. These exercises can be done at home; no gym is needed. You can download a number of free apps, which will help you train and track your progress. E.g. MapMyWalk, C25K (couch to 5k run), MyFitnessPal.

Please note that attempting to complete the trek without any training may make the experience unnecessarily difficult and hinder your experience, and also the experience of your teammates. The Different Travel Company has the right to refuse anyone who they feel is not fit enough for the challenge for the health and safety of the individual, and the group. You can download several free apps to help you train and track your progress.

### Vaccinations and travel health

Different Travel regrets that we cannot provide medical advice or recommendations. You are advised to seek medical advice at least 8 weeks before travelling to ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up to date. For general information visit [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) or [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk) but your GP or travel health professional should be the first stop for a consultation tailored to your medical history. Please note that failure to be adequately vaccinated or take necessary prophylactic medication can invalidate travel insurance policies as it is considered that you have not taken necessary precautions.

### First aid kit

You should bring a small first aid kit of essential items which is for your own personal use and keep it in your backpack. Suggested items to include: personal prescription medicine, Compeed blister plasters, painkillers, plasters, antiseptic wipes, anti-histamine tablets, indigestion remedy, Imodium (Loperamide), rehydration sachets, lip balm with SPF, antiseptic cream, zinc oxide tape etc. Please keep the contents to a minimum as you have to carry it yourself.

### Insect repellent

There are many mosquitoes in India, particularly in Delhi, so it is essential that you use repellent day and night. **50% DEET** is the most effective repellent available for use on your skin. Never use 100% DEET on your skin as it is not designed to be used this way.

### Malaria

While there are many biting insects in India, the areas where you will be travelling are considered to have a low or no risk for malaria and antimalarials are not usually advised. For more information visit <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/malaria>.

### Emergencies and evacuations

In the unlikely event of a serious illness or accident, the local team will ensure you are transferred as swiftly as possible to the nearest hospital. Please ensure your travel insurance covers you for airlifting/emergency evacuations as this can be required to reach casualties on more remote trails in an emergency. You are recommended to bring a credit card during the trip if you need to pay for medical treatment upfront in the event of an emergency.

### Safety

Please take common-sense precautions while travelling to ensure your safety and the protection of your belongings. For example: leave flashy jewellery, watches and accessories at home; keep wallets out of sight stowed in a handbag or backpack rather than sticking out of a pocket; don't leave bags unattended at any time; carry cameras in their cases rather than carrying them openly with the camera strap; split cash into different pockets rather than carrying all your money in one place, especially immediately after you have used the ATM; and so on.

### Zinc Oxide tape

This tape is useful to prevent blisters. When you feel your boots start to rub against your feet, you should stop and remove any debris from your boots and check your feet. If a hot spot is developing (a red, sore area without broken skin) you can apply zinc oxide tape to the area, and it will stop (or slow down) a blister developing. If you are too late to prevent the blister, then you should clean the area and apply a Compeed blister plaster instead.

*Last updated March 2025*