

NORTHERN INDIA PILGRIMAGE TOUR 2019

Detailed Itinerary

07/09/2019: Day 01: Arrive Delhi

Assistance upon arrival at Delhi airport, and transfer to the hotel. Overnight at the hotel.

08/09/2019: Day 02: Delhi – Leh

After breakfast transfer to the domestic airport for your flight to Leh. Upon arrival at Leh airport our representative will assist, and transfer you to your hotel.

It is important for one to rest on this day to get properly acclimatized. In the evening you can take a walk in the nearby town. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

09/09/2019: Day 03: Leh

Today after breakfast full day tour of places in and around Leh, covering Hemis Monastery, Thiksey Monastery, summer place of Shey, Sindhu Ghat and Shanti Stupa. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

OPTIONAL WHILE AT LEH:

10/09/2019: Day 04: Leh – Nubra Valley (161 kms/5-6 hrs)

After breakfast drive to Nubra Valley via Khardoung la Pass (5,353m) which is the world's highest motorable road. You will visit the famous sandunes in Nubra valley. Here one can take a ride on a double humped camel.

Note: The charm of visiting Nubra Valley is you will be driving through the world's highest motorable road to get there. The road ends at Nubra valley and you are driving above 3500m hence the expression "to the end of the road in the sky".

Check in at the hotel, dinner and overnight at the hotel.

11/09/2019: Day 05: Nubra Valley – Leh

After breakfast you will drive back to Leh. En-route visit Diskit Monastery of Geleg sect, the oldest and largest monastery in Nubra valley. Upon arrival at Leh, check in at the hotel. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

12/09/2019: Day 06: Leh – Lamayuru (115/2.5 hrs -3 hrs)

Today after breakfast drive to Lamayuru. En-route visit Likir Monastery and the old Castle of Basgo. Upon arrival in Lamayuru check in at the hotel, dinner and overnight at the hotel.

13/09/2019: Day 07: Lamayuru – Leh

After breakfast visit Lamayuru Monastery and further drive to Leh. Upon arrival check in at the hotel. Rest of the late afternoon and evening at leisure. Opportunity for souvenir shopping. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

14/09/2019: Day 08: Leh – Delhi – Varanasi

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight to Delhi. Our representative will provide assistance on arrival. Visit the National Museum to see Buddha's relics. Time permitting can visit nearby places like India gate, Humayun's tomb (Taj Mahal is copied from this monument). Evening transfer to the airport for your flight to Varanasi. Assistance upon arrival at Varanasi airport, and transfer to the hotel. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

15/09/2019: Day 09: Varanasi

Early morning boat ride on the Ganges to see the sunrise, and witness the life by the Ghats in the early hours of the day.

Return back to the hotel for breakfast, and drive to Sarnath.

Sarnath is where Buddha taught for the first time. The teaching spot is marked by Dhamekh Stupa, a massive cylindrical building of 43.6m tall.

Also visit the famous Sarnath Museum which houses the famous Lion Capital of Ashoka which is also India's national emblem. The sacred and the famous statue of Buddha in teaching pose is also located at the museum.

Evening to the Ghats to see the "arti"- synchronized elaborate evening prayers being performed to the river Goddess Ganga by the Hindu Pandits.

Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

16/09/2019: Day 10: Varanasi -Bodhgaya (by road -250kms/6 hrs)

After breakfast depart for Bodhgaya. Upon arrival check in at the hotel. Rest of the time at leisure, dinner and overnight at the hotel.

17/09/2019: Day 11: Bodhgaya

Leisure or visit [Mahabodi Temple](#) (where Buddha attained enlightenment), depending on arrival time.

18/09/2019: Day 12: Bodhgaya

Optional: After breakfast drive to Mahakala cave (45 mins drive one way, and 20-30 mins walk to the cave). On return visit Sujata village and lodru kawa.

Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

19/09/2019: Day 13: Bodhgaya

Today after breakfast you can visit the nearby monasteries, preferably Bhutan Temple, Thai Temple, Japanese temple, China Temple and Shechen Monastery (Optional)

While in Bodhgaya, you can also light butter lamps at the main Mahabodhi temple, at Shechen Monastery and at Bhutan Temple. Costs per lamp are in rupees @ 2.5 , 4 & 5 at Mahabodhi temple, Bhutan Temple and at Shechen Monastery respectively.

Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

20/09/2019: Day 14: Bodhgaya - Rajgir (78 kms & 2 hrs)

In Rajgir, on Vulture's peak Buddha spent many rainy seasons. Diamond Sutra and Heart Sutra were taught at this place.

In Rajgir, visit Venu Vana, the Bamboo grove gifted to Buddha by King Bimbisara. It is said this place was one of his favourites during his stay there. This place was probably one of the first properties owned by the Buddha and his Sangha. Other places to visit from that era are Ajatshatru Fort and Bimbisara Jail which are in ruins.

From recent times there is the world's tallest peace pagoda (Vishwa Shanti Stupa) built by the Nipponzan Myohoji sect of Japanese Buddhism in 1969 (Optional).

Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

21/09/2019: Day 15: Rajgir – Patna (105 kms) – NJP (Train)

After breakfast depart for Patna. En-route, visit the ruins of Nalanda University where the great teachers like Nargarjuna, Shantideva, Asanga, Shilabhadra, Dharmapala (just to name a few), studied and later taught there.

Also visit Huien Tsang's memorial hall at Nalanda. Huien Tsang was the famous Chinese pilgrim who visited India in the mid seventh century. He studied in Nalanda for 6 years.

At Patna stop for early dinner, and drive to Patna Railway station to catch your train to New Jalpaiguri (NJP). Overnight in the train (North East Exp dep at 2117 hrs)

22/09/2019: Day 16: NJP – Darjeeling (72 kms)

Arrive NJP at 0830 hrs. Drive to Darjeeling. Upon arrival check in the hotel. Rest of the time at leisure. Dinner and overnight at the hotel

23/09/2019: Day 17: Darjeeling

Today drive to Tiger hill in the early hours to see the sun rise view of Mt Everest and Mt Kangchenjunga, world's highest and the 3rd highest peaks. Return back to the hotel for breakfast. After breakfast take a joy ride on the famous Darjeeling 'toy' train to Ghoom, and visit Sakya Ghoom Monastery, Bhutia Busty Monastery, Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Tibetan Refugee Self Center. If you don't want to take the toy train you can always drive to these places (Options).

Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

24/09/2019: Day 18: Darjeeling – Gangtok (98 kms-4 hrs)

After breakfast depart for Gangtok, capital of Sikkim known as the land of Orchids.

Upon arrival check in at the hotel. Rest of the time at leisure and one can stroll in the town. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

25/09/2019: Day 19: Gangtok

After breakfast start full day city tour covering Ganesh Tok, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (world's largest treasury of invaluable old Tibetan books & manuscripts on Buddhist philosophy and religion), Enchey Monastery, Do Drul Chorten, Tsuk La Khang

Monastery and Deorali Orchid Sanctuary which houses over 400 orchid species. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

26/09/2019: Day 20: Gangtok (Excursion to Rumtek Monastery)

Today after breakfast full day excursion to Rumtek Monastery (Seat of the late 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, 23 kms one way). Evening return back to the Gangtok for dinner and overnight at the hotel.

27/09/2019: Day 21: Gangtok – Pelling (117 kms, 4 hrs)

After breakfast drive to Pelling. Upon arrival check in at the hotel. Rest of the time at leisure. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

28/09/2019: Day 22: Pelling - local

Today after breakfast visit Sangachoeling Monastery, Pemayangtse Monastery, the wish-fulfilling Khecheopalri Lake, and Rabdentse Ruins (the second capital of Sikkim now in ruins). Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

***Pemayangtse Monastery** (wild sublime lotus). It is the oldest Nyingma Monastery in Sikkim, and was patronized by the Royal Family. A visit on the top floor to see zanthong pheri, a replica of Heaven built in wood, is a must.*

Khecheopalri Lake is a sacred lake and a pilgrimage centre for all faiths and is about 2 hours drive from Pelling. It is also known as the wish fulfilling lake.

29/09/2019: Day 23: Pelling-Tashiding (36 kms, 1.5 -2 hrs)

Today after breakfast drive to Tashiding Monastery.

Enroute visit the sacred Lho Khandro Sang Pho cave at legship by river rangit where Guru Rinpoche stayed in meditation. You can also take a dip in the divine sulphurous hot springs near by the cave.

Time permitting visit Yuksum (19 kms northwest of Tashiding).

***Yuksom** literally means the “meeting place of the three learned monks” as three monks who came from Tibet around mid-17th century selected Phuntsog Namgyal as the first King of Sikkim and gave him the title Chogyal (“Religious King” or “the king who rules with righteousness”)*

Tashiding Monastery situated at about 1465 metres, was founded in 1641 AD by Ngadak Sempa Chempo Phunshok Rigzing, one of the three wise men who held the crowning ceremony of the first King of Sikkim at Yuksom. Tashiding Monastery is held in very high reverence. Legend has it that even a casual glimpse of this monastery can cleanse a person of all his sins and shortcomings. The annual Bumchu festival is celebrated here with people coming from all parts of the world. Tashiding is a place where travellers longing for a spiritual connection would feel at home. The whole region of Tashiding is covered in forests and short treks around this region would lead you to numerous caves, monasteries, waterfalls and the sight of the mighty Himalayas.

30/09/2019: Day 24: Pelling - Kalimpong (85 kms-3 hrs)

After breakfast drive to Kalimpong. Upon arrival check in at the hotel.

After lunch visit Jang Dog Palrifo Brang Gompa (Durpin Monastery) built under the guidance of HH Dalai Lama, and Tharpa Choeling Gompa. Or Visit the colonial-era buildings like MacFarlane Memorial Church, named after a Scottish missionary. Time permitting drive to Deolo Hills, the highest point of the town. Deolo Park has landscaped gardens and offers views of the town and surrounding hills.

Dinner and overnight at Hotel.

01/10/2019: Day 25: Kalimpong – Bagdogra (78 kms-3 hrs) – Delhi

After breakfast drive to Bagdogra airport to catch your afternoon flight to Delhi.

Dinner and overnight at Hotel.

02/10/2019: Day 25: Delhi – Home

After breakfast drive to Delhi airport to catch your flight home.

