

World **BIG CAT** *Safaris*



World Big Cat Safaris presents a Pioneering Trip to Track the Snow Leopards of Ladakh, India

February 2010.

A once in a lifetime chance to join the experts in finding the elusive snow leopards of Ladakh.

This small group safari joins Dr Yash Veer Bhatnagar and our local guides in searching for the snow leopards of the beautiful Ladakh region. Every attempt will be made to track this elusive predator but time will also be spent meeting the local people as we stay in village homes, taste some of the local cuisine, and admire the local cultures, traditions and religions. We also visit the mountainous monasteries and crumbling palaces of Ladakh. Other wildlife that we hope to see includes, Golden Eagles, Argali, Blue Sheep and Red Fox.

A fantastic educational safari that supports the local communities of Ladakh and critically endangered snow leopards through [The Snow Leopard Trust](#).



Itinerary February 2010

15 Feb

Met upon arrival into Delhi and transfer to your hotel for a chance to relax after your flight and prior to the adventures of the next couple of weeks.

Overnight: The Imperial—Heritage Room; beautiful ensuite rooms with King-sized beds

16 Feb

An early start to catch the 0600hrs flight north to Leh. You have the day at leisure to acclimatise and this evening you meet your team of guides, porters and specialists who will be accompanying you for the next couple of weeks.

Overnight: Grand Dragon-comfortable ensuite rooms with views of the surrounding region (B/L/D)

17 Feb

Today we start our adventure. With a short drive (approx 2hrs) to Zingchen, we start our trek with a 2hr walk to Husing where camp will be set up for the first night. Husing will be our base camp for the next 5 nights as we explore this region in search of the elusive snow leopard. Husing is widely known as the "snow leopard capital" as it is at the intersection of three prominent valleys where snow leopards pass.

Overnight: Tented Camp at 3500-3800 meters (B/L/D)

18, 19, 20, 21 Feb

Over the course of the next few days we will explore the Husing region in search of the snow leopard. Your local expert will illustrate the various signs to look out for such as pug marks, scat (dung), scrapes and rock face rubbings as signs of the presence of snow leopards. The guides and local experts will work closely with the local villagers as to the most recent sightings and will use certain vantage points to maximise the possibility of sightings.

Overnight: Tented Camp (B/L/D)

22 Feb

Today we break camp and head to the upper Rumbak Valley where we will stay at local village houses (approx 1hr trek). The rooms are clean and comfortable, lit by candles or solar light and furnished in the traditional Ladakhi style. We now move our search efforts to this region in order to cover as much ground as possible. At a slightly higher altitude, this region offers us glimpses into the higher ridgelines where snow leopards regularly hunt.

Overnight: Village Home Stay 4000-4200 meters (B/L/D)

23 Feb

Today we make our way to the higher ridges where we have panoramic views of the Phyang Village. In this region we can also hope to see Baral (Blue Sheep), Red Fox, Golden Eagle and Tibetan Magpie. This afternoon we return to our village houses at Rumbak Doh.

Overnight: Village Home Stay 4000-4200 meters (B/L/D)

24, 25 Feb

Over these two days we have the chance to follow the trails towards Ganda La and the remote village of Yurutse; a great opportunity to broaden our search area and also catch sight of the Argali, a magnificent wild sheep whose males grow huge horns.

Overnight: Village Home Stay 4,000-4,200 meters (B/L/D)



26 Feb

This morning we start our return journey home with a 3.5hr trek from Rumbak Doh to Zinchen. Met here by our vehicles we drive back approximately 2hrs to Leh where we have a chance to relax and reminisce on the adventures of the last few days and hopefully some snow leopard sightings!

Overnight: The Grand Dragon (B/L/D)

27 Feb

Today we have a chance to explore the variety of monasteries in this region including Shey, Thikse and Hemis and also Stok Palace. Firstly we visit Shey Palace and Monastery; the adjacent Palace and Fort are in ruins but the monastery is still in use to this day. Inside is a 39 foot statue made of gilded copper of the Sakyamuni Buddha. We will then visit Hemis Monastery (the largest and richest in Ladakh) and cross the Indus River to Stok Palace.

Overnight: The Grand Dragon (B/L/D)

28 Feb

This morning we have an early start for our internal flight departure at 0735hrs to Delhi. Spectacular views of the Zaskar Range and also the famous peak of K2! Met upon arrival into Delhi you have a short transfer to the hotel prior to your international flight departure tomorrow.

Overnight: Radisson Hotel—Superior Rooms (B)

1 March

This morning you have a transfer to your hotel in time for your international flight back home. Rooms are available until 1200hrs (B)

APPROXIMATE COST

Per Person Sharing: £2,950

Single Supplement: £650

Includes: accommodation and meals as stated, internal flights (Delhi—Leh—Delhi), transfers, porters & ponies to carry baggage, park and monument fees as per the itinerary, expert guide Dr. Yash Bhatnagar, local guides, insulated mattresses and sleeping bags

Excludes: tips, international flights, visas, personal expenses, items of a personal nature, travel insurance, drinks, laundry



NOTES:

- Clients will need to be of a reasonable fitness in order to maximise their benefit from this pioneering trip to track the Snow Leopards of Ladakh
- It is essential that time is spent acclimatising to the altitude at the start of the trip. Altitude sickness is a serious issue and clients must listen to the advice of the local expert guides at all times
- Please note that this is a fluid itinerary. Amendments may be made during the trip in order to maximise chances of seeing the Snow Leopard. This may mean that on nights when Village House Stays are allocated and a Snow Leopard is sighted in a different region the Village House stay could be replaced with a basic camping night instead (and vice-versa!)
- Maximum of 9 clients per trip ensuring an educational and personal experience
- Accommodation is in a combination of dome tents and local home stays ensuring we contribute to the local communities. Camp will consist of dome tents (see image), pit toilets, kitchen tents and a simple dining tent
- Breathtaking scenery as you explore this stunning mountainous region of Northern India
- The group will be accompanied by Dr. Yash Veer Bhatnagar who is a Director of The Snow Leopard Trust and is a leading figure in the conservation of snow leopards. Local guides will also be on hand for their local expertise and knowledge
- Temperatures will be very cold (can drop to -35°C); however this is the best time to see the wildlife of this region as it descends from the high peaks of the surrounding mountains in search of prey
- Internal flights are subject to surcharge increases

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Snow Leopard Images Courtesy of Andy Rouse