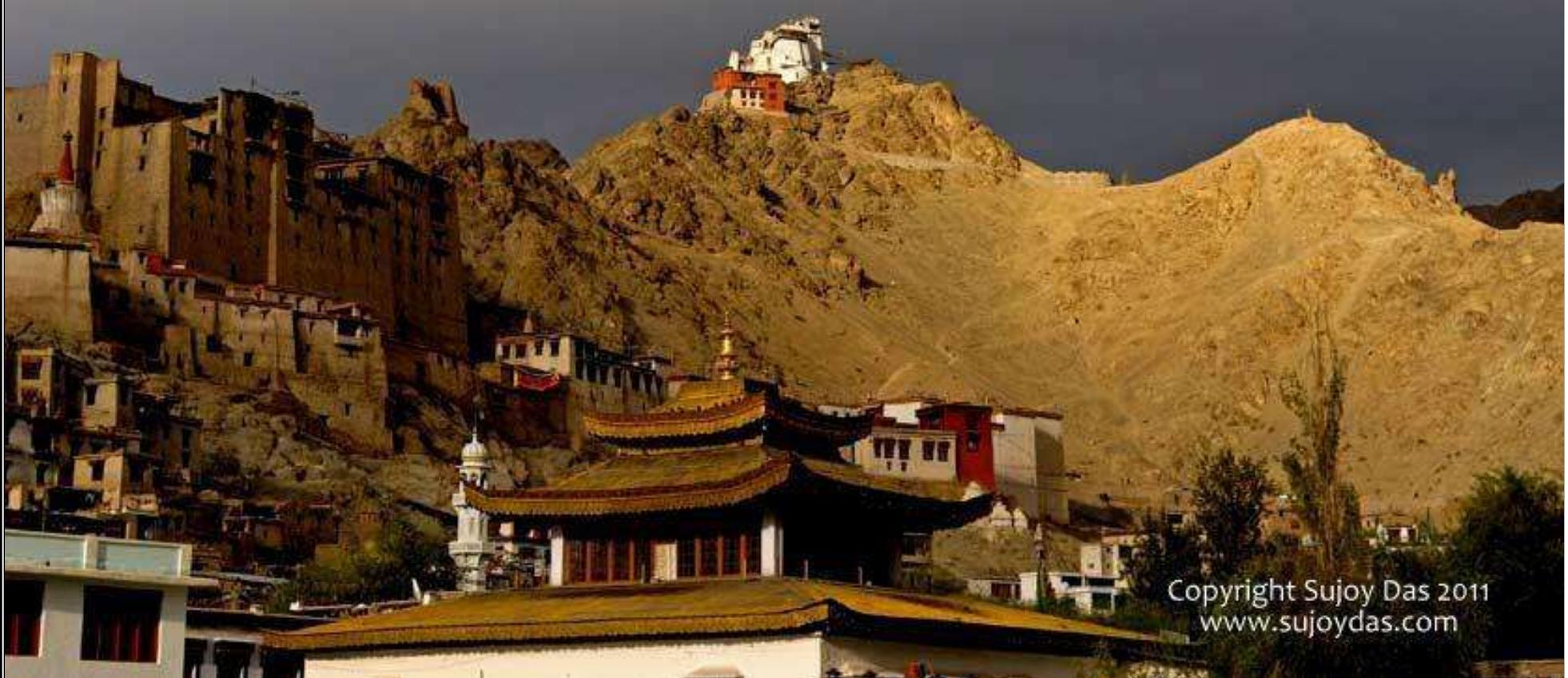


# South Col Expeditions



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# The Markha Valley Trek July 2016

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# Map of the Markha Valley

- The Markha Valley is one of the most popular treks in Ladakh. It is relatively short, located close to Leh, the walking is mostly below 4000 metres with night stops around 3500 metres and has the best of Ladakh thrown in: Sculpted canyons and fantastic rock formations, medieval villages, Buddhist gompas and snow-peaks. When approached from Chilling there is only one pass to cross the Kongamaru La which comes on Day 8 of the trek by which time most trekkers are properly acclimatised.



# The Markha Valley Trek 10 days (Delhi to Delhi)

- The ten day trip (Delhi to Delhi ) has been carefully designed to provide proper acclimatization so as to ensure the least discomfort for the trekker.
- The costs of this trek is **Rs 65,000 ( foreign passports USD 1200).** Exclusions apply For details please check page 8.



# The Markha Valley Trek Itinerary 1

- **Day 01 Delhi to Leh**  
We take the spectacular one hour flight over the Himalayas to Leh. Be prepared to sit on the left hand window seat for the best views. The rest of the day is spent acclimatizing in Leh.
- **Day 02 Acclimatization day in and around Leh**
- We take the opportunity to visit some of the splendid monasteries in and around Leh like Shey, Thikse, Hemis etc.
- **Day 03 Leh to Chilling by road and then walk to Skiu 3400m (4 hours)**
- We leave Leh in the morning after an early breakfast and then drive to Chilling in around two and a half hours. We meet our pony man and support team in Chilling. From Chilling we start our four hour walk to Skiu and reach by later afternoon.



# The Markha Valley Trek Itinerary 2

- **Day 04 Skiu to Tunespa 3600 m ( 4 hours)**  
The trail is mostly flat following the Markha river. After around three hours the trail crosses a bridge and then traverses some steep slopes before entering the hamlet of Chaluk. From Chaluk there is a short walk to Tunespa which is small village with cultivated fields.
- **Day 05 Tunespa to Markha 3700 meters 3 hours and then Markha to Hankar 3900 metres 3 hours**  
The trail from Tunespa climbs up to some chortens from where there is a good view of the valley. It continues to follow the river until it enters Markha where we have lunch. From Markha it is a gentle climb past Umlung to Hankar where we stop for the night.
- **Day 06 Hankar to Tahungtse 4150 metres 3 hours and the Tahungtse to the Tea Tent (lake) 3 hours**  
From Hankar the trail climbs to reach the walled pastures of Tahungtse. We stop for an early lunch here and then proceed after lunch to reach the small tarn with excellent mountain views. There is a small tea tent here in season for refreshments.



# The Markha Valley Trek Itinerary 3

## ■ Day 07 Tea Tent to Nimaling ( 4720 meters) 2 hours uphill

The trail climbs to Nimaling which is a large valley where yaks, sheep and goats are grazed by the villagers of Markha. We do a short day to Nimaling as the next day has a pass crossing and a stiff downhill! It is beautiful campsite but can often be cold and windy!

## Day 08 Nimaling to Kongmaru La 5100 meters 2 hours and then down to Chukirmo 4050 meters four hours

The trail then climbs to the pass of Kongmaru La from where there are good views over the Zanskar mountains and the peak of Kang Yaze. From the pass the trail drops steeply for about 1000 metres to the settlement of Chukirmo where we camp for the night.

## Day 09 Chukirmo to Shang Sumdo 3 1/2 hours and then drive to Leh two hours

The trail continues to drop but more gradually now to Chogdo and then passes a school and finally enters Shang Sumdo. We have our packed lunch in Shang Sumdo and then drive back to Leh.

## Day 10 Leh to Delhi

We can avail the morning flight from Leh to Delhi and be back in civilization in an hour! In case you wish to stay on in Leh further please do inform us for hotel bookings and onward reservations.



# The Markha Valley Trek Costs 2016

## ■ **Rs 65,000 (foreign passports USD\$ 1200 exclusions apply )**

- The cost is per person for Leh to Leh (9 days) as per the itinerary given earlier
- Costs given above are at current rates of 2015 and may change without notice as by 2016 we may have further rupee devaluation against the dollar. Changes if any will be notified 3 months before the trek.

### **Costs include:**

- Transfer by four wheel drive vehicle from Leh to Chilling (start of trek) and pickup from Shang Sumdo to Leh at the end of the trek.
- One day monastery visits around Leh - Shey, Thikse, Hemis etc. on day 2 in a private vehicle
- Three nights accommodation in Leh on twin sharing basis in a good standard hotel.
- All accommodation in tents and meals on trek for seven days (day 3 to day 9) as per itinerary; breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Cost of guides/cook/helper/ponyman and ponies as needed for the trek.

### **Costs not included**

- Flight Costs from home country to Leh and back.
- All meals in Leh not covered.
- Airport taxes if any.
- Client travel and medical insurance of any kind. Emergency evacuation costs if needed.
- Bottled drinks; boiled, filtered or bottled water; alcohol; snacks etc
- Personal clothing and equipment; sleeping bag; duvet /down/ goretex jacket, medicines for personal use etc.
- Tips to guides/cook/helper/ponyman at the end of trek

### **Estimate of Costs not included**

- Present cost of air ticket Delhi - Leh - Delhi ranges between Indian **Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 return**. Early bookings will attract lower fares. Some airlines flying to Leh from Delhi are Jet Airways, Air India and Go Air.

# Special Information on the Markha Valley Trek

- The Markha Valley trek is a full support camping trek with ponies, guide, cook, helpers.
- It is not a lodge or tea house trek though there are some tea tents in the season where basic refreshments like noodles, tea, soup etc may be available.
- Tents with mattresses will be provided every night. Quilts and blankets will not be possible. You will need a warm sleeping bag at least three seasons.
- We will have a team of one cook and two helpers who will cook all meals. Food will be basic like porridge, cornflakes, some eggs, chapattis, rice, dal, vegetables etc. All food will be carried from Leh.
- Our bags and luggage will be carried by ponies supervised by a pony man.
- Toilets will not be available on the trail. – we will provide toilet tents for the trek.



# The Markha Valley Trek FAQ #1

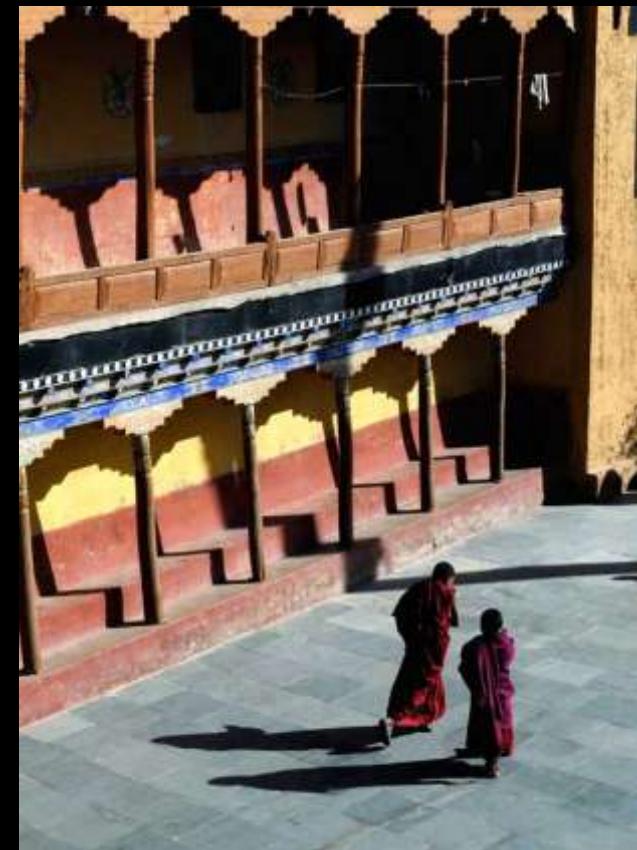
**How fit do I have to be to do a trek?** Whilst you do not need to be super-fit, you need to be fit enough to comfortably walk for 5-6 hours per day in the mountains on reasonable trails. . You will definitely need to walk for around an hour at least every day to get fit. If you can spend some time in the gym it would help. Walking uphill/stairs etc also helps a great deal.

**What is a typical group? Will I fit in?** Groups range in size from 8 up to 12, and typically comprise a range of nationalities and experience. We have also had a group upto 14! So far, all of our groups have got along very well. One of the attractions of such a trip is the chance to meet people with different backgrounds and personalities.

**Do I need to buy special equipment?** Usually our clients simply bring their existing clothing and equipment and if necessary supplement this with some extra items purchased cheaply in Leh.

**I am a single trekker. How does this work?** Normally single trekkers have no problems fitting in with a group. Normally single trekkers share rooms or tents with other trekkers of the same sex, but if we have an odd-number we ensure that a room or tent is organized accordingly.

**Will I be able to deal with the high altitude?** Our itineraries are designed so that our clients ascend at a sensible and safe rate. The effects of altitude are felt by everyone, even the guides and Sherpas, but most people find that gentle acclimatization allows them to reach their high point without any problems. We will be monitoring this closely on the trek and in the event of any problems we will ensure that there is no compromise on safety. For details on AMS visit [http://www.ismmed.org/np\\_altitudeTutorial.htm#prevention](http://www.ismmed.org/np_altitudeTutorial.htm#prevention)



# The Markha Valley Trek FAQ #2

**Where do we stay on the trek?** Tents are provided with mattress on this trek. You need to bring your own sleeping bag.

**Where do we eat our meals?** As this is a camping trek meals will be cooked by our crew and served at camp. Lunch will be usually given packed in the morning to have during the day. You are encouraged to bring chocolates, nuts, energy bars etc with you.

**Where do we get water during the trip?** It is our suggestion that in order to save money, trekkers carry iodine tablets or lugols solution or chlorine with them so that they can purify the water every day. You can also carry water filters/steripen for purification.

**What type of shoes or boots should I wear?** The proper foot wear depends on the trek. The Markha trek should be done in boots with firm ankle support. Having said that you will find locals and porters trekking in sneakers! Shoes and boots are best purchased before your arrival for the trek with proper break in.

**What will the weather be like?** Ladakh is in the rain shadow so the days are likely to be warm and the nights cold. Temperatures in the day can range between 20 and 30 Celsius while nights in Leh would be between 8 and 12 Celsius in August/September. Higher up the temperatures will be less and being summer snow is not likely though a freak snow storm on a pass cannot be ruled out! Passes around 5000 metres are likely to have sub zero temperatures at night.

**How should I give my gear to the pony man ?** Ideally the gear should be given to the pony man in a duffle bag locked and this will be returned to the client in the evening. As you may not be able to access the duffle bag during the day please carry the essentials like water, jacket, camera, sweets etc in your daypack.

# Terms and Conditions # 1

## **CANCELLATION POLICY**

- The cancellation policy and refunds available are given below:
- 0-7 days before the start of the trek =75%
- 8 -15 days before the start of the trek = 50%
- 16-30 days before the start of the trek = 35%
- 31-45 days before the start of the trek = 25%
- 46 days and above = 15%
- 

## **IN CASE OF LEAVING THE GROUP**

- If due to illness or any other reason a client has to leave the group and go down or wait at a campsite for the group to pick him/her up on the way back, all expenses including lodging, fooding and any porter/guide related expenses if any are to be borne by the individual client over and above the trek fees paid for the trek. There are also no refunds for leaving a trek before completion.
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## **HIRING OF PONIES ETC**

- In the eventuality of a client needed the services of a pony to come down to lower altitudes, the cost of hiring the pony will be paid by the client.

# Terms and Conditions # 2

## CAMPSITES ON THE TREK

- The choice of campsites to be used on the trek will be decided by South Col and clients will have to stay at these designated campsites. Clients are not permitted to choose their own campsites on the route.
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## TREK ROUTE

- The trek route and day wise schedule will be fixed by South Col and will have to be followed by the client.
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## RISKS AND LIABILITY

- The trek is in a remote mountain area and has certain additional dangers and risks, some of which include: physical exertion for which the client should be prepared; weather extremes subject to sudden and unexpected changes; remoteness from normal medical services; evacuation difficulties.
- In the event of injury or illness South Col Expeditions (Sujoy Das) or its Staff can, at the clients cost arrange any medical treatment and emergency evacuation service as it or they deem necessary for the health and safety of the client.
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# Why trek with South Col?



- South Col is a small, personalized firm specializing in treks in the Himalayan region.
- Every single trek done by South Col till date has been lead by Sujoy Das himself.
- We are keenly aware of the fragility of environment and cultures in which we trek and recognize our responsibility in maintaining them. "Take pictures, leave only foot prints" is our motto.
- Trekkers get personalized attention both in the planning stage as well as during the trek itself.
- Support team of guides and porters as needed are personally supervised by Sujoy to ensure that the clients are comfortable and well looked after.
- Sujoy has intimate knowledge of the trekking trails so can advise on the best stops for photographs and local culture etc. campsites for night stops and camping sites if needed are selected to ensure the best views, food and comfort.

# Trek Leader Profile

**Sujoy Das** has been trekking and photographing in the Himalayas for the last thirty years.

His notable treks include: Winter ascent of Kala Pattar peak (Everest region) Dec 2003; Everest Base Camp 18,500 feet (2001); Thorung-la pass/Annapurna Circuit 17,746 feet (2000); Annapurna Base Camp 14,300 feet (1999); Gokyo Ri peak Everest region 18,275 feet (1998); Rupkund Lake, Garhwal 16,200 feet (1996); Kangchendzonga Base Camp North and Green Lakes 16,875 feet (1987); Dorji La peak North Sikkim 18,644 feet (1986); crossing of Lhonak-la pass North Sikkim (1987).

He has visited the Annapurna region six times including two visits to the Base Camp and the entire Annapurna circuit. He has trekked in the Everest region eight times including the winter of 2003-04. In the Eastern Himalaya he has trekked the Singalila ridge of Sandakphu and Phalut six times and made four visits to the alp of Dzongri in West Sikkim.

In September 2009 he trekked across seven passes in Ladakh from the monastery of Lamayuru to Padum in Zanskar and again in September 2011 trekked the high left bank of the Spiti river. In April - May 2011 he led a successful trek with twenty one persons to Thyanboche Monastery and upto Kala Pattar and Everest Base Camp and again trekked the Gokyo lakes in April 2012.

He is the joint author of Sikkim- A Travellers Guide and author & Lonely Planet - Nepal for the Indian Traveller. His essays and photographs have been published in books and magazines worldwide. He is currently working on a book on the Nepal Himalaya and organizing treks and photo expeditions. For a view of his photographs of the Himalaya please visit [www.sujoydas.com](http://www.sujoydas.com). He can be contacted at [sujoyrdas@gmail.com](mailto:sujoyrdas@gmail.com)



# Om Mani Padme Hum!

*Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus*

