

## Dalai Lama Mountain Trek



Duration: 10 days

This magnificent trek offers the ultimate combination of breath-taking scenery and fascinating culture, in the southernmost ridges of the Indian Himalayas. Starting and finishing at McLeod Ganj, residence of His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and a large community of Tibetan Buddhist exiles, this challenge promises an extra-special experience.

We trek through the friendly villages, high pastures and forests of the southern flanks of the Dhauladhar (White Mountains), gradually gaining height as we follow trails used for centuries by local shepherds. We're constantly rewarded with far-reaching vistas of the beautiful Kangra valley and surrounding mountains, but with a high point of 3200m, remain at relatively low altitudes.

This trek is packed with diverse cultural discovery, exceptional trekking and magnificent landscapes – all the ingredients for an unforgettable trip!

[See more adventures in India.](#)

## DETAILED ITINERARY

## Day 1: Depart London

## Day 2: Arrive Delhi – Pathankot

On arrival, we transfer to a nearby hotel, where we can freshen up after our overnight flight and enjoy lunch before heading out to the bustling city for an afternoon sightseeing tour, including Old Delhi's Jama Masjid, the

impressive 17<sup>th</sup>-century red-sandstone mosque, and famous markets of Chandni Chowk. Later this evening, we head to New Delhi Railway Station to board our overnight train. A cultural experience in itself, the journey takes us from the crowds and chaos of Delhi through rustic scenes of life in the countryside in our comfortable air-conditioned sleeper carriages. Night train.

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### **Day 3: Pathankot – Dharamsala – McLeod Ganj**

Arriving at the small city of Pathankot in the early morning, we meet the awaiting local crew and vehicles at the station and begin our journey deeper into the foothills of the Himalayas towards the former British hill station of Dharamsala and its hilltop neighbour, McLeod Ganj. Now home to the Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetan Buddhists, this colourful settlement, known as 'Little Lhasa' has become a pilgrimage centre. After checking into our hotel, we set off on a walking tour. We visit the Dalai Lama's complex, the Tibetan Library and St John's Church. In the evening we have a briefing over dinner, and anyone who wishes can head out to explore the fun shopping experience of the local night bazaar. Night hotel.

**Drive approx. 3 hours**

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### **Day 4: McLeod Ganj – Kareri**

After an energising breakfast, we meet our local guides and head out on the first day of our trek challenge. Setting off from McLeod Ganj (1760m), we have a gentle ascent through pine forests, traditional Gaddi shepherd villages, and terraced fields of rice and barley towards Kareri village. We gain a wonderful insight to the local way of life here in these remote villages, as farmers work their land and livestock in ways that have changed little for centuries. Our camp for the night is set in a picturesque spot beside a river and watermill. Night camp (1985m)

**Trek approx. 6-8 hours**

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### **Day 5: Kareri Village – Bahl**

Continuing our gradual ascent, we leave Kareri behind us, trekking once again through remote villages, open meadows and rhododendron forests. These forests are home to a rich and diverse birdlife, including colourful pheasants, as well as larger animals including deer and even black bears and leopards – although it is extremely rare to see these! Upon reaching Barlai village, we stop for a relaxed lunch, before more uphill trekking brings us to our camp at Bahl village. Night camp (2100m)

**Trek approx. 5-7 hours**

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### **Day 6: Bahl – Triund**

We have a challenging but spectacular day of trekking to look forward to, as we head through a woodland reserve with the promise of fantastic views of the surrounding mountain scenery. We pass through the small village of Galu, making our way through forests of cedar and rhododendron. Our destination today is our highest camp at Triund, where our reward is the particularly awe-inspiring views of the permanently snow-capped peaks and ridges of the Dhauladhar mountain range. The panorama extends out across the Kangra Valley and down to McLeod Ganj. The evening sky is a sight in itself! Night camp (2850m)

**Trek approx. 5-6 hours**

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### Day 7: Triund – Laka Got – Triund

This morning we enjoy breakfast with a marvellous view, before heading out on a round trip to Laka Got, where open meadow meets the end of a glacier. Our trail traverses along the glacial moraine to reach Laka Got (3200m), a temporary shepherd encampment and the highest point of our challenge. Here we can revel in the views over Laka Glacier, which until early summer remains full of snow, before it is melted with the monsoon. We can also see across to Lahesh Cave, a shelter used by shepherds when travelling over the mountains with their flock. We should have plenty of time to enjoy the views and a picnic lunch, before returning to our camp at Triund for our last night under canvas. Night camp (2850m)

**Trek approx. 5 – 7 hours**

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### Day 8: Triund – McLeod Ganj

This morning we turn our backs on the mountains and enjoy the last section of our trek, which is mostly downhill and fairly relaxing after all our uphill trekking over the previous days! Back in McLeod Ganj, we have time to explore more of this unique town, including the monastery. If time allows we may also be able to visit Norbulingka Institute, near Dharamshala, which is dedicated to the preservation of the Tibetan culture. Back at our hotel we enjoy a well-deserved meal to celebrate our many achievements this week! Night hotel.

**Trek approx. 3-4 hours**

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### Day 9: McLeod Ganj – Pathankot – Delhi

We can enjoy a more leisurely start to the day than we've been used to, and enjoy some free time for last-minute shopping in McLeod Ganj. In the afternoon, we regroup for our transfer back to Pathankot ready for our overnight train to Delhi. Night train.

**Drive approx. 3 hours**

*(Lunch not included)*

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### Day 10: Depart Delhi, Arrive UK

Arrive Delhi early morning and transfer to international airport our flight to London.

*(Lunch not included if not in-flight)*

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All transport from London to Delhi return
- Overnight train from Delhi to Pathankot return
- All meals except where specified, accommodation and camping equipment
- Discover Adventure leaders; doctor with group of 15 or more participants; local guides and support team

- Vehicle support and back-up equipment
- Entry to any sites visited as part of the itinerary

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Sleeping bag & sleeping mat
- India entry visa
- Airline taxes: we cap these so £250.00 is the maximum you will pay
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- Inbound airport departure tax (no tax applied at the time of writing)
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable charges as per Terms and Conditions

## CHALLENGE INFORMATION

### DETAILED INFORMATION

#### Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

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#### Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group.

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#### Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will

be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries may be less than you would spend on an average night out.

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## Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

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## Altitude

Altitude adds to the challenge, and affects people differently. Most travellers experience no more than headaches and shortness of breath (typical symptoms of being at altitude, and not usually a concern.)

Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) or 'altitude sickness' occurs when you ascend to high altitude quickly. The best way to avoid it is to allow time for the body to adjust - our itineraries are designed with this in mind - and to walk at a slow pace (which our leaders will set). We also recommend avoiding alcohol and smoking. Problems usually begin at heights of around 3500m - 4500m. More severe symptoms are usually quickly remedied by descending to a lower altitude and taking more time to acclimatise.

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## Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice).

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## Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route; details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

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## Accommodation

We camp in two-man tents; these are usually expedition-style (ie sleeping room only). Camps are usually simple, in remote locations with great views! We have communal dining areas (usually with tables and chairs/stools) and toilet



tents, and the local crew look after us very well. We stay in hotels (of a 2-3\* standard or equivalent) at the start and end of the trip; standards may vary between different hotels, but they are generally clean and comfortable with good facilities.

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## Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

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## Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

**Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.**

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## Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

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## Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or

expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

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## PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

### Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

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### Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

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### Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

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### Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8

months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

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## Cultural Differences

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for! We are very privileged to live in a country with a high standard of living, and travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow participants and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

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## Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

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## Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

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# CHALLENGE EXTENSIONS





## GOLDEN TRIANGLE EXTENSION

The famous Golden Triangle of Delhi, Jaipur and Agra in northwest India is home to some of the most iconic buildings in India, with ornate palaces and ancient forts contrasted by modern buildings and busy street scenes. These cities are the most-visited places in India for a reason!

Trip highlights include the iconic Taj Mahal – without doubt the most famous and recognisable monument in India – and Jaipur's magnificent Amber Fort, but there are plenty of other incredible sights and experiences as we travel between these wonderful cities. Visiting these monuments allows a wonderful insight into the rich history and culture of India, and a greater understanding of this fascinating country.

**Contact the office for pricing and availability.**



Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 12 May 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.