

Spiti Discovery - 15 days

Chandigarh to Spiti Valley via Kullu Valley

Tour JTT-HP01: Chandigarh - Manali - Kaza - Kibbar - Tabo - Pin Valley - Demul - Komik - Kaza - Manali - Chandigarh

Spiti is a true Shangrila if there ever was one. Nestled in a large meander of the mighty Himalayan Range, it has always been closer - and, therefore, more exposed to - Tibet than to any place in India. In summer we can approach it from nearby Manali by crossing two high passes. On this trip you'll explore some of the highest inhabited villages in the world, you'll be awed by the



Spitians' adaptation to their harsh environment and mesmerized by their Buddhist culture. You'll explore the area by jeep, on foot, and even yaks, and sleep in hotels as well as simple but clean homestays.

Itinerary

Day 01: Arrival Delhi

After arrival at Delhi International Airport you'll be transferred to a pleasant guesthouse in a quiet neighbourhood of Gurgaon (not far from the airport).

Day 02: Delhi – Shimla by Shatabdi Express train

After a very early breakfast you'll be transferred to the Railway Station for boarding the train for Chandigarh (departure 7:40 AM). Arrival at Kalka Railway station is at 11.45 AM. From Kalka you can board the so-called Toy train to Shimla. This narrow-gauge train ride is deservedly popular ride as it climbs the foothills of the Himalayas in an endless row of loops and switchbacks, offering magnificent views on a clear day. After reaching Shimla RWS you'll be transferred to your hotel.

Day 03: Chandigarh – Manali

Most of the day will be spent driving up through the lush green Himalayan foothills of Himachal Pradesh till we reach the green hill station of Manali. Situated among pine forests at an elevation of almost 2000m, the snow-covered peaks of the Pir Panjal looming in the north, Manali is a pleasant, bustling market and tourist town. In the afternoon there will be some time to explore the market or even walk to the Hadimba Temple, hidden in the forest above the town. Your hotel is situated just outside the town for diner and overnight stay.

Day 04: Manali to Naggar and Solang

We drive to Naggar, an old ancient capital of Kullu Valley, during the period of King Sidh Singh in 1550 AD is located in the middle of the valley, which later shifted to Kullu. The King was blessed by Goddess Hadimba (a very famous local deity in Manali) to rule the whole oh Kullu Valley, which he could see in the North and South. Nagger Castle still lies lies above the Naggar Village from here one can get magnificent panorama of the Kullu Valley, to the North lies the Rohtang pass and Bajaura to the South of the Valley. Naggar has a famous Art Gallery, belongs to the famous painter, philosopher, mystic, writer and traveler Nicholas Roerich; he was a Russian who made this place his home for a long time. It is also famous for ancient temples of Shankar, Vishnu and Krishna. In the earthquake of 1905 the tunnel, linking Naggar and Parvati Valley got destroyed. Further drive to Manali, the most beautiful drive in Kullu valley, with wonderful surrounding of old traditional houses and absolute simple life, paddy field dotted with chalet-like wooden houses. Overnight at the hotel in Manali.

Day 05: Manali to Kaza (210 km / 10 hr)

Today we start early and drive over the Rothang pass (separating Kullu from the Lahaul Valley), and enter into the valley of the Chandra river and continue passing Chhatru, Batal and over the Kunzum La pass at an altitude of 4551 mts, which divides Lahaul and Spiti. We spend some time taking in the fabulous views of the Chandrabhanga ranges of mountains, we visit the Buddhist shrine at Kunzum and get into our waiting jeeps, and drive for Kaza, reaching there in evening. Overnight at the hotel.



Day 06: Kaza – Kye - Kibber - Tashigang (3 hr by jeep / 1.5 hr by bike)

Today we drive in our jeeps to the highlands of the left bank plateau for altitude acclimatization. Here we visit the Kye village (about ½ hour journey) and the Kye Gumpa, the largest monastery in Spiti. After visiting the monastery we interact with the monks and drive to Kibber Village (another ½ hour drive), which is 14,000 feet above sea level, is the road head for the trade route into Ladakh over the Parang La. We continue to the village of Gette and Tashigang (about 1 hour drive), high up in the mountains – this area is famous for Spiti horses bred for trade with nomadic



“Changpas” of Ladakh in exchange for the valuable Pashmina wool. On our way back we have the option to bike back to Kaza on Fire Fox mountain bikes*. The evening can be spent roaming the Kaza market where one may find interesting local handicrafts. Overnight at hotel in Shego (near Kaza).

*Biking is an option for a group size of maximum 4 people. The biking is mostly downhill, so it is not strenuous.

Day 07: Kaza – Tabo (4 hr)

After breakfast we leave Kaza for Pin Valley which is a tributary of the Spiti River. En route we will get the opportunity to see some of the other initiatives pertaining to promotion of solar energy in Spiti Valley to reduce fuel wood consumption and carbon emissions of the local community (these ranges from solar passive houses, green houses and solar cookers). They also work on other live hood initiatives from the regions herbs & berries. If time permits we can stop at seabuckthorn processing unit to get an insight in their initiative aimed at empowering the women of Spiti. Overnight in Home stay.



Day 08: Tabo – Gju via Pin Valley (4 hr)

Today we drive to Tabo, famous for its ancient Tibetan monastery. In 1996 the Tabo monastery celebrated its 1000 years with Kalachakra ceremony, which was presided over by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We'll spend time exploring the Monastery and the numerous paintings and statues at the monastery, before we leave for Gju (about 1 hour drive). Gju is the furthest and most isolated village of Spiti, lying close to Tibet (China). Gju village is also interesting as the body of an old monk (675 years old) sitting in meditation still exist intact till date. It is said that the hair and nails of this monk are still growing. Then we continue to Pin Valley, a beautiful high-altitude valley cradled by the great Himalayan Range. The area is a national park as it is home to rare and endangered animals such as the snow leopard. Easier to see are the Spitian horses. These so-called Chumurti Horses are a small but sturdy and hardy breed. In the recent past, buyers used to come from far-away places to buy them.

Buddhism in these parts follows a unique and rare sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The so-called Buchens are theatrical artists that preach religious, social and ecological morals to the locals. They are followers of Tholdan Gyalpa, who lived in the early 11th century and. Overnight at a home stay or monastery guesthouse in Pin Valley.



Day 09: Pin – Dhankar

Today we drive in the morning along the Pin River which meets in Attergo with the Spitian main River which flows towards and meet in Kinnaur with Satluj in Ka. After that we drive to Dhankhar and overnight at the local guesthouse.

Day 10: Dhankhar to Lhalung to Demul (3 hr)

Today we drive to Dhankhar, the ancient capital of Spiti with houses of ancient Monastery perched precariously between unique winds eroded structures. There is the remaining of the Dhankhar Fort, house of the royal family of Spiti. We visit the Monastery, Fort and subsidiary temples leaves one spell bound at the traditional architectural marvels. The Monastery has some interesting wall murals and thangkas. The Dhankhar Monastery has been recognized as one of the 100 Most Endangered sites in the World, by 'The World's Monument Fund'. Efforts are being made for restoration and conservation of the Monastery structure, murals and thangkas. This conservation initiative is also being linked to live hood generation of the village community and monastery from tourism, in order to provide them with an incentive to the inhabitants. An hour trek above Dhankhar is a spectacular blue – green lake amidst pink- brown hills. We can get up early in the morning and visit the lake. After Dhankhar we head for Lhalung which is the largest village of the Lingti Valley (a tributary of the Spiti River). It is famous for its 1000 year old temple 'Sarkhang' (the golden temple) and possibly one of the oldest trees (dating back to over a 1000 years) in Spiti are found here. Lhaling is also famous for the culture and here we participate and witness a Cultural programme accompanied by songs played by the musicians using their traditional instruments. Ecosphere is promoting these art forms to ensure their conservation and as a source of income generation for the local community especially the women and musicians (bloning to the lower castes) as well as to enable an enhancement in their social status. Overnight at home stay.



Day 11: Demul – Komik (5 hr)

Today we adopt the local mode of transport, yaks. Here we explore the Trans-Himalayan Deserts and travel into the grazing pastures of the local livestock and wild herbivores (such as the Blue Sheep). This is also the hunting ground for the Himalayan Wolf and Snow Leopard. If lucky, spotting of the Wolf can be possible. We will also learn of the conservation efforts of Ecosphere with the local community to conserve this unique and endangered wildlife. The trail also gives insights into the floral diversity of the region. We will continue to the village of Komik which is Asia's highest village where we halt for the night stay in a home stay.

Day 12: Komik – Hikkim – Langza – Kaza (3 hr)

Today we drive for Komik, adorned by a legendary monastery. After visiting the Monastery we get back to our waiting jeeps, on the way we visit the ruins of the ancient monastery deserted a few decades ago close to the village of Hikkim (1/2 hr). The monastery has a unique legendary location and the locals have interesting interpretations about it. We then drive for Langza (1/2 hour) located in a large high mountain meadow with a beautiful mountain, Chau Chau Kang Nilda, towering above this village. Here we take a short trek (1 hour) to the village fossil centre where one can find evidence of fossils of sea life dating back to 200 million years when this region was submerged under the sea. The fossil centre has been formed by the village youth of Langza and Ecosphere to help preserve Spiti's geological wealth. Langza village has a unique temple which is regarded as the headquarters of all the Gods and Goddesses of the region. On numerous occasions the Gods are invoked by the villagers to pass judgement and unresolved issues. From here we head back to Kaza for the night stay. Once we are in Kaza, we will take time to relax and refresh ourselves. Time can also be spent roaming the Kaza market to shop for local handicrafts. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 13: Kaza to Manali (11 hr)

After an early (7 am) breakfast we drive back to Manali along the same route that we took to reach Kaza over the Kunzum La and Rohtang La.

Day 14: Manali to Rewalsar (133 km / 6 hr)

Today we drive for Rewalsar Lake, Buddhist call this by the name of Tso Pema. Shaped like a square with a shoreline of 735 Mts. this dark jewel rests on a mountain spur and is protected by a variety of dense vegetation. The spot is held as the scared place for Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhist. Legend says that in the history of Tantrik Buddhism, Padmasambhava, used his enormous powers to fight to Tibet from Rewalsar, also known as Guru Rinpoche, the precious master, it is under Padmasambhava's influence that Mahayana Buddhism took root in Tibet. The small lake is revered by Tibetan Buddhist and every year, shortly after the Tibetan New Year (sometime in March);



many people make pilgrim here, especially those from Dharamshala, Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti. The festival known as Tso – Pema, is particularly important in the year of Monlay, which falls in every 12 years. At this time there are thousands of people here and the Dalai Lama gives Puja (Prayer) in the monastery and then does a circuit around the Lake and Kinnaurites sing a particular song. There are three Buddhist Monasteries at Rewalsar. There is Gurudwara that was built in 1930 by Raja Joginder Sen of Mandi, commemorating the month long stay of Guru Gobind Singh in 1738. There are three Hindu temples at Rewalsar dedicated to Lord Krishna , Lord Shiva and to the sage Lamas, A small zoo near the Lake. The Lake of Kunt Bhyog (1750 mts above sea level) lies above Rewalsar, as do six other lakes of Legends. These are associated with the escape of the Pandavas from the burning Palace of wax- an episode from the epic Mahabharata.

Overnight at hotel at Rewalsar.

Day 15: Rewalsar (Chhu Pema) to Chandigarh to Delhi (240 km / 6 hr)

Today evening we catch the Shatabdi train chair car to New Delhi, about five hr drive from Rewalsar to Chandigarh. The train ride takes about four hrs from Chandigarh to New Delhi.

Tour Price

For 2 & 3 people INR XXX per person

For 3 & 4 people INR XXX per person

For 5 & 6 people INR XXX per person

Price Includes:

- One overnight at Guragaon/Delhi guesthouse.
- Transfers from Indira Gandhi Int. Airport to Gurgaon guesthouse (day1); from Gurgaon guesthouse to RW Station (day2); from RWS to International Airport (day 15).
- Transportation by train from Delhi to Chandigarh and back by Shatabdi Express (2nd tier sleeper), without guide.
- Guide services from Chandigarh (day 2) to Chandigarh (day15)
- Transportation by Toyota Qualis or Chevrolet Tavera. Pick-up and drop-off at Chandigarh Railway Station.
- Hotel accommodation at MAP basis (breakfast and dinner);
- All monastery fees and other entry charges.

Price excludes: tips, laundry, alcohol, insurance and any other expenses of personal nature.