

Stok Kangri

India | 6,153m



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We are sad to have to inform you that Stok Kangri is now closed for the next few years (2020 and until further notice). This is to help the land recover from tourism. We have kept Stok Kangri up as we know many of you are keen on this peak so to make this information easier for you to find.

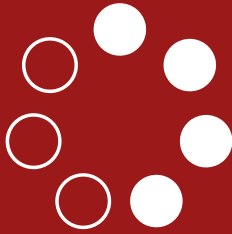
As an incredible alternative (not as a second-best) we are now running [Kang Yatse](#).

Stok Kangri, 6,153m, a stunning mountain of the mysterious **Ladakh** region of **Northern India**. The trek to its summit is achievable by someone with little **trekking** experience but huge enthusiasm. It's a fantastic entry level 6,000m peak as the ascent is not considered technical, especially as the majority of the mountain is snow-free in July – early September.

Ladakh is a land of many contrasts. It's one of the highest, driest inhabited regions on Earth, a semi-desert where Buddhism meets Islam, India meets Tibet and where the **Himalayas** meet the Karakorum. Dotted with small villages and ancient monasteries, the high mountain panoramas blend into eternal blue skies and vibrant festivals spring up with cheerful regularity. Arriving from **Delhi** into **Leh** (at 3,524m) we spend a few days acclimatising, exploring the town and local monasteries. Our trek begins at **Choksi** where one extended family farm the small, verdant valley. From here the trek is a wonderful ascent through wild Indian countryside, rural villages and up into spectacular mountain scenery of plunging rivers, steep gorges and high passes surrounded by majestic snow-capped peaks.

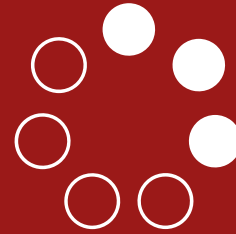
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Physical – P4

Sustained physical effort calls for a state of high conditioning. You should already have experience of tough challenges (P3) and be regularly training as part of your normal routine. Expect days of up to 8 hours and longer while carrying a pack up to 8-14kg in weight. Summit night could be easily in excess of 12 hours.



Technical – T3

May involve harder scrambling or some trekking and climbing with ropes. If snow is encountered then glacier travel with ropes, ice axes and crampons will be necessary. Basic climbing skills are ideal, but these will also be taught (and certainly practiced) during the expedition and pre-summit phase.

Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.



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ITINERARY

DAY 1 : Depart UK

Fly to Delhi and connect for our Leh flight. The spectacular connection flight over the Himalaya takes us to one of the highest airports in the world at 3,350m.

DAY 2 : Arrive Leh

Today we arrive in Leh. If the weather is good we should see the Karakorums from the plane, and get a peek at Stok Kangri as we land.

The rest of the day is free to relax and acclimatise to the altitude (3,500m). In the afternoon we can have a wander around Leh and its bazaars and explore our home for the next couple of days.

DAY 3 : Leh

We stay in Leh in order to begin acclimatising. You are welcome to join us on a very leisurely sightseeing tour to three of the major gompas (monasteries) in the area. We first drive to Shey, a former Royal Palace of the Ladakh kings. Inside is a small temple containing a 350 year old copper and gold statue of Buddha. Next stop is Tikse, perched prominently on top of a hill, its red and white buildings visible for miles. A recently built temple contains a magnificent image of the Future Buddha. Final stop is Stakna, a small, friendly monastery high above the Indus River.

DAY 4 : Leh – Choksi (3,210m)

We leave Leh and drive to the start point of our trek. We follow the Indus River for a short while before turning off onto an unpaved track that winds along the Zaskar River. The open valley begins to narrow and steepen until we find ourselves driving along the bottom of a magnificent gorge. At the first bridge we leave the vehicle, put on our packs and have a short climb to Choksi (3,210m) where we camp. This pretty village is inhabited by one large extended family who farm this small valley. In the afternoon we can have a short acclimatisation walk in preparation for tomorrow or just explore our environs.

DAY 5 : Choksi – Shepherds hut

Today is our first day of proper trekking as we climb steeply out of Choksi, the valley narrowing spectacularly as we get closer to its head. Looking back over our shoulders, the colourful Ladakh mountains are spread before us. We reach camp around lunchtime, and have the afternoon to explore the area, potentially climbing up to the ridge opposite us for views of the surrounding peaks.

DAY 6 : Kang La (4,900m)

We have a short morning's walk today up to the base of the Kang La (4,900m). After lunch we can climb up to the top of the small rocky peak behind our camp. At 5,056m the views are magnificent – we can see the Kang La and Palam Peak ahead and the Himalayas are spread in front of us.

DAY 7 : Kang La (5,260m)

Although the altitude gain today is seemingly small, today remains a tough day as we head for our first pass. The climb is gentle and long at first, but the last section is steep, rocky and challenging as we try to identify the little-used path.

Once we reach the pass the climb up Palam Peak (5,380m) is well worth doing for the views from its summit that are almost as good as from Stok Kangri itself. Looking behind us towards Leh, now several days past, we look ahead towards Stok Kangri, our objective. All around us are panoramic views of the Himalayas.

We continue from the top, contouring the top of the valley in view of Stok Kangri. Just below the ridge is a high camp we can use, or we continue down towards the base of Ganda La, depending on the weather.

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DAY 8 : Ganda La (4,970m) – Rumbak

We continue round the valley following the contours once more and then climb up to Ganda La, our second pass, and the entrance to the Markha Valley. From here we can identify the path for the next couple of days, as well as enjoy the spectacular views of the north face of Stok Kangri in the east and the Karakoram Range in the north. The mountain slopes of Gander La are home to several species of Himalayan wildlife such as blue sheep, marmots, golden eagle and the mystic snow leopard. After enjoying the views we descend down the valley and come across the one house village of Yurutse before entering the Rumbak Valley. Rumbak is inhabited by 20 families and a small gompa.

DAY 9 : Rumbak – Mankarmo (4,300m) via Stok La (4,950m)

Today is a big day of trekking, but also one of the most rewarding as we cross the Stok La with its amazing colourful rock formations. The path slopes gently, but soon starts to steepen as it zigzags towards the pass. The views of the Indus Valley, Zaskar and Karakoram Ranges once we reach the pass are second to none, while layer upon layer of multicoloured rock cathedrals are spread before us in every direction.

We then drop steeply down the other side, levelling off to contour the valley once more to meet the river that drops from Stok Kangri, following it until we reach Mankarmo, a shepherd settlement.

DAY 10 : Mankarmo – Base Camp (5,000m)

The trail from Mankarmo climbs gradually through a rocky river bed towards Base Camp. As we climb higher we can see the north east face of Stok Kangri ahead of the valley. The distance today is quite short so we take our time. After a warm lunch we can get a good rest and in the afternoon organise our climbing gear for the early morning push for the summit. There will be a full briefing about tomorrow's ascent and a run through of walking in rope teams and with crampons. After an early dinner we retire to bed to rest for a few hours.

DAY 11 : Summit (6,173m)

The summit push, like many others, is long and hard. We're up very early for coffee and porridge before setting off around 2am. The initial climb is gradual, but after about 3 hours we cross the glacier and things get steeper. At around 5,700m we traverse to the exposed left ridge of the mountain, scrambling up the rocky, icy final section to the summit.

The route isn't technical, but the altitude and cold will make it hard work. But hard work will be rewarded with stunning views of the Himalayas and Karakorums, and on a very clear day the sunrise might even pick out K2 in the distance. After lapping up the views and catching our breaths, we head carefully back down to basecamp for a warm brunch, and the chance to climb back into our sleeping bags and catch up with some sleep.

DAY 12 : Base camp – Leh

Our final trek day is a stunning one as we wander back down a spectacular valley with wonderful colourful rock formations culminating in our emergence into a fantastic gorge before the trail widens and we reach Stok. Here our transport will meet us and return us to Leh for hot showers and a welcome celebration that evening.

Sometimes we are lucky and the Leh festival coincides with our date and if this is the case you could be in for a colourful afternoon/evening. The festival is one of the major cultural celebrations in Ladakh and takes place in Leh on a large scale with a procession of several cultural troupes from different parts of the region which traverses through Leh Market. There is dancing, singing, traditional music and people wearing colourful traditional Ladakhi dresses. The festival takes place in Leh and surrounding villages with archery, polo, masked dances from the monasteries and dances by cultural troupes from the villages. There are musical concerts too.

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ITINERARY

DAY 13 : **Leh to Delhi**

We have an early start from Leh to catch our flight back to Delhi. All flights from Leh arrive either mid-morning or early afternoon into Delhi as, flying later in the day, there is always the risk of storms over the mountain.

Flights from Delhi back to the UK generally depart late evening or early morning which means we'll have a bit of a long layover (somewhere between 9-12 hours depending on which flights we secure).

There are a few options:

As there is no left luggage store at the airport it may be worth booking a room at a local hotel (if there are a few of you) and leaving your big bags for the day. There are lots of hotels around the airport ranging in price and luxury (check booking.com) so you could always book a room and sleep all day.

The airport is well-served by public transport (the metro is great and goes directly to the airport) so you could take a trip into town and see some of the sights – there are also lots of companies offering sightseeing tours from the airport.

Just make sure that whatever you do, you are back at the airport with your bags ready to check in for your flight back to the UK!

(B)

DAY 14 : **Depart Leh/Arrive UK**

Today's timings are dependent on your international flights.

If 360 are securing your flights, you will generally be departing Delhi in the early hours of the morning and arriving back to the UK today.

This will be dictated by flight routes, times and costs and if you tick "flights included", then 360 team will do their utmost to find the most appropriate flights, giving you the best options. Please do let the office team know at the time of booking if you have a preference, and we will always do our best to accommodate.

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KIT LIST

Bags & Packs

Kit bag

A 90 -120L duffel bag to transport kit. A duffel bag is a strong, soft, weather resistant bag without wheels but with functional straps for carrying. Suitcases and wheeled bags are not suitable

Daysack

Approx. 40L capacity. Your day to day pack that you carry with your daily essentials, fitted with shoulder straps and importantly a waist belt

Drybags

Nylon rolltop bags that keep fresh clothing and other important items like passports and iPods dry in the event of a total downpour that seeps into your kitbag. Good for quarantining old socks. Please note that many countries are now banning plastic bags. We would always advise buying re-usable nylon rolltop bags for keeping your kit dry (and sustainability).

Waterproof rucksack cover

To protect rucksack from rain

Small kit bag or light bag

This is for any kit you intend to leave at the hotel and could even simply be a heavy duty plastic bag

Padlocks x 2

For use on your kit bag for travel and on the expedition plus your hotel bag

Sleeping Gear

4 Season sleeping bag

You should get a sleeping bag rated to -10C and choose a sleeping bag that functions within the comfort rating of this temperature. A silk sleeping bag liner will enhance this rating on the coldest nights

Sleeping bag liner

Silk is best for keeping the bag clean and you a little warmer

Sleeping mat

A full length self-inflating rather than $\frac{3}{4}$ length Thermarest

Headwear

Warm headgear

This can be a warm hat, beanie, balaclava, anything to reduce the heat loss from your head

Wide brimmed hat

Keeps the sun off exposed areas like ears and the nape of the neck

Buff/Scarf

Essential for protection from the sun and dust

Sunglasses

Preferably wraparound style

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KIT LIST

Ski goggles – Category 3 (excl. July - September)

For days when it may be snowing and very windy. Very useful on summit day. Only required when trekking outside the period July to September

Sunblock

Buy the highest SPF you can find as UV intensifies with altitude

Lip salve

Sun cream will not work on your lips and they are very susceptible to burn without proper protection

Upper Body

Base layer x 3

This is the layer closest to the skin and its principal function is to draw (wick) moisture and sweat away from the skin. You can also get thermal base layers for use at higher altitudes that provide an additional insulative layer while still drawing sweat during times of high exertion

Mid layer x 2

These are typically lightweight microfleece or similar technology that provide varying degrees of warmth and insulation without being overly bulky or heavy to pack

Gilet (optional)

Optional – A great low volume additional layer to keep your core warm, whether down, Primaloft or fleece

Light insulated jacket

A lighter jacket such as a Primaloft or lightweight down which can be worn at lower to mid altitudes is a great addition to your kit offering greater flexibility with layering

Soft Shell (optional)

Optional – These should be windproof (not all are) and insulative. They are mostly made of soft polyester and sometimes resemble a neoprene finish which makes them very mobile and comfortable to wear. While offering a degree of weather repellence, they are not waterproof

Hard Shell

These jackets are thin, highly waterproof and windproof and worn over all other items of clothing. You'll find these made of Gore-Tex or other proprietary waterproof yet breathable technology. Inexpensive hard shells that aren't breathable will prevent evaporation, making you sweat intensely and are not recommended

Down jacket

These provide the best insulation and are worth every penny. Ask advice in the shop (or from us) when buying the jacket and mention you want it rated to -20C and the assistant will recommend the correct fill for you

Warm gloves

Consider liners or a light Polartec pair for lower altitudes and evenings, and a thicker waterproof pair like ski gloves for higher altitudes

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KIT LIST

Down mitts & waterproof mitts

Essential for higher altitudes and cold temperatures. To be worn with a liner glove underneath and waterproof & windproof layer over the top.

T-shirts / Trekking tops

For wearing in Leh and lower down the mountain when the weather is warm.

Lower Body

Trekking trousers x 2

These tend to be polyester so they dry quickly after a shower and weigh little in your pack. Consider perhaps a pair with detachable lower legs as an alternative to shorts

Softshell trousers

Windproof or thermal lined trekking trousers for higher altitudes and the summit phase. Thermal leggings can still be worn underneath if necessary

Long Johns

Thermal insulation for the lower body

Waterproof overtrousers

Like the jacket, an essential piece of kit to stay dry and should also be Goretex

Underwear

Merino or wicking material, not cotton. How many pairs you take is entirely up to you

Shorts

For wearing in Leh on your days off and for lower down on the mountain. Whilst Leh is fairly liberal, longer shorts are preferable.

Feet

4 season trekking boots

Well broken in with mid - high ankle support

High altitude plastic boots (excl. July - September)

Double or triple layered to keep feet warm. Either La Sportiva G2 SMs, Scarpa Phantom 6000s, La Sportiva Spantiks or 8,000m boots are suitable. Make sure you can fit 2 pairs of socks for added warmth with room to wiggle your toes. Only required when trekking outside the period July to September

High altitude socks (excl. July - September)

These socks are super thick to provide maximum insulation. Three pairs, keep one clean for summit day, wear with a thinner inner. Only required when trekking outside the period July to September

Trekking socks x 4

Start with lighter socks lower down, working up to thicker pairs for higher up as it gets colder. Some people like a clean pair every day, others are happy to change every other day – that's a personal choice

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KIT LIST

Spare laces

Just in case

Trainers

For camp, saves stomping around in heavy boots for the entire day. You could also opt for walking sandals or Crocs.

Technical Equipment

Climbing harness (available locally at no cost)

We recommend Petzl harnesses. Try a variety on in a shop before you buy to ensure a good fit. Legs clips are a good option and avoid having to step into the harness to put it on. Harnesses are available locally at no cost.

HMS Locking karabiners x 2

Climbing equipment, for attaching a rope to your harness

Sling (60cm) x 1

Ice Axe (available locally at no cost)

A walking ice axe between 55cm and 65cm. Go to an outdoor shop and try different ones for weight and size so that you get one that feels good to you (available locally at no cost)

Crampons (available locally at no cost)

12 point mountaineering crampons with anti-balling plates that fit your specific boots (not ice climbing crampons), (available locally at no cost)

Micro crampons

A smaller style of crampon, designed to give you a bit more grip on more icy terrain when full crampons are too much, or if you're wearing lighter boots. Microspikes can be invaluable on slippery slopes, and we would suggest they are carried in your day pack with you when higher up on the hill. Please note these cannot be hired in situ – but as they are only around £15, hopefully a good little investment for you anyway! (An example here, though other brands and styles are of course available.)

Hydration

Water purification

Although generally all water is boiled some prefer to double up and add purification tabs as well. Always good to have in your bag

Water bottles/bladder

3L equivalent – Camelbaks are useful at lower altitudes but have a tendency to freeze up at higher altitudes without insulation tubes, Nalgene bottles are better at altitude and can be put in your down jacket

Pee bottle (+ optional Shewee for the girls!)

A good idea if you are storm bound at higher camps. A 1ltr Nalgene bottle is a good option but do make sure you label it as your pee bottle!!

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KIT LIST

Toiletries

Wash kit

Keep it simple on the mountain. Essentials are toothbrush, toothpaste and deodorant. Moisturiser is advisable, everything else is a luxury!

Travel towel

Travel towels from the likes of Lifesystems are perfect

Wet wipes

Preferably biodegradable, these are great for washing when modern shower facilities become a thing of the past

Alcohol gel

A must have for good camp hygiene

Insect repellent

For early stages and once back down

Toilet paper

Provided on the mountain but a spare in your daysack may be useful if you need to hide behind a rock between camps

Nappy sacks or dog poo bags

Only needed to bag your toilet paper if you are caught short in between camps and for keeping your rubbish tidy in your tent

Medications

Personal first aid kit

The 360 med kits are designed to be used in emergencies and akin to an A&E rather than a pharmacy on Expeditions so please come prepared with useful meds for yourself such as painkillers (Ibuprofen if you can take it and a Paracetamol) plus blister plasters, plasters, antiseptic, rehydration sachets and any muscle rubs you wish to use.

Personal medication

Keep this in your daysack

Miscellaneous

Head torch

We recommend Petzl head torches. Bring spare batteries.

Trekking poles

These tend to be a personal preference but help with your stability and can dampen the pressure on the knees coming down hill

Camera

Bring plenty of spare batteries and memory cards

Penknife (optional)

Sewing kit (optional)

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KIT LIST

Snacks

You will be fed very well and given snacks each day however we advise bringing a small selection as a little bit of comfort. For summit night it's always good to have a few extra chunky bars for that extra boost. Energy gels and protein bars are not suitable

Documentation

Passport

Don't forget this! Your passport should have at least 6 months validity. With your passport expiry date at least six months after the final day of travel.

Copy of passport

Scan of passport picture page

Passport photos x 4

We need these to obtain your climbing and trekking permits

Visa

A visa can be obtained from the Indian Embassy in London or using the e-visa website. Non UK residents should check with their local Indian Embassy

Dental check up

We recommend you have a dental check-up before your trip. New fillings can be an issue at altitude if there is an air pocket left in the gap

Money

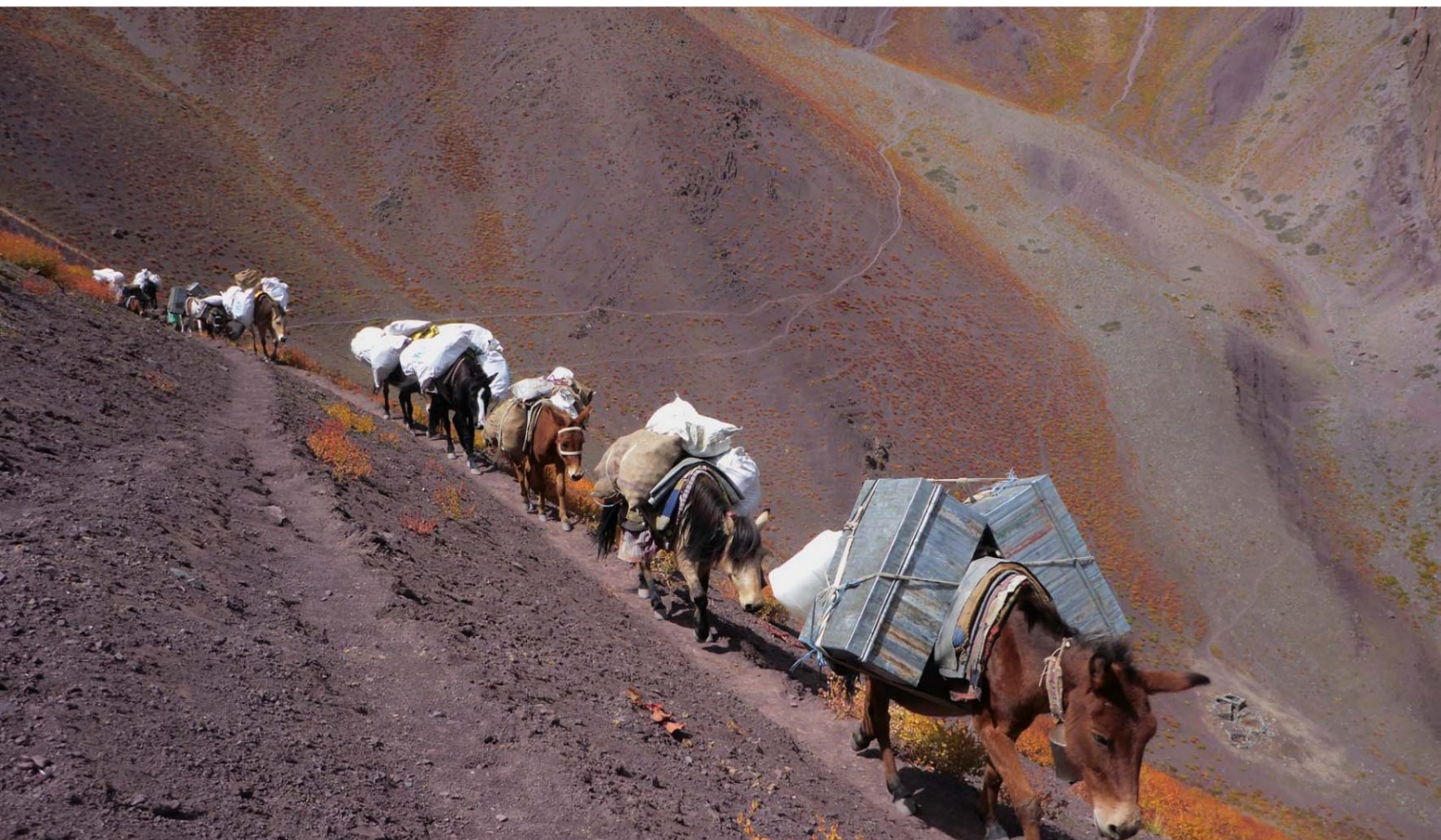
We recommend you take around \$120 – \$150 onto the mountain in small denominations to tip the local team. Plus about \$250 for any extras along the way, satellite phone calls etc.

Travel insurance

Copy of own travel insurance details. And relevant contact numbers. We have a partnership with True Traveller and would recommend that you contact them when looking for travel insurance for your trip with 360. However, it is vital that you ensure that the insurance cover they offer is suitable for you, taking your personal circumstances (items to be insured, cancellation cover, medical history) into account. Many other insurance providers are available and we do recommend that you shop around to get the best cover for you on the expedition you are undertaking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip. To include medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip.

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FAQ'S

Food and Water

What will we be eating?

Food served on this trek is vegetarian and consists of a wide variety of Tibetan, Indian and continental dishes.

Breakfast: Chapati, bread, jam, cheese, butter, cornflakes, omelette, porridge, pancake, tea, coffee

Lunch: bread, cheese, jam, fruit, spring rolls, chocolate, boiled potato and egg.

Dinner: Tibetan, Indian and continental dishes.

If you have food allergies, let us know in advance and we'll do our best to cater for these.

Where does the drinking water come from?

Drinking water comes from a stream or spring near the campsite. As it's mostly rain run off or snow melt it's going to be pretty pure to start with but we'll boil or treat anyway for good measure.

How often is fresh water available to top up during the day?

There are streams and springs on the way so bring purification tablets or a water filter (the latter are noticeably heavier and bulkier than the former) you can replenish whenever you run out, but generally we fill our bottles up in the morning before we set off.

Accommodation

How big are the tents?

We use 3 man tents for two people to give you a bit more personal space and more room for your gear.

Will I have my own room/tent?

Most altitude related symptoms manifest themselves at night. We therefore recommend room and tent sharing from the onset of all our expeditions. Room share is always organised according to sex and where possible age groups. Obviously if you are climbing this mountain with a friend or partner then share rooms with them. If you have joined the team by yourself then it is highly likely that you will be sharing a room with your pre-assigned room buddy unless prior arrangements have been made.

If you would like your own hotel room, please contact the office to make arrangements, a modest single supplement fee will be requested.

Do you use a mess tent for dining and relaxing?

Yes, we provide dining tents for meals and to relax and wind down in after a day's walking.

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FAQ'S

Will the camp be freshly set up or will we be staying at existing camps at a set site on the way up? What will the lavatorial facilities be?

There are no fixed camps in the mountains, so we carry all camping gear with us on horses, pitching camp near some of the reliable water sources. In terms of the camp "facilities", there is a portaloo toilet in its own tent, and a shower tent.

Health and Safety

Am I likely to suffer from altitude sickness on this expedition?

There are different types of altitude sickness. Although our acclimatisation regime ensures that everybody enjoys the best possible chance of getting high on the mountain, altitude related problems can happen. The most common of this is high altitude sickness – AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness). Symptoms for this can include headaches, nausea and vomiting.

This sounds quite dramatic but generally this is just the process your body naturally goes through to adjust to the higher altitudes and the reduced partial pressure of the atmosphere. For some people the acclimatisation process takes a little longer than others.

For our guides this is all part and parcel of ascending a 6,000m peak and, although we assess each client's personal situation carefully, we also further consider the compounding effects of dehydration brought on by excessive vomiting and loss of appetite. AMS might sound frightening but our guides are fully trained (and highly experienced) in helping relieve your personal symptoms and providing advice on how to best proceed.

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FAQ'S

What can I do to help prevent AMS?

In most cases AMS can be avoided by following guidelines:

- Drink lots of water
- Walk slowly
- Stay warm
- Eat well

We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the various affects that altitude can cause. During your pre-climb briefing, we describe altitude sickness to you in detail, and advise you how to cope with it. The most important thing is not to fear it, but to respect it and to know how to deal with it and more importantly tell your guides how you feel.

Our guides have seen every condition that can occur on this trek, and they will always know how to deal with problems.

Is there a risk of getting HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema) and HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema) on the mountain?

HACE and HAPE rarely occur on this trek and our guides are fully trained in recognition of the onset of these problems and will deal with them at the first sign of their development.

Should I bring Diamox on the expedition with me?

Although we recommend you come armed with a course of Diamox or other high-altitude drug on this expedition, we do not recommend that take you these as a prophylactic during the trek or climb. We view Diamox as a treatment drug rather than a preventative medicine. Most adventure medics give similar advice, however we do appreciate this can be confusing, as many GPs (who aren't necessarily mountaineers) do suggest taking it as a prophylactic.

We pride ourselves on designing all our itineraries with acclimatisation very much front and centre and this expedition itinerary has been carefully designed to allow for your body to adjust to the altitude gradually, safely and comfortably. However, if you find that you are still having problems adjusting to the altitude (see our FAQ on Altitude Sickness) then your expedition leader or expedition medic will recommend the correct course of action regarding taking Diamox.

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FAQ'S

Should I take Diamox?

It is far preferable to take Diamox if and when needed during the course of the expedition. If you are already taking it and then start having altitude related problems you are left with few options but to descend to a more comfortable altitude which sadly often means that the summit is not attainable.

Furthermore, Diamox is a diuretic, meaning you will have to drink a lot of fluid to prevent dehydration. Of course, the upshot of this is you'll have to pee more which means you'll probably be having to get up more in the night and take cover behind rocks during the day. Another quite common side-effect is that it can cause your extremities to "buzz and tingle" including your fingers, toes and lips which can feel quite unsettling. Other side-effects can include dizziness and light headedness with loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Although all these side-effects are manageable when you have symptoms of altitude sickness, we personally believe it is counter-intuitive to take it unless necessary.

Of course, it is totally up to you, this is just our recommendation and we're not doctors. If you do decide to take Diamox on the advice of your doctor then please do let your leader know in situ so they are aware of this. We also suggest you take the drug for a couple of days a few weeks before travelling so you can experience the symptoms before taking them during the trek.

What happens if there is a problem on the mountain?

We're in the developing world now, and help isn't quite so easily at hand. However, if there's a serious injury or sickness the 360 leader carries a satellite phone and we can get a helicopter from the Indian Air Force to airlift a casualty to Leh. Remember you'll need insurance to cover the expenses if this happens.

What happens if I need to leave the expedition early (not requiring medical evacuation, but I need to get home quickly)?

If something has happened at home and you need to get back quickly, we can get you to the nearest road head and arrange a pick-up to drive to Leh. If you've had to be turned back, or you feel you've reached your limit for the expedition, normally you will be led back down to base camp to wait for the others unless it is felt you need to return to Leh. Unfortunately you will be liable for any additional costs that this has incurred.

Do I need to take Malarial drugs? Do I need to have a yellow fever certificate?

There is no malaria or yellow fever in Ladakh, and you don't need a yellow fever certificate UNLESS you are traveling from an area where YF is present.

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FAQ'S

What vaccinations do I need?

The standard vaccinations that are generally recommended for travel to the Indian subcontinent are Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio, some people consider a rabies jab to be important. However you should consult your doctor, travel clinic or nurse practitioner for the most recent accepted advice rather than take our word for it.

You advocate taking a small first aid kit, what should it have in it?

We advocate a little bit of self-help on the trek. If you have a blister developing for example then please stop take off your boot and treat it before it becomes a problem.

Your own first aid kit should contain: a basic blister kit, plasters, antiseptic, sun-protection, your own personal medication (sometimes your porter might get to camp after you and if he is carrying your medication you may not be able to take it according to the regime you are used to), basic pain relief (aspirin and Ibuprofen,) a personal course of antibiotics if prone to illness etc. Foot powder in your socks every morning is great for preventing blisters.

Generally the best approach packing your first aid kit is to include such basic medications as if you would on a family or personal holiday.

Your 360 expedition leader and/or a local porter carries a very comprehensive first aid kit which contains a wide range of supplies and medications. They are fully trained to use whatever is needed for any emergency that may arise. We advocate keeping this in mind when packing your own first aid supplies and keeping your own FA kit as compact and light as possible.

Stok Kangri

India | 6,153m

FAQ'S

Kit

What clothing should I wear on the mountain?

If this is your first foray into high altitude climbing and don't already own much equipment then we advocate borrowing gear from friends, buying second hand (not shoes) or hiring from our partners Outdoorhire.co.uk as the cost of buying everything on the kit list can be more than the trip itself.

Our guides usually start the walk wearing long, lightweight trekking trousers and T-shirts. Long trousers are recommended as a deterrent to insects, stinging plants and to act as sun protection. Shorts can also be worn on the initial few days of the trek as the temperature is usually warm. Ensure that you apply sun-protection frequently, or buy a once a day product such as P20 if you're not very good at remembering to apply it. Sunglasses are worn for most of the trek as well as sunhats.

The prevailing conditions on the mountain will dictate what you will wear: if it is cold when you leave the camp in the morning then wear your fleece. As things warm up take advantage of the zipper system which most trekking clothing has – open and close the zips to adjust to your own preferred temperature. If you get too warm then take a layer off.

Over the top of your clothing you will wear a climbing harness and be attached to a rope for some of the day.

Waterproofs are needed on hand at all times. Stok Kangri is a big mountain that creates its own weather system. It is not unusual to be caught out in an afternoon rainstorm low down on the trek. Waterproofs should be Goretex material or similar.

What do your guides wear on summit day?

On summit day it gets cold and temperatures of 0C to -10C are not unusual.

Typically our guides wear 2 sets of base layers (long johns), a thick fleece layer (top and bottom) and then on the legs waterproofs whilst on the upper torso a down jacket is worn. As the wind picks up near the summit ridge our guides will put on their windproof layer to ward off the wind chill. On their hands they'll wear a thin layer of fleece working gloves over the top of which a thicker set of ski gloves or mittens is worn.

Their heads are covered by a thermal beanie hat or a thick balaclava and the hood of their down jackets. On their feet the guides wear one pair of thin socks and one pair of thick.

Waterproofs are used as an invaluable windshield to protect you against the effect of wind chill when a strong wind blows.

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FAQ'S

What is the best type of footwear to use?

Whilst plastic boots are generally essential for climbing 6,000m peaks, Stok Kangri at the end of summer is generally the exception that proves the rule! You are very unlikely to need plastic boots as the summit (and summit day) are generally snow-free. If plastic boots are deemed necessary they will be supplied in-country.

In a similar vein, crampons aren't always required on Stok Kangri and will very much depend on the snow conditions on the mountain. Crampons WILL be provided if you don't have your own.

You will however need a good pair of trekking boots, which should be sturdy, waterproof, insulated against cold temperatures and offer adequate ankle support. In addition it is highly recommended that your boots are well worn in to prevent the formation of blisters. A range of suitable boots are on the market and further advice as to which brand names are available can be found online or at your local gear store and do also check out our [useful guide for boots and crampons](#).

What will happen to my mountain hardware during the climb?

All the mountain hardware (plastics, crampons, ice axes, etc) are brought directly to the camp by porters.

What about back in Leh?

The temperatures in Leh will be anywhere between 15C and 35C so shorts and t-shirts will be fine, possibly trousers in the evening on a cooler day.

Can I leave my civvies at the hotel whilst we're on the mountain?

Yes, you can leave a bag of clothes and personal effects that you're not planning to take up the mountain in Leh, they will either be looked after by our local team or left in a lock-up at the hotel.

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FAQ'S

How much will my pack weigh during the trek?

A daysack is worn by the climber at all times during the trek. The content of this is mandatory and should include: a fleece (for when taking breaks or the weather changes); a full set (top and bottom) of waterproofs; sufficient water for the day; snacks; camera equipment; personal medication and a head torch.

Your day-to-day rucksack should weigh no more than 3 – 4 kilos and a rucksack of around 30 – 40 L capacity will more than suffice. This rucksack can be filled to the brim with extra stuff when checking in at the airport. Our guides for example put their down jackets or a thick fleece and a pair of mountain socks in this bag so as to free up space in their hold luggage. It is important that your day sack has an adjustable waist belt to transfer the weight of your daily load onto your hips and from here onto your legs (strongest muscles) to do most of the carrying. Another handy feature would be a compartment in which to fit a platypus/ camelbak or water bladder.

Our main luggage will be carried from camp to camp by horses. Our initial check in luggage should be around 22kg.

Are down jackets necessary?

They are highly recommended and are worth their weight in gold on summit day. Our guides wear them every evening from the high camp up. A layer system comprising of several layers of base and thermal layers, fleeces, and a thick jacket will suffice on most summit nights but nothing beats the efficiency of a good down jacket (especially when topped with a water proof layer).

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FAQ'S

How warm does my sleeping bag need to be?

Should be rated within the -10C comfort zone. From the first camp upwards it is not unusual to experience frosty nights and a good night's sleep is important to giving you the best chance to climb this mountain. Ensure you get a sleeping bag that has this temperature rating at this comfort zone rather than as its extreme zone.

Our guides take sleeping bags rated to well below -10C to ensure that they are warm at night. 3 season sleeping bags can be enhanced by using an inner silk liner (or similar), and ultimately by draping your down jacket over you. The idea is to be as comfortable and warm as possible for the night and henceforth to ensure plenty of sleep for the arduous days ahead. It is important to remember that down sleeping bags work by your own body heating the down that's inside the bag.

Once you have warmed the bag up the feather down will retain the heat and ensure that you sleep at a temperature that's your own body temperature. For best results wear as little as possible when inside your sleeping bag. Our guides will often only wear a set of thermals in their bag. It is important for the bag to trap the heat. By wearing multiple layers of clothing your clothing will trap this heat and your bag will not function properly.

Is it possible to rent equipment before I go?

You can rent equipment from our friends at www.outdoorhire.co.uk. Look under Partner Kit Lists, 360 Expeditions. However, we do advocate the use of personal equipment when it comes to footwear, your boots should be well worn in to your own feet.

The Climb

What is the best time of the year to do this trek?

August and September are the best months for climbing Stok Kangri, offering stable weather and good temperatures.

Whilst there can sometimes be rain/snow showers, it is usually very stable.

September has the added advantage of there being fewer trekkers.

We did experience unseasonably snowy weather at the end of September 2018 but that was unprecedented and something our local crews have never before experienced and don't expect to again. You can read more about their trip [here](#).

What is the overall success rate for climbing the mountain?

The success rate for Stok Kangri is about 80%.

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FAQ'S

How long is summit day?

The summit day is about 10 – 14 hours.

What is the ratio of leaders to clients?

On the trekking phase we have one overall 360 leader who runs the expedition, assisted by 1 local guide per 8 clients. Once we reach base camp the team increases and we use 1 local guide per 4 clients.

How out of my comfort zone will I be?

On a day to day level remember that you will be camping at altitude in cold temperatures. You are likely to be cold, washing and toilet facilities will be limited, your appetite may be affected by the altitude and as you get higher on the trek you are likely to suffer shortness of breath and many people experience difficulty sleeping. Remember that everyone on the trek is likely to be experiencing exactly the same symptoms, physical and mental.

How fit do I need to be for this expedition?

Climbers are expected to be in good physical condition. The better your physical shape the more you will be able to handle the demands of trekking to the base camp and then climbing the peak. Having a good level of fitness will allow you to enjoy the expedition all the better and increase your chances of reaching the summit.

How cold / hot can it get?

The temperature in the mountains can vary from 30C during the day to 0C in the evenings. Add some windchill on summit day and it could be somewhat cooler. In Leh the temperature can vary between 15 – 35C.

The Weather

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Travel

Where do I meet my Leader?

Your guide will generally meet you at the airport. At the check-in desk look for someone wearing a 360 logo.

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FAQ'S

Insurance

Do I need special insurance fro this expedition?

You must carry individual travel insurance to take part in the trek. We cannot take you on the mountain without proof of insurance.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip. To include medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip.

Your insurance details are requested on the booking form, however this can be arranged at a later date. 360 Expeditions will be requesting your insurance details 8 weeks before your departure.

Training

Any tips on how I can maximise my chances of success?

The 360 training programs have been devised to be expedition specific. Use these as a guide but also feel free to contact us for individual advice on how to best incorporate the most suitable fitness program with your own lifestyle. The idea is to increase the intensity of the exercise over 4 to 6 months before you leave for the expedition. Concentrate on cardiovascular work-outs during the initial weeks by taking short runs when time allows and try to spend at least 2 weekends a month going on long duration walks (longer than 6 hrs) carrying a rucksack of around 10kg. As you get stronger increase this rate of exercise and the duration by walking every weekend and running 5km every second day.

A focused regime will not only prepare your body for carrying minor loads but will harden your body against the big days on the mountain itself. In addition the weekend walks will help break in your boots and get you used to your equipment. In combination this will pay dividends when you reach Stok Kangri because even though you can't train for altitude your body will be ready for arduous days and you will be familiar with how to best use your equipment.

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FAQ'S

Finance

When is the money due for this expedition? What kind of payment do you accept?

Generally speaking deposits are due upon booking as we need to book your international flights well in advance. The full amount should be paid 4 months prior to departure. However having said this, our aim is to get you to the top of this mountain and we understand that personal financial situations can vary. Please contact our friendly office crew to discuss a suitable payment plan if monthly payments would make life easier.

What is your cancellation policy? What is your refund policy?

Please read our terms and conditions carefully before you depart. 360 Expeditions highly recommends trip cancellation insurance for all expeditions. Due to the nature and heavy costs of government and operator permits we must adhere to a stringent refund policy.

Money: what currency should I take?

You can't buy or sell Indian Rupees outside of India. Therefore we would recommend taking either British pounds or American dollars and then changing them when you arrive in country. Both are readily recognised and are easily converted to the local currency. Upon arrival there will always be a bureau de change at the airport. There are also plenty of ATM's around Leh. Generally either of these provide a better rate of exchange than your hotel.

Again, do check with your bank, what the charges are for withdrawing cash in India.

What additional spending money will we need?

The amount of money you will need depends on how many presents you wish to buy or how much you wish to drink when you come off the hill. As a basic rule of thumb \$300 should be more than adequate for any post expedition spending. India is a relatively cheap place and when indulging in the local custom of haggling then goods can be very good value for money. The only cash you'll need to consider taking with you on the mountain is the local crew tips which are presented to them usually on the final evening at the last camp before you sign out from the national park.

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FAQ'S

How much do we tip our local crew?

Our local crew work extremely hard to ensure that your expedition runs well. While tipping is not compulsory, once you see how hard the crew work and realise the small amount of money they get paid relative to one's own income, tipping will seem the least you can do to say thank you. As a general rule we suggest between \$80-100 for tipping the local crew.

For the leader this is your call.

Electronics

Will I be able to charge my camera/phone battery on the trek?

Opportunities to charge your batteries will be limited. If you can get hold of a solar battery charger this is probably the best option. This together with making sure that you keep your spare batteries warm i.e. by keeping them near your body day and night should mean that you can keep snapping all the way!

Is there mobile phone reception on the trek?

Your best bet is to buy a local SIM to use in and around Leh to call out as it's very unlikely that the local networks will let you join through your UK operator.

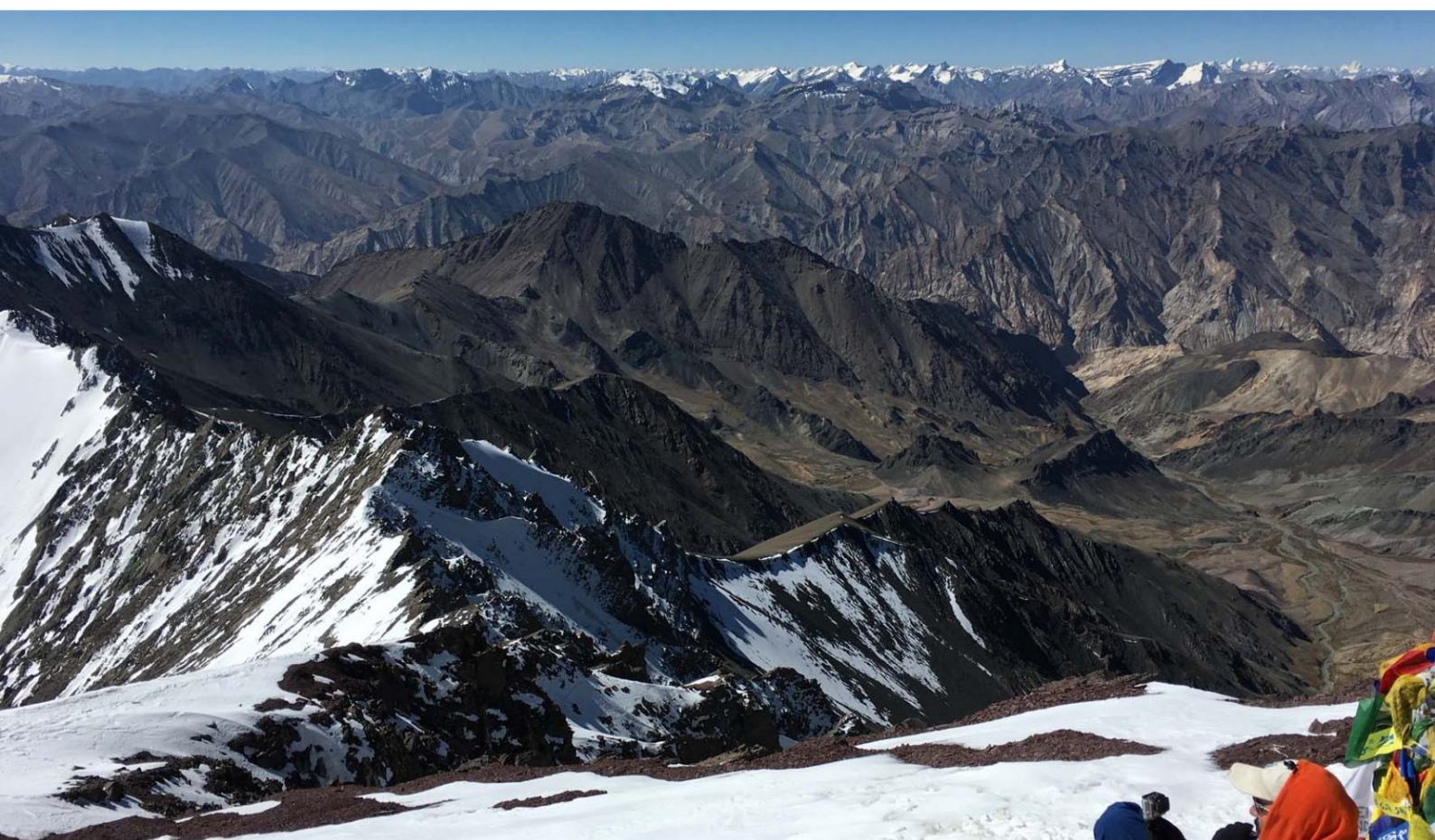
General

Will my valuables be safe?

While we will do everything we can to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions, the general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery, necklaces, rings and even watches. Your passport and money should be kept on you at all times. As with travel in any foreign country, you need to look after yourself and your possessions, and this is no different.

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TRAINING PROGRAM

To begin 6 months prior to the expedition where possible.

1. CVS: Cardiovascular exercise which is low impact such as swimming, cycling, cross trainer, rowing.

2. Weekend walk should be done over undulating terrain. Only a light rucksack needs to be carried.

3. For specific exercises it is worth doing static squats and heel raises on a regular basis to improve leg muscles prior to the trip. Static squats are especially useful to help protect the knees. Please remember that it is still important to have a well balanced workout using a variety of muscle groups.

4. It is worth winding down and resting in the week leading up to the trip, doing several light walks to keep things going.

5. When walking going at a pace of a brisk walk with a light sweat and enough to feel breathless is recommended

6. During the program, rather than step up suddenly each month (example, going for 3 one hour walks each week during the weekdays in April to 3 one and half hour walks suddenly in May) it is better to build up gradually each week so there isn't a large transition (example, going for 3 one hour walks during week 1 in April, going for 3 one hour and ten minute walks during week 2 in April, going for 3 one hour and fifteen minute walks during week 3 in April, going for 3 one hour and twenty minute walks during week 4 in April)

6. It is important you seek medical advice prior to starting any training program, especially if you are not used to regular physical exertion

All the best with your training!

MONTH 1

OPT 1

2 x 30 mins weekday walk
1 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 30 mins weekday walk
2 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 2

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 3

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 4

OPT 1

3 x 1 hour weekday walk
1 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1 hour weekday walk
2 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

MONTH 5

OPT 1

3 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
1 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
2 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

MONTH 6

OPT 1

3 x 2 hours weekday walk
1 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 3 hours weekday walk
2 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS



"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty & well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out & loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!' "

Dream it. Plan it. Live it.