



Guest Brief: Snow Leopard Expedition

Welcome to one of the most extraordinary wildlife adventures on the planet – the Snow Leopard Expedition in Ladakh. This journey takes you into the remote Trans-Himalayan mountains, offering a rare chance to observe the elusive **Snow Leopard** in its natural habitat. This high-altitude expedition also introduces you to the stark beauty, deep spirituality, and resilient communities of Ladakh.

Because of the rugged terrain and extreme altitudes involved, this is a physically and mentally demanding expedition. This handbook is intended to prepare you thoroughly so that your experience is safe, respectful, and deeply rewarding.

Expedition Overview:

Part 1: Arrival & Acclimatization – Leh (3,500m / 11,500 ft)

You will land in Leh, the capital of Ladakh, where your first 2–3 days will be devoted to altitude acclimatization. We deliberately avoid strenuous activity during this time. Gentle sightseeing (optional) may include local monasteries, traditional Ladakhi homes, and markets. You'll stay in a comfortable guesthouse or boutique hotel with heating and hot meals.

Part 2: Wildlife Expedition – Ulley (4,000m / 13,000 ft)

After acclimatization, you will transfer by vehicle (approximately 2.5–3 hours) to the remote village of Ulley. This region is one of the best-documented habitats for Snow Leopard sightings. You will be based at a rustic but cozy lodge or homestay that is geared for winter expeditions. Daily tracking and wildlife viewing will be done with expert guides and spotters.

Health & Altitude Acclimatization:

Traveling to Ladakh involves **high-altitude exposure**, and it is critical to allow your body time to adjust to the lower oxygen levels.

Guidelines:

- **Day 1: Complete Rest.** Avoid stairs, long walks, or any exertion.
- **Hydration:** Drink 4–5 litres of fluids daily. Avoid alcohol and caffeine.

- **Diamox (Acetazolamide):** Consult your physician about taking this as a preventive.
- **Symptoms to Watch:** Headache, dizziness, shortness of breath at rest, loss of appetite, disturbed sleep, or nausea. Inform your guide immediately if these occur.
- **Oxygen & Evacuation:** Emergency oxygen is carried. In serious cases, guests may be brought down to Leh for treatment.

What to Pack:

Being properly equipped can make all the difference in your comfort and success during the expedition.

Clothing (Layered Approach)

- Thermal base layers (top and bottom)
- Fleece or wool mid-layers
- Insulated down jacket (800 fill or higher)
- Windproof and waterproof outer shell
- Fleece trousers or insulated pants
- Warm hat, balaclava, scarf or buff
- Insulated gloves + waterproof over-gloves
- Woollen socks (multiple pairs)

Footwear

- Waterproof insulated hiking boots (broken in)
- Boot warmers/liners
- Lightweight slip-ons or crocs for indoor use

Gear & Essentials

- Daypack (20–30L) for camera, water, extra layer
- Water bottles or thermos flasks (wide-mouthed for freezing)



- Sunglasses (UV protection), high SPF sunscreen, lip balm
- Camera, zoom lenses, binoculars (10x42 or higher recommended)
- Power banks and extra batteries (keep insulated inside clothing)
- Personal medications, altitude sickness meds, and first-aid kit
- Headlamp with spare batteries
- Wet wipes, moisturizer, small towel (bathing is limited)
- Passport copies, travel insurance document

Accommodation & Services:

1. In Leh:

- Heated rooms with bathrooms attached
- Room heaters or electric blankets
- Hot meals, filtered water, basic Wi-Fi

2. In Ulley:

- Rustic homestay or expedition lodge adapted for winter
- Heated rooms
- Insulated sleeping arrangements with heavy quilts or sleeping bags
- Shared heated bathroom
- Limited electricity (solar-powered in some cases)
- No internet or mobile network – prepare for digital detox

Wildlife Tracking in Ulley:

Snow Leopards are wild, free-ranging, and highly elusive. Success depends on persistence, sharp eyes, and experienced local trackers.

- You may spend hours (or days) scanning a valley for movement.



- Spotting scopes and radios are used by the guide team for coordination.
- Wildlife includes Snow Leopards, Asiatic Ibex, Blue Sheep (bharal), Ladakh Urial, Red Fox, Tibetan Wolf, Golden Eagle, and Lammergeier among others.
- On some days, short hikes or climbs (with trekking poles and guides) may be needed to access vantage points. Pace is slow and tailored to the group.

Meals & Dietary Info:

- All meals are prepared fresh and hot, even in Ulley. Expect warm Indian and continental fare.
- We can cater to vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and other diets with advance notice.
- Warm drinks, soups, and light snacks will be available throughout the day, including in the field.
- Alcohol is discouraged due to altitude effects.

Local Culture & Respect:

- Ladakh is a deeply spiritual and culturally rich region, heavily influenced by Tibetan Buddhism.
- Dress modestly and always ask before photographing people, especially during the visit to monasteries.
- Refrain from loud behavior, littering, or disturbing wildlife.
- Homestays are run by local families – you’re sharing their home. Respect their customs and be mindful of water and energy usage.

Connectivity & Emergency Contacts:

- **Mobile networks:** Only partial coverage in Leh (Jio, BSNL, Airtel)
- **Ulley:** No network – satellite phones or radios used by our team
- In case of emergency, Nature Safari India will always be able to reach your expedition team.



Nature Safari India Emergency Contacts:

☎ **Sharad Vats** : +91 9811200094

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✅ **Final Reminders:**

- **Be flexible:** Wildlife sightings, weather, and road access may change daily.
- **Be patient:** This is a rare privilege, and success takes time and humility.
- **Be kind:** To fellow travelers, guides, and hosts – this is a journey of shared spirit and respect.