



Spiti - Land of Red Robes - Dharma, Duty, Devotion

Become enlightened. Experience for yourself the ways in which Buddhism has moulded, guided Shaman, Sages. Explore the lived experience of Buddhism in the valley in all its forms.



Life in Spiti provides everything the soul needs to thrive.

From the fragrance of the mountains to the flow of clear springs. The rhythmic chants of the monks, the whirl of the wind across the river valley. The golden rays of the morning sun and the gentle warmth of the crimson orb at the end of the day.

In Spiti you'll learn that there is more than one path into the future – a path based on the co-evolution between humans and earth. At first the outsider will see the hard life, but give yourself time and you'll see the rare kind of purity the people live by.

FROM THE MILLERS





Day 1- Chandigarh - Shimla

Driving time -3hrs

Distance -105kms

Himachal's capital and one of India's most popular hill stations, Shimla has a few hidden secrets left. With plenty of forest walks to choose from or opt for a pleasant walk on the Mall. Shimla with its relaxed atmosphere, green river valleys and vistas over distant mountain ranges is the ideal place to ready oneself for the adventure ahead.

Madhavi at the quaint Sunnymeade heritage cottage will be your hostess for the first night. Situated on the edge of an Oak and Rhododendron Reserve Forest, Sunnymeade Estate is surrounded by floral gardens, with stunning views over the surrounding mountains and reserve.



Day 2- Shimla - Kanam - Pooh

Driving time -9hrs

Distance -280kms



The day starts with a drive on the Indo-Tibetan highway through the Shimla hills covered with Pine and Deodar trees. As you enter Kinnaur with its jaw dropping mountain and valley scenery, a distinctive cultural change and mix emerges from Hindu to Tibetan Buddhist. Proud and friendly, Kinnauri's can be recognized by their short cylindrical cap.

Enroute you will spend time at the rarely visited Kanam monastery where the first translation of

Buddhist philosophy into a European language took place. From there you make your way to Pooh which has served as a gateway to the Buddhist heritage of the Himalayas and as an important stop on the trading route to Tibet through the Shipki la pass. Part of Western Tibet 's Guge Empire, at Pooh your host will be Tenzin Negi who's family comes from a lineage of monks. Their house has one of the most important temples of the village and you can also visit the cave of lama Govind, the mountain Yogi who has been meditating in different caves in Kinnaur for the last decade.



Day 3 - Pooh - Nako

Driving time -2hrs

Distance -50kms



The change in landscape, architecture, and religion is hard to miss as you reach the upper regions of the Himalayas. Slate roofs give way to flat Tibetan roofs on your approach to Nako which means 'the place from where one starts a pilgrimage'. Ringchen Zangpo, the 'Great Translator' and key figure in the second propagation of Buddhism, built Tabo Gompa in the 11th century, this is believed to be one of over 100 monasteries founded by him. Inside are ancient murals and what is believed to be a footprint of Guru Padmasambhava, the sage credited with spreading Buddhism in Tibet in the 8th century.

While Nako is not the secret it once was, its narrow streets and stone and mud-brick houses built around the lake and the setting are still magical. You can spend part of the day hiking or admiring Nako's remarkable stone-wall terracing.



Day 4- Nako - Gyu - Tabo

Driving time -3hr 30min

Distance -75kms



As you make your way from Nako to Gyu you head deeper into Trans Himalayan range. This isolated settlement is famous for its 500yr old mummified monk. The nails, teeth and hair of the mummy appear as if of a living person. Recent research papers suggest that the monk underwent self-mummification, a ritual undertaken by highly devoted and able spiritual masters who would starve themselves to death very slowly in to reach the highest form of enlightenment.



Whilst driving next to the turquoise-grey ribbon of the Spiti river from Gyu you'll be passing scattered villages throughout the serrated moonscape until you reach Tabo monastery. Built in 996AD, Tabo is regarded as the oldest continuously operating Buddhist enclaves in the Himalayas. Built on a Bon temple, the monastery is one of the highlights of Spiti with unique architecture and a plethora of wall paintings and mud statues. You can also visit caves which have been used as assembly halls for monks and also as dwellings for meditation

Day 5 - Tabo - Dhankar - Lalung - Sagnam

Driving time -2kms

Distance -50kms



Less than an hour from Tabo you'll visit Dhankar the site of a 1200 year old temple. Dhankar's crag-top fort and old gompa together create one of the most spectacular sights in Spiti. This was the former capital of the Guge kings who once ruled Spiti. A two hour trek to the lake above Dhankar is also possible.

The drive from Dhankar to Lalung is along a ridge with beautiful views of the confluence of the Pin and Spiti rivers. Built during the second propagation of Buddhism in the 11th century, this outwardly modest monastery is actually an antique gem. The atmospheric main hall has interior walls lavished on three sides with an extraordinary array of colorful mud-plaster sculptures. Locals claim they were made by God not man. For the next 2 nights night you head to Sagnam to be with the incredible Soni and Karma.





Day 6 - Sagnam - Kungri - Sagnam

Driving time - 45min

Distance -15kms

Soni and Karma. These inspiring women live and left their jobs to serve the elders in their valley. 'This is my kora', Soni will tell you. Their homestay now sustains the old age home. Post breakfast you can head for a short hike towards the Pin Valley national park. Depending on your luck you may sight some raptors, mountain goats, foxes, weasels and maybe even some signs of a snow leopard.

In the evening witness for yourself the dedication with which the nuns practice their dharma as you spend the evening at Kungri nunnery. You'll come to see how Buddhism is fundamental to the lives of Spitians

Day 7 - Sagnam - Demul - Komic - Hikkim - Langza
- Kaza

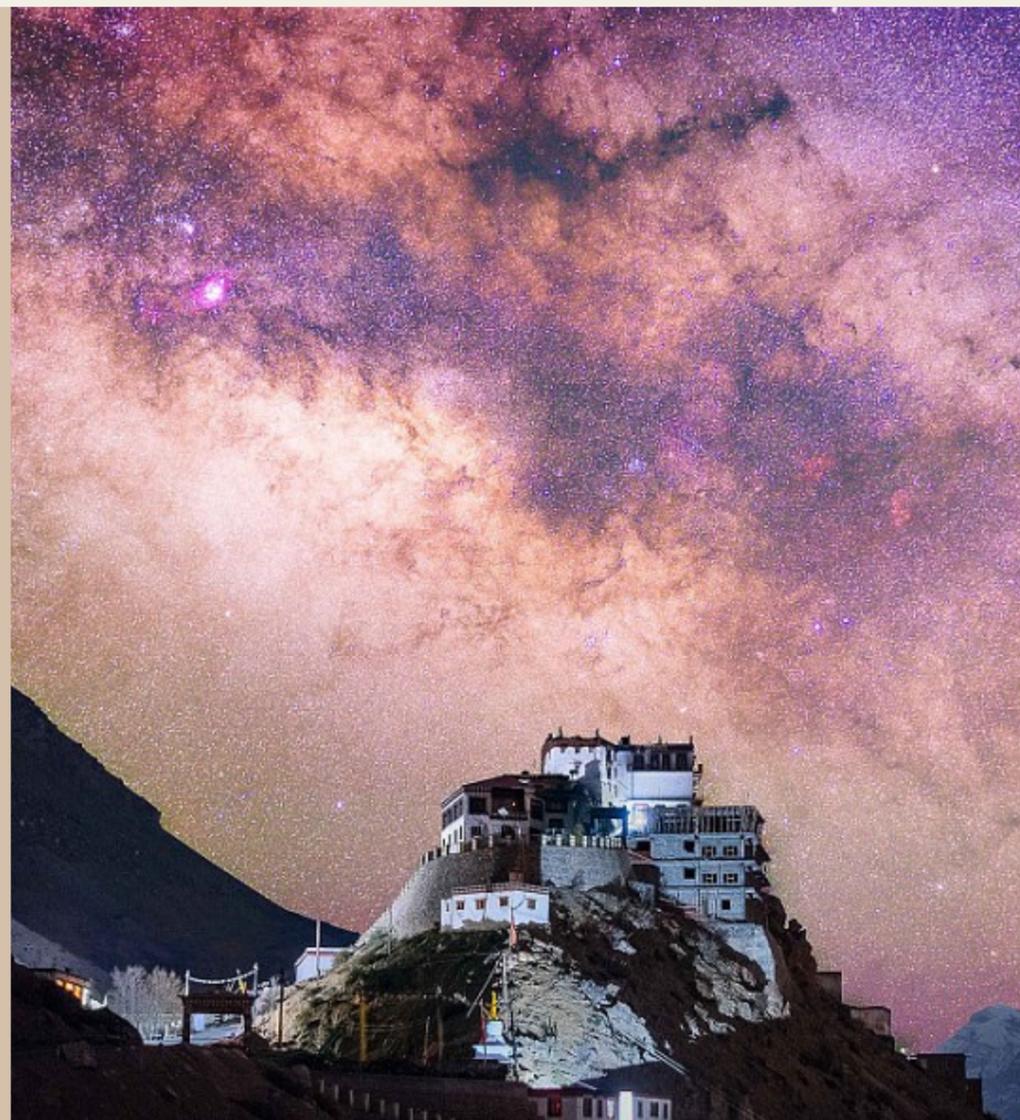
Driving time -3hrs 30min

Distance -80kms



The day starts with a drive from Demul to Komic. For anyone interested in geology the views of different strata tilted at all conceivable angles tell us the story of the land we live on. The stunning drive leads you to one of the highest inhabited places in the world at 4600mts. The views are breathtaking and Komic also has a monastery from the 13th century. Fancy sending your loved ones a postcard from the world's highest post office? A short drive from Komic to Hikkim will allow you to do so.

Lunch will be organized at a homestay at Langza and you can also try your hand at digging for marine fossils some of them being over 100million year old. For the night you head to Kaza where Simba awaits you.



Day 8 - Kaza - Ki - Tashi gang - Kaza
Driving time -3hrs
Distance -60kms

The day however starts with a visit to Ki monastery. Covering a conical hillock with whitewashed monastic buildings, Ki gompa is one of the most photographed sights of Himachal and houses nearly 300 monks. Also making it the largest in the area. In the upper library, is the bed that was used by the Dalai Lama during his visits in 1960 and 2000.

From Ki you head to Tashi gang, a hamlet of 30. An hour trek from Tashi gang is a meditation cave with carvings which is still in use. The trek to the cave is easy and you'll probably have the company of a Griffon hovering above you. Views while heading to Tashi gang around Gete are amongst the most stunning in the area and you will see for yourself that the giant rock mountains around could not have been carved by any mortal hand but only by the force of wind and water over millennia.



Day 9 - Kaza - Chandertal lake

Driving time - 5hrs

Distance 100kms



A fitting place to end your trip, the Chandertal lake presents mirror-perfect reflections of the surrounding white-top peaks.

Before reaching the lake you will drive past the soaring 4551mts Kunzum Pass with the Spiti River as your near constant companion, although sometimes way below in precipitous gorges.

Though you may not see one but this is Snow Leopard, territory. The lake is also a nesting sight for migratory birds and you may also sight the now Snowcock, Kestrel, Golden Eagle, Marmots and the Red Fox. A walk around the lake is sure to get you breathless, but it's well worth the effort.



Day 10 - Chandertal lake - Manali

Driving time - 7hrs

Distance - 140kms

As you exist this spectacular landscape with jagged peaks, arid mountains, fluttering prayer flags and whitewashed stupas, you can excuse yourself for feeling overwhelmed. The locals believe that Spiti is the land of Dharma. With your experience the highlights of Spiti would probably be of a spiritual nature: magnificent monasteries, prayer halls of chanting monks, and remote cliffside meditation retreats. Grandmothers murmuring mantras in temples

heavy with the aromas of juniper incense and yak butter are an essential part of this experience. Spitians have a level of devotion and faith that seems to belong to an earlier age. It is fascinating and inspiring at the same time.

Day 1- Chandigarh - Shimla

Driving time -3hrs, Distance -105kms, Accommodation at - Sunnymead homestay

Day 2- Shimla -Kanam - Pooh

Driving time -9hrs, Distance -280kms, Accommodation at - Om guest house

Day 3- Pooh - Nako

Driving time -2hrs, Distance -50kms, Accommodation at - Kinner camps

Day 4 - Nako - Gyu - Tabo

Driving time -3hrs 30min, Distance -75kms, Accommodation at - Maitreya hotel

Day 5- Tabo - Dhankar - Lalung - Sagnam

Driving time -2hrs, Distance -50kms, Accommodation at - Soni and karma homestay

Day 6 - Sagnam - Kungri - Sagnam

Driving time -45min, Distance -15kms, Accommodation at - Soni and Karma homestay

Day 7- Sagnam - Demul - Komic - Hikkim - Langza - Kaza

Driving time -3hrs 30min, Distance -80kms, Accommodation at - Hotel Deyzor

Day 8- Kaza - Ki - Tashi gang - Kaza

Driving time -3hrs, Distance -60kms, Accommodation at - Hotel Deyzor

Day 9- Kaza - Chandertal lake

Driving time -5hrs, Distance -100kms, Accommodation at - Parasol campsite

Day 10 - Chandertal lake to Manali

Driving time - 7hrs, Distance - 140kms, Accommodation at - Casa Bella Vista

Day 11 - Manali - Chandigarh

Driving time - 8/9hrs, Distance - 310kms