

Quest for the Snow Leopard, and a close-up experience of an Ancient Buddhist Culture

Ladakh, Summer '08

KarmaQuest and the Snow Leopard Conservancy present a special opportunity for adventure-some travellers looking for an unusual experience:

- A chance in a lifetime to track a wild snow leopard...
- A chance at survival for the endangered cat...
- And some extra income for the mountain villagers who promise not to harm the leopards in exchange for your visit to their homestay.

This trip takes you high into the Western Himalaya where some of the best preserved Tibetan art



and culture remain. And where some of the last remaining snow leopards on earth make a home amidst their blue sheep prey, goat farmers and tourists.

Your journey begins with a spectacular flight from Delhi to Leh. A driving and sightseeing tour along the Indus River gorge to Alchi and Lamayuru monasteries helps you acclimatize to the altitude during the first few days.

The trek begins with an overnight at the picturesque village of Rumbak (elev. 12,500 ft.), where villagers host your stay in their simple, clean homes. You'll share traditional meals and can partake in farming, butter-making, or English lessons with the children,

gaining new friends and insight into another way of life. Other nights on the trek are spent tent-camping with an attentive staff.

SLC-India staff will accompany the group to Rumbak Village, for an introduction to the community and a special overview of the Conservancy's programs.

After the Rumbak visit, you will be walking through snow leopard country, led by a nature guide trained under the Conservancy's community-based tourism program. While you will be very lucky to see a snow leopard during the warm months, our guides will show you tracks and other signs made by these magnificent cats. You may also see blue sheep, ibex and the impressive argali sheep, along with golden eagles, snow cocks and other unusual birds protected in Hemis National Park.

The colorful, vertical strata of ancient landscapes pierce the sky in dramatic, wind-eroded formations, and the slopes are carpeted with summer wildflowers.

The trip surpassed our expectations. Everything was a great experience for us, including meeting Ladakhi people and having fresh food on the trek.

-John and Cathy Yee, September, 2007

The most frequent question I am asked is, 'Would you do it again?' My answer is, 'In a minute!'

-Mary Herrmann, September, 2007



If you would like more information, or to sign up for this trip, please contact KarmaQuest at 650-560-0101; karmaquest@earthlink.net www.KarmaQuests.com

Trips can be organized for a minimum of four people, between April and mid-October 2008, when daytime temperatures range from mild to hot, and evenings are cool but pleasant.

The homestay and camping trip is rated moderately challenging, crossing two high passes (16,400 ft.), and offering visitors an in-depth experience of Hemis National Park's spectacular landscapes and traditional villages.

The 21-day trip includes nine days of trekking through Rumbak and the Markha Valley, ending at Hemis Monastery, one of the oldest and richest monasteries in Ladakh.

We ask each participant to agree to the following terms:

- Doctor's health clearance and Rx for *Diamox* (which helps with altitude adjustment);
- Self-coverage medical and medivac insurance;
- One month physical training (minimum exercise - 1 hr per day walking);
- Signed release of liability for KarmaQuest and the SLC.

