

We proudly present our two new promotional videos showing what our trekking tours in Ladakh looks like.

Videos by [Patrick Haderer](#)

This is trekking in Ladakh

When you step out of the plane in Leh, you already are at 3500 m of altitude. That's no small thing. The plane is (hopefully!) pressurized to around sea level values, so regardless if you came down from the sky or drove up from a lower area, your body has to first get used to the thin air of Ladakh. Not for nothing we take great care to start slow, giving you time to adapt before carrying on with the trip program. After arriving, put your feet up and take a deep breath. The flight (or drive) is usually quite exhausting, the altitude makes it worse, and you usually need some time to shed the stress of the trip. On the first day, therefore, we typically do nothing but rest. The day after that we start slowly, get to know Leh, stroll around and take the city in. There is a lot to see in the colorful and chaotic capital of Ladakh. The following day we focus on its cultural highlights, visiting some of the most beautiful Buddhist monasteries, listening to the vibrant voices of the monks while they sing Buddhist prayers, marveling at the extraordinary sounds of Tibetan musical instruments, delving into the mystical Tibetan Buddhist mythology and wandering around a bit. The body has now finally caught up and we have regained our strength. Breathing is still a bit harder than what we are used to at home, but we can manage. We get accustomed to the slowness of this place in the Himalayas, and learn to appreciate it.

This is how your first days in Ladakh can look like:

But the day comes when it is time to leave. Off to the mountains, out into freedom, into happiness, into the silence. Where we can become one with nature, find the essence of our being. Discover a simpler, slower way of living. In walking, the most basic form of locomotion, we return to ourselves. We leave behind the complexity of everyday life. The head is free of polluting thought-clouds. Breathing and walking become one single action, the mind placidly and unobtrusively tags along. It's not always easy to climb a mountain pass. It's exhausting, it's demanding, it makes us think about giving up, we quarrel with each other, with ourselves: why are you doing this when you could be lying on a floating bed on the Adriatic instead... But then you're up there, among the colorful prayer flags, looking at the majestic, otherworldly expanse of the Tibetan plateau and realize that it was worth the effort. Pushing to the limit, stepping out of our comfort zone lets us discover new worlds, new meanings, new aspects of ourselves. They are worth it. Absolutely. And they stay with us. Forever.

And this is how this journey of self discovery can look like:



Eager Feet?

Would you like to know more about this tour? Patrick Haderer and his friends took part in our popular trekking tour "Classic Tsomoriri Trek".

This impressive journey leads across the Tibetan Plateau, past the Salt Lake Tsokar, through traditional nomadic summer camps and to the deep blue shimmering waters of Lake Tsomoriri.

High mountain passes, wide plains and breathtaking panoramas determine the character of this tour. We find wild donkeys, rare black-necked cranes, and huge herds of yak and sheep. Walking under the seemingly endless horizon acts as a balm for stress-laden souls.

[>>To the tour>>](#)

Many people shy away from traveling to Ladakh (and other regions of the Himalayas), because they are afraid of the effects of high altitude. And yes, Ladakh is only in a few places below 3,000 meters above sea level. At that altitude the air is thin enough that keeping it inside requires some effort. But with just a few tips, all travelers, big and small alike, can learn to adjust faster and enjoy a safe stay.



The one who gets well acclimatized in Ladakh can easily reach altitudes over 6.000m (c) Barbara Esser

First of all, a disclaimer: Of the several thousand guests that we welcomed so far in Ladakh, less than 10 have had to leave due to altitude sickness. So that is really not much.

Some discomfort and height adjustment difficulties of course are more common, but also much easier to overcome with just a bit of patience and discipline.

The acclimatization starts in the mind

We are not trying to deny or dismiss the effects of altitude sickness, but our experience in the field for over ten years has allowed us to notice that most of the people that have trouble with the altitude worry too much in advance. Consequently, we believe that a positive approach and perhaps a slightly naïve “it will be all right” attitude are more successful than the headache of overthinking and preparing for the worst. By this we do not mean either a complete indifference: most people will definitely feel some of its effects. The goal should be a healthy balance between positive thinking and cautious respect.



Who keeps it low the first few days, can soon start hiking (up).

Stick to simple rules

There are some simple rules that you should always follow when you arrive at a high altitude location (such as Leh, at 3.500m). This begins with a first day of rest and relaxation. And it is hard to believe how many people nowadays have difficulty with simply doing nothing for a full day! Because your legs are already itching with anticipation, and you want to run and explore. After all, you didn't come all this way to lie still! Ok, if things go well you certainly don't need to spend the whole day lying in bed, you can go for a walk... just keep it easy and don't try to go climbing any mountain! Listen to yourself and your body and you will know what is good for you.

What is even more important is to have plenty of fluids and oxygen. That means a lot of drinking (alcohol is excluded, and you should keep away of it at least at the start) and getting out in the open, sitting and breathing the fresh air in the hotel or guest house's garden. When sleeping, try to do so in a relatively elevated position and, if possible, keep the windows open.

You can download the main tips for height adjustment as well as a PDF: [PDF](#)

Self-pity

"How are you?" Most people answer to this question automatically with a "Good, thank you!", even though that may not be true. You don't want to come off as self-pitying nor be a burden for anyone. But that's what you should be in Ladakh. **Ailments and discomfort should be notified** before

they become bigger problems. Especially when you are traveling in an organized tour, your guide will ask you this question not only out of politeness and interest for your mood, but because he wants to know how you're doing in relation to the height. He is also the one who can give you valuable tips and, if necessary, bring in a doctor.

Unsurprisingly, by the way, doctors in Ladakh are very experienced with regard to the altitude sickness, and can be of a great help when things go awry.



Children can also visit Ladakh. Our 8 year old son, at 4,500m.

Traveling with children?

Although long-distance travel with children is quickly (and happily) increasing in popularity, it is still a good idea to be cautious when traveling to higher altitudes. Obviously, you want to save your children as much trouble as possible. In our experience, though, the concern is not very justified, because children usually tolerated the height change better than adults. We believe that the child's body adapts to the altitude more easily than the adult's.

Teenagers are the exception: we have noticed, although at the moment we can't explain scientifically, that pubescent kids often have a somewhat rougher time adjusting, compared to adults or children. This of course does not mean that all young people have difficulties, nor that they can't normally adapt when appropriate measures are taken. Every year we welcome many young people who enjoy high altitude trekking (5,500m) or have even successfully climbed up to 6,000m.

Proper preparation

We are constantly being asked by our guests about how they can properly prepare for their visit to Ladakh and its mountains. Here are a few tips:

1. **Be healthy and fit!** It is always important that you take care of yourself and are physically fit and healthy. This is especially true for people who trek in Ladakh or want to go mountain climbing. Whoever suffers from a heart condition or has a lung disease and still wants to take a trip to the roof of the world, should first have a long conversation with his/her doctor! People who arrive with a cold or are suffering other ongoing symptoms of illness, have usually a very hard time adjusting to the altitude. We have often seen how a common cold, caught just before the flight to India, developed in a bad flu after arriving to Ladakh.
2. **Up, up and away!** Those who have enough time to prepare should definitely try to get used to the altitude already before leaving for Ladakh. This is of course easier if you live in Austria or other Alpine region, than if your home is in a flat one like Northern Germany. Things are fairly easy in Ladakh for people used to regularly hike over 2,500m or that slept repeatedly in high-altitude mountain huts before flying. However, this kind of "training" is most effective the closer it happens to the departure day.
3. **Hypobaric chamber.** A few of our guests were before departure even in a pressure chamber. They are nowadays easy to find in many major cities. In the past, they were mostly used by elite athletes and professional climbers (many Himalayan travelers use them these days). However, hypoxia training is relatively expensive. Again, the closer to the departure date, the better. (Just google for "hypoxia training" in your closest big city to find institutions that offer it).

Getting to Leh: should I travel by land or on a plane?

Again and again we hear or read that travelers are advised to arrive via Manali for a better acclimatization. But we consider this brutal shock treatment. After all, this journey entails crossing several 5,000m mountain passes, and in many cases sleeping at over 4,000m. This means that many will be ill for some time *during* the journey and then still a bit longer in Leh. After that, they are doing well, but was it really worth it? **We recommend traveling by plane, enjoy a few lazy days in and around Leh and then, after the tour and if you want, go back by land.** In that way you can really enjoy the ride and the scenery.