



**INDIA**

On the trail of the Snow Leopard



# PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



**Do something extraordinary.....**

## Itinerary

**India • On the Trail of the Snow Leopard**

**14 Days • 13 Nights  
1 – 14 Feb 2025**

**With Dan O'Neill  
twin share in Kurkhang Tents**

## Highlights

- The World's Best Snow Leopard Tour using the best snow leopard accommodation.
- The foremost snow leopard focused private camp with centrally heated tents, suites, brilliant chefs and social areas.
- Currently a 100% success rate of seeing a snow leopard during the expedition
- Top equipment including the best Swarovski Scopes for our clients use – the highest quality and best scope to client ratio

## Tour Essentials

Tour Style	Wildlife Trek
Tour Start	Delhi
Tour End	Delhi
Accommodation	Hotel, Private Lodge
Included Meals	11 Breakfasts, 12 Lunches, 12 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Medium
Notes	Small Group Trip - Max 12

This snow leopard journey has been designed to deliver a lovely combination of wildlife, culture, and history. This is a journey into the heart of the Himalayas, where you'll seek one of the planet's most elusive creatures. An expedition that blends adventure, conservation and cultural exploration.

Using the the premium and best located accommodation in Ladkah – LUNGMAR we will have access to both wilderness and Ladakhi cultural treasures.

This itinerary has currently offered a 100% success rate to see snow leopards.

All tours are led by experienced local guides who possess extensive knowledge of the terrain, weather conditions, and wildlife behavior. Their expertise is crucial in navigating the rugged landscapes safely and effectively.

On this once in a life time experience you will be led by one of the worlds' most experienced snow leopard expedition leaders Behzad J. Larry and Snow Leopard expert, biologist and Snow Leopard Trust 'explorer in residence' Dan O'Neill.

In Hemis National Park's remote, snow-covered landscapes, you'll witness snow leopards in their natural habitat – experiencing both the tracking of these mountain ghosts to understanding their ecosystem significance. .

Whether you're a wildlife enthusiast, adventurer, or conservationist, these expeditions offer unforgettable memories and a deeper love for nature's wonders.

Dan O'Neill is a field biologist, wildlife filmmaker, and explorer specialising in remote and challenging environments. He has organised numerous expeditions to find, film, and study rare animals from the pristine jungles of the northern Amazon and Mayan temple ruins of the Yucatan, to the frozen peaks of Central Asia. Regularly involved in field projects, he primarily works as a mammal specialist, expedition leader and camera-trap technician. After 5 years of collaboration, the Snow Leopard Trust named Dan as their first ever Explorer in Residence, working with international field teams and local partners to help communicate the conservation story of the planet's least understood big cat. His varied work also includes shooting & directing longform TV wildlife and expedition documentaries and digital mini-series, co-producing nature-inspired music with Grammy-winning artist Imogen Heap, and in the creative direction of projects spanning from live events to digital fashion campaigns. Dan's recent 5-part series 'Giants' produced by Off The Fence for Curiosity Stream premiered in May 2023 and circles the globe on 5 epic expeditions to find the biggest beasts to have walked the planet. 'Giants' marked the first time in history openly LGBT wildlife presenter hosted a series for a major network. Dan continues to be a passionate advocate for increased LGBT representation in STEM, natural history media, and adventure. His work has been featured in Attitude Magazine, Gay Times, The Advocate, The Independent, BBC Radio 4 and more.



## Why Pioneer Expeditions?

Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures. The team have a real passion for wildlife and adventure travel which we love to share with our clients. We delight in searching the world for new destinations, new experiences and creating the most incredible adventures. We work with the best partners and expedition leaders to ensure our clients enjoy a unique incredible wildlife expedition.

From the moment you choose to travel with Pioneer Expeditions until you return back home, you are supported by our dedicated team. We listen to what you want and can create an itinerary around your specific needs, working with your budget and with a commitment to responsible travel.



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# Itinerary



## DAY 1: ARRIVE IN DELHI

After arriving in Delhi, you will be met and transferred to your hotel where you will check in and spend the day relaxing.

Overnight Roseate House Hotel or J.W. Marriott.



Overnight:  
**Hotel**



Meals:



Distance:  
**Short airport transfer**



Activities:  
**Travel**

## DAY 2: DELHI TO LEH

An early start as we transfer to New Delhi airport for our flight into the incredible mountains of Ladakh. Here we will be met and transferred to the Grand Dragon Hotel.

Located in a valley of the Upper Indus River, Leh is a small town steeped in grand history. Situated at 11,550 feet (3,520 meters) above sea level, Leh is ringed by peaks of the Ladakh Range, a southeastern extension of the magnificent Karakoram Range, home of K2.

One of the most remote areas of India, Leh is also one of the highest permanently inhabited towns in the world. It was an important trading center on the Great Silk Road. It was a crossroad for traders coming from the Indian plains to the South, Tibet in the East, Xinjiang, Turkestan, and the great Khanates of Samarkand and Bukhara to the north, and Kashmir to the West.

This made it a cultural melting pot and helped it develop a warm and hospitable culture - one welcoming to travelers. Sandwiched between Buddhist Tibet and Islamic Central Asia and Kashmir, Ladakh is religiously diverse, with a population that is roughly half Buddhist and half Muslim. The major Tibetan Buddhist orders are all represented, including the Gelugpa Sect (Yellow Hat Order), led by HH The Dalai Lama and the Drukpa (Red Hat Order), led by HH The Gyalwang Drukpa.

Due to the altitude of the region, acclimatization is very important. The first day is one of total and complete rest. Just relax in your room, stay hydrated, and enjoy the view. No walks, no exploring, and no physical exertion.



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Stay: Grand Dragon Ladakh.  
Room Type: Premier Heritage Room



Overnight:  
**Hotel Grand Dragon**



Meals:  
**B, L, D**



Distance:  
**Approx. 1.5 hr flight**  
**Short transfer to hotel**



Activities:  
**Wildlife**

### DAY 3: EXPLORE LEH

After spending the first day acclimatizing to Leh's altitude of 11,550 feet, we will do some easy sightseeing on the second day to get a feel for the rich history of the region, with visits to the 15th century monastery of Thiksey, a trip to Leh's main market, in the shadow of the impressive 16th century Leh Palace, and to the Central Asian museum.

We'll take it slow as you're still acclimatizing.

Sightseeing will be split between the morning and evening, with a rest period in and around lunch. Those interested in picking up souvenirs or one of the fine Pashmina shawls that Ladakh is famous for, can do so during the market visit today.

*The Snow leopard conservancy is a non-profit organization that was established in 2000 by leading snow leopard expert Dr Rodney Jackson, with the main incentive of changing local people's perception of the Snow Leopard from a pest to valued asset.*



Overnight:  
**Hotel Grand Dragon**



Meals:  
**B, L, D**



Distance:  
**N/A**



Activities:  
**Culture**

### DAY 4: TRANSFER TO THE LUNGMAR

Depart the Grand Dragon after an early breakfast and change your sightseeing cap for your explorers hat. Though the road journey itself takes a little over an hour, the transformation between Leh's urban landscape and the LUNGMĀR's wild environs is total.

Nestled deep in the Ladakh Range, beyond medieval Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries and past ancient shepherding hamlets, our spectacular location and timeless Silk Road feel strike the perfect balance between remote luxury and rugged adventure.

Your transfer team will take you to Camp to check in, unless they receive word of an active wildlife sighting, in which case they will explore that opportunity first.

At Camp, after a tour of your accommodations and a briefing, you will set out in search of wildlife with your tracking team.

#### ABOUT THE LUNGMĀR

The LUNGMĀR — red valley in Ladakhi, is named for the iconic landscape that surrounds us.

Nestled deep in the Ladakh Range of India, beyond medieval Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries and past ancient shepherding hamlets, our spectacular location and timeless Silk Road feel strike the perfect balance between remote luxury and rugged adventure.

As High Asia's premier wilderness camp, we are the pinnacle of what is possible in the greatest mountains on our planet. At 12,000 feet above sea level, in the heart of 25,000 hectares of prime habitat, and supported by an elite team of specialists, the LungMār is your base for perhaps the greatest quest of all: a search for the snow leopard.

We are a remote bush camp style property centered around a phenomenal wildlife experience. Our take on the expedition life combines the excitement of Himalayan adventure, a deep sense of place, and some



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incredible comforts to create a truly singular and iconic journey. The LungMār is designed to conserve our critical habitats, celebrate our incredible local culture, and create memories for a lifetime.

The LUNGMĀR's veteran team of highly-awarded snow leopard conservationists, trackers, and guides have over two decades of field time and international experience across snow leopard habitats. An indispensable part of our guests journey, they are the most sought-after trackers on the planet. Their knowledge and enthusiasm for our wildlife sets the global benchmark for snow leopard tours.

At the cross-roads of India, Tibet, Kashmir, Ancient Turkestan, and China; Ladakh is at the heart of the Great Silk Road. The LungMār blends the stunning art and architecture of the ancient caravansaries of this region with our thoughtfully designed, high-tech camp. Staffed with a renowned expedition crew, our employee- owned property is purpose-built for the cold winters that accompany peak snow leopard season.

A warm welcome awaits you at our home on the roof of the world.



Stay: The LUNGMĀR Remote Camp.  
Room Type: Kurkhang Tent



*Overnight:*  
**The LUNGMAR**



*Meals:*  
**B, L, D**



*Distance:*  
**Approx. 2 hour drive**



*Activities:*  
**Trekking**

## DAY 5 – 12 : WILDLIFE TRACKING WITH THE LUMAR TEAM

Guests visit the LUNGMĀR for snow leopards. Snow leopards are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk. Our spotters leave camp at dawn. One of our 4x4s drops them off at various points in different valleys. They scan the ridge-lines and slopes for wildlife, reporting any sightings back to camp.

Usually guests start waking up around 7 AM. Our restaurant, the SUMDO SARAI is already warm and inviting.

The LUNGMĀR's snow leopard trackers are world-renowned and legends. Senior trackers have two



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decades of experience, and work internationally on snow leopard expeditions across North India and Central Asia. All of them are equipped with the finest Swarovski optics.

Trackers and spotters work through the day, carefully scanning for wildlife and looking for signs. If a snow leopard is seen, guests head to the closest vantage point. They are either driven there or walk, depending on the spotter's location. Our spotters at other locations pack up and converge on the sighting location. Under the leaderships of our Chief Tracker, they use their combined experience to decide on a plan for the day to best track the snow leopard for as long as possible. They take care to ensure they maintain appropriate distance and that the snow leopard, or other wildlife, is never stressed. Meals, coffee, tea, snacks, all keep arriving from camp for as long as guests are at a sighting.

Based on the days plans, guests accompany the spotters and trackers to various parts of the valley as they search for the snow leopard. Spotters, trackers, and the field team always point out interesting birds and wildlife, as well as share details about local life and culture.

There will be opportunities to visit local homes and villages as well. These visits are an important way to understand what life is like in this beautiful region of the world, and how essential communities are to conservation.

Daily guided wildlife tracking may include driving, walking, hiking, or a mix.



*Overnight:*  
**LUNGMAR Remote Camp**



*Meals:*  
**B, L, D**



*Distance:*  
**Varies**



*Activities:*  
**Wildlife  
and Trek**

### DAY 13: LUNGMAR – LEH – NEW DELHI

Our transfer team will take you to the Leh airport for your flight to Delhi. Upon arrival in New Delhi, transfer to the Roseate House Hotel or J. W. Marriott. Schedule your flights for later this evening, or the next day.



*Overnight:*  
**Hotel**



*Meals:*  
**N/A**



*Distance:*  
**Approx. 2 hr Driving**



*Activity:*  
**Travel**

### DAY 14: END OF TRIP

Depart Delhi.



*Overnight:*  
**N/A**



*Meals:*  
**N/A**



*Distance:*  
**N/A**



*Activity:*  
**Travel**



## Important Information

### Included

- All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- Accommodation as described
- All Permits and national park fees
- Domestic flights between Delhi and Leh
- Dedicated tour leader in Ladakhi
- Airport transfers in Delhi and Leh and vehicle usage as per program (using four Toyota Innova's)
- Worlds best snow leopard tracking team
- 2 x expedition leaders
- A Kurkhang tent included in standard rate
- Support staff
- Oxygen

### Not Included

- Meals other than mentioned
- International flights
- Visa for India
- Tips
- Upgrades to suite rooms
- Personal porter
- Personal expenses
- Alcoholic and soft drinks
- Travel / Medical Insurance
- Medical emergency expenses
- Personal gear





# GENERAL Accommodation

## Hotel Four Points Sheraton

Delhi

<https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/delfn-four-points-new-delhi-airport-highway/>



## Hotel Grand Dragon

Leh

<https://www.thegranddragonladakh.com/>



# LUNGMAR REMOTE Lodge



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info@pio



Exclusivity and an intimate approach to the wilderness are key features of the LUNGMĀR. There are just nine tents & suites in two different styles for adventurous travelers in search of the grey ghost.

The SUMDO SARAI serves as a central dining and lounge space where meals are served and stories are shared. The menu is designed by acclaimed Master Chef Corey Ferguson of the famed El Five, Denver. It explores classic cuisines of the Great Silk Road with a smattering of Indian and Ladakhi favorites. The kitchen is helmed by Chef Sajan Rai and supported by Sous Chef Gagan Rai, an uncle-nephew team of mountain chefs. The two have worked their way up from cooking on some of the toughest mountaineering expeditions on the planet, to serving delightful meals at the world's premier snow leopard camp.

Mornings see espressos being pulled, pots of tea brewing, and the bustle of breakfast, while evenings buzz with guests socializing over libations after a day of searching for snow leopards. Stocked with a small specialized library, maps, board games, and much more, our SUMDO SARAI is designed to make memories.

It has incredible old maps showcasing the documentation of High Asia's rugged terrain and remote cultures over two hundred years of exploration during the Great Game between Czarist Russia and Great Britain. 5 Predator Suites in a spectacular stone and wood building offer great comfort and space, with ensuite bathrooms. Six Quonset style Kurkhang Tents offer a traditional take on the remote bush camp. They provide a warm and well furnished bedroom in the main tent and separate showers and toilets, a 30 second walk away.

Local materials, used all over the camp, give a deep sense of place. Richly hued red and green rocks from our valley blend perfectly with carved local wood beams and roofs. The textures connect you to the great mountains that surround us - the workmanship to our neighboring communities.

The tents & suites continue this exploration of the region and the Great Road. Stone framed beds ground our guests to the land, while the textiles used within perfectly blend a high-end safari with the expedition life.

Hand-embroidered throw pillows, Afghan kilims, and downy duvets are paired with spectacular paintings by Nicholas Roerich, the acclaimed 19th century painter famous for his depictions of the Himalayas, Ladakh, and the Silk Road of the 1920s.

### Standard Accommodation



The Kurkhang Tents are designed for warmth and comfort. They have taken years of R&D and testing to perfect. These tents provide a classic 'bush glamping' experience. In Ladakhi, Kurkhang translates to tent home - an ideal description for this comfortable bedroom in the wilderness.

Utilizing hand-stitched canvas, custom insulation, central heat, and furnished with one king sized or two twin beds, the unique structures offer great warmth.

Guests staying in a Kurkhang have access to the LUNGMĀR Hammām. The Hammām is a heated stone building, with four private bath rooms, each with a shower, toilet, and space for dressing.



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## Upgrade Accommodation The PREDATOR Suites



The Predator Suites at the LUNGMÄR are large stone and wood rooms built in a traditional style. Space-age insulation, central heat, and 24/7 running hot water make these spacious rooms incredibly comfortable. All have beautiful south facing mountain views.

There are 5 units named for our major predator. Three of them have king sized beds: the Eee (Eurasian lynx in Ladakh), the Shanku (Tibetan wolf), and the Denmo (Himalayan brown bear). The Watsey (red fox) has twin beds, and the Kogar (stone marten) is a single, but can also have twin beds, though it is a small room for 2. These suites are spacious one bedroom units averaging about 300 sq ft. Each room is beautifully designed with wooden floors, traditional poplar and willow ceilings, and walls alternating between wood and mud plastered stone. They are heated by state of the art Italian central heating systems, and the bathrooms have hot running water throughout our bitterly cold winters. The Predator Suites are the finest rooms available to use as a base for snow leopard expeditions anywhere on the planet.

## conservation & sustainability

Our partners team team combines deep experience operating highly-awarded snow leopard tours with pioneering conservation work. Community based conservation is a central tenet as 99% of the LUNGMÄR's team hail from snow leopard landscapes. For each guest that stays at camp, \$350 is contributed towards predator proof corrals, reducing human-wildlife conflict, in the region.

Separately, the LUNGMÄR funds ranger trainings and carbon mitigation projects across ecosystems critical for snow leopards in India, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan through the High Asia Habitat Fund. Our field teams serve as advisors to both governments as well as leading international non-profits working in this space. The LUNGMÄR's work positively impacts over 5 million hectares of snow leopard habitat internationally.

As this operates in an ecologically sensitive landscape, LUNGMAR have taken great care to thoughtfully design the camp to have a minimal footprint while ensuring guest comfort. They have limited themselves to only ten tents to restrict the natural resources consumed, and successfully balanced the romance of adventure with the essential comforts required for a great experience. The LUNGMÄR's power and hot water systems are both solar. All fossil fuel use is tracked and then annually offset through carbon negative program.

*The Snow leopard conservancy is a non-profit organization that was established in 2000 by leading snow leopard expert*



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*Dr Rodney Jackson, with the main incentive of changing local people's perception of the Snow Leopard from a pest to valued asset.*

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## Fitness requirement

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This expedition is a wilderness adventure in remote regions, with a focus on observing wildlife. Participants need to be in good health and possess basic physical fitness. The itinerary is adaptable to track the movements of snow leopards and other wildlife.

Sightings may occur close to our camp or necessitate a drive of about an hour to nearby areas and then perhaps a walk or hike.

Guests should be prepared to walk short distances from the camp or vehicles for optimal wildlife viewing. The high altitudes, between 12,000 and 14,000 feet, can make these walks feel more strenuous than usual, even though they are not extensive in distance or elevation gain. Daily hikes of at least 2 miles on narrow, rocky, and possibly snow-covered trails can be expected, but may not always happen. Trekking off-trail is also a possibility, requiring good balance and stability. Our staff will provide assistance, but guests need to be capable of handling uneven and challenging terrain independently. There are also options for longer, more demanding hikes to explore additional scenic areas.



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