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Trip Essentials

Months: June to October

Duration: 17 days

Route: Delhi - Manali – Spiti – Manali – Delhi

Maximum Altitude: 5000 mts.

Key features: Volunteering on projects mitigating the impacts of climate change, Homestays, weekend excursions

During this journey you will be assisting the local community in construction of a Solar bath/ Greenhouse. The volunteers will participate in the actual construction of the solar bath and the set up of a solar water geyser (Evacuated Tube Condenser) or a greenhouse and will be assisted by a dedicated team of a qualified mason and representative from Ecosphere. The activity will entail physical work. The construction period will be 7 to 8 days. The trip is intermixed with work and pleasure. During this trip you will also be visiting some of the highest villages in the world, going on a high-altitude trek, visiting some ancient monasteries dating back to over a 1000 years and take a yak safari and mountain bike if interested. Traditional homestays further enrich the experience by giving one an authentic understanding of the life and culture in a Spitian home.

Significance of this Tour

Solar Bath

The construction of a solar bath is of great significance in this region as great amounts of fuelwood, coal and wood is burnt for heating water which contributes to CO2 and black carbon emissions. The latter having far more damaging affects on the melting of glaciers and snow on a local level. Through the set up of a solar bath which includes both a passive solar structure as well as a solar water heating system, we enable the people to cut down on emissions (especially reducing black carbon) as well as enable them to have better hygiene through regular availability of hot water.

Greenhouse

The green-house project is of special significance in Spiti since the region is devoid of green vegetables. Most of the supply comes from the neighbouring cities of Shimla and Manali which takes 2 days. This excessive transportation makes the vegetables both expensive as well as high in their carbon footprint. Moreover in the 6 month long winters there is no availability of green vegetables as access to the neighbouring regions is cut off. The greenhouses developed by Ecosphere enable locals to cultivate vegetables not only in the summers but also in the winters at temperatures as low as -25 degrees centigrade. These green houses contribute to better health for the locals, reduction in emissions and also in providing them with an additional source of income.

Ecosphere, Main Market Kaza, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India.

91-1906-222652, 91-9899492417/ 9418860099

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The Journey

Day 01: Delhi arrival and depart for Manali (overnight bus)

Mode: Overnight Bus
Gradient: Gradual to steep Ascent & Descent
Duration: 12- 13 Hours

Day 02: Manali (free day for local sightseeing)

O/N MANALI

Mode: Jeep
Gradient: Gradual to steep Ascent & Descent
Accommodation: Hotel/Guesthouse

Manali is a small little hill station bustling with tourists. There are lots of interesting places and temples to visit in Manali. One can also take a stroll into the forests or roam the markets of New and Old Manali. For a food buff, Manali is an ideal place to taste a wide range of cuisines.

Day 03: Manali to Kaza O/N KAZA

Mode: Bus/ Share Jeep
Gradient: Gradual to steep Ascent & Descent
Duration: 8-10 Hours
Accommodation: Hotel/Guesthouse

Today is an early start. We drive over the Rohtang pass (separating Kullu from the Lahaul valley), and descend into the valley of the Chandra river and continue past Chhatru, Batal and over the Kunzum la (pass/4551mts), which divides Lahaul and Spiti. We spend some time taking in fabulous views of the Chandrabhaga range of mountains, visit the Buddhist shrine and get into our waiting jeep/bus, to reach Kaza by evening.

Day 04: Kaza -- Orientation, visit an existing site and settle into the project location **O/N PROJECT LOCATION**

Mode: Jeep

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Gradient: Gradual Ascent & Descent
Duration: 1 Hour (travel time)
Accommodation: Homestay/Guest House/ Camping

Today after breakfast we will visit the office of Ecosphere and get a brief insight into Spiti, its culture, people and ecology. We will also get details on Ecosphere's various developmental activities in the region along with their initiatives on responsible travel and conservation of nature & culture. Subsequently we will be briefed about our project in the region and the preparation for the next few days.

We then get into our jeeps and head to an existing project site after which we will head to the project location where we will settle into our living quarters, meet with the team who we will be working alongside.

Day 05 to Day 08: Project Village

O/N PROJECT LOCATION

Accommodation: Homestay/Guest House/ Camping

We will spend the next 4 days working on our building a solar bath.

Day 09 to Day 12:

We will spend the next 4 days exploring the Spiti valley and get to see the various facets of Spiti valley ranging from visits to over 1000 year old Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries, living in traditional Homestays giving one a peep into culture and lifestyles in Himalayan villages, trekking along wildlife habitats with diverse flora and fauna.

We begin early on Day 09 and trek to Asia's highest village at 4500 meters. Here we spend the night in Homestays and also visit the monastery adorning this village.

On Day 10 we trek across alpine pasturelands to a village called Demul (5 – 6 hours trekking). One can opt for a yak safari* in case one would rather not trek. The route traverses across the hunting grounds of the endangered Snow Leopard and Himalayan Wolf where spotting of the Blue Sheep will be possible. We spend the night at Demul in Homestays.

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On Day 11 we will trek/ yak safari* up to 5000 mtrs to a vantage spot which provides a birds eye view of the Spiti Valley. Reaching this vantage spot is thrilling and well worth the effort. We return to Demul for the night where we get a peep into the indigenous folk expressions of the region through an evening of songs and dance forms.

On Day 12 we trek to lahlung village and further by jeep on to Dhankhar village which was the erstwhile capital of Spiti by jeep. Dhankhar is famous for its monastery and the remains of the fort still remain. The location of the Monastery perched precariously between wind eroded structures leaves one spell bound at the architectural ingenuity of yester years. We visit the Dhankhar monastery and fort and trek up to the Dhankhar Lake (a 1 hour trek from the village). Today we head back to our project village.

Day 13 to Day 14: Project Village

O/N PROJECT LOCATION

Accommodation: Homestay/Guest House/ Camping

We will spend the next few days completing our project. On the last day the project will be inaugurated.

Day 15: Project village to Manali

O/N MANALI

Mode: Bus
Gradient: Gradual to steep ascents and descents
Duration: 8—10 hrs (travel time)

After breakfast we drive back to Manali along the same route that we took to reach Kaza. If time permits and the road is open we take a short detour* after crossing Kunzam La (4551 mts) to Chandra Tal (4270 mts), the lake of the moon goddess.

Day 16: Manali to Delhi

Mode: Overnight Bus
Gradient: Straight to gradual ascents and descents
Duration: 12-14 Hours

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Today we spend the day at Manali at leisure and in the evening catch the overnight bus to Delhi.

Day 17: Arrival Delhi

Costs

Includes:

INR 29000/person including taxes for a group of 15 persons

- All accommodation starting Day 2 to Day 15
- Meals starting Day 4 dinner to Day 14 dinner
- All bus/ jeep transfers Day 1 (with bus from Delhi to Manali) to Day 16 (bus from Manali to Delhi)
- Project support
- Support staff starting Day 1 to Day 15
- INR 15500 including taxes for a teacher/ escort/ representative of IAYP for a group size of 15 persons

Excludes:

Mineral water and beverages (other than those provided)

Monastery Fees

Tips

Insurance

Expenses arising out of unforeseen circumstances which may include change in route due to the road being closed, etc.

Transfer Details:

Bank – State Bank of India

Branch – Kaza, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India

Swift Code – SBININBB288

Account Name – Ecosphere

Account Number – 30769923704

IFSC Code – SBIN 0003337

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Please Note:-

a) This is a carbon neutral trip. It is Ecosphere's endeavour to generate minimum emissions on this journey and whatever emissions that we do generate are calculated and offset through investments in our in-house renewable energy projects within the region. These include construction of passive solar houses, green houses and investing in other sustainable renewable energy alternatives such as solar water heating systems, solar cookers, solar lighting, etc.

b) A different kind of holiday - Ecosphere is a social enterprise and your travel with Ecosphere will contribute to the development and conservation of the region. Insights into the local development and conservation issues and a peep into Ecosphere's initiatives to ensure the sustainable development of this Trans-Himalayan region can be seen during your trip.

c) Accommodation:

Homestays - provide you with a clean and comfortable room in a local house with environment friendly and clean toilets. Hot water can be made available on request. Cuisine comprises of local delicacies. However if you would prefer to stick to basic Indian meals (lentils, pulses, rice, chappati/ local bread) you can inform your hosts in advance. Boiled water is provided for drinking purposes.

Guesthouse – comprises of a clean and comfortable room with attached/common bath and toilet.

Camping – alpine tents with sleeping bags

d) Kindly inform us in advance of any food preferences.

e) Spiti is a high altitude region. Since few people have been to such altitudes, it is hard to know who may be affected by high altitude sickness. There are *no* specific factors such as age, sex, or physical condition that correlate with susceptibility to altitude sickness. Some people get it and some people don't, and some people are more susceptible than others. If one has not travelled to these altitudes before, it is recommended that you consult your doctor. We usually advise dosage of Diamox 2/3 days before reaching kaza as a safe precautionary for this trip, however please consult your doctor before considering to take this medication. While booking the tour we will provide more details on high altitude mountain sickness and possible precautions you could take. Please note that there will not be any reimbursements in the event that you are unable to complete the trip due to high altitude sickness, other personal reasons, weather conditions or road blockages.

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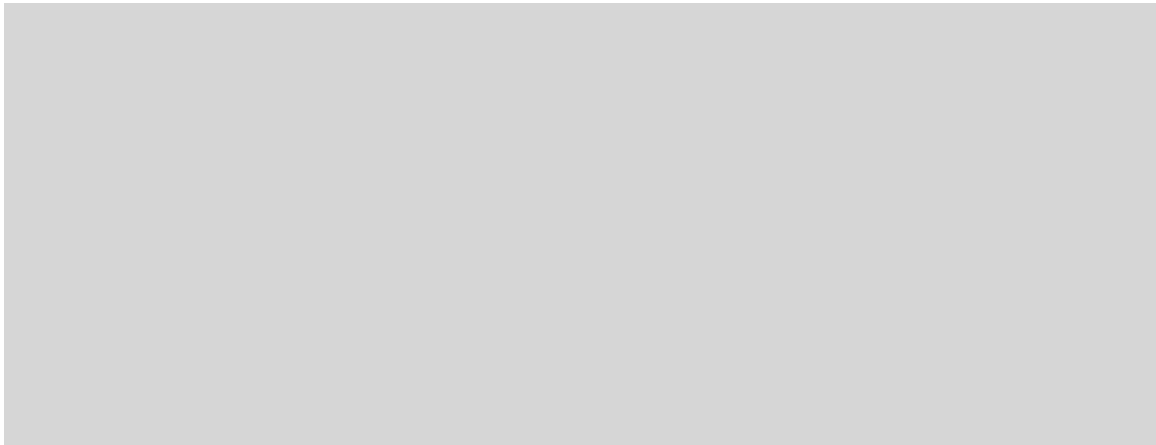
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