



India Zaskar River Rafting

12 Days



The Adventure Company | EST. 1969


MT + SOBEKTM
MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
AS THE PIONEER OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL

India Zanskar River Rafting

The last truly lost horizon of our planet awaits in Zanskar, 'the land of white copper,' where a pristine river canyon snakes through towering mountains. Traveling west from Leh (11,483 feet), feel the Tibetan spirit of the Ladakh region. Roam Buddhist monasteries and gompas, bustling markets, ancient palaces, and remote villages in the embrace of the Himalayas. At the Stod River, begin a multi-day river adventure down the remote Zanskar River Gorge. Paddle Class III and IV rapids through narrow passages, flanked by sky-high mountain walls, all the way to the fork of the Indus River. Experience Ladakh's warm hospitality and rest at riverside camps under starry night skies. This adventure celebrates MT Sobek's first descent of the Zanskar in 1979!

Details

Arrive:	Leh, Ladakh, India
Depart:	Leh, Ladakh, India
Duration:	12 Days
Group Size:	12-15 Guests
Minimum Age:	15 Years Old
Activity Level:	

Testimonials

"Great experience every time with some of the most knowledgeable guides in their fields. We always come home with wonderful memories of the people we meet and things we see."

Bob J.

"I have taken 12 trips with MT Sobek. Each has left a positive imprint on me—widening my view of the world and its peoples."

Jane B.

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.

 1-800-974-0300

 info@mtsobek.com

Why Take This Trip With Us?

REASON #01

MT Sobek works with professional local guiding teams who have a deep knowledge of Ladakh and the Zaskar River. The end result is a phenomenal whitewater adventure.

REASON #02

This trip has been carefully curated by MT Sobek's travel experts to celebrate both the spectacular mountain wilderness and the rich culture of Ladakh.

REASON #03

Exploring remote destinations, such as the Zaskar River, has been the cornerstone of our heritage since 1969. MT Sobek was the first outfitter to

What to Expect



ACTIVITIES

Scenic canyon rafting, covering 15 to 25 miles per day with fun big-volume whitewater stretches, and cultural touring in Ladakh.



LODGING

Comfortable hotels for five nights and riverside camping, with tents and sleeping bags provided, for six nights.



CLIMATE

Expect moderately cool days in September, with temperatures ranging from the 65°F to 75°F.

Meet Our Guides

Our expert guides and trip leaders are truly the key to our trips' success. Many are locals who live in-country year-round; others have made it their second home—all are passionate, enthusiastic and endlessly knowledgeable. Meet two of the guides that might be on your trip.

We work with only the most experienced and knowledgeable local tour guides on our trip extensions. While you will not be accompanied by an MT Sobek through guide on this tour, you will be in excellent hands with a fully licensed and accredited local guide who will share their expertise in everything from history and architecture, to culture and traditions, the best local cuisine, activities and crafts, or even shopping. Local guides live, breathe, and love their trips because as locals they are an integral part of their communities. Their connections run deep and pride in their piece of the world is contagious.

Local Tour Guide

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Itinerary

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN LEH, LADAKH

Welcome to Ladakh, India's northern region, and its largest town Leh. Known as the 'land of high passes,' the region is often called 'the Little Tibet' for its well-preserved Buddhist culture and stunning scenery. Spend your first day enjoying this scenic town nestled in the mountains and acclimatizing to the elevation of 11,483 feet. In the evening, meet your MT Sobek trip leader for an orientation and group welcome dinner.

Meals: D

DAY 2

EXPLORE ANCIENT PALACES, BUDDHIST MONASTERIES, & MARKETS IN LEH

After breakfast, explore the sights of Leh. Start at the monumental Leh Palace, a former royal palace built in 1600 that offers impressive views of Leh in the Indian Himalayas. Next, roam monasteries and Tibetan religious structures called gompas, including Shey, Thiksey and Hemis. Wrap up the day at the ancient Leh market, the most colorful place in town, where you can get anything from jewelry to spices. Share your impressions of the day over dinner with your fellow travelers.

Activity: 6-hour city tour

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3

VISIT CAVES & FORTS ON A SCENIC DRIVE FROM LEH TO KARGIL

Set out toward the town of Kargil in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Along the way, marvel at the striking painted caves of Saspol, the mud-brick fortress of Basgo, and the Lamayuru monastery, one of Laddakh's largest and oldest gompas. Past Nimu, the confluence of the Zaskar with the Indus, travel over the 13,500-foot Fotu La pass, and reach Mulbekh village, famous for its rock-carved Buddha. In Kargil, settle into the hotel, enjoy a shower, and then prepare for the great outdoors.

Activity: 6-hour private van transfer

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4

JOURNEY HIGH INTO THE HIMALAYAS

Today, enjoy a spectacular drive past the magnificent Panikkar and Parkachik Glaciers that hang off the slopes of the imposing 23,000-foot Nun-Kun massif. Admire Balti settlements surrounded by lush fields filled with crops and fruits. The road swings past the last Muslim settlement of Parkachik, and travels to the 18th-century Buddhist Gelukpa monastery of Rangdum. An optional hike through the huge surrounding meadow can be added should you wish to stretch your legs.

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Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5

CROSS PENSI-LA PASS & DESCEND TO THE STOD RIVER

Journey over the 14,000-foot Pensi-la pass, known as the Gateway to Zanskar. Marvel at the imposing Zanskar peaks that tower over the Drang Drung glacier — a long river of ice and the source of the Stod River (a tributary of the Zanskar). Descend down to the Stod, and travel past remote villages and Padum, the capital of Zanskar, to Remala, a pretty beach of sand and pebbles where your rafting trip starts. Enjoy the first night under open skies at your riverside camp.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6

PADDLE FROM PADUM & HIKE TO KARSHA GOMPA

Rise today to start your rafting adventure! Near the town of Padum, set out to raft among the grandiose 20,000-foot peaks. You will paddle for some four to five hours, and stop midway for a refreshing lunch with hot beverages. This whitewater section features Class II rapids, and is a great warm up and a good introduction for first-timers. In the afternoon, settle into your camp, then consider a long walk around the camp or an optional hike to Karsha Gompa, Zanskar's largest Buddhist monastery.

Activity: 4-5 hours/19 miles rafting and optional hiking

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

RAFT EASY RAPIDS FROM KARSHA CAMP

Enjoy another day of easy paddling on Class II and Class III rapids, just perfect for mastering your stroke and tuning into the rhythm of the river. After a late morning start, set out to raft 15.5 miles from Karsha Camp to Honyo/Pidmo, a beautiful grassy and flat campsite. As you relax listening to the river in the evening, recharge your body and spirit for another big day of whitewater rafting ahead.

Activity: 4-5 hours/15.5 miles rafting

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 8

EXPERIENCE THE ZANSKAR'S GRAND CANYON

Today, charge over an exciting Class III whitewater section as you raft towards the remote village of Nyerak (10,780 feet). As you progress, the gorge gets narrower, until it eventually forms a series of rapids just after

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the last village of Honimul, at the entrance to the canyon. As these cascades churn the turquoise waters of the Zanskar, and mountain walls rise thousands of feet up in the air, you'll see why they call this the Grand Canyon of the Himalayas. Enjoy a relaxed evening by the campfire in the gorge just below Nyerak.

Activity: 4-5 hours/15.5 miles rafting

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9

RELAX, RECHARGE & VISIT THE REMOTE NYERAK VILLAGE

Today is a well-deserved layover day. Take time to relax and soak up the gorgeous mountain scenery from underneath willow trees. You can also choose to hike to the remote Nyerak Village, which can be reached only by rafting expeditions in summer or trekking over a frozen river in winters.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10

RAFT CLASSIC WHITEWATER IN THE ZANSKAR RIVER GORGE

Get ready for the most exciting rapids so far. Warm up over Class III whitewater as you charge through the very heart of the majestic Zanskar River Gorge. Eventually, the gorge narrows down to a mere 18 feet and the rapids turn to an adrenaline-boasting Class IV. Savor a lunch by a sky-high waterfall, then paddle a bit more to the camp at the confluence of the Zanskar and Markha rivers. Along the way to Lamaguru at 10,465 feet, soak up the extraordinary colors and take in monumental rock formations.

Activity: 22 miles/4-5 hours rafting

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 11

MEET THE FORK OF THE INDUS RIVER & RETURN TO LEH

Your last day on the Zanskar is the grand finale of your journey! Over the 25 miles between Lamaguru and Nimu villages, enjoy the rush of Class III and Class IV rapids. Just past the village of Chilling, the rapids plunge out of the canyon to meet the Indus River. Where the Zanskar and Indus come together, take a moment to reflect on the past days and plot to take on the Indus next. After a shuttle ride to the hotel in Leh, enjoy a hot shower and one last group meal.

Activity: 25 miles/4-5 hours rafting

Meals: B, L, D

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DAY 12

DEPART FROM LEH

Say your farewells early in the morning, then take a shuttle to the airport.

Meals: B

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Dates

Aug 30 - Sep 10, 2023

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Inclusions & Exclusions

PRICE INCLUDES

- Expertise and services of our experienced adventure guides
- All accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- All breakfasts, almost all lunches and dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Snacks and water between meals
- Additional regional guides and experts on many trips
- Comprehensive Trip Planner with detailed pre-trip information
- Private guided tours at historic sites, museums, wineries and other select attractions as noted in the itinerary
- Special events and other select attractions as mentioned in the itinerary
- All gratuities at hotels and restaurants
- Equipment and experienced guides for activities as described in the itinerary
- Park and other entry fees (unless otherwise noted)
- Fares for trains, ferries and other modes of travel as listed in the itinerary
- Select transfers as mentioned in the itinerary
- Baggage transfers and portorage

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International airfare, airport taxes, and excess baggage fees
- Alcoholic beverages (MT Sobek provides wine at select events)
- Gratuities for MT Sobek guides and guide-drivers
- Travel Protection Program
- Personal expenses

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➤ Rafting & Kayaking with MT Sobek

At MT Sobek, we take you to premier wilderness rivers and beautiful island locations to experience some of the most breathtaking rafting and kayaking on the planet. In addition to our world-class guides who offer entertaining experiences, you'll enjoy comfortable camping and delicious meals. Here are the key things that set us apart:

- **Expert Guides** ~ Our professional guides are the best in the business. From the first safety briefing to the final high five, you'll be led by experienced guides who have made trip leading their profession.
- **Small Groups** ~ We are proud of our commitment to small group sizes, which don't exceed 20 guests. Our guide to client ratio on river trips is 1:4.
- **Special Permits** ~ With special permits, we are able to gain access to less-traveled regions, far off the beaten path, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Salmon-Challis National Forest.
- **Comfortable Camping** ~ After a day of thrills on the river, take it easy as guides cook up tasty meals at your comfortable camp. Enjoy creature comforts in the wilderness!
- **Range of Trip Levels** ~ Our rafting and kayaking trips range from easy to moderate-strenuous, so there is something to suit every level.
- **Sterling Safety Record** ~ We have a sterling safety record on our rafting and kayaking trips and all guests are required to attend mandatory briefings.



Sobek Expeditions was founded in 1973 by Richard Bangs (*left*) and John Yost. Named after the Egyptian River God, Sobek ran more than 40 first descents on some of the world's most famous rivers, including the Bio Bio and the Omo. In 2022, Richard Bangs was named one of the 100 Greatest Explorers of the Last 100 Years by explorersweb.com! Sobek Expeditions will celebrate 50 years of intrepid rafting in 2023.

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➤ A Day on the River

Many guests ask us “what’s a typical day on the river like?” Other than being super fun, here’s what you can expect. On Day 1, you’ll either meet your group and guide in town or on the riverbank, depending on your itinerary. After introductions and a thorough safety briefing, you’ll receive your personal floatation device and step into your raft or kayak. The first stretch of the river is usually gentle and you’ll arrive at camp in the late afternoon. Once you’ve found your tent and settled in, enjoy games and drinks by the river while your guides prepare a delicious dinner. The evening winds down with stories and laughs around the camp fire.

In the morning, awake to the soothing sounds of the river and savor a warm breakfast before setting out for an exhilarating day of rafting and kayaking—led by your expert guiding team. Along the way you’ll have plenty of rest stops and time to explore historic or natural sites along the river’s edge. Then it’s back in the raft for epic rapids and more fun on the water!

River Rafting Terminology



Oar Boat

Classic inflatable raft, equipped with two long oars rowed forward-facing by the guide. Accommodates gear and 2-3 passengers. Perfect for relaxing.



Inflatable Kayak

“Duckies” are your chance to get intimate with the river. Paddle or sit at river level with a double-bladed paddle and be in charge of your own destiny!



Paddle Boat

Up to 6 passengers sit on the perimeter of the raft with legs inside and paddle under the direction of the guide, who sits in the stern of the raft.



Stand-Up Paddleboard

Balance on these surprisingly stable craft, also known as SUP, and propel yourself downstream with a single-bladed paddle.



Gear Boat

Also called the sweep boat, the gear boat carries all the camp necessities, plus all our waste—ensuring that we leave the river as pristine as we found it.



Portage

When rivers become un-navigable, the gear has to be taken out and carried to the next navigable stretch. This is known as portage.

River Rafting Classification

Class I-II Rapids

Sit back and enjoy the scenery. Experience placid river conditions with interspersed wave trains and enjoyable splashes.

Class III-IV Rapids

Things are getting exciting! Begin to see more frequent irregular waves. This level requires a good response to guide commands and efficient team paddling.

Class V Rapids

The highest level of rafting difficulty, likely involving long, continuous rapids. Successful navigation requires great physical fitness and precise paddling.

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