



HIMALAYAN BROWN BEAR LODGE



Total Duration :
4 Nights / 5 Days (Ex Kargil)



Style of Tour :
Jeep Safari & Hiking



Stays :
Brown Bear Lodge



Highest Altitude :
3700 Metres



Best Season :
April to November

Witness the rare Himalayan Brown Bears in the second coldest inhabited place in the world. Our lodge is arguably the best location in Drass for sighting these magnificent mammals in Ladakh. Along with Tibetan Wolf, Himalayan Red Fox, Long tail marmot, Asiatic Ibex, Ladakh Urial and even the elusive Snow Leopard. Drass is also a haven for birding as it is home to a variety of warblers, finches and raptors.

Himalayan Brown Bears of Western Ladakh



Overview : The trans-Himalaya slowly transforms from a cold dry desert in the east dotted with plateaus and barren hills, turning greener beyond Namik La towards Kargil and Drass. The Zoji La pass beyond Drass is the dramatic divide between the forested hills to the west and the trans-Himalaya to the east.

The valley of Drass lies in the western extreme of Ladakh, (6 hours from Leh) just short of the rise towards Zoji La Pass. Despite the destruction caused by the war in the summer of 1999 and the constant mechanisation and development brought in by the army, the lush green hills of Drass still make for a majestic view. Rows of flower beds, a good variety of bird life, streams originating from snow melt and nomadic herders walking the high pastures with their flock are some of the sights that one tends to take away from Drass. This is also a stark contrast to the barren slopes of eastern Ladakh.



This change in habitat and precipitation has also led to some unique wildlife taking over the mantle in the western reaches of Ladakh. Apart from the animals that occur in eastern Ladakh, the grassy slopes of Drass are home to specials like the Long-tailed Marmot, the Himalayan Fox (a recent split from the Red Fox) and most importantly, the largest land carnivore in India, the Himalayan Brown Bear.

In India, these Brown Bears occupy the high altitude pasture and shrub land, avoiding dense forests in most cases. They are rarely seen in the lower reaches of the hills, except when they are in search of food. These bears hibernate every year from December to late March, right through the biting cold winter months. This is also the time when the pregnant females give birth. When they emerge from their slumber in March, most of them are famished and desperate to feed themselves and their little ones. This is when they approach human habitation in search of scraps, and this is also when most of the conflict occurs.




Our team, investigated one particular village in this region which was unique and told a story of its own. The bears were here in good numbers and their signs visible everywhere during the day, including in and around the village's streets and walls. And naturally, there is a good bit of tension and hatred for the bears in the village.

Our base of operations will be centered around the village, involving the local community directly in our operation, providing them the necessary training and empowering them.






Brief Itinerary

 Day 1 :
Arrive in Kargil from
Leh and drive to Drass


Day 2 :
Brown Bear Tracking



 Day 3 :
Brown Bear Tracking

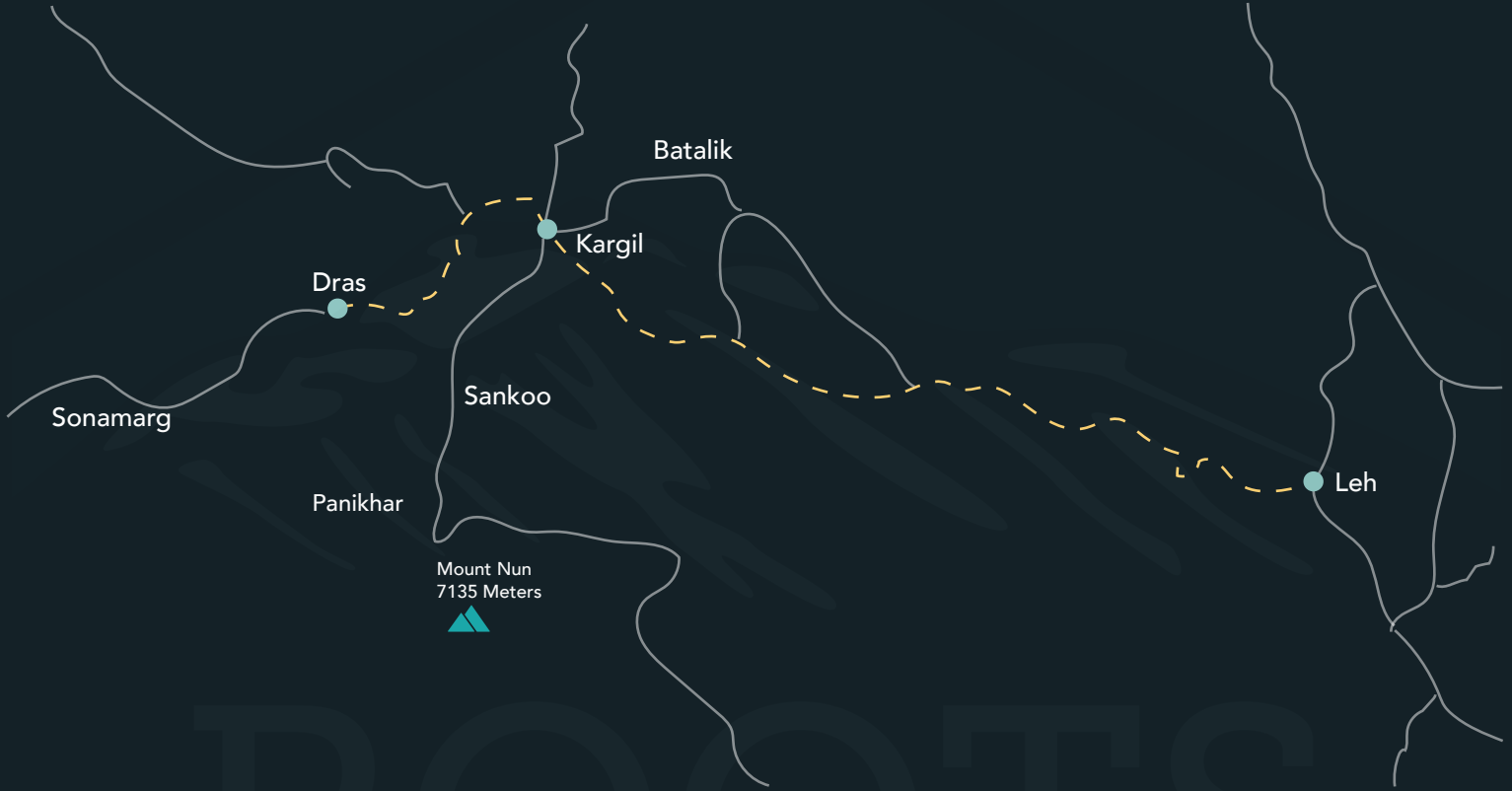
Day 4 :
Brown Bear Tracking



 Day 5 :
Drive back from Drass to
Kargil and on to Leh



Route Map



ROOTS
— LADAKH —



Day 1 :

Arrive in Kargil from Leh and drive to Drass

Arrive at Kargil and transfer by our vehicles to Brown Bear Lodge.

Check in at Lodge in Brown Bear Landscape, Briefing by Tour Leader and Spotter. Dinner at the lodge.

Day 2 :

Brown Bear Tracking

Early Start to the day at 5 am. Depending on the snow conditions, we will hike up or use ponies to reach the adjacent hillside, which provides a good vantage point to scan for bears.

Our spotters will accompany us. Packed breakfast can be reached on site.

During the day, we will visit the near by Shina villages towards Mushkow valley. This valley also boasts of other wildlife such as marmots, Ibex, Fox and Wolves.

A variety of birds are also present in this region. This area has some great walks amidst blooming tulips and other wild flowers through the summer.



Day 3 & 4 :

Brown Bear Tracking

Morning and evening Brown Bear tracking. Depending on the sightings in our base valley, we can drive to other adjacent valleys such as Umba La (based on snow levels at that time of the year), Pandrass, Matayen, Shimsha Kharbu, Suru or the apricot orchards in the beautiful village of Karkitchu.

Day 5 :

Drive back from Drass to Kargil and on to Leh

Return to Kargil visiting the Hundurman border museum near on the LoC.

Continue journey from Kargil.

These itineraries are customizable based on guest interests to an extent and within the limits of the region/scope of operation. Depending on the time of the year these itineraries can be started from both Srinagar and Kargil and any further assistance on either end of the fixed departure can be provided by us if one feels the need.

COST PER PERSON ON REQUEST

For a minimum of 4 PAX and maximum 10 PAX



FIXED DEPARTURE DATES:

2019

20 th – 24 th August

16 th – 20 th September

23 rd – 27 th October

14 th – 17 th November

2020

14 th – 18 th April

5 th – 9 th May

18 th – 22 nd August

15 th – 19 th September

**Departures in September and October can be clubbed with Dachigam National Park located near Srinagar during this period. Dachigam is a great place to see the Asiatic Black Bears during the months of September and October. Those interested in this can let us know and we will organize the same.*

Additional Information :

- These itineraries are customizable based on guest interests to an extent and within the limits of the region/scope of operation.
- Depending on the time of the year these itineraries can be started from both Srinagar and Kargil and we can provide any further assistance on either end of the fixed departure if one feels the need.
- The fixed departure dates will operate only when a minimum of 4 PAX sign up per trip.
- Minimum stay at the Lodge - 2 nights (suggested is 4 nights)
- The Himalayan Brown Bear Lodge can be used as a base to explore the heritage of Kargil, Suru Valley, Drass and other regions of Western Ladakh, apart from being the best site to view the Himalayan Brown Bears.
- Access - Less than 30 mins from Drass town. From Leh it is a 6 hours drive and from Snow Leopard Lodge Ulley it is 4 hours 30 mins, From Srinagar the drive takes 4 - 5 hours to our lodge depending on snow and traffic around Zoji La Pass. (open only after May)

Payment and Cancellation policy :

- Full payment must be made before commencement of the journey
- Booking confirmation- 15% advance 1 year prior to the trip or at time of booking if its less than one year (non-refundable)
- 35% - 6 months prior to the trip (non-refundable)
- Balance 50% - 3 months prior to arrival (non-refundable)
- No refund will be granted for portion/portions of the journey not performed by the traveller.
- No refund will be granted in case of non-performance of journey due to external and natural events.
- In the event of any dispute, the matter shall be resolved under the jurisdiction of the District Court, Kargil.

Inclusions :



Transport :

- Transport fully engaged on disposal throughout the journey Ex Kargil



Meals :

- All Meals in Kargil and Drass



Equipment :

- Spotting scope to share



Accommodation

- Accommodation at the lodge in Drass including all meals



Medical Services :

- First Aid Kit
- Oxygen cylinder (5 kg)



Staff :

- Tour Leader
- Local Spotters
- Local Porter/Mules



Permits :

- Community Fee
- Permits

Exclusions :

- Museum and Monastery tickets
- Personal binoculars/spotting scopes
- Personal expenses such as mineral water, beverages, alcohol
- Medical/Travel insurance
- Emergency evacuation cost
- Cost incurred due to change in itinerary on account of road blocks, weather change, vehicle breakdown
- Tips to drivers/guides

Donations to The Himalayan Brown Bear Project :

We strongly suggest to DMCs that an added conservation fee (INR 1000) be included/night/guest. This will be handed over to The Himalayan Brown Bear Project to be used in conservation projects in the Kargil area.

FACILITIES AT THE LODGE

- Power: Erratic power (based on site) with generator backup on schedule
- Food: Mix of Indian / Continental / Ladakhi. Set Menus
- Rooms: 5 Twin Rooms (with 1 or 2 shared Toilets)
- Small library of reference books and fiction
- Binoculars available on request
- Tea / Coffee & cookies available all day in the dining / lounge area
- Drinking water provided
- Packed lunches / tea coffee provided when in the field
- No credit card facility - nearest ATM in Drass/Kargil
- Vehicles / guides / spotters at disposal
- Rooms are heated with gas heaters or bukharis
- Hot/Cold water in bathrooms/toilets provided in buckets.
- Toilet - Cleanwaste technology - odour-free dry chemical toilets
- Projection system for screening films
- Nearest Hospital in Drass/Kargil (approx. 15min/1 hour drive)

LODGE GALLERY



Trip Specific Information

By signing up for a trip with Roots :

You acknowledge that you have voluntarily applied to participate in this trip and that you have read the description of the trip as it appears on the website and the information below:

- All outdoor related activities involve a certain level of risk. You are expected to sign an Indemnity Form in agreement to the risks involved through part taking in such outdoor activities.
- Delays are expected on account of roadblock & weather conditions. Our effort will be to continue with the trip as per the schedule & make you as comfortable as possible. But in such situations we may have to compromise and adjust to these situations then & there. Our Lead Guide on location will take the final call.
- The itinerary should be viewed as ideal we may have to make some spot changes due various unavoidable reasons.
- The distances & altitude mentioned in the above itinerary are to the best of our knowledge & information marginal variance in the actual distances & altitudes is possible.
- You are expected to be in reasonable shape and fitness
- Roots Ladakh reserves the right and permission to use photographs of individuals and photographs submitted by them on tour for use in promotional and publicity purposes

Checklist for your trip

Clothing :



Water-proof
Trekking Shoes



Woolen &
cotton socks
(2 pairs each)



Full sleeve
tshirt



Water-proof
trekking pants
(1 spare)



Woollen or fleece
sweater/jacket



Downfeather
Jacket



Thick gloves
with inner



Spare under
garments



Thick muffler



Woolen Cap



Rain poncho or
wincheater

Essentials :



Sun goggles



Valid ID proof



Wearable
Flashlight with
batteries



Power bank



2 ltr. Water
bottle



Rucksack

Toileteries :



Personal
Toileteries



Sun block



Personal-Aid
Kit

4 REASONS WHY

You should travel with us!



Go Offbeat :

We pride ourselves in being the experts in offbeat and adventure travel experiences in Ladakh. We like to mix it up – a little bit of history and a little bit of adventure.

Travel Responsibly

We believe in creating shared value. We focus on engaging local communities in our work and always try to harness the local knowledge from the land.



Travel with Locals

Get an authentic and immersive Experience. Expect some local food, close interaction with locals and more time out in the nature on your own.

Expect Professionalism

We promise only what we can deliver. We are a great team of young, trained & experienced professionals from various backgrounds and share the same passion for outdoors & exploration.



Everything you need to know about

ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS

Altitude sickness ranges from mild headache and tiredness to a fatal build up of fluid in the lungs or brain at high altitudes.

Causes of AMS

Dipping air pressure & Lack of Oxygen at High Altitudes

The symptoms



Headache



Dizziness



Nausea



Loss of Appetite



Fatigue



Loss of sleep

steps to prevent ams



Consume 2 Litres of water everyday

Start exercising 1 month prior to the Journey



Diamox to help with better Acclimatisation



If initial precautionary measures are not taken, Acute mountain sickness might prove to be fatal and lead to further heart conditions

WHO DOES aMS AFFECT?

Part of the mystery of Acute Mountain Sickness is that it is difficult to predict who will be affected. There are many stories of fit and healthy people being badly limited while their older companions have felt fine!

what to do if you suffer from AMS?



Tell your team mates immediately



Descend down as soon as you can