

Ladakh Packing List

Everything to pack for Ladakh's high-altitude cold, thin mountain air, and short summer travel window — built to pair with Indroam's Ladakh itinerary templates.

WHY LADAKH PACKING IS DIFFERENT

Ladakh sits at extreme altitude — Leh alone is around 3,500 meters, with many passes and lakes considerably higher — so thin air, intense UV, and a real risk of altitude sickness shape everything about how you pack and how you pace the first days. The region is high-altitude desert: bright, dry sun by day and genuinely cold nights even in peak summer, with the main road-accessible travel season generally running from May/June to September before mountain passes close for winter. This is a packing list built around altitude and cold-dry air, not heat.

CLOTHING

- Layered clothing system: thermal base layers, a fleece or down mid-layer, and a windproof/waterproof outer shell
- Warm hat, gloves, and a neck gaiter or buff — temperatures drop sharply once the sun sets, even in summer
- Thermal socks and at least one warm change for evenings
- Lightweight quick-dry layers for daytime, since direct sun can feel intense despite the cold air
- Comfortable, loose clothing that allows easy layering on long drives over high passes
- A buff or scarf to cover the nose and mouth against dust and cold wind

FOOTWEAR & ACCESSORIES

- Sturdy, broken-in trekking or hiking shoes — terrain is rocky, dry, and uneven almost everywhere
- Warm, insulated socks for cold mornings and high-altitude excursions
- UV-protection sunglasses (wraparound style helps against glare and dust)
- Lip balm with SPF and a high-SPF sunscreen — UV exposure is intense at altitude
- A daypack for monastery visits and short walks at altitude
- Reusable water bottle — staying hydrated helps with acclimatization

HEALTH, DOCUMENTS & TECH

- Diamox or other altitude-sickness medication, taken only after consulting a doctor before the trip
- Personal medication plus a basic first-aid kit, since pharmacy access is limited outside Leh
- Rehydration salts/electrolytes for the dry, high-altitude climate
- Sunscreen SPF 50+ for both face and exposed skin
- Permits or ID copies required for protected/border areas (check current requirements before traveling)
- Portable charger and a universal plug adapter (India: Type C/D/M) — cold can drain batteries faster

Plan at least a day or two in Leh to acclimatize before going higher — altitude sickness is common and a rushed itinerary increases the risk.