

Spiti Valley Packing List

What to pack for Spiti's high-altitude desert landscape, freezing nights, and long stretches between towns with limited supplies or medical help.

WHY SPITI VALLEY PACKING IS DIFFERENT

Spiti sits at altitudes generally above 3,000 meters, making it a cold desert with thin air, intense daytime sun, and nights that drop well below freezing even in summer. Roads in and out are long, winding, and occasionally closed by landslides or snow, so towns and villages along the way have limited shops, pharmacies, and fuel stations. Altitude sickness is a real risk worth packing and planning around, and this is one of the few Indian destinations where what's in your medical kit matters as much as what's in your suitcase.

CLOTHING

- Heavy-duty thermal base layers — non-negotiable even in peak summer (June–September)
- An insulated down jacket for freezing nights at any time of year
- Windproof and water-resistant outer layers — Spiti's weather shifts fast
- Warm fleece or wool layers for layering through the day as temperatures swing
- Thermal leggings or warm trousers for cold mornings and evenings
- A warm hat, neck gaiter or buff, and insulated gloves
- Quick-dry trekking clothes for daytime, since direct sun at altitude can feel surprisingly warm

FOOTWEAR & ACCESSORIES

- Insulated, waterproof trekking boots — broken in before the trip, not new
- Thick wool socks, ideally several pairs
- Sunglasses with strong UV protection — altitude sun is intense even when the air is cold
- Trekking poles if visiting remote monasteries or villages on foot
- A headlamp for villages and guesthouses with limited or unreliable electricity
- A daypack for layers, water, and snacks during long travel days between villages

HEALTH, DOCUMENTS & TECH

- Medication for altitude sickness (consult a doctor before the trip) and a basic pulse oximeter
- Sunscreen SPF 50+ and lip balm — both sun and wind are harsh at altitude
- A comprehensive first-aid kit, since pharmacies are scarce once off the main highway
- Water purification tablets or a filter bottle as backup
- Extra cash in small denominations — ATMs are rare and unreliable beyond the main towns
- A fully charged power bank and offline maps, since mobile signal is patchy to nonexistent in much of the valley

Spend at least a day acclimatizing before going higher, and travel with a buffer of extra days in case roads close.