



# Spiti - Walk like a Spitian



Spiti offers fabulous monasteries, breathtaking high-altitude walks, stunning views of the world's highest mountains and one of the most likeable cultures you will ever encounter. But what makes Spitians so special and different? Why is it worth the effort to travel to what may seem as a harsh place? To know that you need to live like a Spitian, or become a become one for a week





Life in Spiti provides everything the soul needs to thrive from.

From the fragrance of the mountains to the flow of clear springs. The rhythmic chants of the monks, the whirl of the wind across the valley. The golden rays of the morning sun and the gentle warmth of the crimson orb at the end of the day.

In Spiti you'll learn that there is more than one path into the future – a path based on the co-evolution between humans and earth. At first the outsider will see the hard life, but give yourself time and you'll see the rare kind of purity the people here live by.







Day 1- Chandigarh - Narkanda

Driving time -6hrs

Distance -175kms

You'll meet our driver in Chandigarh who would drive you up to Narkanda. Your day begins with a gradual ascend through the Shivalik range driving through pine forest to spend the night at the charming Tethey's resort where a bonfire awaits you.

As we ease you into the adventure that awaits, allow yourself to take in the smells and sights of the mountains. The drive close to Narkanda is along dense deodar forests and apple orchards.

A night at 2700mts will acclimatize you well before the higher Himalayas and on route you can enjoy a lunch in one of the many Dhabas. Your driver will know the best one.

We recommend you fly into Chandigarh before noon to make the most of the property and so that you can walk around the forest in the area as well.







Day 2- Narkanda - Pooh

Driving time -7hrs

Distance -220kms

The day starts with a drive on the Indo-Tibetan highway through the Shimla hills covered with Pine and Deodhar trees. As you enter Kinnaur with its jaw dropping mountain and valley scenery, a distinctive cultural change and mix emerges from Hindu to Tibetan Buddhist. Proud and friendly, Kinnauris can be recognized by their short cylindrical cap.



For the night you make your way to Pooh which has served as a gateway to the Buddhist heritage of the Himalayas and as also an important trading route to Tibet. Your host Tenzin Negi will explain to you life in the Trans Himalayan region and if time permits he'll also take you to his orchard. The culture and lifestyle from Pooh to Spiti is similar and with Tenzin you will understand the role the monastery places in everyday life. He will also take you through the importance of farming and rearing of life stock in Kinnauri and Spitian life before you try your hand at those.





Day 3 - Pooh - Nako - Tabo - Mane

Driving time -4hrs 30min

Distance -120kms

You will spend the next 2 days with Lobzang at her homestay. With her you will try your hand at making Arak (local brew), weaving, tending to animals and doing every day chores. Often the traveler to just tick the check list forgets that it's the people that make the experience, not its monuments. Time spent with Lobzang will give you an insight into Spiti and Spitinas, the highlight of the valley. Before you reach Mane you'll pass through Nako. The change in landscape, architecture and culture is hard to miss as you reach the upper Himalayas. Slate roofs give way to flat Tibetan style roofs and most dabhas will sell only mutton momos. With your local guide you will wander the village lanes of Nako as he explains life in the village. From Nako you head to Tabo monastery which is one of over 100 monasteries founded during the second propagation of Buddhism. Inside the 11th century gompa are ancient murals







Lobzang's resourcefulness and creativity is hard not to appreciate. You'll spend the second day collecting wild tea, herbs and if the time of the year permits, you can help her harvest either barley or green peas or the sought after black peas from her fields. Despite the long winter and the cold and dry air, nature compensates adequately and a day in the fields of Mane is sure to be illuminating.

Lobzang initiated a local self help group who crochet handicrafts and weave. An afternoon spent with these inspiring women is sure to give you a deeper understanding of Spitians. You can get a lesson with them as well.

Lobzang's house is built using traditional rammed earth technique and she will take you through the benefits of such a construction method in this high altitude desert. Pressure to live in a concrete structure may seem absurd but some Spitians believe that to be a sign of progress. If there is a traditional house being built, you can participate in it, getting some hands on experience.



Day 5 - Mane - Dhankar - Lalung - Sagnam

Driving time - 2hrs 30min

Distance - 50kms



Dhankar is less than an hour from Mane. The highlight there is a 1200 years old crag-top temple and fort, creating one of the most spectacular sights in Spiti. Dhankar was the former capital of the Spiti kings. The drive from Dhankar to Lalung is along a ridge with beautiful views of the Pin and Spiti river confluence. Built during the second propagation of Buddhism in the 11th century, this outwardly modest monastery is actually an antique gem.

For the next 2 nights night you head to Sagnam to be with the incredible Soni and Karma. Soni left her job to care for the elders in her community. 'Serving them is my kora', Karma will tell you. Their homestay now supports the old age home. They live the dharma of their Buddhist faith. Time with them will help you understand the selfless side of life in Spiti. With them you can learn to make Spitian food and they won't take no for an answer when they offer you second and third helpings.





Day 6 - Sagnam - Kungri - Sagnam

Driving time - 30min

Distance - 15kms

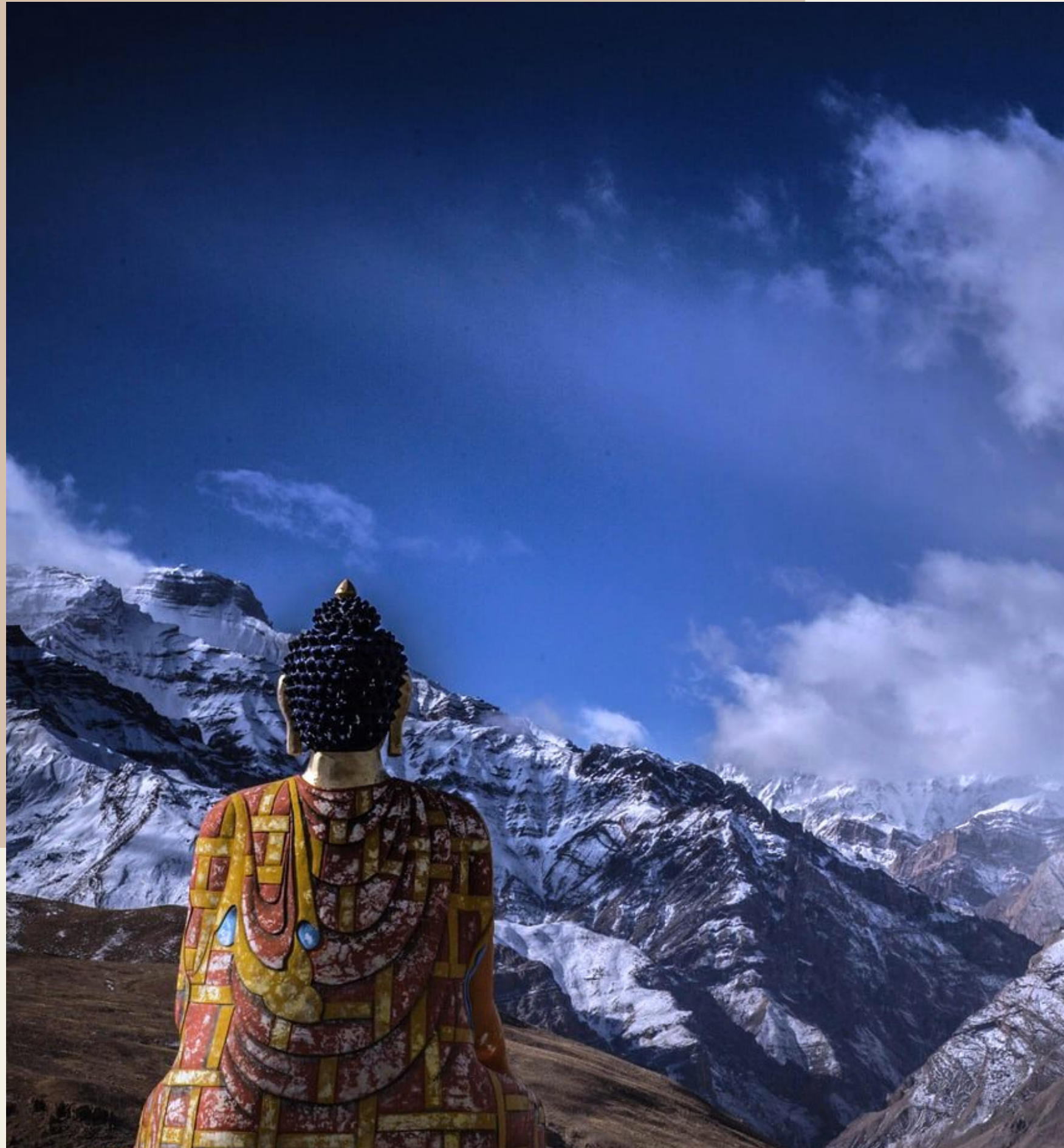
The day starts with a short hike towards the Pin valley national park with your hosts. Depending on your luck you could sight some raptors, mountain goats, fox, weasel and even signs of a snow leopard. A few locals from Sagnam have seasonal houses near their fields close to the national park which will make an ideal setting for lunch. Karma's sister is a nun at the Kungri nunnery and in the evening you can spend time interacting with the nuns there. Unlike monks, most nuns become one out of choice and not compulsion. The devotion and dedication with which they practice their dharma will help you understand the role Buddhism plays in the lives of Spitians.



Day 7 - Sagnam - Komic- Hikkim - Langza - Kurith

Driving time -3hrs 30min

Distance -80kms



The day starts with a drive to Komic. For anyone interested in geology the views of different strata tilted at all conceivable angles tell us the story of the land we live on. The stunning drive leads you to one of the highest inhabited places in the world at 4600mts. The views are breathtaking and Komic also has a monastery from the 13th century.

Fancy sending your loved ones a postcard from the world's highest post office? A short stop at Hikkim on route to Komic will give you a chance to do so.

Lunch will be organized at a homestay in Langza and you can try your hand at digging for marine fossils, some of them being over 100million year old.

For the night you'll head to Kurith to be hosted by Kalzang, a proud farmer. His traditional house overlooks his fields. Kalzang started his homestay to share his love for Spiti. A village pradhan, he draws inspiration from traditional knowledge to work for his community.



Day 8 - Kurith - Sumlling  
Driving time -10min  
Distance -8kms



Kalzang practices organic farming and is aware of the changes in his valley with the introduction of chemical assisted farming. A tour of his fields in the morning will add a new piece to the puzzle that Spiti is. A short 15min drive to Sumlling springs another surprise. A 3hr trek from Sumlling will reveal 1000yr old pre Buddhist rock paintings. With views of the river and villages in the valley as a backdrop, your host Shering will share with you the early history of Spiti. Season permitting, he will also identify medicinal plants used by local traditional doctors. A teacher, like his father, Shering is driven to conserve the traditions of his area and is a natural story teller. He is attempting to make Sumlling and the villages around plastic free and is working closely with the community to ensure the benefits of tourism are spread. Shering can also take you for a tour to a nunnery nearby.





Day 9 - Sumlling - Chandertal lake -  
Driving time -4hrs 30min  
Distance -85kms

A fitting place to end your trip, the Chandertal lake presents mirror-perfect reflections of the surrounding white-top peaks.

Before reaching the lake you will drive past the soaring 4551mts Kunzum Pass with the Spiti River as your near constant companion, although sometimes way below in precipitous gorges.

Though you may not see one but this is Snow Leopard, territory. The lake is also a nesting sight for migratory birds and you may also sight the now Snowcock, Kestrel, Golden Eagle, Marmots and the Red Fox. A walk around the lake is sure to get you breathless, but it's well worth the effort.







Day 10 - Chandertal lake - Manali

Driving time - 7hrs

Distance -140kms

Maybe its the simplicity or honesty with which Spitians live their life that makes them unique. Maybe its because they are more connected to themselves or the land they live on. Or perhaps you have discovered another reason. Whatever that may be, your time here amongst some of the most gracious people you will meet is sure to be memorable. Such is the energy of the place that you'll feel strangely content. Maybe it is the architectural

perfection of the mountains that lord their beauty over this high altitude wilderness. Spiti a place which represents measureless freedom. It's a place to connect with nature and here you see that if you let indigenous people live as they have for centuries, then we have more to learn from them than they from us.



Day 1- Chandigarh - Narkanda

Driving time -7hrs, Distance -175kms, Accommodation at - Tethys resort

Day 2- Narkanda - Pooh

Driving time -7hrs, Distance -220kms, Accommodation at - Om guest house

Day 3- Pooh - Nako - Tabo - Mane

Driving time -4hrs 30min, Distance -120kms, Accommodation at - Lobzang homestay

Day 4 Mane. Accommodation at - Lobzang homestay

Day 5- Mane - Dhankar - Lalung - Sagnam

Driving time -2hrs 30min, Distance -50kms, Accommodation at - Soni & Karma homestay

Day 6 - Sagnam - Kungri - Sagnam

Driving time -30min, Distance -15kms, Accommodation at - Soni & Karma homestay

Day 7- Sagnam - Hikkim - Komic - Langza - Kurith

Driving time -3hrs 30min, Distance -80kms, Accommodation at - Kalzang homestay

Day 8- Kurith - Sumlling

Driving time -10min, Distance -8kms, Accommodation at - Tendel homestay

Day 9- Sumlling - Losar - Kunzum Pass - Chandertal lake

Driving time -4hrs 30min, Distance -85kms, Accommodation at - Parasol campsite

Day 10- Chandertal lake - Manali

Driving time -7hrs, Distance -100kms, Accommodation at - Casa Bella Vista

Day 11- Manali - Chandigarh

Driving time -8/9hrs, Distance -310kms