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# The Frozen River Trek

The Best Way to Experience Himalayas in Winters!

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## Introduction

Known for its stunning beauty with the snow capped mountains and covering the Zaskar river with ice, Chadar trek is one of the most popular trek in the Himalayas. If you love trekking and exploring the beauty of the mountains then this trek is a must visit for you. The magnificence of the trek lies in the trail that wanders through the entrancing gorges and overpowering canyons of the Zaskar Valley. As trekking through the ice can be dangerous at times, let's make this easier for you with this Guide to the Chadar Trek.



### Chadar Trek

#### What is Chadar Trek?

Mostly known for its mesmerising beauty of blanket of ice covering the whole river, Chadar is very famous among the trekkers. Once you reach there you will be illusioned as you are walking on a sheet of ice. This is how this trek got its name 'Chadar'. This trek has slowly gained its significance among the professional trekkers as as well the amateurs. You will be starting your trek from a small village from where you can see the river at its frozen state.

The beauty of Chadar can be best enjoyed during the winters and as you will be travelling during these period bring your warmest Jackets and dozing sacks and great shoe. You also need to keep in mind about the weather conditions of this region and plan accordingly. These help perpetually in keeping the body warm and anticipate cold sores. Most of the time you will be spending your evenings in the cave and also with the locals who are said to be very warm hearted.

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## What is the best time for Chadar Trek?

The most preferred time for this trek is during the month of **December to February** when the ice is very stable. The temperature stays less 15 to 20 Degrees during the daytime and – 25 to –35 Degree during the night. Most of the time the trekker would finish their trek by walking, but there are some part in the trek when you will have to climb the snowy white rocks and stones during your trip. While in the evening most of the trekkers are seen resting in the caves after strolling through the white ices sheet.



## Why should you go on the Chadar Trek?

For the adventure seekers and the nature lovers this is one place where you can see the true beauty of nature while taking the challenges. People might fall for the beauty of this trek but at times the trek might be difficult. Unleash that adventure spirit in you as you trek through the mesmerizing beauty of this region.

Chadar treks hold a secret of an amazing passage to explore the beauty of the Himalayas and which will be definitely a lifetime experience. Whether you are an experienced trekker or a beginner this trek will be quite hell of an experience. Trek through the slippery ice and spend your nights in the caves during this amazing trek. This is one thing you should never miss, trekking through the ice sheets, climbing through the steepy rocks will make you escapade more fascinating.

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## How Difficult is the Chadar Trek?

While you are planning for an adventurous Chadar trek it will be good to know that the trek can be very difficult at times. It is also said that the Chadar trek is one of the most difficult treks. You may be illusioned with the glittering beauty of the ice sheet in the Zaskar river. But this is very provoking as well. As winter falls this whole place gets covered by snow and even the roads are blocked.

In the month of January and February when the ice one can see round blocks of ice covering the river and making it one huge snow plate. If you are a photography buff then this is a double treat for you as the pictures you click will speak a thousand words about this place. The trekkers should also face the challenge of the cold and the unsettling temperatures. At first you will be mostly walking in the trek for around 105 km. As you continue trekking you will have to overcome climbing some of the steep rocks and stones on your way.

To save yourself from frost bites wear as much warm clothes as you can. Your body will slowly starts to adjust with the subzero temperatures. Keep in mind to carry right quality of sleeping bags and sturdy ice shoes which will help you to beat the cold. You will be camping in the caves most of the time so be prepared to carry warm jackets and warmers and woolen socks as well.



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## How to reach the starting point?

For the thrill seekers this is one place you have been long waiting for. The chilly weather and slippery ice can make you confused at times but nothing can stop you from exploring its beauty. While you are heading for an adventure in the Chadar trek start your trek from the Base camp at Chilling. You will be driving along the Leh Srinagar road and reach Zaskar which is very near to Chilling, Chadar trek will start from this point. Get amazed by the mesmerizing beauty of the region and feel the ice beneath you.

We have three major options to reach to the starting point, Chilling

**Buses:** For travelling to Chilling, mini buses are available on Wednesday's and Sunday's. Frequency is just one or two per day which might be cut down during non tourist seasons.

**Taxis:** Taxis are available from Leh throughout the day. The taxi fares vary from INR 2500- 3000.

**Self-Driving:** You can also have multiple options to hire a bicycle or motorbike from Leh.

Note: There isn't any Airport nor any Railway stations in Chilling moreover there are no railway tracks in Ladakh as well.

## Difficulties that you may encounter

Because of its unique beauty and the serenity Chadar has gained its significance with the trekkers. But during the trek the one thing that can make your trek difficult is the climatic condition. Since it goes down to zero degree your body will take time to adjust with the climate. You will be trekking to an altitude of 13000 ft above sea level. You will have to keep up your stamina as you will be trekking for a long time.

There are a few things that you need to keep in mind:



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## How to find a right Trekking Company

Chadar Trek is experience of lifetime, instead of finding the cheapest companies, find the right quality of trekking company. You can also take help of marketplaces like [Thrillophilia](#) where most of the local suppliers are listed. Check and compare the offerings of various local suppliers before you book. You can check out one of the [Chadar trek experiences](#) listed on Thrillophilia here, which has some good reviews as well. Remember, a right trekking company can enhance your experience multiple fold.

## What to do on the Chadar Trek

- As you are on a trek there can be scarcity of food and water. Carry a sufficient edibles and water with you. Best is to go with a professional trekking company, who can help you with potters and arrangements.
  - You should have a keen eye of the ice sheet where you are walking.
  - Always carry a medical kit where you have all the medicines. You might get bruised at times and it is very important to check into it as soon as possible.
  - Carry warm clothes and sleeping bags with you as it will later help you to avoid frost bites.
  - Sometimes you might find a sudden crack in the snow in between your trek. Just run to the solid ice immediately.
  - Ice can be slippery at times so walk with utmost care.
  - It is also recommended to let your family or friends know about your trip which will help in emergencies.

## What not to do on the Chadar Trek

- As you will be trekking to a high altitude it is always advised not to skip your meals.
- Avoid using soap or shampoo in the waterfalls as the local inhabitants use the water for drinking purposes.
  - Take a brief note the weather conditions of the region.
  - Do not click pictures or disturb the monks in this region, they might be very sensitive in this cases.
  - Do not litter away and pollute this region the beauty of this region.



### How Cold Does it Get?

Known to be one of the unique treks with the best views this trek is also the chilliest during the winters. The temperature in Chadar drops down to less than zero degree which makes it freezing cold. But Chadar trek can be best enjoyed during the time of winters. One can see the round pieces of ice over the glittering in the transparent river of ice in River Zaskar. The temperature stays less than 15 to 20 during the daytime and minus 25 to minus 35 during the night.

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The weather is extremely cold at this region. So you need to be physically and mentally strong while you are planning for the trek. Also, try to carry body warmers which will help you to keep yourself warm. You will be covering a distance of 105 km through walking but at then again you will have to climb icy rocks and stones on your way. The only thing you can see with be the white sheet of ice everywhere. So you will have to keep yourself warm as much as you can. Wear an extra layer of socks then usual which will help you during camping in the caves at night.

### **How to Get Safe Drinking Water During the Trek?**

While you are making your way to the Himalayas and that too to the most unique trek you will have the purest water from the Himalayas. But as you will be traveling from different regions you can fill your water bottles in the filling stations. Here the water is purified by adding chlorine tablets in boil water and suitable for drinking. Always keep in mind to check with your trek leader while you run out of water. Never drink water from any other sources before without consulting your trek leader.

### **Is the Trek suitable for Girls?**

If you have a doubt in mind that the trek is difficult for girls then just kick that out right now. The trek is very much safe for girls. Everything is very well arranged in this region from your guide to the staff. If girls don't just think about going there just pack your bags and head out right now. Just keep in mind to check up your personal belongings.

### **Accommodation Arrangement for the Trekkers**

If you are worried about your accommodation during your Chadar trek, then fret not as you will be staying in good tents with all basic facilities. During your trek, you will be mostly camping in the caves. Usually two person can accommodate in one tent, most of the time your trekking company will be providing sleeping bags to beat the subzero temperature. For your own comfort you can carry your own tent and sleeping bags with you. This will make



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your camping in the caves more suitable. Also carry warm pads which are the best for the one easily catching a cold. This pads slipped into your gloves or socks can keep you warm up to 10 hours.

When choosing a company ask for a lead trekker who is certified in wilderness and can take care of your problems easily. Trekking company will also be providing you with cook, guides and other staff members during your trek.



### Approximate Cost

You don't have to worry about the cost for your amazing Chadar trek. The approximate cost for a 9 days 8 nights trip will start from 20,000 INR. The cost may vary according the number of person for the trip, activities, type of arrangement, government fees etc. A whole package will include all the facilities of transportation, accommodation, food etc. But the cost

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will not cover your personal expenses like sleeping bag, trekking shoes, clothing, insurance and phone calls. You need to be very serious about all the trekking gears and the hiking clothes for your expeditions. If you are in a hurry you can also buy all the clothes and the gears in Leh.

### Medical Evacuations/Emergencies

While heading out on a trek your first priority will be your safety, so while you are planning for your Chadar trek you will have to keep few things in mind. Since there will be no doctors there your trek leader will be one in all who will be taking care of you. He is trained to be your primary medical aid which will be helping you throughout your trek. For the best experience do not deviate from the guidelines. For your safety it is best to carry your own medical kit with all the medicines required. Also get checked your physical health before heading out for your trek. In case you are under any kind of medication then consult a physician before starting your trip.

### Things You Must Carry

As you are planning for this unique trip you need to be ready with all things beforehand. As the climatic condition of this place is very cold you need to be very careful with what you are carrying with you.

Carry these things without fail:

- warm clothes
- sleeping beds
- food supplements
- water
- body warmers
- long sleeve
- hiking shirt
- long quick dry hiking pants etc.

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Don't forget to carry chlorine or water purifying tablets before drinking water. Carry a duffle bag where you will have all your personal belongings like a set of spare clothes, inner and outer socks, sweaters, insulating hats, shoes, towel, soap, toothbrush, medical kit etc.

### What are the major destinations covered in Chadar Trek?

On this amazing trip you will definitely be interested to know where you will be setting your foot in this unique land. The places which you are going to cover during your trek are:

**Tilat Sumdo:** Also known as a famous campsite for Chadar Trek. 'Sumdo' literally means 'the confluence'. Soak in the amazing beauty of this region with the snowcapped mountains and the small stream joining with the Zanskar river.

**Shinra Koma:** Just 10 km away from Tilat Sumdo lies Shingra Koma which is best known for showcasing the incandescent beauty of the mountains. If you have been long searching for some quiet region then this is definitely the place for you.

**Tibb:** Offering one of the best picturesque view of the cascading waterfalls and the mysterious caves, this place is best known for camping. The caves in this area are suitable for the hikers for their overnight stay.

**Nerak:** This places serves as the base camp for your trek. If you want to capture some best shots with your lens, then you have the amazing sunset to provoke you.

**Gyalpo:** This is another campsite which is in a curve state with the Zanskar river. With the beauty of the rock and the peaks Gyalpo has become one of the best campsite for the hikers.

**Dibyokma:** Known for its breathtaking views of the Himalayas this is another region for camping in the Himalayas. Marvel at the sight of the amazing beauty of the snow-clad mountains just in front of you.

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**Lingshed:** Considered as one of the most established towns in Ladakh, Lingshed gloats sensational flawless nature. This locale is noticeably celebrated for the Lingshed Monastery, which is one of the most established religious communities in Ladakh also.



So this was a just glimpse of what you will explore on this exciting trek to Chadar. You will for sure experience a lot more thrilled, a lot more adventurous, a lot more breathtaking once you'll reach there but, this ultimate guide will help you to plan that perfect trip