

Shyok River Lodge

Caravan Crossroads of the Karakoram



At home and comfortable among the world's highest mountains

Shyok River Lodge (SRL) is strategically located right at the spot where the two majestic mountain ranges of the Himalayas and Karakoram meet. But what is perhaps most special is the unique blend of authentic village life and contemporary comfort that the lodge offers. SRL sits right in the middle of an oasis of green fields, wild roses and willows, overlooking the wild, braiding Shyok river. We welcome families, individuals, couples. For the epicurean traveler who seeks an authentic Himalayan village experience without having to slum it out SRL is the ideal retreat. But the real treat is our chef's creative culinary repertoire that never fails to delight the palate.

To have a truly memorable experience, you can engage with the local community by helping with the ploughing, sowing or harvesting of the barley. In spring time, you can accompany the herders as they take the yaks to the high pastures, while keeping an eye out for elusive wolves and snow leopards.

Unique wildlife

Speaking of snow leopards, SRL is a haven for those interested in wildlife, bird watchers and nature lovers in general. It is close to the high plateau of Rupshu (Changtang) where the *kyang* (wild Tibetan horses) roam, and the great lake of Pangong Tso where rare black-necked cranes breed. On multi-day treks you may encounter the wild yak and Tibetan antelope.



Programmes

At Shyok River Lodge, you can stay as long as you like, of course. It is entirely up to you if you merely want to soak up the peace, quiet and natural beauty of the place, or take off on walks and rides daily, or even make a long trek on foot or horseback. For most of our clients, we design a tailor-made programme.

A minimum stay at SRL is three nights/four days. We maintain a minimum stay because a shorter stay would not allow you to truly enjoy the quality of the place. As most parts of day 1 and day 4 would be spent traveling, this gives you two full days at the lodge. We can suggest the following two programmes.

SRL with Pangong Lake – 3 nights/4 days

Day one will be spent traveling from Leh in the Indus Valley to Shyok, a thrilling drive along bright green oases of barley fields and white-washed Ladakhi farm houses among bare, colorful mountains. En route you will cross the 5260m high Chang La (pass) and visit two magnificent *gompas* (Buddhist monasteries).

Highlights of the 2nd and 3rd day include a scenic 4 hour walk over the old caravan route to Yarkand (Turkmenistan), drinking tea with the monks at the village gumpa, and a jeep trip to the famous Pangong Lake. Of course, there's always the option of ambling off with a good book to the lazy hammock in our willow grove. The last morning will be spent exploring the banks of the Shyok River, as you like either by jeep, walking or on horseback.



SRL with Pangong Lake & Nubra Valley – 5 nights/6 days

On the first day you'll travel from Leh to Nubra Valley, crossing 5450m high Khardong La, one of the highest motorable passes in the world. On the way up, you'll get dramatic views over the oasis of Leh and the Stok Kangri massif looming behind. The next day, you'll explore Nubra Valley, its magnificent monasteries and its green hamlets of whitewashed houses hidden among tall polars and apricot groves. If you're a walker we'll take you to some small, remote gompas that Lonely Planet has never heard of. Or you can travel caravaneer-style between the humps of a Bactrian camel through a true desert landscape of large sand dunes outside Diskit. Optionally, you can follow the Shyok River down all the way to Turtuk, close to the Pakistani border.

On the third day you'll travel eastward, along a rarely traveled track following the wide, untamed Shyok River through truly splendid mountain scenery with gorges, thickets of flowering tamarisk and tiny time warped hamlets to Shyok River Lodge. Day four to six will be as in the 4-day programme.



Walks, rides & floats

Speaking of trekking, the lodge offers fantastic opportunities to walk, trek, horse or camel ride and even canoe. For instance, it is a moderately strenuous 8-day trek to reach Shyok River Lodge on foot. The starting point is Leh, the capital of Ladakh. If you are into trekking, we feel this is by far the most interesting and rewarding way to get there. Also, we are offering treks further afield, some of which have never been done before, including one from SRL to Pangong Tso. Closer to home and less demanding are some splendid day walks that can be done from the lodge itself.

From late summer 2015 onwards, we will also offer short rides and multi-day treks on horse back. On the longer horse treks, we'll venture out onto the fascinating high altitude plateau of Rupshu, the domain of Tibetan nomads.

Also starting 2015, we hope to offer canoe trips on the Shyok River. Canoeing on this fast flowing river is not for total beginners. However, anyone who has experience with canoeing rivers with grade 2/3 rapids should feel comfortable on the Shyok.

Yoga retreats and courses

SRL is an ideal place for retreats of any kind. Two experienced yoga teachers are ready to assist with anything from an introductory course to a full-fledged month-long yoga retreat.



Responsible tourism

One of the main ideas behind SRL is to have the locals profit from tourism. SRL is owned by a local family that receives a fair share in the revenues. As far as possible, other villagers are engaged in services required.

Keeping a pristine place like Shyok clean and green is one of our most important commitments. As most of the food we serve is locally sourced or comes from elsewhere in Ladakh, packaging and pollution associated with transport is prevented. As a result, garbage production is small, and most of it is recycled or reused. Speaking of energy use, both electricity and hot showers are provided, courtesy of the Ladakhi sun.

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