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## Travel Guide for Pangong Tso Lake in Ladakh

By [Dheeraj Sharma](#) on Mar 12, 2012 00:05 in [Ladakh](#), [Travel Guides](#) / [194 comments](#)

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### Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh

**Pangong Tso** lake in Changthang region of Ladakh has emerged as one of the most wanted places to visit among domestic tourists in recent times especially after the Bollywood blockbuster "3 idiots". Now, in India one can see a lot more movies and advertisements being shot around this mesmerizing lake. This slat water, beautiful ocean like lake is about 5 KM wide at its broadest point and about 134 KM long with about 60% of the length extending into Tibet. During winters the lake freezes completely, which itself is a great experience to witness if you have seen the other colors of the lake. ~~Being very near to the Line of Actual Control, one need to get Inner Line Permit to visit Pangong Tso. You can get more details on Inner Line Permits here: [Inner Line Permits for Leh—Ladakh](#).~~ Starting May 2014, Indian Tourists does not need Inner Line Permits for Pangong Tso lake. Read more about it [here](#)

The beautiful multi shades of blue color offered by this lake along with a picturesque landscape around gives this place an extremely romantic feel as shown in Bollywood film songs. However, sitting behind the TV/LCD it looks so but in actual reality the place is extremely harsh and difficult to survive especially in winters. There is only one cemented accommodation available around the lake and the facilities like electricity, medical aid, hot running water, western toilets etc. are rare to find. The lack of oxygen makes survival difficult if your body is not properly acclimatized to its high altitude and hence, one need to plan his/her journey extremely carefully to make it acute mountain sickness free vacation.



Photo credit: Kaushik Dada at [IndiaMike](#)

#### Location

Pangong Tso lake is located about 170 KMs from [Leh](#) town of Ladakh district.

<http://devilonwheels.com/index.php/travel-guide-for-pangong-tso-lake-in-ladakh/>

**Altitude**

Pangong Tso lake is one of the high altitudes lakes of India at a staggering altitude of 4350 Meters or 14270 Feet.

**Season for Traveling to Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh**

In January to March, Pangong Tso remains mostly frozen, extremely cold conditions with no options to stay around the lake. In April types, it starts to melt and starts transforming into the beautiful multi shades of blue colors off the shores. Then May, June, July and August is the peak tourist season and they generally flock the shores of the Pangong Tso lake. In this summer period, a large number of birds can also be seen around the lake including the most common Bar-headed goose and Brahmini ducks.

Come September and early October, the tourists starts to reside as cold starts to set in and accommodation tents starts to pack up. According to me, this is by far the best time to visit Pangong Tso to see full glory of beautiful shades of blue color. The colors are purely magical at this time of the year and with less number of tourist comparatively, you get better deals and enjoy more. After second week of October up to December, all the accommodation packs up and the only nearest place you can stay is either in some home stay with basic facilities to fight the harsh cold or in some guest house at Tangste with more better facilities to fight the cold. If sun is shining and you do not mind the hard cold winters, then also you can make a day trip to Pangong Tso from Tangste to see magical shades of blue color at this lake.

**How to Reach Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh****Route from Leh to Pangong Tso Lake**

This is the general route to Pangong Tso that most people take to visit this ever beautiful lake in Ladakh. You can reach in about 5 – 6 Hrs depending upon the number of break you take in between. The route along with distance between the subsequent places is as follows:

Leh – Karu (36 KMs) – Sakti (10 KMs) – **Chang La** (34 KMs) – Durbuk (32 KMs) – Tangste (9 KMs) – Lukung (34 KMs) – Spangmik (16 KMs) = **171 KMs**

You can cover Thicksey, Hemis and Shey monasteries while going through this route. This route provides the best road conditions among all other routes. So, if you are one of those who prefer relaxing vacation and do not want to rush through places then, I will suggest make a two day trip to Pangong Tso lake via this route from Leh. Of course, I assume your body has been acclimatized properly by staying for couple of nights in Leh and spending a night or two in Nubra Valley before attempting to sleep near Pangong Tso. If you are short on time then you should make a day trip to Pangong Tso via this route only, being best in road conditions, so fastest among all.

**Route from Nubra Valley to Pangong Tso Lake**

Many of the domestic tourists are short on leaves and also do not want to miss the opportunity of sunrise/sunset at Pangong Tso by making a day trip. Hence, when they visit Nubra Valley (always recommended for better acclimatization) first most of them seek some route from Nubra Valley to Pangong Tso directly without going back to Leh. For all such people, there exist two routes from Nubra Valley to Pangong Tso:

**Nubra Valley – Wari La – Pangong Tso**

This route goes via mighty Wari La pass, one of the most remotest passes of the Ladakh region and takes about 11-12 Hrs again depending upon number of interim breaks you take. The route is long and rough and hence require you to leave very early from Nubra Valley, so that you reach Pangong Tso (Lukung or Spangmik) before sun goes down. If you are planning via Wari La route then keep confirming from the BRO posts that come by to check the road conditions ahead. It is extremely remote region and you will hardly find any tourist or vehicle going past by you. Hence, in case required, help would be long to find. You need to mention Wari La on your permit form in order to under take this route. The route along with distance between the subsequent places is as follows:

Diskit – Khalsar (19 KMs) – Agham (31 KMs) – Tangyar (11 KMs) – **Wari La** (28 KMs) – Tathok (25 KMs) – Sakti (4 KMs) – **Chang La** (34 KMs) – Durbuk (32 KMs) – Tangste (9 KMs) – Lukung (34 KMs) – Spangmik (16 KMs) = **243 KMs**

Do not attempt this route in early season because, first it might not be open being low on priority for BRO and second roads are not stabilized in early season. So, being remote again help might be hard to find. You also need to carry spare fuel from Leh to cover about 425 – 475 KMs because many a times the petrol/diesel is not available at Diskit, Nubra Valley petrol pump and you will be covering Leh – Nubra Valley – Wari La – Pangong Tso – Leh without any other petrol pump.

**Nubra Valley – Shyok Village – Pangong Tso**

This route from Nubra Valley to Pangong Tso goes via Shyok Village and is on the cards to be opened in the year 2012. It is much shorter than the Wari La route, takes about 6-7 hrs from Nubra Valley to Pangong Tso and hence will save more time and energy. But, again there are some nasty landslide prone stretches on this route which BRO has found hard to tackle and stabilize a road through it. In the year 2010, few of the people did make it through this route but around flashfloods time the whole route was washed-off again. As per BRO, they might throw open this route via Shyok village in this year that is 2012 and it will be a great relief for the tourists, at least having less time on hands. You need to mention Shyok Village on your permit form in order to under take this route. The route along with distance between the subsequent places is as follows:

Diskit – Khalsar (19 KMs) – Agham (31 KMs) – **Shyok Village** (48 KMs) – Durbuk (18 KMs) – Tangste (9 KMs) – Lukung (34 KMs) – Spangmik (16 KMs) = **175 KMs**

You also need to carry spare fuel from Leh to cover 350 – 400 KMs because many a times the petrol/diesel is not available at Diskit, Nubra Valley petrol pump and you will be covering Leh – Nubra Valley – Wari La – Pangong Tso – Leh without any other petrol pump.

**Route from Tso Moriri Lake to Pangong Tso Lake**

There exist a route between **Tso Moriri** a [Got a Travel Question? Ask Here!!](#) st general cases, you will always be doing it from other way around that is from Pangong Tso to Tso Moriri because you can exit Ladakh from **Tso Moriri** towards **Manali** – **Leh** Highway after visiting Pangong Tso without coming back to Leh and secondly, Tso Moriri is higher than Pangong Tso so as per acclimatization schedule you must stay near Pangong Tso before spending night at Tso Moriri. However, for the informational purposes you can go to Pangong Tso from Tso Moriri directly via the remote and ever beautiful Changthang region. The drive between Pangong Tso and Tso Moriri is one of the most beautiful drives in whole Ladakh region. You need to mention all the places mentioned in the route below on your permit form in order to under take this route. The route along with distance between the subsequent places is as follows:

Tso Moriri (Korzok) – Sumdo (53 KMs) – Mahe (10 KMs) – **Nyoma** (25 KMs) – **Loma** (22 KMs) – Tsaga Village (23 KMs) – Tsaga La (20 KMs) – **Chusul** (33 KMs) – Kakstet (24 KMs) – Merak (4 KMs) – Man (12 KMs) – Spangmik (9 KMs) = **235 KMs**

Though highly unlikely but if at all you are doing in this order then you also need to carry spare fuel from Leh/Upshi/Karu to cover about 600 – 700 KMs because you will be covering Leh -Tso Moriri – Nyoma – Loma – Pangong Tso – Leh without any other petrol pump.

**Preferred Vehicles**

The higher ground clearance vehicles are preferable and 4x4 ones would definitely be helpful especially between Tso Moriri and Pangong Tso as well as Nubra Valley – Shyok Village – Pangong Tso route. However, quite a few people do it in hatchbacks and sedans as well which depends upon your skills to drive and road conditions.

#### Suggested Itinerary for Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh

Generally, at least one night stay is preferable to truly witness the mesmerizing beauty of this blue colored salt water lake. Of course, one night stay will help you watch sunrise and sunset over the picturesque landscape and increase the charm of your vacation to great extent. Most people, generally do:

#### Day 1 | Leh – Hemis Monastery – Pangong Tso Lake

Cover either of Hemis, Thicksey and Shey on the go towards Pangong Tso  
Overnight at Pangong Tso (Spangmik or Lukung)

#### Day 2 | Pangong Tso Lake – Thicksey Monastery – Shey Palace – Leh

Cover either of Hemis, Thicksey and Shey on return to Leh  
Overnight at Leh

You can also check the most common and very well balanced itinerary for whole Leh – Ladakh region covering all major tourist destination including [Srinagar – Leh Highway](#) and [Manali – Leh Highway](#), at the below link: [Most Common Itinerary for Leh – Ladakh](#)

#### Accommodation Options at Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh

For a comprehensive list of accommodation options or hotels or camps around Pangong Tso lake, check the link here: [Good Hotels or Accommodation options near Pangong Tso – Ladakh](#)

#### Medical Facilities near Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh

The nearest basic medical health center is at Tangste Village about 50 KMs from Spangmik village and 34 KMs from Lukung village. You can get basic first aid including Oxygen doses at some of the tents/camps, I guess.

#### Food Joints near Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh

Being a remote place, you will either be eating in the home stay at Spangmik Village or at the camps/tents you might be staying overnight.

#### Phone Signals at Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh

You will not find any phone or mobile signals at Pangong Tso lake.

#### Petrol Pumps near Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh

Nearest Petrol Pump is at Karu about 135 KMs from Pangong Tso and comes on the way to Pangong Tso from Leh. I will suggest that you top-up the fuel from Leh itself and then drive/ride up to Pangong Tso.

#### ATMs near Pangong Tso Lake – Ladakh

You will not find any ATMs near Pangong Tso lake and hence, it is always better to carry cash from Leh (the only place where you find ATM in Ladakh) itself.

#### Conclusion

It is a great place to visit and I am sure if you visit Ladakh, this one surely is not the place you would like to exclude from your plan. I hope the above information will be useful for your upcoming Leh – Ladakh trip.

Please feel free to post any queries or doubts you might have in planning your trip to Pangong Tso place in the comments section below. If you have been to Pangong Tso lake, kindly share your thoughts and other information you might feel will be worth sharing with other fellow travelers and prove helpful to them.

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## 194 Comments

1.  *Amit Gulia* says:  
[Jun 4, 2014 at 15:37](#)

Hi,