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7 Useful Tips for a Self Drive to Leh – Ladakh

By [Dheeraj Sharma](#) on May 21, 2012 00:05 in [Ladakh](#), [Travel Articles](#) / [167 comments](#)

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With [Leh](#) – Ladakh season in full swing now, lots of adventure lovers prepare themselves to go for a self drive run over the roof of the World via the ever enthralling and adventurous [Manali – Leh Highway](#). I would like to share 7 useful tips for your upcoming self drive expedition to Leh- Ladakh that you might want to keep at back of your mind, rather always on mind, before you dive into the dream drive of your life to Leh – Ladakh:



1. Over-confidence is your biggest enemy, so keep it away!!

Never be over confident that you are master of driving, you have done Rohtang Pass ‘x’ number of times, you are a champ driver in plains etc. because driving to [Ladakh](#) especially via [Manali – Leh Highway](#) could be one of the strangest and adventurous drive you will ever undertake in life. Never think that any overlying stone will not hit the underbelly, never think that the road ahead is straight as an arrow like runway and you can cruise through it etc. ... Such a thinking can get you/your vehicle stranded in the middle of no where for hours to up to days.

Even the smoothest and straightest of the roads, which look like super fine, newly laid tarmac are washed in between or have sudden bumps in them which can badly hurt your vehicle. If you see a big rock lying in between on road especially at sections with loose gravel then it is always you better step out and throw it away to make your way instead of taking any chance and getting your car’s underbelly hurt with it.

2. Never rush through a any tricky section of the road

Whenever, you are in doubt about some rough section of the road, may be landslide section or pathetically rough road or a water crossing etc. then never, ever rush through it. Rather, carefully analyse that section by parking your vehicle aside and judging the situation. Try to see how other vehicles are crossing that section. And, if required, check/inspect the trouble section on your foot to prepare an exit route through it in your mind. Then finally go for it.

3. Know Your Vehicle Well

It is very important to know about your vehicle because you might find some of the stretches or sections of the road which are not possible to cross without a hit or scratches under-belly, especially with hatchbacks and sedans. In such, situations you need to know which parts of the underbelly of your car you might need to protect especially oil sump (which you need to protect all round the trip) and which parts you can let get hit from below or have some scratches.

4. Do Not Use Heaters

Use of heaters should be avoided at any cost especially at the places like [Manali – Leh Highway](#) and [Ladakh](#) because the warm air by heater destroys the levels of oxygen content present inside and can make breathing very difficult and aggravate the AMS Symptoms.

5. Do Not Drink & Drive

Should be first and foremost, but still, PLEASE do not booze/drink at all while you are driving in Himalayas, especially the [Manali – Leh Highway](#) which runs above 14000 feet at major portion of it. Boozing or Drinking means you will have some real trouble in getting acclimatized with alcohol in your belly 😊 and of course, will create lapse in concentration while driving.

6. Always Help Others

While traveling in mighty Himalayas, you must always help other people stuck on their way with whatever you can offer, be it a lift, push, pull, fuel, spares, rope etc. because the help is always hard to find especially at places like Manali – Leh Highway, Changthang or other remote routes of Ladakh. Do not forget, this can happen to you at the very next turn and it does not feel much good when someone comes after hours and passes by without offering any help. So, please always help others who are in need. It actually defines the spirit of Traveller inside you 😊

7. Carry Essentials and other Spare Parts

On a self-drive to Ladakh trip, one should [Got a Travel Question? Ask Here!!](#)

- Basic Toolkit including Jack and Spanner
- Air Compressor and Foot pump
- Hydraulic Jack
- Spare Tyre (Check for puncture before leaving)
- Puncture Repair Kit
- Screwdriver Set
- Torchlight
- Jump Start Cables
- Spare Bulbs
- Tow Away Rope approx. 3-6 ton Capacity
- 1-2 Jerry Cans / Coke Bottles to carry spare fuel
- Funnel
- Spare Coolant and Engine Oil
- A Long Stick/Rod
- A Shovel and a Hammer
- 2-3 Packs of M-Seal and Quick Fix/Fevi-Quick/Elfy
- Plenty of Drinking Water and Snacks/Dry Fruits

Apart from the above driving related list, I use to follow my [list of things to carry](#) whenever I Travel anywhere including Leh – Ladakh. Also, **do not forget** to get your vehicle serviced before 2-3 weeks when you go on a self drive to Ladakh.

Conclusion

I hope the above tips would be useful in your upcoming Leh – Ladakh trip. Please share it with others and if you happen to have done a self – drive to Leh – Ladakh before, kindly share your valuable inputs and suggestions as tips to other travel self drive enthusiasts here who are ready to take on this remote region of mighty Himalayas – **Ladakh**.

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