

## Lobang Tso - The emerald lake in Leh

The drive from Leh to Hunder took us seven hours. We crossed a very picturesque high altitude desert en route and driving along this wide sand dune stretch was virtual simulation of driving alongside an isolated sandy beach at Lakshwadeep! The vegetation was sparse and consisted of cacti and shrubs. Two rivers, namely Shyok and Nubra, flow through this patch of green amidst the dunes. The snow capped peaks at a distance add to the breathtaking beauty of this oasis.

After checking into Hiker's Hut at Hunder (run by J. & K. Tourism), I rested for a day before setting out for this magical lake. I found out from Yangtan, the manager at Hiker's Hut that the Lobang-Tso (lost lake) lake was a five hour trek from Hunder. The next day morning, we set off for Lobang-Tso. The initial two hour uphill walk took us through miles of uninhabited sand dunes. We crossed a couple of double humped camels before reaching a green patch. Here we found several mountain goats grazing on the banks of the Shyok River. Soon, we could see an outline of two elephant shaped mountains in the horizon. The trek to these hills over



sand, cacti, rocks, mud and stone was tough. It took us over an hour to reach the mountains and another hour to climb uphill. After an arduous trek, we managed to descend into the hollow of the mountain and had our first glimpse of Lobang Tso. It was a very divine and spiritual experience. A speck of light green amidst sand dunes rocks and stone. It resembled an emerald nestling in the palm of Nature's hand. The closer we got to the lake, the more beautiful it looked. The tranquillity experienced

while meditating on its swampy banks, cannot be described in words. Lobang Tso is a crystal clear, oval lake, nestled in the hollow formed at the junction of two mountains. The calmness and serenity of the place touched my soul.

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