



Fairly Easy

Darjeeling with Singalila trek and Sikkim



Trip Summary

The Singalila Ridge Trek is world-renowned. Get the unique opportunity to see four out of the world's five highest peaks including Mt. Everest, Makalu, Kanchenjunga and Lhotse. Besides these, enjoy undulating views of many other peaks of Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet and Bhutan. It is an ethereal experience, to walk through the flowering Rhododendron forests, interspersed with giant Magnolias, Spruce and a wide range of rare Orchids. There are over 600 varieties of Orchids in this area, the largest concentration in any single geographical area in the world. The perfect time to see them bloom is in spring when the valley comes alive. The trek route also passes through the Singalila National Park which has many fascinating and rare animals like Red Pandas and Pangolins.

Accommodation

We use simple hotels, all with en-suite facilities. On trek we do camp or stay in home stays, with shared facilities and a larger communal room or tent for meals. In Delhi we stay in a comfortable hotel. A single supplement is available on this trip including camping.

Food

Whilst on trek all meals are included and are prepared by our own cook and served, in Srinagar Dinner and Breakfast is included and served from the kitchen of the houseboat. In Delhi and Leh we provide bed and breakfast option only, this allows you the option of choosing where you would like to eat, which is very much part of the adventure. On trek we eat Indian, Chinese and western food prepared to a surprisingly high standard. There are always several dishes: dhals, vegetables and sometimes meat if fresh chicken or lamb is tracked down. Breakfasts and lunches are varied and appetizing.

Vegetarians are well catered for in India. If you have any other dietary restrictions please let us know when booking.

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m.

Transport

We fly from Delhi to Bagdogra and use jeeps or taxis for the sightseeing round Darjeeling and the journey from the start of the trek and from the end of the trek.

Health and Hygiene

We have an excellent record of staying fit and well in India. The key seems to be our enthusiasm for Indian vegetarian food, (most of India is vegetarian), and care with water, peeling fruit, avoiding salads etc.

Climate

In Delhi it will be warm around 30°C, and generally dry during this time of the year. Beyond that it will generally be milder in Darjeeling and surroundings around 20-25 °C day time temperatures and on the trek it should mostly be similar a bit cooler during mornings and evenings. Though trips are run but rainfall are always possible in the mountains. At night on the trek, temperatures could drop to 5-10 degrees, so suitable clothing is required.

Indian Visas

A full passport is required to apply for the Indian visa, with a validity of at least 6 months beyond the intended duration of stay in the country. It is the client's responsibility to complete all the application procedures and obtain their visas before the intended date of departure. We have no say in the immigration and consular processes and are not responsible for their actions. UK passport holders can apply themselves for Indian Visa through India High Commissions Visa service VFS by logging on to <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/>. Current visa fee for British passport holders is £ 80 (there is an additional consular fee and a service charge of £ 12.20 on top of this amount). Visa fee for other nationalities will differ; it is advised to contact your nearest Indian High Commission or Consular office for further details. Avoid mentioning Ladakh, Stok Kangri or Sikkim on your visa application, as it may sometimes delay the visa process or cause rejection of visa.

Facility of applying for an eVisa is now available to British passport holders, this will entitle the applicants to a 30 day tourist visa, for more details please log on to the official website of Indian Government <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/>

Please note: in order to ensure there is no delay in the processing it is advised not to mention Ladakh or Sikkim in your application. Any permits needed to visit these areas will be arranged locally in India.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary will always need to remain flexible, and may change due to weather conditions, the pace of the group or other unforeseen circumstances. Times and distances are approximate. (B,L,D) refers to meals included in the trip cost: breakfast, lunch, dinner.

This trip is 16 days ex DELHI. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival in and departure from KOLKATA, and may not be the days you leave or return home.



Day 1 Arrival at Delhi and transfer to the hotel. Enjoy leisure time for the rest of the day.

Day 2 Delhi – Bagdogra – Darjeeling (90 km / 3-4 hr drive / 2050 m)

Morning transfer to Delhi airport for the flight to Bagdogra. The team awaits you at Bagdogra airport and facilitates further transfer to Darjeeling by road. The drive is made more interesting as we deviate from the commercial main road and drive through small villages to reach the Darjeeling- Kurseong Road. The picturesque drive continues alongside the famous heritage Darjeeling

Railway track through forests and tea estates over a 2,200 m pass at Ghoom towards our destination, Darjeeling. Check into the hotel late afternoon and relax.

Day 3 In Darjeeling

After a scrumptious breakfast, head towards the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute and zoo. Later, you get a chance to witness Tibetan elders display their skills in weaving carpets, tailoring and wood carving at the Tibetan Help Self Centre. A quick stop at the Tea Factory is planned enroute your return to Darjeeling.

Day 4 Drive to Dhoudray (2300 m) Trek to Tonglu (3020 m / 3-4 hr walk)

A lovely morning train ride takes you to Ghoom. You are further transported by car to Manibhanjang which is an important village on the Nepal border and a passport checking centre. The journey continues by road to Dhoudray where our trek crew will be eagerly awaiting your arrival. Get warmed up as you start trekking through the forest to reach Tonglu. Tents would already have been set up here and a hot cup of tea awaits you as a reward for all the effort. If the weather permits, sunset is a picture perfect moment here.



Day 5 Tonglu - Kalapokhri (3185 m / 6 – 7 hr walk) via Garibas (2620 m / 3 hrs walk)

Wake up early morning at 5am to catch beautiful views of Kanchenjunga. After breakfast, we start on a fairly-easy downhill trek to reach Tumling, another border village. The trek now takes us through the Kanchenjunga Wild life Sanctuary. If we're lucky, we may get a glimpse of the majestic Mount Everest. The trek cuts through Jaubari Nepali village and the little settlement at Garibas. A further uphill trek through Bamboo glades and Rhododendron and Magnolia forests brings us to Kaya Katta, a small two-house village of Nepal. Finally, we follow the main motorable road to reach Kal Pokhri Lake which is merely 5 minutes away from our camp. Overnight in tents.

Day 6 Kala Pokhri - Sandakhphu (3636 m / 4 – 5 hr walk)

Depart at 8 am post breakfast and embark on a wide rough trail passing through a small Nepalese village to reach Bikibhanjang. From here, the mainly-uphill walk is gorgeous through Bamboo glades and Rhododendron and Magnolia forests towards the crest of the Singalila ridge. Sandakhphu is a popular stop with accommodation options for trekkers. If the weather gods are kind, you may see all the famous mountain ranges from here including Everest, Kanchenjunga and many more. Take in this awe-inspiring sight before you continue on your trek to reach the camp site which is in Nepal. The views from the campsite are enviable as well. Overnight in tents.

Day 7 Sandakhphu – Sabargram (3585 m / 4 – 5 hr walk)

Start off post breakfast, down the rough motorable road. The trek takes us to a low-altitude point (200 m down) near a doksa (where Nepali shepherds stay during summers with their animals). On the way, you are treated to views of Cho Oyu in the west and Everest, Lhotsa, Makalu, Pandim and ofcourse Kanchenjunga. From the doksa, an hour's uphill walk through the forest shall bring you to our camp in Sabargram. The location has been handpicked for its gorgeous views of Kanchenjunga, Mount Everest, Makalu and Lhotse. Overnight in tents.

Day 8 Sabargram – Samadan (2500 mts) via Phalut (3600 m / 7 – 8 hr walk)

Rise early to catch spectacular views of the sunrise over the high peaks. Set off post breakfast towards Phalut Trekkers Hut. This stretch is the last opportunity to get a glimpse of the mighty Mt. Everest. From Phalut, the trail is narrow and mostly downhill. Lunch is served at an open field enroute. After lunch, the trail increasingly narrows and descends gradually to reach the village of Sri Khola. Cross a river over a narrow bridge and you arrive at Samdan Village, our campsite for the night. The village is exceptionally beautiful, surrounded by coniferous trees. You also get the opportunity to interact with locals and get an insight into their lives. Overnight in tents.



Day 9 Samadan – Rimbik (2280 m / 6 – 7 hr walk)

The trek starts off by crossing a river to reach Rammam School, which offers a nice view of Sikkim. Continue downhill through cultivated fields, small hamlets and coniferous and Rhododendron forests to reach the suspension bridge over Sri Khola River and further towards Rimbek. This is our last day with the pony-men and we bid the rest of the trekking staff adieu. Overnight at the lodge.

Day 10 Rimbek – Darjeeling (80 km / 4 hr drive / 2030 m)

After breakfast, drive to Darjeeling crossing the Ghoom Railway Station. A leisurely afternoon walk is planned through the old part of Darjeeling. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 11 Darjeeling – Gangtok (120 km / 5 hr drive / 1780 m)

Enjoy a delicious breakfast and drive to Gangtok, passing through picturesque tea gardens and villages. The drive follows River Teesta and enters Sikkim through Rangpo at the Sikkim border. Overnight at the hotel in Gangtok.

Day 12 In Gangtok

A morning visit to Rumtek Monastery is planned today. Located on a hill 24 km away, facing Gangtok, the original Rumtek Monastery was built by the fourth Chogyal. It was damaged by an earthquake and has since been rebuilt. The new Rumtek Monastery was built by the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa. It is the largest in Sikkim and reflects the best of Tibetan architecture. It is also a treasure trove of some of the most unique religious objects found anywhere in the world, besides being a world-renowned centre of Kagyu teachings. Rumtek monastery is the seat of the Kargyupa sect of Buddhism and similar to the Kagyu headquarters in Tsurphu. A visit to the Institute of Tibetology, Handicrafts Centre and Flower Show in Gangtok are also planned for the day. Enjoy an afternoon walk through the Spice Market in Gangtok. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 13 Drive to Kalimpong (4 hr drive)

Depart post breakfast for Kalimpong. Passing through Rangpo again, an uphill road brings you to the hill station of Kalimpong. Visit Dr Graham`s Home, Lord Krishna`s temple and a small monastery on the top of Kalimpong (Dorpin Hills). Overnight at the hotel.

Day 14 Drive to New Jalpaiguri (3 hr drive / 70 km) and take the overnight train to Kolkata. The morning is free for your leisure. Depart in the afternoon, driving through small villages and pass through a coronation bridge connecting Bhutan and Assam. Reach New Jalpaiguri Railway Station where you will board the overnight train to Kolkata departing NJP at 21:00 hrs and reaching Kolkata at 06:30 hrs.

Day 15 Arrive Kolkata

Arrive at Sealdah Station. Transfer to the hotel. At your leisure, you may choose to opt for the optional sightseeing tours.

Day 16 Depart for home

Early morning transfer to the airport for your flight back home