



KANCHENJUNGA TREK ITINERARY

(Duration: 17 Nights / 18 days)

ITINERARY

Day 01: Bagdogra Airport to Gangtok

Upon arrival in Bagdogra (329 ft) airport meet, assist and transfer to the waiting vehicle for the drive to Gangtok. *The drive takes about 6-7 hours and covers a distance of 124 kilometers.* From Bagdogra airport we then drive towards the metropolitan town of Siliguri. From Siliguri the drive towards Gangtok is five hours passing through the plains of Sevoke, Coronation Bridge, and small village towns besides river Teesta.

Our drive is mostly along the beautiful river Teesta till we reach a small town of Ranipool. From here we gradually climb up for 30 mins towards the capitol of Sikkim. On our way we cross a small border town of Rongpo which guards the border with the state of West Bengal. Here we get our first Sikkimese entry stamp in your passports after we show our Sikkim inner line permit. Upon arrival in Gangtok (5500 ft) - Capital of Sikkim, check into the hotel.

Sikkim Or Denzong "The Hidden Valley of Rice" is a small but beautiful land that lies almost hidden in the eastern Himalayas. Nestled between Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and Darjeeling, Sikkim is a paradise of natural beauty. Believed to be the abode of Gods, Mount Kanchenjunga is revered by the Sikkimese as their protective deity. Religion forms an integral part of the daily lives of the Sikkimese. With nearly 200 Monasteries scattered all over the land, the influence of Buddhism is all pervasive. Even in the remotest hamlet, the fluttering of prayer flags constantly reminds one of the teachings of Lord Buddha.

Till recently, Sikkim was a kingdom ruled by the Chogyal (King) whose history dated back to the sixteenth century. Monarchy was abolished by a popular movement and Sikkim became the 22nd state of the Indian Union in 1975. Sikkim, once a restricted area, has now opened its doors to welcome travelers to share its rich cultural heritage and natural bounty.

In the evening before dinner there will be a short briefing about the sightseeing tours.

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 02: Sightseeing in Gangtok

AM: Visit **Enchey Monastery** - It is situated adjoining the Siniolchu Tourist Lodge, 3 kms from Gangtok town. This monastery is an important seat of the Nyingma order, the Enchey Monastery is built on the site blessed by Lama Druptob Karpo, a tantric master known for his power of flying. This 200 years old monastery has in its premises images of Gods, Goddesses and other religious objects. Every year, around January, 'Chaam' or religious masked dance is performed with great fanfare for two days.

Later visit the **Government Institute of Cottage Industry**. This institute is located at zero point, few km uphill from the main Gangtok town. It was established, in



1957 with the purpose of promoting the manufacture and sale of local handicrafts, carpets and furniture. An emporium at the institute sells handicrafts; thangkas (scrolls with paintings) hand carved foldable wooden tables known as 'Choktsees' and exquisitely woven woollen carpets, mask and dolls. Hand made paper is another unique novelty of the Institute and is made from the bark of a tree Algeri. The paper is used extensively for invitation cards and letter-pads.

Continue the tour towards Dadrul **Chorten**. The Dadrul Chorten is one of the largest stupas in Sikkim and a very sacred icon to the Buddhists. The Venerable Trulsi Rimpoche built it in 1945 to ward off foreign invasion.

Later visit the **Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology (SRIT)** - Situated at Deorali, the SRIT is within walk-able distance from the main town of Gangtok. It was formerly known as the Namgyal institute of Tibetology, after the late Chogyal of Sikkim, Palden Thondup Namgyal whose brainchild it was, the Sikkim Institute of Technology(SRIT), has since become one of the most prestigious depository of Tibetan literature, rare manuscripts, paintings, thangkas, statues and religious objects and other works of art and history.

This institute was established to promote research on the language and traditions of Tibet as well as the Mahayana sect of Buddhism. There are about 30 thousand volumes, mostly xylographs, (xylographs are documents that are printed using wooden slabs that have the matter embossed on them in the reverse) translations of the original teachings of the Lord Buddha, and treatises by distinguished Buddhist scholars from

The museum at the Institute consists of rare collection of antiques like statues, coins and thangkas. This institute is a premier institute in the world that conducts research in the language and culture of Tibet. It has on its faculty eminent scholars. The foundation stone of the Institute was laid in February 1957 by the Dalai Lama and it was inaugurated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in October 1958.

Noon: break for Lunch

PM: After lunch visit the famous **Rumtek Monastery** also known as Dharma Chakra Centre. This monastery is one of the most important seats of the Kagyu lineage outside Tibet. In the early 1960's, His Holiness the Sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa founded this seat near the 300 year old Kagyu monastery built in the sixteenth century by the Fourth King of Sikkim under the guidance of the ninth Karmapa. The new Rumtek monastery was built about two kilometers away from this old monastery.

Rumtek became the International Kagyu Headquarters during the life of His Holiness, from where lineage activities manifested throughout the world. It also became the residence of a new generation of Kagyu masters, who are being trained in a tradition of study and meditation practice which began 800 years ago.

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 03: **Gangtok to Yuksom (1760 m)** (Drive duration 6 ½ - 7 hrs approximately)
After late breakfast drive to Yuksom. On the way we get scenic views of curved valleys and the serpentine rivers and of course the green vegetation of the hills.



We cross two important rivers namely Teesta and Rangit and the hilly pass of Ravongla. Passing through small towns, paddy fields, wet cardamom plantation, small monasteries and of course the magnificent view of Kanchenjunga and its ranges from the hills of Ravongla makes our journey worthwhile.

Our journey starts from the East of Sikkim (Gangtok) crosses through the towns of Singtam (the road divides to Ravongla and Rongpo), Pass of Ravongla (South Sikkim) and enters into the town of Legship. We stop for a short break at the small village town of Legship. From here the road climbs uphill towards the village towns of Tashiding. Numerous water falls, streams, paddy fields, small villages falls on our way. Finally we arrive at the ancient capital village town of Yuksum. Upon arrival check into the hotel. The rest of the day is free to explore the village. In the evening there will be a briefing about the trek.

" Yuksum " meaning in Lepcha " *The meeting place of the three wise men* ". It was here that the three great saints Gyalwa Lhatsun Chenpo, Kartok Sempha Chenpho and Ngadak Rigdzin Chenpo met in 1641 AD to coronate the first Chogyal, or the Maharaja of Sikkim. Bearing mute witness is the extant mute stone throne on which the King sat for his coronation. Near the throne the preserved footprints of His Holiness can be found.

About two and a half kilometers is the residence of Gyalwa Latchun, which was later converted into a monastery, called Dubdi. A tableland of barley and millets, Yuksom provides beautiful vista of mini lakes with the Himalayan background. The night can be spent in tourist huts or in a good hotel i.e. Hotel Tashi Gang.

Distance: 112 kms to Yuksum.

Overnight in a Hotel.

Day 04: **Yuksom / Bakhim (2744 m)** (Trek duration 5 ½ - 6 hrs approximately)

The trail now runs through wooded forest, hills abounding in flora and fauna & through moss-laden forests of oak, spruce, chestnut, fir, pines, giant magnolias, different varieties of rhododendron and of course the famous orchids- a botanist' paradise. Not forgetting the fauna, naturalist's can view hundreds of varieties of exotic birds, and butterflies. Among the animals are the Himalayan black bears, barking deer. Samber, Marble cats, Blue sheep, Tibetan antelope, Wild ass, Himalayan wild goats, Red pandas and Musk deer at various altitudes. We leave early from the hotel at eight am as it is our first day's walk. From the bridge of Rathong chu (river) the trek route is a steady climb till we reach the forest bungalow of Bakhim. This forest bungalow used mostly by the Himalayan mountaineering institute students and this place gets its name from heavy growth of Bamboo. "**Bakhim**" (2744 metres or 9000 feet) known to the locals is the place of bamboo.

Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 05: **Bakhim / Phitang (3040 m)** (Trek duration 4 1/2 - 5 hrs approximately)

After breakfast there is a steep climb for an hour through the rhododendron and magnolia forest we finally arrive at the Tibetan village of Tshoka. Tshoka is a interesting village with yaks grazing on one side, people tending to their daily household chores. Long time back the Chogyal gave permission to some families (who migrated from Tibet as refugees due to Chinese aggression) to settle on the



high slopes near the Dzongri hills. As the Chogyal's land extended right to the foothills of the Kanchendzonga ranges the king appointed some of the villagers to look after the royal cattle which grazes even today at these ridges. The distance from Tshoka to Phitang is only four kms, but the route is uphill all the way crossing through pine forest, thick outgrowths of rhododendron trees.

Phitang having an altitude of 3040 meters is located on a small meadow with green grass and alpine trees surrounding, makes it a lovely picturesque spot for campers or even people who love to take a lunch break. From here we can see the beautiful ranges of Pandim, Jopunu, Narsing and other smaller peaks.

Lunch, Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 06: **Phitang / Dzongri.**(Trek duration 4 -4 1/2 hrs approximately)

Four kilometers and four hours away, each steps to Dzongri leads to the world of the famed Kanchenjunga massive. The trail leads uphill through the thick undergrowth of amidst an exclusive and bewitching forest of rhododendron to **Deorali Dara'** - the meeting place of Men and Mountains- of God and Nature. Here one gets the awesome views of the ranges of the Sikkim Mountains and its peaks. These granite peaks with a thick hood of ice offer the most fascinating and awe-inspiring views of the mountains. Straight-ahead is the third highest in the world- the legendary Kanchenjunga, in all its celestial height and glory, while on either side 3 smaller peaks bow down in reverence. The spectacle at dawn and dusk tinted in softest hues, is one never to be missed a supernatural vision of eternal beauty. Scattered around are pigmy bushes of *Cryptomeria Japonica*, the dry leaves of which, the local people gather to offer as incense to their family Gods. Everything is calm and all is bright.

Lunch, Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 07: **Dzongri / to Bikbari (3850 m)** (Trek duration 6 hrs approximately)

This day also the walk is slightly uphill and sometimes level walking. The path is still small and we have to be careful at some places. The reason of the thick growth in this path is because trekkers do not frequent this path. Only three times in a year students of HMI trek on this route. We still will not have view of mountains except far away hills. Just before we arrive at our campsite we have to walk downhill to arrive at a clear valley of Bikbari.

Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 08: **Day excursion to Dhud Phokari via HMI Base Camp** (Trek duration 6 ½ - 7 hours approximately)

In today's excursion we first climb to the Base camp of HMI (training center), which is approximately about one and half hours away. Then we take a steep short climb to reach the moraine. Beautiful sights of the surrounding peaks can be seen from here. From here we take the right hand trail, initially flat and then again climb a steep ridge to reach the top and from there its downhill to Dhud Pokhari. Later return to the campsite in Bikbari. (**Note:** we will be carrying packed lunch for this trip)

Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 09: **Bikbari to Dzongri (4030 m)** (Trek duration 6- 6 ½ hours)



We take a turn towards a narrower path but easy to follow towards the black peak seen on the left. Finally we reach the ridge and fluttering of prayer flags indicates that it is a "La" or a pass called **Dzongrila Pass**. A huge black peak is seen on the right hand side of the pass called "Kabur". A rocky and distinct peak seen from far distant hills. Considered holy peak by the Sikkimese is worshiped with great dignity. We then move downhill for an hour till we reach our campsite "**Dzongri.**"

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Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 10: Dzongri- Thangsing (3,800 m) (Trek duration 5 – 6 hours)

Early morning, weather permitting walk up to Dabla Khang(Dzongri Top) to view the sunrise. From here we get magnificent views of the Himalayan range such as Juponu (5937m) on the east and Pandim (6691m) on the left and a small view of Kanchenjunga in front. It takes approximately 1 hour to reach the top from Dzongri. Later return to the camp for breakfast.

After breakfast, approximately seven kilometers from Dzongri, the four hours' trek leads through meadows and valleys down the burrow leads into the most beautiful valley of Thangsing. It is situated at the base of Mt.Tenzing ghang peak. Surrounded on all sides by massive mountains here, the beautiful stream pierces the forest and presents an enchanting scene. To reach the camping grounds dwarfed in the giant valley, one crosses a wooden bridge over the stream under the watchful eye of majestic Pandim.

Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 11: Excursion to Lam Pokhari and back (Trek duration 7 hr approximately)

The trek from here is a gradual uphill and takes around 4 hours to reach Lam Pokhari. The trek is very easy and one can get the view of Deorali Dara and the Dzongri top. The famous Himalayan pheasants Dafey and Munal can also see on our way. After a 2 hours trek we come across a place called Chaurigang, which has two huts, belonging to the Forest department and the other to the shepherd from Yuksum. Most of the time they are empty. A very beautifully quiet place with the only sound of gushing water nearby. From this point the trek gets a little tough and steep as we have to cross a small pass. As one reaches the top of the pass below and across we can see the beautiful holy lake called Lam Pokhari From here we get the picturesque view of the lake at length and can see the small streams feeding the lake, a view worth a life time. After lunch we return back to Thangsing. (Good to start early in the morning)

Dinner & Overnight at Camp



Day 12: **Thangsing-Samiti Lake(4800 m)** (Trek duration 3 -4 hours)
Situated at the base of mighty Pandim, Samiti lake is a holy lake for the local people and even for far wandering pilgrims from the plains. It takes us only three to four hours gradual uphill walk to reach this beautiful camp. The trek upto Lake Samiti is flat and surrounded as it is by the mighty mountains inspires the trekker onward. This day after pitching our tents we take a walk on the ridges of the lake and as we go higher the splendid view is really breathtaking.

Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 13: **Samitii Lake-Cheemathang-Goecha-La (5000metres) & back to Samiti Lake**
This day we wake up early in the morning (3am) and after having some tea we start walking uphill towards Goecha-La. Chemathang is eight kilometers from Thangsing. Walking towards the legendary Kanchenjunga, right through the giant Onglathang Valley the mystic awe of the surrounding mountains fills the trekker with wonder going past splendid glacial lakes and numerous glaciers as he walks amidst the legendary mountains of Sikkim...Traversing the loose boulders, rocks and razor sharp ridges, the old camp at Chemathang is reached- a place so calm and serene that the isolation of the wilderness pierces right through the soul. Still higher and a little more trek, is the Goecha - La pass about 5 km away but takes a good three hours trek. This is the northernmost and highest point of the trek. The climb starts through and over lichen covered moraine, the approach to the pass is precipitous and over rugged, trail-less terrain but rewards the climber with splendid views and the closest too, of the legendary God of Sikkim interlaced with glacier, rivers flowing sown in sacred lap. Mighty Kanchenjunga and its surroundings are no longer at a distance. The trekker is tempted to walk up further and touch the sky. After having our packed breakfast we walk back to our camp at Samiti.

Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 14: **Samiti Lake to Kokchu** (Trek duration 6 ½ hours)
This is the return journey and is spent looking for rare high altitude birds and Blue sheep roaming in the wilderness of high cliffs and snows, among the thick and low bushes. The camp is situated near the river Prek chu, about half km downhill from Thangsing.

Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 15: **Kokchu to Tshoka** (Trek duration 6 1/2 Hrs)
It is a full day walk towards Tshoka village. Our route is mostly straight but few ups and downs all along the way, mostly through forest areas. We stop for our hot lunch at the tower of Phithang and after lunch it is all down hill walk back to our beautiful camp at Tshoka .

Dinner & Overnight at Camp

Day 16: **Tshoka-Yuksom** (Trek duration 5-1/2 hrs)
A leisurely walk of about five and half hours brings one back to Yuksom. The meeting place of the three wise men. Here one can pause and get a full taste of the charms of Sikkimese rural life.



Evening: Farewell dinner with the Sherpas with some local Nepalese dance and music

Overnight in a hotel.

Day 17: Drive Yuksom to Kalimpong (4 hrs)

Nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas, the town of Kalimpong is situated at an altitude of 1,250 m. The name, Kalimpong, has three different origins. One, it means the place where the local tribesmen gathered to organize field sports, second, it takes its name from the Bhutanese Kings Ministers stronghold and thirdly, it is named after "Kaulim", a fibrous plant found in abundance in this region

The town offers a breathtaking view of the snowy peaks of the Himalayan range that lies not far beyond it. The lush green valleys are a soothing sight.

Enroute, visit the famous flower nurseries of Kalimpong. The region produces 80% of India's gladioli and is a significant orchid-growing area. Entire hillsides are blaze with colour during the season.

Continue on to the main town and check into the Hotel.

PM : . After Lunch we leave from hotel to see the magnificent towering monastery of Durpin which has an commanding view of Kalimpong town and the surrounding regions. If the day is clear we will be able to see the ranges of Kanchenjunga and also some of the Bhutan peaks.

EVE: free to visit the bustling bazaar of Kalimpong.

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 18: Early morning drive to Bagdogra and fly to Calcutta / Delhi

After early morning breakfast we leave for the plains of Siliguri which takes us 2 hours approximately. Our drive is mostly along the beautiful river Teesta and then finally reaches the plains of Sevok. Enroute, we pass through the Old beautiful British built bridge " Coronation bridge" .Passing through the outskirts of Siliguri we drive towards Bagdogra town on the Calcutta Highway. We finally reach our airport where we connect our flight to Calcutta or Kolkota / Delhi

*****End of Arrangements*****