

# JAN Treks & Travels

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Journeys into Adventure and Nature

## Darjeeling & Shingalilla Ridge Trek – 10 days/ 6-day trek

Trekking tour, moderately strenuous

**Tour JTT-SIT-01:** Delhi - Bagdogra – Darjeeling – Dotrey – Tonglu – Kalipokhari – Sandapkphu - Sabargam – Rimbik – Darjeeling - Bagdogra – Delhi

**From the Darjeeling hills where tea plantations stretch as far as the eye can see, to Sikkim, an ancient Himalayan kingdom of Tibetan culture, this trek offers breathtaking views of the Himalayan range from Cho Oyo to Kanchenjunga. The Singalila range is one of the rare spots on earth where the view embraces five summits rising above 8000m, amongst them Everest, Makalu and Lhotse. It is also a scenic trip in terms of villages and dense rododendron forests that bloom spectacularly in the spring.**

**Activities & sights:** Sikkim's subtropical and alpine forests, 'Bhutia ('Tibetan') and Lepcha culture, Buddhist monasteries, Himalayan views, village culture, walks.

### **Itinerary**

#### **Day 01: Delhi ✈ Bagdogra – Darjeeling (72 km/ 3 hr)**

Early morning you'll board the 2-hour flight from Delhi to Bagdogra (access is also possible from Kolkata). You will be met by our representative on arrival

at Bagdogra airport and then driven to Kurseong, a drive of about 1.30 hrs. we check in at Cochrane Place, a hotel located on a ridge amidst lush Tea gardens.



#### **Day 02: At Darjeeling**

Early morning we walk upto the observatory Hill where there is a Temple of the Mahakala that has a unique attraction. In this temple, both Hindu and Buddhist monks preside over the ceremonies within the same complex. After breakfast, we take a joy ride on the toy train to Ghoom. The toy train is part of the World Heritage Site and the train still runs on steam engines that are over 100 years old. The ride to Ghoom station takes about an hour. We visit the Ghoom monastery – Yiga Choling . This is supposed to be the oldest monastery in Darjeeling built by a Mongolian monk in 1850. The monastery houses a big statue of Maitreya, the future Buddha along with some rare works of Buddhist art.

From Ghoom we take the Aloorari village route and walk towards the town of Darjeeling which is about 1.30 hrs walk. Later we drive to the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute and Tibetan Centre. The HMI mountaineering museum is quite an interesting place as it has on display the entire history of mountaineering in the Himalayas and Mt. Everest in particular. It was after the first conquest of Everest by Tenzing and Hillary that this institute was established. A Zoological Park near the HMI warrants a visit definitely to for a rare glimpse of the Snow Leopard, the Red Panda, the Himalayan Black bears and other Himalayan species.

**Day 03 Darjeeling – Dhotrey; TREK Dhotrey - Tonglu (driving 47 km/ 2.5 hr; walking 6 km/ 3 hr)**

Our trek starts with a drive (1.30 hour) by jeep to the village of Dhotrey. We trek through the forest on this fairly easy first day to the ridge of Tonglu where we camp for the night. From here, on one hand, there are particularly good views of Darjeeling town spread over the ridge immediately opposite, 1000 metres below us and wide views of the entire Kangchenjunga range on the other.

**Day 04 TREKKING Tonglu – Kalipokhri (13 km/ 5 hr)**

After breakfast and some photograph taking, we do a short, easy walk to Gairibans, which translates as the 'village amongst the bamboo thickets'. The initial level walk takes us past a long Mani wall to the Nepalese border post in the large village of Jaubari - one of the few border crossings in this part of the world where we are actually waved on without any formalities. After a tea break, we take a downhill trail back into the Indian side reaching Gairibans. From here, we trek uphill for another 2/3 hrs to reach Kalipokhri where we camp for the night.

**Day 5 TREKKING Kalipokhri - Sandakphu (6 km/ 3-4 hr)**

In the morning we continue walking on the gentle slope passing through the sparse Rhododendron forest and local hamlets to Bikhebbhanjyan or the valley of poison (The most common poisonous plant found here is Aconite which is considered quite a potent poison). From here a steep two hours climb will take you to the Sandakphu top (3636 mts). When we arrive at Sandakphu, the highest point of Singalila, we are rewarded by the majestic views of the Kangchenjunga, Jannu, Makalu, Everest, Lhotse, Nuptse and a number of high peaks in Sikkim and Bhutan like the Chomolhari. Overnight stay is at a tented accommodation.

**Day 6 TREKKING Sandakphu – Sabargram (14 km/ 6 hr)**

We wake up early to walk to a platform overlooking Sandakphu with spectacular views all around us. Although today is a longer day, it is easy walking on the most spectacular section of the Singalila ridge. The undulating ridge trail runs north to the junction of Sikkim, Nepal and India. There are superb views of the Himalayas throughout the day and a walk along the Singalila Ridge is hard to beat for the sheer grandness of its views and the vastness of the surrounding landscapes. With a series of ridges fading away to the Arun Valley in the west, the

mountains of Sikkim and Bhutan rise in the north and east with the magnificent Kangchenjunga beckoning directly ahead. We camp at Sabargram.

**Day 7 TREKKING Sabargram – Samanden (22 km/ 6-7 hr)**

Today, we stay on the ridge for the first part of the walk but then descend through the rhododendron and magnolia forest to reach our camp at Samanden, a beautiful site near a very small village in front of the forest. (6 hours walking).

**Day 8 TREKKING Samanden - Rimbick (24 km/ 6-7 hr)**

A downhill trail today takes us to the floor of the Sri Khola valley before climbing through thick forests of the Singalila National Park to the roadhead of Rimbick. Another fascinating day unfolds as we walk through untouched parts of the eastern Himalayas. Soon after a couple of orderly hillside villages allows us to see the local lifestyle up close. Tonight, we stay at the Hotel Sherpa, as there is no proper campsite available. This lodge is run by a friendly Sherpa family and whatever it lacks in amenities, it makes up by providing plentiful chilled beer. (6 to 7 hours walking). Overnight Hotel Sherpa.

**Day 09- Rimbick- Darjeeling (60 km/ 4 hr)**

After breakfast, we drive to Darjeeling for 4 hrs. On arrival in Darjeeling we check into a hotel. We keep the day free for pursuing your own itinerary, be it simply resting, reading a book or sightseeing.

**Day 10- Darjeeling- Bagdogra ✈️ Delhi (driving 93 km/ 4 hr)**

The drive to Bagdogra Airport takes 4 hours. There you check in for your flight to Delhi.

***Entry formalities***

Please note that all foreign nationals need Restricted Area Permit (RAP) to visit Sikkim. Validity is normally for 2 weeks, but can be extended upto 45 days in Gangtok. This permit will be issued at the interstate border at Rangpo when entering Sikkim. Two passport size photographs and a copy of the passport and visum for India are required. The visa is offered free of cost.

***Tour Price***

For 2 persons: INR XXX per person, using 1 Toyota Innova (or similar)

For 3 persons: INR XXX per person, using 1 Toyota Innova (or similar)

For 4 persons: INR XXX per person, using 2 Toyota Innova (or similar)

For 5 – 7 persons: INR XXX per person, using 2 Toyota Innova (or similar)

For 8 – 10 persons: INR XXX per person, using 3 Toyota Innova (or similar)

Single supplement: INR XXX per person.

Above tour price is on current rates only, valid throughout 2014. Tour price may rise, however, in case of increase of flight prices or price of car fuel.

**Price includes:** Flights Delhi – Bagdogra and Bagdogra - Delhi, English speaking escort throughout, all transfers by private vehicle (Toyota Innova or similar), all accommodation on twin-sharing basis in Darjeeling and Rimbik, trekking services including guide, cook, helpers, porters or mules for portage, all meals, A- shaped mountain tents with sleeping mats, dining tent with table and chairs, toilet tent, toilet paper, trek permit and other sightseeing entrance fees, MAP on none-trekking days (breakfast and lunch included, starting with dinner on day 01, ending with breakfast on day 10) fuel and driver allowance, all entrance fees at sights.

**Price excludes:** International airfare, overnight stay at Delhi if required, tips, laundry, alcoholic beverages, insurance and any other expenses of personal nature.

***Hotels used:***

Darjeeling: Hotel Dekeling or similar (CP basis, breakfast only)

Rimbik: Sherpa Lodge (AP, all meals included)

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