

# Sikkim - Beneath Kangchenjunga Trek

Trip Code: SIK

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



CHALLENGING



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Complete a sensational Indian Himalaya trekking holiday with an itinerary unique to KE
- Experience close up views of Kangchenjunga, the world's third highest peak
- Enjoy pristine wild campsites including at Jumlay Pokhari below the Danphebir Pass
- A fascinating sightseeing day in the British Raj hill-station of Darjeeling

## AT A GLANCE

- 14 days trekking
- Max altitude - 4500 metres
- Join at Delhi

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

As seen from the characterful hill-station of Darjeeling, the five-summitted massif of Kangchenjunga (8586m) dominates the northern horizon. Kangchenjunga is the world's third highest mountain and we make our approach to it by crossing the border into the Indian state and former independent kingdom of Sikkim and trekking up onto the crest of the Singalila Ridge, the prominent spur of high ground that forms the border between India and Nepal. Here, we find views that extend northwards to Kangchenjunga, but also across to the distant Nepalese peaks of Everest and Makalu. Our route continues through a mountain wilderness, taking us via high passes and a succession of lovely camping places to the valley of the Prek Chu. It's from this point, above sacred Samity Lake, that we make our ascent to the viewpoint for Kangchenjunga's huge south-east face. Providing a brilliant travel experience, as well as first-class trekking amongst fabulous mountain scenery, this is a simply superb trekking holiday in the Indian Himalaya.

## Is this holiday for you?

This is a unique and exciting trekking holiday, which provides a taste of some of the finest trekking in the generally restricted territory of Sikkim. The conditions we will find on this trek range from easy trails, sometimes in forest, to narrow ridge paths and sometimes rather rougher tracks across glacial moraine and scree. We mostly use well-made and established trails throughout the trek, following the routes used by yak herders, to take their animals to high pastures for grazing in the monsoon months. The unspoiled Himalayan foothills trekking, variety of scenery, the lack of other trekkers and the pristine nature of the campsites make this Sikkim trek special. The pace of a trip such as this has to be governed by speed of our pack animals and porters. Some of the walking days are quite short as a result of this and for this reason we have graded the trip at the lower end of our blue range. However, trekking at altitude is always challenging and there are several longer days during the trek.

# Itinerary

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Version:

# Extensions

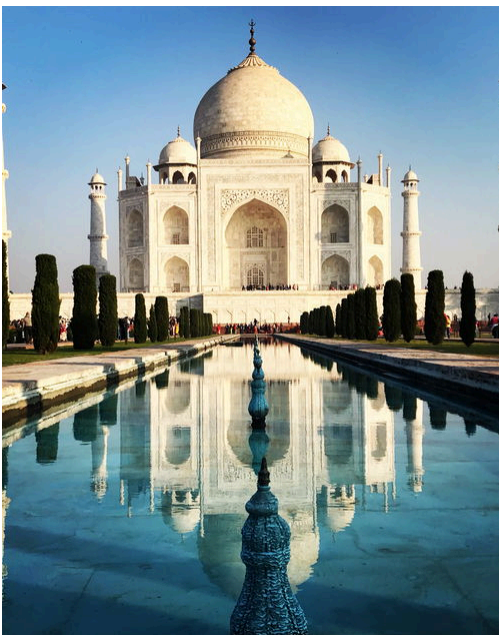
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When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



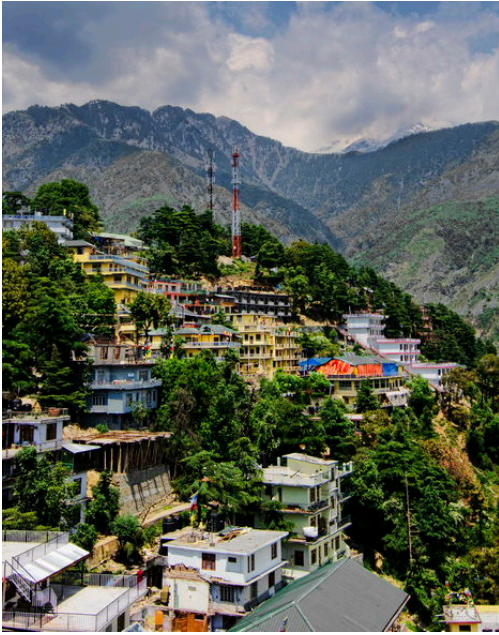
## Agra and Jaipur four day extension

The Golden Triangle needs little introduction and is rightly considered a classic trip in its own right. Easily accessible from Delhi, this excursion takes in the wonders of the majestic Agra Fort, the incomparable Taj Mahal, the abandoned ghost-city of Fatehpur Sikri and the architectural jewels of Jaipur and Amber. This four day trip ensures you get the most out of these stunning attractions at a relaxed and unhurried pace.



## One day tour of Agra and the Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal needs little introduction. Built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz, it is widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world. Nearby is the oft overlooked Agra Fort, itself an awe-inspiring and magnificent complex of palaces and ancient forts. Traveling from Delhi on the express train and returning by private vehicle, our one-day extension to Agra is perfect for those with limited time who wish to complete their India experience with exploring one of the most admired and loved buildings on the planet.



## Dharamsala and the Dalai Lama

Dharamsala is a former British Raj hill-station in the Dhauladhar mountain range and currently home to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile. On this four day extension, you will be able to sample a flavour of life in Tibet and enjoy visits to the Dalai Lama's temple complex; the Norbulingka Institute; the Tibetan children's village and visit a local Gaddi Tribal village to experience the life of the people who traditionally inhabit the lower reaches of the Dhauladhar.



## Agra & the Taj Mahal two day tour

Our two-day extension is for those who wish to explore Agra and the surrounding area at a relaxed pace. We start by exploring the oft overlooked Agra Fort, itself an awe-inspiring and magnificent complex of palaces and ancient forts, before waking before the next day to see the sunrise break over the Taj Mahal. Needing little introduction, the Taj Mahal was built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz. It is widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world. This tour also gives us an opportunity to explore the fascinating abandoned ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri.



## Delhi Sightseeing Tour - Full day

Old Delhi is centred on the Red Fort and is a labyrinth of narrow, bustling streets including Chandni Chowk bazaar. Must-sees here include the Red Fort, built by Emperor Shah Jahan; Hummayan's Tomb, constructed in similar style to the Taj Mahal and the towering Qutab Minar minaret. New Delhi was the creation of the British Raj who wanted to show their ascendancy over the former Mogul rulers with many grand buildings designed by the greatest ever British architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens. Exploring this area by vehicle will give a glimpse of this interesting aspect of India.

# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- An experienced English-speaking leader
- Delhi Airport transfers on group arrival and departure days
- All internal flights and land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described in the trip dossier
- All meals throughout the trip
- Full trekking service including food and all equipment (excluding personal equipment)

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Delhi Airport transfers (other than on group arrival and departure days)
- Indian Visa
- Tips for trek staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Delhi.

Transfers are provided from/to Delhi Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All meals are included

## Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

The food served during the trek is a mixture of local and Western, mostly purchased locally and cooked for us by highly trained trek cooks. The emphasis is on providing a high-carbohydrate and largely vegetarian diet, which we have found to be easily digestible at high altitude. In Delhi, we take our meals in the group hotel or in nearby restaurants. All meals while on trek and while staying in hotels are included in the trip price.

## Accommodation

On arrival in Delhi and for one night after the trek, we stay at a hotel close to the airport which provides convenient and comfortable accommodation. Being near the airport makes the whole travel experience more relaxing. Our itinerary also includes 2 nights in a comfortable hotel in Darjeeling, 1 night in a hotel in Yoksom and 1 night in a hotel in Kalimpong. On trek there will be 13 nights camping. All accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. It is possible to hire a single tent while on trek. Depending upon availability it may be possible to arrange single rooms. For hotel prices and single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website. Please note that you may not be able to access your hotel room on Day 1 until 2pm. If you are arriving early and would like more direct access to your room there is the option to book an extra night.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by an experienced English-speaking trek leader who will meet the group in Bagdogra. While in Delhi the group will be looked after by a KE representative. During the trek, the trip leader will be assisted by local guides, camp staff including a cook and by baggage ponymen.

## Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

## Spending Money

Approximately £200 (or equivalent in Euros / US dollars etc.) changed into local currency, should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses, including porter and trek crew tips and soft drinks, etc. It is not necessary to purchase local currency (Indian Rupees) before you travel. We recommend taking your personal spending money in cash since you will be changing the majority of this into local currency on the day of arrival. Sterling, US dollars and Euros are readily exchanged in Delhi. Credit cards can be used to purchase many goods in Delhi and are particularly useful for more expensive souvenirs. It is also possible to withdraw cash (rupees only) from cash machines in Delhi using credit and debit cards.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides and porters. Tips do not form part of their wages. KE always pays local crews the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that was given. Most people will want to tip their guides and support staff and we recommend that you do this as a group. As a guide, we suggest that a contribution of approximately £70 (in Indian rupees) from each group member will provide a sufficient pool for these tips. At the end of a trek many people also like to donate various items of their equipment to the porters and trek staff who work so hard to make the trip a success. Boots, gloves, hats, scarves and even socks (clean of course) are always warmly received by the porters and ponymen, many of whom are simple farmers earning extra cash by portering for trekking groups. Technical clothing and equipment such as head-torches and trekking poles are highly prized by the local guides and camp crews.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag, and a day pack. Your baggage on trek will be carried by porters or pack animals and should weigh no more than 15kg. Please note that the check-in baggage limit on all internal flights within India is now 15kg and you are responsible for any excess baggage charges that the airline may apply. It is possible to leave travel clothes and any other items not required on trek at the group hotel.



## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Visa India

Most nationalities, including travellers from the UK, the USA and many European countries can apply for their Indian Visa online through the **E-Visa Application** process. You must make your application at least four days prior to departure. Please download the detailed information document for details of how to apply for your visa: [Visa India PDF](#)

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Zika virus has been confirmed as active in this country. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The mosquitoes that transmit ZIKV are unlikely to be found above 2,000m altitude. For more information, visit the website of the National Travel Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) at <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk>

## Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid.

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## Currency

The currency of India is the Indian Rupee.

## Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. For this trip you need to be aerobically fit and also comfortable with walking up to 7 hours each day and longer on some days. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Regular hiking in hill country is the best training but any regular exercise will be good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina. Before departure, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country.

## Climate

During both the spring and autumn departures, the daytime temperatures will be of the order of 25°C at Darjeeling and will be rather cooler, at about 10°C to 15°C once on trek. Night time temperatures at our highest camps will certainly drop below freezing and you must be prepared for cold, often damp, evenings at camp. Our trek dates are outside the monsoon period but you should be aware that the eastern end of the Himalaya receives more rainfall than further west in the Everest or Annapurna regions. It can and does rain here and you should be prepared for this. Generally, the period outside of the monsoon is stable, but weather in the Himalayan foothills is notoriously difficult to predict and short-lived storms can occur at any time of the year.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](https://www.travelaware.gov.uk)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](https://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- Top Treks of the World. New Holland /Steve Razzetti
- Trekking in the Indian Himalaya. Lonely Planet
- India. A Travel Survival Kit. Lonely Planet
- The Trekkers Guide to Pakistan and India. Hugh Swift
- Exploring the Hidden Himalaya. Kapadia and Mehta

## Maps

### **Sikkim Himalaya - 1: 150,000. Schweizerische Stiftung für Alpine Forschung (Swiss Foundation For Alpine Research)**

Although a monochrome map (black and white detail with a sepia coloured relief shading), this map is much more detailed than some other more colourful maps. As well as the relief shading it has 100 metre contours, spot heights, peaks, passes, and glaciers, and graphics to show various types of terrain. Coverage extends south to Darjeeling, and within Nepal to the western edge of the Kanchenjunga Glacier.

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. The packed weight of your bag whilst trekking should be no more than 15 kgs.

### **You must bring the following items:**

- Hiking boots
- Trainers or sandals for river crossings and camp use
- Walking socks (2 or 3 pairs)
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Thermal baselayer - leggings

- Baselayer shirts
- Shirts or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm jacket (down)
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Daypack 30 to 40 litres
- Water bottles 1 litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Gloves
- Warmer and waterproof gloves or mittens
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -20°C)\*
- Sunglasses
- Washbag and toiletries
- Small towel
- Antibacterial handwash
- Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), altitude (Diamox), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)

**The following items are optional:**

- Thermarest (note that foam mattresses are provided)
- Trekking poles (recommended)
- Insect repellent
- Spare laces
- Shorts
- Scarf or buff
- Sleeping bag liner
- Travel clothes
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

**Equipment hire / rental**

Items marked \* can be hired / rented through KE Adventure Travel. Please make requests at least 6 weeks prior to the trip departure.

Note all hire / rental equipment will be issued in Delhi.

**Specialist Equipment**

Depending on the conditions, the trip leader may issue 'in-step' crampons to group members for the crossing of the Goeche La. These are small lightweight crampons which can quickly and easily be attached to any kind of walking boot. We would strongly recommend that you bring a pair of trekking poles for the pass crossings.

## Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Delhi. Transfers are provided from/to Delhi Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Delhi. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving in the morning on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Delhi on the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

Trekking in the Indian state of Sikkim requires a special permit and this is a logistically challenging trip to run. Thirty years of experience in the area mean we know how to get it sorted and the result is one of the finest of all Himalayan treks with a fabulous itinerary unique to KE.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 24/11/2024 and the trip is subject to change