



Highlights of Sikkim – 8 days

Jeep tour

Tour JTT-SI-01: Delhi - Bagdogra - Gangtok - Rumtek - Namchi - Kewzing - Tashiding – Pelling/ Pemayangtse – Bagdogra – Delhi

Best time: Mid-Sept – Mid-May

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 – Gangtok (driving 124 km/ 4 – 5 hr)

Early morning, you'll board the 2-hour flight from Delhi to Bagdogra (access is also possible from Kolkata). You will be assisted on arrival at Bagdogra airport and then transferred to Gangtok, a distance of 124 kms that normally takes about 4 hrs. We cross the border of Sikkim at Rangpo where the permit formalities are done. On arrival at Gangtok, we check into a hotel for overnight stay.

Day 02: At Gangtok

Early morning, we wake up to witness a spectacular sunrise of the Kanchenjunga massif from Tashi view point, which is located 16 kms from Gangtok. We return to the hotel for breakfast. Later, we visit the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology. In 1957, the 14th Dalai Lama laid the foundation stone of this architectural wonder that houses a huge collection of rare Sanskrit, Lepcha and Tibetan manuscripts, sculptures, treasured artifacts and Buddhist icons.

Next point will be the Do Drul Chorten the biggest stupa in Sikkim, located on the hill hock, adjacent to the Tibetology Institute. Popularly known as Phurba, this stupa was built in 1945. We will also visit the Cottage Industries Centre to see the local handicrafts of Sikkim and the Flower Show. Last, we will visit the Enchey Monastery, a Nyingma Monastery believed to have been built by a monk with flying powers. In the evening, we walk around M.G. Marg, the heart of Gangtok city.

Day 03: Gangtok – Rumtek (22 km, 40 mins)

We visit Rankha & Rumtek monastery. The Rankha Monastery is a relatively new one but the location in a forested area is beautiful. Later, we drive to the famous Rumtek Monastery. This monastery was built by the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa in the 1960's as a replica of the Tshurphu monastery, the original home of the Karmapas in Tibet. The monastery is also the headquarters for the Dharma Chakra Centres, the world over housing rare and antique pieces of Buddhist art. There is also an Institute of Higher Buddhist Learning in the monastery complex.

After the visit, we check in at the Teen Taley Eco resort, not a regular hotel but more of a home stay with its own organic gardens. There is a 1 km trail within the resort for bird lovers. Overnight stay is at Teen Taley.

Day 04: Rumtek – Namchi - Ravangla – Kewzing (109 km/ 4 hr)

We drive to Namchi for 92 kms. In Namchi, we visit Sandruptse. The world's largest statue (at 118 feet) of Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, the patron saint of Sikkim, is on the Sandruptse hill (The Wish Fulfilling well) opposite Namchi. It was completed in February 2004. Later, we drive to the village of Kewzing. Overnight stay is at the Bon Farmhouse or a local house in a Bhutia village.

Day 05: At Kewzing

Against a backdrop of a magnificent view of the mountains, Kewzing is a typical quiet Bhutia village. Located 8 kms from Ravangla in South Sikkim, it is a quiet hamlet of some thirty houses, with the residents predominantly Buddhist. The accommodation is simple but neat and comfortable and wholesome local food is served from the family kitchen. You can participate in the daily or seasonal chores of the family or just spend a few days of relaxation in a Sikkimese village.

On this day, we walk in the village and visit the nearby monastery and the Buddha Park in Ravangla.

Day 06: Kewzing - Tashiding – Pelling (81 km/ 3.5 hr)

We drive to Pelling, en route visiting the Tashiding monastery. The Tashiding Monastery is part of the Buddhist religious pilgrimage circuit starting with the first monastery at Yuksam in Sikkim known as the Dubdi Monastery, Norbugang Chorten, Pemayangtse Monastery, the Rabdentse ruins, the Sanga Choeling Monastery, and the Khecheopalri Lake.

Day 07: Pelling & Pemayangtse Monastery

The Pemayangtse Monastery, in Pemayangtse, founded by Lama Lhatsun Chempo in 1705, is one of the oldest and most famous monasteries of west Sikkim. Of particular note is a seven-tiered painted wooden structure portraying Guru Rimpoche's Heavenly Palace known as 'Sangthokpalri' also spelt 'Zandog-palri', on the top floor of the monastery. After this, we walk to the Sanga Choeling monastery. The literal meaning of Sanga Choeling is the 'island of esoteric teachings'. The Monastery is located on a ridge top above Pelling at a distance of 7 kilometres from Pemayangtse Monastery and is accessed by walking the steep hilly track of 4 kilometres (2.5 mi), which traverses through rich forest cover.

Sanga Cheoling Monastery, built in 1697, is also known as the place of secret spells. It has clay statues dating back to the 17th century. Later, we walk around the village of Pelling.

Day 08: Pelling – Bagdogra ✈️ Delhi (136 km, 5 hr)

We make an early start from Pelling to drive for 5 hrs to Bagdogra to take the flight to Delhi in the afternoon.

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 63.000 per person, using 1 Toyota Innova (or similar)

For 3, 4 persons: INR 58.600 per person, using 1 Toyota Innova (or similar)

For 5 - 7 persons: INR 54.200 per person, using 2 Toyota Innova (or similar)

For 8 – 10 persons: INR 52.000 per person, using 3 Toyota Innova (or similar)

Single supplement: INR 18.400 per person.

Above tour price is on current rates only, valid till May 2016. 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, MAP (breakfast and lunch included, starting with dinner on day 01, ending with breakfast on day 08) 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:

Gangtok: Hidden Forest retreat, Mintokling GuestHouse, or similar.
Rumtek: Teen Taley Eco Resort (www.sikkimresort.com).
Kewzing: Bon Farmhouse or local homestay.
Pelling: Norbu Ghang Resort.