

Sikkim Rhododendron Trek



trip highlights

Trek through remote valleys and alpine pastures along the Sikkim - Nepal frontier

Visit key cultural sites including the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Pemayangtse Monastery, Zang Dhok Monastery and the Lepcha Museum

Stay in a combination of fully supported wilderness camps and characterful heritage hotels

Enjoy opportunities for views of Kangchenjunga (8,586m/28,169ft), the world's third highest peak

Walk beneath ancient rhododendron forests, with seasonal colour in spring



Trip Duration	15 days	Trip Code: GSR
Grade	Moderate to Challenging	
Activities	Trekking	
Summary	15 day trip, 7 day trek, 8 nights hotel, 6 nights fully support wilderness camping	

welcome to World Expeditions

For over 50 years, we've been creating high-quality, expedition-style adventures for active travellers with a curious spirit. From our very first trek in the mountains of Nepal to pioneering remote routes across all seven continents, our journeys are built for those who want to truly explore – not just visit.

At the heart of what we do is a simple philosophy: take the paths less travelled.

This means travelling with care, supporting local communities, minimising our impact, and unlocking experiences that most travellers will never have.

If you're ready to go further and dig deeper, we invite you to join us on the Sikkim Rhododendron Trek, a journey that captures the essence of a unique adventure.

why travel with World Expeditions?

World Expeditions has been pioneering trips since 1975. Our extra attention to detail and seamless operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable experience. Every trip is accompanied by an experienced local leader, as well as support staff that share a passion for the region, and a desire to share it with you. Our adventures always aim to benefit the local people we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience.



Sikkim Rhododendron Trek



World Expeditions does not require single travellers to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we cannot match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. Please refer to our website for the additional cost.

the trip

During his remarkable journey through Sikkim in 1849, the British botanist Joseph Hooker documented an extraordinary diversity of rhododendrons, confirming the forests beneath Kangchenjunga as among the richest in the Himalaya for flowering species. This trek explores that same landscape, a lesser-known corner of the eastern Himalaya where dense temperate forests give way to high alpine meadows beneath the world's third highest peak, Kangchenjunga (8,586m/28,169ft).

Compared to the more frequented trails, Sikkim offers a quieter trekking experience, shaped by a unique blend of Tibetan Buddhist and indigenous Lepcha culture. Beginning in the historic hill station of Darjeeling, the journey provides cultural context before entering the forests of Kangchenjunga National Park. Over the following days, the trail winds through oak, magnolia and rhododendron forest, with spring bringing seasonal colour to the mountainsides. At Dzongri, there are opportunities for sweeping views of Kangchenjunga - the world's third highest peak, and a chain of 7,000m peaks marking the border with Nepal.

What sets this journey apart is the balance between remote wilderness and comfort. Seven days are spent trekking with fully supported camps, while the broader itinerary includes stays in characterful hotels, including heritage properties that reflect the region's colonial and cultural history.

This trek is ideal for those seeking a less-travelled route in the eastern Himalaya, offering a distinctive contrast between remote wilderness camping and comfortable hotel stays, alongside strong cultural insight.

about your leader/escort

Nawang Tsering was born in the village of Nimoo Ldorba, in the heart of Leh Ladakh, and brings over 25 years of experience guiding travellers across the Indian Himalayas. His expertise spans Ladakh, Sikkim, Rajasthan, Southern India, North East India, Bhutan and Nepal.

A long-standing and much valued member of the World Expeditions India team, Nawang is known for his calm leadership, strong focus on safety, and genuine care for his groups. His deep regional knowledge, combined with a thoughtful and attentive guiding style, ensures travellers feel both supported and enriched throughout their journey.

at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE DELHI
DAY 2	FLY TO BAGDOGRA, TRANSFER TO DARJEELING. DRIVE 3 TO 4 HOURS
DAY 3	IN DARJEELING (2,045M/6,709FT)
DAY 4	DRIVE TO YUKSAM (1,650M/5,413FT). DRIVE 5 - 6 HOURS
DAY 5	TREK TO FOREST CAMP (2,150M/7,053FT). WALK 4 TO 5 HOURS
DAY 6	TREK TO TSOKHA (3,040M/9,973FT). WALK 4 TO 5 HOURS
DAY 7	TREK TO PETHANG (3,480M/11,417FT). WALK 4 - 5 HOURS
DAY 8	TREK TO DZONGRI (4,010M/13,156). WALK 4 HOURS
DAY 9	TREK TO DZONGRI LA (4,356M/14,291FT)
DAY 10	RETURN TREK TO TSOKHA. WALK TO 5 - 6 HOURS
DAY 11	TREK TO YUKSAM. WALK 7 - 8 HOURS
DAY 12	DRIVE TO PELLING 2 HOURS
DAY 13	DRIVE TO KALIMPONG 4 - 5 HOURS
DAY 14	IN KALIMPONG
DAY 15	DRIVE TO BAGDOGRA 4 HOURS, FLY TO DELHI

what's included

→ Led by highly experienced local guide Nawang Tsering



Sikkim Rhododendron Trek



trip dates

2027 18 Apr - 02 May

fast facts

Countries Visited:
India

Visas:
Yes*

Vaccinations:
Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

Singles:
A single supplement is available for this trip*

Leader:
Expert local leader

- Quality accommodation Delhi/Darjeeling/Pelling/Kalimpong
- 14 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 13 dinners
- Airport arrival transfer if arriving Day 1 (transfers if arriving early can be booked for an additional cost)
- Use of a World Expeditions trek pack which includes a quality sleeping bag, down or fibre fill jacket and insulated mat (valued at over US\$500)
- Souvenir World Expeditions kit bag
- All group camping equipment
- All park fees and entry permits
- Mules to carry personal equipment
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as listed

what's not included

- International flights
- Internal flights Delhi to Bagdogra (NOTE: We will advise the group flight and can book this for you, please allow approx. USD350)
- Travel Insurance - compulsory
- Bottled water, aerated & alcoholic drinks
- Excess luggage charges - the included flights have a 15kg per person checked baggage allowance. Additional kilos can be purchased at the airport, however we recommend storing your main suitcase or any excess items in Delhi, to collect upon your return
- Visa
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry
- Tips
- Additional transfers or accommodation in Delhi - we are happy to assist booking these

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive Delhi

You will be met by a World Expeditions representative and transferred to the your hotel. On arrival you will have an initial briefing focusing on the transfer arrangement and the flight the following day. Your main briefing will be held on arrival in Darjeeling.

Overnight: The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, Delhi

NOTE:

Internal flights are not included in the tour cost, we will be happy to assist with booking this for you. A nominated group flight will be advised.

The standard checked luggage allowance for internal flights in India is 15kg. Additional kilos can be purchased at the airport, however if you are staying in Delhi upon your return, we can assist in storing your main suitcase and any excess items & hence filling your provided World Expeditions kit bag with only what you will need while in Sikkim.

meals: NIL

DAY 2 Fly to Bagdogra, transfer to Darjeeling. Drive 3 to 4 hours

A morning flight brings you to Bagdogra on the edge of the plains, where the Himalaya rise dramatically to the north. From here, a winding drive climbs through forested hills to Darjeeling, once a summer retreat of the British Raj. Set at over 2,000m (6,709ft), Darjeeling offers cool mountain air and expansive views, with Kangchenjunga often visible on clear days. In the afternoon, there is time to explore

Sikkim Rhododendron Trek



thoughtful travel

Our World Expeditions adventures are grounded in a deep commitment to regenerative travel, going beyond minimising harm to actively restoring and enriching the places we visit. We partner closely with local communities, ensuring that our trips support cultural preservation, fair livelihoods, and community-led initiatives. Each expedition is designed to protect and regenerate natural ecosystems through low-impact practices, climate action, and education that fosters respect for biodiversity. We prioritise meaningful connections between travellers and place, encouraging a sense of stewardship that lasts well beyond the journey. By embedding sustainability into every layer of our operations, we aim not only to explore the world responsibly but also to leave it healthier, more resilient, and more vibrant for future generations.

trip grading Moderate to Challenging

The Sikkim Rhododendron trip is graded moderate to challenging, however most days are moderate. We have graded the trek overall higher to best prepare our walkers for the longer days, also the spring conditions that can be muddy and slippery. It includes trekking for up to 6 - 8 hours per day at a steady pace with the highest camp altitude at Dzongri (4010m/14291ft). You will need a good level of fitness and health. Suggested preparation includes one hour of aerobic type exercise three times a week for three months leading up to your trip. For trekking, hill walking with a day pack in variable weather conditions is also recommended.

The Mall and surrounding streets, where a blend of Nepali, Tibetan and colonial influences come together to shape the town's character. In the evening we will have a pre trek briefing and provide you with your sleeping bag and down/fibrefill jacket.

Overnight: Elgin Hotel, Darjeeling

meals: B,D

DAY 3 In Darjeeling (2,045m/6,709ft)

This morning we head to the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, home to a fascinating collection of maps, memos and photographs documenting Himalayan climbing history. The Institute is set within the grounds of the Zoological Park, where endangered species, including the red panda, can be seen. We then visit a nearby tea plantation to learn about and taste Darjeeling's most famous export. The afternoon is free to wander the markets or simply take in the atmosphere, with the chance to catch a distant glimpse of Kangchenjunga rising above the clouds.

Overnight: Elgin Hotel, Darjeeling

meals: B,D

DAY 4 Drive to Yuksom (1,650m/5,413ft). Drive 5 - 6 hours

Crossing into Sikkim, the journey continues through forested foothills and small rural villages to Yuksom, the former capital of the Sikkim kingdom and the starting point for treks into Kangchenjunga National Park. This small settlement holds historical significance as the site where Sikkim's first king was crowned in the 17th century. Today, it remains a peaceful gateway to the mountains and the beginning of our trekking journey.

Overnight: Yuksum Residency, Yuksom

meals: B,L,D

DAY 5 Trek to forest camp (2,150m/7,053ft). Walk 4 to 5 hours

Our trek begins with a gradual ascent through subtropical forest, where the humidity of the lower valleys supports an abundance of vegetation. The trail winds alongside streams and small waterfalls, with oak, bamboo and magnolia forming a dense canopy overhead. In spring, the first signs of rhododendron bloom begin to appear, bringing early colour to the forest floor. This is a gentle introduction to the trek as we make our way to a small forest clearing for our first camp.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 6 Trek to Tsokha (3,040m/9,973ft). Walk 4 to 5 hours

Crossing a suspension bridge above the confluence of the Prek and Rathong rivers, we begin a steady climb. The air cools as we gain elevation, and the vegetation begins to change, with moss-covered trees and thick undergrowth creating an almost primeval feel. A welcome break at the small settlement of Baktim offers tea and a chance to rest before continuing to Tsokha, a former Tibetan refugee settlement. From here, views begin to open across the valley, with the first glimpses of snow-capped peaks appearing between the trees.

meals: B,L,D

Sikkim Rhododendron Trek



important note

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise.

DAY 7 Trek to Pethang (3,480m/11,417ft). Walk 4 - 5 hours

Today is a standout day of the trek, as we enter the heart of the rhododendron forests that Sikkim is renowned for. The trail climbs steadily through silver fir and larch. The sense of remoteness deepens as we gain altitude, reaching our camp at Pethang, set in a clearing surrounded by forest, a quiet and atmospheric setting.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 8 Trek to Dzongri (4,010m/13,156). Walk 4 hours

Continuing through forest, we gradually approach the tree line, where the landscape begins to open and, in clear weather, the first expansive mountain views begin to emerge. At Deorali, we gain our first clear perspective of Kangchenjunga and the surrounding peaks, a defining moment of the journey. From here, the trail steepens in places before easing into the broad alpine meadow of Dzongri, where we establish camp for two nights. The transition from dense forest to open, high-altitude terrain is particularly striking.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 9 Trek to Dzongri La (4,356m/14,291ft)

An early morning walk to a nearby viewpoint offers the possibility of panoramic views of Kangchenjunga (8,586m/28,169ft) and a sweep of surrounding peaks, including Pandim, Kabru and Talung. We then trek to Dzongri La (4,356m/14,291ft), the highest point of our trek. Here the landscape opens further to reveal glacial valleys and high ridgelines stretching into the distance. Wildlife sightings are possible in this area, including bharal (blue sheep), while golden eagles are often seen riding the thermals overhead.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 10 Return trek to Tsokha. Walk to 5 - 6 hours

Shortly after leaving Dzongri, we make a final ascent to a ridge, offering the opportunity for last views of Kangchenjunga and the adjoining peaks before beginning our descent. From here, the trail leads back through forest, retracing our steps as the landscape gradually shifts from open alpine terrain to denser vegetation. Continuing downhill, we return to Tsokha, where our camp is set among the trees.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 11 Trek to Yuksam. Walk 7 - 8 hours

We pause to take in views across the Prek Valley, with the river winding far below. The trail then continues with a steady descent through forest and small farms. Crossing the bridge over the Rathong River, we complete our return to Yuksam, where the trek began, marking the end of our time on the trail.

Overnight: Yuksum Residency, Yuksum

meals: B,L,D

DAY 12 Drive to Pelling 2 hours

Today there are opportunities for clear views of Kangchenjunga and the surrounding peaks. After lunch, we visit Pemayangtse Monastery, one of the oldest and most significant Nyingma Buddhist monasteries in Sikkim. Originally built in 1705, it has been carefully restored over time. The monastery is renowned for its rich artistic heritage and three-storey structure, which houses an intricate wooden model of

Sikkim Rhododendron Trek



Guru Rinpoche's celestial palace. Our hotel offers a comfortable setting to relax for the remainder of the day, or you may choose to spend more time exploring Pelling and its surroundings.

Overnight: Elgin Mt Pandim, Pelling

meals: B,L,D

DAY 13 Drive to Kalimpong 4 - 5 hours

From Pelling, we drive across the foothills to the Sikkim border before continuing to the historic town of Kalimpong. This afternoon is at leisure to explore Kalimpong, a relaxed hill town. Alternatively, enjoy time at the hotel, a heritage property set within peaceful gardens, with inviting lounges and views across the surrounding hills.

Overnight: Elgin Silveroaks Kalimpong

meals: B,L,D

DAY 14 In Kalimpong

Located close to the Tibetan border, Kalimpong became a place of refuge for many Tibetans who fled to India in 1959, and their culture continues to shape the town today. This influence is reflected in sites such as Zang Dhok Monastery, including its monastic museum. Today we also visit the Lepcha Museum, run by a local community member dedicated to preserving and sharing the traditions of Sikkim's indigenous Lepcha people. There is time to wander the town and browse local shops before preparing for your journey home.

Overnight: Elgin Silveroaks Kalimpong

meals: B,D

DAY 15 Drive to Bagdogra 4 hours, fly to Delhi

On our final day, we descend to the lower plains and the city of Bagdogra where we take our flight to Delhi. We hope you leave with a deeper understanding of Sikkim's landscapes, cultures and traditions, along with a real sense of achievement from your time on the trail.

The trip concludes in the late afternoon on arrival at Delhi airport. There is no included accommodation on this night, however, we can assist with arranging additional services if required.

NOTE: Internal flights are not included in the tour cost, we will be happy to assist with booking these for you. A nominated group flight will be advised however you are not obliged to return to Delhi if your onward travel plans do not require this. If you have chosen to store luggage at our hotel, you will need to make arrangements to collect it yourself.

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

country information

Tucked between Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet, Sikkim is one of India's smallest and least visited Himalayan states, yet one of its most distinctive. Long isolated from the outside world, it retains a strong cultural identity shaped by Tibetan Buddhism and the traditions of the indigenous Lepcha people, who regard Kangchenjunga as a sacred mountain. Sikkim is characterised by lush forests and steep valleys. As you travel north, the landscape transitions from subtropical foothills to temperate forest and eventually to alpine terrain beneath the high Himalayan peaks. The region is also home to the Kangchenjunga National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed area recognised

Sikkim Rhododendron Trek



for both its natural and cultural significance. Villages are few and far between, and trekking here offers a quieter, more remote experience.

climate

Spring (April to early May) is one of the most rewarding times to trek in Sikkim, with rhododendrons and other alpine flowers coming into bloom across the forested slopes. However, conditions in the eastern Himalaya can be variable. While there are often clear mornings and periods of fine weather, it is also common to experience cloud build-up, mist, and rainfall, particularly in the afternoons. Trails can become wet and muddy underfoot. At higher elevations, including Dzongri (4010m/13,156ft), temperatures can drop to or below 0C (32F), and snowfall is possible at any time. Weather patterns can change quickly, and trekkers should be prepared for a range of conditions. Daytime temperatures may range from around 15 - 20C (59 - 68F) at lower elevations to near freezing at higher camps.

dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be unavailable. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

what you carry

In your daypack you will need to carry extra warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and weather), a rain jacket, water bottle, and personal items. Porters carry all group gear and your kit bag of items including bedding.

equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking boots and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

acute mountain sickness

When we ascend above 2500 metres our bodies have to acclimatise to the decreasing amount of the oxygen available. To allow our bodies to adjust we have structured our treks so that you ascend slowly, allowing acclimatisation to occur. However, during the acclimatisation process, you may experience some of the following symptoms.

- Headache
- Tiredness
- Disturbed sleep
- Loss of appetite/nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Palpitation
- Swelling of the hands and face

Individuals acclimatise at different rates. Your best strategy is to take your time and drink plenty of water. These symptoms may not indicate the onset of A.M.S. and if you experience them it does not necessarily mean that you should not continue. All our group leaders have extensive first aid training and we urge you to communicate with the group leader at all times should you believe you have any symptoms in order that we can effectively monitor your symptoms. The only cure for Acute Mountain Sickness is to descend.

Sikkim Rhododendron Trek



Please note that your group leader has ultimate responsibility and may ask you to descend if symptoms persist.

vehicles & safety

During the course of your trip, we will use a variety of vehicles, all of which are fit for purpose and the conditions encountered. It should be noted that laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and whilst wherever possible, vehicles with seatbelts are provided, on occasion some vehicles may not have seat belts fitted.

visas

Please bear in mind that visas may be required for countries you are visiting en route or transiting through on the way to your destination. It is important that you check the requirements of all countries you will visit. Visa costs and requirements do change regularly so we suggest you check with your travel agent or World Expeditions reservations consultant. It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary visas.

Visas are required to enter India and visitors from countries (including Australia, New Zealand, United States, Canada and United Kingdom) can obtain an online visa, the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) prior to arrival. The official website <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html> Note your passport must be machine readable or you will be denied entry.

World Expeditions will apply for the groups Sikkim permits. Please apply for your ONE YEAR Indian tourist visa well in advance. You can list Delhi & Darjeeling as the places you will visit. Do not include Sikkim on your Indian tourist visa application, this is a separate permit. You will need the one year visa as the shorter one won't allow time for us to secure your permit to Sikkim.

For your Sikkim permit you will need to provide a copy of your 'ETA' for your Indian tourist visa. When you apply for your visa, you will receive an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) - normally issued within 24 hours of application - while your (actual) visa is issued into your passport on arrival.

The tour address in Delhi is: The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa. Bangla Sahib Road, New Delhi - 110001 Phone - + 91 11 42500200

The Sikkim permit forms must be received in the World Expeditions Sydney office by the end of February 2027.

We require the following:

Sikkim permit form, completed using blue pen only & signed. Leave questions 9-15 blank, our local office will complete for the group

Photocopy of your passport photo page

Photocopy of your ONE YEAR tourist visa Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) for India

Two passport photos

These items must be mailed to the World Expeditions office & received no later than the end of February 2027.

Our address is: Level 2, 55 York Street, Sydney, New South Wales, 2000, Australia

In addition to obtaining a valid visa, India has implemented a mandatory e-Arrival Card, which replaces the paper-based arrival form.

All foreign nationals must complete the e-Arrival Card online before reaching immigration. It can be submitted up to 72 hours before arrival in India.

Please note:

The e-Arrival Card is not a visa. You will still need a separate, valid visa (such as an e-Visa or regular tourist visa) to enter India.

More information and the official form are available via the Indian visa website.

Sikkim Rhododendron Trek



All travellers, including Australian passport holders and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, must complete the online e-Arrival Card within 3 days prior to travel to India – you can apply for your e-arrival card at <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/earrival/>

how to book

Please submit your booking & deposit online www.worldexpeditions.com.

We highly recommend you have your travel insurance in place as soon as you start paying for any aspect of your travel plans, including your trip deposit.