

# Discover Sikkim Safari Tour

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Jeep Safari in Darjeeling and north Sikkim, Sikkim has always been known for its unparalleled natural beauty, high hills, big Buddhist Monasteries and lakes. The newly opened region of North Sikkim has opened another opportunity for nature lovers and is considered as a botanist paradise.

The Yumthang and surrounding region is full of many varieties of wild Himalayan flowers like Rhododendrons, Blue Poppies, many varieties of exotic Orchids and many more. The journey passes through lush green hill slopes and tea gardens. The journey from Lachung to Yumthang offers an unforgettable virgin landscape covered with rhododendron bushes and 108 other types of Orchids which bloom in different colours from April to May.

## Itinerary

### **Day 01: Bagdogra – Darjeeling**

On arrival at Bagdogra airport the clients will be received by our guide who will accompany the group for the rest of the tour in Darjeeling and Sikkim. Bagdogra to Darjeeling is a three hours drive uphill through tea gardens and small towns. We will occasionally meet the famous Darjeeling Toy Train, huffing and puffing across our road

### **Day 02: Darjeeling**

Early morning visit Tiger Hill for fabulous sunrise views over Mt. Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world at 28,156 ft. Mt. Everest and a host of other Himalayan giants are also seen on the horizon subject to clear weather. On our drive back to the hotel we will stop at Ghoom to visit Yiga Choling Monastery. After breakfast we shall visit the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Zoological Park, Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre and the nearest tea garden to witness the orthodox manufacturing process of Darjeeling Tea. In the evening, stroll around the local market and the Mall. O/N Hotel.

### **Day 03: Darjeeling-Pelling or Pemayangtse (West Sikkim)**

Today's drive is truly a naturalist's delight. The hillsides and mountain slopes of Sikkim are strewn with bright patches of myriad colors. The lower mountain slopes are abundant with lush green bamboo and ferns. The northern valleys are draped with wild cherry, oaks, chestnut, pines as well as magnolia varieties called *Magnolia Campbellii* and *Michelia Doltso-pa*. The higher altitudes are abloom with 46 species of *Rhododendrons*. And of course, Sikkim's 600 varieties of orchids are everywhere. Today our 05 hours drive is interesting as we move upstream along the river Rangit through dense forests of sal and teak. O/N Hotel.

#### **Day 04: Pelling to Yuksom via Kechipalri Lake**

Early morning after having breakfast we walk to the Pemayangtse monastery. Here we hear the chanting of the morning prayers by the young and old monks and the smell of the burning Juniferous Squamata and *Rhododendron Nivele*. Pemayangtse, also known as the "Perfect Sublime Lotus" is one of the oldest monasteries of Sikkim and belongs to the Red Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism. After visiting his monastery we will drive towards Khecheopalri Lake – wishing lake and further proceed to Yuksom. O/N Hotel.

#### **Day 05: Yuksom**

The original capital of Sikkim, the tiny hill town of Yuksom is the base for treks and climbing expeditions to Mt.Kanchenjunga and other important peaks. This day we walk to the coronation throne, Dubdi Monastery and the nearby jungles to see wild orchids like *Coelogyne* and *Dendrobium*, as well as the indigenous flora of Sikkim.

#### **Day 06: Yuksom – Gangtok**

The 5 hour drive from Yuksom to Gangtok passes lush green fields of the famous large Sikkimese Cardamoms as well as Golden Rice.

#### **Day 07: Gangtok**

Perched atop a ridge at a height of 1520 mtr lies Gangtok, a quaint, colorful town. This small modernized town is the capital of Sikkim. Here we visit the famous monastery of Rumtek (27 kms away from the main town), which is the headquarters of the Kagyu sect. Later, we will visit the Institute of Tibetology which has a collection of almost 30,000 volumes of diverse subjects like astrology, philosophy, magic and religion. After lunch we will visit Enchey Monastery, Flower Show, Du Drul Chorten and take a walk around the town. O/N Hotel.

#### **Day 08: Gangtok to Lachung**

This area was recently opened to foreign visitors. We will be seeing the breathtaking landscapes of the northern part of Sikkim. Our drive takes us through lush green bamboo thickets intermingled with tropical flora and we arrive at the historical place of “Kabi Logstok” where the Lepchas and Bhutias had their brotherhood treaty. Later we pass scattered villages and terraced paddy fields. A few kilometers before reaching Mangan (the capital of North Sikkim), we will cross the Rang Rang bridge which is said to be one of the highest bridges in Asia. After Mangan the landscapes turn even more interesting as we encounter magnificent waterfalls cascading down steep mountain walls. O/N lodge.

#### **Day 09: Lachung-Yumthang**

Today we will visit Shingba Rhododendron sanctuary set at 12000 ft. Here we find different varieties of Rhododendrons and Pines. Yumthang is also rich in sulphur springs and even the Kings of Sikkim have made their own bathing huts. The air starts to get cooler as you enter the valley, with towering peaks closing in from all sides. From this point Tibet is only 25 kms as the crow flies. Evening return back to our lodge in Lachung.

#### **Day 10: Lachung-Gangtok**

After breakfast visit Lachung monastery before commencing the return drive. Lachung is famous for apples and October and November are lively months when the apples are harvested and sent to Gangtok. On our return drive we will make stops at different places and take short hikes to explore the countryside. We will have a picnic lunch at Singhik, famous for its clear and unobstructed views of the Himalayas.

#### **Day 11: Gangtok-Bagdogra**

The 5 hours drive from Gangtok to Bagdogra follows the Teesta river and we will be making stops to see the low altitude Himalayan flora.