



## LIFESTYLE HOLIDAYS – INDIA

### Sikkim Mountain Biking Tour – 12 days ex Delhi



Our India Bike Tour is through Sikkim, formerly a Kingdom and today the smallest state of India, which lies East of Nepal on the bottom of the Great Himalayan Range. Its population consists of the tribes of Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali. Sikkim is rich in cultural and heritage and offers a big diversity of climate in Sikkim including breathtaking, subtropical areas near to the arctic zones. The main peak of the Himalayas in Sikkim is Kanchenjunga, 8598m making it the third highest mountain in the world. But don't worry; we won't be biking up it! Our biking starts from Kalimong itself, and takes approximately 8 days. We cycle from the lush subtropical rain forests right into the highest terrain of the earth, where we reach Yuksom (First capital of Sikkim ) and the bottom of Kanchenjunga Himalayas. The return biking takes us through meadows, villages and along impressive hills. During our journey we will visit the monasteries of Rumtek, Pemayangtse, Dubdi, Kachiuri Lake, Thashding as well as the bustling town of Gangtok the new capital of Sikkim.

#### **Explore the smallest yet most diverse state of India**

Biking through Sikkim is a great way to fully appreciate the beauty of the countryside, flora, fauna and lifestyle of the Sikkimese people.

#### **Monasteries galore**

Along the way visit the outstanding monasteries of Gangtok, Pemayangtse, Yuksom, Thasding and Kalimong. We also get the opportunity to visit the sacred Kachiuri Lake as well as the tea gardens in Darjeeling

#### **Bike through extraordinary terrain**

As we bike through the extraordinary terrain of the Sikkim region, we will have no doubt that this is one of the most amazing places on earth.

## Tour Itinerary

### Day 1. Arrival in Delhi

On arrival in Delhi, we will be met and transferred to our hotel.

**Accommodation: Hotel**

**Meals: no meals included**

**No cycling**

### Day 2. Delhi to Kalimpong

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our flight to Bagdogra. On arrival we meet our team and drive to Kalimpong, which is approximately 60km and takes about three hours. The evening is free to explore the local market before retiring to our hotel for the night.

**Accommodation: Hotel**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

**No cycling: 3hr drive (60km)**

### Day 3. Kalimpong to Rangpoo

Kalimpong is a relatively small market town set amongst the rolling foothills and deep valleys of the Himalayas at an altitude of 1250 metres. Despite its size and location it is still bustling and rapidly expanding. It was once part of the land belonging to the Rajas of Sikkim, but now it is in West Bengal. Kalimpong's monastery, churches and an excellent private library are available for the locals to study Tibetan and Himalayan language and culture. Monasteries: Established in 1922, the Tharpa Choling Monastery belongs to the yellow Hat sect "Geluk-Pa" of Tibetan Buddhism, founded in Tibet in the 14th century and to which the Dalai lama belongs. Lower down the hill, the Thongsa Gompa, or Bhutanese Monastery is the oldest monastery in the area and was founded in 1692. After breakfast we visit the monastery, then it's back to the hotel to start biking to Rangpoo. This town is on the border of Sikkim and our passports will be checked there.

**Accommodation: Hotel**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

**Elevation/Cycling: 50km / 4.5 hrs riding (altitude range: 1200 – 1000 – 700 – 500)**



### Day 4. Rangpoo to Martam

Today we bike from Rangpoo to the small village of Martam, on an undulating trail through rice paddy fields. On the way, we visit the Rumtek Monastery which is one of the main monasteries of Sikkim and is the seat of the Gyalwa Karmapa, the head of the Kagyu-pa order of Tibetan Buddhism. The order was founded in the 11th Century by Lama Marpa, the disciple of Indian Guru Narupa. It was later split into several sub sects - the most important of these being Druk-pa, Kagyu-pa and karma-pa. The main monastery is the recent structure built by Gyalwa Karma-pa in strict accordance with traditional Tibetan designs. Martam is a beautiful place and well away from the hustle of the busy market.

**Accommodation: Hotel**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

**Elevation/Cycling: 55 km / 5-6 hrs riding (altitude range: 500 – 800 – 1100).**

### Day 5. Martam

After breakfast we drive (then bike) on a sightseeing tour of the capital of Sikkim, Gangtok (which means Hill Top). It occupies the west side of the long ridge flanking the Ranipool River, and from there we have an excellent view of the Kanchenjunga Range. Gangtok only became the capital in 1800, with the previous capitals being Yuksum and Rabdentse. The town has undergone rapid modernization in recent years.

Sightseeing of Gangtok includes: Namgyal Monastery, Namgyal institute of Tibetology, Royal Chapel (tsuk-la-khang), Enchey Gompa  
**Accommodation: Hotel** **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**  
**Elevation/Cycling:** 55 km / 4-5 hrs riding (altitude range: 1100 – 1300 – 1400).

#### **Day 6. Martam to Ravangla**

Today we bike to Ravangla on a rough metallic road which is mainly uphill followed by a short downhill.

**Accommodation: Hotel** **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**  
**Elevation/Cycling:** 60km / 5-6 hrs riding (altitude range: 1400 – 1700 – 1900 - 2100).



#### **Day 7. Ravangla to Pelling**

After breakfast we start biking from our Hotel - it is mostly downhill through small villages in the morning followed by an uphill section after lunch until we reach Pelling. The road is almost all metallic and doesn't have a lot of traffic. Pelling is a small hamlet nestled within a mountainous location and has preserved much of its traditional lifestyle. The ranges around West Sikkim are famous for their placid, sacred lakes.

**Accommodation: Hotel** **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**  
**Elevation/Cycling:** 65km / 6-7 hrs riding (altitude range: 2100 – 2000).

This cycle profile between Ravangla and Pelling follows the road and is reasonably accurate.

#### **Day 8. Pelling to Yuksom**

We start the day with a visit to the Pemeyangtse Monastery (Perfect sublime lotus). From Pelling, Pemayangtse Monastery (at 2085m) is framed on two sides by snowcapped mountains and is one of the State's oldest and most important monasteries. It was founded in 1705, but was badly damaged in the earthquakes of 1913 and 1960. It has been reconstructed several times and belongs to the Nyingma-pa sect, which was established by Padmasambhava in the 8th Century. All sects' monasteries are characterized by a prominent image of a teacher, together with female consorts and this monastery is the head of all monasteries in Sikkim. On the third floor you will find Zandog-palri, a seven-tiered painted wooden model of the abode of Guru Rimpoche, complete with rainbows, angels and the whole panoply of Buddha's and bodhisattvas. The model was built single-handedly by the late Dzungzin Rinpoche in five years. Next to the monastery there are the ruins of the second capital of Sikkim.

From the monastery we have a great view of the Kanchenjunga range before we head back to the hotel to start biking to Yuksom.

After 17kms we reach the holy lake of Khecheopari which is a popular destination for trekkers. This sacred lake lies in a depression surrounded by prayer flags and forested hills. By the lake shore is the small Lepcha village of Tsojo and about 1.5km above the lake is the Khecheopari Gompa.

We continue cycling towards Yuksom, which was the first capital of Sikkim. It is now a small village and a great base for local trekking trips. After checking into our hotel we have time to freshen up before a visit to Duddi and other monasteries.

**Accommodation: Hotel** **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**  
**Elevation/Cycling:** 35km / 4-5 hrs riding (altitude range: 2000 – 1900 – 1800).

### **Day 9. Yuksom to Darjeeling**

Today we bike to Jorethang which is about 55km and takes around 4 hours. After lunch at Jorethang we have a further drive to Darjeeling via Tashiding.

**Accommodation: Hotel**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

**Elevation/Cycling:** 76km / 4 hrs riding (altitude range: 1800 – 1600 – 1400 – 500, followed by a 21km drive back up to 2100).



### **Day 10. Darjeeling**

Early this morning (at 4am) we drive to Tiger Hill for sunrise to see the amazing view of the mountain range at first light. We return to the hotel for breakfast followed by a full day of sightseeing in Darjeeling.

Sightseeing of Darjeeling includes: Tiger Hill, Ghoom Gumpa, Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI) & Museums, Tea Garden.

**Accommodation: Hotel**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

**No Cycling: about 25km driving.**

### **Day 11. Darjeeling to Delhi**

After breakfast we drive to Bagdogra and board a flight for Delhi where we stay overnight.

**Accommodation: Hotel**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**

**No Cycling about 90km driving (4 hrs).**

### **Day 12. Departure from Delhi**

Depending on flight times, we have the morning to enjoy sightseeing in Delhi before we fly out in the afternoon or evening.

**Accommodation: Hotel**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**

**No Cycling.**

## Tour Information



### Included in the tour price:

- Accommodation: 2 nights 4 star hotel in Delhi and 9 nights guesthouses in West Bengal and Sikkim of good standard (based on twin share),
- Meals: All meals as indicated in itinerary (dinners in Delhi are not included in the price)- the support van carries snacks, drinking water and all the equipment for lunch stops;
- Transport: all transportation and gear transport in non-air-conditioned bus/minivan - the support vehicle is available as a back-up at any time;
- Airport transfer;
- Tour guides: experienced English speaking tour guide for all cycling and sightseeing on tour; the guide will stay in the support vehicle; for the sightseeing in Delhi we contract a professional local guide;
- Bike Hire
- Other Attractions: Entrance fees to all places of interest are included
- Other Inclusions: All state and interstate taxes, Restricted Area Permit for Sikkim.

### Tour Grade

This tour is graded 7/8 challenging to hard. Challenging Tours are or those looking to have some of the hardest days possible. Terrain will be steep and the adrenalin factor will be extreme. The strenuous effort will be well and truly rewarded when you reach the top but there will be some sweat lost and kilojoules burnt getting there. Options for dropping out will be minimal so you will need to be in for the duration.

### Not included:

- Domestic flight Delhi – Bagdogra (return flight, approx USD 650)
- Travel insurance
- Rescue,
- Medical kit for clients,
- Repair kit for the bikes
- Mineral water as well as hot and cold drinks,
- Tips (e.g. for laundry and meals)
- Sleeping bags,
- Camera fees & all entrance fees in Delhi and Agra are not included

### Rental Bike Information:

We are using a recreational, sturdy mountain bike on our Sikkim tour. The Bergamont Stallion offers everything needed for a smooth and easy ride over gravel and Indian roads. It is light enough to make climbing easy and the front shock will smoothen the bumps in the road. We might need your help to transport the bike to India to maintain the fleet.

### Recreational Riders & Sightseeing Passengers:

Whilst this tour is graded hard to challenging, we are happy to cater to a small number of recreational riders who may wish to take part with shorter daily rides. We also welcome limited numbers of non-riders on our tours. If you are keen to experience the Pyrenees, but prefer to do this on four wheels rather than two, please do not hesitate to check our availability on your departure of choice.

### Fitness Required:

You will be very fit prior to the trip and even fitter when you get back!