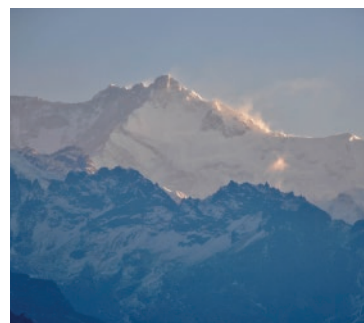


Indian
Sub-continent

sikkim rhododendron trek with garry weare



trip highlights

Escorted by Garry Weare, acclaimed Himalaya authority

Trek through some of the finest ancient rhododendron forests in the Himalaya when over three hundred varieties are in full bloom

Stay in heritage listed hotels in Darjeeling, Pelling and Kalimpong

Unrivalled views of the awesome flanks of

Kangchenjunga – the world's third highest peak

Explore the yak grazing pastures and sacred peaks that form the divide between Sikkim and Nepal



Trip Duration	15 days	Trip Code: GSR
Grade	Moderate	
Activities	Trekking	
Summary	15 day trip, 8 day trek, 7 nights hotel, 7 nights camping	

welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our Sikkim Rhododendron Trek with Garry Weare trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience.

why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to a remote and challenging destination, many factors need to be considered. World Expeditions have been pioneering treks in Nepal since 1975. Our extra attention to detail and seamless operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable trekking experience in the Himalaya. Every trek is accompanied by an experienced local leader who is highly trained in remote first aid, as well as knowledgeable crew that share a passion for the region in which they work, and a desire to share it with you. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics. We use an excellent 4 star hotel in Kathmandu and well maintained, good quality camping equipment on trek. For your convenience and health we supply all meals on trek, whilst maintaining the highest standards of hygiene and our cooks will surprise you with a varied menu. Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to benefit the local peoples we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience.



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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.

trip dates

2025 19 Apr - 03 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:

Western Escort & local leaders in country

thoughtful travel

The natural environments that you'll travel through are fragile; the cultures and traditions precious and often the communities we pass through are reliant on tourism. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence, protect what is precious and where we can leave a positive impact. Learn how you can do this by downloading the Thoughtful Traveller booklet from our website.

the trip

During the remarkable travels of Joseph Hooker through Sikkim in 1849, the British botanist catalogued many a vast array of rhododendrons. It underlined that the forests beneath Kangchenjunga one of the finest in the Himalaya for the numerous flowering species. We combine an trek through the pristine forests of Sikkim with uninterrupted views of Kangchenjunga and a host of 7000m peaks that form the borderlands with Nepal. To add to our experiences we include time to explore the renowned hill stations of Darjeeling and Kalimpong in this exhilarating journey across the east Himalaya. Ideal for those who have trekked in the Himalaya, to extend their experience in the hidden gem of Sikkim.

about your leader/escort

Garry has been involved with World Expeditions since its inception in the 1970's. Garry is a recognised authority on the Indian Himalaya with his intimate knowledge documented in his definitive Lonely Planet guide Trekking in the Indian Himalaya that he wrote for over 25 years. Garry has also written his high acclaimed Long Walk in the Himalaya and more recently Kashmir: a Journey through history. Garry is a founding director of the Australian Himalayan Foundation, Australian secretary of the Himalayan Club and holds a life times' achievement award for his commitment to the Indian Himalaya. His deep and abiding passion for Sikkim and his his wealth of knowledge of the region will ensure a memorable experience.

at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE DELHI.
DAY 2	FLY TO BAGDOGRA, TRANSFER TO DARJEELING. DRIVE APPROX. 3 TO 4 HOURS.
DAY 3	IN DARJEELING (2045M).
DAY 4	DRIVE TO YUKSAM (1650M). DRIVE APPROX. 5 HOURS.
DAY 5	TREK TO FOREST CAMP (2150M). WALK APPROX. 4 TO 5 HOURS.
DAY 6	TREK TO TSOKHA (3040M). WALK APPROX. 4 TO 5 HOURS.
DAY 7	TREK TO PETHANG (3480M). WALK APPROX. 3.5 TO 4 HOURS.
DAY 8	TREK TO DZONGRI (4010M). WALK APPROX 4 HOURS.
DAYS 9-10	AT DZONGRI.
DAY 11	RETURN TREK TO TSOKHA. WALK APPROX. TO 4 TO 5 HOURS.
DAY 12	RETURN TREK TO YUKSAM. WALK APPROX. 6 HOURS. DRIVE TO PELLING 1.5 HOURS.
DAY 13	DRIVE TO KALINGPONG APPROX. 4 HOURS.
DAY 14	IN KALINGPONG.
DAY 15	DRIVE TO BAGDOGRA APPROX. 4 HOURS, FLY TO DELHI.

what's included

- Good 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)
- Expert bilingual guide and group medical kit
- 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

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trip grading Moderate

The Sikkim Rhododendron trip is graded moderate. It includes trekking for up to six hours a day at a steady pace with the highest altitude at Dzongri at 4020m. You will need a reasonable 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

adventure travel

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. 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. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. 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.

what's not included

- International flights
- Internal flights Delhi to Bagdogra (NOTE: We will advise the group flight & can book this for you, please allow approx. USD300, flight prices will increase so early booking is recommended)
- Travel Insurance
- 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 phone calls, laundry, etc
- Tips
- Additional transfers or accommodation in Delhi - optional and can be booked at an additional cost

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive Delhi.

You will be meet by a World Expeditions representative and transferred to the Lalit 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.

NOTE:

Internal flights are not included in the tour cost, we will be happy to assist with booking this for you. The nominated flight for the morning of day 2 is:

Delhi to Bagdogra 20 April 2025

AIR INDIA/ AIR VISTARA

AI2725/ UK725 07:50/ 09:45

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 recommend storing your main suitcase and any excess items & hence filling your provided World Expeditions kit bag with what you will need while in Sikkim.

meals: NIL

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

Your morning flight to Bagdogra takes around 1.5 hours. On arrival we complete the 70km drive that winds up the foothills to the renowned hill station of Darjeeling. We stay at the New Elgin hotel (one of the three heritage hotels on our trip, each reflecting an old world charm and services much appreciated by our groups). That afternoon you there is time to wander The Mall and savour the cool mountain air where generations of Nepalese and Tibetan people have forged a living in this former outpost of the British Raj.

That evening we will brief you on the days ahead and issue you with your kitbag, sleeping bag and down/fibrefill jacket.

meals: B,D

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DAY 3 In Darjeeling (2045m).

This morning we head to the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute – with numerous maps, memos and photographs of Himalayan climbing exploits. The Institute is set in the grounds of the Zoological Park where endangered species including the red panda can be seen. We then head to a nearby tea plantation to appreciate Darjeeling most famous export. The afternoon is free to wander the markets and perhaps gain a distant glimpse of Kangchenjunga looming above the clouds.

meals: B,D

DAY 4 Drive to Yuksam 1650m). Drive approx. 5 hours.

We drive for two hours to the Sikkim border. Once permits are checked we continue through the foothills to one of the former capitals of Sikkim at Yuksam where we stay at the traditional Tashigang lodge for the night.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 5 Trek to forest camp (2150m). Walk approx. 4 to 5 hours.

Our trail ascends through mixed oak, bamboo and conifer forest and past tumbling waterfalls while delicate orchids and ferns line the trail. Take plenty of rests on this first day as the trail winds gradually up to a forest clearing and our camp for the night.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 6 Trek to Tsokha (3040m). Walk approx. 4 to 5 hours.

From camp we take an hour to reach the bridge just above the confluence of the Prek and the Rathong rivers. Its then a long gradual haul through magnificent forest to the solitary Lepcha settlement at Baktim and a welcome tea. It's a further hour as the trail heads to Tsokha crossing clearing in the forest that afford incredible views that extend back to Yuksam. Notably the lowest band of rhododendron are coming into bloom we complete the final push to Tsokha.

From Tsokha we gain a clear view of Pandim (6691 m) looming above the upper Rathong Valley. Until a decade ago Tsokha was the home of Tibetan people who were granted this small tract of land in 1959 after they fled from Tibet. They have now been re-settled in line with the Sikkim government's policy of banning settlements in the Kangchenjunga National Park. (the indigenous Lepcha people are the exception)

meals: B,L,D

DAY 7 Trek to Pethang (3480m). Walk approx. 3.5 to 4 hours.

A truly memorable stage. We ascend an ancient forest with the magnificent array of rhododendrons coming into full bloom. Many hours can spent taking in the pure majesty of the forest. The cloud and mist intensify the colour of the rhododendron. Silver fir and the occasional larch thrive at these rarefied elevations while the birdsong from unseen species add a further dimension to the trek.

Our attractive camp at Pethang is set in a clearing in the midst of rhododendron forest and is ideally located to assist our acclimatisation.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 8 Trek to Dzungri (4010m). Walk approx 4 hours.

Another magnificent stage. We ascend the forest trail as it gradually winds up to Deorali (3690m) and our first glimpse of the high peaks including Kangchenjunga.

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Rhododendrons are coming into bloom while for a fortunate few the daphne pheasant may be sighted in the undergrowth. The trail ascends (steep in places) before the gradient eases out to reach the vast meadow at Dzongri.

meals: B,L,D

DAYS 9-10 At Dzongri.

An early morning ascent to a nearby vantage point (client take between 35 minutes to an hour) to gain spectacular views of the unmistakable peaks of Kangchenjunga (8586 m) the third highest mountain in the world. Mountain views extend from Pandim to Talung 7349m and the impressive 7000m Kabru peaks. Further options to trek to an isolated glacial lake high above our camp afford a further perspective of awesome Himalayan backdrop.

On the second day a foray to the Dzongri La (4360m) (return trek approx. 4 to 5 hours return) affords stunning views of Kothang (6147m) as well as the Kabru peaks that enclose the glacial valley. Close to the pass look out for herds of bharal (blue sheep), stalked by the elusive snow leopard while golden eagles soar on the thermals.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 11 Return trek to Tsokha. Walk approx. to 4 to 5 hours.

Shortly after leaving Dzongri we ascend a ridge to gain our final views of Kangchenjunga and the adjoining peaks before descending through pristine forest to our camp at Tsokha.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 12 Return trek to Yuksam. Walk approx. 6 hours. Drive to Pelling 1.5 hours.

An early start is imperative to complete the stage to Yuksam by early afternoon. From Baktim we gain panoramic views that extend down the Prek valley before a steady descent to the bridge over the Rathong river. We then focus on completing an exhilarating stage back down to Yuksam. On arrival we bid goodbye to our crew and mule attendants before completing the drive to Pelling (2150m). After camping for a week our rooms at our heritage hotel above the bustling town of Pelling take some beating.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 13 Drive to Kalingpong approx. 4 hours.

In the morning we are greeted with unforgettable views of Kangchenjunga and the nearby peaks before we visit the nearby Pemayantse monastery that has been recently rebuilt to accommodate its ancient Buddhist traditions. From Pelling we drive across the foothills to the Sikkim border where our permits are once again checked before we complete our drive to the historic town of Kalingpong.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 14 In Kalingpong.

Located close to the Tibetan border the vibrant town offered a sanctuary for many Tibetan people who fled to India in 1959. Many of the Tibetan people have made Kalimpong their home with their vibrant culture reflected in the Zang Dhok monastery (and in particular in the monastic museum). The Tibetan culture is also evident in the markets with no end of outlets selling momo's and other Tibetan cuisine. We also include a visit to the Lepcha museum run by an enthusiastic

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member of the community keen to promote the traditional lifestyle of Sikkim's indigenous people. There is also free time to wander the markets and complete last minute shopping before returning home.

meals: B,D

DAY 15 Drive to Bagdogra approx. 4 hours, fly to Delhi.

On our final day we descend to the sultry Indian plains and the city of Bagdogra. Our return flight takes around 1.5 hours.

Trip concludes late afternoon, on arrival at Delhi airport and there is no included accommodation on this night, we can assist in booking extra arrangements for you.

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

DAY 15 Bagdogra to Delhi 03 May 2025

AIR INDIA/ AIR VISTARA flight

AI2726/ UK726 14:10/ 16:25

You can also fly on to Kolkata if that suits your travel plans better. If you have chosen to store luggage at our hotel, The Lalit in Delhi, 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

The Lepcha were the original inhabitants of Sikkim followed later by Tibetans who established the Buddhist beliefs across the Himalayan kingdom. In the 17th century a princely state was formed that at times extended across much of eastern Nepal and as far south as Darjeeling. Much of its vast territory was lost during wars with Bhutan and Nepal and throughout the 19th century large number of Nepal migrants arrived that eventually formed a majority of the Sikkim's population. In 1835 Darjeeling was ceded to the British East India Company. It marked the gradual reduction of Sikkim's influence including its important trading position with Tibet. In 1975 the Indian government deposed the ruler (chogyal) on the pretext that the Nepalese living in Sikkim were undermining its influence across this politically sensitive border region.

climate

Sikkim is subject to the influence of the Indian monsoon from late May until mid-September. While we trek in the pre monsoon period anticipate an occasional storm marking the build-up of the monsoon. Day time temperatures will vary from 20C at lower altitudes to 0C with an occasional snow storm and sub zero temperatures at Dzongri.

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 ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must

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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, camera gear, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze etc. 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.

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

special visa requirements

All foreign visitors must obtain a Restricted Area Permit (RAP) to visit Sikkim which we will arrange for you, please see details below. You will need to apply for your regular Indian tourist visa (one year validity) in your home country and include a copy of this in the paperwork to be mailed to the World Expeditions office in Sydney, Australia.

IMPORTANT: For your Sikkim permit you will need to provide a copy of your Indian tourist visa or e visa, as such this is NOT the visa on arrival service, you need the Indian visa issued in your passport BEFORE you travel.

The tour address in Delhi is: Lalit Hotel New Delhi, Fire Brigade Lane, Barakhamba, New Delhi, Delhi 110001, India.

Phone number: +91 11 4444 7777

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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.

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.

For your Sikkim permit you will need to provide a copy of your Indian tourist visa or e visa, as such this is NOT the visa on arrival service, you need the Indian visa issued in your passport BEFORE you travel.

The tour address in Delhi is: Lalit Hotel New Delhi, Fire Brigade Lane, Barakhamba, New Delhi, Delhi 110001, India. Phone number: +91 11 4444 7777

The Sikkim permit forms must be received in the World Expeditions Sydney office by 1 February 2025.

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 India visa page in passport or photocopy of e visa
- Two passport photos

These items must be mailed to the World Expeditions office & received no later than 1 February 2025.

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

Please contact us if you have any questions.

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.