



Shakti Sikkim Extension to 'North India – from West to East with Christine Manfield'

INDIA

Join Christine on this stunning walk in the Sikkim region of the Himalaya – the perfect finale to your North Indian experience.

Located in the North East of the Indian sub continent, the Buddhist Kingdom of Sikkim shares borders with Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal and is nestled in the heart of India's Eastern Himalayan range. The thumb shaped state contains an environmental legacy of untouched but incredibly stunning and uniquely diverse landscapes and a cultural mosaic under the looming presence of the world's third highest mountain, Kanchenjunga (8598m). This mighty mountain, signifying female energy- is revered by the Sikkimese people as their protective guardian, and this protection is conspicuous as the mountain that dominates this state.

Sikkim was a British protectorate from 1890 and from 1950 became a protectorate of India. By 1973 demands (mostly from Nepali immigrants) calling for formal Sikkimese accession to the Indian Union, had become too loud to ignore and Sikkim became an associate state. The Gyalpos (Kings) lost their power as a result of the Sikkim's new democratic constitution and Sikkim became the 22nd state of India in 1975.

Carved from glaciers and rivers, Sikkim bears testament to the generosity of the Himalayas. Fed by over 100 rivers and hot springs the North East Indian state boasts some of the most exotic wild flora and fauna and rich Buddhist culture dating back to the 8th century. Stroll through colourful markets or step into ancient monasteries as you explore this Himalayan oasis.

The walks traverse the terraced foothills with overnight 'home stays' in various villages. As an honoured guest, the locals are keen to share their way of life with you so you can encounter life as it is.

Trip length	Start/Finish	Cost	Dates
5 days 4 nights	Calcutta	\$4,760	21st – 25th February 2010



ITINERARY

Key: (B) breakfast (L) lunch (D) dinner (W) wine/spirits

Sunday 21st February Calcutta – Bagdogra – Yangsom

This morning you will be collected from your hotel in Calcutta and transferred to the domestic airport for your flight to Bagdogra (1220/1320 Jet Airways 9W617)

Upon arrival in Bagdogra you will be collected and driven 5 hours to Yangsum Village near Rinchonpong in South Sikkim.

At an altitude of 6400ft, Rinchonpong, whose name means 'meeting place' in the local dialect is a pretty and un-spoilt Himalayan town. Yangsum Farm is a small locally run 'home stay' that has stunning views of the Himalaya.

In the early evening, you will be given an introductory briefing of your tour by your English speaking accompanying guide. This will be followed by drinks and snacks around the fire and under the stars and then a delicious dinner.

Overnight:

Village House at Yangsom Farm – Double/twin room (B,L,D)

Altitude: 1500m (4920ft)

Monday 22nd February
Yangsom – Sandyang Lee

If the weather is clear, your guide will wake you at dawn with a hot drink of your choice and some homemade biscuits. You will not regret getting out of bed for a view of the Kanchenjunga massif. This will be followed by breakfast and a tour of the property with Thendup, the owner.

Today's walk begins with a gentle climb along a lush jungle trail passing a few isolated houses and hamlets (mostly belonging to Nepali immigrants) along the way. Passing the Rangeet River in the valley below you will continue onto the Magi Darra, a stunning viewpoint of the entire valley and the newly constructed Gurung monastery. After this you will follow the trail up to Poison Lake passing neatly cultivated fields and village houses along the way. This trail affords stunning Himalayan views and will give you an insight into the lives of the local villagers. You will then arrive at Sangdyang Lee House, which also offers fantastic views of the Kanchenjunga massif. Sandyang Lee is a modern structure belonging to a local politician. We chose this particular house because there are only a few old structures around (in a region that bears the full brunt of the monsoon between June and September), but also because it has a stunning location, is very comfortable (with three en-suite bedrooms) and first and foremost has a wonderfully welcoming and interactive family.

Overnight:
Village House at Sandyang Lee – Double/twin room (B,L,D)
Altitude: 1800m (5904ft) Distance: 9 km Time: 6 hours

Tuesday 23rd February
Sandyang Lee – Radha Kandu

Again if the weather is clear this morning, your guide will wake you at dawn for a short (five minute climb) up to the viewpoint above Sandyang Lee House. The sight of the sun rising through the fluttering prayer flags with Kanchenjunga in the background is truly unforgettable. You will then be taken to Rinchenpong Monastery where you may be able to participate in the early morning prayers before driving back to Sandyang Lee for breakfast.

After this morning's breakfast, you will follow the trail down via Rinchenpong monastery and along a ridge with stunning mountain views continuing through the charming village of Bhasmay. You will then arrive at Kaluk village where our vehicles will be waiting to take you onto the approach road to the 'stairway to heaven', a one kilometre uphill climb! You will be rewarded for your efforts with mind-blowing views over Pemayangste hill and on to the Great Himalayan range.

After lunch on the ridge of Durpin Darra you will hike along the newly laid trail that leads to Chyaan Darra and then continue uphill to the charming village of Hee where you will have afternoon tea enjoying an almost 180 degree view of the Himalaya (if the weather is clear). Continue walking

gently downhill for around thirty minutes until you reach a stunning waterfall. From the waterfall, the trail continues gently upwards for around forty minutes until you reach Radhu Khandu village.

Overnight:
Village House at Radha Kandu - Double/twin room (B,L,D)
Altitude: 2200m (7216ft) Distance: 11.5 km Time: 7 hours

Wednesday 24th February
Radha Kandu

After breakfast, you will go on a walk around the village with the charismatic owner of the village house, Krishna Lal. After this you will continue uphill (through a wildlife sanctuary) to the enchanted lakes, a series of three beautiful lakes one after the other up the mountain side. After a picnic lunch, you will then walk along a flat path to visit the local cave which the locals consider to be a home for holy spirits. Continue back to Radhu Kandu village where you will arrive back mid afternoon.

Overnight:
Village House at Radha Kandu - Double/twin room (B,L,D)
Altitude: 2200m (7216ft) Distance: 8 km Time: 4-5 hours

Thursday 25th February
Radha Kandu – Bagdogra – Calcutta

After breakfast, you will walk back down to the road head (around twenty minutes). From here you will be driven 5 hours to Bagdogra Airport, from where you will fly to Calcutta.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Christine Manfield – tour leader
- Accommodation on twin-share basis
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary
- Transport in air-conditioned 4WD vehicles
- Portage at the airports
- Local English speaking guides for the tour
- All entrance fees to monuments during sightseeing
- Tips

Prices DO NOT Include:

- International air-fare, visa fees, airport tax or any kind of insurance cover
- Items of personal nature like drinks, laundry, telephone calls, etc
- Any pre dinner drinks or drinks during the meal
- Any other meals than those mentioned in the itinerary