

Green Lake Wilderness Trek, Northern Sikkim, India

A very challenging trek to an area of northern Sikkim few westerners have been to before, close to Kangchenjunga.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Camping
Grade	Strenuous
Duration	20 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 11 days Walks on: 1 day
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Mountain Kingdoms Appointed Leader
Land only	Joining in Delhi, India
Max altitude	4,935m/16,191ft, Green Lake, Day 14

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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Departures

Group departures

2021 Dates:

Sun 03 Oct - Fri 22 Oct

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts, who will have first-hand experience of the destination/s you want to visit. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday.

If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide



Mountain Kingdoms Appointed Leader

In destinations with limited tourist infrastructure, and on long treks into very remote regions, you will be led by a Mountain Kingdoms Appointed Leader. These western leaders usually work alongside a local guide and often have particular expertise in the region you are visiting. Between them, our leaders have led hundreds of mountain treks and tours and have travelled to all parts of the globe. Collectively they represent an enormous fund of knowledge. We have some incredible leaders and their photos and CV's are to be found on our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com/about/our-leaders.

Your trip highlights

- A rewarding trek in remote north Sikkim close to the border with Tibet
- Fabulous views of Mount Kangchenjunga and high peaks on the border with Tibet, considered to be some of the best mountain views in the Himalaya
- Visit the inaccessible and beautiful Zemu Glacier
- Trek through fine rhododendron forests with more than 24 different varieties being found here
- Visit Gangtok with sightseeing and a comfortable hotel of real character

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-2	Overnight flight to Delhi. Afternoon sightseeing tour in Delhi, including a visit Qutab Minar.
Days 3-4	Fly to Bagdogra Drive to Gangtok. Sightseeing.
Days 5-6	Drive to Lachung and acclimatisation walks Lachung.
Day 7	Drive to Lachen and start trek.
Days 8-14	Trek to Green Lake from Zema with rest day at Yabuk and at Green Lake.
Days 15-18	Return trek to Zema. Drive to Lachen and back to Gangtok.
Day 19	Drive to Bagdogra and then fly to Delhi.
Day 20	Fly to London.

Trip summary

The trek to Green Lake is a spectacular high altitude adventure in a remote region offering some of the finest high mountain views in the Himalaya. Very few westerners have ever been this way and this trek has that element that is so rare to find anywhere today - a feeling of real exploration. A recent client on this trek considered it to be a 'real gem', with some of the finest high mountain views anywhere. You will travel close to the border with Tibet and have unrivalled views of the south and east faces of Kangchenjunga as well as many other fine peaks such as beautiful Siniolchu, once called the most beautiful mountain in the world.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Sikkim was the centre of British exploration of the high Himalaya with most British expeditions "going in" through Darjeeling. All of the pre-war Everest expeditions went in this way. The Chumbi valley has always been a major thoroughfare across the Himalaya and until the Chinese occupation of Tibet this route was widely used. Since the 1950's the north of Sikkim was generally closed to foreign visitors, so it was with great excitement that we first completed a reconnaissance trek in 2003. Now this route provides a real off-the-beaten-track adventure to those who would like a different and unusual trek.

Special notes

Permits

Because the north of Sikkim is a very sensitive border area, special permits are needed for this trek. We have not experienced problems in getting these permits for our groups in the past although the process can take a little time so we do recommend that you book well in advance if you wish to do this trek. We have met high-ranking officials in the Sikkim government who say they will support our applications. However we also have to obtain permits from the Home and Defence Ministries in New Delhi. Anyone knowing how Indian bureaucracy works will understand this is a slow and uncertain process. Our advantage is that our Delhi agent is headed by the daughter of the famous Indian mountaineer, Nawang Gombu, who was one of the first Indians to summit Everest, and the first man to climb it twice. He was a close relative of Tensing Norgay, and his family are highly respected in Sikkim.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London to Delhi.

Fly overnight from London to Delhi.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Delhi. Group transfer to hotel. Afternoon sightseeing.

Arriving in Delhi in the middle of the morning you will be met and transferred to your hotel which is situated not far from the airport. Although Delhi can be quite a culture shock, nowadays it is a vibrant and cosmopolitan modern city with thriving business areas, an excellent metro system and plenty of reminders of its exciting history and ancient civilization.

There will be time to rest after arrival and then in the afternoon you will have a sightseeing tour. You will visit Qutab Minar, a 73m high tower built in 1193 by Qutub-ud-din Aibak to celebrate his victory over Delhi's last Hindu King. It is considered to be one of the finest monuments in India. You will also visit the IMF Headquarters which has a small but interesting mountaineering museum.

Our local representative will let you know details of your flight to Bagdogra in the morning.

Overnight: Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport, Delhi

Day 3: Fly to Bagdogra - 2 hours. Drive to Gangtok, 1,650m/5,413ft. - 125km, 5 hours.

After breakfast at your hotel you will be transferred to the airport to catch the flight to Bagdogra. Here you will be met by your guide and driver and will drive to Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim state. This is a very scenic drive taking you up from the plains and into the foothills, through deep river gorges, forests and steeply terraced rice fields.

Gangtok is the capital of Sikkim state. The name means 'hilltop' and the town is situated along the steep west side of a long ridge above the Tanipul River. The scenery from Gangtok is spectacular and there are excellent views of the entire Kangchenjunga Range from many points throughout the city. Gangtok only became the capital in the mid-1800s (previous capitals were at Yuksom and Rabdentse), and the town has undergone rapid modernisation in recent years. Gangtok has also recently become something of a hill station resort and is a popular holiday destination for Bengalis, especially during the 10-day Durga Puja holiday period in early autumn. Many people expect Gangtok to be a smaller version of Kathmandu. It is not that but it is an interesting and pleasant place to stay with many monuments built in traditional architectural style, including nearby Rumtek Monastery, Enchey Gompa, the palace of the former chogyal and the impressive Royal Chapel (the Tsuk-La-Khang), the huge Tashiding, or Secretariat complex and the Legislative Assembly.

Your stay in Gangtok will be at the delightful Netuk House Hotel, which with its traditional decorations has a very Sikkimese feel. It has a lovely atmosphere and character, and often serves traditional food, and is run by nice friendly people. It is a lovely spot to relax before you start your journey into the wilds.

Overnight: Netuk House Hotel or Similar, Gangtok (Meals: BLD)



Day 4: Sightseeing in Gangtok.

You will have a day to sightsee in and around Gangtok.

Rumtek Monastery, an important monastery just 5km from Gangtok was built in the 1960s by his holiness Gyalwa Karmapa to replace the old Rumtek monastery which was destroyed by an earthquake. Rumtek is now the seat of Karmapa Rinpoche. It is the newest and perhaps the most impressive monastery in Sikkim both in size and grandeur. It has very interesting paintings, statues and a stupa containing ashes of the 16th Karmapa. Have your passport with you for this visit as it is frequently requested here.



You will also visit Enchey Monastery, located in forest above the town and offering brilliant views of the Kanchenjunga range. This beautiful place is an important monastery for the Nyingmapa sect, a sect to which the Sherpas of Nepal also belong. You may also visit the Orchid Sanctuary nearby which houses about 200 of the total 454 species of orchids found in Gangtok.

Finally, you visit the world-renowned Namgyal Research Institute of Tibetology. This building perched on a hill top in forest of magnolia and oak is built in the typical Tibetan style of architecture. The institute promotes research on the largest collections of books and manuscripts on Mahayana Buddhism in the world. There are about 30 thousand volumes and translations of the original teachings of Buddha, and various other treatises of other venerable Buddhist scholars from around the world. The institute also has a museum which has an impressive collection of antiques and some fine thangkas, paintings depicting the life and times of Buddha. Close by is the huge golden-topped Do-drul Chorten, or Phurba Chorten, shaped like a stupa (dome-shaped) with 108 prayer wheels around the periphery. This white painted chorten, with its many-coloured Buddhist prayer flags, is visible from many parts of downtown Gangtok. Close to the chorten is the Guru Lhakang Monastery, also a school for Buddhist studies.

Later you will have some free time to relax or to do any last minute shopping for trek.

Overnight: Netuk House Hotel or Similar, Gangtok (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Drive from Gangtok to Lachung, 3,000m/9,842ft - 4 to 5 hours.

Today you will make an early start for the drive to Lachung, 4 to 5 hrs. You head north from Gangtok and after a short distance, on the crest of the watershed divide 8 km north of Gangtok, your driver will stop at Tashi View Point for the views. From here you look north over the Dik Chu tributary of the mighty Teesta river and on a clear day, north west toward Kangchenjunga (28,169ft/8,586m) and Siniolchu, 22,598ft/6,888m, rising ethereally above the valley mists. The road meanders down through lush greenery, terraced farmlands and stilted village houses. Later you have time to pause at Phodang, 38 kms north of Gangtok to visit the gompa and stretch your legs. Phodang Monastery is half an hour's walk up from the road or 10 minutes by vehicle. The gompa sits high above the main road to Mangan and there are tremendous views down into the valley below. Phodang was built in 1740 and belongs to the same order (Kagyupa) as Rumtek, but is much smaller and less ornate than the gompa. After the 16th Karmapa fled from Tibet and before he installed himself in Rumtek in 1959, Phodang was for a while the most important of Sikkim's three Kagyupa gompas (the third is Ralang Gompa). It is still considered one of the six main monasteries and, along with Rumtek and Ralong, hosts the annual Kagyat dances in December. Here you can feel the timelessness of a part of Sikkim which tourists rarely visit and which gives a hint of the grandeur of the north. You may also have time to visit Labrang Monastery, located about 4 km up a rocky dirt road above Phodang. The architecture of this gompa is quite unusual. The exterior shape is an octagon, built of mortar and brick with an outer coat of plaster and painted rust colour. Here you may take a moment to be aware of the soundlessness, to contemplate a life spent in peaceful meditation far away from traffic and urban din.

Driving on, 65 kms from Gangtok, you meet the first check post at Mangan, a place which considers itself to be the 'cardamom capital of the world'. You continue to the town of Chungthang, where the rivers Taschung and Lachen meet to form the Teesta (the largest river in Sikkim). Here you turn right to drive up to Lachung a settlement situated at the confluence of the Lachen and Lachung rivers, tributaries of the Teesta. On your left are the mountains of Chameringu, 4,528m/14,855ft and Phedang Khungi, 4,897m/16,066ft.

Overnight: Local Guest House (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: In Lachung - day walk up the valley for acclimatisation.

Lachung is a well-established village, famous for its apples, peaches and apricots. Its wooden houses are built in traditional style. In the past this region felt more remote but nowadays hotels have been built here to serve the needs of a newly emerged Indian middle class with money to spend, coming up from Gangtok and staying overnight here to make a day trip up to a sacred lake near the border with Tibet. This tourism has started to have its effect on these upland valleys with local young people no longer working so much on family farms, but instead working in hotels and acting as taxi drivers. Because this is a sensitive border area there is also much military traffic and army camps.



The scenery around Lachung is 'alpine' with open woodland up to about 500m higher than the village. The mountains which are visible from the valley floor rise to about 5500 m. Today, for acclimatisation you will take a walk from your Lachung hotel up the steep valley opposite to gain a useful 700m of acclimatisation. You might also visit Lachung Gompa, an old gompa (built in 1880) and one the most picturesque gompas in Sikkim. It is a short 30 minute walk uphill from the centre of Lachung to the gompa and there is an amazing backdrop of snow-capped peaks. In Lachung you might also visit the handicraft centre which sells woven rugs and blankets.

Overnight: Local Guest House (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Drive from Lachung to Lachen, 2,750m/9,022ft, and continue to start of trek at Zema - 2½ hours drive - Trek to Thalem 3,240m/10,620ft - approximately 4 hours.

Today you leave Lachung and descend the valley back to the big junction where after crossing the bridge the road follows the left side (western) to Rongpu and on to Lachen. You cross the fine Bolshoi Bridge - of Russian design - built almost 492m/1500ft above the riverbed (Do not try to photograph any bridges as the Indian authorities are very sensitive on this point). From here the Teesta valley rapidly becomes narrow and steep sided and is forested all the way to Lachen, another settlement with an obvious army presence.

You then drive the short way to Zema at 8,950ft/2,730m. This takes about 20 minutes along a rather poor road to arrive at a bridge over the Teesta and the start of the trek. When Sir Joseph Hooker, the great British botanist and explorer came here in the mid 1800's he found a piece of string tied across the bridge, and a local told him that other side of the bridge was 'Cheen' (ie China). Nowadays the border is quite a long way north, but still contested by the Chinese. You start walking from Zema, where the Zemu Chu, which flows down from the Zemu Glacier, merges with the Thangu Chu (river). The trail turns west to follow the left bank of the Zemu Chu. At first the trail is fairly straight and broad, but landslides may hamper the route in several places and make the going difficult or muddy underfoot. The last section to Thalem is steeply uphill in lovely forest. Thalem (Jadong) is located at the junction of Lhonak Chu with Zemu Chu, where your first campsite is a lovely spot in woods where you will be lulled by the sound of the two rivers.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Trek to Jakthang, 3,429m/11,250ft - 3-4 hours.

This is a relatively short day of about 4 hours to aid acclimatisation. From Tallem the trail enters some of the magnificent forest for which Sikkim is famous, and is reasonably flat for half an hour. Crossing a bridge over a fierce torrent you enter a dense and wet forest. Again the trail may be muddy and the walking quite tiring as you also have to negotiate dwarf rhododendron roots, possible landslip areas and several short but steep climbs. You climb through this forest to Shobuk and then descend steeply for forty five minutes to Jakthang, a small meadow, with broken-down herdsmen's huts, which makes a convenient night's halt.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Trek to Yabuk, 3,978m/13,050ft - 4-5 hours.

The trail continues through forest. After a short climb it crosses a substantial bridge over the Thombak Chu. This river, draining from the north, leads to the Thieu La and Muguthang, towards the Lhonak Valley. Again the going is quite rough over landslips and through bamboo and rhododendrons. There are several ascents and descents on the route and floods may have damaged the trail so it can be quite tough going. The path can be

difficult to follow and its best along here for the group to stay together. After a final long climb you reach the camping ground of Yabuk where there is a Forestry Commission hut.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Rest day at Yabuk.

Today you will have a day to rest and acclimatise and to explore the local area. For those who are interested in rhododendrons there are many varieties found round here. You should now be getting your first views of the peaks surrounding the Zemu Glacier.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Trek to Rest Camp, 4,725m/15,500ft - 4½ - 5 hours walking.

Today you will get some of the most magnificent views of the trek - or any trek! Along the way if you climb to the top of the moraine the sudden view out over the glacier as you reach the crest is sensational - a sense of infinite light and space, beautifully shaped peaks, the huge glacier and Kanchenjunga east face in the distance.



From camp the trail enters the moraine field of the Zemu Glacier, crossing boulders and streams. You traverse above the river for 20 minutes then join it, climbing up beside it through the moraine. Near the snout of the glacier you head steeply up right to reach a brèche in one and a half hours. From here are the first magnificent views of the summit ridges of Siniolchu 22,563ft/6,877m, a mountain which Freshfield called 'the most beautiful in the world'. The nature of the walk now changes and as the valley opens up the great peaks come into view. You descend to cross the stream on a plank bridge and head east beside the stream with views ahead of Tent and Nepal Peaks. The going is now very pleasant underfoot and you ascend the widening valley gradually to reach what is known as Base Camp 1, the camp used by climbers attempting Siniolchu. Your porters may establish their own camp here but will carry all your gear upwards for a further hour to reach the true 'Rest Camp' which is situated right opposite Siniolchu. Rest Camp is at the mouth of the wide valley descending from the Thangchung La to the north and is a very pleasant camp site with wonderful views from the crest of the moraine 10 minutes' walk away. It was a rest and recuperation camp for the German expeditions of the 1930s and was the last one where firewood was available. Kangchenjunga rises in the distance. Herds of bharal (blue sheep) are often sighted on the hill opposite and this is also snow leopard country.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Extra day at Rest Camp.

Today you will have time to relax, acclimatise and explore the area around Rest Camp.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Trek to Green Lake Camp, 4,929m,16,171ft - 3½-4 hours.

Today it is best to rise just before dawn to see the sun hit Siniolchu. Then, after breakfast you will head up the valley from camp, staying on the left side, to a little col with great views of all the peaks. This takes about 1¼ hours. Then follows a long, very gentle walk up to the wide-open space with a stream which is one of the sites called 'Green Lake Camp'. Green Lake is a take off point for mountaineering expeditions to the peaks of this area. 'Green Lake' may conjure up an image of a beautiful stretch of still water, but sadly this is not now true. Instead of a lake there is just a small shallow pond. It seems that a lake did exist here in the past - the hollow can still be seen clearly, but the water has drained away into the adjacent Zemu glacier that is gradually eroding the base of the area where Green Lake is situated. In fact, the lake had disappeared by 1899 when, according to Douglas W Freshfield, 'The hollow enclosed between the converging moraines of the Zemu and Green Lake glaciers has been very lately a lake, and was now a lake basin'. But any disappointment at the lack of a lake is more than compensated for by splendid views all around. This is a wonderful spot and from here there are great views of Simvu and the whole of the towering south and east faces of Kanchenjunga. There will be time to take a little walk along the moraine or just to admire the fine surroundings. The true Green Lake Camp sometimes suffers from a lack of water so, as one of our earlier groups did, you may continue, to camp

about 1¼ hours further on, next to a stream. This is a lovely camp opposite 'mini' Siniolchu and there is plenty of water here as well as dead wood for a camp fire.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: Exploration from Green Lake Camp. High point at 4,929m/16,171ft.

After admiring the fine early morning views in all directions there is a whole day for exploration of this great amphitheatre. One fine route leads on the expedition route towards Tent Peak. You pass Green Lake and head for the crest of a moraine and then follow cairns which mark a narrow path which then swings right to follow a small stream descending from the direction of Tent Peak which is dead ahead. Just an hour or so from camp you reach the end of an easy path for fine views of Tent Peak and Nepal Peak and the glaciers falling from them.



When an earlier group was at Green Lake, Blue sheep came right down past the camp and there were Snow leopard pug marks nearby. So keep your eyes peeled today!

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: Retrace route to Yabuk - 3 hours.

A very easy and pleasant descent of about 3 hours.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 16: Trek to Thalem - approximately 6 hours.

Today you retrace your steps to Thalem, mostly downhill walking.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 17: Trek to Zema - 3 hours. Drive to Lachen.

Today you retrace your steps with a pleasant downhill trek to Zema and on to Lachen. Zema is 5 kms from Lachen and your vehicles may meet you here, but if not you may need to walk the last stretch up the road to the pretty village of Lachen. In Lachen you will say goodbye to your hardy band of porters and spend the night at the Apple Orchard Lodge.

Overnight: Apple Orchard Lodge or Similar, Lachen (Meals: BLD)

Day 18: Return to Gangtok - 6-8 hour drive.

Today you make the drive back to Gangtok where you can enjoy a beer and a welcome shower!

Overnight: Netuk House Hotel or Similar, Gangtok (Meals: BLD)

Day 19: Drive to Bagdogra airport. Fly to Delhi.

Today you will drive down from the mountains to the Indian Plains. In Bagdogra you will take the flight to Delhi. Depending on your flight schedule there may be time for some sightseeing or shopping - there is a metro station not far from the hotel so a visit into town is not difficult.

Overnight: Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport, Delhi (Meals: B)

Day 20: Depart Delhi.

After breakfast there will be a group transfer to the airport for your flight home. **(Meals: B)**

Our grading system

Green Lake Wilderness Trek is graded as a Strenuous trekking holiday, as described below.

Strenuous

Our strenuous trekking holidays can involve anything from 10 to 30 days on trek and are often in remote areas, far from 'civilisation'. Rest days are interspersed but there may be up to 7 consecutive days of hard walking. Most treks reach altitudes of at least 4,900m/16,000ft and there will be a great deal of ascent and descent. The majority of our strenuous treks utilise camping, tea house or mountain lodge accommodation.

These holidays are suitable for fit individuals who have regular experience of mountain walking.

Trip altitude

Important - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend www.medex.org.uk as a good source of information.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ An experienced English-speaking local guide
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation in Delhi, twin share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ Best available hotels in outlying towns on full board basis
- ✓ All camping facilities and all meals on trek
- ✓ Camp staff to carry out all camp work
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ All internal flights and domestic hotel/airport transfers
- ✓ Costs of all portage and porter insurance
- ✓ Sightseeing as mentioned in the itinerary
- ✓ All necessary permits
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & all Departure Tax (flight inclusive holidays only)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfer for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag
- ✓ The opportunity to attend one of our pre trip meets in the Cotswolds

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Delhi
- ✗ Tips

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

For our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag (these are required for certain treks), there is the choice of receiving either a free Water-to-Go bottle or a free Mountain Kingdoms fleece. If you are not eligible for a free bottle, you will still be able to buy a special Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport, Delhi

The Holiday Inn is situated just 4km from the airport and offers all the facilities you would expect from a good quality hotel. It is also just a short walk from a metro station.



Netuk House Hotel or Similar, Gangtok

We will stay at the Netuk House Hotel a traditional Sikkimese family house, now run as a small hotel with splendid food and traditional service. If this is not available we will use the Norkhill Hotel.



Camp

On our camping treks, the following are provided: a sleeping tent, a dining tent, a toilet tent exclusively for your group to use, and a kitchen tent. There are camp chairs or stools, a kerosene / gas lamp or candles for reading in the dining tent at night, a dining table, crockery and tableware. The staff complement of cooks, put up and take down tents, make the tea, cook the food, wash the dishes, and load the porters or pack animals. Your kit bag is carried for you either by porters or pack animals and you just trek with a light day sack.



Apple Orchard Lodge or Similar, Lachen

This is a comfortable hotel offering good food. If The Apple Orchard Lodge is not available there are now several other hotels offering comfortable accommodation in Lachen.

Meal arrangements

Bed and Breakfast in Delhi. All meals included in other hotels and on trek.
18 breakfasts, 16 lunches, 16 dinners

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

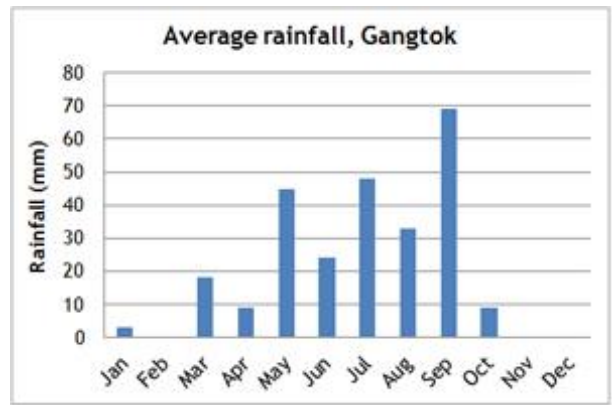
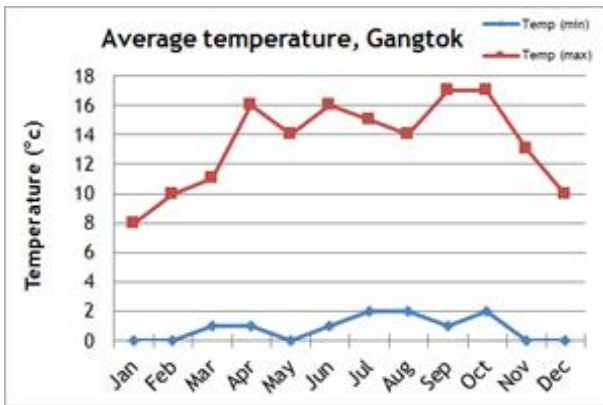
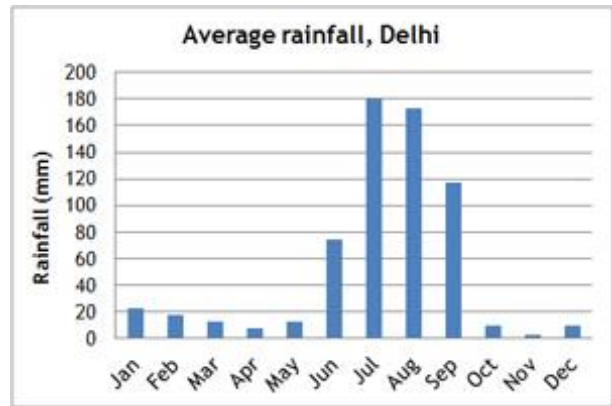
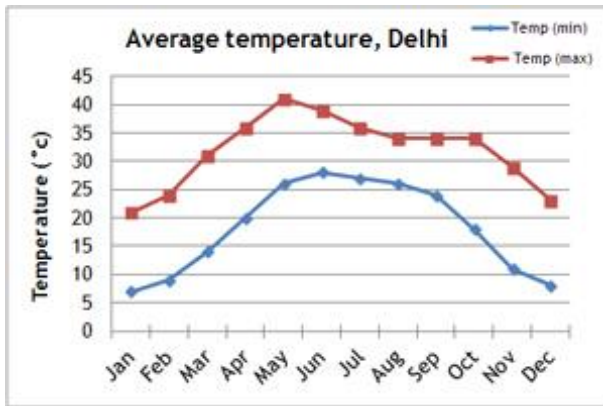
Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.



Additional accommodation in Delhi

If you would like to stay longer in Delhi we can arrange additional nights and upgrades from our selection of first rate hotels such as the Oberoi Maidens in the city or Claridges Hotel in New Delhi.



Agra, Taj Mahal & Jaipur

We offer various extensions to Agra, from a one-day visit to see the majestic Taj Mahal to a six-day trip to visit both the Taj and the Amber Fort at Jaipur. All options travel to Agra on the Shatabdi Express and include the services of an English-speaking guide, sightseeing and private transport.



Glenburn Tea Estate, Sikkim

The Glenburn Tea Estate, nestled in the beautiful Himalayan foothills, offers a wonderfully relaxing extension at the end of your trekking holiday in Sikkim. A working tea estate, you can tour the tea factory and fields and also enjoy nature walks, birdwatching or longer hikes in the estate's extensive grounds. Accommodation is elegant and indulgent, with rooms in restored planter's bungalows and meals are always delicious using ingredients grown in the estate's own gardens.



Ranthambore National Park

Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan is one of the finest national parks in northern India. It has a diverse range of habitats attracting a fantastic variety of wildlife including tigers, leopard, bears and monkeys as well as a large number of exotic birds. We can arrange a three night stay at a jungle camp from where you can enjoy many wildlife watching activities such as nature walks, jeep safaris and bird watching.

Corbett National Park

Corbett was India's first national Park and hosts a spectacular range of mammals, reptiles and birds including a large population of Royal Bengal tigers, elephants and leopard. For this extension, you take the train to Ramnagar for a three night stay at a lovely lodge with a full programme of safari activities.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- Few companies offer this trek and you will be one of only a handful of westerners to trek up to Green Lake.
- This trek requires special permits which we obtain through excellent local contacts.
- To aid acclimatisation we include a day walk along the beautiful Lachung Valley and sightseeing in Gangtok, the quirky capital of Sikkim with its echoes of the British Raj
- Our route ensures you will enjoy the most spectacular scenery including superlative views of Kangchenjunga and Mount Siniolchu, thought by past explorers to be 'one of the most beautiful mountains in the world'.
- All trekking crew are carefully selected and trained to deliver friendly, helpful and efficient service.
- The trek is fully portered and we use good quality camping equipment.
- There are no hidden costs or surcharges. The cost of the domestic flights from Delhi to Bagdogra and return are included in your holiday price, along with Delhi airport transfers.
- Our maximum group size for this trip is just 12 to ensure all the benefits of a genuine small group experience without the negative impact often associated with larger trekking groups.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and other exciting activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- We are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say



We feel we can trust and rely on MK. You use excellent local guides and hotels.

-Mr & Mrs T, Nottinghamshire

This is a real gem of a trek

- Mrs M, Scotland

We had a view of the whole length of the Zemu Glacier which is one of the finest mountain views I have ever seen. Once again I run out of superlatives in describing the crew. Everyone of the 17 man crew were excellent

- Mr & Mrs M, Inverness-Shire



Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

