



## Glimpses of the British Raj

*This trip is custom designed to provide a real taste of the colonial heritage of India. The bustling city of Calcutta serves as a gateway for our journey. Here we take a trip down memory lane and relive history as we travel through Dalhousie Square, the epicenter of British power in India until the transfer of its capital to Delhi. The majestic landmarks, many of which symbolize the rich legacy of Calcutta like the Victoria Memorial are architectural gems we visit. We then fly to Bagdogra and drive through undulating hills covered with lush green tea gardens and enjoy the fresh aroma of tea as it whiffs through the air. We follow the railway tracks of the celebrated "Toy Train" and stop to marvel at some of the loops and crossings which are examples of the engineering brilliance of its builders. We savour one of the most expensive teas in the world in the comfort of a colonial bungalow in Kurseong. Next morning we take a joy ride on the famous toy train and visit an agricultural project that is bringing about a quiet revolution in agriculture and education. The project advocates and promotes self sustenance and environment friendly agricultural practices and uses the proceeds from the products for the education of the local people. We then trek through thick forests of pine trees and visit an organic farm that grows vegetables in a green house environment throughout the year. Here we visit several schools built during the late 1800s and early 1900 and enjoy the colonial flavour that still linger in these institutions. We then travel to Darjeeling. Spread over a hill Darjeeling affords one of the most beautiful views of the Kanchenjunga massif. The sprawling tea gardens, the Victorian edifices, the Mall and the Toy Train exude colonial charm and take us back into time. We enjoy a stunning view of the sunrise, ride the toy train, and soak ourselves in the hospitality of yesteryears in a colonial villa. Darjeeling is synonymous tea and to complete the experience of the British Raj we head to Glenburn Tea Estate and spend two nights in the comfort of a European Bungalow and experience how the British Tea Planters lived. Here spend two absorbing days in the company of one of the oldest tea producing families in India and learn what goes into making Darjeeling tea from the bush to our cup. We then experience the cultural wonders of Sikkim where we visit one of the most important Buddhist Monasteries in the world. In Kalimpong we walk among tree tops, experience the involutions and edifice that exude the colonial charm of this quaint town. We then wind up our trip with a visit to Agra, the city of Taj Mahal, one of the most remarkable structures built on this earth. All the accommodations are in hotels that complete the British Raj experience.*

**Calcutta:** The documented history of Calcutta begins with the arrival of the British East India Company in 1690, when the Company was consolidating its trade business in Bengal. Job Charnock is credited to have laid the foundation to the city. It has grown from humble beginnings to be one of the most vibrant and important cities of India. From Fort William built to station its troops and as a regional base Calcutta went on to be the headquarters of the Bengal Presidency. The city for a short while fell into the hands of the Nawab of Bengal and was retaken by Robert Clive in the battle of Plassey that really laid the foundations for the British Empire in India. It was later named the capital of British India in 1772. Lord Richard Wellesley, the Governor General between 1797 - 1805 was largely responsible for the growth of the city and its public architecture which led to the description of Calcutta as "The City of Palaces". The city underwent rapid industrial growth from the 1850s, especially in the textile and jute sectors; this caused a massive investment in infrastructure projects like rail roads and telegraph by British government. A socio-cultural reform followed often referred to as the Bengal Renaissance. Within a couple of year Calcutta, a sleep hamlet along the Gangetic plains was transformed into a bustling metropolis, as much a Victorian city as any. During the Second World War the location of Calcutta prompted the British to move the capital to New Delhi in 1911. Today it is a vibrant modern city yet it clings to its past with edifices that date back centuries and give us a glimpse yesteryears.



#### **Day 1 Late night arrival in Calcutta.**

Upon arrival at Dum Dum International Airport our representative will receive us and transfer us to our hotel and help us check in.

#### **Overnight Fairlawn Hotel**

**Meals: None**

#### **Day 2 Full day guided sightseeing in Calcutta: Visit Dalhousie Square/ St. Paul's Cathedral/ Nirmal Hriday/ Indian Museum/ Victoria Memorial**

Since the English landed in Calcutta, this small fishing village went on to become one of the most vibrant cities in India. Today we take a walk down memory lane and take a guide tour through the various sites that define the city. After breakfast we visit **The Dalhousie Square**, the nerve centre of English colonial power and trade during the two centuries that it was the capital of India under British rule. The two-square-kilometer area operated as the political, financial, social centre of the Indian Empire until the removal of the capital to New Delhi in 1911. Originally named in honor of James, Marquise of Dalhousie, Governor General of India from 1847 to 1856. British architects filled this epicenter of their power with neoclassical buildings, riverside promenades, and manicured parks, as well as office buildings and apartment houses, all built in Victorian style. Today, Dalhousie Square has retained many of its original colonial buildings and is one of a few remaining city centers of its kind in this part of the world. It has now been declared as one of the 100 endangered cultural heritage sites by the World Monuments Fund. We then continue to St. Paul's Cathedral. This huge edifice stands close to the main nerve centres of Calcutta within walking distance from Victoria Memorial and a host of other attractions of the city. Built in 1847 it's with its spire in the likeness of Norwich Cathedral its gothic style with stained glass windows and frescoes make it a sight to see. St. Paul's was sanctified in 1874. We visit **Nirmal Hriday or the Home of the Pure Heart** started by Mother Teresa in 1952. It was the first Home for the

Dying in the city of Calcutta. With the help of the local administrators she started her home in an abandoned Hindu temple in Kalighat. Today we can see hundreds of old and destitute people being tended to by the sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, an order she founded. We then visit the **Indian museum**. It is one of the oldest museums in the world. The museum was founded by Dr Nathaniel Wallich a Danish botanist at Serampore in 1814. Today it is located in the heart of Calcutta and is the oldest institution of its kind in Asia Pacific region with the largest repository of artifacts in the orient belonging to different eras. The present building was opened in 1875 and has different sections dedicated to geology, zoology, industry, archaeology, art, and ethnology. It exhibits among others: an Egyptian mummy, the Buddhist stupa from Bharhut, the Buddha's ashes, the Ashoka pillar, the official emblem of India, fossil skeletons of prehistoric animals and a rare collection of arts objects and antiques. We wrap up our visit of Calcutta with a visit to the **Victoria Memorial**. Originally built as a memorial of Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom who also considered the Empress of India, it today serves as a museum and a tourist attraction. Sir William Emerson designed the building in a classical fusion of European and Mughal elements. During the evenings light shows can be seen which add another dimension to this beautiful architectural masterpiece.

#### **Overnight Fairlawn Hotel**

**Meals: B**

#### **Day 3 Fly Calcutta - Bagdogra and transfer to Kurseong**

After breakfast we will be transferred to the airport for your flight to **Bagdogra**. Upon arrival in Bagdogra meet our awaiting guide and transfer to Kurseong. The drive from Bagdogra to Kurseong is interesting. The road snakes through dense jungles, a thick foliage of Sal, Teak and teak trees dotted with purple bougainvillea, scarlet poinsettia and exotic mauve of the orchids, and tea plantations that cling to steep hillsides and small clusters of villages and small towns

that dot hills. The lush green rolling tea gardens and the marvelous mountain views make the drive an experience in itself. We stop en route to see the loops and 'z' crossings on the railway tracks that stand as testimony to the sheer engineering prowess of the pioneers who helped bring this area a little closer to other people about 150 years ago. Upon arrival in Kurseong we transfer to Cochrane Place. After lunch we can explore the **Ambootia Tea Garden**, the foremost bio - organic tea garden in this region which produces premium Darjeeling tea that is retailed in stores like the Harrods, Teeladen, Mariage Frere etc. In the evening our guide will brief us regarding the next day's program.

#### **Overnight Cochrane Place**

**Meals: B/L/D**

#### **Day 4 Take Toy train to Tung station, visit Woodcut at Sepoydhura and take a short hike to Chimney and then continue to Kurseong via Dowhill, drive to Darjeeling in the evening**

After an early breakfast we catch the 6.40 am Darjeeling train from Kurseong station to Tung station. The ride is very interesting as the train negotiates sharp curves and bends as it makes its way past tea gardens and small settlements to its next stop at Tung. We then walk for 10 minutes to "**Woodkot**" at **Sepoydhura**. The "Woodkot" project run by a Canadian Jesuit Priest employs truly innovative eco friendly ideas to support local farmers and the education of their children. The project includes dairy farming, organic farming, organic fertilizer plant, indigenous solar water heating project, bio gas project, a school and a centre to make handicrafts. It not only practices efficient, sustainable agricultural practices but promotes these ideas among the locals. From here we continue our walk through thickly wooded forest trail to **Chimney** another interesting. During the British Raj a huge chimney was constructed in this place which still stands today. A walk to Chimney is a very fulfilling experience as we pass through green forests covered with pine trees. The village is famous for its fully organic vegetable farm that grows vegetables throughout the year in a green house environment. The fresh vegetables grown here are sold in places like Kurseong and Darjeeling. We have a **picnic lunch** here at the Memorial forest in the midst of glorious vistas.

We continue downhill and visit the Deer Park, the Forest Museum, the **Dowhill** School and **Victoria** school that has been

**Kurseong:** The Land of White Orchids, Kurseong, is noted for its secluded charm. The town was ceded to the British by the King of Sikkim in 1835, as a small village. It gained prominence in 1880 when the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway was extended to Kurseong on 23rd August. Since then Kurseong has been an important township in the district of Darjeeling. Perched on a ridge at 1458 m surrounded by tea gardens on almost all sides Kurseong makes a very pretty picture. Towering figures in art, literature and politics Rabindranath Tagore, Sister Nivedita, Atul Prasad Sen, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and Abanindranath Tagore have drawn inspiration for their work from this unassuming town. Because of its lower elevation, Kurseong enjoys a milder and very healthy climate throughout the year.

imparting education since colonial times. Early in 1879, Sir Ashley Eden, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, knowing that it was difficult for parents in the lower ranks of British Government service in India to send their children to schools in the hills conceived the happy idea of establishing a Government institution for boys and girls. Hence Dowhill and Victoria schools were born. Set amid moss-laden conifers this area exudes calm and serenity in contrast to the chaos and cacophony of the plains. On a clear day, one can have a sweeping view of the plains in striking contrast to the hills around.

We continue further down and board our awaiting vehicles and drive to Darjeeling. The 1 hour drive from Kurseong to Darjeeling is very interesting. We pass through several villages and small 'bazaars'. Upon arrival we check into our hotel. The guide will brief you regarding the next day's program.

#### **Overnight Hotel New Elgin (Deluxe) or Hotel Dekeling (Standard)**

**Meals: B/L/D**

#### **Day 05 Early morning Tiger Hill for Sunrise, visit Ghoom Monastery and take train back to Darjeeling, Afternoon visit HMI, Zoological Park, Tibetan Refugee Center**

We rise early in the morning and head Tiger Hill and see the visit the major sites the town has to offer. Perched on a ridge above Ghoom - Jorebunglow, 11 kms from Darjeeling town at an elevation of 2590 m, **Tiger Hill** offers mesmerizing sunrise as well as an astounding view of the imposing Kanchenjunga massif as well as a host of Himalayan giants like the Chomolhari, Makalu and Mount Everest. Tiger Hill is very popular with tourists and we can see hordes of people making their way to this vantage point to enjoy the sights that it has on offer. We have breakfast on the hilltop and then drive back to Ghoom and visit the Monastery there. Constructed in 1875 by Lama Sherab Gyatso, the **Ghoom Monastery** is one of the largest





**Darjeeling:** “ The one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once- by even a glimpse- would not give that glimpse for the shows of the rest of the world combined’, is how Mark Twain described Darjeeling. Quite true as a visit to Darjeeling will surely remain etched in our memories forever. Often referred to as the “queen of the hills”, this small picturesque town still retains its colonial flavour and old world charm. It is steeped in history and the glorious past this small hill station enjoyed is visible in every nook and corner of the small town. The Mall, the gardens and a host landmarks like the St. Andrews Church, the Gymkhana, the Townhalls and a host of schools housed in buildings that date back to the late 1800s make a visit to Darjeeling a travel back into time. A walk in the mall and a ride on the celebrated ‘toy train’ against the backdrop of one of the most stupendous views of Kanchenjunga is indeed a journey back into a bygone era. Spread over in a natural amphitheatre with Kanchenjunga as its backdrop Darjeeling offers beautiful imagery often described in superlatives. Today it is the land of the beautiful rhododendrons, the sparkling white magnolias, never ending rolling hills covered with a sea of tea bushes, the evergreen forests of silver fir-all under the blanket of a brilliant azure sky dappled with specks of clouds. Darjeeling with its soothing climate and its beautiful landscape draws thousands of tourists from all around the globe. The laidback atmosphere, the ever smiling people, the unique culture and the magnificent scenery and provides a respite to all weary minds. It is a great escape and a perfect place to unwind and enjoy the bounties of nature.

monasteries in Darjeeling. Also known as the Ghoom Monastery it houses a 15 ft statue of the Maitreya Buddha and contains images of Chenrezi and Tsongkapa. The monastery belongs to the Gelugpa order. We take a ride by the fabled Toy train back to Darjeeling. After lunch at the hotel we head to **Himalayan Mountaineering Institute**. The Institute is one of the premier mountaineering training facilities in India supported by Indian Government to promote mountain climbing and adventure activities related to this sport. Since its inception decades ago hundreds of students have graduated from this institute and gone on to create history for themselves and achieve personal milestones. Darjeeling until the early 1950s was the hub of mountaineering activity in India. Nepal had not yet opened its doors to the west for tourism and most of the expeditions in Nepal began in Darjeeling but no climbing institute existed then. However the ascent of Everest by Late Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary on 29th May 1953 gave an impetus to mountaineering in the country. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1954 Darjeeling saw the opening of the Himalayan Institute by personal initiative of Late Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru the first Prime Minister of

India and Dr.B.C.Roy the then Chief Minister of West Bengal to promote mountaineering activities in the country. The museum housed in its premises showcases the equipments and personal gear used by Tenzing Norgay during his ascent of Mt. Everest. From the institute we walk through a forested enclave to the **Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park**. Established in 1958 under the Department of Education of the State for study and conservation of the Himalayan Fauna, it is the only Zoo in the world to breed Tibetan Wolf in captivity and the first South Asian Zoo to breed Snow Leopard, the Siberian Tiger and Red Panda. We visit the **Tibetan Refugee Center** and head back to the hotel to wind the day.

**Overnight Hotel New Elgin (Deluxe) or Hotel Dekeling (Standard)**  
**Meals: B/L/D**

**Day 6 Drive to Glenburn tea Estate, evening walk in the surrounding hills**

After breakfast we drive past tea gardens and pine forests to Glenburn. Upon arrival we check into the

Glenburn bungalow. We have lunch and explore the surrounding tea garden on our own.

#### **Overnight Glenburn Bungalow**

**Meals: B/L/D**

#### **Day 7 Full day visit of Glenburn factory, the tea garden and see how tea is processed followed by a tea tasting session at the end**

After breakfast we visit the **Glenburn tea Estate**. The factory is a 150 year old plantation house, situated on a small hilltop in a valley above the



**Glenburn Bungalow:** A night spent in an old British built bungalow in Glenburn is a bewildering experience of connect the past to the present and makes you feel like royalty. Surrounded by 1,000 acres of private forest and the working tea estate, the main bungalow has a wonderful long veranda with comfortable chairs running along the front. Inside is an English-style sitting room and dining room and, in the gardens, a small pavilion, the perfect place for lunch, tea or dinner. Glenburn consists of six bedrooms and suites, each one individually designed with timbered ceilings and a private entrance. The real delight, however, at

Glenburn is the utterly charm of the family who own and run this estate. It takes you back in time to the days of the East India Company and other voyages of discovery. Let the old maps and prints, and oriental figures in the Toile de Jouy furnishings, transport you back to those grand old days, while you relax in front of a crackling fire in the privacy of your room. For a breath of fresh air, step right out into the garden through your private verandah and sit-out that looks out across the Simbong Valley towards the hills of the old royal kingdom of Sikkim.

In the afternoon we walk around the village, visiting homes and interacting with the locals which

River Rungeet and close to Darjeeling, sits in the Himalayas at an altitude of 3,700m and is overlooked by Mount Kanchenjunga. Started by a Scottish tea company in 1860, Glenburn has now passed into the hands of one of India's pioneering tea planting families - The Prakashes, who have over the years come to be known as the "**Chaiwala family**" - which literally means "tea planters". Spread over a 1,600 acres the river valley offers breathtaking views of the **Kanchenjunga Mountain Range**. Apart from the sprawling tea fields, Glenburn has forests that are a bird watcher and hiker's paradise. Across the river lie the forests and villages of the old royal kingdom of **Sikkim**, which you can access via a hanging bridge. And to complete your **Glenburn Experience** we learn about the fascinating process of tea making. From bush to factory - and into your tea cup at a tasting session, discover what goes into making a fine Darjeeling tea. In the evenings you can sit with the Prakashes and share their stories of tea history.

#### **Overnight Glenburn Bungalow**

**Meals: B/L/D**

#### **Day 8 Drive to Martam, afternoon walks around the village**

After an early breakfast we drive to Sikkim. The road snakes past rolling hills covered with tea plantations through sal forest. We pass through small scattered settlements as we make our way along the Teesta river. We go through the formalities at the border check point in Rangpo and head for Martam. Upon arrival at the hotel we have lunch after we check in.

give us a glimpse of the ethnic lifestyle of the Sikkimese. This is the perfect location for visitors who love nature or adventure and for those seeking peace and relaxation. The surrounding is splashed with rich and unique Himalayan flora and fauna which makes walking in these parts worthwhile.

#### **Overnight Martam Village Resort**

**Meals: B/L/D**

#### **Day 9 Early morning drive to Gangtok, Visit Rumtek Monastery en route, visit Dru Drul Chorten, Tibetology, Enchey Monastery, handicraft center and local market**

After an early breakfast we head to the world famous **Rumtek Monastery**, the main seat of the Karmapa outside Tibet. Today it is the one of the most important Kagyurpa monasteries in the world and also a seat of His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa Rinpoche, head of the Kagyurpa Order of Tibetan Buddhism. Located just 6 kms from Martam Rumtek Dharma Chakra was built in 1960 by His Holiness the late 16th Gyalwa Karmapa as a replica of the original Kagyurpa Monastery in Tsurphu, Tibet.. It is also the Headquarters of the Dharma Chakra Religious Centre. An interesting feature of the monastery is the memorial stupa of the XVI Gyalwa Karmapa inlaid with gold plate and semi precious stones within its precinct. The complex also houses the Shri Nalanda Institute for Higher Buddhist Studies and the Jamyang Khang Primary School and has some of the world's most unique religious scriptures, manuscripts and religious art objects. The old Rumtek monastery originally built



**Sikkim:** One of the youngest and smallest states of India, Sikkim is a jewel in India's crown. Nestled between the two Himalayan kingdoms of Bhutan and Nepal, this Himalayan paradise is almost hidden and is certainly one of the last Shangri - Las. Home to Mount Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain of the world, Sikkim is a vibrant realm of colors and breathtaking beauty. Religion forms an integral part of the daily lives of the people. Colorful prayer flags fluttering from atop ridges beckoning the gods are

familiar sights. The indigenous people of this area, the Lepchas are a vanishing tribe and a visit to this state gives a peek into their unique and multihued lifestyle. The state, though small in area is diverse in terms of climate and flora and fauna. With the elevation changing dramatically from 350 meters to the third highest point on earth Sikkim is a paradise that boasts of over 400 different kinds of orchids, over 600 species of butterflies, 500 species of birds not to mention the rare and elusive red pandas, snow leopards and other mammals. With different cultures and religion existing in perfect harmony, Sikkim is fascinating with inviting people, majestic mountain peaks and immense natural diversity.

in 1730 by the ninth Karmapa is fifteen minute walk downhill from Dharma Chakra Center. We then head towards Gangtok. En route we visit the **Dru Drul Chorten and Tibetology**. **Do-Drul Chorten** is one of the most important and biggest stupas found in Sikkim. Built in 1945 by the venerable Trulshi Rimpoche, head of the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism, the stupa is encircled by 108 prayer wheels. Inside this stupa there are complete mandala sets of Dorjee Phurba (Bajra Kilaya), a set of Kan-gyur relics (Holy Books), complete 'Zung' (mantras) and other religious objects. The Chorten is surrounded by Chorten Lakhang, which houses two huge statues of Guru Padmasambhava. We then head to **Tibetology**. Previously known as the Namgyal institute of Tibetology, after the late Chogyal of Sikkim, the **Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology** is internationally acclaimed for its huge and magnificent collection of rare Tibetan literature, rare manuscripts, paintings, thangkas, statues and religious objects and other works of art and history. It is one of the few institutes in the world that conducts research in the language and culture of Tibet.

Upon arrival in Gangtok we check into the hotel and have lunch. After lunch we visit the **Government institute of cottage industries**. This institute was started by the Chogyals of Sikkim to preserve, protect and propagate Sikkimese arts, handicrafts and skills of local and village artisans. Today the center sees a lot of visitors. People can buy souvenirs like carpets, hand carved tables (choktses), traditional handicrafts, furniture, handlooms carpets and other products that are produced & exhibited for sale. We continue to **Enchey Monastery** perched in a hilltop. Located 3 kms from Gangtok town and is a very important seat of the Nyingmapa order. The monastery was built during the reign of Sikyong Tulku in the shape of a Chinese Pagoda. It is believed that the location was blessed by Lama Druptob Karpo, a tantric master known for his flying powers. This 200 year old monastery houses

many images of Gods, Goddesses and other religious objects within its complex. It is a riot of colours and buzzes with activity every January when religious masked dances are performed with great fanfare. We then visit the market to see the local way of life. It is interesting sight to see people from various parts of the state converge in the local market to sell their wares.

**Overnight Nor-Khill Hotel (Deluxe) or Chumbu Residency (Standard)**  
**Meals: B/L/D**

**Day 10 Early morning to Tashi View Point and then drive Kalimpong after breakfast, afternoon visit Durpin dara, Old houses of the Raj period, Zang Dog Palri Monastery, walk back to the hotel**

We get up early in the morning and head towards Tashi View Point to see the early sunrise as it hits the Himalayan giants. Situated about six kilometres away from Gangtok on the North Sikkim Highway the view point was built by the late King of Sikkim Sri. Tashi Namgyal, hence the lookout point bears his name. The viewpoint offers an astounding view of the mighty Kanchenjunga range and a glorious view of the surrounding hills on a clear day. We have breakfast at the hotel and then drive one and half hours to Kalimpong. We check into the hotel and prepare ourselves for the beautiful day ahead of us.

After lunch we visit the **Durpin Dara**. Located at an altitude of 1402 meters Durpin Dara commands an impressive view of the surroundings. The 5 kms drive from town is very interesting past serene woods dotted by British Villas surrounded by a riot of colourful flowers. This observatory point is celebrated for its breathtaking views of the Himalayas including the whole Chola range of Sikkim and the Jelepala pass. On

the northwest we can see the panoramic views of the majestic Kanchenjunga range. We also visit the **Zong Dhog Palri Fo Brang monastery** situated near Durpin Dara, another attraction of the area. We then walk back to the hotel through forested enclaves past remnants of the British Raj to the hotel. The European style buildings built during the British era and still stand today give us an indication of the town's importance during the British Raj. **Morgan House** situated en route is a classic example of colonial architecture in Kalimpong.

**Overnight Silver Oaks Hotel Hotel (Deluxe) or Kalimpong Park (Standard)**

**Meals: B/L/D**

**Day 11 After breakfast visit some nurseries and drive to Lava and Lolaygaon for a full day excursion**

After breakfast we visit the famed **nurseries** of Kalimpong. Kalimpong is a blaze of colours throughout the year owing to the richness of its stunning flora. The town is famous for their infinite variety of orchids and a host of exotic flowers that it produces and exports to other parts of the world. For those with an interest in floriculture, a trip to a few of these nurseries is worthwhile. We then have a whole day excursion in and Lava and Lolaygaon. We visit a Tibetan Monastery at Lava and a drive to Lolaygaon where you can walk among the tree tops on a specially built tree-top pathway. Late evening drive back to Kalimpong

**Overnight Silver Oaks Hotel Hotel (Deluxe) or Kalimpong Park (Standard)**

**Meals: B/L/D**



Tibet grew. The economic prospects that the area promised prompted a huge influx of migrants from neighboring regions. Following India's independence in 1947, Kalimpong became part of the state of West Bengal. The town enjoys the best climate in the region. Weekly markets on Wednesday and Saturdays offer a unique look into the local lifestyle. It is an interesting sight to see the locals haggle over the price of some goods with smiling shopkeepers. The life is laidback and the surroundings provide a perfect getaway from the trappings of modern life. The dense forests of golden oak trees offset by the rich undergrowth of moss and lichen provide an ideal setting for balmy walks on the thick cushions of russet-brown leaves. The vast rolling hills covered with a riot of wild flowers, the sparkling brooks and rivulets meandering lazily by the terraced fields are a feast for one's eyes.

**Day 12 Early morning visit to Deolo Hill, visit Dr. Graham's Homes on the way back. After breakfast drive to Bagdogra and fly to Delhi**

We get up early in the morning and visit **Deolo Hill**. It is one of the numerous view points in Darjeeling region that warrants a visit. The view of the sun rising in the distant horizon and the golden rays hitting against the Kanchenjunga massif creates a magical feeling. We then head downhill and visit Dr. Graham's Home spread over Deolo Hill. Founded in 1880 by Dr. John A. Graham for destitute Anglo-Indian students, it is a sprawling educational institution that gives a glimpse to Kalimpong's European influence. It has its own dairy, bakery, poultry farm and vegetable gardens. It is a fitting example of community life. We then head towards the hotel for breakfast. After breakfast we drive for two hours across beautiful landscape to Bagdogra to catch our flight to Delhi. Upon arrival in Delhi we will be met by our representative and transferred to our hotel. The rest of the evening we are free to relax and rest.

**Overnight Oberoi Maidens Hotel**

**Meals: B**

**Day 13 Transfer Delhi to Agra by train, full day sightseeing, evening transfer Agra - Delhi by car or bus, International departure**

Today we check out early in the morning and take the train to Agra by chair class. The baggage will have to be checked out and you will need to carry only what you will require for the day and the rest can be stored at the hotel. Our representative will collect all the bags and bring it straight to the airport when you arrive from Agra.

### **Kalimpong**

Kalimpong was ruled now and then by Sikkimese and Bhutanese Kings until the mid-19th century. After the Duar War in 1864 Bhutan had to cede the territory east of the Teesta River to the British East India Company as per the Treaty of Sinchula. The ideal climate of this charming town led the British to develop it as an alternative hill station to Darjeeling to escape the scorching summer heat in the plains. Soon the town became an important trading outpost due to its proximity to the Nathula and Jeleppla passes. Trade of furs, wools and food grains between India and



The train ride takes about two and half hours. Upon arrival we board our awaiting vehicles and begin our visit of the city. We visit the **Taj Mahal** is one of the most famous buildings in the world, the mausoleum of Shah Jahan's favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Built in 1653 A.D. by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan the tomb of Mumtaz is one of the most fascinating and beautiful monument that you will come across and a testimony of Emperors love for his wife. It is a masterpiece of symmetry and an architectural marvel. The verses of Holy Koran as inscribed on it and at the top of gate 22 small domes, signifying the number of years the monument took to build. And below the elegant dome of the Taj is the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal. We visit another **Agra Fort** another World Heritage Site built by Akbar in 1565. Additions to the red sandstone fort was made during Shah Jahan's reign. Notable buildings in the fort include the Pearl Mosque, the Diwan-e-Am and Diwan-e-Khas (halls of public and private audience), Jehangir's Palace, Khaas Mahal, Sheesh Mahal (mirrored palace), and Musamman Burj. We later visit **the Fatehpur Sikri** located 35 kms from Agra, an architectural marvel in itself. A world heritage site it was built by Akbar when he moved his capital there. We then drive directly to the airport after a stopover for dinner. (Wash and change rooms can be arranged for clients if needed. However prior information will be required so that logistical arrangements are made likewise)

### Necessary Information

#### Responsible Travel

The ecology of the Himalayas is very fragile. Responsible and sustainable tourism has always been our main thrust and mantra so that the environment and its resources-natural or cultural - always remain intact for the future generations to savor. We strongly advise that all non-biodegradable items such as can, bottles, batteries, plastics etc to be brought back to **Darjeeling** for proper disposition. We discourage the use of bottled mineral water to control the plastic waste. Since water is essential while traveling we advise our clients to carry sturdy water bottles so that they can fill them up with hot water that is treated with water purifiers. As a part of our responsible tourism drive we use local guides and locally owned hotels (wherever possible) so that the people can earn income from direct employment or through the distribution of

work responsibility. We are always adding new destinations and in the process working with local communities to forge a partnership to ensure change for the local people as well as visitors. Our tour programs are designed to work closely with the people and the environment of the destination so that the visitors can feel it to be an integral part of their holiday experience.

This heritage tour is tailor-made to give you have a deeper understanding of the local culture and heritage. We

visit various sites that are normally off the regular tourist map to generate more awareness regarding these places so that they are preserved for the coming generations to savour. We have designed this trip in the way that can be done by any age group without any prior experience in adventure. Anyone with and spirit of adventure to explore the exotic can enjoy the thrills of this trip. We encourage interaction between our clients and the locals through home or school visit, teaching local dance and dialects so that the clients have a better understanding of the countries they are visiting.

#### Group size

The size of the group could vary from 2 - 16 people. Though we can manage larger groups due to group dynamics we only operate groups up to 16 people. We have limited number of people in all our departures to ensure personalized service. We try and make sure that the need of each and every client is attended to and he/she feels comfortable and can enjoy the amazing culture, landscape and people better and have a great holiday.

#### Staff on the trip

Orientation programs to educate our support crew on environmental conservation and its importance are undertaken periodically. We provide opportunities for local people to earn income from direct employment or through the distribution of work responsibility. With years of experience, research and suggestions of experts and clients, this trip has been put together with utmost consideration of our clients' expectations, comfort and safety. All our staff is highly qualified in their field and we provide the best service and equipments for our clients' satisfaction, comfort and safety. Their knowledge on local culture and customs makes your trip an extra exciting.

#### Access

Darjeeling Kalimpong and Sikkim is connected to the rest of the country by air, train and road. BY AIR - Major airlines operate direct flights from Calcutta and Delhi to Bagdogra airport which is 2 hours drive from Darjeeling and Kalimpong and 3 and half hours from Gangtok.

A regular helicopter service operated between Sikkim and Bagdogra.

## What to Take

### *Clothing and Footwear*

- Warm down jacket for the cold
  - Warm clothes
  - Spare clothing - several thinner layers are better than one thick layer
- The weather in Darjeeling/ Sikkim/ Bhutan can vary significantly, and the best advice is to take clothing that will layer to cover all eventualities.
- Walking boots/ shoes - well worn-in, with good ankle support and strong ridged soles with good tread, and spare laces
  - Windproof/waterproof trousers and jacket with hood, good rain gear: It is quite likely to rain at some point whilst you are out.
  - Sunglasses
  - Loop-pile socks - one thick and one thin pair reduces the risk of blisters

- Long trousers and long-sleeved shirts
- Sun hat
- Comfortable clothes - for evenings and comfortable shoes for sightseeing
- A small rucksack - a bin liner will keep contents dry if it rains
- Windbreakers/ Jacket
- Towel
- Torch
- money belt; fold-up bag for souvenirs; camera and plenty of spare film; umbrella
- sturdy water bottle: with at least 1 litre capacity.
- Moisturizing lotion
- Insect repellent
- A duffel bag for your clothes

BY TRAIN - New Jalpaiguri, 2 hours from Darjeeling and Kalimpong and 3 and half hours from Gangtok, is connected to the major cities of India. Several trains operate between the major cities of India and New Jalpaiguri.

BY ROAD - Siliguri, the major hub in the plains is well connected to the rest of India by road. It is a 2 hour scenic drive through tea gardens and forests to Darjeeling and Kalimpong and 3 and half hours to Gangtok.

### Documentation

An Indian Visa is required to visit Darjeeling and Sikkim. It can be obtained in the Indian Embassy or in the consulates. To visit Sikkim a special permit called the Inner Line Permit (ILP) is required. The Inner Line Permit can be obtained while acquiring the Indian Visa at the Indian Embassy or Consulate or upon arrival at Siliguri, Darjeeling and Rangpo. Two passport size photos are needed for acquiring the ILP.

### Currency

The currency in **India** is the Indian Rupee (Rs). Bills are available in 10, 20, 50,100 and 500 denominations. Travellers' Cheques can be changed at banks in the

cities but not necessarily elsewhere, although some hotels and travel agents are licensed to change money. US dollars in cash are not widely accepted so it is prudent to change your money into rupees before embarking on a trip. Your guide will be able to advise on where to change money. You will need your passport when you change money. Credit cards are accepted in hotels and shops catering to tourists. Credit cards are also useful as an emergency source of cash as there are a lot of automated teller machines in the major cities and towns and the major cities from where money can be withdrawn. You may well be approached by people offering black market currency exchange - this is of course illegal, and hard currency gained in this way often contributes to criminal activities.

### Medical Kit

We provide a first aid kit with medication for altitude sickness, nausea, dehydration, pain killers, and medication for dysentery, diarrhea, bandages, water purifier, antiseptic creams, throat lozenges, eye drops, antibiotics, nasal sprays, and pain relievers in tubes or spray but it is advisable to carry some medication on you without taking too much room in your baggage.

However we recommend the clients to carry the following items:

- Asprin or Panadol - for pain or fever
- Antihistamine - useful as a decongestant for colds, allergies, to ease the itch from insect bites and stings or to help prevent motion sickness
- Antibiotics-useful if you are traveling well off the beaten track but they must be prescribed
- kaolin preparation (Pepto-Bismol),
- Imodium or Lomotil - for stomach upsets



and to stop diarrhea and dehydration  
Antiseptic, Mercurochrome and Antibiotic powder or similar 'dry' spray-for cuts and grazes  
Calamine lotion-to ease irritation from bites and stings  
Bandages and band-aids- for minor injuries and wounds  
Scissors, Tweezers and a Thermometer  
Throat Lozenges  
Acetaminophen (paracetamol)  
Antacid tablets

### Health

Prevention is always the best cure. So taking care in what you eat or drink is the best bet. Travelling in India does not involve major health risks providing simple precautions are observed. Drink only bottled water. Reputable brands of bottled water or soft drinks are generally fine. Take care with fruit juice, particularly if water may have been added. Do not take ice; be wary of uncooked food including salads, fruit juice and ice-cream; remember that milk is usually unpasteurised; do not bathe in freshwater rivers and lakes, and maintain a high standard of personal hygiene - wash your hands frequently and clean your teeth with bottled water. Please remember to pay attention to sensible hygiene at all times and to follow any advice given by your guide - it is essential in avoiding illness. Despite these precautions, the change of climate, water and diet may still cause some minor stomach upset, and you should obtain a suitable drug such as Immodium or Lomotil from your pharmacist to take with you. If you can, obtain suppositories, as they are obviously easier to use if you are feeling or being sick. Remember however that these drugs provide relief from the symptoms but don't cure the problem and should not be used if you are dehydrated - the main treatment is to drink plenty of fluids: weak black tea with a little sugar and diluted fizzy drinks left to go flat are recommended. You should also take a rehydration solution such as Dioralyte in case of severe problems, and don't eat rich or spicy food as you recover. Previous guests have recommended taking a hot water bottle (an aluminium water bottle can serve a dual purpose such as this), which can be a great comfort to an upset stomach. Thoroughly cooked food is the safest bet but not if it has been left to cool. Stomach upsets are the most likely travel health problem but the majority of these upsets are relatively minor. Wash your hands frequently as it's quite easy to contaminate your own food. Avoid climatic extremes. Keep out of the sun when it is hot, dress warmly when it is cold. Avoid potential diseases by dressing sensibly. You can get worm infections through bare feet. Try to avoid insect bites by covering bare skin when insects are around, by screening windows or by using insect repellents.

### Immunisations

Immunisations currently recommended for India are those for Hepatitis A and Typhoid. Typhoid may be given in two separate injections so you will need to consult your doctor in plenty of time. A vaccination is available for cholera but most doctors no longer consider this worth giving as it has a low success rate and tourists are unlikely to become infected if basic hygiene is observed. Ensure also that you apply insect repellent liberally and do not expose bare skin to mosquitoes after dusk. You should also ensure that your Tetanus and Polio injections are up-to-date. The

situation with regard to vaccinations and health precautions is subject to change, and you should consult your doctor for advice as early as possible.

### Medical Facilities

There are many pharmacies which sell medicines and some have a doctor's clinic. Prescription is not a requirement for purchase of harmless drugs in India.

### Insurance

All the clients are strongly advised to have personal travel insurance covering trip cancellations or interruptions due to natural disasters or medical reasons, insurance against emergency evacuation, medical and accident insurance.

### Time Zones

India is 5 hours 30 minutes ahead of GMT.

### Best Season

It is best to visit this region in **spring** and **autumn**. **Spring** generally begins in **March** and ends in **May**. Though there is a slight haze the forests covered with a riot of scarlet coloured rhododendrons, primulas, daisies, white magnolias and a host of other beautiful plants making the visit an exhilarating experience.

Mid September heralds the beginning of the **autumn** season. Mid **September** to mid **November** enjoys excellent climate coupled with deep blue sky and clear days making this period the period of the year to visit this area.

### Accommodation

We use different categories of accommodation (standard and deluxe which are best in their categories) for all our trips depending upon the requirement of the clients. Meals plans are on BB, MAP and AP basis depending upon the requirement of the clients.

### Transportation

Driving is on the left in India but your vehicle may be a left-hand drive, meaning you alight into the traffic - please take care. Comfortable jeeps, vans or tourist coaches will be provided for all transportation depending on the size of the group. For groups up to 8 people we use Tata Sumo and Mahindra Maxx Jeeps for standard groups and Scorpio, Tavera, Toyota Qualis, Ford Endeavour and Toyota Innova for Deluxe groups. For bigger groups we use, Tata Tempo, regular and deluxe coaches depending upon the category of the group.

### Risk and Liability

Our trips mean safety, reliability and the professional personnel to ensure your convenience at all times. However sometimes unforeseen circumstances like landslides, floods, bad weather, bad road condition, vehicle breakdown, delay in flights due to bad weather, local political situation could contribute to the change in the program. No claim of refund will be entertained including early return from the trip, or change in itinerary due to unavoidable situations like the above. All extra expenses (apart from the services offered as per the program) that occur in such cases would have to be borne directly by the clients.