## Kolkata with Sikkim - 11 Days

| Day | Destination |
|---|---|
| 2 Nights | Kolkata |
| 3 Nights | Darjeeling |
| 2 Nights | Gangtok |
| 2 Nights | Kalimpong |
| 1 Day | Bagdogra |

### Day 1: Day 1: Arrive Kolkata

Located along the eastern bank of the Hooghly River in the lower Ganges Delta, Kolkata is the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal. This 350-year-old metropolis is the heart and soul of eastern India with its crumbling colonial architecture, elegant gardens, countless temples and bustling bazaars. Celebrated as the birthplace of the early 20th-century Bengal Renaissance, Kolkata is a major centre for drama, art, film, theatre, literature, spirituality and music. Visitors can roam the streets and soak up the atmosphere of faded grandeur, or take a ride in a rickshaw to one of the many Indian restaurants serving mouth-watering Bengali cuisine. Must-see highlights include: the Victoria Memorial, with its east-meets-west architecture; the Indian Museum, with its range of rare artifacts; and the Kali Temple, an important pilgrimage centre for Hindus.

Arrival at Kolkata airport. Meeting & assistance on arrival and transfer to the hotel.

Rest of the day free as leisure.

## Day 2: Day 2: In Kolkata

After breakfast, proceed for a full day city guided tour covering Dalhousie Square, Flower market, Howrah Bridge, Indian Museum, Victoria Memorial Hall & Mother House

**Dalhousie Square (BBD Bagh)**

The Square was named in the memory of Lord Dalhousie who was the Governor General of India from 1847 to 1856. However, it was renamed as BBD Bagh (Binoy, Badal, and Dinesh) three patriotic sons of Bengal who attained martyrdom during India's struggle for independence. The Dalhousie Square is surrounded by some of Kolkata's most enduring Raj-era monuments like the magnificent GPO (General Post Office), the regal Raj Bhawan, the St.John's Church and the Gothic style Writer's Building. In terms of heritage, no other city square is as rich as Dalhousie Square.

**Flower Market**

It can also be termed as Heritage Market. Beneath the east end of Howrah Bridge, Mullick Ghat Kolkata Flower Market is eastern India's largest flower market with hundreds of stalls and people sitting on the ground. Around 2,000 flower growers from the surrounding areas come to sell their flowers and garlands and during the wedding and festive season probably double that number. One can spend hours watching the hustle and the beautiful colours from the bridge.

**Howrah Bridge**

Howrah Bridge, located over the Hoogli River, is said to be the busiest bridge of the world. It got its name owing to the fact that it connects the city of Howrah to Calcutta.It stands on two 270 feet high pillars. Calcutta Howrah Bridge is a cantilever truss bridge that was constructed without using any nuts and bolts. However, earlier it had a tram route, but presently; it is serving mainly as a Road Bridge. This bridge acts as an important symbol of Kolkata.

**Indian Museum**

Founded by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the Indian Museum is the oldest and the largest multi-purpose museum in the entire Asia-Pacific region. It was the formation of this museum that pioneered the idea of having a museum to foster man-made and natural objects of national importance. The collection at the museum is so remarkable that it is often regarded as the "JaduGhar" or the house of magic by the locals.

The year 1814 witnessed the formation of this incredible museum in the Park Street area of Kolkata. With over 100,000 exhibits in store, the India Museum becomes the country's largest repository of antiques and artifacts. The museum is replete with the most impressive collection of archaeological, geographical and botanical objects. Astonishing objects such as remains of the Harappan Civilization, meteorites, Buddha's ashes, Shah Jahan's emerald goblet, and even human embryos can be seen in the galleries of the Indian Museum.

The Italian style of architecture was used to construct the magnificent structure of the museum. The museum has six departments for Art, Archaeology, Anthropology, Geology, Zoology and Economic Botany, comprising more than sixty galleries. A bookshop and a library are also provided for those inquisitive about history. The Indian Museum is regarded as an Institution of National Importance by the Constitution of India. It offers a plethora of exquisite credentials of the Indian culture and heritage.

The Indian Museum is a golden opportunity for us to get an insight of the rich history of our nation.

**Victoria Memorial Hall**

One of the renowned monuments in Kolkata, Victoria Memorial was built in the loving memory of Queen Victoria in 1921. Built and designed by Sir William Emerson, the Victoria Memorial Hall is an impressive edifice, which is made in white marble and is a perfect blend of Mughal and European architectural styles.

The Victoria Memorial is also a museum that houses some rare pictures, and statues of men and women who played a prominent part in the history of India and develop a pride in their past especially in relation to the history of Calcutta. In addition, the museum also houses dresses, along with several artillery weapons from the Battle of Plassey, the Whispering Gallery in the dome and the famed Rosewood piano.

Cited as one of the finest and the most important building and art museum in present Kolkata, Victoria Memorial is a majestic building, which also houses a Royal Gallery that showcases oil paintings depicting the scenes from the life of Queen Victoria like receiving the sacrament at her coronation, or her marriage with Prince Albert among others.

Built on a land of 64 acres with the building covering 338 ft. by 228ft, Victoria Memorial is an architectural splendor that boasts of a scenic landscaped garden, which adds to the beauty of this royal grandeur. There are some remarkable figures sculpted above the north porch, which symbolize prudence, learning and motherhood.

**Mother House**

The Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity, located at 54A, A.J.C. Bose Road, Calcutta, is the headquarters of the international religious congregation of the Missionaries of Charity. It has been home to Mother Teresa and her sisters from February 1953 to the present day. It is here that Mother lived, prayed, worked, and guided her religious family of sisters spread across the world. It is here that her body was laid to rest.

Mother Teresa was buried on the ground floor of the Mother House on 13$^{th}$September 1997. Her tomb has become a place of pilgrimage and quiet meditation to people of all creeds. The site of the tomb is a place of profound silence and peace despite the persistent noise of passing Calcutta traffic. Mother’s tomb is truly a reflection of her life, that we must be able to pray and contemplate even in the midst of noise and distractions.

## Day 3: Day 3: Kolkata- Darjeeling

Tucked away in the northeastern corner of India, Darjeeling is best known for its rolling tea plantations and ‘Toy Train’ which meanders along the precipitous mountain routes of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. A picturesque hill station, Darjeeling offers access to a number of Buddhist monasteries, tea estates, railway journeys and is a great base for trekking in the Himalayas. Impressive jagged peaks of the snow-capped Himalayas can be seen from town with Tiger Hill offering astounding views at first light.

After breakfast,take a flight to Bagdogra and on arrival at Bagdogra, you will be met and transferred

to Darjeeling (approx. 95 kms/ 03 hours drive). Arrive Darjeeling and check in at the hotel

## Day 4: Day 4: In Darjeeling

Early morning visit to Tiger Hill and later enjoy toy train ride from Darjeeling to Ghoom.Afternoon visit Japanese Temple, peace Pagoda and Tibetan Refugee Centre (closed on Sunday).

**Tiger Hill**

The scenic Tiger Hill is located a few kilometres away from the town of Darjeeling. The hilltop offers stunning views when the golden hues of sunrays illuminate the Himalayan range on the north – which consists of Mount Kanchendzonga peak. Visitors crowd the observation deck as they wait to experience the beauty of nature and take advantage of spectacular photo opportunities.

**Ghoom Monastery**

This is oldest Monastery in the area, which was built in 1875, and one can see the image of Mythey Buddha 15ft. height on the way back from Tiger Hill.

***Japanese Peace Pagoda***

Japanese Peace Pagoda is one of the most popular attractions. It is one of those Peace Pagodas (Buddhist stupas) in the world that have been established with the aim of creating a special niche for enlightening people from all religions, creeds and origins, to come together and work for world peace.

It was built under the supervision of a Buddhist Monk, Nichidatsu Fuji, who was also the founder and preceptor of NipponzanMyohoji, a Buddhist order for world peace.

***Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre***

It is located on a small estate. The centre opened on October 2, 1959, following the dramatic escape of his holiness the Dalai Lama during that period of mayhem. It is home to approximately 650 refugees. The centre features facilities such as a hospital, a factory, and a workshop.

The production of handicrafts is their mainstay both regarding activity as well as its source of income. Some of the traditional items produced include Tibetan carpets, wood carved items like folding tables, frames, and wall hangings. Metal items like bronze and copper pots, prayer wheels and leather items such as boots and shoes are also produced at the centre.

## Day 5: Day 5: In Darjeeling

Day at leisure in Darjeeling

## Day 6: Day 6: Darjeeling- Gangtok

The capital of Sikkim, Gantok is an enticing hilltop city bordered by rivers on either side. Its pleasant

sub-tropical climate and superb views of the world's third-highest mountain (and India's highest) – Mt. Kangchenjunga – make it a popular tourist destination. Its primary attractions include two key Tibetan Buddhist monasteries – the Rumtek Monastery and the Enchey Monastery – as well as Tashi View Point, which offers spectacular views of the Himalayas, particularly in the light of the setting or rising sun. The best time to visit is after monsoon season, from October to May.

Morning visit Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (closed on Thursday), Zoological Park (closed on Thursday).Later drive to Gangtok (approx. 98 kms/ 4- 5 hours drive).

**Himalayan Mountaineering Institute**

The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute was started in Darjeeling when Tenzing Norgay climbed Everest to give training to learn Mountaineering and other adventure sports. Here one can see equipment's used by Mr. Tenzing Norgay and Everest Museum having complete details on Mt. Everest.

## Day 7: Day 7: In Gangtok

Full day tour of Gangtok including excursion to Rumtek Monastery.

**Rumtek Monastery**

The monastery, the largest in Sikkim, is home to the monks community. The place where they perform the sacred rituals and practices of the Karma Kagyu lineage. Many sacred objects are housed within the complex, and one of the most magnificent is the Golden Stupa, which contains the precious relics of His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa. Opposite that building is the shedra, or college, Karma Shri Nalanda Institute for Higher Buddhist Studies. Members of the lay sangha practice in the community Lhakhang just outside the walls of the monastery complex. Surrounding Rumtek Dharma Chakra Centre is the stupa walkway, where monks, pilgrims, and visitors alike perform kora.

**Enchey Monastery**

This 200-year-old monastery is an excellent example of Chines Pagoda architecture. The monastery features a vibrant prayer hall with paintings and murals of four religious kings, images of gods, praying wheels, colourful Buddhist flags and a central Buddha figure. The peaceful and relaxing ambiance makes this monastery a popular meditation site amongst Buddhist devotees and tourist alike.

**Namgyal Institute of Tibetology**

Since its establishment in 1958, the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology has sponsored and promoted research on the religion, history, language, art and culture of the people of the Tibetan cultural area which includes Sikkim. The NIT library holds one of the largest collections of Tibetan works in the world outside Tibet and a museum of Tibetan iconography and religious art. It has published the Bulletin of Tibetology since 1964 and numerous books over the years. The site on which the institute was established was donated by the late Chogyal (king) of Sikkim Sir TashiNamgyal. The foundation stone of the institute was laid by the 14th Dalai Lama on the 10$^{th}$of February 1957 and the institute was declared open by the late Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the 1$^{st}$of October

1958. The institute’s main building is an imposing monument and a splendid example of Sikkimese architecture.

**Handloom & Handicrafts Centre**

Handloom & Handicrafts Centre was established to promote the skills and crafts of local artisans in Gangtok. Handmade items such as craftworks, handlooms, paper, wooden objects and furniture, carpets, soft toys, decorative items, leather works and several other handcrafts are produced at the centre. There is also an on-site museum with displays of some unique objects and artefacts. Visitors will have the opportunity to see first-hand the production processes, and how the artisans work, they can also buy some of the items at the souvenir shop.

## Day 8: Day 8: Gangtok- Kalimpong

Kalimpong is a lively hill station situated about 53 km from the hill station of Darjeeling. The municipality sits on a ridge overlooking the Teesta River and boasts some breath-taking Himalayan views and a wonderfully temperate climate. The town is also known for its tranquil Buddhist monasteries, its colonial architecture and its impressive flower markets. Must-see sights include The Kalimpong Science Centre and ZangDhokPalriPhodang, a Buddhist monastery holding a number of rare Tibetan Buddhist scriptures. Do not miss Durpin Dara, the highest point in Kalimpong, which offers breath-taking views of the surrounding area and the mighty Teesta.

After breakfast,drive to Kalimpong (approx. 80 kms/ 03 hours drive). Arrive Kalimpong and check in at the hotel.

## Day 9: Day 9: In Kalimpong

After breakfast, enjoy city tour of Kalimpong.

**Flower Nurseries**

The climate of Kalimpong is ideal for the cultivation of flowers and plants.  Kalimpong is famous for its nurseries, which export exotics flowers like Amaryllis lilies, Anthuriums, Roses gerberas, Dahilias, Gladiolias as well as Orchids and Cacti.

**Zang Dhok Palri Monastery**

Set on a hill, this Buddhist monastery is a good example of the Buddhist architectural style. The monastery features rare Tibetan scriptures, a ceremonial hall and beautiful paintings. This beautiful site offers stunning views of the calm surroundings, the valley below as well as the Mount Kanchenjunga. The monastery is well visited by the Tibetans and tourists alike.

**Geden Tharpa Choling Monastery**

Set on a hilltop, the imposing Geden Tharpa Choling Monastery has a large prayer hall decorated with lovely paintings, murals and a magnificent Buddha image. The highlight of the monastery is the on-site museum, which features artifacts, rare scriptures, Tibetan Buddhist artworks as well as the documented details of Dalai Lama contributions to the monastery.

**Thongsa Gumpa**

This monastery was set up in the year 1692 and is said to be the oldest monastery located in Kalimpong region. The original Gompa was demolished during the disruption of Gurkhas in the state of Sikkim. So it was renovated and established in this monastery again. The Gompa that originally existed was built during the Bhutanese rule under the counsel of King of Bhutan. This is an ideal place for meditation and the Buddhist monks everyday offer prayers in this monastery. Activities aimed at uplifting spirituality take place here every day. Every part of the Gompa is accessible to the tourists and this Gompa acts as an important attraction for the tourists.

## Day 10: Day 10: Kalimpong- Bagdogra- Kolkata

Today drive back to Bagdogra (approx. 85 kms / 3 hrs) for the flight to Kolkata.

## Day 11: Day 11: Kolkata – International departure

### About Tour

A journey through Kolkata and Sikkim – one of the North Easternstate of India.

### Highlights

- Explore the historic city of Kolkata, a 350 years old metropolis.
- Enjoy a heritage tour of the city of Kolkata and understand its lineage with the Days of the Raj as their First Capital.
- Visit the Mother Teresa’s House of the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata.
- Visit Darjeeling best known for its rolling tea plantations and the historical ‘Toy Train’ of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.
- In Gangtok, visit the two key Tibetan Buddhist monasteries – the Rumtek Monastery and the Enchey Monastery.
- Enjoy beautiful nature at Gangtok & Kalimpong.