

## The Mountaineers Sikkim Goecha La Trek with Jamling Tenzing Norgay



Kangchenjunga, the third highest peak in the world<sup>1</sup>, will fill your sky along with dozens of other Himalayan giants from the crux of the 9-day Goecha La trek through Kangchenjunga National Park in Sikkim, India. This two-week adventure in this remote unspoiled Indian state encircled by Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet samples an immense range of landscapes, flora and fauna, as well as high mountain culture far more ancient than the state itself. Our trek will be guided by Jamling Tenzing Norgay, the son of the first Everest summiter Tenzing Norgay, and our experience will include high tea at Tenzing Norgay's family home and a visit to their family museum and shrine. The trek starts and ends in Bagdogra, India and includes a day to explore lovely Darjeeling. Stay in 3\* hotels in town, carry only a daypack on the trek with supported camping every night. Watch a dramatic 27-minute documentary film on an Indian film-maker's trek over Goecha La to Kangchenjunga, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9uKPQRWCbk>.

### **Trip Itinerary (tentative November 1-14, 2018) – Mountaineers price \$3600**

**DAY 01. ARRIVE AT BAGDOGRA AIRPORT - (BY PLANE) TRANSFER BY CAR TO DARJEELING (90 KM, ~ 4HOURS) 6700FT ALTITUDE.** Upon arrival at Bagdogra, a representative from our outfitter will meet us at the airport and transport us to Darjeeling by car - approx 4 hours journey, through Assam tea plantations and tiny villages. Built on top of a ridge, Darjeeling faces the Himalaya and is a popular destination for Westerners and Nepali culture alike. Overnight stay at a comfortable 2-3 star hotel in Darjeeling.

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<sup>1</sup> Kangchenjunga at 28,169 ft is the highest mountain in India, third highest in the world, and the easternmost of the Himalayan peaks higher than 8,000 m (26,000 ft). It is called Five Treasures of Snow after its five high peaks, and has always been worshipped by the people of Darjeeling and Sikkim.

**DAY 02. EXPLORE DARJEELING (6700FT)** An early morning start for Tiger Hill to watch the spectacular sunrise is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Darjeeling! The hill, about 14 km from Darjeeling, is at an altitude of 8,515 feet and is famous for its spectacular views at sunrise. The top of Mount Everest is visible, between the peaks of Kanchenjunga and Makalu. On the way back we'll visit Ghoom Monastery and the Batasia Loop railway. After breakfast we'll go for a half-day sightseeing including the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, the Himalayan Zoological Park, and the Darjeeling Happy valley tea garden. The evening will be free for shopping & individual activity. Overnight at hotel.



**DAY 03. DARJEELING TO YUKSAM (5840FT) - BY CAR 6 HOURS** . After breakfast, we will drive via Ghoom approximately two hours to Teesta River. After crossing the Teesta Bridge we will then drive for three hours over winding roads, through the green countryside and cross into Sikkim. We then continue our drive through cardamom groves and small Sikkimese villages to Yoksum. At Yoksum we will meet our trekking staff; the Sherpas, cooks, porters and yaks. Yoksum is one of the most historic sites in Sikkim, as it was here in 1642 that three monks got together and crowned the first Chogyal (King) of Sikkim. On arrival, we will have lunch and then do an introductory hike (45 min) to Dubdek monastery, which is beautifully situated overlooking the village of Yoksum. After this we will continue to visit the coronation site of the 1<sup>st</sup> king of Sikkim which is another 20 min walk. Night at hotel.

**DAY 04. TREK YUKSOM TO BAKHIM (9100FT) -16 KM, 6 HRS.** After breakfast we begin our trek into the pristine Sikkimese wilderness. Today's hike will be about six hours, and we will gain an altitude of 3000ft. The trail passes through rich wooded hills of oaks, spruce, orchids, giant magnolias and rhododendrons. We will break for lunch along our route, then continue walking up the Ratong Valley. After crossing the Prek Chu, we have a steep climb to our camp at Bakhim.



**DAY 05. TREK BAKHIM TO PHEDANG (12,100FT) - 3 HOURS, 5KM.** A further climb brings us up to the Tibetan village of Tsokha (3,050m), and the last village encountered on the trek where you can get great views of the mountains ahead, especially the distinctive peak of Pandim. Then we climb through thick rhododendron and fir forest to reach our camping site in Phedang. (this is particularly nice in spring when the rhododendrons are in bloom).



**DAY 06. PHEDANG TO DZONGRI (13,221FT) – 3 HRS, 5KM.** After breakfast, we will continue our climb until our camp in Dzongri .This is when we witness awe-inspiring views of Kanchenjunga and all its satellite peaks.



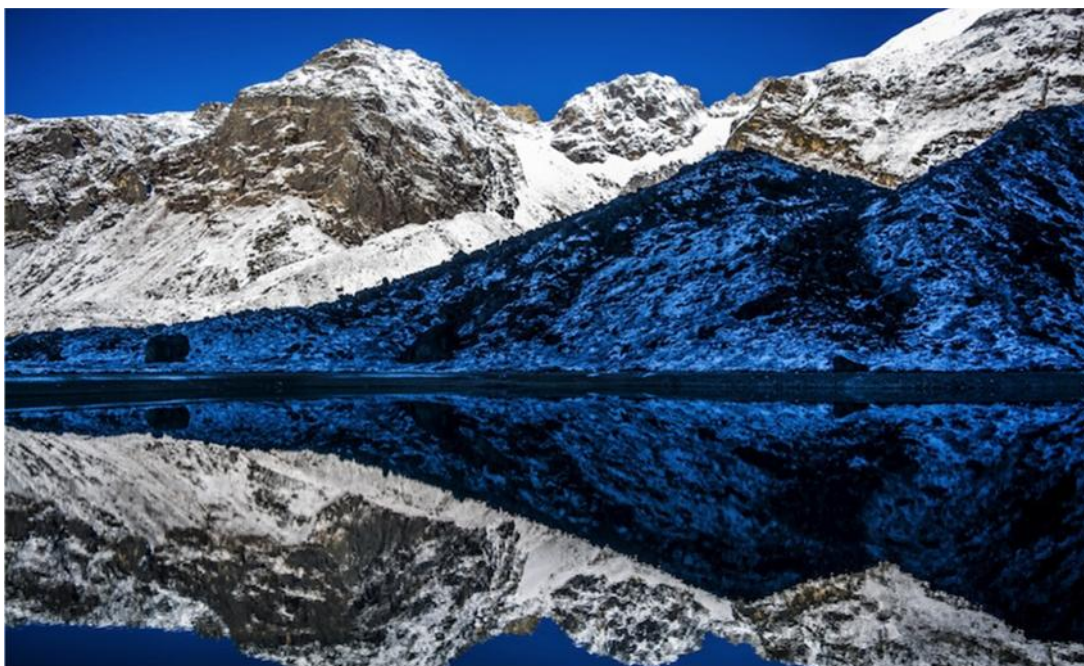
**DAY 07. DZONGRI – GINGAY DARA (14,200 FT ) – DZONGRI . - 5 TO 6 HOURS 10KM**

Back up day for sunrise in Kanchenjunga. Day hike to Gingay Dara, which is a pass looking into the Ratong Valley with panoramic views of Ratong Glacier, Kaktang, Kabru ,Frey and peaks to the south of Kanchenjunga. We will also be able to see in the distance the H.M.I. Base Camp, the area designated for high altitude mountain training for students undergoing basic and advanced courses with the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute.



**DAY 08. DZONGRI - THANGSING (12,900 FT ) – 5HRS, 6KMS.** After breakfast we continue on to Thangsing. We will see beautiful views of Kabru, Sinolchu, Simvu, Pandim and Gochela Peaks along the trek. A steep downhill will bring us to Kokchorung (12,100ft) and then we will start a gradual uphill along the Onglathang valley, through meadows and gorges to camp in Thangsing which is by the Prekchu river. We will have lunch at Thangsing.

**DAY 09. TREK THANGSING TO LAMUNEY (12,995FT) - 3-4HOURS.** We begin our approach towards our last camp at Lamuney. The day's walk is a gradual uphill hike through the Onglathang valley, past yak herders and grazing yaks. After lunch at camp you will have the afternoon to do some optional day hikes to either the Samiti lake (14,400) or to the base of Mt. Tinchin Khang's glacier ( 15,500 ft).



**TREK FROM LAMUNEY TO GOECHA LA PASS (16406 FT) AND BACK TO KOCHRUNG (12,152FT) (13 KMS/ 6-7 HRS)** We'll get a very early start today to beat the inclement weather that is common during the latter part of the day. We'll begin by climbing the hill behind the lake before traversing the moraine and then descending to the sandy bed of an empty lake. The whole area above Samiti Lake is called the Zemathang Plateau. We'll cross this under the shadow of Pandim, and then ascend moraine to a height of about 15,700 feet where we'll rest above a glaciated lake mottled with snow and icy pinnacles. The Goecha La Pass is another hour away. We traverse the lake and proceed across a slope, and then on a well-trodden path to our objective, which is festooned with brightly colored prayer flags. The views of the east flank of Khangchendzonga and the mountains and valleys in the distance are stunning. We then descend to our campsite at Kochrung.



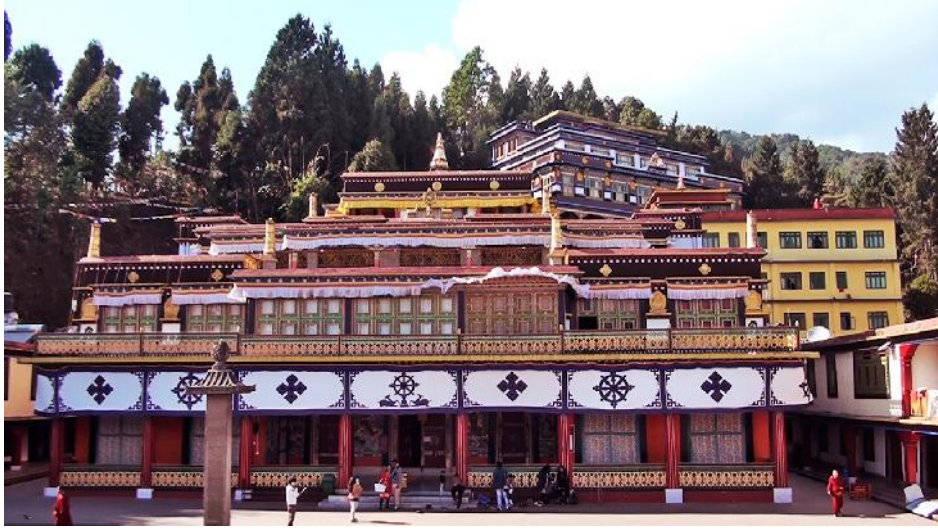
**DAY 10. TREK KOCHRUNG - BAKHIM (9100FT) VIA PHEDANG (12,500FT). (14 KMS/ 6-7 HRS).** It's worth getting up early to take a short hike to the ridge behind the camp. From here there are fantastic views of Khangchendzonga and one can look back up to the Gocha La. Leaving Thangsing, we'll take a different route than we ascended a few days before, avoiding the long climb to the Dzungri Plateau. Descending to the Prek Chu, we'll contour around jungle to emerge at Phedang, and then continue to Tshoka along another steep descent. This will save us a day on the return march, but does involve quite a long day.



**DAY 11. TREK BAKHIM TO YUKSAM -5 TO 6 HOURS 16KM.** Today we'll descend to the Prek Chu following the route we took up on the first day, and then contour gradually downwards to reach the village of Yuksam, our starting point.

**DAY 12. DRIVE YUKSUM TO PELLING: 24KM, 3 HRS.** After breakfast we'll drive to Pemayangtse, with a side trip to visit the holy Khechepheri Lake, originally known as Kha-Chot-Palri (meaning the heaven of Padmasambhava). This is a sacred Lake for both Buddhists and Hindus, which is believed to be a wish fulfilling lake, and a height of about 6000ft , According to Buddhist belief the lake is the emanation of goddess Tara blessed by Guru Rempoche. It is believed that, if you go to the lake and pray silently, whatever wish will be fulfilled. From the lake we'll continue the journey for another 30 Kms ( 1.30 hrs) to reach Pelling and overnight in a hotel.





**DAY 13. DRIVE PELLING TO BAGDOGRA (120KM, 5 HRS).** After breakfast we'll drive to Bagdogra for flights home.

