ROAMBEYOND · JOURNEY ITINERARY

# Sandakhpu Trek

## Trip snapshot

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| **Group size** | Maximum 16 guests |
| **Departs** | Mar–May · Oct–Nov |
| **Deposit** | 10% of total |

## Overview

Few journeys put the Himalaya so close in front of you. The Singalila Ridge runs along the border between India and Nepal, and for four days you walk along its crest, with the mountains filling the horizon. At its high point, Sandakphu, Everest, Kanchendzonga, Lhotse and Makalu stand together in one great snow-covered arc, so close that you feel you could reach out and touch them. It is one of the few places on earth where you can see so much of the roof of the world from a single trail.

The adventure begins in **Darjeeling**, the old hill station the British founded in the mid-1800s as an escape from the summer heat. You reach it from the plains by quiet back roads that wind upward through emerald tea gardens, bamboo groves and small villages, with the air cooling at every bend. On your first evening, snow peaks glow on the horizon above tea plantations that stretch in every direction. A full day in town gives you time to settle in. Before dawn you drive up to **Tiger Hill** to watch the sun rise over the Eastern Himalaya, as the summits turn from grey to gold to rose, and on the clearest mornings Mount Everest appears in the distance. At **Ghoom Monastery**, where an image of the Maitreya Buddha is enshrined, the monks may invite you to share a cup of salty yak butter tea, which tastes more like a savoury broth than a tea. Then you ride the famous **toy train**, a railway completed in 1882 that loops around the Batasia Loop, one of its remarkable feats of engineering. You can also visit the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute and browse the carpets and crafts of the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre.

Then the real journey begins. From the Sherpa and Nepali village of **Maneybhanjyang**, you climb through evergreen forest and wildflower-scattered hillsides to camp at **Tonglu** (10,000 ft), with the lights of Darjeeling twinkling far below. The following day brings the toughest and most rewarding walk of the trek: 21 km along the spine of the ridge, through bamboo glades and warm-hearted villages, past the still, dark waters of **Kalpokhri**, and up through dense rhododendron and magnolia forest to **Sandakphu** (11,800 ft), “the height of the poison plant.” Stay for the sunset and the sunrise, when the whole range of peaks turns to fire, and you will carry the memory for the rest of your life.

The most scenic day follows, as the ridge carries you towards **Phalut**, the “denuded peak” where Nepal, India and Sikkim meet. Rhododendrons in every shade, magnolias, chestnut oaks and silver firs drift in and out of the mist, and the Himalaya fills the western horizon. Near Phalut, the trees dwindle to windswept bonsai. Then the trail plunges into the valley, passing the hidden village of **Samanden**, the “lost valley,” and ending beside the river at **Ramman**. A final walk through forest rich in orchids, moss and ferns brings you to **Rimbick**, and a drive back to Darjeeling for a hot shower, a good meal and a comfortable bed.

Along the way, the forests are home to red pandas, black bears and many Himalayan birds, and in season the rhododendron groves bloom in spectacular colour.

## Dates & Prices

| Date | Price per person | Status |
|---|---|---|
| Mar–May · Oct–Nov | On request | Available |

*Multiple departures each spring and autumn. Land cost is confirmed when you reserve. A deposit holds your space.*

## What's Included

- All transportation in the best available jeeps or minibuses (other than airfare)
- Accommodation on twin-sharing basis (singles optional, subject to availability)
- All meals while touring
- Guide, crew, and drivers as per itinerary
- Local permits and entrance fees as per itinerary

## Not Included

- Airfares and insurance of any kind
- Medical immunizations
- Emergency medical costs beyond first aid from the trip leader
- Laundry, alcohol, gratuities, donations
- Costs from delay or extension due to weather, politics, illness, or transport failure

## Guidance on this trip

You travel with Himalayan hosts — not a revolving cast of contractors. Pema and the field team brief every departure, stay reachable, and introduce you to people they actually know.