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# Sikkim



India

An area of unspoilt natural beauty, framed by snowcapped Himalayan peaks

## Sikkim

|  |         |
|--|---------|
|  All meals included   | Yes (1) |
|  Free beverages       | Yes (2) |
|  Persons per room     | 2-4     |
|  Wifi in public areas | Yes     |
|  Laundry facilities   | No (3)  |
|  Safety box           | No      |
|  Lockable rooms       | Yes     |
|  Hot shower           | Yes     |
|  Private bathroom     | Yes     |
|  Bed linen            | Yes     |
|  Towels               | No      |
|  Mosquito protection | Yes     |
|  Fan                | Yes     |
|  Air conditioning   | No      |

(1) Three meals per day during weekdays and two per day on weekends

(2) Water, Coffee, Tea, and Milk

(3) At an additional fee



## Location

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An area of unspoilt natural beauty, framed by snowcapped Himalayan peaks. The capital of Sikkim, Gangtok, reflects this tiny state's extraordinary ethnic diversity. In the crowded city which spills precariously down a ridge, Lepchas (the region's original inhabitants) live alongside Tibetans, Bhutias, Nepalis and Indians from the plains. Though now full of modern structures, Gangtok's "Shangrila" aspects can still be experienced in pockets of the city and in its alpine environs.

Until 1975, Sikkim was a kingdom with the status of an Indian Protectorate. It was ruled by the Chogyals Buddhists of Tibetan origin, whose dynasty began in the 17th century. However, the British Raj's policies of importing cheap labour from neighbouring Nepal for Sikkim's rice, cardamom and tea plantations drastically changed Sikkim's demography, soon Nepali Hindus constituted 75 per cent of the state's population. In 1975, the population of Sikkim voted overwhelmingly to join the Indian Republic, ending the rule of Palden Thondup, the last Chogyal.

## Accommodation & Food

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### About the Accommodation

In our center, there is a mini library, a dining room, a lounge area where you can hang out with fellow participants and a beautiful garden to relax.

Furthermore, there is a refrigerator which you are welcome to use to store food and beverages.

### Food Arrangements

The meals are a mix of Western and Indian food, consisting mainly of vegetarian dishes including rice and vegetables. You can expect to have a chicken dish about twice per week. You can also use the kitchen facilities to cook for yourself or eat out at any of the local restaurants.

## Facilities

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**ATMs:** There are ATM's around our centers. The closest one to our residence is about a 15 minute walk from the house.

**Shop:** The closest local supermarket is a 15 minute walk from the centre.

## Activities & Events

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No scheduled activities outside the program.

## Sights & Surroundings

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- **Enchey Monastery**, whose large prayer hall is full of irant mural and images, representing the entire pantheon of Mahayana Buddhist deities. Enchey's festivals feature spectacular masked dances. At the southern end of the town is the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Established in 1958, it has a rare collection of medieval buddhist scriptures, bronzes and embroidered thangkas.
- **Saramsa Orchidarium**, situated 14 km south of Gangtok, displays many of the 450 orchid species found in Sikkim. They flower from April to May, and again in October.
- **Rumtek Monastery**, 24 km southwest of Gangtok, is the headquarters of the Kagyupa (Black Hat) sect, on of the oldest Tibetan Buddhist sets, and the seat of its head, the Gyalwa Karmapa. The 16th Karmapa fled Tibet in 1959 after the Chinese invasion, and build a replica here of this monastery at Tsurphu in Tibet. Rumtek is an impressive complex, its flat roofed buildings topped with golden finials, and filled with treasures brought from the monastery in Tibet. Especially splendid is the reliquary chorten of the 16th Karmapa, behind the main prayer hall, made of silver and gold and studded with enormous corals, amber and turquoise.
- **Tsomgo Lake**, 40 Km northeast of Gangtok, lies at an altitude of 3780 m. Visitors to the lake require a special permit from the Sikkim Tourism office in Gangtok. The drive to Tsomgo Lake, close to the border with China, is spectacular, and the lake is an impressive sight both in spring and summer, when it is surrounded by alpine flowers in bloom, and in winter when it's frozen solid. Visitors can go for rides and the splendid shaggy black yaks that stand docilely on the lake's shores.