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Sikkim: The Ultimate Kanchenjunga Ridge Trek

October 23 – November 12, 2016

Join veteran trekking guide Cathy Ann Taylor for an extraordinary hiking and cultural adventure to Sikkim, an enchanting Himalayan enclave of snowcapped mountains, lush green valleys, Buddhist monasteries, and old charming hill stations from the days of the Raj. Our 13-day trek right along the borders of Sikkim and Nepal brings us along an unfrequented ridge top trail past beautiful high altitude lakes and across several passes, with continuous views of Kanchenjunga and other mighty Himalayan giants (Cho Oyu, Everest, Lhotse, and Makalu). Along the way we have a chance to meet yak herders who graze their animals in high alpine meadows, admire striking Buddhist artifacts in magnificent monasteries, and enjoy in-your-face views of Kanchenjunga (28,230'), third highest mountain in the world, from the Goecha La, where the mountains—just three miles away—seem close enough to touch. Our full service camping and personalized service guarantees your every comfort.

TRIP DETAILS

Very Challenging ▶ 13 days strenuous hiking on sometimes rocky, steep terrain at high elevation (max. 15,748'); 12 nights camping, 7 nights hotels

ITINERARY

Depending on your airline routing, you will likely need to leave the U.S. on Oct 22 (or earlier) to arrive in Delhi on Oct 23. We also highly recommend coming in at least one day early to recover from jetlag.

Day 1, Oct 23 ▶ Arrive in Delhi

Upon your arrival in Delhi, you will be met and transferred to The Claridges, a hotel that combines old-world charm with gracious Indian hospitality. The remainder of the day (or likely night) is free to relax or explore on your own. (Note: Most flights to India arrive between 8:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. and you will need to reserve an extra night's hotel accommodation (if arriving before Day 1) and wish to check in right away. We are holding reservations beginning in the afternoon of Day 1. The Claridges, New Delhi

Day 2, Oct 24 ▶ Darjeeling (7,000')

Morning transfer to the airport at 8:00 a.m. for the 11:15 a.m. flight to Bagdogra, arriving at 1:10 p.m. After completing entry formalities, we drive to Darjeeling (4½ hours), set in the foothills of the Himalayas. We'll stop in Kurseong for lunch or tea & snacks. A former British hill station during the days of the Raj, Darjeeling is now a hub of cultural diversity. Dinner and overnight in Darjeeling. B,L,D...The Elgin Hotel or similar

Day 3, Oct 25 ▶ Darjeeling (7,000')

Our excursions in Darjeeling include a walk to the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute's Everest Museum, founded by the late Tenzing Norgay, a drive to the Tibetan Refugee Self-Help Centre, and a visit the old Happy Valley Tea Garden, where tea is made in the traditional way. The afternoon is at leisure to rest or explore on your own. Dinner and overnight in Darjeeling. B,L,D...The Elgin Hotel or similar

Day 4, Oct 26 ▶ Pelling and Pemayangtse (7,382')

After an early breakfast, we set off by jeep for the 4½- to 5-hour drive to Pelling town, stopping for lunch enroute. In the afternoon you can visit Pemayangtse monastery (1645 AD), the second oldest monastery in Sikkim, with its exquisite painted murals, sculptures, and ancient thangkas. B,L,D...The Chumbi Mountain Retreat

Day 5, Oct 27 ▶ Uttarey / Begin Trek (8,793')

A scenic 2-hour drive along the Ranjit River and through thriving tea plantations and a beautiful steep-sided valley brings us to Uttarey (7610'). We begin our trek along a good trail through abundant forests of oak, rhododendron, and bamboo to a campsite clearing near the forest guard's hut at Chitre (8,793'). 4-5 hours hiking. B,L,D...Camp

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Day 6, Oct 28 ▶ Singalila – Chiwabhanjang (10,269')

Today is a short but steep hike to our camp below Chiwabhanjang (10,269'). From here we take an acclimatization walk to a viewpoint called Singalila (11,480'). Weather permitting, we will have fantastic views of the valleys and Peaks of Nepal (Makalu) from here. We return to camp in time for lunch. 2 hours hiking to camp and 1 hour hiking to Singalila and back.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 7, Oct 29 ▶ Dhor (12,205')

Our hike begins with a 2 hour steep climb on a well-defined path through rhododendron forests to a clearing at about 11,560 feet where there are some prayer flags. We then descend to about 10,800 feet, with our trail offering spectacular views of Makalu, Kanchenjunga, Jannu, Tenzing Kang, and Pandim as it meanders between Nepal and Sikkim along a knife-edge ridge. We stop for lunch before continuing to another ridge top to our camp by a yak herders' camp at Dhor (12,205'). We camp on the Nepal side of the ridge and have splendid views across a succession of ridges, as well as a beautiful sunset panorama of the high peaks of Nepal, including Makalu and Everest. 8-9 hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 8, Oct 30 ▶ Khamsong Danda (Pare Megu)(12,631')

We arise early to hike to a viewpoint for sunrise views on Kanchenjunga, the world's third highest mountain. Most of our hike today is up and down at elevations between 11,811 and 12,795 feet past rhododendron and small Hindu shrines until we reach our camp at Khamsong Danda (12,631'). Our camp is close to a small shepherd's summer settlement. Look out for blue sheep (bharal) on the high craggy mountainsides today. 6-7 hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 9, Oct 31 ▶ Lam Pokhari (13,780')

Leaving camp, our trail begins with a descent and then climbs steadily through more open terrain, with views of the mountains becoming larger. We'll catch our first closer views of the entire Kabru range dominated by Mount Pandim (~21,947'). We follow a wide valley, passing a large waterfall, to camp near the holy lakes at Lam Pokhari (13,780'). Some of these holy lakes are very important pilgrimage sites to the Sikkimese who come here during the monsoon months. In the evening we are again rewarded with a spectacular sunset on Makalu and other high peaks. 5-6 hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 10, Nov 1 ▶ Yangseb (~13,060')

We leave camp early to enjoy the morning views from Danphe Bir pass (~14,800'), which can be seen from a distance as we zigzag our way up to the pass. Continuing along our trail, we come to Danphebir Pass (~14,800'), marked by hundreds of prayer flags. The view again is as spectacular as ever and you will get to see peaks such as Kanchenjunga, Cho Oyu, Everest, Lhotse, and Makalu. After another hour of traversing and a gradual ascent we cross the Kag Bhir pass. We then descend steeply through open terrain and then silver fir and juniper forests to lunch by the river at Gomathang.

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A climb of about 2 hours brings us to our camp in a clearing at Yangseb by the stream. 7-8 hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 11, Nov 2 ▶ Panding (14,026')

We contour the hillside on an up-and-down trail and cross a small river. One final ascent brings us to Khamsey pass at 14,140 feet that offers views looking back to the mountains. We then continue to camp at Panding (~14,026'). We'll see a beautiful sunset and sunrise over the peaks of Rathong, Kabru, Pandim, and Tenzing Kang. 5 – 5 ½ hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 12, Nov 3 ▶ Dzungri (12, 967')

We have a fairly long day of ascents and a very steep descent to the river. We climb again and then finally descend to camp at Dzungri (12,967'), set in a dramatic location beneath the southwest face of Kabru massif. This is yet another wonderful campsite to witness a spectacular sunset! 5-5 ½ hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 13, Nov 4 ▶ Rest Day - Dzungri (12,967')

Today is a day of rest or you take an optional hike for sunrise and sunset. Optional hikes can range from 1-3 hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 14, Nov 5 ▶ Lamune (13,661')

A half-hour walk on a lovely trail past fluttering prayer flags rewards us with spectacular views of the sunrise on Kanchenjunga and the neighboring peaks of Rathong (21,916'), Kokthang (20,177'), Kabru Dome (21,667') and Forked Peak (20,066'). Our day's hike begins with a short climb to a ridge with open views across Sikkim. After following this scenic ridge for about three miles, we descend very steeply to the banks of the glacial Praig Chu to reach Kokchurung. A short stretch of boulder hopping, and then we cross the stream to begin the climb to Thangsing, a large open campsite on a grassy pasture. The southern ridge of Kanchenjunga and the moraines of the Oglathang Glacier are visible directly ahead, and there are close-up views of Pandim. We have lunch at Thangsing and continue for another 2 hours to camp at Lamune (13,661'). 6 - 7 hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 15, Nov 6 ▶ Goecha La (15,748ft) – Thangsing (~12,700')

Today is our longest hiking day, so we get a very early start. Following a terminal moraine scree trail up a zigzag path, we ascend to Samiti Pokhari, a sacred lake surrounded by snowcapped peaks, including Pandim, which seems within arm's reach. From here we make the hard, four-hour climb to the 15,748-foot-high Goecha La. The trail skirts the lake before ascending a series of moraine ridges on the eastern edge of the Oglathang Glacier. As we climb, we have increasingly spectacular views of the mountains and valleys to the south and east, but these are overshadowed by the panorama that unfolds ahead of us when we reach the prayer-flagged Goecha La. Rising more than 13,000 feet above

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the Talung Glacier, at a distance of only three miles, is the stunning eastern wall of Kanchenjunga, which includes the five principal summits of the massif and also the very impressive Kabru and Rathong peaks. We return to Lamune and enjoy a hot lunch before continuing downhill for another hour and a half to Thangsing. 9-10 hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 16, Nov 7 ▶ Tsokha (10,000')

We backtrack to the Praig Chu river from where we take another route through thick, tall rhododendron, silver fir, and magnolia forests to the tiny settlement of Tsokha. Tsokha is an enchanting little Tibetan settlement perched on a mountain spur. 6-7 hours hiking.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 17, Nov 8 ▶ Yuksom (5,580')

We continue to descend through red birch, oak, and rhododendron forests to the suspension bridge over the Praig Chu, then follow an up-and-down trail to the large village town of Yuksom, where we end our trek. Yuksom is an important place in Sikkimese history: it was the first capital of Sikkim in the 17th century and the coronation site of the first king of Sikkim (his seat can still be seen). We can visit the monastery above the village, where the footprint of Guru Rimpoche is set on a rock. Tonight we will celebrate our last evening with our amazing trekking staff. Overnight at hotel. 6-7 hours hiking.

B,L,D...Tashigang Hotel

Day 18, Nov 9 ▶ Kalimpong (4,091')

Drive to the hill station of Kalimpong. Kalimpong was a very important trade center between Tibet, West Bengal, and Sikkim and has now again gained importance with the opening of the Nathula pass for trade for Indians. Kalimpong also enjoys a temperate climate which makes it suitable for agriculture and flowers. Overnight at hotel. 5½ hours driving.

B,L,D... The Elgin Silver Oaks or similar

Day 19, Nov 10 ▶ Kalimpong (4,091')

The day is at leisure or we can spend the day seeing some of the sites. We'll visit Zangtok Palri monastery, the handmade paper factory, the cactus nursery, and the Tharpa Choling monastery (time permitting). The local market is also interesting to wander and walk through on your own. This evening we gather for our festive farewell dinner at the hotel.

B,L,D... The Elgin Silver Oaks or similar

Day 20, Nov 11 ▶ Bagdogra / Delhi

We drive to the Bagdogra airport for our flight to Delhi, arriving by 4:00 p.m. Connect with homeward-bound flights. 3-4 hours driving.

B

Day 21, Nov 12 ▶ Arrive home

LAND COST

\$5,895 per person (10-14 members)

\$6,195 per person (6-9 members)

\$450 internal airfare (Delhi-Bagdogra-Delhi. Subject to change due to increases in fuel costs. Cattara will book and issue these tickets for you.)

Single Supplement—\$1,000. If you wish to share accommodations, we'll try to match you up with a roommate. If that's not possible, we will have to charge you the single supplement.

*Should you choose to pay with credit card there will be a service charge of 3%, the fee we incur from the bank.

LAND COST INCLUDES...

- Expert leadership of Cathy Ann Taylor
- Accommodations in hotels in Delhi, Darjeeling, Pelling, Yuksom, and Gangtok
- All trek arrangements, including tents, foam sleeping pads, community camping and commissary equipment, services of camp and commissary crew, including camp and cook staff
- Meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Airport transfers
- Sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- Ground transportation
- Additional guides and porters where necessary
- Trek permits & National Park Fees

LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE...

International airfare to Delhi and return; round trip flight from Delhi to Bagdogra (see separate cost above); meals not noted on itinerary; accommodations en route to India; trip insurance (we strongly recommend you purchase the optional trip insurance offered by Cattara, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; visas; camera fees on trek; cost of medical immunizations; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

TRIP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation..... 25% of land cost
 120 days prior to departure..... 25% of land cost
 90 days prior to departure..... Balance

CANCELLATION FEE SCHEDULE

From time of reservation
 until 90 days prior to departure..... 25% of land cost

89-60 days prior to departure 50% of land cost
59 days of fewer prior to departure.....100% of land cost

EXPERT LEADERSHIP

Expert leadership is the key to every successful trip. Cattara attracts knowledgeable and gifted leaders who are passionate about guiding trips and truly enjoy sharing the experience with others. They understand the cultures and traditions they work in and are a fountain of information. In addition to making sure everything runs smoothly and safely, Cattara guides enhance your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends.



Cathy Ann Taylor, a high altitude trekking guide for the last 26 years, will be leading this trek. She's trekked all over Nepal, Tibet, India, and Bhutan, with well over 200 trips in the Himalayas (she mountain biker, she leaves no trail undiscovered, and her passion for the mountains, caring nature, and boundless energy are renowned. Her experience, knowledge, positive attitude (she can find the good in anything!), calming presence, and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has been able to manage the

sponsorship of fifteen remote village children, all of whom are in boarding school and four who have graduated from University in Australia & the United States. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and still considers the Himalayas her “second home”! A devout hiker and mountain biker, she leaves no trail undiscovered, and her passion for the mountains, caring nature, and boundless energy are renowned. Her experience, knowledge, positive attitude (she can find the good in anything!), calming presence, and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has been able to manage the sponsorship of fifteen remote village children, all of whom are in boarding school and four who have graduated from University in Australia & the United States. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and has quite a loyal following. Cathy Ann is active in the Breast Cancer Fund and has participated in fifteen expeditions, including Mount McKinley, Cho Oyu, Mount Fuji, Mount Shasta, and Mount Rainier, which helped increase awareness of breast cancer (she alone has raised over \$620,000 for the cause!). Cathy Ann’s program, Sacred Treks, which benefits the Breast Cancer Fund (Bhutan, Mont Blanc, Peru, Everest Base Camp, Ladakh, Mustang, Georgian Caucasus, and Sikkim treks) has raised over \$600,000. She has also reached the summit of Ama Dablam (22,500') in Nepal and Argentina's Aconcagua (22,834'), the highest peak in South America. Cathy Ann received an honorable mention in *Hooked on the Outdoors* magazine's Outdoor Person of the Year Awards, and also received a letter of recognition for her fundraising and environmental work from former Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS

This trip is extremely challenging and is designed for those who are very fit and experienced in the outdoors. We expect you to be a strong, experienced hiker and in great physical condition. On this trip, you will hike four to nine hours a day, up and down mountain trails that are steep and rocky, and mostly at elevations above 12,500 feet, with the highest point of the trek at 15,748 feet. High altitude trekking can be very physically taxing and may create discomfort. You may experience symptoms of

illness that you do not experience while exercising at sea level, such as shortness of breath, restlessness or sleeplessness at night, and headaches. At 18,000 feet, there is only one-half the amount of oxygen in the air, which imposes considerable physiological stress on the body. You should be aware of the demands and risks imposed by very high altitude, be in excellent underlying health, and prepare by training rigorously. We recommend you have a thorough physical exam and evaluation to uncover any general medical problem that might flare up while trekking in the remote areas of India, where medical care may be many days away.

This trek is designed to allow time for acclimatization while trying to follow a schedule that accommodates peoples' time constraints. Certain aspects of the trek organization and schedule that may seem illogical are designed to maximize acclimatization. For instance, once at altitude, elevation gains between camps are limited: you may climb higher during the day but descend to sleep (climb high, sleep low).

While on trek, you should drink a lot of water—this helps to avoid dehydration. The prescription drug Acetazolamide (Diamox) can also help acclimatization, prevent acute mountain sickness, and treat mild cases of mountain sickness. It is also very helpful for altitude insomnia and should be used in preference to sleeping pills or Valium, which are dangerous at altitude. Consult with your physician for advice on trekking at high altitude and any prescription medications you may need.

For physical preparation for this very challenging trek, we strongly suggest regular cardiovascular exercise for one to two hours at least 4-5 times a week. We recommend stair climbing, running, and mountain biking on hills, or elliptical or treadmill training in the gym with 10-15 pound day packs. This gets the heart rate going, which will be very beneficial for the type of high altitude trekking you will be undertaking.

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

Your trekking day typically starts at 6:30 a.m., when the camp staff will bring you “bed tea” to start the day, along with a large bowl of hot water for washing. (Bring along a washcloth and you can have a full sponge bath in the privacy of your tent!) After packing your bags, you'll enjoy a hearty breakfast of porridge, eggs, and toast. By 8:00 or 8:30 you're off on the trail. A trailside lunch breaks up the day, giving you time to rest and refuel before heading out on the trail for the afternoon hike. You usually arrive in camp by 4:00 p.m. and have time to wash up and get settled in your tent before enjoying tea and snacks in the dining tent. While waiting for dinner, you can write in your journal, read a book, play cards, or simply relax. The day ends with a hot, multi-course dinner, which often includes ethnic cuisine as well as American favorites. After dinner you can gaze at the stars (incredible viewing in this part of the world) and the moonlit peaks, go over the events of the day, or retire to your tent to read for a while before heading off to sleep.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

In addition to a passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of completion of the trip, you will need a visa for India. Visas cannot be obtained upon arrival at the airport, so you will need to get one in advance. You can contact your local Indian consulate for information or use the services of a visa agency. We recommend CIBT: <http://cibtvisas.com/> or Travia Outsourcing

(www.travisaoutsourcing.com). Both agencies have detailed information on obtaining visas and the correct forms.

To help you complete the **visa application**, we have listed the answers for certain questions. Please mark NA or NO on any line that does not apply to you.

Question #24, check “Tourist”

Question #25, (Place you want to visit), enter Delhi and Sikkim

Question #26, check “six month” (you can also get a 5 or 10 year visa for the same price)

Question #31, (Object of journey), enter “tourist”

Question #37; enter Rimo Expeditions, 229 DLF Galleria, DLF Phase IV, Gurgaon - 122022, India
Tel: 011 91 124 2806027

Sikkim Permit application:

Question #7, Address in India: Rimo Expeditions, 229 DLF Galleria, DLF Phase IV, Gurgaon - 122022, India. Tel: 011 91 124 2806027

Question #10, Places proposed to visit: Pelling, Yuksom, Dzungri.

Question #11, Route intended to be followed: Darjeeling – Pelling – Yuksom – Bakhim – Dzungri – Tsokha – Yuksom – Kalimpong.

Question #12, Purpose of visit; Trekking holiday

Question #13, Duration of stay: 14 days

Question #14, Date of visit: 21st Oct 2015 to 03rd Nov 2015

We cannot mention Goechala as it is still is restricted. The Sikkim tourism tell people to mention only Dzungri.

We recommend making a few photocopies of the photo page of your passport and carrying them separately from your passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, a photocopy will help the local consulate speed up authorization for replacement. Also bring several spare passport photos—they’re handy in case of unexpected visa or permit requirements.

Note—most countries requiring visas require a completely blank page on which to stamp the visa, so your passport should contain at least one blank page for each country you plan to visit.

AIR TRAVEL

Airfare is not included in the land cost of the trip. For air reservations, please contact the airlines directly, either by phone or via the Internet. Plan your arrival in Delhi anytime on Day 1, or arrive a day early if you can to recover from jet lag. Many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling, but please check with us before purchasing or obtaining your tickets. We need to

verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip. Note—Names on air tickets and passports must match!

MEDICAL MATTERS

No vaccinations are currently required to enter India, but immunizations for typhoid, tetanus, hepatitis A, and polio are *recommended*. These regulations and recommendations change frequently, so please check with your local health department or the CDC for more information (www.cdc.gov). In addition, malaria is a potential health risk in India at altitudes lower than 2,000 meters (6,561'). The CDC website has good information on this and you should confer with your physician for further advice regarding malaria prophylaxis and recommended immunizations.

Please advise us of any pre-existing medical conditions that may affect your health on the trek (recent injuries or surgeries, chronic illnesses, etc.). Hospital facilities for serious medical emergencies may be far away and evacuation can be difficult (and expensive).

To avoid intestinal problems while on the trip, do not drink tap water or even use it to brush your teeth. In Delhi, Darjeeling, and Sikkim, drink bottled water only. While on trek, the camp staff will provide boiled water for daily use. You must be careful when eating out on your own, too. That said, there are many wonderful restaurants to try. Your trip leader will give you more guidelines on staying healthy while in India.

We recommend you bring your own personal first-aid kit, which should include antibiotics (Cipro, Z-pack, or other), Diamox, Ibuprofen, or Gingko (for high altitudes), pain killers, and allergy medicines if you are prone to allergic reactions. The trip leader will also carry a basic kit for emergencies, but will not have any prescription medications.

MONEY MATTERS

You should bring enough money for any souvenirs you may buy, plus a few meals that are not included in the cost of the trip (e.g. various meals in Delhi, or meals and accommodation en route to India). Depending on how much of a shopper you are, \$500-\$600 is usually enough for incidentals and souvenirs. You should bring an additional amount for optional gratuities to the trip leader and local trekking staff. Trip members often ask for guidelines on tipping the trip leaders. Typically, trip members tip the trip leader at least US \$450 (presenting this personally rather than collectively gives you the opportunity to say thank you individually and is greatly appreciated) and at least \$250 toward a group tip for the trekking staff, preferably paid in local currency, as traveler's checks are impossible for the trekking staff to exchange.

Bring some of your money in traveler's checks and **most** in cash. Bring along your credit card in case of emergencies. Credit cards are also generally accepted in India's five-star hotels and restaurants, and ATMs are located in the major cities. Only Visa and MasterCard are accepted in Darjeeling at the hotels. There are ATM machines in Delhi and a few in Darjeeling. The currency in India is the *rupee* and it is approximately 59 rupees to the dollar. It is always better to exchange enough currency either at the hotel or bank in **Delhi**.

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When on your own (such as at The Claridges in Delhi), it is customary to tip 5-10% on the restaurant bills. Tips for porters can range between US\$0.50 and US\$1.00 per bag. Taxi drivers do not expect a tip.

WEATHER & CLIMATE

The months between late October and November are the best for trekking in Sikkim. Temperatures are usually moderate to cold and the skies are clear (in the high mountains there is always a chance of rain or snow). In late October through November, daytime temperatures in Darjeeling and Kalimpong range from a low of 50° to a high of 75°. While on trek we can expect daytime temperatures ranging from 40° to 70°F, and nighttime temperatures between 15° and 50°F. Rain or snow is always possible in the high mountains.

INCIDENTALS

Laundry: Laundry service is available at the hotels. While on trek, wash basins are available for any laundry you may want to do yourself on rest days. Synthetic fabrics are the easiest to wash, and they dry quickly. Please make sure you bring biodegradable soap.

Electricity: India is on the 220V system. Sockets are usually the round two- or three-pin variety, but they vary. If you are planning to use something like a hairdryer or electric shaver at the hotel (a hairdryer is provided at The Claridges Hotel), bring a converter and a selection of plug adapters (you can buy these in drugstores or travel specialty stores in the U.S.). Power outages are common.

Time Zones: India is Greenwich Mean Time plus six hours. That means if it's 8:00pm in Delhi, it's 9:00am in New York and 6:00am in California.

Environmental Responsibility: We ask you to carry out whatever you carry in, including non-biodegradable items such as batteries, flashlight bulbs, empty plastic containers, and so on. India does not have the proper facilities to process this kind of waste and your throwaways will end up in the river or tossed down a hillside. Please pack Ziploc bags for your own personal garbage.

SHOPPING

India is a fun place to shop—street vendors and emporiums are everywhere you look. Craft items to buy include beautiful hand-woven Tibetan carpets, traditional brass cooking vessels, semi-precious gemstones, silks, and jewelry.

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WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT LIST

Packing Notes

It's best to go as light as possible and take only the essentials. Excess baggage can be a burden, not only to you but to support personnel.

Your trekking duffel must not weigh more than **30 lbs.**, because it will be carried by a porter or pack animal. This includes all items you will need while on trek as well as your sleeping bag. We suggest you bring an additional small lockable duffel to store non-trek clothes and other items in Darjeeling (these will be with our drivers and delivered to our hotel in Yuksom).

In addition, there are baggage weight restrictions on the flights between Delhi and Bagdogra.

Checked baggage can weigh no more than 33 lbs (15 kgs). Hand carry luggage can weigh no more than 15 lbs (7kgs). Excess baggage will cost approximately \$5.00 per kilo (2.2 lbs).

Luggage

- Duffel bag. A good size is about 14" x 15" x 36" (7,560 cu. in)—large enough to hold your sleeping bag plus your trekking clothes and gear. It should have a full-length zipper (for easy access), and be sturdy and water-resistant or waterproof.
- Daypack with a capacity of 2,000 to 2,500 cubic inches, with a good padded waist belt. It can double as your carryon bag. Always bring all irreplaceable items, such as camera, medications, important documentation, and trekking boots in your carryon luggage.
- Spare roll-up duffel. This is essential if you wish to store your city clothes while on the trek and to bring home those great souvenirs! It should be lockable.

Clothing Notes

Because you will be going to higher elevations, the weather will be cold part of the time. Nighttime temperatures are likely to fall below freezing; sometimes even daytime temperatures (at least in the shade) can be quite cold.

Bring comfortable clothing that will protect you from cold and wet weather. Synthetic fabrics (such as capilene or fleece) are the most effective barriers against the cold. They provide the best insulation, are light in weight, wick away perspiration, and dry quickly if wet. Wool and wool/synthetics are also suitable. (Cotton garments are not good in cold or wet mountain conditions.)

Layering is the way to go. Your innermost layer should be long underwear. The middle layer can be a synthetic turtleneck or wool shirt, and pants. The outermost layer should be a synthetic or down jacket, and/or a good quality wind/rain parka and over-pants.

We suggest men & women trek in comfortable, loose-fitting long pants.

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Underwear

- Regular underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry. Depending on the weather, you may be able to hand-wash some on your rest days during the trek.
- Thermal underwear. One light weight, one medium weight top and one light weight, one medium weight bottom, of a polyester-type fabric. Wool and wool/synthetic blends are also suitable. You can use them to sleep at night and as layers for maximum warmth.

Socks

- Athletic socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for your walking (not hiking) shoes. You can store them in your extra duffel while on trek.
- Medium weight hiking socks (synthetic or wool/synthetic).
- Synthetic or silk sock liners--optional. Some people wear sock liners to help prevent blisters, and some wear the same pair of hiking socks for three days in a row and achieve the same result.

Shirts

- Long-sleeved, synthetic or wool shirt.
- Short-sleeved, synthetic or wool T-shirts.

Pants

- Full-length pants, preferably of quick-drying synthetic fabric.
- Fleece pants, ideal for camp time or layering for warmth.

Outerwear

- Medium-weight jacket of synthetic fabric, such as fleece.
- Medium-weight down or synthetic-fill jacket (10-12 oz. of down or 15-20 oz. of fiberfill). A must for camp.
- Rain/wind parka (must fit over bulky clothing).
- Rain/wind pants, preferably with full-length side zipper (must fit over your other pants).
- Gloves or mittens (fleece or combination of fleece with waterproof shell over mitt or glove).
- Glove liners (synthetic).

Head Gear

- Sun hat with wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off, or baseball cap.
- Balaclava for warmth at night. The combination of a cap and neck gaiter also works well.
- Fleece or wool hat.
- Bandanna. A generally useful item—it will keep your neck from getting sunburned and can double as a hand towel in the field.

Footwear

Please break new boots in well before the trip.

- Medium-weight, sturdy hiking boots with padded ankle, good arch support, and lug sole for traction. Your hiking boots should be waterproofed, well broken in, and suitable for prolonged walking on snow and/or rocks.
- Down booties, tennis shoes, or slip on clogs to wear in camp.
- Knee-high gaiters to keep snow out of your boots.

Sleeping Gear

- Expedition weight sleeping bag. We recommend a rating of -5° to -20° F.
- We provide thick foam sleeping pads, but for added comfort, you may wish to bring your own lightweight pad.

Other Items

- Water bottles, 1 or 1.5 quart capacity. Make sure they are leak-proof, and heavy duty. Bring 2 and mark them with your name or initials as several people may have the same bottle. **Note—CamelBaks or other bladder hydration systems are not recommended, as they often break or leak, are difficult to fill with boiled water, and are hard to keep clean.**
- Hiking sticks—highly recommended. They help relieve the impact on your knees during long downhill; they are also useful on uphill. Practice with them before the trip.
- Parachute cord to use as a clothesline inside your tent.
- Set of casual city clothes that are dressier than your trekking clothes. You will store these in your extra duffel while you are on trek.
- Toiletry kit—biodegradable soap, toothbrush, feminine products, etc.
- Roll of toilet paper. Toilet paper is provided at camp, but you need to carry your own on trek during the day.
- Purell hand sanitizer for quick hand washing and hygiene (a must!).
- Personal medical kit.
- Throat lozenges (or hard candies), about 40 of them. Good for soothing sore or dry throats at altitude.
- Body lotion for dry skin at higher altitudes.
- Small towel of synthetic-type fabric.
- Sponge or washcloth to wash up at camp.
- Ace bandage or brace if you're prone to sore knees or ankles.
- Sunglasses (100% UVA/UVB protected). For high altitudes, it's good to have glasses with a special dark lens and side shields that block reflected UV.
- Spare pair of prescription glasses, prescription sunglasses, or contact lenses.
- Sunscreen lotion and lipstick of SPF 25 or higher.
- Small headlamp with spare batteries.
- Heavy weight trash bags to waterproof your duffel and backpack. Ziploc bags are great for small items and camera gear; nylon stuff sacks are also handy.
- Small padlock or combination lock for your stored city duffel.
- Extra passport photos. Keep them with your travel documents as you may need them throughout your journey.
- Swiss Army-type pocket knife.
- Money belt or neck pouch to store cash.

CATTARA

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Optional Travel Accessories

- Camera and plenty memory cards, and extra batteries.
- Repair kit with needle, thread, and safety pins.
- Pair of compact binoculars.
- Powdered electrolyte mixes for your water.
- Your favorite trail snacks, especially if you have allergies or dietary restrictions.
- Reading and writing material.
- Sit upon for the trail (seat pad).

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