



Darjeeling & Lower Himalayas

INFORMATION PACK

How to get to the trip

You will need to fly into Kolkata (Calcutta) then fly from there the next day to Bagdogra. At Calcutta, unless you want the big city experience I suggest you stay at an airport hotel.

DATES

16 November (from Bagdogra) – 2 December 2024

ITINERARY

Itineraries will vary from year to year. The plan for 2024 is:

Day 1

Jo will meet you with transport at Bagdogra Airport to take you the 30 min trip to our hotel in Siliguri.

We'll have welcome drinks in the bar at 6.30pm followed by dinner. There is a swimming pool here so bring your cosi.. Temperatures in Siliguri will be in the high 20s at this time of year.

Day 2

On this day we'll be driven 30 minutes to New Jalpaiguri where our trip on the Darjeeling Himalaya Railway commences! Our train will climb up to the hill town of Kurseong, passing through villages on the way - a beautiful introduction to the Himalayan foothills. Here we'll stay in an historic colonial hotel for 3 nights

Days 3 & 4

During these 2 days we'll explore the region with a walk to a Tea Estate and a scenic drive and walk for an overview of Kurseong and its views. We'll continue our exploration of the railway, meeting with local Nepali whose families have worked on the railway for generations. They'll introduce us to the heritage of the railway and the legacy of my grandfather including the General Manager's residence where he lived. Our introduction to local traditional music will commence here with a concert.

Days 5 – 10

We'll have a grand adventure now as we set off on the main walking part of our trip. We'll explore 2 areas in the lower Himalayas, staying in a mountain lodge for 3 days, then the next 3 nights in a homestay in a village which is a trekking base.

You can choose to do walks of 1 – 4 hours depending on your energy and enthusiasm. We'll have local guides for the walks and be surrounded by views of the Himalayas! Dave and Jo will offer some music and singing jams and Jo also offers meditation and yoga sessions

Days 11 – 14

Our trip will finish in the historic town of Darjeeling where we'll stay in a beautiful colonial hotel whose history has been pivotal to the development of the tea industry and railway in the region.

Here we'll have 3 full days to explore the older colonial part of Darjeeling as well as the markets in the tourist and poorer sections of the town. We'll have the option of some regional hiking and meet and hear local musicians. Darjeeling boasts a fabulous zoo featuring animals of the Himalayas including snow leopards and a Bengal tiger. The Mountaineering Institute also pays a significant and moving homage to decades of Himalayan and Everest expeditions.

Day 15

Sadly it will now be time to leave the mountains. We have transport to take us the 3 hour journey to Bagdogra airport where we'll all fly to Kolkata and say adieu.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Temperature

In the lowlands of India, temperatures will be in the high 20s. Once we get to Kurseong and the Darjeeling/Himalayas region expect about 6-18 degrees, though you also need to factor in snow and cold days. I'll provide a packing list when you book.

Accommodation

Our first night in Siliguri is in a modern international motel with ensuite, restaurant and swimming pool.



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Accommodation continued

7 nights are in 2 comfortable colonial style hotels with great aesthetics. All rooms have en-suites. Our Kurseong hotel has a cafe that operates all day and in Darjeeling we have a restaurant, a charming bar and a massage therapist. We are within a 5 minute walk of shops/bazaar and cafes/restaurants.

6 nights are in more 'village' style accommodation which includes 3 nights in a mountain lodge where you have private rooms then 3 nights are in 'homestay' accommodation.

Meals

Our hotel accommodation offers a choice of Indian or western menus. They are used to dealing with preferences/allergies so let Jo know if you have particular needs. During our 6 days out in the Himalayas, our cooks are also able to manage food issues though the cooking will be more simple.

Group Size

We'll have small groups of 8 – 12 people.

Walking

Some days will have 1 or 2 hours of walking including sightseeing. During the middle of the trip for 6 days we'll have walks of 1-4 hours. Some days you'll have the option to extend that, and you always have the option to take a day off or to only join us for the first part of the walk.

Walk Fitness

We are in the lower Himalayas so you will need to be comfortable that on some stretches we are walking up and down hills, and on rougher surfaces. Expect compacted dirt in the form of goat tracks and 4 wheel drive tracks. Walks will be 3-10 kms to an altitude of 2,970metres (10,000ft).

Vaccinations

Talk to your Doctor about these. Allow for vaccinations to happen 6 weeks before arrival in India.

Visa

You'll need a visa. It's easy to do electronically 30 days before travel or you can apply by snail mail.

Price

\$4,000 for one person sharing a twin or double bedroom. If you would like single accom, it's available for all but 3 nights. This costs an additional \$660 so your total for the trip is \$4,660. As some accom offers single rooms for significantly less you can also choose a single for specific chunks of your trip.

Included

Accommodation, guiding, railway tickets, taxi transfers to and from airport and railway and to walks, all breakfasts and most meals.

Items not included are travel between your country of origin and Bagdogra, airport taxes and fuel surcharges, passport and visa fees, travel insurance, health costs and drinks/alcohol. You will need to pay for up to 10 meals (such as lunches in mountain Tea Houses and the odd restaurant) as well as snacks, entrance fees to exhibits, taxis if you opt out of some walks.

REGISTER ONLINE

<https://jocresswell.com/registration-overseas-trips>

Cancellation Conditions

If you must cancel your reservation, we will retain your deposit and attempt to fill your place. If this is not possible, your cancellation fee will be determined according to the following criteria:

31-60 days 50% retained by us

15-30 days 75% retained by us

14 days or less no refund

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