



A WALK IN THE HIMALAYAN FOOTHILLS - CULTURES AND MOUNTAINS SCAPES OF THE EASTERN HIMALAYA

KOLKATA/SIKKIM/DARJEELING

| Day | City | Description | Hotel |
|-------|-------------|--|----------------------|
| Day 1 | Calcutta | Arrive Calcutta. You are met as you exit the aircraft and assisted with immigration and custom formalities. In the arrival hall you meet the Banyan Tours representative and you are transferred to your hotel | Oberoi Grand |
| Day 2 | Calcutta | You have a late start to the day. Today you explore the melting pot of cultures that makes Calcutta such a vibrant city. The visit takes you to North and Central Calcutta , an area rich in diversity – you explore the confluence of cultures that made their homes here from the Jewish community, to the Armenians and Chinese who fled persecution in their own country. This area was also home of the very wealthy landlords, and you will drive past crumbling mansions and will stop at the famous Coffee House on College Street. You will stop at Kumarthulli the potters enclave . You end the day at a Kolkata institution – Flury's Tea Room - for tea and cakes. | Oberoi Grand |
| Day 3 | Calcutta | <p>Today you take a heritage around the historic Dalhousie Square, renamed BBD Bagh. We break for a cup of Glenburn tea at St John's Church, and then visit 2 famous city landmarks: The almost forgotten Park Street Cemetery dates back a few centuries with poignant images of its early society; and the majestic Victoria Memorial. We have lunch at a private home, a rare glimpse of a bygone lifestyle</p> <p>We end the day in a private river boat, guests are able to discover a hitherto unseen side of Kolkata, with a ring-side view of the myriad happenings on the river's 'Ghats'. It is a wonderfully relaxing end to the day with a sumptuous tea menu comprising popular Indian snacks and refreshing Darjeeling Tea.</p> <p>After lunch you will take a boat across the Hugly Bridge River and you visit the temple of Dakhineswar, one Bengal's most popular pilgrimage spots. The temple built in 1855 by a wealthy widow. From here you continue to Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. You will arrive here in time for the evening "aarti".</p> | Oberoi Grand |
| Day 4 | Radhu Kundu | <p>You will transfer to the airport and you will depart for Bagdogra today</p> <p>On arrival into Bagdogra today you will be met and driven to the Rinchenpong area where the Shakti Village walks are located.</p> <p>At an altitude of 6400ft, Rinchenpong is a pretty un-spoilt</p> | Shakti Village House |

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| | | Himalayan town. In the early evening, you will be given an introductory briefing of your tour by your Shakti guide. | |
| Day 5 | Radhu Kundu | <p>This day's walk begins after breakfast and if possible the owner of the house will accompany you through the laid back village of Khandu. Carrying on further through the cardamom fields, you will then take a tea break at one of the local houses owned by a retired school teacher whose life long experiences become a point of great conversation.</p> <p>Later you will follow a path which leads to the beautiful 150 years old monastery and follow a path to the rhododendron ridge for a delicious picnic lunch. Return to your village house and spend the evening at leisure as you enjoy your drinks by the fire.</p> | Shakti Village House |
| Day 6 | Hee | <p>After breakfast you will start with a gentle walk downhill till your trail reaches a stream. Following the stream you will reach a path, which is one of the oldest trade routes ever established in this part of the mountains. After walking along this path for three and a half hours you will reach the charming village of Hee – your next village house.</p> <p>Hee is a stunning village with Mount Kanchenjunga in the back drop. Hee house belongs to a local family and is situated at a respectable distance from the owner's house to give you your own space and quiet. The house is a small structure facing the owner's fields and the mountains. It has two renovated bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. There is also a prayer room with wooden floorings, wooden walls and the idols of the Buddha.</p> | Shakti Village House |
| Day 7 | Hee | <p>This morning if the weather is clear, you can wake up early to view the sun rising with Kanchenjunga. Enjoy the stunning view with a hot cup of tea!</p> <p>After breakfast you will set out to explore the area, passing through the houses of the different communities in the village- Gurung, Nepali and Bhutia families, you will walk through the Cardamom hills and arrive at Chaaya Tal. You may take a gentle walk around the beautiful lake followed by a delicious picnic lunch.</p> <p>After lunch, visit Yuma Samyo Mangheem (Limboo Temple) and other local attractions with your private guide.</p> <p>Alternatively, you will have the option to visit the Pemayangste monastery. The monastery is an hour's drive from Hee. It is one of the oldest and premier monasteries of Sikkim, also the most</p> | Shakti Village House |

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| | | famous in west Sikkim. Pemayangste means "Perfect Sublime Lotus", representing one of the four plexus of the human body. | |
| Day 8 | Hatti Dunga | <p>This morning if the weather is clear, your guide will wake you at dawn to view the Pemayangste Hill and the great Himalayan range. The sight of the sun rising with Kanchenjunga in the background is truly unforgettable. Enjoy the stunning view with a hot cup of tea. You may visit the Pemayangste monastery with your private guide.</p> <p>After breakfast, you will follow the trail through the village of Tadong and reach the picturesque Jowbhari Village which promotes terrace farming. This village will give you a glimpse of the local culture and life as you walk down the village, stopping en route for a picnic lunch.</p> <p>You will be driven for about 10 minutes after which you will resume the walk at Kaluk Village and reach Resum Monastery. After spending some time at the monastery, you will walk down for 30 minutes to your next village house</p> <p>Located near Rinchenpong, Hatti Dunga which literally means "Elephant rock" is a small village with just around 20 households. Shakti's village house is a traditional wooden structure aged more than 70 years; the house has been re-designed and built to house three ensuite bedrooms with its original teakwood flooring preserved. The house is set in a gardened tier land with uninterrupted views of the valley looking over West Sikkim.</p> | Shakti Village House |
| Day 9 | Hatti Dunga | <p>For those who wish to, rise up early this morning and walk to the Rinchenpong Monastery where you can participate in the early morning prayers. After the prayers you will walk back to Sandyang Lee for breakfast.</p> <p>After breakfast your guide will present you with an option of walking down to the Yangsum village nearby. This gradual walk of around 4 - 5 hours will give you a glimpse of the local lifestyle practiced here and an interesting rendezvous at the typical mountain village market in Rinchenpong. The walk can be shortened depending on how you are feeling.</p> | Shakti Village House |
| Day 10 | Glenburn | After breakfast, you will walk back down to the road head (around twenty minutes). From here you will be driven for about 5 hours to Darjeeling. You will transfer to Glenburn Tea Estate. | Glenburn Tea Estate |
| Day 11 | Glenburn | In the morning you tour the plantation and the factory, where you watch the intricate process of converting the green leaf | Glenburn Tea Estate |

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| | | <p>into one of the most expensive beverages in the market – Darjeeling tea, the champagne of Indian teas.'</p> <p>The rest of the day is free and you can design your own day, taking one of the many trails ending with a picnic lunch or tea, or just sit under a tree with a beverage and a book.</p> <p>For those who would like to wake very early, you can hike or take a jeep to the <i>Gorkhay Dara view point</i></p> | |
| Day 12 | Glenburn | <p>In the morning you visit Ghoom where you visit the Yiga Choeling Monastery which belongs to the Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) sect. The monastery has murals of Buddhist deities and beautiful frescos. You continue to Darjeeling on the delightful toy train</p> <p>You explore Darjeeling. You will visit the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute and Museum. The museum traces the history of the conquest of Everest and contains a collection of mountaineering equipment and samples of Himalayan flora and fauna. Until his death in 1986, Sherpa Tenzing Norgay was director of the institute. You will visit the sacred cave on Observatory Hill, important to both Buddhists and Hindus. Later you can or walk or drive to the Bhutia Busty Monastery, built in 1879. The cult text – <i>The Tibetan Book of the Dead</i> was found in the library attached to this shrine. The murals are beautiful, and we will get permission for you to enter the shrine.</p> <p>After lunch you return to Glenburn Tea Estate</p> | Glenburn Tea Estate |
| Day 13 | Glenburn | <p>Today you can hike three hours or take a jeep through the tea estate and the forest to the banks of the Ringit River which borders Sikkim. A very picturesque spot, you can relax by the River and have a picnic lunch and you can fish for trout or you can take a further hike to the <i>Manjitar Suspension Bridge</i>.</p> <p>Later you return to your plantation bungalow.</p> | Glenburn Tea Estate |
| Day 14 | Calcutta | <p>After breakfast drive to Bagdogra airport for flight to Calcutta. Stay at Swissotel Kolkata until your departure flight from Kolkata</p> | Swissotel |



Day 1

Arrive Kolkata. You are met as you exit the aircraft and you are assisted with immigration and collecting your bags. You are transferred to your hotel.

KOLKATA

Kolkata or Calcutta as it used to be known grew from an obscure village on the banks of the Hugly River to become the capital of the Great Britain's Indian empire until it moved to Delhi. "What Bengal does today, India does tomorrow". Sadly this adage is no longer true. At one time, Calcutta was the proud intellectual and cultural capital of India. Its inhabitants made outstanding contributions to art, medicine, science and social reform. Kolkata had an elected communist government for over 30 years.

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| Hotel | Glenburn Penthouse |
| Room | Grand Bengal Suite |
| Meals | Breakfast |



Day 2

Kolkata

You have a late start to the day. At 10:30 PM you meet your guide and depart for an exploration of the City.

Calcutta has witnessed many more cultures in its past than most others would even in this globalised present. The tour today will trace for you the origins and remains of the varied communities that hung their boots and called Calcutta home.

It begins in the area known as Bow Barracks, home of the Anglo Indian community and ends at Burra Bazaar, along the way introducing you to the **Chinese, Armenian, Jewish and Portuguese influences**. Driving and walking through narrow alleyways teeming with people and color, you come across unexpected sites – a police station decorated with replicas of Picasso; a blackboard that serves as the Face book page for the Anglo Indian community; Chinese breakfast being served from

street carts, a long time Calcutta tradition. There are many sights which are quintessential “Calcutta”, and this tour introduces you to a city usually only seen by locals.



You stop at the famous **Coffee House** a meeting place for students where the discussions are eclectic and diverse. You will continue to the **Kumarthulli, the potter village** where throughout the year they make the idols of the gods and goddesses that are worshipped throughout the year.

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| Hotel | Glenburn Penthouse |
| Room | Grand Bengal Suite |
| Meals | Breakfast, Lunch |



Day 3 **Kolkata**

You start with a heritage walk around the historic **Dalhousie Square**. Alongside Armenian and Portuguese churches, and Jewish Synagogues, we embark upon a journey that started the British Raj in India dating back to the time of the Black Hole, from where it transformed itself into a City of Palaces.

The famous Writers' Building – the former HQ of the infamous East India Company, the magnificent Governor's House and the almost forgotten Charnock Mausoleum – Here lay the administrative, judicial and political heart of an Empire that stretched from Aden to Burma.



We break for a cup of Glenburn tea at **St John's Church**, and then visit 2 famous city landmarks. The almost forgotten **Park Street Cemetery** dates back a few centuries with poignant images of its early society; and the majestic **Victoria Memorial** was embarked upon and completed just as the same conquerors abandoned their majestic capital to build another in Delhi. The museum has a permanent collection of Art and a well laid out Calcutta Gallery telling the history of the city. **The Indian Museum, Metcalfe Hall, Belvedere House** and the **Currency Building** – all house fabulous collections of art, antiques and exhibitions on the city and can also be included.

We have lunch at the home of Mr Surojit ‘Bomti’ Iyenger, an art collector and socialite, who is delighted to welcome visitors into his charming heritage flat on historic Chowringhee Road. Authentic and home-cooked Bengali cuisine and stimulating insights into Bengali Art through their private art collection and modern Kolkata, make up Bomti’s salon.



We end the day in a **private river boat**, guests are able to discover a hitherto unseen side of Kolkata, with a ring-side view of the myriad happenings on the river’s ‘Ghats’. This was the view that greeted many a 19C adventurer as he stepped up to the Princep’s Ghat. You will sail past Belur Math, headquarters of The Ramakrishna Mission, as the city’s two huge and famous bridges, Howrah and Vidyasagar Setu pass overhead. It is a wonderfully relaxing end to the day with a sumptuous tea menu comprising popular Indian snacks and refreshing Darjeeling Tea.

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| Hotel | Glenburn Penthouse |
| Room | Grand Bengal Suite |
| Meals | Breakfast, Lunch |



Day 4

Kolkata/Bagdogra/Radhu Kundu

You will transfer to the airport and you depart for Bagdogra. From the airport it is a five hour drive to the Shakti House at Radhu Kundu

At an altitude of 6400ft, Rinchenpong is a pretty un-spoilt Himalayan town. The house at Radhu Kandu is a charming traditional Sikkimese house with two bedrooms and attached bathrooms. The family are fantastic (the owner being a particular character), the location is sublime and there is nothing better than having tea in the sit out room which has 270° views of the area.

In the early evening, you will be given an introductory briefing of your tour by your Shakti guide.

**Overnight
Meals**

**Shakti Village House Radhu Kundu
All inclusive**



Day 5

Radhu Kundu

This day's walk begins after breakfast and if possible the owner of the house will accompany you through the laid back village of Khandu. Carrying on further through the cardamom fields, you will then take a tea break at one of the local houses owned by a retired school teacher whose life long experiences become a point of great conversation. Later you will follow a path which leads to the beautiful 150 years old monastery and follow a path to the rhododendron ridge for a delicious picnic lunch. Return to your village house and spend the evening at leisure as you enjoy your drinks by the fire.

Enjoy your farewell drinks and dinner at the house tonight.

Total Walking: 10 kms

**Overnight
Meals**

**Shakti Village House Radhu Kundu
All inclusive**



Day 6

Radhu Kundu/Hee

After breakfast you will start with a gentle walk downhill till your trail reaches a stream. Following the stream you will reach a path, which is one of the oldest trade routes ever established in this part of the mountains. After walking along this path for three and a half hours you will reach the charming village of Hee – your next village house.



Hee is a stunning village with Mount Kanchenjunga in the back drop. Hee house belongs to a local family and is situated at a respectable distance from the owner's house to give you your own space and quiet. The house

is a small structure facing the owner's fields and the mountains. It has two renovated bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. There is also a prayer room with wooden floorings, wooden walls and the idols of the Buddha.

Total Walking: 10 kms

**Overnight
Meals**

**Shakti Village House Hee
All inclusive**



routes ever established in this part of the mountains. After walking along this path for two hours you will reach your village house at Radhu Khandu.



The house at Radhu Khandu is a charming traditional Sikkimese house with two bedrooms and attached bathrooms. The family are fantastic (the owner being a particular character), the location is sublime and there is nothing better than having tea in the sit out room which has 270° views of the area.

Enjoy hot lunch at the village house prepared by your private chef. Later today, if you are keen on more walking, you can set out on a 2 hour walk to Bhalukhop village. Bhalukhop literally translates as "Himalayan Black bear cave".

Return to your village house for drinks and dinner.

Overnight

Shakti Village House Hee

Meals

All inclusive



Day 8

Hee/Hatti Dunga

After breakfast, you will follow the trail through the village of Tadong and reach the picturesque Jowbhari Village which promotes terrace farming. This village will give you a glimpse of the local culture and life as you walk down the village, stopping en route for a picnic lunch.

You will be driven for about 10 minutes after which you will resume the walk at Kaluk Village and reach Resum Monastery. After spending some time at the monastery, you will walk down for 30 minutes to your next village house



Located near Rinchenpong, Hatti Dunga which literally means “Elephant rock” is a small village with just around 20 households. Shakti’s village house is a traditional wooden structure aged more than 70 years; the house has been re-designed and built to house three ensuite bedrooms with its original teakwood flooring preserved. The house is set in a gardened tier land with uninterrupted views of the valley looking over West Sikkim.

**Overnight
Meals**

**Shakti Village House Hatti Dunga
All inclusive**



Day 9

Hatti Dunga

For those who wish to, rise up early this morning and walk to the Rinchenpong Monastery where you can participate in the early morning prayers. After the prayers you will walk back to Sandyang Lee for breakfast.



After breakfast your guide will present you with an option of walking down to the Yangsum village nearby. This gradual walk of around 4 - 5 hours will give you a glimpse of the local lifestyle practiced here and an interesting rendezvous at the typical mountain village market in Rinchenpong. The walk can be shortened depending on how you are feeling.

**Overnight
Meals**

**Shakti Village House Hatti Dunga
All inclusive**



Day 10

Hatti Dunga/Glenburn

You drive through the picturesque mountains to Darjeeling Glenburn Tea Estate. The drive will take four hours.

Glenburn lies in a river valley, with breathtaking views of the mountains on a clear day. The tea estate stretches from an elevation of 3700 feet down to two snow fed rivers – the Rangit, which is the border between Sikkim and West Bengal, and the Rung Dung.

Hotel
Room
Meals

Glenburn Tea Estate
Suite
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 11

Glenburn Tea Estate

In the morning you tour the plantation and the factory, where you watch the intricate process of converting the green leaf into one of the most expensive beverages in the market – Darjeeling tea, the champagne of Indian teas. You will also take part in a tea tasting session, very similar to wine tasting.

The rest of the day is free and you will can design your own day, taking one of the many trails ending with a picnic

lunch or tea, or just sit under a tree with a beverage and a book.

Hotel
Room
Meals

Glenburn Tea Estate
Suite
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 12

Glenburn Tea Estate/Darjeeling

In the morning you will take a delightful toy train journey from Ghoom where you visit the **Yiga Choeling Monastery** which belongs to the Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) sect. The monastery has murals of Buddhist deities and beautiful frescos



You can start your tour of Darjeeling with the Tibetan Refugee Center, about a half an hour amble, with wonderful mountain views on a clear day. Next you can visit the nearby zoo, housing India's only duo of Siberian Tigers. The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute and Museum, The museum traces the history of the conquest of Everest and contains a collection of mountaineering equipment and samples of Himalayan flora and fauna.

After lunch, you return to Glenburn to enjoy the surroundings and a great cup of Darjeeling Tea!

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| Hotel | Glenburn Tea Estate |
| Room | Suite |
| Meals | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner |



Day 13

Glenburn Tea Estate

Today you hike or drive to the Ringeet River. Accompanied by an experienced guide cum naturalist this hike/drive takes you through a village, a tea plantation into the Simbong Forest area. Following the main track you continue downhill to the River Ringeet. All along the way you will have spectacular views of neighboring Sikkim and the valley below.

Once at the river you can either relax or try your hand at fishing or have a picnic

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| Hotel | Glenburn Tea Estate |
| Room | Suite |
| Meals | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner |



Day 14

Glenburn/Bagdogra/Kolkata

You drive three hours to Bagdogra Airport and you will depart for Kolkata. You are met on arrival and transferred to your hotel until your later transfer to the international airport.

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| Hotel | Swiss Hotel |
| Room | Deluxe |
| Meals | Breakfast, Lunch |