

SIKKIM

A new travel series that helps expats plan and visit the must-see sights of India

IN THE north eastern highlands of India lie the tea plantations of Darjeeling. Neighbouring these, is the state of Sikkim, a Himalayan kingdom, known for its remoteness, spectacular mountains that include the magnificent Kanchenjunga and ancient Buddhist monasteries. The best time to visit Sikkim is from March-May or Oct-Dec. Here is a sample itinerary that will help you plan your holiday.

Day 1: Fly to Bagdogra via Kolkata where you will travel by car to the old Raj hill station of Darjeeling. Darjeeling is a fascinating town with its mix of Buddhist and colonial architecture.

Day 2: Before sunrise visit Tiger Hill for views of many Himalayan peaks. Later visit the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, the Himalayan Zoo and the Tibetan Self-Help Centre. Also ride on the UNESCO World Heritage Darjeeling Himalayan Railway to visit the Yiga Choling Monastery at Ghoom.



Day 3: This morning leave by car for Rinchonpong in West Sikkim, following the route of the rivers Rungeet and Teesta. Stop at Gyalsing, the capital of West Sikkim, to visit Pemayangtse Monastery. Stay at a remote mountainside farmstead.

Day 4: A morning visit to Pelling and a walk up to Sikkim's oldest monastery the Sanga Choling.

Day 5 & 6: Drive to Tashiding and take the steep uphill walk to enjoy views of this famous monastery. Pass through small villages before arriving in Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. Drive out to the Rumtek Monastery, and take the scenic walk across terraced fields to the Lingdum Monastery.



Day 7: Today drive to sleepy Kalimpong, a remote hill station set in the West Bengal foothills. Depart for Bagdogra and Chennai the following day.

Milesworth specialises in independent travel. This means that you travel by yourself without joining a group, the departure date is of your own choice, and the holiday is arranged and operated just for you.

This is an advertiser's feature by Ashish Gupta, who runs his own travel company, Milesworth Holidays, an American Express Travel office in Chennai. He offers customised holiday travel planning in India with a specialisation in Southern India.

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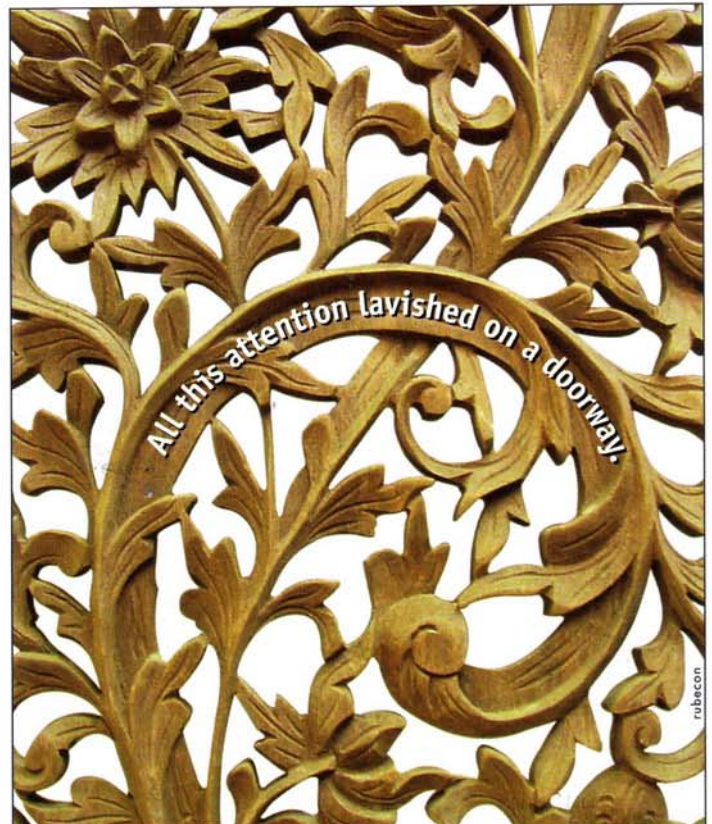
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