



WORLD DISCOVERY

HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE

Assam and Sikkim



The 'Toy Train', Darjeeling

DAY 1 - Depart UK.

DAY 2 - Arrive Kolkata (Calcutta).

On arrival in Kolkata in the afternoon you will be met by a representative of World Discovery outside immigration and customs. You will then be taken by private car direct to your hotel. The rest of the day is free.

DAY 3 – Kolkata.

Your World Discovery India holiday begins this morning when your guide meets you at your hotel and takes you on a full day sightseeing tour of **Kolkata**. Kolkata (Calcutta), the former capital of British India, was founded by the enterprising English merchant trader Job Charnock in 1690. Your full day guided tour will include the **Victoria Memorial** (1921), whose main gallery contains a wealth of memorabilia from the days of the Raj; **St. Paul's Cathedral**, the first Episcopal Church of the Orient; the **National Library**, the first public library to be set up in eastern India; the **Botanical Gardens**, and the **Mother Teresa Centre**.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 4 – Fly to Guwahati. Continue to Kaziranga.

In the morning take the short flight by Jet Airways to Guwahati in the state of Assam. You will be met and driven through the lush valley of the Brahmaputra River to Kaziranga National Park, a long and fairly tiring journey of around 4 hours. You will arrive at your lodge in the late afternoon.

Meals included: Full breakfast, dinner.

DAYS 5 AND 6 – Kaziranga National Park.

Due to its remote location, Kaziranga National Park is less visited than the wildlife destinations in central India, but it enjoys a beautiful setting on the banks of the mighty Brahmaputra River and has recently been declared a World Heritage Site. Kaziranga is famous for its healthy population of the Indian greater one-horned rhino, but also has wild buffalo, sambar, swamp deer, hog deer, wild pig and around 1,000 elephants. The birdlife is also prolific, especially water birds such as egrets, pond herons, river terns, black-necked stork, fishing eagles, pelicans and the rare Bengal florican. There are also otters and dolphins in the river. There will be morning and afternoon game drives each day.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner each day.

DAY 7 - Fly to Bagdogra. By road to Darjeeling.

After breakfast drive back to Guwahati for the early afternoon flight to Bagdogra, West Bengal. From here you will be driven into the foothills of the Himalaya, around the twisting hair-pin bends up to Darjeeling, located at 2,134m/7,000ft.

Meals Included: Full breakfast, packed lunch, dinner.

DAY 8 - Darjeeling.

Darjeeling - 'Queen of the Hills' - was one of the most famous summer retreats of the British, a place to escape the fierce heat of the plains. Darjeeling is a delightful place to spend a few days, with its exhilarating clear air and spectacular views, including if you are fortunate the towering peak of **Kanchenjunga**, the third highest mountain in the world. A favourite walk for visitors is to the summit of **Tiger Hill** to witness the sunrise over the Himalaya. You can stroll along the Mall, visit the interesting Tibetan Refugee Centre, or perhaps take a ride on the famous '**Toy Train**', disembarking at **Ghoom** to visit the monastery.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 9 - Drive to the State of Sikkim.

Sikkim has long been regarded as one of the last 'Shangri-las' because of its remoteness, spectacular mountain terrain, varied flora and fauna, and its wealth of ancient Buddhist monasteries. The former British Protectorate has only been part of India since 1975 and a permit is required to enter its territory. Your World Discovery representative will organise this for you during your stay in Darjeeling. The drive this morning is slow but scenic along the winding roads to reach **Gangtok**, the capital of Sikkim, set on a ridge above the Ranipul River at 1547m/5,075ft.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 10 - Gangtok.

A full day of sightseeing in **Gangtok**. Your first visit will be to the marvellous **Rumtek Monastery**, a 24km drive from Gangtok through beautiful countryside. The monastery is the last a thriving centre of Mahayana Buddhism. *Thankhas* (religious scroll paintings) and frescoes decorate the walls of this ancient monastery, built in the Tibetan style, and renovated in the 1960s from a state of near collapse. The monastery is the largest in Sikkim, and spreads over a huge area. Continue to the **Research Institute of Tibetology**. Situated in a serene forest of oak, ash and birch, this organisation's purpose is to advance the Tibetan language and its literature on the "Enlightened one". Near the Deorali Bazaar, are two exquisite Stupas, the **Dul-dul-Chorten**, built to commemorate the victory of good over evil, and the **Jhang Club Chorten**, which perpetuates the memory of a great spiritualist of the modern era, Thrul-shik Rinpoche, who died in 1962. **Enchey Monastery** is an important seat of the Nyingma order. It currently houses around 90 monks.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 11 - Drive to the Glenburn Tea Estate.

Return to West Bengal for a restful stay at the charming **Glenburn Tea Estate**, a 150 year old plantation house situated on a small hill above the River Rungeet. This is the perfect place for those who are looking for peace and quiet, and for those who like walking. A resident guide/naturalist will organise walks in the surrounding areas, as well as birdwatching and fishing. An individual programme can be tailored to suit your requirements.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 12 - Glenburn Tea Estate.

At leisure, with a choice of activities.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 13 - Return to Kolkata.

Drive out of the hills to Bagdogra and fly to Kolkata.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 14 - Kolkata.

At leisure.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 15` - Depart for home.

In the morning transfer to the airport for your international flight home.

Meals included: Full breakfast.