

Sandakphu Trek - “10 things I should do before I die”- BBC

Sandakphu (3636 Mtrs) is the highest point in the state of West Bengal and commands majestic views of the Mt. Kangchendzonga (8586 Mtrs) range and the Everest group-Mount Everest (8850 m) Lhotse (8516 m) Makalu (8481 m). It lies in the Singalila National park and a trek to Sandakphu takes the trekker through the wilderness and exquisite flora and fauna of the National Park.

Reaching the top of Sandakphu becomes an occasion of celebration for the trekkers with the stunning views of five, eight thousand feet plus peaks of the world right in front of them. The views defy the perspective of size, the very reason BBC lists this trek in **the “10 things I should do before I die”** program.

This is a beginner's trek and does not need any technical expertise. The trekking route is well beaten, wide and does not have a lot of steep gradients. The trek can become a testing ground for anybody who wants to start mountain exploration at a more advanced level.



The Trail to Sandakphu

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Itinerary for Sandakphu trek-(6 nights, 7days)

Total trekking Kms- 48

Day 1—NJP (New Jalpaiguri) to Darjeeling via Kurseong, (94 Kms drive)

We will pick you up from NJP railway station /Bagdogra airport and drive you to Darjeeling at 2134 mtrs, a 4 hour / 94 kms drive via Kurseong. Darjeeling known as the "queen of hills" has a very rich colonial heritage. It is also the birthplace of Darjeeling Tea. Darjeeling will be our night halt for the day. In Darjeeling we will visit the local market to stock up provisions for the trek. There will be a briefing in the evening over dinner regarding the trek.



Day 2—Dhotre 2700 Mtrs to Tumling-2750 Mtrs (6 Kms trek)



Early Morning after breakfast, we will drive to Dhotre a 2.5 hour / 35 Kms drive. Dhotre is located in the Tanglu forest range in the western part of North Bengal at an altitude of 2700 Mtrs and commands a beautiful view of Mt Kanchendzonga. It is a very small settlement of around 40 houses. We will meet our porters here, pack our backpacks and hit the trail on way to Tumling. The trail will start through deep pine forest, gradually opening up to the top, from where we can see Darjeeling town and the beautiful eastern skyline. All along the trail we will have the snowcapped mountain ranges on our right side ruling the northern skyline. After crossing two small hills and a grazing meadow we see beautiful Tumling through the forest. Tumling is in the Ilam district of Nepal and we can practically stand with one foot in India and another in Nepal. We stay the night at **Shikhar lodge** owned by **Mrs. Nila Gurung** who is a schoolteacher. She has earned several awards and has featured in Lonely Planet Travel.

Day 3—Tumling 2750 Mtrs to kalapokhri 3010 Mtrs via Joebari and kaiyakata(14 Kms trek)

We wake up early in the morning to witness a beautiful sunrise on Mt Kangchendzonga, have breakfast and prepare for the trek to Kalapokhri. Today we will have a long day as the distance to our next destination is 15 Kms. It is a wonderful trek, which will take us through the Indo-Nepal border. If weather permits we will also get the first glimpse of Mt Everest. The trek starts with a gradual climb for about an hour and then goes down to the town of Joebari (Nepal) where we will take a short break. After that the trail goes down steeply for about 1.5 hrs to Gairibas, which is the Indo-Nepal border check post. The trail climbs up steeply from here and takes us to Kaiyakata where we will have our lunch and then a walk of 2.5 hrs on a very comfortable gradient takes us to Kalapokhri. The name Kalapokhri comes from a pond, which exists at this place, has black water and is revered by the local people. It is said that this small pond never freezes even during the peak winter season. We will be staying in **Chawang Lodge** here, which is maintained by a Tibetan family and is the best place to stay at Kalapokhri.

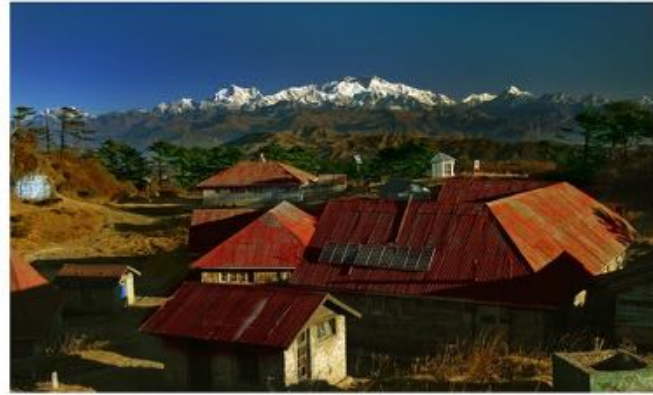
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Day 4—: Kalapokhri 3010 Mtrs to Sandakphu(3636 Mtrs) via beekaybhanjan (6 Kms trek)

We get up early morning and go to the pond to witness a great sunrise, come back have breakfast and start for our final ascent to Sandakphu. This 6 Km trek has an extremely steep gradient and we will be climbing the most from 3010 to 3636 mtrs. The trail from Kalapokhri gradually rises for about 2 kms to reach a place called Beekaybhanjan or “**Land of poisonous plants**”. We take a short break here, have some tea and then start our final, very steep ascent to Sandakphu. We will cross three tops before ascending Sandakphu. Reaching the top is an exhilarating moment for the trekker as suddenly he can't see any mountain on top of him and the feeling of “top of the world” fills his being. We will stay at **Hotel Sherpa Chalet** which is the best hotel here and has well-appointed rooms with attached bath and a very good restaurant. We will call off the day with a small celebration.



Day 5—Sandakphu 3636 Mtrs to Gurdum 2800 Mtrs (11 Kms trek):



We will get up very early in the morning to watch the most beautiful mountain sunrise. Seeing the majestic peaks fill up with sunrises is an experience to behold and cannot be described. After breakfast we start our trek downhill, a beautiful walk through the jungle, with the chirping of birds in the background. We will lose altitude very fast and will see the mountain range gradually vanishing from our visions. A steep downhill walk of 2 more kms will take us to Gurdum, which is a beautiful place in the lap of the mountain. We will halt for the night here at **Himalayan Resort**, which has a beautiful garden and a very good ambiance.

Day 6—Gurdum 2800 Mtrs to Rimbick 2286 Mtrs (11 Kms trek):

After breakfast we start for our final trek to Rimbick. We will hit the Ramam River through the jungle and get to see some beautiful waterfalls. After about 2 hrs, we will come to the mountain settlement of Sirikhola that is situated by the side of the river Siri. We can go down to the riverside, enjoy the view and continue to Rimbick which is another 6 kms of flatline walk. In Rimbick we will stay at **Hotel Sherpa**, the best property in the whole region with well-appointed rooms. In the evening we will officially close the trek with a bonfire, some nice music and a great dinner.

Day 7—Start early morning for Bagdogra airport that is a 6.5 hrs drive and take the onward flight.
Tour ends

The best time to visit this area is from October to February as the weather is very clear with the monsoons retreating, opening up wonderful vistas of the eastern Himalayas with a blue sky background. It would be cold in the winter months, helping preserve energy while trekking. Another good time to undertake this journey will be during March to May to enjoy the full blooms of rhododendrons all along the trail.

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The **per person cost** of the trek to Sandakphu (ex: Bagdogra/ Njp) will be **INR 23,500.00 plus 3.5 pc GOI service tax.**

The above cost is for 6 persons travelling together, the inclusions are mentioned hereunder:

- 1) All transfers in dedicated vehicles-innova/xylo. **Maximum 6 people traveling in one vehicle. Bagdogra to Darjeeling, Darjeeling to Dhotre and Rimbick to Bagdogra**
- 2) All Accommodations on (details given underneath) twin or triple sharing depending on family units
- 3) All meals—bed tea+breakfast+lunch+evening snacks+dinner.
- 4) All food during transit at the best of restaurants.
- 5) Mineral water during the whole tour
- 6) All porter and guide charges(one porter per trekkers)
- 7) All permits(entry into Singalila national park)

Accommodations:

- 1) Darjeeling : Apartment accommodation in Sushma Villas.
- 2) Tumling : Shikhar lodge
- 3) Kalapokhri : Chawang Lodge
- 4) Sandakphu : Hotel Sherpa Chalet
- 5) Gurdum : Himalayan Resort
- 6) Rimbick : Hotel Sherpa

The Above cost will not include the following

1. To and fro Airfare / trainfare
2. Phone calls, laundry and tips
3. Alcoholic beverages
4. Extra cost incurred due to delay in transit as a result of inclement weather or civil disturbances

Payment terms

An amount of INR 10,000 has to be paid as confirmation towards the tour and the rest can be paid 25 days prior to the travel date.

Cancellation Policy

One month before the travel date: full refund of the advance money less deposit

15 days before travel date: 50 % of the advance money will be forfeited

5 days before travel date: no refund

hotels mentioned above are subject to availability at the time of confirmation

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