

South Col Expeditions

Curated Day Walks in West Sikkim

Led by Sujoy Das

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Ghonday Village Resort West Sikkim

Curated Day Walks in West Sikkim (5 days Bagdogra to Bagdogra)

- This trip takes one into an unspoilt part of Western Sikkim free from the bright lights of Gangtok and Changu Lake. Our base is the small village of Kaluk-Rinchinpong with the beautiful and comfortable Ghonday Village Resort. We stay here for four nights and make day trips and day walks around this area in the shadow of Mount Kangchenjunga. This is one of the easy tours in Sikkim which covers the finest views of Kangchenjunga much closer than the views from Darjeeling.
- This trip is a good post covid exercise as people have been housebound for many months and have been looking to get back into the outdoors and breathe some fresh mountain air. It is a spectacular outing in post monsoon weather with clear blue skies and white peaks.
- The costs of this trip is **Rs 45,000/-** all inclusive of taxes and meals are covered. Some exclusions apply. For details please see page 8.



Trip Highlights



- A five day four nights holiday in unspoilt West Sikkim in a covid free environment.
- Walk 3-4 hours a day (5-6 km) and return at night to the beautiful Ghonday Village Resort in Rinchinpong/Kaluk with comfortable rooms, hot showers, good meals and great mountain views.
- Look out on the Kangchenjunga range from your bedroom window.
- Verdant forests of the Eastern Himalaya rich in bird life flowers, ferns and orchids.
- Monastic and village walks give a flavour of Sikkim away from the crowds of Gangtok and Rumtek in east Sikkim.
- Ideal for those of you thinking of a longer trek but need to build confidence with short day walks.

Curated Day Walks in West Sikkim Itinerary Days 1 and 2

- **Day 01 - Bagdogra to Rinchinpong by vehicle (5 hours)**
- We reach Bagdogra by lunchtime and then transfer to our vehicles for the 5 hour drive to Rinchinpong/Kaluk to the Ghonday Village Resort our home for the next four nights. Dinner at the resort with a roaring fire and then to bed for the night. If we are lucky we can see Kangchenjunga by moonlight from our rooms.

- **Day 02: Walk from our resort uphill to Reesum Monastery 2-3 hours and then visit Rinchinpong monastery below.**
- The trail leaves our resort and begins a pleasant steady uphill climb through a forested path. It is a beautiful walk with lots of ferns, lianas, rhododendrons and azaleas. We pass small village houses in the clearing and continue up to the abandoned monastery which is now almost in ruins. There is a very fine view of Kangchenjunga from the monastery on a clear day. We spend some time on the top and then walk down to the Rinchingpong monastery which a fully functioning monastery. From here we can have our transport pick us up and take us for lunch. The afternoon is spent relaxing in our resort garden and chilling out.



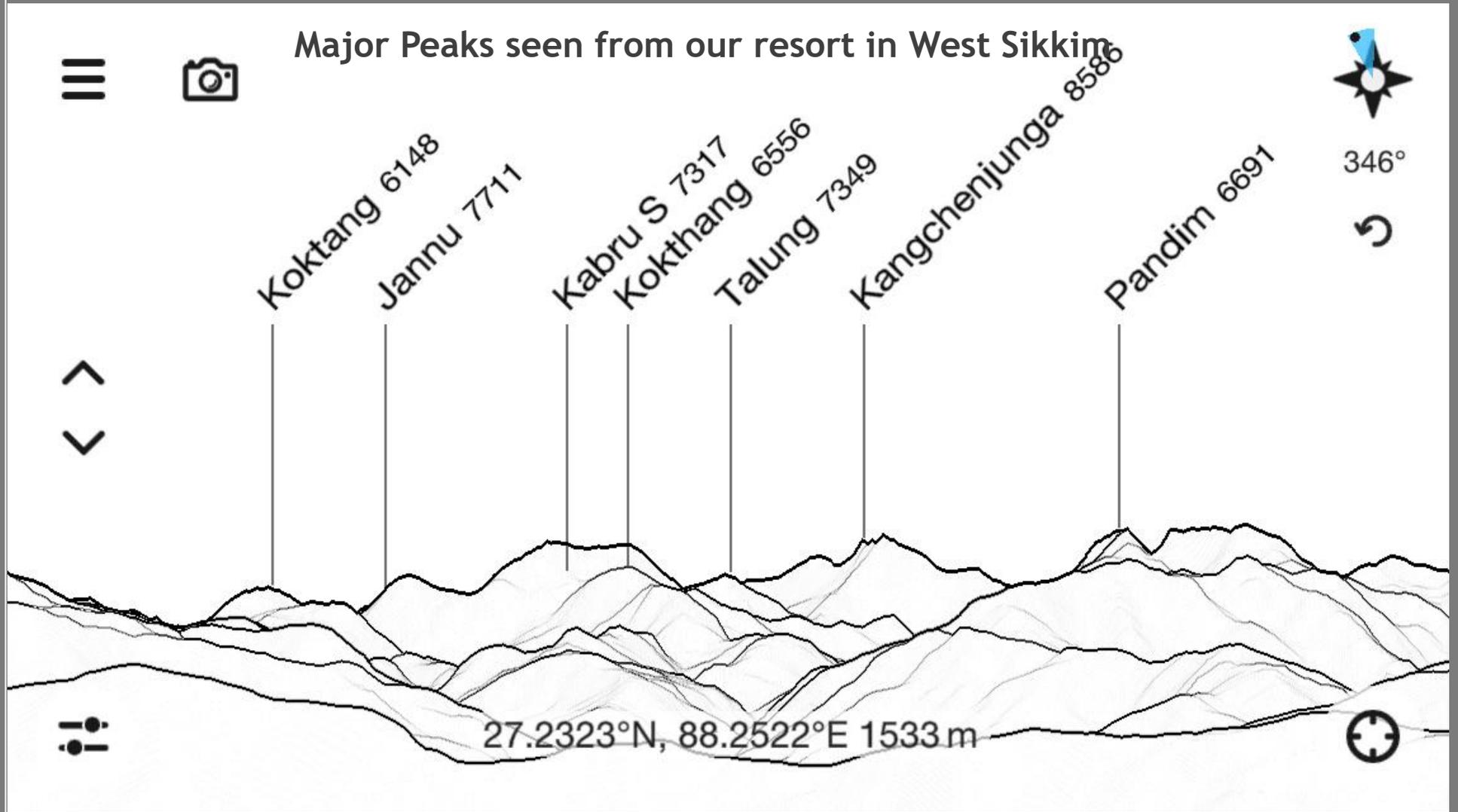
Curated Day Walks in West Sikkim Itinerary Days 3 to 5

- **Day 03: Drive to Uttarey one hour and then do a Uttarey village walk for 2 hours mainly downhill**
- We leave the resort in the morning by 8 am after breakfast and drive to Uttarey 1924 metres past the village of Dentam and the beautiful Singshore bridge. We then drive up 30 minutes from Uttarey to the Hillary Tenzing Memorial Park with the huge statues of the first summiteers of Everest. The car leaves us here and then we walk downhill through small village paths and stone steps passing beautiful houses decked with flowers, local produce and have a first hand chance to view Sikkim village life away from the cities. The walk should take us around 2 hours after which we can have lunch in Uttarey. After lunch we can visit the Trout farm which is around 20 minutes away and then drive back to our resort by late afternoon.
- **Day 04: Drive to Chakung in the morning 45 minutes and then walk up from Chakung to Durpenay Dara one hour up**
- We leave our resort after breakfast around 8.30 am and then drive to Chakung which would take around one hour. We then start our one hour walk uphill to the viewpoint to Durpenay Dara. Thw walk is very peaceful along the ridge with the valley on one side and the forest on the other. We cn also sea lot of birds and butterflies on the way. If the weather is clear we can get a good view from the top. The return is back the same way and we should be in time for lunch at Chakung and return to our hotel by afternoon
- **Day 5 : We leave Rinchinpong by 7 am and are down in Bagdogra by lunch time** - we can have lunch at the airport restaurant and catch our 3 pm flight to Kolkata.
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Curated Day Walks in West Sikkim

Major Peaks seen from our resort in West Sikkim



Curated Day Walks in West Sikkim Costs 2021

- **For Indian Nationals Indian Rs 45,000 /- including taxes**
- The cost is per person for Bagdogra to Bagdogra (5 days) as per the itinerary given.
- Costs given above are at current rates and may change without notice. Changes if any will be notified 3 months before the tour.

Costs include

- All necessary permits including covid permits to enter Sikkim as per the current rules.
- **Four nights hotel stay at Ghoday Village Resort Kaluk/Rinchinpong on a twin sharing basis.**
- **All meals on the tour are covered if we are travelling during the day then packed lunch will be provided.**
- Cost of guide and support staff as needed
- All transport Bagdogra to Bagdogra is covered. Due to covid restrictions only four passengers will be allowed in a Xylo/ Ertiga or Inova.

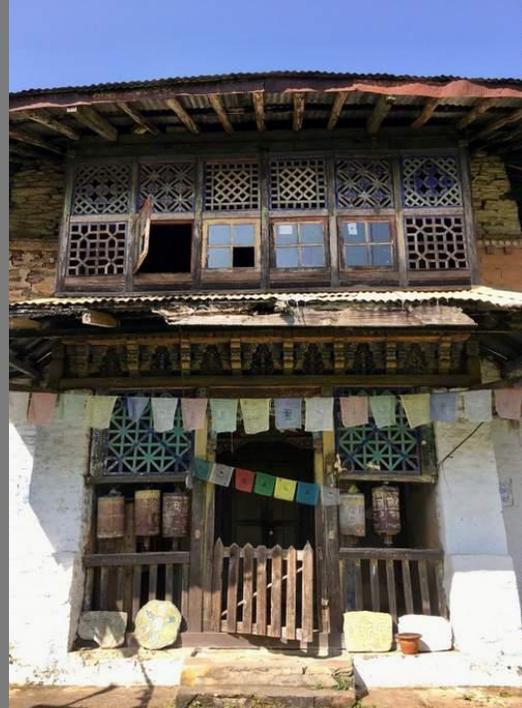
Costs not included

- Flight Cost/Train costs to reach Bagdogra/New Jalpaiguri
- Breakfast or lunch on the way Bagdogra to Rinchinpong and back is not covered.
- Medical insurance of any kind.
- Personal clothing and equipment; medicines for personal use etc.
- Air fare from residence country to India and back
- Cost of covid negative test if needed and any other test like rapid antigen test in Sikkim if required - **presently no covid test is needed for Sikkim.**
- Tips at hotel and to local staff at the end of tour - we will give a guideline on this before the tour.

Why do the Curated Day Walks in Sikkim Tour with South Col?



- South Col is a small, personalized firm specializing in treks and tours in the Himalayan region. **Sujoy is one of the few tourists to have visited the region way back in 1986! Our tour leaders have a huge experience with Sikkim and this tour.**
- We are keenly aware of the fragility of environment and cultures in which we tour and recognize our responsibility in maintaining them. "Take pictures, leave only foot prints" is our motto.
- Our clients get personalized attention both in the planning stage as well as during the tour itself and put a lot of emphasis on the safety of our team.
- Support team of guides and porters as needed are personally supervised by the tour leader to ensure that the clients are comfortable and well looked after.



Covid Protocol

Sikkim has only around 400 active covid cases in the state as of now and it is going down daily. Most of these cases are in the capital Gangtok and east Sikkim – the area which we visit West Sikkim has few cases in single digits. Life is normal here with proper safety measures like masks, sanitisers and distancing.

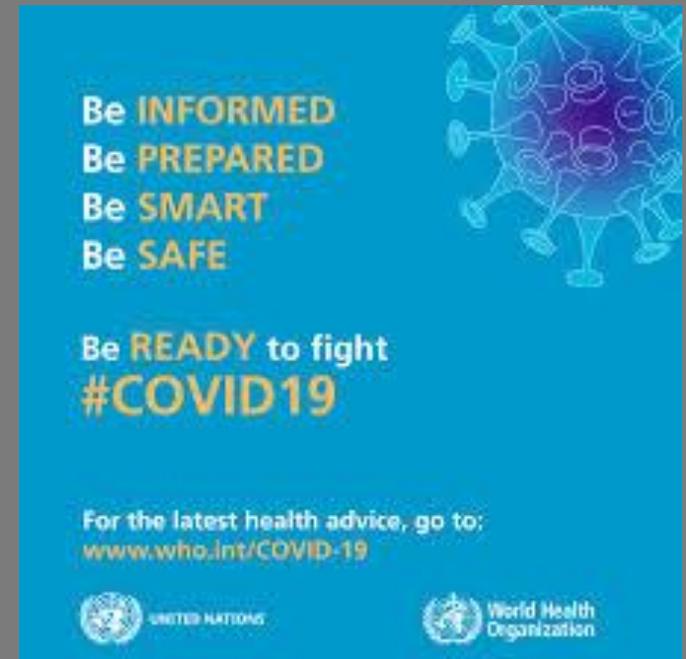
Normal airport protocol like masks, shields and sanitisers to be followed. Prebook seats in the front rows of the aircraft. Board the aircraft last and get out first.

Transport will be sanitised with a plastic shield between the drivers and passengers cabins. Only four passengers to a vehicle – air con will not be used as it is very pleasant weather.

Our resort is maintaining all covid safety standards including sanitisers, spray machines for luggage, rooms are checked and sheets and towels changed daily. Staff is serving meals with masks even though there is no covid cases in the area.

As we will be walking in remote areas we are likely to be the only walkers there so masks while walking may not be needed.

▪Sikkim does not need a covid negative test but travellers joining this tour should be responsible enough to check that they have no symptoms of cough, cold, fever or any other covid like symptoms before starting out.



Curated Day Walks in West Sikkim FAQ

How fit do I have to be to do a tour? Whilst you do not need to be super-fit, you need to be fit enough to comfortably walk for 2-3 hours per day in the mountains on reasonable trails. You will definitely need to walk for around an hour at least every day to get fit. Walking uphill/stairs etc also helps a great deal.

What is a typical group? Will I fit in? Groups range in size from 6 up to 12, and typically comprise a range of nationalities and experience. So far, all of our groups have got along very well. One of the attractions of such a trip is the chance to meet people with different backgrounds and personalities.

Do I need to buy special equipment? For this tour no special equipment is needed - the altitude is never more than 2000 metres and mostly the tour is between 1500-1800 metres. Usually our clients simply bring their existing clothing and equipment. Please check the equipment list which we will send out.

What type of shoes or boots should I wear? The proper foot wear depends on the tour. These day walks can be done in sneakers but it would help to have a shoe with a slightly heavier upper and sole. Having said that you will find locals doing these walks in flip flops.

What will the weather be like? November is the post monsoon season so we expect clear sunny days and cold nights. Temperatures in the day can range between 15 and 18 degrees Celsius while nights would be between 6 and 8 Celsius. Sunny days clear nights are expected. Once the sun is up it can get quite warm while walking.



Terms and Conditions

CANCELLATION POLICY

- The cancellation policy and refunds available are given below:
- 0-7 days before the start of the tour = 75%
- 8 -15 days before the start of the tour = 50%
- 16-30 days before the start of the tour = 35%
- 31-45 days before the start of the tour = 30%
- 46 days and above = 20%

IN CASE OF LEAVING THE GROUP

- If due to illness or any other reason a client has to leave the group and go down or wait at a lodge for the group to pick him/her up on the way back, all expenses including lodging, fooding and any porter/guide related expenses if any are to be borne by the individual client over and above the tour fees paid for the tour. There are also no refunds for leaving a tour before completion.

LODGES/CAMPING SITES ON THE TOUR

- The choice of lodges/camping sites to be used on the tour will be decided by South Col and clients will have to stay at these designated lodges/camps. Clients are not permitted to choose their own lodges on the route.

TOUR ROUTE AND ITINERARY

- The tour route and day wise schedule will be fixed by South Col and will have to be followed by the client.

RISKS AND LIABILITY

- The tour is in a mountain area and has certain additional dangers and risks, some of which include: physical exertion for which the client should be prepared; weather extremes subject to sudden and unexpected changes; remoteness from normal medical services - In the event of injury or illness South Col Expeditions (Sujoy Das) or its Staff can, at the clients cost arrange any medical treatment and emergency evacuation service as it or they deem necessary for the health and safety of the client.





South Col Founder Profile

Sujoy Das has been touring and photographing in the Himalayas for more than thirty five years.

His notable tours include: Winter ascent of Kala Pattar peak (Everest region) Dec 2003; Everest Base Camp 18,500 feet (2001); Thorung-la pass/Annapurna Circuit 17,746 feet (2000); Annapurna Base Camp 14,300 feet (1999); Gokyo Ri peak Everest region 18,275 feet (1998); Rupkund Lake, Garhwal 16,200 feet (1996); Kangchendzonga Base Camp North and Green Lakes 16,875 feet (1987); Dorji La peak North Sikkim 18,644 feet (1986); crossing of Lhonak-la pass North Sikkim (1987).

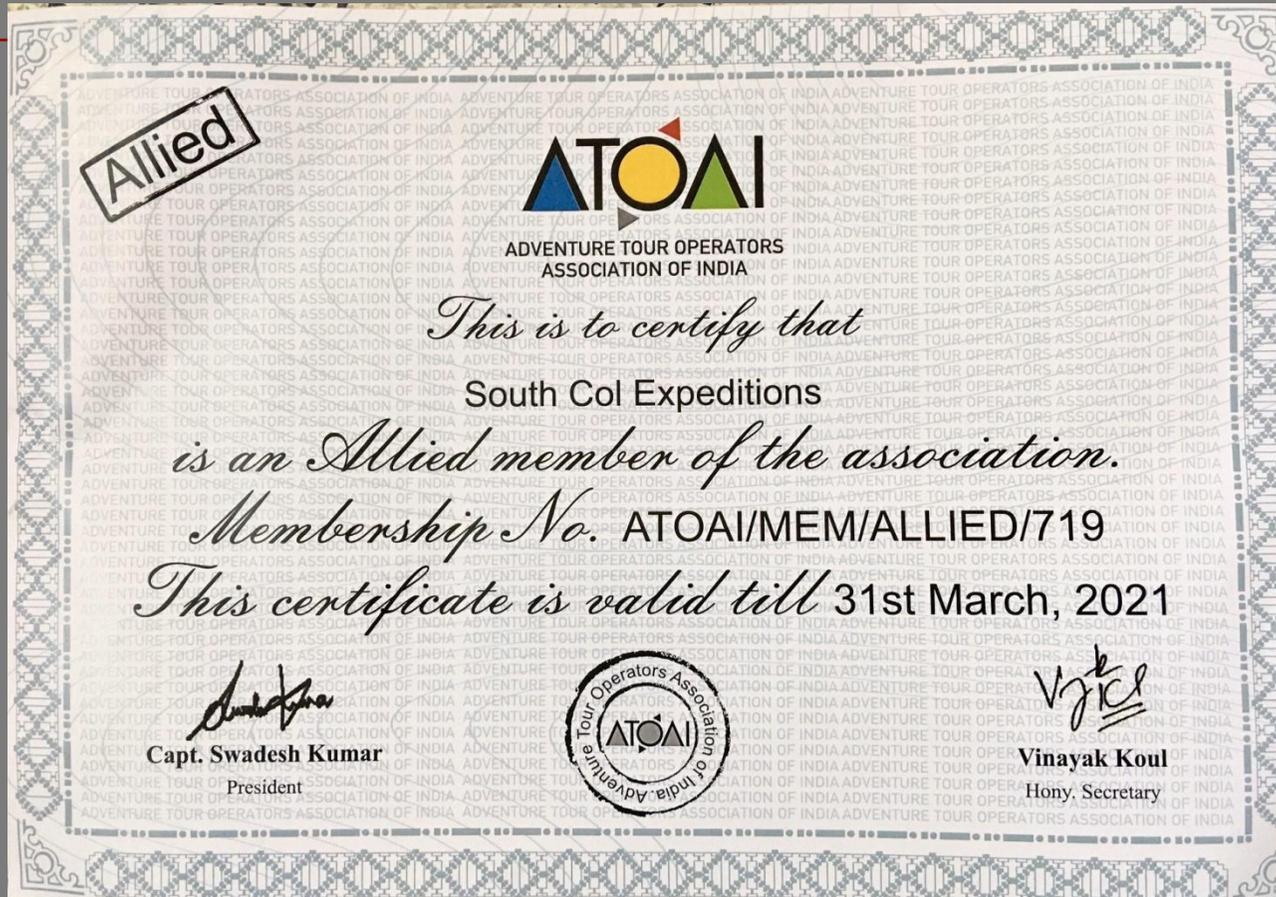
He has visited the Annapurna region a dozen times including three visits to the Base Camp and the entire circuit of Annapurna. He has trekked in the Everest region more than fifteen times including the winter of 2003-04. In the Eastern Himalaya he has trekked the Singalila ridge of Sandakphu and Phalut six times and made four visits to the alp of Dzongri in West Sikkim. In September 2009 he walked across seven passes in Ladakh from the monastery of Lamayuru to Padum in Zaskar.

He has been an invited speaker at the Mussoorie Mountain Festival 2017 and Mountain Echoes - the Bhutan Literary Festival 2019.

He is the joint author and photographer of a number of books like Sikkim- A Travellers Guide, Nepal Himalaya - A Journey Through Time, Everest Reflections on the Solukhumbu, Lonely Planet - Nepal for the Indian Traveller. His essays and photographs have been published in books and magazines worldwide. To view his photographs of the Himalaya please visit www.sujoydas.com. He can be contacted at sujoyrdas@gmail.com



Membership



Om Mani Peme Hung!

