



TOUR PROSPECTUS

This prospectus sets out the contents of the tour and together with the Booking Conditions and Booking Form is the basis of our contract with you.

Sikkim **2 - 18 March 2012** **Tour 1167**

The tiny Himalayan state of Sikkim, nestling between Nepal and Bhutan, is a world apart from the stifling plains of lowland India. Here the mountain air is fresh, and the hills, against a backdrop of snowy peaks, are clothed in pine forests, rhododendrons and tea plantations. An independent Buddhist kingdom until 1975, Sikkim retains its own unique character. Populated by less than half a million mainly Nepali speaking mountain dwellers, this is India's last Shangri La. The terrain is very hilly with long climbs and a couple of steep descents, but the daily distances are modest. Road conditions are variable with some very rough sections. There will be vehicle support for luggage transfer with space for several riders and their bikes if necessary and the services of an English speaking local guide.

Itinerary

- Fri 2 Mar Fly from London Heathrow to Delhi on Virgin Airlines flight VS300, departing at 2200.
- Sat 3 Mar Arrive Delhi at 1145. Vehicle transfer from airport to hotel. Stay 1 night.
- Sun 4 Mar Transfer to Delhi domestic airport for Kingfisher Airlines flight to Bagdogra, departing 0915, arriving Bagdogra 1115. Vehicle transfer to hotel in Siliguri. Prepare bikes. Stay 1 night.
- Mon 5 Mar Cycle to Kurseong. Stay 1 night.
- Tues 6 Mar Cycle to Darjeeling. Stay 1 night.
- Wed 7 Mar Cycle to Nayar Bazaar. Stay 1 night
- Thurs 8 Mar Cycle to Pelling. Visit monastery. Stay 1 night.
- Fri 9 Mar Cycle to Yuksom via Khechiopalri Lake. Stay 1 night
- Sat 10 Mar Cycle to Ravangla. Stay 1 night.
- Sun 11 Mar Cycle to Mangan via Dikshu. Stay 1 night.
- Mon 12 Mar Cycle to Gangtok. Stay 2 nights.
- Tues 13 Mar Day at leisure in Gangtok.
- Wed 14 Mar Cycle to Rumtek. Visit monastery.
- Thurs 15 Mar Cycle to Kalimpong. Stay 1 night.
- Fri 16 Mar Cycle to Damdim. Short vehicle transfer to Chulsa. Prepare bikes for journey home. Stay 1 night.
- Sat 17 Mar Vehicle transfer (60kms) to Bagdogra for Kingfisher Airlines flight to Delhi departing 1250, arriving Delhi 1630. Vehicle transfer to hotel. Stay 1 night.
- Sun 18 Mar Morning vehicle transfer to Delhi airport for Virgin Airlines flight VS301 to London Heathrow departing at 1400, arriving London at 1740.

Distances: 50 – 100kms

Luggage carrying

A support vehicle for the transfer of luggage will accompany the group on all moving-on days. There will be space for several riders and bikes if necessary.

Accommodation and meals

The accommodation will be in hotels of 2-4 star rating, based on two people sharing a room. Breakfast, lunch and evening meal are included on all cycling days; breakfast and evening meal will be included on all other days.



Price - £1965

The price is based on a minimum number of 16 participants taking part in the tour; please note Booking Conditions, clause 4). If there are insufficient bookings by the closing date of 23 December 2011 we will contact you and return all monies paid, though in certain circumstances the tour may still run at below minimum numbers but at the same price.

Price includes:

- Return flights London Heathrow to Delhi
- Internal flights Delhi to Bagdogra and from Bagdogra to Delhi
- Coach transfers between airports and hotels as per the Itinerary; luggage transfer all days
- 15 nights hotels, half board, sharing rooms
- Light lunches on cycling days
- The services of an English-speaking guide throughout the tour
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price does not include:

- Travel to and from London Heathrow
- Meals in transit
- Drinks with evening meals; lunches on non-cycling days
- Visa and inner line permit costs – budget £45 (see leaders information)
- Entry fees to any attractions; other fees, taxes or gratuities
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance

Passports, Visas and Health

EU citizens must hold a passport that is still valid for at least six months at the end of the tour. A visa is required for EU passport holders. Holders of non-EU passports are advised to check whether they require a visa.

There are no compulsory vaccinations for EU residents although it is strongly recommended that you are vaccinated against: Typhoid; Hepatitis A and B. Tetanus and polio vaccinations should also be up to date at the time of travel. You should contact your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel to obtain these vaccinations and the latest advice to travellers.

Payment schedule

A deposit of £200 per person must accompany the Booking Form, with an interim payment of £300 per person due by 31 July 2011 and the final balance of £1465 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 23 December 2011. Cheques should be made payable to **CTC Tours** or complete the credit/debit card slip in the booking pack.

Cancellations

Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

Written notice received:	Cancellation charge:
Before 31 July 2011	Deposit (£ 200)
31 July to 23 December 2011	26% (£ 500)
24 December 2011 through to departure	100% (£1965)

To make a booking

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form together with your deposit and the relevant part of the Travel Insurance Declaration Form **directly to the leader** (address on Booking Form).

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you are adequately insured for this tour.

Whether you already hold a policy or will be taking out a new one, the cover it offers must be comparable to that stated in clause 8 of the Booking Conditions, and you must complete the enclosed Insurance Declaration Form and return it with your Booking Form.

CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd can accept no responsibility for any costs you may incur due to insufficient insurance cover.

LEADER'S INFORMATION SHEET

The information below is given by the tour leader to help enquirers decide if the tour is suitable for them.

Sikkim
2 - 18 March 2012
Tour 1167

The area covered by the Tour

The cycling starts from Siliguri in West Bengal. We will cycle north to Darjeeling, an atmospheric Victorian hill station surrounded by manicured tea plantations and magnificent mountain views, before crossing into Sikkim, India's smallest state. It covers barely 7000 sq kms and has a population of less than 600,000. This tour sets out to explore most of the state accessible by road. The terrain is mountainous with views of some of the world's most magnificent peaks, including Kanchenjunga. The scenery is lush and green with steep forested hills and terraced rice paddies, and dotted with villages.

Rides and rest days

This tour is best suited to experienced enthusiast cyclists with a sense of adventure. Daily mileages are not excessive to allow for the difficult terrain. There are climbs on all days, two very steep descents and road surfaces are poor in places. Re-routing or itinerary changes are sometimes necessary in the Himalaya. We will reach Pelling with time to visit the monastery, and there is a rest day at Rumtek.

It is not practical to ride as one group, and riding in smaller groups of similar speed and ability is recommended, re-grouping occasionally. You will be supplied with a map and route information.



Accommodation / Meals

We have reserved the best accommodation available at most locations. Some hotels are 4 star, and all are clean and comfortable with hot water and en-suite facilities.

Visas

It is necessary that all travellers to India obtain a tourist visa before departure from the UK. You cannot get a visa by post or directly from the Indian Embassies in London or Birmingham. All applications are outsourced to VFS Global - see in.vfsglobal.co.uk/ where application forms can be completed online. Budget £35. Sikkim is a restricted area, and an inner line permit is required – budget £10.

Group information

The maximum group size will be 20 including the leaders.

Weather and Clothing

The weather should be mainly fine and warm, but the evenings can be cool in the north. However you will be cycling in the foothills of the Himalaya, and weather can be unpredictable, so come prepared for cool mornings and evenings and the possibility of cycling in rain.

Cycles / Equipment

Due to poor road surfaces in places, a lightweight mountain bike or robust touring bike would be the best options, well maintained and fitted with good wheels and fairly wide tyres (not less than 1½ inches). You will not need to carry luggage, but a bar bag or rack-top pack will be useful for spare clothing, camera, sun lotion, snacks etc. You should be able to carry a water bottle. It is advisable to fit a calibrated cycle computer, as this will aid navigation. Lights should not be necessary. Each participant will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs. Once we leave Delhi, cycle spares will not be available on route.

Helmets are not mandatory but if you do *not* intend to wear one, please check that your travel insurance will cover you in the event of a claim.

Maps

There are no accurate maps of Sikkim but If you wish to purchase your own map, we have used Insight Reinsen East Himalaya. A copy of a map showing the route will be provided.

The “Lonely Planet Northeast India” is a useful source of information – ISBN978-1-74179-095-5.

Money

The currency in Sikkim is the Indian Rupee. There are approximately 70 rupees to £1. Sterling or US Dollars can be exchanged for Indian Rupees at Delhi airport. Drinks and snacks should cost no more than £10 per day, and budget £20 for crew tips.

Travel Insurance and Advice

Make sure you have read Clause 8 in the Booking Conditions. Before booking you should check the Foreign Office ‘Travel Advice by Country’ at www.fco.gov.uk or on 0845 850 2829.

About the leaders

We are both enthusiastic cyclists and have been CTC members for 19 years. We have led tours to many worldwide destinations, and each year we look forward not only to the reunion with regular travelling companions but also get great satisfaction from introducing new members to the unique camaraderie of CTC holidays. We do not have a set style of leadership but adapt to suit the needs of the group. We encourage all prospective participants to contact us to talk through the tour prior to booking.

Note: The leaders are travelling on to Vietnam to join a group. Arrangements will be made for the group to be picked up from the hotel and taken to the airport on Sunday morning, 18 March.

John and Pat Ashwell

2 The Retreat, Off Camp Road, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, BS23 2EN

Telephone: 01934 746638 - Mobile 07766 091627

comebiking@btinternet.com

www.comebiking.com