



## 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.

# **India – Sikkim**

## **15 - 31 October 2010**

### **Tour 1056**

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 15 Oct	Fly from London Heathrow to Delhi on Virgin Airlines flight VS300, departing at 2200.
Sat 16 Oct	Arrive Delhi at 1145. Vehicle transfer from airport to hotel. Stay 1 night.
Sun 17 Oct	Transfer to Delhi domestic airport for Kingfisher Airlines flight to Bagdogra departing 0915, arriving Bagdogra 1115. Vehicle transfer to hotel close to airport. Prepare bikes. Stay 1 night.
Mon 18 Oct	Cycle part way to Darjeeling. Stay 1 night.
Tues 19 Oct	Cycle on to Darjeeling. Stay 2 nights.
Wed 20 Oct	Day at leisure in Darjeeling. Optional train ride.
Thurs 21 Oct	Cycle to Bisthang. Stay 1 night.
Fri 22 Oct	Cycle to Pelling. Visit monastery. Stay 1 night.
Sat 23 Oct	Cycle to Yuksom via Khechiopalri Lake. Stay 1 night.
Sun 24 Oct	Cycle to Ravangla. Stay 1 night.
Mon 25 Oct	Cycle to Gangtok. Stay 1 night.
Tues 26 Oct	Cycle to Singhik near Mangan. Stay 1 night.
Wed 27 Oct	Cycle to Rumtek via Dikshu. Stay 2 nights.
Thurs 28 Oct	Day at leisure at lovely Teen Tealey eco resort. Visit monastery.
Fri 29 Oct	Cycle to Kalimpong. Prepare bikes for journey home. Stay 1 night.
Sat 30 Oct	Vehicle transfer (50kms) to Bagdogra for Kingfisher Airlines flight to Delhi departing 1145, arriving Delhi 1530. Vehicle transfer to hotel. Stay 1 night.
Sun 31 Oct	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 - £1850

The price is based on a minimum number of 14 participants taking part in the tour and is calculated at a rate of 1.61 US Dollars to £1 sterling (based on exchange rates published on [www.x-rates.com](http://www.x-rates.com) on 19 September 2009; please note Booking Conditions, clause 4). If there are insufficient bookings by the closing date of 31 July 2010, 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 flight from London Heathrow to Delhi
- Internal flights Delhi to Bagdogra and from Bagdogra to Delhi
- Coach transfers between airports and hotels as per the Itinerary
- Support vehicle to transfer luggage
- 15 nights hotel accommodation, half board, sharing rooms
- Light lunches on cycling days
- The services of an English-speaking guide throughout the tour
- Route information
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

#### Price does not include:

- Travel to and from London Heathrow
- Meals in transit
- Drinks with lunches and evening meals
- Lunches on non-cycling days
- VISA and inner line permit costs – budget £55 (see leaders information)
- Gratuities for support crew – budget £20 (optional)
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance

## Payment schedule

A deposit of £200 per person must accompany the Booking Form and an interim payment of £300 per person is due by 31 March 2010. The final balance of £1350 per person is to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 31 July 2010. 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 March 2010	Deposit (£ 200)
31 March 2010 to 31 July 2010	27% (£ 500)
1 August 2010 through to departure	100% (£1850)

## 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).

### 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.

### 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.

### **India – Sikkim** **15 - 31 October 2010** **Tour 1056**

#### **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 covering barely 7000 sq km with 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 steep forested hills and terraced rice paddies, 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. There are rest days in Darjeeling and Rumtek, and we will reach Pelling with time to visit the monastery.

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. All distances stated in the Itinerary are approximate, as the route has not been previously ridden.



#### **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 have now been outsourced to VFS Global - see <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/> where application forms must be completed online. Budget £35. Sikkim is a restricted area, and an inner line permit is required – budget £20.

#### **Group information**

The maximum group size will be 18 including the leaders.

#### **Weather and Clothing**

We will be travelling in high season so 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 would be the best option, 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.

## Money

The currency in Sikkim is the Indian Rupee. There are approximately 80 rupees to £1. Sterling or US Dollars can be exchanged for Indian Rupees at Delhi airport or the hotel in Delhi. Drinks and snacks should cost no more than £10 per day, and budget £20 for crew tips.

## 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.

## Travel Insurance and Advice

Information on CTC Cyclecover Travel Insurance is available from CTC (0870 873 0068) or can be found at [www.cyclecover.co.uk](http://www.cyclecover.co.uk).

Before booking you should check the Foreign Office ‘Travel Advice by Country’ at [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) or on 0845 850 2829.

## About the leaders

We are both enthusiastic cyclists and have been CTC members for 18 years. We have led tours to many worldwide destinations. Each year we look forward 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.

## John and Pat Ashwell

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