



Sikkim

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Best Places to Sleep

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Best Monasteries

- ➔ Resum Gompa (p558)
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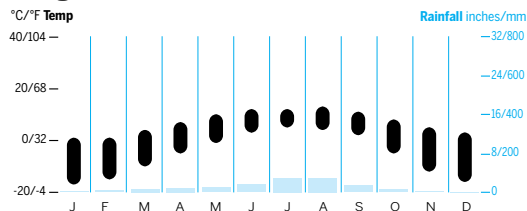
Why Go?

Sikkim was its own mountain kingdom till 1975 and still retains a very distinctive personality. The meditative, mural-filled traditional monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism coexist with Hindu shrines of the ever-growing Nepali community, both religions creating some astonishing latter-day mega-sculptures to adorn the skyline.

Hassle-free and warm-hearted, it's a state that's all too easy to fall in love with, explaining perhaps why permit regulations prevent foreigners staying too long or going too far. Clean, green and 'all organic' since 2016, Sikkim is mostly a maze of plunging, super-steep valleys thick with lush subtropical woodlands and rhododendron groves, rising in the north to the spectacular white-top peaks of the eastern Himalaya. When clouds clear, an ever-thrilling experience from many a ridgetop perch is spotting the world's third-highest mountain, Khangchendzonga (8598m), on the northwestern dawn horizon.

When to Go

Gangtok



Apr & May Beautiful spring blossoms, partly clear skies, high-season crowds.

Mid-Jun-Sep Monsoon plays spoilsport, but there are great discounts on offer.

Mid-Oct-mid-Nov Clearest weather for fabulous views but gets cold at altitude.



Sikkim Highlights

- 1 Yuksom** (p554) Planning short hikes or Himalayan treks from this cosy, historic village.
- 2 Yumthang Valley** (p548) Driving through a kaleidoscope of sceneries to and through this picture-perfect valley.
- 3 Buddha Park** (p550) Gazing at Ravangla's giant, serene Buddha statue, backed

- by white-topped peaks and serenaded with piped mantras.
- 4 Kuluk** (p558) Waking up to dazzling Khangchendzonga views.
- 5 Namchi** (p549) Finding a gigantic Shiva statue overshadowing a selection of India's greatest Hindu temples all recreated on a ridge.

- 6 Rinchenpong** (p558) Exploring half-forgotten monasteries with stunning views.
- 7 Tashiding Gumpa** (p557) Wandering among prayer flags, flower hedges and ancient chortens (stupas).
- 8 Dzongu** (p547) Learning about Lepcha culture in an authentic Dzongu homestay.