

Enchanting North Bengal



Embark upon a beautiful journey into the depths of Bengal's crowning glory



Chairman's note

The 2020 pandemic highlighted the critical need of tourism as a crucial pillar of development. It also shifted the global traveller's focus to the magic of the hyper-local.

Even in the realm of international tourism, the world observed a resurgence among globe-trotters of 'seeking the unknown' in the most popular of travel destinations.

This makes us rediscover the opportunity to showcase our beautiful North Bengal, which offers a treasure trove of travel options to lose ourselves in the arms of nature.

Escape into the woods, feel the snow, trek the hills, be amazed by the heritage, take in the grandeur of the Himalayas, or just lose yourselves in the vales. Here's presenting the mystical land of North Bengal, waiting to be explored.

The aura, the misty hues, the rolling greens and the stunning blue. Nature's medley and man-made architectural wonders abound in the crowning glory of Bengal.

Welcome to the magic of North Bengal. Wish you a Happy Journey!

Harshavardhan Neotia
Chairman, Ambuja Neotia

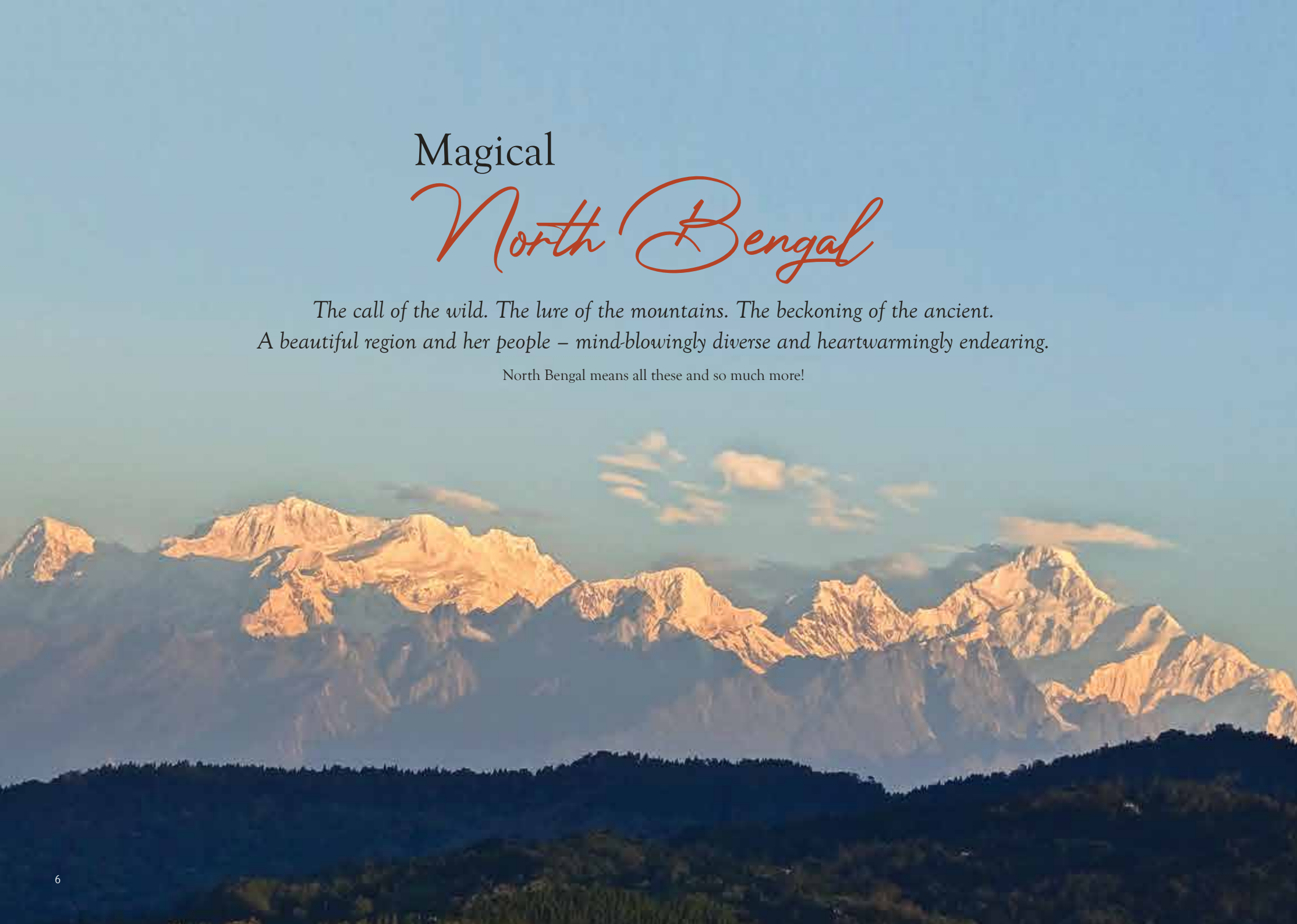


Resham firiri, Resham firiri
Udera jau ki danda ma bhanjyang, resham firiri
Resham firiri, resham firiri
Udera jau ki danda ma bhanjyang, resham firiri
(My heart is flying like silk in the wind, I cannot decide whether to fly or sit still on the hilltop)

Magical North Bengal

*The call of the wild. The lure of the mountains. The beckoning of the ancient.
A beautiful region and her people – mind-blowingly diverse and heartwarminglly endearing.*

North Bengal means all these and so much more!



Encircled by international boundaries of Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, the northern half of West Bengal is like a hidden gem to a soul filled with wanderlust.

Where hills, jungles, rivers, valleys, tea gardens, cities and villages come together with a diverse blend of cultures and cuisines to entice the footloose in us.

Think verdant fields, alpine peaks, and sunrise on snow! Elephants and leopards, rhinos and red panda, rhododendron and rauwolfia. Birds and butterflies, ferns and orchids. Mangoes and oranges, chillies and chai. The rich bio-diversity will blow your mind away!

The beautiful mosaic of people of different ethnicities offers a montage of heart-warming experiences.

Come, embark upon a beautiful journey into the depths of Bengal's crowning glory – let's explore North Bengal!

Their temples and monasteries, churches and mosques. Their food and music, artworks and handicraft. Their sincere hospitality with an infectious smile that spells home, away from home.

North Bengal is a traveller's sweet spot. A tourist's dream sojourn. Where some of the best and virgin destinations are nestled for you to visit solo or with your loved ones.

This book gives you a peek into the myriad activities and possibilities for a traveler and explorer in North Bengal, across the districts of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Coochbehar, North & South Dinajpur and Malda.





Adventure Tourism



Fun and exciting. Exhilarating and humbling.
Pushing the boundaries. Getting off the comfort zone...
to feel the thrill.

North Bengal, with her snow-clad peaks, fast gushing
rivers and dense forests, offers ample thrill to try a range
of adrenaline-pumping adventure sports and activities
– both for the pro and the uninitiated.



Paragliding

Where: In Darjeeling (St. Pauls-Lebong Ground; Tukvar Tea Garden-Jaumney Grounds). In Kalimpong (Dello Hills)

Best time: April to June, and October; open on all days, 9am to 4pm. Very windy and cloudy/rainy days are not ideal for paragliding.

What to expect: Feel like a bird up above the rolling valleys, with the cold breeze on your cheek, your heart racing, and a stunning view of the paradise beneath. Known as Tandem Paragliding, you will be accompanied by a certified instructor on such flights.



White Water Rafting

Where: The Teesta-Rangeet confluence or Triveni, near the town of Teesta Bazar in Kalimpong district. Routes for non-swimmers: Melli to 29th Mile, Melli to Kalijhora. Routes for swimmers: Tarkhola to Melli, Tarkhola to 29th Mile. Rafting of all difficulty levels (Class I to Class V rafting) is done here.

Best time: December to June. 7am to 5pm daily

What to expect: Feel the rush as you navigate through turbulent rapids and foaming waters. Try to take in the amazing beauty of the dense Dansong forests along the shores.

What's White Water? When flowing water hits obstacles such as rocks in the riverbed or when the gradient of a river increases, water gets mixed with air because of turbulence, forming aerated water which looks white.



Kayaking & Camping

Where: Along the streams of Rammam and Chhota Rangeet rivers at Singla, about 25km from Darjeeling.

Best time: December to June. Day trips include a picnic by the riverside. For overnight kayaking, camp by the riverside over a crackling bonfire and a barbecue.

What to expect: Wear a lifejacket, park yourself in a solo or two-seater canoe, paddle and maneuver your way downstream or upstream, while soaking in the beauty of nature. Forward stroke or sculling draw — pick your master stroke to glide like a pro! No worries, there are trained guides to assist.

Note: Besides riverside camping, one can opt for independent camping on the hills as part of trekking trails.



Rock Climbing

Where: Tenzing and Gombu Rocks on Lebong Cart Road, Darjeeling (for amateurs and enthusiasts)

Best time: September to June, 8am to 5pm daily

What to expect: Climb the same rock that the famous mountaineer Tenzing Norgay once did without any equipment. Trained guides will share tips and tricks for scaling a steep climb. Sturdy shoes are a must, as you need to trek.





Mountain Biking

Where: The only Mountain Biking Park in India, a 20km cycling trail through Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary with its main gate at Jorebungalow near Ghoom, and back gate in Chatakpur. Other Mountain Biking destinations include Lamahatta, Pokhribong, Maneybhanjan and Kurseong.

Best time: October to April, sunrise to sunset. The trail remains shut during the monsoons.

What to expect: There are several trails graded according to difficult terrain. Wear your helmet, and bike through the pine forests, spotting birds and wild animals, and pausing for some astounding views of the Himalayas on the way. The highest point of this trail is at an elevation of 2,600 metres!



Ropeway in Darjeeling

Where: Rangeet Valley Cable Car atop the Little Rangeet river, plying between North Point in Darjeeling and Singla on the banks of Rammam River.

Best time: September to June, 9.30am to 4pm daily

What to expect: Panoramic views of the beautiful river valley, tea gardens and the Himalayas including Kanchenjunga — all with an adrenaline-high!



Hot Air Balloon Ride

Where: Jamuni, a 45-minute ride from Darjeeling

Best time: October to May, when visibility is the highest with clear sky; 4pm to 6pm daily.

What to expect: Soar like an eagle. Glide like an albatross. While being snugly parked in a basket lifted by a hot air balloon. Enjoy the bird's eye view of the hilly terrains, meandering rivers and lush valleys. Pretty and spectacular, you bet!



Watchtower Tourism

Where: Across sanctuaries and reserve forests of North Bengal, like Jatrapsad, Chapramari, Medla and Chukchuki watch tower in Gorumara among others.

Best time: November to March, early morning slots preferably

What to expect: Wait with bated breath to sight the elusive wildlife in these forests. Hear catcalls and use binoculars to view animals from afar. All from the safety and height of a forest watchtower.





Trekking and Hiking

In the entire gamut of adventure tourism, trekking and hiking are perhaps the most popular ones. And why not? As Mary David had said, “To walk in nature is to witness a thousand miracles.”

From half-a-day’s hike to weeklong expeditions – North Bengal leaves you spoilt for choice. Bonus: Mesmerizing views of the grand Eastern Himalayas!

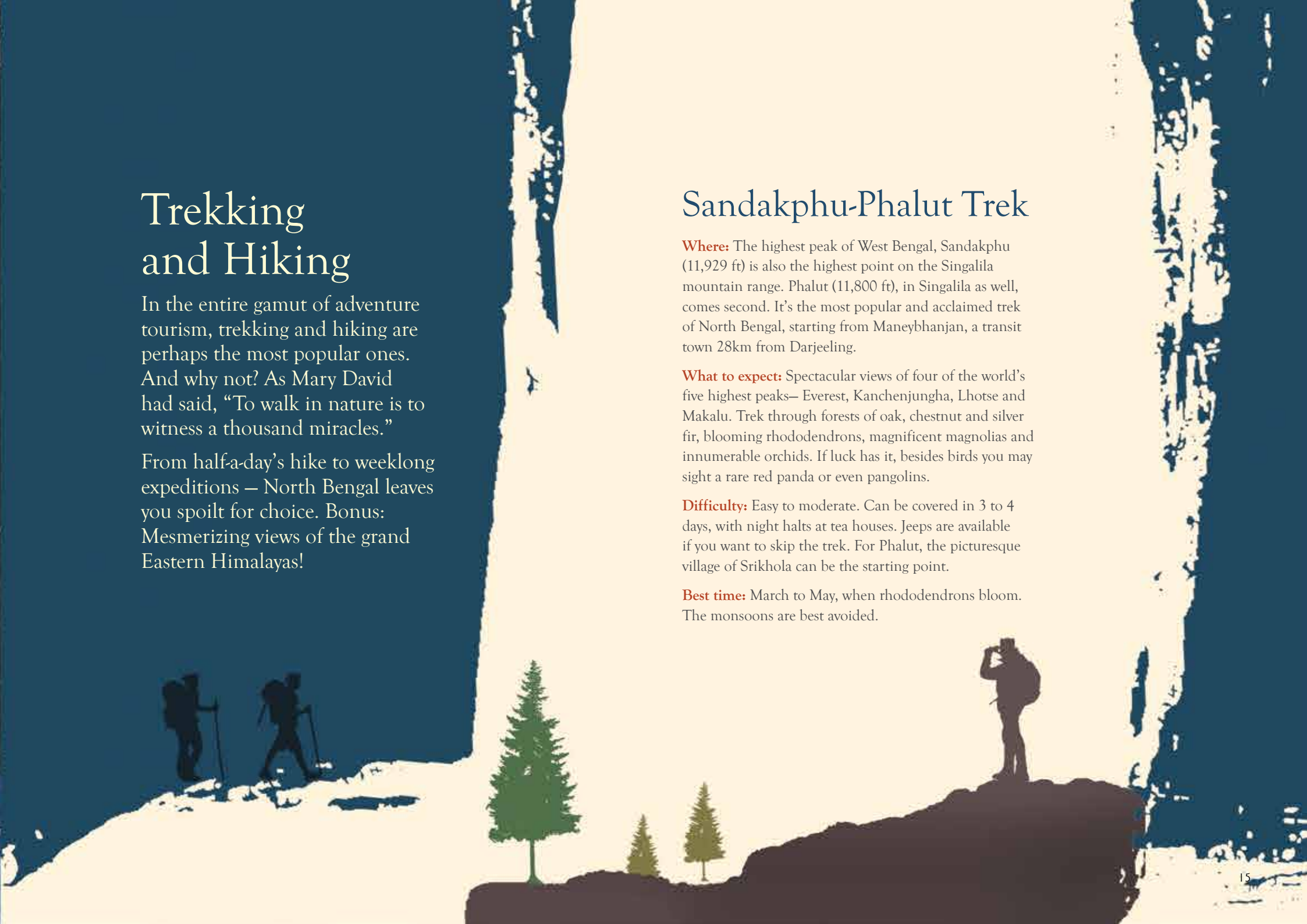
Sandakphu-Phalut Trek

Where: The highest peak of West Bengal, Sandakphu (11,929 ft) is also the highest point on the Singalila mountain range. Phalut (11,800 ft), in Singalila as well, comes second. It’s the most popular and acclaimed trek of North Bengal, starting from Maneybhanjan, a transit town 28km from Darjeeling.

What to expect: Spectacular views of four of the world’s five highest peaks— Everest, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse and Makalu. Trek through forests of oak, chestnut and silver fir, blooming rhododendrons, magnificent magnolias and innumerable orchids. If luck has it, besides birds you may sight a rare red panda or even pangolins.

Difficulty: Easy to moderate. Can be covered in 3 to 4 days, with night halts at tea houses. Jeeps are available if you want to skip the trek. For Phalut, the picturesque village of Srikhola can be the starting point.

Best time: March to May, when rhododendrons bloom. The monsoons are best avoided.





Other popular treks

Tonglu to Maneybhanjan via Chitrey Trek

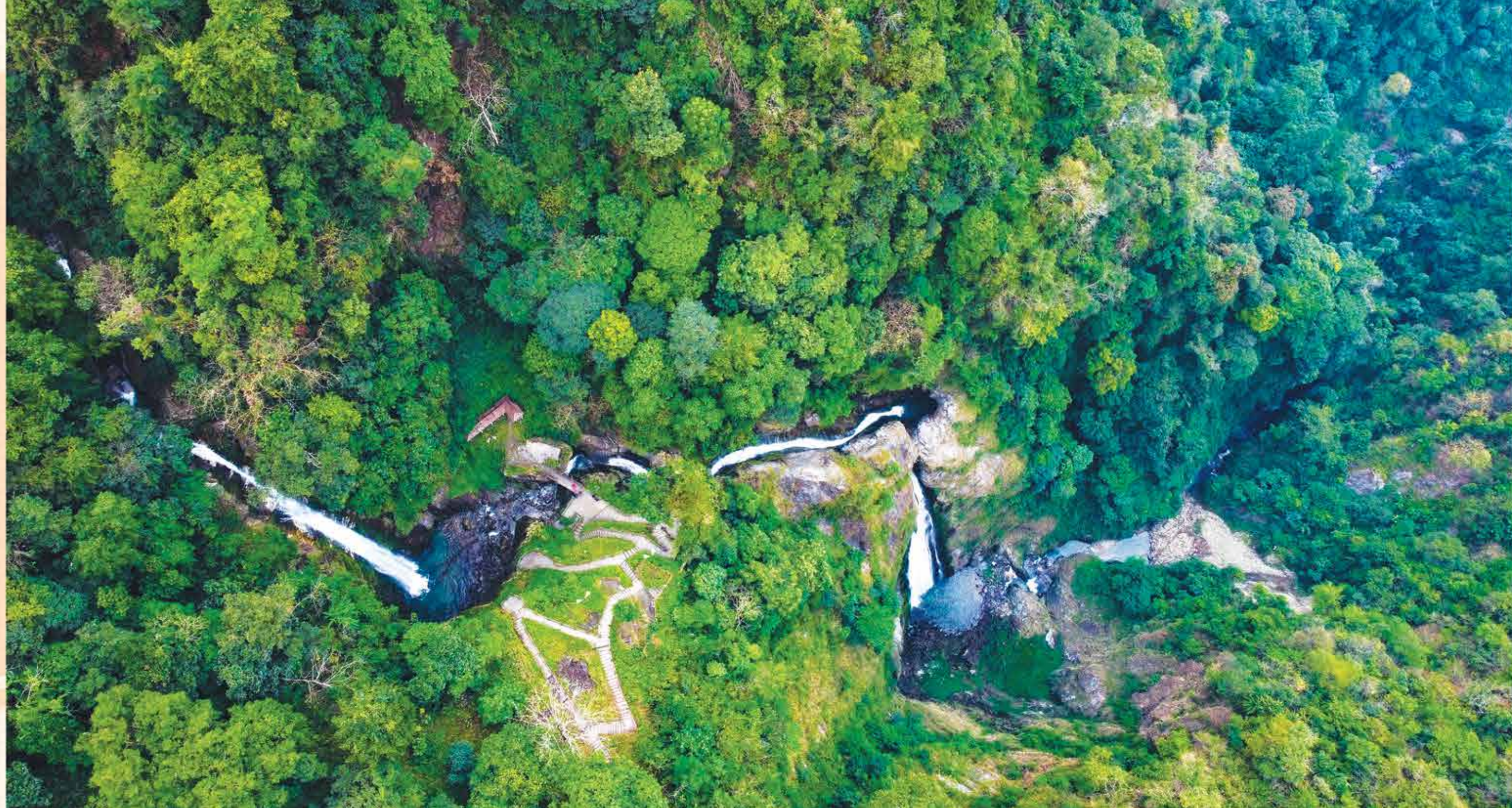
A scenic yet not too arduous trek, the trail gives you a peek into the Koshi river valley when the weather is clear.

Rachella Pass Trek via Alubari & Lava

Situated close to Tangta, Rachella Peak is known for its scenic natural lakes. The forest canopy of Neora Valley National Park is the draw here.

Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary to Raja Rani Hill trek

It's a day trek of 6km beginning from the forest hamlet of Latpanchar.



Suntalekhola to Mouchuki trek

Another 6km trek along the Neora river in the Dooars region. Expect amazing views of verdant forests as well as the Himalayas.

Jaldhaka-Todey-Tangta Trek

Located in the Kalimpong Sadar subdivision, Todey and Tangta are two hamlets known for cardamom plantation. A dip at the natural hot water spring Dabai Khola in Todey is a popular draw.

Takdah-Tinchuley-Lamahatta Trek

A lovely day trek offering spectacular views of mountains, hamlets and tea gardens. Take a vehicle to Takdah from Darjeeling, and then trek the rest of the route till Tinchuley's Gumbadara View Point.

Treks in and around Kurseong:

Kurseong (meaning the Land of White Orchids in the local Lepcha language) has many trekking and hiking trails. The most popular among them are:



The Baggaura hike from Kurseong town, also known as zero point because of its highest elevation in Kurseong.

Kurseong town to the Dowhill forest past the Victoria and Dowhill schools. Further on, Deorali and Chimney Dara offer wonderful views of the Kanchenjunga and the Balasun river.

Kurseong to Gairigaon (10km from Kurseong on the way to Darjeeling) via Old Military Road is lined with birch, pine and silver firs as you trek.

Baggaura to Tiger Hill via Chatakpur

A majestic view of the Kanchenjunga plus a mind-healing nature trail awaits you here.

Giddhapahar (10km from Kurseong) to Maldiram Tea Estate (one of the oldest gardens in the hills) A leisurely walk past cascading waterfalls via Chittrey, Majua and Jungpana.





There's always some adventure waiting in the woods. And North Bengal has plenty of it. From Himalayan Moist Temperate forests to Tropical Dry Deciduous — the wide and varied forest cover is home to a large variety of flora and fauna.

Rhinos and leopards share the forest's ferny floors with deer, gaur, Himalayan red panda, and countless other species and subspecies of birds, reptiles and insects. Looking for biodiversity? You're in the right place!

Forest safaris – in jeep as well as on elephant back, forest walks and trails, birdwatching, wildlife spotting from watchtowers, and forest picnics are some of the popular activities across the jungles of North Bengal.

The Darjeeling and Dooars regions are the core forest areas. Some forests have restricted entry, where you need permits, guides and tickets to enter. Others are simply part of the natural terrain, with hamlets and pathways dotting through them. Let's explore some of the best-known National Parks and Sanctuaries of North Bengal!

Note to Remember!

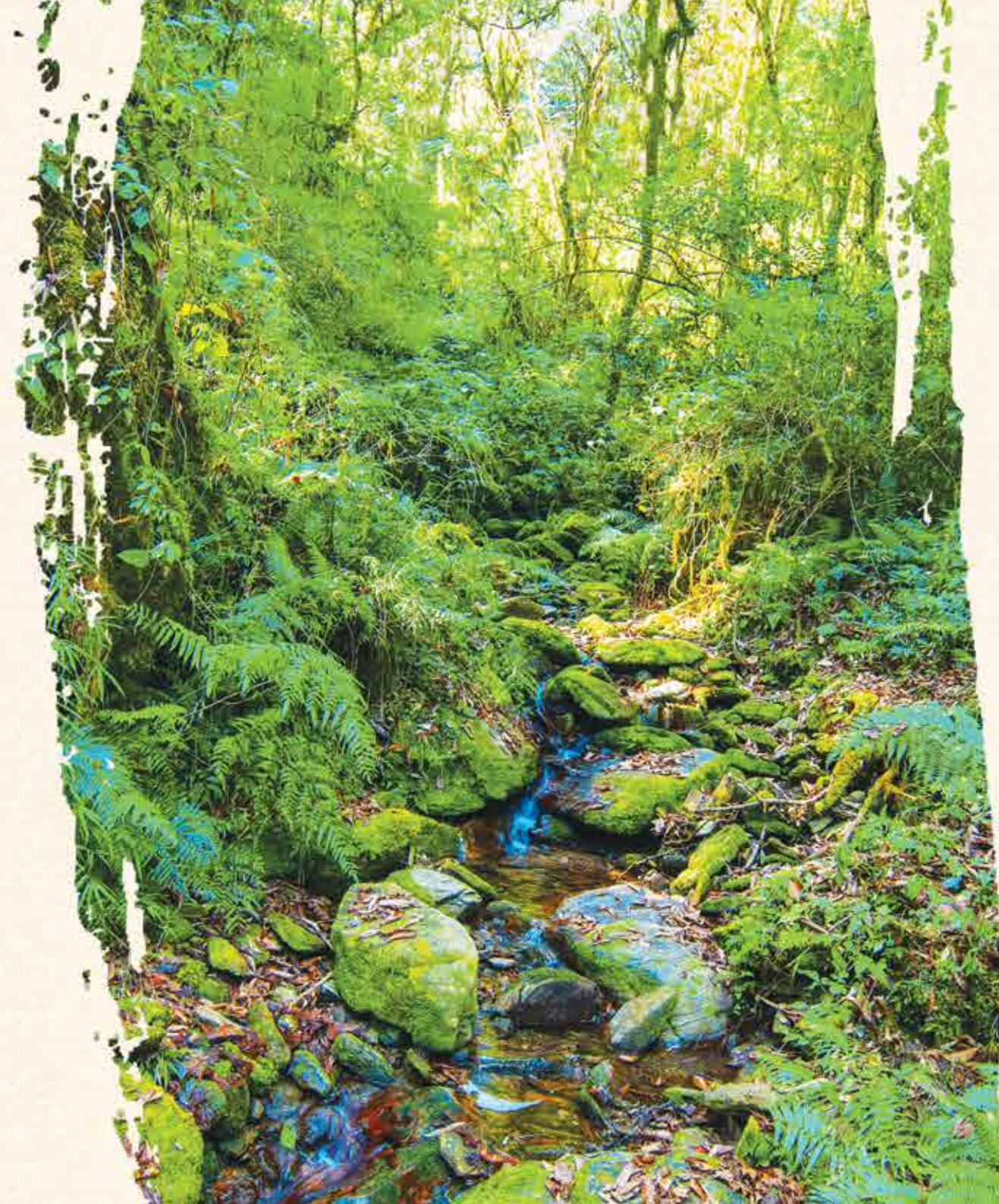
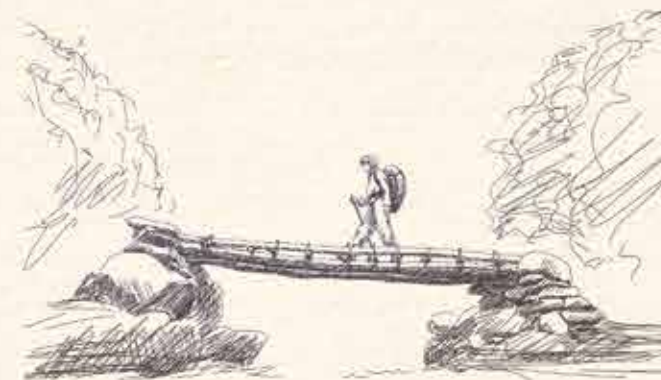
Each of these sanctuaries, national parks and even zoos will have respective entry rules and restrictions, timing, permit requirements, and guide charges, subject to seasonal changes. Some of them have jeep safari options, while some also offer elephant safaris. Most of them remain closed during the monsoon. Best time to visit these forests is winter. Please check with your hotel concierge, the local forest office, ranger's office or the nearest tourism board branch (list provided in the appendix) before planning a visit.

Woods in the hills

Neora Valley National Park

Located in Kalimpong district, the 88-sq km forest area is home to the elusive red panda, plus many other big and small animals. Also, a birding paradise! This park gets its name from the Neora River, which flows through it.

Access point: A good place to begin is the Neora Valley Nature Interpretation Centre in Lava, 32km from the town of Kalimpong. Vehicles are allowed till the Zero Point, which is about 13km into the forest.



Singalila National Park

Many of the popular treks of North Bengal including the famous Sandakphu-Phalut route runs through this forest, which is also home to the red panda, leopard cats, barking deer, yellow-throated marten, wild boar, and pangolin.

Access point: The beautiful hamlet of Maneybhanjan, which is also the starting point for the Sandakphu trek. It's also accessible through Rimbik, 90km from Kalimpong.

Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary

It is one of the oldest wildlife sanctuaries of India and covers an area of 38.6 sq km, which includes a pristine Senchal Lake. Home to the barking deer, wild boar, Himalayan black bear, Assam macaque, Himalayan flying squirrel and more. The sanctuary is also rich in bird life.

Access point: Entry from Jorebunglow in Ghoom near Darjeeling. Exit via Chatakpur gate. This route is also popular for mountain biking.



Jorpokhri Wildlife Sanctuary

Located in the Darjeeling district, it is home to the elusive Himalayan Salamander (*Tylototriton verrucosus*), locally known as 'Gora'.

Access point: Lepchajagat, a little village 19km from Darjeeling

Jungles of Dooars

Gorumara National Park

Covering nearly 80 sq. km and located on the flood plains of rivers Murti, Raidak and Jaldhaka, Gorumara is a mix of riverine grasslands and deciduous forest, popular for one-horned Indian rhinos, Asian elephants, barking deer, sloth bear, wild boar, hog deer, leopard and Indian wolf. The King Cobra is also often sighted here. It's also home to the endangered Brahminy Duck among other species of birds. The elephant safari here is a must-do, and can be booked online.

Access point: Lataguri is the nearest town located on NH-31, around 54km from New Jalpaiguri. There are four watchtowers – Jatraprasad, Medla, Chandrachur and Chukchuki, which remain open throughout the year for tourists.



Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary

Located in western Dooars, Chapramari is an extension of Gorumara National Park, separated by the Murti River. Elephant and Gaur are commonly sighted here. The forest's watchtower is a favourite among birders.

Access point: Around 8km from Chalsa in Dooars.

Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary

Spread over 158 sq. km over different altitudes, featuring different forest types such as riverine forests and dense mixed-wet forest, this sanctuary was primarily established for conserving elephants, barking deer, Royal Bengal Tiger and the Himalayan Black Bear. The sanctuary is also a bird lovers' favourite.

Access point: Near Sukna Toy Train station, 11km from Siliguri.

Buxa Tiger Reserve

Located in Alipurduar, Buxa is home to tigers, elephants, bears, civets, clouded leopards, wild buffaloes, antelope and snakes including python.

The rivers Raidak and Jayanti flow through the forest and the Narathali Lake attracts migratory birds. The Buxa Fort is another tourist attraction at this Reserve. There are a few watchtowers for adventure seekers.

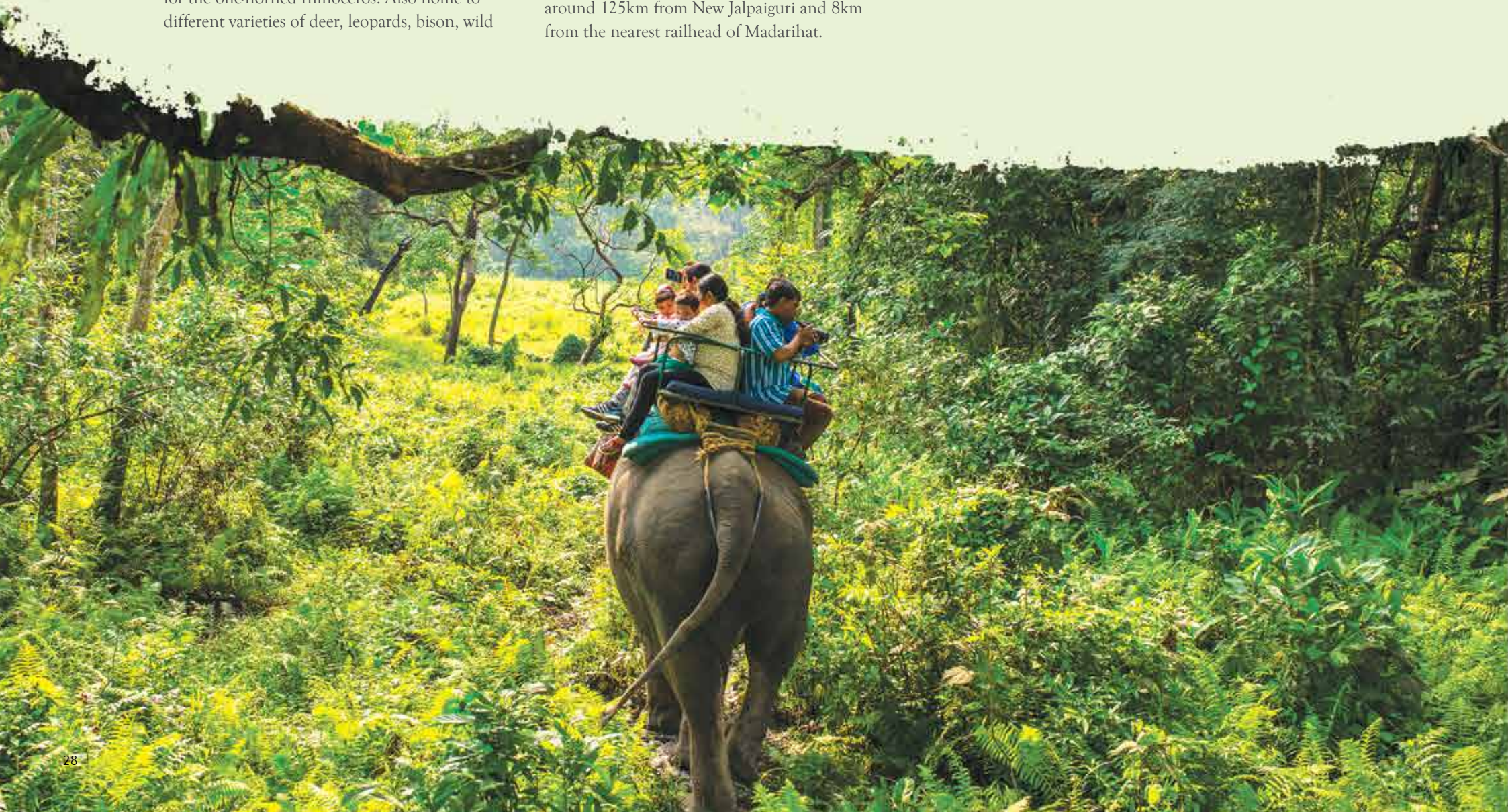
Access point: A small town named Rajabhatkhawa near Alipurduar Junction is your entry gate.

Jaldapara National Park

One of the largest national parks with lots of riverine forest patches amidst a vast grassland by the river Torsa, and a star of wildlife tourism in the Dooars region of Bengal, Jaldapara is famous for the one-horned rhinoceros. Also home to different varieties of deer, leopards, bison, wild

pigs, jungle fowl, and an occasional elephant or tiger. It is where you get to experience elephant safari as well.

Access point: The quaint town of Hollong, around 125km from New Jalpaiguri and 8km from the nearest railhead of Madarihat.



Chilapata Forest

It's adjacent to the Jaldapara National Park in Dooars on the eastern banks of river Torsa, and is known as an elephant corridor between Jaldapara and Buxa.

Access point: Kodalbasti Check Post, around 14km from Hasimara town in Alipurduar district.

Kathambari Forest

Located about 35km from New Jalpaiguri, Kathambari is surrounded by tea gardens. Leopards, wild boars, Indian gaurs, elephants are sighted here.

Access point: It's part of the Baikunthapur forest division, and is around 11km from Gajoldoba, a town in the Malbazar subdivision of Jalpaiguri district.

Khuttimari Forest

Elephant, Indian Gaur, leopard, sambhar, barking deer are some of the common sightings here.

Access point: Near Gayerkata in Dooars



Zoos and Safari Parks

Padmaja Naidu Zoological Park

Popular as the Darjeeling Zoo, it's the largest high altitude zoo in India. It specializes in breeding animals adapted to alpine conditions, and has successful captive breeding programs for the snow leopard, the critically endangered Himalayan wolf, and the red panda. The zoo serves as the central hub for Central Zoo Authority of India's red panda program and is a member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Access point: It shares its complex with that of Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling. Open from 8.30am to 4pm, Thursdays closed.



Bengal Safari Park

Situated within the verdant forested area of Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, it is the first animal safari park of North Bengal. Sambar deer, jungle fowl, wild boar, rhinoceros, spotted deer, and Royal Bengal Tiger can be sighted at the Safari Park.

Access point: The entry is on Sevoke Road, around 5th Mile, near Salugara, Siliguri. Open from 9am to 5pm, Mondays closed.





Forests In Dinajpur

Aira Forest

Located near the Indo-Bangladesh border, dotted with numerous waterbodies. Usually a popular destination as a picnic spot for the locals.

Access point: Around 14km from Kushmandi in Dakshin Dinajpur

Sapnikla Forest

An expansive lake amidst a thick canopy of forest scape, Sapnikla is a popular wildlife destination of Uttar Dinajpur.

Access point: Located 22km from Islampur, Sapnikla Forest is a jungle in the Chopra block.

North Bengal

A Birdwatcher's Paradise



From the hills to the plains, North Bengal offers treasure troves for ornithologists and bird-watchers. Places like Rongtong, Kurseong, Dow Hill, Lepcha Jagat, Latpanchar, Lava, Rishab, Kalimpong, Jhandi, Gorubathan, Jhalong, Fulbari, Jaldhaka, Chatakpur, Reshikhola, Rikisum and Gajoldoba are home to several beautiful species.

Among the birds frequently sighted in the hills and the Dooars are burn swallow, ashy backed shrike, spotted eagle, laughing thrush, grey nightjar, greater racket-tailed drongo, sunbird, black bulbul, pond heron, sprangled drongo, Himalayan pheasant, minla, black-chinned yuhina, magpie, goosander, pied hornbill, rufous necked hornbill, red star, ibis bill, black stork, minivet, migratory common teal, white-eyed pochard, red crested pochard, shoveler, pintail, wigeon duck, grey-headed lapwing, ferruginous pochard, lesser sand plover, osprey, marsh harrier, hen harrier, peregrine, great crested and black necked grebe, etc.

All the wildlife sanctuaries and reserve forests of North Bengal are also full of birds, both local and migrant. While the weather, topography and rich biodiversity attract many a bird, two sanctuaries particularly stand out for avid birders and birding enthusiasts.



Raiganj Bird Sanctuary or Kulik Bird Sanctuary

Situated near Raiganj in Uttar Dinajpur, it's the largest heronry of India, with more than 150 species of birds. It is also a shelter for migratory birds.

Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary

By the lake Rasik Bil in Cooch Behar, it draws a large variety of migrant birds in winter. Indulge in boating or visit the aviary, tortoise rescue centre, deer park, python house, crocodile rehabilitation centre and leopard house in the vicinity.

Pop Picnics

North Bengal is not all about treks and strict timetables for tours. It is also about making you pause, taking a moment, and embracing Mother Nature in all her glory with your near and dear ones. What better way to do that than having an old school picnic in the epitome of scenic beauty? Take your pick from a multitude of locations available, and let the natural beauty feed your soul while you feed your belly.

Popular picnic spots in the jungles are:

- Around the Mendabari watchtower by river Kunai at Chilapata forest
- Laligura by river Murti in Malbazar
- Rockey Island and Suntalekhola along the banks of Murti river
- The butterfly park near Ramsai rhino camp, and the Raimatang watchtower area in the Dooars
- Kunjanagar Eco Park near Falakata, Alipurduar
- Jhalong on the banks of Jaldhaka river
- The Phashkhawa picnic spot near Buxa Tiger Reserve
- The area around the hanging bridge over Rasikbil Lake





Orchid Tourism

Often referred to as Mother Nature's masterpieces, the delicate and ornate petals and the ethereal colours of orchids brighten up the hills of North Bengal.

The Darjeeling and Kalimpong hills are home to approximately 300 species of orchids like Cymbidium, Vanda, Dendrobium, Paphiopedilum, Lycaste, Odontoglossum and more.

If you are new to the world of orchids or a veteran orchid explorer, you must visit Takdah Orchid Centre, around 27km from Darjeeling, located near the Rangli Rangliot Tea Garden. Rare Himalayan orchids are conserved here.

The forests of North Bengal are interspersed with 'Maling' bamboo trees and unique mosses and lichens, which also attract botany enthusiasts and researchers.

You can also visit

- Holumba Haven Orchid Nursery in Kalimpong
- Kalimpong Cactus Nursery
- Lloyd's Botanical Garden in Darjeeling
- Lamagaon near Darjeeling and adjacent to Bijanbari



Rivers & Lakes of North Bengal

Mostly fed by snow-melt water with sources in the Himalayan glaciers, the major rivers of North Bengal are Teesta, Mahananda, Torsa, Bindukhola, Dudhpokhri, Jaldhaka, Murti, Raidak, Rangeet, Diana, Churni, Sikiyajhora, Neora, Mouchuki, Balason, Brahmani, Atreyee, Tangon and Punarbhaba.

Prominent lakes and waterfalls include Namthing Pokhri (Latpanchar), Mirik Lake, Jorpokhri, Changey Falls, Dhal Dighi, Kal Dighi, Mahipal Dighi, Tapan Dighi (Dakshin Dinajpur), Rasik Bil (Cooch Behar).



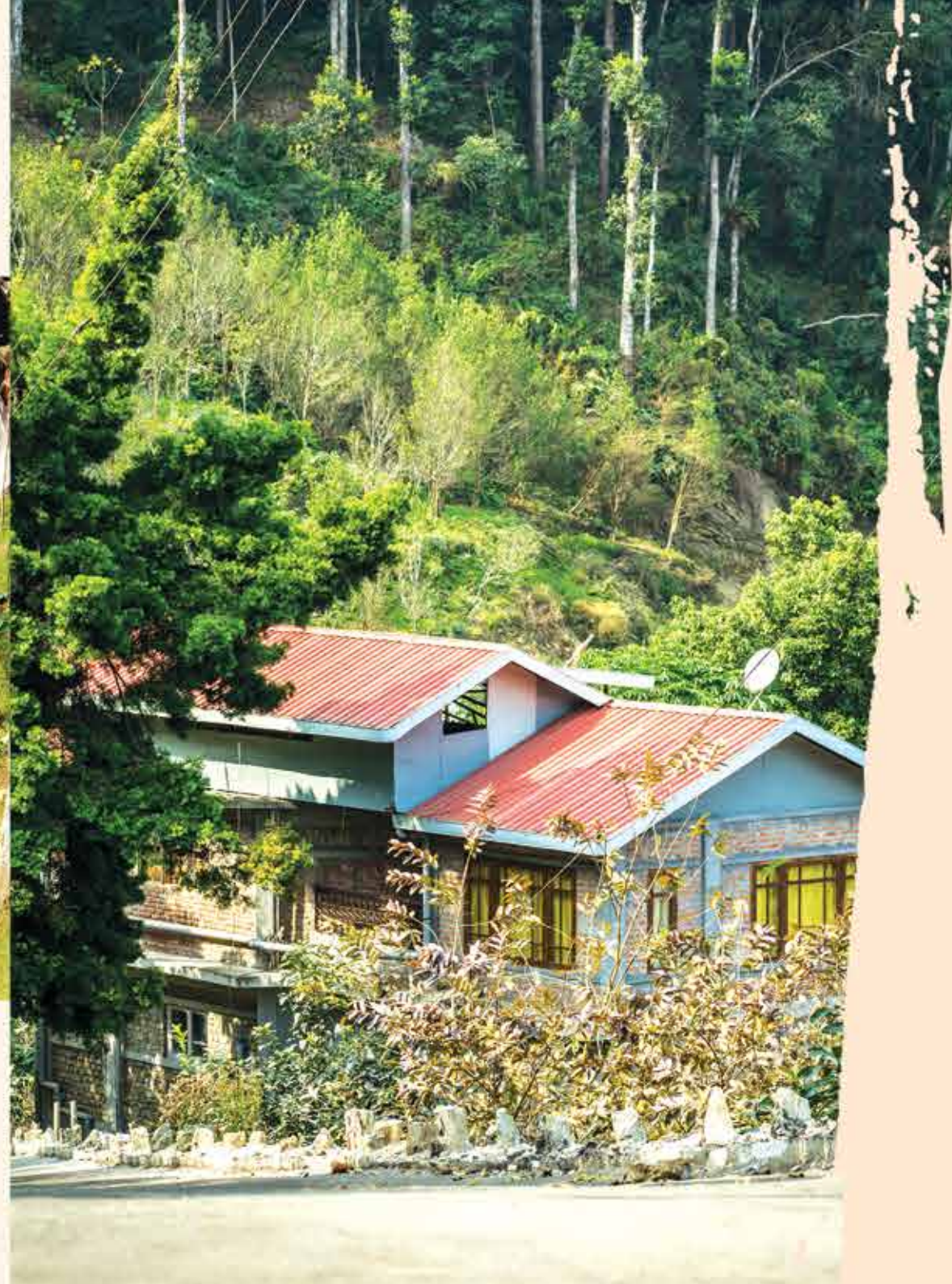
Hamlets & Homestays of North Bengal

If you are seeking off-grid solace and adventure, the quaint little picturesque villages in North Bengal are your best bet. And the charm gets doubled with the local residents opening their homes for tourists to stay.

Staying with locals, sharing their food, exploring their culture first-hand and experiencing their warm hospitality is an unparalleled affair.

The good news is that with the emergence of homestay tourism in the past decade, experiencing local life, culture and the food has become much easier, thanks to these local residents from the tiniest of villages opening their hearts and hearths for tourists.

Note: Homestays are not hotels. It's like staying with a family. Respect their culture and customs. They will be more than happy to have you over.



Popular hamlets to explore

Darjeeling district: Bara Mangwa-Chhota Mangwa (orange tourism), Tinchuley, Takdah (orchid tourism), Sittong (orange tourism), Lamahatta, Dilaram (near Kurseong)

Kalimpong district: Suntalekhola (orange tourism), Tandrabong, Kolakham

Dooars: Gahunbari, Lepchakha (Queen of Dooars, a Drukpa village), Raimatang, Todey, Tangta, Khasmahal by Samsing (orange tourism)







Tribal & Cultural Tourism

North Bengal is home to several tribal communities such as the Lepchas, Gurungs, Mangars, Rais, Chettris, Koch Rajbongshi, Mech, Rabha, Munda, Paik, Toto, Garo, Oraon, among others.

Their rich cultural heritage including music and dance forms; arts and handicrafts are worth exploring. The best way to do that is to stay in the local homestays and explore. On request, many homestay owners will arrange for showcasing their indigenous folk art forms.

Folk cultural forms such as Khan, Natua (folk form celebrating the love between Radha and Krishna),

Jang Gan, Mokha Dance, Halna-Halnani are some of the popular performing arts from the two districts of Dinajpur.

The Bhawaiya Sangeet of Cooch Behar is about love between man and woman, often laced with spiritual undertones.

Nepali folk songs are a treat to the discerning ears, and you may find occasional street singers in the hills strumming a local stringed instrument and crooning a song or two. The tunes will ring in your memory long after the journey is over!

Madarihat, Kalchini and Toto Para are villages with exclusive tribal population comprising Santals, Oraons, Mechs, Mundas & Totos.

Mugurmari Oraon Village near Kathambari in Dooars showcases tribal traditions and lifestyle.

Koch Rajbongshi community of Cooch Behar have their ancient tradition of hunting and indigenous medicine.



The Art and Craft scene of North Bengal is rich and diverse, thanks to the folk communities and tribal population across the region.

Some celebrated handicrafts from these regions are:

- **Darjeeling:** Woolen Garments, Brass & Bell Metal Craft, Wood Carving, Cane & Bamboo Craft, White Metal Jewellery, Painting (on cloth) also known as Thangka Painting, Embroidery on Cloth
- **Jalpaiguri:** Cane & Bamboo Craft, Wood Carving, Stone Carving, Jute Craft, Embroidery, Soft Toys
- **Cooch Behar:** Cane & Bamboo Craft, Shital Pati, Wood Carving, Sholapith Craft, Jute Craft
- **Uttar Dinajpur:** Bamboo Craft, Terracotta Pottery, Mask, Sholapith Craft, Wood Carving, Jute Craft
- **Dakshin Dinajpur:** Cane & Bamboo Craft, Embroidery, Jute Items, Sholapith, Terracotta Pottery, Mask, Wood Carving, Soft Toys, Mat/Madur (made of natural fibre)
- **Malda:** Silk and Cotton Textile



Lepcha Museum, Kalimpong

The Lepchas are one of the prominent tribal communities residing primarily in the North Bengal hills, and also parts of Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan. The Lepcha Museum in Kalimpong (Big Dhara area, 1km from Kalimpong bus stand) has a huge personal collection of articles of worship, musical instruments, handicraft items and manuscripts related to the Lepcha lifestyle.

Visiting Hours: Monday to Friday 10.30am to 4.30pm, Saturday 10am to 12noon, closed on Sunday.



From mangoes and momos to chillies and chai, food in North Bengal is as varied as its people. High altitude places where ingredients are limited to the flood plains and river valleys where abundance is usual – North Bengal offers a delectable diversity on the plate.

But not everything is available at hotels and restaurants. Mostly it is home food or street food, and for that you have to visit a local's home or a homestay kitchen. Or hit the streets.

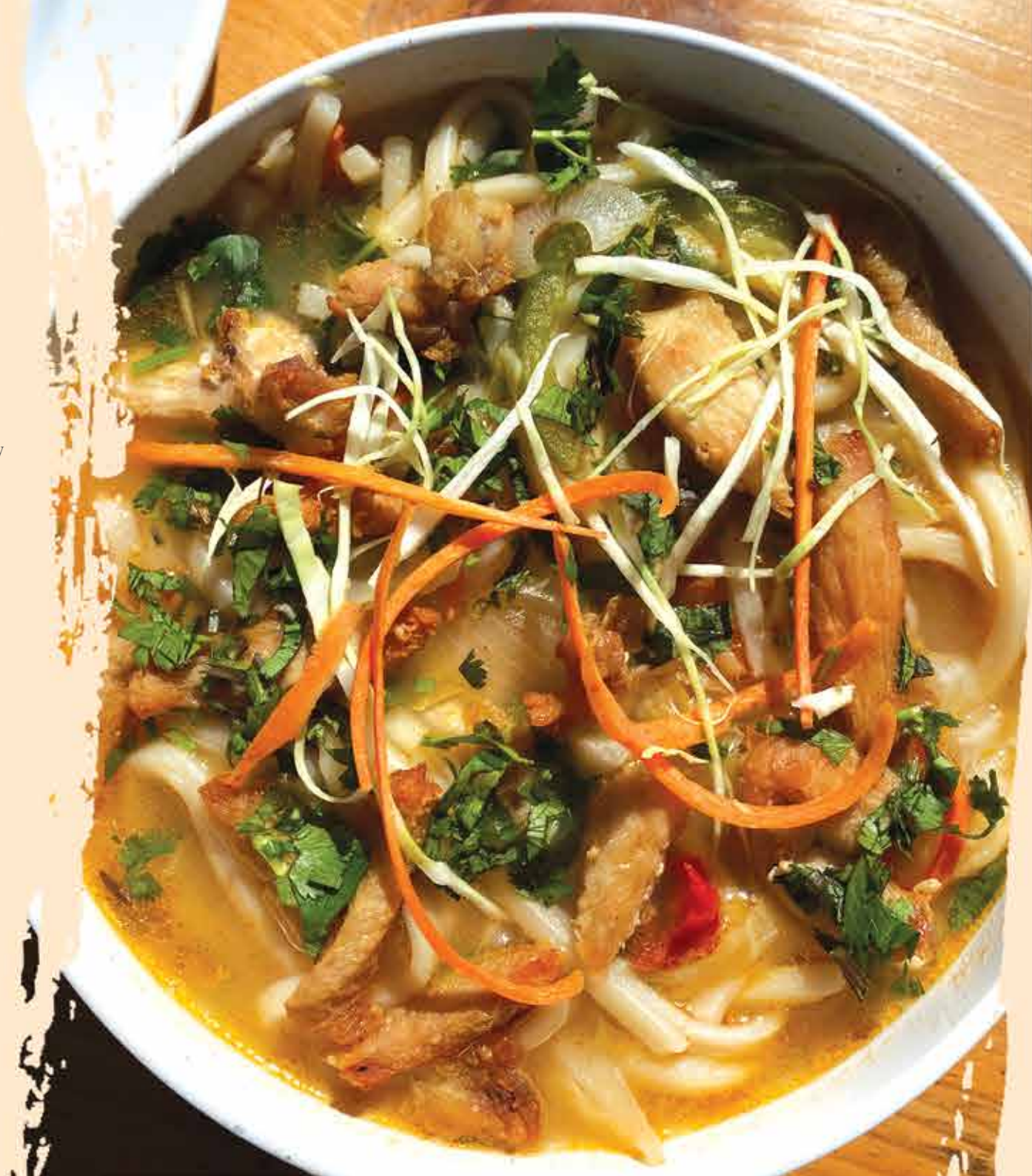
Tibetan, Nepali and Bhutanese Food

Momos or Tibetan flour dumplings with meat or vegetable stuffing have become almost synonymous with the food of North Bengal. The fillings are usually made of chicken, pork, beef, vegetables, and/or cheese. Usually steamed or pan-fried, they also come dunked in a soupy, meaty broth.

Thukpa, a steaming hot noodle soup, too has its origins in Tibetan cuisine. Thukpa comprises vegetables, meat, seafood, eggs and noodles.

Thakali or a traditional Nepali Thali comprising Dal, Bhaat, Tarkaari, Chutney or Achaar, with or without meat is a must-try when in North Bengal.

Bhutia or Bhutanese food like the Datshi group of dishes (where cheese and chillies are cooked together along with other ingredients) such as Ema Datshi, Kewa Datshi, Shamu Datshi, Shakam Ema Datshi, Shakam Shukam Datshi, and Shakam Paa, Phaksa Paa, Sikam Paa (pork belly) are also favourites among locals.



Naga Thali comprises rice served with chicken or pork, also with fermented bamboo shoots, achaar and sometimes a sweet dish. Smoked or fermented food is a specialty in Naga cuisine.

Phalay and Shaphalay are like Tibetan pies. Bread pouch stuffed with meat or veggies, and had with any curry or chutney/sauce.

Sael Roti is a circular deep-fried local bread, often accompanied with the spicy Nepali peero aloo dum or aloo ko achar.

Gundruk is a mix of fermented leaves of radish, mustard, cauliflower, etc. Mostly cooked as a stir-fry with onion and chillies.

Chhurpee is cheese made from cow or yak milk. They come in soft or hard forms.

Kwati is a mixed soup made by boiling nine varieties of sprouted beans.

Sekuwa are meat kebabs barbecued with tangy and hot spices and aromatic herbs.

Kinema is a Nepali dish of fermented soybean, resembling natto, a fermented soyabean breakfast from Japan.

Aaloo Tama is a curry with potatoes and fermented bamboo shoots.

La Phing is a kind of local pasta/flat noodle made from moong bean or wheat flour starch, had with a hot and tangy sauce made of vinegar, soy sauce, red chilli paste and sesame seed paste.

Drinks

Chaang, also called **Tongba**, is a beer-like brew prepared by fermenting millet with local yeast.

The Toto tribe drink a fermented liquor called **Eu**, made from fermented marua (a kind of millet), rice powder and malt, served warm in wooden glasses called poipa.

Some specialties among North Bengal produce

Kalimpong cheese: Many decades back, a Swiss missionary team had come to Kalimpong and established a cheese manufacturing unit there. The Swiss had left, but the tradition of making cheese is still continuing in Kalimpong.

Ningro: Fiddlehead fern widely consumed in the hills, especially with local cheese chhurpee.

Tama: Tender bamboo shoots available in various processed shapes and also fresh.

Nakima: A club-like flower from a perennial plant with long strap-like leaves. The inflorescences are eaten in Kalimpong and its surrounding hills as a spicy stir-fry, as well as in pickled form.

Local wild mushrooms: Kalungay, Chamray, Jharey, Kanney, Kotuchae, Giddae are a few varieties of edible wild mushrooms abundant in the hills.

Iskush or Squash: Grown as a creeper on rooftops and along fences, this veggie is widely loved and eaten across North Bengal. It is consumed raw, baked, fried, boiled or used as fillings in momos.

Simrayo or Watercress: A microgreen from the mustard family, with a distinctive peppery, pungent flavour.



Sinki: Made from sun-dried radish tap roots, Sinki is used for chutney and pickles as well as an addition to mixed veg stir-fries.

Dalley Khorsani: These heirloom peppers with a high heat quotient are indigenous to the Eastern Himalaya – Darjeeling, Sikkim, and the eastern districts of Nepal. Much loved by the local residents and used in pickles and sauces, as well as in different mixed veg curries.

Oranges: Grown abundantly across dedicated orchards in Darjeeling, these oranges are an important cash crop of the region. With tight yet thin skins, and a unique flavour and juice, it is quite different from the varieties cultivated in other states such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Karnataka.

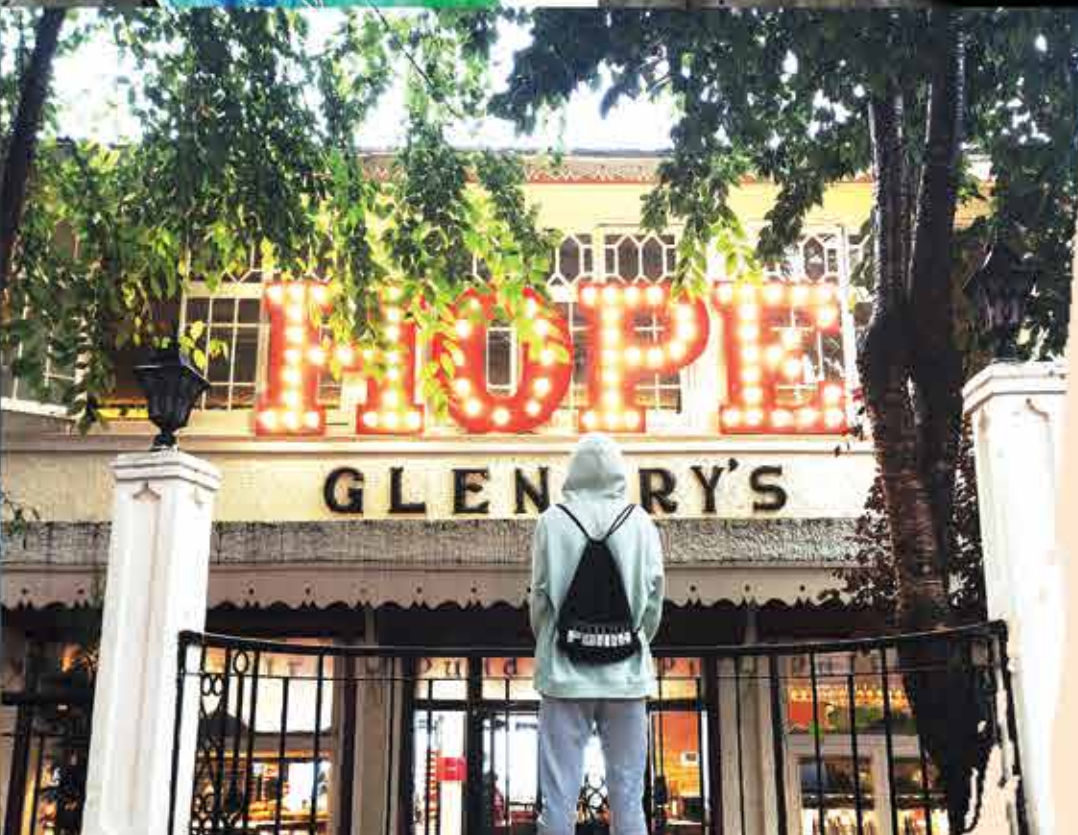
Mangoes: The plains of North Bengal, especially those in Malda, are famous for their mangoes. Popular varieties include Khirsapati, Dudhia, Lakshanbhog, Lyangra, and Fazli.

Fish: North Bengal is crisscrossed by rivers and mountain streams, and hence fresh water fishes such as Boroli, Chapila, Mola, Kajli and Batashi are very popular in the Dooars and the adjoining flood plains.



Desserts of North Bengal

- Chomchom of Belakoba, Jalpaiguri
- Lalmohan of Phoolbari, Siliguri
- Rashkadamba of Malda
- Kansat of Malda
- Monda and Jilipi of Premer Danga, Cooch Behar
- Kamala Bhog of Madarihat, Alipurduar
- Chhanar Payesh of Raiganj, Uttar Dinajpur
- Kheer Doi of Gangarampur, Dakshin Dinajpur



Pop Places to Eat in and around Darjeeling

Glenarys

An iconic café, confectionery, restaurant and music bar all rolled into one in the heart of Darjeeling (Nehru Road), from the times of the British Raj. Warm and cozy interiors, charming views of the Himalayas from an open sit-out, whiff of freshly-baked goodies and Darjeeling tea, plus a multi-cuisine menu offering roasts, steaks, sausages and fish-n-chips in a cool and happening ambience — Glenarys is a favourite among locals as well as visitors.

Keventer's

Founded in 1911 by Edward Keventers, it's a classic favourite near the Planter's Club (Nehru Road). Breakfast platters with homemade sausages, ham, bacon and salami with a choice of eggs, hot chocolate and cold coffee are the pop picks from the menu.

Kunga Restaurant

Located just beside the Club-side taxi stand in Darjeeling (51 Gandhi Road), Kunga is known for Tibetan and Nepalese food. Momos, Thukpas, Chowmein, Chopsuey, Wonton Soups, Phing or Glass Noodles, Thenthuk and Bhagthuk (noodle soups) are the most popular dishes here.

Joey's

A pub well-loved by old-timers, opposite Big Bazaar in Limbugaon, Darjeeling. Walk in and listen to old favorite numbers with a drink and some finger food.

Gatty's Café

A café with a mix of lounge, art and live music, on Zakir Hussain Road, off Chowrasta (Darjeeling Mall). Sandwiches, pastas, lasagna among Italian as well as Middle-Eastern dishes like hummus and pita and falafel platter are the top draws from the menu.

Revolver Café

Are you a Beatles fan? If yes, this is a must-visit. Listen to *Hey Jude* or *Imagine*, while polishing off some delish Naga and Nepali delights at this café which is part of the hotel by the same name on Gandhi Road, behind Union Chapel Darjeeling.

Cafe House Darjeeling

A cafe at one of the best viewing points for the majestic Kanchenjunga in Darjeeling — that's Cafe House on the premises of Hotel Retreat. A picturesque alfresco setting leading to a cozy interior with book shelves and prim white tables, by British bungalow style windows overlooking a vast expanse of the hills. Coffee, tea, sandwich, French fries, bakery goodies, and more cafe food to enjoy while gazing at the Queen of the Hills on a clear day.

Sonam's Kitchen

Known for its American breakfast including hash browns and pancakes, porridge and toasts, this tiny eatery on Zakir Hussain Road is quite popular as a brekkie destination.

Hot Stimulating Café

On the way to the Zoo from the Mall, you will find this tiny street-side eatery where they serve Nepalese, Tibetan and Chinese dishes, besides an occasional draught of Tongba, a handmade beer served in hollowed bamboo poles.



Tea bars

Nathmulls Sunset Lounge and Golden Tips tea bar will leave you tea-psy with their vast collection of Darjeeling tea. Munch on some light snacks and enjoy the golden brew before packing some good quality tea leaves for home.

Chia Verandah

Chia Verandah is a coffee shop* overlooking the misty mountains and the verdant Makaibari Tea Estate. A part of Taj Chia Kutir, this alfresco dining space gives you a reason to press pause. Only to savour the taste of global cuisines prepared from the fresh handpicked farm produce while soaking in the sun-kissed summer mornings or pleasant starlit evenings.

Margaret's Deck

Overlooking Margaret's Hope Tea Estate in Kurseong, a few hundred yards north of the Tung Station on the famous Darjeeling Himalayan Railway route, Margaret's Deck is a tea lounge shaped like a ship's deck, presenting a panoramic view of the majestic hills in front. Reflecting an old world charm of British era cottages, the lounge offers all-day Continental breakfast, a variety of tea including their special muscatel tea, several refreshing tea mocktails along with accompaniments such as cookies, cakes, croissants, quiches, grilled fish, scones, brownies and cheesecakes. The menu also has soups and desserts.

*Prior booking required



A retreat in the tea gardens set amidst serene landscape is perhaps the most exotic and innovative way to enjoy nature. Watching tea leaves being plucked in the midst of an undulating verdant tea garden and then witnessing how the leaves are processed to give you the choice of brew is sheer happiness.

A bonus is the delectable food, the ingredients for which are sourced almost entirely from organic local farms. Plus astounding views of the Himalayas and lush green rolling valleys, from a British era bungalow.

Some stunning tea estates in and around Darjeeling

Makaibari Tea Estate

The fabled garden from where even the Queen of England gets her tea. Located in Kurseong, Makaibari is one of the oldest tea gardens in Darjeeling, with its factory established in 1859.

Taj Chia Kutir Resort & Spa, within the Makaibari estate, offers tourists a luxurious stay amidst a verdant plantation that advocates sustainability and conservation of ecology and wildlife.

Glenburn Tea Estate

Exuding an old world charm, the estate's bungalow on the banks of river Rangeet near Darjeeling offers a fascinating stay plus a tea tour through the gardens and the factory, packed with tea trivia and culminating into a tea tasting experience.

Singtom Tea Estate

Established in 1852, the bungalow offers a Victorian charm with contemporary facilities and an extensive tea tasting tour. Located around 4km from Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Darjeeling.

Sourennee

The Sourennee tea estate lies in the Mirik valley of Darjeeling district. It is a certified producer of organic tea. Perched at 4,500 feet, the three-storied bungalow has lift access to every floor. An hour's drive from the Bagdogra airport, a visit to Sourennee can be combined with visits to Mirik and Darjeeling. They can also arrange for angling apart from the usual hikes, picnics and sightseeing tours.



Goomtee Tea Estate

Located on Hill Cart Road and 8km from Kurseong, the 100-year-old estate bungalow offers a beautiful view of the surrounding countryside and an informative tea tour.

Ging Tea House

About half an hour's drive away from Darjeeling the estate's refurbished mid-19th century bungalow offers lovely views of the Himalayas along with a refreshing tea tour.



Chamong Chaibari

Located in the Jorebungalow-Sukhiapokhri area near Darjeeling, this tea estate resort packs in grand views, luxury stay and tea tasting trails.

Stenthall

A half hour drive from Darjeeling and you will be at Stenthall Bungalow, a 150-year old property. Surrounded by tea gardens, you can catch a panoramic view of the Himalayas. They serve only vegetarian food. They can also arrange for a guided tea factory tour and riverside picnics.

Taj Chia Kutir Resort & Spa

Located at the heart of the famous Makaibari tea estate, the property is a haven of permaculture and sustainability, overlooking the misty, rolling hills. Go for the quintessential luxury estate experience with gourmet picks that date back to the Raj, or tea tasting sessions at the Chia Lounge or plan a picnic on the lush mountains.

New Chumta Tea estate

Located near Salbari in Matigara, the New Chumta Tea Estate has opened up bungalows in the estate to offer visitors a taste of some of the finest teas they produce as well as an experience of a life led by the erstwhile British planters.

Other tea estates in the Darjeeling area

Fagu Tea Estate near Malbazar, Badamtam Tea Estate, Namring Tea Estate, Margaret's Hope in Kurseong, Sourennee Tea Estate in Mirik, Pattabong Tea Garden and Soom Tea Estate in Pulbazar, Happy Valley Tea Estate in Darjeeling, Samabeong Tea Estate in Gorubathan, Tabakoshi within Gopaldhara Tea Estate near Mirik.



Tea estates in the Dooars region

Zurrantee Tea Estate, Damdim Tea Estate, Ghatia Tea Estate, Patharjhora Tea Estate, Samsing Tea Estate, Ord Terai Tea Garden, Chalsa Tea Estate



Spiritual Sojourn

British era churches to Buddhist monasteries from the time of Silk Route trades, temples from the yore and mosques from medieval Bengal — North Bengal is home to many a destination for one to seek spiritual solace. We list some of the famed ones here.



Magical Monasteries

Peace Pagoda, Darjeeling

Inspired and facilitated by a Buddhist monk from Japan who wished to infuse global harmony after World War II, the Darjeeling Peace Pagoda is one of 80 similar stupas around the world dedicated to peace. Bordered by pine forests, the solitude here invokes introspection and meditation.

Bhutia Busty Monastery, Darjeeling

Especially known for preserving a section of the famous Buddhist text 'Book of the Dead', this monastery has changed its location a number of times in history because of reasons like earthquakes and invasions. Currently it is located around 1.5km downhill from Chowrasta Mall of Darjeeling.

Mag-Dhog Yolmowa Monastery, Darjeeling

Also known as Aloobari monastery, it's located around 3km from Darjeeling. The construction of the monastery started in 1914, same year as World War I. Keeping the war in mind, the monastery was named 'Mag-Dhog', meaning 'to do away with war'.



Samten Choling Monastery, Ghoom

Around 8km from Darjeeling, the Ghoom Monastery belongs to the Gelukpa or the Yellow Hat sect of Buddhism. Its 15-ft high statue of Maitreya Buddha is a visitor's delight. The peace of this place is its primary lure.

Dali Monastery, Senchal

Officially known as Druk Sangag Choeling Monastery, it is a monastery built across several levels close to Batasia Loop and home to over 200 Buddhist monks. The Dalai Lama stayed at this monastery for a few days in 1993.

Gaden Tharpa Choling Monastery, Kalimpong

A beautiful Gelugpa monastery built around 1912, atop Tirpai Hill in Kalimpong, it has intricate paintings on the inner walls and a garden outside.



Bokar Ngedon Chokhor Ling Monastery, Mirik

Located at an altitude of 5,800 ft, this monastery is home to around 500 monks who practise the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha.

Kagyü Thekchen Ling Monastery, Lava

Popular as the Lava Monastery, this Tibetan-style abbey was built in 1987 and, today houses over 110 monks.



Temple Tales

Mahakal Temple, Darjeeling

Dedicated to Lord Shiva and located on the Observatory Hill in Darjeeling, this temple represents a peaceful co-habitation of Hinduism and Buddhism, as Brahmin priests perform the pujas while Tibetan monks give blessings.

Dhirdham Temple, Darjeeling

Located south of the Darjeeling market centre, just below the Toy Train station, this Hindu shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva was built in 1939, inspired by the architecture of Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Ambootia Shiva Temple, Kurseong

Located close to the Ambootia Tea Estate, this temple is also dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Mangal Dham, Kalimpong

Dedicated to Lord Krishna, this temple is located on Relli Road in Kalimpong.

Jalpesh Mandir, Maynaguri

Located in the town of Maynaguri in Jalpaiguri, this temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, and attracts devotees from near and far, especially during Shravani Mela, a fair during the monsoons.

Devi Chaudhurani Kali Temple, Jalpaiguri

This temple dedicated to Goddess Kali is locally believed to be existing from the times of Sanyasi Vidroh, and fictional characters of Devi Chaudhurani and Bhavani Pathak from Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya's legendary novel 'Devi Chaudhurani' are considered to have links with this temple.

Jatileswar Temple, Maynaguri

Built in the Gupta period, Jatileswar Mandir of Maynaguri is one of the oldest temples in North Bengal, dedicated to Jatileswar or Lord Shiva.

Bhairabi Kali Temple, Uttar Dinajpur

An old Hindu terracotta temple enshrining a black stone idol of Ma Bhairabi, an avatar of Kali, in Uttar Dinajpur.

Debi Sthan, Godak

This temple in the picturesque village of Godak around 15km from Bindu is where tribal people worship the local river, which they believe originates from a rock and never dries.





Jahura Temple, Malda

Located a few kilometers from the town of Malda, the century-old temple dedicated to Goddess Kali stands amidst a mango orchard.

Madan Mohan Temple, Cooch Behar

Built by Maharaja Nripendra Narayan of Cooch Behar, circa 1889, this temple is dedicated to Lord Madan Mohan (Krishna), Goddess Kali, Goddess Tara and Goddess Bhavani. Tourists enjoy a lot during the festivals of Rash (Rash Purnima) in November.

Baradebi Bari, Cooch Behar

The temple in Cooch Behar is dedicated to Goddess Durga, and was constructed in the line of European architecture.



Rajmata Temple, Cooch Behar

Located in the north of Rajmata Dighi, around 1km from Madan Mohan Temple of Cooch Behar, this single-storied temple consists of three rooms with a dome atop and dedicated to Goddess Tara Kali, Goddess Katyayani, and Lords Radha Raman and Kanailal-RadhaBinod.

Kamteswari Temple, Dinhata

Located around 8km from Dinhata railway station in Cooch Behar, this temple was built by Maharaja Pran Narayan in 1665.

Baneswar Shiva Temple, Cooch Behar

A 10-ft-high Shiva Linga below ground level attracts devotees to this temple in Cooch Behar, especially during Shiv Chaturdashi.



Magnificent Mosques

Adina Mosque, Gour

Located 16km from the town of Malda, this grand quadrangular mosque was built around 1373 in the line of Mughal architecture. It is one of the largest mosques of Bengal.

Chamkati Mosque, Gour

Also known as Chika Mosque because of the presence of 'chika' or bats, this single domed edifice in Malda was constructed in 1475 under the patronage of Sultan Yusuf Shah.

Baroduari Mosque, Gour

A brick-and-stone monument built in the Indo-Arabic architectural style, this mosque is also known as Baro Shona Masjid. It was built by Allauddin Hussein Shah and his son Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah by 1526. The ornamental stone carvings inside the mosque makes Baroduari a special attraction for tourists.

Tantipara Mosque, Gour

A mosque built for the weaver community of medieval Gaur empire, this brick-built mosque was constructed around 1475.





Church Chronicles



St. Andrews Church, Darjeeling

Named after the patron saint of England, this old Anglican Church was built in 1844 and has marble tablets and brass plaques immortalizing the oldest residents of Darjeeling including Lt. General Lloyd who is believed to be the Discoverer of Darjeeling.

St. Jude Catholic Church, Darjeeling

Built in 1892, it is the oldest Catholic church in Darjeeling, located on East Lepong Road. This church was initially meant to address the spiritual needs of the British troops in Darjeeling.

MacFarlane Memorial Church, Kalimpong

The oldest church in Kalimpong, it was built in 1891 and dedicated to William MacFarlane, the first Scottish Missionary to visit Kalimpong.

St. Theresa Church, Kalimpong

This church reflects a seamless mix of the Gothic and Tibetan style of architecture, with intricate wood carvings and Biblical illustrations on the inside walls of the church. Located amidst mountains and dense forests, the church entices visitors giving a lifetime memory.



Sacred Heart Church, Singamari

A Catholic church in Darjeeling, it was established in 1898. The church is located close to the Darjeeling Ropeway and the zoo.

St. John Berchman's Church, Kurseong

Located around 4km from Kurseong railway station, this Catholic church was built in 1988 for the people of St. Mary's Hill and its surrounding places.

The Baptist Church, Jalpaiguri

Located at Nayabusti, Jalpaiguri, this is one of the oldest churches of North Bengal, having been established around 1883. It is listed among the heritage buildings of North Bengal by the West Bengal Heritage Commission.

Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church, Malda

One of the four churches in India under this order, it's quite popular with the local Christian population in Sarbamangala Pally, Malda.



Heritage Tourism



The mysteries and wonders of the past come alive in a time capsule called Heritage Tourism. And the antiquity of North Bengal is best explored through the heritage structures, archeological sites and other entities that dot the map of the region. From the famous Darjeeling Toy Trains to the magnificent palaces of Cooch Behar and monuments of ancient Gour, the list packs in quite a punch.

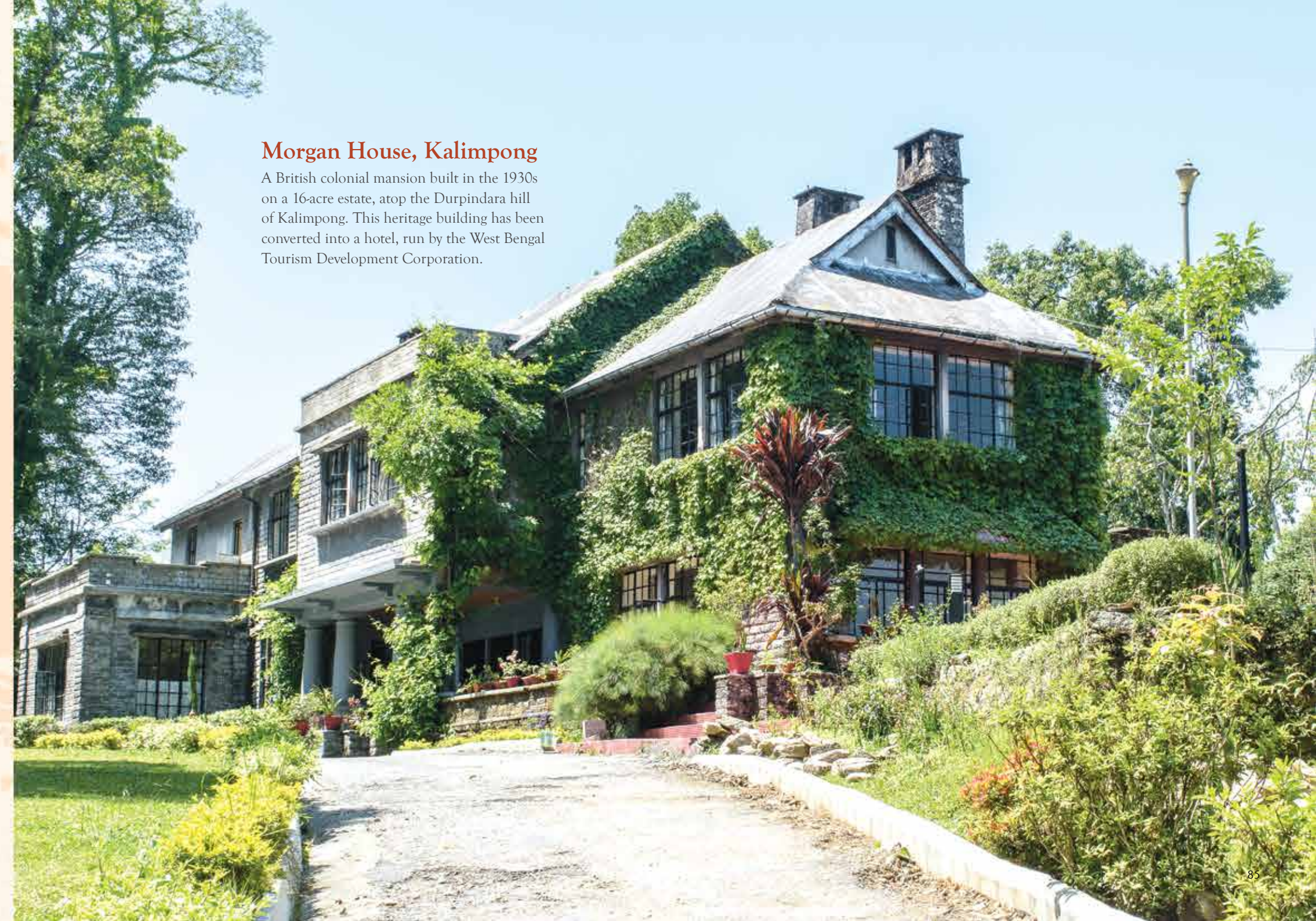


Toy Train, Darjeeling

A gateway to the spectacular Himalayas. The second highest railway station (Ghoom) in the world. And a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Put all together and you get Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, the famed Toy Train. Easily one of the most spectacular journeys in the world, it will take you through valleys, forests and tea gardens, with the Kanchenjunga across the window seat!

Routes: New Jalpaiguri to Kurseong and Darjeeling; Round trip from Darjeeling to Ghoom.

How to book a ride: Tickets can be purchased online at www.irctc.co.in, or in person at Indian Railways computerized reservation counters nationwide, or at the toy train stations at Darjeeling, Ghoom, Kurseong, New Jalpaiguri or Siliguri. Tickets cover entry to the DHR museums at Sukna, Kurseong and Ghoom.



Morgan House, Kalimpong

A British colonial mansion built in the 1930s on a 16-acre estate, atop the Durpindara hill of Kalimpong. This heritage building has been converted into a hotel, run by the West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation.

Burra bungalows

The Brits and the Scotts had built several bungalows and churches across the hills of North Bengal, mostly in and around tea estates. These iconic structures embody nuances of colonial architecture. If you are a heritage lover, look out for such properties dotting the hills.

Planter's Club, Darjeeling

A witness to many a historical event in the hills, this club was built for tea planters and their wives in 1868. Tenzing Norgay, the famed Sherpa, is said to have lined up for a job at this club much before he scaled the Everest summit. It was also the starting point for Andrew Irvine and George Mallory's famous, failed expedition to climb Mount Everest in 1924.



Cooch Behar Palace

Also called the Victor Jubilee Palace, this magnificent castle was built by Maharaja Nripendra Narayan in 1887. Intended to resemble the Buckingham Palace in London, this palace used to be a symbol of fine taste with a huge durbar hall, ballroom, billiards room and around 18 bedrooms! Today, a part of this palace has been converted into a museum.



Gour, Malda

Perhaps the oldest part of Bengal, Gour or Gauda used to be a kingdom under King Sashanka in the 7th century AD. History has seen royalties come and go, and with time several monuments have been built by different rulers, some of which still stand today as heritage structures. Pandua, 18km from Malda town, once used to be the capital of Gaur, an important seat of medieval Muslim architecture.

Explore the ruins of Dakhil Darwaza, Bada Darwaza, Tantipara Mosque, Eunuchs' Mosque, Kadam Rasul Mosque, and Firoz Minar, and Bara Sona Mosque. The Adina Mosque built in 1369 is one of the largest mosques in India.

Bangarh, Dakshin Dinajpur

Dating back to the Gupta period in history, Bangarh has many ancient ruins for heritage enthusiasts.



Offbeat

Destinations

They say unexplored paths lead to undiscovered treasures. The hills and foothills, valleys and flood plains of North Bengal still have places almost untouched by commercial travel. Little hamlets and quaint destinations keep secrets of this magical land for you to explore.



Cardamom Plantation at Bindu and Godak.

Musical stone cave of Chamurchi Mahakal, in a sleepy hamlet by the river Diana around 91km from NJP.

Gairibas Dioscorea Plantation – a haven for botany enthusiasts.



Ruins of Dalim Fort, a grandiose Bhutanese fortress on the hilltop of Jhandi.

Chibo, 4km from Kalimpong, is a haven for nature lovers. The village has a vantage view of the mesmerising Kanchenjunga.

Hanspokhri, by the Balason river, near the Indo-Nepal border, is blessed with abundant flora and fauna. Indulge in bird watching, angling, tea garden tours, nature walk, village walk and other activities.



Ramdhura, surrounded by dense forest of pine trees, is a serene hamlet located 15km from Kalimpong. It offers an unhindered view of Kanchenjunga.

Doban Valley near Kalimpong, at the meeting point of Rangpo river and Reshi river, close to Rorathang Bridge.

Mahaldiram in the Shelpu Hills of Kurseong offers a peaceful picturesque valley view with tea gardens and mountains (including Mt Kanchenjunga).



Mesmerising View Points



Tiger Hill in Darjeeling



Batasia Loop (Ghoom)



Gumba Dara View Point (Tinchuley, Darjeeling)



Lovers Meet View Point (Teesta Valley)



Ahal Dara View Point (Latpanchar, Darjeeling)



Lepchakha View Point in Dooars



Jhandi Dara Sunrise Point (Darjeeling district)



Ramitey Dara View Point (Longest view of Teesta) near Ramdhura

Mesmerising View Points



Coronation Bridge, Sevoke



Gajoldoba, Teesta Barrage

Tourist information

Alipurduar

Regional Tourist Office, Office of the District Magistrate,
Dooars Kanya, Alipurduar Court, Alipurduar, Pin- 736122
Phone: 03564-255062
Fax: 03564-255286
Email: dmapd20@gmail.com

Cooch Behar

Tourist Information Centre, Zillaparishad Atithi Nibas
(at Kachari More near Sagar Dighi), Cooch Behar- 736101
Mr. Partha Dutta (ATO)
Phone: 03582-231527

Malda

District Magistrate & Collector,
Office of the District Magistrate & Collectorate,
New Collectorate Building, Malda, West Bengal, Pin- 732101
Phone: 03512252381
Fax: 03512253092
Email: dm-malda@nic.in

Darjeeling

1. Darjeeling GTA TIC

Tourist Information Center, Deputy Director of Tourism, Darjeeling
Silver Fir Building, Bhanu Sarani (Mall Road), Darjeeling- 734101
Phone: (0354) 2254879/2255351
Fax: (0354) 2254214

2. Darjeeling Tourism Centre (Siliguri)

M-4 Building, Hill Cart Road, Siliguri, District - Darjeeling,
West Bengal, India
Phone: 0353-2511974/2511979
Telefax: 91-353-2517561
Email: tc_slg@yahoo.com

Kalimpong

WBTDCC, Morgan House, Kalimpong
Phone: 035 -52-255384/033552-283292/9733018776/9733008776
Email: morganhousetl@gmail.com

Jalpaiguri

District Magistrate, Collectorate Building,
Office of the District Magistrate, Jalpaiguri
Phone: 03561-230127
Email: dm-jlp@nic.in

Dakshin Dinajpur

District Magistrate, Shri Bijin Krishna, I.A.S.
Office: 03522-255201/255488 (Fax)
Residence: 03522-255202
Email: dm-bgt-wb@nic.in

Uttar Dinajpur

Shri Arvind Kumar Mina, IAS,
District Magistrate & Collector, Uttar Dinajpur
Phone: 03523-246025
Fax: 03523-246250

Buxa Tiger Reserve

Field Director, Buxa Tiger Reserve (West), Alipurduar College
Halt, Alipurduar Court, District Jalpaiguri, West Bengal- 736122
Phone: 03564-551129/03564-256333
Fax: 03564-55577/79
Email: fdbtrwb@gmail.com

Gorumara National Park, Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary, Neora Valley National Park

Divisional Forest Officer, Gorumara Wildlife Division,
Aranya Bhavan, 3rd Floor, Old Court Road, Jalpaiguri- 735101
Phone: 03561-222233
Email: dfowildlife2@gmail.com

Jaldapara National Park, Chilapata Forest

Divisional Forest Officer, Jaldapara Wildlife Division, Nilkuthi,
Coochbehar-736101
Phone: 03582-227185
Email: dfowl3wb@gmail.com

Singalila National Park

Divisional Forest Officer, Darjeeling Wildlife
Division, Bengal Natural History Museum,
Meadow Bank Road, Darjeeling- 734101
Phone: 0354-2257314
Email: dfowildlife1@gmail.com

Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary

Office of the Ranger Officer (Jorebungalow), Senchal West Range,
Wildlife Division-I, Darjeeling, West Bengal
Phone: 0354-2257314

Jorpokhri Wildlife Sanctuary

Dalkajhar Forest, West Bengal 734431, India
Darjeeling, West Bengal- 734431
Phone: 097759-47171

Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, Kathambari Forest, Khuttimari Forest

Phone: 03561-220 017
Email: dfonmd@vsnl.com

Aira Forest, Sapanikla Forest

M-4 Building, Hill Cart Road, Siliguri, Darjeeling,
West Bengal
Phone: 0353-2511974/2511979
Telefax: 91-353-2517561
Email: tc_slg@yahoo.com

Raiganj Bird Sanctuary

NH34, Raiganj, West Bengal- 733134
Phone: 033-2225-4723

Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary

Phone: 033-22370060





Ambuja Neotia *Initiatives* in North Bengal

The year 2005 was a milestone for Ambuja Neotia as it launched its first mixed-development township Uttorayon in Siliguri, thereby changing the urban landscape of the second fastest growing city in North East India. Since then the Group has forayed into other residential as well as commercial realty projects, healthcare, leisure and hospitality in and around Siliguri. Inspired by the phenomenal response from local residents, the Group has several more projects lined up across the beautiful terrains of North Bengal.



City Centre Siliguri

City Centre Siliguri is a high point in the evolution of a growing metropolis that is increasingly influenced by four major drivers - quality housing, quality working, quality shopping and quality entertainment. Siliguri has a vivid mix of local, transit and tourist population. City Centre draws visitors from both in and out of Siliguri from adjacent foothills, the hills, the neighbouring areas, the borders and from across the City, providing a unique experience.

Developed over a ten-acre expanse, it is a multiutility complex that is the confluence of diverse interests, a hub of activity, a breathing space for people-on-the run, a fantasy land for kids, a gen next hangout and a place Siliguri will be possessive about. City Centre Siliguri is all about this...and it's getting better every day.



Neotia Getwel Multispecialty Hospital

Neotia Getwel Multispecialty Hospital is the first healthcare initiative by Ambuja Neotia Group in North Bengal. Beautifully landscaped and spread across 3.18 acres of land, this 250-bed, NABH accredited state-of-the-art multi-specialty hospital is equipped with global expertise and modern technologies that holistically caters to the healthcare needs of the patients with world – class medical services and its dedicated team of healthcare professionals. With first rate infrastructure and superior healthcare facilities as its hallmark, the tertiary care hospital offers comprehensive medical care by providing hi – tech infrastructure and specialized medical facilities at a competent cost. The hospital is nestled within the premises of Uttarayan, in the foothills of Himalaya. The sprawling environment of the hospital offers patient-friendly care, It also adheres to the international norms of energy efficiency & waste management.





Montana Vista

Montana Vista is a new-age club that offers you the unique advantage of pristine surroundings complimented by impeccable amenities. A major lifestyle landmark, it is the first complete family destination for Siliguri and North Bengal.

It is the ideal destination for business meets, conferences, leisurely get-togethers and for spending quality time with family or one's own self. From decor to the amenities, from choice of cuisine to entertainment facilities, every detail is meticulously planned to ensure the very best in terms of brand value.



Uttorayon

The residential township of Uttorayon was Ambuja Neotia's first venture in North Bengal's Siliguri. The Ambuja Neotia Group launched Uttorayon, in association with Luxmi Township & Holdings Limited. Shri Dipankar Chatterjee, Chairman of the Luxmi Group, invited Ambuja Neotia to conceptualize, manage and market the project.

A first-of-its-kind project, the township changed the urban landscape of Siliguri. A mixed-use development with commercial and residential offerings, Uttorayon, a highly ambitious endeavour, presented a lifestyle experience like never before. The journey of transformation witnessed by the city and its residents continued with multiple developments.



Utsodhaara Teesta Township



After Uttorayon, Utsodhaara Teesta Township is Ambuja Neotia's newest offering to Siliguri. A compact and complete city within a greater city, Utsodhaara is conceptualized as a mixed-use integrated development comprising residential and commercial spaces developed across 81 acres. This self-sustaining township will incorporate a complete urban system including a robust road network and efficient power facility, water supply and drainage system, along with excellent healthcare facilities and educational institutes.



Taj Chia Kutir Resort & Spa, Darjeeling



The Taj Chia Kutir Resort and Spa has been the latest offering from Ambuja Neotia in the hospitality space, redefining the standards of luxury and sustainable tourism in North Bengal in collaboration with the Taj Group of Hotels. The verdant, sun-kissed Makaibari Tea Estate, one of the most fabled and celebrated tea gardens of the world, has been carved out to create this resort that integrates sustainability with the best of luxury, in a style that's vintage contemporary.

Leave the road,
take the trails.

—Pythagoras

