

# Incredible India

## Photo Excursion

7 - 18th October 2010

A 12-day photography journey from Kolkata to Darjeeling and Sikkim

**Join Sean Liew** on a photography expedition to the mystical region of Sikkim, India. Organised by Gogolion Travel Solutions, this unique tour is the one-of-a-kind tour you will not want to miss, as you learn tips and techniques on how best to capture great travel photography, from majestic mountain views to heart-warming smiles of the locals. We will take you on an adventure to explore and capture this relatively unexplored region of India, with its lush valleys, pristine rivers and waterfalls and friendly people. Be one of the first to return with unique imagery largely unseen by the rest of the world.

This tour is specially planned with photographers in mind, spanning over 12 days that will take you on a remarkable journey that starts on the streets of Kolkata, the 'City of Joy' that bursts with colours that tingles the photographic mind and smiling faces at every turn of corner that bound to capture your heart. Next we head for Darjeeling, the 7000 feet high hillside haven that Mark Twain calls it "Queen of the Himalayas". Famous for its fine quality tea products, Darjeeling offers a grand view of sweeping vistas, lush green hills and crystal clear blue skies. We will also explore the labyrinthine streets and bustling bazaar that will guarantee to get your shutters clicking feverishly. Among the places we'll visit in Darjeeling is the Druk Sangag Choe Ling Monastery, a towering monastery that's beautiful on the outside and inside, with its residents of more than 300 young monks learning meditation and philosophy. From Darjeeling we'll be travelling to Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. Our hotel in Gangtok offers a clear and grand view of



*Farmer returning home from a long day at work*

Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world, and overlooks the busy streets of Gangtok so you can capture spectacular images right from the comfort of the hotel itself. From its busy MG Marg street to the nearby impressive Rumtek

Monastery, there's plenty to explore and savour in this region. Next we will travel up north to a remote village in the mountains for an authentic experience in the majestic hillsides of Sikkim. Capture the beauty and tranquility of the simple village life in this northern region, fondly called the "Switzerland of the East". Autumn season in this region means clear blue skies and a truly breathtaking photography experience, especially when we travel up to some 18000 feet above sea level for a grand panoramic view of the snow-covered mountains. After a few days tour here in the northern Sikkim region, we will head back to Gangtok for another free and easy evening before travelling back to Kolkata to explore the city to its fullest and to coincide with the famous Durga Pooja celebration. We will then return home on an evening flight back to Kuala Lumpur. 🏠

*School children preparing for a festival performance*



*Majestic view at  
Yumthang*

## Itinerary in brief

- Day 1 7<sup>th</sup> Oct (Thursday)**  
ETD KUL 1430hrs ETA CCU 1550hrs  
Overnight in Kolkata Photography briefing and Q&A
- Day 2 8<sup>th</sup> Oct (Friday)**  
Early morning transfer to airport, fly to Bagdogra.  
Pick up from Bagdogra airport, travel by 4x4 jeep to Darjeeling. Reach Darjeeling in the evening.
- Day 3 9<sup>th</sup> Oct (Saturday)**  
Darjeeling day tour  
Visit Tiger Hill for sunrise, and Tibetan refugee centre / tea plantation / monastery
- Day 4 10<sup>th</sup> Oct (Sunday)**  
Darjeeling – Sikkim (Gangtok) 4x4 journey for about 5 hrs with scenic stops along the way
- Day 5 11<sup>th</sup> Oct (Monday)**  
Day Trip - visit sacred lake of Sikkim, Lake Tsomgo at altitude of 3780m
- Day 6 12<sup>th</sup> Oct (Tuesday)**  
Depart to Northern Sikkim for a 4 days 3 nights trip (journey distance about 8-10 hrs)
- Day 7 13<sup>th</sup> Oct (Wednesday)**  
Northern Sikkim – snow mountain view
- Day 8 14<sup>th</sup> Oct (Thursday)**  
Northern Sikkim – visit small villages in the northern region
- Day 9 15<sup>th</sup> Oct (Friday)**  
Back to Gangtok, photo presentation at night by participants
- Day 10 16<sup>th</sup> Oct (Saturday)**  
Gangtok – Bagdogra, fly back from Bagdogra to Kolkata.
- Day 11 17<sup>th</sup> Oct (Sunday)**  
Kolkata day tour
- Day 12 18<sup>th</sup> Oct (Monday)**  
ETD CCU 1635hrs local time, ETA KUL 2255hrs local time @ LCCT

*ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival*

*ETD: Estimated Time of Departure*

*KUL: Kuala Lumpur*

*CCU: Calcutta/Kolkata*



## Tour information

### Tour cost

RM5500 covers the following:

- AirAsia return ticket from Kuala Lumpur to Kolkata
- All overland transportation (including transfers)
- All entry fees to temples and monuments
- Best available accommodation
- Travel insurance
- India visa application

Meals are excluded for what we feel are good reasons: over the course of our tour, we will encounter various types of foods to savour. While some may have iron-stomach and are adventurous to try out exotic local delicacies, others may choose to stick to safer choices. Food prices vary accordingly and it is particularly true in larger cities such as Kolkata and Gangtok. As such we leave it up to the participants to try out various eatery establishments, big and small, and at times we may even break into groups depending on taste and appetite preferences. Cost of regular meals are not expensive and participants can expect to spend no more than RM500 for this entire trip if they spend frugally.

### Not covered in the cost are:

- Excess baggages (standard baggage limit is 20kg)
- Video or still camera fees
- Tips/gratuity to guides/translators and other staff
- Items consumed and/or utilised on personal nature such as beverages and laundry services
- Charges incurred as a result of delays beyond Gogolion's control

### Why we are different

Our itineraries are especially planned with photographers in mind, giving you plenty of opportunities to explore and capture memorable images. We take you on the less travelled road with unique views that photographers can relate to. We fully understand every photographer shoot differently, which is why we offer full flexibility: take your own time to explore and understand new places, wait for that perfect moment to capture the one-in-a-million shot or follow our photography trainer as he guides you the best view and angle to capture precious photographic moments. Whichever way you choose, you're bound to return home with great images in your mind and fantastic impression on your photos.

### Our advantage

**Small tour groups** - you get full attention of the photography trainer and ample of time for photography, unlike the typical packaged tour where you're usually 'on-the-clock' and are rushed from one place to another.

**On-the-spot guidance** - we believe the best way to learn is to do it yourself, so rather than showing you slides after slides, we show you how to get the perfect shot on-location.

**Flexibility** - while we carefully plan our itinerary, we leave enough room and flexibility to cater for pleasant surprises that we encounter

on the road: that split second beautiful scenery that must be captured while en route to our destination, short visit to villages, chance encounters with unique local events, all these small unexpected detours will make this tour unique.

### Optional Single Occupancy

Costs listed are based on double/twin occupancy. Participants may, upon early request, opt for single occupancy and we will arrange accordingly. Single supplement charges will apply in such cases.

### Refunds Policy

Participant are required to pay a non-refundable deposit of 50% of the tour price upon confirmation of participation and balance payment 2 months before travel date. If cancellation occurs before or while the trip is in progress, there will be no refund for any payment made and for any unused portion of the tour. Our rates are based on group participation and no refund will be issued for any accommodation, services, visits or features not utilised.



Young monk in a monastery in Darjeeling

### Tour Grading and Expectations

This tour is graded as easy to moderate and is suitable for anyone who his reasonably physically fit. This tour covers a long distance between each destination and will require some long drives which may be a bit rough and bumpy at times. Due to the nature of the roads (a large portion of Sikkim region is covered in mountain ranges!) and unpredictability of weather conditions and road, it may be necessary to alter our schedule before or during our tour. We will always keep our participants informed of latest information we have. Please also note that bathroom facilities on certain parts of this trip can be scarce and while we will endeavour to provide decent restroom stops, your privacy in 'emergencies' may be limited to a nearby tree or rock. Anyone who are unacceptable to such situations should consider carefully about joining this tour. Our policy is to provide the best available accommodation but we may encounter the occasional electricity breakdown, hot water may not be available at all times and service may be a little slow. Schedules on this tour can be vigorous

and as such participants are expected to be fully aware of such conditions before signing up. A good sense of humour and flexibility are essential to make this tour a fun one for everyone.

### Pre-Departure Briefing and Materials

After you have signed up, there will be a pre-departure briefing and Q&A session for participants (usually 1 month prior to travel date, to be held in KL) and a booklet with essential checklists, vital information, background information and photography notes will be provided.

### More information

For more details or questions about this excursion, kindly contact Sean or Gogolion, please see contact details on next page.

# Contact Information

## About Sean Liew, the photography trainer

Known to be a down-to-earth and very friendly trainer, Sean shares his unique vision and knowledge in easy and simple way to understand. He has conducted photography workshops for Nikon Malaysia for 2 years before setting up a training academy and conducted various digital photography courses for another 2 more years. Sean has since moved on to conduct local and international travels that are organised with photography enthusiasts in mind. He is an avid traveller and is always looking forward to the next destination whenever his schedule opens up. Aside from conducting travel excursions, Sean specialises in personalised training, a one-on-one photography and workflow (Photoshop, Aperture) training suited for individuals and small groups. He can be reached via email: [sean@seanliew.com](mailto:sean@seanliew.com) or call **+60 12 3331 332**.

Sean also maintains his weblog at [www.seanliew.com](http://www.seanliew.com)



Photo by Sam Lau



## About Gogolion Travel Club

Meet the lions, Xiao Fu and Mei Jun, the girl power that drives Gogolion, organiser for this excursion. Frequent travellers and dreamers for as long as they can remember, they take participants on the off beaten path and skip the tourist traps because they believe that's the only way to truly see this unique world. Both passionate travel writers for magazines and newspapers, they formed Gogolion in 2008 to share their extensive globe-trotting experiences with others.

The uniqueness of Gogolion lies in its ongoing mission to take travellers to visit places not so much as tourists or shoppers, but as adventurers. To seek out natural beauty of the world and heart-warming encounters of the locals. Each of Gogolion's trips are carefully crafted to allow participants to enjoy a truly memorable holiday. To see where the girls are taking adventurers to next, and learn more about this trip, call **012 3189166**, visit <http://www.gogolion.com/> or email [gogolion@gmail.com](mailto:gogolion@gmail.com)

Flower trader in Kolkata



Belakoba