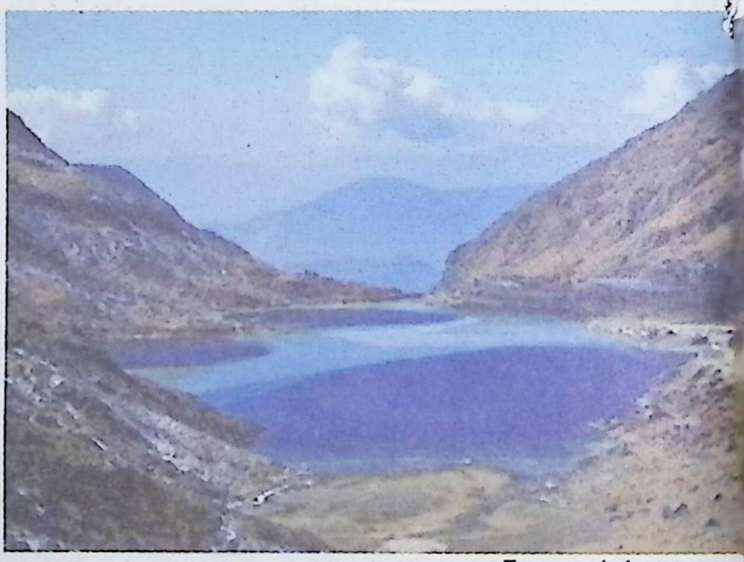
Soul- Searching in Sikkim

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Sikkim is a state in East India in the Himalayan foot hills bordering China (Tibet), Nepal and Bhutan. The snow-covered mountains and lush green valleys of Sikkim revitalises one's soul. Nearly 40 percent of its total area is forested.

How to go: There are no airports or railway stations in Sikkim. The only way to enter from the rest of India is by road using bus or jeep from West Bengal. Buses are available at Dharmatala in Kolkata city. It will take about 17 hours to reach Gangtok, the capital city of Sikkim. Construction of a 50 km rail link from Sevoke, West Bengal to Rangpo, Sikkim started in 2009, but it isn't expected to be ready until 2015. It will also take another few years until it reaches another 40km to Gangtok. Meanwhile, the nearest railway stations are Shiliguri and New Jolpaiguri. Both of these have a number of trains connecting them to Kolkata. You should be able to get pre-paid taxis outside the railway stations quite easily. The nearest airport for Sikkim is Bagdogra, near Shiliguri in North Bengal which is 124 km away and approximately four hours drive from Gangtok. Indian Airlines, Jet Airways, Spice Jet, Go Air etc. service Bagdogra linking it with other major airports in India (Including Gwahati). Druk Air flies twice weekly from Bangkok, stopping at Bagdogra before continuing to Paro in Bhutan. You can also take a helicopter from Bagdogra to Gangtok.

Where to Stay: As like any other popular tourist place, there is a large number of hotels, motels and guest houses available in Sikkim, particularly in Gangtok. Mayfair Spa Resort and Casino, Suhim Potriko, Hotel Sonam Delek, Welcom Heritage Denzong Regency, Elgin Nor- Khill Gangtok, Hotel Saikripa Gangtok, The Keepsa Residensy, Summit Norling Resort and Spa, Hotel Sagorika, Aashishkim Guest House, Sikkim Retreat Hotel, Himalayan Retreat, Hotel Mount Siniolchu, Tara Palace, Hotel Barries etc. are well-known hotels in Gangtok. Hotel Yarlam, Modern Residensy, Snow Lion Resort and Sonam Palgey Lachung are the notable hotels at Lachung.



Tsongmo Lake

Popular Destinations

Rumtek Monastery: 24 km from Gangtok in East Sikkim – the main seat of Karma Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism in Sikkim. Originaly built by the 9th Karampa Wangchuk Dorjie in 1740 but fell into disrepair. The current structure dates from 1959.

Tsongmo Lake: The most visited lake in Sikkim is Tsongmo Lake in East Sikkim. Located at 35 km from Gangtok and an altitude of 12,000 feet the ethereally beautiful Tsongmo Lake is must on every visitor's itinerary. Embedded in steep and rugged mountain terrain, the lake is covered with snow from early winter to late spring. Associated with many legends and myths, Tsongmo is regarded holy by the Sikkimese. For the tourists, the visit to the lake offers the wonderful outing. Rides on colourfully decorated yaks and mules offered at the lake side, which also has a verity of eating stalls serving snakes and beverages. Snowboots and gumboots can be hired here. The lake also provides the perfect backdrop for holiday photos

Pelling: About 117 km away from Gangtok, Pelling is today emerging as the second biggest tourist destination in the state of Sikkim. Although