



Sikkim boasts of a dramatic landscape

Himalayan range, beautiful meadows and stunning wildflowers in their natural environs. Start your exploration at the capital city Gangtok's Rumtek Monastery — the centre of the Karma Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism that was originally built by Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje in 1740 and was renovated in 1959. Stop at the Tsongmo Lake, 40 km from Gangtok. This large lake is inhabited by Brahminy Ducks and is also a favourite with migratory birds. Tucked amidst a lush forest cover, the lake is revered by both Buddhists and Hindus who believe that the birds do not allow even one leaf to float on the lake's

surface. Being in a restricted area an inner line permit is required by all to visit this place. Sikkim is home to the Nathu La Pass that also needs special permission to be visited. The Baba Harbajan Singh Temple located close to the Nathu La Pass is a well-known place as well. The Gurudongmar Lake that stands at an altitude of 5150 metres freezes in winter and is considered sacred as a part of it is believed to have been touched by Guru Padmasambhava. Sikkim also offers numerous trekking trails and the Dzongri trek gives you a stunning view of the unique landscape. Also visit the Yumthang Valley, home to

several exotic, rare and wild flowers. Since there is a strong Buddhist influence in the state you will find several monasteries like the Lingdum Monastery and Enchey Monastery here.

Best known for: Large cardamom production.

When established: In the 17th century by the Namgyal dynasty.

What to shop for: Buddhist prayer flags and Sikkimese cups with colourful art, especially dragons, printed on them.

Must-try food dishes: Momos and thukpas (noodle soup). Chhang, a locally brewed millet beer, is also very popular.