

DISCOVER THE 'BIOLOGICAL TREASURE TROVE' OF THE EASTERN HIMALAYA WITH WORLD EXPEDITIONS

A “*rugged and remarkable landscape*” and “*a biological treasure trove*” - just two of the terms used to describe the Eastern Himalaya in a new WWF report. Now you can experience this remote, pristine environment for yourself with World Expeditions, which offers 10 per cent off on a selection of its trips to the region.

WWF states that more than 350 new species have been discovered over the last decade in Eastern Himalaya, a region that reaches across Bhutan and northeast India to the far north of Myanmar as well as Nepal and southern parts of Tibet.

The Eastern Himalaya's awe-inspiring mountains, grasslands, savannas and rich alpine meadows harbour rare and exotic creatures, from red pandas, snow leopards and one-horned rhinos to the recently identified world's smallest deer and 'flying frogs' with vivid golden eyes.

Few places on Earth can match such splendour – and below are World Expeditions' top five trips to the region:

1. Land Of The Thunder Dragon 13 days

The remote Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan, which last year celebrated 100 years of monarchy, is well known for its untouched wilderness, rich Buddhist culture and a history steeped in mystique and legend. The tour begins in the lush rice-paddies of the picturesque Paro Valley, where Little Buddha was filmed and home to the sacred cliff-top monastery of Tiger's Nest (Takstang). From there you will cross the breathtaking Dochu La pass in the Black Mountain and glimpse the snow-capped Himalayas - before getting to the windswept Bumthang for a chance to visit temples and monasteries hardly touched by the passage of time...

PRICING: £2,080

2. East Himalayan Kingdoms 13 days

A magnificent touring journey to Darjeeling, Sikkim and the 'Dragon Kingdom' of Bhutan to appreciate the extraordinary landscapes and the rich history of the East Himalayan

Kingdoms. The trip includes a visit to the renowned town of Darjeeling, protected by UNESCO, and allows for memorable views of Kangchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world. In Sikkim you get to visit the Tibetan Buddhist Rumtek Monastery, the largest in the state, and Kalimpong hill station, where trade thrived between British India and Tibet until the early 1900s; while in Bhutan you will have time to discover its markets, wander the outlying villages and savour its unique cultural highlights.

DEPARTS 2009: 10 October, 26 October, 28 December

PRICING: £1,790

3. Sikkim Bhutan Trek 20 days

An exhilarating introductory itinerary that combines a spectacular trek in Sikkim with a journey to the Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan. The trek follows trails through magnificent rhododendron forest to verdant yak grazing pastures, where you will camp beneath the magnificent backdrop of Kangchenjunga, the world's third-highest peak. In between, you will visit the renowned hill station of Darjeeling, the thriving capital of Gangtok and the legendary town of Kalimpong, while in Bhutan you can visit the ancient Dzongs (forts) and Buddhist monasteries to appreciate its rich cultural heritage.

DEPARTS 2009: 26 September, 3 October

PRICING: £2,250

4. Darjeeling & Singalila Ridge Trek 14 days

An inspiring introduction to Himalayan trekking through the impressive Singalila Ridge to the west of Darjeeling, following the trails that define the borders of India and Nepal. This trek includes time in Nepalese villages, before ascending through oak and rhododendron forest to the alpine meadows, where you will take in spectacular views of Kangchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world, and the myriad of peaks that form the East Himalaya. A glimpse of the summit of Everest and the adjacent peaks provide an additional bonus on this outstanding trek!

DEPARTS 2009: 11 October, 25 October, 8 November

PRICING: £1,395

5. Bhutan High Trails via Laya 18 days

A superb trek into the heartland of Bhutan, passing underneath the sacred peak of Chomolhari and across a series of high passes in pristine wilderness. The trip follows forest trails and appreciates the wide variety of rhododendrons and other spring flowers, crossing a series of high passes (each in the vicinity of 5,000m) and camping in alpine meadows beneath a constant backdrop of snow-capped peaks. While in the land of the

peaceful Dragon, you will also get the chance to spend time in Paro, probably Bhutan's most beautiful valley and historically the centre of the most important trade routes, and capital Thimphu, pure and rich in natural splendour and cultural vibrancy.

DEPARTS 2009: 26 September

PRICING: £2,750

Committed to sustainable and responsible travel, World Expeditions won in 2001 the WWF-sponsored Environmental Achievement Award in Australia for its publication of *The Responsible Travel Guidebook*, which highlights ways to minimise your impact and leave the paths you travel as you found them. Responsible travel goes well beyond simply employing local people and using local services, which is why the company has continually put its trekking service under the microscope to analyse where the tourist monies end up in an effort to have an even distribution of wealth.

World Expeditions now offers a 10% discount on trips departing exclusively in Bhutan for travelling in 2009 (bookings must be made direct with World Expeditions).

Please note that trips have limited availability, due to the country's restricted accessibility by air. Bhutan is serviced by only one airline, therefore flights are selling out fast (September is already full and, although the winter schedule has just been released, flights from October 2009 onwards are also filling quickly).

World Expeditions' all-inclusive policy ensures that there are no local payments.

Prices quoted above do not include international flights, however these can be arranged on request.

For bookings please call 0800 0744 135 or visit www.worldexpeditions.co.uk

- Ends -

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Notes for editors:

- World Expeditions began operating treks in Nepal in 1975. Since then, it has earned itself an outstanding reputation as a world leader in small group trekking and adventure holidays.
- Two factors distinguish World Expeditions from its competitors: the **all-inclusive value** of its trips, with all meals whilst trekking, internal transport, accommodation, equipment and site entrance fees covered; and its **expert leaders**, often world-renowned figures whose experience and passion for destinations and local communities ensure superbly-designed, fulfilling travel itineraries every time.
- World Expeditions trips are for those travellers who want to discover destinations from the inside - taking the 'paths less travelled' to interact with and learn about local cultures, rather than simply ticking off tourism spots. More than 500 stand-alone itineraries are offered, from small group active adventures and expeditions to cycling and walking tours to cultural journeys.