

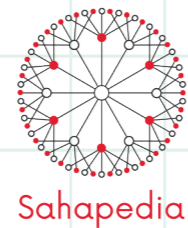
My City
My Heritage

My Gangtok

Explorers' Book

Activity Book for Children

TO DO LIST
1. Food
2. Culture
3. Craft



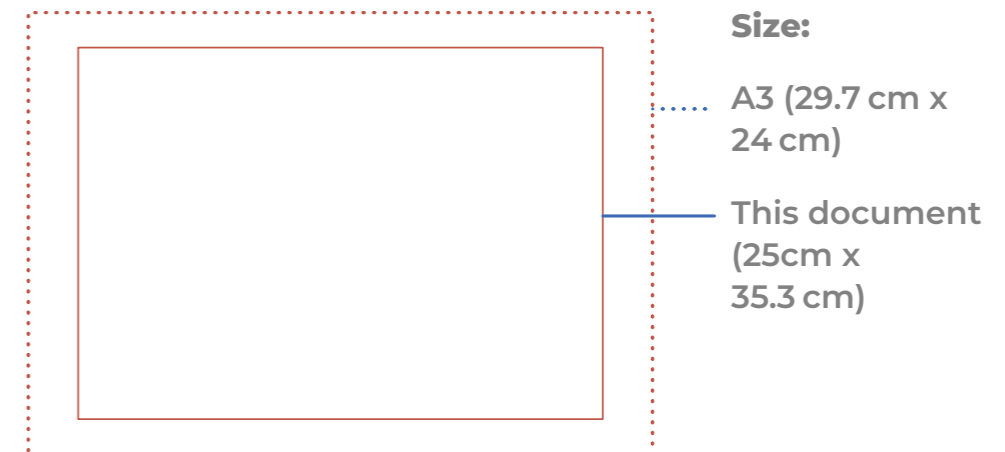
The capital city of Sikkim, Gangtok is shaped by its hilly geography and surrounded by mountains, vibrant monasteries, historic trade routes, folklores, and rich cultural traditions. The cultural and trading hub of Sikkim, it is perched along ancient trade paths that once connected regions across the Himalayas — including Tibet, Bhutan, and Nepal to the rest of the Indian subcontinent — the city is a unique blend of its indigenous traditions, larger trans-Himalayan cultural exchanges and a vibrant mix of ethnic communities that have shaped the history of Sikkim. From the old palace, thangka paintings and handwoven textiles to wood carving and metalwork, Gangtok is an archive of faith, nature, and community.

This activity book invites you to explore the landscapes and culture of the city and the state through engaging quizzes, puzzles, and illustrations. Think of these less as a test of knowledge, and more as a journey through Sikkim from afar. Whether you're a nature lover, culture enthusiast, or curious explorer, Gangtok — and this book — has something for everyone.



Discover More:

Learn about Gangtok with curated articles and numerous recommendations with the MCMH My Gangtok Booklet and 2 heritage trails on <https://www.sahapedia.org/my-city-my-heritage/celebrating-gangtok>



Title:
 My City My Heritage My Gangtok:
 Explorers' Book

Design and Illustrations:
 Kaustav Purkayastha and
 Jisha Unnikrishnan

Publisher:
 Sahapedia

We welcome suggestions and
 corrections for future editions.

Supported by:
 InterGlobe Foundation

Contact:
 Sahapedia

Copyright:
 ©Sahapedia and InterGlobe
 Foundation, 2026
 All rights reserved.

Website:
www.sahapedia.org

Email:
contact@sahapedia.org

Contributors:
 Abhibyanjana R Thatal

Photos:
 Abhishek Anil
 Wikimedia Commons

Gangtok Through Time

Gangtok's history, shaped by the wider history of Sikkim, continues to influence the city today. This exercise is for the history buffs! Listed here are some key events connected to Gangtok and Sikkim, but the years are all mixed up. Your task is to match each event to the correct year and build an accurate timeline. The first one should be an easy start, but some of the others are more challenging. Let's see if you can piece together Gangtok's past, year by year!





Phuntsog Namgyal was crowned the first Chogyal at the Norbugang coronation site marking the beginning of the Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim.



A peace agreement called the Treaty of Titalia was signed between the king of Sikkim and the British East India Company where the British agreed to protect Sikkim, in return for free trade and travel through Sikkim to the border of Tibet.



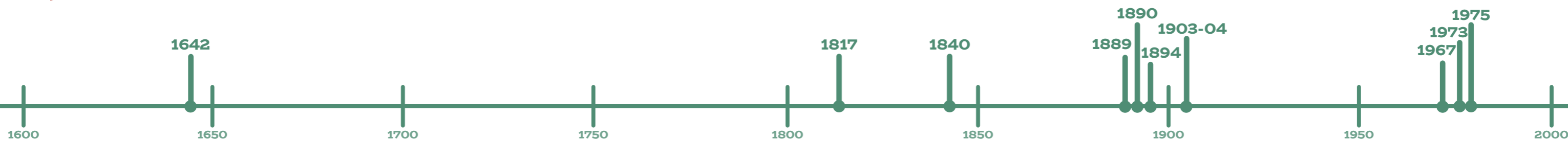
The people of Sikkim voted in a referendum after which Sikkim became the 22nd state of India.



Enchey Monastery was constructed in Gangtok making it a popular Buddhist Pilgrimage site.



The capital of Sikkim was shifted to Gangtok by Chogyal Thutob Namgyal.



(The following years and events are mismatched)

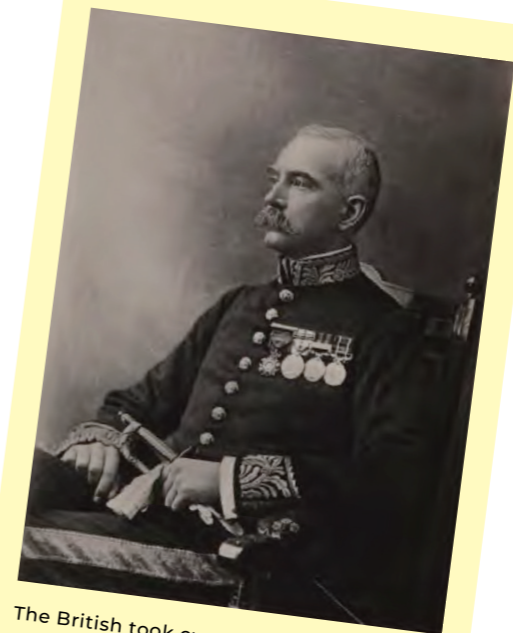
Year of the Tripartite Agreement between India, Sikkim's Chogyal (King), and Sikkimese political parties that paved the way for democracy in Sikkim.



A temporary British Indian Armed Forces expedition into Tibet known as Younghusband expedition leading to the convention of Lhasa started from Sikkim.



The Indo-China war also called the Nathula and Cho La clashes happened on the border of Sikkim between Indian armed forces and Chinese troops.



The British took over the administration of Gangtok in their hands entirely.

An Anglo-Chinese Convention was signed in Calcutta defining the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet along the Teesta River area.



Gangtok's Food Heritage Trivia

Gangtok's food heritage is shaped by the history of Sikkim and its geographical setting, where climate, hilly terrain influenced what people cooked, preserved, and shared. Traditional ingredients, fermentation practices, warming soups, and simple meals reflect everyday life adapted to mountain living, while local markets and kitchens remain central to the city's food culture. This quiz offers a glimpse into Gangtok through its culinary traditions.

The questions range from easy to somewhat tricky. Don't worry if you don't get everything right — the idea is to discover and appreciate the food practices that continue to define Gangtok's heritage.



Food Heritage Quiz

Easy

- Which famous street food in Gangtok is a fusion of local food and Bihari-style chaat?
 - Momo
 - Aloo Chewra
 - Laphing
 - Phaley
- This local crop is used in both food and alcohol-making in Sikkim.
 - Wheat
 - Maize
 - Millet
 - Sugarcane
- What is the name of the fried ring-shaped sweet bread made of rice popularly consumed during the Dasain celebrations in Sikkim?
 - Khapsey
 - Zero
 - Sel-Roti
 - Bhungu Amcho
- What is the name of the traditional Sikkimese fermented food made from soybeans?
 - Gundruk
 - Kinema
 - Sidra
 - Sukuti
- Gundruk is prepared by fermenting which ingredient?
 - Bamboo Shoot
 - Meat
 - Saag
 - Soyabean
- What is the name of the traditional Sikkimese fermented alcohol made from millet or rice?
 - Hit Beer
 - Chaang
 - Fenny
 - Arrack
- "Tongba" a common word to describe the Chaang is actually a
 - Bamboo/Wooden container
 - Wooden Plate
 - Brass Bowl
 - Brass cup
- This traditional cheese made of cow or yak milk comes in both soft and hard form
 - Paneer
 - Churpi
 - Kalari
 - Gouda

Intermediate

- Terrace farming and irrigation by the Nepali farmers increased the production of which crop?
 - Rice
 - Barley
 - Wheat
 - Millet



- 'Wachipa', a unique dish made of burnt chicken feathers, meat and rice is a traditional cuisine of which community?
 - Mangar
 - Limboo
 - Sherpa
 - Rai

- What is the name of this traditional recipe made of a millet crepe filled with Churpi (cheese) and wild greens vegetables?
 - Khum
 - Dedo
 - Marcha
 - Khuri-Khu
- This wild plant is used to make fabric as well as food such as soup.
 - Stinging Nettle (Sisnu)
 - Ningro (Fiddle Head Fern)
 - Bamboo Shoot
 - Fern
- Sikkim is the leading exporter of this GI tagged cash crop in India
 - Small cardamom
 - Dalley Chilly
 - Tobacco
 - Large Cardamom
- This local sausage made of a mixture of minced meat, flour, rice, blood and herbs stuffed into an intestine is called
 - Gyari
 - Gyuma
 - Chorizo
 - Lap Cheong
- During which festival do people eat a mix of beaten rice and curd with fruit or sugar?
 - Makar Sankranti
 - Asar Pandra
 - Namsong
 - Chasok Tonmang

Difficult

- In popular Lepcha folklore the origin of Chi Millet is linked with which entity?
 - Tungli-moo
 - Mun
 - Itboo Deboo Rum
 - Tso-Mung
- In Bhutia households, this ritualistic noodle soup is prepared using nine symbolic dough types, also commonly called Kawri in Nepali
 - Thukpa
 - Guthuk
 - Thenthuk
 - Gya-thuk



Food Heritage Quiz

18. Ponguzum, a traditional delicacy of the Lepcha community, is a dish made of
 - a. Beef
 - b. Chicken
 - c. Pork
 - d. Fish
19. The soup made from this animal is believed to have medicinal properties and is popular among post-partum women
 - a. Crab
 - b. River Crab
 - c. Paha frog
 - d. Ox Tail
20. During Makar Sankranti the following is served and consumed by locals
 - a. Boiled yam, tapioca/cassava and sweet potatoes
 - b. Boiled radish, turnip, beetroot and carrot
 - c. Boiled radish, pumpkin, squash and gourd
 - d. Boiled squash, pumpkin, bottle gourd and cucumber
21. Khapsey, a deep fried snack of Tibetan origin is central to which festival?
 - a. Saga Dawa
 - b. Losar
 - c. Sonam Lochar
 - d. Losoong
22. The most common and traditional way of meat preservation in Sikkim is
 - a. Smoking and Sundrying
 - b. Fermentation
 - c. Brining
 - d. Cold Storage
23. This traditional fermented milk product prepared from milk of yaks or cows is popular among Sherpa community
 - a. Somar
 - b. Chuu
 - c. Philu
 - d. Churpi
24. Mesu, a sour fermented food item, is made from which plant?
 - a. Gundruk
 - b. Radish
 - c. Bamboo Shoot
 - d. Kinema



Capturing Enchey

Create Your Own Postcard!

Sitting on a high hill above Gangtok, Enchey Monastery, which literally means a 'solitary monastery,' is a peaceful monastery that once made Gangtok a popular pilgrimage site. It is believed that the guardian deities Khangchendzonga and Yabdean reside in this monastery and therefore people's wishes are fulfilled when they pray here. Prayer flags flutter in the mountain air, and the city hum fades into birdsong. Sit on the stone steps, sketch the sloping roofs and distant hills, and imagine the centuries of quiet watching unfold below you.

Your Task:

1. **Draw Your Scene:** On the blank side of the postcard, create a vivid illustration of your favourite view in Enchey. Look at the arches, the architecture of the monastery, ornate painted windows, the mountains, and take in the quiet.
2. **Describe Your Experience:** On the lined side of the postcard, write a short message about your visit. What did you see and hear? How did it feel to stand where scholars once studied the stars?



Hints for Your Postcard:

The Architecture and People:

- Draw the roofs and ornate windows capturing their vivid colours and characters.
- Show the chortens, the prayer wheels, the monks walking around, the visitors here to pray.

Scenery from the Top:

- Sketch the layered view of Gangtok unfolding below and the winding roads.
- Show the hills fading into one another.
- Capture the drifting clouds, prayer flags, smoke from the saang, and birds circling above.

Magical Moments:

- Imagine the folklore of the monk who flew to this hill.
- Can you draw this mythical story?



Blank postcard template with a vertical line separating the address area (left) from the message area (right). The message area includes a small rectangular box for a stamp in the top right corner.

Blank postcard template with a vertical line separating the address area (left) from the message area (right). The message area includes a small rectangular box for a stamp in the top right corner.

Location: Where is it? (Example: On a hill above Gangtok)

Message (Why do you love this place? What makes it special? Describe what you see, hear, or feel.)

Dear _____ ,

I am in (name of place), and it is absolutely beautiful! The best part about this place is _____

I saw _____

(a bird, tree, river, or other natural feature), and it made me feel _____

I wish you were here to see it with me!

See you soon!

Yours

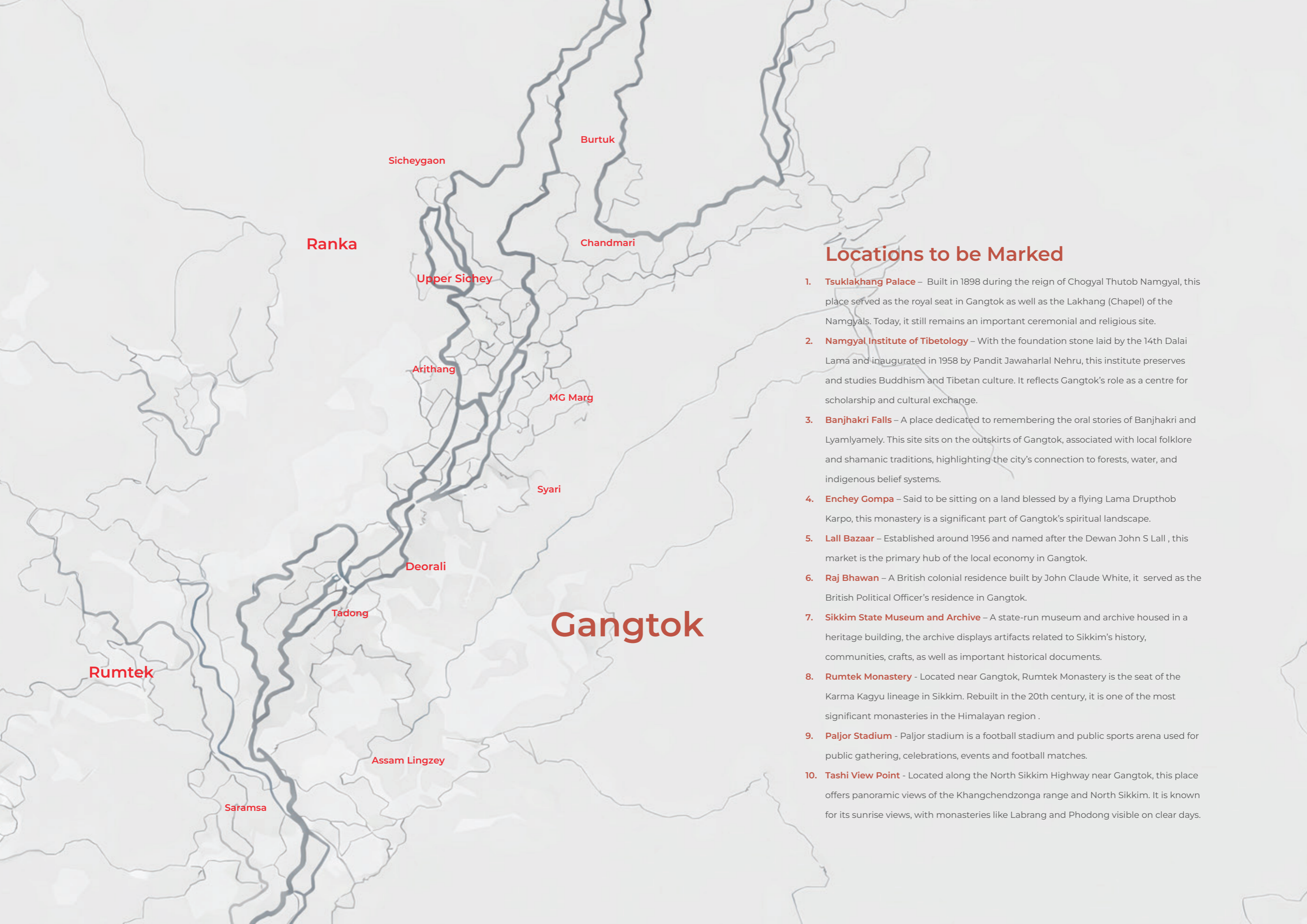
Gangtok Mapped

Gangtok has grown from a small pilgrimage site into an important political, cultural, and spiritual centre. Once shaped by royal patronage, trade routes, monasteries, and its mountainous landscape, Gangtok today is a melting point of different cultures and traditions. From hilltop monasteries to bustling markets and colonial-era institutions, Gangtok tells the story of a rich history and everyday life in the mountains. In this activity, we will use a map to trace Gangtok's key places that reflect the city's historical evolution and its diverse cultural identity.

Instructions

- Look at the list of historic and cultural locations provided.
- Match each location with its correct spot on the map of Gangtok.
- Draw a small icon or sketch to represent each landmark (for example, prayer flags for a monastery or a basket of vegetables for a market).





Locations to be Marked

1. **Tsuklakhang Palace** – Built in 1898 during the reign of Chogyal Thutob Namgyal, this place served as the royal seat in Gangtok as well as the Lakhang (Chapel) of the Namgyals. Today, it still remains an important ceremonial and religious site.
2. **Namgyal Institute of Tibetology** – With the foundation stone laid by the 14th Dalai Lama and inaugurated in 1958 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, this institute preserves and studies Buddhism and Tibetan culture. It reflects Gangtok's role as a centre for scholarship and cultural exchange.
3. **Banjhakri Falls** – A place dedicated to remembering the oral stories of Banjhakri and Lyamlyamely. This site sits on the outskirts of Gangtok, associated with local folklore and shamanic traditions, highlighting the city's connection to forests, water, and indigenous belief systems.
4. **Enchey Gompa** – Said to be sitting on a land blessed by a flying Lama Druptob Karpo, this monastery is a significant part of Gangtok's spiritual landscape.
5. **Lall Bazaar** – Established around 1956 and named after the Dewan John S Lall, this market is the primary hub of the local economy in Gangtok.
6. **Raj Bhawan** – A British colonial residence built by John Claude White, it served as the British Political Officer's residence in Gangtok.
7. **Sikkim State Museum and Archive** – A state-run museum and archive housed in a heritage building, the archive displays artifacts related to Sikkim's history, communities, crafts, as well as important historical documents.
8. **Rumtek Monastery** - Located near Gangtok, Rumtek Monastery is the seat of the Karma Kagyu lineage in Sikkim. Rebuilt in the 20th century, it is one of the most significant monasteries in the Himalayan region .
9. **Paljor Stadium** - Paljor stadium is a football stadium and public sports arena used for public gathering, celebrations, events and football matches.
10. **Tashi View Point** - Located along the North Sikkim Highway near Gangtok, this place offers panoramic views of the Khangchendzonga range and North Sikkim. It is known for its sunrise views, with monasteries like Labrang and Phodong visible on clear days.

Voices of Gangtok

Character Sketches From the Past

Gangtok is filled with histories, whether documented or orally passed on from elders to younger generations. From mythical characters and mystical entities to internal lives of people who lived on these hills. Step into the past and your vivid imaginations and give voice to one of these characters through your eyes.

Your Task:

1. **Choose a Character:** Pick one from the list below or invent your own.
2. **Describe Them:** Who are they? What do they do? What period do they live in?
3. **Write in First-Person:** Let the character speak in their own voice.
4. **Draw or Imagine Their World:** What surrounds them? What do they see, wear, or dream of?



Character Sketch Examples

A Banjhakri (20th Century)

Mythical Forest Shaman:

"My life in the dense forest of the hills is full of magic. Meditating and devotion to the spirits of the forest has blessed me with supernatural abilities. Dhyangro is my instrument. It is my duty to pass on this knowledge of the spirit world to the young children of this land; even if I have to protect them from my wife, the most feared creature of this land."

A Lyamlyamey (19th Century)

A feared female mythical entity

"People whisper my name in fear and call me monstrous. They fear me and my image. They only remember my body but forget my purpose. But they know little about my life in these forests and the spirits I play with. I test humans, frighten them, chase them away when they forget their place. Fear keeps balance. Without it, the forest would not survive."

A porter along the Silk Route (Late 19th century)

"My back knows these mountains better than any map. I carry salt, wool, tea bricks, and cloth along the old Silk Route paths that pass through Sikkim. From Kalimpong to Lhasa, every bend is filled with uncertainty, snow, wind, and falling lands. We walk before dawn, resting in small hamlets. When the traders talk of borders and treaties, I listen quietly. Kingdoms may change, but these paths remain, etched into this land."

A monk devoted to the craft of Thangka (Early 20th Century)

"Each line I paint is an offering. Ground minerals, cloth, patience—nothing is hurried. I learned to prepare colours from stone and earth, and to steady my breath before every brushstroke. These thangkas are not decoration; they are paths for the mind. When they leave the monastery, a part of my silence travels with them."

The Last Chogyal of Sikkim (20th century)

Palden Thondup Namgyal

"I inherited a kingdom standing at the edge of change. From my palace in Gangtok, I watched a small Himalayan kingdom negotiate with the modern world. I carried tradition, diplomacy and loss in equal measure. When the crown faded, memories remained of the erstwhile kingdom."



Draw Their World:



Answers

GANGTOK THROUGH TIME

Matched

1. 1642: Phuntsog Namgyal was crowned the first Chogyal at the Norbugang coronation site marking the beginning of the Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim.
2. 1817: A peace agreement called the Treaty of Titalia was signed between the king of Sikkim and the British East India Company where the British agreed to protect Sikkim, in return for free trade and travel through Sikkim to the border of Tibet.
3. 1975: The people of Sikkim voted in a referendum after which Sikkim became the 22nd state of India.
4. 1840: Enchey Monastery was constructed in Gangtok making it a popular Buddhist pilgrimage site.
5. 1894: The capital of Sikkim was shifted to Gangtok by Chogyal Thutok Namgyal .
6. 1973: Year of the Tripartite Agreement between India, Sikkim's Chogyal (King), and Sikkimese political parties that paved the way for democracy in Sikkim.
7. 1903-04: A temporary British Indian Armed Forces expedition into Tibet known as Younghusband expedition leading to the convention of Lhasa started from Sikkim.
8. 1967: The Indo-China war also called the Nathula and Cho La clashes happened on the border of Sikkim between Indian armed forces and Chinese troops.
9. 1889: The British took over the administration of Gangtok in their hands entirely.
10. 1890: Anglo-Chinese Convention was signed in Calcutta defining the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet along the Teesta River area.

FOOD HERITAGE QUIZ

1. B
2. C
3. C
4. B
5. C
6. B
7. A
8. B
9. D
10. A
11. D
12. A
13. D
14. B
15. B
16. C
17. B
18. D
19. C
20. A
21. B
22. A
23. A
24. C



Stickers

