

My City
My Heritage

Gang
toko

 Trail

From Enchey to Rumtek

 50km apx

 Enchey Gompa

Photos by Abhishek Anil and Wikimedia Commons.
Illustration by Jisha Unnikrishnan.

Gangtok, earlier being the capital of an independent kingdom and now of present-day Sikkim, holds a rich history shaped by the region's political past and its religious and spiritual dimensions. This trail invites you to explore the city as an expansive geographical vessel of a Buddhist kingdom and its craft culture, encouraging you to interact with the city and its people.

Starting from the Enchey Gompa, the historical pilgrimage site outlining the spiritual contours of the beliefs and practices of the people in Sikkim, the trail moves downwards to the main town of Gangtok from the state archive and crafts training center to old monuments and palaces and museums and finally ends at the Rumtek Monastery at the outskirts of Gangtok. In the town center, the trail covers important historical and cultural sites in present-day Gangtok that shape the imaginations of the region's culture and the past.

This trail covers a large hilly terrain with cultural, historical, and spiritual centers as the guiding framework to understanding Gangtok.

1 Enchey Gompa

The Enchey Gompa, a prominent monastery of the Nyingma order of Mahayana Buddhism, is popular not only among Buddhists but also Hindus. There is a common belief that any prayer or wishes of the followers of this monastery are



fulfilled. First established in 1840 and rebuilt into its present architectural form with ornate woodwork in 1909, the monastery made Gangtok a popular pilgrimage site. Legend goes that the monastery was a hermitage of Lama Druptob Karpo, a monk with flying power. The *Detor cham*, a masked dance, is performed on the 18th and 19th day of the 12th Lunar month of the Tibetan calendar, as is the dance of *Singhe cham*.

2 Directorate of Handloom and Handicraft (DHH)



Founded by the then Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal in 1957, the directorate of handloom and handicraft was originally called Palden Thondup Cottage Industries Institute (PT Institute). The center today provides vocational courses on various Sikkimese crafts such as carpet weaving, *thangka* painting, mask making, bamboo crafts and more. The institute is open to all who are curious about craft

processes and also has an art gallery which displays state and national award-bearing craft products. The institute also has a sales emporium for people to take back souvenirs.

3 Sikkim State Museum and Archives



Located near the Zero point, the Sikkim State Museum and Archives was established in 1990 and is under the Culture Department of the Government of Sikkim. The two-storeyed stone building, featuring beautiful wood and stone-work houses, records holdings of 15 Secretariat Departments of the Durbar Period as well as artefacts of various communities of Sikkim.

4 White Hall & Ridge Park

The White Memorial Hall was built in a typical British architectural design in 1931 to honour John C White, a British political officer in Sikkim who



built the (present-day) Raj Bhavan. This two storied building is located near Ridge Park, a promenade near the Tusklakhang monastery which once hosted an open market for goods brought in from the Sino-India-Tibet trade route. Today, Ridge Park also houses an orchidarium.

5 Tsuklakhang Royal Chapel and Monastery

Tusklakhang monastery was the former royal residence and chapel of the Namgyal dynasty, currently managed by the Tusklakhang Trust. It was built in 1898 by Chogyal Thutob Namgyal. The site is both politically and culturally significant, with the annual Pang Lhabso! celebrations of Gangtok taking place in its compound.



The space also houses sacred art, artefacts, and ceremonial objects. The palace features architectural design that is now synonymous with a Sikkimese style, featuring intricate woodwork and vibrant paintings.

6 Namgyal Institute of Tibetology



Located in Deorali, this is one of the most important museums and research institutes on Buddhism in Sikkim. The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (NIT) was inaugurated in 1958 by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The institute houses two libraries and a museum, which hosts a rich collection of manuscripts, ancient Buddhist texts, statues from Sikkim and Tibet, *thangkals*, ritual objects, and over 30,000 volumes of books in Tibetan, Sanskrit, and English. The institute also has a Bulletin of Tibetology that publishes research work in the field of Buddhism and histories of Sikkim.

7 Rumtek Monastery

Also known as the Dharma Chakra Centre, this monastery is one of the most significant monasteries in the Himalayan region. Originally built in the mid-eighteenth-century under the guidance of Changchub Dorje, 12th Karmapa



Lama, and later reconstructed in 1959 under the guidance of Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, the monastery serves as the seat of the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism in exile. The monastery complex showcases traditional Tibetan architectural design, murals, sacred relics brought from Tsurphu Monastery, the Karmapa's seat in Tibet, and elaborate *thangkals*.



Please Note:

- This trail can be done independently and can typically be covered in one or two days, depending on the preferred pace of the individual(s). The trail can be covered partly on foot, by car, and by cable car.
- Shared cabs are available from each location.

On foot: From DHH to Tsuklakhang Palace.

By car: Enchey Gompa to Gangtok; Rumtek to Gangtok.

Cable car: After completing the walking trail up to Tsuklakhang, take the road to Namnang and then the cable car to Deorali to reach NIT.

- Entry fees may be applicable at some places, such as the Craft Gallery and the NIT Museum.
- While the order of the trail may be adjusted for convenience, following this sequence is recommended.



Abhibyanjana R Thatal

is a musician/producer and independent researcher on music and identities from Sikkim.

Email: abhibyanjanat@gmail.com



01. Enchey Gompa
02. Directorate of Handloom and Handicraft (DHH)
03. Sikkim State Museum and Archives
04. White Hall & Ridge Park
05. Tsuklakhang Royal Chapel and Monastery
06. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (NIT)
07. Rumtek Monastery



Black C

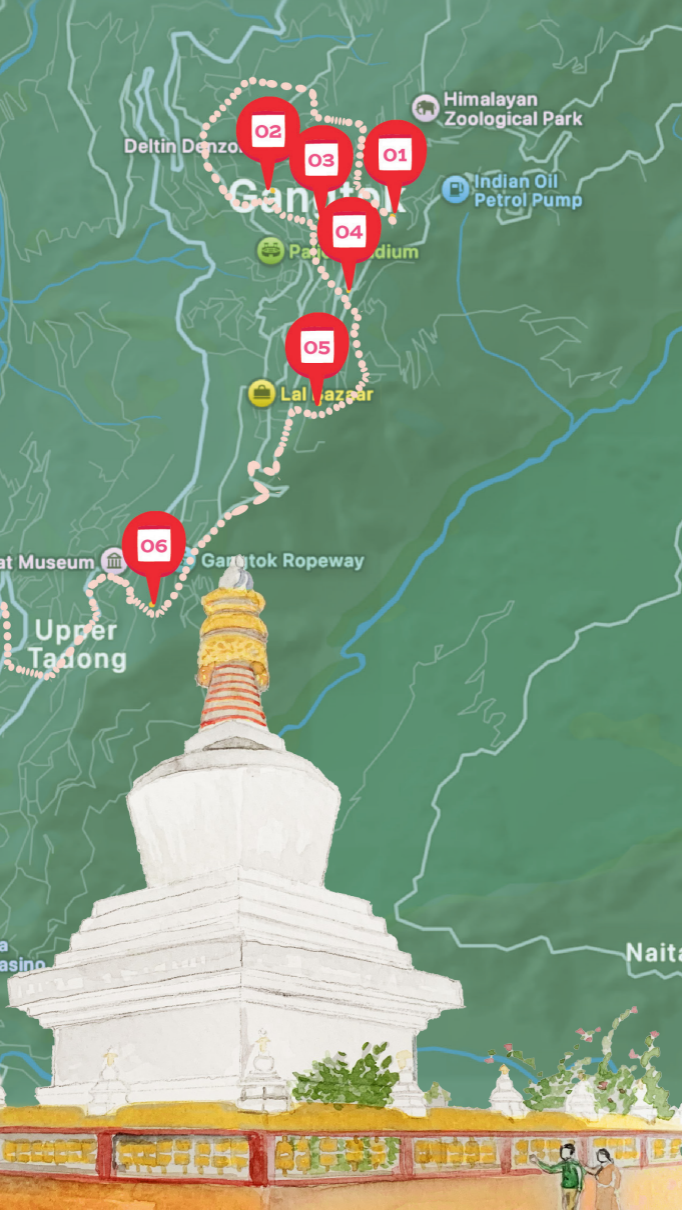
Mayfair Sp
Resort & C

Rawate
Rumtek

Shyagyong

Samli





Deltin Denzong

Himalayan
Zoological Park

02

03

01

Indian Oil
Petrol Pump

Gangtok

04

Parliament
Stadium

05

Lal Bazaar

06

War Museum

Gangtok Ropeway

Upper
Tadong

Casino

Nait...





INTERGLOBE
FOUNDATION



Sahapedia



sahapedia.org
sahapediaexperiences.org