

Steam Railway Readers' Tour to the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway 31 January to 11/13 February 2018

Please note that all charter trains will be steam-hauled

Wednesday 31 January

Leave the UK (choice of Gatwick, Heathrow, Birmingham or Manchester) at 1300...

Thursday 1 February

...After changing in Dubai, we arrive in Kolkata at 0700. After clearing immigration, we can offer you a choice.

OPTION 1: We will catch the 1035 flight to Bagdogra, where we will be met and taken to our hotel, where rooms will be ready. After lunch, we will take a minibus north to meet the southbound service train, and take our first photographs. We will stay at the Cindrella hotel in Siliguri for three nights

OPTION 2: We will transfer to a central Kolkata hotel where we will have a couple of rooms to freshen up. In the afternoon, we will take a ride on one of Kolkata's vintage trams, and in the evening transfer to Kolkata's Sealdah station to catch the Darjeeling Mail at 2205 for the overnight journey to New Jalpaiguri, at the foot of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.



Friday 2 February



OPTION 1: In the morning, we will take a short ride to Sevoke to see a few remains of the Teesta Valley branch and the Coronation Bridge, which carries India's road connection to Assam.

OPTION 2: We should arrive in New Jalpaiguri at 0800, and we will be met and taken to our hotel, where breakfast will be ready.

BOTH OPTIONS: Charter trains over the lowest section of the line are very rare, and we cover it in the afternoon with a steam charter, which will stop in Siliguri's bazaar for one of the DHR's iconic photographs of the train passing within inches of the shops. We will

also have a look at Siliguri Town station, the original lower terminus of the DHR, and we will explain the history of the line in this area.

Saturday 3 February (+)

Our charter train will leave Siliguri Junction and travel up to Tindharia, where we will have a visit to the DHR's main workshops. A coach will run alongside the train for photographers. The coach will return us to Siliguri for the evening.



Sunday 4 February (+) The coach will take us up to Tindharia, from where our charter will continue up to Darjeeling. Again, the coach will run alongside the train for the photographers. We will also arrange for everyone to be able to photograph the train in Kurseong's bazaar, another iconic location. We will stay at The Windamere, the historic hotel, for three nights – this was once the preferred watering hole for the British tea-planters in the area.

Monday 5 February

We will run a photographer's freight charter up from Sonada to Darjeeling, but with a twist: at Ghum we will attach an open wagon in which we can ride down to Darjeeling, giving an entirely new perspective to this section.

Tuesday 6 February

A free day in Darjeeling, but we will arrange transport for anyone who wishes to ride or chase the Joy trains between Darjeeling and Ghum – there are wonderful photo opportunities on this stretch! Alternatively, Darjeeling has many attractions – the zoo, the Planters Club, the Tibetan self-help centre and the Ropeway spring immediately to mind.

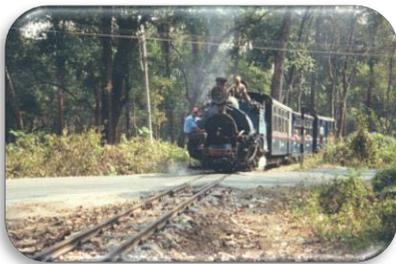


Wednesday 7 February

We will drive down to Kurseong, and we'll take a charter train up through Kurseong bazaar and on up to Sonada. Then it is back on the bus for the journey back down to Siliguri. For those who wish, with advance notice, we can arrange a downhill journey on the service train. We will be back at the Cinderella hotel for two more nights.

Thursday 8 February (+)

A second charter train (again accompanied by a photographers' coach) will run up from Siliguri Junction to Kurseong, with a return to Siliguri by coach on the new Rohini Road



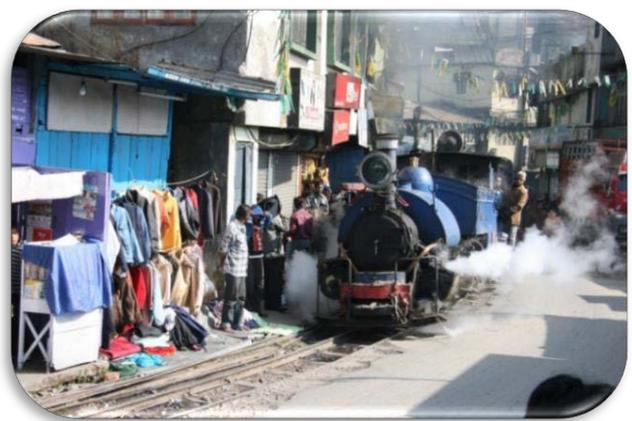
Friday 9 February

We will watch the morning train depart from Siliguri for Darjeeling, and chase it up to Sukna. We then return to our hotel to pick up our bags and head for Bagdogra airport for the afternoon flight down to Kolkata. We will then check in for the 2125 flight....

Saturday 10 February

...via Dubai, back to the UK.

See overleaf for the Optional extension to Delhi and the Taj Mahal...



Optional extension to Delhi and the Taj Mahal

Friday 9 February

After breakfast, we head out to Bagdogra for the flight to Delhi, where a coach will meet us and drive us the 200km south to Agra for two nights.

Saturday 10 February

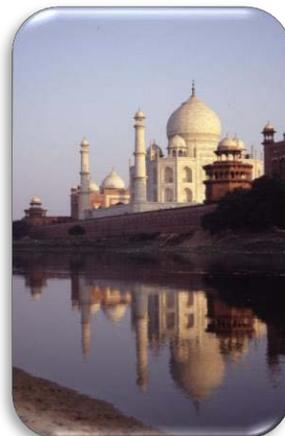
We will have a full day visiting the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort. The Taj is famous for its inlaid marble, and we will visit a workshop where the skills in marble inlay work can be demonstrated.

Sunday 11 February

In the morning, we will drive back north to Delhi, and in the afternoon, we can offer either a visit to the National Railway Museum or time in central New Delhi's Connaught Place. We need to be at the airport to catch the 2005 flight...

Monday 12 February

...via Dubai, back to the UK.



On days marked (+), there will be an alternative programme for adventurous photographers.

On selected evenings, we will arrange for local rail staff and local personalities to come and talk to us

What's included?

Economy class flights to/from India, breakfast and dinner (*) daily, accommodation in 3-4 star hotels (or best available locally), all transport, charter trains and excursions as set out in the itinerary and the services of a Darjeeling Tours Limited Tour Manager and staff from 'Steam Railway' Magazine. It is expected that Peter Jordan will be the Tour Manager and Nick Broderick and Tony Streeter will represent 'Steam Railway Magazine'. Personal and incidental expenses are not included. (*) Dinner is not included in Kolkata, Agra or Delhi, where there is plenty of choice, both in and out of our hotel. Food is not expensive, and this allows considerable individual flexibility.

Prices

Fully inclusive price from London:	£ 3,595 based on two people sharing
Ground only price (international flights excluded)	£ 3,145
Single supplement:	£ 430
Extension to Agra/Delhi	£ 450 based on two people sharing
Single supplement:	£ 165

Please note that carriers, flights times and train times are subject to change.



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