**FAQ for Sandakphu**

1. How Difficult is it?

As the photographs state, it’s riding mountain bikes on the trekking route of Sandakphu along the Singalila ridge bordering India and Nepal. It’s not exactly a walk in the park, but if it was, why would you be doing it anyway? This does require proper bicycle riding skills as well as a thirst for adventure and the need for the thrill. Do you think you have what it takes?

1. What if I can’t ride a bike?

If you cannot ride a bicycle, you could always opt for the Sandakphu trek which involves the regular run of the mill trekking across the vastly trekked route. Nothing exciting there hence we don’t really do it. We could refer you to some companies which do if you wish to visit the place and you can’t ride a bike.

1. Do I need very high skills to do this?

Well, to complete and enjoy it? No. Basic bicycle riding skills will suffice. But you will end up hiking and walking your bike in a lot of sections. But, the better your skills, the more the fun. Professional Enduro riders have ridden this trail many a time and are always more than stoked.

1. What is the risk factor?

There is always a risk of falling off a cliff into the unknown. Jokes aside, We make sure that you understand your equipment, aka bikes and ride as per your skill level. We will ask you to walk or ride the dangerous sections as per the tour bike leader deems fit for your safety. We provide state of the art mountain bikes as well as protective gear because we want you to have fun. There is always a certain risk involved in any extreme sport.

1. Can we bring our own bikes?

Well, of course you can! Nothing better than shredding your own bike down some gnarly (read awesome) trails. But, however, you must let us know in advance so we know how many bikes we need to get from our end and also logistics from the airport change a bit according to number of people flying in with their bikes. All in all, feel free to bring your own bikes as long as you inform us about it.

1. What Bikes will we get?

If you do not own a proper mountain bike, we would be giving out Giant Revel Cross country mountain bikes for the trip. They are entry level mountain bikes capable of taking what the trails of the Singalila ridge can throw at them. Front suspension, hardtail mountain bikes with 27 or 30 gears.

1. What if our bike breaks down?

The ride will always have the tour bike leader leading the pack and he will always be available for trailside assistance. In case you break something which is really hard to mend on the trail, you will be picked up by the sweep vehicle or you’d have to walk till the point where the sweep vehicle would be waiting for you. Apart from this, we shall also be briefing you about your bikes and how to manage basic trailside repairs in case you want to be self sufficient. But nothing to worry about, we have professionals at the job at your disposal.

1. Will we have someone to guide us for riding?

There will always be a guide on a bike, leading your ride as well as a guide making sure of your accommodation and other needs. You will be in good, experienced hands who will let you be adventurous too.

1. Why is it so expensive?

Mountain biking is an expensive sport, and the equipment involved is a little more expensive than a normal trek. Also, more vehicles and logistics are needed to carry out a bike trip. Hence the costs are more than on a standard backpacking or trekking trip. The bikes we give out are about 40,000 INR each and the maintenance and spares are more expensive than maintaining a regular hatchback car.

1. What If I am not physically in immaculate condition?

As long as you can ride bikes, you can come and have fun. If you feel the climb is too grueling, you may always choose to sit in the car and get a shuttle up. If you feel the descents are too steep, you may walk or again choose to get into the backup vehicle. As long as you are having fun, we have fun.

1. What is the temperature going to be like?

The temperature in April will be relatively cool. Temperatures vary from 22degrees to 10 degrees but, the weather up on the ridge is very hard to speculate. We once had clear skies to snowfall in under a day. You should be prepared to face temperatures up to 1 degree Celsius. Just in case.

1. How much luggage do I carry?

Always travel light on a mountain bike trip. Carry one large rucksack (60-80 litres) for all your clothes and equipment. Carry another knapsack (20-30 litres) for the rides. You will have to carry water and basic food on the rides. There will be some sections where the vehicle will have to take a different route and on that section we all will have to be self-sufficient. The knapsack will take care of that.

1. How should I pack?

Make sure you have enough space in the daypack/knapsack for basic needs and all your clothing fits into the luggage which will be transported by the car as you ride.

1. Best way to get to Bagdogra?

Bagdogra has flights flying in from almost all major domestic airports. If you choose to take a train, then The nearest railway station is Siliguri or New Jalpaiguri.

1. What if there are injuries?

Mountain biking is an extreme sport, and this particular trip is not exactly going to be a regular ride on smooth tarmac. There will be possibilities of injuries. We will have first aid qualified personnel with us and will have an adequate first aid kit. A vehicle shall be sweeping at most times in case somebody has to be transported in an emergency.

1. What would the accommodation be like?

The Singalila ridge has very few towns and all of them have only basic cozy Home Stays. The beauty of the ridge and the towns will not have you complaining about anything. Time spent on this trip is something you will always cherish. I still have fond memories of the time I first came here for Reconnaissance.

1. How high is Sandakphu?

Sandakphu is 3636m or approximately 12,000 feet above sea level.

1. What’s so special about it?

Sandakphu is the highest peak of West Bengal and the whole ridge acts as a border for India and Nepal. In Sandakphu itself, the hotel, Sherpa Chalet has two buldings. One with a reception and dining area and one with the Bedrooms. The bedrooms are in India whereas the Dining and Reception are across the road in Nepal. They even sign the bills with stamps of two addresses. Both INR and NPR work along the ridge. Also, if the weather is clear, you get a panoramic view of the Annapurna and the Sandakphu range together, which means you get to see Mount Kanchenjungha in the same frame as Mount Everest.

1. Can we ride our bikes there?! Isn’t it a trekking route?

Mountain biking mostly is about riding bikes where normal people think it’s not possible. Riding here instantly makes you cooler than the regular population. It is very much possible and being a trekking route it is not very very technical to ride on.

1. What If we can’t ride a certain stretch?

If you cannot ride, you are free to hike with the bike or choose to use the backup vehicle to reach a certain point where you wish to ride again.

1. Must Carry Items?

Must carry items include-

Gloves, Sunglasses, proper shoes (not running shoes or casual soft sole sneakers), socks, warm layers, wind and rainproof jackets, personal creams or moisturizers, hiking shorts, cargoes, warm hats, bike specific tools (if you’re getting your own bike), regular camping equipment you feel you may need.

May Carry-

Sleeping bags,

1. What all will be provided?

We shall be providing you with mountain bikes, a helmet, two guides and an experience you will cherish for many a days to come. Come, let’s get excited!