

Himalayan Explorer



16 DAYS / SMALL GROUP OR PRIVATE TOUR / CLASSIC JOURNEY /

This tour explores the three Himalayan countries of Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet, and give you a great introduction to their beautiful scenery, ancient cultures and fascinating histories. The itinerary concentrates on cultural sightseeing, with some short and easy walks built in to allow you to get closer to traditional rural life as well. Extensions to visit more of Nepal can also be added.

FLIGHT BOOKINGS AVAILABLE

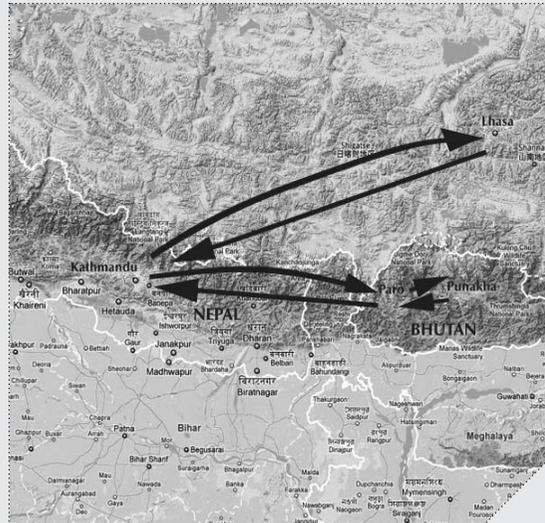
See page 5 for details

Several small-group departures run during the ideal travelling seasons. Call or check the website for dates and prices. Private and tailor-made options are also available on request.

Please refer to page 3 or website for details.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

Kathmandu valley sites, Bhutan Dzongs & other sites, Tibet Potala Palace, temples & monasteries



FLIGHTS INCLUDED:*	LOCAL PAYMENT:	ENTRANCE FEES:	AIRPORT TRANSFERS:
X ✓	X	✓	✓

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 email: tours@nepal-uncovered.com or call us on: +44 (0) 845 130 48 49
 Please quote Tour Code: CUNPHE when booking

TOUR FACTS

Tour Code:	CUNPHE
Group Size & Age:	Min - 2 Max - 12 / Min age - 12 (groupu deps only)
Travel Idea:	Classic Journey
Activity Level:	Mild
Max. Altitude:	3,750m
Comfort Rating:	Standard
Accommodation:	15 nights in hotels
Transport:	Private car, SUV, minibus, internal flights
Meals:	15 Breakfasts (B), 7 Lunches (L), 5 Dinners (D)

YOUR 16 DAY TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1:** Arrive in Kathmandu. Transfer from airport to hotel.
- Day 2:** Kathmandu - Sightseeing tour.
- Day 3-4:** Fly to Bhutan. Paro tours & Taktshang (Tiger's Nest)
- Day 5-6:** Dochu La Pass and the Punakha Valley
- Day 7:** Thimphu weeknd market and tours
- Day 8:** Fly to Kathmandu. Tour Bhaktapur ancient centre.
- Day 9:** Sunrise views from Nagarkot. Temples & stupas
- Day 10:** Fly to Tibet. Transfer to Tsetang.
- Day 11:** Yumbulagang Palace, boat trip to Samye Monastery
- Day 12-13:** Lhasa - Full days of tours including the Potala Palace, the Barkhor and Jokhang Temple, Norbulingka, Drepung Monastery and Sera Monastery.
- Day 14-15:** Fly to Nepal. Free time in Kathmandu
- Day 16:** Kathmandu. Free time. Departure airport transfer

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DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1 / ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU

We greet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel in the centre of Kathmandu, where our Nepal Uncovered rep welcomes you, helps you settle in, introduces you to your local surroundings, and explains the agenda for the rest of your tour.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu.

DAY 2 / KATHMANDU - FULL DAY CITY TOUR

We start after breakfast this morning with a fascinating and fun walking tour through the busy narrow streets of Kathmandu where you'll see a huge variety of tiny shops and workshops, numerous small street temples and stupas, and start to get a feel for life in this busy and exotic city. After arriving in Durbar Square, your guide will explain the history behind the splendid array of Hindu Temples and the old Royal Palace.

After lunch, we climb up the many steps leading to the immense Swayambhunath Stupa which sits upon a hill overlooking Kathmandu and gives a spectacular view over the city. In the evening you have an opportunity to check out the numerous bars and restaurants, and soak up the unique atmosphere that makes Kathmandu a magnet for travellers from all over the world.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu (B).

DAY 2 EXTRA OPTIONS Everest Mountain Flight

DAY 3 / FLY TO BHUTAN

We pick you up from the hotel this morning and transfer to the airport. After checking in and showing your visa approval form and flight e-ticket which we will have provided, you fly with Druk Air, Bhutan's national airline and the only one flying into the country. During the flight, try and sit on the left hand side of the plane for spectacular mountain views, including Everest and Kanchenjunga.

While en route, complete immigration and custom form formalities for later declaration and keep your customs form safe as you will need to produce it again on departure. On arrival at Paro airport you will know that you've arrived somewhere special as the airport buildings have the same traditional architecture you'll see throughout the country. You'll receive a warm welcome by our local representative and be driven to your hotel.

After an introductory lunch, we visit Ta Dzong, originally the Watch Tower for the Rinpung Dzong in Paro. Now the 'National Museum of the Kingdom', it boasts a wide range of antique thangka paintings, textiles, weapons, armour, household objects and historic artifacts. Next, walk to the nearby Rinpung Dzong or the 'fortress of the heap of jewels'. Bhutan's Dzongs are impressive and beautiful buildings and host the seat of the district administration and the residence of the monastic school.

Overnight at hotel in Paro (B L D).

DAY 4 / PARO. TAKTSHANG WALK AND VALLEY TOURS

After an early breakfast, you drive to the foot of the Taktshang cliff just outside Paro, before walking uphill for 2-3 hours to reach this monastery, giddily perched on a sheer 800m rock face. Taktshang is probably Bhutan's most famous site and means 'Tiger's Nest', as legend has it that Guru Padmasambhava flew to this spot on the back of a tigress in the eighth century. He meditated here making this temple a sacred pilgrimage destination for Buddhists.

You'll break for lunch at the Taktshang Cafeteria about two thirds of the way up. The return trip to the monastery takes 4-5 hours and riding ponies can be arranged for most of the uphill route if you wish.

In the afternoon, you have a short sightseeing tour to Drukgyel Dzong, the fort of the victorious Drukpas. Although gutted by a fire, this fort is renowned as the stand from which several Tibetan invasions were repulsed. To the north, the dome of sacred Mt. Chomolhari, or the "mountain of the goddess" can be seen.

You will also visit one of the oldest landmarks in Bhutan. The 7th

century Kyichu Lhakhang was one of the 108 temples built in the Himalayas by the Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo. It is revered as one of the most holy shrines in Bhutan and embodies the arrival of Buddhism here.

In the evening you can have a stroll through the streets of Paro, or enjoy a relaxing traditional hot stone bath to ease any tired limbs.

Overnight at hotel in Paro (B L D)

DAY 5 / PARO - DRIVE TO THE PUNAKHA VALLEY

Keen birdwatchers may wish to enjoy a pre-breakfast tour this morning and drive up to the Che Le La Pass for sunrise to look for the beautiful Blood Grouse and colourful Himalayan Monal, as well as other birds.

After breakfast, we drive to the Punakha Valley (77km, approx 3 hours). On the way, and after a winding climb through mixed forests, you'll stop at the Dochu La Pass (3,050 metres) for tea/coffee and in clear weather enjoy spectacular views of the Eastern Himalayan range. After descending past the new Botanical Gardens, the road winds through beautiful forests and gradually opens out into the Punakha valley where we take a short walk through fields to Chimi Lhakhang, built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley or 'The Divine Madman'. The temple is renowned for blessing barren women with fertility.

This afternoon you visit Wangduephodrang Dzong, whose unrestored state is a distinct change from the Dzongs in Paro and Punakha. It really gives a feel for how these buildings with their joint monastic and administrative functions have run things in Bhutan over the centuries. A walk through Wangdi's slightly ramshackle old streets follows before you drive up the valley, passing the site planned for a new rebuild of the whole town centre on the far side of the river.

Overnight at hotel in Punakha / Wangduephodrang (B L D).

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DAY 6 / PUNAKHA VALLEY WALK & SIGHTSEEING

After breakfast, you drive through the valley to the north of Punakha for a morning walk to Khamsum Yuelley Namgyel Chorten. This Chorten stands majestically on a strategic ridge above the Punakha valley and was visualised out of the Buddhist treasure teachings by Thragthung Dudjom Lingpa. It is a sacred religious edifice which will help to ward off negative forces, promote peace, stability and harmony, and is the only one of its kind in the world. The Chorten is also an esoteric embodiment of positive forces prevailing over all negative influences in the three forms of existence. According to Lamas, the Chorten is a quintessence of Buddhism and in various ways it will promote the health, and happiness of the king and people thereby controlling all evils. A pleasant walk down through fields full of chili, bean and wheat crops takes us to the riverbank from where you walk downstream along the river through fields and forests towards Punakha.

After lunch you visit the spectacular Punakha Dzong, which lies between two rivers known as Phochu and Mochu. Symbolizing masculine and the feminine co-existence, their currents are of different colours and they unite at this spot. Later in the afternoon we drive back over the Dochu La Pass to Thimphu.

Overnight at hotel in Thimphu (B L D).

DAY 7 / THIMPHU TOURS

The whole day is free for sightseeing in and around Thimphu with your driver and guide. You have a choice of various places to visit and you can discuss which are of most interest to you with your guide and arrange your day accordingly.

Options include:

- the national Takin Reserve where you can see several of these strange looking animals on an easy stroll through open pine forest, and enjoy great views over the Thimphu valley.
- the Memorial Chorten, a stupa conceptualised by the Third King to ward off negative influences. It was later built in his memory by

the present King and Queen Mother.

- the School of Arts & Crafts where you can see young students at work honing traditional skills.
 - the Folk Heritage Museum, for an insight into the medieval lifestyles of the Bhutanese people.
 - the National Library of Bhutan, featuring the largest book in the world, and displays of traditional Tibetan style books written on long strips of handmade paper.
 - the National Institute of Traditional Medicine, which has a small museum and a clinic where many people are still treated with traditional herbal and other medicines.
 - a traditional hand-made paper factory with a shop selling attractive and interesting souvenirs.
 - the Textile Museum which has displays of local weaving and normally some weavers at work.
 - Trashichhodzong, the beautiful medieval fortress/monastery which houses most of the Government's office and King's Throne room. It is also the summer residence of Je Khenpo, the Chief Abbot.
 - several short half-day hikes are also available around the valley
- Lunch will be included during the day, and if there is an archery tournament taking place, a stop at the national stadium is well worthwhile. Displays of traditional folk dancing also run every day for those who are interested.

The other main highlight in Thimphu is its vast weekend market with its hundreds of different stalls selling a huge range of fresh vegetables, spices, and of course, chillies. There is also a handicrafts and clothing market here, and overall this is a great place to pick up some souvenirs as a memory of your time in Bhutan. The market runs from Friday afternoon until Sunday lunchtime and we aim to always time our tours or to adjust the itinerary to ensure that you are in Thimphu during this time.

Late in the afternoon, we make the short drive of around two hours back to Paro.

Overnight at hotel in Paro (B L D).

DAY 8 / FLY TO NEPAL. BHAKTAPUR & NAGARKOT

After an early breakfast, we transfer you to the airport where you depart with Druk Air to fly back to Kathmandu. On arrival, we meet you and transfer to the ancient centre of Bhaktapur. Formely a capital of the Kathmandu Valley, the pedestrianised centre of Bhaktapur is full of squares and temples with some stunning wooden architecture. You have a tour here, as well as time to explore the narrow winding streets which bustle with life. In the afternoon we leave Bhaktapur and make a short drive uphill to the village of Nagarkot, which sits on a ridge at the north-eastern edge of the Kathmandu Valley. Accepted as probably the best of the valley's mountain views, from the village lodges and hotels you can see all the way from Kanchenjunga in the east, past the tiny (from here!) peak of Mt. Everest, to Dhaulgiri in the west. A couple of kilometres walk from the village there is a lookout tower, which affords an even more spectacular full 360° panorama. Stunning clear views are all but guaranteed between mid-October and March, with more chance of cloud and haze before and after this period. You can check the weather and the hotel will wake you if the morning is clear so that you can see the sun rise over the distant Himalayas.

Overnight at hotel in Nagarkot (B).

DAY 9 / NAGARKOT, VILLAGE WALK, TEMPLES & STUPAS

After waking early to enjoy the sunrise views, you have breakfast before enjoying an easy downhill rural walk of a couple of hours. You start by walking through pine forest and the Tilkot Forest Reserve, before following a ridge which brings you down through tiny Chhetri villages with wonderful views to either side, to the beautiful Changu Narayan Temple. From this temple at the end of the ridge, you can either drive back to Kathmandu or carry on walking and descend to the valley floor and the

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Manohara River. The walk today can be made as long or short as you would like it.

Before returning to the hotel in Kathmandu, you have a tour of two of Nepal's most important pilgrimage sites. First we visit Pashupatinath, the most important Hindu temple in Nepal. Although non-Hindus are not allowed inside the temple itself, you can see into the temple complex from the holy riverbanks where there are bathing and cremation ghats. We also visit the huge Buddhist stupa at Boudhnath which is a complete contrast in style and atmosphere. From here we drive you back to your hotel in the centre of Kathmandu for your last night in Nepal.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu (B).

DAY 10 / FLY TO TIBET. TRANSFER TO TSETANG

Another short flight takes us into Tibet this morning, where our Tibetan guide meets us and transfers us to the town of Tsetang. You'll really get a feel for the size and contrasting plains and mountains of the Tibetan plateau. We take the rest of the day easy to adjust to the increase in altitude.

Overnight at hotel in Tsetang (B).

DAY 11 / YUMBULAGANG PALACE, SAMYE MONASTERY

We start today with a visit to the Yumbulagang Palace, home to the early Tibetan kings. We then take an interesting and beautiful flat-bottomed boat trip for 1 to 1 ½ hours across the Bhramaputra (Tsangpo) river to Samye, the first monastery to be built in Tibet. Fully restored and rebuilt after being destroyed in the Cultural Revolution it is a great example of Tibetan religious architecture. We then drive on to Lhasa (3750m).

Overnight at hotel in Lhasa (B).

DAY 12 / LHASA TOURS

Today we have arranged for you to be taken on a guided tour of

the fascinating city of Lhasa and you start the day with a visit to its cardinal landmark - Potala Palace. One of the great wonders of world architecture, it was the former winter home of the Dalai Lama and probably the image of Lhasa that most people have in their minds when they think of Tibet. Learn more about its eventful history as you explore the countless rooms of richly decorated rooms, halls and palaces as pilgrims bring silk scarves, coins and yak butter to the shrines as offerings.

We then visit the Barkhor. Perhaps similar to the Kathmandu area around Durbar Square and Freak St, monks sit cross-legged on the streets with alms bowls and the low murmur of prayers can be heard in the air while nearby stall owners offer jewel encrusted daggers with enthusiasm. Away from the square you can begin the Barkhor circuit including Mani Lhakhang (huge prayer wheel), Nangtse Shar (former jail and dungeons) before arriving at Jokhang Temple the spiritual centre of Tibet.

In contrast to the Potala, Jokhang Temple is buzzing with activity and pilgrims from every corner of Tibet arrive here to worship. The temple is the product of Han, Tibetan and Nepalese architectural styles and is, quite simply, the most revered religious structure in the whole of Tibet and a 'must' on any Lhasa/Tibet itinerary. The aroma of yak butter mixed with incense, and the murmur of prayer drift throughout the temple whilst at the entrance, there are always prostrations being made by pilgrims. Inside the temple you pass statues of the four guardian kings before reaching the exposed inner courtyard, or Dukhang, and the former throne of the Dalai Lama. The inner prayer hall houses six large statues including Guru Rinpoche, Avalokiteshvara (sometimes referred to as the Bodhisattva and should be well known to any students of Tibetan Buddhism) and Jampa (Future Buddha). There is also a collection of chapels that encircle the statues and pilgrims walk around this courtyard (always in a clock-wise direction) visiting the various chapels along the way.

Overnight at hotel in Lhasa (B).

DAY 13 / LHASA TOURS

After breakfast we continue our tour of Lhasa with a visit to the Norbulingka, the former summer palace of the Dalai Lama which served both administrative and religious functions in the past. Norbulingka is divided into three areas: the palaces, government buildings and opera grounds which are considered the best public parkland in Tibet. During the summer and autumn months, the opera grounds become hubs of entertainment with dancing, singing, music and festivities, and also host the annual Sho Dun or 'Yoghurt Festival'.

We then travel to the Drepung Monastery, about 8 km west of central Lhasa and once the largest monastery in Tibet with over 10,000 monks. Enjoy a pleasant walk uphill to the monastery, to experience the solemn ambience inside the halls and chapels. From the hillside there are wonderful views of Lhasa and the distant mountains. Drepung is one of Lhasa's two great Gelugpa monasteries, the other is Sera. Around 5km north of central Lhasa, Sera may not be as grandiose as Drepung, but is more serene and surrounded by many small temples. Every day at 3pm (except on Sundays), the famous 'Buddhism Scriptures Debating' takes place in the courtyard as monks follow the teachings of the Buddha to question everything they are told. They supplement their debating with a variety of gestures including clapping their hands, pushing their partners for answers and plucking their prayer beads.

Overnight at hotel in Lhasa (B).

DAY 14 / FLY TO NEPAL

After an early breakfast, we transfer you to the airport where you depart Lhasa and fly back to Kathmandu where we meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel. The rest of the day is free.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu (B).

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DAY 15 / KATHMANDU. FREE DAY

We leave the whole of the day free today for you to explore Kathmandu further or make some last minute souvenir purchases. While you can fly home today if you wish, we build this free day into the itinerary in case of delays or cancellations to the flight back from Lhasa to Kathmandu, which can happen when the weather or visibility is poor.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu.(B).

DAY 16 / KATHMANDU. DEPARTURE AIRPORT TRANSFER

Your time is free today until we transfer you to the airport in time for your flight home. (B).

SMALL GROUP, PRIVATE AND TAILOR-MADE TOURS

SMALL GROUP DEPARTURES:

We schedule several small group departures on this tour during the year. Departure dates are given on our website, and on request.

PRIVATE DEPARTURES:

You can also choose to do the tour privately, following the itinerary above, but on any other date throughout the year. We add a small supplement for these departures. Please contact us first to check availability. Start dates need to be set to allow for the Tibetan entry permit to be obtained from the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu and the Lhasa-Kathmandu flights. At the time of writing, the itinerary is designed to work best with a Thursday start day. Please contact us for further details.

TAILOR-MADE TOURS:

Finally, this tour can also be used as a base for a private tailor-made itinerary, to be run on any dates. You can make adjustments as per your own requirements (for example, adding extra days, slightly shortening the tour, adding a wildlife safari to Chitwan or Bardia National Parks, or including some trekking or rafting etc.).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OPTIONS:

Booking and paying for options:

Options may be booked by selecting them on our online reservation form, and can also be added after you have made your booking, or while you are in Nepal, subject to availability at the time.

Credit Cards (add 3%), traveller's cheques or cash are accepted in Kathmandu for these payments. A receipt will be provided.

Single room supplement

If you would like to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, then we need to add a single supplement charge.

If you are a single traveller joining a group tour, then if you are happy to, you may share a twin room with another single traveller on the tour of the same sex. If there are no other single travellers available for you to pair up with at the time of your booking, then we will need to add the single supplement to your tour price, but will refund this or deduct it from your balance payment if we are able to pair you up later on.

Note: *Couples will always be given a private double room, and triple/family rooms are available on request.*

Book in advance. Pay in advance.

Extra days

These are available on request in Kathmandu before and after the tour starts and finishes. If you'd like to add extra days into the time elsewhere, then please request a tailor-made tour. Prices depend on your party make-up and include a night in the hotel, breakfast, all taxes and transfers. Single room supplements apply.

Book in advance. Pay in advance.

Accommodation upgrades - Price: on request

If you are booking this tour privately (i.e. not joining one of our group departures), then we are happy to arrange to upgrade the accommodation in Kathmandu and Bhutan if required. Upgrades can include the following hotels (subject to availability):

Kathmandu:

• *Yak & Yeti hotel or Dwarikas hotel.*

Paro:

• *Uma Paro, Amankora Paro*

Punakha Valley:

• *Amankora Punakha*

Thimphu:

• *Taj Tashi, Amankora Thimphu, Namgay Heritage Hotel*

Lhasa:

• *Bhramaputra Grand, Lingsang Boutique Hotel, Four Points by Sheraton*

Please contact us for rates if required.

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Everest mountain flight option

This flight leaves from Kathmandu early in the morning, and lasts for around an hour, taking you up towards Everest and the surrounding high peaks. You can even get glimpses of the high Tibetan plateau. The planes have good-sized clear windows, and window seats are guaranteed. We normally run this option on Day 2, and you would rejoin the group in Durbar Square.

Full day valley tour to Kirtipur, Chobar, Pharping and Dashinkali

This tour follows the road south west out of the city to the famous Kali shrine of Dashinkali where animal sacrifices are regularly carried out and open to view. En-route you can explore the neglected but interesting hilltop town of Kirtipur, see the impressive Chobar Gorge (with its less beautiful factories) and pass several temples, monasteries and forested areas. Just before Dashinkali is the lively town of Pharping which has an interesting Tibetan area full of stupas, temples and gilded gompas. An extra night in Kathmandu is needed to include this tour.

Book & Pay in advance or in Kathmandu.

Bhote Kosi rafting option

Min 2 people (adds 2 days to the tour)

For those wishing to enjoy some exhilarating white water rafting, this short option takes you to one of Nepal's wildest white water rivers, and one of the best two-day rafting trips in the world. This Grade 4 river (Class –IV to IV+ rapids) is just 3 hours from Kathmandu and makes an excellent adrenaline filled extension to your tour (other easier rivers are available on request).

The minimum age for this option is 16, and you need to be relatively fit and a confident swimmer, and be prepared for continuous, technical, and demanding rapids.

You will be joining a group operated by one of Nepal's premier rafting operators - please contact us to check availability.

Book in advance. Pay in advance.

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Chitwan National Park extension

This option adds a 3 day/3 night wildlife safari in the Royal Chitwan National Park to your tour. Staying in one of the lodges in Sauraha, just outside the park (eg Rhino Lodge), we include a jeep safari, jungle walk, river-canoe trip, elephant ride, tour and a cultural programme in one of Asia's most famous national parks. All park activities and entrance fees are included.

Book & Pay in advance.

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TOUR:

- Meals as indicated on the itinerary
- All accommodation
- Sightseeing tours as indicated on the itinerary
- All entrance fees in to sites mentioned in the itinerary
- All transport & transfers (including flights where stated)
- Bhutan visa & tourism development fee (TDF)
- Tibet entry permit
- Return flights between Kathmandu and Paro
- Return flights between Kathmandu and Lhasa

NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TOUR:

- International airfares
- Nepal visa costs (US\$25 obtained on arrival in Kathmandu airport)
- Meals not indicated on the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips, and other personal expenses
- Travel insurance
- Any other items not mentioned above

ACCOMMODATION:

1. Hotels in Nepal

We use a 3 or 4-star tourist class hotel in Kathmandu, which is clean, secure and offers most amenities including a swimming pool. When available, we aim to use the Shanker Hotel, a place full of character, which was formally a royal palace. Other hotels used may have a location closer to the centre of the Thamel district but be of

a slightly lower level. The hotel in Nagarkot is around the 2-3 star level.

2. Hotels in Bhutan

The lodgings used on our Bhutan tours are covered by the standard nightly fee are comfortable hotels at the 3 star level. All are inspected regularly and have en suite bathrooms. Some very special 4 and 5 star hotels are also available for an extra supplement - please contact us for a supplement.

3. Hotels in Tibet

The hotels used on our Tibet tours are around the 3-star level. We aim for hotels that are locally owned and have a traditional Tibetan style (this is not always possible depending on availability).

TRANSPORT & TRANSFERS:

We use saloon cars, air conditioned 4 wheel drive SUVs, larger people carriers and minibuses for all the main transfers and journeys on this tour. Vehicles in Bhutan are of a better standard than in Nepal and Tibet.

All of your airport arrival and departure airport transfers are included (24-hour service).

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS:

In order to keep our tours flexible, and to make them accessible to as many people as possible, we do not include your international flights in the set tour itinerary or price.

However, we do hold an ATOL (UK flight sales license) and are happy to book your flights for you. If you let us know your ideal dates and departure airport, then we will be happy to provide you with some flight options that we can arrange for you. You can then choose whether to book the flights through us, or make your own arrangements. Either way,

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your airport arrival & departure transfers are included.

TOUR GUIDES & ENTRANCE FEES:

We provide a local Nepalese tour escort to accompany you throughout your time in Nepal, together with specialist city guides for the sightseeing tours in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. In Bhutan and Tibet a professional local guide accompanies you throughout. Entry fees to all the sites visited during the tour are included in the price.

To help support the local people and economy, and because we know it works best, our policy at Nepal Uncovered is to use only local guides and tour leaders on this tour. Please check our website for further details.

MEALS:

Kathmandu & Nagarkot:

Breakfasts only are provided in the hotel. Kathmandu has a wealth of restaurants serving excellent food from all over the world, so you will never be short of ideas or places to eat within a short walk of the hotel.

Bhutan:

All meals are included (breakfast, lunch & dinner), covering a wide range of options, normally buffet style with both local and western dishes available.

Tibet:

The time in Tibet is based on bed and breakfast only. A wide range of meal options are available in restaurants in Lhasa, though the hotel restaurants are generally more limited.

WHEN TO GO:

There are several considerations to make when planning when to do this tour. Generally the best time to visit Nepal and Bhutan is September-November and February to April. Tibet is best visited during the warmer summer months of April to November, as it gets extremely cold during the winter. We therefore recommend the best times to do this tour as April-May and mid-September-November.

We avoid travelling in March, as the Chinese authorities often close the borders to Tibet to prevent tourists being in the country during several sensitive anniversaries.

BORDER & EMBASSY CLOSURES:

As well as the now regular border closures in March, the Chinese authorities are also liable to stop issuing Tibet entry permits and close the Tibet/Nepal border at other times of the year, often with very little notice of when the border may close and no information on when it may re-open again.

If entry to Tibet becomes blocked during your planned visit we will keep you updated as much as possible. We will offer alternative arrangements for your tour, either in Nepal or Bhutan so that you can still travel on your planned dates.

The Chinese embassy in Kathmandu can also close without much notice meaning we are not able to obtain your Tibet entry permit (your passport needs one full day in the embassy to get the permit finalised). In this event, we will aim to obtain your permit on the next day that the embassy opens and will adjust your tour itinerary accordingly.

TIPPING:

While an accepted part of the culture and customs in Nepal, and to a lesser extent in Bhutan and Tibet, tipping is always optional, and any amounts paid should reflect excellent service.

It is normal and accepted for people to tip differently, and you

should not feel under any pressure to tip any particular amount.

We are often asked for advice on common amounts however, and suggest that up to approx. 5% of the tour price would be a suitable budget for this tour.

COUNTRY GUIDE:

For an in-depth overview of Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet, including up-to-date regional security advice and information, please checkout the country guide pages on our website.

DATES & PRICES:

We run several small-group departures during the ideal travelling seasons and to fit in with some of Bhutan's major festivals. These departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request. We can also run the set tour itinerary privately for you on other dates, or customise it to make a tailor-made tour to fit your personal requirements.

HEALTH:

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting, and where you are travelling from. You must obtain professional advice from your medical practitioner or a travel clinic on current vaccinations needed for your destination (1st Contact travel clinic gives free advice tel. 0800 0393073).

In general, most recommendations for Nepal and Bhutan include: Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A, Polio, Meningitis, Rabies and Malaria prophylactics.

VISAS:

Many nationals can obtain their Nepalese visa in Kathmandu airport upon arrival (including UK, European & US citizens).

To book visit: www.nepal-uncovered.com, email: tours@nepal-uncovered.com, or call us on: +44 (0) 845 130 48 49

Please quote Tour Code: CUNPHE when booking

* LAND ONLY PRICE (SEE WEBSITE FOR FULL PRICE LIST), FLIGHT QUOTES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

Himalayan Explorer continued...



16 DAYS / SMALL GROUP OR PRIVATE TOUR / CLASSIC JOURNEY /

The cost is US\$25 (UK Pounds also accepted) and the visa is obtained in the immigration area at the point where your passport is stamped (i.e. you don't need to join an extra queue).

We will arrange your Bhutan visa for you and send you a print-out of the visa approval letter before you travel.

For Tibet, our reps will finalise your entry permit once you arrive in Kathmandu. For this, they will be required to take your passport to the Chinese Embassy. The cost of your Tibet Entry Permit is included in our tour prices (see note on embassy closures above).

For further information, please check out the visa pages on our website, or contact us directly.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM:

We take responsible travel seriously, and as well as taking this into consideration when we design our itineraries, and select the people and agents we work with, we also donate £2 for every person travelling on of our Nepalese tours. This is split between two projects:

- Shree Nalang primary school, which is situated 80km NW of Kathmandu and caters for 5-11 year old children. Our donations are helping with renovations and building of new classrooms.
- Bardia eco lodge. We are helping to build a carbon neutral wildlife lodge with the aim of providing an environmentally sympathetic and sustainable destination for tourists, which will also benefit the local community.

If you would like to visit or support either of these projects while you are in Nepal, please let your guide or our Kathmandu representative know. Full details of our responsible travel policy are given on our website.

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION:

After booking, we will provide you with detailed information to help you prepare for the tour. This will include helpful advice on money, health, insurance, tipping, climate, clothing etc.

Further information is also available in the County & Travel guides on our website.

FACEBOOK / TWITTER / UNCOVER THE WORLD BLOG:

Uncover the World recently joined the Facebook community; it would be great if you joined us and shared some of your travel photos and stories. It's also a great way to stay in touch with your fellow travellers, share photos, and also keep updated with special offers and news about new tours and destinations from us - click on www.facebook.com/UncoverTheWorld and 'Like' us.

You can also follow us on Twitter - www.twitter.com/utworld

If you'd like to post a blog about your trip you can also visit our blog page - <http://www.uncovertheworld.com/blog/>

We are fully bonded for your complete financial protection.



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