

## NEPAL EXPLORER - 15 DAYS



**THIS COMPREHENSIVE TOUR GIVES A TASTE OF ALL THAT NEPAL HAS TO OFFER, WITH TIME EXPLORING THE KATHMANDU VALLEY, A SHORT TREK IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE MAJESTIC ANNAPURNA MOUNTAIN RANGE, OPTIONAL WHITE WATER RAFTING ON THE TRISULI RIVER, SOME HILLTOP VILLAGES WITH GREAT MOUNTAIN VIEWS, AND A RANGE OF WILDLIFE SAFARIS IN CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK.**

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Kathmandu sightseeing, Trisuli river rafting option, Chitwan National Park safaris, Lakeside Pokhara, Newari village of Bandipur, mountain views from Nagarkot, Bhaktapur ancient centre, 5-day Poon Hill trek in the Annapurnas**

#### Detail: Itinerary:

##### Day 1: Arrive into Kathmandu

We greet you on your arrival in Kathmandu airport today and transfer you to your hotel in the Thamel tourist district of the city. Our rep will help you settle in and familiarise you with the local area.

Overnight: Kathmandu hotel.

Extras: Extra days in Kathmandu

Meals: N/A

##### Day 2: Kathmandu walking tour. Swayambunath stupa.

Our tour starts today with a guided walk from our hotel in Thamel through small back streets full of numerous tiny shops, workshops, temples, and stupas to Durbar Square with its array of wooden and stone carved temples and palaces. After lunch at a rooftop restaurant overlooking the square, we drive to the important Swayambunath Stupa which sits on a hilltop overlooking the city, visible from miles around. Also known locally as the 'monkey temple', we'll see these nimble inhabitants scampering in and around the trees and temple.

Overnight: Kathmandu hotel.

Meals: Breakfast

##### Day 3: Drive to Chitwan National Park. Rafting option

This morning we drive out of the Kathmandu Valley and drive to Chitwan National Park in the lowland Terai region of Nepal that borders India. This will be our first taste of rural Nepal, and we'll see terraced farmland, forested hills, and rushing rivers. An option is available today to spend a few hours white water rafting on the Trisuli river (those choosing this option will rejoin the group in Chitwan this evening). On arrival in Chitwan, we check into our lodge, and then take an early evening village walk to see how the local Tharu people live and work.

Overnight: Lodge in Chitwan

Extras: White water rafting on the Trisuli

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

##### Day 4: Chitwan National Park wildlife safari

We spend the whole day today exploring Chitwan National Park in search of the endangered Asian one-horned rhino, which Chitwan is famous for protecting. If you're very lucky you may also see a leopard, wild elephant or sloth bear, or even an elusive Bengal tiger, while the rhino, deer, monkeys, sloth bears, wild boar and numerous different birdlife are common sightings. Activities included are a jungle walk, river canoe trip and elephant safari. You may also take a jeep safari in the afternoon if you wish in place of the elephant safari.

Overnight: Lodge in Chitwan

Meals: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

##### Day 5: Chitwan to the hilltop village of Bandipur

Early this morning you can take a walk outside the park dedicated mainly to bird watching, or you can take an early morning elephant ride if you didn't do one yesterday (extra fee). After breakfast we leave Chitwan and the Terai and drive to the ancient hilltop Newari trading village of Bandipur. The centre of Bandipur has been restored, and is vehicle free, with some lovely old buildings. You have time this afternoon to relax here, or take a walk or hike through the surrounding fields, villages and hills. Walks include a 2-hour downhill hike through fields and forest to Siddha Cave, one of the largest in Asia and full of impressive rock formations (bring a torch). You can hike back uphill to Bandipur from here or walk down to the highway for our vehicle to pick you up. A shorter walk from the town centre can take you uphill



surrounding the Kathmandu valley for a night in the village of Nagarkot.

Overnight: Nagarkot hotel

Extras: Everest mountain flight

Meals: Breakfast

**Day 14: Walk to Changu Narayan temple. Pasupatinath and Boudhanath.**

This morning we hope for spectacular sunrise views from Nagarkot before walking downhill through the Tilkot Forest Reserve and along a ridge with classic terraced farmland on either side to the regions oldest Temple – Changu Narayan. We drive back from here to Kathmandu, stopping en-route at two of the cities most important, and contrasting religious pilgrimage sites - Pasupatinath temple (Hindu) and Boudhanath stupa (Buddhist). The evening is free for you to explore Kathmandu and Thamel one last time and enjoy a farewell meal together.

Overnight: Kathmandu hotel.

**Day 15: Kathmandu. Departure transfer to the airport**

You have some free time in Kathmandu today until we transfer you to the airport for departure. Extensions to the tour are available to add more trekking, white water rafting or to visit Bardia National Park (the best place in Nepal to see tigers).

Overnight: N/A

Extras: Extra nights in Kathmandu, Everest mountain flight (international flight evening departures only), further optional tours if staying extra days, Bardia extension

Meals: Breakfast.

## INCLUSIONS

- ✓ All accommodation as stated in the itinerary
- ✓ Transport in private vehicles and tourist coaches
- ✓ All transfers, including 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- ✓ Services of a local escort throughout the tour
- ✓ Specialist city guides and wildlife safari guides.
- ✓ Trekking guide and porters
- ✓ Trekking pack option available
- ✓ All national park entry and activity fees
- ✓ All rafting equipment on rafting option
- ✓ Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- ✓ All entrance fees to sites visited in the itinerary

## EXCLUSIONS

- ✗ International Flights (available on request)
- ✗ Visa fees (see below)
- ✗ Travel Insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- ✗ Meals not indicated in the itinerary (budget approx. US\$60 for lunches & dinners on the trek)
- ✗ Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- ✗ Tips for tour leader, guides and porters
- ✗ Any other items not mentioned above

## NEPAL NOTES:

### WHY CHOOSE ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL IN NEPAL?

- ✓ Guaranteed departures and small groups (max 18)
- ✓ Family run local team
- ✓ 14 years experience running tours in Nepal
- ✓ Local guides to provide a better experience
- ✓ Pokhara sightseeing included
- ✓ All safari activities included in Chitwan
- ✓ Trekking pack option available - sleeping bag, down jacket and walking poles
- ✓ Fun mix of private and local transport
- ✓ Every booking contributes to local projects
- ✓ Dal Bhat guaranteed!

**Single room supplement**

If you want 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 the 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:**

**Extra days - Price: subject to hotel & party make-up**

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 will depend on the make-up of your party, and will include a night in the hotel, breakfast, all taxes and your airport transfer. Single room supplements apply.

**Trisuli white water rafting**

If you would like to enjoy a taste of Nepal's famous white water rafting, then this is available on Day 3 of the tour on the Trisuli River. One of Nepal's most popular rafting rivers, the Trisuli features some great fast and exciting rapids (Grade III/IV, higher in the monsoon months of July-August) with long flat sections between. The rafting adventure starts with some skills training before we are let loose on the rapids.

**Everest Mountain Flight**

This short but spectacular flight takes you from Kathmandu up towards Everest and the surrounding high peaks and Tibetan plateau. The planes have larger than normal clear windows, and window seats are guaranteed.

**Trekking pack**

This option includes the use of trekking poles, a sleeping bag and a down jacket for the duration of your trek.

**Bardia National Park Extension**

4 day / 3 night package to Bardia National Park, one of Nepal's best national parks and perhaps the best place in Nepal to catch a glimpse of the elusive Bengal tiger. Includes return flights, accommodation, meals and park activities.

**Day 1** - Transfer to Kathmandu airport and fly to Nepalganj (sit on the right for great views of the Annapurnas). On arrival you are met and driven to the lodge (approx. 2 1/2 hours). In the afternoon discover Tharu life and culture with a guided walk from the lodge through neighbouring villages and farmland. Meals - Dinner

**Day 2** - am & pm - Full day guided Jungle Walk taking in various areas in the park and targeting different species. Packed lunch included. Meals - Breakfast, lunch & dinner

**Day 3** - am - Morning 1-hour Elephant Safari into the park. pm - Guided Jeep Safari, visiting areas of the park you didn't reach during the jungle walk. Meals - Breakfast, lunch & dinner

**Day 4** - am - Early morning bird watching walk outside the park followed by free time to relax or explore the surrounding village. pm - Departure from Bardia. Transfer to Nepalganj airport and fly to Kathmandu. On arrival transfer to your hotel. Meals - Breakfast

**Includes:**

- Return flights between Kathmandu and Nepalganj
- Airport/hotel transfers in Kathmandu
- Nepalganj-Bardia transfers
- 3 nights' accommodation
- All meals while in Bardia
- All park activities and park entry tickets as per itinerary

**Note:** Prices are based on a minimum of 2 people

## ACCOMMODATION

**1. Hotels in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Bandipur, Nagarkot**

We use comfortable tourist class hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara (approx. 3 star). The hotels in Bandipur and Nagarkot are at a slightly lower level but make up for it with some great mountain views.

**2. Trekking with lodges**

For this lodge-based trek, we will use a variety of Lodges and Teahouses. In recent years many new lodges have sprung up and many offer quite good facilities and amenities. However, in some areas the lodges can be run on a very simple basis where toilets and washing facilities are outside the building. We can't promise that you will always have full amenities all the time, so you should understand this before embarking on this trek.

Staying in lodges gives you more comfort overnight than camping, and also allows you to meet up with and talk with other trekkers and guides at the end of the day. It also allows us to put more back into the local economies than if we were bringing everything with us.

Rooms in lodges are normally based on same sex sharing of twin rooms (though couples will be able to share). Some sheets & blankets are provided but a sleeping bag is still required. We provide the option to hire a sleeping bag in our trekking pack option, though you may still wish to bring your own inner sleeping bag liner or sleep sheet if you wish. Warm showers are available for a small fee at most lodges, though these may be bucket showers higher up.

### 3. Safari lodges in Chitwan National Park

At Chitwan National Park, we use safari lodges with comfortable clean rooms and en-suite bathrooms. We normally use lodges in and around the village of Sauraha on the edge of the park, which increases the number of activities you can do while at the park.

## TRANSPORT & TRANSFERS

The tour includes a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in Kathmandu airport, your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers.

Private vehicles are used for all sightseeing tours and most of the journeys throughout the tour. A tourist coach is used for the journey back from Pokhara to Kathmandu. A variety of transport including jeeps, elephants & canoes is used when you visit Chitwan.

## TREKKING

The trekking times given above are approximate, and will vary depending on your fitness, and also importantly, on the speed you want to walk. We will normally set off early in the morning, and have plenty of breaks during the day, before finishing trekking in mid-late afternoon. Some days will be longer than others, and your guide will let you know when there is a long day ahead.

Acclimatisation days are added into all our itineraries where required, and these cannot be missed out (not necessary on this tour). You can however, slightly adjust the itinerary as you go along if you are struggling on a particular day, or you want to forge ahead. If travelling with a group, you should be prepared to walk at the speed of the slowest member.

Breakfast during your trek is included in the price of your tour. All other meals, drinks and snacks are not included however a good selection of meal choices is available at all of the trekking lodges we use. We suggest you budget approx. US\$60 to cover the extra cost of food and drink during your trek.

We have graded this trek as: **FAIR:**

*"A trek, where the terrain can vary considerably. Some days can be quite easy walking, but on others the going will be considerably harder. You must have confidence in your ability to be able to complete a day's walk even when the route tough."*

## RAFTING OPTION

It is a popular myth that white-water rafting is only for the young and super fit.

For all our rafting tours, you must be a competent swimmer and be unafraid of the water and to this end we are unable to accept bookings from non-swimmers. So, whether you are male or female, young or old, if you are prepared to honestly assess your physical abilities and accept the challenge then rafting is right for you.

You need to bring swimming gear, some trainers or sandals you don't mind getting wet, and a towel. We will provide wetsuits, and all the rafting equipment.

All the Nepalese rafting guides we use are fully trained and experienced on the river, and we carry a first aid kit and use safety kayakers. For the rafting option on this particular tour on the Trisuli River, there are Class II, III and IV rapids (Grades run from I to V), and you only need to be relatively fit. You don't need any previous rafting experience, and the start of your time on the river will be spent learning the skills and teamwork required. We consider the Trisuli river ideal for beginner rafters.

**Class II:**

**Class III:**

**Class IV:**

## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to book your flights for you, and our ATOL (UK flight sales license) covers all holidays booked together with a flight from the UK.

Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from. Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included whether you book your flights independently or through us.

## GROUP SIZE / TOUR LEADERS / GUIDES

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their

fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set this Nepal group departures to have a maximum of 12 travellers. Average group sizes are around 8 people, lower during the low season (December-February, June-September).

Fully trained English-speaking Nepalese trekking, rafting and safari guides are provided in Nepal and many of our travellers consider them a highlight of their tour. We also provide a fully trained English-speaking guide for any sightseeing tours. A tour leader will accompany you throughout the trip.

We support and follow international guidelines for the employment of any trekking porters we use, including those of the IPPG (International Porter Protection Group)

At Encounters Travel we only use local Nepali guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

## ENTRANCE FEES

All your entry fees and permits are included (to cover entry into the trekking conservation areas, and sites on the city tour).

In Chitwan, all National Park activity costs are included, to cover one of each of the following: Jungle Walk, Village Walk, River canoe trip, Elephant Ride or Jeep Safari.

## TIPPING

While an accepted part of the culture and customs in Nepal, 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. More information will be provided in your pre-departure information.

## DATES & PRICES

We run regular small-group departures on this tour throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 travellers. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and in our brochures. Please check the website for the most up-to-date prices and any special offers available.

Note: We do include some departure dates during the main monsoon season (late June to mid-September). During this period not all activities may be available in Chitwan, and you should travel prepared for muddy trails and rain during the trek. Despite the probability of some heavy rain showers, visiting Nepal during the monsoon season can be a very pleasurable and different experience to the rest of the year, with everything looking very lush and far fewer tourists around, particularly on the trekking routes.

## 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. In general, most recommendations for Nepal 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). The cost is US\$25 (UK Pounds also accepted) for a stay of up to 15 days (US\$40 for up to 30 days), 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).

## HOW TO BOOK

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website. We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking and payment.

## FINANCIAL SECURITY

We are a UK registered company and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

If you book a flight departing from the UK from us with your tour then your entire package is ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is 10467.

Additional financial protection is also provided through International Passenger Protection for passengers not booking flights. Please see our website or booking conditions for more information.

## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

All porters are equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

## ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Several of our Nepal Uncovered small group tours, including this one, are also featured on our Encounters Travel website which showcases a wide range of small group tours in many countries around the world.

For more information, see [www.encounterstravel.com](http://www.encounterstravel.com) and [www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](https://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)