

# **Classic Nepal**

Country(ies): Nepal

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: A/C minibus & 4x4 jeeps

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 12

Days: 15 days

Start Location: Kathmandu, Nepal

End Location: Kathmandu, Nepal

Meals: Breakfasts - 14, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 2

#### **Highlights:**

Kathmandu, mountain views from Nagarkot, Bhaktapur ancient centre, Trisuli river rafting option, Chitwan wildlife safaris, lakeside Pokhara, trekking to Poon Hill, hilltop village of Bandipur



# **Itinerary**

### Day 1: Arrive in Kathmandu, transfer to hotel

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

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** None

EXTRAS: Bardia National Park Extension Single room supplement (NPSGCN) Extra day in Kathmandu - pre-tour

# Day 2: Thamel Rickshaw Ride. Walk around Durbar Square, visit Swayambunath Stupa

Our Nepal tour starts with an exciting Rickshaw ride through the backstreets of Thamel, to Durbar Square. We'll pass 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, where we'll have plenty of time to walk around and explore. 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

**EXTRAS:** Everest Mountain Flight

# 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 (approx. 7-8 hours). 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 (requires advance booking). 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:** Chitwan hotel **MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** Trisuli white water rafting

# Day 4: Chitwan National Park wildlife safaris. Evening Tharu Dance performance

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 jeep safari.

This evening you'll experience the vibrant culture of the Tharu people with an unforgettable dance performance. As the sun sets over the jungle, be mesmerized by the rhythmic beats and graceful movements of traditional Tharu dancers, adorned in colorful attire. This captivating performance offers a unique glimpse into the rich heritage and artistic traditions of the Tharu community, creating a truly immersive cultural experience.

**OVERNIGHT:** Chitwan hotel **MEALS:** Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

**EXTRAS**:

# Day 5: Chitwan to the hilltop village of Bandipur. Bandipur walking tour

Early this morning you can take a walk outside the park dedicated mainly to bird watching. After breakfast we then 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. We'll have a short guided walking tour around the centre of Bandipur before you have free time this afternoon to relax, 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 for around 30min to the Thani Mai Temple, which is well worth it for its views at sunset if the weather is clear. In fact the whole of Bandipur affords good mountain views.

**OVERNIGHT:** Bandipur hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** 

# Day 6: Morning drive to Pokhara. Pokhara Tour, Boat ride of Lake Phewa and Momo making class

We leave Bandipur early this morning and drive on to the lakeside town of Pokhara, which sits at the base of the Annapurna range of mountains and is the main access point for trekking and rafting in the area. We have an action packed afternoon ahead which will include visits to Devi Falls, the Tibetan Refugee Camp and the hilltop Peace Pagoda, which offers amazing views over Pokhara.

After visiting the Peace Pagoda, we'll begin a short hike downhill to the shores of Lake Phewa, from where we'll take a boat accross the lake, back to the centre of Pokhara. On our final stop of the day, we'll learn how to make momos, the traditional steamed dumplings, popular throughout Nepal and Tibet.

**OVERNIGHT:** Pokhara hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** 

# Day 7: Drive to Naya Pul, trek to Ghandruk

We drive through low hills and valleys via the village of Lumle to Nayapul. We start our trek through the Annapurna foothills here by walking to Birethanti (approx. 1-2 hours) before continuing on a path following the Modi Khola river which is fairly flat until you begin your long ascent from Shauli Bazaar to Ghandruk. The town of Ghandruk is an important settlement in the region and is the heart of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project, as well as home to thousands of serving and retired Gurkha soldiers. The total trekking for today is approximately 5-6 hours.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ghandruk trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Trekking Pack

## Day 8: Trekking from Ghandruk to Tadapani

The walk from Ghandruk to Tadapani passes through several types of forest, some with unusual trails of moss hanging down from the tree branches. The rhododendron forest here is considered one of the largest in the world, and is a spectacular sight in spring when the trees come into flower. Once you arrive in Tadapani you will be rewarded with spectacular views of Annapurna South, Hiunchuli and Machhapuchhare. The total trekking for today is approximately 4 hours, so you have plenty of time for photo stops and perhaps to visit the Old Gurung museum before you leave Ghandruk which displays traditional clothes and equipment used by the local Gurung people.

**OVERNIGHT:** Tadapani trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** 

# Day 9: Trekking from Tadapani to Ghorepani

The trail between Tadapani and Ghorepani crosses several river valleys and winds its way through more rhododendron forests where monkeys are often seen. After leaving the mountain forests behind you can get some clearer views before arriving in Bantanthi. You have time to rest for a while in Bantanthi before climbing through forests and following a grass and pine covered ridge to Ghorepani. The total trekking for today is approximately 4-5 hours.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ghorepani trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** 

# Day 10: Sunrise on Poon Hill, trekking from Ghorepani to Tirkhedunga

We start early today and climb up to Poon Hill for great views of the Annapurna Range and Macchapuchare in particular. The rising mists over the foothills of the Himalayas stretching into the distance away from you are also a beautiful sight. After returning to the lodge for breakfast, we walk down to Tirkhedunga through oak and rhododendron forests via Nangethanti, Banthanti and a steep stepped descent from Ulleri. Today's trekking time is approximately 5-6 hours.

**OVERNIGHT:** Tirkhedunga trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** 

## Day 11: Finish trek, free time in Pokhara

We finish trekking today by walking from Tirkhedunga back to Naya Pul with some more steep descents and beautiful scenery. After driving back into Pokhara the rest of the day is free to relax, take a boat out on the lake, or enjoy a relaxing meal and drink at one of the Lakeside area's many restaurants while reflecting on your trek. Today's trekking time is approximately 3 hours.

**OVERNIGHT:** Pokhara hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS**:

## Day 12: Transfer from Pokhara to Kathmandu

We leave the Annapurna region behind this morning and take a tourist bus back to Kathmandu (approx. 7-8 hours). An upgrade to a domestic flight is available on request. The remainder of the day and evening is free to settle back into busy city life again!

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS**:

# Day 13: Bhaktapur ancient centre with pottery lesson. Head to Nagarkot

This morning you have the option of taking a spectacular mountain viewing flight to see Everest and its surrounding peaks up close. Otherwise, the morning is free to check out the shops and markets in Kathmandu for some souvenirs. This afternoon we embark on a guided tour of Bhaktapur's ancient center. The centre of Bhaktapur has been designated a World Heritage Site, and hosts the best preserved ancient buildings and temples in the Kathmandu valley, with some great examples of traditional wooden architecture to be seen. Our tour here will really give you a taste for how life has been led in the valley for centuries, and you'll see several traditional crafts still taking place, including a whole square dedicated to pottery where you'll have the opportunity to join an included pottery class.

Later, we head into the hills surrounding the valley and spend the night in the village of Nagarkot. The village is perched on a ridge and is known for having some of the best views in the Kathmandu Valley.

**OVERNIGHT:** Nagarkot hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Everest Mountain Flight

# 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

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** 

### Day 15: Kathmandu, free time, transfer to 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). First thing this morning there is also another option to take a spectacular mountain viewing flight up to see Mt. Everest (requires an evening international flight departure).

OVERNIGHT: N/A MEALS: Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Everest Mountain Flight Bardia National Park Extension Panauti Community Homestay Extension - 1 Night post-tour Extra day in Kathmandu - post-tour

#### Included:

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary
- Private car, minivan or minibus subject to group size
- All transfers, including 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Tourist bus from Pokhara to Kathmandu
- Services of a local escort throughout the tour
- Specialist city guides and wildlife safari guides in Kathmandu, Bhakatpur and Chitwan.
- Trekking guide
- Trekking porters (provided with clothing, footwear and accommodation as per IPPG recommendations).
- All national park entry and activity fees
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- All entrance fees to sites visited in the itinerary
- Added Experiences: Kathamandu Rickshaw Ride, Tharu Dance Performance, Pokhara Boat Ride, Momo making class & Pottery class

#### **Excluded:**

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (available on arrival for most nationalities)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary (budget around 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

# **Options**

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

## **Everest Mountain Flight**

Min numbers: 1

This short but spectacular flight takes you from Kathmandu up towards and around Everest and the surrounding high peaks and Tibetan plateau. The planes have good sized clear windows, and window seats are guaranteed. The flight takes around 1 hour and we aim to book one of the first flights of the morning when the views tend to be better and the flights are less liable to delays or cancellations. Transfers to and from your hotel are included. If the flight does not run due to poor weather, we will aim to reschedule it for later in your tour. If that is not possible then you will be refunded.

#### **Bardia National Park Extension**

Min numbers: 1

#### Day 1

You are picked up from your hotel in Kathmandu and transferred to the airport for a domestic flight to Nepalganj. Aim to sit on the right side of the plane for great mountain views of Langtang and the Annapurnas.

On arrival in Nepalganj, you are met and transferred by jeep through the lowland Terai region of Nepal, passing several small villages before you reach the park. We'll stop at a bridge over a river as we enter the park which has sandbanks popular with resting gharial and mugger crocodiles.

We leave the main road through the park and drive through more tiny Tharu villages to the park entrance and our lodge accommodation for the next few days, Bardia Eco Lodge. The journey takes around 2 1/2 hours. Bardia Eco Lodge is located directly on the banks of a tributary of the Karnali river, with the park on the far bank. Monkeys, deer, peacocks, eagles and other wildlife are common sightings from the lodge. You'll also see the park elephants passing in front of the lodge in the morning and evening as they head to and from their stables. After checking in, take a guided walk from the lodge through neighbouring fields, villages and farmland to see and learn more about rural Tharu life.

Meals - Dinner

#### Days 2 & 3

These two days are available for a range of activities in and around the park (see list below). Activities are payable locally. If you wish to take a jeep safari or take a rafting trip please advise us in advance so we can confirm availability for you. In the evenings enjoy a relaxing beer or soft drink on the lodge balcony overlooking the river and the park.

Meals - Breakfast, lunch & dinner

#### Day 4

You have a final morning available for a last activity in the park today before we leave the lodge and head back to Nepalganj for your flight back to Kathmandu. On arrival you are met and transferred back to your hotel in the city.

Meals - Breakfast

#### Includes:

- Return flights between Kathmandu and Nepalganj
- Airport/hotel transfers in Kathmandu
- Nepalganj-Bardia transfers
- 3 nights accom
- All meals

#### **Excludes:**

- National Park entry fees and activities
- · Drinks and snacks
- Tips

#### Park activities:

The following activities are available from the lodge. Please advise us in advance if you would like to do a jeep or rafting trip so that we can confirm availability.

- Half day jungle walk with guide = US\$30 p/p
- Full day jungle walk with guide = US\$50 p/p
- Half day jeep safari with guide = US\$80 p/p (min 2)
- Full day jeep safari with guide = US\$100 p/p (min 2)
- Full day easy rafting (no fast rapids) & jungle walks = US\$90 p/p (min 2)

The main package price is based on 2 people travelling and sharing a twin or double room at the lodge. A supplement will apply for solo travellers or if you are travelling with other people but require a single room.

## Trisuli white water rafting

Min numbers: 1

This option provides an exciting day of white water rafting on the Trisuli river and takes place on the day featuring your travel from Kathmandu to Chitwan National Park. You'll start with some initial skills training and practice manoevering the boat as a team with your rafting guides. Then it is on to some exciting rapids as you head further downstream - around 4 hours rafting in total. The section of the Trisuli we will take is a pool drop river with some great rapids with long flat sections inbetween. The larger rapids are grade III-IV for most of the year, but more extreme (IV+) during the monsoon months of June to September). No previous experience is necessary, but during the monsoon season we'll choose a section of river appropriate to your experience and the current river conditions. All rafting equipment is included (life jackets, helmets, paddles, wetsuits (winter months) camera barrels & dry bags, first aid kit, safety kayaker). Lunch is included on the banks of the river, and after finishing the rafting you'll be transferred on to Chitwan (approx. 1 hour) to rejoin the rest of the group.

# Panauti Community Homestay Extension - 1 Night post-tour

Min numbers: 1

Immerse yourself deeper into the rich tapestry of Nepalese life with a one-night post-tour extension to the heartwarming Panauti Community Homestay. Embark on an insightful village tour, where you'll witness the rhythms of daily life, interact with friendly locals, and gain a profound understanding of their customs and traditions. Delve into the culinary heart of the community as you participate in a hands-on cooking experience, learning to prepare authentic Nepalese dishes using fresh, local ingredients.

# Single room supplement (NPSGCN)

Min numbers: 1

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing twin/double rooms. This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

## Extra day in Kathmandu - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

# Extra day in Kathmandu - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

# Trekking Pack

Min numbers: 1

This optional trekking pack provides a selection of equipment that you may want to use during your trek but not buy in advance or carry with you to Nepal. The trekking pack includes:

- 3 or 4-season sleeping bag You need to have a sleeping bag on all our trekking tours. We provide a 3 or 4-season bag (depending on your date of travel) which is washed between every use. We suggest you bring a sleeping bag liner for extra comfort.
- trekking poles These provide extra support and assistance when walking up and down the
  many hills you'll be crossing during your trek and will take a lot of the strain off tired knees
  and legs.
- **down jacket** These thick warm jackets are particularly welcome during cooler seasons and in the evenings at higher altitudes after you have finished walking for the day.

#### 1. Accommodation

#### 1. Hotels in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Bandipur

We use comfortable tourist class hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara (approx. 3 star). The hotels in Bandipur 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 and families 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.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

#### 2. Transport

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 & canoes is used when you visit Chitwan.

#### 3. 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.

#### 4. 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 18 travellers. Average group sizes are 8-12, lower during the low season (December-February, June-September).

Fully trained English-speaking Nepalese trekking, rafting and safari guides are provided on this tour 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 (often your trekking guide) 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.

#### 5. 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 becomes tough."

#### 6. Rafting

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: mild rapids, suitable for children and anyone seeking an enjoyable experience

Class III: larger rapids, requiring a little more skill but with little real danger

Class IV: powerful rapids, needing more advanced techniques

#### 7. 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.

#### 8. 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.

Printed on: Thursday 30th of October 2025

**Note:** Please <u>download an up-to-date copy</u> of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.