

## Everest Base Camp

**Country(ies):** Nepal

**Tour type:** Small Group

**Transport:** A/C minibus & flight

**Group size:** Min: 2 | Max: 12

**Days:** 16 Days

**Start location:** Kathmandu, Nepal

**End location:** Kathmandu, Nepal

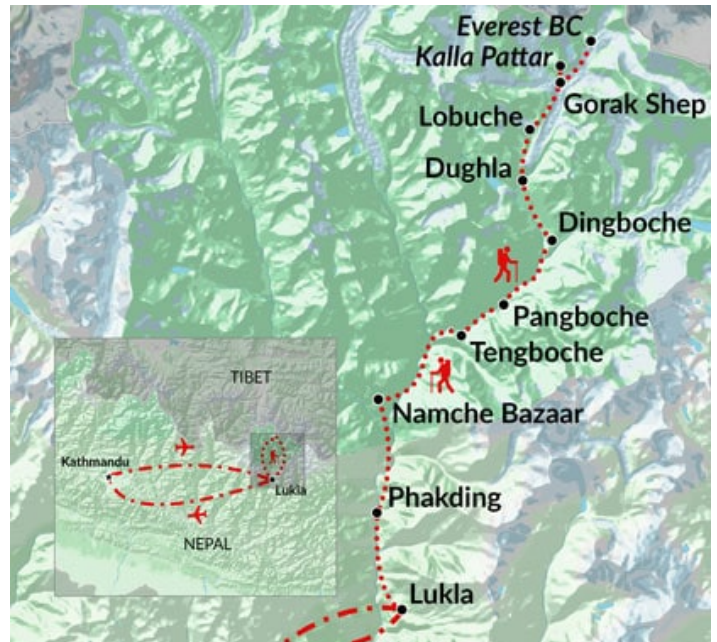
**Departs On:** Saturday

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 16, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 0

**Highlights:**

Kathmandu, Everest Base Camp trek, Sherpa village of Namche Bazaar, side walks from Dingboche, amazing views from Kallar Patar, friendly trekking lodges, trekking guide & porters

**Places Visited:** Kathmandu, Lukla, Namche Bazaar & Everest Base Camp



# 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 district of the city. Our rep will help you settle in and familiarise you with the local area.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Trekking Pack || Single room supplement (NPSGEB) || Extra day in Kathmandu - pre-tour

## Day 2: Fly to Lukla and start trekking to Phakding

Your Everest tour in Nepal officially starts today. We catch the short early morning flight from Kathmandu to Lukla (2,800m) and start trekking to Phakding (2,652m). Descending out of Lukla the trail gently winds its way along the river and serves as an easy introduction to the harder days ahead. We overnight at Phakding at one of the many comfortable trekking lodges.

**Trekking time:** *Approx. 2 1/2 hours*

**OVERNIGHT:** Phakding trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Trekking Pack

## Day 3: Trek from Phakding to Namche Bazaar

The day starts gently as we make our way along the river to the entrance of the Sagarmatha National Park, where we will obtain our trekking permits and register with the park authorities. Soon the trail starts to rise for a long climb up to Namche Bazaar (3,446m), where we stop for the night.

**Trekking time:** *Approx. 5 hours*

**OVERNIGHT:** Namche Bazaar trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Namche Bazaar, acclimatisation day

Today is a free day in Namche Bazaar for acclimatisation - one of the most important things to do on any Everest tour in Nepal.

This colourful Sherpa town is a great place to spend time exploring. There are numerous shops and stalls selling everything from cut price trekking gear to Buddhist prayer flags. Its internet cafes, bakeries and cafes are also popular with the many visitors. Of course, if you're not too tired, there are plenty of interesting and scenic day walks you can do if wish. We overnight at a lodge in Namche Bazaar.

**OVERNIGHT:** Namche Bazaar trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 5: Trek from Namche Bazaar to Thengboche

Leaving Namche Bazaar behind our goal today is the village of Thengboche, which lies on top of the next ridge. This means we start the day with a long descent through Rhododendron forests down to the suspension bridge at Phunki Tenga (3,250m). Then we start the climb and it really is a strenuous climb, as now we have to fight against the altitude as well as the steepness of the trail. Eventually we crest the ridge and arrive at Thengboche (3,870m), from where, on a clear day, the views of Everest and Lhotse are magnificent. Thengboche is also the site of a large Buddhist monastery, which is certainly worth a visit. We overnight at a lodge in Thengboche.

**Trekking time:** *Approx. 5 hours plus any side walks*

**OVERNIGHT:** Thengboche trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: Trek from Tengboche to Dingboche

Today's trekking takes us through beautiful Rhododendron forests as we follow the river up the Imja valley towards Dingboche. Along this stretch of the trail there is a good possibility of spotting the elusive musk deer, an endangered species indigenous to the area. Leaving the forests behind, we end the day with a steep climb up to Dingboche (4,410m). We overnight at a lodge in Dingboche.

**Trekking time:** *Approx. 4 hours*

**OVERNIGHT:** Dingboche trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 7: Dingboche, acclimatisation day

We spend the day in Dingboche acclimatising to the high altitude. This beautiful Sherpa village is a patchwork of small fields enclosed by stonewalls and offers wonderful views of the surrounding mountains. If you don't feel like resting you can head up the valley towards Chukung for even better views. We overnight at a lodge in Dingboche.

**OVERNIGHT:** Dingboche trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: Trek from Dingboche to Lobuche

Climbing up from Dingboche we follow the valley high up on one side until we reach Dughla (4,620m) and the entrance to the Khumbu valley. Heading up the Khumbu valley, a steep climb takes us over the Thokla Pass (4,830m) then we follow the edge of the glacial moraine onto Lobuche (4,910m). We overnight at a lodge in Lobuche.

**Trekking time:** *Approx. 4 hours*

**OVERNIGHT:** Lobuche trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 9: Trek from Lobuche to Gorak Shep and Kalar Pattar (flexible day)

As we continue along the Khumbu valley the unfolding mountain panoramas are quite simply breathtaking. Reaching the Lobuche Pass (5,110m) we continue onto Gorak Shep (5,140m), where we take a welcome break from the altitude before making our short but steep ascent of Kalar Pattar (5,550m). This view point is the perfect place to take in the full majesty of the surrounding mountains. We overnight at a lodge in Gorak Shep.

During this part of our Everest tour in Nepal, we keep our itinerary for today and tomorrow flexible, depending on the weather and how people are handling the altitude.

***Trekking time: Approx. 2-3 hours plus 2-3 hours for Kalar Pattar***

**OVERNIGHT:** Gorak Shep trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 10: Trek from Gorak Shep to Everest Base Camp (flexible day)**

Today we continue up the edge of the Khumbu glacier until we finally reach Everest Base Camp (5,364m). If you're lucky and the timing is right you may see expeditions preparing to climb Mount Everest. After spending some time to enjoy the surroundings and the completion of our goal, we make our way back down to Lobuche. We overnight at a lodge in Lobuche.

***Trekking time: Approx. 5-6 hours***

**OVERNIGHT:** Lobuche trekking lodge

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Single room supplement (NPTMNB)

## **Day 11: Start descent towards Pangboche**

Having acclimatised well to the altitude and gained some extra fitness on the way up, the trekking feels much easier now as you descend back down the trail towards Lukla. The next three days are flexible and we'll stop at lodges en-route based on how far we feel comfortable walking each day. You'll make regular stops to look back at the high peaks you've come so close to, and the views in front of you and up the side valleys also look and feel very different in this direction.

***Trekking time: Approx. 5-6 hours***

**OVERNIGHT:** Pheriche / Pangboche trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 12: Continue descending to Namche Bazaar**

We continue our descent today, arriving back into Namche Bazaar with its welcome shops, hot water and services. You can even access the internet again here and send messages to update friends and family back home on your progress.

***Trekking time: Approx. 5-6 hours***

**OVERNIGHT:** Namche Bazaar trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 13: Finish trek in Lukla

Our trek finishes today with the long walk back down from Namche Bazaar to Lukla. As a final treat, there's a steep climb up to Lukla to finish.

**Trekking time:** *Approx. 8-9 hours*

**OVERNIGHT:** Lukla trekking lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 14: Fly back to Kathmandu, free time

This morning we catch the flight from Lukla back to Kathmandu, where we transfer you to your city centre hotel. The rest of the day is free. You can also arrange some tours with your local guide today for your free day tomorrow.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 15: Kathmandu, free day

Today is kept as a free day, leaving you to enjoy Kathmandu at your leisure. There are many options available including visits to the nearby towns of Patan and Bhaktapur as well as the chance to go rafting on the Bhote Khosi River.

**Note:** This day is built into the itinerary in case of delays to the flight back from Lukla to Kathmandu, which do occur fairly frequently when the weather is cloudy or there are high winds.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 16: Kathmandu, free time, transfer to airport

We've reached the end of our Everest tour in Nepal. Your last day in Kathmandu is free for you to catch up on some last minute souvenir shopping and exploring before we transfer you to the airport for your flight home.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Everest Mountain Flight || Bardia National Park Extension || Trisuli white water rafting || Extra day in Kathmandu - post-tour

## Included

- All accommodation (3 nights in approx. 3-star hotel, 12 nights in trekking lodges)
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Domestic return flights between Kathmandu and Lukla
- Services of a trekking guide and porters throughout the trek
- Trekking area permissions/permits
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

- Tips for drivers

## **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 approx. US\$250 for lunches & dinners on the trek)
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guides and porters
- Any other items not mentioned above

## **Notes**

During busy periods, flights to Lukla may depart from Ramechhap instead of Kathmandu. This is a shorter flight, less prone to weather delays, but does require an early start and a 4-hour drive from Kathmandu to Ramechhap airport. We will advise you before departure if your flight will depart from Kathmandu or Ramechhap. If this is the case there will be an additional fee of US\$50 per vehicle payable in Kathmandu for each journey.

# Options

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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.

**Price:** \$255

## 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.

**Price:** \$50

## 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.

**Price:** \$515

## Single room supplement

**Min numbers:** 1

This tour is based on twin-share accommodation, with single bookers paired up with another traveller of the same sex in the group. If the final group make-up means that no room share is available, you do not need to pay this supplement. However, if you would like to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, then please add this option to your booking. This option books a single room in the Kathmandu hotel before and after the trek. Single travellers should normally expect to share a room while on the trek. Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

**Price:** \$265

## 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.

**Price:** \$50

## 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.

**Price:** \$50

## Kathmandu - full day city tour

**Min numbers:** 1

This full day guided tour of Kathmandu starts with a morning walk from your hotel, through the narrow streets and alleys of Kathmandu. You'll pass by street corner temples and stupas, and a wealth of tiny shops and stalls, before arriving in Durbar Square at the heart of the old city. Many of the temples and palace buildings here were badly damaged during the earthquake of 2015 and are still being restored. In the afternoon you'll drive with your guide and visit the contrasting atmospheres of the important pilgrimage sites of Pasupatinath temple (Hindu) and Boudhanath stupa (Buddhist). A supplement will apply for solo travellers.

**Price:** \$85



# Tour Notes

## 1. Note

### 1. Hotels in Kathmandu

We use comfortable tourist class hotels in Kathmandu (approx. 3 star).

### 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.

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

## 2. Note

### Hotels in Kathmandu

Breakfasts only are provided in the Kathmandu 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.

### Trekking with lodges

Breakfasts are included on the trek, based on breakfast items from the menu plus one drink. You may add to these if you wish, but a substantial and hearty breakfast is always provided. You will need to buy your own lunches and dinners and you'll find that the lodges along the route provide a surprisingly good selection of food and drink. In places the menu may be limited but the food is always nourishing and wholesome. To protect the limited resources available in trekking areas (particularly with regard to fuel) we politely suggest that you either eat the same items as the guide / porters, or as the rest of your group, and that groups do not order too many different items from the menu. We suggest that you budget around US\$250 to cover the cost of all the meals not included while on your trek.

### Water & Drinks

It is very important that you drink lots of water and remain well hydrated during this, and any trek. We recommend you refrain from drinking much alcohol during the trek. This all helps your general wellbeing and helps prevent against the symptoms of altitude sickness. You can buy bottled water at most of the lodges along the route and tap water is also available but should be treated. Waste caused by using lots of plastic water bottles is a perennial problem in the Himalayas and other trekking areas. We therefore recommend that you carry your own water bottle (or two) and refill it each day at the lodges you pass or from springs or streams your guide suggests are OK to use. Any water collected this way should be treated either with a water filter or with purification tablets. These are all available to buy in many trekking shops in Kathmandu if you don't want to bring them with you. You can also get

cheap powdered flavourings to remove the taste of purification tablets.

### **3. Note**

We use private cars or minibuses for all the main transfers & journeys on this tour. An internal flight is used for the journeys between Kathmandu and Lukla. A variety of transport including jeeps, elephants & canoes is used if you visit Chitwan.

Note: The Kathmandu-Lukla flight is subject to delays due to bad weather. On the rare occasion that the flight from Kathmandu to Lukla be delayed by more than a day or two, an alternative trekking route will be offered, normally in the Annapurna region. We build a free day in Kathmandu into all our treks that fly back from Lukla to allow for possible delays or cancelled flights and strongly recommend that you aim for your international flights to leave in the afternoon/evening of the final day of the tour or to book flexible/changeable flights to protect against more extended delays.

### **4. Note**

This tour include a 24-hour airport arrival and departure transfer service at Kathmandu airport and all other transfers. There will be a collection of people waiting on the far side of an airport service road immediately in front of you. Please look out for an Encounters Travel signboard to find our representative. You will be pestered for tips by porters who try to carry your luggage. We suggest you either be firm and insist on carrying your own luggage, or if you want assistance, wait until you have met our representative and then let him arrange the porter for you. You will need to have some money ready for a small tip (eg. up to NRs 50 or a single US Dollar bill).

Your airport transfers are only included on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary, plus on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

### **5. 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 suggest flights to go with the tour. 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 on the first and last days of the tour. Most of our Nepal tours start and finish at Kathmandu airport (KTM).

On tours that combine Nepal with Tibet, and/or Bhutan, the connecting flight(s) are generally not included in the price of your tour and will need to be purchased separately. Full details will be provided at the time of booking. If we arrange the flights then e-tickets will be sent to you in advance but will also be available in Kathmandu before you travel to the airport for the flight.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline

rules on your ticket.

## 6. Internal Flights

Please note that all Nepalese airlines operating domestic routes in the country are currently on the European Commission's list of airlines banned in the EU. This includes those running Everest viewing flights and flights to Lukla for the start of the Everest Base Camp trek.

Along with these Everest flights we may offer some other domestic flights on some of our tours, either as part of the itinerary or as an upgrade in place of a land transfer. Where this is the case we are careful to select airlines that have a good current reputation in Nepal.

## 7. Note

### Group size

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! We also don't want you to feel like you're walking up the mountains in a great long line of people. So, we set our Nepal trekking group departures to have a maximum of 12 travellers. On some dates we may run several groups alongside each other, but they will be kept independent with their own guides and porters. In these cases we may adjust the group make-up en-route based on the speed of different people's walking. You should always be prepared to walk at the pace of the slowest member of the group. Fitness does not relate to the chance of getting altitude sickness and fast walkers may find they are among the slowest in the group at high altitude (and vice versa).

### Guides

Fully trained English-speaking Nepalese trekking 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. For groups of 1-6 travellers we provide one trekking guide plus porters, and for groups of 7 to 12, two guides are provided plus porters.

### Porters

This is a supported trek, and we provide porters to carry your main bag. All you will need to carry is a small day-pack containing a water bottle/camera/snacks/clothes you may take on and off during the day. You can leave a bag with some of your luggage locked securely in the hotel in Kathmandu. We support and follow international guidelines for the employment of any trekking porters we use, including those of the IPPG (International Porter Protection Group). Generally we use one porter per 2 trekkers though this will vary slightly on occasion depending on the make up of the 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.

## 8. Note

All your entry fees and permits are included in the price of the tour to cover entry into the trekking conservation areas, and sites on any optional city tours added.

## 9. Note

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. 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.

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

*“A serious trek, where we would expect you to have had previous trekking experience and to prepare in advance. You should be very confident of your trekking ability and be prepared to walk some long days perhaps on a steep climb (or descent). You may also have to walk difficult terrain or at high altitude for a number of days. This is definitely the kind of trek where you are more likely to experience extremes of altitude and/or weather.”*

You will need to prepare in advance for this trek and we will provide you with a simple training guide. We will also ask you to complete a simple questionnaire about your fitness which will help us to advise you on how best to prepare.

Due to the nature of the trek we set a minimum age of 15 on our group departures on this tour. If you have a family with younger children then please contact us and we will be able to offer options to do the trek privately.

## 10. Note

In theory one can trek up to Everest Base Camp all year round, if you come prepared. However, there are quite significant variations in the weather and walking conditions to consider.

### **Winter - January-February**

It can get extremely cold higher up during the winter months, and for this reason we rarely run treks during this season. Large dumps of snow can also cause delays and stop you completing the trek.

### **Spring - March-May**

This is a great time to trek, with good weather, and the opportunity to see the mountain climbing expeditions at Base Camp. May tends to be the warmest month, but it can also be cloudy.

### **June to August - Monsoon season**

The monsoon rains start around mid-June and continue through July and August. While it is certainly possible to trek during these months, we tend to avoid them because the trails particularly at lower elevations can get muddy and slippery and hiking through prolonged periods of heavy rain isn't that enjoyable. There is also a higher risk of landslides blocking the trails.

### **September - end of the Monsoon**

The monsoon rains come to an end in September, and this can be a good month to trek. You should still expect some rain and snow, particularly in the afternoons. So, you need to come prepared with wet-weather clothing and walking boots rather than walking shoes, particularly early in the month. The trails are quieter than October & November and flights cheaper.

### **Peak season - October-December**

October and November are peak season for trekking in Nepal, with good weather and mainly clear skies, though you will often still get some afternoon showers if the monsoon is running a bit late. This is the busiest time on the mountain and flights into Nepal also fill up and get expensive earlier. December is quieter but still a good month to travel, though it starts getting very cold as the month progresses.

The notes above are a rough guide and the weather does vary throughout the year. The monsoon rains can start earlier and also drag on into October, and cloud cover can be variable too. However, taking a balance of the numbers of people on the trails and the weather & visibility, our preferred months to trek are late September, October-November, March and April.

## **11. Health and Vaccinations**

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

**Nepal:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Bhutan:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Tibet:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Malaria:** Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting. In general the lowland regions Bhutan are considered malarial zones, while higher altitudes including central Bhutan including Paro, Thimphu, Punakha and Bumthang are not. Nepal is considered mainly low risk with prophylactics not normally required.

**Yellow Fever:** This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this [US CDC information](#) about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary. Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

## **12. Passports and Visas - Nepal**

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an

almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

Many nationals can obtain their Nepalese visa in Kathmandu airport upon arrival (including UK, EU, US, CA, AU, NZ, SA citizens). The costs for a single entry visa are currently:

- up to 15 days - US\$ 25
- 16 to 30 days - US\$ 40
- 31 to 90 days - US\$ 100

An additional \$20 fee is charged to convert these into a multiple entry visa which will be needed for any tours returning to Nepal after visiting Bhutan or Tibet.

The visa is obtained in the immigration area at the point where your passport is stamped. Forms to fill in are available in this immigration hall and may also be given out on your flight (if so, do fill them in before you land as it will reduce your queuing time). You will also need to fill in an arrivals card. Once your paperwork is completed, head to the immigration desk and hand over your forms, 2 passport photos, your visa fee and passport. The visa fees are set in US Dollars, but you can also pay in other currencies, but don't rely on getting given change.

**Passport Photos:** You will need two passport photos for your Nepal visa if you are obtaining it on arrival. If you are doing any trekking, rafting or visiting a National Park (i.e. on many of our tours), you should bring extras, as some of the permits we may need to get require these. Please bring at least 4 passport photos with you - they will always come in useful later if you don't need them all.

## 13. Time

The time in India and Sri Lanka is GMT plus 5 1/2 hours.

The time in Nepal is GMT plus 5 3/4 hours.

The time in Bhutan is GMT plus 6 hours.

The time in Tibet is GMT plus 8 hours.

Daylight saving adjustments are not applied.

## 14. Note

The tour reaches an altitude of over 5000m and we therefore build in several acclimatisation days and plan the daily walking schedule to take account of the effects that spending time at high altitude can have on you. These acclimatisation days are compulsory; you may not miss them out and push on ahead even if you think you are feeling fine at the time or you want to shorten the tour.

Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) can develop at any altitude over 2000 meters. The early symptoms are headache, extreme fatigue, and loss of appetite. Some people become breathless at rest. AMS is the result of fluid accumulating in parts of the body where it does not belong: in the brain, in the lungs, or both. When mild symptoms develop, it is a signal that you must stay at that altitude or descend until symptoms have gone away. Never ascend with any symptoms of AMS!

Most people reaching altitudes above 3000m and certainly above 3500m will experience some breathlessness, mild headaches, and poor sleep patterns. Other common symptoms include lack of appetite, increased urination (though you should be drinking a lot so should expect this anyway), strange dreams, tightness in the chest and fatigue. However, few people get very severe symptoms or go on to develop acute altitude sickness (AMS) which requires medical treatment.

If you are male and/or unfit/unhealthy and/or older (60s, 70s, 80s) then you are more likely to be affected than if you are female and/or fit & healthy and/or younger. However, there is no hard and fast rule and there are plenty of exceptions to these generalisations.

To try and minimise the effects of altitude, we recommend that you:

- Ensure you keep warm
- Don't take any baths or showers for your first couple of days at altitude
- Don't smoke
- Eat more fruit & vegetables than normal
- Breathe deeply but normally – don't be tempted to gasp and hyperventilate
- Drink lots of water (several litres) before you leave low altitude, and carry on drinking a lot of water while at high altitude.
- Don't rush – walk slowly and don't exert yourselves. Taking things easy and slowly really helps prevent mountain sickness
- Don't drink alcohol
- Tell each other and your guide how you are feeling as time goes on (this helps others spot if symptoms are becoming severe)

People with serious heart disease should not visit high altitudes, and people with light heart troubles should check with their doctor and follow their advice, as should people with high or low blood pressure.

More severe symptoms that may require medical treatment or an early descent to a lower altitude include severe and persistent headaches, nausea & vomiting, disorientation and loss of co-ordination, irrational behaviour. If you do experience any of these, make sure you tell each other and your guide straight away.

### **Trekking and Altitude Sickness**

If you are trekking with us then you should keep your guide informed at all times of any symptoms you may be developing, especially headaches and breathlessness while at rest. You may need to spend a night or two at the same altitude before continuing your trek. All our trekking tours have acclimatisation days built into the itinerary where necessary to help with this. Usually within one or two days you will feel well and can continue your trek. On private tours, your guide will adjust your itinerary to try and ensure the normal route can be achieved, though this may not always be possible. On group tours, the group may delay their ascent if the itinerary allows, or a porter or second guide may remain with you until the group descends and rejoins you, or you try and ascend to catch up later.

If you are resting at the same altitude and your symptoms are becoming worse, then it is necessary to descend. Worsening symptoms of AMS including increasing tiredness, severe headache, vomiting, and loss of coordination. These are signs of High Altitude Cerebral Edema (or HACE). HACE can lead to unconsciousness and death within 12 hours if progressive symptoms are ignored. Increasing shortness of breath, cough, and tiredness are signs of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema or HAPE. HAPE can also be rapidly fatal if ignored.

A person suffering from AMS may not have clear thinking and may have to be forced to descend. You accept that our guides have the final decision on whether you should descend and that ignoring their advice constitutes leaving the tour. Even if someone is willing to descend they should never be allowed to descend alone and one of our porters or a second guide will accompany you. Keep descending until the person shows some sign of improvement, usually after 300-500 meters of descent. Even if the diagnosis is not clear, but might be AMS, you should descend. You can always re-ascend when you feel better.

It is best to start descending while the person who is ill can still walk. In Nepal, if the person can no longer walk, a yak or horse might be obtained. Porters can often be found to carry a sick person down. Do not wait for a helicopter. If you choose to administer oxygen or medications do not delay the descent to watch for improvement.

In summary, if you are not doing well at altitude, most likely you have some mild symptoms of AMS. Rest at the same altitude until you feel well. If you are getting worse at the same altitude, descend to at least the last point at which you felt well. If you are not sure of the diagnosis, err on the side of being too cautious. Remember severe altitude sickness is entirely preventable if you follow these guidelines.

#### **Costs for changing itineraries:**

If you are not able to complete your trek or tour for any reason and choose to return back down early, then you may be liable to pay for extra accommodation and transport costs (see our booking conditions for full details). We try to be as flexible and helpful as possible in these cases, and will aim to arrange some lower altitude trekking or other tours during the time you would have spent at higher altitude. You must ensure that you have travel insurance that will cover you for any extra costs incurred due to symptoms or treatment or altitude sickness, and that your policy will cover you to the altitudes reached on your tour.

[More useful information on altitude sickness](#)

## **15. Voltage**

In Nepal, India and Sri Lanka, sockets are mainly two round pronged and 230 volts (Type C,D,M). In Bhutan a range of different sockets can be found, including two and three round pronged and three flat pronged (Type D,F,G).

Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard UK-European adaptors will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are sometimes available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already but cannot be guaranteed.

If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

## **16. Money**

The local currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee (NRs). There are a banks and several ATMs in Kathmandu where you can use a debit/credit card to withdraw cash (Visa, Mastercard), but these are not generally available out of Kathmandu or Pokhara. There are numerous money change shops in the main towns. Travellers cheques can be changed in some banks in Kathmandu and Pokhara, but not elsewhere.

You should ensure you have all the Nepalese rupees you think you will need before you leave for any trekking or visiting any more remote areas (including Bardia National Park). Try to obtain as many small denomination notes as possible, as higher value notes can be very hard to change in remote areas. You can pay with US Dollars cash in some places but should not rely on this.

## **17. What to take**

**Luggage:** Whatever you're doing in Nepal, Tibet or Bhutan, you'll find that large rigid wheeled suitcases are cumbersome - you may be able to wheel them inside the airport and your hotel, but due to the condition of roads and pavements that's often about it. As many of our tours involve a degree of adventurous activity, we strongly advise you to bring a more practical bag for these i.e. a rucksack or holdall. These are easier for both your porters, and yourself to carry around. Suitcases are OK for our cultural tours in Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan though, but please aim to bring small or medium sized ones rather than very large. If you are trekking or rafting, or doing a lot of travel throughout the country, then as little as possible is the basic message. A rucksack or holdall (50-70 liter approx.) for your main luggage, and a daypack for you to use during the day should be plenty. While rafting we only take



essential kit on board the rafts, and your main luggage will travel by bus to the take-out point. While trekking your porters (Nepal) or ponies (Bhutan) will carry your main luggage, leaving you with just a daypack with things you'll need during the day. You can also leave some luggage locked safely in the pre-trek hotel if you wish. We recommend that couples plan to leave one main bag behind, and pool their remaining luggage in their other bag for the porter to carry.

**Luggage limits:** Most international airlines allow 20-23kg per person of hold luggage. Domestic flights often have smaller allowances around 15kg. As airline rules vary we recommend that you take no more than 20kg of luggage if your tour just includes international flights, and no more than 15kg if there are any domestic flights included in your itinerary. Please ask us for details if you are unsure. Any excess baggage fees will be your responsibility to cover. Most airlines allow between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage so we suggest that you take no more than 5kg unless you have confirmed that your airline(s) will allow more than this.

If you are trekking with us, we ask that you keep the weight of your main bag that the porter will carry to a maximum of 12.5kg. This then allows the porter to carry up to 2 bags, and a maximum of 25kg (the International Porter Protection group's advised limit for Nepal is 30kg, which then leaves a little more weight for their own kit). This weight allowance includes your sleeping bag if you are hiring it from us and not carrying it with you to Nepal. If you are doing an Everest trek and flying from Kathmandu to Lukla, then flight luggage limits are 10kg for your main bag and 5kg for hand luggage - total 15kg. You can re-arrange that after you arrive in Lukla. Please keep to these limits as while you can pay for extra weight, it may be held back until the next flight which may then be delayed or cancelled.

Treks in Bhutan follow the same weight limits for your ponies.

You may leave other luggage securely locked in your hotel during the trek. If you are travelling as a couple then we suggest you leave one main bag in Kathmandu and share the other main bag that the porter will then carry.

**Clothing & Climate:** Nepal and Bhutan have a climate that ranges widely depending on when you visit, and where you are visiting.

- Autumn - late Sep-Nov: The weather is good and very warm, with lots of sunshine, getting quite hot during the day in lowland regions. It will still be cold at night at higher altitudes if you are trekking. Shorts & T-shirts are fine while you are walking, but you should still bring warmer clothes for the evenings. There is a good chance of rain in September and early October, so bring a waterproof.

- Winter - Dec-Feb: It will be pleasant in lowland regions with very little rain, but will be cooler at night. Long trousers and shirts are advised during the day, and you will need warm clothes in the evenings. If you are trekking, then it will be cold during the day, and extremely cold at night, particularly at higher altitudes. Several warm layers are recommended so you can regulate your comfort as you walk, including a waterproof, even if only to protect from cold winds. We include thick down jackets in our optional trekking packs for comfort in the evenings at higher altitudes.

- Spring - Mar-May: The weather is very pleasant during the spring, and again shorts & t-shirts are fine while you are walking. There is a higher chance of rain as the season progresses, so a thin waterproof is recommended in case. It gets very hot and humid in the lowlands from May onwards.

- Monsoon - Jun-mid Sep: It will be hot and sticky during these months, with lots of rain, so come prepared accordingly if you are visiting during these months - gaiters are highly recommended if you are trekking to keep out leeches.

A huge variety of cheap trekking gear is available in Kathmandu (fleeces, waterproofs etc.) and buying some here can save you carrying it with you, and support the local economy. However, you should definitely bring your own walking boots.

Modesty rates highly in Nepal and Bhutan especially for women, so please ensure all clothes are loose fitting and not too revealing. You'll find the Bhutanese dress fairly smartly or in national dress, so you will stand out even more if you look scruffy.

### **Whilst rafting:**

**On the raft:** Shorts, Tevas (sandals) or trainers, baseball style cap to keep the sun off your face, sunglasses with a strap to keep them on your head, swimwear, sarong for women, sun-cream, lip balm, water bottle, several t-shirts.

Note: All footwear on a raft should be rubber soled, and of the type that will not come off easily.

**Off the raft:**

Long trousers, warm sleeping bag (provided, but you may want to bring a sheet sleeping bag as well), petzel type head torch, warm jacket/fleece, dry shoes, boots, warm socks, towel, warm long sleeved shirt, toiletries.

**Cameras:** You can take cameras on the raft, and we endeavour to keep that sort of kit dry in waterproof bags. But there is always an element of risk of getting the camera wet.

**What you shouldn't take on the raft:** All the rest of your kit and you're your valuables. We will make arrangements for their transport to your take-out point.

### **Whilst trekking:**

**Suggested Clothing and equipment:** Strong hiking boots or walking shoes that you have broken in; Good sized rucksack or holdall; 3 to 4-season sleeping bag (only if you want to use your own rather than the one provided in our optional trekking pack); silk or cotton sleeping bag liner; lightweight waterproof and windproof jacket; (waterproof gaiters, waterproof over trousers - these are only necessary on some treks in some seasons - contact us for further info if required); 3 or 4 t-shirts; small day pack; several pairs of light socks; 2 pairs of heavier woollen socks; underwear including thermals; warm hat and gloves; swimwear; pair of lightweight trousers; pair of shorts; 1 fleece or warm jumper and 1 sweatshirt. Also, sunglasses, torch and batteries, toiletries (include a lighter to burn toilet paper), bring biodegradable shampoo & soap, towel, blister kit, money belt and any personal medication you might require. Remember, Lots of layers are the key to staying warm and comfortable. Also, keeping your feet comfortable and healthy makes a huge difference to how you enjoy your trek. So, bring waterproof boots/walking shoes and plenty of pairs of socks so you can change them regularly.

**Day Packs and Main luggage:** You will want a sturdy and comfortable daypack to carry your day-to-day items with you while you are walking (clothes you may change in and out of regularly, drinks, snacks, camera). You will also need a sturdy holdall or backpack for your main luggage. Your porters or ponies will carry this for you, so suitcases are not appropriate. They may leave earlier than you, and may not walk with you throughout the entire day, so bear in mind that you won't have access to this luggage all the time - you need to ensure you are carrying everything you require during the days walk in your daypack. You can leave luggage behind in storage at your hotel so you don't need to take everything with you on the trek.

### **Whilst in the game parks:**

You should bring long trousers and long-sleeved shirts for jungle walks and travel within the park. Please ensure these are of drab colours to avoid drawing attention. Sunglasses and sun-hats are advisable for hot and bright days. Mosquito repellent is highly recommended. Binoculars are extremely useful at any of Nepal's National Parks, and are not generally available for hire locally. Don't forget fast film for those jungle shots and moving animals/birds. A good cleaning kit is essential as these items are unavailable once at the park. It is also better to take quality film, either from home or Kathmandu into the parks, and to ensure you have a spare fully charged battery and memory card.

**All tours:** We recommend that you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

## **18. Note**

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on a Sunday 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.

## **19. Booking & Payment**

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by

making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

## 20. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

*IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.*

### **Covid-19**

**Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given [on our website](#).**

## 21. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

## 22. 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.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

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

## 23. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravl](http://www.twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

## 24. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.

## 25. Tipping - Nepal

While an accepted part of the culture and customs in Nepal, tipping is always optional, and any amounts paid should reflect excellent service. Tipping in Tibet and Bhutan is less prevalent though it is still normal practice to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour.

We support [travel aware](#) international guidelines for the employment of any trekking porters we use, including those of the IPPG (International Porter Protection Group). We therefore pay all our porters a higher than average wage, but an additional tip is still normal practice at the end of your trek.

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 you consider around US\$ 5-10 per person per day for guides, US\$ 3-7 p/p/day for assistant guides or tour leaders, and US\$ 2-5 p/p/day for porters and drivers.

Haggling or bargaining is also prevalent throughout Nepal and Tibet, particularly in Kathmandu, and is still done in markets in Bhutan though to a lesser extent in other shops. More often than not the start price is at least double the actual price the vendor will be happy to accept. Do not take offence, but be prepared to bargain if you want to, consider your budget (and what you'd be happy to pay for things at home), pay fairly and enjoy this as part of the experience. Note: if you do offer a price, then you are expected to purchase – do not start bargaining unless you really want to buy.

While you are out in rural/hill areas, we recommend that you should stick to published price lists and pay fair prices for local food, accommodation and services, as this aids local economies (bear in mind that when you are trekking, nearly everything you eat or buy will have been carried there by porters or donkeys).

## 26. Transport

The transport used on this tour will be an air conditioned car, STV, modern people-carrier, minivan or minibus, subject to the final number of people in your group or in your party. We always aim to have some free seats so you can spread out a little. You should expect vehicles in Bhutan to be a little better quality than those in Nepal.

Please see the note on International Flights for more information on the connecting flights between Kathmandu and Paro.

## **27. Transfers**

Your airport transfers are only included on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary, plus on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

Transfers are also included on the days within the tour when you are transferring to and from the airport for flights during the itinerary.

## **28. International flights including Nepal/Bhutan**

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 to Nepal in the main tour price. We are however very happy to make suggestions for flights to go with your tour and can provide you with list of possible airlines and flight times from your preferred departure point to fit with the tour.

The return flight between Kathmandu (KTM) and Paro (PHB) is also not included in our tour prices. This makes the whole tour more cost effective for our travellers as it means we do not to account for agency commissions or discounts on top of the fixed flight price.

You can book this flight independently through the [Druk Air website](#) or we may be able to book it for you, subject to your location and local regulations (UK residents will need to book the flights themselves). There is often only one flight per day and therefore everyone on the tour will therefore usually be using the same flight. All transfers are included at each end.

An option is available to add onto the tour to book these flights.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are

issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

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**Printed on:** Sunday 4th of December 2022

**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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