

## Highlights of Nepal

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**Country(ies):** Nepal

**Tour type:** Private

**Transport:** A/C minibus, 4x4 jeeps & flight

**Group size:** Min: 1 | Max: 0

**Days:** 10 days

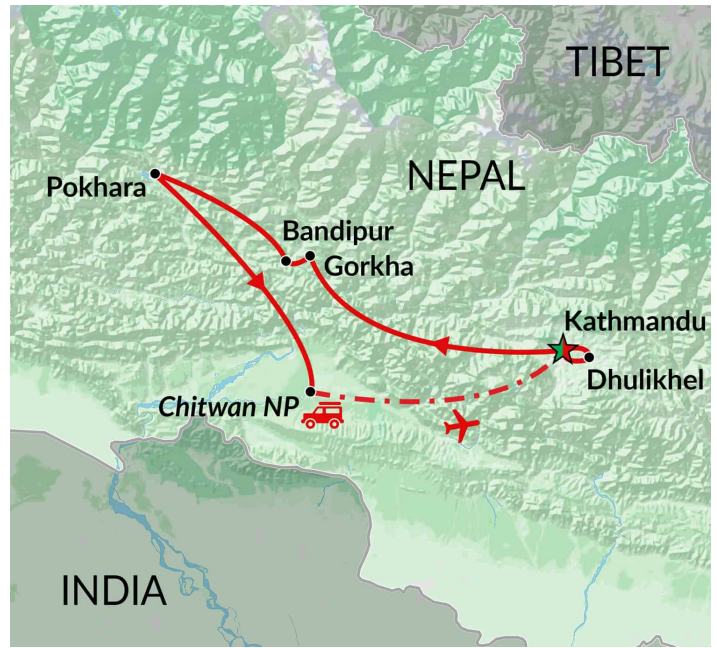
**Start Location:** Kathmandu, Nepal

**End Location:** Kathmandu, Nepal

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 9, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 2

**Highlights:**

Temples and Stupas of the Kathmandu valley, Everest mountain flight, Bandipur and Gorkha hill-villages, lakeside town of Pokhara, wildlife safaris in Chitwan National Park



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive in Nepal and transfer to hotel

We will be happy to help with flights into Nepal if you wish, and on your arrival our local representative will greet you and transfer you to your hotel in the centre of Kathmandu. We normally use the Shanker Hotel, which is built around a former royal palace and located in large quiet gardens close to the main touristic area of Thamel.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Kathmandu - pre-tour Single room supplement (NPTMHN)

## Day 2: Everest mountain flight & Kathmandu city tour

You start today early with a spectacular Everest mountain flight, which lasts for about one hour and gives you a great chance to see the World's highest mountain up close. Later in the morning you'll take an easy walking tour from your hotel, finding your way through the narrow city streets to Durbar Square. Our guides change the route everytime for this tour, and it will take in various corner temples and stupas and allow you to see all kinds of tiny shops and workshops. In the impressive Durbar Square, your guide will explain some Nepalese history as you walk through the many Hindu temples and the old Royal Palace.

After a break for lunch at a rooftop restaurant, you head by car to the edge of the city and walk up to Swayambhunath Stupa. Sitting on a hill overlooking the city, you'll get great views of the Kathmandu Valley and enjoy watching the many monkeys which make this holy place their home. After returning to Kathmandu the rest of the day is free.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 3: Gorkha & Bandipur village walks

This morning we make our way across the beautiful Nepalese countryside to the small hillside town of Gorkha, where you can climb up to the Gorkha Durbar perched on the top of the hill. This is a steep hours walk, rewarded by good views and an interesting exploration of the Durbar - a combination of a fort, temple and palace. We next head for the old Newari trading town of Bandipur.

Situated on a ridge with some great mountain views, Bandipur has been fairly untouched, the centre is traffic free, and many of its buildings have been protected. In the late afternoon you have an easy walk around the area surrounding the village, exploring some tiny villages and learning about the local agriculture and way of life. You spend the night here in a traditionally restored Ghaun Ghar Hotel on the main street.

**OVERNIGHT:** Bandipur hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 4: Drive to Pokhara and half day tour

You leave Bandipur late morning and drive on to Pokhara today. En route, Nepal's largest cave, the Siddha Gufa, can also be visited (make sure you have a torch!).

In the afternoon you'll take a tour of Pokhara, visiting the Peace Pagoda for great views of the Annapurna range, nearby Devi caves and waterfalls and a visit to the Tibetan refugee camp.

You can also extend the tour here to include a short trek. The Annapurna foothills are a great place for relatively low altitude trekking, and we can arrange circular trekking routes lasting anything from 2 days to 2 or more weeks.

Your accommodation tonight is at Temple Tree Resort & Spa, a boutique hotel that combines western standards with the distinctive architecture and culture of Nepal's Western Himalayas, and within walking distance of the main restaurants and shops.

**OVERNIGHT:** Pokhara hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 5: Pokhara, free day

You have a free day today to enjoy time in the beautiful lakeside town of Pokhara. There is plenty to do, and you could take the chance to walk or drive up to the view point at Sarangkot for a spectacular sunrise over the Annapurnas. Other options include a boat ride on Lake Phewa, a cycle ride exploring the town and its surroundings or perhaps just a stroll around the many souvenir shops that line the streets.

**OVERNIGHT:** Pokhara hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 6: Drive to Chitwan National Park

The drive to Chitwan today takes around 5 hours, and you may stop several times en-route. We can also extend this journey by adding in a 2 day/1 night white water rafting trip on the beautiful Seti River.

After arriving in Chitwan and settling into your lodge you enjoy an evening walk through the local Tharu villages to see and learn about traditional rural life here in the Terai region of Nepal.

**OVERNIGHT:** Chitwan hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 7: Chitwan National Park, safari activities

Your full day in Chitwan will be fairly full with activities in and around the park, but you'll still have some free time to yourselves as well, particularly in the middle of the day when wildlife viewing is not so productive.

We'll take both a jeep safari and an easy open log canoe ride down the Rapti River, where you have the opportunity to observe the many bird species native to Nepal. You should also see many of the 160 species of migratory birds which visit Chitwan seasonally. You may also see Gharial crocodiles sunning themselves on the riverbanks.

You will also explore and learn about the forests in a half-day jungle walk where you should see spotted deer and antelope and hopefully spot some rhino. Experienced local guides point out the various species, their habitats and behaviour, on all of your journeys into the park.

**OVERNIGHT:** Chitwan hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 8: Fly to Kathmandu and transfer to Dhulikhel**

This morning you transfer out to the main road and the airport for the short flight to Kathmandu. On arrival in Kathmandu your first stop is at the ancient centre of Bhaktapur. You have a guided tour of the temples and stupas here, and also some free time to explore the narrow streets. Thankfully free of cars and vehicles, this is a great opportunity to study some of the valley's beautiful brick and carved wooden architecture.

Later in the afternoon, you drive out to the rim of the valley, climbing up to the small town of Dhulikhel. Here you will spend the night in the beautiful ridge top surroundings of the Dhulikhel Mountain Resort.

**OVERNIGHT:** Dhulikhel hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 9: Pashupatinath and Boudhanath**

The morning is free to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of Dhulikhel before heading back towards Kathmandu where you visit two important religious pilgrimage sites. The Buddhist stupa at Boudhanath is huge, and surrounded by monasteries and strings of colourful, fluttering prayer flags. Nearby, is Pashupatinath, the most important Hindu temple in Nepal. Although non-Hindus are not allowed inside the temple itself, you can see into the temple complex from the holy riverbanks where there are bathing and cremation ghats. From here we drive you back to your hotel in Kathmandu.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 10: Kathmandu, free time and departure transfer**

Your time is free today until we pick you up from your hotel and transfer you to the airport for your flight home.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

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

**Included:**

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary
- All transport in private AC vehicles with a local driver
- All transfers, including 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Internal flights between Chitwan and Kathmandu
- Services of a local escort throughout the tour
- Specialist city guides and wildlife safari guides as detailed in the itinerary
- Entrance Fees to sites visited
- All national park entry and activity fees
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

**Excluded:**

- International Flights in and out of Nepal (available on request)
- Nepal visa fee (available on arrival for most nationalities)
- Travel Insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Any other items not mentioned above

# 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.

## No Options

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## 1. Accommodation

This tour uses a range of different styles of hotel, suited to the location and amount of time you're staying. We're aiming for interesting, characterful places to stay with friendly and helpful staff and in good locations. These aren't luxury hotels, but they are some of the best mid-range options available. The hotels listed on the Accommodation section on our website are our preferred properties, but may change from time to time subject to availability and levels of service we're receiving. As a private & tailor-made tour, we can also change as many or as few of these as you wish to suit your preferences and budget.

In Kathmandu and Pokhara we use boutique or heritage style hotels where possible. These can be considered at around the 3-4 star level. In Bandipur we stay in renovated guesthouses or small hotels that are packed full of local flavour and interest to match the town around them. The lodges used in Chitwan National Park are on the outskirts of the park itself, with lush greenery around them and comfortable rooms. Finally, in Dhulikhel we stay in a resort on the edge of the town surrounded by flowering gardens and with great mountain views.

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

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## 2. Transport

We use private, air-conditioned vehicles for all your sightseeing tours and journeys throughout the tour. These include jeep style vehicles for small numbers, minivans for families or mid-sized parties, and minibuses for larger groups. A variety of transport including open jeeps, elephants & canoes is used during your stay in Chitwan National Park.

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## 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.

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## 4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

As a private, tailor-made tour you may book this trip as an individual, couple, family, or as a group. We will customise the price based on the final number in your party.

An English-speaking Nepalese tour leader will accompany you throughout the tour, along with your driver who will normally speak a little, but not much English. Separate specialist guides are then used for the city sightseeing tours in Kathmandu, and for the wildlife safaris in Chitwan.

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

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## 5. Entrance fees & permits

All your entry fees and permits are included in the price of the tour. These cover sites visited during your sightseeing tours, as well as permits and activity fees in the National Parks. In Chitwan, the price covers one of each of the following: Jungle Walk, Village Walk, River canoe trip, Elephant Ride or Jeep Safari (jeep safaris may not be available during the monsoon season and that event would be exchanged for a different activity).

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## 6. Departure Dates and Seasons

This tour can be run all year round, with start dates available any day of the week. The weather and climate in Nepal does change significantly during the year, and this has an impact both on the cost of accommodation and transport, and on some of the activities included in the tour itself.

#### Spring - March to May

This is a good time to visit, with warm weather throughout the country, gradually increasing until it feels pretty hot in the lowland Terai region in May. Mountain views are generally good, though it can get hazy and foggy later in the season. Wildlife viewing is at its best, as the national parks have normally completed their annual elephant grass cut by this time, water holes are drying up, and the wildlife is easier to locate and spot. Many flowers will blossom during this season, with Nepal's national flower, the rhododendron filling hillsides with colour.

#### Summer - June to August

The heat and humidity builds up through June until the monsoon rains start in earnest. It will rain most, if not every day in July and August, with evening thunderstorms common, but clear weather inbetween the showers, particularly in the mornings when mountain views can still be good. This is an interesting time to visit, with lower tourist numbers, cheaper prices, and lush green vegetation. Many Nepalis return to their family farms in the countryside during the summer as this is a busy time in the fields and terraces. Some activities in the national parks are not available during the monsoon, depending on the ground conditions at the time. We may therefore exchange or adjust the planned activities accordingly. This season also corresponds with peak season and the best weather in Tibet.

#### Autumn - September to November

This is peak tourist season in Nepal, particularly for trekking, with corresponding higher prices and fuller hotels (we recommend booking early if you want to visit during this season as the popular hotels can fill up well in advance). The end of the monsoon rains may drag on into September or even October in some years, but generally the weather is good and warm with clear mountain views. The main Hindu festivals of Dashain, followed by Tihar, fall during the autumn.

#### Winter - December to February

This is a good time to visit, with lower visitor numbers and cheaper hotel rates. Temperatures are lower and it will feel cool during the day and at night, though warm in the sunshine. Occasional snow falls at mid to higher altitudes, making views of the foothills of the mountains especially beautiful. This season is great for lower level trekking, with quieter trails and good walking weather, though come prepared for some snow. Some higher routes may be inaccessible. This tour does not reach any great altitude, so there is little risk of snow where you'll be travelling.

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## 7. 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.

### **Flight CO2 Emissions:**

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## **8. 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.

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## **9. 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.

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When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## **10. 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.

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## 11. 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.

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## 12. 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).

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## 13. 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)

<https://x.com/encounterstravel> (yes, without the 'e')

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## 14. 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).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

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.**

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## 15. 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.

## 16. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

### How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

### The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

### Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

### Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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## 17. Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing

you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

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## 18. 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 and follow 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).

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## 19. 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.

**India:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate:

Yellow fever rules for India are quite complicated and lengthy. Please read the [WHO guidance](#).

**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.

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## 20. 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. Full details of current visa on arrival procedures are given on the [Nepal immigration department website](#).

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 multi entry visa are currently:

- up to 15 days - US\$ 30
- 16 to 30 days - US\$ 50
- 31 to 90 days - US\$ 125

The visa is obtained in the immigration area at the point where your passport is stamped. Forms to fill in are available at kiosks in the 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 may also need to fill in an arrivals card. Once your paperwork is completed, head to the payment/bank desks to pay and get a receipt, and then to the immigration desk and hand over your forms, your payment receipt 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.

To reduce queuing time you can also complete most of this process online in advance. First fill in the [Visa on arrival form](#) on the government website, and take a photo or print out your completed application form. You can only do this within 15 days of arrival, or you will need to repeat the process. You can then either pay online or pay on arrival at the airport. When you get to the airport, show your printed/photographed form, and the payment receipt if you have paid, and your visa will be issued and stamped into your passport.

**Passport Photos:** If you are doing any trekking, rafting or visiting a National Park you may be asked for passport photos, as some of the permits we may need to get require these. So please bring at least 2 standard passport photos with you just in case - they will always come in useful later if you don't need them.

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## 21. 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.

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## 22. 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.

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## 23. 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, Texas (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.

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**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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