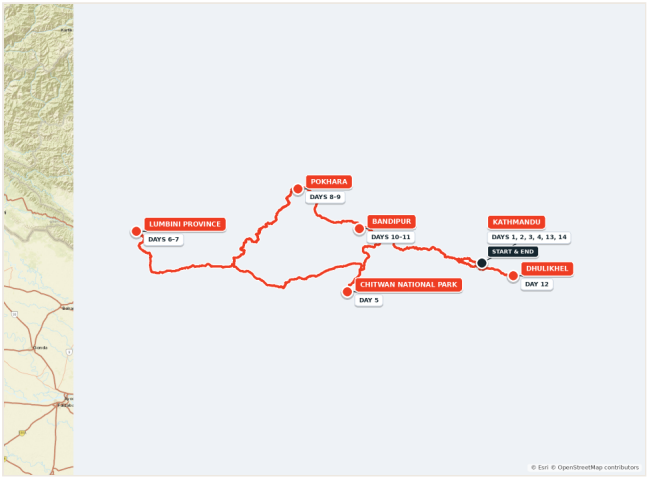
ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Nepal Discovery

COUNTRY(IES)	Nepal
TOUR TYPE	Private
TRANSPORT	A/C car/minibus/coach
GROUP SIZE	Min: 1 | Max: 0
DURATION	14 days
STARTS	Kathmandu, Nepal
ENDS	Kathmandu, Nepal
MEALS	Breakfasts - 13, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 3

TOUR ROUTE MAP **14 Days**



ROUTE: **Kathmandu** (Start) → **Chitwan National Park** → **Lumbini Province** → **Pokhara** → **Bandipur** → **Dhulikhel** → **Kathmandu** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Temples & Stupas of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Tilkot and Changu Narayan, mountain views from Dhulikhel, Royal Chitwan National Park, Relaxing in and around Pokhara, traditional village of Bandipur, birth-place of the Buddha in Lumbini

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive in Kathmandu, transfer to hotel

Meet the representative at Kathmandu Airport and travel directly to the centrally located hotel. After arrival, receive assistance with settling in and an explanation of the plans for the remainder of the tour. This gentle introduction keeps the focus on arrival, transfer and briefing while giving you time to adjust to the busy surroundings of Kathmandu.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Kathmandu Airport**
  Arrive at Kathmandu Airport where our representative greets you and assists with formalities. Begin your journey in Nepal's vibrant capital city.

- **Drive from Kathmandu Airport to Kathmandu City Hotel**
  Transfer from Kathmandu Airport to your hotel in the Thamel district. Settle in and get your first feel for the bustling streets of Kathmandu.
- **Welcome Meeting in Kathmandu**
  Your representative provides an overview of the itinerary and essential information for the journey ahead.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Kathmandu hotel	None	Single room supplement (NPSGCN), Extra day in Kathmandu - pre-tour

DAY 2 Kathmandu, tour

The first part of the morning will be dedicated to a pre-tour briefing and introduction to your local tour leader. After this we arrange for you to taken on a guided tour of the fascinating, sprawling city of Kathmandu. We start by walking from the tourist centre of Thamel, through winding streets and past corner temples and stupas, to Durbar Square with its splendid array of Hindu Temples and the old Royal Palace. Next, we climb up the many steps leading to the Swayambhunath Stupa, which sits upon a hill overlooking Kathmandu and gives a spectacular view out over the city. In the evening you have an opportunity to try one of the many restaurants and bars, and soak up the unique atmosphere that makes Kathmandu a magnet for travellers from all over the world.

ACTIVITIES

- **Pre in Tour Briefing – Kathmandu**
  Receive an overview of your upcoming wildlife safari tour from your local team. The briefing prepares you for the cultural and natural highlights ahead.
- **Walk from Thamel to Kathmandu Durbar Square**
  Walk from Thamel to historic Kathmandu Durbar Square through narrow alleys filled with shrines and courtyards. This route introduces you to Kathmandu's oldest quarters.
- **Explore Kathmandu Durbar Square**
  Explore Kathmandu Durbar Square with its intricately carved temples and royal palaces. Learn about Newari architecture and the history of the ancient kingdom.
- **Explore Swayambhunath Stupa**
  Visit the hilltop Swayambhunath Stupa, one of Kathmandu's most iconic Buddhist sites. Enjoy sweeping views of the city and watch for the monkeys that live around the temple.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Kathmandu hotel	Breakfast	Everest Mountain Flight, Kathmandu - full day city tour

DAY 3 Bhaktapur, Tilkot & Changu Narayan tour

Begin with a guided visit to Bhaktapur before driving to Tilkot Forest Reserve for the walking section. The hike is described as easy and takes approximately two and a half hours, descending through pine forest and Chhetri villages to Changu Narayan Temple. The source specifically supports these locations and walking conditions, so the collection should remain focused on the city tour, forest transfer and temple-bound hike.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Kathmandu to Bhaktapur**
  Travel by road from Kathmandu to the ancient city of Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley. Leave the busy centre behind and head towards this well-preserved historic town.
- **Explore Bhaktapur Ancient Centre**
  Explore Bhaktapur's UNESCO-listed centre with its palaces, temples, and traditional wooden architecture. Learn about centuries-old craftsmanship and urban culture.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Kathmandu hotel	Breakfast	Chitwan Safari Package - standard lodge

DAY 4 Drive to Chitwan

Drive approximately six hours by private vehicle to Chitwan National Park and reach a lodge located just outside the park boundary. The source states that travellers can relax after arrival and may also take an early-evening walk around local villages. The day does not yet include formal safari activities, so wildlife viewing should not be added before the later programme.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Kathmandu to Chitwan National Park**
  Drive out of the Kathmandu Valley towards Chitwan National Park. Pass terraced hillsides, rivers and rural villages along the way.
- **Village Walk in Chitwan**
  Take an early evening walk through a local Tharu village near Chitwan National Park. This provides insight into traditional rural life and the unique cultural heritage of the Tharu community.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Chitwan lodge	Breakfast,Dinner	Chitwan Safari Package - standard lodge

DAY 5 Chitwan National Park

The experience includes a canoe trip on the Rapti River before continuing with either a jungle walk or jeep safari. Birdlife, crocodiles, deer, monkeys, antelope and rhino may be encountered, although sightings depend on natural conditions. Local guides add interpretation of the park’s habitats and wildlife throughout the activities.

ACTIVITIES

- **Canoe Safari in Chitwan National Park**
  Glide along a jungle river in a traditional canoe while watching crocodiles and water birds. Enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the lowland waterways.
- **Chitwan Safari Activity**
  Join your first safari activity in Chitwan National Park, either on foot with a guide or by jeep, depending on local conditions. Look out for rhinos, deer, monkeys and rich birdlife in the forest and grasslands.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Chitwan lodge	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 6 Chitwan to Lumbini

The source specifies an elephant-back ride in Chitwan in search of one-horned rhino before the drive to Lumbini. Because animal-welfare practices may vary, the wording should preserve the source activity without adding promotional claims about wildlife approach. The journey to Lumbini takes around three hours, followed by visits to Maya Devi Mandir, Ashoka Pillar, monasteries and the Sacred Garden.

ACTIVITIES

- **Guided Tour of Lumbini Sacred Sites**
  Explore key sites in Lumbini including the Maya Devi Temple, Ashoka Pillar and sacred gardens. Learn more about the Buddha's life and the development of this important pilgrimage centre.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Lumbini hotel	Breakfast	Day hike to Sarangkot and Naudanda

DAY 7 Drive to Pokhara

Travel from the Terai to Pokhara via Tansen over approximately six hours. The source mentions views of the Annapurna range and Machhapuchhare, but these should remain weather dependent. No formal sightseeing stop in Tansen or included activity in Pokhara is stated. Restaurants around Lakeside are independent choices rather than included meals, so the collection remains primarily an overland transfer and arrival.

ACTIVITIES

- **Journey from Lumbini to Pokhara via Tansen**
  Leaving the lowland Terai, the road climbs back into the Himalayan foothills, passing the hilltop village of Tansen on the way. Around six hours of winding road bring you down into Pokhara.
- **Free Time in Pokhara**
  Relax in Pokhara with free time by the lake. Enjoy the cafés, shops and peaceful lakeside setting.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Pokhara hotel	Breakfast	Pokhara to Kathmandu flight with Bhaktapur

DAY 8 Pokhara, tour

Our tour today takes in visits to the World Peace Pagoda, Daryalling Monastery and the Tibetan refugee camp on the edge of town, before visiting Devi Falls and the attached caves on the way back to Pokhara. The experience continues through the named activities at a comfortable pace. Time at each stop is used to experience the setting and character of the places visited.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore World Peace Pagoda in Pokhara**
  Visit the hilltop World Peace Pagoda for panoramic views of Pokhara and the Annapurna mountains. Walk around the gleaming white stupa.
- **Explore Tibetan Refugee Camp in Pokhara**
  Stop at a Tibetan refugee camp to see handicrafts being made and learn about the community's history in Nepal. Browse local workshops and stalls.
- **Explore Devi Falls in Pokhara**
  Visit Devi Falls where water plunges into a deep chasm. Learn about the legend behind its name and observe the unusual geological formation.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Pokhara hotel	Breakfast

DAY 9 Pokhara, free day

Your day is free today to relax and enjoy Pokhara. There are many activities on offer, including day walks, cycle tours, boat rides and nearby excursions, all set to the beautiful mountain backdrop of the Annapurnas. If you are feeling energetic, the early morning views from the top of the nearby hill of Sarangkot are well worth the walk.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Pokhara**
  Relax in Pokhara with free time by the lake. Enjoy the cafés, shops and peaceful lakeside setting.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Pokhara hotel	Breakfast

DAY 10 Drive to Bhandipur

Travel towards Bandipur with a sightseeing stop at Gorkha Durbar before continuing to the Newari hill town. Once in Bandipur, the afternoon is free. Walking through terraced farmland, visiting the bazaar and exploring surrounding villages are independent possibilities from the source rather than fixed guided activities. Views depend on weather, and no additional scheduled sightseeing is specified.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Bandipur**
  Relax in Bandipur or take short independent walks into surrounding villages and hills. Enjoy the peaceful hilltop atmosphere and scenic views.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Bhandipur hotel	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 11 Drive to Dhulikhel

Travel from Bandipur to Dhulikhel and arrive around mid-afternoon. The road journey brings you back towards the Kathmandu Valley and finishes at the ridge-top village of Dhulikhel. Mountain views depend on weather and visibility, while the following morning may offer a chance to watch sunrise across the Himalayan landscape if conditions are favourable.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Bandipur**
  Relax in Bandipur or take short independent walks into surrounding villages and hills. Enjoy the peaceful hilltop atmosphere and scenic views.
- **Journey from Bandipur to Dhulikhel**
  The drive east from Bandipur heads back towards the Kathmandu Valley, with terraced hillsides and river valleys for company. By mid-afternoon you arrive at Dhulikhel, a village on the valley's north-eastern ridge.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Dhulikhel hotel	Breakfast

DAY 12

Dhulikhel, free day

After an early sunrise opportunity and breakfast, the day is at leisure in Dhulikhel. Guests may relax in the hotel garden or undertake short or more demanding walks independently. A separate optional tour can visit Kirtipur, Chobar and Pharping. These activities should remain optional, and mountain views should not be guaranteed because they depend on weather and visibility.

ACTIVITIES

- **Sunrise Viewing from Dhulikhel**
  An early rise rewards you with sunrise from the Dhulikhel ridge. Between November and March the skies are generally clear enough to make out a long chain of Himalayan peaks, Everest included.
- **Time at Leisure in Dhulikhel**
  After breakfast the day is yours to spend as you wish in the hotel gardens or the surrounding countryside. An optional tour of the nearby Newari towns of Kirtipur, Chobar and Pharping can also be arranged.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Dhulikhel hotel	Breakfast

DAY 13

Travel to Kathmandu

After breakfast, we return by private vehicle to Kathmandu. Along the way we visit Pashupatinath, the most important Hindu temple in Nepal. Although non-Hindus are not allowed inside the temple itself, you can see into the temple complex from the holy riverbanks where there are bathing and cremation ghats. We also visit the huge buddhist stupa of Boudhanath before arriving back at our hotel. The afternoon is free for you to explore Kathmandu further, and perhaps do some final souvenir shopping. In the evening you will enjoy a special traditional Nepalese dinner at the stylish Bhojan Griha restaurant.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu**
  Visit Pashupatinath, Nepal's most important Hindu temple. Observe ceremonies along the Bagmati River and learn about its spiritual significance.
- **Explore Boudhanath Stupa in Kathmandu**
  Explore the massive Boudhanath Stupa, a major centre of Tibetan Buddhism. Walk around the stupa with pilgrims and monks.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Kathmandu hotel	Breakfast

DAY 14

Kathmandu, transfer to airport

Your tour ends after breakfast and, if required, we transfer you to the airport for your flight home. Most of the remaining time is spent travelling between the named places, with the surroundings changing along the way. The journey itself provides time to watch the landscape change between the departure point and the next destination.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Kathmandu City Hotel to Kathmandu Airport**
  Transfer from your Kathmandu hotel to the airport. Say goodbye to Nepal as you head for your departure flight.
- **Tour Ends in Kathmandu**
  The Classic Nepal Tour concludes in Kathmandu after your airport transfer. Your Nepal adventure ends here unless you have arranged an extension.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
N/A	Breakfast

INCLUDED

- 5 nights accommodation in hotels (two levels available)
- 2 nights accommodation in wildlife lodge in Chitwan National Park
- All transfers, including 24-hour airport arrival transfer service vehicle transport
- All transport in AC car/minibus/coach subject to group size
- Services of a local escort throughout the tour
- Specialist city, wildlife and trekking guides for optional tours in Kathmandu, Chitwan and Pokhara
- All national park entry and activity fees included in option prices
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (7 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners)
- All entrance fees to sites visited in the itinerary

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (available on arrival for US$25 most nationalities)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Optional tours
- Tips for guides, drivers & tour leader
- Any other items not mentioned above

Tour Options

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

activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

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

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

No additional options available for this tour.

Important Notes

1 Accommodation

1. **Hotels in Kathmandu & Pokhara**
   The standard tour uses comfortable tourist class hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara (3-star). The upgraded package uses a 5 star hotel in Kathmandu, normally the Yak and Yeti, and a boutique hotel around 4-star level in Pokhara, normally the Temple Tree Resort or Shangri La Hotel.
2. **Safari lodges in Chitwan National Park**
   At Chitwan National Park, we use safari lodges with comfortable clean rooms and en-suite bathrooms. The standard tour uses the Rhino Lodge or a similar property in the village of Sauraha on the edge of the park, while the upgraded package uses a deluxe lodge a little outside in a wilder environment, normally the Temple Tiger Green Lodge.

2 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.

3 Transport

Private AC vehicles appropriate to the final size of the group are used for all sightseeing tours and journeys throughout the tour. A variety of transport including local jeeps & canoes is used when you visit Chitwan. A domestic flight option is available to replace the drive back from Pokhara to Kathmandu (approx. 7 hrs).

4 Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. So, we set this Nepal small group tour to have a maximum of 12 travellers in each group.

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

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

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

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5 White Water Rafting

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

For the white water rafting option available on this tour, you must be a competent swimmer and be unafraid of the water and to this end we are unable to accept bookings from non-swimmers. So, whether you are male or female, young or old, if you are prepared to honestly assess your physical abilities and accept the challenge then rafting can be a fantastic fun experience.

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

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

Class II: *mild rapids, suitable for children and anyone seeking an enjoyable experience*
Class III: *larger rapids, requiring a little more skill but with little real danger*
Class IV: *powerful rapids, needing more advanced techniques*

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6 Entrance & Activity Fees

All the entry fees and permits required on this tour are included in the price of the trip, or the price of any optional tours (to cover entry into the trekking conservation areas, and sites on the city tour).

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

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7 Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 travellers. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website with options available from a range of US airports.

Note: Private departures on other dates, and flights from other airports are also available for a supplementary cost, including through the monsoon season (late June to mid-September). During this period not all activities may be available in Chitwan, and you should travel prepared for muddy trails and rain if adding any trekking. Despite the probability of some heavy rain showers, visiting Nepal during the monsoon season can be a very pleasurable and different experience to the rest of the year, with everything looking very lush and far fewer tourists around, particularly on the trekking routes.

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8 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.

9 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.

10 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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11 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.

12 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.

13 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).

14 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

https://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

15 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.

16 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.

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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17 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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18 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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19 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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20 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: Diptheria, 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: Diptheria, 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 vacinnation 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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21 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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22 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 adapters 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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23 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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24 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.