

Highlights of Nepal

9 days | Starts/Ends: Kathmandu



Combine exploration of ancient cities, temples and palaces, breathtaking mountain ranges and thundering waterfalls. Go wild in one of Asia's finest game parks and immerse yourself in local life and culture. Get to know the real Nepal!

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Kathmandu - Rickshaw ride through the city, explore Kathmandu Durbar Square and visit the Swayambhunath Stupa and Bodhnath Stupa
- Bhaktapur - Roam around the beautiful Durbar Square and test your pottery making skills
- Chitwan National Park - Go on a jeep safari in Chitwan, home to the one horned rhino and the elusive Bengal tiger
- Admire spectacular views of the Annapurna mountain range
- Pokhara - Visit the World Peace Pagoda, see the daily prayers at Matapani Monastery and go boating on Lake Phewa
- Patan - Explore the temples and shrines of Patan Durbar Square

What's Included

- 8 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners including dinner at a Nepali cultural evening
- 8 nights 4 star hotels
- Airport arrival and departure transfer day 1 and day 9
- Economy class flight from Pokhara to Kathmandu
- Touring of Kathmandu, Patan, Bhaktapur and Pokhara
- Chitwan National Park jeep safari in the buffer zone, jungle activities and park fees
- Rickshaw ride in Kathmandu
- Boating on Lake Phewa in Pokhara
- Escorted by English speaking local tour guides
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private air conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- Entrance Fees: USD\$45-55pp, paid in local currency
- International flights and visa
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Kathmandu

Friday. Welcome to Kathmandu and the start of your holiday! You'll be met and transferred to your hotel where you will receive a

welcome drink and a briefing about your trip.

Overnight - Kathmandu

Day 2 : Kathmandu Valley



Nepal's capital Kathmandu is a fascinating blend of old and new and the largest and most cosmopolitan city in Nepal. This morning we visit the colossal Bodhnath (Boudha), which is one of the world's largest stupas and the most important Buddhist monument outside Tibet. It's a beautiful worship site where the spinning of prayer wheels, prostrating pilgrims and collective chants are just some of the practices that can be witnessed. The Stupa is located in the area of ancient trade route to Tibet where Tibetan merchants and offered prayers for many centuries. When refugees entered Nepal from Tibet in the 1950s, many decided to live around Bodhnath. Hence, a complete township has developed around Bodhnath and we visit a monastery where the young monks live and study Tibetan Buddhism. We'll also stop at a Thangka Art Gallery, to learn all about this Tibetan art.

Highlights of Nepal - 9 days

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Highlights of Nepal

We travel on to the Newari town of Bhaktapur, which, despite its close proximity to Kathmandu, seems worlds apart. This enchanting old town is peacefully traffic free and has retained its centuries old traditions, crafts and trades. Bhaktapur Durbar Square is home to beautifully carved Malla dynasty palaces and pagodas and the cobblestone streets, temples, shrines and squares are full of character. The Newar communities of Bhaktapur are famous for their pottery making, they not only sell their products within the country but also abroad. We visit Pottery Square and test our pottery skills, making clay pots on a spinning wheel.

Our final stop of the day is Patan, an old Newari city in the Kathmandu Valley, Here we'll explore the historic Patan Durbar Square, which is home to more than 50 stunning temples and shrines and although it is smaller than Durbar Square in the centre of Kathmandu it is architecturally more refined and less commercialised. Highlights of Patan include the Kumari Temple, Golden Temple, Rudra Varna Mahabihar, Machhendrabahal, Kumbeshwor Temple, Taleju Temple and Taleju Bell. We also watch a Singing Bowls demonstration, which were invented by ancient Tibetan and Nepali Buddhist monks for physical, mental and spiritual rejuvenation.

After time to freshen up at your hotel, enjoy a tasty dinner whilst watching a traditional dance performance depicting the various religions of Nepal. **Overnight - Kathmandu (B, D)**

Days 3-4 : Chitwan National Park



Kathmandu – Chitwan. On day 3 we travel by road to Chitwan National Park (approx 5 hr drive), arriving in time for lunch. Chitwan

is hailed as one of Asia's finest game parks, home to more than 500 species including the endangered one horned rhino and the elusive Bengal tiger.

Over the next two days we enjoy a selection of activities offered by the lodge including a jeep safari, hoping to encounter the one horned rhino, various types of deer, boar, monkey, leopard and if we're very fortunate the Bengal tiger. Other activities at the lodge include a local village walk and nature walks in the jungle, a scenic dugout canoe ride down the Rapti River, bird watching and a visit to the Crocodile Breeding Centre. We'll also watch a traditional Tharu dance performance one evening with dinner. **Overnight - Chitwan National Park (B:2, L:2, D:2)**

Day 5 : Pokhara



Chitwan National Park – Pokhara. After breakfast we travel on to scenic Pokhara (approx. 5 hour drive). Pokhara is the gateway to the magnificent Annapurna Range, which boasts five mountains over 7200m and has one of the Himalayas most distinctive mountains - Machhapuchare with its unique 'fishtail' peak. The local people believe Machhapuchare is sacred to the god Shiva and therefore is off limits to climbing. Arriving in the afternoon, there's time to relax and perhaps take a stroll around the lakeside market. **Overnight - Pokhara (B)**

Day 6 : Boating on Lake Phewa



Early this morning we drive (approx. 45 minutes) to World Peace Pagoda with a packed breakfast. The World Peace Pagoda is a massive Buddhist stupa, situated on the top of a hill on the southern shore of Phewa Lake. Besides being an impressive sight in itself, the shrine is a great vantage point which offers the spectacular views of the Annapurna range, Phewa Lake and Pokhara city.

We then take a scenic two hour walk back to Pokhara via Raniban forest crossing the suspension bridge and enjoying wonderful views of the lake and mountains en route. We reach Lake Phewa and enjoy a scenic boat ride. Our sightseeing continues this morning with an excursion to the beautiful Devi's waterfall and the spectacular Seti Gorge, where the Seti River has carved a 200m deep chasm through the Pokhara Valley.

This afternoon we visit a Tibetan refugee camp and the Matepani Monastery which sits on top of a mountain, overlooking the city. Monks from all over the country come to the monastery to study and here we will watch the monk's daily prayer. **Overnight - Pokhara (B)**

Day 7 : R&R in Pokhara

Today is free day for you to explore Pokhara and participate in optional activities such as paragliding, ultra-light flight, zip line, bungee jump, mountain biking, cycling, boating and horse riding, or if you prefer, simply relax down by the lake. **Overnight - Pokhara (B)**

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Highlights of Nepal

Day 8 : Kathmandu



Pokhara - Kathmandu. This morning we take the short flight (approx. 30 mins) back to Kathmandu and in the afternoon we explore more of the city.

Our sightseeing today includes the Buddhist Stupa of Swayambhunath with a wonderful view of the Kathmandu Valley. Swayambhunath is a Buddhist Chaitya said to be more than 2000 years old and perched on a hillock 77 metres above the valley floor. Offering a bird's eye view of the Kathmandu City, it has eyes painted on it which are to represent the all-seeing eyes of Lord Buddha keeping a watch on the human behaviour. Some of the Tibetan exiles in Nepal live nearby the Stupa.

From Swayambhunath we head to Kathmandu Durbar Square where there are over 50 temples and monuments, predominantly designed from the time of the Malla Dynasty. We'll also see the living goddess KUMARI, the young girl considered the Hindu Living Goddess, worshipped by Nepali Buddhists and Hindus as the manifestation of the goddess Durga.

Then we take an exciting rickshaw ride from Hanuman Dhoka to Thamel through narrow alleys where we'll see scenes of everyday life, local shops selling Nepali spices and souvenirs, pious people revering deities and others involved in selling fresh fruits & vegetables, home-made pie and tea. This evening is free for you to wander around the Thamel market, where you can pick up some last minute souvenirs. **Overnight - Kathmandu (B)**

Day 9 : Kathmandu

Saturday. Our tour comes to an end today with a transfer to the airport. An optional Everest

scenic flight is offered on the morning of day 2 or day 9 (subject to availability) so if you'd like to book this please ensure that your onward flight on day 9 does not depart before midday. (B)

HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.

Mulberry Hotel

The Mulberry Hotel is an inviting oasis in the heart of Kathmandu. The elegant rooms are bright and airy with complimentary WiFi. Guests have a choice of two dining venues at the hotel with a rooftop infinity pool, spa and wellness centre to take advantage of also. The hotel is conveniently located in the popular entertainment district of Thamel and a 30 minute drive from the airport.



Standard Accommodation

Jungle Villa Resort

Situated at the northern borders of Chitwan National Park, the Jungle Villa's cottages contain well-furnished rooms with fully equipped ensuite bathrooms. Wake up to the sights of the World Natural Heritage Site from your private balcony overlooking the Rapti River. The resort's restaurant and outdoor bar serve a variety of cuisines and cocktails crafted from local produce. During the day, the National Park is right on your doorstep, should you wish to view the endangered flora & fauna on a safari tour, or join a village tour to learn about life in local communities.



Kasara Resort

Situated on the border of Chitwan National Park, Kasara Resort blends simple luxury with a lush jungle setting. Each guestroom boasts a private, water-garden courtyard, an indoor-outdoor bathroom space and a sun deck set up for personal dining. Alongside a restaurant and spa facilities, guests can take part in an exciting range of outdoor activities. Perhaps enjoy a scenic cruise along the Rapti River in a dugout canoe, take a guided jungle walk in search of native wildlife or cycle around the nearby villages.



Atithi Resort and Spa

Atithi (Sanskrit for 'guest') offers genuine Nepalese hospitality in central Pokhara. At the heart of the resort are its spa, which incorporates yogic methods into a range of modern treatments, and an intimate outdoor pool looking out upon the majestic Annapurna range. The all-day restaurant and lounge-bar offer comfortable spaces for guests to relax. All rooms are ensuite, with rosewood furniture, LCD television, and a mountain view.



Optional Activities

The following optional activities are available to book and pay locally.

Highlights of Nepal - 9 days

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Highlights of Nepal

Mountain Flight 'Everest Experience Flight' in Kathmandu

Flight Time: 45 to 50 mins

Cost: Approx USD\$200 - USD\$250 per person, including return transfers and domestic airport taxes

Paragliding in Pokhara

Flight Time: Approx 25 mins

Cost: Approx USD\$90 per person, including return transfers and taxes

Ultra-light Flight in Pokhara

Flight Time: Approx 30 mins

Cost: Approx USD\$156 per person including return transfers and taxes

Prices are subject to change.

Clothing

Pack casual clothing that can be layered for warmth, even when travelling in the summer, as

temperatures drop at night. You will need to pack lightweight summer clothing if you are travelling from April to August and warm winter clothes for travel from September to March. An umbrella or a raincoat is essential between June and September.

Summer temperature can reach up to 35-38°C in southern Nepal - Chitwan national park, Pokhara and Lumbini areas. Spring and autumn, nights and early mornings can be quite chilly at night and foggy in the morning. As heating systems are quite rare and expensive, rooms are quite cold during the night in winters, but in the day there are generally clear skies and pleasant temperatures, allowing you to travel in t-shirts. Temperatures at the peak of winter in December and January can range from 2-24°C.

General clothing

- T-shirt (fast drying)
- Comfortable trousers/jeans
- Fleece jacket/layer jacket
- Pair of socks & inner garments
- Thick jacket, sweater, hat, scarf, gloves (October-March)
- Cap/sun hat, sunglasses
- Comfortable walking shoes/trainer & sandal
- Raingear / umbrella (June-September)

- Cotton mask or scarf to cover from dust

Tipping

Tipping is not a natural part of many Western cultures and many of us feel uncomfortable or unsure about when and how much to tip. However in the Himalayas, tipping is an important part of local incomes and it's handy to always keep a supply of small notes for tipping.

As a guide we recommend you allocate the following amount for the duration of your tour to cover tips for drivers and local guides - approximately: USD\$45-50 in local currency.

Local drivers for arrival/departure transfers - approx USD\$2.00

Local guide for a full day of touring - approx USD\$5.00

Local driver for a full day of touring - approx USD\$3.00

Naturalist guide in Chitwan - approx USD\$3 per activity

Insurance

We will make every effort to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible. However, we shall not be responsible for any changes and alterations in the itinerary due to unavoidable circumstances such as landslide, road blockage, flood, snow, political unrest, cancellation of flight, delayed arrival, sickness or accidents. Any extra cost incurring there of, shall be borne by yourself/upon consultation. It is therefore essential that you have comprehensive insurance to cover you for medical, personal accidents, cancellation.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Nepal Country Guide

Nepal Visa Requirements

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please check with your local embassy before travelling and also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Nepal.

All nationalities must obtain a visa for Nepal. On our multi-country tours you will need a visa for each country included within the holiday.

It is possible for UK, EEC, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, South African and USA passport holders to obtain a visa upon arrival. However in the event of visa refusal at port of entry On The Go will not be held responsible.

In order to avoid long queues and unnecessary problems at Kathmandu airport, it is now possible to complete an Online Visa Application form within 15 days of travel. The application is only valid for 15 days so do not complete the form any earlier than this.

For further information and to complete your application please visit... <http://online.nepalimmigration.gov.np/tourist-visa>

Please note that we require a scanned colour copy of your passport to apply for trekking permits (if applicable).

Currency in Nepal

The currency of Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars or other major currencies can be exchanged at the airport and there are plenty of places to exchange money in Kathmandu. There are also ATMs at the banks in Kathmandu and Pokhara, although as these are sometimes out of order and banks are not always open, we advise that you bring some cash with you, preferably US dollars. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities. Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

Time & Voltage in Nepal

Kathmandu (Nepal) is 5 hours 45 mins ahead of GMT and does not observe daylight savings time.

Standard voltage in Nepal is 220 volts. Primary sockets generally require Indian round 3 pin plugs that are similar but not identical to European plugs, however you will also find those which require the European variety. We recommend that you pack a

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Highlights of Nepal

universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter, and plug adaptor in order to use U.S. appliances.

Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Nepal from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Diphtheria, Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Polio are strongly recommended. You may also be advised to take anti-Malarial medication.

DENGUE FEVER

Nepal recently confirmed cases of Dengue Fever. Risk is typically present throughout the country, with peak transmission from August to November. Travellers should take meticulous measures to prevent mosquito bites during the daytime. Use a repellent containing 20%-30% DEET. Re-apply regularly according to manufacturer's directions. Wear neutral-coloured (beige, light grey) clothing. If possible, wear long-sleeved, breathable garments. Apply sunscreen first followed by the repellent (preferably 20 minutes later).

WATER

As tap water is not safe to drink in Nepal, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants. You should also avoid salads which may be washed in unhygienic water.

Altitude Sickness

An altitude of over 3,000 meters is defined as high altitude and given parts of Nepal are higher than this level, it is possible to experience differing degrees of symptoms which include headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue and shortness of breath. These symptoms will usually decrease in severity during acclimatization and mild cases of altitude sickness should not interfere with light activity. It is important not over exert yourself if travelling to altitude and drink plenty of fluids and eat carbohydrate food to keep the body properly hydrated. Please report any symptoms of Altitude Sickness immediately to your tour leader.

Food in Nepal

The national dish of Nepal is Daal Bhaat Takaari (lentils, rice and vegetable curry) which can be found in a range of flavours and is often served as a main course for lunch and dinner. For many people in Nepal this is the only dish they eat. It often varies in quality, being excellent in one restaurant and bland in another. Nepali food has Tibetan influences especially in the mountains where a traditional diet consists of soups, potatoes, pasta and toasted flour. You will also find Indian food in Nepal, such as Roti (bread) tandoori meats, masala and kofti. Kathmandu is renowned as the budget eating capital of Asia with tourist restaurants selling a wide variety of Western style fast food including chips, steaks and pizza. Noodles are available everywhere and ideal for a quick snack, the Nepali name for them is chao-chao.

Entrance Fees

On our group tours in Nepal, entrance fees are not included must be budgeted for by you. The total cost of the entrance fees which need to be paid locally, as noted under 'Exclusions' on the first page of these Trip Notes. Entrance fee amounts can change and as such upon arrival, your tour leader will highlight the exact total entrance fee cost for your tour. Entrance fees are to be paid in Nepalese Rupees and they will be collected on day 2 of your tour.

Tippling in Nepal

Tippling is not a natural part of many Western cultures and many of us feel uncomfortable or unsure about when and how much to tip. However in the Nepal, tipping is an important part of local incomes and it's handy to always keep a supply of small notes for tipping.

In Nepal, as a guide, we recommend you allocate the following amount for the duration of your tour to cover tips for drivers, porters and local guides - approximately: USD\$40-50 in local currency.

Local drivers for arrival/departure transfers - approx USD\$3

Local guide for a full day of touring - approx USD\$5-10

Naturalists / Safari guides in Chitwan – USD 5 Per Activity

Local driver for a full day - approx USD\$3-5

Style of Trip

Local guides provide sightseeing and assistance at each port of call, the tours are not escorted throughout by a tour leader. On flights you will therefore travel without a guide and will be met upon arrival at your destination and transferred to your hotel. In Chitwan National Park guiding will be provided by the lodges own expert jungle guides. Transportation is a combination of internal flights and private air conditioned vehicles.

Group size

The number of travelers participating our Himalayan tours and treks varies from week to week. Our maximum group size in Nepal is 15, with an average of 2 - 6 travelers on each departure.

Single Rooms

If you have opted for a single room on any of our trips, we are always able to guarantee single rooms for all hotel stays. If your tour involves trekking where accommodation is offered in tea houses single rooms are not always available and you maybe required to share with someone of the same sex on your tour. We will contact you prior to departure if shared accommodation is required at any time on your tour, though this does not negate the minute chance that a change maybe required locally.

What to Expect

Nepal is a developing nation with limited infrastructure. Coupled with this and ever changing weather conditions and its no surprise that at times there can be delays or cancellation of services. This may take the form of flight delays due to low cloud in the mountains or foggy conditions in Kathmandu. The road network is quite congested in the cities and suffers from poor maintenance on some routes again causing delays and a rough ride from time to time.

Whilst Kathmandu has a good choice of high quality hotels, in other areas hotels and facilities

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Highlights of Nepal

are not as high as western standards. Power shortages, water supply issues and fuel scarcity are common problems throughout Nepal. We will always try to offset any unforeseen problems but patience and understanding should be included when packing. Bear in mind that tourism is still relatively new to these beautiful Himalayan regions, things do not always run smoothly and a sense of adventure is a must!

Insurance

We will make every effort to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible. However, we shall not be responsible for any changes and alterations in the itinerary due to unavoidable circumstances such as landslide, road blockage, flood, snow, political unrest, cancellation of flight, delayed arrival, sickness or accidents. Any extra cost incurring there of, shall be borne by yourself/upon consultation. It is therefore essential that you have comprehensive insurance to cover you for medical, personal accidents, cancellation.

Climate in Nepal

In Nepal, June to September is monsoon season and during these months it is very hot and rains almost every day. October to November is much drier with pleasant temperatures in the daytime and good visibility, and at this time of year conditions are ideal for trekking. The winter months from December to February tend to be mild in the daytime but can become very cold at night especially in the mountains. January is the coldest month of the year. March to May is very warm, with occasional showers. The annual temperatures peak in May just before the monsoons begin.

The best time to trek in Nepal is during the spring (March - May) and autumn (October - November).

Temple Etiquette

Please take particular care when visiting religious places, such as temples and monasteries. Dress and behave appropriately - don't wear shorts or sleeveless tops and do not smoke or hold hands. Shoes and hats should be removed. Within temples no carvings, statues or deities should be

touched. Photography is prohibited in certain sections of most sacred sites and please do not attempt to be photographed with Buddhist monks. If in doubt ask your local guide for further information.

Shopping in Nepal

The Kathmandu Valley is heavenly for shoppers, with a host of craft outlets selling locally made handicrafts, stone idols and statues of Buddhist and Hindu deities. There are also beautifully designed brass pots and vessels available. Jewellery shops sell gold, silver, white metal and semi precious stones, as well maala (the traditional necklace worn by women in the Himalayas, which is made of gold with strings of glass beads) at very reasonable prices. If you are more interested in clothing there are delicately embroidered Kaftans, Pashminas made of goats wool, Kashmiri Shawls and Tibetan robes. You can also pick up inexpensive leather jackets.

Whilst trekking there are traders dotted along the trails selling everything from down jackets, waterproofs, jumpers, hats and socks at very reasonable prices, so there is no need to panic if you haven't packed enough! It is advisable to pack light and simply buy extra clothing en route if needed.

You are expected to barter for your goods in Nepal and the process is always very lighthearted. Most traders will speak English in tourist areas but if you can learn a few words in Nepali you may get a better deal.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

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