

## Nepal Discovery

**Country(ies):** Nepal

**Tour type:** Private

**Transport:** A/C car/minibus/coach

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

**Days:** 14 Days

**Start location:** Kathmandu, Nepal

**End location:** Kathmandu, Nepal

**Departs On:** Any day

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 13, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 3

**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

**Places Visited:** Kathmandu, Chitwan National Park & Pokhara



# Itinerary

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

We greet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel in the centre of Kathmandu, where our Encounters Travel rep welcomes you, helps you settle in, and explains the agenda for the rest of your tour.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** 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 be 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.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Everest Mountain Flight || Kathmandu - full day city tour

## Day 3: Bhaktapur, Tilkot & Changu Narayan tour

This morning we drive you out to the ancient centre of Bhaktapur for a tour of the many squares and temples, seeing stunning wooden architecture as well as exploring the narrow winding lanes which bustle with life and have remained relatively unchanged for centuries. We then drive up to the beautiful Tilkot Forest Reserve where we start an easy walk downhill through pine forests and tiny Chhetri villages with wonderful views to either side, to the beautiful Changu Narayan Temple (approx. 2 1/2 hours easy walking).

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Chitwan Safari Package - standard lodge

## Day 4: Drive to Chitwan

Today we take you away from the bustle of the Kathmandu valley and drive across Nepal in a private vehicle to Chitwan National Park (approx. 6 hours). The journey gives you a chance to experience the varied and beautiful landscape of Nepal as we see views of snowcapped mountains and lush green jungles and pass by raging rivers and colourful towns and villages.

We arrive at the lodge, which is located just outside the park boundaries, in the late afternoon. You are at Chitwan National Park for two nights and during this time you have an exciting itinerary in and around the park. Once settled into your lodge, you can eat, drink and relax and take in some of the spectacular settings that surround you. You can also do an early evening walk around the local villages and learn about rural Nepali life here.

**OVERNIGHT:** Chitwan lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** Chitwan Safari Package - standard lodge

## Day 5: Chitwan National Park

We include a full range of safari activities today including a log canoe trip 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. One highlight while on the river is the chance to watch the spectacular skill of ospreys fishing. You may also see Gharial crocodiles sunning themselves on the riverbanks.

After the canoe ride you will explore and learn about the forests in a jungle walk or jeep safari where you should see spotted deer and antelope, monkeys 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 lodge

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: Chitwan to Lumbini

We include morning you will hopefully enjoy a beautiful sunrise over the river behind the lodge. You will take a morning elephant back ride into the park in search again of the rare, Indian one horned rhino. Travelling on the back of an elephant can be the best way to approach wildlife, especially rhino, as your human smell is obscured by the familiar smell of the elephants themselves. This means that the animals you search for are much more relaxed in your presence giving you better opportunities to study them. After returning from the elephants, we drive to Lumbini (approx. 3 hours), birthplace of Buddha and arguably the most significant historical site in Nepal. On arrival we arrange for you to be taken on a guided tour, visiting The Maya Devi Mandir, Ashoka Pillar, a number of important monasteries and the Sacred Garden where the Buddha was reputedly born.

**OVERNIGHT:** Lumbini hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Day hike to Sarangkot and Naudanda

## Day 7: Drive to Pokhara

We leave the lowland Terai today and head back into the Himalayan foothills as we drive via the hilltop village of Tansen and on to Pokhara (approx. 6 hours). Set in a broad fertile valley, Pokhara is the gateway to most of Nepal's rafting and trekking destinations. The town itself is dominated by stunning views of the Annapurna range, particularly of the sacred Machhapuchhare. The Lakeside area (around Phewa Lake) is enchanting and busy with travellers in the evenings, and has many good restaurants to enjoy.

**OVERNIGHT:** Pokhara hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** 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.

**OVERNIGHT:** Pokhara hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## 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.

**OVERNIGHT:** Pokhara hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 10: Drive to Bhandipur

This morning you start your drive back towards Kathmandu. On the way you stop to visit the Gorkha Durbar - a hill top fortress, palace and temple complex flamboyant in design and reflective of Gorkha's central place in Nepal's history as the ancestral home of the Nepalese royal family. We then travel onto Bandipur, a once prosperous Newari trading town, where the afternoon is free to enjoy an easy walk through the local terraced farmland and rural villages to enjoy the wonderful vistas and quiet charm that envelopes this little-visited, and typical hill village. There is an interesting bazaar around which to wander and excursions into the surrounding countryside are also worthwhile.

**OVERNIGHT:** Bhandipur hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 11: Drive to Dhulikhel

After a little more time at Bandipur, we drive you back to the Kathmandu Valley giving you another chance to take in the beautiful scenery that makes Nepal such a popular country to visit. You should arrive in the village of Dhulikhel, which sits on a ridge at the north-eastern edge of the Kathmandu Valley, by mid-afternoon. Stunning clear views are all but guaranteed between November and March and it is well worth the effort to get up early tomorrow morning to see the sun rise over the distant Himalayas including the tiny (from here !) peak of Everest.

**OVERNIGHT:** Dhulikhel hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 12: Dhulikhel, free day

After an early rise to enjoy the sunrise views, we have breakfast and the day is then free for you to relax in the beautiful garden setting of the hotel, or to enjoy some short or more demanding walks in the surrounding countryside. We can also offer a tour of the nearby historic Newari towns of Kirtipur, Chobar and Pharping if you wish.

**OVERNIGHT:** Dhulikhel hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## 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.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kathmandu hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 14: Kathmandu, transfer to airport

Your tour ends after breakfast and, if required, we transfer you to the airport for your flight home.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## 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, available on request)
- 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

# 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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).

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## 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. 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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## 8. 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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## 9. 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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## **10. 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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## **11. 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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## **12. Passports and Visas - Nepal**

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

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

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

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

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

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

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## **13. Health and Vaccinations**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 14. 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 (fleece, 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), petzl 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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## **15. 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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## **16. 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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## 17. 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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## 18. Travel Insurance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Covid-19

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

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## 19. 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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## 20. 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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## 21. Follow Us Online

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

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

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

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## 22. 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.



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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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