

Nepal

Planning a trip to Nepal? Then you should talk to us... We offer independent expert advice and the ability to deliver top quality itineraries with the best tour operators that are exceptional value for money. Arranging your travel through The Specialist Travel Consultancy also reduces the time you have to spend researching and planning your trip. And our service is completely free! Contact us to discuss your travel requirements on **0845 838 7667** or for more information on the service we offer please visit our website: www.thestc.co.uk

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Facts & Highlights

Full Country Name: Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

Area: Approx 147,000 sq km.

Population: Estimated 23.7 million (2001).

Capital City: Kathmandu.

Peoples: Seven major tribal groups, two caste groups, with Indians and some Tibetans also present.

Language(s): Over 30 languages including Nepali 57% (official), Tibetan languages (20%), Indian languages (20%) Newari 3%.

Religion(s): Officially 90% Hindu, 8% Buddhist and 2% Islamic.

Currency: Nepalese Rupee (NPR).

Government: Parliamentary democracy, with King as Head of State.

Electricity: Usually 230 volts AC, 50Hz. Plugs used are of the round two- and three-pin types.

Time: GMT + 5hr 45 mins



Kathmandu: Explore the shopping, narrow streets and unique temples of this legendary city.

Chitwan National Park: Explore the waterways and forest trails of Nepal's most popular national park in search of Rhino and Tiger.

Everest's High Passes: Follow the trail less travelled to Everest Base Camp and experience the size and majesty of the biggest mountains on earth.

Mustang: Get off the beaten track and experience the unique festivals of this remote and only recently "re-opened" Kingdom.

ABC: Visit Annapurna Base Camp on one of the greatest short treks in the Himalaya - the "Annapurna Sanctuary".

Whatever the reason for your visit to this enchanting country, you are sure to come away with endearing memories of warm welcomes, smiling children and a sense of wonder at the sheer majesty of the Himalaya. The mountain range dominates life in much of this Kingdom, however, the beauty of Nepal lies in its sheer diversity.

There is a huge range of environments, ecosystems, terrains, religions and cultures, and while a visit to Nepal would not be complete without experiencing the bustle of Kathmandu or the wildlife of its many National Parks, it is the mountains that draw groups here time and again.

There is no better way to get a feel for this country than to walk through the valleys and villages of the Himalaya. "Life" is all around you: children playing, men and women working the terraces with buffalo and ox, lively markets and families preparing dinner, all with the magnificent jagged peaks soaring high above.

Trekking in Nepal is not just about scaling high peaks, crossing snow covered passes and traversing remote valleys. There are many options offering easy and short (perhaps four or five day) treks at low altitude. In the Annapurna region, particularly, there are some excellent treks that remain below 3,000m and yet afford stunning views of the 8,000m Annapurna range and the beautiful Machapuchare or "Fishtail" mountain.

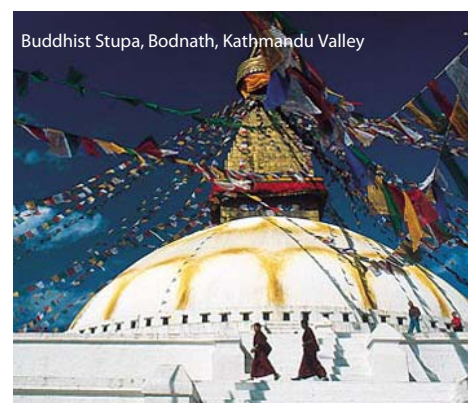
Aiming a little higher, classic treks such as Everest Base Camp and the Annapurna Circuit are certainly popular with the masses, but even with Everest Base Camp there are some great variations on the standard route that take you away from the crowds and over some of the most spectacular passes in the Himalaya. Remoter opportunities abound too, with access to previously restricted areas opening up with increasing frequency. A circumnavigation of Dhaulagiri, the spectacular Rolwaling Valley, or the remote and challenging region of Nar and Phu all offer genuinely remote trekking amongst fabulous scenery.

For the more upwardly inclined, there are some truly awe-inspiring trekking peaks that are challenging, rewarding, and technically within the reach of any fit and determined group with ice-axe and crampon experience. Mera Peak (6460m), Island Peak (6189m) and Chulu West (6250m) are three non-technical trekking peaks offering the opportunity to experience true mountaineering in the Himalaya. Our trekking and climbing operators in Nepal have been operating for over 20 years, some for more than 30 years. They are the most experienced in the business and offer a support and safety network that is second to none.

In addition to trekking, Nepal has excellent opportunities for white water rafting and mountain biking. Often it is feasible to include all three of these activities in an itinerary if required.

Central to any exploration of Nepal is Kathmandu. This fascinating city is home to a remarkable history and a rich cultural heritage. Holy men, artists, business men and tourists jostle for position amongst ancient palaces and temples in one of the world's greatest travel destinations. Any itinerary, whether trekking or more culturally focused, should allow at least some time in this absorbing city.

Whatever your travel requirements, be it general adventure, trekking or a longer expedition, contact us and we will work with you to establish a suitable programme.



Buddhist Stupa, Bodnath, Kathmandu Valley

Suggested Itineraries

Two weeks: Adventure Tour

Day 1 Depart London.

2 Arrive Kathmandu.

3 Sightseeing, visiting the temples of Pashupatinath and Bodnath; drive to Nagarkot.

4 Sunrise over the Himalaya. Walk to Changu Narayan; drive to ancient city of Bhaktapur and return to Kathmandu.

5 Scenic drive, with good mountain views, to Bandipur, a small traditional hill town with spectacular views of Manaslu and the Annapurnas; river rafting on Trisuli River.

6 Daywalk from Bandipur into surrounding hills with excellent Himalayan views and some interesting villages.

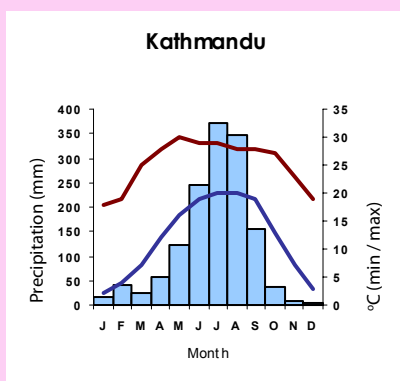
7 To lakeside at Pokhara.

8 Explore the countryside of Pokhara Valley on bikes, stopping at villages en route.

Geography & Climate

Stretching 800 km from east to west and from 90 to 230 km north to south, Nepal is dominated along its entire length by the mighty Himalaya. At its highest point, it reaches the dizzy heights of 8,848m (Mt. Everest), while elsewhere there are tropical jungles, rolling hillsides, wild rivers and fertile plains. With its many different habitats and ecosystems the flora and fauna of Nepal is exceptional, and an inescapable part of any visit.

Nepal's climate essentially follows our own in autumn, winter and spring. However, the summer months of May to September are dominated by the monsoon that heads north from India. During this time of heavy rainfall the rivers become swollen and the trails muddy and leech infested. An exception to this is the Kingdom of Mustang which lies north of the Annapurna region and is geographically part of the Tibetan plateau. Here, May and September are considered the best months to travel. Elsewhere, the best times of year to visit Nepal are October and November, or March and April. February is a good time on the lower trekking routes when the high trails remain impassable.



9 Trek through beautiful terraced fields and forests to Dhampus with magnificent views of Machapuchare 'fishtail' peak.

10 Morning walk through villages to Dhampus Phedi; to Pokhara for free afternoon.

11 To Chitwan National Park.

12 Elephant rides, river trips and jungle walks in and around the park in search of wildlife.

13 Return to Kathmandu.

14 Free morning; late afternoon depart.

15 Arrive London.

Mountaineering: Mera Peak, 6460m

DAY 1 Depart UK

2 Arrive Kathmandu

3 In Kathmandu

4 Fly to Lukla, trek to Poyan (2,800m)

5 To Pangkongma (2,846m)

6/15 To Mera La (5400m)

16 To high camp (5,700m)

17 Mera Peak Ascent (6,460m) & descend to base camp

18 Spare day

19/22 Return to Lukla via Tagnag and Thuli Kharka

23 Fly to Kathmandu

24 At leisure in Kathmandu

25 Trip concludes in Kathmandu

Project Work

The majority of project work on offer in Nepal is community based. There are many different options, but possibilities include the redecoration or building of village schools and community facilities, the construction of irrigation ditches, or perhaps embarking on a clean up trek along the many trails and valleys through the mountains. Different tour operators have access to different project possibilities, so call us with your requirements and we can assess all the options for you.

Responsible Tourism

The tour operators we use in Nepal who offer trekking and mountaineering have a clear policy on the rights of porters and their working conditions. The porters have access to adequate clothing, boots, shelter and food, medical care when ill or injured and insurance.

National Holidays

Nepal celebrates over 21 bank holidays every year. Some dates are fixed, others are

Hindu celebrations and as such are moveable in line with local astronomical observations. These national holidays and festivals are usually a colourful spectacle, and should not be missed if you are in the country.

Regulations & Red Tape

A full passport (valid for six months after your return date) is required for visits to Nepal. British citizens require a visa which can be obtained before departure or on arrival in Kathmandu. Current cost for British passport holders is £20 (valid for six months from date of issue and for 60 days on entry).

Price Guide

Prices vary enormously depending on the length and style of trip required, as well as the number of participants involved and date of departure. Two week itineraries start from around £1400 including flights. Extended treks and mountaineering expeditions can be in excess of £2,500 per person, dependent on itinerary and whether project work is also required.

Useful Addresses

Nepal Tourism Board

Bhrikuti Mandap, PO Box 11018,

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: (1) 425 6909.

Web: www.welcomenepal.com

Embassy in the UK

12A Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QU

Tel: 0207 229 1594.

Web: www.nepembassy.org.uk

Hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1700; 1000-1200 (consular section).

More Information

To discuss the travel and trekking possibilities Nepal offers in greater detail, and to get free, independent advice on potential tour operators, please contact:

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