

This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. 'B,L,D' refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

This trip is 15 days ex KATHMANDU. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival in and departure from KATHMANDU, and may not be the days you leave or return home.

DAY 1 Kathmandu

Arrive Kathmandu and transfer to our hotel.

DAY 2 Drive to Besisahar (790m), trek to Bhulbule

We leave Kathmandu this morning and drive westwards through the beautiful mountain landscapes of Central Nepal, towered by the peaks of the Ganesh Himal and the Manaslu range. We drive to the road head near Besisahar (760m) and after lunch we begin our trek up to the Gurung village of Khudi (790m), continue walking towards north along the Marsyangdi Valley to Bhulbule. (B)

DAY 3 Jagat 1250m

We cross the Marsyangdi River on a high suspension bridge and start climbing up to the village of Bahundanda. The trail passes through the village of Lampata and along we have spectacular views of Manaslu (8156m). We descend from Bauhundanda to the river and the trail then undulates to Syange, where we

cross the Marsyangdi River again on a suspension bridge. The trail now climbs again to the village of Jagat.(B)

DAY 4 Dharapani 1943m

The trail undulates through villages and forest as we continue following the Marsyangdi River upstream. We pass through small settlements and cross the river back and forth, as we make our way up the valley to our final destination at Dharapani. (B)

DAY 5 Chame 3700m

Continuing north our trail continues climbing mostly through forest and at Bagarchap we get a glimpse of the mountains ahead. It's a fairly easy day today and we stay at Chame, a large village and the administrative centre of the area (B)

DAY 6 Pisang 3200m

We leave the village and cross to the northern side of the river to continue walking through forest high above the river until we reach the apple orchards around Brathang, a former Khampa settlement at 2840m. Just past the village we cross the river and have a steep climb through fir and pine forest. Looking back we have a stunning views of a huge rock face called Paungdi Danda. Emerging from the forest we descend gently through Dudh Pokhari with its collection of lodges and bakeries to Pisang for the night. We are now almost above the tree line and the Annapurnas begin to tower above us. The landscape is now more akin to Tibet with fantastic rock formations and flat roofed stone houses. The energetic can walk to Upper Pisang this afternoon and visit the small monastery. (B)

DAY 7 Manang 3500m

There are two options today. For the energetic there is a longer walk via the villages of Ngawal and Gyaru to Braga or we can take the easier trail which climbs gradually out of the valley and descends past the airstrip at Hongdi to Braga. Braga is a wonderful Tibetan style village. Here we find a collection of interestingly stacked houses and the largest monastery in the region, which has a wonderful collection of statues and old weapons. A little further is Manang, our destination for the day. (B)

DAY 8 Manang

A rest day for acclimatization. We can hike up to a small temple above the village for great views of Gangapurna and the Great Barrier across the valley. The huge glacier of Gangapurna tumbles down into a large glacial lake. In the afternoon we can explore the village and maybe have coffee and cakes at one of the many bakeries. (B)



DAY 9 Trek to Yak Kharka 4000m

We take a gradual ascent to Tengi (3620m) and start a slow climb towards Gunsang (3930m), continuing further we have the great views of the peaks of Gangapurna (7454m) and Annapurna III (7555m). The trail ascends all morning to Yak Kharka. We should reach our lodge by lunchtime and in the afternoon the energetic can hike up in the surrounding hills. (B)

DAY 10

Trek to Phedi 4450m

We continue to climb along the Jarsang Khola, making our way to the settlement at Thorong Phedi (4450m) the start point for next day's trek over the Thorong La. (B)



DAY 11

Cross Thorong La (5416m) and trek to Muktinath 3700m

A very early start today as we have a long climb up to the Thorong La. It will take 4-6 hours to reach the top of the pass. The trail climbs steeply for the first hour to a higher tea house. The gradient eases a little as we gain height. Looking back we can see the sun rise over the Annapurna behind us. Slowly we wind our way to the top. There are a few false summits but finally the colourful prayer flags marking the top come into view. And what a view – ahead we look towards the Kali Gandaki and behind the vast peaks of the Great Barrier. There is a small tea shop at the top for a welcome cup of hot chocolate. From the pass we descend to Muktinath. The descent is long and steepish in parts but we have stunning views of Dhaulagiri (8167m) and Tukucho Peak (6920m) in the background as we descend. (B)

DAY 12

Jomosom 2700m

Today is the last day of the trek as we head towards Jomosom. It's an easy trail passing through the settlement of Jharkot (3550m) down to the Kali Gandaki Valley. The wind blown rock formations surrounding us are reminiscent of Tibet. The last part of our walk takes us along the rocky Kali Gandaki to the town of Jomosom. (B)

DAY 13

Flight via Pokhara to Kathmandu

We take a flight to Kathmandu via Pokhara. (B)

DAY 14

Free day in Kathmandu

A free day in Kathmandu for individual sightseeing. Recommended are the monkey temple at Swayambunth, the large Buddhist stupa at Bodnath and the Hindu temple at Pashupatinath. (B)

DAY 15

Depart Kathmandu or continue with your own arrangements. (B)

Nepal

Nepal is a small country, wedged between India and Tibet and dominated by the Eastern Himalayas. Many of today's trekking routes are ancient trade routes between India and Tibet. These and the porter skills of the mountain people are the main factors in allowing westerners access to the highest regions. Nepal's diverse geography has shaped an equally diverse kaleidoscope of cultures. The spiritual heritage influenced by Tibetan Buddhism in the higher regions, and Hinduism elsewhere gives substance to peoples' lives throughout Nepal, making them reverent, kind, hospitable and hard-working people.

Trek details

The Mini Annapurna Circuit is a shortened version of one of the classic treks of the world. Many people do not have the time to do the complete circuit so we are pleased to be able to offer this 'mini' version of the classic trek which still covers all the main areas of the longer trek. Starting in

Besisahar we follow the Marsyangdi River north through pretty Nepali villages with terraces of rice and wheat. As we climb higher the vegetation changes to forest and finally we leave the trees behind and come to the Tibetan like area of Braga and Manang. Here we are surrounded by the grand Annapurna range and the small Tibetan style villages of the Manang area. Turning west we cross the formidable Thorong La Pass. At 5416m, it is one of the highest passes in the area. From the top we get magnificent views back to the Annapurna and ahead to the Kali Gandaki Valley, the deepest gorge in the world. Descending to Jomosom the trip ends with a spectacular flight down the Kali Gandaki Valley, the deepest gorge in the world with Annapurna 1 rising to over 8000m on one side and Dhaulagiri on the other .

Lodge treks

In the popular areas where there are many lodges to choose from, we like to support the local people by sleeping in lodges rather than carrying in an independent camp. You will have more encounters with locals on a lodge trek, and will often be accommodated within the family home. Solar showers are available at some lodges for approx NRS300

The trip is on bed and breakfast basis. Breakfast on trek is a fixed set breakfast consisting of porridge or muesli, toast or other bread and an egg. Lunch and dinner on this trek are not included. Please allow £25- £30 per day for other meals and drinks on trek. You can choose food from the menus which serves traditional Nepalese Rice and Lentils to continental foods. Please note imported food and drinks are expensive in this region. Vegetarians will have a good choice, indeed it is normally best to avoid meat on the trail unless you are sure it has been freshly killed.

We try to discourage buying mineral water in plastic bottles on trek. You can often buy filtered water from special safe water stations, or treat the water.

Climate

During June, July, August and mid-September, the monsoon affects the Himalayas, so the usual trekking seasons are late March to May (pre monsoon) and October to November (post monsoon). It is likely to be warm (shirt sleeves) during the day, with night time temperatures dropping to -10 °C or lower at the highest lodges.

Transport

We fly between Jomosom and Pokhara and Pokhara and Kathmandu and travel by bus to the start of the trek.

Kathmandu

In Kathmandu, we stay in a centrally located hotel (B&B) which gives you the chance to choose between the wide arrays of restaurants. You can buy a meal in Kathmandu for £10- £15, excluding alcohol.

Fitness

On some days the walking is strenuous, due both to the altitude and to the terrain, but there is plenty of time to acclimatise, and the trip is suitable for anyone who is reasonably fit. Previous walking experience is an advantage, but is not necessary. Just as important are adaptability and an open mind.

Altitude

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m. Many people have some minor side effects from altitude, such as headache, nausea or general lassitude. The optional use of 'Diamox' has proved useful for some people, as this drug

can reduce these symptoms. You will be given more information on 'Diamox' with your Final Information, between 8 and 10 weeks before departure.

Trekking life

A trekking day usually starts early, around 7 am in December. After breakfast we set off. We stop for lunch at about mid day for about an hour. Most days we will reach our destination by mid afternoon, leaving time to wash/relax before dinner at around 7pm. Bedtime beckons early and by about 8-9pm you will be ready to fall into your sleeping bag.

Language

The national language is Nepali, which has similarities to Hindi. Some locals will speak enough English for simple conversations, but many will not. A few words of Nepali will help to increase mutual understanding.

Health

If you take care while in Nepal there should be no reason why you do not stay healthy. Frequent hand washing and care with drinking water is the key.

Luggage

Luggage will be carried by porters. All you have to carry is what you need for the day: waterproofs, fleece, hat, camera, water bottle etc. A trek bag is ideal for your main luggage, and a small lockable bag will be useful for leaving travel clothes etc in Kathmandu.

Currency and Tipping

Local currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee (*exchange rates appx. 1GBP = NR 150*). It is custom and practice to tip in Nepal. You should perhaps allow the equivalent of around NR. 4500-5000 per person for the whole trip; so which would normally cover hotel bell boys plus trekking crew including porters. Try to avoid giving sweets, biscuits, pens or cash to children or anyone who has not rendered a service.

Equipment and clothing

Full details of the equipment and clothing required will be sent when you book. You will need good mountain equipment, a sleeping bag and light clothing for warm day temperatures. Down jackets and sleeping bags can be hired in Kathmandu.

International Porter Protection Group

High Places has been endorsed by I.P.P.G. High Places has been endorsed by I.P.P.G. This means that we treat our porters fairly, and provide appropriate clothing and medical attention for them. Max load for trek bag is 15kg.