

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Discover Nepal (DN 2017)



TRIPDURATION
15
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: DN

Trip Highlights - Discover Nepal

- ✓ Kathmandu - Explore the riverside Temple of Pashupatinath and Bodnath Stupa
- ✓ Kathmandu Valley - Step back in time in the well preserved medieval city of Bhaktapur, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ✓ Nargakot - Stunning ridge top mountain views of the Himalaya
- ✓ Gorkha - Visit the hilltop home of the Gurkhas
- ✓ Pokhara - Walk up to the Peace Pagoda for views across Phewa lake to the Annapurna Range
- ✓ Chitwan - Jungle walk and jeep safari in search of the One-Horned Rhino

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 4 nights Premium Hotel
8 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Standard Lodge

Included Meals: 14 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 7 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Kathmandu
End Point: Trip ends: Kathmandu

Transport: 4WD, Bus

Countries: Nepal



Discover Nepal

Enjoy an enticing introduction to Nepal, starting with a tour of the gilded Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas of the Kathmandu valley. From Pokhara we'll walk to the Peace Pagoda for panoramic views of the Annapurna range before travelling to the Newari town of Bandipur. We then explore Chitwan National Park, searching for rhino, sloth bears and leopards.

Why Book this trip

Ideal for anyone wanting to see the best of Nepal, this tour mixes culture and busy cities with gentle walking and the chance to try out white water rafting. Days are packed with new experiences but also with plenty of time to get to know the incredibly friendly locals and relax and enjoy views of the Himalaya.



Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.



Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Kathmandu

Arrive Kathmandu, check into hotel.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 In Kathmandu

This morning we have arranged a walking tour visiting the bazaar and the Durbar Square area, the centre of old Kathmandu. Much of the day to day life of Kathmandu takes place in the bazaar: a fascinating mixture of people selling fruit, vegetables and spices; potters spinning their wheels to produce small household bowls and containers for temple offerings; devotees visiting their favourite gods at temples and small shrines dotted along the sides of alleyways; rickshaw wallahs honking their horns and the ever present sacred cow wandering amongst it all. In the afternoon we plan to visit the Temple of Pashupatinath on the banks of the Bagmati River, the holiest Hindu shrine in Nepal and also Bodnath, the largest stupa in the country and a destination for Buddhist pilgrims from all over Nepal.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Drive to Nagarkot

In the morning we visit the almost perfectly preserved city of Bhaktapur, also known as Bhadgaun or City of the Devotees. Bhaktapur feels more like a huge medieval village with its potters wheels and its many intricate stone and wooden carvings. We then continue to our lodge at Nagarkot on the Kathmandu Valley rim. Sunset views from Nagarkot back across the valley to Kathmandu are very impressive.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4 In Nagarkot

Thirty five kilometres east of Kathmandu and at an altitude of 2,174 m, Nagarkot stands on a ridge between the Kathmandu valley in the west and the Indrawati valley in the east. We make a pre-dawn walk from our lodge to a nearby hilltop along the ridge to catch a spectacular sunrise over the Himalayas, and then return to the lodge for a late breakfast. There are many other possibilities for short walks during the rest of the day, including visits to neighbouring farms growing crops of fruit, vegetables and grain, under the spectacular backdrop of the snow capped Himalayan peaks.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Drive to Kurintar on the banks of the Trisuli River

We make a morning departure to drive out of the high Kathmandu valley and descend to the foothills where we overnight at the much lower altitude of about 262m. As we leave the valley, on clear days we will have views of the Ganesh, Manaslu and Annapurna ranges of the Himalaya. En route we have the option of a half-day's whitewater rafting on the Trisuli River (Grade III-III+). No previous experience required. Includes all permits, services of experienced river guides, helmet, life jacket and lunch. We recommend that you are confident swimming for at least 25 metres unaided if participating in the rafting. As the rafting finishes at the beach just below our accommodation, those who do not wish to raft may relax by the hotel pool. Please note that there are some road improvement works taking place in Nepal, but they being carried out at night so there will be little or no change to the journey times. On the odd occasion that works continue in to the day time there may be slightly longer journey times, but this is rare and unlikely to have an adverse effect on the itinerary.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6 Visit Gorkha. Walk to local villages.

Next day we make our way to the small hill bazaar of Gorkha (1 1/2 hour's drive) where the surfaced road ends. The town which gave the feared Gurkha soldiers their name was also the place from which King Prithvi Narayan Shah set out to unify Nepal in the 18th century. A walk up to the ridge on which stands his old palace fort is well worth the climb. The view over the surrounding Annapurna and Manaslu ranges is spectacular.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 Drive to Pokhara

In the morning there is an option to visit the nearby Manakamana Temple (1302m), the sacred place of the Hindu Goddess Bhagwati, using Nepal's only cable car imported from Austria and inaugurated in 1998. Local people call the goddess the wish fulfilling deity and the temple is a popular pilgrimage site. Afterwards, we continue our journey on to Pokhara situated beside Lake Phewa Tal beneath the Annapurna range.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 In Pokhara

On our first morning in Pokhara, we take a walk through some small Gurung and Chettri settlements, to a ridge above Pokhara. From this ridge there are spectacular views of the mountains making up the Annapurna range which at this point are only 48km away - from Dhaulagiri in the west to Annapurna II in the east. The rest of the day is left free to explore the tranquil town of Pokhara, perhaps taking a boat trip on the lake, or simply sitting back and admiring the breathtaking beauty all around.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 In Pokhara

Today we'll visit the Mountain Museum housing expedition memorabilia and information on ethnic groups, flora and fauna. We'll also visit Tashiling, a long established settlement of Tibetan refugees. We spend some time here watching wool being sorted, dyed and eventually made into Tibetan carpets which are exported all over the world and then visit the village's Buddhist monastery.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Drive to Bandipur

Leaving Pokhara we take a short drive to the hilltop town of Bandipur. After a short walking tour of the town and the bazaar there is free time to explore this traditional Nepali town. Bandipur is a small, quiet town that doesn't attract as many tourists as nearby Pokhara. There are several small temples to visit and stunning views back across the Himalaya.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 11 In Chitwan National Park

Today we drive from Bandipur to Chitwan National Park. Once a private hunting ground, Chitwan is now a National Park, with thick tree cover and tall elephant grass sheltering a wealth of animals, most famously the one-horned Rhino. Our lodge is located just across the Rapti River, outside the park, near the village of Baghmara. Throughout your stay you will be kept busy during the day

(except for a couple of hours around lunch time) with many activities available, including jeep safaris searching out the one-horned rhino, bird watching, jungle walks and drives and dugout canoe trips along the Rapti River. Canoeing will be dependent on the water level, floating silently down the river in a traditional dugout canoe gives us the opportunity to spot many varieties of water birds. On a nature walk in the company of trained native naturalists you can walk along trails in the less densely forested parts of the park. An early morning bird watching walk near the river will reveal many of the 450 bird species that can be found in the park, especially kingfisher. A trained naturalist will help you get the best enjoyment and interest from these excursions.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 12 In Chitwan National Park

Today we continue our exploration of Chitwan National Park on foot, by canoe and with an afternoon jeep safari.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 13 Drive to Kathmandu

After a final walk through the park we depart for Kathmandu (approximately 5-6 hours).

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 In Kathmandu

Today is left free to explore Kathmandu. There is the option to visit Swayambunath. Perched on a hilltop, the stupa is known as the monkey temple because of its resident group of very inquisitive monkeys.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Tour ends Kathmandu

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 14 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 7 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Nepal

Lunch £: 7.00

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Dinner £: 10.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Nepal

Bottle of Beer £: 3.00

Water £: 0.30

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Rafting on the Trisuli - a half day white water rafting trip. No previous experience required. Includes all permits, services of experienced river guides, helmet, life jacket and lunch. Minimum number of participants is 4. US\$ 60.

Swoyambunath - Approx US\$ 20 (minimum 4 people)

Patan - a half day sightseeing trip to Patan, one of the three royal cities in the Kathmandu Valley. The city is known for handicrafts and carvings and is home to more than 1000 monuments. US\$ 30 (minimum 4 people)

Cable car to Manakaman Temple - US\$ 20 (minimum 4 people)

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow £25 for tipping.

In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Foreign Exchange

Nepal

ATM Availability: Although you may occasionally find cash machines these are very unreliable - do not rely on plastic!

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are not generally accepted except in larger establishments in Kathmandu.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques are not accepted as a valid mode of payment in Nepal.

Local Currency: Nepali Rupee.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US\$ or GBP.

Where to Exchange: In major cities and towns

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

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Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Nepal: An entry visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens and can be obtained on arrival at Kathmandu Airport and various international border crossings between Nepal and its neighbouring countries. This currently costs 25USD for a 15 day visa, and 40USD for a 30 day visa. All visas are issued as multiple entry visas and are valid from the date they are issued.

A passport-sized photograph for immigration is required. Payment must be made in cash, UK sterling and US dollars are both accepted.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

Vaccinations & Protection

Nepal

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus, polio and Japanese encephalitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to take immunisation against meningococcal meningitis.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Nepal

Temperatures in the lower altitude regions are extremely pleasant. At Pokhara variations in temperature are very limited: from the coldest recorded of 8°C (46°F) to the highest of 31°C (88°F). The mountains are best admired, with greater air clarity, from October to January, while from February to May the skies may be hazy. Monsoon rains are strongest in June, July and August. The coldest months are December and January.

Clothing

You can expect to wear short sleeved shirts and t-shirts during the day in the Spring and Autumn months but it does get cool in the evening, so bring some warmer clothing as well. In December and January evenings can be very cold and you will need a down jacket and thermal layers. It's worth bringing a good quality waterproof. No bright coloured clothing for Chitwan. Do not wear lycra tights or leggings or very short shorts as the Nepalese find these offensive. Nagarkot can be cold most times of the year.

Equipment

A torch. Binoculars for animal & birdwatching in Chitwan National Park, a universal bath plug and antibacterial handwash, are useful to have along. You may also want to bring with you ear plugs and insect repellent.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes (eg. trainers) and sandals, plus lightweight boots if you wish to take part in any walks.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac. You will find it more convenient to travel light when outside Kathmandu. Any extra luggage can be stored in Kathmandu hotel.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Nepal

Population: 29,331,000

Size of Country: 147,181 sq km

Major Language: Nepali

Religion: Hinduism

Time Difference to GMT: +5:45

Electric Supply & Plugs

Nepal

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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