EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Annapurna Circuit (AN 2015)

WALK & TREK

TOURDURAT
21
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Comfort: Simple
Tour Type: Small Groups
Trek Grade: Challenging
tour Code: AN

Tour Highlights - Annapurna Circuit

- ✓ Annapurna Circuit - Complete a 17 day trek around one of the world's classic trekking routes
- ✓ Thorong La - Cross this challenging high pass, 5416m, offering stunning views across the Himalaya
- ✓ Poon Hill - Climb to the top of Poon Hill and enjoy sunrise views across to the Annapurnas and Dhaulagiri
- ✓ Pokhara - Take a well earned rest by the lakeside and enjoy a cake at one of the towns many bakeries
- ✓ Kathmandu - Explore the temples and winding streets of the capital and browse for souvenirs

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	4 nights Standard Hotel 16 nights Simple Teahouse
Included Meals:	20 breakfasts, 16 lunches, 16 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Kathmandu
End Point:	Tour ends: Kathmandu
Maximum Altitude on Trek (m):	5416
Transport:	Bus
Countries:	Nepal
Minimum Age:	From 16 years

Annapurna Circuit

One of Nepal's classic treks, this route takes us on a full circuit of the Annapurna range. We trek through rhododendron forests, mountain foothills, barren rocky landscapes and across snow covered passes. After the challenging ascent of the Thorong La Pass (5416m) we are rewarded with dramatic views of the Annapurna range and northwards into Tibet.

Why Book this tour

10 Reasons to trek Nepal with Explore

- Local knowledge: Over 30 years of experience in organising treks in Nepal and long established network of local partners throughout the country
- Our trek leaders in Nepal are consistently voted among the best Explore leaders anywhere in the world
- Our trekking ascent rates are carefully planned to be safe and fall within Wilderness Medicine Society (WMS) guidelines
- All our trek leaders are qualified in first aid and specially trained to recognise and deal with Altitude Sickness
- We carry a Portable Altitude Chamber (PAC) on treks above 3000 metres
- On treks into extremely remote areas we carry a satellite phone for emergency use
- We support our trek crew by following the guidelines of the International Porter Protection Group (www.ippg.net)
- All our trekking staff, from trek leaders to guides, porters and cooks, are Nepali - revenues from our treks benefit the local people
- All meals are included on camping and teahouse based treks making them excellent value for money
- FREE Explore kitbag. If you trek with us in Nepal you will receive a free Explore kitbag when you arrive in Kathmandu

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.

Tour Comfort: Simple

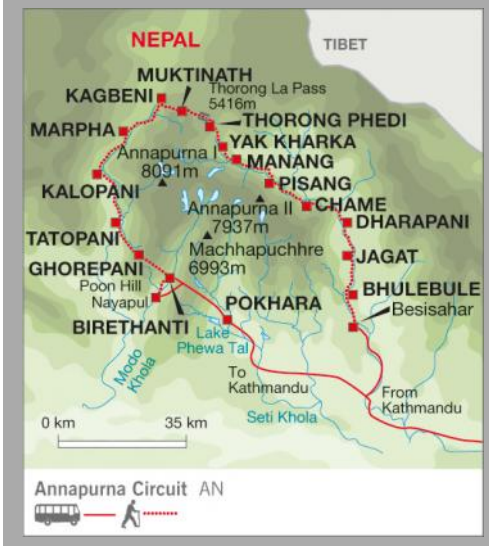
These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, typically with en suite facilities.

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.

Trek Grade: Challenging

You need to have a good level of fitness and previous trekking experience is recommended. Trekking days are generally longer, challenging and at higher altitudes. Terrain may be difficult and ascents and descents are often demanding.



Your tour 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

Our tour begins today in Kathmandu. After meeting up with your tour leader, the rest of the day is left free to relax or perhaps take a first wander in the bustling streets of the Nepali capital.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 In Kathmandu

After breakfast we will have a full briefing on the trekking days ahead, followed by a chance to visit a local hire shop to pick up any last minute equipment still needed. Following this, we then have a walking tour of the city, visiting the bazaars and the temples of old Kathmandu in the company of a local Nepalese guide. Nepal's bustling capital is a captivating mix of spice sellers and potters, rickshaws and sacred cows, all crowded together amidst a city of vibrant noise and colour. Our sightseeing this morning takes in the sumptuous majesty of Durbar Square and its collection of ornate palaces, courtyards and temples, as well as the Asan Bazaar and the Kumari Ghar, home to the living goddess of the Kumari Devi. This afternoon we then plan to visit Swayambunath Temple, affectionately known as the monkey temple. The temple complex is perched on top of a hill to the west of central Kathmandu, offering views across the entire valley. At the centre is a large stupa with a glittering golden spire decorated with the eyes of Buddha looking out in all four directions. There are also several small temples at the site which we can visit before making our way back to our hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Drive to Besi Sahar and trek to Bhulbule (840m)

Departing the city this morning we drive west, towards the beautiful mountain landscapes of Central Nepal, home to the towering peaks of the Annapurnas, Dhaulagiri and the iconic Machhapuchhre (the famous 'Fish Tail' mountain). Stopping for lunch along the way, on arrival in the foothills around Besi Sahar (760m) we begin our trek up to the Gurung village of Khudi (790m). Following the gorge we pass a sprinkling of small hamlets and tropical forest, before making our way across the Khudi Khola to follow the trail north along the Marsyangdi Valley to Bhulbule (840m). Approximately 3 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 Trek from Bhulbule to Jagat (1300m)

This morning we cross the Ngadi River by way of a high suspension bridge and continue along its east bank up to the settlement of Bahundanda. The route takes us through the villages of Ngadi and Lampata and to the north-east we are treated to some stunning views of Manaslu (8156m). From Bahundanda we then descend to a stream, before climbing to the village of Lili Bir, from where we continue to follow the trail high above the river. The track then descends to another bridge, at Syange (1190m), where we cross over to the western side of the Marsyangdi and hike up a steep trail to the ancient village of Jagat (1300m). Approximately 7 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Trek from Jagat to Dharapani (1860m)

From Jagat the trail descends along a meandering track that follows the Marsyangdi, mirroring the river's course before winding up through forest to the small village of Chamje (1430m). Crossing the river to the east bank again, we then continue up to the large settlement of Tal (1675m), where we find a number of lodges and shops sharing the landscapes with some breathtaking views of the surrounding valleys. This presents us with an ideal spot to stop for lunch, before we resume our journey onto the village of Karte. The afternoon sees us crossing the river back and forth, snaking our way up the valley and passing through a collection of small villages en route to our final destination at Dharapani. Approximately 7 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 Trek from Dharapani to Chame (2670m)

A rocky trail takes us west, following the Marsyangdi up the Manang Valley, where we enjoy some stunning views out towards Annapurna II (7937m) and Annapurna IV. These remote highlands are home to the Manangi people, itinerant traders who have traded salt and yaks across these mountains for centuries. Following in the footsteps of these mountain merchants of old, we head up through forests of oak and maple to Dhanakyu (2290m) and then on to the village of Latemarang (2360m). Our route then winds it way across several forested ridges to Kotho (2590m), from where we have a short easy walk down to Chame (2670m), the region's administrative headquarters, where the distant views of Lamjung, Annapurna II and Annapurna IV provide a stunning backdrop to our day's end. Approximately 7 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 Trek from Chame to Pisang (3190m)

Departing Chame, we cross over to the northern side of the river and follow a relatively easy trail up through apple orchards to the village of Bhratang (2840m), an old Khampa settlement that is largely abandoned these days. From here we then start along a trail that provides us with some of the most dramatic scenery of the journey so far. Blasted through the surrounding rock, the trail leads through a steep, narrow valley, blanketed in dense forest. As we exit the forest and cross the river over a bridge suspended some 3040m above sea level, we are treated to our first view of the spectacular Paungda Danda, a 1500 metre wall of rock that rises up from the river below. After crossing a ridge that lies festooned with prayer flags and stone cairns, we then reach the large village of Pisang. The village is split into lower and upper Pisang and from the gompa at the top of the town there are some lovely views out across the meandering streets and rambling houses of the lower town. Approximately 6 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Trek from Pisang to Manang (3540m)

Continuing along the south side of the river today we make a long climb up and over a ridge that takes us past 3400 metres. From here we enjoy some truly spectacular views of the surrounding peaks, before we descend into the valley and on to Hongde (3325m), a village that has the distinction of an airstrip, a police post and a truly impressive mani wall. Continuing on to Mungli, we then cross back to the north bank of the river and continue to the Tibetan-style village of Bryaga (3475m), where we find an engaging collection of interestingly stacked houses and the largest gompa in the district. The houses lie one on top of the other, the terraces of the upper houses forming the roofs of the ones below, whilst the monastery contains a wonderful collection of Tibetan Thankas that date back some 500 years. From here it is just a short walk on to the large community at Manang, our final destination for the day, where we find a settlement of some 500 houses, a chorten and a long mani wall etched with the Buddhist chant of 'Om Mani Padme Hum'. Approximately 4 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 Acclimatisation Day

Today has been left free to get a little more used to the conditions at these higher altitudes before we make the crossing of the Thorong La. You can spend the day exploring the area around the village, taking some shorter hikes into the mountains to enjoy the views of the Chulu ranges and Thorong La in the distance. It is important to get some rest today too though, so remember to conserve some energy for the days still to come.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 Trek from Manang to Yak Kharka (4018m)

Taking it steady today we trek to Tengi (3620m) and begin a slow climb towards Gunsang (3930m), enjoying the alpine landscapes and abundance of scrub juniper and alpine grasses that grow on these high slopes. The ever expansive views present us with a magnificent panorama that takes in the peaks of Gangapurna (7454m) and Annapurna III (7555m), as we make our way on to our overnight stop in Yak Kharka. Approximately 7 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 11 Trek from Yak Kharka to Thorong Phedi (4450m)

Our first port of call today is the small settlement of Letdar (4250m), which we reach after an hour's steady climb out of Yak Kharka. From here we continue to climb along the eastern bank of the Jarsang Khola, making our way up to Thorong Phedi (4450m). Translating as 'foot of the hill', this is the starting point for tomorrow's long trek up to Thorong La Pass. Approximately 7 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 12 Cross Thorong La (5416m) and trek to Muktinath (3800m)

We make an early start this morning and begin the long climb to the Thorong La, an ascent that should take us some 4 hours (depending upon the fitness of the group and weather conditions). The trail up to the pass follows a route that has been used by local herders for centuries, crossing through moraine and snow and snaking its way steeply up over the rocky ridges. As we approach the pass we are greeted by the sight of a traditional chorten and fluttering prayer flags and as we crest the summit the views before us are simply staggering. A panorama of Himalayan giants lies before us, with the immense Kali Gandaki Valley lying off to the west and the towering peak of Yakgawa Kang (6481m) to the north. After stopping to rest and enjoy the stunning vistas, we then begin the long trek down to Muktinath, a 1600 metre descent that affords us some glorious views of Dhaulagiri (8167m) and Tukuche Peak (6920m). The moraine trail eventually gives way to grassy slopes, with the final part of our journey taking us along the upper reaches of the Jhong Valley to Muktinath and Ranipauwa, where we end our crossing of the Thorong La. Approximately 8-10 hours walking (depending on weather).

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 13 Trek from Muktinath to Kagbeni (2800m)

This morning we visit two small temples, one an important pilgrimage site for Hindus, the other for Buddhists. After visiting the temples we begin our trek to Kagbeni, via the village of Jong, which avoids the newly constructed road. We spend the night in Kagbeni, the gateway to the region of Mustang. Approximately 4 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 14 Trek from Kagbeni to Marpha (2670m)

After leaving Kagbeni, we follow the Ekle Bhatti- Jomsom trails on the opposite side of the river to reach Jomsom. Throughout the day we are met with views of Nilgiri and Dhaulagiri. We walk further through Thini Village to reach Dumba Lake and Monastery after which we walk down from the ridge and cross stream to reach Marpha. Marpha is a typical Thakali village and it is famous for its apples and brandy. Approximately 7 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 15 Trek from Marpha to Kalopani (2530m)

We cross the river and walk to Chokhepani through Tibetan Refugee camp at Chairo, before continuing on to Tukuche. From Tukuche the trail is undulating and we pass through the small villages of Sauru, Kobang and Larjung along the way. After lunch we cross the river and continue our walk down to Kalopani. Approximately 7 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 16 Trek from Kalopani to Tatopani (1190m)

We come close to one of the main access roads today and so head off the standard trail and follow the river until we reach Ghasa. We descend for most of the day and make a final cross of the river just before we reach Tatopani. The name Tatopani means hot water and this village is lucky enough to have two hot springs. We can take time to give our legs a well earned dip in the springs before the final stages of our trek. Approximately 7 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 17 Trek from Tatopani to Ghorepani (2860m)

Today we climb steadily through thick forest until we reach Shikha. From this vantage point we have stunning views down through the Kali Gandaki Valley and across to the Dhaulagiri range. Continuing through rhododendron forest we make our way to Ghorepani. Approximately 8 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 18 Ascend Poon Hill; trek to Birethanti (1025m)

An early rise this as we leave our teahouse and make the ascent of Poon Hill for sunrise. From the top we have panoramic views of the Annapurna Range and if the weather permits we can watch the sun rise over the peaks of Annapurna 1, Annapurna South Machhapuchhare and Dhaulagiri amongst others. We return to Ghorepani for a well earned breakfast before descending to Birethanti. Approximately 7 hours walking.

Overnight: **Simple Teahouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 19 Trek to Nayapul; drive Pokhara

We have a short walk this morning to the small village of Nayapul where we say goodbye to our trekking crew and drive to Pokhara. Pokhara is Nepal's second largest town and is far more relaxed than Kathmandu. Its beautiful lakeside setting beneath the imposing shadow of the stunning Annapurna Range, make it the perfect ending point for our trek. There should be time to enjoy some of the town's many attractions today, with options to visit the thriving Tibetan village of Tashiling, or perhaps take a boat trip out onto the lake to visit the small temple of Barahi Mandir.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 20 Drive to Kathmandu

Leaving Pokhara this morning we drive back to the capital. The drive will take us along the scenic Prithvi Highway. The drive will take approximately six hours.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 21 Tour ends Kathmandu

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

Although accommodation choices in Nepal are expanding and overall standards improving, please note that whatever the level, from basic guesthouse to high end city centre hotel, you should always be prepared for standards to be different than in the West. For example, even in the best hotels, plumbing and electricity supplies can be somewhat erratic and although the welcome is always warm, service levels may be less efficient than you may be used to.

Our accommodation whilst on trek is in simple locally run lodges, known as teahouses and it's a great pleasure to support these small local businesses. Rooms are simply furnished with just a bed and occasionally a small table. You will need to bring a sleeping bag. Washing and toilet facilities are shared and may be in a separate part of the teahouse or outside. You can enjoy the company of your fellow travellers and share a tale with other trekkers in the evening in the dining area.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 20 breakfasts, 16 lunches,16 dinners included in the price of this tour. 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 Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour 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

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

Bhaktapur - Fantastically preserved Newari capital and UNESCO listed World Heritage Site - US$ 35 (minimum 4 people) US$ 35 (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 £45 for tipping of trek staff, drivers, guides etc.

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 Tour

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.

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.

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

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 joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited. who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

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.

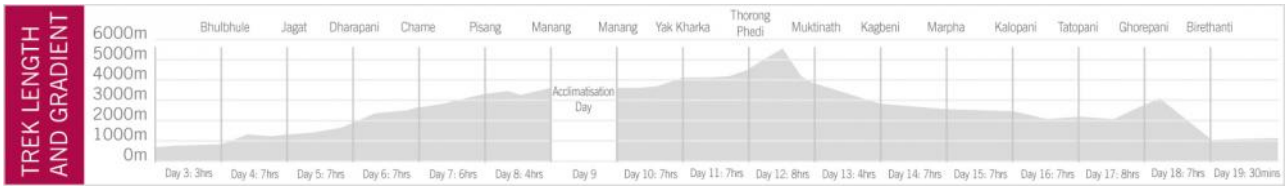
All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure

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 Tour



Maximum Altitude on Trek (m)

5416

Trekking Details

This is a 17-day trek with an average of 7 hours walking a day. On day 12 we hike for about 10 hours to reach a maximum altitude of 5416m. We have graded this route as challenging.

Altitude Description

This trip goes to an altitude where there is a risk of being affected by Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), a common and usually harmless condition caused by reduced air pressure and a lower concentration of oxygen. Whilst the itinerary has been specifically designed to allow your body to acclimatise gradually, the speed of onset and severity - as well as the height at which AMS develops can vary greatly between individuals; being physically fit affords no special protection. If symptoms occur while on tour you must let your tour leader know immediately. For further advice when travelling at altitude we recommend visiting the medical advice website of Medex and download their information booklet: http://medex.org.uk/medex_book/english_version.php

Travellers with heart or lung conditions, anaemia, asthma, high blood pressure, or taking the contraceptive pill must seek the advice of their GP and specifically mention the maximum altitude the trip reaches (please refer to Tour Essentials box on front page of your Tour Notes). Please take these to your medical appointment so that your doctor has the full details of your trip.

You must have adequate travel insurance for your trip. Please ensure that your insurance policy covers you to the maximum altitude indicated above. If you have Explore insurance you will be covered to this altitude.

This trip includes night stops where we sleep at altitudes in excess of 4000m. For this reason it is suitable only for participants aged 16 and over

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 March. Monsoon rains are strongest in June, July and August. The coldest months are December and January.

Clothing

Long Trousers - For everyday walking, light cotton trousers are the most suitable. Knee length shorts are acceptable in the more remote areas, but to avoid giving offence in the villages, you should cover up with trousers. Although comfortable, leggings are also unsuitable as they too cause offence to local people.Jeans are not recommended as they are often difficult to walk in over longer distances and become cumbersome when wet.

Down Jacket - After sunset, temperatures can fall below freezing. A down jacket is the lightest and most convenient way of keeping warm when the temperature drops. Down jackets can be inexpensively hired or bought in Nepal. Details will be given at the briefing in Kathmandu.

Waterproofs - Breathable waterproofs not only protect against rain and wind but also stop you from overheating. They ‘breathe' and avoid condensation which you will experience from nylon waterproofs. Rain during the trekking season is fairly rare but can be heavy if it does happen.

Gloves - Especially useful in the morning and in the evening at higher altitudes. Thermal types are most suitable.

Socks - It is best to wear a pair of reasonably thick loop stitch socks. This helps to protect your feet against blisters. Avoid nylon socks, they are abrasive, don’t breathe well and can cause blisters.

Thick fleece pullover/jacket - A thick fleece pullover or jacket is necessary as nights can be very cold at altitude. Make sure that your waterproof jacket is loose enough to wear over your pullover or jacket.

Track Suit - Comfortable and much more practical (and warmer) to sleep in than pyjamas. Alternatively, thermal underwear is good.

Thin Shirt/T-Shirt

Thick Shirt or Thermal Vest

Warm Hat

Equipment

Sleeping Bag - As you do not carry it yourself this may be down or synthetic, but it should be 4-season (temperature -10°C to -5°C). As most treks pass through a variety of climatic conditions, a long side zip is a good idea. A cotton liner helps to keep your bag clean. Good sleeping bags are expensive but can be rented or bought quite easily and cheaply in Kathmandu, so if you don't own one you could consider this option. Details can be dealt with at the briefing in Kathmandu.

Water Bottle - Water along the trail must never be considered as drinkable. Each day you must sterilise water with Chlorine Dioxide with which to fill your own bottle. 1 litre is the minimum size suitable. If you dislike the taste of sterilised water, it is a good idea to add some powdered fruit juice. You MUST bring Chlorine Dioxide with you on this trek. For environmental reasons, we do not encourage the purchase of bottled mineral water nor the boiling of water due to fuel and power shortages.

Plastic Bags - If you pack bits and pieces in plastic bags inside your bag they will stay dry in case of rain and be easier for you to sort through in camp. Remember, the less you have to unpack in the evening, the less you have to repack each morning! A bin liner to pack inside your daysac is also a good idea.

Torch/Batteries/Bulb - A small torch is essential for finding things in your room, going to the loo in the night, etc. Petzl head torches are particularly useful. Remember that in most developing countries only a limited selection of batteries is available so bring spare batteries and bulb. The most common are pen cells (or AA size) and SP/HP2 (D size).

Toiletries - Try to keep heavy cosmetics etc to a minimum. Essentials are toothbrush/paste, bio-degradable soap, small towel, small nail brush and toilet rolls! 'Wet Wipes' are great for a quick clean up, so bring a pack of those (non-perfumed to avoid rashes!).

Sunglasses/Snow Goggles - A good pair of sunglasses are essential for protection against UV rays and glare at high altitudes.

Sun Hat, High Factor Sun Cream/Block & Lip Salve Choose a high factor suncream (Factor 15 or more) to protect your skin against the sun at high altitudes. A combination sunblock/ lipsalve is ideal for facial protection.

Personal First Aid Kit Each trek carries an extensive first aid kit but no prescription medicines. You should have your own supply of plasters, aspirin, diarrhoea tablets and also a comprehensive blister kit plus any other medications you or your doctor feel advisable. (Please do not give medicines to local people without consulting the trek leader.) See the list in our General Information Booklet.

Trekking poles Trekking poles with rubber points are recommended.

Gaiters

Whistle To attract attention in an emergency.

Boot Cleaning Kit

Spare Laces

Swimsuit

Anti bacterial handwash

Footwear

We strongly recommend walking in a good, comfortable, broken in pair of boots. Trainers and tennis shoes do not give the ankle support afforded by a decent pair of walking boots. Ideally, visit a specialist outdoor pursuits shop who will offer advice. It is a good idea to carry your boots in your hand luggage on international flights or wear them.

Trainers and/or sandals are useful for post trek relaxation, whilst travelling and in towns.

Luggage: On Tour

Your luggage should consist of three main pieces:

Main Baggage: The item of luggage used to carry all your belongings in the hold of the plane and used to store all of the items you don't need on trek. This can be left behind at the group hotel used prior to the trek.

Trek Kitbag: Customer on all of our treks in Nepal receive a free Explore kitbag on the tour prior to the start of the trek. Approximately 80 litres in size it's ideal for all items you need to take on trek and the luggage preferred by our porters. The weight limit for this is 10kg but you will probably find that you do not need this much.

Daysac/Rucksack: 30-35 litres recommended. During the course of a trekking day, you do not have access to the luggage which is being carried for you by the porters. In any mountain region the weather can change rapidly and you must be equipped for this eventuality. Your daysac should therefore be large enough to carry waterproofs, fleece jacket/sweater, long trousers (if walking in shorts), warm hat and gloves, sun hat, sun cream, water bottle (minimum 1 litre) and your camera. Most people normally find that this adds up to about 2 to 3kg. Other optional items in a daysac might be a diary or a book to read at lunch time. On a few occasions

it is also necessary to carry your own packed lunch. We advise you to take a waterproof rucksack cover or alternatively line the sack with a large plastic bag to keep the contents dry.

Advice on how and what to pack for the trek will be given at the tour briefing but it may be useful to do a trial pack before you leave home.

Luggage allowance on tour: 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 & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one 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, elephant, 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.

Our commitment to the environment

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 and traditional, 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), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

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

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk

- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

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

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 LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â 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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour 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: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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