

Nepal & Bhutan

10 days | Kathmandu to Kathmandu



Combine two beautiful Himalayan Kingdoms in one magical tour. Enter the serene and spiritual lands of Nepal and Bhutan, and experience the countries' rich histories and unique cultural heritages. From the brightly coloured fluttering prayer flags of Nepal to the elaborate traditional dress of the Bhutanese, these captivating lands cannot fail to enchant.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Kathmandu and the Kathmandu Valley - Patan Durbar Square, Swayambhunath Pagoda, Bodhnath Buddhist stupa and various other temples and shrines
- Bhaktapur Durbar Square
- Paro - Paro Rinpung Dzong, Kyichu Lhakhang, The National Museum at Ta Dzong, local farmhouse and Paro market
- Thimphu - Market, Chorten's memorial, Hand Made Paper Unit, Handicrafts Emporium
- Punakha - Punakha Dzong
- Chimi Lhakhang - beautiful temple
- Panoramic views of the Bhutanese Himalayas and incredible scenery

What's Included

- 9 breakfasts, 5 lunches & 6 dinners including dinner at a Nepali cultural evening
- 4 nights standard hotel in Kathmandu, 5 nights standard hotel/lodges in Bhutan
- Airport arrival and departure transfers
- Return economy class return flight Kathmandu - Paro - Kathmandu
- Guided sightseeing of Kathmandu and Bhutan as detailed in the itinerary
- Services of local English speaking tour guides
- All entrance fees to included sites and monuments
- Services of licensed Nepalese & Bhutanese English speaking tour guides
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private vehicles
- Bhutan Visa fee and travel Permit (excludes visa admin fee of USD\$20 pp, payable upon arrival)
- All Bhutan government royalties and taxes

What's Not Included

- International flights, Nepal visa, Bhutan visa administration fee payable upon arrival USD\$20
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Kathmandu

Welcome to Nepal and the start of your holiday! Pick up and complete a landing card on the plane or in the airport before you go through customs. Upon arrival you will be met by our representatives and transferred to your hotel where you will receive a welcome drink and a briefing about your trip. **Overnight - Kathmandu**

Day 2 : Pashupatinath Temple



Enjoy a full day of sightseeing in the Kathmandu Valley. Our first port of call is Swayambhunath - believed to be 25 centuries old it is one of the world's oldest Buddhist Chaityas and a World Heritage site. It is a sacred shrine and worshipped by all the Buddhists around the world. From Swayambhunath we drive to Kathmandu Durbar Square - the Royal Palace complex built during the 17th century. We may also visit the special living Goddess "Kumari". Many local festivals take place in this area, you may be lucky enough to witness one!

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After lunch drive to Pashupatinath, on the banks of The Bagmati River. Pashupatinath Temple is one of the most sacred Hindu shrines and is also a World Heritage site.

After exploring the area drive northeast to Bodhnath stupa, another World Heritage site. You can see many artistic monasteries here which provide an excellent insight into Tibetan culture. In the evening, Buddhists walk around the stupa with prayer wheels, praying, or prostrating as they pray to Buddha. Many butter lamps provide a unique feeling of Nirvana. We drive back to the hotel to freshen up. In the evening enjoy an authentic Nepali meal with unique cultural dances depicting the various religions of Nepal at a typical Nepali restaurant. **Overnight - Kathmandu (B, D)**

Day 3 : Paro

Kathmandu – Paro. This morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Bhutan. Upon arrival at Bhutan/Paro airport you will be met by our local representative and transferred to your hotel. Check in to the hotel and freshen up. After lunch, enjoy a visit to the Paro Rinpung Dzong “the Fort of the heap of Jewels” which houses the Paro Monastic body, Paro District Civil Administration and the Paro District Court. A smaller Dzong was first built sometime in the 15th century and rebuilt by the Shabdrung in 1645. It caught fire in 1905 but was immediately rebuilt to its original splendor by the Paro Penlop Dawa Penjor. On way back to the hotel visit Kyichu Lhakhang, built in 638 AD under the order of the Tibetan King Songtsengampo, it is one of the oldest temples in Bhutan. **Overnight - Paro (B, L, D)**

Day 4 : Thimphu



Paro - Thimphu. After an early breakfast, drive for approx 1.5 hours to Thimphu, capital of Bhutan. Thimphu is one of the fastest growing cities in the world, located in a narrower valley than Paro and more crowded. It is a modern city but still preserves traditional architecture and traditions.

This afternoon visit the Memorial Chorten built in memory of Late His Majesty, the 3rd King of Bhutan. Also visit a weaving centre that provides cloth for Bhutanese royals where you can watch the weavers at work. The tour ends with an evening visit to the Weekend market for some souvenirs.

The rest of the afternoon is free for you to explore the Thimphu market. **Overnight - Thimphu (B, L, D)**

Day 5 : Punakha

Thimphu - Punakha. After breakfast drive on to Punakha. Stop for lunch at Docho la, where if the weather permits you'll be treated to an incredible panoramic view of the Bhutanese Himalayas. Punakha is a 2.5 hour drive from Thimphu. After crossing Docho la the vegetation changes from predominantly Blue Pine forest to a greater variety of plants and trees. In spring, it is colorful with all the Rhododendrons and Magnolias in bloom. Upon arrival in Punakha check into hotel, refresh and then drive up the valley to visit the Dzong in all its splendor. **Overnight - Punakha (B, L, D)**

Day 6 : Chimi Lhakhang

Punakha - Chimi Lhakhang - Paro. After an early breakfast visit Wangde Dzong en route to Chimi Lhakhang. A beautiful temple standing all alone on a small hill overlooking the Puna Tshangchu river belt, Chimi Lhakhang is the Holy place of Lama Drukpa Kuenley, also known as Divine Mad man. The temple is very sacred for the Bhutanese and thousands of people who visit Chimi Lhakhang do so to pray for children - either people with no children seeking fertility or those who have children, seek protection for them. Return to your hotel for lunch before driving back to Paro. **Overnight - Paro (B, L, D)**

Day 7 : Evening tea with a local family



After breakfast continue your tour with a hike up one of Bhutan's most revered monuments, the Taktshang Goemba or more commonly known as “Tigers Nest “ until you reach the sacred monastery perched on a cliff 900m above the valley floor. In the evening enjoy a traditional butter tea with a Bhutanese family in the farm house. **Overnight - Paro (B, L, D)**

Days 8-9 : Kathmandu & Bhaktapur

Paro - Kathmandu. On day 8 fly back to Kathmandu where you will be transferred to your hotel. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure in Nepal's colourful capital. The following day visit Bhaktapur and enjoy a guided tour of the Durbar square, ancient Royal Palace and the local town, which is very cultural and traditional. **Overnight - Kathmandu (B:2)**

Day 10 : Kathmandu



Arrangements end after breakfast today with an included transfer to Kathmandu Airport for your flight home. Alternatively consider extending your stay and take a spectacular scenic flight over Everest and the majestic Himalayas! (B)

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

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Bhutan Country Guide

Arriving to Bhutan

Upon arriving to Bhutan, you will need to declare the following personal items to customs officials: personal cameras & video recorders, laptops, mobiles, or any other electronic device. Upon departing the country, a check will be made to ascertain that these items have indeed left with you. If bringing in tobacco products to the country you will need to pay a tobacco tax upon arrival. Ensure that you have taken enough with you to last the duration of your visit as the sale of tobacco products in Bhutan is prohibited.

Shopping in Bhutan

The handicraft industry is much smaller in Bhutan than neighbouring countries as less tourists visit the destination but there are plenty of shops in Thimphu which sell a range of goods including wooden bowls, handmade paper, jewellery, masks, prayer wheels and thangkhas. Bhutan is renowned for its brightly coloured and boldly designed stamps, so it's paradise for stamp collectors.

Bargaining is not acceptable in Bhutan and goods are offered at fixed prices. Bartering is seen as offensive so should not be tried.

Not like Home

Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from what you are used to back home. As such it is important to come prepared for unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned, as things can and do change in foreign countries.

The people, customs, creed and languages are different from one region to the next.

Bhutan is a country of unparalleled contrasts, a destination where you'll be afforded plenty of unique encounters, and if you can travel with an open mind you will have a wonderful time here. In return, please remember to demonstrate sensitivity and respect for local customs.

Duty Free Allowances

Travellers are permitted to bring the following into Bhutan:

- 1L of alcoholic beverages
- Personal effects
- The sale of tobacco is banned in Bhutan. Tourists can import 200 cigarettes or three 50g tins of tobacco for personal consumption, but these are subject to 100% tax

Visa Conditions - Arrival & Departure

If travelling on any of our Bhutan GROUP tours your arrival to Bhutan must be on day 1 and departure on the final day of your tour. This is a condition of the Group Tourist Visa which we are applying for on your behalf. On our Group tours we do not offer pre tour or post tour accommodation. If it is your intent to include additional days to your holiday, you would not be able to join any of our group tours but instead we can arrange a private tour, tailored exclusively to your arrival and departure dates.

Currency

The currency in Bhutan is the Bhutanese Ngultrum, however, the Indian Rupee (INR) can be used as well.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars or other major currencies can be exchanged in Bhutan at the airports and in banks. Visa and AMEX are accepted by some bigger hotels and business establishments mostly confined to the larger towns such as Thimphu and Paro.

Traveller's Cheques are not recommended and ATMs don't often accept international cards, so we recommend taking your budgeted amount in cash and exchanging locally. Please also note that most banks are closed over festivals and public holidays.

Religion

Buddhism is Bhutan's official religion and is practiced by approximately 75% of the population. Most of the remaining practice Hinduism and freedom of religion is guaranteed by the King. Buddhism plays an important role in Bhutan.

Voltage, Time & WiFi

Bhutan is 6 hours ahead of Greenwich Meantime and does not observe Daylight Saving.

Standard voltage is 220 volts. Primary sockets generally require Indian round 3 pin plugs that are similar but not identical to European plugs, however, you will also find those which require the European or British variety. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter and plug adaptor in order to use U.S. appliances.

Most hotels in Bhutan have a WiFi connection and there are some restaurants and cafes in the main cities that have WiFi. Expect the download speed to be slower and the connection less secure than what you might be used to at home.

Visa Requirements

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Bhutan.

All nationalities require a visa for a visit to the Kingdom of Bhutan. Your visa for Bhutan will be arranged and procured by our office in India/Nepal. In order for us to arrange your visa for you, we require a scanned copy of your passport at least 4 weeks prior to your date of arrival in Bhutan. Once the visa is approved, we will email you a copy of the visa approval letter, which you must carry with you. You will be required to present your visa approval letter in order to board the flight to Bhutan and upon arrival at Paro Airport, the visa will be stamped in your passport.

Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Bhutan from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Diphtheria, Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Polio are strongly recommended. You may also be advised to take anti-Malarial medication.

WATER

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As tap water is not safe to drink in Bhutan, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants. You should also avoid salads which may be washed in unhygienic water, as well as ice in drinks.

Altitude Sickness

An altitude of over 3,000 meters is defined as high altitude and given parts of Bhutan are higher than this level, it is possible to experience differing degrees of symptoms which include headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue and shortness of breath. These symptoms will usually decrease in severity during acclimatization and mild cases of altitude sickness should not interfere with light activity. It is important not over exert yourself if travelling to altitude and drink plenty of fluids and eat carbohydrate food to keep the body properly hydrated. Please report any symptoms of Altitude Sickness immediately to your tour guide.

Preparing For Your Trip

If your tour includes hiking, it makes a lot of sense to spend some time getting some additional exercise, before coming on a holiday that includes some trekking. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience and spend time enjoying the views instead of catching your breath. Though for most days, the included hiking is approximately 2 – 3 hours long (4 - 6 up to the Tiger's Nest Monastery), which for most travellers would seem easy enough, many of these treks are through a variety of terrains which includes uneven steps, up and down hills and valleys etc. So to prepare, take a number of long walks in hilly country and wear in your new hiking boots prior to this holiday.

What to Pack

What to Pack

- Suitcase or frameless backpack/rucksack if preferred
- Small day bag for your camera, water, sunglasses, i-Pod etc.
- Please see the heading 'Etiquette' for recommendations on what/what not to wear
- Personal first aid kit
- Hiking boots and woollen socks too if partaking in any trekking

- Sunglasses, hat, umbrella, money belt
- DEET - based industrial strength mosquito/ insect repellent
- High factor sunscreen and bathers/swim costume
- Anti-bacterial hand gel/wet wipes and flat pack toilet paper/tissues
- Universal adapter
- Two spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport in case of loss or theft
- Spare camera batteries, especially if you possess a digital camera, which requires specialist high-power batteries
- A torch
- Your travel insurance policy details
- Warm clothing - raincoat, warm hat, socks, gloves etc as wet/dry and hot/cool climatic periods change invariably
- Pack as light as possible to leave room for the souvenirs!

Climate in Bhutan

With its location in the Himalayas and the variation in altitudes that this brings, Bhutan experiences a widely varied climate. Bhutan's climate is also influenced by the Indian monsoons that bring rain at certain parts of the year. The monsoons in Bhutan are from June - September bringing heavy rains and high humidity. Autumn is from October to November when it's generally sunny with some snow at higher elevations. Late November to early March is dry with pre-monsoon showers starting in May.

The best time to visit Bhutan is during the spring (late February to early May) when the valleys come alive with flowers in bloom. Another good time to travel is throughout November till early December where the Himalayan peaks are most visible with the clear skies and the weather is dry.

Food in Bhutan

Bhutanese food is very simple but delicious and each region has its own specialities. Most meals consist of meat (yak, chicken, pork or beef) and vegetables, which are accompanied with rice, and chillies feature in almost all recipes. A popular dish is Ema Datshi which is simply made of cheese and chillies - it's tasty but very hot. When it comes

to snacking, fried yak skin is a popular choice. Tibetan specialities such as momos (a type of dumpling) and noodles are also popular in Bhutan and western food is becoming more prevalent in cities.

There is a huge number of vegetarians in Bhutan so finding delicious, meat-free meals is easy. All kinds of plant life is included in Bhutanese cooking such as nettles, ferns, orchids and a huge variety of mushrooms. A common drink found across the country is yak butter tea – an acquired taste but certainly something worth trying. Sprite, Fanta and Coke are readily available, diet versions are hard not. Beer is also available with most meals.

Hot, hot, hot!

The biggest problem most travellers have with Bhutanese food is the liberal use of chilli in almost every single dish. For those with a sensitive palate, try and ask for food without chilli and if you have no luck there, stick to rice and momos.

Entrance Fees & Tipping in Bhutan

On our Bhutan group tours, entrance fees to all included sightseeing are included within the cost of your tour. Should you wish to visit sites not noted within our itinerary during your free time the cost (if any) would be payable at the entrance to the site.

While tipping is not compulsory in Bhutan, the majority of workers, especially those in the tourism industry such as guides, only have work for around half or quarter of the year and therefore tips are incredibly valuable for making up their income. USD\$15 per day for your tour guide and USD\$10 per day for the driver is a suitable amount to leave as a tip from a group of two. In restaurants it's standard to tip 10% on top of the final bill. Taxi fares can be rounded up and hotel porters should be tipped USD\$1 per bag.

Insurance

We will make every effort to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible. However, we shall not be responsible for any changes and alterations in the itinerary due to unavoidable circumstances such as

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landslide, road blockage, flood, snow, political unrest, cancellation of flight, delayed arrival, sickness or accidents. Any extra cost incurring there of, shall be borne by yourself/upon consultation. It is therefore essential that you have comprehensive insurance to cover you for medical, personal accidents, cancellation.

Etiquette

Despite the inevitable ups and downs of travelling abroad, you will generally be shown great hospitality in Bhutan. In return, please demonstrate sensitivity and respect for the local customs. Bhutan is a conservative country; so care should be taken to dress respectfully in large cities and towns, for example when at markets or public places.

Here are some helpful tips:

- Temple Etiquette: Please take particular care when visiting religious places, such as temples and monasteries. Dress and behave appropriately - don't wear shorts or sleeveless tops and do not smoke or hold hands. Shoes and hats should be removed. Within temples no carvings, statues or deities should be touched. Photography is prohibited in certain sections of most sacred sites and please do not attempt to be photographed with Buddhist monks. If in doubt ask your local guide for further information.
- Don't try to sneak into temples, where your guide has advise you not to enter
- Never touch a carving or statue of a deity within a temple
- Do not touch locals on the head or point the soles of your feet at a person, religious shrine or image of a deity. This is very disrespectful
- Take care to dress conservatively and ensure that limbs are covered when entering any place of religion, dress modestly and respectfully. Hats, caps etc should be removed before entering the premise. Please refrain from smoking while on the premises and in public places
- Both ladies and gentlemen will need to dress conservatively and cover all shoulders and knees when visiting monasteries, dzongs and other religious site in Bhutan. Men and Women are not permitted to wear headgear or footwear at sacred sites in Bhutan - these must be removed prior to entry

- Bhutanese are conservative and mostly wear traditional dresses, ladies should avoid wearing clingy, tight or suggestive attire, and stick to cool, flowing cottons. T-shirts are fine!
- Beach attire is fine by a hotel pool, but ladies, avoid wearing bikini tops anywhere but by the pool
- Displays of intimacy are not considered suitable in public
- Ex-military style clothing should not be worn
- It is polite to ask permission before taking photos of people
- Use your right hand for giving, taking, eating or shaking hands as the left is considered to be unclean
- Don't be surprised if you are frequently the centre of attention when travelling around the country. Staring unabashedly is not a social taboo
- Do carry toilet paper with you (or adjust to the Bhutan habit of using water instead), but don't throw it down the toilet without first checking to see if there's a basket to put it in (narrow pipes clog easily)
- Don't be surprised to see men defecating or urinating in public when restrooms are not readily available. Women, in the same circumstance, tend to use cover of darkness and huddle in groups
- Photography is prohibited in certain sections of sacred sites. Do not attempt to be photographed with Buddhist bhikkus (monks) or to pose for photos with statues of Buddha or other deities or paintings
- Do be open and friendly in conversations with locals - they can be quite talkative, asking strangers questions (about marital status, salary, etc.) that might be interpreted as overly personal in other cultures
- If you have scheduled your trip around a festival, you should bring formal clothing

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Nepal Visa Requirements

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please check with your local embassy before travelling and also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Nepal.

All nationalities must obtain a visa for Nepal. On our multi-country tours you will need a visa for each country included within the holiday.

It is possible for UK, EEC, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, South African and USA passport holders to obtain a visa upon arrival. However in the event of visa refusal at port of entry On The Go will not be held responsible.

In order to avoid long queues and unnecessary problems at Kathmandu airport, it is now possible to complete an Online Visa Application form within 15 days of travel. The application is only valid for 15 days so do not complete the form any earlier than this.

For further information and to complete your application please visit... <http://online.nepalimmigration.gov.np/tourist-visa>

Please note that we require a scanned colour copy of your passport to apply for trekking permits (if applicable).

Currency in Nepal

The currency of Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars or other major currencies can be exchanged at the airport and there are plenty of places to exchange money in Kathmandu. There are also ATMs at the banks in Kathmandu and Pokhara, although as these are sometimes out of order and banks are not always open, we advise that you bring some cash with you, preferably US dollars. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities. Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

Time & Voltage in Nepal

Kathmandu (Nepal) is 5 hours 45 mins ahead of GMT and does not observe daylight savings time.

Standard voltage in Nepal is 220 volts. Primary sockets generally require Indian round 3 pin plugs that are similar but not identical to European plugs, however you will also find those which require the European

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variety. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter, and plug adaptor in order to use U.S. appliances.

Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Nepal from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Diphtheria, Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Polio are strongly recommended. You may also be advised to take anti-Malarial medication.

DENGUE FEVER

Nepal recently confirmed cases of Dengue Fever. Risk is typically present throughout the country, with peak transmission from August to November. Travellers should take meticulous measures to prevent mosquito bites during the daytime. Use a repellent containing 20%-30% DEET. Re-apply regularly according to manufacturer's directions. Wear neutral-coloured (beige, light grey) clothing. If possible, wear long-sleeved, breathable garments. Apply sunscreen first followed by the repellent (preferably 20 minutes later).

WATER

As tap water is not safe to drink in Nepal, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants. You should also avoid salads which may be washed in unhygienic water.

Altitude Sickness

An altitude of over 3,000 meters is defined as high altitude and given parts of Nepal are higher than this level, it is possible to experience differing degrees of symptoms which include headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue and shortness of breath. These symptoms will usually decrease in severity during acclimatization and mild cases of altitude sickness should not interfere with light activity. It is important not over exert yourself if travelling to altitude and drink plenty of fluids and eat carbohydrate food to keep the body properly hydrated. Please report any symptoms of Altitude Sickness immediately to your tour leader.

Food in Nepal

The national dish of Nepal is Daal Bhaat Takaari (lentils, rice and vegetable curry) which can be found in a range of flavours and is often served as a main course for lunch and dinner. For many people in Nepal this is the only dish they eat. It often varies in quality, being excellent in one restaurant and bland in another. Nepali food has Tibetan influences especially in the mountains where a traditional diet consists of soups, potatoes, pasta and toasted flour. You will also find Indian food in Nepal, such as Roti (bread) tandoori meats, masala and kofti. Kathmandu is renowned as the budget eating capital of Asia with tourist restaurants selling a wide variety of Western style fast food including chips, steaks and pizza. Noodles are available everywhere and ideal for a quick snack, the Nepali name for them is chao-chao.

Entrance Fees

On our group tours in Nepal, entrance fees are not included must be budgeted for by you. The total cost of the entrance fees which need to be paid locally, as noted under 'Exclusions' on the first page of these Trip Notes. Entrance fee amounts can change and as such upon arrival, your tour leader will highlight the exact total entrance fee cost for your tour. Entrance fees are to be paid in Nepalese Rupees and they will be collected on day 2 of your tour.

Tipping in Nepal

Tipping is not a natural part of many Western cultures and many of us feel uncomfortable or unsure about when and how much to tip. However in the Nepal, tipping is an important part of local incomes and it's handy to always keep a supply of small notes for tipping.

In Nepal, as a guide, we recommend you allocate the following amount for the duration of your tour to cover tips for drivers, porters and local guides - approximately: USD\$40-50 in local currency.

Local drivers for arrival/departure transfers - approx USD\$3

Local guide for a full day of touring - approx USD\$5-10

Naturalists / Safari guides in Chitwan – USD 5 Per Activity

Local driver for a full day - approx USD\$3-5

Style of Trip

Local guides provide sightseeing and assistance at each port of call, the tours are not escorted throughout by a tour leader. On flights you will therefore travel without a guide and will be met upon arrival at your destination and transferred to your hotel. In Chitwan National Park guiding will be provided by the lodges own expert jungle guides. Transportation is a combination of internal flights and private air conditioned vehicles.

Group size

The number of travelers participating our Himalayan tours and treks varies from week to week. Our maximum group size in Nepal is 15, with an average of 2 - 6 travelers on each departure.

Single Rooms

If you have opted for a single room on any of our trips, we are always able to guarantee single rooms for all hotel stays. If your tour involves trekking where accommodation is offered in tea houses single rooms are not always available and you maybe required to share with someone of the same sex on your tour. We will contact you prior to departure if shared accommodation is required at any time on your tour, though this does not negate the minute chance that a change maybe required locally.

What to Expect

Nepal is a developing nation with limited infrastructure. Coupled with this and ever changing weather conditions and its no surprise that at times there can be delays or cancellation of services. This may take the form of flight delays due to low cloud in the mountains or foggy conditions in Kathmandu. The road network is quite congested in the cities and suffers from poor maintenance on some routes again causing delays and a rough ride from time to time.

Whilst Kathmandu has a good choice of high quality hotels, in other areas hotels and facilities

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Nepal & Bhutan

are not as high as western standards. Power shortages, water supply issues and fuel scarcity are common problems throughout Nepal. We will always try to offset any unforeseen problems but patience and understanding should be included when packing. Bear in mind that tourism is still relatively new to these beautiful Himalayan regions, things do not always run smoothly and a sense of adventure is a must!

Insurance

We will make every effort to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible. However, we shall not be responsible for any changes and alterations in the itinerary due to unavoidable circumstances such as landslide, road blockage, flood, snow, political unrest, cancellation of flight, delayed arrival, sickness or accidents. Any extra cost incurring there of, shall be borne by yourself/upon consultation. It is therefore essential that you have comprehensive insurance to cover you for medical, personal accidents, cancellation.

Climate in Nepal

In Nepal, June to September is monsoon season and during these months it is very hot and rains almost every day. October to November is much drier with pleasant temperatures in the daytime and good visibility, and at this time of year conditions are ideal for trekking. The winter months from December to February tend to be mild in the daytime but can become very cold at night especially in the mountains. January is the coldest month of the year. March to May is very warm, with occasional showers. The annual temperatures peak in May just before the monsoons begin.

The best time to trek in Nepal is during the spring (March - May) and autumn (October - November).

Temple Etiquette

Please take particular care when visiting religious places, such as temples and monasteries. Dress and behave appropriately - don't wear shorts or sleeveless tops and do not smoke or hold hands. Shoes and hats should be removed. Within temples no carvings, statues or deities should be

touched. Photography is prohibited in certain sections of most sacred sites and please do not attempt to be photographed with Buddhist monks. If in doubt ask your local guide for further information.

Shopping in Nepal

The Kathmandu Valley is heavenly for shoppers, with a host of craft outlets selling locally made handicrafts, stone idols and statues of Buddhist and Hindu deities. There are also beautifully designed brass pots and vessels available. Jewellery shops sell gold, silver, white metal and semi precious stones, as well maala (the traditional necklace worn by women in the Himalayas, which is made of gold with strings of glass beads) at very reasonable prices. If you are more interested in clothing there are delicately embroidered Kaftans, Pashminas made of goats wool, Kashmiri Shawls and Tibetan robes. You can also pick up inexpensive leather jackets.

Whilst trekking there are traders dotted along the trails selling everything from down jackets, waterproofs, jumpers, hats and socks at very reasonable prices, so there is no need to panic if you haven't packed enough! It is advisable to pack light and simply buy extra clothing en route if needed.

You are expected to barter for your goods in Nepal and the process is always very lighthearted. Most traders will speak English in tourist areas but if you can learn a few words in Nepali you may get a better deal.

Nepal & Bhutan - 10 days

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