

ABOUT NEPAL

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Nepal is a landlocked country located in South Asia with China in the north and India in the south, east and west. The country occupies 147,516 sq. km of land and lies between coordinates approximately 28°N and 84°E. Nepal falls in the temperate zone north of the Tropic of Cancer. The entire distance from east to west is about 800 km while from north to south is only 150 to 250 km. Nepal has vast water systems which drain south into India. The country can be divided into three main geographical regions: Himalayan region, mid hill region and the Tarai region. The highest point in the country is Mt. Everest (8,848 m) while the lowest point is in the Tarai plains of Kechana Kalan in Jhapa (60 m).

The Tarai region has a width ranging from 26km to 32 km and varies in altitude from 60m to 305 m. It occupies about 17 percent of the total land area of the country. Further north, the Siwalik zone (700 – 1,500 m) and the Mahabharat range (1,500m - 2,700m) give way to the Duns (valleys), such as Trijuga, Sindhuli, Chitwan, Dang, and Surkhet. The Midlands (600 – 3,500 m), north of the Mahabharat range is where the two beautiful valleys of Kathmandu and Pokhara lie.

The mountainous region begins at 3000m leading up to the alpine pastures and temperate forests limited by the tree-line at 4,000 m and the snow line beginning at 5000 m. Eight of the world's highest peaks (out of fourteen) that are above 8000m lie in Nepal: Mount Everest (8,848 m), Kanchenjunga (8,586 m), Lhotse (8,516 m), Makalu (8,463 m), Cho Oyu (8,201m), Dhaulagiri (8,167 m), Manaslu (8,163 m) and Annapurna (8,091 m). The inner Himalayan valley (above 3,600 m) such as Mustang and Dolpo are cold deserts sharing topographical characteristics with the Tibetan plateau. Nepal holds the so-called "waters towers of South Asia" with its 6,000 rivers which are either snow-fed or dependent on rain. The perennial rivers include Mahakali, Karnali, Narayani, and Koshi rivers originating in the Himalayas. Medium-sized rivers like Babai, West Rapti, Bagmati, Kamla, Kankai, and Mechi originate in the Midlands and Mahabharat range.

Of the 163 wetlands documented, the nine globally recognized Ramsar Sites are: Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Beeshazarital (Chitwan), Jagdishpur Reservoir (Kapilvastu), Ghodaghodi Tal (Kailali) in the Tarai, and Gokyo (Solukhumbu), Phoksundo (Dolpa), Rara (Mugu) and Mai Pokhari (Ilam) in the mountainous region. There are more than 30 natural caves in the country out of which only a few are accessible by road. Maratika Cave (also known as Haleshi) is a pilgrimage site associated with both Buddhism and

Hinduism. Siddha Cave is below BNDIPUR near Bimal Nagar along the Kathmandu-Pokhara highway. [Pokhara](#) is also known for caves namely Bats' shed (Mahendra Gufa), Batulechar, Gupteswar, Patale Chhango. The numerous caves around Lo Manthang in Mustang include Luri and Tashi Kabum which house ancient murals and chortens dating back to the 13th century.

WILDLIFE

Nepal's wildlife is officially classified into two main categories: common and protected. The common category lists Nepal as a landlocked country located in South Asia with China in the north and India in the south, east, and west. The country occupies 147,181 sq. km of land and lies between coordinates approximately [28°N and 84°E](#). Nepal falls in the temperate zone north of the Tropic of Cancer. The entire distance from east to west is about 800 km while from north to south is only 150 to 250 km. Nepal has vast water systems which drain south into India. The country can be divided into three main geographical regions: the Himalayan region, the mid-hill region, and the Tarai region. The highest point in the country is Mt. Everest (8,848 m) while the lowest point is in the Tarai plains of Kechana Kalan in Jhapa (60 m).

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Such species include the common leopard, spotted deer, Himalayan tahr, and blue sheep. These species are commonly seen in the wild. The protected species include 26 mammals, nine birds, and three reptiles. These rare animals are confined to their prime habitats.

Please click [Protected Species](#) for details.

185 species of mammals are found in various parts of Nepal. Nepal's dense Tarai jungles are homes to exotic animals like the Asiatic elephant, the one-horned rhinoceros, and the Royal Bengal tiger among others. Also found here are the leopard, Rhesus monkey, langur, hyena, jackal, wild boar, antelope, wild cat, wolf, sloth bear, chital or spotted deer, and barking deer. Wild buffalo locally called "Arna" is found in the Koshi Tappu region. The western Tarai jungles of Suklaphanta are home to the swamp deer, while the endangered blackbucks are located in the Bardia region.

Gangetic dolphins are found in the fresh waters of the Narayani and Karnali rivers. The Himalayan region is also home to the elusive snow leopard and the red panda. Red pandas, rarely seen because of their shy nature, are found around the Langtang National Park to Kanchenjunga Conservation Area. Other mammals that live at high altitudes are yak, blue sheep, Himalayan tahr, and musk deer. While otters are found in the Rara region northwest, the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve is home to the blue sheep and the Himalayan tahr.

Reptiles: Nepal has two indigenous species of crocodile: the fish-eating gharial with a long narrow snout and the marsh mugger which is omnivorous, eating anything it can catch. A very successful breeding project has brought the gharial back from extinction. Among the snakes found in Nepal, there are cobras, kraits, vipers, the Indian python, etc. Other reptiles found in the country are turtles and monitor lizards. Some of these reptiles can be seen in the Chitwan National Park and Bardia National Park.

Birds: Nepal has more than 850 recorded species of birds. Amazingly, half of these birds can be seen in and around the Kathmandu valley alone. The hills around the valley especially Nagarjun, Godavari, and Phulchowki are popular birding areas. Phulchowki at 2,760 m boasts about 90 bird species including the endemic spiny babbler, which was thought to be extinct until it was spotted in Nepal. Another rare species of bird, the red-headed trogon, was also sighted here in April 2000. Taudaha lake on the outskirts of Kathmandu is popular for migrant waterfowl during the winter.

National parks like Chitwan and Bardia harbor a wide variety of birds. The Koshi Tappu region is home to an incredibly large species of resident and migratory birds. It has about 26 varieties of ducks alone. About 485 species have been sighted here, including

black ibis, honey kites, ospreys, black-headed orioles, peregrine falcon, partridges, ruddy shelduck, storks, vultures, and eagles among others. The higher Himalayan region is home to many species of raptors and birds of prey. Nepal's national bird, the Danphe or Impeyen pheasant, is also found in the Himalayan region. A rare bird known as Jerdon's baza was sighted in Nepal while there is an effort to conserve Sarus cranes in Lumbini.

CLIMATE OF NEPAL

In northern Nepal summers are cool and winters are severe, while in the south, summers are very hot while winters are mild to cold. Nepal has five seasons: spring, summer, monsoon, autumn and winter.

In the Tarai (southern Nepal), summer temperatures exceed 40° C and above 45 in some areas, while winter temperatures range from 7°C to 23°C. In mountainous regions, hills and valleys, summers are temperate while winter temperatures can plummet to sub zero. The [Kathmandu Valley](#) has a pleasant climate with average summer temperatures of 20°C – 35°C and 2°C – 12°C in winter.

Average temperatures in Nepal drop 6°C for every 1,000 m you gain in altitude.

The Himalayas act as a barrier to the cold winds blowing from Central Asia in winter, and form the northern boundary for monsoon rains. Some places like Manang and Mustang fall in the rain-shadow behind the mountains and are mostly dry. Eighty percent of all the rain in Nepal is received during the monsoon (June-September). Winter rains are more pronounced in the western hills. The average annual rainfall is 1,600 mm, but it varies by eco-climatic zones, such as 3,345 mm in Pokhara and below 300 mm in Mustang.

There is no seasonal constraint on traveling in and through Nepal. Even in December and January, when winter is at its severest, there are compensating bright sun and brilliant views. As with most of the trekking areas in Nepal, the best time to visit are during spring and autumn. Spring is the time for rhododendrons to bloom while the clearest skies are found after the monsoon in October and November. However, Nepal can be visited the whole year round.

Average temperatures and rainfall during peak summer and winter in three most popular tourist areas:

Place	Summer (May, June, July)	Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)

	Max (°C)	Min (°C)	Rain (mm)	Max (°C)	Min (°C)	Rain (mm)
Kathmandu	28.1	19.5	312	19.3	3.0	15.4
Pokhara	29.7	21.3	829.7	20.3	7.7	26.3
Chitwan	33.0	25.3	404.0	24.1	8.3	13.8

PEOPLE OF NEPAL

THERE ARE ABOUT 101 ETHNIC GROUPS SPEAKING OVER 92 LANGUAGES IN NEPAL.

The population of Nepal in 2019 is reportedly 29.7 million. There are about 101 ethnic groups speaking over 92 languages. The distinction in caste and ethnicity is understood better with a view of the customary layout of the population. The official language of Nepal is Nepali which is spoken and understood by a majority of the population. The ethnic groups have their own mother tongues. English is taught in schools and many of them are English medium schools so a large portion of the population understands the language. Most private schools today teach in English.

Northern Himalayan People

The mountainous regions of Nepal are inhabited by Sherpas, Dolpa-pas, Lopas, Baragaonlis, Manangays. The Sherpas are mainly found in the east, Solu and Khumbu region; the Baragaonlis and Lopas live in the semi-desert areas of Upper and Lower Mustang in the rain-shadow area; the Manangays live in Manang district while the Dolpa-pas live in Dolpa district of west Nepal.

Middle Hills and Valley People

Several ethnic groups live in the [middle hills](#) and valleys. Among them are the Magars, Gurungs, Tamangs, Rais, Limbus, Thamis, Sunuwars, Newars, Thakalis, Chepangs, Brahmins, Chhetris and Thakuris, Damai, Sarki, Kami and Sunar.

Ethnic Diversity in the Kathmandu Valley

[Kathmandu Valley](#) represents a cultural melting pot of the country, where people from varied backgrounds have come together to form a diverse population. The natives of the Kathmandu Valley are the Newars. Although Newars are either Hindus or Buddhists, their culture is vastly different from the rest of the Nepali people. Their rituals, food and festivals are unique to them. Newars of Kathmandu Valley were predominantly traders or farmers by occupation.

Tarai People

The main ethnic groups in the Tarai are Tharus, Darai, Kumhal, Rajbangsi, Bote, Majhi and other groups. They speak north Indian dialects like Maithili and Bhojpuri. Owing to the fertile plains of the Tarai, most inhabitants subsist on agriculture. There are, however, some occupational castes like Majhi (fisherman), Kumhal (potter) and Danuwar (cart driver).

CULTURE OF NEPAL

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS DIFFER FROM ONE PART OF NEPAL TO ANOTHER.

Customs and traditions differ from one part of Nepal to another. The capital city [Kathmandu](#) enjoys a rich tapestry of cultures blending to form a national identity. Kathmandu Valley has served as the country's cultural metropolis since the unification of Nepal in the 18th Century. A prominent factor in a Nepali's everyday life is religion. Adding colour to the lives of Nepalis are festivals the year round which they celebrate with much pomp and ceremony. Food plays an important role in the celebration of these festivals.

Religion

Nepal was declared a secular country by the Parliament on 18th May 2006. Religions practised in Nepal are Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Sikhism, Bon,

ancestor worship and animism. The majority of Nepalis are either Hindus or Buddhists and these two religions have co-existed in harmony through centuries.

Buddha is widely worshipped by both Buddhists and Hindus of Nepal. The five Dhyani Buddhas; Vairochana, Akshobhaya, Rathasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi represent the five basic elements: earth, fire, water, air and ether. Buddhist philosophy conceives these deities to be the manifestations of Sunya or absolute void. Mahakaala and Bajrayogini are Buddhist deities of the Vajrayana sect worshipped by Hindus as well.

Nepali Hindus worship the ancient Vedic gods. Bramha the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the Destroyer as the Supreme Hindu Trinity. People pray to the Shiva Linga or the phallic symbol of Lord Shiva in most Shiva temples. Shakti, the dynamic element in the female counterpart of Shiva, is highly revered and feared and some of the names given to her are Mahadevi, Mahakali, Bhagabati and Ishwari. Kumari, the Virgin Goddess, also represents Shakti. Other popular deities are Ganesh for luck, Saraswati for knowledge, Lakshmi for wealth and Hanuman for protection. Krishna believed to be the human incarnation of Lord Vishnu is also worshipped widely. Hindu holy scriptures: Bhagawat Gita, Ramayan and Mahabharat are widely read in Nepal. Vedas, Upanishads and other holy scriptures are read by learned Brahmin Pundits during special occasions.

Customs

The diversity in Nepal in terms of ethnicity again makes room for various sets of customs. Most of these customs go back to the Hindu, Buddhist or other religious traditions. Among them, the rules of marriage are particularly interesting. Traditional marriages call for deals arranged by parents after the boy or girl come of age.

The slaughter of cows is illegal in Nepal. The cow is considered a Universal Mother, symbolizing motherhood, charity, and pity. To respect it is to put into practice the concept of Ahimsa, which in Sanskrit literally means "non-violence", an important component of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Before entering a temple or a house, you will often be asked to take off your shoes, so as not to pollute the pure interiors with your stained soles. Some temples are forbidden to non-Hindus. The right hand, considered pure, is used to eat, pay, give and receive. If rural Nepal is mostly agrarian, some aspects of urban life carry the glitz and glamour of the ultra-modern world.

Food: Food habits differ from region to region and much of Nepali food has been influenced by Indian and Tibetan styles of cooking. However, the Newar people have their unique cuisine which is vast and nutritious. The Thakalis also have a distinct cuisine although the staples are the same daal and bhat which most Nepali people eat. The regular Nepali meal is daal (lentil soup), bhat (boiled rice) and tarkari (curried vegetables), often accompanied by achar (pickle). Curried meat is very popular, but for many, it is saved for special occasions. Momos (steamed or fried dumplings) deserve a

mention as one of the most popular snacks among Nepalis. Rotis (flatbread) and dhedo (boiled flour) are also the staple diet in some homes.

TRIP IDEAS

Nepal offers fun educational, environmentally friendly, outdoor experiences for families travelling with children.

Nepal offers families with children a fantastic experience on many levels. While the capital city is often congested, taking an environmentally friendly rickshaw puts a smile on every child's face while avoiding busy streets on foot. The capital city has a host of child friendly garden courtyard style restaurants away from the busy streets. Most restaurants are very accommodating to children and it's worthwhile asking them to make subtle changes to menu items such as reducing spices.

Hotels in Kathmandu are also accommodating to families with children. The vast majority will have triple rooms or even rooms with four beds. It's also possible to request an extra mattress in your room or in higher budget hotels a cot. Many hotels have closed in gardens that children can play in or rooftop gardens. Though it is important to inspect these facilities for your own requirements.

Swayambu is favoured among many children visiting Kathmandu city. This iconic stupa overlooking the whole city offers up a variety of sights. Known affectionately as the "Monkey Temple" due to a large number of Rhesus Macaque monkeys living there, these primates offer a good distraction for children. But, it's important to remember not to feed the monkeys and to keep your possessions away from them!

For a quieter, more peaceful stay with younger children you might want to consider staying in the peaceful city of Bhaktapur which is a short taxi ride from Kathmandu. Bhaktapur offers a quiet environment set in a traditional Newar style. The streets here are pedestrian friendly and filled with hidden treasures from potters spinning clay vessels to Thangka painters working on large colourful artworks.

The hotels in Bhaktapur offer homely stays with many of the owners delighted to have young families staying with them. It's a great opportunity to learn more about Nepalese family life. Don't be surprised if you get an offer to join them for a meal or tea more than once!

The resort town of Pokhara is another popular place for families with children visiting Nepal. Lake Phewa offers safe boating overlooking calm waters. A hike up to the World Peace Stupa overlooking the lakeside is a great day out for children. After a short boat ride across the lake you hike for about 1 hour before reaching a glistening stupa with panoramic views of the lake and Annapurna mountains. Descending down the other side offers visits to underground caves, Devis waterfalls and even a robotic Buddha museum.

Again, guest houses in Pokhara's Lakeside offer family friendly rooms and restaurants with closed in gardens or courtyards to put your mind at rest. Meanwhile, walks or pony rides around the lake make for great morning or afternoon activities. High above, the paragliders and micro lights offer an amazing experience for young adults to fly close to the mountains. Make sure you check with the flight company regarding age restrictions for younger children.

When in Pokhara there are a vast number of treks that children can enjoy. Depending on the age of your child you could pick short 3-4 days treks to Poon Hill or Dhampus. Older children who enjoy trekking could also participate in longer treks like the Annapurna Circuit. Do get advice from your medical advisor back home about treks at altitude. For parents with younger children it's possible to hire a porter with a wooden doko basket for a fun way to carry your child on a trek.

Jungle safari is a great adventure for children. Jungle activities in Chitwan National Park offer yet more incredible experiences for children to enjoy while visiting Nepal. Half-day or full-day jungle treks are popular for the real possibility of seeing a wild rhino, elephant, deer or even a tiger in the wild. Again, it's possible to hire a porter to help carry small children.

Whether you are looking for things to do with children that are educational, environmentally friendly, outdoor or family oriented, Nepal offers a dazzling array of fun activities for children of all ages.

Trek through the Ruby Valley filled with hills of red, pink & yellow Rhododendron, meet the Tamang people who reside there; find serenity & bliss.

Plan a trip into this pristine part of Eastern Nepal, where beautiful valleys meet snow-capped mountains smiling back at you. Walk through breathtaking meadows and untouched coniferous forests, where you get to meet local ethnic people of quaint old villages. Hike through forests colored in pastel shades of red, pink, and white, covered with resplendent Rhododendron blooms, Nepal's national flower.

Ganesh Himal is named after the legendary elephant-headed Hindu God Ganesh. The Ganesh Range Peaks (Ganesh I, Ganesh II, Ganesh III, Ganesh IV) stand out like crystals, forming a "Great Himalayan Chain" in the skyline.

Day 1

Drive up to the gateway between [Langtang National Park](#) checkpoint. The drive is through the roads of Dhunche a mountainous village situated 2,030 m above sea level, in the Rasuwa district. After an almost 8-hour drive through scenic gorges and valleys, we arrive at the first stop at Parvati Kunda, a pristine alpine freshwater lake that derives its name from the famous Hindu Goddess Parvati, consort of Lord Shiva. Here colorfully dressed up villagers from the local Tamang ethnic group gather around to greet us. Enjoy an evening de-stressing at a campfire where you are entertained by some local dancing and singing.

Day 2

Wake up early morning to a breathtaking sunrise, with the Ganesh Himal range in full view, then pack your bags and ascend through quiet trails filled with mesmerizing pine and Rhododendron forests to Yuri Kharka (the lunch spot). There are further ascents through magical pine forests past creeks and trees covered with moss. The trail is a paradise for flora lovers and researchers who are interested to learn more about Alpine forests, as there are more than 100 species of wild flora on the trail. The view that unfolds is of endless rolling valleys covered with pine forests, as we slowly enter Khurpu Bhanjyang before dropping down to Somdang Valley, which is an enchanting gorge with sprawling green meadows, featuring the beautiful 200 m Chukarma waterfall. The first camp is beside an old abandoned mine.

Day 3

This hike tests one's endurance and strength, as we take a steep trek up to the highest pass along the border of Rasuwa and Dhading districts called Pangsang Kharka, one of the most scenic trails on the route; the ascent is up to 4,400 m (14500 ft), where the top resembles a terrace with a stunning viewpoint of the broad panorama of the surrounding terrain. Enjoy the view of the majestic Mt. Manaslu to the north, and the entire Ganesh Himal range. The large meadow is graced with a giant entry gateway and is a sensational location for camping and for taking in the breathtaking scenery. The locals here plan to build basic lodge accommodation at the right pass of the Pasang. Since there is no accommodation at the moment, trekkers are recommended to bring a tent for a night halt or spend the night in the poor conditions of a yak hut. Dry fruits or food should also be carried for dinner.

Day 4

The highlight of the trip is when we enter Tipling village, an old village, inhabited mostly by the Tamang people. This village is the furthest one can experience away from city life, as the terrain is dominated by a culture rich in Shamanism and Tantrism. They are influenced by both Hinduism and Buddhism, interwoven with the worship of natural forces. The main feature of this village is the two Tibetan Gompas covered with colorful flags, where you often find local village children with bright red cheeks and dirty clothes perched to welcome tourists with Rhododendrons flowers in their tiny hands.

Day 5

The next village on the trail is a mixture of tradition, culture, color, and vibrancy. Shantung (1,875 m) is a village largely inhabited by Tamangs. The name Shertung means "place of gold". Legend has it that two brothers in search of gold were led here by what they saw in a dream and thus the settlement was born. The people here are warm and welcome visitors to their homes and offer warm meals. One of the highlights of this village is the Shaman or Jhakri dance, performed as a healing ritual. The Ghode or Horse dance is also performed which is said to have been derived from Tibetan culture. The hospitable people of this area have unique customs and craftsmanship and traditional dances, including a welcome dance, the Ghatu dance. Dohori is also a popular pastime with locals singing in a call and response fashion between male and female participants. It is a type of courtship ritual, complemented by folk music. Some dances like the Maruni dance depend on the time of year and take place during festivals such as Dashain and Tihar.

Day 6

The next day's trail descends to Borlang and then to Ukhum for lunch. The trail then takes a turn, as we pass through the Lishne jungle, crossing several suspension bridges, till we eventually arrive at Jharlang village, another fine point for a panoramic view of the peaks. This charming village's main attractions are its huts with black slate

stones. Walk through fields of barley and maize to be rewarded with a scenic view of Ganesh Himal I and II.

Day 7

Walk through lush green forests, and paddy fields to arrive at Kimtang Phedi, a river basin spot, perfect for camping and unwinding, or take a dip in the cool waters of the Ankhu River. Take a jeep or a bus back to Dhadhing Besi, where you can catch a bus back to Kathmandu.

Important things to remember

1. Take your own tent, as hotels and lodges are scarce or not found at all.
2. Take lighter clothes for the day as temperatures could soar to 70-80 F and don't forget to bring warm Gore-tex jackets for the cold. Some parts of the trail are prone to heavy snowfall.
3. Take dry food and snacks, as villages are few in number and in case one has to take refuge at nightfall, food is scarce in this region.
4. Take rain gear as the Pangsang Pass is famous for heavy rains and hailstorms.
5. Take altitude sickness precautions - take necessary medicines and emergency kits.
6. Make sure you spend at least a day exploring the local villages and get to know the local people.

Enjoy some rustic charm and spectacular views of the Himalayan panorama crowning the Kathmandu Valley.

The Chandragiri-Chitlang-Kulekhani road is a historic route coming into or going out of Kathmandu and was once the only means to enter this enchanting valley. Vintage photographs show sixty porters struggling to carry a motor car along this road which was quite a feat considering the uphill climb to the Chandragiri pass before descending to Kathmandu. Although once an important thoroughfare, the road rarely sees long distance travelers these days but serves as a good hike to Chitlang and Kulekhani.

Chitlang is a fertile valley with a small stream flowing through the open verdant rice fields and vegetable patches. With the use of water from this stream for irrigation, the valley supplies a larger amount of vegetables to Kathmandu in the form of cabbage, radishes and more. The village is spread along the main road but actually consists of several different settlements with the original Newar village sitting in the center between the other settlements. The first settlement encountered is inhabited predominantly by

Tamang people followed by the current center of Chitlang which has a police post, shops and a few eateries. The resort and one of the home stays are on the other side of the stream while the other home stays are not far from the main road. Amazingly walking from one end of Chitlang to the other end takes almost an hour.

Some of the deposed Malla royalty are said to have escaped to Chitlang after they were conquered by [Prithvi Narayan Shah](#) in the 18th Century. A little above the main road a small shrine still remains, where they are believed to have prayed to their ancestral gods. The shrine has a number of weapons hanging on the wall. The entrance to a cave can be seen here which they are supposed to have used to reach the water spout (this is also known as Narayan Hiti as the one in Kathmandu.) A large spherical block of stone believed to be a cannonball lies near the royal shrine.

There are several forms of transport available, but hiking or a ride on the cable car is a far more enjoyable means of reaching Chitlang. The cable car drops off passengers on the ridge from where it is an easy hike down. Presently there are five functional homestays and a resort where you can spend a night or two. Some of the homestays are basic but they are constantly improving their facilities with the addition of shower rooms etc. One, in particular, is more of a regular lodge but is popular for goat cheese production. The proprietor was trained in Belgium and France and always has fresh cheese available for his guests as well as for sale. You can visit his cheese-producing facility accompanying him.

A hike to the Kulekhani reservoir past Chitlang takes about two hours if you take the shortcut avoiding the motor road which takes a more long and winding route. There are lodges and eateries at Kulekhani and many Nepali travelers come for the fish delicacies and some take a dip as well. One can catch a bus back to Kathmandu from here as there are not many passengers traveling from Chitlang. Most of the passengers are picked up here before heading for Kathmandu.

GETTING THERE

There are several means to reach Chitlang from the capital city and with the introduction of a cable car to the top of the ridge, one can reduce the hike to just going downhill from the top after a short ride. Buses and smaller vehicles leave from Kathmandu and reach Taukhel near Chitlang via Kulekhani. Chitlang is an easy one hour walk from Taukhel. Buses from Hetauda go all the way to Chitlang also via Kulekhani and leave for Hetauda in the morning. Above Thankot is a settlement known as Godam from where some pickup vehicles leave for Chitlang in the morning and go via the Chandragiri pass; it's the shortest route taking about an hour. One set of buses travel via Pharping near Dakshinkali and takes about three hours but don't reach Chitlang, with Taukhel being the closest point. The other vehicles take the old Tribhuvan Highway to reach Kulekhani. The pick-up vehicles to Kathmandu from Chitlang leave in the morning while the bus leaves from Taukhel in the afternoon.

ACCOMMODATION

There are several home stays which are controlled by the Home Stay Association (the office is beside the main road) which decides the rates and where the guests should stay. The resort is on the other side of the river.

VISIT THE SPECIAL FAIRS AT DOLESWHAR MAHADEV TEMPLE DURING THE MONTH OF SHRAWAN, AND MAHA SHIVARATRI AND TEEJ FESTIVALS

Shrawan is a holy month that falls in monsoon season (July-August), where the shrines of supreme God Lord Shiva hold the special significance among devotees. Among many, [Doleshwar Mahadev Temple](#) located in Bhaktapur, some 20 kilometers away from the capital, is one of the most important Hindu pilgrimages.

Leaving the Araniko Highway, one has to drive or hike towards the dense hill to reach the temple, known as the head of Kedarnath temple located in Uttarakhand of India. The lush green vegetation, up hills and down hills road and the majestic view of ancient [Bhaktapur city](#) makes the journey up to the temple very pleasant.

Just few kilometers away from the historical Bhaktapur Durbar Square, the temple lies in the foothill of green hills, and the river on the south of the temple generates pleasing splashy sound, which makes the environment more tranquil and captivating. As you reach the temple area, you feel like reaching the holy Kedarnath temple itself. While talking about history, Doleshwar Mahadev was officially declared as the head of Kedarnath, one of the Char Dham Yatra, by Shree 1008 Jagat Guru Bheemashaankarling Shivacharya, the head priest of Kedarnath in 2009. Until that day, the relation between Kedarnath and Doleshwar was unknown to the general public for the last 4,000 years.

According to religious beliefs, Pandav brothers, after the Mahabharata of Kurushetra, left for the Himalayas in search of forgiveness from Lord Shiva for the killing of many people during the war. But Lord Shiva was not willing to forgive them thus he disguised in the form of bull. After knowing about Lord Shiva's disguise, when Pandav brothers tried to catch the bull, they could catch only the tail while the head of bull got separated from the rest of the body. According to Hindu scriptures, the remaining body is in Kedarnath of India, while it is believed that Doleshwar is the head part. It is also mentioned in Shiva Puran and other holy books being passed from generations to generations.

Hence, when devotees pay visit to all four major adobes (char dham) of Hindu religion, they complete their trip by paying visit to the head of Lord Kedarnath at Doleshwar. It is believed that the homage tour to four adobes would be fulfilled only after visiting to Doleshwar. The visit to all these holy shrines is believed to wash off all the sins of one's lifetime and is regarded as an opportunity of receiving holy blessings from Lord Shiva.

The Shiva Linga (phallus signifying Lord Shiva or reproduction) of Doleshwar was believed to have emerged at the end of Dwapar yug and the beginning of Kali yug. All the prayers at Doleshwar, from morning ritual to evening aarati (prayers through lights) are done as per the rules and rituals of Kedarnath temple.

The Doleshwar temple is constructed in pagoda style. The temple is also known as Bimaleshwor and Sipare Mahadev and other names as per the local tongue and tradition. Inside the temple, there is a huge plain Shiva Linga (phallus). There are taps, a big idol of bull, a tall Trishul and other artifacts around with some constructions still underway.

Visiting this Shiva temple and offering milk and bel leaves to Lord Shiva is an important ritual for the Hindus or Lord Shiva devotees. The place which was unknown for thousands of years can be now called as a hidden gem. With the grace of Lord Shiva, it is an immense opportunity for the devotees to visit this sacred site and be blessed for the life time.

When you plan to visit Doleshwar, you can also visit other Shiva shrines like Ashapuri Mahadev Temple and Sanga, which are only few kilometers away. Sanga consists of Kailashnath Mahadev which is the world's tallest statue to Lord Shiva, standing 44 meters tall on a high hill. It can be an ideal day trip to visit all these shrines on a single day which can provide you an inner peace and evoke faith on god.

Doleshwar Mahadev is a temple of glory to all Hindu devotees around the world, and one must visit here to gain the ultimate religious experience, as some claim, the great opportunity to worship both the body and the head part of Lord Shiva is obtained only by the virtue acquired from multiple births.

TRAVEL DETAILS

TOURIST VISA

Tribhuvan International Airport and Gautam Buddha International Airport (GBIA) are the international airport of Nepal. Immigration Office, TIA (Tribhuvan International Airport) under Department of Immigration has been facilitating tourists flying to Nepal by providing Visa on Arrival. 'On Arrival' visa procedure is very quick and simple. You can expect some queues during peak Tourist season. If you wish to skip those queues, you can also consider getting Visa from Nepalese Diplomatic Missions stationed abroad prior to your arrival. Choice is yours.

If you have obtained visa from Nepalese Diplomatic Missions, then you must enter Nepal within six months from the visa issued date. Your total stay is counted starting from the day you enter into Nepal.

Visas obtained on Arrival at the Entry and Exit points are 'Tourist Visas'. They bear multiple Re entry facility. Tourist Visa 'On Arrival' is the only entry visa to Nepal. If you are visiting Nepal for the purposes other than Tourism (sightseeing, tour, travel, mountaineering, trekking, visiting friends and families), you should still get ' Tourist Visa' to get into the country. However, you must change the category of visa as per your purpose and length of stay in Nepal from Department of Immigration by producing required documents.

Nationals of following countries are requested to acquire Visa prior their arrival from their nearby Diplomatic missions (Embassies/consulates) of Nepal Government.

1. Nigeria
2. Ghana
3. Zimbabwe
4. Swaziland
5. Cameroon
6. Somalia
7. Liberia
8. Ethiopia
9. Iraq
10. Palestine
11. Afghanistan
12. Syria
13. Refugees with travel document

Please follow these simple procedures for Tourist Visa on Arrival at the airport (TIA) if you have not acquired Visa prior to boarding the plane.

1st Step

- Fill in ' Arrival Card '
- Fill in Online 'Tourist Visa 'form (you can fill it up prior to your arrival visiting our official website Department of Immigration / fill it up using Kiosk machines upon your arrival at the airport). If you fill it from the website, you will get submission Receipt with barcode, please print it out and bring it along for acquiring visa. It works for fifteen days and becomes invalid then after. If so, you will have to fill it up again.

2nd Step

- Make payment at the bank according to your visa requirement (15/30/90 Days)
- Get the receipt

While you can use different modes of payments (at visa fees collection counter), we advise you to carry some cash to be on the safe side.

On Arrival Visa Fee at Entry Points

15 Days – 30 USD

30 Days – 50 USD

90 Days – 125 USD

3rd Step

- Proceed to the Immigration Desk with your online form, payment receipts and your passport
- Hand in your documents to immigration officer for visa processing. He/she issues visa to you upon his/her satisfaction.

Visa Extension Fee

- Tourist visa extension is done for minimum 15 days with USD 45 and USD 3 per day for additional days.
- In the case of delay less than 150 days additional USD 5 per day as late fine.

Gratis Visa (Visa for Free)

Gratis Visa is issued free of cost in case of following categories of Visa applicants:

- Children below 10 years except US citizens
- Up to 30 days for SAARC Citizen (except Afghanistan) visiting Nepal for the first time in a given visa Year. Afghan citizen are eligible for Gratis Visa on Arrival only upon the recommendation of Department of Immigration. If you are an Afghan citizen, you can request concerned institution inviting you to Nepal for necessary paperwork with Department of Immigration to get you Gratis Visa 'On Arrival'.
- Non Residential Nepalese(NRN) card holder (issued by MoFA /Nepalese diplomatic missions abroad)
- Chinese Nationals

Officials from China, Brazil, Russia and Thailand do not need Entry Visa based on reciprocal visa waiver Agreement

Visas of all kinds including 'Gratis' issued at the Airport are Tourist Visas. Contact Department of Immigration for extending your visa or changing the category of your visa. Tourist Visa extension can be done from Immigration Office, Pokhara too. Non tourist visa extension can be done only at Department of Immigration (if eligible) for a period of maximum one year (except business visa).

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO GET A FEEL OF THE PULSE OF THE DESTINATION, TRY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION.

The easiest way to start finding your way around in Nepal is to use your favourite map app on your mobile or other navigation devices. All urban areas in Nepal are mapped out good enough to find your way through some errors that might occur.

Bring an extra passport photo to get a local sim card at the arrival halls in the international airport of [Kathmandu](#). If you can wait a little longer or you crossed one of the road borders to enter Nepal then there are plenty of service centres from mobile carriers where you can get a local sim card.

For offline navigation, you can use a free [Kathmandu Valley](#) map that is available at the Tourist Center of the Nepal Tourism Board and several tourist accommodations. Detailed maps are available in map and book shops in the big tourist areas of Nepal (especially Thamel and Freak Street).

Transportation in Kathmandu

If you really want to get a feel of the pulse of the city, try local transportation like public buses, battery-run three-wheelers. You could even try rides on local rickshaws where they're available. For some quick sightseeing as well as time-saving, the rickshaw is the best in old Kathmandu.

Government-run green buses known as Sajha Bus are comfortable and run along the north-south and east-west main roads of the valley. These buses stop only at designated bus stops, therefore, one has to identify the nearest Sajha bus stop to be able to board one. Other buses are also available for transportation to different parts of the valley.

Hail a taxi, which is easily recognized by its taxi sign on top and black license plate. Private taxis charge higher rates but may be more comfortable. No tip is expected. Night taxi service can also be arranged and operated by major hotels. One can rent a private car through a travel agent or a car rental company.

Mountain bikes and ordinary bicycles are cheap and the best form of transportation for economy tourists. One can hire them at Thamel and Jhochhen (Freak Street), all in Kathmandu. Mountain bikes can also be hired around [Pokhara](#).

Long-Distance Bus Service

Tourist bus services provide easy transportation to prime areas like Pokhara and Chitwan. For other destinations, long-distance day or night bus services are available from Kathmandu to all major cities. Out-of-valley bound buses to leave from New Bus Park at Gongabu at Ring Road near Balaju, Kathmandu. More comfortable and smaller vehicles can also be hired exclusively or on a cost-sharing basis.

Domestic Airlines

Nepal Airlines has an extensive network of air services to major parts of the country. Besides Nepal Airlines, other domestic airlines (more than 18 in operation) provide regular and chartered services to popular domestic destinations. Some of these airlines also offer mountain flights.

Trekking Guide and TIMS Card Mandatory on Most Trekking Routes in the Himalaya

As per Revised TIMS Provision effective from March 31, 2023, specific Protected Areas of Nepal need trekker to be accompanied by licensed trekking guide and carry a trekking agency issued TIMS Card. Below are the trekking regions and routes falling under this rule.

Trekking Region	Name of the Trek
Kanchenjunga Region	1. Kanchenjunga Base Camp via Sele La Pass Trek 2. Kanchenjunga Basecamp Trek 3. Kanchenjunga Base Camp Nango Pass Trek 4. Lumba Sumba Pass Trek
Makalu Barun Area	1. Makalu Basecamp Trek 2. Sherpeni Cole Pass Trek
Everest Region	1. Everest Basecamp Trek 2. Gokyo Trek 3. Chho La Pass Trek 4. Gokyo Renjo La Pass Trek 5. Three Passes Trek 6. Everest View trek

	7. Mera Peak Trek 8. Amphu Labtsha Pass
Rolwaling Region	1. Rolwaling Trek 2. Tashi Labtsha Pass Trek
Panchpokhari Bhairabkunda Area	Panchpokhari Trek
Helambu Region	1. Helambu Trek 2. Gosaikunda Trek
Langtang Region	1. Langtang Trek 2. Langtang Gosaikund Trek 3. Tamang Heritage Trek 4. Tamang Heritage Langtang Trek 5. Ganja La pass Trek 6. Till Man Pass
Ganesh Himal-Ruby Valley Area	Ganesh Himal - Ruby Valley Trek
Manaslu Region	1. Manaslu Circuit Trek 2. Manaslu - Tsum Valley Trek 3. Tsum Valley Trek
Annapurna Region	1. Annapurna Circuit Trek 2. Nar Phu Annapurna Circuit Trek 3. Mesokanto / Tilicho Pass Trek 4. Poon Hill-ABC Trek 5. Khopra Trek 6. Mardi Himal Trek 7. Sickleh Tara Hill Trek
Mustang Region	1. Upper Mustang Trek 2. Sarebung Pass Trek

Dhaulagiri Region	Round Dhaulagiri
Dolpo Region	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upper Dolpo - Jomsom Trek 2. Upper Dolpo Trek 3. Lower Dolpo Trek 4. Kagmara Pass Trek
Humla Region	Humla Limi Valley Trek

Therefore, the first thing an aspiring trekker must do is find out if the route they are interested to trek requires trekking guide and TIMS Card. If yes, please get in touch with a Government registered trekking agency to arrange for the trekking guide and TIMS Card.

The system is generally available all the time.

For charges, NPR 1,000 for SAARC (Citizens of South Asian countries) country applicants and for others NPR 2,000 and, currently payable online.

To visit Restricted Areas in Nepal. a Trekking Permit must be obtained from the Department of Immigration, Kalikasthan, Kathmandu.

Special [trekking](#) permit must be acquired from the Department of Immigration, Kalikasthan, Kathmandu, for trekking to areas that fall under the Restricted Zone. For more information please log on to <http://www.nepalimmigration.gov.np/post/notice-regarding-visa-fee-updates>

1. Trekking in any area or along any route except the specified area of route shall be deemed to be violation of law.
2. The Trekking permit should be kept along with the trekker while trekking.
3. The Trekking permit has to be shown to immigration employees or police on request.

TREKKING PERMIT FEE DETAILS

S.No.	Regions/VDCs	Permit Fee
1.	Upper Mustang <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lomanthang Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 5) b. Lo-Ghekar Damodarkunda Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 5) c. Baragung Muktichetra Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 3 and Satang Village of ward no.5) 	<p>USD 500 per person (for the first 10 days)</p> <p>USD 50 per person /Day (beyond 10 days)</p>
2.	Upper Dolpa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dolpo Buddha Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 4 to 6) b. Shey Phoksundo Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 7) c. Charka Tangsong Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 6) 	<p>USD 500 per person (for the first 10 days)</p> <p>USD 50 per person /Day (beyond 10 days)</p>
3.	Gorkha Manaslu Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Chumnubri Rural Municipality (All areas of ward nos. 1,2,3 and 4) 	<p>September – November</p> <p>USD 100 per person / week</p> <p>USD 15 per person / day (beyond 1 week)</p> <p>December – August</p> <p>USD 75 per person / week</p> <p>USD 10 per person / day (beyond 1 week)</p>

S.No.	Regions/VDCs	Permit Fee
4.	Humla <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Simikot Rural Municipality (All areas of ward nos. 1,6 and 7) b. Namkha Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 6) c. Changkheli Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 3 to 5) 	USD 50 per person / week USD 10 per person / day (beyond 1 week)
5.	Taplejung <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Phantanglung Rural Municipality (All areas of ward nos. 6 and 7) b. Mikwakhola Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 5) c. Sirijunga Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 8) 	USD 20 per person/ week (for the first 4 weeks) USD 25 per person /week (beyond 4 weeks)
6.	Lower Dolpa Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Thulibheri municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 11) b. Tripurasundari municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 11) c. Dolpo Buddha Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 3) d. Shey Phoksundo Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 8 and 9) e. Jagdulla Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 6) f. Mudkechula Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 9) g. Kaike Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 7) 	USD 20 per person/ week USD 5 per person /week (beyond 1 week)
7.	Dolakha <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gaurishankhar Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 9) b. Bighu Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1) 	USD 20 per person/ week

S.No.	Regions/VDCs	Permit Fee
8.	Gorkha Tsum Valley Area Sirdibas-Lokpa-Chumling-Chekampar-Nile-Chule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Chumnubri Rural Municipality (All areas of ward nos. 3,6 and 7) 	September – November USD 40 per person / week USD 7 per person / day (beyond 1 week) December – August USD 30 per person / week USD 7 per person / day (beyond 1 week)
9.	Sankhuwasabha <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bhotkhola Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 5) b. Makalu Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 4) 	USD 20 per person/ week (for the first 4 weeks) USD 25 per person /week (beyond 4 weeks)
10.	Solukhumbu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Khumbu Pasang Lahmu Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 5) 	USD 20 per person/ week (for the first 4 weeks) USD 25 per person /week (beyond 4 weeks)
11.	Rasuwa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gosaikunda Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 and some area of ward no. 2) 	USD 20 per person /week

S.No.	Regions/VDCs	Permit Fee
12.	Manang <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Narpa Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 5) Nasho Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 6 and 7) 	September – November USD 100 per person / week USD 15 per person / day (beyond 1 week) December – August USD 75 per person / week USD 15 per person / day (beyond 1 week)
13.	Bajhang <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Saipal Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 5) 	USD 90 per person / week for the first week USD 15 per person / day (beyond 1 week)
14.	Mugu <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mugumakarmarong Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1 to 9) 	USD 100 per person / week USD 15 per person / day (beyond 1 week)
15.	Darchula <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Vyas Rural Municipality (All areas of ward no. 1) 	USD 90 per person / week USD 15 per person / day (beyond 1 week)

Entrance fees must be paid to enter protected areas of Nepal.

Park entry permit must be obtained to enter [protected areas](#). Park entry fees may be paid at Tourist Service Center, Bhrikutimandap, [Kathmandu](#), or at the entry points. Please refer to the table below for details about payment. Please note that the information below is as per the information provided by the concerned department. Any difference or discrepancy can be reported at info@ntb.org.np . Updates will be made after verification from official sources.

SN.	National Parks/ Wildlife Reserve/ Conservation Areas	Nepali	SAARC	Foreigners	Child discount
National Parks that are designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Natural)					
1	Chitwan National Park	NRs. 150 per person per entry	NRs. 1,000 per person per entry	NRs. 2,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
2	Sagarmatha National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	NRs. 3,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
Other National Parks					
3	Banke National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 750 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free

4	Bardia National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 750 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
5	Khaptad National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 500 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
6	Langtang National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	NRs. 3,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
7	Makalu-Barun National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	NRs. 3,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
8	Parsa National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 750 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
9	Rara National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	NRs. 3,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
10	Shey-Phoksundo National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	NRs. 3,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free

11	Shivapuri- Nagarjun National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 600 per person per entry	NRs. 1,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
12	Shuklaphanta National Park	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 750 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
Wildlife Reserve					
13	Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 750 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
Conservation Areas					
14	Api Nampa Conservation Area	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 500 per person per entry	NRs. 2,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
15	Annapurna Conservation Area	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 1,000 per person per entry	NRs. 3,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
16	Blackbuck Conservation Area	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 500 per person per entry	NRs. 2,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free

17	Gaurishanker Conservation Area	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 1,000 per person per entry	NRs. 3,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
18	Kanchenjunga Conservation Area	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 500 per person per entry	NRs. 2,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
19	Manaslu Conservation Area	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 1,000 per person per entry	NRs. 3,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free
Hunting Reserve					
20	Dhorpatan	NRs. 100 per person per entry	NRs. 1,500 per person per entry	NRs. 3,000 per person per entry	Below 10 yrs free

Check for entry fees to Heritage Sites, museums & other places to include in your city tour.

Entry fees must be paid to enter [Heritage Sites](#), museums etc. at the entry point. Positive discriminatory entry fees are applicable to most of the sightseeing spots, i.e. different fees to Nepali (visitors and students), SAARC and Third-Country (other than SAARC) visitors.

Please refer to the table below for details about payment. Please note that the information below is as per the information provided by the concerned departments. Any difference or discrepancy can be reported at info@ntb.org.np. Updates will be made after verification from official sources.

Entry Fees for Sites in Kathmandu Valley						
Site	Foreign Nationals	SAARC Nationals	Chinese	Nepalese	Contact Number	Remarks
Kathmandu Durbar Square including Tribhuvan Museum	NPR 1000	NPR 500 (BIMSTEC)	NPR 1000	Free	01-5368969 01-5369452	Below 10 years free
National Museum, Chauni, Kathmandu	NPR 150 (NPR 100 for camera, NPR 200 for video camera)	NPR 50 (NPR 75 for camera, NPR 150 for video camera)	NPR 150 (NPR 100 for camera, NPR 200 for video camera)	Students: NPR 10; Others: NPR 25 (NPR 50 for camera and NPR 100 for video camera)	01-4271504 01-4271478	Closed on Tuesdays and Public Holidays. Open for half day on Mondays from (10:30 am to 2 pm)
Patan Durbar Square including Patan Museum	NPR 1,000	NPR 250 (BIMSTEC)	NPR 1,000	Students with letter from school : NPR 10; Student Card Discount:		Entry fees for Nepalese are applicable

				NPR15; Others: NPR30		only for Patan Museum
Patan Golden Temple	NPR 100	NPR 50	NPR 100	Free	01- 5434595 01- 5440227	Closed on Buddha Jayanti
Bhaktapur Durbar Square	US\$ 18 or NPR 1,800	NPR 500	NPR 500	Free	01- 6612249	Below 10 years free. For groups from 11- 20, one tour leader can enter free.
National Art Museum, Bhaktapur	NPR 150 (NPR 100 for camera, NPR 200 for video camera)	NPR 50 (NPR 50 for camera, NPR 150 for video camera)	NPR 150 (NPR 100 for camera, NPR 200 for video camera)	Students: NPR10; Others: NPR25 (NPR 50 for camera, NPR 100 for video camera)	01- 6610004	Closed on Tuesdays. The fee includes wood carving and brass and bronze museum in Dattareya Square.
Swayambhu Stupa	NPR 200	NPR 50	NPR 200	Free	01- 4281889	Below 10 years free.

					01-4277236	
Boudha Stupa	NPR 400	NPR 100	NPR 400	Free	01-4589257	Below 10 years free.
Pashupatinath Temple	NPR 1,000 per day per entry	NPR 1,000. Free for Indian Nationals	NPR 1,000	Free	01-4462767 01-4470340	Tourists can view the temple from the back premises.
Changunarayan Temple	NPR 300	NPR 100	NPR 300	Free	01-5090958	
Ethnographic Museum, NTB, Bhrikutimandap	NPR 200	NPR 100	NPR 50	Students: NPR 25; Others: NPR 30	01-4256909 Extension no. 172	
Garden of Dreams, Katmandu	NPR 400	NPR 400	NPR 400	NPR 150	01-4525340 01-4525341	Below 5 years free. NPR 50 fro 5-11 years. 25% discount for a group of 10 pax.
Godawari Park	NPR 500	NPR 200	NPR 100	NPR 50 (NPR 20	01-	Student

	(NPR 200 for children below 10 years)	(NPR 100 for children below 10 years)	(NPR 50 for children below 10 years)	for children below 10 years)	5174246	50% discount.
Central Zoo	NPR1000 (NPR 250 for children 4-12 years)	NPR 500 (NPR 250 for children 4-12 years)	NPR 250 (NPR 150 for children 4-12 years)	NPR 200 (NPR 75 for children 4-12 years)	01-5428323	Nepali Students: NPR 135;
Entry Fees for Sites in Lumbini						
Site	Foreign Nationals	SAARC Nationals	Chinese	Nepalese	Contact Number	Remarks
Lumbini	NPR 700	NPR 400	NPR 700	NPR 20	071-404040 071-404047	NPR 16 for Indians.
Lumbini Museum	NPR 50	NPR 50	NPR 50	NPR 10	01-580318	Closed
Kapilvastu Museum	NPR 10	NPR 5	NPR 10	NPR 2		Closed on Tuesdays
Entry Fees for Sites in Chitwan						
Site	Foreign Nationals	SAARC Nationals	Chinese	Nepalese	Contact Number	Remarks

Chitwan National Park	NPR 2,000 per day per entry +13% VAT	NPR 1,000 per day per entry+13% VAT	NPR 2,000 per day per entry+13% VAT	NPR 150+13% VAT	056-621069	Elephant ride fare - Foreigner: NPR 2,500; SAARC: NPR 1,500; Nepali NPR 500
Chitwan Elephant Breeding Camp	NPR 100	NPR 50	NPR 100	NPR 25	056-580154	
Tharu Cultural Museum, Chitwan	NPR 25	NPR 15	NPR 25	NPR 10		Below 10 years free

Tourist Police, a special unit of Nepal Police, works to ensure that your trip is pleasant, safe and hasslefree.

Motto:

“Tourist Police for Tourists’ safety”

Vision:

To assure a safe and pleasant stay to all Tourists in Nepal.

Mission:

- Tourist Police has an objective of preventing harassment, mistreatment and criminal activities against tourists.
- Tourist Police Nepal assures a pleasant and a memorable stay in Nepal including advising and assisting tourist in safety and security in tourism issues.
- Tourist police serves for safer destination Nepal.
- Tourist Police are friends of Tourists.

Historical Development

Tourist Police Nepal was established in 26th January 1979 AD as a special unit of Nepal Police working under Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Department of Tourism. Tourist Police today has the strength of 239 Officers working under the Supervision of Deputy Superintendent of Police and has 28 units spread throughout the country including 10 units inside the Kathmandu valley and 18 units outside the valley in 12 different districts. The Central Office is located inside the premises of Tourist Service Centre, Bhrikutimandap Kathmandu, Nepal. Since its inception, the tourist police has been actively facilitating tourists and delivering security services. Tourist Police is motivated by appreciations and receiving ample encouraging feedbacks by concerned agencies and tourists on service delivery. Tourist police is skilled to extend better and efficient services to the tourists with its motto- "Tourist police for tourists' safety".

Our Activities are:-

- To register complaints, conduct preliminary investigation and recommend immediate action in order to assist in recovery of lost goods and documents of the tourists and provide Police Report in case of lost documents.
- To be available 24/7 inside Kathmandu valley and Pokhara city to ensure the safety of the Tourists.
- To ensure a hassle free tour for the tourists.
- To mobilize optimally in the Touristic destinations for Safety and Security of Tourists.
- To coordinate promptly and effectively with relevant agencies during rescue procedure.
- To provide relevant and necessary information regarding safety and security of the Tourist.

- To coordinate with the related Embassies, Consulates, Stake holders and the family members when Tourists are in various problem such as serious illness, mental problems, becomes victim of natural calamities etc.
- To conduct 'Mobile Public Awareness Program" in the Touristic hubs to give additional information regarding safety measures, crimes against tourists and potential crimes by tourists within Nepal.
- To conduct different interaction program with all Tourism concerning agencies to enhance the safety and security of the Tourists.
- To patrol and maintain regular vigilance at the Touristic Destinations to prevent harassment, mistreatment and exploitation of the Tourists.
- To organize training programs in collaboration with various embassies to strengthen different foreign language skill of Tourist Police Personnel.

Work in progress:-

- Extensions of Tourist Police units in other popular touristic destinations.
- Tourist Police Unit jointly in collaboration with other stake holders is aiming towards seasonal patrol in trekking route in remote corners.
- Management of safe house in order to provide temporary settlement for helpless tourists.

Important Points for Tourist Safety:-

- Respect the law of the land, local customs, religion and cultural norms and values.
- Be sure to obtain all the necessary information before using their services to avoid the subsequent problems
- Avail the services of government registered travel, trekking, Hotels, lodges and other agencies only
- Use tourist based authorized vehicle and always note the vehicle number.
- Always carry certified copies of your documents and make sure safety of original copies.
- Exchange foreign currencies only at Government authorized financial institutions.

We are available at:-

Kathmandu valley

Kathmandu District

1. Tourist Police Bhrikutimandap (Head Office)
2. Tourist Police Thamel
3. Tourist Police Basantapur
4. Tourist Police Pashupati

5. Tourist Police Swoyambhu
6. Tourist Police Airport
7. Tourist Police Bouddha

Lalitpur District

8. Tourist Police Mangal Bazar, Patan

Bhaktapur District

9. Tourist Police Bhaktapur
10. Tourist Police Nagarkot

No. 1 State

1. Tourist Police Kakarvitta Jhapa
2. Tourist Police Lukla Solukhumbu

Madhesh State

1. Tourist Police Janaki Mandir Dhanusha
2. Tourist Police Birgunj Parsa

Bagmati State

1. Tourist Police Sauraha, Chitwan
2. Tourist Police Patihani, Chitwan
3. Tourist Police Syafrubesi Rasuwa

Gandaki State

1. Tourist Police Pokhara, Kaski
2. Tourist Police Dhampus Kaski
3. Tourist Police Ghandruk Kaski
4. Tourist Police Birethanti Kaski
5. Tourist Police Chame Manang
6. Tourist Police Dharapani Manang

7. Tourist Police Jomsom Mustang
8. Tourist Police Ghorepani Myagdi
9. Temporary Tourist Police, Bandipur Tanahun

Lumbini State

1. Tourist Police Belahiya Rupandehi
2. Tourist Police Lumbini Rupandehi

Please keep in your mind

No matter when and where you are,

For any assistance in Nepal

Dial 1144 (Toll Free, Hot line) for Tourist Police.

Dial 100 for Police assistance

Dial 103 for Traffic Police assistance

Stay updated about safety issues & the Acute Mountain Sickness before you trek to the mountains above 2,500 m.

Important Information for Trekkers and Mountaineers

Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS)

If you are not feeling well above 2,500 m, it may be AMS until proven otherwise.

Early symptoms of AMS include:

1. Headache
2. Loss of appetite
3. Nausea

4. Fatigue on minimal exertion
5. Dizziness

What to do if you have AMS?

1. Don't go higher, rest, drink fluids (not alcohol).
2. If symptoms get worse, descend with a friend.
3. If symptoms fully go away, go up.
4. Consider taking Acetazolamide (Diamox 250 mg twice a day).

Worsening Symptoms

1. Severe headache
2. Vomiting
3. Walking like a drunk
4. Altered mental status
5. Severe fatigue
6. Shortness of breath at rest

DESCEND! DESCEND! DESCEND!

AMS Preventive Measures

1. Slow and gradual ascend
2. Sleeping altitude should not be more than 300 to 500 m a day above 2,500 m from the previous night altitude.
3. Rest day after every 1,000 m of altitude gain.
4. Drink plenty of clean water.

The HRA is a voluntary non-profit organization which strives to reduce casualties in the Himalayas of Nepal. It was founded in 1973 and now operates Aid posts along the two most popular trekking routes. One is located at Pheriche (4,250m) on the way to Everest and the other is at Manang (3,550 m), just before Thorung-la pass on the Annapurna circuit. Both Aid-posts are staffed by volunteer doctors during the two main trekking seasons, spring and autumn.

HRA also runs Everest ER medical clinic at the Everest Base Camp (5,350 m) since spring season 2003. HRA-Everest ER provides medical facilities to the climbers, support staff and visitors at EBC.

Himalayan Rescue Association Nepal

Dhobichaur, Lazimpat, Kathmandu

Phone: +977 1 4440292/ 4440293

In Case of Emergency:

Mobile: +977-9851086717, Narendra Deo Bhatta, Chairman

+977-9851033046, Prakash Adhikari, Chief Executive

Province 1

From magical mountains to scenic hills and wetlands of Tarai

Nepal is famous not only for its diverse culture and rich natural heritage, but it also has diverse geographical regions, which makes it a must-visit place once in a lifetime.

The newly carved out Province 1 under the federal system is one of the seven provinces in the country. It has 12 districts spread from Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, to one of the greenest districts in Ilam and downward to Koshi Tappu, the serene wetland known for its wildlife reserve.

Besides these natural wonders, this province has people from different ethnicities, making it an amalgamation of diverse culture and language.

How to reach Province 1

The fastest way to travel is to take a direct flight from Kathmandu to Biratnagar and Bhadrapur. It takes about 40 minutes (to Biratnagar) to 55 minutes (to Bhadrapur). You can also take a public bus which takes around 15 hours to reach Biratnagar and more time onwards, while you can also hire private vehicles. .

Major Attractions:

Mt. Everest: Mount Everest or Sagarmatha in Nepali is also known as the ‘Roof of the world’ being the highest mountain in the world at 8,848 meters (29,029 feet) above sea level. It is a dream for the mountaineers from all over the world to reach atop Everest. However, for those who love adventures, they can [trek to the Everest Base Camp](#) at 5,380 meters (17,600 feet) and experience life in the high mountain range and rare biodiversity in the Sagarmatha National Park. Besides

Everest, the Province 1 also boasts of three other high mountains - Lhotse (8,516 meters or 27,940 feet), Makalu (8,485 meters or 27,838 feet) and Cho Oyu (8,201 meters or 26,750 feet) - and is also home to several other prominent peaks above 6,000 meters. The adventure seekers are mesmerized by the magnificent view of this highest Himalayan range and feel that the trip is worth every penny. But it takes 9 days to reach the Everest base camp from Lukla making it a life time experience.

How to reach the Everest Region: There are direct flights from Kathmandu to Lukla. It is a 9-day trek to the Everest Base camp from Lukla and takes around 5 days to return to Lukla. Travel to this region is possible only through the travel operators, as you also need to take permission from the Nepal government.

Best time to travel: Pre-monsoon (February to -May) and Autumn (late September to December)

Pathibhara Temple: Pathibhara Devi Temple or Mukkumlung is one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in Nepal, located in Taplejung at the height of 3,794 meters. It is also considered one of the holy places for Rais and Limbus (or Kirant???) (the local ethnic group/s). The trek to Pathibhara Devi is exhilarating and is an unique experience due to the pristine natural beauty combined with rich cultural heritage.

Best time to travel: Autumn (September to November) and Spring (March to May)

How to reach: There are direct flights to Taplejung (Suketar) from Kathmandu and Biratnagar. It is a 8-9 hours trek to the Pathibhara temple. There is also a direct public bus service from Kathmandu and Biratnagar to Taplejung.

Makalu Barun: Makalu is considered one of the toughest 8,000m peaks to climb and the camping trail to Makalu Base Camp from the south is considered one of the tougher routes in Nepal. Makalu Barun region boasts of 3,000 species of flower plants, 440 species of birds and 75 species of mammals. The trek to the Great Himalaya Trail, which crisscrosses from the east to the west Nepal, begins from this region. It is, however, recommended for the experienced trekkers only. The Makalu Barun National Park offers some of the most spectacular sceneries in the Himalayas. You also need to get a government permit to visit this region.

Best seasons to travel: Autumn and Spring

How to reach: There are direct flights from Kathmandu to Tumlingtar. From there, it is a 9-day

trek to the Makalu Base Camp.

Halesi Mahadev: Halesi Mahadev Cave lies in Khotang district of this Province and is one of the popular pilgrimage sites. Halesi Mahadev is a two feet tall Shiva Linga situated inside the cave and is worshipped both the Hindus and Buddhists.

Best seasons to travel: Throughout the year but devotees throng this place during the Shivaratri festival in March.

How to reach: There are public vehicles from Kathmandu to Halesi or you can hire private vehicles. It takes about 8 hours to reach Halesi.

Ilam: Ilam is a small hilly district in Province 1 that has pristine landscape of sloped tea gardens and lush green forests. Strolling in the tea gardens that carpet the surrounding hills in refreshing mountain air followed by hot tea made from the tea leaves plucked from the garden helps one rejuvenate and relax.

Best seasons to travel: Autumn and Spring

How to reach: There are direct flights Kathmandu to Biratnagar and Bhadrapur. It takes 5 hours of drive from Biratnagar while its much shorter from Bhadrapur.

Bhedetar: Situated on top of a hill in Dhankuta district, Bhedetar is a popular destination for those who would like to get away from the scorching heat in the plains during the summer. With cold climate throughout the year, Bhedetar which is also known as Charles Point, provides holidaygoers a big respite with scenic hills and spectacular views of sunrise and sunset. It also offers paragliding opportunities for adventure seekers.

Best seasons to travel: Summer

How to reach: There are direct flights from Kathmandu to Biratnagar and Bhedetar is just 3 hours drive from there. Biratnagar.

Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve: The Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve is just an hour's drive from Dharan and is home to rare species of birds and globally threatened population of wild water buffalo (Arna), the Gangetic dolphin, and endemic fish species. Other globally threatened fauna like Nilgai, smooth-coated otter, and red-crowned roof turtle are also found in this reserve. It

safeguards the pristine riparian wetlands, grasslands, forests, marshes and swamps, lakes and ponds, and excavated ponds.

Best seasons to travel: October to May

How to reach: There are direct flights from Kathmandu to Biratanagar. It takes one and half hours' drive in a taxi or a public vehicle to the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve.

Province 2

Religious, Cultural, and Business hub of Nepal

Province Two districts: Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahotari, Dhanusha, Siraha, Saptari

Nepal's Province Two is the only province with all its districts located in the southern plains of the country known as the Terai. The geographical belt of this province is considered to be the northern part of ancient Mithila cultural of the India Sub Continent. The eight districts that make up the province are largely flat and very fertile with many rivers that flow through its landscape depositing rich silt necessary for agriculture productivity. In addition to Nepali, Maithali is predominantly the language widely used by people in this region who are largely Hindus.

Major Attractions

Janakpurdham: This ancient city was considered to be the capital of the Videha dynasty that ruled Mithila region in the 18th century. Its references and the birthplace of Sita (Janaki) are mentioned in the Hindu Epic Ramayana. This place is therefore an important center for its prolific Mithila history and culture. Another important town here is Dhanushadham where Lord Ram is said to have won a challenge only after which he was given permission to marry Sita. The city is

an important pilgrimage site for Hindus the world over and is recognized as a center for religious and cultural tourism.

Attraction in Janakpur

Janaki temple: Located at the heart of the city is the impressive and dominant Janaki temple which was built around 1898 by queen Brisabhanu. The temple which is the main attraction in the city is also known as the Nau Lakha Mandir (nine hundred thousand rupees) which in literal terms translates to the cost of building the temple. The temple rests at the site where a holy saint is said to have found a golden idol of Sita, believing this is where she was born. The temple is one of the biggest in Nepal. Adjacent to the Janaki temple is the Ram-Sita Bivaha Mandir, where Lord Ram and Sita are said to have been married.

Mithila painting: This form of painting has a history that dates back to the time of the epic Ramayan and continues to be practiced even today in Nepal and India. Also known as Mithila art, its origin in Mithila cultures is said to have started with the capture of the wedding ceremony of Lord Ram and Sita. This art form is usually practiced by women who decorate walls and floors of homes during festivals and auspicious ceremonies. The paintings reflect natural elements, abstract geometric patterns and village life using natural dyes such as sooth, charcoal, turmeric, sandalwood and indigo. Painting are stroked with twigs and fingers and symbolize prosperity, heroism, love, devotion and fertility.

Sacred Ponds: Known as a town for its ponds (Kundas), there are more than 200 sacred ponds revered by pilgrims for holy rituals and cleansing. The more famous ones are Dhanush Sagar and Ganga Sagar which are in close proximity to Janakpur.

Events to observe: Chhath an ancient Hindu Vedic festival observed on Kartik Shukla Shashthi and dedicated to the sun god (October or November) is celebrated in a carnival like atmosphere. Likewise Bivaha Panchami marking the wedding of Lord Ram and Sita is also marked with religious fanfare, and Holi the festival of colors marks the advent of spring.

How to reach: There are many airlines that operate direct flights from Kathmandu to Janakpur. Long distance buses both night and day services operate to the city from major hubs in the country.

Parsa wildlife Reserve: Spread over Parsa, Makhwanpur and Chitwan districts this reserve is home to some endangered animals. Located adjacent to the Chitwan National Park, Parsa Wildlife

Reserve has recently been opened to the public.

The reserve is a national wildlife park in its own right with attractions to see tigers, leopards, rhinoceros, wild elephants, sambar, chital, hog and barking deer as well as Langur monkeys and striped hyenas. There are about 300 species of birds found in the reserve; common ones include the giant hornbill, peafowl, red jungle fowl, flycatchers and woodpeckers.

How to reach: Located between Nepal's two industrial and business centers Hetauda and Birgunj, it is accessible from any place in the country. The closest airport are Bharatpur airport in Chitwan and Simara airport in Birgunj.

Salhesh Botanical garden (Phulbari): The botanical garden has a legend, intertwined with faith and commitment of Salhesh, the hero of the once untouchable caste in the Mithila region of Nepal. As a cult hero, this place represents his legacy and commitment as a change agent for the downtrodden. The botanical garden is very unique with a single garland shape orchid flowering from the branches of two tree. The blooming of the orchid is distinctive in that it only flowers once a year and that too on 1st Baisakh, the start of the Nepali New Year. Thousands of visitors from Nepal and India come to this garden to witness this nature's wonder. Spread over 8 hectares, the garden is rich in plant diversity and has a good repository of tree species, ponds and walking trails. Public transport is available to the destination which is 3 KM west from Lahan town in Siraha district.

Gadhji Mai: This pilgrimage site is one amongst the many seats of power (Shakti Peeth) dedicated Hindu Goddess. The temple in Mahagadimai Municipality in Bara district is famous for holding a religious fair (mela) once every five years with large numbers of animals being sacrificed. The month long mela starts on Magh Sukla Saptami (December January). Thousands of people from Nepal and India visit the temple in the belief that Goddess Gadhi Mai will fulfill her devotee's aspirations when offerings are made at the temple.

The closest airport is Janakpur and there are public transport to the area from all major towns and cities.

Jaleswor Mahadev: Devoted to Lord Shiva, Jaleswor Mahadev is a revered religious site for Hindus. The town of Jaleswor is synonymous with the Mahadev temple where Lord Shiva's 20 ft.

symbol the linga is always submerged in water. There are two large ponds Barunsar and Kshiresar one on each side of the temple which feed water into the temple. Large numbers of pilgrims visit the temple in the month of Shrawan (July-August) that is especially devoted to Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.

Access: Jaleswor is 15 km south of Janakpur and the town center is connected to the Mahendra Highway.

Birgunj: The metropolitan city is synonymous with Nepal's trade and transit and is a commercial hub south of the capital Kathmandu. Being a border town and also known as the "Gate way to Nepal", Birgunj was founded in 1897 by 3rd Rana Prime Minister Bir Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana. Aside from commercial interest, key areas of attraction in Birgunj are Ghadiarwa Pokhari, Birta Mai Temple and the Gahawa Mai Temple which has references to Birgunj's former name Gahawa.

Simraungadh: Simraungadh in Saptari district was once a fortified city and an ancient capital of Mithila from 11th to the early 14th century. This historical background makes it a cultural, archeological and historical site of interest and importance. A key attraction in Simraungadh is the Kankalini Temple (Shakti Peeth) which is a seat of power for Hindu Goddess. The temple is a key attraction for Nepali and Indian Pilgrims

Access: Situated 19 km east of Saptari's headquarter Rajbiraj, 90 km south of Kathmandu, and 28 km east of Birgunj, it is well connected through road networks and transport services.

Baba Taal: The Terai Plains of Nepal are home to many underappreciated and beautiful tourist spots that have grown in popularity in the recent years. Such is the case with BabaTaal, a man-made lake in Nepal's Bandipur- Siraha district located only 1km away from the East- West Highway and 2kms north of Bandipur Bazaar.

The beauty of the lake can be appreciated by simply walking around it or hiring a boat to sail through it. Growing rapidly popular in recent years among both local and Indian visitors, the lake also has a park, picnic area, temple, a view tower to enjoy the stunning views of the lake and the Terai plains from the top for those wishing to visit.

Bagmati Province

Cultural and heritage center

Bagmati Province Districts: Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Chitwan, Rasuwa, Ramechhap, Kavre, Makhwanpur, Dhading, Nuwakot, Sindhupalchoke, Dolakha, Sindhuli.

Kathmandu: Nepal's capital, the city has the most number of tourism sites with historical and archeological importance. Known as the city of temples, it has numerous temples and stupas spread across the city. Religious and cultural festivities are an integral part of the city's social life.

Covering 13 districts, Province Three is rich in cultural and has numerous heritage sites with historical significance. Main tourism sites in the province are the [Kathmandu valley](#), Dolakha, [Sauraha](#), Jiri, Ruby valley, Daman, Sindhuligadi, Bhote Koshi, Nuwakot Durbar and the Langtang area.

The Province has a large number of religious sites linked to Hinduism and Buddhism. Key religious sites in the province are Devghat Dham Chitwan, Palanchowk Bhagwati Kavre, Kalinchowk Bhagwati and, Dolakha Bhimsen in Dolakha, Dakshinkali Kathmandu, Tripurasundari Dhading and Gosaikunda in Rasuwa.

Kathmandu valley: As Nepal's ancient and historic city area, the valley has three cities Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur. The valley is unique in its history, culture and natural environment and is home to seven world heritage sites. These sites are [Pashupatinath Temple](#), Changuanarayan Temple, [Swayambhunath Stupa](#), [Boudhanath Stupa](#), [Basantapur Durbar area](#), [Patan Durbar area](#), and [Bhaktapur Durbar area](#).

Key attractions in the valley are Dhulikhel, Nagarkot, Chandragiri, Phulchoki/Godavari, Kakani/Shivapuri, Kirtipur town and old city areas, Budhanilkantha, Narayanihiti Museum, Singha Durbar, and Thamel Bazar.

Sauraha: One of Nepal's famous destinations for domestic tourism and international visitors. Its an appreciable place for nature and wildlife enthusiasts. The area is also home to the famous Hindu holy site Devghat. Key activities in Sauraha are a pilgrimage, Jungle Safari, up-close experiences with elephants, boating on the Rapti River and Tharu Culture.

Daman: A beautiful and scenic town in Makhwanpur District, it's a popular tourist destination along the old Tribhuvan Highway to Kathmandu. It stands at a vantage point for views of the

Himalayan range from Dhaulagiri, Annapurna peaks in the west to Mt. Everest in the east. It's an ideal place to experience nature and village life. Other attractions in the vicinity are the rock-filled Kulekhani dam, Tistung, Chitlang, and Palung villages.

Dolakha Bhimsen: Considered an abode of Lord Bhimeshwar, it is Nepal's famous Hindu temple in Dolakha district which has strong affiliation amongst traders; considered as their will God. Another temple in the district is Kalinchowk Bhagawati, revered as a powerful goddess temple with strong spiritual power. Situated in the high mountains (3842m) it lies in the Gaurishankar Conservation Area as a pilgrimage site.

Jiri: It carries the history of being the gateway and classic route to Mt. Everest and continues to be the trailhead for many treks into Sagarmatha National Park. The town settlement is predominantly inhabited by the indigenous Jirel community. Its natural beauty with lush green alpine forest draws domestic and international visitors. Jiri provides scenic views of the Rolwaling section of the Himalayas, Gaurishankar peak revered as the abode for Lord Shiva and Parvati, waterfalls and birds.

Ruby valley: A close destination from Kathmandu in Dhading district, it is known for its Tamang and Gurung culture. Famous for its ruby mine and herbs, the valley settlement is also a unique place to experience Shaman practices. With varying landscapes from flatland, gradual and steep alleviation, it offers an abundance of trails for trekking. Key attractions are views of the central part of the Himalayan range, the Ganga-Jamuna waterfall, hot springs, the Paldor Peak base camp, and Netra Lake.

Nuwakot Durbar: Chronicled as the starting point of Nepal's unification, the palace is famed for its 1762 seven-story Newari architecture which has archeological significance. The complex which is on the tentative World Heritage Site list comprises of the main Nuwakot Palace, temples and shrines of gods and goddesses around it with the most famous being the Bhairab temple. A destination appropriate to visit during the summer and winter.

Langtang: World famous as a trekking destination, it attracts domestic and international visitors. Trekking in the region is relatively easy and relatively less busy than other popular routes. A haven for bird watchers and wildlife enthusiast, the Langtang areas has expansive high meadows and is a habitat for musk deer, Red Panda, snow leopard, and the Himalayan black bear. Main attractions are views of the Langtang Lirung peak and the Tamang heritage trail experience of culture and rural village life.

Trishuli: A River synonymous with Nepal's rafting destination, the river's waters originate from Mt Ganesh Himal and Langtang. The river has impressive gorges and exciting rapids for excitement. Easily accessible from Kathmandu and Pokhara, it is popular amongst domestic and international tourists. Onward journey after rafting the river includes a trip to the province's Chitwan National Park and Pokhara in Province Three.

Bhote Koshi: A challenging river in Sindhupalchoke for rafting and Kayaking, it is famous the world over for its steep gradient per kilometer. The rapids along with the river range from class 4 to 5 at high flow, and 3 at lower levels providing the intense and ultimate experience in water adventure. Just hours from Kathmandu the river area also has Bungee jumping activities over the river which draws extreme sports enthusiasts.

Helambu: a Scenic destination in the highlands of Sindhupalchoke, it covers areas from Lauribina La Pass to the Melamchi valley. Known for its apples, it is also a trekking destination from various points around the Kathmandu namely from Sundarijal, Nagarkot, Kakani, and Sankhu.

Sindhuligadi: The fort represents the landmark November 1767 victory in the battle of Nepal's Gorkha army over the 2400 strong British Troops of the East India Company sent from India during Nepal's unification process. The historical and strategic fort is a tourist attraction in central Nepal 140 KM from Kathmandu. It is also a symbolic war memorial of Nepal's victory.

Gandaki

Gandaki is the confluence of culture and nature. It is a well-known province for both Nepalese and foreign visitors. The province has an area of 21,773 km² which is about 14.66% of the total area of Nepal. The area ranges from 1500 – 3000 meters has a temperate climate and Himalayan regions at an altitude of 3000 to 4500 meters with Alpine climate. In the High Himalayan region of the province, we can find Tundra climatic conditions.

Pokhara, the provincial capital, is a renowned tourist destination due to the presence of Fewa Lake and Begnas Lake. You can also get a stunning view of the Himalayan ranges of Annapurna, Fishtail, and Dhaulagiri. This province is also significant from a religious standpoint, as it is home to Muktinath Chhetra & Manakamana Temple. Additionally, when in Gandaki, you can also opt for trekking in Manang Mustang where you can explore the Tilicho lake.

Lumbini

Lumbini, the birthplace of lord Budhha and home to world-renowned monasteries, is the third-largest province in Nepal. The province is named after the holy pilgrimage site of Lumbini in the Rupandehi District. With an area of 22,288 square kilometers (8,605.44 sq. mi), the province covers about 15.1% of the country's total area. Lumbini has a humid subtropical climate and experiences four seasons. The largest national park in the Terai, [Bardia National Park](#) is also situated in this province and consists of a beautiful, unblemished wilderness filled with Sal forests, diverse flora and fauna, and alluvial washes of the Karnali River. Rani Mahal, which was a palace built in Palpa in 1893, still stands alongside the Gandaki river.

Karnali

The largest province in Nepal, Karnali province covers an area of 27,984 sq km and gets its name from the longest river in Nepal that flows through the region. Consisting of 10 districts and two popular national parks, Rara National Park and Shey Phoksundo National Park, it is the home to the largest lake of Nepal Rara as well as the second largest lake of Nepal Shey Phoksundo. In the High Himalayan region of the province, we can find Tundra climatic conditions to sub-tropical climatic conditions in the Chure region.

As the hills and the mountains cover most of Karnali province, many off beat trekking trails such as the Upper Dolpo that are perfect for adventure seekers can be found here. While the river that flows along the province makes it a perfect spot to indulge in white water rafting. Areas of spiritual, historical, and archaeological importance such as, Jumla, Surkhet, Dailekh fall under this province

making Karnali province popular amongst the Hindu pilgrims and researchers. Rare Himalayan herbs with medicinal properties can be found around the region.

Sudurpaschim

Province 7 of Nepal, known as Sudurpaschim province falls in the far western region and covers an area of 19,516 sq km. Consisting of 9 districts the province consists of numerous holy sites that have been mentioned in the Hindu epics. Sudurpaschim province is an ideal holiday destination for the ones seeking for a spiritual escape. In the High Himalayan region of the province, we can find Tundra climatic conditions to sub-tropical climatic conditions in the Chure region.

[Khaptad National Park](#) and Shuklaphanta National Park are the major natural attractions of the region. Apart from being rich in flora and fauna province 7 includes Badimalika, Ugratara, Shaileshwori and Tripura the most popular pilgrimage sites in the far west. The highest peak in Api Nampa Conservation Area, Api Himal a bird watcher's dream and wetland area such as Ghodaghodi Lake also lies in the Sudurpaschim province. A road less travelled Sudurpaschim province is a diverse region with hidden gems spread all over it.

Places to visit.

Kathmandu Valley

Kathmandu Valley comprises the three ancient cities of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, which were once independent states ruled by the Malla kings from the 12th to the 18th centuries. The three cities house [seven UNESCO World Heritage shrines](#) which are together listed as [a UNESCO World Heritage Site \(Culture\)](#). The valley is also home to hundreds of other exquisite monuments, sculptures, artistic temples and magnificent art - reminders of the golden era in Nepal's architecture.

Legend has it that the valley was once a primordial lake ringed by verdant mountains. In this pristine lake lived giant serpents until one fine day, saint Manjushree, the Bodhisatva, raised a

mighty sword and in one fell swoop, cut open the side of a mountain at a place now known as Chobar. The voluminous water of the lake gushed out, leaving behind a fertile valley capable of supporting large urban settlements over the millennia. The Gopala and Kirati dynasties were the earliest rulers here followed by the Licchavi (300-879 A.D.), under whom flourished trade and crafts.

But the valley's remarkable cities with their ornate palaces, the superbly crafted pagodas, and the monumental stupas are testimony of the artistic genius of the Newars, the original inhabitants of the valley, whose skills were championed by the Malla kings and appreciated even by the Mongol rulers of 18th century China.

CLIMATE

Kathmandu Valley is blessed by a temperate climate. The temperature does not exceed 34 degrees Celsius even during the scorching summer months and does not drop below 3 degrees Celsius in winter.

ACCESS/ ACCOMMODATION

One can directly fly into the Tribhuvan International Airport in the Kathmandu Valley. One can ride buses or drive to Kathmandu from border towns and other parts of the country. There are five-star hotels, resorts to moderate accommodations with modern amenities available in and around Kathmandu Valley.

Places to see in Kathmandu valley.

Visit Ktm Durbar Square, a heritage site in the heart of the city

Kathmandu Durbar Square, also known as Basantapur Durbar and Hanuman Dhoka, is an old durbar square in [Kathmandu](#)'s city center. In the heart of old Kathmandu city, Basantapur never fails to impress first time visitors with its intricate wood carvings and rich history. Hanuman Dhoka was built during the Licchavi period (4th to 8th centuries AD), and King Pratap Malla extended the property significantly in the 17th century. With the highest concentration of old structures, the square is home to several palaces, courtyards, and temples. It is also known as "the Museum of Temples" because there are over 50 temples in the square. Handicraft shops may be found in the courtyards around Gaddi Baithak, where you can see a variety of attractive purchasable handicrafts.

Among the 50 temples that lie in the vicinity, lies the temple of the titular deity, Taleju Bhawani. The Durbar is divided into two courtyards, the outer Kasthamandap, Kumari Ghar, and Shiva-

Parvati Temple, and the inner section consisting of Hanuman Dhoka and the main palace. Some floors have been converted to museums dedicated to three generations of Shah kings of Nepal. Most parts of the palace premises are open to tourists throughout the week.

TALEJU TEMPLE: The Taleju Temple is the tallest of all structures, built by King Mahendra Malla in 1549 AD. This temple is open to the public for one day each year during the Dashain festival.

KUMARI TEMPLE: The 17th century Kumari Temple, or the temple of [Living Goddess](#) is an example of highly developed Nepali craftsmanship. This is the official residence of Living Goddess Kumari of Kathmandu. Visitors can get a peek of the living goddess and seek blessings during special hours.

JAGANNATH TEMPLE: Built in the 16th century, the Jagannath Temple is known for the fascinating erotic figures carved on the wooden struts.

NASAL CHOWK: This lovely courtyard inside the main entrance will be your first experience of the historic royal residence. Nasal Chowk was built during the Malla dynasty, although many of the structures in the area were built during the Rana period. Nasal Chowk was utilized for coronations throughout the Rana regime, and the practice persisted until 2001.

NARSINGHA STATUE: Narsingha is thought to be Lord Vishnu in his man-lion avatar, disemboweling a demon. Pratap Malla erected the stone image in 1673, and according to the inscription on the monument, he did so out of fear of upsetting Vishnu by dancing in a Narsingha attire.

SWET BHAIRAV: Swet Bhairav is a statue of Bhairav, avatar of Shiva. This Bhairav temple is open to the public once in year during the festival of Indra Jatra during August-September.

SHISHA BAITHAK: Shisha Baithak is an open patio with the Malla throne on display, and pictures of the Shah kings.

TRIBHUWAN MUSEUM: Along with memorials to Kings Mahendra and Birendra, the [Tribhuwan Museum](#) commemorates King Tribhuvan and his successful insurrection against their regime. The museum exhibits the king's bedroom and study, complete with real personal belongings that provide a surreal look into his existence. The king's boxing gloves, the walking staff with a spring-loaded sword hidden inside, and his dusty, empty aquarium provide some mysterious moments. There are several spectacular thrones, numerous hunting photographs, and the typical coin collection on display.

KAL BHAIRAB: The Kal Bhairav is one of the largest 17th century stone statues in Kathmandu, representing the terrifying aspect of Lord Shiva.

Swayambhunath Stupa

Find peace and prayers on the little hillock of Swaymbhunath northwest of Kathmandu Valley.

Find peace and prayers on the little hillock of Swaymbhunath in the northwest of [Kathmandu Valley](#). Visitors for whom the name was a tongue twister have called it "Monkey Temple" from the 1970s. Swayambhu, overlooks most parts of the valley giving visitors a panoramic view of the city. The stupa has stood as a hallmark of faith and harmony for centuries with Hindu temples and deities incorporated in this Buddhist site. The glory of Kathmandu Valley is said to have started from this point.

Resting on a hillock 3 km west of Kathmandu, Swayambhu is one of the holiest Buddhist stupas in Nepal. It is said to have evolved spontaneously when the valley was created out of a primordial lake more than 2,000 years ago. This stupa is the oldest of its kind in Nepal and has numerous shrines and monasteries on its premises.

Swayambhu literally means "self-existent one". Believed to date back to 460 A.D., it was built by King Manadeva and by the 13th century, it had become an important center of Buddhism. Legend has it that Swayambhu was born out of a lotus flower that bloomed in the middle of a lake that once spread across the [Kathmandu Valley](#) once was. The largest image of the Sakyamuni Buddha in Nepal sits on a high pedestal on the western boundary of Swayambhu beside the Ring Road. Behind the hilltop is a temple dedicated to Manjusri or Saraswati - the Goddess of learning. Chaityas, statues and shrines of Buddhist and Hindu deities fill the stupa complex. The base of the hill is almost entirely surrounded by prayer wheels and deities. Devotees can be seen circumambulating the stupa at all times.

Exceedingly steep stone steps that lead up to the shrine is quite a challenge. However, there is also a motor road going up almost to the top from where it is a short walk. A large number of Buddhists and Hindus alike visit Swayambhu throughout the day. This shrine is perhaps the best place to observe religious harmony in Nepal. The largest crowds of people are seen here on Buddha's birthday which usually falls in May each year.

Some important monuments to see in this area

The huge gold plated Vajra 'thunderbolt' set in the east side of the stupa.

Buddha statue on the west side of Swayambhu.

The Sleeping Buddha.

The Dewa Dharma Monastery, noted for a bronze icon of Buddha and traditional Tibetan paintings.

The temple dedicated to Harati, the goddess of all children. It is said that she was an ogress before Lord Buddha converted her to be the caretaker of all children.

Pashupatinath Temple

This temple situated on the banks of the holy River Bagmati is the most revered Hindu temple in Nepal. The main temple complex is open only to the Hindus; non-Hindus must satisfy themselves by observing from the terraces just across the Bagmati River to the east. As a mark of reverence and tradition, leather items that include shoes, belts and cameras are forbidden within the temple complex and must be left outside. Photography is strictly prohibited.

The most important festival observed here is [Shivaratri](#), or ‘the Night of Lord Shiva’ - the night Lord Shiva self-originated - when devotees and pilgrims from far and wide across Nepal and India, including sadhus (barely attired holy men with long locks of hair and smeared in ashes) and ascetics, throng the temple to have a darshan (glimpse) of the sacred Shiva lingam. The other holy occasion when devotees descend to the temple in large numbers is on [Teej](#) (a festival solely observed by Hindu women) in mid-September. The whole temple complex and the adjoining areas turn into a sea of red as women draped in their bridal red sarees and wearing yellow or green bead necklaces offer prayers for the well-being, prosperity, and longevity of their husbands. The temple is just as crowded with devotees every fortnight on the 11th day of the lunar month on Ekadashi. Among the Ekadashis, the most prominent and holiest two are the Harishayani Ekadashi in Ashadh (June/July) and four months later, Haribodhini Ekadashi in Kartik (October/November).

The Slesh Mantak forest encircles the holy site where monkeys abound, and deer is reared in captivity to revere the animal form that Lord Shiva took as per the Swasthani Brata Katha.

The [Pashupati Bagmati Aarati](#) is one of the most engaging rituals at this pilgrimage site. Devotees from all over the country participate in this ritual whenever they [visit Pashupatinath Temple](#).

Guhyeshwari

It is one of the famous Shakti Peeths in Nepal and is located on the banks of the Bagmati River near the Pashupatinath Temple. Here too, non-Hindus are denied entry. The goddess is replicated here in the form of a silver-plated waterhole which is kept covered by a silver kalash (auspicious water jar). The Swasthani Brata Katha chronicles the origin of the temple. Following the death by

self-immolation in a fire by his beloved consort Sati Devi, a grief-stricken Shiva wandered aimlessly across the earth carrying her dead body on his shoulders. In the course of his directionless wandering, the corpse began to rot, and parts of the body fell at different places. Wherever those body parts fell, a Shakti Peeth originated, and the Mother Goddess in her manifestation as the consort of Lord Shiva came to stay there. Gods, sages and celestial beings came to the Shakti Peeths to do penance or offer worship to the goddess (Ishwari), and thus these spots became holy places. It was at this spot that the Guhya (anal portion) of the corpse fell, and hence this place came to be known as Guhyeshwari.

Access: The temple lies 5 km to the east of the city center. Besides taxis, minibuses or three wheelers called tempos will drop you at Gaushala from where it is a short walk to the temple.

Thamel

As the tourist district of [Kathmandu](#), Thamel bustles with activity late into the night. It is a mere 10-minute walk from the center of Kathmandu, yet completely different from the rest of the city. Thamel caters entirely to tourists with its scores of hotels, rows of restaurants and bars, book shops, inviting souvenir shops, cyber cafes and travel agencies. All that a tourist needs can be found here, even friends and traveling companions. Thamel is also great for shopping for [trekking](#) and [mountaineering](#) gear, travel accessories as well as souvenirs.

Asan

Once the center of old [Kathmandu](#), the Asan market square is located about midway on the only diagonal thoroughfare in Kathmandu that links [Durbar Square](#) with Durbar Marg. At Asan, there are six roads radiating in all directions. The three-storied pagoda style Annapurna Temple of Annapurna, the Goddess of Grains, presides over the ever-lively bazaar. Asan is still an important shopping center and one of the busiest market places with shops selling anything from local and imported spices to kitchenware, grocery, fresh vegetables, Chinese goods, hardware and clothes.

Kirtipur

Visit Kirtipur for an authentic experience of the Newari culture of Kathmandu Valley.

Located about 30 minutes from [Kathmandu](#) on a ridge 8 kilometers southwest of the city. Kirtipur, an ancient Newar town, is a little hill town with paved streets lined by typical red-brick houses and tiled roofs, as well as temple squares. An experience in itself, its age-old traditional Newari buildings blending with the new is a sight you wouldn't want to miss. Apart from its

architecture, Kirtipur is a lively town that hosts a variety of traditional events known as Jatras in Nepali, which visitors can attend. The most well-known Jatras are Indrayani Jatra in November and December, and Bagh Bhairab Jatra in August.

The Chilamchu Stupa and the Bagh Bhairab Temple are the main lures here. Bagh Bhairab is without a doubt the most well-known temple with Gurkha weapons on display. Other popular temples in the area include Aadinath Temple and Lohan Dega. Aside from the temples, you can also walk around Manjushree Park, hike to Chobhar Gorge, or go birdwatching at Taudaha Lake, which is located south of Kirtipur. Nepal's oldest university, [Tribhuvan University](#), is in the foothills of Kirtipur. After a long day of sightseeing, you can relax with your friends at one of the Newari [eateries](#) and spend the rest of the day munching on delectable Newari cuisine.

Garden of Dreams

At the entrance of [Thamel](#), the Garden of Dreams is a quiet oasis for city dwellers in the heart of [Kathmandu](#). The garden, a part of the Kaiser Mahal complex which was earlier in dire need of maintenance was renovated and restored to its former glory. Major attractions in this 24-acre garden include neo-classical pavilions, fountains, decorative garden furniture, Chinese Moon Gate and European inspired features such as pergolas, balustrades, urns and birdhouses. Today it is open to the public with a restaurant and bar.

Pharping

Lying 18 km south of Kathmandu on the [valley](#) rim, Pharping is perched on a hilltop with a Buddhist monastery. Pharping's main attraction is an elaborate 17-century temple which houses a gilded image of Goddess Bajra Jogini. Other fascinating sights here include a cave and a hand-imprint of the Buddhist saint Padmasambhav on the rock face over its entrance.

Patan

Patan is home to the valley's finest craftsmen who have preserved ancient techniques of metal craft.

Patan, also known as 'Lalitpur', the city of artisans, lies 5 km southeast of [Kathmandu](#), and is home to the valley's finest craftsmen who have preserved such ancient techniques as the repoussé and lost wax process used to produce exquisite sculptures. The city retains much of the old charm with its narrow streets, brick houses and multitude of well-preserved Hindu temples, Buddhist

monasteries (vihars) and monuments. The predominant sound in Patan is that of the tinkering of craftsmen bent over the statuettes they are shaping. As in Kathmandu, Hinduism and Buddhism have co-existed here for ages, influencing each other, and the religious harmony is exemplary.

PATAN DURBAR SQUARE ([UNESCO World Heritage Site](#)): Like its counterpart in Kathmandu, Patan Durbar Square is located in the heart of the city and was once the palace of the kings of Patan. The square is an enchanting mélange of palace buildings, artistic courtyards and graceful pagoda temples – a display of Newari architecture that had reached its pinnacle during the reign of the Malla kings. Among its numerous courtyards, the renovated Keshav Narayan Chowk has been converted into a bronze artifact museum. The Sundari Chowk with the sunken bath of Tusha Hiti is a showcase of exquisite woodcarvings, and stone and metal sculptures.

The magnificent Krishna Temple with its 21 gilded spires, built in 1637, and the Manga Hiti, the sunken stone water spout, found in the palace complex are but a few examples of its opulence. The Krishna Temple, built entirely of stone, is said to be the first specimen of Shikhara-style architecture in Nepal.

MAHABOUDHA: To the east of Patan Durbar Square is Mahabouddha, an exceptional Buddhist monument of exquisite terra cotta art form. On this 14th-century architectural masterpiece are engraved thousands of images of Lord Buddha.

RUDRA VARNA MAHAVIHAR: Also known as Uku Bahal, it is situated a few steps past Mahabouddha and contains an amazing collection of images and statues in metal, stone and wood. The stone-paved courtyard is enclosed by a two-story building with gilded roofs. The kings in ancient times were crowned in this monastery. Many of the treasures offered by devotees can be seen here even today.

HIRANYA VARNA MAHABIHAR: Dating from the 12th century, the three-storied shrine, also known as the Golden Temple, houses an image of the Buddha inside the courtyard or Kwa Bahal. The monastery is known for its exceptionally fine wood-carvings and repoussé work. It is a five-minute walk west and north from the northern end of Durbar Square.

KUMBHESHWAR: The temple dedicated to Shiva is the only five-storied pagoda in Patan and one of the only three surviving five-storey temples in the country. A natural spring within the courtyard of this temple built in 1392 is said to have its source in the glacial lake of [Gosainkunda](#) in northern Kathmandu. A large gathering of devotees arrive here for a ritual bath on the day of Janai

Poornima in August.

JAGAT NARAYAN: The Jagat Narayan Temple on the banks of the Bagmati River at Sankhamul is a tall Shikhara-style temple consecrated to Vishnu. Built of red bricks, the temple has many fine images. An attractive metal statue of Garuda mounted on a stone monolith is accompanied by several images of Ganesh and Hanuman.

ASHOKA STUPAS: There are four stupas, supposed to have been built by Emperor Ashoka of India in 250 BC, marking the four corners of Patan. They are situated at Pulchowk, Lagankhel, Ibahi and in Teta (way to Sano Gaon) respectively. At the time they were built, Buddhism was flourishing in the Kathmandu Valley.

TIBETAN CAMP: The camp on the outskirts of Patan is a tourist attraction with its souvenir shops that sell handwoven woollen carpets and handicrafts such as prayer wheels, an assortment of belt buckles, wooden bowls and jewelry. The camp also houses a stupa and a number of shrines.

PATAN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE: Situated at Lagankhel near Sat Dobato, it is known for handicrafts such as wood carvings, metal craft, handwoven woollen carpets and Thangka paintings. There is a [shopping](#) arcade where handicrafts are on exhibition.

Bhaktapur

City of Devotees - Bhaktapur is a treasure trove of artistic creations displayed on the temples and monuments of the city.

Perched on a hill at an altitude of 1,401 m, Bhaktapur or Bhadgaon, literally the City of Devotees, is a major tourist destination that takes visitors back in time. Bhaktapur lies 12 km to the east of [Kathmandu](#) on the Arniko Highway that leads to the Chinese border. Covering an area of 6.4 sq km, Bhaktapur has managed to retain its authentic ambiance with brick-paved roads, charming red brick houses and a way of life that goes back to medieval times. This ancient city is also famous for pottery and woodcarving amply displayed on the squares and windows of the local houses and temples.

BHAKTAPUR DURBAR SQUARE ([UNESCO World Heritage Site](#)): Bhaktapur Durbar Square is an elegant and open space facing south surrounded by buildings dating from the 13th century to the 18th century. The 15th century Palace of 55 Carved Windows called Pachpanna Jhyale Durbar and the palace entrance, the Golden Gate - a masterpiece in repoussé art, have added splendor to this palace square. The extraordinary Durbar Square with its extraordinary monuments

reflects the glory days of the Malla dynasty when art and architecture thrived in the three cities of the valley.

In front of the palace, building are innumerable temples and architectural showpieces like the Lion Gate, the statue of King Bhupatindra Malla mounted on a giant stone pillar and the Batsala Temple. The stone temple of Batsala Devi is full of intricate carvings and is a beautiful example of Shikhara-style architecture. There is a bronze bell on the terrace of the temple, which is also known as the Bell of Barking Dogs. Erected by King Ranjit Malla in 1737, its sounding announced the beginning and end of a daily curfew.

NYATAPOLA TEMPLE: The unique temple of Bhaktapur, the Nyatapola literally means ‘five storied’ and rises above the city’s landscape as a remarkable landmark. It also has the distinction of having withstood the devastating earthquake of 1933. Dedicated to a Tantric goddess, the steps leading up to the temple are flanked by stone sculptures of deities and mythical beasts, each 10 times more powerful than the one immediately below.

BHAIRAVNATH TEMPLE: Dedicated to Bhairav, the God of Terror, the three-storied temple of Bhairavnath has only the head of Bhairav in the inner sanctum. Legend has it that the Bhairav’s head was cut off by a Tantric expert in order to keep him in Bhaktapur. Built-in pagoda style, the temple is noted for its artistic grandeur and stands adjacent to the famous five-storied Nyatapola Temple.

DATTATREYA SQUARE takes its name from the Dattatreya Temple dedicated to a three-headed combination of the Hindu deities Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. This temple is said to have been built from the trunk of a single tree. Near this temple is a monastery with exquisitely carved peacock windows.

SIDDHA POKHARI: For a small city, Bhaktapur has the largest number of public water tanks built within the city limits. Siddha Pokhari, which dates back to the Lichhavi period, is situated at the bus stop. This large rectangular pond teems with fish and has stone images of different Hindu and Buddhist deities on the walls surrounding it.

THIMI is a Newar town situated about 8 km east of Kathmandu on the way to Bhaktapur. Besides farming, most of the households here are engaged in pottery. This laid-back town not only supplies Kathmandu its pottery but also its vegetables. The two important deities here are those of Balkumari Temple, dedicated to the Mother Goddess, and Karunamaya, the Buddha of Compassion.

SURYA BINAYAK: The temple dedicated to the Hindu deity Ganesh. Situated in a thick forest to the south of Bhaktapur, it is a 20-minute walk from the bus stop. The temple is crowded with devotees especially on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

CHANGU NARAYAN TEMPLE (World Heritage Monument): It is situated on a ridge overlooking Bhaktapur, about 12 km to the east of Kathmandu. Dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu, it is one of the oldest specimens of pagoda architecture in the valley. The temple dating from the Licchavi period is embellished with exquisite wood and stone carvings.

Trekking Regions

RARA

Visit Nepal's deepest Lake, the Rara, hiking through lovely Juniper forests and enjoy the spectacular landscape that surrounds this pristine lake.

Rara Lake at 2,990m, is the deepest lake in Nepal and also one of the most pristine. Surrounded by green hills on all sides, covered in juniper trees, one can camp by the sparkling waters of the lake. Go boating in the clear waters, hike to nearby hills for a closer view of the mountains and lake, get acquainted with the charming local people, or just walk around the large lake watching out for wild flowers or a rare bird along the way.

The park is surrounded by alpine coniferous vegetation and offers a representative sample of the region's flora and fauna. More than 500 different kinds of flowers, 20 species of mammals and 214 species of birds can be observed in the [Rara National Park](#). As for life in the lake, the snow trout is one of the fish varieties recorded here so far.

The rich vegetation of the park supports diverse species of wildlife including the endangered red panda, musk deer, Himalayan black bear, leopard, jackal, Himalayan tahr, Yellow-throated martin, wild dog, wild boar, common langur, rhesus macaque and the common otter. During winter the

park abounds in bird varieties like coots, great-crested grebe, black-necked grebe, red crested pochard, mallard, common teal, merganser and gulls. Migrant water fowl and gallinaceous birds can also be seen during certain seasons.

Rara in the far north western part of Nepal is the smallest national park in the country, while the Rara Lake is Nepal's biggest lake. The lake is 167m deep at some places, and drains into the rivers Mugu Karnali via Nijar Khola. Chuchemara Hill at 4,087m is the best vantage point to enjoy magnificent views of the deep blue lake, the forested hillsides and the snow capped peaks. The journey begins with a flight from Nepalgunj to Jumla, from where it is a 2-3 days hike to reach Rara Lake. Jumla is known for its fine apples and walking through these orchards can be an interesting experience.

The trek leads through remote countryside toward the Tibetan border. A journey into the Jumla region and the beautiful Rara Lake is probably one of the most fascinating treks in the Himalaya undisturbed by hordes of trekkers as one finds on other trek routes.

The best time to visit the park is in the spring, summer and autumn. As more people are now visiting the park, tourist services and infrastructure have developed over the years. However, for a great experience, it is still advisable to be self-sufficient if you are traveling alone. Lake Rara is also a popular [pilgrimage site](#) for Nepalis.

Jomsom and Muktinath

Trek through Jomsom and Muktinath, walk through the unique terrain, taste Thakali food and observe their rich culture.

Jomsom is a great place to start [trekking](#). The diverse landscape and culture found along this trekking route give marvelous insight into the way of life of Nepali people of various ethnic groups. The highlight is a trek through the deepest gorge in the world carved by the Kali Gandaki River, which originates in the Tibetan plateau to eventually flow into the Ganges in India.

Not too far from Jomsom, you find Muktinath, the famous pilgrimage site for Buddhists as well as Hindus. To Hindus, Muktinath is a sacred place of salvation. They believe that bathing in the waters here guarantees salvation after death. The Hindu god, Brahma, is said to have lit the eternal flames that burn at Muktinath.

To Buddhists, Muktinath is a place where the great sage Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) who brought Buddhism to Tibet, came to meditate.

The area is a perfect place to find fossilized ammonites, known locally as Shaligram, which are found all along the upper reaches of the Kali Gandaki.

This part of Nepal is inhabited by Gurungs and Magars in the lower regions of the Kali Gandaki, Thakalis around Jomsom and people with strong Tibetan roots, the Lopa, around Muktinath and up in Mustang.

Their customs and attire are distinct and this trek is ideal for observing the diversity of the ethnic groups and their customs. Hinduism dominates the lower parts while as one climbs further up, Tibetan Buddhism predominates.

If you happen to be in Muktinath in early September, you are likely to be in time for one of Nepal's unique festivals, the annual horse race known as Yartung. This is a week of some serious horse racing, Tibetan style, and some equally serious merrymaking.

Most of the route along the Jomsom trek forms a part of the Annapurna circuit and [Annapurna foothill treks](#). The usual starting point is Naya Pul on the Pokhara to Baglung road and from there, via Ghorepani and Tatopani, into the gorge of the Kali Gandaki.

Between Tatopani and Lete Khola, there is a dramatic change of scenery. Pine forests crowd in on the trail and the villages take on a quite different appearance.

The layout of the villages and the design of the houses are unique to this area. The houses are

designed to protect the inhabitants from the strong winds that blow up the valley everyday from late morning onwards.

These winds are caused by differences in atmospheric pressure between the Tibetan plateau and the lower reaches of the valley. The best example of the unique architecture of this region is found in the village of Marpha which is a two-hour walk down from Jomsom.

The stone flagged streets with efficient underground drainage system and the flat-roofed houses with a central courtyard make an attractive spot to spend an extra day resting. Use the free time to sample apple products of this region from the lush orchards up in the valley.

Jomsom is best known for its airport that offers a quick entry or exit to the valley with regular daily flights from [Pokhara](#). The strong winds that blow up the valley prevents flights from taking off from Jomsom after 11 a.m. Jomsom can also be considered a place to use as a base for exploring the upper part of the Kali Gandaki region. There are numerous accommodation options including a new high-class resort complex.

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An alternative to Jomsom as a base for the trek is the village of Kagbeni which is a two-hour walk up the valley. Kagbeni is not as commercialized as Jomsom and certainly much quieter. This is the furthest trekkers are allowed to go towards Upper Mustang without a special permit and an accompanying Environmental Officer.

Upper Mustang

Enjoy the unique chance to trek to the mystical land beyond the Himalaya.

Trekking in Upper Mustang is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. As, it allows you to witness the way of life of true mountain people, who have had little contact with the rest of the world for hundreds of years. Trekking in Upper Mustang is like trekking in Tibet in many ways, as it is geographically part of the Tibetan plateau. Prepare to be awestruck by breathtaking landscapes and meet the people of one of the world's most culturally preserved regions.

Until 1950, the district of Mustang was a separate kingdom within the borders of Nepal. Upper Mustang was opened to non-Nepali trekkers in 1994, and visiting the region today feels like stepping back in time. To enter Upper Mustang, trekkers need a special permit and must be accompanied by a government appointed official. Because of its location in the Himalayan rain shadow area, it is one of the few regions in the country suitable for trekking even during the monsoon season. The Mustang trek is not particularly difficult, with the highest point reached at only 3,800 meters, but the conditions can be difficult at times. Mustang gets cold in the winter and is always windy. Winter treks should be avoided due to inclement weather.

The old capital of upper mustang, Lo Manthang, can be reached in four days, but at least one extra day should be spent here to take in the sights and sounds of this unique walled settlement. Ponies can be rented if you desire. During the return trip, you can take the same route you took to enter or a different route along the eastern bank of the Kali Gandaki river.

Namche bazaar

Step into Namche Bazaar, a place with gorgeous views, and connect with the most hospitable communities.

Namche Bazaar (3,500 m) is the staging point for expeditions to [Everest](#) and other Himalayan peaks in the area. It has developed into a small, colorful market town selling everything from Tibetan artifacts to [trekking](#), climbing equipment and everything you might need during your trip. The visitor center at park headquarters has detailed information on various climbs in the area, memorabilia from different [mountaineering expeditions](#), and information on the lifestyle and culture of the Sherpa people.

A historic trading hub, famous for its homemade yak cheese and butter, Namche is situated on the slope of an arch-shaped mountain, with amazing views of giant Himalayan peaks from anywhere

in the valley. Despite its development, Namche Bazaar still retains its ancient culture, traditions, and heart-warming hospitality. Besides the usual collection of hotels, restaurants, and equipment stores, one can even find a regular pub, Wi-Fi facilities, and a place to play pool. It is wise to halt here for a couple of days to get acclimatized by walking up and down in the vicinity as acclimatization is a slow process. A visit to [Syangboche](#) or some Sherpa villages like Thame, [Khumjung and Khunde](#) , just a few hours walk from Namche are good options for whiling away your time, which also helps you get acclimatized.

Every Saturday morning, Namche Bazaar gears up for the weekly market fair which lights up the place. This fair puts the spotlight on the middle of the town, where traders from Tibet and neighboring villages display their wares and essential goods to attract potential customers.

Now a major gateway to Everest, Namche Bazaar has become a busy tourist hub where climbers and trekkers can-do last-minute shopping for essentials.

Annapurna I (8091m)

The tenth highest mountain in the world

Latitude: 27° 51' 42" N, Longitude: 86° 51' 50" E

The Annapurna range is a series of peaks stretching 55 km with the highest point, Mt. Annapurna I, being the tenth highest summit in the world. It lies east of a great gorge cut through the Himalaya by the Kali Gandaki River, which separates it from the other large massif, the Dhaulagiri. Dhaulagiri I is 34 km west of Annapurna I. In Sanskrit Annapurna literally means “full of grains” but is normally taken to mean “Goddess of Harvests”. The Hindu Goddess of fertility is also known as Annapurna. The entire massif lies within the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). Mt Annapurna I is the main peak of this chain of mountains which includes three other peaks that share its name. They are Annapurna II (7,937m), Annapurna III (7,555m) and Annapurna South

(7,219m). Unlike other giants, the Annapurna I barely stands out, most of it hidden by other peaks in front of it.

The conquest of Annapurna I was remarkable in many ways. For a start, the French climbers spent weeks just trying to locate the mountain as it was still unexplored. It was the first eight-thousander to be climbed and even more remarkable was the fact that they did it on their first attempt. This was highly unusual as on most mountains of this size, many exploratory teams went up to study the possible routes up to the summit. Only after several expeditions had tried and failed would one eventually succeed. When Annapurna I was climbed, Nepal was still under Rana rule and the country was strictly closed to outsiders. The climb made Maurice Herzog, the expedition leader very famous, this being the first eight-thousander to be climbed. No expeditions had taken to the mountains from Nepal before this team and so sherpas had to be hired from Darjeeling from where many expeditions were launched via Tibet. Even before the team arrived in Nepal, they had given themselves two options: Climb Dhaulagiri or Annapurna. Finding the former too difficult to climb, they turned their attention to the latter. As we have seen over the years of climbing history, the best time to climb in the Himalaya is May. However, by the time Herzog and his team were heading up to the summit it was the beginning of June. Having received news that the monsoon was to begin from 5th June, they were racing against time and made the summit just two days before the weather changed for the worse. Herzog and Louis Lachenal reached the top on 3rd June via the north face. The two summiteers paid a heavy price for the climb, losing their toes and some fingers to frostbite. Herzog would not climb any major peak following this historic climb. The first Nepali climber to summit this peak was Sonam Wolang Sherpa on 13th October 1977.

Mt. Everest (8,848 m)

Climb Everest if you want to stand on top of the world, or do the extremely popular Everest Base Camp Trek to enter a strange world of ice and snow.

Reach the highest point on earth or choose to live out your dream by standing at the foot of Mt. Everest (8,848 m).

The **Everest region in Nepal** is more than just climbing and trekking, it is a life-changing experience and some see it as a journey close to achieving Nirvana. Located in the northeastern province of Nepal, this region is in a world of its own with vast glaciers, icefalls, the highest mountains, deep valleys, precarious settlements, and hardy people challenging the harshest

conditions thrown at them by nature in the thin air of high altitude.

Passing through legendary Sherpa villages, the trek is a mix of deep cultural and spiritual experiences and physical challenges that test your strength and endurance. Buddhist lamas, monks and nuns led by Rinpoches (reincarnate at mas) serve the predominantly Sherpa communities from their gompas ([monasteries](#)).

The journey to Everest or [Everest Base Camp](#) begins with a dramatic flight from Kathmandu to Lukla, after which you hike up the Everest region to reach your destination in the Himalayas. However, for die-hard lovers of trekking, there is another switchback starting from Jiri through the mid-hills of Solu, an ethnically diverse section of the trek rich

For those with sufficient time, a 10-12 day trek through Solu to the Khumbu and the [Sagarmatha National Park](#) is an excellent itinerary both in terms of acclimatization and to observe the changing customs, traditions, and lifestyles as you go from the lower altitude settlements to those in the higher altitudes.

A part of the Himalayan ecological zone, the park was added to the list of [UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites](#) in 1979. The park has three of the world's highest mountains: Everest, Lhotse, and Cho Oyu besides countless other peaks that rise above 6,000 meters from sea level.

Taking a flight is a time-saver, while trekking from Jiri gives you the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Tenzing and Hillary before their conquest of Everest. With more time to interact with the charming people along the route, you get to see the rich flora and fauna on the long trail. You get the added benefit of natural acclimatization as you go up and down the cliffs and valleys.

The option from Jiri will roughly add 10 days to your trip to the famous Sherpa village, [Namche Bazaar](#) (3,500m). The **Sagarmatha National Park** in which Mt. Everest lies is one of the few places on earth with the rarest bio-diversity and the highest mountains in the world.

Climbers and trekkers continue to trek to *Everest Base Camp* and not surprisingly the "Roof of the World" continues to be the world's top attraction for hardened mountaineers, a haven for alpine enthusiasts and is on the bucket list of adventurers from around the world.

The Everest region has been valued as the key to the evolutionary history of the Earth and is also a habitat for some rare and endangered species like the snow leopard, red panda, Himalayan black

bear, musk deer and Himalayan wolves.

Manaslu Conservation Area

Activities: [Trekking](#), [mountaineering](#)

Accommodation: Camping, lodges

Access: By bus to Dhading (87 km from Kathmandu) or to Besisahar (106 km from [Pokhara](#)) and then trek

Wildlife: 33 species of mammals including snow leopard, musk deer and Himalayan tahr; three species of reptiles

Birds: 110 species of birds

Vegetation: 1,500-2,000 species of flowering plants

Best Season: March-May, September-November

Park Headquarters: Prok

Added attractions: 11 species of butterfly

Entrance Fee: Nepalis - Free, SAARC nationals - NPR 200 per person per entry, foreigners - NPR 2,000 per person per entry

The trek on an ancient trail along which you enjoy authentic Nepali culture and hospitality, promises breathtaking views of Manaslu and other Himalayan peaks always on the background. You get to witness ancient cultures and the almost medieval lifestyle of the people as you trek up north towards the peaks.

Shielded from modernization and commercialization, the local people's lifestyle has changed little over the centuries, thus retaining their purity. So your trek to Manaslu will be akin to time-travel. going back in time. The trail has teahouses along the way for a night halt, but one could opt for a camping trek and sleep under the stars.

Langtang National Park

Activities: [Trekking](#), mountaineering, experience of Tamang culture

Accommodation: Lodges, camping, teahouse

Access: From Dhunche, which is 117 km by road from [Kathmandu](#)

Wildlife: Wild dog, red panda, pika, muntjac, musk deer, Himalayan black bear, Himalayan tahr, ghoral, serow, rhesus monkey, langur monkey, snow leopard

Birds: 373 species of birds including tragopan and impeyan pheasant

Vegetation: Sub-tropical forests below 1,000 m giving way to alpine shrubs and grasslands

Best Season: October-November and March-May (cold at higher elevation), June-September (monsoon), December-February (snow)

Park Headquarters: Dhunche

Added Attraction: [Gosainkunda Lake](#), Langtang Valley, Helambu

Entrance Fee: Nepalis - NPR 25 per person per entry, SAARC nationals - NPR 1,500 per person per entry, foreigners - NPR 3,000 per person per entry

Khaptad National Park

Activities: [Trekking](#), Birdwatching

Accommodation: Camping

Access: Fly from [Kathmandu](#)-Nepalgunj (60 min.), then fly to Chainpur (Bajhang) 20 min. and then a three-day walk; or fly Kathmandu-Dhangadi (1 hr 10 min.) 670 km by drive, then 10 hours' drive to Silgadi and then 1 day trek

Wildlife: Wildlife include 20 species of mammals including barking deer, wild boar, ghoral, Himalayan black bear, yellow-throated marten, rhesus monkey and langur monkey

Birds: 175 species of birds, the common ones being different varieties of impeyan pheasant,

partridges, flycatchers, bulbuls, cuckoos and eagles including several species of migratory birds

Vegetation: Grasslands and forests of subtropical, temperate and sub alpine vegetation; 224 species of medicinal herbs

Best Season: March-May and October-November (10-20 degrees Celsius), June-September (rainy), December-February (snow)

Park Headquarters: Khaptad

Added Attraction: Ashram of Khaptad Swami, Khaptad Lake, Tribeni, Sahashra Linga (at 3,200 m, the highest point of the park), Ganesh Temple, Nagdhunga and Kedardhunga

Entrance Fee: Nepali - Free, SAARC nationals -NPR 100 per person per entry, Foreigners - NPR 1,000 per person per entry

RAMAROSHAN

Ramaroshan in Achham district is also called Pancha Pura (five cities) in Hindu scriptures and is attached to the stories of the Pauranic Age. The site is famous for the five historical cities connected to the stories of Goddess Parvati. There are 12 lakes in Khaptad National Park that are good bird watching sites. There are also ruins of old historical buildings that make this region important from an archaeological point of view.

Badimallika

From Badimallika, there are enchanting views of the Himalayas and the ideal time to visit is from April to October. One can reach the area from Khaptad National Park by trekking for 8 to 10 days through remarkable landscapes of verdant forests and pastures. Badmallika houses the temple of Mallika Devi (4,153m) in the Bajura district. It is believed that Goddess Sati, Shiva's consort was reborn as Parvati in this holy site.

Tengboche

Visit the enchanting Tengboche, on the lap of sacred Khumbila across the stunning Ama Dablam.

TENGBOCHE MONASTERY

Tengboche Monastery is one of the most famous monasteries of Nepal, probably because of the unrivalled backdrop of Mt. Ama Dablam. The monastery is a leading Buddhist center in the Khumbu region with a residing Rinpoche who blesses the pilgrims, mountaineers and travelers.

Every October, Tengboche Monastery hosts the colorful Mani Rimdu festival, which is a culmination of Buddhist celebrations with a religious gathering, songs, ritual dances, and enactments of the lives of legendary figures. Visitors are welcome to partake in the festivities and many trekkers book their trek to coincide with the festival. Tours of the monastery are conducted every afternoon. Tengboche lies on the very popular trek route to the [Everest region](#).

Atop a hill across Imja Khola, Tengboche is the most common night halt after [Namche](#). The monastery is perched on a high ridge across the canyon from [Khunde](#). The original Tengboche Monastery was burnt down in 1989 and replaced with a more solid structure.

Pines, azaleas and colorful rhododendrons surround the attractive gompa (monastery), with a stunning panoramic view of Everest, Lhotse and Ama Dablam. Tengboche has many rest houses and lodges as well as spacious camping sites.

From Tengboche you can continue to Pheriche, Kala Pattar and the hamlet of Gorakshep. From here, the Everest Base Camp is easily reached, as is the summit of Kala Pattar (5,545 m), known for outstanding views of Mt. Everest. However, it is advisable to take time to acclimatize and avoid rapid gain in altitude to avoid altitude sickness.

Gokyo

Take an alternative route to the serene Gokyo valley with pristine glacial lakes.

The picturesque Gokyo valley lies towards the west of the famous Khumbu region of the Himalaya and is a part of [Sagarmatha National Park](#). The serene valley boasts extensive pastures for yaks to graze during summer and the pristine turquoise lakes are simply breathtaking. Gokyo can be visited after trekking up to [Everest Base Camp](#) or by trekking directly to Gokyo. One can also charter a helicopter and fly there.

Gokyo valley consists of small villages nestled in the Himalaya where most of the houses are tea-houses catering to the trekkers with necessary services. Popular for its views, one of the eight-thousanders, Cho Oyu is seen towards the north from Gokyo along with the spectacular panoramic view of other eight-thousanders extending from Everest, Lhotse all the way to Makalu. There are many great views all around the valley, but one can venture up to the summit of Gokyo Ri situated at an altitude of 5,357 m to get an all-round spectacular view of the peaks and the pristine Gokyo lakes. The holy Gokyo lakes are of religious significance to the Hindus and Buddhists. These lakes

also provide refuge to the migratory birds on their trans- Himalayan migration, twice annually. Apart from this, Gokyo is also renowned for being the world's highest altitude ice skating range and a part of [Ramsar sites](#).

FESTIVALS

Tihars

Enjoy Tihar, the festival of lights & colors!

The five-day festival of lights, known as Tihar honors Yama, the God of Death, meanwhile the worship of Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth dominates the festivities.

On the first day Kaag Tihar, is the day of the crow, the informant of Yama is worshipped. The second day Kukur Tihar is for worshipping the dogs as the agents of Yama. On the third day is Gai Tihar and Laxmi Puja. On this day cow is offered prayers and food in the morning, and Goddess Laxmi is offered elaborate prayers and puja in the evening.

The fourth day is for the draught animal, oxen when the Newari community also performs Mha Puja dedicated to oneself. The fifth day is Brothers' Day when sisters put tika on their brothers' foreheads and give blessings. This festival is noted for lighting up of homes with candles, oil-wick lamps and electric lights.

Houses all over the country are lit up with extra lights and decorated with garlands. A great view can be had of the brightly lit-up Kathmandu city from the Swoyambhunath Stupa. The celebrations begin with the adoration of crows and dogs. Leaf dishes of rice, incense and light are set out for the dark messenger, while dogs are worshipped and offered goodies.

During the day known as Laxmi Puja, the Goddess of Wealth, is welcomed to people's homes by making a path of footprints leading into the house. All lights are kept on and the doors and windows kept open to let in the goddess. Rows of lamps are placed along windows and doors, with the strong hope that Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth notices and enters. The day also belongs to the cow that represents Laxmi.

Bhai Tika is the day people look forward to. In some communities, sisters and brothers accept tika from each other. Bhai means brother in Nepali. Brothers and sisters honor each other and the sisters pray to Yama, the God of Death, for their brothers' progress, prosperity and longevity.

The brothers bring gifts to their sisters and the festival ends with feasting. It is also traditional to go from house to house singing Tihar songs and bestowing blessings, whereupon the residents of the house give money in return. Fireworks also fill the skies despite a government ban on fire-crackers.

Nag Panchami

Prayers & offerings are made to the Nagas on this day for their help in bringing rain to the valley. Nepali people worship snake gods, also called the Nagas during Nag Panchami. In the ancient time Nagas halted rain from pouring over Nepal. The king of that time also happened to be a Tantric and so he used his power to make Nagas let go of rain. The king succeeded in doing so but he also honored the majestic power of Nagas by turning the day of victory into a festive occasion of Nag Panchami. On Nag Panchami, devotees put a picture of Naga high above their doorway and perform puja with necessary puja items. Offerings in the form of food are left in the yards and paddies for snakes. Naga temples in the valley at Nagpokhari, Taudaha and Nagdaha are thronged with devotees on this day.

Trek to Holy Gosainkunda this Janai Purnima to observe unique & ancient Shaman customs.

Janai Purnima is a Hindu festival celebrated all over the country, with family get togethers and feasts of Kwati or sprout lentils. This day is also a harbinger of rejuvenation with Hindu men renewing their Janai and people flocking to Shiva temples in different parts of the country. It is a big day to observe the Shaman culture.

On this day Shamans of the valley and around Nepal gather to perform their ancient rites in places like the Kumbeshwar in Patan, Gosaikunda in Langtang and Charikot in Dolakha. International counterparts trained by Nepali Shamans also make it a point to visit their sacred sites on this occasion.

This full moon day sees a large number of Brahmins at the holy riverbanks. They take ritual dips in the water and offer ablution to the gods. They then change their sacred threads. Brahman priests tie yellow sacred threads around the wrists of the faithful.

Newars of Kathmandu Valley call this festival Gunhi Punhi and they prepare a soup of a mixture of beans called Kwati as special food for the day. Kwati is a nutritious soup made from sprouted beans.

At Kumbheswar in Patan, a richly decorated Lingam, the phallic symbol of Lord Shiva, is placed on a raised platform in the middle of the Kumbheswar pond to receive homage from devotees. Another ceremony that takes place here is Byan-ja Nakegu, during which rice is offered to frogs in gratitude for a good spell of rain.

Join the carnival of dancing, singing, mirth & laughter, on the streets of Kathmandu Valley.

Gai Jatra is a festival of dancing, singing, mirth and laughter. The festival of cow is celebrated in the Kathmandu Valley to commemorate the death of loved ones. As part of the festival family members of the deceased of the past year send people mostly children, dressed as cows to parade on the streets. The festival usually falls in July or August.

Gai Jatra is a time to remember lost ones and also to ease the pain. The word "Gai" means cow in English. Cow is regarded as the goddess of wealth in the Hindu religion. Sharing of sorrow and taking the comfort in knowing that their lost ones are safe is the true reason of celebrating this festival.

The day is also marked with a gay parade along with many people dressed in weird clothes. In Bhaktapur the festival lasts for eight days. The origin of this celebration goes back to the reign of the Malla rulers. It is said that the Malla Queen was in mourning for a long time after the untimely death of her son. The king in an attempt to console her asked every family that lost a loved one to come out in a procession to show the queen that she was not alone with her suffering. That is why there is much joy and joking during the procession that goes through the streets.

Celebrate the life & legend of Lord Krishna by visiting a nearby Krishna temple on this auspicious night!

The birthday of Lord Krishna is celebrated as Krishn Ashtami. Krishna, the dark- skinned god revered as a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, who taught warrior Arjuna the value of Karma in the Bhagwad Gita, was born at midnight on the eighth day of the dark moon of August which is known as ashtami.

To celebrate the birthday of this popular Hindu god, devotees flock to Krishna temples all over Nepal; Kathmandu Valley's Krishna Mandir in Patan Durbar Square is the center of celebrations and is thronged by a large number of devotees who gather at night to pay homage beyond mid-night. Even during the day, hordes of devotees visit the temple to pray and make offerings .

At night, men and women from far and wide gather in and around the 17th century stone temple singing praises of Lord Krishna waiting for the midnight hour. Euphoric prayers and incantations fill the air, and small oil lamps are lit as a mark of felicitation and devotion to the god.

Images of Lord Krishna are also carried around the city in processions accompanied by joyous crowds of followers and musical troupes. Along the lanes of old Kathmandu people display framed pictures of Krishna showing various episodes of his amazing life.

Observe unique celebrations of fathers' day on Kushe Aunsi also known as Gokarna Aunsi.

Watch the Nepali people celebrate their traditional fathers' day. Kushe Aunsi is a fathers' day festival and is also known as Gokarna Aunsi.

This is a special day set apart for the veneration of one's father. On this auspicious day, sons as well as daughters go home to meet and spend quality time with their fathers. Home-cooked delicacies, sweets, meat and other gifts are offered to all fathers.

On the streets are seen married daughters with goodies making their way to their maternal home to meet, no matter how busy their schedule is. Many people celebrate this festival by offering prayers to the Shiva shrine at Gokarna Temple. People also visit the temple at Gokarna or other holy places to perform "shraddh" in memory of their deceased fathers. The date does not coincide with the international fathers' day and is based on the lunar

calendar as all the other cultural festivals celebrated in Nepal.

Watch the exciting festival of chariot processions, masked dances, religious enactments, lights, color & Living Goddess Kumari as the center of celebrations.

The eight-day long Indra Jatra festival falls in September and is one of the most exciting and revered festivals of the Newar community of the Kathmandu Valley. This also marks the beginning of a month-long festival season of autumn. It begins with the erection of a wooden pole made of pine at Basantapur Square in front of the old Hanuman Dhoka Palace.

For the pole-raising ceremony, hundreds of spectators gather at the Palace Square and on the surrounding temples. The chariot of Kumari, the Living Goddess, is taken out in a procession through the main streets of Kathmandu.

Masked dancers known as Lakhay take to the streets almost every evening accompanied by loud drums. The festival commemorates the time when Indra came down from heaven in human form to look for an herb.

Each night of Indra Jatra the shrines and ancient palace buildings around Kathmandu Durbar Square are aglow with oil wicks. Each night on the platform in front of the temple of the Living Goddess, there is an enactment depicting the ten earthly incarnations of Lord Vishnu. The large image of Akash Bhairab's head is put on display out in the open directly facing his temple at Indra Chowk.

In the afternoon of the day before full moon, ecstatic mobs gather near Hanuman Dhoka Palace for the long-awaited Living Goddess' chariot procession to catch a glimpse of the revered little Newar girl who has been deified as Kumari representing Goddess Taleju.

The chariot of the Kumari followed by two other smaller chariots carrying a representative of Ganesh and Bhairav is taken to different parts of the old Kathmandu through the narrow alleys where people gather to watch and pay homage. The festival of Indra Jatra ends with the lowering of the (lingam) pole bearing Indra's flag amidst religious ceremonies.

Visit Nepal during Dashain, for the best of natural and cultural experience.

This is the longest Hindu festival in Nepal, traditionally celebrated for two weeks with prayers and offerings to Durga, the Universal Mother Goddess. The great harvest festival of Nepal, Dashain is a time for family reunions, exchange of gifts and blessings, and elaborate pujas. Dashain honors the Goddess Durga, who was created out of the shakti or energy of all the gods, armed with weapons from each of them.

Goddess Durga, symbolizing valor and prowess, is worshipped and offered sacrifices to ensure the devotees' progress and prosperity. During the first ten days, pilgrims flock to various river confluences early in the morning and sacred shrines in the evening. Ghatasthapana, Phool Pati, Mahaastami, Nawami and Vijaya Dashami are the series of the events under Dashain each marked with a different set of rituals.

During Dashain, men and women in their fineries visit their elders to seek tika (a dab of red vermilion mixed with yogurt and rice) accompanied by blessings. Sword processions (Paayaa) are also held in various part of the Kathmandu Valley. A large number of animals are officially sacrificed at Hanuman Dhoka during Nawami which is attended by officials, invitees and visitors.

During the ninth day, the Taleju Temple which is normally out of bounds is also open to the public. The last day, known as Kojagrat Purnima, is the full moon. New clothes, home visits, grand feasts, kite flying and village swings are the highlights of Dashain. Around this time the population of Kathmandu is greatly reduced as many head home to various parts of the country.

On the tenth day known as Tika, people are seen moving around with their foreheads covered with rice tika, wearing new clothes. There is much feasting as people visit relatives' homes to receive tika and blessings.