



WalkingWomen – Intermediate Nepal 08 - 22 April 2017 (Sat-Sat)

Holiday details

The incredible experience of trekking in Nepal need not be purely for high level walkers. The Hindu and Buddhist temples of Kathmandu, the amazing medieval city of Baktapur, the serenity of Phewa Tal ('Fish Tail Lake') in Pokhara, and the breath taking views of the Himalaya are all features of this intermediate holiday to Nepal – including a 6-day circular trek to Gorapani in the Annapurna region. At Gorapani, weather permitting, we'll climb Poon Hill and watch the sun rise over the magnificent Annapurna range. There'll be bamboo forests and huge rhododendron trees in flower, monkeys in the trees, steep stone steps that we'll take as slowly as we need, and little villages dotting the terraced hillsides where we'll stop for tea. From Pokhara before the trek, we will have a warm-up walk to Sunrise View at Sarankot, and maybe cross the lake by boat to climb to the Peace Temple. The walks on this holiday are generally to the full limit of Intermediate height gain, but usually shorter in distance. We will stay in 3-star hotels in Kathmandu & Pokhara, and simple tea houses on the trek (basic accommodation usually with twin rooms and most have squat toilets). Luggage is transported for you - you carry a day pack only.



Price includes: 13 nights in Nepal & all costs **except** flight, visa, entrance fees to sites in Kathmandu, tips, and snacks & lunch and evening meals when not on trek, but these will be very cheap.

Flights & Transfers – Flight to Kathmandu is not included We believe that this gives maximum flexibility and the best chance of getting a good price as well as the option to extend your stay. Flights must fit with the transfers below otherwise you will be responsible for your own transfer. To find suitable flights try www.skyscanner.net.

Transfers: The transfers are included for the flights given below. However, if you book a different flight and you arrive at a different time, it is straightforward for us to arrange an airport taxi transfer (A taxi from the airport to the Thamel district of Kathmandu will cost approx 500 NR –about £5.00).

Flight information:

Outbound

DATE	FLIGHT	AIRPORT	COUNTRY	CHECK-IN	DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRPORT	COUNTRY
08/04/2017	Jet Airways 9W121	London Heathrow	UK	18:15	20:45	09:45 on 9th	Indira Gandhi Delhi	INDIA
09/04/2016	Jet Airways 9W260	Indira Gandhi Delhi	INDIA	transfer	13:45	15:45	Kathmandu	NEPAL

Return

DATE	FLIGHT	AIRPORT	COUNTRY	CHECK-IN	DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRPORT	COUNTRY
22/04/2017	Jet Airways 9W263	Kathmandu	NEPAL	07:00	09:50	11:20	Indira Gandhi Delhi	INDIA
22/04/2017	Jet Airways 9W122	Indira Gandhi Delhi	INDIA	transfer	13:35	18:20	London Heathrow	UK

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Is your passport in date? Please check that your passport will be in date for **at least 6 months** after the trip finishes, as this is a requirement when entering Nepal. Please check this at this stage so that you will have plenty of time to renew it if necessary.

Itinerary

The walks and trek are intermediate in grade overall. On one day there is an ascent of just under 800m (third day of trek) and on another, a descent of 1000m (last full day of trek), but otherwise the 'up's and 'downs' are comfortably within the WW Intermediate grade and the walks are not long, usually finishing just after lunch. The trek is called 'low level' in the Himalaya sense because it only reaches 'altitude' (3200m) on the walk up to Poon Hill from Gorapani. We will take all the steep inclines and stone stairs slow and steady so problems with altitude are highly unlikely – even on the way to Poon Hill. It also helps to walk slowly, drink plenty throughout the day, eat well in the evening and take nibbles to eat in the day (extra dried fruit, nuts, flapjacks etc can be bought in Kathmandu or on the trek).

1. – leave Heathrow on Air India flight, stop in Delhi the next morning to change planes, then fly to Kathmandu.
2. – Arrive in Kathmandu. Settle into our simple ensuite twin rooms at Hotel Norbu Linka (in a little back street, Tibetan owned and very friendly, has a roof veranda). Unless there's a flight time change, there won't be much time to explore before dinner, but there are small shops and change bureaux near the hotel in the Thamel district if needed. Early evening chat with Lorraine about the trip and the trek. Eat out at a good local Newari restaurant
3. – Sightseeing in Kathmandu: which may include Swayambunath Monastery, Pashaputinath temple (Hindu), Boudhanath Stupa (Tibetan Buddhist) and a short drive to the incredible city of Baktapur which has hardly changed in the last 1000 years. Spend some time wandering through its narrow streets, visiting its Durbar Square where all the temples are. Return to Kathmandu. Eat out in local restaurant.
4. – Check out of Hotel Nurbu Linka. Fly to Pokhara - a beautiful small town beside Phewa Tal Lake where the kings summer palace stands. Check in to our hotel here. Phewa Tal means Fish Tail because Fish Tail Mountain looks down on it. It's lovely to walk by the lake or explore the town and its small shops. In the afternoon we will do a short local walk to a waterfall and Tibetan Refugee Community village where they still make carpets in the traditional way. Eat out at local restaurant – plenty of excellent ones to choose from.
5. – Early am drive to Sarankot for a sunrise view over the Annapurna range & Fish Tail mountain. Then after a short uphill walk and a stop for breakfast, we walk down to Pokhara through little villages and terraces returning along the lake. Leisure time in afternoon. Pack for trek. Eat out in Pokhara in the evening.
6. – Leave early, and drive to Dampus (1.5 hrs) to start the trek. Fabulous views from the start and an easy gradual up through rhododendron forest to Pothana (1990m). Around 2 hr walk with 300m ascent. Lots to see with people and donkey trains passing. We will stay and eat at a simple lodge/tea house with views of Fish Tail mountain.
7. – Leave Pothana for Landruk (1620m) with an initial 1hr uphill climbing through forests for a total of about 200m to a pass with views of the river far below and maybe a tea stop. If we're lucky we will already have fine views of Annapurna South and Hiunchuli to the north and Fish Tail and Pokhara to the south. Then we descend, steeply in places, for around 450m down stone steps and through forests, until we cross a bridge and continue into the Gurung village of Ghandruk where we arrive at our tea house for the night.
8. Landruk to Ghandruk (also known as Ghandrung, 1990m) We set off down hill until we reach and cross the river and then start making our way up hill for around 4hours climbing 600metres along paths running between villages and terraces. This path is the only 'road' and we will pass women carrying loads, children going to school in next village, donkey trains carrying grain higher into mountains... We may have lunch at one of first tea houses in Ghandruk, then walk up more steps through Ghandruk to our relatively modern lodge. Ghandruk is the second largest Gurung settlement in Nepal and there are two little cultural museums and an also small temple.
9. – Leave Ghandruk for Tadapani (2721m). First we climb steadily up to reach Rhododendron forest. On the way we have spectacular views of Annapurna South. Here we'll take a breather before starting into the forest, passing waterfalls and trees in flower. We may see monkeys in the trees (taking care of the tree roots and any buffalo!) More tea houses to stop at before we reach the village of Tadapani for the night. Tadapani means 'Plenty of water'.



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10. – Tadapani to Gorapani (2860m). Crossing and recrossing a river (but not by rickety suspension bridges) we will make our way up to through rhododendron forest to a pass, then along a ridge and down to Gorapani. Gorepani means "Difficult to find water" (due to its higher elevation). It is a larger village with a post office, a few shops and a place to swap books. Time to spare for exploring the village before we eat at the lodge. Bed early if the forecast is good.
11. – (Weather permitting) up at 4am to climb up Poon Hill (3200m) in the dark with head torches & flap jacks for energy. Voices heard in the dark are others doing the same. Arrive on Poon Hill encircled by mountains at approx 5.30 to watch the sun rising over the Annapurna range – an unforgettable experience. Return to Gorapani for breakfast, then set off down towards our lodge in the Magar village of Ulleri (2080) through rhododendron forest and bamboo and then pass villages and fields. We will cover over 1000m of descent on this day, but done in two parts and we will take our time and rest at tea shops.
12. – Descend from Ulleri (2080m) to Hile (1480) - down a steep stone stepped path and a wide stone trail, stopping at tea houses to rest our knees. We walk for 3 hours before we meet the jeep or minibus that will drive us back to Pokhara to return to the Mountain Lodge Resort. We can spend the afternoon crossing the lake in a small boat and climbing the hill to the Peace Temple or exploring the small shops for souvenirs and presents or we can rest and take the time to just sit and take it all in by the lake. Eat out that evening in one of Pokhara's many small restaurants.
13. – Leave Pokhara and fly by small plane back to Kathmandu with different and striking views of the mountains if we're lucky. Settle back into Hotel Nurbu Linka and then you have a free afternoon to do more shopping and sight seeing. Eat out in Kathmandu that evening.
14. – Last day of leisure in Kathmandu. Could do early flight around Everest (weather permitting. Not included – approx £120) or take time for present shopping, see Kathmandu's Durbar Square, or just wander the narrow streets and shops of the Thamel district. Eat out in Kathmandu
15. – fly back to UK, changing plane in Delhi, and arriving back to Heathrow in the evening.

Visa

A full passport (make sure it will be valid for 6 months after your return from Kathmandu) and a visa is required for entry into Nepal. A single entry 15-day visa costs £20.00. It can be obtained direct from the Nepalese Embassy not far from Notting Hill Gate tube in London, between 10.00-12.00 Mon-Fri, or it can be obtained by post. (It can also be obtained on arrival in Kathmandu at the airport though there may be queues). The visa is valid for 6 months from date of issue, its 15 day duration dates from your date of arrival in Nepal. You will need an application form (included with this info sheet), a valid passport (valid for 6 months after your trip), your photograph, the visa fee in cash, Postal Order, or Bank Draft made payable to the Embassy of Nepal, London (cheques & credit cards are not accepted. If you are applying by post, you will also need a stamped self-addressed envelope. Minimum time to process a visa is 24 hours if applying at the Embassy, and 3 weeks if applying by post. For more information see the Nepalese Embassy website: <http://www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa.php>

Travel Insurance

Your personal travel insurance is not included in the cost of the holiday, and for all foreign holidays we ask that you take out the appropriate insurance against illness and injury. The maximum height you will reach on this trip is 3200m.

Copies of passport – IMPORTANT!

It is good practice to photocopy your passport and other important documents when going away. We ask you to fill in and hand to your guide the insurance sheet sent with your confirmation email and also to take photocopies of your Passport, Visa, Flight ticket, & Travel Insurance with you to give to Lorraine in case any of your documents are stolen or lost while abroad.

Health & Vaccinations

There are no compulsory vaccinations for Nepal, unless you're arriving from an infected area. Doctors will recommend the following: tetanus booster, polio booster, immune serum globulin (not a vaccine but antibodies as a protection against Hep A), TB (and to a lesser extent meningococcal meningitis). Malaria prophylaxis is not an issue in Kathmandu or in the mountains. All water in Nepal must be assumed to be contaminated with Giardia, even in hotels and city restaurants, and must be purified. All the tea houses we stay at outside Kathmandu and Pokhara filter their water, however to be especially careful you should also filter your water by using Chlorine Diox or iodine against Giardia - available from UK outdoor shops. (Chlorine Diox has replaced iodine which you are unlikely to get in the UK, just check that it is active against Giardia).

Altitude?

Our trek will only take us above 3000m – to 3210m - on the morning we climb to Poon Hill. You will experience some breathlessness, but there is little danger of altitude sickness. We will also have been climbing slowly but steadily over the previous few days, so your body will have adapted by the time we reach Gorapani. (This is an optional early morning walk).

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Environment

We will be walking in the Annapurna Conservation Area and we ask that you use environmentally sound practices while trekking in this fragile mountain environment. Please consider not using hot showers in lodges where wood-fuelled stoves heat the water, as deforestation is one of Nepal's biggest environmental problems. However, some lodges have electricity and others use solar power to provide hot water. Bring biodegradable soap and shampoo for use on the trek.

Do not buy bottled water on the trail or elsewhere in Nepal, as the plastic bottles are not recyclable. You should treat water using Chlorine Diox. We also recommend that each trekker keeps and uses a small rubbish bag for non-burnable material such as plastics and batteries which must be taken to Kathmandu for proper disposal.

Please do not give sweets, money or other gifts to children you meet on the trek. You will pass some schools along the way with collecting boxes outside and making a donation, or giving to one of the many children's charities in Pokhara or Kathmandu is a better way to help. It is a good idea to take heed of the advice given on culturally acceptable behaviour.

Following these guidelines will help to protect and preserve this beautiful region for future visitors.

Money

The unit of currency in Nepal is the rupee. In July 2014 the exchange rate was 1 UK Pound = 163 rupees. Foreign currency can be exchanged in most hotels, banks, and at money changing stalls. All major currencies are accepted and this is how you will get the best rate. However, it is important that the foreign currency notes that you bring do not have any marks or writing on them as many places will not accept these. Credit cards are also accepted in a few shops (at a 3-5% surcharge). There are numerous ATM machines where you can withdraw cash using your credit or debit card – make sure you let your bank know in advance you will be traveling to Nepal. We recommend that you carry rupees in small denominations on the trek to cover personal expenses. To help you budget for additional expenses that are not included in the trip price, the following list gives an indication of what you will need:

- Meals in Kathmandu & Pokhara - accommodation at the hotel is on a B&B only basis. Allow a total of US\$25 or £15 per day for meals whilst in Kathmandu and Pokhara.
- Personal expenses on the trek – very few (£4-5 per day will cover drinks, chocolate bars etc).
- Gifts - many visitors to Nepal like to take home gifts. In Kathmandu and Pokhara you can sometimes pay by credit card, but you will meet traders in various villages on the trek selling tempting inexpensive wares, and here you will need some Nepali Rupees in cash.
- Tips - it is usual for trekkers to tip the local team of porters and other staff. The amount is a purely personal decision but on average is around \$2.50 or £1.50 per trekker per trekking day.
- Entrance Fees – most are £1 or £2 but Baktapur is now around £12 and Deber Square is £8. Visits are optional

What to bring

General principles: It will generally be warm during the day, except when we get higher up on the trek and a lot cooler in the evening. You will need leisure clothes for Kathmandu & Pokhara, and walking clothes for the trek and day walks. Try and keep the clothes for the trek to several layers that you can put on and take off when needed. Nepal is coming into Spring at this time and you will need warm fleeces for the evening as we ascend to Gorapani but during the day, and especially lower down and in Pokhara it will be quite warm and short sleeve T-shirts may be sufficient. At the same time, the amount of gear taken on the trek must be limited to what a porter can carry (10 kilo per person) so **please** keep these trekking clothes to essentials only: merino wool layers are a great investment (warm when needed, wicking, and they don't need washing everyday like synthetic wicking layers). Warm hat and gloves, an anorak or light waterproof against the wind and possible rain, toiletries in small bottles and quantities, etc. Clothes that are not needed for the trek can be left at the hotel in Pokhara for when we return – this will require a separate bag/suitcase, preferably lockable.

A trekking holdall will be supplied to you in Pokhara for the trek. This is the holdall that the porters will carry.

Many outdoor gear items on this list below can be bought very cheaply in Kathmandu or Pokhara before the trip (eg. Sleeping bag, day pack, waterproofs, fleeces, woolen hats). So if you need to purchase items, consider doing it there.

The other important things to bring with you on a trek in Nepal are a sense of humour, an open mind, and an expectation that conditions and facilities will be very different from what you might expect in the Europe! With all of these you will have a great trip!

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- 1 bag, preferably lockable, to stay at hotel in Pokhara.
- 1 comfortable day-pack, ideally with padded belt to take the weight on your hips – 20 -30 litre should be sufficient. (Other clothes for the trek go in a special supplied bag that the porters carry).
- 1 money belt/pouch etc for passport, flight ticket etc when walking around Kathmandu (these will be left locked up at the hotel in Kathmandu while you're trekking).
- 1 pr walking boots – gortex or leather, comfortable & well worn in but still with good tread
- 1 pr light trainers – for evenings
- Waterproof jacket & trousers – for rain & wind proofing
- Thick plastic bags – to line day-pack and for clothes in holdall. Spare plastic bags for odds & ends, rubbish, keeping precious items dry like camera or film.
- Warm gloves, neck warmer or buff, warm hat (or buy one out there), sunglasses, sun hat, cotton scarf is good for dust.
- 2 Fleeces – 1 thick, and 1 thin for layering. (A down jacket if you already have one is wonderfully light and warm instead of a fleece for evenings, early mornings, & in the wind).
- 4 Walking tops (some women find synthetics smell after only 1 day. Merino wool tops are a good alternative as they don't smell so quickly, and are warm or cool as needed).
- 2 Trousers & 1 pr shorts – lightweight and loose for trekking. (You may also want a warmer pair of comfortable trousers for the evenings as we go higher).
- 5 changes of walking socks.
- Walking pole/s – very advisable for all those steps!
- Toilet bag with toothbrush, small toothpaste, small soap/shampoo, deodorant etc, tissues, moisturiser, flannel – good for when washing by hand. A packet of Wet wipes is invaluable!
- 1 lightweight camping towel
- 1 roll of soft toilet paper
- Blister prevention: zinc oxide tape, Compeed blister treatment, moleskin for blister protection. Rehydration salts in case of tummy troubles (Diuralite sachets from the chemist are good).
- Sun cream, lip balm
- Strong Anti insect cream or spray, consider 50 plus Deet
- **2 passport sized photos for trekking permits**
- 3 or 4 season lightweight sleeping bag – with or without sheet liner
- Water flask or 'Platypus' or similar water system – 1.5 to 2 litres capacity
- Water treatment kit/ tablets & neutralizer – must be Chlorine Diox or Iodine to be able to cope with Giardia.
- Small head torch (plus spare bulb and spare batteries)
- Dried fruit and nuts or energy bars – some women like to have these to snack on between tea house meals. Can be bought in Kathmandu or Pokhara.
- Playing cards/ book for quiet evenings etc. Small notebook & pens for diary of trip. A supply of cheap pens are great to give to kids rather than sweets or money.
- Passport, visa, plane ticket, insurance policy (make a copy of each and give to Lorraine who will leave it the Hotel safe in Kathmandu).
- Cash in sterling or dollars – small denominations so that you don't have to change a large amount if you don't want to and make sure the notes are not marked or damaged in any way.
- Binoculars, camera, spare film or memory cards, spare charged up batteries and charger for digital camera. (You are unlikely to be able to recharge torch & camera batteries on the trek, so bring plenty of spare batteries).

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