

Marco Polo Travels Nepal – TREKKING IN THE HIMALAYA

Nepal, a fascinating Himalayan Kingdom, occupies the largest part of the youngest mountain range on earth. The towering Himalayan range extends 885km across the country - a magnificent landscape stretching from northern snow-capped mountains, eight of them rising above 8000m, to the southern plains, less than 200m above sea-level-all within a relatively short distance. These sharp contrasts and diversity in the landscape and climate make Nepal an enchanting destination, offering opportunities to experience the mountain grandeur in the north and exotic wildlife and subtropical vegetation in the south. Medieval towns exuding ancient cultures, profuse with art and architecture enhance the allure of the country.

Trekking, a vital part of adventure tourism in Nepal offers unparalleled enjoyment amidst natural surroundings. Rhododendron forests, high mountain passes, deep gorges, glaciers, high waterfalls and diversified cultures, age-old settlements and encouraging smiles of the villagers are the parts and parcel of trekking in Nepal. While most of our treks are done in the foothills of the Himalayas some of them do reach the base camps of the mighty peaks. Physical fitness is required for complete enjoyment of walking in the hills.

MARCO POLO'S TEA HOUSE TREK:

These treks are done in popular and well-traveled areas. The Tea Houses are usually small basic lodges offering accommodation and food for travelers. We rely on these Tea Houses for food and shelter and thus require minimal equipment. Our experienced guides will select the best teahouse in the villages, and if required, will go ahead to find shelter in peak season. The Tea Houses are also a meeting point for trekkers from various parts of the world. These treks are economical, suitable for both youth and budget tourists.

Highly experienced Sherpa guides and reliable porters support our Tea-house trekking packages. Our staffs are knowledgeable about and conscious of environment protection.

MARCO POLO'S CAMPING TREK:

Services on our camping trek include complete camping arrangements. Camping or organized treks are usually tailor made trips with provision of a range of staff - experienced guide, escort guides, well trained kitchen crew and porters, complete camping and kitchen equipment. Usually these treks are done on off the beaten tracks where the chances of meeting other trekkers are low. Since the arrangements of food & shelter are in the hands of our numerous staff- experts in their own areas, quality service and personalized attention are found on camping treks.

Our camping equipment consists of high quality down sleeping bags, mattresses, tents and toilet tents to ensure comfort for our clients even in the harshest conditions of remote areas. Our cooks serve delicious wholesome meals to hungry trekkers in spacious dining tents.

Trek grading system:

Trekking involves physical activity and it is certain on all of them that you will become a stronger person than when you left both physically and mentally.

It is important to choose an adventure within your capabilities. We have five grades of trips, and these should be taken as a guide only - adverse weather, problems with trail conditions, and other challenges can turn an easier trek into a much harder one.

One must be prepared as outlined below. The amount of preparation you have to do is also affected by such things as your age, fitness, personal habits such as smoking, and your weight.

SOFT ADVENTURES (GRADE 1)

These trips include city tours, Jungle safaris on elephant back, and relaxed rafting. They do not require any strenuous activity for extended periods. If you are fit enough to travel you are fit enough for these trips. Grade I trips are non-trekking trips. In the case of Trisuli River rafting, you can simply relax in the center of the raft and enjoy the exciting float if you find paddling too strenuous.

LEISURELY ADVENTURES (GRADE 2)

These treks generally involve 5 to 6 hours walking per day on average. Any active person can easily participate on these trips and any reasonably fit person will find them exhilarating. For preparation, we recommend a program of sports or aerobic activities (cycling, swimming, etc.) minimum of 2 to 4 weeks before departure. Remember that the fitter you are, the more you'll enjoy the adventure.

MODERATE ADVENTURES (GRADE 3)

These are moderate treks involving 7 hours plus walking on certain days. Any reasonably active person should be able to manage these trips, provided they do not suffer any medical conditions affected by strenuous exercise. For preparation, we recommend a program of sports or aerobic activities (cycling, swimming, etc.) minimum of 4 to 6 weeks before departure.

ADVENTUROUS TRIPS (GRADE 4)

These are harder treks. They are within the capabilities of most people but you must be very fit before departure. Older people, particularly over the age of 50, must prepare themselves well and should not consider joining these trips if fitness is not an important routine of their normal life. Those with high blood pressure, asthma and heart conditions should not participate on these trips. We recommend a program of sports or aerobic activities (cycling, swimming, etc.) minimum of 6 to 8 weeks before departure.

A. KATHMANDU VALLEY RIM TREKS

Itineraries of 2 treks around Kathmandu Valley Rim are given below. Rated as grade 2, these treks allow people of all ages in normal physical condition to meet people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, enjoy village life, sight ancient shrines and view the grand Himalayas. The major Himalayan peaks glimpsed around Kathmandu Valley are Ganesh Himal (7405m), Shisha Pangma (8013m), Gang Chenpo (6397m), Dome Blanc (6830m), Dorje Lakpa (6990m), Lonpo Gang (7083m) and Purbi Chyachu (6658m).

Kathmandu Valley rim treks offer rich cultural, natural and spiritual experience, which is treasured throughout one's life.

01 BUDHANILKANTHA TO SUNDARIJAL

2 Nights / 3 Days

Mode of trekking: Camping only

Grade 2

A trek from Shivapuri to Sundarijal via Chisapani covers northern portion of Kathmandu Valley Rim. In spite of being close to Kathmandu one experiences the spiritual calmness on this trek. The route traverses through Shivapuri watershed project and offers beautiful landscape backed by the Himalayan range, stretching from Ganesh Himal in the west to a host of mountains towards east with Langtang, Dorje Lhaka, and Gauri Shankar amidst them. Passing through the villages and meeting the people is an insight into the culture.

Of Shivapuri Watershed and Wildlife Project:

Located 13kms Northeast of proper Kathmandu Shivapuri is regarded as a safe haven for endangered animals and birds. The region accounts for one fourth of total water supply in the valley. Within its vicinity of 120 sq. km. Shivapuri features eight species of endangered mammals, among them black and two other types of leopards, hundred and seventy-seven different species of birds, hundred and two different types of butterflies and hundred and twenty-nine types of mushrooms. The resources of major rivers – Bagmati and Bisnumati – in Kathmandu valley lie within Shivapuri watershed project.

In the Shivapuri range the highest hill stands at 2732m. During March/April rhododendrons blossom throughout the hills.

Trek itinerary:

Days:	Destinations:	Altitude	Duration:
01.	Transfer to Budhanilkanta/ Trek to Shivapuri via Nage Gompa	1330 m 2723 m	40 mins. 6 hours
02.	To Chisapani	2194 m	6 hours
03.	To Sundarijal/transfer to Kathmandu		

02 BUDHANILKANTHA TO CHANGU NARAYAN

4 nights / 5 days

Mode of trekking: Camping only

GRADE 2

The trek from Budhanilkanta to Changu Narayan offers a wealth of historical, ecological, cultural and aesthetic experiences comparable to extended trekking routes in the remote regions of Nepal. We see the grand views of Manaslu range, Ganesh Himal range, Langtang range, Gaurishanker Himal, Dorje Lakpa and a host of other Himalayan peaks. The route covers north and northeastern portions of Kathmandu Valley Rim.

Overlooking Kathmandu valley from its northern rim the hill Shivapuri bears a majestic pose. 'Shivapuri' literally means the abode of Lord Shiva, the god revered by the Hindus as one of the holy trinity. The first day of the trek starts from Budhanilkantha, the holy site of reclining Vishnu, again one of the sacred trinity, revered by the Hindus as the protector. The destination of the first day is Shivapuri, the second highest hill in the valley. The area is protected as Shivapuri Watershed and Conservation Area and we trek inside the conservation area. This region is famous for rhododendron and birds. From the Shivapuri peak the lights of Kathmandu sparkle magically after dark. Next morning the views of the Himalayan peaks such as Langtang, Ganesh and Manaslu welcome us. On our way up we visit a Buddhist Monastery, Nage Gompa.

From thereon we proceed to Chisapani on the second day, a magnificent location for viewing Himalayan peaks. On the third day we proceed towards Chowki Bhanjyang, a mixed settlement of Tamangs, Brahmins and Chhetris. On the fourth day we trek onwards to Nagarkot, a very popular destination for viewing the eastern Himalayan peaks inclusive of Mt. Everest, Dorje Lakpa Gauri Shankar and many more peaks. On the last day we hike downwards to Changu Narayan, one of the oldest temples in Nepal. Perched on Dolagiri hillock about 18km northeast of Kathmandu, the pagoda-styled temple of Changu Narayan dates back to 325 AD the period of King Hari Dutta Varma. Later the Lichivi King Manadeva I renovated the temple and placed a pillar with scripture in 464 AD. Again rebuilt in 1702, the temple is rich in art and architectural treasures. Stone sculptures of various reincarnations of Lord Vishnu, dating from the fourth to ninth centuries are scattered in its courtyard. The visit to the temple is followed by transportation to Kathmandu.

The trek offers an introduction to cultural, religious and natural heritage of Nepal.

Trek itinerary:

Days:	Destinations:	Altitude:	Duration:
01.	Transfer to Budhanilkantha/ Trek to Shivapuri via Nage Gompa	1330 m 2723 m	
02.	To Chisapani	2194 m	
03.	To Chowki Bhanjyang		
04.	To Nagarkot	1985 m	
05.	To Changu Narayan/transfer to Kathmandu		

B. Annapurna treks:

Itineraries of two treks in the Annapurna region are given below. The length of the trek and the altitude determine its grade.

Of Annapurna region:

The pride of Central Nepal is the Annapurna region. The region offers rich cultural experiences, beautiful mountain views, impressive landscape and villages inhabited by people from diversified ethnic backgrounds. Most of the treks in this region start from the valley of Pokhara located 203 km. West of Kathmandu, famous for magnificent mountain views and lakes. The route of these treks traverses through foothills of Western Himalayan Range offering beautiful views of the mighty peaks with three of them above 8000m – Annapurna I (8091m), Dhaulagiri (8167m) and Manaslu (8157m). The range also includes dramatic Machhapuchhare (6993m), Hiuchuli, Mardi Himal and a host of other peaks.

03 Ghandrung Trek

2 nights / 3 days

Mode of trekking: Teahouse or Camping

Grade 2

Ghandrung teahouse trek is a short trek in the foothills of the Annapurna Himalayan range. The trek offers panoramic views of the Annapurna Massif, Machhapuchhare, Manaslu, Dhaulagiri and a host of other peaks. It is a moderate grade 2 trek; in other words a reasonably fit person can do it. The highpoint of the trek is the visit to the village of Ghandrung. It is inhabited by the Gurungs, the people who are famous as the Gorkhas in the British army. The village with its orderly rows of slate-roofed houses clustered on a canyon wall looks beautiful.

The route on the trek goes through many settlements of hilly people, thus offering an insight into the culture of the region. The prevalent religion the inhabitants follow is either Hinduism or Buddhism.

Itinerary:

Days:	Destinations:	Altitude:
01	From Pokhara transfer to Phedi/trek to Tolkha	815m 1821m
02	Trek to Ghandrung	2012m
03	Trek to Nayapul/ transfer to Pokhara	1097m

04 Annapurna Sanctuary

8 nights / 9 days

Mode of trekking: Teahouse or Camping

Grade 3

The Annapurna Sanctuary is a natural amphitheater surrounded by mighty Himalayan peaks. En route we visit Chomrung & Ghandrung, the villages of the Gurung people- famous for their bravery as Gorkha soldiers. From Chomrung the view of Annapurna South is very close and dramatic. At sanctuary we at the base camps of the Annapurna range and Machhapuchhare and take excursion to the glaciers. The trek offers memorable landscape of mountains, hills, villages and terraced fields. It also provides an insight into the culture of people living in foothills of Nepal.

Itinerary:

Days:	Destinations:	Altitude:
01	From Pokhara transfer to Phedi/ trek to Tolkha	815m 1810m
02	To Chomrung	2040m
03	To Dobhan	2606m
04	To Machhapuchhhare Base Camp	3788m
05	To Annapurna Base Camp	4095m
06	To Dobhan	
07	To Chomrung	
08	To Ghandrung	2012m
09	To Nayapul / Transfer to Pokhara	1257m

C. Langtang trek:

Please refer to the itinerary of ten days of Langtang trek given below.

Of Langtang Region:

Praised as “One of the world’s most beautiful valleys” by Harold Tilman, a British national and the first ever westerner to explore the region, Langtang valley possesses superb landscape.

Allocated just 70 km. North of Kathmandu, easily accessible, Langtang region is yet another charming destination for the adventurers. The area was planned in 1971 to be the first Himalayan National Park in Nepal and in 1976 was designated as the 2nd largest National Park in Nepal. The park has beautiful and healthy forests of rhododendron, fir, blue and chir pine, and birch. Wildlife in the park includes leopard, musk deer, Himalayan black bear, rhesus and langur monkeys, and the endangered red panda. The Bhote Kosi - Trisuli is an important migratory route for birds travelling between India and Tibet.

Langtang Valley (3420m), the main destination of the trekkers, is surrounded by a range of captivating peaks; Langtang Lirung (7246m) to the north, Dorje Lakpa (6966m) to the east, Gang Chhenpo (6388m) and Naya Kangri (5846m) to the south. Langtang Lirung was first ascended in 1978 by a combination of Nepalese & Japanese team. Towards north of the valley and beyond the peaks lie Tibet.

The term 'lang' in Tibetan means yak and 'teng' to follow. It is believed that a lama following an escapee yak came across this valley, thus, the name 'Langtang' was given to it. Till this day yaks do inhabit the valley.

05 Langtang Valley trek

9 nights / 10 days

Mode of trekking: Teahouse or Camping

Grade 3

The Langtang Valley trek takes us to an area of Nepal where the influence of trekkers has not been so great. We begin our trek at Dhunche and proceed along well-defined trail to Langtang valley. We explore this magnificent alpine valley (3500m) to find rewarding view of snow capped Langtang Lirung (7545m). On the way to Kyanjing Mani walls engraved with Buddhist scriptures and grand views of Langshisha Ri (6310m), Gang Chhenpo (6388m) and a range of other magnificent peaks await the trekkers.

Itinerary:

Days:	Destinations:	Altitude:
01	Transfer to Dhunche / Overnight at a Guest House	1950m
02	Trek to Syabru	2100m
03	To Lama Hotel	2380m
04	To Langtang valley	3500m
05	To Kyanjin Gompa	3800m
06	To Lama Hotel	
07	To Syabru	

08	To Singompa	3250m
09	To Dhunche	
10	Transfer to Kathmandu	

D. Everest Treks:

Please refer to two itineraries of Everest treks given below.

Of Everest region:

Solu-Khumbu region well known as Everest region is the native land of the Sherpas, the infamous climbers and mountaineers. The area possesses mountainous landscape of unique beauty - a wonder of nature. Within its vicinity lie some of the highest peaks of the world: Everest (8848m), Lhotse (8501m), Nuptse (7879m), Makalu (8475m) and the captivating Amadablam (6956m) to name a few. Viewing these magnificent peaks up close is indeed a nature lover's dream. Besides the crisp fresh air of Solu-Khumbu is extremely alluring.

Although Sherpas inhabit different parts of Nepal the famous ones come from Thami, Pangboche, Namche Bazaar, Khumjung and Kunde, the main villages of Solu-Khumbu. The Sherpas follow Tibetan Buddhism as their religion. Their dress code and speech portray Tibetan influence.

Dating 300 years back the village of Pangboche is the oldest settlement of the Sherpas in the region and at 3860m, one of the highest villages in the world. The monastery here, the oldest in the region at one time held a skull and a hand believed to be the remnants of the elusive Yeti.

Tengboche at an elevation of 3870m is a well-known settlement in the Solu-Khumbhu region for nature and culture. The views of the Himalayan range seen from here are among the best in the nature's creation. The surrounding panorama consisting of magnificent peaks such as Thamserku, Everest, Ama Dablam, Lhotse, Nuptse, Kwangde, Kantega, Tawachee and Khumbila contribute to make this settlement highly spectacular, a must destination for an adventurer.

The monastery at Tengboche completed in 1919 perhaps is the most active in the region, visited by the believers from all other settlements in the area. Run by approximately 50 monks the monastery is of the Nyingmapa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. According to a legend in around 17th century the fifth reincarnate lama of Rongbuk monastery from Tibet, Lama Sange Dorje left in his footprints at Pangboche and Tengboche. The credit for the Gompas at those villages, Thami and Khumjung are given to him.

In the month of May, on a full moon night, Mani-Rimdu festival, a religious Sherpa show that represents the victory of Buddhism over Bon is shown at Thami monastery; similarly from November to December at Tengboche monastery.

Standing at an altitude of 5623m, Kalapathar, a promontory of black rock is the goal of the trekkers trekking in Everest region. At sunrise the spot provides 360 degrees of breath-taking vista of famous mountains at close proximity.

A weekly Saturday market at Namche Bazaar presents opportunities to socialize and trade among people from neighboring villages. It is an important event starting early in the day and ending by noon. The locals look forward to it. One can expect vegetation of sub-alpine climate in Everest region; chirpine, hemlock, silver fir and Juniper trees are found at lower altitude whereas blue pine and juniper shrub above 4000m. A range of birds inhabits Solu-Khumbu area. Nepal's national bird, the multi-colored Himalayan pheasant known as Danphe in Nepali well in the vicinity. Golden eagles dominate the skies. Flocks of snow pigeon blood & crimson horned pheasants, Goshawks and Eurasian kestrels are found here. Opportunities of spotting the endangered Himalayan musk deer commonly known as kasturi mriga are highly likely in this region. The deer is hunted for its precious musk, an important ingredient for making perfume. Himalayan tahr the mountain goat known as Jharal in Nepali also reside in this high altitude land.

06 Everest Trek

7 nights / 8 days

Mode of trekking: Teahouse or Camping

Grade 3

Everest Trek takes you along the trail where you will see the world's highest peaks, including Everest, Ama Dablam, and Lhotse. Although a short trek you will experience the clean mountain air, sight all around view of the mountains from Tengboche – one of the excellent spots for the mountain views and visit the traditional Sherpa village of Khumjung.

Itinerary:

Days:	Destinations:	Altitude:
01	Fly to Lukla, Trek to Phakdingma	2800m 2600m
02	To Namche Bazaar	3440m
03	Rest Day in Namche for acclimatization / Excursion to Thame	3800m
04	To Tengboche	3870m
05	To Khumjung	3780m
06	To Monzo	2800m
07	To Lukla	
08	Fly back to Kathmandu	1330m

07. Everest Base Camp trek

Trekking duration: 15 nights / 16 days

Mode of trekking: Teahouse or Camping

Grade 4

The Solu-Khumbu region is fascinating and justifiably famous, not only for its proximity to the world's highest mountain, but also for its Sherpa villages and Buddhist monasteries. This slow paced exploration allows us to enjoy grandeur of Khumbu peaks and time to mix with Sherpas. This is an ideal trek for those who wish to savor the magnificent Everest region.

Itinerary:

Days:	Destinations:	Altitude:
01	Fly to Lukla (2850m)/ commence trek to Phakding	2652m
02	To Namche Bazar	3440m
03	Rest day for acclimatization/ excursion to Thame	3800
04	To Tengboche	3867m
05	To Orsho	
06	To Dingboche	4343m
07	To Chukung/return to Dingboche	4593m
08	To Duglha	
09	To Lobuche	4930m
10	To Kala pathar (5623m)/return to Lobuche	
11	To the Everest Base Camp/return to Lobuche	
12	To Tengboche	
13	To Khumjung	3780m
14	To Monjo	2835m
15	To Lukla	
16	Fly to Kathmandu	

CAMPING TREK CONFIDENTIAL TARIFF

Trekking Areas:

Kathmandu Valley, Annapurna, Langtang and Everest

Rates in US\$ per person per day in a group of			
No of days	2-5 pax	6 – 9 pax	10-15 pax
02-06	70	66	62
07-10	68	64	60
11abv	66	62	58

Rates are net & non-commissionable & valid till 31st December 2009

Note:

- For Everest Region 20% extra on above cost.
- Minimum of 2 persons is required to operate the treks.
- Extra costs of National Park Conservation permits: for Shivapuri Watershed project:US\$5 per person, for Annapurna region: US\$ 32 per person, for Langtang and Everest regions: US\$ 16 per person, TIMS: US\$ 2 per person

Cost includes:

A. Staff:

- a sirdar (the chief guide),experienced cook and his helpers
- an escort guide for every group of four persons and porters
- insurance of the staff

B. Accommodation:

- Water proof, cold resistant tent for two persons
- sleeping bag with inner sheet and an insulated mattress for each client
- toilet tent with a stool designed for comfort

c. Food:

- meals consisting of morning tea, breakfast, lunch, tea & biscuits and dinner as per our trekking menu
- meals served inside a dining tent facilitated with dining table and camp stools
- complete ancillary equipment inclusive of kitchen gear and dining equipment(plates, bowls, spoons, forks and knives)

D. Baggage:

- a facility of 15 kg baggage allowance for every client on the trek

E. National park conservation fees

F. Medicine:

- Basic first aid kit with medicine available in Kathmandu

G. Environment conservation:

- Use of kerosene fuel for cooking and other nature conservation facilities.
- Special hygiene services for clients

H. Special service:

- Preparation of birthday cakes for the clients

I. Land transportation:

- Transfers by bus to trek starting point and from trek ending point

Costs do not include:

- Client insurance
- Domestic flights
- Airport transfers
- Transfer by private vehicle
- Accommodation in Kathmandu and Pokhara
- National Park Conservation permits
- Expenses incurred as a result of illness or any other unforeseen events
- Loss incurred by re-routing, inclement weather, floods, famine, political disruptions, strikes, riots and other disturbances
- Mineral water and soft or hard drinks

TEA HOUSE TREK CONFIDENTIAL TARIFF

Trekking Areas:

Annapurna, Langtang, Everest

Rates in US\$ per person per day in a group of		
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No of days	2-5 pax	7 pax & above
02-06	40	36
07 days & above	38	34

Rates are net & non-commissionable & valid till 31st December 2009.

Note:

- For Everest Region 10% extra on above cost.
- Minimum of 2 persons is required to operate the treks.
- Extra costs of National Park Conservation permits: for Shivapuri Watershed project:US\$5 per person, for Annapurna region: US\$ 32 per person, for Langtang and Everest regions: US\$ 16 per person
- TIMS: US\$ 2 per person

Costs include:

A. Staff:

- an English speaking experienced guide and a porter for two clients
- insurance of the staff

B. Accommodation:

- accommodation in a teahouse at every resting destination throughout the trek
- sleeping bag with inner sheet for each client

C. Food:

- meals consisting of breakfast, lunch and dinner in the teahouses as per teahouse menu every trekking day

D. Baggage:

- a facility of 15 kg baggage allowance for every client on the trek

E. Land transportation:

- Transfers by bus to trek starting point and from trek ending point

Costs do not include:

- Client insurance
- Domestic flights
- Airport transfers
- Transfer by private vehicle
- Accommodation in Kathmandu and Pokhara
- National Park Conservation permits
- Expenses incurred as a result of illness or any other unforeseen events.
- Loss incurred by re-routing, inclement weather, floods, famine, political disruptions, strikes, riots and other disturbances.
- Mineral water and soft or hard drinks.

Recommended equipment for the trek:

1. Foot wears:

- broken in hiking shoes
- thick woolen and light cotton or nylon socks
- light camp shoes

2. Clothing:

- loose or baggy cotton trousers
- shirts and T – shirts
- windcheater
- Gortex quality rain-proof jacket and trousers
- Sweatshirts and sweater
- fleece jacket
- down jacket (from Late November to early March)
- undergarments
- thermals
- wool hat (from Late November to early march)
- gloves
- sun hat or a cap with a visor
- bathing suit

3. Other essential gear:

- duffel bag with lock
- day pack
- water bottle
- sun glasses
- flash light with spare bulbs and batteries
- lip salve
- insect repellent
- toiletries (bio degradable)
- diary
- laundry soap
- towel
- repairing & sewing kit
- binoculars
- camera and film
- personal medical kit as required