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Nepal Trek Challenge

with hospice care project



11 - 22 November 2017

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DESTINATION: NEPAL

About Nepal

Nepal is a landlocked Himalayan country in south Asia covering an area of 147,181 sq. km, bordered by Chinese Tibet to the north and by India to the south, east and west. For a small nation, the Nepali landscape is diverse, ranging from the humid Terai in the south to the lofty Himalayas in the north. Much of Nepal's history is inextricably linked to its larger neighbour to the south, India. Kathmandu is the nation's capital and the country's largest metropolitan city.

Nepal is a country of highly diverse and rich geography, culture, and religions. The mountainous north contains eight of the world's ten highest mountains, including the highest, Mount Everest. The fertile and humid south is heavily urbanized. By some measures, Hinduism is practiced by a greater majority of people in Nepal than in any other nation. Buddhism, though a minority faith in the country, is linked historically with Nepal as the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama who as the Buddha Gautama gave birth to the Buddhist tradition.

The Project

Just outside Kathmandu is the Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital, where our participants have previously carried out renovation work and other projects which has been extremely well received. Closer to departure we will confirm exactly what we will be doing, but likely tasks include painting, refurbishing and work in the garden to name a few. Our local team will be visiting the hospital regularly prior to our visit to put the firm plans in place ready for our arrival, and we'll provide a further update in the final information, two weeks prior to departure.



THE TREK: WHAT TO EXPECT

Trek Overview

This 5-day trek is a great opportunity to witness the culture and tradition in the Nepalese countryside. Along the way you will enjoy the views of the snowy peaks of the Annapurnas and a highlight will be the awe-inspiring panoramic views which unfold from Poon Hill at sunrise, the highest altitude point of the trek at 3400m.



Who will accompany us?

The trek is accompanied by local Sherpa guides who have an excellent knowledge of hiking in the region and may even have summited some of the peaks you will see on the trek. The guides are first aid trained and will support you throughout your journey. You will also be supported by an excellent team of assistant guides, cooks and porters who together make your journey possible. You will be accompanied throughout your challenge by a Different Travel Company UK tour manager.

What is the accommodation like during the trek?

You will stay in teahouses which are locally owned lodges accommodating trekkers from all over the world. The teahouses are comfortable but basic and feature a main lounge-dining area which is heated with a central yak-dung burning stove which makes it a very cosy environment. You will take your breakfast and evening meals in this room and will probably play cards and get to know each other here each evening too. Battery charging facilities, soft drinks, hot drinks, snacks and souvenirs may be available to purchase at many tea houses along the way.

The bedrooms usually have two or three single beds per room which have mattresses and occasionally pillows and blankets. You will need to bring your own sleeping bag. The tea houses may have hot water showers or access to buckets of hot or tepid water for washing. Washing facilities can be expensive. Toilet facilities at the teahouses will usually be one Western and one Asian style/squat toilet. These may flush but

please ensure you dispose of toilet paper in the bins and do not put it into the toilet as this will cause blockages. Toilet paper is not provided so you will need to bring your own. During the trek you will need to pack up any toilet paper you use to dispose of properly at camp. NEVER leave toilet paper or other litter on the trail.



What is the terrain like?

The terrain will vary throughout the 5 days but in general you will trek uphill for the first two days, have a morning of ascent and afternoon of descent on day 3, and the final two days will be descending. It is essential that your training includes hill walking and trekking up and down gradients! Underfoot may be stony trails, muddy forest floors, rocky steps or scree slopes and in some places very dusty (bring a 'Buff' to cover your nose/mouth). There may be some suspension bridges to cross. Each day's trek is between 5 and 8 hours in duration (variable depending on group pace).



How tough is it?

This trek is graded '*moderate to challenging*' because of the combination of long days of trekking over varying terrain including some days where you will trek uphill all day, the increasing altitude as the trek progresses and the basic conditions at the teahouse accommodation. You will ascend to altitudes of up to

3400m by day 3, having slowly increased your exposure to altitude over the previous two days.

What is the climate like?

Temperatures will be dependent upon the weather which is usually clear and sunny in the morning, with clouds and possibly a few spots of rain coming in from around midday. On average the temperature will range between 5°C to 25°C during the day and -5°C to 0°C at night. Weather conditions will vary but in general you will experience sunny, clear days with little precipitation. Snowfall is unlikely but possible. It's important to be prepared for all weather conditions and temperatures by packing technical non-cotton layers and waterproofs.

What about altitude?

The altitude you experience on this trek is up to 3400m which is above the generally agreed threshold for some people to start feeling some symptoms of altitude exposure. Your local guide is very experienced in spotting the signs of altitude sickness but it is important that you also research the effects so you can be aware of how your body is adjusting. A great source of information can be found at <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Altitude-sickness/Pages/Introduction.aspx> or <http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/altitude.htm>.

Common mild symptoms of altitude sickness are headache, nausea, loss of appetite, disturbed sleep and fatigue. These generally subside after a few days, once your body acclimatises. It is vital that you make your guides and tour manager aware of any symptoms immediately so you can be monitored.

Important info about altitude:

- If you begin to show symptoms of moderate altitude sickness, don't go higher until symptoms decrease.
- If symptoms increase, you must descend immediately. Your guide and tour manager's decision for you to descend must be respected.
- Different people acclimatise at different rates. You must keep aware of your own symptoms.
- Stay well hydrated. You need to remain properly hydrated (at least three litres per day). Urine output should be copious and clear to pale yellow.
- Take it easy and don't overexert yourself when you first arrive at altitude.
- Avoid tobacco, alcohol and other depressant drugs including sleeping pills and opiates such as codeine. These decrease the respiratory drive resulting in a worsening of symptoms.
- Eat a high calorie diet while at altitude.
- Acclimatisation is inhibited by overexertion, dehydration, and alcohol.

Who can take part?

The trek can be undertaken by anyone of any age (min. 18 unless accompanied by an adult) as long as you have a good level of fitness and you are healthy and determined. There is no upper age limit.



How fit do I need to be?

It is advised that you are of a good fitness level before departure to ensure fast recovery from each day's exertions. An ideal candidate for the trek would be someone who enjoys being out of their comfort zone and trying something new.

If you do not already regularly exercise it is crucial that you start training (including plenty of hills!) before departure to ensure your best chance of enjoyment on the trip. This could include speed walking, hill walking, swimming, running, cycling, gym workouts, team sports, boot camps, yoga etc. You can download a number of free apps, which will help you train and track your progress. E.g. iMapMyRide (for cyclists), C25K (couch to 5k run) (jogging/running), MyFitnessPal (for a variety of sports). It is possible to complete the trek without training but it will be difficult and may hinder your experience, and the experience of your teammates. We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues **must** be noted and (if relevant) signed off by your GP. Any conditions that develop must be declared and a new medical form completed and signed.

Different Travel's Online Training

Different Travel has teamed up with Brightside Personal Training to bring you a fun and unique way to train for your upcoming challenge without needing to leave the comfort of your home or signing up for an expensive gym membership. Please see here for more information: <http://brightsidept.kajabi.com/sp/34357>

What is included?

Trip cost: £295 registration fee + £1,695 balance or £3,390 minimum sponsorship

Trip cost includes: Flights from London (inc. airport taxes), all transfers & transport in Nepal, accommodation in 3 star hotel in Kathmandu (4 nights), guesthouse in Pokhara (2 nights) teahouses on trek (4 nights), all meals, local expert English-speaking guides and support crew, National Park entrance fees, trekking permits, project materials and coordination, a UK Different Travel tour manager.

Trip cost does not include: Personal expenses (such as drinks, souvenirs, etc.), bottled water, any vaccinations required, Nepal visa (current cost US\$25), travel insurance, tips (approx. £25-35 per person), personal trekking kit (see packing list below).

ITINERARY

Day 1-2 (Sat 11th – Sun 12th November): London to Kathmandu

Depart for Kathmandu on an overnight flight (via a Middle East or Asian hub). Upon arrival in Kathmandu you will be transferred to a central hotel. Depending on flight times there may be an opportunity for you to explore the local area before gathering together meet the local team and receive a briefing on the days ahead. Welcome dinner tonight

Day 3 (Mon 13th November): Kathmandu to Pokhara

After breakfast, we depart for the scenic drive to Pokhara (approx. 6 hours). You will spend the afternoon in this beautiful lakeside town where you can take in the sights or even do some last minute shopping in preparation for your trek! Overnight at a guesthouse.

Day 4 (Tues 14th November): Pokhara – Nayapul - Ulleri

This morning we transfer to Nayapul (35km / approx. 2 hours) from where you commence the trek. You will follow the banks of the Bhurungdi Khola River as far as Tikhedhunga (1575m) where your final challenge for the day is a steep uphill walk to Ulleri where you stay the night in a teahouse (2073m). Approx. 10km trek / 530m ascent.

Day 5 (Wed 15th November): Ulleri - Ghorepani

A day of ascent! Today we will gradually gain more altitude as we walk for about 5 hours to the overnight teahouse in Ghorepani (2800m). As we approach Ghorepani we will pass through stunning rhododendron forests. Approx. 11km trek / 1400m ascent.

Day 6 (Thur 16th November): Ghorepani - Poon Hill - Tadapani

An hour-long pre-dawn ascent gives us the opportunity to see the fascinating views of the Annapurnas and Dhaulagiri glowing in the morning sun from Poon Hill (3400m). After breakfast back at the teahouse, it is a mostly downhill walk through magnificent oak and rhododendron forests, to reach Tadapani, where you will have another chance to enjoy views of Annapurna South and Machapuchare (Fishtail Mountain). Overnight at teahouse in Tadapani. Approx. 11km trek / 330m ascent / 640m descent.

Day 7 (Fri 17th November): Tadapani - Ghandruk

The descent to Ghandruk is a shorter and relatively easy walk, mostly downhill. From Tadapani you descent through mossy forests and deep gorges, before the scenery changes to a drier more sparse forest as we approach Ghandruk. Ghandruk is a beautiful Gurung Village, where most of the inhabitants were Gurkhas. Overnight in a teahouse. Approx. 8km trek / 700m descent.

Day 8 (Sat 18th November): Ghandruk - Pokhara

Today is our final day of trekking as we descend back to Nayapul, from where we travel by road back to Pokhara. Overnight in a guesthouse. Approx. 13km trek / 1000m descent.

Day 9 (Sun 19th November): Pokhara – Kathmandu

Transfer back to Kathmandu (6 hours' drive). This afternoon we will have an introductory visit to the project.

Day 10 - 11 (Mon 20th – Tue 21st November): Kathmandu

Today we will spend two days assisting at the project in Kathmandu. On Tuesday evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Day 12 (Wed 22nd November) *: Kathmandu - London

Today you will transfer to the airport for your flight home (via a Middle East or Asian hub).

**NB: Depending on flight schedules you may arrive back in London the following day*

*Day 13 (Thur 23rd November): London

Arrive back into London (depending on flight schedules)

N.B. This itinerary may change due to unusual weather patterns, the ability of the group and so on. We will do our best to keep to the itinerary however we cannot be held responsible for changes that might occur outside of our control. In all such circumstances your guide and tour leader will have the final say in the interest of the health and safety of the group.