



Fully Guided Slow Travel Adventure

13 Days • Nepal

BREATHE THE HIMALAYAS

Nature, scenery and slow travel experience in Nepal to immerse your spirit in the forests, mountains and rivers of the Himalayas. Includes cultural connections, relaxation & yoga sessions, and quality time in the wilderness.



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WHY WE LOVE IT

Breathe in the culture and mountains of Nepal. A truly unique itinerary for travellers who want to connect with the Himalayas. Thousands of years of tradition have led to this tour design, as we meet a range of Himalayan ethnic groups and share their companionship.

A journey that begins in Kathmandu, takes in views of the Annapurnas and Langtang, and invites you to share moments of tranquility with singing bowls, meditation and relaxation. Think of this as a Himalayan version of “Forest Bathing”, but with monks and nuns and joss sticks and magnificent mountains and the spring air in Pokhara.

Your escort for this journey is Adrian Tischler, a qualified yoga instructor with a decade of experience living and studying in the sub-continent. His gentle guidance along the way will open the door to relaxation sessions and even a few yoga classes, if you feel inclined, while you breathe in the spring air of the Himalayas.

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS

Arrival

- Our team will collect you at Kathmandu Airport
- All meals are included during the tour

Kathmandu

- Nepali and Sherpa cuisine
- Chanting with the nuns at Nagigumba
- Downhill forest trail to the reclining Vishnu
- Stupas and Singing Bowls

Shivapuri

- Cabins with views of Langtang
- Jeep drive through the National Park
- Village walks to meet Tamang community
- Relaxation sessions

Pokhara

- 3 nights in our favourite Pokhara resort
- Stupa walk and boat ride across Phewa Lake
- Sunrise at Sarangkot Viewpoint
- Singing Bowl Sound Bath
- Tibetan Buddhist Centre
- Thakali cuisine

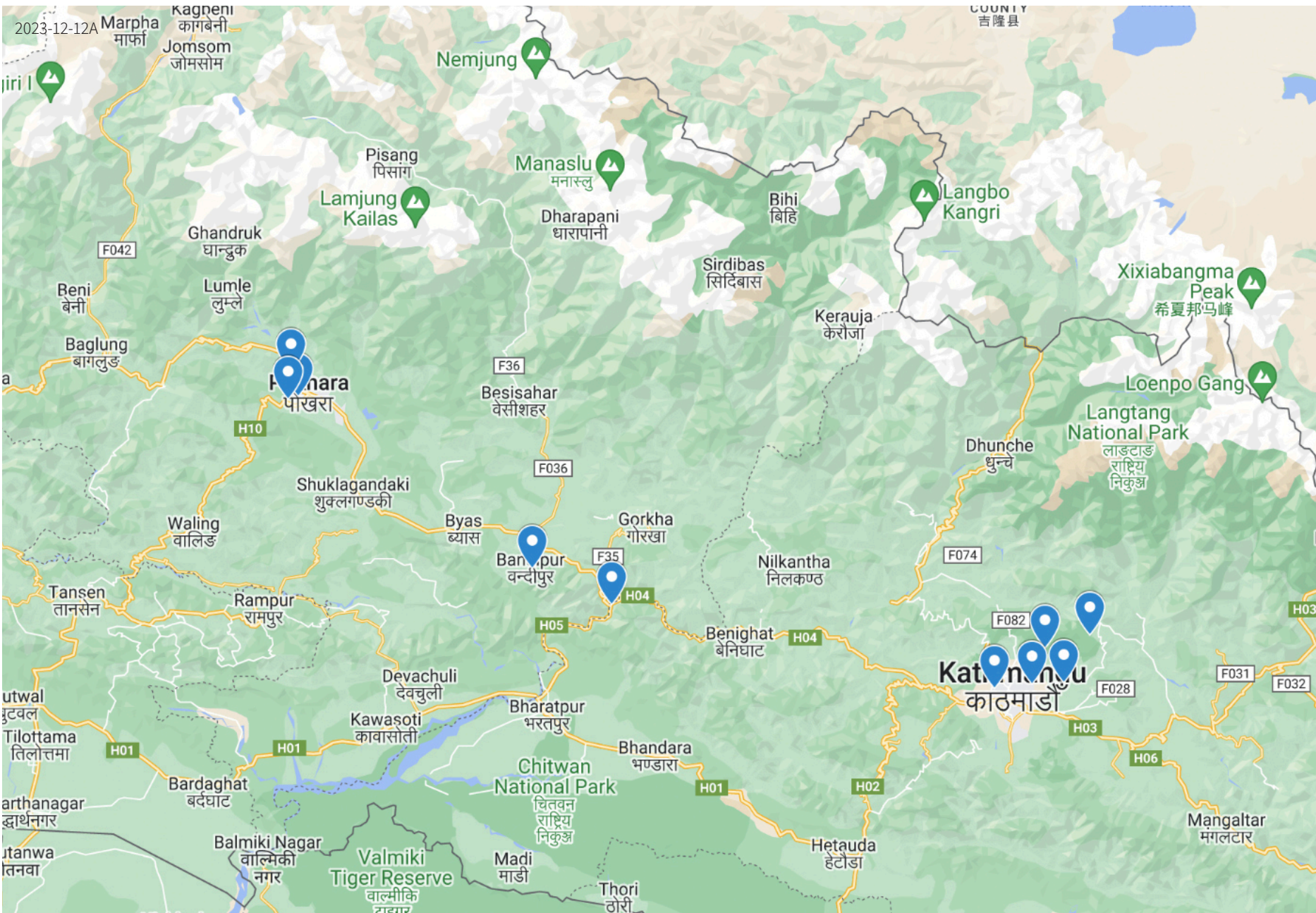
Bandipur

- Hilltop village and day walks
- Newari food and culture



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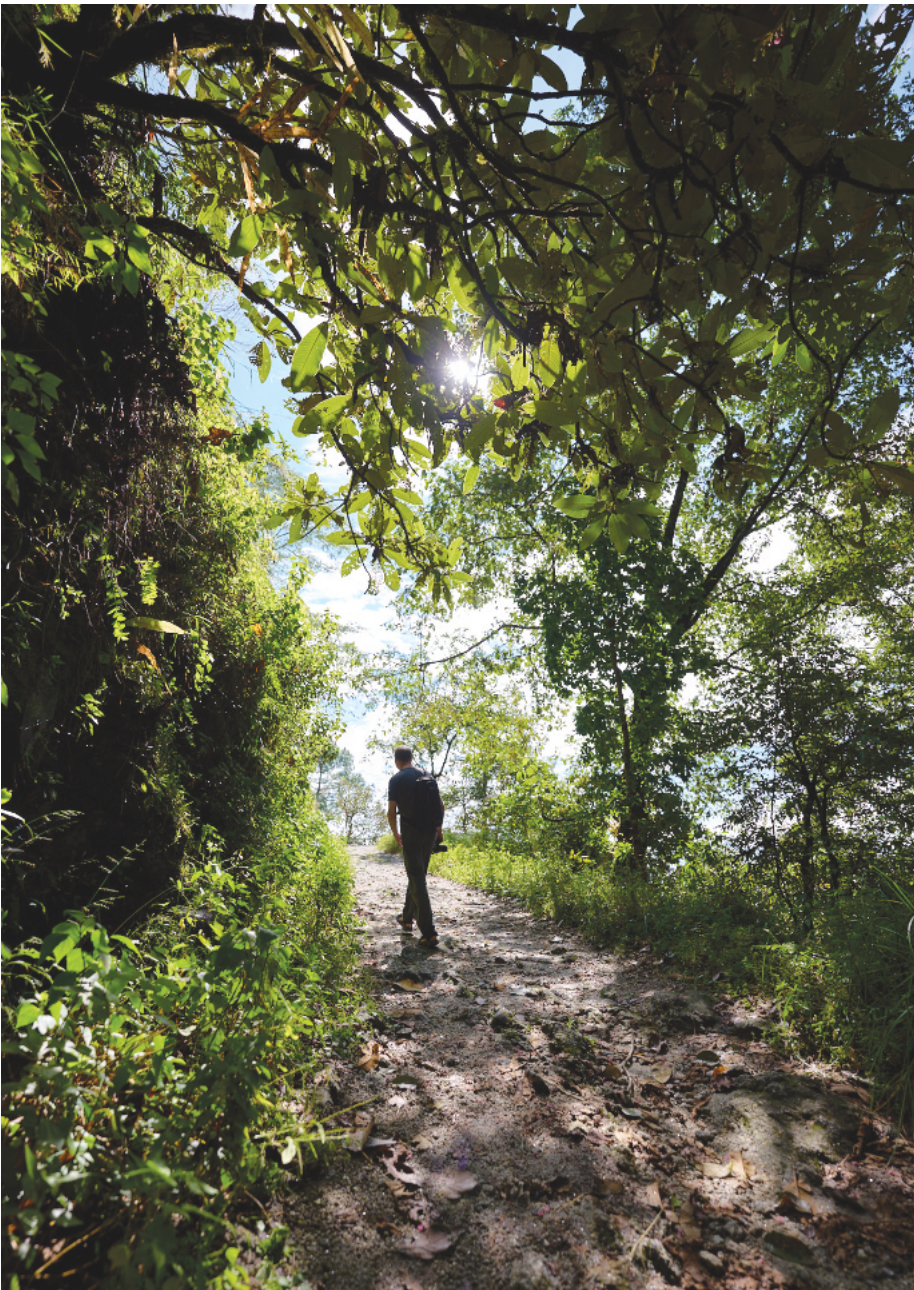
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DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 • KATHMANDU

Arrival Day

If you plan to arrive a day or two early, we can arrange for pre-tour accommodation at our group hotel in Thamel (Kathmandu's Old Town). Most arrivals will be landing in Kathmandu during the day, so we schedule the group meeting for 4pm and then head to dinner. It's about a 30 minute transfer to reach our hotel and this is included in the package.

Day 2 • KATHMANDU

We have private transport to drive north of the city and high into the forests, where we visit the nuns at Nagigumba. We'll spend some quality time at the nunnery and get to meet the residents as they go about their daily rituals.

After lunch we have a gentle hour's downhill walk beneath a canopy of trees finishing at the Budhanilakantha, home of the famous Floating Vishnu statue. We will take the time here to discuss key aspects of the site as well as to enjoy some of our favourite local sweets before heading back to town for the night.

Day 3 • SHIVAPURI

The Nepalese word for "nature" is Prakriti, and that's also the name of our resort on the northern edge of Shivapuri. We need 4WD access to make the drive through some tricky mountain trails. Our reward for the bumpy drive is a secluded resort with stunning views of the Himalayas at dawn. Prakriti offers charming cottages, an organic garden and some great Nepalese cuisine.

Aside from adjusting to the elevation at 2200m, we will also participate in a deep relaxation session on the "infinite horizon" resort deck.

Day 4 • SHIVAPURI

Sunrise is a special moment in this part of Nepal. We're often above the clouds and hope to get some clear skies across the mountains of Langtang. It's a chance to start the day breathing in the Himalayas.

After breakfast we take an easy walk from our resort to get up close with Gurung and Tamang ethnic villages. Most villagers farm rice and live by very simple means yet are typically both curious and generous, and often want to share a cup of tea with us strangers. The good news is these villages are downhill from the resort and a very enjoyable walk. Even better news is we have jeeps to get us back up the hill when it's time to return to our cabins and an afternoon program focused on relaxation and wellness.

Day 5 • SHIVAPURI

Today's program takes in an easy walk over flat terrain and through shady forest, with occasional vistas of Himalayan peaks to keep us company. We stop for lunch at a Thakali kitchen with a special view of the mountains. Gentle yoga and deep relaxation will be offered this afternoon for anyone wanting to stretch out a few long forgotten muscles or just enjoy some quiet time amongst the marigolds.

Day 6 • POKHARA

Travel Day

The major religions in Nepal hold that "when one door closes, another one opens". In this spirit, we trade views of Langtang for views of the Annapurnas. It takes most of the day to transit to Pokhara, but we are rewarded with three nights in very comfortable digs. We have consciously chosen a beautiful and calm resort in the heart of Pokhara so that we can drop down a gear physically and mentally... and breathe more fully.



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Day 7 • POKHARA

Above beautiful Lake Phewa stands the Zen World Peace Pagoda. We visit here to take in its noble aspirations and serene vistas. We follow the pagoda with a slow walk back down to the lake and a scenic row boat ride back to the resort. The afternoon is free to visit our favourite bakeries in Pokhara, take advantage of the swimming pool or book into the hotel spa.

Day 8 • POKHARA

We're up early today for a very special sunrise yoga experience. We travel a little higher into the hills and hope for some clear skies with views of Macchhapucchre and the rest of The Annapurna Ranges. After the yoga sessions we enjoy breakfast at the viewpoint, then return to Pokhara for some deep relaxation with a "singing bowl sound bath". Once again the afternoon is left free to take at your own speed.

Day 9 + 10 • BANDIPUR

Our last morning in Pokhara will be spent at a Tibetan Buddhist Centre. Here we will do a gentle yoga class in the Gompa and participate in the morning meditation before enjoying breakfast and an introductory discourse in Mahayana Buddhism. The discourse provides a welcome opportunity to raise any questions you have on Buddhism and to ask for tips on meditation if you already have a practice.

After lunch we will transfer by road to Bandipur, a delightfully preserved Newari village in the hills between Pokhara and Kathmandu. We have a charming hotel for our hilltop stay and some great views across the forests when we awake in the morning. Newari cooking and local walking trails will be the focus of our visit, plus time to breathe in the spring air.

Day 11 • KATHMANDU

Travel Day

It's a big drive from Bandipur back to Kathmandu, following the highway along the Daraudi and Trishuli Rivers. Several villages along the route are popular with Nepali folks for the locally caught fish. The small ones are deep fried and the big ones are used to make fish curry. It's yet another twist on the national dish "dal bhat", and some of the freshest "seafood" you'll find in Nepal. Once back in the old town of Kathmandu we'll have one more culinary treat for everyone.

Day 12 • KATHMANDU

Our journey comes full circle in Kathmandu.

We get up for sunrise one more time for a pre-breakfast visit to Swayambunath, The Monkey Temple, where there are 365 steps to climb to reach the Stupa. We'll give you the option of taking the side gate, and starting half way up the hill. Our final scenic stop for the tour will be Boudhanath in the Tibetan Quarter, the site of a magnificent stupa that has been a focus for Tibetan refugees since the 1960s.

Day 13

Departure Day

We depart Kathmandu with transfers to your flights, or you can extend the stay with additional travel plans around Kathmandu Valley.



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TOUR INCLUSIONS

- Airport transfers in Kathmandu
- Internal flights in Nepal
- Accommodation based on twin sharing (single supplement available at additional cost at time of booking)
- Visitor Fees and Permits for access to Shivapuri
- All meals (lunch, dinner and breakfast)
- Tea, coffee and water is included with all meals
- Services of an experienced professional licensed tour/walking guides
- Host from Be Your Best in addition to local guides
- Transport throughout the stay in Nepal, sightseeing activities, museum/monument fees, road/monument permits
- Relaxation and yoga sessions
- Classes with singing bowls
- 3-4 star accommodation all through the journey

ACCOMMODATION

We will use a range of accommodation during this tour, ranging from a contemporary hotel in the middle of Kathmandu to charming cabins on the edge of Shivapuri National Park. This trip mixes a little Nepalese style with traveller comfort, and all our accommodation choices are based on providing great locations with genuine comfort.

You can expect to have access to electricity every night and a chance to recharge camera batteries, iPads and phones, plus access to complimentary wifi. Hot showers are typically solar powered and at some locations there may be certain times of day when the hot water service is more reliable.

Unlike some of our other trips in Nepal, this itinerary doesn't stay in remote guesthouses or travel to high elevations. It's a very gentle introduction to the Himalayas, complete with a touch of luxury in Pokhara where the in-hotel massage centre will be happy to take bookings. This tour is all about slowing down your travel experience and breathing in the mountain air.



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GENTLE WALKS & QUIET MOMENTS

Nepal is well known as a serious trekking destination. But it does have a lighter side that is far more accessible, a touch more comfortable, yet still rich with stunning views of snow capped mountains. Not everything in life has to be done the hard way. Skip the trekking and step into the slow lane.

We Do Short Walks

Most walks are between 1-2 hours, or 2-4kms. Gradients are mostly gentle. There are often options to extend a walk or go further for those who want more. But the tour design is focused on gentle and slow, while making special effort to drive up the steep bits so you can enjoy walking down again later.

Yoga and Relaxation

This is not a yoga retreat or a health club, but it is a chance to connect with nature and connect with yourself. Adrian is an experienced tutor in yoga, relaxation and meditation and is always happy to tailor relaxation sessions to suit the style of the group.

You Can Opt Out

None of the walks or sessions are essential. If you want to have a day to yourself wandering around a charming Himalayan village, instead of visiting a hilltop temple, then you should do exactly that. It's your holiday. We'll help you make alternate arrangements if there's something very special you wish to include in your trip that diverges from the planned itinerary.

It's All About Slow

We plan the itinerary so you're not rushing from town to town, hotel to hotel. Multiple nights in one place let's you ease into the joy of that destination. We plan the walks so that you can take your time and not worry about being left behind. We have extra guides with us to keep you company regardless of your pace. For those who finish a walk in record time, you can use that extra time to enjoy a pot of tea at the guesthouse or extend your walking with another section.

Slowly slowly.



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TAKE THE TIME

It's taken us a decade to gather up the right expertise to run this tour in Nepal. We know where the best momos are in Kathmandu, which guesthouses make the fluffiest pancakes, and where to find a freshly squeezed pomegranate juice. We're fussy about where we dine for a meal, which family we stay with in the mountains, and how many passengers are riding in each jeep.

We recognise that for most travellers this trip may be the one time in their entire lives they get to visit Nepal, and we want to make that experience the best it can be.

We don't do trekking. We design itineraries that are genuinely gentle and deeply culturally connected. We describe this trip as a blend of easy walks, remote wilderness and cultural moments. It's a journey taken at a manageable pace that allows time to soak in the experience and enjoy the Himalayas.

We don't try to cram a week into a day; we prefer to fully enjoy the places we visit. This tour a slow travel holiday, not a race!

Most of the walks on this trip are short. There are no full day hikes or the need to carry a pack lunch for this itinerary. Lunch will usually be arranged in villages along the way, or stopping into a restaurant that has been hand picked by the tour host. Cuisine in Nepal is always a cultural opportunity, and a chance to taste a range of influences from India to Tibet, and all points in between.

Your daypack need contain little more than sunglasses, a bottle of water and a jacket in case the weather changes.

We've taken the time to make this tour the best is can be. We want you to take the time to experience what makes Nepal so special.



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MEALS

Food in Nepal is a genuine highlight of the experience. Dal Bhat (rice and lentils) is the national dish and for many Nepali people they are happy to have it two or three times a day, every day. Our culinary journey experience will be more diverse, although the dal baht option does vary from place to place and is often the best choice on the menu. Indian and Tibetan influences will be common place too.

Your host from Be Your Best will have a handful of favourite places to dine, and will do their best to ensure you get to sample a wide variety of delicacies. For vegetarians, travelling in Nepal is an absolute delight. The range of options is always delicious and vegetarian is the default setting for the most of the country.

WEATHER

We schedule our Nepal trips for the edge of winter, when the air is clear and there is very little rainfall. The nights are cool in Kathmandu and warm in the daytime, but once we get into the mountains the nights are much colder and can even get down to zero sometimes.

When out in the sunlight you will often be warm enough to wear only pants and a shirt. The afternoon breeze in the lower reaches of the Annapurnas can be very cool indeed, so a good wind-stopper jacket is essential even when setting out in bright sunshine.

A detailed packing list provided to our travellers in advance of the tour.

AIRPORT PICKUP

Part of Kathmandu's charm is the chaos and you'll enjoy that even more knowing you have a dedicated pickup from the airport to our hotel. We collect flight details for your arrival in order to ensure we have someone waiting for you as you exit the terminal. A guide and a driver will ensure you are taken directly to the hotel. We also drop off to the airport when it's time to catch your flight home.

If planning to arrive a few days early or stay a few days later we will still include the airport service.

SIM CARD

For those who need to be contactable at all times, it's easy for us to arrange a local SIM card for your time in Nepal. This must be done while in Kathmandu and costs less than US\$30 inclusive of 20G of data. Just make sure you bring an unlocked phone if planning to use a local SIM card.

TIPPING

Tips for local trekking guides, driver are included in tour price so tipping is not necessary.



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IS ALTITUDE A PROBLEM?

Absolutely not! But it's always wise to ask first. We've been running trips in the Himalayas for over a decade now and we understand why many people are worried about the elevations.

This itinerary avoids elevations that are remotely difficult. Pokhara and Kathmandu are not high in the Himalayas and you won't even notice the altitude.

There are times while visiting Shivapuri when you will feel a little breathless, but we take it slow just to be sure. In over a decade of running tours in Nepal and Bhutan we have never had a guest suffer from "altitude sickness".

We'll do our best to help you keep hydrated and to stay within your limits. This is a very achievable adventure and we stay a long way below 3000m.

EAT LIKE A LOCAL

Most of our adventures in Nepal make a feature of the local cuisine. We're not super big fans of hotels in the Himalayas that try to offer "continental cuisine" as it usually turns out pretty bland and quite disappointing. We prefer to eat local.

Nepal offers an immense range of cultural influences, and that is reflected in the food. Your BYB host will have their own favourite local eats based on their experience. Often we opt to dine very local, shoulder to shoulder with the Nepalese folks. Sometimes that means a fabulous tandoori kitchen in Thamel, other times it might be a Sherpa restaurant at Boudhanath. We'll get you eating like a local and sampling some really great dishes.



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