



Fully Guided Slow Travel Adventure
12 Days • Nepal

SLOW WALKING IN NEPAL

This is how you see Nepal when you don't want to climb Everest or spend all month on the Annapurna Circuit. Delicious momos, short walks, and holy temples set against some of Nepal's most gorgeous mountain peaks.

WHY WE LOVE IT

Nepal offers lots of wonderful locations to get out of the urban landscape and enjoy easy walks with views of Himalayan forests and snow-capped peaks. You don't have to climb Everest to be rewarded with stunning scenery.

This tour design starts in Kathmandu Valley before heading into the wilds of the Annapurnas. We do some easy walking but often with an option to skip a section and jump ahead in the jeep. Accommodation for this tour is often very simple guest houses in ancient villages, and even then we supply the essentials such as sleeping bags and towels.

The food in Nepal offers some genuine highlights, plus we have a marvellous local guide, named Tsering, to help you make cultural connections. She's a Sherpa by birth but enjoys the lower altitudes of the Annapurnas. Our itinerary slowly climbs into the mountains day by day so you won't have to worry about altitude issues, and the highest point on the tour will be 3,600m.

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS

Arrival in Kathmandu

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

Kathmandu Valley

- Day walk in the valley from Nagarkot to Dhulikhel
- Newari culture and juju dhau in Bhaktapur
- Fly to Pokhara

Tatopani & Marpha

- Overnight at the hot springs at 1,200m
- Thakali villages at 2,500m elevation

Lower Mustang

- 4 nights in our favourite Tibetan guest house
- Goats and trails at Kagbeni (2,850m)
- Lubra Valley day walk (2,800m)
- Tiri Monastery visit (3,000m)
- Muktinath holy site (3,650m)
- Dhumba Lake day walk (2,800m)

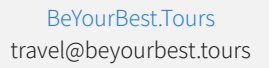
Kathmandu

- Fly back to Kathmandu
- Stupas and Sadus on the last day



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DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 • BHAKTAPUR

Arrival Day

If you plan to arrive a day or two early we can arrange for pre-tour accommodation at our group hotel in Bhaktapur, located a short walk from the old town. If arriving a few days early you can also choose to stay in Thamel (Kathmandu's Old Town) at our group hotel there. 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 airport transfers to reach our Bhaktapur hotel, and this is included in the package.

Day 2 • KATHMANDU VALLEY

We head out of the city early and head for the hills of Kathmandu Valley. The walk from Nagarkot to Dhulikhel routes through forest and farmland, starting at an elevation above 2,000m and finishing below 1,500m. This part of the valley feels a lot like what Kathmandu might have been 100 years ago.

After lunch we stop for a visit in Bhaktapur and a taste of Newari culture. These people are the artisans of Nepal, who traditionally specialised in pottery, wood carving and a special curd called "Juju Dhau". We have time to walk the streets before dinner, and then head back to the hotel.

Day 3 • TATOPANI

Travel Day

It's a big day of travel with a flight from Kathmandu to Pokhara, then meet our team of 4WD vehicles who will be with us for the next two days. The drive takes us through some stunning terrain and challenging roads, as we gain elevation into the Rhododendron forests. Our destination for the night is Tatopani (1,200m), the site of natural hot springs that flow into the Kali Gandaki River. From here we get our first look at the snow on Nilgiri, whose peaks will be our companions over the next week.

Narrow suspension bridges are essential for locals to get across these steep sections of river, and handy for us to gain access to some nice walking trails. There are options to follow the river to Dana (1,400m), or take a steeper challenge up to Narchyang. The exact itinerary will be dependant on how lucky we are with flight schedules and road conditions on the day.

Day 4 • MARPHA

Our road trip continues further up the valley and we enter the Annapurnas today. Our destination is Marpha (2,500m), a Thakali village built from dry-stone walls that hugs the hillside. Goats and apples are the main trade here.

On our way to Marpha we'll make a lunch stop at Kalopani (2,400m), a small village just at the lower end of a glacial moraine. After a good feed we'll let the cars go on ahead while we walk a section of the river on foot, from Kalopani to Kobang. This piece of valley is beautiful, peaceful and surrounded by pine forests. It feels a million miles away from the hustle of Kathmandu.

Access to trails on either side of the river can be limited by changes in the river course from season to season. The locals put down timber crossings when the water level is low, but they get washed away every wet season.



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Day 5 • KAGBENI

We leave in the morning to start our Syang Walk, with modest elevation changes and ever growing views of the Nilgiri peaks. The morning sun is stunning in this section of valley, so you'll need your camera too. Our reward at the end of the walk are some of the best apple pancakes in the world. No other guesthouse in the Annapurnas gets them so fluffy.

After lunch and pancakes in Jomsom we head further up the valley by road, until Kagbeni (2,850m) comes into sight. Here we get out of the cars again and take the easy walk back down into the village. For those who would enjoy an additional 10kms the walk from Jomsom all the way to Kagbeni is also an option.

Kagbeni is home to one of our favourite guesthouses, run by a Tibetan family. It gets the afternoon sun to crank up the hot showers, and the cooking is excellent. We stay here for four nights while making day trips to other nearby valleys.

We finish our arrival in Kagbeni with an orientation of the town. There's a really good coffee shop that overlooks the Mustang Valley and is a prime location in the late afternoon for watching the goat herds return.

Day 6 • TIRI GOMPA

Our day trip takes us a little way into the Lower Mustang where an ancient monastery has welcomed travellers for nearly 600 years. The walk is pretty flat in general but the final climb to the monastery is exceptionally steep. There's no rush however, and the views of surrounding valleys and peaks from the monastery is one of the great highlights of our journey.

We stop in Tiri for lunch as well, enjoying the local version of Dal Baht.

Day 7 • LUBRA VALLEY

We hire some local transport to head out of Kagbeni and visit the nearby Lubra Valley. It's a tricky road in places but when we emerge on the other side you'll understand why it's so special. We have an easy walk or a hard one available. The standard route takes us across an impressive suspension bridge about 100m above the valley floor, and then follows the river as you descend into the town of Lubra (2,800m).

Here we stop for lunch and some apple juice. The harder section of the walk leaves town and heads up to a meditation cave, a winding stair-climb of roughly 100m up the face of the cliff. This is very much optional.

Day 8 • MUKTINATH

The highest elevation of our journey is Muktinath (3,650m), and it happens to be one of the most spiritual as well. This temple is the site of a Tibetan monastery yet is also one of the most scared places on earth for Hindus. Pilgrims and holy men travel from India all year round. We start the morning by driving up to the edge of the township, where the road ends. We walk through town and then up to the temples of Muktinath, with its giant Buddhas, elegant pagodas, and a special water feature with 108 fountains.

After the temples we head down the hill and make our way towards Kagbeni. There are two major routes we may select, depending on the energy levels of the group and depending on how late we leave the temples. Every option is a stunning view and mostly downhill once we leave Muktinath.



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Day 9 • JOMSOM

We have a lazy morning in Kagbeni and time enough to visit their chorten just 100m elevation above the town. Before lunch we start driving down the valley to Jomsom (2,600m) and check-in to our guesthouse for the night. It happens to be the same place that does the best apple pancakes in the world!

An afternoon walk is planned to cross the valley at Jomsom to visit Dhumba Lake (2,800m) and it's glacial blue waters. It's a gentle walk compared to the previous days and a chance to take a swim in the lake if you wish to brave the cool water.

Jomsom is an essential stop overnight as we are catching the very early flight down to Pokhara the next morning.

Day 10 • KATHMANDU

Travel Day

It's a big day ahead to catch the flights into and out of Pokhara. It saves us from several days of driving. The plane out of Jomsom down to Pokhara is just 20 minutes in the air.

In the event of bad weather interrupting the flight schedule, we will have to take the overland option instead and drive back down the mountain. It does happen sometimes. This means having to spend a night in Pokhara before heading on to Kathmandu, which is why we allow one extra day in the schedule at the end of the trip. In the event of a schedule change we lose the chance to spend a day sight-seeing in Kathmandu, but we make sure you are back in time to catch international flights back home.

Day 11 • KATHMANDU

Cultural Stops

Being back in the big city after the remoteness of the Annapurnas is something of a culture-shock. Some people prefer to have a slow day to repack their luggage before flying, and catch up on souvenir shopping. For the others we have some great sights in the city instead.

Pashupatinath and Boudhanath are two of our favourite places to visit in Kathmandu and each are deeply spiritual. The first is a sacred Hindu site where public cremations are held and sadus visit from all over India. The second is a Buddhist holy place with special significance to Tibetan refugees from last century.

If you really want to increase your steps for the day, just join the hundreds of Tibetan devotees as they walk clockwise around the Stupa at Boudhanath, over and over and over.

Anyone who wants to get up for sunrise one more time in Nepal is also welcome to join us for a pre-breakfast visit to Swayambunath, The Monkey Temple, where there are 365 steps to climb to reach the Stupa.

Day 12

Heading Home

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 Annapurnas
- All meals (lunch, dinner and breakfast)
- 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
- Packaged drinking water throughout the journey and in the mountains, plus other services wherever possible.

ACCOMMODATION

We will use a range of accommodation during this tour, ranging from an eco-lodge in the middle of Kathmandu to family run guesthouses in the Annapurnas. The more basic nature of guest houses when in the mountains requires our team to provide a few extras, so they will arrange sleeping bags and towels for all our guests. The rooms are clean and tidy, but very basic, and room-heating is non-existent once we head into the Annapurnas.

In colder weather the dining rooms usually provide hot coals beneath the table so guests can get extra cosy and warm over a meal. These little touches do help to ensure you have a good night's rest beneath the sleeping bag and extra blankets. Many of our guests find the sleeping bags too warm in fact.

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.



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HOW EASY ARE THE WALKS

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. It's a holiday not a training session.

The Steep Bits

A couple of sections are short but steep. For example, there's a monastery in the Annapurna's we visit that requires a 3kms walk across the valley, then 20 mins of slowly ascending a step track about 100m high. But we take it slow. We stop to catch our breath, and catch the view. We get there eventually, and it feels magnificent.

You Can Opt Out

None of the walks are essential. When travelling between towns we have a vehicle space luggage and passengers alike. You can ride in the vehicle for a section, or stretch your legs instead. Some walks we plan so you can do the easy bit first, then jump on the bus and skip the rest! Everything is optional too. If you want to have a day to yourself wandering around an ancient Himalayan village, instead of visiting a hilltop temple, then you should do exactly that. It's your holiday.

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 rising 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 the 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 Baht (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 trekking 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 several gigabytes of 4G 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 any seriously tough elevations, and we take it slowly on the journey into the Annapurnas so your body can adjust to the conditions. By the time we reach Muktinath and 3,600m, you will be very well acclimated and able to enjoy the scenery.

There are times during the journey when you will feel a little breathless, but we have never had a guest suffer from "altitude sickness" on our Nepal or Bhutan adventures.

We'll do our best to help you keep hydrated and to stay within your limits. If you are taking medication for a heart condition, a lung condition or post-covid complications we ask that you consult with your doctor for advice on altitude and your condition.

COVID ASSURANCE

Due to the ongoing potential for Covid-19 to impact future travel plans, we are offering an assurance that in the event of our tour departure being cancelled due to border closures, you will be given the option to move to another date in future at no extra cost.

To secure your place on any scheduled departure a deposit is required. Travel Insurance remains essential for participation on our trips. It is essential to include covid-coverage with your insurance.

If you need assistance in organising suitable coverage for your travels, please get in touch so we can help.



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