

Annapurna Circuit



23 Days
18 Days DEMANDING Trekking
Maximum Altitude 5416 Metres

- ◆ THE CLASSIC TREK AROUND THE ANNAPURNA MOUNTAINS CROSSING THE THORUNG LA PASS
- ◆ AN EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPE, DRAMATIC MOUNTAIN SCENERY & FASCINATING CULTURES
- ◆ MAGNIFICENT PANORAMA OF MOUNTAINS, ALPINE DESERTS & THE TIBETAN PLATEAU
- ◆ VISIT POON HILL FOR SPECTACULAR SUNRISE VIEWS OF ANNAPURNA & DHAULAGIRI
- ◆ STAY AT THE DELIGHTFUL FISHTAIL LODGE ON PHEWA TAL LAKE

For dates and prices check our website

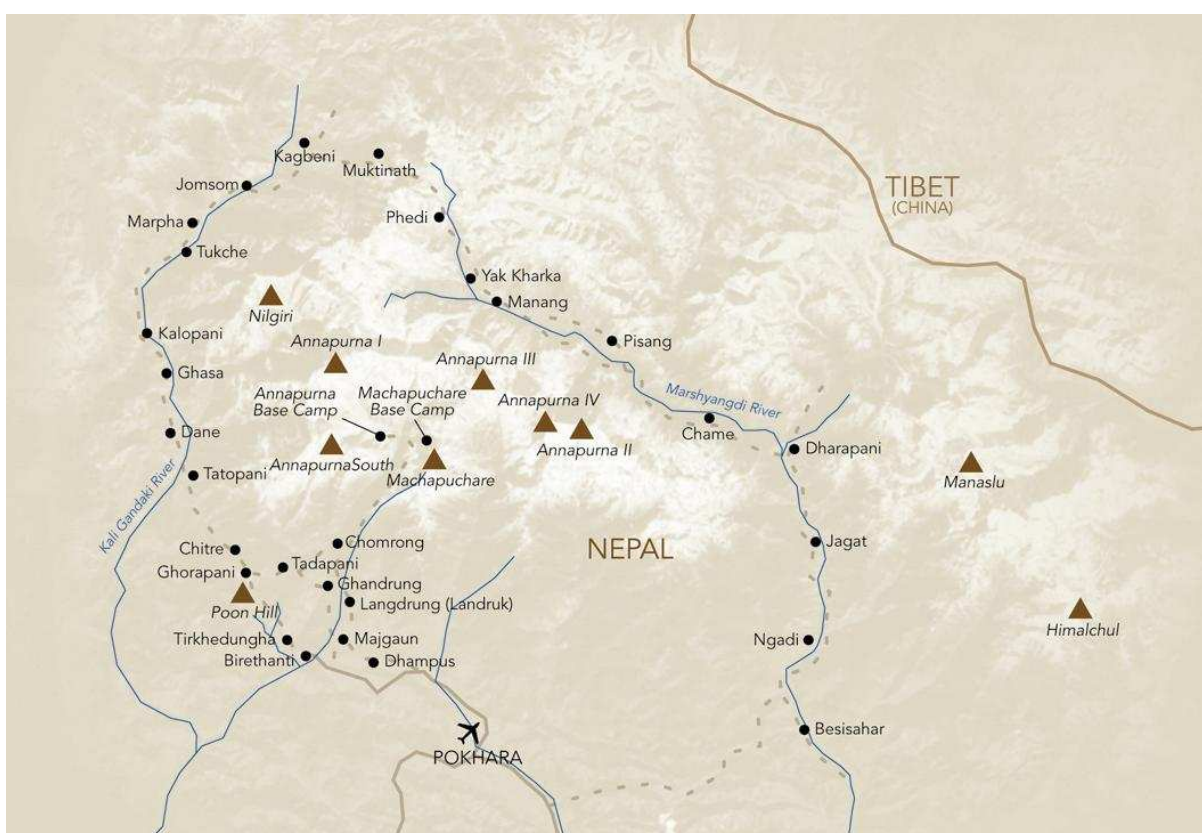
Introduction

The Annapurna Circuit trek is one of the great walks of the world and offers the most variety of any treks in Nepal. Making a complete circuit of the huge Annapurna massif in central Nepal, our route provides us with an ever-changing landscape, dramatic mountain scenery and a fascinating mix of local people and culture. This 300 kilometre trek reaches an altitude of 5,416 metres on the Thorung La pass, touching the edge of the fabled Tibetan plateau.

The magnificent mountain scenery, seen at close quarters includes Annapurna 1, at 8,091 metres this was the first 8,000 metre peak to be climbed, the magnificent ice pyramid Dhauligiri, at 8,167 metres, once the home of the legendary Buddhist guru Padmasamba, and Machapuchare at 6,993 metres, considered by many to be the most beautiful mountain in the world.

The Annapurna region is one of startling contrasts and inhabited by an amazing array of varied ethnic peoples. It contains the deepest valley in the world – Kali Gandaki, which lies between the summits of Annapurna 1 and Dhauligiri as well as a section of the Tibetan plateau near Muktinath where the arid, velvety brown landscape contrasts vividly with the glistening white of the snow capped peaks. In a relatively small area the Annapurna region offers some of the best trekking anywhere in the world.

The Annapurna Circuit trek follows ancient paths used as trade routes between Nepal and Tibet. These paths have long facilitated the flow of cultures and religions in this remote and formerly inaccessible region. Today Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism, Hinduism and the mysterious Bon-Po religion still coexist and interpenetrate one another in this region which contains many pilgrimage sites.



The unusually wide range of climatic zones in such a small area as the Annapurna Circuit path ascends from 900 metres to 5,416 metres provides a chance to see many different plants and animals, and the different ways of life of the many peoples who live there.

Starting from Besisahar we make our way steadily up the Marshyangdi Valley, first through lush green foothills and terraced rice fields, progressing to alpine forests and finally to the high desert country of Mustang. Lowland farming communities and Hinduism change slowly to highland trading communities and Tibetan Buddhism.

Throughout the mountain views are superb, Lamjung, Himalchuli, Manaslu and the Annapurnas tower spectacularly over the valley. The high point of the trek is crossing Thorung La pass at 5416 metres. The early start and strenuous effort are well rewarded with breathtaking views from the pass. Below is the Kali Gandaki valley and the purple, brown hills of the Tibetan plateau. Across the valley rises the huge bulk of Dhaulagiri, while looking back we have a magnificent view of Manaslu.

Now we descend the dramatic Kali Gandaki valley between the summits of Dhaulagiri and Annapurna I making this the deepest gorge in the World. Fascinating trading villages and even more spectacular mountain views are experienced all the way to our trek completion at Pokhara and our stay at the luxurious Fishtail Lodge. This classic circular trek is a reasonable proposition for a first time visit to Nepal, completing an epic journey through one of the most diverse areas of the Himalaya.

In 2008 we revised our trek route along the Kali Gandaki valley to avoid as much as possible the dirt road which is very slowly being built there. This worked extremely well and we will continue to do this on future treks. Where necessary our trek route now follows paths through scenic villages and returns to the main route for our overnight lodge accommodation.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Depart UK

Depart UK on flight to Kathmandu.

Day 2 - Kathmandu (1527 metres)

Arrive Kathmandu. Flying into Kathmandu along the northern border of Nepal on a clear day is in itself an unforgettable experience, with the entire Nepalese Himalaya sprawling out below you. After customs, you will pass out of the restricted area and into the passenger pick-up area outside the building. You will see a Classic Journeys signboard and your trek leader will be waiting to welcome you to Nepal. After transferring to your Hotel, you will be given a chance to catch your breath and then be given a briefing. Your air ticket will be collected to reconfirm your onward travel. Overnight hotel.

Day 3 – Kathmandu Sightseeing

A day in Kathmandu. Morning guided sightseeing to the Buddhist and Hindu sights in Kathmandu, probably to Kathmandu's Durbar Square, Swayambunath - the Buddhist monkey temple and Pashupatinath – a sacred Hindu temple complex on the banks of the Bagmati River. Three major towns are located in the valley, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, each having a great artistic and architectural tradition. Kathmandu is the capital and the largest city in the country. Patan, the second largest is separated from Kathmandu by a river. Bhaktapur, the third largest, is towards the eastern end of the valley and its relative isolation is reflected in its slower pace and more distinctly mediaeval atmosphere. In the Valley the landscape is dramatically sculpted by the contours of the paddy fields. The towns and villages are alive with the colours of farm produce, ranging from pyramids of golden grain to the vivid reds of chilli peppers laid out on mats to dry in the sun. In the streets and towns there is a constant bustle of activity, especially in the bazaars and markets where the farmers sell their vegetables and fruit. The afternoon is free for you to explore the city further and pack bags ready for the start of the trek the following morning. You can leave a bag at the hotel with items you will not need on the trek. Overnight Hotel. (B)

Day 4 – Besisahar / Marshyangdi (790 metres)

We set out from Kathmandu after an early breakfast on the drive west to Besisahar. First the road follows the Trisuli River to Mugling. Leaving the main Pokhara highway we drive north alongside the Marshyangdi River. Normally we arrive in Besisahar by late afternoon. Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 5 - Ngadi (824 metres)

The trail continues northward up the Marshyangdi Valley with Mt. Himalchuli and Peak 29 dominating the horizon. The valley is noticeably changing now to become a deep river gorge. We continue on the left bank of the Marshyangdi, stopping for lunch at Bhul Bhule where we cross to the right bank of the Marshyangdi on a long suspension bridge. We continue to Ngadi. (6 to 7 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 6 - Jagat (1343 metres)

Corn begins to replace rice cultivation and we pass many crashing waterfalls as the valley narrows. It is a steep climb up to Bahundanda ("Brahmin Hill"), the northern most Brahmin settlement in the valley. From here the trail descends steeply through rice terraces, then in and out of side canyons before crossing the Marshyangdi on a long suspension bridge at Syange (1136 metres). The trail climbs high above the river on the steep west bank, which is forested with rhododendrons and pine.

Because of the steepness of the valley, villages in the region are infrequent. Jagat is a small village with a mediaeval atmosphere inhabited by people of Tibetan ancestry. (5 to 6 hours walking).

Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 7 - Dharapani (1946 metres)

From Jagat the trail continues to climb through forest to Chyamje. Following the east bank of the Marshyangdi the trail climbs gradually before the valley suddenly opens into a large plateau at Tal (1511 metres), the site of an ancient lakebed. We will probably stop for lunch here. Corn, barley and potatoes are grown in this area. After crossing the broad flat valley the trail climbs steeply on a stone staircase high above the river. There are some steep ups and downs on this section passing through forests of blue pine before descending to a suspension bridge. From here the trail climbs to a stone archway or Kani, marking the entrance to Dharapani. (5 to 6 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 8 - Chame (2685 metres)

From Dharapani the trail passes a school and climbs over a spur before descending to Bagarchhap, the first village with typical Tibetan buildings and examples of Buddhist culture including a Gompa (monastery), prayer wheels and entrance Chortens (monuments) at both ends of the village. The path enters a narrow forested gorge; looking back we have a magnificent view of Manaslu. As we proceed the trail continues through Temung and the hamlets of Charku and Thangla. As we continue on to Burdhan where views of the Annapurna range become more extensive, with Annapurna 11 looking particularly splendid. At Chame, the administrative headquarters of the Manang district, there are small pools along the side of the river where hot springs bubble through. (5 to 6 hours walking).

Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 9 - Pisang (3200 metres)

We follow the east bank of the Marshyangdi to Brathang; here Annapurna 11 is directly above. Continuing through forest to a wide valley, with the dramatic Paungda Danda rock face rising more than 5,000 feet from the river. There are good views of Annapurna 11 to the south and Pisang Peak to the northeast. The trail continues to Pisang where flat roofed houses cling to the crumbling hillside.

We will stay a little way beyond Pisang, in the forest on the south bank of the river, which provides good shelter against the cold wind, which very often blows up the valley. (5 to 6 hours walking).

Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 10 – Manang (3540 metres)

We are now in the dry, arid region of Manang called Nyesyang. Since this area falls in the rain shadow area of the Himalaya, it seldom rains in the summer months, though it snows in the winter and the snow remains on the ground for a long time. The population is mostly farmers and traders. There are two routes leading out of Pisang towards the Manang Valley. The one we follow stays along the valley floor, on the left bank, providing spectacular views of Annapurna 11 and 1V along with Gangapurna and the Tilicho peaks. We pass through the village of Ongde where there is a STOL airfield. Crossing the river, just past the Manang mountaineering school we walk along a fairly broad trail to the fields near the village of Braga. From Braga we walk upstream and after a slight climb we arrive at the village of Manang. (5 to 6 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 11 - Manang (3540 metres)

Manang is a fascinating mediaeval village of just over 500 flat roofed houses whose entrances are reached from the narrow alleyways by ascending a steep log, notched with steps. This is an important acclimatisation day, which will prove very beneficial when we come to cross Thorung La. There are splendid views of the surrounding peaks from Manang. Manang is a large village situated on a rise immediately across from the huge glacier descending from Glacier Dome and Gangapurna. A beautiful emerald lake lies at its foot. Possible side trips include treks to: a lake about 3 hours north of Braga, to the main Manang Gompa, or to Khangsar on the trail to Tilicho Lake. We have excellent views of the Annapurnas, 11, 111 and 1V, Gangapurna, Glacier Dome and the huge ice fall descending from the northern slopes of Gangapurna is quite spectacular. Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 12 - Yak Kharka (3900 metres)

Past Manang the trail climbs steeply to the village of Tenki, which is the last permanent settlement, this side of the Thorung La. We climb a little further and then contour slowly past pastures to Yak Kharka (Yak Pastures). (5 to 6 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 13 - Phedi (4427 metres)

We continue through pastures on the east bank of the Jarsang Khola before crossing. The trail climbs on scree slopes high above the river to Phedi, our overnight lodge before crossing Thorung La. (5 to 6 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 14 - Muktinath (3694 metres)

An early start from Phedi. The trail becomes steep immediately on leaving our lodge. As local people have used this trail for hundreds of years the path is well defined. After a while the gradient eases and it is a steady walk to the Chorten and Cairns of the Thorung pass (5416 metres), which we reach in about 4 hours. The views are dramatic. Stretching below is the head of the Kali Gandaki valley and the brown/purple hills of Mustang leading to Tibet. Across the valley is the Tibetan marginal range of mountains and either side the pass tower twin 6500 metre peaks. The descent to Muktinath is steep and long, 1500 metres of knee jerking descent. (8 to 10 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 15 – Marpha (2665 metres)

A leisurely start to the day after the exertions of crossing Thorung La. Time to explore the famous temple at Muktinath before descending the dramatic Kali Gandaki Valley, initially through arid country in the same geographical and climatic zone as Tibet. After passing through villages with typical Tibetan architecture we follow the valley floor most of the way to Jomsom, passing beneath vertical rock cliffs. Jomsom is sprawled along both banks of the Kali Gandaki and from here there are fine views of the Nilgiri peaks. Still following the river valley we arrive at Marpha, a delightful Thakali village, complete with drainage system beneath the flagstone streets. Marpha is particularly well known for its apples, apple cider and Rakshi (spirit). (5 to 6 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 16 - Kalopani (2525 metres)

Passing the government vegetable and horticultural farm below Marpha, we continue down the Kali Gandaki, reaching the former Thakali trading centre of Tukucho with its large, richly carved homes now largely deserted or converted into trekking lodges. From Tukucho we follow the west bank of the Kali Gandaki to Larjung. Here narrow alleyways and tunnels connect houses with enclosed courtyards, providing protection against the winds blowing up the valley. We climb through pine, juniper and cypress forest, crossing the river twice before reaching Kalopani with fine views of Annapurna 1. (5 to 6 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 17 - Tatopani (1160 metres)

The trail descends steeply through forest to Ghasa, the last Thakali village and the southern most limit of Lama Buddhism. Soon after Ghasa we enter the steepest and narrowest part of the gorge. At Dana, a mostly Magar village there are good views of the large peak of Annapurna South across the valley. Dana was once the capital of Mustang district until the early 1970s when Jomsom succeeded it. The trail now descends following the Kali Gandaki to Tatopani where apple pie awaits and we can bathe in hot springs at the side of the river. (6 to 7 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 18 - Chitre (2316 metres)

A short distance downstream from Tatopani the trail crosses the river on a large suspension bridge. Here we leave the Kali Gandaki and begin the long climb to the pass at Ghorapani. The trail climbs steeply at first then becomes more gradual as we climb some 1200 metres to the village of Chitre. (4 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 19 - Ghorapani (2855 metres)

Yet more uphill until we reach Ghorapani. In the afternoon there is the opportunity to climb up to the summit of Poon Hill, which offers a magnificent panoramic view of the mountain ranges. Annapurna south and Hiunchuli are up front, towering and prominent, while Machapuchare and others look a little less distinguished further to the east. Look past these mountains and the rolling hills diminish in size until you can see the serpentine Chinese road snaking its way through the hills. (4 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 20 - Tirkhedunga (1540 metres)

An early morning excursion can be made to the top of Poon Hill (3200 metres) for even more impressive views of the mountains at sunrise. Dhaulagiri looks enormous, floating above the Kali Gandaki Valley. To the east Annapurna 1, Annapurna South, Hiunchuli and the fishtail Machapuchare form an impressive circle around the Annapurna Sanctuary. After breakfast we begin the long descent to the Modi Khola valley, through magnificent rhododendron forests. All the way down to Banthanti (2 hours) the rhododendrons are outstanding. From Banthanti the trail leaves the forest to enter a region of cultivation and the attractive Magar village of Ulleri (1960m). Below the village we continue descending on a series of stone steps, which takes us to the bed of the valley and our lodge at Tirkhedunga. (4 to 5 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 21 – Pokhara (885 metres)

Our last day of trekking is an easy descent of the Bhurungdi Khola valley, through farming country to Hille and Birethanti, an attractive bazaar situated on the banks of the Modi Khola River, the valley leading to the Annapurna Sanctuary. We cross the Modi Khola on a suspension bridge then follow the river valley to the road-head at Nayapul. Here our trek ends and our private vehicle takes us the short way to Pokhara. Here we check-in at the delightful Fishtail Lodge hotel situated on Phew Lake. From the lovely hotel gardens, across the lake and above the terraced hillsides, we may catch a glimpse of the sun setting on Annapurna and Machapuchare. (3 hours walking). Overnight hotel Fishtail Lodge. (B)

Day 22 – Kathmandu (1526 metres)

Mid morning we will fly from Pokhara to Kathmandu (35 minutes). Transfer to our hotel and rest of the day is free for sightseeing and shopping. Overnight Hotel. (B)

Day 23 – Depart Kathmandu

Transfer to the airport for your flight departure. (B)

The day-to-day schedule should be taken only as a general guide. A variety of factors, including adverse weather conditions, difficulty with transportation and politics can lead to enforced changes. Because of this it is not possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the planned itinerary. The trip leader will make any changes, which are necessary.

Mini Annapurna Circuit

This shorter 18 day option enables those who don't have time to complete the full Annapurna Circuit to trek with the group up the Marshyangdi Valley to Manang, across the Thorung La pass to Muktinath and down into Jomsom in the Kali Gandaki Valley. Here you will say your goodbyes to the group and fly back to Kathmandu.

Itinerary is as per the Annapurna Circuit Trek up to Day 14**Day 15 - Jomsom (2710 metres)**

A leisurely start to the day after the exertions of crossing Thorung La. Time to explore the famous temple at Muktinath before descending the dramatic Kali Gandaki Valley, initially through arid country in the same geographical and climatic zone as Tibet. After passing through villages with typical Tibetan architecture we follow the valley floor most of the way to Jomsom, passing beneath vertical rock cliffs. Jomsom is sprawled along both banks of the Kali Gandaki and from here there are fine views of the Nilgiri peaks. (3 to 4 hours walking). Overnight lodge. (BLD)

Day 16 - Fly to Pokhara and on to Kathmandu

The flight goes via Pokhara to Kathmandu, transfer to our hotel. Overnight Hotel. (B)

Day 17 - Kathmandu

Free day for sightseeing, shopping and relaxing. Overnight Hotel. (B)

Day 18 - Depart Kathmandu.

Transfer to the airport for your flight departure. (B)

NEPAL EXTENSIONS

There are many interesting destinations, which offer an enjoyable variation to your holiday. The programmes can be tailored to suit individual requirements and we will be happy to suggest destinations and itineraries to compliment your own ideas. It is also possible to extend this holiday and have extra time Kathmandu. Here are a few suggestions.

Chitwan National Park: We offer options for a safari in Chitwan National Park, one of the finest wildlife reserves in Asia. For accommodation we can book any of the properties offering a wide choice of prices and options.

Bardia National Park in West Nepal or **Koshi Tappu National Park** in East Nepal

White water Rafting: on the Trisuli or Bhote Kosi rivers.

Everest Mountain Flight: The 1 hour flight departs Kathmandu early morning and provides spectacular views of Mt. Everest and the surrounding mountains.

Bhutan: A five-day cultural visit to include Paro, Thimpu and Punakha.

Tibet: A four or five day visit to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet

Please contact the Classic Journeys office if you plan to extend your stay in Nepal.

Please Note: If you plan to extend you stay in Nepal it is essential we are informed as soon as possible so that alternative international flight dates can be booked. There is always a high demand for flights to and from Kathmandu.

TREKKING IN NEPAL WITH CLASSIC JOURNEYS

- With over 25 years experience we believe the quality of our Nepal treks is second to none.
- We operate fully supported, environmentally sustainable group treks.
- Our itineraries are carefully planned to provide extra rest and acclimatisation days and as a reserve against bad weather.
- Our Nepalese leaders are professionally trained and are among the most experienced in Nepal. Who better to look after you than your professional local leader, who speaks the language and knows the culture, intimately?
- Our friendly trekking crews are dedicated to ensuring your holiday is the best it can be. They will accompany you along the trail and supervise preparation of your meals.
- Porters or pack animals carry your main baggage for you.
- Sleeping bags, cotton or fleece liners, padded duvet jackets, mattresses, kit bags and basic first aid kits are provided on all of our Nepal treks.
- We provide insurance, equipment and gear for our crew and porters and aim to keep our impact on the environment to a minimum.

The International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) works to improve the conditions of the mountain porters in the tourism industry worldwide. Classic Journeys supports the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) and are the first UK trekking company to make a commitment of donating on an annual basis. All porters on a Classic Journeys Nepal trek are provided with insurance and adequate clothing (waterproofs, warm clothing, boots, goggles). For more information about the IPPG check out their website www.ipg.net

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

If you would like Classic Journeys to book your international flights, please tick the flight inclusive package box on the booking form. Please advise if you have a preferred airline you would like to travel with or if you have a preferred airport you would like to travel from. Classic Journeys will then book your international flights and advise you of the actual cost. To discuss your international flight options, please give the Classic Journeys office a call and we will advise on up to date flight prices and timings for your chosen trip.

Baggage Allowance: For hold luggage this is normally around 20kg and you should aim to keep to this weight. For internal flights the weight limit may be 15kg. Classic Journeys is not responsible for any excess baggage charges incurred.

Land Only Clients: Land only clients who are making their own flight arrangements should meet up with the group at the hotel in Kathmandu. We can arrange airport transfers if needed and will provide hotel contact details. If you have booked on a land only basis and are making your own flight arrangements, you must check with the Classic Journeys office that your chosen holiday has reached the minimum numbers required and is **guaranteed to operate** before paying for your air tickets. We cannot be held liable, in cases where we cancel your trip, for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made.

PRICING

If you choose the Land Only plus international flights package Classic Journeys will book your international flight and advise you of the cost. The price of the tour will be the Land Price plus the cost of international flights on your chosen airline. Depending on the airline flights are booked with, you will pay for these flights with your final balance, 8 weeks before the trip departure. With some airlines, flights have to be paid for on making the flight booking and we will require full payment for the air tickets in order to purchase the tickets. In this situation we advise paying for your air tickets as soon as possible to secure the lowest fare.

Airfares and taxes are subject to change and if the fare has increased before the final balance has been paid, the additional cost will be passed on and detailed on the invoice.

INCLUDED IN THE COST

- Hotel accommodation on a twin share basis (unless single has been requested) for the nights listed in the itinerary
- All meals as specified
- Airport – Hotel – Airport Transfers
- All internal transport as the itinerary
- Sightseeing tours where specified
- All trekking arrangements including trekking permits, National Park entrance fees, accommodation in local lodges (twin sharing unless single has been requested), bed sheets, pillowcases, sleeping bag and duvet jacket (if requested), English speaking trek guide (Sirdar) & porters
- Nepalese tour leader who will meet you in Kathmandu (with a group size of 4+). With groups of less than 4 members, you will be accompanied on trek by an English speaking Nepalese guide (Sirdar).
- Cordura kit bag
- Basic first aid kit carried by your guide

NOT INCLUDED IN THE COST

- International flights from the UK
- Airport Taxes
- Visa fees
- Medical examination (if required) & vaccination costs
- Personal expenditure, bar bills, laundry, telephone calls, etc.
- Porters, guides & other tips
- Meals not specified
- Personal clothing & equipment
- Travel insurance
- Optional trips
- Charges incurred as a result of delays beyond Classic Journeys control
- Anything not specified in the Cost Includes section

GROUP SIZE

Minimum 2, Maximum 12

This holiday will operate once the minimum group size has been reached.

GUIDE / TOUR LEADERS

On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel by our transport staff. For any included sightseeing you will be accompanied by a professional sightseeing guide. For the trek, an English speaking guide (Sirdar) will accompany you along with the required number of porters. Depending on the group size there may also be one or more assistant guides. With four or more clients an additional local tour leader will accompany you.

Your leader will be with you throughout the trek to guide you along the route, help organise and interpret in the villages and assist the group in any other way possible. Our leaders are fluent in English and Nepalese as well as often another language, and have walked in the area many times. They will try and give you a real insight into the local way of life and, for those interested, will happily give some basic Nepalese lessons while walking or over evening drinks. Although not specialists, they are interested in the area's mountains, flora and fauna. Please ask your guide/leader if you have any queries during your holiday e.g. rest breaks, type and quantity of food or any other specific requests, as they will do their best to adjust the trip accordingly and cater for your needs and tastes.

TREK GRADE

Please remember that occasionally bad weather, altitude and unfamiliar cultures can make extra demands. A sense of humour and determination are important attributes on any adventure holiday and on a trekking holiday it is important to enjoy walking. In order to help you in selecting a trek we have given each trek a grade, although this is only a simple guide. Please read the appropriate trip dossier and if you need help in deciding which trek is suitable, please call the office and we will be pleased to advise you further.

Easy treks involve up to 6 hours of walking a day, on good trails with plenty of time for sightseeing. Altitudes generally do not exceed 3500 metres. Anyone who enjoys regular exercise and is in good physical condition should easily cope with these treks.

Moderate treks involve walking for 6 to 8 hours a day in more remote country, reaching altitudes of approximately 4500 metres. A reasonable level of fitness is required as there will be much ascent and descent with the occasional difficult day. A hill walking background is advisable.

Demanding treks are harder, suitable for regular hill walkers as they are generally more demanding and may involve 7 or 8 hour days, with altitudes up to 5500 metres. You should be physically fit and appropriate preparation is essential. Some days may involve crossing a pass with up to 10 hours walking.

A TYPICAL DAY

The day normally starts with an early morning mug of tea (or coffee), enjoyed while still in our sleeping bags at around 6.00 am. We will have breakfast in the lodge dining room, please pack before breakfast, as the porters will normally set off while we eat. We start walking after breakfast, between 7.30 and 8.30 am. Everyone is free to walk at the pace, which is comfortable for them, stopping along the way to explore villages and take photographs. We will stop around 11.00 am at a local teahouse or lodge for lunch. Our overnight lodge is usually reached at around 3 to 4 pm. Afternoon tea and biscuits or snacks are served on our arrival and at around 6.30 to 7.00 pm we will meet in the dining room for the evening meal.

HEALTH & FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

The fitter you are before embarking on a trekking holiday the more enjoyment you are going to get out of it. You should be in good condition for the activity you are going to do - lots of walking. Once you decide you are going on a trek, it is wise to begin a fitness programme. The best way for you to prepare is to take a lot of walks, particularly up and down hills. Jogging, aerobics, cycling and fast swimming will also help but should be in addition to walking outdoors.

We carry a basic first aid kit but recommend that each person also carry a personal first aid kit including any prescription medication they require; a suggested contents list will be provided on booking in the country information dossier. We also provide details of the recommended vaccinations needed however you will need to talk to your doctor, practice nurse or a travel clinic for the latest advice on health recommendations.

ACCOMMODATION

In Kathmandu we typically stay at the Shanker Hotel, a 100-year-old palace, situated in the heart of Kathmandu, facing the North side of the Royal Palace and just 10 minutes walk from busy Thamel, a quiet retreat with swimming pool and gardens. The grandfather of Her Majesty of Nepal once owned this heritage hotel, and the present owners have kept its historical character and the visible grandeur of the exterior and merged the old with modern comforts and authentic decorative objects, to create our comfortable base in Kathmandu. Alternatively we may stay at the Hotel de l' Annapurna, hotel Shangri La or Yak & Yeti hotels. These hotels are centrally located, situated close to the Royal Palace amidst landscaped gardens complete with swimming pool.

In Pokhara we use the Fishtail Lodge hotel or Shangri La hotel. These are first class hotels, superbly landscaped with magnificent tropical gardens with a swimming pool and fantastic views of the snow-capped Himalaya.

Our trek uses local lodges for accommodation. Most are family run, basic, clean and provide a deep insight into the lives of the local people. We have carefully selected the lodges in each village; they provide simple wooden beds, mattress, pillow and sheet. You will need to bring your own sleeping bag or request to borrow one of ours. Lodge accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis, although very occasionally on trek, dormitory accommodation may be all that is available. Please note that sometimes the mentioned accommodation is fully booked in which case we will use similar standard accommodation.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS

If you are a single person booking this holiday you do not have to pay single supplements, if you are happy to share. Neither will you be asked to pay a single supplement if you end up with single occupancy because of odd numbers. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with another single client of the same gender. Single supplements are payable if you specifically request to have a room/tent to yourself. If you have requested single accommodation we will do our best to secure this although this may not always be possible.

FOOD

Breakfast in Kathmandu and Pokhara (if your itinerary visits Pokhara) and all meals on trek included. Most hotels and restaurants usually provide both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, continental, Nepalese and traditional cuisine. Please ask the staff if you have any specific request, especially regarding flavours and spices, as they will do their best to adjust menus accordingly and cater for your tastes. The lodges on the trail offer varied food and the menus are as diverse as the lodges themselves. There are continental menus as well as local cuisine such as dhal bhat (lentils and rice) and other nourishing meals. As much as possible, locally bought fresh vegetables are used although in some remote areas they are not available. Fresh fruit should always be peeled and avoid salads or raw vegetables. The menus in the lodges tend to look extensive but for trekking it is best to choose the high carbohydrate foods based on rice, chapattis, potatoes and vegetables, avoid fried food on ascents to assist with altitude.

WEATHER

Nepal has two seasons the dry season from October to May and the rainy, monsoon season from June to September. Daytime temperatures at lower altitudes (Kathmandu) will range between highs of 20°C (December to February) up to 30°C (May to October). The best time to visit most regions of Nepal is from October to early April when the weather is good for trekking and relatively dry. The season can be extended into May for higher altitude areas such as the Everest region. Early spring (mid Feb, March and April) will be ideal to see the rhododendrons in flower, with temperatures between 20°C to 30°C. Late autumn (October and November) offers crisp skies and often the clearest mountain views; temperatures are similar (20°C to 30°C).

Winter starts from December to February, when the mornings and evenings can be quite cold but warming up in the afternoon to become warm and sunny, the temperature ranges from 6°C to 20°C. The summer months of June to August can be too hot for general travel with monsoon rains. Pokhara remains favourable all the year round neither too warm nor too cold.

EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

You will need to provide personal equipment and clothing. Buying specialist equipment and clothing can be costly. That is why on our Nepal trekking holidays, if requested, we have synthetic 4/5 season sleeping bags and liners that you can borrow free of charge! We can also lend you a synthetic duvet jacket, again free of charge! A considerable saving for those people who don't have their own equipment. You do not need any specialist equipment or clothing for most treks. Basically you need similar clothing to what you would take on a winter walk in the British hills. A detailed equipment list is provided on booking. We also provide a spacious Cordura kit bag, which will be given to you before your trek and is yours to keep. We provide a comprehensive equipment list in the country information dossier, which we send you on confirmation of booking.

PASSPORT & VISA REQUIREMENTS

You will require a passport valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry into Nepal; British Nationals also require a Nepalese entry visa, which should be obtained prior to departure. We will send you a visa application form and details of how to apply for this when you book. You can apply for your visa from the embassy in London. Alternatively you can obtain your visa on arrival at Kathmandu, although this may mean joining a queue. Other nationalities should check with the Nepalese embassy to see if a visa is required.

INSURANCE

It is a condition of booking with Classic Journeys that you have adequate travel insurance cover. It is very important that you obtain insurance cover against the usual risks associated with adventure travel, from the date of booking until the date you return home. Please ensure that your insurer is aware of your Classic Journeys itinerary and agrees to cover the activities being undertaken. Please ensure that your insurance provides adequate protection against the two major concerns: medical / repatriation expenses while abroad and cancellation / curtailment charges in the event that you, a travelling companion or a close relative fall ill either before or during the trip. For trekking holidays your travel insurance must contain evidence of satisfactory cover for repatriation and helicopter rescue.

Classic Journeys do not provide any advice on travel insurance. Classic Journeys is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd. who are Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Campbell Irvine is a specialist travel insurance broker. The comprehensive policy they issue provides 24-hour medical emergency assistance and covers altitude and all adventurous activities undertaken on our holidays. For single-trip policies, the insurance provides cover for both UK and worldwide residents at very competitive rates. In addition an annual policy is available to United Kingdom residents.

To obtain insurance cover visit the insurance section of the Classic Journeys website and follow the links to the Campbell Irvine Ltd. website. Alternatively contact the Classic Journeys office and we will send you details and an application form.

We require confirmation of your insurance, the policy number and 24-hour emergency telephone number who ever you take insurance with.

SUGGESTED READING FOR NEPAL

Nepal: An Insight Guide: APA Publications.

Rough Guide to Nepal: Reed, Rough Guide Publications.

Nepal Phrasebook: Margit Meinhold & Prakash A. Raj, Lonely Planet Publications.

Annapurna: Maurice Herzog. Describes the first conquest of an 8000 metre peak.

The Gurkhas: Byron Farwell, Penguin.

Window on to Annapurna: Joy Stephens.

Annapurna A Woman's Place: Arlene Blum

Kathmandu to Everest: Uchida. An excellent photographic essay of the entire route.

The Ascent of Everest: John Hunt, London 1953.

Everest: Walt Unsworth. The story of climbs on Everest from 1921, Oxford Illustrated Press.

The Story of Mt. Everest National Park: Cobb Horwood Publications, New Zealand. An excellent book, applicable to all areas.

Birds of Nepal: Grimmett, Inskipp & Inskipp. (Field guide available)

BOOKS & MAPS AVAILABLE FROM:

Stanfords, 12 Long Acre, London, WC2E 9LP. Tel: 020 7836 1321

Cordee, 3A De Montfort Street, Leicester. Tel: 0116 2543579

Cicerone at Booksource, 50 Cambuslang Road, Cambuslang, Glasgow, G32 8NB

Maps are readily available in Kathmandu.

Web Links: <http://www.amazon.co.uk>

If you have any questions or would like to know more about any aspect of this trek, please do not hesitate to contact the Classic Journeys office.

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Classic Journeys **ADVENTURE TRAVEL**

Our Experience is Your Guarantee

Classic Journeys have a proven record of operating top quality, adventure holidays with over 25 years experience. Our ground agents and friends are the best in the business. They have an unsurpassed knowledge and ability for organising treks, expeditions, wildlife and adventure travel and all have excellent contacts, extremely important when dealing with local bureaucracy.

An important aspect of our success is our team of reliable and professional leaders, both western and local who ensure everything runs smoothly and efficiently. All our leaders are experienced, enthusiastic and have travelled widely. Working with our experienced and friendly staff, you can be sure of a high quality, personal service that many of our clients have come to expect.

Your Complete Financial Protection

Classic Journeys is a fully licensed and bonded tour operator with an Air Travel Organisers Licence (ATOL) issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (ATOL 3022). The purpose of the ATOL scheme is to provide financial protection for your holiday arrangements. An ATOL is a legal requirement for anyone selling air holidays to the public. In order to obtain this licence we have to continually satisfy the very rigorous standards and provide a bond, you can book your holiday with Classic Journeys in complete confidence that your payment is fully protected.

How To Book

Before making your booking please make sure that you have read the relevant tour itinerary. This can be downloaded from the tour page on our website, or you can request a copy to be posted to you from the Classic Journeys office. You should also read our General Information and Booking Conditions on our website. It is important that you choose a trip that is well suited to your experience and abilities. If you have any doubt or need to chat through any of our tours, please call the Classic Journeys office. Our advice is based on first hand experience and we are always happy to talk about our journeys.

Provisional Booking: It is sensible to check if places are still available on any Classic Journeys tour you are interested in before sending your booking form to us. We will be happy to hold open space for you for up to 7 days (up to 14 days if you live outside Europe) in order to give you sufficient time to send in your booking form and deposit.

Definite Bookings: To make a definite booking you must either complete and sign our standard booking form which can be printed off from our website at www.classicjourneys.co.uk and post or fax it to us, or complete the on-line booking form and transmit it to us electronically. You also need to pay us the required deposit as detailed on the booking form. If you are submitting an on-line booking form and decide you wish to pay the deposit by credit or debit card, you can, if you are concerned about security, telephone your card details to us.

Please note: We cannot confirm a booking until we receive your completed and signed booking form. Any delay in submitting your booking form may put at risk your place on your chosen trip, or flights.

If you would like further information, help with planning your holiday or details of extending your holiday, please don't hesitate to contact the Classic Journeys office.