

ADVENTURE TRIPS IN NEPAL

Nepal Travel Vibes
BE THE ADVENTURE

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ADVENTURE TRIPS IN NEPAL



Nepal is home to nearly one-third of the 1500-mile-long Himalayan range, the world's tallest mountains, and the deepest gorge. The 1700-kilometre Great Himalaya Trail, or GHT, is the longest and highest alpine trekking trail, and it connects the two ends of the country via a breathtaking route. There's plenty for those who want to see majestic views in plush comfort, unwind while gazing at snow-capped peaks, or watch the indescribable beauty of the sun rising over misty mountains.

ADVENTURE TYPES IN NEPAL



MOUNTAIN EXPERIENCES

There are few places where you can travel for days in the farthest mountain and yet feel secure about having access to relative comfort and connectivity should you want it. Nepal is a country of incredible natural beauty, these experiences, and more.



WILDLIFE

You can go on a wildlife-focused adventure in this ecologically diverse country, which is home to rare species including mammals such as the red panda (p13), musk deer, snow leopard, and birds such as the red-headed Trogopan and the Himalayan Monal.



WATERWAYS

Some of the biggest Himalayan rivers flow through the heart of Nepal. The Karnali, Nepal's longest and largest river, originates in the Tibetan plateau of Manasarovar, and rafting enthusiasts can experience both fast, wild rapids and serene waters along the course of the same river.



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SKY IS THE LIMIT

For adventure seekers, the sky is truly the limit in Nepal. Tandem paragliding is the perfect way to be initiated into sky sports. The daring can take a plunge, quite literally, and bungee jump (p35) from Asia's second highest jump. Enjoy the beauty of Pokhara's Lake Phewa by boarding an ultralight plane and flying with a pilot.



NATURE & NURTURE

From watching the sunrise over the Annapurna mountains to a gentle boat ride down the Rapti, and from waking up to birdsong in the middle of nowhere to soaking in luxury in locales you would never expect it in, get a taste of the best experiences in the unofficial adventure capital of southeast Asia. In Nepal, your next big thrill is just a mountain peak, river or valley away.



NEED TO KNOW

When To Go

October & November: This is the best season for adventure trips because the skies are clear, allowing for great mountain views, and the waters aren't too cold. Good weather in high-altitude areas is a bonus for hikers and those wanting to see views from an airplane. This period sees a steep rise in the prices of accommodation and other things.

December–May: The winter months are the best time to go ice climbing. When it begins to warm up (Feb–Mar), you can go hiking in the valleys where the rhododendrons are in full bloom. In April and May, trekking starts again, and this is also the best time to go wildlife watching in the Terai.

June–September: This is the monsoon period and there are operators who conduct tours for travellers. Visits to rain-shadow areas like Upper Dolpo and Upper Mustang are recommended during this season. In other areas, accommodation is cheap and discounts are common during these months.





NEED TO KNOW

What to Pack

- Depending on the time of your visit, pack more or fewer warm layers. Should the weather turn, you will need a light fleece even in the summer.
- Carry good walking shoes and pack light running shoes if you want to go trail running. Sturdy hiking boots, thermals and other high-altitude gear are important on serious treks. You can pick up equipment in Kathmandu if you forget anything; most travel companies also provide gear as part of their arrangements.
- Pack sunscreen, sunglasses, lip balm, a flashlight, insect repellent, water purification tablets, a reusable water bottle or flask and all other outdoor paraphernalia. You can easily pick up anything you don't have from any of the mini supermarkets in Kathmandu and Pokhara.
- Carry a bathing suit or shorts for rafting and other water sports, and ponchos and other rain gear for the unpredictable weather.





Quick Facts

LANGUAGE

The people in Nepal speak a mix of Nepali and Hindi, and basic English is spoken and understood by most on the tourist circuits and even in teahouses on trekking trails.

CURRENCY

The Nepali rupee (NPR #) is the local currency. The US dollar is widely accepted just like the Indian rupee. Most money exchange shops display the exchange rates for the day, but you can check on www.xe.com too. The closer you are to a touristy area, the larger the number of ATMs you will find. Credit cards are widely accepted at mid-range and high-end hotels and other service providers, but carry enough cash on hiking trails.

CONNECTIVITY

Local SIM cards are available at the airport, and there are many recharge shops in towns. If you are travelling with a partner or a group, try buying from the same service provider as inter-service telephony is expensive.

Wi-fi services are widely available in cities and towns and even in trekking teahouses now (additional charges apply). For more details, go to www.welcomenepal.com





Quick Facts

KEY TO RATES

Accommodation

\$\$\$	over \$90
\$\$	\$50-90
\$	below \$ 50

Meals

\$\$\$	over \$15
\$\$	\$8-15
\$	below \$ 8

GETTING THERE

By Air: The Tribhuvan International Airport outside of Kathmandu is the country's only international airport.

You can take a prepaid cab from inside the terminal. You can also download the Sarathi app (www.sarathi.cab) and hire taxis or bicycles to get around Kathmandu. The domestic flight network in Nepal is excellent as it connects most remote trailheads to the capital and saves you arduous road journeys. These are small sector flights, so be prepared for delays and cancellations because of weather conditions, etc.

By Road: Buses are the main (and cheapest) form of public transport and connect most of the country. The tourist buses are more comfortable than local ones, and they are better at keeping time too. Car hires for multi-day trips can be arranged through tour operators. They can be a bit expensive but are worth the comfort and flexibility.





GETTING AROUND

You can hire taxis in cities like Kathmandu and Pokhara to go sightseeing. Settle on a fare beforehand to avoid haggling later. Alternatively, you can download the increasingly popular Tootle app and hop on a bike if you aren't fussy about getting on one.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Kathmandu has excellent clinics including the Nepal International Clinic (www.nepalinternationalclinic.com). While trekking, your only option may be small, local health posts. Carry an appropriate medical kit to high altitude areas. Medex offers a free download of the useful booklet *Travel at High Altitude* (http://medex.org.uk/medex_book/about_book.php) with good advice for staying healthy in the mountains.

TOURS & GUIDES

If you want to go on an organised trek, it is better to use reputed agencies and certified, approved guides for both quality and safety reasons. Check the credibility of your tour operator and their emergency response procedures for high-risk sports. Read the indemnity bonds carefully when you sign up for a trek.

Dos and Don'ts

Do

- Depending on the physical demands of the adventure sport you plan to indulge in, begin a fitness regimen before you travel.
- Plan ahead to get good deals on stay and travel.
- Be respectful both in temples and high-altitude monasteries that you might halt at on your trekking trails. Take off your shoes and hat before entering and check if photography is allowed.
- Move clockwise around chortens and stupas and if you wish, you may leave a small donation at gompas and temples.
- Wear garments appropriate for the weather and altitude.
- Minimize your needs and carbon footprint, especially since most treks take you to environmentally sensitive zones.

Don't

- Rush through acclimatization in high-altitude areas; shortcuts can be fatal.
- Indulge in a sport without the right gear or instructor.
- Go canyoning if you are claustrophobic or participate in aero sports if you have vertigo.
- Waste natural resources in the mountains.
- Take photos of people without seeking permission first.
- Drink tap water or mountain spring water if your body is not accustomed to it.

ADVENTURE HIGHLIGHTS IN 2023



Visit Nepal Decade 2023-2033 promises to showcase the best of Nepal's adventure sport options. From high-altitude marathons to ice skating on the world's highest lakes to biking down the deepest gorge, you can make your trip memorable in many ways. Pick from a range of options that appeal to your idea of adventure. You will have to choose what you can manage to fit into the duration of your visit, for true to Nepal 2020's tagline, once is not enough for all that Nepal has to offer!

Top 10 Adventure Experiences

1. RAFT DOWN THE KARNALI

Nepal offers some of the best white-water adventures in the world, and rafting down the country's longest river, the Karnali, is an unforgettable experience. The river originates near Kailash Manasarovar and flows into western Nepal's Bardia National Park, taking you from the wild west into a pristine wilderness. The roller coaster ride on its thrilling waters starts with a bang and slowly dissolves into moderate and gentle rapids. The beautiful canyons along this route make rafting on the Karnali an unforgettable experience.





2. MAIDEN CLIMB

If climbing a peak has always been your dream, go to Nepal to ensure that your first experience is a special one. There are several peaks in the 6,000-metre range for beginners to choose from. The Lobuche East, Island or Mera peaks are popular with amateur climbers. The routes on some of these have fixed ropes and are open through all seasons. Celebrate your climb in style with champagne and strawberries - and supplemental oxygen!



3. BIKING TO NEPAL'S LARGEST LAKE

While there are several options for mountain biking including right outside the Kathmandu Valley and around Pokhara (p40), there is nothing like cranking up the adventure quotient and going off the beaten path. Hit the dirt tracks of the **Rara Lake**, and the tough terrain will take you through the beautiful Rara National Park with the Himalayas looming majestically in the distance. Those with a greater thirst for adventure can also ride all the way down the deepest gorge in the world formed by the **Kali Gandaki River**.



4. SKYDIVE ABOVE EVEREST

A bucket list quest for many and the ultimate in aerial adventures, skydiving in the **Sagarmatha National Park** is a rare privilege. This is the highest diving zone in the world, and free falling towards the world's tallest mountains is an unparalleled experience. The main diving zone is Syangboche, and the other one is the gorgeous Ama Dablam base camp zone, though diving over the latter is dependent on the weather.

5. ASIA'S SECOND HIGHEST BUNGEE JUMP

For an instant adrenalin rush, take off from a 166-metre suspension bridge over the Bhote Kosi River in **Asia's second-highest bungee jump** after Macau. It's guaranteed to give you the thrill of a lifetime as it more than doubles the length of an average bungee jump. Located three hours from Kathmandu, the serene countryside is the perfect foil to the raging Bhote Kosi River.

6. A ROOM ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

Adventure means different things to different people, and lovers of luxury and comfort can also have an adventure sipping some bubbly and looking at the sun sinking over Mount Everest. Spend a night or two at Hotel Everest View, one of the world's highest hotels, nestled in the Solukhumbu region, which looks directly on Everest, Lhotse, Nuptse and the other highest peaks of the world. There are fabulous views of Everest from every room, and they also make arrangements for any special celebrations.





7. A HIGH-ALTITUDE RACE

Be it mountain biking challenges or triathlons, Nepal brings together the best of adventure sports. If you are a marathoner, try something new with a high-altitude race. Sign up for trail running events that take you to high altitudes and beautiful landscapes. Pick a category suited to your physical and mental capacities. But even if the experience is too strenuous, it will be an indelible memory.

8. FLY OVER PHEWA

Getting a bird's-eye view of Pokhara's Lake Phewa deserves a place on any list of must-dos in Nepal. The more adventurous can choose to paraglide and fly alongside stunning mountains. Those who would rather choose the comfort of an engine-powered flight can take a ultralight and have a professional pilot take you on a panoramic ride above the serene lake, parallel to the Annapurna massif.

9. EVEREST FLIGHT

Seeing the world's highest mountain up close is not reserved for hikers alone. Sign up for an Everest mountain flight, and go on an aerial adventure to see the peak from your window. The 50-minute flight allows you to get close to Mount Everest without actually climbing it, fulfilling a dream for many people unable to climb to the beautiful Solukhumbu region.

10. WILD ENCOUNTERS

Several areas have been designated as protected for conservation, and if you get lucky, you could see wildlife while hiking. For an animal-focused adventure, pick from national parks including Chitwan, Bardia and Rara. The tiger population in Nepal has almost doubled since 2010, making it a great place to see this majestic animal in the wild. Wetlands like the Koshi Tappu Reserve showcase Nepal's rich birdlife, and higher Himalayan parks put the spotlight on the country's rich mountain flora and fauna.



BEST OF ADVENTURE ITINERARIES



If a thrill is what you love most, explore Nepal with this 15-day itinerary tailor-made to showcase the best of Nepal's adventure options.

DAY 1

Arrive in Kathmandu and visit the Astrek Climbing Wall to polish your climbing skills. Finish the day with dinner at a restaurant of your choice.

DAY 2

Go on a day trip to the Last Resort for an unforgettable bungee jumping experience in the Bhote Kosi Valley.

DAY 3

Begin your seven-day trip to the Langtang National Park with a six-hour drive to Syabrubesi. This trek is a relatively easy trail, lined with cosy teahouses at comfortable distances and spectacular Himalayan views.

DAY 4

This hike takes you across the Bhote Kosi or Tiber River, walking upstream past a bamboo village and forest to the Lama Hotel.

DAY 5

The scenic trail now takes you to Mundu and to the site of the erstwhile Langtang village that was destroyed in the 2015 earthquake.

DAY 6

Trek to Kyangjin village (3800mt), the highest point of your trek, and explore the Kyangjin Gumpa. The Kyangjin ridge offers stunning views of the Langtang range.

DAY 7

Ascend Kyangjin Ri if you want some more climbing experience.

DAY 8

Trek back to the Lama Hotel in a single day as descents are quicker.



DAY 9

Trek to Syabrubesi through forest routes or from Rimche via Sherpa Gaon for scenic mountain vistas.

DAY 10

Drive from Syabrubesi to the Trisuli Learning Centre near Bandare village. Unwind at the beach on the river and spend the night at Big Fig Camp.

DAY 11

Enjoy half a day of hitting the rapids on the Trisuli River, and then start the three-hour drive to Pokhara. Spend the night here.

DAY 12

Choose your adventure for the day from paragliding, ultralight flying, canyoning or zip lining.

DAY 13

Drive to Chitwan National Park, visit Tharu settlements in the vicinity and go on an evening safari.

DAY 14

Go on a morning safari; return to play with and bathe elephants. Follow it up with a relaxing evening boat safari and a sundowner by the Rapti River.

DAY 15

Fly back to Kathmandu after a leisurely breakfast.





EXPERT RECOMMENDATION

Sustainable adventure plans

DAWA STEVEN SHERPA

Dawa Steven Sherpa an eco-warrior and entrepreneur, has scaled Mt Everest thrice and works to highlight the impact of climate change on the Himalayas.

In Nepal, the adventure tourism industry is quite conscientious, and most service providers and tourism stakeholders have a high level of awareness about environmental protection. Programmers that save the environment, such as building public toilets, installing and maintaining garbage bins along trekking trails, clean-up efforts, running and maintaining incinerators and reforestation are also being worked on.

Here are some adventures you can go on in Nepal in 2023.

- You can climb your first 6000m mountain in the shadow of Mt Everest. Choose from either the Lobuche East or Mera Peak as both offer spectacular views of Everest. Both peaks have ropes fixed across them, and routes are open all season long. You can also hire Sherpa guides and climbing equipment from the nearby villages of Lobuche and Khare respectively, and this also lowers costs.
- Skydiving in the Everest region (for expert sky divers only) or at Pokhara (for beginners)
- A day of white-water rafting or kayaking along the Trisuli River
- Paragliding over Lake Phewa in Pokhara for spectacular views of the Annapurnas and Machhpuchhare
- Bungee jumping into a gorge over the Bhote Kosi River
- Cross-country dirt biking on the mountain trails to Rara Lake in the far west of Nepal
- Mountain biking on the Tibetan plateau near the Mustang region along wide dirt trails and great expanse of grass and pasture lands
- Multi-pitch rock climbing in Bandipur (all year except monsoon)
- Multi-pitch ice climbing festival in Manang (February)



EXPERT RECOMMENDATION

Racing Ahead

MIRA RAI

Nepals celebrate champion trial runner and skyrunner **Mira Rai** highlights the adventure activities you can participate in 2023.

Ultra-races There are many great one-day ultra-races in Kathmandu and Pokhara, and if you want to experience remote villages along with the sport, opt for the trail races conducted in villages. A race is held in my own village of Bhojpur in February, and in the villages of Helambu, Rukum and Jumla among others. There are also some multistage races in Mustang, Manaslu and Annapurna, and you can also take part in the Great Himal Race. The Visit Nepal 2020 campaign is promoting trail races as one of the main activities in Nepal, and has also sponsored some races.

Women first Nepal is a good adventure destination for women travellers and has a good support network. Women can choose offbeat activities in Nepal like village race tours, multi-stage races and biking in remote destinations. The tourism industry is being very creative with food and cultural tourism during the Visit Nepal 2020 campaign, and agro-tourism and eco-tourism are being given an additional boost to showcase food diversity in Nepal.

Mountain biking Pokhara offers some fabulous trails for mountain biking. Those with a greater thirst for adventure can hit the dirt trails in the higher mountains. Here, you can ride while looking at Himalayan views, meadows and mountain hamlets. Extreme biking adventures include riding all the way up to Mustang or participating in mountain races. You can also hire a bike and explore on your own or sign up for an organized adventure.

Top Tip If you are interested in any adventure activities and want to pursue them during your visit to Nepal, take the time to train for them. Don't worry about reaching peak physical shape, but be physically fit enough for all the demands your adventure will make on your body and mind. Do your homework and research equipment, gear and physical training. Read about the destinations which support your passion and see how far you can pursue it.