

Nepal Explorer (15 days)

Small Group or Private Tour



'Nepal Uncovered' is a trading name of Uncover the World Ltd.



Tour Facts

Trip Code - CUNPNE
Class of Tour - Standard
Maximum Number - 12
Minimum Number - 2
Minimum Age - 12
Activity Level - Medium to High
Trek Grade - Fair
River Grade - II-III
Activities - Multi Activity: Trekking in the Annapurnas, Rafting the Seti River, Chitwan Safari; Sightseeing,
Accommodation - 6 nights in hotels, 1 night camping, 4 nights in trekking lodges; 3 nights in safari lodge
Transport - Bus/minibus/jeep and raft
Meals - 14 Breakfasts (B), 9 Lunches (L) and 8 Dinners (D)

Basic Itinerary

Day	Activity
1	Arrive in Kathmandu
2	Kathmandu -Sightseeing tour
3	Travel by road to Pokhara
4	Trek to Ghandruk
5	Trek to Tadapani
6	Trek to Ghorepani
7	Sunrise on Poon Hill. Trek to Tatopani (hot springs)
8	Trek to Beni. Overnight in hotel in Pokhara
9	Rafting on the River Seti
10	Full day rafting. To Chitwan
11	Chitwan National Park safari activities
12	Chitwan - safari activities
13	Chitwan. Drive to Kathmandu
14	Kathmandu. Free day
15	Free time. Transfer to airport

Small Group, Private and Tailor-made Tours

Small Group Departures:

We have regular small group departures on this tour throughout the available seasons. Departure dates are given on our website, and on request.

You can join our group departures as a single traveller - see single supplement option below.

Private Departures:

You can also choose to do the tour privately, following the itinerary below, but on another date. We add a small supplement for these departures.

Tailor-made Tours:

Finally, this tour can also be used as a base for a private tailor-made itinerary, to be run on any dates. You can make adjustments as per your own requirements (for example, adding extra days, slightly shortening the tour, adding some trekking etc.).

Options:

On all of the above types of tour, we offer various different options, which can be added to the tour. These options are listed within the itinerary below, and then in detail at the end of this factsheet and on our website.

All options that include internal flights are to be paid for in Kathmandu.

Detailed Itinerary

Note: This tour runs together with our Nepal Uncovered tour. They follow identical itineraries except that the Nepal Explorer visits the hill-town of Bandipur instead of doing the white-water rafting.

Extra Days Option

Day 1 Arrive in Kathmandu

We greet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel in the centre of Kathmandu, where our Nepal Uncovered rep welcomes you, ensures you're comfortable and explains the agenda for the rest of your tour.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu

Day 2 Kathmandu, tour

The first part of the morning will be dedicated to a pre-tour briefing and introduction to your trekking guide. After this we arrange for you to taken on a fully guided tour of the fascinating, sprawling city of Kathmandu. We visit Durbar Square with its splendid array of Hindu Temples and the old Royal Palace. We next take you for a climb up the many

steps leading to the immense Swayambhunath Stupa, which sits upon a hill overlooking Kathmandu and gives a spectacular view out over the city. You will also have plenty time to check out the numerous little gift shops that line the maze-like streets. In the evening you can try out the numerous, restaurants and bars, and soak up the unique nightlife that makes Kathmandu a magnet for travellers from all over the world.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu (B)

Kathmandu-Pokhara flight option

Day 3 Travel by road to Pokhara

Today you set off early heading west for Pokhara. You will travel by public tourist coach and once clear of the city's surrounding hills, there is a wonderful vista of snow-capped peaks as you wind your way down into the Trisuli River valley, through the junction town of Mugling, and on to Pokhara. The journey will also give you your first glimpses of Himalchuli and Manaslu, away to the north.

Overnight at hotel in Pokhara (B)

Days 4 Pokhara to Ghandruk Trekking Time - 5-6 hrs

We drive you through low hills and valleys to Nayapul via the large village of Lumle (approx. 1-2 hours) and then you start your trek to Birethanti (1,000m), a large and prosperous mountain town. From Birethanti, the trail is fairly flat, following the Modi Khola river, before you start a long ascent from Shauli Bazaar (1,140m) to Gandruk (1,950m).

Note - depending how your party is doing, sometimes we spend our first night in a lodge in Shauli Bazaar, and walk up to Ghandruk the next morning.

Overnight at lodge in Ghandruk (B L D)

Day 5 Ghandruk to Tadapani Trekking Time - 4 hrs

Ghandruk is one of the largest Gurung settlements in Nepal, and this area is one of the main recruiting areas for Gurkhas joining the British Army. There is an interesting ACAP visitor centre (Annapurna Conservation Area Project) which is well worth a visit.

The walk from Ghandruk to Tadapani passes through several different types of forest, some with trails of mosses hanging down from the tree branches. On arriving in Tadapani, you enjoy spectacular views of Annapurna South, Hiunchuli and Machhapuchhare.

Overnight at lodge in Tadapani (B L D)

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Day 6 Tadapani to Ghorepani Trekking Time – 4-5 hrs

The trail from Tadapani crosses several river valleys, and winds through rhododendron forests where there are often monkeys to be seen. You leave the wet high mountain forests and get some clearer views before arriving at Bantanthi (2,650m) where you can rest in the shelter of a high rock face. You climb up from Bantanthi through more forest, and then follow a grassy and pine covered ridge with good views, to Ghorepani (2,750m).
Overnight at lodge in Ghorepani (B L D)

Day 7 Ghorepani to Tatopani, (Poon Hill Sunrise) Trekking Time – 5-6 hrs

An early start, allows you to make the mandatory (and well worth while!) hour long trek up Poon Hill to watch the sunrise from the summit (3,210m). The steep ascent offers excellent views of the Annapurnas and Dhaulagiri. At the summit there is an observation platform, with picnic tables around the edge and normally a local selling welcome hot drinks (the mornings can be very chilly here before the sun broaches the horizon). Many people come here to see the unobstructed sunrise, from what is rightly considered one of the best viewpoints in the Himalayas.

After the sun has risen you head back down to Ghorepani for breakfast before you start the long descent to Tatopani. You start off down a long stone staircase before winding through lots of tiny villages (Chitre (2,350m), Phalate (2,270m) and Sikha (1,980m) amongst other). The farming terracing becomes more established the further you descend, though you will still walk through lovely open woods and cross some impressive old landslides. Another set of stone steps carefully laid into the side of the mountain brings you down to the Kali Gandaki River and on to the next section of your trek. You cross the river on a long cable bridge before arriving at Tatopani (1,189m), a prosperous Thakali town. You get a good view from this bridge of the scale of the valley you are about to trek up into. Oranges and Lemons proliferate in Tatopani, as the town seems to have its own microclimate. The name of the town literally means "hot-springs", and indeed the spring fed hot pools here provide welcome relief from the past few days walking. The hardy can alternate time in

the hot waters with a dip in the icy river, which rushes past alongside.

Overnight at lodge in Tatopani (B L D)

Day 8 Tatopani to Beni Trekking Time – 6½ hrs

Your final days trekking takes you down the Kali Gandaki river valley from Tatopani to Beni. You re-cross the long cable bridge just after the huge landslide, which blocked the river downstream from Tatopani. During the day you have to be careful as you can pass many long donkey caravans that constantly travel up and down this valley. These donkeys carry all of the supplies for the many villages further up the valley, as well as returning with rubbish and waste. The valley gradually broadens although you pass through some narrow gorges on the way. When the landscape starts to flatten out and the steep mountains to either side recede, you know that you are approaching Beni and the end of your trek. On arrival in Beni, you drive back to Pokhara for a welcome night in a hotel, and the chance to enjoy a big meal in one of Pokhara's many lakeside restaurants.

Overnight at hotel in Pokhara (B L)

Day 9 Rafting the Seti River

After a late start this morning, you make the short drive to our put in point on the Seti River (approx. 2 hours). The Seti is one of Nepal's most beautiful, and its warmest rafting river, and has exciting, though not too large, rapids (grade II-III) which are suitable for families and those of all ages (over 12).

After getting changed, you begin on the rafts slowly, as your guides teach you all you need to know, and you practice paddling techniques, ready for the harder rapids to come, and soon enough the more testing white water looms ahead. Rapids come and go, with peaceful water in-between, as you pass through parts of Nepal that are virtually unknown to most tourists. You have time to relax on beautiful white sandy beaches and see fascinating temples and picturesque villages as you head downstream. At night you tie up on a beach and, after a hearty meal, chat about the days adventures or plan the new challenges to come.

Overnight camping by the river (B L D)

Day 10 Rafting the Seti River

Back on the river we save the biggest and best till last, and it comes in the shape of exciting rapids that are sure to test your newly acquired skills and teamwork. Eventually you reach your take out point near the confluence with the Trisuli river, unpack, deflate the rafts and lay everything out to dry in the sun. You then make the short drive to the Royal Chitwan

National Park (approx. 1 hour). You will be met by jeeps from your lodge and taken along the final village roads to arrive at your lodge in the late afternoon.

Overnight at lodge in Chitwan (B L D)

Days 11 & 12 Chitwan National Park

You are at Chitwan National Park for three nights and during this time you have an exciting itinerary in and around the park. Once settled into your lodge, you can eat, drink and relax and take in some of the spectacular settings that surround you. The next morning you will hopefully enjoy a beautiful sunrise over the river behind the lodge.

Among the itineraries we include, you will take a morning elephant back ride into the park in search of the rare, Indian one horned rhino. Travelling on the back of an elephant can be the best way to approach wildlife, especially rhino, as your human smell is obscured by the familiar smell of the elephants themselves. This means that the animals you search for are much more relaxed in your presence giving you better opportunities to study them.

You also take a canoe ride down the Rapti River, where you have the opportunity to observe the many bird species native to Nepal. You should also see many of the 160 species of migratory birds, which visit Chitwan seasonally. One highlight while on the river is the chance to watch the spectacular skill of ospreys fishing. You may also see Gharial crocodiles sunning themselves on the riverbanks.

After the canoe ride you will explore and learn about the forests in a half-day jungle walk where you should see spotted deer and antelope and hopefully spot some rhino. Experienced local guides point out the various species, their habitats and behaviour, on all of your journeys into the park.

Another excursion takes you further into the park, this time travelling by jeep. The greater distances you are able to cover with the jeeps allow you to see more different habitats and visit the crocodile-breeding centre, located deep inside the park.

You will also make a tour of a local village where you can gain insights into the daily life of the people of this Terai region. Your lodge will also arrange a cultural program for you to attend, and, perhaps, participate in.

Overnight at safari lodge in Chiwan (2x B 2x L 2x D)

Day 13 Drive to Kathmandu

Today you leave early for the drive back to Kathmandu. The 6-7 hour coach journey ride (an internal flight or private transport can be arranged if required)

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gives you one final chance to take in the beautiful scenery, which makes Nepal such a popular country to visit. You should arrive in Kathmandu by late in the afternoon and are transferred to your hotel to enjoy the rest of the evening as you wish.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu (B)

Chitwan-Kathmandu flight Option

Day 14 Kathmandu, free day

Today is a free day to spend relaxing and recovering from the previous weeks activities. Alternatively you may want to spend more time exploring Kathmandu and its surroundings; there are plenty of things to see and do. Perhaps some last minute shopping for presents will fill your last day in Kathmandu.

We offer several options today, including a mountain flight up to Everest, a tour to the nearby ancient areas of Patan and Bhaktapur, or an extension to the tour to try some more demanding rafting on the Bhote Khosi river.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu (B)

Bhote-Khosi Rafting Option

Everest Mountain Flight Option

Patan & Bhaktapur Tour Option

Day 15 Tour ends

Your tour ends after breakfast and, if required, we transfer you to the airport for your flight home. (B)

Extra Days Option

Options

- Booking and Paying for Options:

All the options detailed below should be booked in advance, when booking the tour. Spaces are left on the booking form to use for this purpose.

You can also add extra options to your tour, after you have made your booking, subject to availability at the time. Finally, there will be opportunities during the tour itself to arrange day walks and other activities.

Extra Days

These are available on request in Kathmandu before and after the tour starts and finishes. If you'd like to add extra days into the time in Pokhara or Chitwan, then please request a tailor-made tour.

The price includes a night in the hotel, breakfast, all taxes and transfers.

Book in advance. Pay in advance

Kathmandu-Pokhara flight option

This option provides an internal flight from Kathmandu to Pokhara, instead of taking the public tourist coach (approx. 7 hours), and would normally run in the morning on Day 3. All transfers are included.

Flights are subject to availability, flight times may vary, and prices are given on request.

Book in advance. Pay in Kathmandu

Chitwan-Kathmandu flight option

This option provides an internal flight from Chitwan to Kathmandu, instead of taking the public tourist coach (approx. 6 hours), normally in the morning on Day 13. All transfers are included.

Flights are subject to availability, flight times may vary, and prices are given on request.

Book in advance. Pay in Kathmandu

Patan & Bhaktapur tour option

This tour starts by crossing the Bagmati River to nearby Patan, often referred to as Lalitpur 'city of beauty'. Here you will spend plenty of time exploring Durbar Square, which has a fabulous concentration of Buddhist temples. After lunch we drive you out to the ancient city of Bhaktapur, for a tour of the many squares and temples, seeing stunning wooden architecture as well as exploring the narrow winding lanes which bustle with life. The tour lasts for a full day, and

includes private transport and the services of a professional local tour guide.

Book in advance. Pay in advance

Everest Mountain Flight option

This flight leaves from Kathmandu early in the morning, and lasts for around an hour, taking you up towards Everest and the surrounding high peaks. You can even get glimpses of the high Tibetan plateau.

The planes have larger than normal clear windows, and window seats are guaranteed.

We will book your flight in advance, but payment for this option is to be made in Kathmandu.

Book in advance. Pay in Kathmandu

Bhote Khosi Rafting option (adds 2 days to the tour) Min 2 people

For those wishing to take the rafting to a higher level, this short option takes you to one of Nepal's wildest white water rivers, and one of the best two-day rafting trips in the world. This Grade 4 river (Class -IV to IV+ rapids) is just 3 hours from Kathmandu and makes an excellent adrenaline filled extension to your tour.

The minimum age for this option is 16, and you need to be relatively fit and a confident swimmer, and be prepared for continuous, technical, and demanding rapids.

You will be joining a group operated by one of Nepal's premier rafting operators - please contact us to check availability.

Book in advance. Pay in advance

Sleeping Bag Hire

If you don't want to carry a sleeping bag with you to Nepal, then we can arrange for you to hire one in Kathmandu. We recommend you still bring a sheet sleeping bag with you.

Book & Pay in advance or in Kathmandu

Accommodation Upgrades

If you are booking this tour privately (i.e. not joining one of our group departures), then we are happy to arrange to upgrade the accommodation in Kathmandu, Pokhara and/or Chitwan National Park if required.

Upgrades would normally be to the following hotels (subject to availability):

Kathmandu - Yak & Yeti hotel

Pokhara - Fishtail Lodge

Chitwan - Tiger Tops Lodge

Please contact us for rates if required.

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Single Room Supplement

If you want to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, then we need to add a single supplement charge.

If you are a single traveller joining one of our Standard level groups, then if you do not select the single supplement, then you may share a twin room with another traveller (same sex) in the group.

Note: We cannot guarantee single rooms in the trekking lodges, and you may need to share a tent while rafting.

Note: Couples will always be given a private double room, and triple/family rooms are available on request.

Included in the Price of the Tour

- Meals as indicated on the itinerary
- All accommodation
- All transport & transfers
- Sightseeing tours and guides as indicated on the itinerary
- All entrance fees to sites mentioned in the itinerary
- All entrance and activity fees at Chitwan National Park
- All trekking guides and porters, rafting guides and safari guides
- All rafting and camping equipment including sleeping bag while rafting.
- Annapurna Conservation Area entry fees
- Trekking Permit

Not Included in the Price of the Tour

- International airfares
- Visa costs
- Meals not indicated on the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips, and other personal expenses
- Travel insurance – please see the policies available on our website
- Departure taxes
- Sleeping bag (required while trekking)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Accommodation

1. Hotels in Kathmandu & Pokhara

We use comfortable 3-4 star tourist class hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara. These are usually the **Shanker Hotel**, formally a royal palace in Kathmandu, and the **Kantipur Hotel** in Pokhara (alternate hotels of a similar standard may be used).

2. Trekking with lodges

For this lodge-based trek, we will use a variety of Lodges and Teahouses. In recent years many new lodges have sprung up and many offer quite good facilities and amenities. However, in some areas the lodges can be run on a very simple basis where toilets and washing facilities are outside the building. We can never promise that you will always have full amenities all of the time, so you should understand this before embarking on this trek.

Rooms in lodges are normally based on same sex sharing of twin rooms (though couples will be able to share). Sleeping bags are required (you can hire these from us in Kathmandu if required).

3. Camping whilst rafting

On the river we camp, usually on sandy beaches beside the water, and provide all the necessary camping equipment, including two-person tents, sleeping bags, mats, and toilet tents.

4. Lodges in Chitwan National Park

At Chitwan National Park, we use safari lodges with comfortable clean rooms and en-suite bathrooms. We use lodges, which back onto the river and have pleasant gardens and surroundings (normally the **Island Jungle Resort** or similar).

For further details on the hotels and accommodation used on this tour, please check out the information on our website.

Upgrades to Superior level hotels and lodges are available on request on private departures - see the Options section above or contact for details and prices.

Meals

Kathmandu

Breakfasts only are provided in the hotel. Kathmandu has a wealth of restaurants serving excellent food from all over the world, so you will never be short of ideas or places to eat within a short walk of the hotel.

Lodge trek

Many of the lodges along the route offer an excellent variety of food. In places the menu might be limited but the food is always nourishing and wholesome. To

protect the limited resources available in trekking areas, we politely suggest that you either eat the same meals as the guides and lodge staff, or try not to order too many different items from the menu. 3 meals per day are included.

Camp food

When on the water all meals are included, and consist of camp cooked breakfasts and dinners, and picnic style lunches. They are always of a high standard and, as rafting is hungry work, they are also very substantial. All meals are hygienically prepared and cooked by you and your guides. As this is often considered a highlight of the rafting trip, we ensure that the food is varied, tasty and correct for those hard worked muscles.

Chitwan National Park

All meals are included in the lodge restaurants (breakfast, lunch & dinner), covering a good range of options, both local and western.

Trekking Times

The trekking times given above are approximate, and will vary depending on your fitness, and also importantly, on the speed you want to walk. We will normally set off early in the morning, and have plenty of breaks during the day, before finishing trekking in mid-late afternoon. Some days will be longer than others, and your guide will let you know when there is a long day ahead.

Acclimatisation days are added into all our itineraries where required, and these cannot be missed out. You can however, slightly adjust the itinerary as you go along if you are struggling on a particular day, or you want to forge ahead. If travelling with a group, you should be prepared to walk at the speed of the slowest member.

We have graded this trek as: **FAIR:**

"A trek, where the terrain can vary considerably. Some days can be quite easy walking, but on others the going will be considerably harder. You must have confidence in your ability to be able to complete a day's walk even when the route becomes tough."

For more information on trekking with us in Nepal, please check the Trekking Activity Guide page on our website.

Country Guide

For an in-depth overview of Nepal, including up-to-date regional security advice and information, please checkout the country guide pages on our website.

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White Water Rafting

Is rafting right for you ?

It is a popular myth that white-water rafting is only for the young and super fit. For all our rafting tours, you must be a competent swimmer and be unafraid of the water and to this end we are unable to accept bookings from non-swimmers. So, whether you are male or female, young or old, if you are prepared to honestly assess your physical abilities and accept the challenge then rafting is right for you.

You need to bring swimming gear, some trainers or sandals you don't mind getting wet, and a towel. We will provide wetsuits, and all the rafting equipment. All the Nepalese rafting guides we use are fully trained and experienced on the river, and we carry a first aid kit and use safety kayakers.

For this particular tour on the Seti River, there are Class II and III rapids (Grades run from I to V), and you only need to be relatively fit. You don't need any previous rafting experience, and the start of your time on the river will be spent learning the skills and teamwork required. We consider the Seti river ideal for beginner rafters, families, and children (min-age 12).

Class II - mild rapids, suitable for children and anyone seeking an enjoyable experience

Class III - larger rapids, requiring a little more skill but with little real danger

Class IV - powerful rapids, needing more advanced techniques (see Bhote Khosi rafting option above)

For more information on rafting with us in Nepal, please check the Rafting Activity Guide page on our website.

Transport & Transfers

We use private cars or minibuses for your airport transfers, the sightseeing tour in Kathmandu, and to the trekking & rafting start points. A variety of transport including jeeps, elephants & canoes is used in Chitwan.

We use the highest quality tourist coaches available for the journeys from Kathmandu-Pokhara, and Chitwan-Kathmandu.

Upgrades to internal flights are available on request.

Tour Guides & Entrance Fees

All your entry fees and permits are included (to cover entry into the Annapurna Conservation Area, Chitwan National Park and sites on the city tour).

All National Park activity costs are included, to cover one of each of the following: Elephant Ride, Jeep Safari, Jungle Walk, Village Walk, River canoe trip.

Fully trained English-speaking Nepalese trekking, rafting and safari guides are provided throughout this tour and many of our travellers consider them a highlight of their tour. We also provide a fully trained English-speaking guide for any sightseeing tours.

We support and follow international guidelines for the employment of any trekking porters we use, including those of the IPPG (International Porter Protection Group)

To help support the local people and economy, and because we know it works best, our policy at Uncover the World is to use only local guides and tour leaders on this tour. Please check our website for further details.

When to go

Good Trekking - Late September to November are the best and most popular time for trekking in Nepal, with good visibility and fine weather. The rafting is good, though the water is cooler towards the start of the season. Wildlife viewing is good in Chitwan, though the elephant grass gets longer as the season progresses, reducing the possibility to see some species.

Winter Season - We do not generally run this tour during the winter months of December to February as the river water is very cold for the rafting section. We can still run the tour for a minimum of 4 people however.

Good Viewing - Late February to May is an ideal time to do this tour, as the weather is good and the water is warmer for the rafting. Visibility is good for the trekking, and the elephant grass is cut in Chitwan National park during this season which gives better wildlife viewing opportunities. It does get hot towards the end of the season, so March & April are ideal months.

Monsoon Season - We do not run this tour during June to September, as the rafting isn't possible, trekking is hard work in the hot & rainy weather, and there is a high risk of landslides causing delays to the overland journeys.

Tipping

While an accepted part of the culture and customs in Nepal, tipping is always optional, and any amounts paid should reflect excellent service.

It is normal and accepted for people to tip differently, and you should not feel under any pressure to tip any particular amount.

We are often asked for advice on common amounts however, and suggest that approx. GBP50 p/p would be a suitable budget for this tour.

Visas

Many nationals can obtain their Nepalese visa in Kathmandu airport upon arrival. The cost is US\$30 (UK Pounds also accepted) and the visa is obtained in the immigration area at the point where your passport is stamped (i.e. you don't need to join an extra queue).

For further information, please check out the visa pages on our website, or contact us directly.

Health

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting, and where you are travelling from. You must obtain professional advice from your medical practitioner or a travel clinic on current vaccinations needed for your destination. In general, most recommendations for Nepal include:

Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A, Polio, Meningitis, Rabies and Malaria prophylactics.

1st Contact have a travel clinic with free telephone advice - 0800 0393073, and you can also visit our travel health website for more information...

www.travelhealthzone.com

Uncover the World Ltd.

This tour is operated by Uncover the World Ltd. in the UK, in conjunction with our team in Nepal.

We also run tours in Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, India, Thailand, Cambodia and New Zealand. Please check our other websites, or contact us for details.

www.uncovertheworld.travel
www.egypt-uncovered.com
www.thailand-uncovered.com