

# CLASSIC NEPAL



## ITINERARY:

Starts and ends in Kathmandu (13 days / 12 nights)



### Day 1

**AM** Arrive in Kathmandu (1,400m/4,620' altitude) and transfer to Dwarikas Hotel (The best Heritage Hotel in Nepal!) for **2 nights**.

**PM** Stroll in central Kathmandu's historical centre around the busy Durbar Square (UNESCO WHS) and 'Old Market' districts. Back to hotel for dinner.

### Day 2

**AM & PM** After breakfast we drive (1h) to the picturesque village of Changuarayan, on the valley's south eastern slopes and its UNESCO WHS temple famed for its C10th stone carvings. We then descend to the Medieval city of Bhaktapur (UNESCO WHS). We explore, on foot, the lanes, neighbourhoods and squares of this bustling ancient capital. Lunch is in the pagoda-strewn Durbar Square. Back to hotel later in the afternoon.

### Day 3

Morning flight to Pokhara (Spectacular views of the high peaks) and on to Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, our accommodation for 5 nights.

Situated on a ridge at 1,200m/ 3,960' above the Pokhara Valley, the Lodge has panoramic views of Machhapuchhure ('Fishtail') and 3 of the world's 8,000m peaks. It is also the perfect base from which to do 4 days of walking and excursions into the rural surroundings. The 19 spacious rooms are arranged in 13 stone cottages strewn around the extensive hilltop garden and forested grounds, themselves a haven for birds and other wildlife. The lodge has won many accolades, including Conde Nast Traveler Magazine's Eco-tourism Award.

**PM** Afternoon walk (2h) through the local farms, some of which supply our accommodation with fresh organic produce.

### Day 4

**AM** A 15 minutes drive takes us to the ridge line at Kalikasthan (1700m), the Prince of Wales' first camp on his 'Royal Trek' in Dec 1980. Wonderful mountain views of Manaslu. On foot we descend on a good track through forest into the Madi Khola Valley through colourful Chettri, Bahun, Gurung and Tamang hamlets (Diverse ethnic communities) observing rural life and chatting to the locals.



The glaciers of Lamjung Himal, at the head of the valley, provide a stunning backdrop to our morning walk (4h). The British Army recruits soldiers for the Gurkha Rifles from this area. Back to the lodge for a late lunch.

## **Day 5**

**AM** After a leisurely breakfast we drive (30min) to the lakeside town of Pokhara and visit some of its sights, including the excellent Gurkha Museum and do a boat trip on the lake. Return to lodge for lunch. Lovely optional afternoon walk (2h) down to and along the Seti river.

## **Day 6**

After breakfast we get dropped off for a ridge top walk (3h) through hamlets, farms and forest. There are wonderful views of the Annapurnas and Lunjung Himal to the north and the Pokhara Valley to the south. Lunch will be back at the lodge. Optional afternoon walk (2.5h) through paddy fields, farms, and around two small lakes now protected wetland habitats.

## **Day 7**

Our final 'day walk', this time in the valleys to the north east of Pokhara. More wonderful scenery, bucolic lifestyle, and friendly locals. It is said of this amazingly photogenic area that even when accidentally dropping one's camera a great photo would result! Lunch out and mid afternoon pick up.

## **Day 8**

**AM** This morning we fly from Pokhara, via Kathmandu, to Nepalgunj and on to Tiger Tops Karnali Lodge (3 nights) in Bardia National Park. The park is in the lowlands of the western Terai, is Nepal's largest and best preserved wilderness area, the home of the tiger, leopard, elephant and Indian Rhino. Much less frequented than the busy Chitwan National Park, Bardia borders India's Banke National Park, together they have a combined area of over 2,231 square Km. Karnali Lodge is uniquely set on the very edge of the park, in an isolated location.



## **Days 9 & 10**

**AM & PM** We have two full days of 'Jungle Activities'. These entail wildlife drives, boat and elephant rides into the park, as well as optional walks on the perimeter. Bardia is criss crossed by rivers, and comprises riverine habitats such as marsh grasslands, evergreen tropical forest and deciduous forest. The best way to explore these is by jeep and by elephant; despite a

restricted range the latter cope well with the terrain and allow one to approach very close to wildlife. Nepal is also a Mecca for birdwatchers, the country as a whole has almost 900 recorded species, Bardia and our lodge itself offer excellent habitats for rare species. We go into the park early in the morning and later in the afternoon, with the middle of the day spent at leisure in/around our lodge.



## **Day 11**

**AM** After optional early morning activities transfer (1h drive) to fly back to Kathmandu, and back to Dwarikas Hotel (2 nights). Possible afternoon sightseeing.

## **Day 12**

This morning we visit the valley's two most sacred Buddhist sites. Swayambunath, is the centre for Nepalese Buddhism (UNESCO WHS). Set on a dominating hilltop it offers stunning views of the Kathmandu Valley. We then drive to Bhoudinath (UNESCO WHS) the Tibetan community's holiest site and the largest stupa in Asia. After visiting the site we lunch at a roof top restaurant with arial views of the stupa.

Dinner at Krishnarpan, Dwarikas' famous speciality Nepalese (Newari) Cuisine restaurant.

## **Day 13**

Transfer to Kathmandu's Airport for flight back home.

