

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 busy Durbar Square (UNESCO WHS) and 'Old Market' districts. Back to hotel for dinner.

Day 2

AM 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 a deconsecrated temple (Nyatapola Café Restaurant) in the pagoda-strewn Durbar Square. Back to hotel for a rest.

PM Dinner out at the Dwarikas-owned Garden of Dreams (An ex royal palace and garden) restaurant. Back to hotel for the night.

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 300m/1,000' above the Pokhara Valley, the Lodge has panoramic views of Machhapuchhare ('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. The lodge has won many accolades, including Conde Nast Traveler Magazine's Eco-tourism Award.

PM Afternoon walk (2h) through the local farms that 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 Manasulu. 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. Optional afternoon walk (2h) down to and along the 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

Today we leave Pokhara and fly to Bharatpur and Chitwan National Park. Once we land we have a 1h road transfer to Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge (**3 nights**). Chitwan is the first national park in Nepal. It was established in 1973 and granted the status of a World Heritage Site in 1984 for its

biodiversity. It covers an area of 932 km² (360 sq mi) and is located in the subtropical Inner Terai lowlands of south-central Nepal. Its dense forests and grassy plains are home to rare mammals like one-horned rhinos and Bengal tigers. The park shelters over 300 bird species, including the giant hornbill. Dugout canoes traverse the northern Rapti River, home to crocodiles.



Days 9 & 10

We explore the park over 2 full days. There is also a chance to experience the customs and culture of the Tharu people, the ethnic community that, thanks to their immunity to malaria (Now eradicated), traditionally inhabited these forested lowlands. We go into the park early in the morning and later in the afternoon. The middle of the day, when wildlife is less active, is spent at leisure in/around our comfortable lodge.

Day 11

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

PM Optional walk in Patan's wonderful Durbar square.

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 Boudinath (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.