



Nepal School Project and Trek

This is a fascinating trek that will get you off the well-worn trails with stunning views of the high Himalayas whilst trekking through a variety of scenery. You will also take part in a community project based in a Nepalese village. This project work is a chance to get involved in working for the local community in a gesture of sharing and giving something back prior to our trek in this amazing country. The Helambu trek gives you an insight into Nepalese ancient culture and a taste of life without traffic, pollution or technology. Some strenuous days trekking means that people will feel challenged by this itinerary but no technical skills or equipment are required.

"This would have to be the most rewarding and empowering trip I have ever experienced. We were embraced by an entire village, able to share our cultures and assist in improving peoples lives. A wonderful experience and extremely humbling."

Belinda Nicholson , Nov 2008

Itinerary

Day 1 Bhaktapur

Arrive into Kathmandu any time this day. Meet at our start hotel in the old Bhaktapur district. Bhaktapur is a beautifully restored medieval town located in the Kathmandu Valley. That afternoon you will have time to wander around the historic squares with their temples and narrow streets. In the evening we have a full briefing and dinner and if time permits, we will pay a visit to the Great Buddhist Stupa at Bodhnath and the Tibetan community that resides there.

Meals included: dinner

Day 2 Bhaktapur to community project

This morning we will have a small presentation and general introduction to KEEP. We then take a short drive to Nagarkot, the project location where the group is introduced to the village. This project work is a chance to get involved in working for the local community in a gesture of sharing and giving something back prior to our trek in this amazing country.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 3 KEEP community project

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

The Project School:

Each year a different school may be chosen dependent on the needs of the community and school in question. In past years we have concentrated on one school to bring successive infrastructure improvements, such as drinking water, toilets and landscaping to the school. Schools are assessed by our local NGO partner KEEP, who works with the village in question to

determine what work would be most suitable.

You will be staying in the village with a host family. The Homestay Program gives you an opportunity to really get to know the local community and interact with the villagers and learn their culture and language.

The type of work we looked at on the last trip included;

- construction of a wall which had collapsed due to rain.
- renovation work including changing of the roof, increasing the height of the class room, painting and whitewashing of the school blocks.
- landscaping and levelling of the floors of the school block

Cultural exchange is also a major component of the Community Development Program. Staying with a host family enable you to experience the incredible hospitality of Nepali people and also the opportunity to understand Nepali culture. At the end of the project a cultural night is held to celebrate the project with singing and local dancing. As a group you should expect to reciprocate with a performance of your own!

During the project you will be working alongside local trades people and no building skills are required. There will be a representative of KEEP working with you each day. The materials for the project will be provided including working tools. However, bring a pair of gloves to protect from the paint and blisters. Ohh, and don't forget your sense of humour! The Nepalese laughter is infectious.

Day 4 KEEP Community project

Project work commences at 8.30am through to 4.30pm with plenty of breaks and meals.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 5 KEEP Community project

Project work commences at 8.30am through to 4.30pm with plenty of breaks and meals.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 6 Melamchi Pul Bazaar

Today we'll leave the KEEP project after 3 days of making friends and making a difference. After lunch we'll take a 3 hour bus ride to Melamchi Pul Bazaar where we'll stay for a night before departing the next morning for our Helambu trek.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Please note that the final location of the community project & activities undertaken may change dependent on the need assessed by KEEP but will be in the vicinity of the Kathmandu valley & adjacent areas.

Day 7 Melamchi to Kakani.

Our first day of trekking is a serious introduction to the foothills of the Himalayas. We'll ascend most of the morning to a ridge before a final ascent to 1996m in the village of Kakani.

The trail ascends gradually all day through meadows and cultivated fields. On the way, you'll come across several old villages with their own particular traditions. Walking today is a tough opener but quite pleasant with mountain views and interaction with locals.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 8 Kakani to Sermathang

A shorter day in distance but we continue to ascend through pine forests with views over the Helambu valley Sermathang lies at 2590m and is a quaint little sherpa village. Arriving early in the afternoon, there's a chance to visit the local monastery and play with children or even learn some Nepalese.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 9 Sermathang to Melamchigoan

A relatively easy morning is spent walking to Ghang Yul where we'll visit the monastery and take a breather before following a ridge, Tarke Gyang the largest village in Helambu with its cultivated Malemchi valley fields, stone houses, tiny alleyways and water driven prayer wheel. After lunch we descend to the river before a final climb to Melamchigoan. A long day but the apple orchard and apple pie awaits us.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 10 Melamchigoan to Mangengoth

Today's walk is a true adventure with a high pass to cross (3510m), Buddhist monasteries scattered throughout the day and spectacular views. The Tharepati Pass is in fact a great view point from where you can take a glimpse of the breathtaking snow capped mountains such as Dorje Lakpa, Gaurishankar, Langshisa, Jugal, Numbur and many others.

The final 3 hours is a gradual ascent to Magengoth through rhododendrums, oak and fir forests.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 11 Mangengoth to Kutumsang

Today's trek is mostly downhill, as the trail proceeds into alpine meadows used by herders for pasturing Yaks and other livestock and is beautiful walking. The paths on this section can be very eroded and steep at times and care is needed. Following the trail winding steeply through lush Rhododendron and Fir Tree forest and clusters of shepherd's huts.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 12 Kutumsang to Chisopani (Kathmandu)

Our final day of trekking winds down the hillside to the scenic village of Chisopani. Chisopani has superb views over the distant Himalayas and farming valleys below. In the afternoon we transfer to Kathmandu.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 13 Kathmandu

A day at leisure. A chance for you to explore around the many historic sights of the Kathmandu valley, such as the 'monkey temple' at Swayambunath or the palaces of Durbar Square. Tonight we will have a celebratory dinner to mark the completion of our trek. There will also be an opportunity to take an early morning flight over Mount Everest the next morning (optional extra, approx. \$175).

Meals included: breakfast

Day 14 Kathmandu

If you're leaving today then there is a chance for some last minute shopping before you depart around midday for the airport.

Meals included: Breakfast

Background information on KEEP

The Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation. Its aims are twofold: to provide impartial and independent information to travellers, and to ensure the future ecological and cultural prosperity of Nepal through positive impact tourism and outreach project work. KEEP aims to help minimise the negative influences of tourism by advocating and promoting "minimum impact" trekking and through presentations and lectures to travellers and trekking industry professionals. These presentations sensitise visitors and Nepalese to issues of conservation and culture.

In the field, KEEP spreads its message to local Nepalese by offering training and courses on nature conservation, basic and intermediate English for trekking guides and lodge owners, as well as first aid training, eco-trekking workshops and courses on ecological thinking, Positive Impact Tourism, and regenerative

handicraft skills. Recently KEEP has become involved in programs aimed at poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women.

KEEP has adopted a two-tiered approach to achieving its goals of working with visitors to Nepal, and working with the Nepalese themselves.

At KEEP's Travellers' Information Centre at its headquarters in Jyatha, Thamel, Kathmandu, visitors can get advice on: trekking and mountain safety, causes of deforestation, ecotourism, the do's and don'ts of Nepalese society and practical conservation tips. The centre also helps national and international students conduct environmental, forestry, and tourism research in Nepal. Since inception, KEEP has played a very important role in the conservation of Nepal's ecology and culture. With the downturn in tourism, the need for financial support for their programs has never been greater.

Joining Point Hotel

Bhadagoan Guest house
Bhaktapur

We don't expect any problems (and nor should you!) but if for any reason you are unable to commence your group trip as scheduled, please contact Pls contact our local office at + 977 1 4417426 + 977 1 4416335 for urgent messages

Accommodation

Accommodation is a mixture of hotels in Kathmandu valley and teahouses on the Helambu trek. In Kathmandu we use good hotels which are very centrally located with clean twin share rooms and ensuite facilities.

Tea houses are rustic style accommodation where the facilities are basic reflecting their location in amazing mountain environments where everything has to be portered in. There is usually limited access to shower facilities which in the more remote locations involves a bucket of hot water. All meals are cooked in the tea houses en route and evenings are spent socializing in the communal areas and enjoying the spectacular scenery. Although facilities may be more spartan than what you were previously used to the time spent here is invariably a highlight of people's trips. Feel free to contact us for more information on the accommodation if you have any concerns.

Meal Inclusions

Most meals are included in this trip and the food is generally of a good quality. The only exclusion is on free days in Kathmandu. Please refer to the itinerary for exact inclusions. We like to sample the best of local dishes and produce so you enjoy an authentic taste of the region which you're travelling through. Nepalese food is a mixture of different influences from India and Tibet, though western dishes are very widely available and there is a tremendous variety of restaurants in Kathmandu where you can find almost every cuisine at very reasonable prices. On the trek the food gets more basic as we climb to higher altitudes reflecting the scarcity of fresh produce at higher altitudes. Vegetarians are easily catered for and we can usually cater for other dietary restrictions. Please contact us if any doubt or you would like to discuss further.

In the Itinerary (B,LD) stands for breakfast and lunch and dinner.

Transport

Any transport required is generally by private vehicle.

Physical Rating

Moderate - Demanding

You don't need to be a highly experienced trekker to join these multi-day trips but a reasonably good level of fitness is required to participate fully. Be prepared for some strenuous physical activity as you will be hiking in mountainous terrain for between 5 and 7 hours each day on average and some pre-trip training is essential to get the most from your adventure. Please see our guide to trekking fitness on our www.rawchallenges.com site for more information on how to prepare for your trek:

<http://rawchallenges.com/guide-to-trekking.php>

Visas

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself.

If you would like someone to take the hassle out of your visa application before you travel please visit the following website: www.visalink.com.au

Nepal

You can easily obtain a visa on arrival into Kathmandu airport (bring 2 passport photos & \$USD), cost US\$30 for a single entry visa.

Alternatively apply via the Nepalese consulate before you go which has offices in Brisbane and Melbourne. Please visit the following site to download forms:

<http://www.nepalconsulate.net.au/downloadforms.php>

Important Notes

1: Climate

On this journey we will experience variations of weather conditions from pleasant sunshine in Kathmandu to cold and possibly wet whilst trekking the various sections as well as windy conditions (wind chill factor) on some of the higher sections. This applies to trips in the October / November time frame. Other trips in April / May may experience warmer daytime weather but higher likelihood of rain. It is essential that you are properly prepared for variations in weather and temperatures.

2.Tipping

During the trek our leader will pass round a collection for tips for the local porter team as a way of saying a personal thank- you for a job well done. Our guidance is US\$30 but how much you contribute is at your discretion. This is of course always much appreciated and is very much part of the culture of trekking in the Himalayas. RAW Travel also donates money to this tip but your contribution is as much a personal thank you as a financial consideration.

3.Drinking water

Safe drinking water is provided in the form of boiled water from the teahouses we stay at, so you will be supplied at the beginning of each day and at the end. You should bring 'Puritabs' or iodine tablets (purchased from Chemists or outdoor stores) so that you can top up your supply of water from village taps along the way. A metal drinking water bottle is preferable to plastic as some times the water will still be warm from boiling. RAW strongly discourages the regular purchase of plastic water bottles in villages en route which are an environmental nuisance in Nepal.

4. Dehydration

This can be of the biggest risks when undertaking a physical challenge such as trekking over mountainous terrain. It is so important to be aware of your fluid intake especially at altitude and to constantly drink water throughout the day (even when

you do not feel thirsty). Symptoms of mild dehydration include: - flushed face - extreme thirst, more than normal or unable to drink - dry, warm skin - cannot pass urine or reduced amounts, dark, yellow - dizziness made worse when you are standing - weakness - cramping in the arms and legs - sleepy or irritable - headaches - dry mouth, dry tongue; with thick saliva.

The simplest way of monitoring your fluid intake is by checking the colour of your urine. If it is clear or slightly yellow you are well hydrated but once it is a dark yellow you are in the danger zone and need to increase your fluid intake immediately. Ensure that you bring some Gastrolyte sachets as these help your recovery after trekking with the replacement of electrolytes. Gastrolyte is also the recommended treatment for dehydration caused by diarrhoea ('gastro').

5. Acclimatisation and altitude sickness: Altitude sickness has the potential to affect all trekkers from 2500m and higher. We ascend slowly and give our bodies plenty of time to adjust to the smaller quantities of oxygen in the air. However it is important to be aware of the normal altitude symptoms that you may encounter BUT NOT worry about: - Periods of sleeplessness - Occasional loss of appetite

- Vivid dreams at around 2500-3800m in altitude
- Unexpected momentary shortness of breath, day and night
- Periodic breathing that wakes you occasionally
- Your nose becomes bunged up
- Dry cough develops
- Mild headache If you are feeling nauseous and dizzy be sure to let the main leader know and the person you are walking with so that we can monitor your condition. However at the altitude we go to there should not be any problems. More details will be given to you at the briefing on the first day.

What to take?

You should pack as lightly as possible. Your main luggage will be carried by porters for you. You will only need a day pack to carry your personal items when trekking. You are expected to carry your own luggage on & off any transport used and though you will not be required to carry your luggage we recommend keeping the weight under 12kg for the Porters to carry. It is possible to leave some of your personal gear in Kathmandu before the trek and collect upon your return.

Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, though a soft kit bag with straps will also suffice. Suitcases and bags with rigid edges /wheels are not suitable as they have to be carried on a porters back! If you are wondering whether your bag is suitable ask yourself if you'd like to carry it for several hours a day over mountains and you'll have the answer! Bags are also available cheaply in Kathmandu so if you have nothing suitable then this is an option to buy one locally and transfer your gear.

Checklist (suggested list):

Trekking - What to Bring

Here is a general gear list you will need when trekking in Nepal, with specifications for winter months (Dec-Feb). Try to keep the weight and bulk to a minimum by bringing clothes made from lightweight material. Don't pack too much clothing; one or two changes will be all you need.

However, as the weather conditions in the Himalayas are often unpredictable, be prepared for all eventualities, be it rain, unseasonable cold or heat. Good walking boots/shoes with ankle support that are well broken-in (this means worn frequently prior to travel because new boots invariably equal blisters and discomfort). RAW provide porters to assist with carrying your luggage but you will be expected to carry your day pack and to keep your other luggage to a minimum.

- 4 season sleeping bag

-Socks, several pairs, wool blend and thin cotton. Bring extra during winter month (Dec - Feb)

- Running/tennis shoes or sandals, for wearing around tea houses or camp
- Waterproof, thigh-length jacket of GoreTex or similar material
- Wool jumper / sweater / fleece: lightweight. 1 heavyweight or 2 lightweight during winter months
- Pants: lightweight long trousers, a pair of long shorts, tracksuit pants to wear around tea houses or camp. Warmer trousers during winter months. Jeans are not suitable
- T-shirts/shirts: 2 or 3 short sleeve, 1 long sleeve to protect from sun
- Hat: Sun hat or cap for day wear. Wool hat or beanie covering the ears during the winter months
- Towel: lightweight medium size and/or sarong
- Gloves
- Thermal underwear as they are light and easily washable
- Swimsuit: to relax in hot springs or swim in rivers. A sarong is also useful while bathing, and can be bought cheaply in Nepal
- Hygienic hand wipes
- Torch / flashlight
- Penknife, Swiss Army style
- Basic First Aid kit
- Sunglasses Sun block

Personal Items

- First Aid kit (see the health section)
- - High factor sunscreen
- - Sunglasses to protect eyes from glare
- - Toiletries (biodegradable)
- - Watch or alarm clock
- - Ear plugs (in case room mate snores!)
- - Plastic bags for wet or dirty clothing
- - Wet wipes or antiseptic hand gel
- Water bottle and purification tablets
- toilet paper
- Biodegradable soap
- High energy foods such as nuts and chocolate
- String washing line to dry clothes in the tea house

Please note that sleeping bags, packs of various sizes, cold weather clothes (for all treks) are readily available to buy cheaply or hire in both Kathmandu and Pokhara at very reasonable rates. Most items can be hired for no more than US\$3 per day. Your group leader can assist you in hiring gear. If you plan to hire a sleeping bag we recommend that you bring an inner sleeping sheet, which adds another layer of warmth as well as a layer of hygiene. For the trek all of your gear should be packed into plastic bags to protect from rain etc. Dry clothes are essential for your comfort.

Clothing

- 4 season sleeping bag
- Socks, several pairs, wool blend and thin cotton. Bring extra during winter month (Dec - Feb)
- Running/tennis shoes or sandals, for wearing around tea houses or camp

- Waterproof, thigh-length jacket of GoreTex or similar material
- Sweater / fleece: lightweight. 1 heavyweight or 2 lightweight during winter months
- Pants: lightweight long trousers, a pair of long shorts, tracksuit pants to wear around tea houses or camp. Warmer trousers during winter months. Jeans are not suitable
- T-shirts/shirts: 2 or 3 short sleeve, 1 long sleeve to protect from sun
- Hat: Sun hat or cap for day wear. Wool hat or beanie covering the ears during the winter months
- Towel: lightweight medium size and/or sarong
- Gloves
- T-hermal underwear as they are light and easily washable
- Swimsuit: to relax in hot springs or swim in rivers. A sarong is also useful while bathing, and can be bought cheaply in Nepal

Trekking Equipment

- 1 pair of comfortable walking boots with a good grip and ankle support
- medium to large backpack
- day pack to carry your personal belongings during the day (should have waist straps)
- 1 sleeping bag (comfortable to -10C)
- inner sheet/sleeping sheet (optional)
- refillable water bottle (min. 750 ml capacity recommended) or 'Camel Bak' hydration pack
- trekking pole (optional)

Other Suggestions

- Camera and plenty of film
- Adapter for recharging digital camera (sockets are the 3 pin variety but can also accommodate 2 pin plugs)
- Spare batteries
- Reading / writing material
- Penknife (put in main luggage at airport)
- Torch
- toilet paper
- Small calculator (when out bargaining!)
- Photos of family or postcards of Australia (great way to have fun with locals you meet)
- Nepalese phrase book, map and Lonely Planet guide
- Small padlock for securing your luggage during flights

Please note that a tremendous variety of outdoor gear - aimed towards Trekkers - is widely available in Kathmandu at cheap prices. If you need fleeces, jackets, thermals etc these can be picked up very cheaply there.

***Tea house treks: A medium size, comfortable daypack will be needed. Your main pack should be big enough to carry the requirements listed above, including a sleeping bag and sleeping mat. Although this is a long list be careful not to pack too much. A sleeping bag is essential while trekking as only blankets are provided in the tea houses. Before departing, make sure you have enough Nepalese currency to purchase meals and drinks during the trek (in the smallest denominations possible, as no one out there is going to be able to change a 500rps note). As a guideline, USD\$15 per day per person should be more than sufficient.

Local Dress

When packing be aware that dress standards are conservative throughout Asia. We will be spending a lot of time in the more

conservative rural regions of Nepal. Please remember that as visitors to someone else's home it is our responsibility to fit with the local customs by wearing appropriate clothing (irrespective of what other travellers are wearing). Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and practical, as it provides protection from the sun. Please remove any headwear and shoes when entering Temples or people's homes. Your guide will give you more information on local etiquette.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. We strongly recommend that you take out insurance the moment you register for a trip as you are then covered should you not be able to go in the event of illness or accident. Please send these details (name of insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number) to RAW prior to departure.

We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader. If you have credit card insurance your tour leader will require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Our preferred insurance company is CoverMore as they provide an excellent service. You can apply on line directly by clicking on this link:

<https://b2c.covermore.com.au/index.jsp?alpha=AAV0231>

Health

All RAW travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our group leader, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, RAW reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

Please let us know of any medical conditions on the registration form and if you are currently taking prescription medicine as it is important that our leader is aware of your circumstances. We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

There are no specific health requirements for entry into Nepal. However, you should consult your doctor or travel clinic for up-to-date information and prescriptions for vaccinations and anti-malarial requirements. We would suggest that you are up to date with immunisation protection against typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis. Lowland Nepal also a malarial risk area and we recommend that you take a course of suitable malarial prophylactics. As some vaccinations require a course over weeks or months, contact your doctor as early as possible prior to departure. Generally, six to eight weeks' notice is adequate.

We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements (such as a spare pair of prescription glasses). Please be aware that for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets/antibiotics etc. Your first aid kit should include:

- headache tablets
- diarrhoea treatment (both a blocker to bring relief from the symptoms and an antibiotic)
- band-aids
- antiseptic for cuts & scrapes
- lip balm
- insect repellent

- high factor sunscreen.

Given the physical nature of this trip we strongly advise bringing some sachets of an oral rehydration solution (available at chemists) as this aids recovery following activity and dehydration and also helps replace lost body salts should you suffer from 'gastro'. Just add a sachet to your water bottle each day. Please scroll down to the Special Safety Notes below for information on dehydration.

If you are 65 years or older a completed Medical Certificate is required.

Please let us know and we can post you a copy which then needs to be signed by your GP and posted faxed through to 03 9597 0797 prior to departure.

Physical Preparation

On many feedbacks after a trip we get comments such as: 'I wish I had done more training.' The best advice is to start early. This is a very active trip, requiring a good level of physical fitness. Getting yourself fit is all part of the Challenge and one that you'll benefit from long after your trip is over. It is really worth putting in the effort before you go as it means you'll enjoy the event rather than it being a struggle.

For training & advice go to our website and read our Guide to Trekking:

<http://rawchallenges.com/guide-to-trekking.php>

Walking may seem to be one of the most natural things to do and you may feel that you are already in good enough shape to take on the challenge, but remember you will be trekking for successive days over steep and uneven terrain. Don't leave training until the last minute, regular exercise with a gentle build up will ensure that you are in peak condition for the trek. Improve your fitness levels by taking other forms of regular exercise (biking and swimming are good for improving general fitness) but remember that you also need to get your feet used to your trekking boots as they need to be well worn in before your trip.

Money Exchange

Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates please refer to the following website: www.oanda.com

Nepal: \$1 AUD = approx. 56 Rupees. The Nepalese Rupee is the unit of currency. There are many moneychangers in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Clean bills with no tears are best. ATM's are widely available in larger cities where you can withdraw money in local currency if you have a visa / mastercard or cirrus card. Credit cards can be used to advance cash in banks in major towns but attract a high fee. We recommend that you don't use money changers on the street. When changing money try and get a mix of denominations (your leader will advise you on this). Keep smaller notes with you when on the cycle ride as it can be difficult to change larger notes once out of the city.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. \$15 USD a day would be sufficient for more people on the trek.

Any tip that you wish to give to your local guides or leader in recognition of excellent service is always appreciated. We recommend approx. US\$30 to go into a kitty to be distributed to the local team at the end of the trip. Usually we do this on the last night at the celebration dinner.

Emergency Funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional USD\$400 or \$AUD equivalent, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, or an outbreak of bird flu) necessitate a change to our planned route. This is an extremely rare occurrence but it is well worth being prepared!

Keeping In Touch - communication while on the road

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road. Email cafes are commonplace throughout the regions we visit. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency we recommend that they refer to our Emergency contact. We don't recommend that family and friends try to contact you through hotels, as they are subject to change and the reception staff may not speak English.

Emergency Contact

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please call the RAW Office.
Tel: +61 3 9597 0799 Outside of office hours please call 0413 703 632

Your Fellow Trekkers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience.

Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Group Leader

RAW has both resident western and local leaders who lead our trips in this region. Generally speaking you will have a western leader with a larger group size supported by local leaders as well. Where the group size is smaller or with a private booking for a few persons you will have a local leader. All our staff are first aid trained and experienced with the special nature and demands of cycle tours and are able to give you support and insights into the local culture.

The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends.

While not being tour guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local area guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. When we are cycling children will ask you for pens, money etc. It is always hard to resist giving them small gift. However we ask you not to do this as it encourages a culture of begging and often parents will take their children out of school and get their children to prey on tourists. Ask your leader what is the best way to give.

Participation Form

All RAW Travel passengers are required to sign a Participation Form on day 1 of the trip. Please note that signing the form is a prerequisite of travelling with RAW. The wording of this form follows:

“I understand that travelling with RAW Travel may involve risks (and rewards) above and beyond those encountered on a more conventional holiday, and that I am undertaking an adventure trip with inherent dangers. I understand that I am travelling to geographical areas where, amongst other things, the standard of accommodation, transport, safety, hygiene, cleanliness, medical facilities, telecommunications and infrastructure development may not be of the standard I am used to at home or would find on a conventional holiday. I have read and understood the RAW Travel trip notes for the trip I am undertaking and have provided details of any pre-existing medical conditions I have to RAW Travel’s representatives. I accept these risks and obligations and I fully assume the risks of travel. I release RAW Travel from any liabilities connected to these risks to the maximum extent permitted by law.”

All RAW travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in a group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our group leader, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, RAW Travel reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund. We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

Our leaders are first aid qualified and will be carrying a first aid kit. Please ensure that you bring a good hat and high factor sun screen, insect repellent. We advise that you carry at least 1 litre of water with you at the start of each day.

RAW Newsletter

We have a free email newsletter full of traveller’s stories and experiences as well as news on new trips that we are running. Please send us an extract from your travel journal at the end of the trip.

If you have any suggestions to add more information to our trip dossier that you think other walkers would find useful please email: adventure@rawtravel.com. And of course email us if you have any questions leading up to the event.

We hope you will love the Great Ocean Walk as much as we do and we look forward to you joining us on other RAW experiences.

The information in these trip notes has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and RAW Travel.