



## Annapurna and the Terai

Come with us to Nepal for the cycle ride of your lifetime, following an ancient passageway to India on this exhilarating exploration of the Himalayan wonderland.

After a day in cosmopolitan Kathmandu to prepare for your adventure, we let you settle into your saddle with an easy but exciting ride through delightful rural valley villages, experiencing their colourful local culture and the dramatic mountainous backdrops. After that, you'd better hold on tight to your handlebars - your second day on the bike starts off with a thrilling downhill ride from the hilltop lookout of Daman, which drops down by 1500m altitude along 80 simply thrilling kilometers, twisting and turning through a river valley that gives you an enthralling view of the Himalayas on a clear day.

Once you're down onto the southern Terai plains, you'll be charmed by the timeless village vibe and you'll get roared at by wildlife at Chitwan National Park. As we peddle forward on our route through the Pokhara valley to the Annapurna Himalaya, you'll get to explore a treasure trove of truly tantalising historic landmarks and landscapes, many of which are off the beaten tourist tracks and hidden from most

western eyes. The beauty of this trip - aside from the enchanting cultural experiences and sublime mountain scenery - is that it's not all about the bike. Along the way you'll do a jungle safari, a dug-out canoe ride on the Rati River, some boating on the Phewa Lake and a hike along the famous Royal Trek.

This challenging - but not impossibly hard - ride is fully vehicle supported, so you can choose how much you want to ride each day. Then, at the end of each day's adventure, you can rest your legs and enjoy the creature comforts of great accommodation that we've carefully chosen for character and location.

## Itinerary

### **DAY 1: Arrive in Kathmandu**

Transfer to our centrally located hotel. You are free to explore the area, prepare the bikes and in the evening attend a trip briefing and enjoy a dinner out with your biking companions in anticipation of the adventure that lies ahead.

Accommodation: Guest House

Meals (D)

### **DAY 2: Kathmandu / Cycle to Daman.**

We leave Kathmandu early morning in a support bus to Tistung, on the edge of the Kathmandu valley. From here we saddle-up for our introductory off-road ride, with full vehicle support, in the Palung Valley to Kulekhani Lake (28km). Today's cycling will be through rural villages and the scenes of local life and friendly local people make for a fantastic riding experience. After a late lunch we re-hit the trail and those of you that are undaunted by Himalayan hills can ride up to our hotel, the Everest Panorama Resort, near Daman. You will enjoy the spectacular mountain views, on a clear day you can almost see the full Himalayan mountain range, from Everest in the east to Dhaulagiri in the west.

Overnight Daman  
Meals (B, L, D)

**DAY 3: Cycle Daman to Hetauda.**

After breakfast we cycle down to a nearby monastery then return to the hotel for lunch. Having filled up with excellent food, we prepare for the exciting ride to Hetauda in the Terai. The road descends an amazing 1,500m in altitude over 80 km, twisting and turning a river valley this is a truly exhilarating ride.

Overnight Hetauda .  
Meals (B, L, D)

**DAY 4: Cycle Hetauda to Sauraha.**

We take a short transfer by support vehicle to clear Hetauda and any traffic and after approx 30km start our biking into Sauraha, the main town adjoining Chitwan National park. We'll be riding dirt tracks with guide support only, over some 40km of level terrain. The terrain in the Terai is completely different to other parts of Nepal as it is flat and feels very much like you are in India, which in fact is very close! This is fantastic riding as we travel on bullock-drawn cart tracks as we pass through neat mud-walled villages, paddy fields and mixed sub-tropical forests crossed by numerous rivers and we reach our accommodation, hopefully arriving in time to enjoy one of the amazing Terai sunsets!

Overnight Safari Lodge Chitwan  
Meals (B, L, D)

**DAY 5: Rest day Chitwan National Park**

Today is your chance to explore the jungle and an exciting guided tour either on elephant back or a foot safari can be arranged to make the most of the experience. Chitwan National Park is the oldest national park in Nepal and was also granted World Heritage status due to the extraordinary diversity of flora and fauna found here. Think of Rudyard Kipling's "Jungle Book" and you'll have an idea of what to expect! Some of the flagship species include one of the last populations of Indian Rhinoceros and Bengal tiger as well as Leopards and Asian Elephants. It is a remarkable experience to wander through the forest and see peacocks, troops of Monkeys and deer herds all around you. The park is home to at least 43 species of mammals, 450 species of birds, and 45 species of amphibians and reptiles. The Sal forests are literally teeming with wildlife and the river is also home to rare Gangetic Dolphins.

Overnight Safari Lodge Chitwan  
Meals (B, D)

**DAY 6: Cycle Chitwan National Park to Tansen.**

We leave the park and spend the whole day cycling through the western Terai along dirt and tar sealed roads, seeing village life close up. There is an epic descent and for those that feel up to it a one hour climb to the Sameshwar Mountains. Distance covered today will be approximately 60km. In the afternoon we make our way by vehicle to Tansen, an ancient hill town, famous for its architecture strongly influenced by Newari migrants from the Kathmandu valley. Our Stay here offers an opportunity to experience genuine Nepali culture and nature, as Tansen receives few foreign visitors. Our Hotel is located on the hill of Srinagar which offers breathtaking views of the Himalayan range from Dhaulagiri to Ganesh Himal.

Overnight Tansen  
Meals (B, L, D)

**DAY 7: Cycle Tansen to Pokhara.**

This morning you have the option of trekking for two hours in the morning to reach the Kali Gandaki River and the recently restored Ranighat Palace. Known as the 'Taj Mahal of Nepal' this beautiful building sits on a remote location overlooking the river and has an air of mystery about it. In the afternoon we continue onwards by bike to Pokhara, gaining beautiful views of Mt. Machhapuchhre (The Fishtail) and the Annapurna Range.

Nepal's second city, Pokhara, is set along one of three lakes in the area, providing serene views with the backdrop of the Annapurna range behind. The mountains here are surprisingly close and are so immense you can not fully absorb how huge they are. We relax in this fantastic scenery among many of the bars and restaurants that scatter Lake Phewa's shoreline. You can

hire boats on the lake and walk up to the World Peace Pagoda. From here enjoy the views of the mountains, lake and Pokhara spread out in front of you and then walk for 30 minutes upto the hilltop, where we stay at a beautiful mountain resort called the Retreat.

Overnight Pokhara  
Meals (B, L, D)

**DAY 8: Rest day in Pokhara.**

Today is free for you to explore around Pokhara, relax in one of the Lakeside cafes, take out a rowing boat or just stay at our hillside accommodation and enjoy the incredible views.

Overnight Pokhara  
Meals (B, D)

**DAY 9: Cycle & hike the Royal trek**

Today we hike and bike along the Royal Trek, a low altitude trek just outside Pokhara so named after Prince Charles hiked it on a visit to Pokhara. After a 13 km drive out of Pokhara to Begnas Lake we set off on foot to Majnathana, two hours uphill, where we meet up with our bikes. From here we descend 20km off-road, initially following the ridgeline and giving awe inspiring views of Annapurna IV. Once we reach the bottom of the ridge you can ride the 10 km back to Pokhara on relatively flat terrain.

Overnight Pokhara  
Meals (B, L, D)

**DAY 10: At leisure in Kathmandu.**

We catch a morning flight back to Kathmandu, with amazing views over the ranges from Annapurna to Langtang (the bikes return by road). On arrival into Kathmandu transfer to our centrally located hotel and the rest of the day is free for sightseeing or relaxing. Tonight we'll enjoy a farewell dinner to be held with your guide, amongst the excellent restaurants in Thamel to mark the conclusion of the tour.

Overnight Kathmandu  
Meals (B, D)

**DAY 11: Depart Kathmandu.**

The following morning airport transfers will be arranged for those that have booked together with bikes and luggage. Two hours prior to flight time you will be transferred to Kathmandu International Airport.

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## Accommodation

Accommodation is a mixture of hotels and guest houses on a twin share basis and we have chosen the best that are available in the more remote locations. In Kathmandu we use good hotels which are very centrally located with comfortable rooms and facilities. Generally speaking, the accommodation on this trip is a good standard though some patience may be required in the smaller guesthouses where the plumbing and standards of English may not always be as you like it!

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## Meal Inclusions

Most meals are included in this trip and the food is generally of an excellent 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.

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

## Transport

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Any transport required is generally by private vehicle. You will have a support vehicle travelling with you in Nepal throughout the trip.

## Is this the right trip for me?

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When considering booking a trip it's important that you look at the descriptions in these trip notes relating to the accommodation, food and difficulty level to ensure that it matches your expectations. Particularly with the physical difficulty rating it's vital to select a trip that is realistic for your ability.

With physical gradings it's important to understand that a label, of say 'moderate' can mean two different completely different things to two different people depending on their experience, fitness level and mental attitude.

For our Australian based walking trips there is now a track grading scale that we refer to (developed as an industry standard). For overseas walking or cycling trips you need to rely upon interpreting the information given and relating it to your own fitness levels and abilities.

So if a trip describes daily activity of 5-7 hours a day walking or cycling then you must ask yourself are you currently doing walks or rides of that distance in comparable terrain? So if a walking trip involves ascents of 500-1000m each day then you should go and walk a mountain with a 1000m ascent and see how you cope. If a trip is a cycle ride with average distances of 80km a day then go out and ride a comparable distance to see how you cope.

While we often see amazing improvements in people's fitness with a programme of regular training before a trip you have to be realistic about whether you can commit to regular training with your current lifestyle. If you feel that you would be unable to commit to doing the training to achieve that level of fitness then you should consider another trip that is less demanding. This is the only way to accurately judge whether you can cope with the demands of any given trip.

## Physical Rating

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### Moderate - Demanding

You don't need to be a highly experienced cyclist to join these multi-day trips but a reasonably good level of fitness is required to participate fully. Though full support is provided throughout, so you can ride as much or as little as you want to. Be prepared for moderate to strenuous physical activity as you will be cycling for between 5 and 7 hours each day on average and pre-trip training is recommended to get the most from your adventure. Terrain is varied but generally on sealed roads and no demanding technical skills are needed to enjoy the trip.

## Visas

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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 please visit the following website:  
[www.visalink.com.au](http://www.visalink.com.au)

### Nepal:

You can easily obtain a visa on arrival by air (bring 2 passport photos), 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

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### 1. Bikes

The bike fleet that we use in Nepal is a mixture of Treks and Giants plus some Fuji Outland's for bigger frame sizes when the former are not available. Please make sure that you let us know your height in cm's so that we can properly size you to the correct frame size. The bikes that we provide are 21 speed mountain bikes with front suspension and have a single water bottle carrier cage. There are no racks and we advise bringing a handlebar bag to carry personal items.

Please see our cycling guide on our website for more details on preparing for a cycling trip and how to customise your bike, plus other trips and information:

<http://rawtravel.com/bike>

### 2. Bringing your own bike

Not a problem but any extra charges for taking it on the train or plane are your responsibility. It is best to pack your bike in a bike box available from any bike shop. We can then carry the box in the truck. Please note that while every effort is made to maintain all the bikes in good condition on each trip, we cannot guarantee that some small damage such as scratching will not occur as a result of the daily loading and unloading of bikes into and out of the support vehicle.

Please note - If you are bringing your own bike and it has disc brakes, hydraulics, rear suspension, oil units or special pumps for adjusting the suspension pressure, please make sure that you bring the necessary spares and parts with you.

## What to take?

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You should pack as lightly as possible. Your main luggage will be transported for you on all cycling days in the support vehicle. You will only need a day pack to carry your personal items when cycling. You are expected to carry your own luggage on and off the bus and though you will not be required to walk long distances with your luggage we recommend keeping the weight under 12kg. Suitcases are not recommended as they are awkward to store in the support vehicle.

Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags with wheels are acceptable, although we recommend your bag has carry straps as well.

## Checklist (suggested list):

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### Travel Documents:

- Passport (with photocopies) and Nepal visa
- Copy of travel insurance
- Airline ticket
- USD cash
- Credit card

\*\* Tip: use a money belt for security (put documents inside a plastic bag)

### Personal Items:

- - First Aid kit (see the health section)
- - High factor sunscreen
- - Mosquito repellent & prophylactics
- - Sunglasses

- - 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

#### Clothing:

- - 3 T-shirts (lightweight quick drying fabric) / long sleeved T-shirt
- - 2 pairs Cycling shorts (padded)
- - 1 pair of comfortable shoes for cycling
- - 1 pair of sport sandals
- - socks (for cycling)
- - 1 pair of knee length shorts
- - 1 pair lightweight long trousers
- - Lightweight waterproof top
- - Sweater/fleece for evening
- - Small towel and swim wear
- - Sun hat
- - Clothes to relax in

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. There is however very little biking supplies so please bring these with you.

#### Cycling Equipment:

- - Helmet - (compulsory)- bring one with good ventilation
- - 1 water bottle (min. 750 ml capacity recommended) or 'Camel Bak' hydration pack
- - Handlebar bag / small day pack for carrying items when cycling
- - Cycling gloves
  
- Optional:
  - - Multi-tool (allen keys) for minor adjustments to your bike
  - - Your own saddle or gel seat cover
  - - Your own SPD pedals
  - - Mini bicycle pump
  - - Favourite snacks for cycling energy boost e.g. 'PowerBars', sports gel (a concentrated carbohydrate that delivers immediate energy when you feel tired or flat), dried fruit or nuts

#### Other Suggestions:

- - Camera and plenty of film
- - Adapter for recharging digital camera (Can be bought locally)
- - Spare batteries
- - Reading / writing material
- - Penknife (put in main luggage at airport)
- - Torch
- - Small calculator (when out bargaining!)
- - Photos of family or postcards of Australia (great way to have fun with locals you meet)
- - Phrase book, map and Lonely Planet guide
- - Small padlock for securing your luggage during flights

## Local Dress

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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.

Cycling shorts and tops are ideal for riding, though we do insist that you cover up when coming off the bike or stopping in villages as local people will be shocked and sometimes offended by the sight of tight body hugging lycra! So please be a good ambassador for your country and have a loose pair of shorts to put over your cycling shorts or a sarong to wrap around.

## Travel Insurance

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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

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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 or faxed through to 03 9787 0136 prior to departure.**

## Physical Preparation

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In order to physically prepare yourself to cycle long hours in the saddle for up to 6-7 hours on successive days it is vital that you undertake a fitness program. Getting yourself fit is all part of the experience and one that you'll benefit from long after your trip is over. It is really worth putting in the effort before you go to condition the body (backside, neck, shoulders and leg muscles) as it means you'll enjoy the event rather than it being a struggle.

Build up your base endurance by long and frequent bike rides which will ensure that you are in peak condition for the trip. You can also mix this up by taking other forms of regular exercise which you currently do such as yoga, spinning classes, walking and swimming. For more information on preparing for a cycle trip please visit our cycling fitness page at:

<http://rawtravel.com/bike>

## Money Exchange

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Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates please refer to the following website: [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)

Nepal: \$1 AUD = approx. 80 Rupees. The Nepalese Rupee is the unit of currency.

There are many money changers 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

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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.

Any tip that you wish to give to your local guides or leader in recognition of excellent service is always appreciated. On a group trip we recommend approx. US\$30 per head 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. With private bookings the tip tends to be higher (\$5-10 USD per day per

person depending on your trip length and number of guides)

## Emergency Funds

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

## Keeping In Touch - communication while on the road

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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 Funds

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In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please call the RAW Office. Tel: +61 3 9787 4366.  
Outside of office hours please call (+61) 0413 703 632

## Your Fellow Cyclists

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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

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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 with fewer people 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.

One of the staff accompanying your trip will also double as mechanic and ensure that your bikes are trouble free by checking them over regularly during your trip. It is your responsibility to communicate any problems you may have with your bikes to your leader so that they are aware of them. Please ensure that any maintenance required is pointed out to the mechanic / leader at a time when they have time to fix the problem and not immediately before your scheduled departure each morning - which will delay the day's ride for everyone.

## Responsible Travel

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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 a 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.

## A Couple of Rules

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Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for RAW travellers.

RAW's philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make our destinations such special places. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

## Safety

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Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling.

Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities however during your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your group leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time.

Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

A thorough cycling safety briefing will be given prior to setting off about the bikes.

## Dehydration

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Dehydration is the biggest risk when undertaking a physical challenge such as cycling over undulating 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 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').

### Acclimatisation and altitude sickness:

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Altitude sickness has the potential to affect all cyclists and trekkers from 2500m and higher. We try and ascend slowly on treks and give our bodies plenty of time to adjust to the smaller quantities of oxygen in the air. With bike trips you may have to ride over a pass at a faster rate of ascent but usually you descended even faster which cures any symptoms of altitude. Your sleeping altitude is the most important one and we avoid staying on high passes. 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, wild 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 cycling or 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 group meeting on the first evening.

### RAW Newsletter

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We have a free email newsletter full of travellers 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. We would also love to receive any photos after the event as we are starting to build up a travellers album for each of our destinations on our website. We need resolution of around 1MB.

Please could you send a CD to: RAW Travel Photo album, Suite 1 7 Davies Ave, Mount Eliza, VIC 3930.

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

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.