

Himalayan trekking with a difference

# NEPAL

## DESTINATION GUIDE

**RAW** TRAVEL  
ICONIC WALKS WORLDWIDE

Certified





# DISCOVER NEPAL'S BEST TREKS



## GIVING BACK

RAW Travel donates money from every Nepal booking towards sponsoring local Nepalese and Tibetan school children at the Nagajuna School, Pokhara. The school was opened by Yeshe Gyaltsen. Yeshe has a unique recruitment process: each summer he walks for 20 days through the Himalayan mountains visiting the villages. In consultation with the village chief, he identifies needy orphans and poor children and then walks them back to the school where they are given board and education that they would not have otherwise had.

### Disclaimer

The information in this Destination Guide 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.

# NEPAL

## HIMALAYAN TREKKING WITH A DIFFERENCE

**Every traveller should see the incredible Nepal Himalaya at least once in their lifetime – it's an extraordinary and uplifting experience you will never forget.**

In Nepal you can trek to the base of Mount Everest in true expedition style, or explore the Annapurna region, an outstanding introduction to Himalayan trekking that offers lower altitude treks without compromising on breathtaking scenery. Many travellers end up trekking both in the end, because Nepal is one of those countries that's hard to only do once.

There's also the lake city of Pokhara and shorter treks to enjoy, along with lots of side trips, including the Kathmandu Valley, rich in traditions and temples, and Chitwan and Bardia national parks, excellent safari destinations for rhino and tigers.

Upper Mustang is Nepal's intriguing hidden kingdom – a secluded and mystical region that requires a special permit. To trek in Mustang is to step back in time into a world of Tibetan culture. It offers an extraordinary travel experience.

All our trips to Nepal are private and on-demand. You will travel with your own personal guide and porter, which means you can follow a walking itinerary that allows for your own individual pace and acclimatisation, rather than being forced to keep up with a group, which may not offer the ideal rate of ascent for each person.

The accommodation in Nepal can be an amazing experience in itself. It's not all basic teahouses and camping. You can choose unique mountain lodges and boutique hotels that are in keeping with the style and traditions of the area. They will take your experience of Nepal to a whole new level by offering comfort and standards you probably never expected to find. Lodges specialising in 'barefoot luxury' add a whole new dimension to a trekking trip in Nepal.

The wonderful people of Nepal and their culture will round out your experience.

Call me today for first-hand advice on travelling in Nepal. I would love to design a Himalayan adventure that's just right for you.



Lilia

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“ I HAVE JUST FINISHED THE POON HILL TREK AND IT FAR EXCEEDED ALL EXPECTATIONS. THE WALKS WERE BEAUTIFUL, THE VIEWS WERE SPECTACULAR AND THE GUIDES WERE KNOWLEDGEABLE, EXPERIENCED AND ACCOMMODATING. INCORPORATING YOGA INTO A TREKKING TRIP IS A WONDERFUL IDEA. THE TEACHING METHODS WERE PERFECT FOR STUDENTS OF ALL LEVELS. ”

– Alicja Podgorski

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## SECTION 1: INSPIRATION

### WHY YOU'LL LOVE NEPAL

If you haven't been to Nepal yet, you're missing out. Here's why...

1. **Endless, unrivalled trekking options:** Choose from low-altitude treks in the foothills of the Annapurnas, the epic challenges of Everest Base Camp, Gokyo Lakes and the Chola Pass, the ancient and remote trails of Upper Mustang, Nar-Phu Valley and Dolpo, and more!
2. **Breathtaking beauty and tranquility:** Gaze at epic snow-capped peaks, stunning lakes, rugged trails and beautiful Himalayan valleys.
3. **Holy and spiritual: Rediscover your zen:** Nepal is the birthplace of Buddha and home to thousands of sacred centuries-old stupas, gompas and monasteries.
4. **Friendly people:** Meet warm-hearted and welcoming locals. People in Nepal really are genuinely kind, accommodating, happy and good spirited.
5. **Reputable trek staff:** Experience spectacular, safe hassle-free trekking with reliable guides, porters and Sherpas.
6. **Varied accommodation:** Stay in 5-star hotels, traditional teahouses, and superb mountain lodges, and relax in the great company of other travellers.
7. **Village culture:** Learn about ancient customs, traditional architecture and colourful festivals.
8. **Panoramic peaks:** Set your eyes on some of the world's highest and most beautiful mountains, including Everest, Lhotse, Makulu, Dhaulagiri, and Manaslu.
9. **Abundant wildlife:** Head to the jungles for tigers, leopards, rhinos, leopards, elephants, exotic birds and more!
10. **Delicious food:** Enjoy momo dumplings, thukpa noodle soup, daal bhaat, vegetable pakoras, chargrilled goat, yak cheese, and more.



## NEPAL

### WHY EXPERIENCE NEPAL WITH RAW TRAVEL?

#### Experience

RAW Travel is one of the most experienced operators you can choose for your [Nepal trekking adventure](#). It's a destination that's very close to the owners' hearts – Dave and Mel have been travelling here for over 25 years. We have come to know and love this region intimately. We know that you need professional, experienced local guides and porters who are properly trained and who understand, prepare for and can mitigate any potential risk associated with trekking at high altitude. With their knowledge and care, they can offer insights into the local culture and make your experience of Nepal come alive.

#### Excellent mountain lodges

Our luxurious mountain lodges are a holiday in themselves and offer the chance to experience the high mountains in comfort and relax at the end of your day's trek with wonderful boutique accommodation.

#### Flexible private trips

Choosing your own departure dates and working together to design an itinerary that is suitable for your ability and timeframe can make all the difference between an incredible life experience and a punishing trek schedule that is anything but enjoyable. You will see this first-hand in Nepal and will thank yourself for wisely choosing private arrangements.

#### Giving back

RAW Travel donates money from every Nepal booking we receive to help fund scholarships for children from mountain villages to attend a school in Pokhara. This is part of RAW's ongoing commitment to return 10% of all our Nepal profits each year towards local charities. Your trip will also support local businesses.

#### Personal service

For a first-timer, Nepal can seem overwhelming. When you book a trip with us you will deal with people who've done the walks and can answer your many questions about travelling there. We provide detailed

advice and pre-trip information to make sure everything goes smoothly. In addition to speaking to someone in the same time zone as you, you can come along to our free [talks](#) on trekking in Nepal.

#### Nepal's 2015 earthquakes

A devastating earthquake on 25 April 2015 killed nearly 9,000 people, and thousands of Nepalese were made homeless with entire villages flattened. The Kathmandu Valley was one of the hardest hit areas, with the shock waves bringing some of the city's ancient and beautiful temples crashing to the ground. The area around Pokhara was mostly unaffected. A major avalanche in the Everest Region killed climbers at Base Camp. A major aftershock occurred on 12 May 2015 causing more destruction. It was a severe blow to Nepal, whose economy depends heavily on its tourism. International aid and Nepal's massive program of reconstruction means it is once again safe to trek in Nepal. It remains the same captivating, fascinating and welcoming destination it always was.







## NEPAL



### HISTORY OF TREKKING IN NEPAL

*"NEPAL IS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD THAT IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT TREKKING PARADISES AND ONE OF THE NICEST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD FOR TREKKING."*

*– Sir Edmund Hillary*

The history of trekking in Nepal started after climbing expeditions of many majestic peaks. In 1949 Nepal opened its frontiers to the outside world and within 8 years, 10 of its 8000m peaks had been climbed. Annapurna (8091m) was the first to be climbed in 1950, followed in 1953 by Everest (8848m) and Nanga Parbat (8125m). From then on the number of expeditions coming from many different countries of the world multiplied and by 1964 all these Himalayan giants had been climbed.

Nepal began its career as a trekker's paradise in 1949 when a British adventurer Harold William 'Bill' Tilman (b.1898) managed to get permission from the King to make several treks into the Kali Gandaki, Helambu, and Everest regions.

Tilman was educated in an English boy's school, and fought as a youth in WWI, before

setting off for Africa to become a coffee farmer and, ultimately, one of the best known British mountaineers of the last century. Another British coffee farmer and climber, Eric Shipton, introduced Tilman to climbing in Kenya and in the Ruwenzoris of Uganda. Shipton had already been to Mount Everest.

Another early visitor was Maurice Herzog, who led a French expedition to Annapurna in 1950.

Trekking in Nepal really took off with the first expeditions to the base of Mount Everest: an American led expedition in 1950 and a British one in 1951.

Colonel Jimmy Roberts was the first person to realise that trekking would appeal to tourists. As a former Gurkha Officer and Military Attaché at the British Embassy in Kathmandu he had spent years of his life walking the hills of Nepal. He had accompanied Tilman on his first trek and in 1964 he founded Mountain Travel, the first of Nepal's trekking companies and the inspiration for the adventure travel industry. His idea, revolutionary for the time, was to provide tents together with Sherpas, to guide and cook. This made Nepal and the Himalaya available to a wide community and was an immediate success.



## SECTION 1: INSPIRATION

Jimmy Roberts' Mountain Travel Trekking Agency was the first trekking agency registered in Nepal in 1964, and it remained the only one for the next 4 years. His first clients came to do the Everest Trek in the early spring of 1965. They were three American ladies who, according to Jimmy Roberts, "Were a sporting trio of enthusiasts".

He was later joined by Dawa Norbu Sherpa and Mike Cheney to handle some of the work. His early foreign partners were Leo LeBon, Allen Steck and Barry Bishop from the USA, and Australian Warwick Deacock

of Ausventure. They regularly began to send clients from their countries to trek in Nepal. And so Mountain Travel prospered and became an inspiration for other Nepalese tourism entrepreneurs.

*The word trek is derived from the Boer language (spoken by the Dutch settlers in South Africa), meaning a long, hard journey. The root of the word is Dutch 'trekken' which means to pull or haul.*

- Find out more: [Bill Tilman: Nepal's very first trekking tourist](#)

### Guides & Porters

One of the hallmarks of our Nepal trips is that they are private on-demand trips with your own personal guide and porters. All our trips are lead by professional, experienced local guides who can give you insight into the local culture and terrain and make sure you are well looked after.

We only use the most reputable trekking teams who can offer a superior service. Our local staff are employed full time in the industry, with good conditions and training.

Our guides speak good English, know the terrain and the trails, and supervise porters. They will travel with you during the day and handle all the arrangements.

Your porters will carry your main luggage; some speak English. Most of the porters you will meet on the trail are Tamang or Rai.

Contrary to perceptions in the West, Sherpas (numbering about 150,000) actually do very little portering, focusing mostly on high-altitude expedition work. Sherpas are renowned for their climbing skills, superior strength and endurance at high altitudes. The most famous Sherpa was Tenzing Norgay, who summited Mount Everest in 1953 with Edmund Hillary.

You may see some porters carrying their loads in bamboo baskets (*doko*). These are professional porters hired by camping groups.



## NEPAL

### IS THIS THE RIGHT TRIP FOR ME?

When considering booking a trip, it is important that you look at the descriptions in this Destination Guide about accommodation, food and level of physical difficulty to ensure that the trip matches your expectations. Particularly with the physical difficulty rating, it's vital to select a trip that is realistic for your ability. Read through this Destination Guide and the specific trip itineraries on our [website](#) before booking.

### Regular training

While we often see amazing improvements in people's fitness with a program 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 you are unable to commit to doing the training needed to achieve the level of fitness required 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.

### WHAT WE OFFER

There is perhaps no other country in the world that offers as many mountain treks as Nepal. The two most well-known trekking areas in Nepal are the Annapurna and Everest regions, which attract the majority of first-time visitors.

The **Annapurna region** is a popular destination for trekkers and offers an outstanding introduction to Himalayan trekking. RAW Travel walks a trail that weaves through fertile, lower valleys to rushing rivers that you cross by long suspension bridges and up through spectacular Rhododendron forests, where ferns and orchids grow within their gnarled branches. You trek over terraced hills, stay at colourful teahouses and immerse yourself in the rich culture and traditions of the local villagers. All the while your trail is flanked by some of the world's most biggest and beautiful mountains.

The **Everest region** has drawn many thousands of travellers from all over the globe. Soaring 8848m into the thin, pristine





“FOR ANYONE WHO THRIVES ON PHYSICAL CHALLENGES, IT DOESN'T GET MUCH BETTER THAN EVEREST BASE CAMP. YOU WILL MEET LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE, SHARE BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS WITH COMPLETE STRANGERS, AND BOND OVER THE 'BASIC' CONDITIONS THAT MAKE THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE SO MUCH MORE REWARDING.”

– Jennifer Crowther



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Himalayan air, Mount Everest is a sight many aspire to witness in their lifetime. You will experience the unique Sherpa culture and a spiritual perspective on the mountains they call home, discover the Tibetan Buddhist Thyangboche Monastery nestled at the base of Mount Ama Dablam, and stay in villages with some of the world's most breathtaking scenery at your doorstep.

If you would like to get more off-the-beaten-track, then talk to us about a trek in Upper Mustang or other areas such as Dolpo, Langtang Valley, Helambu or Gosainkund, all of which we have run trips to.

The kingdom of **Mustang** lies in the rain shadow formed by the Annapurna and Nilgiri Himalayas, and thus gets very little rain, making the area ideal for trekking when the rest of the country is suffering the monsoon season. This is among the very few adventure trips in Nepal which can be done throughout the year. To trek in Mustang is to step back in time into an ancient world of Tibetan culture. It offers a superb walking adventure and a true privilege to be among the few to visit.

Also consider extending your trip to take in one of the outstanding **national parks** (Bardia or Chitwan) that offer unparalleled wildlife encounters with tigers, elephants, rhino and many other species.

*All our trips are on-demand and we can create different itineraries to suit your timeframe and ability.*

[View all our Nepal trips and itineraries](#)

### TREKS IN THE ANNAPURNA REGION

#### • RAW Travel Grading:

6–7 (Challenging to Strenuous)    
See p19 for more information.

The lower altitude sections of the Annapurna region are an ideal starting point for a first-time trek in Nepal. There are many trekking options available, providing you are reasonably fit. There are comfortable treks in the foothills

and many easy day walks in the valleys that still afford fabulous mountain views.

Our [Poon Hill](#) trek is one of the classic options, offering a short trek that delivers stunning views of the high peaks of the Annapurna and trekking through traditional villages in Ghandruk before ascending to a high point of 3210m. There is an option to add **Kopra Ridge** to extend this trek in duration and altitude.

We also offer the longer and more strenuous **Annapurna Sanctuary** and **Annapurna Circuit** options, which ascend to spectacular high points of 4130/5400m.

If you'd like to get high mountain views without venturing onto trekking trails and high altitude you can stay at **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge** and take guided day walks each day in the surrounding villages of the middle hills. You can choose from a variety of trails, most of which don't exceed 2000m in altitude.







## NEPAL

### TREKS IN THE EVEREST REGION

- RAW Travel Grading:

6-7 (Challenging to Strenuous)  

See p19 for more information.

The heady mix of natural beauty, fascinating culture and a personal sense of achievement, as well as warm Nepalese hospitality, make experiencing the Everest region an unforgettable experience.

The trek to Everest Base Camp is one of the world's most famous walks, but did you know you can have an incredible walking trip in the forested lower reaches of the trail. You do not need to go all the way to Base Camp to get breathtaking views of Mount Everest and all the jaw-dropping peaks of the surrounding Khumbu.

A trip here offers sublime walking through forests, rivers, Sherpa villages and monasteries, all without having to venture above 3800m.

It is also possible to stay in luxury lodges on the lower sections of the trail, giving you comfort while still experiencing all the elements of mind blowing scenery and Sherpa village culture. This eliminates a lot of the worries about getting sick that people may have when venturing into the more difficult parts of the trail above 4000m.

### EVEREST BASE CAMP TREK

- RAW Travel Grading:

8 (Strenuous) 

See p19 for more information.

From the thrilling flight to Lukla, to grand-stand views from Kala Patta, to enchanting Sherpa communities, you will be awed at the magic and natural beauty of this world-famous trek. Join experienced guides and porters for a personal challenge that will leave you with a great sense of achievement and unforgettable memories.

This trail was initially made famous by mountaineers attempting to summit Mt

Everest (8848m) but nowadays it has many more trekkers than mountaineers.

We can tailor-make an itinerary for [Everest Base Camp](#), Gokyo Lakes and the Chola Pass.

This trek is a classic, offering iconic peaks, spinning prayer wheels, colourful prayer flags and a camaraderie among like-minded people all with the goal of setting eyes on the world's tallest mountain.

The trail leads through the famous villages of Phakding, Namche, Tengboche Pangboche, Lobouche and Gorak Shep as it ascends towards the eventual goal of Everest Base Camp at 5400m.

All trips are on-demand and you will have your own guide and porter, so you can walk at a pace that suits you and ascend safely within your individual limits.

On our [Everest Base Camp Luxury Trek](#) we are able to offer you accommodation of a higher standard in all but the highest, more remote areas. These luxury lodges are operated by Sherpas from the Solu-Khumbu region and they extend a warm welcome and a very comfortable place to rest your head after a long day's trek.

### TREKKING IN UPPER MUSTANG

- RAW Travel Grading:

7-8 (Strenuous) 

See p19 for more information.

Our [Upper Mustang trek](#) brings you into the hidden world of the old Buddhist kingdom of Mustang, also called Lo. Lo used to be part of the Tibetan empire and is therefore closely tied to Tibet in culture, language and geography. The trail follows the ancient salt caravan route through which the people of Mustang traded Tibetan salt for grain from the lowlands.

Upper Mustang retains an atmosphere of mystery and exclusivity. Entry here is controlled by a strict paid permit system that limits the number of foreign visitors each year.





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It is a fantastical landscape of eroded red sandstone valleys backed by snow-capped peaks, ancient villages and cliff dwellings.

The highest point on the trek is a 4200m pass on the road but pretty much all of the route lies above 3400m.

Travelling in Upper Mustang involves more basic accommodation and conditions than other parts of Nepal and is best suited to experienced travellers and trekkers with an interest in authentic Tibetan culture.

The rewards in this remote and spectacular part of the Himalaya are immense. It is a unique travel experience you will never forget.



### YOGA & HIKING IN THE ANNAPURNA FOOTHILLS

With ancient yoga practice and the modern trekking industry both originating on the sub-continent, our [Nepal Yoga Hiking Adventure](#) truly belongs in this part of the world. Beginners and long-term practitioners alike can immerse themselves in yoga practices and wellness treatments at a purpose-built retreat overlooking Fewa Lake in Pokhara, then head off on a 5-day hike to Poon Hill in the Annapurna foothills. To complement the trekking, we offer daily yoga and meditation sessions to deepen a sense of mindfulness – promising a whole new level of awareness, fun and appreciation of your extraordinary surroundings.

### TRIP GRADINGS EXPLAINED

RAW Travel offers a range of multi-day walks for complete beginners through to veteran walkers. We have graded each RAW Travel trip from 1 (introductory) to 10 (tough). Our grading system is intended to differentiate only the walks that RAW Travel offers, so they won't necessarily match another travel company's assessment of their trips.

We have used several criteria to assess the difficulty of each walk we offer, including the number of hours walking required each day, terrain and conditions underfoot, weather, gradient, altitude, signage and facilities – basic accommodation and food in remote areas will contribute to a walk being graded more difficult. Keep in mind that if a walk is graded moderate, it doesn't mean you will never feel tired.

### RAW TRAVEL INSIGHTS (BLOG)

Written by our Nepal Destination Experts, our RAW Insights about Nepal are great background reading.

[Why Nepal is the ideal destination for a solo female traveller](#)



[Time travelling in Mustang](#)

[Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge: Luxury and tranquility](#)





## SECTION 1: INSPIRATION

### RECENT MODERN HISTORY OF NEPAL

**1996** Eight climbers die on a single day on Everest. An Imax film and Jon Krakauer's book *Into Thin Air* chronicle the disaster.

**2001** Prince Dipendra massacres 10 members of the Royal Family in the Narayanhiti Palace then shoots himself.

**1996–2006** A decade long Maoist insurgency brings the country to its knees and results in the death of 13,000 Nepalis.

**2008** Parliament abolishes the Nepali monarchy, ending 240 years of Royal rule. Nepal becomes a Federal Democratic Republic.

**2014** On April 16, Sherpa guides are killed on the Khumbu icefall, Everest's single deadliest disaster. In October, 43 trekkers and porters die after heavy snowfall in the Annapurna region.

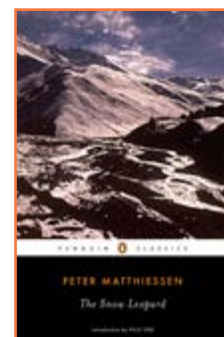
**2015** A massive earthquake strikes central Nepal, killing nearly 9000 people and causing devastation across the Kathmandu Valley.



### RELIGION

Nepal is famous as the world's only Hindu Kingdom. However, it is an intricate and beautiful tapestry formed by the interweaving of Hinduism, Buddhism and other beliefs. Religious tolerance and harmony in Nepal is unique. There is no record of religious conflict.

### BACKGROUND READING



**The Snow Leopard (1978)**  
by Peter Matthiessen

A classic work of travel literature that narrates the author's journey into the remote Upper Dolpo region of Western Nepal in 1973. On the surface, Matthiessen's trip is in

search of the elusive snow leopard. But it's also a spiritual quest as the author mourns the loss of his wife and seeks to make sense of and accept his grief through Buddhist philosophies.

## NEPAL

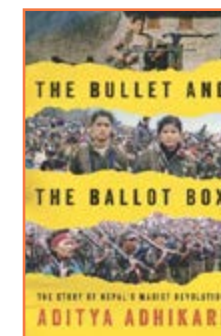


**Into Thin Air (1997)**

by Jon Krakauer

Recounts the disastrous Everest climbing expedition that the author was part of in 1996, in which eight climbers were killed. The book was published very quickly

after the event, and was harshly criticised by some family members of those involved as being insensitive, but Krakauer does admit where his own mind and senses let him down during his struggle for survival.



**The Bullet and the Ballot Box: The Story of Nepal's Maoist Revolution (2014)**

by Aditya Adhikari

When Nepal's Maoists launched their armed rebellion in 1996, they were seen as quite a fringe element and did not have much public support outside certain rural communities. Yet, just a couple of years after the end of the war, when Nepal officially became a republic, the Maoists were in power in the government in Kathmandu. This book accounts for this remarkable chain of events.

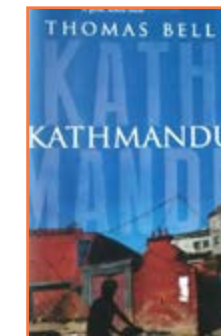


**While the Gods Were Sleeping (2014)**

by Elizabeth Enslin

A fascinating memoir of cross-cultural understanding, international relationships, and life and politics as a woman in rural Nepal.

Enslin was a graduate student in anthropology in the USA when she decided to conduct fieldwork on the Terai (plains) of Nepal, choosing to live in her Nepali husband's family's village.



**Kathmandu (2016)**

by Thomas Bell

Thomas Bell is a British journalist who has been living in Nepal for 20+ years. He arrived in the country in the midst of the decade-long Maoist insurgency, and

has witnessed all of the country's recent upheavals, from the massacre of the royal family to the end of the war and the formation of the republic, to the 2015 earthquakes.



**Blood Against the Snows: The Tragic Story of Nepal's Royal Dynasty (2003)**

by Jonathan Gregson

A portrait of Nepal's doom-laden royal dynasty from its staggering expansion in the 18th century to the massacre in June 2001, a sequence of events worthy of a Greek tragedy.

### NEPAL IN FILM



**Dr Strange (2016)**

Much of this Marvel movie was shot around Nepal's captivating capital city, Kathmandu, and features a number of spectacular locations in the Kathmandu Valley.



**Sherpa (2015)**

Filmed during the 2014 Mount Everest ice avalanche, this film explores the Sherpa culture and their spiritual relationship with Mount Everest, as well as the heavy work and risks Sherpas take in making multiple ascents to take equipment and supplies up the mountain and make the climb possible for foreign climbers.



“ NEPAL OFFERED REMARKABLE LANDSCAPES AND EXPERIENCES. UPPER MUSTANG WAS MEANT TO BE! WE CANNOT SPEAK HIGHLY ENOUGH OF OUR GUIDE AND WHAT HE CONTRIBUTED TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF NEPALESE CULTURE, BUDDHISM, THE REGION AND OUR ENJOYMENT OF THE WHOLE ADVENTURE. ”

– Anne & Mark Greaves



## NEPAL



### Everest (2015)

Based on the events of the 1996 Mount Everest disaster (10–11 May), when eight people caught in a blizzard died on Mount Everest during attempts to descend from the summit.

Focuses on the survival attempts of two expedition groups, one led by Rob Hall and the other by Scott Fischer.



### Himalaya (1999)

Stunningly shot in Dolpo; also released as *Caravan*. Tells the story of a village, which since time immemorial, has engaged in a winter trek to bring salt to its people and send out goods

to be traded. The journeys are conducted by yak caravans.



### Everest (1998)

IMAX documentary describes the training required to summit Mount Everest and the challenges faced during the ascent, such as avalanches, blizzards, and oxygen deprivation.

*Everest* was in production at the mountain during the 1996 climbing disaster and the film includes footage of these events.

### RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

At RAW Travel we believe in responsible travel, which means a lot more than staying safe and respecting the local culture and customs in the country you are visiting. You are responsible for making this trip the best it can be – read all your notes we send you, do the right pre-trip training, read our blog posts, buy the right gear, wear in your boots, practice walking with trekking poles, learn some local Nepalese phrases, understand the culture and etiquette – and make sure you are prepared to enjoy this unique destination. Travelling through developing countries often presents unexpected challenges. We ask that you travel with an open mind and an understanding that things don't always go to plan.







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## SECTION 2: TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

### WHEN TO TREK IN NEPAL

Technically you can go trekking in Nepal at any time of the year. There are no restrictions. However, each season in Nepal delivers a different landscape, environment and experience. The peak seasons are between late February and April, then late September to November.

The other major factor to consider when deciding when to visit Nepal is the festival calendar. There are more than 365 festival days in Nepal. For information and dates go to: [www.visitnepal.com](http://www.visitnepal.com)

#### September to November (Autumn)

These months are considered to be the best time to trek in Nepal. You'll experience excellent weather, tantalising mountain views with great visibility, and pleasant, moderate temperatures. The main trails are heavy with trekkers during this time for good reason.

#### December to February (Winter)

These months are also good for trekking. Although colder, you'll get clear skies

(great for photos). It's an ideal time to be trekking at lower elevations as you will see incredible scenery.

High passes are usually closed from mid-December to late February, as are treks to the remote regions of Dolpo, Mustang, Makalu Base Camp and Humla.

#### March to May (Spring)

Spring is also one of the best times to trek in Nepal. The giant rhododendrons will be blossoming, and the temperatures are warmer. Temperatures start to get very hot at lower altitudes in May. This is a good time to spot migratory birds.

#### June to September (Summer)

This is monsoon season in Nepal, and not a popular or favourable time for trekking. There is high rainfall, lots of leeches, transport delays and limited views. However, this is a good time to trek in the regions that connect to Tibet and the desert like region of Upper Mustang, Nar-Phu Valley and Dolpo, which are behind the Himalayan rain shadow area.

### Luxury accommodation on the Everest Base Camp Trek?

Yes! If you are looking for an adventurous trek but would like to treat yourself to a bit more comfort without compromising on the typical warm, Nepalese hospitality, our [Everest Base Camp Luxury Trek](#) could be for you.

On this trek we offer accommodation of a higher standard (in all but the highest, more remote areas). These luxury lodges are operated by Sherpas from the Solu-Khumbu region and they extend a warm welcome and a very comfortable place to rest your head after a long day's trek.

Large fireplaces keep you toasty while you re-fuel on delicious, fresh meals made from vegetables and herbs grown on the property.

The lodges often feature a small library, well-stocked bar, 24-hour service, and wifi. Rooms offer the luxury of private bathrooms with hot and cold running water and an electric mat on your bed to keep you warm during cooler mountain nights.

As you trek higher towards Base Camp the accommodation becomes more simple and reflective of a typical Nepalese teahouse/lodge. If you would prefer a trek with *only* luxury lodges, we can customise a special itinerary that features only the higher standard properties available. You will not hike to Base Camp but you will have many opportunities to see the majestic Mount Everest and the beautiful scenery of the Everest region. Contact our [Nepal Destination Expert](#) to find out more.

## NEPAL

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO TRAIN FOR A NEPAL TREK

Nepal is one destination for which you must properly prepare yourself. Multi-day trekking in the the Himalayas requires concerted physical preparation – for both your fitness and your feet. Ask yourself: How fit do I need to be? Is my trek at high altitude?

We strongly encourage you to train early, condition your body and practise with your intended gear. Your experience will be more enjoyable if you have tested all your equipment and clothing and achieved a suitable level of physical conditioning.

Proper training will make your feet less prone to blisters, which can be a real impediment to your progress and enjoyment during a trek. Other common injuries from lack of preparation include shin splints, tendonitis, joint and muscle pain.

Don't stress that you might not have big mountains near you to train in; work with what you have whether that is a 300m hill or a tower block in a city. Either one of those can help you prepare if you walk up and down them frequently.

We recommend completing 2 to 3 walks per week at a reasonable pace, and longer distances with a 6kg daypack. Include regular hill/mountain/stair walking.

Also make sure that you and your equipment can cope with changing weather conditions. Being in the mountains you should prepare for all eventualities with weather and make sure you have adequate clothing and equipment.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HIKING AT ALTITUDE

The response to altitude can be very individual but with a safe rate of ascent each day you can avoid any likely complications. It is recommended that you should not gain more than 400m in a day (to your sleeping altitude) once you're above 3000m. If you follow this advice you should reduce the likelihood of any serious problems with altitude.

#### Slow and steady

'Slow and steady' is the key to achieving and enjoying a trek in the Himalayas. The walking itself is usually not too difficult; no more so than in England's Lake District – apart from the altitude, of course (some of our Himalaya treks





“THE EVEREST BASE CAMP TREK SURPASSED ALL MY EXPECTATIONS. ICONIC. SPECTACULAR. HARD WORK. EXTRAORDINARY SCENERY. I CAME AWAY FEELING SO EMPOWERED THAT THERE IS NOWHERE IN THE WORLD I CAN'T GO HAVING DONE THIS.”

– David Betheras



## NEPAL

go above 3000m and as high as 5400m to Everest Base Camp). If you are used to walking and are sensible with your daily altitude gains then you're unlikely to have any problems.

The human body is highly adaptable and just needs time to adjust – most people have a safe experience with high altitude treks, but might experience some symptoms.

### What will I experience?

It is normal and natural to feel effects such as shortness of breath, which slows you down walking uphill. Other minor effects of high altitude may include reduced appetite, difficulty sleeping through the night or a dull headache. You may experience a few of these effects or none of them – but they are not a serious concern for most people and just a natural by-product of the reduced oxygen available. It comes with the territory and should not put you off enjoying your trek in these extraordinary regions.

### Why is it important to be fit?

You will be more at risk if you are not properly acclimatised or unfit to start with. As we advise people, it is one thing for your body to have to adjust to higher altitudes but don't also tax it with an additional burden of a lack of fitness at the same time. Eliminate one of these factors (lack of fitness) and it will be easier and more pleasant for you to only have to adapt to the altitude gains.

### Who is at increased risk?

People with respiratory or heart problems are also at increased risk and need to be cautious. In these instances of pre-existing medical conditions you must always consult your doctor first and get their advice on whether a high altitude (above 3000m) trek is suitable for you. The same could be said for people aged over 65 years, though age in itself is not a prohibiting factor and some doctors and mountain leaders have seen that older people have as good a chance, if not better, of completing their treks and climbs than younger people because they tend to go slower and allow for proper preparation and acclimatisation.

### How can I minimise the effect of altitude gains?

It's a good idea to arrive a couple of days earlier before starting your trek as this will help you acclimatise to the higher altitudes you will experience along the trek.

As you ascend to higher altitudes there are things you can do to minimise the risk of altitude sickness:

- walk slowly – don't hurry, even if you are fit
- drink plenty of water – the dry air will rapidly evaporate your bodily moisture.

### How do I alleviate symptoms of mountain sickness?

The easy way to alleviate any symptoms of mountain sickness is to descend again to a lower altitude and the symptoms will usually abate.

Diamox is sometimes used to help trekkers acclimatise. There are some advantages and disadvantages to taking this medication, which can help you ascend/acclimatise faster but with some side effects such as tingling lips, hands and feet. In reality though with adequate acclimatisation and a safe rate of ascent most trekkers have no need for it.

### Can I get advice during a trek?

Our trek leaders are highly experienced mountain guides and can give you advice to keep you safe and healthy. Having someone to look out for you and keep an eye out for any symptoms of mountain sickness is a wonderful safeguard.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities (trekking); however, during your trip you may have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time.

- Find out more:  
[www.high-altitude-medicine.com](http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com)



## SECTION 2: TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

### GETTING FIT FOR YOUR TREK

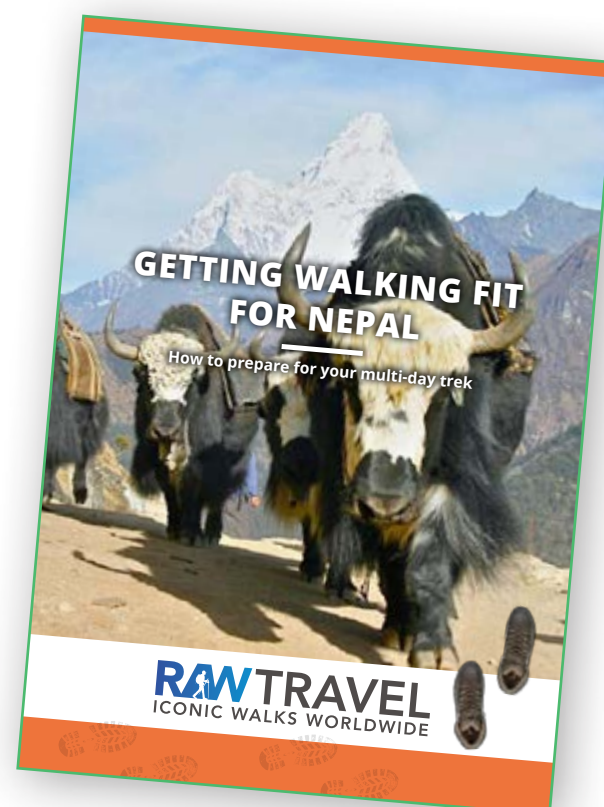
Walking is one of the most natural things to do, so you may feel that you are already in good enough shape. However, you will be walking for many hours over successive days carrying a backpack, which is likely very different to your current walking schedule.

We recommend that you undertake a training program according to your level of fitness for at least 3 months leading up to your departure. Regular exercise prior to the trip will allow you to build your fitness steadily so that you will enjoy and complete the trip with a smile and energy left over.

Moderate activities such as walking pose little health risk but before starting any new exercise program we recommend that you see your doctor for a check-up, particularly if you have a medical condition, are aged over 40 years, are overweight or haven't exercised in a long time.

• Find out more:

👉 [Getting Walking Fit For Nepal: How to prepare for your multi-day trek.](#)



### ACCOMMODATION STYLE

The accommodation we book in Nepal varies from comfortable 4-star hotels to traditional lodges and teahouses, which while basic, are part the charm of trekking in Nepal. Many are family owned and operated and give you an opportunity to immerse yourself in the local village life. Bathrooms are sometimes attached (en suite) but often times separate to the main lodging. Toilets are basic Western-style and/or 'squat' style. Most lodges will have solar powered hot showers, but please note that this service cannot be guaranteed. The communal restaurant area in trekking lodges, usually with a central wood stove, is a great place to eat, mingle with other trekkers, or read.

A flexible and positive attitude with a sense of adventure will enable you to get the most out of your stay.

You can also choose more upmarket options that are in keeping with the style and traditions of the area. They will take your experience of Nepal to a whole new level by offering comfort and standards you probably never expected to find. Lodges specialising in 'barefoot luxury' add a whole new dimension to a trekking trip in Nepal.

• Find out more: 👉 [Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge: Luxury and Tranquility](#)

## NEPAL

### A typical day at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge

Overlooking the spectacular Pokhara Valley and the Himalayas beyond, [Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge](#) is a perfect haven for guests to relax and rejuvenate before or after an invigorating trek. You will be warmly received by Jhalak or Marcus from the moment you step through the elegant front doors.

*Here's what you can expect...*

As the sunrise lightens the Himalaya, receive a knock at your bedroom door and a pot of delicious tea or local organic coffee, served with homemade biscuits. Sit on the verandah of your room and watch the mountains glow in the morning light.

Take a pre-breakfast walk to see what birdlife is afoot or opt for a private yoga session, or browse the international online papers.

Breakfast is served at the time of your choice, either on your verandah or the terrace of the Main Lodge. Enjoy home-made yoghurt and cereal, delicious preserves, freshly baked breads and a choice of cooked items with eggs made to order. The traditional masala rumble tumble is a divine local variation on scrambled eggs.

After breakfast consider your options: a day walk to Thuloswara or a shorter walk to the charming Begnas Lake. Both routes take you through a variety of local villages, forest and farmland, and you'll have the company of a tempting picnic lunch. You may prefer to be driven down to Pokhara for a microlight mountain flight or tandem paragliding.

Alternately, borrow a book from Col. Jimmy's Library and relax by the pool watching the mountains reflected in the clear water.

Lunch is generally served al fresco – a tempting buffet of authentic Nepali curries and rice served with all the traditional trimmings of roti and *achaar* (pickles). For those who want an

alternative, there is a selection of soups, salads, sandwiches and light items made to order from the award-winning kitchen.

After lunch? Swimming, sightseeing in Pokhara, museums, souvenir shopping in Lakeside, or perhaps a quieter afternoon relaxing on your verandah or having an Ayurvedic massage in the privacy of your room.

Afternoon tea means fresh cake, hot buttered toast, finest Nepal tea or herbal infusions fresh from the garden.

Dinner is a 3-course continental meal (with a traditional Nepali Thali option to order) deftly served in the spacious dining room. Ingredients are sourced locally and preference is given to organic foods.

End the day around the fire in the Main Lodge with a brandy, single malt whisky or liqueur, accompanied by petits fours.







## NEPAL



### TREKKING FOOD

All the food you could ever want is available in the tourist areas of Kathmandu. While on the trail, the selection will be much more limited, but you will have the opportunity to try traditional Tibetan, Indian and Nepalese food. Bring along additional high energy snacks from home if required. Food is more basic and expensive as you ascend higher up the trail.

The standard Nepalese meal is *daal-bhaat-tarkari*: lentil soup, white rice, curried vegetables and sour pickles, often served on a heavy metal plate with metal cups. Sometimes it comes with *chapati* (unleavened Indian bread) or *papad* (crispy fried lentil-flour pancake). If you order this, someone will come around offering free extra helpings of rice, daal and vegetables. Eating daal bhaat with your fingers adds to the experience, but it's okay to use a spoon and fork.

Most Nepalis are vegetarian. Where you do get meat it will be chicken, goat or buff (water buffalo).

While Nepalese food shares some similarities with Indian food (bright colours, amazing flavours, variety of ingredients), it is unique and the spice mix is different (salt, fenugreek, turmeric, cumin, ginger, garlic, green chillies, coriander). Nepal is healthier and less heavy than Indian food because cream is not used.

Thanks to the influence of Tibet, Nepal also has *momo*: steamed dumplings with savoury fillings, usually water buffalo, chicken, yak







cheese or chopped vegetables. Nepalese people love *momo*. So do we!

Also good is *thukpa* (long noodle soup) and garlic soup (which trekking guides will tell you helps your body cope with altitude sickness).

There's also pots of hot and soothing masala/lemon/ginger tea to enjoy. If you are after something sweet, try apple pie – which appears on many menus, along with chocolate bars (usually Snickers) wrapped in dough and deep fried!

Most trekking lodges also sell supplies of chocolate bars, biscuits, toilet paper and other essentials.

### RECOMMENDED APPS

-  [Welcome Nepal](#)
-  [Nepal Map](#)
-  [Trekking in Nepal](#)
-  [nLocate](#)
-  [Strava](#)
-  [MapMyWalk](#)

### HEALTH

To participate fully in an active travel experience you need to be in good physical health. Read the trip itineraries on the website thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Our Destination Experts are available to answer any questions you have to help you choose the most suitable trip for you.

You need to be in good health to undertake this trip due to the sometimes demanding days. You should consult your doctor if you have any medical conditions to assess your suitability before departure. You also need to declare, for assessment, any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurance provider.



## SECTION 2: TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

In the event of an incident or medical emergency on the walk, the default mode of evacuation is by helicopter. It is essential that you have comprehensive travel insurance, medical insurance or ambulance insurance that will cover the cost of helicopter evacuation.

### First aid supplies

We recommend that you carry first aid supplies for common ailments as well as any personal medical requirements as you will be travelling in remote areas and away from medical facilities. See also Vaccinations, p35.

If you wear contact lenses, bring plenty of solution and take extra care with hygiene to avoid eye infections; it can often be dusty in Nepal.

Your first aid supplies should include (but not be limited to):

- Antibacterial hand gel (sanitiser)
- Blister pads/bandaids and zinc oxide tape/ moleskin to cover 'hot spots' on your feet to stop potential blisters developing
- Bandages, safety pins
- Steristrips, and sterile dressings
- Painkillers such as Panadol and ibuprofen
- Antiseptic cream
- Anti-inflammatories for muscle and joint pain
- Rehydration salts
- Laxatives
- Travelan or probiotics (useful in avoiding stomach bugs when travelling).
- Water purification tablets



- Diarrhoea treatment including antibiotics
- Diamox for altitude sickness
- Electrolytes to help combat altitude sickness and nausea
- Ear plugs (to block out wind and snorers)
- High factor sunscreen
- Drugs for emergencies, including antibiotics, diarrhoea tablets and strong painkillers. Consult your doctor when you are being vaccinated. See p35.

### Preventing blisters

The key to preventing blisters and avoiding unnecessary pain is to eliminate friction. Different things work for different people, but one thing's for sure: blisters can be prevented with a little bit of effort.

Here's a range of blister prevention strategies for you to test on your training walks.

1. Buy comfortable, well-fitting walking boots.
2. Toughen up. Condition your feet by walking, gradually building intensity, pace and distance. Remember to moisturise your feet with a good quality foot cream after showering.
3. Adjust your laces during your walk so that your shoes fit perfectly. Foot swelling and different temperatures and terrain will affect the fit of your boots.
4. Slather your feet thickly with a lubricant like Vaseline. You'll need to reapply it, and it doesn't wash easily out of socks.
5. Put cornflour or talcum powder in your socks to keep your feet dry.
6. Keep your toenails short.
7. Invest in good socks. Use moisture-wicking socks and consider double-layers. Experiment with the thickness of your socks, and change them whenever your feet get wet.

## NEPAL

8. Apply tape (such as Fixomul) or dressings to reduce friction. It can be difficult to perfect the technique and can be time consuming, so you'll need to practise.
9. Always carry blister pads in your daypack. The cushioned gel pad immediately reduces pain and promotes fast healing. You can even use them to prevent blisters.
10. See a podiatrist if you think the way you walk might predispose you to blisters. You might need orthotics.

### Blister treatment

Broken blisters that are leaking fluid should be disinfected and bandaged. Small blisters that are not painful should be left alone because the best protection against infection is the blister's own skin. These will heal by themselves and will be reabsorbed in a few days. If you do have blisters, shower in the evening to allow your feet to be fully dry when you dress them and set off in the morning.

### VACCINATIONS

You do not officially require any immunisations to enter Nepal, unless you have come from an area where yellow fever is present, in which case you must show proof of immunisation.

Vaccinations you might consider include: Diphtheria and Tetanus; Typhoid; Hepatitis A; Hepatitis B. See medical advice at least 6 weeks before you travel as some vaccinations require multiple injections over a period of time.

### VISAS, PASSPORTS AND TREKKING PERMITS

#### Nepal visa

All foreign nationals require a visa to enter Nepal. You can obtain a visa before you depart from a Nepalese embassy/consulate, or when you arrive in Nepal. At the time of writing, the cost of a 30 day visa on arrival is USD\$25 per person. US dollars are the preferred currency, but Australian dollars are also accepted. You can use a credit cards but the EFTPOS machine is often unreliable, so we recommend you carry cash with you.







## NEPAL



In the arrivals hall at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport there are electronic registration machines that read your passport, take your photo, and print out a completed visa form to submit to immigration. Helpful friendly staff are there to provide assistance. You should still bring passport photos in case the machines are not working.

### Valid passport

All travellers must have a minimum of 6 months validity (after their date of return into Australia) on their passport. Please confirm these requirements with your chosen airline.

### Trekking permits

RAW Travel will organise and pay for any trekking permits and national park fees. These items are factored into our trip costs.

### SMART TRAVELLER

Be informed. Be prepared. Stay smart while you are travelling. Smarttraveller is provided by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It provides up-to-date travel advice for Australians travelling overseas. You can subscribe to receive free updates, including about widespread health or security issues.

[www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au)

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

If you are travelling on any trip with RAW Travel you will require comprehensive travel insurance. We sell Cover-More travel insurance and you can easily get a quote over the phone. No one plans for anything to go wrong, but if it does we want to make sure that you have adequate cover.

We highly recommend you purchase cover as soon as you start booking your travel arrangements, and include cancellation cover. Your travel insurance also must include emergency evacuation and medical cover.

Please contact your insurance provider to ensure your policy covers you for your specific needs. Carry a copy of your policy and your insurer's 24 hour contact details.

Any advice given here is a general guide only. Please research and purchase a policy best suited to your needs and circumstances.

- Find out more: [👉 10 things you need to know about travel insurance](#)



## SECTION 2: TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

### WHAT TO PACK

#### EQUIPMENT

##### Kitbag (duffel bag)

On treks, your gear will be carried by porters or yaks, so you will need a strong, soft, waterproof bag, such as a duffel bag (do not bring a rigid suitcase), weighing no more than 12kg. These are easily purchased cheaply in Nepal should you not have one, but they are not as tough as say the North Face Base Camp Duffel. Leave behind non-essential items in Kathmandu or Pokhara to limit the weight carried; these can be stored securely at your hotel.



##### Daypack

You'll need a small to medium sized backpack (30 to 40 litres) to carry water, camera, sunscreen, extra clothing, trekking poles, snacks, hat, and sunglasses, etc. Everything else should be placed into your main bag, which the porters will carry. Make sure it is comfortable and has a good waist band that transfers some of the weight to the hips. It needs to be big enough to take a jacket, fleece, water, camera and odds and ends. You'll also need a waterproof cover or dry stuff sacks/ pack liner or plastic bags for waterproofing your pack.



##### Good sleeping bag

Most of our trips and treks in Nepal will require you to have a sleeping bag. You won't need a sleeping bag for the luxury lodges as bedding is provided, but in the more standard lodges/ teahouses further up in the mountains you will require a sleeping bag to supplement the blankets they provide.

You'll need a warm 'four seasons' sleeping bag. Good down is fluffy, light and thick. A muff (an extra section around the neck) makes a big difference to the overall warmth of a bag. Reasonable sleeping bags are cheaply available for rent in Kathmandu. Alternatively, add a fleece sleeping bag liner to add warmth to a 3-4 season bag.

##### Sleeping bag liner

Sleeping bag liners are made of cotton, silk or fleece. Using one will save washing your sleeping bag and adds warmth. Cotton or silk ones can be made in Kathmandu but are more easily brought from home. Fleece ones are readily available in Kathmandu and cost around \$15.

##### Pillow case

Lodges supply basic pillows, so bring a pillow case. If you are very fussy about pillow comfort, bring an inflatable pillow.

##### Hiking poles

Hiking poles are not essential but highly recommended. They certainly make trekking ascents and descents easier and we strongly recommend them if you have had issues with sore knees, ankles or hips. You can buy them in Kathmandu.

• Find out more: [👉 Do I need trekking poles and which ones should I buy?](#)

##### Water bottle

Water bottles should be 1L or more in capacity and be able to take boiling water. You'll need at least two water bottles, or one water bottle in addition to a CamelBak or similar bladder hydration system.

## NEPAL

##### Head torch

Ideal for reading in bed and essential for trips to the toilet at night.

##### Quick dry towel

Bring a large microfibre towel. They are compact, lightweight and highly absorbent.

##### Sunscreen and lip balm

The sun is strong at altitude. Bring products that are SPF 15 or better still, SPF 30+.

##### Books

Bring one or two. Kathmandu has some great second-hand bookshops, as does Pokhara, Namche and Gokyo.

##### Money-pouch/belt/inside pocket

Most people find wearing one while trekking is a hassle and keep it buried in their kit bag or daypack. Most Kathmandu hotels have safety deposit boxes.

##### CLOTHING

The clothing you bring will need to allow for both the warmth of the days and the chill of the nights. While trekking during the day at lower altitudes, lightweight trekking

trousers and t-shirts are recommended. It's always a good idea to carry a waterproof jacket and some warmer clothing with you though as mountain weather is notoriously unpredictable. For the cold nights, thermal underwear, a warm fleece jacket and even a down jacket will help to keep you warm.

• Find out more: [👉 How to layer clothing for hiking](#)

##### Hiking boots

You don't have to go out and buy the best trekking boots on the market just because you're going to Nepal, but for a happy trek, you need comfortable feet. Good boots are waterproof, have good ankle support, plenty of toe room for long descents, a stiff sole to lessen twisting torsion, and are lightweight. Look at the inner lining – leather is good; Cambrelle is even better – a material that eats smelly feet bacteria. Good lightweight trekking boots or light all-leather boots are perfect. Boots must be lightly worn in before trekking and this should include some steep hills to show up trouble spots.

• Find out more: [👉 What boots should I buy and how do I look after them?](#)







## NEPAL



### Socks

At lower altitudes your feet will be warm or even hot while walking so quality cotton mix sports socks are best. Three to four pairs are enough. Thick trekking socks are better for higher up and cool evenings. Most modern trekking boots fit snugly so wearing two pairs of socks at the same time is impractical. Don't buy expensive boots then skimp and buy unsuitable cheap socks. A good pair of socks can last a long time and many treks, so it's a good investment.

### Camp shoes/sandals/flip-flops

Bring a change of shoes, such as flip-flops. They are good for showers and a luxury after a long day of trekking. Sandals that allow you to wear a pair of thick socks with them are the best.

### Polarised sunglasses and broad-brimmed hat

It is unlikely that you will be trekking through snow on lower altitude treks (up to 3000m) but on higher altitude treks (above 4000m) it is more likely, so you will need good sunglasses to avoid excessive glare from reflected UV and high altitude sun. Specialised glacier glasses with side pieces are not needed; neither are ski goggles.

### Warm clothing and waterproof outers

A fleece top and/or vest, a down jacket and thermal underwear are essential. You'll also need a waterproof and windproof jacket, and warm, comfortable hiking pants, plus a beanie and gloves. Some down jackets may also be showerproof, usually the more expensive ones!

### Trekking pants

You will live in these. Light material, loose and dark-colored is best. You can survive with only one pair, although two is better.

### Wind pants

If your trekking pants are reasonably windproof then special wind pants are not needed. If you do bring a pair, it is not necessary to have Gore-tex. Similar, non-waterproof material is quite OK.

### Wind/rain jacket

Waterproof and breathable. Plastic ponchos or non-breathable raincoats are not suitable. Gore-tex (or similar) jackets are recommended for treks over passes or climbing trips. Lighter jackets should be a second jacket, easy to throw in the day pack for warmer days.



## SECTION 2: TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

### Fleece/sweatpants

Great for the chilly evenings, thicker is better (except for when the stoves in the tea houses really heat up!). Readily available in Kathmandu.

### Day-wear shirts

T-shirts are popular but a shirt or mixed yarn travel shirt is more versatile. The collar protects the back of your neck and the sleeves can be rolled up or down. Take two or three so you can swap damp for dry.

Both wool and synthetic t-shirts/long sleeve tops provide the moisture wicking function you need when hiking. Wool fibres are so fine that they won't itch or scratch while walking, which also means no chafing. Wool also helps to neutralise body odour, but will not dry as fast as its synthetic competitors and can be slightly more expensive.

Synthetic base layers are a great alternative to wool as they dry even faster than wool, but do tend to hold body odour. So if you are considering multi-day hikes and do not have access to washing facilities, wool can be a much nicer choice for your fellow hiker!

### Gaiters

If you trek on a major route during the normal trekking season from October to May you probably won't encounter leeches, but during the monsoon season leeches are everywhere. Gaiters can help repel them.

### Warm hat/balaclava and mittens/gloves

A good beanie is nice for the evenings and essential for cold trekking days. A good pair of wind-proof gloves are also essential. Easily available in Kathmandu if you don't have them.

### Neck gaiters and head buffs

For winter trekking they are really the best for staying warm; bring several.

### Underwear

Bring four to seven pairs (quick dry material).

### Swimwear

Some hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara have swimming pools.

### First aid kit

See p34.

## NEPAL

### Water purification

Don't drink the water in Nepal and don't buy expensive purified water in plastic bottles. While trekking, purify your own water with iodine tablets or liquid such as Potable Aqua, Aqua Tabs, Polar Pur or Coghlans. Another option is a UV light-based treatment such as a Steripen. They provide drinking water quickly (1L in 90 seconds). You can also boil water for one minute. Lodges can supply boiling water but will charge for it because it uses fuel.

### RENTING EQUIPMENT IN NEPAL

The small outdoor shops in Kathmandu rent real expedition equipment. These establishments recycle genuine cold-weather gear and specialty items that are only needed for Nepal. You may want, for example on a demanding trek, a heavy down jacket and down pants for crossing a high pass. You can rent these items very cheaply and return them when the trek is finished.

### TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- US cash for Nepal visa and tipping
- Passport photos
- Passport (with photocopies or scanned back-up copy)
- Copy of travel insurance policy and 24-hour contact number
- Airline and other ticket(s)
- Credit card and spending money

### HOW TO BOOK YOUR RAW TRAVEL TRIP

Before making a booking, please read this Destination Guide thoroughly to make sure that trekking in Nepal is right for you. We have compiled lots of important information about accommodation, food, fitness required, weather and what to expect so that you can make an informed decision. On our [website](#), you'll also find detailed itineraries and other important information.

A deposit of AUD500 per person is due at the time of booking and balance of payment is required 8 weeks prior to travel. All quotes are subject to availability at the time of booking and valid for 7 days. Please contact your Destination Expert for your personalised booking link.

When you submit your booking form, you are committing to an itinerary and travel dates. When arrangements are confirmed, non-refundable deposits are paid to suppliers to secure these bookings. Any changes to the itinerary and/or travel dates after arrangements have been confirmed will incur additional charges.

### PARTICIPATION CONDITIONS

To travel with RAW Travel you must accept the [booking conditions](#) (online at the time of booking), which include the following 'participation conditions':

*When booking on one of our trips the applicant understands that RAW Travel operates adventure holidays worldwide. In developing countries, the standards of accommodation, transport, safety, hygiene, telecommunication facilities, level of infrastructure development and medical facilities are not equivalent to those familiar to the applicant's usual living arrangements, or would find on a conventional holiday. This type of trip inherently involves a higher level of personal risk, which the applicant agrees to fully assume. The applicant acknowledges that travel on a RAW Travel trip requires a degree of flexibility, and understands that the trip's route, accommodation and modes of transport are subject to change without prior notice due to local circumstances. Should RAW Travel deem it advisable to amend an itinerary for any reason, it may do so by shortening, varying or re-routing any trip. These changes are binding and additional expenses will be charged to the applicant if the reason for any major alteration is outside RAW Travel's control.*







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GETTING TO THE TRAILHEADS

In Nepal, few trips go exactly to plan because of the terrain, weather and conditions of vehicles. We will build plenty of time into your itinerary, but you'll need to treat any delays as part of the wonderful experience of Nepal.

Flying into Kathmandu

There's only one option for international flights to get into Nepal. The capital Kathmandu hosts the country's only international airport, Tribhuvan International Airport (airport code KTM) on the outskirts of the city. It's a small airport with a very limited number of facilities.

From Australia and New Zealand there are easy connections through Bangkok, Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Guangzhou or Hong Kong.

When flying into and out of Kathmandu, if it's a clear day then you can get absolutely stunning views of the Himalayas from the plane. Do your research beforehand about which side of the plane to sit on, depending on where you're flying in from. Reserve a good seat if you can.

The domestic terminal is next to the international terminal. One of the safer, more reliable domestic airlines is Buddha Air, which has flights to Pokhara.



Entering Kathmandu

Be prepared for culture shock and sensory overload when getting into Kathmandu. It's a crazy city with lots of noise, chaos, sights and sounds, drivers weaving over the streets, motorbikes swerving past pedestrians and so on. Take things slow when you arrive and give yourself time to adjust if you are staying for a few days. It gets easier with time. But rest assured, the rest of Nepal is not like Kathmandu at all – outside the cities it is much less chaotic and more peaceful!

Getting around Kathmandu

Kathmandu's tight laneways are perfect for wandering by foot but when you have had enough of walking, there are a few options. Taxis are available everywhere; however, it may be difficult to get them to turn their meter on. Bicycle rickshaws are a fun and slower way to get around but settle on the price before you get in. Bicycles are also available for hire.

Accessing the Annapurna Region

The lakeside city of Pokhara (45-minute flight from Kathmandu) is the gateway to treks in the Annapurnas and a convenient base to prepare before a trek. The city of Pokhara itself is a fascinating place to explore.

Accessing Everest Base Camp Trek

To get to the start point for the Everest Base Camp Trek, you'll need to fly into the infamous, perilously situated Lukla (Tenzing/Hillary Airport, 2800m). The short, uphill runway is surrounded by high peaks, and during the final approach the twin-propeller planes are often buffeted by strong winds. The planes arrive like trains, unloading and reloading trekkers in less than 10 minutes, with as little as 90 seconds between a take-off and landing. It's consistently rated as one of the most dangerous airports in the world. But that's only if something goes wrong. Pilots land at Lukla multiple times every day and there have been only three fatal crashes since construction more than 50 years ago. Flights can be reliable, but you should expect delays and cancellations due to weather issues.

Accessing Upper Mustang

Jomsom is the starting point for almost all routes heading into the Upper Mustang region. Most people choose to fly between Pokhara and Jomsom (a 20-minute flight) to save time and to avoid the arduous bus or jeep journey by land. The official checkpoint for the restricted region is Kagbeni, just north of Jomsom.

LANGUAGE

There are 123 languages native to Nepal! The official language is Nepali (spoken by nearly 50% of the population), with Maithili being the second largest language.

Language is not a barrier to travelling in Nepal. The people you will deal with in the Kathmandu Valley and Pokhara will speak some English. Along the main trekking trails, particularly the Annapurna Circuit, English is also widely understood. Your trekking guide that we organise will speak good English, too.

Of course it's still worth learning a few words of Nepalese:

Hello/Goodbye	Namaste
How are you?	Tapain-lai kasto chha?
Excuse me	Hajur
Please (give me)	Dinuhos
Thank you	Dhanyabad

ENVIRONMENT

While travelling in Nepal, tread lightly. Stick to the trails, minimise the amount of rubbish you create and carry it out of the mountains with you. Where possible, drink boiled rather than bottled water.

CULTURE AND ETIQUETTE

Travelling in Nepal really is a profoundly uplifting experience. It is one of the most beautiful and spiritual countries you will ever visit. Nepalese people are genuinely and unconditionally welcoming, accommodating, happy and good spirited. While Nepal is a beautiful and beguiling country, there are plenty of traditions and local customs to be aware of.







## NEPAL

Probably the greatest number of Nepali taboos are to do with food. One underlying principle is that once you've touched something to your lips, it's polluted (*jutho*) for everyone else. If you take a sip from someone else's water bottle, try not to let it touch your lips (and the same applies if it's your own). Don't eat off someone else's plate or offer anyone food you've taken a bite of, and don't touch cooked food until you've bought it.

If eating with your hands, use the right hand only. The left hand is reserved for bodily hygiene and considered unclean. You can use your left hand to hold a glass or utensil while you eat, but don't wipe your mouth, or pass food with it.

It's considered good manners to give and receive everything with the right hand. In order to convey respect, offer money, food or gifts with both hands, or with the right hand while the left touches the wrist.

### DO

#### ✓ Learn to say Namaste

Join both palms and greet anyone (of all ages) and at all times of the day with *Namaste*. Do not shake hands.

#### ✓ Remove your shoes when entering a Buddhist monastery

Also leave an offering in the donation box or on the altar.

#### ✓ Always ask permission before taking photos

Whether this is of people, festivals, cremation grounds or the inside of temples.

#### ✓ Walk clockwise around a religious monument

Always keep the monuments to your right side.

### DON'T

#### ✗ Drink the tap water

Whether you're in a 5-Star Deluxe Hotel in Kathmandu or a simple teahouse in the Himalaya, never drink the tap water.

#### ✗ Dress scantily

The Nepalese are traditional and conservative in the way they dress. To avoid embarrassment on both sides, don't wear revealing clothing or sleeveless tops. Shorts are acceptable, but they should reach to just above the knee and be modest. Light, loose, longer length clothing is practical and respectable. Avoid singlets and lycra. Anything that hugs the body is likely to draw unwanted attention and gives a negative impression.

#### ✗ Point your finger or feet

Do not point your finger at a person and especially to religious monuments; instead use the flat back of your hand to indicate the person or a sacred object. Don't point the soles of your feet at people.

#### ✗ Give cash to beggars

Nepal like many countries around the world has its fair share of beggars and the desire to help can be overwhelming. At the end of the day it's up to you, however, begging is slowly becoming a major problem in Nepal as it sparks off a chain of events that ultimately destroys self-worth and devalues Nepali culture.

### GREETINGS

The Nepalese have one of the gentlest and politest forms of greeting you will ever come across. Derived from the ancient Sanskrit script, *Namaste* means 'I bow to the divine in you'. The gesture represents the belief that there is a divine spark within each of us that is located in the heart chakra. *Namaste* is usually spoken with a slight bow and hands pressed together, palms touching and fingers pointing upwards, thumbs close to your chest. You can also use a 'Namaste' for farewells and for demonstrating your gratitude too.



### CASTE SYSTEM

Though it was abolished in 1962 the caste system is still very active in Nepal. In layman's terms it means that you are born into a certain status that will dictate your income, job, income and family including that of your children. For example a well educated wealthy scholar might be of the Brahmin class. And therefore would not be seen washing clothes. Whereas someone from the Dhobi caste would be born into a life of washing clothes and not seen as an educator or a landlord.

### PRAYER FLAGS AND WHEELS

The Nepali view of the world is dominated by prayer and ritual and a knowledge that the gods are not remote, abstract concepts but living, present beings who can influence human affairs in very direct ways.

In Nepal you will see strings of colourful **prayer flags** prominently displayed across passes, streams and houses. They are highly symbolic and arranged in a particular order.

Blue symbolises sky and space, white (air and wind), red (fire), green (water), and yellow (earth). The balance of all the elements is said to bring about inward and outward harmony; and as the wind blows through them, the vibration of the prayers and spiritual intention behind them spreads to find fulfillment.



You'll also see long lines of cylindrical **prayer wheels**, often beautifully embossed, which pilgrims spin to activate thousands of prayers wrapped inside. Traditionally, the mantra Om Mani Padme Hum is written in Sanskrit on the outside of the wheel. On a trek you'll see everything from small hand-spun wheels to huge house-sized wheels which come with their own private chapel. Always remember to walk to the left and spin your prayer wheels in a clockwise direction.

### MOBILE, WIFI AND INTERNET COVERAGE

**Mobile phone** connection covers most of the country but not necessarily trekking areas. You can generally use foreign SIM cards in Nepal, but it is far cheaper to buy a local one. Ncell is currently the most popular network, though it is not the best choice when in the mountains. You can buy SIM cards in various shops in Thamel (the tourist area in Kathmandu) or lakeside in Pokhara. When you buy a SIM you'll need to take photocopies of your passport and visa and a passport photo.

Many hotels and guesthouses offer free **WiFi** as standard. You'll also find WiFi in many restaurants and hotels. Internet speeds can be slow.

When you're in the mountains you will need to pay for **charging your phone**, camera batteries, and your power bank. Costs depend on the region, altitude and whether the village is connected to any kind of grid.

### ELECTRICITY

Electricity is 230V. Some sockets take plugs with two round pins; others take 3 round pins. It's not uncommon to find that even in your hotel room there are two different types of socket. The best solution is to carry a universal adapter-transformer, which can be used with any types of sockets and plug.

The electricity supply in Nepal has not been stable in recent years. Residents and visitors alike have to manage electricity cut-offs or 'load shedding'. Most lodges have electricity but the supply can be unreliable.

Batteries (camera, phone etc) run out faster in cold temperatures so wrap them up and keep them warm overnight at higher elevations.

### LAUNDRY

There are no laundry facilities while you are trekking. Bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap and a (universal) sink plug to rinse your clothes.

### TOILETS

Toilets in Nepal range from 'Western' (sit-down) flush options to a shed over a hole. In basic lodges and villages you pass through, the norm is a squat toilet. Don't flush toilet paper: put it in the basket provided. Paper is not provided in more basic places; Nepalis use a jug of water and their left hand. If you have to go while out trekking, make sure you are well away from the trail and any water source.

### MONEY

#### Currency

Nepal's unit of currency is the Nepali rupee (Rs). At the time of publication, the exchange rate was A\$1 = Rs80 / US\$1 = Rs104. For current exchange rates and a currency convertor go to: [www.xe.com](https://www.xe.com)

You cannot obtain Nepalese currency in Australia before you leave home.







## NEPAL

### Cash & ATMs

It's easy to change cash and access ATMs in Kathmandu, Pokhara and other cities, but almost impossible in rural areas or on treks. Bring enough money for the trek and in small denominations of clean intact bills.

Let your bank know well in advance that you are travelling overseas and will be making cash withdrawals so that your account is not locked due to suspicious activity. Also confirm your daily withdrawal limit, and applicable fees.

### Bargaining

Nepal is one of the best countries in the world for souvenir shopping and will require some bargaining and bartering. It's expected and a good sign of respect, and should be an enjoyable social exchange. Nepalis do not appreciate aggressive behaviour.

### Tipping

In Nepal, tipping is expected by most people involved in the country's tourism industry. While tipping is not mandatory, it is a very important source of income in Nepal.

*Trekking guide and porter:* The best way to decide on an amount is to base it on the quality of service you receive. For example, if you go on a 7-day trek, it is recommended you give at least USD\$10 per day. Travellers should also tip porters who help carry supplies.

*Taxi drivers:* Taxi drivers in Nepal do not expect a tip, but a small tip, such as extra change, will be greatly appreciated.

*Hotels:* In Nepal, large hotels already include service charges in the final bill. Therefore, it is not necessary to tip. If a service charge is not included in the total, 10% of the bill is perfectly acceptable for a tip. If a tipping box is available, it is best to use this so tips can be divided between all members of the hotel staff. A tip of 20 rupees is sufficient for anyone who helps carry your luggage, such as a porter or bellboy. If you are traveling with a group, 10 rupees per bag is standard for tipping.

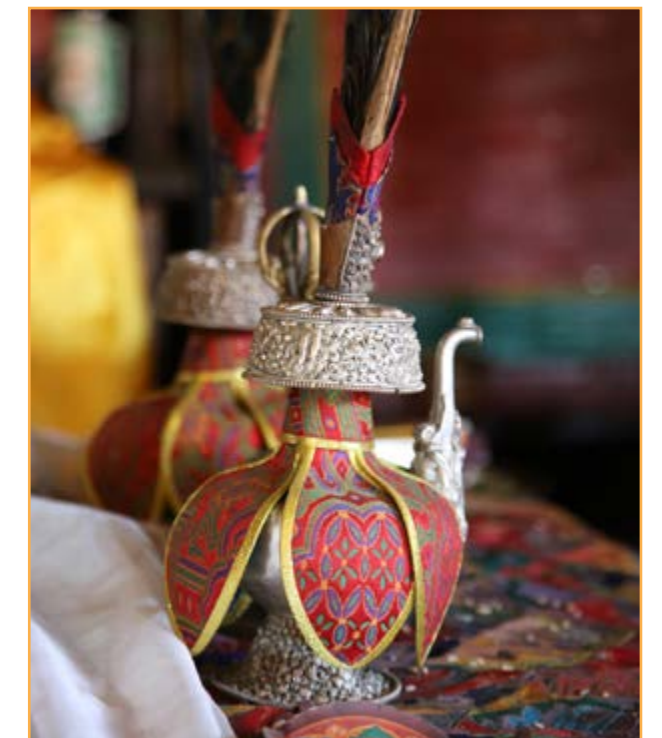
*Restaurants:* Restaurants that are more expensive already include a service charge, while many times tips are non-existent in cheaper establishments. If you choose to leave a tip due to good service, 5–10% is acceptable.

### 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, souvenirs and other personal expenses.

### Emergency funds

Ensure you have access to additional funds to be used if unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (e.g. a natural disaster) necessitate a change to your planned route. This is a rare occurrence but we recommend being prepared. Some comprehensive travel insurance companies will make payments on your behalf in an emergency. Some more basic covers require you to pre-pay yourself then make a claims. Do your research before you travel.





SAFETY IN NEPAL

Travelling in Nepal is safe, but as in any other country in the world – you are not immune from risk. Here is a list of potential hazards while trekking in Nepal. For more information, please talk to one of our Destination Experts.

Petty crime

Nepal is generally a safe country to visit with low crime rates; however, petty crime does exist in Nepal, so you should always exercise caution and commonsense to protect yourself and your personal belongings. Busy tourist areas are often targeted so be mindful especially in these places. Do not leave valuables lying around hotels rooms or on tables in restaurants. Use a money belt for safekeeping, leave any valuable jewellery at home, and lock your luggage.

Beggars

Dealing with beggars is part and parcel of travelling in Nepal. It might initially get to you, as it should, but you will probably adjust to it fairly quickly. A thornier dilemma is how to cope with panhandling kids. A small number of bona fide beggars make an honest living from *bakshish* (alms). Hindus and Buddhists have a long and honourable tradition of giving to lepers, the disabled, sadhus and monks. There are no unemployment benefits in Nepal, and many who can't work and have no family turn to begging (or prostitution). In the hills, locals will occasionally approach foreigners for medicines.

Don't give money directly to street children, and watch your wallet. The conditions street children endure are arguably more debilitating than rural poverty. Homeless, they sleep in doorways, *pati* (open shelters) or unfinished buildings. Weakened and malnourished by a poor diet and contaminated water, few are without disease. Many sniff glue or become addicted to harder drugs. They're regularly beaten by the police, and vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse (including from tourists). Although it can be hard to say no when street children ask for money or food, in the long

term your alms will do far better going to a charity than the beggars themselves.

Drinking water

Never drink the tap water in Nepal. Only drink water that is bottled, boiled or properly purified. Safe, boiled water will usually be available at each teahouse so you can re-fill your water bottles each day. Bottled water is usually available along the way but for environmental reasons, we encourage you to bring your own re-useable water bottles from home. You may wish to carry purification tablets with you – seek advice from your local outdoor/adventure store. It is important to stay hydrated while trekking in Nepal, particularly as it will help you adapt to altitude.

Traveller's diarrhoea

The main cause of infection is contaminated water and food, due to low standards of hygiene. However, diarrhoea is usually self-limiting and most people recover within a few days.



Altitude sickness

Altitude sickness can affect anyone, regardless of age, fitness and gender. If you are trekking at altitude (see p27 for more info) it is imperative that you discuss with your doctor any pre-existing conditions that may be exacerbated by high altitudes. Always communicate with your guide if you are feeling unwell, have an injury or have any symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness. Remember that a trek is not a race and you will travel better and feel better if you take your time and pace yourself. You may find alcohol available for purchase in a number of lodges on the trek; however, it is best to be avoided to reduce your chances of feeling unwell at altitude.

Medical facilities

Kathmandu has the best health facilities in the country, but standards at clinics and hospitals decline the further you get from the capital. In mountainous areas, there may be no health facilities at all. Trekkers who become unwell in the mountains are generally evacuated to Kathmandu, or overseas in the event of something really serious. Always take out travel insurance to cover the costs of hospital treatment and emergency evacuations.

Respiratory Infections

Upper respiratory tract infections are common ailments in Nepal, especially in polluted Kathmandu. Respiratory infections are aggravated by high altitude, cold weather, pollution, smoking and overcrowded conditions, which increase the opportunities for infection.

Most upper respiratory tract infections go away without treatment, but any infection can lead to complications such as bronchitis, ear infections and pneumonia, which may need to be treated with antibiotics.

Earthquakes and floods

Nepal is in a major earthquake zone and earth tremors are common across the country. Major earthquakes in 2015 caused extensive damage to Kathmandu.

Reconstruction work is continuing and the country is fully open to tourism.

RAW Travel has contingency plans in place in the event of an earthquake. You should also familiarise yourself with safety procedures.

The monsoon season normally runs from June to September. Flooding and landslides often occur during this time and road travel can be hazardous, particularly in rural areas.

The Government of Nepal [👉 Meteorological Forecasting Division](#) provides weather updates (in English) and flood forecasts during the monsoon.

**Facebook's Safety Check feature** During a natural disaster, Facebook can activate its Safety Check feature to quickly determine whether people in the affected geographical area are safe. The feature allows users in the area to broadcast to their Facebook friends that they are safe, and for those concerned to check on their friends. It was introduced in October 2014 and its first major deployment was on 25 April 2015 in the wake of the Nepal earthquake. Geolocation pinpoints your proximity to a site of crisis, and your next visit to Facebook will prompt you to 'mark yourself safe'.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Nepal	
Police	100
Fire	101

RAW Travel Office (Victoria, Australia)

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.30pm:  
+61 3 5976 3763

If there is a genuine emergency outside of these hours, call +61 (0) 478 649 848.





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## SECTION 4: RAW TRAVEL

### ABOUT RAW TRAVEL

RAW Travel specialises in iconic walks worldwide. We are a small family owned operator on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula that is highly regarded for great value, outstanding customer service and reviews, experienced tour guides, and excellent accommodation and food.

We provide a friendly, personal and trusted service. We pride ourselves on the intimate knowledge we have of our chosen walking destinations, which allows us to create exciting journeys for our clients while taking meticulous care of all the details.


We offer walks for complete beginners through to demanding treks that will satisfy and thrill even veteran adventurers.

Over the years, we have organised countless trips to far flung corners of the globe and introduced many thousands of happy travellers to their first long distance walk or

ride. The spirit of RAW Travel remains the same – creating inspiring active journeys that offer genuine interaction with the people and cultures we visit, backed by a personal but expert service.

Come and visit us at our beachside location in the coastal town of Mornington. Make an appointment with one of our Destination Experts and afterwards browse the many shops, cafes, beaches or nearby vineyards of the Mornington Peninsula.

### OUR PEOPLE

We have an experienced, dedicated passionate  [team](#) in our Mornington Head Office, as well as expert guides and support staff on the ground in Europe, Japan and Australia. Our staff have many things in common, including a passion for walking, a love of adventure travel in beautiful and historic locations, and the ability to go above and beyond to make our clients' travel dreams become a reality.



## NEPAL

### Why book your trip with RAW Travel?

Our trips are flexible and tailored to you!

- We listen to our walkers; we'll plan an itinerary to suit your needs and ability.
- We operate our own trips.
- We have staff dedicated to each destination: you get first-hand advice from people who know the walks.
- We have our own staff in-country, so help is never far away should you need it.
- We offer authentic travel with 17 years' experience.



### OUR COMMITMENT

We won't cut corners or ever intentionally compromise the quality of your trip. We don't want to run thousands of trips every year – because the quality of your experience is much more important than quantity to us. We're still small enough to care about our travellers as individuals and we want to stay that way!

We know that people desire a certain level of comfort along with their adventure, so great accommodation and discovering delicious local food is a hallmark of our trips. RAW owns and operates its own adventures, with our own staff on the ground in many destinations so we are able to keep control over the quality of our trips at the same time as we offer you reassurance and support. We take notice of the feedback you give us and your opinions do matter.

As a primarily 'direct to customer' company we avoid the commissions and overheads associated with the traditional travel distribution network. We charge fair prices but still provide great advice before you go, experienced leaders who love their groups, good quality accommodation and solid value for your money.

### EXPERT, FRIENDLY SERVICE

We're a specialist company and we enjoy providing a friendly, personal service where you're treated as an individual – no call centres here!

**At RAW Travel we don't just plan your travel, we take our clients on a journey. From your research and ideas we work with you to plan your dream travel experience. We consider your fitness levels, your achievements, your motivations and then together we map out every step of the journey.**



## SECTION 4: RAW TRAVEL

Our Destination Experts deliver a level of advice and experience that comes from being 100% focused on our chosen walks, rather than hundreds of different trips, as is often the case with bigger companies. We pride ourselves on our intimate knowledge of our chosen walking destinations and we really do “know because we go”.

Our staff take these walks each year and share their insider insights with you to help create exciting journeys where you can experience the best of your chosen destination, while being reassured that all the details are taken care of. Help is never far away should you need it from our locally based staff and suppliers.

### GIVING BACK & TREADING LIGHTLY

Our trips have helped raise over \$A18 million in funds for 40+ charities in Australia and overseas through our charity challenges. We are proud to have been part of so many great fundraising initiatives that have substantially impacted and improved people's lives.

In today's world travelling lightly is no longer just an admirable sentiment but a necessity. We always look for ways to improve our impact on the ground by monitoring our group's environmental and cultural impacts. At RAW, we have achieved advanced eco-certification on our Great Ocean Walk and have always been committed to ‘grass roots’ tourism.

In particular we favour small local suppliers to ensure the benefits of travel are distributed equally and to the people who need it the most. We also donate to KIVA micro-lending throughout the world and encourage you to also look at this commendable scheme.

So, rest assured, your travel with us will leave a positive, lasting impact on you and the places you visit.

### FREE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU PLAN YOUR TRIP

We've got inspirational brochures, essential preparation guides, comprehensive destination guides, weekly blog posts and more!



## NEPAL

### DESTINATION WEBSITES WITH UNRIVALLED INFORMATION

Visit our destination websites for unrivalled expert information and insights. You'll find photo galleries, route information, resources, trail history and lots more!

[rawtravel.com](http://rawtravel.com)

[caminodesantiago.com.au](http://caminodesantiago.com.au)

[kumanokodo.com.au](http://kumanokodo.com.au)

[montblancтреks.com.au](http://montblancтреks.com.au)

[greatoceanwalk.info](http://greatoceanwalk.info)

### RAW ADVENTURES NEWS

It's easy to stay up-to-date on all things RAW with our free monthly e-news. It's bursting with traveller's stories and information about new trips and insights. If you're not already a subscriber, it's easy to register.

Find out more: <http://rawtravel.com>

### FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

We love connecting with like-minded travellers on social media and we'd like you to be part of our RAW community. We regularly share tips and resources, as well as photos and stories from other travellers and our staff. Like and follow us, and be sure to give us a shout out to say hello. We really enjoy reading comments from our community of travellers!



[www.facebook.com/rawtravel/](https://www.facebook.com/rawtravel/)

### FREE TRAVEL INFORMATION NIGHTS

We love meeting our clients face-to-face and getting to know them. Twice a year we travel around Australia and New Zealand to talk about a selection of our iconic walks. If you have ever wanted to experience an iconic walk with RAW Travel then you will want to attend one of these events. We guarantee you'll be inspired by trip insights, videos and stunning images from our Destination Experts.

Find out more: <http://rawtravel.com/talks/>





## SECTION 4: RAW TRAVEL

### 'WALK AND TALK' DAYS

We love to walk and we love to talk! During the year we regularly offer opportunities (in Victoria) to walk with our Destination Experts and ask questions about your chosen destination, pre-departure preparation and gear. We limit these walks to around 25 people (depending on the location). The pace is generally relaxed so there is plenty of time to chat.

Find out more: <http://rawtravel.com/talks/>

### BOOK YOUR FLIGHTS WITH US

RAW Travel is a Business Class and Premium Economy Flights Specialist. We will find you the best deals and make sure you arrive well-rested to start your walk. Our in-house travel agents take the stress out of planning all the travel arrangements around your walk. They can book your international flights, give you advice about land transfers to the start of your walk, organise the perfect city break, and more! For a personalised service that you won't find on online booking sites, along with specific destination knowledge you won't necessarily find with your own travel agent, contact our Flights Department today at the RAW Travel office on (03) 5976 3763 or email [flights@rawtravel.com](mailto:flights@rawtravel.com)

Find out why our flights service is a better choice: [RAW Travel Flights](#)

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

If you are travelling on any trip with RAW Travel you will require comprehensive travel insurance. We sell Cover-More travel insurance and you can easily get a quote over the phone. No one plans for anything to go wrong, but if it does we want to make sure that you have adequate cover.

We highly recommend you purchase insurance as soon as you start booking your travel arrangements, and include cancellation cover. Your travel insurance must also include emergency evacuation and medical cover.

Any advice given here is a general guide only. Please research and purchase a policy best suited to your needs and circumstances.

### CITY BREAKS

Get the most from your time overseas with one of our city breaks. They offer the chance to explore and get an insider view with locals, try cultural activities and stay in unique and well-located hotels. They take the guesswork out of the bewildering range of hotels and activities on offer in the big cities and ensure that you can make the most of your limited time. Connect with locals, find the best places to eat and not spend your time getting lost or feeling overwhelmed about where to start!

Find out more: [RAW Travel City Breaks](#)

### CONTACT US

All of our RAW Travel experts have one thing in common: bringing you the immediate, highly personal satisfaction of discovering a new world on your own terms.

### RAW Travel Office (Victoria, Australia)

Our Melbourne HQ can be contacted Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm on +61 3 5976 3763. If there is a genuine emergency outside of these hours, call +61 (0) 478 649 848.





RAW TRAVEL TRIP GRADINGS

RAW Travel offers a range of multi-day walks for complete beginners through to demanding treks that will satisfy and thrill even veteran adventurers. We have graded each RAW Travel trip from 1 (introductory) to 10 (tough).

Our grading system is intended to differentiate only the walks that RAW Travel offers, so they won't necessarily match another travel company's assessment of their trips.

We have used several criteria to assess the difficulty of each walk we offer, including the number of hours walking required each day, terrain and conditions underfoot, weather, gradient, altitude, signage and facilities – basic accommodation and food in remote areas will contribute to a walk being graded more difficult. Keep in mind that if a walk is graded moderate, it doesn't mean you will never feel tired.

Our multi-day walks require a suitable level of physical preparation. More detail is provided in our essential free guides to getting walking fit, which are available for each of our destinations.

WALKING & HIKING

Walking and hiking are mainly leisure activities that involve well-made trails and roads, often on purpose made paths, such as pilgrimage trails and low mountain trails.

TREKKING

Trekking refers to long continuous point-to-point journeys on foot in areas where there is usually no other transport. Trekking is not mountaineering; it is walking for a number of days on often rudimentary trails in challenging environments, which are likely hilly or mountainous. Nepal, the Himalayas, Pakistan and South America are good examples of trekking countries.

TRIP GRADINGS

Camino de Santiago Routes

Portuguese Coastal Camino | 4-5 Moderate to Challenging

Spanish Route | 4-6 Moderate to Challenging

Le Puy Route (France) | 5-6 Challenging

Italy's Via Francigena

Via Francigena | 4-5 Moderate to Challenging

Japan

Nakasendo Way | 4-6 Moderate to Challenging

Kumano Kodo | 6-7 Challenging to Strenuous

European Alps

Swiss Alps | 6-7 Challenging to Strenuous

Tour Du Mont Blanc | 7 Strenuous

Italian Dolomites | 7 Strenuous

Nepal

Annapurna Trails | 6-7 Challenging to Strenuous

Everest Monasteries Trek | 6-7 Challenging to Strenuous

Upper Mustang | 7-8 Strenuous

Everest Base Camp | 8 Strenuous

England

Coast to Coast Path | 6-7 Challenging to Strenuous

Australia






Great Ocean Walk | 3-4 Moderate

Yoga Hiking Adventures

Great Ocean Walk | 3-4 Moderate

Portuguese Coastal Camino | 3-4 Moderate

Nepal | 6-7 Challenging to Strenuous

	 Introductory Grade 1-2	 Moderate Grade 3-4	 Challenging Grade 5-6	 Strenuous Grade 7-8	 Tough Grade 9-10
Fitness/ experience required	Basic fitness level required.	Good health and a reasonable standard of fitness.	Good base level of fitness; experience walking in remote areas.	Good aerobic conditioning recommended, along with experience walking in mountains and on longer duration walks.	High level of fitness and experience trekking in high mountains and remote areas.
Overview	Relatively easy walking on well-formed paths with no difficult terrain. Generally flat or undulating with no long uphill sections.	Walking that is generally moderate but with some more strenuous sections. Regular ascending and descending may be required.	Longer duration walks where conditions underfoot will be fair to uneven with potential for slippery or rocky surfaces.	More demanding walking with a fairly consistent level of effort required.	Long days; continually demanding; long ascents and descents; steep gradients. Potential for extreme variation in weather at higher altitudes.
Daily hours/ km	Short hikes; 2 to 6 hours walking / up to 15km per day.	4 to 7 hours walking / up to 20km per day.	5 to 8 hours hiking / 25km per day.	6 to 8+ hours / up to 30km per day.	7 to 10 hours / up to 30km per day.
Terrain and path quality	Compacted trail. Fairly even surfaces. Well signposted, well-maintained trail.	Fairly even surfaces.	Variable terrain.	Usually mountainous terrain. May include high pass crossings in remote areas.	High pass crossings in remote areas.
Max altitude Facilities	Below 1000m Comfortable accommodation and good food.	1500m Comfortable accommodation and good food.	2500m Generally comfortable accommodation and good food; occasionally more basic conditions.	4000m Overnighting in basic accommodation/ mountain refugios. Food choices limited and often more basic.	5500m Basic accommodation, limited variety of food, limited recourse to medical facilities.
Preparation required	1 to 2 walks per week (10km each)	1 to 2 walks per week (15km each)	2 to 3 walks per week, increasing distances while carrying an 8kg pack; some hill walking stairs, or heavy sand walking recommended.	2 to 3 walks per week at a reasonable pace and longer distances with an 8kg pack; regular hill / mountain walking or stairs, heavy sand walking is necessary.	2 to 4 walks per week at a reasonable pace, and longer distances with an 8kg pack; must include long duration hikes on steep hills and in mountains.





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