

ASIA · MOUNTAINS · HIKING · ADVENTURE · CULTURE · SACRED SITES · WILDLIFE



Nepal

Nepal rises from the jungle lowlands of Chitwan to eight of the world's ten highest peaks in a country only about 200 kilometres from south to north. Trekking is the obvious draw, Everest and Annapurna above all, but the Kathmandu Valley's pagoda temples and Newari towns, rhino safaris and Lumbini, the Buddha's birthplace, make it far more than a mountain trip.

i Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Nepal and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 1 October 2026.

CAPITAL Kathmandu	CURRENCY Nepalese rupee (NPR) £1 ≈ NPR 203	LANGUAGE Nepali, Maithili Bhojpuri, Tharu	BEST TIME Mar–Apr, Oct–Nov
DAILY BUDGET £25–£150 £ Budget-friendly	PLUGS Type C, D, M 230V · adapter needed	FLIGHT FROM LONDON 14h via Delhi, Doha or Istanbul ~£650–£1,150 return	TIME ZONE UTC+5:45 standard time

Nepal is shaped by altitude. The Terai plains along the Indian border hold Chitwan and Bardia national parks and Lumbini; the middle hills hold Kathmandu, Pokhara and most of the population; and the Himalaya fill the north. A typical first trip spends a few days among the Kathmandu Valley's three old royal cities, takes the road or a short flight to lakeside Pokhara for the Annapurnas, then drops to Chitwan for wildlife. Trekkers usually commit to one region: Everest via the airstrip at Lukla, or the Annapurna Circuit and Sanctuary from Pokhara.

Nepal is excellent value: teahouse treks cost far less than comparable hikes in the Alps, and Kathmandu's Thamel district has gear shops, bakeries and agencies for everything. Since 2023 a licensed guide has been required in most trekking regions, though enforcement varies; it adds cost but also local knowledge and someone to watch for altitude sickness. Peak seasons in October–November and March–April bring busy trails and fully booked Lukla flights. Many temples damaged in the 2015 earthquake have been rebuilt, though scaffolding remains in places, and roads are slow and bumpy. Patience, and a spare day or two, go a long way.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

ADVENTURE

Everest Base Camp trek

Around 12 days return from Lukla through Sherpa villages, Tengboche monastery and Namche Bazaar to base camp at 5,364 metres. For the classic view of Everest, climb Kala Patthar at dawn, and build in rest days to acclimatise.
- 2

ADVENTURE

Annapurna Circuit

A trek of roughly two weeks around the Annapurna massif, crossing the 5,416-metre Thorong La pass between Manang and Muktinath. New roads have shortened it, but alternative trails keep walkers away from the jeep tracks.

3

ARCHITECTURE

Bhaktapur Durbar Square

The best-preserved of the valley's royal cities, with brick lanes, potters' squares and the five-tiered Nyatapola Temple, which survived the 1934 and 2015 earthquakes. Stay overnight to see it after the day groups leave.

4

WILDLIFE

Chitwan National Park

Nepal's first national park protects sal forest and tall grassland on the Terai, home to greater one-horned rhinos, gharials, sloth bears and Bengal tigers. Jeep safaris, canoe trips and guided walks leave from Sauraha.

5

SACRED SITE

Lumbini

The birthplace of the Buddha, where the Maya Devi Temple shelters the marker stone and the pillar erected by Emperor Ashoka in 249 BC stands nearby. Monasteries built by Buddhist nations line a long canal across the site.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Kathmandu

≈ 3 million people

The capital and its sister cities Patan and Bhaktapur hold three Durbar Squares, the Boudhanath stupa and Pashupatinath's riverside cremation ghats; stay in Thamel for convenience or Patan for calm.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Pokhara

≈ 510,000 people

A relaxed lakeside town beneath Machhapuchhre and the Annapurnas, with paragliding, boating on Phewa Lake and sunrise views from Sarangkot; the starting point for most Annapurna treks.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Bharatpur

≈ 370,000 people

Chitwan district's busy commercial hub and transport junction on the Terai; few visitors stay, but its airport is the quickest way to Sauraha and Chitwan National Park.

Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Nepal

Best time: **Mar-Apr, Oct-Nov.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

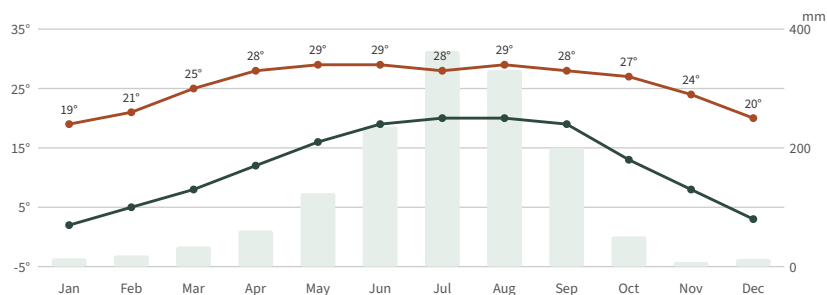
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Kathmandu

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Mar	Holi The spring festival of colours, when Kathmandu and Pokhara erupt in water fights and handfuls of powdered paint; wear clothes you are happy to ruin.
Sep–Oct	Dashain Nepal's biggest festival, fifteen days honouring the goddess Durga, with family gatherings, kites, giant bamboo swings and animal sacrifices; many businesses close and buses are packed.
Oct–Nov	Tihar The five-day festival of lights honours crows, dogs, cows and Laxmi, goddess of wealth, with oil lamps, marigold garlands and children singing from door to door.

How much does Nepal cost?

SHOESTRING £25 per person / day ≈ NPR 5,071 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £60 per person / day ≈ NPR 12,171 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £150 per person / day ≈ NPR 30,427 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Dal bhat The national meal of lentil soup, rice, vegetable curry and pickle, eaten twice a day; refills are free, hence the trekkers' slogan 'dal bhat power, 24 hour'.	Momo Tibetan-style dumplings filled with buffalo, chicken or vegetables, steamed or fried and served with a fiery tomato and sesame achar.	Samay baji A Newari ceremonial platter of beaten rice, spiced buffalo choila, black soybeans, boiled egg and ginger, traditionally with rice beer.
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Getting around

Tourist buses run daily between Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitwan; the Kathmandu–Pokhara road takes six to eight hours. Buddha Air and Yeti Airlines save time on longer routes, while small planes serve mountain airstrips such as Lukla and Jomsom and are often delayed by weather. Jeeps reach many trailheads. In Kathmandu and Pokhara, the Pathao and inDrive ride-hailing apps are cheaper than haggling with taxis.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



230V — bring a UK-to-C/D/M adapter

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police: **100**

Tourist police: (good English language skills): **1144**

Fire: **101**

Ambulance: **102**

Nepal tourist police: Tourist police in Kathmandu : **01 5347041**

Tourist police for incidents in Thamel (Kathmandu):
009 77 9851289453

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

DIALLING CODE

+977

TAP WATER

Not safe — drink bottled or treated water

TIPPING

Tip trekking guides and porters at the end of a trek, roughly 10–15% of the trek cost shared between them. Tourist restaurants often add 10% service.

ETIQUETTE

Walk clockwise around stupas and prayer wheels, remove shoes before entering temples and homes, and don't touch anyone's head. Some Hindu temples, including Pashupatinath's main shrine, are closed to non-Hindus.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Tribhuvan International Airport (KTM), Kathmandu

TIME ZONE

UTC+5:45 (standard time)

DRIVING

On the left

Visas & entry for Nepal

Shown for a British passport.

Visa required — apply before you go

You must have a visa to visit Nepal for up to 90 days.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

Typhoid

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Japanese encephalitis

Measles

Rabies

Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

Low risk of malaria

- There is a low risk of malaria in areas of Nepal below 1,500m, particularly in the Terai district: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.
- There is no risk of malaria in the city of Kathmandu and on typical Himalayan treks: bite avoidance recommended.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Nepal

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Wed 21 Oct 2026	Ekadashi (Dashain)
Thu 22 Oct 2026	Duwadashi (Dashain)
Sun 8 Nov 2026	Laxmi Pooja
Mon 9 Nov 2026	Gai Tihar
Tue 10 Nov 2026	Gobardhan Pooja · Mha Pooja
Wed 11 Nov 2026	Bhai Tika
Sun 15 Nov 2026	Chhath Parva
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Wed 30 Dec 2026	Tamu Lhochhar
Mon 11 Jan 2027	Prithvi Jayanti
Fri 15 Jan 2027	Maghe Sankranti
Fri 29 Jan 2027	Martyr's Day
Sun 7 Feb 2027	Gyalpo Lhosar · Sonam Lhochhar
Fri 19 Feb 2027	National Democracy Day
Sat 6 Mar 2027	Maha Shivaratri
Mon 8 Mar 2027	International Women's Day
Wed 10 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Sun 21 Mar 2027	Fagu Poornima
Mon 22 Mar 2027	Fagu Poornima (Terai)
Wed 14 Apr 2027	Nepali New Year
Thu 15 Apr 2027	Ram Navami
Sat 1 May 2027	International Labour Day
Mon 17 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Thu 20 May 2027	Buddha Jayanti
Sat 29 May 2027	Republic Day

Tue 17 Aug 2027	Janai Poornima
Wed 25 Aug 2027	Shree Krishna Janmashtami
Sun 19 Sep 2027	Constitution Day
Thu 30 Sep 2027	Ghatasthapana
Wed 6 Oct 2027	Fulpati
Thu 7 Oct 2027	Maha Ashtami
Fri 8 Oct 2027	Maha Navami
Sat 9 Oct 2027	Bijaya Dashami
Sun 10 Oct 2027	Ekadashi (Dashain)
Mon 11 Oct 2027	Duwadashi (Dashain)

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Nepali

ENGLISH	NEPALI	SAY IT
Hello	नमस्ते	<i>na-ma-STAY</i>
Thank you	धन्यवाद	<i>DHUN-ya-baad</i>
Please	कृपया	<i>KRI-pa-ya</i>
Excuse me	माफ गर्नुहोस्	<i>maaf gar-NU-hos</i>
How much is this?	यो कति हो?	<i>yo KA-ti ho</i>

Know before you go

Rules introduced in 2023 require foreign trekkers in most national parks and conservation areas to use a licensed guide, so book through a registered agency and check the current rules for your route.

Allow two or three spare days around an Everest trek: Lukla flights are often grounded by cloud, and in peak months may leave from Ramechhap, several hours' drive from Kathmandu.

Make sure your travel insurance covers trekking at altitude and helicopter rescue, and check the maximum height it covers before you book.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.