



THE HIMALAYAN EXPERIENCE

14 days / 13 nights

Day 1

Kathmandu

On arrival you will be met and transferred to the hotel. Overnight at the hotel in Kathmandu.

Day 2

Kathmandu

After breakfast enjoy a sightseeing tour of Kathmandu. Visit Swayambhunath, perhaps the most glorious stupa in the world and one of the holiest Buddhist sites in Nepal. Its establishment is linked to the creation of the Kathmandu valley out of a primordial lake. The whole area around the stupa is an array of small chaityas and monasteries.

Visit the temples of living Goddess who acknowledge the greetings of devotees from the balcony of her temple residence. Kasthamandap, the source of the word Kathmandu and supposed to be made from the timber of a single tree and Durbar Square, the area holding the array of temples overlooked by Hanuman, Dhoka Palace, the ancient palace of Nepalese Royalty. Overnight at the hotel in Kathmandu. B

Day 3

Kathmandu-Pokhara

After breakfast drive to Pokhara, a very scenic drive through the beautiful riverbanks and gorges.

Pokhara, the enchanting city nestled in a tranquil valley is starting point for many of Nepal's most popular trekking and rafting trips. Here the serenity of Pehwa lake and the magnificent Mt. Fishtail rising behind it, creates an ambience of peace and magic. The valley surrounding Pokhara is home to thick forests, gushing rivers and emerald lakes and world famous view of the Himalayas. The major attractions of Pokhara are; Pehwa Lake, Barahi Temple, Devid's fall, Bindabasini Temple and Seti Gorge.

Overnight at the hotel in Pokhara. B

Day 4

Pokhara-Chitwan National Park

After breakfast enjoy a pleasant boat ride on Pehwa Lake, reflecting the panoramic view of Mt. Fishtail on its backdrop. Then drive to Chitwan. B

Day 5

Chitwan National Park

Whole day jungle activities including jungle walks, elephant rides and also visit to villages. Chitwan National Park is most famous in Nepal, which offers 450 species of birds including four species of deer, leopard, sloth bear, wild boar and many other faunal species. The park is well known for the one horned Rhinoceros and it also offers shelter to Royal Bengal Tiger. B

Day 6

Chitwan-Kathmandu

After breakfast drive to Kathmandu passing through beautiful valleys. Evening free. Overnight at the hotel in Kathmandu. B

Day 7 **Kathmandu**

Today's sightseeing in Kathmandu includes:

- Boudhnath; this stupa stands with four pairs of eyes in the four cardinal directions keeping watch of righteous behavior and human prosperity. It was built by King Man Deva on advice of Goddess Mani Jogini. Situated on the octagonal base inset with prayer wheels, this shrine is ringed by houses of Lamas or Buddhist priests.
- Pashupatinath Temple; one of the holiest Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. Situated amidst lush green natural settings on the bank of the sacred Bagmati River, the temple built in Pagoda style has gilded roof and richly carved silver door.
- Bhaktapur City; also known as Bhadgaon, this place is the home of medieval art and architecture. Bhaktapur was founded in the 9th century and is shaped like a conch shell. Visit Durbar Square with a range of temples overlooking the palace of 55 windows built by King Bhupindra Malla and Nyatapola Temple.

Overnight at the hotel in Kathmandu. B

Day 8 **Kathmandu-Paro**

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Paro. On arrival you will be met and transferred to the hotel. This evening take an exploratory walk around the main street. Overnight at the hotel in Paro. B

Day 9 **Paro**

This morning visit Taktshang Monastery, also known as Tiger's Nest. It is believed that Guru Rinpoche, the father of the Bhutanese strain of Mahayana Buddhism, arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this monastery. Taktshang was severely damaged by fire in 1998 and at present its restoration work is in progress.

After lunch visit Ta Dzong, the National Museum. The museum collection includes ancient Bhutanese art and artefacts, weapons and the country's exquisite postage stamps. Then walk down the trail to visit Rinpung Dzong situated at a commanding height overlooking Paro valley. This Dzong is symbolic as the religious and secular center of all affairs of the valley. Overnight at the hotel in Paro. B

Day 10 **Paro-Punakha** 125kms – approx 4 hours

After breakfast drive to the ruins of Drukgyel Dzong. From this fortress, Bhutan repelled several invading Tibetan armies during the 17th century. Then visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest and most sacred temples of the Kingdom, reflecting the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan.

After that drive to Punakha across Dochula pass (3,050m) which heralds the most enchanting views of Bhutan.

Until 1955, Punakha served as the capital of Bhutan and still it is the winter seat of Je Khenpo. Visit Punakha Dzong built in 17th century at the junction of Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers. It has been destroyed by four fires and an earthquake in 1897 and has frequently been devastated by flood water coming from the great northern glaciers. The Dzong has now been fully restored to its original splendour.

This evening visit the local market. Overnight at the hotel in Punakha. B

Day 11 **Punakha-Wangduephodrang-Thimphu** 90kms – approx 3 hours

After breakfast drive to Wangduephodrang. The last town in the west before arriving at the central region of Bhutan, Wangdue is typical small Bhutanese town. The town's formidable Dzong is its most visible feature. In the 17th century Wangdue played a critical role in unifying the western, central and southern Bhutanese districts.

After lunch drive to Thimphu, a small charming city sandwiched in the heart of Himalayas. Thimphu's charm is not only embedded in its wealth of museums or places of historic interest but visitors wander along the main street and into shops, all of which are decorated in traditional style. Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu. B

Day 12

Thimphu

This morning visit Trashichhodzong situated on the banks of Wang Chhu. It is home of the National Assembly and the summer residence of capital's venerated monastic community. The Dzong is the impressive result of a redesign of the original medieval structure sanctioned by the Third King, HM Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, when he moved Bhutan's permanent capital to Thimphu.

Bhutan's National Library is located close to the Thangka painting school and contains arguably the best collection of religious and historic literature in the Himalayas. The country has its own brand of Himalayan medicines and this can be seen at the Indigenous Hospital. The Memorial Chhorten, a pious landmark for Thimphu's residents, was erected in 1974 by the mother of Third King in memory of her son. Visit the Handicrafts Emporium, which displays a wide assortment of beautifully hand-woven and crafted products. Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu. B

Day 13

Thimphu-Phuentsholing 180kms – approx 6 hours

After breakfast drive to Phuentsholing en route visiting Simtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress of the Kingdom built in 1627, which now houses the School for Buddhist studies. The Thimphu / Phuentsholing road was built in 1962 by Dantak, the Indian Border road organisation. The drive on this route is very pleasant with numerous scenic spots.

Just before arriving into Phuentsholing, visit Kharbandi Gumpa. This beautiful monastery, situated in a garden of tropical plants and flowers was built by the Royal Grandmother, Ashi Phuntsho Choedron in 1967. There is a splendid view of Phuentsholing town and the Indian plains from the monastery garden. Overnight at the hotel in Phuentsholing. B

Day 14

Phuentsholing

After breakfast you will be met by our Indian representative and driven into India. B