

Annapurna Base Camp Trek

in the heart of the Annapurna Himalaya



Introduction

Journey from the lower foothills of the Himalayas to the Annapurna Sanctuary. Beginning in Pokhara, you will trek through lush green hill country typical of the Pokhara Valley. Tiny thatched-roof villages, set among terraced fields, paint a scenic picture against the Himalayan backdrop – you can expect magnificent views of the snowy range of Annapurna, Manaslu and Dhaulagiri, including perhaps the most majestic of all the Himalayan peaks, Machapuchare, or ‘Fish Tail’.

From the rural villages and farms of Pokhara, the trail continues through a deep gorge that separates Hiunchuli and Machapuchare peaks, before entering the dense rain and bamboo forests of the narrow Modi Khola (‘river’) valley. The trail then continues to the Annapurna Sanctuary, its immense walls visible at a distance, giving it the character of a mountain fortress.

This is a comparatively easy high-altitude trek, along a well-trodden trail that passes through several settlements. The main challenge for the group will be the altitude (they will be climbing over 4,000m), and potentially difficult weather conditions.

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

Itinerary

Day 1: Kathmandu (1300m)

On arrival in Kathmandu the group will be met by our local escort and transferred to Gokarna Forest Lodge (or similar). There, our guide will be on hand to help with check-in and to brief you on the journey ahead. They will be able to provide answers to any questions the group may have about the hotel arrangements, Kathmandu, trekking and camping, and any other related information that you might require while in Nepal.

A group dinner will be arranged in Kathmandu this evening. Then, it's an early night ready for a fresh start tomorrow morning!

Day 2: Fly Pokhara (830m) and trek to Ghandruk (1940m) – 4-5 hours trekking

Early breakfast, then transfer to the domestic airport for the flight to Pokhara.



It's a scenic half-hour flight to the famous lake city. On a clear day, you can expect magnificent views of Dhaulagiri, Manaslu, Machapuchare, and five of the Annapurna Peaks from the plane.

You will be met on arrival in Pokhara and, after a short rest, drive 1½ hours to the trailhead at Nayapul (New Bridge).

Today's walk should provide a gentle introduction to the mountain terrain. To start with, the trail passes through busy, populated areas, where the group will encounter many local merchants, traders and farmers, as well, of course, as the famous mule and donkey trains. At Bhirethati village the trail splits in several directions. Following the main trail along the ancient Trans-Himalayan trade route, we'll shortly arrive at a suspension bridge over the Khumnu Khola. From here the trek continues to follow the main trade route through a series of farming villages, ending at Ghandruk, our overnight camp.

Ghandruk is a charming hillside settlement of traditional stone houses, inhabited by the Gurung people. This afternoon the students will be able to visit the Gurung Museum in Ghandruk to

learn more about the Gurung, their culture and traditions, before returning to camp to help with the dinner preparations.

NB. It is also possible to drive to Pokhara. The drive takes approx. 8 hours, and will usually require that you spend a night in Pokhara, thus adding a day to the itinerary. The option to drive is there as a backup plan in case of delay to your internal flights, which is unfortunately common in Nepal.

Day 3: Ghandruk to Chomrong (2170m) – 5 hours trekking

From Ghandruk, the trail follows a winding course uphill for one hour until it reaches Ghandrukkot, from where it is a steep descent to the Kimron River. After an hour of flat, mostly easy terrain, there is another steep ascent taking the group up to Chomrong, the gateway to the Annapurna sanctuary. As you gain altitude you will notice the air become cooler and with it a change in the vegetation. Chomrong is a small village located on the lap of the Annapurna massif, and the setting for our campsite.

Day 4: Chomrong to Dovan (2580m) – 6 hours trekking

Depart Chomrong and trek alongside the Modi River for two hours, leaving behind the inhabited foothills and entering the high wooded slopes of the Himalayas. The path is steep up to Sinuwa Danda, after which it becomes somewhat more level as we approach Khuldighar through thick forests of rhododendron. During March and April, when the rhododendron are in flower, this region is particularly beautiful. From Khuldighar, it is an easy descent on stone steps and through bamboo forest to Doban.

Day 5: Doban to Deurali (3230m) – 4 hours trekking

From Doban continue to follow the Modi River upstream. The trail soon begins to climb through forests of bamboo and oak (home to wild pig, deer, and the very rare snow leopard). After a gradual ascent you approach Himalaya Hotel (in fact a small lodge, with only a few rooms!) situated near Hinko cave at the base of Hiunchuli peak. There will be time to rest and take in the views. The trail then continues on a gradual ascent for another 1-2 hours, ending at Deurali, the last tea-house en-route to Machapuchare Base Camp. As you approach Deurali, the lush vegetation gives way to high alpine flora and shrubs. Overnight at Deurali.



Day 6: Deurali to Machapuchare Base Camp (3700m) – 3-4 hours trekking

Leave Deurali and continue to trek upstream alongside the raging Modi River. The track is generally easy, though you may encounter strong winds in the valley. Crossing the bed of the Modi River, we reach Bagar, where we stop for lunch and rest.

From Bagar, it is a short but strenuous climb to Machapuchare Base Camp. On arrival at Machapuchare BC, you'll be rewarded with stunning views of Annapurna South, Annapurna I, Gangapurna and, of course, "the Fishtail", or Machapuchare, itself. Overnight at Machapuchare Base Camp.

Day 7: Machapuchare Base Camp to Annapurna BC (4130m) – 2-3 hours trekking

Today's walk takes us to our final destination, Annapurna Base Camp, in the heart of the Annapurna Sanctuary! Begin by trekking up a fairly steep trail for 2-3 hours, which, depending on the season, is likely to be covered in snow.

As you reach higher ground, you can expect magnificent views of several of the Himalaya's highest snow peaks. At this height, the vegetation disappears altogether.

Annapurna Base Camp has a number of teahouses, where the group can relax and enjoy the views – a well-earned reward for their hard work! We camp tonight at Annapurna Base Camp.

Day 8: Annapurna Base Camp to Bamboo (2310m) – 6 hours trekking

Leaving the serene and barren tranquility of the mountains, we return to the lush green vegetation and forest of the lower foothills, as we make our way to the village of Bamboo. Today's trek is largely downhill, with only a few brief ascents.

Day 9: Bamboo to Jhinu Danda (1760m) – 6 hours trekking

From Bamboo, we have a short climb to Khuldi-ghar, where we check out at the National Park gates. From Khuldi, the trail descends all the way to the bridge over the Modi River, and then up to Lower Chomrong.

We leave Lower Chomrong after a short rest and climb up the steep stone path to Upper Chomrong, from where we descend to the small village of Jhinu Danda. If time allows, you will be able to visit the hot springs down below by the Modi River. Overnight at Jhinu Danda.

Day 10: Jhinu Dada to Pokhara – 5 hours trekking, 1 hour drive

The route from Jhinu Danda to Kyumi Village is mostly downhill albeit with some short climbs. After lunch near Kyumi, continue to Syauli Bazaar and then down to Birethanti, from where it is an hour's walk to Naya Pul, the end point of our trek.

Our driver will be waiting to greet the group in Naya Pul for the one hour drive back to Pokhara and check-in to a central hotel situated close to the lakeside. Dinner and overnight in Pokhara.

Day 11: Pokhara to Kathmandu

A morning flight takes us back to Kathmandu, and Gokarna Forest Lodge.

This afternoon, we'll arrange for a guided tour of Kathmandu, taking in the former royal palaces, Durbar Square, and Boudhanath, the largest stupa in Asia.

In the evening, a celebratory meal in central Kathmandu. We will arrange for the group to be accompanied by a Nepalese climber who has summited Mount Everest, and who will have many inspiring tales to share with the students.

Day 12: Departure

After breakfast the group will be transferred to the airport for the return flight home.

Arrive London the following morning.



Key Points

Expedition Summary

Trek Grade:	Moderate
Trek Duration:	9 days trekking
Accommodation:	Camping
Total Trip Length:	12 days
Suggested age group:	Years 9-10

Location

Our Annapurna Base Camp itinerary takes place in the Himalaya region of Nepal. Access is via Kathmandu and Pokhara.

Elevations

Pokhara (823m/2,700ft) is the starting point for the Annapurna Base Camp expedition. The high point is Annapurna BC at (4,130m/13,545ft), with the option to trek to the viewpoint about 150ms above Base Camp. Also of note is the stunning Fish Tail Peak BC, known to Nepalis as Machhapuchhre Base Camp (3700m/12135ft).



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Nepal has one of the most varied altitude profiles of any country in the world, ranging from lowland plains to 8000m+ mountain peaks.

Geology

The region is formed and constantly developing due to the collision of two giant continental tectonic plates, which has forced the uplift of the ranges we know as the Himalayas. The ranges include the sources of some of the great rivers of the world such as the Indus and the Ganges and, of course, the Himalayas are home to the world's highest mountain, Everest, standing at 8348ms.

Climate & Geography

The climate of Nepal is divided into two main seasons: the monsoon season from June to September, and the dry season from October to May. In April/May Base Camp can be around -10 to -7c in the early evening. Late Sept/October – November is the start of the dry season; the weather is warmer, the air is clean, visibility is perfect and the country is lush following the monsoon. In Sept & October, early evening temperatures are from -5 to -10c. In December and January the climate and visibility are good but it can be exceptionally cold, and trekkers need to be well prepared for snow. The early evening temperature in December/Jan can be from -15 to -17c. Early morning hours, when most climbers set out to climb, are very cold. During the day temperatures are warmer than these quoted, if the sun is out, but at night it will always be well below zero. You must be prepared for the worst, as mountain weather conditions can be extremely unpredictable

Altitude Impact

Expeditions to Annapurna Base Camp take the trekkers over 4130ms, so the “thinner” air will have a big impact on the way we feel and perform. Our itineraries are scheduled to allow for acclimatization to altitude.

Cultural

Most Nepalis are Hindu, especially in the capital and plains areas. The Middle Hills are mixed areas, with Hindu castes, predominantly Chhetri, living among ethnic groups (possibly of Tibetan origin) such as Gurungs, Magars, Tamangs, Rais and Limbus who practice various mixtures of Hindu, animistic and Shamanic practices. Buddhist groups such as Sherpas and Tamangs live in mountain areas.

The national language of Nepal is Nepali, which is closely related to Hindi. It is not essential to learn the language – English is widely spoken and for many Nepalese their second language – but efforts made to learn key phrases and greetings is likely to be warmly appreciated.

Educational Opportunities

There are, naturally, many opportunities for geography and geology studies. The rich tribal and religious diversity of Nepal also offers a good source for religious studies. Both expeditions pass through villages where there are schools to visit and support and the Himalayan Trust projects may also be visited when they are in the vicinity of your trek.

General Information

- **Language** – Nepali
- **Time** – 5 hours + 45 mins ahead of GMT (UTC+05:45)
- **Flight Time** – from UK approx. 14 hours
- **British Embassy in Nepal** - PO Box 106, Lainchaur, Kathmandu, Nepal (+977 (1) 4410583/4414588)
- **Currency regulations** - Rupeya (Nepalese rupee). The rupeya cannot be carried outside of Nepal and must be bought and exchanged in-country. For up to date currency exchange, go to: <http://www.xe.com/>

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