

DISCOVER NEPAL

ANNAPURNA BASE CAMP TREK/CHITWAN JUNGLE/KATHMANDU

OCTOBER 19 - NOVEMBER 8, 2010

The following itinerary is similar to the one that we did with family and friends in 2007. It is perfect for those who have not been to Nepal before as it includes a trek but also includes sightseeing in Kathmandu and a very special experience in the Chitwan National Forest. We used the same trek team in 2007 and again in the fall of 2008 when we trekked to Everest Base Camp and we cannot say enough good things about the amazing staff. Razzu, the owner of Samsara Journeys, and I have been working together for over 6 years and have led 7 tours to Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and Sikkim and 2 treks in Nepal. The personal service is outstanding and I encourage you to have a look at the website: <http://samsarajourneys.com/>

ITINERARY

Wednesday, October 20: Kathmandu (Arrival)

Arrive at Kathmandu International Airport. Meet, assist and transfer to Nirvana Garden Hotel. Depending on arrival time we will do a short walking tour of the area we are staying in.

Trek briefing and introduction to your trek staff team.

Overnight Nirvana Garden Hotel

Thursday, October 21: Kathmandu

Following breakfast we will start our Kathmandu tour.

Kathmandu City: We first visit Durbar Square. This complex of palaces, courtyards and temples, built between the 12th and 18th centuries, used to be the seat of the ancient Malla Kings of Kathmandu. We will also see Hanuman Dhoka, House of the Living Goddess and Kasthamandap, which is believed to be built from a single tree, along with other fascinating temples in the area.

Swayambunath: Also known as “Monkey Temple” after the tribe of roving monkeys who guards the hill and amuse the visitors and devotees, Swayambunath is the oldest Buddhist Stupa, established more than 2500 years ago. Situated high on a hill top it commands fine views of the entire Kathmandu valley. It is also known as “Sengu” and is listed as a World Heritage site. We will also get to test out our climbing legs. Although

you can get to the temple vehicle, the long climb up the eastern stairway is by far the best way of approaching Swayambunath.

Lunch at the Summit Café – Durbar Square, Patan

The Tibetan Refugee Center and Patan City

Patan City: This city of arts and architecture was founded in 250 AD and is also known as Lalitpur. It is renowned for its fine works in bronze, silver and copper. We will visit the Durbar Square which, like its counterpart in Kathmandu, is an enchanting mélange of palace buildings, artistic courtyards and graceful pagoda temples.

The Tibetan Refugee Center was set up in 1960 under the initiative of the International Red Cross and the Swiss Development Cooperation in cooperation with the Government of Nepal. Its main objective is to help the Tibetan refugees to be productive thus supporting themselves.

Overnight Nirvana Garden Hotel (B)

Friday, October 22: Kathmandu - Pokhara

After breakfast transfer to the domestic airport for flight to Pokhara. Upon arrival at Pokhara transfer to hotel near the lake side.

Rest of the day free for personal activities.

Overnight Hotel Barahi (B)

Saturday, October 23 : Pokhara - Tolka

Breakfast at the hotel.

Pokhara, drive to Phedi 20 minutes for the start of trek to Dhampus (1700 m)

Trek Time - 6 hrs.

The trek starts immediately with a steep climb through mixed forests and takes about an hour to arrive at the Mina Lodge, which marks the end of the steep path and arrival at Dhampus Plateau. From here the incline is much easier as the trail continues to climb steadily in more forested area and after about two hours we arrive at the first check post at the entrance to Dhampus Village with a maze of houses and alleyways of stonewalls. There are magnificent views of the mountains from west to east of the Annapurna South (7219m), Hiun Chuli (6441m), Mardi Himal (5587 m) and Machhapucchhare (6993m) to the north.

Lunch at Dhampus.

After leaving the village, we continue on the trail going down a fairly gentle slope cut into steps in the middle of the forest and then a short climb brings us to the settlement of Pothana (2000m) after an hour with magnificent views of the western Himalayas. The path from here slowly ascends until it reaches the locality of Bichok Deorali (2149m) located at the crest of the ridge. From here, the trail descends slowly but gets steeper until it meets the Modi Khola Valley first and then the village of the Bheri Khola, Cross a small suspension bridge as the path follows the ridge of a hill for an hour to the settlement of Tolka (1895m).

Dinner and Overnight Camp at Tolka

Sunday, October 24: Tolka - Chhomrong (2050 m).

Trek time – 6 hrs.

Breakfast at camp.

After breakfast, trek thru Tolka Medi Gara before again going down gently towards the village of Landrung on a trail where the forest gives way to vast expanse of terraced cultivation covering the surrounding hills.

We walk through the village and at the end of the village trail junction, there are two paths. One goes steeply down in the direction of the Modi Khola towards the Ghandrung Village but we walk towards north on a path which gradually leads to the river bank and then on to the New bridge which takes about an hour. After crossing the bridge, the path rises steeply and it is tough going for about 45 minutes before it eases out on a slope gently going down until our arrival the Kyumnu Khola, a tributary of the Modi Khola. From here, it is another 30 minutes of climbing to the settlement of Jhinu Danda (1760 m), which has a few comfortable looking lodges and many Tibetan traders selling trinkets to trekkers. Jhinu Danda is a good lunch spot and also has a hot spring but it's again a steep descent for about 20 minutes to reach here.

After lunch, the climb to Chhomrong is a steep one with an average slope of 30 degrees incline. The trail is on a barren hillside making shelter from the sun a difficult one. But fortunately there are a few lodges located on the trail making the necessary stops an enjoyable one. At the end of the 2 hour ordeal, we arrive at a ridge with a few hotels but we continue further (for camping groups) about 10 minutes to arrive at the main Chhomrong village with hotels and houses dotting the whole hillside and a most panoramic and close views of the Annapurna South, Hiun Chuli and Machhapucchhare mountains. Chhomrong controls the entry to the Annapurna Sanctuary.

Overnight at Chhomrong.

Monday, October 25: Chhomrong - Bamboo - Doban.

Trek time- 5hrs-6hrs

Breakfast at camp

Go down until the suspension bridge, which crosses the Chhomrong Khola, and then climb up the opposite side for about 30 minutes till you reach the hamlet of Banuwa. Carry on for another thirty minutes until you reach Sunawa (about 2400m) where you will find at least two lodge-restaurants. Here the path leaves cultivated fields to enter the beautiful tropical forest.

You can follow the ridge of the hill, about 2500 meters high, but unfortunately the mountain is drained by several small streams and the trekkers are forced to take several ascents and descents. It takes about an hour to reach the locality of Khuldi Ghar (2,477m) where you will encounter the second check post. (You will have to show your trekking permit as well as your entrance ticket to the National Park.) The head quarters of ACAP and its environment center are also located at Khuldi Ghar. After the check post the path suddenly descends until it reaches the hamlet of Bamboo (2300m) with four or five lodges and is a good place to make a lunch break.

As the name suggest, Bamboo marks the beginning of the huge bamboo forest, which leads, after about an hour of walking, to Tiptop (2571m). There are two lodges here competing with the lodges established at Doban (2606m).

Overnight Bamboo or Doban

Tuesday, October 26: Bamboo or Doban

Rest Day. Day hikes (optional)

Overnight Bamboo or Doban

Wednesday, October 27: Doban to Deorali

Trek time 4-6 hours

Breakfast at camp

Soon after Doban you will enter the sacred forest of Jode Yehm, where near the waterfall on the east bank of Modi Khola, you will see an altar surrounded by thousands of white banners suspended from the trees. A sign indicates the name of the place and reminds the travelers not to lean over. One assumes it is better not to disturb the Gods. From Doban, it will take an hour to reach Himalayan Hotel (2873m).

The track continues through the middle of the forest, going up and down following the flow of the rivers, until the last stretch where a steep path leads to Hinku Cave (3139m). It will take another three hour to reach the actual site of the Hinku Cave, noticeable by a huge rock half sheltering a bhatti. From here it will take about three hours to reach Deorali (three lodges, 3230m). On the way you probably would have to cross two naves or slabs of old frozen ice, commonly found in glacial area.

Overnight Deorali.

Thursday, October 28: Deorali to Machhapucchhare Base Camp (3700 m)

Breakfast at camp

Walking from Deorali to Bagar (3300m) takes about fifty minutes. Instead of lush vegetation, only bushes and high grasses survive. The path crosses the lodges twice on rather shaky bridges so as to avoid avalanches and landslide prone area. It is a good place to make a lunch break.

The next stop, the base camp of Machhapucchhare, is about two hours walk away. Machhapucchhare or “fishtail”, has been thus named because its twin summits resembles a twitched fishtail. After having walked along the river for thirty minutes, the path rises up and goes through several naves. If it has snowed recently, this part of the route will be quite difficult, though the use of crampons is not necessary, a stick should suffice.

Overnight at MBC.

Friday, October 29: MBC to Annapurna Base Camp (4200 m) to MBC to Deorali

Trek time 4 hrs

Breakfast at camp

Early morning trek to ABC to enjoy the magnificent sunrise over the Sanctuary, which is only two hours away. Except for a few hills, the route is flat and therefore quite easy. Also, the spectacular views of Annapurna south in the forefront are so satisfying that one easily forgets the exhaustion. At the end of the route (4130 m), there are about five or six lodges. A little further, the path leads to a small hill, which is the best point to admire the entire panorama of the Sanctuary. Trek back to MBC.

Lunch at MBC

After lunch walk back to Deorali.

Overnight at Deorali

Saturday, October 30: Backtrack - Chhomrong (2170m) - 5 hours

Breakfast at camp

Lunch Enroute
Overnight at Chhomrong.

Sunday, October 31: Chhomrong - Ghandrung (1920m)

Trek time: 5 hrs
Breakfast at camp.

After breakfast trek towards Kyumrong Khola for lunch. After lunch trek to Ghandrung Village via Kyumrong Danda. This area offers some of the finest trekking in Nepal. The Annapurna range and Machhapucchhare dominate the mountain views through glimpses further East to Lamjung Himal and Manaslu Range are also possible. Ghandrung village is rich through its excellent farming land and the generations of its sons who have sent and received pay and pensions from the British and Indian Gorkha armies.

Overnight at Ghandrung.

Monday, November 1: Ghandrung - Naya Pul & drive back to Pokhara.

Trek Time – 4 hours

Breakfast at camp.

After breakfast, trek through a pleasant down hill trail and then the trail levels out and follows the banks of the river. After having spent a long time at higher altitudes, the heat sometimes makes traveling on the open riverbed an uncomfortable one. After about 3 hours arrive at the riverside settlement of Birethathi for lunch. This is also the main entry point to the Annapurna Conservation Area and after lunch, walk along the high banks of the Modi Khola for about 30 minutes and end trek at Naya Pul to meet waiting vehicles for the one hour drive back to Pokhara.

Overnight Hotel Barahi (B)

Tuesday, November 2: Pokhara – Machan Paradise

Early breakfast at hotel.

After breakfast drive to Machan Paradise which borders Chitwan National Park. Chitwan National Park is a 932 square kilometre area of tall grassland and magnificent sal forest. It is one of Asia's richest and most spectacular wildlife sanctuaries. Activities available include wildlife viewing from elephant back, nature walks, jungle treks, bird watching, land rover drives and photography from Machans.

Upon arrival at Machan you will be briefed about your program and jungle activities.

Afternoon: Jungle activities (Elephant Riding etc.)
Overnight Machan Wild Life Resort (B, L, D)

Wednesday, November 3: Machan Paradise

Full day jungle activities.

Overnight Machan Wild Life Resort (B, L, D)

Thursday, November 4: Machan Paradise

Full Day jungle activities.

Overnight Machan Wild Life Resort (B, L, D)

Friday, November 5: Machan Paradise – Bharatpur – Kathmandu

Breakfast at Resort.

Drive to Bharatpur Airport for flight to Kathmandu.
Upon arrival at Kathmandu airport transfer to hotel.

Overnight Nirvana Garden Hotel (B)

Saturday, November 6: Kathmandu (Full Day sightseeing)

Breakfast at the hotel

Sightseeing of Bodhinath Stupa

Bodhinath, lies about 6 km to the east of down town Kathmandu and is possibly the world's largest Buddhist Stupa and a site of great veneration for Buddhists. Around the Stupa have sprung up number of monasteries of the different sects of Tibetan Buddhism including one (on the West Side of the Stupa) that houses, an enormous seated statue of Maitreya Buddha splendidly adorned.

Continue to Bhaktapur City. (40 minutes drive)

Bhaktapur, home of medieval art and architecture is also known as "City of the Devotees." Traffic free, we will tread along the 17th century cobbled pavements, marvelling at the ancient architecture. Not only are there many beautiful gates, temples, shrines and monasteries but the town has a vibrant cultural life. Communities of potters, weavers, woodcarvers are just some of the few artisans working and living here, collecting water, laying grain out to dry, dying wool, blending the modern world with the medieval. Return to Kathmandu.

Overnight Hotel Nirvana Garden. (B)

Sunday, November 7: Kathmandu

Breakfast at the hotel.

Free day for personal activities.

Overnight Nirvana Garden Hotel

Monday, November 8: Kathmandu (Departure)

Following breakfast, transfer to the airport for your international flight.

COST (Approximate – All costs are subject to changes made by airlines, government fees and permits)

Twin sharing 10+ clients:

Single Supplement:

COST INCLUDES

- All airport transfers
- Domestic flights Kathmandu - Pokhara and Bharatpur - Kathmandu;
- 5 Nights at Nirvana Garden Hotel, Kathmandu with breakfast
- All sightseeing as mentioned in the itinerary with an English speaking guide
- 10 day camping trek with all meals included
- Sirdar, Sherpa team, cook, porters etc.
- toilet, dinning and kitchen tents
- 2 man mountain tents with mattresses and inner liner
- Sleeping bags
- Trekking permit and fees
- Porterages, local taxes, tolls, entrance fees and service charges where applicable
- All tips including hotel porters and full trek team
- Insurance and medical facilities for trek team
- Annapurna Conservation Fees
- Trek Permit
- 2 Nights at Hotel Barahi, Pokhara with breakfast
- Transfer from Pokhara to Machan Paradise
- 3 Nights at Machan Paradise inclusive of all meals, elephant back safari, nature walk, bird watching, river trip and the services of trained naturalist
- Porterages, local tax, tolls entrance fees and services charges

NOT INCLUDED IN COST

- Any meals not specified in itinerary
- Expenses of a personal nature such as room service, laundry, and telephone calls
- Personal insurance and medical and emergency evacuation insurance
- Visa and departure tax
- International flights

DEPOSIT

US\$500

FINAL PAYMENT

Final payment is due July 15, 2010

CANCELLATION

There will be a cancellation fee of US\$100 if you cancel before the final payment is due. Any cancellations after July 15 will result in payment of any charges the travel agent imposes. Also cancellations after that date could result in higher costs for all group members. You will not pay any cancellation fee if we have to cancel.

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