

# Nepal

*WEDGED BETWEEN the arid plateau of Tibet and the hot fertile plains and jungles of India, Nepal offers a plethora of opportunities to travellers despite its small size. The Himalaya Range forms the backbone of Nepal and provides arguably the best mountain scenery in the world. However, there's far more to Nepal than mountains and the country's national parks and unique architecture provide a wonderful contrast to the wild landscapes.*



Village life, Kathmandu Valley

## Trekking

The spectacular mountains of Nepal have long attracted trekkers from all over the world and the country is justly famous for its routes to Everest Base Camp or around the Annapurnas. We specialise in shorter and less challenging treks however and our guides follow centuries-old trade and supply routes used by local nomads, farmers and traders. These treks can be anything from one to ten days and take in some of the most scenic parts of Nepal's Himalaya often without having to tackle the difficulties associated with high altitude trekking.



Trekking in the Annapurnas

Our specialists will be able to advise you on choosing a suitable route taking into consideration the possible effects of altitude, your fitness level, the steepness of the trails, the amount of walking you wish to do each day and the standard of accommodation you require.

## Wildlife

Nepal is a wildlife enthusiast's haven and in the national parks you can search for elusive tigers and rare one-horned rhinos on an elephant-back safari or take a boat trip to see the endangered gharial crocodile or some of Nepal's 450 bird species.

Situated in the southern Terai region, Chitwan is the oldest of the country's national parks and is easily reached from Kathmandu or Pokhara. Harder to reach but with an enviable lack of visitors is Bardia National Park far to the west of Chitwan. Both parks offer steaming jungle and lush river plains with Bengal tigers, one-horned rhinoceros, wild elephants, leopard, crocodiles and prolific bird life.



Bengal tiger, Chitwan National Park



Tengboche, in the Khumbu valley

## Culture

For those in search of culture, the eaves of the pagodas, the smells from the street stalls and the people in their colourful dress all combine to make Kathmandu a truly intoxicating city. Today, the city's centre is Durbar Square where temples, palaces and golden gates merge to form a magical outdoor theatre. Away from the city centre the simplicity of the towering white Buddhist stupas at Bodnath and Swayambhunath is striking.

Another fascinating place to visit is Pashupatinath, near Bodnath. Located on the banks of the Bagmati River, it is considered the most sacred Hindu site outside India. Many cremations take place in Pashupatinath, on the ghats (steps that lead to the river).

Nepal's rich culture extends beyond Kathmandu with several interesting places to visit quite close to the city. Just across the Bagmati river is the ancient city of Patan with its vibrant square packed with pagoda-style temples and statues, while further out into the valley is the city of Bhaktapur, which lies only a short distance from the capital but has a vastly different history and atmosphere.

If you have the time and an interest in



## Last visit

by **Carol Coates**

Nepal specialist

Nepal is one of the places in the world where I feel most at home. I love how welcoming the people are; they make you feel like part of the family and are always smiling. On my last trip I travelled through the country meeting the locals and learning about the history and religions of Nepal. I was lucky enough to see wild elephants in the Chitwan National Park whilst drinking Masala tea in my lodge. I saw monkeys in the jungle and enjoyed many helpings of dhal baht (national dish of rice, curry and lentil soup). My most poignant memory however has to be of the early morning view of Mount Everest at Namche Bazaar whilst on a trek to Everest Base Camp. It was a breathtaking sight and came when I needed it most after a difficult trek uphill, and is an image forever emblazoned on my mind.

Nepalese history, it is well worth going a little further afield to the town of Bandipur. It is a place seemingly untouched by modern life and the majority of the buildings are traditional Newari houses, with carved wooden windows and overhanging slate roofs. A fantastic example of traditional Newari culture, it is a great place to see how the Nepalese really live and is home to some wonderful 18th-century architecture, numerous temples and breathtaking views of the Himalaya.



*Sadhus, Pashupatinath, Kathmandu*



*Durbar Square, Kathmandu*



## FACT file

A 13 day trip uncovering the main highlights of Nepal including Kathmandu, a three day trek in the Annapurna region and safaris at Chitwan National Park, including international flights starts from £1,975 per person. For more information please contact Carol on 01993 838 314.

[www.audley.co.uk/nepal](http://www.audley.co.uk/nepal)