



16-DAY ADVENTURE

## THE MANASLU CIRCUIT

Nepal

Manaslu, the Mountain of the Spirit, is the eighth-highest mountain on Earth (8,156m). Manaslu sits immediately next to the Annapurna range within a closely managed conservation area. The Manaslu Circuit shares many of the great views and panoramas that you see trekking around Annapurna, taking in nine other peaks of more than 6,500m. The big difference is that while the Annapurna Circuit is in nearly every collection of great treks, Manaslu is relatively unknown so it is a lot quieter than its famous next door neighbour. And now that the latter part of the Annapurna trek has been spoiled by roads, this is a great alternative.

As well as the change in scenery as you rise higher, there is also a distinct change in culture. In the lower farming areas the people are Nepali of Indian origin but as the trek progresses you move into the Nupri Region, where villagers are descendants of Tibetan immigrants.

The high point of this trek is the crossing of the Larkya La, a high remote and challenging pass. From here there are fantastic views of Himlung Himal, Cheo Himal, Kang Guru and Annapurna II. From just after the pass you take a side trip to visit Manaslu Base Camp before following the trail round to meet with the outbound leg of the Annapurna Circuit, ending your trek at Besi Sahar.

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Quieter than its famous neighbour, Annapurna
- Cross the challenging Larkya La Pass
- Lodge-based accommodation





# ITINERARY

## DAY 1

### ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU

All trekkers need to organise their own flights to Kathmandu International Airport (KTM). From Kathmandu Airport we will arrange a private transfer to your hotel. That night you will meet your local Kandoo representative and have a full pre-trek briefing.

Accommodation: **Hotel**

## DAY 2

### DRIVE TO ARUGHAT BAZAAR

The journey to Arughat Bazaar starts down the main Pokhara Highway before taking a turn down a rough road. It takes approximately 6 hours to drive to Arughat, which is a large prosperous trading town.

Accommodation: **Hotel**

Meals included: **Breakfast**

## DAY 3

### TREK TO SOTI KHOLA

On our first day on the trail we head north, following the Budhi Gandaki. In this low country we are trekking through rice paddies and rural villages. After climbing briefly to Kyoropani, we descend once again to the river, where it meets the Sundi Khola, and our village for the night.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**

Ascent: **120 m**

Max. altitude: **720 m**

Accommodation: **Teahouse**

Meals included: **Breakfast**

## DAY 4

### TREK TO MACHHA KHOLA

We cross a bridge and climb up onto a ridge above the rapids of the Budhi Gandaki. The trail continues, climbing over a big rock and crossing a log bridge, before it eventually descends back down to the banks of the Budhi Gandaki. We trek up again on a steep rocky trail clinging to the side of a cliff, then up and around to the Gurung village of Labishe (880m) and beyond to Machha Khola.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**

Ascent: **210 m**

Max. altitude: **930 m**

Accommodation: **Teahouse**

## DAY 5

### TREK TO JAGAT

We cross the Machha Khola river and head upstream to the tiny village of Khola Bensi and the hot springs at Tatopani. The valley becomes steeper and the route then switches to the left bank by way of a suspension bridge. The trail is quite exposed and challenging in places. After a short section of forest path we reach the single teahouse at Doan. Beyond this steep section, the route is much flatter and we will finally cross the river on a suspension bridge, and then climb on a high path to the fields of Jagat.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**

Ascent: **390 m**

Max. altitude: **1340 m**

Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 6

### TREK TO DENG

After descending a long series of stone steps to the river, we climb a terraced hill to Saguleri, from where we can see Singri Himal, 7187m. Our route continues upstream, through a gorge section with towering walls. We cross the river three more times in the next two hours to avoid difficult valley sides and then climb up over a further steep spur to reach the village of Deng.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**  
Ascent: **520 m**  
Max. altitude: **1860 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 7

### TREK TO NAMRUNG

As we leave Deng the valley is still steep-sided. We pass the village of Lama, and start to see Mani stones (prayers etched onto wayside rocks), a sign that we are entering a Buddhist region. After about four hours we reach the village of Ghap in the Tibetan area. As we gain altitude we move into alpine territory with great mountain views. There are more Mani stone walls and three more crossings of the Buri Gandaki on our route to Namrung.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**  
Ascent: **770 m**  
Max. altitude: **2630 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 8

### TREK TO SHYALA

Above Namrung the valley opens out and there are extensive pastures. Climbing gently now, and crossing a large stream flowing down from the Lidanda Glaciers, we reach the Tibetan village of Sho, and get our first views of Manaslu North and then of Manaslu Main. As we continue we come to Lho, a large village at 3150 metres where there is a lovely little monastery and numerous chortens and Manis, before arriving at Shyala.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**  
Ascent: **870 m**  
Max. altitude: **3500 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 9

### TREK TO SAMAGAON

Leaving Shyala we follow the right bank of the river, with views of Peak 29 ahead. As we continue on the main trail, we reach the fields of Samagaon.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**  
Ascent: **20 m**  
Descent: **3520 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 10

### TREK TO SAMDO VIA MANASLU BASE CAMP

We continue to follow the Budhi Gandaki surrounded by spectacular mountains on all sides. Manaslu is particularly impressive and we take a detour off the main path to visit Manaslu Base Camp. From here we drop back down to re-join the main route and descend to Samdo for the night.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**  
Ascent: **880 m**  
Descent: **525 m**  
Max. altitude: **4400 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 11

### TREK TO LARKYA PHEDI

Today we hike along the ever shrinking Budhi Gandaki river with towering mountains around us. We will find a stream that runs through Gya La, the gateway to Tibet and the remains of what used to be a trading hub. Finally we reach Larky Phedi and one of the best lodges we will have stayed in for many days!

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**  
Ascent: **585 m**  
Max. altitude: **4460 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 12

### CROSS LARKYA LA PASS – TREK TO BIM THANG

Not long after leaving Larkya Phedi we reach the northern face of the Larkya Glacier and climb steadily to the Larkya La pass, from where there are stunning views of Cho Danda, Annapurna II and Larkya Peak. We will then walk down to Tanbuche and from there down to Bim Thang.

Hiking time: **8 - 9 hours**  
Ascent: **700 m**  
Descent: **1570 m**  
Max. altitude: **5160 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 13

### TREK TO TILJE

The trail descends into pine and rhododendron forest before following the Dudh Khola river. After we reach Karche, we make a steep climb onto a ridge, before descending again to the river bank at Goa. We continue through fields to Tilje, a large Gurung village.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**  
Descent: **1290 m**  
Max. altitude: **3590 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 14

### TREK TO JAGAT

Another day spent trekking the lowlands through mixed forest and paddy fields. After Dharapani, we join the Annapurna Circuit and follow this classic trek in reverse through the Marshyangdi valley to Jagat.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**  
Descent: **1000 m**  
Max. altitude: **2300 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 15

### TREK TO BESISAHAR – DRIVE TO KATHMANDU

An easy morning's walk brings us to Besisahar before our final drive to Kathmandu which takes about 7 hours. You stay overnight in a hotel in Kathmandu.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**  
Ascent: **460 m**  
Descent: **460 m**  
Max. altitude: **1300 m**  
Accommodation: **Hotel**

#### DAY 16

### DEPARTURE FROM KATHMANDU

We will collect you from your hotel and transfer you to Kathmandu Airport for your departing flight.

Meals included: **Breakfast**

# TRIP INFORMATION

## DIFFICULTY

The trek is considered **moderately difficult**. There is nothing extreme about this trek and the trails are getting better every year. However, you will need a good level of fitness as you will be trekking a fair distance each day and climbing over several high passes, including Larkya La Pass at 5,150 meters.

## FOOD & DRINK

In Kathmandu, if you choose to eat outside your hotel, use your common sense when selecting where and what to eat, drink bottled water and avoid ice in drinks.

You are booked into the teahouses on a room only basis. Over the past few years, the teahouses have really developed their menus, and you can now get a choice of maybe 40 or 50 meals ranging from the basic dahl baht right up to yak steak with blue cheese sauce. You choose exactly what you want to eat at the lodges and settle your bill each morning. We recommend you budget between \$30-35 per person per day for all your meals. The menus in the teahouses are quite extensive and you pay more for western dishes. Soft drinks, crisps and chocolate bars are available, but will cost considerably more the further up the trail you go and can cost as much as a main meal! The room prices at the teahouses are based on you taking your meals within the teahouse - they offer discounted room pricing on the expectation that they will receive income from food. This is standard policy at all teahouses. You therefore cannot eat outside the teahouse, and you definitely cannot bring your own food into the teahouse.

## ACCOMMODATION

Your full day by day itinerary shows what is included in terms of hotel accommodation and meal basis. All of our pre- and post-trek accommodation is based in Kathmandu. Where your hotel basis is B&B, you can usually purchase snacks or meals at the hotel, which can be paid in Nepali Rupees or US Dollars. Check in time will be between 12:00 and 2:00 pm, depending on the hotel. If you arrive on an early flight into Kathmandu, you may have to wait until this time for your room to be available. Similarly, if you return at the end of your trek on an early flight from Pokhara, you will not be able to check into your room straight away.

On the trek you will be staying at teahouses in villages along the trail. These are fairly basic and generally consist of two wooden bench beds per room with mattresses, and shared toilet facilities. Whenever possible we will try to book en-suite rooms, but availability is very limited and rooms cannot be pre-booked. Showers are not always available and it tends to be just the communal areas that are heated. The budget cost in 'Meals/Food' allows for some sundry items such as internet access, use of chargers (yes, teahouses will charge you to plug your phone or camera in for an hour) and hot showers (afraid you will also have to pay for hot water in some locations.) If you intend to use the internet and showers at every teahouse, then expect to add an additional \$10 per day to your food budget. We do probably over-estimate the food cost, but there is no ATM until you reach Jomsom, so you have no access to money until this point. We would rather you have too much money with you than not enough.

## TRANSPORT

The general standard of driving throughout Nepal is poor and badly regulated. Roads in Kathmandu are very congested, many drivers are not properly licensed and vehicles are poorly maintained. During the monsoon season (June to September) many roads outside the Kathmandu valley are prone to landslides and may become impassable.

We insist on using a high standard of vehicle and driver for all of our transfers. In Nepal it is not a legal requirement to have seatbelts fitted in the back of vehicles, and while we try to use vehicles that do have rear seatbelts fitted, this cannot always be guaranteed. If you are unhappy about any aspect of the vehicle or the standard of driving, please speak to the driver or our local office immediately.

## LUGGAGE

### Duffel bags

You will be provided with a large duffel bag at the pre-trek briefing that will be yours to use for the duration of your trek. Your equipment will then need to be transferred into this bag. If you are travelling with a duffel bag then it is up to you which bag you choose to use for the trek, if you are travelling with a suitcase then this will need to be left at the pre-trek hotel and collected upon your return as our porters need the bags they carry to be flexible.

The internal flights from Jomsom to Pokhara and Pokhara to Kathmandu operate an absolutely strict maximum **limit of 10kg** for your main equipment bag and a maximum of **5kg for your day sack**. Your baggage will be weighed by the airport staff so it is important that you do not exceed these limits.

The porters can carry up to 15kg in the main equipment bag, so there is scope for your bag to be slightly heavier while you are on the trek. However, you may need to move items into your daysack for the flight out of Jomsom.

All items must be packed in your main equipment bag. They should not be attached to the outside, as we are not responsible if items fall off when the bags are being carried on the trek.

## HOW DO I GET THERE?

There are several ways to get to Nepal from Europe and the USA all of which involve an international flight to Tribhuvan International Airport which is the main airport in Kathmandu. There are a lot of flights that fly to Kathmandu through the Middle East. Qatar, Gulf and Air Emirates offer daily flights from Europe and the US to Kathmandu, with a stopover at their central hubs. You must be careful though, as some of these layovers are very long indeed. Check the schedules carefully, and consider using Qatar. They seem to have the shortest layovers (at Doha) by a substantial margin. The other alternative is to fly via Delhi, with BA, Air India or Jet and then catch a shorter flight up to Kathmandu. Again be careful of long layovers and be warned - some of the reviews for Air India are less than glowing!

## BUDGET & CHANGE

The **Nepali Rupee** is a closed currency so you will not be able to buy this before you arrive. It is advisable to travel with US Dollars, as these are widely accepted. It is very important that US bills be new (less than 10 years old), crisp and untrampled. If you want some **local currency** then we can take you to an ATM or bank. Alternatively all the hotels in Kathmandu will change money for you. We recommend that you take local currency on the actual trek with you, as the teahouses prefer local currency to dollars. You will also get a more favourable exchange rate in Kathmandu.

If you are relying on a credit or debit card for emergency funds, make sure you tell your card issuer that you will be using it abroad, or you may find that it won't work when you really need it.

In Kathmandu a meal for two at a mid range restaurant will cost ~\$20. A taxi will generally start on a base rate of \$0.45 and then charge \$0.4 for every km. Or you can ride the bus which will be around \$0.15 for a 5km journey. Souvenirs in Kathmandu are generally on the cheaper side too.

Whilst on the trek, we recommend that you budget \$30 to \$35 per day for meals and drinks.

Our recommended guidance for spending budget in Nepal would be between \$500-800 (depending on the length of the trip and your meal preferences) on top of your tips, to give you ample money for souvenirs and treats.

## **TIPS**

We realise that tipping may not be a common practice in all countries but for Nepal it is a standard practice that all operators support. The decision on how much to tip should be determined by how well the team served you while you were on the trek. Tips are always discretionary and if you are not happy with the service you have received you do not have to pay tips. Tips can be made in US dollars or Nepali Rupees. It is very important that US bills be new (less than 10 years old), crisp and unturned.

We are members of the Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal and the Nepal Mountaineering Association, and follow their guidelines when recommending tip levels for guides and porters. We would suggest you budget \$125-\$175 per trekker for your tip contribution.

We say goodbye to our porters in Jomsom before we return to Kathmandu. Any tips that you wish to give to the porters will need to be carried on the trek with you.



# FORMALITIES & HEALTH

## PASSPORT

Please double check that your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the date of arrival in Nepal. We recommend that you take a photocopy of your passport and keep it separate from the original, and this will be useful if the original is lost while you are travelling. You must carry your passport on the trek with you, as it is required for internal flights.

## VISA

Most visitors to Nepal (including nationals from the UK, Europe, USA and Australia) require a tourist visa to enter Nepal. To secure a visa you will need to present proof that you have a return ticket, and proof that you have sufficient money to support yourself during your stay in Nepal. Visa can be obtained online at: <https://uk.nepalembassy.gov.np/visa/>. Visas are valid for 6 months from the date of issue, so do not send off your application too early.

The other option is to queue and pay for a visa on arrival at Kathmandu Tribhubhan International Airport. This will need to be paid for in cash. We highly recommend securing a visa before departure as this will ensure you have no problems passing immigration, as well as speed up the process of clearing immigration. You will need at least one blank visa page in your passport. Certain nationalities not mentioned above must apply for a visa in advance, so check with your local Nepalese Embassy or online at: <https://www.immigration.gov.np/page/visa-on-arrival>.

For most of our trips, you may be ok with a 15 day tourist visa which costs USD30 (around GBP25). However, if you are adding any extra days in Kathmandu you would then require a 30 day tourist visa which USD50 (around GBP40). Visas can be extended once you are in Nepal, but overstaying your visa is taken very seriously, and can result in your being detained or not allowed to leave without paying a fine. In Kathmandu airport they will assume you are paying in your home country currency so make sure you have the amount you need for your visa, or to extend your visa, in cash in your home currency. For smaller currencies, USD will be the best replacement.

## VACCINATIONS

The standard vaccinations required are diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid and hepatitis A, but you should always consult your doctor or travel clinic for the most up to date advice.

## INSURANCE

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully and adequately insured for the duration of your trip. Please ensure that all activities, excursions and destinations in your itinerary are included in your travel insurance policy, in addition to your regular cover for cancellation and medical expenses. For the Annapurna and Everest Regions, we recommend cover up to 6000m of altitude. If you are climbing Mera Peak or Island Peak you will need cover for trekking up to 7000m of altitude.

Please take a copy of your insurance policy to the pre-trek briefing, as the guide will need to collect your insurance details. We also ask that you keep a copy of your policy summary (containing policy number and the emergency contact number for your insurer) in your day sack at all times, so that we can access this information should we need to contact the insurer on your behalf.

# HEALTH

## Malaria

There is no risk of malaria in Kathmandu and on the majority of Himalayan treks that we operate, due to the altitude. However, there is a risk of malaria in areas of Nepal below 1,500m, particularly in the Terai district, the lowland region of Nepal adjacent to the Indian border. This region includes Chitwan National Park, so if you are planning a safari extension to your trek, you need to plan anti-malarial medication for this part of your trip. In addition to taking medication, we would recommend you take every precaution to prevent mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved trousers and shirts at dusk and dawn when the mosquitos are active, and by using a DEET based mosquito repellent.

## Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness, also called Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), hypobaropathy and soroche, is an illness caused by exposure to low air pressure, especially low partial pressure of oxygen, which many trekkers experience at high altitudes. AMS is caused by exerting yourself at high altitudes, especially if you have not been properly acclimatised. It is most common at altitudes above 2400 metres. Your route into the Annapurna Sanctuary has been designed to aid your acclimatisation wherever possible, but the following will also help your body adjust:

Slow and steady. You need to keep your respiration rate low enough to maintain a normal conversation. If you are panting or breathing hard, you must slow down. There is no pressure on you to keep up with other members of your group.

Drink much more water than you think you need. Proper hydration helps acclimatisation dramatically. You need to drink at least three litres each day.

## Diamox

There has been a lot of research on Diamox that shows it has been reasonably well proven to be helpful in avoiding AMS by speeding up the acclimatisation process. In the UK it is a prescription drug which must be prescribed by a doctor, but some doctors are reluctant to prescribe it. The concern is that by taking Diamox, people believe that they are immune from AMS and can ignore the symptoms. In reality, although Diamox can help prevent the symptoms, should symptoms still develop it means that you are not acclimatising and you have to take notice. Diamox is taken before you start trekking to prevent altitude sickness, not once you are on the trek and symptoms have developed.

## Dehydration

You can easily become dehydrated at high altitudes. The lower air pressure forces you to breathe more quickly and deeply, and you lose a lot of water through your lungs. You will also be exerting yourself, and sweating, and may even suffer from diarrhoea. As a result, you will have to drink much more water than you normally would so you should drink at least 3 litres of fluids every day while trekking. Even when you do not feel thirsty you have to drink this amount as a minimum, preferably more. Stay on the look-out for signs of dehydration in yourself and your fellow trekkers. The most common symptoms include thirst, dry lips, nose or mouth, headache and feeling fatigued or lethargic.

# EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

## EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY KANDOO ADVENTURES

We recommend that wherever possible you use your own gear for your trek as this is the best way to ensure your comfort and enjoyment. We recognise though that the cost of some items is very high and this may not be possible.

### Duffel bags

You will be provided with a large duffel bag at the pre-trek briefing that will be yours to use for the duration of your trek. Your equipment will then need to be transferred into this bag. If you are travelling with a duffel bag then it is up to you which bag you choose to use for the trek, if you are travelling with a suitcase then this will need to be left at the pre-trek hotel and collected upon your return as our porters need the bags they carry to be flexible.

We do not have other gear available for rental but there are many places offering gear for rental in Kathmandu and we can recommend a number of places for you. The quality of rental gear is very variable and it is your responsibility to check carefully the condition of any item you rent. We accept no responsibility for the quality of equipment hired. An indication of the likely rental costs is below.

- Four Season Sleeping Bag -\$2 per day
- Down Jacket - \$2 per day
- Trekking Poles - \$1 per day

Most of the rental shops close around 8pm, so if you are arriving on a late flight the day before the trek starts there will not be an opportunity for you to visit a rental store. If you are planning on renting equipment, you need to make sure you have allowed sufficient time at the beginning of your trip.

All rental equipment is included in your overall trekking bag weight, so make sure you have allowed for this when packing your bag at home. A sleeping bag will weigh around 2kg.

# **CLOTHING TO BRING**

## **HEADGEAR**

- Warm beanie style hat – knitted or fleece
- Neck gaiter or scarf. It can get dusty in Nepal and the air very cold. A scarf or balaclava comes in useful for keeping dust out and can double as a warm layer for your neck / face!
- Sun hat – preferably wide-brimmed for protection
- Sunglasses – high UV protection
- Headlamp (plus extra batteries)

## **UPPER BODY**

- Thermal or fleece base layer (x2)
- Long sleeve shirt/tshirt – light or medium weight, moisture wicking (x3)
- Short sleeved shirt/tshirt – lightweight, moisture wicking (x2)
- Fleece or soft shell jacket (x2)
- Insulated jacket – down or primaloft
- Lightweight water/windproof hard shell outer jacket
- Gloves – lightweight, fleece or quick drying fabric
- Gloves or mittens – heavyweight, insulated, preferably water resistant

## **LEGS**

- Leggings – thermal or fleece base layer (x1)
- Trekking trousers – light or medium weight (x2) – convertible trousers work well
- Waterproof hard shell trousers – ski pants work fine (x1)
- Gaiters

## **FEET**

- Trekking boots – mid weight with good ankle support
- Training shoe or similar – to wear around the teahouses
- Micro-spikes – required for snowy conditions on the Thorung La pass
- Mid-weight trekking socks (x5 pairs)
- Breathable, high-wicking liner socks (x3 pairs)
- Thermal trekking socks for upper reaches of your trek (x1 pair)



## **EQUIPMENT TO BRING**

### **GEAR**

- Small Rucksack or Daypack (30-40 litres) to carry water and personal items
- Sleeping bag (4 season or -10 Deg C) and compression sack
- Trekking poles
- Water bottle or hydration bag – must be able to carry 1.5-2L of water

### **OTHER ACCESSORIES**

- Sunscreen and lip balm - high SPF
- Toiletries, including toilet paper, wet wipes and hand sanitiser – please carry all rubbish back off the trail
- Camera and spare batteries
- Plug adapter, for charging devices in teahouses and hotels
- Personal medication and first aid kit
- Personal snacks and energy bars – dried fruit and nuts are also a good source of energy
- Isotonic drink powder / energy drink powder to mix in with your water. This improves flavour and helps replace electrolytes
- Microfibre towel for wiping hands and face each day
- Ear plugs, if you are a light sleeper
- Pee bottle, useful for late night toilet needs
- Dry bag (only required if your main duffle bag is not waterproof)

# HOW TO BOOK THIS TRIP

## **1 CHOOSE YOUR DATE AND CHECK AVAILABILITY**

A full list of available dates can be found on our website.

## **2 CONTACT US**

Contact us by phone, email or through our website. We will answer any questions you may have and send you a personalized itinerary and quote.

## **3 COMPLETE BOOKING AND PAYMENT**

When you are ready to book, we will send you a link to our online booking forms and participation agreements. We accept all major credit and debit cards and require a low 20% deposit to secure your place.

