



12-DAY ADVENTURE

## THE ANNAPURNA SANCTUARY

Nepal

One of the best shorter treks we operate, the Annapurna Sanctuary trek is a great option if you do not have sufficient time available for the acclimatisation required on one of our longer treks.

The trek begins with a 30 minute flight from Kathmandu to the lakeside city of Pokhara, followed by a one hour drive to the trailhead at Nayapul. A steep ascent takes you to the village of Ghorepani, ready to make your ascent of Poon Hill for amazing views of Dhaulagiri, Machhapuchhre, Nilgiri, and the Annapurna range. From here you trek for several days following the gorge carved by the river, crossing and re-crossing on suspension bridges before reaching Machhapuchhre Base Camp and Annapurna Base Camp. This section of the Annapurna range forms an amphitheatre containing Annapurna I, Fang, Gangapurna, Glacier Dome, Hiunchuli and Machhapuchhre. With so many surrounding mountains, sunlight is restricted to just 7 hours a day in summer. The only entrance to the Sanctuary is a narrow pass between Hiunchuli and Machhapuchhre. The peak of Machhapuchhre is thought to be the dwelling place of the Hindu god Shiva. The sanctuary was not entered by outsiders until 1956. After the trek, there is the opportunity to relax on the shores of Lake Pokhara before flying back to Kathmandu.

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Trek into the heart of the Annapurna Range
- Climb Poon Hill for stunning views
- Comfortable teahouse 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

### FLY TO POKHARA – DRIVE TO NAYAPUL – TREK TO TIKHEDHUNGA

We will take a morning flight to Pokhara, with magnificent views of Dhaulagiri, Manaslu, Machhapuchhre, the five peaks of Annapurna and many others. We will then drive for one hour to Nayapul where we start our trek. We follow the south bank of the river, passing through sub-tropical valley forests and crossing the Modi Khola on a high suspension bridge. We continue to ascend on this trail until we reach the village of Tikhedhunga where we will spend the night.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**

Ascent: **461 m**

Descent: **221 m**

Max. altitude: **1540 m**

Accommodation: **Teahouse**

Meals included: **Breakfast**

## DAY 3

### TREK TO GHOREPANI

We leave the small village of Tikhedhunga, crossing the small suspension bridge across the deep gorge to start your steep ascent up to Ulleri. Fortunately there are steps all the way which makes this tough climb slightly easier. After Ulleri, the trail continues winding its way through the rhododendron forests, passing beautiful waterfalls and we climb up, and down a little, enjoying the views of Machhapuchhre (Fish Tail) peeking out high above the lush green hillsides. Eventually we reach the village of Ghorepani and are rewarded with breath-taking views of Dhaulagiri and the Annapurna range.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**

Ascent: **1240 m**

Max. altitude: **2780 m**

Accommodation: **Teahouse**

## DAY 4

### ASCEND POON HILL – TREK TO TADAPANI

We will set off in the dark this morning to ascend Poon Hill, renowned as one of the best view points in Nepal. The trail climbing to Poon Hill's viewpoint is steep, but it is well rewarded with spectacular views of Machhapuchhre, Dhaulagiri, Nilgiri, and the Annapurnas as the sun rises. We then begin our descent down to Tadapani through rhododendron forests with beautiful views of the high mountains and lush green valleys.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**

Ascent: **420 m**

Descent: **570 m**

Max. altitude: **3200 m**

Accommodation: **Teahouse**

## DAY 5

### TREK TO CHOMRONG

We will trek down through the village of Chuile and then descend to Lower Chomrong, before climbing the thousand stony steps taking us to Upper Chomrong.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**

Descent: **460 m**

Max. altitude: **2630 m**

Accommodation: **Teahouse**



#### DAY 6

### TREK TO BAMBOO

The trail from Chomrong descends to cross the Chomrong Khola, before ascending out of the valley through rhododendron forests and bamboo thickets. In a clearing in the forest is the village of Bamboo.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**  
Ascent: **370 m**  
Max. altitude: **2540 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 7

### TREK TO MACCHAPUCHHRE BASE CAMP

Today we start our trek to Machhapuchhre Base Camp (MBC). This is quite a strenuous hike but well worth the effort as the spectacular view of Machhapuchhre unfolds before you. Passing between the heights of Hiunchuli and Machhapuchhre, we reach Machhapuchhre Base Camp, where we spend the night.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**  
Ascent: **1160 m**  
Max. altitude: **3700 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 8

### TREK TO ANNA PURNA BASE CAMP, DESCEND TO HIMALAYA

On the way to Annapurna Base Camp from Machhapuchhre Base Camp, the vegetation disappears and we will be trekking amongst glacial moraine. Our first view will be of Annapurna's near vertical south face towering above you. Annapurna Base Camp boasts one of the most awe inspiring 360° views in the Himalaya. We will literally be surrounded by the peaks such as Machhapuchhre, Annapurna South, Annapurna IV and Hiunchuli

Hiking time: **8 - 9 hours**  
Ascent: **430 m**  
Descent: **1210 m**  
Max. altitude: **4130 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

We then descend from Annapurna Base Camp to Himalaya retracing our steps through Machhapuchhre Base Camp. Heading back down to the valley is much easier than climbing up! We will see the waterfalls that drop down from a high point to the rocks below.

#### DAY 9

### TREK TO CHOMRONG

We will trek down through the villages of Bamboo and Sinuwa to Chomrong.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**  
Descent: **750 m**  
Max. altitude: **2920 m**  
Accommodation: **Teahouse**

#### DAY 10

### TREK TO NAYAPUL – DRIVE TO POKHARA

Today is our last day on the trail as we make our way down to Nayapul and say goodbye to the Annapurna Conservation Park. We will then transfer in a private vehicle (approx. 1½ hours) to your hotel by the lake in Pokhara.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**  
Descent: **1091 m**  
Max. altitude: **2170 m**  
Accommodation: **Hotel**

#### DAY 11

### FLY TO KATHMANDU

We take a morning flight from Pokhara to Kathmandu. You have the afternoon free to explore the capital city.

Accommodation: **Hotel**  
Meals included: **Breakfast**

**DAY 12**

**DEPARTURE**

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

Meals included: **Breakfast**

# TRIP INFORMATION

## DIFFICULTY

The Annapurna Sanctuary trek is considered **moderate**. It is one of the easier treks in the Annapurna region, but still requires a good level of fitness as you will be trekking roughly 5-6 hours a day with a maximum ascent of 1240m. Altitude is not a huge issue on this trek as the high point is just over 4100m and you will have made a very gradual ascent to this elevation. It is therefore ideal for people who want to trek the region without reaching any dizzying heights! In recent years, maintenance to the route means that the majority of this trek is now on stepped paths, so for those with dodgy knees and hips, you will definitely want to bring your walking poles. That said, anyone with a good level of fitness and some ascent training beforehand will easily manage this trek.

## FOOD & DRINK

You choose what you want to eat at the lodges, and settle your own bill in the morning. While you can eat heartily for very little money at any lodge, we do recommend that you budget £20 to £25 (\$30 to \$35) per day for meals and drinks. This will ensure that you not only have plenty of food, but that you enjoy it a lot more. Please note that we prefer some of the more expensive lodges, so the prices are higher than they might be at more spartan facilities. This is particularly true along the Mera Peak route, and you might expect to spend a bit more if you choose that trek. One word of advice, place your meal order as soon as you can upon arriving at the lodge as it is strictly 'first ordered, first served', and the best lodges are quite busy at meal times.

## ACCOMMODATION

Trekking in Nepal is more popular than ever. As a result, the standard of accommodation available on most of the trek routes has improved dramatically. Where there were once simple peasant huts, large hostels have been built featuring running water, indoor toilets (some en-suite) and electricity. However, while internet access, charging facilities and hot water are available, you will need to pay to use them - if you plan on using the internet and showering every day, then you should budget around \$10 per day.

However, in the Annapurna region, development is still ongoing, and as you get higher into the mountains the lodges become more basic. Furnishing is generally fairly spartan, and most rooms feature little more than a bench bed and a thin mattress, so your sleeping kit will probably see some early use. Showers are not always available and it tends to be just the communal areas that are heated.

Kandoo has a list of lodges that we prefer to work with, all of which are regularly inspected to ensure the best quality rooms available. Even at the worst, they are clean and well-kept. When the route is busy, we send a porter ahead to hire rooms for the night, as they cannot be reserved in advance. We will do all we can to ensure these rooms are on a twin share basis, however on occasion, when the route is busy, it may be the case that you will have to share with up to three others in a room. This is a rarity and you will always share with others of the same gender.

## 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

The internal flights operate a **strict maximum limit of 10kg** for your main equipment bag and 5kg for your day sack. Your bag will be weighed before you leave the hotel to start the trek and if it is overweight you will have to leave items behind. Your baggage will also be weighed by the airport staff so it is important that you do not exceed these limits. You will be given 2 litres of water on arrival in Pokhara to fill your bottles for your first day's trekking, so you do not need to carry water from Kathmandu.

### 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 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. You can move items from your daysack to your main bag when you reach Pokhara. All items must be packed in your main 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 unturned. 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.

You may also want to be prepared to pay for the cost of a helicopter which can fly in bad weather (around US\$300-500 per person), in the case of your flight to or from Pokhara being postponed due to bad weather conditions.

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 realize 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 \$100-\$150 per trekker for your tip contribution.

We say goodbye to our porters in Pokhara 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 – may be required in snowy conditions
- 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**

- Small Rucksack or Daypack (30-40 litres) to carry water and personal items
- Main equipment bag- max weight when full should be 15kg. This weight restriction includes your sleeping bag. Your duffle will be carried by a porter
- 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.

