

## Annapurna North Base Camp Trek, Nepal *New*

A sensational new short but remote trek into the majestic heart of the Annapurnas, following in the footsteps of Maurice Herzog's fabled 1950 expedition to Annapurna I



### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Camping
Grade	Moderate / Vigorous
Duration	14 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 6 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Trek Leader, Nepal
Land only	Joining in Kathmandu, Nepal
Max altitude	4,305m/14,124ft, Advance Base Camp, Day 8

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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# Departures

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## Group departures

### 2024 Dates:

Sun 24 Mar - Sat 06 Apr  
Sun 14 Apr - Sat 27 Apr  
Sun 13 Oct - Sat 26 Oct  
Tue 22 Oct - Mon 04 Nov      With Laxmi Pooja Festival

### 2025 Dates:

Sun 23 Mar - Sat 05 Apr  
Sun 13 Apr - Sat 26 Apr  
Sat 11 Oct - Fri 24 Oct      With Laxmi Pooja Festival  
Sun 21 Oct - Sat 03 Nov

### Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

### Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

### No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

### Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

### Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

### Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

## Your guide

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These treks are led by professionally trained English-speaking Sherpas. We have many very experienced Sherpas living and working in the Annapurna region, for example:

**Bhuvan K C** (pictured left) - affectionately called 'KC' and the first winner of the Wanderlust 'Paul Morrison' Guide of the Year award.

**Durga Kattel** - a very experienced guide who has knowledge of Nepali flora & fauna.

**Jangbo Sherpa** - another experienced and knowledgeable guide.

**Passang Tapling** - a very good leader and many people returning to us ask for him to be their leader again.

We cannot guarantee which Sirdar will be assigned to any particular departure, but the above information should give you a taste of our Annapurna leaders.

## Your trip highlights

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- A scenically spectacular little-known alternative to the Annapurna Sanctuary trek
- Wild terrain with towering cliffs, waterfalls, glaciers, a brilliant blue lake and a host of Himalayan giants
- Trek to the high point at French Advance Base Camp, 4,305m, with staggering 360-degree mountain views
- Four-star hotel in Kathmandu, exciting mountain road to the start of the trek, and a well-paced ascent
- Remote camping trek - the equal of anything in the Himalaya but in just two weeks London to London

## At a glance itinerary

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Days 1-2	Depart London, fly to Kathmandu.
Day 3	Internal flight to Pokhara. Sightseeing and exploring Pokhara.
Day 4	Drive to Beni and onward to Tatopani.
Day 5	Drive the mountain road to Hum Khola Dovan, begin the trek to Sadhi Kharka. Camp.
Days 6-7	Trek to the original Annapurna I base camp above Narchang Lake.
Day 8	Trek to the Advance Base Camp, and towards the base camp for the Nilgiri peaks.
Days 9-10	Return to roadhead and drive to Pokhara.
Day 11	At leisure in Pokhara.
Days 12-14	Fly to Kathmandu. Sightseeing. Fly to London.

## Trip summary

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The tea house trek to the foot of the beautiful Annapurna range, better known as the Annapurna Sanctuary Trek, is a well-established Himalayan classic, and deservedly so. However, for those prepared to camp there is now a superb alternative trail which approaches Annapurna I, the world's tenth highest mountain, from the west rather than the south.

This new trekking route, which has only recently been made accessible thanks to the combined efforts of a local politician and the exciting access road built for two new hydro projects at the foot of the valley, is truly stunning. It follows in the historic footsteps of a 1950 French expedition led by esteemed mountaineer Maurice Herzog, the first to successfully climb Annapurna I and the first ever ascent of an 8,000m peak. Panoramic views of the Annapurnas, Nilgiri, Hiunchuli, Machhapuchare and Dhaulagiri unfold as the hiking trail ascends through forest, passing beneath dramatic cliffs and hanging waterfalls. The final campsite above brilliant blue Narchang Lake at 4,050m is the equal of any in the Himalaya.

Although the route only takes six days, the terrain feels pristine and a million miles away from the relative civilisation of Annapurna's popular tea house trails. And, with the highest camp at an altitude of just over 4,000m, it ensures that acclimatisation isn't compromised.

This is the perfect Nepal adventure for anyone who has only a couple of weeks to spare but wants an unforgettable trek right up to the foot of some of the world's highest mountains. Go now before word gets out.

## Foreword by Steve Berry, M.D. of Mountain Kingdoms

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Every year of our 36 years running treks and tours around the world, Nepal has always been our biggest single destination. In that time we have gone exploring far and wide, from Everest eastward to Kangchenjunga on the border with the former kingdom of Sikkim, and westward to Mount Api sitting near the border of Nepal and India. We have taken our clients on all of the world famous Nepal treks, and also traversed remote routes way off-the-beaten-track. We have trekked to the base camps of all of the eight x 8,000 metre peaks in Nepal, and we have pored over maps searching out new routes in amongst the myriad peaks that make up just a fraction of the Himalaya chain. We have laboured our way over lofty snow covered passes to seek out strange, isolated Buddhist kingdoms such as Dolpo, Mustang, Limi, Rolwaling and many more. We have crossed glaciers, traversed sensationally deep gorges, penetrated hidden valleys, and made complete circuits of some of the tallest peaks in the world. But we are always on the lookout for new and exciting treks in Nepal.



Recently, some old expat friends of mine who have lived on and off in Nepal for donkey's years told me how they had recently been up to the original Base Camp for Annapurna to the northwest of Pokhara. They urged me to go, and so I did! It was such a fantastic experience.

Annapurna I was first climbed by the French in 1950. Those were the days before motorable roads, and prior to detailed maps. The large expedition consisted of some of the most famous names in French mountaineering history - Maurice Herzog (Leader), Louis Lachenal, Lionel Terray and Gaston Rébuffat and others. They spent many weeks just trying to find a route to the mountain, let alone climb it. The ascent is a fantastically gripping tale of success against all the odds, and the descent is a harrowing story of near death and terrible frostbite. Their route to the northwest base camp was complicated and remote. Little wonder that when Chris Bonington's expedition succeeded on the south face of Annapurna in 1970, his Base Camp became more famous because it had an easy approach through the fabled Annapurna Sanctuary. Over the years the French Base Camp was simply forgotten.

However, a strange and intriguing story has now made the French Base Camp perfectly possible. Some seven or eight years ago a prominent local politician, Mr Tej Gurung, realised that if a path could be made up the Miristi Khola Canyon it would lead straight to the old French Base Camp. He therefore set himself a mission to raise the funds to build such a path. He hopes that trekkers will come and that his local community will benefit. This activity coincided with the Nepalese government deciding to build two hydro projects in the Miristi Khola. The government then built a 20km road from near the small town of Tatopani to Hum Khola Dovan which is where the second hydro project is, and our trek starts. Incidentally, the road is a real feat of engineering skill. It is wide enough to take lorries single file, and caterpillar tracked JCB diggers, but is not tarmacked. In the last stages the road has been engineered into the sides of big cliffs. It is an exciting drive to say the least. If you do not relish drives in 4 x 4 jeeps with steep drops to one side then this trek is not for you!

When you do the trek to French BC you will be amazed at the standard of the path that has been created by Mr Tej Gurung and his team. The work this must have entailed is incredible. However, what will really stagger you is the incomparable scenery. There are beetling cliffs, eerie forests, and waterfall after waterfall after waterfall. There are a few good suspension bridges and a rushing river with boulders the size of houses. There is forest to begin with and climbing upwards you see strange rock formations, and from the start you can see the high snowy peaks above and framed at the end of the gorge. When finally you reach the high point of the old glacial moraine, just before the original base camp, the grandeur is incredible. You have essentially arrived at a high altitude valley in which sits Lake Narchang and surrounded on all sides by gigantic peaks. The various summits of Annapurna are to your right. Across the lake is a gigantic set of cliffs which look like a pedestal for Mount Tilicho (7,134m/23,405ft) to sit upon. To the left you can see the three peaks of Nilgiri, beyond which is the Buddhist kingdom of Mustang.

On a personal note, I must say I felt truly privileged to visit this incredible place. It is an exciting route just to get to the old Base Camp. The day spent exploring up to French Advance Base Camp I will never forget. As a wonderful coincidence Mr Tej Gurung just happened to be at the base camp at the same time as myself, and I was able to congratulate him on his achievement of a lifetime in the construction of the path. We're pictured here together.



# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Depart London.

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Depart London on your overnight flight to Kathmandu.

**Overnight: In flight**

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## Day 2: Arrive Kathmandu. Group transfer to hotel.

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The overnight flight from London, with a stop usually in the Middle East, typically arrives in Kathmandu in the afternoon. Your guide will meet you at the airport to welcome you to Nepal and then you transfer in a private vehicle to your hotel. Once you have settled in you can enjoy a short tour of the Museum of Nepalese Art (MONA) which is part of the hotel - free entrance is included for Mountain Kingdoms clients. In the evening you may like to wander the back streets of the old part of town, Thamel.

**Overnight: Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu**

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## Day 3: Fly to Pokhara - 25 minutes flight time. Sightseeing tour and local walks.

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After breakfast you will transfer to the airport for the short domestic flight to Pokhara, Nepal's second city. There are fantastic view of the Himalaya including of course, Annapurna. Pokhara has a wonderful location, being set on the banks of picturesque Phewa Tal (lake) and enjoying magnificent views of the Annapurna range of mountains.

On arrival in Pokhara you will be taken to your hotel before heading out to enjoy some sightseeing. First stop is the lakeside area where you will take a boat ride out across the lake. You can soak up the wonderful views of the not-so-distant mountains and the terraced hillsides around the lake and watch the daily life of local people along the shores of the lake; boats loaded with produce crossing from shore to shore, water buffalo wallowing up to their noses in the water and children splashing about in the shallows. You will also visit the two-storied pagoda style temple of Tal Barahi which is located on a small island in the lake. After this you head into the centre of town to visit the Mountaineering Museum which has interesting displays on expeditions in the Annapurna Range and on the mountain peoples living in the region. It is worth seeking out the artifacts and historical record of the 1950 French expedition which made the first ascent of Annapurna I in 1950.

You may then drive to Devis Falls Tibetan Centre to see some carpet weaving and to see the Devis Falls themselves.

**Overnight: Waterfront Lakeside Resort, Pokhara (Meals: B)**

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## Day 4: Drive to Tatopani, 1,216m/3,990ft, via Beni - 5 to 6 hours drive, approximately 70 to 80 kms.

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This morning you watch the Nepalese world go by as you head away from Pokhara toward the countryside and climb into the hills. For some unbeknown bizarre reason there is even a six lane carriageway for a short stretch, but then you are into the countryside and climbing into the hills. The views are always interesting and impressive as you traverse the Naudanda ridge (with good views of the Annapurna range) before you pass through the Modhi Khola Valley. The geology is fascinating and the gorges get grander and grander. You pass through hamlets, villages, and highly cultivated terraced farmland. The Modhi Khola joins the Kali Gandaki River Valley to arrive at the town of Beni. This is a District headquarters and pretty typical for Nepal - a busy, noisy, bazaar town of ramshackle shops and offices. It should take around four to five hours to Beni, and another hour or so to Tatopani. The road deteriorates somewhat beyond Beni, but the scenery does not. In fact there are beetling cliffs and the occasional girder bridge across the swift and powerful river. If you stayed on this road it would eventually reach up to the kingdom of Mustang, much further north. Instead, you branch to the right to head up to Tatopani.



Arriving at Tatopani on a clear day you will see the Nilgiri peaks framed at the end of the valley. A new hotel has been built here where you will stop for the night. It is well worth exploring the town after you have settled into your room.

**Overnight: Hotel Natural Springs, Tatopani (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 5: Drive to Hum Khola Dovan, 2,751m/9,027ft - 1½ hours drive, 20km. Begin trek to Sadhi Kharka, 3,182m/10,439ft - 2½ to 3 hours trek.**

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What a drive! Shortly after leaving Tatopani you cross the river on another girder bridge. On this day there is little or no tarmac, just a dirt road. To begin with you are passing through farmland and driving past small villages, soon however, the road begins to climb. The jeep changes into low gear ratio and you zig zag ever upward. First through forest and eventually you begin to traverse steep mountainsides. The higher you go the more exciting the road becomes.



You pass a group of buildings (storerooms, garage and office) squeezed onto a small level area. Further on and you marvel, astonished at the outrageous vision of the road builders. The road is literally carved out of cliff faces. Much of this must have been accomplished by the liberal use of dynamite. It is wide enough for lorries, and occasionally there are constricted passing places. Clearly the road is used regularly, and on a daily basis, but knowing this will not diminish the thrill of this hair-raising journey! Eventually you come to the upper hydro project at Hum Khola Dovan, which is still under construction. Construction workers wave a surprised greeting. The road ends just above this point, and soon you will be donning walking boots and rucksacks and heading off on the start of the trek proper.

The trek is a delight and the path well-constructed. Soon the valley tightens further, and you wonder how the path will be able to go up, but it does. You cross the river twice on suspension bridges. The cliffs and waterfalls are staggeringly impressive - some of the cliffs must be in excess of 1,200ft above your dizzy gaze. If you see a large white splotch high on a cliff that is likely to be an eagle's nest and you will almost certainly see these birds high on the thermals. At some point on the right-hand side of the valley there are a set of giant rock slabs. Above the first night's camp on the left are cliffs to beat them all. Arriving at Sandhi Kharka you will see a 'porter shelter'. This is a simple, fairly recently built, wooden, one-room structure with a corrugated iron roof. The crew will use this as a kitchen and as their sleeping quarters. Although you are in among some forest there are views of big peaks appearing, and of the cliffs opposite.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 6: Trek to Bhusket Mela, 3,546m/11,635ft - 3 to 4 hours.**

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Another fantastic day for scenery! Firstly, you cross the river on another good suspension bridge (the remains of a much older bridge made of logs can be seen here) leading to a set of cleverly made steps below cliffs and above a small waterfall. Up from here you come to a spooky place that is hemmed in by lowering cliffs. The wide staircase is a little overgrown with weeds and it feels like the approach to Count Dracula's castle. For some long while you are still in and out of forest but you slowly gain height with gigantic cliffs on your left. On your right tumbles the river stacked with huge boulders, and hanging waterfalls drop many hundreds of feet. Another bridge below PhutPhute Waterfall takes you up another staircase of steps. At some point the path and its steps almost corkscrews steeply upwards through the forest. Take care not to stumble and admire the skill of the builders of the impressive path. As you crest the highest point it levels out somewhat and continues high above the river.

The route becomes easier much to your relief! Soon you reach another porter's shelter at Gupha Pant, 3,306m/10,847ft, among birch trees, about 1½ hours from camp. There is a small shrine here. After this the path starts to gain height again after another suspension bridge and bears round to the left. There are incredible views of Tilicho Peak, 7,134m/23,996ft, framed in the valley, and you can see parts of the Annapurnas on the right. Ice slopes glistening in the sun, ridges disappearing into clouds.

Leaving the forest behind you come to open scrub and a rockier path. There is a point somewhere here on the left where Herzog and his expedition came down from the Fanche Pass on their way to Annapurna. Just near here, marked by a sign that says 'Sky Caves', are a strange set of what looks like caves high above, formed by erosion of ancient glacial moraine. They are shown on some maps as Narchang Pit Hole. The views of the Annapurnas, and Annapurna Fang (a peak on the great Annapurna ridge), 7,647m/25,089ft, are sensational from here. Just on a bit there is a grand waterfall dropping over a vertical cliff. The path passes close by it.



It is a much easier ramble now to Bhusket Mela still stopping every few minutes to soak up the views. Everywhere you look are either gigantic cliffs or major Himalayan giants poking their heads over ridges. All the time you are walking towards Tilicho Peak which looms larger and larger. You cross a fine suspension bridge, Bhusket Mela is close now.

Arriving at the night stop you'll notice there are some weird rock spires behind camp. The hut here has stone walls and a good roof, though the front is open to the elements. In 2023 this is where Steve Berry first met Mr Tez Gurung, the instigator and Project Manager behind the building of the trail. A very convivial evening was spent sharing stories. Tez Gurung has been up to the old French base camp some 70+ times. In that period, of around 10 years, he has seen snow leopard, blue sheep, thar (deer type animal), musk deer, and pikka (small rodent). Indeed, we saw much evidence of blue sheep, and saw the friendly little pikkas that hang around camp.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 7: Trek to Annapurna North Base Camp, 4,050m/13,287ft - 3½ to 4 hours.**

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Another sensational day, but very tiring. It is only a height gain of 490m/1,600ft but it seems much harder, all down to the effects of altitude. Go slowly! There are cliffs everywhere and now you have a sense of achievement looking back down the mammoth valley you have come up. The path is well-made and clear and climbs gradually most of the time. There are one or two steepish bits and care is needed but by-and-large it is a good trail. It roughly follows the roaring river with its unreal boulders. There are more surreal ribbon waterfalls. Look out for soaring eagles.

Eventually you will see the high wall of an ancient glacial moraine ahead, and there is an obvious rectangular rock with a small cairn on top, 3,756m/12,323ft. Sure enough when you reach it the path levels out somewhat. Ahead now is a giant jumble of moraine, a positive maze, but the path is still clear. You pass a great yellow sandstone cliff with a waterfall falling down a chute on its left hand side.

Finally, you come to a rise and a sign which says Kagbhusundi Danda, 4,060m/13,320ft, and there below is Lake Narchang. Ahead are cliffs like something out of a sci fi movie. Black, regular, horizontal, buttresses strong enough to support the weight of Tilicho Peak which seems to sit on top of them, but this just a small part of the view. You have arrived at a huge valley hemmed in on all sides by icy peaks. Annapurna's receding glaciers feed the lake. It was from here that in 1950 the French mounted their audacious climb of the world's 10th highest peak. The first of the 8,000m peaks to be climbed successfully. Maurice Herzog's book, 'Annapurna', is a must read if you undertake this trek!!

Tonight you are camping at the original base camp used by Herzog's French team in 1950. Tomorrow you will explore to the modern day base camp and the French Advance Base Camp. If time and inclination allow you could explore some way towards Tilicho.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**



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**Day 8: Trek to the modern day Annapurna I Base Camp, 4,190m/13,728 ft. Visit the French Advance Base Camp, 4,305m/14,124ft. Possible foray toward Nilgiri BC. Return to Annapurna North Camp. Total trek time - 5-6 hours.**

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No kind of superlatives do justice to this hidden valley and today you will see the very best of it. After another tasty breakfast designed to give you plenty of calories, you descend the short distance to the end of the lake. Now you have to cross the stream. There may be planks in place for this purpose or you might have to wade across. A short rise brings you to a couple of small temples/shrines, one Hindu, the other Buddhist.

From here the path can be seen easily snaking up to a smaller drier valley. Today's expeditions use this as their base, and you might very well meet climbers and their Sherpas attempting one of the Annapurna summits.



From this good level campsite you wander up a gully leading up on to the top of the moraine, and in the direct opposite direction of the Nilgiris. You arrive after some time on top of the moraine and, keeping away from the edge which drops steeply down to the lake far below, you continue to follow a vague path. At the very end is the remains of a very old building and a large memorial chorten. The latter has many inscribed stones and tablets to those who perished on their climbs. One name seen engraved here is Alison Chadwick who died attempting Annapurna in 1978.

The views from here are the best on the whole trip and that is saying something. You cannot help but speculate what was the route that the French took - it all looks exceedingly dangerous. The main views are of the Annapurnas which hog the stage but there are a host of other big stars surrounding you. There are glaciers, gigantic cliffs, impossibly steep snow faces, seracs, and pencil thin waterfalls crashing into the depths.

Walk back along the top of the moraine being careful not to get too close to the edge. Large crashes may be heard as the moraine sheds a regular stream of debris into the lake below. Lots of interesting small birds and the more confident cheeky choughs may come looking for scraps when you stop for a picnic lunch. Back at the modern day Annapurna I Base Camp head off now in the opposite direction. This too is fun exploration and there are many possibilities. You have plenty of time if the weather is settled. Please follow your Sherpa's advice and stay as one party; it would be easy enough to get lost.

You will almost certainly end the day celebrating the fact that few foreigners have been here before you and you have seen what it is like to be high up in a remote Himalayan valley.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 9: Return trek to Sadhi Kharka, 3,182m/10,439ft - approximately 6½ to 7 hours**

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You have the pleasure now of enjoying the descent of the huge valley and gorges you laboured up on your way to pay obeisance to the Gods of Annapurna. It may take about three hours to reach Bhusket Mela and a little less to Sadhi Kharka, depending on how many photos you take.

No doubt you will leave with a sad feeling because unlike Mr Tez Gurung you might not come up here again, and it is a wrench leaving somewhere quite so beautiful. You know the route now but accidents often happen descending a mountain. Take care, go slowly - you have plenty of time. There are a couple of places where there has been minor avalanche debris but they are easily managed. There is a section in the forest where the path is 'exposed' - the path is good, but you know to take care here. You will watch out no doubt for that spot where the walls of the gorge narrows to 50 to 100m wide. Very impressive. Remember that place where there were five ribbon waterfalls all in a row - magical stuff.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 10: End trek. Descend to Hum Khola Dovan - 2½ to 3 hours. Drive to Pokhara - 5 to 6 hours.**

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The thoughts of hot showers and a comfy bed with duck down pillows, perhaps a glass of wine or two, begin to creep into your mind. Still you need to focus, and the path is terribly exciting. You know you are not far from the end when you come into cane thickets. Before you drive off down that amazing road don't forget to tip your porters who have worked so hard. Perhaps last night you had a celebration meal, and you had a party with

them and your guide and cook. Perhaps you did the tipping then. In any case they will be like friends now, and there will be fond farewells for those not driving back to Pokhara with you.

Again, the thrill of the 20km drive to Tatopani but you are 'old hands' by now. We recommend one of those blow-up pillows for naps on the drive back from Tatopani to Pokhara. You will probably stop for a Nepalese lunch at a roadside restaurant.

The hotel we have chosen is the Himalayan Front Hotel. It is up above Pokhara at a place called Sarangkot. It is a much quieter location than the Waterfront Resort and has fantastic views of the mountains. Every room has a mountain view. It will seem unreal that only a few days ago you were up there among those very peaks!!

**Overnight: Himalayan Front Hotel, Sarnagkot Pokhara (Meals: B)**

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**Day 11: Day at leisure in Sarangkot, Pokhara. Laxmi Pooja Festival in October.**

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There are numerous options in Pokhara although after such a wild adventure you might like a day simply to relax.

If you are travelling on our 22nd October 2024 or 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025 departures you will be able to enjoy the Laxmi Pooja festivities that are taking place in Pokhara this evening as well as in Kathmandu tomorrow night. During the Light Festival of Laxmi Pooja all houses, streets, entire villages, towns and cities are lit up by hundreds of thousands of pure-oil earthen lamps and candles to welcome Laxmi, Goddess of Prosperity, into the home and the community. Groups of people, mostly girls and boys will be seen out in the streets singing and dancing, they go from house to house playing "bhailo" and "deusi", similar to carol singing at Christmas. It is a joyous occasion and you will have fun mingling with the crowds if you travel down into Pokhara.



**Overnight: Himalayan Front Hotel, Sarnagkot Pokhara (Meals: B)**

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**Day 12: Morning fly to Kathmandu. Transfer to hotel. Afternoon half day sightseeing tour in Kathmandu.**

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After a morning to recuperate from your flight, you take an afternoon walking tour of central Kathmandu with an English-speaking guide. They will introduce you to the history, traditions and legends of Kathmandu and its people. The splendid royal palaces, temples and monuments of Durbar Square are amongst its most impressive sights and the bustling markets and shrines of Indra Chowk and Asan Tole are good places to stop and linger. Your afternoon ends in Thamel, the tourist heart of the city crammed with tourist shops, bars and restaurants. Then head by private vehicle to Swayambhunath temple, better known as the Monkey Temple due its vast troop of fearless monkeys. It's a great place to watch the sunset over Kathmandu.

**Overnight: Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu (Meals: B)**

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**Day 13: Morning free. Evening transfer to fly to UK. Depart Kathmandu.**

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Today will be at leisure for some shopping, sightseeing or simply relaxing after your trek. If sightseeing, you might like to visit the important Hindu temple complex of Pashupatinath on the banks of the Bagmati River or the magnificent stupa of Boudhanath. You could also take a taxi in the morning (hotel reception can help you organise this) to visit one of the two old towns of the Kathmandu Valley, Bhaktapur or Patan.

Later in the afternoon there will be a transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to London.

**Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)**

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**Day 14: Arrive London.**

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## Our grading system

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Annapurna North Base Camp Trek is graded as a Moderate/Vigorous trekking holiday, as described below.

### **Moderate**

Holidays in this grade typically involve 5 to 10 days of walking or trekking. They will often venture into more remote country and can cross mountain passes. Altitudes though are still relatively low, going no higher than around 4,300m/14,000ft. Accommodation can include simple hotels, tea houses, lodges and camping.

### **Vigorous**

Typically these trips involve 8 to 14 days (occasionally more) trekking in relatively remote landscapes. High passes up to 4,900m/16,000ft may be crossed (sometimes snow-covered) and there may also be glacier travel and peak ascents. Walking days can be between 5 and 8 hours with considerable ascents and descents. This grade also covers some European treks of shorter durations. Overnight stops on trek could be in tea houses, mountain huts or camping.

These holidays would suit enthusiastic hill/mountain walkers.

## Trip altitude

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**Important** - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend [www.medex.org.uk](http://www.medex.org.uk) as a good source of information.

## What the price includes

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**Mountain Kingdoms** aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ Experienced trekking guide
- ✓ All accommodation as specified on a twin share basis
- ✓ B & B in Kathmandu and Pokhara, all meals on trek
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ All transport and transfers by private vehicles
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ All camping facilities and all meals on trek
- ✓ Costs of all portage and porter insurance
- ✓ Camp staff to carry out all camp work
- ✓ Free use of a good quality down jacket and sleeping bag with liner on trek
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Tips

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.



# Your accommodation

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## Hotels

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### **Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu**

The Kathmandu Guest House is a 4\* hotel situated right in the heart of Thamel - the tourist hub of the city. Known as Kathmandu's 'original hotel' it has been extensively renovated over recent years and has good quality rooms, a spa, gardens and a restaurant. The hotel also houses the excellent Museum of Nepali Art (MONA) which showcases traditional and contemporary works of art - admission is free for Mountain Kingdoms guests.



### **Waterfront Lakeside Resort, Pokhara**

Overlooking Phewa Tal Lake, the 3 Sta Waterfront Resort enjoys a great position, but has the advantage of being at the far end of Pokhara's lakeside which is much quieter. There are several dining options including the Alfresco outdoor patio and the main Aqua Bird. It has an attractive swimming pool, and guest rooms are well-sized with a good range of modern amenities.



### **Hotel Natural Springs, Tatopani**

It is quite a surprise to find a hotel of this quality in the small town of Tatopani. It is by far the best place in town being newly constructed and enjoying great views. Rooms have modern décor and are well-appointed. The hotel has its own bar and restaurant.



### **Camp**

For the nights you will be camping the following are provided: a sleeping tent, a dining tent, a toilet tent exclusively for your group to use. The staff complement of cooks put up and take down tents, make the tea, cook the food, wash the dishes, and load the porters or pack animals. Your kit bag is carried for you either by porters or pack animals and you just trek with a light day sack.



### **Himalayan Front Hotel, Sarnagkot Pokhara**

This 3\* hotel is situated in the hills above Pokhara at Sarangkot. Its lofty location affords it breathtaking views of the Pokhara Valley and the high peaks of the Annapurna range. With a swimming pool, spa and rooftop bar it's a great place to relax after a trek. All the rooms have Himalayan views as well as tea/coffee makers, mini bars and free Wi-Fi. There is an onsite restaurant and a shuttle bus service for those who want to drop down into Pokhara.

## Meal arrangements

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Bed and breakfast in Kathmandu and Pokhara. All meals on trek.

## Flight arrangements

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### Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

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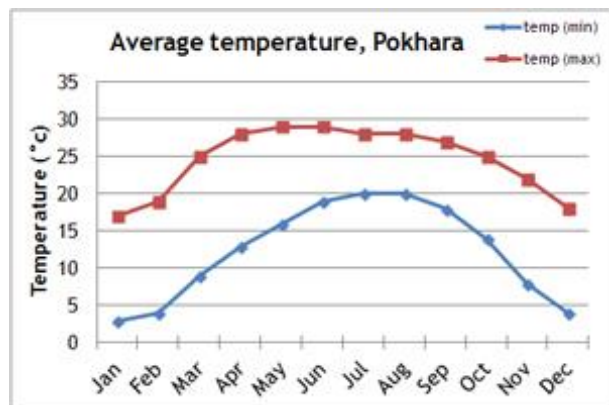
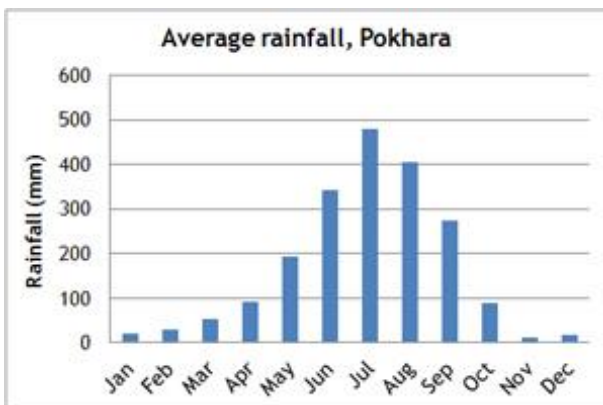
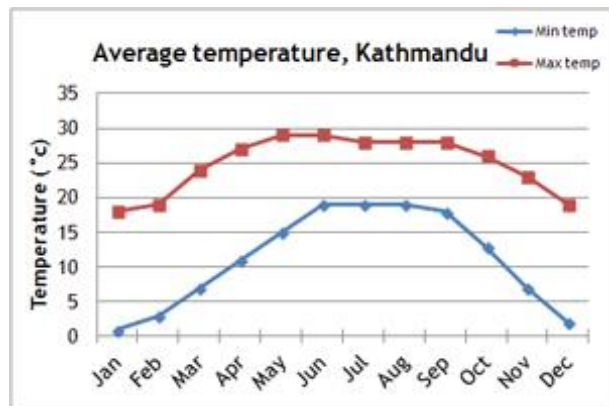
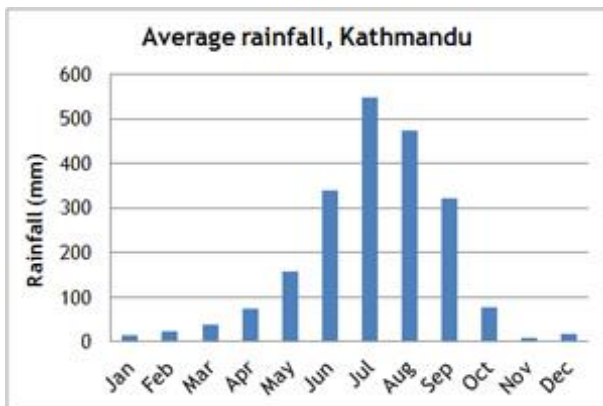
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

## The nature of adventure travel

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

# Climate information



# Extensions

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## Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



### Extra nights in Nepal

If you would like to extend your stay in Nepal, you can add extra nights at your group tour accommodation or choose from our range of distinctive properties in Pokhara and the Kathmandu area. We can offer luxury resorts, heritage hotels, tranquil lodges and characterful cottages. Our selection includes Dwarika's hotel in Kathmandu and its sister property - Dwarika's Resort at Dhulikhel, Pavilions Himalaya at Pokhara, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge and Shivapuri Heights Cottage. Individual extension leaflets for all these options can be downloaded from our website or requested from our office.



### Kathmandu Valley sightseeing excursions

We can arrange half day or full day sightseeing tours taking you to the key cultural attractions of central Kathmandu or the Kathmandu Valley including the World Heritage Sites of Bhaktapur and Patan. Your tour will be led by an English-speaking guide and you will have a private vehicle and driver.



### Bhutan and Tibet extensions from Nepal

Whilst in the Himalaya, why not extend your Nepal holiday with a tour of the cultural highlights of Bhutan or Tibet. We offer several extension packages that include all accommodation, meals and sightseeing or we can tailor an itinerary to suit your exact requirements. Download extension leaflets for our Bhutan and Tibet extensions from Nepal, or contact the office to discuss various options.



### Wildlife extensions in Nepal - Chitwan, Bardia & Koshi Tappu

Visit Chitwan or Bardia National Parks home to a rich variety of birds and animals including elephant, rhinos, leopard and Bengal tiger. Stay in a comfortable lodge and enjoy a range of wildlife viewing activities. Alternatively visit the renowned Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve - one of the finest birdwatching and wildlife areas in all Asia.



### Lumbini

Enjoy a three day extension to the birthplace of Buddha, one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. Take the short flight from Kathmandu, and spend two nights in a comfortable 3\* hotel, just steps from the Lumbini temple complex, with a full day to explore the fascinating UNESCO World Heritage Site in the company of your expert local guide.



## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- This holiday has been designed to offer an excellent trek into the heart of the Annapurna mountains in just two weeks London to London.
- Your trek will be led by a knowledgeable, well-trained English-speaking guide supported by an experienced trekking crew who will provide an excellent standard of service. Your gear will be portered for you so all you need to carry is a small daypack.
- Mountain Kingdoms provide a full service camping experience complete with dining shelter and morning 'bed tea'.
- We provide a good quality down jacket, sleeping bag and liner to be used, free of charge, on trek.
- You will stay at a four star hotel in Kathmandu
- We have a maximum group size of just 12 trekkers for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group experience and helps reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger trekking groups.
- We have a wealth of experience in the company and several members of the Mountain Kingdoms team have travelled extensively in Nepal. Steve Berry, our MD, completed this trek in 2023 and would be happy to help with any questions you may have about this holiday.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and exciting activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for options, quotes and further information

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

## What we say

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*I can honestly say I feel privileged to have had the chance to have visited this inner sanctum of Annapurna. When you arrive at the Base Camp you are surrounded by a collection of such massive peaks that you cannot help but leave the tents every ten minutes just to soak up the views! The approach trek is also a great fun outing and constantly changing. The cliffs in the Miristri Khola gorge are truly awesome, and without the work and incredible commitment of Mr Tej Gurung and his team of stonemasons, mere mortals would never have found a way to the Narchang Lake camp. My deepest respect to these brave men in creating a fantastic path through jungle, winding its way up steep mountainsides, and for constructing the many suspension bridges to enable the path to emerge far above the tree line. I thoroughly recommend this unusual Himalayan outing which incredibly can be completed within two weeks!!*

*-Steve Berry, MD, Mountain Kingdoms*



# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### **Carbon Offsetting**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### **Reducing Carbon Emissions**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.



