



Highlights of Nepal

Classic Tour | 7 Days | Physical Level 2

Kathmandu – Dhulikhel - Kathmandu

Discover the cultural Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal, with a whistle stop tour of the highlights of this intriguing country. This itinerary is an extension to our Highlights of India tour, however can also be booked as an exciting standalone trip.

- Explore the vibrant city of Kathmandu
- Wander the traditional town of Dhulikel
- Tour the Boudhnath stupa: the largest in Nepal
- Stroll through the architecture of Bhaktapur's Durbar Square



Highlights of Nepal tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers)
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Nepal on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis, so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort/Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Physical Level 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Highlights of Nepal' is rated 2 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails
- You will be required to get on and off various sizes of boats and rickshaws throughout the tour
- You will be at a higher altitude in Nepal. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatise.

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

Country Profile: Nepal

Nepal is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of biodiversity and has an incredible variety of ecosystems. Here you will witness the greatest mountain range on Earth, which has eight of the world's 14 highest mountains, including Mt. Everest (8,848m). See thick tropical jungles teeming with a wealth of wildlife, thundering rivers and forested hills. Within this spectacular geography is a rich cultural landscape. The majority of the population is found in the Kathmandu Valley, located in the centre of Nepal and home to three major towns, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 7 days in duration including international flights. Due to airline schedules you may arrive/depart on day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes visa fees and your arrival/ departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 1 in Kathmandu and end the tour on Day 6 in Kathmandu. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Itinerary – Highlights of Nepal

Day 1: Arrive Kathmandu

Fly to Kathmandu for a three-night stay. Your National Escort or Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours will meet you at the Nepal International Airport in the Arrivals Hall. Together with other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer 45 minutes to your hotel and check-in.

The rest of the evening is at leisure to acclimatise to the higher altitude. Our visit to Nepal concentrates on the Kathmandu Valley, which encapsulates the history of Nepal within the ancient capitals of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur.



Destination Information

Nepal - The small Kingdom of Nepal sits atop the Himalayas wedged between India, Tibet and China. It is renowned for its incredible landscapes and is home to 10 of the world's 14 tallest mountains. The mountaineering race of the early 20th century brought this tiny nation to the attention of the whole world. Even today, from the low lands of the Terai (the plain in the southwest), through the ancient and noble towns of the Kathmandu Valley, to the unrivalled heights of Mt. Everest, the country retains a mediaeval atmosphere. Markets thrive in town squares, alleys wind between temples, homes and water wells, and statues of Ganesh are covered in rice, tiny flowers and coloured powder.

Day 2: Kathmandu - Patan

Patan altitude 1,330m

This morning, visit the Dakshinkali Temple. In the afternoon travel to Patan, the second largest city in Nepal. Spend approximately 2 hours on foot here. Visit Durbur Square, including the UNESCO World Heritage listed Royal Palace. Return to Kathmandu in the afternoon.

Destination Information

Dakshinkali Temple - The Dakshinkali Temple is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali. This temple is 22km away from the city centre on the southern rim of the valley and is one of the most popular places for worshippers. On Tuesdays and Saturdays, the ritual of animal sacrifice is performed before the deity. Please note that many foreigners find the temple confronting as they still make live animal sacrifices here (usually early morning) and can be crowded with pushing.

Patan - The second largest city in Nepal and located 5km from Kathmandu, on the southern bank of the Bagmati River. Until 1768, when King Prithvi Narayan Shah (a Gorka) unified the Kingdoms of Nepal into a single nation, the Kathmandu Valley supported three separate Kings - one in Kathmandu, one in Patan and another in Bhaktapur.

Durbar Square - Situated in the heart of the city, Durbar Square is the centre of Patan's religious and social life. The stunning display of Newari architecture houses three main courtyards, an array of temples, shrines, houses and the Royal Palace.

Royal Palace - Though parts of the richly decorated Royal palace dates back to the 14th century, the majority of the construction was completed in the 17th century. The Royal Palace forms the eastern side of the Durbar Square and contains a series of courtyards, temples and a museum for the royal collection.

Day 3: Kathmandu

Sightseeing today begins at Durbar Square and the Kumari Temple where you will have approximately 2 hours of light sightseeing. Continue to two of the most important significant sites in Nepal, Swayambhunath Stupa and Bodhnath Stupa. Later, travel to Pashupatinath Temple and end the day with a stroll through Thamel Markets. There is very little sun protection, so bring hats and sunscreen. Keep a firm hold of cameras as monkeys have been known to steal them! Please note that here you may see the practice of animal sacrifice or cremation at Pashupatinath Temple. – Please refer to Nepalese Customs section for further information on touring.



Destination Information

Kumari Temple - Situated close to the palace is the Kumari Temple, the temple of the Living Goddess. The Living Goddess is a Weng girl who lives within the temple, acknowledging visitor's greetings from the central window.

Swayambhunath Stupa - Often called 'the monkey temple' because of the hundreds of monkeys that scamper about the place. Its location, atop a hill west of Kathmandu, makes the stupa visible for miles and is thought to have been a Buddhist pilgrimage site since the 5th century.

Bodhnath Stupa - The largest stupa in Nepal and the capital city's religious centre for ethnic Tibetans who form a significant proportion of Nepal's population. The Bodhnath Stupa is thought to have been originally built in 600AD, after the famous Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo was converted to Buddhism.

Pashupatinath Temple - A Hindu temple of Lord Shiva situated 5km east of Kathmandu on the banks of the sacred Bagmati River. Pashupatinath Temple has a two-tiered golden roof and is famous for its superb architecture. It is a centre of annual pilgrimage on the day of Maha Shivaratri. Here one may also witness the cremations of the dead bodies of Hindus. Devotees from all over the world come here to pay their homage to Lord Shiva. **Please note:** Entrance to Pashupatinath is permitted to the Hindus only, however visitors can clearly see the temple and the activities performed inside the temple from the eastern bank of the Bagmati.

Thamel Market - a local tourist area filled with mountaineering shops, cafés and restaurants.

Day 4: Kathmandu – Dhulikhel

Dhulikhel altitude 1,600m

Today you will drive to Dhulikhel, visiting Changu Narayan Temple en route. Spend approximately 1 to 2 hours at this site, there are some uneven steps here. You will also stop at the small village of Thimi, known for its local pottery and manufacturing of masks. After lunch, drive to Dhulikhel, enjoying the spectacular views of the Himalayas.

Destination Information

Changu Narayan Temple - A UNESCO World Heritage listed site situated on a ridge overlooking the valley, this temple is dedicated to the Hindu God Vishnu and is one of the finest examples of pagoda architecture.

Thimi - A small village known for its local pottery and the manufacture of masks.

Dhulikhel - Dhulikhel is located 30km east of Kathmandu and offers spectacular views of the Himalayas. A well-preserved Newari town, Dhulikel offers an insight into traditional life in Nepal.

Day 5: Dhulikhel – Kathmandu

Rise early this morning to view the sunrise. After breakfast, return to Kathmandu visiting Bhaktapur, the third of the ancient royal capitals, en route. At the original town gates, your group coach will drop you off and you will receive a ticket that allows you entry into several important sites within Bhaktapur. At Durbar Square you will visit the Golden Gate at the Palace of 55 Windows as we weave our way through to the Taumadhi Tole Square. You will have a few hours to explore the alleys that link these squares. Depending on the time available to you, as well as the walking pace of your group, you may visit the wonderful Potter's Square located nearby before you return to Kathmandu. At dinner this evening, you will enjoy a performance of traditional Nepalese dancing.

Destination Information

Bhaktapur - Traffic is prohibited in Bhaktapur, making it a wonderful place to explore on foot. The absence of traffic makes this a treasure trove of antiquated sites. In markets and alleys, corn husks and handmade noodles are all laid out on a sheet to dry in the sun, baskets of chillies, temples and shrines covered with offerings of food, brightly coloured powder or flowers.

Durbar Square - Founded in the 12th century and located in the heart of the city, Bhaktapur's charming Durbar Square is filled with monuments, palaces and temples with elaborately carved roofs.

Golden Gate - The splendid Golden Gate is entrance to the Palace of 55 Window. Completed in 1754, the gate is one of the finest examples of Nepal's repoussé metalwork.

Palace of 55 Windows - Built in the 17th century, the palace features a balcony of 55 intricate wooden windows, a masterpiece of wood carving.

Days 6-7: Depart Kathmandu

Today any time before your flight will be at leisure. You will then be transferred to the airport according to the departure time of your flight to Australia, arriving home the same or following day.

Late check-out is not included in our group tours. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Nepal, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

Highlights of Nepal Travel Information

Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to Nepal and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

For Nepal: Please be advised that for all visa applications to Nepal, Wendy Wu Tours will provide passengers with forms to be completed by hand. Once the form is completed, the application and passport will need to be sent to Wendy Wu Tours. Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 60 days prior to departure; if received after this date; urgent visa processing fees will apply.

Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in Nepal

Nepalese cuisine is one of the most diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world. Dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavours. Though cuisine can vary greatly from the food we get in Australia, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our classic group tours, from dinner on the arrival day until breakfast on the day of departure. Please be aware that dishes selected for your meals reflect the cooking styles and signature dishes of the local area you are in. Nepalese cuisine is based around the ingredients grown locally in the mountainous areas.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional ‘family style’; meaning that various dishes will be laid out in the centre of the table top. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody.

Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Nepal. We recommend that when it comes to Nepalese food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

Accommodation

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Nepal. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met. Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort or Local Guide.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner-city roads in Nepal have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in Nepal have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

Development in Nepal

Although Nepal is developing quickly, they still lack the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

Public Holidays in Nepal

If you are travelling within the below Nepali Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed, and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. The Holi Festival 20th – 21st March 2019 (The Hindu 'Festival of Colours' can include locals smearing coloured powder on one another. Every effort will be made to minimise the effect on passengers whilst touring). Nepali New Year is celebrated on the 14th April and Dashain Festival on 19th October.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions, which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with Local Guides.

Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is in US Dollars and will be collected by your National Escort on arrival and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. Any additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

Nepalese Cultural Difference

Nepal has many special customs and rituals that tie into daily life, some of these may be surprising or unsettling for some passengers. While the guide will make every effort to forewarn passengers when visiting sites that may participate in the practice of animal sacrifice or cremation, there may be special local festivals within villages where such rituals are unavoidable. When visiting the Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, please be aware that you may witness cremations taking place across the canal. Please note when visiting Dakshinkali Temple the ritual of animal sacrifice is performed before the deity on Tuesdays and Saturdays. If you would prefer not to participate in this touring, please let your National Escort/Local Guide know upon arrival in Nepal.

Appropriate Dress

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and trousers or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their backpack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques. When visiting Jain temples, you must not wear or take in any leather items such as belts, watches, camera straps, purses and shoes.

Religious sites and homes throughout Nepal – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick, old socks in your backpack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces.

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a

hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

Packing list and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com

Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that when travelling to cities outside of Kathmandu and other main cities that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Nepal however, other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort/Local Guide will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$250AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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