

# The Responsible Travellers



**The Responsible Travellers** is a non commercial organisation specialising in travel within the Himalaya. The company's primary objective is to encourage travel to this remote area of the world and thereby generate "aid through trade" and income for charitable projects which support environmental and educational development in Nepal. We can therefore offer our clients a rare and unique opportunity to visit this spectacular Himalayan Kingdom knowing that all profits generated will be invested in local charitable projects. Whether it is trekking amongst the splendid mountain peaks, an elephant safari in the jungle or an enriching cultural experience, Nepal is the ultimate travel destination, and **The Responsible Travellers** are the very essence of responsible & ethical tourism. As well as the scheduled departures, we specialise in offering tailor made holidays and experiences. These may be independent trips, charity or corporate challenge events, bespoke groups, school field trips or gap year experiences

## **Our Ethics:**

When you travel with **The Responsible Travellers** you benefit and so does the local community:

- ✓ We are a non commercial organisation donating 100% of profits to Charitable Projects in Nepal.
- ✓ We will pay the cost to Carbon Balance your flights in order to neutralise the impact on the environment
- ✓ Through a committed Environmental Policy we work to ensure minimal impact of our activities
- ✓ Have a simple and fair Pricing Policy with no extra fees or land charges – price us up against other companies!
- ✓ Have a fair and ethical Employment Policy which is committed to employing local staff and paying fair wages

## **Our People:**

You can also depend on our experience and professional expertise. Our Directors have a combination of Travel Industry, Charity and Global Corporate backgrounds. We are able to combine these skills to create a highly professional and experienced team. Equally, we take our responsibilities seriously when looking after you in the mountains. The trekking staffs have all been working in the industry for between 7 to 15+ years. Our Group Leaders attend professional trainings for Mountain Leadership and Mountain Safety & first aid training provided by KEEP (Kathmandu Environmental Education Project is a registered non-governmental organization, working to support sustainable tourism in Nepal). We pride ourselves on paying wages higher than commercial organisations and limit the loads that our porter staffs carry. Equally the assistant Sherpa staffs receive training in English language and eco-trekking. You can read more about our employment policies and relationships with KEEP and other charities on the website: at [www.theresponsibletravellers.com](http://www.theresponsibletravellers.com) and click on Our Ethics.

Operated by **The Responsible Travellers Ltd**  
Registered Company no. 5912731

# Annapurna Trails & Jungle Safari Trip Notes

## Highlights:

### Mountains

Annapurnas  
Dhaulagiri  
Machhapuchhre  
Poon Hill

### Culture

Pashupatinath Temple  
Boudha Stupa  
Bhaktapur  
Mountain Villages

**A taste of Nepal with an introductory trek in the Himalayan foothills and jungle safari on elephant back.....** After a cultural tour of Kathmandu including the Hindu pilgrimage site of Pashupatinath and the Buddhist Stupa of Boudha, you will head west towards Pokhara for a five day trek in the foothills of the Annapurnas. This trek takes you through beautiful alpine villages. You will visit Ghandrung, one of the main Gurung villages from where Gurkhas have been recruited, and the high point of the trek will be the viewing point at Poon Hill from where you can experience the sun rise over the Himalayan giants of Dhaulagiri, Machhapuchhre and Annapurna and enjoy the splendid mountain vista.

You will then descend to the Terai jungle to indulge in nature and enjoy elephant back safari in Chitwan National Park in search of the one horned Rhino, crocodile, deer and birdlife.

Back in Kathmandu, you have a free morning to take an optional Everest view flight and then join a guided tour of Bhaktapur, the medieval capital city of Nepal – now a registered UNESCO site. The streets are studded with fine examples of Newari architecture, with many temples and exquisite buildings. This trip gives you a great taste of Nepal!

## **Day 1: Arrival in Kathmandu**

Arrive in Kathmandu (5hrs 45mins ahead of GMT winter time).

Transfer to the hotel from the airport. Evening will be spent settling in and relaxing in the hotel, group dinner will be arranged in a restaurant in the evening.

Accommodation: City Hotel Bed & Breakfast

## **Day 2: Kathmandu Sightseeing**

This morning there will be a full trip briefing by the leader.

Today then incorporates a guided sightseeing tour to two of Kathmandu's major sights.

Our first destination is the country's most important Hindu temple- Pashupatinath. The temple is situated on the banks of the Bagmati River in the outskirts of the city. The cobbled streets are bustling with ladies selling flowers, incense and other offerings, and colourful Sadhus (holymen) roaming the surrounds of the temple.

Pashupati, lord of the animals is a manifestation of Shiva and is believed to still roam the forests in the form of deer. The temple dating back to many hundreds of years makes it one of one of the most important Shiva locations across the Indian sub continent. As well as a place of worship, it is also the most important cremation sites for the Hindus in Nepal.

Our second visit takes us to Boudha, a Buddhist monument and the largest of its kind. As you wander round the shops surrounding the stupa, you will find yourself mingling with monks in their maroon and saffron robes, and traditionally dressed Tibetan refugees who live here – the religious center in Nepal for Himalayan Buddhists. You can join the locals to circumambulate the stupa, bargain for artifacts in the shops or sit on a rooftop restaurant and absorb the atmosphere.

Accommodation: City Hotel Bed & Breakfast

### **Day 3: Kathmandu to Birethanti**

We leave early this morning on a very scenic drive to Pokhara. Leaving Kathmandu, we drive westward over a small pass from where there is amazing view of the Ganesh Himals, the Manaslu Range and even the Annapurnas on a clear day. The road drops from here until we reach the valley bottom and follow the Trishuli River. Aproximately 3 hours into the drive, at Mugling we cross the bridge and follow the Marshyangdi River for about 1 ½ hours and then carry on to Pokhara. The journey provides plenty of opportunity to view typical rural life amidst cultivated terraced fields.

We continue through Pokhara and drive over a pass at Lumle then drop down to Naya Pul. A short 30 minutes walk from here will bring us to Birethanti situated on the confluence of the Modi and Burundi Khola. This will be our home for the night.

Accommodation: Mountain Lodge

### **Day 4: Birethanti to Ghandrung**

We start the morning with a climb out from Birethanti. After ascending for approximately 500metres we then start to traverse through terraced villages. This gives a wonderful opportunity to see traditional rural life in the low altitude areas of the Annapurna Himalayas. The larger of these communities is called Kimche where we may take some refreshments. Walking amongst these beautifully cultivated hillsides takes you on a journey back in time, and allows you appreciate the basics of life. The local people are self sufficient and hardy working as farmers cultivating maize, millet, mustard seeds and potatoes. Sheep are also kept as village herds grazing on high pastures in the summer and coming down to the lower areas for the winter months. This time of year, after harvest ladies will be working in the fields preparing the terraces for the next crop. As you pass through these medieval type villages you will hear the greeting Namaste from families huddled together in their house entrances. Today continues as a steady climb until reaching Ghandrung where we will rest for the night. This town perches on the hillside with stone paved paths and handsome slate roofed houses. It is one of the largest settlements of the Gurung people who are renowned for their services in the British Gurkha regiments – a profession which brings a relatively higher income and prosperity to the village. The Gurung Museum displays items of basic house-hold wares and tools used for living in this region and it is worth a visit in the afternoon.

Altitude:1951m

Walking Time: 5 ½ hrs

Accommodation: Mountain Lodge

### **Day 5: Gandrung to Tadopani**

Earlier in the morning is usually the best time for viewing the mountains. The peaks that can be seen from here are – Annapurna South (7219m), Hiu Chuli (6441m) and Machapucchhre (6993m), undoubtedly one of the most beautiful and distinctive mountains of the world. Sunrise on the mountains is very good from here.

Today's trek is a relatively shorter day allowing you to enjoy the surrounding landscape. The trail climbs gently from Ghandrung, arriving to cross a river. We continue trekking to Bhainsi Kharka where we can stop for refreshments. A further one hour from here through thick rhododendron forest will have us arrive at Tadapani in time for lunch. In the afternoon we can take an optional nature walk in the forest, in search of resident birdlife. This is also a great location from which to see the mountains and explore the surrounding nature. Your Group Leader will be a keen naturalist and enthusiast, who will be able to point out and explain both cultural and natural points of interest.

Walking time: 4 ½ hrs

Approx. altitude: 2700m

Accommodation: Mountain Lodge

### **Day 6: Tadopani to Ghorapani**

Today the trek continues in lush rhododendron forests starting with a steep descend before a short climb to a small tea house. The trail undulates all morning to a clearing called Banthanti then climb steadily for the rest of the morning to Deurali Pass, a good place for lunch. From here, we continue ascending for about 20 minutes and arrive on the ridge from where on a clear day the view is breathtakingly beautiful of the mountains to the north. The path ambles along the ridge for a while and then drops down towards the houses of Ghorepani, which means horse watering place. Traditionally this point used to be a main resting place on the trade route between Pokhara and the prosperous Kali Gandaki Valley leading up to Mustang.

Walking time: 7 hrs

Approx. altitude: 2855m

Accommodation: Mountain Lodge

### **Day 7: Ghorapani to Tirkhedunga**

There is an early start today to climb up to Poon Hill – a viewing point for the sunrise over the mountains. After a quick tea/coffee we climb for about forty five minutes to the top of the hill. Getting there at dawn before sunrise allows us an amazing experience, to see the daytime slowly creeping in over the mountains and as the first ray of sunlight touches the peaks, the world below is just awakening. This is one of the highlights of the trek. After breakfast we depart from Ghorepani descending through mossy forests of rhododendron until Ulleri where we take a lunch break. For the next hour the trail drops steeply down a stone staircase and cross two bridges in order to reach Tirkhedunga, situated above the Bhuringdi Khola.

Walking time – 4 1/2 hrs

Approx. altitude – 1577m

Accommodation: Mountain Lodge

### **Day 8: Tirkhedunga to Pokhara**

We make a good start today in order to benefit from the opportunity for bird-watching and allow time to enjoy the afternoon in Pokhara – the second city of Nepal. After leaving the lodge we walk along the Bhurundi Khola where it is possible to sight Kingfishers, Redstarts, Forktails, Himalayan Dippers, Blue Magpies and Treepies. A short walk on to Nayapul, at the road head we meet up with our transport to Pokhara. There is a good part of the afternoon free to explore the lakeside and shop around or even go for a boat ride. Tonight will be our last with the trekking crew, so we can celebrate and say farewell in one of the lakeside restaurants.

Walking time – 3 1/2 hrs

Approx. altitude – 820m

Accommodation: Hotel Bed & Breakfast

### **Day 9-10: Chitwan National Park**

Today we transfer to the Safari Lodge in Chitwan National Park. Leaving the lakeside we head east as we drive past the airport and cross the bridge at Mahendrapul. If the weather is clear this morning, we should have fantastic views of the Annapurna and Manaslu Range for good photos on the way out. The road then follows the Seti River and enter the hills, driving through villages and terraced fields as we leave the Pokhara Valley. We cross the Modi River (a tributary of the Seti) at Damauli then the road climbs up before descending to the Marshyangdi River at Dumre following it on to Mugling. Here we leave the Kathmandu – Pokhara Highway and head south along the river which has now become the Narayani (after the confluence with the Trishuli at Mugling) to our jungle lodge in Chitwan.

The park is home to the one horned rhino, the Bengal tiger, elephant and crocodile. As well as these creatures the park has 450 species of bird, 43 mammal species including several types of deer and 67 different types of butterfly. The most popular way of wildlife viewing is on elephant back. The activities during your stay will include elephant safaris, dugout canoe ride down the river allowing plenty of opportunity to see Garial and Mugger Crocodiles that are indigenous to this part of the world, a nature walk in the park observing many bird species. If you wish you can also join the elephants for a bath in the river after your activities!

Accommodation: Resort Lodge

Food Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### **Day 11: Return to Kathmandu**

We leave the lodge after breakfast and drive to Narayanghat, from where we take the north – south Highway following the Narayani River to Mugling. Here is the confluence of the Marshyangdi and the Trishuli. The Highway to Kathmandu follows the Trishuli Gorge until just before Naubise from where we ascend up to the pass at Thankot to enter the Kathmandu Valley.

Today we return to our hotel in Kathmandu.

Accommodation: City Hotel

Food Included: Breakfast

### **Day 12: Free Day in Kathmandu**

Today is free for you to take the Everest View flight. This is a leisure flight which departs early in the morning to view the giants of the Himalaya. Due to local weather conditions, we can not guarantee this flight. It can be booked in Kathmandu at an approx. cost of \$140.

We then have a relaxing afternoon with a dedicated guide in the finest medieval town in Nepal – Bhaktapur. In the 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries this was the country's capital city and has the finest examples of Newari architecture. This is a pedestrian city – so walking around the timeless streets is an absolute pleasure.

The town is studded with shrines and temples, and has a myriad of back streets to explore. Dodging the grain and straw laid out to dry, you will reach Potters Square to watch the men working at their wheels in the open air, before reaching Durbar Square which is the highlight of this visit. Bhaktapur also has many shops for those who like to dabble in a little trading!

Accommodation: City Hotel

Food Included: Breakfast

### **Day 13: Depart KTM**

This will be undeniably a journey like no other into the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal.

There will be a sense of achievement trekking in the Annapurnas and joy of exploring the jungle on elephant back. The culture you will have experienced along the way will no doubt touch you deeply.

However, the best memory will surely be, knowing that as a result of your holiday the Nepali community will benefit from development projects supported by The Responsible Travellers.

**Should you wish to extend your stay in Nepal please review the optional extra excursions online at [www.theresponsibletravellers.com](http://www.theresponsibletravellers.com) and go to our destinations and click on extensions.**

#### Additional Information

Please Note costs include:

- Carbon Balancing for international flight to Kathmandu
- 5 nights city hotel bed & breakfast accommodation
- 5 nights Teahouse accommodation on trek
- 2 nights full board Safari Lodge with Jungle activities
- 2 days guided sightseeing, transport and entrance fees in Kathmandu & Bhaktapur as specified on the itinerary
- All transportation included in the itinerary whilst in Nepal
- Porterage and guide fees
- National Park Entrance fees
- Charity donation

Not included:

- International flights & airport taxes to Kathmandu (international airport tax leaving Kathmandu - approx £15)
- All meals other than those specified on the itinerary
- Incidental extra personal expenses
- Staff tips
- Nepal Tourist Entry Visa (\$30)
- Single persons supplement
- Additional sightseeing not specified in the itinerary
- Travel Insurance

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**Single Person Supplement:** the costs are based on two people sharing a twin room. Should you require a single room a supplement of £105 will be levied. Please note a single room can not be guaranteed in the mountains and will be dependant on availability. We will however, do our utmost to meet your requirements.

**Flight Information:** Our trips are land only and operate Kathmandu to Kathmandu (please see trip notes for specific details). Given our clients come from a variety of locations around the world we are able to help you source flights but we do not purchase on your behalf. We also prefer to give you the option to add extensions or create a tailor made trip and therefore have the flexibility of flights at your own convenience. Please contact us if you want advise about flight options and how to purchase.

**Insurance:** It is compulsory to take full holiday insurance which covers trekking to 5600M altitude, and also covers rescue and repatriation costs of at least £50,000. You will need to provide a copy of your insurance details, including an emergency 24hour telephone number to the trek leader before departing Kathmandu. This should include any correspondence stating clarification of the required cover. If your policy documents are not available or prove to provide insufficient cover you may not be able to continue your trip. Please ensure that your policy also covers any extra activity outside of the stated itinerary if you are extending your trip.

**Passport:** Passports need to be valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of visa application if you are applying in the UK and from the date of entry into Nepal.

**Visa Details:** Visas are available in advance from the Nepal Embassy for US\$20. The website is [http://www.nepalembassy.org.uk/visa\\_information.html](http://www.nepalembassy.org.uk/visa_information.html)

You can also have the visa processed at Kathmandu airport. If you intend to wait until your arrival at the airport please remember to bring 2 passport photos and US\$30 dollars in cash (N.B US dollars - is the only accepted payment).

**Vaccinations:** We strongly recommend you to take advice from your local GP travel clinic regarding required vaccinations.

**Money:** The local currency is Nepali Rupees (approx exchange rate 120 NRS - £1 – subject to daily fluctuation) Please note this can not be purchased in the UK. It is advised to take either sterling or US Dollars. Traveller's cheques and cash can be exchanged for local currency in Kathmandu. Credit cards are not generally accepted. In Kathmandu there are ATMs available to access cash via Cirrus / MasterCard / Visa cards.

**Baggage, Equipment Hire & Purchase :** If trekking you should use a Rucksack or Kit bag that is strong enough to withstand the rigors of transportation in the mountains. Suitcases or rigid bags can not be used as these are a difficult and awkward load for porters and pack animals. If you are taking an internal flight 15 kgs is the limitation for luggage on this flight including day sack. As a responsible employer we have a strict policy to limit the porter loads. Please help us to maintain standards by restricting your kit bag to 12.5kg. Many items are available in Kathmandu for purchase at lower cost than in the UK e.g. sleeping bag liners, trekking trousers, down jackets & sleeping bags. Please contact us at least 1 month before departure with any queries regarding kit hires or purchases you may wish to make.

**Itinerary:** All that is possible will be done to ensure the trip follows the outlined itinerary. However, due to factors beyond our control such as local weather, politics and airlines it may be necessary to vary one or more of the days. If this does occur we shall do our utmost to ensure minimal impact to you.

**Staff:** All staff are specially selected and hired locally, the trek Leader will be an experienced professional leader working full time in the Himalayas & Central Asia. As a responsible employer we pride ourselves on paying wages higher than commercial organisations. We also have high standards limiting the loads our porters carry.

**Group Size:** Due to the remote locations that are visited, we remain sympathetic to the local culture and environment by limiting our trips to a maximum of 12 places. This may be slightly smaller than other operators, and we believe it ensures the maximum enjoyment and fulfilment of our trip members by giving the opportunity to absorb the local culture more easily. This also avoids the feeling of "herding" from being part of a large group. There is a minimum of 6 to operate the trek.

**Preparation and Training:** In order to get the best from your holiday you may need to do some training, or other preparation. Remember you will be travelling to the Himalayas, this is a remote destination where the way of life is very different. You should be prepared for facilities and services appropriate for the local conditions and not equivalent to Western standards.

**Itinerary:** All that is possible will be done to ensure the trip follows the outlined itinerary. However, due to factors beyond our control such as local weather, politics and airlines it may be necessary to vary one or more of the days. If this does occur we shall do our utmost to ensure minimal impact to you.

**Sponsorship:** You may choose to take this opportunity to raise sponsorship for one of our affiliated charities, If you wish to do so please contact us o: [info@theresponsibletravellers.com](mailto:info@theresponsibletravellers.com) and we will forward details to you.

**Further Information:** If you have any queries regarding this trip, whether it is about preparation, the itinerary or general travel information please do not hesitate to contact us. If this trip is not for you perhaps you would like to contact us for details of alternative trips.

All our trips and additional extensions can be viewed online at: [www.theresponsibletravellers.com](http://www.theresponsibletravellers.com) or write to us at [info@theresponsibletravellers.com](mailto:info@theresponsibletravellers.com), or by post at PO Box 20878, Kathmandu, Nepal.

## More about our charity work.....

Here at **The Responsible Travellers** we take great pride in the fact that we are **doing the right thing** by you our customers, by our staff, and by the people, country and environment in which we operate. We believe actions speak louder than words, over the next page you can read how our ethics are put into practice.

**Before you go....** We start to take responsibility for your trip by carbon balancing your flights. The impact on climate change from the way in which we live today is a topic we have all heard about, and is under much debate from the world's scientific community. This is something that we can not and should not ignore. We work to calculate the carbon emissions generated from your flights, and invest in both reforestation and renewable energy resources in order to offset the carbon emissions of your trip. For example in the Terai region of Nepal, WWF have identified critical areas suffering from forest degradation. Projects such as biogas plants (converting human & animal solid waste to gas) provide alternative renewable fuel resources. Travel with peace of mind with **The Responsible Travellers**

**Whilst you are there....** Our Employment and environmental policies demonstrate our continued sense of responsibility. Firstly, our belief in aid through trade and therefore the generation of local employment and how this is managed is at the very heart of our operation. This is why we have a 100% commitment to employing only local staff. Our customers benefit from this by being able to get closer to the culture and learn more from the experience in the Himalayas, travelling with those who are born and bred in the area. By employing this policy we are also ensuring that the local economy benefits as much as possible rather than commercial organisations. We take great pride in ensuring fair wages to all our local staff and protecting our porters from exploitation. Secondly, our environmental policy addresses waste management, water usage, and encourages and supports the use of renewable resources. In addition, we work closely with the Nepal Sustainable Tourism Development Unit and WWF to ensure the strongest commitment to the local environment. Read more at: [www.theresponsibletravellers/ethics.html](http://www.theresponsibletravellers/ethics.html)

**After you've gone.....** **The Responsible Travellers** donates all profits from its travel operations to charitable projects in Nepal. We believe the most effective way to invest is with the help of specialist organisations. Our areas of investment include:

**Education:** We believe all development starts with educating the people. We support community education programmes, child sponsorship, and interest free loans for adult education through our beneficiary charities: CHANCE & Save the Children.

**Community Development:** In association with local charity KEEP (Kathmandu Environmental Education Project) we help communities to provide themselves with improved facilities and encourage this to be done in an environmentally friendly way. Our volunteer programs allow visitors to experience this first hand when they opt for a family home stay and participate in the community project holidays.

**Re-Forestation & Renewable Resources:** The WWF estimate that only 29% of the original forest covers in Nepal still remains. Between 1990 and 2005, Nepal lost 1.2 million hectares of forest. We support the work of WWF to help the communities re-instate the forest environment and woodland habitats and provide alternative energy sources.

Our commitment to **Doing the Right Thing** extends from investing in local charitable projects, to making sure that our customers also get a good deal.

To help you have a hassle free holiday, we provide a fair and simple **pricing policy**:

- ✓ We charge a fair price: to make sure the holiday is as satisfying as possible; we charge what we believe is a fair price, not what we can get away with – compare us to other companies!
- ✓ No extra land charges or hidden fees: To keep life simple we make a single charge
- ✓ No profiteering from single supplements: we charge a fair price based on cost & do not charge excessive premiums for single supplements
- ✓ No nagging for donations: We do not request charitable donations from you in order to justify our responsible tourism policy. We work hard on your behalf so you can just concentrate on having a great time!

**The choice is easy when you**

**...Doing the right thing**

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