



# The Responsible Travellers

www.theresponsibletravellers.com

## Off the Beaten Track: Kopra Danda & Khayer Tal Trek Trip Notes



### Highlights:

- 2 days Sightseeing in Ktm valley
- 11 nights fully catered tented camping trek
- 4 Nights B&B Hotel
- Average daily walking 5-7 hours
- Maximum Altitude 4600m
- Internal Flight Pok - Ktm

### Grade C 16 days

This is graded "C" as it includes some trails with

- Some Exposure
- You stay at high altitude
- Prolonged climbs
- Camp facilities

### Introduction

This trek is a true off the beaten track experience away from the heavily trodden paths of the regular Annapurna routes. The route gives you the opportunity to trek through untouched villages and walk beautiful ridges and high altitude pastures where very few other tourists venture. At the high point of Kopra Danda (meaning ridge) we enjoy rugged scenery above all habitation with views of the Dhaulagiri massif rising above the great Kali Gandaki valley, Nilgiri, Annapurna South, Baraha Sikhar and Annapurna I. Our unique itinerary then takes you to a high camp to enable a day trek to Khayer Tal (meaning lake). This high altitude lake is spring fed and is held sacred by the Gurung and Magar people living in the villages below. The traverse of a Cwm to reach the lake is documented by our Himalayan specialists as one of the most superb trails of the whole Annapurna region, and what's better is that you are likely to have it all to yourselves!

This tented camping trip also walks through pristine ancient rhododendron forests which during the spring season are a feast of colour.

On return from trek we spend a night in Pokhara before then taking the internal flight back to Kathmandu, which weather permitting provides wonderful views flying parallel to the Himalaya.

### Detailed Itinerary

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

Arrive in Kathmandu (5hrs 45mins ahead of GMT winter time, 4 hrs 45 mins ahead of GMT in the summer). 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**

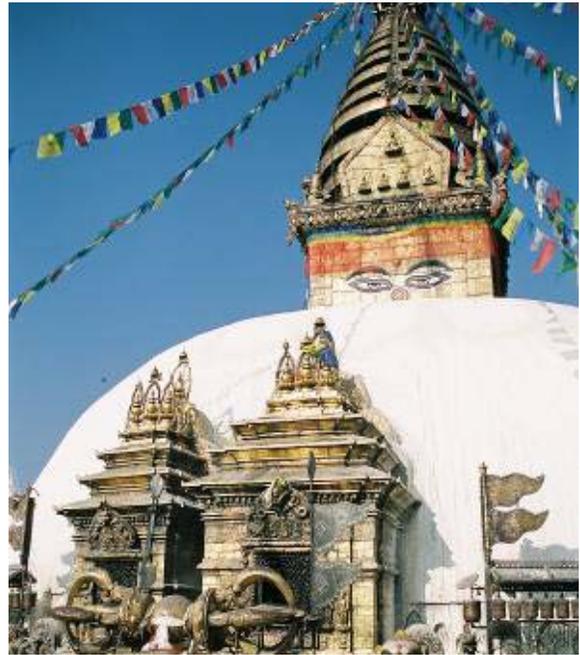
This morning there will be a full trip briefing by the leader. The day then incorporates a guided sightseeing tour to two of Kathmandu's major sights. Our first destination is one of the country's most important temples – Swayambhunath popularly known as the monkey temple due to the large population of macaque monkeys resident here. Believed to be self created thousands of years ago, the temple is a very large whitewashed dome with a gilded spire top which is surrounded by a complex of smaller temples. It sits atop a hill and thus can be seen from many miles away. The balcony there provides a good view overlooking the valley and the mountains in the north. A good part of the morning will be spent here enjoying the view and mingling amongst the pilgrims who come here to worship in the various temples. Our second visit will take us to Kathmandu Durbar Square. The old palace stands here amidst a complex of temples dating back to the 17th Century. However, the Kasthamandap, a building which supposedly had been built from a single Sal tree and given Kathmandu its name, is thought to date back to the 12th century. Some of the major highlights in the Square are the Taleju Temple standing tallest to the north of the palace, Kumari Bahal – home to the Living Goddess "Kumari", and Kala Bhairav which is the most fearsome aspect of Lord Shiva depicted on a huge slab of stone. From the window of the Shiva and Parvati temple the image of the divine couple benignly looks down upon the subjects. After the tour you can walk amongst the back streets of Thamel enjoying the shops and bazaar atmosphere. Accommodation: City Hotel Bed & Breakfast

### **Day 3: Kathmandu to Nayapul**

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 Himal, 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. Approximately 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 descending down to Nayapul. We camp here for the day. Final altitude : 1050m, Drive time : 7 hrs  
Accommodation: Fully catered camp

### **Day 4: Nayapul to Ghandrung**

From Birethanti we follow the Modi Khola on a wide and flat trail to Shyauli Bazaar. There should be nice view of Machapuchhre and Hiunchuli mountains as we also enjoy the birdlife. Woolly necked storks are visitors here in February and early March. At Shyauli Bazaar we cross a small bridge and ascend for approximately 500metres we then traverse through terraced fields



and 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 stop for lunch. Walking amongst these beautifully cultivated hillsides takes you on a journey back in time, and allows you to 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. 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 larger 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.  
Final altitude: 1951m, Walking Time: 5 ½ hrs  
Accommodation: fully catered camp

### **Day 5: Gandrung to Tadapani**

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), HiunChuli (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 short allowing you to enjoy the surrounding landscape. The trail climbs gently from Ghandrung then traverses through the forest on an undulating trail until arriving a small stream. We cross the bridge and climb steeply up to Bhainsi Kharka.

Here we climb a little more entering a thick and ancient forest of rhododendron through which the trail to Tadapani undulates gently for about an hour. 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.

Walking time: 4 ½ hrs, Final altitude: 2700m  
Accommodation: fully catered camp

#### **Day 6: Tadapani to Bayeli Kharka**

Leaving Tadapani we enter the forest and start ascending gently for about half an hour. Then after a small descent we continue climbing to the shoulder of the hill through this mossy rhododendron forest that is reminiscent of images from Lord of the Rings. It is a steady climb all morning, the terrain ranging from gentle traverse to prolonged steep climbs through varying rhododendron and bamboo forest. We also pass several clearings with derelict shacks before arriving on a bigger ridge top clearing at Dobato; which in good weather should provide splendid views of Annapurna South and Machpucchare. The trail descends a little from here past a Chautara (resting place) where we take the less



obvious path ascending on the left. Arriving on the ridge you will see ahead a rocky hill that we will be climbing. The trail is exposed and quite narrow getting to the base of the hill. After about half an hour of climbing the path traverses briefly to the ridge. A few minutes descent will then bring us to camp.

Walking time: 6 - 6½ hrs, Final altitude: 3450m  
Accommodation: fully catered camp

#### **Day 7: Bayeli Kharka to Kopra Danda**

The newly developed trail from here is more scenic traversing across to Kopra rather than descending down to Shistibong. This is the trail we will take, however in heavy snow condition this may not be possible, so the alternative route via Shistibong will be used. The direct route trail descends from Bayeli through sparse rhododendron trees and berberis bushes to cross a couple of streams then climb steeply up on the ridge seen from camp. It is a gentle climb from here as we cross a stream then traverse this steep sided slope to Kopra. The trail undulates all the while with some steep climbs and descends either crossing streams or climbing over spurs. Finally arriving at a small pond and chautara, we ignore the path continuing straight and take the ascending left hand trail climbing in zigzags up the ridge, after another chautara a short traverse will get us to our destination.

Walking time: 5 ½ - 6 hrs, Final altitude: 3450m  
Accommodation: fully catered camp



#### **Day 8: Khopra Danda to High Camp**

After a fabulous sunrise across the mountains we continue our trek towards the Khayer lake. The trail hugs the slopes heading north towards the mountains. It is a gradual ascent to begin as we traverse the mountainside, then after a short steep climb over a spur we cross a small stream. During early spring and late autumn the streams are frozen, so care should be taken to cross them. We continue to traverse crossing several more streams, climbing over more spurs and passing chautaras and shepherd's huts until we come to a large open area with several streams joining at the crossing. This is our high camp a great wilderness place. If you contour around to the other end of the small hill on the left there is quite a scatter of stone huts and bamboo enclosures that are used by herders who bring their livestock in the summer to graze.

Walking time: 5 ½ - 6 hrs, Final altitude: 4300m, Accommodation: fully catered camp



### **Day 9: High Camp – Khayer Tal – Kopra Danda**

Leaving camp we descend from the small mount and traverse for a short while, then climb steeply up straddling the ridge. The climb eases a little after about thirty minutes. Then again we climb keeping the stream gully to the left. We then arrive on a rocky field, one would imagine or hope the lake to be behind the jumble of rocks. What lies behind is moraine debris, however a small temple can be seen atop the grassy hill on the left. We climb steeply up to the temple and then following the ridge hidden behind the huge rock face is Khayer Tal. The lake is a small mountain tarn which is said to be spring fed. A short climb up the grassy hill is rewarding with and incredibly up close view of Annapurna south and Annapurna Fang. For the energetic, a further 30 minutes climb behind the lake to the jagged ridge is stunning scenery. The Dhaulagiri Range looms over the Kali Gandaki Valley and you couldn't get any closer to the Annapurna mountains as the sheer face of Annapurna fang drops below you.

We retrace our steps to camp for lunch then continue down to Kopra Danda.

Walking time: 5 ½ - 6 hrs, Final altitude: 3880m

Accommodation: fully catered camp

### **Day 10: Kopra Danda to Swanta**

After yet another fabulous sunrise view we retrace our steps along the short traverse and down to the small pond and chautara. From here we will follow the path descending down towards the valley. From sparse vegetation of berberis and rhododendron we pass amazing oak forest after Shistibong, then down to bamboo and wet mossy forest of mixed vegetation. After crossing the forest there is short climb then the trail undulates through the woodland to Swanta.

Walking time: 5 ½ - 6 hrs, Final altitude: 2200m

Accommodation: fully catered camp

### **Day 11 – 14: Pokhara**

We will spend the next three days trekking out to Pokhara. From Swanta we descend down to cross the bridge, then climb up to Phalante where we will meet the main trekking trail. Rather than following it we will take the rarely trekked route passing through Gurung and Magar villages of Nangi, Lespar Langdi, Puranogaon and Deopur by which you will have a taste of rural and authentic Nepali life. We return on day 14 to Pokhara after a short walk to the trailhead and have the remainder of the day free to enjoy the lakeside and in the evening you will enjoy the comforts of the city hotel!



### **Day 15: Pokhara – KTM**

In the morning we take an internal flight to Kathmandu. Weather permitting; this should be a spectacular journey with a bird's eye view of the Himalaya from Dhaulagiri in the west, across the Annapurnas, Manaslu, Ganesh Himal and finally Langtang. The remainder of the day is free to relax at the hotel, explore further sights or shop in the markets of Kathmandu for souvenirs and Nepalese handicrafts. Accommodation: City Hotel Bed & Breakfast

### **Day 16: Departure;**

Today the trip concludes in Kathmandu. You will be given complimentary airport transfers for your departure flight. Your sense of achievement after trekking along unfrequented trails to remote parts of the Annapurnas and the culture you will have witnessed along the way will be a fabulous experience. However, the best memory will surely be that as a result of your holiday the Nepali community will benefit from development projects through our affiliated charities.

### **Recommended Extensions**

**We suggest the following extensions which can be added to the end of this itinerary:**  
i) 2 days chitwan Safari ii) 2 day Spa Resort

### **Independent & Bespoke Group Trips**

**This trip can be tailor made for either an independent trek or for your own group. You can select any departure date and adjust the itinerary if necessary to suit your needs.**

**please contact us at:**  
**info@theresponsibletravellers.com**

To book e-mail: [info@theresponsibletravellers.com](mailto:info@theresponsibletravellers.com)

# Additional Information

## What's included in your holiday?

- ✓ Carbon Balancing of international flights
- ✓ Internal flight return Pokhara - Ktm
- ✓ 4 nights hotel B&B accommodation
- ✓ 11 nights fully catered tented camp
- ✓ 1 day guided sightseeing, transport and entrance fees in and around Ktm as specified in the itinerary
- ✓ All transportation included in the itinerary
- ✓ Porterage and guides fees
- ✓ National Park Entrance fees & permits
- ✓ 100% profits donated to charity

## What's not included:

- ❖ International flights & airport taxes
- ❖ Meals: lunch and dinner whilst in City B&B
- ❖ Incidental extra personal expenses
- ❖ Nepal Tourist Entry Visa
- ❖ Single persons supplement
- ❖ Additional sightseeing not specified in the itinerary
- ❖ Travel Insurance
- ❖ Staff tips

Travelling alone.....and don't want to pay a single supplement? No problem, you will be paired up with someone of the same gender to share a room / tent. If you would prefer the privacy of a single occupancy the Single Supplement for this trip is £120

### **Thought of Funding raising for charity?**

- 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 at: [info@theresponsibletravellers.com](mailto:info@theresponsibletravellers.com) and we will forward details to you.

## First class staff & service levels

We are a highly credible tour operating organisation specialising in the Himalayan countries. All our staff are specially selected based on their experience, expertise and qualifications. We pride ourselves on a highly personalised airport to airport service with quality of care. The trip Leader will be an experienced professional leader working full time in the Himalayas & Central Asia with many years of experience. He/she will have full mountain wilderness & first aid qualifications and will have received training from either Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Nepal Mountaineering Association or one of the European Alpine Clubs. As a responsible employer we pride ourselves on hiring local staff and paying wages higher than most organisations. If you want to read more about our employment policy please go to:

[www.theresponsibletravellers.com/our\\_ethics/employment\\_policy.html](http://www.theresponsibletravellers.com/our_ethics/employment_policy.html)

### 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).

## Administration & Practicalities

**Insurance:** It is compulsory to take full holiday insurance which covers trekking to the maximum altitude of your trek/trip, and also covers full rescue and repatriation costs. You will need to provide a copy of your insurance details, including an emergency 24 hour telephone number to the trek leader before departing Leh. 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 you wish to do 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 online at:

[http://www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa\\_information.html](http://www.nepembassy.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 two passport photos and US\$40 dollars in cash (N.B US dollars - is the only accepted payment).

**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.

**Flight Information:** This trip is land only and operates Ktm to Ktm. Please contact us if you want advice about international flight options and how to purchase.

**Health:** It is important you are prepared & fit and healthy for your trek. We strongly recommend you visit your local GP and ask advice regarding any vaccinations required.

**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.

## What to expect

### Weather

- October to April is the dry season. During this time you should have warm days with temperatures between 15 -25 degrees Celsius depending on altitude with relatively clear skies and little precipitation.
- During the winter months temperatures may reduce to -10 degrees Celsius during night-time.

### 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 and minimize the pressures on the environment. This also avoids the feeling of "herding" from being part of a large group. There is a minimum of 6 to operate the trek.

### Wildlife

The Annapurna has high pastures with Yaks grazing, on whom the elusive snow leopard preys. Lower down the forest is home to Langur monkeys. You are likely to get sightings of the Himalayan birds of prey such as Griffin vultures and lammergeiers. If you travel in the spring the rhododendron forests will be in full bloom.

### Baggage:

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. The weight limit for your trek bag is 15kg. The limitation for luggage on the internal flight is 15kg for the hold and 10kg for hand luggage. Please see your airline for details of your international flight luggage allowances.

# More about us & Our Ethics.....

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 few pages you can read how our ethics are put into practice.



## Our Guarantee:

100% of profits are donated to Charitable Projects

- ✓ We pay the cost to Carbon Balance your international flight to the Himalayas
- ✓ Through a committed Environmental Policy we work to ensure minimal impact of our activities
- ✓ We have a simple and fair Pricing Policy with no extra fees 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

*Are you ready for a change in the way you approach your holiday?*

**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. This is why when you go on holiday with "The Responsible Travellers", we commit as part of our Responsible Tourism policy to ensure your trip contributes towards renewable energy technologies in the Himalayas. Given the great "green debate", we have chosen to implement this policy in a way that ensures we know we are making a difference. For every traveller to the Himalayas we donate twice the amount it costs to purchase commercial carbon credits\*\* to either Nepal's Renewable Energy support programme BSP. Or Ladakh's Ecological Development Society depending on your destination. 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)



**The choice is easy when you are...**

**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. We work with our partners to find suitable projects and locations to invest and then all the funds go directly to the local project. Our partner charities and areas of investment include:



### Education

We believe all development starts with educating the people. We support community education programmes, child support programmes, and interest free loans for adult education through our beneficiary charity CHANCE Registered UK charity. 1107201..



### Community Development

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

Our third area of work involves working with BSP – the national biogas organisation in Nepal. 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 work with BSP Nepal in order to help the communities develop Biogas – a renewable energy resource which provides clean fuel, stops deforestation, and offers far reaching health and sanitation benefits.



*To see more details of our charitable giving please go online to:  
<http://www.theresponsibletravellers.com/ethics/projects.html>*

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!

**....Doing the right thing**