

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.
- ✓ We will pay the cost to Carbon Balance your international flights
- ✓ Through a committed Environmental Policy we work to ensure minimal impact of our activities
- ✓ Our fair and simple Pricing Policy has no extra fees or land charges – price us up against other companies!
- ✓ We 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 and click on Our Ethics.

Experience Nepal: Culture & Nature Tour Trip Notes

Highlights:

Culture

Bhaktapur
Pashupatinath Temple
Boudha Stupa
Family Home stay

Nature

Rhino
Crocodile
Birdlife
Elephant back Safari

If you want to do something different, want to make a differenceor want to really get to know the country you visit, then this is the trip for you. This alternative itinerary combines a cultural and nature tour with volunteering. The first part of your holiday allows you the opportunity to experience a family stay & community project. Our program allows you to get the most from your visit to Nepal by becoming part of a community, and allows you to gain an understanding of issues faced by populations in the developing world.

The second part takes you on a journey through time exploring this mystical Himalayan Kingdom. In the Kathmandu Valley you will have a chance to see the finest Newari architecture, experience the hustle and bustle of the medieval capital city, explore the cobbled streets and temple complexes and experience sunrise over the Himalayan panorama. Finally, in Chitwan, Nepal's most popular Nature National Park you will enjoy elephant back safaris and canoe rides in search of Rhino, crocodile and other wildlife.

This is a trip doesn't just visit but allows you to Live Nepal!

Please refer to the website: www.theresponsibletravellers.com for more details of the latest community projects.

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: Hotel

Meals: None

Day 2: Kathmandu Valley

This morning there will be a full trip briefing by your Leader for the next part of your culture & nature tour of Nepal. Today there is 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 flower sellers, incense and other offerings for sale, 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 the most important Shiva locations across the Indian sub continent. As well as a place of worship, it is also the most important cremation site 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.

Renowned to be the best mountain viewing point in the Kathmandu valley, we drive up to the hill resort at Nagarkot, in time to watch the sunset.

Accommodation: Resort Lodge

Food Included: Breakfast and Dinner.

Day 3: Kathmandu Valley

We get up early for sunrise as the skies are normally clearer at this time and provide a better opportunity to see the mountains. From here we should get to see a spectacular view with a wide range of the Himalayas. After breakfast we have a beautiful walk through villages and terraced fields down to Changu Narayan, the oldest temple of the valley that dates back to the 5th century. The statue of Garuda and the inscriptions on the stile attest its originality and date. Here our transport will meet us and take us to the medieval city of Bhaktapur – a world heritage site. Between the 14th and the 16th centuries this was the country's capital city and has the finest examples of Newari architecture still intact. The visit will include the Durbar Square – studded with Shrines and temples, Potters Square where you can see the potters at work on the wheel, Taumadhi Tole – the old centre of the town. This is a pedestrian city, thus walking around the ancient streets is a pleasure and takes us back some 400 years. We then drive to our hotel in Kathmandu.

Accommodation: City Hotel

Food Included: Breakfast

Day 4/5/6: Chitwan National Park

Today we drive to our Safari lodge in Chitwan National Park. 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 descends steeply on hairpin bends until we reach the Trishuli valley and follow the Trishuli River to Mugling. We now drive south towards Chitwan National Park. The park is home to the one horned rhino, the Bengal tiger, elephant and crocodile. As well as these mammal species the park has 450 species of bird, 43 mammal species and 67 different types of butterfly. The most popular way of wildlife viewing is on elephant back. The activities during our 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 and a visit to the elephant breeding centre.

Accommodation: Resort Lodge

Food Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Day 7: To KTM

We transfer from Chitwan to Kathmandu today, with the remainder of the day free.

Accommodation: Hotel

Food Included: Breakfast

Day 8: Kathmandu

Today is kept free for you to pursue an activity of your choice. There are a variety of pursuits including: an optional extra leisure flight to Everest Base Camp, further sightseeing in Kathmandu such as visiting Patan Durbar Square and museum, Swayumbhu (or the monkey temple), the ancient capital city of Bhaktapur or simply relaxing in the hotel, an old palace and enjoy the gardens and swimming pool. Of course the shops in Thamel – offering a variety of goods and handicrafts, will be open until late in the evening for those wanting to dabble in a little trading!

Accommodation: City Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Day 9-13: Family Home stay & Community Project

Early in the morning you will be transferred to the project location.

While working with local residents and youth groups on community development projects, you are placed in a home stay to encourage integration and cultural exchange. You will gain an insight into the typical daily life of the Nepali people, whilst gaining and understanding for the environmental and social issues faced in a developing country. This program allows you to collaborate with locals on projects that develop the community and improve the overall way of life. Typical projects include awareness campaigns for hygiene and sanitation, renovation of school buildings, and establishing and improving potable water sources.

After the arrival greetings and introductions, there will be a briefing and opening ceremony. Later in the day you will be introduced to your family and able to settle into your home for the week. Then the project work will commence. You do not need any particular skills, only a willingness to participate. Food will be provided

and safe water stations will be set up for participants to use. You should remember that the facilities in rural Nepali homesteads are relatively basic compared with Western standards.

On the final day there will be a closing ceremony at lunchtime and then following farewells with your new found Nepali community, you will be transferred back to Kathmandu. In the evening the group will meet for dinner to celebrate the project and new found friendships.

Accommodation: Home Stay

Meals: Full Board

Day 14: Depart for the UK

This will be undeniably a journey like no other into the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal. The culture you will have experienced along the way will touch you deeply. 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.

Should you wish to extend your stay in Nepal please review the optional extra excursions online at www.theresponsibletravellers.com and go to our destinations and click on extensions.

Additional Information:

Please Note costs include:

- Carbon balancing for international flights to Kathmandu
- 5 nights city hotel bed & breakfast accommodation
- 1 night hilltop resort with full board
- 3 Nights safari resort accommodation with full board and safari activities
- 4 nights full board family home stay
- Guided sightseeing, transport and entrance fees in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Bandipur, Pokhara, Chitwan as specified in the itinerary
- All transportation included in the itinerary whilst in Nepal
- Internal flight from Chitwan to Kathmandu
- National Park Entrance fees
- Community Project Management & Co-ordination
- Funding for community project
- Charity Donation

Not included:

- International flights & airport taxes to Kathmandu (international airport departure tax – approx £15)
- 5 lunches & 5 dinners
- Incidental extra personal expenses
- Staff tips
- Nepal Tourist Entry Visa (\$30)
- Single persons room supplement
- Additional sightseeing not specified in the itinerary
- Travel Insurance

Single Person Supplement: the costs are based on two people sharing a twin room. Should you require a single room a supplement of £150 will be levied. Please note a single room can not be guaranteed on the family home stay and will be dependant on availability. We will however, do our utmost to respond to 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 advice about flight options and how to purchase.

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 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 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 for approx. £20. A link to the website is below:

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\$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 15kgs 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.

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 at: 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 or write to us at 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

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!

If you are ready for a change in the way you approach your holiday, we believe no-one else can offer you a better option than **The Responsible Travellers**.

The choice is easy when you

....Doing the right thing

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