Mercury Holidays

COLOURS OF NEPAL

Kathmandu, Bandipur, Pokhara & Chitwan National Park

Squeezed between India and Tibet, Nepal is a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups, stunning mountainous landscapes and dense ancient cities brimming with pagoda-topped temples. This wonderful tour takes you to the evocative city of Kathmandu then up into the hilltop settlement of Bandipur and lakeside city of Pokhara then finishes in the steaming jungle of Chitwan National Park, which offers an excellent opportunity to spot the solitary greater one-horned rhinoceros.

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Nepal. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:
B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Kathmandu
Depart London Heathrow on your scheduled, overnight flight to Kathmandu.

DAY 2: Kathmandu & Patan D
Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel in Patan, one of three royal cities in Kathmandu Valley. After an introductory meeting at the hotel with your guide, the afternoon will be at leisure to allow you to relax and take in your new surroundings. The group will reconvene in the evening to enjoy a welcome dinner together.

DAY 3: Patan B/L/D
Following breakfast, your group will commence its first foray into Nepal's capital city. Kathmandu is not only the country's core in terms of trading and religion but is also known for the sleepy, all-seeing Buddha eyes which keep watch from the stupas and temples dotted amongst the chaotic jumble of buildings that spread across the valley. Begin with Boudhanath, the largest and holiest Buddhist stupa (a hemispherical shaped monument containing Buddhist relics) outside of Tibet. Continue on to the ancient religious complex of Swayambhunath, also known as Monkey Temple due to the families of macaques that live and roam around the grounds. After lunch your tour returns to Patan, a sprawling city which has almost merged with Kathmandu, separated only by the murky waters of the Bagmati River. Explore the enchanting melange of temples and former royal palaces of Durbar Square before concluding your day with a shopping trip in Thamel where you can barter for souvenirs or take a break to enjoy a sweet pastry from one of the local bakeries.

DAY 4: Patan to Bandipur B/L/D
In the morning you will begin your drive to the hilltop settlement of Bandipur, arriving in time for lunch. With winding lanes, traditional Newari-style buildings and a community of farmers and traders, this beautiful town is seemingly untouched by modern life. Following a local lunch, venture into the heart of Bandipur to discover Bandipur Bazaar, an area of old shops, houses, temples and meeting places where you can appreciate the extraordinary view of the snow-clad Himalayan skyline.

DAY 5: Bandipur to Pokhara B/L/D
Enjoy a morning at leisure in Bandipur before journeying to Pokhara, the gateway to the peaks and valleys of the Annapurna mountain range. This sleepy lakeside city enjoys a tranquil and relaxing atmosphere and is the perfect base for day walks or hikes into the spectacular surrounding mountains. Arriving at your hotel in the late afternoon there will be some time to unwind before your evening meal.

DAY 6: Pokhara B/L/D
After breakfast at your hotel, a tour to the stunning Devi's Falls follows where the group will follow a series of underground streams and small walkways before reaching the cascading waterfall that bursts through a tunnel and falls into a cave deep below. Next visit Mahendra Cave to appreciate the stalagmites and stalactites before making a stop at the Tibetan refugee camp to browse for handmade jewellery, pashminas, trinkets and local carvings. Finally your group will take a peaceful boat trip on the serene waters of the lake before enjoying a riverside lunch. Returning to your lodge in the afternoon the rest of the day is at leisure.

DAY 7: Pokhara to Chitwan B/L/D
Today you will depart Pokhara after breakfast for Chitwan National Park, one of the largest havens for the endangered Bengal tiger and home to a rare population of one-horned Indian Rhinoceros. A stop will be made en route at Manakamana to take a cable car ride to the summit of a spectacular viewpoint. Arrive at the hillside temple and a mountain shrine which dates back to the 17th century and is believed to be a place where the goddess Bhagwati has the power to grant wishes to those who are able to make a suitable sacrifice. Following lunch, your journey will continue into the sub-tropical lowlands of the national park where, in the evening you will experience the traditional dances of the Tharu Cultural Show.

DAY 8: Chitwan B/L/D
Your full day tour of Chitwan National Park begins in the morning with a canoe ride up the Rapti River where you may encounter the rare gharial, a fish-eating crocodile whose population is estimated at less than 235 individuals. Next visit the elephant breeding centre where you will have the chance to watch mother and baby elephants interact whilst grazing in the jungle and warding off pesky mosquitos by covering themselves in dust. After lunch the group will proceed further into the jungle for a guided safari upon the backs of the majestic elephants, led by the local mahouts (elephant riders) who will be keen to help you spot deer, rhinoceros, antelope and perhaps even a glance of the "King of the Jungle", the Bengal tiger.

DAY 9: Chitwan to Kathmandu B/L/D
Leaving Chitwan after breakfast, you will be driven back to Kathmandu, stopping for lunch along the way and arriving back in the city in the late afternoon. Enjoy some free time to venture out into the bustling streets to pick out any last minute gifts before enjoying your final dinner with the rest of your group. The sounds of bicycle bells and chanting monks and the intoxicating aromas of Nepalese delicacies will leave you with a memory to cherish for years to come. Namaste – "the spirit within me salutes the spirit in you", goodbye and farewell.

DAY 10: Kathmandu to the UK or Extension B
Transfer from your hotel to Kathmandu airport for your return flight to the UK, or continue on to your chosen extension.

Your hotels

Patan, Kathmandu (3 nights): 4★ Hotel Himalaya - Sahid Shukra Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal 44700, Nepal. Contact number: 00977 1-5523900

Bhandipur (1 night): 4★ Gaun Ghar Resort - Dumre-Bandipur Rd, Bandipur 56516, Nepal. Contact number: 00977 1-4215431

Pokhara (2 nights): 4★ Fishtail Lodge - Pokhara 33700, Nepal Contact number: 00977 1-4229647

Chitwan (2 nights): 4★ Rhino Lodge and Hotel - Sauraha Rd, Chitwan 44200, Nepal. Contact number: 00977 1-4005072

All accommodation is 4★ and features an en-suite bathroom and air-conditioning/heating. Mercury Holidays has visited and inspected all of the hotels to ensure that they meet the high standards of service which we require for our clients. If the hotels detailed are not available, alternatives will be used of a similar standard. Final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately two weeks before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Lunch and dinner will generally be taken in local restaurants or your hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.

On your arrival

On your arrival in Nepal you will be met by a representative from our local agent, Champawati Tours and Travel Ltd, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Nepal representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries.

However, if you need to contact Champawati Tours during your stay the details are:

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for Champawati Tours and Travel Ltd

Contact	Telephone number
Madan Adhikari	Office: 00977 1 4700 967 Mobile: 00977 985 1093896

Contact e-mail address for Champawati Tours and Travel Ltd

info@champawatitours.com

Visas - IMPORTANT

British passport holders do not need to obtain a visa for Nepal prior to departure. A Nepalese visa can be purchased on arrival into Kathmandu; you will need to download a form from the Nepal Embassy website and present this completed form on arrival at immigration together with a passport sized photograph (we reccommend taking a couple spare) and payment (currently USD $25). When applying for the visa on arrival you will need to ensure you apply for a multiple entry visa. We recommend you check the following website before travelling for all the most up to date advice, requirements and any changes http://www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa.php. We strongly advise you to check with your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding required passport validity.

Insurance

You must obtain suitable travel insurance prior to departure. Mercury Holidays is partnered with Holiday Extras which offer insurance at the following prices: Worldwide insurance, excluding the USA.

Age in years	Up to 64	65-74	75-85
Up to 17 days cover	£42	£79	£135

For all persons 86 years and over, please contact us for insurance prices. To book your travel insurance with us please contact our reservations department on 0800 093 4099. If you have an existing policy with another company, please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays 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.

Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip, starting in Kathmandu on Day 1 ending back to Kathmandu on Day 10. Transfers will be provided by a local English speaking guide.

Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory and is at your discretion. Should you wish to tip, we reccommend to tip both your driver and guide approximately £3.00 ($5.00) per person per day in total. This will be collected at the end of your tour for your convenience. Tips are accepted in the local currency, US dollars and British pounds.

Health and Vaccinations

It is strongly recommended that you check the latest health recommendations for travel to Nepal with your GP at least 4-6 weeks before travel. Any medicines you may need during your journey should be packed in your hand luggage. We suggest it is worth taking a few first aid supplies such as travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic cream, aspirin etc. Because these products can be more expensive abroad and familiar brands are not always available. It is not advisable to drink the tap water.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves full days of sightseeing, often on foot, and includes some climbing of stairs and getting on and off coaches and boats. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 6, and the maximum will be 40. If in the unlikely event there are less than 6 people booked on your tour date then you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee or NPR, divided into 100 paisa. US dollars and UK sterling are both also often accepted should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any lunches and dinners where these are not mentioned on your itinerary and personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and extra drinks and snacks. Approximately £100-£200 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour, depending on how much of a bargain-hunter you are!

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

What to Pack

- Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Warm clothing and thermals in winter
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- An electric plug converter - three different plug sockets are used, so it is best to bring a multi adapter
- Loo paper for public WCs • Binoculars

Flight and Airport Information

Your flight is to Kathmandu International Airport with Jet Airways (9W), departing from London Heathrow Terminal 4.

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
Heathrow - Delhi	20:50	10:40	8 hours 30 minutes	9W121
Delhi - Kathmandu	12:00	14:00	1 hour 45 minutes	9W260
Kathmandu - Delhi	09:50	11:20	1 hour 45 minutes	9W263
Delhi - Heathrow	13:45	18:30	9 hours 15 minutes	9W122

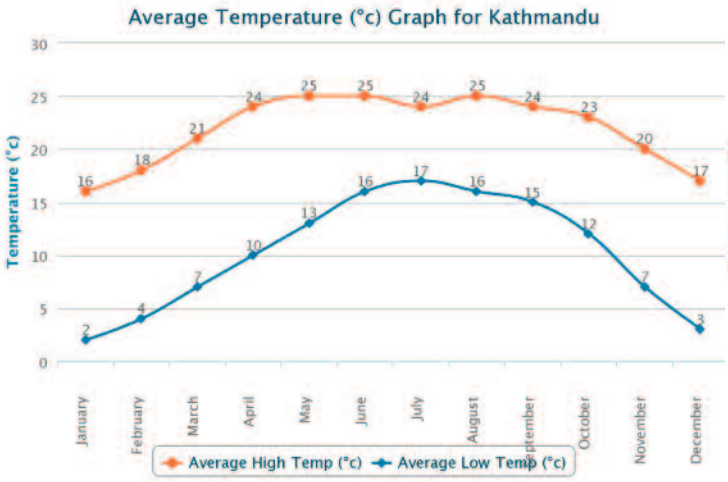
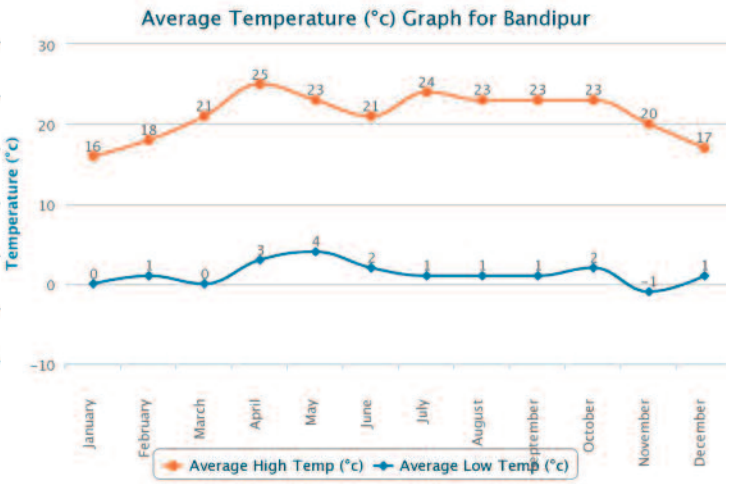
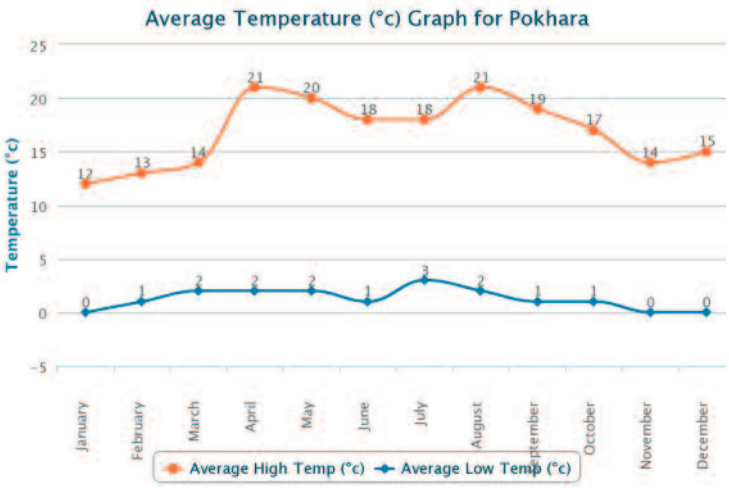
IMPORTANT: Please note that all flight times are subject to change. Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Baggage Allowance

Baggage allowance (per person): Each passenger is entitled to 23kg of hold luggage & hand luggage of 5kg not exceeding 55cm x 35cm x 25cm in size and 1 personal item such as a handbag, briefcase or laptop case. Weight restrictions will be finalized on E-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check – in. Check-In should be at least 3 hours before departure.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras - Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

Weather and Climate

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.