

READ Nepal: Kathmandu, the Annapurna's and Chitwan




Myths
and Mountains

13 days/12 nights

2017 Trip Dates:
Oct. 8-20 (READ Trip with
Dr. Toni Neubauer)

Custom Dates Available



Myths and Mountains is a proud corporate sponsor of READ Global (www.readglobal.org). We contribute a portion of our profit on behalf of each traveler to READ Global, which builds library/community centers and seeds rural businesses to fully sustain and support the libraries. Its pilot site, READ Nepal, was the winner of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's 2006 Access to Learning Award.

READ Nepal: Kathmandu, The Annapurnas & Chitwan

Nepal is not just about climbing Himalayan peaks, but also about its friendly people and rich environmental diversity. The country rises from 100 feet above sea level to Mt. Everest in less than 100 miles. On this imaginative trip, *two weeks door-to-door and perfect for a family*, you actually get to see everything from the jungle to the snow-capped Annapurnas and are hosted by members of the READ library community along the way.

Traveling with Myths and Mountains President, Dr. Antonia Neubauer, you journey from Kathmandu to Gorkha, home of the king who founded the Shah dynasty in Nepal. Here you can visit a new READ library just under construction and explore villages in the shadow of Langtang, Bauda Himal and other sky-touching peaks. From Gorkha, you head to Pokhara looking out on the Annapurnas. You can visit the town and museum, paraglide, if you wish, and take a boat on the lake. Then, from the mountains, you drop down to the jungle and spend time with the local Tharus.

Along the way, you will meet the children and adults of the villages, be shown all around, fed delicious food, and get a sense of the communities!

During your time in Kathmandu, you visit the beautiful temples and monasteries of the valley, meet craftspeople, shop for jewelry, rugs, or whatever you wish, and enjoy the hospitality and warmth of the Nepali people.

DAY	DESCRIPTION	HOTEL	MEALS
Oct. 08	Arrive in Kathmandu; PM walk down Asan Tol to Dhurbar Square. Welcome dinner at Thamel House	Summit Hotel	D
Oct. 09	Tour Swayambunath. Walk down to Vajra Hotel for breakfast. Drive to READ office. Visit Pashupatinath, Bodhanath with lunch	Summit Hotel	B,L,D
Oct. 10	Explore Patan & Bhaktapur; Visit with the Kumari goddess and lunch at the Patan Museum	Summit Hotel	B,L
Oct. 11	Optional Everest View Flight. Drive Gorkha via Manakamana. Visit Temple	Gorkha Gaun	B,L,D
Oct. 12	Visit palace, town and villages	Gorkha Gaun	B,L,D
Oct. 13	Day hike to villages	Gorkha Gaun	B,L,D
Oct. 14	Drive Pokhara with lunch and time to explore in Bandipur	Fishtail	B,L
Oct. 15	Visit Pokhara – Optional paragliding. Sunrise hike. Visit Mountaineering Museum, town and boat ride on lake.	Fish Tail Lodge	B
Oct. 16	Drive to Maruni Sanctuary	Maruni Sanctuary	B,L,D
Oct. 17	Enjoy a canoe trip and visit the elephant-breeding center. Visit Jhuwani Library and Sauraha	Maruni Sanctuary	B,L,D
Oct. 18	Elephant Safari, Elephant Bathing, Ox Cart Ride, Tharu Museum, Tharu Dancing	Maruni Sanctuary	B,L,D
Oct. 19	Fly back to Kathmandu from Bharatpur for a special farewell dinner hosted by READ (not by you)	Summit Hotel	B,L
Oct. 20	Transfer for your flight back home	None	B

PER PERSON LAND PRICE: \$2995 (7-10 people), \$3375 (4-6 people), \$3995 (2-3 people)
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$605
PER PERSON ESTIMATED INTERNAL AIR: \$110
OPTIONAL EVEREST VIEW FLIGHT: \$200/pp
OPTIONAL PARAGLIDING: \$130/pp
PER PERSON TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO READ GLOBAL: \$300

**We will make every effort to match you with a same-sex roommate if you wish but if no one is available,
we must ask that you pay the single supplement.*

CONTACT:

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INCLUDED IN LAND COST

- Accommodations as listed, including all service charges and taxes
- Internal airfare
- All ground transfers
- All excursions with expert English-speaking guides
- Entrance fees to museums, temples, etc.
- All meals as indicated with B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner

NOT INCLUDED IN LAND COST

- International airfare
- Comprehensive insurance coverage, including medical, evacuation, baggage loss/delay, cancellation ins., etc.
- Visa fees
- Any hotels transiting from the States to Nepal
- Meals where not indicated with a B,L,D
- Tips/gratuity (porters, drivers, local guides, etc.)
- Domestic and international airport taxes
- Other items of a personal nature including laundry, alcoholic beverages, etc.
- Additional expenses resulting from the delay or extension of the trip due to causes beyond our reasonable control

ITINERARY

OCT. 08: ARRIVE KATHMANDU

Arriving in **Kathmandu**, you will clear customs and immigration. Leaving the airport, you will be met by our operator holding a sign with *Myths and Mountains* on it. He will transfer you to the hotel. In the afternoon, time permitting, you will take a walk along **Asan Tol**, the market street, and visit **Durbar Square**.

Tonight, you will have a welcome dinner.

HOTEL **SUMMIT HOTEL**
MEALS **DINNER**

OCT. 09: VISIT SWAYAMBUNTH, PASHUPATINATH AND BODHANATH

You will rise early and be picked up by your guide to visit **Swayambunath**, the lotus temple, at sunrise. At this hour of the morning, the temple belongs to the local people and not the tourists. Here, at the site of the origins of the Kathmandu Valley, you will visit the temple, see all the morning worshippers and listen to the sacred songs sung by the local Newaris of the valley. You can also walk the *kora*, or pilgrim walk, around the temple with the local devotees. When you are done, you can walk down to the Vajra Hotel for breakfast.

After breakfast, you will be met by the van. In the spring, you will be driven to **Pashupatinath**, the holiest of the Hindu shrines in Nepal.

In the fall, you will stop first at the **READ office** and meet with the staff. Then you head to Pashupatinath.



In Pashupati, you peer from a distance at the Temple to Shiva before crossing the bridge to gaze across the Bagmati River through the temple doors or watch what is going on along the banks. Continuing up the hill, you will stop to visit with some of the yogis and descend passing the **Gujeswari Temple**.

Leaving the Hindu world of Pashupati behind, you will drive up to Bodhanath. By the time you arrive, it will be time for lunch. After lunch, you can circumambulate the stupa, visiting the side chapels. About half way around and off to the left is a small Gelugpa monastery with some nice paintings, and a copy of the Buddha in Tibet's Jo Khang in another chapel. Following the tour of Bodha, you can stay and visit the little shops or return to the Yak and Yeti for a rest.

Tonight's dinner will be at one of Kathmandu's best restaurants – Chez Caroline in Barbar Mahal.

HOTEL **SUMMIT HOTEL**
MEALS **BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER**

OCT. 10: TOUR PATAN AND BHAKTAPUR

You rise early to spend the morning in **Patan**, one of the three cities of the Kathmandu Valley. Also called Lalitpur, the "Beautiful city", Patan is the most Buddhist of the three cities and famous for its excellent metalwork. Early in the morning, you will visit the **Golden Temple**, the largest Newari Buddhist monastery in

the valley and a superb example of Newari metalcraft. You will participate in the morning rituals at the temple, where a constant stream of devotees offer their *puja* or worship to the main shrine image of Sakyamuni Buddha.

Behind the temple is one of the best **makers of singing bowls** in Nepal. You can spend time with him, learning about the sound and medicinal qualities of the bowls, and sampling some of the different varieties he has in his shop.

You will then walk to the house of the **Kumari**, the living goddess, who manifests herself in the body of a virgin girl. The Goddess Kumari is one of the most popular deities in the valley, worshipped equally by Hindus and Buddhists. At her home you will take her *darsan*, that is, receive her divine vision. You will participate in her private worship, performed by members of her family and rarely seen by tourists. This will also be an opportunity to talk to her family and learn about what it is like to be a parent of a goddess and what her life is like. When you are done, you can have lunch at the **Patan Museum** in Dhurbar Square and explore the museum.



From Patan, it is a short drive to **Bhaktapur**, the City of Devotees, and a visit to its Dhurbar Square, museum and unique temples. Bhaktapur resembles the Kathmandu of 20 years ago. In the center of town no cars are allowed and the original architecture of the valley has been retained. Here you can see the beautiful woodcarvings for which the Newari artisans of the valley are rightly famous. Bhaktapur is also known for its pottery. In one of the side squares, you can see the *Kumalis*, or potters making and firing their pots as they have done for centuries.

HOTEL **SUMMIT HOTEL**
MEALS **BREAKFAST, LUNCH**

OCT. 11: OPTIONAL EVEREST VIEW FLIGHT. DRIVE GORKHA VIA MANAKAMANA

Those who wish need to rise early to go to the airport to catch an **Everest View Flight on Buddha Air**.

After the flight, you head out of Kathmandu and drive to the pilgrimage site of **Mana Kamana**. Take the cable car to the top, where you can visit the temple to Kali. Depending on timing, you may want to have lunch here.

After the visit, you continue driving along the road turning off to head towards Gorkha, one of the 75 districts of Nepal. The Magars, who live here, are famous as soldiers, some as members of the Gurkha Army and others as members of the Nepali Army. Legend says that a very famous saint, Goraknath, appeared in Gorkha, and there is a cave nearby with markings said to be his feet. The town of Gorkha was built on the spot where the saint first appeared.

The ruling dynasty in Gorkha in the 1700s were the Shahs, and it was from here that Prithvi Narayan Shah and the Gorkhalis swept down to conquer the Kathmandu Valley in 1769 and, from there, unite Nepal.

ACCOMMODATION: GORKHA GAUN
MEALS: BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

OCT. 12: VISIT READ SITE, MUSEUM, PALACE AND MARKET

Note that this touring may vary depending on READ plans.. Today you can do a "historical hike " or drive and walk around the area. If you wish to do a half day of touring and perhaps have a picnic along the way, rise and have

an early breakfast leisurely breakfast. Then in the morning cool, drive up to the **Gorkha Museum** and spend as much time looking at it as you wish. The museum contains artifacts and paintings from the 1700's and the days of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of the erstwhile Shah dynasty.

From the Museum, you can walk about 1 ½ hours uphill to the **Gorkha Durbar** or palace, the birthplace of Prithvi Narayan Shah. You can visit the site and then continue on to the **Bajra Bhairab Temple**. If the weather is clear, you will have excellent views of Langtang and the Annapurna Massif. On the return, walk along a ridge through the middle and lower forts back to the museum. If you wish, you can bring a picnic lunch, and stop along the way.

You will meet your car at the Museum, drive to the new READ Library, and can head to the **Gorkha Bazaar** on the return

ACCOMMODATION: GORKHA GAUN
MEALS: BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

OCT. 13: VISIT MASKI CHAP

Today you can visit the Magar village of **Maski Chap**. The village is primarily a farming community, but the young men vie for the chance to serve in either the British or Nepali armies. The main crops of the village are corn, millet and tangerines.

Leaving the lodge early with a packed lunch, you walk down to the river and then head uphill on a steep trail for about 1 ½ hours to Maski-Chap. If the weather is clear, you will have good views of Ganesh Himal in the northeast, Manaslu to the north and the Annapurnas to the northwest.

After lunch, return to Gorka Gaun.

ACCOMMODATION: GORKHA GAUN
MEALS: BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

OCT. 14: DRIVE POKHARA VIA BANDIPUR

This morning, you drive out from Gorkha to the charming hill town of **Bandipur**. Originally a sleepy Magar hill village, Bandipur became a key stop on the India-Tibet trade route and developed into a prosperous trading center and community. Buildings with neo-classical facades and shuttered windows lined the streets, which were paved with silverish slate. During the 100 years of Rana rule from 1846-1951, Bandipur was at its height, and even received special permission to have its own library!!!!

During the 1970s, the Kathmandu-Pokhara Highway was constructed, and, for logistical reasons, the road ran through the Marsyangdi Valley, bypassing the mountain town of **Bandipur**. Sadly, the municipality's influence declined drastically, and the population moved to more profitable areas, leaving almost a ghost town in its stead. Despite all, the library still remained. In recent years, the town has drawn a number of tourists, many of the homes and



shops have been restored and there are some charming hotels.

On arrival, you can have lunch and explore Bandipur.

When you are ready, you can continue on for about an hour to **Pokhara**.

HOTEL **FISH TAIL LODGE**
MEALS **BREAKFAST, LUNCH**

Oct. 15: OPTIONAL SUNRISE HIKE OR PARAGLIDING. VISIT MUSEUM, TOWN, DEVI FALLS, BOAT RIDE ON LAKE

Today you will explore Pokhara. Lusher and more tropical than Kathmandu, Pokhara's setting at the base of some of Nepal's most famous mountains – Machhapuchare, Annapurna, and Dhaulagiri – has made it a haven for tourists, trekkers, and hippies. Culturally, it is where the Hindu caste groups of the valley meet the Gurungs of the nearby highlands. By the 17th century, Pokhara was part of the Kingdom of Kaski, later annexed by the present ruling Shah Dynasty. In the hills surrounding Pokhara are the ruins of palaces and forts dating back to the time of the Kaski era.

You can begin with an optional hike to see sunrise on the Annapurna range (weather permitting) or to do some optional paragliding.

Afterwards, you can visit the excellent **Mountaineering Museum** in town, walk down to **Devis Falls** and visit the nearby Cave.

Later in the afternoon, you can take a **boat ride** out on the lake to visit a small island and watch sunset on the Annapurnas.

HOTEL **FISH TAIL LODGE**
MEALS **BREAKFAST**

OCT. 16: DRIVE CHITWAN

After breakfast, you pile back into your vehicle and drive to **Chitwan National Park**. Although the park is known for the one-horned rhinoceros, *gaida* in Nepali, and the Royal Bengal Tigers, it is also a major stop on the north-south migration flyway and plays host to more than 450 migratory and resident birds. In terms of animals, the park is home to sloth bears, gaur, a wide variety of deer, wild boar, langurs, and the endangered gharial.

Depending on timing, you might be able to take an evening walk through the park.

HOTEL **MARUNI SANCTUARY LODGE**
MEALS **BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER**



Oct. 17: BOATING ON THE RIVER, ELEPHANT BREEDING CENTER, JUNGLE WALK, EVENING SAFARI AND THARU DANCING

This morning early, you will take a **boat ride on the Rapti River** to do some **birding**. From here, you can head to the **elephant breeding center** and see what is happening and if there are any new baby elephants.

This afternoon, you head out from the lodge to the village of **Jhuwani**. Here you can visit the library, explore the Tharu Village and spend time with the local people. Jhuwani also boasts a school for the blind.

Returning from Jhuwani, you can stop in **Sauraha** to explore the town.

In the evening, there **may** be a Tharu dance performance.

Note that this is a general schedule. Activities may vary from day to day, depending on who is at the lodge when you are there.

HOTEL **MARUNI SANCTUARY LODGE**
MEALS **BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER**

Oct. 18: ELEPHANT SAFARI, ELEPHANT BATHING, BULLOCK CART RIDE AND VILLAGE TOUR

The day will begin with an **early morning elephant safari**. Returning, you will have breakfast, and then head out to do some **elephant bathing**. More like it, the elephants will bathe you!

After lunch at the lodge, there is the opportunity to do a **bullock cart ride and visit some of the local villages**, spending as much time as you wish. Then you can visit the **Tharu Museum**.



HOTEL **MARUNI SANCTUARY**
MEALS **BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER**

OCT. 19: ELEPHANT SAFARI. RETURN TO KATHMANDU. FAREWELL DINNER

Early in the morning, you take a **final elephant safari**. Returning, you have time to pack and eat lunch, before heading to Bharatpur to catch a flight back to **Kathmandu**. When you arrive, you can return to the hotel.

Tonight, you will have a very special farewell dinner.

HOTEL **SUMMIT HOTEL**
MEALS **BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER**

OCT. 20: TRANSFER FOR YOUR FLIGHT BACK HOME

The morning is free until time to transfer to the airport for your **flight home**.

HOTEL **NONE**
MEALS **BREAKFAST**