

WILD GUANABANA WELCOMES YOU TO NEPAL!

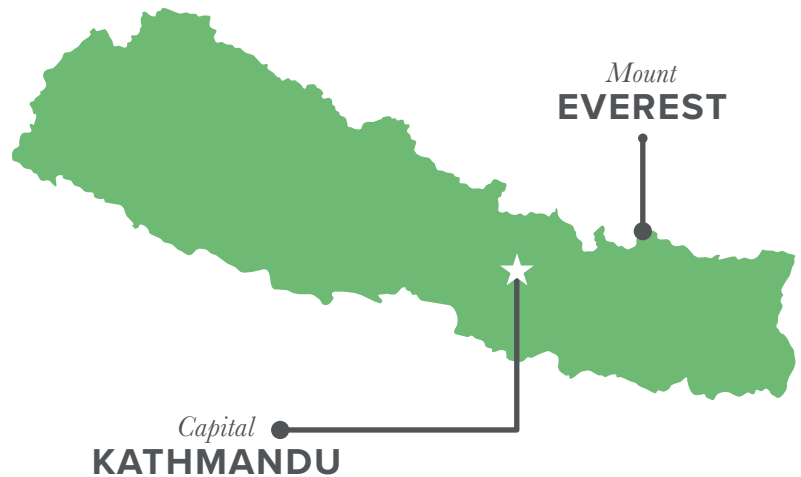


ENTERING NEPAL

VISA

Upon arrival for most nationalities but it's best to check with your embassy if there is a need to apply in advance.

Fees: \$25 for a 2 week visa; \$40 for a one month visa; \$100 for a 2 month visa.



WEATHER IN THE MOUNTAINS

Dec - Feb

BELOW FREEZING

Oct - Nov & Mar - April

DRY & MILD

Jun - Sept

MONSOON (RAINFALL)

CURRENCY

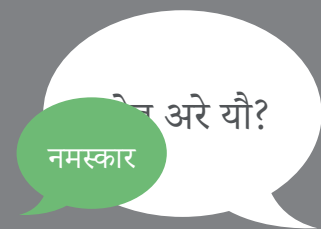


NEPALI RUPEE

Exchange Rate

USD 1 = 103.76 NR

LANGUAGE



NEPALI

RELIGION



HINDUISM & BUDDHISM

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



Plug
TYPE D *Voltage*
220 V

DIALLING CODE



+977

STAYING SAFE!

Nepal is considered a safe country but normal cautious procedures should be taken into consideration.

CHECK THE [SAFETY LINK](#) FOR MORE DETAILS

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

Gyan | WG's Local Partner
00977 - 98510 - 65354

Bhuvan | Local Guide
00977 - 98511 - 03521

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A GUIDE TO TRAINING FOR ABC

GETTING YOUR BODY PREPARED

Essentially reaching Annapurna Base Camp is a multiple day hike. In light of this hiking and walking are ideal forms of preparation for your body. Hiking at altitude is hard work and so the more preparation you do the better – but not to the point of over exerting yourself or stressing your body especially a few days before the climb. Therefore, the best bet is to work exercise into your daily routine and where possible try to have extended walks where you can wear in your boots, carry your rucksack and get used to some light weight on your shoulders and increase your aerobic ability. If you can combine more exertive exercise, such as swimming and even other forms of aerobic exercise then great – remember that you will be walking for a number of days and so the fitter you are the more adapt your body is to this level of exercise.

A POTENTIAL 3-MONTH TRAINING PROGRAM IS AS FOLLOWS:

Journey Date Minus 3 Months

- Gym / fitness class / any selection of fitness session x 2 times a week: choose workouts that make you work hard and increase fitness rather than build muscle.
- Walking: walk whenever possible – short 10 minute walks are fine, go to the shops, see friends, short trips you might normally take a bus or taxi for.
- Diet: cut out soft drinks with sugar or sweeteners and junk food. Remember this is a once in a lifetime event – use it as a great excuse to get healthy!

Journey Date Minus 2 Months

- Gym session x 3 times a week: again choose workouts that make you work hard and increase fitness rather than build muscle. No need to go crazy, but doing 3 workouts a week breeds discipline and mental stamina as well as improving physical conditioning. You can even substitute 1 gym session for an alternative activity such as Yoga (even better yoga session every morning!) or swimming .
- Walking: keep walking! – short 10 minute walks are good, but increase your distance to at least 1 hour once a week. That's only 4 x 1 hour walks for the whole month!
- Diet: keep healthy but remember to feed the fire! When you exercise you will burn lots of calories and so replace lost fuel and keep very well hydrated – water is life, drink, drink. Lots of water helps flush out toxins and maintains a healthy perfusion of the bodies cells.

Journey Date Minus 1 Month

- Gym session x 3 times a week: no need to go crazy on the gym sessions, simply keep up a good routine. Do not over exercise! Going over 3 times a week increases the risk of injury and muscle damage which will prevent you from even starting, which is not what we want.
- Walking: be realistic and set 4 hikes for this month of around 3 – 2 hours each. Keep walking when ever possible. Again, overexertion and strains should be avoided at all costs, but some hill work and distance will definitely help wear in those boots and prepare you mentally.
- Diet: a good well balanced diet is the way to be. Any loss of body weight or toning should really have been done in the last couple of months and now keeping healthy and maintaining the status quo is our goal. Lots of water and enough calorie intake to complement your exercise routine.

Journey Date Minus 1 Week

- RELAX. No need for last minute blasts or burnouts. Take a good walk at the beginning of the week and then simply relax. If you haven't prepared up to this point then training one week from your arrival is not going to help (people that take that approach should expect to find the hike hard work and possibly be ready to fail). Being MENTALLY RELAXED is as important as physical conditioning. Even if you haven't managed to put in lots of training time the same applies.

Note: wearing in your boots will avoid discomfort on the mountain – serious blisters can seriously affect your ability to walk and for this reason we also recommend carrying / wearing them on the plane.

Getting your body prepared tends to go further than this. Many people work really hard right up to the night before they leave, and then arrive tired and start climbing tired. A stressed body will not acclimatize as well as a relaxed body and so give your body a chance and try to prepare early. You can also spend extra days in Nepal relaxing in Kathmandu before the journey if you have ample time.







If you're interested in a more detailed training plan, we partnered up with Uphill Athlete, one of the leading training companies which have tailored training plans for mountaineers.

<https://www.uphillathlete.com/wild-guanabana/>








For ABC we recommend the 8 week training plan which is quite intense but if followed it will really help put your fitness in the right level for this challenge. Once you book this journey with us, we will send you a 10% discount voucher to use for this training plan if you want to use it.

ABC EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST



This list is only a guide. While you are required to bring everything on this list (unless otherwise stated), there are numerous options, brands, and versions of each piece of equipment. Please let us know if you need advice on what product to go with.











CLIMBING EQUIPMENT		
Adjustable Ski/Trekking poles. 1 pair.		
Head torch. Bring extra batteries (preferably Lithium).		
FOOTWEAR		
Running shoes and sandals. 1 pair to wear at the end of every day for comfort.		
Light Hiking Boots or trekking shoes. 1 pair of sturdy boots in which you can wear a light synthetic sock (optional) under a heavy sock comfortably, either wool or synthetic. Shoes should be very <u>Water Proof</u> and <u>Warm</u> .		
Wool or Synthetic Socks. 3 pair heavyweight socks (wool is warmer). If you're going to be layering socks, check fit over feet and inside boots. Remember to keep one fresh, dry pair of socks available for the summit.		
Liner Socks (optional). 3 pair of smooth thin wool, nylon or Capilene to be worn next to the skin. This reduces the incidence of blisters and hot-spots and makes the outer sock last longer before needing to be changed. They should fit well with your heavyweight socks.		







TECHNICAL CLOTHING

<p>Thermal Underwear. 2 pairs of Tops & 1 pair of bottoms, Capilene, other synthetic or wool. No Cotton. Lightweight is preferable as it is more versatile. Zip-T-neck tops allow more ventilation options. If available, bring 1 set of white or light colored for intense sunny days and 1 pair of dark for other days.</p>		
<p>Synthetic Shirts. Sweat wicker material. No Cotton Preferably 1 short sleeved and 2 long sleeved. Light colors preferred.</p>		
<p>Fleece/Soft Shell jacket. 1 Mid and 1 Heavyweight fleece. A full-zip version is easier to put on and has better ventilation than a pullover. Zip-T's are also good.</p>		
<p>Down or Synthetic jacket (optional). Medium to heavy weight for latter days and evenings.</p>		
<p>Hard Shell jacket w/ hood. We recommend a waterproof breathable shell material with full front zipper, underarm zips, and no insulation. This outer layer protects against wind and rain.</p>		
<p>Trekking Pants. Synthetic pants to be worn every day.</p>		
<p>Underwear. Synthetic or cotton.</p>		

HANDWEAR

<p>Lightweight synthetic gloves. Quick drying material. Should fit comfortably inside heavy gloves.</p>		
<p>Heavy Gloves. A good pair of heavy gloves works well. Should not be too tight or too loose so that it's warm enough.</p>		

HEADWEAR		
Warm Lightweight synthetic/wool hat. Preferably hat should cover ears.		
Baseball cap/sun hat. One with a good visor to shade the nose and eyes. Synthetic is nice as it dries quickly but not necessary.		
Bandana/Buff. Used to shade your neck from continuous sun exposure.		
Glacier glasses. 100% UV, IR, high quality optical lenses with no more than 8% light transmission (category 3 or 4). If you wear contact lenses we recommend packing a spare pair of glasses—it is a good idea to have these with “photo-gray” or equivalent light-sensitive material so they can double as emergency sunglasses.		
PERSONAL EQUIPMENT		
Trekking Backpack. A daypack big enough to carry water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing. Porters carry the rest. 40L is a good capacity.		
Water Bottles: 2 Wide mouth bottles with minimum 1 Litre capacity per bottle. 1 or 2L water bag or bladder systems is also good in the lower regions but tend to freeze higher up so not ideal on summit day. Total carrying capacity should be 2L.		
Sunscreen. SPF 30 or higher, Make sure that the sunscreen is not older than 6 months as it would lose half of its SPF rating.		
Lipscreen. SPF 40 or higher, again not older than 6 months.		
Sports Drink Mix (optional). Powdered electrolyte drink mix can help you rehydrate. Bring 1-2 Servings per day for 7 days.		
Sleeping bag. Expedition quality to at least -10 comfort rating ⁰ . Down is lighter, warmer and less bulky, but more expensive than synthetics.		

TRAVELING		
Dry Sacks. Keeps clothing and other items dry and organized.		
Duffle Bag. A small duffle can be nice for storing things at the hotel during the expedition and extra clothing while traveling.		
Zip lock bags. To store food, tablets, documents, camera etc.		
Trail snack food items (optional). Bring your favorite energy bars, GU packets etc for the long days		
Travel clothes. Don't forget to bring clothing to wear after the climb on your return home. Otherwise, no one will want to sit next to you on the plane!		
Toiletries. Soap, wet wipes, toothbrush, towel, hand sanitizer, foot powder, dust mask, ear plugs etc.		

MEDICAL & SAFETY

Small personal first-aid kit. The guides will have a first-aid kit. Please let us know about any medical issues before the climb.



Drugs/Medications/Prescriptions. Climbers should bring Pepto Bismol, Ciprofloxin (Cipro) 500mg tablets for traveler's diarrhea and for urinary tract infections, Azithromycin (Z-pak) 250mg tablets for non-gastrointestinal infections, Acetazolamide (Diamox) 125 or 250 mg tablets for altitude sickness, Ibuprofen 200mg or Acetaminophen (Tylenol) tablets for altitude headaches, sprains, aches, etc.



In regards to renting, we do gear rental from our Egypt office, below is a list with all the equipment and prices. Rental in Nepal is limited to sleeping bags (20\$) and down jackets (20\$), so we usually recommend that you either bring everything with you from your home country, or purchase the gear from Nepal. There are a lot of local stores with the equipment you'll need at a cheap price; the quality isn't stellar, but it'll suffice just fine for this trip.

Please note that the items below are the property of Wild Guanabana and are on loan to you for the purpose of the trip. Should any of the items be damaged/go lost you will be charged the full cost of replacing them. If the item(s) is not available then a similar one will be chosen in its place. A 50\$ deposit will be returned to you once all items have been inspected.

ITEM	PRICE IN USD
Balaclava	10
Sleeping Bag (-29C)	50
Sleeping Mat	10
Therm-A-Rest	25
Hiking Pole (single)	15
Gaiters	20
Head-Torch	15
Thin Gloves/Liner Gloves	10
Thick Gloves	20
Thick Gloves with Inners	30
Rain Jacket	30
Rain Pants	25
Mid-Layer/Convertible Pants	20
Water Platypus/Bottle	10
Mid-Weight Fleece	15
Heavy Fleece	20
Warm Hat	10
Sun Hat	10
Dry Sack	10
Synthetic/Down Jacket	40
Pair of Socks (4 season)	10
Pair of Socks (3 season)	10
Duffel Bag	30
Backpack	30

Take nothing but memories and leave nothing but your footprint.



TIPS & TRICKS

HIKING PACK

Your hiking pack should only contain in it your water, your extra sweater/gloves/sunglasses/etc., waterproofs, and camera, snacks. Everything else will be in your main duffel bag, which will be carried by the porters. You won't even see your duffel bag as the porters are much faster and they will get to the lodge probably before you.

DUFFEL BAG

Upon your arrival in Kathmandu, you will be receiving a duffel bag, yes that's our gift to you. While packing your stuff in the duffel bag, **please note that all of your items in the duffel bag cannot exceed 15kg as per regulations or else the porters will not carry them.** Everything needs to fit in your duffel bag - the only items that should be in your hiking day pack are extra layers of clothing for the hike in case you get cold or feel hot, camera, snacks, medication, etc. - and that's all!

You don't want it to be any more than that or else it will be too heavy for you since you will be walking for long hours. Don't over pack! You will not be changing your clothes as often as you think! Especially the last few days you will be cold and tired so some have slept and woken up and hiked in the same clothes for 2 days straight and it was all good! Just bring what is necessary and if you follow the checklist you should be okay.

PACKING TIPS

The trick here is to minimize the amount of time you need in the morning and before you sleep. So you want to make sure you pack in a way that helps you find what you are looking for as fast as possible without having to dig too hard into your bag. The best way in our experience is to place everything in Zip Lock Bags according to their category. The good thing about zip lock bags is that they are see-through so you can see what's in them right away. Another good thing is that they are waterproof so in case it rains it will keep your items dry. For example, you can place all of your toiletries in one zip lock such as: soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, facewash, toner, cotton pads, etc. Then you can place all of your underwear in another zip lock, your passport and any important documents in another, your medicine and any medical supplies in another, your socks together, etc. That way you can always find your items quickly and it will also keep them dry.

SLEEPING BAG

This is important because even though you will be sleeping in lodges – they are not insulated. So, you will feel the cold especially as we go higher up. You will be placing your sleeping bag on top of the bed to sleep in. If you are the type that likes a pillow – there are a few tricks for that. You can either bring an empty pillowcase and stuff it with clothes to sleep on, or you can bring the inflatable airplane pillows. The beds in the lodges come with pillows, so you can also bring a scarf to place over the pillow so you can feel more comfortable resting your head on it.

HIKING SHOES

We hope you are wearing them daily! Make sure they are high enough to support your ankles and made out of an insulated material so that they can keep you warm and they also need to be waterproof. They also need to be a half size bigger as sometimes you may feel the need to wear at least 2 socks to stay warm -so its important that your hiking boots have room for that. It's important to wear them early on so you can loosen them up before the hike, especially if they are brand new.

GLOVES

This is a tip for gloves: What keeps your fingers warm is actually the air pockets between the gloves so make sure that buy your gloves a bit bigger than normal so that when you wear them on top of each other there is still room in between them. If they are all too tight you wont feel warm - so you need to make sure the air pockets are there.

SOCKS

Your socks need to be made out of wool'ish material absolutely no cotton! -- They call them 3 season or 4 season socks, kind of like the ones you would wear for skiing.

CAMERA

Since this is a super awesome trip, you definitely want to bring a camera with you. Some of you if you are photo enthusiasts will want to bring your SLR. You can but we don't recommend it, as they are heavy and bulky. A normal digital camera will do. In the case of batteries, make sure you bring extras! The trick with camera batteries is to bring extras and always keep them in a warm place, like inside your socks in your duffel bag - as the cold makes the battery life deplete a lot faster. Also, interchanging the battery is believed to be better and also makes it last longer than using one full battery till it runs out and then switching to another one.

HYGIENE

We will always do our best to provide rooms in lodges with attached bathrooms. However, not all of the rooms come with bathrooms and not all of the bathrooms will have showers - so its time to embrace the funk! :) In the chance that you do shower, please make sure you bring your own mini shampoo, conditioner and towel. Alternatively, you can 'rent a towel' but it's best to have your own. Also, please make sure to get a towel that is made out of a quick dry material, and not the normal towels you find at home as they take longer to dry.

HYGIENE *(continued)*

The best thing to bring with you is Dettol wipes or baby wipes. These will be your new best friends on the mountain! So you can use them for obvious reasons and you can also use them in what we like to call «Dettol Showers» and just wipe yourself down in your room to freshen up. Some people have also taken with them Dry Shampoo, so you can do that as well. Or you can just hide your hair under a hat that works as well! Please also make sure you bring your own toilet paper. As for other elements, sometimes the hot water in the bathroom is not as reliable so for the days where you are too tired or cold to wash your face, we find that its great to bring a face toner so you can just wipe it down in the morning and at night to stay fresh. You can also bring with you a body spray to feel fresh and nice smelling.

NAILS

Make sure you cut your toe nails really short. This is important especially on the way down from the mountain, as the pressure on your toes from the boots have caused some people to lose their nails when they get home. It's not fun so if you keep them short you should be okay.

BLISTERS

Some people get them from the long hours of walking. The last thing you want on a trek is a blister as that can seriously make your life miserable when you are there. The trick we find best for this is «Pre-Emptive Behavior». That means you wrap your sensitive spots, like your heels, certain toes, etc. with gauze and medical white tape as soon as you start the trek. This will protect those areas from extra friction and save you from blisters. So you wrap them up like you already have a blister - before you get the blister. It works for us!

PHONES

You will get very little reception on the trail, so feel free to bring your phones if you like but keep in mind that not all networks work roaming in Nepal. Some people take this as a chance to completely disconnect from the world and unplug but some of you have moms and dads who need that update so it's ok. If you want to be absolutely connected, then please feel free to purchase a local sim card in Nepal. The battery trick here is the same as the camera one so keep your phone in a dry and warm place so it lasts longer and keep it turned off when you are not using it. In certain villages like Namche Bazaar (day 3 and 4) you will have access to cyber café's where the internet is reliable – so you can use that time to get connected or to update family. The plug in Nepal is a 3 hole one like the picture on the right.

CAMP SHOES/CLOTHES

Once you get to each village you're going to want to take off your hiking boots and get into something comfortable. We suggest bringing something that's easy to slip on and off - versus something with laces. Since if you have to go to the bathroom at night the last thing you want to be doing is fumbling in pitch-black darkness with laces and the likes of. You may also want to bring comfortable lounge pants like sweat pants or something to keep you warm.

GEAR LIST

Everything on our gear list is mandatory so we can't stress enough that you should go over it again and again and make sure you have everything, every little thing counts!

POCKET MONEY

You can take with you around 150\$ USD for the whole trip as pocket money but keep in mind that this is just an estimate- everyone is different when they travel so make sure to take with you what will make you comfortable. Nepal is not the best place for Visas or Mastercards so remember that CASH is KING.

SNACKS

The best snacks to bring are DATES - as they are small and packed with energy. We prefer these over the usual energy bars as sometimes they have not so friendly effects on your stomach and that's the last thing you want on the trail. Nuts are also a great option.

BRING A JOKE!

The trail is long so sometimes it's nice to share a joke or two :)

BRING SOME ENTERTAINMENT

Some people bring with them books (kindle is best so you don't have to worry about weight) or a journal - you're going to want to document this for your memories. Sometimes it will be cold to write so perhaps bringing a voice recorder is best to record your thoughts and memorable moments. Avoid bringing heavy items such as laptops as you won't get as much use out of those as you would think.

BRING AN AWESOME ATTITUDE

Trekking to Annapurna Base Camp is 90% mental so make sure you start visualizing yourself there - and bring with you a flag or a picture or whatever you want to take your photo with when you reach Base Camp!



EXTRAS

STAYING HEALTHY

Nepal does NOT require any immunizations for entry, although it is recommended to be vaccinated against Polio & Tetanus (if nil in last 10 years), Typhoid (if nil in last 3 days) and Hepatitis A. Since most vaccines don't provide immunity until two weeks after they're given, we recommend a visit to the doctor three to eight weeks before departure. Even though Nepal is a Malaria area, the risk of contracting the mosquito-borne disease is extremely low. However, you recommend that you discuss the matter with a physician.

Traveler's diarrhea is the most common illness affecting travelers, involving a substantial number of international travelers each year. You can minimize the risk for Traveler's Diarrhea by avoiding to eat foods and drink beverages in places with poor hygienic conditions, abstaining from consuming raw or undercooked meat and seafood, and avoiding raw fruits and veggies unless they can be peeled. Drinking mineral water is also recommended. Needless to say that frequently washing your hands is the prudent thing to do, whether at home or abroad.

Altitude sickness can occur in high altitude regions from 3,000 m upwards, and can be an issue on the Annapurna Base Camp trek as it goes to high altitudes, possibly causing the risk of being affected by Acute Mountain Sickness. People who arrive from lower elevations may experience some shortness of breath, dizziness, insomnia, and a loss of appetite during the first couple of days as their bodies adjust. This can be prevented by appropriate acclimatization beforehand. The avoidance of alcohol, cigarettes and heavy food can also help prevent altitude sickness. If you have specific concerns about acclimatization or a history of medical problems or altitude related issues, please let us know and consult with your physician. Our ABC itinerary is designed to enable everyone to acclimatize to these high altitudes, but you should be aware that it is still possible for you to be affected regardless.

While on the trip, you will have access to an extensive first-aid kit, which includes meds such as Ibuprofen, Tylenol, Aspirin, Immodium, Pepto Bismol, Diamox, and some common broad spectrum antibiotics. If you wish to bring a small med kit of your own, feel free to do but keep it simple. Many over the counter and antibiotic medications are readily and cheaply available in the pharmacies in Kathmandu

CUSTOM & DUTY FREE

Duty Free: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco, alcoholic beverages not exceeding 1.5L, articles for personal use

Prohibited Imports: None that we are aware of

Prohibited Exports: export of animal furs and trophies artistic or cultural articles.

SAFETY

Nepal is not a dangerous country to travel in, but it is not crime-free either. Petty crime does exist, particularly in tourist areas. Be careful when using ATM machines and try not to walk alone at night, particularly when in Kathmandu. Do not exhibit valuable personal belongings (camera, iPod, passport, credit cards, watch, jewelry, etc) when you don't need to. Never leave your bag(s) out of your sight or unattended. Keep your important documents and money safely hidden under your clothes (not in your backpack or day pack) or locked in a secure place. Care should be taken throughout your stay in Nepal. Use your common sense and vigilance to minimize the risk of becoming a victim of crime. Strikes and demonstrations are inherent to the Nepali political reality and if you happen to witness any, use common sense and avoid public gatherings that could turn violent during periods of volatile political and security situations.

PEOPLE OF NEPAL

Nepali society is a melting pot of several ethnic groups and mixes. For the sake of simplifying things, Nepal's ethnic map can be divided into a few different layers.

Thakali People: The Thakalis are Tibeto-Burmese people who have become the entrepreneurs of Nepal. They honed these skills from the days when they played an important part in the salt trade. The majority of Thakali people own small farms in Nepal's countryside but a few of them have ventured into the lodging business for the trekking industry.

Tamang People: The Tamangs represent the largest cluster of the Tibeto-Burmese ethnic group. They are generally sedentary farmers and labourers originally from the Himalayan region but now live in the high hills surrounding the Kathmandu Valley and the Central Himalayan area.

Tibetan People: Mongoloid people from Tibet have settled in Nepal for thousands of years, but recently there has been an influx of Tibetan refugees into Nepal after the Chinese invasion of Tibet. Tibetans are devout Buddhists and their arrival in the valley has rejuvenated a number of important religious and spiritual sites in the area.

Sherpa People: The most famous of all of Nepal's ethnic groups, Sherpas generally live high in the mountains of Eastern and Central Nepal, near the Everest region. Originally from Tibet, they have been in the area for about 500 years as nomadic herders before they started settling in villages. In recent years, the word Sherpa has become synonymous with mountaineer and trek guide due to their involvement in mountaineering and guiding.

Newar People: The Newars are Nepal's ethnic melting pot, with cultural characteristics, features, traditions and rituals drawn from both Buddhism and Hinduism. It is generally believed that Newars are a mixture of many different ethnic groups although their exact origin remains somewhat of a mystery. Newars have been known to be merchants and traders and are in close proximity to the country's center of power.

Gurung People: The Gurungs are a Tibeto-Burmese group with a unique shamanistic religion that is slowly giving way to Hinduism and Buddhism, and tend to live in the higher countryside in the Annapurna region of Nepal. They are traditionally farmers and herders. Other ethnic groups include Magars, Bahuns, Chhetris, Rais, Limbus and Tharus amongst others.

CLIMATE

The climate of Nepal varies from warm summers with mild winters in the low-lying southern region, to alpine conditions with very severe winters in the mountains. Between December and February temperatures drop well below freezing in the mountains. In the early spring and late autumn, the weather is dry and temperatures are generally mild. The monsoon season occurs between June and September with about 80% of Nepal's annual rainfall occurring during that period.

On the trek, daytime temperatures at most altitudes are generally comfortable for walking, the sky is clear much of the time and rain and snow are occasional occurrences. Daytime temperatures will vary from 20°C to 30°C in the Kathmandu Valley to around 10°C at 3,600m and progressively lower the higher we go. In the early morning, evening and at night on trek, the temperatures will be considerably lower, sometimes dropping below -15°C at high altitudes. Snow can be expected at the higher altitudes particularly during winter. Please note that in any mountain area the weather is never entirely predictable and you should be prepared and equipped to deal with any differences in weather beyond the conditions described above.

CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The rich cultural heritage of Nepal has evolved over many centuries. This multi-dimensional cultural heritage encompasses within itself the cultural diversities of various ethnic, tribal and social groups that inhabit different regions and altitudes within the country. These cultural diversities are manifested in various forms; music, dance, crafts, folklore, language, religion, gastronomy and forms of celebrations.

Cuisine: The cultural and geographic diversity of Nepal provide ample space for a variety of cuisines based on ethnicity, soil and climate. Nevertheless dal-bhat-tarkari is eaten throughout the country. Dal is a spicy soup made of lentils. It is served over boiled grain (bhat) usually rice but sometimes another grain with vegetable curry, tarkari. Typical condiments are a small amount of extremely spicy Achaar made from fresh ingredients or fermented pickled achaar, sliced lemon or lime and fresh chili peppers. The variety of achar is staggering, said to number in the thousands. Yak dairy is a dietary staple in higher altitude regions.

Music & Dance: Legends state that dances in the Indian subcontinent originated in the abode of Lord Shiva - the Himalayas and the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal - where he performed the Tandava dance. This indicates that dance traditions of Nepal are of very ancient origin. With altitudes and ethnicity, the dances of Nepal slightly change in style as well as in the dance costumes. Accompanying music and musical instruments also change in tune with the themes, which revolve around topics like harvesting of crops, marriage rites, war stories, a lonely girl's yearning for her love, and several other themes and stories from everyday life in the villages.

Languages: Nepal's linguistic heritage has evolved from three major language groups, namely Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman and indigenous. The major languages that are spoken today in Nepal are Nepali, Maithili, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang, Newari, Lumbu amongst others.

Crafts: Nepal has a very rich variety of artifacts that come in the form of textile, pottery, metal, carving, weaving, jewelry, Thangka...etc. Each region has its own variations in terms of design, techniques and materials used. There is also a strong presence of Tibetan crafts found in the country. The diversity and abundance of crafts, makes Nepal a Mecca for ethnic shopping.

CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS *(continued)*

Literature: Nepal does not have a long or elaborate literary tradition and until recent years, it was very influenced by Indian literature. Nepal's most famous internationally acclaimed author is Bishnu Kumari Waiba, known as Parijat, who wrote Blue Mimosa, which has been adapted in the literature curriculum of some colleges in English speaking countries. Other important writers and poets include Lekhnath Paudyal, Balkhishna Sama, Lakshmisprasad Devkota, Daulat Bikram Bishtha and Guruprasad Mainali. There are several books about the Himalayas, mountaineering, religion and striking temples that make great reads for the trip. Some of them include The Conquest of Everest by John Hunt, Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer.

MONEY

Traveling with large amounts of cash is NOT recommended. There are several ATM machines that accept debit cards, VISA, and MasterCard in Kathmandu. If you choose to bring an ATM card, alert your bank before leaving the country that you will be traveling in Nepal to avoid any problems with access to your account. Travelers Checks are an alternative, although you are limited in where and when you may cash them.

TRAVEL GREEN TIPS

- Sign the Responsible Travel Pledge and commit to preserving the natural and cultural attributes of the destination you will be visiting (http://www.globalproblems-globalsolutions.org/site/PageNavigator/FWH_survey_travelPledge)
- Unplug your home and office appliances before leaving for the trip
- When researching your destination, try to go paperless and avoid printing unnecessary materials
- Pack lightly and leave the extra shoes and clothes at home
- Bring your own water bottle for filtered water instead of purchasing endless plastic bottles
- Pack a re-usable food container for snacks and meals on the go
- Bring a re-usable shopping bag to carry purchases made on the trip
- Bring rechargeable batteries and a battery charger
- Minimize your waste by not buying disposable items for which there are reusable alternatives
- Avoid pre-heating or pre-cooling your hotel room when you are not around
- Turn off the lights and appliances when you leave your hotel room
- Try to wash your own clothes as laundry service can waste a lot of precious water
- Eat local foods and order only ocean-friendly seafood
- Stay at small, locally owned and operated hotels
- Support sustainable tourism practices by forgoing certain comforts while on the journey
- Buy from local artisans and co-ops not department stores
- Do not purchase items made from endangered species
- Lend a helping hand to the communities you visit whenever you can - volunteer
- Stay on the trail - take only memories leave only footprints
- Respect the local culture and be mindful of cross-cultural differences when interacting with locals
- Plan your trip in conjunction with a local festival/event to get an insight into local culture and customs
- Try to fly with on-time airlines that fly non-stop whenever possible
- Consider offsetting your travel through carbon offset schemes or otherwise
- Share your knowledge and experiences with others

TRAVEL INSURANCE

You have made a significant investment in your travel plans and while in most cases everything will run smoothly, situations may arise on or before your trip that are outside of our control and for which we cannot be held responsible. Travel insurance may help to make your trip more worry-free by protecting your investment and yourself.

Travel insurances can cover expenses resulting from situations such as:

- Trip Cancellation and Interruption due to sickness
- Emergency Medical Transportation
- Trip and Baggage Delay
- Lost or Stolen Baggage
- Doctor and Hospital Payments
- Travel Accidents
- Weather delays

There are plenty of options when it comes to travel insurance providers. We highly recommend World Nomad's single trip travel insurance. You can buy it here: <https://www.worldnomads.com/travel-insurance/> (make sure you go for the Explorer package as that covers a higher altitude)