



## ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT

Lodge / Teahouse

**No. of days. – 23**

### **Graded - Strenuous walk at high altitude**

Nepal, a tiny country nestled in the Himalayas between India and China, is one of the most diverse and fascinating countries in the world. Covering an area of only 147,181 sq. km, Nepal encompasses the world's highest mountains and the deepest valleys as well as low elevation rain forest.

Although the width of the country is only 200 km North to South, Nepal has the highest altitude variation of any country on earth, from 20m above sea level to 8 848 meters above sea level (Top of Everest).

The country is divided in to 3 elevation Zones viz. the low Terrain, the Midhill region and the High Himalayas, which contains 1/3 of the Himalayan range with 9 of the world's highest mountains. This wide diversity of landform gives Nepal an incredible wealth of flora and fauna.

Nepal is not only famous for its landscape but also renowned for the friendliness of its people. The people of Nepal are as variable and intriguing as the country's geography. There are more than 37 ethnic groups with their own language and culture.

Hinduism is the official religion, which the majority of the people practice. Many people throughout the country are Buddhist and the two religions have co-existed in harmony over the ages. A small number of people practice Christianity and Islam.

#### **Nepal at a glance:**

Longitude: 26'12' and 30'27' No

Latitude: 80 degree 4' and 88 degree 12' East

Population: 22 million

Capitol: Kathmandu

Area: 147,181 sq. km.

## **Annapurna**

Annapurna Region is grand and the Circuit is known to be the most beautiful trek you can do in the world. Blooming Rhododendron hills along with tropical forest are mixed with turquoise glacier lakes and snowy 8000 meter peaks. Close to the mountains is the small and pleasant town of Pokhara that is situated by a beautiful lake and is a far calmer town than Kathmandu.

The Annapurnas' have several high peaks. "Annapurna 1" is 8 091 meters and the 10<sup>th</sup> highest mountain in the world. Annapurna 1 is known to be the most difficult 8000 meter peak to climb but still it was the first mountain above 8000 meter that was successfully climbed. The year was 1950 and it was a French expedition. After the French it took 20 years before the next successful climb. Till today it is still not more than a few hundred people who has summit successfully.

## **Your Adventure**

For those who want to explore the delight in Nepal's magnificent and varied scenery, from the verdant lowlands, and lush sub tropical forests, to alpine meadows and the barren, windswept Tibetan Plateau, a circuit of the Annapurnas' gives it all. Walking through the world's deepest gorge with colossal of flanks of Annapurna I (8091m) and Dhaulagiri I (8167m) on either side, is an experience in itself. This Adventure is graded 5 which is equivalent to strenuous walk at high altitude (max 5416m) so physical fitness is very important. Typically there are 5-6 hrs of walking per day with one day of longer walking.

## **Summery**

Trek Distance:	Approx. 228 km
Maximum altitude:	5416m (Thorung La).
In / Out:	Kathmandu



## Itinerary

- Day 1.** Arrive in Kathmandu (1330m), welcome dinner
- Day 2.** Half day city tour around Kathmandu Valley, lunch and trek briefing
- Day 3.** Drive to Besisahar and trek to Bhulbule (833m)
- Day 4.** Trek to Syange (1136m)
- Day 5.** Trek to Tal (1707m)
- Day 6.** Trek to Danaque (2175m)
- Day 7.** Trek to Chame (2715m)
- Day 8.** Trek to Pisang (3185m)
- Day 9.** Trek to Braga (3350m)
- Day 10.** Rest at Braga.
- Day 11.** Trek to Gunsang (4240m)
- Day 12.** Trek to Yak Kharka (4018m)
- Day 13.** Trek to Thorung Phedi (4460m)
- Day 14.** Trek to MuktiNath (3860m) via Thorung Pass (5416m)
- Day 15.** Trek to Marpha (2670m)
- Day 16.** Trek to Kalopani (2530m)
- Day 17.** Trek to Tatopani (1180m)
- Day 18.** Trek to Ghorepani (2860m)
- Day 19.** Trek to Hile (1570m) via Poon Hill (3230m)
- Day 20.** Trek to Nayapul (1030m) and drive to Pokhara (870m)
- Day 21.** Drive to Kathmandu
- Day 22.** In Kathmandu
- Day 23.** Departure

**Please Note** that the above itinerary is only a guide and that it could change. A lot of things have to be taken into account like weather, general walking pace of the group, mountain safety etc. Your group leader can change the schedule if necessary with prior notice to you, keeping safety first in mind.



## Your Activity

### Day 1 - Arrival in Kathmandu

Once you reach KTM airport and finish with the immigration and custom formalities be prepared to confront the confusion outside the airport which is common in most of the south Asian countries. As you walk out of the Exit door into the passenger pick up area you will see hundreds of people with different sign boards in their hands, taxi drivers looking for fares, hotel touts looking for customers and porters trying to help with the luggage for tips. Please remain calm and do not walk out of the restricted area into the crowd straight away. Remain there and try to find the Hi On Life sign board. Once you spot it, walk straight to the signboard and identify yourself. From here we will take care of you. When you arrive to your hotel you will be briefed about your activities and "do's and don'ts" while your stay in Kathmandu. When you arrive to your hotel you will be briefed about your activities and "do's and don'ts" while your stay in Kathmandu. We will also collect some documents from you. Please have the following things handy when arriving.

1. **Travel/ Medical Insurance** (photo copy)
2. **3 passport size photos**
3. **Photocopy of your passport.**

In the evening we will go for a traditional Nepali dinner at Kathmandu's finest Nepali restaurant.

### Day 2 - City tour and Trek briefing

After breakfast you will be taken for a half day city tour where you will be visiting some historical temples and monuments. You will end your sightseeing with a lunch.

After your lunch you will be return to your hotel and your Group leader will give you your trek briefing and issue you your 'trek pack' consisting of a duffle bag, down jacket, sleeping bag, inner liner for your sleeping bag and rain poncho.

Your afternoon is free for you to do your packing and purchasing your last minute items for your trek.

### Day 3 - Drive to Besisahar (860m) and trek to Bhulbule (833m) 6 hours drive and 1 ½ hour walking

We depart from Kathmandu early in the morning, for the drive to Besisahar where we commence the trek. The drive is quite spectacular, with mountain views of the Ganesh and Manaslu ranges. On the way we drive alongside the Trishuli River and the ever-present terraced hillsides. From Besisahar we follow the Marsyandi River to the village of Khuldi where we cross a tributary of the main river and continue on to Bhulbule and stop here for the night.

### Day 4 - Trek to Syange (1 136m) 7 hours

We begin with crossing the Marsyandi and after a short distance, views of Manaslu (8156m), Peak 29 (7541m) and Lamjung (6986m) open out on the horizon. It is an easy walk to Ngadi. From here we cross a small suspension bridge over the Musi Khola to start a gradual climb to the village of Bahundanda (1311m) located on a ridge top. We stop here for lunch. After lunch we start with a short descent and we again follow the river valley alongside terraced hillside. We reach Syange by late afternoon.

**Day 5 - Trek to Tal (1 707m) 6½ hours**

The trail in the morning follows a cut in the near-vertical cliff high above the river to reach Jagat (1341m), a Tibetan village that served as a customs post on the old trading route from Tibet. The vegetation changes to rhododendron and pine forest and the valley becomes narrower and steeper. After Jagat we cross the river on a large suspension bridge from where the trail ascends quite steeply, with the river tumbling through a maze of large boulders. After reaching the top of the zig-zag climb, the valley suddenly widens out to reveal the village of Tal, which nestles amongst the fields of barley, wheat and potatoes. We have now entered the district of Manang and we will stay here for the night.

**Day 6 - Trek to Danaque (2 175m) 5 hours**

We walk through dramatic fir and pine forests. After half an hour, we reach Bagarchap (2160m), the first village on the trek with typical Tibetan architecture. We stop at this village for lunch. Here we may observe firewood stacked on the roofs in preparation for the long, hard winters. From here there are excellent views of Lamjung Himal, Annapurna II, and Annapurna III up the valley. It is another 1 hour trek to Danaque which is nestled in a forest. There are a few apple orchards in this village. We can see Manaslu and Peak 29 from here.

**Day 7 - Trek to Chame (2 715m) 7 hours**

We climb steadily through a dense forest and cross a small wooden bridge beside a beautiful waterfall, and ascend to Latamanang (2360m). The trail then continues through pine and rhododendron forest past the police check post at Kotho. From here it is a short trek Chame (2685m).



### **Day 8 - Trek to Pisang (3 185m) 6 hours**

In the morning we cross the Marshyandi and the trail follows a narrow cut along side a near vertical cliff. Then again we are trekking through fields of barley and buckwheat to reach the apple orchards at Brathang (2840m), a former Khampa (Tibetan rebels') settlement. Here we will stop for lunch. After lunch the trail is again alongside a steep cliff and then crossing the river into thick fir forest where we will have glimpses of Lamjung and Annapurna towering high above the trail. Then we cross a small suspension bridge to reveal the huge rock slabs of Paungda Danda, some 1 500 meters high. From here we continue to climb through a beautiful coniferous forest, called the "Peaceful Forest". After spending some time in the forest we reach the flat-roofed stone houses of Pisang. From the village we have full view of Annapurna II and Pisang Peak (6091m).

### **Day 9 - Trek to Braga (3 475m) 5 hours**

We follow wooden irrigation canals through Pisang village, an indication of the arid trans-Himalayan terrain. The walking is fairly easy but there is one steep climb to a ridge that leads down to the airstrip at Hongde where we take lunch. In the afternoon we have an easy walk along the valley to Braga where the houses are stacked on top of each other, perched high on the valley cliffs. Above the houses is a monastery, the oldest and most interesting in the area, estimated to be over 500 years old.

### **Day 10 - Rest and Acclimatization**

The rest day here is designed to aid acclimatization and we can choose to relax or trek above the village where there are great views of the Annapurna peaks, visit the old monastery or climb a steep hill to a beautiful frozen lake. Your Group Leader will suggest you regarding the options for acclimatization hikes.



### **Day 11 - Trek to Gunsang (3 900m) 5 hours**

From the village of Braga it is only a short walk to the village of Manang. The huge icefall of Annapurna rears over the village. Annapurna II and Annapurna IV tower dramatically above the valley floor to the south-east, with Tilicho, RocNoir and the Grand Barrier to the west. Chulu West and East lie behind the village. After a short stop in Manang we slowly ascend to Tengri. Here we branch away from the Marsyandi valley and follow the Jarsang Khola. The trail is fairly easy with short climbs. Here only short Juniper shrubs and Seabuckthorn bushes can be seen. We reach Gunsang in the afternoon.

### **Day 12 – Trek to Yak Kharka (4 018m) 4 hours**

The trek from Gunsang to Yak Kharka gives us beautiful views. After a short and easy walk we cross Ghyanchang Khola, a small river coming down from the glacier below Chulu East and Chulu Central. After the bridge we climb a short but steep uphill and take the trail high up on the mountain slope of Gunggang, following the river Thorung Khola all the way to Yak Kharka.

### **Day 13 - Trek to Phedi (4 460m) 4 hours**

We begin with a steady climb for about 40 min to reach Ledar. Today is another short day . We cross the Jarsang Khola on a covered bridge and then follow the bank of the river over loose screes on the steep-sided valley. We will arrive at Phedi (4460m) at lunch and we will have the afternoon free to relax and prepare for the crossing of the pass.

### **Day 14 - Trek to Muktinath (3 860m) crossing Thorung La (5 416 m) 9 - 11 hours**

We need to start very early, around 3 a.m., so we can proceed slowly and safely. We begin with a steep climb for about an hour and reach Thorung Base Camp. From here the trail is not steep, and the long, gradual approach crosses several false summits before reaching some stone cairns marking the true crest of the pass at 5,416 meters. In fine conditions the views from the pass are truly fantastic: an amazing panorama of the Annapurna, Mukut and Mustang ranges with the Kali Gandaki Valley seen far below. The descent from the pass is fairly steep. This is a long walk and we should arrive at the village of Muktinath, in afternoon. Mukhtinath is one of Nepal's most sacred pilgrimage sites for both Hindus and Buddhists.



**Day 15 - Trek to Marpha (2 670m) 7 to 8 hours**

From Muktinath, the trail descends towards the Kali Gandaki Valley, passing through the village of Jharkot. Sensational views of Dhaulagiri and Nilgiri can be seen. The terrain around Jharkot is a yellow, barren, dotted with patches of green cultivation, where man-made canals cut across the fields, irrigating the crops and fruit trees. From here a short steep descent leads to our lunch stop at Eklaibhati on the bank of the Kali Gandaki River Valley. After lunch we follow the river, through the wide, windswept and barren valley to Jomsom. From Jomsom we continue on the Kaligandaki Valley to reach Marpha.

**Day 16 - Trek to Kalopani (2 530m) 5 hours**

The walk today is easy but we have quite a distance to cover. We trek along the Kali Gandaki River bed. At the end of the river valley, where it starts getting narrower, we reach Lete. We take our lunch here. The valley begins to narrow after lunch and the forest begins to reappear and thicken to provide even more magical walking conditions. We have great views of Tukucho Peak and Annapurna I. We reach Kalopani by mid afternoon.

**Day 17 - Trek to Tatopani (1 180m) 7 to 8 hours**

Today is a long walk and quite a descent, about 1 350 m. We gradually descend the forested trails, to Ghasa, which is a beautiful village with terraced farming where they grow barley and corn. The trail undulates until we reach our lunch stop. In the afternoon the long descent is followed by a short descent that takes us Tatopani. Tatopani means 'hot springs' and after 14 days on the trail, the baths are a welcome sight.



### **Day 18 - Trek to Ghorepani (2 860m) 8 to 9 hours**

It is a tough day today and we climb about 1700 m. From Tatopani we cross the Kali Gandaki River and gradually ascent through forests and paddy fields. We pass through a series of settlements including the prosperous villages of Ghara and Shikha. We stop for lunch at Shikha. After lunch we continue to climb gradually to Chitre where you can find a few lodges. From Chitre the trail is mostly stony steps and climbs steeply through a beautiful Rhododendron forest to reach Deurali from where you can savor views back to the Kali Gandaki Gorge wedged between the huge Dhaulagiri and Annapurna massifs. We reach Ghorepani by late afternoon.

### **Day 19 - Trek to Hile (1 570m) via Poon Hill (3 230m) 8 hours**

We wake up very early today. We climb up to Poon Hill through coniferous forest on well trodden stony steps. It will take us about 1 1/2 hours to reach Poon Hill. From here we get spectacular sunrise views on the Annapurnas and Dhaulagiri. After spending about 1 hour here we go back down to Ghorepani. From Ghorepani we descend steeply through dense forest on a steep stony staircase. We cross the villages of Nange Thanti and Ban Thanti on the way. We will probably stop here for lunch depending on time and then continue to descend down to Hile, passing the village of Ulleri on the way.

### **Day 20 - Trek to Pokhara (980m) 3 hours walk and 1 1/2 hours drive**

We continue on a more gentle descent to the village of Birethanti on the banks of the Modi Khola. Here we take lunch and then cross the new bridge to the east bank, from here you follow the river back to the road-head at Naya Phul. We are then transferred by coach to Pokhara and the rest of the day is free. In the evening you will dine out at one of the many lakeside restaurants.

### **Day 21 - Drive to Kathmandu (1 330m)**

Drive to Kathmandu takes us about 6 hours.

### **Day 22 - In Kathmandu**

### **Day 23 – Departure**



## A Day On Your Trek

Although each day is different, considering the weather, general pace of the group and length of the days walk, in general your day begins with a wake up tea at around 6 to 6:30 in the morning. You will then be provided with a bowl of warm water for washing. Then you will need to pack your duffel bag and your daypack and come to the lodge's diner for breakfast.

After breakfast we will hit the trail and usually walk for about 3 to 4 hrs before we stop for lunch. We will give you about an hour and a half rest during lunch, which will also give enough time for the staff to have their lunch and pack. Usually after 3 to 4 hrs of walking we finish the days walk by 4 PM. Tea/ Coffee and snacks will be served on arrival to the lodge. Your Group Leader will often organize side trips in the afternoon. Your dinner will be served around 7 PM.



## High Altitude

On this trek you will be going up to 5 416 m, so it is very important to understand the affects of altitude. The greatest provocation is going too high too fast. Hi On Life's itinerary has been carefully designed to minimize the effects of altitude. We ascend slowly and surely allowing enough time for safe acclimatization.

Headaches and breathlessness are common at altitude which in itself is nothing to worry about. In rare cases, this may worsen to Acute Mountain sickness (AMS), so a close watch is kept on all trekkers by the group leader who is trained to recognize the symptoms of AMS which are severe headaches, nausea, lethargy, loss of appetite serious breathlessness even at rest. If any trekkers show such signs they will be descended to relatively lower and safer altitude. The Group Leader's decision on evacuating such person to a safe altitude is final.

Do not medicate yourself without first informing your group leader.

Going to altitude slowly with adequate rest and adequate intake of fluid (3 to 4 liters per day), you will most likely have no problems apart from breathlessness on hills which is completely normal as the percentage of Oxygen in the air is relatively lower to that at sea level. The most important thing is not to worry about altitude because our team is there to take care of you.

## Staff

**Group leader:** your most important member of your staff. Our Group leaders are highly trained in all aspects of the trek, conservation, first aid specializing on altitude sickness, emergency procedures and have extensive knowledge of the natural history of the area.

**Sirdar:** His job is to manage and organize staff duties. He is responsible for the actual operation of the trek.

**Sherpas:** Their job is to lead your way and distribute equal loads to the porters.

**Porters:** They are responsible to transport your duffle bags and their job finishes once they reach the designated lodge. Our porters are provided with Gore-Tex suits, trekking boots, gloves, hats, socks, snow gaiters and snow goggles. Most importantly, we regulate them on a 25 Kg carrying which no other company does. Our clients can therefore feel comfortable knowing that our porters are working in a good humane condition. During the trek you can see porters carrying 60-70 kg and sometimes even more than 100 kg!!)



## Weather

### Oct/Nov and March/April

On the trek at lower altitude (2500m to 3500m) during daytime the Max temp can be around 22C to 28C and the Min temp can be 8C to 15C

At higher altitude (3500m to 5500m) the daytime Max temp can be between 17C to 22C and Min temp can be between -4C to 8C

### Dec to end of Feb

On the trek at lower altitude (2500m to 3500m) during daytime the Max temp can be around 15C to 20C and the Min temp can be 2C to - 8C

At higher altitude (3500m to 5500m) the daytime Max temp can be between 12C to 18C and Min temp can be between -4C to -20C

Please note that this is just general information and it could vary marginally.

## Our Services

- All internal transportation, in private vehicle.
- Services of English or/and Swedish speaking guide.
- Porter's and sherpa's assistance.
- 4 nights in tourist class hotel on bed and breakfast basis while in Kathmandu.
- Welcome dinner.
- Half day guided city tour with lunch.
- Use of a personal trek pack consisting of a duffle bag, down jacket and sleeping bag with a fleece inner-liner.
- All meals while on trek.
- Afternoon tea/coffee service on arrival at the lodge.
- Twin share accommodation in trekking lodges with shared bath and toilet facilities.
- National Park fees.
- Staff insurance, tourist service fee and all taxes applicable as per state law.

## Not Included

- Personal accident and rescue insurance. You must provide your own rescue insurance
- Mineral water, beer, soft drinks and extra tea/coffee outside of normal meal times.
- Private room accommodation in Kathmandu unless a single supplement is paid.
- Optional tips to guides and porters.
- International airport departure taxes.
- Visa costs.
- Helicopter evacuation in the unlikely situation, although we do arrange for it and make the necessary documents so that you can claim from your insurance.

## Recommendations for things you should bring

- Water bottle 3 bottles, min 1 litre each, should be able to hold hot water
- Day pack medium size 35-40 litres
- Sunglasses
- Duct tape small roll.
- Stuff bags smaller plastic bags to organize you duffle bag
- Money belt
- Toiletries we provide toilet papers
- Towel
- Torch preferably head lamp
- Penknife
- Sewing kit
- Medical kit as per your prescriptions. It should be noted that the group leader will be carrying a first aid kit.

## Optional

- Walking sticks
- Cameras
- Knee guard for those with bad knees.

## Clothing

- Trousers: 1 lightweight for easy walking. 1 warmer for colder days preferable wind/water proof. 1 comfortable, warm for the lodges
- Shorts: Not too high cut revealing ones
- T-shirts: At least 3 or 4
- Hats: Sunhat and woollen ones for colder days
- Gloves: Woollen and Gore-Tex
- Woollen inner liners: Light weight tops and trousers, preferably woollen, at least 2 pairs
- Socks: At least 4 pairs (both thin and thick woollen ones)
- Jackets: 1 fleece and 1 Gore-Tex wind/waterproof. Please note that we provide down jackets.
- Shoes: Trekking boots, preferably waterproof & sandal/gym shoe for evening

## **Healthy and trouble free holiday**

There are no compulsory vaccinations required for entering Nepal. However please consult a doctor for vaccination against Typhoid, Meningitis, polio, and hepatitis. If you have special dietary requirements or allergies, please through your agent, give us a list of what you can and can't eat so that we can provide proper food for you.

If you are undergoing a course of prescription medicine, please ensure that you have sufficient supplies for the entire holiday. Some types of drugs including anti-malarias have side effects at high altitude; therefore please consult your doctors regarding these drugs. The places you trek are mosquito free and there has been no report on malaria in Kathmandu for the past couple of decades.

## **Insure yourself:**

We highly recommend you to take a comprehensive Personal Travel Insurance before leaving home. This should cover for your loss of baggage, airline delays, sickness, and accidents. And it should also cover you for Emergency Helicopter Evacuation.

## **Money Matters**

The ideal currency to bring with you is US\$ or Euro in traveller's cheques.

**In Kathmandu:** Each meal will cost around 4 to 6 US\$. Plus 10 to 20 US \$ for your taxis if you wish to go around the city.

**On trek:** you will need around 6 to 10 US\$ per day. This money is for your hot showers, chocolates, soft drinks and beers etc and also for small donations in the monasteries.

## **Tipping**

Although tipping is entirely optional and personal matter the following is recommended as a guideline

**In Kathmandu:** for bellboys, waiters and porters 20 to 30 Nepali Rupees

**On the trek:** At the end of the trek it is a customary to tip the field staff. The recommended amount is 100 US\$/group member. The Group leader will collect the tip and then split it between the staff and put it in envelopes so that the trekkers can give it to the staff during the "Farwell Ceremonies". If you want to tip the Nepali group leader, you can do that separately.

## Some Do's and Don'ts

Nepalese people treat visitors as special guests. Although they will never rebuke you publicly for unknowingly offending them, we must consider their culture.

While in Nepal please observe the following:

- Full or partial nudity is not accepted.
- Over display of affection between men and women, especially in temples and monasteries are discouraged.
- Please remove your shoes before entering monasteries and temples.
- Never point the soles of your feet at a person or shrine.
- Many Hindu temples are closed to non-Hindus. Please ask before entering.
- Locals walk around the Mani walls and Stupas in a clockwise direction as a respect and they expect you to do the same although it is not compulsory.

ENJOY!

