

# Nepal Factsheet

Currency	Nepalese Rupee	Not obtainable before arrival. US dollars and Sterling are widely used
Time	GMT + 5.45	i.e. when it is 12 noon in London it is 17:45 in Kathmandu
Language	Nepali	English is widely understood in tourist areas
Electricity	230v	Round pin attachment plug 

## PASSPORT & VISA

A valid ten-year passport is essential; it should be valid for at least six months after departure from the country – check the FCO's advice on entry requirements for Nepal to be sure: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. Remember to check any regulations for countries you may transit during your flight. Most nationalities require a visa, including British passport-holders, but please check current visa requirements on our website (<https://www.discoveradventure.com/essential-information#/get-your-visa>) in good time. Visas can be obtained on arrival; a machine takes your photo in airport Arrivals as part of the application process, so there is no need to carry photos with you. Despite this good procedure, it is still quicker to obtain your visa in advance.

## MONEY

Prices are quoted in rupees and US dollars in many circumstances; Sterling is widely accepted and easy to exchange. Although you may get a better rate when exchanging US\$, it's usually not worth the extra cost of buying US\$ if you do not already have some. Use small denominations and when changing money ask for small notes in rupees - it can be very difficult to get change. Ripped and dirty notes are often not accepted so try to avoid being given them. We recommend changing money into rupees in Kathmandu before the start of your trek; dollars are less use when trekking. Credit cards are accepted but usually only in the main tourist shops and hotels. There are ATMs in Thamel (the touristed area of Kathmandu).

## COMMUNICATIONS

There are good email and internet facilities in Kathmandu, Namche and Pokhara. There are also phones to make international calls. There is very little mobile reception outside Kathmandu.

## HEALTH:

### Vaccinations

We recommend you ensure your routine UK schedule of vaccinations is up-to-date (especially Tetanus) and check the Fit For Travel (<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk>) website for further details. You should always check with your GP/travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are made immediately aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

### Malaria & Insect Bites

Malaria rarely occurs above 1000m/3280ft (Kathmandu is around 1300m/4265ft), so for this trip you will only need malarial prophylaxis if you are staying on and travelling at lower elevations, where there is a risk. You should always check with your doctor. Cover up at dawn and dusk and use a good repellent to avoid insect bites – there are still plenty of mosquitoes in Kathmandu even if they do not carry malaria!

### Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) or 'Altitude Sickness'

This occurs when you ascend to high altitude quickly, and the best way to avoid it is to allow time for the body to adjust, and to avoid alcohol and smoking. Problems usually begin at heights of around 3500m - 4500m (11483 – 14764ft). Most travellers experience no more than headaches and shortness of breath (typical symptoms of being at altitude, which is not the same as having AMS.) More severe symptoms are usually quickly remedied by descending to a lower altitude and taking more time to acclimatise. Refer to our Effects of Altitude Factsheet for further information.

### General

On the trek itself, food is cooked and prepared to very high standards and you can eat with confidence – though adopt good hand-washing procedures to prevent bugs being passed around the group. Elsewhere, be aware of the following general precautions: Do not drink tap water – or even clean your teeth in it – and avoid ice cubes in drinks unless you are sure they are made with bottled water. For the same reason avoid salads, raw vegetables and fruit that you cannot peel yourself, as well as unpasteurised dairy products and ice cream. Do not eat a meal if you think it has not been freshly cooked. There is extra risk of sunstroke and dehydration when trekking. You should use a high factor sun cream or sun block, wear a hat, sunglasses and ensure that you drink plenty of water or energy drinks to replenish your fluid levels. You will be more susceptible to sunburn at altitude.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Expect a great deal of lentils, rice, curried vegetables and meat (chicken, pork and goat.) Daal bhaat (lentil stew with rice and curried vegetables, eaten with the right hand) is common. Meat is a luxury to most Nepalese so it's easy being vegetarian. Beef is unlikely due to the Hindu reverence for cows, but you will see buffalo (buffsteak) on menus. Sherpa regions serve Sherpa stew. Newari cuisine is spicier and traditionally uses buffalo and radish in most dishes. Tibetan dishes are popular, especially momo and kothe, pasta shells filled with meat or vegetables and steamed or fried. Street vendors sell snacks such as peanuts, chopped fruit, roti (bread), samosas, and fruit such as bananas, mangoes and oranges. Tea is the national drink, served with milk and lots of sugar; coffee is available. Bottled water, juices and fizzy drinks are widespread, as is the Indian-style lassi, a blend of yoghurt, fruit and sugar. Local and imported beers are popular. Raksi is also widely available, which is a home-distilled, rather potent alcohol similar to tequila.

## WEATHER

Nepal's rainy season, or monsoon, is from mid-June to September, though there may still be intermittent rain in early October – and that doesn't mean it doesn't rain at other times! Weather in spring and autumn is clear, dry and sunny; nights are cool to cold depending on how high you are. The snow line is usually above 4000m (13123ft). Temperatures in Pokhara and Kathmandu are similar but in the mountains altitude is an important factor. The figures below show min and max average temperatures and average days of rain for Kathmandu:

October	13-27°C (55 – 80F); 4mm (0.16in)	December	3-19°C (37 – 66F); 0	March	7-27°C (44 – 80F); 2mm (0.08in)
November	7-23°C (44 – 73F); 1mm (0.04in)	February	4-19°C (39 – 66F); 5mm (0.2in)	April	12-28°C (53 – 82F); 6mm (0.24in)

## SAFETY & SECURITY

Petty theft is relatively uncommon in Nepal, which is one of the safest countries in Asia, but there are opportunists waiting for careless tourists. Use your common sense: wear a concealed moneybelt containing your passport, flight ticket and cash, and do not flash any valuables, including your watch and camera. Leave your valuables behind; you don't need your best jewellery and gadgets on this trip. Be careful at night and avoid walking or getting into taxis alone. Crowded areas such as airports, bus stations and markets attract pick-pockets and bag-slashers, so be vigilant for both yourself and your companions.

## LANGUAGE

The main language of Nepal is Nepali, which is closely related to Hindi. There are also many Tibetan speakers, and Sherpa and many other ethnic languages are spoken within their own communities. English is widely understood in tourist areas, though it is well worth having a few basic phrases up your sleeve – they will go a long way in forming good relationships with the people you meet, and having some fun interaction!

Hello / Goodbye	- <i>Namaste</i> (said with palms together as if praying)	How much does this cost?	- <i>Esko kati parchha?</i>	
Yes / No	- <i>Ho / Hoina</i>	Please	- <i>Kripaya</i>	
Thank you (very much)	- <i>Dhanyabaad</i>	Sorry	- <i>Maph garnus</i>	
I don't speak Nepali	- <i>Ma Nepali boldina</i>			
1 - <i>ek</i>	4 - <i>chaar</i>	7 - <i>saat</i>	10 - <i>das</i>	100 - <i>ek sae</i>
2 - <i>dui</i>	5 - <i>paanch</i>	8 - <i>aath</i>	20 - <i>bis</i>	1000 - <i>ek hajaa</i>
3 - <i>tin</i>	6 - <i>chha</i>	9 - <i>nau</i>	50 - <i>pachaas</i>	

## CULTURE & PEOPLE:

### Religion

Officially 90% of the population is Hindu, though this is often suffused with Buddhism; shamanism is prevalent among the many ethnic groups in the hills. There is a great tolerance to other religions and Christians and Moslems live in the cities. Buddha was born in Lumbini in the Terai in 500 or 600 BC, and there are also followers of Tibetan Buddhism, a slightly different school of philosophy. Religion is a way of life in Nepal and it is greatly beneficial to have some understanding of Hinduism and Buddhism in order to understand the Nepalese way of life.

### Dress

Remember that what you would wear on a hot day in the UK is not necessarily acceptable in other countries; at Discover Adventure we expect our groups to be sensitive to other cultures. Villagers along our trek routes are relatively used to trekkers but you will still cause offence if you do not dress appropriately (though they may be too polite to show it.) Even in the most remote locations, we have local crew with us and they also deserve your respect. Women travellers in particular should dress sensitively - shoulders and thighs should not be revealed. Avoid tight or 'strappy' tops in favour of regular T-shirts. Shorts should be 'long' and trousers are preferable in rural areas, even for men, who should also always wear a top. While women travellers experience only a fraction of hassle from local men compared to India, you will minimise even that by not reinforcing the stereotype that Western women are 'loose'.

### Haggling

You can buy some wonderful crafts and fabrics in Nepal, but it is expected, as in most of Asia, that you will haggle for prices. You are not ripping people off if you knock their prices down, but you can damage the structure of local customs and economy if you do not. Haggling is also great fun and a good way of interacting with local people. A good rule of thumb is to offer a third of the asking price and meet somewhere in the middle. However, while the intention is to knock the price down, beware of going too far to the other extreme and taking great pride in spending half an hour knocking what amounts to less than 50p off a hand-crafted woodcarving - Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world.

### Tipping

Restaurants and hotels may add 10% to bills in which case no further tip is required; otherwise a 10% tip is customary in places that cater to tourists. Elsewhere it is not customary to tip, but gratuities are always appreciated.

## RECOMMENDED READING:

### Travel Guides (useful if extending your stay)

- Nepal - Lonely Planet
- A Rough Guide to Nepal
- Nepali phrasebook - Lonely Planet

### Fiction / Autobiography

- A Glimpse of Eternal Snows - Jane Wilson-Howarth
- The Snow Leopard - Peter Matthiessen
- The Waiting Land - Dervla Murphy
- Into Thin Air - Jon Krakauer
- The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest - Anatoli Boukreev