

nepal fact file



nepal embassy in uk	Website: www.nepembassy.org.uk Address: 12A Kensington Palace Gardens, London, W8 4QU Telephone: 020 7229 159400/6231/5352 Facsimile: 020 7792 9861 Office Hours (GMT): Mon–Fri: 0930–1300 & 1400–1750
british embassy in nepal	Website: www.britain.gov.np britemb@wlink.com.np Address: PO Box 106, Lainchaur, Kathmandu, Nepal Telephone: +977 (1) 4410583/4414588 Facsimile: +977 (1) 4411789/4416723 Office Hours (GMT): Mon - Thurs 0815 – 1700 and Friday 0815 – 1315
area	1,47,181 Square Km.
population	Approx. 26.46 Million
capital	Kathmandu
language	Nepali
tipping	Small dollar or Nepalese rupees are needed, ie: 20 rupees for a porter to take your bag to your hotel room, 10% on restaurant bills.
bank opening hours	9am to 3pm (Monday to Friday)
post office hours	9am to 5pm (Monday to Friday)
office opening hours	9am to 5pm (Monday to Friday), in rural areas Sun-Thurs 10am-5pm, Fri 10am-3pm
shops opening hours	Roughly 10am to 6pm
time (+/- gmt)	+5hr 45 mins
electricity	220 Volts & 50 Cycles
public holidays	Saturday (and sometimes Sunday)
telephone	The international direct dialling code for India is +977. Please check with your mobile phone provider if your network & contract enable you to have coverage in Nepal. Charity Challenge also has a Satellite Phone. The Satellite Phone is for emergencies only and battery life is limited by the cold temperatures.
photograph	You will find it hard to buy camera film outside of Kathmandu and Namche Bazaar. You can charge digital cameras at the tea houses you have your evening meals in for a small fee (100-200 rupees per hour), please bring a plug adapter.
postal	GPO is situated at Sundhara. Best to post through your hotel or a major bookshop.
currency	Rupiya (Nepalese rupee). £1= Rs126 (as of August 2008). For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com .
credit cards	Accepted in all major hotels, banks and stores in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Make sure you know your pin number before leaving the home.
travellers cheque	As for credit cards in USD and GBP denominations
passport/visa	You must hold a full ten-year passport with at least six months to run from the end of your expedition. Airlines may not carry passengers holding passports with less than 6 months validity. We will provide you with a visa application form or you can download one from the embassy website - www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa_information.html The validity of visa dates are counted from the date of arrival in Nepal. You should apply about 12 weeks before departure for a single-entry tourist visa. Do not apply too early otherwise it will run out before you leave for Nepal. It is valid for six months from the date of issue. The visa is valid for 60 days on entry and costs £20. Also see Travel Tips & your visa letter 3 months prior to departure.
gifts & souvenirs	Gifts and Souvenirs can be bought and taken out from the country except for antique or if more than 100 years old.
duty free	Available at Tribhuwan International Airport, Kathmandu

vaccination & health

Nomad Travel Stores Medical Centre recommends the following vaccinations: hepatitis A; typhoid; diphtheria; tetanus; poliomyelitis. Vaccines sometimes advised: hepatitis B; rabies; tuberculosis; meningococcal meningitis; Japanese B encephalitis (for eastern and low lying areas); cholera. Malaria precautions are essential in all areas below 1200m, all year round. The risk in Kathmandu and mountainous areas of similar or greater altitude is very small. Check with your doctor or nurse about suitable anti-malarial tablets. It is imperative that you drink at least 5 litres of water per day to limit the effects of dehydration and to combat the effects of altitude sickness. High altitude (usually from 10,000ft upwards) can cause headaches and dizziness, but the gradual acclimatisation process of this itinerary will help to prepare you for the altitudes. Also see Health notes.

risks

- > Unpredictable weather, cancellation or delay of internal flights, emergency evacuation can lead to a re-route of our original itinerary sometimes.
- > Landslides affect Nepal during the monsoon season (July-September), and flooding may also occur. Both can cause major disruption to travel during the summer months.
- > Nepal is an earthquake zone. Although no major earthquake has struck Nepal since 1934, the possibility still exists.
- > Delays caused by army checkpoints on roads.
- > Very small but slight risk of encounters with Maoist insurgents if travelling in certain rural areas such as the Annapurna region, to date where these have occurred it has usually involved paying a 'tax' (up to \$100) without any physical violence.

hospitals/ pharmacies

In Kathmandu there are major government-run and private hospitals. Pharmacies are widely available on all places in big town & cities. Health Posts are found in major villages like Lukla, Namche Bazaar, Khunde and Pheriche.

water

Water is NOT safe to drink straight from the tap, rivers or creeks. Chlorine-based purification tablets are only 50% to 60% effective on Himalayan water. Iodine or Lugol's solution (available locally) works 100% but leaves a slightly metallic taste. Plastic bottled water is not recommended for Eco-trekking purposes. On trek we serve safe boiled drinking water, the safest way to stay healthy while on treks. Also see Health notes.

climate

The cold, dry, clear winter season runs from October to March, and the warm, dry spring season from March to June. The wet season, or monsoon, lasts from roughly June to September, depending on the year. Mid-September to mid-October is the start of the dry season. Also see Q&A for your chosen expedition.

temperature

Highly dependent on altitude and season, so charts are little use. Kathmandu temperatures can drop to a few degrees centigrade on winter nights, and reach about 30 degrees centigrade shortly before the monsoon. In the mountain temperatures rarely exceed 25 degrees, but can plummet far below zero. Plains areas roughly 5-10 degrees centigrade hotter than Kathmandu.

geography

Located between India and China at latitudes 26 and 30 degrees North and longitudes 80 and 88 degree East. Nepal is topographically divided into 3 regions; the Himalayas (mountains), the pahad (middle hills) and the Terai (plains).

culture/customs

Most Nepalis are Hindu, especially in the capital and plains areas. The Middle Hills are mixed areas, with Hindu castes, predominantly Chhetri, living among ethnic groups (possibly of Tibetan origin) such as Gurungs, Magars, Tamangs, Rais and Limbus who practice various mixtures of Hindu, animistic and Shamanic practices. Buddhist groups such as Sherpas and Tamangs live in mountain areas.

do's & don'ts

- > Do learn the lingo! The formal greeting in Nepal is "Namaste", performed by joining the palms of the hand together in front of the face; it's usually over-formal for chance encounters on trails - try a hearty "oho!". Equally, "dhanyebaad" is too formal for most thank yous - you can use an English "thank you" instead, or just smile. With its diverse ethnic groups and traditional beliefs Nepal has numerous cultural practices. The best advice is to watch what other people do, and even if you get it wrong, most Nepalis are very understanding.
- > Do be aware of local customs. Hindus consider certain objects as ritually impure: shoes (remove them when entering homes or religious places, and avoid touching anyone with your feet, or stretching your legs out showing the soles); eating utensils (avoid sharing food with Hindus, or any utensil or water bottle that you've touched with your lips); and the left hand (avoid pointing at or touching people with it, especially on the head).
- > Do seek permission before entering temples and note that walking around temples and monasteries is traditionally done clockwise.
- > Don't displays of affection between men and women in public - affection should be kept private.
- > Don't get involved with drugs. Drugs are illegal and frowned on by most Nepalis. Possession of very small quantities can lead to imprisonment.
- > Don't overstay your visa. If you do, you may be heavily fined and can even find yourself in jail.

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