

Team Ascent

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GENERAL INFORMATION FOR: NEPAL

Nepal only occupies 0.1% of the earths surface, yet is home to: 2%of all the flowering plants in the world; 8% of the worlds population of birds -848 species-; 4% of the mammals on earth; 11 of the worlds 15 families of butterflies; 600 indigenous plants; 8 of the 14 mountains above 8000 meters in the world; 319 species of exotic orchids.

Responsible Tourism: Respect, respect, respect! It's true to say that the fact that we encourage you to travel to Nepal and other wonderful and environmentally sensitive areas of the world does have an effect. At Team Ascent we try to be responsible. All tourism has an environmental, economical, cultural and social impact. We aim to make our impact as positive as minimal impact can be. Environmentally we aim to leave the environment in at least as good a state as we find it. Socially and culturally we go where our hosts are happy to welcome us. Economically we try to ensure that our hosts receive a fair share of any business that tourism generates. We ask and will remind all our clients to be as responsible and respectful as they can be and to help us as much as they can in preserving our wilderness areas.

Passport and Visa: All visitors to Nepal except Indian Nationals must hold a valid passport and visa. You can obtain a visa at the Royal Nepalese Embassy or consulate in your home country. You can also obtain a visa on entry to Nepal and this is very straight forward for those with British passports and we recommend that this is the most hassle free way to obtain your visa, unless of course you live in London and can easily visit the Embassy. To obtain your visa you will need to present your valid passport, two passport size photos and the visa fee (currently \$30.00 in USD and this will give you a 30 Day visa. Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the date of the return trip. Team Ascents local agents can arrange visa extensions once you arrive. Multiple visas can be obtained for \$50.00 USD.

Free Visa: Foreigners who visit Nepal for only three days or not more than three days do not need to pay for an entry visa. This free visa will only be issued at Kathmandu's international airport which is named: Tribhuban international airport Kathmandu.

Trekking Permits and Fees: Trekking Permits are required for most areas of Nepal. Team Ascent will organise these for you and this is included in our price. We require a photocopy of your passport, 2 passport size photographs so that we can make all necessary arrangements on your behalf. It is important that you forward these to us once your booking is confirmed. We will also ask you to complete a bio data form. It's always worthwhile to carry some extra passport photos with you in Asia as they seem to be asked for often and they can be hard to obtain once outside Kathmandu.

Upon Arrival: After obtaining your visa and being cleared through customs, you will emerge from the airport into a sea of smiling, shouting Nepali faces, many offering you taxis to Kathmandu. Our local staff will be there to meet and transfer you and your luggage to the hotel. Just look for our Team Ascent Sign, which may also have your trek, expedition or personal name on the board.

Airport Departure Tax: An airport tax of Rs.770/- per passenger is levied upon departure to Asian countries and Rs1100/- to other international destinations. Those flying with Nepali airlines receive a deduction. You have to pay this departure tax as soon as you enter the airport prior to checking in.

Currency and Foreign Exchange: The unit of currency is the Nepalese Rupee (NPR). The rate of exchange does vary like all currency and currently is around 136.33 NPR = £1.00 USD. The rate of exchange is determined by the Nepal Rastra Bank and is announced daily in the local press. Daily Foreign Exchange rates are available from <http://www.kantipuronline.com/forex.php> Foreign currency must be exchanged only through the banks and authorised foreign exchange dealers. Credit Cards and Traveller's Cheques can be used throughout larger towns of the Kathmandu valley. There are a number of ATM's and these tend to be quite reliable. If you wish to pay for goods by credit card there is usually a minimum of an extra charge of 3%. Rupee notes of smaller denominations are necessary when travelling outside of the Kathmandu area.

Banks: Banks are open 10.00 am to around 3.00 pm. Sunday through to Thursday and 10.00am to 2.30pm on Fridays.

Custom Formalities: All baggage must be declared and cleared through customs and is much the same as any other frontier. Narcotics, arms and ammunition are strictly prohibited. When departing Nepal customs officials are most concerned with export of drugs and antiques

Time: Nepal is 5 hours and 45 minutes ahead of GMT and 15 minutes ahead of Indian Standard time.

Restaurants and Food: Almost every kind of food representing the culinary skills of many parts of the world is available in Kathmandu. Your Hotel stay will include an international breakfast. Butter and Milk products taste funny and indeed many things are different but generally moderate to good! Drinking water is an issue in Kathmandu and you should only drink bottled water and also use this for dental brushing etc. *Always be careful to avoid swallowing any tap water, even in the shower never ever drink tap water unless you sterilise it first!* Bottled drinks are normally Ok, and boiled tea and coffee is usually fine, but do take care, and if it's cold, ask for boiled!

Immunisation: Visitors do not need any particular immunisation for a visit. Vaccinations for Cholera, meningitis, diphtheria, typhoid and gamma globulin should however be considered.

Traveller's first aid kit: A small, simple but adequate medical kit can be very useful when travelling: aspirin or panadol- for pain or fever. Antihistamine – as a decongestant for colds, allergies; a broad-spectrum antibiotic- to cover bowels and chest infection (prescription required). Imodium or Lomotil- for stomach upsets; re-hydration mixtures- for severe diarrhoea; insect repellent; antiseptic sprays or wipes is useful. Bandages, band aids, tweezers, water purification (iodine based) and a blister kit are recommended.

Medical Services: Medical facilities around Kathmandu tend to be good, there are several private clinics and the government assisted by foreign aid has set up some good Health Posts. Outside Kathmandu the facilities are not so good or readily available, but it is improving all the time. You are best to have all your vaccinations done at home prior to your visit. Many medical treatments can be bought over the counter in Kathmandu.

Ethics and Etiquette in Nepal: Nepalese practice cultural etiquettes that may appear unusual to visitors: The form of greeting in Nepal is “Namaste” performed by joining palms together.

- As a mark of respect shoes are often removed before entering someone’s home or cultural site.
- Food or material containing another’s saliva is considered impure –“ jutho”
- Passing things to another person with the left hand can give offence. As can touching with the feet.
- Persons (both men and women) wearing skimpy outfits is frowned upon, especially in the countryside.
- Walking around temples or stupas is traditionally done clockwise.
- To avoid conflict photography is carried out after asking permission from the person.
- Public displays of affection between man and woman are scandalous.
- Leather articles are prohibited inside many temples.
- Some Hindu temples do not allow Westerners to enter.
- Nodding head and a slight dangling of the head from left to right means yes, shaking the head means no.

Political System: Multi- Party democracy

Religion: Nepal enjoys the distinction of being the only Hindu Kingdom in the world. However a harmonious blending of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christian and Islam exist. The Team Ascent Sherpas are Buddhist.

Seasons:

Winter: December – February

Spring: March – May

Summer: June- August

Winter: September to November

Mountaineering/Trekking activities tend to take place Pre and Post Monsoon. Pre-monsoon: late March to end of May; Post-monsoon September to February.

What to wear: Lightweight clothing is recommended for May through to October, warmer garments for other times. An umbrella or Raincoat is a must for the rainy season. Layering systems are best for trekking and climbing.

UIAA participation statement: “Climbing and mountaineering are activities with danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement”

Weather: Kathmandu

Temperature C.

Jan	19
Feb	20
Mar	25
Apr	30
May	34
Jun	30
Jul	20
Aug	29
Sep	27
Oct	23
Nov	23
Dec	20

Rainfall

25
25
75
50
100
225
375
360
175
50
10
10

Chance of a dry day

95%
91%
93%
85%
74%
54%
33%
37%
62%
88%
98%
99%