



## Delhi to Kathmandu

To travel between Delhi and Kathmandu, from the bustling cities of the Indian plains to the peace and tranquillity of the highest mountains on Earth, is one of the most beautiful and fascinating journeys in Asia.



10 days/9 nights

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Delhi

You are free today to explore Delhi and rest after your flight; rooms may not be available until noon but it is often earlier than this.

#### Day 2: Jaipur

After breakfast you will have a tour of the capital. In Old Delhi you visit Jama Masjid (India's largest mosque). You then drive past the fine colonial buildings in New Delhi. Built by the British Raj in the early years of last century and set in spacious tree-lined boulevards, these now house various Indian governmental departments. You then visit Humayun's Tomb, one of the earlier Moghul Emperors. In the afternoon you drive to the 'Pink City' of Jaipur. This drive will take approximately 5 to 7 hours, depending on local traffic.

#### Day 3: Jaipur

A full day to explore Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan and one of the most attractive and colourful cities in India. Built in the late 18th century, it is a planned city of broad avenues built of sandstone and painted pink at a later stage. First you visit the City Palace. Formerly the residence of the Maharaja it is now a fine museum containing rare manuscripts, paintings, royal garments and weapons. Close to the palace is one of the most intriguing sites of India, the observatory of Jai Singh. This is an assembly of immense astronomical instruments made of marble and brass set in a pleasant garden. You will also see Jaipur's impressive landmark, the Hawa Mahal, or Palace of the Winds. A few miles from the main city is the splendid Amber Palace, rising above a lake. The imposing hilltop fort contains large courtyards and interiors with fine decorations including inlaid alabaster panels and a Chamber of Mirrors. You can walk up the hill through the massive gateway to the courtyard. Jaipur is a centre of many handicrafts, such as durries (woven rugs), carpets, printed cloth, semi-precious stones, leatherwear etc.

#### Day 4: Agra

You begin the day by driving to Agra via the deserted ancient city of Fatehpur Sikri. Formally the capital of the Mughal Empire, this wonderfully preserved 'ghost town' was constructed by Emperor Akbar between 1570 and 1585 and reflects his ideals in art, religion and architecture. This impressive and well-preserved citadel became his capital in 1571,



after the blessing of a local Moslem holy man correctly predicted the birth of a longed-for son, his successor the Emperor Jehangir. The mosque, designed to hold ten thousand worshippers, the palaces, residences and halls of audience are all of decorative red sandstone. But this magnificence only lasted 14 years, as in 1584 Akbar left Fatehpur Sikri to secure his outlying territories, leaving this city much as we see it today. The site is one of the most atmospheric in northern India and its position on a ridge overlooking the modern village below, and its wonderful state of preservation give us with a taste of this city's majestic past.

#### **Day 5: Gaya**

A very early start to see the incredible spectacle of the sunrise over the Taj. The Moghul Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631, built the beautiful white marble Taj Mahal. The Taj is serenely beautiful and never fails to amaze a first time visitor; the white marble exterior changes colour according to the position of the sun and is matched by the rich interior detail. Within striking distance is the imposing Red Fort of Akbar, whose mighty sandstone walls enclose the beautiful white marble Pearl Mosque and the palaces, halls, courtyards and fountains of his sons and successors, Jehangir and Shah Jahan. It is here that the latter spent his last years, imprisoned by his own son Aurangzeb. Agra also offers a wide variety of handicrafts including jewellery, inlaid and carved marble, carpets and clothes and there should be time for some shopping. In the evening you make our way to Agra Fort train station to catch your overnight train to Varanasi.

#### **Day 6: Varanasi**

On arrival in Varanasi you transfer to your hotel. Please note rooms may not be available until noon but efforts are made to make it earlier if possible. In the afternoon you visit the nearby Sarnath Temple. Sarnath is as sacred to Buddhists as Varanasi is to Hindus. The main monument at Sarnath is the Dhamekh Stupa which is the very spot where Buddha is believed to have given his first sermon. Evening free.

#### **Day 7: River Ganges**

Varanasi, situated on the River Ganges, is one of the most holy cities in India and stands at the centre of the Hindu universe. As such, the city lives and breathes Hinduism: there are thousands of pilgrims, wandering holy men (Sadhus), religious leaders and casual visitors. Immerse yourself by exploring its maze of narrow lanes, many temples and watch the Hindu ceremonies that take place around the clock. Just before dawn, you take a boat out on the Ganges to witness the extraordinary spectacles on the ghats; the steps leading down to the river. Every day thousands of Hindu pilgrims come to these three miles of riverbank to submerge themselves in the waters of the holy Ganges. In the evening you can witness the aarti ceremony from the banks of the river.

#### **Day 8: Lumbini**

You board a private bus and make an early departure for Nepal. You will drive across the northern plains, passing through a few towns and lots of Indian villages. At the Indian border you leave our bus and walk across through customs and immigration to Nepal (approx. 500 metres). Once in Nepal, you enter the Terai, the narrow plain running along the southern breadth of the country. You have a short drive (approx. 1 hour) to Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha, where you spend the night. Total driving time approx. 12 hrs.

#### **Day 9: Chitwan National Park**

Early this morning there is a short, optional rickshaw ride around the Lumbini gardens. Buddha was born here and the area is being developed into a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists from all over the world. Travelling east and parallel to the mountains, you reach Chitwan (approx. 4 hour drive), where you spend two nights. The park, with its jungle and thick forest, was the former royal hunting ground and was made a conservation area in 1973. During your stay you can enjoy an optional ox cart ride in Tharu village or an evening dance performance; both providing a glimpse into the fascinating lives of the local tribe.

#### **Day 10: Chitwan National Park**

Chitwan National Park and the surrounding forest covers an area of 923 square kilometres of the terai (low land region in southern Nepal) and affords excellent wildlife viewing opportunities. Amongst the larger animals, you have an excellent chance of seeing the Indian one horned rhino, Sambar and Chital deer, guar, langur and Rhesus monkeys, mongoose, jackal, otter and crocodile. The more elusive animals include tiger, leopard, leopard cat, Sloth bear and Indian bison. Over 500 species of birds have been recorded in this area.

Wildlife activities are managed and escorted by experienced naturalists and shikharis and included in your stay is a jeep safari and a dug out canoe excursion. Birdwatching outings can also be organised.

#### **Days 11: Pokhara**

Today, your journey to Pokhara is only 140km but will take 4-5 hours. You follow the gorge of the Narayani River and soon you are in the foothills of the Himalaya. The scenery changes dramatically from the forests and farmlands of the terai to steep terraced hills, and as you get closer to Pokhara you begin to see the formidable Annapurna Range. Set at only 1,000m amongst semi-tropical plants and with a delightfully warm climate, it is actually much closer to the main Himalayan peaks than Kathmandu. Machhapuchhare, the 'Fishtail Peak', dominates the skyline especially on a clear morning. You will stay in a simple hotel near to Lake Phewa, with a wide choice of restaurants and other facilities close by.



### Day 12: Pokhara

You can either relax by or on the beautiful lake in Pokhara, or the more energetic can hike into the surrounding hills for even better views of the peaks. There are many wonderful day walks in and around the Pokhara valley, one of the best being to drive up to the remains of a fort at Sarankot, the hill directly overlooking the lake and then walk back to Pokhara. An early morning start is required to guarantee the clearest view, but once there, the whole Annapurna range can be seen with virtually no intervening hills. This is one of the best of all viewpoints for Machhapuchhare, most people's favourite mountain in the region. For many though, Pokhara is a place to relax by either renting a rowboat or bicycle for a few hours and exploring the lake and its shoreline at a leisurely pace.

### Day 14: Kathmandu

You leave early for the long drive to Kathmandu, along the Chinese-built road running parallel to the main Himalayan range. The distance is only 200km but it is a slow climb through the mountains and the journey will take most of the day (7 - 8 hours). The views, however, are stunning as you follow the Marsyangdi and Trisuli rivers, passing numerous villages and terraces stretching thousands of feet up the hillside. You will arrive in Kathmandu in the late afternoon and check into our centrally located hotel.

### Day 15: Pashupatinath

You have today to explore Kathmandu and the valley. In the early morning there is the opportunity to take a scenic flight to see Mount Everest (this can be booked and paid for on arrival in Kathmandu). Today there will be a half-day sightseeing tour visiting Pashupatinath, the most important Hindu temple in the valley, and Bodnath, one of the largest Buddhist stupas in the world. The rest of the time is free for individual exploration of Kathmandu. You may like to visit Durbar Square of Kathmandu with its old Royal Palace and intricately carved temples, or Swayambhunath, the 'monkey temple', set on a hill overlooking the city.

Kathmandu also offers the most wonderful and varied opportunities for souvenir shopping: clothes, trinkets, Tibetan and Nepalese handicrafts and superb bookshops. It also has a wide variety of restaurants serving some of the best food from the sub-continent and you can also find wonderful pizzas and apple pie.

### Day 16: Kathmandu

After breakfast, this portion of your adventure is complete and you will be transferred to the airport.

## Details

#### Tour Size:

Min. 4 - Max. 16

#### 2019 Departures:

February: 10

April: 07

October: 06, 27

November: 03

December: 22

#### 2019 Pricing:

CA\$2,945 - CA\$3,515

#### 2020 Departures:

January: 19

February: 09

March: 08

April: 05

October: 04, 11, 25

November: 08, 15

December: 20

#### 2020 Pricing:

CA\$3,285 - CA\$3,345

Prices are shown in CA\$, per person based on two people sharing a twin room, one person in a single room. Some dates have slightly higher prices than those shown. Please inquire for the rate that pertains to your date of choice. Contact us for single pricing.

#### Trip Code:



009390 - W20

**INCLUDED**

- All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 2 dinners
- All accommodation
- Transfer for group flights

**NOT INCLUDED**

- Flights to Delhi and from Kathmandu
- Optional activities
- Travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature

**TOUR NOTES**

No experience is necessary for this leisurely adventure.

\*The Diwali Festival: During Diwali, the festival of lights, people typically light up their houses, shops and streets, and celebrate on the streets with fireworks. Some departures will take place during the festival. It is a great festival to witness and some very minor itinerary alterations may be made locally in order to make the most of these occasions.

*Disclaimer: We do our utmost to ensure that information posted on our website is correct at the time of publication, however trip details are subject to change without notice by the suppliers and operators involved. We update the information as soon as possible when changes are advised to us, however, we cannot assume responsibility for such changes made by the suppliers and operators.*

**ROUTE MAP**



**Contact**

**Winnipeg**  
 164 Marion Street  
 Winnipeg, MB, Canada  
 R2H 0T4  
 Phone: 204.949.0199  
 Fax: 204.949.0188  
 Toll Free: 800.661.3830

**Edmonton**  
 (formerly Butte Travel Service)  
 11733 95th St. NW  
 Edmonton, AB, Canada  
 T5G 1M1  
 Phone: 780.477.3561  
 Fax: 780.477.9871  
 Toll Free: 800.661.8906



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