

Journey to Nepal October 25 – November 3, 2023

With Lynne Wiggins and Lorraine Meyer



Nepal boasts eight of the world's tallest mountains and the world's oldest Hindu and Buddhist sites. While Kathmandu Valley is made of three ancient cities filled with enchanting medieval palaces, pagodas, temples, statues and stupas, the rest of the kingdom offers unparalleled adventure options with abundance in flora and fauna. As for its people - From the Tharus that share their land with the splendid Asian tuskers in the plains to the brave Yak herders of Dolpo, they are as amazing as the land itself. Here in its tropical jungles the Royal Bengal Tiger prowls, higher up the legend of the Yeti lives on. Although modernization has set in, the quintessence of ancient Nepal remains.

In Nepal, a rich tapestry of cultural heritage is blended in the Kathmandu Valley. The Valley encompasses the three ancient cities of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur that together house seven UNESCO World Heritage shrines that are together listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Culture). Kathmandu is a living museum of Nepali civilization and culture. It is also home to hundreds of other exquisite monuments, sculptures, artistic temples, and magnificent art - reminders of the golden era in Nepal's architecture.

Originally known as a Hindu Kingdom, Nepal became a secular state in 2006. About 80% of the population follow Hinduism, making Nepal a country with the highest percentage of Hindu followers. Buddhism, though a minority is also an important religion in the country because of a historical link to the country. Siddhartha Gautama, the man who was enlightened to be the Buddha was born in a small village in Nepal. These two religions have co-existed down the ages and many Hindu temples share the same complex as, Buddhist shrines. Apart from Hinduism and Buddhism, many other religions like Islam, Christianity, and Bon are practiced here.

DETAILED ITINERARY:

Day 1 – 25 Oct 2023: Arrive in Kathmandu

Altitude: 1,400 m / 4,600 ft.

Upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, you will be met and assisted by one of our representatives to complete the immigration and visa formalities.

After collecting your baggage, follow your path outside the airport where our local guides will be waiting in the arrivals section.

Arrive at the hotel and check in.

If time permits, transfer to Boudhanath - one of the most imposing landmarks of Kathmandu and is a center of Tibetan Buddhism. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this stupa is built on a massive three level mandala and is one of the largest in the world. A popular tourist attraction, there are many shops around the stupa selling souvenirs, handicrafts, and a variety of exclusive Tibetan specialties and delicacies.

Boudhanath has an extra element as the place gleams with oil lamps while prayer flags soar high fluttering simultaneously. People start their kora (circumambulation) around the stupa in a clockwise direction spinning prayer wheels and the entire place appears magical.

Light butter lamps at Boudhanath as an offering of light to the deities. Lighting butter lamps is considered as one of the most common means of making merits and one of the most powerful offerings. The light from the flame symbolizes the wisdom of the awakened mind, dispels the darkness of delusion and mental obscuration.

Enjoy a sundowner at a rooftop restaurant in Boudhanath exclusively for our guests, while you are served refreshments – tea/coffee and snacks.

Note: Meals - only dinner at the hotel is included for today.

Overnight at the hotel [-/-/D]

Day 2 – 26 Oct 2023: In Kathmandu –

Vegetable & spice markets: We visit the vegetable & spice market in Ason and see its many courtyards and bustling bazaars. Take an exciting rickshaw (tricycle) ride honking your way through narrow alleys to the bustling bazaars of Ason. Sit back and relax as you navigate for a slightly different experience of exploring the city like a local.

After the visit, continue to Swayambhunath Stupa, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It rests on a hillock and is one of the most important and sacred Buddhist shrines of Nepal. Legend has it that when Kathmandu Valley was a lake 2000 years ago, a single lotus flower grew at the center of the lake. When Saint Manjushree, the Bodhisatva drained the lake with a single slash of his sword, the lotus settled on top of a hill and magically turned into a stupa. Thus Swayambhunath is also known as a Self-Created stupa.

Transfer back to the hotel.

Day 3 – 27 Oct 2023: In Kathmandu

This morning, explore Patan. Also known as Lalitpur, the city of artisans is a paradise of fine arts and best known for its rich cultural heritage. It is home to the valley's finest craftsmen who have preserved such ancient techniques as the repoussé and lost wax process used to produce exquisite sculptures. The city retains much of its old charm with its narrow streets, brick houses and multitude of well-preserved Hindu temples, Buddhist monasteries (vihars) and monuments.

In the heart of Patan, amidst the Patan marketplace lays the Patan Durbar Square, an area filled with ancient palaces, pagoda temples, stone baths, Hindu and Buddhist statues, engravings and bronze carvings. The Palace of the Malla Kings is one of the highlights of Patan. Patan Durbar Square is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We visit the current Kumari in her chambers in Patan and get her blessings as she sits upon a gilded lion throne. The power of the Kumari is perceived to be so strong that even a glimpse of her is believed to bring good fortune.

Further meet with an ex-Kumari who has served her tenure as a Kumari and successfully handed over her powers and privileges to her younger successor. This meeting provides a first-hand in-depth knowledge of this sacred ancient tradition, the challenges faced by the Kumaris and ordinary life that follows the life of being a goddess.

*Later visit the **Singing Bowl Workshop** at Patan for a healing bowl therapy. The Healing bowl in order to produce the perfect harmonic sound should be made with an alloy of seven different metals in correct proportion and balanced hammering. Typically called "Dhwoni Patra" in Nepali which translates to "singing bowl" is a special metallic alloy of seven different metals (copper, iron, tin, lead, gold, silver, mercury) which correspond to the seven planets in the universe and the seven Chakras (energy centers) in our body. Singing bowls has been used for centuries for healing and meditation purposes. By striking the surface or rubbing the rim the singing bowl produces majestic long sustaining harmonic overtones and yet intense vibration which is used as ultrasonic therapy and physiotherapy.*

Benefits of The Himalayan Healing Bowls:

- *Reduce stress and anxiety significantly*
- *Lower anger and blood pressure*
- *Improve circulation and increases blood flow*
- *Deep relaxation and pain relief*
- *Chakra balancing*
- *Increase mental and emotional clarity (depression, fatigue, anger, loneliness, fear)*
- *Promote stillness, happiness and well-being. Stimulate the immune system.*
- *Enhances the awareness of mind and body in perfect harmony*
- *Also used as tool for clearing up negative energy and cleansing of space*

This session will last for 15-20 min. There will be additional time for those interested in learning more individual techniques.

Later afternoon, visit Pashupatinath. The magnificent Pashupatinath temple with its astonishing architectural beauty is situated on the bank of the sacred Bagmati River. Dedicated to the Hindu God of Destruction, Lord Shiva, this temple is regarded as the most sacred of all Lord Shiva temples. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the temple comprises of a richly ornamented pagoda that houses the sacred linga or phallic symbol of Lord Shiva. **Overnight at the hotel [B/L/D]**

Day 4 – 28 Oct 2023: Fly to Chitwan

Flight details: TBA

After breakfast, fly to Chitwan by fixed wing flight.

Chitwan is among the last surviving examples of continuous band of forests and grasslands, which once extended from the Indus River in Pakistan to the Burmese border. Chitwan National Park lies in the lush valley of Chitwan situated in the foothills of Churia ranges. It is the first National Park of the Kingdom and is one of the finest national parks in Asia. The Park is famous for its variety of wildlife especially the Great Indian one Horned Rhinoceros. On arrival, welcome drink will be served at the hotel. After check – in, you will be briefed about the resort's accommodation and the types of flora and fauna that can be found here.

Later afternoon, enjoy canoe down the river. As you float down the serenity of the tranquil water, you can observe the aquatic animals and the bird life that are so diverse in Chitwan. This excursion will last about one to two hours.

Enjoy a sun-downer at the bank of Rapti River. Soft drinks along with some light snacks will be served. Take a seat back and relax while watching the beautiful sun set behind the lush greenery of the Chitwan National Park.

Overnight at Barahi Jungle Lodge [B/L/D]

Day 5 and Day 6 – 29 Oct & 30 Oct 2023: In Chitwan

After breakfast, go for an adventurous Jeep Safari inside the dense Chitwan National Park. This exciting ride will offer you a unique opportunity to experience the wildlife in Chitwan.

Make sure you wear clothes that match the environment like the colors of green, brown, khaki so you have more chances of animal-sighting; bright colored clothing may scare or alert the animals.

Return to the lodge in time for lunch. After lunch, you can enjoy an adventurous Jungle walk inside the dense forest where you will get to witness some wild animals, birds, and game reserves. On your way back, take a tour of the nearby village and surroundings; interact with locals as our guide briefs you about the area and its people.

Return to the lodge and freshen up.

Evening, enjoy a slide show presentation of the property or a Tharu cultural show performed by the local Tharu community followed by dinner.

The activities in Chitwan are subject to weather conditions and as per the activities offered by the resort during the time of travel.

Overnight at Barahi Jungle Lodge [B/L/D]

Day 7 – 31 Oct 2023: Fly back to Kathmandu. Drive to Dhulikhel visiting Bhaktapur

Flight details: TBA

Morning, transfer to Bharatpur airport to board the flight to Kathmandu. Upon arrival in Kathmandu, transfer to Bhaktapur.

Also known as Bhadgaon, literally the 'City of Devotees' is a major tourist destination that takes visitors back in time. Bhaktapur lies on the Arniko Highway that connects Kathmandu to the Chinese border. Bhaktapur is still untouched by rapid urbanization and has managed to retain its brick paved roads, charming red brick houses and a way of life that goes back to medieval times. This ancient city is also famous for pottery and woodcarving

amply displayed on the squares and windows respectively.

The extraordinary Bhaktapur Durbar Square is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and its monuments reflect the glory days of the Malla Dynasty when art and architecture thrived in the three cities of the valley.

In Bhaktapur Durbar Square, visit the **Nyatapola Temple**, the unique Temple that literally means 'five storied' and rises above the city's landscape as a remarkable landmark. **Bhairavnath Temple**, dedicated to Bhairav, the God of Terror, is a three-storied temple noted for its artistic grandeur and stands adjacent to the famous five-storied Nyatapola Temple. **The Golden Gate** is the entrance to the 15th century Palace of 55 Carved Windows. The golden gate is a masterpiece in repousse art, which has added splendor to this palace square that consists of buildings dating from the 13th century to the 18th century.

After the visit, continue to Dhulikhel.

Dhulikhel has always been an important trade center, is a place of exhilarating beauty and unparalleled serenity. Also popular for the remarkable view of the sunrise and sunset, Dhulikhel is famous for its vantage location in viewing the Himalayas. The old town of Dhulikhel is a close traditional Newari settlement with an assembly of fine old Newari houses with beautifully carved windows and doors. The core area of Dhulikhel has interesting narrow cobbled streets and lanes embedded with number of Hindu Shrines and a few Buddhist Stupas.

Upon arrival, check in to the hotel, where the remaining day will be at leisure.

You can also indulge in activities offered by the resort for the in-house guests whilst their stay:

- 1) Full spa
- 2) Use of Chakra Sound Therapy Chamber
- 3) Use of Meditation Maze
- 4) Group Yoga Session
- 5) Group Pottery Session
- 6) Visit to the farm
- 7) Use of Swimming Pool and Fitness Center
- 8) Use of Garden of Nine Planets
- 9) Art & Painting Session
- 10) Crystal house
- 11) Cine Therapy Session
- 12) 30 Minutes Consultation with our Ayurvedic Doctor
- 13) Use of Salt room room

Overnight at Dwarika's Resort [B/L/D]

Dwarika's Resort is located approx. 1-1.5 hours' drive from Kathmandu city amidst verdant forest with views of Himalayas and countryside. Admire the stunning mountain views from a giant picture window and one can settle near one of the resort's amazing sunset viewing points. The uncluttered and comfortable accommodations feature their own private outdoor spaces, complete with hammocks or lounge chairs.

Day 8 – 1 Nov 2023: In Dhulikhel

The day is on leisure to relax or enjoy the activities like pottery, yoga, meditation, hiking offered by the resort.

OR you can enjoy hiking:

Namo Buddha Hike

Grade: Easy - *uphill*

Trek Duration: approx. 3.5 hours walking.

Located on a slightly elevated land, glistened with distant snowcapped mountains, adorned with fluttering prayer flags Namu Buddha is a sanctuary of peace and harmony.

For centuries Namu Buddha has drawn pilgrims to the sacred spot where legend has it that the Great Being, an early incarnation of Lord Buddha while on a walk through the dense forest came across a starving tigress and her five cubs. The tigress was so weak that she was unable to feed herself or her cubs. The Great Being was tormented at the sight of a mother unable to feed her children. Hence, out of sheer generosity, the Great Being sacrificed his own flesh to feed the starving tigress and her cubs.

The ancient stupa of Namu Buddha is where the remains of the Great Being after his sacrifice are buried. Today, this site has become a special place to accumulate merit through activities of circumambulation and making offerings. People from all over the world visit the site to pay homage to the Great Being and make traditional offerings of butter lamps. A carved stone slab depicts this Buddhist tale of selfless compassion and sacrifice. After Great Being offered his body in generosity to the tigress, people found it difficult to travel through the region for fear of wild animals, so they developed the practice of reciting 'Namu Buddha' (I take refuge in the Buddha) to dispel their anxiety. This is how the area gets its name. As time passed, villages gradually appeared and the area became more urban and less dangerous.

Overnight at Dwarika's Resort [B/L/D]

Day 9 – 2 Nov 2023: In Dhulikhel

The day is on leisure to relax or enjoy the activities like pottery, yoga, meditation etc.

Overnight at Dwarika's Resort [B/L/D]

Day 10 – 3 Nov 2023: Departure [B]

Transfer to International airport in time to board the outbound flight.

Trip Ends

Note: All information in this itinerary is accurate to the best of our knowledge but please note that changes to our trips can and do occur. This may be due to our effort to improve our program or logistical reasons such as changes in flight schedules, traffic conditions, weather conditions, or government policies. Dharma Adventures will make every effort to keep you informed of any changes but cannot be held liable for any alterations made to the published itinerary.

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

LAND ARRANGEMENT COST INCLUDES:

- Meet and assistance at the airport upon arrival.
- All necessary airport transfers.
- 3 nights at hotel in Kathmandu, on twin/double sharing on bed and breakfast basis.
- 3 nights at Barahi Jungle Lodge, Chitwan on twin/double sharing on full board basis with all jungle activities.
- 3 nights at Dwarika`s Resort, Dhulikhel on twin/double sharing on half board basis.
- All sightseeing and transfers as per the above program by private vehicle with English Speaking Guide throughout.
- Meals as specified in the itinerary (lunch/dinner provided at a local restaurant/hotel).
- All monument entrance fees.
- Lighting butter lamp at Boudhnath.
- Sundowner at Boudhnath.
- Rickshaw ride in Kathmandu.
- Meet with Ex-Kumari.
- Singing bowl session in Patan.

COST EXCLUSIONS:

- Nepal Visa
- Refreshments, tips, bottled drinks and bar bills.
- Insurance and rescue of any form.
- Cost arising out of flight cancellation/road blockades/landslides and reasons beyond our control.
- Expenses of personal nature and any other expenses not mentioned in the above cost.
- Gratuities to trek staff, trek leader, city guide and driver.
- Excess baggage charges
- Personal insurance policy - suggested a comprehensive travel insurance covering tour and flight cancellations, loss of valuables, thefts, illness, accidents, and hospitalization.

REMARKS:

Please note this is a proposal only and is subject to availability at the time of confirmation – we are not holding any spaces for this itinerary currently.

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PAYMENT:

Payment policy:

Deposit of US\$ 1000.00 per person to be made after the trip has been confirmed.

Balance payment to be made 30 days prior to trip commencement.

If a trip is booked within the period of 30 days before it commences, then full payment to be made at the time of booking the trip.

Cancellation Policy:

The trip will be considered as canceled if the final payment is not received when due. No refunds will be made for any unused trip arrangements; transportations, guide services, hotel accommodations, meals, sightseeing,

trek days, flights and others after the trip commences. A trip will be deemed cancelled if there is no show of clients, whatsoever, the reason may be.

A trip cancellation fee will be levied as follows;

45 - 30 days: Deposit forfeited.

29 - 16 days: 50% of trip cost

15 days or less: 100% of trip cost

Travel Insurance:

We suggest the clients to take appropriate travel insurance in the country of residence to cover the following:

- All trip payments, if in case the trip is cancelled.
- Loss of money if in case the trip needs to be cut short or extra cost if trip is to be extended due to unforeseen interruption or personal reason.
- Loss and damage of baggage.

Flight delays and cancellations – All domestic flights can be delayed or canceled owing to various reasons like air traffic congestion, weather, visibility etc. The flights in & out of the mountain airports are weather dependent and there have been cases where flights have been cancelled for several days. Appropriate policy is to be purchased to cover such delays and cancellations. If a flight is cancelled, where available, helicopter will be offered for an added fee. Your policy should cover the added cost for helicopter flights.

Any cancellation made will attract retention charges as below:-

- 7 days and less: 100% retention of total stay
- 8 days – 20 days: 60% retention of total stay
- 21 days – 30 days: 40% retention of total stay
- NO show will be charges the full amount of stay.

Cost of trip \$4500 in double occupancy

Single supplement \$1300

