

National Seniors Travel

Highlights of the Himalayas 2012



Saturday 27 October to Sunday 11 November 2012

Have you ever wanted to see the highest mountains on earth, experience a culture rich in history and a land of great diversity? One day you will find yourself photographing snow capped peaks, the next riding an elephant through tropical jungle. Experience the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu and shop for handicrafts found nowhere else on earth. With its spectacular scenery and the friendliest people, Nepal is a 'must see' for any adventurous traveller. One does not have to trek to have this wonderful mountain experience. This small group tour (maximum of 20), will be escorted by National Seniors members Ann and Steve Gaunt, who have travelled to Nepal on many occasions.

Saturday Oct 27: Depart Australia with Singapore Airlines for your flight to Kathmandu.

Sunday Oct 28: On arrival at Kathmandu Airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel for a two night stay. Check-in at the hotel, the remainder of the day is at leisure. Tonight enjoy a welcome dinner. (D)

Monday Oct 29: Today we begin our Nepal adventure with a day of sightseeing within the Kathmandu Valley. We travel to the medieval city of Bhaktapur, another of the three ancient cities of Nepal, and the only one to be heritage listed as an entire city. Bhaktapur is Nepal's home of medieval art and architecture and a thriving pottery and weaving industry. On the way we stop at Bodhnath, home to one of the largest stupas in the world. It is also home to many Tibetan exiles as this town was on the major trading route from Lhasa to Kathmandu. (B)



Tuesday Oct 30: Today we take an interesting drive to Pokhara by private vehicle. Nestled on Phewa Lake, Pokhara is a thriving township where you can spend your time strolling around the shops, go out on the lake or enjoy a drink at one of the lakeside restaurants. Stay overnight in Pokhara. (BL)

Wednesday Oct 31: Transfer to the airport for a spectacular early morning flight to Jomsom, a town in the Annapurna region. On arrival in Jomsom transfer to our deluxe 'green resort' for an unforgettable two night stay at Jomsom Mountain Resort. From here there are options to take a walk to a neighbouring village, visit the eco centre or simply relax at the resort. The resort is among the few places in Nepal where the giant Himalayan peaks can be admired safely and yet at such close proximity. (B)

Thursday Nov 1: There is an option to take an escorted short walk to nearby villages such as Thini, the oldest village in the area where King Thang Mig Chen used to rule over the region and demand taxes in either labour or produce from the locals. Remainder of the day is at leisure. (B)

Friday Nov 2: A morning return flight to Pokhara gives us plenty of time to relax on arrival. You can visit one of the many museums, talk with the Tibetan traders or sit by the lake and watch the para-gliders take off from a nearby vantage point. Stay three nights in Pokhara. (B)

Saturday Nov 3: We set out today to explore one of the most tranquil and picturesque valleys in Nepal. Enjoy the view of the mountain peaks of Machhapuchhare or 'Fish Tail', the Annapurnas and Phewa Lake, the second largest lake in Nepal. Visit the Old Bazaar—this



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traditional bazaar is colourful and so are the ethnically diverse traders. In its temples and monuments, the ties to the Newar architecture of the Kathmandu Valley can be seen. Also see Devi Falls, the Mahadev Cave. (B)

Sunday Nov 4: This morning there is a chance for you to see the sunrise from Sarangkot where you will be able to take some great photos of the spectacular scenery. After breakfast we board a boat for a cruise on the lake and visit the Varahi Mandir Hindu Temple on an island in Phewa Ta Lake. Our cruise will take us across the lake, and for those energetic enough to walk up the steep path to the Peace monument, will be rewarded with spectacular views of Pokhara. (B)

Monday Nov 5: This morning we drive to Kurintar and the Riverside Springs Resort for our lunch stop. After lunch we travel to the town of Sauraha for a two night stay, close to the gate of Chitwan National Park. This park is long regarded as the third biggest attraction in Nepal and one of the largest refuges to the One-Horned Rhinos. This afternoon we take an ox cart ride to a nearby Tharu village to meet and chat with the local Tharu people, learn more about village life and perhaps purchase some locally made handicrafts. Later there may be an opportunity for a slide and information session on the wildlife and flora of the area before your smorgasbord evening meal of fresh local produce. (BLD)

Tuesday Nov 6: Today we take a canoe ride to the elephant breeding centre, spotting many different species of birds as we travel up the river. After visiting the centre we return by jeep. Before lunch there may be time for a swim in the resort pool, or you may choose to witness the elephant washing routine. Our afternoon elephant ride takes us into the jungle where we get a chance to see rhinos, monkeys and deer. If very lucky we may catch a glimpse of the Royal Bengal Tiger. In the evening you can see the Tharu Cultural Show where you will be invited to join in the dancing and fun. (BLD)

Wednesday Nov 7: An early morning walk gives us the opportunity to do some more bird watching, then it's time for breakfast before we drive to the nearby



airport at Bharatpur for our morning flight back to Kathmandu for a three night stay. The afternoon is free to explore on your own. (B)

Thursday Nov 8: Enjoy a day of sightseeing in Kathmandu including Durbar Square which is the main square of the city featuring innumerable temples and architectural showpieces. Swayambhunath stupa (or Monkey Temple), situated high on a hill top, is one of the most recognised images of Kathmandu Valley and affords magnificent views of the city and valley below. From here we travel to Pashupatinath, the site of the most important Hindu temple in Nepal and is located on the banks of the Bagmati River. Here we will see holy men known as Sadhus performing their religious rituals. (B)

Friday Nov 9: Today is at leisure. Optional extras which can easily be arranged including an early morning Everest mountain flight, or further sightseeing to Patan, the third ancient city of Kathmandu valley. (B)

Saturday Nov 10: There is a last minute opportunity for shopping before your late morning transfer to the airport for your flight home with Singapore Airlines. (B)

Sunday Nov 11: Arrive Australia.



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Includes:

- Services of Australian Group Leaders Steve and Ann Gaunt
- International airfare including pre-collectable taxes
- Internal airfares within Nepal
- Land transfers by private vehicle as per itinerary
- Touring and entries as per itinerary
- Twin share accommodation including breakfast in Kathmandu and Pokhara at Nepali 4 star hotel
- Accommodation and all meals at Chitwan's Rhino Residency Resort or similar
- 13 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners

Excludes:

- Travel Insurance (Mandatory condition of booking)
- Visas
- Airport departure taxes from Kathmandu
- Excess baggage charges
- Other meals not stated
- Items of a personal nature
- Optional touring/sightseeing
- Tipping

Booking Conditions:

- A non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 per person must be paid within 7 days of booking and the booking form must be completed.
- Final payment is due 60 days prior to departure
- Travel Insurance with unlimited medical cover is compulsory for all trips to Nepal
- A visa for Nepal is to be obtained prior to departure from Australia.
- Your passport must have at least 6 months validity after your return to Australia.



Your Tour Leaders

Steve and Ann have led a number of trips for National Seniors over the last few years, specialising in Asia as they have travelled extensively throughout the region. They have led National Seniors groups to Vietnam, Nepal and most recently, Borneo. Steve and Ann first travelled to Nepal over ten years ago and have trekked many kilometres through the Himalayas. They have spent time at Everest base camp on both the Nepal and Tibetan sides of the mountain. They have travelled overland from Lahsa in Tibet crossing the Himalayan plateau and down into Kathmandu. Having spent so much time in this breathtakingly beautiful part of the world they decided they would like to share their experience with like minded adventurers but without the need to trek, although there is the option of a couple of half day mountain walks on this trip for those wanting to do so. Many people think of Nepal as a trekking only destination, when in fact, it has so much to offer as a touring/sightseeing destination. If you have always wanted to see the Himalayas, go on a jungle safari or soak up the culture of bustling Kathmandu then why not join them on our next exclusive small group tour in November 2012.



PRICING:

\$4,500 per person twin share*

\$560 single supplement

*Includes flights from Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne, other ports available on request.

Airline taxes and fuel surcharges are subject to change until ticketed.



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