# Nepal: Walking in the Annapurna Highlands



| Trip style: | Destination: | Walking Grade | Carbon Footprint: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guided Walking Holidays | Nepal | 8 | 5010kg CO2 |

## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Nepal packs a remarkable amount into its small size and this journey across its mountain landscapes pairs fascinating sightseeing experiences with walks in the Himalaya's most spectacular trekking region. Discover Nepal's rich history and diverse cultures as we follow ancient spice routes between India and Tibet, visit remote villages where unique communities thrive, and explore centuries-old cities in the Kathmandu Valley. We'll also head into Annapurna where dramatic walks offer unforgettable views over frozen lakes and some of the highest peaks on the planet. To top it all, we'll spend time in the enchanting capital city Kathmandu, staying in luxury accommodation that was once the royal palace of Nepal's 19th-century rulers.

## WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Explore Bhaktapur, one of the Kathmandu Valley's three ancient royal cities and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Admire Bandipur's beautifully preserved Newari architecture, with its traditional houses, temples, and mountain-town charm.
- Walk through rural landscapes shaped by Magar culture, with panoramic views across the Himalayan foothills.
- Hike to spectacular Ice Lake, known locally as Kicho Tal, for one of the Annapurna region's most memorable mountain views.

- Visit Boudhanath Stupa, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Nepal's most important Buddhist landmarks.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Local Tour Manager who leads walks
- Assistant guide for every four guests
- 13 nights' accommodation
- 13 breakfasts, 11 lunches, 12 dinners
- All sightseeing, tips, necessary permits, and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- All in-destination transport
- Return flights from London including baggage and transfers

## ITINERARY - ITINERARY

### Day 1 **Depart the UK**

Depart the UK for your overnight flight to Kathmandu.

### Day 2 **Arrive in Kathmandu**

Your local Tour Manager will be waiting to greet you on arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport. We'll transfer to our hotel, where there'll be time to relax after the journey before gathering in the evening for a welcome briefing and dinner.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Shanker

### Day 3 **Bhaktapur**

Today we visit Bhaktapur, one of the Kathmandu Valley's three ancient royal cities and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Known for its beautifully preserved temples, courtyards, and brick-paved lanes, Bhaktapur offers a fascinating introduction to traditional Newari culture and architecture.

We'll wander through Durbar Square, admire the five-storey Nyatapola Temple, and see local artisans at work in pottery and woodcarving workshops. Lunch will be served at a local Newari restaurant, giving us the chance to sample authentic regional dishes before returning to Kathmandu in the afternoon.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Shanker

### Day 4 **Kathmandu to Bandipur**

Leaving Kathmandu behind, we follow the Prithvi Highway westwards, travelling alongside rivers, terraced hillsides, and rural settlements before climbing to the hilltop town of Bandipur.

Once an important stop on the India–Tibet trade route, Bandipur is now known for its peaceful atmosphere and beautifully preserved Newari architecture. After lunch and time to explore its cobbled streets, we'll walk to the temple viewpoint above town for sunset views across the Himalaya. On a clear day, you may see the Dhaulagiri, Annapurna, Manaslu, and Langtang ranges.

**Accommodation:** Bandipur Village Inn

## Day 5 Ramkot Village & Bandipur

After breakfast, we set out on a guided countryside walk from Bandipur to Ramkot Village, passing through terraced farmland, forest trails, and traditional hillside settlements.

Along the way, we'll gain an insight into Magar culture, rural lifestyles, and local farming practices, with panoramic Himalayan views as a memorable backdrop. We return to Bandipur for lunch before taking a short walk to a local silk farm to learn about traditional silk farming and weaving. There'll also be time to meet members of the local community and hear more about rural livelihoods and cottage industries.

Later, enjoy free time to relax, explore Bandipur's cafés, or soak up the peaceful hilltop atmosphere.

**Accommodation:** Bandipur Village Inn

## Day 6 Bandipur to Chame

Today we journey north into the Annapurna region, following the Marsyangdi River upstream through increasingly dramatic mountain scenery.

The road climbs steadily through villages, pine forests, and narrow river valleys as snow-capped peaks begin to dominate the skyline. By the time we reach Chame, the administrative centre of the Manang district, the air is noticeably cooler and thinner. Surrounded by forests and towering Himalayan walls, Chame marks the start of our high mountain adventure.

**Accommodation:** Hotel White Stupa

## Day 7 Chame to Upper Pisang

**Distance:** 15km / 9.5 miles

**Ascent:** 650m / 2,150 feet

**Maximum Daily Altitude:** 3,300m

**Sleeping Altitude:** 3,300m

Our trek begins with a gradual ascent along a dirt trail beside the Marsyangdi River, with short, steeper sections through pine and fir forests.

Crossing suspension bridges and passing small settlements, we'll notice the valley gradually widening as the scenery becomes increasingly alpine. The trail eventually climbs steeply to Upper Pisang, a traditional Tibetan-style village perched above the valley floor, with magnificent views of Annapurna II and Pisang Peak.

The village's ancient monastery and stone-built houses reflect the strong Tibetan Buddhist culture of the region and mark our arrival into the upper Manang district.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Royal Alpine

## Day 8 Upper Pisang to Ngawal

**Distance:** 10km / 6 miles

**Ascent:** 360m / 1,150 feet

**Maximum Daily Altitude:** 3,730m

**Sleeping Altitude:** 3,660m

This morning begins gently as we leave the village, passing ancient houses and prayer wheels on our way down to beautiful Green Lake.

After a further gentle section, we cross a short suspension bridge before the path climbs steeply to Ghyaru, where we stop for lunch. Later, we follow the high trail to Ngawal, a peaceful village known for its far-reaching views of Annapurna III, Annapurna IV, and the Marsyangdi Valley.

Ghyaru and Ngawal are rich in Tibetan culture, with ancient monasteries and traditional stone houses. Many local people live a semi-nomadic lifestyle, herding yaks and cultivating barley.

**Accommodation:** Ngawal Cottage

## Day 9 Ngawal Acclimatisation Walk

**Distance:** 5km / 3 miles

**Ascent**: 400m / 1,300 feet

**Maximum Daily Altitude:** 4,000m

**Sleeping Altitude:** 3,660m

Today's walk takes us above Ngawal towards old trans-Himalayan trade routes and viewpoints looking out towards the remote landscapes leading to the Larke La region.

The trail crosses open hillsides, yak-grazing pastures, and rugged alpine terrain, with expansive views across the Annapurna range and upper Marsyangdi Valley. After taking time to enjoy the scenery and allowing our bodies to adjust to the altitude, we descend back to Ngawal for a relaxed afternoon.

**Accommodation:** Ngawal Cottage

## Day 10 Ngawal to Manang

**Distance:** 12km / 7.5 miles

**Ascent:** 240m / 750 feet

**Maximum Daily Altitude:** 3,660m

**Sleeping Altitude:** 3,520m

A beautiful scenic walk brings us to the famous village of Manang. The trail contours across wide-open landscapes with uninterrupted mountain views before descending gradually into the broad Manang Valley.

Along the way, we pass ancient monasteries, juniper forests, and small seasonal settlements. Arriving in Manang in time for lunch gives us the afternoon to explore the village's stone alleyways, traditional architecture, and monasteries. Alternatively, you may prefer to simply relax at one of the village's excellent coffee shops and take in the views.

Surrounded by towering peaks and glaciers, Manang is one of the highlights of the Annapurna region.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Tilicho

## Day 11 Manang Acclimatisation Walks

Morning hike to Praken Gompa:

**Distance:** 5km / 3 miles

**Ascent:** 220m / 750 feet

Cho Ngkor viewpoint:

**Distance:** 5km / 3 miles

**Ascent :** 420m / 1,400 feet

**Maximum Daily Altitude:** 3,950m

**Sleeping Altitude:** 3,520m

Today we explore the area around Manang, with walks that offer spectacular views from both sides of the valley.

In the morning, we climb steadily to the retreat cave where the highly revered monk Geshe Lama Konchog meditated. The cave offers excellent views across Manang, the valley, and the surrounding peaks. We will also visit Praken Gompa, an ancient cliff-side monastery.

After lunch, we cross the river and climb gently to the Cho Ngkor viewpoint, a beautiful ridge overlooking the Gangapurna Glacier and Annapurna range. Returning to Manang afterwards, there'll be time to rest and enjoy the atmosphere of this unique mountain settlement.

Both walks provide valuable acclimatisation ahead of tomorrow's hike to Ice Lake.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Tilicho

## Day 12 Ice Lake

**Distance:** 14km / 8.5 miles

**Ascent:** 1,140m / 3,750 feet

**Maximum Daily Altitude:** 4,620m

**Sleeping Altitude:** 3,520m

Today is one of the most rewarding hikes of the trip and our final opportunity to trek among the mighty Himalayan peaks.

Leaving early with packed lunches, we ascend steadily through alpine meadows and rocky slopes towards spectacular Ice Lake, known locally as Kicho Tal. As we gain height, the views become increasingly dramatic, with sweeping panoramas of Annapurna II, Annapurna III, Annapurna IV, Gangapurna, Tilicho Peak, and Chulu East.

The turquoise lake sits high beneath the surrounding peaks and is considered sacred by local communities. After time to enjoy the setting and take in the views, we descend carefully back to Manang.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Tilicho

### Day 13 Manang to Besisahar

Today we leave the high mountains behind and retrace our route by road through the Marsyangdi Valley to the busy hill town of Besisahar.

The journey passes waterfalls, pine forests, terraced farmland, and villages as the landscape gradually changes from alpine terrain to lush mid-hills. Although long and at times bumpy, the drive offers a final look at the dramatic scenery of the Annapurna region.

**Accommodation:** Gateway Himalaya

### Day 14 Return to Kathmandu & Boudhanath Stupa

After breakfast, we continue our journey back to Kathmandu via the scenic Prithvi Highway, arriving in time for lunch and the chance to rest before our final evening in Nepal.

In the late afternoon, we visit Boudhanath Stupa, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the largest and most important Buddhist stupas in the world. It is also the spiritual centre of Nepal's Tibetan community. Prayer flags flutter overhead as monks and pilgrims circle the stupa, spinning prayer wheels and chanting mantras.

In the evening, we gather for a farewell dinner overlooking the stupa and celebrate our journey together.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Shanker

### Day 15 Depart Kathmandu

After breakfast, we return to Tribhuvan International Airport for our flight home.

## DAILY WALK OPTIONS




**Challenging walking grade 8**

Challenging walks for fit, experienced walkers. Expect rugged or mountainous terrain, or some longer distances than typical for this grade. Typically, 12-13 miles (19-21km) with around 2,300ft (700m) of ascent.

## ACCOMMODATION

### Hotel Shanker, Kathmandu - Nepal

The 19th century residence of the rulers of Nepal, the Hotel Shanker has been offering stays fit for royalty since 1964 when it was converted from lavish palace into a luxury hotel. Spacious rooms have recently been refurbished and come with all mod cons, while Renaissance-style décor, complete with antique furnishings and glittering chandeliers add to the opulent feel of this unique heritage hotel. The large and welcoming restaurant serves up extensive buffet meals and the lobby bar boasts ornately carved windows that are over 200 years old. As for facilities, you'll find an outdoor pool surrounded by manicured gardens, and a spa area offering a range of wellness treatments, perfect for indulging in post-walk relaxation.

### Bandipur Village Inn, Bandipur

Perched on a ridge in the charming hilltop town of Bandipur, the Bandipur Village Inn combines traditional Newari character with warm Nepalese hospitality. Designed to reflect the area's rich architectural heritage, this welcoming boutique-style hotel enjoys a prime location close to the town's historic centre and spectacular Himalayan viewpoints. The bright en-suite bedrooms provide modern amenities including tea and coffee making facilities and television. After a day's walking, relax in the hotel's gardens, enjoy authentic local cuisine in the restaurant, and soak up the peaceful atmosphere of this mountain retreat.

### Hotel White Stupa, Chame

Set in the heart of Chame, the gateway to Nepal's spectacular Manang region, Hotel White Stupa enjoys a stunning location surrounded by soaring Himalayan peaks and alpine forests. Just a short walk from the town centre, this welcoming hotel offers comfortable bedrooms with en-suite facilities, while spacious dining areas provide a cosy retreat after a day of walking. Guests can relax in the attractive courtyard, enjoy a range of Nepalese and international dishes, and soak up the peaceful atmosphere at nearby monasteries and Buddhist monuments.

### Hotel Royal Alpine, Upper Pisang

Set in the traditional mountain village of Upper Pisang on Nepal's famous Annapurna Circuit, Hotel Royale Alpine offers a warm welcome amid some of the Himalayas' most spectacular scenery. The comfortable en-suite bedrooms provide a cosy retreat, while communal dining areas and rooftop terrace offer the chance to relax. As the sun sets over Annapurna II and the surrounding mountains, guests can soak up the unforgettable views that make Upper Pisang such a memorable stop.

### Ngawal Cottage, Ngawal

Nestled in the peaceful Himalayan village of Ngawal, Ngawal Cottage offers a characterful and welcoming stop surrounded by breathtaking mountain scenery. Comfortable accommodation and warm Nepalese hospitality provide a relaxing retreat after a day of walking, while the village's quiet atmosphere makes it an ideal location for acclimatisation. With snow-capped peaks, ancient Buddhist traditions and unforgettable sunsets on the doorstep, Ngawal Cottage is a memorable base in the heart of the Himalayas.

### Hotel Tilicho, Manang

Located in Manang Village on the Annapurna Circuit, the family-run Tilicho Hotel has been welcoming guests since 1989. Surrounded by dramatic Himalayan scenery, the hotel enjoys panoramic views of Annapurna, Gangapurna and the rugged mountain landscapes that define this remarkable region. Comfortable en-suite bedrooms provide a

welcome retreat after a day's walking, while inviting lounge areas and a popular bakery offer the perfect place to relax and recharge. Warm hospitality, hearty food and a prime location for acclimatisation make Tilicho Hotel an excellent base from which to experience the culture, beauty and adventure of Nepal's Annapurna region.

## Gateway Himalaya Resort, Besisahar

Situated in Besisahar, the gateway to the Annapurna region, Gateway Himalaya Resort offers a comfortable stay. Surrounded by mountain scenery and attractive gardens, the resort combines modern facilities with warm Nepalese hospitality. Spacious en-suite bedrooms feature hairdryer, TV and tea / coffee making facilities. The restaurant serves a variety of local and international dishes. After a day's walking unwind beside the outdoor swimming pool, enjoy views of the surrounding hills, or simply relax in the peaceful setting.

# VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

### Vaccinations & health information

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel.

As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure.

Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting.

For further country-specific health advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

## PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

### Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long.
We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

### Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.
British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

### Packing list

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

**Essentials**

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Swimcap (compulsory in Itialian resorts)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

**Recommended**

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags

- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

**Optional extras**

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

## JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITH FLIGHTS)

### With flights

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from selected UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

## JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITHOUT FLIGHTS)

### Without flights

If you are booking on a land-only basis, you can join the group transfer at an additional cost. To do so, your arrival and departure times must be in line with the scheduled group flight timings. Guests travelling at different times will need to arrange their own transfers. Please contact us before booking to discuss the available options and costs.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Safety Information

**Walking Safety**

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and minimum number of guests.

Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest where clothing, equipment or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps and a compass.

**Please note**: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you.

**In the event of a problem**

If you become separated from your group, please stay where you are. Your leader will retrace their steps to find you.

All our walk leaders carry a mobile phone, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. In the unlikely event your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call the emergency services (call 999 in the UK, or 112 overseas).

Please then try to call the hotel where you are staying to let them know there is a problem.

We advise you carry a copy of these trip notes or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of emergency.

If you have any cause for complaints regarding accommodation, you should notify your leader who can then attempt to rectify the problem.

### Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/

### Drinking Water

## Drinking Water

Standards for drinking water vary widely around the world. In many destinations, tap water may not be safe to drink, brush your teeth with, or use for making ice. Where advised, you should drink only bottled or treated water and ensure that bottle seals are intact before use. If bottled water is unavailable, water should be boiled or filtered.

Staying well hydrated is particularly important in hot climates and during active holidays. Carry water with you and drink regularly.

If you are unsure about local water safety, check official country-specific health advice before travel, or ask your accommodation or local guides for guidance once you arrive.

## TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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