

NEPAL

Nepal is a country of amazing extremes. Gigantic mountains give way to towering hills above lush valleys that gently roll down to the forested plains in which the stately tiger and the unique rhinoceros roam freely. All this in a country that is, on an average, 120 miles wide.

Bound by Tibet in the north and India on the other three sides, Nepal lies in the temperate zone, but the weather and terrain are greatly influenced by the altitude, which in Nepal ranges from almost sea level in the south to the highest point on earth.



Nepal's population of about 26 million consists of 36 different races and tribes, each wearing their own traditional costumes and speaking a different language or dialect. All these races and tribes coexist peacefully by embracing Hinduism or Buddhism, the country's two major religions. The harmony and in which these various races and tribes exist is one of the remarkable features of Nepal.

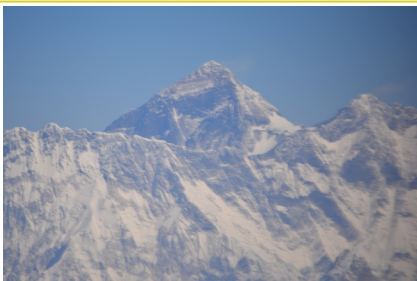
EXPLORE NEPAL(10DAYS) LAND COST: US\$ 1550.00 + INTERNAL AIR: \$104.00



The very word "Nepal" invokes visions of high mountains, remote valleys and hardy explorers foregoing all creature comforts to test themselves against nature and her forces. However, long before the first mountaineers ventured north to the jagged horizons of rock and ice; long before the first rafter or kayaker descended the rivers; long before the first trekkers appeared on the ridges; the Nepalese were building palaces, temples, monasteries and complex townships to rival those anywhere else in the world. Arts and crafts flourished – so much so, that artisans and

builders traveled as far as Beijing in China to build temples and Pagodas. The lost way method of metal casting was perfected, woodworking and carving attained new heights, stone carving and painting as devotional excises became art forms. Perhaps these are among the many reasons why, just in the vicinity of the Kathmandu valley alone, there are seven UNESCO designated World Heritage Sites, within a 13-mile radius. This trip is designed to introduce to you the essence of Nepal. The heritage sites and museums, stunning mountain scenery and model conservation and preservation efforts; all of which go to make Nepal one of the most exciting destinations in the world.

EVEREST BASE CAMP TREKKING(18DAYS) LAND COST: US\$ + INTERNAL AIR: \$340.00



This 18 days trek begins with an "eye opening" flight to Lukla at 9200 feet. The trek passes through the picturesque Sherpa village of Namche Bazaar to Gorak Shep culminating in the "ascent" of Kala Pattar (18000 feet from where classic views of Everest and its surrounding peaks are available. Most of the trek is spent above altitudes of 9800 feet in the Khumbu and Imja valleys whose skylines are dominated by the massive peaks of the Eastern Himalaya. Although this is a short trek, by Nepal standards, there will be plenty of time to enjoy the culture of the Sherpas,

visit ancient monasteries and learn how Lamaistic Buddhism influences Sherpa life. Stop at any of the numerous tea houses sip a glass of sweetened tea or *Chang* (millet beer) and get a taste of hospitality unique to the Sherpas. Beautiful, multi-hued prayer flags, prayer wheels and intricately-carved mani stones line every hilltop, rock wall and trail side singing prayers to the gods with every breeze and every passing traveller.

MUSTANG TIJI FESTIVAL(17DAYS) LAND COST: US\$ + INTERNAL AIR: \$470.00

The land of "Lo". Remote and forbidden to travelers for centuries is now open to trekkers. Your journey begins with a late afternoon flight to Pokhara followed, the next morning, by a flight to Jomsom. From here the trail leads along the left bank of the Kali Gandaki river through the villages of Kagbeni, Chusang, Samochin and Charang to the walled capital of Mustang - Lomanthan.

The Tiji festival which is held in Lo Manthang every year is a three-day ritual known as "The chasing of the Demons" that focuses on the Tiji myth.

The myth tells of a deity named Dorje Jono who must battle against his demon father to save the Kingdom of Mustang from destruction. The demon father wreaked havoc on Mustang by bringing a shortage of water (a highly precious resource in this very dry land) and causing many resulting disasters from famine to animal loss. Dorje Jono eventually beats the demon and banishes him from the land. Tiji is a celebration and reaffirmation of this myth and throughout the festival the various scenes of the myth will be enacted. It is of course timed to coincide with the end of the dry winter/spring season and will usher in the wetter monsoon season (the growing season for Mustang). Tiji comes from the word "ten che" meaning 'the hope of Buddha Dharma prevailing in all worlds' and is effectively a spring renewal festival.

This trip also gives you the opportunity to go where few have been before. Most of the trek keeps to arid, high deserts inhabited mostly by people of Tibetan stock. The men folk are either traders or farmers while the women mostly tend the fields. Along with insights into the everyday lives of the people of "Lo" you will have the opportunity to witness their vibrant culture and also a chance to get a look at Lamaist Buddhism little changed by time.