

ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT EXPEDITION



The **Annapurna Circuit Trek** is one of the most remarkable in the world. It is a true adventure taking you through **vast open fields** and **deep dark forests**, across **sun-soaked valleys** and **snow covered passes**. It truly celebrates some of the most amazing things that **Nepal** has to offer. In the evenings you can relax and experience fresh local foods cooked over stone ovens. Each lodge offers **home comforts** and **warmth** from the families that run them; with a strong influence from the flow of Tibetan's who's ancestors cross the border to Nepal. A **diverse** and **rich** culture, absolutely full of history.

A large part of this trip is having **time to think** and **take in the views** of the surrounding mountains. The exercise of the trek combined with the fresh food in the evening along with the fresh mountain air is the perfect health kick to **reboot your body and mind**.

You will have the freedom to walk the trail at your own speed knowing that you are guided by **professional Nepalese and British mountain guides**. The trek will cover the entire **Annapurna** massif reaching to the top of **Thorong La** pass at (5416m). The journey then ventures into the deepest valley in the world, **Kali Gandaki** that lies between **Annapurna** (8091m) in the east and **Dhaulagiri** (8167m) in the west being 38 km far apart to each other.

Explorer, **Mark Wood** has travelled all over the world and has operated within Nepal for the past 18 years - his favourite trek is "**the Circuit**" as it steps from one remarkable scenery to another as if you are part of an adventure game. Mark's advice is to relax - **live every moment** and to **immerse yourself into the journey**.

Once you trek out of the mountains your final destination before heading back to Kathmandu is **Pokhara**, which sits against a vast lake lined with restaurants, cafes and shops. After a hot shower and good food to celebrate your achievement **leave space to relax and reflect**.



ITINERARY

- Day 1 Upon the arrival to Kathmandu, meet and transfer to Hotel
- Day 2 Trek preparation day in Kathmandu
- Day 3 Drive to Jagat (1300m)
- Day 4 Trek to Dharapani (1860m)
- Day 5 Trek to Chame (2670m)
- Day 6 Trek to Pisang (3300m)
- Day 7 Trek to Manang (3519m)
- Day 8 Acclimatization day in Manang
- Day 9 Trek to Churi Letdar (4250m)
- Day 10 Trek to High Camp (4880m)
- Day 11 Trek to Muktinath (3800m)
- Day 12 Trek to Jomsom, via Kagbeni (2743m)
- Day 13 Fly to Pokhara in the morning- balance day on relaxation or walk around Fewa Lake
- Day 14 Drive to Sarangkot for Sunrise across the whole Annapurna. Afternoon, fly to Kathmandu
- Day 15 Independent sightseeing and shopping in Kathmandu
- Day 16 Final departure for home

EXPEDITION COSTS INCLUDE

All airport transfers in Kathmandu on private vehicle.

Four nights' hotel accommodation in Kathmandu.

All internal flights.

Eleven nights / twelve days trek on full board basis.

Three meals (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner) will be provided with hot drinks (tea/coffee/hot chocolate) The accommodation will be provided at lodges on route.

One English speaking guide. One assistant guide for the group of 8 people.

One porter between two people.

Medical supplies and insurance for your helpers and guide.

COSTS DON'T INCLUDE

International airfare.

Nepal entry visa.

Personal trekking equipments.

Main meals in Kathmandu.

Mineral water and electronic devices charging costs.

Emergency evacuation if needed.

Personal medical supplies.

Travellers insurance.

Tips to your guides/porters/drivers.

FLIGHTS

Flights from **London**

There are a number of options for flights to **Kathmandu**. The important points to note are as follows:

1. The flight normally involves a few hours layover or stop-over which can, depending on the location or airline, be for a number of hours. Be sure to take note of your layover when booking, and be aware of any currency you may require during the layover.

2. The shortest (and often the cheapest) flights are usually via Delhi (around 12 hours in total). The following airlines use this route:

a. **Air India**

b. **Jet**

c. **Kingfisher**

Other airlines and routes can have much longer lay-overs in Doha (Qatar Airlines) and Bahrain (Gulf Airlines) and Abu Dhabi (Eithad). Internal flights during the trip are with a local airline and are included in the cost of the trek.



AIR TRANSFERS

Airport transfers are included, provided clients are arriving ahead of Kathmandu departure day and have provided **Mark Wood Explorer Ltd** with prior notification of their flight number and scheduled arrival time.

Your trip normally starts at our hotel in Kathmandu in the morning of **Day 1** of the itinerary described below. Hotel check-in times are normally from around **2pm**.

ACCOMMODATION

11 nights lodges and 4 nights hotel (Kathmandu only). Most lodges now have twin bedded rooms but you should still be prepared to sleep in multi-bedded rooms on very rare occasions. In the last decade the quality of the lodges and the food has improved significantly, but you should expect fairly basic accommodation at the highest points of the trek. Some lodges now have showers (often charged at **£2-£4 per shower**) and all have basic toilets.

SINGLE ACCOMMODATION

There is no single supplement available whilst on the trek. Accommodation in Kathmandu is on a twin share basis, but single rooms are usually available at an additional cost of **£60 in total**. Please let us know as early as possible if you would like a single room while at the hotel in Kathmandu.

EXTRA ACCOMMODATION

If you require any additional accommodation either before or after the trip, we can book this for you (subject to availability) at the Hotel Vaishali in Kathmandu, provided you notify us at the time of booking. Currently (2015) a single room costs **£32 per night** and a double room costs **£50 per night** including breakfast.

Please note that a £5 booking fee is added to the invoice. We will advise closer to the date of the up to date costs for your year. Please contact us if you would like to extend your stay in Nepal

FOOD AND TRANSPORT

FOOD

During your time in Kathmandu, breakfast is the only meal provided, so **please allow £25 - £30 per day** for other meals and drinks. During the trek, all main meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and hot drinks are provided. The menus in the lodges are varied, ranging from traditional Nepalese dhal bhat to pizza and apple pie.

DRINKS

Soft drinks and water will need to be purchased separately. As a rule of thumb, **the price of water increases** dramatically the higher you go, from 12 NPR in Kathmandu to 500 NPR per litre in Gorak Shep. Look out for UV filtered water if available in the lodges - it's perfectly safe, is a much cheaper and greener option. Avoid adding to the colossal waste created by plastic bottles if you can!

TRANSPORT

For airport transfers we use a private minibus. Flights to and from Lukla will usually be in a Twin Otter or Dornier plane.

WEATHER

The main trekking season in Nepal is **from October to mid-May** when daytime temperatures at most altitudes are generally comfortable for walking, the sky is clear much of the time and rain and snow are occasional occurrences. Daytime temperatures will vary from **15°C to 35°C** in the Kathmandu Valley to around **10°C at 3600m** and progressively lower the higher we go. Different seasons offer different advantages for trekking.

Post Monsoon/autumn: mid September to November. This is the main trekking season in Nepal. Day temperatures in Kathmandu are approximately above **20°C**. Skies are usually clear and days on trek are sunny and mild with clear mountain views. Nights will be colder.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

We encourage you to try and keep mineral water purchase to a minimum whilst on trek as currently there are no provisions for disposing of the empty plastic bottles. Alternatively you can look for UV filtered water in certain lodges.

We also ask you to consider only taking a shower at lodges where they have electricity or solar power to heat the water. The use of biodegradable soaps and shampoos is recommended.

We recommend bringing a **spare bag (none plastic) for rubbish that cannot be burnt**. Burnable rubbish can be left in the lodges. Non-burnable rubbish should be taken back to Kathmandu.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

All nationalities **require a full passport** that must be valid for **6 months beyond the intended length of stay**. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Most nationalities **require a visa** for Nepal, which can be obtained in advance or on entry. The current cost of a visa on arrival is \$25 for 15 day visa \$40 for 30 days, \$100 for 90 days and all are multiple entry (you will also need two passport size photographs); the visa fee can be paid in US\$, Sterling or Euros. If you wish to apply before departure the current visa cost is £20 for a 15-day visa and £35 for a 30 day visa for UK passport holders. All other nationalities should check with their nearest embassy.

You will also need **2 passport photos for your trekking permit**. Visa regulations can and do change without notice and if you are not a British passport holder please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.



VACCINATIONS AND HEALTH

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements for this trip, but recommended vaccinations for this trip are: Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A.

The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your GP or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information. Important note for those who are travelling to and through United Arab Emirates. It is vital that you check with the United Arab Emirates website before travel on www.uaeembassyuk.net for their list of approved medication. You should be sure that any drugs you wish to take with you on your travels are acceptable, as there are many medications that we are able to buy over the counter in the West that may not be on their approved list. Please check the ingredients carefully to be sure. Failure to comply with these regulations may result in prosecution and even imprisonment.

ALTITUDE WARNING

This trip goes to high altitudes where there is a risk of being affected by **Acute Mountain Sickness**. Our itineraries are designed to enable everyone to acclimatise to these altitudes, but you should be aware that it is still possible

for you to be affected. Although rare, a number of medical conditions can also reduce your body's ability to acclimatise, and thus will affect your performance at altitude and make you more susceptible to AMS.

If you are worried about any pre-existing condition (e.g. heart problems), or unsure of your physical ability, we recommend that you **seek medical advice prior to booking**. Advice varies, but the consensus on how to combat altitude sickness ability, we recommend that you seek medical advice prior to booking.

Advice varies, but the consensus on how to combat altitude sickness seems to be to drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluid (at least 4 litres per day) and rest for the first few hours when you reach altitude. When hiking, do not hurry - take your time, enjoy the scenery and give your body a chance to catch up. If you are breathing hard, you are probably ascending too quickly.

Please ensure that your **Travel Insurance policy does cover you** up to the **maximum altitude** on this trip and includes helicopter evacuation. Please take proof of this with you on the trip, as you will need to show it to the leader.

LOCAL TIME IN KATHMANDU
GMT + 5 HRS 45 MINS.

ELECTRICITY
VOLTAGE: 230V FREQUENCY (HZ): 50HZ.

INSURANCE - ARE YOU ADEQUATELY COVERED?

It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). We don't provide insurance, but do recommend the Austrian Alpine Club for insurance (specifically their 'Trek' policy): <https://aacuk.org.uk>

Which ever insurance you opt for - ensure it covers the duration of your trip as well as trekking in the Everest region.

If you're in any doubt about the suitability of your insurance with regard to trekking, feel free to contact us and we'll assist where possible. Many of the lodges now have electricity and charging facilities for batteries. In some lodges this is free, but as a general rule, the higher you go the more it will cost (assume approx £2 per hour to charge). Bear this in mind if you're bringing cameras and other electrical equipment. Ensure you have spare batteries and that everything is fully charged in Kathmandu.

People have had varied success with portable solar panel devices - so this may be something you want to consider if you'll need to charge often.



GROUP, STAFF AND SUPPORT

The group will generally be about **12 people**. Groups of seven and above will be accompanied by at least one **Expedition leader**, who will be supported by a sirdar (chief guide), porters and assistant guides. We occasionally operate smaller groups and these will be led by one of our highly competent English speaking sirdars (i.e. the sirdar will act as leader and chief guide).

We also have representatives in Kathmandu who will look after your transfers to and from the airport, advise you on shopping, eating out and equipment etc.; and who will be on hand to answer any other questions you may have about your trek.



MONEY MATTERS

CURRENCY INFORMATION

The national currency of Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee (NPR), with an approx. exchange rate of 105 to the UK£ and 68 to the US\$. (Exchange rates are correct at the time of publication).

It is illegal to import or export rupees, but foreign currency is not limited, provided it is declared on arrival. Take your personal spending money in cash (dollars, sterling or euros can all be changed easily) or travellers cheques if you prefer.

Please note \$20 travellers cheques, £50 notes or any Scottish or Irish Currency **cannot be changed in Nepal**. Travellers cheques and cash can be changed easily at the airport on arrival in Kathmandu or at the hotel in Kathmandu. Our staff will advise you about how much money to take with you on the trek.

ATM AVAILABILITY/CREDIT CARD ACCEPTANCE/TRAVELLERS CHEQUES

There are ATM machines in Kathmandu only. Money can be also be exchanged in Namche Bazaar. Credit cards are accepted in many of the larger shops and restaurants in Kathmandu.

EXTRA EXPENSES AND SPENDING MONEY

As there are local lodges/teahouses along the entire trekking route it is possible to buy things such as beer, cold drinks and chocolate and even a wide range of trekking clothing and equipment (looking almost like the real thing in many cases!)

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING TAKE

Below is a suggestion of what you might find useful on this trip. It is **NOT** an exhaustive list.

Please note that many Nepalis are still traditional in the way they dress. We therefore recommend that you **dress conservatively** - no sleeveless tops or revealing clothes. Although shorts are acceptable they should be modest and reach to **just above the knee** and for women a skirt or trousers are preferable.

You will be restricted to **12 kgs** of luggage whilst on trek. This is because of weight restrictions for safety on the flight to and from Lukla. Any baggage not needed on trek.

YOU WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING:

- 3 season sleeping bag - although this largely depends on personal temperature levels. Get expert advice if unsure.
- Waterproof synthetic or leather walking boots (worn in).
- Waterproof jacket and trousers.
- Trainers / comfortable footwear for the evening.
- Warm hat, scarf or neck-covering can also be useful.
- Warm gloves
- Several pairs of walking socks.
- Comfortable, warm clothing for the evenings.
- Warm mid layer (fleece).
- Shirts/t-shirts/base layers.
- Light - mid weight trousers.
- Long shorts or skirt for women.
- Sunhat, sunglasses, sunscreen and lip salve with sun protection.
- Daypack towel.
- Head torch.
- Water bottle (minimum 1 litre).
- Plastic bags (bin liners) to line daypack and for packing clothing in the kitbag.
- Toilet paper.
- Small personal first aid kit (blister plasters, wound dressings and ibuprofen are all recommended additions).
- Hand sanitising gel.
- Water bottle (minimum 1 litre).
- Plastic bags (bin liners) to line daypack and for packing clothing in the kitbag.
- Toilet paper.
- Small personal first aid kit (blister plasters, wound dressings and ibuprofen are all recommended additions).
- Hand sanitising gel.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- trekking poles.
- Silk sleeping bag liner - ideal for sleeping in as a sheet when bedding is provided and a sleeping bag.
- Biodegradable soap/shampoo.

BAGGAGE AND ALLOWANCE

At time of writing the standard weight limit for hold baggage on the recommended international carrier for this trip is **20kg**. We recommend packing only one piece of checked baggage. Internal flights in the destination country are subject to a weight limit of **12kg**.

As advice about luggage allowances for both hand and hold luggage is subject to change, we suggest you check www.baa.com and/or the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure. In the unlikely event of any of your luggage being misplaced or damaged, a property Irregularity Report (PIR) must be filed with the appropriate airline if you subsequently wish to make a claim against the airline or on your travel insurance. This must be done at the airport where your baggage arrived, or should have arrived.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL MEMBERS

Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This maybe for a variety of reasons - climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Abnormal conditions or other events beyond our control can prevail at any time, particularly in remote or off the beaten track destinations, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.



CONTACT

EXPEDITION LEADER Mark Wood
EMAIL mark@markwoodexplorer.com
CALL 07792 376 361

www.markwoodexplorer.com