

FLIGHTS TO NEPAL

This document is to assist you in finding the best flight routing/price to Nepal. It is produced through experience of airlines and also airports. It is not exhaustive nor is it driven by sponsors of any nature.

General

It is currently not possible to fly direct from the UK to Kathmandu (international code KTM). Over the past 3 years the number of carriers flying into Nepal has increased, which is good news - it keeps the airfares competitive.

When choosing your flight, you should consider several factors: the airline itself (which dictates the intermediary airport), cost, the stopover time and the departure times. The flying time itself is pretty standard (under 12hrs); only the stopover time will increase the overall journey time.

The cost is often the single most influential factor but keep your eye on any long stopovers! There is often a reason for low cost flights, especially if you are just a few months off of your intended departure date.

Routes

In general terms, the vast majority of flights are two legged; from UK to the hub of your chosen airline and then onto KTM. The main carriers are Qatar (via Doha), Gulf Air (via Bahrain), JET Airways (via Delhi), Etihad (via Abu Dhabi) and Oman Air (via Muscat).

If you go via Delhi, there are lots of other airlines that will take you there such as BA, Virgin, etc.. But you will then transfer onto JET Airways for the DEL—KTM leg. Be wary of such journeys as if the airlines are not coded shared, you could end up with a dispute over lost luggage and missed departures if there is a delay on the first leg.

Useful Links

Here are some links that are useful to find the right flight for you. Try the airline sites directly first, they can often be cheaper.

The best site I have found to date is

<http://www.kayak.co.uk/flights>

It compares most airlines and comes up with some great routes. There are also some useful tools on there too to narrow down departure times, etc... You cannot buy flights off this site but it will tell you which sites offers what price. It also cross references with the sites below!

<http://www.expedia.co.uk/default.aspx?rfr=-8602>

<http://www.ebookers.com/shop/home>

<http://www.dialaflight.com/flightsearch.asp?referrer=google&gclid=CKPCn9-0pACFQ7dIAod-CuSOQ>

The Major Players That Fly To KTM

Qatar Airways

<http://www.qatarairways.com/global/en/homepage.html>

Flights to KTM go via its hub Doha. Top class airline, one of the few airlines that has been granted an industry 5* rating. Book early to get some cracking deals. Current airport is very good, with a new one being built; finished in 2011.

Gulf Air

<http://www.gulfair.com/uk/index.asp>

Flights to KTM go via its hub Bahrain. Very similar to Qatar although flight timings coming back to UK tend to be a little longer (longer layover). It also tends to be slightly cheaper than Qatar.

Etihad

<http://www.etihadairways.com/etihadairways/uk/en/home/home>

Flights to KTM go via its hub Abu Dhabi (in the United Arab Emirates).

A very new airline with a US\$12 billion order for 100 new aircraft and is recognised as the fastest growing airline in the industry. Reports have been good. Watch flight timings (not too good) although in its favour is the fact that it flies from Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Durham (through Heathrow (LHR)).

JET Airways

<http://www.jetairways.com/Cultures/en-US/United%20Kingdom/>

Flights to KTM via Delhi. This airline has evolved greatly in recent years and represents very good value. The aircraft are new and roomy. The transfer through Delhi is not as smooth as the others but improving.

Air India

<http://home.airindia.in/SBCMS/AIHome.aspx>

Flights to KTM via Delhi. One of the cheapest airlines flying these routes but not as regular.

Kingfisher Air

<http://www.flykingfisher.com/>

Flights to KTM via Delhi. Another 5* airline but the return journey requires an overnight stay in Delhi.

In addition, you can access KTM via Bangkok (BKK) or Singapore (SIN). Flights will be more expensive but if you are on a bigger tour of other countries too, this may suit.

Oman Air

<http://www.omanair.com/wy/>

Flights to KTM via Muscat. New to KTM in 2011. Reports are that this is another decent Middle East airline.

From Bangkok (BKK)

There are plenty of options from BKK to KTM, DEL and Kolkata (CCU) although some flights are expensive direct. Look out for the low cost airlines in India, which are good value if hopping from DEL to CCU for example.

From Singapore

JET feature highly from here to all three destinations. Singapore's low cost Silk Air airline will get you direct to KTM but watch timings as it does not fly everyday.

http://www.singaporeair.com/saa/en_UK/index.jsp

http://www.silkair.com/mbe/en_UK/index.jsp

Airline Failure Protection

If you book with an airline direct you will be covered for airline protection provided you use a credit card for full payment.

You can also obtain separate insurance for about £5.

The travel industry will always quote the ATOL cover in their adverts for travel agents but that will not be valid if you book flights only.

Trailfinders is a recommended Agent who include the failure insurance automatically (I have no affiliation to them).

Bespoke Connections

Due to its peak seasons, it can often be difficult to get reasonably priced flights to KTM.

Consider flying to DEL and connecting to one of the low cost airlines such as Air Sahara and JETLite (low cost version of JET).

If you do this, watch the visa requirements as you will have to collect your luggage from your LON - DEL flight and check in again for the next one.