

THE MANAPURNA CIRCUIT Information and Itinerary

A combination of the best of the Manaslu and Annapurna Circuits, the **Manapurna Circuit** is one of the longest treks on our programme; it is 24 days of trekking. Dirt track roads have encroached onto both the Manaslu and Annapurna Circuits and this combined route avoids them thus producing an amazing remote and tranquil trek that you will not want to end.

It begins on the Manaslu Circuit at a very low level for Nepal (just 570m) and gradually ascends for 7 days before it gets through the 3000m barrier so the acclimatisation is excellent.

Until very recently, the Manaslu region could only be trekked using tents as the tea houses are basic and simply not set up for trekkers. Whilst the tea houses are still relatively basic by Nepal trekking standards, sufficient have now been trained to accept trekkers and it is therefore possible to trek this Circuit using tea houses. This region is still very lightly trekked.

It is not until Day 8 that you rise above 3000m and until Day 12 that you cross the Larkya La (5010m), the highest point on the Manaslu Circuit. It is then a relative gallop down to Thone where the route meets the Annapurna Circuit coming north.

Having dropped to 2300m, you turn west and trek for 3 days up to Manang (3500m), where you spend another day resting and acclimatising before tackling the Thorong La. By now you will also have noticed a change in the culture and appearance of these robust mountain people. You may even see a shower in the tea houses!

From here, the walking gets more serious for a few days. The scenery has changed from forest to open stark mountains and the altitude increases back through 4000m until a 'dawn raid' gets you up and over the highest Pass in the world – the Thorong La (5416m).

It doesn't get much better than this: you are on the northern edge of the Annapurna range. You will have seen Manaslu I (8156m, 8th highest in the world), Annapurna I is south of you (8091m, 10th) and you will also be looking at Dhaulagiri (8167m, 7th); not easy to beat!

After nearly 3 weeks of glorious trekking, you should savour the moment for you are about to descent – rapidly! The 1700m descent to Muktinath immerses you deep into Buddhist/Tibetan territory. This is emphasized when you trek for another day into the deepest river gorge in the world (the Kali Gandaki) and reach Kagbeni. The gorge entrance to Upper Mustang (once of Tibet) is in this wonderful village.

Your final leg is to Jomson along the Kali Gandaki river. Spend some time looking for ammonites (fossils), which can be easily found on the river bed having been washed down by the monsoons.

You will overnight in Jomson before your 20 min mountain flight to Pokhara. Despite the sadness of leaving, you will welcome the rest and relaxation that 2 days in the lake side town of Pokhara will bring. Relax by



On top of the Thorong La and below, the final spectacular stage of the trek to the Pass.



Clockwise Circuit?

You are strongly advised not to try to trek the Manapurna Circuit in a clockwise direction.

Due to night stops, you would need to ascend from Muktinath (3760m) to the Thorong La (5416m) in one day; an ascent of 1700m that would surely bring on AMS very quickly. It is dangerous.

DETAILS

Price: £1260

Duration: 32 days UK - UK

Min/Max pers: 2/12

Dates: see website

the hotel pool or the Phewa Lake itself, eat and drink in one of the many inviting restaurants and bars or if you are ready for more.....try some world class paragliding or microliting!

You will eventually fly back to Kathmandu, spend a little time there before boarding your flight back to the UK.

This 32 day trip (UK – UK) is an awe inspiring journey that not only takes you through the whole range of trekking terrain that Nepal has to offer but also through some of its numerous cultures. The scenery that unfolds before you is truly stunning. Your two night stay in Pokhara post trek is just what you need after so many nights on trek.

Important Information:

- **Costs** are based on 2 sharing and are per person (singles see below).
- **Dates:** see respective website page.
- **Passports.** Passports should be valid for a minimum period of 6 months on the date on entry into Nepal (source: Nepal Embassy, UK)
- **Tourist Visa** is required for UK Nationals. This is not onerous and can be done on entry into Nepal or prior to departure. Full details provided on booking including the visa application form.
- **Itineraries.** Day 1 of itineraries are deemed to be your departure day from the UK.
- When you book with Travel and Trek, you will receive a set of **comprehensive trekking notes**, an itinerary, clothing and equipment list, a visa application form and much more to help you prepare.
- **Airport arrivals.** We pick you up on arrival and transfer you back on departure; all part of the service.
- **Singles.** Travel and Trek does not believe in penalising single travellers unnecessarily. If you are a single traveller and do not request sole occupancy of a room, you will be accommodated with another member of the group of the same sex. If there is an odd number travelling and you happen to be the odd one out then you will be allocated sole occupancy at no extra cost. If you do request sole occupancy throughout all or part of the trip, then you will be charged a supplement (£60 based on full trip).
- **Extended Stays.** You are free to extend your stay in Nepal with extra days before or after the trek. Travel and Trek can assist you with accommodation if you wish or you are free to make your own arrangements.
- **UK Leaders.** Some treks are led by a UK Leader IN ADDITION to a local Nepalese Guide. ALL treks have a local Guide on them.
- **Fitness.** The perception that you have to be super fit to reach EBC or even trek in the area is not true. A reasonable level of fitness based on the ability to walk at your own comfortable pace for 6 - 7 hrs a day (with rest stops), for several consecutive days carrying a day sack weighing approx 5kg is all that is required. Island Peak does require a higher level of fitness. If you are in any doubt about whether you are fit enough, please consult Travel and Trek prior to booking.
- **Clothing and equipment** list will be provided on booking.
- **Medical/Vaccinations.** You are advised to consult your GP if you are in any doubt about your physical condition to undertake your chosen trek. You should also seek professional advice on what vaccinations you require for Nepal and other locations should you have an extended trip. Travel and Trek has a specific document on medical issues for clients once they book but as a guide for planning purposes, you should need: Hep A, Typhoid, Tetanus, Polio and Meningitis.
- **Altitude Sickness.** Formally known as Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), Travel and Trek has produced a 'Guide to Trekking at High Altitude', which can be downloaded from the website. Alternatively, you can request a copy be sent to you. If you wish to discuss it personally, please call the Travel and Trek office; our experienced staff will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.
- **Local Payments.** Travel and Trek does not charge any local payments.
- **Travel Insurance.** It is absolutely vital that you have adequate travel insurance. See page 7.

International Guide and Porter Protection

Travel and Trek takes pride in the way it treats the Guides and porters that it employs. We ensure that they are adequately clothed, medically supported and only carry up to the maximum limit allowed (30kg) as advised by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

Manapurna Circuit - Daily Itinerary

Days	Event	Remarks
1	Depart London	
2	Arrive Kathmandu Transfer to hotel (25 mins). Evening free to explore Thamel	After exiting the airport, you will be collected by our Representative and transferred to your hotel (25 mins), which is perfectly placed in the heart of the city - Thamel. You are then free to settle in and explore Thamel. You may choose to dine in one of the many and varied restaurants, all within minutes of your hotel.
3	Free Day Cultural tour of Kathmandu (optional), with exclusive transport and Guide. Preparation for trek	This free day can be used to either relax and prepare for the trek or take in some of the many sights on offer or do both! We can prearrange a sightseeing tour (private) or you can arrange it on site. See the notes on sightseeing in this document. You will be advised of what time to meet your Guide in preparation for the drive to Besi Sahar the next day.
4	Drive to Arughat Bazar , the start point of the Circuit.	The drive is approx 7 hrs including a lunch stop. You may require a short local transport transfer. Overnight in tea house.
5 - 8	Trek Liding - Machhakola - Dobhan - Sirdibas/Philim	This early part of the trek ascend very slowly up to 1500m through classic hillside rural communities. You will get a real taste for how the Nepalese live and work their land.
9 - 13	Trek Dyang - Ghap - Lho - Sama - Samdo	The trek continues to climb although a little more steeply now through the 3000m barrier at Lho. This village is covered in prayer flags as by now the valleys will have opened up to view a more mountain style scenery. The temperatures are colder now as you progress up to Samdo (3690m) and think about the next few days to come.
14	Rest/acclimatise at Samdo	You will have been trekking for 10 days and reached a significant altitude; it is time to rest and acclimatise before you ascend over the Larkya La in a couple of days. Your Guide will encourage you to take a trek to higher altitude to assist the acclimatisation process.
15 - 16	Trek Dharamsala - Bimtang	The trek up to Dharamsala is a significant increase in altitude and you will feel the cold too. This is blue sheep country so look out for them grazing. An early night is in store in preparation for the early morning rise to ascend over the Pass. A pre-dawn start. This will be the longest day's trek so far; potentially 9 hrs. It will take about 4 hrs to the Pass. It is not uncommon to see snow leopard prints in the snow here. The views from the Pass on both sides are just superb. The descent down to Bimtang is across varied terrain so trekking poles will be useful.
17/18	Trek Bimtang - Tilije - Danaky	From Bimtang, it is a fairly rapid descent back out of the alpine terrain down to Tilije. You will then turn west towards Danaky and you are now onto the Annapurna Circuit. You will immediately notice the difference in tea houses; they have showers and apple pie!
19 - 21	Trek Danaky - Chame - Pisang - Manang	The next 3 days will take you slowly back up to 3500m and another rest/acclimatisation day at Manang. This side of the Thorong La has often been described as harsh when compared to the greener, more lush terrain of the Kali Gandaki Valley (which lies ahead of you). You will see a change in culture and maybe a change in the visual features of the faces as you progress towards Manang.
22	Acclimatisation in Manang	At an altitude of 3500m, Manang is the perfect place to stop and acclimatise. The Nepalese Rescue Association (NRA) is also located here and provide timely daily talks on Acute Mountain Sickness.
23/24	Trek Manang - Letdar or Yak Kharka - Thorong Phedi	The next two days will take you back over the 4000m mark, the latter night stop being your final night at any significant altitude. Your time on trek to date should stand you in good stead for acclimatisation.

Days	Event	Remarks
25	Trek Thorong Phedi - Thorong La (5416m) - Muktinath	<p>A big day ahead. It will be an early, pre-dawn start for the ascent to the Pass. The initial steep ascent will be to High Camp and beyond that it will take several hours in potentially very cold conditions to reach the Pass.</p> <p>The rewards however, are spectacular. The achievement and views are well worth it.</p> <p>The descent down to Muktinath is long and can be more demanding than the ascent itself! It is a drop of over 1700m but at least, if any effects of altitude were being felt at the top, they will have subsided by now.</p>
26/27	Trek Muktinath - Kagbeni - Jomson	<p>This is a fabulous day. Firstly, there are no climbs to talk of! The scenery from Muktinath down to the Kali Gandaki river bed is wonderful; stark mountains with Upper Mustang stretching away to the north (previously of Tibet).</p> <p>Kagbeni is classic Tibetan village with a purpose in life. It guards the entrance into Upper Mustang. Beyond here, you must pay a fee of US\$500 per person for a 10 day visit.</p> <p>It also has a wonderful Monastery.</p> <p>Your final day's trek is to follow the wide river bed (it is full flow in the monsoon) to Jomson. From late morning, it is a battle against the southerly winds that traditionally push through this deep valley.</p> <p>Don't forget to keep your eyes peeled for ammonites (fossils); they sit on the floor having been washed down from the previous monsoon.</p> <p>Having reach Jomson, it is time to rest and clean up. You have just completed a fantastic trek.</p>
28	Fly Jomson - Pokhara	<p>Rise early for your mountain flight to Pokhara.</p> <p>This excellent 20 min flight will fly you down the Kali Ghandaki valley and up over Poon Hill, which is the route that you would have taken with the remainder of the Annapurna Circuit. Far easier in a plane!</p> <p>You will be picked up and transferred to you hotel where you can relax.</p>
29	Pokhara, free day	<p>A day to do whatever you wish, primarily relax.</p> <p>There are numerous options open to you whether it be wandering around this delightful lake side town or just sitting in a café watching the world go by. For the more adventurous, there are also opportunities to go paragliding or microliting; both world class in this region.</p>
30/31	Pokhara - Kathmandu by domestic flight Relax in Kathmandu	<p>Have a relaxing breakfast before the 30 min flight back to Kathmandu. You will be picked up from the domestic terminal and transferred to your hotel.</p> <p>The rest of the day and the following day is yours to do as you wish. You may shop or catch on some sightseeing you may have missed first time around.</p>
32	Depart Nepal	Transfer to the international airport for your flight home.

TRIP INCLUSIONS:

4 nights hotel accommodation in Kathmandu (twin share, B&B basis)
 2 nights hotel accommodation in Pokhara (twin share, B&B basis)
 24 nights lodge accommodation on trek (twin share, B&B basis)
 All group ground transportation as appropriate
 Return International airport transfers
 All domestic flight transfers as appropriate
 Domestic flights as per your itinerary
 National Park fees and TIMS certificate (trekking certificate)
 Services of an English speaking qualified Nepali Guide throughout the trek, and portering
 Breakfasts throughout (hotels and trek)
 Comprehensive Trip Notes

TRIP EXCLUSIONS:

Domestic airport departure taxes (approx £1.50 per flight)
 Nepal Tourist visa
 Personal spending
 Staff gratuities (advice will be given if required)
 Personal travel insurance
 Local vehicle fare (Gorkha Bazaar - Arughat Bazaar)
 Food, other than breakfasts

Some Guidance for Kathmandu

If you have never been to a place such as Kathmandu, it is difficult to gauge whether the time allocated in any given itinerary is enough for your needs to see what you wish to see and do. This is designed to help you decide.

Our itineraries give you 4 nights in Kathmandu, which is effectively is two full days and a few half days. This is dependant to some degree on your international flight timings. Unless you wish to see every single sight that Kathmandu has to offer, we would suggest that the time we offer in Kathmandu is enough for most people's needs.

If you really wish to relax and take your time with sightseeing and also shopping/dining/bars then consider adding at least a day, if not two (I would suggest at the end of the trek). See insert box to the right.

Kathmandu has more than its fair share of sights to see; here are a selection:

Swayambhunath, otherwise known as Monkey Temple. The Buddhist Temple sits high on a hill to the west of Kathmandu and is one of the instantly recognisable icons of the city. It is walkable from Thamel (about 30 - 40 mins) and will take about 1 - 2hrs to get around this complex depending on how much interest you have in what is there. Small entrance fee (under £1).

Boudanathan (Boudha), is the largest Buddhist stupa in Nepal and one of the largest in the world. It is a magnet for the large Tibetan population in Nepal and the circular complex is surrounded by shops selling Tibetan artefacts. A lovely place to see, very tranquil. A good place for lunch on one of the high restaurant floors overlooking the stupa. This would be high on my list to see. Small entrance fee (under £1).

Pashupatinath. This is Nepal's most important Hindu Temple. It stands on the banks of the Bagmati river, which flows into the Ganges and is therefore considered holy. It is also one of the most important Shiva Temples on the Asian continent and draws devotees from all over, most notably the colourful *Sadhurs* or holy men. This site is perhaps better known for its open cremations on the ghats of the river bank. This site is quite close to Boudha so it makes sense to combine them both in one outing. Entrance fee approx £2.50.



Bhaktapur is one of the original town's in the Kathmandu valley. It is approx 45 mins drive, which in itself can give you a flavour of what the local area is like. A German funded development project in the 1970's restored many very old buildings to their former glory, paved previously dirt tracks and established a sewerage system. Despite its heavy £7 (approx) entrance fee, it is still (in my opinion) worth a visit. The 'town'

is certainly walkable and it has many shops and places to see.

Patan is considered the 2nd largest town in the Kathmandu valley, although most people's vision and experience of Patan is its Durbar Square. This Square has the highest concentration of Temples than anywhere else within Kathmandu or Bhaktapur. Worth a visit if you have time and be sure to read more about Patan before you get there!

Kathmandu's Durbar Square, is easy walkable from Thamel (20 mins) and for that reason alone, is recommended. Not only do you see the Square but you will walk through the back streets to get there and also (if you plan it right), return from another direction, hopefully through Freak Street and New Street (high concentration of local shops).



Extended Stays

We can pre-arrange extended stays in the same hotel for as little as £32 per room based on twin share, B&B.

How to sightsee. You can do this in one of two ways; Do It Yourself (DIY) or with a professional tour guide and vehicle.

DIY. With a bit of planning you can plan a route, grab a taxi and away you go. You can then either pick up a local guide on the spot (probably a student trying to earn some money) or use a guidebook and self guide your way around. The beauty of this is that you can really please yourself and change your plan as often as you wish. The downside is that you don't quite get the full flavour of local life and may even miss something.

Professional Guide. This can easily be arranged with your hotel (at least a day's notice) or even pre-arranged prior to leaving the UK. The tour will be private to you and will include an appropriately sized vehicle, driver and Guide. They will suggest an itinerary but you can alter that within reason.

Some tips.....I would suggest that you would be able to hit 3 sights in a day between 9am and 3pm, including lunch. This timescale still gives you time to relax and do other things. Save the ones that are walkable from Thamel (Monkey Temple and Durbar Square) for half days. Hit Bhaktapur first thing in the morning and come back into Kathmandu later. Try visiting Monkey Temple early also, better atmosphere, less people.

For some, Thamel is a **shopping paradise**; wall to wall shops. You can find some absolute gems there (literally), from clothing to jewellery, trekking gear to all sorts of wonderful presents at very inexpensive prices. Bargaining is part of their culture; they love a good haggle!

There are many good **restaurants, bars and cafes** in Thamel; more than enough to suit anyone's taste (from Nepali to general continental) for the time that you have there. Watch the prices though; the 10% service and 13% Govt tax are not included in the prices shown on menus.

Some Guidance for Pokhara

It is unlikely that you will visit Pokhara before Kathmandu and therefore you will appreciate the much slower pace of life.

Pokhara is Nepal's second largest town and although it is quite well spread out, your efforts are likely to be concentrated around Lakeside. It is the areas closest to the lake (Lake Phewa).

Although this area is lined with shops, restaurants and bars, it is much more tranquil than Kathmandu and therefore an air of calm and relaxation always appears to hang over this place. After any form of trek in this region, it is natural to end up here to relax and get back to normal!

Most of our trekking itineraries will include a two night stop here at the end of the trek.

Pokhara is not what I would call a sightseeing location with lots of attractions to go and see. There are a few though depending on your likes. Any good Guidebook will highlight those.

Although most do use Pokhara just to relax, there is plenty to do if you want to.

- The shops provide ample entertainment in themselves.
- The restaurants and bars are inviting and have plenty of character.
- The lake provides a wonderful backdrop and you can hire boats for an hour or more (you can row them yourselves or hire a boatman to do that for you).
- For the more adventurous, you can paraglide (tandem jumps) from Sarangkot and land back down by the lake. Flights cost about \$90 and last about 30 mins. The scenery and natural wind conditions make paragliding in this region truly world class.
- The same goes for microlighting; they take off from Pokhara's airport.
- You can also hire mountain bikes or basic mopeds to tour around the local area.
- There are some museums too: the museum of mountaineering is here as is a Gurkha museum. The latter holds more VC's than any other in the world.



The streets of Pokhara during a Holi Festival and below, the Lake View Resort Hotel used by Travel and Trek.



CONTACT DETAILS

Terry Crosby

The Bungalow, 42 Hough Road, Barkston, GRANTHAM NG32 2NS

Phone/Fax: 01400 250770, Mobile: 07725 943108

E-mail: terrycrosby@travelandtrek.com

Travel Insurance

It is vital that you have adequate travel insurance. Some parts of the Manaslu and Annapurna Regions are remote and it would take over a day in some cases to get to any form of professional medical assistance. If you had an unfortunate serious accident, the helicopters would cost up to US\$2500 per flying hour (expect a 2hr return flight) to come and get you and fly you back to Pokhara (and then perhaps onto Kathmandu). To fly you back to the UK under any form of medical supervision (ie on a stretcher) is estimated to cost well in excess of £10,000 and that doesn't include the hospital costs.

Having adequate insurance means that you have to be truthful to the insurance company about precisely what activities you are undertaking and to what altitude (max).

In terms of activities for insurance purposes, none of our treks in the Manaslu or Annapurna regions require the use of specialist equipment (ie crampons or ropes; it is purely trekking).

Please note that any travel insurance that you may have as part of a credit card is unlikely to provide adequate cover but check your own card conditions but please check.

This Foreign & Commonwealth Office link is a useful reference and recommended read:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/staying-safe/travel-insurance/>

Whilst Travel and Trek does not sell insurance (and nor can it recommend any particular company), it is aware of several products that meet the criteria that you may be looking for. Your contract would be with the chosen insurance company and not Travel and Trek.

So What Happens If I Have An Accident?

If you have an accident that requires professional medical help, the first priority is to get you to the nearest medical station (provided that you can be moved). Your Guide and his staff will do this as quickly as possible. You will be carried if necessary. There are a number of these stations scattered in the region. On the Annapurna Circuit (Manang), there is a Nepalese Rescue Association (NRA) station manned by volunteer professional doctors and the provisions (drugs, etc..) are funded by donations. Expect to pay a fee if you require attention (min US\$50).

If they can provide sufficient assistance to get you trekking again, they will.

Any serious injury that clearly requires a helicopter to get you to a hospital will need the involvement of your travel insurance company. Someone will be required to call your travel insurance company and inform them of the incident if you are unable to do so yourself; the insurance company should do the rest. Many tea houses and all medical stations will have satphones to enable that call to be made.

If you do not have insurance or cannot pay with a credit card on the spot the helicopters will not take off.

No payment, no rescue, it is that simple.

A Little Preparation May Save Your Life

Some insurance companies provide a very handy credit card sized card with all of their contact details on it. If your company does not, then try using this very handy website Ucardit.co.uk Travel and Trek clients get a 10% discount.

For about £5 (including P&P), you get a virtually indestructible credit card sized card with all of your important information on it. You can either use one of three pre-designed Travel and Trek cards or design your own. An example is shown below. You can literally put whatever you want on it from flight details, mobile numbers, addresses, insurance details, etc..

To try it, go to the Home page, click 'Travel'. Then scroll down, bottom left, click on the 'Travel and Trek' banner and either use a branded template or design your own. These are example cards from the website (not full size).

Front



Rear

