



## Culture, Wildlife and Nature Tour

10 nights / 11 days

Tour code : DA-1002

### Itinerary in detail

#### Day 1 - Arrive in Kathmandu

You will be met by our representative at the airport and transferred to the hotel. If time permits, you may be able to explore old Kathmandu City with its Durbar square of old temples, palaces and homes. Overnight at hotel.

#### Day 2

Visit Pashupatinath, Boudhanath, old Kathmandu City and Swayambhunath. Situated 5 km east of Kathmandu, Pashupatinath temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, sits on the bank of the sacred Bagmati river in a tranquil location, but may only be viewed from across the river as access is restricted to Hindus only. Built in pagoda style, it stands over two tiers with four triple silver doorways and a golden roof. A unique example of Nepalese temple architecture, it is one of the largest Hindu temple complexes in South Asia with hundreds of Shiva lingam shrines and icons of Hindu gods and goddesses. During the festival of Shivaratri, tens of thousands of devotees and pilgrims visit this temple and light ceremonial fires.

Boudhanath is one of the oldest and biggest Buddhist monuments ever built in the Himalayan Kingdom at 36m high. Built by King Man Dev taking advice from the Goddess Mani Jjogini, it sits on an octagonal base inset with prayer wheels. Four pairs of eyes adorn its surface, each directed towards the four cardinal points of the compass. Lamas' houses ring the shrine. Every year thousands of pilgrims flock here from all over the Himalayan region.

We then return to the old part of Kathmandu City to visit the temple of the Living Goddess, who

acknowledges the greetings of the devotees from the balcony of her temple residence. Kasthamandap temple — the source of the name Kathmandu and supposed to be made from the timber of a single tree — and Durbar Square with its array of temples are overlooked by the Hanuman Dhoka Palace, the ancient residence of Nepalese Royalty.

Our final stop is Swayambhunath, a particularly fine Buddhist stupa in the western hills of Kathmandu. The 2,500 year old monument is a holy site replete with symbols: the mound represents the four elements of earth, fire, wind and water and the 13 gilded rings of the spire symbolize the 13 steps of the ladder leading to Nirvana. The entire shrine is bedecked with colorful prayer flags and is accessed via a path with 365 steps. Return to hotel to overnight there.

#### Day 3

Full-day sightseeing at Patan, Bungamati and Khokana. In the morning, we drive the five km to Patan, also known as Lalitpur, a city of fine art. Surrounded by four stupas said to have been built in the third century by the Emperor Ashoka, it is an attractive place. The Durbar square, with its bronze collection at Patan Durbar, the Krishna temple built by King Siddhi Narsingh Malla, Hiranya Varna Mahavihar and Mahaboudha temple are all included. The tour also includes a visit to the Tibetan Refugee Camp and Handicraft Centre, a center for carpet weaving and the molding of metal statues.

From here, we head south to Bungamati, a town that dates back to the 16th century. It is here that the Rato Machendra statue spends half of every



year, and it is to Bungamati that this same statue is pulled in a massive chariot every 12 years. We also visit the Rato Machendranath temple with its important shrine and natural stone that resembles a Ganesh.

From here it is a short hop to Khokana, a small Newari village about 11 km south of Kathmandu City. Established in the 7th century by the mighty Licchavi rulers of Nepal, it gives a unique glimpse into how life has been lived in this part of the world for centuries.

Return to Kathmandu for overnight at hotel.

#### Day 4

Excursion to Dakshinkali, Pharping, Chovar and Kirtipur. Today sees another full-day tour of the Kathmandu Valley's cultural delights. First stop is Dakshinkali, a temple in a forested canyon some 19 km from the city: Literally meaning the Kali of the South, this temple is dedicated to the Hindu Goddess Kali and a sacrifice ceremony of goats, chickens and ducks is held here every Tuesday and Saturday. After this, we head to the Padmasambhava Caves at Pharping, famous as a meditation venue, and from here it is a short drive to the Chobhar gorge. Legend has it that the bodhisattva Manjushree created the gorge to drain the Kathmandu Valley, which was then a lake. There is a small but picturesque temple on the top of a nearby hill that affords wonderful views of the surrounding mountains. Our final stop is the ancient township Kirtipur with its natural fortress, Chilamchu stupa and the temple of Bagh Bhairav. Kirtipur's people are known for their building and weaving skills, and the little town has quaint streets lined with artistic houses and temple squares. After this, we return to Kathmandu to overnight at hotel.

#### Day 5

Visit Bhaktapur, Changu Narayan and Nagarkot. Our first stop of the day is Bhaktapur, the third major city in the Kathmandu valley. Distinctly medieval in appearance, Bhaktapur sports traditional houses made from brick with intricate wood carvings for decoration. Its large Durbar square has fewer temples than Kathmandu's due to an earthquake in 1934, but is impressive nonetheless. We also visit Changu Narayan temple: Situated at the end of a long ridge, it is said to have been built in 323 AD by King Hari Dutta Varma. The temple is richly decorated with sculptures and carvings and is said to be the oldest temple in the valley. It is situated about 153 m above the Kathmandu Valley, so affords beautiful views of the surrounding countryside. From here it is a short drive 32 km east of Kathmandu to Nagarkot, a rural beauty spot with fine views of the Himalayan ranges. Encompassing more than 200 miles of snowcapped peaks, from Annapurna in the west and beyond Everest in the east, it offers marvelous sunrise and sunset shows (providing the weather is clear). Overnight at resort there.

#### Day 6

Fly to Pokhara. After breakfast, we proceed to the airport to fly to Pokhara, visiting Davis Waterfall and the Tashi Palkhiel Tibetan Refugee Camp, before proceeding to the hotel. Pokhara has mesmerized visitors from all over the world with its rare combination of snow-clad peaks and snow fed lakes and rivers. It is the starting point for many of Nepal's popular trekking and rafting trips. The most famous peak is Machhapuchhare or Fishtail mountain which dominates the skyline. Dense forests, gushing rivers, peaceful lakes and world famous views of the Himalayan mountains



are inspiring indeed. Overnight at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge.

#### Day 7

Sunrise viewing from Sarangkot followed by tour of Pokhara Valley. A short drive to the beautiful village of Sarangkot (1,592m) to view the sunrise is followed by breakfast at the hotel, then a full sightseeing tour of Pokhara and its surrounds takes in the major sites in and around the town: a one-hour boat trip on Phewa Lake with its island temple dedicated to Goddess Barahi; Bindebashini temple, one of the oldest temples in Pokhara, and the old bazaar area; and Gupteswor Mahadev cave are all visited. Overnight at hotel.

#### Day 8

Drive to Chitwan National Park. After breakfast at the hotel, we take the five-hour drive to Chitwan National Park, after which we transfer to our lodge for briefing on jungle activities and facilities at the park. Chitwan is one of the last surviving examples of a continuous band of forest and grasslands that once extended from the Indus River in Pakistan to the Burmese border. It is Nepal's first National Park, a huge area that protects 932 sq km of sal forest, water marshes and grassland. The park is one of the last refuges of the endangered One-horned Indian Rhino and there are sizeable populations of tigers, leopards and rare Gangetic dolphins. Overnight at lodge.

#### Day 9

Jungle activities at Chitwan. The day is filled with jungle activities including a nature walk, elephant safari, bird watching, boat ride on the river, jeep ride and canoeing. Overnight at lodge.

#### Day 10

Fly to Kathmandu. Half-day tour of Patan City. A quick flight brings you to Kathmandu, after which we transfer to the hotel. In the afternoon, we drive the five km to Patan City, also known as Lalitpur, a city of fine art. Surrounded by four stupas said to have been built in the third century by the Emperor Ashoka, it is an attractive place. The Durbar square, with its bronze collection at Patan Durbar, the Krishna temple built by King Siddhi Narsingh Malla, Hiranya Varna Mahavihar and Mahaboudha temple are all included. The tour also includes a visit to the Tibetan Refugee Camp and Handicraft Centre, a center for carpet weaving and the molding of metal statues.

In the evening we have a farewell dinner at one of Nepal's finest restaurants with a cultural dance performance.

#### Day 11 - Tour concludes

Transfer to the airport for onward flight.