

Dentaid Annapurna Trek & Dental Project

10th – 22nd April 2012

Information Pack

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IMPROVING THE WORLD'S ORAL HEALTH

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About Nepal

Nepal, officially the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, is a landlocked country in South Asia and the world's youngest republic. It is bordered to the north by the People's Republic of China, and to the south, east, and west by the Republic of India. With an area of 147,181 square kilometres (56,827 square miles) and a population of approximately 30 million, Nepal is the world's 93rd largest country by land mass and the 41st most populous country. Kathmandu is the nation's capital and the country's largest metropolitan city.



Nepal is a country of highly diverse and rich geography, culture, and religions. The mountainous north contains eight of the world's ten highest mountains, including the highest, Mount Everest. The fertile and humid south is heavily urbanized. By some measures, Hinduism is practiced by a greater majority of people in Nepal than in any other nation. Buddhism, though a minority faith in the country, is linked historically with Nepal as the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama who as the Buddha Gautama gave birth to the Buddhist tradition.

Geographically, Nepal is uncommonly diverse. Nepal is of roughly trapezoidal shape, 800 kilometres long and 200 kilometres wide, with an area of 147,181 square kilometres. It is commonly divided into three physiographic areas: the Mountain Region, the Hill Region and the Lowland Plains.

The southern Lowland Plains bordering India are part of the northern rim of the Indo-Gangetic plains. They were formed and are fed by three major rivers: the Kosi, the Narayani, and the Karnali. This region has a hot, humid climate. The Hill Region (Pahad) abuts the mountains and varies from 1,000 to 4,000 metres (3,300–13,125 ft) in altitude. Two low mountain ranges, the Mahabharat Lekh and Shivalik Range (also called the Churia Range) dominate the region. The hilly belt includes the Kathmandu Valley, the country's most fertile and urbanised area.

The Mountain Region, situated in the Great Himalayan Range, makes up the northern part of Nepal. It contains the regions of highest altitude in the world; the world's highest mountain, 8,850 metres (29,035 ft) height Mount Everest (Sagarmatha in Nepali) is located here on the border with Tibet. Seven other of the world's ten highest mountains are located in Nepal: Lhotse, Makalu, Cho Oyu, Kanchenjunga, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Manaslu.

The Trek

Nepal is popular for trekking, containing some of the highest and most challenging mountains in the world, including Mount Everest. Since Nepal first opened its frontiers to foreign visitors in the 1950's, it has captured the minds of mountaineers and explorers from all over the world. Today Nepal has established itself as the true home of Adventure not only for mountaineers and trekkers but, also to all other explorers from all walks of life.

GHOREPANI / POON HILL TREK:

Amongst the various treks available, this trek is ideal for those who have limited time, but still want a real Himalayan experience. The trek is a great opportunity to witness the culture and tradition of the Nepalese countryside. Along the way, there are spectacular views of the snowy peaks of the Annapurnas, and a fascinating mountain panorama from Poon Hill.



Itinerary

Day 1 (Tue 10 Apr): LONDON / KATHMANDU

Depart for Kathmandu on an overnight flight.

Day 2 (Wed 11 Apr): KATHMANDU

Arrive in Kathmandu and transfer to a central hotel. This afternoon meet the local team and receive a briefing on the days ahead. Welcome dinner with cultural show tonight.

Days 3 (Thu 12 Apr) & 4 (Fri 13 Apr): KATHMANDU

Spend two days assisting on a local Dentaïd project (accommodation, breakfast, dinner & transport within Kathmandu included).

Day 5 (Sat 14 Apr): KATHMANDU / POKHARA

After breakfast, transfer by road to Pokhara (approx 6 hours). Overnight at a Guesthouse.



Day 6 (Sun 15 Apr): POKHARA /BIRETHANTI /TIKHEHDHUNGA

Transfer by road to Nayapul (approx. 2 hours) from where you commence the trek. Follow the banks of the Bhurungdi Khola River as far as Tikhedhunga (1575m) then it is a steep uphill walk to Ulleri where we stay the night in a lodge. (2073m)

Day 7 (Mon 16 Apr): ULLERY / GHOREPANI

A day of ascent! Gradually gain more altitude as you walk for about 5 hrs to the overnight base in Ghorepani (2800m).

Day 8 (Tue 17 Apr): GHOREPANI / POON HILL / TADAPANI

Early this morning ascend to Poon Hill (3400m) for a spectacular sunrise view over the Annapurna Massif, Dhawalagiri (8167m) and other ranges. After breakfast back at the lodge, it is a mostly downhill walk, via Deorali, to reach Tadapani. The route is through peaceful forestland, famed for its rhododendrons. Overnight at Lodge in Tadapani.

Day 9 (Wed 18 Apr): TADAPANI /GHANDUK

The descent to Ghandruk is a relatively easy walk, with spectacular views of the Annapurna and Machhapuchre snow-capped peaks all the way down from Ghorepani. Ghandruk is a beautiful Gurung Village, where most of the inhabitants were Gurkhas. Overnight in a lodge.

Day 10 (Thu 19 Apr): GHANDRUK / POKHARA

The final day's trekking. It is about a 6 hour walk to Birethanti, from where we travel by road back to Pokhara. Overnight in a Guesthouse.

Day 11 (Fri 20 Apr): POKHARA / KATHMANDU

Return to Kathmandu overland. This afternoon enjoy a brief sightseeing tour of the city, with visits to Pashupatinath Temple and Boudhanath Stupa (alternatively a project visit could be arranged). Farewell dinner this evening.

Day 12 (Sat 21 Apr): KATHMANDU / LONDON

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

Day 13 (Sun 22 Apr): LONDON

Arrive back into London.



Notes: The day-to-day program is subject to weather, general conditions and the progress of the group. The leaders will be making daily decisions about, for example, exactly how far or which way we go, and ultimately about the safety and health of all in the group, as well as doing their best to ensure the enjoyment and success in the outcome of the trek.

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BEFORE YOU GO: AN A - Z OF INFORMATION ON NEPAL

A is for Arrival. You must obtain a visa prior to travel. See http://www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa_information.html for more information. You should check visa validity and conditions carefully. They are usually valid for one month. There are fines and/or imprisonment if you overstay your visa. Entry to Nepal may be refused if your passport has less than six month's validity.

A is also Accommodation. You will be staying in lodges and teahouses. Although simple, the teahouses or lodges do provide shelter and warmth and are normally run by friendly local families. Rooms are basic, normally just a bed with a pillow and blankets. It is recommended you bring a sleeping bag, however you may just wish to bring a sleeping bag liner to use with the blankets provided. A few have electric lights and all have a spacious dining room-lounge. All meals are included and are taken in lodges along the trail. There will be a wide variety of Nepali and Western food as well as drinks (beers etc will be available to purchase).

A is also for Altitude. The trekking on this trip does not go into very high altitude areas (i.e. not above 3400m) but you may feel some signs on altitude sickness such as a mild headache, breathlessness or a cough on the days trekking above 3000m. Please be honest about how you are feeling if you do suffer from any of these (or any other) symptoms so our local guides can ensure your safety and well-being.

B is for Begging. Begging has become more prevalent in recent years especially where tourists congregate. In most cases however they will try to sell you trinkets and jewellery that can either be purchased or in some cases exchanged for the taking of their photo. We strongly advise against giving anything to the children on the streets as this will only encourage more begging.

C is for Communications. International telecommunications charges from Nepal are among the highest in the world, and hotels usually add a high surcharge on top of this. It's best to make quick calls and to have the other party call you back. While trekking in the remote parts, you may not have an access to telephone facility for some days. However, en route there may be few places where telephone facilities may be available and likely to be working. Mobiles will receive an intermittent signal.

C is for Clothing. Although there are no real restrictions on tourist clothing it is best to err on the side of caution and dress modestly, smartly and respectfully. Short skirts and hot pants should be avoided, but below the knee skirts for women are acceptable and provide some privacy when using the bathroom in the great outdoors. Linen trousers or smart trekking bottoms and cotton shirts or t-shirts would be suitable attire for both men and women during the trek. Local women often wear salwar kurta and saris but increasingly wear Western clothing. Local men tend to wear smart Western clothes apart from during special occasions.

C is also for Climate. The best seasons to trek in the Annapurna region are autumn (from mid-September till November end) and spring (from the beginning of March until mid-May). Temperatures will drop considerably as you trek higher every day. You can expect nights to be a bit colder (between 0°C to 10°C) but, the days are sunny and hot (between 15°C to 30°C). The mornings are usually clear, with clouds building up during the afternoon, disappearing at night.

D is for Drink. Fresh fruit and vegetables should always be peeled or washed thoroughly with purified water. Bottled or purified water should be used at all times for drinking. Boiled drinks such as coffee or tea are fine. Ice is not to be trusted unless you are sure it has been made with bottled water.

D is also for Dietary Requirements. The majority of special diets, such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, etc., can be catered for. Please ensure that you notify us of any dietary requirements at the time of booking or as soon as possible.

D is also for Difficulty. This trek is classified as a moderate to challenging adventure trek. The trek does not go above 3400metres altitude and each day you can expect to be walking for around 6-8 hours. It is a perfect introduction to trekking in Nepal. The activity level is moderate to high but don't expect it to be all easy going, there will still be some big hills to climb as well as the well-known 'Nepali flat' – a little bit up and a little bit down. **You**

will be required to train in preparation for this, and Different Travel reserves the right to refuse anyone they feel is not fit enough for the challenge.

D is also for Dehydration. This is a potential problem and you must bring a good supply of rehydration salts with you. You can buy the small packets from chemists in different flavours and just add the powder to quantity of water mentioned on the packet. To stave off dehydration before it begins, NUUN electrolyte tablets can be added to water to turn your water into a sports drink!

D is also for Daypack. Throughout the trek your daypack is your responsibility and you will be carrying your own – so don't make it too heavy. We recommend a 25-30 litre pack. It is likely to weigh around 10kgs when packed, so please take this equivalent with you during your training trips. You will need to carry some essentials with you as you will not have access to your main pack: waterproofs, fleece, sun hat, sunglasses, gloves, warm hat, sun cream, water bottle, tissues/wet wipes, medical kit, etc. You may also wish to bring your camera and spare memory cards and batteries. It is worth taking a waterproof cover for your daypack as rain is not unusual during the climb. Alternatively, consider dry bags for inside your pack, which will keep important items dry.

E is for Expenses. Very little spending money is required. You only need a small amount for soft and/or alcoholic drinks, lunches during the project, snacks, souvenirs, porters' tips, laundry, telephone calls, and occasionally there may be a small charge to use hot water in the lodges. Please also see I for Inclusions/Exclusions.

E is also for Electricity. Mains electricity is 230v/ 50 Hz but is subject to fluctuations and power cuts. Plugs are 2 round pin sockets (European style) or three large round gold pins (South African style).

E is also for Emergencies and Evacuations. In the unlikely event of a serious illness or accident, the local team will ensure you are transferred as swiftly as possible to the nearest hospital (probably Pokhara). Please ensure your travel insurance covers you for airlifts/emergency evacuations.

F is for Food. Nepali food is very similar to Indian, with some Chinese influences. Rice or bread and dhal (lentils) are the staple and are eaten twice a day. Vegetarians are well catered for. Snacks such as bread, chura, roti, curried vegetables, and milk tea are generally eaten in between the two big meals.

Popular Nepali dishes

Equally popular among Nepali people and foreign tourists, Gundrook-Dheedo is a sugar-free dish made of wheat, maize and dried green vegetable. The food is high on nutrition level and satisfies the taste buds as well.

Vegetable Pulao (Fried Nepali Rice). Vegetable Pulao is one of the popular ways rice is served during the parties and events in the Nepalese household. It has flavour of turmeric and cumin to it. The rice is particularly famous among tourists who prefer eating it with curd and Manchurian.

Masu. Masu is spiced or curried meat (usually chicken, mutton, buffalo or pork) with gravy. Served with rice, it is a main course dish, very popular in Nepal.

Chatamari. Regarded as Newari pizza, Chatamari is a flat-bread made from rice flour with or without toppings (meat, vegetables, eggs, sugar). It is highly savoured by the tourists who consider it as a good and healthy substitute to pizza.

F is for First Aid kit. Especially whilst on the climb you should carry a small first aid kit of essential items (Anti-malarials (if your GP has prescribed them), personal prescription medicine, painkillers, plasters/blister spray, insect repellent (containing 50% DEET), anti-histamine tablets and cream, loperamide (Loperamide), rehydration sachets, throat lozenges, painkillers such as ibuprofen, decongestant, lip balm with SPF, antiseptic cream, antifungal powder, scissors, tweezers, thermometer, sanitary towels and/or tampons or a Mooncup, spare glasses or contact lenses, toilet roll. See packing list for more detail.

F is also for Fitness. A good general level of fitness is required. You should start a programme of body conditioning well before your departure including walking and cardio vascular workouts to both improve your stamina and your ability to walk up and down gradients. You will be walking steadily, but for many hours, so it is essential that you are able to walk for at least 8 hours. Regular breaks are taken, but long days walking are inevitable. **DTC has the right to refuse anyone who they feel is not fit enough for the challenge.** Please see the fitness tips sheet for more information.

H is for Health. Remember to take all your existing medication in clearly labelled packages. Normal body temperature is 98.6 f / 37 C. Resting pulse rate should be 60 – 90 per minute (higher at higher altitude). Respiratory rate should be 12-20 breaths per minute. You should seek medical advice at least 8 weeks before travelling and ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up-to-date. For further information on health

<http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk>

Malaria occurs in Nepal but we may not visit the areas where it is a problem, so it is **ESSENTIAL** you seek up to date medical advice at least 8 weeks before departure. It is important that you wear long sleeve shirts and trousers during the evenings, use 50% DEET mosquito repellent. Upon your return you should mention to your doctor that you have been to a Nepal if you develop any symptoms (fever, fatigue).

H is also for Haggling. Unless marked with a price most items in a shop are not fixed so prepare your bargaining skills early! As a general rule halve the initial asking price and you should eventually come to a price that is agreeable to both you and the vendor.

I is for Insurance. Different Travel will do everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. However, certain risks are involved and should be recognised by participants. Thus, we highly recommend the purchase of short-term travel insurance for our expeditions. Travel Insurance is a cost effective way to protect yourself and your equipment in the event of problems due to cancelled trips, delays, medical problems, baggage loss or damage.

I is also for Inclusions/Exclusions

Trip Includes: Flights from the UK (excluding taxes), all transfers & transport in Nepal, all accommodation and meals (except lunches in Kathmandu when on project), entrance fees, local guide & porters on trek, all trekking equipment, conservation fees & permits, Different Travel Tour Leader

Trip Does Not Include:

Personal expenses (such as drinks, laundry etc), airport taxes (currently approx. £205 pp), visas and vaccinations required (current cost for Nepal visa £25 for UK passport holders) travel insurance, tips

L is for Language. An attempt to speak a few words of the local language is always appreciated! Here are some simple phrases to get you started:

Welcome स्वागतम् (swagatam)

Hello/Goodbye नमस्ते (namaste)

How are you? तपाईंलाई/तिमीलाई कस्तो छ? (tapaaii/timi lai kasto cha?)

Fine thanks, and you? मलाइ सन्चै छ । तपाईंलाई नि? (sanchai cha. tapaaiilaai ni?)

What is your name? तपाईंको/तिम्रो नाम के हो? (tapaaiiko/timro naam ke ho?)

My name is... मेरो नाम ... हो (mero naam ... ho)

Have a nice day शुभ दिन (subha din)

Thank you धन्यवाद (dhanyabad)

Excuse me/Sorry माफ गर्नुस् (maapha ganus)

Where's the toilet? शौचालय कता छ? (sauchalaya kata chha)

How do you say... in Nepali? तपाइले नेपालीमा ... लाइ कसरी भन्नुहुन्छ? (tapain le nepalima ... lai kasari bhannu hunchha?)

L is for Luggage. You need just 3 pieces of luggage – a suitcase or luggage for check in, a daypack for your use during the trek (and probably used as hand luggage), and a trek bag for your trekking luggage which is carried by the porters. When you check in for the flights, you may wish to put your luggage and trek bag inside a large lockable bag or suitcase. You can leave this in the hotel free of charge while you are trekking. During trek your main luggage will be carried by porters. This luggage should be put inside a waterproof trek bag such as the North Face Duffel in size Medium. On the trek you simply carry a day pack with your day-to-day essentials such as water, sunscreen, waterproofs, head torch, first aid kit etc. Please contact us if you have any queries about luggage.

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M is for Money. The official currency is the rupee. Several ATMs are available in Kathmandu and money can be exchanged at banks and hotels. The exchange rate at time of publishing is UK£1.00 = 113 rupee. Travellers' cheques can be cashed at major banks for a service fee of 2%-5%. Visa, Master, American Express and Diner's Club are widely accepted at most of the larger hotels, restaurants and shops.

P is for Personal Safety. Nepal is widely acknowledged to be a safe destination. In almost all cases the Nepalese people regard tourists with the highest level of respect as guests in their country. However petty theft and pick pockets do exist in the larger cities. In other areas reports of these activities are almost unheard of. It is certainly not something to be concerned about but you should be aware of your surroundings. You should therefore ensure that all bags have sturdy locks. Place all valuables, including passport and air tickets in the in-room safe at hotels or at the front desk. It is best not to bring expensive jewellery or watches to Nepal. Do not carry unnecessarily large amounts of cash with you at any time.

P is also for Photography. If you take photographs of local people, you should ask permission first and expect to be asked for payment!

R is for Religion. Hinduism is practiced by a greater majority of people in Nepal than in any other nation. Buddhism, though a minority faith in the country, is linked historically with Nepal as the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama who as the Buddha Gautama gave birth to the Buddhist tradition. Religion is an integral part of life for most of the population, and its evidence is all around.

R is also Responsible Travel. The wonderful environment of the Himalayas is also an extremely fragile one. Increasing population density and the numbers of trekkers threaten the beauty of Nepal and, as such, we are extremely conscious about the environment and aim to minimize our impact as much as possible. As deforestation is one of the greatest environmental threats, we do not have camp fires. We also discourage trekkers from using wood-fuelled hot showers in lodges along the way. Many lodges, however, now provide solar hot showers, a far more eco-friendly alternative.

R is also for Rubbish Disposal. Rubbish disposal is another major problem which we strive to avoid. Our staff members are well motivated towards eco-friendly practices. We carry out all our rubbish, apart from that which can be safely and easily burnt at nearby the Lodges. Our aim is to help protect and preserve this beautiful environment for future generations of trekkers to enjoy.

S is for Souvenirs. Nepal boasts a wide variety of traditional handicrafts, including quality hand embroidery, woodcarvings, paintings and ceramics. There may be some local handicrafts available to purchase on the trek, and once back in Kathmandu there are plenty of opportunities for shopping!

S is for Sleeping bag. Bed linen is provided in most lodges; although it is recommended you take your own sleeping bag with a comfort rating of between 2 and 10C for extra warmth depending on how cold you get at night. If you take a sleeping bag, you ought to also take a sleeping bag liner to protect your sleeping bag from dirt and sweat and to give you some extra warmth if you need it. Alternatively, you may wish to bring just a sleeping bag liner instead of a sleeping bag and use with the bedding provided in the lodges although all bedding is clean.

S is also for Staff. In addition to your Different Travel Tour Leader, you will be accompanied on the trek by a trained and experienced Sherpa Guide. There will also be 1 porter for 2 participants, to carry your luggage (you are just responsible for your day pack).

T is for Tipping. Whilst tipping is not part of Nepal's cultural make-up it is nonetheless an important and welcome recent addition. We would recommend allowing around \$50 in total for tips during your trip.

T is also for Typical Day on Trek. Each morning after packing our bags and a hearty breakfast, we set off on the day's walk. After walking for 4-5 hours we stop for lunch at around midday. The afternoon's walk is generally shorter and we usually arrive at our destination by late afternoon. The remainder of the day can be spent exploring the village, doing a bit of washing or simply relaxing with a good book. After dinner, the evening will often be spent playing cards and reliving the day's adventures, before retiring for a well-earned sleep.

W is for Weather.

Nepal has five climatic zones, broadly corresponding to the altitudes. The tropical and subtropical zones lie below 1,200 metres (3,940 ft), the temperate zone 1,200 to 2,400 metres (3,900–7,875 ft), the cold zone 2,400 to 3,600 metres (7,875–11,800 ft), the subarctic zone 3,600 to 4,400 metres (11,800–14,400 ft), and the Arctic zone above 4,400 metres (14,400 ft). During this trek, in autumn, lowest temperatures are not expected to fall below 5°C.

W is also for Water. All water on this trip is undrinkable. You must not brush your teeth or rinse your mouth with the tap water, only use bottled or purified water. You should bring water purification. A highly recommended purification is 'Biox Aqua Drops' which contains chlorine dioxide. You may also wish to consider powdered fruit juice or squash as this will make purified water taste better but please ensure that the water is treated as per the instructions on the packaging before adding any flavouring.

Z is for Zen Travelling. We suggest these tips for successfully dealing with Nepalese officials, airport personnel and bureaucrats:

- Try your best to smile and be pleasant.
- Don't complain loudly.
- If you feel you need to criticise someone, do it in a joking, light-hearted manner to avoid confrontation.
- Expect delays - build them into your schedule.
- Never show anger - ever! Getting visibly upset is not only rude; it will cause you to lose face.
- Don't be competitive. Treating your interaction as a cooperative enterprise works much better.
- Don't act as though you deserve service from anyone. If you do so, it's likely that you will be delayed.

PACKING LIST

CLOTHING

Flip Flops/ Trek sandals /Trainers

Walking boots (broken in)

Light trekking trousers x 2

Pair of long shorts/capri pants

Long warm base layer trousers

Breathable waterproof trousers

Long-sleeve thermal base layer

T-shirts/vests x 2

Long-sleeved cotton shirt

Fleece / warm mid layer

Warm jacket

Breathable waterproof jacket

Trekking socks

Underwear

Scarf / pashmina

Warm hat and gloves

Sun hat

Swimwear

HYGIENE

Wash bag and washing kit

Antiperspirant/deodorant

Soap/Shower Gel/ loofah

Razor/shave foam or oil

Toothbrush/Toothpaste

Large pack of wet wipes

Antiseptic hand gel

Sanitary towels/tampons

Shampoo/conditioner/hairbrush

FIRST AID KIT

Anti malarials (see your GP)

Prescription medicine

Painkillers

Plasters + blister plasters

Anti-histamine tablets/cream

Imodium

Rehydration solution

Lip balm with SPF

Antiseptic cream

Antifungal powder (optional)

Scissors/tweezers

Insect repellent: 50% DEET

Spare glasses/contact lenses

Sun cream - high SPF

After-sun lotion

Baby wipes/ wet wipes

ESSENTIALS

Tickets (or e-tickets)

Passport and copy

Money

Insurance policy details

Torch, head torch + spare batteries

Diary/Notebook and pen

Sunglasses

Toilet roll

Books/Playing Cards

Money belt

Adaptor (2 round pin European or 3 gold round pin South African)

OPTIONAL

Camera

Video camera + charger

Films/batteries/memory stick

Mobile phone + charger

MP3 Player

Sewing / repair kit

Trekking poles

Protective wear for project (gloves etc)

NUUN electrolyte tablets

EATING AND DRINKING

Powdered fruit juice or squash

Energy snacks

2 litre personal water bottle x 2

Water purification e.g. Biox Aqua

LUGGAGE

25-30 litre day pack + rain cover

Luggage for check-in + padlocks

Waterproof trek bag (e.g. North Face Duffel Medium)

SLEEPING

Silk sleeping bag liner

Eye mask / Ear plugs

Sleeping bag with comfort rating of between 0-10C (optional)

This list is to be used as **general guidance** only and is not exhaustive. There may be items you wish to bring which aren't on this list, and you may feel you do not wish to bring all the items listed above.

If you have any questions or queries regarding this list, please contact us on info@different-travel.com