

## Nepal Travel Climate on an Upward Trend

For Nepal, the hub of trekking in the Himalayas, the year 2007 represented a marked ascent in the tourism industry. Tourism in Nepal has been severely down over the past decade due to political strife and violence that included the deaths of thousands of Nepalese. In November 2006, the government of Nepal and the Maoist rebels it was fighting signed a peace accord and 2007 was the first full year of implementation of that accord. Enacting the peace agreement hasn't been without problems, but signs of hope have emerged even out of the problems.

From the perspective of Itreknepal, a [Nepal trekking company](#), the fact that the political opposition walked out of government in September demanding Nepal's monarchy be abolished before elections slated for November was more a cause for celebration than for fear. After a decade long civil war, the fact that the opposition is able to negotiate rather than take up arms is a sign that all parties are committed to peace. For travelers who have yearned to visit this majestic country during the past ten years, but who have been afraid to do so peace and stability mean a lot.

For members of the Itreknepal management who were in Nepal when hostilities broke out a decade ago, the cessation of hostilities has meant that their dream of a company which can provide the best custom trips for clients, while respecting and giving back to the Nepalese has become a reality. Itreknepal, co-founded by longtime friends Leigh Wilson and Ambir Gurung, has brought about a company that brings together Nepal and Western management in its efforts to provide the best possible experience for trekkers while improving the lives of Nepalese guides and porters.

After a decade of war in which tourism was severely depressed and jobs in the tourism industry were far and few between many Nepalese are thrilled to see more visitors returning to the country and just as importantly they are thrilled to see a climate where companies like Itreknepal wish to operate. According to Wilson, "While most companies only pay guides and porters union rates per trek when available, we pay yearly salaries, health insurance and union rates whilst actually on treks to ensure the highest quality of service and a shared interest in the customer experience." Such policies lead to enthusiasm and loyalty among the Nepalese employees. These are the kinds of jobs that they haven't dared dream of over the past 10 years.

Trekkers are equally pleased with the situation in Nepal. The few intrepid travelers who did make it to Nepal each year over the past decade often found the conditions harsh. They were frequently the victims of shakedowns by the Maoists. Food could be scarce and lodging was not always at it's best. Today, a trek with a company like ITrekNepal means staying at first rate hotels and tea houses, trekking with new equipment and guides who speak English and are happy to be offer great service.

In 2007 there were still a couple of reports of shakedowns by Maoists, however, no trekkers who chose to go with an organized company reported any such experiences. The peace agreement continues to be implemented, and 2008 looks like it will be an even better year for tourists and tourism in Nepal.