

Trekking in Nepal - 7 Tips for Success

If you're considering trekking in Nepal, these seven tips will help you have a enjoyable trip. Though certainly not meant to be all- inclusive they are a good starting place for researching what you need to know.

1. Know when to go

The two most pleasant seasons for trekking are spring and fall. The spring months are considered to be March through May. The average temperature in March is in the low 60 degree Fahrenheit range and it warms to the upper 70's by May. The fall season is slightly cooler with average temperatures starting in the upper 60's in October and cooling to the lower 50's by December. December is also generally the driest month of the year.

During the spring months flowers are in bloom in the forests so it can be quite beautiful though it can also be cloudy, especially in the morning. In the fall you'll get the best mountain views, with clear skies usually all day long.

[Trekking in Nepal](#) is possible at any time of the year. That said, it is worth remembering that they get eighty percent of their annual rainfall from the end of June through the middle of September. This period is considered summer but is also referred to as the monsoon season, so if you're from a climate that has dry summer months don't be fooled.

Winter in Nepal is considered to be the period from December to February and the thing to keep in mind about these months is that the temperatures can be quite cool depending on where you are. In the central valleys during this time of year the temperatures can definitely fall below freezing. The Kathmandu Valley, at an altitude of 4297ft/1310m will typically have temperatures ranging from 36 - 68 degrees Fahrenheit. At higher elevations in the Himalayas temperatures will drop below freezing and it can be extremely cold at night.

2. Know where to go The most popular treks in Nepal are in the Annapurna and Everest regions. There are also very popular treks in the in the Langtang Valley that can be easily reached from Kathmandu and completed in less than a week. In the Annapurna region you have a choice between the rich forests and serene beauty of the Annaupurna sanctuary or the more Tibetan-like villages and arid terrain of the Kali Gandaki gorge up to Muktinath. Any one of these treks is an incredible experience. They usually take about two weeks. ItrekNepal, a unique trekking outfitter, can put together everything you need including guide, porters and accommodations for one of these and many other treks.

3. Protect your health Staying healthy is key to a happy trip. Most unhappy health situations in Nepal are a result of intestinal complications. These are easily avoided if you take some simple precautions. In general, you should boil or purify all of your water. ITrekNepal also recommends that you bring at least one water bottle with a special filter so that you'll always have access to purified water wherever you are. Also make sure to wash your hands before eating or putting them in your mouth. These two simple things can help you avoid most problems.

Recommended vaccines include Typhoid (Typhoid vaccine (Typhim Vi- injectable)), Hepatitis A (brand names (Havrix, Vaqta, Avaxim) or Twinrix (combined A&B)), Polio (usually as child, check if your own physician if booster is needed), Tetanus (10 year valid), Rabies,(3 year valid). If traveling to west Nepal (rural areas) prevention of Japanese Encephalitis would be advisable (vaccination at least 2 weeks before departure), a certificate of proof of

vaccination against Yellow fever is not necessary for you as you are not traveling from a country with yellow fever transmission risk.

Altitude sickness, also known as acute mountain sickness (AMS), generally does not become a problem until you reach elevations of 10,000 feet or greater. There's no way to know if you will get AMS and just because you have traveled at elevation before and not had it is no guarantee of not getting it in the future. However, one precaution that you can take is to move up to elevation slowly over a matter of days. This will give your body time to acclimatize. If you're at altitude and you begin to feel nauseous, dizzy, suffer from severe headaches or insomnia you may be experiencing AMS and the best treatment is to move to a lower elevation.

4. Have proper travel documentation Passports are required for all visitors from US, UK, Canada, Australia and all European Union member countries. Unlike some countries Nepal does not require that you have a return ticket on entry. Tourist visas, which are valid for six months from the date of issue, can be obtained upon arrival at the airport.

5. When in Nepal do as the Nepalese In order to have the most successful trip possible, and avoid social offense you'll want to follow the customs of Nepal. There are several things which are considered rude that you might not even think of in your home country. While you may have been taught not to point at people in Nepal this rule extends not only to pointing at people but also statues. It is considered rude to step over the feet of a person. Other social conventions pertaining to the feet include taking off your shoes before you enter someone's home, a kitchen or eating area which are sometimes detached. You must also always remove your shoes before entering a shrine. Never stand by someone who is eating, though it is fine to sit or kneel next to them. When passing local Chorten and shrines always do so in a clockwise manner. Hand shaking is not the norm, so to greet someone you will want to put the palms of your hands together in a prayer-like gesture.

6. What to wear When packing for a trip to Nepal remember that the key to comfort is layers. You will want to put on and take off clothes as you need to adjust to temperature changes. Bring an insulated jacket if trekking during the winter or going above 10,000 feet. Men will want to bring hiking shorts and pants, women will want to bring skirts and pants. Bring t-shirts and blouses, but nothing too revealing. Obviously, you'll want to bring multiple changes of underwear and socks. A sun hat and a cool weather hat. If you are trekking above 10,000 feet you will want insulated pants, long underwear, gloves, gaiters, nylon wind pants and windbreaker top. As a general rule cotton is great for keeping you cool but lousy for keeping you warm. Cotton is also slow to dry, so when possible choose synthetics or wool.

7. Travel insurance It's a good idea to have travel insurance any time you are traveling and this is certainly true in Nepal. Not all travel insurance is created equally, so make sure that your travel insurance covers the activities you will be doing especially that there aren't exclusion for alpine activities. Helicopter rescue insurance is also available at a premium starting at around US\$100.

Nepal is a land of great beauty, and trekking in Nepal can be the trip of a lifetime. Following the above tips will help to ensure that you have an enjoyable and safe trip, but don't let this be the end of your research. The more you know the more you will enjoy yourself. Namaste.