

ADVENTUREX

WITHOUT ADVENTURE... WHAT IS LIFE?

The Karnali

Nepal's Mightiest River

With big whitewater and wild rapids, Nepal's mightiest river flows spectacularly through remote and pristine jungle surroundings. For the 8 days and 180 kilometres we won't see a single sign of the modern world however wildlife is abundant, with sightings of deer, bears, rhesus monkeys and leopards. The Karnali's headwaters come off Mount Kailas in Tibet slicing through the Himalayas in a series of magnificent isolated gorges and forests. Regardless of the month, the Karnali always offers good, powerful rapids with miles of beautiful scenery, pristine beaches and deep river gorges.

Quoted as being 'one of the finest rafting rivers in the world', it is also an incredible journey for the advanced paddler who is happy on big water. Starting with God's House we face a rollercoaster of big rapids, great surfing and lots of play potential surrounded by stunning gorges. As the river narrows we run the classics - Juicer and Flip and Strip before continuing through Red Rock Canyon, taking on more and more rapids. With the confluence of the Seti River, the second half of the trip mellows out with vast jungle wilderness, fresh water dolphins and gorgeous large beaches making stunning campsites. The perfect relaxing ending to an adrenalin charged adventure.

Adventure Itinerary

Day 1:

Arrive in Kathmandu. You will be met by an AdventureX Guide and escorted to your hotel. Time to relax and change and then we'll head off to one of the many fine restaurants.
(No meals included)

Day 2:

Free time in Kathmandu to explore this amazing city. From observing early morning sessions of prayer wheel turning at the Buddhist Stupa of Bodhnath, to gaining a glimpse of the Living Goddess in Durbar Square, there are endless things to see. Or if you fancy a bit of retail therapy check out the multitude of shops selling branded fleeces and good quality merchandise – and be prepared to bargain! We'll meet up at 6pm and have a pre-departure meeting and meal together. Then finish the day with a relaxing cold drink in one of the many terrace cafes whilst the sun starts to go down on the distant snow-capped Himalayan Mountains.
(Breakfast included)

Day 3:

After a hearty breakfast it's time to head off to the airport for an hour long flight to Nepalgang out in Nepal's "Wild West". From Nepalgang we board our rafting bus and head off for a fun ride to the river, stopping for rest breaks. The scenery as we traverse the Terai is varied and splendid as we climb up the Churia Hills. At Kalyant our Sirdhar (head porter) shows up with his crew to will carry all the expedition gear the short walk to the river. It's quite a sight to watch a 60-kilo man in his mid thirties trudge along a mountain trail with a 70-kilo raft hanging off a strap across his forehead. It's enough to make you want to join a health club. This part of Nepal sees very little tourism and the villages and farms you see along the trail are much the way rural Nepal has been for hundreds of years. By the afternoon we reach the Karnali River and rig the rafts and sort out kayaks. We drift off downstream a short distance to the first night's camp.

Days 4 - 10:

Our river guides spend time explaining the finer points on how to paddle through whitewater and stay in the raft as it contorts through the rapids. They will also teach you what they look out for when they run a river and how to move the raft using the water and rocks. Whitewater rafts are amazingly versatile and stable crafts, and in the care of an expert raft guide it is possible to run challenging lines safely and confidently. Your guide is a professional, someone who has devoted their life to learning and running rivers. Under his or her careful indoctrination the raft crew will learn how to work as a team, practicing on the numerous smaller rapids we encounter on the first 2 days of the river.

By the time we get to the really big rapids, you will be more than prepared. Even though this is a challenging river, the natural progression of rapids actually makes it an ideal trip even for first time rafters.

Camping on the Karnali is breathtaking. The massive floods of the monsoon deposit huge tracks of pure white sand along the river which are ideal to camp on. When the local Nepalese living in the area do manage to find one of our campsites, the rewards are mutual. We will have at least 1 layover day where we stay at the same river camp for 2 nights. BEACH PARTY!!! Volleyball, Frisbee, sun bathing, eating or just relaxing are favourite activities for the layover day. You can also take advantage of the day to trek to a peak or nearby village, or take part in the kayak workshop the safety boaters will offer. Several of the beaches we camp at offer waterfalls or mud baths, and if you're into fishing, the Karnali offers some of the best fishing in Nepal. If you're an avid fisherman, be sure to bring your kit along - you won't be disappointed.

The most sustained challenging section of the river begins with God's House, and continues in a series of canyons for about 7 kms and 16 rapids. This is what we are all here for – it's a real 'thrill a minute roller-coaster ride' with rapids on every bend. The whole river narrows down into the bowels of the earth and we run such classic drops as Juicer, Flip and Strip, Totali Ghat, Snapshot and Freight Train before stopping at a sweeping sandy beach for the night.

Contorted sandstone cliffs tower on either side as we continue through the Red Rock Canyon and still more rapids. The confluence of the Seti River means that we're past the major rapids on the Karnali. The lower section of the Karnali is home to fresh water dolphins and gaurials - the fish eating crocodiles with the long, graceful jaws. After days of whitewater it's nice to take a rest and watch the scenery pass. (Included: All Meals Day 3 – Day 10)

Day 11:

From our last campsite nestled in the rock formations of the lower canyon we drift down to Chisopani, the first town we've seen for 10 days. Chisopani isn't much of a town, basically just a couple of dahl baht shops and a damn impressive bridge, but even so it's hard to get re-accustomed to the sounds of civilization. From Chisopani we transfer to Nepalgang for a 1 hour flight back to Kathmandu and our hotel.

(Included: All meals except evening meal in Kathmandu)

Day 12:

An extra day for last-minute sight-seeing, retail therapy and a chilled beer in the sun!

(Included: Breakfast)

Day 13:

A very relaxed breakfast and we take you back to the airport for your return flight home. Or extend your trip with one of the following options:

(Included: Breakfast)

Options

Safari:

3 Days – 2 Nights

Staying at the luxurious Temple Tiger Camp is a great way to finish off your trip. Set in the heart of the Royal Chitwan National Park you have some fantastic opportunities to see the prolific bird life, not to mention occasional sightings of the Royal Bengal Tiger, rhinos and an amazing array of other wildlife. Naturalists are on hand with their seemingly endless supply of knowledge to answer your queries regarding all the species of animal in the park. The lodge is made entirely of local materials and blends in beautifully with the environment. There is a range of activities to enjoy from elephant safaris to jungle walks, to bathing the elephants in the glorious warm water or just relaxing in the serene surroundings of the Lodge. Meals are all-inclusive and are a wonderful combination of Western and Nepali dishes.

Accommodation is in spacious safari tents with twin beds and separate hot and cold showers.

Since you do have to book in advance we strongly recommend that you try and think how you will feel at the end of the river journey - if returning to Kathmandu will be the option or getting close to nature, bathing elephants and drinking a cool drink whilst overlooking the bewildering fresh green jungle may be better? What a choice!

Trekking:

Another option well worth considering if you are looking for a longer trip is to go trekking. Trekking in Nepal is an intense cultural experience as well as an exploration of one of the world's most hiker-friendly and spectacular environments. Nepal has a staggering number of potential routes for trekkers. These are not just a pathway designed for recreational use, but also a working transportation network for goods and people. While trekking you will see the great diversity of Nepal. Villages embrace many ethnic groups and cultures. The beauty and attraction of the Nepal Himalaya emanates not only from the mountains themselves, but also from their surroundings.

Our experienced guides can take you on easy low level treks, right up to 7,000m + peaks, from 4 days to 33 days. Please visit our website or contact us for more information on trekking in Nepal.

Mountain Biking:

We can offer mountain biking trips for those who wish to extend their stay in Nepal. We offer a Cross Country Nepal trip, starting in Kathmandu, before heading down the Kathmandu Valley and on into Chitwan National Park. The trip then heads off west to take in the Pokhara and Annapurna regions. This is a great way to see what Nepal really has to offer. Trips can be arranged for 7, 10 or 14 days.

We also offer a 2 week Downhill mountain biking trip for those wishing to exert a little less effort. We will ride for 3 days down the Kathmandu Valley before heading to the temple of Goddess Manakamana and the cable car that rises some 1600m up the mountain side. Following on from that we transfer to the Pokhara/ Annapurna region and take a flight part way round the Annapurna Circuit Trek and then spend 3 days riding downhill back to Pokhara. This trip is a 14 day trip.

Finally, we are also able to offer Cross Country trips based around Pokhara. These tend to be around 7 days in length but can be run to suit your timescales.

We have a range of high spec (full suspension, disc brakes etc.) Commencal bikes available for hire for those not wishing to take their own bikes to Nepal.

Please contact us for any information about extending your trip with any of the options mentioned here.

The Details

What Is Included?:

- Transfers to and from Kathmandu Airport and the hotel. If you provide us with your arrival details we will meet you at the airport.
- Accommodation – the 2 nights before and after the river trip. This is based on a share twin basis with someone else on the trip.
- All tented accommodation.
- Transfers to and from the rivers, including local flights.
- All meals from breakfast on Day 3 to lunch on Day 11 – unless stated above.
- All kayak and rafting equipment, including the best in kayaks, buoyancy aids, helmets, cags and spray decks.
- All camping equipment (sleeping bags and thermorests excluded)
- Qualified and experienced guides and safety kayakers.
- All necessary permits and licenses.
- A very cool AdventureX t-shirt.

Please note: Not included are flights, visas, departure taxes, travel insurance, inoculations, sleeping bags, thermarests, DVD of the trip, beer/wine kitty (if applicable) , personal items or gratuities. You will also need to budget for meals in towns (see itinerary) – a 3 course meal can be between \$2 -\$6 dependent upon meal and restaurant.

Getting There:

If you have any queries or need a hand at all in arranging your flight to and from Kathmandu please give us a shout. AdventureX have teamed up with KE Travel – fully ABTA (J1763) and ATOL (2808) bonded so your flights can now be booked easily and professionally. Our service is extremely competitive on price and your seat can be held in most cases by just a deposit. Please note though that Nepal is becoming a very popular destination so flights do tend to get booked up quite quickly.

Do I Need A Visa?:

The best and easiest way to get your visa is to apply to the Nepalese Embassy in London by post before you leave. The cost is currently £20 for 60 days (single entry). Just send your passport, photo plus application form (downloadable from website) plus £20 cheque and your visa will be with you within 2 weeks. For full information, visit http://www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa_information.html .

Alternatively you can get visas at Kathmandu airport. If you choose to do this you must have a passport photo and new crisp US dollars - as they will not accept payment in any other form (including wrinkly notes). However be prepared for long queues!

Either way please make sure you have at least 6 months validity on your passport prior to departure. Feel free to give us a call for more information.

Injections:

We recommend that you contact your Medical centre for professional advice. As a guide you will be looking at Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid and Polio and have an up-to-date Tetanus shot. Some of these immunizations take weeks or months to do correctly, so don't leave it to the last minute and do check with your local health department for more detailed information. A thorough dental check-up is also strongly recommended before you leave.

Dysentery is the normal ailment that travellers to Nepal are struck with. With this in mind, be careful of where and what you eat in Kathmandu before the trip. Sanitation is a top priority on our trip and must be adhered to at all times.

Malaria has not been completely eradicated in Nepal, though it is only present on the Terai (southern Nepal). Basically unless you are going to spend considerable time in the game parks in southern Nepal (Chitwan National Park etc) it's not a huge worry as the rivers are essentially bug free.

Without a doubt the most effective deterrent against malaria is to protect against mosquito bites with long, tightly woven clothing and mosquito repellent. Mosquito repellent should be brought from home.

If you have any relevant medical conditions please make sure they are listed on your booking form. On all journeys we carry a very comprehensive first aid kit, but if you want to bring your own personal basic first aid kit by all means do.

Exchange Rates:

As a reference the Nepali Rupee currently stands at (time of print) – Nepali Rupee 70.65 to 1\$ and for the British pound it is 129 to £1 – however it changes frequently. To change your currency once in Nepal, use only certified foreign exchange points or alternatively your hotel as there are a lot of people who will jump at the chance to help – this is definitely not recommended! GBP£ and US\$ are the most widely accepted currencies to exchange for Rupees.

Weather:

One of the most fascinating things about Nepal is that in the space of a hundred miles you can go from the coldest and most bitter conditions on earth to the sweltering heat of the North Indian Plain. In general it's best to plan for sub-tropical to temperate conditions on the rivers. Temperatures in the daytime range from 25-32 degrees centigrade, with evenings being 8 to 10 degrees cooler. A fleecy top for the evenings is recommended – although most nights you will probably have a campfire to keep the chill out. Expect typical northern hemisphere seasons.

Fitness and Safety:

You don't need to be superman/woman but we do recommend a certain level of fitness in order to get the most from any trip. There will be moments going through a class IV rapid that you'll wish you did a little more. All we ask is that if you have any medical conditions or problems that you do let us know as we take safety very, very seriously and it is our first priority. We employ some of the best rafting guides in the world. These men and women are whitewater professionals, trained in CPR, emergency wilderness first aid and swift-water rescue. They are highly experienced, and level headed in the most demanding and stressful situations and have devoted their lives to the navigation and understanding of whitewater rivers.

Dress Code:

On the river anything goes and with hot temperatures you will of course spend most of your time in your shorts and bathing cosies. However when it comes to the towns you must dress appropriately. Ladies should wear t-shirts/blouses and knee-length skirts or trousers (cut off combats do the trick!) and men should cover up their chests with shirts/t-shirts. The guys can usually get away with shorts but must be prepared to wear trousers when going to temples.

Personal Equipment:

We will send you all the information you need on what to bring and more importantly what not to bring, based on years of experience, so you do not have to worry. You will also find that most of the kit list you have already – very little specialised equipment will need to be bought. The best idea would be to travel as light as possible anyway as almost anything you need can be found in Kathmandu.

Finally:

It is imperative that you realise that you are entering an environment where the rules and realities of life are much different from the West. Certain events such as festivals sometimes delay the itineraries and are just part of everyday life in Asia. It's a big part of what makes Nepal magical, and in our opinion, it is by far outweighed by the brilliance of being able to journey through one of the world's last true frontiers. This is a brilliantly wild river expedition and one that you will remember for years to come!