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Treasures of Nepal – a luxury cultural tour

From **To**

2010

Available on request

Best times to visit – Spring season
February to end of May. Autumn season
end of September to early December

Grade: Easy
Max elevation 1985m



Duration: 14 Days

Land only price per person (join in Kathmandu) Guaranteed to run for a minimum 2 persons. Luxury hotels and deluxe lodges throughout

Group Size	Minimum 2	7 plus group members
Luxury hotels and lodges	£1595	£1495
Flight Price	From £600	
Single hotel supplement throughout £490		

Introduction:

This is a fantastic round trip luxury tour of Nepal, taking you to experience the highlights and enjoy the treasures of this enchanting Kingdom. You'll visit stunning World Heritage Sites, travel by elephant back on a jungle safari to spot rare species including the Royal Bengal Tiger and One Horned Rhino. You'll explore Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, with its wonderful sacred gardens. You'll be able to relax at the charming lakeside town of Pokhara, surrounded by the Annapurna Range and watch the sunrise over the Himalayan range from a peaceful hill station high on the rim of the Kathmandu Valley. This trip is truly a first class tour of the Kingdom as you visit ancient temples and monasteries, high look out points, holy gardens and tropical jungles, enjoying luxury accommodation and plenty of time to relax and enjoy the surroundings and magnificent Himalayan views.



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Day 01: Arrive Kathmandu

Namaste and welcome to Nepal. You'll be met and assisted at the airport by our local representatives who will arrange your transfer and check in to your hotel. There's plenty of time to rest and get refreshed before meeting up this evening for a welcome dinner at one of Kathmandu's finest restaurants in the heart of Kathmandu, before turning in for a good night's rest at the hotel.

Day 02: Kathmandu and Valley

After breakfast today take time to enjoy a day of relaxed sightseeing on a guided tour of some of the highlights of Kathmandu and the surrounding Valley. We'll take a relaxed tour of Kathmandu city where we'll explore Kathmandu's central Durbar Square and visit an ancient palace, the living goddess Kumari temple as well as Hanuman Dhoka and Kastamandap temple. We'll visit Swoyambhunath Stupa, also known as the Monkey Temple, with its fine views over Kathmandu and many interesting features as well as the great stupa itself and of course the resident troupes of monkeys. Explore the ancient streets of Patan, the City of Fine Arts with its wonderful central square and myriad of temples and wonderful architecture. Later this afternoon we'll drive back to Kathmandu where the remainder of this evening is free for you to explore the surrounding area or simply relax at the hotel.

Day 03: Chitwan National Park

Today we'll take a wonderfully scenic drive to the Chitwan National Park, the most popular and easily accessible safari destination in Nepal. More than 43 species of animal are found in Chitwan including the endangered One-Horned Rhino, Royal Bengal Tiger, Ghariyal Crocodile, Four-Horned Antelope, Striped Hyena and many more. Tomorrow we'll spend the day on safari and taking part in other jungle activities. Arriving at our resort lodge tonight we'll check in with the remainder of the evening free to relax.

Day 04: Chitwan National Park

After breakfast this morning it's time for our jungle safari. We'll travel into the jungle by charter elephant, what's known as a 'silent safari' as it allows us to get close to the wild animals and birds living here without disturbing them. Some of the species we can expect to see include the rhino, antelope, hyena and if we're lucky the more elusive Royal Bengal Tiger. We'll also take a guided jungle walk and short canoe trip to learn more about the local wildlife in the park and a relaxing way to float down the river. This is the ideal way to see the many butterflies, birds and plant species and smaller animals along the waterways. After our cultural program and safari it's time to return to the lodge for an evening relaxing and chatting.

Day 05: Lumbini

This morning we'll drive through the Nepalese countryside to reach Lumbini, the birthplace of the Lord Buddha. As well as being a World Heritage Site, Lumbini is also the pilgrimage destination of millions of Buddhists each year. Located in the flat plains of south west Nepal amid the foothills of the Churia range, this is an area rich in plant and animal life and a historic treasure trove of ancient antiquities. Reaching Lumbini we'll check in to our hotel and relax for the evening.

Day 06: Lumbini

We'll explore Lumbini today on our guided tour to the highlights including the birthplace of Lord Buddha marked by the Ashoka Pillar, the sacred pond where Buddha's mother gave birth and the Maya Devi



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Temple. We'll take time to explore and enjoy the stunning architecture and sacred gardens today. This evening we'll return to the hotel with the remainder of the day free to explore the surrounding area or simply relax at the hotel.

Day 07: Lumbini to Tansen

Following breakfast today we'll drive to the hill town of Tansen, a charming little town with a rich heritage of traditional art and architecture filling the cobbled and narrow zig zag streets with their abundance of temples, shrines and stupas. Tansen sits in the lap of the Srinagar Danda with a wonderful panoramic view of both the Himalayas and the southern plains of the Terai. It's a popular summer resort with an easy going holiday atmosphere and a good place to visit at any time of the year. Arriving at Tansen we'll check in to our hotel and relax for the evening.

Day 08: Ranighat

Today we'll explore the streets and temples of Tansen. We'll also take a short hike to visit Ranighat, an ancient palace constructed also known as the Taj Mahal of Nepal. Set in a beautiful remote location on the banks of the Kali Gandaki river the entire palace complex is stunning. It was constructed in 1892 AD by the then commander in chief and governor of Palpa, in memory of his beloved queen. The whole complex includes a huge main building surrounded by layered gardens and stone walls with a small shrine. We'll take some time to explore this magnificent structure and its surrounds as well as enjoy the tranquil location before heading back to our hotel in Tansen where we'll stay tonight.

Day 09: Tansen to Pokhara

This morning we'll leave Tansen and drive through the beautiful Nepalese countryside to the relaxing lakeside resort town of Pokhara. Pokhara is the hip place to be and one of the best places to relax in Nepal as well as the starting point for many treks and adventure activities. It's an enchanting town with a laid back atmosphere, nestled in a lush tranquil valley on the shores of Lake Phewa against a stunning backdrop of the Annapurna range and the dominating presence of Machhapuchhre. On arrival we'll check in to our hotel and then take a late afternoon visit to the lake side. The remainder of the evening is free to rest and relax and enjoy the area particularly around the lakeside.

Day 10: Pokhara

Today we'll visit the highlights and places of interest in Pokhara and the surrounding area including Mahendra Cave, Davis Falls, the most famous water fall in Pokhara which disappears underground. We'll have plenty of time to explore the area and to relax and enjoy the wonderful surroundings. This evening is free to relax at the hotel or perhaps visit the lakeside area again with its wide variety of things to do and see.

Day 11: Pokhara to Nagarkot

Today we'll leave the lakeside and drive on towards Kathmandu and up to the picturesque hill station Nagarkot. From its position on the very rim of the Kathmandu Valley it's the best place to enjoy the most fantastic views over the Himalayan range with particularly stunning views as the sun rises over the peaks. Reaching Nagarkot we'll check in to our hotel and relax for the night.



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Day 12: Nagarkot to Bhaktapur and Kathmandu

We'll get an early start today to watch the sun rise over the Himalayan range – well worth the early wake up call. After breakfast we'll drive back towards Kathmandu. En route we'll stop at Bhaktapur, the City of Devotees. This traditional and traffic free town is the third major in the Valley. We'll explore the medieval like squares, courtyards and temples of this vibrant conservation area town. After a stop for lunch at a restaurant in Bhaktapur it's time to drive back to Kathmandu. Arriving in Kathmandu we'll check in to the hotel and the rest of the afternoon is free to relax in the capital, do some local exploring or catch up on some last minute shopping.

Day 13: Kathmandu

Today is a full day at leisure to relax, explore the local area and perhaps buy a few local handicrafts or other items before departure tomorrow. There is also an option today to book the optional extra of a mountain flight to see Everest close up. Each flight lasts a full hour and everyone will be able to enjoy fantastic close up views of the Himalayas including Everest. The crew provides local information throughout and there is also an opportunity to visit the cockpit for even closer views and great photo opportunities. This evening we'll all meet up for a farewell dinner to celebrate our trip.

Day 14: Kathmandu and Departure

Today is free to relax until departure or to commence any additional trips or activities you may have booked. If departing, you'll be transferred to the International Airport in time for your return flight home.

Extending your holiday

There are many choices and options if you'd like to extend your holiday before or after your main booking. Here are just a few suggestions of extensions available for this trip:

- Enjoy the adrenaline rush of white water rafting in Nepal
- Follow scenic trails on one of the world's classic treks
- See the wonder of the Taj Mahal and enjoy relaxed sightseeing around Delhi
- Visit the mysterious and ancient land of Tibet and travel across the 'roof of the world'
- Explore the vibrant culture and nature of the wonderful Kingdom of Bhutan

Please contact our UK office if you'd like to extend your stay by booking one of the above options, if you would like ideas or advice on how best to spend your time and budget or if you would like help with arranging any special celebrations during your trip.

Useful Information

The following information is aimed at helping you to decide whether this trip is right for you. Additional information can be found on our website and in our brochure. If you have any questions or would like advice on any aspect of this trip please contact us and we'll be happy to go through everything with you.

Day to Day Itinerary

It must be realized that with adventure travel changes to an itinerary may occur, for example due to unexpected weather conditions. The day to day itinerary is provided as a general guideline and is intended to give you a general sense of what to expect, including places visited and activities during the trip to help with your decision regards which trip is the best one for you. Activities and timings may vary



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slightly from those outlined Your guide will make any changes necessary and all arrangements during the trip, including explaining reasons for any changes to the itinerary that may occur.

Trip Duration and Grading

This trip is 14 days with Day 1 beginning in Kathmandu and ending with departure from Kathmandu on Day 14. The trip has been easy as it's a low altitude guided tour. There will be some short day walks as part of your sightseeing, usually for a few hours, for example when visiting World Heritage sites in Kathmandu, Pokhara and other destinations during the trip.

Group Size

The maximum number of persons on this trip will be 16 and the minimum number 2 persons. By keeping group sizes small it means we can provide a more personal service to you.

Local Representatives and Guides

You will be met at the airport on arrival by our local representatives who will always be available to help with your arrival, departure and any queries or requirements during your trip. The group will be accompanied by a local English speaking guide throughout the trip. Once you have confirmed your booking we will send you details of how you will be met on arrival and you will meet your guide just after you arrive.

Accommodation

During this trip you will spend 4 nights at a luxury (five star) hotel in Kathmandu. On safari you will spend 2 nights at a deluxe jungle lodge resort. In Pokhara you will spend 2 nights at a luxury hotel. You'll spend 1 night at a deluxe mountain resort in Nagarkot and 2 nights at a deluxe hotel in Tansen. You'll also spend 2 nights at a luxury hotel in Lumbini.

All accommodation is based on twin share. If you are traveling on your own and are happy to share with someone, we will arrange for you to share a room with someone of the same sex, at no extra charge. If you request a single room the single room supplement charge for this trip will apply. It is usually possible to arrange single room accommodation but please contact our office to confirm this.

Meals

Meals on half board basis will be provided during the days spent in Kathmandu except for the days spent on safari when all meals on full board basis will be provided. Half board basis is to allow you the opportunity and freedom to try out some of the many wonderful eating places in the places visited and particularly in Kathmandu. Snacks, bottled drinks including mineral water and alcohol are not included in the price.

Flight Inclusive Price and International Flights

The flight inclusive price is based on best available price (at the time of producing our current brochure) of economy return flights from the UK added to the 'land only' price. Flight prices are subject to change and do vary throughout the year. We use a variety of airlines and scheduled flights on our trips including British Airways, Air India, Gulf Air, Qatar Air etc. Our ATOL number is T7199 and we work with other ATOL holders to issue flight tickets. For exact air fares and flight classes available at the time you wish to travel please contact us.



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Land Only Option

Our trips are based on 'land only' as well as flight inclusive options to allow you the flexibility to choose to make your own arrangements for flights or perhaps to arrive a few days earlier or leave a few days later than the trip or to join the trip from anywhere in the world. If you choose the land only option we will provide full details of how and when to meet the rest of your group, details of your hotel and local contacts upon confirmation of your booking. All accommodation during your trip is included in the price although additional days before or after the start and end dates of your trip are not included. We are happy to book additional accommodation or optional activities, based on your requirements and budget, on request.

Please note that whilst at all times we aim to run our trip even with just a few persons, on some of the longer treks or trips, should the group size be less than our minimum operating level we may cancel the trip up to 6 weeks before departure. In the rare event that this happens, we will offer alternative dates or trips or refunds as appropriate and agreed with you. If you are arranging your own flights and accommodation prior to the start date of a group trip we recommend that you book fully flexible and refundable accommodation and transport if booking more than 6 weeks in advance, as should we need to cancel the trip compensation will not be paid for any arrangements that have been made independently.

Climate and Weather

Nepal has a monsoonal two season year with the dry season from October to May and the wet season (monsoon) from June to September. From end September/start October to end November is one of the best times to visit. The vegetation is lush after the rains of the monsoon and the air is clean and fresh. The next best time to visit is February to April at the end of the dry season. It can be a little dusty at this time but the weather is warm and pleasant and it's a great time to see many wildflowers in bloom. December and January are still good in terms of climate and visibility but can be chilly particularly at higher altitudes as well as in the evening in Kathmandu. May and early June can be very hot and uncomfortable and mid June to September can be cloudy with poor visibility and muddy trails although some treks (rainshadow treks) can still be undertaken even during the monsoon.

Clothing and Equipment

Generally lightweight to medium weight clothing in natural fabrics is best with warm clothing a must for chilly evenings and at high altitude. For visits to more remote areas including Everest Base Camp, a warm down jacket, hat and gloves are suitable. It's also useful to wear several layers of clothing as temperatures can change suddenly. To a large extent it depends where you plan to go and what you plan to do. For example during winter if you are on safari in the southern Terai region you'll need a tshirt. At the same time if you're in Kathmandu you'll probably need a jacket as well. And if you're at Everest Base Camp you'll need to be very well wrapped up. During the monsoon you'll need a light rain jacket. We also suggest you take comfortable walking shoes and a small day pack or shoulder bag as well as sunscreen, a hat and good sunglasses. In the mountains and at high altitude the weather can change rapidly so it is important to have appropriate clothing and equipment. Clothing is easily and cheaply available in Kathmandu so it's rarely a problem if you forget to pack something. On fully provisioned camping style treks we provide twin share dome or A frame sleeping tents, kitchen tent, mess tent, toilet tent, tables, chairs, stools, lanterns/candles, thin sleeping mattresses, all crockery and cutlery and a fully equipped kitchen set up. Upon booking with us we will send you a suggested clothing and equipment list appropriate to your trip including details of any must have items or items that can be hired (if required).



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Baggage Allowance

We request that you aim for a maximum weight of 15 to 20 kg for your main baggage including clothing and personal equipment. Many of our trips involve porters and/or local flights and 15kg is the maximum safe weight allowance for porters and permitted on local flights. International flights will usually permit up to 20kg maximum weight. If trekking, some additional baggage can usually be stored until you return from your trek. Remember you may also want to leave some weight allowance for any items you have bought during your trip! The Himalayan Adventure Company and our local partners are not responsible for excess baggage charges.

FREE Himalayan Adventure Company Travel Gift

On confirmation of booking we will provide a complimentary travel gift (subject to availability). The gifts vary each year and past gifts have included trek bags and t-shirts. We aim to make the gifts useful during this and other travel adventures.

Passport and Visa Requirements

A full valid passport and a current visa is required for all trips and treks. Passports must have at least 6 months validity after the completion date of your trip. To secure your booking and avoid any additional charges, information (e.g. spelling of name) provided to us on your booking form must match exactly the details as shown in your passport.

To enter Nepal you will require a visa which can be obtained in advance from the Nepalese Embassy in London (UK applications) or on arrival at the airport in Kathmandu for a fee of US\$25. The visa process has changed in 2008 and all visas are now multiple entry. We will provide up to date information on visa requirements, costs and the application process on confirmation of your booking or on request.

You are responsible for ensuring you have a valid passport and visa prior to departure. Where appropriate, we will arrange any special permits or visas required to visit specific restricted areas included as part of the itinerary whilst you are in the country and may request information from you to allow us to do this.

Permits

To enter certain areas e.g. National Parks or other trekking or protected areas, you may require a permit. All our trip prices include the cost of relevant permits and entrance fees. Where this is not the case, for example you have booked a tailor made private trip, we will inform you of any required permit fees before you make a booking with us.

Health and Medical Information

It is your responsibility to ensure you are well and fit enough to join the trip. If you are unsure of this please contact our office to talk it through with one of our experienced staff members. We also recommend you speak to your GP if you are in any way unsure of your fitness level required to join the trip. We also suggest you have a thorough medical and dental check up before you travel. You may need specific vaccinations appropriate to the country or area you will visit. You must tell us if you have an existing medical condition or disability that might affect your holiday before you make a booking with us. If, in our reasonable opinion, your chosen holiday is not suitable for your medical condition, disability or level of fitness, we reserve the right to cancel the contract or to suggest more appropriate alternative



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options for you. A group medical kit will be carried on each trip or trek but we also recommend that individuals carry their own basic first aid kit and we will send a suggested list of items for this when you make a booking.

For useful health and general travel advice and information we suggest you visit the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo> and also obtain a copy of the UK Department of Health leaflet *Advice on Health for Travellers* or speak to your local GP or practice nurse for their recommendations.

What's Included in the Price?

Airport pickup and transfer, local English speaking guide services, pre trip briefing on arrival, all accommodation during the trip on twin share basis, meals on half board basis throughout and full board basis at Chitwan, all sightseeing and activities as per the trip itinerary, all entrance fees and permits required, all transportation during the trip (by car, boat, local flight etc), a group first aid kit, a free Himalayan Adventure Company travel gift, complimentary Safe Seat Plan issued to all our clients confirming 100% financial protection of your booking with us at all times).

What's Not Included in the Price?

Visa fees, international flights (available on request), personal travel insurance (available on request – UK residents only), vaccinations, airport departure and re-entry fees, additional private bus, car or jeep rental to any destination on the trek other than transport provided during the trip, bar/alcoholic beverages, bottled water, personal expenses e.g. for souvenirs, personal clothes, food or snacks during transfer journeys, hot showers during days on trek – please note most teahouses are now charging for provision of hot showers and for electricity charging due to high demand – charges are approximately £1.50-£3.50 per shower and for charging items approx £1.50 - £2.50 per hour, tips for guides, porters, driver etc, alternative transportation, accommodation or other service required as a result of missed or delayed flights, strikes, road or weather conditions, illness or other unexpected event outside of our control (payable locally and directly if required), international flights (unless requested), laundry, optional trips, holiday extensions and activities (available on request), excess luggage charges, additional accommodation before or after the start and end dates specified (available on request).

Our Experience

We have a love of and respect for the Himalaya. Our founders and office staff are all experienced travelers who share many years of helping other travelers achieve their ambitions. The fact that we specialise in travel to the Himalaya and that we have extensive local knowledge and experience of the area means that we can offer you a wide range of travel options and provide the best standards of service to you. Being an independent specialist travel operator means we can offer a friendly personal service and are able to be flexible and use our experience and contacts to build new and tailor made programs as well as to continue to develop new and improved services. We have a wealth of experience in helping many individuals and groups in designing and planning adventures, ranging from romantic breaks to personal challenges to school study programmes to extreme adventure expeditions, from low budget to no expense spared and we have lots of ideas, suggestions and experience to share with you. We are also delighted to say that many of our clients return again and again to travel with us and many of our new clients are through recommendations and word of mouth from happy and satisfied clients who have previously traveled with us.



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Fair Pricing

We aim to provide you with the best service at fair and competitive prices and excellent value for money. As part of this, most of our trips are priced for different group sizes with the higher price applicable for smaller groups. With larger groups the price drops so that everyone benefits from a cheaper holiday. We offer 'land only' prices, for travellers who prefer to make their own international flight and transfer arrangements but are happy to arrange flights for you on request, using a variety of international carriers from regional and national airports. Our ATOL number is T7199 and we work with other ATOL holders to issue flight tickets. Additionally, we offer special discounts for groups of 10 or over, schools and group leaders. Contact us for more information.



Your Financial Protection

We understand how important it is that the money you spend on your holiday is securely protected. You may also have concerns about booking with an independent operator. To give you peace of mind and confidence in our service to you we have a number of ways in which we protect the money you pay for your holiday. The company is a full member of the Travel Trust Association (<http://www.traveltrust.co.uk>) membership number U3237, in compliance with the EC Directive on Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours. Our ATOL number is T7199 and we work with ATOL licence holders to issue flight tickets. For flight bookings the money you pay is protected under the ATOL holder's licence. For all other arrangements, your payment to us is held in a separate Trust Fund and only released to us on your return. In addition, we provide free to you, a 'Safe Seat Plan' insurance cover which means that in the unlikely case of your money not being held in the Trust Account or of our insolvency, you will be fully reimbursed for the loss of any monies paid to us, up to a limit of £11 000 per person. Therefore, for your peace of mind and confidence, all money you have paid to us is always 100% protected and available to pay for the services you have booked.

Insurance

Before confirming your booking we will need to see evidence of adequate travel insurance. Whilst you are able to choose your insurance from any provider, as members of the Travel Trust Association (TTA) we are able to offer some of the best and most competitive travel insurance on the market to our clients. Contact us for more information.

Responsible Tourism

We believe that tourism should benefit local communities and that responsible travel does not mean a compromise in standards. We aim to promote responsible travel that respects and benefits local cultures, communities and environments and we support Tourism Concern, are a sponsor of the International Porter Protection Group and a friend of The Sahara Group. We donate 5% of profits to local charities and are involved in local development and voluntary work in the Himalayas, particularly in Nepal. For every booking made we also donate £10 to The Sahara Group (<http://www.saharagroup.org.np>) to help continue their wonderful work with street children with HIV/AIDS, women and children affected by human trafficking and poor rural communities. We employ local guides, office and support staff and ensure they have good facilities and fair wages and we work as a team to ensure you a wonderful adventure holiday.



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Suggested Reading

We recommend you learn about the places and cultures you will visit before you travel so that you can enjoy your travel even more. Below are just a few varied suggestions to get you started:

Lonely Planet Nepal (Travel Guide), Tony Wheeler, Richard Everist, Lindsay Brown (Editor), Bradley Mayhew (Editor), Wanda Vivequin (Editor), Lonely Planet Nepali Phrasebook (Phrasebooks) Mary-Jo O'Rourke, Bimal Shrestha, Lonely Planet Nepal (Travel Guide), Tony Wheeler, Richard Everist, Lindsay Brown (Editor), Bradley Mayhew (Editor), Wanda Vivequin (Editor), Lonely Planet Nepali Phrasebook (Phrasebooks) Mary-Jo O'Rourke, Bimal Shrestha, Himalayan Art, Madanjeet Singh, The Art of Nepal, Lydia Aran, Erotic Art of the Kathmandu Valley, Bob Gibbons and Sian Pritchard-Jones, Nepal: Valley of Gods, Suzanne Held and Gilles Beguin, Kathmandu Durbar Square: A living museum of great Nepalese art and architecture and centre of important festivals and religious ceremonies, Trilok Chandra Majupuria.

How to Book

Once you have chosen your trek or trip, contact our office to check availability and ask any questions you may have. We'll hold a provisional booking for 7 days. Please read our Terms and Conditions prior to making your booking. Then post or fax us your completed booking form (available in our brochure or downloaded from our website) along with the appropriate non refundable deposit of £250 per person and (if applicable) any insurance premiums to our UK office address. If you choose to phone us with your debit or credit card details, a signed and completed booking form will still be required for confirmation of booking. Bookings will only be confirmed once we receive a completed and signed booking form along with appropriate payment.

We will confirm your booking and send you a trip dossier which will include confirmation of your booking, a day by day itinerary, visa and trekking permit instructions, vaccination and health information, a suggested first aid pack list, a suggested equipment and clothing list, a suggested reading list appropriate to your destination, a responsible travel briefing and other useful information.

The final balance for your booking will be due 2 months before departure. **NO REMINDER WILL BE SENT.** Your Himalayan Adventure Company travel gift will be mailed to you separately. For clients outside the UK, a gift will be sent on payment of delivery costs only.

We wish you a wonderful Himalayan adventure.

