

Wildflowers of Nepal

From	To	Duration: 10 Days
2009		
Available on request		Grade: Easy to mod Max elevation 2730m
Best times to visit – Spring season mid March to end April. Autumn season end of September to end of October		

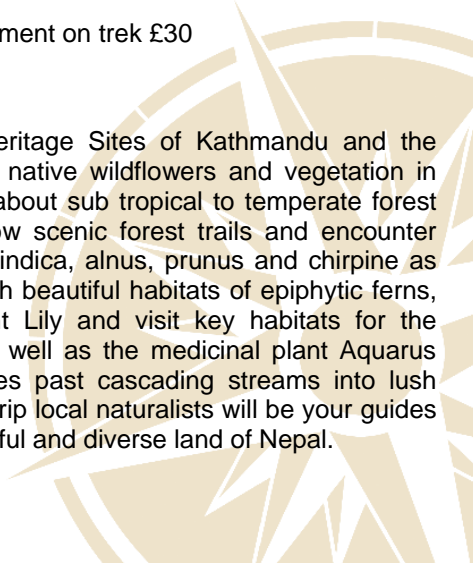
Land only price per person (join in Kathmandu) Guaranteed to run for a minimum 2 persons. Includes use of down jacket and sleeping bag on trek. Deluxe eco - resort and fully provisioned tented camp on trek

Group Size	Minimum 2	7 plus group members
Deluxe eco resort and 3 nights tented camp	£1395	£1195
Flight Price	From £600	

Single hotel supplement Kathmandu £305 Tented camp supplement on trek £30

Introduction:

This trip offers a great combination of exploring the World Heritage Sites of Kathmandu and the surrounding Valley as well as a focus on the many species of native wildflowers and vegetation in Nepal. You'll have the unique opportunity to observe and learn about sub tropical to temperate forest types including oak, laural, holly and rhododendron. You'll follow scenic forest trails and encounter indigenous plant species including schima wallichii, castanopsis indica, alnus, prunus and chirpine as well as wild pear, cherry and yellow raspberry. You'll walk through beautiful habitats of epiphytic ferns, mosses and orchids as well as wild strawberry and the Giant Lily and visit key habitats for the endangered woodsnipe, the woodcock and common leopard as well as the medicinal plant Aquarus Calamus. You'll journey through beautiful deep mountain gorges past cascading streams into lush forests rich in unique plant, bird and animal life. Throughout your trip local naturalists will be your guides to show you the very best of wildflowers and plant life in the beautiful and diverse land of Nepal.





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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 to your hotel, a deluxe eco friendly resort in the foothills of the Shivapuri National Park. After welcome drinks you'll be able to check into your room and rest, relax and get refreshed before lunch at the Earthwatch restaurant which overlooks Shivapuri National Park. After lunch you're free to explore the hotel gardens spread over 6 acres of jungle and watch the many flowering plants, birds and butterflies. This evening we'll meet up at 6pm for a short presentation and orientation of Nepal by local eminent naturalists followed by an open air barbecue dinner and chance to relax for the evening.

Day 02: Kathmandu and Valley

Although this trip focuses on the many and varied plant species in Nepal, Kathmandu and the surrounding valley is also a wonderful place to explore in terms of culture and heritage and today is a relaxed introduction to some of the highlights of the area including a number of World Heritage Sites.

After breakfast today we'll take a relaxed tour of Kathmandu city where we'll explore Kathmandu's central Durbar Square with its ancient palaces and pagoda temples including 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 relax and explore the garden surrounds and to get a good night's rest ready for an early start tomorrow.

Day 03: Shivapuri National Park

After an early breakfast today we'll enter Shivapuri National Park where we'll be able to explore the dense vegetation at Pani Muhan, a reservoir of the Shivapuri watershed area. Here we'll have the unique opportunity to study the Schima Castanopsis forest and to observe sub tropical to temperate forest types and accompanying plant species. In 1802 it was this area of Shivapuri and also Budhanilkantha that Dr Francis Hamilton selected to carry out the first ever botanical exploration in Nepal. From here we'll walk up towards Nagi where will be able to see many indigenous species including wild pear, schima wallichii, castanopsis indica, alnus, prunus, chirpine and a variety of wild cherry and wild yellow raspberry.

Reaching Nagi Gompa, a Buddhist Monastery we'll stop for lunch and to enjoy the surrounding view. From here we'll continue on towards Deurali following the trekking trail through the forests of oak and laurel. We'll also be able to see all three colours of the rhododendron arboretum (white, pink and red) along with the holly tree as we follow the trail. The unique character of this forest is the moss (Usnea) covered oak branches which create a beautiful habitat for epiphytic ferns and orchids such as Coelogyne. The forest floor is carpeted by mosses, ferns and flowering plants such as Compylandra with its coral red rounded fruits and herbs such as the Giant Lily. On the open slopes of the mountain wild strawberry blooms.



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Leaving Deurali we'll travel on to Sipucho Summit at 2730m to enjoy the sunset view over the Himalayas including the peaks of Manaslu, Langtang, Gosainthan, Mahalangur and Gauri Shanker. Tonight we'll rest and relax at our tented camp on the summit.

Day 04: Chisapani

This morning wake up to wonderful sunrise views over the Langtang range, well worth the early start. After breakfast we'll trek towards Chisapani following the Nagi trail and a jeep track enjoying the landscape and views as we travel as well as the chance to observe the indigenous plant species along the route. We'll stop for lunch at Tare Bhir before continuing on to reach Chisapani overlooking the Kathmandu Valley by late afternoon. Tonight we'll relax at our tented camp at Chisapani.

Day 05: Manichur

Today we'll continue our scenic walk and follow the jeep track to Manichur. We'll stop for an early lunch today at Dhap, a marshy area of land and a picturesque saddle of the Shivapuri and Manichur mountain system. Bozo (*Aquarum calamus*), a medicinal plant grows in this marshy area which is also an important habitat for woodcock and the endangered wood snipe. It's a tranquil area which also means it's a good place for sightings of the Common Leopard. On the way towards Manichur Danda we'll pass through a deep gorge overlooking Gopte, Melambi and Tarke Ghyang of the Helambu area. The forest on this part of the trail consists of oak, laurel and rhododendron as well as a rich variety of birdlife including the Laughing Thrush, Flycatchers and Babblers. Reaching Manichur we'll relax and enjoy dinner at our tented camp.

Day 06: Sundarijal

After breakfast today we'll follow the jeep track towards Sundarijal water reservoir where we'll stop for lunch. From here we'll follow the trail as it descends past cascading streams and through rich local vegetation. Our guide will be on hand throughout to point out the various plant species along the route. Later this afternoon we'll drive back to our eco resort hotel with a chance to meet up and discuss the plant species seen so far. The remainder of the evening is free to rest, relax and enjoy a leisurely dinner and perhaps stroll through the gardens.

Day 07: Kathmandu and Valley

After breakfast today take time to enjoy a half day of relaxed sightseeing on a guided tour of some of the highlights of Kathmandu and the surrounding Valley. 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. Join the devotees, pilgrims and wandering siddhus (holy men) at Pashupatinath. Pashupatinath is the most important Hindu temple in Nepal as well as being one of the most important Shiva temples on the subcontinent, situated on the banks of the holy Bagmati River. Take time to walk around Bodhnath (Boudha) stupa, the largest in Nepal and one of the largest in the world. Boudha is also the centre of Tibetan culture in Nepal and a wonderfully vibrant, interesting community. This afternoon we'll drive to the peaceful hill station of Nagarkot, on the rim of the Kathmandu Valley. This is a wonderful place with amazing views of the Himalayas with the surrounding area of lush vegetation and plant life. Arriving in Nagarkot we'll check in to our guest house and relax for the evening.



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Day 08: Bhaktapur to Kathmandu

Today it's well worth getting up early to view sunrise over the Himalayan range. After breakfast we'll leave Nagarkot and drive through the beautiful Nepalese countryside on the return journey to Kathmandu. En route we'll visit the City of Devotees (Bhaktapur). This traditional and traffic free town is the third major in the Valley and we'll be able to explore the medieval like squares, courtyards and temples of this vibrant and charming conservation area. After a stop for lunch at a restaurant in Bhaktapur it's time to drive back to Kathmandu. Arriving in Kathmandu the remainder of today is free to relax at the hotel or to be dropped off in the centre Thamel area of Kathmandu to explore the local streets, browse the many handicraft items or relax with a coffee or beer.

Day 09: 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. You may also want to try out the sauna, steam room or jacuzzi at the hotel or simply relax by the pool. 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. You may want to go into the centre of Kathmandu to look around the local streets and perhaps do some last minute shopping before returning to the hotel.

Day 10: 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:

- Take a jungle safari by charter elephant to spot rare species including the Royal Bengal Tiger in the Chitwan National Park
- Enjoy the adrenaline rush of white water rafting in Nepal
- Relax by the lakeside in Pokhara, Nepal
- 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'

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.



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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 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 10 days with Day 1 beginning in Kathmandu and ending with departure from Kathmandu on Day 10. The trip has been easy to moderate. It's a low altitude guided tour with some short day walks and hikes as part of your sightseeing, usually for a few hours and for a maximum of a day, for example when visiting World Heritage sites in Kathmandu and when observing native plants in Shivapuri National Park.

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 5 nights at a luxury eco resort (four star) hotel just outside Kathmandu (3 nights at the start of your trip and 2 at the end). You'll spend 3 nights at fully provisioned tented camp during the part of this trip in Shivapuri National Park. In Nagarkot you'll spend 1 night at a deluxe lodge.

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 full board basis will be provided during this trip except for Days 8 and 9 when meals on a half board basis will be provided. This is to allow you the opportunity and freedom to try out some of the many wonderful eating places in Kathmandu. Snacks, bottled drinks including mineral water and alcohol are not included in the price.



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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.

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 t-shirt. 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.



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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).

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.



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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 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 full board basis except for Days 8 and 9 which will be on half board basis, 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 security for 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, tips for guides, porters, driver etc, alternative transportation (e.g. car/air) in case of heavy rainfall, landslide, strike or road blockage, laundry, optional trips, holiday extensions and activities, 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.



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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.

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. 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



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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.

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, Trees and Shrubs of Nepal and the Himalayas, Adrian Storrs, Jimmie Storrs. 100 Himalayan Flowers, P.V.Bole (Editor), Ashvin Mehta (Illustrator), Flowers of the Himalaya, Oleg Polunin and Adam Stainton..

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.

