



Kathmandu Valley & Around

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Best Hikes

- ➔ Nagarkot to Dhulikhel (p184)
- ➔ Dhulikhel to Panauti via Namobuddha (p186)
- ➔ Gokarna Mahadev Temple to Bodhnath, via Kopan (p172)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Shivapuri Heights (p135)
- ➔ Famous Farm (p194)
- ➔ Neydo Tashi Choeling Monastery Guest House (p178)

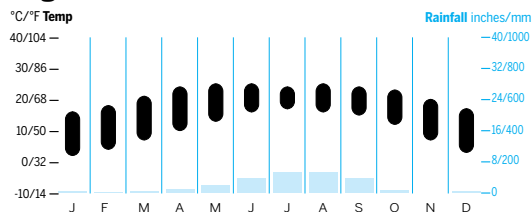
Why Go?

In many ways the Kathmandu Valley *is* Nepal. Created from the bed of a sacred lake by the deity Manjushri, according to Buddhist legend, the basin is a patchwork of terraced fields and sacred temple towns that showcase the glory of the architects and artisans of Nepal. Sadly, the area also bore the brunt of the 2015 earthquake. This took its toll on the valley's medieval villages and sacred sites, but there is still a huge amount to see, from centuries-old temples to Himalayan viewpoints and two adventurous roads to Tibet.

Aside from the great Unesco World Heritage Sites of Patan, Bodhnath and Bhaktapur, try to visit one or two of the smaller Newari villages off the mainstream tourist circuit. Many attractions can be explored by minibus, taxi, mountain bike, motorcycle, even on foot, following a web of ancient trails. You'll likely see fewer tourists just 10km outside Kathmandu than you will if you trek for days through the Himalaya.

When to Go

Nagarkot



Mar–Apr Warm weather, green farmland and spectacular chariot festivals.

Oct–Jan Clear views and sunny days but chilly nights at Nagarkot and Dhulikhel.

May–Sep Hot and humid, regular rainfall and temperatures peaking over 30°C.



Kathmandu Valley & Around Highlights

1 Lose yourself in the courtyards of **Patan** (p137) on a walking tour, soak in the glorious Newari architecture of its Durbar Sq and visit Patan Museum, the best in the country.

2 Explore the fascinating backstreets of **Bhaktapur** (p152), where grand Newari temples still stand despite the 2015 quake.

3 Join the Tibetan exiles on the kora (clockwise ritual circuit) around the enormous **Bodhnath Stupa** (p128).

4 Have a medieval mini-adventure in the historic city of **Panauti** (p189), which escaped the earthquake's destruction.

5 Get the pulse racing on a bungee, canyoning or rafting

trip at the adventure resorts of **Borderlands** (p192) or **The Last Resort** (p193), just a stone's throw from the Tibet border.

6 Find Nepal's spiritual side on the monastery-strewn road to **Dakshinkali** (p177), where Tibetan Buddhism jostles for space with Tantric Hinduism.