

Nepal and the 2015 Earthquakes

At 11.56am on 25 April 2015, Nepal was hit by a massive earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale, causing devastation to many parts of the country. This chapter is intended to provide an overview of what happened, how this has affected travel to Nepal, and how we deal with the disaster in this guidebook.

Regions Affected

Nepal's regions were affected to differing levels by the 2015 disaster.

Kathmandu

Severe damage to buildings and monuments, particularly in Kathmandu Durbar Square, but many areas escaped damage.

The Kathmandu Valley

Widespread damage to buildings and monuments, particularly in the historic cities of Patan and Bhaktapur, but many areas escaped damage.

Kathmandu to Pokhara

Gorkha and settlements close to the epicenter suffered severe damage; Bandipur and locations closer to Pokhara suffered only minor damage.

Pokhara & Around

Pokhara town and Annapurna region mostly unaffected but minor damage in rural areas.

The Terai & Mahabharat Range

Buildings destroyed in the foothills closer to Kathmandu, but lowland areas largely escaped damage.

Trekking Regions

Entire villages destroyed in Langtang, Rolwaling, Manaslu, Helambu; less severe damage in the Everest region. The Annapurna region and Eastern and Western Nepal saw only minor damage.

A Dark Day for Nepal

The morning of 25 April 2015 brought destruction to central Nepal. Thousands of buildings collapsed in the initial tremor and in subsequent aftershocks, killing more than 8500 people, and leaving thousands more homeless. Landslides destroyed entire villages and an avalanche at Everest Base Camp killed 18 climbers in Nepal's worst mountaineering disaster. Aftershocks followed for weeks, including a major tremor on 12 May, which killed hundreds more. Around the epicenter in Gorkha district, and across the Kathmandu Valley, communities were devastated and centuries-old monuments were reduced to rubble. Many of Nepal's most famous tourist sights were damaged beyond recognition. The earthquake has been described as the worst disaster to hit Nepal since the deadly Bihar-Nepal earthquake of 1934.

A huge international response has helped Nepal to cope with the immediate aftermath of the crisis but rebuilding lost homes, monuments and livelihoods is likely to be a slow and drawn-out process. Tourism has been severely affected by the disaster, and this comes at a time when Nepal is desperately in need of the revenue from tourism to rebuild. It is our hope at Lonely Planet that this guidebook will inform travellers about the damage caused by the earthquake, and encourage people to return and help the people of Nepal as they rebuild their lives after the crisis.