



# Around the Kathmandu Valley

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## Best Hikes

- » Nagarkot to Dhulikhel (see boxed text, p170)
- » Dhulikhel to Panauti via Namobuddha (p173)
- » Gokarna Mahadev Temple to Bodhnath, via Kopan Monastery (see boxed text, p160)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Shivapuri Heights (p125)
- » Famous Farm (p180)
- » Traditional Homes Patan Durbar Square (p135)
- » Last Resort (p178)

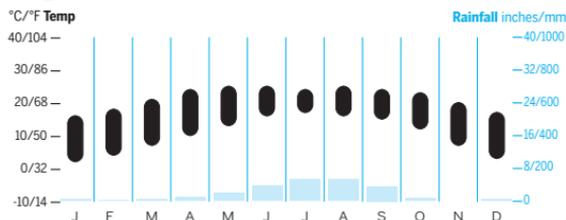
## Why Go?

In many ways the Kathmandu Valley *is* Nepal. Created by the sword of the Buddhist deity Manjushri, the natural basin is a patchwork of terraced fields and sacred temple towns that showcase the glory of the architects and artisans of Nepal. The valley is literally full of medieval villages, centuries-old temples and sacred sites, while just beyond the valley rims lie 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. All of the attractions in this chapter can be explored by frequent minibuses, taxi, mountain bike, motorcycle, or 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 some spectacular chariot festivals.

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

**May–Sep** Hot and humid, with regular rainfall and temperatures over 30°C, but the valley is green.



## Around the Kathmandu Valley Highlights

- 1 Lose yourself in **Patan's** (p126) courtyards 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** (p140), Nepal's best-preserved medieval town
- 3 Join the Tibetan exiles on the kora (clockwise circuit) around the enormous **Bodhnath Stupa** (p120)
- 4 Have a hiking or biking mini-adventure in the little-visited towns of the Southern Valley – **Kirtipur** (p160), **Bungamati** (p164) and **Chobhar** (p161)
- 5 Get the pulse racing on a bungee, canyoning or rafting trip at the adventure resorts of **Borderlands** (p178) or the **Last Resort** (p178), just a stone's throw from the Tibet border
- 6 Escape the crowds and relax at little-visited **Nuwakot** (p180), a historically important village with fine architecture