

Trekking Routes

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Best Everest Detours

- ➔ Gokyo Lakes (p299)
- ➔ Chhukung (p297)
- ➔ Kunde & Khumjung (p296)

Best Annapurna Detours

- ➔ Milarepa's Cave (p301)
- ➔ Upper Pisang (p301)
- ➔ Jhong & Purang (p305)
- ➔ Praken Gompa (p301)

Why Go?

Easily the best way to see Nepal is on foot, following a network of trails trodden for centuries by porters, traders, pilgrims, mountaineers and locals travelling from village to village, plains to hills, Nepal to Tibet. Nothing beats strolling from teahouse to teahouse under crystal-clear Himalayan skies as 8000m peaks tower above you. Although trekking routes close to Kathmandu were badly damaged in the 2015 earthquake, most trails around the country escaped with only minor damage, including in the Annapurna and Everest regions.

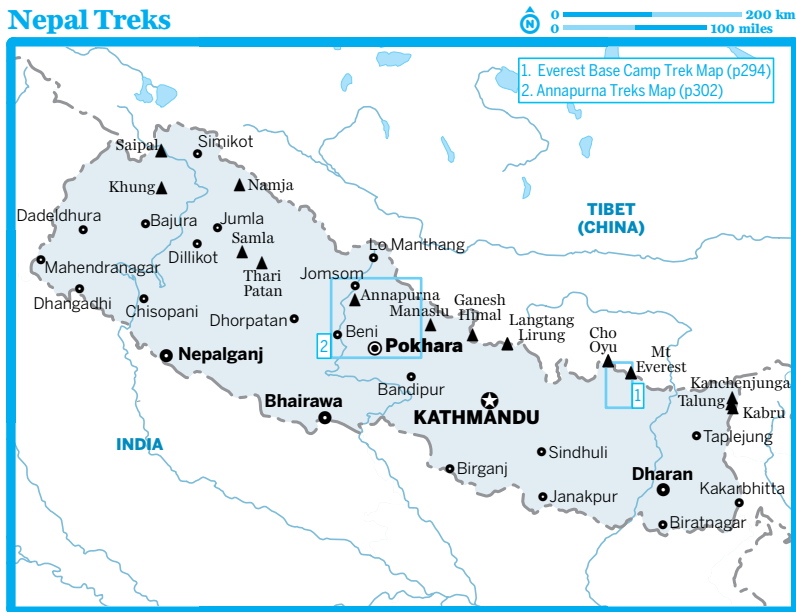
The following treks are ideal for travellers who want to turn up and trek without too much forward planning – permits are easy to organise and trekking lodges line the trails every hour or so offering meals and accommodation. En route, you'll meet Sherpas, Gurungs, Rai and Thakali people and hike through villages, monasteries and sacred lakes. These cultural interactions are what give these treks much of their charm.

Our best advice is not to rush your walk. Adding on a few days to your itinerary allows you to take in side trips, detours and monasteries, or just take a day off every now and then. These just might end up being the highlights of your trip.

Trekking Safety Tips

- ➔ Never trek alone.
- ➔ Always carry an emergency supply of food, water purification, warm clothes, a whistle and a detailed map.
- ➔ Take care of altitude sickness and don't skip the acclimatisation days.
- ➔ Register with your embassy before setting off and make sure someone knows your itinerary.
- ➔ Tell your lodge if attempting a day trip detour.
- ➔ Make sure you have comprehensive health and evacuation insurance.

Nepal Treks



CHOOSING A TREK

The popular teahouse treks described in this chapter account for the bulk of trekking trips in Nepal. Easily the most popular options are the Annapurna Circuit trek and Everest Base Camp (EBC) trek, which saw some damage in the 2015 earthquake but remains fully open to trekkers. Both treks offer spectacular scenery, cultural depth and plenty of scope for detours, as well as plenty of crowds.

Treks closer to Kathmandu, such as the Langtang Valley trek, Gosainkund trek and Tamang Heritage Trail, were a popular choice for travellers before the disaster, but the earthquake caused widespread destruction. Buildings were damaged in every village in the Langtang Valley and Langtang village itself was completely destroyed. Immediately north of the earthquake epicentre, the trekking regions of Manaslu and Tsum were also badly damaged, with sections of trail swept away and some lodges damaged. Until trails and infrastructure are rebuilt, most trails in these areas will remain off limits to trekkers.

Over the past few years Everest has become very busy in high season, while the Annapurna region has been affected by road construction. The Annapurna Circuit has the advantage of being a loop route, while

Everest is an out-and-back trek, returning to Lukla via the same route, unless you add on the excellent side trips to the Gokyo Lakes or over the Three Passes. Everest requires a flight (or week-long approach walk), which makes it a slightly more expensive option than Annapurna.

If that's not enough for you, it is also possible to combine treks. The Annapurna Sanctuary Trek is easily pinned onto the end of the Annapurna Circuit to create a full month of superb trekking.

For full information on these routes, as well as camping and teahouse treks in more remote regions, see Lonely Planet's *Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya*.

Shorter Treks

If you don't have time for a big trek, several shorter treks from Pokhara in the southern foothills of the Annapurnas can give you a delightful taste of life on Nepal's trails. The Ghandruk Loop (three days) and Ghorepani and Ghandruk loop (six days) both offer fine mountain views, villages and trekking lodges, while trips to Ghachok or Panchase offer quieter trails away from the main Annapurna routes. All are excellent low-altitude or winter choices.