

Old Nepal Treks

luxury trekking

with

BASANTA ADVENTURE
TREKS & EXPEDITIONS



Our Old Nepal itineraries capture the unique feeling of trekking in Nepal in the early days. Staying at our truly comfortable 'hidden gem' locations we access the 'real Nepal' that the tourist trails miss: unspoilt villages, traditional foothill farmland, stunning forests and panoramic views of the whole Himalaya. Be in no doubt - this is the greatest mountain landscape on the planet, and you really don't have to stick to the tourist trails to see the very best of it. Our secret Nepal is as gorgeous as ever. Walking days are designed to be easy enough for all casual walkers, linking our wonderful night stops through beautiful countryside and stunning views. Every detail of these itineraries is carefully crafted to give the richest experience of the gorgeous foothills and culture that only Nepal has to offer. Being here... in these incredible inspiring landscapes... staying in such fabulous locations - surely the most rewarding holiday available on earth. This is our beloved Old Nepal.

Old Nepal under the fish's tail

*the beautiful twin peaks
of Machapuchare &
the Annapurna foothills*

The foothills of the Annapurna Himal are the most classically beautiful landscape in Nepal: unspoilt Gurung villages, hill-terraced farmland, whole forests blazing with rhododendron bloom in the spring, and the close views of the gorgeous Annapurna peaks. It is especially about the ever-changing views of the stunning twin fluted peaks of Machapuchare, the fish's tail, the most beautiful mountain in the world.



11 nights

9 full board
2 b&b in town



trek grade

First, Patan Durbar Square, the best location in the Kathmandu valley, staying at the delightful Patan Inn, a fantastic converted Newari house, richly carved with the artisan skills that this little town is world famous for. Then we stay at the wonderful Fishtail Lodge, the original hotel in gorgeous lakeside Pokhara, hand-ferried across to its unique location across the lake to watch the magical sunset on the pyramid peak of Machapuchare - sundowners like nowhere else.

Our perfect little trek has 5 walking days, all easy enough, plenty of time to rest and revel in the spectacular views, enjoy village life and the wonderful countryside. In the Annapurna Conservation Area we exclusively use Ker & Downey traditional lodges, by far the best available - country comfort with lovely ensuite rooms, fireside happy-hours (free drinks!) and delicious food served by the most welcoming local staff. This is Old Nepal trekking in style. The trek ends at fabulous Hananoie, a hotel that is also a small farm - an amazing synthesis of real comfort and genuine traditional village life.

With in-town or countryside options for our last night in Pokhara we fly back to Kathmandu for a last hidden gem in the valley - the serene Gokarna Forest Resort where, for all the enjoyment of its fantastic facilities, the highlight is the forest itself, the former hunting reserve of Nepal's rulers. A dawn walk here with the roaming deer makes our departure day truly memorable.

Best season for this trek:

October to May - typically with clear views right through the mild winter; March & warmer April are fantastic for rhododendron forests in bloom

...breakfast on treke

Machapuchare from Basanta Lodge, Dhampus



day 1: arrive Kathmandu, transfer to Patan Inn (B&B)

Patan is the most rewarding of the old cities of Kathmandu with the best preserved Durbar Square, small streets rich in traditional architecture, a marvellous museum and the very best of the beautifully restored Newari inns for us to stay in. If your international flight is an afternoon arrival it is well worth adding an extra night at the wonderful Patan Inn to really make the most of it. This fabulous converted Newari town house has delightful rooms centred around a richly carved traditional courtyard with an excellent restaurant, one of many that are highly recommended in Patan.

day 2: fly Pokhara, transfer to the Fishtail Lodge (B&B)

Flying into Pokhara is one of the lasting delights of an Annapurna trek; immediately the stunning peaks dominate the view, centred around the beautiful pyramid peak of Machapuchare, the sacred 'fish-tail' mountain. Along the shore of beautiful Phewa Tal lake, Pokhara has a laid-back atmosphere and an abundance of very good restaurants. However, the famous Fishtail Lodge was the original lakeside hotel, so is genuinely Old Nepal, with its design classic round-house rooms. This hotel established the town as the relaxed centre for Annapurna trekking. Now excellently restored, its unique location just across the lake, accessed by its own raftsmen, set it apart as a haven of lakeside tranquility. Sunset sitting out on the terrace with the backdrop of the mountains will be a lasting memory - mine's a Campari Soda, thank you.

day 3: drive/walk to Birethanti, Ker & Downey Sanctuary Lodge

It is possible to drive all the way to our first lodge in less than 2 hours from Pokhara, but many prefer to walk the last section along the beautiful Modi Khola river through quiet villages. Sanctuary Lodge (1100m), by the banks of the river, sets the standard for the Ker & Downey Lodges that we use exclusively within the Annapurna Conservation Area. They are simply the best possible way to experience this fabulous landscape, comfortable ensuite rooms with meticulous attention to detail, delicious food all included, and dedicated staff to make sure you don't miss out on any of it. There's even a daily complimentary happy-hour at the bar as you relax round the open fire-side.

day 4: walk to Ghandruk, Ker & Downey Himalaya Lodge

This is actually the longest day of this itinerary, about 5 hours walk at a moderate pace gradually uphill to our highest lodge stop on the trek (1980m - not an altitude where we will feel much effect). A great walk and the destination is so worth it. The lodge is dominated by fabulous views of Annapurna South and the beautiful twin peaks of Machapuchare - now we see how it gets its name, the fish's tail. This is one of our favourite K&D lodges with its cosy fire-side lounge and fronted by some of the best preserved of the traditional Gurung houses in this picturesque village at the foot of the peaks.

day 5: rest day in Ghandruk, Ker & Downey Himalaya Lodge

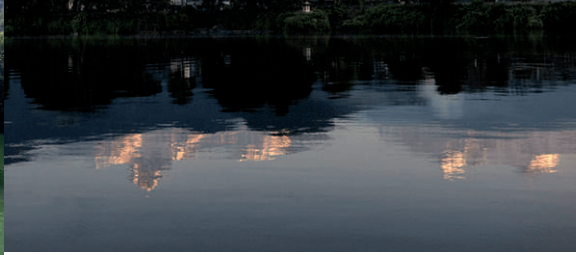
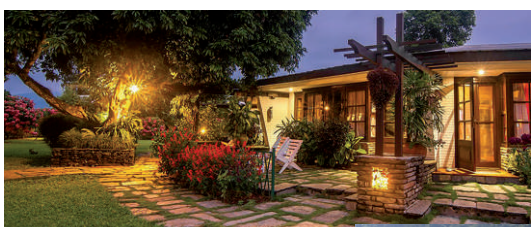
This is intended as a totally relaxing rest day to thoroughly enjoy these fantastic surroundings. Some short walks into the countryside are on offer to the best of the local viewpoints, but are entirely optional. There is much enjoyment in just wandering the little walking streets of this, the main Gurung village, or just sitting out on the lodge terrace soaking up one of the very best views in the Annapurna Himal.

day 6: walk to Landruk, Ker & Downey La Bee Lodge

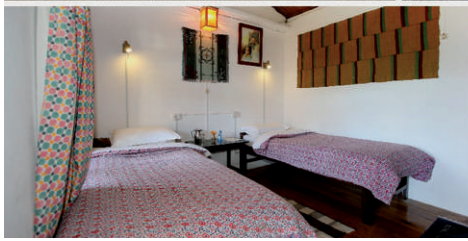
We descend through beautiful forests, an ornithological paradise, right down to cross over the Modi Khola where it comes rushing down from the snows of the Annapurna peaks. At our own pace we climb slowly back up the farmland on the other side, beautifully terraced fields of corn, millet and vegetables, to soon reach the lovely village of Landruk (1640m), famous for its marigold gardens and honey, nearly every house has a few hives. The morning's walk takes about 3 hours. Our lodge sits above the village, commanding stunning views of the whole valley still dominated by the majestic peaks of Annapurna South, a great place to relax after lunch.

day 7: walk to Majhgaon, Ker & Downey Gurung Lodge

A nice easy day following the contours high above the Modi Khola, through beautiful terraced farmland and lush forests for about 4 hours before arriving at our lodge for lunch (1400m). This is really delightful, still in a woodland setting yet with mountain views between the peaks, designed in the style of a traditional Gurung house. In the afternoon we can relax or take a stroll to enjoy the surrounding villages where we will invariably see some aspect of their hill farming lives, harvesting millet or corn, or rounding up the buffalo or goats for milking.



Pokhara: **the fish tail lodge**



On trek: **her & downey lodges**



Kathmandu: **gokarna forest & the patan inn**



& hananote



day 8: walk to Dhampus, Ker & Downey Basanta Lodge

Today's walk takes us further off the tourist trail through some of the best preserved countryside in the Annapurna Conservation Area, starting with the unspoilt village of Patlekhet. We then wind through beautiful oak and rhododendron forests to pick up the main trail again at Pothana, just up from our lodge at Dhampus (1500m) after about 4 hours, in time for lunch. This is probably our favourite K&D lodge, small scale, cosy and welcoming, but still with a panoramic view to die for, with Machapuchare back centre-stage.

day 9: walk to Astam, Hananoie Lodge

Our destination lodge today is a little different and arguably the nicest mountain lodge in the Himalayas. Originally designed for Japanese groups, Hananoie (1400m) combines comfort with delightful attention to traditional detail including a real Gurung round-house. It is a real small farm practically self-sufficient in fabulous vegetables, making it's own butter, with buffalo, goats and chickens. The staff are truly dedicated, from the amazing cooks to the land-girls working on the harvest. Employing much of the local village of Astam, there is a fantastic sense of 'belonging' here which guests immediately feel part of. The only downside would have been the very rough jeep-track access, but we are lucky enough to have the perfect walk in, an easy 4 hours along the gentle ridge line with yet more stunning panoramic views of the peaks all the way.

day 10: walk/drive to Pavilions Himalaya near Pokhara or Fishtail Lodge (B&B) for groups preferring to be in town

Cleverly avoiding the rough jeep-track again we take a half hour walk down the hill to be picked up on the better road at the bottom, and we drive to either of our preferred destinations. Pavilions Himalaya is a fabulous location just south of Pokhara with exquisite rooms and infinity pool beautifully integrated into stunning rice-paddy farmland. It is the perfect relaxation option after our trek. However, for groups who would prefer more town life in which to celebrate, or some souvenir shopping, we can return for another night at the famous Fishtail Lodge - our first night here was never going to be enough.

day 11: fly Ktm, drive to Gokarna Forest Resort

The morning flight to Kathmandu and a short drive direct from the airport brings us to one last fabulous destination in the protected 470 acre Gokarna Forest, a haven of peace and beauty nestled in the Kathmandu valley. The hotel is comfortable and luxurious, with indoor pool, spas, golf course and fantastic restaurants, but the highlight will always be the forest itself. Huge mature fig trees dominate the site, and fallow deer and myriad other wildlife roam these former private hunting grounds of Nepal's rulers.

departure day: early forest walk, drive to airport and depart Kathmandu

The dawn walk in the forest, the best time to see wildlife, makes one last fantastic memory of this unforgettable Old Nepal itinerary.

Some extension options for this trek to complete your perfect personal itinerary:

- **Tiger Mountain** A night or two at the premier Pokhara retreat - a haven of luxurious post-trek tranquility and wildlife
- **Helicopter to Annapurna Base Camp** Get right into the incredible Annapurna Sanctuary the easy way
- **Everest Mountain Flight** Add another night in Kathmandu to see the Everest range close up

See our Old Nepal Extensions sheet for many other ideas