

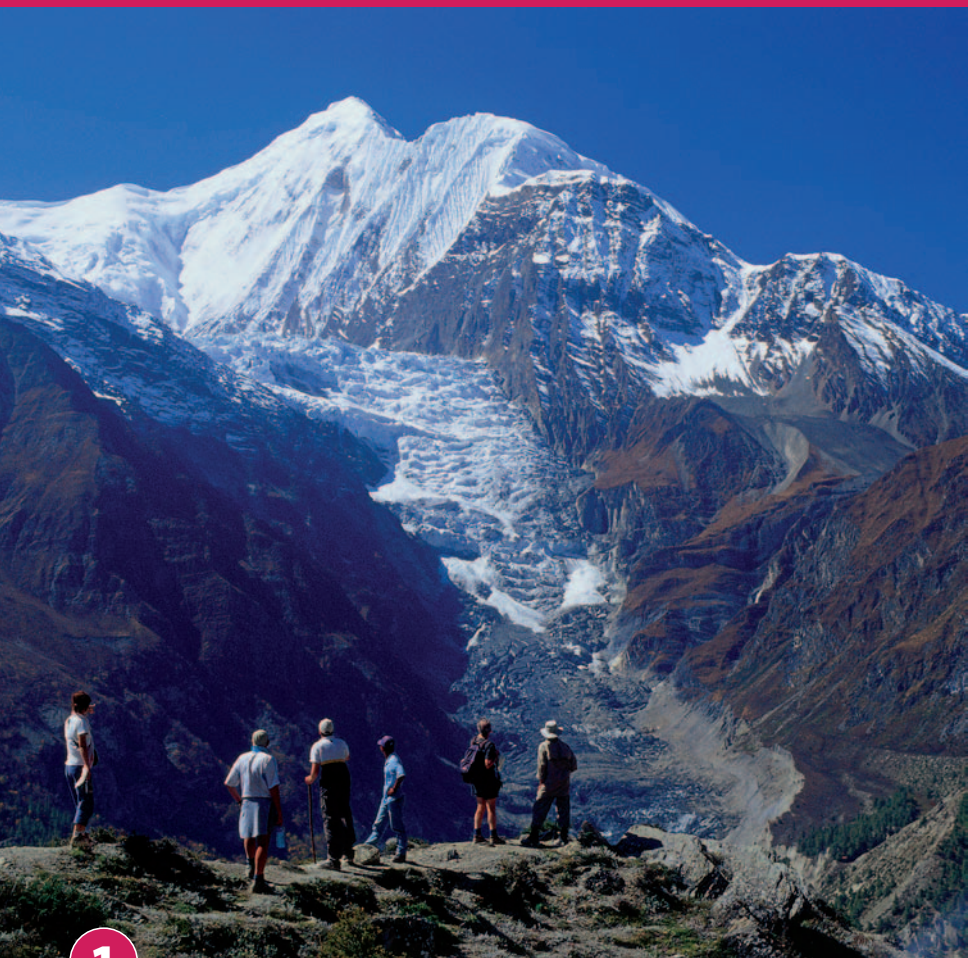
Trekking

IN THE NEPAL HIMALAYA



TREKKERS' HIGHLIGHTS

Nepal attracts the gamut of trekkers, from hard-core peak trekkers to those wanting to unwind on a ramble from teahouse to teahouse. Everyone who takes on Nepal's mountainous terrain seems to come away from the country with their own favourite experiences and favourite treks. Here we have compiled recommendations from travellers, trekking professionals and Lonely Planet authors.



RICHARD Y'ANSON

1

TEAHOUSE TREKKING

For a teahouse trek, I just love the area around Manang. The village of Bragha (p179) is the perfect base for trips up to high lakes, glacier viewpoints and Buddhist pilgrimage sites, all with the astounding views of Annapurna III and Gangapurna.

Bradley Mayhew, Lonely Planet Author



LANGTANG

The trek (p211) that offers more than just the grand views of mountains. The rich variety of flora and fauna and the uniqueness of Tamang culture make it stand out from the rest for me.

Prakash Karki, Trekking Guide

3

CHRIS KLEP



2

EVEREST BASE CAMP

SCOTT DAKSNEY

It's a trip (p101) you'll never forget: thrilling, difficult, breathtaking. The mountains are higher than the clouds, and you'll experience a culture without cars and Western luxuries. You'll be pushed to the limit, create lifelong friends and help the local economy.

pthalokitty, Traveller



4

BENI TO DOLPO

BILL WASSMAN

The sense of anticipation you get over every pass, each remoter and higher than the last (p287). Then you descend to Dolpo and it's as if someone turned back the clock 450 years while you were away.

Chris Beal, Trek Leader

TO EVEREST FROM JIRI

For a sample of rural Nepal, and if you have time, you should trek in to the Everest region from Jiri or Shivalaya (p133) as opposed to flying to Lukla. It's hard work but the scenery in this area is beautiful, the lodges quiet and the people friendly. You will get a taste of the 'real' Nepal.

bascule, Traveller

CHRIS KLEP

5



DUNAI TO PHOKSUMDO

Ascending the Tarap gorge into the Trans-Himalayan monasteries and Dolpo-style *chortens* (stupas) of Do Tarap (p283), and then a simply mind-blowing three days of achingly beautiful wilderness, before a day to laze around on the shores of Phoksumdo Lake (p281). That's hard to beat.

Bradley Mayhew, Lonely Planet Author

6

BILL WASSMAN



7

OVER THE CHO LA PASS

RICHARD YANSON

The trek to Everest Base Camp is one thing, but the walk over the Cho La pass to Gokyo (p132) is something else. While researching this book, I walked the trail just after a blinding blizzard and the glacier leading up to the pass was like a shimmering silk shawl, draped over the saddle between Cholatse and Kangchung.

**Joe Bindloss,
Lonely Planet Author**





ANDREW PEACOCK

8

EVEREST VIA GOKYO

If you've ever imagined a picture of heaven, then the pristine beauty of the Gokyo lakes (p124) and the serenity posed by snow-clad mountains surrounding the lakes should come pretty close to what you've imagined. In simple words – it's heavenly.

Abhinaya Shrestha, Trekking Guide



BILL WASSMAN

9

INNER DOLPO

My (latest) favourite trek is inner Dolpo (p329); there are so many routes into this diverse, remote region. I love the Tibetan feel of Dolpo, the lack of trekkers in most parts, the opportunity to research and make many side trips to remote gompas and villages, the history, the wonderful camp sites and the 'living' Dolpo itself, a step back in time. Overall, it's a very challenging, quite diverse and scenically spectacular trek.

Kim Bannister, Trek Leader



10

VILLAGES ON THE ANNAPURNA SANCTUARY

RICHARD J'ANSON

I'll never have enough of this trek (p160). The simple reason being the variety it offers – spellbinding views, beautiful villages (especially Chhomrong and Ghandruk) and its people. There's also a hot spring at Jhinu Danda to relax away all the exhaustion of long walks.

Surya Jimée, Trekking Guide



11

THE ANNAPURNA SKYLINE TREK

JANE SWEENEY

There's a different joy and heightened sense of challenge in doing an off-the-beaten-track trek. Khayer (or, as we call it, the Majestic Skyline Trek; p200) is the best one of that kind that I've done so far.

Rajesh Karki, Trekking Guide

NOT FOR QUITTERS – ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT

This trek takes up to three weeks, moving through all of the different geographies of the region. The highest pass crosses the Tibetan plateau at the Thorung La at 5416m. Not for the faint-hearted, and best to take a mate or guide across the pass.

kez101, Traveller

ANDREW PARKINSON

12



TATOPANI, ON THE ANNAPURNA TRAIL

After many hours of mountain trekking either up or down the steep granite rock stairs of the trail, the hot waters of the basic outdoor pools by the fast-flowing Kali Gandaki River (p199) are extremely welcome to tired bodies.

onesmallbag, Traveller

13

MICHAEL TAYLOR



14

CHRISTER FREDRIKSSON

TREKKING TO THE HEART – ANNAPURNA BASE CAMP

This trek takes you to the very heart of the Annapurna region, weaving through the high peaks of the Annapurna Sanctuary and arriving at the base camp of the highest peaks (p165). Stunningly beautiful views.

kez101, Traveller

DESTINATION NEPAL

For anyone who loves the mountains, life simply doesn't get any better than a trek through the Nepal Himalaya. The world's highest mountain range defines everything in Nepal, from its topography and its weather to its religion and trade. It's also home to the grandest mountain scenery you'll ever see. 'In a hundred ages of the gods,' rhapsodises the ancient Indian text the Skanda Purana, 'I could not tell thee of the glories of Himachel.'

Nepal sets the global standard for spectacular, hassle-free trekking, especially in the teahouse trekking regions of Everest and the Annapurnas. Nowhere else can you hike for weeks into the very heart of a mountain range, safe in the knowledge that at the end of the day you can count on a clean bed, a hot meal and a slice of warm apple pie. Leave the tent, stove and freeze-dried goulash at home. This is trekking at its most accessible.

Beyond the famous teahouse treks, Nepal's mountains are rivalled only by its superb trek staff – porters, sherpas and trekking agencies – who can take you off the beaten trek to high-altitude camps at the base of 8000m peaks or over 5000m passes into remote and timeless pockets of Tibetan culture. What you soon realise is that the rich culture and customs of Nepal's myriad peoples and their unswerving good humour are as big a draw as the peaks themselves.

As the slogan goes, one trip to Nepal is rarely enough. If you've seen Everest or the Annapurnas, try a trek through Langtang or around Manaslu, and once you've done those, head out to remote Dolpo or Kanchenjunga at the far ends of the country. It's hard to think of a better way to spend a couple of weeks of your life.

ANDREW PEACOCK



Table of Treks

EVEREST REGION	DAYS	DIFFICULTY	MAXIMUM ELEVATION
EVEREST BASE CAMP	16	MEDIUM-HARD	5545M
GOKYO	12	MEDIUM-HARD	5360M
THREE PASSES	20	HARD	5535M
SHIVALAYA TO LUKLA	6	MEDIUM	3530M

ANNAPURNA REGION	DAYS	DIFFICULTY	MAXIMUM ELEVATION
ANNAPURNA PANORAMA	6	EASY-MEDIUM	3210M
GHANDRUK LOOP	3	EASY-MEDIUM	1970M
ANNAPURNA SANCTUARY	10	MEDIUM	4095M
GHOREPANI TO GHANDRUK	2	EASY-MEDIUM	3210M
ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT PART I	10-14	MEDIUM-HARD	5416M
ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT PART II (KALI GANDAKI)	7-9	EASY-MEDIUM	3800M

LANGTANG & HELAMBU	DAYS	DIFFICULTY	MAXIMUM ELEVATION
LANGTANG VALLEY	7-8	MEDIUM	3870M
GANJA LA	5	HARD	5106M
GOSAINKUND	8	MEDIUM-HARD	4610M
HELAMBU CIRCUIT	6	EASY-MEDIUM	3640M

EASTERN NEPAL	DAYS	DIFFICULTY	MAXIMUM ELEVATION
LUKLA TO TUMLINGTAR	9	MEDIUM	3350M
MAKALU BASE CAMP	18	HARD	5000M
KANCHENJUNGA NORTH	20	HARD	5140M
KANCHENJUNGA SOUTH	14	HARD	4800M

WESTERN NEPAL	DAYS	DIFFICULTY	MAXIMUM ELEVATION
RARA LAKE	9	MEDIUM	3710M
JUMLA TO DUNAI	6	MEDIUM	3820M
KAGMARA LA	4	MEDIUM-HARD	5115M
PHOKSUMDO LAKE	3	MEDIUM	3730M
PHOKSUMDO LAKE VIA DO TARAP	9	HARD	5290M
BENI TO DOLPO	12	MEDIUM-HARD	4420M

RESTRICTED AREAS	DAYS	DIFFICULTY	MAXIMUM ELEVATION
MUSTANG	10	MEDIUM-HARD	4325M
NAR-PHU	7	MEDIUM-HARD	5320M
AROUND MANASLU	18	MEDIUM-HARD	5100M
PHOKSUMDO LAKE TO SHEY GOMPA	7 OR MORE	MEDIUM-HARD	5160M
SHEY GOMPA TO JOMSOM	12	HARD	5460M
LIMI VALLEY	17	MEDIUM-HARD	4988M

TREKKING SEASON	HOTELS	OTHER INFORMATION	PAGE NO
FEB-MAY, OCT-DEC	EXCELLENT	Potential altitude problems; flight hassles in Lukla	101
FEB-MAY, OCT-DEC	GOOD	Extraordinary scenery but potential altitude problems	124
MAR-MAY, OCT-NOV	GOOD	Dramatic mountain passes, but high altitude	130
OCT-MAY	GOOD	Lots of ups and downs; allow 22 days to visit base camp	133

TREKKING SEASON	HOTELS	OTHER INFORMATION	PAGE NO
OCT-MAY	EXCELLENT	Outstanding views from Poon Hill	149
OCT-MAY	EXCELLENT	Good introduction to trekking; scenic Gurung villages	151
MAR-APR, OCT-NOV	VERY GOOD	Spectacular mountain amphitheatre; danger of avalanches	160
OCT-MAY	GOOD	Links the Annapurna Circuit with the Annapurna Sanctuary	168
MAR-APR, OCT-NOV	VERY GOOD	Varied scenery; one very high pass; excellent side trips	170
OCT-MAY	EXCELLENT	Along the Kali Gandaki Valley on detours, avoiding the road	186

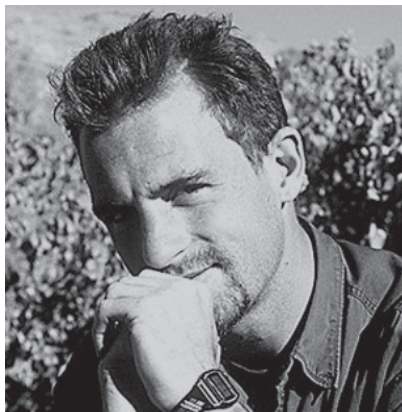
TREKKING SEASON	HOTELS	OTHER INFORMATION	PAGE NO
SEP-MAY	VERY GOOD	High alpine valley and glaciers; close to Kathmandu	211
MAR-MAY, OCT-NOV	NONE	May require technical mountaineering skills in snow	216
MAR-APR, OCT-NOV	MOSTLY GOOD	Sacred lakes and Himalayan views	218
OCT-APR	VERY GOOD	Good transport from Kathmandu; cheap and easy	224

TREKKING SEASON	HOTELS	OTHER INFORMATION	PAGE NO
OCT-APR	PRIMITIVE	Hot in Arun Valley; alternate exit, or approach, from Khumbu	236
MAR-MAY, OCT-NOV	NONE	Steep climb to Barun Valley; rain or snow likely	243
MAR-MAY, OCT-NOV	PRIMITIVE	Long, hot approach; remote base camp	252
MAR-MAY, OCT-NOV	PRIMITIVE	Flights to/from Suketar (Taplejung); excellent mountain scenery	257

TREKKING SEASON	HOTELS	OTHER INFORMATION	PAGE NO
MAR-OCT	NONE	Complicated logistics but an outstanding trek; lots of birds	266
MAR-OCT	MINIMAL	Deep forests, interesting villages with unique culture	274
MAR-OCT	NONE	High, remote and potentially dangerous	277
MAY-OCT	BASIC	Spectacular high-altitude lake and dramatic scenery	278
MAY-OCT	NONE	Through a steep gorge to Tibetan villages and high passes	281
MAY-OCT	NONE	A true journey and wide range of scenery; great views of Dhaulagiri	287

TREKKING SEASON	HOTELS	OTHER INFORMATION	PAGE NO
MAY-OCT	SIMPLE	Walled city; Tibetan culture and scenery	301
MAY-OCT	BASIC	Scenic villages and a preserved pocket of Tibetan culture	312
OCT-MAY	NONE	Long trek on steep trails; great views of Manaslu north face	319
MAY-OCT	NONE	Lots of mystique surrounding Crystal Mountain	330
MAY-OCT	NONE	Long desolate walk across the roof of Nepal	332
MID-MAY-EARLY OCT	NONE	Remote triangular walk on the borders of Tibet	337

The Authors



BRADLEY MAYHEW

A self-professed mountain junkie, Bradley has been trekking in the Himalaya for over 15 years now, including in Ladakh, Pakistan, Bhutan and Tibet. For this edition he walked the trails in the Dolpo, Annapurna, Nar-Phu and Langtang regions. British-born, Bradley currently lives under the big skies of Montana. He is the co-author of Lonely Planet guides to *Tibet*, *Bhutan*, *Nepal* and *Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks*, as well as a dozen other titles, and is currently filming a five-part documentary retracing the route of Marco Polo.

Bradley coordinated this edition and wrote the Culture, Planning and Trekkers' Directory chapters, amongst others.



JOE BINDLOSS

Joe made his first trip to Nepal as a fresh-faced backpacker in the early 1990s and something clicked. Since then, he's been back numerous times to walk the trekking trails of the Khumbu and Nepal's 'Wild East', including for this edition. His favourite moment while researching this book was climbing the 5420m Cho La pass on a blanket of freshly fallen snow. The lowlight was having emergency root-canal surgery after cracking a tooth on a tough piece of buffalo jerky. When not researching guidebooks for Lonely Planet, Joe lives in London with a growing collection of Tantric Buddhism paraphernalia picked up on his travels.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

Why is our travel information the best in the world? It's simple: our authors are passionate, dedicated travellers. They don't take freebies in exchange for positive coverage so you can be sure the advice you're given is impartial. They travel widely to all the popular spots, and off the beaten track. They don't research using just the internet or phone. They discover new places not included in any other guidebook. They personally visit thousands of hotels, restaurants, palaces, trails, galleries, temples and more. They speak with dozens of locals every day to make sure you get the kind of insider knowledge only a local could tell you. They take pride in getting all the details right, and in telling it how it is. Think you can do it? Find out how at lonelyplanet.com.

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Trent Holden

Trent first visited Nepal in 2001, during the tragedy of the royal massacre, and (despite this shock) it's a country he has felt passionate about ever since. Working as an editor at Lonely Planet's Melbourne office for the past five years, he figured it was about time to escape the office grind for the more exciting adventures of authoring. For this book Trent provided research for Jumla, Nepalganj, Pokhara and parts of the eastern Terai.

Dr David R Shlim

David R Shlim MD is one of the most respected travel medicine experts in the world. He gained his knowledge of the medical problems of trekkers in Nepal during three seasons as a volunteer doctor at the Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA) aid post in Pheriche, and 15 years as the Medical Director of the CIWEC Clinic in Kathmandu. He was the Medical Director of the HRA for 10 years. He is the author of over 40 research papers on the medical problems of travellers to Nepal, and is the co-author, with Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, of *Medicine and Compassion: A Tibetan Lama's Guidance for Caregivers*. David wrote the Health & Safety chapter of this book.

Wanda Vivequin

Wanda wears out a good pair of hiking boots with deep tread every year on Nepal's more remote trekking trails and clocks an average of over 40,000 vertical metres thanks to the country's tightly folded and convoluted landscape. Currently living in Canada, Wanda runs her own small trekking company and enjoys the challenges and rewards that come with discovering and sharing quiet trails in remote trekking regions with other intrepid travellers. Wanda researched the Limi Valley trek, wrote the boxed text 'Revisiting the Cloud Dwellers' and provided input on women trekkers. She has previously worked on Lonely Planet's *Nepal* guide.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'