



HIMALAYAN

SCHOOL OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

**Gearing Students with Knowledge,
Experience and Attitude**



An undertaking of Himalayan Education Partnership affiliated to House of Rajkarnicar

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Gushingal, Sapena, Lalitpur, Nepal

As an outdoor adventure school, we proudly call Nepal our classroom. Nepal offers an unmatched natural environment for hands-on training in outdoor and adventure skills – trekking, mountaineering, rock climbing, kayaking, white water rafting, canyoning, mountain biking, para gliding, wild life, jungle safari and leadership.

Nepal, a Shangri-la of the Himalayas surrounded by high snow peaks and refreshing blue mountains. Nepal is not a destination of week-enders or stop-overs. Aside from the thrill of a novelty destination, there is a legend and a story behind Nepal. The birth place of Buddha and Mecca of Buddhism. The cradle of Hindu civilization and culture. Natural wonders of Mt. Everest and the Himalayas. The land of rare tigers and the Yeti, the Abominable Snowman. The home of the brave Gurkha soldiers. It is a living museum of ancient temples, places, shrines, squares and courtyards. And, yes, it is a fairy-tale kingdom of past king, queens, princes, princesses but living goddesses–still worshipped today. Not a week goes by in Kathmandu without a festival or a feast. The Nepalese people, as economically underprivileged or diverse as they may be, live in harmony–perhaps fatalistic, perhaps content. Smiles that make you wonder about your own way of life and philosophy.

Nepal cannot be another beach resort country nor a shopping-mall nation. No. But Nepal is one destination that will fire up the imagination of visitors on their way to Nepal. Some curious, some incredulous, some a little nervous but for once Nepal brings excitement that will turn adults into boys and girls. Nepal promises stories to take back home not just snap-shots and Facebook posts.

History

Nepal has long served as a vibrant crossroads of cultures, with a history as diverse and colorful as its landscapes. Geographically and linguistically, the country has acted as a natural boundary between the Mongoloid peoples of Tibet, who speak Tibeto-Burmese languages, and the Indo-European-speaking populations of the Indian plains. Even today, Nepal retains its role as a vital trade hub, capitalizing on its strategic location between two powerful neighbors.

Historically, Nepal's significance lay in its role as a trade conduit between India and China. While times have changed, the country continues to leverage its position between these two regional giants, often balancing diplomatically and economically between them.

Over the centuries, Nepal's borders have expanded to encompass large parts of what is now northern India, and at times have contracted to little more than the Kathmandu Valley and a few nearby city-states. Long before written records existed, legends spoke of the Kathmandu Valley as once being a vast lake. According to one popular tale, Manjushri, a Buddhist saint from China, used a magical sword to cut through the valley wall, draining the lake and forming the fertile land we see today.

Alternatively, Hindu tradition attributes this miraculous act to Lord Krishna, who is said to have created the Chobar Gorge by hurling a thunderbolt. Regardless of which legend you believe, modern science supports the idea that the valley was indeed once submerged, and today, the rivers that flow through it exit via the narrow passage of the Chobar Gorge, giving credence to these ancient stories.

Nepal moved into an era of small kingdom and fiefdoms especially in Kathmandu valley where civilization and culture thrived until an ambitious Shah king from tiny kingdom of Gorkha unified Nepal into what is more or less of what it is today. Thus, Nepal saw the beginning of the Shah Dynasty that continued for 82 years although the political power was hijacked by Jung Bahadur Rana which created Rana regime still under the nominal royalty of the Shah Kings.

Rana Regime gave way to political parties and democratic forces which finally brought down the Shah Dynasty through several revolutions and established a republic in Nepal. Today Nepal benefits from a modern democracy but suffers from the dysfunctions of democracy with corrupt politicians and a political culture that is immature and distorted.

Religion, Culture and Community

Nepal has long served as a cultural and geographical bridge between great civilizations. It marks the transition where the plains of the Indian subcontinent rise toward the Tibetan plateau, where Indian languages and traditions merge with those of China and where Hinduism gradually blends into Buddhism. As a country positioned at this unique crossroads, Nepal embodies a rich fusion of influences, further enriched by the diverse ethnic groups that make up its population. The country's vibrant cultural festivals, sacred temples and traditional music and dance provide deeply immersive experiences.

In Nepal, Hinduism and Buddhism are intricately intertwined, creating a complex religious blend that is often difficult to distinguish. Although the Buddha was born in Nepal, Buddhism is believed to have been introduced to the country around 250 BC, reportedly by the great Indian emperor Ashoka.

Over time, Hinduism became more dominant, but from the 8th century AD onward, the Tantric form of Buddhism practiced in Tibet began to spread into Nepal via the Himalayas. Today, Buddhism is primarily followed by communities living in the high Himalayan regions, such as the Sherpas, Gurungs, and Tamangs, as well as by Tibetan refugees who have settled in the country.

While the majority of Nepal's population practices either Hinduism or Buddhism, there are also small communities of Muslims and Christians. Muslims are mostly concentrated near the Indian border and in a few isolated villages.

Climate & Geography

Nepal is located between 80°4' and 88°12' east longitude and 26°22' to 30°27' north latitude, spanning an area of approximately 147,181 square kilometers. The country stretches about 885 kilometers from east to west. Geographically, Nepal is divided into three main physiographic zones: the Terai (lowland), Pahad (hill), and Himal (mountain) regions, which cover approximately 17%, 68%, and 15% of the total area, respectively.

Nepal experiences a diverse range of climates, classified into six major climatic zones: tropical, subtropical, temperate, subalpine, alpine, and tundra/nival/trans-Himalayan. The country has four distinct seasons:

- Autumn (September to November)
- Winter (December to February)
- Spring (March to May)
- Monsoon (June to August)

During the summer and late spring, temperatures can reach up to 28°C in the hill regions and over 40°C in the Terai. In contrast, temperatures drop significantly in the higher elevations. The monsoon season, typically from June to August/September, brings about 80% of the country's total annual rainfall. This period is marked by heavy rain, often leading to flooding and landslides, which pose significant safety and security risks across various regions of the country.

Average Monthly Temperatures in Kathmandu

Kathmandu experiences a temperate climate with four distinct seasons. Spring (March to May) is mild and pleasant, marked by blooming flowers and clear skies, making it one of the best times to visit. The summer months, from June to August, bring warmer temperatures and high humidity due to the monsoon, with frequent rainfall, especially in July. Autumn (September to November) follows with clear skies, comfortable temperatures and low humidity, offering ideal weather conditions. Winter (December to February) is cool and dry, with temperatures occasionally dropping close to freezing at night but generally staying mild during the day. Overall, Kathmandu enjoys a moderate climate without extreme heat or cold.

Month	Avg High (°C)	Avg Low (°C)
January	18.0	2.1
February	20.2	3.8
March	24.3	7.5
April	27.4	11.3
May	28.2	15.5
June	28.3	19.0
July	27.7	20.0
August	28.0	19.7
September	27.2	18.2
October	25.8	13.0
November	22.7	7.4
December	19.4	3.0

Average Monthly Rainfall in Kathmandu

Month	Rainfall (mm)	Rainy Days
January	14.2	2
February	16.7	3
March	31.2	4
April	54.4	6
May	114.2	12
June	256.4	17
July	359.6	23
August	314.2	22
September	183.1	15
October	59.4	4
November	7.5	1
December	14.2	1

Nepal Visa Information for Students

Visa is required for most nationalities except Indian nationals. For non-Indian nationals (except Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Cameroon, Somalia, Liberia, Ethiopia, Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan), the visa is available from Nepalese Embassies or Consulates or upon arrival at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. Indian nationals are required to present some form of official ID, i.e., passport, driving license and Aadhar card.

The following information indicates the fee required for various duration of Tourist VISA. Children below 10 years are exempt from the visa fee but proof of age is required. Nationals from SAARC countries are exempt from any fee for up to 30 days VISA

- 15 days: USD 30
- 30 days: USD 50
- 90 days: USD 125

Bring 2 passport photos, cash in USD and a valid passport (6+ months validity).

Foreign nationals wishing to study in Nepal must obtain a student visa, which is issued by the Department of Immigration in Kathmandu. The process begins by entering Nepal on a tourist visa, which can be acquired on arrival or online in advance. Once in Nepal, the student must secure admission to a recognized educational institution and obtain a recommendation letter from the Ministry of Education. With these documents, the tourist visa can be converted into a student visa. Student visas are typically valid for one year and can be renewed annually for the duration of the study program.

For further information, please, contact Department of Immigration, Maitighar, Impact Building, Kathmandu, Nepal, Telephone: 00 977-1-4221996/ 4223590/ 4222453,

Apply online for faster entry: <https://nepaliport.immigration.gov.np>

For more, visit: <https://www.immigration.gov.np>

HEALTH

Insurance

A travel insurance policy that covers theft, loss and medical treatment is highly recommended. Make sure the insurance covers the outdoor adventure activities that you will be undertaking during your stay in Nepal.

Immunization

Nepal does not require any particular immunization for your visit. Cholera, Meningitis, Tetanus & Diphtheria, Typhoid and Gamma Globulin are some of the vaccinations that should be considered for your trip. Please consult your physician and get a complete check-up before your departure.

Prevention the Best Medicine

Care in what you eat and drink is the most important health rule. The number one rule is 'don't consume the water including ice'. Reputable brands of bottled water or soft drinks are generally fine. Take care with fruit juice, particularly if water may have been added.

Milk should be treated with suspicion as it is often unpasteurized. Boiled milk is fine if it is kept hygienically and yogurt is usually good. Tea or coffee should also be OK since the water would have been boiled. Salads and fruit should be washed with purified water or peeled where possible. Ice cream is usually OK if it is a reputable brand name, but beware of ice cream that has melted and been refrozen. Thoroughly cooked food is the safest but not if it has been left to cool. Stomach upsets are the most likely travel health problem but the majority of these upsets will be relatively minor. Wash your hands frequently, as it's quite easy to contaminate your own food. You should clean your teeth with purified water rather than straight from the tap. Avoid climatic extremes: keep out of the sun when it is hot, dress warmly when it is cold. Avoid potential diseases by dressing sensibly. You can get worm infections through bare feet. Try to avoid insect bites by covering bare skin when insects are around, by screening windows or by using insect repellents.

Accommodation

Options range from student hostels and homestays to budget guesthouses and apartments. HSOR can provide you a recommend list of options.

AIRPORT and VENUE TRANSFERS

For students arriving in Nepal from abroad, Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) in Kathmandu is the main entry point. The airport is located approximately 6 kilometers from the city center and is well connected by taxis, ride-sharing services like Pathao and Indrive and hotel shuttles. HSOR will assist international students with airport pickup services. Students are advised to coordinate with HSOR in advance to arrange a smooth transfer from the airport to their accommodation or campus.

Transport

Public transportation in Nepal is basic but widespread, with buses, microbuses and tempos (three-wheelers) serving most towns and cities. While affordable, these options can be crowded and may not always follow a fixed schedule. In Kathmandu, travel is more convenient thanks to taxis and ride-sharing services like Pathao and Indrive, which offer app-based bookings and transparent pricing.

Nepal also has an extensive network of domestic flights connecting Kathmandu to major cities and remote mountain regions like Pokhara, Lukla and Jomsom. These flights are especially useful for travelers with limited time or those heading to trekking destinations. Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) in Kathmandu is the country's main international gateway, offering regular flights to major cities in Asia and the Middle East, with growing connectivity to other global destinations.

Internet and Connectivity

Wi-Fi is widely available in cities and towns. SIM cards with data are cheap and easy to obtain for mobile connectivity. Tip: Using mobile data is often faster and more reliable than public Wi-Fi in remote areas.

ELECTRICITY

All electrical outlets in the hotels and other areas are 220 to 240 volts, 50 cycles, continental plugs. For Multi-voltage appliances like laptops, plug adaptor is needed. For 110 to 120 electronics, plug adaptor plus step-down transformer is necessary.

TIME ZONE

Nepal Standard Time is GMT+0545 Hours.

LANGUAGE

Nepali is the official language in Nepal. However travel, trade and most of the literate people understand and speak English.

CUSTOMS

All baggage must be declared and cleared through the customs on arrival at the port of entry. Passengers arriving at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) without any dutiable goods can proceed through the Green Channel for quick clearance without a baggage check. If you are carrying dutiable articles, you have to pass through the Red Channel for detailed customs clearance. Visitors are permitted to import the following for their personal use: Cigarettes, 200 sticks; cigars, 50 sticks; alcoholic liquor, one bottle not exceeding 1.15 liters; beer, 12 cans.

Eating & Drinking Custom

Eating and drinking customs in Nepal are deeply rooted in the country's cultural, religious, and ethnic traditions. The typical Nepali meal revolves around dal bhat, a combination of steamed rice and lentil soup, usually served with seasonal vegetables, pickles, and occasionally meat or fish. Other popular foods of Nepal include momo (dumplings), chatamari and thukpa (noodle soup) are filling and inexpensive. Vegetarian and vegan options are easy to find. Western food like bakery, burger, pizza, pasta, noodles and other delicacies are widely available in restaurants, hotels and cafés in major cities and tourist hot-spots.

Most families eat twice a day—late morning and evening. Meals are often served on metal plates and traditionally eaten while seated on the floor, particularly in rural or conservative households.

Mealtime etiquette is important. People eat with their right hand only, as the left hand is considered unclean. Washing hands and sometimes feet before eating is a common practice. Food is regarded as personal and sacred—sharing from someone else's plate or touching another's food is generally avoided, as it is considered impure, or jutho. Guests are highly respected and are typically served first, and it is considered impolite to decline food once offered.

Tea, especially milk tea (chiya), is a daily staple and is served multiple times a day. In the Himalayan regions, butter tea (suja) is more common, especially among Tibetan and Sherpa communities. Traditional alcoholic drinks like raksi (distilled liquor) and tongba (a fermented millet beer) are commonly consumed during festivals and special occasions, especially in ethnic households. Drinking water is usually boiled or filtered at home, and bottled water is widely used in urban areas and by travelers.

Religious beliefs play a major role in dietary choices. Beef is strictly avoided, as the cow is considered a holy goddess in Hinduism and is revered as a symbol of motherhood and abundance. Muslims avoid pork and alcohol and follow halal dietary laws. During religious fasts and festivals such as Teej or Ekadashi, many avoid onions, garlic, and grains as part of their spiritual observance. Communal eating is a common feature of Nepali life, particularly during festivals, weddings, and rituals, where guests sit in rows and are served traditional foods like sel roti, yomari, jelabi, halwa, sekuwa, choila etc. These shared meals reflect Nepal's deep cultural values and the importance of food in social and religious life.

Cultural Etiquette Tips

Visitors to Nepal are bound to encounter cultural differences and occasional missteps are natural. However, keeping a few simple guidelines in mind can help avoid misunderstandings such as always take off your shoes before entering a Nepalese home, dress modestly—revealing clothing are inappropriate for women. Nudity is never acceptable. Public displays of affection are discouraged. Interestingly, Nepalese men and women may walk hand-in-hand, but this gesture carries no romantic or sexual meaning.

Holidays & Festivals

Nepal is a country rich in cultural and religious diversity, and this is reflected in its many holidays and festivals celebrated throughout the year. Festivals in Nepal are vibrant, colorful, and deeply rooted in tradition, often involving rituals, music, dance, and communal gatherings. Major Hindu festivals like Dashain and Tihar are celebrated nationwide, symbolizing victory of good over evil and honoring gods, ancestors, and animals. Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and indigenous ethnic communities also observe their own important holidays, such as Buddha Jayanti, Eid, and Christmas. Many festivals follow the lunar calendar, so dates vary each year. Festivals are not only religious but also serve as opportunities for families and communities to come together, reinforcing Nepal's rich cultural heritage.

MONEY

Nepalese Rupees comes in denominations of 1000, 500, 100, 50, 25, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1. Coins come in denomination of 10, 25, 50 paisa, 1 rupee and 2 rupees. One rupee equals 100 paisa.

Credit cards such as American Express, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted at major hotels, shops and restaurants. Remember to keep your Foreign Exchange Encashment Receipt while making foreign exchange payments or transferring foreign currency into Nepalese rupees. The receipts may be needed to change left-over Nepalese rupees into hard currency before leaving the country.

Major banks, hotels and the foreign exchange shops provide services for exchanging foreign currency. In addition, Nepal has a growing digital payment system. Foreigners can now use local digital wallets like FonePay, eSewa and Khalti at many shops, cafes, restaurants and ride-sharing services. While some apps may require a local mobile number and bank linkage, tourists can often use these platforms with the help of Nepali friends, hotels or by purchasing SIM cards and linking to local services.

ATM machines are widely available in Kathmandu and Pokhara for drawing cash from credit cards and debit cards.

BUSINESS HOURS

Business hours in Nepal are generally from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sunday to Friday, with Saturday as the weekly holiday. Government offices follow slightly different schedules depending on the season: they operate from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM in summer, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM in winter and close earlier at 3:00 PM on Fridays. Malls, shops and markets typically stay open longer, from 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Danger and Annoyances in Kathmandu

Kathmandu is generally safe for visitors, but like any busy city, it has its share of petty crimes such as pick-pocketing and occasional scams, especially in crowded tourist areas. Traffic can be chaotic and road safety is a common concern. Street noise and pollution might also be bothersome to some travelers. Emergency services are available, but Nepal does not have a 911 system. Important numbers to keep handy include: Police – 100, Ambulance – 102 and Fire Service – 101. It's advisable to stay alert, avoid isolated areas at night and keep valuables secure.

