

ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT, NEPAL



Top of Thorong La pass on the Annapurna Circuit



HIGHLIGHTS

- The classic trek which covers over 200 miles circumnavigating the entire Annapurna massif with views of Machhapuchhare, Dhaulagiri, Manaslu, Pisang Peak and of course the Annapurnas.
- The trail takes you from villages in the middle hills to the remote Manang area and across the Thorong La pass then down the Kali Gandaki gorge.
- Roland, the owner and founder of The Mountain Company, led a group around the Annapurna in April 2008. He will be able to answer any questions you might have.

“The Annapurna Circuit has many spectacular views. Roland provided, not only the knowledge, but also a comfortable atmosphere which lent itself to many extraordinary memories. This trip was both refreshing and rewarding. We look forward to coming back to Nepal for another adventure.” Neil and Tamara Fricke (Canada)



ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT

Total number of days	23 days
Grade & days trekking	Strenuous, 18 trekking days
Accommodation	4 nights hotel, 18 nights teahouse lodges
2010 price from Kathmandu	£1,095 (US\$1,795)
Minimum group size	2
Dates	March 13 th to April 4 th 2010 April 10 th to May 2 nd 2010 October 9 th to 31 st 2010 November 13 th to December 5 th 2010 March 12 th to April 3 rd 2011 April 9 th to May 1 st 2011 October 8 th to 31 st 2011 November 12 th to December 4 th 2011



THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP

- All internal transport and transfers including airport collections.
- Twin share room at Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu.
- Breakfast only at Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu, all meals included while on trek.
- Twin share room in teahouse lodges while on trek.
- All trekking arrangements including permits and fees, TMC guide and porters.
- Complimentary Annapurna trekking map.
- Financial protection insurance with International Passenger Protection.

THE FOLLOWING SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IS AVAILABLE:

Single room supplement £80

Please note that if you are a single person booking on one of our trips you do not have to pay the single room supplement, this is only payable if you specifically request to have a room or tent to yourself. You will not have to pay this for this option if you happen to end up with a single room or tent due to odd numbers on the trip.

THE FOLLOWING IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP

- International flight to/from Kathmandu (London from £550).
- Travel & trekking insurance (eg. Snowcard from £72).
- Nepal visa for 30 days at US\$40 (approx £25).
- Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu.
- Personal clothing & equipment, please see Appendix for suggested kit list.
- Tips (guidance on amounts included in Nepal pre departure information).



- Other items not listed in “What is included”.

YOUR COMPLETE FINANCIAL PROTECTION

In accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992" all passengers booking with The Mountain Company are fully protected for the initial deposit and subsequently the balance of all monies paid to us, including repatriation if required, arising from cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements due to the insolvency of The Mountain Company.

This Insurance has been arranged by International Passenger Protection Limited and underwritten by Insurers who are members of the Association of British Insurers. A certificate detailing this cover will be given to each passenger as evidence of cover.



PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Participants should be aware trekking, mountaineering and travelling in a developing country are activities that involve a risk of personal injury or death. As a condition of booking you must accept these risks and be responsible for your own actions and involvement.

Adventure travel requires an open and flexible attitude. You may experience extreme conditions, unpredictable weather and last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. Lack of acclimatisation to high altitudes could also be a risk factor. Our itineraries allow optimum time for acclimatising although it is possible that some individuals might be slow acclimatisers.

The majority of our trips visit remote areas where you are away from normal emergency services and medical facilities. In case of a serious injury requiring



hospitalisation, it has to be accepted by you, evacuation could take up to several days and may impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the most usual means of evacuation, however they are not always available or they may be hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

INTRODUCTION

Annapurna Circuit is the classic trek covering over two hundred miles circumnavigating the entire Annapurna massif.

This is one of the great treks of the world offering a cross section of Nepal from lowland terraced rice fields, pine forest to the arid terrain in the Himalayan rain shadow near Muktinath. The trail starts at Besisahar and follows the Marsyangdi river through Gurung settlements to the Tibetan region of Manang. We are now in Buddhist country where you will see colourful prayer flags, mani walls and monasteries along the way.

The high point is the challenging day crossing the Thorung La pass at 5,416m followed by the trek down the deep Kali Gandaki gorge located between the Dhaulagiri and Annapurna massifs. After a relaxing soak in the hot springs at Tatopani we make the long climb to Ghorepani where we stay overnight then get up at sunrise for the Himalayan panoramic view point at Poon Hill.

The mountain views throughout this trek encompass the highest and most beautiful in the world including Lamjung, Himalchuli, Manaslu, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Machapuchare.



DETAILED ITINERARY

It is our intention to keep to the day by day itinerary detailed below, although there might be some flexibility due to local conditions or other factors beyond our control. If this is the case the trek leader will do everything possible to work out the changes to the itinerary in order to minimise your inconvenience.

Day 1. Arrive Kathmandu and join the tour at the hotel.

You will be met on arrival at Kathmandu airport and driven back to the hotel. Please provide travel plans on booking and we will arrange the pick up and transfer. A full briefing will be given in the afternoon.

Day 2. Sightseeing in Kathmandu.

Today we explore Kathmandu with a local guide, the day is flexible depending on what you would like to see but the most popular places generally are:

- Pashupatinath is a Hindu temple with burning ghats on the banks of the Bagmati river.
- Swayambhunath, also known as the monkey temple, is climbed by a long set of steps and has great views of Kathmandu.
- Boudhanath stupa has many traditional gompas hung with strings of multi coloured prayer flags, it attracts many Sherpas and Tibetans for the circumambulations of the stupa (koras).
- Durbar square, which is one of the old capitals of the Kathmandu valley, has a blend of Hindu and Buddhist temples.

Day 3. Drive to Besi Sahar (760m).

We leave Kathmandu early in the morning by private bus/car. It is a scenic drive with several picturesque gorges and occasional glimpses of mountain peaks. Overnight in a lodge at Besi Sahar.

Day 4. Trek to Bahundanda (1,320m).

From Besi Sahar the trail descends then climbs steeply through the deep gorge. It moves up and down through fields, tropical forest and small hamlets to the Gurung village of Khudi at 825m. The trail heads northwards up the Marsyangdi valley and crosses over a suspension bridge in Bhulebule.



There are many rice terraces along the route and after another suspension bridge crossing we begin the climb to the village of Lampatta followed shortly by Bahundanda perched on a ridge.

Day 5. Trek to Chamje (1,430m).

Today as we trek up the valley you the sides will begin to narrow and increase in height. After walking through several villages the trail descends to the valley floor and crosses a steel suspension bridge across the Marshyangdi to the village of Syange. There is a steep climb from here to Chamje.

Day 6. Trek to Dharapani (1,940m).

The trail passes through an oak forest and over a ridge to arrive in a wide valley with the village of Tal. Soon after leaving this village the climbs the narrowing valley and descends to cross the river at Dharapani.

Day 7. Trek to Chame (2,700m).

We climb to the village of Bagarchap, walk through a forest and then follow the river to Chame. Today, there are great views of Annapurna II (7,937m) and Lamjung Himal (6,932m) up the valley and if you look back you will be able to see the Manaslu (8,154m) and Peak 29 (7,833m).

Day 8. Trek to Pisang (3,190m).

Leaving Chame you pass some mani walls and a little further there is a water-turned prayer wheel. After the suspension bridge the valley widens and Pisang Peak (6,091m) will become visible.

Day 9. Trek to Manang (3,500m).

We recommend taking the high level route to Manang (6 to 7 hours) today but there is also the option to take the low route (5 hours) along the valley floor.

The high level route starts by crossing the river outside Pisang and follows a path which passes a lake and a long mani wall. There is a long climb along a switch back path to the village of Ghyaru. We will stop at one of the tea houses and enjoy the stunning view of Annapurna II and IV.

From Ghyaru we follow a high level trail to Ngawal the next village. Finally you descend back to the valley floor and rejoin the main trail to continue to Braga and Manang.



Day 10. Rest & acclimatisation day in Manang (3,500m).

It is important to have an extra day in Manang in order to help acclimatisation for the next few days as we start the climb towards the Thorong La.

There are lots of options for day walks around Manang. One possibility is to walk to Khangsar village on the way to Tilicho Lake or a longer walk to Ice Lake above Braga. It is well worth visiting the gumpa above Braga as well as attending the Himalayan Rescure afternoon lecture on altitude and acclimatisation.

Day 11. Trek to Yak Kharka (4,090m).

It is a shorter day today, about 3 to 4 hours, in order to help everyone acclimatise to the altitude. It is a good idea to go for an afternoon walk which also helps with this process, you can either walk up the valley and back to the lodge or climb the ridge behind the village.

Day 12. Trek to Thorong Phedi (4,490m).

It is another short day of about 3 to 4 hours walking again to help the acclimatisation process.

Leaving Yak Kharka we pass through a few lodges at Letdar and after crossing the river there is a climb to Thorong Phedi. In the afternoon it is a good idea to go for a short walk.

Day 13. Trek over the Thorong La (5,400m) and to Muktinath (3,800m).

Today we will leave Phedi at first light for the challenging walk over the Thorong La. The trail is on undulating terrain and after about 4 to 5 hours we should reach the pass.

There are spectacular views of the Annapurna Range to the south and the Mukat Himal bordering Dolpo to the west, as we descend on the other side Dhaulagiri (8,175m) and Tukucho Peak (6,920m).

The descent to Muktinath is quite steep and will take between 3 to 4 hours. It is a good idea to have walking poles to help in case of a slippery path if there is still snow (depends on the time of year) and to take the strain off the knees.

Day 14. Spare day.

We have included a spare day in case of bad weather or for any other eventuality!



Day 15. Trek to Kagbeni (2,800m).

Today we have a short walk to Kagbeni, this will probably be welcome after the long day going over the pass yesterday. After breakfast it is well worth going to visit the temples above the village of Muktinath.

The trail passes through a beautiful arid landscape in the rain shadow of the Himalayas, this is starkly different to green and lush terrain at the start of our trek a week ago!

We descend steeply to the green oasis of Kagbeni. It is a fascinating place to explore with narrow streets and old buildings. One needs a special permit to follow the path north of Kagbeni along the Thak Khola to Upper Mustang.

Day 16. Trek to Marpha (2,670m).

The trail follows the Kali Gandaki down to the town of Jomsom and then on to the pretty village of Marpha set amongst apple orchards.

Day 17. Trek to Kalopani (2,560m).

Today we pass the interesting village of Tukuche with its large, carved houses before continuing on down the Kali Gandaki to the villages of Karjung and Larjung. Kalopani is further located a little further down the valley.

Day 18. Trek to Tatopani (1,190m).

We now leave the Tibetan like landscape and start to see pine, cypress and junipers trees. The trail is sometimes on the valley floor and other times

on a trail high above. Tatopani is village with natural hot springs and is it well worth having a soak in the afternoon.

Day 19/20/21. Trek to Birethanti via Ghorepani (2,855m).

This last stage takes us back to Pokhara. We have a long climb to Ghorepani, in the morning. It is well worth the effort to walk up Poon Hill for the sunrise (optional), the view from here is know as one of the best in the Himalayas!

The trail then descends steeply to the village of Birethanti by the Modi Khola, there is a short walk to the road and our transport back to Pokhara.



Day 22. Fly to Kathmandu, rest of day at leisure in Kathmandu.

We catch the morning flight to Kathmandu, where on a clear day, there are great views of the western end of the Himalayas.

Day 23. Fly back home.

Transfer to Kathmandu airport for the flight back home. End of trip.



ETHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Mountain Company is committed to adopting a responsible attitude to the areas we visit. We are guests of the communities visited and with some thought and care we can ensure that everyone benefits from the experience.

We work closely with the International Porter Protection Group (www.ippg.net) who we support as a Camp 1 sponsor- we abide by their 5 guidelines for porter protection.

We also work with other organisations such as Climate Care (www.climatecare.org), Tourism Concern (www.tourismconcern.org.uk), Friends of Conservation (www.foc-uk.com) and Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (www.keepnepal.org).

We have developed a Responsible Tourism policy which aims to ensure that The Mountain Company and its clients act in a way that is socially, environmentally and culturally sound.

The Mountain Company has joined the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Know Before You Go campaign. The aim is to make sure travellers are properly prepared before travelling overseas. The best way to get the FCO latest advice is to visit their website at: www.fco.gov.uk/travel.





PRACTICAL INFORMATION

ACCOMMODATION IN KATHMANDU

In Kathmandu we use Hotel Tibet (three star). The hotel is located close to the British Embassy near to the centre of Kathmandu. It is within walking distance of the Royal Palace and the tourist hub of Thamel.

FOOD

In Kathmandu there is a wide range of excellent restaurants, some of the more popular ones are: K Too Steak House, Everest Steak House, Rumdoodles, Fire and Ice, La Dolce Vita, Mike's Breakfast and New Orleans. Breakfast is provided each morning by the hotel.

In the lodges for breakfast you will get porridge or cereal, toast or chapattis, omelettes and a range of hot drinks. On arrival in the afternoon you will be given tea and biscuits and a three course meal will follow later in the evening.

CLIMATE

The traditional trekking season in Nepal is late September to May, with October and November generally recognised as having the best weather. Spring is also a popular time of year with warmer weather and the advantage of seeing spring flowers and rhododendrons in bloom.

This trek will have a wide range of temperatures depending on the altitude and the time of day. In the mountains between 1,000m and 3,500m the nights will be cool, normally around 5°C, and during the day temperatures sometimes rise to 25°C. At higher altitudes temperatures range from about 15°C to -20°C.



CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

A list of suggested clothing and equipment for the Annapurna Circuit trek has been included in Appendix below. This is a comprehensive list and experienced trekkers will often take only a selection of these items based on what has worked in the past. It is worth pointing out that you will need a sleeping bag for this trip although you can arrange to rent one in Kathmandu.

If you do not have the clothing and equipment contained in this list then a good option might be to rent from the UK. Trek Hire is a company that rents out high quality items at competitive prices which would save you the expense of buying. The link to their website is <http://www.trekhireuk.com/>

Alternatively if you are going to buy then please contact the office for the Cotswold Outdoor promo code that entitles you, as a client of The Mountain Company, to a 15% discount in their stores and online.

Each trekker should bring one backpack for items required during the day. Your day backpack will contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and snacks.

The rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel bag or backpack will be carried by a porter. **The maximum weight allowance is 15kgs.** Please ensure that your bag is marked clearly on the outside for easy identification.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

All foreigners require a visa for entry into Nepal. It is your responsibility to obtain the entry visa. You can get from a Nepalese embassy overseas or on arrival in Nepal. Most people will obtain their visa on arrival to Kathmandu airport.

You will need one passport photo and the following fees dependent:

- 15 days USD\$25 or equivalent convertible currency
- 30 days USD\$40 or equivalent convertible currency
- 90 days USD\$100 or equivalent convertible currency



VACCINATIONS AND MEDICAL

You should obtain professional advice from a travel clinic or your local GP about which vaccinations to have before you arrive in Nepal. A dental check-up is a good idea as there will be no dental facilities while on the trek.

We bring a comprehensive first aid kit from UK (Life Systems Mountain Leader) plus high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines.

FLIGHTS

We recommend Max Travel (ATOL bonded license# 4705) for booking international flights and other travel arrangements. Please take a look at their website at <http://www.maxtravel.co.uk/> or give them a call on 020 7095 0920.

There are a number of good online agents that we also recommend, they are:

Kayak: *an excellent flight cost comparison website* <http://www.kayak.co.uk/>

Traveljungle: *another good flight cost comparison website*
<http://www.traveljungle.co.uk/>

Cheap Tickets: this site quotes airfares in USD\$ & often is very competitive when translated back to GBP£ <http://www.cheaptickets.com/>

Southall Travel: very competitive prices for India, Pakistan and Nepal both online and telephone support <http://www.southalltravel.co.uk/>

INSURANCE

Travel insurance for any Mountain Company itinerary is a condition of booking a holiday. At the very least you should have emergency medical and repatriation insurance which must include the cost of mountain rescue. Cancellation insurance is strongly recommended as all deposits paid to The Mountain Company are non-refundable.



To get an online quote for your personal travel and trekking insurance (UK residents only), take a look at Snowcard's website at http://www.snowcard.co.uk/pages/d_select1.asp?referrer_id=MC

The Snowcard activity level for Annapurna Circuit trek is 3 and prices start from £72.



Please note that The Mountain Company do not act as an agent of Snowcard Insurance and any policy bought via this web link is effected directly with Snowcard Insurance Services Limited.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

For those of you who are visiting Nepal for the first time we have provided some cultural information to help you fit in and feel at ease:

- The dress code is important for both men and women. Men and women should wear trousers rather than shorts while trekking.
- There are many hot springs, rivers and lakes where it is pleasant to take a dip, it is fine for men to go bare-chested while bathing but they should not go nude. Women should try and be as modest as possible in these situations.
- Hindus are concerned about the ritual pollution of food when it is touched by someone outside their caste or religion. Therefore, do not touch any cooked foods on display and when drinking from a container used by others avoid touching your lips to it. Do not eat food with your left hand and make sure you only give or receive food with your right hand.
- Shoes are considered degrading so keep them on the ground and remove them before putting your feet on anything. If you enter a Nepali house follow the



example of your host in deciding whether to remove your shoes but on entering a temple or monastery you should definitely remove them.

- You will pass Buddhist mani walls, chortens, and stupas along the trek and to follow local traditions you should pass them on your right.
- When visiting a monastery or gompa it is customary to give a donation for its upkeep.

SUGGESTED READING

Please take a look at The Mountain Company's online bookstore for a wide selection of books and maps to Nepal, the link is at:

<http://astore.amazon.co.uk/themountainco-21>

Annapurna south face by Chris Bonnington

Himalayan Pilgrimage by David Snellgrove

Annapurna by Maurice Herzog

True Summit: What Really Happened on the Legendary Ascent on Annapurna by David Roberts

The Ascent of Rum Doodle by WE Bowman

A Nepalese Journey: The Essence of the Annapurna Circuit (Mountain Photography) by Andrew Stevenson

Nepali Phrasebook by Lonely Planet

MAPS

Nepal Trekking Map Himalayan Maphouse Scale: 1:900,000 **This map will be included in your welcome pack when you arrive in Nepal.**

National Geographic Annapurna Trekking 1:135,000



APPENDIX

SUGGESTED CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST

Footwear:

- Walking boots. A pair of water repellent boots with ankle support.
- Gaiters. A pair used to keep boots dry if walking through deep snow or on wet ground.
- Wool and liner socks.
- Trainers or trail shoes. Can be used in camp/lodge in the evenings.

Clothing:

- Waterproof jacket and trousers (goretex or similar).
- Trekking trousers.
- Long sleeve shirts (not cotton).
- Micro fleece.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece.
- Sleeveless or body warmer type fleece.
- Thermals or base layer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
- Fleece pants.
- Medium weight down jacket (eg Nuptse jacket by The North Face)

Handwear:

- Fleece gloves.
- Warms mittens and/or gloves.

Headwear:

- Wool or fleece hat.



- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf.
- Headtorch. Bring extra batteries.
- Sunglasses.

Personal Equipment:

- Backpack large enough to carry water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing.
- Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised.
- Two water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best).
- Sunscreen and lipsalve with a high SPF.
- Insect repellent.
- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira).
- Favourite snack food.
- Books, ipod and cards etc.
- Trekking poles.
- Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
- Insurance certificate.
- Earplugs (optional).
- Baby wipes (optional).
- Hand sanitizer (optional).

Travelling:

- Duffle bag or large backpack for your personal gear on the trek (carried by a porter). Bring a small combination padlock to secure the bag.
- Travel clothes. You will need casual clothing for air travel days and time spent in Kathmandu.



- Toiletry bag include toilet paper, soap, towel, toothbrush, etc.

Personal first aid kit:

Note: we provide a comprehensive group first aid kit but please bring personal medications and other items you might use regularly such as:

- Any personal medications.
- Malaria prophylactic tablets.
- Blister treatment (Compeed patches are the best).
- Rehydration powder eg Dioralyte.
- Analgesics (paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin).
- Plasters and zinc oxide tape.
- Throat lozenges.
- Diamox (helps with acclimatisation).