



Earthbound Expeditions

Annapurna Base Camp Trek

14 days, from US\$1,287 per person

Duration

14 days

Start and end

Kathmandu

Accommodation

Teahouses

Getting there

Fly to Pokhara

Grade

Moderate

On the trail

5 to 7 hours a day

Meals

All meals on the trek

Max altitude

4,130 m

Best season

Mar to May, Oct to Nov

Group size

Up to 10

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Annapurna Base Camp Trek Overview

Trek into the Annapurna Sanctuary, surrounded by a ring of high peaks, and stay the night there. It is the only moderate trek in Nepal that ends with mountains on every side.

Trek overview

The trek follows a river gorge for nine days to a glacial basin surrounded by mountains, which makes it different from any other trek in Nepal. On most treks you see the mountains from one side. Here the valley narrows to an entrance about a hundred metres wide, and once you pass through it there are high peaks on every side. Annapurna I, Annapurna South, Hiunchuli, Gangapurna and Machhapuchhre form a complete ring. The area is known as the Annapurna Sanctuary, and the name describes it accurately.

Who this trip is for

This is the trek we recommend to first-time trekkers, and experienced walkers often return to it. It reaches 4,130 m, which is high enough to notice the altitude but low enough that serious altitude illness is uncommon. There is nothing technical, no pass to cross and no snow underfoot in the trekking seasons. It does require stamina on stone steps: the Ulleri staircase on day 4 and the descent from Chhomrong on day 7 involve thousands of steps, and your leg muscles, rather than your lungs, will feel it in the evening.

Why this route includes Poon Hill

There is a shorter Annapurna Base Camp trek that starts at Jhinu and skips the Ghorepani ridge. It saves two days, but you miss the best viewpoint in the region, and you lose the gradual first week that makes the ascent to the Sanctuary more comfortable. Poon Hill, at 3,210 m on day 5, provides the acclimatisation needed for day 8, and it offers one of the finest sunrises in Nepal without a difficult walk.

Avalanche risk in the gorge

Between Hinku Cave and Machhapuchhre Base Camp the trail passes through a narrow, steep-sided section that is prone to avalanches after heavy snow. People have been killed there. We cross this section early in the morning, before the sun loosens the slopes, and in a winter with heavy snow we turn groups around rather than take them through.

Planning your trek

Other treks in the same region: the Annapurna Circuit over the Thorong La, the Mardi Himal trek along a ridge facing Machhapuchhre, the shorter Ghorepani and Ghandruk circuit by way of Poon Hill, and the Annapurna Luxury Trek with lodge comfort. To compare with the Everest region, see the Everest Base Camp trek.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
2	Kathmandu valley, fly to Pokhara	–	–	830 m
3	Drive to trailhead, walk to Tikhedhunga	4–5 hrs	9 km	1,480 m
4	Tikhedhunga to Ghorepani	6–7 hrs	12 km	2,850 m
5	Poon Hill at dawn, on to Tadapani	6–7 hrs	13 km	3,210 m
6	Tadapani to Chhomrong	5–6 hrs	10 km	2,150 m

7	Chhomrong to Dovan	5–6 hrs	11 km	2,500 m
8	Dovan to Machhapuchhre Base Camp	6–7 hrs	11 km	3,700 m
9	Base Camp at sunrise, down to Dovan	7–8 hrs	16 km	4,130 m
10	Dovan to Jhinu Danda hot springs	6–7 hrs	14 km	1,780 m
11	Walk out, drive to Pokhara	4–5 hrs	8 km	830 m
12	Pokhara, free day	–	–	830 m
13	Fly or drive to Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
14	Fly home	–	–	–

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

We meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel. If you arrive early, there is time to walk around Thamel. In the evening we brief you on the trek, check your equipment and answer your questions.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Dinner

Day 2

Kathmandu Valley sightseeing and fly to Pokhara

A morning tour of the old city: the hilltop stupa at Swayambhunath, the cremation ghats at Pashupatinath and the carved courtyards of Patan. In the afternoon, a 25-minute flight west to Pokhara, a lakeside town below the Annapurna range.

Altitude: 830 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Pokhara Meals: Breakfast

Day 3

Drive to the trailhead and trek to Tikhedhunga

A short drive from Pokhara to the end of the road, then the first day of walking, past the river, rice terraces and villages where the trail is also the main street. The half day is deliberately easy, to give your legs time to adjust.

Altitude: 1,480 m On foot: 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Tikhedhunga Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Trek via Ulleri to Ghorepani

The hardest day of the first half of the trek: more than 3,000 stone steps up to Ulleri, then a gentler climb through rhododendron forest to Ghorepani. In March and April the forest is in red flower all the way.

Altitude: 2,850 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Ghorepani Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Hike to Poon Hill at dawn and trek to Tadapani

An early start in the dark for the 45-minute climb to Poon Hill, one of the best viewpoints in Nepal, where Dhaulagiri, Annapurna South and Machhapuchhre turn gold at sunrise. Return for breakfast, then walk through mossy forest to Tadapani.

Altitude: 2,630 m On foot: 6–7 hrs including Poon Hill Night: Teahouse, Tadapani Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek to Chhomrong

A steep descent to the Kimrong river and a climb up the other side to Chhomrong, a village built in terraces down a hillside below Annapurna South. Chhomrong is the entry point to the Sanctuary trail.

Altitude: 2,150 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Chhomrong Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek into the gorge to Dovan

Down the long stone staircase from Chhomrong, across the river, and up through Sinuwa and Bamboo into the main gorge. The trail passes through wet forest, where you may see langur monkeys, and the valley narrows on both sides until only a strip of sky is visible overhead.

Altitude: 2,500 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dovan Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Trek via Deurali to Machhapuchhre Base Camp

The trail passes Hinku Cave and climbs through Deurali, where the forest ends and the gorge opens out. We cross the avalanche-prone section early in the day for safety. By the afternoon you reach Machhapuchhre Base Camp, directly below the summit of Machhapuchhre (Fishtail).

Altitude: 3,700 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Machhapuchhre Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Sunrise at Annapurna Base Camp and descend

A two-hour climb to the Sanctuary for sunrise, the main goal of the trek: a flat glacial basin at 4,130 m, with Annapurna I, Annapurna South, Hiunchuli and Machhapuchhre forming a complete ring around you. Then a long descent, because sleeping at a lower altitude keeps this trek safe.

Altitude: 4,130 m at Base Camp On foot: 7–8 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dovan Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Trek to Jhinu Danda and the hot springs

Back down and out of the gorge, then a short descent below Chhomrong to Jhinu Danda. Twenty minutes further down are natural hot pools beside the river, which are very welcome after eight days of walking.

Altitude: 1,780 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Jhinu Danda Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Trek to the road head and drive to Pokhara

An easy morning's walk through terraced fields and along the river to the road head, then a drive back to Pokhara, where you have a hot shower, a proper bed and dinner beside the lake.

Altitude: 830 m On foot: 4–5 hrs Night: Hotel, Pokhara Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 12

Free day in Pokhara

A free day. Options include a boat trip on Phewa Lake, the Sarangkot viewpoint, a massage, or paragliding, for which Pokhara is one of the best places in the world.

Altitude: 830 m On foot: None, free day Night: Hotel, Pokhara Meals: Breakfast

Day 13

Return to Kathmandu

A short flight, or the longer scenic drive along the Trishuli river if you would like to see the country between the two cities. In the evening there is a farewell dinner with the guides and a Nepali cultural show.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, flight day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 14

Departure

We take you to the airport. If you have a few hours before your flight, we can store your bags and suggest parts of the old city you did not see on day 2.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- In Kathmandu: Two nights in a three-star hotel, twin or double rooms with a private bathroom: one night before the trek and one after.
- In Pokhara: Three nights in a three-star hotel by the lake, twin or double rooms with a private bathroom.
- On the trek: Eight nights in teahouses on a twin-share basis, with private bathrooms in most lodges at Tikhedhunga, Ghorepani, Chhomrong and Jhinu Danda, and shared bathrooms higher up.
- On the trek: Breakfast, lunch and dinner from day 3 to day 10, and breakfast and lunch on day 11, with tea or coffee at every stop.
- In Kathmandu and Pokhara: Breakfast every morning, dinner on day 1, and the farewell dinner on day 13.
- Airport transfers: Pickup and drop-off at Kathmandu airport in a private vehicle.
- Kathmandu to Pokhara: The 25-minute flight on day 2.
- Pokhara to Kathmandu: By tourist coach on day 13, or by air at extra cost.
- To and from the trail: The drive from Pokhara to the trailhead on day 3, and back from the road head on day 11.
- A government-licensed guide, who leads every departure.
- One porter for every two trekkers.
- Wages, insurance, food and lodging for every guide and porter.
- Annapurna Conservation Area permit (ACAP)
- TIMS card
- Kathmandu tour: Swayambhunath, Pashupatinath and Patan with an English-speaking guide on day 2.
- Sleeping bag and down jacket: Lent for the trek, if you need them.
- Farewell dinner: With a Nepali cultural show, in Kathmandu on day 13.
- First aid: A group medical kit, carried by your guide.
- Taxes: Local taxes and VAT.

Not included

- International flights to and from Kathmandu
- Nepal entry visa, bought on arrival
- Travel insurance covering trekking to 5,000 m and helicopter rescue, which is compulsory
- Rescue and evacuation costs, which your travel insurance covers
- Lunch and dinner in Kathmandu and Pokhara, other than the meals listed above

- Entry fees at the Kathmandu monuments
- Hot showers, device charging and wifi in the teahouses, \$2 to \$5 each time
- Drinking water, snacks, and drinks other than tea and coffee
- Personal trekking clothing and equipment
- Tips for your guide and porters, usually \$120 to \$180 per trekker
- Costs from delays, cancellations, weather, landslides or illness, which are outside our control

Packing list

One weight limit, and no flight baggage limits

Your porter carries a strict maximum of 20 kg, shared between two trekkers, and there are no airstrip weight checks on this trek. We provide the duffel bag and the sleeping bag. Anything you do not need on the trek can be stored free of charge at our Kathmandu or Pokhara office.

On your head

- Sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat that covers your ears
- Two buffs or neck gaiters
- Sunglasses, category 3. The sun is stronger than the temperature suggests
- Head torch and spare batteries
- Sunscreen SPF 50 and lip balm with sun protection

On your body

- Three or four merino or synthetic base layers, no cotton
- Two mid layers; fleece is enough
- A light down or synthetic jacket for the evenings
- A waterproof jacket and trousers that pack small
- Two pairs of trekking trousers, one lined
- Underwear for four or five days, washed along the way

Hands and feet

- Light gloves, and a warmer pair for the mornings
- Trekking boots with ankle support, already broken in. This is essential
- Four pairs of wool trekking socks
- Camp shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Gaiters, if you are trekking in winter or early spring

Bags

- Duffel bag for the porter, 20 kg maximum. We provide one
- Daypack, 30 to 35 litres, with a rain cover
- Dry bags or thick liners. Rucksacks do not stay waterproof for long on a Himalayan trail

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to minus 10°C. We provide one
- Silk or cotton liner, for warmth and hygiene
- Earplugs. Teahouse walls are thin plywood

Health

- Personal first aid: blister plasters, tape, painkillers, rehydration salts
- Any medication you take regularly, in its original packaging
- Water purification: tablets, a filter, or a SteriPen
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes
- Throat lozenges. Most people develop a dry cough at high altitude

Papers and money

- Passport valid for six months, plus two photocopies
- Four passport photographs for permits
- Travel insurance certificate showing trekking cover to your maximum altitude
- \$200 to \$300 in small notes. The last reliable cash machine is in Pokhara; the machines at Ghorepani and Chhomrong are unreliable

Specific to this trek

- Trekking poles, which are essential. This trek has stone steps both up and down
- A swimming costume, for the hot springs at Jhinu on day 10
- Leech socks or long gaiters if you are trekking close to the monsoon
- A book. It gets dark and cold at Machhapuchhre Base Camp at five in the afternoon

Annapurna Base Camp Trek

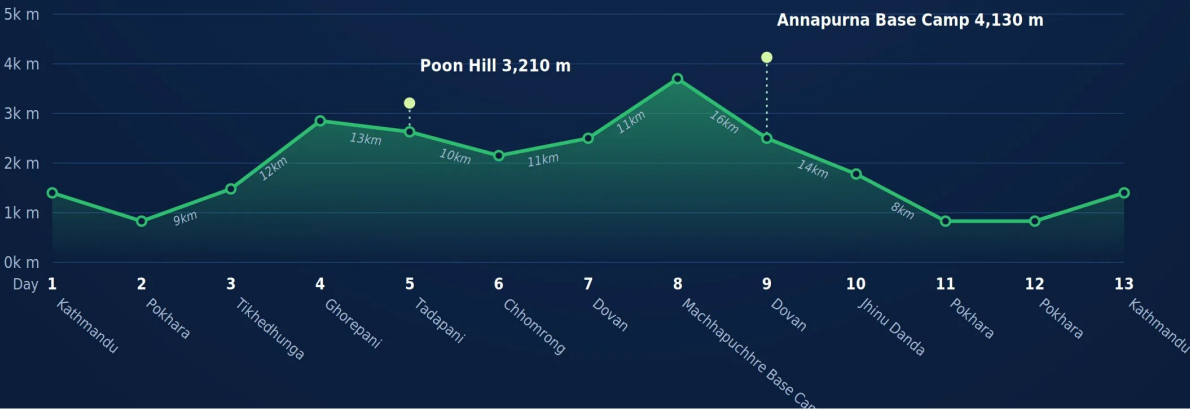
14 days | Highest point 4,130 m | Moderate



Start: Kathmandu valley, then fly to Pokhara

End: Back to Kathmandu

Altitude by day



Optional extras

Paragliding over Pokhara

\$95, 1 morning

A 30-minute flight from Sarangkot with views of the Annapurna range across the valley. Pokhara is one of the best places in the world for paragliding, and day 12 is already a free day.

Chitwan jungle safari

from \$390, +3 days

Travel to the lowlands to see rhinos, a relaxing change after nine days of trekking. It fits easily between Pokhara and Kathmandu.

Helicopter flight out from Base Camp

from \$2,500 for the aircraft, saves 2 days

Priced per aircraft rather than per seat, so it is much more affordable when shared between four people. Most people choose it to spare their knees rather than to save time.

Ghandruk instead of Ghorepani

no change, same length

A different first week through the large Gurung village of Ghandruk, with a museum and a shorter day 4. There is less climbing and no Poon Hill. Ask about this option if you are concerned about the Ulleri stairs.

Two more nights in Pokhara

\$120, +2 days

Two extra nights by the lake at the end of the trip, to rest before travelling home.

Single room

\$150

A room to yourself for all six hotel nights. On the trail, lodges are twin-share only, especially at Machhapuchhre Base Camp.

Luxury lodge upgrade in the Annapurna foothills

Price on request

Mountain Lodges of Nepal runs lodges in the Annapurna foothills at Dhampus, Landruk, Ghandruk, Majgaon, Tomijong and Birethanti. Where this route stops in one of those villages, we can book the lodge instead of the teahouse: a private room with its own bathroom, a garden and a full dinner.

Higher on the route there are only teahouses, so those nights stay the same. We confirm availability for your dates before you book.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: enepaltrekking.com/annapurna-base-camp-trek