



Earthbound Expeditions

Annapurna Circuit Trek

14 days, from US\$1,497 per person

Duration

14 days

Start and end

Kathmandu

Accommodation

Lodges

Getting there

Drive in, fly out

Grade

Moderate to strenuous

On the trail

4 to 6 hours a day

Meals

All meals on the trek

Max altitude

5,416 m

Best season

Mar to May, Oct to Nov

Group size

Up to 10

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Annapurna Circuit Trek Overview

A classic teahouse trek over the Thorong La pass, through landscapes ranging from subtropical valleys to high desert.

Trek overview

This is a traverse rather than a return trek, which defines its character. You walk up the Marsyangdi valley on the wet, green, Hindu side of the Himalaya, cross a pass at 5,416 m, and descend the Kali Gandaki valley into high desert on the dry, Tibetan Buddhist side. Over seven walking days the vegetation, architecture, people and religion all change completely. No other trek in Nepal offers this, and it is why the circuit was one of the best-known treks in the world for thirty years.

Who this trip is for

Trekkers who want variety rather than a single mountain destination. Most days are moderate, four to six hours on good trails, but there is one very long day: you get up at three in the morning, climb for four to five hours to the pass, and descend for three to four hours on the other side. If you can manage one very long day at altitude, the rest of the trek is comfortable. If an eight to nine hour day at 5,400 m concerns you, Annapurna Base Camp is a better choice.

The road

A jeep track now runs from Besisahar to Manang, and another from Muktinath down to Jomsom and Beni. Some trekkers who walked the circuit before the roads were built consider it spoiled. In fact it is now shorter. The four days that were spent walking along the road are now driven, which is why this itinerary takes fourteen days rather than twenty-one. The most important section, from Manang over the Thorong La to Muktinath, has no road and never will. We drive the jeep tracks and walk the NATT trails, marked alternative paths that keep you off the jeep road for most of the remaining route.

Why the acclimatisation day in Manang is essential

Manang, at 3,540 m, is where you acclimatise for a pass that is nearly two kilometres higher. The Himalayan Rescue Association aid post in the village, run by volunteer doctors, gives a free altitude talk every afternoon during the season, and every group attends. Some itineraries skip this day and cost less. The Thorong La is the most common place in Nepal for trekkers to develop serious altitude sickness, and this day is the main reason our groups generally avoid it.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
2	Kathmandu valley sites	–	–	1,400 m
3	Drive to Besisahar	6 hrs	–	760 m
4	Jeep up the valley to Chame	5–6 hrs	–	2,670 m
5	Chame to Pisang	5–6 hrs	15 km	3,300 m
6	Pisang to Manang	5–6 hrs	14 km	3,540 m
7	Manang, acclimatisation day	3–4 hrs	–	3,540 m

8	Manang to Yak Kharka	3–4 hrs	9 km	4,050 m
9	Yak Kharka to Thorong Phedi	3–4 hrs	7 km	4,540 m
10	Over the Thorong La to Muktinath	8–9 hrs	15 km	5,416 m
11	Muktinath to Jomsom	5–6 hrs	18 km	2,720 m
12	Fly Jomsom to Pokhara	25 min	–	820 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. The evening is free for you to rest, and we meet to brief you on the days ahead.

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

Day 2

Kathmandu Valley sightseeing

An easy day around the old city: Swayambhunath (the Monkey Temple) on its hill, the great stupa at Boudhanath, and the carved squares of Patan. A gentle start before the mountains.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3

Drive to Besisahar

We leave Kathmandu and drive west into the hills, past rivers and terraced farms, to the small town of Besisahar, where the circuit begins.

Altitude: 760 m On foot: Drive, 6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Besisahar Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Drive to Chame

A rougher jeep road climbs north beside the Marshyangdi river to Chame, the main village of the district, with the first close view of Annapurna II above the pine forest.

Altitude: 2,670 m On foot: Drive, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Chame Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Trek to Pisang

The first day of walking. A steady climb through forest past Bhratang and the great curved rock face, before the valley opens out at Pisang, with its peak rising behind the village.

Altitude: 3,300 m On foot: 15 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Pisang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek to Manang

A high, scenic route through the old villages of Ghyaru and Ngawal, with houses and prayer walls in the Tibetan style, to the large village of Manang below the Annapurnas.

Altitude: 3,540 m On foot: 14 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Manang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Acclimatisation day in Manang

A day to allow your body to adjust to the altitude before going higher. There is an optional short climb to a viewpoint or to the glacial lake, with wide views, before returning to rest.

Altitude: 3,540 m On foot: Optional 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Manang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Trek to Yak Kharka

A shorter day at a higher altitude, leaving the forest for open grazing land. Yaks graze on the juniper slopes, and the air is noticeably thinner by the time you reach Yak Kharka.

Altitude: 4,050 m On foot: 9 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Yak Kharka Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Trek to Thorong Phedi

A short, slow walk to the foot of the pass, to save energy for the next day. Thorong Phedi is the last stop before the pass, so we arrive early and rest.

Altitude: 4,540 m On foot: 7 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Thorong Phedi Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Cross the Thorong La to Muktinath

The longest day of the trek, with an early, cold start. A long, slow climb leads to the Thorong La, the highest point of the trek, marked with prayer flags. Then a long descent on the far side to the temple town of Muktinath, which is sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists.

Altitude: 5,416 m at the pass On foot: 15 km, 8–9 hrs Night: Teahouse, Muktinath Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Trek to Jomsom

After visiting the pilgrims' water spouts at Muktinath, we descend into the dry, wind-eroded Kali Gandaki valley and follow it down to Jomsom, an old trading town between the peaks.

Altitude: 2,720 m On foot: 18 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Jomsom Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Fly to Pokhara

A short, scenic morning flight between the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri massifs down to the lakeside town of Pokhara. The rest of the day is free to relax by the lake.

Altitude: 820 m On foot: Flight, 25 min Night: Hotel, Pokhara Meals: Breakfast

Day 13

Return to Kathmandu

A short flight or a scenic drive takes you back to Kathmandu. The evening is free for a farewell dinner and a last walk around Thamel.

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

Day 14

Departure

We take you to the airport for your flight home.

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

What's included

- Airport transfers & ground transport
- Licensed English-speaking guide
- Accommodation throughout the trip
- All permits & national park fees
- Meals as per the itinerary

Not included

- International flights
- Travel & rescue insurance
- Personal trekking gear
- Tips & personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Packing list

Two weight limits, and the Jomsom flight has the lower one

Your porter carries a strict maximum of 20 kg, shared between two trekkers. The Jomsom to Pokhara flight allows 15 kg and bags are weighed, so anything you buy in Manang has to fit within that limit. We provide the duffel bag and the sleeping bag, and store the rest of your luggage free of charge in Kathmandu.

On your head

- Sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat that covers your ears
- Two buffs or neck gaiters
- Sunglasses, category 3 or 4. Snow glare at this altitude is strong
- 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, one fleece and one light insulated layer
- Down jacket. We provide one; bring your own if you feel the cold at night
- 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

- Liner gloves and insulated outer gloves or mittens
- 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 15°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
- Diamox, if your doctor agrees, and any medication you take regularly
- 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 helicopter cover to 6,000 m
- \$250 to \$400 in small notes. The last cash machine is in Manang, and it runs out of money in October

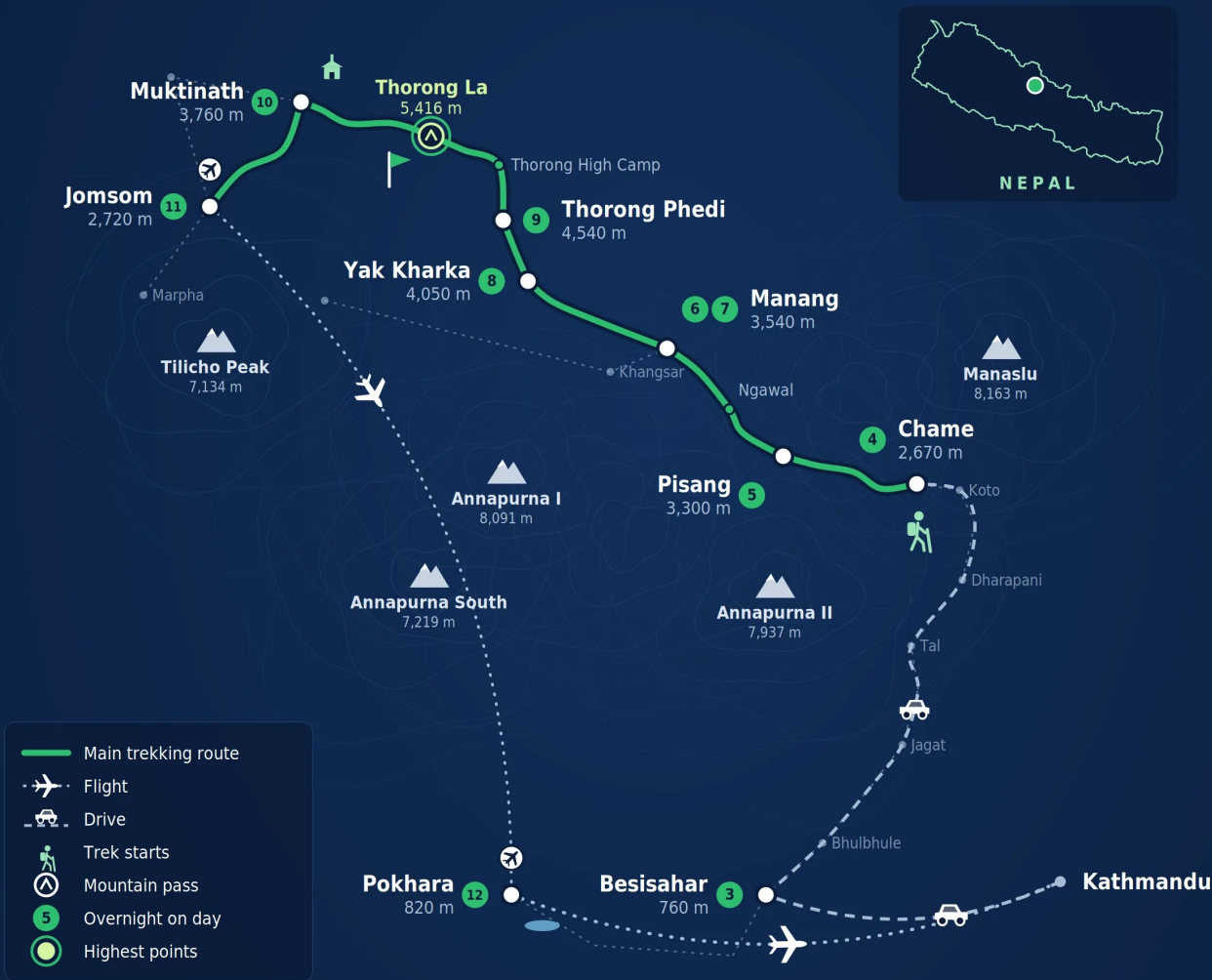
For the pass crossing

- A very warm hat, and mittens rather than gloves. You leave Thorong Phedi at three in the morning at about minus 15°C
- An insulated flask. The hose of a water bladder freezes on the day of the crossing, while a bottle in your pack does not
- Microspikes, if you are trekking in March or late November. Your guide will tell you in Manang whether to buy a pair there
- Trekking poles, especially for the 1,650 m descent to Muktinath
- Snacks you enjoy. Few people want breakfast at three in the morning, but everyone needs the energy

Route map

Annapurna Circuit Trek

14 days | Highest point 5,416 m | Moderate to Strenuous



Start: Drive to Besisahar End: Back to Kathmandu

Altitude by day



Optional extras

Tilicho Lake

from \$290, +3 days

A lake at 4,919 m in a side valley near Manang, and one of the highest lakes of its size in the world. This is a demanding extension, with two nights above 4,000 m and a long, exposed traverse. It also provides very good acclimatisation for the pass.

Poon Hill on the way home

from \$240, +3 days

Walk out through Ghorepani instead of flying from Jomsom, and end the trek with one of the best sunrises in Nepal. It costs less than the flight and takes three days longer.

Upper Mustang from Jomsom

from \$1,600, +8 days

The trek ends in Jomsom, the gateway to Lo Manthang. Continuing into the walled former kingdom is the best extension in the Annapurna region, and requires a restricted area permit at \$50 a day.

Paragliding over Pokhara

\$95, 1 morning

A 30-minute flight from Sarangkot, with views across the valley of the range you have just trekked through. There is time for it on day 12.

Chitwan jungle safari

from \$390, +3 days

A chance to see rhinos, and a relaxing change after crossing a 5,416 m pass. It fits between Pokhara and Kathmandu.

Single room

\$140

A room to yourself for the four hotel nights. On the trail, lodges are twin-share only, especially at Thorong Phedi.

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