



Earthbound Expeditions

Chisapani and Nagarkot, the Kathmandu Valley Rim

5 days, from US\$349 per person

Duration

5 days

Grade

Easy

Max altitude

2,430 m

Start and end

Kathmandu

On the trail

4 to 6 hours a day

Best season

Oct to Apr

Accommodation

Hotels and a lodge

Meals

Breakfast daily

Group size

Up to 12

Getting there

Private car

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Chisapani and Nagarkot, the Kathmandu Valley Rim Overview

Three easy walking days on the ridge around Kathmandu, from a national park gate and oak forest to sunrise over Langtang, ending in two of the oldest towns in the valley.

Trek overview

This is a five-day trip, with three days on foot along the rim of hills that encloses the Kathmandu valley. You drive an hour to Sundarijal, climb through Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park to a pass at 2,430 m and sleep at Chisapani. The next day you follow the rim east to Nagarkot for the sunrise view, and on the third day you descend to Changunarayan and Bhaktapur.

Who this trip is for

The trek suits anyone who can walk four to six hours on a hill path and does not want to spend two weeks trekking. This includes beginners, families with children aged about ten and over, people with a short holiday, and people who are concerned about altitude and want to find out whether they enjoy walking in Nepal before committing to a longer trek. It is the least expensive and the easiest trek we offer.

What to expect

This is not a wilderness trek. The first day is through forest, but much of the second day follows a ridge that is farmed and inhabited, and for part of the afternoon you walk on a dirt road with occasional jeep traffic. In return, the Langtang range is in view for most of the way.

Why we recommend it

An hour from Thamel you are walking through oak forest with barbets calling, and the descent on the last morning ends at a temple that has been in continuous use since the fifth century. Few short walks offer this much in three days. It also makes a good first week for travellers who will fly to Lukla later in the same trip.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
2	Drive to Sundarijal, walk to Chisapani	4–6 hrs	12 km	2,194 m
3	Chisapani to Nagarkot along the rim	6–7 hrs	22 km	2,175 m
4	Nagarkot at dawn, down to Changunarayan and Bhaktapur	3–4 hrs	9 km	1,541 m
5	Fly home	–	–	1,400 m

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

When you land at Tribhuvan International Airport, a member of our office will meet you with a sign bearing your name and take you to your hotel in Thamel. If you have the afternoon free, you can walk to Durbar Square. Over dinner we go through the route, check your boots and tell you about recent weather on the ridge.

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

Day 2

Drive to Sundarijal and trek to Chisapani

You drive an hour north-east to Sundarijal, then climb concrete steps beside the pipe that carries water down to the city. The park gate is early on the route, and we buy your ticket there. Above Mulkharka the path narrows into oak and rhododendron forest and climbs steadily to the pass at Borlang Bhanjyang, then descends for half an hour to Chisapani.

Altitude: 2,194 m On foot: 12 km, 4–6 hrs Night: Lodge, Chisapani Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 3

Trek from Chisapani to Nagarkot along the valley rim

This is the longest day. You leave the forest for a ridge of terraced fields and villages, and walk on a dirt road for a good part of the afternoon. Lunch is at Chauki Bhanjyang. Langtang and the Jugal peaks are on your left for almost the whole way to Nagarkot.

Altitude: 2,175 m On foot: 22 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Hotel, Nagarkot Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 4

Sunrise at Nagarkot and trek to Changunarayan and Bhaktapur

You set out before six to see the morning light on Langtang and Dorje Lakpa, and on an exceptionally clear morning a wider range of peaks. After breakfast you walk down the southern ridge through pine forest and terraces to Changunarayan, where the oldest dated stone inscription in Nepal stands beside a statue of Garuda. You then continue to Bhaktapur and drive back to Kathmandu.

Altitude: 1,541 m On foot: 9 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, lunch

Day 5

Departure

After breakfast, you have the morning free until your flight. If you wish, we can take you to Patan to visit the museum, or to the airport at any time you choose. Most people leave Nepal from here. Some stay on for a longer, higher trek, which we can also arrange.

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

What's included

- Airport transfers and private vehicle throughout
- Licensed English-speaking guide
- Four nights of accommodation, twin share
- National park and heritage site entry fees
- All meals on the three walking days

Not included

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Personal walking gear
- Tips and personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Packing list

You carry a small daypack

There is no porter on the standard version of this trek, because there is very little to carry. You walk with a daypack containing water, a warm layer, a waterproof jacket and your camera, and your suitcase is kept in the hotel storeroom in Kathmandu until day 4. If you prefer not to carry a daypack, a porter costs \$22 a day and we can arrange one. We lend trekking poles and a dry bag free of charge, so you do not need to buy either for this trip.

Headwear and sun protection

- A sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat for the early morning at Nagarkot
- Sunglasses. The winter light reflected off the terraces is bright
- Sun cream, SPF 30 or higher, and lip balm
- A small head torch for walking to the viewpoint before six
- A buff for the dusty road section on day 3

Clothing

- Two walking shirts, one long-sleeved
- A fleece or light down jacket. Nagarkot in January is near freezing at dawn
- A waterproof jacket, even in the dry season
- Walking trousers, and something comfortable for the evening
- One extra warm layer if you travel in December or January

Footwear and gloves

- Boots or sturdy trail shoes, worn in. Ankle support helps on the steps
- Three pairs of walking socks
- Light gloves for the early starts, November to February
- Sandals or trainers for the evening
- Blister plasters, although your guide also carries them

Bags

- A 25 to 35 litre daypack, which is all you need on this trek
- A dry bag or bin liner to line it
- Your main suitcase can be stored at the Kathmandu hotel free of charge
- A small pack cover, or use the bin liner instead

Sleeping

- No sleeping bag is needed. Both lodges provide blankets and a duvet
- A sleeping bag liner if you prefer your own sheet
- Earplugs. Chisapani has thin walls and the village wakes early
- Warm socks to sleep in, December to February

Health

- Any personal medication, in its original packaging, plus a few days' spare
- Rehydration salts, two or three sachets
- Paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Hand sanitiser and a small roll of toilet paper
- Insect repellent if you travel in September or late May

Documents and money

- Your passport, which is checked at the park gate
- Two passport photographs, which are occasionally requested
- Travel insurance certificate
- About NPR 4,000 in small notes for tea
- A bank card, which can be used in Bhaktapur but not before

Route map

Chisapani and Nagarkot, the Kathmandu Valley Rim

5 days | Highest point 2,430 m | Easy



Altitude by day



Optional extras

A porter for two walkers

\$22 a day, no extra days

A porter is not needed on this route, but some walkers prefer to carry nothing.

A second night at Nagarkot

from \$45, +1 day

Two chances to see the sunrise instead of one, which in March or April roughly doubles your chances of a clear view.

Bhaktapur with a heritage guide

\$35, same day

Three hours with a guide who can explain the woodcarving, the Potters' Square and the earthquake restoration work. Bhaktapur benefits from a heritage guide more than any other town in the valley.

Finish at Sankhu

\$60, +1 day

Descend north from the rim to the old Newar trading town of Sankhu and the Bajrayogini temple above it, then drive back to Kathmandu. It is quieter and far less visited than Bhaktapur.

Everest mountain flight

\$220, 1 morning

A one-hour flight along the range from Kathmandu with a guaranteed window seat. This is the most reliable way to see Everest on a trip like this one.

Chitwan, three days

from \$390, +3 days

Travel south to the lowland jungle to see rhino, gharial and a wide variety of birds. It combines well with a short valley walk if you have a spare week.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: enepaltrekking.com/chisapani-to-nagarkot-to-dhulikhel-hike