



Earthbound Expeditions

Kathmandu Valley Day Hikes

6 days, from US\$497 per person

Duration

6 days

Grade

Easy to moderate

Max altitude

2,762 m

Start and end

Kathmandu

Walking time

2 to 7 hours a day

Best season

Oct to Apr

Accommodation

Hotel and guesthouse

Meals

Breakfast and lunch

Group size

Private, from 1

Getting around

Private vehicle

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Kathmandu Valley Day Hikes Overview

Four different hills on the rim of the Kathmandu Valley, walked one a day from a single hotel base, with a night at a monastery at the end.

Tour overview

Five days of walking on the hills around the Kathmandu Valley, based at a hotel in the city rather than on a trail. The trip includes four summits, two of them close to 2,750 m, and a night in a working monastery, with no permits, porters or domestic flights. It offers the most walking you can do in Nepal without going on a trek.

The hills around the valley

Many visitors see only the valley floor and assume the surrounding hills are suburbs. In fact, Shivapuri is a national park where leopards live. Phulchowki has around three hundred recorded bird species and the finest broadleaf forest within fifty miles of the city. From either summit on a winter morning, you can see two hundred kilometres of the Himalaya.

Ending at a monastery

After four days of out-and-back walks, the final walk leads to a destination. The route from Dhulikhel to Namobuddha is a one-way walk, and Namobuddha is one of the three most important Buddhist sites in Nepal, set on a hill among fields and receiving few visitors. The guesthouse is simple, and the evening prayers are the part most travellers remember.

Who this trip is for

Walkers with a week available, travellers with a gap in their Nepal itinerary, families with teenagers, and anyone who wants days in the hills without living out of a duffel bag. It also works well in the week before a Himalayan trek, because four days of climbing to 2,700 m is proper preparation.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
2	Budhanilkantha to Shivapuri and back	6 to 7	16 km	2,732 m
3	Godavari to Phulchowki and back	6 to 7	18 km	2,762 m
4	Pharping to Champadevi to Kirtipur	5 to 6	14 km	2,285 m
5	Dhulikhel to Namobuddha	4	10 km	1,750 m
6	Namobuddha to Panauti, and out	2 to 3	8 km	1,400 m

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

We meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel. The afternoon is free. In the evening we go through the four hills with you, check the weather forecast for the week and decide the order of the walks, so that the clearest morning is used for the highest hill.

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

Day 2

Hike to Shivapuri

Drive half an hour north to the Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park gate at Budhanilkantha, then climb steadily through oak and rhododendron forest. Nagi Gompa, a Tibetan nunnery on a shoulder of the hill at 2,300 m, is an hour and a half up and a good place to stop. The summit at 2,732 m is two hours further, with views of Ganesh Himal and Langtang to the north. You descend by the same route and are back at the hotel for tea.

Altitude: 2,732 m On foot: 6 to 7 hours, 16 km Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, packed lunch

Day 3

Hike to Phulchowki

Drive forty minutes south-east to Godavari and the botanical garden, then walk four hours up through the finest forest near the city: subtropical at the bottom, oak and laurel in the middle, and moss and rhododendron near the top. Phulchowki, at 2,762 m, has a shrine, an army post and, on a clear day, a view of Everest to the east. The descent in the afternoon is easier.

Altitude: 2,762 m On foot: 6 to 7 hours, 18 km Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, packed lunch

Day 4

Hike from Pharping to Champadevi and Kirtipur

Drive south to Pharping, where the Asura cave and the Tibetan monasteries above it are worth an hour before you start walking. You then climb the pine ridge to Champadevi at 2,285 m, which has a stupa, prayer flags and a view over the whole valley. The descent follows the ridge north and down into Kirtipur, a Newar hill town that few visitors reach.

Altitude: 2,285 m On foot: 5 to 6 hours, 14 km Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, packed lunch

Day 5

Walk from Dhulikhel to Namobuddha

Drive an hour east to Dhulikhel, an old trading town on the road to Tibet with a Himalayan view from its ridge. The walk to Namobuddha takes four hours through terraced farmland and Tamang villages, and ends at the stupa where, according to legend, a prince gave his body to a starving tigress. You stay at the monastery guesthouse, which is simple, and can attend the evening prayers.

Altitude: 1,750 m On foot: 4 hours, 10 km Night: Monastery guesthouse, Namobuddha Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 6

Walk from Namobuddha to Panauti and return to Kathmandu

You can attend the morning prayers at six if you wish, then walk two hours down through the fields to Panauti, a Newar town at the meeting of two rivers, with a thirteenth-century temple and very few visitors. From there the vehicle takes you to the airport or back to your hotel, an hour away.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: 2 to 3 hours, 8 km Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- Airport transfers, and a private vehicle with a driver to and from every trailhead
- Five nights: four in the same Kathmandu hotel and one at the Namobuddha monastery guesthouse
- A licensed hiking guide on all five walking days
- Breakfast every morning, a packed lunch on each day hike, and full board at Namobuddha
- Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park entry, and the Phulchowki and Namobuddha fees

- A valley hiking map, and the option to change the order of the hills to suit the weather

Not included

- International flights and the Nepal visa
- Dinner in Kathmandu, which is inexpensive and best chosen yourself
- Drinks, tips and personal expenses
- Travel insurance
- Optional extras: the Everest scenic flight, a valley heritage day, Nagarkot at the end

Packing list

Luggage stays at the hotel

On this trip you only unpack once. Bring a daypack for the hills and a small overnight bag for the single night at Namobuddha. Everything else stays in your Kathmandu hotel room, which we keep for you across the two nights you are away from it.

Headwear

- A sun hat with a brim, for the open ridge on Champadevi
- A warm hat for the summits between November and February
- Sunglasses

Clothing

- Layers rather than one warm coat. You start in the valley at 1,400 m and finish at 2,700 m
- A light waterproof jacket, in any month
- A warm layer for the summits and for evenings at the monastery, which has no heating
- Clothes that cover shoulders and knees for the monasteries at Pharping and Namobuddha

Footwear

- Boots with ankle support and good grip, for forest tracks with roots and loose stone
- Three pairs of walking socks
- Trekking poles, which we can lend you if you prefer not to fly with them. Both descents are long
- Comfortable clothes and shoes for evenings in Kathmandu

Health

- Sun cream, factor 30 or above. The valley is at altitude and the sun is stronger than the temperature suggests
- A blister kit, to be used as soon as you feel rubbing
- A dust mask or buff for the traffic on the drive out of Kathmandu
- Insect repellent, which is needed on the forest hills in warmer months
- Your own prescription medicines in their original packaging

Bags

- A 20 to 25 litre daypack with a rain cover, which is all you carry
- A small overnight bag for the one night at Namobuddha
- Bottles or a bladder holding two litres of water, as there is nowhere to buy water on the hills
- Binoculars, which are especially useful for birdwatching on Phulchowki

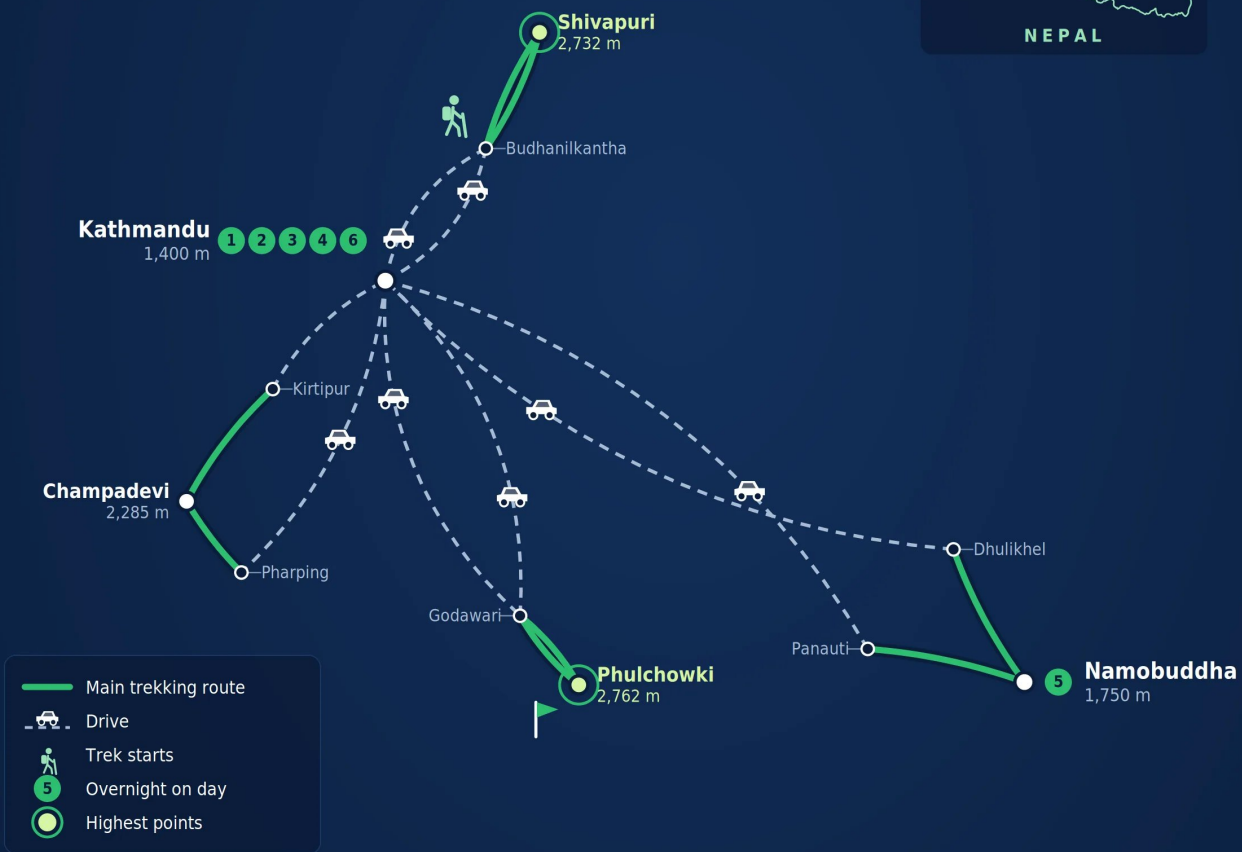
Documents

- A passport valid for at least six months, and two passport photographs for the visa
- US dollars in clean notes for the visa counter
- Travel insurance details, on paper as well as on your phone

Route map

Kathmandu Valley Day Hikes

6 days | Highest point 2,762 m | Easy to Moderate



Altitude by day



Optional extras

A valley heritage day

\$95, 1 extra day

Patan, Bhaktapur and Swayambhunath with a cultural guide instead of a hiking guide, added as a rest day between the two long hill days. This is the most popular addition.

Everest scenic flight

\$220, 1 morning

An hour-long flight along the range with a guaranteed window seat, returning before eight, so it can fit before any of the hill days. It depends on the weather and is refunded in full if it does not operate.

Two nights at Nagarkot at the end

\$210, 2 extra days

A ridge hotel at 2,175 m with a north-facing room, two sunrises, and a walk down to Changu Narayan on the last morning. It is the gentlest way to finish the trip.

Chandragiri, up on foot and down by cable car

\$65, replaces a day

A 900 m climb from Thankot to the ridge at 2,550 m, with a temple and a very good view at the top, and a cable car for the descent. It takes half the effort of Shivapuri and offers most of the views.

A bird guide instead of a hiking guide

\$25 a day, same length

Phulchowki and Shivapuri are two of the best birdwatching forests in central Nepal. If birdwatching is your main interest, we provide a specialist guide, and the walking becomes slower and more focused on birds.

Upgrade to a garden hotel in Patan

\$180, same length

A quieter base than Thamel, in a Newari courtyard house, and ten minutes closer to the two southern hills. Recommended if you prefer to avoid the noise of central Kathmandu.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: enepaltrekking.com/kathmandu-valley-day-hikes