



THE ANNAPURNA SANCTUARY TREK

12 nights / 13 days

Introduction

The Annapurna region in Central Nepal is the most geographically and culturally diverse region for trekking with over 3,000 visitors. The **Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP)** working along with the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation have declared this region as area of conservation and sustainable development. Stretched over **2600 sq. km.**, the area boasts of a variety of diverse cultures, tribes and castes as the Brahmins, Chettris, Newars, Gurungs, Magars, Manangis and the Tibetans. This area has sub-tropical lowlands, valleys, bamboo, oak and rhododendron forests, alpine meadows, windswept desert plateaus and the towering Annapurna Mountains. This area has the world's deepest river gorge, Kali Gandaki, lying some 6900 metres/22,563 ft. below some of the world's largest and most beautiful mountains as the Annapurna I (world's 8th highest) & Fishtail (one of the most beautiful). Animals and birds are in abundance in this region. 440 species of birds and animals like the marten, deer, langur and the elusive snow leopard live in this area.

Grade :	3 +
Duration :	11 days
Road :	Drive from Kathmandu / Pokhara
Air :	Fly out from Pokhara / Kathmandu
Warning:	Altitude Sickness



ITINERARY

Day 01: Kathmandu

Arrive Kathmandu. Upon arrival, meet by representatives from **Sacred Summits (P.) Ltd.** and transferred to the Hotel.

Eve: Trek briefing followed by welcome dinner at a typical Nepali restaurant.

Day 02: Kathmandu

10:00 Hrs - After breakfast, meet at the lobby and proceed for the sightseeing tour of the ancient **Kathmandu city** with its many beautiful temples and shopping courtyards. As one crosses from the modern area of New Road into the Durbar Square, the one time Freak Street, one is suddenly in the midst of Kathmandu's famed medieval architecture. The major tourist attractions on this tour includes a visit to the **Hanuman Dhoka (Hanuman ate)** which takes its name from the Monkey God, Hanuman from the epic, Ramayana The palace of the Malla Kings located in the Hanuman Dhoka is of the 14th Century and it is still retained as a ceremonial palace of the present Shah dynasty. Important traditional Royal ceremonies including the coronation of the King of Nepal are still conducted at Hanuman Dhoka Palace. Near the Hanuman Dhoka is the house of the Living Goddess Kumari - **Kumari Bahal**. Two painted stone Lions stand guard at the entrance. Visitors may enter the courtyard to see the Living Goddess but are forbidden to take photographs.

Also visit **Kasthamandap**", a temple built from the wood of a single tree from Where Kathmandu city derived its name.

Continue drive to **Swayambhunath Stupa** - one of the protected monument sites of the Kathmandu Valley. It is situated on the top of the hill lying 4 kilometers west of Kathmandu. More than 2,500 years old, this ancient landmark is connected to the visit of Manjushree who created Kathmandu – a lake than – by draining its waters. The sage saw a celestial lotus in bloom on the top of this hill and sacrificed it. It is an important pilgrimage center as well as the center of art, architecture, religion and culture of Mahayana Buddhism.

The stupa of Swayambhu is a Hemispherical mound of compacted earth, and is built to specific rules, and is replete with symbols. The mound represents the four elements of earth, fire, wind and water. The 13 gilded rings of the spire symbolize the 13 steps of the ladder leading to *Nirvana*, the final salvation. The shrine is bedecked in colorful prayer flags. The pilgrim's progress to Swayambhunath's holy premises is actually through a sylvan path of 365 steps. The entrance is graced by a huge *Vajra* (Symbol of thunder bolt). Statues of Buddha adorn the four corners of the stupa. Statues of goddess Ganga and Jamuna guard the eternal flame behind it. There is a Tibetan gompa (monastery) and innumerable chaityas (small stupas). The balcony of Swayambhunath is ideal for viewing the entire valley spread out below.



There are five images of Panchadhyani Buddha around the main stupa of the Swayambhu. They are Achhyobhya in east, Ratna Sambhava in south Amitabha in the west, Amoghasiddhi in the north and Vairochana in the south-east just by the side of Achhyobhya. Two Sikhara temples known as, Pratappur and Anantpur are standing on either side of the main stupa. To the right of this temple is a monastery called Swayambnu Vahi. It is one of the oldest monasteries of the Sayambhu area. On the west of the main stupa is the monastery called Devadharma Gumba. Similarly there is a temple of Vayapura in southwest corner along with chaitya known as Mangal Vahudwara chaitya near by. It is a unique style of Chaitya found in the Kathmandu Valley.

PM : Free for packing

Overnight at the Hotel.

Day 03: Kathmandu / Pokhara

08:00 Hrs - After breakfast, check out from the hotel and start drive to Pokhara. The 5 hours scenic drive is along the banks of the Trishuli River to Pokhara – one of the most beautiful city in Nepal situated on the laps of the mighty Annapurna range with lakes and green surroundings.

Pokhara stands at 884 m above sea level, about 700 m lower than Kathmandu Valley. In Kathmandu Valley the high temples are all around you, in Pokhara it is the mountains. Only foothills separate Pokhara from the full height of the Himalayas, and the magnificent 8000 m. peaks of the Annapurna range. It is a vacationer's paradise with its crystal clear lakes and fantastic views of the Annapurna range including the Fish Tail Mountain.

On arrival proceed to the Camping Ground next to the lake OR check in at a lake side hotel. Eve: enjoy boatripe on Lake Phewa.

Overnight at the Hotel.

DAY 04: POKHARA / NAYA PUL / GHANDRUNG

08:00 Hrs – Drive Pokhara to Nayapul (1 ½ hour drive). Upon arrival, trek down to the river for 10 minutes and cross the new suspension bridge, thus the name Naya Pul (New bridge). Then climb up to the main village located on the ridge. Walk through on cobbled stones and then follow the trail along the Modi river for about 20 minutes to arrive at the settlement of Birethanti. After crossing the bridge, there is a check post where the National Park entry permit must be purchased prior to starting the trek.

After completing the formalities, take the right hand trail and a gradual ascent leads us through field (of paddy in summer and mustard in winter) to arrive at upper Birethanti village after about one hour. Walk further through more terraced fields and bamboo groves on a gentle ascent along hillside and arrive at a river bed. Take the trail leading into the forest. The forest provides a welcome shade and an ideal place for the porters to prepare lunch as water is readily available from a stream.

Trek through the forest and follow the trail along the hillside and after about 20 minutes arrive at the settlement of Shauli Bazaar, which is located along the banks of the Modi river. The trail from here continues to climb steadily for about 2 hours until we arrive at a gate with a signboard saying “Welcome to Ghandrung”.



However, there is a steep climb for another 20 minutes to arrive at the main village of Ghandrung.

Ghandrung is the largest Gurung village in Nepal where the sons and male member of the local community have sacrificed their lives to serve for the Gurkha Armies and security Forces around the world. The brave and chivalrous Gurkhas have earned themselves the reputation as the most loyal and indomitable soldiers in the world! The afternoon is free for rest or optional activities such as a visit to **the Annapurna Conservation Museum** and a tea break at the home of a renowned Gurkha soldier who may show you his Victoria Cross won during the first or second world war. In the evening the local Gurung womenfolk will join the campers for a village get together to show their talents in singing and dancing. Guests are welcome to join in. A contribution to the dancing group may be necessary.

Overnight at the lodge in Ghandrung.

DAY 05: CHHOMRONG (1950 m)

After a wake up to a marvelous sunrise (weather permitting) and a hearty breakfast, descend for about 20 minutes from the village to valley bottom, cross a small bridge and trek on a winding trail on a hillside cleared for making terraced fields. There are a few settlements enroute and after about 3 hours arrive at a teahouse and after crossing the bridge, it is a steep ascent for 30 minutes to the settlement of Jhinu danda. Here are a few tea houses and many Tibetans selling trinkets to passing tourists.

This place is fast becoming a popular resting place because of the close proximity to the Hot Springs. There is a belief that sickness is cured if one takes a dip in the hot spring. The hot spring is located about 20 minutes walk from the settlement to the river bank and is a man made pool where the hot sulfur water is tapped through pipes. While the lunch gets prepared the guests are at liberty to visit this pool and take a much desired hot bath.

After lunch, the trek to **Chomrong** – the gateway to the Annapurna Sanctuary take about 2 hours. It is a very steep ascent to the top of the ridge with a tea house. The roof of the Tea house can be seen from the bottom but getting there is a tough two hours of huffing and puffing up the mountain hillside. Upon arrival at the ridge, a 10 minute walk on a gentle undulating trail through a forests brings us to Chomrong which is also located on a ridge with a wide expansive view of the Annapurna Range of mountains and valleys towards the Annapurna Sanctuary area. The views of the Annapurna Range is closest from here than anywhere on this trail.

Overnight at the Lodge in Chomrong.

DAY 06: HIMALAYAN HOTEL (2100 m).

Go down until the suspension bridge which crosses the Chomorong Khola and then climb up the opposite side for about 30 minutes till you reach the hamlet of Banuwa. Carry on for another thirty minutes until you reach Sunawa (about 2400m) where you will find at least two lodge-restaurants. Here the path leaves cultivated fields to enter the beautiful tropical forest. You can follow the ridge of the hill, about 2500 meters high, but unfortunately the mountain is drained by several small streams and the trekkers are forced to take several ascents and



descents. It takes about an hour to reach Khuldi ghar (2,477m) where a second check post is encountered.

ACAP tickets are checked here as the head quarters of ACAP and its environment center are also located at Khuldi Ghar.) After the check post the path suddenly descends until it reaches the hamlet of Bamboo (2300m) with four or five lodges and is a good place to make a lunch break.

As the name suggest, Bamboo marks the beginning of the huge bamboo forest which leads, after about an hour of walking, to Tiptop (2571m). There are two lodges here competing with the lodges established at Doban(2606m). Soon after Doban you will enter the sacred forest of Jode Yehm, where near the waterfall on the east bank of Modi khola, you will see an alter surrounded by thousands of white banners suspended from the trees. A sign indicates the name of the place and reminds the travelers not to lean over. One assumes it is better not to disturb the Gods. From Doban, it will take an hour to reach Himalayan Hotel (2873m).

DAY 07: MACHHAPUCHHRE BASE CAMP (3700 m)

The track continues through the middle of the forest, going up and down following the flow of the rivers, until the last stretch where a steep path leads to Hinku Cave (3139m) It will take another three hour to reach the actual site of the Hinkui Cave, noticeable by a huge rock half sheltering a bhatti. From here it will take about three hours to reach Deorali (three lodges, 3230m). On the way you probably would have to cross two neves, or slabs of old frozen ice, commonly found in glacial area.

Walking from Deorali to Bagar (3300m) takes about fifty minutes. Instead of lush vegetation, only bushes and high grasses survive. The path crosses the lodges twice on rather shaky bridges so as to avoid avalanches and landslide prone area. It is a good place to make a lunch break.

The next stop, the base camp of Mchhapuchhare, is about two hours walk away. Machhapuchhare or "fishtail", has been thus named because its twin summits resembles a twitched fishtail. After having walked along the river for thirty minutes, the path rises up and goes through several neves. (If it has snowed recently, this part of the route will be quite difficult, though the use of crampons is not necessary, a stick should suffice.)

DAY 08: ANNAPURNA BASE CAMP (4200 m)

To enjoy the magnificent sunrise over the Sanctuary one has to go to the Annapurna Base Camp(ABC) which is only two hours away. Except for a few hills, the route is flat and therefore quite easy. Also, the spectacular views of Annapurna south in the forefront are so satisfying that one easily forgets the exhaustion. At the end of the route (4130 m), there are about five or six lodges. A little further, the path leads to a small hill which is the best point to admire the entire panorama of the Sanctuary.

DAY 09: BACKTRACK TO HIMLAYA HOTEL - 6 hrs.

DAY 10: BACKTRACK TO CHHOMRRONG (2170m) - 5 hrs.

DAY 11: GHANDRUNG(1920m./ 6400 ft.)



After breakfast trek towards Kyumrong Khola for lunch. After lunch trek to Ghandrung Village via Kyumrong Danda. **Ghandrung (6297')**. This area is offers some of the finest trekking in Nepal. The Anapurna range and Machapuchhere dominate the mountain views through glimpses further East to Lamjung Himal and Manaslu Range are also possible. Ghandrung village is rich through its excellent farming land and the generations of its sons who have sent and received pay and pensions from the British and Indian Gurkha armies.

DAY 12: Pokhara

After breakfast, trek through a pleasant down hill trail and then the trail levels out and follows the banks of the river. After having spent a long time at higher altitudes, the heat sometimes makes traveling on the open riverbed an uncomfortable one. After about 3 hours arrive at the riverside settlement of **Birethanti** for lunch. This is also the main entry point to the Annapurna Conservation Area and after lunch, walk along the high banks of the Modi Khola for about 30 minutes and end trek at Naya Pul to meet waiting vehicles for the one hour drive back to **Pokhara**. Trek Duration – 4 hours + 1 hour drive.

Overnight at the Hotel.

DAY 13: Drive back to Kathmandu.

**** End of Arrangements ****