



SUNKOSI (“River of Gold”)
(Duration 8 nights / 9 days)
Kathmandu/ Kathmandu

Introduction:

The Sunkosi is one of the three main tributaries of the Sapat kosi system. Its tributaries stretch from the Jugal Himal to the Khumbu Himal. Our trip traverses 170 km. through the middle hills of Nepal, on one of the most beautiful rivers of the world - the River of Gold, rated as one of the top ten rivers in the world for multi-day trips by outside magazine of USA.

Views of the Himalayas, visits to Hindu temples, exotic people and exciting whitewater highlight this adventure.

Itinerary

Day 01: Drive from Kathmandu to Dolal Ghat, (2 hrs)

We begin by packing our waterproof bags into the boats. The boats loaded, we cast off sometime before mid-day and head downstream beginning our river trip and float down the Bhote kosi to join the SUNKOSI. At this point the Sunkosi is a peaceful river and our first day is a leisurely introduction to river life.

The Sunkosi is one of the most diverse river trips in Nepal because its channel cuts through such a vast part of the countryside. Rich colours and varied rock formations are evident the entire length of our river trip. The Sunkosi traverses the Mahabharat Range and follows one of the main geological fault lines of the Himalayas. The gently sloping hills are typical of this interesting geological area of Nepal.

The variety during this trip is not limited to topography, changing river condition or wildlife. Local people add the magic touch. We come in contact with many different ethnic groups, each unique and colourful. Throughout the trip, the people, their customs and dress will fascinate us and our experienced Nepalese guides will add to our understanding and appreciation of the area. Unlike other modes of travel, the river provides easy access to remote areas seldom seen by westerners.

For lunch we stop on one of the sandy beaches that flank the river. Our first river meal and those that follow will be delicious and well balanced. In the afternoon the canyon changes. The ridges begin to close in and the vegetation becomes thicker. As we float through this interesting geological area, we encounter a number of small sized rapids.



Day 02: At Sunkoshi

After breakfast we continue down river. The valley which varies in width from half to one kilometre, is never static. One bend in the river may reveal rounded, shrub covered hills and the next high, steep ridges dotted with pines and deciduous trees. In the morning, just before reaching Jhunga khola, we will scout a rocky rapid. After several hours run we stop at Jhunga khola, a beautiful Newari village. Located on a bluff above the river, the village is a collection of white houses and grainfields. Some of the houses display intricate wood carvings, for which the Newaris are famous. In the centre of the village is a cobbled square shaded by a large peepal tree. The square is surrounded by small shops where merchants trade. In one we will find biscuits, sewing material, soap and cigarettes; in another a brass merchant forging posts; a cobbler and a tea shop. The village is reminiscent of medieval Europe.

In the afternoon we pass the confluence of the Tamba kosi (Copper River). Just above the confluence is one of the largest rapids on the Sunkosi, the Nepalese call it 'Meatgrinder'. This rapid is a great introduction to the power of the Sunkosi and can be rated as class 4 on a scale from 1-6.

Day 03: *On this day the canyon changes. The ridges begin to close in and the vegetation becomes thicker. We float through an interesting geological area and encounter a number of small to medium size rapids.*

This afternoon, we will stop on a beautiful beach. We will have time to relax and explore, fish, swim, photograph or do whatever we chose.

Day 04: *We continue through a maze of interesting rock formations; evidence of the complex and dynamic forces of the great Himalayas. One geological theory believes that the Himalayas were formed by two great land masses colliding and the pressure caused during this process, pushed up the Himalayas. Because of the tremendous stress there are many faults throughout Nepal. The Sunkosi criss-crossed one of these faults and the formations we see today are extraordinary.*

The whitewater picks near the village of Harkapur. We run some of the largest rapids of the trip, rated from 4 to 5. In the afternoon we will camp near the confluence of the Dudh Kosi (Milk River). The Dudh kosi flows from the Khumbu icefall at the foot of Mt. Everest.

Day 05: *Below the Dudh Kosi the river widens and flows through a broad valley. Fans of sand and gravel spill into the river from side canyons. During the monsoon rains these become torrential streams. This area of Nepal receives most its 170mm of rain in the summer months. Without this climatic cycle Nepal would be a desert.*

We float past many trails and suspension bridges. For generations' foot travel has been the only way of transporting food from one area of Nepal to another. With the construction of roads, trade centres are able to distribute goods more conveniently.



but this is not so in the areas we see. Porters buy goods in the Terai and carry them into the mountains. The main trade routes often cross the river and at the suspension bridges, we can witness the constant flow of foot traffic. Further on, the Sunkosi bends south and cuts through the Mahabharat Range. The topography changes. The steep hills are behind us and the area is more gentle. This afternoon we run a number of small rapids rated 3 to 4. We will camp near the Rasuwa khola.

Day 06: *Today we encounter tropical vegetation. The river narrows into a gorge lined by thick forest. Broad leaf trees, ferns, mosses, bamboo and creepers canopy the river banks. When we stop for lunch today we can shower under a beautiful waterfall. It's a photographer's paradise! The rest of the afternoon we meander through the gorge and enjoy the changing scenery.*

Tonight we camp on a broad beach bordered by a waterfall. The beaches on the lower section of the river are deposits for the mineral mica. The beaches sparkle in the sun and reflect the moon at night.

Day 07/08: *A 'Ghat' is a place near a river. It can be a ferry, a cremation site, a village or a prominent topographical area. Today we pass several important ghats. They are major crossings from the terrain to the mountains. The main trails connect to the east-west highway, one day walk south from the Sunkosi.*

Bunghilaghat is a pastiche of languages. Many different ethnic groups gather on the river banks to wait for the dugouts to ferry them across. We see some Limbu's and Rai's in this area. They are Tibeto-Burman people who make a large ethnic group called Kiranti. It was the Kiranti Kings who ruled the Kathmandu valley until the second century AD. Among the Limbu's some hold the belief that the 'milky way' is the reflection of the Sapt Kosi.

Tonight we camp near the confluence of the other two main rivers of the Sapt Kosi system, the Arun and the Tamur. The junction is called Tribenighat.

Day 09: *Below Tribenighat we will stop at Brah Kshetra, a famous Hindu temple. During the full moon in January, thousands of Hindus meet at the temple to worship. Legend has it that a demon God used to inhabit the area. He had a special power granted to him by higher Gods, preventing any mortal from killing him. Since this demon God was such a nuisance to the holy men and the pilgrims who came to the temple to pray, Vishnu descended from heaven and took the shape of a pig. A terrible battle ensued in which the demon God was killed. So each year pilgrims come to the temple to celebrate the death of the demon God and Vishnu's victor in the form of 'Brah', the pig.*

Before noon we end our trip at Chattrra, where our jeep will be waiting. It is two and half hours drive to Biratnagar, where we meet the flight to Kathmandu. Fly 50 min. to Kathmandu.

Upon arrival in Kathmandu, met by representatives and transferred to the hotel.



**** End of the Arrangement****