

The Essential Quick Guide For Discerning Travellers

MUST-DOS KATHMANDU

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HIMALAYAN INSPIRATION

A must-do on a Nepal trip: experience the Himalayas. Don't have the time (or energy) for long treks? Stay in Nagarkot, where hotel rooms afford spectacular views, or turn to hour-long mountain flights, operated daily by local carriers such as Buddha Air (www.buddhaair.com), for up-close views of the ranges from the air. If you have a little more time, head to Thankot and hop onto a cable car. Then, spend the next 10 minutes or so admiring the majestic landscape as it takes you up to Chandragiri hill, which affords stunning panoramic views of the Kathmandu valley and Himalayan ranges.

CULTURE IN A MEAL

Feast on authentic Nepali fare while enjoying traditional music and dance at Bhojan Griha (www.bhojagriha.com), a restored palace. For a taste of Newari food, head to Jheegu Bhwoyehhen Restaurant in Thamel, where you can wash down dishes such as Swan Puka (fried goat's lung) with local alcohol. Also give momo (dumplings), one of the most popular dishes in Nepal, a try. Readily available, these are usually filled with buffalo or chicken meat, or spinach and cheese.

Fast Facts

CURRENCY
Nepalese rupee
US\$1 = 103.124NPR

VISA
Requirements vary. Visit www.nepalimmigration.gov.np for details.

BEST TIME TO VISIT
Spring (March and April) and autumn (mid-September to mid-November) are the prime seasons. It's very rainy in summer due to the monsoon season, while winter is often too cold for trekking – although it's still a great time to visit Kathmandu.

HOW TO GET THERE
Singapore Airlines subsidiary SilkAir flies 5 times a week from Singapore to Kathmandu.

EARN MILES
KrisFlyer members can earn 2,197 miles with a flight from Singapore to Kathmandu on eligible fares. For more information, visit www.krisflyer.com.

MORE INFORMATION
www.welcomenepal.com



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ANCIENT HOLY PLACES

There's more to Nepal than the Himalayas; explore the myriad religious sites in the capital city. The Kathmandu valley is home to seven World Heritage Sites, including Swayambhunath, a hilltop complex of Hindu and Buddhist shrines and temples; the Boudhanath stupa (www.boudhanathstupa.org), one of the largest of its kind in Asia; and Pashupatinath Temple (www.pashupatinathtemple.org), the country's holiest Hindu shrine.

INTO THE VALLEY

One of the best ways to get to know the city is to wander its many lanes and streets. The back alleys of Patan are fascinating – filled with old buildings, temples and craftsmen at work – and lead to the historic Patan Durbar Square: a UNESCO World Heritage Site with old temples, palaces and sculptures. Thamel, a thriving tourist area, is chock-full of restaurants, curio shops and great places to drink, with live music from local bands.

THE BEAUTY OF NATURE

Those seeking to experience the best of nature can go on day treks. Birdwatchers in particular will find much to love – almost 500 species of birds are found in the Kathmandu valley. Also worth checking out is Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park (www.snnp.gov.np). Just a short drive from downtown, this protected wildlife reserve is home to over 300 species of birds, as well as animals such as leopards, pangolins and barking deer.



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A A traditional Newari community feast.

B Watch the sun set and the sun rise over the mountains when you overnight in Nagarkot.

C Patan Durbar Square and its back streets are the centre of life.

D In spite of the bustle of pilgrims and tourists, there's a sense of peace at the Boudhanath stupa.

E A white-throated kingfisher at Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park.

PHOTOS 123RF.COM