

Earthbound Expeditions

Annapurna Panorama Trek

7 days, from US$687 per person

Duration **7 days**	Grade **Easy**	Max altitude **3,210 m**
Start and end **Kathmandu**	On the trail **3 to 6 hours a day**	Best season **Mar to May, Oct to Dec**
Accommodation **Teahouses**	Meals **All meals on the trek**	Group size **Up to 12**
Getting there **Fly to Pokhara**		

Annapurna Panorama Trek Overview

Two days of walking up to a ridge, an hour on a hilltop at 3,210 m, and sunrise over the Dhaulagiri and Annapurna ranges. The shortest and gentlest trek we offer in the Himalaya.

Trek overview

The trip takes seven days, four of them on the trail. You fly to Pokhara, drive to the road head above Birethanti, and walk for two days through Magar and Gurung villages to the ridge at Ghorepani. Before dawn on the third walking day, you climb for 45 minutes to the viewing tower on Poon Hill, at 3,210 m, and watch the sunrise on Dhaulagiri, Annapurna South, Nilgiri and Machhapuchhre. You then return the way you came.

Who this trip is for

First-time trekkers in the Himalaya, families with children who enjoy walking, and anyone with less than two weeks available. There is no technical ground, no pass, no snow in the trekking seasons and no significant altitude. If you can manage a hilly day walk at home, and do it two days in a row, you are fit enough for this trek.

How this differs from the Ghorepani Ghandruk circuit

We offer two treks that include Poon Hill, and they are different trips. The circuit continues east from Ghorepani to Tadapani and down through Ghandruk, which adds three days, considerably more climbing and several hundred dollars. This trek goes up to Poon Hill and returns down the same staircase. It is shorter, less expensive and easier, and it is the right choice if you have days rather than weeks in Nepal. If you have two weeks, choose the circuit instead.

The two demanding parts

The climb from Tikhedhunga to Ulleri is a stone staircase of more than 3,000 steps, with roughly 500 metres of ascent. It is not dangerous, but it is slow and tiring. The other is the 4:30 am start, in the cold and dark, for the walk up to the viewpoint. The rest of the trek is straightforward.

Key highlights of the Annapurna Panorama Trek

- Sunrise on Poon Hill (3,210 m)
- Dhaulagiri, Annapurna South, Nilgiri and Machhapuchhre in one view
- Rhododendron forest above Ulleri, in flower from March
- Magar and Gurung villages on the climb to the ridge
- Four walking days, with a highest point of 3,210 m

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	-	-	1,400 m
2	Fly to Pokhara	-	-	822 m
3	Jeep to the road head, walk to Tikhedhunga	3–4 hrs	7 km	1,480 m

4	Tikhedhunga to Ghorepani, over the Ulleri stairs	5–6 hrs	8 km	2,874 m
5	Poon Hill at dawn, down to Hile	6–7 hrs	13 km	3,210 m
6	Walk out to Birethanti, drive to Pokhara, fly to Kathmandu	2–3 hrs	6 km	1,400 m
7	Fly home	-	-	1,400 m

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

When you land in Kathmandu, we meet you outside customs and drive you to your hotel. There is nothing to do for the trek this evening, so you can rest after your flight. Over dinner your guide briefs you on the four walking days, checks your boots and insurance, and answers your questions.

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

Day 2

Fly to Pokhara

A 25-minute flight west to Pokhara, or six hours by road if you would like to see the countryside. Pokhara lies at 822 m beside a lake below the Annapurna range, and from here you can see how close the mountains are. The afternoon is free.

Altitude: 822 m On foot: None, flight day Night: Hotel, Pokhara Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3

Drive to the road head and trek to Tikhedhunga

An hour and a half by jeep to the road head above Birethanti, where your permits are checked at the conservation area post. Then a gentle walk upstream beside the Bhurungdi Khola, on stone paths and across suspension bridges, past buffalo and terraced millet. The first day is deliberately short, because the next day is harder.

Altitude: 1,480 m On foot: 7 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Tikhedhunga Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Trek via Ulleri to Ghorepani

The most demanding day of the trek. A steady climb to Ulleri up a stone staircase of more than 3,000 steps, taken slowly with plenty of stops, then an easier section through rhododendron and oak forest via Banthanti and Nangethanti to Ghorepani on its ridge. Roughly 500 metres of the climb is on the staircase.

Altitude: 2,874 m On foot: 8 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Ghorepani Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Hike to Poon Hill at dawn and trek to Hile

An early start at 4:30 am and a 45-minute climb by head torch up the steps to the viewing tower on Poon Hill, to see the first light on Dhaulagiri, Annapurna South, Nilgiri and the fishtail summit of Machhapuchhre. Return for breakfast, then a long descent along the same route to Hile. The descent is hard on the knees but easy on the lungs.

Altitude: 3,210 m at Poon Hill On foot: 13 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Hile Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek to Birethanti, drive to Pokhara and fly to Kathmandu

Two easy hours beside the river to Birethanti and out through the checkpoint, where the jeep is waiting. Lunch in Pokhara, then the afternoon flight to Kathmandu. In the evening we have dinner together.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: 6 km, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Departure

We take you to the airport for your flight home. If you have a spare day, Kathmandu has plenty to see: the stupa at Boudhanath, the carved squares of Patan, and shops in Thamel that can post your purchases home for you.

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

What's included

- Airport transfers & ground transport
- Licensed English-speaking guide
- Accommodation throughout the trip
- All permits & conservation area fees
- Meals as per the itinerary

Not included

- International flights
- Travel & rescue insurance
- Personal trekking gear
- Tips & personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Permits and other costs

Permit	Fee	Issued by
Annapurna Conservation Area permit (ACAP). SAARC nationals pay NPR 1,000, and children under ten do not need one. It is issued at the Tourist Service Centre in Kathmandu and the tourism board office in Pokhara, or online. Checked at Birethanti on the way in.	NPR 3,000, about $22	By the National Trust for Nature Conservation, in Kathmandu or Pokhara
TIMS card. NPR 1,000 for a group booked through an agency, and the same for SAARC nationals. Individual trekkers have not been able to buy one directly since April 2023. The checkpoint is beside the conservation area desk at Birethanti.	NPR 2,000, about $15	Nepal Tourism Board and the Trekking Agencies' Association, through a registered agency

Licensed guide. Required by law for foreign trekkers in the conservation area since April 2023, and still enforced at the Birethanti checkpoint.	Inside the trek price	Nepal Tourism Board licence, carried by your guide

Other cost	Amount	Note
Kathmandu to Pokhara flight, both ways	$120–180	25 minutes each way. Or $25 by tourist coach, which takes six to seven hours
ACAP permit	NPR 3,000, about $22	SAARC nationals NPR 1,000. Free for children under ten
TIMS card	NPR 2,000, about $15	NPR 1,000 for a group, through an agency. Issued by the tourism board and the trekking association
Jeep, Pokhara to the road head and back	$30–40	Shared by the whole party, not per person
Teahouse bed	$5–10 a night	Three nights. Ghorepani is the most expensive
Food on the trail	$18–25 a day	Three meals and tea. Less expensive than on any other trek we run
Licensed guide	$28–35 a day	Plus their bed and board
Porter, one per two trekkers	$20–25 a day	Plus their food and lodging. Many trekkers on this route choose not to have a porter
Kathmandu and Pokhara hotels	$35–60 a night	Three-star, three nights in total across the two cities
Travel insurance to 4,000 m	$70–120	Should include helicopter rescue, even at this altitude
Hot shower, charging, wifi	$2–4 each, each time	Not included, cash only
Tips, guide and porter	$60–100	Per trekker, at the end

Packing list

A short, low trek needs much less equipment than most packing lists suggest. The item people most often underestimate is a warm set of clothes for the viewpoint at dawn.

A short packing list

With four walking days, three nights in teahouses and nothing above 3,210 m, you need only a small bag. We provide the duffel bag and a sleeping bag, and a porter shared between two trekkers carries up to 20 kg for the pair. Many people on this trek carry everything themselves. Anything you do not need on the trek can be stored free of charge at our Kathmandu or Pokhara office.

On your head

- Sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat for the dawn climb
- Buff or neck gaiter
- Sunglasses, category 3
- Head torch and spare batteries, which are essential
- Sunscreen SPF 50 and lip balm with sun protection

On your body

- Two or three merino or synthetic base layers, no cotton
- One fleece or mid layer
- A light down or synthetic jacket, needed for about an hour on Poon Hill and rarely otherwise
- A waterproof jacket that packs small
- Two pairs of trekking trousers
- Underwear and socks for four days

Hands and feet

- Light gloves for the early start
- Boots with ankle support, already broken in. New boots cause blisters on stone steps
- Three or four pairs of walking socks
- Sandals or trainers for the evenings

In the daypack

- Two litres of water capacity, bottles or a bladder
- Purification tablets or a filter as a backup
- Snacks, because lunch is late on the Ulleri day
- A small first aid kit with blister plasters and paracetamol
- A power bank, though you can charge at every lodge on this route

Papers and money

- Passport valid for six months, plus a photocopy
- Two passport photographs for the permits
- Travel insurance certificate showing trekking cover to 4,000 m
- $100 to $150 in small notes. The last cash machine is in Pokhara

Specific to this trek

- Trekking poles, which on this route are more useful for descending than for climbing
- Warm layers packed at the top of your bag on the night at Ghorepani, so you can dress in the dark
- A swimming costume if you add a night in Pokhara at the end
- Leech socks if you are trekking close to the monsoon

Altitude profile

Day	Place	Sleep at	Highest point
1	Kathmandu	1,400 m	-
2	Pokhara	822 m	-
3	Tikhedhunga	1,480 m	-
4	Ghorepani	2,874 m	-
5	Hile	1,430 m	3,210 m
6	Kathmandu	1,400 m	-

Getting to the trailhead

You travel to Pokhara, then by jeep. There is no mountain airstrip that could delay you for days, so a trek this short can be planned around your return flight.

Flying to Pokhara

The flight from Kathmandu takes 25 minutes and lands at an airport on flat ground at 822 m. There is no Lukla flight on this trek: delays are measured in hours rather than days, and if the weather closes in completely, you can travel by road. This is why a seven-day trek can be booked around a fixed flight home without the spare day that every Everest itinerary needs.

Travelling by coach

The drive from Kathmandu to Pokhara takes six to seven hours along the Trishuli river on the Prithvi Highway, and costs about 25 US dollars by tourist coach. On a trip this short most people fly, but the drive is a good way to see central Nepal and some travellers prefer it. Let us know which you prefer when you book, and we will price the trip accordingly.

The changing trailhead

Treks used to start at Nayapul, but the jeep track now runs beyond Birethanti and, in dry conditions, as far as Hile or even Ulleri. We drive as far as the road is safe on your dates and start walking from there, so day 3 involves three to four hours of walking wherever the road ends.

Leaving the trek early

On this trek you are never more than half a day's walk from a jeep, although this is rarely needed. From Ghorepani a pony can be arranged within an hour, and a vehicle can meet you at the road head the same day. A helicopter to Pokhara is possible and costs around $2,000 for the aircraft, although we have never needed to call one on this trek.

Accommodation

Teahouse accommodation

The three nights on the trail are spent in teahouses: family-run lodges with one warm dining room and simple twin rooms with foam mattresses and thin walls. On this route most rooms have a private bathroom, and a hot shower is available for a fee. The nights are cool rather than cold, but a sleeping bag is still useful at Ghorepani.

Along the route

Tikhedhunga is a teahouse beside the stream. Ghorepani, on the ridge, has the best lodges on the route and is where you sleep before the dawn walk up Poon Hill. Hile is a small village teahouse on the way down. In Kathmandu and Pokhara you stay in three-star hotels.

Where	Nights	Type	Room	Bathroom
Kathmandu	2	Three-star hotel	Twin or double	Private, hot water
Pokhara	1	Three-star hotel, lakeside	Twin or double	Private, hot water
Tikhedhunga	1	Teahouse beside the stream	Twin	Private in most lodges, hot shower for a fee
Ghorepani	1	Teahouse on the ridge, the best on this route	Twin	Private, hot shower for a fee
Hile	1	Teahouse	Twin	Private, hot shower for a fee

Heating

A stove in the dining room at Ghorepani, lit at dusk, and no heating in the bedrooms. Lower down, heating is not needed.

Hot shower

Available every night of this trek, for $2 to $4. This is unusual: on most treks in Nepal, hot showers are not available at the higher lodges.

Charging

$1 to $3 per device in the dining room, and free in some lodges at Tikhedhunga and Hile. Mains electricity reaches most of this route.

Wifi

Free or a few dollars in nearly every lodge, including Ghorepani. It is slow but usually works.

Phone signal

Ncell and NTC cover the whole route, including the top of Poon Hill.

Water

Boiled water costs $1 to $2 a litre, and there are safe drinking water stations at Birethanti, Ulleri and Ghorepani that cost less. Please use them.

Sleeping bag

Provided, rated to minus 10°C. On this route most people use it as a duvet rather than sleeping inside it.

Bedding

A mattress, a pillow and a blanket in every lodge, with thicker blankets at Ghorepani than lower down.

Meals

Meal	Time	What it is like
Breakfast	7:00–7:30	Porridge, Tibetan bread, eggs, chapati, pancakes, tea or coffee
Lunch	12:00–13:00	Dal bhat, fried rice, noodles, soup, momo, and potato dishes
Dinner	18:30–19:30	Dal bhat, pasta, thukpa, curry and rice, and apple pie at Ghorepani
Tea	on arrival	Black, milk, lemon, ginger or masala. Included at every stop.

Diet	How we manage it
Vegetarian	Easy throughout. Dal bhat is vegetarian, freshly cooked, and refilled free of charge.
Vegan	Easier here than on the high treks, because the kitchens are close to Pokhara and restock daily. Tell us when you book.
Gluten free	Rice, dal, potatoes and eggs are safe. Bread, noodles and momo are not, and a teahouse kitchen cannot rule out cross-contamination.
Halal	There is no certified halal kitchen on the route. Vegetarian food is the practical option, as it is throughout the hills.
Meat	Safe at this altitude, unlike on the high treks. Meat comes up to the road head by jeep rather than being carried by porters for two days.

A typical day

Time	What happens
6:30	Tea in your room, and warm water to wash in
7:00	Breakfast in the dining room
8:00	On the trail. The guide sets a slow, steady pace on the stairs
12:00	Lunch at a teahouse on the route, about an hour
13:00	Two to three hours more. Days on this trek are shorter than on the longer treks
15:30	Arrive at the lodge, tea, check in, and a hot shower
17:30	Sunset on the mountains from the terrace at Ghorepani
18:30	Dinner, and the guide briefs you on the next day
20:30	Bedtime, because on the morning of Poon Hill the alarm is set for 4:30

Preparation

Six weeks of regular walking is enough. The most useful training is for stairs and descents rather than for fitness in general.

Difficulty 2 of 5

Short days, one long staircase and an early start. The gentlest trek we run in the Annapurna region.

- Three to six hours of walking a day for four days, with one day of six to seven hours.
- The Ulleri staircase has more than 3,000 stone steps and around 500 metres of ascent. It is the only demanding section of the trek.
- You sleep at 2,874 m for one night and reach 3,210 m for about an hour, which is low enough that altitude is rarely a problem.
- No ropes, no crampons, no pass, no exposed sections and no snow underfoot in the trekking seasons.
- Descending is harder on the body than climbing. Trekking poles and trimmed toenails are more useful here than extra fitness.

Getting ready

6 weeks before: Start walking
Three walks a week of forty minutes, at a pace where you can still talk. Any activity that raises your heart rate helps, but walking is what you are training for and is the best choice.

4 weeks before: Stair training
Replace one session with stair climbing: a stairwell, a stadium or a steep path, twenty to thirty minutes up and down. The Ulleri climb is the one part of this trek that benefits from specific training, and general fitness does not prepare you for it.

3 weeks before: Walk in your boots
Walk in the boots you will trek in, every time, with a daypack loaded to 4 kg. Blisters end more short treks than anything else, and they can be prevented by breaking in your boots in the weeks before you travel.

2 weeks before: Downhill training
Find a hill with 200 m of descent and walk down it repeatedly, using poles. Day 5 descends 1,444 m in a morning, which is hard on the thigh muscles.

1 week before: Consecutive days
Walk for four hours on Saturday and two hours on Sunday morning on tired legs. This is close to what the trek involves, and it will give you confidence that you are ready.

2 days before: Rest
Training at this stage will not improve your fitness and increases the risk of injury. Rest, and do not break in any new equipment.

Altitude and safety

The highest point is 3,210 m, where you spend about an hour. Serious altitude illness is unlikely on this trek.

The highest place you sleep is Ghorepani, at 2,874 m, for one night, and the highest point is 3,210 m, for about an hour at sunrise. Acute mountain sickness can occur from around 2,500 m, so it is possible here, but it is uncommon and almost always mild: usually a headache at Ghorepani that clears by the time you reach Hile the next afternoon. Altitude is not the main challenge on this trek.

What to watch for

- A headache at Ghorepani that does not improve with water and paracetamol
- Poor sleep on the highest night, or waking short of breath
- Loss of appetite at dinner after five hours of walking
- Nausea or dizziness on the climb to the viewpoint
- Breathlessness while standing still rather than while climbing stairs

How to prevent it

- Drink two to three litres of water on the day you climb to Ghorepani. Most headaches here are caused by dehydration rather than altitude.
- Walk the Ulleri staircase more slowly than feels natural. Arriving overheated and out of breath often leads to a difficult evening.
- Eat at Ghorepani even if you have lost your appetite, and limit alcohol, which is sold in every lodge on the ridge.
- Put on your warm layers before you leave for the viewpoint, not halfway up. You will stand still in the cold for half an hour at the top.
- If you feel unwell at Ghorepani, skip the sunrise walk. The mountains are also visible from the ridge outside the lodge.

What we do

1. Health check at Ghorepani

Your guide carries a pulse oximeter and measures your oxygen saturation and pulse on the one night you sleep above 2,500 m. On a trek this low the reading is usually normal, but it can show an early problem before you notice it yourself.

2. If you are unwell at dawn

The viewpoint is 336 m above the lodge, and it is not worth climbing if you feel unwell. You can sleep in and photograph the same peaks from the ridge after breakfast, and a few people do so every season.

3. Descending quickly

The route from Ghorepani to Hile descends 1,444 m in a single morning, on stone steps. Descent is the treatment for altitude sickness, and on this route it is always possible within hours.

4. Evacuation by road

The road head is a few hours below the highest lodge, and from there a jeep takes two hours to reach the hospital in Pokhara. Your insurance should still cover helicopter rescue, but on this trek evacuation is most likely to be by road.

Weather by month

Only two months of the year are unsuitable, fewer than on any other Annapurna trek we run. The trek stays open in winter because the trail never goes high enough to be closed by snow.

Month	Day at Ghorepani	Night at Ghorepani	Dawn on Poon Hill	Conditions	Note
January	7°C	-5°C	-10°C	Good	Cold, bright and very quiet, with the clearest air of the year. Occasional snow on the ridge at Ghorepani, which clears within a day.
February	9°C	-4°C	-8°C	Good	Still cold at night and warming during the month. Clear mountain views and quiet lodges.
March	13°C	0°C	-4°C	Best	The rhododendron begins to flower below Ghorepani, and walking conditions are excellent. The number of trekkers increases as the month goes on.
April	16°C	3°C	-1°C	Best	Peak flowering and the busiest time. The viewpoint is crowded at dawn, and the lodges at Ghorepani fill by mid-afternoon around Nepali New Year.
May	18°C	6°C	2°C	Good	Warm, green and increasingly hazy. Cloud builds after lunch, but the view at dawn is usually still clear.
June	19°C	9°C	5°C	Hard	The monsoon arrives in mid-month. Leeches in the forest, cloud on the peaks, and a clear sunrise is uncertain.
July	19°C	10°C	6°C	We do not run it	We do not run this trek. The viewpoint is usually in cloud and there are no mountain views.
August	19°C	10°C	6°C	We do not run it	As in July, with the heaviest rain of the year and road closures from landslides between Pokhara and the trail.
September	18°C	8°C	4°C	Good	The rain clears during the month, and the last week is clear and very green. Early September is still unpredictable.
October	15°C	4°C	0°C	Best	The most reliable month and by far the busiest. Expect a few hundred people at the viewpoint at sunrise, with a festive atmosphere.

November	12°C	1°C	-4°C	Best	Clear, cold and quieter. Less than 6 mm of rain falls during the month, and the light on Dhaulagiri is the best of the year.
December	9°C	-3°C	-8°C	Good	Frost at dawn, blue skies by nine, and very few people on the hill. The best-value month, and the one we most often recommend to people who prefer to avoid crowds.

Drawn from Nepali meteorological records for the Pokhara valley, adjusted for the height of Ghorepani at 2,874 m and checked against lodge readings. The Poon Hill column is what standing still at 3,210 m feels like before the sun arrives, wind included.

Guides and porters

Your guide

A government-licensed guide with wilderness first aid training leads every departure, and there is one porter for every two trekkers who want one. From thirteen trekkers, a second guide joins the group. Most of our Annapurna guides grew up within a day's walk of Ghorepani and have been to the viewpoint many times.

Porters and luggage

Each porter carries a maximum of 20 kg, which is your duffel bag and one other, shared between two trekkers. This is below the 25 kg limit set by the trekking association. If your bag is overweight, the load is divided rather than added to. Porters carry the main luggage, not daypacks: you carry your own water, camera and jacket.

Staff pay and insurance

Wages, insurance, food and lodging for every guide and porter are included in the price you pay, and are never collected separately on the trail. They are insured for accidents and evacuation on the same terms we require of you. This trek is inexpensive for our customers, but not because any member of the crew is underpaid.

Tipping

Tipping is customary but not compulsory, and it never replaces wages. For a trek of this length, $60 to $100 per trekker for the whole team is usual, given together on the last evening. Your guide will not ask for a tip, and would prefer that it is not given in front of the group.

Responsible travel

Drinking water

There are safe drinking water stations at Birethanti, Ulleri and Ghorepani that refill your bottle for much less than the cost of a plastic bottle, and the money goes to the village that runs the station. You can complete the whole week on this route without buying a single bottle of water. Bring purification tablets or a filter as a backup.

Supporting local communities

Every lodge you stay in on this trek is a family business in a village on the route. The conservation area fee funds the wardens, the forest and the trail repairs that maintain the Ulleri staircase. Nearly all of what you pay for this week is spent within twenty miles of the trail.

Crowds at the viewpoint

In October and April a few hundred people stand on Poon Hill at sunrise, and the platform was built for fewer. We go up early enough to find space at the quieter eastern end, we carry our rubbish back down, and we ask you not to fly a drone over other people.

Local customs

Ghorepani means "horse water", and mule trains still bring supplies to the lodges. When you meet one, stand on the hillside of the path rather than the side with the drop, and let it pass. Ask before photographing anyone, and remove your shoes where a sign asks you to.

Booking and payment

How to book

Write to us or send a message on WhatsApp and tell us roughly when you will be in Nepal. You will receive a reply from a member of our team who has walked this trail. Nothing is payable until you pay a deposit.

Deposit

A deposit of 30 per cent secures your dates, and the balance is due when you arrive in Kathmandu, in cash or by card. At the same time we ask for a copy of your passport, your insurance certificate and any dietary requirements, because the permits are issued in your name.

Payment

You can pay by bank transfer, or by card through a secure link. Card payments carry the bank's fee of about 4 per cent, which we show you before you pay. The balance in Kathmandu can be paid in US dollars, pounds, euros or Nepali rupees.

Cancellation

If you cancel more than 30 days before departure, your deposit can be transferred to any other date or trek we run, with no time limit. If you cancel within 30 days, the deposit is retained, because the permits, vehicles and crew have been booked by then. If we cancel for any reason other than weather, we refund everything you have paid.

Late bookings

This is the trek we can arrange most quickly. Permits are issued the same day in Pokhara and the jeep can be booked by phone, so three days' notice is enough outside October and April. If you are already in Pokhara with a free week, visit our office.

Private and group departures

For a party of five or more, private and group departures cost the same. A private departure runs on your dates at your pace and can be arranged for one person. A group departure runs on the dates above, with a maximum of twelve people. On a trek this gentle, families often choose a private departure so the pace suits the youngest walker.

Optional extras

Jeep to Ulleri

$45, saves half a day

A jeep takes you past the 3,000 steps and starts you above them. If the staircase concerns you, this option avoids it.

Paragliding over Pokhara

$95, 1 morning

A 30-minute flight from Sarangkot, with views of the Annapurnas across the valley. It requires one extra night in Pokhara, and it is one of our most popular extras.

Two extra nights in Pokhara

$110, +2 days

Two nights by the lake at the end of the trip, with a boat trip on Phewa Tal and no climbing. The trek is short, so most people have time for this.

Continue to Ghandruk and the full circuit

from $300, +3 days

Continue east from Ghorepani over Deurali to Tadapani and down through the large Gurung village of Ghandruk instead of returning the same way. Please decide before you book rather than at Ghorepani, because the permits and lodges are arranged in advance.

Chitwan jungle safari

from $390, +3 days

Travel to the lowlands to see rhinos and the tall elephant grass. It fits easily between Pokhara and Kathmandu on the way back.

Single room

$70

A room to yourself for the three hotel nights. On the trail, lodges are twin-share only.

Luxury lodge upgrade in the Annapurna foothills

Price on request

Mountain Lodges of Nepal runs lodges in the Annapurna foothills at Dhampus, Landruk, Ghandruk, Majgaon, Tomijong and Birethanti. Where this route stops in one of those villages, we can book the lodge instead of the teahouse: a private room with its own bathroom, a garden and a full dinner.

Higher on the route there are only teahouses, so those nights stay the same. We confirm availability for your dates before you book.

Frequently asked questions

Answers to the 24 questions travellers ask us most often. If your question is not here, contact us and we will answer it.

Is this trek suitable if I have never trekked before?

Yes, and it is the trek we most often recommend to first-time trekkers. There are four walking days of three to six hours each, nothing technical, and a highest point of 3,210 m. If you go on hilly walks at home from time to time, you are fit enough.

What is the hardest part of the trek?

There are two. The staircase from Tikhedhunga to Ulleri has more than 3,000 stone steps and around 500 metres of ascent, and it takes most people two hours with stops. The other is getting up at 4:30 am in the cold for the viewpoint. Neither is dangerous, but both are tiring.

How is this different from your Ghorepani Ghandruk circuit?

The circuit continues east from Ghorepani to Tadapani and Ghandruk rather than returning the same way, which adds three days, much more ascent and descent, and about $300. This trek goes up to Poon Hill and returns along the same trail. Both include the same sunrise. Choose this trek if your time in Nepal is short, and the circuit if you have more time.

Can I bring children?

Yes, and many families walk this route. Children aged eight and over manage it at a pace set for them, and a private departure is the best way to arrange this. Children under ten do not need a conservation area permit.

Is there an age limit?

There is no upper age limit, and we take walkers in their seventies on this trail every season. Whether you walk regularly at home matters more than your age. The only thing to consider is the staircase, and there is a jeep option that starts you above it.

How many people will be in the group?

Twelve at most, and departures run with as few as one person. From thirteen people, we add a second guide. A private trip on your own dates costs the same for a party of five or more. For one or two people it costs more, only because the guide is not shared.

Will I get altitude sickness?

Probably not. You sleep one night at 2,874 m and spend about an hour at 3,210 m. Mild symptoms are possible from about 2,500 m, and a few people get a headache at Ghorepani, but serious altitude illness on this route is rare. This trek does not need acclimatisation days.

How cold does it get?

At night, Ghorepani is around freezing from November to February and a few degrees above freezing for the rest of the year. The cold is most noticeable at the viewpoint at dawn, where it ranges from about 0°C in October to around minus 10°C in January, including wind chill. You stand still there for about half an hour, so dress warmly.

What insurance do I need?

A policy covering trekking to 4,000 m, including medical evacuation and repatriation. It costs less than a high-altitude policy, around $70 to $120. The most likely emergency here is a twisted ankle and a jeep journey rather than a helicopter rescue, but you should still buy cover that includes helicopter evacuation.

What happens if cloud hides the sunrise?

It can happen, and no operator can guarantee a clear morning. In October, November and December it is clear on most days. If there is cloud at Ghorepani, you can wait a day and go up again the following morning. Adding a spare night to your trip costs about $60. We will let you know the evening before what the forecast looks like.

How crowded is Poon Hill at sunrise?

In October and around Easter, a few hundred people are on the viewing platform, and the trail up is lined with head torches. The atmosphere is friendly. We leave early and stand at the quieter eastern end. In December, January and February you may share the viewpoint with about twenty people.

Are there showers and wifi?

Yes, every night, which is unusual. Hot showers cost $2 to $4 at all three teahouses, wifi is free or a few dollars, including at Ghorepani, and charging a phone costs one or two dollars. Mains electricity reaches most of this route.

Is the food safe, and can you cater for my diet?

Yes. Dal bhat is freshly cooked, refilled free of charge and the safest choice on every menu. Because the road head is close, the kitchens here restock daily, so vegetarian and vegan diets are easy to cater for and meat is safe at this altitude. Tell us about gluten intolerance or allergies when you book.

Do I need a porter?

Not necessarily, and this is the only trek we run where that is the case. Clothing for three nights fits in a 40-litre pack that most people can carry themselves. A porter is available if you prefer to walk the stairs without a load, and costs $20 to $25 a day, shared between two trekkers.

What are the teahouses like?

Simple and comfortable. You have a twin room with a mattress, pillow and blankets, a dining room with a stove at Ghorepani, and hot food all day. They are warmer and better equipped than lodges on the high-altitude treks, because a jeep can reach the bottom of the hill.

Which permits do I need, and who issues them?

You need two permits. The Annapurna Conservation Area permit costs NPR 3,000 (about $22) and is issued by the National Trust for Nature Conservation in Kathmandu or Pokhara. The TIMS card costs NPR 2,000 (about $15) and is issued by the tourism board and the trekking association through a registered agency. Both are included in your trip price, and both are checked at Birethanti.

Do I need a guide?

Yes. Since April 2023, foreign trekkers in Nepal's conservation areas must walk with a licensed guide, and this is enforced at the Birethanti checkpoint. Your guide is included in the price. This is a legal requirement and cannot be waived at the checkpoint.

How much cash should I bring?

$100 to $150 in small notes, changed into rupees in Pokhara. This covers showers, charging, drinks, snacks and tips over four days. The last reliable cash machine is in Pokhara, and no lodge on this route accepts cards.

How do I get a visa?

Most nationalities can get a visa on arrival at Kathmandu airport: $30 for 15 days or $50 for 30 days, paid in cash. Complete the online form within 15 days before arrival to shorten the queue, and bring a passport photo and a passport valid for at least six more months.

When is the best month to go?

October and November offer the most reliable weather, March and April are the months for rhododendron, and December combines clear skies with very few trekkers. Because the trek stays low, it remains open in winter when higher treks close. We do not run it in July and August.

How far ahead should I book?

Six weeks' notice is comfortable, and outside the peak season three days' notice is possible, because permits are issued the same day and there are no mountain flights to book. For October, and for the two weeks either side of Nepali New Year in mid-April, book two to three months ahead so that we can reserve rooms at Ghorepani.

Can you change the itinerary?

Yes, and it is easy on a trek this short. You can start on any day, add a night at Ghorepani for a second chance at the sunrise, drive to Ulleri to avoid the stairs, add nights in Pokhara at the end, or continue east to Ghandruk to make it a circuit. Ask us before you book so that the permits match your route.

Can I start from Pokhara instead of Kathmandu?

Yes. This shortens the trip by two days and reduces the price by about $180. If you are already in Pokhara, the trek itself takes four days, and we can have you at the road head the morning after you contact us.

What is the most important advice for this trek?

Walk slowly up the Ulleri staircase, and put on your warm clothes before you leave the lodge in the dark, not halfway up the hill. These two points prevent most of the difficulties people have on this trek.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/annapurna-panorama-trek