



## The Lost Kingdom of Mustang - with Tiji Festival

### NEPAL MUSTANG

Embark on an extraordinary **riding adventure in Mustang**, an ancient forbidden Kingdom in **Nepal**. This beautiful and wild region was only open to foreigners in 1992 - it is remote and still relatively unspoiled. From the Kali Gandaki valley, nestled between the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri massifs, explore this remote part of the world **on horseback**. A wonderful cultural and equestrian experience off the beaten track, exclusive to Equus Journeys.

<b>Exploration Rides</b>	 <b>20 days (11 on horseback)</b>	 <b>From £2,360</b>	
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Discover the Lost Kingdom of Mustang on horseback



Beyond just a riding holiday, this is also a cultural experience



Horseback adventures in Nepal

### ITINERARY

## Highlights

- Spend time with the locals and discover the Nepalese and Tibetan culture
- A real expedition: your belongings are carried by pack mules, with limited impact on the environment
- Enjoy the unbelievable scenery of the colourful mountains, under the mighty peaks of the Himalayas
- Sturdy Himalayan ponies, descending from the Przewalski's horse
- On certain dates throughout the year, visit the Tiji Festival for a real cultural experience

### Day 1 — 1 : EUROPE - KATHMANDU

Depart from Europe on your international flight to Kathmandu. It is likely this will be a connecting flight (UK flights usually connect in Doha).

### Day 2 — 2 : KATHMANDU

You will be met at Kathmandu airport and transferred to your hotel. Meet your fellow travellers and your guides for your first briefing. The rest of the day is spent at your leisure: Kathmandu is a fascinating city, very different from our western cities - a flurry of sounds, smells and colours. You meet in the evening for dinner in one of the many restaurants available in the city.

### Day 3 — 3 : KATHMANDU - POKHARA

Bus transfer to Pokhara, catching your first glimpse of the Nepalese lifestyle. The town is situated at the foot of the famous Annapurna mountain range: if the visibility is good, you will have the chance to marvel at the beauty of its peaks. Night at the hotel.

Meals today are not included (lunch in a small cafe en-route, and Pokhara will offer many options for dinner).

### Day 4 — 4 : POKHARA - JOMSOM (2720m) - Approx. 10 hours driving

Get ready for a long day in the jeep that will take you to Jomsom. You first drive through Beni, before driving up the Kali Gandaki gorge, separating the Annapurna from the Dhaulagiri (standing at an impressive 8167m). By some measures the Kali Gandaki gorge is the deepest canyon in the world. The area becomes more and more arid as you get closer to Jomsom (2900 m). There is time to settle in the lodge and take a stroll through town.

Please note: we have decided to organise this transfer by road rather than plane, due to the unreliability of the local companies that are currently blacklisted by the EC.

## Day 5 — 5 : JOMSON - CHHUSANG (2980m) - 6 hours riding

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It is now time to meet the horses and the local team, before heading out on the trail. The track follows the bed of the Kali Gandaki, taking you through the arid, almost lunar, landscape. It is relatively flat and you should make good time to Kagbeni, where you will stop for lunch. Kagbeni is a typical stone village, known for its fortifications, and the break is just long enough that you can stroll the narrow streets and visit its monastery. Kagbeni is also the getaway into Mustang.

You set out on horseback again, riding up the Kali Gandaki gorges before reaching the stunning town of Tangbe, a beautiful typical village with a maze of alleys and passageways. After an other hour on horseback, you get to Chhusang, a village development committee surrounded by stunning red and orange cliffs.

## Day 6 — 6 : CHHUSANG - SYANGBOCHE (3800m) - 6 hours riding

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The track leads you away from the river and into the village of Chele. You are now deep in the upper Mustang. The influence from nearby Tibet is very strong, and you will find spiritual paintings on the walls. The track becomes steeper, built into the cliff wall, and dominates the Ghyakar Khola gorge.

You make your way through a first mountain pass at Chele (3600m), before reaching Simir for lunch. The afternoon sees you cross two other passes, at Bhen La (3800m) and Yamdo La (3850m). After a long day in the saddle, you reach the small village of Syanboche where you will spend the night.

Please note that there will be approximately 1h on foot, walking with the horses, at around 3500 m.

## Day 7 — 7 : SYANGBOCHE - NYI LA (4010) - TSARANG (3560m) - 6 hours riding

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Your day starts with the crossing of the Syanboche pass (3850m). A steep ascension will take you to Nyi La (4010m), where you will be blessed with fantastic views across the Annapurna mountain range. After crossing the Ghami La pass (3770m), you ride into Ghami, a small village nestled between patches of green and colourful cliffs. In the afternoon, you ride across arid land up to the Tsarang La (3870m) before reaching the village of Tsarang, known to be the King of Mustang's summer quarters. You may visit the local monastery if you wish.

## Day 8 — 8 : TSARANG - LO MANTHANG (3810m) - TIJI FESTIVAL - 4 hours riding

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This morning, you ride across astonishing scenery, in a flurry of greys and yellows. Troglodyte dwellings and chorten (spiritual structures containing relics) make their appearance. You ride across a pass at 3850m before you finally discover Lo Manthang, the fortified capital of the ancient Kingdom of Lo. In the afternoon, you take a break from the riding to explore the old city and some of its monasteries.

In May, you will have the opportunity to visit the Tiji festival to witness Tibetan rituals celebrating the Mustang kingdom being saved from destruction.

Tonight, you settle in Lo Manthang where you will stay for the next three nights (foreigners are not allowed to stay the night in the villages up north). Some riders might struggle with the physical demands of the trek and the altitude, and you will have the opportunity to stay behind for a day if you wish to rest.

## Day 9 — 9 : TIJI OR LO MANTHANG - SAM DZONG (4150m) - LO MANTHANG (3810m) - 8 hours riding

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Tiji Festival or riding day (depending on dates, please contact us)

Today is a long one in the saddle. You start out from Lo Manthang, riding east towards the border with Tibet. You ride across Sam Dzongest, where the water is saturated with the salt that used to be an economical blessing: now, lacking drinkable water, its people will soon be forced to move.

You explore magnificent scenery: today you get to enjoy the wildest, purest views of your trail ride. The natural beauty of this region is stunning. Ride down to Choser caves and Jong caves with a visit of Nimphu monastery.

Back to Lo Manthang for the night.

Please note that today there will be approximately 2 hours on foot at 4150m, with uphill and downhill slopes.

## Day 10 — 10 : TIJI OR LO MANTHANG - NYAMDO (4030m) - LO MANTHANG (3810m) - 6

## hours riding

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Tiji Festival or riding day (depending on dates, please contact us)

Your riding expedition continues today with another day riding around Lo Manthang, heading to Nyamdo (north-west). Visit of the Namgyal monastery, that was rebuilt many times over. You will also explore the village of Thinggar and its traditional mani walls. An old fortress in ruins dominates the village.

You ride back to Lo Manthang, tracing back your steps.

## Day 11 — 11 : LO MANTHANG - MARANG LA (4230m) - MUI LA (4170m) - 7 hours riding

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Today you start the long way back home. The first leg of this journey sees you riding through Marang La pass (4230m): this is the highest point of your trip. You then ride down to Ghar Gumba, a small village known for its monastery (dating back to the 8th Century - one of the oldest monasteries in the world). At 4170m you reach Mui La, then proceed to Dhakmar, a lovely village nestled at the foot of towering red cliffs.

Please note that today there will be approximately 1 hour on foot at 4170m, going downhill.

## Day 12 — 12 : DHAKMAR - SYANGBOCHE (3800m) - 5 hours riding

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From Dhakmar, you reach Ghami before you ride uphill up to 4000m before starting the ride down to Gelling at 3570m. The local monastery dates back from the 13th century and is another interesting cultural sight, with a chance to visit it if you like. At the end of the day, you cross at Syangboche La (3850m) and arrive at Syangboche for the night.

## Day 13 — 13 : SYANGBOCHE - TETANG (3040m) - 5 hours riding

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Your trail starts with the long descent to the Syangboche Khola gorges. Once at the bottom, you follow a small, almost hidden path, to Ranchung Cave: this is a natural cave used for prayer and contemplation. You are greeted by a buddhist monk who will give a tour of the cave. After this short break, a steep hill (approx. 1h) takes you back to the main path.

Lunch in Samar before you ride again along the shores of the river, riding across Chhusang before reaching Tetang.

Please note that today there will be approximately 2 hours on foot at 3800m, going downhill.

## Day 14 — 14 : TETANG - GYU LA (4077m) - MUKTINAH (3760m) - 5 hours riding

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From Tetang, the path takes you to the very last pass of the trail ride, at Gyu La (4077m), with splendid views over the Annapurna and the Dhaulagiri. You then finally ride downhill for your last night in Mustang, at Muktinah. The town is a famous place of pilgrimage, and there is time in the afternoon to explore the temple and see its many fountains.

Please note that today there will be approximately 30 minutes on foot at 3500m, going uphill.

## Day 15 — 15 : MUKTINAH - JOMSOM (2720m) - 5 hours riding

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Set out on horseback towards Jomsom, that you will remember from the first days of the trek. En route you will see many smaller villages, such as Jharjot and Lupra. Lupra especially is a high place of the Bön culture, that is prior to the development of Buddhism. You reach the Kali Gandaki and follow it to Jomsom.

## Day 16 — 16 : JOMSOM - POKHARA - Approx. 10h drive

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You trade the horses for a jeep that will bring you to Pokhara (approx. 10 hours drive). In the evening you can relax or take a walk around Phewa Lake or the busy streets of Pokhara.

Dinner is not included and to your own account. Night in a hotel.

## Day 17 — 17 : POKHARA - KATHMANDU

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Drive back to Kathmandu. Free afternoon and meals to your own account.

Night in a hotel.

## Day 18 — 18: KATHMANDU

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Today, we have organised a visit to see the highlights of the city, with a local guide. Free afternoon and meals to your own account.

Night in a hotel.

## Day 19 — 19: KATHMANDU - EUROPE

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Transfer to the airport to meet your flight.

## Day 20 — 20: ARRIVAL IN EUROPE

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Back in Europe.

### DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	PRICE INCLUDING FLIGHTS	STATUS
20/05/2022	08/06/2022	£2,360		Open

## Price details

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- Flights to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.
- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room.
- Groups are composed of a minimum of 4 international riders and a maximum of 8 riders, plus guides.
- Please note: the ride will also confirm for 2-3 riders on payment of a supplement of c. €315/£275/\$370 per person. Once the group has reached 4 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.
- There is a single supplement of c. £135/€150/\$175 per person if you end up in a single room (for Kathmandu and Pokhara only - no single rooms during the ride). This is refunded if we later find a sharer for you.
- The permit to access Mustang is not included in the price and is US\$500. It can be paid on arrival or we can invoice it before you leave. A visa is also required to enter Nepal and can be obtained at the airport.
- The rider weight limit is 90kg/14st11lb

### Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

## Price includes

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### SUPPORT TEAM

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1 English-speaking horse guide

A team of muleteers

### LOGISTICS

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1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

Pack mules

### INLAND TRANSPORT

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Airport transfers

Return bus transfer from Kathmandu and Pokhara

Private jeep transfer between Pokhara and Jomsom

### ACCOMMODATION

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Double rooms in a standard hotel in Kathmandu/Pokhara

Simple guesthouses during the trail

## MEALS

Full board from lunch on Day 4 to lunch on Day 15  
Tea, coffee and snacks included. Mineral water is not included.

## ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Hyperbaric chamber

## EXTRAS

Visit of Kathmandu

## Price doesn't include

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### MEALS

Meals on Days 1-2-3-17-18 and 19 if necessary, dinner on day 16  
Beverages (including mineral water) and personal extras

### TRANSPORT

Visa fees and permit into Mustang  
International flights

### EXTRAS

Tips to the local team (approx. £30-40, left to your discretion)  
Park, museum and other site entry fees  
Special Mustang permit (see dates and prices)

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

## Horses

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You will ride Himalayan ponies (mares/geldings only), descending from the Przewalski's horse originating from Mongolia. These horses are sure footed and well used to the rocky paths and high altitude. They are well behaved and easy to ride.

## Minimum riding ability

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### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be a capable rider who is used to riding outdoors and fit enough for some long hours in the saddle. You are riding in a very remote location across rugged terrain and must be prepared for steep ascents and descents and be able to adjust your seat accordingly. It is preferable that you already have an experience of long trail rides.

Rider weight limit: 90kg/14st11lb

### PACE

The paths are dry, dusty and rocky, and you will be riding across deep passes and gorges. Some hills can be rather steep. There are a few moments where you ride close to the cliffs, so this is not suitable to anyone suffering from vertigo. Please remember that on a few occasions, you will be asked to dismount and lead your horse on foot.

This is not a fast trail: main pace is the walk but there are some trots and canters when suitable.

### TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

There is no support vehicle(\*) and all your belongings will be carried by pack mules. Please remember to pack lightly!

\* On some dates we may be able to organise support by jeep, but this is not frequent and should not be relied on.

### TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You need to be physically fit. On occasions you will need to dismount and lead your horse - about 15% of the time: 1 to 2 hours every day. You need to be prepared to accept sometimes unfavourable weather conditions - it can be cold at altitude and it may rain.

This ride takes place in a mountainous environment between 3,000m and 4,200m. The altitude is increased gradually to help you acclimatise but you must respect the advice of your guide. You should speak to your doctor before joining the trip particularly if you have any medical conditions relating to your heart, blood pressure or respiratory system. You should prepare for the holiday by increasing your endurance training - fast walking, jogging, cycling, swimming etc.

Previous experience of adventurous travel or long trail rides is recommended.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life.

## **EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT**

Tibetan saddles, with blankets fitted over the saddle.

Saddlebags are not provided, and we would strongly advise you to bring your own to pack extra layers and water during the day.

We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

## **TRAVEL INFO**

### **COMFORT**

Standard hotel (double rooms) with en-suite bathroom in Kathmandu and Pokhara.

During the ride, you stay in simple guesthouses (tea houses) in the villages. Some guesthouses will charge extra to use shower facilities (150-500 rupees). You will need to bring your sleeping bag (see packing list below)

### **MEALS**

The food is simple, with picnic lunches and hot meals in the evenings.

Beverages are not included and mineral water can be purchased in the villages.

Water:

Take care not to drink water from unknown sources. You can refill your bottles using boiled water (or bring water purification tablets).

### **CLIMATE**

The best time to visit this area is between May and October, the Mustang region being sheltered from the monsoon by the mountains. The days can be hot (up to 30°) and the nights are cold. Please remember that the weather is always changeable at high altitude, and the winds can be strong.

### **GUIDE AND LOCAL TEAM**

English speaking Nepalese guide, accompanied by a team of muleteers and staff.

### **TIPS**

Tips are customary in Nepal: it is common to tip your team (guide, driver, cook...) and the staff in hotels and restaurants. Some guides may offer to collect the money and look after the distribution. You should count about £40-45 per rider for the week, although this is of course left to your discretion.

Please remember that the lifestyle in Nepal is very different to that of Europe. Please do not tip too generously, as this can disrupt the local economy. Do not give money to children either.

### **PACKING LIST**

During the ride, the maximum weight allowance is 15kg per rider (remember your belongings are carried by pack mules). You can leave some of your belongings in Kathmandu or Pokhara to be picked up on your way back.

Please pack in accordance with local religious and traditional cultures - it is important to keep your shoulders and knees covered when meeting the local people. Please do not wear shorts or strappy tops in towns and villages.

Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. There are many lightweight options available nowadays.

- Sunhat for when not riding

- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding

- Buff or bandana

- Warm hat for cold nights

#### Upper body

- Thermals (long or short sleeved)
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and are an extra layer
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm fleece or jumper (and a spare in case one gets wet)
- Warm and waterproof jacket - it can rain and the evenings can be particularly cold

#### Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Thermals
- Casual trousers for the evenings, such as jeans or tracksuit bottoms
- Waterproof over trousers
- Lightweight, comfortable trousers for non-riding days

#### Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps as an extra layer against inclement weather. Bringing light hiking boots instead of paddock boots is a good idea as there will be periods of walking.
- Trainers or equivalent light shoes for the evenings
- Several pairs of warm, thick socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, cold or rain whilst riding. Waterproof gloves can be particularly useful

#### Nightwear

- Sleeping bag. The comfort factor should be -10°/15°C.
- Sleeping bag liner - silk, cotton or fleece - adds an extra layer
- Pyjamas or tracksuits or thermals for sleeping in

#### Other useful items

- Towels - lightweight camping ones will both dry and pack more easily
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Wet Wipes or equivalent (for when washing facilities aren't available)
- Toilet paper and a lighter to burn it with
- Small plastic bags for rubbish
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)

#### Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent, preferably containing deet
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Re-hydration sachets
- Water purification tablets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

You may wish to ask your doctor for some specific medication for travelling at High Altitudes. We recommend that you discuss this directly with your doctor who is best placed to advise on your personal medical history.

#### In your hold luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag. We recommend biodegradable washing products where possible.
- Swiss army knife (or equivalent)

#### In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

#### Our Recommendations

- Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided with a capacity of 60-80 litres. We recommend taking a backpack or similar. The luggage limit on the ride is 15kg per person.
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bumbag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc)
- We recommend travelling in your boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- Please take your rubbish home with you. There are no recycling facilities in Tibet, so take your used batteries, aerosols etc back home and dispose of them appropriately. Try to leave excess packaging material at home before travelling
- You may wish to take some photographs or postcards of your home with you to show your hosts. You may also wish to take some crayons, colouring books etc for the children. Be careful not to take card games as these are frowned upon by the adults, who use them for gambling.

## VISA & HEALTH

### Formalities

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To apply for a visa in the United Kingdom you should contact the Embassy of Nepal, 12A, Kensington Palace Gardens, London, W8 4QU (telephone: +20 7229 1594 or 6231 or 5352).

Visas are available on arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport and at some land borders. To obtain a visa upon arrival by air in Nepal you must fill in an application form on arrival and provide a passport photograph. A single-entry visa valid for 15, 30 or 90 days costs US\$25, 40 or 100. At Kathmandu's Tribhuvan Airport the fee is payable in any major currency (some land crossings insist on payment in US dollars), Children under 10 require a visa but are not charged a visa fee. A Nepali visa is valid for entry for three to six months from the date of issue.

Please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nepal>

#### ADDRESSES OF CONSULATES

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- Ambassade du Népal  
45, bis rue des Acacias  
75017 PARIS  
Tél. : 01 46 22 48 67  
Fax : 01 42 27 08 65  
[nepalparis@noos.fr](mailto:nepalparis@noos.fr)
- Ambassade du Nepal  
Rue de la Servette 81  
1202 Genève  
Tél. : 022/733 26 00  
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[mission.nepal@bluewin.ch](mailto:mission.nepal@bluewin.ch)
- Ambassade du Nepal  
Avenue brugmann 210  
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Tél. : +32 (0) 2 346 26 58  
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[nepal@pandora.be](mailto:nepal@pandora.be)
- Ambassade à l'étranger  
Lazimpat BP 452  
Katmandou  
Tél. : +977 (1) 4 412 332  
Fax : +977 (1) 4 418 288

### Health

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Visit your health professional at least 4 to 6 weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures.

Medical treatment is expensive at western travellers' clinics in Nepal. Healthcare is poor in most places outside the Kathmandu Valley and Pokhara. It may be difficult to get rapid helicopter evacuation if you fall ill or suffer a serious accident in a remote area of the country. Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad, repatriation and evacuation by helicopter (presently costing between £1,000 and £2,000 per flying hour).

There have been confirmed cases of cholera in Kathmandu, Nepalganj city in western Nepal and in Doti, Bajhang and Gorkha districts.

There have been some cases of avian influenza (bird flu) among birds and poultry in parts of the country. The risk to humans is believed to be very low, but as a precaution you should avoid visiting live animal markets, poultry farms and other places where you may come into close contact with birds, and make sure poultry and egg dishes are thoroughly cooked.

Please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nepal/health>

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## Insurance

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It is a condition of your booking with Equus Journeys that you have travel insurance which covers you for the riding activities to be undertaken. Your travel insurance should cover you for medical expenses and repatriation. Your guides will require your travel insurance details before they allow you to ride and may refuse to let you ride if you cannot provide them. You should take your insurance documents with you.