



# Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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## 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>Pack Trip</b>	 <b>19 days (8 on horseback) -</b>	 <b>From £0</b>	
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### 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: ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU

Fly to Kathmandu (flights not included but bookable on request). A member of the local team will collect you from the airport and you'll be transferred to your hotel.

After everyone has arrived, you will meet your fellow travellers and guides and be given a safety briefing. The rest of the day is spent at your leisure.

You will meet in the evening for dinner at one of the many restaurants available in the city. Meals are to your own account today.

Overnight at the hotel.

## Day 2 — 2: SIGHTSEEING IN KATHMANDU

Kathmandu is a fascinating city, very different from western cities - a flurry of sounds, smells and colours.

Today you will embark on a sightseeing tour with a local guide and discover some of the city's highlights. It will also give you chance to relax and recover from travelling, and prepare for the trip ahead. Lunch and dinner are to your own account today.

Overnight at the hotel.

## Day 3 — 3: KATHMANDU - TATOPANI (1190m) - No riding, 10 hours driving

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Get ready for a long drive today, as you transfer by private vehicle to Tatopani, (a journey of around 10 hours).

The quiet village of Tatopani is a stop on the Annapurna Circuit Trek, and is known for its hot springs. On arrival, you will have chance to enjoy the hot springs (which are about a 10-minute walk from your hotel).

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

Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

## Day 4 — 4: TATOPANI - JOMSOM (2720m) - No riding, 4 hours driving

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You will climb higher today, transferred by jeep (a drive of around 3-4 hours) to Jomsom, another village on the Annapurna Circuit, said to be the gateway to Upper Mustang. As you ascend, the vegetation gradually fades to become almost desert, and you will enjoy scenic mountain views.

After lunch, you will meet the horses, and if there is time, you may enjoy a short 1-hour ride to get to know your horse.

Dinner and overnight at a lodge.

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

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Today will be your first day of riding. 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.

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 another hour on horseback, you get to Chhusang, a village development committee surrounded by stunning red and orange cliffs.

Dinner and overnight at a lodge.

## Day 6 — 6: CHHUSANG - SAMAR (3620M) - 5 hours riding

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Today 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 Samar for lunch.

Dinner and overnight at a lodge.

## Day 7 — 7: SAMAR - GEILING (3520M) - 5-6 hours riding

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After breakfast you continue your ride towards Geiling. You will first visit the Chungsi cave, which the locals have been using for centuries as a place of worship, meditation, and retreat. The cave is lit by natural light that filters through small openings, which creates a mystical atmosphere.

You will then continue towards the Yamda La pass at 4010m, passing the village of Syangbochen and the pass at 3850m, before arriving at Geiling village.

Dinner and overnight at a lodge.

## Day 8 — 8: GEILING - TSARANG (3560M)

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After breakfast you will continue riding, passing over a suspension bridge and after crossing the river, climbing back up again. The trail is beautiful and lined with mani (prayer) walls.

Before arriving at Ghami for lunch, you have to climb over the Nyi pass at 4025m. The top of the pass provides excellent views of the Mustang valley and the surrounding mountains.

Ghami also provides exceptional views of the red, grey and blue cliffs. The towns of Ghami and Tsarang are old settlements and Tsarang village majestically sits atop a steep faced canyon.

Dinner and overnight at a lodge.

## Day 9 — 9: 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.

The Tiji Festival takes place in the walled city, featuring colourful masks, traditional costumes and dancing.

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).

Dinner and overnight at a lodge.

## Day 10 — 10: TIJI - 1 hour riding

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You will continue to enjoy the Tiji Festival today, with riding possible in and around the village.

You'll return to Lo Manthang for the night, staying overnight in the lodge.

## Day 11 — 11: TIJI - 1 hour riding

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You will continue to enjoy the Tiji Festival today, with riding possible in and around the village.

You'll return to Lo Manthang for the night, staying overnight in the lodge.

## Day 12 — 12: LO MANTHANG - MARANG LA (4230m) - MUI LA (4170m) - DHAKMAR (3820m) - 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.

Dinner and overnight at the lodge.

## Day 13 — 13: 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.

Dinner and overnight at the lodge.

## Day 14 — 14: 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 will follow a small, almost hidden path, to Ranchung Cave: this is a natural cave used for prayer and contemplation. You will be 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.

You'll have 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.

Dinner and overnight at the lodge.

## Day 15 — 15: TETANG - GYU LA (4077m) - MUKTINATH (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.

Dinner and overnight at the lodge.

## Day 16 — 16: MUKTINATH - LUPRA - JOMSOM (2720m) - 5 hours riding

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After breakfast, you will set out on horseback towards Jomsom, a place that you will remember from the first days of the trek.

Enroute you will see many smaller villages, such as Jharjot and Lupra. Lupra especially is a high place of the Bön culture. You will then reach the Kali Gandaki and follow it to Jomsom.

Dinner and overnight at the lodge.

## Day 17 — 17: JOMSOM - POKHARA - No riding, 8 hours driving

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Today you will 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 to your own account today.

Overnight at the hotel.

## Day 18 — 18: POKHARA - KATHMANDU - 7-8 hours driving

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You'll drive back to Kathmandu today, another long drive of 7-8 hours.

Upon arrival in Kathmandu, you'll have free time to relax at the hotel or enjoy the city. Lunch and dinner are to your own account today.

Overnight at the hotel.

## Day 19 — 19: DEPARTURE - KATHMANDU - EUROPE

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After breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home.

### DATES & PRICES

We are currently updating our dates and prices they will be online soon. If you want details of this holiday, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## Price details

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No departure for this destination. Please contact our travel advisers for more information.

- 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 guests 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. €750 / £650 / \$890 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. €175 / £150 / \$205 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\$550. 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 or in advance of your trip.

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

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Full board from lunch on Day 4 to lunch on Day 15

Tea, coffee and snacks included. Mineral water is not included.

### ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

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Hyperbaric chamber

### EXTRAS

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Visit of Kathmandu

## Price doesn't include

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### MEALS

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Meals on Days 1-2-3-17-18 and 19 if necessary, dinner on day 16

Beverages (including mineral water) and personal extras

### TRANSPORT

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Visa fees and permit into Mustang

International flights

### EXTRAS

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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)

# 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.

## Guide & local team

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You will have an English-speaking Nepalese guide and an assistant guide, depending on the size of the group. All of the tour leaders have first aid training. They have a good knowledge the local culture and are familiar with high altitude living conditions. Management teams (except porters) are generally of Sherpa, Tamang, Magar or Gurung ethnic groups.

## Minimum riding ability

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### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

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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.

The rider weight limit is 85kg / 13st5 / 190lbs.

### PACE

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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

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The local team will look after the horses for you.

### TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

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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. Please inform us of any medical conditions before booking your spot.

You should prepare for the holiday by increasing your endurance training - fast walking, jogging, cycling, swimming etc. for at least a month before the trip.

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

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.

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

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Tibetan saddles, with blankets fitted over the saddle.

Saddlebags are provided.

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

## 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 in the months of February, March, April, and May or November, to avoid the monsoon months. Please remember that the weather is always changeable at high altitude, and the winds can be strong.

## 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

As the luggage will be carried by horses and mules, please do not bring suitcases, bags with iron lining or wheels. Your luggage should be soft sided with a capacity of 60-80 litres. We recommend taking a backpack or duffle bag. During the ride, the maximum weight allowance is 15kg per rider. 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.
- Warm hat for cold nights.
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding.
- Buff or bandana.

### Upper body

- Thermals (long or short sleeved).
- Long-sleeved shirts that provide protection from the sun and are an extra layer.
- T-shirts.
- Tops to wear in the evening.
- Lightweight fleece or jumper.
- Warm fleece or jumper (and a spare in case one gets wet).
- A warm, windproof and waterproof jacket with a hood - it can rain and the evenings can be particularly cold.
- Feather / down jacket.
- Bodywarmer / gilet.

### Legs

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

### Hands and Feet

- Comfortable, short hiking/riding boots that have been worn in. We recommend short hiking boots (that offer good protection for your ankles, and have rigid or semi-rigid soles) and that you can wear with half chaps, as there will be periods of walking. (Paddock boots will not suit as they don't have

enough grip). You may wish to take long chaps instead of half chaps, for an extra layer of protection against weather.

- Trainers or equivalent light shoes for the evenings.
- Several pairs of warm, thick socks.
- 2x pairs of 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 minimum.
- Sleeping bag liner - silk, cotton or fleece - adds an extra layer.
- Pyjamas or tracksuits or thermals for sleeping in.

#### Other

- Towels - lightweight camping ones will both dry and pack more easily. Also best to have your own towel for use in hotels.
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery.
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding.
- Headtorch or small torch – you may want to bring spare batteries and bulbs.
- Water bottle of at least 1 litre.
- Wet Wipes or equivalent (for when washing facilities aren't available).
- Cosmetics – shampoo, deodorant, moisturizer, toothbrush etc.
- Toilet paper and a lighter to burn it with.
- Small plastic bags for rubbish.
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers).
- Travel adapter to charge your devices.

#### Medical kit

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.

- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor.
- Insect repellent, preferably containing DEET.
- Any medication you regularly take.
- Aspirin or Paracetamol - for pain or fever.
- General antibiotic + prescription
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs.
- Antihistamine.
- Throat lozenges, vapour rub.
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses.
- Eye drops.
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhea medication.
- Re-hydration sachets.
- Water purification tablets.
- Antiseptic wipes.
- Handwash gel.
- Scissors, tweezers and thermometer.

#### In your hold luggage

- Swiss army knife (or equivalent).
- Any liquids / cosmetics over 100ml. We recommend biodegradable washing products where possible.

#### In your hand luggage

- Any liquids less than 100ml, packed in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag.
- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat.

#### Our recommendations

- 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.

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favourite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

### Note about Nepal:

The ecosystem of the Himalayas is very fragile. We strongly recommend that all non-biodegradable waste such as cans, bottles, batteries and plastics be brought back to Kathmandu for recycling. Please avoid using numerous plastic water bottles. Since water is essential at such altitudes, we recommend that clients refill reusable bottles with boiled or purified water.

For more information please [see this page](#).