

Overview

On the one hand there's the most popular trek in the Himalayas, the **Annapurna Circuit**, long considered the most scenically diverse and beautiful hike in all of Nepal. On the other there's the trek to the hidden valley of **Nar Phu**, locked away from public view for centuries and harboring a rugged landscape and secluded culture that harks back to distant centuries in neighboring Tibet. Which to choose? Well now you don't have to, because with this latest offering from Nepal Trekking Experts we combine the two areas into one glorious journey that stands as arguably the most rewarding trekking experience currently available.

Other than the initial leg, which shares the same beginnings as the **Annapurna Circuit**, the first half of the trek comprises the visit to **Nar Phu**, a mystical valley breaking through the mists of time like some latter day Brigadoon ready to entrance modern visitors with its impressive mix of scenic splendor, cultural integrity, inspiring monasteries, and visually stunning medieval villages. Unlike many other regions of Nepal that have geared up economically to cater to the trekking industry the people of Nar Phu steadfastly maintain a traditional Tibetan way of life that has stood them in good stead for centuries, from basic subsistence agriculture to the all-important herding of sheep and yak.

The second half of the trek picks up the Annapurna Circuit again where the Nar Phu leg merges with the trail at the village of Ngawal, leading northward past the classic vistas of the **Annapurna range** so beloved by countless visitors to the area through the years. At Khangsar the opportunity exists to branch away for a few days to visit **Tilicho Lake**, the world's highest body of water, before returning to the trail and pushing on for the final hike over **Thorong La** (5416M) and the last stretch to Jomsom for the return drive to Pokhara and Kathmandu.

If you're looking for an epic and rewarding adventure through the Himalayas that provides arguably the most diverse and intoxicating mixture of landscapes and culture — all wrapped up in a two for one package that represents enormous value — get in touch with us to discuss the wonderful possibilities of this trek. Now is the time to experience the distant past that **Nar Phu** represents, because the modern world will eventually seep in and change the valley, much as we might wish to stay its hand. We think you'll find it as amazing a journey as we do.

Itinerary Details

Day 01 : Welcome at airport and transfer to the hotel.

Welcome at Tribhuvan International Airport, and then transfer to your hotel.

Day 02 : Free day and last chance to prepare for trekking.

Free day for preparation and sightseeing in Kathmandu

Day 03 : Kathmandu to Jagat by drive. (1300m, 8 hrs)

Pick up from your hotel and transfer to a bus for the drive to Jagat, where we rest up for the night in preparation for the next day's trekking.

Day 04 : Jagat to Dharapani. (1960m, 5 hrs)

Another reasonable day of hiking through another diverse landscape of farmland, river crossings and numerous waterfalls. The pretty village of Tal (meaning lake) gives us time to pause before finishing up for the day at Dharapani, one of the region's key trekking hubs.

Day 05 : Dharapani to Koto. (2600m, 5 hrs)

The morning sees the trail climbing steadily through forested slopes towards Timang, one of the trek's scenic outlooks with fine views of Manaslu, Annapurna II and Lamjung Himal. The day finishes at Koto, the gateway to Nar Phu where we check in with our permits at the local field office.

Day 06 : Koto to Meta (3560m, 7 hrs)

The real adventure begins as the trek leads into the restricted and rarely visited valley of Nar Phu, a semi-arid region very similar geographically to Manang yet one with its own highly unique and largely untouched culture.

Day 07 : Meta to Phu (4080m, 8 hrs)

The day's stunning landscapes and secluded nature of the trail are only superseded by the magic of coming upon the medieval walled village of Phu at day's end, a cubist painting come to life of block-like homes and structures ringed around the core hill.

Day 08 : Side trip to Himlung Base Camp (7 hrs, 4920m) then on to Phu village.

A rest day at Phu that gives us ample opportunity to explore the heights and spectacular views on offer of Himlung Base Camp, with plenty of time left over in the afternoon to relax and wander the myriad laneways of Phu and bask in the genuine warmth, hospitality and traditional culture of the local people.

Day 09 : Phu to Nar. (4110m, 8 hrs)

The long trek to Nar Phedi and Nar Village offers further opportunities to take in the unique landscape of the valley.

Day 10 : Nar to Kang La pass 5320m then descend to Nagwal. (3660m, 8 hrs)

A day to savor, as well as a day to test one's resolve. The trail moves steadily away from Nar Village and climbs through the most remote area of the valley to Kang La and the streaming prayer flags that mark the apex of the trek. After pausing to celebrate the moment, take appropriate pictures, and admire the glorious views, we head over the pass to begin the steep descent to Ngawal, the village which marks our return to the standard route for the Annapurna Circuit.

Day 11 : Nagwal to Manang. (3540m, 3hrs)

The trail leads on through the old village of Braga, which offers up a perfectly situated monastery to pause and reflect on. From there it's on to Manang.

Day 12 : Side trip around Manang.

A rest day, the main purpose of which is to allow the body to acclimate to the increase in altitude. A number of possibilities are available for the day, including hiking in the nearby hills to help the acclimation process or simply just relaxing in the town and taking in the magnificent views.

Day 13 : Manang to Yak kharka. (4050m, 4 hrs)

Leaving behind the pine and fir forests from the lower slopes, the trail leads on through Old Manang into the pure alpine regions of the upper valley. The trek is a shorter one by necessity because of the altitude gain, and the day's hike comes to a conclusion after a pleasant 3-4 hour hike to Yak Kharka.

Day 14 : Yak Kharka to Thorong Phedi. (4450m, 3 hrs)

Another short day of hiking through the mountain wilderness thanks to the need to acclimate to the higher altitudes. By midday the trail leads in to Thorong Phedi, the penultimate destination before reaching the trek's apex at Thorong La.

Day 15 : Thorong Phedi to Thorong La 5416m then descend to Muktinath. (3760m, 8 hrs)

The grand finale of the steady climb through the valley, peaking at one of the Himalayas highest passes, Thorong La, after a pre-dawn departure from Thorong Phedi. It's a day to celebrate a worthy achievement, not least the effort taken to make the last final push to the pass and its myriad prayer flags fluttering in the mountain breeze. From there the trail descends steeply towards Muktinath and its glorious outlook towards Dhaulagiri. Muktinath is held to be sacred by both Buddhists and Hindus, who view the town and its temple as a pilgrimage site to be visited at least once in their lives.

Day 16 : Muktinath to Jomsom. (2720m, 5 hrs)

The final leg of the trek via Kagbeni offers fine Himalayan scenery and glimpses of the restricted and highly secluded region of Upper Mustang. Kagbeni itself, situated in peaceful surroundings by the Kali Gandaki River, is also sacred to Hindus. The trail leads on by the river all the way to Jomsom, a sizeable town that serves as the central administrative and transport hub for the region.

Day 17 : Jomsom to Pokhara by drive.

The drive from Jomsom to Pokhara is a lengthy - if adventurous - journey, while the much shorter option of a direct flight is also available. With enough time a side trip to nearby Tatopani and its natural hot springs is also available, and certainly worth considering for its recuperative effects on weary limbs.

Day 18 : Pokhara to Kathmandu by drive.

A long day's drive by bus that gives provides numerous scenic opportunities - and thrills - along the way.

Day 19 : Transfer to international airport.

Farewell and drop-off at the airport, or the opportunity to join another of our programs.