



Destination  
Nepal

# Spring Trekking in the Annapurnas

Words & images by Rob Keating



Trek to Nayapul

There certainly is something special about trekking through the Annapurna region of Nepal. It becomes clear when one first views these magnificent mountain ranges for the first time. The clouds part to reveal their enormity, which makes this region world famous.

Upon arriving in a bustling, hot and dusty Kathmandu (the largest metropolis in the Himalayan hill region), it really is, as they say, an 'assault on the senses'.

City life here is fast-paced and keeping up can be difficult for the ill-informed. A visit to Thamel to bag a bargain is a must. The popular maze-like grid of narrow streets contains hundreds of tiny shops and stalls spilling out onto the dirt roads while every means of traffic whizzes around you.

After two days in Kathmandu, my new found travelling companions and I were eager to get on our way and venture out into the quiet mountain wilderness. This was what we were here for after all!

Setting off early after breakfast, our group was transported to the airport for the 30-minute scenic flight to Pokhara...gateway to the Annapurna region. After several hours (and way too many coffees) of waiting in the small airport lounge while squinting to see if our flight number would appear on the board, it was announced that our flight, and indeed all the flights that day, had been cancelled due to poor weather conditions. This is the mountains after all and it happens.

That afternoon we boarded a bus for the less scenic eight-hour journey through to Pokhara. As we bounced along the dusty, potholed roads, I can safely say I never want to complete that drive again. I was, however, happy to finally be on the move!

The next day we commenced a full day's trekking to catch up on our shortfall from the previous day. This would be my trekking debut and, as I strode out confidently in my shiny new trekking boots, I knew I would be challenged physically. I have completed many physical and sporting challenges from triathlon to bodybuilding, but I was a newbie trekker.



Steps down to Nayapul, Annapurnas



Tadapani Breakfast views

I was suitably prepared, physically, but what I wasn't prepared for was the mountain weather and how changeable it can be. Spring is the optimal time

to visit the Himalayas, with mild daytime temperatures, colourful rhododendrons in bloom and dry tracks all making for a pleasant trekking experience.



Kopro Ridge views



Having said that, we did experience some unseasonable pre-monsoon hail storms thrown into the mix! The electrical storms during the night were also a spectacular sight. Towards the end of the first day, the weather finally began to improve and we squealed with delight, cameras at the ready, as the first glimpses of the mountain ranges came into view.

We managed a total of eight hours on the trail that first day. This would come to be the average each day – around four hours in the morning, followed by a rest for lunch and then three to three and a half hours in the afternoon. As we progressed along

the trails, my legs began to get used to the daily routine and I found my natural stride. The terrain was varied – from lush forests, to scree paths and high mountain grassy passes. Oh and steps...LOTS of steps! The different conditions encountered each day made the trekking all the more interesting as we continued along the trails with our trusty Sherpa guides.

We eventually reached the penultimate point of the trek...Kopro Ridge. This is the highest point on the trail at 3,660m, with breath taking views of Dhaulagiri peak as it towers above the deepest gorge in the world, the Kali Gandakhi.

### facts:

Rob travelled to Nepal with the assistance of World Expeditions [www.worldexpeditions.co.nz](http://www.worldexpeditions.co.nz)

Our accommodation on this trek was a combination of permanent eco-campsites and eco-lodges. The eco-campsites feature comfortable stand-up tents complete with wooden beds, mattresses and pillows. The eco-lodges have cosy but basic rooms containing two single beds. Communal dining rooms are cosy and have a pot-belly fire in the middle that tends to attract trekkers like moths to the flame.

One of the best things about this trip was the food. Carbs! I'm talking glorious carbs EVERY meal!! The fantastic World Expeditions team whipped up three hearty meals a day for the group...sometimes using basic methods outdoors. The mountain ranges produce very little meat, and our 3 course meals would consist of four or five different carb heavy dishes; pasta, pizza, stews and large amounts of breads and potato dishes. Not to mention the desserts! There was always seconds and thirds offered, and, despite all those carbs I ended up dropping 4kg!

The final day of the trek arrived, and the morning consisted of descending 1,000m on stone steps to the village below and then taking the scenic flight back to Kathmandu. YES! we could fly this time! And what a flight it was. Viewing the mountains from the air was such a treat.

Arriving back at the hotel in Kathmandu felt like being back in relative normality, and we did laugh as we felt a bit like 'Survivor' contestants as we enjoyed our hot showers, clean clothes, a lovely dinner and a plush hotel beds for the night.

I am certain my experience of Nepal will stay with me forever. I feel blessed to have been given the opportunity to experience the serene mountains, the friendly people and the unique culture of this land, all of which draws you in as you leave a piece of your heart and vow to return. Namaste. ■

# Trek the Annapurnas with World Expeditions.



**Experience the serene beauty of this peaceful region of Nepal on one of our fantastic trekking adventures. Be captivated by the views, the people and the culture.**



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