

**TRAVEL INFORMATION FOR TERGAR TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION,
WANDERING YOGI MEDITATION RETREAT, MAY 2023**

WHERE WILL THE TREK TAKE PLACE?

Our meditation trek will take place in Nepal from 2-18 May, 2023.

We ask all trekkers to arrive in Kathmandu on or before 30 April. We will meet on 1 May to make introductions, give a briefing on the program, collect final payments and passports for the trekking permit applications, and ensure everyone has the gear they need.

We ask all trekkers to check in to Hotel Moonlight in Thamel on 2 May, which is included in the price of the trek. We will have a welcome dinner together that evening.

We will return to Hotel Moonlight on 18 May and the program officially ends after breakfast on 18 May, although you are welcome to stay and explore Kathmandu Valley or all of Nepal.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

Please review the packing lists in your earlier emails. If you would like me to resend them, just ask and I will be glad to do so.

WHAT ARE THE VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR NEPAL?

A valid passport with at least six months remaining before the expiration date is required for travel to Nepal. Those living outside Nepal will also need a tourist visa during the time of the trek. Tourists are allowed to stay up to 150 days in a single western calendar year.

TOURIST VISAS

Tourist visas are available from Nepali embassies and consulates around the world. Tourist visas are also available upon arrival at the immigration counter at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu for most passport holders. You might want to check the link below to ensure you can get a visa on arrival with your passport.

Three types of tourist visas are available, depending on the length of your stay, you will need one of these two:

30-day multiple entry for \$60

90-day multiple entry for \$100

If you would like to fill out your visa application online, you can go to this site:

<http://online.nepalimmigration.gov.np/tourist-visa>

The form must be filled out NOT MORE THAN 15 days before your arrival in Nepal. You need to print out a copy for yourself so you have the barcode. If you do this, you can go straight to the payment counter in the airport.

Otherwise, there are interactive computerized visa application machines at the airport, which take your picture and print an application form. The lines for these computers can be long.

You will need the full address (including ward number) of the hotel you plan to stay in the night of your arrival.

You must pay in foreign currency. GB Sterling, Euros, or US dollars are all acceptable, Nepalese rupees and credit cards are NOT acceptable. It is helpful if you have the correct change as close as possible. Coins will not be accepted, and change will be given in Nepalese rupees.

Tourist visas are also available upon arrival at the land border with India. You will need a passport-sized photo and foreign currency to cover the visa fee. You will be provided with an application form.

RENEWING YOUR VISA

Upon expiry of the initial tourist visa, visitors may obtain a 30-day extension for \$60 from the Department of Immigration in Kalikasthan, Kathmandu. You will need to fill out an online application form and then take the print-out to the Department of Immigration. The online application page can be found here <http://online.nepalimmigration.gov.np/tourist-visa>.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS

The fee for the trek includes airport transfers. However, you might want to check if your hotel offers complimentary airport pickup.

Otherwise, there will be a driver waiting outside the airport with your name on a sheet of A4 paper. They will be opposite the exit (across the service road). There will be a lot of people waiting there. This is past the currency exchange, prepaid taxi stand, and SIM card stand.

We need all flight information for anyone using the airport transfer service at least 15 days before you arrive. Please let us know if you plan to utilize an alternative method of transportation (like hotel pickup).

If you have questions once you arrive at the airport, you can contact Bishnu at Himalayan Sunrise Outfitters: +9779841602424 .

Pre-paid taxi service - There are also pre-paid taxis that you can take from the airport at reasonable rates. There are two pre-paid taxi counters in the airport with prices displayed on a board at either pre-paid taxi counter. You can book the prepaid taxi from within the airport or get a non-prepaid taxi from the parking lot outside. Porters will probably try to carry your bags. If they do, you might like to be prepared with a tip. \$1 or \$2 US or 100 to 200 Nepalese rupees is considered a good tip. Of course, you can feel free to not use a porter and hold on to your bags. The trolleys in the airport are free of charge, you do not have to pay to use the trolleys.

HOW CAN I EXCHANGE MONEY?

There is a money exchange booth at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu but your exchange rate is better in the city of Kathmandu itself, so you may only wish to exchange a limited number of rupees when you initially arrive. There is an ATM at the airport as well and throughout the city.

WHERE CAN I STAY BEFORE OR AFTER THE COURSE AND HOW CAN I BOOK ACCOMMODATION

Please see our accommodation list (at end of this document) for suggested places to stay if you are planning to arrive early or stay after the trek.

INSURANCE

All participants are required to have travel insurance, including helicopter evacuation coverage- Please note the elevations listed on the itinerary, as that information might be required when purchasing coverage.

Please submit insurance information at least 15 days prior to your arrival in Nepal, so we have it on file in case of an emergency.

HOW CAN I STAY HEALTHY AND SAFE?

Food safety - Avoid water that is not filtered, bottled or boiled. When outside the guesthouse avoid raw vegetables and pre-cut fruit as much as possible.

Must haves - Always carry toilet tissue and hand sanitizer. It is also advisable to carry a torch (flash light) if you are going out at night.

Foot wear - Roads and pavements (sidewalks) are uneven with plenty of potholes so sensible shoes are advisable at all times.

Pollution protection – The city of Kathmandu is highly polluted. You may want to bring and use a smog mask if you are in any way sensitive to dust and pollution. Simple cotton face masks are widely available throughout the city. You can also purchase disposal masks from all pharmacies. Please note the air quality on the trek should be excellent. The main problem is while traveling across the city.

Safety at night – Travelers are advised not to go out alone at night.

WHAT MEDICAL PREPARATION SHOULD I MAKE FOR MY TRIP?

Always consult your medical practitioner well before embarking on foreign travel to discuss your personal medical needs as well as required vaccinations.

Reference information for a well-respected hospital in Kathmandu:

CIWEC Hospital Private Limited

Address: G.P.O. Box 12895, Kapurdhara Marg, Kathmandu 44600, Nepal

Phone: +977 1-4424111

WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO NEPAL?

Clothing & footwear - Short skirts, shorts, or low-cut tops are not suitable in a monastery setting. Sensible shoes are a must. Given the Nepali and Tibetan custom of removing your shoes before you enter a room, shoes that come on and off easily are advisable. There might be considerable differences in temperature during the day and at night so please wear layers.

General items - Any medication, vitamins or supplements you take, special toiletries or cosmetics. You can buy most toiletries in Nepal but if you need brand specific items it's best to bring your own. You will need a torch (flashlight), sun hat and sunscreen. Also, it can be very handy to have a powerbank to recharge your cell phone.

Power – Nepal uses 220-240v power. Many electronics that do not specifically state that they can work with both 110 and 220 could benefit from a converter, or better yet, a transformer. To learn about power in Nepal, this site is helpful <https://www.power-plugs-sockets.com/nepal/>

Note that there will be very little electricity available on the trek. Some teahouses have outlets, some charge to use the outlets, and some have none at all. It is a good idea to bring charged batteries or solar-powered battery chargers for your cameras and phones.

WHAT KIND OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN NEPAL?

WiFi is used widely throughout Kathmandu. Most guest houses, hotels, restaurants, and cafés offer free WiFi to their customers. There will generally not be wifi on the trek.

LOCAL MOBILE NETWORKS – You can get a SIM card in Nepal fairly easily, if your phone is unlocked. There are booths outside the airport as well as throughout the city. Bring a photocopy of your passport and visa and also a passport-sized photo.

Data packages are offered by both the two main carriers Nepal Telecom (NTC) and NCell.

Nepal Telecom seems to work best in Nubri Valley, although your results may vary.

You can recharge your Nepal Telecom (NTC) SIM or NCell SIM cards with recharge cards available in many denominations at stores throughout the city.

Once we leave the city, phone coverage will be spotty, at best.

ACCOMMODATION LIST

The following map shows the location of the listed guest houses and hotels, Ciwec Clinic, Norvic Hospital, Boudha Stupa and Tribhuvan Airport.

[Accommodation Map](#)

Please note telephone numbers are listed for calling from outside Nepal i.e. with the country code 977. When in Nepal the area code for Kathmandu is 01 (rather than 1). Nepali mobile numbers are all 9 digits long and do not require an area code.

ACCOMMODATION IN THE SWAYAMBHU AREA

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THE SPARKLING TURTLE BACKPACKERS HOSTEL

Email: tshostel@gmail.com

Web site: www.thesparklingturtle.com

Tel: (977) 01 4033736, Mobile: (977) 9813564272

SATHI GUEST HOUSE AND SATHI GUEST HOUSE 2

Email: info@sathiguesthouse.com

Web site: <https://sathiguesthouse.com/>

Tel: (+977) 9808834249

BENCHEN VIHAR

Email: bghouse@ntc.net.np

Website www.benchen.org

Tel: 977 1 4284204/4272302

THE VAJRA HOTEL

Website: www.hotelvajra.com

Email: vajra@mos.com.np, info@hotelvajra.com

Tel: 977 1 4271545

ACCOMMODATION IN THAMEL

HOTEL MOONLIGHT

<https://www.hotelmoonlight.com/contact-us>

Address: Paknajol Marg, Kathmandu 44600, Nepal

Phone: 977 1-4383566

KATHMANDU GRAND HOTEL

Website: <http://www.kathmandugrandhotel.com/contact-us>

Phone: 977-01-4700694/ 4701483

ACCOMMODATION IN BOUDANATH ("BOUDHA")

SHECHEN GUESTHOUSE (part of Shechen Monastery)

Website: <http://www.shechenguesthouse.com.np>

Email: guesthouse.nepal@shechen.org

Phone: +977 1-5178209

TI-SE GUESTHOUSE

Website: <http://ti-se-guesthouse-boudha.kathmandubesthotels.com/en/>

DRAGON GUESTHOUSE

Email: dragon@ntc.net.np

Phone: +977 0-15178117

There are many other guesthouses and hotels in the Thamel, Lazimpat, and Boudhanath areas to meet all budgets and needs. You can easily browse through them online.

TAXI DRIVERS

Boudha

Krishna: 984 144 6423 – Krishna can arrange other taxi drivers – tell him George sent you

Jita: 986 023 8662

Vishnu: 980 300 9378

Tikka: 984 292 2704

Rajesh Lama: 984 332 4750

Swayambhu

Haku: 980 812 5328

Kishor: 981 0318611

Raju: 984 1454975

Gopal 980 793 7023

Tsundru 981 355 2665 – has a good network of other drivers

THINGS TO DO IN THE KATHMANDU AREA

For a map of selected locations, [click here](#).

Swayambhunath Stupa

The Swayambhunath Stupa (meaning the 'self-created' stupa, aka the Monkey Temple) is found on a hilltop to the west of Kathmandu just across 'ring road' from Ösel Ling. Second in importance only to the Boudhanath Stupa, the Swayambhunath complex, founded by King Manadeva during the fifth century, contains a stupa, temples, shrines, Tibetan monastery, museum and library. The Swayambhunath Stupa is one of the crowning glories of Kathmandu Valley architecture. 25 min. walk.

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/nepal/swayambhunath/attractions/swayambhunath-stupa/a/poi-sig/1432708/357105>

Thamel

Since the 1960s, Thamel has been the home to the backpacker crowd coming to Kathmandu from all over the world. While the architecture is superb, and the shopping is spectacular, Thamel is a bohemian hub for tourists from around the globe. Thamel is a must visit while in Kathmandu. Can be walked - 20-25 minutes via taxi/van.

Asan Tole Market

Asan Tole is the very heart and soul of Kathmandu and the center of the life of its residents. A walk through Asan will give you a glimpse into the everyday life in Nepal. Asan is a just short walk from Thamel. Can be walked - 25-30 minutes via taxi/van.

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/nepal/kathmandu/attractions/asan-tole/a/poi-sig/386803/357144>

Kathmandu Durbar Square

Kathmandu's Durbar Square was where the city's kings were once crowned and legitimized, and from where they ruled ('durbar' means palace). As such, the square remains the traditional heart of the old town and Kathmandu's most spectacular legacy of traditional architecture. Can be walked - 25-30 minutes via taxi/van.

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/nepal/kathmandu/attractions/durbar-square/a/poi-sig/386867/357105>

The Village of Boudha

Located seven (7) miles NW of Ösel Ling, Boudha is the heart of the Tibetan community in Kathmandu. It is bustling with activity at all hours, both sublime and mundane. It is the home to most of the teachers and their monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley. It also offers some of the best shopping for Buddhist statues, paintings and Himalayan crafts in the region. This is a must-visit site. 45-60 minutes by taxi.

Boudha Stupa

The center of all activity in Boudha is the great stupa, Boudhanath. The stupa is one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. Built sometime after AD 600, when the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo, converted to Buddhism. In terms of grace and purity of line, no other stupa in Nepal comes close to Bodhnath. 45-60 minutes by taxi

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/nepal/bodhnath-boudha/attractions/bodhnath-stupa/a/poi-sig/1172098/357115>

Monasteries in Boudha

Boudha is the home to some 50 monasteries from all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Principle among these are Ka-Nying Shedrup Ling (the White Gumpa), the monastery of Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche (Mingyur Rinpoche's eldest brother), HH Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's Shechen Monastery, Thrangu Rinpoche's monastery, the monastery of Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche, Pullahari, and the well known Gelugpa monastery, Kopan Gumpa. 45-60 minutes by taxi

Ka-Nying Sheldrub Ling Monastery - <https://shedrub.org/>

Shechen Monastery - <http://shechen.org/>

Pashupatinath Cremation Ghats

Near Boudha, on the banks of the sacred Bagmati are the burning ghats (funeral grounds) of Pashupatinath. Pashupatinath is the Nepali equivalent of Varanasi on the sacred River Ganges. The cremation ghats along the Bagmati are used for open-air cremations and are constantly in use. The architecture of the small temples in the surrounding area is beautiful. Pashupatinath is also the place where many of Nepal Hindu Sadhus (mendicants) live. 45-60 minutes by taxi.

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/nepal/pashupatinath/attractions/cremation-ghats/a/poi-sig/1432314/357105>

Patan Durbar Square

A UNESCO World Heritage site, the beautiful city of Patan lies south of Kathmandu across the Bagmati River and that is home to Nepal's finest collection of temples and palaces. Founded in the 3rd century, Patan is the home to the Newari people, the earliest inhabitants of the Kathmandu valley and the earliest Buddhist practitioners in Nepal. The Newari craftsman produce the finest Buddhist statuary in the world. Mingyur Rinpoche's father, Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche, was considered to be the guiding Tibetan teacher for the inhabitants of Patan. 60 minutes by taxi

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/nepal/around-the-kathmandu-valley/patan>

Golden Temple – Kwa Bahal

Untouched by the earthquake, this unique Buddhist monastery is just north of Durbar Square. It was allegedly founded in the 12th century, and it has existed in its current form since 1409. The temple gets its name from the gilded metal plates that cover most of its frontage and it is one of the most beautiful in Patan. The Shakyamuni Buddha that is the heart of the Golden Temple that is considered to be the most historically important and beautiful statues in Nepal. 60 minutes by taxi

Namo Buddha (Stupa)

Namo Buddha is one of the important pilgrimage spots in the Kathmandu valley and the site of Thrangu Rinpoche's Thrangu Tashi Yangtse Monastery

According to the Jatakas and several sutras, Mahasattva was one of Buddha Shakyamuni's former incarnations. He was the youngest of the three sons of king Maharatha. One day as the three brothers were walking through the forest, they saw a tigress with the five cubs she had given birth to. She was so hungry she could hardly move. The three princes went away, but Mahasattva decided to go back and started to cut his flesh to give it to the tigress to eat. When his brothers went to look for him they found only his bones and hair. The stupa was built on top of these remains.

<http://namobuddha.org>

http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Namo_Buddha

HELPFUL TRAVEL GUIDES

Lonely Planet Kathmandu - <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/nepal/kathmandu>

Rough Guides Nepal - <https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/asia/nepal/kathmandu-and-patan/>

The Longest Way Home - <https://www.thelongestwayhome.com/travel-guides/nepal/kathmandu-city-travel-guide.html>

Trip Advisor - https://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g293890-Kathmandu_Kathmandu_Valley_Bagmati_Zone_Central_Region-Vacations.html

Walking Guides for Kathmandu - <https://www.gpsmycity.com/gps-tour-guides/kathmandu-414.html>