

# itinerary

## Nepal – Land of the Gods

### Days 1 & 2

Your Himalayan Adventure Begins! Depart from New York and arrive in Katmandu. Transfer to hotel and rest.

### Day 3

Katmandu valley contains three city-kingdoms of enormous historic, artistic and cultural importance. In Katmandu city, we will explore this ancient capital of Nepal by first visiting Durbar Square with its superb examples of sculpture, Nepalese architecture of pagoda-shaped temples, the Royal Palace, the temple of the Living Goddess - a young girl worshiped as a deity by all devout Hindus, Katmandu's holiest of Hindu shrines and the many bazaars for which Katmandu is famous.

### Day 4

The morning will begin with a visit to Swayambhunath Stupa which is surrounded by 2000 year old Buddhist chaityas. This remarkable monument is symbolic of Buddha's enlightenment 2500 years ago. Many important events in Buddha's life are exquisitely represented in brass relief on this magnificent stupa. A visit to a Tibetan Buddhist monastery at Swayambhunath will be highlighted by a beautiful colossal statue of the future Buddha Maitreya. In the evening, we will visit katmandu's music temple where devout Hindu musicians play music from the Vedas — sacred knowledge texts.

### Days 5 & 6

Early morning departure by motor vehicle through the picturesque Nepali countryside to Dhulikhel, a small town east of Katmandu toward the Chinese border. From here you have a spectacular hundred-mile panoramic view of the Himalayas from the Annapurnas to Everest. We will spend the evening at a comfortable lodge to take advantage of the magnificent sunrise. The nearby villages also give us a splendid taste of life in the Nepalese countryside which we will experience before our return trip to Katmandu. The remainder of day five is reserved for leisure and personal activities.

### Day 7

After breakfast we will visit Patan, the second of Nepal's ancient capitals and oldest of the three cities of the Katmandu valley. Founded in the 3rd century, this medieval city is home for hundreds of temples and palaces each with exquisite intricate carvings that display Nepal's unique blend of Hindu and Buddhist influence. Of particular interest are the 16th century Krishna Mandir with its frieze depicting war scenes of ancient Hindu epics, the Hiranya Varna Mahavirha - a three story golden pagoda built in the 13th century - the Mahabuddha Temple and, of course, the famous Patan bazaar. We will also visit an artist foundry where we will witness statue making for which Nepalese artists have become famous.

### Day 8

In the morning we visit Pashupatinath, the most sacred of Nepal's Hindu shrines, dedicated to the God Shiva. This Hindu temple is renowned for its gold-gilt-brass twin pagoda roofs and its richly carved silver-plated doors and gateways. In the afternoon we will visit a Tibetan Handicraft Center where we will observe the ancient Tibetan traditions of carpet weaving, painting and knitting of woolen goods by the talented hands of these skilled artisans and craftsmen.



**Day 9**

A morning flight for sightseeing by the Royal Nepal Airlines will offer a spectacular panoramic tour over Mt. Everest and the Eastern Himalayan range. In the afternoon, we will enjoy a beautiful drive in the countryside on our way to Bhadgaon, also known as Bhaktapur, city of devotees. Here our tour begins at Durbar Square where we explore Bhadgaon's temples and palaces including the famous Golden Gate - opening the way to the courtyard of the Palace of the 55 Windows, topped by the Hindu Goddess Kali. This ancient city has remarkable examples of Nepalese architecture and has the most medieval flavor of the former three city-kingdoms. In the evening we will enjoy Nepalese music and dance.

**Day 10**

In the morning, we will visit Bodhnath the site of the world's largest Buddhist stupa. For more than a century, Tibetans have come to Bodhnath to make a pilgrimage and to perform their ritual observances before, and around, this great stupa. In fact, in the past many traders and Buddhist monks en-route from India through Nepal to Tibet stopped here to pray for their safe return home over the massive Himalayan mountain range. Bodhnath today is home to one of the largest Tibetan communities in Nepal. At Bodhnath, we will explore this great monument as well as the surrounding monasteries, Tibetan shops and bazaar. In the afternoon, we will travel to a Tibetan Buddhist monastery outside the town of Bodhnath called Kopan.

**Days 10, 11 & 12**

The concluding portion of our tour takes place at Kopan monastery where we will spend two and a half days learning and experiencing Buddhist meditation. We will receive instruction and a discourse from a Tibetan lama. The monastery sits at the top of a beautiful mountain that overlooks the Katmandu valley and is an ideal location for relaxation, contemplation and peaceful nature walks through ancient bamboo forests. One can also explore Bodhnath Stupa and bazaar from Kopan because it is only minutes away by foot.

**Day 13**

Return to Katmandu. Our last day in Katmandu is reserved for shopping browsing and final preparation for our return trip home. The evening will be devoted to our departing banquet.

**Day 14**

Departure from Katmandu for New York.

