ANNAPURNA SANCTUARY (ANNAPURNA BASE CAMP)

Machhapuchhare from the Sanctuary © Ann Foulkes, trekMountains

Grade:	Moderate	**Land-only duration:**	15 or 16 days * (see day 2 of itinerary)
		Trekking days:	12 days
Max altitude:	4130m	**Price:**	Contact us
Dates:	We can run this on dates to suit you for a minimum group size of 1. The 2 main trekking seasons in Nepal are Spring and Autumn. Contact us at info@trekmountains.com with your preferred dates		

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Trek description

The Annapurna region is justifiably one of the very finest trekking destinations in the world.

The area north of Pokhara covered by this trek offers dramatic close-up views of some of the highest and most beautiful mountains in the world. The Annapurna Sanctuary (also known as Annapurna Base Camp), is a natural alpine amphitheatre completely surrounded by snow capped mountains all over 6100 metres, and offers unrivalled trekking. This trek takes you through a variety of scenery, from the villages, farmland and jungle surrounding Pokhara, through alpine zones before coming into the Sanctuary itself, where you are completely surrounded by 6000, 7000 and 8000 metre Himalayan peaks at very close range.

Trekking up to the village of Ghorepani offers us breath-taking views of the Annapurnas. The next morning we ascend Poon Hill at dawn to see sunrise on the mountains before the path takes us up the Modi Khola valley to the Annapurna Sanctuary. We spend time at both Machhapuchhare and Annapurna Base Camps, allowing us to fully appreciate both sunset and sunrise at both camps, and as an aid to our acclimatisation and allowing time to explore the Annapurna Sanctuary in depth.

Due to the incredible altitudinal range and consequent geographical and climatic variations, trekking in this area is a naturalist's dream. In just 8 days we move from the sub-tropical areas around Pokhara to the high tundra and glaciers of the Annapurna Sanctuary.

The inhabitants of the lower areas are mostly Gurung and Magar: races that make up the backbone of the famous Gorkha regiments of the British and Indian armies. Pokhara is mainly inhabited by Newarii, the lowland traders of Nepal. Part of this trek follows one of the most important of the ancient trading routes over the Himalaya, and is also a major pilgrimage route to Muktinath.

Trekking in this region is very accessible, even to people who haven't trekked at altitude before. Starting low (around 800m), the Annapurna region offers trekkers on this route the chance to acclimatise much more gradually than the typical Everest region itineraries, which normally start from an altitude of 2700m at Lukla. This makes an ideal first Himalayan trek.

The ridge to Macchupuchhare from the Annapurna Sanctuary © Ann Foulkes trekMountains

OUTLINE ITINERARY

Walking and journey times are approximate

Day 1 **Arrive in Kathmandu**
You will be met at Kathmandu airport and taken to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax after your journey, and to make any final preparations for your trek.

Day 2 **Free day in Kathmandu**
Time to explore this fascinating city with its temples and markets, or take an optional excursion into the Kathmandu Valley.
We feel that this day is important as, should you experience any problems on your outbound journey, (eg delays or missing bags), you still have chance to catch up with your trek itinerary rather than having to rush your acclimatisation to complete the trek. Hopefully this won't apply to you, and you can explore Kathmandu at your leisure. However, in our experience, when these problems do occur, trekkers are extremely grateful for the buffer day.

If you are short of time, we can make this trip shorter, by removing day 2 from your itinerary.

The all-seeing eyes, Swyambunath, Kathmandu © Ann Foulkes trekMountains

Day 3 **Fly Kathmandu to Pokhara, trek to Hille 1475m 2½ hours walking**
We take the 25 minute spectacular flight to Pokhara and drive a short distance to the trail head at Birenthanti. We meet our trekking crew and start trekking up Bhurungdi Khola valley, where the trail gently climbs to Hille. We camp for the night at Hille or in nearby Tikhedunga.

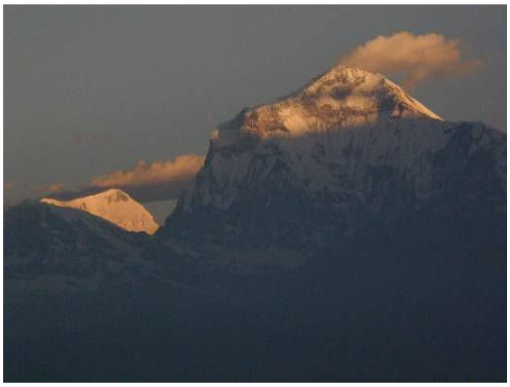
Typical village view on the Annapurna Sanctuary trail © Ann Foulkes trekMountains

Day 4 **Trek to Ghorepani 2750m 4½ hours walking**
Beyond Hille the trail steepens until reaching Ulleri where we are rewarded with views of Annapurna South & Hiunchuli. It is good to do this climb before the heat of the day. From Ulleri the trail climbs less steeply, passing through pastures and cultivated fields before reaching rhododendron forests and the blue roofs of Ghorepani. If the clouds are obliging, we will be rewarded with fantastic views from this vantage point.

Village children © Ann Foulkes trekMountains

Day 5 **Ghorepani to Poon Hill 3193m & Tadopani 2590m 1½ hours + 2½ - 3¼ hours walking**
We rise early for the 45 minute trek to Poon Hill 3193m, one of the most famous places to watch the sun rise across the magnificent

Himalayan panorama including Dhaulagiri to Manaslu in the east and the Annapurna range between.
After returning to Ghorepani for breakfast we set off on the short climb to Deorali for more fantastic panoramic views. We then descend a steep river gorge before the climb to Tadopani.



Dhaulagiri at dawn from Poon Hill
© Ann Foulkes trekMountains

Day 6 Tadopani to Chomrong 2170m
5/6 hours walking
From Tadopani the trail heads north east until we reach the village of Chomrong.. The village is beautifully set against the peaks of Annapurna South, Hiunchuli and Machhapuchhre which towers above. From here we can see why Machhapuchhre was given its other name of Fishtail Peak.

Day 7 Chomrong to Bamboo Lodge 2340m
5/6 hours walking
We leave Chomrong, the last permanent settlement before the Sanctuary, and walk up the Modi Khola valley through beautiful rhododendron and bamboo forest. We camp at the Bamboo lodge.

Day 8 Bamboo Lodge to Deorali 3230m
5 hours walking
We arrive at Himalaya Lodge and walk up the Modi Khola. The valley narrows into a steep sided gorge, by the time the large fire blackened rock overhang known as Hinku Cave is reached, the vegetation has thinned and the gorge narrowed to be only a few hundred metres wide. It was at Hinku Cave that Chris Bonington and his Annapurna South Face team sheltered on their approach to the Sanctuary in 1970. We camp at Deorali.

Day 9 Deorali to Machhapuchhre Base Camp 3700m 4/5 hours walking
Now the valley narrows into a steep gorge, rising above the vegetation line, until we pass through into sanctuary 'gates'. Once through the Sanctuary gates we cross moraine to a cluster of huts called Machhapuchhare Base Camp with Annapurna South, Hiunchuli and the magnificent Machhapuchhre (Fishtail) towering above us.
Some groups do not stay at Machhupuchhre Base Camp, but we think it is important because it allows you the best acclimatisation, and allows you to spend the time enjoying your stay rather than rushing on to the next overnight stop.
It also means that you will have plenty of time to savour the memories that you have trekked for - of the sunset and sunrise when the mountains glow pink and gold both at Machhapuchhare Base Camp and at Annapurna Base Camp - unforgettable!

Day 10 Machhapuchhre Base Camp to Annapurna Sanctuary 4130m 2/3 hours walking
In places the path is a little rougher as it crosses rocks and small streams. Tantalizing glimpses of the massive peaks that form the Sanctuary appear and urge us on. When we reach the moraine the views on all sides of snow capped peaks, fluted walls of ice and enormous rock buttress are incredible; this is a mountain amphitheatre of spectacular size. Wherever you stand in the Sanctuary the 360º views are breathtakingly beautiful. Starting from Hiunchuli 6451m and turning clockwise we see Annapurna South 7467m, Fang 7646m, Annapurna I 8105m, Tent Peak 5673m, Gangapurna 7467m, Annapurna III 7568m and the most spectacular of all, Machhapuchhre 7055m. As you lie in your sleeping bag listen to the glaciers creaking and cracking throughout the night.

Day 11 Annapurna Sanctuary to Doban
6 hours walking
We retrace the trail which we came up but of course this time it will be much easier as we will be descending to lower altitude. If you have energy left, about half hour from Doban a shrine stands in honour of the deity Bataha Than and it is traditional to leave strips of cloth or flowers here. Near the shrine there is an impressive waterfall said to consist of 70 streams!

Fixing the new village swing for the festival season © Ann Foulkes trekMountains

Day 12 Doban to Chomrong
6/7 hours walking
Still retracing our steps down the Modi Khola valley, passing rhododendron and bamboo forests we reach Chomrong. From here it is obvious why Machhapuchhare got the name Fishtail Peak.

Day 13 Chomrong to Tadapani 2900m
5/6 hours walking
We descend down to the Kyumun Khola and trek through the rice fields before we finally we start climbing up to Ghandruk, the picturesque Gurung village surrounded by paddy fields and set against the peaks of Annapurna South and Hiunchuli.

Day 14 Ghandruk to Birethanti, drive to Pokhara
5/6 hours walk, 3 hours drive
Our descent continues to Syauli Bazaar approx 1500m and we continue down to Birethanti, crossing the Modi Khola bridge and finally we come to the road head. After the arrival of all our kit we depart by car/coach to Pokhara where we are accommodated in a very comfortable hotel.

Day 15 Time in Pokhara, fly back to Kathmandu
We may have time to explore the popular town of Pokhara before our flight from Pokhara to Kathmandu, where we return to our group hotel. Rest of day free to shop, explore Kathmandu or rest in the hotel gardens.

Day 16 Depart Nepal
Transfer to Kathmandu airport for international flights.

Machhapuchhare (Fishtail) Peak – the unclimbed, holy mountain which dominates the approach to the Annapurna Sanctuary © Ann Foulkes trekMountains

Important Note: Whilst we expect that the trek will run as per the itinerary, participants should accept that there is a possibility of changes being necessary subject to local conditions.

The Price Includes:

- Journeys by air between Kathmandu and Pokhara including departure taxes for internal flights where applicable.
- Transfers between Kathmandu and Pokhara airports and hotel accommodation
- Accommodation for 3 nights in Kathmandu and 1 night in Pokhara in rooms with shower and wc and inclusive of breakfast
- Participation in the trek as per itinerary including full board shared tea house accommodation, services of porters (15 kg load per participant); Sirdar (head guide) and all relevant trekking permits and insurance for trekking staff.

Not Included:

- International flights - see note below
- Nepal visa - refer to our document "Preparing for your trek: Nepal" for latest prices
- Meals other than breakfast in Kathmandu and Pokhara
- Travel Insurance (see guidance notes in "Preparing for your trek: Nepal")
- Sleeping bag – see kit list in "Preparing for your trek: Nepal"
- Tips
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls and souvenirs (allow approximately £250 spending money)

Single rooms:

If you are travelling alone, you will be matched up to share with someone of the same gender. Single rooms can be provided at extra cost in the hotels (payable in advance), and in the tea houses (payable locally) subject to availability.

Approaching Annapurna Base Camp
© Ann Foulkes trekMountains

Flights:

You are welcome to book your own international flights for this trip. If there is a group of you we may be able to book your international flights for you – please contact us.
We will book the Kathmandu – Pokhara flights for you.
No flights should be booked until you have received written confirmation from the trekMountains office that your departure is guaranteed to run.

Minimum numbers and our pricing policy:

This trip is advertised based on a 2 person price based on twin sharing rooms. It can, however, be run with just 1 person.

We can offer this trip as a trip just for your party on dates to suit you. If the 2 person twin share price is not relevant to your party, we will quote according to the number of participants and the number of single / shared rooms that you require.

Alternatively, you may prefer that we open up the trip to other bookings. In that case, if there are less than 2 of you in your party we will give you a price based on the number of participants so that the trip can be guaranteed immediately. The final price will reduce as more trekkers join the trip.

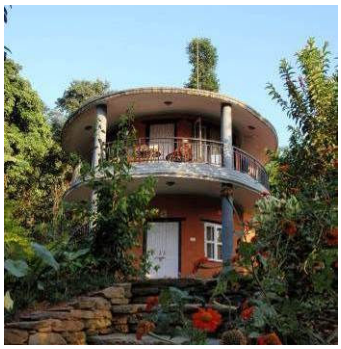
Further trek and country information

Please see our document "Preparing for your trek to Nepal" at http://trekmountains.com/pre-trek/ for all the advice you need about visas, insurance, money, equipment, and medical matters.

Extension Options:

Extra nights are available in Kathmandu and Pokhara:

- **Kathmandu** - hotel accommodation
- **Pokhara** – choose either to stay in hotel accommodation in Pokhara or in a delightful Nepali family-run guest house overlooking the lake. The guest house is best suited to those wanting an authentic time with a Nepali family, and a time of tranquillity and space – it is in a quiet location in a village which is 40 minutes walk from the centre of Pokhara.



Pokhara Guest House accommodation – a little bit of heaven © Ann Foulkes trekMountains

Extension packages can also be organized in Nepal, Tibet or Bhutan.
Please refer to our **Himalayan extensions dossier** for more details.

Potala Palace, Tibet
© Ann Foulkes trekMountains

Drukyel Dzhong, Bhutan © Pam Pickett

Extensions and extra nights should be arranged prior to booking international flights.

Are you looking for even more of a challenge? Some of our other treks that might interest you are:

- Everest Base Camp & the Khumbu Valley – Nepal – the relaxed itinerary
- Everest Base Camp & the Khumbu Valley – Nepal – the 2-week itinerary
- Everest Base Camp & the Sacred Lakes of Gokyo - Nepal
- Naar Phu – Nepal
- Kangchenjunga & the Singalila Ridge – India
- Chomolhari Trek – Bhutan

Looking for something similar?

- Everest Highlights – Nepal
- Singalila Ridge – India
- Druk Path – Bhutan

Not sure? Please email or call us – we consider it very important that you find the right trek for you and we pride ourselves in our ability to help you find the most appropriate trek.

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