



Places to Visit

Kathmandu Valley was regarded as a holy mandala by Tibetan masters of the past, as it was visited by Buddhas of the past when it was a lake and it was opened by Bodhisattva Manjushri. The whole valley is dotted with power places of bodhisattvas, yidams, protectors and Matrikas (mamos).

The Three Stupas

1. Swayambhunath Stupa

The Swayambhunath Stupa (swayambu means “self-existent one”, 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.

2. Boudha Stupa

The centre of all activity in Boudha is the great stupa, Boudhanath (Jarung Kashyor, Wish-fulfilling Stupa). The stupa is one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. Built sometime after 600CE, 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 Boudhanath.

3. 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.

Thamel

Since the 1960s, Thamel has been the home to the backpacker crowd coming to Kathmandu from all over the world. The architecture is superb and the shopping is spectacular.

Thamel is very famous for serving Nepali souvenirs where you can get every variety of Nepali Products.

Asan Tole Market

Asan Tole is the very heart and soul of Kathmandu and the centre of the life of its residents. A walk through Asan will give you a glimpse into everyday life in Nepal. It is one of the most well-known historical locations in the city and is famed for its bazaar, festival calendar and strategic location. A tremendous variety of merchandise sold here, ranging from foodstuffs, spices and textiles to electronics and bullion. Asan is just a short walk from Thamel.

Three Durbar Squares

1. 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 royal palace). It is one of the three Durbar squares in Kathmandu Valley in Nepal that are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. A three-story palace called Kumari Chouk or Kumari Bahal is located at the southern edge of the Durbar square. This Malla-era edifice is used as the residence of the Kumari, a young girl worshipped as a living embodiment of the Hindu Goddess.

2. Patan Durbar Square

A UNESCO World Heritage site, the beautiful city of Patan lies south of Kathmandu across the Bagmati River and 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 craftsmen produce the finest Buddhist statuary in the world. Mingyur Rinpoche's father, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, was considered to be the guiding Tibetan teacher for the inhabitants of Patan.

3. Bhaktapur Durbar Square

The grandest among the three Durbar squares during its independency but now many of the buildings that once occupied the square have been lost to the frequent earthquakes. It housed the Malla Kings of Nepal from 14th to 15th century and the kings of the kingdom of Bhaktapur from 15th to late 18th century until the kingdom was conquered in 1769.

Golden Temple – Kwa Bahal

Grandest Newari style monastery (Patan); Itum Bahal- A famous temple dedicated to Tara, also known as 'talking Tara' is in the premises; Vikramshila Mahavihar/ Stham Bahal – This is a temple consecrated by Atisha, and is said to house the original Pragyaparamita text in gold which can be paid homage upon prior appointment. Ashokan stupas, Patan - These ancient stupas are considered to be established by Dharma King Ashoka in the 3rd century BC. 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 is considered to be the most historically important and beautiful statue in Nepal.

The Village Of Boudha

Located 7 km (4–5 miles) northeast of central Kathmandu, 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.

Monasteries In Boudha

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

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 the Nepal Hindu Sadhus (mendicants) live.

Buddhist places outside Kathmandu:

1. Lumbini Area: Lumbini

The birthplace of Sakyamuni Buddha, Ramgram Stupa (One of the 8 great stupas and the only intact original relic stupa of the Buddha), Tilaurakot (where Buddha stayed for 29 years as a Prince), Nilgihawa and Gotihawa (Birthplace of past Buddhas - Krakuchanda and Kanakamuni). (2 Night / 3 Days trip with flights to cover these places)

2. Maratika

Guru Rinpoche's place of longevity practice. Maratika is an important place associated with Guru Padmasambhava where he attained the siddhi of immortality (Ayu) with his Indian consort Mandarva. There are several caves in the area and a visit from Kathmandu requires a night's stay there. (2 Days 1 Night Trip)

3. Hyolmo

The cave Tagphug Sengezong (Tiger and Lion Cave) in Helambu Region is the practice place of Milarepa, where he did a 3 year retreat. This place was prophesied by the Shakyamuni Buddha in the Avatamsaka Sutra as the blessed land for spiritual practice. (2 days 1 night with stay in Melamchi Bazar)

4. Temal

Yarinag /Temal, Kavre is the land blessed by Guru Padmasambhava. Temal comes from Termahal – as the Guru had hidden termas here. This is where he planted the Bodhichitta plant whose seeds are regarded best for a mala. The cave Yarinag is where the Guru subdued the demonic Black Yaksha as Dükyi Shechen manifestation. (2 Days, 1 night)

5. Risheshvara / Chumik Jangchub (Spring of Enlightenment)

It is one of seven places of Guru Padmashambhava near Kathmandu valley. Padmashambhava blessed the site with rock-water spouts. The spring water is considered extremely sacred and collected for ritual usage. He manifested as Kyechok Tsulzang here. (2 Days, 1 night)

Apart from these Nepal has sites of Milarepa in Lapchi, Manang, Tsum-Nubri, Humla; sites of Guru Rinpoche in Mustang, Helambu, Kabilas, Langtang, Dolakha, Devghat, Makalu Valley etc. The five out of seven known Beyuls (Hidden Valleys) are in Himalayas of Nepal. But, most of the places are in mountainous region and require a long time and strenuous travel.

Helpful Travel guides

- [Lonely Planet Kathmandu](#)
- [Rough Guides Nepal](#)
- [Trip Advisor](#)