

Useful information for your Nepal trip

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 visa for travel to Nepal.

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 three:

15-day multiple entry for USD 30

30-day multiple entry for USD 50

90-day multiple entry for USD 125

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

<https://nepaliport.immigration.gov.np/>

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.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS

There are 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.

Ösel Ling is approximately a one-hour journey from the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. Taxi fares are approximately 2000 NPRs one way to Ösel Ling.

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.

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.

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

Health Insurance: It's highly recommended to have travel insurance that covers medical emergencies.

Reference information for well-respected hospitals in Kathmandu:

- CIWEC Hospital Private Limited. Address: G.P.O. Box 12895, Kapurdhara Marg, Kathmandu 44600, Nepal; Phone: +977 1-4424111
www.ciwechospital.com
- NORVIC Hospital: Thapathali, Kathmandu 44617, Nepal; Phone: +977 1-5970032
www.norvichospital.com

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 range between 20–29 Celcius during the day and at night as it is in raining season 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. Also, it can be very handy to have a powerbank to recharge your cell phone.

Power – Nepal uses 220-240v power and Type C,D and M electrical outlets. 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-plugssockets.com/nepal/>

WHAT KIND OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN NEPAL?

Wi-Fi and Mobile Networks

Wi-Fi is available in most hotels, guest houses, and cafes.

Consider getting a local SIM card for data connectivity during your stay.

WHILE AT TERGAR ÖSEL LING - Please note there is no good WiFi at Tergar Ösel Ling, and phone coverage for all mobile companies is generally nonexistent.

LOCAL MOBILE NETWORKS – You can get a SIM card in Nepal fairly easily, if your phone is unlocked. There are booths at the airport as well as throughout the city. Bring your passport to get one.

Data packages are offered by both of the two main carriers, Nepal Telecom (NTC) and NCell. You can recharge your Nepal Telecom (NTC) SIM or NCell SIM cards with recharge cards available in many denominations at stores throughout the city.

HOW TO GET TO OSEL LING

[Tergar Ösel Ling](#) is Mingyur Rinpoche's monastery in Swayambhu, Kathmandu. Ösel Ling is situated on the top of a hill overlooking Swayambhu Stupa on the other side of Ring Road from Swayambhu Stupa and Buddha Park. The general area is locally known as Sitapaila.

Address:

Tergar Ösel Ling Monastery

PO Box 8921

Chhokdhol Height

Swayambhu

Nagarjun 44600

Website: <https://www.tergarsangha.org/>

TRANSPORTATION

Pathao: Pathao is Nepal's version of Uber. You can download the app to your phone and use it when you are connected to wifi or using data. The app does not ask for credit card information and payment is made in cash at the end of your ride. You may choose a motorcycle or car as your mode of transportation and drivers need clear directions to get to Ösel Ling.

Local guide: You can also arrange transportation directly with Mr Bipul Timilsina (information below).

WHAT IF I NEED HELP TO BOOK ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORT?

You may wish to get in touch with this Kathmandu-based travel agent:

Mr Bipul Timilsina (can speak English and understand a little Chinese)

Dokora Services

WhatsApp: +977 9841554551

WeChat: bipul147 (you can send text and voice messages in Chinese)

Services include: Accommodation booking; Transport booking and any other logistical help;
Buddhist pilgrimage tours

ACCOMODATION

Swayambhu Area:

- THE SPARKLING TURTLE
BACKPACKERS HOSTEL
Email: tshostel@gmail.com
Tel: (977) 01 4033736, Mobile: (977) 9813564272
- BENCHEN VIHAR
Email: bghouse@ntc.net.np
Tel: 977 1 4284204/4272302
- Yuloko Guesthouse
Email: yulokoguesthouse@gmail.com
Tel: (977) 985 1329168

Thamel Area:

- HOTEL NEPALI GHAR
\$75–\$85/ night with breakfast
Website: <http://nepaligharhotel.com/>
- POTALA GUESTHOUSE
\$25–\$80/night
Website: <http://www.potalaguesthouse.com/>
- DALAI-LA BOUTIQUE HOTEL
\$80–\$275/night with breakfast
Website: <https://dalailaboutiquehotel.com/>
- KATHMANDU GRAND HOTEL
Phone: 977-01-4700694/ 4701483
Website: <http://www.kathmandugrandhotel.com/>

Boudha Area:

- HYATT REGENCY KATHMANDU
\$175–\$250/night
Website: https://www.hyatt.com/hyatt-regency/en-US/kathm-hyatt-regency-kathmandu/?src=corp_lclb_gmb_seo_kathm
- LAVIE RESIDENCE AND SPA
\$50–\$60/night with breakfast
Website: <https://residence.laviehospitality.com.np/>
Phone: +(977) 980 1303330
- HOTEL LOTUS GEMS
\$50–\$60/night with breakfast
Website: <https://www.hotellotusgems.com/>
- ROKPA GUEST HOUSE
\$70–\$80/night with breakfast

Website: <http://www.rokpaguesthouse.org/>

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:

www.tripadvisor.com

www.agoda.com

www.booking.com

www.airbnb.com

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 STUPA

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 shakya muni’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. While the architecture is superb, and the shopping is spectacular. Thamel is very famous for serving Nepali souvenir 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 the 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. 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 SQUARE

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 mean **royal palace**). It is one of the three Durbar squares in Kathmandu Valley in Nepal that are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. A three-story temple called Kumari Chouk or Kumari Bahal is located at the southern edge of the Durbar square. This Malla-era temple is used as the resident 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 Ugyen Rinpoche, was considered to be the guiding Tibetan teacher for the inhabitants of Patan.

3. BHAKTAPUR DURBAR SQUARE

The grandest among the three Durbar during its independency but now many of the buildings that once occupied the square has 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 Pragya-paramita text in gold which can be paid homage upon prior appointment. Ashoka 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 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.

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 Gumpa), 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 Gumpa 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 Mandarava. 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 Sengezhong (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 the 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 hid terms 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 Padmasambhava near Kathmandu valley. Padmasambhava blessed the site with rock-water spout. 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 mountaneous region and require a long time and strenuous travel.

DEPARTURES

When departing on an international flight, arrive at least two hours or preferably three hours early.

You need to show your tickets as you enter the departure hall – either have it ready on your phone or print it out before you go to the airport.