

JAN Treks & Travels

Journeys into Adventure and Nature

East Nepal: Limbu-land discovery – 17 nights/ 18 days

Jeep tour with day **walks**. Kathmandu, Sunkoshi, Solu Khumbu, Koshi Tappu & Taplejung

Tour JTT-NE-W01: Kathmandu – Dhulikhel – Sunkoshi rafting – Gurmi – Phaplu – Koshi Tappu N.P. – Dhankutta – Chainpur – Rajarani – Phidim – Taplejung – Ilam – Birtamode - Kathmandu

Best time: end of Sept. – mid-Dec., March – mid-May

Accommodation: hotels, lodges, tented camps, camping

Introduction

On this jeep tour we'll travel from Kathmandu eastward, discovering the middle regions of the eastern Nepali Himalayas. By 4WD we'll explore small, often unpaved, muddy and less traveled mountain tracks that lead to until recently remote villages and vantage points from where we can make magnificent walks. You can expect lots of natural beauty and some spectacular views of the 'big guys', including Everest and Kangchenjunga. But foremost this is a cultural tour. We'll take our time to explore the cultural highlights of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur and then head into the heartland of Limbu culture, which lies East of Arun River and Kangchenjunga regions. The



Limbu are probably the most authentic of the group of original settlers of Nepali known under as Kiranti, who established their first kingdom in the second century BC. The Limbu are agriculturalists with a rich culinary tradition, partly reminiscent of Korean and Japanese cuisine. The drink tongba (millet beer) just like their neighbours in Sikkim and

follow their own animistic religion. Most likely we'll be able to witness some of their traditional dances and festivals. As we near the Indian border we enter tea country. At Ilam we'll spend a day on a tea garden, witnessing the harvesting, drying and processing of the tea leaves, before flying back to Kathmandu.

Itinerary

Day 01: Arrival Kathmandu

After arrival at Kathmandu you are transferred to your hotel. Rest of the day at leisure in Kathmandu. However, if your flight reaches early, we can take you on a walking tour of Asan, Indra Chauk and Kathmandu Durbar Square. These places are in the same area as your hotel. They brim with people and activities.

Overnight in comfortable hotel. *Meals not included*

Day 02: At Kathmandu

In Kathmandu (1325m): Full day tour of the most important historical places and monuments of Kathmandu area: Patan, Swambhunath, Pasupatinath and Boudhanath. These

Overnight in comfortable hotel. *Breakfast included.*

Day 03: Kathmandu – Dhulikel (1554 m) (15 km/ 30 mins)

Today we first visit Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Bhaktapur is an old historical city with beautiful architecture and ancient monuments. We have lunch at a restaurant near Nyatapola temple. After that, we drive to Dhulikhel (17 km); the drive takes about 35 minutes. Stay overnight at Dhulikhel Resort situated at the edge of the valley. You get to see beautiful sunset view of the entire Himalayan range to the north.

Overnight in Dhulikhel Lodge. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 04: Dhulikel- Bardibas; Rafting Sun Koshi river (150 km/ 3-4 hrs; rafting 5-6 hrs)

Today will be spent on white water rafting on the Sun Koshi River. After breakfast we travel by the new Japanese-made road that leads to Bardibas in the plain, to the raft put in point. Depending upon the river condition and volume of water in the river the starting point would be at Nepal Thok, at the confluence of Sun Koshi River flowing through

Dolalghat and Roshi Khola (river) that flows through Panauti or further downstream. The full length of the drive to the first camp at Gurmi (Harkapur) is about 150 km (4 hour). Rafting is full day (5 to 6 hour) that would cover a distance of 15 to 20 km.

Overnight in camp on the bank of the river (own tents and kitchen staff). *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 05: Gurmi – Phaplu (1683 m) (55 km/ 6 hrs)

After breakfast we leave Sun Koshi river at Harkapur and turn north to Okhaldunga (25 km /2 hour drive from Harkapur), after which we drive another 4 hour (30km) further to Salleri and Phaplu. After lunch we visit Chewang monastery and some Sherpa villages. We return to Phaplu for overnight.

Overnight in lodge. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 06: Phaplu – Koshi Tappu N.P. (250 km/ 8 hrs)

Today we drive to Koshi Tappu National Park. We drive back to Harkapur, cross the Sun Koshi river and drive further down via Katari and Tribeni to meet the Main East West High Way at Mirchaiya. From here, we go east towards Koshi Barrage. After crossing the big Koshi river we drive north to Koshi Tappu Wild Life Reserve. We reach there after 10 hour drive with rest and lunch in between.

Accommodation in lodge near the Wildlife Reserve. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 07: At Koshi Tappu

Today we spend the whole day at Koshi Tappu National Park on bird watching activities in and around the bank of Koshi Tappu River. We may visit the sanctuary to see wild buffalo and other wild animals. In the evening return to the lodge. The evening program includes cultural dance of local Tharu community or a documentary of the area and dinner.

Overnight in tented camp. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 08: Koshi Tappu – Dhankutta (1652) (100 km/ 4 hrs)

Today is going to be an easy day. Instead of taking East West High Way to Itahari we drive northeast to Dharan via Chatara (40 km/ 1 hour). Dharan is a bustling city with modern

amenities, shops, hotels, and theater. It is an important cultural center of East Nepal. This city gained prominence after the British established a recruiting and transit camp as center of their activities; now all these activities have moved to Pokhara. After a brief stop at Dharan we continue to drive up the hill to Dhankutta. En-route we stop for lunch at Bahedetar. As we drive up a cool breeze will float in through the window and beautiful views starts unfolding.

From Dharan we reach Dhankutta in 3 hour covering a distance of 50 km.

Overnight in lodge. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 09: Dhankutta – Chainpur (1600 m) (75 km/ 5 hrs)

Chainpur is situated at the edge of the Milke Danda ridge. It is a well known for artisan works and artistic carving, especially *Chainpure Karuwa* (metal water jug). In the spring Milke Danda (ridge) is covered with rhododendron flowers all the way to Basantapur. We visit this hill town, where depending upon the date of visit we can attend the weekend market, and maybe even the famous Laakhe Nach Festival. Part of the road to Chainpur is bad so we drive slowly to reach Chainpur in 5 hour.

Overnight in lodge. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 10: Chainpur – Rajarani (1445 m) (170 km/ 6 hrs)

We drive back to Dhankutta and further down to Bhade-Tar (35 km), then turn east to Dhada-bazar, from where the road descends to Rajarani (58 km). Hopefully we reach Rajarani in time for a short walk around the village.

Rajarani is a neat Limbu village with an average population of 2567 people and 491 households. Depending upon the season you may participate in many rituals, a marriage ceremony or other festivities that are celebrated by the Limbu.

Overnight in camp. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 11: At Rajarani

On this day we take a walk (4 hours) to a small lake near the village. We take a boat ride in the lake and walk around several nearby villages to see day-to-day life, handicraft making and participate in other village activities.

Overnight in camp. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 12: Rajarani – Phidim (1179 m) (100 km/ 5 hrs)

Today's route goes via Budhabare and Ravi and then climbs up to Ranke to reach Phidim; the drive takes about 5 hours on a winding gravel road. Especially the pitched road that winds up from Ilam is spectacular.

Phidim is a picturesque valley in the foothills of the Eastern Nepal. It has enchanting and beautiful scenery. The panoramic view of Kanchenjunga Himalayan range can be seen from this vantage point. Rice, potatoes, cardamom and tea are grown in its fertile soil. Though a Limbu village in the past, now it has 'grown' up to have more cosmopolitan features. There are several historical and cultural places related to the history of Limbu. An important landmark is the fort of Hili Hang, a Limbu king who fought the Gurkha army to halt their progress to the east. This helped bring about the agreement that allowed autonomy of the region east of the Arun river which is known as *Kipat*.

Overnight in lodge. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 13: Phidim – Taplejung (2371 m) (100 km/ 3 hrs)

After breakfast we drive to Taplejung. It should take about 3 hours uphill winding drive to reach Taplejung. After a short break and lunch we take the short drive to Suketar (2420m), where there is an airport. From here we start the walk, climbing gradually to Phedi. Depending upon the season you meet many pilgrims going to the temple of Patibhara. We climb further to the summit to see the temple and magnificent view of Kanchenjunga and Kumba Karna Himal that looms large at just 60 km distance in the northeast. We descend to Lalikharka for an overnight stay. On this short hike (max. 4 hrs) you get the opportunity to visit Limbu villages, meet pilgrims, and interact with indigenous people that would help you know more about them.

Overnight in lodge. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 14: Taplejung – Ilam (1800 m) (165 km/ 5 hrs)

On this day we drive back to Phidim and further south to Ilam. The drive through the picturesque road to Ilam should take about 5 hours. We may stop at several points and villages to see view and observe cultural activities.

Overnight in comfortable hotel. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 15: At Ilam

We plan to have this day devoted to tea. After breakfast we visit the local tea garden to see people plucking tea leaves. There you will learn about tea and the tea plant. You can participate in tea testing. Then we take a walk around the garden (4 hours) and visit the factory where tea making is in progress. We return back to our hotel for overnight.

Overnight in comfortable hotel. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 16: Ilam Bhadrapur - Kathmandu (95 km/ 3 hrs drive; 1 hr flight)

We drive the road south to meet the Main East West High Way at Charali and drive further south to Bhadrapur (3 hour drive). Here you'll board your plane back to Kathmandu. The flight takes about one hour. Upon arrival transfer to hotel.

Overnight in comfortable hotel. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 17: Depart from Kathmandu

Most international flight leave Kathmandu during the afternoon, which leaves with some relaxed hours to spend at Nepal's laid-back capital. Airport transfer is provided.

Price

2 pers.	US\$ 3010 per person
3-5 pers.	US\$ 2760 per person
6-9 pers.	US\$ 2540 per person
10+ pers.	US\$ 2440 per person

Single supplement: US\$ 360

Price includes:

- All ground transportation (non-AC) as required. Transport will be in 4WD jeeps accommodating max. 4 people.
- All airport transfers.
- Accommodation and meals:
 - 3 star hotels in Kathmandu on bed and breakfast.
 - Best available standard lodge or hotel accommodation during the overland journey on AP basis (all meals).
 - Accommodation in tents at indicated locations on AP basis (all meals)

- Camping equipment: tents, sleeping mattresses, kitchen utensils and staff during camping
- Rafting and Wild Life Camp includes all meals, camping and activities with guides.
- Sightseeing tour, excursion and visits according to program.
- Sightseeing entrance fees and service of tour guide in city tour.

Price does not include:

- Personal clothing and sleeping bag.
- Personal accident and health insurance, emergency evacuation, and medical first aid.
- Expenses of personal nature like bottled beverage, bottled water, laundry, tips, and photography charge.
- Any other services and expenses that are not specifically mentioned in the programme
- Expenses due to flight delay, sickness other contingencies.
- Services that are not specifically mentioned.