

JAN Treks & Travels

Journeys into Adventure and Nature

Nepal: Wildlife of the Terai - 16 nights/ 17 days

Jeep tour with short walks, staying in lodges and hotels, one camp tented camp.

Tour JTT-NE-W01: Delhi – Chaddi Chauki – Suklaphanta N.P. – Bardia N.P. – Lumbini – Chitwan N.P. – Kathmandu – Bhaktapur – Koshi Tappu W.R. – Kakkarbhitta – Bagdogra/ Delhi

Jeep tour with visits to four national parks/wildlife reserves and cultural activities.

Best time: May/June, August – October



Introduction

On this wildlife tour you'll cross Nepal from West to East, visiting the four main nature reserves of the country, while spending some time on Nepal's cultural treasures as well.

Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, Bardia National park, Chitwan National park and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve are like a string of pearls highlighting the natural treasures of Nepal's Terai zone, which covers the entire southern part of the country.

You'll explore these well-conserved wilderness areas in a variety of manners. These include venturing into deep jungle on elephant back or four wheel drive to view wild animals in their natural habitat, canoe rides over jungle rivers, guided nature walks, and bird watching.

Besides a great number of 'safaris' you will visit Lumbini - the birth place of Lord Buddha, the picturesque lake city Pokhara and Kathmandu, Nepal's capital, that has numerous historical monuments, palaces, temples and cultural sites. Despite the damage that the recent earthquake has done, Kathmandu valley has still a lot to offer tourists.

Traveling east of Kathmandu you'll visit the picturesque and incredibly bird-rich Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve before concluding the trip at Kakkarbitta, on Nepal's eastern border.

The wildlife of Nepal is officially classified into two main categories: common and protected. The common category lists such species as common leopard, spotted deer, Himalayan tahr, blue sheep and others. These species are commonly seen in the wild. The protected species include 26 mammals, nine birds and three reptiles. These rare animals are confined to their prime habitats.

National parks like Chitwan and Bardia harbor a wide variety of birds as well. In Chitwan, endangered vultures are being protected from contaminated food by establishing 'vulture restaurants' that feed them safe carcasses. The Koshi Tappu region is home to a large species of resident and migratory birds. It has about 26 varieties of ducks alone. About 485 species have been sighted here, including black ibis, honey kites, ospreys, black headed orioles, peregrine falcon, partridges, ruddy shelduck, storks, vultures and eagles among others. Over the past few years a conservation group has worked specifically in the Lumbini area to conserve the sarus crane.

Itinerary

Day 01: Delhi – Shuklaphanta N.P. (341 km/ 8 hrs)

The drive from Delhi to the Nepal border takes about 7 hours. You'll enter Nepal at Ghaddi Chauki. From here, you'll travel to Mahendra Nagar and onwards to Royal Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, which takes another hour drive.

At Shuklaphanta you'll check in at a tented (fixed) camp. *Dinner included.*

Day 02 and 03: At Suklaphanta National Park

Suklaphanta National Park covers an area of 305 square kilometers and evolved from a hunting ground for Nepal's ruling class to a gazetted wildlife reserve in 1973. The grasslands here are one of the last remaining habitats in Nepal for endangered animals such as the hispid hare, pygmy hog and swamp deer. Other wildlife in the park includes spotted deer, nilgai (a large antelope), wild dogs, jackals, wild elephants and tigers. There

are over 350 species of birds, 14 species of fish and 24 species of mammals in Suklaphanta. WWF Nepal's Hariyo Ban Program has done a good job in preserving blackbucks to Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, the first phase of the translocation, a total of 22 animals (6 male and 16 female) were taken from the Nepalgunj mini zoo to Hirapur Phanta in Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve. They are adapting very well and are increasing in numbers.

The mornings will be spent on elephant-back excursions into the park, jeep drives and a canoe ride. On the afternoons you can visit a traditional Tharu village on a cart ride, witness Tharu cultural dances, and enjoy the evening sunset view from the riverbanks.

Overnight at tented camp. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

Day 04: Shuklaphanta - Bardia National Park – (139 km/ 4 hrs)

Traveling further eastwards through a part of Nepal that doesn't see too many foreigners coming you'll reach Bardia N.P. around lunchtime.

The Bardiya National Park was established in 1988 as Royal Bardia National Park. Covering an area of 374 sq km, It is the largest and most undisturbed national park in Nepal's Terai. It borders the eastern bank of the Karnali River and is bisected by the Babai River in the Bardiya District. Its northern limits are demarcated by the crest of the Siwalik Hills. The Nepalgunj-Surkhet highway partly forms the southern boundary.

Bardia National Park has 53 mammals species that include the Royal Bengal tiger, one-horned rhinoceros, elephant, swamp deer, and black buck. Reptiles include gharial crocodile and marsh mugger crocodile. Fresh-water Gangetic dolphins are commonly seen in the Karnali River, specially from November to January. There are 400 species of birds, including Bengal florican, lesser florican, silver-eared mesia and saurus crane. The vegetation consists of sal (small-leaved hardwood), open savannah forests and grasslands.

In the afternoon you'll explore the park by jeep.

Overnight at a local lodge. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

Day 05: At Bardia

The whole day will be spent on excursions into the park, both on elephant and in jeeps.

Overnight at the local lodge. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.



Day 06: Bardia – Lumbini (195 km/ 4 hrs)

After early bird-watching and breakfast, you'll drive to Lumbini, which is about 4 hours of scenic driving.

Lumbini is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Maurya Emperor Ashoka of India visited Lumbini in 245 B.C. and erected a pillar signifying the sacred spot where Lord Buddha first put his foot after birth. Two famous Chinese pilgrims, Fa Hien and Hueng Tsang, visited the site in the 5th and 7th centuries respectively, and wrote about this sacred place in their travelogues. The main temple is named after Buddha's mother, Maya Devi. A large number of Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world visit Lumbini to pray at the Maya Devi Temple, where excavations have revealed the 'marker stone' showing the exact spot where Siddhartha Gautam Buddha was born. Here, we do a half-day sightseeing of the Sacred Garden.

Overnight at a local hotel. Breakfast, and lunch included.

Day 07: Lumbini - Chitwan N.P. (137 km/ 3.5 hrs)

We follow a beautiful route to the famous Chitwan National Park where many protected species live, including the Bengal tiger and the rhinoceros. We stay two nights at the edge of the Chitwan National Park. During your stay you will do a spectacular safari on the back of an elephant through the jungle and meters-high grass in search of rhinos and crocodiles.

In Chitwan National park there are 56 species of mammals that include one-horned rhinoceros, Royal Bengal tiger, rhesus monkey, langur, deer, leopard, gaur, wild boar, wild dog and wild cat; 49 species of amphibians and reptiles that include the endangered long-snouted gharial, marsh mugger crocodile and python. The number of birds surpassed that of other Nepali parks: 539 species of birds have been observed. These

include summer migrant birds like paradise flycatcher, Indian pitta and parakeets, while winter birds include waterfowl, Brahminy ducks, pintails, bar-headed geese, cormorants and migratory birds from Siberia.

In Chitwan, you'll explore the park on elephant back (and engage in elephant bathing by jeep, canoe and on foot. Avid bird watchers will get plenty of opportunities to pursue their hobby. You'll also visit an elephant breeding center and cultural programs as well as a slide presentation.

Overnight at a local lodge. Breakfast, and lunch included.

Day 08: At Chitwan National Park

At Chitwan – full day activities

Overnight at a local lodge. Breakfast, and lunch included.

Day 09: Chitwan - Pokhara (135 km/ 4 hrs)

The drive to Pokhara is beautiful with breathtaking views of huge hills and valleys as well as snow-capped mountains and raging rivers. There is much to behold on this amazing drive and the sights are with us all the way to Lake city Pokhara.

Pokhara Valley is famous for its view of Machapuphare peak and Phewa lake. There are also several places of interest including short hike around Annapurna foothill.

After check into room, we set out for a boat ride on Lake Phewa. The rest of the day at leisure. Evening dinner would be at your own in a restaurant in the city.

Overnight at a local lodge. *Breakfast included.*

Day 10: Half day sightseeing

After breakfast we go for a half-day sightseeing tour. This includes visits to Phewa Tal (Lake) and Davi's fall. Phewa Tal Lake is situated close to city. It has an Island temple dedicated to Goddess Barahi in the middle. With its serene water reflecting the Annapurna range and a nicely preserved forest on the adjoining southern slope, this legendary second largest lake of the Kingdom remains a major source of attraction for the visiting tourists. It can be explored in canoes locally known as *doongas* which are available on rent at several points on the lake. This lake can also be enjoyed by swimming and fishing.

Davi's Fall, locally known as Patale Chhango, lies in the southern flank of the Pokhara valley. Here, the stream that discharges Phewa Lake suddenly collapses and surges down the rock into a deep gorge, leaping through several potholes before taking a final plunge. After the sightseeing, you are transferred to Kande, from where you walk uphill for one hour to reach Australian Camp, where you'll stay the night in a local lodge cum teahouse. You can do a short hike in the surroundings of the village. The evening sunset and sunrise are marvelous from this point.

Overnight at a local lodge. Breakfast and dinner included.

Day 11: Pokhara - Kathmandu (200 kms/ 5hrs)

After breakfast it is a 45 minutes walk down to Kande, where your car will be waiting for the 5 hours drive to Kathmandu. The drive from Pokhara to Kathmandu is pleasant, and you get good views of Trishuli River and villages dotted on the foothill. You may stop at Kurintar where you can ride a cable car to a famous temple called Manokamana, where many Hindu devotees come with their live sacrifices to offer to the Goddess Monokaman. Upon reaching Kathmandu, you'll check into your hotel, situated in the pleasant 'tourist quarter' Thamel. After that you are free to explore the city. Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu. *Breakfast included.*

Day 12: At Kathmandu - full day sightseeing in Kathmandu and Patan

Full day sightseeing in Kathmandu and Patan. Alternative would be Swayambhunath Stupa and Patan City.

Kathmandu's historical centre is listed in the UNESCO Heritage list. It suffered significant loss during the earth quake April 25 this year, but the area still attractive and picturesque. We can take you to the Swayambhunath Stupa, damaged only in a small portion in the recent earth quake. Swayambhu literally means 'Self-Existent One.' Swayambhunath is believed to have been established at least 2,500 years ago. According to translations from an inscription dating back to 460 A.D., it was built by King Manadeva. By the 13th century, Swayambhunath had developed into an important center of Buddhism.

Next would be Patan Durbar Square. Here, the Char Narayan Temple and a sattal (rest house) have turned into debris, but monuments with slight damages, that are being renovated and can be visited include the Taleju Temple, Mahadev Temple, Bhimsen Temple, Mahabouddha Temple and the replica of Pashupatinath Temple, among others.

The Patan Museum was partially damaged during the earthquake but it is open for the public.

Other attractions of Patan like the Krishna Temple, Mayadevi Temple, Golden Temple, Minnath Temple and the Big Bell of Patan Durbar Square have remained intact. The artistic Dhunge Dhara (Stone-Tap) at Patan Durbar Square suffered no loss at all during the quake.

Overnight at hotel in Katmandu. *Breakfast included.*

Day 13: Travel to Bhaktapur

Overnight and sightseeing – In Bhaktapur

In the morning, we visit Boudanath Stupa. This 36-meter-high stupa is one of the largest in South Asia. With countless monasteries surrounding it, Bouddhanath is the center of Tibetan Buddhism in Nepal. Built in the shape of a mandala designed to replicate the Gyantse of Tibet, the stupa was renovated by Licchavi rulers in the 8th Century. The location of the stupa is interesting as it once lay on the ancient trade route to Tibet and it was here that Tibetan merchants rested and offered prayers for centuries. Boudha even today has a strong Tibetan presence as countless Tibetan refugees found a home around the stupa. On top is the harmika and on each side are painted the all-seeing eyes of the Buddha symbolizing awareness. The canopy has thirteen stages. At ground level there is a brick wall with 147 niches and 108 images of the meditational Buddha inset behind copper prayer wheels.

In the afternoon we visit Bhaktapur. The recent earthquake of 25th April has had a significant impact on Bhaktapur Durbar Square. The Authorities at Bhaktapur Durbar Square said 67 monuments out of 116 at Bhaktapur have been demolished. The famous Nyatapoli Temple of Bhaktapur remains intact after the quake. The Big Bell of Bhaktapur stood tall along with the Bhimsen Temple and Dattatraya Temples among others. The Priest House, Siddhi Laxmi Temple and the replica of Muktinath Temple among others suffered minor damages where as the Temples of Shiva, Asi Dega and Batsala Devi among others have demolished. But Bhaktapur offers plenty to see still.

Overnight at hotel in Bhaktapur. *Breakfast included.*

Day 14: Bhaktapur - Bardibas and onward to Koshi Tappu National Park (450 km/ 10 hrs)

Today you are in for a long drive, traveling 450 km eastward to Koshi Tappu National Park. We'll stop at a suitable location for lunch and stretching our legs. The journey itself is scenic passing through jungle, rivers and numerous villages. We will stay in a lodge outside the Reserve as there are no activities specially evening.

Overnight in resort outside the park. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 15 to 16: At Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve

Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve lies on the alluvial flood plain of Sapta Koshi River. This, the largest river in Nepal, flows through the reserve. The Sapta Koshi is the largest river in Nepal, and also one of the three main tributaries of the Ganga. Sal forests and grasslands dominate the vegetation of the reserve. This combination of vegetation and wetland proves a special site for birds and animals. The nearby Koshi Barrage has created a vast expanse of water. This makes it the most important staging point for migrating birds. At the same time it is an all year playground for resident ones.

The main mammals here are wild elephant, wild buffalo, spotted deer, wild boar, blue bull Bull, gharial crocodile and Gangetic dolphin. Around 300 species of birds have been recorded in this reserve. These include waterfowl, birds of prey, waders, and other water birds. The globally threatened Swamp Partridge (*Francolinus gularis*) can also be seen. Many of these birds fly all the way from Siberia during winter

We'll do nature walks, go rafting on the lower Sapta Koshi River with a naturalist to view some of the water birds, water buffaloes, dolphins and various water habitats, and drive to the Koshi Barrage to view bird-life and Dolphins.

Overnight in resort outside the park. *Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.*

Day 17: Travel to Kakarbhitta

It is about 4 hours drive to the border town of Kakkarbhitta. Here an Indian jeep will await you. After finishing the border formalities you'll travel further to Bagdogra Airport, from where you return to Delhi.

Price

2 pers.	US\$ 3695 per person
3-5 pers.	US\$ 3585 per person
6-9 pers.	US\$ 3215 per person

10-15 pers. US\$ 3095 per person
Single supplement: US\$ 1360

Price includes:

- 01: Road transfer by transfers by private car, coach, bus according to the group size, starting from New Delhi;
- 02: All ground transfers as per itinerary;
- 03: Entrance fees as per itinerary;
- 04: Hotel accommodation in Lumbini, Pokhara, Kathmandu and Bhaktapur (3 star categories on BB);
- 05: Camping accommodation at Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve on full board plus activities;
- 06: Lodge accommodation at Bardia and Chitwan National park on fullboard plus activities;
- 07: Koshi Tappu Wildlife camp on full board plus activities at Koshi Tappu;
- 08: Sightseeing tour as per itinerary in Lumbini, Pokhara and Kathmandu with tour guide;
- 09: Day Hike to Australian camp – full board;
- 10: Lunch and dinner in local restaurant in Lumbini, Pokhara and Kathmandu;
- 11: Farewell dinner and Nepalese cultural dance at one of authentic Nepali restaurant;
- 12: One Sherpa escort/ wildlife guide throughout trip;
- 13: Return flight Bagdogra – Delhi.

Price does not include:

- 01: Alcoholic and bottled beverage, laundry, and tips;
02. Personal health and accident insurance;
03. Any other services and expenses that are not specifically mentioned.