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Mount Aspiring & Mt Maunganui Nepal 2026

Day 1 | 18 September 2026

Arrive in Kathmandu — Welcome to Nepal

After a long journey, you'll arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal's vibrant capital city, located in a valley surrounded by forested hills and Himalayan foothills. Your Ground Team will meet you at Tribhuvan International Airport and assist with your transfer into the city.

Kathmandu is the cultural and historical heart of Nepal, shaped by centuries of trade between India and Tibet. The city is a fascinating blend of ancient temples, bustling markets, prayer flags, narrow alleyways and modern city life. Even on the drive from the airport, you'll begin to notice the energy of the valley — motorbikes weaving through traffic, shrines glowing beside the road and the distant silhouettes of hills surrounding the city.

Tonight is all about settling in. After checking into your hotel, you'll have time to unpack, rest and adjust to the atmosphere before the adventure officially begins tomorrow.

Tip: Drink plenty of water after your flight — Kathmandu's altitude and dry air can feel different after long travel days.

Day 2 | 19 September 2026

Kathmandu Heritage Exploration

Your first full day in Nepal begins with breakfast at the hotel before heading out to explore Kathmandu's rich cultural and spiritual heritage. Today introduces you to the traditions, architecture and daily life that shape the Kathmandu Valley.

You'll visit several UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including Swayambhunath (Monkey Temple) and Boudhanath Stupa — two of Nepal's most important Buddhist sites. Prayer flags flutter above whitewashed stupas while monks, pilgrims and local families move through the temples in quiet daily rituals.

Throughout the day, your Ground Team will share insights into Nepal's unique blend of Hindu and Buddhist traditions, explaining how centuries-old customs continue to shape everyday life in the city.

There will also be time to explore local markets and cafés, exchange money, and pick up any final gear needed for the trek ahead.

By evening, you'll return to the hotel for dinner and a relaxed night before tomorrow's journey west toward Pokhara.

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Tip: Temple areas are active places of worship — dress respectfully and ask before photographing local people.

Day 3 | 20 September 2026

Kathmandu → Pokhara Flight & Lakeside Exploration**

After breakfast, you'll transfer to the airport for your morning flight to Pokhara. Due to recent flood impacts on Nepal's road network, the group will fly instead of travelling overland — a quicker and safer option that also gives you extra time to enjoy Pokhara this afternoon.

The short flight offers beautiful views of the middle hills and, on clear days, the distant Himalayan ranges. On arrival, you'll collect your bags and transfer to **Hotel Karuna** in the Lakeside area.

After settling in, the group will have free time to explore Pokhara. The city is Nepal's adventure hub, set beside Phewa Lake and backed by the dramatic Annapurna range. Students can walk along the lakefront, visit cafés, browse local shops or take a gentle stroll through the Lakeside neighbourhood.

Later in the afternoon, your trekking guides and Ground Team will run a full trek briefing covering route details, safety procedures, altitude awareness, weather expectations and daily routines for the Annapurna Sanctuary Trek.

The evening is relaxed, giving everyone time to organise gear, enjoy dinner and prepare for the trek beginning tomorrow.

Tip: Pokhara is warmer and more humid than Kathmandu — carry water and sunscreen while exploring Lakeside.

Annapurna Sanctuary Trek

Day 4 | 21 September 2026

Trek Day 1 — Pokhara → Nayapul → Ulleri

Start Altitude: 820 m (Pokhara)

Finish Altitude: 2,050 m

Distance: ~8–10 km

Elevation Gain: +1,230 m

Trekking Time: 4–5 hours



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Today marks the official beginning of your Annapurna Sanctuary Trek. After breakfast, you'll drive from Pokhara to Nayapul, the traditional starting point of the route. Here you'll meet your porters, organise your daypacks and begin trekking into the foothills of the Annapurna region.

The trail immediately begins climbing through terraced farmland and small villages connected by steep stone staircases. The lower section is warm and humid, with banana trees, rice terraces and subtropical vegetation surrounding the path.

As you gain altitude, the views begin to widen across the valley, and traditional Magar farming villages appear along the route. The final climb into Ulleri is steep but rewarding, with long stone staircases leading into the village perched high above the hillsides.

After checking into your teahouse, you'll have time to rest, enjoy dinner and settle into the rhythm of trekking life.

Tip: Take the steep staircase sections slowly and steadily — finding your pace early makes the trek much more enjoyable.

Day 5 | 22 September 2026

Trek Day 2 — Ulleri to Ghorepani

Start Altitude: 2,050 m

Finish Altitude: 2,860 m

Distance: ~10–12 km

Elevation Gain: +810 m

Trekking Time: 5–6 hours

Today's trail climbs steadily through dense rhododendron and oak forest as you continue deeper into the Annapurna region. Moss-covered trees, waterfalls and cool mountain air make this one of the most atmospheric sections of the trek.

The route follows an old Himalayan trade path once used by merchants travelling between mountain valleys. Along the way, you'll pass small teahouses and occasional clearings with views toward distant snow-covered peaks.

As you gain elevation, the air becomes cooler and the forest quieter. By afternoon, you'll arrive in Ghorepani, a historic mountain settlement sitting on a ridge beneath the surrounding peaks.

The evening is relaxed, with an early dinner and preparation for tomorrow's sunrise hike to Poon Hill.



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Tip: Nights are noticeably colder now — keep warm layers easily accessible in your daypack.

Day 6 | 23 September 2026

Trek Day 3 — Ghorepani → Poon Hill → Tadapani

Start Altitude: 2,860 m

Highest Altitude: 3,210 m (Poon Hill)

Finish Altitude: 2,630 m

Trekking Time: 6–7 hours

Today begins before sunrise as you hike up to Poon Hill, one of Nepal's most famous mountain viewpoints. The climb is steep but short, and reaching the summit at dawn is one of the highlights of the trek.

As the sun rises, the Himalayan skyline slowly lights up across the horizon. On clear mornings, you'll see Annapurna South, Annapurna I, Dhaulagiri and the iconic Machapuchare rising above the valleys below.

After time for photos and breakfast back at Ghorepani, the trek continues along forested ridgelines toward Tadapani. The trail undulates through rhododendron forest and occasional clearings with mountain views appearing between the trees.

By late afternoon, you'll arrive in Tadapani, a quiet settlement surrounded by dense forest and dramatic Himalayan scenery.

Tip: Mornings can be freezing at Poon Hill — wear gloves and a warm outer layer for the sunrise climb.

Day 7 | 24 September 2026

Trek Day 4 — Tadapani to Chhomrong

Start Altitude: 2,630 m

Finish Altitude: 2,170 m

Trekking Time: 5–6 hours

Today's route combines forest trails, ridgeline walking and long descents into river valleys before climbing again toward Chhomrong.



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As you descend through forest and cross suspension bridges, you'll pass small Gurung villages surrounded by terraced farmland and stone houses. The route then climbs steadily toward Chhomrong, considered the gateway to the Annapurna Sanctuary.

Perched dramatically above the valley, Chhomrong offers incredible views toward Machapuchare and the surrounding peaks. The village is one of the largest settlements along the route and a major resting point for trekkers heading toward Annapurna Base Camp.

After arriving at your teahouse, there's time to relax and explore the village before dinner.

Tip: The repeated descents and climbs can feel surprisingly tiring — pacing yourself is key today.

Day 8 | 25 September 2026

Trek Day 5 — Chhomrong to Bamboo

Start Altitude: 2,170 m

Finish Altitude: 2,310 m

Trekking Time: 5–6 hours

Today the trail drops steeply down stone steps toward the Modi Khola river before crossing a suspension bridge and climbing back into thick forest.

The environment changes noticeably as you enter a quieter, more enclosed section of the valley dominated by bamboo forest, waterfalls and steep cliffs rising overhead.

The climb is steady but manageable, with regular teahouse stops along the route.

By afternoon, you'll arrive in Bamboo, a peaceful settlement tucked deep within the forested valley.

Tip: The valley becomes more humid and shaded — keep a rain jacket handy even if the morning begins clear.

Day 9 | 26 September 2026

Trek Day 6 — Bamboo to Deurali

Start Altitude: 2,310 m

Finish Altitude: 3,200 m



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Elevation Gain: +890 m

Trekking Time: 5–6 hours

Today's trek takes you higher into the Annapurna Sanctuary as the valley narrows and the landscape becomes increasingly dramatic.

The trail climbs through alpine forest, crossing streams and passing beneath towering cliffs lined with waterfalls.

You'll stop for lunch at a teahouse along the route before continuing toward Deurali, a small settlement positioned beneath steep glacial slopes.

The cooler temperatures and thinner air are noticeable now, making hydration and steady pacing increasingly important.

Tip: Walk slowly and drink regularly — altitude affects everyone differently once above 3,000 m.

Day 10 | 27 September 2026

Trek Day 7 — Deurali → Machapuchare Base Camp → Annapurna Base Camp

Start Altitude: 3,200 m

Finish Altitude: 4,130 m

Elevation Gain: +930 m

Trekking Time: 5–6 hours

Today is the most anticipated day of the trek as you enter the heart of the Annapurna Sanctuary.

The trail climbs steadily above the tree line through rocky glacial terrain, passing Machapuchare Base Camp before continuing into the vast alpine basin surrounding Annapurna Base Camp.

As the valley opens, enormous Himalayan peaks rise on all sides — Annapurna I, Annapurna South, Hiunchuli and the sacred Machapuchare creating a dramatic amphitheatre of snow and ice.

Reaching Annapurna Base Camp is a major achievement and one of the highlights of the expedition. After settling into the teahouse, there's time to explore the area, take photos and absorb the scale of the mountains surrounding you.

Dinner is served early, and the evening is calm and cold beneath the peaks.



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Tip: Temperatures drop quickly after sunset — keep your warmest layers ready for the evening.

Day 11 | 28 September 2026

Trek Day 8 — Annapurna Base Camp to Bamboo

Start Altitude: 4,130 m

Finish Altitude: 2,310 m

Elevation Loss: -1,820 m

Trekking Time: 6–7 hours

You'll wake early this morning to watch sunrise over the Annapurna Sanctuary.

After breakfast, you'll begin the long descent back down through the sanctuary.

By late afternoon, you'll arrive back in Bamboo for a well-earned rest.

Tip: Descents can be tough on knees — trekking poles help reduce strain during long downhill sections.

Day 12 | 29 September 2026

Trek Day 9 — Bamboo to Jhinu Danda

Start Altitude: 2,310 m

Finish Altitude: 1,780 m

Trekking Time: 5–6 hours

Today's route continues down the valley through forest and riverside trails before climbing gently toward Jhinu Danda.

The village is best known for its natural hot springs located beside the river below the settlement.

Dinner is served at the teahouse, and tonight offers a relaxed final evening on the trail.

Tip: Bring sandals and a towel if you plan to visit the hot springs after arriving.



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Day 13 | 30 September 2026

Trek Day 10 — Jhinu Danda → Siwai → Pokhara

Start Altitude: 1,780 m

Finish Altitude: 820 m (Pokhara)

Trekking Time: 2–3 hours

Drive Time: ~3 hours

Your final morning on the trail begins with a gentle descent toward Siwai.

After saying goodbye to the trekking crew and porters, you'll board vehicles for the drive back to Pokhara.

The afternoon is free to relax and celebrate completing the Annapurna Sanctuary Trek.

Tip: A proper stretch and plenty of water today will help your legs recover.

Day 14 | 1 October 2026

Pokhara Rest & Recovery Day

Start/Finish Altitude: 820 m

Today is a full recovery day in Pokhara after completing the trek.

Optional activities may include short boat rides, café visits or exploring Pokhara's markets and viewpoints.

Tip: Carry water and sunscreen while exploring the city.

💛 Community Engagement Project

Day 15 | 2 October 2026

Travel to Rural School & Community Orientation

After breakfast, you'll travel to a rural school located outside Pokhara where the community engagement project takes place.

On arrival, you'll settle into simple accommodation and meet local teachers and staff.

Tip: Flexibility and openness make the experience more rewarding.

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Day 16 | 3 October 2026

Community Project Day 1

Today is your first full service day at the school.

Tasks may include painting classrooms, light plastering, basic construction support and improving outdoor learning areas.

Tip: Pace yourself, stay hydrated and take breaks when needed.

Day 17 | 4 October 2026

Community Project Day 2

Continuation of renovation work and cultural exchange with students.

Tip: Some of the most memorable moments happen during informal interactions.

Day 18 | 5 October 2026

Final completion of project work and farewell with the community.

Throughout the day, students will help finish the last sections of the renovation work, ensuring the school is left in a better place for the community to use. This may include final coats of paint, tidying work areas, organising learning spaces, or assisting teachers with small improvements around the grounds.

There will also be time to **play games with the students**, share laughs, and enjoy the friendships formed over the past few days. These informal moments often become the most meaningful part of the experience.

As the afternoon ends, the group will gather to **say goodbye to new friends**, take photos of the completed project work, and thank the community for welcoming them so warmly.

Tip: Capture group photos with your new friends — these are the memories that last.



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Adventure Section

Day 19 | 6 October 2026

Due to ongoing road closures, today's journey has been adjusted for safety and efficiency.

After breakfast, you'll transfer to Pokhara Airport for your short domestic flight back to Kathmandu. On arrival, your Ground Team will assist with baggage collection and coordinate the onward transfer to Bhaktapur.

The drive from Kathmandu to Bhaktapur is short, bringing you into one of the Kathmandu Valley's best-preserved historic cities. Bhaktapur is known for its traditional Newari architecture, brick-paved streets and beautifully carved temples.

After checking into your accommodation, the group will have time to settle in and take a gentle walk through the surrounding area to get a feel for the old city.

Tip: Bhaktapur's narrow streets can be uneven — walk carefully and stay aware of scooters moving through the alleys.

Return to Kathmandu

Day 20 | 7 October 2026

Today is your full exploration day in Bhaktapur, one of Nepal's best-preserved historic cities. After breakfast, you'll head out into the old town's maze of brick-paved streets, traditional Newari architecture and beautifully carved temples.

You'll visit Bhaktapur's key cultural areas, including Durbar Square, Taumadhi Square and the surrounding courtyards filled with artisans, woodcarvers and metalworkers.

A highlight of the day is a **hands-on pottery lesson** in Pottery Square, where local potters will guide you through shaping clay using traditional techniques. Students can try making small bowls or simple clay pieces to experience one of Bhaktapur's oldest crafts.

The rest of the afternoon is relaxed, with time to explore cafés, markets and quiet backstreets at your own pace.

Tip: Pottery Square can be dusty — wear clothes you don't mind getting a little clay on.



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Day 21 | 8 October 2026

This morning, you'll depart Bhaktapur and travel back to Kathmandu. The drive takes around **2 hours**, bringing you into the familiar pace of the capital for your final full day in Nepal.

After arriving, you'll check into your accommodation and have time for a short city exploration or final visits to favourite cafés and shops. This is also a good moment for group reflection — looking back on the trek, the community project, and the experiences that shaped the journey.

In the evening, the group will gather for a **final night dinner**, with the option to take part in a **Nepali cooking class**. Guided by local chefs, students can learn how to prepare traditional dishes such as momos or dal bhat before enjoying a celebratory meal together. It's a relaxed and memorable way to finish the expedition.

Tip: Kathmandu's traffic can be busy in the afternoon — keep small groups together when moving around the city.

Day 22 | 9 October 2026

This morning, you'll make your final preparations before heading to the airport. After breakfast, the group will transfer to Tribhuvan International Airport for your flight home to New Zealand.

Check-in and security can be busy, so staying organised and keeping your passport easily accessible will make the process smoother. Once through departures, there's time for final goodbyes, last-minute snacks, and reflecting on the journey before boarding your flight.

Tip: Keep your boarding pass and passport in the same pocket — it makes airport transitions much easier.