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# Nepal

## At Home with Lishu + Himalaya Trek Extension

**Dates:** Dec. 27, 2018 - Jan. 8, 2019

**Cost:** \$3,595 (Double Occupancy)





## Daily Itinerary

Nepal rests along the southern slopes of the Himalayan mountain range. Landlocked between India to the east, south, and west and Tibet to the North, its territory extends roughly 500 miles from east to west and 90 to 150 miles from north to south. For such a small country, Nepal has tremendous geographic diversity. It rises from 194 feet elevation in the tropical south, home to Bengal tigers and one-horned rhinos, to over 22,966 feet to mountainous north, including Mt. Everest and many of Earth's highest peaks. The capital city is Kathmandu, considered a living museum housing 7 World Heritage Cultural sites within a 9-mile radius. The country is also a convergence of culture and spiritual philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Our trip leader Lishu Rodriguez has designed this journey to her birthplace as a way to share her memories of her childhood and her recent 4-year stay there. She invites you to join her as she visits her native country, as she does every couple of years to reconnect with family, people, organizations and the ancient folklores to nourish her soul and "Buddhahood" amongst the chaos and connective power of globalization and the age-old wisdom of Nepali tradition. Join Lishu as she visits home to rediscover it as it unfolds in the present.

**Day 1 | Thursday | December 27** Arrive at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. Picked up by a representative of the company, and driven to the hotel, about half an hour way, barring traffic. After a brief rest, meet for an introduction to the country in a short briefing followed by a walk for dinner at a local restaurant. This evening we shall keep it short to adjust for jet lag. **Summit Hotel, Kopundol, Lalitpur (D)**

**Day 2 | Friday | December 28** We start our journey with a walking tour around Lishu's neighborhood. We will visit the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, getting an opportunity to meet its charismatic owner, Nirakar Yakthumba, who is also Nepal's best-known bassist. At the same location, we will enjoy a cup of coffee at Karma Coffee, run by Birgit Lienhart-Gyawali, a coffee boutique working with over 30 different producer groups.

After a quiet lunch at the Patan Museum Cafe, we will continue our day in the Patan area, famous for its narrow alleys and incredible architecture. Starting at the Patan Durbar Square, a UNESCO cultural heritage site, we will be accompanied by a trained guide to showcase the history, lifestyle, traditions and architecture in a walk through the innermost parts of this city. We end our day at the Summit Hotel for their famous Friday BBQ dinners sometimes accompanied by live music. **Summit Hotel, Kopundol, Lalitpur (B,L,D)**

**Day 3 | Saturday | December 29** One of the iconic symbols of Buddhism is Thangka Paintings - mandalas, life story of the Buddha or celestial depictions of heaven and hell - done in vivid colors. In ancient times, a painter would have to weave the canvas, make the frame, make brush from yak hair and even make their own paints from organic sources, before they started their intricate paintings -- often taking years to complete one. Devotees still believe that the soul of the painter is inside the painting.

We discover this at a painting school at the Heritage Site of Soyambhunath -- famously called the Monkey Temple! Here, we shall be explained the intricacies of this art, and interested participants can even try their hand at a painting... to kick start it! We will enjoy lunch at the most famous Italian address in town -- the Fire and Ice. In the afternoon, we will explore the area of Boudhanath stupa, one of the largest monuments in Asia. This dome-shaped Buddhist shrine with a large mandala and storied past is the largest stupa in Nepal. We will hear the famous legend about the wife of a deceased Tibetan trader who wanted this stupa made in memory of her husband. The devastating earthquake of 2015 twisted a portion of the spine that holds the stupa together. Even while hundreds of aftershocks were happening, master scaffolders came from villages around Kathmandu to prepare the bamboo scaffolding to repair the Stupa -- the power of faith!

We enjoy a nice dinner overlooking the stupa from one of the many rooftop restaurants. **Summit Hotel, Kopundol, Lalitpur (B,L,D)**

**Day 4 | Sunday | December 30** | At dawn and dusk, the markets come alive with farmers and vendors offering fresh harvests in neighborhoods and age-old locations throughout the city. Every Sunday, organic producers from around the valley also congregate at the Yellow House and sell their wares. It is an excellent place to go to witness the regrowth of the organic movement in Nepal, and to enjoy some excellent produce while we eat brunch there.

A great way to appreciate local food is to learn how to make it! Today, you will learn how to cook local Nepali delicacies and eat your homework. It also includes visits to local shops to buy the ingredients. Today you might be even using some of the ingredients from the Farmers Market!

In the late afternoon, we will explore contemporary Nepali art. We will visit an artists' studio and end our day at The Babar Mahal Revisited, a complex of renovated palace stables that have been converted into a beautiful shopping area with restaurants. The complex also houses Siddhartha Art Gallery, a leader in the promotion of contemporary Nepali art that has strived to introduce international perspectives in art to the Kathmandu community. We will have dinner at the complex at the famous French venue, Chez Caroline. **Summit Hotel, Kopundol, Lalitpur (B,L,D)**

**Day 5 | Monday | December 31** | After an early breakfast, we will check out of our hotel and transfer to the airport for a short flight to the jungle and the Chitwan National Park, where we will check into Sapana Village Lodge. We chill down to some drinks by the river in Sauraha overlooking the local scene. We say that everything moves slowly in Chitwan -- the wind, the elephants, the river, chilled! This is our New Year's Eve! **Sapana Village Lodge, Sauraha, Chitwan (B,L,D)**

**Day 6 | Day 6 | Tuesday | January 1** | Led by experienced local naturalists and guides, our day will be full of activities exploring the jungle and learning about the role of community forestry in conservation, its successes, animal-human conflict, and complications.

The insights will be provided through activities such as jungle walks, canoeing, visiting an elephant breeding center, visiting a Tharu Village, and potentially learning about house painting with them.

NOTE: The Tharu are the only community in the world immune to Malaria, honed as they battled it for centuries after escaping the invasions of their ancestral Thar Desert by Mughals invaders! **Sapana Village Lodge, Sauraha, Chitwan (B,L,D)**

**Day 7 | Wednesday | January 2** | After breakfast, we check out from our first hotel and transfer to the Tiger Tops Hotel & Lodge, also located in Chitwan National Park. The Tiger Tops has been iconic in the conservation of the jungle through tourism and has given birth to the entire tourism industry around the Chitwan National Park. They used to have their property inside the jungle but in the recent years, this has been scaled back and they run a Tharu Lodge property at the edge of the jungle. Our visit there is to understand this history, and to learn the deeper impacts of tourism and conservation while enjoying more time in the jungle. **Tiger Tops Hotel & Lodge (B, L, D)**

**Day 8 | Thursday, January 3** | Our time in the jungle is coming to an end, and after breakfast it is time to check out from the Tiger Tops Hotel & Lodge, transfer to the airport to catch our short flight back to Katmandu.

We will drive to Bhaktapur, another city of the Kathmandu Valley and a UNESCO heritage site for an overnight stay there. We will check into the hotel, have lunch and walk through the city to visit the museum and witness the restoration work in progress. We will also meet local artisans -- a paper maker, a potter, a master wood carver or even better the yogurt making family in Bhaktapur. We will have dinner together. **Peacock Guest House (L,D)**

**Day 9 | Friday | January 4** | The early hours are the best time to see the city as it wakes up and the citizens go about doing what they have been doing for centuries. We do this pre-breakfast.

After breakfast, we will check out from the Peacock Guest House and go to the worksite of Abari Institute located outside the valley and for our homestay experience in the village. We will have lunch at Abari and meet the team to understand the role Bamboo has played

post-earthquake in restoration and reconstruction. We will then meet our host families and join them for evening chores and dinner. **Abari Homestay (B,L,D)**

**Day 10 | Saturday | January 5** | Today we wake up with our host families, partake in morning activities with the family and have the morning meal with them. We will spend our day at the Abari Institute. We will get our hands dirty and help them build. We will have lunch at the work site.

In the afternoon, we will go for a stroll through the village and in the evening join our host families again for evening chores and dinner. **Abari Homestay (B,L,D)**

**Day 11 | Sunday | January 6** | Today we wake up early and say goodbye to our host families. We will drive back to Kathmandu to our hotel for breakfast. We will rest until we meet in the afternoon for a late lunch at the famous Dwarika's hotel, featuring one of the largest private Nepali woodwork collections. We will then hop over to visit Pashupatinath, a UNESCO World heritage site and one of the most sacred temples of the Hindu faith, dedicated to the national deity, Lord Pashupatinath – The Lord of all living and non-living beings.

In the evening, we will move on to explore the area of Boudhanath stupa, one of the largest monuments in Asia. This dome-shaped Buddhist shrine with a large mandala and storied past is the largest stupa in Nepal. The devastating earthquake of 2015 twisted a portion of the spine that holds together the stupa. Even while hundreds of aftershocks were happening, master scaffolders came from villages around Kathmandu to prepare the bamboo scaffolding to repair the Stupa -- the power of faith and community!

We enjoy a nice dinner overlooking the stupa from one of the many rooftop restaurants!  
**Summit Hotel, Kopundol, Lalitpur (B,L,D)**

**Day 12 | Monday | January 7** | Today is a free day to explore Kathmandu on your own! We end the trip with a delicious home-cooked meal at the house of our trip leader, Lishu. It could not end better! **Summit Hotel, Kopundol, Lalitpur (B,D)**

**Day 13 | Tuesday | January 8** | After breakfast you will be transferred to the Katmandu International Airport for your flights back home. For those who have added a trek, hike, or river rafting extension to this trip, adventure awaits. **(B)**

## **Trip Leader:**



**Lishu Rodriguez** Lishu's life story and experience is shaped by the balance she has had to find with half her heart in the Himalayas of Nepal, where she was born and raised, and the other half along the coasts of the grand pacific ocean of America, where she has lived since she was thirteen. Travel, diversity, culture and the quest for humanity is her lifelong passion and her life force. She is an environmental artist and designer and also the cofounder of El Dot Designs, a certified B Corp furniture company committed to innovative designs for social equity and environmental sustainability through the use of renewable materials and handcraft traditions. She currently lives on Bainbridge Island, Washington. with her loving husband, Leo, and their two boys, Himal and Kailas.

## In-Country Guide:



**Raj Gyawali** Raj is a visionary and a catalyst for social tourism in Nepal with a contagious laugh and an adventurous spirit. After a Bachelor in Agriculture and a MBA in Development, Raj got interested in responsible ways to support his country. He cofounded Social Tours with his wife in 2002 *based on CSR principles and* three basic principles – to be sensitive to the environment and the culture, and to contribute into the local economy. Today he does just that with his team and a stakeholder base which exceeds 200 people, all working together to bring about positive change while sharing the culture of Nepal with travelers and adventure lovers from around the World.

## Journey Notes:

**NOTE:** Katmandu is about 4600 ft above sea level, so travelers sensitive to elevations need to take care. Due to its geographical uniqueness, located in a valley surrounded by mountains, the air quality over the years has gotten worse, hence those with respiratory problems or asthma should, to feel comfortable on this trip, consult a health care practitioner and bring the necessary medications. The Nepalese countryside is underdeveloped and has in some areas a bit of a rugged terrain. In the jungle, we will be traveling in local canoes, jeeps, oxen carts, and if desired, ride on elephants. This journey requires participants to be able to walk a couple hours each day. There are many uneven surfaces and sidewalks. There

are times to rest but ability to keep up the group's pace is essential. Most people find no issues with the activity level but those with any conditions should call our office to discuss their limitations.

**INCLUDED:** All in-country transportation per the itinerary in an air conditioned motorcoach; 2 domestic flights within Nepal; all hotels; breakfast buffet daily, lunches, dinners (B/L/D per itinerary); all entrance fees on itinerary; preparation materials; tips for drivers, bellman and included meals on itinerary; CCJ trip manager; professional English speaking tour guide; and bottled water on the bus.

**NOT INCLUDED:** International air travel to Nepal; Nepal visa, alcoholic drinks; meals not on itinerary, (B/L/D per itinerary), snacks; excursions not on the itinerary; tips for local guide and chambermaids (optional, yet customary); travel cancellation and evacuation insurance (strongly recommended, see below), photography fees.

**TRAVEL PROTECTION:** For more information on the available plans or to enroll, [enroll here](#) or contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 47-0272. Please advise Travelex that Cross Cultural Journeys is the travel company for this trip.

**Dates: December 27, 2018 - January 8, 2019**

**Cost:** \$3,595 (Double Occupancy)

**ADD:** \$600 (Single Room)

**Optional:** Mt. Everest Trek Extension: \$1,695

**To Book This Journey**

(800) 353-2276

Email: [travel@crossculturaljourneys.com](mailto:travel@crossculturaljourneys.com)

