



Kathmandu

Photo: HamsterMan/Shutterstock.com



RHG/Shutterstock.com

Stunning Himalayan vistas, big city bustle, centuries-old temples and an array of vibrant colors, intoxicating aromas and friendly smiles all come together in the eclectic metropolis that is Kathmandu. It is an emerging cosmopolitan city, yet it remains steeped in cultural, artistic and religious tradition and it offers visitors an assortment of unique sights and experiences. Independent travelers and trekking groups alike will find no shortage of things to do.

NOTE: This Guide has been limited to 20 points of interest per section. For the full guide, please visit ArrivalGuides.com



nevenm/Shutterstock.com



Thejim999/Shutterstock.com

QUIZ

*What Type of Traveller
Are You Based on
Your Travel IQ?*

TAKE THE QUIZ

Top 5



Hanuman Dhoka

Dedicated to the Hindu monkey god, Hanuman, this impressive palace complex w...



Durbar Square

Kathmandu's central square is a breathtaking sight, packed with palaces, tem...



Kwa Bahal (Golden Temple)

Dating back as far as the 12th century, this unique Buddhist monastery gets ...



Boudhanath Stupa

This temple, located northeast of central Kathmandu, is the largest stupa in...



Swayambhunath Temple

West of the city of Kathmandu lies this cluster of temples, shrines and othe...



THE CITY



Azuresong84/Shutterstock.com

Kathmandu is the largest and most populous city in Nepal, as well as the heart and soul of tourism, the economy and cultural heritage in the country. It lies in the stunning Kathmandu Valley, along with its sister cities of Patan and Bhadgaon, where mountain life, religious tradition and big city buzz coexist.

For centuries an important centre for both Buddhist and Hindu traditions, it is a city steeped in spirituality, with temples, shrines and altars seemingly everywhere you look. However, the Nepalese capital is by no means stuck in the past — it is emerging as a modern, dynamic and cosmopolitan metropolis, offering all the amenities and luxuries of contemporary living without losing its sense of self and historical roots.

Kathmandu also serves as either a starting or finishing point for many trekkers and explorers of the Himalayas. The city is surrounded by stunning mountain views that by themselves could be enough to warrant a visit. Adventurers would do well not to miss the chance to visit.

DO & SEE



Alexander Mazurkevich/Shutterstock.com

Kathmandu is a spiritual and cultural centre of great importance for both Buddhist and Hindu traditions, and as such, it boasts a dizzying wealth of stunning temples, shrines and sacred places that have been delighting visitors for years. The city is also home to a few genuinely interesting museums that record the at times tumultuous history of Nepal, which are well worth a visit.

Hanuman Dhoka



Dedicated to the Hindu monkey god, Hanuman, this impressive palace complex was originally constructed between the 4th and 8th centuries and then expanded considerably in the 17th. Spread over 5 acres, it contains the Royal Palace and many beautiful temples and courtyards. Unfortunately, the complex was severely damaged during the 2015 earthquake and reconstruction is still underway.

Photo: Ovchinnikova Irina/Shutterstock.com

Address: Durbar Square, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Tue–Sat 10:30am–4pm, Sun 10:30am–2pm

Durbar Square



Kathmandu's central square is a breathtaking sight, packed with palaces, temples, shrines, and pagodas. The colours, sounds and smells are intoxicating as what seems like the whole city passes through on any given day. It is the centre of spiritual and cultural life in Kathmandu and cannot be missed.

Photo: D'July/Shutterstock.com

Address: Durbar Square, Kathmandu

Kwa Bahal (Golden Temple)



Dating back as far as the 12th century, this unique Buddhist monastery gets its name from the many decorative gold plates covering much of the facade. It is located in Patan, to the south of the city, and the doorways and courtyards hold shrines dedicated to Buddhist gods and elaborate statues of the temple's mythical guardians.

Photo: CRSHELARE/Shutterstock.com

Address: Kwa Bahal, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 5am-6pm

Boudhanath Stupa



This temple, located northeast of central Kathmandu, is the largest stupa in the country and the most important Tibetan Buddhist temple outside Tibet. After the Chinese occupation of Tibet, thousands of Tibetan refugees fled to Nepal and settled in the area around this temple,

making it an important haven for Tibetan culture.

Photo: Daniel Prudek/Shutterstock.com

Address: Gangalal Way, Kathmandu

Swayambhunath Temple

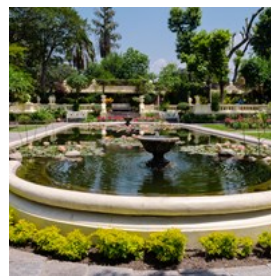


West of the city of Kathmandu lies this cluster of temples, shrines and other religious structures, one of the oldest and holiest places in the whole country, revered by Buddhists and Hindus alike. Also known as Monkey Temple, because of its many resident monkeys, devotees and visitors flock here, often preferring to tackle the 365 step ascent, rather than driving up.

Photo: HamsterMan/Shutterstock.com

Address: Swayambhunath, Kathmandu

Garden of Dreams



The ideal place to escape the hectic rhythm and constant bustle of the city, the Garden of Dreams provides a refuge for nature lovers. This small garden, with its beautifully decorated gates, fountains and pavilions is a great place for a picnic and a spot of people watching, as young local couples often come for a romantic day out.

Photo: Lihana/Shutterstock.com

Address: Garden of Dreams, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 9am-10pm

Phone: +977 1 1 4425340

Internet: www.gardenofdreams.org.np

Kumari Bahal



This red-brick building is the home of the Kumari, a young girl chosen as the city's 'living goddess', a charge she occupies until reaching puberty. Inside is a wonderful courtyard (considered by some to be the most beautiful in all of Nepal) where the Kumari herself may be seen from 9am to 11am, though photographing her is forbidden.

Photo: Nitipol Temprim/Shutterstock.com

Address: Kumari Bahal, Kathmandu

National Museum



Nepal's National Museum houses exhibits with wonderful treasures, ranging from Buddhist art (containing statues, paintings and gigantic manuscripts) to stone, metal and terracotta statues, the highlight being that of Sukhavara Samvara, with 34 arms and 10 faces. Another favourite is the collection of weapons belonging to national heroes such as Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of Nepal.

National Museum has three exhibition buildings — the Historical building, the Juddha Jatiya art gallery, and the Buddhist art gallery.

Photo: Clemensmarabu (image cropped)

Address: Museum Road, Chhauni, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Mon 10:30am-2:30pm, Wed-Sun 10:30am-4:30pm

Phone: +977 11 4271504

Internet: www.nationalmuseum.gov.np

Email: info@nationalmuseum.gov.np

Peace Gallery



The Nepalese civil war tore the country apart for ten years at the turn of the 21st century. This powerful photo exhibition displays images of children affected by the violence and some of the brave people who endured. The photos are beautifully moving and extremely thought-provoking.

Photo: Nuamfolio / Shutterstock.com

Address: Patan, Nepal

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 10am-4pm

Phone: +977 1 5522614

Kopan Monastery



Just outside Kathmandu, in the village of Kapan, lies this Buddhist monastery, the perfect place for a day-trip, or even to spend a few nights in one of the guest rooms. Famed for its beautiful setting and peaceful, relaxing surroundings, many visitors come here to attend courses in search of a spiritual experience.

Photo: Ozzy dkn/Shutterstock.com

Address: Kopan Monastery, Kapan, Kathmandu

Phone: +977 1 4821 268

Internet: www.kopanmonastery.com

DINING



Alexandra Lande/Shutterstock.com

Nepal's geographic, climatic and cultural diversity means that its cuisine is equally varied. The national dish is Dal Bhat Tarkari, a lentil soup (dal) served on boiled rice (bhat) with curry (tarkari). There are countless variations on this staple, and it is not to be missed. The city also offers an emerging fine dining scene where visitors and locals can find top-class cuisine from around the world.

OR2K



This vegetarian restaurant is popular with tourists and locals alike, offering light Middle Eastern dishes in a stylish and intimate setting.

Patrons must take off their shoes at the entrance, and all seating is on cushions on the floor, giving the whole place an authentic feeling to accompany the delicious food.

Photo: Paul_Brighton / Shutterstock.com

Address: Thamel, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 8am-10pm

Phone: +977 1 4422097

Yak Restaurant



For a touch of local cuisine, it doesn't get much better than Yak. It is a favourite among locals, backpackers and travelers alike, serving up Nepalese, Tibetan and Indian dishes in an unpretentious setting with a laid back vibe that is hard to beat.

Photo: ssmit / Shutterstock.com

Address: Thamel Marg, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 7am-10pm

Bhojan Griha



This spectacular restaurant serves traditional Nepali dishes in one of the most unique places in the city. The four-storey building was the residence of the royal priest over 150 years ago, and it retains its traditional feeling, with floor seating on decorative cushions and meals served in brass dishes. It also hosts regular cultural shows and boasts a Kamasutra bar decorated with erotic-themed wood carvings.

Photo: ThamKC / Shutterstock.com

Address: Dilli Bazar, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 10am-10pm

Phone: +977 1 4416 423

Internet: www.bhojagriha.com

Le Sherpa



Le Sherpa offers one of Kathmandu's best fine dining experiences. This relatively new restaurant brings contemporary European cuisine to the city, offering specialties like the Sherpa soup and

rabbit tortellini, as well as a formidable wine selection, in elegant surroundings with a green open-air courtyard.

Photo: Shustykevych / Shutterstock.com
Address: Ramalaya, Pani Pokhara, Kathmandu
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 10am-10pm, Sat 8am-10pm
Phone: +977 9 8011 59480
Internet: www.lesherpa.com.np

Utse



Utse claims to be the first modern restaurant in Kathmandu, dating back to 1979. Locals and visitors alike gather here to try the famously delicious Tibetan specialties, like gacok, a stew made of meat, vegetables and mushrooms cooked over many hours. Booking a table may come in handy, as it tends to get quite busy.

Photo: Ruslan Kalnitsky
Address: Jyatha, Thamel, Kathmandu
Phone: +977 1 4257 614
Internet: www.utsehotel.com/dinning.html

Saigon Pho



Award-winning Saigon Pho is the only Vietnamese restaurant in Kathmandu, and is deservedly a favourite in the city. Serving delicious

Vietnamese and South Asian cuisine, including pho, shrimp rice wraps, papaya salad, and much more, visitors will want to arrive early to get a table on the outdoor terrace to enjoy the view.

Photo: Artit Wongpradu / Shutterstock.com
Address: Lazimpat, Kathmandu
Opening hours: Sun-Sat 10am-10pm
Phone: +977 1 4443 330

CAFES



joannawnuk/Shutterstock.com

Nepal has historically been more of a tea-drinking culture, rather than favouring coffee, but there has been a recent explosion in interest, and a taste for a good cup of joe has been developing around the country. Beans are now grown locally, and a number of sleek cafes serving high-quality roasts have been popping up for years, providing a welcome respite from the sometimes hectic city streets.

Bakery Cafe



This great local chain has outlets throughout the city and serves up snacks and fast food, as well as delicious coffee drinks. It is famous for hiring deaf employees who would otherwise have difficulty finding stable work, and is thus a favourite among the local community.

Photo: Anna_Pustynnikova / Shutterstock.com
Address: Patan, Kathmandu
Opening hours: Sun-Sat 10:30am-9:30pm
Phone: +977 1 5522949
Internet: www.thebakerycafe.com.np

Kathmandu Guest House



The Kathmandu Guest House is part of a great chain of hotels in Nepal, founded by Karna Sakya, hailed as the father of tourism in the country.

Not only is it a great place to stay, once a favourite among mountaineers, but it also boasts some of the best coffee in Kathmandu. Other beverages are also available to enjoy in the lovely courtyard.

Photo: Em Campos / Shutterstock.com

Address: Thamel, Kathmandu

Phone: +977 1-4700632

Internet: www.ktmgh.com

Himalayan Java



Hailed as serving some of the best coffee in the whole country (they roast their coffee in-house), local and traveling coffee lovers flock here for the

high-quality coffee drinks and the relaxed vibe. It provides a very relaxing environment despite the bustle of the city streets just outside its walls.

Photo: Samsamproductions / Shutterstock.com

Address: Tredevi Marg, Thamel, Kathmandu

Phone: +977 1 442 25 19

Internet: www.himalayanjava.com

Email: info@himalayanjava.com

Flavors



This family-run cafe stands out from the competition, consistently serving superb coffee and food in the Boudhanath Stupa area. They serve

breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week, and the specials change every month in order to reflect the flavours of each season. The pastries are also worth a try.

Photo: sirin meesorn / Shutterstock.com

Address: Boudha Nath, Boudhanath Stupa, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 7:30am-9:30pm

Phone: +977 1 4498748

Internet: www.flavorsrestaurantandbar.com.np

Email: info@flavorscafe.org

Rosemary Kitchen and Coffee Shop



A Kathmandu favourite, the menu at Rosemary Kitchen offers a bit of everything: dishes from all over the Asian continent, from India to

Thailand, via Mongolia, Italian specialties, fine wines and homemade bread. It gets busy, so reservations are recommended, especially for garden seating, but the interior is elegant and comfortable, as well.

Photo: Baisa / Shutterstock.com

Address: Thamel Marg, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 7am-10pm

Phone: +977 1 4267554

Email: rosemarykitchenktm@gmail.com

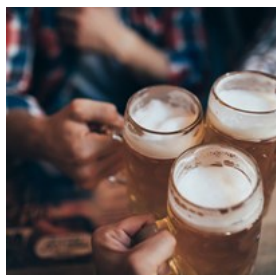
BARS & NIGHTLIFE



cat_collector (image cropped)

Nightlife in Kathmandu revolves mainly around the area of Thamel, where backpackers and hip locals can be seen frequenting the trendiest bars and nightclubs in the city, some of which have live music. Though music in public places is forbidden after 10pm, many of these places manage to keep it going until later. More upscale establishments can be found in big hotels. Additionally, cultural centres and some high-end restaurants offer traditional dance shows.

Tom & Jerry Pub



A long-standing favourite among backpackers and trekkers, Tom & Jerry is a rowdy and noisy little place that doesn't lack for charm. Groups of

trekkers make it lively after weeks of traversing the mountains, and for the more relaxed crowd, there are pool tables on the second floor.

Photo: F8 studio / Shutterstock.com

Address: Thamel, Kathmandu

Phone: +977 985 1072794

New Orleans Cafe



For a bit of live music, be sure to visit New Orleans. It is an extremely popular place for a drink due to its intimate vibe set to candlelight and soft tunes, and the courtyard hosts live blues and rock covers almost every night. The far-reaching menu has excellent and varied options, too. Book ahead or arrive early to be sure to get a table.

Photo: thanosquest / Shutterstock.com

Address: Sagarmatha Bazar, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 7:30am-11pm

Phone: +977 1 4700736

Electric Pagoda



Quickly becoming one of the best places to eat, drink and party in Nepal, Electric Pagoda provides a great environment for travelers. The primarily Mexican-inspired menu is top-notch, the bar is fully stocked with international spirits, and the resident DJs pump out an eclectic mix to satisfy all tastes. The courtyard is green, the decor tasteful and the company is always cheerful.

Photo: xmee / Shutterstock.com

Address: Saat Ghumti Marg, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 8am-12pm

Phone: +977 1 4700123

House of Music



House of Music is where local musical talent comes to gain a following, not to play covers. The best of Nepal's original rock, pop and RnB can be enjoyed here on Wednesdays and Fridays. It is a

perfect place to brag a beer and become part of the local music scene.

Photo: Dmitriy_Tsyupa / Shutterstock.com
Address: Amrit Marg, Thamel, Kathmandu
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 4pm-11pm
Phone: +977 9851075172
Internet: www.houseofmusicnepal.com

Jai Nepal Cinema Hall



For a more relaxed evening, the Jai Nepal Cinema offers a convenient option for cinema-lovers. The selection is usually limited to Bollywood movies (mostly Hindi, but also some local Nepali films) with no English audio or subtitles, but that only makes it a more interesting experience, and it takes nothing away from enjoying the music and the dances.

Photo: lapandr / Shutter
Address: Narayanhiti Marg, Kathmandu
Opening hours: Sun-Sat 10:30am-11pm
Phone: +977 1 1 4442220
Internet: www.jainepal.com

SHOPPING



Pikoso.kz/Shutterstock.com

Kathmandu offers everything from luxury boutiques and shopping centres to bargain outlets and outdoor markets. Visitors can shop for designer clothing or interesting souvenirs,

but where the city really shines is in handicrafts and antiques: everything from scroll paintings and metalwork to handwoven cloths, gems, incense, teas and spices. Of course, adventurers can also find their share of trekking gear shops to prepare for their mountain expeditions.

Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre



This handicraft centre showcases the beautiful, elaborate carpets that fuel much of Nepal's textile industry. It is a Tibetan refugee

cooperative, and visitors can watch as more than 1,000 refugee employees work at their craft before heading to the shopping area to take one home. Other options include cashmere and yak-hair shawls.

Photo: doughallnh (image cropped)
Address: Ekantakuna Rd, Patan
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Phone: +977 1 5527047
Internet: www.jhcnepal.com

The Paper Park



The Thamel area boasts several great shops that showcase Nepal's wonderful handmade paper products, and The Paper Park might be the best place to buy it. Visitors can find photo albums, paper lamps, notebooks, paper hangings and much more, made from the country's special paper that comes from the lokta plant.

Photo: rweisswald/Shutterstock.com
Address: Chaksibari Marg, Thamel, Kathmandu
Opening hours: Sun-Sat 9:30am-7:30pm
Phone: +977 1 4700475

Tibetan Thangka Gallery



Thangkas are traditional Tibetan Buddhist scroll paintings on cotton or silk that usually depict Buddhist deities, religious scenes or mandalas. The

thangkas on display here are beautiful and a great bargain, as they usually end up on sale at tourist hotspots for much higher prices. Pop in, watch the artists at work in the workshop and take home a unique souvenir.

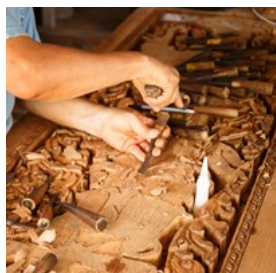
Photo: oceanfishing/Shutterstock.com

Address: Boudha Rd, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 9am-6pm

Phone: +977 1 4428863

Lee Birch Woodcarving Studio



The Kathmandu Valley is famous for its Newar woodcarvers, who are part of a woodworking tradition that dates back to the 10th century. The

master carvers train for years to perfect their craft and the result is some of the finest craftsmanship you are likely to find almost anywhere. Find ornate panels, mirror frames, tables, bookshelves and much more, and take home a true masterpiece.

Photo: Muangsatun/Shutterstock.com

Address: Jawalakhel, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Fri 10am-5pm

Phone: +977 97410 28053

Internet: www.leebirch.com

Email: info@leebirch.com

Baber Mahal Revisited



The Baber Mahal was originally a Rana palace that dates back to 1919, but has now been redesigned and repurposed into a chic and beautiful shopping centre hosting clothing stores, galleries and some fine restaurants and bars. The quality of the products here is high and clearly aimed at tourists and the local elite, so expect higher prices than you might find elsewhere in the city.

Photo: Ashim nep (image cropped)

Address: Tanka Prasad Ghumti Sadak, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 11am-7pm

Phone: +977 1 4248747

Internet: www.babermahal-revisited.com

Email: info@babermahal.com

Shona's Alpine Rental



Explorers and adventurers need to look no further for their one-stop outdoor gear shop in Kathmandu.

Shona's sells and rents out everything trekkers might need to battle the elements and brave the mighty Himalayas, including backpacks, sleeping bags (they make their own) and warm down jackets.

Photo: Alexander Raths/Shutterstock.com

Address: Amrit Marg, Kathmandu

Opening hours: Sun-Sat 9am-6:30pm

Phone: +977 984 3688910

TOURIST INFORMATION



Nick Fox/Shutterstock.com

Best Time to Visit



October to December is the best time to visit as the clear skies make for spectacular views. The weather is dry until April, and in May, heat and

humidity levels increase until the Monsoon season arrives in June. Religious festivals are celebrated all year long.

Photo: VectorA/Shutterstock.com

Passport / Visa



Obtaining a travel visa for Nepal is relatively simple. Tourist visas for 15, 30 and 90 days are available on arrival at the Tribhuvan International

Airport

or at any of the land borders that accept foreigners. The cost for the visa is US\$25, 40 and 100 paid in cash on the spot, depending on the number of days. You can fill in the visa details online beforehand or at the border you enter through.

Photo: TukTuk Design/Shutterstock.com

Tribhuvan International Airport



The Tribhuvan International Airport (KTM) is situated about 6km east of Kathmandu, right in the heart of the Kathmandu Valley. It is

the country's only international airport, serving approximately 30 airlines with service to Asia and the Middle East, as well as Istanbul, and functions as the hub for Nepalese airlines.

Getting from the airport to the city can be done by taxi, buses, hotel shuttles or rental cars. Buses run regularly from dawn till dusk from just outside the airport gate, are very affordable and take approximately 30 minutes to reach the city. Passengers wishing to take a taxi are recommended to order one from the pre-paid booth inside the terminal.

Photo: Juan Garces

Address: Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu

Phone: +977 1 4113033

Internet: www.tiairport.com.np

Public Transport



Public transport in Kathmandu can be confusing, as there are no proper signboards. However, buses have a cashier or attendant who

can let travelers know where the bus goes and let them know when they have arrived at their destination. Buses are usually quite old and not very comfortable, but traveling with the locals can be very pleasant, and they are always very friendly and helpful. Blue and green buses go in circles along the Ring Road.

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair

Taxis



Taxis can be found just about anywhere along major streets in Kathmandu. They are metered, but drivers will try not to use it in order

to ask for higher prices. Either demand to use it or agree on a price before getting in. Note that rates rise after 9pm. An alternative in Thamel is to take rickshaws, which can often be seen around this tourist-heavy area.

Photo: ArrivalGuides

Post Office



Photo: Andy Fuchs

Address: Sundhara Marg, Kathmandu

Phone: +977 1 4223512

Internet: www.gpo.gov.np

Pharmacy



Ritika Pharmacy
Chhetrapati Chowk,
Kathmandu +977 1
4260792

Photo: Gemma Garner

Telephone



Country code: 977 City
code: 1

Photo: Jardson Almeida

Electricity



Voltage: 230 V
Frequency: 50 Hz Power
sockets: type C, D and M

Photo: Stirling Tschan

Population

1,000,000

Currency

Nepalese rupee

1 NPR = 100 paisa

Opening hours

Nepalese businesses are typically open 7 days a week. Banks open Sunday to Friday 9am-3pm, and Saturday 9am-12pm. Shops usually open at around 10am and close at 8pm and usually remain closed on Saturdays. Bars and restaurants close at 10pm, since music in public places is forbidden after that, but some bars and clubs stay open until midnight.

Newspapers

Nepali Times

Himalayan Times

The Kathmandu Post

Emergency numbers

Emergency: 100

Tourist information

Nepal Tourism Board - Tourist Service Center

Bhrikuti Mandap, Kathmandu

+977 1 4256909

info@ntb.org.np