

Earthbound Expeditions

The Royal Trek

8 days, from US$845 per person

Duration **8 days**	Grade **Easy**	Max altitude **1,730 m**
Start and end **Kathmandu**	On the trail **4 to 6 hours a day**	Best season **Oct to Apr**
Accommodation **Lodges and homestays**	Meals **All meals on the trek**	Group size **Up to 10**
Getting there **Via Pokhara**		

The Royal Trek Overview

Four warm days at low altitude on a ridge east of Pokhara, through Gurung and Brahmin villages and terraced fields, with the Annapurnas and Manaslu in view from breakfast to dusk.

Trek overview

Four days on a ridge east of Pokhara, staying in three villages, never higher than 1,730 m. You start at the Bijayapur stream, climb once onto the ridge and then follow it north-east through Kalikasthan, Syaklung and Chisapani, before descending to Rupa and Begnas lakes at the end. The Annapurnas and Manaslu are visible to the north for most of the day, and you walk almost entirely between farmers' terraces.

Who this trip is for

Travellers who want to see the Himalaya without two weeks of trekking, high altitude or crowds. It suits first-time trekkers, walkers in their seventies, families with children aged eight or nine, and anyone with one week rather than three. It is also a worthwhile trek for experienced trekkers who want to see daily life in the middle hills.

The origin of the name

The Prince of Wales made an official visit to Nepal in 1980, visited the Gurkha regiment of which he was colonel-in-chief, and spent three days walking these ridges with a party usually reported at around ninety people. Some sources date the visit to 1981, and accounts differ. The main reasons to walk the trek are the villages and the terraces.

Changes since then

Dirt roads now reach most of the villages on this ridge, and on two or three short sections the trail follows the road. We use footpaths wherever they still exist. The roads have not changed the views or the terraces, and you will still meet more schoolchildren than trekkers.

Key highlights of the The Royal Trek

- Four days on a ridge with views of Annapurna II, Lamjung Himal and Manaslu
- Gurung and Brahmin villages that see only a few trekkers each week
- No point higher than 1,730 m, so altitude is not a concern
- Rice and millet terraces from the valley floor to the ridge
- A boat crossing of Begnas Lake at 650 m at the end
- Comfortable conditions in December and January, when most of Nepal's trekking regions are very cold

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	-	-	1,400 m
2	Kathmandu to Pokhara, by air or road	-	-	822 m
3	Drive to Bijayapur, walk to Kalikasthan	4–5 hrs	9 km	1,370 m
4	Kalikasthan to Syaklung	5–6 hrs	13 km	1,730 m

5	Syaklung to Chisapani	5–6 hrs	12 km	1,550 m
6	Chisapani to Begnas Lake, drive to Pokhara	4–5 hrs	11 km	650 m
7	Pokhara to Kathmandu	-	-	1,400 m
8	Fly home	-	-	1,400 m

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

We meet you at the airport and drive you to your hotel. If you arrive early, there is time to walk around the old streets near Thamel. In the evening we meet to go through the route, check your equipment and answer any questions.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Dinner

Day 2

Fly from Kathmandu to Pokhara

A twenty-five-minute flight west, or a seven-hour drive along the Trishuli river if you prefer to see the countryside. Pokhara lies at 822 m beside Phewa Lake, with the Annapurnas rising close above it. The afternoon is free, and we collect your permit while you rest.

Altitude: 822 m On foot: None, flight day Night: Hotel, Pokhara Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3

Drive to Bijayapur and trek to Kalikasthan

A twenty-minute drive to the Bijayapur stream on the eastern edge of town, followed by the only sustained climb of the trek, up through rice terraces and buffalo sheds onto the ridge. Kalikasthan is a small group of Brahmin houses around a Kali temple, and from above the village the Annapurna range is visible at dusk.

Altitude: 1,370 m On foot: 4–5 hrs Night: Village lodge, Kalikasthan Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Trek from Kalikasthan to Syaklung

Today you follow a long, gentle ridge with terraces on both sides and Annapurna II, Lamjung Himal and Manaslu to the north. You pass through the Gurung villages of Thulakot and Mati Thana, stopping for tea when it is offered. Syaklung, at 1,730 m, is the highest overnight stop of the trek.

Altitude: 1,730 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Homestay, Syaklung Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Trek from Syaklung to Chisapani

We descend from the ridge through oak and pine forest, then climb gradually onto the next ridge. Chisapani means 'cold water'; about forty villages in Nepal share the name, and here it refers to the spring below the houses. The view north from the shoulder above the village is the finest of the trek.

Altitude: 1,550 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Homestay, Chisapani Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek from Chisapani to Begnas Lake

The last morning is downhill all the way, a descent of nine hundred metres through terraces to the lakes. You pass Rupa Lake first, which is quiet and rich in birdlife, then cross the low saddle between the two lakes and descend to Begnas at 650 m. You cross by boat, have lunch by the water and take a thirty-minute drive back to Pokhara.

Altitude: 650 m On foot: 4–5 hrs Night: Hotel, Pokhara Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Return to Kathmandu

A twenty-five-minute flight or a seven-hour drive back, depending on what you booked. If you fly, ask for a window seat on the right-hand side to see the range from Annapurna to Ganesh Himal. The evening is free in Kathmandu, and we can have dinner together if you wish.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, flight day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 8

Departure

We take you to the airport three hours before your flight. If your flight is late in the day, there is time to visit the carved courtyards of Patan or the bookshops of Thamel, and we can store your bags at our office until you need them.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, departure day Night: Departure day Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- Airport transfers and ground transport
- Licensed English-speaking guide
- Accommodation throughout the trip
- All permits and conservation area fees
- Meals as per the itinerary

Not included

- International flights
- Travel and rescue insurance
- Personal trekking gear
- Tips and personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Permits and other costs

Permit	Fee	Issued by
Annapurna Conservation Area permit (ACAP). Issued by the National Trust for Nature Conservation, which manages the conservation area. SAARC nationals pay NPR 1,000 and children under ten are free.	NPR 3,000, about $22	Kathmandu, or the counter at Damside in Pokhara
TIMS card. Sources disagree on whether this ridge requires one, and checks here are much less strict than at the Annapurna checkpoints. We buy it in any case because it costs $15 and avoids delays at a roadside checkpoint.	NPR 2,000, about $15	Only through a registered agency, never over the counter

Licensed guide. Required for foreign trekkers in the conservation area since April 2023. On a ridge with many junctions and few signs, one is useful regardless of the rule.	Inside the trek price	Arranged by us, before you start

Other cost	Amount	Note
Flights to Pokhara and back	$110–170	Or $18 each way by tourist bus, which takes seven hours
ACAP permit	$22	NPR 3,000. SAARC nationals pay NPR 1,000
TIMS card	$15	NPR 2,000, issued through a registered agency only
Village lodge or homestay accommodation	$5–10 a night	Three nights. There is no more expensive option on the ridge
Food on the trail	$15–22 a day	Three meals and tea, cooked in the house where you stay
Licensed guide	$28–35 a day	Including their accommodation and meals
Porter, one for every two trekkers	$20–25 a day	Optional on this trek. Most people carry their own bag
Kathmandu and Pokhara hotels	$30–55 a night	Three-star, two nights in each city
Travel insurance	$50–90	Standard trekking cover is sufficient. High-altitude cover is not needed
Camping option, if chosen	$180–220 extra	Cook, kitchen tent and crew for three nights
Boat across Begnas Lake	$4	Per boat, not per person
Tips for the guide and porter	$60–100	Per trekker, given at the end

Packing list

Pack light for this trek

There is no altitude, no snow and no flight baggage limit, and every village has mains power and road access. Most people carry their own daypack for the four days and leave the rest of their luggage at the hotel in Pokhara, where we store it free of charge. If you would like a porter, the cost is $20 to $25 a day, shared between two trekkers. We provide the duffel and, from November to February, a sleeping bag. Bring boots that are already broken in.

Headwear and eyewear

- Sun hat with a brim. The ridge has very little shade
- Sunglasses, category 2 or 3
- A warm hat, for evenings from November to February only

- Sun cream, SPF 30 or higher, and lip balm
- Head torch, for village paths after dark

Clothing

- Two or three light base layers, merino or synthetic
- One fleece, and a light insulated jacket if you travel in December or January
- A light waterproof jacket. Afternoon showers can occur even in the dry season
- Two pairs of trekking trousers, or one pair and a pair of shorts
- Modest clothing to change into in the villages, covering shoulders and knees

Footwear and hands

- Trekking boots or sturdy trail shoes, already broken in
- Three pairs of walking socks
- Sandals or trainers for the evenings
- Light gloves, December to February only
- Trekking poles, which help on the long descent to Begnas

Bags

- A 30 to 35 litre daypack, which is all most people need on this trek
- A duffel for the porter if you hire one. We provide it
- One or two dry bags for your camera and documents

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to 0°C, which we provide, for November to February
- A silk or cotton liner, which is sufficient on its own from March to October
- Earplugs, as village roosters crow early

Health

- Blister plasters and tape, the most useful items to bring on this trek
- Rehydration salts and painkillers
- Insect repellent, for the lake area in September and October
- Hand sanitiser
- A water bottle or bladder of at least two litres. No purification is needed, as the water is boiled

Documents and money

- Passport valid for six months, plus a photocopy
- Two passport photographs for the permit
- Travel insurance certificate
- $100 to $150 in small notes, changed into rupees, which is more than you will need

Altitude profile

Day	Place	Sleep at	Highest point
1	Kathmandu	1,400 m	-
2	Pokhara	822 m	-
3	Kalikasthan	1,370 m	-
4	Syaklung	1,730 m	-
5	Chisapani	1,550 m	-
6	Pokhara	822 m	-
7	Kathmandu	1,400 m	-

Getting to Pokhara

Twenty-five minutes by air or seven hours by road. Unlike the Everest treks, nothing here depends on a mountain airstrip.

Kathmandu to Pokhara by air or road

The flight takes twenty-five minutes and costs $55 to $85 each way, with around a dozen flights a day from Kathmandu. The tourist bus takes seven hours on a road that follows the Trishuli river and costs about $18. Neither is affected by weather in the way that a mountain airstrip is, and both run all year. Many travellers fly one way and drive the other.

The trailhead is a twenty-minute drive

Bijayapur lies on the eastern edge of Pokhara, beyond the army camp, and the road takes you to the bridge over the stream where the walk begins. There is no long transfer at either end of the trek, which is why it fits into eight days.

No long weather delays

Unlike treks in the Khumbu, this trek does not depend on flights to Lukla, has no risk of a three-day weather delay and needs no spare day in the itinerary. If the Pokhara flight is delayed by fog on a winter morning, you drive instead and lose half a day.

Your flight home

Book it for the evening of day 8 or later. Even on this reliable trek, a landslide on the Prithvi Highway during a wet September can add four hours to the drive back.

Accommodation

Three nights in village houses and small lodges. The accommodation is simple.

Village lodges and homestays

The three nights on the trail are in village houses, not large lodges. Kalikasthan has the largest lodge on the route, with plain twin rooms and a shared hot shower. At Syaklung you stay in a Gurung homestay, in a room in a family house with a shared bathroom and a bucket of hot water, and you eat with the family. At Chisapani you stay in a homestay or a small lodge, depending on the month, with plain twin rooms and a hot shower at most houses.

Hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara

In Kathmandu and Pokhara you stay in three-star hotels, by the lake in Pokhara, with twin or double rooms and a private bathroom.

Where	Nights	Type	Room	Bathroom
Kathmandu	2	Three-star hotel	Twin or double	Private, hot water
Pokhara	2	Three-star hotel by the lake	Twin or double	Private, hot water
Kalikasthan	1	Village lodge, the largest on the route	Twin, plain	Shared, with a hot shower
Syaklung	1	Gurung homestay, in a room in a family house	Twin, sometimes with three beds	Shared, with a bucket of hot water
Chisapani	1	Homestay or small lodge, depending on the month	Twin, plain	Shared, with a hot shower at most houses

Heating
A wood stove in the kitchen on cold evenings. Bedrooms are not heated, which is worth knowing in December.

Hot shower
A bucket of hot water in all three villages, and a plumbed shower in two of them. Free or for a dollar.

Charging
Mains power in every village, free or a dollar per device. Power cuts occur, so bring a small power bank.

Wifi
Usually available at Kalikasthan and sometimes at the other villages. Do not rely on it.

Phone signal
Ncell and NTC cover the whole ridge, and 4G works along most of it. Buy a SIM card in Kathmandu or Pokhara.

Water
Boiled or filtered water is included at every stop. We do not buy bottled water on this trek, and we ask you not to either.

Sleeping bag
Provided, rated to 0°C, which is more than enough at 1,730 m. Not needed from March to October.

Bedding
A bed, a mattress, a pillow and thick quilts. The homestays provide more blankets than you will need.

Meals

Meal	Time	What it is like
Breakfast	7:00–7:30	Roti, eggs, porridge, curd and honey, milk tea or coffee
Lunch	12:00–13:00	Dal bhat, fried rice, chow mein and vegetable curry, depending on what the garden provides
Dinner	18:30–19:30	Dal bhat with three or four vegetable side dishes and pickle, with chicken if you ask in the morning
Tea	on arrival and at every excuse	Milk tea, ginger or lemon tea, or the local millet spirit if there is a celebration

Diet	How we manage it
Vegetarian	Easy everywhere, and standard in the Brahmin houses at Kalikasthan. Dal bhat is vegetarian and refills are served until you have had enough.
Vegan	Manageable. Mention ghee and curd when you book, because they are not usually thought of as dairy ingredients here.
Gluten free	Rice, dal, potatoes, eggs and vegetables are all safe. Roti and noodles are not, and a village kitchen cannot rule out cross-contamination.
Halal	There is no certified halal kitchen on the ridge. Vegetarian food is the practical option, and it is good here.
Meat	Chicken and buffalo meat are available at most stops, and unlike on the high treks the meat is fresh and refrigerated. Tell your guide the night before so that a chicken can be bought.

A typical day

Time	What happens
6:30	Tea outside, with views of the mountains in the evening light
7:30	Breakfast, usually at a table in the yard
8:30	Start walking. No day on this trek requires an earlier start
12:00	Lunch in a village on the ridge, for about an hour
13:30	Two to three more hours of walking, mostly along the ridge rather than uphill
15:30	Arrive, wash, have tea, and relax for an hour
17:30	Sunset lights up the mountains to the north
19:00	Dinner with your host family, with your guide translating
21:00	Bed. The village goes quiet early

Difficulty and preparation

Difficulty 1 of 5

The easiest multi-day trek in Nepal that still offers mountain views.

- Four walking days of four to six hours, on trails and farm tracks rather than stone staircases.
- One significant climb of 570 m on the first afternoon, and one long descent of 900 m on the last morning.
- No point higher than 1,730 m, so altitude is not a factor on this trek.
- Warm rather than cold conditions, so water and sun protection matter more than warm layers.
- If you can do a hilly day walk at home and another one the next morning, you are ready.

Getting ready

8 weeks before: Walk regularly
Walk three times a week for forty-five minutes, at a pace where you can still talk. This alone is enough preparation for this trek.

6 weeks before: Add hills
Replace one walk with a route that includes 250 m of ascent. The first afternoon climbs 570 m and is the only part of the week that will leave you breathing hard.

4 weeks before: Wear your boots
Do every walk from now on in the boots you are bringing, with the daypack you will carry. Blisters are the most likely problem on a four-day trek, and they are avoidable.

3 weeks before: Practise descending
Find a descent and walk down it repeatedly. The last morning descends 900 m to the lakes, which is hard on the thigh muscles rather than the lungs.

2 weeks before: One longer day
Walk for five hours on hills with a light pack. If you finish able to eat a proper dinner and sleep normally, you are ready.

Altitude and safety

The highest overnight stop is 1,730 m. Altitude sickness is extremely rare below 2,500 m, so altitude is not a concern on this trek.

The highest overnight stop on this trek is 1,730 m, and the highest point you cross is only slightly higher. Altitude sickness is extremely rare below 2,500 m, so there is no need to acclimatise, no rest day in the itinerary and no need for oxygen readings in the evening. Pokhara, where you stay before and after the trek, is lower than most European ski resorts.

What to watch for

- Heat: an open ridge at midday in April reaches around 24°C with no shade
- Dehydration, the most common problem on warm, low-altitude treks
- Blisters, as four days on hard-packed trails can cause them
- Sunburn, which is stronger than it feels with a breeze on the ridge

- An upset stomach, best prevented by drinking boiled water rather than bottled and keeping your hands clean
- Village dogs, which bark a lot but rarely bite. Keep walking and avoid staring at them

How to prevent it

- Drink two to three litres of water a day, refilled with boiled or filtered water at every stop.
- Wear a brimmed hat and sun cream, which are more important on this trek than a down jacket.
- Start at half past eight and finish by four, so that the hardest climbing is done while it is cool.
- Wear boots you have already walked in. Four days is long enough for new boots to cause problems.
- Tell your guide about any sore spot on your foot at lunch, before it becomes a blister.

What we do

1. First aid
Your guide carries a first aid kit with blister treatment, rehydration salts, antiseptic, painkillers and a splint, and is trained to use it. On a trek at this altitude, this covers almost every problem that occurs.

2. Road access to every village
A jeep can reach Kalikasthan, Syaklung and Chisapani, so anyone who needs to leave the ridge can do so within an hour or two.

3. Hospital care in Pokhara
Manipal Teaching Hospital in Pokhara, two to three hours away, is a full hospital with intensive care and English-speaking doctors. Nothing on this route is more than a short drive from it.

4. Helicopter evacuation
A helicopter is available and quick to arrive from Pokhara, although in eight years of running this trek we have never needed one. We still recommend standard trekking insurance.

Weather by month

December, January and February are among the best months for this trek, although we advise against them for almost every other trek in Nepal.

Month	Day on the ridge	Night on the ridge	Night at Syaklung, 1,730 m	Conditions	Note
January	15°C	4°C	2°C	Good	Cold nights, warm sun and the clearest mountain views of the year. Valley fog can cover Pokhara until nine.
February	17°C	5°C	3°C	Best	Excellent. Clear, dry and warm enough to walk in a shirt, with very few other trekkers.
March	21°C	9°C	7°C	Best	The best spring month. Rhododendrons flower in the forest between Syaklung and Chisapani, and farmers are ploughing the terraces.

April	24°C	12°C	10°C	Good	Warm and increasingly hazy. Start early, because the open ridge is very hot at midday.
May	25°C	15°C	13°C	Hard	Hot and humid, and the mountains are usually hidden by haze. Pre-monsoon storms develop most afternoons.
June	26°C	17°C	15°C	Hard	The monsoon arrives. Green, humid and wet, with leeches in the forest sections.
July	26°C	18°C	16°C	We do not run it	We do not run this trek in July. Pokhara receives over 900 mm of rain and the mountains are not visible.
August	26°C	18°C	16°C	We do not run it	Similar to July, with a risk of landslides on the access roads and leeches on every damp section.
September	25°C	16°C	14°C	Good	The rain clears during the month. Late September is clear, and the rice on the terraces turns gold.
October	22°C	12°C	10°C	Best	The most reliable month, with the harvest under way, and still quiet on this ridge while the Annapurna trails are busy.
November	19°C	8°C	6°C	Best	Clear, dry and comfortable. The mountains to the north are visible from dawn to dusk on most days.
December	16°C	5°C	3°C	Best	One of the few treks in Nepal that is enjoyable in December. Cold after sunset, but excellent conditions by day.

Built from Pokhara station averages with roughly five degrees taken off for the height of the ridge. Any given week runs a few degrees either side, and the winter figures assume a clear night, which most of them are.

Guides and porters

Your guide

One government-licensed guide with wilderness first aid training accompanies you, and a second guide joins for groups of eleven or more. Our guides on this route come from Kaski and Lamjung, so they know the families whose houses you stay in, which makes conversations at dinner much easier.

Porters and luggage

If you would like a porter, one porter is shared between two trekkers, carrying a maximum of 20 kg in total. Many people carry their own pack, because there is no altitude and the days are short. Either choice is fine, and hiring a porter provides a day's wage for someone from these villages.

Staff pay and insurance

The wages, insurance, food and accommodation of every guide and porter are included in the price on this page, not collected on the trail. Staff are insured for accidents and evacuation on the same terms we ask of you. We pay fair wages on easy treks as on difficult ones.

Tipping

Tipping is customary rather than compulsory and never replaces wages. For a trek of this length, $60 to $100 per trekker for the whole team is usual, given together on the last evening. Your guide will not ask for tips.

Responsible travel

Supporting local communities

A night in a family house at Syaklung brings income directly to a household that has no other way to earn from trekking. There are no lodge chains here, no owners based in Kathmandu and no commissions, so the money goes directly to the community.

Drinking water

Boiled or filtered water is included at every stop, and we do not buy plastic bottles on this trek. The ridge has no rubbish collection: anything bought here is burned here, in someone's yard, so a week of plastic bottles leaves real waste behind.

Roads and local needs

Some trekkers dislike the dirt roads on this ridge. However, the roads mean that a woman in Chisapani can now reach a hospital in two hours instead of being carried for eight. We use footpaths wherever they remain.

Local customs

Always ask before photographing anyone. Remove your shoes at the door, eat with your right hand or ask for a spoon, and do not step over food or over someone who is sitting down. Cover your shoulders and knees in the villages. Your guide will explain other customs as they arise.

Booking and payment

How to book

Email us or send a WhatsApp message with your approximate month of travel. You will receive a personal reply from someone who has walked this route, and there is no payment until you pay a deposit.

Deposit

A thirty per cent deposit secures your dates, and the balance is due on arrival in Kathmandu, in cash or by card. At the same time, we ask for a copy of your passport, two photographs for the permit, your insurance certificate and any dietary requirements.

Payment

Pay by bank transfer, or by card through a secure link. The bank charges about 4 per cent on card payments, and we show you this amount at the time of payment. The balance in Kathmandu can be paid in dollars, pounds, euros or rupees.

Cancellation

If you cancel more than 30 days before departure, the deposit can be transferred to any other date or trek we run, with no time limit. Within 30 days it is retained, because the rooms, guide and transport have been booked. If we cancel for any reason other than weather, you receive a full refund.

Private and group departures

For five or more people, both options cost the same. A private departure runs on your dates at your pace and can be arranged for one person at $1,190. Because this trek is short and involves no flights to coordinate, private departures are particularly easy to arrange.

Late bookings

Four days' notice is enough, or two if you are already in Pokhara. There are no permit delays, no domestic flights that sell out and no lodges that need reserving. This trek is a good option for travellers whose original plans have changed.

Optional extras

This short trek leaves you with spare days, and Pokhara is a good place to spend them.

Paragliding from Sarangkot
$110, 1 morning
A thirty-minute flight from the hill above Pokhara, with the Annapurnas ahead and Phewa Lake below. A very popular activity in Pokhara.

Sarangkot sunrise
$45, 1 morning
An early jeep ride to watch the first light on Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Machhapuchhre, returning for breakfast. It fits well on the day you arrive in Pokhara.

Chitwan, three days
from $360, +3 days
A five-hour drive south to the lowland jungle to look for rhinos, crocodiles and possibly a tiger. It is easy to add, as Pokhara is already partway there.

Camping instead of homestays
$195, same 8 days
Cook, kitchen, dining and toilet tents and a camp crew for the three nights on the ridge. This is how the trek was originally walked, and it lets you camp at the viewpoints rather than in the villages.

An extra night at Begnas
$70, +1 day
Stay by the lake at the end rather than driving straight back to Pokhara, with a boat trip, a swim and a quiet evening.

Guided tour of the Kathmandu Valley
$95, 1 day
Bhaktapur, Patan and Boudhanath with a guide who can explain the carvings. A good use of day 7 if you fly back from Pokhara in the morning.

Single room throughout

$120

A room of your own for all four nights in the cities. On the ridge, a private room depends on which house is open, so we cannot guarantee one.

Frequently asked questions

Answers to the 23 questions travellers ask us most often. If your question is not here, contact us and we will answer it.

Do I need any trekking experience?

No. We recommend this trek to people who have never trekked before. It involves four days of four to six hours of walking on paths that farmers use every day. If you can manage a long day walk at home, you can manage this trek.

How fit do I need to be?

A reasonably active lifestyle is enough. The first afternoon climbs 570 m and the last morning descends 900 m, and the ridge in between is gentle. Eight weeks of walking three times a week is ample preparation, and many people arrive having done less.

Is the trek worthwhile if it is so easy?

Yes. The trek is easy, but it offers four days experiencing life in the middle hills, the part of Nepal most trekkers pass through quickly on the way to higher routes. The mountains are in view throughout.

Can I bring children?

Yes, and this is the trek we recommend for families. Children aged eight or nine and older can manage it, the days are short enough to stop when someone is tired, and a jeep can reach every village if needed. Local families in the homestays are very welcoming to children.

Is there an upper age limit?

No. We have run this trek for walkers in their eighties. With no altitude, no exposed sections and a road to every overnight stop, the factors that usually prevent people from trekking in Nepal do not apply.

Will I get altitude sickness?

No. The highest point you sleep at is 1,730 m, and altitude sickness is extremely rare below 2,500 m. There is no acclimatisation day on this itinerary because none is needed.

Can I walk this trek in winter?

Yes, and December to February is one of the best times for it. Daytime temperatures on the ridge are around 15°C to 17°C in full sun, nights fall to about 3°C to 5°C, there is no snow at this altitude, and the mountain views are the clearest of the year. Very few treks in Nepal are suitable in winter.

Can I trek during the monsoon?

We do not run this trek in July or August. Pokhara receives over 900 mm of rain in July, the mountains are hidden for weeks, the forest sections have leeches and the access roads are affected by landslides. June and September are borderline, and we will advise you on conditions for the part of the month you are considering.

How hot does it get?

In April and May the ridge reaches about 24°C to 25°C by midday, with very little shade, and it feels hotter on open sections. For this reason we start at half past eight and finish by mid-afternoon, and a sun hat is more important than a fleece.

Where will I sleep?

Three nights on the ridge: a small village lodge at Kalikasthan and family homestays at Syaklung and Chisapani, with occasional changes depending on the month and which houses are open. There are beds, mattresses, quilts, shared bathrooms and a bucket of hot water. The accommodation is simple.

Can I do it as a camping trek?

Yes, and this is how the trek was originally walked. For $195 we add a cook, kitchen, dining and toilet tents and a camp crew, so that you can camp at the viewpoints rather than stay in the villages. Camping offers better views but less contact with local families, and most people choose to stay in the houses.

Is there a shower?

At Kalikasthan, and usually at Chisapani, there is a plumbed hot shower, free or for a dollar. At Syaklung there is a bucket of hot water in a stone washroom, which is adequate after a warm day. You will be able to wash every day on this trek.

Will I have phone signal and wifi?

Ncell and NTC cover the whole ridge, and 4G works along most of it, which is better coverage than at 4,000 m in the Khumbu. Wifi is available at Kalikasthan and is unreliable elsewhere. Buy a SIM card in Kathmandu or Pokhara, as you cannot register one in a village.

Is there a road on the trail?

In places, yes. Dirt roads reach all three villages, and two or three short sections of the route follow the road. We use footpaths wherever they still exist. Traffic is light, with only a few jeeps and motorbikes a day.

What is the food like?

Dal bhat twice a day, cooked in the house where you stay, with three or four vegetable side dishes from the garden and a strongly flavoured pickle. Breakfast is roti, eggs and curd. The food is fresher than trail food at altitude, and there is no menu, which most people come to prefer.

How many other trekkers will I see?

Very few. In a busy week in November you might pass two or three other groups in four days, and in January you may see none. The road building that some trekkers dislike is one reason this ridge has remained quiet.

What permits do I need?

An Annapurna Conservation Area permit at NPR 3,000, about $22, issued by the National Trust for Nature Conservation in Kathmandu or at the Damside counter in Pokhara. We also buy you a TIMS card at NPR 2,000, about $15. Both are included in your trip price, and we arrange them using a copy of your passport and two photographs.

Do I need a TIMS card for this trek?

Sources disagree, and checks on this ridge are much less strict than at the Annapurna checkpoints at Birethanti. We buy one because it costs $15 and avoids any problem at a checkpoint.

How much cash should I bring?

$100 to $150, changed into rupees, covers drinks, snacks, the boat at Begnas, a shower or two and your tips, with some to spare. There are ATMs throughout Pokhara but none on the ridge, so withdraw what you need before you leave town.

What insurance do I need?

A standard travel policy covering trekking, medical treatment and repatriation. You do not need the high-altitude cover or helicopter cover required for the Everest treks, because you never go above 1,730 m. Check that your policy does not exclude Nepal.

Do I have to start from Kathmandu?

No. If you are already in Pokhara, we can run it as a six-day trip starting and finishing there, which is cheaper. Many people add it to the end of another trek or to a work trip, and it is easy to shorten to three walking days if you have limited time.

How big is the group?

A maximum of ten on a set departure, which runs with a minimum of one. For groups of eleven or more, a second guide joins. Most people book private departures on their own dates, which costs the same for groups of five or more and is easier to arrange on this trek than on any other we run.

Can I combine it with something else?

Yes, easily, because it is short and ends in Pokhara. Popular combinations are three days in Chitwan, a week on the Annapurna Base Camp trail afterwards, or the Panchase ridge on the other side of the lake. Tell us your plans and we will arrange the dates.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/royal-trek