

KTU/6

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO NEPAL

Photo: Chemi Dorje

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

Hello from PhotoKTM!

We are so excited to welcome you to Nepal soon. Before we dive into festival details, we want to acknowledge that this year, you'll be arriving at a moment of deep transition here, as youth-led protests have recently reshaped the political landscape that brought down the government. The days since have been intense, inspiring, and uncertain all at once. While the political atmosphere remains charged, everyday life in Kathmandu continues and visitors are moving around as usual.

In the midst of this, there is also a strong sense of resilience and determination. Life is carrying forward, and so must our collective efforts to work towards the change we all wish to see and live. For us at PhotoKTM, this has meant rescaling and reconfiguring some of our original plans,

while holding on to the core of what the festival is about: creating space for images, stories, and community. We will also try to offer the festival as a space to continue important conversations sparked by the GenZ protests on the kinds of change that young Nepalis wish to see.

We are continuing to monitor the situation, but we are hopeful that travel will be fine for everyone. The Nepali economy relies on tourism in a big way, so the interim government is making efforts to ensure safety for travelers. If you do have concerns or queries, please of course feel free to write to us.



Photo: Kaveer Rai

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

PhotoKTM is a relaxed, community-driven festival - no dress codes, no red tape, and no pressure. It's warm, informal, and people-centered. Think of it as a gathering of friends (some old, some new) coming together to share stories, explore images, and spend time in beautiful spaces.

Our team is here to support you throughout your stay, so if you ever need help, have a question, or even just need directions - please don't hesitate to reach out. If it's something we can manage, we'll do our best to make it happen. And if something isn't possible, we'll be honest and try to find the next best alternative. We want your time in Nepal to feel easy, comfortable, and enjoyable.

A big part of what we love about this festival is how it brings people together. We hope you'll meet new friends - Nepali and International - along the way. Most evenings around 7 PM, we gather informally at local bars near Patan Durbar Square.

Nothing fancy, just a chance to catch up, connect, and wind down after the day.

All our exhibitions and talks are free and open to everyone. We set them up in public spaces - in alleyways, courtyards, and beautiful old corners of Patan and Kathmandu. That often leads to the loveliest moments: children squeezing into a screening, elders pausing to share memories sparked by a photo, schoolkids pulling their parents along to show them what they saw, and even local guides weaving festival stops into their walking tours.

If we're helping with your stay, you'll be right in the heart of Patan's old city where most of the festival unfolds. It's a lively place during the day, full of narrow lanes, the occasional motorbike honk (which often just means "hello, I'm passing!"), and lots of energy. But tucked between the bustle are peaceful side-alleys and quiet little spots that you'll come to love. Give it a day or two, and you'll start to feel at home here.



Photo: Kaveer Rai

ARRIVAL IN NEPAL

Visas: For most, the regular **tourist visa** is all you need to look at .

- **Indian nationals** do not require a visa to enter Nepal. A valid passport or Indian government-issued ID is sufficient to enter the country.
- Visitors from the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries** - Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka - receive a **free 30-day visa-on-arrival once a year.**

(Note: Afghanistan is currently excluded from this provision.)

- **Citizens of Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Cameroon, Somalia, Liberia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Syria, and Refugees with travel documents** are required to obtain a visa **in advance** before arriving in Nepal.



Photo:Shikhar Bhattarai

- **All other nationalities** can get a **visa on arrival** at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. The current fees are:

- US\$30 for 15 days
- US\$50 for 30 days
- US\$125 for 90 days

Tourist visas can be issued for **a maximum of 150 days per calendar year.** Visa fees are payable in major currencies like Euros, Pounds, Chinese RMB, and Australian Dollars, though **US dollars are preferred.** There is a credit card machine at the payment counter, but it can be unreliable - we recommend carrying some **cash** just in case. All tourist visas issued on arrival are **multiple-entry.**

Step-by-Step: Get your Visa at the airport

Step-by-step visa procedure for everybody except the nationals of above-mentioned countries:

1. Before you travel:

Fill out the **online tourist visa application form** at

www.online.nepalimmigration.gov.np/tourist-visa, 15 days before your departure at the earliest.

Print and bring a copy with you.

2. On your flight:

Ask the cabin crew for an **Arrival Card**, or get one in the arrival hall.

3. At the airport:

- Go to the visa fee payment counter at the arrival hall. Pay the fee and collect your receipt.
- With your printed visa form, arrival card, passport, and payment receipt in hand, proceed to the immigration desk.
- Choose the line based on your visa duration: 15 days / 30 days / 90 days.
- Once processed and stamped, you're all set to enter Nepal!

After your passport has been processed and stamped, exit the hall and head downstairs to the luggage belts. Expect some waiting time, especially if you arrive on an evening flight. Keep your **luggage tag** (the one that was pasted on your boarding pass at check-in) handy - security staff / custom officers will ask to match it with your bag before you exit.

Getting from the airport to your accommodation

- **If PhotoKTM is arranging your stay:** Look out for a **PhotoKTM placard** just outside the arrival area. Our team will be there to receive you and take you to your hotel.
- **If you've booked independently:** We recommend arranging your first night's stay in advance and requesting your hotel to **send a pick-up**. Many hotels offer **complimentary airport transfers**, and someone should be waiting outside with a sign bearing your name or the hotel's name.
- **If you haven't pre-arranged a pick-up:** No worries - there's a **pre-paid taxi counter** before you exit the building. Make sure you know **the name of your hotel and neighborhood** before booking. It helps everything run more smoothly.

WHAT TO BRING

For your time in Nepal during November-December

The weather this time of year is dry and sunny, with beautiful clear skies. Daytime temperatures usually hover around **15°C**, but as soon as the sun dips, it can drop to **3-5°C** (or colder on some nights). Since most buildings in Kathmandu don't have central heating, **warm layers are essential**, especially in the evenings and at night.

Here are a few things we suggest packing:

- **Clothes for layering** - Bring cozy, breathable layers that you can add or remove throughout the day. A **warm sweater or fleece, jacket, scarf, hat**, and **woolen socks** will serve you well. Kathmandu evenings can be chilly!
- **Comfortable, warm sleepwear** - Nights can get cold, even indoors, so pack something snug to sleep in.
- **A small bag with essentials for 2 days** - Carry this as **hand luggage** in case your checked baggage is delayed.
- **Passport-sized photos** - Handy for things like SIM cards or local permits.
- **Any personal medication or prescriptions** - It's a good idea to consult your doctor before your trip and carry what you need.
- **Camera, memory cards, and extra batteries** - Cold temperatures can drain batteries faster, so spares are helpful!

Let us know if you have any questions about packing or local availability - we're happy to help!



Photo: Shutterstock

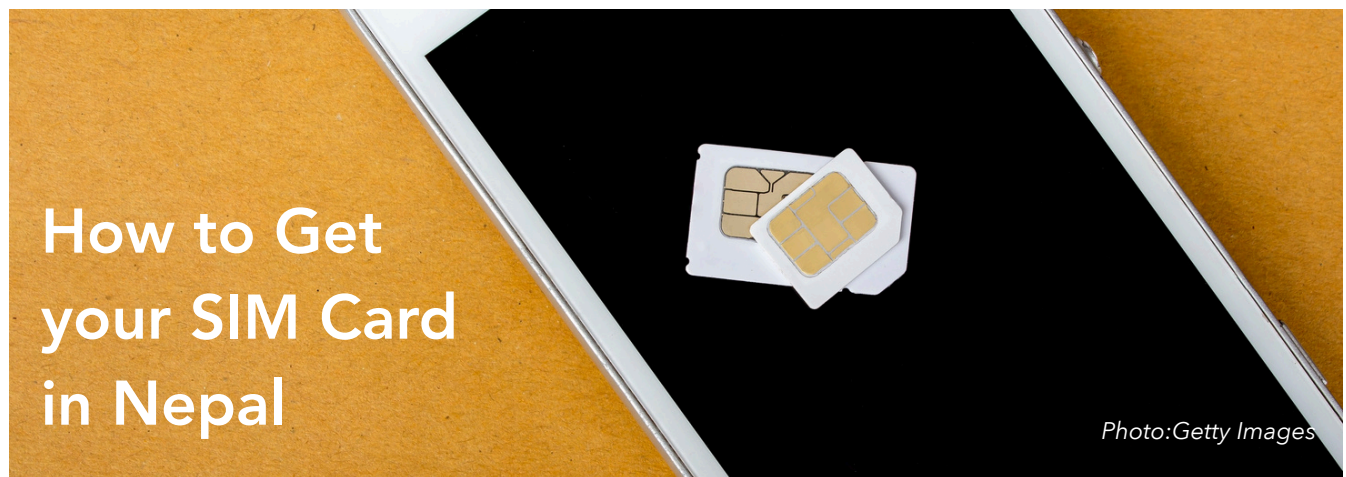
STAYING CONNECTED

You'll find **WiFi** in most cafés, hotels, and guesthouses around the Kathmandu Valley. Speeds may not be lightning-fast, but they're usually good enough for checking emails, messages, and scrolling through social media.

If you'd like to stay connected while on the go, getting a **local SIM card** is easy and inexpensive. There are two major providers in Nepal:

- **Ncell** (privately owned)
- **NTC** - Nepal Telecom Company (government-run)

Both offer **4G data coverage** in cities and towns, including most areas you'll be visiting.



Here's what you need to get a SIM:

- A **passport-sized photo**
- A **photocopy of your passport and visa page**
- A quick form to fill out
- Around **NPR 100** (less than USD \$1)

SIM cards are also available at the airport, just after baggage claim. It's a convenient option if you'd like to get connected right away.

Alternatively, you can visit an **official store or service center** in town. We recommend this over smaller corner shops, as those can sometimes result in long activation delays (even if they promise it'll be ready in "a couple of hours"). A quick Google Maps search (e.g., "Ncell Center" or "NTC Office") will help you locate the nearest outlet.

- **Ncell SIMs** are widely available, and you can choose between call+data or data-only options. Need a micro or nano SIM? Most places will trim it to size for free.
- **NTC SIMs** are usually available only at official NTC offices. Occasionally, the **Nepal Tourism Board desk at the airport** gives out free NTC SIMs - worth checking just before you exit the terminal!

Top-up/recharge cards are easy to find at shops all over town, in values ranging from small to large.

CATCHING UP ON LOCAL NEWS

If you'd like to stay informed about what's happening in Nepal (and the region), there are several English-language newspapers and magazines available both in print and online:

Nepali Times - Weekly insights and in-depth reporting on current affairs, arts, and culture.

República - Daily news with coverage of national and international events.

The Himalayan Times - One of the most widely read English dailies in Nepal.

The Kathmandu Post - Offers a broad range of stories, from politics to lifestyle and opinion.

Himal Southasian - A regional publication focused on South Asian politics, society, and culture, known for thoughtful, long-form journalism.

Kalam Weekly - A well-curated newsletter that offers a fresh, thoughtful take on current events and cultural moments in Nepal. You can subscribe for free during your stay and choose to continue as a paid subscriber later if you'd like to stay connected.

PLACES TO VISIT

Nepal is known for its mountains, of course - but just as captivating are the **palaces, temples, and historic neighborhoods** that dot the cities and valleys.



Photo: Infinity Adventure Nepal from Pexels



Photo: Volker Meyer from Pexels



Photo: Mehmet Turgut Kirkgoz from Pexels

Start with the **Durbar Squares** of **Kathmandu (Basantapur)**, **Patan**, and **Bhaktapur**. These beautifully preserved royal plazas - *Durbar* means palace - are filled with centuries-old temples, intricately carved statues, ancient courtyards (*patis*), and traditional stone water spouts (*hitis*). Many of these structures withstood the 2015 earthquakes and are still standing proud today.

The best way to experience these sites is on foot, ideally with a **local guide** who can take you beyond the squares into the surrounding neighborhoods - places where traditional Newar life unfolds in quiet alleys and hidden courtyards.

A quick note: there's a **small entrance fee** for tourists at each Durbar Square. Be sure to carry your **passport with your visa page**, and ask for an **extended ticket** if you plan to visit more than once - it saves both money and time!

If you'd like to go a little further afield, the **old towns of Dhulikhel and Panauti**, just a two to three-hour drive from Kathmandu, are equally rich in heritage - but with fewer crowds. They're perfect for a slower day trip, full of winding lanes, old-world charm, and stunning valley views.

Of course, no visit is complete without seeing:



Photo: Getty Images Signature



Photo: xijian from Getty Images Signature



Photo: Rajan Nagaju from Getty Images

- **Boudhanath Stupa** - One of the largest Buddhist stupas in the world and a peaceful place to walk a few rounds under prayer flags and glowing butter lamps.
- **Swayambhunath** - Also known as the Monkey Temple, perched on a hill with sweeping views over the city.
- **Pashupatinath** - A sacred Hindu temple complex along the **Bagmati River**, where temples, ashrams, shrines, and rituals come together in a deeply spiritual space. It's one of Nepal's most important religious sites - beautiful, emotional, and unforgettable.

If you're craving a little quiet from the city buzz, find a spot at the **Garden of Dreams** in Thamel. Settle onto the cushions, watch the squirrels dart around, and enjoy a break surrounded by sub-tropical plants and soft fountains.

And if you're up for a short adventure: take the **cable car to Chandragiri Hills**. Just outside the valley, this hilltop offers spectacular views of the mountains (on clear days, even Everest!), along with fresh air, historical significance, and that unmistakable sense of being far above the noise of the world below.

Finally, for something more immersive and off the beaten path, we recommend checking out **Stay Next Door** (on Instagram) - they curate thoughtful, meaningful travel experiences across Kathmandu.

RESPECT & CULTURAL CUES

Nepal is warm and welcoming - and locals are generally kind toward guests who make an effort to understand local ways. Here are a few things that help you move through spaces here with ease and thoughtfulness:

Start with a Namaste (or Namaskar) - Press your palms together and smile. It's used for both greeting and farewell, and carries the beautiful sentiment: *"The divine in me acknowledges the divine in you."*

Respect elders - A small gesture, like a greeting or a slight bow of the head, is always appreciated.

Shoes off - Always remove your shoes before entering **homes, temples, monasteries**, and sometimes **even certain shops or guesthouses**. If you're unsure, a quick look around or asking someone will usually guide you.

Layer up - Most homes don't have central heating, so warm clothes at night are a must, especially in winter.

Hats off in sacred spaces - Removing your hat in temples or monasteries is a sign of respect.

The right hand rule - The right hand is traditionally used when giving or receiving things, especially food or money. If you're left-handed, don't stress - just be mindful in communal or formal settings.

Toilets - Many toilets have bidet sprays (instead of toilet paper). Carry tissues and hand sanitizer just in case.

At temples and religious sites -

- Some **Hindu temples** restrict entry to non-Hindus in specific inner areas - this is about preserving religious sanctity, not personal exclusion.
- At **Buddhist sites** like stupas or monasteries, **walk clockwise** around them (keeping the structure on your right).
- **Always remove your shoes** before entering temple areas - even if they're outdoors.

Eating & drinking - In more traditional settings, avoid touching shared food or communal water containers directly. Let someone pour for you or wait to be served.

At someone's home - Wait to be invited in before entering past the main door or porch. It's common to remove shoes at the entrance.

Bargain gently - Negotiating prices at local markets is fine - just do it with a smile and good humour. If something feels too expensive, it's okay to say so kindly without devaluing the effort or craft.

Photography Etiquette - It's good to ask before taking photos of people, especially elders, religious figures, or in temple spaces. Some temples or rituals don't allow photography at all - signs usually make it clear, but when in doubt, just ask.

Eco/Climate Etiquette - Nepal is facing rising waste challenges, especially with increased tourism. Avoid single-use plastics where possible, refill water bottles at hotels or safe stations, and carry reusable items like tote bags.

Local Economy & Conscious Tourism - Whenever possible, support locally-owned guesthouses, homestays, shops, and eateries. Buying directly from artisans or family-run businesses ensures more of your money stays in the community. Bargaining is okay - even expected in some markets - but approach it with warmth and mutual respect.

MONEY MATTERS

- **Nepali Rupees** (NPR) is the local currency. A quick way to estimate the USD equivalent is to remove the last two digits of an NPR price (e.g., NPR 1,000 ≈ USD 7-8).

Tip: Hold on to your ATM and money exchange receipts - you'll need them to convert leftover NPR back into foreign currency at the airport bank when departing Nepal. Without them, currency conversion is not permitted.

- **Indian currency** is accepted at a fixed rate of NPR 1.60 per INR 1, but ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes are not widely accepted.
- ATMs are easy to find and many operate 24/7. Most have a withdrawal limit of NPR 35,000 per transaction (e.g., Nabil Bank), with a processing fee of about NPR 500. Currency exchange offices are also available in tourist areas.

STAYING SAFE

Nepal is a remarkably safe country to travel in, and Kathmandu is no exception. Violent crime is rare, and pickpocketing isn't common - but the usual precautions apply. Keep your valuables secure, avoid flashing large amounts of cash, and trust your instincts.

Occasionally, there are political strikes (bandhas) or demonstrations. These are usually peaceful and allowances are often made for tourists - taxis, flights, and essential services may continue operating. If unsure, ask your accommodation or check English-language local news outlets like **The Kathmandu Post**, **Himalayan Times**, or **Nepali Times** for updates.

STAYING HEALTHY

Water - Tap water in Nepal is *not* safe to drink unless boiled or filtered. Most restaurants and cafes serve purified water from large 20L dispensers when you ask for “regular” water. If in doubt, stick to sealed bottled or filtered water.

Food - Peel your fruits, and be selective with street food - if it's fried and piping hot, it's generally safe. For raw salads, it's okay to ask if the veggies were washed with treated or iodized water (most restaurants do this).

Traveler's diarrhea is common and usually mild - stay hydrated, carry tissues, and bring hand sanitizer for meals on the go. Electrolyte packets (like Jeevan Jal) are available at most pharmacies if needed.

If things don't improve in a couple of days, don't hesitate to consult a local clinic or ask your hotel to recommend a doctor - many in Kathmandu cater specifically to travelers.

GO OUT AND HAVE FUN

For the latest happenings and vibe checks, check out the Instagram pages of these spots - they often share events, live music schedules, and special nights.

In Thamel:

- **Sam's Bar** and **Bimba** are always buzzing with a fun crowd and great drinks.
- **Jazz Upstairs** on Lazimpat Road offers chill vibes with live jazz and a lovely view - a perfect spot for a relaxed evening.
- **House of Beers** in Thamel has a wide selection of craft and international beers if you're after something different.
- **Electric Pagoda** and **Purple Haze Rock Bar** (just around the corner) frequently host live bands, with Purple Haze rocking almost every night.
- **Shisha** is another great live music venue in Thamel, known for fun performances.
- **Irish Pub** (Lazimpat) is your go-to place for catching major sports events on a big screen.

Speakeasy vibe:

- **Barc** in Tripureswor is a stylish, cozy speakeasy bar with expertly crafted cocktails and a great atmosphere for a laid-back night out.

South side (Jhamsikhel):

- **Beers and Cheers** offers a lively scene with good music and drinks.
- **Basecamp** is a popular hangout spot.
- **Musicology** hosts special nights, including a lovely Ghazal night every Wednesday - perfect for something a little different and more soulful.

Late-night dancing:

- **Supper Club, Plan B** and **LOD** (all in Thamel) are hotspots where you can dance the night away.

In Freak Street:

- **The Threads** is a cozy spot known for great cocktails and delicious food, perfect for a relaxed evening away from the usual hustle.

FOOD & DRINKS

All the places mentioned here are easy to find on Google Maps.

Mo:mo: Delicious bite-sized dumplings bursting with flavor, available boiled or fried, vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Some of our favorite spots include **Shandar Momo** in Sanepa, **Dallé** in Pulchowk, and the **Tibetan-style Michung Mo:mo** in Boudhanath. For a more local experience, try **Mahabharat Momo near Patan Dhoka** or **Everest Momo in Naxal**



Photo: Nishi Rungta

Breakfast/Brunch

For breakfast and brunch, popular among the expat and NGO crowd, **Café House 5** in Jhamsikhel, **The Yellow House** in Sanepa, **Deli Akuj** in Jawalakhel and **Feels** in Jhamsikhel serve hearty breakfasts, tasty burgers, fresh salads, and an irresistible selection of desserts displayed on the counter. If you want to start your day like a local, be sure to try the Jeri-Swari combo at local sweet shops around Patan, often paired with the local favorite gwaramari. Just remember to arrive before 9 AM to enjoy these traditional breakfast treats at their freshest.

Local cuisine

Nepali cuisine centers around the national meal daal-bhaat-tarkaari - spiced lentils served over steamed rice with a variety of seasoned vegetables. This wholesome meal is typically accompanied by dahi (yogurt) and a spicy achar (pickle) and is traditionally eaten with the right hand. For authentic Thakali cuisine, head to **Thakkhola** or **Mantra Thakali** in Jhamsikhel, as well as **Tukuche** in Naxal. If you're interested in exploring Nepal's diverse ethnic dishes, **Raithaane** in Kupondole offers a range of options that showcase this variety.



Photo: Lucid Inc.

One of Nepal's oldest eateries, **Honacha** (Patan Durbar Square), still stands strong and serves authentic Newari cuisine. Their chhoila (a spiced grilled meat dish) has been a local favorite for years. A three minute walk from Patan Durbar square, **Newa Ghasa** is another local favourite. Famous for their yomari and chatamari, **Nandini food court** in Swotha will not disappoint newari food lovers. If you're a hardcore lover of choila, head to **Yala Choila Pasa** in Pimbahal.

For a full Newari food and Raksi experience, head to lovely Kirtipur, just behind Tribhuvan University, where **Newa Lahana** on the fourth floor offers amazing views of the hills, and serves 5 different types of raksi to go along with a variety of Newari snacks. Also located in Kirtipur is **Sasa Twa**: offering live music with amazing ambience and delicious Newari food to match. **Sam's One Tree Cafe (Sanepa, International Club)** serves some favorite Kathmandu classics such as sizzlers, Nepali Thali, momo alongside delicious cocktails.

Vegan/Vegetarian

As numbers of vegans and vegetarians increase, Kathmandu has opened its fair share of plant based eateries. **Hamro Vegan** in Kumaripati is a hub for vegan alternatives offering everything from sausages and fish to yogurt and ice cream. **Annamaya** in Jhamsikhel is well known for its delicious breakfast bowls, healthy burgers, noodles and salad bowls with organic and gluten free options. Also in Jhamsikhel, **C-ya Vegan Restaurant** offers the best beetroot and matcha-flavored ice cream in town, while **Organic Smoothie Bowl & Cafe** delights with fresh smoothie bowls. If you're looking for a refreshing drink, **Juice Mandala** offers a variety of fresh juices as well as smoothies and snacks, all vegetarian. South Asian cuisine here is friendly to vegetarians as well. For veggie sweets and snacks, **Sajangoth, Tiptop and Moti Mahal** are the local favorites.

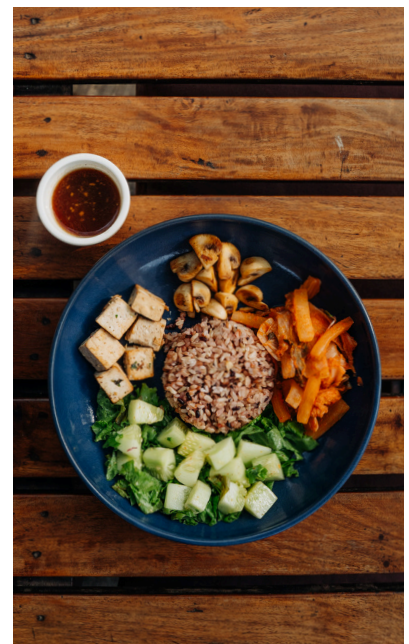


Photo: Lucid Inc.

International

The food scene in Kathmandu is fast-growing. And it's good! South of the Bagmati River, it's all happening in the Jhamsikhel area where new places pop up regularly. Among them are **Bell Bar & Bistro**, **Fire N Ice** (known for pizza), **Lhakpa's Chulo** (fusion), **The Workshop Eatery** in Bakhundol (burgers), **Piano Piano** (Italian), **Xithang Hotel & Chinese Cuisine** (Chinese) and **Taza** (Syrian cuisine and Baklavas) to name a few.



Photo: Lucid Inc.

On the north side, find **Chez Caroline** (continental) in the beautiful Baber Mahal Revisited complex in Thapathali, or **Vino Bistro** (cheese and wine) on Lazimpat Road, **Smashing Burgers** in Thamel, **Little Tibet** (Tibetan, Bhutanese, and Nepali cuisine and Tongba - a warm millet based alcoholic drink - a great choice for winters) also in Thamel and **Le Sherpa** (continental) in Panipokhari, amongst many others.

Tea - Although not as internationally famous as Indian brands, Nepal does in fact have a large, thriving organic tea industry. Sit down on a stool at any tea shop, ask for masala tea, milk tea or black tea. Remember to ask for little or no sugar, if that's your fancy. For something a little more serene and curated, check out **Suiro Teas** in Baluwatar, a lovely little tea house offering beautiful blends and a quiet corner for tea lovers.

Coffee - Nepal has emerged as a coffee-producing country over the last two decades. For the most part, it is grown organically and provides extra income for smallholder farmers. Don't settle for dehydrated instant powders when you can enjoy a tasty local arabica! For a good cup, head to **Kar.ma Coffee** in Jhamsikhel - they serve beautifully brewed local coffee and have some of the best desserts in town, including their beloved juju dhau cake.

Patan Lassi Station in Mikhabahal offers tea, coffee and shakes along with its famous lassi in delicious varieties.

Alcohol - Raksi is a clear drink, similar to tequila in its alcohol content. It is usually brewed "in house", resulting in variations in taste and strength. It is often served in small, baked, beveled clay cups that hold less than a shot. It works great as a mixer in juice or soda. Chyaang is a cloudy, moderately alcoholic drink sometimes called "Nepali beer". It is mostly made from rice, specially in Newari culture. While weaker than raksi, it will still have quite an effect. Tongba is a Tibetan drink based on fermented millet grains. **Sherpa Khaja Ghar** in Dhaugal is the go-to place when it comes to Tongba for Patan dwellers. **Kyampa** in Sanepa is a great place for a beer or two. Unpretentious **Base Camp** attracts the artistic minded crowds on Arun Thapa Chowk.

There are several food delivery apps you can use to order from restaurants around the city, including **Foodmandu**, **Pathao**, and **Bhoj Deals**.

RECOMMENDED READING AND LINKS

Among the many sources of information on Nepal, we find these particularly well written and insightful. Books:

Thomas Bell - "**Kathmandu**" (non-fiction)
Prashant Jha - "**Battles of the New Republic: A Contemporary History of Nepal**" (non-fiction)
Prawin Adhikari - "**The Vanishing Act: Stories**" (fiction)
Manjushree Thapa - "**Tutor of History**" (fiction)
Pranaya Rana - "**City of Dreams**" (fiction)
Rabi Thapa - "**Thamel**" (non-fiction)

Online in-depth news magazines:

La.Lit Magazine (lalitmag.com)
Kalam Weekly
(kalamweekly.substack.com)
Himal Southasian (himalmag.com)

Links to general information on Nepal and Kathmandu:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal
wikitravel.org/en/Nepal
wikitravel.org/en/Kathmandu



Photo: Roman Saienko from Pexels

GETTING AROUND

Except for the main arteries, very few streets in Kathmandu have names/signs. To get to your destination, you'll usually need to know the nearest landmark, or at least the name of the neighborhood.

Taxis are one of the most efficient ways to get around in Kathmandu. They're the small white Maruti Suzuki cars (with black number plates), and usually with a luggage rack on the roof. Most taxi drivers are familiar with most hotels and landmarks around town, and if you mention the neighborhood, they'll ask around themselves to get you safely to your destination. Before sitting down, make sure that they either **put on the meter** or **agree on a price**. Be prepared to negotiate (on average, settle for around 30% less than the first offer). Best results come when you smile and take the negotiation process lightly. There's no use getting frustrated, and there are usually other taxis around if one doesn't work out.

From Patan Durbar Square, expect to pay **around NPR 200 to Jhamsikhel**
NPR 400 to Thamel
NPR 500 to Lazimpat
NPR 600 to Bouddha

Prices generally increase by 50% after dark.

Ride-sharing apps like **Pathao** and **InDriver** have made things much easier. Both offer bike and taxi options and can be a great alternative to flagging down a cab. Other options include the (often crowded) **"tempo"** three-wheelers and **"micro"** buses that run fixed routes for NPR 20-30. The routes are usually written in Nepali, so ask around for help.

For longer distances, like Pokhara (6-7h) or Chitwan (7h), daily **tourist buses** leave at 7 am from Kantipath, just outside Thamel. You can also fly with **domestic carriers** such as (Buddha Air, Yeti Airlines, or Nepal Airlines).

TO SHOP

For books, head to **Pilgrims Book Store** (Thamel or Jhamsikhel) or the **Wisdom Books & Aroma Shop** (Bhanimandal).

For **locally made and fair trade certified souvenirs and interior decoration items**, explore the strip in Pulchowk between Himalaya Hotel and Kan Devata Temple. Shops like **Dhukuti, Mahaguthi Craft with Conscience, and Mahaguthi** carry a thoughtful range of handicrafts, textiles, and homeware. Also inside the International Club in Sanepa is **Ne Nepal**, showcasing beautifully curated objects that bring together craft, design, and storytelling.

Roam the alleys of Patan to find antiques (or replicas, as exporting certain antiques is prohibited). If you fall in love with a wooden object, one way to know if it's the real thing is to check for patina.

TO RELAX

Lotus Mindfulness and Relaxation Services (Thamel) is the place to wind down and get yourself back together after exploring the nooks and crannies of Kathmandu. Just sit back, relax and let the singing bowls do all the work.

Sotai & Kai Japanese Physiotherapy (Sanepa). The Japanese owner and his son have trained deaf/mute Nepalis as masseuses/ masseurs, and they perform excellent massages that do wonders to ease aching muscles and joints.

For the ultimate spa experience **Chaintanya** is highly recommended by locals and expats alike.

Seeing Hands (Jhamsikhel & Thamel). The fantastic hands of the teams of blind masseurs will find every knot in your muscles and make sure you leave walking on clouds.

EMERGENCIES

Police 100

Fire Brigade 101

Ambulance 102

Traffic Police 103

Patan Hospital +977 01 542 2278/5422266 (Lagankhel)

CIWEC Clinic +977 01 453 5232 /4524242 (Opposite British Embassy, Lainchaur)

Grande City Hospital +977 01 515 9266 (Kanti Path, opposite Hotel Yellow Pagoda)

Norvic Hospital +977 01 597 0032 (Thapathali)

Nepal Medicit Hospital +977 01 421 7766 (Nakhu)

Blood Bank +977 01 542 7033 (Pulchowk)

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

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