



Nepal

Walking with Elephants

2, 3 or more days activity

The experience of walking through the jungle together with elephants -and not over them in their backs- allows you to feel much closer to the ground, the trees, and to have the animals at your same level. There is a lot of difference in the welfare of the elephants that do not walk tourists all day on their backs and those that have to do it day in and day out as well, that is why at Plan Himalaya we do NOT do jungle safaris on the backs of elephants.

Duration 3 days (you can extend more days or do only 1 night / 1 day)

From Kathmandu or Pokhara by road or flight (also other options)

From September to June

Elephant Camp / Tharu Lodge local English-speaking Guide

Activities with the elephants in a respectful way

Transportation by private vehicle (and domestic flight)

Chitwan National Park is in southern Nepal bordering India. Surrounded by a rural area of fields and farms, Chitwan National Park is a large extension of forest, savannah and rivers with a good concentration of wild animals, including Asian rhinos, different types of deer, birds of all kinds, crocodiles and gharials, leopards and a large population of tigers, although these two species are almost impossible to see.

Around the Park there are many hotels and "resorts" of all kinds that are in charge of taking care the visits to the Park, and from this point onwards the big differences begin. Most visitors to Chitwan do so in large lodges where activities in the jungle are managed as if it were a theme park, a way that we have never liked. But other lodges have tried to take more care of the environmental impact, integration into the environment and respect for nature. But in 2016, the company Tiger Tops launched a project that fits completely with what we were looking for, the Elephant Camp / Tharu Lodge, with which we work almost exclusively while there are no other establishments that start working like them.

At Elephant Camp they have a dozen carefully treated elephants that enjoy more freedom and space. While in the other lodges the elephants are nothing more than an exotic means of transport to attract tourists, the Elephant Camp is a place where they take care of elephants and receive visitors who can do activities related to the elephant world and the forest. The philosophy is really very different. The idea is that visitors learn about and get involved in some of the tasks in caring for elephants, such as making the "Kuchi", a kind of ball with grass that they love and give it to them, cutting grass to feed them, or accompanying them to the river bath at sunset. You can also visit an organic farm and the Tharu ethnic village. These activities can vary according to the season and the program of each moment, and there are also some activities, such as canoeing on the river or doing an off-road route that involve a supplement.

But the main activity is to go to the forest to walk with a guide and accompanied by elephants. The routes in the forest can vary, but usually last about two hours. The presence of the elephants ensures the safety of the group and, moreover, the elephants are very sensitive to any "threat" that may hover over them, so their "mahouts" (the elephant drivers) are always aware of what is happening around them in the forest. This is the jungle, not a zoo, and although the animals are a bit used to human presence, do not expect them to jump gracefully two meters in front of you! They will maintain a safe distance, which may be bigger or lesser. Deer tend to keep their distance, while rhinos tend to get quite close, for example. Therefore, it cannot be guaranteed which animals you will see, although in general it will be difficult for you not to see any, as the guides more or less know where the animals are every day. Naturally, keeping a certain amount of silence helps animals don't worry about you.

To go into the jungle it is more than advisable to wear discreet colours (no camouflage needed!), long trousers, long-sleeved shirt and closed shoes, as well as sun protection, hat or cap and don't forget the mosquito repellent (there's no malaria in Chitwan).

Just because of their size you have to be careful with the elephants, so it is forbidden to touch them if none of the "mahouts" allow you to do it. They will watch over your safety during your whole stay. Each elephant has its own character, although the elephants here are actually much calmer than those in other lodges, where they have much more stressful behaviour.

The Elephant Camp / Tharu Lodge is a large extension of land where there are spaces for the elephants and where there is also space for visitors. The community buildings such as the dining room, meeting room and the rooms of the Tharu Lodge are built according to the traditional methods of the area, and the accommodation can be in these rooms or, as we propose here, in comfortable tents for two people protected by an additional roof, with double or single beds, electric power and a nice private bathroom with hot water. As it is in the middle of the forest, some small animals may come to visit us around our tent, so it is important to ensure that it is always well closed.

In Chitwan it can be quite humid and hot, but this humidity can also be cool in the winter months.

The minimum visit to Elephant Camp / Tharu Lodge is 2 days / 1 night (you usually arrive at noon on the first day and leave the next morning, so it's really one day) but it can be extended, being 3 days / 2 nights the most common. Please, ask to us.





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Here we point out the proposal of 3 days / 2 nights at the Elephant Camp, with the start from Kathmandu and end in Pokhara (or vice versa), but keep in mind that you can adapt it to your taste. A good option is to come from or go to Bandipur or Tansen by road, and of course you can choose one way by car and the other by plane.

The road trip from Kathmandu is usually about 6h / 7h, from Pokhara about 5h / 6h and from Bandipur or Tansen about 4h. Flights to Pokhara or Kathmandu take about 20' / 30' respectively and Bharatpur airport is about an hour's drive from Elephant Camp.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Private vehicle or domestic flight from Kathmandu to Chitwan accommodation and from Chitwan to Pokhara (other options are possible, but price will vary, please contact us)
- 2 nights / 3 days full board accommodation at the Elephant Camp in tents with private bathroom (or at the Tharu Lodge)
- Entrance to Chitwan National Park
- All government taxes and VAT

PRICE EXCLUDES

- Accommodation in Pokhara or Kathmandu after Chitwan is already included in the full travel program where this activity is inserted
- Staff tips
- Soft drinks, hot drinks, phone calls, internet access and any personal need.
- Medical and/or travel insurance
- In general, any concept not specified in the program, as well as any type of personal assistance to the traveller for matters outside the program of this trip.

PRICE per person in US\$ 3 days / 2 nights at Elephant Camp

Travellers in the group:	1*	2	4	6	> 8
Start in Kathmandu and end in Pokhara (or vice versa) by road	\$ 715,00	\$ 560,00	\$ 520,00	\$ 485,00	\$ 460,00
Start in Kathmandu and end in Pokhara (or vice versa) by plane	\$ 705,00	\$ 695,00	\$ 685,00	\$ 680,00	\$ 680,00

* One-person travellers have specific conditions. Ask us.

NOTE: Be aware about the tips for the staff.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY THE TRAVEL INFORMATION THAT WE HAVE EXPRESSLY MADE WITH INFORMATION, TIPS AND NOTES, BOTH FOR THE JOURNEY IN GENERAL AND SPECIFICALLY ON THE TREKS IN NEPAL, ON OUR WEBSITE:

planhimalaya.com/nepal-travel-information

ALSO, YOU CAN FIND MORE COMPLETE INFORMATION IN THE DOCUMENT "FOUR THINGS ABOUT NEPAL"

Available online in fourthingsaboutnepal/ (password: open)

Please, read carefully the contract conditions: planhimalaya.com/contract-conditions

