
Small and Beautiful: All About Nepal

Nepal is a small and beautiful developing landlocked country in South Asia. Nepal shares border China in the north and share border India in the south, east, and west. The total area of Nepal is 147,181 square kilometers. Nepal is approximately 800 kilometers long and 200 kilometers wide. Among the ten highest mountains in the world, 8 peaks are located in Nepal. The highest peak, Mt. Everest of height 8848 meters is located in Nepal. Nepal is divided into three topographic areas which are the mountainous region, the hilly region, and the Terai region. The mountainous and hilly region is situated in the great Himalayas in the northern part of Nepal and the Terai region is situated in the southern part of Nepal.

The climate of Nepal is tropical in the south , temperate in the hills, and arctic in the high altitude zone (mountainous region). In Nepal, there are five seasons, Summer (March-May), monsoon (June-August), autumn (September-November), and winter (December-February). Winter in the mountainous region is cold and snowy, with temperatures below zero.

The national language of Nepal is Nepali. Nepali is the mother tongue of about 48 percent of the population. It is also spoken as a second language by people of a different ethnic group. Nepali is widely spoken in Bhutan. It is also one of 23 official languages spoken in India. However, Nepali is spoken in cities and taught in schools. The total population of Nepal is 26494504 according to the census 2068. The main religion in Nepal is Hinduism, which is practiced by about 80 percent of the population. Buddhism is another religion that is officially practiced by only about 10 percent of the population. Buddhism has a significant following as Nepal is the birthplace of the Buddha. Other religions followed in Nepal include Christianity and Islam.

Nepal is administratively divided into five development regions, 14 zones, 75 districts, 6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 municipalities, and 460 rural municipalities. It is an ethnically diverse country, with various races, castes, tribes, and rituals. 102 ethnic groups, 92 spoken and religious languages coexist in harmony and united. In Nepal, The administrations follow the Bikram Sambat calendar and This year is 2078 B.S. The Vikram sambat calendar is 57 years ahead of the Gregorian calendar.

Nepal has a cow as a national animal. The national flower of Nepal is the rhododendron and the national bird of Nepal is Lophophorus. The currency of Nepal is Rupee. 1 rupee=100 paisa. Daura suruwal is the name of traditional Nepalese men's clothing. Daura suruwal comprise of a knee-length sleeves shirt that closes at the side, pants. The male wear shoes called docha along with Daura Surwal. Politicians and government officials still use the Daura suruwal daily. Some men may choose to wear a coat or jacket over the suruwal Daura to keep warm. The gunyo cholo is the traditional clothing of female.

Nepal has a flag which is the only non- rectangular national flag in the world. The flag anticipates that the nation will last as long as the sun and moon are on Earth. Red in the flag represents the national flower, the rhododendron, which covers the lower slopes of the Himalayas. Simrik is the national color. The blue-edged triangles reflect the jagged edges of the Himalayas. The blue border also symbolizes the peaceful nature of the country and the hope for continued harmony between the two main religions, Hinduism and Buddhism.

Dal Bhat tarkari (rice, lentils, and vegetable curry) are the main dish eaten throughout Nepal. Tibetan cuisine is popular in mountain areas and cities, Tibetan cuisine is popular. Tea, rice, maize, millet, wheat, sugar cane, jute, and tobacco are crops that are mainly produced in Nepal.

There is a wide range of both modern and traditional popular music in Nepal. Each of the 36 ethnic groups has traditional folk songs in their language, which are still very popular with all ages. Many songs speak of the difficulties of life in Nepal. The most popular sports among Nepalese are Football and Cricket. Foreigners, however, know the country best from their hiking and mountaineering in the great Himalayas.

Nepal was an isolated agricultural society without hospitals, schools, or electrical power until 1951. Since then the infrastructure has been developed but it is very basic. Foreign aid still represents 50 percent of the development budget. In Nepal, Eighty percent of the population is involved in agriculture. Tourism is an important source of income in hiking regions and large cities.

Many religious holidays and festivals are observed in certain regions and by certain castes. Holiday dates can also vary by year and location as a result of the multiple calendars in use, including two solar and three lunar calendars, and different astrological calculations from religious authorities. Holidays may not be respected if religious authorities consider that the date is not conducive to a specific year.

The largest festival, Dashain, is usually held in October. This is a Hindu festival that worships the goddess Durga, but all Nepalese celebrate it across the country. Lasting 15 days, families get together for special meals. Shortly after Dashain, families enjoy the Tihar festival by worshipping the goddess of wealth, Laxmi. Tihar usually coincides with the rice harvest. The children go from house to house singing traditional songs and dancing in the hope that they will get some money. On the last day of the festival, all the men and boys receive a tikka (a mark on the forehead made of flour and the color of rice) from their sisters. In return, they give money or gifts to their sisters.

Another colorful festival is Holi, which is usually celebrated in April. People get together and throw colored powders at each other. Nepal follows a different calendar than the Roman calendar. In Nepal, the Nepalese New Year is a national holiday. Also, Tibetans and Sherpas celebrate Lhosar (Tibetan New Year) in February with colorful dances. People put up new prayer flags, buy clothes, and exchange gifts.

Teej is the festival and ritual especially for Hindu women, which is celebrated on the third day after the new moon in the Nepalese month of Bhadra Sukla Trayodasi (August). Usually, Teej starts from Bhadra Dwadashi (second day after the new moon), on this particular day, married daughters and sisters are invited to Maitighar (parents' house) to celebrate Teej. Janai Purnima or Raksha Bandhan (festival of the sacred thread) occurs on the day of the full moon (Purnima) in the month of Shravan (according to the Hindu calendar), and is a popular Hindu festival in which the sisters tie a sacred thread on the wrist of her brothers to reaffirm the bond of affection and protection and exchange of gifts and sweets.

Maha Shivaratri or 'Night of Shiva', a symbol of the union of Shiva (yin or male energy) and Shakti (yang or female energy) falls on the 14th day of the month of Magha (according to the Hindu lunar calendar) on Krishna. Paksha (the dark phase of the month when the moon is

waning). Bisket Jatra (or Navavarsha, which means 'new year') is celebrated with great pomp and splendor in Bhaktapur Durbar Square, although it is also celebrated in smaller towns with a slight difference in rituals.

Buddha Jayanti (Buddha Purnima and Swanya Punhi) is a celebration of the three major events in the Buddha's life: his birth, his death, and the day he reached nirvana (enlightenment), all of which fall on the same day. Buddha was born in Lumbini, Nepal in 543 BC. C., on a full moon day (Purnima) of the month of Baisakh (according to the Hindu calendar).

Indra Jatra (Yanya Punhi) is the largest and most significant of the festivals in Nepal, as they are several festivals in one. The 8-day show is held to favor Indra, the god of rain and sky, and Bhairab, another form of Lord Shiva, as well as to greet Kumari, the living goddess.

Chhath Parva is celebrated to propitiate Surya, the Sun God. Devotees offer prayers of thanksgiving as the harbinger of life and prosperity, well-being, and longevity. The 4-day celebrations begin on the fourth day after Tihar (in Kartik Shukla Chaturthi according to the Hindu calendar) and are marked by elaborate rituals. Christmas is celebrated in Nepal not only by Christians but also by people of all faiths. In keeping with the spirit of warmth and joy of the season around the world, here too families congregate and gather, Christmas trees are decorated and illuminated, and gifts are exchanged.

Nepal is overwhelmingly patrilineal and patrilocal. Arranged marriages are the norm in the dominant culture. Because marriages forge important social bonds between families, when a child reaches marriageable age, the elders of the family are responsible for finding a suitable partner of the appropriate caste, educational level, and social status. Hindu castes generally do not approve of cross-cousin marriage, which is preferred among some Mongol ethnic groups. But at this time, Love marriage is highly practiced in Nepal.

In Nepal, the usual greeting is to bring the palms of the hands together in front of the chest and say namaste ('I greet the god in you'). Men in urban areas have adopted the custom of shaking hands. In mainstream culture, physical contact between the sexes is not appropriate in public. Although men can be overtly affectionate to men and women to women, even married couples do not display physical affection in public. Some ethnic groups allow more open contact between the sexes. Hospitality is essential. Guests are always offered food and are not allowed to help with food preparation or clean-up after a meal. It is polite to eat only with your right hand. The hand used for eating should not touch anything else until it has been thoroughly washed, as saliva is considered a contaminant. When drinking from a regular water container, people do not touch their lips to the rim. It is an insult to hit someone with a shoe or sandal, point the soles of your feet at someone, and walk over a person.

Nepal consists of eight World Cultural Heritage sites: Bhaktapur, Patan, and Kathmandu Durbar squares; Swyambhunath; Baudhanath; Pashupatinath; Changunarayan, and Lumbini (the birthplace of Lord Buddha) are combined with two world natural heritage sites: Sagarmatha and Chitwan national parks. These natural and cultural heritage sites are distributed in different geographical regions of the country, so they can be the main attractions for tourists visiting those areas.

Nepal has established a very good network of Protected Area with 12 National Parks, 1 Wildlife Reserve, 1 Hunting Reserve, 6 Conservation Areas, and 13 Buffer Zones that extend from the

lowlands of Terai to the high mountains. , covering 23.39% of the country's total land, which contributes to the in situ conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity throughout the country. The conservation efforts undertaken by the Nepalese government are globally popular and highly recognized by international societies.

Mount Everest is a peak in the Himalayas. It is located between Nepal and Tibet, an autonomous region of China. At 8,850 meters (29,035 feet), it is considered the highest point on Earth. In the 19th century, the mountain was named after George Everest, a former Surveyor General of India. Climbing Mount Everest has become a popular expedition for mountain climbers. However, it is a dangerous undertaking.

Lumbini is located in Terai, in the southwestern region of Nepal. It is recognized in the world as the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, the Apostle of Peace. On Vaisakha's full moon day of 623 B.C. , Prince Siddhartha Gautam, the future Buddha was born there when his mother Mahamaya was on her way to Devadaha, his birth home. Lumbini, as a sacred shrine, attracted not only local scholars and pilgrims but also religious-minded people and learned travelers from foreign countries. The Lumbini metropolitan area includes the districts of Rupandehi, Nawalparasi, and Kapilvastu in the southern plains of western Nepal. The 5,260 square kilometer area, with a total population of 2,095,640, is home to many archaeological and religious sites related to the life of Lord Buddha, including his birthplace Lumbini. Among these sites, two are on the provisional World Heritage list: Tilaurakot, the former capital of the Shakyas Kingdom, where Lord Buddha lived as a prince until he was 29 years old; and Ramagrama, which is believed to have a stupa containing one of the eight relics of Lord Buddha.

Janakpur, currently the seat of both the Janakpur area and the Dhanusha district, was the capital of King Janak's former Mithila Kingdom during the Treta Yuga, or period, nearly 12,000 years ago. The name Janakpur is made up of three words in the Devnagari script, ie 'Janak', 'Pur' and 'Dham', which mean 'father', 'village' and 'famous pilgrimage place' respectively. The name of the wise king, Janak, Janakpur, however, also encompasses Mithilanchal or the Mithila region. Janakpur is the only city in the world that has more than 115 ancient ponds of historical and mythological importance. The Mithila region prides itself on having the largest number of ponds in the country. Within Nepalese Mithila, there are about 2,000 villages, each of which has no less than four ponds. The mango orchards of Janakpur could be of great attraction for the visitor. At least half a dozen major festivals like Jhoola, Durga Pooja , Chaath, Mithila Madhya Parikrama, Vivah Panchami, and Ram Navami are celebrated with great fervor in Janakpur.

Chitwan National Park (CNP) is located on Nepal's southern border with India, with typical subtropical vegetation and eastern fauna. It was listed as the country's first National Park in 1973, but in 1977, more land was added to the east and west, making it 932 square kilometers. In recognition of its importance, not only for Nepal but also for the entire world and all humanity, the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) designated the CNP on behalf of the world community as a Natural Heritage Site. The headquarters of the park is in Kasara. The CNP has a diversity of ecosystems, including the Rapti, Reu, and Narayani rivers. The Churia hills rise slowly to the east from 150 m. more than 800m. The western part of the park is made up of the lower but steeper Someshwor Hills. The Park shares its eastern boundary with the Parsa Wildlife Reserve. The CNP is made up of tropical and subtropical forests.