

# TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY ADVENTURE

PRE-TRIP DOSSIER 2012/2013

# NEPAL



Photo tours designed by photographers, for photographers. Advance your photographic skills while travelling through Nepal on a 15 day adventure. We have designed an incredible journey into the remote Annapurnas and the charming villages of Kathmandu Valley. Open to beginners and advanced photographers alike.



GRASSHOPPER  
ADVENTURES

PHOTOGRAPHY  
by Ewen Bell



# ITINERARY

15 days exploring Nepal by private van, light aircraft and friendly porters. Accompanied by professional photographer Ewen Bell - All meals, accommodation and sadus are included.

## Day 1-2 | Kathmandu

We meet in Kathmandu on the evening of day one to orientate and meet the group.

The next day we start early to see the Monkey Temple (Swayambunath) at sunrise and later in the day we visit the Hindu temple and holy men of Pashupatinath and then immerse ourselves in the chaos of Durbar Square. Well find ourselves confronted by Sadu of varying holy authenticity, we'll walk through the Thamel streets where residents buy their produce for dinner and have time to talk about the camera and light in preparation for the journey.

## Day 3 | Bhaktapur

We spend a night in the city of Bhaktapur, one of the former kingdoms in the Kathmandu Valley. "The City of Devotees" still retains its medieval charm and we get a chance to explore the laneways and Newari architecture with afternoon and morning light. The past glory of the Malla rulers are reflected at the towns Durbar Square while traditional industries of pottery and weaving are on show to this day. At dusk and dawn the streets fill with local produce vendors selling their goods to residents, adding an intimate range of subjects for our photography.

## Day 4 | Bandipur

We have a long drive to reach the Pokhara Valley and the hill-top town of Bandipur on the way we follow mighty rivers, stop for a local style lunch of Dahl Bhat and finish in a boutique hotel in Bandipur. These are also Newari people.

## Day 5 | Pokhara

We drive to the town of Pokhara with a few scenic stops on the way. This is our base for preparing for the Annapurnas ahead, and we make arrangements to ensure all travellers have warm clothing and snug sleeping bags. You may wish to shop for a warm jacket or gloves for the cool weather ahead, and Pokhara is wall to wall with vendors to sell you some outdoor gear. We'll enjoy a tandoori meal and fresh fruit juices. We stay in the Fish Tail Resort and hope for a clear morning so we can view the Fish Tail Peak (Machupuche) from the hotel.

### Days 6-7 | Marpha

The day starts early with a spectacular flight into Jomsom, a village in the Annapurna mountains of Nepal located at 2800m. We spend two nights to the south in the charming town of Marpha to explore a few villages, moraines and scenic locations. These few days also help us to adjust to the mountain air and altitude. The pace is easy for these two days, but there are opportunities for short hikes for those who want to stretch the legs. Accommodation for these two days is clean but simple, taking advantage of some local guesthouses that offer good food and great access to photographic inspiration. Jomsom sits at 2750m of altitude, but our villages to the south are only 2600m high.

### Days 8-9 | Kagbeni

We head further into the former Mustang Kingdom where the landscape presents ever changing views of the Annapurnas and their peaks. Dhaulagiri and Nilgiri present themselves in various facades as we head north from Jomsom. Getting to Kagbeni is a tough day of jeeps, a short hike and some more jeeps. The trail is better suited to mountain trekkers than photographers, so hold onto your pack and enjoy the ride. Once we arrive in Kagbeni we'll have some stunning sunrise opportunities, colourful vistas and a Tibetan monastery to photograph. Kagbeni sits at an altitude of 2750m.

### Day 10-11 | Muktinath

This is where things get a little tougher. Muktinath is where the jeep trail ends and you have to trek to go any further. It's also at an altitude of 3800m so we have to go easy on the thin air. The jeep ride is about an hour and it's rough and tumble all the way. We spend just one night here so we can explore the sacred temple that attracts both Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims. The most prominent shrine is a Vishnu temple where 108 spouts, fashioned in the shape of cows heads, pour forth water that is considered to be holy. There are great landscape vistas to be enjoyed at sunrise, and also sunset if the skies remain clear.

### Days 12 | Jomsom

We spend the morning visiting local villages around Muktinath, then return to Jomsom after lunch for a single night with hot showers and hot food. We have a favourite guesthouse here that serves great fresh crushed apple juice, fluffy pancakes and potato & cheese mo-mos. We rest up before flying out very early the next morning, but also plan to get one last chance to shoot the peaks of Nilgiri at dusk and dawn as Jomsom provides excellent views of these ranges.



### Day 13-14 | Kathmandu

We have a travel day with two flights before arriving back in Kathmandu for lunch. We'll make a visit to Patan in the afternoon to explore the palace and heritage rich museum, or just wander the streets and sample 'ras mulai' from vendors.

The next day we start early to see a small Newari village beyond Kathmandu where chickens are sacred and goats trample the stupas. We finish the day with sunset at the Tibetan Buddhist temple of Boudhanath before a farewell dinner.

### Day 15 | Departure

On the final day we head to the airport at Kathmandu and fly home. Your transfer to the airport is included and we recommend you arrange flights to depart around lunchtime or soon after.





## THIS ADVENTURE

A unique journey for a very small group of photographers through a diverse country of landscapes and cultures. We help you to get the right sunset, to access the most idyllic wilderness, to meet diverse ethnic groups and to make sure you have the time to explore your craft in the process. You won't be worried about travel, meals or accommodation - it's taken care of for you.

Secondly we present a series of photographic themes which introduce key concepts and techniques which will help you improve your photography. Each session will discuss a topic and outline associated techniques. A set of technical notes are provided to accompany these sessions. Your travel itinerary has been developed in conjunction with the session themes, so you can immediately practise the skills you learn.

We will also encourage people to share their work during the trip. Review is very important and can greatly assist the development of your own personal style. Throughout the trip you will be free to consult with your photographic guide as well. You are not confined to the sessions to talk about your work and ideas! This will be a 17 day photographic immersion with like minded people, a tour designed by photographers for photographers.





## WHO TRAVELS WITH US

Our photographic journeys appeal to both the young and old, the experienced and novice. Most tours are made up of people aged 25-65, and occasionally older or younger still. It doesn't matter what your skills and interest in photography are, you will enjoy sharing a creative and immersive experience with like minded people. You can read feedback from our past travellers by visiting [www.ewenbell.com](http://www.ewenbell.com)





# TAKE BETTER PHOTOS

The photographic themes designed into this trip are aimed at people with a fundamental knowledge of their camera, but who want to learn more. A basic knowledge of aperture, focal length, depth of field and exposure is useful, but not essential. We will even help you learn the technical use of your camera, if that's what you need. For more experienced photographers the itinerary alone will be an inspiration for your artistic output, plus the chance to share stories with an award winning travel journalist.

People of many different skill levels and ambition will be gathered for the journey, so expect to be in the company of diversity. This tour will appeal to anyone who wants to immerse themselves in the process of cultivating skills and exploring cultures. You will have a chance to discuss techniques and principles, then immediately go out and practise. This will not give you a qualification, but hopefully will give you confidence and direction to take better photos





## ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

We recommend the use of Digital SLR cameras for this journey, but you are not restricted from using any type of camera you may have, including conventional film SLRs and compact cameras. Digital SLR cameras offer excellent manual controls and give us the ability to review our work at the end of each day - a valuable part of this experience. A minimum of 4Gig of memory cards should accompany your camera, plus an additional 100Gig or greater of external storage (hard drive or laptop).

We also recommend that you carry a wide angle lens for general use and occasional landscape opportunities. Tripods are not used by the instructing photographer and are not required for this tour.

A good quality day pack will be an essential part of the packing list. Crumpler and Lowe make excellent packs that are designed for camera equipment. Ideally your pack should be comfortable, spacious, and practical. The traditional type of 'over-the-shoulder' camera bag is not very suitable for travel photography, a day-pack is better.

Finally, full travel insurance and coverage for your 'additional items' is absolutely necessary. Standard travel insurance is generally inadequate to cover the value of your equipment unless you stipulate your equipment when buying insurance. It costs very little, so don't be caught short. Please check very carefully that you are fully covered and have completed all necessary details to qualify for suitable coverage.





## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

At all times during our journey we need to be mindful of how our presence can impact on the cultures we wish to observe. Travel photography carries an even greater burden to ensure that you respect cultural beliefs and personal privacy. We never take photos of people without their express consent; instead we will learn techniques to enable you to gain more intimate connections.



# GO SLOW

The most unique aspect of this style of travel is the emphasis on taking the travel slowly, to have time in fewer places and see more of those places. We travel by van across the province, free to stop and take photos when something presents itself.

This is not a package tour designed for the masses, it's a photographic journey designed for photographers, by photographers.







## YOUR GUIDE

Ewen Bell is a travel junkie and recognises the unique charms that Nepal has to offer the photographer, both for beautiful images and because the people of Nepal are so welcoming and kind.

Travel photography is his calling but Ewen has also been practising commercial photography since 1990 with experience in wildlife, travel, commercial and portraiture. Ewen's work is published in many travel brochures each year and appears in regular travel publications including the Escape Weekend editions across Australia, The Sydney Morning Herald and national magazines including Vacations & Travel, backpacker Essentials and Holidays for Couples.

Ewen was also chosen by the ASTW as their 2007 Australian Travel Photographer of the Year, and in 2008 won the award for Best Australian Image. 2009 he won two prizes in the M.I.L.K. awards.

Ewen has spent many years travelling in Asia and has a thorough appreciation for the cultural and historical context for his photographic journeys. He is genuinely passionate about Nepal and makes several trips to the region every year. Since 2006 ewen has led on average three photo tours per year, choosing to run a small number of trips so that he retains a keen passion for the experience.



# WHY SHOOT DIGITAL

For the purpose of this journey a digital camera is the most suitable equipment to carry. We will save the debate about film vs digital for the journey, there will be plenty of time to discuss opinions! Our trip is a chance to develop new skills and the immediate feedback offered by digital cameras is invaluable. The quality, manual control and practicality of modern Digital SLRs make them perfect for travel photography.

Your instructor will also be carrying a laptop computer for the journey, so there will be ample opportunity to review your photographs and study your image in detail.





## DIVERSITY IN NEPAL

Cultural, Religious and Geographic Diversity are the essence of this trip. Few places in the world offer a chance to wash your feet in the Trishuli River one day and then views of snow capped peaks the next. From the Newari people of Kathmandu Valley, the holy traditions of pilgrims at Muktinath, the vibrance of Hinduism in Kathmandu and the Tibetan people of the Annapurnas. This is really three journeys in one, an unusual trip that is demanding on your camera kit and pushes your fitness just a little by venturing into the mountains.







## PRE-TRIP ESSENTIALS

### Packing

Choosing the right clothing is very important. You want to have enough clothes to stay warm or cool yet not over pack. Usually you will have warm days and cold nights. A warm jacket either fleece or down can be better for the evening. Long underwear and wool socks are good for warmth too. We encourage people to bring a light pair of pants and shorts for hiking. Sunscreen and glasses are a must. Most gear can be purchased in Kathmandu or Pokhara at one of the many outdoor gear shops. Pack comfortable shoes too, as we will be walking a lot.

Before the tour departs you will be provided with a detailed Pre-Departure Guide which lists suggested items for packing and other useful information. This is a demanding trip for both luggage and camera equipment, covering snow capped mountains, lowland plains and everything in between.

### Weather

The weather in late February to early March should be good. Clear views make this time a year one of the most important seasons to visit Nepal. It might be sunny during the day and cold at night, especially at the higher altitudes. Sudden rain storms or snow flurries are always a possibility. Be prepared!

### Great Guides

We are prepared for any emergency situation. Our guides are trained in first aid and can deal with most of the basic ailments that occur at altitude, in the jungles or downtown Kathmandu. Every traveller must have full travel insurance before coming to Nepal. If an emergency occurs, we will evacuate you to one of the International clinics in Kathmandu and contact your travel insurance for you.

### Altitude

Our routes are carefully planned to allow for proper acclimatization in order to minimise the risk of adverse reactions. Quick changes in altitude can lead to acute altitude symptoms, so we avoid that entirely and take the slow path to higher ground over several days. During the transition you may feel some effects of altitude such as breathlessness, lethargy and mild headaches. Maintaining adequate fluid intake and going slowly is the key to handling these conditions.

Your tour leaders do not use specific drugs to aid with altitude, such as Diamox, but please consult your doctor to discuss whether such medication is suitable for you. If you are taking such medication please be sure to advise the tour leaders so they can be prepared for contraindications of such medicine.

Altitude sickness can be a worry for many people. Most symptoms are not cause for worry and are usually just a nuisance. We take great care to design this journey to ensure you have a gradual and comfortable ascent.



## HOW TO BOOK



Simply visit the website for Grasshopper Adventures and fill out the online booking form to reserve a place. Once they have received payment of the deposit your place on the trip is confirmed. You can make payment with your credit card or direct bank transfer...

[www.grasshopperadventures.com](http://www.grasshopperadventures.com)

You can also find out more about this trip, the photographer Ewen Bell or other photo tours by emailing Ewen at [ewen@ewenbell.com](mailto:ewen@ewenbell.com) or go online to his website...

[www.ewenbell.com](http://www.ewenbell.com)