

#bringyoursmiletonepal



Gourmet Nepal

13 day culinary exploration and "cook book tour" to raise money for Nepal

The Plan

Shellie and Shasee are your two gourmet girls leading this culinary exploration of Nepal. Shasee Hirachan is a local Thakali lady who cooks and cares for guests when they visit the Annapurnas. Her knowledge of food and recipes in Nepal is detailed and delicious. Shellie Froidevaux is a Melbourne food blogger better known as Iron Chef Shellie, and she'll be making her first visit to Nepal on this trip. Shellie will gather recipes and photos from the journey to publish into a cook book that can be shared after the journey.

By joining this trip you are raising money to help people in Nepal rebuild their homes and their lives, and helping them to work through tourism.

OCTOBER 26TH 2015

Day 1+2: Kathmandu

Arrival day, meet the group and discover the charms of Dal Bhat. We start our journey on the streets of Kathmandu and visiting the biggest produce market in the country at Kalimati. The street food of Kathmandu is impressive and we seek out the sweet treats such as Ras Mulai along the way, indulge in the omelette carts and finish in the evening with an exploration of Momos in Lazimpat.

Day 3+4: Pokhara

We make the winding drive to Pokhara and edge of the Annapurnas. Along the way we discover the river fish traditions at Mugling and sample one of the best Dal Bhat truck stops in Nepal. Once we reach Pokhara we have very comfortable lodgings and easy access to some great tandoori kitchens.

Day 5+6: Kagbeni

A short flight into the hills and we find ourselves at the low steps of the Annapurnas. An hours drive from the airstrip at Jomsom is the scenic town of Kagbeni and the entrance to the Kingdom of Mustang. We explore the Tibetan kitchens here and discover the charms of yak cheese. We also walk across the valley to the hamlet of Tiri and enjoy views of the snow capped peaks from the monastery.

(guesthouse accommodation in Kagbeni is basic but clean, sleeping bags are provided for our comfort)

Day 7+8: Muktinath

This is our highest point along the journey, a breathtaking 3600m altitude matched only by the scenery. Our journey to Muktinath is slow and gentle so you won't have trouble with altitude. This is also home to our culinary guide, Shasee, and we'll have two days of cooking from her kitchen before saying goodbye to her. The township is the site of one of the most important Hindu sites, so we'll visit the temple at Muktinath and leave some prayer flags to wish our loved ones well. (guesthouse accommodation in Muktinath is basic but clean, sleeping bags are provided for our comfort)

Day 9: Jomsom

We descend the road back to our airstrip at Jomsom, and spend the night before an early morning flight back to lower ground. Our favourite guest house in Jomsom is run by a lovely grandma who makes amazing apple pancakes so fluffy you could use them for a pillow. Apples in this part of the Annapurnas have proved an amazing bonus to the economy, and cuisine. Take care with the apple brandy however, at least until we land back in Pokhara. (guesthouse accommodation in Jomsom is basic but clean, sleeping bags are provided for our comfort)

Day 10+11+12: Kathmandu

We fly back to Kathmandu from Jomsom and enjoy two days of cooking school with the charming Amrit and his family. He is a personal friend of ours and is very proud of his wife's recipes. We'll have two full mornings of cooking classes combined with lazy afternoons visiting some amazing cultural sites around Kathmandu.

Day 13: Departure

If you feel you want to stay on and visit more of Kathmandu, or volunteer for some aid programs, it will be easy to extend your accommodation at our group hotel. We ask that you add on time in Kathmandu at the end instead of at the start.









Cook Book Tour

This gourmet adventure is a little bit special because Shellie Froidevaux will not only be exploring the culinary landscape of Nepal, but collating material for a special cook book to share after the journey. Shellie is a master of food styling and photography, and knows a thing or two about recipe development as well. By joining this tour you help make this cook book project possible.

The book will be released as a digital copy for free, a showcase of culture and cuisine in Nepal to encourage other travellers to visit and enjoy. It will also be a handy memento for all the passengers on this Gourmet Nepal journey to remember their adventure.

The tour itself is designed around three kinds of cooking in Nepal, featuring recipes and kitchens from the Newari, Thakali and Tibetan people.

The itinerary has been designed to give you a sense of how the cuisine fits into the landscape, from the fertile valley of Kathmandu to the barren glacial moraines of the Annapurnas.

Along the way you will be employed by locals to enjoy their local tea, a similar brew to the Indian Masala Chai, but locally called Nepali Chia. Yes that's not a typo, they call it Chia instead of Chai. The national dish of Nepal is Dal Bhat, and we'll be exploring immense variety of how they prepare and present this basic equation of lentils and rice.

Variety is the key to this gourmet experience. Delicious variety.



About Ewen

My name is Ewen Bell, and Bring Your Smile to Nepal is my personal project. This is my way of giving something back to the people of Nepal, and while I know it is not nearly enough I also know that it will make a difference to the loves of many. That is all I can hope for.

I am a travel photographer, which is one way of saying I have no useful life skills. I can't build houses or repair motorcycles, so my way of helping Nepal is through this campaign and raising a few dollars.

I have included a selfie of myself in front of a chorten in the Annapurnas in an effort to convince you that I am an outdoors type who likes to climb mountains. The truth is that I'm a dedicated traveller but rather fond of basic comforts, and climbing up hills is my least favourite thing in the world. Dining in a small village with sumptuous local foods is easily my preferred experience in the mountains :)

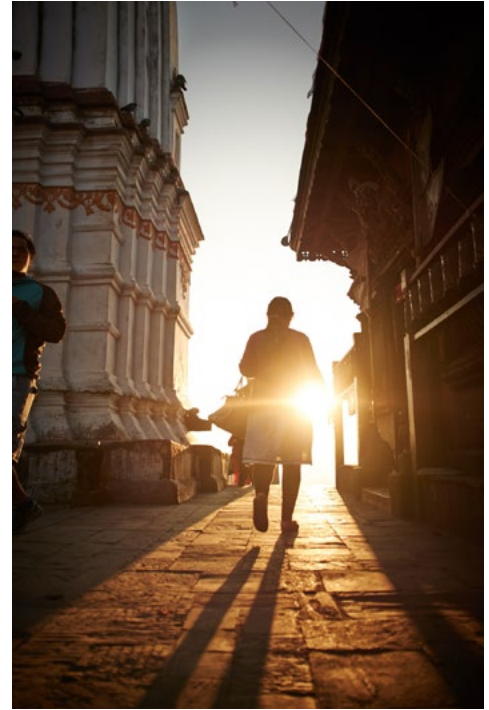
I am giving up several months of my life this year to try and raise money, and I feel good about it. I am lucky to work for myself and have the freedom to walk away from my work and pursue this goal. I realise most people are not so fortunate, but hopefully there are enough who can join me for two weeks in Nepal instead.

I will be leading this gourmet tour across Nepal, with the help of Shellie and Shasee. I have wanted to design this trip for many years, but now seems like the perfect time to celebrate a little of the beauty of Nepal while we encourage the rest of the world to come visit as well.











Bring Your Smile to Nepal

Just a quick reminder about why I'm doing this.

SHARING IS CARING

It has amazed me that so few travellers have discovered the charms of Nepal. The blend of cultures and depth of kindness I find on my travels is unmatched anywhere else in the world. All I ask of you is to consider Nepal for your future travels, and share the idea with others.

If you have been to Nepal before you will already know what I mean. You may even consider making time to return again. But please share the word, share the love.

Many people will already have plans to visit Nepal and may be thinking about changing those plans. Please reconsider, please continue your plans to visit. Most of Nepal is undamaged from the earthquakes, but the tourism industry is devastated. You can do a lot of good simply by being there and sharing your smile.

If your tour company has cancelled trips to Nepal, please email them and ask them to reconsider, for the sake of the local guides and hotels who need the business.

In addition to adding to the local employment this campaign hopes to raise additional funds to go towards rebuilding projects. All profits from these tours I am running are being donated for the benefit of rebuilding in Nepal.

My goal is to raise a total of \$20,000.



THE SHORT STORY

My connection with Nepal covers a dozen trips in recent years to lead photography tours, and I know just how critical the tourism industry is to the people of Kathmandu, the Annapurnas and other regions. I heard news of the April earthquake within minutes, and have been in daily contact with friends in Kathmandu since that time.

Some parts of Nepal were utterly devastated, but most of Nepal is untouched and safe for travellers. Indeed the biggest impact for survivors of the earthquake will be the economic downturn from tourism. Empty hotels and unemployed tour guides will make the next 12 months incredibly hard for locals.

My travels in Nepal have been a big part of my career, having helped me to advance my photography but also learn deeper respect for humanity. I owe a debt of gratitude to the people of the Nepal. It is time for me to repay their kindness.

Tony Wheeler, the founder of Lonely Planet, elegantly described his debt to the people of South East Asia and Sri Lanka following the 2004 Tsunami. He donated \$1million of his own money and instigated a policy to encourage all staff to spend a day a week working with charities of their choice.

He did not spend money advertising his generosity, or use the act of charity to promote a brand. Tony's generosity was driven by the need to help. That's all that really matters.







Where the Money Goes

There are three reasons I'm running this trip to Nepal. Firstly to raise awareness and encourage other travellers to visit. Second to create a little work for the families I work with in Kathmandu and the Annapurnas so they have some income this year. The third reason is to directly raise money for rebuilding. ALL profits from this journey will go towards rebuilding and helping people in need.

CARE AUSTRALIA / \$20,000

The majority of the fund raising will benefit the work of Care Australia and their efforts to assist with rebuilding in Nepal. Care have been operating in Nepal for 35 years and have a very established program of community support and development. 80% of the staff are local Nepali people and they have an excellent overview of where the money can best be spent to achieve the most good. I have a personal connection with people at Care Australia and hence a high level of trust that in sending a little money their way we can make a positive impact on the lives of many people.

My goal is to raise \$20,000 across the two tours. To achieve this I am donating my time to design, run and promote the tours. If we fill every seat on the trips then we will achieve the target. If not, we will still raise considerable money. Every little bit helps.



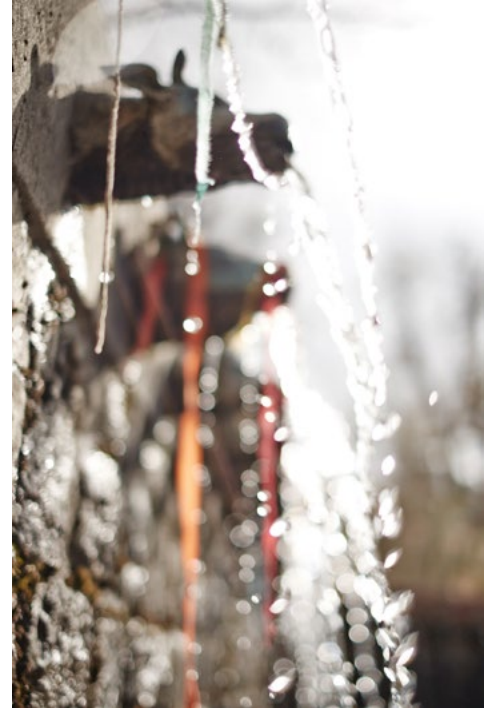
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TARUKA SCHOOL / \$200pp

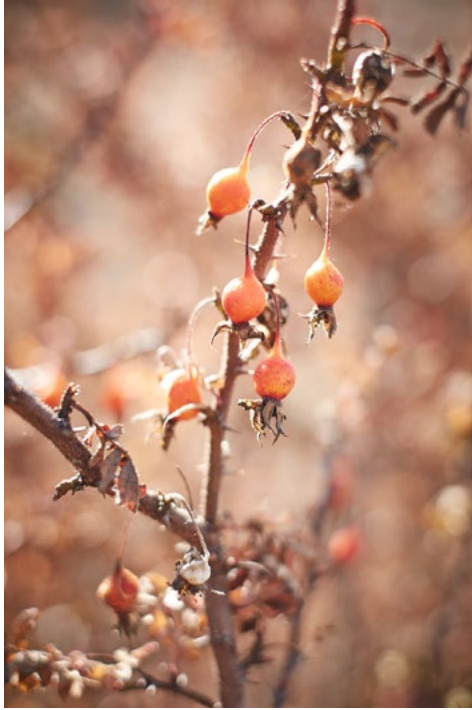
Separate from the donation to Care Australia, US\$200 from every passenger who joins a tour is going directly to a school rebuilding project in the village of Taruka. This is on the edge of the Lantang region that was so heavily affected by the earthquakes. It is a personal commitment from my guides to help get the community back on its feet, and they are donating their time and effort to rebuild the school house.

Across these fund raising tours (Mustang Motorcycles and Gourmet Nepal) we aim for make a donation of US\$5,000 to the school. It's not all the money they need, but it will make a big difference. The funds are administered personally by the owner of Makalu Adventures in Kathmandu, a personal friend of mine, they are not going through a government agency or NGO.











How to Book

Simply visit the link below and sign up for the tour. A non-refundable deposit of \$1,500 is required to confirm your place.

ewenbell.com/nepalgourmet

Dates

- October 26 to November 7, 2015

Price

- US\$4,200 excluding your flight to Nepal
- Upgrade to a single room for additional US\$400

Group Size

- Maximum of 16 people

Not Included

- Flight to Nepal
- Entry Visa for Nepal
- Drinks
- Tipping

Included

- All meals and Accommodation based on twin share
- Transfer to and from Kathmandu International Airport
- All permits and fees for access into Annapurnas and temples
- Sleeping bags and towels for guesthouse stays
- Cooking class fees in Kathmandu
- Western guide experienced in Nepal

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