

Kathmandu Guide

Things To Do

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Getting Around

It is possible to get around Kathmandu by foot, but it is not always a pleasant walk & you may want to consider a public transportation for anything more than wandering around a specific area. Rickshaws can be found around the tourist area of Thamel and taxis are everywhere. Negotiate on a price before you get in a taxi or Rickshaw. If you can't agree, ask another driver. Prices go up after dark & in less busy areas. Taxis are easy to find; they park near all major streets & have fare-meters. After 10pm it can be very difficult to find taxis away from central tourist areas or major hotels.

Before heading out into Kathmandu you will need a map. You should be able to pick up a free Kathmandu Valley street map from Kathmandu International Airport. This will prove invaluable for getting around town.

Places to Visit

1. Durbar Square and the Hanuman Dhoka Museum

The Patan Museum in Patan Durbar Square is filled with Hindu and Buddhist relics, whilst Hanuman Dhoka Museum has more displays of royal items. The museum itself is housed in a very old Palace and a guide is recommended for you to get the most from your visit. Kathmandu Durbar Square is a cluster of temples and palaces and has been listed as one of the eight Cultural World Heritage sites by UNESCO. The Kumari Bahal on the southern side of the square, one of the must-sees in Kathmandu, is the residence of Kumari Devi, the Living Goddess.

2. Freak Street - On the left lane after the entrance to Durbar Square. Here you will find a lot of hippies, along with several cafés, restaurants, tea shops, recycled goods and tattoo/piercing parlours.

3. Pashupati Nath temple - The Pashupati Nath Temple is a Hindu Pilgrimage site. If you are not a Hindu, you will not be allowed in the premises. However, there is still a lot to see in the area. Pashupati is also the place where most cremations take place. The royals to the locals are cremated in these premises, and as gory as it can get, a lot of people come to view these cremation practices. If you are looking for a unique experience that is quite normal in the lives of most Nepali's, a visit to this temple is a must. Take your cameras!

4. Stroll the ghats of the Bagmati - A decidedly un-touristy destination, this mile-long river frontage is home to all manner of crumbling temples and neglected artifacts, as well as the shanties of Kathmandu's outcasts.

5. Hang out at Pashupatinath - Often likened to Varanasi in India, Nepal's holiest Hindu pilgrimage site is a time-warp enclave of exotic temples, cremation ghats, ritual bathers and charismatic holy men.

6. Circumambulate Boudhanath - The spiritual center of Tibetan exiles in Nepal, the great stupa of Boudhanath attracts the entire spectrum of Buddhist seekers, from prostrating pilgrims to trust-fund dharma bums.

7. Climb up to Swayambhunath - The third of the valley's main "naths" (holy places), this 2000-year-old stupa-set atop a conical hill overlooking the city-is the most profound expression of Buddhist symbolism in Nepal, and the centerpiece of the local creation myth.

8. Visit the Patan Museum - Housed in a wing of the splendid Patan Durbar, Nepal's newest and most tasteful museum does honor to Patan, the city of artisans located just across the river from Kathmandu.

9. Thamel - this is the main tourist destination in Kathmandu. Thamel can be very crowded and is full of shops selling a wide variety of goods. Again, there are many bars and restaurants and is a good place to hang out in the evenings or at the week-end.

10. The Garden of Dreams - this is at the entrance to Thamel. The garden has been recently renovated and is one of the most beautiful sights you'll see in Kathmandu. There is also a good restaurant overlooking the Garden.

11. Pote Bazaar & Indra Chowk - Pote Bazaar is one of Kathmandu's ancient markets and a good place to buy gifts. Indra Chowk adjoins Pote Bazaar and is a local market where you will find all kind of things old & new. Ason is another place to go shopping - it is one of Kathmandu's oldest markets and one of the most crowded places you will find.

12. Go to Swayambhu Nath Temple - A Buddhist pilgrimage site on top of a hill. Monks are sprawled across the premises, and you will hear ancient chanting's and prayers offered at most times of the day. The Swayambhu Nath is also a good place to get an aerial view of Kathmandu. Another sightseeing delight is the Boudhanath temple, which is not as far as Swayambhu Nath. The Boudhanath temple makes for a lot of postcard photos in Nepal!