

# NEPAL - A MOUNTAIN BIKER'S DREAM



Nepal has long been famous for its history and its ethnic way of life. Tourists have been coming here to admire the breathtaking scenery and traditional villages set in the shadow of the mighty Himalayas. However, for those with a sense of fun and danger, there is a novel way of exploring Nepal; travel by mountain bike.

The sport was first introduced here in the late 1980s, and with the emergence of more and more companies offering this amazing experience, many sponsors have also decided to invest in this branch of adventure tourism. The amazingly diverse terrain and varied climate, when combined with the marvellous scenery, offers the experience of a lifetime. The Kathmandu valley is a great starting point. There are many trails and backroads, dirt roads leading through interesting towns, past temples and Buddha stupas. One exceptional place to visit on the way is the traditional Newari village.

In this area, a good map is essential, and though not all are reliable, the Schneider or Nelles Verlag maps are the most respected. Also, many trails are very new, therefore not depicted in the maps, and so tourists sometimes have to rely on their sense of direction. If you get lost, you can always ask a local person.

A classic off-road adventure is the popular Scar Road, and another route is a two-day circular tour to Dhulikhel to the east of Kathmandu. Once on the road, there are many ancient sites to see, such as the townships of Bhaktapur and Panauti.

For those who fear getting lost or simply do not have the time to plan everything themselves, there are various companies that offer special group trips. The packages include all necessary equipment, an experienced guide, and if needed, a car, and this can turn a visit to Nepal into an experience of a lifetime.

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