

# New Trail through the Most Culturally Diverse Areas of Nepal

Sandwiched between the up and coming economic titans, China and India, Nepal is an immensely beautiful country. The tiny Himalayan nation is increasingly becoming a popular tourist destination due to its awe-inspiring natural scenery – including Mount Everest with the world’s highest mountain ecosystem – and enchanting ethnic communities.



Annually, more than half a million visitors come to Nepal, with the majority engaging in adventure and culture based activities like trekking, rafting, mountaineering, wildlife watching and cultural tours. Most tourists congregate along the popular trekking routes of the mountainous areas of Annapurna, Everest and Langtang as well as in the city hubs of Kathmandu and Pokhara and in the lowlands of Chitwan National Park. However, several new tourist destinations have arrived on the market with a focus more on the remarkable culture, beauty and rural lifestyle of the mid hills.

The Indigenous Peoples Trail (IP Trail) is a newly indicated product that lies entirely in the Mahabharat range and is just 100 km east of the capital city Kathmandu. This route was developed by the Ramechhap Local Economic Development (LED) Forum with the support of UN’s International Labor Organization (ILO) to provide access to pristine areas outside of the well-established, more commercial trekking routes while providing a source of income for impoverished communities.

The trail is an original branded that heralds the indigenous people of Nepal, and presents an incomparable, natural blend of cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversities. Each community along the way has unique features and the village vistas combine scenic landscape with breathtaking Himalayan panoramas. In fact, the trail boasts spectacular mountain views along nearly the whole route and particularly from Sailung viewpoint, which offers a panorama of some 400 km including the Annapurna Range in the west to Manaslu, Ganesh, Langtang, Jugal, Rolwaling and Everest regions in the north and east.



Against this magnificent Himalayan backdrop, visitors gain memorable insight into the culture and lifestyle of at least six indigenous communities: Sherpa, Newar, Thami, Tamang, Yolmo and Majhis. Among these groups, the Thami and Majhi are rarely encountered on trekking routes anywhere.

Home-stay accommodation and cultural performances offer closer contact with Nepali hospitality and greater insight into ethnic lifestyles that cannot be found along the more developed trekking venues where interactions can be more commercially oriented. The predominant religions include Buddhism and Hinduism as well as animism, and the practice of these faiths is ever present in the form of daily rituals. Along the route are temples, stupas, monasteries and sacred caves to be visited.

The highest elevation reached is 3146 m making the trail an all season trek (however, March to June and September to January are the best seasons). It is a relatively soft top-down, gentle trek fit for all categories of trekkers and particularly suited to visitors wishing to avoid extreme high altitudes within a week or less of holiday. In sum, the serenely peaceful trail is a unique blend of cultural tourism in a strikingly beautiful area.

{%C5,6%}

**By Ram Chandra Sedai** ([sedairam@yahoo.com](mailto:sedairam@yahoo.com)) & **Alonzo Lyons** ([shakaharee@gmail.com](mailto:shakaharee@gmail.com))

Date: 2010-02-22

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-traveling-nepal-the-indigenous-peoples-trail-article1120>