

Annapurna Sanctuary Trek - 15 Days

Quick Facts

Duration:	15
Max Altitude:	4130
Best Season:	Sept - Nov & March - May
Group Size:	15
Accommodation:	4 Star hotel and Tea House
Route:	Kathmandu to Kathmandu
Difficulty:	Moderate

Trip Overview

The Annapurna Sanctuary Trek, also called the Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) Trek, takes you into one of the most dramatic natural amphitheatres on Earth. Ringed by ten peaks above 6,000 metres, including Annapurna I (8,091m), Annapurna South (7,219m), Machapuchare (6,993m), and Hiunchuli (6,441m), the base camp at 4,130m feels like standing at the centre of the Himalaya itself.

This guide is written from on-the-ground experience guiding and trekking this route across multiple seasons. Every figure, altitude, walking hours, and distances reflect what you will actually encounter on the trail, not averages pulled from a desk.

How Long Is the Annapurna Sanctuary Trek?

The standard trek takes 7 to 12 days, depending on your starting point, pace, and whether you add the Poon Hill detour. Trekkers starting from Nayapul and following the direct route to ABC and back typically complete it in 7 to 9 days. Those including the Ghorepani and Poon Hill detour, strongly recommended for first-timers, should plan for 10 to 12 days. If you are prone to altitude sickness or prefer a relaxed pace with buffer days built in, allow 12 to 14 days. A common source of confusion: some websites quote 15 to 20 days for this trek. That figure refers to a combined extended circuit that links the Sanctuary route with a broader Annapurna region loop a separate undertaking entirely. The Sanctuary Trek on its own is 7 to 12 days.



Annapurna Sanctuary Trek Route Overview

The trail is well-marked and covered by detailed trekking maps issued by the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). The two most common starting points are Nayapul, reached by road from Pokhara in roughly 1.5 hours, and Ghandruk, accessible by jeep for those looking to shorten the approach.

The main route follows this sequence of waypoints: Nayapul (1,070m) to Tikhedhunga (1,540m), then up to Ghorepani (2,860m), across to Tadapani (2,610m), down into Chomrong (2,170m), and through Sinuwa, Bamboo, and Dovan before climbing through Himalaya Hotel (2,920m) and Deurali (3,230m) to Machapuchare Base Camp (3,700m) and finally Annapurna Base Camp at 4,130m. The return follows the same path, typically taking two to three days for the descent. Total round-trip distance from Nayapul is approximately 75 to 80 kilometres.

How Hard Is the Annapurna Sanctuary Trek?

The trek is rated moderate, but in Himalayan trekking, that word deserves unpacking. Most days involve five to seven hours of walking, with the push to Machapuchare Base Camp or ABC extending to eight hours. Daily elevation gain on ascent days typically runs between 400 and 700 metres. The steepest section on the entire route is the climb from Tikhedhunga to Ghorepani, approximately 1,300 metres of sustained ascent over 10 to 12 kilometres that will test even experienced trekkers on tired legs.

The fitness benchmark is straightforward: if you can comfortably hike five to six hours with a light daypack on uneven terrain, you are ready for this trek. Mountaineering experience is not required. Good hiking boots broken in before departure, and a pair of trekking poles will serve you far better than raw gym fitness alone.

Altitude sickness deserves special mention. The sanctuary sits in a bowl with no easy lateral escape route above Chomrong. If you develop a persistent headache, nausea, or dizziness above 3,500m, descend immediately, do not push on to ABC, hoping it will pass. Building in a rest day at Chomrong and at Machapuchare Base Camp is not optional if you are showing any symptoms. Travel insurance with helicopter evacuation cover is strongly recommended for every trekker on this route.

Annapurna Sanctuary Trek vs Annapurna Circuit Trek

Both routes [explore the Annapurna massif](#) but deliver very different experiences. The Sanctuary Trek is shorter, more concentrated, and focuses almost entirely on the high-altitude mountain environment. At 75 to 80 kilometres over 7 to 12 days, with a maximum altitude of 4,130m, it gives you deep immersion in the inner sanctuary without requiring an extended time commitment.

The [Annapurna Circuit](#) is a fundamentally different adventure. Covering 160 to 230 kilometres over 14 to 21 days, it crosses the Thorong La Pass at 5,416m and passes through the semi-arid Mustang landscape, Thakali villages, and the dramatic descent into Jomsom terrain and cultures the Sanctuary route never touches. The Circuit is rated moderate to strenuous and demands a higher baseline fitness level, particularly for the pass crossing.

In terms of permit costs, both require the ACAP permit (NPR 3,000, approximately USD 22) and a TIMS card (NPR 2,000, approximately USD 15), obtained at the Nepal Tourism Board office in Pokhara. Crowd levels are similar in peak season, though the Circuit's sheer length means you will encounter far fewer trekkers on its outer sections. If your priority is getting deep into a high-altitude mountain amphitheater as efficiently as possible, choose the Sanctuary. If you have three weeks and want the full breadth of Annapurna's landscapes and cultures, the Circuit



rewards every extra day.

Annapurna Base Camp Trek for Beginners

The ABC Trek is one of the most beginner-friendly high-altitude routes in the Himalayas, but preparation makes the difference between a rewarding experience and a miserable one. Begin physical training six to eight weeks before departure. Long walks of three to four hours with a loaded daypack on hilly terrain are the most specific preparation you can do. Stair climbing builds exactly the muscle groups the trail demands.

On gear, the essentials are trekking boots that are broken in before you arrive (blisters at altitude are a serious problem), trekking poles for the steep ascents and descents, and a layering system that covers every condition from humid gorge at 2,000m to wind-exposed camp at 4,130m. A sleeping bag rated to -5°C is worth bringing teahouses provide blankets but nights at ABC reach -10°C in the winter months. At higher elevations, water purification tablets are essential, and headlamps are non-negotiable given the pre-dawn Poon Hill start.

Two permits are required, and both are obtained in Pokhara at the Tourism Board office on Damside before you reach the trailhead: the ACAP permit at NPR 3,000 (approximately USD 22) and the TIMS card at NPR 2,000 (approximately USD 15).

The best seasons are October to November for maximum visibility and stable weather, and March to April when rhododendron forests bloom in full colour along the lower trails. December to February is quiet and cold. ABC can have significant snow, but perfectly doable for well-prepared trekkers. The monsoon months of June to September bring leeches, landslide risk, and poor mountain visibility, and are not recommended for most trekkers.

Combining the Sanctuary Trek with Poon Hill

Poon Hill at 3,210m is one of the most celebrated sunrise viewpoints in Nepal. It sits on the Ghorepani ridge and offers a broad panorama of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges Dhaulagiri I (8,167m), Annapurna I, Annapurna South, and the unmistakable fishtail silhouette of Machapuchare all visible on a clear morning from a single viewpoint.

The climb from Ghorepani teahouse starts before dawn typically leaving at 4:30 to 5:00am and takes about 45 minutes on a stone-stepped path. The viewpoint has a small observation tower and fills quickly in peak season, so arriving early is worth the effort. The detour adds one day and approximately 15 kilometres to the Sanctuary route overall, branching at Ghorepani and rejoining the main trail via Tadapani and the descent to Chomrong. For first-time trekkers on this route, it is the most consistently recommended addition.

Essential Facts for Planning

Annapurna Base Camp sits at 4,130m and is reached after a round-trip of approximately 75 to 80 kilometres from Nayapul. The highest sleeping altitude on the route is around 3,700m at Machapuchare Base Camp teahouses. Pokhara is the nearest city, roughly 1.5 hours by road from the trailhead at Nayapul. Teahouse accommodation and meals are available at regular intervals, typically every one to three hours along the entire route, so carrying a tent or food supplies is unnecessary. Mobile signal from NTC and Ncell networks is available up to Chomrong, with very limited connectivity above that point.



Helicopter rescue services operate in the region but depend on weather windows. Travel insurance that explicitly covers high-altitude trekking and helicopter evacuation is not optional; it is the single most important logistical preparation you can make before arriving in Nepal.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Kathmandu

Namaste and a warm welcome to Kathmandu Valley, the gateway to the Himalayas. Upon your arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, after completing your visa formalities, you will be greeted by our representative with a traditional khada at the arrival gate. You will then be comfortably transferred to your premium 4-star hotel in the heart of the city. In the evening, relax and unwind, enjoying the vibrant yet peaceful atmosphere of Kathmandu.

Accommodation: 1400

Meals: Welcome Dinner

Day 2: Kathmandu to Pokhara

After a delightful breakfast, you will travel to Pokhara either by a scenic flight or a comfortable private vehicle. The distance between Kathmandu and Pokhara is around 200 km, which would take around 4 to 6 hours to travel. As you arrive, the tranquil beauty of Phewa Lake and the stunning backdrop of Machapuchare will welcome you. Check into your luxury hotel and spend the evening enjoying lakeside dining and relaxing views. This is your perfect introduction to the Himalayan journey ahead.

Accommodation: 820

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 3: Drive to Nayapul and Trek to Tikhedhunga

Today, your adventure begins with a private drive to Nayapul, followed by a gentle trek along rivers and charming villages. The trail is easy and scenic, allowing you to fully enjoy the natural surroundings. Your overnight stay will be in a comfortable, well-selected teahouse with upgraded services.

Accommodation: 1540

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 4: Trek to Ghorepani

Your day starts with a steady climb through beautiful rhododendron forests and traditional settlements. The famous Ulleri stone steps will challenge you, but the rewarding views make it worthwhile. Upon reaching Ghorepani, enjoy warm hospitality and comfortable lodging with stunning mountain scenery.

Accommodation: 2850

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 5: Poon Hill Sunrise and Trek to Tadapani



Early morning, hike to Poon Hill for a breathtaking sunrise over the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges. After capturing unforgettable views, return for breakfast and continue trekking through peaceful forests to Tadapani. The trail offers a perfect mix of nature, tranquility, and scenic beauty.

Accommodation: 2630

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 6: Trek to Chomrong

Descend through lush forests and cross scenic suspension bridges before reaching Chomrong village. This beautiful Gurung settlement offers incredible mountain views and a glimpse into local culture. Enjoy a comfortable stay with warm hospitality and delicious meals.

Accommodation: 2170

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 7: Trek to Bamboo

Leaving Chomrong, you will descend and then gradually ascend through dense bamboo and rhododendron forests. The peaceful trail, filled with natural sounds, creates a calming trekking experience. Overnight stay in a well-managed teahouse with comfortable amenities.

Accommodation: 2310

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 8: Trek to Dovan / Deurali

Today's trek takes you deeper into the Annapurna Sanctuary, where the landscape becomes more alpine and dramatic. You will pass waterfalls, narrow valleys, and quiet trails. Your accommodation will be carefully chosen to ensure maximum comfort in the mountains.

Accommodation: 2600

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 9: Trek to Machapuchare Base Camp

As you move higher, the surroundings open into breathtaking Himalayan landscapes. Walking alongside glacial rivers and rocky terrain, you'll reach Machapuchare Base Camp. Enjoy premium mountain lodge comfort while surrounded by towering peaks.

Accommodation: 3700

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 10: Trek to Annapurna Base Camp

Today is the highlight of your journey as you reach Annapurna Base Camp. Surrounded by a natural amphitheater of snow-capped mountains, the experience is both peaceful and awe-inspiring. Enjoy the luxury of time, space, and



unforgettable panoramic views in the heart of the Himalayas.

Accommodation: 4130

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 11: Trek Back to Bamboo

Wake up to a magical sunrise over the Annapurna range before beginning your descent. The return journey offers a new perspective of the landscapes you passed earlier. Relax in the comfort of your teahouse at Bamboo after a fulfilling day.

Accommodation: 2310

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 12: Trek to Jhinu Danda

Continue your descent through forests and villages. At Jhinu Danda, you have the option to enjoy a soothing dip in natural hot springs by the river. This relaxing experience is a perfect reward after days of trekking.

Accommodation: 2170

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 13: Trek to Nayapul and Drive to Pokhara

On your final trekking day, walk through beautiful villages and farmlands back to Nayapul. From here, enjoy a private drive back to Pokhara. Check into your luxury hotel and spend the evening celebrating your successful trek by the lakeside.

Accommodation: 820

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 14: Drive from Pokhara to Kathmandu

After breakfast, you will travel back to Kathmandu in a comfortable private vehicle or optional flight. Upon arrival, check into your premium hotel and enjoy your final evening in Nepal. You may explore the city, enjoy fine dining, or simply relax.

Accommodation: 1400

Meals: B, L, & D

Day 15: Final Departure

Your incredible journey in Nepal comes to an end today. After breakfast, our team will transfer you to Tribhuvan International Airport for your departure. You leave with unforgettable memories of the Annapurna Sanctuary and the majestic Himalayas.

Accommodation:

Meals: Breakfast



Cost Includes

- 1.** Airport pick-up and drop-off from Tribhuvan International Airport in a private vehicle
- 2.** 3 nights luxury 4-star hotel accommodation in Kathmandu with breakfast
- 3.** 2 nights premium hotel accommodation in Pokhara near Phewa Lake with breakfast
- 4.** Private tourist vehicle transfer which is(Kathmandu → Pokhara → Kathmandu and Pokhara → Nayapul → Pokhara)
- 5.** Annapurna Conservation Area Permit (ACAP)
- 6.** TIMS (Trekking Information Management System) card
- 7.** Experienced, licensed English-speaking trekking guide
- 8.** Strong and reliable porter service (1 porter for 2 trekkers)
- 9.** Guide and porter insurance, meals, salary, and accommodation
- 10.** Accommodation in the best available teahouses/lodges during the trek (twin-sharing basis, upgraded where possible)
- 11.** Full board meals during trekking (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)
- 12.** Seasonal fresh fruits after dinner during the trek
- 13.** Welcome dinner in Kathmandu with authentic Nepali cuisine
- 14.** First aid medical kit carried by the guide
- 15.** All government taxes and service charges

Cost Excludes

- 1.** International airfare to and from Nepal
- 2.** Nepal entry visa fees (available on arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport)
- 3.** Travel insurance (must include high-altitude trekking & helicopter evacuation up to 4,130m at Annapurna Base Camp)
- 4.** Personal expenses
- 5.** Tips for guide and porter (highly recommended in Nepal)

