



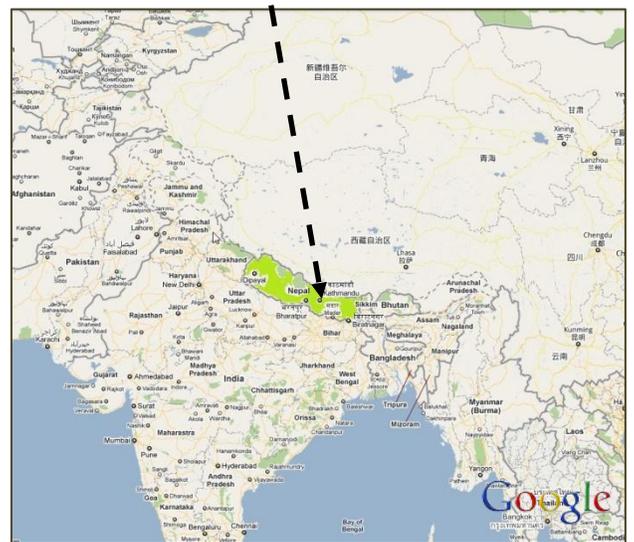
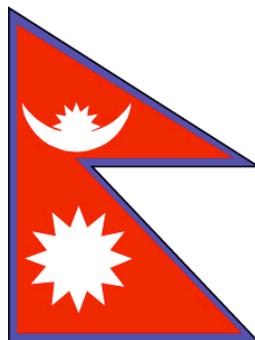
Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Kathmandu, Nepal, located at 27° N and 85° E.
- We have traveled approximately 24,130 miles (38,833 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



People and Culture

- The first documented people arrived into Nepal from north India in about 250 AD. Several regional dynasties ruled into the 18th century. A unified kingdom was declared in 1768. Portions of India and Sikkim were part of this empire.
- A rivalry between Nepal and the British East India Company led to a war from 1815 - 1816 in which Nepal ceded the portions of Sikkim and India that it controlled. Foreigners were not welcomed back into the country until 1951.
- A decade-long civil war led to the monarchy being abolished in 2008. Today, Nepal is a federal republic with a population of about 30 million. About 80% of the population is Hindu and approximately 11% are Buddhist.
- Nepal is among the poorest countries in the world. In one estimate, about 40% of the population lives in poverty. The adult literacy rate is about 54%.
- The Nepali year begins in mid-April and consists of 12 months. There are more than 50 festivals celebrated yearly. Major festivals include *Ghode Jatra* (Festivals of Horses) and *Gai Jatra* (Cow Festival).



Pashupatinath Hindu Temple, Kathmandu
(source: Thefullwiki.org)

Did you know?

The *Guru Purnima* festival is celebrated during the full moon in June / July and celebrates teachers. In the Hindu hierarchy of respect, teachers are second only to gods. During this time students pay tribute to teachers and receive blessings from them as well. Religious ceremonies are held in monasteries and temples to signify the event.

(source: Nepal-Kathmandu.com)



New Year festival
(source: Visitnepal.com, Akashkhatri.blogspot.com)



Mount Everest, located on the Nepal / China border (source: Happytellus.com)

National Parks

About 19% of Nepal's land has been set aside as a national park or protected area. The oldest national park is Chitwan. It was established in 1973 and is located in the southern lowlands. It is home to over 50 mammals and more than 500 types of birds.

source: Ntnc.org.np



Harvesting rice in the Terai region - (source: Flickr.com/EcoagriculturePartners)

Nature and Environment

- Nepal is a landlocked country bordered by China (Tibet) to the north and India to the south, east and west. The country is about 550 miles (885 kilometers) long and about 125 miles (201 kilometers) wide.
- Even with the country's small size, there is a great geographic diversity. The northern part of the country is dominated by the Himalayan range of mountains. This area equals about 64% of Nepal's terrain. There are more than 240 mountains over 20,000 feet (6,096 meters) high in Nepal. Eight of the 10 tallest mountains in the world can be found here, including Mount Everest (29,029 feet / 8,848 meters), which is the tallest peak on Earth.
- In the southern portion of the country the *Terai* region borders India and is as low as 328 feet (100 meters) above sea level. This has a sub tropical / tropical climate and comprises about 17% of the Nepal's total land area. A intermediary hill region links this area with the northern mountains.
- Agriculture is a main source of income for the majority of the population. This includes tea, rice, corn, wheat and sugarcane. With limited land for agriculture, deforestation is an ongoing concern.

Our Plans

- We flew from Bangkok, Thailand to Kathmandu and will spend a little less than three weeks in Nepal. Our first stop, the city of Kathmandu, will provide us with a great introduction to the culture of this country.
- Our major activity here will be trekking in the Mustang region of the country. This will take almost two weeks. We will hike through beautiful mountain scenery and visit a former kingdom.
- Thanks for your emails and questions. Perhaps we will include yours (and our answers) in our next update.

The Nepal Flag

This flag is the only national flag which is not square or rectangular. The red color signifies the rhododendron, the national flower of Nepal. The blue border represents peace. One explanation for the moon and the sun on the flag is that they symbolize that Nepal will last as long as those two heavenly bodies.

sources: world-free-printable-flags.com, neatadventure.com

More Information

- <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Nepal-LOCATION-SIZE-AND-EXTENT.html>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal>
- <http://www.himalayanspiritadventure.com/home/index.php?action=ecotourism>
- <http://www.thamel.com/htms/history.htm>
- http://imagingeverest.rgs.org/concepts/imaging_everest/-72.html

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