

THE SUN KOSI

A Classic High Water River Journey!

Nepal as a holiday destination is plainfantastic. A kingdom steeped in history and dominated by the majestic Himalayas, it enthralls all who enter. One of the best ways to explore and discover this remarkable land is to get away from the towns and roads and embark on a rafting adventure welcome to the Sun Kosi River Expedition. The Sun Kosi flows from Tibet and at High Flows is one of the most brilliant river journeys on the planet and is a favorite trip amongst guides and clients alike. With wonderful sandy beaches to camp on, breathtaking scenery to gaze on and some of the most exhilarating warm whitewater to raft, this is truly a river journey with it all!

Day One

All going well most international flights arrive early afternoon in Kathmandu. You will be met by one of our guides who will be holding a Water By Nature sign and waving frantically at you from within the crowd that meets and greets every flight! Rescuing you from the masses, who will all be trying desperately to get you in to their taxi, we will escort you to your hotel, and the remainder of the day is to be spent at your leisure exploring the back street bargains of Thamel or the insides of your eyelids. (Not included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner)

Day Two

Time to face the hustle of this amazing city and get out there and explore Kathmandu or the surrounding area. Walking around this ancient city is like being in the world's biggest outdoor museum! We recommend a good guide book (cheaply available in Kathmandu's many book shops) and then grabbing either a taxi or rickshaw or heading off on foot or bike to visit some of the incredible temples, stupas, and squares that make up this most vibrant of capitals. From observing early morning sessions of prayer wheel turning at the Buddhist stupa of Bodhnath, to perhaps gaining a glimpse of the Living Goddess in Durbar Square, there are endless ways to pass the day. A great way to finish it off is with a cold drink on one of the many terrace cafes watching the sun go down on the distant, snow capped Himalayas.

Day Three

After a hearty breakfast at Mikes Breakfast, which is undoubtedly the best brekky in town, we board our private bus and drive towards Dolaghat, our rafting put in point. As we drive towards the river on a clear day the views of the Himalayas and Everest are amazing! At the put in point, we inflate the rafts, make a sumptuous lunch and prepare the rafts for our journey down the Sun Kosi! Just remember the amount of time the guides spend tying the gear onto the rafts is directly proportional to the size of the rapids.... We leave the nearby roads and with all our gear on board we are entering into one of the Ten Most Classic River Journeys in the World! Below the suspension bridge at Dobhan Tarr the river enters a small beautiful canyon with waterfalls and lush tropical growth. Kuseshwar Mandhir is a Shiva temple situated amongst large banyan and paipal trees at the confluence of the Roshi River. It's a great place to wander around and perhaps collect the blessing of a local priest for the river journey.

Days Four to Ten

A raft trip down the Sun Kosi isn't just a vacation... it's an education. Our river guides spend the first part of the morning explaining the finer points on how to paddle through whitewater and stay in the raft as it bucks and contorts through rapids. For those who missed a point in the previous lesson there is a lesson on how to swim through whitewater, using your flotation device to keep your head up and your feet to push off rocks or pesky kayakers who happen to be surfing in the middle of a rapid.

Days Four to Ten (cont'd)

The guides will explain what they look out for when they run a river, the innocuous looking rise in the water that hides a hole, or the way you can use a pillow of water rebounding off a rock to push the raft where you want it. Whitewater rafts are amazingly versatile and stable crafts and in the care of an expert raft guide it is possible to run exhilarating lines safely and confidently. Your guide is a professional who has dedicated their life to learning and running whitewater rivers. Under his or her careful indoctrination the raft crew learns to work as a team, practicing on the numerous smaller rapids we encounter on the first 2 days of the trip. By the time we get to the really big rapids, with names like Meat Grinder, High Anxiety and Harkapur, the crews will be working together with the precision of a Bangkok nightclub act.

It's a good thing too, because the first time you line up above a big water Class 4 rapid you're not going to believe what you see, hear and feel! The water above a rapid is as soothing and quiet as a children's story, and it's not until you look down into the churning digesting, gut twisting white abyss that you realize the story is written by Brothers Grimm! Gravity seems like a seductive and cruel mistress, pulling us into something we want. We drift smoothly along and watch as our fate is sealed... the watery conveyor belt undulating and throbbing finally giving way to the liquid cheese grater attachment of life's Quisinaart. Most people find that time slows down and fear vanishes, replaced by primal resignation and a sharpening of all senses to a point usually only attained through an automobile crash. The heart-shaking roar of whitewater becomes dim, like a background symphony heard through the cheap paper walls of some sleazy budget hotel. Now this is living!

River trips are much more than gravity powered roller coaster rides, they are incredible journeys taken on the most magical highways in the world. From Dologhat, we have 270 blissfully motor free kilometres before we hit the next road. 270 kilometres of living for no other purpose than to see how much fun we can have. Life is reduced to eat, sleep and play. In accomplishing these things, you'll be amazed at how much you can learn, and more importantly, how much you'll forget. In no time at all the amalgamation of all your concerns will seem distant, unimportant and eventually, unworthy of your attention. It is our goal to breed irresponsibility and slothfulness in all people!

Most of the rapids on the Sun Kosi are formed by monsoon debris brought in by side streams and loose rockfall. These rapids change from year to year depending on the severity of the monsoon rains. After stopping at Tokshel Harkapur and spending time there checking out this porter town we drift down to a rapid called Harkapur 2. Pulling over to the left to camp for the evening it is interesting to go down and look at the rapid and contemplate the start of the next day. Harkapur 2 becomes the main topic of conversation that night. There is a large rockfall on the right and the river is further constricted on the left by a huge mudslide! Boulders from the mudslide have washed into the middle of the rapid forming large ledge drops and holes. Harkapur 2 is always an interesting rapid and there is plenty more to come. A few kilometres downstream watch out for the famous Dudh Kosi, the river of milk, which tumbles down from Mount Everest. We recommend a sacrificial swimmer out of the raft here to appease the Gods. The Dudh Kosi is a lot cooler than the Sun Kosi. Below the suspension bridge is a small rapid that is followed by Jaws, then Dead Mans Eddy. Sculptured into the rock on the left side of the river is a huge eddy that has a dubious reputation of collecting most things that float downstream!

The jungle corridor is an outrageous section of rapids in a hard rock canyon with tropical forest right down to the river. At the end of the jungle corridor, a series of waterfalls cascade in from both banks so keep your soap and shampoo (biodegradable of course) handy for a really refreshing shower. Camping on the Sun Kosi is awesome. The massive floods of the monsoon deposit huge tracks of pure white sand, which are ideal to camp on.

Days Four to Ten (cont'd)

We will have at least one layover day where we stay at the same camp for 2 nights. Hello Beach Party! Volleyball and Sculpture, hacky sack Frisbee, sun bathing and eating are favourite activities for a layover day. You can also take advantage of the layover day to trek to a nearby peak or village or take part in the kayak workshop the safety kayaker's offer.

Day Eleven

The last big rapid of the trip is called Big Dipper. Tie your shorts on well cause the other name for the rapid is Quick Stripper. I think you get the picture. If we all make it through this one with our dignity intact, it's a quiet cruise down the confluence with the Arun and Tamur and the beginning of the Sapta Kosi or the Seven Rivers. The confluence is called Tribeni Ghat and has an interesting temple to visit. Before emerging onto the flatland terai, there is another larger Hindi Temple called Baraha Chhetra. Every year in January, on the day of the full moon, thousands of Hindu pilgrims mass here to pay homage to Lord Vishnu. Legend has it that once a demon god inhabited this area and troubled the villagers, holy men and pilgrims. Hearing of this, Lord Vishnu, preserver of the universe, took the form of a pig and slayed the demon in battle. Inside the temple is a pig headed figure of Lord Vishnu, and the annual Braha festival commemorates the victory. Just a little further downstream lies India and all its semi functional chaos. By afternoon we have reached the take out and all the expedition equipment is cleaned, broken down and laid out in the sun to dry, then loaded on top of our private bus. Transfer 2 hours to Biratnagar and fly back to Kathmandu. The mountain views on a clear day are outstanding as the flight goes right along the main Himalayas.

Day Twelve

After a rather leisurely breakfast and chat about the trip we take you back to the airport for your return flight.

Days Eleven to Thirteen (Optional)

Staying at the luxurious Tiger Tops Camp is a great way to finish off your trip. Set in the heart of the Royal Chitwan National Park you have some fantastic opportunities to see the prolific bird life, not to mention occasional sightings of the Royal Bengal Tiger, elephants and an amazing array of other wildlife. Naturalists are on hand with their seemingly endless supply of knowledge to answer your queries regarding all the species of animal in the park. The lodge is made entirely of local materials and blends in beautifully with the environment. There is a range of activities to enjoy from elephant safaris to jungle walks, to just plain old relaxing in the serene surroundings of the Lodge. Meals are all inclusive and are a wonderful combination of Western and Nepali dishes. Accommodation is in spacious safari tents with twin beds and separate hot and cold showers. Since you do have to book in advance we strongly recommend that you try and think how you will feel at the end of the river journey and decide if returning to Kathmandu will really be the option that you will want!

On day thirteen we transfer you to Meghauly Airport (about 2 hours away) where you will meet with your return flight to Kathmandu. That afternoon we suggest that you spend some time doing some well deserved retail therapy. A group farewell dinner is always welcomed and it is a final chance to relive the previous two weeks with people that do believe you when you explain just how big that rapid was!!!

Days Fourteen (Optional)

After a rather leisurely breakfast and chat about the trip we take you back to the airport for your return flight.

ITINERARY

Day	<u>Itinerary</u>			
	Fri	5 Sept	19/9	Depart London Heathrow
1	Sat	6 Sept	20/9	Arrive Kathmandu and overnight
2	Sun	7 Sept	21/9	Kathmandu
3	Mon	8 Sept	22/9	Drive to the Sun Kosi put in
4	Tue	9 Sept	23/9	Rafting the Sun Kosi
5	Wed	10 Sept	24/9	Rafting the Sun Kosi
6	Thu	11 Sept	25/9	Rafting the Sun Kosi
7	Fri	12 Sept	26/9	Rafting the Sun Kosi
8	Sat	13 Sept	27/9	Rafting the Sun Kosi
9	Sun	14 Sept	28/9	Rafting the Sun Kosi
10.	Mon	15 Sept	29/9	Rafting the Sun Kosi
11	Tue	16 Sept	30/9	Return to Kathmandu
12	Wed	17 Sept	1/10	Depart Kathmandu

Chitwan National Park Extension

11	Tue	16 Sept	30/9	Chitwan National Park
12	Wed	17 Sept	1/10	Chitwan National Park
13	Thu	18 Sept	2/10	Return to Kathmandu
14	Fri	19 Sept	3/10	Depart Kathmandu

Ex London To be published in May when Qatar Airways confirm the fall schedule
 River Only £750
 Chitwan £300

WHAT IS INCLUDED

EX LONDON

- International flights on Qatar Airways in economy class
- Airport transfers in Kathmandu
- Accommodation the night before and the night after the river trip in a tourist hotel. This will be on a share twin basis with somebody else on the trip.
- All transfers to and from the river including local flights
- Meals from lunch on day 2 to lunch on day 11
- All rafting equipment, including the best in buoyancy aids, helmets and spray jackets
- Tented accommodation on the river
- All camping equipment (excluding sleeping bags)
- Qualified and experienced guides and safety kayakers. The crux of our trips, we have a mixture of local and overseas guides who are extremely professional and are some of the most experienced guides in the world. These guys and girls make every effort to make your trip memorable and fun for you whilst at the same time ensuring your safety. They all hold up to date advanced first aid qualifications and in the unlikely event of an injury they have the expertise and professionalism to deal with it.
- All necessary permits and licenses
- Travel Insurance
- A cool t shirt!

Please Note: **Not included** are visas, departure taxes, inoculations, sleeping bags, personal items or gratuities. You will also need to budget for meals in town, which are not included in the price and any extra accommodation outside what is provided.

RIVER ONLY

As per the ex-London costs but **excluding** international flights and travel insurance

CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK EXTENSION

Accommodation, meals, activities and park fees.

Not included are bar bills, tips, gratuities and laundry.

HOLIDAY OPTIONS

If you are interested in having a few more days (or weeks!) in Nepal then the choice is endless. Depending on your available time there are everything from spectacular mountain walks in the Himalayas, to excursions in to Tibet or even a 2 day whitewater trip of continuous rapids for those that still hanker for more river time! We can recommend the following and suggest if you are interested in any of them to have a chat to our office staff who will be more than happy to give you the cost and low down on the different activities.

Trekking

There are few places in the world with such magnificent views and great tracks to walk amongst villages as there are in Nepal. Trekking is big business in Nepal however you can walk on your own provided that you possess the relevant "Trekking Permit" from the immigration department. These are relatively cheap at US\$1 per day. Most people do what is known as "Teahouse Trekking" whereby they stop at local teahouses for the night and also for food. This makes it necessary to not carry too much in the way of camping equipment or food with you. Treks vary in length, but if you are looking for something around a week, then may we suggest the trek to Tatopani via Poon Hill from Pokhara that also gives you time to rest your weary muscles in hot pools long the way! The other reasonably short trek is to Kangtang out of Kathmandu. Please contact us if you would like more details.

National Parks

Nepal has two fantastic safari parks, with the opportunity to take in some great game viewing usually from the back of an elephant! Royal Chitwan and Bardia National Parks are fairly accessible and give great opportunities to see the Indian Rhino, a fascinating array of bird life and the occasional Bengal Tiger. We can provide you with information regarding the many options available to visit these two beautiful areas which usually fits nicely into a few days at the end of your rafting trip.

Tibet

What a fantastic opportunity to go and see for yourself what effect the Chinese have had since their invasion in 1956. Visit such sites as Potala Palace, Tashilhumpo Monastery or Mount Kailash. This country has to be seen to be believed. Tours vary in length and only operate at certain times of the year, so please contact us should you require more information about how best to organize it around your trip to Nepal.

Everest Flight

If you can't bare the thought of coming all the way to Nepal and not seeing the big one, then relax as an early morning Everest Flight will give you the ultimate bird's eye view. Departing daily (weather permitting) it is a great way to fill in your time before your departure home.

Hot Air Ballooning

Another fantastic way to see the Himalayas is from the air with an early morning float out of Kathmandu. Definitely romantic and definitely a once in a lifetime experience.

Retail Therapy Options

For all you shopaholics out there, what a paradise Nepal is. It is well worth it to get out and explore the many back alleys, for those bargains that are prohibitively expensive in the West. Tibetan art abounds in the form of Thankas, statues and carpets. Cheap but reasonable quality hiking equipment is everywhere as are good quality cameras with all the film and battery supplies you could ever want. Electronic goods in general are reasonable, as are the cheap Thai copy Ray Ban sunglasses! You can plan on spending big as there are also reasonable and reliable shipping agents to help you get back home those things that just won't fit in your luggage!!!

Getting There

In order to give you maximum flexibility with your holiday plans, you decide when you want to fly or travel to and from Kathmandu and we then help make it happen. The flight option that we usually book for our clients is on Qatar Airways out of Heathrow. These flights leave around 7pm the night prior to Day One, arriving into Kathmandu around 12pm the following day. The return flight is a morning departure out of Kathmandu with an early evening arrival into Heathrow the same day. So be it is a flight from any other airport in the UK, or even an overland trip through Asia we will give you advice on what is the best deal around and help you with your booking. **Don't leave it too late as well as flights can be difficult to secure for this popular destination!**

Visa Requirements

For most people entering Nepal, you may enter with the minimum of formalities, providing that you have acquired your visa beforehand or you have nice crisp folding American notes in your pocket. For most nationalities you can get your visa at the airport, costing the equivalent of US\$1 per day. Visas for 1 and 2 months are available for US\$30 and US\$60 respectively. These may also be renewed at the local immigration office although this is not recommended if you do not wish to spend the majority of your holidays in an office! It is also frowned upon severely to overstay your visa! A valid passport is also required and should have a minimum of six months validity before departing on your journey.

The Dreaded Jabs

What is a fun raft trip without those lovely big needles that doctors love inflicting us with! We recommend a full and simple immunization program before embarking on your Nepali river journey. We are giving you guidelines however we would recommend that you contact your local GP or immunization center and seek their advice. Bear in mind that some of these jabs or medication can take weeks to complete the course correctly so please don't leave it until the last minute! We recommend Tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, Polio, Meningitis and Typhoid. Well it isn't too bad if you read it quickly! We often get asked the situation regarding Malaria in Nepal. Seek the advice of your Doctor, however unless you are planning on spending time in the low lying regions of the Terai including the Royal Bardia or Chitwan National Parks, it remains rather unnecessary as the river remains bug free except for of course the guides! By far the biggest effect most people experience with respect to health in Nepal is a bad case of the squirts! Dysentery, either amoebic or bacterial, can be picked up from the occasional restaurant in Kathmandu, so be careful where and what you eat! The standard of hygiene whilst on the river is impeccable and the guides will get on your nerves about as much as your Mum did telling you to wash your hands before you eat. As silly as it may sound, a cake of "Detol" soap in your bag that always goes with you is not a dumb idea. Please let us know if you have any medical problems before you get to the blacking out stage of an illness!

Exchange Rates

The Nepali rupee is a somewhat difficult currency to come across at your local bank, however you will be met at the airport in Kathmandu, by not only kamikaze taxi drivers but also those with uncles or cousins that have a carpet shop and will be able to give you the best exchange rate deal in town. Unless you are in the profession of selling used Grandmothers then I wouldn't recommend trusting these characters too much! The current rates of exchange which change about as often as Italy changes Government for the US\$ is between 50 and 60:1 and for the British Pound approximately 85 and 100:1. We would recommend carrying mainly these two currencies as they are the most widely accepted. To give you some idea as to how far your money will go, the average evening meal in Thamel (the tourist area of Kathmandu) will cost you around US\$6! A bit of a bargain!

Transport Services

Whilst you are in Kathmandu, it is fairly easy to get around whilst using 'shanks pony', a rather smelly Tuk Tuk or the traditional rickshaw. The latter two are quite entertaining as they go hell for leather down the narrow side streets and are relatively cheap although we would recommend negotiating the price before you get in. If you are traveling further afield you have but two choices - buses or aircraft. If you are using the buses then may we recommend that you take a "Tourist" bus and not the "Local" buses. This is a more expensive option but we are talking about US\$3! The local buses have a "Road Code" unique to them which includes only overtaking on blind corners and putting their trust in the "Road God" and a bunch of flowers that is sitting at the front of their bus, believing whole heartedly that this will indeed stop them going off the road! You will often see passengers adorning the roof of their bus alongside goats and chickens. Our transport to the river is from a very reputable company that we use all the time. As for aircraft, most are ex Russian and they provide a pretty quick and efficient service, linking all the major points of interest. Much faster too when you consider that the 200 km trip to Pokhara from Kathmandu takes a mere 50 minutes compared to the 8 hours it takes by bus! Taxis are relatively available to say the least and they are only too happy to take you anywhere on the Asian continent for a "very special price!" Tourists do tend to get a bit of a raw deal occasionally so if you aren't so sure how much to pay then check with us. As a rule, a transfer from the airport to Thamel costs 200 Rupees so if he tries to charge you 500 he could well be one of those Grandmother sellers!

River Flows

The Sun Kosi is a large volume river and is in fact the longest river trip in all of Nepal. We choose to offer this river trip at what is considered peak flows, that is in September when the rapids although fairly straightforward are HUGE! Weather wise this is also an optimum time to be out there with rain being not too common although possible and visibility of the surrounding mountains being pretty good. It is also a sunny time to be on the river, with the water always at a temperature comfortable to swim in, having had plenty of time to warm up on its long journey down from the Himalayas! This also means that it is a great time to be trekking if you decide to extend your trip with a jaunt in the mountains. However flows to vary from year to year due to monsoon and snow fluctuations so while we can give you a reasonably accurate indication of water levels - water does do what it wants!

Climate

Nepal's climate has a great number of extremes, being rather chilly on the top of Mount Everest and fairly warm on the Terai on the Indian border! However as far as preparing yourself for your raft trip, we operate our trips in the temperate valleys that don't hold these extremes. Expect daytime temperatures between 15 and 35 degrees centigrade with the evenings being somewhat cooler. A fleece jacket is a good idea for the evenings as it can get around 10 degrees cooler at night. Monsoon is a rather damp time and a good raincoat is recommended! This period normally starts around the first week in May and can last until early October, although it normally doesn't rain consistently for the entire day!

Fitness And Safety

There are no special fitness requirements for the Tumor River especially as the trek can be taken at your own pace and you don't have to lumber along carrying anything! The main thing recommended is a sense of adventure! Just to recap what is mentioned in the brochure: The minimum age for the trip is 16 years and there is no upper age limit providing that you are in reasonable physical shape and you are aware of the rigors of a whitewater expedition in a foreign country.

Fitness And Safety

Please make a point of telling us (quietly if you wish) if you have any medical condition or are on any medication that you think we should be aware of. Any known allergies are also useful before you turn 3 shades of blue and phase in and out of Consciousness! Safety is our foremost consideration at all times whether on or off the river. We are out there for a great time on the river and we want you to feel comfortable in your new environment.

Dress Code

At a glance it would seem that pretty much anything goes in Kathmandu due to the large presence of the young overland crowd! However while it is warm in Kathmandu it is nowhere near the ocean and therefore we recommend that beachwear is left to be worn where it belongs!!! Most women find it comfortable to wear long cotton trousers or long skirts while walking around Kathmandu and whilst shorts are more acceptable for men trousers are also more appropriate around the temple areas. Most restaurants are fairly casual unless you head off to dine at one of the top hotels where for men, a shirt with a collar is expected. The nights do cool down considerably in Kathmandu and so something along the lines of a fleece jacket would be suitable. Once on the river and away rafting, then bathing suits and shorts are completely suitable. However we do recommend for the women especially, bringing a sarong with you, which makes an excellent wrap around skirt when visiting the villages along the river.

Personal Equipment

After years on the river the guides have found exactly what is necessary to feel comfortable on the raft by day, cozy around the camp at night and totally in style in town before and after trips! Therefore our equipment list will mean that you will be perfectly attired and outfitted for your whole trip and well under the baggage allowance - river guides are famous for being light travelers (one has to be when a kayak is often in tow!). A full list of what we recommend for both the trekking and rafting sections will be sent to you upon booking confirmation. We find that most people already have in their possession what is needed for a rafting trip and very little if anything in specialized equipment that needs to be bought.

Finally....

Please remember that things do change, prices go up and down, activities stop running or change format and weather can send the best laid plans out the door. We will do our best to provide what is described above but please take into consideration the nature of the journey that you are embarking on and the country that you are in and understand that a certain degree of flexibility is necessary! Nepal has so much to offer everybody and we would love the opportunity to show you diversity and fascination of this majestic Kingdom. What better way to discover a country's people and beauty than by rafting some of the best whitewater around!