Annapurna Circuit Trek with Tilicho Lake

Trek Information

Duration	17 days
Difficulty	Hard
Region	Annapurna Region
Highest Altitude	4550.0 m
Group Size	2-10
Season	Spring and Autumn
Individual Cost	$0.00

Description

About the Destination

Detailed description for **Annapurna Sanctuary**.

Trip Overview

The Annapurna Circuit and Tilicho Lake Trek represents one of the finest of all Nepalese trek opportunities, encompassing traditional Himalayan pathways and one of the world's highest, yet remarkably picturesque, alpine lakes. This extended journey will lead you to the core of the Annapurna Region and allow for an unforgettable trekking experience filled with fluctuating environments, ancient cultures, and imposing mountain passes.

Rather than being a shortcut trail, this is a true, full Himalayan Circuit journey. Starting in the warm lowland valleys of central Nepal and progressing up into the awe-inspiring alpine domain where snow-covered peaks and glaciers will reign supreme on all sides, this trek will also allow you to visit many unique and spiritual Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist villages scattered throughout the mountain range.

Perhaps the most memorable of the journey will be visiting Tilicho Lake at an elevation of 4,919 meters. One of the highest lakes in the world, it will seem almost out-of-body due to its sheer height and surrounding Himalayan peaks. Although this side trip can take several extra days, it is well worth the added effort required to achieve the magnificent prize.

Equally the most difficult of the treks will be crossing the revered Thorong La Pass at an incredible 5,416 meters; arguably the world's highest trek pass. A strenuous climb of this famous mountain peak is perhaps one of the greatest feats a trekker can achieve throughout their journey and crossing will likely be one of the most emotional and proud moments that one may ever encounter while trekking.

Throughout your journey, trekkers will experience one of the most dramatic changes in elevation possible, as you travel from green valleys to a barren, high-altitude desert and will find the conditions to be highly advantageous for acclimatization and generally easier for trekking than any other long Nepal journey.

This trek will not be recommended for the novice trekker and trekkers must be prepared physically and mentally to endure the rigors and rewards of trekking in high-altitude Nepal.

Trip Highlights

- Explore the diverse landscapes of Annapurna Region
- Spectacular trails with lush greenery to high alpine valleys
- Crossing through Thorong La Pass (5416m) which is the highest passes in the world
- Panoramic views which includes Annapurna Dhaulagiri and the following peaks
- Trek through diverse natural diverse landscapes
- Natural hot spring
- Experiencing the local culture and traditional lifestyle
- Encountering of wildlife with rare and endangered species

- Taste of local foods and cuisines

Detailed Itinerary

Arrival in Kathmandu

Arrival at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu. After warmly receiving you by the crew and guide at the airport, you will be driven to the hotel. It's your day to relax and make yourself ready for the trekking after the long flight. You can also wander around your nearby location (Thamel- famous place for trekking gear, cafes, shops etc). You get a chance to meet your guide and make an overview of the entire trek. Your equipment is checked for safety and adequacy. Kathmandu is full of historic temples and a blend of cultures. You can get your currency exchanged here and buy some things needed from here before the trekking journey starts. Later in the evening you have your guide briefing and orientation about the entire journey and altitude awareness etc. Adequate rest is important.

Drive from Kathmandu to Besisahar

Today we bid adieu to Kathmandu, driving to the Annapurna region. The drive to Besisahar is approximately 6-7 hours along a beautiful river, terraces and remote villages. The drive from the city moves slowly from the urbanization to tranquility. Besisahar is the entry to the Annapurna Circuit and a busy town where the trekkers often group together before heading for deeper parts of the mountains. Green hills and moving rivers enhance the drive to the area and serve as a pleasing start to our trek. We will be checking into a local lodge after reaching Besisahar and be getting ourselves prepared for the next destination. You can roam around this small town in the evening interacting with the local people and resting.

Drive from Besisahar to Chame

From Besisahar, continue your trip by a local shared jeep toward Chame, follow the valley of Marsyangdi River. The road will become more rugged and exciting during the trip due to the high cliff, waterfall, waterfall and the steep and narrow trail along the mountain way. This rugged ride lasts 6-8 hours, depending on the conditions. During the journey, passing the villages and the lush forest, the altitude is climbing up gradually. The air feels cooler and the fresher. Chame is the administrative headquarter of Manang district and surrounded by several high Himalayas. The excellent views of Annapurna II and Lamjung Himal could be viewed clearly on a fine day. After arriving at Chame, it is a time to relax and adjust with altitude. This is your first time spending a night on the altitude so it's important to drink enough water.

Trek from Chame to Upper Pisang

The trekking begins today. You will walk through the forest of pine trees beside the river and over suspension bridges, which offers some wonderful scenery and a bit of exercise. It takes about 5-6 hours to reach Upper Pisang from today's trail. You can see a rock cave, rock formations and Annapurna range all along. The vegetation changes as you move towards more rugged dry terrain. Upper Pisang is a traditional village that is typical with Tibetan styled buildings and fantastic views to Annapurna II from the village itself. It is another spectacular day in trek which offers tranquility, beautiful scenery, and proper acclimatization as we keep gaining altitude.

Upper Pisang to Ngawal

Today after the morning breakfast, you will head for Ngawal via the upper route. This route offers some of the most spectacular panoramic views during the trek. The trail ascends gradually, through a stark mountain terrain marked with monasteries and prayer flags. The

trek will take 5-6 hours, the views here of Pisang and Annapurna peaks are superb and there will be a definite openness to the landscape with less trees and far-reaching vistas. Ngawal is a quaint village positioned on a hillside with peaceful surroundings and fantastic views of the neighboring peaks and has significant Tibetan influences both in the design and tradition.

Trek from Ngawal to Manang

This trek to Manang is comparatively shorter and more easy going. You will be hiking downhill then will enter a wide valley called Manang Valley. It is approx 4-5 hours trekking duration. You will pass some authentic villages and fields along the way, and have some beautiful viewpoints. Manang is a quite large village in the area and is the best acclimatization stop. It gives an amazing view of surrounding mountains and cultural aspects, there are monasteries, shops and few small cafes in the village.

Acclimatization day at Manang

This is our important acclimatization day at Manang, which is a beautiful Himalayan village located at 3,540 meters in Annapurna Region. This rest day is important for our body to adjust in high altitude before continuing our journey to higher elevations such as Tilicho Lake and Thorong La Pass. Instead of staying dormant at Manang for this whole day, we are encouraged to climb up to higher elevation in a short period and go back to Manang to sleep (climb high, sleep low). This way helps to adapt to high altitude and prevent altitude sickness better. We can also go to explore and visit Gangapurna Lake or to the viewpoint near to our lodge for an amazing view of Annapurna III, Gangapurna and surrounding peaks. Manang is a very cultural village with many Tibetan influences in it, where you can see many monasteries, prayer walls, and local houses where they lived their mountain lifestyle. Manang has a small bakery and cafes where we can enjoy coffee and bread with awesome views. We need to make sure we drink enough water, rest well and make our mental ready for the upcoming higher and critical trek portion.

Trek from Manang to Khangsar

Having acclimatized, we now leave Manang and turn towards Khangsar, beginning the trek to Tilicho Lake. At this point, we will turn off from the main Annapurna Circuit and the trail will be much quieter and less travelled. This day takes approx. 4-5 hours and is a walk through alpine scenery with views of a large, wide valley. The land will soon begin to grow drier, and even more mountainous. We will notice a change from previous days in the environment as trees become less prominent and open mountain terrain takes over. Khangsar is a small, traditional village where we will find stone houses, and an area very different from Manang and far more removed. The day is relatively easy.

Trek from Khangsar to Tilicho Base Camp

A harder day than the day before, as you trek further on toward Tilicho Base Camp. The trail goes through unstable land prone to landslides, narrow pathways beside vertical cliff walls which you are warned about when taking the trek. This part takes approximately 5-6 hours. The scenery is awesome: imposing vertical rock formations and large mountainous panoramas. There is very little vegetation and you're walking through dry, rocky land mostly. The atmosphere gets thinner with the elevation so pace yourselves well. Tilicho Base Camp is basically a collection of buildings, serving simple food and tea. The amenities are fewer than in previously visited places because of the high altitude and remote location of Tilicho Base Camp. Normally trekkers sleep early, as you will be heading to Tilicho lake early the next day.

Trek from Tilicho Lake to Siri Kharka

The highlight of the trek and one of the best and rewarding day's work. An early start today to make the upward trek to Tilicho Lake, a 4,919m high glacial lake. This is a reasonably straightforward but arduous climb due to the altitude and cold. On reaching the lake, which reflects the peaks around it like a mirror and is an indescribable deep blue, you will feel a profound sense of accomplishment and be struck by the incredible vista of turquoise water with a backdrop of snowy peaks and rocks. The air is so and it feels quite out of this world-definitely one of the key high points of the entire journey. Then back down and onward to Siri Kharka. Total time of walking will take approximately 6 to 8 hours depending on weather. You would trek back down and then make an upward trek to Siri Kharka which you reach in the afternoon.

Siri Kharka to Yak Kharka

Today you meet the Annapurna Circuit trail again. Siri Kharka to Yak Kharka will take approximately 5 to 6 hours, and is undulating through with a gradual increase in altitude. The surroundings are arid and open with Yaks in fields, and distant peaks to admire. This trail is not technically challenging like previous days however is still steep with steady progress to be made, even though the altitude is high. Yak Kharka is a basic settlement that is more frequently used as an animal grazing site. It offers a quiet base to rest with basic shelter. It is important now that you are over 4000 meters that you stay hydrated and aware of your body and signs of Acute Mountain sickness.

Trek from Yak Kharka to Thorong Phedi / High Camp

This is a shorter day of trekking, around 3-4 hours and is essential for a proper acclimatization to the upcoming Thorong La pass crossing. This trail slowly continues upward, toward Thorong Phedi at the foot of the pass. Some trekkers carry on a further distance, up to High Camp, in order to shorted their distance the following morning up the pass. The terrain will grow more steep and rugged with less and less vegetation to be found. Today should consist mainly of rest and acclimatization. Consume lots of calories and drink as much as you can, with early sleep as the departure time will be before dawn. Layer up as the weather can change at any time.

Trek from Thorong La Pass to Muktinath

This is undoubtedly the most challenging and rewarding day of the trek. You will have a very early start (often before sun-up) to cross the Thorong La Pass (5416m) at the highest point of your trek. The ascent is mostly steady and relatively gentle but extremely taxing due to lack of oxygen, cold and often high winds. Slow is the word when climbing to such a height. When you reach the top you can leave your prayer flags (and a bit of your own body's oxygen!) behind you as the vistas from here are stupendous and stretch across the immense Himalayas. After an hour or so at the pass you will start your descent to Muktinath. The downward trek takes several hours. However it's often easier than the ascent, especially when you re-gain a bit of oxygen. Muktinath is a sacred pilgrimage site and a very special place as it is worshipped by both Hindus and Buddhists and the feeling when you finally arrive there, after such a grueling physical ordeal, is immense and spiritually satisfying.

Drive from Muktinath to Tatopani

Today involves an invigorating descent back down from the high lands as we drive from Muktinath to Tatopani by vehicle. The drive, which should take approximately 6-7 hours, navigates down the dramatic Kali Gandaki Gorge, which has been designated one of the world’s deepest gorges. From the desolate rocky terrain high up on the plateau we enter a much greener, more temperate landscape and will travel through the traditional Thakali villages, passing numerous apple orchards and river valleys on the way to Tatopani. This change in environment is truly stunning and provides a totally contrasting side of the

Annapurna Region. Tatopani which actually translates to hot water is named after the thermal springs and will offer a blissful and luxurious end to the days spent trekking in the mountains as you soak your aching muscles in the natural hot springs and relive your high altitude trekking experiences.

Drive from Tatopani to Pokhara

Today you make your way by road from Tatopani to Pokhara. This is considered to be one of Nepal's most relaxed and attractive cities. It takes approx 5-6 hours to reach Pokhara, along many river, terraces and tiny villages. As you descend into a more temperate and lush country, the warmer air and greenery are a welcome change from the colder high alpine scenery. Pokhara is a laid-back city set against a background of the incredible Annapurna range, next to the lovely Phewa Lake, here you can relax and eat some good food and have a well deserved rest as you have successfully completed your trek, many people come here to have celebrations with the group members.

Drive from Pokhara to Kathmandu

From your stay in relaxed Pokhara, you are transferred back to Kathmandu by tourist bus or an optional flight, the journey taking 6-7 hours along the picturesque Prithvi Highway. This route weaves and flows along the rivers and hills, proving for an exciting journey. Though it is a long trip, the scenery through the trip can be really breathtaking. The trip continues passing through the small villages, agricultural terraces and along the river valleys, where one can have the last peek at the vast rural Nepal. After arrival at Kathmandu, you check-in the hotel and will be free for sightseeing and the farewell dinner and souvenir shopping for the trekkers. This is the change from the trekking scenario to urban luxury for the trekkers.

Departure from Kathmandu

Today is the last day of your Annapurna Circuit with Tilicho Lake trekking. You will be transferred to Tribhuvan international airport to board the flight for your destination. If you have leisure hours before your flight, then you can roam around the city, take a last taste of Nepali food or walk along the touristy sites of the city to cherish your last hours in the exotic Kathmandu. The experience will be a perfect farewell to your enthralling Himalayan journey. You will take back some of the most cherishing memories of high mountain passes, tranquil villages and immense natural beauty of the Himalayas from Kathmandu. Trekking to Tilicho lake and crossing the Thorong La Pass, all these accomplishments will surely make your tour a magnificent expedition. It is not just the trekking experience but also a spiritual journey of knowing yourself through the eyes of another culture. The journey is complete here but the memories will be with you until the end of your life.

What's Included

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What's Not Included

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Equipment & Packing List

Best time For Annapurna Circuit with Tilicho Lake trek
The best time to do the Annapurna Circuit with Tilicho Lake Trek is primarily the spring (March-May) and autumn (September-November) seasons. These are the seasons that generally experience the most stable weather conditions, offering clear mountain views and safest trek conditions throughout the Annapurna region. As this trek involves a high-altitude section with Tilicho Lake and Thorong La pass, selection of the correct season is very important for the overall safety of trekkers.

Spring is undoubtedly one of the beautiful seasons for this trek. During this time, especially from March to May the climate changes from the cold winter into the pleasantly warm spring season, and at lower hilly parts the entire hills are covered with beautiful blossoming rhododendron and green foliage. The morning during the spring season is very clear, providing an exceptional view of the snow-capped mountains. The moderate temperature is pleasant enough to make the long trekking day easily possible. But in late May, haziness starts appearing in lower hills.

Autumn is widely recommended as the best season for the trek. In September to November, the monsoon rain stops completely and wash the dusty air, providing a crystal clear view of the mountains that remains till mid of November. The weather is generally very stable, the sky is deep blue and trekking trails are perfect to cross the high altitude Thorong La pass. However this season is the peak time for trekkers, thus it is better to pre-book for hotels and rooms in the teahouses.

The winter season (December-February) in Annapurna region is extremely cold at high altitude and the path may get covered with snow which can eventually block Thorong La pass. Although the weather condition offers stunning clear views at the high altitude, only skilled and experienced trekkers should plan their trek during this season. June to August are the monsoon months for Annapurna, where trekkers may face continuous rainfall at lower parts, resulting in slippery and unstable trails that could lead to landslides.

Considering these facts, Spring and Autumn seasons are most suited to Annapurna Circuit with Tilicho Lake trek and the autumn is one of the ideal seasons for trekking.

Accommodation, Foods and Drinks
Accommodation on Annapurna Circuit with Tilicho Lake trek are basically managed in teahouses which are simple lodges in the Himalayas run by local families. Along Annapurna region, these teahouses provide a humble and peaceful place for trekkers to stay. Usually rooms consist of two beds, a mattress, a blanket, and shared bathrooms. However on the higher parts as well as before reaching the destination such as around Manang, Yak Kharka and Tilicho Lake, accommodations are getting more fundamental due to the isolation of the area and shortage of basic amenities.

Teahouses provide a cozy atmosphere and it would be a pleasant experience. Most teahouses have dining rooms which are usually warmed by a stove; this is where everyone gathers to eat dinner and enjoy chatting and sharing experiences. Electricity and Wi-Fi are available in lower elevation areas but mostly are absent as it gets higher in altitudes.

The foods available in Annapurna Circuit with Tilicho Lake trek are surprisingly varied given the isolated nature of the trekking areas. The famous and recommended dish is Dal Bhat which consists of rice, lentil soup, vegetable dishes and pickles. It is the staple food of Nepal, and its high energy value makes it ideal for trekking. Many teahouses offer unlimited refills of Dal Bhat. Other alternatives include noodles, fried rice, spaghetti, pancake, various types of soups and Tibetan breads. However in the higher altitude the menu becomes much limited as it is very hard to transport goods.

In villages such as Manang and other lower parts, there are bakeries, cafes where you could have a good cup of tea/coffee along with cake and pastry, which would be like refreshment on a very long day of trekking.

The beverages you can get are various types of tea (black tea, milk tea, ginger tea, lemon tea), coffee, hot chocolate and herbal teas. Ginger tea would be ideal to get yourself warm in the cold and helps in better digestion while at the highest altitude. You can buy bottled water but it is better if you use purifying tablets or boiled water.

In general, accommodation and food on this trek are simple yet provide a sufficient amount of energy, warmth and relaxation in the middle of Himalayan scenery.

Preparation and Fitness

Proper preparation and fitness play vital roles for undertaking Annapurna Circuit with Tilicho Lake Trek in Annapurna Region. This is one of the most challenging yet rewarding trekking routes in Annapurna Region that is extremely strenuous involving trekking at high altitudes, narrow off-the- beaten paths and difficult ascents like visit to Tilicho Lake and passing the Thorong La Pass at an altitude of 5,416m.

Physical fitness is paramount to this trek. It is not a must that trekkers must be an athlete but rather have adequate endurance and stamina. It involves walking 5-8 hours a day with varied terrain which may involve steep ascents, steep descents, rocky paths etc. Doing cardiovascular exercises like walking, jogging, cycling, swimming etc for at least 4-6 weeks before the trek will bring you to adequate physical condition.

Strength training can be done particularly targeting the legs and the core muscles. Exercises like lunges, squats, stair climbers help in gaining leg strength for uphills trekking and carrying a rucksack. Hiking with a loaded rucksack before the trek is highly advisable.

Mental preparation also plays a significant role. High altitude trekking can be slow-paced and exhausting so a lot of patience and optimism is needed during the trek. Changing weather patterns, limited comforts in trekking lodges, long hours of trekking requires the trekkers to be mentally strong.

Acclimatization planning is also a part of good preparation for this trek. It is mandatory that rest days are allocated, especially to places like Manang to allow the body to acclimatize with the lack of oxygen. Hydration and steady walking will play a major role in avoiding altitude sickness.

Equipping appropriate gears is also a crucial part of preparing the trek. Warm clothes which include layers of clothing, a good quality wind-cheater and a waterproof jacket, well worn hiking boots and sleeping bag etc are necessary for the safety and comfortable stay at trekking lodges.

By following the required precautions even a normal fitness trekker can successfully accomplish this beautiful, strenuous and magnificent Himalayan journey.

Permits and Rules

Trekking in Annapurna region demands certain permits and rules to ensure trekkers' safety and preservation of this sensitive area. The trekking circuit with Tilicho lake requires two particular permits:

The Annapurna Conservation Area Permit (ACAP) is mandatory for any traveler intending to enter this region and it contributes in the conservation programs and development

projects. The Trekkers' Information Management System (TIMS) card is another mandatory permit which is needed to track the trekkers for the safety of the latter.

Some parts of this trekking route passes through remote high altitude regions like Tilicho lake and Thorong la pass; therefore the prescribed trekking routes have to be strictly adhered and authorized itinerary have to be followed. Trekking alone is not encouraged in certain prohibited zones; in general hiring a licensed trekking guide is highly recommended or in some instances made mandatory.

These permits can be purchased either in Kathmandu or in Pokhara from the registered trekking agencies. Usually they require copies of the passport and photographs.

While trekking the local laws and ethics must be observed-this includes effective waste management, respecting the religious sites and following the guidelines set by the trekking guide.

Conclusion

The Annapurna circuit with Tilicho lake trek, truly is a most comprehensive and enjoyable trek in the Annapurna Region. It is very hard to find a trek in the Himalayas which incorporates beautiful scenery, culture and physicality as well as this trek. One of the key and most memorable parts of this trek, the visit to the high altitude Tilicho Lake, along with a trip over the very high Thorong La Pass, would make the trekker feel the utmost of their achievements and add a whole new, unique dimension to an already incredible trip.

Despite this trek being particularly challenging in parts, by preparing properly, acclimatizing thoroughly, and taking a route that fits the requirements of the trekkers it would prove that anything is possible, and that it isn't so much about a trek as about one of the most memorable holidays one will ever experience, with an incredible progression of diverse and impressive scenes along the way.

Pricing

Group Size	Price per Person (USD)
Individual	$0.0

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is previous trekking experience required?

A: Although previous trekking experience is useful, it is not necessarily required for this trek. However, beginners who are in good shape and properly prepared can accomplish the trek easily. Due to the high altitude that this trek gains like Tilicho Lake and Thorong La Pass, the trekking background can ease the expedition. Regular walking, cardiovascular exercises, and a short hike before starting the expedition will be a great help. Knowledge on the correct pace and fluid consumption will be valuable. The guide is strongly recommended for first-time trekkers.

Q: Is Altitude Sickness on this Trek a concern?

A: Altitude sickness will be a problem during this trek and you will need to think about it at altitude above 3000m. Altitude sickness will make you have headaches, feel lightheaded, dizzy, have a sick stomach, etc. At Tilicho Lake and over Thorong La Pass there will be increased altitude sickness, this risk will be lower with more acclimatization, this time it is important to spend days at Manang before you go to the higher altitudes so you get used to thin air and also drinking plenty and eating normally is crucial as is controlling your pace and listening to your body and going to a lower altitude if it gets worse. Trekking with a guide will be much safer as they know the signs of altitude sickness and can help.

Q: What accommodation and food should I expect?

A: You can expect very simple teahouses for accommodation throughout your trek in the Annapurna region. The rooms have 2 twin beds and a shared toilet and bathroom and at higher altitudes near Tilicho Lake the room opportunities are smaller. You can expect a varied diet of energetic food which is mainly composed of Dal Bhat, this is made of rice, lentils and vegetables, along with other options like noodles, soups and pancakes. Tea, coffee and hot drinks are available in abundance. Facilities at these teahouses are basic however the people will ensure you are very welcome and the food will provide the necessary energy required when trekking in the mountains.

Q: What is Annapurna Circuit with Tilicho Lake Trek difficulty?

A: Annapurna circuit with Tilicho lake trek is rated as moderately difficult to difficult as it is quite long in terms of distance and time, quite high and covers varied terrain. The trek consists of walking for 5-8 hours daily for days in steep, rough and remote trails. Climbing up to Tilicho lake at 4919m, and crossing the Thorong la pass at 5416m are two of the most arduous sections as the altitude gets very high and oxygen levels drop. The trekking does not involve any technical climbing however adequate fitness level, acclimatization, and mental stamina is required.

Q: What is the best time for this trekking?

A: The ideal time to trek Annapurna region are spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November). These seasons usually have stable weather and clear sky providing great views in the Annapurna region. Spring time is good due to the flowers such as Rhododendron blooming and also moderate temperature, whereas autumn offers best views for Tilicho Lake and Thorong La pass due to clear sky conditions. In the winter it is too cold and many high passes can be closed due to snowfall. Monsoon season leads to many landslides and rainfall. Between spring and autumn, Autumn is a bit preferred as it has more stable weather conditions.