**OFF THE BEATEN EAST TRAIL**

**Trip Introduction:**

If you are looking for your next big adventure, the off beaten trails in the Eastern Nepal is the place to find it. In this remote area and less traveled part of the country you can find some of the region’s unique flora and flora combined with its rich biodiversity helps the wildlife in the region thrive.

Main point of interest during this trek is the “Janaki Mandir”, Mai Pokhari and the illustrious “Tea Gardens of Nepal”. The historic and cultural richness of these places make the trip well worth it.

“Janaki Mandir” of Janakpur dedicated to the Hindu Goddess is a beautiful example of the Koiri Hindu architecture. The three storied structure is made entirely of stone and marble. Visiting the temple, you can see all its 60 rooms decorated with colored glass, engraving, painting, with lattice windows and turrets.

Mai Pokhari situated at an elevation of 2100m. The lake has 9 corners believed to have paying tributes to the nine different Gods, a pilgrimage center for both Hindu and Buddhist followers. The calming surroundings combined by the lake’s emerald hue makes the trip to this place well worth it.

The vast “Tea Gardens of Illam” hold distinction of being the best and most popular tea garden in Nepal and around the world. From this place you can see the vast sloped tea hill till the horizon. Explore the vast tea gardens, lakes, viewpoints of the surrounding hills in Illam. This place is a must visit for nature enthusiasts and those seeking tranquility amidst the captivating landscapes.

Trekking across this region you can see Mount Kanchenjunga, the third highest peak (8586m) followed by Mount Everest and K2. You can opt for an early hike to Antu Dadha for the panoramic sunrise views of the Himalayan range.

Off beaten East Trail covers all the natural, historical and religious aspects of Nepal. This trail is ideal for those seeking adventure without the more crowded Everest and Annapurna trekking routes.

**Trip Facts:**

- **Trip Duration:** 10 days / 9 nights

- **Destination:** Janakpur, Antu Pokhari, Ilam, Mai Pokhari

- **Altitude:** Up to 2,750 meters (9,022 feet)

- **Best Season:** 1 October – 15 November / 1 March – 30 April

- **Activities:** Cultural Exploration, Trekking, Tea and dairy factory visit.

**Trip Highlights:**

* Visit the 115 years old historic “Janaki Mandir”.
* Enjoy the panoramic views of Mount Everest and Kanchenjunga.
* Explore the vast tea gardens of Illam.
* Visit the Tea estates and dairy factory.
* Enjoy the sunrise and sunset views from Antu Dadha.
* Trek across different region and explore the various flora and fauna.
* Experience the emerald waters of Mai Pokhari.

**Detailed Day to Day Itinerary:**

**Day 1: Drive to Janakpur via Sindhuli Highway.**

Your tour starts as you drive to Janakpur, located in the southern plains of the Terai. Covering over 200 kilometers, the journey will take around eight hours. As you travel along the winding roads of Sindhuli Highway, enjoy the beautiful views along the Sunkoshi River, making the drive a memorable experience.

**Overnight in Janakpur.**

**Day 2: Explore Janakpur and visit the Janaki Mandir Temple.**

Begin your morning exploring Janakpur, a city with over 80,000 residents that reflects a distinctly Indian atmosphere, setting it apart from what you have experienced in the Kathmandu Valley. Start your visit at the Janaki Mandir Temple, the city’s main attraction. This magnificent structure holds great significance in Hindu mythology, as recounted in the epic Ramayana. Due to its connection to the story of Ram and Sita, countless Hindu pilgrims flock to Janakpur each year.

Next, head to the Nepal Railway, the only railway station in the country. Janakpur is unique in Nepal, being the sole city with both a station and a train. The railway stretches about fifty kilometers to the Indian border.

In the afternoon, continue your visit with the Women Development Center. Here, local women skillfully create traditional Maithili crafts, representative of the indigenous ethnic group in this Terai region. You will have the opportunity to purchase these beautifully crafted products, making for a meaningful souvenir.

**Overnight in Janakpur.**

**Day 3: Drive from Janakpur to Antu Danda via Kanyam.**

Leaving Janakpur, head to the far east of Nepal, following the Indian border before ascending into the hill country of the Ilam district. After an eight-hour drive, you will arrive in the tea-growing region, known for its temperate climate. Along the way, you will stop at Kanyam, where you can stroll through the stunning tea plantations lining the road and capture as many photos as you like. An additional hour’s drive brings you to Antu Danda, where you will spend the night. Here, you will have the opportunity to explore Antu Pokhari, a charming small pond nestled between pine trees and tea bushes.

**Overnight at Antu Danda.**

**Day 4: Drive to Karfok. Visit the observation Tower of Shree Antu, Explore Illam and visit tea and dairy factory.**

Start your day with a visit to the observation tower at Shree Antu, just a 45-minute drive from your hotel at the hilltop. Here, you can admire the sunrise over the summit of Kanchenjunga, which resembles a reclining Buddha, with the head to the west and the belly and feet to the east. After breakfast, head out to explore the Ilam region, beginning with a drive to Pashupatinagar, a town on the Nepal-India border, located just a few kilometers from Darjeeling. Next, visit a dairy factory known for its cheese and churpi (Dog Chew), a local specialty. Continue your day with a tour of a tea factory nestled within the tea plantations. Finally, you will arrive at Karfok, where you will stay at a homestay for the night.

**Overnight in Karfok.**

**Day 5: Drive from Karfok** **(1600m) to Dhap (1330m) and trek to Thumke. [4.5 hours]**

Today your journey is short and exhilarating one. Have your breakfast early morning and prepare for your drive to Karfok, on the way you can choose to visit Karfok bazar or the 350 years old Lepcha Gumba. After passing by a few village settlements you reach Dhap. Rest and have tea as you prepare an uphill trek to Thumke. The landscape is mostly pine trees and grassland. Trekking further you reach the settlement of Thumke perched at a plateau at an altitude of 2150m. Here, you can rest for the night at a local homestay.

**Overnight at Thumke.**

**Day 6: Trek from Thumke** **(2150m) to Jaubhari.** **(2750m) [5.5 hours]**

Today, you will trek from Thumke to Jhaubari. Ideal for those who enjoy the off beaten path this trail gradually ascend to 600m depending upon the trail condition. Immerse yourself in the natural beauty of the terraced fields, distant Himalayan peaks and dense forest. Due to it diverse flora and fauna, you might be lucky to spot the various bird species, butterflies and possibly even small mammals. Reach Jhaubari by late afternoon and settle into your accommodation.

**Overnight at Jaubhari.**

**Day 7: Trek from Jhaubari (2750m) to Jamuna (1720m) [5hours]**

Begin your descent from Jhaubari to Jamuna, the trail may involve in a mix of terrain including uphill and downhill sections, as well as traversing through forested areas and open fields. This off beaten trail usually less marked offers a peaceful escape from urban life, with a chance to enjoy solitude and natural beauty of the area. Depending upon your pace you will reach Jamuna, a small village with some scenic spots where you can relax after the trek.

**Overnight at Jamuna.**

**Day 8: Explore Mai Pokhari. (2050m) [5.5 hours]**

Today you will trek to Mai Pokhari, a sacred pond surrounded by dense forests. The nine different points of the lake represents the nine different Gods. It is also a pilgrimage site for both Hindu and Buddhist and is a sacred place among the local population. Spend the day exploring the area, taking in the tranquil beauty and spiritual ambiance of this high-altitude wetland. Rest for the night at a homestay at Mai Pokhari.

**Overnight stay at Mai Pokhari.**

**Day 9: Drive from Illam Bazaar back to Karfok.**

From Mai Pokhari Lake, a jeep will take you to Ilam Bazaar (1130m), discover this large town on top of a hill: on one side you can see the local settlements and on the other the tea plantations, these are known to be the first historical tea gardens of Nepal. Later, a two hour’s drive will get you back to Karfok.

**Overnight stay at Karfok.**

**Day 10: Drive to Bhadrapur or fly back to Kathmandu.**

As your journey to the “Off Beaten East Trail” come to an end you be heading to Bhadrapur. The journey takes about 2 hours and from here you can take a flight back to Kathmandu.

The afternoon is free for you to relax, go shopping or enjoy a massage.

**Overnight in Kathmandu.**

**Cost Includes:**

* Land transfer Kathmandu-Janakpur- Illam- Kathamndu by private vehicle (Note: Jamuna, Dhap we might be taking local jeep and request local bus transport)
* 10 days full board (3 meals per day, excluding drinks), accommodation in hotel/ Guesthouse/lodge/ Homestay
* An English-speaking trek guide (other language-speaking on request), his salary, his transport, his food, his accommodation, his insurance
* All entrance fees and trekking permits.
* All government and local tax.

**Cost Excludes:**

* Return flight ticket from Bhadrapur to Kathmandu.
* Round trip flight from your home country.
* Nepalese Visa.
* Insurance and medical evacuation in case of emergency.
* Stay in Kathmandu (accommodation, food, visits, transport…)
* Possible paying sites to visit during the trek like Monastery, Donation etc.
* Equipment for the trek (sleeping bag, hiking shoes, etc.)
* Personal expenses on the trek (drinks, shower, internet, etc.)
* Tips for the home team
* Services not mentioned in the ‘Included’ section