

# ADVENTUREX

WITHOUT ADVENTURE... WHAT IS LIFE?

## Sun Kosi & Tamur

### *The Classic Sun Kosi Expedition finishing on the mighty Lower Tamur*

This is the longest river trip offered in Nepal, carving through the beautiful Mahabharat Range on its meandering way from the 'put in' to the 'take out' at Chatra, far down on the Gangetic Plain. It's quite an experience to begin a river trip, barely 60 kms from the Tibetan border, and end the trip looking down the hot, dusty gun barrel of the North India Plain just eight days later. The Sun Kosi starts off fairly relaxed, with class II and small class III rapids to warm up on during the first couple of days. But don't be fooled, this river reserves some of its biggest and best rapids for the last days. Meat Grinder, High Anxiety, Jaws, Harkapur 2, Roller Coaster, and The Big Dipper are only some of the rapids that have earned their names and reputations from previous expeditions. Days of constant white water, time spent exploring villages, jungle, and some of the small Hindu temples along the way make this an unbeatable river expedition.

We then run the lower section of the Tamur. This is a phenomenal piece of river, with over 40 class IV+ rapids. Different in volume and nature, the Tamur is steeper and more technical, a perfect complement to the huge volume of the 'River of Gold'. All the guides rave about this trip!

#### Day 1:

Arrive in Kathmandu.

You will be met at the airport by an AdventureX guide (look out for the guide in the navy blue AdventureX t-shirt!) and transferred to your hotel. The airport is an extremely busy place so as a precaution keep your hand luggage zipped up and close to you. You may get approached by people wanting to help you – this is fine if you want to, although be prepared that they will want money. Keep some small coins and change in your pocket on its own (of any currency).

We will head off to the hotel and check you in. In the evening we will meet up and go into Thamel to one of the many fine restaurants.

(No meals included)

#### Day 2:

Free time in Kathmandu to explore this amazing city. From observing early morning sessions of prayer wheel turning at the Buddhist Stupa of Bodhnath, to gaining a glimpse of the Living Goddess in Durbar Square, there are endless things to see. Or if you fancy a bit of retail therapy check out the multitude of shops selling branded fleeces and good quality merchandise – and be prepared to bargain! Finish the day with a relaxing cold drink in one of the many terrace cafes whilst the sun starts to go down on the distant snow-capped Himalayan Mountains. We'll meet up and have a pre-departure meeting and meal together.

(Breakfast included)

#### Days 3 - 9:

After a hearty breakfast we set off north towards the river. The put in for the Sun Kosi is only 2 hours away by bus through the ancient city of Baktapur and out of the Kathmandu valley to the village of Dolalghat. On a clear day the views of the Himalayas and Mt. Everest are incredible. At our put in point we sort equipment, inflate the rafts and have a safety talk. For the rafters - our river guides will take time explaining the finer points on how to paddle through whitewater and we have plenty of time to practice

on the numerous smaller rapids we encounter on the first couple of days on the river. By the time we get to the really big rapids like Meat Grinder, High Anxiety and Harkapur the crews will be working together perfectly and you're not going to believe what you see, hear, and feel. It is absolutely awesome! Your senses will be completely stimulated and you will feel on top of the world!

From Dolalghat we have 270km of blissful motor-free river before we hit the next road. 270 km of living with no other purpose than to see how much fun we can have. In no time at all your concerns from your life back home will seem distant, unimportant and forgotten. Hurrah!

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 checking out this porter town we drift down to a rapid called Harkapur 2. Pulling over 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 is always an interesting rapid and there is plenty more to come. A few kms downstream we watch out for the famous Dudh Kosi, the river of milk, which tumbles down from Mount Everest. 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 along the river creating ideal campsites. We will have at least one layover day where we stay at the same river camp for two nights. HELLO BEACH PARTY!!! Volleyball, foot bag, Frisbee, sun bathing or just relaxing on a warm beach with a good book are favourite activities for the layover day. You can also take advantage of the layover day to trek to a peak or nearby village, or take part in the kayak workshop the safety boaters offer.

(Included: All meals Days 4-10)

#### Day 10:

The last big rapid of the trip is called the Big Dipper. It's then a quiet cruise down the confluence with the Tamur and Arun 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 Chetra. Every year on the day of the full moon in January, 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 lays India and all its semi functional chaos.

By noon we have reached the takeout. 2 hours by bus brings us to Mulghat where we make a riverside camp right beside the mighty Tamur River. Sleep well tonight because the next day is going to knock your socks off!

(Included: All meals)

#### Day 11:

The Lower Tamur is without a doubt one of the most exciting things you can do in Nepal, and quite possibly one of the best short rafting sections offered anywhere in the world. The Tamur is a steep and continuously powerful mountain river; a unique combination of exceptionally fun and challenging rapids without it ever getting past the point of recreation. It's sort of like being flushed down a huge open-air toilet but there are no worries! Emerald green fields are terraced high above the river on precipitous slopes, curious villagers lining suspension bridges are amazed as we plunge through cascading waves

and chutes of foam. A full day on the river brings us to the sandy camp at the confluence of the Sun Kosi.

(Included: All meals)

### Day 12:

The final day we raft the Sun Kosi to Chatra. From the takeout it is a short 2 hours drive then a 55 minute flight back to Kathmandu and a welcome hot shower. The mountain views on a clear day are absolutely gorgeous as the flight goes right along the main Himalayas.

(Included: All meals except evening meal in Kathmandu)

### Day 13:

Free time in Kathmandu to explore this amazing city. From observing early morning sessions of prayer wheel turning at the Buddhist Stupa of Bodhnath, to gaining a glimpse of the Living Goddess in Durbar Square, there are endless things to see. Or if you fancy a bit of retail therapy check out the multitude of shops selling branded fleeces and good quality merchandise – and be prepared to bargain! Finish the day with a relaxing cold drink in one of the many terrace cafes whilst the sun starts to go down on the distant snow-capped Himalayan Mountains. We'll meet up and have a pre-departure meeting and meal together.

(Breakfast included)

### Day 14:

A leisurely breakfast brings us to the end of this brilliant river trip, and transfer to the airport for your international flight home.

(Breakfast included)

### NOTE:

This is our planned itinerary, however these trips are run in remote environments and are at the mercy of local conditions, weather etc so alterations can happen to the itinerary. We ask that all people come with an open mind and understand things may not always go to plan. We will endeavour to make things run smoothly and stick to the planned itinerary but we cannot control weather, river water levels etc. But this is an adventure... it's what we're all here for!

## The Details

### What Is Included?:

- Transfers to and from Kathmandu Airport and the hotel.
- Accommodation – 4 nights in hotels, 9 nights camping, 1 beach safari camp. This is based on a share twin basis with someone else on the trip.
- All tented accommodation
- Transfers to and from the rivers
- All meals as specified in the above itinerary.
- All camping equipment (sleeping bags and thermorests excluded)
- Qualified and experienced guides and safety kayakers.
- All necessary permits and licenses.
- An AdventureX t-shirt.

### Flights/Check-In:

#### *Baggage allowance*

If you are bringing a kayak we tend to suggest putting your bulky light items such as helmet, spraydeck, cags etc in your kayak to free up more space in your main luggage. And as they sometimes don't weigh hand luggage, put your small heavy items in your hand luggage. There has been research shown that

the buoyancy aid may also be affected if it is in the main cargo hold of a plane so if possible attach to your hand luggage/rucksack if you have one.

### *Airport Security*

Please check out the standard airport regulations a couple of days prior to departure. The current security procedure is that you can carry medication and cosmetics and creams onto the plane, however they have to be a certain size and also in a transparent re-sealable bag in your hand luggage (re-sealable sandwich bags from Sainsburys do the trick!). If they are not sealed in a transparent bag they will be removed and retained. You are also allowed only 1 piece of hand luggage per person.

For up-to-date details please see websites such as the following:

<http://www.holidayextras.co.uk/airport-information/heathrow-airport-security.html>

### **Do I Need A Visa?:**

There are two ways to obtain a visa:

The best and easiest way to get your visa is to apply to the Nepalese Embassy in London by post before you leave. The cost is currently £25 for 30 days (single entry). Just send your passport, photo plus application form (enclosed) plus £25 postal order or bank draft (payable to the Nepalese Embassy) and your visa will be with you within 2 weeks. For full information, visit [http://www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa\\_information.html](http://www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa_information.html) . We recommend sending your passport/visa application by recorded delivery, and also obtain a second recorded deliver envelope form your post office and send this so the embassy can use it to return your passport and completed visa.

The second way is to acquire your visa on arrival in Nepal. Fill in the visa form attached and join the queue for "Without Visa" in the arrivals hall. Please make sure you have a passport photo to attach to your visa form, and please bring \$USD to pay for your visa. The costs are currently: \$25 for a 15 day visa, \$40 for a 30 day visa, and \$100 for a 90 day visa.

#### **Notes:**

1. Your address in Nepal (to add to your visa form will be: Hotel Tradition, Thamel. Kathmandu).
2. Please make sure you have at least 6 months validity on your passport prior to departure.

### **Arrival:**

On arrival in Kathmandu you must complete an Embarkation/Disembarkation Card (these are obtained as you enter the airport arrivals) and present your visa. If you obtained a visa at the London Embassy before you left then that's great. If you are applying for one at the airport, please make sure you have a passport photo and *new crisp* US dollars - as they will not accept payment in any other form.

For the forms you will need your flight details, hotel address (which is: Hotel Tradition, Thamel, Kathmandu) and trip dates.

### **Injections / Health:**

We recommend that you contact your Medical centre for professional advice.

As a guide you will be looking at Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid and Polio and have an up-to-date Tetanus shot. Some of these immunizations take a few weeks, so don't leave it to the last minute and do check with your local health department for more detailed information. A thorough dental check-up is also strongly recommended before you leave.

If you have any medical conditions please make sure they are known to us before arrival. On the river and while travelling we carry a very comprehensive first aid kit, but if you want to bring your own personal basic first aid kit by all means do.

Antibiotics and other medications are available in Nepal without a prescription and at a fraction of the cost of the rest of the world. You do, however, need to know the chemical name (not the brand name) of what you want, as well as the dosages and side effects. Consult your doctor at home. Some drugs

(which are not available in the West) are available in Nepal, and they can be much more effective and potent than Western equivalents, so consult a knowledgeable source before buying.

### Spending Money:

This is entirely your call on how much you want to spend and how many presents you want to bring back. All meals are included on the trip apart from those in Kathmandu, so you just need money for a beer kitty (if you drink), snacks and personal spend. Generally large beers will cost you about £2 each and the beer/wine/rum kitty for the multi-day trips will be even cheaper. A good 2 – 3 course meal in towns will be less than £10 - so all very cheap. For presents - cheap fleeces can be bought for \$2 - \$5. Top of the range fleeces (i.e. they come out of the same factory as the originals!) \$20 - \$30.

Take some cash (sterling or US\$) so you can get it changed straight away when there, and travellers cheques (sterling/US\$) if you want as well just to be safe. There are also cash machines in Kathmandu if you get caught short!

### Exchange Rates:

As a reference the Nepali Rupee currently stands at Nepali Rupee 65 to 1\$ and for the British pound it is 120 to £1 – however it changes frequently. To change your currency once in Nepal, use only certified foreign exchange points or alternatively your hotel as there are a lot of people who will jump at the chance to help – this is definitely not recommended! GBPE and US\$ are the most widely accepted currencies to exchange for Rupees.

### Weather:

One of the most fascinating things about Nepal is that in the space of a hundred miles you can go from the coldest and most bitter conditions on earth to the sweltering heat of the North Indian Plain. In general it's best to plan for sub-tropical to temperate conditions on the rivers. Temperatures in the daytime range from 25-32 degrees centigrade, with evenings being 8 to 10 degrees cooler. A fleece jacket/ thermals for the evenings is recommended.

### Dress Code:

On the river anything goes and with hot temperatures you will of course spend most of your time in your shorts and bathing cosies. However when it comes to the towns you must dress appropriately. Ladies should wear t-shirts/blouses and knee length skirts or trousers (cut off combats do the trick!) and men should cover up their chests with shirts/t-shirts. The guys can usually get away with shorts but must be prepared to wear trousers when going to temples.

### Bargaining:

Meals are excellent and very reasonably priced in Kathmandu. Many things such as food, bus and plane transportation fares, and items purchased in cold stores have fixed rates, but most things in Nepal are bartered for. Taxi and rickshaw rides, souvenirs, and crafts must be bargained for, and the starting price can be ridiculous. Be patient, polite, and dogged in your determination to pay as close to the local price as possible. Currently, prices for a beer range from US\$1 to US\$2 (depending on can or bottle, imported or local). A full meal with appetizer and small desert will range from US\$5 to US\$10, again, depending on type of meal and restaurant. Shops carry unique items such as Tibetan carpets and Thankas (religious paintings), Nepalese wood carvings and bronze Buddhas, exquisite jewellery and other remarkable wares. It's fairly easy to get carried away – just make sure you can get it home again!

### Tips:

It is also customary to tip your Nepali river staff. Tips should be given to the Trip Leader to be divided amongst all the staff on the trip.

### General Advice:

- Respect privacy when taking photographs
- Respect holy places

- Refrain from giving money to children since it will encourage begging
- Respect for local etiquette earns you respect
- Let the Himalayas change you - Do not change them
- Protect the natural environment
- Leave the campsite cleaner than you have found it
- Limit deforestation - make no open fires
- Burn dry papers and packets in a safe place
- Keep local water clean and avoid using pollutants
- Plants should be left to flourish in their natural environment
- Help your guides and porters to follow conservation measures

#### **Exports:**

It is illegal to export objects over 100 years old (sacred images, paintings, manuscripts) that are valued for culture and religious reasons. Visitors are advised not to purchase such items as they are Nepal's cultural heritage and belong here

#### **Finally:**

It is imperative that you realise that you are entering an environment where the rules and realities of life are much different from the West. Certain events such as festivals sometimes delay the itineraries and are just part of everyday life in Asia. It's a big part of what makes Nepal magical, and in our opinion, it is

by far outweighed by the brilliance of being able to journey through one of the world's last true frontiers. This is an awesome river expedition and one that you will remember for years to come!