



ESCORTED TOUR

NEPAL & INDIA: COLOURS & FLAVOURS

WITH

CHRIS & CAROLYN CALDICOTT

25 OCTOBER – 7 NOVEMBER 2019



Varanasi

THE ULTIMATE TRAVEL COMPANY
ESCORTED TOURS

NEPAL & INDIA: COLOURS & FLAVOURS WITH CHRIS & CAROLYN CALDICOTT

25 OCTOBER – 7 NOVEMBER 2019

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CHRIS CALDICOTT



Since travelling to some of the most remote parts of the world as Photographer-in-Residence to the Royal Geographical Society, Chris Caldicott has continued his globetrotting lifestyle as a freelance photographer, writer and lecturer specialising in food and travel. He has had several books published about food, travel and the spice trade and visited 118 countries on assignments to capture evocative images and write about memorable experiences for publications such as *Vanity Fair*, *Condé Nast Traveller*, *The Sunday Times*, *Harpers Bazaar*, *Tatler*, *House and Garden* and *The Telegraph*. Chris will offer an initial workshop at the beginning of the trip on how to take better travel photographs and get the best out of your camera covering exposure, focus and composition illustrated with examples of his own work. He will also be offering one to one tutorials on photography and individual cameras and curating opportunities to capture creative images of the journey.

CAROLYN CALDICOTT



Carolyn Caldicott owned and ran the World Food Café in London's Covent Garden for 20 years. She now works as an author, cook and food writer and has with her husband Chris written 14 cookbooks about global cuisine, and been commissioned to write bespoke recipe books for private clients. Carolyn is also a contributing food and travel writer to *Elle*, *Conde Nast Traveller*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *The Guardian* and has been featured in *Ok Magazine*, *The Telegraph*, *Observer Food Monthly* and *Waitrose Magazine*, cooked live on the Food Channel and been a guest on America's Live Kitchen. Carolyn will give an introduction to the regional cuisine and the dishes you will enjoy on the journey and be on hand to explain the mysteries of the weird and wonderful ingredients you will see along the way.

QUALITY OF SERVICE

We like to think that our success has been built on a simple formula - to deliver a high standard of service before, during and after each holiday, a duty of care and commitment to you, and value for money. We aim to be totally flexible in our approach, as this allows us to create the holiday that you want and one that is easy and enjoyable to plan.

However, if you feel that there are areas in which we could improve our service to you, please do not hesitate to contact either our Managing Director Nick Van Gruisen, or Executive Director Rowan Paterson, on 020 7386 4646. You can also email them:

nick@theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk
rowan@theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk

DETAILED ITINERARY

Join Chris and Carolyn Caldicott on a curated journey starting in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley. Take a flight around Mount Everest and travel on to a remote mountain lodge in the Nepalese Himalayas. Continue to Chitwan National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site and the country's most visited national park. End in the vibrant ancient holy city of Varanasi.

DAY 1: FRIDAY, 25 OCTOBER

LONDON / DELHI

Suggested flights (not included in the cost of the tour) British Airways BA 257 departing London Heathrow at 19.25 hrs.



Boudhanath Stupa



Kathmandu

DAY 2: SATURDAY, 26 OCTOBER

DELHI / KATHMANDU

Arrive in Delhi at 08.20 hrs and connect to an Indigo flight 6E 31 departing Delhi at 11.45 hrs arriving Kathmandu at 13.45 hrs.

Transfer to the luxury Hyatt Regency Kathmandu city resort hotel situated outside the city centre near the Boudhanath Stupa. Afternoon city tour of Kathmandu including the famous UNESCO Pashupatinath Temple which is considered one of the most sacred temples of the Hindu faith, serving as the seat of the national deity, Lord Pashupatinath, and famous for its burning ghats. Also visit the great white stupa at Boudhanath, one of the world's largest stupas and also the most important Tibetan Buddhist monument outside Tibet. Traditional six-course Nepali dinner at Dwarikas Hotel's Krishnarpan restaurant.

DAY 3: SUNDAY, 27 OCTOBER

KATHMANDU

Visit Swayambhunath, the 'Monkey Temple', the oldest shrine in the world established more than 2,500 years ago, situated on top of a high hill and commanding superb views of the valley below. The four sides of this ancient structure are painted with the compassionate eyes of Buddha. Rickshaw ride through Kathmandu including a stop at a local market.

Lunch at Kaiser Café in the Garden of Dreams. Afternoon at leisure with options to spend the afternoon in the shopping district of Thamel, soaking up the atmosphere, shopping or relaxing in bars; or further explore Kathmandu; or return to hotel to unwind by pool or enjoy the spa. Traditional Tibetan dinner at the home of long-term local resident Lisa Choegyal.

DAY 4: MONDAY, 28 OCTOBER

KATHMANDU

Morning trek through the scenic beauty of the Kathmandu Valley to the medieval town of Bhaktapur with a special curated picnic lunch en route.

Explore Bhaktapur, an ancient Newar town which is the third largest in the Kathmandu Valley and is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its rich culture, temples, and wood, metal and stone artwork. Late afternoon tea and snack stop in Bhaktapur before returning to Kathmandu. Dinner under own arrangements.



Mount Everest



Pokhara Valley

DAY 5: TUESDAY, 29 OCTOBER

KATHMANDU / POKHARA

Dawn flight from Kathmandu airport over Mount Everest (8,848 metres) during which you will have a bird's-eye view of the highest peak in the world and the Himalayan panorama. Later this morning, take a flight from Kathmandu to Pokhara and transfer to the Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge where two nights are spent. Situated on a spectacular hilltop ridge above the Pokhara Valley, the lodge has stunning mountain views. Accommodation is in hand-cut stone bungalows, set in natural gardens around the hilltop. The lodge's spa services include massage, yoga and meditation.

Lunch at the lodge. Afternoon at leisure before a short hike through the surrounding hills. Sunset drinks on the open terrace while enjoying the stunning views. Cooking demonstration followed by dinner at the lodge.

DAY 6: WEDNESDAY, 30 OCTOBER **POKHARA**

Ridge-top walk through the natural beauty of the Annapurna Mountains with breath taking views. Stop for a picnic lunch en route.

Return to relax or enjoy the lodge's facilities. Photo workshop with Chris followed by dinner at the lodge.

DAY 7: THURSDAY, 31 OCTOBER **POKHARA / CHITWAN**

Transfer to Pokhara for a flight to Bharatpur. On arrival transfer to Kasara Resort where three nights are spent. The resort is located on the borders of Chitwan National park, a UNESCO World Heritage site and the country's most visited national park. The resort's proximity to the national park ensures a close interaction with nature and the community forests of Chitwan. The essence of Kasara's design is a blend of simple luxury in a lush and natural jungle environment. Resort facilities include a spa, swimming pool, lounge bar and a restaurant serving much of its own organically vegetables and fruits.

Lunch at the resort. Settle in at the resort and enjoy an elephant ride with expert naturalist guide in National Park buffer zone. Dinner at the resort.



Chitwan National Park

DAY 8: FRIDAY, 1 NOVEMBER **CHITWAN**

Take a morning jeep safari inside the National Park with a chance to spot game such as the one horned rhinoceros, Royal Bengal Tiger, Leopard, Sloth bear, various species of deer, monkey and birds.

Lunch at the resort. Visit a local village. Dinner at the resort.

DAY 9: SATURDAY, 2 NOVEMBER

CHITWAN

Morning canoe ride on the Rapti River in a dugout canoe, made from a single tree, during which it is possible to see various birds and crocodile species and other animals alongside the banks.

Lunch at the resort. Evening jeep safari. Dinner at the resort.

DAY 10: SUNDAY, 3 NOVEMBER

CHITWAN / KATHMANDU

Morning forest walk with expert guides and a naturalist with opportunities to catch sight of various species of animals such as deer, rhinos, monkeys and birds.

Lunch at the resort. Transfer to Bharatpur for a flight to Kathmandu. On arrival transfer the Inn Hotel, situated in Patan Durbar Square, where one night is spent. An old traditional brick and timber Newari house transformed into a beautiful heritage hotel by conservation architect Rohit Ranjitkar the hotel is equipped with 10 individually designed rooms and a private courtyard in historic configuration. Dinner at a Chez Caroline.



Ganges, Varanasi



Bathing on the ghats

DAY 11: MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER

KATHMANDU / VARANASI

Morning visit to Durbar Square in Patan, city of arts and architecture, founded in 250 AD and also known as Lalitpur. It is renowned for its fine works in bronze, silver and copper.

Lunch in the Café of Patan Museum which faces Durbar Square and is housed in a beautifully restored and renovated former Malla palace. Transfer to Kathmandu airport for a flight to Varanasi. Transfer to the Taj Ganges Hotel where two nights are spent. The luxury hotel is set in 12 acres of landscaped gardens with facilities including a spa and swimming pool. Its restaurants rank amongst the best in the city, serving international cuisines as well as sumptuous *thalis*, inspired by produce from the hotel's own organic garden. Evening boat trip on the Ganges to see the sunset Aarti ceremony, a daily ritual conducted by Hindu priests, worshipping the river goddess with incense, camphor, flowers and earthen lamps. Dinner at the hotel.

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DAY 12: TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER

VARANASI

Early morning boat ride on the Ganges past the ghats to see pilgrims gathering on the steps that lead down to the river to bathe in the misty dawn light. Return to the hotel for breakfast and a morning at leisure.

Boat ride to Gai Ghat which is decorated with a huge statue of a cow symbolising Mother Earth and used to be the marker of the southern-most limit of the city. Walk back to the hotel along the ghats and through the backstreets, stopping to see temples, mosques, and the ancient Jantar Mantar observatory built by Maharaja Jai Singh in 1737. Try a fruit flavoured lassi at one of the lassi shops for which Varanasi has become known. Dinner on the roof terrace of the Brij Rama Palace Hotel.

DAY 13: WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER

VARANASI / DELHI

Further walking tour of the ghats from Assi Ghat north to the old city.

Lunch under own arrangements. Transfer to Varanasi airport for a flight to Delhi. On arrival, transfer to the Trident Gurgaon Hotel, where one night is spent. Conveniently located for the airport, the Trident hotel offers a tranquil setting with 7 acres of stunning landscaped gardens, walkways, courtyards, pools and fountains. Farewell al fresco dinner at the hotel.

DAY 14: THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER

DELHI / LONDON

Morning at leisure with lunch under own arrangements.

Transfer to Delhi International Airport. Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour) British Airways flight BA 256 departing Delhi at 11.05 hrs arriving at London Heathrow at 15.20 hrs.

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TOUR PRICE

COST	£5,530 PER PERSON
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Single Supplement	£1,280
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Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.

PRICE INCLUDES

- accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- breakfast daily; 9 lunches; 11 dinners
- domestic flights
- all entrance fees, visits, excursions and transportation as per the itinerary
- gratuities in restaurants for included meals; gratuities to driver/s; portage
- gratuities to guide/s
- local English-speaking guide/s
- the services of your tour leaders throughout

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights
- travel insurance
- visas
- items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 20/05/19

AIRLINE TICKETS

As a tour operator we have access to special airfares. While these offer good value, they do carry certain restrictions applied by the airline. Please ask us for details.

Note: If you are thinking about using air miles to upgrade to a premium cabin on the flights, please check with us first as fare restrictions might not permit this.

AIRLINE SEATING

The rules governing the pre-booking of seats vary from airline to airline. Some allow us to pre-book seats immediately and without charge, some only once the tickets are issued but with charge, and others only when you check in either on line or at the airport.

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We will clarify the rules for your specific carrier(s) with our confirmation documents. In the event that seating cannot be arranged until tickets are issued (normally six weeks prior to departure) and you prefer not to wait, we can issue your tickets earlier provided you are happy to pay in advance for the flight costs in addition to the required deposit for the holiday.

However, please be mindful that the majority of our discounted fare tickets, once issued, are non-refundable and will attract fees should you wish to make any date changes. Nor will you be allowed to change the actual flight routing.

PEACE OF MIND

You will probably be aware of the difficulties many travellers faced with obtaining refunds when their holidays were disrupted or cancelled as a result of such events as ash cloud, strike, snow and political unrest. By booking both your flights and land arrangements with us, not only are you guaranteed the peace of mind that comes with full financial protection but also all the round the clock assistance we are able to offer, should the need arise.

CHANGES TO THE ITINERARY

Please note, that certain elements of this itinerary, and/or the order of events, may well be subject to alteration due to circumstances beyond our control.

FITNESS TO TRAVEL

Whilst we do not impose any age limitations on joining a tour, participants must be reasonably fit. The very nature of the sightseeing involved in our tours (and the difficulties of direct access by coach in various places) means that a considerable amount of walking and standing is unavoidable on almost all tours. We regret that our tours are not suitable for people who have difficulty in walking, may require wheelchair assistance at any time, or are unable to keep pace with the group. If you are in any doubt as to the suitability of a tour, please make this known to us before you book and we will advise you accordingly. The Ultimate Travel Company reserves the right to decline a reservation without necessarily giving a reason. Your tour leader may also refuse to take participants on particular excursions if they feel that the rest of the group will be held up.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotels are chosen on the basis of category, character and location. The majority will be at least 4 star, otherwise the best available. The projected size of the group will often rule out the use of luxury boutique hotels. Sometimes the style of hotel will mean that not all rooms are of the same size or have the same outlook.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

No vaccinations are required for entry into Nepal but Typhoid and Hepatitis A & B are recommended. You should also check that your Polio and Tetanus immunisations are up-to-date. If you have travelled within a yellow fever infected area during the past two years, you will require proof of inoculation.

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No vaccinations are required for entry into India however if you have travelled within a yellow fever infected area during the previous six days prior to arrival you will require proof of inoculation. The following inoculations are recommended: Typhoid, Hepatitis A and B, Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio. Malaria is present throughout most of India so anti-malaria prophylactics are advised.

Please check recommended practice with your GP, practice nurse or travel health clinic. Detailed medical advice can be found on: <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx>.

PASSPORT AND VISA INFORMATION

British passport holders require a visa for Nepal. The visa can either be obtained in advance for a fee of £20 per person or on arrival in Kathmandu. You will need to have one passport photo with you and dollars cash - \$25 for a stay of up to 15 days or \$40 for a stay of up to 30 days.

Holders of foreign passports must check entry and visa requirements with us or the relevant embassy.

British Nationals require a visa for India. This can be obtained through the new online e-Tourist Visa service (currently the easiest and cheapest option), through CIBT (our recommended visa service provider) or directly through one of the Indian Visa Application Centres located throughout the UK.

Passengers should hold a full passport, which should be valid for six months after you return to the UK and should also have at least three empty pages for the visa. Nationals of other countries should consult their local Indian Embassy.

For British passport holders and for non-British nationals resident in the UK, visas can be arranged through CIBT Visa Service Company (an application pack will be provided two months before travel) or direct to the High Commission at <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk>.

FCO ADVICE

We recommend that you periodically review the travel advice issued by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, which relates to all aspects of your destination, at www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo.

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WHY CHOOSE US?

We have been organising bespoke, tailor-made holidays and escorted group tours around the world since the early 1990s. The opportunity that we identified then was for a travel company with the knowledge and enthusiasm of a smaller specialist, but with the range and buying power of a much larger organisation, and we like to think that we have maintained this balance over the years.

More importantly, we try to be an easy and friendly company to deal with, and because most of us have had the good fortune to work abroad, we are able to approach travel in a sensitive and intelligent way.

WHAT WE OFFER?

First-hand knowledge and personal service is at the core of what we offer. Our consultants travel to all the destinations that we feature on a very regular basis, so that the advice you receive is accurate and up-to-date. They will also look after you from the outset and assume full responsibility for ensuring that your travel plans are designed and delivered as requested.

Planning a holiday should be an enjoyable and effortless experience, and we will do all that we can to ensure that this is the case.

OUR REPUTATION

We have grown largely through personal recommendation and repeat business, and so we treat our reputation with care. The directors and owners of the company, led by Nick Van Gruisen, are very much 'hands on' so immediate decisions can be taken to ensure the standard of service that our clients have come to expect is maintained.

LOCAL REPRESENTATION

Equally crucial is the quality of our local associates and suppliers. It is they who look after you on holiday and it is their guides, vehicles and general support service that will determine your enjoyment of it. We therefore take great care to ensure that our ground handlers have the requisite expertise, efficiency and creativity, and also the ability to deal sensitively and swiftly with any situation that might arise. The fact that we have worked together for many years and know each other well is a further bonus.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

As a company with a passion for travel, we understand the vital support that tourism can provide to communities and fragile habitats throughout the world. At the same time, we are aware that tourism can have a negative impact and are committed to doing what we can to minimise this risk.

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In 2007, an independent body completed an Environmental Audit on all aspects of The Ultimate Travel Company. This covered not only our own practices but those of our worldwide suppliers, thereby ensuring that we all met the necessary environmental and employment criteria.

The audit also measured the carbon footprint produced by our London office and by our international travel, and we now offset this with an annual donation to Social Change and Development, a small but dynamic tree planting initiative in India.

Further initiatives include a 'charity donation' scheme, whereby we ask clients for a voluntary contribution of £10 which we then match. As a result of this initiative, a handful of small overseas charities, and the healthcare, environmental and educational projects that they run, now share an annual donation of more than \$100,000.

If you want further details of these initiatives, please ring Nick Van Gruisen on 02073864646.

EXTRA VALUE

It can be difficult at times to recognise the extra value promised by travel companies. Generally speaking, we all offer the same flight, the same hotel, the same excursion, the same sunset, and at similar prices....indeed in many ways, the same holiday experience!

Here, at The Ultimate Travel Company, we strive to go further. While we believe that the diversity of destination, intimate product knowledge and personal service we offer already sets us apart, we supply all our clients with detailed information on all aspects of their forthcoming journey, a 10% discount voucher at Daunt Books (described by The Daily Telegraph as 'the most beautiful bookshop in London – designed for travellers who like reading') and a welcome home 'surprise'.

Honeymooners can also look forward to a wedding gift on arrival at their chosen destination.

Moreover, we continually monitor your movements while you are away so that we can offer any assistance that might be required, effectively and without delay. And if genuine problems do arise as a result of any error on our part (few as these may be!), we will not shy away from our own responsibilities and our commitment to you.