

LANGTANG FESTIVAL

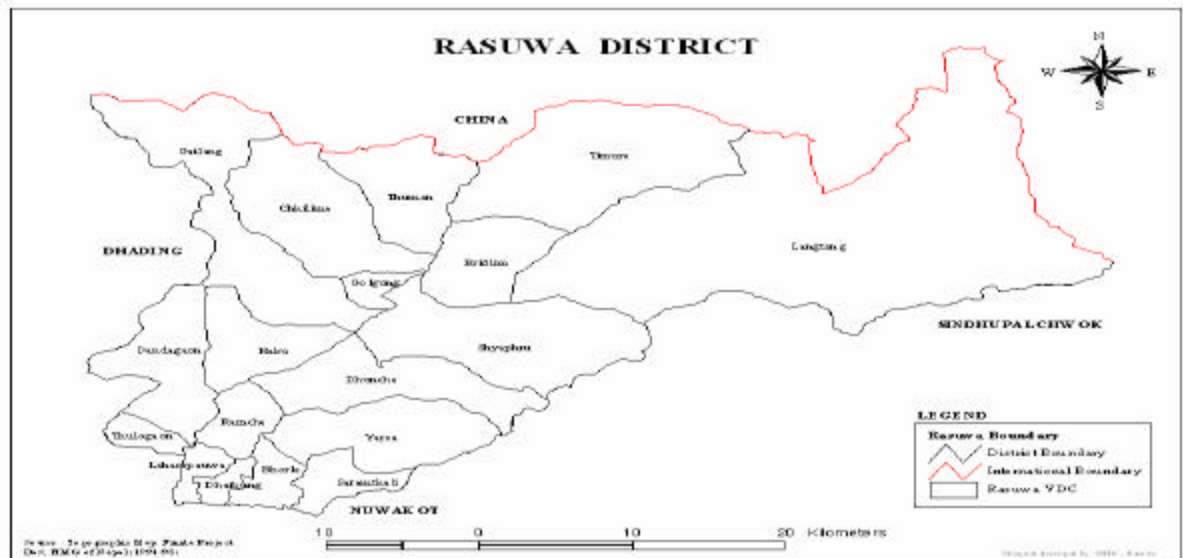
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FAM TRIP REPORT

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Rasuwa District - Langtang Region

Rasuwa district, situated at about 120-km north (32 nautical miles) of the capital city Kathmandu has a total area of 1544 sq.km. The altitudinal variation ranges from 845 (Betrabati) alms to 7245m (Langtang Lirung). The district is accessed with the 118 km long Pasang Lamu highway from Kathmandu. Rasuwa is the homeland of various ethnic groups and caste. The majority of the groups is dominated by Tamang (64%) followed by Brahmins (16%), Gurungs (7%), and so on. Rasuwa is rich equally in natural and cultural resources. Tourism has been emerged as the second most viable economic sector after agriculture (DPP 2002 Rasuwa).



Rasuwa constitutes major parts of Langtang area. Langtang is a popular tourism destination as well as a beautiful geographical landscape representing important part of Rasuwa, Sindhupalchok and Nuwakot districts. This area has been managed as Langtang National Park since 1976. The prime tourism resources and geographical area of the Park fall in Rasuwa district representing 974.5 sqkm out of 1710 sqkm area of National Park. Langtang is the third most popular trekking destination after Annapurna and Everest region. Trekking tourism was started here in 1979 and has reached a maximum number about 13000 in 2000. It absorbs about 10% of the trekkers coming to Nepal. Around 20000 pilgrimages also visit Goshaikunda each year. The trekking tourism in Langtang follows distinct seasonally and the busiest seasons are Oct-Nov and March-April (60%).

Major tourism resources

A visit to Langtang offers the kaleidoscopic insight of scenic landscape, magnificent nature and unique Tamang culture to the visitors within a few days trek from the capital City Kathmandu. The combination of natural and cultural resources has added the value of tourism potentiality in Langtang and has placed Langtang as **destination for many reasons**. The tourism resource of Rasuwa is broadly described under natural and cultural resources.

Natural resources: The landscape of Rasuwa is extremely dissected and much of the area comprises glacio-fluvial, colluvial and moraine deposits. The climatic conditions of the district range from sub tropical to arctic and this drastic variation of climate at a short distance has resulted the five broad categories of vegetation ranging from deciduous subtropical forests (Sal forest) to temperate, sub-alpine and alpine vegetation. Langtang area also comprises high level of biodiversity including 15 forest types, 3000 species of flowering plants, more than 10 species of Rhododendron, Orchids, Primulas etc.

The important faunal species includes Musk Deer, Snow Leopard, Red Panda Himalayan Tahr, Himalayan Langur, Asamese Monkey, 46 species of mammals and more than 250 species of identified birds etc. The beautiful Mountain peaks including Langtang-Lirung (7245m) Sanjen and Ganesh Himal as well as the adventurous pass including Gonjala pass, Lauribina pass, Pangsang pass, Langmala pass are the prime attraction of adventurous tourism in Rasuwa. Likewise high altitude lakes including Gosaikunda, Parvatikunda, Riverkunda, Dudh kunda, Jageshwar kund etc are also the prominent tourism features of cultural and scenic importance. Kyanjin valley, Langtang valley, Sanjen valley, Nagthali, Tatopani hot water Spring are the other areas of natural attraction in the district.

Cultural resources: Rasuwa district is equally rich in cultural heritages. Major cultural resources include Tamang culture, tradition, cultural sites and pilgrimage sites. Major area of cultural attraction are Gosaikunda, Langtang valley (a fusion of Tibetan and Tamang culture), Gutlang-Goljung areas

(living heritage of Tamang culture and architecture), Kanjin and Sing Gomba (oldest Buddhist monasteries). The presence of historic fort Rasuwa Gadi with the boarder to Tibet and historical and religious site Betrabati are other additional site of socio-cultural value in Rasuwa district.

Major tourism Product of the district

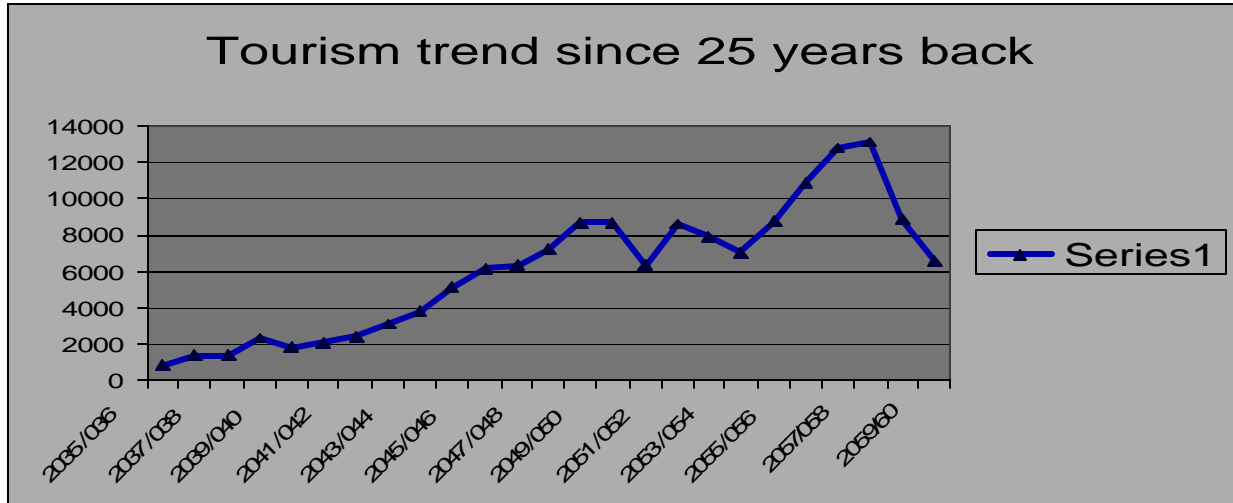
The tourism product of Langtang is broadly classified into following 3 categories:

- Biodiversity experience
- Landscape experience
- Cultural experience

Despite the enormous tourism attractions, safety and the easy access from Kathmandu, the scenario of tourism growth in Langtang area has not followed the general trend as it has been in Annapurna and Everest regions. Current tourism trend is too much concentrated in some particular areas like Kanjin and Gosaikunda with too narrow scope of activities.

Major principle market and tourism trend of the district

Potential market segment of the area includes Organized group trekkers; adventure groups; special interest groups; mountaineers; free individual trekkers (FITs), pilgrims, domestic trekkers and cultural tourists. Of the total trekkers about 60% are free individual trekkers (FITs). The trekking tourism in Langtang follows distinct seasonally and the busiest seasons are Oct-Nov and March-April (60%). Also about 20000 pilgrimages visit Gosaikunda and about 3000 domestic tourist visits Tatopani for medical purposes.



Major market segment of the area are Israel, Europe, America, Japan, Korea and Australia. The visitor data of 2003 revealed that out of the total visitors 4769, the maximum number of visitors are from Israel (17%) followed by France (8%), German (8%), UK (7%), USA (7%), Japan (6%), Australia (6%), and Korea (5%) and visitors from other countries with less than 5% (36%).

Access to the area

The district is accessed with the Pasang Lamu Highway (Trishuli-Somdang road). 3 local bus and rented jeep are available for the visitors. However the access is not comfortable and reliable due to the heavy landslide at Ulkharka (before Dhunche) during rainy season. Private Helicopter charter service is also available from Kathmandu.

Major trekking routes in the district

There are mainly three trekking routes of having different tourism experiences in Rasuwa. Goshaikund trail (6-days) and Langtang trail (9-days) are the established trekking trails where as the Tamang Heritage Trail (8-days) is the newly developed trail offering the blends of cultural and natural experiences. Beside these trekking trails, a greater Langtang circuit trek (17-days) combining all three trails can be done in Rasuwa. Major features of these routes are described separately below.

In order to materialize the rich Tamang culture and associated natural attractions as tourism product in the Tamang areas of Rasuwa, a new tourism product called **Tamang Heritage Trail** has been developed and promoted by DDC: TRPAP Rasuwa. The trail starts either from Dhunche or Syabrubesi and passing through Goljung, Gatlang, Chilime, Thuman, Timure and Briddim. The trail may ends at Briddim village or follows the Langtang trek from Briddim village via Khanjim. The trail follows the row of Chhorten (small Monastery) from Gatlang to Timure along the old trade route to Tibet. Tamang Heritage Trail passes through the mountain villages where the traditional architecture, crafts and style of dress has remained unchanged.

The areas included in the trail have different tourism experience. Goljung and Gatlang villages are especially popular for their rich Tamang culture, architecture and lifestyle. **Goljung** is especially famous for its houses of wooden roof, beautiful Gomba and beautifully embroidered hats and live craftsmanship. A viewpoint has been built at Bahundanda from where one can see the panoramic view of Langtang, Kerung, Ganesh Himal and Sanjen Himal range. **Gatlang** is blended with the presence of holy Lake Parvatikund. Gatlang is the largest Tamang settlement made up of stone wall and wooden roof. A visit to Gatlang village offers an experience of live Tamang museum.

Chilime VDC in the trail is famous for its popular **natural hot water spring**, possibly the biggest hot spring water in Nepal. A 4-days wilderness trek to Sanjen area can also be made to from Tatopani. Brimdang village on the route to Nagthali has been developed as home-stay village. Nagthali on the way to Thuman offers the Kaleidoscopic view of Langtang, Kerung, Ganesh Himal and Sanjen Himal range. It is believed that Nagthali was the meditation centre of the ancient Great Tibetan Lamas. **Thuman** VDC is popular for the Tamang-Tibeto cultural and tradition. **Timure**, the old trade route to Tibet is famous for its historical fort of Rasuwa Gadhi. It displays the scene of ancient battles between Nepal and Tibet. The last hub is Homestay village Briddhim lies at the laps of Langtang Himal. One can experience the Tamang-Tibetan culture with the accommodation facilities at typical Tamang house. The stay at Briddim is managed by the Homestay management committee.

Tamang Heritage Trail

Major tourism activities in the Tamang Heritage Trail include village walk, observation of live craftsmanship and old aged architectures, cultural performance, natural hot spring bath, cultural study, ethno-botanical study, wilderness trekking etc. The accommodation facilities have been recently developed in the Tamang Heritage Trail. A community lodge is offering accommodation facilities at Gatlang. Home stay houses are offering accommodation facilities at Brimdang (Chilime) and Briddim. A normal hotel, lodge and individual home-stay are available in the remaining. Trained guides and sincere porters are available in each village.

Langtang Trail

Langtang is the ultimate destination in the Langtang area. This area comprises beautiful Langtang village, Kanjin Gomba, scenic glacial valley of Langtang and Kanjin. Around 72 glaciers of various sizes are located in and around Kanjin valley. Kanjin glacier is supposed to be the world's nearest glacier from the human settlement. The beautiful Mountain peaks including Langtang, Lirung, Langshisa, Dumpy peak, Cherko Ri, Dorje-Lakpa etc are the prime attractions of Langtang trail. The interested visitors enjoy roaming the Glacier area with the help of local hotel/lodge owner. Major tourism activities in this trail include soft and adventure trekking, glacier walk, mountaineering, rock climbing, wildlife watching, pony trekking, grassland flower study, cultural journey etc. The route passes through the hidden Langtang River and enchanting dances of Himalayan Monkey at Riverside areas.

Comfortable hotels, lodges and tea houses are available in the route. Hot shower is also available in some lodges. Cultural performance and the glimpse of lifestyle of Langtang people can also be observed at the cultural centre in Langtang village.

Goshaikunda Trail

Goshaikund trail offers a blend of religious and natural experiences for the visitors. The holy Goshaikunda Lake, regionally and nationally important centre of pilgrimage is the prime attraction of this route. This lake is related with the great lord Shiva and is the homage of Hindu and Buddhist. Around 25000 pilgrims visited this holy lake on the auspices of Dashahara (June) and Janaipurnima (August) festival. This area is equally important for the soft trekkers as it passes through the gregarious Rhododendron forest, Red Panda habitat, Asamese monkey habitat, beautiful rangeland. The Goshaikund area constitutes the important wetland site consisting about 108 lakes of different sized. This route can be reached either from Dhunche or Thulosyabru of Rasuwa. Also visitors can cross the Lauribina La and reach kathmandu either from Melamchi or Sandarijal.

Major tourist activities include soft and adventurous trekking, pilgrimage visit, holy bath, observing scenic view of Rhododendron forest and grassland/rangeland, ethno botanical study, red panda eco-trek and viewing the majestic view of Langtang, Ganesh Himal, Sanjen, Manaslu and Annapurna range from Lauribina. The accommodation facilities are very good in this route. Temporary cottage are established during the time of Goshaikunda festival.

Goljung VDC

Major tourism features of the VDC:

First VDC enroute to Tamang Heritage Trail

- Beautiful Tamang settlement
- Rich in Typical Tamang culture, houses and lifestyle
- Fertile land for producing vegetables and grains
- Best view of Langtang, Kerung, Sanjen and ganesh Himal from Goljung Bhanjang

Gatlang VDC

Major tourism features of the VDC: The beautiful VDC en-route to Tamang Heritage Trail and Ganesh Himal trek

- The largest and old Tamang settlement made up of stone wall and wooden roof
- Rich in Typical Tamang culture, houses and lifestyle resembling 16th century
- Beautiful and holy lake Parvatikunda
- Best view of Langtang

Chilime VDC

Major tourism features of the VDC: The beautiful VDC en-route to Tamang Heritage Trail and Sanjen trek

- It comprises the important hot water spring, possibly the biggest in Nepal
- The beautiful Sanjen Himal/Kharka, the hidden queen, is located in this VDC

Thuman VDC

Major tourism features of the VDC: The beautiful VDC en-route to Tamang Heritage Trail

- Thuman is the beautiful village comprising Tamang people influencing by the Tibetan culture and traditions
- It comprises the beautiful Kharka, Nagthali, in border with the Chilime VDC
- Nagthali is the important flat land best for the scenic view of Langtang, Kerung, Ganesh Himal and Sanjen Himal

- This VDC has been protected as prohibited area. Thus special permit should be taken from the department of Immigration for this VDC.

Timure VDC

Major tourism features of the VDC:

- The beautiful VDC located at the boarder with the (China(Tibet)
- Also popular for its historic War Fort (Rasuwa Gadhi) at the border
- It is also beautiful village comprising Tamang people influencing by the
- It is the old trade centre/trade route to Tibet from kathmandu
- This VDC has been protected as prohibited area. Thus special permit should be taken from the department of Immigration for this VDC too.

Briddim VDC

Major tourism features of the VDC:

- The beautiful VDC located at the laps of Langtang Himal
- The trade route to Tibet and Langtang trek passes through this VDC
- This VDC is rich in dense forest and wildlife species (Red Panda, Snow leopard, Musk deer etc)

Langtang VDC

Major tourism features of the VDC:

- This is the heart of Langtang National Park and Langtang Range
- This comprises beautiful Langtang valley, kanjin valley and Langshisa valley
- The beautiful peak Langtang Lirung(7245m), and other several peaks are located in this VDC
- The VDC is famous for its larger Glacier, the nearest glacier from the human settlement,
- The VDC is also habitat of Snow Leopard, Musk Deer, Himalayan Tahr and other important wild animals

Langtang Region:

One of the most accessible areas for trekking is the north of Kathmandu Valley. While the area cannot boast any of the Himalayan giants, the scenery here is every bit as spectacular as most of the better known destinations. It is also far less visited by tourists making a trek here somewhat more of an adventure. Just above Kathmandu is the area known as Helambu, which is ideal for short duration treks and is especially suited to winter season trips. Here there is a series of north-south running valleys that provide a variety of possible trekking routes. At the head of these valleys is a ridge that separates Helambu from the east-west running Langtang valley. Here the high alpine scenery, with mountains visible from their base to their peak, and the sparsely inhabited nature of the country makes this an ideal destination for trekkers, who are on tight time schedule.

To the west of Langtang is a virtual wilderness area centred on the Ganesh Himal range, a collection of 6-7000 meter peaks that see very little tourist activity.

The Langtang Trek is to the north of the valley of Kathmandu. It is a narrow valley that lies just south of the Tibet border and is sandwiched between the main Himalayan ranges to the north and slightly lower range of snowy peaks to the south. Langtang Lirung (7246 m) dominates the valley to the north; Gang Chhenpo (6388 m) and Naya Kangri (5846 m) lie to the south; and Dorji Lakpa (6966m) protects the east end of the valley. The area was designated Nepal's first Himalayan National Park in 1971 and use of firewood is strictly prohibited.

Permits and fees

The northern parts of the area largely fall within the boundaries of Langtang National Park. Entry permits should be obtained in Kathmandu before starting to trek. Helambu, to the south, and Ganesh Himal, to the west, are the exceptions although to reach Ganesh Himal from Kathmandu an entry permit is required as the motor road is partly within the park. No trekking permits are required in this area. If accessing Helambu from Kathmandu a permit to pass through the Shivapuri Watershed area, recently declared a National Park, is required. This can be obtained at the entrance gate or from the National Park ticket counter in Kathmandu (see address list).

Getting there

Access to Helambu is particularly easy and quick. A bus or taxi will take you to Sundarjal, one of the most convenient starting points, within an hour. Other possible road heads are at Budhanilakantha, Kakani, Melamchi Pul, bus ride east of Kathmandu .

For Langtang and Ganesh Himal the choice is limited to a bus or taxi ride along the Kathmandu to Trisuli road. Beyond Trisul the road leads to Dhunche, where trek to Langtang and the sacred lakes at Gosainkund can start. The road then continues to Syabrubesi where Ganesh Himal and Langtang treks can come once The drive to from Kathmandu to Syabrubesi takes one long day, as road conditions beyond Trisuli Bazaar are not good. Buses leave regularly from the Balaju bypass bus stop close to the main bus park at Gongabu.

Flora and fauna

The forests of Helambu and Langtang are a prime example of temperate and sub, alpine vegetation. The dense oak and pine forests on the trail up the Langtang Valley are of particular interest. As usual in this part of Nepal, the rhododendrons form a spectacular display during Spring. Wildlife in the area is dominated by many bird species with migratory birds using the Gosainkund area as a temporary sanctuary. Look for deer and monkeys in the lower forests and, perhaps, Tahr and Pika on the alpine hillsides.

Langtang Valley is covered in flowers during the summer and is therefore a good summer trek, though there are hoards of leeches in the lower part of the valley.

Anyone whose primary objective is to see the flora of Nepal, there is not enough in flower to make it worthwhile to take the field until mid march. From then until the end of June most of the trees and shrubs of the temperate zone come into flower. Without doubt, the spring shrub flora is one of the most attractive features of Nepal. By the end of March the shrubberies around the villages respond to the call of the cuckoos, and the shrubs of the evergreen oak forests begin to flower. A little later the shrubs come to flower in the conifer forests, which cover many of the Himalayan slopes. The full beauty of the Himalayas has not been experienced until one has seen the Rhododendrons in their masses flowering beneath hemlock and fir.

Rhododendron Arboreum and Rhododendron Barbatum and ubiquitous and many other forest species can also be seen such as Rhododendron Falconeri, Rhododendron Hodgsonii, Rhododendron Grande and Magnolia Campbellii. The forest floor is carpeted with mauve primulas and there are strange looking Arisaema species.

There are also Ranunculus brotherusii, Thalictrum reniforme, Clematis connata, Hypericum elodeoides, Geranium nakaoanum and donianum, Impatiens sulcata, Desmodium elegans, Hedysarum campylocarpon, Rubus paniculatus, Cotoneaster affinis, Rhodiola bupleuroides etc. Just to name a few. Other alpine flowers, which can be seen, but flower later during the monsoon are the species of Acontium, Codonopsis, Cremanthodium, Cyananthus, Leontopodium and Saxifraga.

Birds: Watch for hawks or buzzards, medium sized raptors with broad wings and rounded tails often fanned. Though there are only three species to look for, their highly variable plumage makes identification difficult. These birds are highly visible during winter and are likely to be seen in pairs mostly below 3000m.

A much smaller but very distinctive bird seen on the open ground is the Hoopoe, which has an orange plumage and black wings and broad white stripes. This species also features a retractable crest that is flared when it alights and a long slender decurved bill that is used for probing the ground. In order to identify the birds of the forests, you will need a keen eye and some tenacity. The ability to recognize birds by their calls will greatly facilitate identification in this habitat. This becomes especially advantageous when dealing with species that for the most part remain hidden when they call or are nocturnal. Particular examples are the usually drab – coloured cuckoos, which call most often in spring and summer, the plump green – fruit eating barbets and at nightfall the various owls and owlets and the nightjars, which are similar to the North American Nighthawks.

Two more species of the forest canopy stand out. The male minivet is bright red with black and the female yellow with black, which is quite striking when they burst into flight together. The slaty headed parakeet, the only parakeet to venture into the hills, has a long yellow tipped tail and is quite vocal in its feeding flocks.

Legend: According to legend, a lama following a runaway Yak discovered the valley. Hence the name 'Lang ' - Tibetan for Yak and 'Teng' (more correctly Dhang) means to follow. Yaks still live in the valley but they now share it with trekkers.

Trekking styles

Most of the trekking routes in Helambu and Langtang are well served with teahouses and teahouses making independent trekking quite possible. There are no such facilities in the Ganesh Himal area nor are there any above Kyangjin Gompa or over Ganja La. For these areas groups need to be fully selfsufficient and have experienced local guides.

People and culture

The people here are of Tibetan origin and call themselves Sherpa although they are quite distinct from the Sherpas of Solukhumbu both in language and customs. Also found in large numbers here are the Tamang people who also originated in Tibet but settled in Nepal considerably earlier than the Sherpas.

This high and isolated region is inhabited by Tamangs, whose religious practices, language and dress are much more similar to those of Tibet than to the traditions of their cousins in the middle hills. A visit to Langtang offers an opportunity to explore villages, to climb small peaks and to visit glaciers at a comfortably low elevation.

When to visit?

The best times for trekking in the Langtang area are the main seasons of spring (February to late April) and autumn (late September to late November). Winter is possible, especially in Helambu, but higher parts may have too much snow. Ganesh Himal and Ganja La are likely to be closed by snow at this time.

Hiring staff

If staffs are required they are found in Dhunche. Porters may be available at Dhunche or Melamchi Pul but reliable guides are to be found.

Langtang Valley

A trek up into the Langtang Valley has to be one of the most rewarding of the short treks available anywhere in Nepal. The east-west running valley is the site of some spectacular alpine scenery as well as being a great place to meet a unique people. A minimum of one week is required but trekkers are well advised to add a few extra days for acclimatisation and for side trips in the valley.

The trek is best started either from Dhunche or from Syabrubesi. By starting at one and finishing at the other it is possible to avoid backtracking to some extent. The most convenient starting point is Syabrubesi as this then gives the option of extending the trek to take in the sacred lakes at Gosainkund.

The bus or jeep trip to Syabrubesi takes most of the first day so trekking usually starts there on the second morning. Syabrubesi is located at the end of the road from Kathmandu at the point where the Langtang Khola meets the Bhoté Kosi.

There are two possibilities from Syabrubesi; the best follows the north bank of the Langtang Khola through the villages of Khangjung and Syarpa Gaon after which the trail from Dhunche joins. Initially the trail passes through cultivated fields and grassy slopes but this soon gives way to forests of rhododendron, bamboo and oak, which are replaced higher up by hemlock and larch before the tree line is reached below Langtang village. Above Langtang the only habitation is at Kyangjin Gompa where one of the first of the Swiss sponsored cheese factories was established.

Above Kyangjin Gompa there are opportunities for day trips or overnight if the trekkers are self-sufficient. The viewpoint of Tsergo Ri gives splendid views across the valley to Ganja La. To the north and east tower the peaks of the Langtang and Jugal Himal the most outstanding being Langtang Lirung and Dorje Lakpa.

To return from Langtang the options are to cross the Ganja La, a serious undertaking that should only be attempted by well equipped and experienced parties, or to backtrack down valley as far as Lama Hotel.

From Lama Hotel the trail to Dhunche crosses the Langtang Khola and climbs up through the forest to the village of Syabru. From here trails descend to Dhunche or head south to the sacred lakes of Gosainkund and Helambu.

Gosainkund/Helambu

By adding a week to the Langtang trek it is possible to visit the sacred lakes at Gosainkund, one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations outside the Kathmandu valley for Hindu devotees. Gosainkund is actually the largest of three main lakes the other two being Saraswatikund and Bhairabkund. Hindu legend has it that the lakes were formed when the god Shiva plunged his trident (trisul) into the ground in order to obtain water. The Trisuli River has its source in these lakes thus the name. The popular time for pilgrims is during the monsoon so trekkers are not likely to see too many people there during the trekking season.

Apart from visiting the lakes as part of a Langtang to Helambu trek they can be made the sole destination for a one-week trek starting and finishing at Dhunche. The lakes are above four thousand meter elevation so acclimatisation is necessary and trekkers should be aware of the dangers of AMS. The trek from Dhunche will be described here.

Starting at Dhunche the trail climbs steeply through rhododendron, oak and conifer forest to the monastery at Shin Gompa. Chauchan Bari, a few minutes beyond the gompa, is the site of another cheese factory and has some teahouses. About an hour beyond Chauchan Bari the trail from Syabru joins the main trail and after another four hours the lakes are sighted. Along this section of trail there are impressive views of the mountains including the Manaslu, Ganesh and Langtang ranges. While the walk from Dhunche can easily be accomplished in two long days, the rapid gain in altitude will mean at least three days must be taken. Trekkers who are coming from Langtang will be well acclimatised should and have little problem.

To finish the trek either return to Dhunche, via Shin Gompa, or continue on to Helambu. The latter option crosses Laurebina La pass, which at 4600 meters can be snowbound even during the trekking seasons.

The Helambu Circuit

A relatively low altitude trek, the Helambu circuit is one of the most convenient of the short treks close to Kathmandu . It can be completed in only seven days and is well supplied with teahouses. No special permits are required but an entry fee is charged for passage through the Shivapuri Watershed area. The local inhabitants in Helambu are predominantly Tamang with Sherpa people inhabiting the higher villages, particularly Melamchi Gaon, Tarkeghayang and Sharmanthang.

While most of the trek is at altitudes below 3000 meters, the high point at Tharepati La pass is 3600 meters and can experience snow even during the main trekking seasons.

There are many variations possible for trekking in Helambu but the circuit starting at Melamchi Put and ending at Sundarijal takes in the best that the area has to offer.

To reach Melamchi Pul it is necessary to drive (bus or taxi) along the Amiko Highway as far as Panchkhal from where a side road takes you to Melamchi Put in about four hours from Kathmandu .

From Melamchi Put the trail climbs up onto the Palchok Danda ridge and passes through the villages of Palchok, Sharmanthang and Tarkeghayang. The section of trail between Sharmanthang and Tarkeghayang is particularly attractive with stands of rhododendron and pine interspersed with cleared areas providing stunning views of the Himalayan peaks to the north. Spend some time exploring around these settlements which are wonderful examples of the way of life of high country Nepali people. Particularly interesting are the local Helambu Sherpas who are quite distinct from their cousins from the Everest region.

Crossing the upper reaches of the Melamchi Khola you pass through another Sherpa village. Melamchi Gaon, before the trail reaches the high point of the trek at Tharepati Pass. From here more spectacular mountain views are possible on a clear day. The trail now heads south through the villages of Kutumsang, Chipling and Pati Bhanjyang where the route to Kathmandu

through Chisapani and Sundarijal should be taken. The last part of the trek passes through the Shivapuri Watershed area, which marks the northern rim of the Kathmandu Valley . From Sundarijal local transport is available for the one-hour drive back into the city.

Ganja La

To cross from Langtang into Helambu, via the Ganja La pass, is a serious undertaking requiring good equipment and experienced local guides. For three to four days there are no facilities, and groups and their staff must be fully self-sufficient. The crossing of the pass requires the use of technical climbing equipment and trekkers must be skilled in the use of this and be prepared to assist less well-equipped porter staff.

For those who are able to complete the crossing the rewards are some of the best mountain landscapes to be found anywhere in Nepal.

The route to Ganja La starts above the settlement at Kyangjin Gumpa in the Langtang Valley (see route description for Langtang Valley). The pass is clearly visible from Kyangjin, just to the east of the peak of Naya Kanga . The trail follows a small valley before reaching the glaciated pass where the use of ropes, crampons and ice axes may be necessary.

From the pass the views across the valley to the peaks of the Langtang Himal are particularly good. In the distance you can see Shishapangma, the only 8000 metre peak entirely in China (Tibet).

The route then follows the open ridge top of Dukpu Danda, which for most of its length is over 4500 meters altitude. Scattered stone shelters, used as summer shelters by herders, are the only evidence of human habitation. There are several fine campsites along the ridge, which can be used by trekkers and their staff on the trek between Ganja La and Tarkeghayang, the first permanent settlement to be reached. From Tarkeghayang there is the choice of trekking to Melamchi Pul or Sundarijal. (See Helambu Circuit trek description)

Ganesh Himal to Trisuli or Dhading

Another remote area suitable for fully equipped trekkers lies to the west of Langtang. The Ganesh Himal range consists of several peaks over 7000 meters in elevation with uninhabited foothills running down to the south and west. A trek is possible that takes you from Syabrubesi, at the end of the road from Kathmandu, up to the base of the mountains and then down a long exposed ridge to finish either at Trisuli Bazaar or in Dhading district. Snow may be encountered at any time on the higher parts of the route and there are no facilities for much of the trek so total self-sufficiency, for both trekkers and staff, is essential. Allow at least nine days for the trek to Trisuli and an extra three days if Dhading is the target. As usual, extra days will allow for exploratory side treks. No specific permit is needed to trek in the Ganesh area but a Langtang National Park entry fee must be paid as the motor road to Syabrubesi passes through the park.

The route follows the old trail to Paldor base camp. There is a new road to the mines at Lad but this can be avoided making for a more enjoyable trek. After four days the site of Paldor base camp is reached where an extra day can be spent exploring around the spurs that lead up to Paldor peak and the glaciers and alpine lakes that are found between them.

From Paldor base camp follow the route down past the mine and into the upper reaches of the Mailung Khola before climbing up onto the crest of the Tiru Danda ridge. This ridge will be followed for the next three days and afford some unrivalled views west to Manaslu and Annapurna massifs, north to the Ganesh Himal and east to Langtang. Crossing the pass at Pansang Bhanjyang the trail passes few signs of habitation, the occasional stone summer shelter being the only structures. After three days the route either turns east and heads into the Salankhu Khola and Trisuli Bazaar or, by turning south west, into the valley of the Ankhu Khola and on to Dhading Best from where buses ply the road back into Kathmandu .

Itinerary

Package DNTT 1 - Langtang from Dhunche route

Days	From	To
1	Kathmandu	Dhunche/Syabrubesi
2	Dhunche	Thulosyabru
3	Syabrubesi/Thulosyabru	Lamahotel
4	Lamahotel	Langtang
5	Langtang	Kanjin
6	Kanjin	Kanjin
7	Kanjin	Lamahotel
8	Lamahotel	Briddim Homestay
9	Briddim	Syabrubesi
10	Syabrubesi	Kathmandu

Interested visitors can make a trek to Gosaikunda area from Lamahotel via Thulosyabru

Package DNTT 2 - Gosaikunda route from

Days	From	To
1	Kathmandu	Dhunche
2	Dhunche	Chandanbari
3	Chandanbari	Lauribina
4	Lauribina	Gosaikunda
5	Gosaikunda	Chandanbari
6	Chandanbari	Dhunche
7	Dhunche	Kathmandu

Interested visitors continue their trek to Langtang from Cholangpati via Thulosyabru

Package DNTT 3

Days	From	To
1	Kathmandu	Dhunche – Syabrubensi.
2	Syabrubensi	Goljung.
3	Goljung	Gatlang.
4	Gatlang	Tatopani.
5	Tatopani	Thuman.
6	Thuman	Bridim.
7	Bridim	Syabrubensi.
8	Syabrubensi	Kathmandu.

Package DNTT 4

Days	From	To
1	Kathmandu	Dhunche – Syabrubensi.
2	Syabrubensi	Goljung.
3	Goljung	Gatlang.
4	Gatlang	Tatopani.
5	Tatopani	Thuman.
6	Thuman	Timure.
7	Timure	Bridim.
8	Bridim	Rimche.

9	Rimche	Thulosyabru.
10	Thulosyabru	Dhunche.
11	Dhunche	Kathmandu.

Package DNTT 5

1	Kathmandu	Betrawati – Kalikasthan – Dhunche.
2	Dhunche	Syabru.
3	Syabru	Kathmandu.

Package DNTT 6

1	Kathmandu	Dhunche.
2	Dhunche	Chandanbari.
3	Chandanbari	Lauribina – Gosainkunda.
4	Gosaikunda	Chandanbari.
5	Chandanbari	Dhunche.
6	Dhunche	Kathmandu.

Package DNTT 7

1	Kathmandu	Dhunche – Syabrubensi.
2	Dhunche	Thulosyabru.
3	Syabrubensi / Thulosyabru Lama Hotel.	
4	Lama Hotel	Langtang.

5	Langtang	Kyangin Gompa.
6	Kyangin Gompa	Lama Hotel.
7	Lama Hotel	Syabrubensi.
8	Syabrubensi	Kathmandu.

Package DNTT 8

1	Kathmandu	Dhunche / Syabrubensi.
2	Dhunche / Syabrubensi	Bridim.
3	Bridim	Vilage Tour / Syabrubensi
4	Syabrubensi	Kathmandu.

Package DNTT 9

1	Kathmandu	Dhunche / Syabrubensi.
2	Dhunche / Syabrubensi	Goljung / Gatlang.
3	Gatlang	Tatopani.
4	Tatopani	Nagthali / Thuman.
5	Thuman	Rasuwagadi.
6	Rasuwagadi	Bridim.
7	Bridim	Khamjing / Syabrubensi.
8	Syabrubensi	Kathmandu.