



Majestic icy peaks but a warmth of welcome that melts you instantly. Nepal has few natural resources other than its startling beauty and its people. Huge mountains dominate tiny terraced fields, where 80% of the population spend their days farming to grow enough food to live on. In steep-sided valleys lie mighty rivers and fast-growing towns, which offer electricity, water, medicine and schools. Our gap year projects and volunteering opportunities in Nepal will help you find the 'real' Nepal, out in these hills rather than the Kathmandu Valley. You will be well known in the town, a resident and friend rather than a passing tourist. The schools we work with are rural government schools and schools for the children of ex-Gurkha servicemen in Gorkha (once capital of Nepal) and Besisahar – the start point for Annapurna trekkers. Tourism is Nepal's main industry, and most tourists speak English so, for many Nepalese, English is necessary to get a job, but schools lack resources and staff. As a volunteer teacher you will be very useful in bringing not only the interest of the outside world but an extra pair of hands for the hard-pressed staff. Enjoy the openness of the Nepalese, make some of the best friends you will ever have and let your laughter echo round the mountains.

Project Summary

Departs: January, September

How long? 12 / 16 weeks

Accommodation: Self catered AV houses

Project Work: Teaching, Art, Music, Drama, Sport, Community Work

Explore Further: Trekking, Temples, Beaches, Wildlife, Paragliding



Project Overview

Orientation + Briefing (4 days)	Orientation course at Shivapuri, in the hills near Kathmandu. A chance to get to know your AV group whilst learning basic Nepali and attending briefings on teaching, keeping safe, staying healthy and Nepali culture.
Project Work (Approx 10-12 weeks)	Living and working in Gorkha or Besisahar, in West Nepal. AV volunteers teach, get involved in extra curricular clubs or work in the wider community. Together with fellow AVs you will live in local houses, with a high level of independence. Spending significant time in one place lets you become fully involved and gain a sense of achievement.
Optional Independent Travel (+4 weeks)	Explore Nepal further and potentially venture into India too, using the confidence and local knowledge gained on your project to make the most of your travels. Trek up into the Himalayas; visit famous temples, bustling towns and colourful markets; experience the Indian Railway network travelling from place to place and relax on beaches. You choose what you do, but we are still on hand to help.

Detailed Itinerary

ARRIVING IN NEPAL

The group flight departs from London Heathrow and will be seen off by one of the AV team. You will fly into Kathmandu, where you will be met by Gaurav Chhetri, our Nepal representative. That night you will stay in a small hotel in Thamel, Nepal's backpacker HQ and we will visit the Rum Doodle, a local bar frequented by those who have climbed Everest. The following day you will visit Kathmandu: the Pashupatinath Temple, the Boudanath Stupa and the ancient city of Pathan. The following day we will travel on to Shivapuri for the orientation course.

BRIEFING AND ORIENTATION

We will climb most of the hill to Shivapuri in a bus, but walk the last couple of hours to the village, which is in a conservation area, where leopards can still be seen. This is a chance to settle in, unwind after the hectic few days leading up to your departure, long journey and an opportunity to get to know your AV group. The orientation course is important to make sure you are fully prepared when you arrive in your school. It will be led by Gaurav, giving you a chance to get to know him too. In this incredibly tranquil spot we will discuss:

- Nepali language
- Nepali history, religion, customs and culture
- Safety, health and security
- Techniques for teaching English

During the course we will visit a local village to see how the hill economy really works, and end up learning some Nepali dances and songs. We will even teach you to cook a curry!

After the course we will take you and your partner to your town/village home for the next three months. To get there involves a 5 or 6 hour bus journey westwards from the Kathmandu Valley along the winding main road towards Pokhara and then up the side roads to Gorkha and Besisahar, with snow clad mountains on the flanks. Once there the AV representative will leave you to settle into your new home, but remember they're never more than a phone call away if you need them!

THE PROJECT

After a warm welcome from your school, usually with a few flowers or garlands, you will quickly settle into the local way of life and develop a routine, although rarely will two days be the same! Your role will be to teach English, take part in whatever sport is going on, and volunteer your skills to the children. The school term runs for 12 weeks with a long weekend break around half term. Each morning you will walk to your school in time for the start of the school day at around 9.00am - be warned that you are living in rural areas and that, in one or two cases, there is a small hill to climb to get there!

You will be teaching at either a secondary or primary school, depending on where you have been placed. Most schools are secondary schools, but some start at primary or even kindergarten. Schools are a mix of old buildings and more recent construction, though there is not much electricity. In most schools children are taught in Nepali, but you will be teaching English, in English! In the ex-servicemen schools,

you may be asked to teach other subjects in English too. We aim for you to teach up to four periods, 45 minutes long, each day - but you will often be in greater demand.

Some of the schools have blind or deaf units attached to them, where you will be very welcome to help in your spare time. Outside the classroom you are also encouraged to help with sports. There are a few sports' pitches - the hills are too steep to carve out many football grounds - but a game of volleyball or football is usually happening somehow, somewhere. Towns have pitches for use at weekends and you will be very popular if you arrange inter-school matches. Most children return home at the end of school but you will be popular if you introduce after school activities and clubs, helping with games or music at the end of the day.

You will be looked after by the English teacher, but other members of the staff may also become your friends. They will enjoy playing cards in the staff room, a good chance to get to know them and learn Nepali.

At weekends you can stay at home or travel further afield. You may take part in school activities, organising sports or going on picnics. Alternatively you can head into town to do some shopping, check emails, catch up on news from home, or meet up with other AVs, visit their schools and travel in the local area. A popular town to visit is Pokhara where you might also get up to see the sunrise on Annapurna – a spectacular sight. Many AVs also take up the chance to go paragliding here, sometimes accompanied by a friendly raptor or vulture, getting a real 'birds eye' view of the incredible scene.

To find out what a typical day on project might be like take a look at our ['Day in the life of an AV'](#) feature, written by AVs who have been there and done it themselves!

Food + Accommodation

You will live in a designated AV house with fellow volunteers, not far from the school. An important part of the AV experience is living in local accommodation, shopping in the markets, being invited to people's houses and making friends in the community. The landlord of the house will act as your host and you will get to know the family well. The house itself will have bedrooms, a (cold) shower and a loo, a communal kitchen and living room. Electricity can be intermittent so prepare for frequent power cuts! You will grow to love it and soon feel very much at home!

We encourage independence and so you won't have someone cooking and looking after you – it's a chance to step up and take responsibility. You will be given a daily food allowance and will be expected to shop and cook for yourself. This is the best way of getting to know people, being involved in the community and gaining the an understanding of living there – you are not a bystander watching from afar.

Your landlord will always be on hand to help, there is a liberal supply of 'AV friends' in each town. The AV representative is never far away and there whenever needed. They can be contacted by phone 24/7 and will visit you during your project.

Optional Independent Travel

As your project comes to an end AV offers you the chance to stay on for an additional four weeks of independent travel time, to ensure a good balance of volunteering and adventure. Nepal is renowned for its spectacular trekking in the Himalayas but also has lots of exciting and beautiful places to explore, whilst India is right next door. From our experience travelling is often when problems occur, from lost passports to getting ill – that's why we offer this extra time to ensure that you experience as much as possible but with the continued 24/7 support from us whilst you do so.

Different travel options Nepal AVs have done in the past include: trekking to the Annapurna or Everest Base Camp which offers some of the most compelling scenery in the world; visiting Buddha's birthplace or riding an elephant to look for a tiger in one of Nepal's famous national parks; travelling on into India, which offers some incredible variety from palm-fringed shores to hot or cold deserts and a history that stretches well beyond the earliest European civilizations. There is no shortage of things to do and see, the only rule is you do not travel alone!

Dates + Costs

For current AV departure dates + costs please visit the website – www.aventure.co.uk

AV PROJECT COSTS INCLUDE:

Before departure:

- Pre-departure information, support and advice
- A nominated member of the UK volunteer support team
- One-to-one face to face briefing for UK applicants
- Telephone briefing for non-UK applicants
- References taken up
- Comprehensive online health check
- Advice on group flight booking or individual flight arrangements
- Briefing for group departure from London airport

In-country:

- In-country representative
- 24/7 in-country backup
- Meet and greet at airport (if arriving with the group)
- Airport transfer (if arriving with group)
- In-country induction course
- Transfer from induction course to school/project
- Accommodation (except during independent travel)
- Food allowance (except during independent travel)
- Management of emergencies, including lost passport, illness, etc. whilst in-country

Upon returning home:

- Returning home advice
- Full telephone debriefing

AV PROJECT COSTS DO NOT INCLUDE

- Flights
- Travel Insurance
- Country visas
- Meeting of non-group arrivals
- Accommodation for early/late arrivals
- Medical expenses, e.g. inoculations, malaria prophylactics
- In-country medical expenses
- Drinks
- Tips/gratuities - No tips/gratuities for AV staff are necessary or expected
- Spending money
- Extra activities that you choose to do
- Food, transport and accommodation on independent travel

Still got questions? We're here to answer them and remember if you want to talk to an AV volunteer who has been there and done it just let us know and we'd be happy to put you in touch! Contact the AV office on +44(0)1380 729009 or info@aventure.co.uk