



considering service

LIVING IN POKHARA

Pokhara is one of the largest cities in Nepal with approximately 300,000 residents throughout the valley. There is very little in the way of industry but there is significant income from the tourist population who come to stay at the lake and use the town as a base from which they go trekking. Pokhara is also a recruiting centre for the British Gurkhas and many current and former servicemen live in this area. This also brings a lot of income to the city and is the reason for many of the new houses being built. Pokhara is generally a pleasant place to live and there are many outdoor activities which are easily accessible for day excursions.

Climate

The climate is sub-tropical and one of the wettest places in the country with up to 4m rainfall during the monsoon [June – September]. Pokhara is also known for its electrical and hail storms. The coldest period is January – February but it never freezes. During the hot season before the monsoon, the temperatures are in the mid-30s and humid.

Church

There are at least 50 churches in the valley! The largest and oldest are Ram Ghat and Nayagaun.

Shopping & eating out

There is now a huge range of shops selling most of the products you are ever likely to need; clothes, electrical goods, furniture, food [including a wide range of imported goods]. The main shopping area is Mahendrapul which is in the middle of the town. There are numerous restaurants with both local and international menus, especially in Lakeside [the tourist area].

Services

There are a number of reasonable hospitals and clinics. Basic dentistry is available in many parts of Pokhara [fillings, crowns etc.] with one good one [Smile Care] near to Fishtail Hospital. Post, cash-machines, email, internet and mobile phones are available.

School

There is an INF-run primary school for primary age children. Pre-school may also be available for children aged 3yrs and above.

Transport

Walking/public bus

This is the cheapest way to travel around Pokhara. The buses run quite regularly until dark. They are often crowded but they are a good way to get around and interact with local people.

Taxi

A 'Reserve-taxi' [hired for you alone] is more expensive than buses and costs the equivalent to 2-4 US\$ per trip. It will take you right to where you want to go. In Pokhara taxis generally do not use meters.

Bicycle

A multitude of brands of mountain bikes are available in Pokhara. Good, light framed mountain bikes made in Malaysia or Taiwan can be bought for Rs 15,000 to Rs. 25,000. Many families travel this way with bike seats attached for young children. Bicycle helmets are available in Pokhara but only for adults, but you may want to bring your own from home. Child bike seats are available nowadays. Basic ranges of children's bikes are also available. High-end dual suspension bikes can also be found usually costing the same if not more in the West. Good mid-range (like Trinx and lower range Giant) cost between Rs 20,000 to Rs 35,000. Shimano parts and other bike accessories are also readily available.

It is important to remember that the rules of the road are likely to be very different to what you are used to! Make sure you understand them well before riding around the busy parts of town. There is a session on this in the orientation course. Pollution and busy traffic are becoming more of an issue in Pokhara. Be aware that the prices mentioned about do vary due to the constant change in exchange rates and inflation.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Be sure to check your health insurance policy. Are you covered if you don't wear a helmet (as a passenger)? And on what size of engine [CC] are you covered?

Motorbike

Some people purchase their own motorbike or moped. Again some bike seats from home countries have been brought out with a special rack made on the back of the motorbike to carry children up to four years of age. Older children should sit behind the rider with a belt attaching them to the rider if possible.

All persons riding on a motorbike must wear helmets. Adult helmets are available but may not of the same safety standard as in your home country. Baby size helmets need to be brought with you for children under three. A quality small sized motorbike helmet for children between three and ten is advisable, although low quality small helmets are available.

Costs: An average new scooter in Pokhara will range from Rs 115,000 to 180,000. Higher specification bikes [e.g. those from Japan] may be available but are expensive. (price will vary depending on exchange rate and inflation)

Second hand motor bikes are available from time to time.
A good overview of prices can be found at www.pricenepal.com

NOTE: Be sure to check your health insurance policy. Are you covered if you don't wear a helmet (as a passenger) and on what size [CC] of motorbike?

Cars

A new Nano [cheapest available but not very strong] may be purchased for about Rs 1,100,000. Other makes start at Rs1,500,000 available – please inquire when you arrive. They are cheaper when bought second hand.

Note: Motorbikes and cars are very expensive because the government charges over 200% import duty. This is included in the price.

Again, it is important to remember that the rules of the road are likely to be very different to what you are used to! Make sure you understand them well before driving. There is a session on this in the orientation course.

From town to town

A local bus or minibus/hiace is the cheapest form of travel in Nepal, but not always the most reliable or safest. Take local advice at the time you wish to travel. You may also encounter delays [breakdowns, transport strikes, etc].

Tourist buses between Kathmandu and Pokhara are a safe way to travel and cost from Rs 600 one way.

Pokhara has a domestic airport with multiple airlines and flights per day back and forth to Kathmandu.

INF vehicles

You may book an INF vehicle with a driver for private use within your centre and for transporting you or your goods to other towns, e.g. Pokhara to Kathmandu.