



Smiling Albino's Jazzmandu

The name resonates with all that is best of jazz music festivals and that most exotic of settings, Kathmandu!



Background



This custom tour has been designed to showcase the ancient and exotic, the fun and the funky, the sacred and the mundane elements of life in crafty, jazzy Kathmandu ...we learn about the traditional crafts, age old traditions, the religion, the food and of course the music of this vibrant city and surrounding rural villages nestled inside the Kathmandu Valley. With amazing adventure and exploration during the day complemented by the blissful sounds of great live jazz music in the Valley's best venues in the evenings, what more could you possibly hope for?

Join in for this unforgettable adventure of a lifetime to immerse yourself in crafts, culture and of course ...fun!

Day 1:
Welcome to Kathmandu
and 'The Valley Jams'
warm ups



Meals: D
Swotha

Upon your arrival at Kathmandu airport we will greet you and transfer you to your hotel. Depending on your arrival time, we can organize some exploring 'behind the scenes' in the afternoon to introduce you to this amazing place and its unique ancient-modern mix.

Stepping out the front door of your stunningly renovated traditional home you are right in the heart of the vibrant ancient city of Patan, a thriving centre of art and culture for centuries. Did you know the pagoda style of architecture started here? Take a walk to explore other curious and beautiful things about the old city and local bazaars.

In the evening we will head out to catch one of the warm up gigs (called The Valley Jams) in our area to get into the swing of things.



About Swotha

Restored as a model of how to preserve the glory of the past while ensuring relevance and sustainability into the future, Swotha is an inspiration. A boutique bed and breakfast nestled right in the heart of old Patan, amidst centuries old temples and the local bazaar, Swotha is the perfect place to get to know Nepal!

Day 2:
Mountains in the
morning and then jazz till
the late night



Meals: B
Gokarna Forest Resort

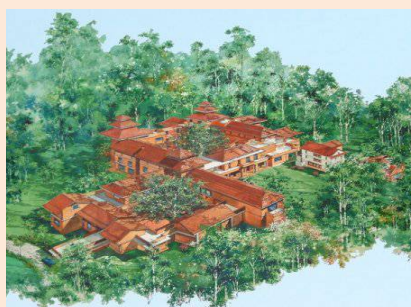
Early in the morning we head to the airport for a spectacular mountain flight, this is your chance to get up close and personal with the big mountains, including Everest the biggest of them all! By mid-morning we will be back in town and head to the incredible Pashupatinath temple complex.

Pashupatinath is one of the holiest temples in the Hindu religion and was first mentioned in 365AD. It is dedicated to Lord Shiva, one of the three main gods in Hinduism, as his birthplace. Pashupatinath is also the main cremation site for Hindus in the Kathmandu Valley, with cremation ghats lining the Bagmati River below the temple. It is such an important pilgrimage site that any Hindu should visit it once in their life and there is a constant stream of sadhus coming and going from Nepal and India.

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From here we move to our hotel for the night, the stunning Gokarna Forest Resort where we will check in and relax before the jazz kicks in...the Jazz Bazaar at Gokarna is, as the name suggests, a blend of cultural folk, classical music from the Subcontinent and of course jazz music performed by international and Nepali musicians. Late in the evening we return to the hotel after a great day of music and mountains.



About Gokarna Forest Resort

Gokarna Forest Resort is an understated but luxurious retreat located inside the stunning Gokarna forest, preserved for 500 years. It is a haven not only for yourself but for wildlife, plant species and birds. This haven is reached by a winding road through the forest to the beautifully designed complex, comprising a mix of the majestic Malla period architecture, Rana period lodges, and newer sanctuaries all blending in with the natural surroundings.

Day 3:
Enfield it to Nagarkot



Meals: B, D
[Club Himalaya](#)

This morning you might enjoy a sleep in after a big night and some time to just relax and enjoy the spa facilities at the resort. For those feeling more active, head out with your host to explore the forest surrounding the resort (it is Kathmandu's only remnant forest so it's very special as well as beautiful) and visit an important temple complex on the 'far side' before returning to the resort for lunch and getting ready to hit the road in style!.

This afternoon you mount up on your classic Enfield motorbike, fondly known as the 'harley of the subcontinent' and head up into the hills where you stay the night on the rim of the Kathmandu Valley. Your bike will be driven by one of the best riders in the city and he will take you on small backroads and through fields (yes there are still fields in Kathmandu!) up to your destination (a van option exists for those who do not want to ride on a motorcycle). Relax with a drink to take in an amazing sunset over the mighty snow capped peaks of the Himalayan range before dinner.

About Club Himalaya

Club Himalaya is a well-appointed hotel perched in the very rim of the Kathmandu Valley. Each room has a balcony overlooking the incredible Himalayan Views and we might enjoy the pool and / or spa facilities after a day on the pillion seat; we'll certainly enjoy the cosy bar and wood fireplace!

**Day 4:
Ancient Woodwork and
Afro Latin Jazz!**



Meals: B, L, D
Swotha

This morning we can get up to catch the sunrise over the mountains (weather permitting as always) then have an awesome Club Himalaya breakfast and head out for a hike to the Kathmandu Valley's oldest temple complex, Changu Narayan, perched on a ridgeline with the views being only slightly less awesome than this fascinating temple dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu.

After exploring here we take a ride down the hill to Bhaktapur, arguably the best preserved of the three ancient cities of the Valley. It is often described as a living museum, but in fact is no mere museum; it is the vibrant centre of the continuing lifestyle of the Bhaktapur people. Here we can experience the real essence of daily life as it has continued, little changed, for centuries inside this incredible old city where farmers dry their harvest, potters turn their wheel and wood carvers create their stunning works.

Our focus here is to explore the ancient crafts of woodwork and pottery for which the Kathmandu Valley is renowned. We will visit the woodcarving museum to learn about the skills and methods of creating the intricate designs we see around us in the temples and houses. Later in the afternoon we head into Patan to visit the Silakar (wood carver) family temple to learn more about the history and culture of the wood carving craft and the families who practice this ancient art.

From here we move back into our cosy home away from home in the centre of old Patan and in the evening head out for a great dinner and some hot latin jazz to top off an incredible day in the Himalayas.

Day 5:
Stone carving, metal
work and great Jazz
fusion



Meals: B, L, D
Swotha

Today we immerse ourselves in two more ancient crafts for which the Kathmandu Valley has been renowned over the centuries. Commencing our exploration, we visit the stone carvers in the village of Bungamati near the medieval city of Patan. Bungamati dates from 16th century and is a typical ancient Newar Village (Newar people being the original inhabitants of the Valley). We reach the village down a road dotted with stone chaityas (monuments) carved by the ancestors of the stone carvers we are about to meet. Here we will also visit the winter home of the Red Machhendra god of Patan who resides here in a powerful, Shikhara-style stone temple. Its spacious courtyard is often used for spreading grain to dry in the sun at harvest time and for the activities of daily life at all times.

We return to Patan to see the finest complex of stone carving in Nepal, the Krishna Mandir in Patan's Durbar Square. Built in a blend of architectural styles, the Krishna temple combines the southern Gupta Shikhara form with the open multi-storied Moghul style to create a temple truly unique in Nepal and beyond. The incredible craftsmanship of the stone carvers can be seen not only in the overall structure, but also in the intricate images of gods and the perforated stone screens.

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After lunch inside the palace garden we expand our repertoire to metal work, learning about the many beautiful household and religious items that are made and sold in the bazaars around the Durbar Square. We then immerse ourselves in the fine art of sculpture making, visiting a family run workshop where the craft has been handed from father to son for generations. As one of the finest examples of the art we will then visit the stunning Golden Temple.



From here we head back to the hotel and get ready for a wonderful evening of traditional/jazz fusion in a nearby, restored local house.

**Day 6:
Tibetan Buddhism and
Thangka painting and the
'All Star Jazz'**



Meals: B, L, D
Swotha

Get ready for a truly exclusive day that only Smiling Albino can pull off! We'll spend the day exploring Kathmandu's major sites perched on the back of classic Royal Enfield motorcycles. You'll have one of the city's best drivers chauffer you pillion-style, so you can sit back, take in the sights and smells, while locals envy your ride (a van option exists for those who do not want to ride on a motorcycle). After a hearty breakfast we are ready to expand our horizons once more to learn about the beautiful and sacred art of Thangka painting. We visit Boudhanath Stupa learning about the history and experiencing the present day life of one of the most important Buddhist Shrines. The huge white dome sits on an octagonal base inset with prayer wheels, with Buddha's eyes facing to the four cardinal directions keeping watch for righteous behaviour and human prosperity. This serene complex is circular in shape, with houses of Lamas (Buddhist priests), monasteries and shops ringing the Stupa.

In Boudhanath we will visit the Thangka painting school which will give us an in-depth knowledge about the intricacies of the Thankas, the intricate art of painting them, the materials used and the long apprenticeship of the artists. We will follow this with a visit to a monastery to view learn about monastic life and view sacred Thankas in their ultimate setting.

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After lunch overlooking the Stupa, we will visit another sacred Buddhist Shrine, the stunning Swayambhunath Stupa overlooking the Kathmandu Valley. This Stupa is said to be 2000 years old and to have created itself! It is one of Nepal's most important Buddhist sanctuaries. The whole hillside is a mosaic of small Chaityas (memorials) and temples and it is one of the only places that you can see the Stupa, Pagoda and Shikar style of temple. It is a sacred Buddhist place of worship, but it is also holy to Hindus and you can also find Hindu shrines here – a fine illustration of the religious tolerance found in Nepal.



Following this rare insight into the practice of Buddhism in Nepal we have the rest of the afternoon free to enjoy some more exploring, shopping for gifts or just to relax and sit in a coffee shop and watch the world go by while reflecting on your amazing time here in Nepal.

Tonight we get ready for the big 'All Star Jazz' grand finale of the Jazzmandu festival and we celebrate our final night in K town in style!

Day 7:
Say goodbye to the valley
of crafts and the city of
Jazz



Meals: B

We'll enjoy one last fabulous breakfast together and share a final round of tales about the trip, before we transfer you to the airport, bid farewell and look forward to our paths crossing again...maybe at next year's Jazzmandu?

PRICE:

Price per person:

Based on 1 person group:

approx. US\$2683 pp

Based on 2 person group:

approx. US\$1900 pp

Based on 3-4 person group:

approx. US\$1676 pp

Single supplement (for groups of 2 people and over) US\$280

INCLUDING:

- Smiling Albino adventure kit on arrival day
- Smiling Albino's Nepali host to accompany you on each day of the adventure
- Transportation as per the detailed itinerary (includes the mountain flight, including transfers and airport taxes)
- Entrance fees for all sightseeing mentioned above
- Tickets to all Jazzmandu gigs mentioned above
- Mineral / drinking water during the day; water and soft drinks with meals in restaurants
- Meals as per the itinerary
- Hotel nights in the hotels specified in the itinerary; based on standard rooms on twin share, bed and breakfast plan
- Tips kitty for your drivers, hotels, restaurants etc
- Smiling Albino classic touches such as surprise wine and cheese at random places

EXCLUDING:

- Services and activities not mentioned in the detailed itinerary
- Use of spa facilities at Gokarna and Club Himalaya
- Any gear or equipment that you may need to rent/buy - please ask us if you would like any advice about gear to bring/buy/rent
- International flights to and from Kathmandu

- Nepal visa fees and international airport taxes
- Any excess baggage charges
- Comprehensive travel insurance that includes trip cancellation and rescue evacuation should this be required for any reason (we require this as the minimum insurance cover)
- Rescue/evacuation costs (to be covered by your insurance)
- Single supplement, please see single supplement charge
- Personal expenses (eg bar bills, laundry, telephone calls, postage, donations, extra snacks etc)
- Costs incurred due to changes in programs and reservations due to unforeseen events (eg strikes, fuel shortages etc)



The Smiling Albino Service Difference

We understand implicitly that a perfect adventure is much more than nice hotels, great meals and hassle-free logistics. For a travel experience to be perfect, all pieces must work together like a symphony. It is the fine details which our guests appreciate most, like cold face towels after a hike, electrolyte beverages for your day cycling, and wine uncorked when the moment is right. From local maps to bottled water and colorful anecdotes on the areas we visit, a Smiling Albino adventure is a thorough, intimately hosted experience. We will also provide you with a complimentary mobile phone for your use throughout your stay. You'll be treated with executive care during your Smiling Albino adventure.

We look forward to hosting you!

The Team at Smiling Albino

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"See a different part of the world, differently."