



PROJECT DOSSIER

THE CLASSIC OVERLAND

LONDON to KATHMANDU

OR

KATHMANDU to LONDON

11 weeks & 13,500kms

Europe, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India & Nepal



Itinerary Guideline

LONDON to KATHMANDU

Week 1: Transit through Belgium & Germany, Austria & Vienna, Hungary & Budapest, Romania & Bucharest.

Week 2: Bulgaria & Varna on the Black Sea into Turkey, Istanbul & Gallipoli.

Week 3 & 4: Aegean & Mediterranean Turkey to Tarsus - beaches, fishing villages & history: Troy, Ephesus, Hieropolis, Thermessos, Aspendos, Side & Silifke.

Week 5: Turkey's rugged Taurus Mountains to the cave cities of Cappadocia; Turkish wine & carpets. The open spaces of the Anatolian Plateau to Mt Ararat & Iran.

Week 6: Esfahan - city of gilded mosques, gold domes & Islam's highest artistry, desert pillars of King Darius' Persepolis. Across the Dasht-e-Lut Desert, nomads & camel caravanserais to Zahedan,

Week 7: Southern Pakistan & oasis city of Quetta. Baluchistan & frontier tribal lands to Peshawar, gateway to the Khyber Pass.

Weeks 8 & 9: May - October: Across the Indus River & north to Pakistan's jagged Karakoram Himalaya - to Gilgit & the valley of Swat, the Punjab plains to Lahore, India & Delhi. November - April: Across the Indus river to the Punjab, India & Delhi to Jaisalmer & the colours of Rajasthan, fabulous

cities & palaces of the Maharajahs in Jodhpur & Udaipur.

- Week 10:** Palaces of Jaipur, the Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri & Agra. To Jhansi & the temples of Khajuraho.
- Week 11:** Byways of rural India, to the Ganges & holy city of Varanasi, Himalayan foothills & wildlife of Chitwan National Park to the high Himalayas & Kathmandu.

KATHMANDU to LONDON

- Week 1:** Kathmandu to Himalayan foothills & wildlife of Chitwan National Park, Indian plains & the Ganges, holy city of Varanasi, byways of rural India & temples of Khajuraho.
- Week 2:** Jhansi, Agra & the Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, palaces of Jaipur to Delhi.
- Weeks 3 & 4: May - October:** Delhi to the Punjab & northern Pakistan, jagged mountains of Karakoram Himalaya - to Gilgit, the valley of Swat & Peshawar, gateway to the Khyber Pass. **November - April:** Delhi to the colours of Rajasthan, fabulous cities & palaces of the Maharajahs in Jodhpur & Udaipur, Jaisalmer & Thar Desert to Punjab, Pakistan - Lahore & Peshawar.
- Week 5:** South through frontier tribal lands of Baluchistan to the oasis city of Quetta.
- Week 6:** To Iran and Zahedan. Across the Dasht-e-Lut Desert, open spaces, nomads & camel caravanserai to the pillars of King Darius's Persepolis. Esfahan - city of gilded mosques, gold domes and Islam's highest artistry.
- Week 7:** To Mt Ararat & Turkey's wild Anatolian Plateau. Cave cities of Cappadocia; Turkish wine & carpets, the rugged Taurus Mountains to the eastern Mediterranean.
- Week 8 & 9:** Mediterranean & Aegean Turkey to its beaches, fishing villages & history: Silifke & Side, Thermessos, Hieropolis, Ephesus & Troy.
- Week 10:** Gallipoli & Istanbul, then Bulgaria & Varna on the Black Sea.
- Week 11:** Transit through Europe to Romania & Bucharest, Hungary & Budapest, Austria & Vienna, Germany & Belgium to London.

PLEASE NOTE:

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

Highlights & Route

EUROPE, ASIA MINOR & TURKEY

Our crossing of Europe is a straight transit toward the Black Sea and Asia. From London to Belgium & Germany's Rhine Valley, skirting the Alps through Austria, across the Bakony hills to the Danube plains of Hungary, Romania & the Transylvanian Alps to Bulgaria. Depending on daylight travelling hours and weather conditions, there are full travelling days with overnight stops in Vienna, Budapest & Bucharest. Then, in Bulgaria, the Danube again to the historical port of Varna on the Black Sea.

To Turkey & the Bosphorus, where Asia meets Europe, east collides with west and Istanbul bridges them - with class, style and a wild abandon that is far superior to either! Her streets are packed with diversion - bargain for carpets, gold, metalwork & hand tooled leather in the Grand Bazaar. To the jewelled treasures of the Topkapi Palace & the famous mosques, the hustle of the waterfront cafes of the Golden Horn and tastes for every appetite.

From Gallipoli and Anzac Cove, stirring memorials to political blunder and the bravery of ordinary mortals, we ferry across the Hellespoint to Asia Minor. Aegean shores of sun and eternity, fishing villages, wine and music. The coast is strewn with impressive archaeological sites, waiting under the Mediterranean sun to reveal their secrets. Here are many of the early Greek city-states where Christianity found its first foothold. There are the ruins of Troy and Ephesus - the mightiest city of Roman Asia, where Paul the apostle preached.

Hot mineral springs at Pamukkale form huge marble white bowls and terraces below the Roman baths of Hieropolis. To the tombs and temples of Thermessos hidden high in the pine hills. Aspendos' perfect amphitheatre and crusader castles standing sentinel over ancient ports. This is the Mediterranean's 'Turquoise Coast' of hidden coves and beckoning sands - lazy days just to swim, relax and explore market towns and fishing villages like Kusadasi, Fethiye, Kas and Antalya. (Optional overnight cruise from Fethiye

aboard Turkish caique to local bays & inlets - approx. US\$ 40).

Inland from Tarsus across the Taurus Mountains is Cappadocia. Goreme is a place of eerie splendour where underground cities, troglodyte dwellings and beautifully frescoed 7th century churches are carved into eroded, time twisted towers and canyons of volcanic rock. Turkey's best wines and tribal rugs come from this land where time has gone unchanged for centuries. To the high Anatolian Plateau and the steppes of central Asia where the Tigris and Euphrates rise. Where low, mud-built villages cling to the valleys and the felt tents of nomads dot the high pastures. The snows of Mount Ararat mark the wary junction of Turkey, the ex-Soviet Republics and Iran.

PERSIA & PAKISTAN

Esfahan is the most beautiful of old Persian cities. The court of the caliphs - where slender minarets and blue-domed mosques echo the muezzin's call to prayer. The covered bazaar vibrates to the hammering of inlay and design on copper, bronze and silver and priceless carpets hang from merchants' balconies in wonders of form and colour.

We cross the rim of the shimmering Salt Desert to the heart of the greatest land empire the world has known. 2,500 years ago King Darius' realm stretched from the Punjab to the Danube, the Nile to Samarkand. Persepolis was his Royal Palace, the seat of power in a once fertile valley called Paradise. Today only huge pillars and great walls of relief carvings stand tall in the encroaching sands.

Into the shimmering mirages of the Dasht-e-Lut, across blinding white salt pans and ridges of pastel rock. The landscape is softened by occasional date palmeries where domed wells mark long tunnels bringing water underground across the desert. This is the land of the powerful Kashgai, nomads of the desert with their black tents and wandering camels.

To Zahedan and tribal Baluchistan to Quetta, desert city of Pakistan. The Pathan villages of the Afghan hills to Peshawar, gateway to the Khyber Pass and a frontier town of frenetic bazaars and dubious dealings. Of opium and carpets, precious stones, firearms and ammunition. Across the Indus River is a suddenly different world of tropical greenery, fertile plains and the rich mixtures of the Indian sub-continent. The streets of Lahore teem with life around the walls of the Red Fort and the perfumed seclusion of the Shalimar Gardens. Beyond stretches the great Punjab and India.

From **May to October**: during the hot weather we head north into the Karakoram Mountains, dramatic western teeth of the Himalaya. To the scenery and pastoral settings of the Swat Valley, the Murree Hills and Gilgit on the upper Indus beneath the snows of Nanga Parbat (26,600ft/8,100m).

From **November to April**: during the cool weather, we move south into India's Thar Desert and the colours of Rajasthan.

To Jaisalmer, hilltop 12th century town springing straight from the pages of 'Arabian Nights'. Jodhpur's cliff fortress - museum of artistic and martial perfections and excess and Udaipur - graceful lake city of island palaces and gardens.

INDIA & NEPAL

Dawn spreads across the great rivers Jumna and Ganges where great cities like Delhi and Agra proclaim the pageantry of their past and look to the future in this, the world's largest democracy. There is Jaipur, rose-pink city of the Maharajahs, of palaces and the brilliant heart of Rajasthan. Then the breathtaking Taj Mahal, the deserted red stone Moghul city of Fatehpur Sikri and the erotic carvings of the Karma Sutra at Khajuraho.

Along the byways of rural India monkeys chatter in the trees, children draw water from a village well, bullock carts creak their gentle progress and an elephant stops to watch with a kindly eye. There is a closeness with time, a sense of the drama and mystery of life which pervades the sights and sounds of India like the ubiquitous sunlight. We reach Hindu's holy city of Varanasi where pilgrims and gurus throng the temples and steps leading to the waters of the goddess Ganges.

To the north, above the haze and far into the distance, the snow peaks of the Himalayas appear impossibly high. In Nepal's teak forested lowlands tiger and rhinoceros stalk the riverbanks of the Royal Chitwan National Park. (Optional day on elephant back through park, on foot with guide and dugout canoe along river approx. US\$ 30. Asian rhinoceros, deer, gaurial crocodile, waterfowl and raptors, rare tiger).

The road to Kathmandu climbs slowly towards a high crest. Then, crowding the horizons, are the solid ranks of the world's highest mountains. Below lies the valley of Kathmandu, city of enchantment and crossroads to adventure in the high Himalayas and beyond.

DELAYS OR FORCED ALTERNATIVE

ROUTES

The possibility of some delay en route is planned into this expedition and we usually arrive on time.

By the very nature of the journey, it should be recognised that longer delays outside our control can still happen. Although these are uncommon in Asia, it is still suggested that you do not make any firm commitments within 5 days of the scheduled end date of The Classic Overland. If we are delayed en route, no additional payments to Encounter Overland will be asked of you.

Major forced changes to our expeditions are also unusual in Asia. When they do happen it is because of a border closure or civil insurrection making it impossible or imprudent to enter a particular country or region. In the worst of cases this could involve an over-flight of the affected area. If this were to happen, Encounter Overland would meet the first US\$ 300 per person of the fare. Should more than this be needed, a contribution from you of up to (but not exceeding) US\$ 300 would be required. Any further amount beyond this would again be met by Encounter Overland.

GROUP SIZE

24 max. including Encounter Staff. Local guides will be employed at certain places of interest where their knowledge is advantageous to our visit.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

None, other than the extended camping/nomadic lifestyle. Living this way for 11 weeks requires flexibility and an adaptable outlook, and is best suited to people aged 18 - 45. The heat and humidity of India & Pakistan from May to September can be difficult.

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, either in cash notes or recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

INCLUDED IN EXPEDITION COST

All transport, food, camping equipment & supplies, local guides, camping fees, entrance fees to Troy, Ephesus, caves of Goreme, Golden Temple of Amritsar, Taj Mahal, Temples of Khajuraho, Chitwan Nat. Park entrance only as detailed from published starting date of expedition until arrival in Kathmandu or London. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

EXPEDITION COST DOES NOT COVER

Flights from/to Kathmandu/London, transfers to/from airport & airport taxes, vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, occasional lunches in major centres (minimal cost), personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Individual entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost), and any individual options available en route e.g Boat trip on the Turkish Coast & the Elephant Safari in Chitwan Nat. Park Accommodation and meals in London/Kathmandu before/after the expedition.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A warm sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack and a daypack. Personal clothing, strong footwear, water bottle, personal medicines & toiletries etc. No specialised clothing (apart from Iran) or equipment is necessary and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Soft bags or frameless backpacks are the most suitable kinds of luggage to bring. Airlines flying in and out of Kathmandu have a 20kg baggage limit.

TRANSPORT

Encounter expedition truck throughout the journey.

ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout. Equipped campsites in most of Europe and parts of coastal Turkey; then basic campground facilities in main centres only, usually extending to simple washing/showering & toilet arrangements. Otherwise open 'bush' camping with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck equipment. (Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic & day to day routines etc.).

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts & evening meals, picnic lunches. Expedition members are involved in daily fresh food shopping & cooking. (Fresh vegetables, fruit, meat where available, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese, preserves, supplemented by canned & dried goods in areas where no fresh supplies available). In larger cities where a day is spent in individual sightseeing or activities away from the truck, lunch will sometimes be at your

own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the expedition, and which contains not less than **11 blank pages**. Your passport should also be free of any evidence of having visited Israel. Visa requirements and costs vary according to your nationality, and even then are subject to sudden change. Some visas need to be obtained before departure, others en route. Encounter or your agent can advise you of all the up to date visa requirements applicable to you, and their costs. We can also help you in obtaining any visas you may require before departure. Visas en route are applied for as a group with the assistance of your leader/driver.

INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on p60 of the brochure. Please bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting. If your policy does not cover this minimum level then Encounter will not accept responsibility for the consequences.

MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

You should allow approximately **£75 / US\$ 120 per week** to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, occasional lunches in major centres, optional activities, some individual museum entry fees & some souvenirs. You should budget an additional £25/\$40 per day that you spend in Kathmandu after or before the expedition to cover hotel, meals & incidentals. Good buys can include leatherwork & ceramics, ornate copper & brassware, silks, lacquerware, gems & jewellery, gold & silver, miniature & religious paintings, carvings, bronzes, statues & inlaid woodwork. Many small 'treasures' need not cost much at all. Credit cards are accepted in most cities. Apart from this, and your en route visas, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money in Asia.

ARRIVING AND LEAVING

There will be a pre-departure meeting at our London or Kathmandu offices at 18.00 hrs two evenings before expedition departure date. On departures from Kathmandu we recommend that

you arrive at least 3 days before expedition departure date to allow yourself time to acclimatise and get over intercontinental flights.

It is safe to say that even a week in the Kathmandu valley is not wasted: city, temples & bazaars, restaurants & nightlife, old city of Bhaktapur, nature reserve, overnight at Nagarkot for sunrise/sunset Himalayan views. Even though serious delays en route are unlikely, we would prefer that you not have any firm commitments for up to 5 days after scheduled expedition completion date.

COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

'The Classic Overland' expedition is neither part of, nor contains sections of, any other Encounter project. Expeditions arriving in or leaving Kathmandu between October and March can combine well with Encounter's trekking & white water rafting programme in Nepal.

INTERESTING READING

Memed, my Hawk (Yashar Kemal), Among the Believers (V.S. Naipaul), The Raj Quartet & other titles (Paul Scott). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

SPECIFIC DETAILS

On Mailing Lists for receiving letters from home, the best ways to organise & carry your spending money, clothing lists etc. are all contained in our Pre-departure information.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Local Payment	
Return flights.....	
Visas.....	
Vaccinations.....	
Insurance.....	
Personal spending money.....	
Total _____	

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Encounter Overland Ltd.