

# ROUTE NOTES

**Start and Finish:** Pokhara, Nepal / **Distance:** 380 km (236 mi) /

**Duration:** 1–2 weeks / **Category:** Multi-week circuit /

**Terrain:** Rocky gravel, 75% off-road, 80% rideable, 10,300 m (33,793 ft) of ascent / **Level:** Moderate, some off-road skills required

## HIGHLIGHTS:

The circuit is roughly divided in two by the Thorong La pass, which is the crux of the route thanks to its 5,416 m (17,769 ft) peak. Going clockwise, the section between Muktinath and Manang is considered to be the most beautiful in the entire circuit.

## LOCAL SPECIALTIES:

On the trail, trekkers, cyclists, and locals alike are powered by a regional staple called dal bhat: a base of boiled rice and stewed lentils.

## WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPE:

The circuit goes from 600 m (1,969 ft) above sea level, with hot and lush tropical forests, all the way up to the cold, windy, and virtually lifeless mountainsides well over 5,000 m (16,404 ft).



## RESUPPLY NOTES:

Tea huts line the route and cater to Western tastes, although the local food is the real attraction. Try the *momo*: stuffed dumplings often served swimming in peppery tomato-based *jhol achar* sauce.

## ACCOMMODATIONS:

The tea huts mean that shelter is never far away, and riders don't need to worry about carrying much in the way of overnight gear.

## GETTING THERE (AND BACK):

Fly to Kathmandu. You can either cycle to Pokhara or arrange a private transfer.

## RIDE SEASON:

April to May or October to November (peak seasons) are the best. Outside of this, weather can be unpredictable and monsoon-like.

## EQUIPMENT:

Warm kit is needed for time off the bike, especially as overnight the temperatures can plummet well into the minus teens.

## WHAT TO RIDE:

To maximize the enjoyment on the descents, a hardtail mountain bike would be the best choice.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

There are two permits required to ride the circuit: the Annapurna Conservation Area Permit (ACAP) and Trekkers' Information Management System (TIMS).

## HISTORY:

Follows the well-worn trekking route, which has been in use since Nepal opened to tourism in the 1970s.

## CONTRIBUTOR INFO:

Eileen Schwab is an experienced bikepacker from New Zealand. Matty Waudby is a well-traveled cycle tourist based in the U.K. They were joined by Emma Cornelis, Rob Hermans, Andy Hovey, and Clare Nattress.

