



Having fun in Langtang publication date: Jan 6, 2009

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Like a good bottle of wine the Nepalese hills are a lot of fun and usually half- empty! Hit the foothills at the right time and the paths and the views are all yours. We were on the Langtang circuit running up to the Ganja-La and then back down to pizzas and a comfy bed.

I fell in love with Nepal many trips ago and like all great love affairs it's not just based on looks. Much of Nepal is ramshackle; a huddle of buildings and skinny roads draped along the back of the Himalayas with barely enough room to dodge the rickshaws. Up in the hills, though, it's a different story. It's strange but often the less there is to look at, the more there is to see. We must have spent hours looking out over the edge of the mountains into hazy blue nothingness. A month's trekking and every day brings its 'stop and stare' moment; without them I swear we could have done this trek in a weekend!

Miniature towns barely wider than the path dot the early trek. Like a Christmas present on Boxing Day, western trekkers in silly shorts have lost their novelty factor even for the normally excitable Nepalese children and they carry on regardless. Through the foothills the feeling of excitement (and the steep slopes) increases. It felt a little like queuing to see a film you've had highly recommended.

We weren't disappointed. As we rose higher the towns became fewer and the skies bigger. All alone on the paths we entered our own secret world of mountains and sky. Purple flowers carpeted much of the trek before giving way to snow as we approached the lakes at Gosaikunda. Trying to choose the best part of a Nepalese trek is like choosing the brightest part of the sun, but these lakes take some beating. They look like the sapphire sky has been rinsed into them like a towel. Against the white of the snow they were almost unreal and if you'd seen them in a travel brochure you'd have suspected PhotoShop.

The paths rose some more before our gradual descent brought us back to reality. Our legs sore and aching, we comforted our tired minds with thoughts of going out to eat, inside to the toilet and everything else we'd missed during the trek. After one night on the ground though, we'd have all packed up our rucksacks and gone round again, had we not had jobs to get home too or feet crying out for sandals. Trekking up mountains for 3 weeks certainly leaves its mark and helps explain Buddhism's appreciation for the journey over the destination; it takes so long to get everywhere here!

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