Terai Jungle Safari: Chitwan & Koshi Tappu



Trip Overview

The Terai Jungle Safari is a nine-day wildlife adventure through Nepal’s most biodiverse lowlands, combining thrilling safari experiences with cultural immersion. Guests explore Chitwan National Park, home to endangered one-horned rhinoceros, tigers, elephants, and gharials, and the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, a premier wetland sanctuary renowned for birdwatching and rare freshwater species. Guided by expert naturalists and ornithologists, the journey offers jeep safaris, canoe rides, and river excursions, alongside opportunities to learn from local communities. From the sal forests and grasslands of Chitwan to the expansive wetlands of Koshi, this expedition reveals the Terai’s rich wildlife, landscapes, and conservation efforts in a safe and immersive way.

Total Trip Days: 9 Days / 8 Nights

Trip Highlights

- Explore Chitwan National Park with jeep safaris, river canoe rides, and night walks
- Spot endangered wildlife including one-horned rhinoceros, Bengal tigers, gharials, and Asian elephants
- Birdwatch in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, home to over 500 species including swamp francolin, Bengal florican, and greater adjutant stork
- Search for the Gangetic river dolphin on a guided river safari
- Learn from expert naturalists and park biologists about local ecosystems and conservation challenges
- Immerse in the culture of the Tharu community through performances and interactions
- Travel in comfort with VIP transfers, boutique lodges, and scenic flights connecting Kathmandu, Pokhara, and the Terai

Itinerary

Day 1:

Your journey begins in Kathmandu, where you will be greeted at Tribhuvan International Airport and transferred to a boutique eco-friendly hotel. In the evening, your naturalist guide will introduce you to Nepal’s diverse ecosystems, providing an overview of the Terai lowlands and their extraordinary wildlife. This orientation sets the tone for the days ahead, when you will enter some of the country’s most biodiverse protected areas.

Day 2:

In the morning you take a short scenic flight to Bharatpur, followed by a drive to a wildlife lodge on the edge of Chitwan National Park. After settling in, you venture into the buffer zone for an introductory jungle walk. This first immersion often yields sightings of spotted deer, rhesus macaques, and a variety of wetland birds. As dusk falls, you enjoy a cultural performance by the indigenous Tharu community, whose lives are intricately linked with the forest and its wildlife.

Day 3:

The day begins with a jeep safari deep into the core zone of Chitwan. Here, vast grasslands and sal forests provide habitat for the endangered one-horned rhinoceros, sambar deer, and wild boar. After lunch, a canoe ride

along the Rapti River offers the chance to watch gharial crocodiles basking on sandbanks, mugger crocodiles lurking in the shallows, and wintering waterfowl gathered in impressive numbers. In the evening, a guided night walk introduces the park’s nocturnal life, including civets, owls, and the elusive jungle cat.

Day 4:

A full-day jeep safari takes you into the quieter western stretches of the park, where tiger activity is at its peak. Your naturalist guides interpret signs such as pugmarks, alarm calls, and scratch marks on trees, creating an atmosphere of anticipation. Whether or not you glimpse a tiger, the experience is thrilling. Birdlife is equally rewarding, with chances to encounter the grey-headed fish eagle, crested serpent eagle, and the brilliantly colored Indian pitta. Lunch is enjoyed at a forest watchtower before returning to camp in the evening for a presentation by a park biologist.

Day 5:

An early departure takes you eastwards across the Terai plains, a scenic drive of six to seven hours that brings you to Koshi Tappu, Nepal’s most important wetland reserve. After arriving at the riverside birding camp, you enjoy your first exploration of the Koshi Barrage, where large flocks of storks, pelicans, and ibises gather against the setting sun.

Day 6:

Koshi Tappu is a paradise for birdwatchers, with more than 500 species recorded. This full-day birding safari, led by an ornithologist, highlights rare and endangered species such as the swamp francolin, Bengal florican, and greater adjutant stork. The wetlands also harbor the last truly wild population of Asian wild water buffalo, as well as smooth-coated otters that sometimes reveal themselves along quiet channels.

Day 7:

This morning is spent drifting along the Koshi River in search of the endangered Gangetic river dolphin, a shy yet charismatic freshwater mammal. River terns, black-bellied terns, and Pallas’s fish eagles soar overhead while herds of nilgai and hog deer graze along the banks. In the afternoon you explore the grasslands on foot, ending the day with a sunset photography session at the Koshi Barrage.

Day 8:

After breakfast, you transfer to Biratnagar for a short flight back to

Kathmandu. The afternoon is at leisure, with opportunities to browse for naturalist field guides or traditional handicrafts. In the evening, a farewell dinner is accompanied by a slideshow of the highlights from your journey through Nepal’s wild lowlands.

Day 9:

Your naturalist adventure concludes with a transfer to the international airport for your onward journey, carrying with you memories of rhinos, tigers, crocodiles, and hundreds of birds that make Nepal’s Terai a world-class wildlife destination.