

Hurrah for Pokhara

Description

Who knew that we would celebrate our 43rd anniversary in Pokhara!?! Not us, even in our wildest dreams, especially since we had never heard of Pokhara before coming to Nepal. It is actually a well known city because it is near the Annapurna Range of the Himalayas. Many trekkers come to the area from all over the world. We saw more tall, pale people in three days than we have in the last 9 1/2 months combined. It felt really odd.



A short 25 minute flight took us from Kathmandu to Pokhara and we got a nice view of the mountains.



View from our hotel in Lakeside.



Colorful boats on Phewa Lake.

We were able to take a day hike to Australian Camp and Dhampus, about 9.2 km. The trails in Nepal are mostly paved with stone and have many, many, many steps. The hike was listed as easy so we decided not to rent trekking poles. That was a mistake we won't make again. We probably went up 4000 steps (that actually may be a conservative estimate) and down 5000 that were even taller steps. I realize we have not been hiking in just over a year, but we do walk everyday and have some stairs and hills so how could our quads and calves be sooooo sore?



Our guide, Roman



The trail took us through forests, fields and villages.



Rice



Plant used to make brooms.



Millet



Small village temple to the goddess Durga. She is the reason for celebrating Dashain, the festival currently going on.



Women harvesting rice.



Rice straw fodder that will be eaten by water buffalo and cattle.



In anticipation of Dashain these Chyangra goats (their wool makes cashmere) were brought down from the mountains to be sacrificed or just butchered for families to use during their celebration feasts.



This goat was waiting to meet his fate at the lodge and restaurant in Dhampus where we ate lunch. We enjoyed a typical Nepali meal with chicken curry, dal bhat, greens, potatoes and “pickle” which is a spicy tangy chutney type sauce.



Typical Newari (one of several distinct people of Nepal) home.



The Nepal flag is the only national flag in the world that is not rectangular.



One of my favorite experiences on the hike was these boys sharing some village dancing and singing. They were doing it on the trail with the hope that trekkers would pay a token amount to pass. We were happy to contribute.

<http://firstthreeodds.org/wpcontent/uploads/2023/10/boys-dancing-on-trail.mp4>

We enjoyed beautiful vistas of terraced rice fields and the Pokhara valley on our hike.

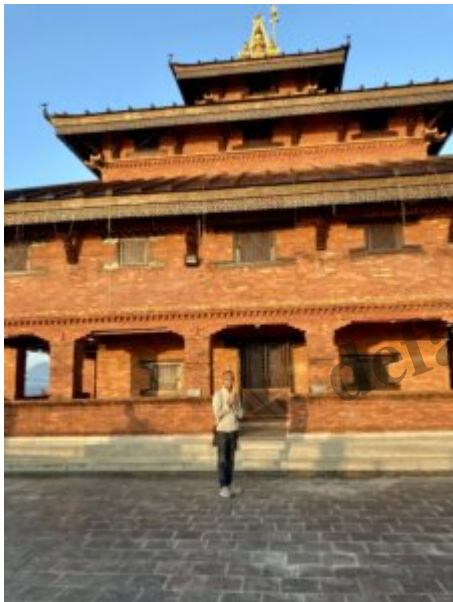


The following morning we got up early to see the sunrise on the Annapurna Range from Sarangkot. It





Roman, us and the mountains!



Roman in front of a temple to Shiva.



The next stop on our half-day tour was the Peace Pagoda. It was built by Japanese Buddhists to promote world peace. We went right after the sunrise and were able to avoid the crowds and see the

mountains before they became obscured by the clouds that tend to shroud them around noon this time of year.



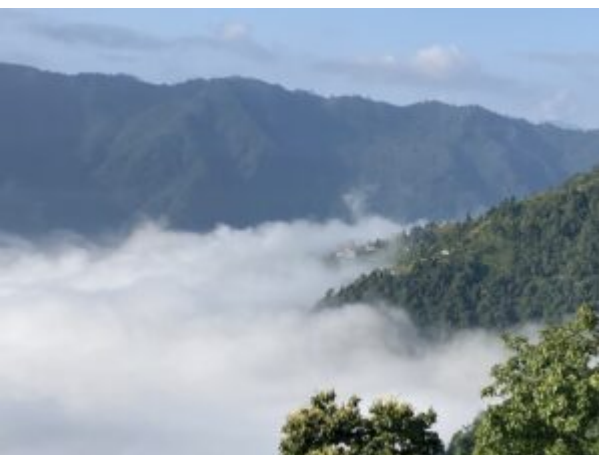
You can't really see that someone added "480 steps" to the sign. We were really feeling it in our legs by this time.



The Peace Pagoda. It is a stupa which is like a temple but there is nothing inside. Worshipping is done from the exterior. It has four different Buddhas from different parts of Asia and different stages of existence. No talking allowed—which contributed to the peacefulness found here.



The sharp peaked mountain is Machapuchare or Fishtail Mountain. The green peak below is Sarangkot where we saw the sunrise.



We then went to Devi's Falls before going back to our hotel for breakfast.



After breakfast we walked down to the Phewa Lake and took a boat ride out to a little island that has a small but important Hindu temple on it. This temple is one of four that faithful Hindus make a pilgrimage to in their lifetime.



Rick, Taunya, Roman and our paddler. It seemed like too much work for one person with one paddle to navigate us around the lake.



Our destination, Tal Barahi temple.



Cultural dancing and music at our hotel.



Feeling content while waiting for our dinner.



Rick's trout is reminiscent of Fishtail Mountain!

It was a wonderful trip, a nice getaway but it is good to be back “home” and back to work. We feel so blessed to be here and having so many different experiences, learning new things, being challenged both mentally and physically and hopefully making a difference.

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