



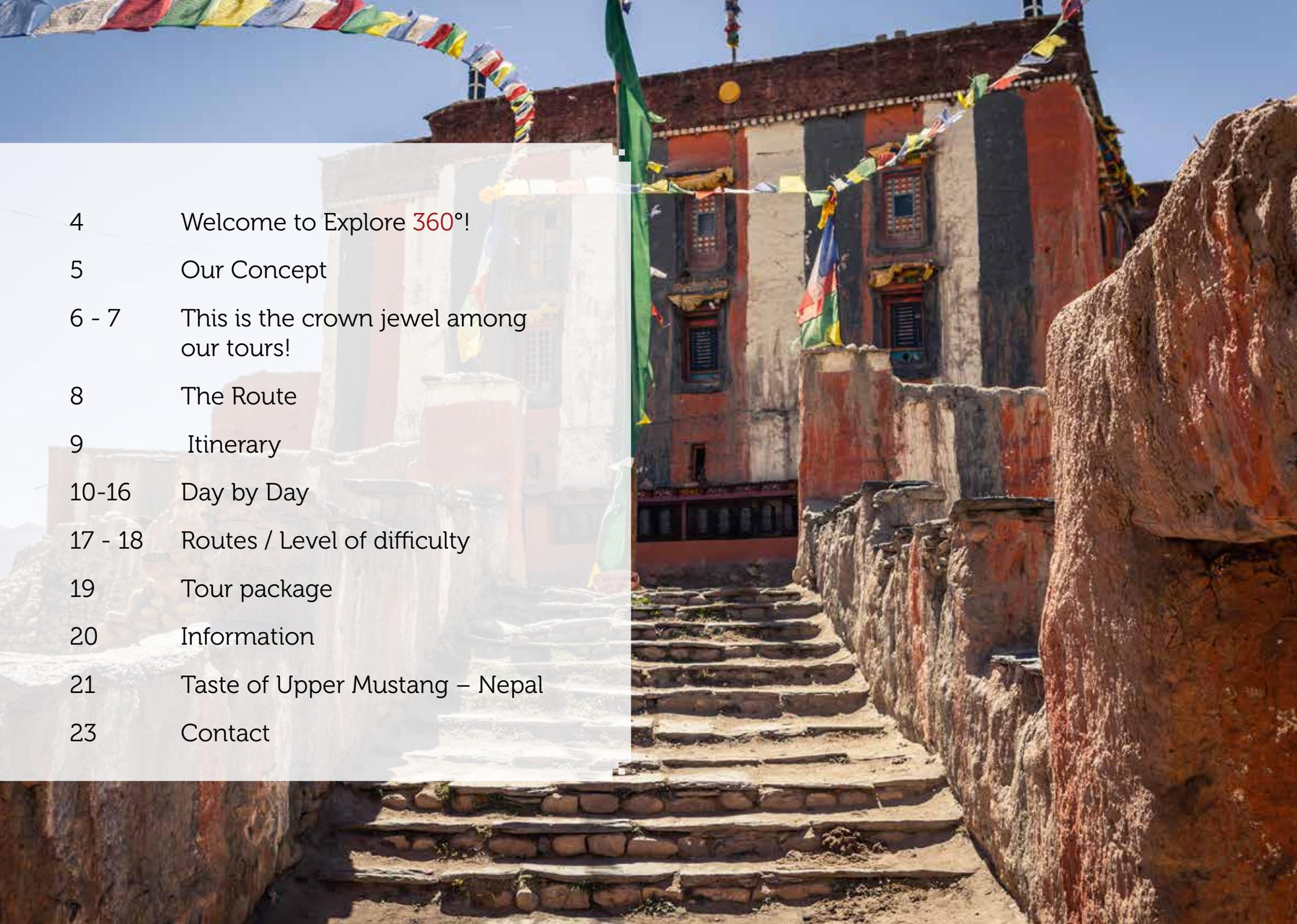
## Upper Mustang – Nepal

Tibet's Last Forbidden Kingdom



**“ IT WAS SO MUCH MORE THAN ADVENTURE RIDING IN THE HIMALAYAS. THIS ANCIENT TRAIL UP TO LO MANTHANG IN THE RESTRICTED UPPER MUSTANG REGION OF NEPAL IS A UNIQUE MOTORCYCLING EXPERIENCE. BUT IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT THE RIDING, CHRIS MANAGES TO CREATE AN EXPERIENCE YOU’LL REMEMBER FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.”**

**DAVE S. / UK**

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# WELCOME TO EXPLORE360°!

## Fellow riders!

Welcome to Explore360°! My name is Chris, originally from The Netherlands but living in Sweden since 2011, and since 2013 I am running Explore360°. I would like to share my two biggest passions with you: travelling and driving a motorcycle: an unbeatable combination that has led me to far-out corners of this world and more than 40 countries the last ten years. The feeling of freedom and really being in the present when my bike, the road and environment are in harmony with each other is what I enjoy

most. Motorbike travelling means to me: experiencing a wide variety of welcome to Explore360°! Scenery, cultures, lifestyles and adventure, and off course to have fun and to go for a ride.

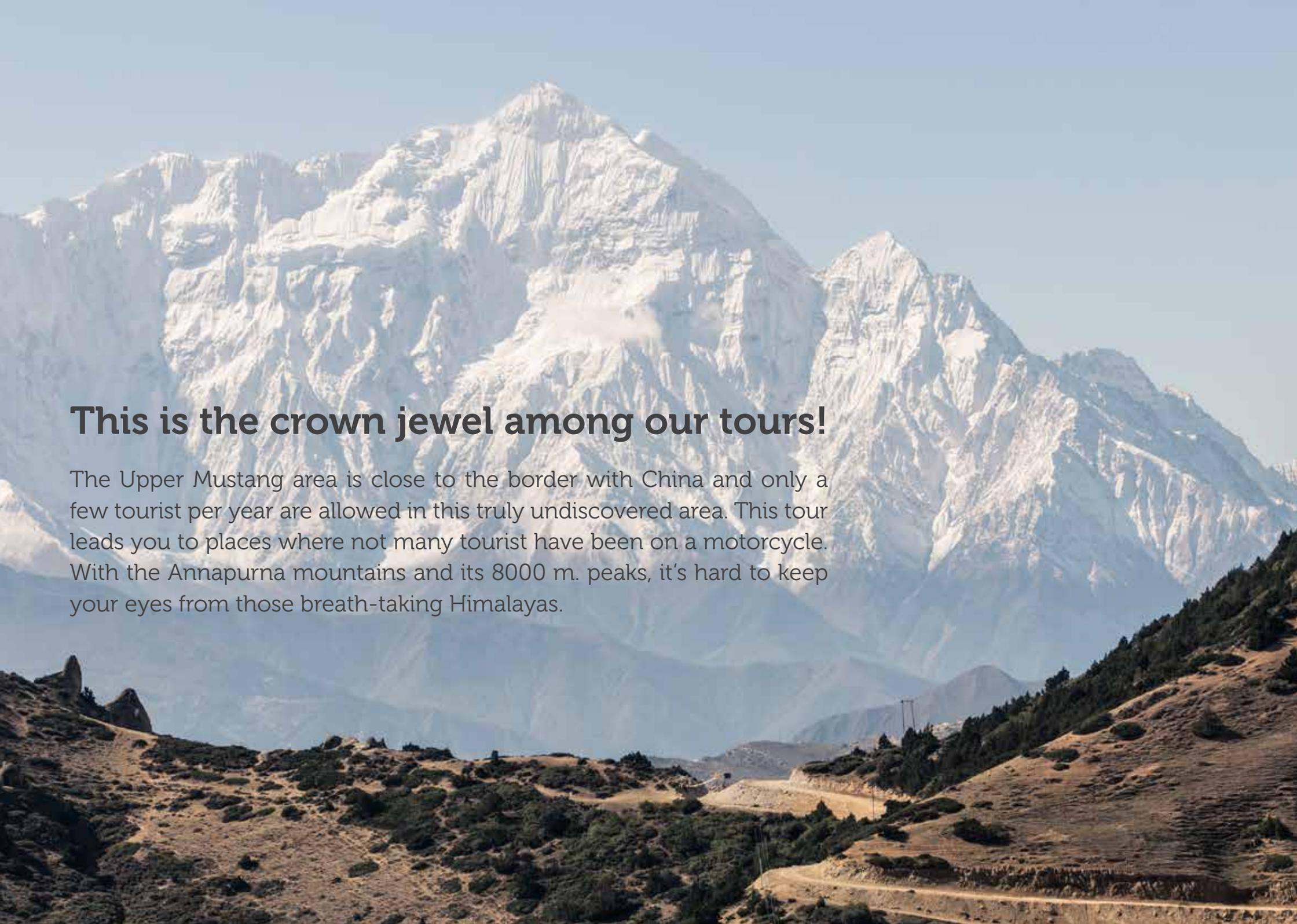
In this brochure I would like to inform you about our tour in Nepal – Upper Mustang and share the experience that I had in this extraordinary country. Breath-taking scenery, great off-road riding, a pervasive culture and the instant feeling that this is a country that moves your senses in all possible ways. Just awesome! At last I would like to share some ideas, which we believe in here at Explore360° to give you a never-to-forget experience.



# OUR CONCEPT

- We believe in having a genuine experience with a healthy dose of adventure. By exploring breath-taking landscapes, great roads and maybe being a bit out of your comfort-zone or undergoing a culture shock, but simply always having a good time and fun will give you a once in a lifetime experience!
- We believe that motorbike travelling is for everybody! It doesn't discriminate age, gender, sexual preference or type of bike and so on. You only need a flexible, open-minded attitude and the rest will follow!
- We strive to make every tour a unique one! So no itinerary will be exactly the same. In this way it will also stay fun and exiting for us.
- We believe in small intimate groups who want to have fun and a great time together. Not only while driving but also when not driving!
- We believe in having a support vehicle ( $\geq 5$  participants). This gives you the opportunity to drive your motorbike in the most free way possible and enjoy it to the max!
- We believe in stimulating the local economy by making use of additional local guides and small local businesses and accommodations to stay.
- We believe in creating a safety-net for our customers. That's why Explore360° has lodged security with the Swedish Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency ("Kammarkollegiet"). So you are protected under the Swedish law.





## **This is the crown jewel among our tours!**

The Upper Mustang area is close to the border with China and only a few tourists per year are allowed in this truly undiscovered area. This tour leads you to places where not many tourists have been on a motorcycle. With the Annapurna mountains and its 8000 m. peaks, it's hard to keep your eyes from those breath-taking Himalayas.

# Join us on this fabulous journey, an opportunity of a lifetime.

Join us for the ride of a lifetime into one of the most unexplored regions of the Himalayas: Upper Mustang. It opened up for tourism in 1997 and still only a limited amount of tourists are allowed into Upper Mustang per year.

The Mustang provides experienced riders with an adventure that very few have done before, especially not on a motorcycle. It's not an easy ride but the rewards are plentiful however as you get the chance to experience the last remaining Tibetan kingdom in all

it's glory. Most of the route rides close to 4000m on terrain, which regularly encounters landslides, snowfall or rain, which is all part of the adventure.

Explore360° is one of the very few tour companies to have a tour to this region. It is beyond doubt the most thrilling and unique Himalayan journey on two wheels. See you out there!



# THE ROUTE

## FACTS ABOUT NEPAL

**CAPITAL CITY:**  
Kathmandu

**SIZE:**  
93<sup>rd</sup> largest in the world, land locked between China and India.

**POPULATION:**  
26,5 million people

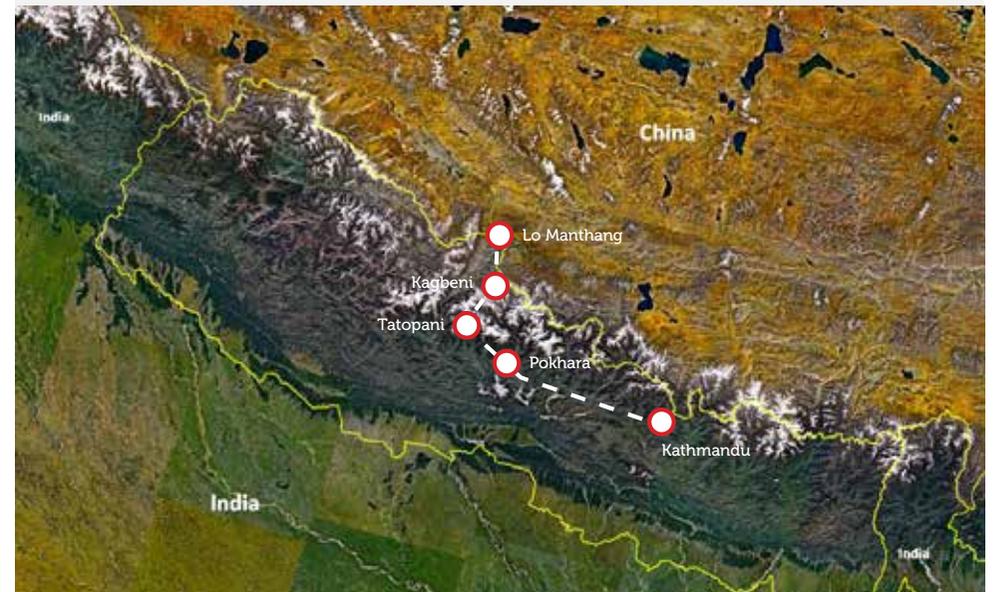
**CURRENCY:**  
Nepalese Rupee (NPR)

**LANGUAGE(S):**  
Nepali

**MAIN RELIGION:**  
Majority is Hindu (Buddhism in Upper Mustang)

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:**  
Federal secular parliamentary republic.

## TRAVEL INFORMATION



# ITINERARY

DAY	FROM:	TO:	ALTITUDE:	RIDING TIME:
1	-	Kathmandu	-	-
2	Kathmandu	Kathmandu	1400 m	-
3	Kathmandu	Pokhara	1200 m	3 - 4 hrs
4	Pokhara	Lete	2700 m	6 - 7 hrs
5	Lete	Chele	3100 m	6 - 7 hrs
6	Chele	Ghami	3450 m	4 - 5 hrs
7	Ghami	Lo-Manthang	3800 m	4 - 5 hrs
8	Lo-Manthang	Lo-Manthang	3800 m	2 - 3 hrs
9	Lo-Manthang	Geling	3500 m	5 - 6 hrs
10	Geling	Kagbeni	2800 m	6 - 7 hrs
11	Kagbeni	Tatopani	1300 m	6 - 7 hrs
12	Tatopani	Bandipur	1100 m	7 - 8 hrs
13	Bandipur	Kathmandu	1400 m	7 - 8 hrs
14	Kathmandu	-	-	-

# DAY BY DAY

## DAY 1 / ARRIVAL AT KATHMANDU

Namasté, meaning welcome/hello, is probably the first thing you'll hear when arriving in the capital of Nepal with its chaotic traffic and busyness of people everywhere. We'll be staying in Thamel in a beautiful boutique hotel, which feels like a quiet oasis in the middle of all chaos. Thamel is the area where most tourists stay and where sightseeing and shops are in the neighbourhood.

## DAY 2 / KATHMANDU

While the special permits for Upper Mustang will be finalized for us today, we can spend the day sightseeing Kathmandu. The Pashupatinath temple, the holiest temple for Hindus where cremations take place along the river and the Swayambhunath temple also known as the "monkey temple" are on the program. Before dinner we'll have the tour briefing so everybody knows what to expect.



## DAY BY DAY

### DAY 3 /

#### KATHMANDU – POKHARA

(0,5 HRS FLIGHT + 2-3 HRS RIDE)

Today we get up early to get the morning flight to Pokhara, which takes about half an hour. In Pokhara we stay in a lovely hotel close to the lakeside and here we'll receive our motorcycles. When done with all the paperwork for getting the bikes and had lunch we'll go for a ride in the surroundings to get used to the bikes and the left-hand side traffic and ride out of Pokhara up to Sarangkot for a beautiful view of the spectacular Annapurnas. Once back in Pokhara, the evening is set-aside for the final check and packing of bags because tomorrow we are on the way! Last minute questions are answered over dinner and drinks and the excitement builds before hitting the road tomorrow.

### DAY 4 /

#### POKHARA TO LETE, 6-7 HOURS

Starting early and with the Himalayas on the back-ground -on a clear day you can see from Dhaulagiri to the west. We'll pass Nepal's longest suspension bridge at Kusma on our way up. After lunch we soon say goodbye to the pavement at Beni and hit the dirt. We ride along the Kali Gandaki river for a couple of hours before arriving at Lete, a village that looks like one in the Alps and will stay in a guesthouse.



## DAY BY DAY

### DAY 5 /

#### LETE TO CHELE, 6-7 HOURS

Today we will ride through the world's deepest gorge which is more than 8000m deep! Dhaulagiri (8167m) is on your left and Annapurna I (8091m) is on your right. The terrain is tough at times as we climb over rocky slopes and cross through waterfalls. At Jomson we'll have a brake, and get our permit checked in Kaghbeni and then on to Upper Mustang! Once in Upper Mustang we continue to follow the Kali Gandaki north passing through Chusang and pass an old regional salt mine. Salt was one of the major trade stocks in times gone by and played a very important role in the development of the region. Just before Chele we'll cross the Kali Gandaki river by bridge, or through the river itself when not too deep. We will be staying in a basic guest-house with some beautiful views over the valley from the roof terrace.

### DAY 6 /

#### CHELE - GHAMI, 4-5 HOURS

After breakfast we head north as the road climbs higher until we reach the Dojori pass. Don't forget to look back once in a while, because the views on the Annapurnas will literally take your breath away. Then on to the toughest sections on this tour and we might need to give each other a hand. It goes steep up, loose rocks and vertical cliffs. You might get vertigo! We continue on, admire the view at each of the high-passes (4000 m) before descending down to beautiful Ghami -a village which has managed to cultivate apple orchards in the dry climate- and has incredible apple pie. When on time we make a short loop to the coloured mountains of Dhakmar. Breath taking!



## DAY BY DAY

### DAY 7

#### GHAMI TO LO-MANTHANG VIA GHAR GUMBA, 6-7 HOURS

Deeper and deeper we ride into Buddhist country. Passing Nepal's longest Mani-wall just north of Ghami, through the village Tsarang from where we'll ride up to Ghar Gumba, one of the oldest monastery in the area (8th century). Then on towards the ancient walled city of Lo Manthang. We'll climb up the last pass and might encounter some fesh-fesh, the talk powder sand. So it might get dusty! But then looking down into the valley, seeing Lo-Manthang, the ancient walled city. Finally we made it!



### DAY 8

#### LO-MANTHANG / CHOSUR CAVES DAY-TRIP, 3-4 HOURS

Today you can have a resting day either a short ride in the surroundings where are many sights of interest. Some of the most fascinating are the caves at Chosur. These caves are carved high into the cliffs and are a labyrinth of small rooms and tunnels. Even up to 5 floors and 85 rooms! We then take the long way home via several small villages along the east of the river to Lo-Manthang. In the afternoon we will have a guided tour through the town and visit the three monasteries in Lo-Manthang by one of the monks.

## DAY BY DAY

### DAY 9 / LO MANTHANG - GELING, 5-6 HOURS

We can take a slow morning and get ready to descent again. We say goodbye to Lo-Manthang and start our journey back. The Annapurnas grow in size as we ride towards the Himalayas and drop from the Tibetan plateau. We'll visit Tsarang shortly. It's home to the King's winter palace and one of the regions largest functioning monasteries. After a coffee break we descend further, pass the steep roads at Samar again and luckily we go downhill this time. We'll pass the town of Geling which we bypassed on the way north, and will stay a bit south of it in a very basic guest-house.

### DAY 10 / GELING - KAGHBENI VIA MUKTINATH 6-7 HOURS

No trip to Mustang would be complete without a visit to the ancient Hindu city of Muktinath. There is a sacred Hindu temple that pilgrims from all across the sub continent try to visit at least once during their lives. The temple houses an ancient shrine surrounded by 108 water fountains fed by glacial water. To cleanse your sins, you must run through each of the water fountains and then take a dip in each of the two pools. We'll be ending up the day in the charming town Kaghbeni, the gateway to Upper Mustang.



## DAY BY DAY

### DAY 11 /

#### KAGHBENI TO TATOPANI, 6-7 HOURS

Down we go! From nearly 3000m we drop to 1200m at Tatopani where the taste of the cold beer and a dip in the hot springs awaits, after a long day avoiding busses, pilgrims, hikers and pot-holes.

### DAY 12 /

#### TATOPANI TO BANDIPUR, 8-9 HOURS

We will leave the Mustang behind us today and head back to Kathmandu. After lunch we go on and ride to Bandipur. A gem of a village on top of a mountain and former hub on trading routes. We'll be staying in a guesthouse with a beautiful view on those mighty Himalayas, which we passed just a couple of days ago.



## DAY BY DAY

### DAY 13 /

#### BANDIPUR TO KATHMANDU, 7-8 HOURS

It's time for the last stretch and it's all tarmac to Kathmandu. The traffic will get busier the closer we approach the city. Cars, busses, scooters, motorcycles, people everywhere! But we take our time to get into town back to our hotel where we started our adventure 2 weeks ago. In the evening we'll have our last dinner together and maybe we'll even end up in Sam's bar. It's the last night of the tour tonight you know.

### DAY 14 /

#### KATHMANDU - HOME

All good things come to an end, so it's time to fly home again. But you will carry an experience of a life-time with you. You rode Upper Mustang and there are not many others who can say so.





## ROUTES / LEVEL OF RIDING

This tour is suitable for drivers with intermediate/advanced off-road experience and you need a good general fitness. The route goes mostly over (tough) gravel roads, to more bumpy tracks with stones, sand and rocks and the majority of the routes are on high altitude (between 2500 and 4000m). Total distance is approximately 1000 km's whereof 80% off-road, not in distance but in time.

It's mandatory to have experience with gravel riding, or you must have joined an advanced off-road course before (like the ORS in Wales). If you have joined a tour with us for example to Morocco or Iceland, your riding skills are probably good enough. Just get in touch when in doubt!



### NEPAL – UPPER MUSTANG TOUR:



#### Conditions

Please bring your complete motorcycling gear (helmet, hard boots (no soft leather touring boots!), gloves, goggles, motorcycling suit with knee, elbow, shoulder and back protector).

Sorry, no rental of motorcycling gear possible.

# RIDING SKILLS / OFF-ROAD

On all our trips are fun and safety our main goals. With the classification 1 track up to 3 tracks, we would like to give you an indication to evaluate your off-road riding skills, for the tour required.

Self-evaluation is not easy – but the final decision is made by you only. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions or you need suggestions for an off-road course. We are also at your disposal for further questions about the trip or special information about the routes.

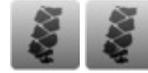


## = Off-road beginners

Driving on asphalt, even on passes with narrow switchbacks are no problem for you. The off-road part is mostly under 30 % of the total distance. The tour is easily manageable also for beginners.

### **Recommendation:**

If you have no off-road and /or gravel riding experience at all, we recommend a 1- or 2 day training course. After that training course it is much easier for you to evaluate your skills and to figure out whether you have fun riding off-road tracks.

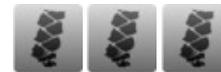


## = Intermediate off-road riders

Driving on asphalt as well as on gravel, passes with narrow switchbacks (paved and gravel) are no problem for you. Off-road (gravel) riding experience is mandatory. The off-road part is mostly over 30 % of the total distance. Challenging sections with bigger stones, steep climbs/descents and/or sand are possible.

### **Recommendation:**

This tour is not applicable for participants without any off-road/ gravel riding experiences. You are experienced with off-road/ gravel riding, and/or have had a 1- or 2-day training course.



## = Advanced off-road riders

This tour is suitable for drivers with advanced off-road experience and good fitness. The daily routes can be pretty long. The tour consist mostly of off-road parts including demanding and difficult routes with single-tracks, sand, big stones, mud and water crossings.

### **Recommendation:**

This tour is not recommended for participants without any off-road experiences. You must have an extensive experience with off-road / gravel riding and/or have had an advanced off-road course.

# TOUR PACKAGE

## TOUR DATES /

Please see the calendar on our website for the most up to date tour dates. Normally in April and October.

## PRICE (PER RIDER) /

Rider:	44 900 SEK (min. 5 riders, max. 8 riders*)
Passenger in 4WD jeep:	32 900 SEK (max. two places available)

## INCLUDED /

- ✓ Honda 250 cc off-road motorcycle (CRF or Tornado)
- ✓ Petrol during the whole tour
- ✓ Domestic flight Kathmandu – Pokhara\*
- ✓ Support 4WD jeep (for luggage, petrol, water, etc.)
- ✓ Upper Mustang permit (US\$ 500 per person)
- ✓ TIMS permit
- ✓ ACAP permit
- ✓ Accommodation (13 nights – days 1 - 13)
- ✓ Breakfast and dinner
- ✓ Excursion with local guide to two temples in Kathmandu on day 2.
- ✓ Entrance fees for the caves and monasteries (day 8)
- ✓ Road tolls
- ✓ English, Swedish, Dutch speaking guides
- ✓ English speaking local Upper Mustang guide (in car)
- ✓ English speaking mechanic (in car)
- ✓ Bike insurance (3rd party insurance)
- ✓ Medical kit

- ✓ Satellite phone and SPOT (GPS safety tracker)
- ✓ Oxygen (in case of emergency of altitude sickness)

\* When the domestic flight is cancelled due to bad weather, other means of transport will be provided.

## EXCLUDED /

- × International flight tickets
- × Visa for Nepal (\$ 25 for 15 days)
- × Travel insurance (mandatory, including medical repatriating).
- × Drinks/ alcohol / lunch
- × Personal expenses (i.e. laundry)
- × Tips for local guides

Bike Damage - A deposit of US\$ 200 (in cash) must be made upon arrival in Pokhara when receiving the motorbike. Any bike damage is the responsibility of the rider and will be deducted from the deposit. The remainder is returned at the completion of the tour when having no damage.

## OWN RESPONSIBILITY TO /

- Bring your own complete motorcycle gear (helmet, boots, gloves, suit incl. protectors/back protector.
- Arrange your personal travel-, cancellation- and medical insurance, (European) insurance card and passport (min. six month valid from the arrival date).
- You have got a valid passport and motorcycle driver's license.
- Make the deposit for the rental bike (€ 1500) in cash or by credit card (upon arrival).
- Book your own flight ticket.
- Follow the (local) traffic rules, laws and regulations as well the tour leader's instructions.
- Take care of your own equipment and motorbike. Explore360° will whenever possible help, but cannot be held responsible for any costs for recovery and such due to reckless behaviour.

\* All prices are per person and are subject to change depending on accommodations, rental bikes and applicable currency, taxes or VAT.

# INFORMATION

## ACCOMMODATION

During our stay in Kathmandu and Pokhara we'll stay in beautiful 5\* boutique hotels. In Upper Mustang the accommodation varies from basis to very basic and you need to bring a sleeping bag for those cold night high up in the mountains.

Single Room Supplement – Only available in Kathmandu and Pokhara- Due to accommodation restrictions we cannot guarantee single rooms when travelling in Mustang.

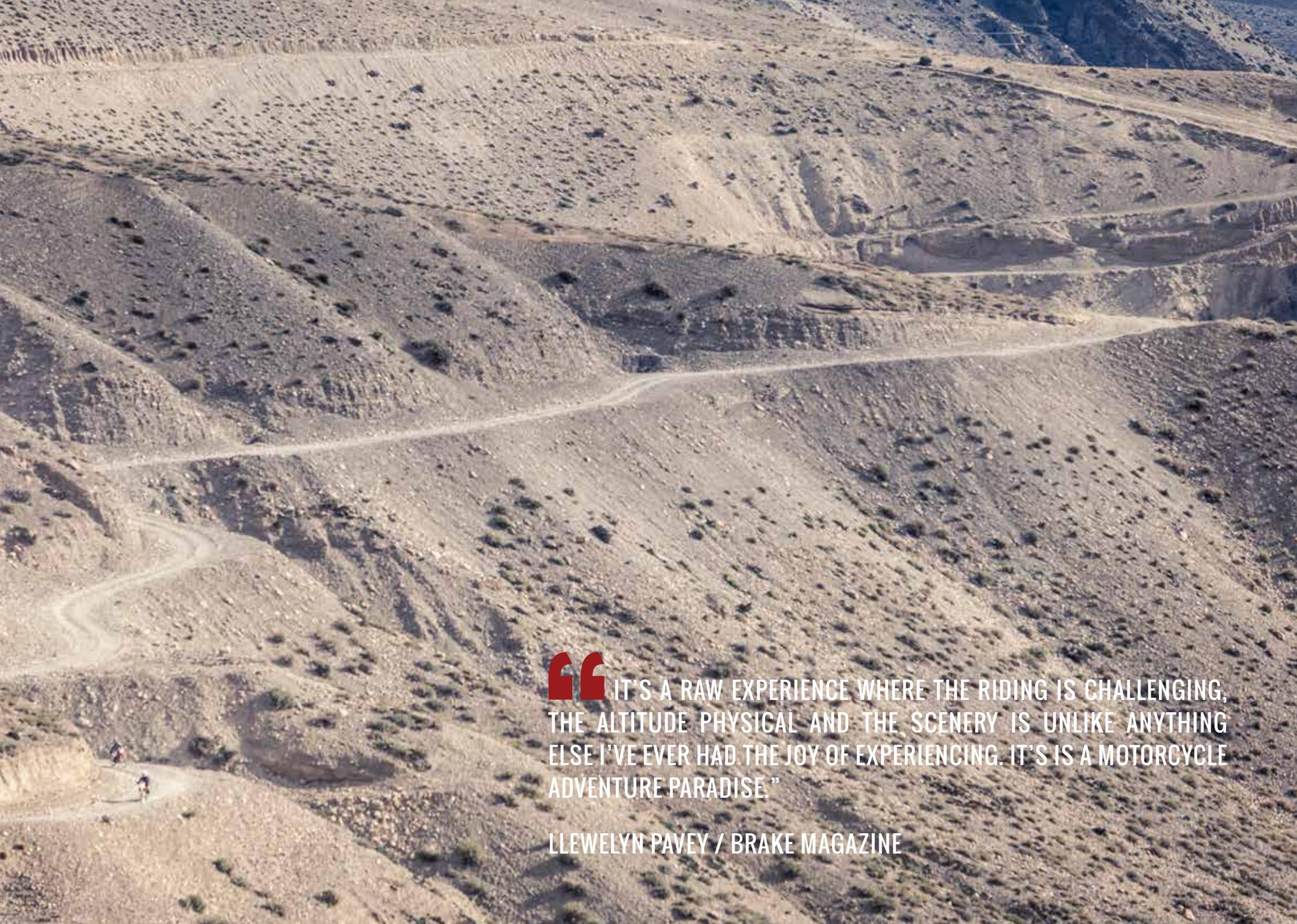
## FOOD

The food is very much Indian orientated. Spicy if you like, sometimes basic but good. Try local dishes like Daalbat (rice with some vegetables and chicken) or some delicious Mo Mo, dumplings with different kind of fillings and a spicy sauce.



# TASTE OF UPPER MUSTANG – NEPAL





“ IT'S A RAW EXPERIENCE WHERE THE RIDING IS CHALLENGING, THE ALTITUDE PHYSICAL AND THE SCENERY IS UNLIKE ANYTHING ELSE I'VE EVER HAD THE JOY OF EXPERIENCING. IT'S IS A MOTORCYCLE ADVENTURE PARADISE.”

LLEWELYN PAVEY / BRAKE MAGAZINE



Pictures courtesy of Llewelyn Pavey and Chris Wilthuis  
Design: Laya Sadgeh

## EXPLORE360°

Adventure motorcycle experiences

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