Superview

NATURE, NATURE, NATURE! · YOUR GUIDEBOOK

A day in *Dhital.*

There's no guide today, so this is your guide. Read it in the car, keep it open at the farm, and look things up as they happen. Nobody at the house speaks English, but everyone is glad you came.

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BEFORE YOU GO

The day at a glance

Pickup: 10 AM, at our parking
A private car waits at our parking, down the steps from reception, and brings you back.

Back: about 4 PM
The drive is about an hour each way.

Meals: with the family
All your meals today are included, fresh from the farm.

Language: Nepali
The driver speaks some basic English. Everyone in the family speaks only Nepali. Smiles and pointing work well.

Every day is different
What you see depends on the season and the family's work today. Not everything in this guidebook will happen on your visit.

BEFORE YOU GO

What to wear and bring

- [ ] **Shoes that slip off easily**
  You take them off before going into the house.
- [ ] **Clothes that can get dusty**
  It's a working farm.
- [ ] **A hat, sunscreen and a water bottle**
- [ ] **A charged phone, with our number saved**
  +977 985 602 2610, on WhatsApp too.
- [ ] **This guidebook, downloaded**
  The signal at the farm comes and goes.

SAY IT IN NEPALI

Seven words that go a long way

Namaste
Hello, and goodbye. Say it with your palms together.

Dhanyabad
Thank you.

Mitho chha
It's tasty. You'll want this one.

Pugyo
That's enough, I'm full. Useful when someone keeps filling your plate, and they will.

Ramro chha
It's beautiful, it's nice.

Aama and Buwa
Mother and father. It's how you address the older women and men of the house.

Didi and Dai
Older sister and older brother. For anyone a little older than you.

GOOD MANNERS

In a Nepali home

Shoes off
Before you go inside, and always before the kitchen.

Respect the fire
The kitchen hearth is treated with care. Don't step over it or put your feet towards it.

Jutho
Food or water that has touched your mouth is *jutho*. Don't offer anyone food you've bitten into, and when you drink from a shared jug, pour it into your mouth without touching your lips to it.

Right hand
Give and take things with your right hand, or with both.

Photos
Ask first. A smile and a nod at your camera is enough.

THE DRIVE

Along the Seti and the Mardi

For about an hour you drive north-west from Sarangkot, out of the city and up the river valleys.

Seti means white. The river runs milky because of the fine limestone it carries down from the Annapurnas. The *Mardi* comes down from the slopes below Machhapuchhre, the Fishtail. Watch the fields change as you climb: rice on the flat land by the rivers, then terraces cut into the hills.



The valley you drive up, Annapurna South at the end of it.

THE HOUSE

Stone, mud and wood

Look at the older houses in Dhital. Walls of flat stones laid in mud, beams and window frames of wood, roofs of slate or tin. Almost everything came from within walking distance.

Low walls, steep roofs
Kaski gets more rain than anywhere else in Nepal. Steep roofs shed the monsoon fast, and deep eaves keep the mud walls dry. Low houses stay out of the wind and are easier to keep warm.

Small windows
They keep the warmth of the fire in on winter nights.

The buffalo next door
The shed is built onto the house. The animals are close by and easy to look after at night, and their dung goes straight onto the fields.

Red and white clay
Walls are often plastered with red clay, *rato mato*, and white clay, *kamero*. Floors are wiped with a paste of mud and cow dung, which dries hard and keeps the dust down.

Upstairs
Grain, corn and hay are stored under the roof, where smoke from the fire keeps them dry.



Stone walls, slate and tin roofs.



Hay stored behind the small upstairs window.

Why the walls breathe

Mud and stone are full of tiny pores. When the air is damp, the clay soaks up moisture. When it's dry, the clay gives it back. So the air inside stays at a steadier humidity than in a sealed concrete room, with less condensation and less mould.

Thick walls also store heat. They warm up slowly through the day and give the heat back at night, so the rooms stay cooler in summer and warmer on winter nights.

And the smoke from the kitchen fire finds its way out through the gaps under the roof, drying the grain stored upstairs and keeping insects out of the wooden beams.

THE BUFFALO

Milk, dahi and ghee

Buffalo milk is richer and creamier than cow's milk. Nothing is wasted: every drop becomes something.

1. The buffalo is milked by hand, usually morning and evening.
2. The milk is heated over firewood in a heavy iron pan.
3. Once it's warm, a spoon of yesterday's *dahi* is stirred in and it's left overnight. By morning it's *dahi*, homemade yogurt.
4. The *dahi* is churned in a pot with a wooden stick, the *madani*, twirled back and forth between the hands until the butter, *nauni*, comes together.
5. What's left is *mohi*, buttermilk, which is drunk with meals.
6. The *nauni* is heated slowly until it turns clear and golden. That's *ghee*, and it keeps for months without a fridge.



Fresh milk on the firewood stove.



Churning nauni, butter, which is then heated into ghee.

THE STONE MILL

Millet on the jaato

The *jaato* is a hand mill: two round stones, the top one turned by a wooden handle. Grain goes into the hole in the middle and comes out as flour around the edge. It's slow, heavy work, and often sung to.

Kodo, finger millet
Grown on the dry terraces and cut by hand in autumn. It's naturally gluten-free and rich in calcium.

Gilo roti
A soft, moist bread of millet flour and water, cooked in a pan.

If the millet isn't in
You may see the *jaato* used for other grain, or not at all. It depends on the season.

Corn on the khottiya
When there's corn, it's roasted over the fire and eaten hot.


The jaato.


Millet, just cut.



Aama at the millet harvest.

THE GRINDING STONE

Chutney on a silauta

The *silauta* is a flat stone, the *lohoro* the round stone you rock across it. Tomatoes go on with chilli and salt, then coriander and mint picked from the garden a minute earlier.

Ask anyone in the village and they'll tell you it tastes better than from a blender. The stone crushes rather than slices.



Tomato chutney on the silauta.

THE FARM

Grow what you can, eat what you grow

The terraces here are too steep and too small to farm for the market. So families grow a little of everything and eat what they grow. It's why village food is so fresh, and so healthy.

Rice
On the lower, wetter terraces, harvested in autumn.

Millet and corn
On the dry terraces higher up.

The kitchen garden
Beans climbing sticks, greens, coriander, mint, whatever the season allows.

Marigolds
Sayapatri, grown in the yard and strung into garlands for Tihar, the festival of lights.









WORKING TOGETHER

Paid in work, not cash

At harvest the neighbours come to work one family's fields, and next week that family works theirs. It's called *parma*. Nobody pays anybody: a day of help is paid back with a day of help.



Rice harvest, turn by turn.



Beating the bundles to get the grain off.

THEN AND NOW

Light, only since 2000

Electricity first reached the village in 2000. Before that there was none of any kind. Even now, cooking is done on firewood gathered from the forest, and people sit on hand-woven mats in the sun.



The line that arrived in 2000.



A woven floor rug, and firewood from the forest.

IF YOU NEED US

We're a call away

Call or WhatsApp
+977 985 602 2610, any time of the day.

Feeling unwell, or want to come back early?
Tell us. We arrange a car straight away.

Can't make yourself understood?
Call us and hand the phone to the family. We'll translate.

Thank you for spending the day in Dhital. Dhanyabad!

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