

Nagarkot Sunrise and Hike to Changunarayan Temple Day Tour

URL: <https://himalayan360.com/trip/nagarkot-changunarayan-hike/>

Destination

Nepal Treks & Tours

Activity

Day Tours

Start / End Point

Thamel/Thamel

Duration

1

Per Person From

USD 48

Group Size

1 - 20

Best Season

All Season

Transportation

Private Vehicle

Meals

N/A

Difficulty

Easy The trip is easy and suitable for everyone, including children and older people. It does not require any skills in mountain climbing or traversing difficult terrain.

Highlights of Nagarkot Changunarayan Hike

- Reach Nagarkot View Tower, where you can see the Himalayan ranges, including Mount Everest (*on clear days*), Langtang Lirung, and Dorje Lakpa.
- Observe the ancient trails near Manohara River Valley, once used as trade routes connecting Nagarkot to the Kathmandu Valley.
- Pass through traditional settlements near Mahadev Temple.
- Visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Changunarayan Temple, the oldest Hindu temple in Nepal, built in the 4th-5th century.
- Step through the Nagarkot army barracks area, once used as a hilltop watch station during the Malla period.
- Explore the Telkot village, known for its 300-year-old Newari-style houses.
- Observe the Garuda statue at Changunarayan.
- Finish your hike at Changunarayan Museum, where ancient coins, weapons, and manuscripts are stored.

Detailed Itinerary of Nagarkot Changunarayan Hike

Day 01: Drive From Kathmandu To Nagarkot, Trek Down To Changunarayan, And Back To Kathmandu

Your 1-day Nagarkot Changunarayan hike starts with a scenic drive to Nagarkot from Kathmandu, about 32KM east and around 1-1.5Hours on the road. We will pick you up from your hotel at 5:00 AM and drive you to Nagarkot Hill. You will drive through Bhaktapur, the city famous for its rich culture, temples, and ancient wood, metal, and stone artwork.

You'll reach Nagarkot View Tower (2,175M) at around 6:30 AM. Here, you'll stand face-to-face with stunning mountain ranges, including **Manaslu, Annapurna, Jugal, Rolwaling**, and the **Numbur Range**, where you can see a breathtaking sunrise view. After witnessing such natural beauty, you'll hike towards Changunarayan temple. You'll cross Tusal and Telkot village, where you'll see traditional Newar and Tamang houses. The hiking trail involves descending for 4-5Hours.

At Changunarayan Temple, you'll explore the main temple dedicated to **Lord Bishnu**. You'll see stone carvings of **Garuda Vishnu, Sheshashayi Vishnu**, and other Hindu deities on the temple walls. There's also a large idol of **Narsimha** and smaller shrines for **Shiva** and other gods. After spending time at Changunarayan, you'll drive back to Kathmandu by successfully completing your one-day hiking trip.

Highest Altitude:

N/A

Meals:

N/A

Accommodations:

N/A

Changunarayan Temple as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

You'll find Changunarayan Temple on the hilltop east of Kathmandu, built in the 4th-5th century. It is the oldest Hindu temple in the valley. The temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu in his Narayan form. UNESCO listed it as a World Heritage Site in 1979 because of its historical value, architecture, and stone and wood sculptures. The temple walls also have inscriptions written in the **Sanskrit language**, crafted over 1,500 years.

When you visit, you'll notice the wooden support carved of **Bhairab**, Vishnu, and other deities. The temple's square tower style is unique to Nepal. The temple includes smaller shrines of Shiva, Parvati, and other gods. You'll also see metal masks, stone lions, and inscriptions in ancient Licchavi script. Visiting here gives you a chance to observe Nepalese history, religion, and art in one place.

Nagarkot Changunarayan Hike Include/Exclude

Included Services

- Confirmable private vehicle for tour as per Group size and itinerary only.
- English-speaking guide.
- All internal taxes.
- 1Bottle/days of water during tour.

Excluded Services

- International Airfare.
- All entrance fees as per itinerary mentioned places.
- Tips for the crew member (it is expected).
- Drinks and food during the tour.

Group Discounts Available

No. of Persons	Price per Person
1 - 1	USD 95
2 - 2	USD 60
3 - 5	USD 58
6 - 20	USD 48

FAQ's for Nagarkot Changunarayan Hike

Can I see Mount Everest from Nagarkot?

Yes, you can see Mount Everest from the Nagarkot Viewpoint Tower on very clear days. Early morning hikes offer the best visibility. Other peaks like Langtang Lirung, Ganesh Himal, and Gaurishankar are also visible, but cloudy or rainy days reduce visibility significantly.

Is photography allowed at Changunarayan Temple?

Yes, photography is allowed in most areas. Some inner shrines may restrict photos, so check for signs or ask temple staff. The temple area, sculptures, and Nagarkot offer perfect opportunities for landscape and cultural photography.

Is the trail open year-round?

Yes, the trail is open throughout the year. The safest months are October to December and March to May for clear views. Monsoon season brings slippery paths and landslide risks. Winter mornings are cold but clear. Follow the order of guides and hike to this stop whenever you like.

Are there any myths associated with Changunarayan Temple?

Yes, local legend says Vishnu appeared in the form of Narayan here to protect the valley. Some inscriptions narrate a battle between gods and demons. Ancient sculptures show these stories. You can see the Narsimha idol representing spiritual protection.

Is there any health risk during the hike?

No, there are no health risks during this hike. Elevation gain is gradual. Carry water, snacks, sun protection, and wear full clothes because early morning can be cold. Your guide will instruct you and provide support whenever you need help.

Are there any ancient water fountains along the Changunarayan trail?

Yes, you can see stone spouts called Dhunge Dharas in villages like Telkot and Tusal. These fountains were built hundreds of years ago and provide fresh water for locals. Some are decorated with carvings of mythical creatures like dragons, makaras (sea monsters), and Garuda.

Are local handicrafts available in villages?

Yes, in the Telkot and Changunarayan area, villagers sell small handicrafts like woven bags, bead necklaces, and metal charms. These items reflect Newar and Tamang craftsmanship. You can purchase products that support local families and hard work.

Scenic Mountain View during Nagarkot Changunarayan Hike

From the Nagarkot Viewpoint, you can see the beautiful range of Himalayan peaks within 40 miles of driving distance of Kathmandu. The mountains are more visible on a clear day. Here are the main peaks you'll see:

- **Langtang Lirung** (7,227M): It lies in the Langtang Himalayan Range. You can see its snow-covered summit and glaciers from Nagarkot.
- **Ganesh Himal** (7,422M): Located in the Ganesh Himal Range, its ridgelines and peaks are visible from the viewpoint.
- **Dorje Lakpa** (6,966M): Situated in the Langtang Himal Range, you can view its snow slopes clearly from Nagarkot.
- **Gaurishankar** (7,134M): Lying in the Rolwaling Range, the twin peaks are visible from the top.
- **Chobutse** (6,529M): Located in the Langtang Range, you can observe part of the eastern ridge from the viewpoint.
- **Mount Everest** (8,848.86M): Situated in the Mahalangur Range, you can see it on a very clear day.
- **Manaslu** (8,163M): Lying in the Mansiri Himal range, you can see its outline on the western horizon.

Ancient Engineering: How Changunarayan Temple Survived Centuries

Changunarayan Temple has stood for over 1,500 years. It was built in the 4th-5th century by the Lichhavi dynasty king Manadeva. Builders used stone foundations and interlocking bricks so tightly that no mortar

was needed. Wooden struts and beams support the roof and absorb shocks from earthquakes. The square tower structure distributes weight equally. Every carving and beam placement was precise, combining art with engineering.

The temple also has a drainage system to prevent water damage. Roof overhangs protect walls from the rain. Local craftsmen during the Lichhavi period used perfect carving and fitting techniques without any modern tools. These methods helped the temple to withstand centuries of weather, earthquakes, and human activity. Visiting it shows the genius Nepalese architectural techniques.

Fun fact: *If only modern apartments were built this precisely, we won't panic at every little shake.*

Why Nagarkot Changunarayan Hike and Not Other Day Hikes near Kathmandu?

Unlike **Swayambhunath** or **Patan Durbar**, where you only explore temples and courtyards. The Nagarkot Changunarayan hike gives both mountain views and UNESCO heritage in one route. You'll walk to Nagarkot View tower for peaks like Langtang and Everest, and then explore Changunarayan temple. This makes it different from other short hikes around Kathmandu. Here are some of the reasons I have discussed below.

40 Miles Sweet Spot: Not too Near, Not too Far

Nagarkot lies about 40 miles away from Kathmandu, which makes it perfect for leaving the crowded city and close enough for a day trip. When you visit Swayambhunath or Patan, you stay inside the city, and the focus is only on temples and courtyards. **Bhaktapur Durbar Square** shows heritage, but you don't see the Himalayas. From Nagarkot to Changu Narayan, you get Himalayan views like Langtang and Gaurishankar, and you end with Changunarayan Temple (a UNESCO Heritage Site). This balance of distance, nature, and history makes the 40-mile spot unique.

Morning Hike is a Less Crowded Option

The Nagarkot to Changunarayan hike in the morning is quieter than most UNESCO sites around Kathmandu. At **Kathmandu Durbar Square** or **Pashupatinath**, you'll find heavy crowds from sunrise onwards, and the Bhaktapur Durbar Square and Patan Durbar Square remain busy with visitors and local activities all day. In Nagarkot, the early hours give you open trails and wide Himalayan views without interruption. You can walk freely, see the morning activity of villages, and finish at Nagarkot Viewpoint before most tour groups arrive.

Chance to Enjoy Bumpy, Scenic, and Winding Roadway Experience

The drive to Nagarkot and Changunarayan is full of twists, turns, and scenic views of the valleys and hills of the Mahabharat range. Unlike **Boudhanath** and Swayambhunath, where you'll stay inside a city, this route gives you a real hill drive experience. You'll pass terraced fields and small villages like **Telkot** and **Trishul Danda**. If you want to explore the entire World Heritage site of Kathmandu Valley, neglecting the city crowd and business, then you can go for the [7 UNESCO Heritage day tour](#), which also completes in 1 day.

Nagarkot Changunarayan Hike cost

The cost of the Nagarkot Changunarayan trip ranges from **USD 95** to **USD 48** per person. Prices depend on group size. For a single traveler, it is USD 95. For 2 people, the cost is USD 60 per person. Groups of 3-5 pay USD 58 each, and groups of 6 or more pay USD 48 per person.

These prices include transport from Kathmandu, a local guide fee, and all internal taxes. Meals and personal expenses are not included. If you want to explore this place for 4-5 days at a limited cost, then go for the [Chisapani Nagarkot hike](#), which will give you a longer trekking experience and more villages and viewpoints.

Address

Address:

Galkopakha Marg – Kathmandu – Nepal