



# The Yak Attack

19<sup>th</sup> October – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 33 Days

## **Day 1 19 October 2017, Hotel Manaslu**

Depart Melbourne Airport. Arrive Kathmandu and, after clearing Customs, you will be welcomed at the airport and transferred to your hotel. You'll have a few hours to settle in and maybe even wander the local area.

## **Day 2 20th October 2017, Hotel Manaslu (B)**

After breakfast, a full briefing then the chance to check over your gear and bike, sort out last minute purchases; explore Kathmandu or optional guided sightseeing.

## **Day 3 21st October 2017, Local Lodge (B,D)**

Drive approximately 5 hours by private vehicle to Behisahar, organise your gear, eat, and enjoy your first night in a local lodge.

## **Day 4 22nd October 2017, Training ride - Besi Sahar (800m) to Tal (1,590m). Local Lodge (B,L,D)**

A big up and down day, avoiding vehicles on the basic jeep tracks, and dodging around trekkers, pony trains and goat herds on the trails. Your ride will take you through terraced farmlands and rhododendron forests, past waterfalls and over suspension bridges.

Finally, after a series of gruelling switchbacks and steep, rocky inclines, you arrive at Tal. Nestled at the base of a large waterfall, on the sandy beaches of the Marshyangdi river, Tal is the first Buddhist settlement along the trail.



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### **Day 5 23rd October 2017, Training ride - Tal (1,590m) to Chame (2,710m). Local Lodge (B,L,D)**

Riding through a deep gorge, there are steep climbs out of Tal which will feel harder as the air thins, but we help your lungs and legs adapt by riding a shorter stage than the Yak Attack. Wooden and suspension bridges, first glimpses of the Annapurnas, muddy tracks, and more gruelling climbs, as you ride past the chortens of the Tibetan style village of Thanchowk, from where it is an easy pedal into Chame.

### **Day 6 24th October 2017, Training ride - Chame (2,710m) to Manang (3,540m). Local Lodge (B,L,D)**

Continue climbing past mani walls and Paungda Danda rock face, an impressive curved slab of rock rising 1500m from the river below, to gain the first amazing views of Annapurna II, Pisang Peak, Himalchulli and Ngadi Chuli. Climb past Dhukur Pokhari lake, over more suspension bridges and through blue pine forest, possibly encountering your first light dustings of snow on the trail. Through picturesque Braga, housing the largest Gompa (temple) in the region, and into Manang, an old medieval town with a comfortable modern quarter, where you can fill up on yak steak and cake, and relax under a hot solar shower.



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## **Day 7 25th October 2017, Acclimatisation day Manang (3,540m). Local Lodge (B,L,D)**

Today is the chance to speed up your acclimatisation by climbing high, either on foot or bike, and sleeping low back in Manang. There are many stunning side trips to peaks, lakes and glacial moraines with views to the summits of Annapurna and Gangapurna, less than 8kms away. The Himalayan Rescue Association operates an aid post here, with foreign doctors available for advice and consultation, as well as free daily lectures on altitude sickness at 3pm. Make sure you are back in time for the lecture, as they proudly claim that no one who has attended has died from altitude sickness.

## **Day 8 26th October 2017, Training ride - Manang (3,540m) to Thorong Phedi (4,450m) Local Lodge (B,L,D)**

Today is a very tough day, maybe the toughest! The air thins as the trail steadily gains elevation, climbing out of the Marsyangdi Valley into the Jarsang Khola Valley. Riding past fields of yaks, well above the tree line and possibly in snow, you now have great views of Annapurna II and IV to distract you from the difficult task of getting oxygen into the lungs. Continue over suspension bridges and past mani walls, nearly always climbing, until you reach Thorong Phedi, where the basic accommodation keeps out the elements as you try to get some sleep in the high altitude.



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### **Day 9 27th October 2017, Training ride - Thorong Phedi (4,450m), to Kagbeni (2,840m). Local Lodge (B,L,D)**

Before dawn, shoulder your bike and start the 5km climb in and out of moraine canyons, past the many false summits, to reach the top of Thronog La pass at 5,416m. The first 1,616m of descent is extremely difficult, regardless of the conditions. Ride down endless switchbacks through either thick and melting snow, or slippery loose gravel scree, until Muktinath (3,800m). From here the next 960m of descent is on jeep trails, with the shock of again manoeuvring around vehicles, people and livestock.

### **Day 10 28th October 2017, Training ride - Kagbeni (2,840m) to Tatopani (1,190m). Local Lodge (B,L,D)**

Start early to descend out of the Kali Gandaki gorge before late morning, when the strong southerly headwind commences to howl, whipping up dust and sand. If the legs are feeling strong, and you want to leave the jeep track behind for a while, there are new side trails to explore, with temporary bridges and shortcuts across river-side gravel bars, if the water is low. At the end of the day, enjoy the amazing sensation of all the extra oxygen entering your muscles and lungs, and relax in one of Tatopani's two stone, hot-spring pools, where the water is around 37C.

### **Day 11 29th October 2017, Training ride - Tatopani (1,190m) to Beni (830m) then drive to Pokhara. Waterfront Hotel (B,D)**

This is a busy section with a lot more buses, trucks, motorbikes and pedestrians, making their way along the jeep track, to and from Beni. From here Pokhara is just a 3-4 hour drive away and you now have 6 days to repair, refuel and play.



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## **Day 12 30th October 2017 Waterfront Hotel (B)**

Pokhara is not only a laid-back version of Kathmandu but also the adventure-sports capital of Nepal. Chill by the lake or pool, eat every hour in a different restaurant, explore the shops and bars, stand-up paddle or be rowed around the lake. Alternatively, seek out an adrenaline-hit by paragliding, bungee jumping, ultra light flying or travelling 120kmh on a 1.8km zip line.

## **Day 13 31st October 2017 Waterfront Hotel (B)**

Continue with the laid-back theme, maybe spin the legs on some flatlands, take a walk up to Peace Pagoda, enjoy a massage or take a meditation or yoga class. Visit the International Mountain Museum, Tibetan Monastery or Carpet factory.

## **Day 14 1st November 2017 Hotel Manaslu (B)**

A 6-8 hour drive by private vehicle, back to the wonderful craziness and sensory overload of Kathmandu.

## **Day 15 2nd November 2017 Hotel Manaslu (B)**

Visit the medieval squares of Thamel, Bhaktapur or Patan, and lose your way in the maze of back alleys and lanes. Explore the ancient temples, take a guided sightseeing tour or just eat, shop and rest.

## **Day 16 3rd November 2017 Hotel Manaslu (B)**

Registration day! Meet your fellow competitors and start the final mental preparation for the race of your lifetime.



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### **Day 17 4th November 2017 Local Tea-House (B,L,D)**

You are now in the hands of the Yak Attack crew. Transfer by coach of all riders, luggage and bikes to Besi Sahar (approx 6 hours).

### **Day 18 5th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 1 Local Tea-House (B L,D)**

Besi Sahar To Taal. Distance 32km, 1700m Ascent (Max Elevation 1700m)

Taal, a beautiful settlement on the banks of the Marshyangdi river.

Plenty of ups and downs today, with lots of water crossings, as the course climbs up to 1700m above sea level.

### **Day 19 6th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 2, Local Tea-House (B L,D)**

Taal To Manang. Distance 64km, 2500m Ascent (Max Elevation 3540m)

After a very tough climb out of Taal, and another in about 20km's time, the trail starts to level a little. There's a distinct likelihood riders will encounter their first sections of snow during this stage, and long sections of deep mud are almost guaranteed. The temperature starts to drop, the air gets thinner, and the mountain scenery more spectacular.



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## **Day 20 7th November 2017 (Acclimatisation Day), Local Tea-House (B L,D)**

In close vicinity of the Tibetan border, Manang valley has its own history among the yak and salt traders of Nepal and Tibet, and still remains one of the important trading points along the northern border of Nepal. Eat, rest, or continue your exploration around the area, again climbing high for acclimatisation and sleeping low back in Manang.

## **Day 21 8th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 3, Local Tea-House (B L,D)**

Mananag to Thorong Phedi. Distance 16km, 1238m ascent (Max Elevation 4450m)

"Into thin air" - The shortest stage distance wise at only 17km but, on average, it takes riders longer than the 60km Stage 3!! Altitude is the biggest obstacle today, with riders finishing at 4450m above sea level. Snow and severe cold are also distinct possibilities during this stage.

## **Day 22 9th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 4, Local Tea-House (B L,D)**

Thorong Phedi to Muktinath. Distance 11km, 1036m ascent (Max Elevation 5416m)

"The Pass" - The stage everybody fears. A 5km 'hike-a-bike', starting in the dark, through snow and freezing temperatures, takes riders to the highest point of the race, Thorong La at 5416m. It's no easy passage from here however, as invariably deep snow makes the 6km descent from the top, treacherous and slow going.



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## **Day 23 10th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 5, Local Tea-House (B L,D)**

Muktinath to Ghiling. Distance 46km, 2050m ascent (Max Elevation 4080m)

"Into the Forbidden Kingdom" - Today the race enters the Forbidden Kingdom of Upper Mustang. A 7km hike and bike ascent straight out of Muktinath takes riders up to the first pass of the day, Gyu La at 4080m. A crossing of the Kali Gandaki river and 5 more passes, all above 3600m, brings riders to the night's destination of Ghiling.

## **Day 24 11th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 6, Local Tea-House (B L,D)**

Ghiling to Lo Manthang. Distance 38km, 1400m ascent (Max Elevation 3979m)

"The Kingdom of Lo" - Today finishes at Lo Manthang, the walled capital of the Kingdom of Lo. After climbing Nyi La at 4010m, riders must negotiate a further 2 passes on their way to Lo Manthang.

## **Day 25 12th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 7, Trekking Inn (B L,D)**

Lo Manthang to Lo Manthang. Distance 21km, 450m ascent (Max Elevation 4072m)

"Towards China" - A relatively easy day by Yak Attack standards. A 21km time trial loop, starting and finishing in Lo Manthang, will take riders towards the Chinese border with a 13km climb. A rapid 8km descent brings riders back to the walled capital, leaving plenty of time to explore the area, or recover for the final 2 days of racing.



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### **Day 26 13th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 8, Local Tea-House (B L,D)**

Lo Manthang to Chele. Distance 54km, 2150m ascent (Max Elevation 4288m)

"Heading south" - Today we leave the Kingdom of Lo and start the journey south towards the finish line. This doesn't mean it's getting easier though, as riders have to cross the highest pass in Upper Mustang, Chogo La (4288m), and then another 5 passes on the way to Chele. Along the way, sections of rocky single-track descents will test the skills of even the best riders.

### **Day 27 14th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 9, Local Tea-House (B L,D)**

Chele to Tatopani. Distance 80, 1600M ascent (Max Elevation 3751m)

"To the hot springs" – One last mountain pass, Dajori La, to cross before the route descends out of Upper Mustang and down towards the Kali Gandaki river. After passing through Kagbeni, Jomsom and Marpha, the race finishes in Kalopani at around the 60km point.

From here it's a further 20km of gnarly downhill to Tatopani.

Unfortunately the track is too heavily trafficked to be safely raced, so this section will be a neutral and just for enjoyment, taking riders down to the hot springs at Tatopani



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### **Day 28 15th November 2017 Yak Attack Stage 10, Waterfront Hotel (B L,D)**

Tatopani to Pokkhara. Distance 102 km, 1200m ascent (Max Elevation 1100m).

Today's stage isn't a race but rather a reliability ride. Riders must complete the 102km in 7 to 7.5 hours, no quicker and no slower, (barring any unforeseen Nepali delays!!)

The first 30km is off-road then "sealed" from there onwards, taking riders all the way into Pokhara, hopefully as a whole group. What an achievement, capped off this evening with the prize giving ceremony and a huge, post race party.

### **Day 29 16th November 2017 Waterfront Hotel (B)**

What a big night last night!! Back in the familiar, laid back Pokhara, you can now really enjoy all that it has to offer. And for those who played it safe the first time and kept away from the adventure activities, here is your chance to cut loose.

### **Day 30 17th November 2017 Waterfront Hotel (B)**

And, for those who didn't get out of bed yesterday, today is the last chance to savour all of Pokhara's delights.

### **Day 31 18th November 2017 Waterfront Hotel (B)**

Drive along the all too familiar Tribuvan Highway and grab the last views of rural Nepal, as you head back to Kathmandu.



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### **Day 32 19th November 2017 Hotel Manaslu (B)**

Last minute shopping, catch up on sights or just sit in the ancient squares and soak up all the colour and atmosphere of daily life in Nepal. Pack your bike ready to return home and hit the trails stronger than ever before!

### **Day 33 20th November 2017 Hotel Manaslu (B)**

After breakfast and goodbyes, transfer is provided to the airport for your flight back to Melbourne.

If you measure the depth of a canyon by calculating the difference between the highest peaks of the gorge and the height of the river surface, the Kali Gandaki Gorge is the world's deepest. The Gandaki River, which flows through the gorge, is older than the Himalayas and has, at its lowest point, an elevation of 1,300 metres, creating a difference of 6,800 metres from the highest peak.