

Srimathe Ramanujaya Namaha

Sri Rangapriya Divya Padhukabhyam Namaha

Dear Bhagavathas,

With blessings of asmad Acharyan Sri Rangapriya Swami, we had a blessed darshan at Mukthinath and also visited a few temples in Nepal. Mukthinath is also called Saligrama and Salakkiramam. I feel like sharing the highlights of this trip with all of you in four posts:

Nepal Trip - Post 1 - Trip Plan

Nepal Trip - Post 2 - Alwar anubhavams on Salakkiramam

Nepal Trip - Post 3 - Anecdotes

Nepal Trip - Post 4 - Experience of Mukthinath

## **Nepal Trip - Post 1 – Trip Plan**

At the outset, I would like to pay my obeisance to Sri Peri Azhwar and Sri Thirumangai Azhwar for paying managalasasanam to Salakkiramam and introducing this divine divya desam to us.

My sincere namaskarams to Bhagavathas who shared information about Mukthinath and other temple towns in Nepal. This trip would not have been possible without their help and guidance.

With Mukthinath in mind, I began my research on Nepal. Pictures of mighty Himalayas with soaring heights, alpine glaciers, cliffs, valleys, rivers, waterfalls and the rich bio diversity of the mountain ranges captivated my attention. I realized that we would be surrounded by the beauty of bountiful nature during our entire trip.

We planned a 7-day trip to Nepal and started our trip with Kathmandu. Here is the itinerary:

Day 1 - Visited Jala Narayan, Changu Narayan and Srinivasa temples in Kathmandu

Day 2 - Flew from Kathmandu to Pokhara; Sightseeing in Pokhara

Day 3 - Flew from Pokhara to Jomsom, took a jeep to foothills of Mukthinath, rode on horse and finally walked uphill to reach Mukthinath temple; stayed in Jomsom

Day 4 - Flew from Jomsom to Pokhara; Rested in Pokhara after a hectic trip to Mukthinath and enjoyed boat ride in lake Phewa

Day 5 – Saw sunrise in Sarangkot (near Pokhara) and flew from Pokhara to Bharathpur; visited Dev Ghat, Narayan Ghat and stayed in Lakshmi Narasimha dham

Day 6 - Took a taxi from Bharathpur to Janakpur; visited Dhanusha Dham and Seetha Ram Swayamvar

Day 7 - Visited Janak Mandir, Janaki Mandir and Ram mandir and flew from Janakpur to Kathmandu

I would like to share a few pointers while planning this trip.

- March, April, May (early), September, October and November are good months to visit Mukthinath. Pick non-rainy days for your trip.
- There have been instances where people couldn't go to Mukthinath because of inclement weather conditions like snow storms, avalanches, landslides etc. So, it is good to stay in Pokhara for a couple of days to have some leeway in planning a trip to Mukthinath.
- Please note that the trip to Mukthinath can be made more challenging by adding more hikes or less challenging by taking a helicopter that lands very close to Mukthinath temple.
- Only the flight ticket from Pokhara to Jomsom needs to be booked in advance. They use small 18-seater airplanes that get booked very quickly. If the flight is cancelled because of weather conditions, the flight charges will be reimbursed.
- Since Mukthinath is at an altitude of 3710 metres, some people experience altitude sickness. Please check with your doctors and equip yourself with the right medicine. Oxygen is low. So deep abdominal breathing helps.
- We can use online resources or take the help of travel agents to plan the entire trip.

Hope this writeup assists Bhagavathas to plan a trip to Mukthinath and other interesting places in Nepal. Kindly excuse me if there are any errors in this writeup.

Sarvam Krishnarpanamasthu

Seeking blessings

Adiyen

Hema Srinath