

# BANDIPUR & THE OLD INN

Welcome  
TO THE **OLD INN**



**The Old Inn over-looking the traffic-free bazaar**



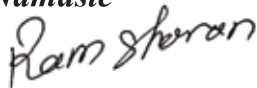
## **The Simple Pleasure of Just Being Here.**

*Those in the know like to summarize the best of tourism as going places, doing things and 'just being there'. Call it all cliches perhaps, but along with this, one hears it said that a stay in Bandipur is the fitting highlight to any visit to Nepal.*

*And why wouldn't it be? Bandipur is different and yet its charm is quintessentially Nepalese. It's probably easy to reach here from wherever else in Nepal you are – or intend to be. It's particularly good value. And it's got what sooner or later everyone needs: mellow surroundings for relaxing in the simple pleasure of just being here!*

*Yes, Bandipur really is one of those 'just being there' places. It follows then that two nights trump one and that a three night stay is surely a flush! However long you are with us we hope this bit of a booklet helps make the most of your stay. More to the point, we at The Old Inn really want to do so too.*

*'Namaste'*



*Ram Sharan Shrestha,  
The Management & Staff,  
The Old Inn, Bandipur  
September 2013*







## LOCATING BANDIPUR

One of Bandipur's several blessings is its geographically central location and why, perhaps, some call it 'the Warm Heart of Nepal'. Rudimentary though Nepal's road system still is, it none the less now serves Bandipur remarkably well. It's as if we here in Bandipur are in the cross-hairs, where routes between Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitwan share the valleys below us and where there are two popular rafting rivers and direct access to famous trekking trails in the Annapurnas and Manaslu.

The winding road up from the often cloud-filled valley seems to anticipate what must be there on the long ridge. How right that proves to be; not only the little town which at first seems so out-of-place but the views to south and north; in one direction the descending folds of greenish foothills draped, tone-on-tone, in greenish mist, in the other, the landscape that is rank on rank of Himalayan foundations up to the serried summits and Tibet beyond.

Although Bandipur is known for spectacular views, the elevation is in fact just over 1,000 metres (400m lower than Kathmandu). This provides an ambient climate that all-year-round is one of Nepal's best. All four seasons are kind to Bandipur, however the fifth – the 'hundred days' of monsoon (typically mid-June - mid - September) – can require a certain philosophical approach!!

*The large-scale map at the back of this booklet shows Bandipur in relation to principle locations and the page before the map summarizes how to get to and from Bandipur.*





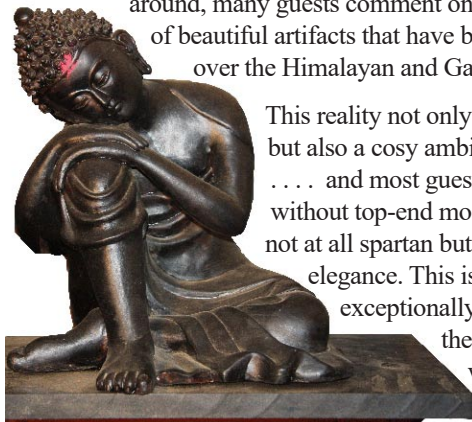


## THE OLD INN – an Overview:

The Old Inn has been welcoming visitors to Bandipur since 2000. It consists of two splendid adjoining timber and brick traditional Newari townhouses. The Inn is located in the heart of the historic, traffic-free flag-stoned bazaar, and it has the very best views of the spectacular Himalaya – in particular The Annapurnas.

There we have two closely integrated wings with a continuous frontage overlook the Bazaar, the prominent feature being the adobe stucco façade, while in the direction of the mountains is an open courtyard with wooden balustrades on three sides.. There are also spacious terraces at ground level and then steeply descending gardens. , **Up On The Roof** there is a *‘secret garden of charm and tranquility with views to die for’*, as recorded by one guest.

Any need to modernize this historic pair of buildings has been strongly tempered by the need to preserve old-world style and integrity. Thus ceilings are low and doorways lower. Most (not all) bedrooms are small (by western scale) and there is no doubt that you are invited into a traditional, charming, Himalayan dwelling. And while wandering around, many guests comment on the interesting assembly of beautiful artifacts that have been collected from all over the Himalayan and Ganges regions.



This reality not only provides the authenticity but also a cosy ambiance and comfort. .

. . . . and most guests feel that, although without top-end mod-cons, The Old Inn is not at all spartan but has a very special simple elegance. This is then personified by our exceptionally helpful staff who ensure the warmth of the individual welcome lasts throughout your stay.

**The Original Wing** , opened in 2000, has 11 bedrooms on three floors. The ground floor, mostly dark wooden pillars and beams, opens onto the active Bazaar. It is used for dining and to watch the world go by. The bedrooms are twins or doubles except for one four-person ‘family room. Then there is the delightful ‘Long Room’ on the first floor which consists of two twin-bedded recesses off a beautifully proportioned living room opening on to the balcony that overlooks the Bazaar. When not occupied, The Long Room makes for an ideal quiet room.

***Bedrooms in this wing do NOT have attached bathrooms. . . .***

*. . . . Instead hot showers and toilets are on two floors and there are additional basement facilities (with mountain views!).*

**More Recent Renovations, - The ‘Extra Star’ Wing** , opened in 2012, has nine bedrooms on three floors and also has a ground-floor lazy-chair and dining area with its copper-hooded fireplace. As in the original wing, each bedroom is distinct in size, number of beds and unique ambiance. Two rooms are singles, three are doubles, with larger rooms to suit various needs.

Some rooms overlook the mountains, others the Bazaar. ***All rooms in the ‘Extra Star’ wing of The Old Inn are en-suite.***





**MEALS:** *All food is prepared fresh daily.*

**Breakfast:** A choice between a classic western breakfast, or delicious made-to-order pan-cakes or true Bandipur-style Takhali and Puri with Dahi (yogurt).

**Lunch:** Typically a home-made soup and buffet-style platters of salami and cheese and salads and french fries.

**Dinner:** Almost every evening The Old Inn prepares the most sumptuous Nepal Bhoj (a traditional dhal bhat banquet). Western alternatives are available. Desserts and fruit as available. Meals can be taken on the ground level terrace, or inside - or some meals can be provided in the garden on the roof-top.

**N.B.** Meals most often form part of a full or half-board inclusive cost. Should it be necessary *please don't hesitate to ring the little bell or strike the small singing-bowl on each table to get our attention.*



**ORDERING FROM THE BAR:** We don't have a dedicated 'Bar' as such. However there is a simple selection of wines, beers, spirits and soft drinks on offer. . .as well as freshly-ground, local, organic coffee.

**ROOM SERVICE, battery recharging, emailing, WiFi etc:**

There is limited room service only; generally provided in The 'Extra Star' wing. (There are however no phones in any rooms). Please ask how best to recharge mobile phones, lap-tops etc. Please also ask about emailing and Wi-Fi services in Bandipur.

**Security:** The Inn is a safe and secure place. Rooms are not





numbered and the locking device is a padlock. Each padlock is numbered along with the corresponding key. These are given to guests while duplicates are held secure at reception.

**Load Shedding** (*The delightful Nepali euphemism for less delightful chronic electrical power cuts*) – is a fact of life. The Inn addresses this with some solar back-up and too by the use of Old Inn-made candles. One's heard load-shedding cited by visitors to Nepal as an example of culture-shock, but actually what's perhaps more alien still is the total aplomb with which it's tolerated.

**Credit/Debit Cards** - arrangements for using these have not as yet been finalized – please check for latest.



**YOUNG FAMILIES** will find that The Old Inn itself and the traffic-free Bazaar outside are naturally 'family-friendly'. . and staff have a natural way of being chummy to children. Responsibility for their charges remains however at all times with their guardians.



**PLEASE COULD YOU . . . . .** tell us when something – anything, anywhere - is not right or could be better. Without this feed-back from guests we would be a lot less likely to maintain standards, let alone improve on them.

*Please. . . .* relax and allow staff to look after you.

*Please. . . .* allow for the fact that both water and mains electricity are restricted throughout Nepal. The Old Inn is often without mains power and although this can actually create a rather pleasing candle-lit ambiance it can also mean passageways, toilets etc might be quite poorly lit.

*Please. . . .* be advised of the few small idiosyncratic features: e.g. how a traditional Newari bedroom is locked from the inside and the outside or where light switches are positioned, or how full-length windows are best opened and closed.

*Please also. . . .* if something is malfunctioning, please, ask for help to fix or to adjust the shower taps. And, ***please also turn off all three taps typical of most shower units.***

## **DESERVING OF RECOGNITION (?) – Tipping.**

Here at The Old Inn there is no formal ‘tip box’ and a tip is not really expected. Guests however do often like to express their appreciation when service is personal, friendly and sincere. In this case we would suggest that you might offer your tip to any staff member but while other staff are present; which will be the case when good-byes are said. (Do ask for an envelope if it helps). All staff are equal beneficiaries. And thank you!

You are also asked to sign our visitor’s book. . . . and we might quote you in a later edition of this guide! Though the likes of Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, Trip Adviser etc. speak glowingly, it is you and your views that matter most to us. Thank you.



*Oh, and another guest wrote in the visitor’s book ‘The best little guesthouse in the known universe – if not beyond!’*







## BANDIPUR -

### A Short History of a Unique Himalayan Hill-Top Town

Bandipur is located at 1,050m in central Nepal. It lies at the end of an 8km 'black-topped' minor road that climbs 600m. From the turning South (left) 1km beyond Dumre after 135kms of the 200kms Kathmandu-Pokhara highway. Bandipur Bazaar straddles an East/West ridge with rolling views to the South and the stunning snow-clad Himalayan skyline to the North.

The villages immediately around Bandipur comprise several different ethnic groups while the Bandipur Bazaar itself is mostly of the Newar community with their ancient Tibetan roots who historically are a byword for trans-Himalayan trade. This fact helps explain both their past prosperity and their broader outlook on the World and also how and why it was that this entrepreneurial lot came to settle in Bandipur from the Kathmandu Valley.

Bandipur's heyday lasted for around a hundred years until the mid 1950's. By then, due to the trade decline with what was now newly independent India and the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the trans-



Himalayan trade dried up; lines of ‘doko’-carrying porters no longer carried the Benares silks and Tibetan brocades and gold and salt and quality Ganges rice via the store-houses of Bandipur. Soon after, the malaria that Bandipur was famously free of was pronounced eradicated from the lowland Terai encouraging Bandipur families to buy and move there to better farmland. And finally, with the beginnings of Nepal’s rudimentary road system in the 1960/70’s that naturally used the valleys, Bandipur’s significance was relegated to history. The town fell into a virtual time-warp from which it did not emerge until two generations later.



However, it was not tourism that first helped put Bandipur back on the map – not that there had been any maps! In fact it was education, with the opening of Notre Dame School under the auspice of a Catholic order of nuns from Japan in 1986. A highly regarded seat of learning, it now has 800 students, about half local, the remainder from diverse parts of Nepal. Also an important cash-crop was introduced and developed. Oranges: the groves visible on the hill-sides with the crop ripening around November-December.

Excused in part by there being no road to Bandipur until 2003, tourism was slow to arrive. Paving and making the Bazaar traffic-free (still the only such bazaar in Nepal) has been the single most far-sighted decision and undoubtedly the cause of Bandipur's unique, Himalayan middle-hills, ambiance – not exactly returning to its original mood and purpose but drawing from its tradition and heritage a new purpose and sense of self-worth.







## PANCHE BAJA

Near The Old Inn, stretching across the end of the bazaar is Bandipur's most imposing building. It had fallen into particularly derelict condition and is desperate for restoration a.s.a.p. This is now underway. For safety reasons access is restricted.

*N.B. 'Panche Baja' are the five musical instruments blown and beaten that form the band at every wedding and many festivals.*





**Around & About Bandipur.** . . We began by praising ‘the simple joys of just being here’; not doing much but plenty of sitting around on balconies and terraces. However there are things one can do.



**Mahalaxmi Mandir & Teen Dhara** can be visited on a stroll around Bandipur. There is also **The Tudhikhel** (original Gurkha recruiting ground) and giant piple trees and escarpment views.

**Ke Garne!**-Café opposite The Old Inn offers a change of scenery, and a scan of Nepal’s

two English daily newspapers, a gaint chess board, a charming veranda and uncomplicated menu to match. And why not go up-stairs and check out ‘**The Monkey’s Flunky**’, Bandipur’s one attempt at slightly wacky night-life!



**There are two sorties worth mentioning:** each take up a big part of a day – we recommend you make a point of getting further info.

**The Siddha Gufa (Cave).** . . .  
. . . is an gaping cavity halfway down the escarpment. Reached by a steep path it takes about 1hr. The alternative return is to then continue down to the valley and come back by road. There is sometimes a cave supervisor and a smallish charge is made. Don't go alone. Take a torch. (N.B. Most travel insurances exclude 'caving' – but don't clearly define the term.) ●



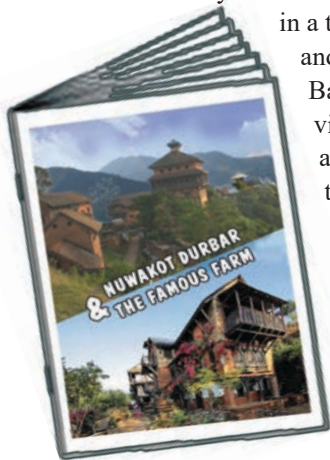
**Ramkot** . . . . . is a village of the Magar caste, some with their traditional round houses. The trail there, having reached the saddle west of Bandipur, roughly holds to the same contour and the practical return is by the same route. Each direction takes 2-3hrs. (N.B. There's a tendency to underestimate the input required; it's quite a bit more than a mere stroll.) ●



● The Old Inn can supply a guide and/or a picnic. It is best to have a mobile phone and The Old Inn numbers.



**THE FAMOUS FARM** is an utterly delightful sister concern of The Old Inn. Under the same management, it shares with us many values and characteristics. However it stands in a totally rural landscape of valleys and rivers with the citadel of Nuwakot Bazaar (fort, palaces and temples) in view a short walk away. The Farm is a 3½ hrs drive north of Kathmandu towards The Langtang Himal and can also be reached by the new road that now uses the upper Trisuli Valley off the Pokhara-Kathmandu Highway.



*This Famous Farm/Nuwakot Booklet is available on request.*

*Also see::*

*[www.thefamousfarm.com](http://www.thefamousfarm.com)*

## TRAVELING TO & FROM BANDIPUR (See Map - Next Page)

### Timings & Distances:

To/From	Own Transport	Public Transport	Distance
Kathmandu	+/-5hrs	+/-7hrs	140kms
Pokhara	+/-2 ½hrs	+/-3½ hrs	73kms
Chitwan N.P. (Sauhra)	+/-2½hrs	+/-3½hrs	84kms
The Trisuli Centre	+/-1½hrs	+/-2hrs	69kms
Nuwakot: Famous Farm	+/-3½hrs	+/-6hrs	118kms

**Guests' own transport/staff . Drivers/guides:** Typically guests' personal staff make their own arrangements in the town or The Old Inn can assist. Alternatively, if guests wish their staff to be provided with guest-standard facilities then a commensurate tariff applies.

**Gated parking** is available close to the Bazaar. Portorage for the 5mins walk is provided by The Old Inn.

**Public Transport** from Bandipur to anywhere first means going by mini-bus down the hill to Dumre, from where there are tourist and local buses to onward destinations. Please ask at The Old Inn 'Desk' for any advice, prices and ticket assistance.





**POKHARA**

**Dumre**

**BANDIPUR  
(The Old Inn)**

**Mugling**

**CHITWAN N.P.**





**TRISULI CENTRE**



**Gulchi**



**NUWAKOT  
(Famous Farm)**



**KATHMANDU**



*You'll always find a warm welcome  
at The Old Inn Bandipur*

**THE OLD INN & THE FAMOUS FARM are part of**

**RURAL HERITAGE**

**----- *travel with tradition***

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