



## The Ethos of Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge 2020

For all the recent difficulties, the lodge goes from strength to strength. Service quality remains excellent.

One of our special strengths is our humanity and authenticity in developing our personal approach – a true sense of place and community. It is the point that differentiates us and defines why the Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge experience is *unique* and *special* – **we are what we are, and we are no one else**. We have books, board games and bed covers in the rooms (no coloured runners on the bed here); we have local information that is genuinely interesting, not merely rules, fire escapes and laundry procedures! We do not have flat screen TVs and the banal output of satellite channels. We do not sell mass produced handicrafts made in China, but homemade items like jams, chutneys, and local artisan soaps.

The lodge is not an hotel; it is home and haven for our guests. It is over-used at times, but the Nepali saying 'Atithi Deva Bhava' (Guests are Gods) is a good one. A guest visiting and staying with us is in our home, doing the things we do, visiting the places we visit. We make this our approach and it is completely different from regular hotels.

It is why we have a very human face, be it Jhalak, Dol Raj, Hari, Sujan or Marcus welcoming guests as personal friends... and this is why so many guests return again and again. We do not make the lodge like anywhere else. We are part of the local community and that is why we do not have high walls around the compound; in normal times we do not prevent local villagers walking through and encourage visitors to be shown around the property.

A village walk with our guides is unscripted – there are no text messages warning villagers to dress up, hide the smartphones and do the traditional dances – guests experience village life that day, that hour; be it a religious ceremony, a wedding, a funeral, or nothing in particular. A visit to a village home is a genuine invitation, made that moment, by the villager of their own freewill. Hospitality is spontaneous and initiated solely by the host – there is no pre-planning, no money changes hands. Add to this quality interpretation and guiding that is, again, unscripted – the words are the guide's own, not a memorised speech. Guides know the culture, flora, and fauna – scientific, common, and local names. Every walk is tailored to the interests of the individual guests – nothing is standardised.

Our food is made with the freshest local ingredients. As far as possible we buy locally what we do not grow. Our approach is farm-to-table and there are many stories to tell of Chef Lalu and his team's traditional Nepali cuisine, memories of visiting chef sharing with our kitchen – teaching and learning in return. Fresh

local trout comes from the northwest of the Pokhara Valley from Indreni and Gandaki trout farms – we visit, inspect, assess, and partner with our suppliers. Our rice is traditional local ‘Pokhreli,’ ‘Jetho Budho’ of ‘Pahele’ classic varieties of the Pokhara Valley. We also source Marsi red rice from Jumla and black rice from Kathmandu. Mutton is bought in the village as is local buckwheat and millet flour. Our international cuisine is personal, be it Dame Adelaide’s cheese straws, Darina Allen’s Chicken Liver Pate, Lisa’s Cottage Pie, or other recopies from friends, cooks and chefs met over the years. Chef Lalu has his own specialities – chilli chocolate ice-cream being one that rarely stays long in the freezer.

We combine this with our approach to the natural environment and local community as part of our *Regenerative Tourism* ethos. Thus, the lodge grounds are kept natural – to enhance the range of birds, butterflies, and other animals by ensuring the habitat is what those species want. We are an active member of the local community working with local schools and Community Forest Committee to support community-based and led initiatives through our Community Support Partnership Programme.

But we do not do it just for our guests; even if there were no guests, we would do it just the same. We are independently audited by a GSTC affiliate for our sustainability too, one of only a handful of hotels in Nepal.

Surely, this is quintessentially what is meant by regenerative tourism?