



culture of hospitality. Nagpanchami, Holi, Dashain and Tihar are the major festivals celebrated with zeal and enthusiasm. Punnihaw lake is the wetland area of the village. Visitor can also visit Tharu museum at Khudabagar and Monkee tree at Chainpuruwa.

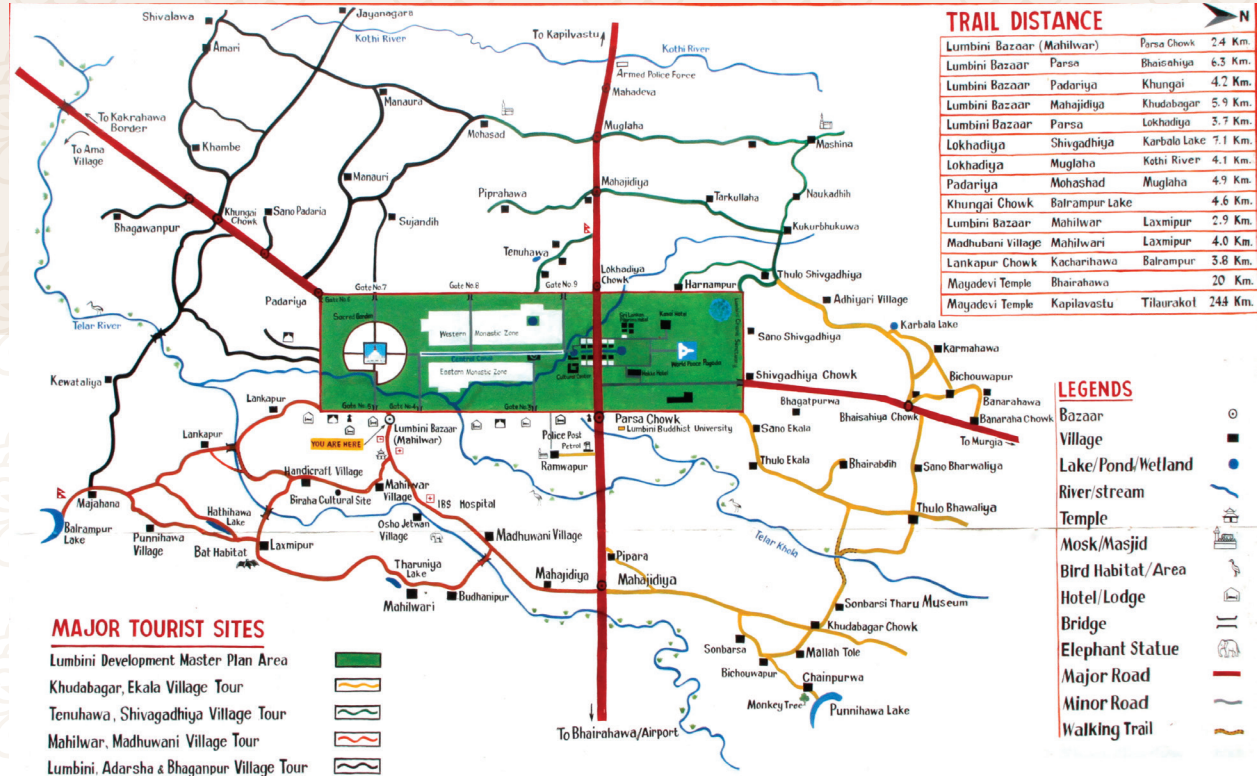
Sightseeing tour to Gaidahawa Lake and Gajedi Lake: Cycling tour or jeep drive to Gaidahawa and Gajedi lakes offers visitors, particularly the bird watchers and nature lovers an opportunity to watch the different varieties of birds including vulture, and mammals including Blue bull within the Sal forest near Gaidahawa lake. Here the

visitors enjoy blooming lotus, the sacred flower also associated with Lord Sakyamuni Buddha. Traversing through the rural villages and agriculture fields would be an interesting undertaking while making a sightseeing tour to these lakes.

Visiting the weekly Hat Bazaar is another opportunity in Lumbini for the visitors to observe the real tradeoffs and life style of the rural people. They can also buy some locally produced organic products including fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts.

Location of Local Hat Bazaar

- Sunday → Jhulanipul, Gobarouli
- Monday → Padariya
- Tuesday → Parsa Chowk, Ahirauli, Jogada
- Wednesday → Mahilwar Bazaar, Suryapura
- Thursday → Mahajidiya
- Friday → Hatibazaar (Bishnupura)
- Saturday → Mahilwar, Karmahawa, Ahirauli, Muglaha



Travel Distance from Gate # 5 (Mahilwar)

- Mahilwar Chowk → Parsa Chowk 2.4km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Khungai 4.2km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Lokhadiya 3.9km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Padariya 2.4km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Laxmipur 2.9km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Hatihawa Lake 3.3km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Madhubani Village ... 2.3km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Bhaisaiya Chowk 6.3km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Punnihaw Lake 6.7km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Gaidahawa Lake 16.1km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Gajedi Lake 21.5km
- Mahilwar Chowk → Kakrahawa Border 9.5km

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LUMBINI VILLAGE TOUR

Visiting the Peripheral Rural Villages that Have Been Safeguarding the Birthplace of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha for Centuries



Government of Nepal
 Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation
Lumbini Development Trust
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Introduction

Lumbini, being the birthplace of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha is the ultimate pilgrimage to the Buddhists that emanates peace, harmony and solace. In addition to promoting contemplative value and spirituality, Lumbini offers a plethora of opportunities for those who are interested to explore the cultural treasure troves and natural splendors.

The existence of Lumbini village was also mentioned by the early travelers including famous Emperor Asoka who visited Lumbini in 249 BC and erected a stone pillar bearing inscription engraved in Brahmi script and Pali language. The translated version of the last line written in the inscription is, “The lord having been born here, the tax of the Lumbini village reduced to the eight part (only)”.

Today, Lumbini Cultural Municipality encompasses ancient Lumbini Game (village), surrounding villages of Lumbini and beautiful natural landscapes around it. One of the interesting features of these surrounding rural villages of Lumbini is that the majority of Hindu and Muslim communities are safeguarding and promoting the Buddhist heritage sites including the birthplace of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha. They feel proud and honored to be the true custodian of this sacred shrine.

A visit to the surrounding villages and natural sites also gives visitor a rare opportunity to come across the most preferred birds of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha, the Sarus Crane, the most preferred plants Asoka tree, Sal tree, Mango tree, Pipal tree etc. and crops such as rice, peas, golden gram, sesame etc.



Important Cultural Sites to Visit

Major cultural villages worth visiting in the eastern part of Lumbini Master Plan Area include Madhubani, Mahilawari Mahialwar, Laximpur etc. Likewise cultural villages located in the southern part of Mayadevi Temple include Lankapur, Punnihawa, Majahana, Kewataliya, Bhagawanpur, Khungai, Padaria, Khambe, Amari, Shivalawa etc. Villages located in the western part include Manauri, Sujandih, Jayanagara, Muhasad, Tenuhawa, Lokhadiya, Muglaha, Mahadeva etc. Cultural villages worth to visit in the northern part include Shivagadiya, Harnampur, Tarkullaha, Mashina, Bhaisaiya, Ekla, Bharwaliya, Chainpurwa, Khudabagar etc.

While the southern and eastern villages are dominated by Hindu communities, the western and northern areas are thickly populated by the Muslims. Mahilwar village is particularly famous for age old Biraha culture. Other attractions in the Hindu villages worth visiting to observe are Shiva, Durga and Hanuman temples, traditional rituals, farming practices, festivals and fairs. Mosques, beautiful arts on Mosque and house walls, various rituals and festivals are the major attractions in the Muslim



villages. Hindu and Muslim communities cherish the social harmony and uphold the Buddhist heritage sites. Therefore, Lumbini is the perfect embodiment of inter-faith tolerance.

Important Natural Sites to Visit

Visitors can find wide varieties of shrubs, herbs, flowers and plants here. Lumbini Crane Sanctuary (LCS) along with the associated farmlands have been identified as an International Bird Area (IBA) due to its rich biodiversity and unique ecosystems having hundreds of cranes, 27 species of mammals, 44 types of fishes and herds of Blue Bulls.

Important natural landscapes and bio-diversity worth visiting in and around Lumbini include the serene natural environment within the Sacred Garden and Monastic Zones, Lumbini Crane Sanctuary located in the New Lumbini Village, several natural wetlands including Karbala Lake (near Karmahawa village), Monkey tree and Punnihawa lake in Chainpurwa (Khudabagar), Tharunika lake in Mahilwari village, bat habitat and Hathihawa lake in Laxmipur, Balrampur lake in Majahana village etc. Likewise important rivers for bird watching includes Telar, Dano and Kothi rivers. Gaidahawa lake (Bishnupura) is famous for vulture



and blue bulls whereas Gajedi lake is popular to observe blooming lotus flower.

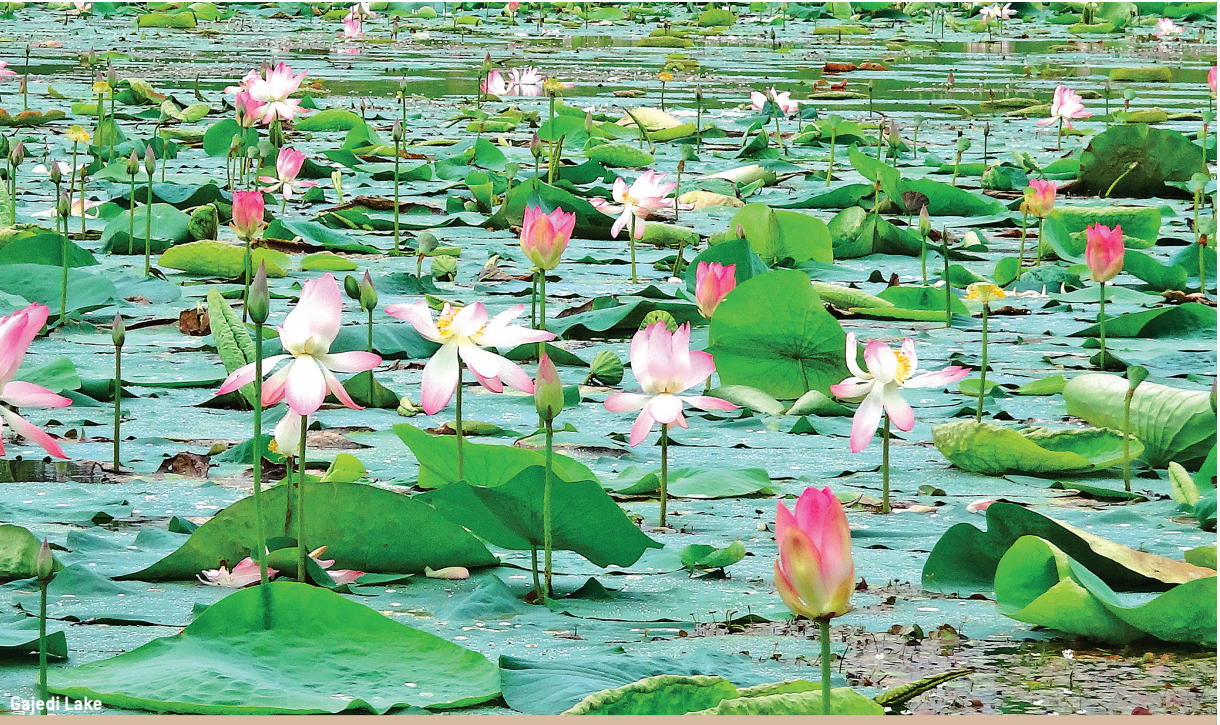
There are more than 250 bird species in the area including the world's tallest flying bird Sarus Crane, endangered birds such as Lesser adjutant, Painted stork, Slender-billed vulture, Red-headed vulture, White-rumped vulture etc. Similarly threatened animals like python, Blue bull (boselaphus tragocamelus), Bengal fox, wild cat, wild boars etc. are also found in and around Lumbini.

The Telar and Dano flood plains are recognized as important habitats for birds. Suwal (2004) has mentioned that there are altogether 164 bird species including 47 families within Lumbini Garden and Lumbini Adarsha VDC alone.

Things to do during the Village Tour

Guided walking, cycling, cart riding or jeep driving tours to the surrounding villages of Lumbini offer visitors the following activities:

- Observing the traditional architecture and lifestyle of locals in the villages.
- Visiting green farmland, observing the traditional agricultural practices and enjoying organic fruits including mangos.
- Observing the weekly Hat Bazaar (rural day bazaar) happening in the key points such as Mahilwar, Padaria, Parsa, Mahajaidiya villages etc.
- Visiting the rural families and having breakfast or lunch with them (needs pre-arrangement).
- Meeting the local champions who make the fiber crafts and mud sculpture of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha.
- Visiting Biraha Cultural Group (at Mahilwar) and observing the traditional Biraha Dance.



- Observing Tharu Museum (at Khudabagar) including the mud-built food storage practices of Tharu and other communities.
- Listening the legends and tales from the villagers on Lord Sakyamuni Buddha's birthplace and history.
- Observing the unique shamanism practices of healing the diseases in the evening would be an interesting activity (needs to be pre-arranged).
- Cycling through the paddy/wheat/mustards fields and along the village roads.
- Visiting temple and mosque. Observing the periodic festival and events.
- Visiting schools and children. Visiting Metta Gurukul School at Mahilwar village and interacting with the local kids/Vikchhus who are learning Buddhism.
- Observing the daily and periodic rituals of the locals including wedding and birth celebrations.
- Bird watching in the mango orchards, wetlands and rivers.
- Visiting Osho Jetavan Village and meditation center located nearby, at Madhubani village.



Recommended Village Tours and Activities

Recommended village tours around the Lumbini Sacred Garden include the followings.

Madhuvani Village Tour: The tour leads to Mahilwar Bazaar to Mahilwar village, to the agriculture fields and to wetland areas. This area is settled by the Hindus and Muslim (90:10), with ethnicities of Tharu, Yadav, Harijan, Brahmin, Chetri and Muslim living in perfect harmony. Religious sites and temples (Durga, Shiva, Kalikasthan & Samaimaisthan), agriculture based villages (straw-huts, clay mortared brick-houses, decorated with wood crafts and special roof tiles), traditional costumes and handicrafts of authentic



characteristics are typical life style of these villages. The traditional Biraha dance can be observed at the Mahilwar village. The bird-watchers go to two lakes (Haththihawa lake and Tharunia lake). In winter one can see beautiful panorama of the Himalayas with the background of a pale blue sky and a green landscape in the foreground.

Lumbini Adarsha Village Tour: It leads to the ancient villages of Padariya, Manauri and Khungai with ethnicity of Yadav, Mallah, Srivastav, Kohar, Murau, Muslim and Goshami. Scattered archeological sites (dating back to the 4th and 5th century AD), Shiva shrines and temples, traditional costumes, local argo-based village lifestyle and culture, interaction with the locals are interesting attractions in these villages.

Tenuhawa Village Tour: It takes about 1.5hrs. of leisurely walk to Muslim settlements with typical culture and costumes. Handicrafts produced by the local women, Masjid (Mosques) and Madarsa are the characteristics of this village to observe. Karbolaha lake situated northwest of the village is the additional attraction.

Ekala Village Tour: About 3 km northeast of Lumbini lay Bhaishiya, Ekala, Bhagatpurwa villages. The settlements are of Hindus and Muslims (80:20); with ethnic peoples- Yadav, Harijan, Chamar, Gupta etc. Irrespective of different caste and creed, they live in social harmony. Agriculture is their main source of livelihood. Their religious sites are Shiva Mandir, Kalimaisthan, Masjid (Mosque) and Karbolha pond. People here celebrate lively festivals of Ram-lila, Tajiya-mela, Holi etc. Local handicrafts produced by the local women are typical for this village. Karbolaha lake is the popular crane sanctuary nearby the villages.

Khudabagar Village Tour: Khudabagar, Chainpurwa, Sonvarsha and Belvariya villages are typical settlements of the Hindus (Tharu, Yadav, Lodh, Harizan, Kurmi, Gupta) and Muslim ethnicity (70: 30), having their own typical costumes and