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By Nepal Digest - September 17, 2026 - Nepal

For UAE residents, Pokhara’s planned direct connection to Dubai offers something more useful than another destination on a map: the possibility of spending a short holiday beside a Himalayan lake instead of arranging an onward journey through Kathmandu.

A few days of annual leave can disappear surprisingly quickly. There is the journey to the airport, the flight, immigration, another connection and, finally, the transfer to the place that prompted the trip. For a UAE resident considering Pokhara, that last part has

often complicated an otherwise appealing idea.

The planned Dubai–Pokhara service changes that calculation. For Nepalis working in the Emirates, it could make a visit to family in and around Pokhara easier. For other expatriates, it makes a different kind of Nepal holiday worth considering: a comfortable city base, time outdoors and mountain scenery without committing to a long trekking expedition.

The opportunity deserves attention. It also deserves a realistic explanation of what is being offered, who benefits and how to plan a visit that feels like a holiday.

What is changing, and when?

In its official announcement, flydubai scheduled daily flights between Dubai International and Pokhara International Airport from **23 September 2026**, operating from Dubai's Terminal 3. As of 17 September, that launch date remains ahead. Travellers should treat this as an upcoming service and reconfirm their chosen dates before booking.

Route	Flight	Departure	Arrival
Dubai–Pokhara	FZ 1165	12:00	18:15
Pokhara–Dubai	FZ 1166	19:15	22:00

Announced schedule; all times local. Confirm the current timetable and terminal on your booking.

These timings favour an arrival evening followed by full sightseeing days. They also make the return day potentially useful, provided luggage storage, airport transport and check-in are planned. They do not remove the need for time at the airport or make a two-day trip automatically relaxing.

The most valuable saving may be your leave

The direct route’s strongest advantage is straightforward: passengers whose destination is Pokhara can avoid arranging a separate journey there from Kathmandu. The precise saving depends on the alternative itinerary. A domestic connection, an overnight stop and a road transfer all involve different costs and uncertainties.

Consider a hypothetical couple living in Dubai who have four nights available. Their decision should begin with usable time at the destination. A cheap itinerary that consumes much of the first and final days may be less attractive than a higher fare that lets them stay in one place. This is a planning example, not a claim that the new service will always be cheaper or more reliable.

For Nepali expatriates, the benefit may be more personal. Parents visiting from the UAE, children travelling with luggage and workers returning for a short family occasion could face fewer arrangements. Those continuing beyond Pokhara still need to

compare the final road journey. A convenient airport is valuable only when it fits the actual destination.

Residents of Abu Dhabi or other emirates should include their journey to Dubai in the calculation. The relevant measure is the entire trip from home to hotel or family home, rather than the flight alone.

Why Pokhara?

Pokhara’s appeal is that a Himalayan holiday need not begin with a demanding climb. The Nepal Tourism Board’s destination guide describes a city combining lakes, views of the Annapurna range and access to outdoor activities. Phewa, Begnas and Rupa give the area several waterside settings, while the city serves as a gateway to the Annapurna region.

For a visitor accustomed to the UAE’s urban routine, the attraction can be a change of pace. Choose a morning walk, a long breakfast and one outing instead of an itinerary organised around constant movement. Pokhara can work particularly well when the objective is to spend time together rather than complete a list of attractions.

This does not require dismissing Dubai’s comforts. Many travellers want both: a manageable journey and surroundings that feel different. The practical question is whether a hotel’s location,

facilities and transport arrangements support that kind of break.

Mountains without a multi-day trek

Sarangkot is one of the viewpoints identified in the Tourism Board’s mountain-viewing guide. On a clear day, the landscape provides the reason many people come to Pokhara in the first place. An early excursion can be the centrepiece of a visit, leaving the rest of the day free.

Keep expectations flexible. Mountain visibility is weather-dependent; no hotel package can guarantee the photograph in its advertisement. Ask your accommodation about local conditions and choose the clearest available morning rather than rigidly protecting a preselected date.

There is also a distinction between enjoying views and undertaking a trek. Visitors considering a longer mountain itinerary should plan it separately, with appropriate time, current permit information and suitable arrangements. A four-night city break should not be sold to a family as if it were an expedition.

A lake, a hilltop and a rainy-day alternative

Phewa Lake gives a short visit an obvious starting point. A lakeside walk or a boating outing, when conditions are suitable, can occupy part of a day without making the schedule exhausting.

Begnas offers another lake excursion for travellers who prefer to spread their outings across several days.

The World Peace Pagoda, on a hill above the southern side of Phewa, combines a Buddhist site with views across the surrounding landscape. Before committing, ask about the access route and walking involved, particularly when travelling with small children or someone with limited mobility.

A visit should also have an indoor option. The International Mountain Museum presents mountaineering history and mountain-related exhibits. It can give context to the peaks outside and offers an alternative when an outdoor plan no longer suits the weather. Check current opening hours before setting out.

These are real places around which to build a modest itinerary. Their value is in the variety they offer; trying to fit all of them into the same day defeats the purpose of an easier journey.

A realistic four-night visit

The following is a suggested itinerary, not an advertised package. It assumes flights operate to the announced schedule and leaves room for changes.

- **Arrival evening:** Arrange an airport pickup, check in and have dinner. Save substantial sightseeing for the next day.

- **First full day:** Explore the Phewa lakeside area at an easy pace. Add boating only if conditions and the operator’s arrangements suit your group.
- **Second full day:** Choose Sarangkot for mountain views if the forecast is promising. Keep the afternoon open for rest or the museum.
- **Third full day:** Choose either Begnas Lake or the World Peace Pagoda, adjusting the outing to your group’s energy and mobility.
- **Departure day:** Have a relaxed breakfast, confirm luggage storage and leave ample time for the airport.

Swap the days when weather requires it. Parents should ask about room layout, child arrangements and transport before paying. Travellers who need accessible facilities should seek specific answers about steps, bathrooms and vehicle access; a general description such as “family friendly” is not enough.

Compare the complete cost

Flydubai’s route page, checked during preparation, displayed advertised starting fares from AED 768 one-way and AED 1,783 return. These are changing promotional reference points, not a quotation for a particular holiday. The cheapest outward and return options may not match your dates.

Build your own total using return airfare, baggage, seat choices, accommodation, airport transfers, food, activities and any applicable visa fees. Include travel to Dubai airport and the cost of returning home after the evening arrival.

A useful comparison asks whether two fares include the same things. A family carrying checked luggage may find that the first price shown is only the beginning. Someone whose leave approval can change should give amendment conditions real weight.

Avoid assuming every Pokhara holiday is inexpensive. A simple stay and a resort holiday are different purchases. Request a written total from each provider and clarify taxes, transfers and cancellation terms before comparing offers.

UAE residency is not a single visa category for Nepal

The UAE’s expatriate population holds many different passports. Nepal entry requirements depend on nationality and travel documents, so an Emirates ID should not be treated as proof that everyone receives the same entry arrangements.

The Nepal Tourism Board’s visa guidance lists visa-on-arrival facilities at Pokhara International Airport for eligible travellers. It also identifies nationalities requiring advance visas and separate arrangements for Indian citizens. Standard tourist visa fees listed are US$30 for 15 days, US$50 for 30 days and US$125 for 90

days, with exemptions applying to some travellers.

Check the rules for each member of your group before buying a non-refundable ticket, especially in families with different passports. Confirm passport requirements, supporting documents and your arrangements for returning to the UAE with the airline and relevant authorities.

Choose the holiday you actually want

Pokhara suits someone who wants a lakeside base, scenic outings and room to slow down. It may be a less obvious choice for a traveller whose main interests require several other Nepali destinations. Direct access should simplify a holiday, rather than encourage an unrealistic attempt to see the whole country in a few days.

For expatriate Nepalis, it also creates the possibility of combining a family visit with a small holiday of their own. That can mean reserving a few nights for a partner or children instead of allowing every day of leave to become another transfer or obligation.

For first-time visitors, the invitation is equally simple: Nepal can be experienced without beginning with an ambitious trekking plan. A lake, a mountain-view morning and time to explore at a comfortable pace can be enough.

The new route’s real value will be tested by its operation and by the experience after arrival. If those work well, Pokhara becomes easier to choose for a limited window of leave. The reward is not merely a shorter journey. It is more of the visit that people travelled for.

Editorial note: Flight plans and travel information were checked on 16–17 September 2026. The service is scheduled to begin on 23 September; this article does not report a completed launch. The itinerary and traveller examples are Nepal Digest’s suggestions, not interviews or commercial offers.

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