

a bamboo design and worth the extra rupee. Reservations are recommended.

**Hotel River Side** (☎ 580009; [www.wildlifechitwan.com](http://www.wildlifechitwan.com); r Rs 500-1500) Take your choice between delightful thatched huts or the less atmospheric modern rooms with a balcony delivering unbeatable river views. The cheapest rooms on the bottom floor are unremarkable but decent. There's a riverside restaurant, helpful staff and a garden full of hammocks.

**Nirvana's Horses Resort** (☎ 580453; [www.nirvanahorsesresort.com](http://www.nirvanahorsesresort.com); r Rs 650) Under French/Spanish/Nepali management, this place is a must for horse lovers. Brightly painted stables are home to healthy looking thoroughbreds, while the rooms for humans are fantastically decorated with Buddhist and Tharu wall hangings and lanterns.

**Hotel Parkside** (☎ 580159, in Kathmandu 01-4232953; [www.hotelparkside.com](http://www.hotelparkside.com); r Rs 600-1000; ♿) This modern hotel is not what most visitors expect in a place like Chitwan, though it gets a big thumbs up for comfortable, spacious rooms with plenty of natural light. It features some beautiful artwork in the hallways and an impressive giant mural on its outside wall. Its location, well removed from the tourist trap area of Sauraha, is appealing for many too.

**ourpick Jungle Adventure World** (☎ 580301, 9845043542; [sharad2029@yahoo.com](mailto:sharad2029@yahoo.com); r Rs 700) This attractive lodge has a Tibetan Buddhist theme, and is adorned with prayer flags, wall hangings and flags draped over each door. The bungalows are inviting with lanterns on each private porch, and it has a shady garden that makes for a great place to escape the heat.

**River View Jungle Camp** (☎ 580096; [rjvcsauraha@hotmail.com](mailto:rjvcsauraha@hotmail.com); cottages US\$10) Its pink brick cottages are set along a long garden leading all the way to the river. The mood is calm and the rooms are tidy and comfortable, with reliable hot water. It's a good central choice with friendly staff and expert guides.

#### Midrange

**Jungle Lagoon Safari Lodge** (☎ 580126, in Kathmandu 01-4258427; [www.lagoon.com.np](http://www.lagoon.com.np); r Rs 1000) On the road to the elephant breeding centre, Jungle Lagoon has a lovely spot on the river bank. Priding itself as a 'birdwatching paradise', there are plenty of exotic birds to spot on the river as well as feeding on the lodge's fruit trees – some of which are home to fruit bats.

Rooms are spacious and clean with carpet like Astroturf. 'Sunset point' is a wonderful spot to sit by the lake, though its chairs are in serious need of maintenance.

**Fewa Wildlife Resort** (☎ 580150, in Kathmandu 01-4263185; [www.fewawildliferesort.com](http://www.fewawildliferesort.com); s/d US\$20/25, s/d with air-con US\$30/35; ♿) Tucked right on the border of the community forest, this is the closest place you'll get to the park without being inside. Popular with package tourists, rooms are fairly standard but its gardens make for a great place to read a book to the accompaniment of chirping birds. There's also a rickety wildlife watchtower and plans for a swimming pool.

**Sapana Village Lodge** (☎ 580308; [www.sapanalodge.com](http://www.sapanalodge.com); s/d/tr incl breakfast US\$20/28/35) Situated 1.5km north of Sauraha, this excellent option is perfect for those with an interest in Tharu culture. Set up by Dutch development organisations with the aim of supporting the local Tharu community, rooms are decked out in charming Tharu-style designs with vibrant paintings, rugs and wicker stools. Its smart restaurant does tasty Tharu dishes, and the staff are very friendly.

**Rhino Residency Resort** (☎ 580095, in Kathmandu 01-420431; [www.rhino-residency.com](http://www.rhino-residency.com); r US\$40; ♿) Right by the entrance to the national park, this elegant resort's styling falls somewhere between English Regency and Malay Colonial. It has an inviting nature-designed swimming pool, bar and restaurant. The displays of snakes in jars in the foyer add a distinct national park feel.

#### Eating

Most lodges have restaurants and there are several independent places in the main bazaar at Sauraha. All serve cocktails and a familiar menu of travellers fare. Most open from 6am and close at around 10pm to 11pm.

**Jungle View Restaurant** (mains Rs 85-310) Probably the best of the terrace restaurants, Jungle View has all your traveller favourites, as well as a beer garden and views looking over the main strip.

**Sweet Memory Restaurant** (mains Rs 90-200) An attractive family-run shack restaurant with plenty of flowers and pot plants, Sweet Memory prides itself on its home-style cooking. The roast chicken is recommended, and it also serves up good filtered coffee.

**ourpick KC's Restaurant** (mains Rs 215-315) The most popular choice in Sauraha, KC's is set in

a Spanish-style hacienda with an open terrace and a fire pit at the back. The chefs here cook up a feast and the menu runs from Nepali and Indian curries to pizzas and pasta.

There's another cluster of laid-back traveller restaurants on the sandy banks of the river that are most popular during elephant bathing and Sauraha's famous sunset. **River Sunset Restaurant** (meals Rs 95-450, BBQ Rs 450-1350) is the most popular of these and does a mouth-watering evening barbecue of duck, pork, chicken and buffalo over an open fire. **Hamro Hotel Restaurant & Bar** (mains Rs 90-350) makes for a delightful spot to breakfast on the banks of the Rapti.

In a town where menus are almost identical, an excellent alternative is the tastefully decorated **Nirvana's Horses Resort** (☎ 580453; crepes Rs 95, mains Rs 250-375) featuring a dazzling menu of French, Spanish and Tharu cuisine.

For real bargain-basement meals, there are a few rustic bhojanalayas in the bazaar.

#### Shopping

Souvenir shops in Sauraha sell the usual range of Tibetan, Kashmiri and Nepali arts and crafts. Local specialities include tiger pugmark ashtrays and wood carvings of elephants and rhinos, including dubious mating scenes. For something a bit more upmarket head to **Happy House** (☎ 580026; ⏰ 7am-9pm) near the Jungle View Restaurant. This small, family-run business produces its own honey (in various delectable varieties) and sells gorgeous Mithila paintings produced by women's craft cooperatives near Janakpur.

The small **women's community shop** (⏰ 7am-5pm), opposite the visitors centre, sells souvenirs with all proceeds going to developing local women's community groups.

#### Getting There & Away

##### AIR

When there is sufficient tourist demand, Yeti Airlines has flights from Kathmandu to the tiny runway at Meghauli for US\$106 (30 minutes), but you'll need to make advance arrangements with your lodge for a pick-up as there is not much going on in Meghauli. If you're bound for Sauraha, it's better to fly into Bharatpur near Narayangarh and take a taxi (Rs 700). Both Buddha and Yeti Air offer daily flights to Bharatpur from Kathmandu (US\$86, 30 minutes). Travel agents and hotels can make bookings.