



NEPAL: MOUNTAINS AND MONASTERIES



This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.



Everest just visible on the left, with Ama Dablam on the far right photo Uta Purcell

- **An ideal introduction to Himalayan trekking & Sherpa culture**
- **See the Himalayan giants: Everest; Lhotse; Kantega; Thamserku; Ama Dablam**
- **Good acclimatisation, with max altitude 3860m**
- **Visit Khumbu villages and monasteries**
- **Lodge accommodation with friendly Sherpa hosts**

Nepal

Nepal is a small country, wedged between India and Tibet (now occupied by China), and dominated by the Eastern Himalayas. Many of today's trekking routes are ancient trade routes between India and Tibet. These and the porter skills of the mountain people are the main factors in allowing westerners access to the highest regions. Nepal's diverse geography has shaped an equally diverse kaleidoscope of cultures. The spiritual heritage influenced by Tibetan Buddhism in the higher regions, and Hinduism elsewhere gives substance to peoples' lives throughout Nepal, making them reverent, kind, hospitable and hard-working people.

The trek

We follow good trails through forested river valleys and small villages, walking between terraced fields and traversing hillsides amongst the Himalayan giants: Everest, Lhotse, Kantega, Thamserku, Ama Dablam. Finally we reach the famous monastery of Tyangboche, perched on a pedestal with Everest and Ama Dablam as backdrop.

This is a varied trek, with 3-8 hours walking each day and good acclimatisation, offering an ideal introduction to Himalayan trekking and the Khumbu culture. Some of the initial days are short to assist acclimatisation, but there is time in the afternoons for side trips or gumpa visits or just to relax in the magnificent mountain surroundings.

Fitness

On some days the walking is strenuous, due both to the altitude and to the terrain, but there is plenty of time to acclimatise, and the trip is suitable for anyone who is reasonably fit. Previous walking experience is an advantage, but is not necessary. Just as important are adaptability and an open mind.

Lodge treks

In the popular areas where there are many lodges to choose from, we like to support the local people by sleeping in lodges rather than carrying in an independent camp. You will have more encounters with locals on a lodge trek, and will often be accommodated within the family home. Solar showers are available at some lodges for approx NR250.

The cost of breakfast, lunch and dinner in the lodges is included, so all you need to buy are your own drinks and snacks.

Vegetarians will have a good choice, indeed it is normally best to avoid meat on the trail unless you are sure it has been freshly killed.

We try to avoid buying drinks in glass bottles or mineral water in plastic bottles on trek – both of which produce unwanted waste.

Trekking life

A trekking day usually starts early, around 6 am. After breakfast we set off. Lunch will break the pace, for about an hour. Most days we will reach our destination by early afternoon, leaving time to wash/relax before dinner at around 7pm. Bedtime beckons early and by about 8-9pm you will be ready to fall into your sleeping bag.



Young trekker

Kathmandu

In Kathmandu, we stay in a centrally located hotel (B&B) which gives you the chance to choose between the wide range of restaurants. You can buy a meal in Kathmandu for around NR500, excluding alcohol.

Language

The national language is Nepali, which has similarities to Hindi. Some locals will speak enough English for simple conversations, but many will not. A few words of Nepali will help to increase mutual understanding.

Transport

Flights between Kathmandu and Lukla take approx 30 mins. Bad weather can sometimes cause delays.

Luggage

Your luggage will be carried by porters. All you have to carry is what you need for the day: waterproofs, fleece, hat, camera, water bottle etc. A trek bag is ideal for your main luggage, plus a small lockable bag for leaving travel clothes etc in Kathmandu.

Climate

Post monsoon weather in October/November/December is typically stable and dry with clear air, particularly in the Khumbu. It is warm enough during the day for light clothing but can drop below freezing at night. In March/April/May it is warmer during the day, particularly at low altitudes. Rhododendrons bloom from February in the valleys through to early June higher up. Intermittent pre-monsoon showers and low altitude haze are possible, but the lack of other trekkers and the spring flowers at this time of year compensate for this. Cold nights and clear skies can still be expected in the mountains.

Altitude

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m. There are lots of tea houses along the way.

Health

If you take care while in Nepal there should be no reason why you do not stay healthy. Frequent hand washing and care with drinking water is the key.

Equipment and clothing

A kit list will be sent with your booking confirmation. Sleeping bags can be supplemented by quilts at most lodges. Down jackets and sleeping bags can be hired in Kathmandu and Namche Bazaar.

International Porter Protection Group

High Places has been endorsed by I.P.P.G. This means that we treat our porters fairly, and provide appropriate clothing and medical attention for them. Max load for trek bag is 15kg.



Namche Bazaar Photo Uta Purcell

Extension

Extend your trip with a visit to Chitwan National Park to see the elephants and one horned rhinos of the Terai or relax for a few days at 'The Last Resort', a three hour drive from Kathmandu. See www.thelastresort.com.np. Ask for more details.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary will always need to remain flexible, and may change due to weather conditions, the pace of the group or other unforeseen circumstances. Times and distances are approximate. (B,L,D) refers to meals included in the trip cost: breakfast, lunch, dinner.

This trip is 14 days ex KATHMANDU. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival in and departure from KATHMANDU, and may not be the days you leave or return home.

DAY 1 Arrive Kathmandu. Hotel.

DAY 2 Kathmandu and sightseeing. Kathmandu (1527m) is a busy city full of contrasts and extremes. Temples, religious shrines and a way of life centuries old all mingle with the hustle and bustle of 20th century architecture, traffic and western influence. Half day city tour. Hotel. (B)

DAY 3 Flight to Lukla (2850m).
After meeting our porters and sorting out loads, we set off. Today's walk is a short one, to the village of Phakding (2640m) or Monjo (2815m). 3-4 hours. (B)

DAY 4 Namche Bazaar (3440m)
We steadily move up higher along a winding path on the banks of the Dudh Kosi River, through villages and forest dwarfed by gigantic rock walls, and our first glimpse of Everest, until a final pull brings us into Namche Bazaar.
Namche is in an unusual position surrounded by mountains with colourful houses scattered in an amphitheatre of rock. 6-7 hours.

DAY 5 Namche Bazaar (3440m)
A day for rest, acclimatisation, and gentle walks around Namche. Visit the Sherpa Cultural Centre and the Sagarmatha National Park Headquarters from where the summit of Everest (8848m) can be seen, peeping out from behind the rock curtain of Lhotse (8501m), an amazing sight at sunrise.



Yak waiting for coffee photo Philip Leith

DAY 6 Thame (3780m)
It's a three to four hour walk to the village of Thame, whose cliff side monastery is one of the oldest in the Khumbu. Part of it has recently been renovated with impressive results. On the way there, look out for Danphe, the colourful pheasant. Thame is on the trading route between Nepal and Tibet, but is off the main trekking route, so it is a fascinating place to spend the night.

DAY 7 Khumjung (3790m)
We drop back down the valley then skirt round on a high path to the village of Khunde, well known for its excellent hospital built in 1966 by the Himalayan Trust. Khumjung is almost adjoining, and we spend the night here. There will be time to visit the gompa built in 1831, Hillary's first secondary school, the bakery, or drop in to the Everest View Hotel for a coffee. 3-4 hours walk, plus visits.

DAY 8 Phortse (3800m)
A contouring path leads easily high above the Dudh Kosi River, with stunning views of Ama Dablam (6812m), Everest and Lhotse. A steep uphill section to Mong (3973m) precedes an equally steep descent to a tiny settlement - look out for musk deer, thar and impeyan pheasant in the forest. Crossing the valley, we climb up to the village of Phortse, where in the summer months, yaks and naks (female yaks) are brought from Khumjung to fertilise the fields for hay. Overlooked by a gompa (monastery) high above the village, this is a traditional settlement and it is interesting to see the way of life little changed in many ways for centuries. Approx 6 hours.

DAY 9 Tyangboche (3864m)
A high traverse with clear views of the rock and ice spire of Ama Dablam (6812m) leads to the friendly and picturesque village of Pangboche (4000m). We are now surrounded by snowy peaks, deep in the heart of the Everest massif, and this will be the highest point of our trek.

Joining the main Everest trail below Pangboche, we walk through woods of moss-bedecked birch and rhododendron to Tyangboche, the most famous Buddhist monastery in Nepal, situated at the foot of Ama Dablam amidst an incredible panorama of peaks and steep valleys. It was destroyed by a fire in 1989, and has been rebuilt in its old, traditional splendour, with the help of the Himalayan Trust. It has also been developed as a museum and Centre for Sherpa Culture. 7-8 hours.



*From Pangboche towards Tyangboche
photo Uta Purcell*

DAY 10 Jorsale (2852)
With early morning light on Everest, we drop down from Tyangboche's pedestal to climb again to the now familiar market town of Namche Bazaar. After a rest and lunch in town, we continue on down the valley towards Lukla. 6-7 hours.

DAY 11 Lukla (2850m). A final day's walk and a steady climb back up to Lukla, with time to reflect on the trip and to look forward to a last evening of Sherpa hospitality. 5-6 hours.

DAY 12 Flight from Lukla to Kathmandu. Hotel.

DAY 13 A final day in Kathmandu. (B)

DAY 14 Depart Kathmandu or continue with your own arrangements. (B)

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