



Tough

EVEREST HIGH PLACES



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 from Gokyo Ri. Photo Uta Purcell

- **A magnificent circuit of the Everest region**
- **3 high passes – the Cho La, Renzo La and Kongma La**
- **5 high viewpoints – Nangkartshang Peak, Chukung Ri, Kala Patar, Awi Peak and Gokyo Ri**
- **Flexibility in itinerary with easier options on some days**
- **Stay by the azure blue Gokyo Lake**
- **Visit Everest Base Camp**

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. Further south lie the foothills. Here a sub-tropical climate gives a colourful spectrum of rainforest, rice fields and tropical fruit trees. The lowlands of the Terai are hot and humid, with enough jungle to provide a home to tigers, elephants and rhinoceros which can be seen in the famous Chitwan National Park. This diverse geography has shaped an equally diverse kaleidoscope of cultures. The spiritual heritage influenced by Tibetan Buddhism in the mountain regions and Hinduism elsewhere gives substance to peoples' lives throughout Nepal, making them reverent, kind, hospitable and hard-working people.

Trek details

Probably the best circuit of the Everest region crossing 3 high passes and 5 spectacular viewpoints. This is a challenging trek but is the classic circuit of the whole Everest region. We start by following the footsteps of the great Everest climbers and visiting Everest Base Camp. We then cross to the quieter but no less magnificent Gokyo Valley with its spectacular azure blue lake. Finally we enter the even quieter Thame Valley.

Some of the pass crossings require good weather and favourable snow conditions and if there is bad weather we may need to make some changes to the itinerary or the route, however there is enough leeway within the itinerary to cope with this. For those confident of their physical fitness this is a trek not to be missed.

Trip grade

This trip has been graded 'Tough' due to the sustained nature of the trip and the altitude. If all the optional extras are included it is towards the upper end of the grade and you will benefit from starting the trip with a good level of fitness.

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 around NR300, and batteries can be charged all the way up to basecamp for a fee.

The cost of breakfast, lunch and dinner in the lodges is included. You will need to buy 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. You can easily treat your own drinking water.

Kathmandu

In Kathmandu, we stay in a centrally located hotel (B&B) giving you the chance to choose between many good restaurants. You can buy a meal in Kathmandu for around NR500 or so, excluding alcohol.

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 at the Kathmandu hotel.

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 be cold at night – down to -10° C or lower at higher altitudes. In spring there can be cloud build up in the afternoons but the temperatures are a bit warmer.

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. Many people have some minor side effects from altitude, such as headache, nausea or general lassitude. The optional use of 'Diamox' has proved useful for some people, as this drug can reduce these symptoms. You will be given more information on 'Diamox' with your Final Information, between 8 and 10 weeks before departure.

Transport

Flights between Kathmandu and Lukla take approx. 30 minutes. Bad weather can sometimes affect flight schedules.

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.

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 often 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 have agreed to treat our porters fairly, and to provide medical attention for them if needed. Max load for trek bag is 15kg.

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 is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. Walking times and distances are approximate. (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch and D=Dinner included)

This trip is 23 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 Kathmandu
Arrive Kathmandu and transfer to our hotel.
- DAY 2 Free day in Kathmandu 1527m
Kathmandu 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. Hotel. (B)
- DAY 3 Flight to Lukla (2850m). After meeting our porters and sorting out loads, we set off for the village of Phakding (2656m) or Monjo (2815m). 4-5 hours. Lodge. (B,L,D).
- DAY 4 Namche Bazaar 3440m
We climb steadily on a winding path on the banks of the Dudh Kosi River, through villages and forests dwarfed by gigantic rock walls until a final steep pull brings us into Namche Bazaar. Namche is in a unique position surrounded by mountain ranges with colourful houses scattered in an amphitheatre of rock. (Approx 5-6 hours) Lodge. (B,L,D).
- DAY 5 Namche Bazaar 3440m
If you can haul yourself out of bed, a walk to the top of Namche will reward you with a sunrise view of the summit of Everest (8,848m) peeping out from behind the rock curtain of Nuptse. Today we spend the day around Namche acclimatizing to the rarified air. We will trek to the villages of Khumjung and Khunde. At Kunde is the hospital built by Sir Edmund Hillary and in Khumjung we can visit the ancient monastery which houses the only remaining skull of a yeti (possibly!). Lodge (B,L,D).
- DAY 6 With stunning views of Ama Dablam (6812m), Everest and Lhotse in the background we continue our trek. The trail starts by undulating round the ridges before descending to the river. Then a steep uphill section through the forest takes us to Thyangboche 3867m. Lodge (B,L,D).
- DAY 7 A dramatic walk on a narrow traversing path to the quiet village of Pangboche 3985m which hosts one of the most ancient Tibetan monasteries in Nepal. A gradual climb leads us to the remote Sherpa village of Dingboche 4530m at the entrance to the Khumbu valley. A slow and steady pace as we gain altitude will reap benefits. Lodge. (B,L,D).
- DAY 8 Dingboche; trek to Nangkartshang Peak
We stay here for another night for acclimatization and today head towards Nangkartshang Peak (5100m) for amazing views of an array of peaks including Makalu and Ama Dablam. We return to Dingboche for a late lunch and have the afternoon to explore the village. Lodge (B,L,D).
- DAY 9 Today we follow a good track up the Imja Khola towards the village of Chukkung, with Island Peak looming directly ahead. From here we climb to Chukkung Ri (5417m) for a stunning panorama dominated by Makalu. Lodge (B,L,D).

DAY 10 Lobuche 4950m
If the weather is good and we're feeling fit, we will head for Lobuche via Kongma La or 'The Pass of the Snowcock' (5535m). It's a long day so we leave early. The route climbs all morning and follows grassy slopes towards the pass passing a series of beautiful lakes. A final steep rocky section brings us to the top where we are rewarded by some of the best views of the trek. Nuptse rises right above us and we can see Makalu in the distance and a whole host of other 7000m peaks. The descent is steep and rocky at first so we need to be careful on the descent. A long descent brings us to the edge of the Khumbu glacier and the final sting in the tail today is a walk across the glacier. The trail goes up and down across this amazing mass of ice and rock to the small collection of lodges at Lobuche. This is a long and challenging day, and only to be attempted by those who are feeling strong and have acclimatised well. If in doubt it will be better to join the porters on the shorter route to Lobuche via Dingboche and Dughla. Lodge (B,L,D).

DAY 11 Gorak Shep (5170m), visit Everest Base Camp
An early start for Gorak Shep. We follow the main trail over moraine beside the Khumbu Glacier and arrive at the tiny settlement in 2-3 hours. After a snack and a rest, there is an option to continue on to Everest Base Camp (5400m), which will take another 3 hours. Here we can see the Khumbu icefall tumbling down from Everest and in spring we can see all the tents of the expeditions attempting the peak. We return to our lodge at Gorak Shep. (B,L,D)



Everest and Nuptse, Photo by Uta Purcell

DAY 12 Lobuche 4930m Kala Patar 5545m
Early morning often gives clear weather on Kala Patar (5545m), a steep 2 hour climb above Gorak Shep. A must for the classic view of Everest's magnificent southwest face and the Khumbu Icefall. Return to Gorak Shep and descend to Lobuche. Lodge (B,L,D)

DAY 13 Dzongla 4843m Awi Peak 5245m
We head for Dzongla, approx 5 hours away, and the last stop before Cho La. For the energetic there is the chance to ascend Awi Peak en route. (B,L,D)

DAY 14 A long day as we cross the glaciated Cho La. We head up a quiet valley below the dramatic north face of Cholatse (6440m) towards Cho La (5420m). The route gets steeper with some rocky scrambling. After crossing the glacier at the top we descend, at first on a very steep rocky trail and then crossing a couple of ridges to drop down to our next lodge at Thangnak (4700m). Lodge (B,L,D).

DAY 15 Gokyo 4468m
We cross the Ngozumpa Glacier, the largest in Nepal, to reach the main trekking trail up the Gokyo valley and follow this for about an hour to reach the lodge at Gokyo. Set in a spectacular location by the lake we can either relax this afternoon or take a walk towards the 4th lake. Lodge (B,L,D).

DAY 16 Gokyo (4750m) with Gokyo Ri option (5360m), a 2-3 hour climb.
This morning we climb Gokyo Ri for another spectacular 360° view including Everest, Nupte, Lhotse and the mighty Cho Oyu. The afternoon is free for more exploration. Lodge (B,L,D).

DAY 17 Lungden 4300m
From Gokyo we skirt the lake and head up on a rocky path then across slabs to reach Renjo La (5417m) in about 4 hours. It's quite different to the view from Gokyo Ri and on this, our final pass crossing, we can take time to enjoy the grand array of vast Himalayan giants all around us. All too soon it will be time to drop down, steeply at first, to our next lodge at Lungden (B,L,D).



Gokyo. Photo Uta Purcell

DAY 18 Thame 3820m
An easy walk down the valley to Thame where we spend the night. We have now joined the trading route between Nepal and Tibet and it's more likely we'll see Tibetans heading to or from Namche's busy market than other trekkers. In the afternoon there will be time to visit Thame's beautiful Gompa which is over 300 years old and to have a walk around the village to see the way of life which is more traditional here than in the popular trekking areas. Lodge (B,L,D).

DAY 19 Monzo 2815m
Heading back down the trail we'll have a stop in Namche then retrace our steps back down the Dudh Kosi River to overnight in Monzo Lodge (B,L,D).

DAY 20 Lukla 2850m
We continue down the valley but there is also a fair amount of climbing today to reach Lukla - however by now we are fit and acclimatised, and it's so much easier than on the way up! It's time to say goodbye to the porters who have enabled us to make this amazing journey

DAY 21 Flight from Lukla to Kathmandu and transfer to our hotel. (B,L,D)

DAY 22 A final day in Kathmandu – perhaps visit Swayambunath – ‘The Monkey Temple’, or do some final shopping. Hotel (B)

DAY 23 Depart Kathmandu or continue with your own arrangements. (B)