

Packet # 1

(rev. 4/19/19)



TAKES YOU TO...

MT. EVEREST BASE CAMP

FOR

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION



Required reading for all participants. Thank you!

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Trip Summary..... | 3 |
| Trip Specifics..... | 3 |
| Itinerary Snapshot..... | 4 |
| Itinerary in Detail..... | 5 |
| Life on the Trail..... | 8 |
| Equipment List..... | 8 |
| Visas & Permits..... | 11 |
| Flights & Airports..... | 12 |
| Average Temperatures..... | 12 |
| Money & Expenses..... | 13 |
| Single Travelers..... | 13 |
| Travel Practicalities..... | 14 |
| Frequently Asked Questions..... | 16 |
| Pre-Departure Checklist..... | 18 |



Trip Summary

The trek to Everest Base Camp is one of the world's truly epic journeys. It should be on every adventurer's "to do" list.

Our group will explore the exotic city of Kathmandu before flying into the remote mountain town of Lukla (9,250') to begin our trek into the Khumbu region of the Himalayas. We follow an ancient route that will take us through tiny villages, across high mountain passes, and remote valleys. The views of the Himalayas are awe-inspiring as we venture up the Dudh Kosi River to Namche Bazaar - the gateway to the Khumbu region at 11,300 feet. We spend one night next to the Thyangboche Monastery (12,700'), which has spectacular views of Ama Dablam, Mt. Everest, and Lhotse. We'll have a chance to meet the friendly Nepali people and soak up the colors, sights, and sounds of Sherpa village life.

We'll walk along the edge of the Khumbu Glacier to the stunning rocky outcrop of Kala Patthar (18,192'), where we feast on awesome panoramic views of Everest and countless other peaks from arguably the best viewpoint in the Himalayas. The following day, we'll walk to Everest Base Camp (17,400') at the base of the Khumbu Icefall, to get a first hand look at the expeditions preparing for their summit attempts in this spectacular and historical setting. The trek into Everest Base Camp is strenuous and you should be in excellent physical condition. It does not require that you have any previous trekking or mountaineering experience. You should be equipped with a spirit of adventure and the willingness to undergo the potential hardships of trekking and consecutive days on the trail.

Trip Specifics

(See the "Trip Planner" sheet for prices, dates and suggested flights.)

What's included:

- Airport transfers
- All lodging including 4 scheduled hotel nights in Kathmandu
- Selected sightseeing in Kathmandu as noted on the itinerary
- Professionally guided trek from Lukla to Everest Base Camp including an English-speaking trip leader from the U.S.
- Porters and yaks to carry your gear
- All meals while on the trek, and selected meals in Kathmandu as noted on the itinerary

What's not included:

Airfare to/from Kathmandu, Internal airfare (Round trip) from Kathmandu to Lukla, Helicopter transport if flights cancelled in/out of Lukla (this is not uncommon!), trip cancellation and personal travel insurance, medical rescue insurance, helicopter use for rescue or flight delays, selected meals in Kathmandu, entry visa or airport tax, expenses incurred should

you need to descend from the trek early, optional tipping to trip leader and local staff, and items of personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry etc.)

Itinerary Snapshot

Due to restrictions enforced by Sagarmatha (Everest) National Park, camping areas are limited to small yak pastures and abandoned crop fields in villages. These camping areas are typically shared with yaks and in very close proximity to lodges (called *teahouses* in Nepal), which provide a welcome level of comfort. For this reason, we strongly believe that staying in teahouses during the trek is the best option for even the hardest outdoor enthusiast. Please note that while we have chosen the best available lodges, they are not similar to lodging in North America. However, we think you'll be surprised how clean our teahouses are. Typical rooms have two single beds (you will use your sleeping bag on the beds and will **not** need an additional sleeping pad). Most teahouses **have showers available for roughly US \$7, and most villages have laundry services. All teahouses have some outlets and charging capabilities** for cameras and batteries for a small fee (\$5-\$10). **Satellite internet is typically available at most villages along the way for a small fee, but is not 100% reliable and is slow speed and limited data.**

*Note: Meals included in the trip cost are in parenthesis following the description for each day (B for breakfast etc.). During our trek, CME lecture times will be variable, and depend on the daily itinerary as well as our arrival time to our teahouse listed in parenthesis. **Exact teahouses are subject to change based on availability. Arrival and departure to and from Lukla is weather dependent and could change.***

- Day 1 Arrive in Kathmandu (Hotel Yak & Yeti).
- Day 2 Relax and explore Kathmandu on your own (Hotel Yak & Yeti) (B).
- Day 3 Flight to Lukla **weather permitting**. Trek to Monjo (Little Tibet) (B+L+D).
- Day 4 Trek 4-5 hours to Namche Bazaar. (Hotel Namche) (B+L+D)
- Day 5 Acclimatization day in Namche Bazaar (Hotel Namche) (B+L+D).
- Day 6 3 hour trek to explore Kunde and Khumjung (Khumjung Lodge) (B+L+D).
- Day 7 Trek 5-6 hours through Tengboche to Deboche (Rivendell Lodge) (B+L+D).
- Day 8 5-6 hours to Dingboche. (Moonlight) (B+L+D).
- Day 9 Acclimatization day in Dingboche w/ optional hikes (Moonlight) (B+L+D)
- Day 10 5-6 hours to Lobuche (Altitude Oxygen) (B+L+D).
- Day 11 8-10 hours to Everest Base Camp, return to Gorak Shep (Buddha Lodge) (B,L,D)
- Day 12 5-6 hours ascend to Kala Patthar, return to Lobuche (Eco Lodge) (B+L+D).
- Day 13 5-6 hours to Deboche (Rivendell Lodge) (B+L+D).
- Day 14 4-6 hours to Namche Bazaar. (Hotel Namche) (B+L+D).
- Day 15 Return to Lukla: 7 hours. (Namaste Lodge) (B+L+D).

- Day 16 Fly to Kathmandu, **weather permitting** (Hotel Yak & Yeti) (B).
- Day 17 Morning city tour of Kathmandu (Hotel Yak & Yeti) (B+D).
- Day 18 Fly home. (B)

Itinerary in Detail

Please note that this itinerary is subject to change because of weather or other factors. We always hope for blue skies on our flight days, but occasionally it is necessary because of weather to charter helicopters to get in or out of the Lukla airport. This option will be presented by your trip leaders. In the setting of a weather delay, a chartered helicopter may allow air travel multiple days before airplane flights resume. The price of a helicopter charter (approximately \$520 per person) is not included in trip costs and can be paid by credit card in Nepal.

Day 1 - Arrive in Kathmandu (4,600')

Your trip leader or local staff will meet you outside the customs and immigration area at the airport. He or she will answer questions, brief you on the immediate arrangements, and escort you to the centrally located Yak & Yeti Hotel. In the afternoon you'll meet with the group for introductions and a brief CME lecture from 5-6 pm at the Yak & Yeti Hotel.

Day 2 - Explore Kathmandu

Following breakfast, we will spend the morning attending a trip briefing and CME lectures at our hotel. In the afternoon, Kathmandu is yours to explore. By western standards, the city is intimate, with many interesting sights, shrines, and markets. Overnight at the Yak & Yeti Hotel.

Day 3 - Mountain flight to Lukla and begin trek (9,300')

Early morning transfer to the airport for the mountain flight to Lukla (9,300') airstrip. During the short but spectacular flight you will leave the Kathmandu Valley and head into the Himalaya, the world's highest mountains rising before you. Your first night on the trail will be at the Little Tibet Lodge at 9,300' near Monjo, along the rushing Dudh Kosi River (5-7 hours hiking). Please note that flights into the mountain airstrip at Lukla are very dependent on clear weather and are often delayed. We have flexibility built into the itinerary to help accommodate changes, but a helicopter flight in or out of Lukla may be the only viable option to avoid multiple day delays if the airport is closed to fixed wing planes. This is usually not necessary and is not included in the price of the trip, but may be an additional expense in the event of bad weather.



Day 4 - Namche Bazaar (11,300')

The trail continues north up the glacial waters of the Dudh Kosi River to the Sherpa capital village of Namche Bazaar. A clearing on the way provides our first view of the summit of Everest – peeking over the massive Lhotse/Nuptse face. Overnight at Hotel Namche (4-5 hours).

Day 5 - Rest day around Namche Bazaar

A rest day in Namche Bazaar for acclimatization, with a short optional hike to gain magnificent views, and plenty of time to explore the quaint shops and markets of the beautiful village. Overnight at Hotel Namche.

Day 6 - Khumjung (12,400')

A morning hike to the lovely village of Khumjung, with spectacular views of Ama Dablam on the way. Explore the school Sir Edmund Hillary established in Khumjung and the hospital he founded in close by Kunde in the afternoon. Overnight at Khumjung Lodge. (3 hours).

Day 7 – Deboche (12,300')

Descend into the deep Dudh Kosi Gorge and ascend the other side – one of the most beautiful valley walks on Earth, full of blooming rhododendron flowers – to the spectacular and renowned Tengboche Monastery. After visiting the monastery, we will stay in the lovely meadows in Deboche just below. Overnight at Rivendell Lodge (5-6 hours).

Day 8 - Dingboche (14,300')

Hike down through a beautiful forest of pine and juniper, cross the Imja Khola, and pass through the village of Pangboche. Keep your eyes peeled for Himalayan Thar and Musk Deer in this section. After lunch we will pass the tree line and ascend to the beautiful pastures and potato fields in Dingboche at the base of the dramatic Chukkung Valley. From here you'll have up close-up views of the sheer Lhotse face, Ama Dablam, and Island Peak. Overnight at Moonlight Lodge (5-6 hours).

DAY 9 - Rest day in Dingboche with optional hike to Chhukung (15,500')

Morning hike up the Imja Kola River Valley towards Chhukung (15,500') and Island Peak Base Camp— with the Lhoste face guarding Mt. Everest in the distance. Retrace your steps back to Dingboche to rest in the afternoon. Overnight at Moonlight Lodge (optional 5 hours).

DAY 10 - Lobuche (16,200')

Hike up along the broad plateau to Dughla (15,100') where we stop for tea and snacks. Continue to the high mountain village of Lobuche with views of Taboche, Cholutse, and Loboje East along the way. Overnight at Oxygen Altitude Home Lodge (5-6 hours).

DAY 11 - Everest Base Camp (18,192') - Gorak Shep (17,000')

Our longest day of trekking. Enjoy the 2-3 hour early morning walk along the Khumbu Glacier to Gorak Shep - one of the highest small villages in the world. After enjoying breakfast and a spectacular sunrise, we continue the trek up the Lower Kumbu Glacier to Everest Base Camp. Spectacular views of Nuptse, Lhotse, and Everest appear along the way. Enjoy lunch in Everest Base Camp while soaking in up close views of the spectacular Khumbu Icefall, and the amphitheater of peaks that surround. Those feeling strong can venture deep into base camp to visit the Everest E.R. tent and view the various expeditions preparing for and engaging in their ascents. Return to Gorak Shep to stay at Buddha Lodge (8-10 hours).

DAY 12 - Kala Patthar (18,192') - Loboche (16,200')

Those who are well acclimatized and feeling strong can ascend Kala Patthar in the pre dawn hours to catch the sunrise over Mt. Everest. You'll be rewarded with perhaps the most famous panoramic view of Everest, Nuptse, Pumori, and the entire Khumbu Glacier. After breakfast together in Gorak Shep, we will then make our way back to Loboche to spend the night Oxygen Altitude Home Lodge (5-6 hours).

DAY 13 – Deboche (12,300')

A mostly downhill walk along the Imja Khola with a brief tour of the Himalayan Rescue Association Clinic and lunch in Pheriche on the way. Overnight at the Rivendell Lodge (5-6 hours).

DAY 14 - Namche Bazaar (11,300')

A steep descent to the Dudh Kosi River and a gradual climb back up to Namche Bazaar. (5-6 hours).

DAY 15 - Return to Lukla (9,300')

A long, but leisurely trek down the Dudh Kosi to Lukla passing the quaint riverside villages along the way. Overnight at Namaste Hotel (7 hours).

DAY 16 - Return to Kathmandu

*Fly to Kathmandu in the morning (**weather permitting!**). If fixed wing planes are not able to fly then helicopters may be the best option to fly to Kathmandu. Upon arrival in Kathmandu, transfer to hotel. Overnight at Hotel Yak & Yeti.

*Day 17 will be spent either in Kathmandu or Lukla, depending on our luck with the Lukla flight. Flights in and out of this small mountain airstrip are commonly delayed and we have no way of predicting the length of the delay; it's something we just have to live with. With luck you'll get out the first day. All meals in Lukla are included while waiting. Though we devote an enormous amount of time, money and energy into securing reservations and obtaining replacement reservations when flights are cancelled, you should be prepared for potential disappointments, delays, and cancellations of Lukla flights. A chartered seat on a helicopter is often the best option once the Lukla airport becomes backed up because of weather and may be available for an additional charge of approximately \$520 USD. We have scheduled an extra day at the end of the trek to aid in not interfering with your homeward-bound flights.

DAY 17 - Kathmandu

If the Lukla flight is not delayed, you'll have a fascinating guided morning tour of World Heritage Site Bodhnath Stupa. The afternoon is free to relax or do some last minute shopping or sightseeing on your own. Celebration dinner and overnight at Hotel Yak & Yeti.

DAY 18 - Fly home

Transfer to airport and depart Kathmandu.

Bio Bio Expeditions is proud to partner with Jiban Ghimire, founder/owner of Shangri-La Nepal Trek

“I can wholeheartedly recommend my friend Jiban Ghimire of *Shangri-La Nepal Trek*. I’ve worked with these gentlemen close to 20 years and feel more than confident in their ability to deliver a great expedition.”

Pete Athans – distinguished U.S. climber who has reached summit of Everest seven times.

“This is a great company, and in fact I know the owner, Jiban Ghimire. He organized my Everest expedition and he is the best in Nepal. You will have a great experience.”

Tony van Marken – motivational speaker and climber of all seven summits.

Life on the Trail

A typical trekking day starts at 6:30 am. Group members will pack up their duffel bags and head up to breakfast at 7:00 with daypacks in hand (we have tea, coffee, and hot chocolate ready at 6:30 for the early risers in the group). Your daypack should include any items that you want access to during the day as you won’t see your duffel bag again until arriving at the next lodge. After a hearty breakfast, we are on the trail a little before 8:00. For the next few hours you’ll walk by the quaint Sherpa villages that line the trail, through lush forests, across glacial rivers, and among blooming rhododendrons. As we progress beyond the tree line at around 14,000 ft the landscape transforms into a stark expanse lined by rock, ice, and shrubs adapted to the high climate.

We encourage everyone to walk at a pace that is comfortable to them, and we have plenty of guides to facilitate different paces as the group naturally spreads out. That said, being in your best physical condition will allow you to fully enjoy the experience (please follow the training recommendations outlined in packet #2). There is plenty of time to take photos, and exchange smiles with the Nepalese people whom we share the trail with. A hot trailside lunch breaks up the day, giving you ample time to rest, refuel, and soak in the towering peaks that surround. Some days we will trek another 2-4 hours following the lunch break. On other days we will make it to our next accommodation by lunchtime—so there is typically ample time to clean up, read, wander around the villages, journal, play cards, have conversation over tea, or just relax. CME lectures are typically done from about 5:30 until dinnertime at 6:30 in the dining room of the teahouses (those not signed up for the CME credits are welcome at the lectures—many non health care providers have really enjoyed them in the past). A buffet style multi-course dinner contains Nepalese/Indian as well as International/American favorites followed by something sweet for dessert. After dinner don’t forget to check out the abundant stars and moonlit peaks before retiring to your room for the evening.

Equipment List

A wide array of clothing will be necessary for this trip. You will need clothing for cold weather protection in the high altitudes along with clothing for trekking in the humidity and heat at lower elevations. You are expected to arrive with all of the equipment listed below, as it is the minimum required for the trip - particularly the cold weather items which are essential for comfort and warmth in the mountains.

The brand of gear you choose is entirely up to you, and there are many options available. A good place to start is REI (Recreational Equipment Inc.) www.rei.com and sale prices are often found at www.rei.com/outlet. Patagonia has very high quality gear, and a strong environmental commitment: www.patagonia.com. It is probably best to find an outdoor store in your area, so you can ensure a good fit before you purchase.

Equipment for mountain travel should follow two simple tenants: lightweight and functional. Items that you pack should be lightweight, dependable, and adaptable to a variety of harsh conditions. Cotton clothing should be avoided because it dries slowly and is a poor insulator when it gets wet. Instead, choose wool or synthetic fabrics that “wick” moisture and sweat away from your skin to keep you much warmer.

The layering system outlined below is sufficient for most people. Please remember that figuring out what to pack is a balance between taking just enough clothes to keep you warm and comfortable, yet not overburdening yourself or others with items you probably will not use.

It works well to have a “tea house/ sleeping outfit” that is not used on the trail (and therefore kept drier and cleaner). This layer of clothing can be repeated each evening. See the packing list below for details.

Basic items such as sunscreen, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, and batteries are typically available on the trail even at the higher altitudes.

In addition to the list provided below, additional clothing items may be brought for our scheduled days in Kathmandu (and left in storage at the hotel during our trek).

Please note: there is a total bag weight restriction for the flight to Lukla (currently 32 lbs). Please see “Pack” section below. This weight limit includes the total of both your day pack and your duffel.

Upper Body

- 2-3 long sleeve synthetic or wool shirts. Lightweight and light colored for sunny days. One of these shirts may be saved for tea house use each evening (and not used on the trail).
- 1 short sleeve synthetic or wool t-shirt.
- 2 women’s sports bras – synthetic (avoid cotton).
- 1 “soft shell” jacket that is wind and water-resistant.
- 1 warm fleece or synthetic sweater, jacket, or vest.
- 1 waterproof outer jacket w/ hood (also sometimes called a “hard shell”) Gore-tex recommended.
- 1 expedition down parka with hood.
- 1 pair of liner gloves. Thin wool or synthetic.
- 1 pair of warm gloves with a water resistant shell. (These may be purchased separately).

- Warm wool or synthetic hat (beanie) that covers your ears.
- 1 micro fiber dust bandana (important item!). *Example: Buff Wear. www.buffwear.com*
- Shade hat or baseball cap (consider using a bandana with a baseball cap for sun protection).
- 1 pair of 100% UV wrap around style sunglasses (full eye and side coverage is recommended).
- Optional: Balaclava.

Lower Body

- 4-5 pairs of light weight synthetic or wool trekking socks.
- 2 pairs of warm, medium to heavy weight synthetic or wool socks.
- 2 pairs of synthetic lightweight long underwear. One pair may be saved for teahouse only use.
- 1 pair of lightweight trekking pants with zip off feature that can be converted to shorts.
- 1 pair of warm fleece pants (ideally with side zips for easy venting). These work great for teahouse use each evening and possibly on the trail at the highest altitudes.
- 1 pair of hard shell pants. Waterproof/breathable with ankle zip for easy on and off.
- 1 pair of medium weight hiking boots. These should be warm and fit well over light and heavy sock combinations** (too tight of a fit will lead to a cold foot). **Fit is more important than brand, and please break boots in before the trip.**
- Optional: 2-4 pairs of liner socks. Polypropylene or synthetic.
- Optional: 1 pair of running shoes (some prefer these over boots for hiking at lower elevations)
- Optional: 1 pair of lightweight sandals (for teahouses use or in Kathmandu).
- Optional: Compact down booties.
- Women should plan to wear long skirts or pants when in Kathmandu for cultural reasons.

All clothing should be kept dry using waterproof stuff sacks, large trash bags, or a waterproof duffel bag.

Sleeping Gear

- 1 down or synthetic sleeping bag (rated to 0 to 25 degrees F).
Please note that sleeping bag ratings are highly variable, as is personal preference with regards to sleeping temperature. If you tend to get cold easily, consider a warmer bag, a fleece sleeping bag liner, or wearing warm layers to sleep in.
- A sleeping pad is **not** necessary since you will use your sleeping bag on the beds at teahouses.
- 2 Pillow Cases are suggested to cover the provided pillows at the tea houses.

Important Miscellaneous Items

- A first-aid kit** including any medications you may want access to while on the trek. **Please note** that the group first aid kit provided on the trip contains basic wound care and medications, but is not available to dispense medications for non-emergencies. Please research and talk to your physician about bringing your own supply of important medications. These might include medications for altitude illness such as acetazolamide, nifedipine, dexamethasone, and others. Please also consider an anti-emetic (e.g. ondansetron). Most participants will also choose to bring their own supply of appropriate antibiotics, appropriate anti-inflammatory meds, and many other

medications and personal first-aid supplies.

Water purification: You are responsible for personal water purification on the trail.

Many possible methods, but chlorine dioxide tablets are highly recommended. Please bring enough to purify about 50 liters (4 liters per day). Tablets may be purchased at <http://aquamira.com> (get 2-3 of the 24 tablet packs) or most outdoor stores. -- Purification pumps are not a good option for this trek because water is obtained from faucets. -- Iodine is also not a good option because it may not kill cryptosporidium. -- The Steri-Pen (UV purification) is convenient and efficient, but please be aware that batteries must be kept warm for it to function properly (please have a back-up of some purification tablets).

Pack

Please bring all three types of bags (pictures show an *example* of each)

32 lbs total weight limit for these two bags combined



1 bag or sack of any type to leave behind.

-On the morning that we fly to Lukla (Day 3), you will bring this bag to the secure storage at the Hotel lobby with any items not needed during the trek.

- Items may include: nontrekking clothes, items purchased shopping, electronics etc.

1 large (7,500+cu.in. or 120+ L) duffel bag for gear.

- Must be durable for use on pack animals, but may not be rigid, contain hard elements (such as handles or hard bottom), or have wheels.

- This bag will be delivered to your room each afternoon. You will not have access to it while on the trail.

1 Large Daypack approx. 2,400 cu.in.

- Although we will be using Yaks and porters to carry our gear, you will want everything needed for a full day in this pack (rain gear, water, snacks, camera etc.)

- A waterproof cover for your daypack (a heavy duty plastic garbage bag may suffice).
- 2 sticks of lip balm. At least SPF 20.
- Sunscreen. SPF 30 or more is recommended.
- Lightweight headlamp with spare batteries.
- A watch with an alarm function or a compact alarm clock.
- 2 water bottles. 1liter size *Klean Kanteen* or *Nalgene* style. Wide-mouth style recommended. If you want to bring a Camel Pack style hydration bladder, please be

sure the tube and bladder are well insulated to prevent freezing.

- 1 water bottle insulator. *Example: Outdoor Research Water Bottle Parka.*
- Toiletry kit, and a quick drying towel for the showers at the tea houses.
- Roll of toilet paper (most toilets in Nepal do not have it).
- Toilet paper also stored in a plastic bag for emergency use on trail.
- 1 small container of hand sanitizer (important! Keep one in your pocket)
- 3 passport size photos.**
- 1 photocopy of your passport.**
- Passport**
- Optional: Compact camp towel and concentrated soap
- Optional: Earplugs (teahouses can get noisy).
- Optional: Cough drops.
- Optional: 1 pair of adjustable trekking poles (most trekkers prefer using them)
- Optional: 3-4 Large garbage bags for keeping miscellaneous gear dry if duffel is not waterproof.
- Optional: 1 pair of glacier glasses with a hard-sided storage case. These provide darker lenses for the highest elevations when significant snow is possible. If not bringing glacier glasses, please consider a back up pair of sunglasses should one pair break.
- Optional: Compact container of foot powder and small package of baby wipes
- Optional: Instant hand/ foot warmers
- Optional: Favorite snack foods. (no more than 1 to 2 pounds). Vegetarian meals are typically served on the trail. Please bring some jerky meats if you wish.
- Optional: Lightweight paperback book, cards, mp3 player, etc.
- Optional: Fanny pack or travel wallet for travel documents, money & passport.
- Optional: Camera and lightweight binoculars.
- Optional: Small, lightweight combination lock for your duffel bag.
- Optional: "Pee bottle" water bottle to avoid needing to leave room at night (approx 32 oz.).
- Optional: 1 small stainless steel thermos (to replace one water bottle).
- Optional: Nylon stuff sacks for gear and large *Ziploc* bags are useful for organization.

Average Temperatures

One of the most common questions before the trip starts is: "what are the average temperatures going to be?" This is a good question, but one that is impossible to answer with a number. We are starting our trek at 9,000 feet and ascending all the way to 18,000 feet with almost any type of weather possible on the way. It will feel quite warm at 9,000 feet when the sun is out - "shorts and a T-shirt" weather (70°F or more). At 18,000 feet, it can get very cold (approaching 15°F or less at night). This wide range of temperatures is the reason we provide such a detailed packing list. Please follow the suggested packing list and you'll be comfortable regardless of what the weather brings.

Visas & Permits

We encourage you to obtain your visa online before the trip (which can save time upon arrival by allowing you to bypass one of the lines), but many travelers have had a frustrating experience with Nepal's online visa process in the past couple years and many travelers

have still found the in person route to be most efficient even if it means waiting in line at the airport. Upon arrival in the KTM airport, fill out the necessary forms and proceed to the visa line or appropriate line if you obtained a visa in advance. As visa prices change often we suggest taking a variety of cash denominations (US dollars), such as (3) \$20.00 bills (2) \$10.00 bills (3) \$5.00 bills. Credit/debt cards are not accepted. Please be prepared for a potentially long visa line.

- Current 30-day visa cost is \$40.00 and is subject to change.
- Please obtain a 30-day visa.
- Bring 3 passport photos (1 for your visa at the airport, and 2 for your trekking permit)
- US\$ 1 ≈ 100 NPR (Nepalese rupees). Check www.xe.com for current exchange rates.

We will obtain a trekking permit for you in KTM after receiving 2 passport photos from you.

Flights & Airports

Purchasing airfare is your responsibility. We highly recommend Jackson Travel Agency. Jackson Travel coordinates with our local outfitter in Nepal (Jiban Ghimire) to get you the best available flight. Jackson Travel also sends us copies of your flight itinerary and any changes in routing. Please ask for David and tell him you are on the Everest Base Camp, Wilderness Medicine Trip.

Sue Rasmussen
Jackson Travel Agency, INC
1-800-543-4189
Sue@jacksontravel.com

Recommended Flights

- We recommend checking with Jackson Travel for the best route to reach Kathmandu from your specific location.
- Thai Airways has a daily flight from Los Angeles to Bangkok and a good connecting flight to Kathmandu. Many guests also enjoy connecting flights through the middle east, and the number of airlines offering flights to Kathmandu seems to increase every year. We can accommodate other flights.
- Please check with your airline regarding transit visa requirements – particularly for flights routed through India.
- There currently is no exit tax at the Kathmandu Airport.

Early Arrivals and Late Departures

- For those arriving early or departing after the scheduled itinerary, we are happy to make hotel and airport pick up arrangements. Please contact us well before departure if you would like us to make these arrangements for you.

Travel Practicalities

Immunizations

We suggest you check with a travel doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip to find out recommended vaccinations when traveling to Nepal. When this packet was written there were no required vaccinations for entry into Nepal. However, please refer to U.S. Government Center for Disease Control website (www.cdc.gov) or call the CDC international travelers hotline at 877.394.8747 for up to date information on vaccinations. There is currently no risk of malaria in the areas we will be traveling in.

Water

Although it takes a little extra caution when drinking fluids in Nepal, it is essential to stay well hydrated. We advise not drinking (or brushing teeth with) any of the tap water in Nepal without treating it. Bottled water is *usually* safe, but there have been reports of contaminated bottled water in Nepal. For this reason, some may choose to treat *any* water that has not been boiled first. All tea and hot drinks served to you during the trek will be boiled first, and thus safe to drink. Please avoid ice as it is typically made from tap water. Please bring the recommended chlorine dioxide tablets (or similar) so you may never have to worry about not having enough water. You will need to plan on drinking 4-5 liters per day to stay hydrated at high altitudes.

Food

We recommend being very cautious with food choices in Kathmandu by eating only cooked foods or fruit that you have peeled yourself. *Cook it, boil it, peel it, or don't eat it* is a good rule to follow in developing countries where tap water is often contaminated. All of the food served to you during the trek will follow this rule (including all vegetables being boiled first). Please note that meals on the trail will be mostly vegetarian as meat products are carried in and often not fresh. If you anticipate this being a problem, please bring extra jerky style snacks.

Digestive Worries

Traveling to Nepal is going to be a big change on your body. Despite the many precautions we all take to stay healthy, occasionally one may experience diarrhea. The major problem associated with diarrhea is fluid loss leading to severe dehydration, so it is important to maintain plentiful fluid intake. You may want to bring an over-the-counter diarrhea cure to minimize your discomfort or talk to your doctor about prescribing an antibiotic for traveler's diarrhea (e.g. azithromycin,). We also advise that you carry your own supply of toilet paper during the trek, as most of the restrooms in Nepal do not have any. Toilet paper is available for purchase at all the villages on the trail.

Prescriptions

If you take prescription medications that you need to bring, be sure to have a plentiful supply and the doctor's prescription in case something happens to them. Along those lines, it is best to carry medications in your carry-on bag in case of lost luggage. If you wear prescription glasses or contacts, we advise that you bring a spare set.

Voltage

220 V; Plugs C & D (Most are two pins, round). If you plan on using your own 110-volt appliances, you will need a voltage converter, unless your appliance is designed to also work with 220 volts electricity (dual voltage). For example, most laptops and some electric shavers are designed to work both at 110 and 220 volts. Plugging in an appliance that is not designed to run on 220 volts electricity without using a voltage converter will most likely kill it. Regardless of voltage, if your appliance has flat prongs, you will need a plug adapter as most Nepal sockets are designed to accept round prongs. We recommend getting a plug adaptor before you leave.

Money & Expenses

With regards to personal expenses, please note that Nepalese Rupees are the preferred method of payment in Nepal. Many places will accept US Dollars, but you will often get a lower exchange rate. Kathmandu has over 20 ATM machines, and many travelers simply withdraw money as needed. However, some of the ATM's are unreliable and incompatible with certain cards, so it is a good idea to bring a variety of debit/ credit cards for withdrawing money if possible. For this reason it is also encouraged to bring some US Dollars with you. With regards to the amount, please bring what you are comfortable with, and the list below should help. **Please call your bank and credit card companies and let them know the dates you will be in Nepal so that they won't freeze your account when you use your card.** Credit Cards are accepted at most larger hotels, shops, and restaurants. Smaller places sometimes accept credit cards but charge a fee. We will work with you closely in Nepal to change money to Nepalese rupees for the trek and for use in Kathmandu.

Most trekkers change at least \$500 to Nepalese Rupees before departing on the trek. This is for tips, snacks, and purchases made along the trek (though many people do the majority of their shopping in Kathmandu). Many trekkers also take an additional \$500-\$1000 for unplanned expenses and emergencies. (Credit cards may substitute for some cash).

Helicopters are typically available for emergency rescue during our trek (depending on weather and availability). Please understand that any charges incurred by helicopter transport are your responsibility. In the event of inclement weather in Lukla, the option of non emergency helicopter transport may be an option for approximately \$520 (this charge may be paid for with a credit card).

Tipping *is entirely up to you*, and most trekkers generally tip \$200 each to be distributed among the Nepalese staff. We have a large staff assisting with the trek, including the local guides, porters, and a cook. Please exchange money in Kathmandu to tip the local staff in Nepal Rupees (not US dollars). This money will be collected and pooled together on one of the last nights of your trek (in Namche or Lukla). Please do not give *individual* local guides and porters extra money beyond this pooled tip, as this creates unnecessary tension and competition among the local guides. You may also choose to tip your trip leader from the U.S. and local city tour guide when you are back in Kathmandu. In Kathmandu restaurants, a mandatory 10% service charge is included in the bill, and tipping beyond this charge is not necessary. Your trip leader can answer any specific questions.

Drinks: Soda and drinks are available along the trekking route. However, please be aware that plastic bottles are not recycled, and waste disposal is a **big** problem in the Khumbu Valley. Aluminum cans are typically recycled. Hot drinks (from water that has been boiled) such as tea, tang, cocoa, coffee are provided as part of the trek, and water is frequently available for purification (always in the morning and evening).

Single travelers will be paired up with another single traveler of the same gender from our group (if there is an odd number of people in the group you may end up with a single room at no extra charge). Due to limited lodging space on the trail, paying extra for a single room is not possible after leaving Kathmandu. However, if you wish to have your own room for the four scheduled nights in Kathmandu (The first two and last two nights of your trip), the current charge is \$220 total (subject to change).

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Who should I contact with more questions about the trip?

Basic questions regarding the trip dates, your booking, payment, and deposit information should be directed to: Bio Bio Expeditions at 1-800-246-7238.

Bio Bio Expeditions will also give you the contact information of your trip coordinator, whom you can contact with specific questions regarding the trip and itinerary.

2) If my pace is slower than others in the group, will I slow them down?

You are absolutely encouraged to hike at your own pace and you will not slow anybody down. The trekking group will naturally break into smaller groups everyday depending on the pace folks are going at. We have plenty of guides to stay with each group as they form! Faster trekkers will merely arrive at lodges quicker to relax and enjoy views— and will not be held back by slower trekkers.

3) Will I be able to take showers and clean my clothes?

Yes, as previously mentioned, most teahouses have showers available for a \$5 charge. Many villages have laundry services available. Wash basins and sinks are always available for washing.

4) What happens if i miss my plane or it is delayed - whom should I call??

- Please call Jiban Ghimire of Shangri-La Nepal Trek at...
(+977) 985-103-5161 (*if dialing from the USA, please dial 011 before the number*).
- Also please contact your trip leader (you will receive their name and email address prior to the trip) and call Bio Bio Expeditions and let them know: 1-800-246-7238

5) What if no one is at the airport to pick me up in Kathmandu?

- This is unlikely, but please call Jiban Ghimire of Shagri-La Nepal Trek at...
(+977) 985-103-5161
- We are staying at the Hotel Yak and Yeti (+977) 1 4248999

6) What is an emergency number that I can be reached at?

The best way to have family and friends get a message to you is through the Shangri-La Nepal Trek. The owner, Jiban Ghirmire, is prompt in replying to emails: treknclimb@shangrilanepal.com Or you may call his office: +977-1-481-0373 or cell (+977) 985-103-5161 (*if dialing from the USA, please dial 011 before the number*).

7) What if I get sick and need to descend during the trek?

This depends on where you are on the trail, and the severity of your sickness. In all cases we will work with you to come up with the best possible option, and you will always be accompanied by a guide should you need to descend. In rare emergency cases, helicopters have access to all elevations up to Everest Base Camp. (Please note that any lodging and meals are your responsibility if you need to separate from the group as are helicopter evacuations—a good reason to have trip insurance).

8) What if poor weather alters our flights into or out of the Lukla airport in the mountains?

Extra adventures! We always hope for good weather and predictable flight timelines, but in the event of canceled flights or changed time lines rest assured that you are in good hands! We, along with our local partners, have lots of experience dealing with the flights in and out of Lukla airport, but we may need you to remain patient and flexible and realize that changed flight plans are part of traveling in the world's greatest mountains. There is nothing we can do about the weather, and if the airlines decide conditions aren't right to fly we never pressure them! If weather is poor, some or all flights may be delayed until later in the day, and we will make sure you're well taken care of while we wait. It is also possible that flights get cancelled. In the event of a flight cancellation the airport can get backed up for multiple days, and our best option may be to charter a helicopter ride into or out of the mountains. This chartered flight would cost approximately \$520 USD due in Nepal and payable by credit card.

9) What if I am not interested in getting CME credits?

No problem! Many people have come on these trips that are not involved with medicine or already have their required CME credits. You are always welcome to come to lectures or you can just spend those two hours in the evening as you wish. We have had many people outside of the medical field really enjoy the lectures as many topics appeal to a lay audience.

10) What if I want to travel in Nepal before or after this trip?

Great! Depending on how early you arrive, we may be able to pick you up at the Kathmandu Airport. You also may enjoy a couple extra days to explore the surrounding area following the trek.

Pre-Departure Check List

Please keep this sheet handy and check off each item when completed.

- Passport and valuable documents, money and credit cards. (Keep these close to your body in a well-concealed place.)
- All items on the packing list given earlier in the packet.
- Three (3) passport photos for entry visa and trekking permit in Nepal.
- One (1) photocopy of your passport to bring on the trek with you.
- Please keep the following information in your wallet upon arrival in the unlikely event that you are not greeted at the airport:
 - Jiban Ghimire of Shagri-La Nepal Trek (+977) 985-103-5161
 - Hotel Yak and Yeti (+977) 1-424-8999 (Taxi drivers know this hotel well)
- Let your bank and credit card companies know that you will be in Nepal so that they will not freeze your account when you try to use your card.
- Consider making photocopies of other documents like plane tickets and credit cards.
- Make sure you carry-on essentials that you cannot live without. Don't check them through!
- Medications and prescriptions (Keep in your carry-on)
- Reading material for plane and relaxing in Nepal.
- Reconfirm flights (72 hours in advance).
- Leave contact phone number in Nepal with a friend or family member.
- Travelex travel insurance forms filled out and sent in (if you choose to purchase). Bring copy.
- Spending money for trip to cover meals, gifts, tips, and any incidentals not covered in the trip cost. Please check itinerary to see which meals are not covered.

Please get to the airport at least 2-3 hours before any International flight!

We look forward to seeing you in Nepal!