

EVEREST BASE CAMP

THE ULTIMATE TREK

Sunday April 18th - Saturday May 9th 2010

US\$2985 from Kathmandu

No short cuts, this itinerary does it all!
Awesome views of Everest from the Renjo La, Gokyo and Kala Patar
A unique, relaxed itinerary with many 'hidden gems'
17 days fully supported trekking. 4 Nights Hotel in Kathmandu.

Trekking through the Everest region of Nepal is our all time classic mountain journey, and is a place that most people want to explore at some point in their lives. The Khumbu, as the region is known to the indigenous Sherpa people combines magnificent mountain scenery and a fascinating Buddhist culture. We take a circular route, crossing the high Cho La Pass (5330m) to visit all the major settlements and view points of the region. A couple of extra acclimatization days ensure a relaxed and enjoyable pace.

There is plenty of excitement from the outset, with our mountain flight from Kathmandu to Lukla, offering extensive views of the entire Nepalese Himalaya. We follow the Dudh Kosi River to Namche, the ancient Tibetan trading settlement and Sherpa 'Capital'. There is plenty of time to acclimatize and explore the beautiful Thame valley and the villages of Khunde and Khumjung where Sir Edmund Hillary established his first school. Entering the broad, arid Gokyo Valley we continue to follow the Dudh Kosi and reach Gokyo Village well acclimatized. This is vital as we then have the option of ascending of Gokyo Ri (5360m) and the Renjo La, with arguably the best views of Everest to be had from anywhere in the Khumbu. Crossing the snow covered Cho La brings us to the main Everest Valley and we trek to historic Everest Base Camp, the dream for many dedicated trekkers. There is also the option to ascend Kala Patar (5550m), the popular walking summit which is the closest vantage point to Sagarmatha, the original Sherpa name for Everest. Descending from Gorak Shep, the 'original base camp' our trip is far from over as we head down to Tengboche and take an optional trek on the quiet trails to Ama Dablam Base Camp, one of the Himalayas most beautiful mountains.

High above the Imja Khola we follow airy trails back through Namche retracing our steps to Lukla. We stay in a mountain lodge and say farewell to our trekking crew with a traditional meal and a jug or two of 'chang' the local beer. Our return flight to Kathmandu requires a breathtaking take off, and we allow a spare day just in case of poor weather and a possible delay. Back in Kathmandu there is time for some bargain hunting or further exploration of the many fascinating shrines and temples in the Kathmandu Valley, before our final meal together in one of the city's finest restaurants.

Itinerary

Day 1: Group arrival and briefing in Kathmandu (1300m) – Hotel.

On arrival at Tribhuvan International airport on the outskirts of Kathmandu, you will be met and escorted to our Hotel in the heart of this vibrant city. We will get together this evening and enjoy our first meal together as a group, where there will be plenty of opportunity to discuss the finer details of our Himalayan journey.

Day 2: Sightseeing and 'fine tuning' in Kathmandu (1300m) – Hotel.

This morning we take an expertly guided tour of some of the most fascinating sacred sites in the Kathmandu Valley. The great Buddhist temple of Swyambunath, and the most important Hindu temple and cremation site of Pashupatinath are an eye opening introduction to the complex cultural traditions of Kathmandu. We take a leisurely lunch in the 'tranquil gardens of 'Mike's Breakfast' and spend the afternoon exploring the vibrant heart of Kathmandu on foot. There is the opportunity for last minute shopping and equipment checks before we head out on trek. This evening we can relax in one of the City's finest restaurants, maybe even indulging a night cap at the expeditions favorite, Sam's Bar.

Day 3: Mountain flight to Lukla (2840m) and trek to Phakding (2610m) – Camp.

An early morning start as we take our exciting 40 minute mountain flight from Kathmandu to the mountain side airstrip at Lukla. Here we meet our trekking crew and organize loads for our porters to carry. Once sorted we start our trek with a gentle few hours walking, high above the Dudh Khosi River to our first nights camp beside the glacial waters at Phakding.

Day 4: Trek to Namche (3440m) – Camp.

We follow the Dudh Khosi, passing through several Sherpa villages, before a final steep climb brings us to the Sherpa trading centre of Namche Bazaar. Here we stay for two nights to explore this ancient settlement and its surroundings. This is also an excellent opportunity to give ourselves time to acclimatize to our new altitude.

Day 5: Exploration around Namche (3440m) – Camp.

There are numerous opportunities for full and half day hikes, museum visits and even shopping! We may explore the Sherpa villages of Khunde and Khumjung or take a longer walk up the beautiful Thame Valley, home to many of the world's greatest climbers and a stunning Tibetan Buddhist Monastery.

Day 6: Trek via Khunde and Khumjung to Kyangjuma (3550m) – Camp.

We leave Namche this morning and make a very relaxed pace through Khunde and Khumjung on our way to the stunning settlement of Kyangjuma. Today we may have our first panoramic views of Mount Everest.

Day 7: Enter the Gokyo Valley and trek to Dole (4050m) – Camp.

We continue gaining altitude as we cross the small pass of Mon La (3900m) and enter the Gokyo Valley. We will continue to climb up the Gokyo Valley for the next couple of days and tonight make camp at Dole.

Day 8: Trek to Machermo (4410m) – Camp.

Continuing up the Gokyo Valley we pass through forested areas and eventually pass through the tree line to open fields and several small settlements en-route to Machermo.

Day 9: Exploration day at Machermo (4410m) – Camp.

To help with our acclimatization we spend two nights at our camp in Machermo. Following the mountaineers principal of 'climb high, sleep low', we may take a stunning walk up the ridge behind Machermo to magnificent views of Mount Everest and Makalu, the world's fifth highest mountain. We return to Machermo for lunch and a leisurely afternoon exploring our surroundings.

Day 10: Trek to Gokyo Village (4800m) – Camp.

We continue our gradual ascent of the Gokyo Valley and pass by two of the five cobalt blue Gokyo Lakes. Ahead of us, framed at the head of the valley, lays Cho Oyu (8201m), the sixth highest mountain on earth. We are amongst the true, Himalayan giants and many people hold the Gokyo Valley as a major highlight of their Everest Trek. We make camp beside the third lake at Gokyo Village.

Day 11: Exploration walks to Renjo La (5345m) and Gokyo Ri (5360m) – Camp.

Gokyo Village provides an ideal 'base camp' for some of our most spectacular walks and awesome views of Mount Everest. Spending a full day here to explore and continue our acclimatization we may head up to the Renjo La (5345m) or take a sunset walk up the slopes of Gokyo Ri, with fingers crossed for clear weather and some of the grandest Himalayan views of our trek so far.

Day 12: Trek to the base of the Cho La (4700m) – Camp.

Leaving Gokyo this morning, we briefly retrace our step before crossing the rock strewn Ngozumba Glacier. Continuing up a side valley to the base of the snow covered pass, we make camp for an early pass crossing tomorrow.

Day 13: Cross the Cho La (5330m) to Dzongla (4830m) – Camp.

A slightly longer day as we cross the snow covered Cho La Pass. Although a non-technical crossing we may well require our crampons and a walking stick or ice axe for support. There are magnificent panoramic views as we pass by and up close to the mountain architecture which makes the Everest region a sanctuary for mountain travelers. We descend to yak grazing pastures and a small tea house at Dzongla, where we will make our camp, surrounded by snow capped Himalayan giants.

Day 14: Trek to Gorak Shep, the original Everest Base Camp (5140m) – Camp.

We descend to Lobuche village on the main Everest trail and continue on a rocky path to Gorak Shep, the base camp used by the original Everest reconnaissance expeditions in the 1930's.

Day 15: Trek to Everest Base Camp (5364m) & Kala Patar (5550m). Trek to Lobuche (4910m) – Camp.

There are several options today as we trek to Everest Base Camp or make an ascent of the view point above our camp at Kala Patar. Following our exploration of this amphitheatre of the world's highest mountains we descend to camp at the slightly warmer settlement of Lobuche.

Day 16: Trek below Tengboche Monastery to Deboche (3710m) – Camp.

The first real downhill day of our trip, we descend the main Khumbu Valley and following the Imja Khola, pass through the tree line to the green surroundings and tea houses of Deboche.

Day 17: Optional trek to Ama Dablam Base Camp or Tengboche Monastery (3710m) – Camp.

Another highlight of the Wilderness Trekking itinerary is our extra day for exploration around Deboche. Many people consider Ama Dablam (6812m) to be the jewel in the crown of Himalayan peaks, and following an expedition to Ama Dablam in 2007 we decided to include an optional walk to the base camp of this stunning mountain. Few trekkers venture up this beautiful side trail where base camp is situated directly below the awesome West face. We return to our camp at Deboche.

Day 18: Trek to Monjo (2835m) – Camp.

A short hike uphill from camp brings us to Tengboche Monastery, the spiritual home of the Sherpa's. Situated on a ridge top, with views of Everest and Lhotse, it is easy to understand why Tengboche was chosen as a place of spiritual significance. We take time to explore the monastery and absorb the majesty of our surroundings before continuing our descent and short climb to Namche. The trail continues downward as we head to the small settlement of Monjo and our camp for the night.

Day 19: Trek to Lukla (2840m) – Lodge.

On the return to Lukla we retrace our steps beside the Dudh Khosi and with a final short climb to the airstrip we finish our incredible journey with a farewell party for our staff and a big thank to all our porters, cooks and guides. Tonight we will stay in one of the many lodges in preparation for tomorrow's early morning flight to Kathmandu.

Day 20: Return flight to Kathmandu (1300m) – Hotel.

We take a dramatic, early morning flight to Kathmandu. Our final views of the snow capped mountains of the Khumbu are followed by an exciting route over terraced ridgelines and a birdseye view of the Kathmandu Valley. In the unlikely event of poor weather delaying our flight, we do have a contingency day built into our itinerary. On our arrival in Kathmandu we will be met and transferred to our hotel where the afternoon is free to enjoy the luxuries of a shower and the many cafes and restaurants.

Day 21: Exploration of the Kathmandu Valley and farewell dinner (1300m) – Hotel.

There are endless possibilities for exploration and relaxation in the Kathmandu Valley. A visit to the ancient Durbar or central squares of Patan and Bhaktapur are architecturally fascinating and the shopping possibilities are endless. The day is free to spend entirely as you wish and there is plenty of advice available to help you make the most of your final day in the Capital. Tonight we will share our final meal together in one of Kathmandu's finest restaurants.

Day 22: Group departure.

Farewells, as we pack our bags and are escorted to Tribhuvan International Airport for our homeward journey.