

Everest Base Camp Trek and High Passes of the Khumbu

Itinerary in full:

Day 1: Kathmandu

Transfer day, briefing and welcome dinner in Kathmandu. Will be staying near Thamel, the main tourist section of town, to allow you to shop without having to take a taxi.

Day 2: Kathmandu

Sightseeing for half day, visiting Swayambhunath, Bouddhanath, and Pashupatinath, a Hindu temple. These temples are in all the 'cliches' of Nepal. They are a must. Pashupatinath is amazing, as Hindus perform cremations along the banks of the sacred river. In November, the skies are generally clear and the views from Monkey Temple are stunning.

Day 03: Kathmandu – Lukla – Monjo

Flight from Kathmandu to Lukla with amazing views of the Himalaya range. The flight will take approx. 45 minutes. We will have some time to explore Lukla, then we will start our trek to Monjo. Walking time 4 hours, 400 vertical meters.

Day 04: Monjo – Namche Bazaar

Trek to famous Namche Bazaar (3'440m/11'300ft), the starting point of all Everest expeditions on the Nepali side. Above this colourful village, you will get your first glimpses of Mount Everest, Lhotse and Ama Dablam. If we have time, we will visit the Sherpa Museum. Walking time: 4 hours, 450 vertical meters.

Day 05: Namche Bazaar – Kumjung – Namche Bazaar

Day hike to Kumjung. This is where many of the world's best known Sherpas are from. Sir Edmund Hillary built his first school here, which can still be visited today. 440 vertical meters. The night will be spent again in Namche Bazaar

Day 06: Namche Bazaar - Thame

Today we hike to Thame, the twin city of Kumjung. We will have ample time to visit the monastery in the afternoon. 450 vertical meters.

Day 07: Thame – Arye

From Thame we head due north towards the Nangpa La and the tiny hamlet of Arye. Arye is nothing more than two lodges which serve as a staging area for the Tibetan traders and the occasional trekker intrepid enough to venture this far. This valley has been newly opened by the government of Nepal and has seen very few trekkers except for the last four years.

Day 08: Day-hike to Dzibko

Our day trip towards the Nangpa La will be a fairly easy walk as we gain little altitude. The trail is well worn but quite rough, as hundreds of years of trading have kept the path in good condition. At these altitudes, snow showers are frequent but if the skies are clear, Cho Oyo's south dominates the vistas. Nangpa Gopsum (7352m), first climbed in 2006 by a Japanese Nepali team, is also an incredible wall of ice and rock guarding the entrance to the Nangpa La. We will then return back to Arye for the night.

Day 09: Arye – Renjo Pass - Gokyo

Our day begins early, as we will depart just after sun up. The first two hours are spent negotiating a series of boulders and gullies as we work our way up towards an initial plateau with the benefit of a proper trail. We climb steeply to the first of two lakes where we join the main path coming from Lungare. Once above the first lake, the path becomes a well-traveled flagstone trail with steps leading all the way up to the 5465 meter Renjo Pass.

The trail down from the Renjo passes a large lake and a first campsite. We will continue past this site and work our way down to the tiny hamlet of Gokyo and its stunningly blue holy lake. 1000 vertical meters. Steep trails but stunning views out towards the Tibetan ranges. Overnight in Gokyo.

Day 10: Day-hike Gokyo Ri

Leaving early the following morning, we head up to Gokyo Ri where views out to Cho Oyo and the surrounding peaks are outstanding. We then return via the same track spending a second night in Gokyo. 600 vertical meters to vantage point.

Day 11: Gokyo - Dragnag

A late morning departure along the Tsho Lake and then along the lateral moraine of the Ngozumpa Glacier before eventually crossing it in order to reach the hamlet of Dragnag. The trail to Dragnag is not easy as we negotiate a living glacier with several crevasses, which we need to avoid. The trail is slippery at times, as we will be walking on gravel melted into the ice. After less than three hours, we should reach our lodge in Dragnag and an afternoon of leisure as we rest up for our long a difficult hike over th Cho La the following morning.

Day 12: Dragnag - Dzongla

A fairly arduous hikes awaits us as we leave just after sunup in order to take advantage of the normally clear mornings. Hiking up a frozen gorge, we access a large plateau where wild grouse are often found in large numbers. We cover quite a bit of ground before setting out for the final climb of the day and the ascent of the Cho La. The path is often snow covered and is in the shade until about midday. We will have one very steep section of about 150 meters, which we may equip with a fixed rope depending on the conditions. From the Cho La, many unclimbed peaks surround us as we traverse a short section of glacier before heading down steeply to the hamlet of Dzongla where the mighty Jobo Lhaptshan stands sentinel. Overnight here and a much need rest

Day 13: Dzongla - Lobuche

Another early start in order to take advantage of clear skies and the dramatic views of Ama Dablam which will be seen to our right as we climb to Lobuche.

Lobuche is a cluster of lodges seemingly microscopic in comparison to the many peaks well over 7000 meters, not to mention the giants such as Nuptse, Lhotse and Mount Everest. Our lodge sits at 5000 meters, a very uncomfortable altitude for several reasons. The cold will be biting, which may make it difficult to recover from our efforts and the high altitude will affect some more than others. Lots of fluids and a slow pace around the camp will normally be sufficient in order to acclimatize for the next few days of hiking.

Day 14: Lobuche – Kala Patar or Gorak Shep

A late start will allow the sun to warm us as we ascend towards Gorak Shep and our ascent of Kala Patar. Depending on how the group feels, we can either head straight to Kala Patar or spend the night in Gorak Shep. Gorak Shep is surrounded by some of the world's highest and most stunning peaks. One of the most beautiful is Pumori, which dominates the views to the northwest. For those feeling strong, there are several short day walks wround Gorak Shep but it is best to avoid too much exercise and simply take in the views from the warmth of the lodge.

Day 15: Kala Patar

Early the following morning we will depart for Kala Patar and sunrise on Mount Everest. Kala Patar is dwarfed by Pumori, Everest and its many satellite summits. This vantage point is unique as there are few areas where so many 8000 meter peaks can be seen from such a short distance. Depending on the weather and temperatures, we will spend about an hour on the top of Kala Patar.

Day 16: Everest Base Camp

With very little vertical gain (200 meters) this hike is relatively arduous as the trail winds along the moraine of the Khumbu Glacier. Reaching base camp is the dream of most trekkers today. With a bit of stamina and willpower, it is within reach of most hikers. A pack lunch at BC and a descent all the way to Lobuche for the night. We will welcome an early night and a good meal as tomorrow's ascent will be the most taxing of the trip.

Day 17: Lobuche to Kongma La

Departing Lobuche before sunrise, our trail will follow a series of cairns as we try and find the easiest way up the pass. Steep, rocky and certainly covered in snow, the walk will test the most experienced trekker. The reward is beyond description and the view probably the best of the trip.

From the pass, we have the best panoramic views of the trip, with Nuptse just above us to the northeast, and further east Makalu I and Makalu II followed by Ama Dablam. To the west, the mountains of Tibet form a formidable border. The hike down is steep and the trail of poor quality.

Overnight to the stunningly placed village of Chhukung at the foot of Ama Dablam. The most difficult hiking is behind us as we return to the relative luxury of lower altitudes and warmer temperatures. 700 vertical meters.

Day 18: Chhukung - Pangboche.

A long day but mostly downhill. Our hike today takes us to the heart of the Sherpa culture as we pass cultivated fields of barley and potatoes. Yaks and naks are a familiar sight as we descend to Pangboche for the night.

Day 19: Pangboche - Namche Bazaar

Here there is an option to extend the trip and hike to Thame, then to Thengpo and to eventually climb Parchamo at 6273 meters. This is a non-technical climb requiring some previous crampon experience. Please refer to our Parchamo climbing extension for full details. For those of you descending, Namche Bazaar will be a welcome sight as chocolate cake and a hot shower await us. Overnight in Namche Bazaar.

Day 20: Namche Bazaar - Lukla.

Now that we are all fit, this walk down will feel like a stroll. Overnight in Lukla and early morning flight the next day for Katmandu.

Day 21: Lukla - Kathmandu

Early morning flight to Katmandu. Afternoon sightseeing or free time.

Day 22: Kathmandu

Sight-seeing or free day

Day 23: Departure day

Transfer to Katmandu International Airport and flight back to your home country.