

CLIMBING CLUB: EVEREST BASE CAMP VIA GOKYO Autumn 2011

Grade: Demanding / Strenuous 
Land-only duration: 22 days Kathmandu - Kathmandu
Trekking days: 17 days
Maximum altitude: 5623m



En route to Everest Base Camp (Ann Foulkes)



Our trip takes in the all the best parts of trip to the Everest region: Kala Patar, Everest Base Camp, the Cho La Pass, the turquoise holy lakes at Gokyo and the sublime view of Everest and a host of other Khumbu peaks from the summit of Gokyo Ri across the Ngozumpa glacier. We spend time acclimatising on our ascent via the Gokyo valley, which is much quieter than our descent which is down the Khumbu valley.



Yak in front of the Khumbu Ice Fall, Everest Base Camp (Ann Foulkes)

Important Note: Whilst we expect that the trek will run as per the itinerary, participants should accept that there is a possibility of changes being necessary subject to local conditions.

If this itinerary is run alongside the Peaks and Passes itinerary, the direction of this itinerary will be reversed, ie ascend via the Khumbu, descend via the Gokyo valleys.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

Walking and journey times are approximate

- Day 1 Arrive Kathmandu:**
Transfer to hotel. Rest of the day free.
- Day 2 Free day in Kathmandu**
Explore the fascinating city of Kathmandu, with its temples and markets, or take an optional excursion into the Kathmandu Valley (can be booked locally through our Nepal office).
- Day 3 Fly to Lukla, trek to Phakding 2600m (3 hours trekking)**
An early start for the spectacular mountain flight to the tiny airstrip at Lukla (2827m). Here we meet with our porters and begin the trek with a short walk to Phakding (2600m) where we camp for the night.
- Day 4 Phakding - Namche Bazaar 3440m (5 hours)**
After a flat walk along the Dudh Kosi river we climb steeply to Namche Bazaar (3440m), the most important Sherpa town and a former trading centre with Tibet.
- Day 5 Namche Bazaar acclimatisation day**
We have two days of acclimatisation at Namche. Namche Bazaar is well worth exploring, with its Buddhist monastery, Sherpa museum and distant views of Everest. For better acclimatisation it is recommended that you do the half-day walk to the Everest View Hotel.
- Day 6 Namche Bazaar acclimatisation day**
Today the climbing and the trekking groups part company. This is our second acclimatisation day. Namche Bazaar is well worth exploring, with its Buddhist monastery and distant views of Everest. A walk to one of the nearby villages such as Thame would be a good acclimatisation programme today.
- Day 7 Namche Bazaar – Kangjuma 3620m via Khumjung and Khunde**
Our interesting walk to the villages of Khumjung and Khunde has been added into our route to further aid acclimatisation, which will be invaluable later on in the trek before we ascend above 4000m. There are spectacular views of Ama Dablam to be had from Kangjuma.
- Day 8 Kangjuma - Dole 4040m (3½ - 4½ hours)**
Soon after Kangjuma the path splits. The path to the right leads up the main trail to Everest Base Camp via the Khumbu Valley. We take the much quieter left-hand trail to the Gokyo Valley. Himalayan tahr and musk deer can sometimes be seen on this part of the route if you are lucky. We follow through rhododendron and birch forest up the left-hand side of the Dudh Kosi Valley heading towards Dole which is 1-2 hours walk from the old check post at 3680m. The hill behind Dole is a good vantage point for sunset views of 6685m Kangtega and 6608m Thamserku.
- Day 9 Dole - Machermo 4410m (3½ - 4 hours)**
Another short day of walking, though it is necessary to stop here to restrict our rate of ascent. It is very important to ensure that we stick to the guidelines for ascent to enable us to acclimatise properly.
- Day 10 Machermo acclimatisation day**
We have an acclimatisation day and a local walk on the ridge behind Machermo with fantastic views of the surrounding peaks. This will enable us to gain height during the day, returning to spend a second night at the same altitude. This is a very important aspect of our trek and will undoubtedly assist with the success, as well as with our enjoyment of it. Community Action Nepal, our sister charity, has supported the building of 3 porter shelters on this trek. The first of these is here at Machermo, and today would be a present a good chance to see this shelter for ourselves.
- Day 11 Machermo - Gokyo 4790m (4hours)**
Our route today takes us further up the Gokyo Valley, to the first of the sacred lakes and past the path we will take later which leads to the ascent route for the Cho La. Continuing on up the valley we come across the second and third sacred lakes, marked by small piles of stones. The village of Gokyo is by the third lake, Dudh Pokhari, and we can see Gokyo Ri to the north of this lake. There are a couple of tea houses here, and CAN's newest porter shelter is being built here. These shelters provide vital shelter for all porters, regardless of the company they are working for. We can appreciate just how important good quality shelter is when we are at 4790m.
- Day 12 Contingency / extra acclimatisation day**
A spare day in case of bad weather or the need for extra acclimatisation. If this day is not needed on the ascent, we can use it to walk further up the Gokyo Valley to the 5000m "Scoundrels' View" of Everest by the 5th lake at Ngozumpa Tsho.
- Day 13 Gokyo Ri 5340m – Dragnag 4700m (5 hours)**
We can start today with an ascent of Gokyo Ri if we didn't climb it yesterday. Depending on your acclimatisation and your confidence on rougher ground, the ascent typically takes around 2 hours, with the descent around half that time. Gokyo Ri offers a fantastic view of Everest and countless Khumbu peaks, and many consider the view from here to surpass the view from Kala Pattar even though Kala Pattar is much nearer to Everest. Returning to Gokyo, we descend the Gokyo valley and

across the Ngozumpa Glacier to Dragnag where we overnight (walk around 2 hours). While crossing the glacier the route is not very obvious. Being a glacier, it is important to follow the sherpas carefully along the cairned route.



From Gokyo Ri (Ann Foulkes)

Day 14 Dragnag – Dzongla 4850m via Cho La 5420m

The Cho La is a steep ascent, and can appear to be rather intimidating when you are at the foot of the pass. The pass can change in nature quite a lot – sometimes it is too snowy to cross, sometimes icy and sometimes without any snow or ice. If the descent is icy an ice axe is a helpful tool. If there is too much snow to cross the pass, or if people are finding the going rather tough there is the option of retracing our steps back down the Gokyo valley and ascending the Khumbu valley from Phortse. There is limited accommodation at Dzongla, so it might be necessary to continue on to Lobuche. This additional trek can take 2-3 hours. Today is a long and tiring day, but the length of the day is very dependent on the strength of the group.



Setting off to cross the Cho La (Ann Foulkes)

Day 15 Dzongla – Lobuche (4-5 hours))

From Dzongla we skirt round on the path above Dughla, with 6119m Lobuche East and 5245m Awi Peak on our left, and 5806m Pokalde opposite us as we join the main Khumbu valley. We stay in Lobuche, where there can be spectacular sunset views of Nuptse.

Day 16 Lobuche - Gorak Shep (option to Kala Pattar) (4 + 3 hours))

The trail gets rougher above Lobuche as we traverse the Khumbu glacier debris where an adjoining glacier flows down from Changri La. Our lunch and overnight stop is at Gorak Shep (5100m).

If the weather is clear in the afternoon there will be chance to ascend Kala Pattar (5623m) which is a steady, but not technically difficult climb. From its summit we may enjoy uninterrupted views of Everest's black south west face, seemingly dwarfed by its neighbouring giants Nuptse & Lhotse. The Khumbu's tortured ice field stretches away to the south in an unbroken panorama of snowcapped mountains.

Whilst at Gorak Shep you may like to explore the Community Action Nepal porter shelter at Gorak Shep, built to give protection to all porters using this camp, and from where there are spectacular views of Everest.

Day 17 Gorak Shep - Everest Base Camp – Gorak Shep (7-8 hours)

Today we visit the modern-day Everest Base Camp location. The Khumbu ice fall dominates above the part of the glacier that expeditions use for their Base Camps, and trekkers in the spring may well see the climbing expeditions camped here. We return to our camp at Gorak Shep, the site of the old Base Camp.

Day 18 Gorak Shep - Kala Pattar – Dingboche (or Pheriche) (7-8 hours)

After retracing our steps along the glacial moraine to Lobuche, we descend the Imja Khola Valley to the village of Dingboche, (4350m). Alternatively we can stay at nearby Pheriche (4280m).

Day 19 Dingboche - Kangjuma

A delightful day of easy walking is ahead of us as we cross first yak meadows and descend into the alpine zone. We continue our descent of the Khumbu passing through Deboche (3757m) and Pangboche with its 300 year old monastery containing wall paintings and Tibetan manuscripts. It is a climb up to Thyangboche Monastery in a magical setting that commands impressive views of shapely Ama Dablam. Dropping down from Thyangboche we traverse along pine-wooded paths to reach Kangjuma.

Day 20 Kangjuma – Monjo

From the lovely spot at Kangjuma we return along the easy Balcony Path to Namche Bazaar. From here the deep valley of the Dudh Khosi drops away as we retrace our steps to

Monjo where we camp for the night, and where we should meet up with the other group

Day 21 Monjo to Lukla

The last day of trekking is undulating, and the sting in the tail is the final pull up to Lukla where we will stay in a tea house for our final night in the Khumbu. We will no doubt pass fresh-faced trekkers just embarking on their trip.

Day 22 Fly Lukla to Kathmandu

Weather permitting we will fly to Kathmandu, where there should be time to do a little shopping in Kathmandu during the afternoon, or to relax by the hotel pool.

Days 23 & 24 Free in Kathmandu

Time to enjoy a well-earned rest after your trek. We have allowed a buffer after the trek as

flights between Kathmandu and Lukla are sometimes subject to cancellation due to weather conditions.

There is time today to shop for crafts or explore the city. Kathmandu is a great place to buy presents! Perhaps you would like to take the scenic Everest mountain flight (book through our Nepal office).

There is also the possibility of spending a couple of days on one of our Himalayan extensions – perhaps visiting the wider Kathmandu valley, or going to Pokhara or Chitwan National Park, or alternatively a white water rafting might be more your style.

Day 25 Depart Nepal

Transfer to Kathmandu airport.

The Price Includes:

- All transfers between Kathmandu airport & hotel accommodation
- Internal return flights between Kathmandu and Lukla
- 6 nights hotel accommodation on a B&B basis in Kathmandu
- National Park permit and TIM
- All meals and lodge accommodation during trek
- Services of a local leader (sirdar), sherpa guides & porters (15kg per trekker)

Not Included:

- International flights
- Lunches and dinners in Kathmandu
- Nepalese visa (currently £35 for 30 days)
- Travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature eg drinks, laundry, phone, souvenirs
- Tips
- During trek: drinking water, extra drinks, bar/telephone bills, extra baggage for porter (more than 15kg), sleeping bag etc.

Options:

- Extra nights are available in Kathmandu in our group hotel, and in Pokhara in our choice of accommodation.
- Extension packages can also be organized in Nepal, Tibet or Bhutan. Please refer to our Himalayan extensions dossier for more details. Extensions should be arranged to booking international flights.

Last updated 24/12/2010 AF