



## **Island Peak and Everest Base Camp Trek Itinerary**

### **Itinerary Details:**

#### **Flexibility**

In order to provide the best customer service, itineraries may be changed or amended to suite the desires of participants. These changes can be made if all group members agree to them, and if it does not negatively affect your staffs' commitments to family or work. If you decide you would like to customize your trip, there may be additional costs for added days or new areas visited. Trips may also be changed by your guide in the event your planned itinerary is unsafe or is no longer possible due to circumstances. Please remain flexible, and we will do our best to ensure your trip is all you hoped it would be.

Generally, we do not recommend making changes that result in shortening an itinerary since this can result in losing extra summit days, and thus reduce your chances of summiting. Shortening may also result in losing spare weather days for cancelled flights, which could result in you missing your international flight home. Lastly, it may require ascending faster, which can increase your chances of altitude illness. It is possible to add side-trips, extensions, or reverse the direction of some itineraries. Please enquire if you wish to do so.

#### **Delays**

If you are delayed in departing on your trek or climb due to reasons beyond the control of Nepal Alpine Guides, such as delayed or cancelled internal flights due to bad weather, your group can use spare weather days that are built into your itinerary. During these days the cost of your lodging in Kathmandu or Pokhara is covered. If these days occur while you are trekking, then the cost of both your lodging and meals are covered. If the delay extends beyond the number of built-in weather days in your itinerary, you are responsible for your expenses during these extra waiting days. If the period of waiting is so long that it affects your ability to complete the original itinerary, Nepal Alpine Guides will provide an alternative trip for the remaining days, or you may complete part of your original itinerary. If you decide not to participate in the alternative trip, Nepal Alpine Guides is unable to provide a refund.

If you do not use your spare weather days during the trip, you are entitled to a 2800 NPR reimbursement for each unused spare weather day, unless you have used this credit for meals, side-trips, lodging, or other expenses.

If you are delayed in returning to Kathmandu from your climb or trek for reasons beyond the control of Nepal Alpine Guides, such as delayed or cancelled flights, sickness, or injury you are responsible for any expenses associated with extra days. Generally this amounts to between \$30 and \$40 USD/day. If your staff is also required to be with you during this time, then you will be responsible for their expenses as well. This may happen if staff members are assisting in evacuating you due to illness or injury or if you decide to stay at a climbing base camp for extra days until weather clears

for a summit bid. If needed, it is possible to hire a helicopter to provide transport to Kathmandu from many mountain locations. The cost is between \$5,000 and \$6,000 USD, and can be split four or five ways.

## **Meals**

We purposefully do not include the cost of food during your time in Kathmandu before and after your trek/climb (your hotel is included). This allows you to pick your own restaurants and eat according to your own budget and tastes. Most trip participants appreciate this flexibility. Meals in Kathmandu cost between \$2 USD and \$15 USD unless you are eating at the most expensive establishments. On the trek, you have a food budget of 2,800 NPR/day. If you wish to spend more, you can contribute to the bill to account for the difference. You can choose items you like from the menus of lodges along your trek, including tea/coffee/boiled water. Alcohol, bottled beverages including bottled water, and snacks are not included in the cost of your trip, and are not accounted for in the 2,800 NPR budget. For water, we encourage you to use your own filter to collect drinking water from local taps in order to conserve wood which is used to boil water for drinking.

## **Itinerary**

### **Day 1**

Arrival in Kathmandu

4,800 ft.

No Trekking

Lodging Included: Hotel

Meals Included: No meals included

Arrive from international destinations. If possible, schedule your arrival for one or two days prior to the start-date of your trip. This will allow you some time to recover from jetlag, and will give you extra time in the event your flight is delayed or cancelled coming into Kathmandu. These extra days are not covered in the cost of your trip. We would be happy to book you a hotel during these extra days if you like. If you cannot arrive on an earlier day, try to schedule your arrival for *before 4pm* on the start-date of your trip. After arriving, we will have dinner at a local restaurant and get some rest in the hotel. Meet in the hotel lobby at 6pm. The hotel information will be sent to you after booking.

### **Day 2**

Preparation in Kathmandu

4,800 ft.

No Trekking

Lodging Included: Hotel

Meals Included: No meals included

In the morning there is an optional visit to Swayambu Temple (monkey temple), which rests high on a hill to the Northwest. On a clear day you can see the white crested ridges of the Langtang Himal. The temple is known for the droves of Reeses monkeys that occupy the stairs on the way to the shrines on the platform above. For those interested in taking part in this excursion, we will depart from our hotel at 6am. Everyone else can sleep-in. After breakfast at 10am, we will have a trip briefing and gear check. We will need your passports and a passport photo at this time so we can obtain our peak permits. Following the gear check we will have time to shop for missing items. Lunch is on your own. We will have a group dinner at 6pm. Upon returning from dinner, pack your bags for an early morning flight to Lukla tomorrow. We may wait in the airport for several hours, so bring a book to read and some snacks. In the event our flight is cancelled due to bad weather, we will

fly the following day. Your itinerary includes extra days in case of such events, which are common even during the most stable seasons.

### **Day 3**

Fly to Everest Region, Trek to Phakding

8,563 ft.

3 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Lunch, Dinner

This morning we take a shuttle to the airport for our flight to Lukla- the gateway to Everest Region (called Solukhumbu). Because this is a mountain flight on a small aircraft, weather delays are common. It is possible that we could wait as long as 8 hours before our flight is ready to depart, or our flight may be cancelled. We have extra days in our itinerary to account for this possibility. Be prepared by bringing a book and snacks. The flight is less than 45 minutes long. We may have turbulence, so if you get motion sickness remember to take motion sickness medication 30 minutes before we board. If we arrive in Lukla late in the day we will stay for the night. Otherwise we will walk gradually downhill for three hours to Phakding.

### **Day 4**

Phakding to Namche Bazaar

11,286 ft.

5 to 7 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today will be the first strenuous day of hiking. It is important we get an early start in order to give ourselves ample time to acclimatize by walking slowly. Walking through rhododendron and giant fir along the Dudh Kosi River we cross two suspension bridges and slowly ascend past the village of Monjo to a checkpoint at Jorsale where our permits to enter Sagarmatha (Everest) National Park will be checked. We catch a glimpse of 20,889 ft. Kusum Kanguru, and begin a steeper ascent up a ridge toward Namche Bazaar. High on the ridge we get our first view of Everest in the far distance. Finally, we arrive in the large settlement of Namche Bazaar, sometimes called the Sherpa capitol of the Khumbu. Despite having no roads, Namche has dozens of lodges, several internet cafes, bakeries, and even brand-name outdoor equipment shops.

### **Day 5**

Acclimatization Day in Namche Bazaar

11,286 ft.

4 to 7 hr. day hike

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After sleeping-in and eating breakfast, we leave our heavy packs behind and take a stroll uphill to the Everest View Hotel. The area around this Japanese hotel offers some of the most spectacular distant views of Everest, Lhotse, and spire-like AmaDablam. After a short rest and tea, we continue to the village of Khumjung (12,401 ft.), home of Tenzing Norgay who climbed Everest with Hillary in 1953. After the historic ascent, Hillary returned frequently to the Khumbu to build schools and medical clinics. We visit the Hillary School and Khunde Hillary Hospital before descending back to Namche for dinner. Alternatively, we may visit the Tenzing-Hillary View Point to the Northwest of town. From this ridge, you can see a panorama of 6,000 meter peaks across the Everest Region, eastern Rowaling Region, and even into Tibet.

### **Day 6**

Namche Bazaar to Deboche  
12,956 ft.  
6 hrs. trekking  
Lodging included: Lodge  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

A gradual traverse across a hillside gives excellent views of AmaDablam, Lhotse, and the summit of Everest. A long downhill leads to a good lunch spot, then a gradual but sustained uphill to Tengboche and its famous Gumpa (monastery). The ancient monastery is backed by the sacred mountain Khumbila, a craggy peak that has never been climbed. If the Lama is available, we may take part in a *puja*, which is a blessing ceremony to ward-off evil spirits in Tibetan Buddhism. If you take part you may be asked to make a donation of around 500 NPR to the monastery. Another 45 minutes with a short down-hill leads to the small settlement of Deboche. There are only three small places to stay. It is in a beautiful rhododendron grove that stays quite damp, so it can be chilly at night.

### **Day 7**

Deboche to Dingboche  
14,469 ft.  
4 hrs. trekking  
Lodging: Lodge  
Meals Included: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Excellent views of AmaDablam and Kangtega, with its small summit spire motivate us to slowly move higher. We are finally reaching the alpine zone, where soil is dry and sandy, and the trees are few and stunted. A park-like atmosphere offers good views of Lhotse and Tabuche peak which almost seems to lean over town to the West. And at last we can see our climbing objective, Island Peak, to the Northeast. Dingboche is a large settlement by Himalayan standards, with small shops, internet, bakeries, and cafes.

### **Day 8**

Dingboche to Chhukhung  
15,518 ft.  
3.5 hrs. trekking  
Lodging Included: Lodge  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

A gradual ascent to Chhukhung along the banks of the Imja Khola (river) offers more excellent views of Lhotse and adjacent peaks, while the awe-inspiring knife-edge northeast ridge of granitic AmaDablam razors skyward to the South. Nuptse, a 25,790 ft. peak in the Everest Group, spills its glaciers down the valley to the north before the small village of Chhukung comes into view. Once we settle into our rooms we will practice using jumars (ascenders) to attach to a fixed-line. We will also practice rappelling. We will need to master both of these skills before we ascend Island Peak.

### **Day 9**

Acclimatization Day in Chhukhung  
15,518 ft.  
5 to 7 hr. acclimatization hike  
Lodging Included: Lodge  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After a leisurely breakfast we begin our stroll up Chhukhung Ri (18,208 ft.), a large hill to the north of our lodge. It is important to walk slowly in order to ease our acclimatization. It will take between three and five hours to reach the rocky summit almost three thousand feet above us, and two or three hours to descend. Above us is the South Face of Lhotse, one of the most difficult and dangerous alpine climbs in the Himalaya which has left more dead than successful. From the summit ridge, we

can see incredible views of the granitic south face of Makalu, the fifth highest peak in the world at 27,766 ft., as well as Island Peak, Imja Tso (lake), Nuptse, Lhotse, and Pumori. In the afternoon we will cover any skills we were not able to cover yesterday, such as how to properly fit your crampons to your boots, or how to use your ice axe for balance while climbing steep terrain.

### **Day 10**

Chhukung to Island Peak Base Camp

16,689 ft.

3 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Camping (tent provided)

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

We are not gaining much elevation today, but like yesterday, it is important to move slowly in order to keep our heart rates low and speed acclimatization. Thankfully, the scenery will slow you down. The cascading Hunku Nup Glacier can be seen to the south, flowing down from a continuous ridge of snowcapped peaks above 6,000 meters. AmaDablam still dominates the skyline to the southwest, while to the north Island Peak itself stands like a fortress as it protrudes above Lhotse's south ridge. Himalayan Blood Pheasants, named such due to their blood-red plumage, frequent base camp in search of scraps of food left behind by climbers. Unless your appetite is high, eat only a small amount of food at a time while you are at base camp, but eat frequently. Your goal should be to eat *at least* 2,000 calories today, but spread-out over many hours. Eating carbohydrate-rich foods, such as bread with jelly, rice, crackers, popcorn, chips, noodle soup, dried/canned fruit, and candy can make it easier for you to acclimatize. Drink plenty of fluids, such as tea with sugar. Caffeine tends to help with headaches, as does reducing salt intake. Rather than sitting still or lying down, go for easy strolls around camp and socialize with other climbers. This will further help you acclimate. Pack your bag for our climb, and fit your crampons to your boots so they will be ready the following morning. Then bed-down early for our big day tomorrow. You may not sleep well due to the altitude, but know that you are ready.

### **Day 11**

Island Peak Summit Day, then return to Chhukung

16,689 - 20,305 ft. - 15,518 ft.

8 to 14 hours climbing and descending

Lodging: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Snacks for lunch, Dinner

Wake at 1:30am for hot drinks and breakfast. Depart by 2:30am. As we set-off this morning, start slowly. Take small, rhythmic steps and time your breathing with your movement. The first part of the route scrambles through several bands of rock. Keep a slow, consistent pace. Eventually we arrive on the glacier, where we don crampons and rope-up. After crossing the glacial plateau, detouring around crevasses as needed, we begin to ascend a 50 degree, 400 ft. ice wall using a fixed line. Check that your crampons are attached properly before we begin the ascent. At the top of the wall, we follow a knife-edge ridge to another fixed-line up a short, steep section to the summit. Most parties take between six and eight hours to reach the summit. From the summit we have incredible views of Makalu, Cho Oyu, AmaDablam, Baruntse, and Nuptse. Our return to camp will take between three and four hours. Once at camp, we rest for an hour before packing-up and heading down further to Chhukung Village. Heading down from camp reduces the likelihood that someone will become increasingly ill once we are off the mountain (most people experience altitude illness on descent).

### **Day 12**

Spare summit day in case of bad weather or sickness.

Lodging Included: Lodge or Camping

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

If we do not need this day, this can be a rest day in Chhukhung, we can continue with the itinerary to save the day for later, or we can move back down to Dingboche and enjoy the cafes. If we go to Dingboche, it will be closer for us to continue to Lobuche the following day by a lower route rather than going over the Kongma La pass.

### **Day 13**

Chhukhung to Lobuche Village via Kongma La Pass

6 to 8 hrs. trekking

15,518 ft. - 18,159 ft. - 16,210 ft.

Lodging: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Although we will be traveling above 18,000 ft. today, we have already acclimatized by climbing Island Peak, and the terrain is not as difficult as what we have already done. While crossing the Kongma La we pass blue lakes amongst alpine yak pastures backed by views of hundreds of snow-capped peaks. The largest peaks that you can see from the pass include Chomolongzo (25,558 ft.), Kangchungtse (25,066 ft.), Makalu (27,805 ft.), Baruntse (23,465 ft.) and Chamlang (24,019 ft.). Descending to the Khumbu Valley we pick our way across the Khumbu Glacier. Care needs to be taken here, since the glacier is covered with a thick layer of rubble and boulders that shift as the glacier slowly melts. We then ascend the moraine on the western edge of the glacier with magnificent views of Khumbutse, Lingtren, Pumori, and Mahalangur Himal before arriving in Labuche Village.

### **Day 14**

Lobuche to Gorak Shep to Everest Base Camp

16,961 ft.

6 to 7 hrs. trekking. 3 more hours to climb Kala Patthar.

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we wake early and continue northward, with views of Tawoche, Taboche, and Cholatse to the south, Mt. Lobuche to the southwest, and Pumori and Lingtren to the north. After two-hours of trekking we reach the tiny settlement of Gorak Shep. Here we leave our large backpacks and continue across a dry lakebed. The trail ascends gradually, but travel is made difficult by numerous small ascents and descents along the shifting moraine of the Khumbu Glacier. Finally we reach Everest Base Camp. If you are visiting between late March and early May colorful tents are spread across the ice and moraine. The center of camp is usually dominated by large expeditions run by international guiding companies, while the perimeter is dotted with the tents of smaller expeditions and independent climbing teams. It is common to see guided parties practicing how to attach to fixed lines, rappel, and use their crampons for ascending steep sections of the route such as the Lhotse Face. Our guides will talk about the history of climbing on Mt. Everest, and point-out the climbing route. It takes a little under three hours to walk back to Gorak Shep where we rest for an hour before ascending a hill to the north of town called Kala Patthar (18,514 ft.). "Kala Patthar" means "black rock" in Nepali, which describes this small ridge coming down from the impressive Mount Pumori. In the evening light we can see the glowing faces of Nuptse, Everest, Nup II, and Changtse. We then return to our lodge for some well deserved rest.

### **Day 15**

Gorak Shep to Pheriche

14,340 ft.

7 to 8 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

If we were not able to ascend Kala Patthar yesterday, we will do so this morning so we can watch the sunrise behind Everest. Temperatures are at their coldest in the morning, so be sure to carry warm layers and keep your camera in an inside pocket so it will be warm enough to operate in the frigid air. After a hearty breakfast we descend to Pheriche alongside the Khumbu Glacier. In Pheriche there is a clinic run by the Himalayan Rescue Association with the help of international volunteers. Many of the patients here are trekkers and climbers who suffer from altitude illness and microbial infections. If possible, we will take a tour of the clinic and speak with volunteers.

### **Day 16**

Pheriche to Namche Bazaar  
11,286 ft.

6 to 7 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we descend, leaving behind mount Thamserku as we pass through lush forest and cross the Dudh Kosi River where prayer flags blow from a suspension bridge. It is common to see wildlife on this portion of the trek, so keep your eyes open for the Himalayan Monal, which is a beautiful iridescent blue pheasant and the national symbol of Nepal. Once we arrive in Namche we can celebrate with a movie at a local pub, feast on bakery goodies, and rest for our final day of trekking in the morning.

### **Day 17**

Namche Bazaar to Lukla  
9,186 ft.

6 to 7 hours trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Although you will feel strong due to the time you have spent at high elevation, today will feel long due to the amount of downhill we will cover followed by a section of uphill immediately before reaching Lukla. As you descend, be sure to look back at the triangular summit of Kongde. Sadly, this may be the last view you have of the mighty Himalaya before you return home. Once in Lukla we celebrate our incredible accomplishments with food, music, and dancing. This is also the day to give tips to the staff, since most of them will not be joining you on your trip back to Kathmandu. The best way to give tips is to meet with other trip participants and pool all of the money together. Then divide it evenly according to the number of staff, and place it in envelopes with each of their names on it. This egalitarian method is in line with cultural norms of Sherpas, Rai, and other ethnic groups you may have as staff. If you have any items that you do not have use for after the trek, such as an umbrella, headlamp, glacier glasses, or jacket, these items would be more than appreciated by your staff since they rarely have the opportunity to go to Kathmandu to purchase such items.

### **Day 18**

Flight, Lukla to Kathmandu  
4,800 ft.

45 minute flight

Lodging Included: Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast (lunch and dinner on your own in Kathmandu)

Today we wake early so we can get on the first available flight which is when weather tends to be the most stable. Generally this is between seven and eight in the morning. This requires us to wake between five and six. Our departure day is often a sad day, since we say goodbye to most of our staff and the immense beauty of the Himalayas. But it is also a happy day, since we return to hot showers, internet, and cell service. Once in Kathmandu we have a free day of shopping and site seeing. Please

let us know if you would like us to arrange transport to one of the many World Heritage Sites in and around Kathmandu. We will have a celebratory final meal at a restaurant in Thamel near your hotel.

**Day 19**

Spare weather day

Lodging Included: Hotel

Meals Included: None

**Day 20**

Spare weather day

Lodging Included: Hotel

Meals Included: None

**Day 21**

Departure

Lodging Included: None

Meals Included: None