



## **Himalayan Alpine Climbing Course and Climb of Mera Peak**

### **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. Our staff will pick you up from the airport. 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, and will cost you around \$35 each including food and hotel if staying in budget accommodation. 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 to go to dinner. 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 (if we do not already have it). 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. Let us know if you would like a lesson in how to pack and adjust your backpack. 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 from Kathmandu to Lukla, trek to Paiya

9,182 ft.

45 minute flight, 5 to 6 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we need to be at the airport early in order to be ready for our flight into Everest Region. Usually we will arrive at the airport between 6:30am and 8am. Bring a book and snacks in case our flight is delayed or cancelled, which is not unusual. Our flight gives us views over the Kathmandu Valley and panoramic views of the Langtang Himal, Rowaling Himal, and the front ranges of Everest Region. If you look carefully, you can see the impressive Gauri Shankar and Melungtse mountains, and the massive Shishapagma. We land at an airstrip with a slight tilt upward, which helps the aircraft rapidly slow down on this short runway. After arriving we meet our porters and begin trekking south and east away from the popular trekking routes of Everest Region toward the remote valleys of Makalu-Barun National Park. Our route weaves downhill through small settlements, past gardens and groves of bamboo before crossing the Handi Khola river on a bridge and eventually traveling through the teahouses of Surke. Above Surke we cross the Chutok La (pass) and an hour further we arrive in Paiya. Paiya is home to the families of several members of our staff, so our welcome is always a warm one. Note: Paiya is also called Chutok, Poya, and Paiyan. In Nepal there are many languages and dialects, and this will be reflected in the name-places on maps.

### **Day 4**

Paiya to Panggom

9,337 ft.

5 to 6 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Monastery homestay

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After traveling on a wide, easy trail we reach a junction marked on a boulder and turn uphill on a steep, winding mountain trail. We pass by zobyoks (the Sherpa word for a cow/yak crossbreed) grazing in free-range pasture and walk through dense rhododendron forest. As we near Panggom we can see Numbur Himal, a massive seven-thousand-meter peak, along with Mt. Karylung. If he is present, we will be met by Tobten Lama of the Panggom monastery who is the uncle of Karma Sherpa who runs Nepal Alpine Guides. We overnight at the monastery after listening to the beautiful chanting of the young monks in the evening.

### **Day 5**

Panggom to Sibuje

9,350 ft.

3 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Homestay

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast with our Buddhist hosts in Panggom we trek to Sibuje, the home of Karma Sherpa who is the owner of Nepal Alpine Guides. Sibuje is situated on a ridge high above the Dudh Kosi River Valley, with incredible views in all directions. Homes sit on terraced hillsides where crops like buckwheat, mustard, and millet are grown. In Sibuje we visit with community members, take a tour of the village, and enjoy the delicious cooking of Karma's mother. We also review the plan for the mountain training course that will take place in the coming days. After dinner, we have our first class.

7pm – 8pm Med Kit: Contents of an expedition medical kit.

### **Day 6**

Sibuje and surrounds

9,350 ft.

Amount of trekking will depend on lessons each day

Lodging Included: Homestay

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

9am – 9:30am Wilderness First Aid: Bacterial and Protozoa Infections

9:30am – 10am Wilderness First Aid: Scenario practice

10am – 10:30am Ropes: Diameters, types, strengths, weaknesses, and applications.

10:30am – 11am Slings, Daisy-chains, and cord: materials, strengths, weaknesses, and dangers

15 min. break

11:15am – 12:15pm Ropes: Flaking, stacking, and single-coiling

12:15pm – 2pm Lunch break

2pm – 3pm Knots: Overhand (follow-through and on-a-bite), Figure-8 (follow-through and on-a-bite), butterfly, double-fisherman's, tying the middle of a rope (bite) through a harness or anchor with overhand follow-through on a bite

3pm – 4pm Hitches: Clove, autoblock, prussic, kleimheist

4pm – 4:30pm Contents of a Guide's backpack/harness: med kit, light, sunscreen, snacks, water, hand warmer, spare sunglasses, small stove and fuel, ice screw, 2 prussics, V-thread, spare cord, knife

4:30pm – 5pm Review

5pm – 7pm Dinner

7pm – 8pm Hazards: Avalanches

### **Day 7**

Sibuje and surrounds

9,350 ft.

Amount of trekking will depend on lessons each day

Lodging Included: Homestay

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

9am -9:30am Wilderness First Aid: High altitude illness and treatment

9:30am – 10am Wilderness First Aid: Scenario practice

10am – 10:30am Harnesses: Types and buckling/double-backing. Tying-in with a figure-8 or using locking carabiners as a middle climber.

10:30am – 10:45am Carabiners: Types/shapes and uses with various hitches

10:45am – 11am Belay devices: Types, uses, strengths, weaknesses. Also use of the munter hitch.

15 min. break

11:15am – 12:15pm Ropes: Flaking/stacking at a belay. Coiling with a nail-knot. Backpack Coil.

12:15pm – 2pm Lunch break

After lunch move to a place with rocks for placing protection

2pm – 3pm Knots: Review from yesterday. Learn munter-mule hitch.

3pm – 3:30pm Anchor hardware: placing pitons

3:30pm – 4:30pm: Anchor hardware: placing nuts, hexes, and cams

4:30pm – 5pm Review

5pm – 7pm Dinner

7pm – 8pm Hazards: Ice and Rock Fall

### **Day 8**

Sibuje and surrounds

9,350 ft.

Amount of trekking will depend on lessons each day

Lodging Included: Homestay  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

9am -9:30am Wilderness First Aid: Cuts, Scrapes, and burns  
9:30am – 10am Wilderness First Aid: Scenario practice  
10am – 10:30am Belaying: Lead Belay  
10:30am – 11am Belaying: From the top of a climb  
15 min. break  
11:15am – 12:15pm Ropes: Shortening using mountaineers coil, shortening using kiwi coil.  
12:15pm – 2pm Lunch break  
2pm – 3pm Knots: Review from past two days. Teach bowline for one-piece anchors and fixed-line attachment at the center of a rope.  
3pm – 3:30pm Anchors: 1 piece (rock/tree) and 2 piece (bolts/pitons)  
3:30pm – 4:30pm Anchors: 3 piece (pro) and 4 piece (pro)  
4:30pm – 5pm Review  
5pm – 7pm Dinner  
7pm – 8pm Hazards: Rope running over a sharp edge. Carabiner pinches. Extend anchors or redirect to remedy

### **Day 9**

Sibuje and surrounds  
9,350 ft.  
Amount of trekking will depend on lessons each day  
Lodging Included: Homestay  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

9am -9:45am Wilderness First Aid: Broken Bones and splints  
9:45am – 10:30am Wilderness First Aid: Scenario practice  
10:30am – 11am Belaying: Review belaying from bottom and top  
15 min. break  
11:15am – 12:15pm Ropes: Attaching to an anchor using clove, tether, and organizing the belay.  
12:15pm – 2pm Lunch break  
2pm – 3pm Knots: Review from past two days. Practice stacking, belaying a fake leader, setting-up an anchor, belaying from the top while stacking or flaking the rope to organize the station.  
3pm – 4:30pm Rappelling: Extension, autoblock back-up, edges and traverses  
4:30pm – 5pm Review  
5pm – 7pm Dinner  
7pm – 8pm Hazards: Suffocation. Cooking in a tent (Carbon Monoxide) & snow on tents (burial)

### **Day 10**

Sibuje to Ningsow Lodge  
9,003 ft.  
5 hrs. trekking  
Lodging Included: Lodge  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Our trek today takes us over tumbling creeks and through rhododendron and oak forests with distant views of the Numbur Himal poking through the trees. We also pass through several small Sherpa and Rai settlements where buckwheat is grown in raised beds and curious children play under colorful prayer flags.

4pm -5pm Hazards: High Winds (build walls, anchor tents with ropes, dig snow cave/find a crevasse)  
7pm – 8pm Hazards: Old fixed lines sticking out of ice. How to attach to multiple lines.

**Day 11**

Ningsow Lodge to Chetra Khola campsite

10,332 ft.

7 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Our hike today will take us through heavily foliated jungle. Keep your eyes open for signs of wildlife like monkeys, bears, and leopards. Trail conditions on this section can be steep and slippery. Occasionally fixed-lines and ladders are present if the trail was washed-out during the rainy season.

**Day 12**

Chetra Khola to Khote

12,109 ft.

7 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Our route today follows the Hinku Khola (River). This river valley was the site of a major disaster in 1998 when a massive ice avalanche from Mount Kyashar landed in a lake below, instantly displacing billions of gallons of water. The resulting tidal-wave tore through the valley, widening and deepening the riverbed and drowning livestock, forests, and three villagers as it went. Thankfully recent geological studies of the lake suggest that a future outburst flood is very unlikely. Our route will weave in and out of the forest above the steep sides of the newly-cut river valley before following the riverbed to the quaint village of Khote. Along the route to Khote we should cut bamboo wands that can be used to mark our way along the glaciers on our way to Mera High Camp far above us.

**Day 13**

Khote to Tangnag

14,270 ft.

3 to 4 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tagnag is an idyllic location backed by Kyashar to the northwest, an impressively steep granitic peak rising to almost 7,000 meters that has seen only a few climbing attempts. The rising cone of Mera Peak can be seen to the east, while Kusum Kanguru stands like a wall to the west. It is here where we will base ourselves for the second portion of our climbing instruction.

**Day 14**

Tagnag

14,270 ft.

Instruction day.

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

9am -9:45am Wilderness First Aid: Advanced altitude illness (HAPE, HACE)

9:45am – 10:30am Wilderness First Aid: Scenario practice

10:30am – 11am Students set-up top-rope stations for fixed-line practice

15 min. break

11:15am – 12:15pm Fixed lines: Attaching using a jummar, prussic, and crab claw. How to use a PASS/daisy chain/runner for extension. Problems with jummars. Problems with large loads on fixed-line anchors and ropes  
12:15pm – 2pm Lunch break  
2pm – 3pm Fixed lines: Practice setting-up and ascending/rappelling/descending  
3pm – 4pm Improvised Ascending: Using prussics, carabiners, and autoblocking devices to ascend  
4pm – 4:30pm Improvised Descending: Munter hitch, carabiner break, Dülfersitz method  
4:30pm – 5pm Review  
5pm – 7pm Dinner  
7pm – 7:30pm Fitting Alpine Climbing Boots. Tying laces correctly.  
7:30pm - 8pm Types of crampons and fitting crampons correctly.

### **Day 15**

Tagnag  
14,270 ft.  
Instruction day. Minimal trekking.  
Lodging Included: Lodge  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

During the morning First Aid sessions, set-up top rope anchors for climbing  
9am -9:30am Wilderness First Aid: Cold Injuries/Frost Bite  
9:30am – 10am Wilderness First Aid: Scenario Practice  
10am – 11am Wilderness First Aid: Review and Scenario Practice (choose a scenario at random)  
15 min. break  
11:15am – 11:45am How to place an ice screw and clip into it with the rope. How to make a V-thread.  
11:45am – 12:15pm Ice Climbing: Movement skills demo and practice  
12:15pm – 2pm Lunch break  
2pm – 5pm Ice climbing top-rope practice with mock-lead rope and ice screws. Must also build “mock anchors” and attach to them

### **Day 16**

Tagnag  
14,270 ft.  
Instruction day. Minimal trekking.  
Lodging Included: Lodge  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

All-day ice climbing practice  
Evening: How to stack the rope in preparation for glacier travel

### **Day 17**

Tagnag to Khare  
16,486 ft.  
2 to 3 hrs. trekking followed by instruction  
Lodging Included: Lodge  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today is a stunning hike to Khare at the confluence of the Hinku Nup and Shar Glaciers. The steep north face of Mera Peak stands high above the village, while the Mera La (pass) lies to the east. Today we will rest and gather our strength for the following days at high elevation. We will also show how to place snow anchors for crevasse rescue and do a crevasse rescue demonstration from the comfort of our lodge.

Trek to Khare before lunch

12pm-1pm lunch  
1pm – 2:30pm Snow anchors: Deadmen and vertical pickets (if firm snow is found)  
2:30pm – 6pm Crevasse rescue demonstration and practice  
6pm to 8pm Dinner  
8pm to 9pm LNT camping (pack it in, pack it out)

### **Day 18**

Khare  
16,486 ft. to 17,767 to 16,486 ft.  
Instruction Day. 5 hrs. day-hike to/from Mera La.  
Lodging Included: Lodge  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will hike to the Mera La to review our ice climbing skills and practice crevasse rescue off the steep ice cliffs. We must choose a place to practice that is not exposed to rock-fall from the ice above. We will pack lunches before our departure.

7am – 10am hike to Mera La  
10am – 12pm Practice ice climbing on ice cliffs of Mera La  
12pm – 12:30pm lunch break  
12:30pm – 2pm Self-arrest practice if snow permits. Otherwise review snow/ice anchors  
2pm – 5pm crevasse rescue and fixed-line practice on the ice cliffs  
5pm – 7pm hike back to Khare  
7pm dinner

### **Day 19**

Khare to Mera High Camp  
18,958 ft.  
6 to 7 hrs. trekking  
Lodging Included: Tents (camping)  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

From Khare we hike east back toward the Mera La where we practiced the day before. The hike should feel easier today since we had an acclimatization day yesterday. From the Mera La we turn south, and travel up a glacier strewn with crevasses. This section can be prone to white-out, so we may need to mark our route with wands cut from bamboo at lower elevations fitted with candy-bar wrappers as flagging. From high camp we can see Mt. Everest, Lhotse, Makalu, Cho Oyu, Chamlang, Kyashar, Kangtega, Peak 41, Malanphulan, Ombigaichen, and AmaDablam. On a clear day we can see all the way to Katchenjunga on the border with India. Today is all about resting and preparing ourselves for the summit day tomorrow. We may have a short discussion about pacing with clients, but not much else. At high camp some may get altitude sickness, so our plans will adjust accordingly. Pack your summit pack and check your crampons to ensure they are fitted properly.

### **Day 20**

High Camp to Summit to Khare  
18,958 ft. to 21,190 ft. to 16,486 ft.  
10 to 12 hrs. climbing and descending  
Lodging Included: Tents or Lodge (after climbing)  
Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner. Lunch is snacks while climbing.

Today is a long day. We will wake around 2am to rope-up and begin our climb. Most of the route is up a gradual snow slope similar in steepness to a blue ski run. However, the elevation will still make this difficult, and it is important that you are in excellent physical condition for the climb. As we reach the top of the first slope the grade becomes steeper, and just above the terrain flattens and the summit comes into view. To reach the summit we ascend a short (30 ft.) section of fifty-degree ice.



Views from the summit include five 8,000 meter peaks: Everest, Lhotse, Cho Oyu, Makalu, and Katchenjunga. Many say the view from the summit of Mera is the best of any trekking peak (a trekking peak is a peak below 6,500 meters in elevation, and permits are given through the Nepal Mountaineering Association rather than the Nepali government). We continue down the way we came, and spend an hour or so in high camp resting before taking down camp and heading back down to Khare. Going all the way down to Khare often prevents altitude illness from becoming severe for those who have begun to feel ill on summit day.

### **Day 21**

Spare Summit Day in the event of bad weather

### **Day 22**

Khare to Khote

11,808 ft.

4 to 5 hours trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

We continue back the way we came, resting in Khare for a celebratory dinner at lower elevation. Enjoy the last spectacular views of peak 41, Mera Peak, and other mountains of the Makalu-Barun region.

### **Day 23**

Khote to Zatrwa La pass

14,720 ft.

5 to 6 hrs. trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we take a short-cut and begin our trek over the Zatrwa La pass. We have saved the pass for our way back since we are already acclimatized, and the risk of altitude sickness is almost none. Along the route keep your eyes open for the elusive Himalayan Pika, which was not known to exist in Nepal until recently. These tiny relatives of the rabbit family produce loud whistling distress calls as they hide amongst the crags and talus of the high pass. The pass has a park-like atmosphere, with its dwarf trees, grasses, moss, and rock gardens. If snow has fallen recently, the crossing can be somewhat difficult, and may take more time to negotiate.

### **Day 24**

Zatrwa La Pass to Lukla

9,383 ft.

6 to 7 hours trekking

Lodging Included: Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we finish crossing the Zatrwa La pass at just over 15,000 ft., enjoying views of Numbur Himal, Kongde, and Kusum Kanguru before making a steep descent to Chutanga. This section is sometimes covered in hard snow or ice, so we will need to negotiate it carefully. Once back in Lukla we celebrate our final day in the mountains with food and dancing. Today we must say goodbye to our staff and other mountaineering course students who live in the Solukhumbu and Chaurikharka region. They will not be joining us for the flight to Kathmandu tomorrow. This evening is the time to give your staff tips if you are happy with their work. If you have any clothing or equipment that is not needed on future trips, you are welcome to donate it to the staff as well.

### **Day 25**

Lukla to Kathmandu

4,800 ft.

45 minute flight

Lodging Included: Hotel

Meals Included: Breakfast. (Lunch and Dinner on your own in Kathmandu)

We will board an early morning flight out of Lukla for our return to Kathmandu. This is usually around 7am, but the actual time is dependent upon aircraft schedules and weather. Flight delays and cancellations are common, so come prepared for a long wait with a book and some snacks. Once back in Kathmandu enjoy some down time. We will meet for a final celebratory group dinner around 6pm. Bring photos on a USB stick to share with fellow climbers.

### **Day 26**

Spare weather day in the event our flight back from Lukla was delayed/cancelled

### **Day 27**

International Departure

**Note:** For those who already have a good base of knowledge and skill in the techniques taught during this course, it may be possible to take the following exam during the training day at Mera La:

Exam:

1. Ice climb up a pitch, build an anchor, and attach to it.
2. Belay a climber  $\frac{1}{2}$  way up the pitch you have just climbed, then have them hang.
3. Haul the climber 9 ft. up the ice pitch using a 3:1 pulley system.
4. Fix the free end of the rope and rappel to the climber.
5. Ascend the rope to the anchor.
6. Continue belaying the climber to the anchor.
7. Lower the climber from the anchor to the ground.
8. Rappel to the ground with an extension and autoblock back-up