



Ibex Expeditions ®

Itinerary & Trip Description for

NANGPA LA & GOKYO LAKES: NEPAL TREKKING IN THE EVEREST REGION

23-days Kathmandu to Kathmandu, 18-day trek, Sept thru early Nov

Leader: Local colleagues

Highlights

- Ancient former trade route between Tibet & Nepal. Previously closed to foreigners. Permit-required area.
- Magnificent mountain splendor, fluted ice faces, immense blue-white glaciers, towering jagged summits.
- Spectacular 8000-meter giants, Everest, Lhotse, Makalu, Cho Oyu. Formidable barrier mountains of Tibet.
- Sherpa culture, villages and Buddhist monasteries. Summer grazing pastures & potato-farming villages.
- One of Nepal's most photogenic treks. Rich autumn colors. Turquoise Gokyo Lakes. Rhododendron forests.
- Sagarmatha National Park, Himalayan tahr, Impeyan pheasant (national bird of Nepal), barking deer.



Cho Oyu – Courtesy Gil Roberts

Background

Nepal is the motherland of trekking. The Central Himalayas sweep along its northern border creating an impressive barrier dividing the terraced green lowlands from the arid windswept Tibetan Plateau. A portion of this gigantic chain east of the capital of Kathmandu is known as the Khumbu Region and is home to Mt Everest, Cho Oyu, Lhotse and Makalu - stunningly beautiful 8,000-mtr massifs that loom high above the surrounding terrain. Sagarmatha National Park embraces these peaks, forests and meadows, and the tiny villages scattered beneath the southern escarpment. Justifiably, this area is perhaps the world's most famous trekking region. Were it not for the logistical difficulty of reaching this place, it would certainly be Nepal's most popular trek destination.

The remote valleys beneath these peaks are threaded by ancient trails traversed by salt traders and yak herders, potato farmers and itinerant monks, intrepid shepherds and pilgrims. Most trekkers head to Everest base camp, but few know the route along the western edge of the Khumbu to the Nangpa La, the old trade route to Tibet and the route over which, it is believed, the indigenous people - the *Sherpas* - entered Nepal 300 to 400-years ago.

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General plan

This trek begins at the newly paved airstrip at Lukla (9,000-ft.) In the course of this three-week trek there will be opportunity to explore some of the least visited valleys, villages and passes of Khumbu. Ibex trek route is a loop that goes from Namche Bazaar to Thame and thence northward toward the Nangpa La, turns eastward and crosses the Renjo La and, finally, returns via the Gokyo Valley. Enroute are spectacular views of Everest, Cho Oyo, Lhotse and innumerable other stunning summits. In contrast to other parts of the Khumbu, we expect to encounter very few other trekkers or none. *This trek is a challenging high-altitude trek that will reach over 18,000-ft.* Previous hiking or trekking experience at high altitude is desirable, but not an absolute requirement. Mountaineering experience is unnecessary. If you have visited the Everest region previously, you may still want to consider this trip because most of this trek traverses areas that have previously been off-limits to foreign trekkers. *Full Sherpa staff & leadership is provided. Although Nepal has been plagued by a serious Maoist insurrection for many years, the situation is now changing. Inquire about the current political situation.*



Everest from Renjo La courtesy Dominick Kurstjens

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Kathmandu. Transfer to hotel and overnight at the Malla Hotel, a charming four-star hotel located on the edge of Thamel, a district renowned for good shopping. Accommodations in Kathmandu are on B&B basis. Orientation meeting. Overnight at Malla Hotel.

Day 2: Visits to local temples, markets and bazaars. Optional city tour. Overnight at Malla Hotel.

Day 3: Early morning departure for flight to Lukla (9,000-ft) in Solu Khumbu. The airstrip has been newly paved, but the flight remains as dramatic as ever. At Lukla, you will meet your local staff. Your baggage may be carried by either porters or yaks or a combination thereof. Begin trekking toward Namche Bazaar, the economic center of the Sherpa homeland. You'll proceed very slowly on the first days because these days are critical for proper acclimatization. All nights on the trail are in camp or an occasional inn. Overnight Phakting.

Day 4: Enroute. Arrive Namche Bazaar (11,300') and overnight.

Day 5: Opportunity to walk about Namche, experience great views of the surrounding peaks, or to visit the National Park museum and headquarters from which there are excellent views towards Everest and the upper Khumbu region. Overnight Namche.

Day 6: Hike through rhododendron and pine forest and pass several small villages including Phurte, Samshing, Thesho. Lunch enroute. Chance to visit a Buddhist nunnery in Thamo. The forests enroute are excellent areas to look for musk deer and pheasant of many species including the Impeyan pheasant (the extravagantly colored national bird of Nepal). In the meadows and cliffs above you may see Himalayan tahr. After

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Thamo head for the small village of Samde and cross the Bhote Kosi (river). Climb gradually to the potato farming village and trading center of Thame located at 13,000-ft. (Hiking time about 5 hours). Overnight Thame

Day 7: Optional rest day or day hike. Hike to Thengpo summer (yak) settlement enroute to the Tashi Lapcha pass, the 18,000-ft entrance to the Rolwaling region lying farther west. Thengpo is the last yak settlement of the region. It's possible to carry a pack lunch and trek along the Thame Khola as far as desired. This marvelous valley is very isolated and is well suited for contemplation of the beautiful high peaks and enjoyment of the solitude. Return to Thame village by evening. It's possible to visit the Thame Monastery and the Rinpoche (the reincarnated head lama of Thame) on the return trip. Alternatively, you may spend the day in town and visit the monastery. (Hiking time 7-8 hours). Overnight Thame.

Day 8: Thame to Ary camp. The trail heads north to Thame Teng and on through several small villages such as Chanakpa (13,087-ft), Tarnga (13,202-ft), Marlung (13,500-ft), and Lungden (14,235-ft). All except Chanakpa are seasonally occupied only in the spring and summer. Sherpas consider Taranga to be the homeland of the Yeti. Taranga potatoes are also reputed to be the best potatoes in the world. We may have lunch here and our cook will prepare a meal with these famous potatoes. (Hiking time 6 hours)

Days 9 thru 14: Above Marlung there are very few settlements and the vegetation becomes very sparse. Time is set aside to get close to the Nangpa La. The level of acclimatization, weather conditions and other variables will dictate how close the group gets to the pass. It is unlikely the group will actually reach the top of the pass, but there should be excellent views of the Nangpa Glacier and the surrounding peaks. Camp at Sumna Phug at the convergence of the Sumna and Lunag Glaciers. Given time and the proper conditions, we'll proceed up the valley to Lunag or Kangchung at the base of Nangpai Gotaya, a spur of the 24,500-ft Nagpai Gossum massif. The Nangpa La is usually open at this time of year and, if lucky, we may encounter yak caravans or traders crossing the Nangpa La.

Day 15: Ary to Renjo La basecamp. Contour upward through alpine landscape to Relmo Lake (16,000-ft), a high cirque. (Hiking time 6 hours). Overnight at lake camp.



Gokyo Lakes © Bruce Klepinger 2002

Day 16: Gokyo via Renjo Pass (17,466-ft). Because of the altitude, this day is likely to be one of the more difficult days of the trip. Typically the weather is clear at this time of year and the prospects for favorable conditions are excellent. From the pass there are excellent views of Everest and other 8,000-mtr peaks to the east. Descend into the Gokyo Valley, cross the Gokyo Glacier and continue to Gokyo Lake. (Hiking time 7½ hours). Overnight Gokyo Lake.

Days 17 and 18: Pass the Gokyo Lakes and the snout of the Ngzumba glacier. On the lakes there are likely to be migrating Brahminy ducks and pochards. Descending toward Phortse you'll enter rhododendron forests occupied by the elusive Musk deer and Himalayan tahr. There are spectacular views downvalley of several ragged peaks including Thamserku, and Kangtega. Just before reaching Thangboche you'll pass through forests that are considered sacred. The picturesque community of Phortse is one of the loveliest and most traditional in the entire Khumbu region. At Thangboche, you will intersect the main expedition route to Everest Base Camp. We plan to visit Khumjung before completing the circuit route at Namche. Overnights at Phortse and Thangboche.

Day 19: Thangboche to Namche Bazaar.

Day 20: Namche to Lukla. It's only a day's walk downvalley from Namche Bazaar to Lukla. It may be possible to linger until midmorning for a final glimpse of Everest and Ama Dablam as you leave Sagarmatha National Park. Overnight Lukla.

Day 21: Kathmandu. Early morning flight to Kathmandu. Transfer to the Malla Hotel and overnight. Afternoon is on your own.

Day 22. The day is free in Kathmandu to do as you wish. This day is a contingency day and is necessary in the event that flights of the previous day are canceled. Overnight at the Malla Hotel.

Day 23. Depart Kathmandu. Transfer to the airport. End of services. Return to USA or other countries. It's also possible to extend your stay to include other areas of Nepal.

LAND COST from \$2870 per person

Small group surcharge (less than 10-persons)
Single supplement \$400
Deposit \$500 per person
Minimum group size 2-persons

LAND COST INCLUDES

intra-Nepal flights (2); all Nepal group airport transfers (4); half-day sightseeing in Kathmandu; all group hotel stays in Kathmandu (4) per itinerary with breakfast included; 18-day full service trek including tents, wash water & bed tea with all nights in camp; group camping equipment; all meals on trek; leadership, trail staff and group trek expenses.

DOES NOT INCLUDE

items of a personal nature, including sleeping bag, laundry, bottled beverages, immunizations, etc.; tips to trek leader & local staff; lunches & dinners in Kathmandu; non-group transfers; additional nights at the beginning or end of trip; excess baggage charges; international airfare; airport departure taxes & visa charges; accommodations and expenses to/from Nepal.

*Price subject to change

Typical USA to USA travel dates to/from the West Coast for this trip would be Saturday September 30 to Wednesday October 25, 2006 (26-days).

Equipment information, bulletin, reading list, and maps will be sent upon receipt of \$500 deposit and completed trip application.

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