

Trip Notes

Gokyo & Phortse Village Trek



“Trek through the hamlets of Sherpa heartland perched in the foothills of the world's highest peak, Mt. Everest.”

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Trip Facts



Duration

18 days from Kathmandu to Kathmandu

Physical Grading: 3

This trip is suitable for those with a high level of fitness and endurance. You do not have to be an experienced backpacker or mountaineer. Just relatively fit to walk each day for 6-7 hours with a light backpack.

Trip style: Active

This trip is designed for outdoor adventurers who are ready to experience the new height and explore the vastness of the Himalaya.

Service level: Basic

- ✓ Excellent value, competitive price
- ✓ For travellers preferring flexibility, convenience and the security of small groups
- ✓ Simple and clean accommodations and/or well-maintained campsites
- ✓ Highly experienced and educated Staffs, who are mainly the Sherpas from highlands of the Himalaya.
- ✓ Well designed itinerary by our experts, to suit from novice to experienced trekkers/mountaineers for the Himalayan adventure.

Trip type: Small group

Group trips average about 12 travellers per departure, depending on the adventure. The maximum is usually no more than 16.

Trek Timing

While trekking is possible in this area the whole year round, the best times to visit are from the beginning of March to end May and from the beginning of September to end November.

Introduction

The Gokyo Lakes region at the head of the Dudh Kosi Valley provides a great alternative to the popular Everest Base Camp trek. It is a more tranquil trek through the Sherpa heartland that affords ample time for acclimatization with opportunities to savor the mountain panoramas from beautiful alpine campsites. The highlights of the trek are our ascent of Gokyo Ri. From the summit we gain superb views of Everest as well as the 8000m peaks of Lhotse, Makalu and Cho-Oyu. And crossing chola pass glacier (5,380m) is a real fun adventure which gives you an opportunity to set your foot at the highest point of your life.

Gokyo Tso (Lake), also called Dudh Pokhari, is the main lake with an area of 42.9 ha (106 acres), and the village of Gokyo lies on its eastern shore.

Gokyo Lake in Nepal's Sagarmatha National Park, located at an altitude of 4,700m (15,400ft) above sea level. Unique among natural heritage sites world-wide is the Sagarmatha National Park, which includes Mt. Everest (8,848 m) and other high peaks such as Lhotse, Lhotse Shar, Cho-Oyu, Ama Dablam, Pumori, Kangtega, Gyachung Kang, Thamserku, Kwangde, and many more.

Located North-east of Kathmandu, Sagarmatha National Park is 1,148 sq km in area and consists of the upper catchment areas of the Dudh Koshi, Bhote Koshi and the Imja Khola (rivers). Much of the park lies above 3,000m. Sagarmatha is rugged with deep gorges, glaciers and nonnegotiable ice and rock faces.

Phortse is one among the highest human settlement in Nepal, stood at an elevation of 3840meters/12598ft above sea level and it's quite a big traditional Sherpa village in Khumbu or Everest Region.

Locally known as the 'Khumbu', it is the home of the famous Sherpa people. The Sherpas from Phortse village make a living by farming barley and potatoes, and graze their yaks in high altitude pastures. Young Sherpas have also made their name in mountaineering and the trekking industry has of late become the community's economic mainstay. It's been nearly a decade now since the American foundation called Alex Lowe charitable foundation along with NOLS have started a climbing school in this village and it's the only as well as first mountaineering school in the whole Everest region.

Famous for its spectacular mountain peaks and the loyalty and friendliness of its inhabitants (the Sherpas), the Everest region (Khumbu) is one of the most popular destinations for tourists in Nepal. In 1979 the park (Everest National Park) was declared a World Heritage Site.

While trekking is possible in this area the whole year round, the best times to visit are from the beginning of March to mid May and from the beginning of September to mid November. The winters are very cold and snow may make it difficult to travel higher than Tengboche, and also lodges may be closed above this altitude. Summers, on the other hand, are wet, and the spectacular peaks are often lost in the clouds. April and early May is a good time to see the hedgerows and trees bursting into bloom, with Rhododendrons, in particular, adding a spectacular splash of colour to the landscape. However, dust from the plains of India during the spring routinely provides less than ideal conditions for clear mountain views. The views are much better after the summer monsoons have cleared the atmosphere of dust, but the days are shorter and cooler.

Wildlife most likely to be seen in Sagarmatha is the Himalaya Tahr, Ghoral, Musk deer, Pikka (mouse hare) weasel and occasionally jackal. Other rarely seen animals are Himalayan black bear, wolf, lynx and snow leopard. Birds commonly seen are Impeyan pheasant, blood pheasant, snow cock, snow pigeon, red billed and yellow billed chough, Himalayan griffin vulture and lammergeyers.

Sagarmatha National Park is also known as Khumbu region and sometimes, Everest region.

Trek Highlight

- ❖ Explore the ancient city of Kathmandu, Nepal.
- ❖ Scenic flights to/from Kathmandu and Mountain Village of Lukla.
- ❖ Hiking through small Sherpa villages, across rivers, up mountain valleys.
- ❖ Views of the Himalayan giants Ama Dablam, Nuptse, Lhotse, Everest.
- ❖ Enjoy the sunrise on Everest and its massif from "Gokyo Ri".
- ❖ Witness the world's highest lake "Gokyo Lake-4800 meter".
- ❖ See the longest glacier of the Himalayas "Ngozumba Glacier".
- ❖ A visit to the Tengboche Monastery, which can be viewed from the top of Mt. Everest.

Grand Himalaya on the trek

Our aim is to provide you with a safe, enjoyable and successful expedition to Nepal. We provide all of our climbers with a smooth and efficient service to maximize both your enjoyment and your chances of a successful climb.

The benefits of trekking with us in the Everest region are:

A very well planned itinerary and acclimatization schedule based on our experience of leading trekking and expeditions in the Himalaya for more than a decade now.

We provide a good level skilled of sherpa support. Our sherpas and guide have trekked in the Everest region few times and will be walking, assisting the members all the time.

Most of our hotels in the Everest region are one among the finest in the area and because we have frequently travelled in this region, our company has a very good reputation.

Travel Insurance recommendations



Travel Insurance



We recommend cancellation insurance to protect your investment.

We require participants to have travel insurance that covers medical expenses, evacuation and repatriation. Please ensure that your chosen policy provides cover for the activities (Trekking and climbing with guide and roped up) and localities in which you will travel Nepal, to elevations up to (Altitude **5360m/17585ft**) above sea level).

Emergency evacuation

Helicopter rescue services are available. Evidence of insurance will be required by the evacuation services before the helicopter will fly. And it can be landed anywhere in the Everest region. However, emergency evacuation cost is not included in your trekking cost.

Most helicopters struggle above 5000m. Often a helicopter can only take one person at the limit of its operating altitude. There is no mountain rescue squad available, the victims have to be evacuated to a safe helicopter landing site preferably below 5000m.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact Grand Himalaya during a situation of dire need, here is the contact information furnished below:



1. Office Landline phone: +977 1 4474479 (10am to 5pm/ Saturday off)
2. Namgya Sherpa (Managing Director) Cell No. : +977 9851174471 (7/24)
3. Sonam Bhote (Marketing Director) Cell No. : +977 9851174472 (7/24)
4. Prem Gurung (Operations Director) Cell No.: +977 9851174470 (7/24)
5. Tendi Wongmu Sherpa (Sales Manager) Cell No.: +977 9841427120 (7/24)

Flexibility

Whereas every effort will be made to keep to the original itinerary; changes may occur due to snow conditions, electrical storms, or other imponderables of whatever nature whether physical, climatic, human or political.

Passport & visa

A passport with at least 6 months validity beyond the duration of the trip is required and it is your responsibility to obtain your own visa (this can be obtained on the arrival at Kathmandu international airport at a charge of:

- Single entry visa valid for 15 days - US \$25
- Single Entry Visa for 30 days - US \$40
- Multiple entry visa valid for 90 days - US \$100.



You will need **one** passport size photograph for the visa. **(We will forward you the visa form once you booked for the trip).**

4 passport size photographs and passport details will also be required for the climbing permit (if climbing in Nepal) and these should be supplied to Grand Himalaya before the start of expedition on the **Post Box No: - 9935** Kathmandu, Nepal.

For more details, please check Travel Tips on our Website

Trip specific safety

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. The hotels we use in Kathmandu have a safety deposit box which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Upon Arrival in Kathmandu

Upon your arrival at the Kathmandu Tribhuvan international airport, you look for a signboard of Grand Himalaya Treks & Expedition and you will notice our representative holding Grand Himalaya's board. He will welcome you with a garland and a bottle of mineral water, then assists you transfer to your respective hotel in Kathmandu in Grand Himalaya's Van/Coach.

On our every trip, we have all Airport pickup and drop shuttles included in the trip cost to protect you from any kind of hassles and tussles which is quite common to experience when you for the first time visit an alien country.

Please be aware of people wanting to help you with your bags as they will ask for money once you get to your van/coach.

Accommodation in Kathmandu

With Grand Himalaya trip cost, you will be accommodated in a 4 star category hotel in Kathmandu on B&B (Bed & Breakfast) basis. Team members will be accommodated on a twin share basis in large en-suite rooms. Single rooms are available if you prefer, for which a supplement is payable. However 5 star hotel accommodations will be arranged by Grand Himalaya on your request for additional cost. Your early booking the trip along with deposit of 25% of the total trip cost per person is highly required to make necessary accommodations in Kathmandu and Lodges in related trekking region, domestic flight reservation for your trip.

Important note:

- Power cuts can and are a regular occurrence in Nepal, especially throughout Kathmandu. Although the hotel has generators there may be times when these won't work.

Accommodation on trek

Lodge accommodation will be provided during the trek up to base camp and on the way back to Lukla after the expedition, which will be in the best available lodges in the area, team members will be accommodated on a twin share. Meals during the trek at lodges may be selected from the menu, according to individual choice. Most of the lodges in this area will have hot showers available at the charge of \$5-10 per shower which is not included in your expedition cost.

Meals on the Trek

Meals during the teahouse trek should select from the menu according to individual choice, unless the group is large. For large groups you should place a bulk order as the teahouse will find it easier to prepare a bulk order than individual meals. The easiest thing to do is to pick 2 or 3 choices and get a show of hands, the kitchen will thank you!

During a Tea House trek you will usually have breakfast and dinner in the lodge; lunch will be eaten at one of the trail side restaurants. Every Lodge serves the traditional Nepali meal "Dal Bhat" which is comprised of steam rice, vegetables/vegetable curry and lentil soup. There will be a variety of different food items too, such as rice, vegetables, noodles, potatoes and soup. Almost every lodge in the Everest region have Nepali versions of western food such as pizza, pasta, pies and French fries. Soft drinks, snacks and beer are available in all lodges and trail side restaurants. And of course Nepali milk tea is served everywhere.

Electricity Chargers



Electricity

230V

50Hz

Electrical Plugs

European plug with two circular metal pins

Indian-style plug with two circular metal pins above a large circular grounding pin

Electrical Device Charging

Most of our hotels en route on the trek, there will be pay electric devices charging facility.

Time Difference

GMT is less than Nepal by 5 hours 45 minutes

Mobile phones, Internet and Wi-Fi connectivity

Trekking is a wonderful break from the wireless world, but in the towns and cities out here, it is now your choice whether you disconnect or stay connected.

Check your mobile phone roaming services prior to leaving to know whether you might have service.

Nepal - Kathmandu

Most overseas roaming-enabled mobile phones work in Kathmandu and Pokhara. You should be aware that occasionally an SMS (text) message sent to you will arrive 20 times. You can send messages out, normally without problem. Blackberry services and GPRS etc are now available. Local SIM cards can be bought from corner shops and start at around \$8 (cheap!), and refills by scratch cards, very easy and convenient. You need an UNLOCKED phone to use a local SIM. Internet cafes litter Thamel and other tourist haunts, so checking your Yahoo, Gmail etc. is easy and cheap. For laptop users there are more and more free Wi-Fi cafes.

Everest Region, Nepal

Ncell SIM now covers Everest Base Camp as well as most of the trekking route to EBC! There is internet in Namche, Thame, Tengboche, Gokyo and Lukla.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is vital to us to enhance the quality of our services and adventures. Please help us to improve our services by filling the feedback questionnaire, which will be provided to you at the end of the expedition. The best quality service is our foremost priority.

“What is the shortest word in the English language that contains the letters: abcdef?”

Answer: *feedback. We believe that feedback is one of the essential elements of progress.”*

Short Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Kathmandu rest and relax.

Day 2: Rest and cruise around the Thamel.

Day 3: Fly to Lukla

Day 4-9: Trek to Gokyo.

Day 10-12: Climb Gokyo-Ri, Explore Gokyo Lakes, and trek to Phortse.

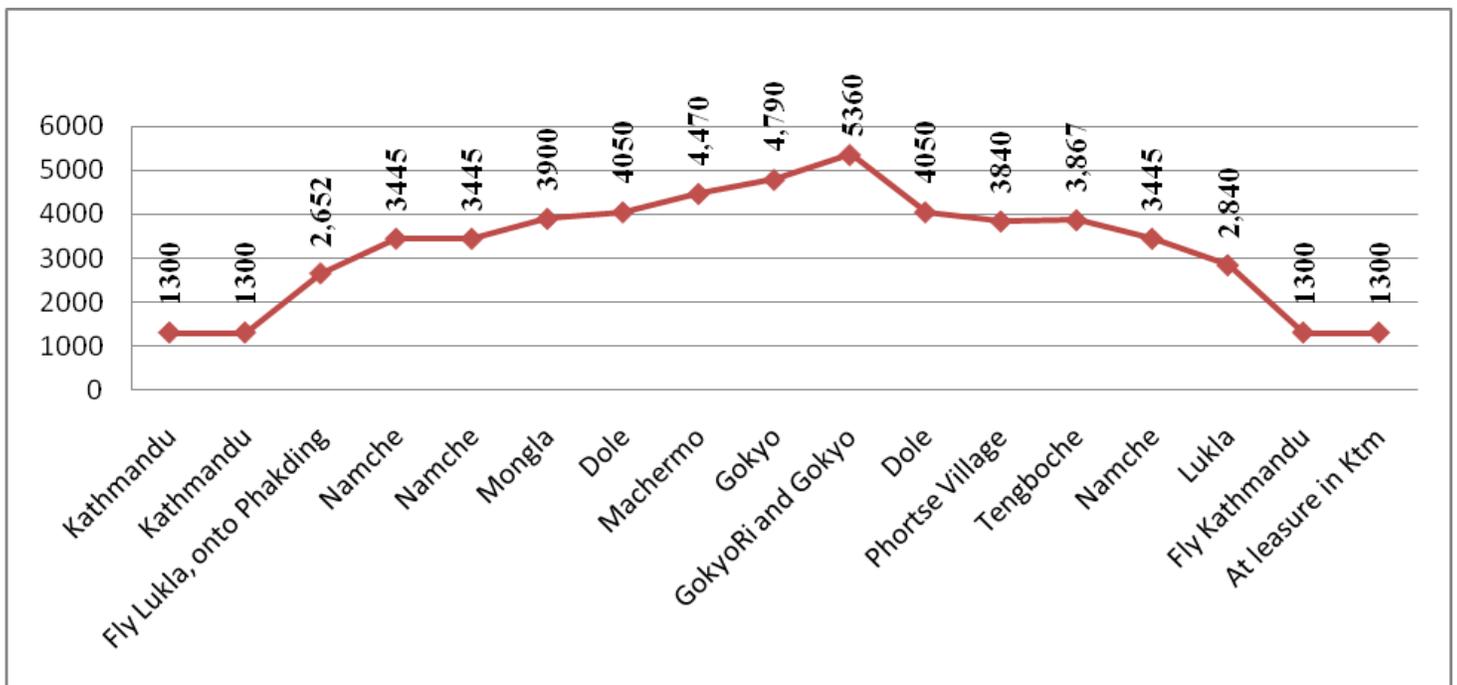
Day 13-15: Trek back to Lukla

Day 16: Fly back to Kathmandu early morning, free day for your own relaxation.

Day 17: Spare day if allow, if delay on flight

Day 18: Depart Kathmandu for home

Altitude Profile In Meters



Itinerary disclaimer

The itinerary is the strongest part of our trip. Stick to it and you will have little altitude related illness problems, go one day harder and you can be in big trouble. In our decade long experience as a guide and leader, we have tested these programs out several times. Sometimes they will seem slow but it's about enjoying the trip not pushing hard and having a headache all day. You need a very good reason to go faster. Going slower is Ok, just watch your overall progress. Shifting up one day instead of having a rest day can mean headaches and you then have to have a rest day later anyway!

Every effort will be made to keep to the above itinerary, but as this is Adventure Travel in a remote mountain region, we cannot guarantee it. Weather conditions and the health of climbers can all contribute to changes. The trek Leader/Guide and sherpas will try to ensure that the trip runs according to plan, but an easy going nature will be an asset! Issues that result in changes to trip finish dates, hotel or air tickets requirements etc need to be communicated to grand Himalaya HQ ASAP.

Furthermore, our Trip Notes is a general guide to the trek and region we are going to visit.

Any mention of specific destinations or flora and fauna is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or come across.

Includes and Excludes

Trek cost includes

- 3 night hotel accommodation in Kathmandu in 3 to 4 star category hotel. Breakfast is included. Accommodation is on a twin share basis.
- Trekking permits, National park entry fees & all government taxes.
- Domestic return flight ticket Kathmandu-Lukla-Kathmandu (Clients + Guide + Assistant Guide).

- All pickup and drop transportation from airport to airport both domestic & international airports.
- Domestic airport taxes.
- Four seasons sleeping bag and down jacket.
- Grand Himalaya Duffel bag to each client for the trek with their names on it.
- All lodging during the trekking period.
- Meal 3 times a day, Breakfast/lunch/dinner (tea/coffee/hot drinks on the trek).
- An experienced Sherpa guide
- Assistant guide/Sherpa (4 trekkers = 1 assistant guide).
- Appropriate number of porters.
- Post trip cultural celebration meal either at Nepali Chula restaurant or similar with all the staff.
- All local staff & porters properly insured & equipped.
- Oxygen & mask regulator set for medical use only.
- A comprehensive medical kit (bring your personal first aid kit).
- Travel and rescue arrangements.

Trek cost excludes

- International & home country domestic airfares, transfers en route & excess baggage.
- Your personal insurance: Medical, mountain rescue cover and repatriation is obligatory.
- Your personal expenses e. g phone calls, laundry, alcoholic beverage, mineral water, charges of showers.
- Main meals (**Lunch & Dinner**) in Kathmandu apart from celebration meal in Kathmandu.
- Your Nepal entry visa fee (USD \$40 available on entry) Valid for 30 days.
- Tipping to the guide & local staff (allow up to \$150 per person)
- Excess baggage above 20 kg will be extra charged USD \$1.5 per kg.
- Extra night accommodation in Kathmandu because of early arrival, late departure, early return from mountain (due to any reason) than the scheduled itinerary.

Booking Conditions

A deposit of 25% of the total trip cost is payable at the time of booking and the final balance due 6 weeks before the start of the trip. The act of booking implies that you have accepted the ethos of the trip and any objective or subjective risks associated with it.

Cancellation

Should you wish to cancel your booking please inform us immediately in writing by email or letter. The following charges will apply, as a percentage of the trip:

- ✓ More than 42 days before departure – 25% of total cost
- ✓ 42 to 29 days – 50% of total cost
- ✓ 28 days to 15 days – 75% of total cost and
- ✓ 14 days or less – 100% of total cost.

These cancellation charges go to paying, amongst other things, outside Guides that have been contracted in, hotel or airline deposits, staff wages, setting up costs etc.

Note

No refund if any member breaking from the group due to illness or otherwise and not utilized any services. Medical evacuation costs, extra accommodation or any other fees associated with early departure, change of itinerary, or breaking from the group due to illness or otherwise. The cost may need to be paid by clients at the time and may be able to be claimed back from your travel insurance company.

What to take

This is a very active trip, meaning you will be on the move most of the time, so pack as lightly as possible. Please note that between every 2 members there will be 1 porter/Yak and your trekking gear will be carried by the porter/Yak in a water-proof duffel bag that we will provide you. The maximum the porters/Yak is allowed to carry in Nepal is 30 Kg/22lbs, which means the average weight of each member's duffel bag shouldn't exceed 15Kgs. Besides, the airlines company that flies to the trekking areas of Nepal has a similar policy of allowing 15Kgs of luggage including your hand baggage for every passenger.

Some of your luggage can be left in Kathmandu, but you will need to take all your trekking gears with you.

Be a safe Trekker

1. Keep your eyes on your team mate while trekking and try to cohere with the group at all times. Trekking tracks in the Himalayas are often connected with caravans and nomads trail, trails to the villages nearby the trekking route, domestic and wild animals trail, etc. These off the trekking track can often mislead you and consequently, people could wander off the track towards the hazardous door.
2. Try not to ascent rapidly especially first few days of the trekking, no matter how physically tough you are. I presume trekking in the Himalayas is entirely different than trekking in the Alps and Andes. Keep your eyes all around you when trekking because there is an utmost possibility of seeing wild lives and some other interesting sites, rather than speeding up towards the next camp and end up holding your heads rest of the day.
3. Drink plenty of plain fluids at least 4 liters a day. Keeping yourself hydrated after day's exhaustion is a must which can prevent you from having AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness). Avoid drinking alcohol once you hit high altitude, which is above the altitude of 3500 meters. Make yourself habit of drinking water, tea, soup, juice and so on, instead of alcohol. Drinking alcohol at high altitude has been scientifically proved to be making your body more susceptible to AMS.
4. Make sure you do not overload your daypack as this could cause pain to your shoulders/back. The heaviest item in your daypack should be your water, so your daypack should get lighter as the day goes on. If your daypack feels uncomfortable at any point, stop and readjust it.
5. Ensure that your feet and other extremities are kept warm and dry at all times. There have been cases of people not adequately dressed getting frost bite at high altitude due to the freezing temperatures. Remember, although the temperatures at high elevations may not seem cold, wild chill can reduce this temperature even further. Always be prepared with something to cover your face, warm gloves and thick walking socks.

6. We advise that you take some plasters/a blister prevention kit with you to keep your feet in good condition. Don't lace your boots too tightly/loosely and if they feel uncomfortable readjust them and apply plasters when necessary.
7. Keep your head torch in your daypack, always. You never know when and where you end up walking in the dark.
8. Walking poles can aid your trek, providing additional support and balance. Walking poles also helps to significantly reduce knee strain, particular during decent.
9. Your guides and sherpas are very much experience about the places you are trekking. So we always recommend you to follow their instructions and help yourselves by helping them to create a most memorable plus successful trip.

We the entire family members of Grand Himalaya would like to wish you safe and successful trips.

Important to note

- Please read the 'Checklist' section of this trip notes for additional details of what you need to bring for the trek on this trip.
- You will need to bring a comfortable medium sized day pack to carry the things that you will need during the day. This should have a waist strap or (better) a padded waist belt.
- The weather is subject to change in high altitude so layered clothing is recommended throughout the year.

✓ Essential gear checklist

Personal Clothing

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of 3 season walking boots, must be well fitting & comfortable | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Warm hat woollen which covers your ears. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of Trainer (approach) shoes | <input type="checkbox"/> Thick Gore-Tex & thin fleece gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2+2 pairs of Warm woollen socks plus thin cool max socks | <input type="checkbox"/> 1+1 Sun & snow Glacier glasses 100% UV protection with side flaps and a hard-sided storage case (i.e. Julbo/Cebe). 1 pair extra sunglasses (Also with UV protection in case your 1st pair breaks or lost) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A warm woollen base layer | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Down jacket (available for hire in Kathmandu at charge of \$ 2 per day) if required. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2/3 Cotton or Cool max T-shirts | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 4 season sleeping bag (available for hire in Kathmandu at charge of \$ 4 per day) if required. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 suit of Thermal top & bottoms Icebreaker are recommended | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Rucksack 50 litre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 suit of Wind proof jacket with hood (Gore-Tex) | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Walking trousers must be warm & comfortable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Suit of Waterproof jacket & trouser | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of Sandal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A fleece jacket & trouser with side zips | |

- 1 Shade hat or baseball cap
- 1 Small duffel bag for luggage storage in Kathmandu
- 1 Kit bags
- 1 Fleece scarf or neck gaiter
- Good quality Camera to capture the memorable moments of your life in the Himalaya.
- Swim suit while you in Kathmandu hotel

Personal Equipment

- Water-proof bag for sleeping bag (e.g. dry bag or robust plastic bag(s))
- 1 Head lamp with enough spare batteries (Petzl or Black Diamond)
- 1 pair Gaiters for boots appropriate to type of boot
- 2 Water bottle (1 litre Nalgene) with wide mouth
- 1 Hydration bladder with drinking tube for lower altitude - (optional).
- 1 pair warm gloves Fleece or wool
- 1 pair Foldable Trekking-poles
- 2 Lip guard. At least SPF 20.
- Pocket knife (Swiss knife)

1 set - Personal first-aid kit with Ibuprofen, Amoxicillin, Ciprofloxacin, Immodium, Diamox, Stemetil, Paracetamol and any other doctor recommended medications. Blister on the feet are quite common problems during the walking or trekking period. So it might be good idea to have some appropriate plasters, there are few different shape of Compeeds available now a days.

Other Personal Gear

- Valid Passport and passport size photos
- Fanny pack or wallet for travel documents, money & passport
- Favourite snack foods
- Paperback books, Sudoku book, cards, Walkman, iPod etc
- Personal toiletries as necessary
- Small padlock for duffel bag is also essential during the trek
- Towel
- 2/3 packets wet wipes for cleaning hand and face are useful
- 100ml Anti-Bacterial Hand Hygiene (Hand Sanitizer) Gel
- Water purification Iodine tablets or Polar-pure crystals.

Equipment supplied by us

- ✓ 1 **Grand Himalaya** Kit bag (water proof) will be provided to you in Kathmandu for the trek. This will be included in your trek cost. Your travelling kit bag can remain at the Hotel in Kathmandu with spare clothes for after the trek.)
- ✓ Satellite phone if you are travelling in a remotest part of Nepal (pay for air time used: USD \$5/minute)
- ✓ Group medical kit (for altitude illness, trauma, reserve antibiotics)

NOTE: You must have most of the above personal gear, clothing and equipment. It may be possible to buy some extra equipment (If forgotten) but don't rely on it.





Grand Himalaya

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Pull your socks...tie your shoe lace...let's get started!