

# All about Trekking

**Choosing a trek** - There are countless long treks in Nepal, some of which still see only a handful of Western trekkers on the trail as well as more popular treks such as Everest Base Camp, Annapurna Sanctuary and Circuit, Langtang and Jomsom. Many previously off limits areas have also been opened up for trekkers in organised camping groups in the Upper Mustang, Upper Dolpo, Manaslu, Humla and the Kanchenjunga Base Camp areas in the north east of the country.

It is also possible to do short treks in Nepal that do not have demanding altitudes nor need any sophisticated equipment, years of experience or great fitness, with some suitable even for young children. The only thing you need is sensible planning and preparation.

**How long is a trek?** - A trekking trip can be any length you choose. Popular short treks taking only one, two or three days to complete and are available around the Kathmandu and Pokhara Valleys. Longer treks can last from a week to a month. It's also possible to combine a series of treks and walk for months on end. A typical day's walk lasts from five to seven hours.

**What do I have to carry?** - You carry only what you need during the day, for example a daypack with your camera, water bottle, anorak or sweater, sunglasses and sun cream; anything you think you might need whilst walking. Your main baggage is

carried by porters, mules, yaks or horses. We provide a tough canvas trek bag to contain your main luggage, provided free to you on confirmation of your booking. Backpacks are also fine to use.

**Trail conditions** - Trails are well maintained and many trails up steep slopes are paved with stones. Trekking in Nepal in particular involves a lot of walking up and down rather than direct routes. Most treks go through areas of between 1000-3000m although the Everest Base Camp trek and the Annapurna Circuit trek, the most popular trek routes, reach over 5000m. Walking normally starts in the foothills and cultivated terrace areas with paths following old trading and communications routes through deep gorges, forests, lush valley floors, across rivers by suspension bridge and perhaps wading across streams, over high passes from one region to another, connecting villages and monasteries and communities. More strenuous treks may cross glaciers and snow covered passes.

**Sherpa Guide or Sirdar** - We use professionally trained and experienced local Sherpa guides or Sirdars on our treks and tours and are totally confident in their ability and experience in leading these routes. Local guides are integral to providing you with the best travel experience and using local guides means that not only do you benefit from their local knowledge during your trek and gain

a real insight into local culture, your travel is also directly supporting local people, creating employment and giving something back to local communities at the same time as you enjoy travelling. Our guides and Sirdars have first aid training.

**Why do I need a guide?** - There are many advantages to using a guide during your trek. Our guides will make your trek easier and often cheaper by negotiating on your behalf for food and accommodation during the trek, they will show you places of cultural interest, they will make all arrangements with lodge owners for your comfort and privacy and should there be any problems your guide will be there to sort it out.

**Meeting local people** - You will have every opportunity to meet and interact with local people. To start with, your guide and Sherpa crew will be local people as are all our Himalayan counterparts who will meet you on arrival. During your trek, the trails you will follow are traditional routes used by local villagers and tribespeople that you will pass on your trek. If you stay in teahouse lodges, the lodge owners will be local people. You will have the opportunity to meet local people and may be invited into their homes to share a local barley beer (chang) or cup of yak butter tea and meet other members of their families. You will certainly be able to experience the warmth and hospitality of local people during your travel, as they live and work and follow the mountain trails.



**What happens if there are any problems?**

- All treks are led by experienced and professional Sherpa guides and (for camping treks) crews. Your guide is there to act as a leader and local expert who will be able to help with any problems to ensure you a safe and enjoyable experience. Additionally, on our remote treks, your guide will carry a Very High Frequency (VHF) telephone or high speed satellite phone, for use in medical or emergency situations only. Our sister office in Kathmandu and in the UK also work closely together at all times.

**Altitude sickness** - Altitude sickness, also known as Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), is the major concern on high altitude treks and if not treated when symptoms first appear, can result in death. AMS is the effect of lack of oxygen at high levels on those who ascend too rapidly to elevations of 3000m or above. High altitude affects most people to some extent. Early stages of mountain sickness include headaches, dizziness, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping. Being young or fit doesn't mean you won't or will be affected as different people react differently to the effects of high altitude. Medicine is no substitute for a hurried descent or evacuation to lower altitude. If a doctor is available he may give medicine and oxygen but the patient must go down to lower altitudes even if treated. For travel in the Khumbu region, hospitals in Khunde and

Pheriche and for travel in Manang, Manang hospital is available. Doctors are available throughout the trekking season. All our itineraries are planned to allow sufficient time for acclimatisation and on our more remote high altitude treks we provide a portable gamma bag as well as satellite phones to ensure safety and if necessary, speedy evacuation.

**Rescue evacuation** - If an unfortunate incident occurs such as flight delays, illness and bad weather on any part of the trekking route and rescue evacuation is required, our well trained and experienced guides will provide every assistance to you. We coordinate our service with a recognised private helicopter company and the Nepalese army in the case of emergency rescue. We also register every trekker name with the appropriate Diplomatic Missions, Embassies and Consulates and have easy access to high speed and satellite telephones to ensure prompt rescue services.

**Trekking peaks** - Climbing a trekking peak is not the same as trekking. The Nepal Mountaineering Association issues permission for small-scale climbing on 18 peaks. Those who would like to climb these trekking peaks must obtain a permit. Permits are valid for one month for a group of ten climbers. If the group exceeds ten climbers an extra fee is payable. Few of the trekking





peaks are 'walk up' and some peaks can be technically demanding and dangerous. Even 'small' peaks are much higher than any mountain in North America. Most of the trekking peaks require a minimum of four days and it can take as much as three weeks for an ascent. A climbing permit does not replace a trekking permit, so you need both if you are planning to climb a trekking peak.

Peaks that can be climbed under the trekking peak regulations are in the following regions: Everest region, Rolwaling, Manang region, Langtang region, Annapurna region, Ganesh Himal. In commemoration of the Mount Everest Golden Jubilee Celebration in 2003, the government has opened an additional 50 trekking peaks, making the total number of peaks 326 with royalty payment for many of the new peaks waived for 3 years. We offer a range of technical and non-technical climbing expeditions including the popular trekking peaks such as Island Peak or Mera Peak as well as the major peaks including Mount Everest, Cho Oyu, Kanchenjunga and others. Our high altitude climbing expeditions are led by experienced Sherpa

climbers including Everest Summiteers and World Record Holders such as Pemba Dorjee Sherpa, the 3 times and current World Record Holder for the fastest Everest ascent (8 hours 10 minutes) and Temba Tsheri Sherpa, the youngest person to summit Everest, age 15 in 2001.

**Visa and passport requirements** - All British subjects require a full passport for all treks and trips listed. Passports must have at least 6 months validity after the completion of your trip. To secure your booking and avoid any additional charges, information provided to us on your booking form must match exactly the details as shown in your passport. A visa is required by all foreign nationals to enter Nepal and also for India. Visas for Nepal can be obtained in advance or on arrival at the airport in Kathmandu. Additional visas will be required if you are travelling to Bhutan, Tibet or Sikkim. Visas for India and Sikkim must be applied for in advance of travel. We will provide details of visa requirements at the time of booking or on request. Generally visa applications should be made 2-3 months in advance of your

departure date. Visas for Bhutan and Tibet will be arranged through our local partners, Gurkha Encounters, in Kathmandu, Nepal. We will require passport details a minimum of 4 weeks prior to travel in order to make the necessary arrangements. For some extreme adventure expeditions or travel into remote areas of Tibet, visa applications and permits may require longer to arrange and we will inform you of this at the time of booking or on request. Providing we make our best efforts to advise you of all visa requirements we cannot be held responsible for visa problems arising from embassy mistakes or delays, changes to regulations or actions by border officials that are beyond our control.

**Insurance** - All our clients are required to have appropriate insurance. For more information call us or visit our website at [www.greathimal.com](http://www.greathimal.com). We will ask you to provide a copy of your policy before the start of your trip. Policies must include cover for helicopter evacuation in the event of serious illness as well as cover for



accidental injury, inability to continue at high altitude, cancellation, death and repatriation etc. Insurance should also cover for possible evacuation in the event of being stranded in any remote airfield due to bad weather conditions.

**Baggage Allowance** - We request that you aim for a maximum weight of 15kg for your main baggage including clothing and personal equipment. Many of our trips involve porters and/or taking internal flights and 15kg is often the maximum weight permitted and is also the maximum safe allowance for porters. The Himalayan Adventure Company or our Himalayan partners are not responsible for excess baggage charges.

**Permits** - In Nepal, to enter certain National Park or wildlife reserve areas under the King Mahendra Trust for Nature and Conservation, a special permit is required. For example an Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) permit to enter the Annapurna region and

similar for Sagarmatha National Park, Makalu, Kanchenjunga and other areas. If you are visiting more than one of these areas you will require a separate permit for each area. Those who decide to trek to remote restricted areas also need to acquire additional special trekking permits. The price of our trips include all permit and entry fees as per the itinerary. Where this is not the case, for example you have requested a tailor made program, we will advise you of any applicable permit fees.

**When to Book** - To ensure a place on your chosen trip, we recommend you book as early as possible. Early booking also helps you to secure the lowest fares for scheduled flight seats, whether booking through us or making your own flight arrangements. Certain times of the year are also more busy than others and early booking also ensures we have time to obtain special permits that are often required for your travel arrangements,

particularly if visiting Tibet and Bhutan or certain restricted areas of Nepal. A small deposit secures your booking with payment of the balance not due until 60 days (8 weeks) before your departure. For tailor made or individual travel arrangements it is still useful to book as early as possible to ensure time to make all the necessary arrangements.

**When to go** - Depending on what you want to do and where you plan to go, it is possible to visit the Himalaya most of the year. Our small group trips are based around the best times to visit each region and should provide a guide as to when to visit each area. Contact us for more details.

**A typical day on a fully organised (camping style) trek** - The day starts early when you'll be woken with a cup of tea or coffee from one of your Sherpa crew, who'll also provide you with a bowl of hot water for washing. Once you're up breakfast of porridge, eggs, bread, pancakes, tea and coffee is served. While you're enjoying your breakfast and the local views, your Sherpa crew will take down the tents, tidy up the camp and pack up the loads for the porters. The entire group is usually on the trail by 7am to take advantage of the cool morning to accomplish most of the day's trek. The porters are slower and the Sherpas, especially the cooking crew, race ahead to prepare lunch for when you arrive. The afternoon walk is usually short, lasting 3 or 4 hours at most. Tents are put up well before sunset and soon afterwards dinner is served. This is a more elaborate meal consisting of hot soup and a main meal (a variety of Nepalese, Chinese and Continental cuisines) rounded off with dessert and a cup of tea or coffee.

