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Sublime Sikkim (Pemayangtse and Yuksom)

From	To
2007	
Sun 14 Oct	Wed 24 Oct
Sun 21 Oct	Wed 31 Oct
Sun 28 Oct	Wed 07 Nov

From	To
2008	
Sun 13 Apr	Wed 23 Apr
Sun 27 Apr	Wed 07 May
Sun 04 May	Wed 14 May
Sun 12 Oct	Wed 22 Oct
Sun 26 Oct	Wed 05 Nov

Grade: Easy (tour)
 Max elevation 1600m



Duration: 11 Days

Land only price per person (join in Kathmandu)

Group Size	4-6	7-16
Luxury & boutique hotels	£1695	£1495
Flight Price	From £500	
Insurance	Available on request	
Single hotel supplement	£450	

Introduction:

This combination tour provides plenty of opportunity to encounter the rich culture and ancient artefacts of Nepal and of Pemayangste monastery and Yuksom in West Sikkim, as well as the chance to sample some of the highlights of Darjeeling and Gangtok. Pemayangste, "The Sublime Perfect Lotus", is the head of all other monasteries of the Nyingma-pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism, great both in antiquity and in sanctity. The majority of Sikkimese Buddhists belong to this sect. Enjoy relaxed sightseeing, easy short walks and some of the most breathtaking mountain views.



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Day 01: Arrive Kathmandu

Welcome to Kathmandu. You'll be met and assisted at the airport by our local representatives who will arrange the transfer and check in to your luxury hotel. After time to get refreshed and have lunch you'll meet the rest of the group. After introductions it's time for a relaxed and easy walking tour to Kathmandu's central Durbar Square where we'll visit the ancient palace, the living goddess Kumari temple, Hanuman Dhoka and Kastamandap Temple. After our gentle walk enjoy a group welcome dinner and chance to get to know each other before turning in for a good night's rest at the hotel.

Day 02: Kathmandu and Valley

After breakfast take time to enjoy a day of relaxed sightseeing on a guided tour to some of the highlights of Kathmandu and the surrounding Valley. Visit Swoyambhunath Stupa, also known as the Monkey Temple with its fine views over Kathmandu and many interesting features as well as the great stupa itself. Join the devotees, pilgrims and wandering siddhus (holy men) at Pashupatinath. Pashupatinath Temple is the most important Hindu temple in Nepal as well as being one of the most important Shiva temples on the subcontinent, situated on the banks of the holy Bagmati River. Take time to walk around Bodhnath (Boudha) stupa, the largest in Nepal and one of the largest in the world. Boudha is also the centre of Tibetan culture in Nepal and a wonderfully vibrant interesting community. Explore the streets, temples and courtyards of Patan, the second largest town in the Kathmandu Valley. Returning to Kathmandu, this evening is free for you to rest, and enjoy the hotel and surrounds

Day 03: Kathmandu to Bhadrapur to Darjeeling

After breakfast at the hotel, this morning we transfer to the domestic airport for our flight to Bhadrapur (Eastern Nepal). After being met on arrival by our local representative, we'll commence the scenic drive to Darjeeling (145km, 5-6 hours) after completion of immigration formalities at the border (145km: 5 to 6 hrs). Arriving in the picturesque hill station of Darjeeling, we'll check in for a good night's rest ready for tomorrow's activities.

Day 04: Darjeeling

Spend today seeing the sights in Darjeeling (2143m), on a guided tour including morning visits to the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre, the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute/Zoo and Happy Valley Tea Garden. In the afternoon, enjoy a scenic ride on the Toy Train. In the afternoon, enjoy a scenic and nostalgic ride on the miniature steam Toy Train, the world's highest track railway as it puffs and toots its way to Ghoom (8km/1hr). Arriving in Ghoom we'll visit the Railway Museum, Ghoom Monastery and the colourful local market before returning to relax for the evening in Darjeeling.

Day 05: Tiger Hill, Pemyangtse and Rabdantse

An early morning trip brings us to Tiger Hill to view the sunrise over the mountains before enjoying a hearty breakfast. After breakfast we'll drive past terraced rice fields, pine forests and tea gardens to reach Pemayangtse in Sikkim (2085m, 118km, 7hrs). As well as being an important religious center Pemayangtse also offers wonderful panoramic views of the eastern Himalayas, including mighty Kanchenjunga. Pemayangtse Monastery, known as "The Sublime Perfect Lotus", is the head of all monasteries of the Nyingma-pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism and revered both for its sanctity and antiquity. View the magnificent brilliantly hued frescoes of gods and demons on the walls and ceilings and the intricately carved woodwork, "Zangkok", portraying the Mahaguru's heavenly palace. We'll also visit



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Rabdanste Palace Ruins, the 2nd capital of Sikkim. We'll check in at our hotel and the remainder of the day is at leisure.

Day 06: Yuksom

Before breakfast, enjoy a relaxed (one hour) walk to Sanga Choeling Monastery, high up on a secluded and serene forest ridge. Enjoy a hearty breakfast before we commence the drive (42km, 4 hours) to Yuksom, the first capital of Sikkim. Enroute, we'll stop to make a wish at Kecheopalri Lake, the "Wishing Lake", considered to be the holiest in Sikkim and located 11 km between Pemayangste and Yuksom. After lunch at the hotel in Yuksom, enjoy a visit to Dubdi Monastery, the oldest in Sikkim and to Norbu Gang, where the first Chogyal (Religious King) of Sikkim was consecrated in 1642. After checking into the hotel, the rest of the evening is at leisure.

Day 07: Gangtok

Today we'll drive to Gangtok via Tashiding and Rabong La (1600m, 125km, 6 to 7 hr). Visit Tashiding monastery which has the holiest Chorten (Stupa) in Sikkim. Tashiding is 21 km away from Yuksom. The monastery is situated on a hilltop above the village. It takes about 45 minutes to walk up and vehicles are not allowed to drive up. After checking into the hotel the evening is at leisure.

Day 08: Gangtok

Enjoy a full day of guided sightseeing today. Highlights of Gangtok include morning visits to Ganesh Tok View Point, Enchay Monastery, the local traditional Handicrafts Centre and (if available) the local Flower Show. In the afternoon we'll visit the Institute of Tibetology and Rumtek Monastery (24km from Gangtok, 1hr drive each way) before returning to the hotel for a relaxed evening at leisure.

Day 09: Gangtok to Bhadrapur

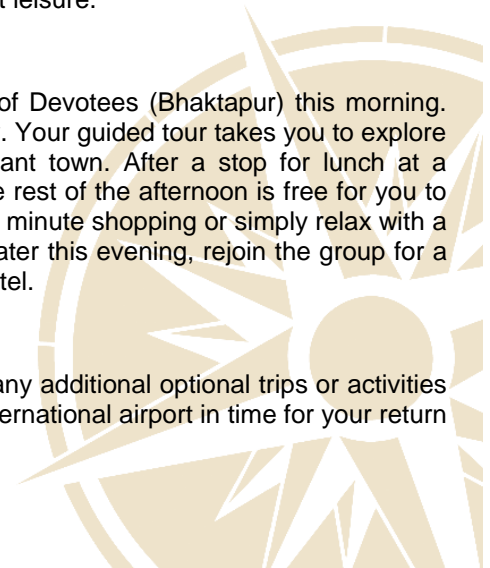
Today we'll take a scenic drive back to Bhadrapur airport in Nepal (185km/6 hrs), with a halt for immigration formalities at the border. Upon arrival in Kathmandu we'll be met by local representatives for the transfer and check in to the hotel. The remainder of today is at leisure.

Day 10: Kathmandu and Valley

After breakfast at the hotel, we'll take a short drive to the City of Devotees (Bhaktapur) this morning. This traditional and traffic free town is the third major in the Valley. Your guided tour takes you to explore the medieval like squares, courtyards and temples of this vibrant town. After a stop for lunch at a restaurant in Bhaktapur it's time to drive back to Kathmandu. The rest of the afternoon is free for you to explore the streets of Kathmandu, perhaps catch up on some last minute shopping or simply relax with a coffee or glass of wine and watch life go by, Kathmandu style. Later this evening, rejoin the group for a farewell dinner at a wonderful little restaurant. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 11: Depart Kathmandu

Today your time is free to relax until departure or to commence any additional optional trips or activities you may have booked. If departing, you'll be transferred to the International airport in time for your return flight home.





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Extending your holiday

There are many choices and options if you'd like to extend your holiday before or after your main booking. Here are just a few suggestions of extensions available for this trip:

- Take a jungle safari by charter elephant to spot rare species including the Royal Bengal Tiger in the Royal Chitwan National Park
- Enjoy the adrenaline rush of white water rafting in Nepal
- Relax by the lakeside in Pokhara, Nepal
- See the wonder of the Taj Mahal and enjoy relaxed sightseeing around Delhi
- Play a round of golf on an international standard course in the Himalayan foothills
- Visit the mysterious and ancient land of Tibet and travel across the 'roof of the world'

Please contact our UK office if you'd like to extend your stay by booking one of the above options, if you would like ideas or advice on how best to spend your time and budget or if you would like help with arranging any special celebrations during your trip.

Useful Information

The following information is aimed at helping you to decide whether this trip is right for you. Additional information can be found on our website and in our brochure. If you have any questions or would like advice on any aspect of this trip please contact us and we'll be happy to go through everything with you.

Day to Day Itinerary

It must be realized that with adventure travel changes to an itinerary may occur, for example due to unexpected weather conditions. The day to day itinerary is provided as a general guideline and is intended to give you a general sense of what to expect, including places visited and activities during the trip to help with your decision regards which trip is the best one for you. Activities and timings may vary slightly from those outlined Your guide will make any changes necessary and all arrangements during the trip, including explaining reasons for any changes to the itinerary that may occur.

Trip Duration and Grading

This trip is 11 days with Day 1 beginning in Kathmandu and ending on Day 11 back in Kathmandu. The trip has been graded easy. There will be some easy day walks as part of your guided sightseeing, for example when visiting temples, palaces or gardens, usually a maximum of a few hours walking each day with no continuous walking and no high elevations. This tour is also suitable for families.

Group Size

The maximum number of persons on this trip will be 16 and the minimum number 4 persons. By keeping group sizes small it means we can provide a more personal service to you.

Local Representatives and Guides

You will be met at the airport on arrival by our local representatives who will always be available to help with your arrival, departure and any queries or requirements during your trip. The group will be accompanied by a local English speaking guide throughout the trip. Once you have confirmed your booking we will send you details of how you will be met on arrival and you will meet your guide just after you arrive.



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Accommodation

During this trip you will spend 4 nights at a luxury (four or five star) hotel in Kathmandu (2 nights at the start of your trip and 2 nights before departure). In Darjeeling you'll spend 2 nights at a luxury boutique hotel. There will be 1 night at a luxury boutique hotel in Rabdantse and 1 night at a luxury boutique hotel in Yuksom. You'll also spend 2 nights at a luxury boutique hotel in Gangtok.

All accommodation is based on twin share. If you are traveling on your own and are happy to share with someone, we will arrange for you to share a room with someone of the same sex, at no extra charge. If you request a single room the single room supplement charge for this trip will apply. It is usually possible to arrange single room accommodation but please contact our office to confirm this.

Meals

During the days spent in Darjeeling and Sikkim all meals on full board basis during the trip are included in the price. During the days spent in Kathmandu meals on half board basis are included. This is to allow you the freedom and opportunity to make your own choice of the wonderful places to eat in the evenings, particularly in Kathmandu. Snacks, bottled drinks including mineral water and alcohol are not included.

Flight Inclusive Price and International Flights

The flight inclusive price is based on best available price (at the time of producing our current brochure) of economy return flights from the UK added to the 'land only' price. Flight prices are subject to change and do vary throughout the year. We use a variety of airlines and scheduled flights on our trips including British Airways, Air India, Gulf Air, Qatar Air etc. Our ATOL licence is T7199 and we work with other ATOL holders to issue flight tickets. For exact air fares and flight classes available at the time you wish to travel please contact us.

Land Only Option

Our trips are based on 'land only' as well as flight inclusive options to allow you the flexibility to choose to make your own arrangements for flights or perhaps to arrive a few days earlier or leave a few days later than the trip or to join the trip from anywhere in the world. If you choose the land only option we will provide full details of how and when to meet the rest of your group, details of your hotel and local contacts upon confirmation of your booking. All accommodation during your trip is included in the price although additional days before or after the start and end dates of your trip are not included. We are happy to book additional accommodation or optional activities, based on your requirements and budget, on request.

Please note that whilst at all times we aim to run our trip even with just a few persons, on some of the longer treks or trips, should the group size be less than our minimum operating level we may cancel the trip up to 6 weeks before departure. In the rare event that this happens, we will offer alternative dates or trips or refunds as appropriate and agreed with you. If you are arranging your own flights and accommodation prior to the start date of a group trip we recommend that you book fully flexible and refundable accommodation and transport if booking more than 6 weeks in advance, as should we need to cancel the trip compensation will not be paid for any arrangements that have been made independently.



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Climate and Weather

Depending on where you want to go and what you want to do, it is possible to visit India throughout the year. The coolest weather is from November to mid March when there are cool fresh mornings and evenings with dry sunny days. Between April and June the weather can be very hot and dry.

Generally October to March are the best months to travel in most areas. In the far south January to September is a good time to visit. During the monsoon rainy season (June to September) is a good time to visit the deserts of Rajasthan and the northwestern Indian Himalayan regions. For Sikkim and northeastern areas March to August are good times to visit. For trekking in India, April to November is generally the best time although this depends on region and altitude.

Clothing and Equipment

Generally lightweight to medium weight clothing in natural fabrics from March to October with something warmer for the evenings and warm clothing for winter. We also suggest you take comfortable walking shoes and a small day pack or shoulder bag. In the mountains and at high altitude the weather can change rapidly so it is important to have appropriate clothing and equipment. On teahouse style treks we provide free of charge a four season sleeping bag and cotton liner. On fully provisioned camping style treks we provide twin share dome or A frame sleeping tents, kitchen tent, mess tent, toilet tent, tables, chairs, stools, lanterns/candles, thin sleeping mattresses, all crockery and cutlery and a fully equipped kitchen set up. Upon booking with us we will send you a suggested clothing and equipment list appropriate to your trip including details of any must have items or items that can be hired (if required).

Baggage Allowance

We request that you aim for a maximum weight of 15 to 20 kg for your main baggage including clothing and personal equipment. Many of our trips involve porters and/or local flights and 15kg is the maximum safe weight allowance for porters and permitted on local flights. International flights will usually permit up to 20kg maximum weight. If trekking, some additional baggage can usually be stored until you return from your trek. Remember you may also want to leave some weight allowance for any items you have bought during your trip! The Himalayan Adventure Company and our local partners are not responsible for excess baggage charges.

FREE Himalayan Adventure Company Trek Bag

On confirmation of booking we will provide a FREE Himalayan Adventure Company trek bag. For clients living outside the UK will provide a free bag on payment of post and packaging delivery only

Passport and Visa Requirements

A full valid passport and a current India Visa is required for all trips and treks. Passports must have at least 6 months validity after the completion date of your trip. To secure your booking and avoid any additional charges, information (eg spelling of name) provided to us on your booking form must match exactly the details as shown in your passport. Additional visas and trekking permits are required for travel to Sikkim. Indian visas can be obtained in the UK from the High Commission of India in London or from the Indian Consulate in Birmingham or Edinburgh.

To enter Nepal you will require a visa which can be obtained in advance from the Royal Nepalese Embassy in London (UK applications) or on arrival at the airport in Kathmandu for a fee of US\$30. Single-entry tourist visas are valid for up to 60 days and can be extended to a maximum of three months



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for an additional charge. You will need to get a double entry visa for Nepal as we will be leaving then re-entering the Kingdom after our time in Sikkim. We will provide up to date information on visa requirements, costs and the application process on confirmation of your booking or on request.

You are responsible for ensuring you have a valid passport and visa prior to departure. Where appropriate, we will arrange any special permits or visas required to visit specific restricted areas included as part of the itinerary whilst you are in the country and may request information from you to allow us to do this.

Permits

To enter certain areas e.g. National Parks or other trekking or protected areas, you may require a permit. All our trip prices include the cost of relevant permits and entrance fees. Where this is not the case, for example you have booked a tailor made private trip, we will inform you of any required permit fees before you make a booking with us.

Health and Medical Information

It is your responsibility to ensure you are well and fit enough to join the trip. If you are unsure of this please contact our office to talk it through with one of our experienced staff members. We also recommend you speak to your GP if you are in any way unsure of your fitness level required to join the trip. We also suggest you have a thorough medical and dental check up before you travel. You may need specific vaccinations appropriate to the country or area you will visit. You must tell us if you have an existing medical condition or disability that might affect your holiday before you make a booking with us. If, in our reasonable opinion, your chosen holiday is not suitable for your medical condition, disability or level of fitness, we reserve the right to cancel the contract or to suggest more appropriate alternative options for you. A group medical kit will be carried on each trip or trek but we also recommend that individuals carry their own basic first aid kit and we will send a suggested list of items for this when you make a booking.

For useful health and general travel advice and information we suggest you visit the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo> and also obtain a copy of the UK Department of Health leaflet *Advice on Health for Travellers* or speak to your local GP or practice nurse for their recommendations.

What's Included in the Price?

Airport pickup and transfer, local English speaking guide services, pre trip briefing on arrival, all accommodation during the trip on twin share basis, all main meals (full board basis) during the days spent in Darjeeling and Sikkim, meals on half board basis during the days spent in Kathmandu, all sightseeing and activities as per the trip itinerary, all entrance fees and permits required, all transportation during the trip (by car, boat, local flight etc), a group first aid kit, a free Himalayan Adventure Company trek bag, international flights (flight inclusive priced package only).

What's Not Included in the Price?

Visa fees, personal travel insurance, vaccinations, airport departure and reentry fees, additional private bus, car or jeep rental to any destination on the trek other than transport provided during the trip, bar/alcoholic beverages, bottled water, personal expenses eg for souvenirs, personal clothes, food or snacks during transfer journeys, tips for guides, porters, driver etc, alternative transportation (eg car/air)



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in case of heavy rainfall, landslide, strike or road blockage, international flights (unless requested), laundry, optional trips, holiday extensions and activities, excess luggage charges, additional accommodation before or after the start and end dates specified

Our Experience

We have a love of and respect for the Himalaya. Our founders and office staff are all experienced travelers who share many years of helping other travelers achieve their ambitions. The fact that we specialise in travel to the Himalaya and that we have extensive local knowledge and experience of the area means that we can offer you a wide range of travel options and provide the best standards of service to you. Being an independent specialist travel operator means we can offer a friendly personal service and are able to be flexible and use our experience and contacts to build new and tailor made programs as well as to continue to develop new and improved services. We have a wealth of experience in helping many individuals and groups in designing and planning adventures, ranging from romantic breaks to personal challenges to school study programmes to extreme adventure expeditions, from low budget to no expense spared and we have lots of ideas, suggestions and experience to share with you. We are also delighted to say that many of our clients return again and again to travel with us and many of our new clients are through recommendations and word of mouth from happy and satisfied clients who have previously traveled with us.

Fair Pricing

We aim to provide you with the best service at fair and competitive prices and excellent value for money. As part of this, most of our trips are priced for different group sizes with the higher price applicable for smaller groups. With larger groups the price drops so that everyone benefits from a cheaper holiday. We offer 'land only' prices, for travellers who prefer to make their own international flight and transfer arrangements but are happy to arrange flights for you on request, using a variety of international carriers from regional and national airports. Our ATOL number is T7199 and we work with other ATOL holders to issue flight tickets. Additionally, we offer special discounts for groups of 10 or over, schools and group leaders. Contact us for more information.

Your Financial Protection

We understand how important it is that the money you spend on your holiday is securely protected. You may also have concerns about booking with an independent operator. To give you peace of mind and confidence in our service to you we have a number of ways in which we protect the money you pay for your holiday. The company is a full member of the Travel Trust Association (<http://www.traveltrust.co.uk>) membership number U3237, in compliance with the EC Directive on Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours. For flight bookings and issuing of tickets our ATOL number is T7199 and we work only with ATOL licence holders. For flight bookings the money you pay is protected under the ATOL holder's licence. For all other arrangements, your payment to us is held in a separate Trust Fund and only released to us on your return. In addition, we provide free to you, a 'Safe Seat Plan' insurance cover which means that in the unlikely case of your money not being held in the Trust Account or of our insolvency, you will be fully reimbursed for the loss of any monies paid to us, up to a limit of £11 000 per person. Therefore, for your peace of mind and confidence, all money you have paid to us is always 100% protected and available to pay for the services you have booked.





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Insurance

Before confirming your booking we will need to see evidence of adequate travel insurance. Whilst you are able to choose your insurance from any provider, as members of the Travel Trust Association (TTA) we are able to offer some of the best and most competitive travel insurance on the market to our clients. Policies can be printed and given or mailed out or emailed to you. Contact us for more information, to request a quote, to see policy wording or to purchase your insurance.

Responsible Tourism

We believe that tourism should benefit local communities and that responsible travel does not mean a compromise in standards. We aim to promote responsible travel that respects and benefits local cultures, communities and environments and we support Tourism Concern, are a sponsor of the International Porter Protection Group and a friend of The Sahara Group. We donate 5% of profits to local charities and are involved in local development and voluntary work in the Himalayas, particularly in Nepal. For every booking made we also donate £10 to The Sahara Group (<http://www.saharagroup.org.np>) to help continue their wonderful work with street children with HIV/AIDS, women and children affected by human trafficking and poor rural communities. We employ local guides, office and support staff and ensure they have good facilities and fair wages and we work as a team to ensure you a wonderful adventure holiday.

Suggested Reading

We recommend you learn about the places and cultures you will visit before you travel so that you can enjoy your travel even more. Below are just a few varied suggestions to get you started:

Lonely Planet India (Travel Guide), Hugh Finlay, Sarina Singh (Editor)
Seasons of Splendour: Tales, Myths and Legends of India, Madhur Jaffrey, Michael Foreman (Illustrator), A Photographic Guide to the Birds of India: And the Indian Subcontinent, Including Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, Bikram Grewal, Bill Harvey, A Journey in Ladakh, Andrew Harvey, Sikkim Himalaya: Travels in the Cloud Kingdom, David Lang.

How to Book

Once you have chosen your trek or trip, contact our office to check availability and ask any questions you may have. We'll hold a provisional booking for 7 days. Please read our Terms and Conditions prior to making your booking. Then post or fax us your completed booking form (available in our brochure or downloaded from our website) along with the appropriate deposit of £250 per person and (if applicable) any insurance premiums to our UK office address. If you choose to phone us with your debit or credit card details, a signed and completed booking form will still be required for confirmation of booking. Bookings will only be confirmed once we receive a completed and signed booking form along with appropriate payment.

Your invoice will read "Payable to and on behalf of The Himalayan Adventure Company Travel Trust Account". Similarly all cheques and other payment should be made payable to The Himalayan Adventure Company Travel Trust Account.



We are members of the Travel Trust Association and as part of this we operate a trust account for the financial protection of our clients in accordance with The Package Travel, package holiday, and package tour



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regulations 1992. All monies received from clients are held in a separate trust account, released on completion of travel.

We will confirm your booking and send you a trip dossier which will include confirmation of your booking, a day by day itinerary, visa and trekking permit instructions, vaccination and health information, a suggested first aid pack list, a suggested equipment and clothing list, a suggested reading list appropriate to your destination, a responsible travel briefing and other useful information.

The final balance for your booking will be due 2 months before departure. We will write to you 10 weeks before departure of your trip with an invoice for the final balance along with other final pre departure details as appropriate. Your final invoice will show the price based on the group size at the time of invoicing, as per prices indicated in this brochure. We will also send your confirmed flight details (if appropriate), instructions of how to meet up with others in your group and details of how you will be met on arrival. Also included will be a statement of any additional services or activities you have requested and a final pre departure reminder check list for last minute arrangements before you travel. Your free Himalayan Adventure Company Trek bag will be mailed to you separately or provided to you at one of our pre-trek meets. For clients outside the UK, a trek bag will be sent on payment of delivery costs only.

We wish you a wonderful Himalayan adventure!

The Himalayan Adventure Company Ltd

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