

This itinerary can be modified and tailored to suit your timing, fitness and other considerations

Itinerary - Everest Trek

Day 1: To Phakding 2,650m

Fly to Lukla then walk 4 hours. From Kathmandu it is a stunning 45 minute flight, flying parallel to some of the highest peaks in the world along the Nepalese - Tibetan border. The Lukla airstrip was first built by Sir Edmund Hillary when he started his work in the region, building schools, hospitals and helping establish the infrastructure of the Everest region. Here will we meet our porters and local crew. We then head off alongside the Dudh Khosi, a fast flowing river of freezing glacial melt, dropping in height until we reach Phakding for our first night in the Himalaya.

Day 2: To Namche Bazaar 3,440m

Walk approximately 7 hours. Again we spend much of this day next to the Dudh Khosi as we enter Sagarmatha National Park at Jorsale. We climb out of the pleasant pine forest and through a series of switch backs. Above these forests we see the local peaks such as Kusum Kangru (6,369m). If the sky is clear, you will catch your first glimpse of Everest about halfway up the slope.

Today is the first day that you will see the many Mani walls along the trail. These structures are built by Buddhists out of stone tablets upon which "Om Mani Padme Hum" (Hail to the jewel in the lotus) is written on each and every one. After a long tough climb at last you'll arrive in Namche Bazaar. This is the most important cultural and economic centre of the Sherpa people. It lies in a natural amphitheatre protected from the weather and is blessed with a major natural spring.

Day 3: Rest day Namche Bazaar 3,440m

If you are feeling strong and handling the altitude well you may want to visit the Japanese Everest View Hotel. Otherwise treat this as what it is meant to be – a rest day. Explore Namche Bazaar. If you want to learn more about the area visit the Sagarmatha National Park Headquarters. There are amazing views up the valley to Everest. Around us you will see Lhotse (8,511m), Ama Dablam (6,856m) and Nuptse (7,896m).

Day 4: To Thyangboche 3,870m

Walk approximately 5-6 hours. Today is probably one of the most visually rewarding days walk in the Himalayas. You meander high above the Dudh Khosi, until you drop down into the valley, cross the Dudh Khosi and have a long climb in and out of Rhododendrum forests up to the Tengboche Monastery. As you walk you will want to keep alert for the beautiful Danfay or Impeyan Pheasant, the national bird of Nepal. If you are very lucky you may also see the huge Lammergeier and Himalayan Griffin Vultures and other soaring raptors, as well as musk deer and the Himalayan Tahr (a species of antelope).

At last, as your final climb takes you through the greeting arch of the Tengboche Monastery (3,870m), a spectacular panorama unfolds. The Tengboche Monastery was reconstructed after being destroyed by fire in January 1989. You will catch full views of the huge south faces of Nuptse and Lhotse, with Everest itself just peering over the ramparts of the other two.

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Day 5: To Dingboche 4,360m

Walk approximately 6 hours. Walking with a stunning early morning view of Everest, you truly get a sense of these powerful mountains and the majesty of the area as you breathe the crisp, clean early morning air and wonder what the day has in store. Again the trail follows the river, climbing gradually as you head directly for Everest. You pass through Deboche, a community of nuns, then cross the Dudh Khosi again and climb to Pengboche for lunch.

After lunch you continue onto Dingboche at 4,360m. It can snow here any month of the year, but you are so far back in the mountains, precipitation is usually light. Snowy peaks however are all around you, with the majestic Ama Dablam (6,812m) the most impressive. If the weather is clear, you can see Everest for most of the day, but the closer you get to camp, the less the summit projects above the ridge linking Lhotse and Nuptse.

Day 6: Rest day in Dingboche 4,360m

Acclimitisation/rest day. It is extremely important that if you are not feeling 100% at this point you take the opportunity to rest. Those adapting well to the altitude can climb Nangkartshang Peak (5100m) for great views of Chalotse, Tawoche and Ama Dablam. Dingboche is a patchwork of small fields enclosed by stone walls which help to keep the cattle away from the crops. In the past and even to this day, it is mainly inhabited during the monsoon to farm and graze the yaks on the surrounding slopes of the mountains.

Day 7: To Lobuche 4,930m

Walk approximately 6 hours.

Crossing above Pheriche on a high shoulder, you enter the upper Khumbu Valley. We are now well above the tree line and the glacial landscape is quite barren and bleak as we leave the rhododendrums behind, reach the foot of the Khumbu glacier and start across the glacial morrain. After stopping for lunch at Dhugla, we ascend the toe of the Khumbu Glacier and follow a mountain path on the moraine, reaching Lobuche (4930m) after a long day's walk. We gain a fair amount of altitude this day and it is essential that we maintain a slow steady pace.

Day 8: To Kala Pattar and Gorakshep 5,228m

Walk 5 hours. It's an early start as we make our way up to our highest camp of the trek, Gorakshep, at nearly 5,288m elevation. It is a steep but relatively short climb, which should only take a few hours. This is some of the most beautiful, albeit desolate scenery in the Himalaya. From here we make our side trip, climbing up our own small peak of Kala Pattar "Black Rock" (5,545m). This will give us breathtaking views of the South Face of Everest, an amazing view of the Khumbu Glacier and our first glimpse down over Everest Base Camp. If we are lucky we will get some incredible sunset views of the mountain. Then back down to Gorakshep to sleep. It can get bitterly cold here overnight.

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Day 9: Return to Lobuche 4,930m

Walk approximately 7 hours. The trek back to Lobuche will seem easy after yesterday's high elevation hikes. The lower elevation of camp this night will be a chance to breathe easier and get a good night's sleep.

Day 10: To Pangboche 3,860m

Walk approximately 4 hours. We now start to descend quite quickly, taking our time as there is still plenty to see. Pangboche is a lovely village and boasts a historic Monastery that is the oldest in Khumbu.

Day 11: To Khumjung 3,780m

Today's walk will take us five to six hours. In the beginning you trek down a path and after crossing Phortse Tenga you trek through a steep ascent path up to Mongla and then gradually down to Khumjung. On the way, you pass villages with monasteries, chorten, mani walls and prayer flags, yak pastures and farming terraces with panoramic views of Ama Dablam, Lhotse, Nuptse, Everest, Thamserku, Kantega and Tyangboche monastery. Khumjung is a notable Sherpa centre. It is where Sir Edmund Hillary built his first school and hospital.

Day 12: To Monjo 2,850m

Walk approximately 4-5 hours. Today's walk is downhill almost all the way. On the crest of the ridge is the famous Everest View Hotel. A Japanese hotel with oxygenated rooms and panoramic view of the mountains, we can stop here for a short break and refreshments before passing through a yak breeding farm and descending to Namche. After lunch we continue our descent through the forests to the base of the valley, where we travel beside the Dudh Khosi river downhill to Monjo.

Day 13: To Lukla 2,800m

Walk approximately 5 hours on our last day in the mountains. We retrace our way back along the valley, passing through Sherpa settlements and Rhododendrum forests. We have one more climb before we arrive at Lukla. The end of the trek is marked with a party, porters included, who after all their hard will return to their villages from here. The night finishes with Nepali singing and dancing which we are all encouraged to join in. Our amazing journey draws to a close.

Day 14: Fly to Kathmandu 1,330m

Back to Kathmandu on a spectacular flight as the world's largest peaks recede into the distance. On arrival we transfer to the hotel. The rest of the day is at your leisure and to rest your weary limbs.