



Pre-Departure Information

ULTIMATE EVEREST



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WELCOME!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

PLEASE SEND US

- Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Air Schedule:** Please forward a copy of your email confirmation, which shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Itinerary for instructions. Please review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets.
- Passport Photocopy:** Scan* a COLOR copy of your passport photo page and email it to us as a JPG or PDF attachment, or send us a high quality photocopy by mail (immediately upon reserving your trip).
- Passport Photo:** Scan* a 2x2 inch passport-sized COLOR photo and email it to us as a JPG or PDF attachment, or send the actual photo by mail (60 days or more before your trip). It does not have to be the exact photo that appears in your passport.

**If you are scanning documents to email, we suggest a maximum resolution of 300 dpi.*

PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- Extra Services:** Request any Extra Services (hotel nights, transfers, extensions) with your WT office contact using the Extra Services Request Form sent with your confirmation packet.
- Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our **website** (www.wildernesstravel.com) or e-mail us at: info@wildernesstravel.com.

Travel Information

PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for six months after your date of exit from Nepal. In addition, we recommend your passport have at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. The service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016. You can request a new passport through **US Passport Services Office** (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>) or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend **Passport Visas Express** (<http://www.passportvisasexpress.com/?affId=2120>). Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) in case your passport is lost or as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

VISAS

Nepal Visa: US citizens need a visa for Nepal. Nepal issues 15-day, 30-day, and 90-day visas, depending on your length of stay.

A 15-day visa is required for this trip and can be obtained upon arrival at the Kathmandu airport. In order to obtain this visa, \$30 and one passport photo are currently required (and must be presented to the Nepali Immigration officials upon arrival).

If you plan to stay longer than 15 days (e.g. you are doing an extension or staying extra nights in Kathmandu), you will need a 30-day visa, which currently requires \$50 and one passport photo.

If you are staying longer than 30 days, 90-day visa will be necessary. It is currently \$125, with one passport photo needed.

We recommend that you bring an additional passport photo with you for emergency use (two photos total). Typically, you will be able to take a photo at the electronic immigration kiosks, meaning that you will not need an actual passport photo. However, if the machines are not working, you will need a physical photo.

India Visa: If you are planning to visit India before or after your trip, a visa must be obtained prior to your departure from the US. Please call or email us for further details, even if you are just planning to transit through an India city.

If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

Please note that all visa requirements and regulations are subject to change.

MONEY

We suggest you bring US cash and one or two major credit cards for any shopping and extra expenses on your trip. US cash is typically easiest and always best for minor expenses.

The currency in Nepal is the *rupee*. You can easily change money at the Kathmandu airport, the group hotel, or stores in Kathmandu. Please remember to keep all currency exchange receipts. You may need them to change any remaining rupees back into US dollars upon departure. You can usually reconvert only 15% of the exchange receipts you have, so try to use up all your rupees before leaving Nepal.

Shops, hotels, and restaurants may add a service charge of 3% or 4% when you use your credit card (Visa and MasterCard are more widely accepted than American Express). If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad. There are ATM machines in many locations in Kathmandu and the Kathmandu Valley. They accept most international ATM and credit cards. Please note there are sometimes restrictions on the amount you can withdraw per transaction or per day. To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. Check with your bank before leaving to make sure your card and PIN number will work in Nepal.

You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, any meals not included in the trip itinerary (approximately \$10-20 each for lunches and \$15-35 each for dinners) and for personal items such as beverages, snacks, etc. A taxi from the hotel to downtown costs about \$5 but should be paid in Nepali rupees. Taxis usually have meters, but they are often not used and you might have to bargain with the driver before departure. Tipping is not expected for taxi drivers.

TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides for outstanding service. A range of reference would be:

In Kathmandu

- Kathmandu Sightseeing Guide: \$12-\$16 per trip member, for a full-day tour; \$6-\$8 per trip member, for a half-day tour
- Drivers: \$8-\$10 per trip member, for a full-day tour; \$4-\$5 per trip member, for a half-day tour; \$1-2 per trip member for a one-way airport transfers
- Local Agents (assisting with airport transfers) in each area: \$5-\$8 per agent for full-day service (please use your discretion otherwise)
- Hotel Porters: \$1 per bag
- Restaurant Meals: A service charge is already included in all restaurant bills in Kathmandu, so tipping is not necessary

On Trek

- Trek Leader: \$175-\$200 per trip member
- Assistant Trek Leader(s): \$100-\$150 per trip member (an assistant guide is only sent with groups of 4 or more)
- Trekking Crew (porters): \$150-\$175 per trip member (this is a pooled tip that will be divided among all of the crew members)

Please Note: It is customary to award your Trek Leader and crew with a gratuity at the end of the trek. All tips can be given in US dollar, if you do not have Nepali rupee on hand.

SPECIAL DIETS

We will do our best to accommodate special dietary needs, however, please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or limitations due to logistics can make it extremely difficult and at times impossible to accommodate dietary restrictions. Please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a restricted diet. It is important to bring a flexible attitude and supplemental snacks.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone

The international dialing code for Nepal is 977. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

SAT Phones

Currently, SAT phones are allowed in Nepal, but must be declared upon arrival. A Customs duty will most likely be charged (rates vary, but can be expensive). In addition, Nepali authorities require that you register the SAT phone with a Nepali SIM card through an authorized company in Nepal. It is illegal to use an international SIM card (from the US) in the phone. Obtaining a Nepali SIM card can be very expensive (\$250-\$450 or more for 25-100 minutes of talking - exact rates cannot be guaranteed by Wilderness Travel).

Email & Internet Access

Wi-Fi is available at your hotel in Kathmandu (this may come at additional charge). It is also available in the Everest region, but connection can be unreliable. Some lodges offer complimentary internet, while others will charge a small fee (please remember to bring rupees with you on trek for this purpose). Currently, there is an internet service provider that allows you to purchase a card in order to access the internet at higher elevations. This card can be recharged for amounts of \$3-\$10, which allows for a limited amount of data/internet connection throughout the trek.

ELECTRICITY

Nepal has 230-volt current. Plugs usually have three round pins in a triangular configuration or two round pins. Bring a plug adaptor kit for appliance use. Please check your appliances to see if a converter is also necessary

You can recharge batteries at the hotel in Kathmandu. While on trek, you can recharge camera batteries at the lodges, although we do recommend that you still bring extra batteries, just in case. Please note that the lodges may require a small fee for you to charge your electronic items (to be paid in rupees).

Medical Information

The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the **Centers for Disease Control**. (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm>) Medical travel products are available from **Travel Health Medicine** (<http://www.travmed.com>) and from **Magellan's Travel Supplies**. (<http://www.magellans.com>)

INOCULATIONS

Entry requirements are subject to change; check with the Centers for Disease Control for updates. All shots should be entered on your International Health Card (yellow card), which is provided by the facility giving the shots. Keep it with your passport while traveling. This provides an important personal record for you to refer to when making future travel plans. We recommend you discuss the following with your physician:

Polio

People who have received the primary series of at least three doses of polio vaccine are considered fully immunized. People who are unsure of their status should receive the vaccine (three doses spaced at intervals).

Hepatitis

The vaccines HAVRIX and VAQTA (two injections, six to 18 months apart) give long-term protection against Hepatitis A and are worthwhile if you travel regularly to developing countries.

Tetanus Booster

A booster is strongly recommended (effective for 10 years).

Typhoid

The CDC recommends the shot or the oral vaccine, Vivotif Berna. You may not be able to take the oral vaccine simultaneously with mefloquine (for malaria prevention).

MALARIA PREVENTION

Malaria is a serious but preventable disease spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. There is no risk of malaria in Kathmandu or Pokhara or at altitudes encountered on the trek, but all travelers visiting the Terai areas of Nepal (such as Royal Chitwan National Park, Royal Bardia Wildlife Preserve, or Biratnagar, which are below 2,000 feet in altitude), or India or rural areas of Thailand are urged take anti-malarial precautions unless instructed otherwise by your doctor. Please discuss antimalarial medication with your doctor, who will explain various antimalarials and their side effects and recommend a regimen for you. In addition to medication, a further precaution against malaria is to wear long sleeves and long pants at dusk. Thin clothing should be sprayed with insect repellent, especially around the elbows and ankles. Use repellent containing DEET.

If, after returning from your trip, you have a persistent fever with chills, muscle aches, and headache, report to your doctor the possibility of exposure to malaria.

For further malaria information, consult your doctor or the **CDC Malaria Hotline**(<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/malinfo.htm>): 888-232-3228.

MEDICAL CLINICS IN KATHMANDU

There are two clinics in Kathmandu you might consider in case you have any medical problems:

The **Nepal International Clinic**(<http://www.nepalinternationalclinic.com/>) is located near the Narayanhiti Palace Museum in Kathmandu and is under the direction of Dr. Buddha Basnyat, a US board certified physician in internal medicine and our Nepal medical advisor, who has also led Wilderness Travel trips.

The **CIWEC Clinic**(<http://ciwec-clinic.com/>) is located just off Lazimpat, and has expanded its services from a small clinic to a full service hospital cum travel medicine center, providing both outpatient and inpatient care. CIWEC also has a second hospital in the heart of Pokhara, near the lake.

STAYING HEALTHY

While on trek, our crew is well trained in hygienic practices. Boiled drinking water is provided and is safe to use at the lodges and during the trek. In hotels, do not brush your teeth with tap water; use bottled water. Don't use ice in your drinks unless you are sure it was made with treated water. When in doubt, ask our local partners or your Trek Leader for guidelines.

ALTITUDE CONSIDERATIONS

Individuals vary widely in their ability to acclimatize. Since physical fitness does not confer any protection or facilitate acclimatization, it is impossible to predict how you will adapt to the altitude. The greatest protection is avoiding rapid ascents and allowing time for acclimatization. Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) is not uncommon at the altitudes reached in the high Himalayas. Early symptoms of AMS include headaches, nausea, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, vomiting, dry cough, irregular breathing, shortness of breath, fatigue, and swelling of the ankles and eyelids.

It is not uncommon to experience some of these symptoms when you first arrive at high altitude and then have them decrease in severity within a few days. It is important that you inform your Trek Leader immediately of any symptoms or discomfort, however minor, so that he or she can help you monitor the situation. While acclimatizing, avoid pushing yourself too hard, however physically fit you may be or feel. Pace yourself comfortably, rest often. You may find that you hike more slowly than others in the group, or more slowly than you are used to.

Proper hydration is essential at high altitude. You need to drink much more fluid than you are used to. Try to drink even if you're not feeling thirsty. Avoid caffeine, which is a diuretic, and avoid alcohol, which is dehydrating. Cut down on salt. Your appetite will probably decrease, but it is still important to eat well (especially carbohydrates), even if you're not feeling well. Sleeping pills and narcotic painkillers (such as codeine) should not be used at altitude because they depress respiration.

Severe progressions of AMS are high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE) and high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE). Symptoms of HAPE include breathlessness that continues at rest, severe cough with watery or bloody sputum, and noisy, bubbling breath. Symptoms of HACE include extreme weariness, vomiting, severe headache, staggering walk, and changes in behavior. If any such symptoms develop, you must notify the Trek Leader immediately and descend to a lower altitude at once.

Diamox (Acetazolamide)

The prescription drug Diamox is now accepted as an effective prophylactic against the early symptoms of altitude sickness. Most people start taking it a day before going to altitude and continue until they feel they are comfortably acclimatized, although some decide to continue its use throughout their time at altitude. Consult with your physician for directions concerning proper usage and dosage. You can also read more about it at the Himalayan Rescue Association's website www.himalayanrescue.org/hra/altitude_sickness.php(http://www.himalayanrescue.org/hra/altitude_sickness.php). Please note: Diamox is not effective in dealing with more serious symptoms of altitude sickness and it is important you keep your Trek Leader informed of any symptoms you are feeling.

Helpful Information

SHOPPING

Souvenirs and handicrafts in Nepal are numerous and quite inexpensive. Good Tibetan hand-knotted wool carpets can be bought for about \$100. More expensive rugs are also available. Other popular items include gems, wool blankets and sweaters, brass and copper ware, woodcarvings, paintings, and other artwork. There is good shopping in Thamel, Durbar Marg, and the shops at Bodhnath (Tibetan handicrafts in particular). Carpets are found in Thamel and at the Tibetan Handicraft Center.

Currently US citizens can import \$800 worth of goods duty-free on your return to the US. If you decide to let a shipping company in Kathmandu handle shipping, they can pack items, take them to the Department of Archaeology for approval (if necessary), check them through Customs, and send them. We do not recommend shipping items home, however, as shipping can be complicated and unreliable. The safest thing to do is bring an extra roll-up duffel bag with you and carry your souvenirs home. Wilderness Travel assumes no responsibility for any purchases made or shipping arrangements, even if you have enlisted the help of our local partners or your Trek Leader in making them.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Camera Recommendations

With the many advances in digital technology, a simple compact digital camera or even your smartphone is capable of taking pictures suitable for the needs of most people. For higher quality images and the ability to use long lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a DSLR camera is well worthwhile, though heavier. Most digital cameras and phones have good video options, but you may want to consider a GoPro for a lightweight, waterproof option. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. Camera equipment is available for rent from **Borrow Lenses** (<https://www.borrowlenses.com/discount/wildernesstravel>), with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients. This is an especially good idea for renting large zoom lenses that you may need for just one trip.

Camera Accessories

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards or a small digital storage unit (or tablet) to back up your photos, freeing space on your memory cards. Don't forget to bring a battery charger and a backup battery so one is always charged and ready to use. For trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger or buying additional backup batteries, and check that you have the appropriate adapter for the electrical outlets in your destination.

Sharing Your Images

We would love for you to share photos from your trip, and with your permission, may even use your photos in our marketing materials or on our photo blog. We request that you send us a small sample of your best images. Please email your photos to wtphotoblog@gmail.com or tag us **@WildernessTravel** on social media.

Photography Etiquette

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Approaching people with a warm smile and using polite gestures or simple phrases to ask permission to photograph them usually works well. It is always recommended to engage people in conversation before asking to photograph them, but if people do not wish to have their photo taken, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which makes it harder for future travelers to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people. Please always heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

In Nepal, folk beliefs and religion merge until they become almost indistinguishable. It is difficult for travelers in Nepal to comprehend fully the practices, traditions and rituals involved in everyday life. A seemingly innocent act could be seen as offensive by the local inhabitants. Some situations may be quite confusing. If you will accept this, and take a relaxed attitude, you will enjoy your trip much more. Your local guide is experienced with the types of problems encountered in Nepal, and will no doubt counsel you on Asia's most important virtue: patience.

As in all travel situations, it is important to observe the local people carefully and use common sense. Ask before taking a photo, entering a temple, washing at a tap, or touching a baby. If you are in doubt about any of these situations, ask a local person. The Nepalese have a phrase: "God visits your home in the form of a guest." You'll almost always find the Nepalese friendly and helpful, as they honor this adage.

Greetings

When two people meet in Nepal, they press their palms together in front of their chest and say "namaste." The formal

translation is "I acknowledge the divine light which shines from within you," and this word is used for both meeting and parting. To greet someone is a sign of respect to that person. So it is proper for the traveler to say namaste first to elders, monks, priests, and people of higher government rank. If you deem the person to be of very high status, use the more formal "namaskar." It is not improper to instigate the greeting to children, field workers, or other people thought to be of lower status, but it is considered more correct if they salute you first. You may find these people either too shy or bewildered at your appearance to muster a greeting. If you feel this is the case, greet them and you will receive a warm, somewhat surprised greeting in return.

Body Language

The Nepalese believe the body is sacred, and there are many taboos involving the body. As there is sometimes little toilet paper, personal hygiene practice is to cleanse oneself with the left hand. Therefore, nothing should be offered or accepted with the left hand only. The most polite way to give or receive an object is to reach out with the right hand while touching the left hand to the right elbow. A more common way is to extend both hands together.

When seated, it is not polite to show the bottoms of the feet, and it is especially rude to point them in someone else's direction. Therefore you should not stretch your legs out or cross them with the sole turned up or out. Also, never step over or on any part of a person as this exposes them to the bottom of your feet. The body is viewed as being cleanest at the head and becoming progressively dirtier down to the feet.

This also makes patting children or other people on the head ill-mannered. Touching a person of the opposite sex, even on the shoulder or hand, is easily misinterpreted.

Clothing

The Nepalese wear a wide assortment of clothing signifying tribal group, caste, religion, work, or marital status. The most important feature to remember is that a man dressed in white is mourning the death of a family member. He goes through many purifying rituals, and no one is allowed to touch him. It is also improper to comment upon a garment or piece of jewelry that a person is wearing. This may make the wearer feel they must present that article to the admirer.

Water

Drinking water, especially from springs, is considered sacred, and is protected by ritual. River and stream water is not subject to these taboos. Many villages, especially those on high slopes, have only small springs from which to draw their water. Usually these springs have an area of uncut forest above them and religious objects nearby. Statues, small temples, shrines, carved stones, printed prayer flags and colorful cloth may adorn the immediate area. Do not casually take water from these springs. It is best to receive permission from a local person. If the water source becomes polluted by careless practice, the consequences for the village are disastrous.

Shrines and Temples

Along almost every street and trail you will find temples and shrines of all sorts. Regardless of their size, they are revered with great devotion. Always keep these structures on your right side, walking around them in a clockwise direction. The same applies to mani stones, the slates carved with inscriptions and placed in piles, walls, or along the side of a building, and to prayer flags. It is alright to touch stones or flags, but do not sit on them or place any other object on them.

At some trail crossroads you'll find a small crossed bamboo form with colorful threads woven in a design, with flour dumplings on the ground nearby. Do not touch or step on these, and keep them on your right hand side. If you find any unusual object whose significance you are unsure of, it's best to treat it as one with religious significance.

When entering a temple, ask about or observe local practice. In some, shoes must be removed. In some it is forbidden to

wear leather of any kind, or to eat. Always leave a small donation (10 to 50 rupees).

Homes

Nepalese are very hospitable and it is common for them to invite travelers into their homes. Most Nepalese take off their shoes before entering a household or room; if your hosts do this, do likewise, making sure your shoes are placed neatly side by side; flipped or crossed shoes are thought to cause bad luck. Do not step on the threshold or stand with one foot inside and the other out, as this allows bad spirits to enter.

Inside, cooking and eating areas should be treated with special respect. Avoid the hearth unless specifically invited there; it is sacred, and home to a guardian spirit. Do not touch the fire area, adjust, blow on, dry your shoes by, point your feet at or burn trash in the fire. Do not touch food or eating utensils used by local people. Most Hindus cannot eat food that has been touched by a foreigner, so don't offer anything from your plate.

These rules may be bewildering in their complexity, but if you use common sense, ask questions when in doubt, and emulate the Nepalese (except when they are worshiping or performing rituals), then you will make few mistakes. Avail yourself of your Trek Leader's expertise in local customs and you will be rewarded for your efforts by a more meaningful cultural experience.

Begging

Children along popular trekking routes often ask for candy (“mithai,” “bonbon,” “chocolate”), pens or money. Rewarding this behavior sets up a barrage of requests for more, a dependency on products not locally available, and an increasing dental problem in a country which has practically no dentists. We therefore ask that you do not give anything to children on treks: no candy, pens, balloons, or money. Instead, we encourage you to contribute to the local community and its children by donating to monasteries and schools, which are often in need of repairs, educational materials, and so on. This can be a monetary contribution, or you can bring pens, crayons, large felt-tip pens, paper, maps, or postcards, to donate to schools we pass along the way.

BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

A HELPING HAND

Wilderness Travel strongly supports the concept of responsible tourism, and encourages all of our groups to be sensitive to their role in the changing, fragile environment of the Himalaya. We also believe it is our responsibility to give something back to the people who so hospitably welcome us into their villages and monasteries.

As part of this effort, we are pleased to support 50% of the annual operating budget of the **Namche Dental Clinic**, a project of the American Himalayan Foundation. This is one of the first dental clinics in rural Nepal, and the only one serving the Sherpa population of the Khumbu area, which has been impacted by tourism and modernization, resulting in changing diets and increased dental problems. The clinic is locally run and managed by Sherpa dental therapists who were trained in Canada, and offers basic dental care as well as an outreach program to teach school children how to care for their teeth. Members of our Everest-area treks have the opportunity to visit the clinic while staying in Namche Bazaar; ask your Trek Leader if you are interested. We also support the efforts of the **American Himalayan Foundation** throughout the Himalayan region.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

There is an undeniable fragility to our planet, and tourism can have an impact either as a positive force for increased awareness and change, or as a contributor to cultural and environmental exploitation. At Wilderness Travel, we want to see the positive benefits of travel outweigh or even cancel out the negative impacts of tourism. We have instituted a number of policies designed to reduce the impact our groups have on the areas through which we trek.

Bathing and Washing

Please use biodegradable shampoo and soap. Dr. Bronner's Castille soap is a popular multi-purpose, biodegradable soap.

Toilet Facilities

On the trail, you will locate quiet spots for toilet purposes. Try to be at least 100 feet from any water source and bury or cover waste.

Garbage

Please carry a small plastic bag in your daypack to store your garbage throughout the day. Bring all tissues, wrappers, and other garbage with you to the lodge where the staff can bury or burn them. We ask that you carry your own non-burnable garbage, especially used batteries and plastic products, back home for proper disposal since there are limited facilities in Nepal.

Be a Vocal Environmentalist

Do not hesitate to express your conservationist concerns and help explain these guidelines to other Westerners. Let our Trek Leader know if you have any additional suggestions.

Packing List

THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- Extra passport photo(s) (see Visa section)
- Expense money

WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our **WT Gear Store** (<http://wildernesstravel.newheadings.com>).

LUGGAGE

- Duffel bag with a small padlock (must be unlocked for travel). We recommend a minimum size of 30" x 15" and a maximum of 36" x 18." **This duffel must be soft-sided with no wheels.** Wheeled duffels cannot be used because they are rigid and can't be securely strapped to the pack animals on the trek. It is essential you have a sturdy duffel.
- Daypack, large enough for a fleece jacket, rain gear, water bottle, camera, and other items you want on the trail. It should be a shoulder pack (not a fanny pack) with a supporting waist belt. Packs with a capacity of 1450-2000 cubic inches are recommended.
- Small extra roll-up duffel if you are an avid shopper.

WEIGHT LIMITS

All Nepal internal (domestic) flights have a **total weight limit of 15 kgs per person (approximately 33 lbs)** - this includes *both* checked and carry-on baggage. You can have more than one checked bag as long as your total weight does not exceed 33 lbs.

While you are on the trek, a small amount of baggage can be stored at the hotel in Kathmandu for your convenience (with your non-trekking clothes and souvenirs).

NOTES ON CLOTHING

Dress on the trip is very informal, with the exception of city dinners for which you may want to dress up a little (jackets are not required for men). You should carry or wear your hiking boots on your flights to make sure they arrive with you.

For Women: In Nepal's culture, women typically wear long skirts and do not show their legs. Tight, revealing clothes are generally frowned upon. Outside of Kathmandu, however, loose-fitting shorts are acceptable. Some women trekkers will want to hike in knee-length hiking shorts (as long as it is warm enough) while others will prefer long pants or a below-the-knee hiking skirt (skirts also provide some privacy on the trail for toilet purposes). Use your own judgment and hiking experience.

For Men: Wearing tight running shorts or hiking shirtless is not appropriate. Knee-length hiking shorts are fine but shouldn't be worn inside temples or monasteries

LAYERS

Fabrics

An insulating base layer (top and bottom) beneath your hiking clothes will keep you warm and comfortable. Capilene, fleece, and other synthetic fabrics are excellent, as are lightweight wool insulating layers by Patagonia, Icebreakers, and SmartWool. Cotton is not a good insulator, especially as a first layer next to the skin. Once it gets wet from perspiration, it stays wet and keeps you cold.

Shell Clothing

Shell clothing includes jackets and pants that protect from rain and wind. Gore-Tex and equivalent fabrics are waterproof and breathable, so they are the best choice. Shell clothing should be roomy enough to fit over other layers of clothing.

Please note that most travelers find it to be colder than they expected, particularly in the lodges, so pack lots of layers!

Laundry Services: Laundry service is available at the hotel in Kathmandu. There is no laundry service available on trek.

CLOTHING

The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only; we encourage you to pack as lightly as possible. The temperatures in the high Himalayas can get extremely cold, especially at night at high altitudes, when temperatures at camp can drop to below freezing. Even if you do not use each item listed, it's better to be prepared.

- Gore-Tex rain/wind shell jacket with hood. A poncho is not adequate.
- Gore-Tex rain/wind pants (preferably with leg zippers so that they can be taken off without removing your boots)
- Down or fiberfill jacket with hood
- Thick fleece sweater
- Hiking pants. Synthetic hiking pants are a practical choice. Jeans are not suitable for trekking because they are made of dense cotton.
- Lightweight cotton pants or jeans (for city wear)
- Sturdy hiking shorts (baggy, knee-length)
- Two sets of Polypropylene, Capilene, or wool long underwear, bottoms and tops. You will appreciate the extra set at camp and when you're sleeping. We recommend one medium-weight and one expedition weight.
- Long-sleeved shirts. Quick-drying "travel" fabrics like nylon are ideal.
- T-shirts. Synthetics are best for the trek; cotton will get soggy with perspiration.
- Shade hat with a wide brim
- Fleece hat for warmth
- Fleece or down mittens or gloves, for the lodges
- Fleece neck gaiter
- Medium to heavyweight hiking boots
- Gaiters—to keep scree and snow out of your boots
- Running shoes, Tevas, or other comfortable shoes (for city wear or for relaxing in camp)
- Hiking socks. Thorlo hiking socks (moisture-wicking synthetic with padded toes and heels) are excellent, as are SmartWool.
- Casual socks for city wear
- Underwear; synthetics dry faster
- Long underwear (can double as sleepwear)
- Sleepwear
- Sports bra(s) for women
- Bathing suit (for hotel pool in Kathmandu)
- Casual city/hotel attire

HIKING BOOTS

Your boots must be waterproof, warm, comfortable, and broken in, with an excellent tread! If you are uncertain about the tread quality of your boots, buy a new pair rather than risk slipping on rocky trails and scree. Please choose your boots carefully. It is a sensible precaution to wear or hand-carry your hiking boots on the plane. Nearly everything else can be replaced in case of baggage loss, but not a pair of well-fitted, fully broken-in hiking boots.

For this trip, you need medium- to heavyweight hiking boots designed for on- and off-trail hiking with multi-day hikes in mind. Lightweight boots don't offer the high degree of ankle support and foot protection you need. Full-grain leather is extremely water-resistant and durable and is preferable to split-grain leather or nylon. Remember that full-grain leather boots tend to be stiffer and will need a break-in period. If you are shopping for new boots, ask your store about boots with built-in Gore-Tex-type waterproof barriers that enhance water-resistance. If you have old full-grain leather boots, coat them with silicon waterproofing material to increase their water resistance. Waterproofing materials wear off over time and need to be re-applied. Gore-Tex boots are considered waterproof for one year unless the membrane is punctured.

If you're buying a new pair of boots, make sure a qualified salesperson gives you proper guidance in determining fit. Don't buy any boots that you are not permitted to return after wearing for several hours around the house. Blisters caused by improperly fitted or insufficiently broken-in boots are the most common and painful problem normally encountered on hiking trips. Before you depart, you should be able to wear your boots for a full, active day with no discomfort. Even boots you have owned for years can sometimes produce blisters when you are doing this amount of hiking. Limber up feet and boots before departure, and bring a good supply of Second Skin.

Running shoes are not sufficient for the hiking conditions you'll encounter, although they are comfortable to change into at night.

EQUIPMENT

- Two sturdy reusable water bottles, 1 qt. capacity, capable of holding boiling water (Nalgene brand is preferable)
- Two pairs of good quality sunglasses with cases. Side shields are recommended for high altitude treks. One pair is a spare.
- Yaktrax. These are rubber-metal traction devices that you can put directly on your boots. They are inexpensive and can make crossing the snow of the Cho La Pass much more enjoyable. We recommend "Yaktrax Pro," as there are different types of Yaktrax. Here is a link to their website: yaktrax.com.
- Personal toiletries, biodegradable soap
- Small, quick-drying washcloth or towel
- Strong headlamp or flashlight and extra batteries; cold temperatures are tough on batteries. Bring a spare bulb as well.
- Assorted plastic bags to keep items dry in your duffel; garbage bags to use as a duffel liner for rain protection
- Bandannas; good for protecting your neck from the sun and for use as handkerchiefs
- Toilet paper (one roll). Tissue (Kleenex) pocket packs are handy. Local brands of toilet paper will be provided at camp, but you can bring your own for softer quality or for stops during the day.
- Battery pack, as power does not operate 24 hours a day in most lodges
- Biodegradable wipes for washing, as hot water is often not available
- Converter/plug adaptor for appliance use
- Note: Wilderness Travel will provide a sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, and foam pad for the duration of your trek.***

PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Every trip member must bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher. Essential at high altitudes! We recommend mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Brands such as Honest Company, Badger, and Alba Botanica are found in most sporting goods stores and drugstores.
- Lip balm with sunscreen and/or zinc oxide
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol for muscle pain or headaches, Tylenol PM for sleep
- Topical antibiotic (such as Neosporin) for cuts, bites, or sores
- Insect repellent
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. “Liquid band-aids,” such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Vaseline for nose/lips (for dry air at altitude)
- Anti-bacterial gel for hand washing
- Antihistamine such as Benadryl
- Decongestant (daytime and nighttime types) for colds, sinus headaches
- Cough drops (for dry throat caused by altitude)
- Pepto-Bismol tablets for diarrhea, heartburn, indigestion
- Imodium for diarrhea. If you wish to bring an antibiotic for diarrhea prophylaxis, please consult your physician.
- Prescription medications properly labeled, enough to last the entire length of the trip
- Contact lenses or prescription glasses; contact lens wearers should bring spare glasses (or extra disposable lenses) for dusty areas and at altitudes
- Optional—Diamox for altitude acclimatization. See the Diamox section in the Altitude Considerations section.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Hiking poles. Hiking with collapsible hiking poles, such as those by Leki and REI, helps distribute body weight, taking pressure off the knees and improving overall balance. Some hikers prefer using one pole, while others like to hike with two poles.
- Gaiters—to keep scree and snow out of your boots
- Down booties
- Fleece neck gaiter
- Small, inflatable head pillow
- Therm-a-Rest sleeping pad. We provide very comfortable sleeping pads; bring your own only if you have a strong preference for your own pad.
- Camera, spare batteries, spare memory cards.
- Reading/writing material
- Playing cards
- Binoculars (small, lightweight)
- Travel clock
- Money belt or neck pouch. Always carry your passport, credit cards, and cash with you in a money belt or neck pouch tucked down inside your shirt or blouse.
- Your favorite between-meal snacks, such as trail mix or energy bars

PROHIBITED ITEMS

E-Cigarettes: Please do not bring e-cigarettes (vaporizers), including e-cigarette refills. The countries of Thailand, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Vietnam have all outlawed the import and export of e-cigarettes (vaporizers), including e-cigarette refills. Travelers found with these items could be fined or sent to prison for up to 10 years if convicted. This applies to both entry and transit through these countries, which is why we recommend that you do not bring them with you, just in case.

SAT (Satellite) Phones — India: SAT phones are not allowed to be brought into India. This also applies to travelers who are just transiting through India on the way to/from their actual trip. If you bring a satellite phone to India, it will be confiscated and you could be subject to serious penalties, including arrest.

Please double-check current entry requirements into Nepal and any country you may be visiting/transiting through during your trip.

Reading List

ESSENTIAL READING

The Snow Leopard

Peter Matthiessen

2008, 368 PAGES

The most perceptive, acutely observed and personal of all his books, Matthiessen's account of a five-week journey through Nepal with naturalist George Schaller combines their quest for the elusive cat with a moving introduction to Buddhism and the people and culture of the Himalayas.

Nepal Map

Nelles

2012

A double-sided map at a scale of 1:500,000, with insets of Kathmandu City and Kathmandu Valley.

Trekking in the Everest Region

Jamie McGuinness

2009, 322 PAGES

A compact guide to treks in the Everest region featuring route maps, village plans and concise information on preparations. Fifth Edition

Spectrum Guide to Nepal

Camerapix

2000, 364 PAGES

A comprehensive guide to the country, its people, history, culture and geography, featuring excellent maps and 200 color photographs.

Khumbu Trekking Map

National Geographic Society

2002

This National Geographic map of Sargmatha National Park and Everest (1:125,000) includes 100-meter contour lines, index, a city map of Kathmandu and overview map of Nepal.

ALSO RECOMMENDED

Altitude Illness: Prevention and Treatment

Stephen Bezruchka

2005, 128 PAGES

Bezruchka, a mountaineer and M.D., includes case studies, frequently asked questions and simple methods of diagnosis and treatment in this indispensable pocket guide.

Photographic Guide to Birds of the Himalayas

Bikram Grewal

1999, 144 PAGES

A pocket guide to 250 birds found from the foothills up to high elevations ranging from the Hindu Kush and Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh in the Eastern Himalayas. With brief descriptive information, maps and 260 full-color illustrations.

Essential Tibetan Buddhism

Robert Thurman

1996, 317 PAGES

The foremost Western scholar of Tibetan Buddhism, Thurman has chosen well from that tradition's sacred literature and helpfully includes suggested further reading, explanatory notes and a directory of sacred sites.

Lonely Planet Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya

Bradley Mayhew

2009, 436 PAGES

This classic guide, now in its eighth edition, is great for both practical trail information and general information on the region.

Into Thin Air, A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster

Jon Krakauer

1999, 360 PAGES

In this bestseller, climber and journalist Krakauer reconstructs a minute-by-minute account of what went wrong on the great mountain in 1996.

Himalayan Voices, An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature

Michael Hutt

1991, 280 PAGES

A collection of 20th-century Nepali poetry and short fiction, much of it translated into English for the first time. This anthology offers insight into Nepal's literary traditions, society and culture.

Trekking Nepal, A Traveler's Guide

Stephen Bezruchka

2011, 448 PAGES

A respected guide covering route planning, national parks, health, where to go and what to do in Nepal. With an overview of the geography, history, religion and culture of the region.

Annapurna, The Epic Account of a Himalayan Conquest and its Harrowing Aftermath

Maurice Herzog

2010, 256 PAGES

Conrad Anker provides a new foreword for this 60th-anniversary edition of Maurice Herzog's classic, dictated from his hospital bed in Paris. French Minister of Youth and Sport in the 1960s and former mayor of Chamonix, Herzog recovered nicely.

Life and Death on Mt. Everest, Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering

Sherry B. Ortner

2001, 376 PAGES

A vividly written, scholarly study of the relationship between the Sherpas and the mountaineers who come to "conquer" the Himalayas.

Escape from Kathmandu

Kim Stanley Robinson

2000, 320 PAGES

The four interconnected stories in this laugh-out-loud novel include the (mis)adventures of two young Americans with a Yeti, international espionage, mountain climbing of the highest sort and a quest for Shangri-La.

The Ascent of Rum Doodle

W. E. Bowman

2010, 192 PAGES

This hilarious send-up of the great British mountaineers, originally published in 1956, is hardly handicapped by the fact that Bowman never set foot in the Himalayas.

High Adventure

Sir Edmund Hillary

2003, 245 PAGES

A classic of 20th-century mountaineering, this 50th anniversary edition of young Hillary's personal account of his historic ascent of Everest, written the heady days after the celebrated climb, includes a new preface by the author and black-and-white photos. Hillary modestly attributes his success to "a goodly share of imagination and plenty of energy."

Touching My Father's Soul, A Sherpa's Journey to the Top of Everest

Dalai Lama

2002, 316 PAGES

A personal account of the business of Everest, the 1996 IMAX Expedition and, most significantly, of a son who is grappling with the legacy of a famous father.

Everest Base Camp, Nepal Map

National Geographic

2004

A durable, folded map for treks from Lukla through Sagarmatha National Park to Everest Base Camp, at a scale of 1:50,000.

Mt. Everest

National Geographic

1998

A gloriously detailed, birds-eye view of Everest by the cartographers at National Geographic.

The Call of Everest: The History, Science, and Future of the World's Tallest Peak

Conrad Anker

2013, 303 PAGES

Presents a historical survey of the world's tallest mountain, featuring accounts of famous climbs and tragedies, previously unpublished photographs, and scientific findings on the impact of climate change.

No Shortcuts to the Top, Climbing the World's 14 Highest Peaks

Ed Viesturs

2007, 368 PAGES

An exhilarating account of mountaineering by the first American to scale the world's 14 peaks that over 8,000 meters high, without the aid of bottled oxygen.

Birds of Nepal

Tim Inskipp

2016, 336 PAGES

Covering all 800 species of birds occurring in Nepal, this book features vivid color plates. Text and illustrations are integrated on facing pages for easy reference in the field.

Himalayan Passage, Seven Months in the High Country of Tibet, Nepal, China, India, & Pakistan

Jeremy Schmidt

1992, 336 PAGES

National Geographic expert Jeremy Schmidt and photographer Patrick Morrow recount their circumnavigation of the Himalayas, accompanied by their wives. Their journey by bike, truck and foot across Tibet, Nepal, China, India and Pakistan is illustrated with 32 pages of color photographs.

Everest, A Trekker's Guide

Kev Reynolds

2012, 255 PAGES

A brief pocket guide to seven treks in the Everest region (including one in Tibet) with sketch maps, good general information and a few photographs.

Everest, The Mountaineers Anthology IV

Peter Potterfield

2003, 240 PAGES

A collection of eyewitness accounts by Greg Mallory and Sandy Irvine, Edmund Hillary, Tom Hornbein, Jim Whittaker, Frank Smythe, Eric Simonson, Reinhold Messner, and many other climbers over the decades.

The Crystal Horizon

Audrey Salkeld

1998, 322 PAGES

Messner's account of the first successful solo ascent of Everest, which he accomplished without the aid of supplemental oxygen in 1980.

A Life on the Edge, Memoirs of Everest and Beyond

Jim Whittaker

2013, 320 PAGES

The legendary mountaineer recalls not just his remarkable feats in the Himalayas but also the details of his personal life, coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s and his time as the first employee, manager and CEO of REI.

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