

Hiking and Yoga in Nepal—The Everest Base Camp Trek

November 1-22, 2008

The ultimate Himalayan odyssey with Lotus Expeditions and Wild Women Workshops— Trek to the foot of Mount Everest at 17,575 feet, called *Sagarmatha* by Nepalis and *Chomolungma* or “Mother Goddess of the Snows” by Tibetans. Our all-women expedition to Everest Basecamp is a challenging high altitude hike and spiritual and cultural journey with plentiful opportunities to practice yoga in a serene and magical setting beneath the Himalaya.

Trek through traditional Sherpa villages, barter with nomadic traders, and visit ancient monasteries where Tibetan Buddhism is still practiced. Along the way, you will have an opportunity to ascend Kala Pattar (18,450 feet) to gain incredible views of Himalayan giants such as Lhotse, Nuptse, and Everest.

Our journey begins and ends in the lush lowlands of the Kathmandu Valley. As we prepare for our trek, we will visit the Pashupatinath Temple, where devout Hindus bring their dead for cremation on the banks of the Bagmati River—a tributary of the holy Ganges River—and witness Buddhist pilgrims as they circumambulate the Bhoudinath Stupa.

From the lowlands, we travel by small aircraft to Lukla (9,350 feet) in the foothills of the Himalaya. Our trek begins here. Glacier-fed rivers and waterfalls, deep valleys, Sherpa villages, mystic monasteries, colorful prayer flags, and stunning peaks dominate the landscape for the next two weeks.

In addition to its extraordinary beauty, the friendliness of its people distinguishes Nepal from other destinations. More than 30 unique ethnic groups and languages coexist here, but Sherpas are the dominant population group in the Khumbu region. Sherpa ancestors, immigrants from eastern Tibet, made their own trek across the Himalaya more than 500 years ago to settle in this rugged environment.

As you take in the tremendous vistas along the trail, you will be further elevated by the sound of laughter and song from the Sherpas and porters who accompany you on this magnificent journey.

Trip Summary

- Four nights hotel, twelve nights camping, two nights lodges
- 12 Days of challenging hiking at high altitude with an optional ascent of Kala Pattar (18,450 feet) for incredible views and photo opportunities
- Visit important Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas

Itinerary

Key: B, L, D—breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner included; O/N—overnight in hotel or camping

Day One, Depart Home

Day Two, En Route

Day Three, Arrive in Kathmandu

A representative will meet you at the airport, outside the customs and baggage area, and transfer you to the Hotel Yak and Yeti. A former Rana palace built in the 19th century, the Yak and Yeti gained notoriety first as a restaurant, started by a flamboyant Russian ballet dancer and restaurateur named Boris Lissanevitch in the 1960s. Following the success of the restaurant, the hotel was added around the former palace in the 1970s, combining much of its old world charm with modern elegance.

The afternoon is free to rest or explore the city. There will be a trip orientation in the late afternoon, followed by an optional evening out on the town. *O/N, Hotel Yak and Yeti*

Day Four, Sightseeing Around the Kathmandu Valley

Today we will visit important Hindu and Buddhist sites around the Kathmandu Valley including the Pashupatinath temple complex and the Swayambunath stupa or “Monkey Temple.” In the afternoon, you may take advantage of last-minute shopping opportunities in Kathmandu or making final preparations for your trek.

Our evening entertainment includes traditional Nepalese dancing and Newari cuisine at the Bhanchha Ghar Restaurant. *B, D; O/N, Hotel Yak and Yeti*

Day Five, Fly to Lukla, Begin Trek to Phakding

Weather permitting, we will board an early flight to Lukla (9,350 feet) in the foothills of the Himalaya. In Lukla, we will meet our local staff, guides, porters, and pack animals. As our bags are prepared for transport, we will have a trek orientation meeting before we begin our walk to Phakding. Our trail follows the turquoise waters of the Dudh Kosi river as we descend through lush green forests to reach the riverside village of Phakding (8,700 feet). *Hiking time 3–4 hours; B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Six, Trek to Namche Bazaar

Today is our first big day in the mountains. Our trail continues through the Dudh Kosi river valley as we work our way up in altitude. We enter Sagarmatha National Park and share the trail with yaks and porters carrying supplies to higher villages and expeditions throughout the Khumbu Valley. Our trail wanders through Sherpa villages where we can glimpse traditional life in these mountains.

After a trailside lunch, we begin the steep climb to Namche Bazaar (11,300 feet).
Hiking time 5–6 hours; B, L, D; O/N, camping

Day Seven, Rest Day in Namche Bazaar

After yesterday's big climb, today is a well-deserved rest day. You may be feeling some effects of the high altitude; thus, today is set aside for rest and exploring Namche Bazaar. Namche is the largest village in the Khumbu Valley and an important center for trading and tourism. It is possible to buy everything from expedition supplies to apple pie here. There is Internet and phone service and a post office. All this, though we are a seven-day walk from the nearest road!

For those with adequate energy, several optional day hikes are possible. A short hike takes you to the Sagarmatha National Park Museum and Visitors Center where stunning views of Everest, Nuptse, Lhotse, and Ama Dablam await. Or further a field, visit the Sir Edmund Hilary School in the village of Khumjung, 2–4 hours round trip. *B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Eight, Trek to Tengboche Monastery

From Namche Bazaar, our trail wraps around the mountainside before we descend once more to the Dudh Kosi river valley. The mountain views are spectacular. After a trailside lunch by the river, the trail climbs steadily to our final destination of the day—the Tengboche monastery (12,887 feet). The spiritual heart of the Khumbu, it is no wonder the patron saint of Sherpas, Lama Sangwa Dorje, touched down on this magical spot surrounded by stunning peaks.

If we are lucky, we may witness the monks performing a *puja* or prayer ritual. As guests, we are allowed to sit around the perimeter just inside the monastery and observe as the monks chant Buddhist prayers and play religious instruments.

Hiking time, 5–6 hours; B, L, D; O/N, camping

Day Nine, Trek to Dingboche

At almost 13,000 feet, it is likely that this morning will be a bit frosty, but the hot tea delivered to your tent will ease your entry into another glorious day in the Himalaya. After a hot breakfast, we descend to the village of Devuche where we have an opportunity to visit a Buddhist nunnery. If you walk quietly on the trail, you may catch a glimpse of endangered musk deer.

From Devuche, our trail crosses the river on a new suspension bridge over a deep gorge. We climb steadily to the village of Pangboche (12,800 feet), home to the oldest monastery in the Khumbu. Local legend holds that when Lama Sangwa Dorje flew through the Khumbu spreading Buddhism, he touched down in two places—Tengboche and Pangboche—and both were to become the sites of important monasteries.

From Pangboche, the trail eases as we reach a high, windswept plateau. Only a few more hours to go to reach our highest camp yet in the village of Dingboche (14,500 feet). *Hiking time, 4–6 hours; B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Ten, Rest Day in Dingboche

Today is another acclimatization day. It is important to rest your body and give it sufficient time to adjust to the thin air. You may rest, read, take a hot shower, or

explore your surroundings. There are also several options for day hikes: Visit the nearby village of Pheriche, home to the Himalayan Rescue Association, or climb steeply to abandoned hermitages from which you gain views of Makalu, the fifth highest peak in the world. A more gradual trail ascends the valley toward Chukung, awarding you with new views of your surroundings. *B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Eleven, High Traverse to Dughla

A shorter hike across an old lateral moraine brings us to the hamlet of Dughla (15,075 feet); from here we gain our first views of Pumori and the Lobuje massif. The afternoon is free to climb up a side valley toward the Cho La Pass, where the steep North Faces of Tawoche and Cholatse seem just out of reach and you can gaze down on the aqua colors of Tshola Tsho lake. *Hiking time, 2–3 hours; B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Twelve, Trek to Lobuje

From Dughla, our trail rises steeply as it ascends the terminal moraine of the Khumbu Glacier. At the top of the moraine, we are afforded incredible views of Ama Dablam and have an opportunity to pay our respects to fallen climbers, as this place has been dedicated to their memory with monuments and *chortens* adorned with colorful prayer flags and Tibetan Buddhist prayers.

The trail grows more gradual as we walk parallel to the Khumbu Glacier and finally reach our destination in Lobuje (16,175 feet). *Hiking time, 3–4 hours; B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Thirteen, Trek to Gorak Shep, Climb Kala Pattar

We rise before the sun to begin our trek to Gorak Shep at 17,000 feet with a goal of reaching the summit of Kala Pattar before the afternoon clouds roll in (*hiking time, 2–3 hours*). The trail follows old glacial valleys, dipping and rising as we pass over moraines of tributary glaciers.

Those feeling well acclimatized may make an optional, nontechnical ascent of Kala Pattar at 18,450 feet (*hiking time, 3–4 hours round trip*); the summit affords more staggering views and great photo opportunities of Everest, Lhotse, and Nuptse. *Total hiking time, 5–7 hours, with ascent; B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Fourteen, Trek to Everest Base Camp

Today is another opportunity to summit Kala Pattar, rest, or take an optional day hike to Everest Base Camp (17,575 feet). The trail to Everest continues to parallel the Khumbu Glacier before we drop steeply down a lateral moraine and onto the Khumbu Glacier itself. Ice, dirt, rocks, and boulders lie between us and our final destination. A few more hours of hiking and the colorful tents and prayer flags of Everest Base Camp (spring only) create a lively contrast to the high, cold, black and white landscape.

Walk to the foot of the highest mountain on earth, explore the lowest ice fins of the Khumbu Icefall, feel the history, success, and tragedy that define this place.

We return to Gorak Shep for the evening. *Hiking time, 6–8 hours, round trip; B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Fifteen, Return Trek to Pheriche

After breakfast, we say our farewells to this rugged, mountainous region and begin our return trek. Hot showers, pizza, and apple pie beckon us to lower altitudes. We retrace our steps and descend to Pheriche (13,950 feet); home to the Himalayan Rescue Association's high-altitude hospital. Visit with international doctors or possibly sit in on a lecture on altitude illness. *Hiking time, 4–6 hours; B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Sixteen, High Traverse to Phortse

Today we leave the main tourist track and return by a seldom-traveled high traverse. After visiting the oldest monastery in the Khumbu, the Pangboche Gumpa, our trail winds around an airy mountainside to the traditional Sherpa village of Phortse (12,500 feet). We may see Himalayan tahr, a genus of wild goat, grazing and sunning on the rocky cliffs or Himalayan griffon soaring majestically in the updrafts as they turn a keen eye on potential prey.

Phortse is an agricultural village nestled into the mountainside. From this vantage point, we gain new views of rugged mountains in the distant Hinku Valley and Cho Oyu (the sixth highest peak in the world at 26,906 feet) comes into view at the top of the Gokyo Valley. The afternoon is free to relax, read, or visit the new school and monastery. *Hiking time, 3–4 hours; B, L, D; O/N, camping*

Day Seventeen, Return Trek to Namche Bazaar

From Phortse, we drop steeply to the valley floor at 11,950 feet and cross the glacier-fed waters of the Kohanar Khola river, whose headwaters originate in the massive glaciers pouring off Cho Oyu. The ecosystem changes dramatically as we descend in elevation from windswept glacier-carved valleys to green rhododendron and birch forests. Musk deer and Danphe pheasants prefer these lower altitudes and are common along this section of trail.

In Nepal, they say that “what goes down, must go up!” The trail climbs steeply for 1–2 hours to the Mong La Pass (13,200 feet) where hot drinks and lunch await. The views from the pass are stunning as new peaks come into view and the path to Namche unfurls below.

A few more hours bring us to Namche Bazaar (11,300 feet) and the Zamling Guesthouse with beds and hot showers! *Hiking time 5–7 hours; B, L, D; O/N, Zamling Guesthouse*

Day Eighteen, Return Trek to Lukla

We retrace our steps as we descend, following the Dudh Kosi river as it makes its journey southward. You may begin to feel lighter and more energized as your surroundings transform to shades of green with splashes of colorful flowers. The air becomes thicker and humid—a more hospitable environment than we experienced in the high country. Passing through villages, you will see children playing along the trail and catch glimpses of ordinary life in the mountains of Nepal.

Our journey ends in Lukla (9,350 feet). A final feast and celebration with our local staff are on the agenda for the evening. *Hiking time 6–8 hours; B, L, D; O/N, Lodge in Lukla*

Day Nineteen, Flight to Kathmandu

We take an early flight to Kathmandu (weather permitting) and return to the Hotel Yak and Yeti. The afternoon is free to explore the city, shop, or visit the Tibetan community at the Bhoudinath Stupa. *B; O/N, Hotel Yak and Yeti*

Day Twenty, Kathmandu

Today is a free day in Kathmandu. You may sign up for an early Mount Everest scenic mountain flight, visit the former medieval city-states of Bhaktapur and Patan, wander around historic Durbar Square, or take advantage of excellent shopping in the Thamel district, where Buddhist thangka paintings and hand-woven carpets abound. We will celebrate our final evening in Nepal with a feast at the Ghar-e-Kebab Restaurant. *B, D; O/N, Hotel Yak and Yeti*

Day Twenty-One, Depart Kathmandu

Day Twenty-Two, Arrive Home

Trip Dates and Prices

November 1- 22, 2008

\$3595 (5-7 Members)

\$3395 (8-10 Members)

\$3095 (11-12 Members)

Single Supplement \$300

Forced Single Supplement \$150

4% Discount for Cash Payments

What is Included

- Four Star accommodation at the Hotel Yak and Yeti in Kathmandu based on double occupancy
- All ground transportation
- Welcome dinner and Nepali cultural show
- One and a half days sightseeing around the Kathmandu Valley including Pashupatinath Temple, Swayambunath Stupa, and Bhoudinath Stupa
- Optional visit to the Tibetan Refugee Carpet Center
- All entrance fees and trekking permits
- Professional, international trip leaders, Heather Sullivan and Raleigh Coburn
- Professional, English-speaking local guides
- Evening and daytime lectures and classes may include:
 - Yoga and stretching
 - Writing, reflection and meditation
 - High altitude illness and prevention
 - Geology of the Himalaya
 - Introduction to Buddhism

- Natural history of the Everest Region
- Sherpa history and culture
- And introduction to glaciology
- Roundtrip domestic airfare Kathmandu-Lukla
- Two nights comfortable lodges on trek
- Twelve nights luxury camping on trek
- All meals where noted on the itinerary
- Experienced, professional cooks prepare delicious meals on trek
- All camping equipment (excluding sleeping bags)
- Group first aid kit, Gamov bag and emergency oxygen
- Baggage transport provided by pack animals and porters (limited to 15kg)
- Fair wages and insurance for porters
- Celebration dinner in Kathmandu at journey's end

What is Not Included

- Domestic or international airfare to Kathmandu
- 60-Day Nepal visa on arrival (\$30)
- Required travel insurance
- Airport or departure taxes and any excess baggage fees
- Rescue or medical expenses
- Personal clothing, equipment, first aid and drug kits
- Single room supplement fees for hotels and single tents
- Hotels, meals, transport or other fees incurred if leaving trip before schedule departure
- Meals not listed on your itinerary
- Personal Sherpa or additional porter
- Local and international staff gratuities (suggested \$300)
- Personal items such as laundry, telephone, email, alcohol, bottled drinks, etc.
- Personal cash for emergencies, gifts, etc. (suggested \$500)