

Gokyo Lakes Trek Information and itinerary

The Gokyo Lakes are stunning.

These glacial lakes change colour with the light. This is a lightly trekked route and with the Cho La Pass to cross, it also presents a significant challenge.



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Introduction

The Gokyo Lakes are stunning. Changing colour with the light, these glacial lakes are very special.

This document should give you a flavour for what this trek is all about. It contains the daily itinerary, lots of important information and the inclusions and exclusions in your trip price.

This trek is arguably the nearest thing that the Khumbu region has to a circuit. It begins along the EBC route, goes north to Gokyo (away from the EBC route) and then crosses the mighty Cho La (Pass) before heading up to EBC itself. It is a good feeling of not retracing your steps.

The advantage of crossing the Cho La first is that it acts as acclimatisation prior to reaching Everest Base Camp thus avoiding any potential set backs there.

On arrival in Kathmandu, you have about 36 hrs to settle in before you fly up to Lukla (an exhilarating experience in itself!) to begin the trek.

After 2 days of trekking you will reach Namche Bazaar; the first of two 36hr acclimatisation stops. From there, after just 2 hrs the route progresses up into the Gokyo valley. It is at this junction that you will split from most if not all of the other trekkers on the trail.

It will take 3 days to reach the upper valley, increasing in altitude all of the time until you reach the Ngozumpha glacier. This area is between 4500m and 4700m and therefore further acclimatisation will take place but you will also take time to savour this stunning area. Cho Oyu (8153m) is directly above you and a 'must do' side trip up to Gokyo Ri (5360m) will ensure that you can see Everest, Lhotse, Makalu too.

You will then head up and over the Cho La (5330m) to re-join the main Everest trail towards the Base Camp. As the trails merge, you will already be trekking along side the Khumbu glacier upon which the Everest Base Camp sits. In just one more day you will reach Gorak Shep, the final tea house village

before the Base Camp itself.

You will stay in Gorak Shep for two nights during which time you will visit the Base camp (it is a 6 - 7 hr return trek) and also trek up to Kala Patthar (5500m) to view the Camp from above.

Make sure you get a good look at the Khumbu ice fall (you can't really miss it!) as it is probably the most difficult and dangerous section of the entire climb to the summit. Climbers have to cross this numerous times in their acclimatisation period prior to the final summit attempt and it is a constantly moving enormous mass of ice blocks.

Spring season trekkers will see hundreds of tents that are home to the teams of climbers attempting to scale Everest. There are not so many in the autumn.

It is soon time to descend and with a predominantly downhill leg, you will easily pass the point at which you joined the trail from Gokyo and reach Dingbouche in a day.

Your next overnight stop is Tengbouche, the prime Buddhist centre for this region; it has a large monastery well worth seeing.

Namche Bazaar beckons the following day and you are now back on familiar territory as you retrace your steps to Lukla and await your flight back down to Kathmandu.

Importantly, we factor in a 'spare' day at Pfkading (overnight) to counter any delays that you may have encountered along the way.

All of this time you will be under the watchful eye of a very experienced local Nepalese English speaking Guide, who will also manage the porters. You will only carry your daysack on the trek with essential items.

Details
Duration: 22 days UK - UK
Min/Max pers: 2/12
Max altitude: 5500m/18,044ft
Accommodation on trek: tea houses (no camping)
Dates: See website
Cost (2012): £990
Our trips formally begin and end in Kathmandu

When to go
In general terms: Mar – May Sep – Nov
Although it is possible to trek throughout the year. Ask for details.

Travel and Trek is a truly independent company specializing in adventure trekking and touring. We pride ourselves on the personal touch and whether you are travelling solo or in a big group, we can adjust itineraries to suit you.

Important information

Costs

Costs are based on 2 people sharing and are per person (singles see below)

Fully Bonded

Your money is safe. We are protected by Insurance Passenger Protection (IPP), which protects YOU against OUR insolvency.



Trek Dossier

On booking, you will receive a comprehensive Trek Dossier, which includes:

- Clothing and equipment list
- Medical notes (including vaccination requirements)
- Notes on trekking at high altitude
- Notes on safe drinking water
- Money saving tips for buying kit in Nepal
- What to do on arrival in Nepal
- Visa application form (including what to do)
- Food, money and much more...

Airport arrivals

We pick you up on arrival and transfer you back on departure.

Passports

Passports should be valid for a minimum period of 6 months on the date on entry into Nepal (source: Nepal Embassy, UK)

Tourist Visa

A tourist visa is required for UK Nationals. This can be done on entry into Nepal or prior to departure. Full details provided on booking including the visa application form if required.

Itineraries

Day 1 of your itinerary is deemed to be your departure day from the UK.

Hotel Accommodation

Our hotels are of 3* standard with very friendly staff to attend to your every need. Our costs are based on a B&B basis, twin share. All rooms are en suite. If you wish to use a higher grade hotel, then please ask us for details.

Accommodation on Trek

Unless you are climbing a trekking peak such as Island Peak, your accommodation will be in tea houses on a B&B, twin share basis.

Singles

Travel and Trek does not believe in penalising single travellers unnecessarily. If you are a single traveller and do not request sole occupancy of a room, you will be accommodated with another member of the group of the same sex. If there is an odd number travelling and you happen to be the odd one out then you will be allocated sole

occupancy at no extra cost. If you do request sole occupancy throughout all or part of the trip, then you will be charged a supplement (see costs).

Extended Stays

You are free to extend your stay in Nepal with extra days before or after the trek. Travel and Trek can assist you with accommodation if you wish or you are free to make your own arrangements.

Our Guides

Our Nepalese Guides work solely for us and are paid 12 months of the year; not just when they trek. They are all qualified, licenced, English speaking Guides with a wealth of experience and knowledgeable. Some were born in the Everest hills.

Fitness

The perception that you have to be super fit to reach EBC or even trek in the area is not true. A reasonable level of fitness based on the ability to walk at your own comfortable pace for 6 - 7 hrs a day (with rest stops), for several consecutive days carrying a day sack weighing approx 5kg is all that is required. If you are in any doubt about whether you are fit enough, please consult Travel and Trek prior to booking.

Clothing and equipment

This information is part of the Trek Dossier and is provided on booking.

Medical/Vaccinations

You are advised to consult your GP if you are in any doubt about your physical condition to undertake your chosen trek. Whilst we do provide information on vaccinations, you should also seek professional advice on what vaccinations you require for Nepal and other locations should you have an extended trip. For planning purposes you should need: Hep A, Typhoid, Tetanus, Polio and Meningitis.

Continued overleaf...

Expert Help

If you have any queries in the planning stage of your trip, call our experts on 01476 562763 or 07725 943108

Altitude Sickness

Formally known as Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), Travel and Trek has produced a 'Guide to Trekking at High Altitude', which can be downloaded from the website. If you wish to discuss it personally, please call the Travel and Trek office; our experienced staff will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Local Payments

Travel and Trek does not charge any local payments.

Travel Insurance

It is absolutely vital that you have adequate travel insurance. See separate page.

How To Book

- Complete the booking form (downloadable from the website) and return it with a deposit of £150 pp.
- Booking forms can be completed electronically and returned as an attachment to an e-mail.
- Details of payment options are on the booking form.
- Balance payments are due 10 weeks prior to departure.



Trip inclusions and exclusions



Inclusions

- Return international airport transfers
- Hotel accommodation in Kathmandu, total 3 nights on a twin share, B&B basis
- Lodged accommodation throughout the trek, including breakfasts
- Return airport transfers for domestic flight to Lukla (LUA)
- Return domestic flights KTM - LUA - KTM
- Everest National Park entry, TIMS certificate (compulsory for all trekking in Nepal)
- Services of an English speaking Nepali Guide throughout the trek
- Porterage
- Comprehensive Trip dossier and other associated documentation

Exclusions

- International flights
- Domestic airport departure taxes (approx £4 return)
- Cost of Nepal Tourist visa (costs range depending on how long you spend in Nepal), budget for £30 - £40 for this trip
- Personal spending
- Staff gratuities, advice will be given if required
- Personal travel insurance
- Food, except breakfasts

Itinerary

1 Depart UK

Our trips formally begin and end in Kathmandu but we can assist you with advice on the best flight routings for your circumstances if you require it.

2 Arrive Kathmandu

You will be collected by our Representative and transferred to the hotel (25 mins), which is perfectly placed in the heart of the city. You are then free to settle in and explore your vibrant surroundings. Our friendly staff are on hand to provide any advice or assistance.

3 Free Day

Meet your trekking Guide for a brief and timings for tomorrow

Final preparations for trek

Pre-arranged cultural tour of Kathmandu (optional), with exclusive transport and Guide or choose to roam as you please.

4 Domestic flight to Lukla - Trek to Monjo 2835m

An early start for your domestic flight to Lukla. Perhaps enjoy a late breakfast in Lukla whilst watching the flights come and go from this unique mountain airstrip.

Begin trekking, Lukla (2840m) - Monjo (2835m)

Today is an easy 5 - 6hrs of trekking through the village of Phakding en route to Monjo where you will stay the night.

5 Monjo - Namche Bazaar (3500m)

The entrance to the Sagarmatha National Park is just on the outskirts of Monjo (checkpoint for Permits) and once through that, it is a steady hour following the river before you cross the final of 7 suspension bridges and begin the 90 min steep ascent up to Namche.

This is the first of the 'big' hills so take it steady. You will catch your first glimpse of Mt Everest in the distance from a rest point (weather permitting).

Namche Bazaar is by far the biggest village in the region with shops and even internet cafes. Expect to arrive at lunchtime. 4 hrs.

6 Namche Bazaar (3500m)

Acclimatisation Day

Your Guide will take you out on a trek to a variety of places in the local region primarily to gain some additional altitude and assist your body in its acclimatisation process (trek high, sleep low) and to see more of the stunning surroundings.

The Everest View Hotel is a favourite and sits at approx 3900m.

7 Namche Bazaar - Dole (4085m)

A beautiful days walk out of Namche, initially contouring for about 60 - 90 mins until you reach Kenjoma. Some groups stop here for coffee (you can see Tengbouche across the valley; you will descend through this village).

Just around the corner, the route towards Gokyo splits from the EBC route.

You will descend rapidly to Phortse Tenga before re-ascending for 2 - 2 1/2 hrs to your resting place of Dole.

8 Dole - Machhermo (4410m)

A short day (just 2 1/2 hrs) but due to the altitude, very necessary. No rush to go anywhere fast today, so take your time and enjoy the easy day.

9

Machhermo - Gokyo (4750m)

Another short day at 3 1/2 hrs. You will ascend to Pangka (4548m), where the front end of the Ngozumpa glacier comes into view. Beyond here lies Gokyo and prior to reaching the village, you will pass several very small lakes; a taste of the bigger ones.

You will spend two nights here, partly rest, partly acclimatisation.

10

Gokyo - Rest/Acclimatisation Day (4750m)

During your rest day, a side trip up to the Gokyo Ri is almost compulsory! A stiff 2 - 3 hrs 550m ascent awaits but the views either a sunrise or sunset are just superb.

You will spend two nights here, partly rest, partly acclimatisation.

11

Gokyo - Dragnak (4700m)

Dragnak is 4hrs from Gokyo, initially back down the trail and then crossing the glacier to reach the village. This puts you in position for the Cho La crossing the next day.

Keep your eye on the weather; the Cho La can be a very dangerous place to be in the wrong weather conditions.

12

Dragnak - Cho-La Pass (5330m) to Dzonglha (4830m)

An early start for a potentially tough crossing.

The terrain is very varied on the ascent and the climb can seem relentless at times. The views from the Pass however are fantastic with Everest being very visible as is Nuptse and Lhotse.

As the altitude of Dzonglha is higher than your start point, the descent is easier. If the weather conditions are good, this is an excellent days trek. Great remote place.

13

Dzonglha - Lobouche (4900m)

An easy day's walk (max 3hrs) to Lobouche. Great views below you as you come around the spur and see Dughla. This small hamlet sits at the base and front end of the Khumbu glacier, which those ascending will climb.

This will be managed by your Guide but as Lobouche can be a bottle neck, it is worth considering trekking on to Gorak Shep (another 3hrs).

14

Lobouche - Gorak Shep (5100m)

Lobouche is just 3 hrs from Gorak Shep; your final and highest tea house on this trip (5100m). Initially, it is easy walking along

Why don't treks stay at Base Camp?

The simple answer is that most trekking groups are not equipped for it. Most treks are lodge based using their facilities to supply beds, food and water, etc.. The closest lodge is at Gorak Shep, approx 2 1/2 hrs away from Base Camp. Base Camp itself is located on a glacier and requires the full support of tents, food, water, cooking equipment and very good personal equipment such as 5 season sleeping bags (minus 20 deg C is a normal overnight temperature there). Lodge based treks don't have any of that support and therefore cannot stay there.

the side of the glacier. After approx an hour you climb up a very short sharp incline before making your way across an undulating moraine and into Gorak Shep.

This is your base for the next two nights. You will trek to both EBC and also to Kala Patthar from here. 3 hrs.

An easy day's walk (max 3hrs) to Lobouche. Great views below you as you come

15

Gokyo Shep (5100m) - Everest Base Camp return

An early start to reach Gorak Shep in 3hrs for breakfast; your final and highest tea house on this trip (5100m). Once you have rested here, it's onto Everest Base Camp!

Savour the moment before returning to Gorak Shep.

The Base Camp itself is potentially enormous; it has to house some 250 - 300 people during the main climbing season. The centre is not marked but is generally known to be a cairn with prayer flags. There is an excellent close up view of the Khumbu ice field. Climbers have to negotiate this dangerous section every time they go up for acclimatisation or to summit.

This is a demanding day so be sure to rest and sleep as much as you can.

16

Gorak Shep - Kala Patthar (5500m) - Descend to Dingbouche (4410m)

A pre-dawn rise to summit the highest point on this trek (although this is optional). It is a 90 min tough ascent (and potentially very cold) but gives you excellent views of the summit of Everest.

The descent is much faster; time for breakfast! At about 0900hrs, you will begin the trek back, first back across the moraine and then through Lobouche (stop for coffee), Dughla and then taking the high route (above Pheriche) into Dingbouche. You will appreciate the lower altitude and warmer temperatures!

A long day but relatively easy going. 8 hrs.

17

Dingbouche - Pangbouche (3930m)

A relatively easy day with very little ascending down to Pangbouche. 4 hrs.

18

Pangbouche - Namche Bazaar

An easy first hour to 90 mins as you descend into the valley, crossing the girder bridge before the short sharp ascent into Tengbouche and well earned rest at the 'German Bakery'!

The long descent followed by the equally long ascent awaits (2 - 3hrs) before the easy contour path back into Namche Bazaar. 7 hrs.

19

Namche Bazaar - Phakding

A nice easy day today. The first few hours will be easy out of Namche back down the long hill to the high suspension bridge. A good break probably in Monjo before moving on to your night stop at Phakding. 4hrs.

20

Phakding - Lukla

Your final day can be deceptive although you have all day! It is primarily ascending until you get back to Lukla. This final section is approx 3 hrs and you will be elated to reach your final destination having completed one of the classic treks in the world; well done. 3 hrs.

21

Lukla - Kathmandu

An early start for your flight back down to Kathmandu.

You should reach your hotel by midday; plenty of time to enjoy the facilities that Thamel has to offer.

22

Kathmandu - Depart Nepal

Depart Nepal.

We will transfer you back to the international airport in accordance with your departure time.



Travel Insurance

It is absolutely essential that you have adequate travel insurance. Be truthful to your insurance company about precisely what activities you are undertaking and to what altitude (max). Failure to do that may invalidate your policy.

To fly a patient back to the UK under any form of medical supervision (ie on a stretcher) is estimated to cost well in excess of £10,000.

In terms of activities for insurance purposes, you are trekking not climbing. Unless your trek specifically states that it does, your trek does not involve any form of specialist safety or climbing equipment.

This Foreign & Commonwealth Office link is a useful reference and recommended read:
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/staying-safe/travel-insurance/>

So What Happens If I Have An Accident?

If you have an accident that requires professional medical help, the first priority is to get you to the nearest medical station (provided that you can be moved). Your Guide and his staff will do this as quickly as possible. You will be carried if necessary. There are a number of medical stations scattered in the region; they are manned by volunteer professional doctors and the provisions (drugs, etc..) are generally funded by donations. Expect to pay a fee if you need to see a doctor (approx US\$50) and more if you are provided with any drugs.

If they can provide sufficient assistance to get you trekking again, they will.

Any serious injury that requires further medical assistance outside the scope of the mountain medical stations will probably need the involvement of your travel insurance company. Someone will be required to call your travel insurance company and inform them of the situation if you are unable to do so yourself; the insurance company should do the rest. Many tea houses and all medical stations will have satphones to enable that call to be made (for which you would be expected to pay).

Note

If you require a helicopter and do not have insurance or cannot pay with a credit card on the spot the helicopters will not take off from Kathmandu.

A Little Preparation May Save Your Life

Some insurance companies provide a very handy credit card sized card with all of their contact details on it. If your company does not, then try using this very handy website www.ucardit.co.uk. Travel and Trek clients get a 10% discount.

For about £5 (including P&P), you get a virtually indestructible credit card sized card with all of your important information on it. You can either use one of three pre-designed Travel and Trek cards or design your own. An example is shown below. You can literally put whatever you want on it from flight details, mobile numbers, addresses, insurance details, etc...

To try it, go to the Home page, click 'Travel'. Then scroll down, bottom left, click on the 'Travel and Trek' banner and either use a branded template or design your own. These are example cards from the website (not full size).

