

GOKYO LAKES Information and Itinerary (with or without EBC)

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, what is included/excluded in your trip price and some guidance on Kathmandu.

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 re-tracing your steps. The advantage of crossing the Cho La first is that it acts as acclimatisation for prior to reaching the Base Camp thus avoiding any potential set backs there.

Whilst the itinerary described in this document includes the Base Camp, it can be done without it. To trek to the Gokyo Lakes and return (no Base Camp) would take 16 days UK - UK. A separate itinerary can be supplied on request.

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 join, 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.

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.



A classic view back down the glacier and below, going over the Cho La.



DETAILS

Prices from £840

Duration: 22 days UK - UK

Min/Max pers: 2/12

Max altitude: 5500m

Dates: see website

Important Information:

- **Costs** are based on 2 sharing and are per person (singles see below).
- **Dates:** see respective website page.
- **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** is required for UK Nationals. This is not onerous and can be done on entry into Nepal or prior to departure. Full details provided on booking including the visa application form.
- **International Departure Taxes from Nepal.** From March 2009, this is included in the price of your air ticket.
- **Itineraries.** Day 1 of itineraries is deemed to be your departure day from the UK.
- When you book with Travel and Trek, you will receive a set of **comprehensive trekking notes**, an itinerary, clothing and equipment list, a visa application form and much more to help you prepare.
- **Airport arrivals.** We pick you up on arrival and transfer you back on departure; all part of the service.
- **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 (£60 based on full trip).
- **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.
- **UK Leaders.** Some treks are led by a UK Leader IN ADDITION to a local Nepalese Guide. ALL treks have a local Guide on them.
- **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. Island Peak does require a higher level of fitness. If you are in any doubt about whether you are fit enough, please consult Travel and Trek prior to booking.
- **Clothing and equipment** list will be 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. You should also seek [professional advice](#) on what vaccinations you require for Nepal and other locations should you have an extended trip. Travel and Trek has a specific document on medical issues for clients once they book but as a guide for planning purposes, you should need: Hep A, Typhoid, Tetanus, Polio and Meningitis.
- **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. Alternatively, you can request a copy be sent to you. 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. Please read page 6.

International Guide and Porter Protection

Travel and Trek takes pride in the way it treats the Guides and porters that it employs. We ensure that they are adequately clothed, medically supported and only carry up to the maximum limit allowed (30kg) as advised by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

What's Included in your trip:

Return international airport transfers and return domestic airport transfer for flight to Lukla.

4 nights hotel accommodation on a twin share, B&B basis

All lodge accommodation on trek, twin share, B&B basis

Return domestic flight 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 Notes, medical notes, high altitude notes, clothing and equipment list and other associated documentation

Excluded:

International flights (from March 2009, international departure tax out of Nepal is included in the price of your flight)

Domestic airport departure taxes (approx £3 return)

Cost of Nepal Tourist visa (costs range depending on how long you spend in Nepal), budget for £27 for an EBC trip

Personal spending

Staff gratuities, advice can be given

Personal travel insurance

Food, (breakfast is included throughout)

Daily Itinerary - Gokyo Lakes and Everest Base Camp Trek

Quoted altitudes and hours walked are approximate.

Days	Event	Remarks
1	Depart London	We can assist with advice on flight routings if you require it.
2	Arrive Kathmandu	After exiting the airport, you will be collected by our Representative and transferred to your hotel (25 mins), which is perfectly placed in the heart of the city - Thamel. You are then free to settle in and explore Thamel. You may choose to dine in one of the many and varied restaurants, all within minutes of your hotel.
3	Free Day Cultural tour of Kathmandu (optional), with exclusive transport and Guide. Preparation for trek	This free day can be used to either relax and prepare for the trek or take in some of the many sights on offer or do both! We can prearrange a sightseeing tour (private) or you can arrange it on site. See the notes on sightseeing in this document. You will be advised of what time to meet your Guide in preparation for the flight up to Lukla the next day.
4	Domestic flight to Lukla Begin trekking Lukla (2840m) - Monjo (2835m)	It will be an early start for your domestic flight to Lukla. Enjoy a late breakfast in Lukla whilst watching the flights come and go from this unique mountain airstrip. Once you are ready, 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 outside 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 into 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	Today is an important 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	Acclimatisation or rest day	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.
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 crsooing the next day. Keep you eye on the weather; the Cho La can be a very dangerous place to be in the wrong weather conditions.

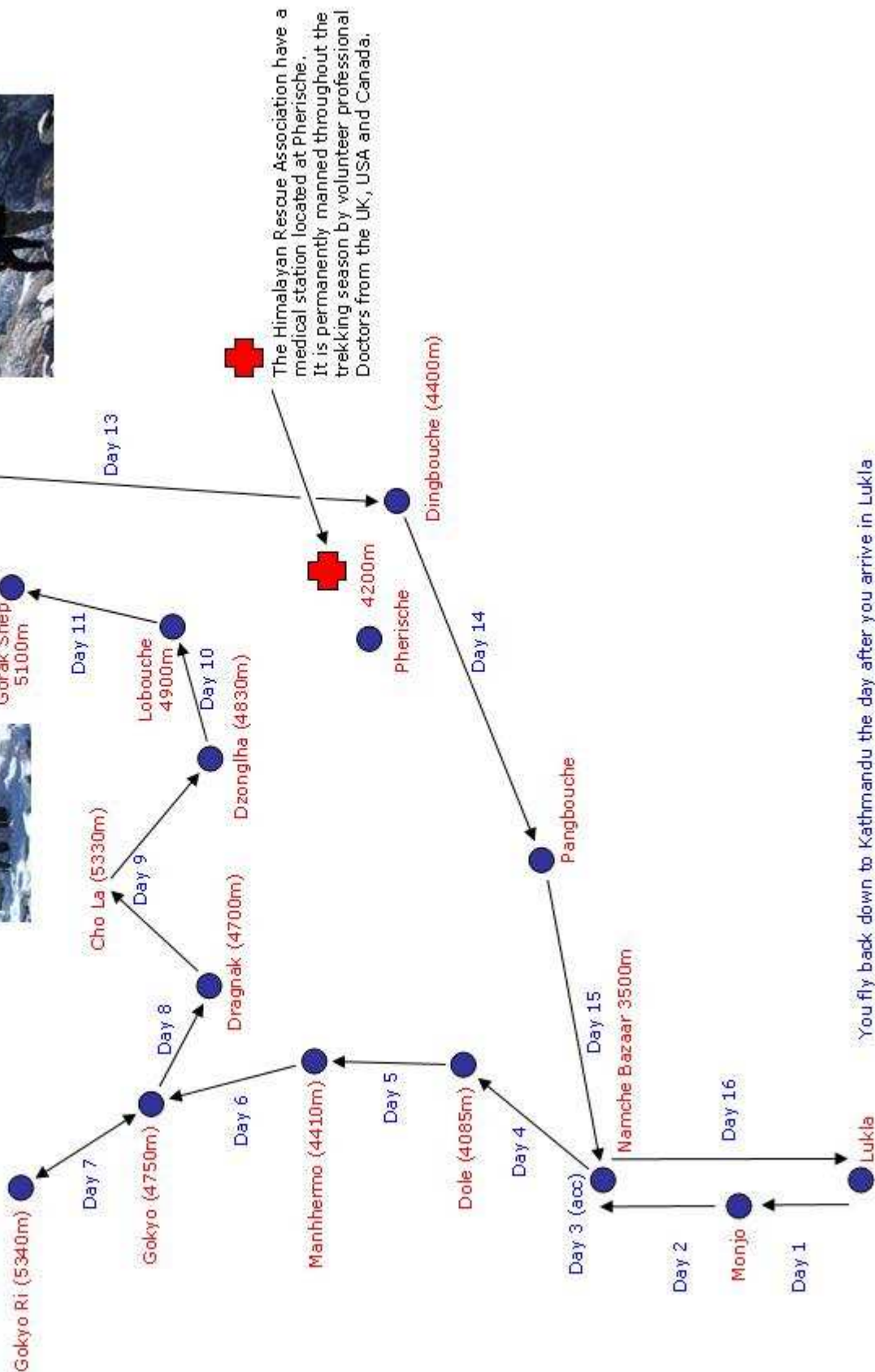
Days	Event	Remarks
12	Dragnak - Cho-La Pass (5330m) to Dzonglha (4830m)	<p>An early start for a potentially tough crossing.</p> <p>The terrain is vary varied on the ascent and the climb can seem relentless at times. The views from the Pass however are fantastic with Everest being very visible as is Nuptse and Lohtse.</p> <p>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.</p>
13	Dzonglha - Lobouche (4900m)	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p>
14	Lobouche - Gorak Shep (5100m)	<p>Lobouche is just 3 hrs from Gorak Shep; your final and highest tea house on this trip (5100m). Initially, it is easy walking along 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.</p> <p>This is your base for the next two nights. You will trek to both EBC and also to Kala Patthar from here. 3 hrs.</p>
15	Gorak Shep - Everest Base Camp (5300m) Return to Gorak Shep	<p>It is an early morning start for the 3 hr trek to Base Camp. The route is very undulating, initially to the side of the glacier and then onto it for the final hour. The route varies enormously from year to year as the glacier moves.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Savour the atmosphere and the location; the whole day is approx 6 - 7 hrs,</p>
16	Gorak Shep - Kala Patthar (5500m) - Descend to Dingbouche (4410m)	<p>An early morning pre-dawn rise to summit the highest point on this trek (although this is optional). It is a 90 min tough ascent but gives you excellent views of the summit of Everest.</p> <p>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 Pferishe) into Dingbouche. You will appreciate the lower altitude and warmer temperatures!</p> <p>A long day but easy going. 8 hrs.</p>
17	Dingbouche - Pangbouche (3930m)	<p>A relatively easy day with very little ascending down to Pangbouche. 4 hrs.</p>
18	Pangbouche - Namche Bazaar	<p>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'!</p> <p>The long descent followed by the equally long ascent awaits (2 - 3hrs) before the easy contour path back into Namche Bazaar. 7 hrs.</p>
19	Namche Bazaar - Lukla	<p>The first few hours will be easy out of Namche back down the long hill to the high suspension bridge. The group will stop at some point prior to moving on to have lunch at Phadking.</p> <p>From here it is a deceptive trek; 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. 7 - 8 hrs.</p>
20	Lukla - Kathmandu	<p>An early start to have breakfast and be ready for your flight back down to Kathmandu.</p> <p>You should reach your hotel by midday; plenty of time to enjoy the facilities that Thamel has to offer. You can continue with any sightseeing, have a post trek massage (very inexpensive in Nepal), shop 'till you drop or simply relax in one of the many cafes soaking up the atmosphere.</p>
21	Kathmandu Free day or depart	<p>Completely free day.</p> <p>Your departure from Kathmandu will depend on your airline. Due to potential delays out of Lukla, you are advised not to book an international flight before the evening of this day.</p> <p>An evening departure will get you back to UK on the morning of Day 19.</p>
22	Kathmandu Depart	<p>Arrival in UK, or if you have a morning departure, the flight should get you back into the UK same day.</p>

Schematic of the Gokyo/EBC Route

Not to scale



Note that Kala Patthar geographically lies to the west of Base Camp, not east as shown here. It has been shown like this for ease of graphics.



You fly back down to Kathmandu the day after you arrive in Lukla

Some Guidance for Kathmandu

If you have never been to a place such as Kathmandu, it is difficult to gauge whether the time allocated in any given itinerary is enough for your needs to see what you wish to see and do. This is designed to help you decide.

Our itineraries give you 4 nights in Kathmandu, which is effectively is two full days and a few half days. This is dependant to some degree on your international flight timings. Unless you wish to see every single sight that Kathmandu has to offer, we would suggest that the time we offer in Kathmandu is enough for most people's needs.

If you really wish to relax and take your time with sightseeing and also shopping/dining/bars then consider adding at least a day, if not two (I would suggest at the end of the trek). See insert box to the right.

Kathmandu has more than its fair share of sights to see; here are a selection:

Swayambhunath, otherwise known as Monkey Temple. The Buddhist Temple sits high on a hill to the west of Kathmandu and is one of the instantly recognisable icons of the city. It is walkable from Thamel (about 30 - 40 mins) and will take about 1 - 2hrs to get around this complex depending on how much interest you have in what is there. Small entrance fee (under £1).

Boudanathan (Boudha), is the largest Buddhist stupa in Nepal and one of the largest in the world. It is a magnet for the large Tibetan population in Nepal and the circular complex is surrounded by shops selling Tibetan artefacts. A lovely place to see, very tranquil. A good place for lunch on one of the high restaurant floors overlooking the stupa. This would be high on my list to see. Small entrance fee (under £1).

Pashupatinath. This is Nepal's most important Hindu Temple. It stands on the banks of the Bagmati river, which flows into the Ganges and is therefore considered holy. It is also one of the most important Shiva Temples on the Asian continent and draws devotees from all over, most notably the colourful *Sadhurs* or holy men. This site is perhaps better known for its open cremations on the ghats of the river bank. This site is quite close to Boudha so it makes sense to combine them both in one outing. Entrance fee approx £2.50.



Bhaktapur is one of the original town's in the Kathmandu valley. It is approx 45 mins drive, which in itself can give you a flavour of what the local area is like. A German funded development project in the 1970's restored many very old buildings to their former glory, paved previously dirt tracks and established a sewerage system. Despite its heavy £7 (approx) entrance fee, it is still (in my opinion) worth a visit. The 'town'

is certainly walkable and it has many shops and places to see.

Patan is considered the 2nd largest town in the Kathmandu valley, although most people's vision and experience of Patan is its Durbar Square. This Square has the highest concentration of Temples than anywhere else within Kathmandu or Bhaktapur. Worth a visit if you have time and be sure to read more about Patan before you get there!

Kathmandu's Durbar Square, is easy walkable from Thamel (20 mins) and for that reason alone, is recommended. Not only do you see the Square but you will walk through the back streets to get there and also (if you plan it right), return from another direction, hopefully through Freak Street and New Street (high concentration of local shops).



Extended Stays

We can pre-arrange extended stays in the same hotel for as little as £32 per room based on twin share, B&B.

How to sightsee. You can do this in one of two ways; Do It Yourself (DIY) or with a professional tour guide and vehicle.

DIY. With a bit of planning you can plan a route, grab a taxi and away you go. You can then either pick up a local guide on the spot (probably a student trying to earn some money) or use a guidebook and self guide your way around. The beauty of this is that you can really please yourself and change your plan as often as you wish. The downside is that you don't quite get the full flavour of local life and may even miss something.

Professional Guide. This can easily be arranged with your hotel (at least a day's notice) or even pre-arranged prior to leaving the UK. The tour will be private to you and will include an appropriately sized vehicle, driver and Guide. They will suggest an itinerary but you can alter that within reason.

Some tips.....I would suggest that you would be able to hit 3 sights in a day between 9am and 3pm, including lunch. This timescale still gives you time to relax and do other things. Save the ones that are walkable from Thamel (Monkey Temple and Durbar Square) for half days. Hit Bhaktapur first thing in the morning and come back into Kathmandu later. Try visiting Monkey Temple early also, better atmosphere, less people.

For some, Thamel is a **shopping paradise**; wall to wall shops. You can find some absolute gems there (literally), from clothing to jewellery, trekking gear to all sorts of wonderful presents at very inexpensive prices. Bargaining is part of their culture; they love a good haggle!

There are many good **restaurants, bars and cafes** in Thamel; more than enough to suit anyone's taste (from Nepali to general continental) for the time that you have there. Watch the prices though; the 10% service and 13% Govt tax are not included in the prices shown on menus.

Travel Insurance

It is vital that you have adequate travel insurance. The Everest region is remote; it would take a days bus ride and 5 or 6 days to walk into the area or a 30 min flight in a light aircraft to get to Lukla. If you had an unfortunate accident, the helicopters would cost up to US\$2500 per flying hour (expect a 2hr return flight) to come and get you and fly you back to Kathmandu. To fly you back to the UK under any form of medical supervision (ie on a stretcher) is estimated to cost well in excess of £10,000 and that doesn't include the hospital costs.

Having adequate insurance means that you have be truthful to the insurance company about precisely what activities you are undertaking and to what altitude (max). Whilst Island Peak stands at 6189m, you are not at that altitude for more than a few hours and a helicopter is highly unlikely to fly to that altitude to rescue you there either*. Explain to your insurance company that, 5500m is a realistic altitude to be rescued from and not 6189m and they may be sympathetic regarding any premium loading.

It terms of activities for insurance purposes, only Island Peak involves using ropes, crampons and associated safety equipment. All other trips involve only trekking; no climbing or use of specialist equipment.

Please note that any travel insurance you may have as part of a credit card is unlikely to provide adequate cover but check your own card conditions.

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/>

Whilst Travel and Trek does not sell insurance (and nor can it recommend any particular company), it is aware of several products that meet the criteria that you may be looking for. Your contract would be with the chosen insurance company and not Travel and Trek.

* This is based on Travel and Trek's experience; helicopters pilots are reluctant to fly to Everest Base Camp (5300m) and generally only do so in life or death cases. The air is very thin at these altitudes and helicopters find it difficult to fly in such conditions. Flying above this altitude to Island Peak is therefore even less likely.

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 these stations scattered in the region; they are manned by volunteer professional doctors and the provisions (drugs, etc..) are funded by donations. Expect to pay a fee if you require attention (min US\$50).

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

Any serious injury that clearly requires a helicopter to get you to a hospital in Kathmandu will need the involvement of your travel insurance company. Someone will be required to call your travel insurance company and inform them of the incident 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.

If you do not have insurance or cannot pay with a credit card on the spot the helicopters will not take off. No payment, no rescue, it is that simple.

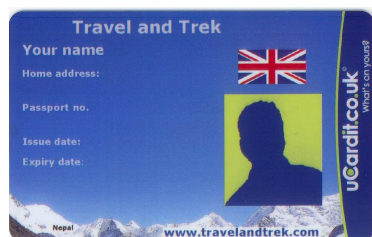
A Little Preparation May Save Your Life

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 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).

Front



Rear

