



Expeditions

Mera Peak or Mera & Island Peak 6476m/6189m

- Nepal's highest trekking peak
- Spectacular viewpoints (including five 8000m peaks)



EXPEDITION OVERVIEW

This expedition is for those who want to climb Mera Peak or, as a challenging extension, ascend the more technical Island Peak.

Mera Peak At 6476m, is the highest 'trekking peak' suitable for anyone with little or no previous experience of using an ice axe and crampons. The spectacular route is well within the reach of regular mountain walkers with a good level of fitness. Our careful programme of acclimatisation is designed to maximise your chance of comfortably reaching this special summit. Mera Peak's summit provides one of the most spectacular viewpoints in Nepal offering stunning views of five 8000m peaks: Everest and Lhotse to the north, Kanchenjunga and Makalu to the east and the majestic Cho Oyu to the west.

Island Peak. This memorable 6189m peak offers a slightly more technical climb. The ascent involves a comfortable scramble, an intriguing rock ridge and then onto a wonderful glacier. Onwards, a steep snow headwall leads to a classic summit ridge. From here you are afforded fabulous views of many Himalayan giants, including the immense face of Lhotse and the elegant pyramid of Ama Dablam. The rewarding return journey is via the main Everest trail, with its welcoming and comfortable teahouses and lodges.

Participation Statement

Adventure Peaks recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

Adventure Travel – Accuracy of Itinerary

Although it is our intention to operate this itinerary as printed, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops and the duration of the day may vary from those outlined. You should be aware that some events are beyond our control and we would ask for your patience.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

KEY to inclusions (H- hotel, T-teahouse/lodge, C- Camping, B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner/evening meal

Day 1: International flights

Day 2: Arrive Kathmandu, transfer to hotel located in central Thamel in Kathmandu. The hotel is in a convenient location with easy access to shops, restaurants and just a short taxi ride to the monkey temple; and with lovely gardens where you can relax. (H,B).

Day 3: Fly to Lukla (2800m). A spectacular short internal flight takes us to this tiny airstrip town and the gateway to the Sherpa Kingdom. After lunch we set off to Poyan (2800m) where we spend our first night. (T,B,L,D).

Day 4: Poyan to Pangkonngma (2846m). A pleasant and easy start to the trek before we climb steeply up to a ridge overlooking the Khare Khola. About five hours in total at a leisurely pace and including a lunch stop to Pangkonngma. (T,B,L,D).

Day 5: Pangkonngma to Nashing Dingma (2,600m). We climb up through an abundance of rhododendrons and bamboo to the Pangkonngma La (3173m). From here, we have fine views of Mera and the twin peaks of its impressive south face. Our route descends down to the Hinku Kola and its classic rope bridge, a wonderful scenic day. The afternoon can be spent resting or on an acclimatisation walk. (T,B,L,D).

Day 6: Nashing Dingma to Chalem Kharka (3600m) Today we climb over the Surke La, adding to our gradual acclimatisation. The path takes us through lush greenery to our teahouse at Chalem Kharka. (T,B,L,D).

Day 7: Chalem Kharka to Chunbu Khaka (4200m). We continue our ascent through the rhododendrons to emerge in the more open but rugged paths that now provide some excellent views towards Kangchenjunga. (T,B,L,D).



Day 8: Chunbu Khaka to Khote (Hinku valley) Today we traverse and descend into the main Hinku valley and follow the east bank of the boulder strewn river upstream to either Khote, with its small village atmosphere, or onwards for another hour and a half to the more remote Swra with an

alpine meadow feel. Either way this is a shorter day with no overall height gain. (T,B,L,D)

Day 9: Khote or Swra to Tagnang (4320m). It really feels like you are entering the Nepali Himalaya on today's walk. As we gain height up the Hinku valley we leave behind the forest and enter an alpine zone. Wonderful herbal aromas and pretty alpine flowers are complemented by the superb and spectacular peaks of Kusum Kanguru, Kyashar and Mera West that now surround you. An hour before Tagnang we can visit the old Gompa at Gondishung. You could burn some juniper or have a candle lit to encourage success on Mera! This is another short day that allows us to gain height steadily and enjoy our surroundings instead of suffering from the altitude. (T,B,L,D).

Day 10: Tagnang to Khare (4850m). We cross the fields of debris created when the glacial lake above Tagnang burst its banks in 1998 releasing a huge wave of water down the Hinku valley. As we ascend a moraine ridge we get good views into the turquoise lake and across to the imposing North Face of Mera. We continue across the grassy alps of Dig Kharka, a good lunch spot, before the final ascent zig-zagging up grassy slopes to Khare. This is not a long day but there is some height gain and we will be staying at the height of Mont Blanc! (T,B,L,D).

Day 11: Rest day at Khare. It is important to recuperate here before heading up onto the Mera glacier and higher on the mountain. There are some excellent short walks to be had giving views of Kantega and Ama Dablam (6856m) to the north. There are also good opportunities for winter skills training on the snout of the glacier above the lodges. (T,B,L,D).

Day 12: Khare to the Mera La (5300m). The glacier snout is reached in one and a half hours from Khare. Here we can put crampons on and climb a short 20-30 degree snow slope to gain the glacial plateau that can be traversed to the Mera La (5400m). From here a short descent gains rocky platforms and an ideal sunny camp site. This is about four hours steady walking from Khare so the afternoon can be spent resting, hydrating and enjoying views east across to the bulky mass of Chamlang, the first 7000m peak to be seen so far. (C,B,L,D).

Day 13: Mera La to High Camp (5750m). This is a short day (2½ - 3 hours) but folk will usually be feeling the altitude a bit. As you climb above the Mera La the whole of the Himalaya will be opening up around you. The first giant peak to be seen is the red rocky pyramid of Makalu to the east. A bit further still and the black rocky pyramid of Everest with its snow plume blowing off it is seen to the north. Just before arriving at high camp – if the visibility is perfect you can see the wild and beautiful Kanchenjunga massif 80 miles to the east. You can also see tomorrow's goal, the summit of Mera 2kms to the South West. (C,B,L,D).

Day 14: High camp to Mera Peak (6476m). Sleep does not come easy at this altitude; especially with the added excitement of climbing a major Himalayan peak the next day, so getting up between one and two a.m. is no hardship. It is cold however and we will aim to be fully kitted out, roped up and in a slow and steady rhythm in the dark hours just before dawn. It can take anything from three to eight hours to reach the summit. We will move in groups of three to four clients

with either a western guide or strong Khumbu Sherpa to allow people to move at their own pace. Although this is hard work the views are outstanding and the ground is easy. The descent is very quick and we will aim to reach Khare to recuperate after the summit bid. or continue onto Island Peak(C,B,L,D).

Day 15-16: Spare summit day in case of bad weather or slower acclimatisation. (C,B,L,D)

Day 17: Mera Peak (Island Peak extension see below)



Descend from Khare to Khote. Passing through Tagnang we descend back to the relatively 'thick air' and warm temperatures of the Hinku valley. Although we cover a relatively long distance (about 12km) the going is pleasantly smooth due to the constant descent and more O2! (T,B,L,D).

Day 18: Khote to Tulli Kharka (4200m). This is the base camp for returning over the Zatrwa La from the Hinku side. It is a finely situated Yak herders' settlement with a couple of lodges providing a good venue for socialising and enjoying some local music and singing! (T,B,L,D).

Day 19: Tulli Kharka to Lukla. You will now really feel the warmth and rich air of the forest zone and this day is enhanced by a feeling of momentum in crossing the two passes and descending to Lukla. The Alpine mountain hut atmosphere of the Sunrise Hotel Lodge in Lukla is the ideal place to relax and celebrate the end of your journey. (T,B,L,D).

Day 20: Fly Lukla to Kathmandu. Back to the comforts of our hotel and the enjoyable hustle and bustle. This is a good time to buy souvenirs and try your hand at haggling with the local shop keepers. (H,B).

Day 21: Kathmandu. This is a contingency day to allow for any unexpected delays during the trek. (H,B).

Day 22-23: Return flight from Kathmandu to your home country. The flight departs late afternoon so you will have a final morning free in Kathmandu.

ISLAND PEAK EXTENSION

Day 14 (continued): A brief rest at Mera La Base Camp and continue down to the warmth and sunshine of Kongma Digma.

Day 15-16: Spare summit day in case of bad weather or slower acclimatisation. (C,B,L,D)

Day 17 Kongma Digma to Sept Pokhari (5076m). Today is a steady 4-5 hours descent into the Hongu Valley. Traversing North East across the lower ridges of Peak 41 (6648m) we descend to Chamlang Base Camp. Here amongst the valley boulders we get a great view of the West Face of Chamlang. (C,B,L,D)

Day 18: Sept Pokhari to Amphulapcha Base Camp (5400m or 5400m). Today is an exceptionally scenic 5-6 hour day heading up the valley with views of Baruntse (7129m) to the North West. We walk below the rocky peak of Hunku (6119m) and past the White Lake to camp below the pass. (C,B,L,D).

Day 19: Base Camp to Path Junction West Imja Tsho (5010m). This is a long day (8-10 hrs) which will take us over the Amphulapcha Pass giving views of Ama Dablam, Island Peak and the South Face of Lhotse. The pass is descended on the north side with the aid of fixed lines. A further 4 hr walk takes us to Chukung (T,B,L,D)

Day 20: If the weather forecast is favourable we leave Chukung for Island Peak High Camp (6-7hrs from Chukung). (C,B,L,D).

Day 21: Island Peak Summit Day, from our high camp we cross a broad gully to gain the main ridge which leads to a snowy glacier and up onto the summit ridge. It is a complicated glacier with ladders and fixed ropes giving a big mountain feel to the day, before the 200m headwall and a narrow ridge, protected by fixed lines. The summit has awe-inspiring views up Lhotse, Nuptse, Makalu, Ama Dablam and Baruntse. 5-7 hrs. in ascent. (T,B,L,D).

Day 22-24 Reserve Summit days or for any unexpected delays during the trek

Day 25-27 Return trek to Lukla taking overnight breaks in Deboche and Namche Bazaar. (T,B,L,D).

Day 28: Fly Lukla to Kathmandu. Back to the comforts of our hotel and the enjoyable hustle and bustle. This is a good time to buy souvenirs and try your hand at haggling with the local shop keepers. We can dine in one of Kathmandu's finest restaurants and experience some local dancing styles! (H,B).

One night's accommodation is included on your return to Kathmandu, additional nights would incur an extra cost should you return early

Day 29-30: Return international flight.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE/FITNESS

The climb up Mera is non-technical and is really a glacier walk. It has a couple of very short, steep snow slopes. It is thus suitable for hill walkers with little or no previous winter mountaineering experience although time spent with ice-axe and crampons in the past will be helpful. Although the ascent of Mera is not technically difficult it is quite a long summit day could take 7-8 hours and can prove to be extremely tiring. If you wish to do Island Peak you should have previous experience of Ice Axe and crampons or have completed a Winter Skills or Winter Mountaineering Course. A previous ascent to an altitude of approximately 4000m would be beneficial when considering either peak.

A TYPICAL TREKKING DAY

Starts around 7 a.m. (not a problem as it's usual to go to bed early!). As you get up it's easy enough to pack all your overnight gear into a kit bag before enjoying a hearty breakfast ready to leave camp whilst it's still fairly cool. The pace on the trek will be leisurely with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos, chat to the locals and keep hydrated. Lunch is usually in a fine spot by the side of the trail, again a pleasant relaxed affair that will help your acclimatisation programme. Another couple of hours trekking after lunch and, most days, you will be arriving at our overnight teahouse ready for a well earned drink.

WHAT TO CARRY

On the trek you should aim to carry a light rucksack which should contain 1-2L of water, waterproofs, a spare warm layer, camera, mini first aid kit, sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses and a warm hat and gloves. The rest of your gear can go in your kit bag to be carried by the porters. We suggest a 40L sac to enable you to carry your sleeping bag, sleeping mat and personal summit day kit up to the high camp, until then the sleeping bag will be carried by the porters.

CATERING & SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

Food on the trek is excellent and designed to stimulate your appetite and keep you going despite frequent altitude-induced loss of appetite. Breakfast includes porridge and cereal followed by eggs (fried, boiled poached or omelettes) and either bread or chapattis with jam, honey, peanut butter etc. Lunch is usually a hot meal which may include some of the following chips, rice, lentils, vegetables, salad, sandwiches, beans, tinned fish and tinned meat. Dessert is usually fresh or tinned fruit and tea. The evening meal always starts with soup (often with a healthy dose of garlic to aid acclimatisation) accompanied by poppadums, popcorn or prawn crackers. The main meal varies from local style – Dal Bhat (rice and lentils with an onion and vegetable sauce), Yak stew, momos etc. to western style – Yak burgers, chips, pasta, even pizza! Accommodation for the trek will normally be in teahouses, however with larger groups or during busy periods, it may be necessary for groups to camp.

DELAYS – LUKLA FLIGHTS

We allow extra time in the itinerary for bad weather causing delays at Lukla. If you are delayed longer our agent will try to secure alternative seats or obtain options on helicopters which can fly in poorer weather. If the flights are delayed over night, accommodation can be provided on a B+B basis at an extra cost. If helicopter flights are utilised you will need to cover this cost inclusive of your leader's portion (variable cost depending on group size but approx: \$400 p/p in total each way). Where required we can re-book/change your international flights but additional costs may/will be incurred. All additional payments would need to be paid for in Kathmandu (card payments accepted). If you are unable to accept this, you may want to consider an alternative trip less dependent on weather e.g. the Annapurna Region.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

We employ local staff to work alongside our own group leader giving employment beyond farming. We ask that you restrict showers to those lodges that have electricity or solar power, thus reducing deforestation. Be prepared to wash using bowls of warm water or wet

wipes. We recommend you dispose of burnable rubbish at the lodges but take other items such as bottles and batteries back to Kathmandu. You can minimise bottles by bringing sterilising tablets and a refillable bottle to drink local pumped water. (Do not drink water from unsealed bottles without sterilising.) Soft drinks should be purchased in glass bottles that can be recycled.

ALTITUDE

If you are new to altitude you may have concerns about its effects. Don't worry, our itineraries generally allow sufficient time to acclimatise. You may experience a headache or a little breathlessness, the best way to avoid such symptoms is to do everything slowly, walk at a gentle steady pace and drink plenty of fluid. Should you be the exception, we can allow you to stay an extra night at a lower level and follow with one of our local guides.

HEALTH

The risks to health whilst travelling will vary between individuals and many issues need to be taken into account, e.g. activities abroad, length of stay and general health of the traveller. It is essential that you consult with your General Practitioner or Practice Nurse 6-8 weeks in advance of travel. They will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and /or antimalarial tablets. You can also check the fit for travel website www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

INSURANCE

Insurance which covers mountain rescue, helicopter evacuation and medical expenses is **essential**. You should note there are no official mountain rescue services in Nepal and that any evacuation in the event of a serious medical emergency to the nearest hospital will be by land or helicopter. We will require a copy of your insurance prior to departure.

USEFUL TIPS

Just in case your main luggage goes missing en route, it is a good idea to wear your boots on the plane and carry your down jacket and summit gloves. Most other things can be replaced but comfortable, well worn-in boots and quality jackets/gloves are more difficult to replace.

EQUIPMENT

A detailed equipment list is provided on booking. Specialist items such as sleeping bags and down jackets can be hired or purchased with 15% discount (off the RRP) from our shop.

BAGGAGE

For your own comfort, travel light. Normally airlines restrict checked in baggage to 20kg but you will be wearing boots and one set of trekking clothes. The Lukla flight allowance is usually less but some items can be left at the hotel for your return. A suitable kit bag is provided but important items should also be packed in plastic bags to keep them completely dry.

VISAS AND PERMITS

UK citizens and most EU nationals can apply for their visa online, 15 days before departure and purchase visas on arrival, you will need a passport photo. All other countries should check with their local embassy. Passports must be valid for at least six months after the end date of the trip.

LOCAL COSTS

All accommodation in the itinerary and most meals are included, please see the key above. Individuals are responsible for drinks throughout and hotel meals which gives the flexibility to choose where you eat.

TIPPING

Tipping is generally expected and part of everyday life. We generally tip our own local staff as a whole. Please see the Nepal Background sheet in your Welcome pack for more information.