

# **Adventure Guide**

## **Information Dossier**

# **Nepal**



# Adventure Guide

## INFORMATION DOSSIER - Nepal

### **PASSPORT & VISAS (British Nationals)**

All visitors to Nepal require a valid passport and an entry visa.

**Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of entering Nepal.** A visa application form is included with this dossier. **The visa is only valid for 6 months from the date of issue**, ie: you must enter Nepal within 6 months of the date of issue of the visa. Make sure you do not apply for your visa too early.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate entry visa. It is much easier to get your visa on entry and I would advise all travellers to do that. However, if anybody does prefer to go through the process before departure, these are the steps to follow:**

The visa will be valid for a stay of up to 60 days in Nepal. About 8 weeks prior to departure download the visa application form from the Nepal Embassy website, complete it and along with your passport, photograph, visa fee **(POSTAL ORDERS ONLY ACCEPTED)** and stamped, self addressed envelope send it to – The Royal Nepalese Embassy, Visa Section, 12A Kensington Palace Gardens, London, W8 4QU. (0207-229-1594). At the time of writing, the visa fee, if purchased prior to departure is £35 + secure postage and possible courier fees. The visa fee on arrival is US\$40 although it can be paid in Sterling (£30) and Euro if desired.

**Please check carefully with the Embassy what the current visa fee is just in case it has increased (or decreased) from the amount stated on the visa application form.**

### **INSURANCE**

It is a condition of joining one of our treks that you must have arranged travel insurance, suitably worded to provide cover for the particular risks involved in this type of holiday. The cover must include repatriation and helicopter rescue. If you arrange your own insurance, the cover must include trekking, rescue and climbing where appropriate. Note that many travel insurance arrangements do not cover these.

### **MONEY TO BRING WITH YOU**

Travellers' Cheques seem to be a thing of the past and many hotels and exchange booths no longer accept them. Generally speaking, it is best to take out cash, which can easily be exchanged soon after arrival. Make sure that the notes you take out are in good condition, otherwise they will not be accepted. If taking Dollars, make sure they are new notes. There are an increasing number of ATMs in Kathmandu so it is becoming increasingly easy to gain access to extra cash. This may well not be the case once we leave

Kathmandu. **PLEASE NOTE THAT SCOTTISH NOTES ARE GENERALLY NOT ACCEPTED IN NEPAL.**

**A money belt is essential for carrying your passport, money and air tickets. It should be worn at all times when travelling.**

At the hotel, we strongly advise that all valuables are put in safety deposit boxes.

Bring sufficient money for your trip as it is inconvenient, complicated and unreliable to have money sent to Nepal. In Kathmandu breakfast is included. You will need to allow around £5.00 to £10 for each main meal. Once on trek there is very little to spend your money on and around £250 worth of cash should be sufficient for the holiday. Of this approximately £7 (1100 rupees) should be set aside for airport tax and approximately £30.00 - £40.00 (5000 - 6000 rupees) for porters tips. You will obviously need to bring more money if you intend to purchase a carpet, numerous souvenirs, books etc.

The **Nepalese unit of currency** is the Rupee which is divided into 100 paisa. We recommend that you wait until arrival at the hotel to change money as the bank at the airport is usually very crowded. You can change money at your hotel, at a recognised bank or at one of the many money changing "shops" in Kathmandu. Always check that none of the notes are torn. It is **important that you get an exchange receipt** when changing money at the hotel or bank. This will be needed for re-converting your rupees to foreign currency at the airport on departure. This however is more hassle than it is worth and it is best not to be in the position of having too many excess rupees at the end of a trip.

Denominations are: Rs. 10,000, 5,000, 1,000, 500, 100, 50, 25, 20, 10, 5, 2 & 1 in notes and Rs. 1, paisa 50, 25, 10 & 5 in silver.

### **TIPPING**

Tipping is a completely personal and optional matter and is left entirely at the discretion of the individual. In Kathmandu 20 to 50 rupees for waiters, porters, room service is appropriate. At the end of the trek/tour, if the group thinks that the trekking crew have done a good job, a group tip would be appreciated. Your group leader will advise and co-ordinate this. As a guide, we recommend approximately £2.50 per trek day (in local currency) from each group member. Individual tipping should be avoided and should only be considered in a very special case.

### **SECURITY/VALUABLES**

It is strongly advise that all valuables, including your air tickets, should be left in safety deposit boxes at the hotel. When on trek your money and camera should be kept with you at all times. Don't leave them unattended in camp or along the trail. Always keep your tent zips closed.

Bags left in the hotel store in Kathmandu should be lockable and it is strongly advise that kit bags are padlocked. When travelling, passport, money and air tickets should be carried in a money belt

or zip pocket. It is important to be extra careful in crowded airports and cities. Everything will be done to ensure the security of your baggage, ultimately it is your responsibility to make sure that your belongings are safe throughout the trip. Theft is not a major problem in Nepal but temptation should be avoided.

### **AIRPORT TAXES**

It is usual for taxes to be included within the price of the ticket, certainly when leaving the UK, and often when returning. However, it may be as well to have cash in hand just in case they decide to charge for your departure from Kathmandu. I said previously, this is approximately NRs1100

Flights within Nepal are also subject to airport tax (currently NRs 200). If your itinerary involves an internal flight, the local airport tax will be collected from you by our staff in Nepal.

### **PASSPORT PHOTOS**

You will also need a passport photo if you are obtaining your Nepalese visa on arrival at Kathmandu airport. For the trek we will need permits, which also require photographs. Please make sure you have several to hand. **Please ensure you have these photos with you at the briefing on arrival at the hotel in Kathmandu.**

### **ARRIVAL IN NEPAL**

At Kathmandu airport you should proceed through Customs/Immigration to the baggage collection area. Once you have collected your baggage you should proceed to the Customs officers to have your baggage cleared. They will want to check your check-in luggage tag with the bar coded sticker on your bag. You can then proceed through the green channel and continue out through the two sets of doors. Nepali customs are fairly lax on entry.

You will be met at the airport and taken to your hotel.

**Nepal is 5 hours, 45 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.**

### **GETTING AROUND IN KATHMANDU**

On the first full day in Kathmandu we can organise a half-day sightseeing tour, with guide. You are then free to explore the town as you like. The best way is to walk, enabling you to absorb the sights, culture, people and way of life. Rickshaws are large tricycles with two seats at the back covered by a hood, a man pedals at the front. Make sure the driver understands where you are going and that the price is settled before you start. Auto rickshaws are the strange little three wheel scooters and can carry up to six passengers! These are less prevalent as private taxis in Kathmandu these days. Either get the driver to use the meter or agree the price before starting the journey. Taxis are available to go to most places in the Kathmandu Valley. Bus travel around Kathmandu is very cheap though extremely crowded and is only for the brave!

## SHOPPING

Many different souvenirs and handicrafts can be purchased in Nepal including masks, puppets, prayer wheels, jewellery, paintings, copper and bronze statues and musical instruments. It is important to shop around to get the best price. Only government emporiums and a very few shops have fixed prices so always bargain. Clothes are excellent value and there are many excellent bookshops. Tibetan carpets are available in all sizes and have very striking designs.

## EATING OUT

Kathmandu's restaurants offer an amazing variety of foods and by western standards prices are very low. Indian, Chinese, Tibetan, Japanese, Italian, Austrian and even Russian cuisine is found. There are few places in the east where so many different dishes, from so many countries can be found in so small a city. The popular area of Thamel is where many of the cheap though excellent restaurants and cafe's are found.

**POPULAR NEPALESE FOOD** - In most parts of Nepal rice (bhat) is the staple diet. It is usually eaten boiled, supplemented with dahl (lentil soup), vegetables (tarkari) and occasionally meat. Dhal bhat tarkari, the most typical Nepali meal consists of rice, lentil soup and curried vegetables. Hill people eat tsampa - ground roast barley, which they mix with milk, tea or water or even eat dry - as a substitute for rice. With the introduction of the potato crop in the Khumbu potatoes are now the staple diet of the Sherpas. Chapattis are an alternative to bread. Beef is not eaten in Nepal as it is forbidden to Hindus, Nepal being a Hindu kingdom. Buffalo and yak meat is available in the mountains.

The national drink is **chiya** (tea brewed together with milk and sugar). In the mountains you may get Tibetan tea, salted with yak butter and churned. **Chang** is the local beer made from fermented barley, maize, rye or millet.

## DEPARTURE FOR TREK

On the morning of departure for your trek ensure that you have deposited all valuables at the hotel and received a receipt. Keep this safe as it will be needed to retrieve them when you return after trek. Before breakfast you should bring all of your baggage down to the hotel lobby where it will be divided into 2 piles, one for trekking and the other for storage at the hotel. All bags must be clearly labelled with your name.

## A FEW DO'S AND DON'TS

1. **Respect the cultural and religious habits of the country you are visiting. Don't wear clothes that are particularly revealing.** Women & men **should not** wear high cut or lycra shorts. Men should not go around bare chested and women should wear t-shirts/blouses that cover the shoulders. For going into peoples houses or monasteries and on treks to less visited regions, women should wear either a skirt which comes below the knees, baggy shorts to the knees or a pair of cotton trousers. Don't be

tempted to pick up anything of religious significance from the monasteries or trails. You should always use your right hand for giving or taking anything, as your left hand is unclean. To give or receive anything with both hands is to honour the gift and is a much appreciated gesture. Most Hindus cannot eat food that has been touched by a foreigner. It is religiously offensive to touch a Hindu on the head. For similar reasons, never point the soles of your feet at a person or a shrine.

2. **Nudity is totally unacceptable**, so please wear a swimsuit when bathing. If you wish to wash in any of the rivers use biodegradable soaps.

3. **Don't throw any rubbish down along the trail.** It is extremely offensive to throw rubbish into any cooking fire. Carry it back to camp where it will be burnt or disposed of before leaving the following day. Any non-burnables or non-biodegradables, e.g. batteries, plastic bags, should be taken back to Kathmandu, or even back home.

4. Sanitation is a problem in the hills. At camp a toilet tent will be provided. **Always use the toilet tent when it is available.** During the day make sure that toilet stops are made well off the trail and that all toilet paper is burned or buried. Sanitary towels and tampons should only be disposed of into the toilet hole at camp.

5. **Do not encourage the cutting of trees** by requesting a fire at night. De-forestation is the Himalaya's biggest environmental problem and we will be using kerosene for cooking on all of our treks as an alternative to wood. We strongly advise against trekkers buying wood fuelled hot showers in lodges along the trail on more popular routes.

6. **Do not collect flowers, seeds or plants.**

7. Although tipping of the trekking crew has now become accepted practice, and often many people wish to show their thanks, it is important to remember that what seems little to us is a great deal in Nepal and Tibet. As a guideline £2.50 per day per group member (in rupees) is an approximation of what you need to tip your trekking crew.

The trek leader will co-ordinate the collection and distribution of tips. Useful gifts such as old clothes are especially welcome. It is best **not to give gifts indiscriminately** to children and people you meet in villages. If you wish to contribute, it's best to give pens and paper to a local schoolmaster to distribute, or to a family who have particularly welcomed you to their home.

8. Avoid entering a villager's house unless for a specific reason and then remember to remove your shoes or boots. When entering any Nepalese home, monastery or temple always remove your shoes.

9. **Pass any religious objects or monuments you come across on the left hand side** (i.e. clockwise). You may find food left by the roadside; this is here to pacify spirits, so leave it well alone

10. Many Hindu temples may not be open to non-Hindus, **always ask permission before entering**. Nepalese people are offended by being touched on the head and you should never direct the soles of your feet at anyone or any religious object.

11. Try and **respect the privacy of the local people** especially when taking photographs.

12. **Begging should not be encouraged**. You should avoid giving money to street beggars and you should not hand out sweets, pens, balloons to children in the villages.

### **PHYSICAL PREPARATION BEFORE YOUR TREK**

It is important to be in good physical condition before you start your trek and the best way is to do a lot of walking, particularly up and down hills. **All treks require good all round fitness and a recent mountain walking background is advisable (Lake District, North Wales, Peak District or similar).**

Pre-trek training should be designed to increase physical stamina. Walk upstairs rather than take a lift, if possible, walk or cycle to work. Jogging and aerobics will also help. Running a few miles most days is probably the best single physical activity, which will help. Those who are planning to climb one of the trekking peaks need to be physically very fit and mentally determined. Make sure your boots fit and are well broken in by taking long walks before the trek. If necessary, apply surgical spirit (a dab with cotton wool each day) to pressure points on the feet to harden the skin. Have all of the recommended immunisations and have a dental examination and any treatment that is required.

### **STAYING HEALTHY ON TREK**

First it is important to **walk carefully and to look where you are going**. If you want to admire the view, stop and look. Trying to look and walk may leave you flat on your face.

To prevent infection which causes diarrhoea it is important to observe good hygiene and consume only uncontaminated food and liquids. All of the meals served on trek are freshly cooked and prepared hygienically by our cooks.

**The best rule of thumb is to peel it, boil it, cook it or forget it.** Water should be sterilised with **iodine tablets (potable aqua) or tincture of iodine** (8 drops in 1 litre, leave for 20 minutes), or boiled. The tea served in tea shops is usually safe. Eat only food that has been freshly cooked and avoid all fruit and vegetables that cannot be peeled. **It is particularly important to remember these rules in Kathmandu and in all of the hotels**, sterilising the water you will clean your teeth with for instance. Bottled carbonated drinks are generally safe, but any ice that might be added often is not.

### **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

It is important that you check with your doctor to ensure you are in reasonably good health and that you have no circulatory or respiratory problems. **In due course you will have a health questionnaire to be completed by you and returned to me.** If

you are a reasonably fit and active person who enjoys walking in the British hills on a regular basis you should have no problems on a trek in Nepal.

### **IMMUNISATION**

You should begin your series of vaccinations about 8 weeks before travelling to Nepal. For entry into Nepal there are no compulsory vaccinations, however the following are strongly recommended.

**POLIO** - Booster's every 10 years.

**TYPHOID** - **Typhim Vi** vaccine consists of a single injection. Boosters are given every 3 years.

**TETANUS** - a basic course consists of an initial injection followed by a second after 4 weeks and a third after 4 weeks. Boosters after 10 years if needed.

**HEPATITIS A** - **Havrix Monodose** vaccine consists of a single injection. A booster dose is recommended between 6 and 12 months following the initial dose. Provides immunity for up to 10 years.

**TB & DIPHTHERIA** - Most people will have been immunised at school.

**Web Links:** The following site contains a huge amount of information about recommendations for immunisations.

**[www.tmvc.com.au](http://www.tmvc.com.au)**

### **SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR IMMUNISATION**

<b>1st GP VISIT 10 weeks before departure</b>	<b>2nd GP VISIT 8 weeks before departure</b>	<b>3rd GP VISIT 7 days later</b>	<b>4th GP VISIT 28 days from 2nd visit</b>
Discuss with GP what vaccinations are needed	Typhoid (Typhim Vi)		
	Tetanus (if booster needed)		Meningitis (if needed) (one dose)
	Hepatitis A (Havrix Monodose)		
Polio			

**It is important to check with your doctor on the above recommendations as he/she should have the most recent medical advice.**

**It is strongly recommended that you visit your dentist and undergo any treatment that is required. It is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require.** When you complete the confidential questionnaire please state any side effects of any medication and of any drugs to which you are allergic.

**On most treks we will be isolated from any medical facilities so attention to medical matters is very important.**



## PERSONAL MEDICAL KIT

Our ground agents carry a comprehensive medical kit. However there is only so much that can be carried and you should consult your GP about any prescription medicines you wish to carry with you. It is very important to have your own personal medical kit. The following suggestions are based on my experience of trekking in the Himalaya and on the most common medical problems encountered.

It is important to check with your doctor in case of allergies to any medications. We suggest that you bring the following:

- Elastoplast.
- Adhesive tape.
- Crepe bandage.
- Elasticated knee and/or ankle support if you experience strain in these joints.
- Blister dressings, e.g. moleskin, compead, spenco dressings.
- Nasal decongestant, eg; Otrivine nasal spray.
- Throat lozenges/glucose sweets.

On treks that stay above 3000 metres for any length of time, it is quite common to get a sore throat and/or cough. This is due to breathing dry, cold air through the mouth. On these treks it is advisable to bring a good quantity of throat lozenges - Strepsils, Bradosols, Megazones, etc.

- \*Wide spectrum antibiotic (Ciproxin recommended). Ciproxin is a very useful treatment for non-specific diarrhoea as well as bacillary dysentery, respiratory, skin and urinary infections. It is highly recommended that everyone has a course in their personal medical kit unless advised by your doctor not to take ciproxin for some reason (allergy for instance).
  - Immodium or Lomotil. These anti-motility drugs do not treat the diarrhoea but slows the gut and should only be used when the condition is causing dehydration, much distress or is impossible to deal with on transport. The aim in using them is to take just enough to control the complaint.
  - \*Acetazolamide (diamox). For those trekking above 10,000 ft./3000 metres, as an aid to acclimatization and prevention of altitude sickness you may consider taking diamox.
  - **It is unlikely, on this trek, that you will need Diamox as we spend very little time above 3000m.**
  - Cold and flu medication - beechams powders, hot lemon, nasal decongestant, etc.
  - Aspirin and/or paracetamol.
  - Rehydrate powder - useful for adding to your water bottle and for fluid replacing purposes.
  - Small pair of scissors.
  - Any special medicines you require.
- \*Available on prescription.

**DIARRHOEA** - Should you suffer from diarrhoea, it is important to drink lots of fluids to avoid dehydration including oral rehydration solutions. It is best to try and let the body sort out the problem without medication. Immodium and Lomotil immobilise the gut and should only be taken if the diarrhoea is causing an inconvenience ie; a long road journey is to be undertaken. If the problem persists for more than 24 hours it may be necessary to take medication and ciproxin (ciprofloxacin) is recommended. Dysentery is when the diarrhoea contains blood and mucus. Ciproxin is the recommended medication. If diarrhoea is accompanied by burps smelling of rotten eggs then the protozoan parasite *Giardia lamblia* may well be the cause and can be treated with another drug - flagyl (metronidazole).

**INFORM YOUR GROUP LEADER BEFORE TAKING ANY MEDICATION**

**ALTITUDE SICKNESS**

For treks going over 10,000 ft./3000 m. we are very careful to allow time to acclimatise to the altitude. We ascend slowly and allow rest days for acclimatisation. Even with these precautions it is still possible for altitude sickness to occur. It is difficult to predict who is likely to suffer from altitude sickness. Sex is not a determinant, nor is age. Physical condition is important to good altitude adjustment, but often people who are fit ascend too rapidly for their systems to adjust.

Altitude sickness results from decreased amounts of oxygen in the blood owing to the lower atmospheric pressure at higher elevations. A very few people begin to experience difficulties as low as 8,000 ft./2440 m., most people notice at least a mild headache by the time they reach 14,000 ft. (4275 m.). The main way to prevent altitude sickness is to walk up to higher elevations rather than being conveyed there and **make the ascent gradually.**

It is **very important to drink plenty of liquids** while higher than 10,000 ft./3000 m., dehydration, which may predispose you to altitude sickness, can occur easily at high elevation. The rule of thumb is to drink enough fluids to maintain a clear and copious urine output, usually between 4 and 6 litres of fluid per day. Maintain a diet high in carbohydrates, make sure you eat those potatoes!. Studies have shown that a diet of 70- 80% carbohydrate may reduce symptoms of acute altitude sickness.

Also avoid heavy exertion if you are suffering from the altitude. Exhaustion is one of the factors that can help bring on altitude sickness.

**SYMPTOMS OF ALTITUDE SICKNESS**

Rather than one or two, usually a group of symptoms begin to appear as a person gains altitude. These symptoms vary in intensity and in the elevations at which they appear, depending on the individual experiencing them. The predominant characteristic associated with maladaptation to altitude is headache. Usually a headache appears in the evening after a long day of ascending. The

headache should be relieved by paracetamol or aspirin and should go away by the following morning.

The principal symptoms that accompany the onset of altitude sickness are: headache and weakness, sleeplessness, often accompanied by irregular breathing, particularly at night, fluid retention (oedema), particularly about the eyes or fingers, depending on the degree of altitude sickness, dry cough, mild nausea, loss of appetite, ataxia or loss of co-ordination and severe breathlessness at rest. If you experience a few of these symptoms and they are not severe, you have only a mild case of altitude sickness. Sleep can be difficult at an unfamiliar high altitude; to wake up at night gasping for breath is a sign of irregular breathing and not serious. Often facial oedema (fluid retention) that appears in the morning will decrease as the day progresses.

If the symptoms are a mild annoyance then you should rest until they subside. If the symptoms become more severe or do not disappear after a night's sleep, then you should descend until you feel well.

**IF YOU OR YOUR COMPANIONS DISPLAY ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS PLEASE INFORM THE GROUP LEADER IMMEDIATELY.**

The basic treatment for severe altitude sickness is immediate descent: altitude sickness can progress rapidly once it becomes serious. The person afflicted should be taken down between 1,000 to 3,000 ft. (300 to 450 m.), the distance increasing with the extent of the symptoms.

There are various drugs that may help in coping with high altitude. The drug **ACETAZOLAMIDE (DIAMOX)** has been used for assisting with acclimatisation when travelling to altitude. The adult dosage is 125 mg (half a 250mg tablet) twice a day, starting two days before ascent above 10,000 ft./3000 m. The most pronounced and irritating side effect is tingling of fingers and toes. This is harmless. The drug should be taken until descent. If you decide to take acetazolamide, please inform your group leader. **It should not be taken by people who are allergic to sulphur drugs or have glaucoma.**

**NB Diamox is increasingly more difficult to get hold of in this country. It may be possible to buy some, much more cheaply, in Kathmandu. There are alternatives more easily available and, if you have concerns regarding altitude, you should probably have a conversation with your GP.**

Severe altitude sickness affects few trekkers, most know when to stop and head back down. All of our treks are based on experience and are planned to gain height gradually, with days allowed for rest and acclimatisation. The above brief notes on altitude sickness are to point out what it is and to note the symptoms. **Prevention is simple; make a gradual ascent and allow sufficient rest at intermediate altitudes.**

**Suggested Reading:** Altitude Illness, Prevention & Treatment by Stephen Bezruchka (Cordee)

The High Altitude Medicine Handbook by Andrew Pollard & David Murdoch (Radcliffe Medical Press)

### **WOMEN TRAVELLERS**

Travel and trekking can occasionally upset the menstrual cycle so take extra tampons/sanitary towels on any long trip. Unless needed for contraception or other particular medical reasons, the contraceptive "pill" is an unnecessarily risky way of postponing periods. All the usual contraceptive pills ("combined pills") contain oestrogen which carries a small but significant risk of thrombosis to those taking them. The risk of thrombosis is increased when one is immobile (as in long haul air flights), or when dehydrated (as occurs at altitude or with diarrhoea). Those taking oral contraceptives should consult their doctors for advice, preferably as soon after booking as possible.

### **EQUIPMENT FOR TREKKING**

Basically the equipment and clothing you need is what you would wear and carry in the British hills, with a few additional items. You will need a good 4 season sleeping bag, for most treks (provided if you don't have your own). Clothing will be required for both extremes of climate, from hot sun when trekking through the lower foothills to freezing temperatures at night when camping in the high valleys (generally above 12,000 ft./3500 m.).

Shorts, skirt or lightweight trousers are ideal in the heat of the day along with T-shirts, long sleeved cotton shirts and sun hat. Good quality cotton clothing and T-shirts can be bought cheaply in Kathmandu. During the evening and at the higher altitudes you will need warmer clothing, track suit bottoms or fleece trousers, thermal underwear, fleece or wool jumper, fleece or wool hat and mitts, fleece jacket, down or synthetic filled jacket. You will also need a set of waterproofs in the event of rain (or snow) which also act as a windproof layer.

**LAYERING:** Use layering to achieve the right level of warmth. Usually you need to keep the trunk warmer than the legs in order to maintain correct core temperatures, so legs do not need as many layers as the trunk.

**BASE LAYER:** It is important to avoid moisture next to the skin as this causes rapid cooling as well as being clammy and uncomfortable. The next to the skin layer must be of light, stretchy, wicking (ability to transfer water towards the exterior) fabric. A long sleeve, crew-neck top and long john are normal. They should be of a close fit as good contact with the skin enables the sweat to be wicked away more effectively. Good fabrics are Polypropylene, Rhovyl, Coolmax, Dru Flo, Capilene. Recommended manufacturers are Lowe Alpine, Helly Hansen, North Cape, Duofold, Patagonia. This layer can be omitted (especially on the legs) during warmer conditions.

**MID-LAYER:** This layer provides most of the insulation by trapping air with-in them which in turn is heated by your body to provide thermal insulation. These garments should be relatively close fitting and have provision for ventilation and be able to continue the wicking process by allowing moisture to pass to the shell layer. They should be non absorbant and quick drying. The mid-layer may consist of more than one garment depending on the anticipated temperatures. Brushed inter-lock weave polypropylene, Patagonia's mid weight and expedition weight Capilene, Lowe Alpine's Dry Flo, North Cape's Rhovyl and expedition weight are good mid-layers. On top of this layer most people would then wear a fleece or fibre pile layer. Good quality fleece is Polartec, manufacturers are North Cape, Berghaus, Karrimor, etc. There is a vast range of thickness (warmth and weight) and there is even a windproof fleece (Polartec 1000). Some fleeces are lined with pertex to make them windproof and shower proof and this certainly increases their insulation properties.

**SHELL-LAYER:** The shell layer protects the mid-layer from anything which will impair its insulating ability, such as wind, rain, snow. Jackets should be easy to ventilate, with 2- way zips, which should be protected by a storm flap. They should be close fitting to avoid annoying wind flap, often with draw cords at the waist and /or hem. Jackets intended for climbers will allow full arm movement and the hood will be enlarged to accommodate a helmet. Hoods should be close fitting, most will have stiffened visors or re-inforced peaked hoods and there should be plenty of pockets. Most walking overtrousers have zipped gussets in the lower leg to enable them to be put on over boots. To prevent the problem of condensation, breathable waterproofs are recommended - Goretex and Cyclone. Manufacturers are Sprayway, North Face, Berghaus, Lowe, North Cape, etc.

Additionally for treks which will take you above 12,000 ft/3665 metres it is highly recommended that you have a padded **DUVET JACKET** (down or synthetic). This will provide extra insulation which will prove essential around camp when the sun has set and before it rises when temperatures can drop well below freezing. Duvet jackets are provided by Classic Journeys for the duration of the trek.

Before purchasing any items of clothing or equipment, talk to the shop assistants. They should be friendly, knowledgeable and spend time helping you make the right choice.

## **EQUIPMENT LIST**

### **Footwear**

- ☐ **BOOTS:** Light hiking boots, make sure they are well worn in before your trek.
- ☐ **TRAINING SHOES:** for travel to and from Nepal, in Kathmandu and around camp.
- ☐ **SOCKS:** 3 pairs of thin liner socks (polypropylene or coolmax) to be worn next to the

skin. This reduces the incidence of blisters and hot spots. 3 pairs of thicker wool or wool blend socks.

- ☐ **\*GAITERS:** useful if we encounter snow.

#### Clothing

- ☐ **\*LIGHTWEIGHT THERMAL UNDERWEAR:** Tops (2), bottoms (1) Cotton not acceptable.
- ☐ **LIGHTWEIGHT WOOL OR FLEECE JUMPER:** (1)
- ☐ **FLEECE OR PILE JACKET:** (1).
- ☐ **TREKKING TROUSERS (eg: track suit bottoms, polycotton trousers)** (2)
- ☐ **SHORTS:** (2)
- ☐ **\*DUVET JACKET:** (Provided) Medium Weight down or synthetic. Needs to fit over all insulation layers.
- ☐ **WATERPROOF JACKET:** Good stormproof mountain jacket with attached hood. Suggested Goretex or similar.
- ☐ **WATERPROOF TROUSERS:** Good stormproof trousers with side zips to knee. Suggested any Goretex, Sympatex, Sprayway Hydro-Dry, etc.
- ☐ **T-SHIRTS/POLO SHIRTS:** (3) capilene, dry flo or coolmax preferred for quick drying/high wickability. Have at least one with a collar to protect against sunburn.

Manufacturers: Lowe Alpine, North Cape, Patagonia, etc.

- ☐ **LONG SLEEVED COTTON SHIRT:** with collar to protect arms and neck from sun burn
- ☐ **UNDERWEAR**

#### Headgear

- ☐ **SUN HAT:** Baseball cap or wide brimmed sun hat .
- ☐ **WOOL OR FLEECE SKI HAT**
- ☐ **HEADTORCH:** (Petzl recommended) - spare batteries and bulbs.
- ☐ **SUNGLASSES:** - essential to get a pair which cuts out 100% UV rays.

#### Mitts & Gloves

- ☐ **SYNTHETIC GLOVES:** 1 pair light weight fleece/wool/pile.
- ☐ **\*MITTS :** wool - Dachsteins or pile/pertex - Buffalo or similar.

**\* Only needed if your trek is going above 2800 metres**

#### Equipment/Accessories

- ☐ **RUCKSACK (DAY SACK)** - this is what you carry containing any items you will need during the day, i.e.; camera, water bottle, jumper, waterproofs, personal first aid kit (or part of it), toilet paper & lighter etc. A rucsac of around 35 litres capacity should be large enough. Padded hip belts are recommended. Make sure your rucsac is lined with one large plastic bag.

- ☐ **SLEEPING BAG & LINER:** (provided if required) good quality 4 season down or synthetic. Suggested manufacturers RAB, Mountain Equipment, North Face, Ajungilak, Vango.
- ☐ **SCARF:** silk/nylon, for keeping the sun off the back of your neck and dust out of your mouth.
- ☐ **SUN CREAM:** high protection factor 30 or higher (2 small tubes)
- ☐ **LIPSCREEN:** high protection factor 30 or higher (2 sticks)
- ☐ **WATER BOTTLE:** 1 litre metal (Water2Go, Sigg, Nalgene or Platypus bottles recommended).
- ☐ **IODINE WATER PURIFICATION TABLETS (POTABLE AQUA) OR TINCTURE OF IODINE SOLUTION** obtained from most chemists put into a small glass dropper bottle. 1 tablet or 8 drops of iodine will sterilise 1 litre of water in 20 minutes. Vitamin C tablets added to the water after it has been sterilised will remove any taste of iodine.
- ☐ **TOILET ITEMS:** soap, towel, flannel, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, comb, sanitary protection, toilet rolls (2), etc. Toilet paper is provided on trek but bring 2 rolls (soft).
- ☐ **SEWING KIT:** needle and cotton only for emergency repairs
- ☐ **SMALL KNIFE:** Swiss army style - has many uses (do not carry in hand luggage when taking international or internal flights).
- ☐ **NOTEBOOK/DIARY/PENS**
- ☐ **SMALL PADLOCK:** essential for locking your kit bag.
- ☐ **PASSPORT**
- ☐ **SET OF PASSPORT SIZE PHOTOGRAPHS**
- ☐ **A COPY OF YOUR INSURANCE CERTIFICATE (very important)**
- ☐ **MONEY BELT:** to carry valuables (passport, money, airticket) and wear at all times when travelling
- ☐ **CHOCOLATE BARS, SWEETS, DRIED FRUIT, ETC.** (high energy trek snacks)
- ☐ **PERSONAL MEDICAL KIT** (see list).
- ☐ **COMPRESSION STUFF SACS, SMALL PLASTIC BAGS/STUFF SACS OR PILLOW CASES:** to separate and keep the gear in your kit bag in order.
- ☐ **CIGARETTE LIGHTER:** for burning toilet paper and rubbish.
- ☐ **PLASTIC BAGS:** To pack gear into and/or one large dustbin liner to line kit bag.
- ☐ **WET WIPES:** one pack very useful for wiping hands, face and other parts of body when it is too cold to wash.
- ☐ **KIT BAG** - this is what the porters carry.

**There will be a weight limit on trek (15 kg) so it's best not to pack more items than what you actually need.** A small padlock will protect and secure your gear.

**Have everything packed in plastic bags to protect them from rain or one large plastic bag (dustbin liner).** Anything you aren't taking on trek can be left at the hotel in Kathmandu (clean set of clothes!).

☐ **SMALL DUFFEL/NYLON BAG OR SUITCASE:** to store excess clothing, etc. at the hotel. You should make sure that this bag is locked.

#### **OPTIONAL**

- ☐ **SKI STICK(S):** have proved to be very useful, one or two telescopic for easy carrying.
- ☐ **CAMERA GEAR**
- ☐ **SWIMSUIT**
- ☐ **READING MATERIAL:** 1 book.
- ☐ **WALKMAN OR SIMILAR** - for those early nights. Spare batteries.
- ☐ **GAMES:** cards, chess, frisbee, juggling balls, etc.
- ☐ **CAMERA** – Plenty of memory card space for all those pictures you are going to take and spare batteries. There will be long spells when there will be no electricity for recharging batteries. You may need to consider a solar charging pack to keep your batteries topped up.

#### **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PACKING**

**Keep the weight and bulk down to a minimum.** Baggage allowance on most international flights is 23 kgs. Most people tend to bring more clothes than they actually need. You will only need one change of clothes for Kathmandu. On trek it is important to dress in layers. When it is hot you will only be wearing a base layer, when it gets colder you can add to this until you are wearing most of your clothes!

Fragile and valuable items should be carried in your hand baggage. Most people take their rucksack on the plane as hand baggage. Most airlines only allow one item of hand baggage, which should not be more than the specified size and weight (usually 7kg).

On internal flights there is an allowed baggage allowance of 15 kgs per person. When flying within Nepal we suggest you wear all your heavy clothes and boots to keep your baggage to a minimum.

On internal flights we suggest you pack all batteries in your main luggage to avoid confiscation by security personnel.

Any excess baggage charges will have to be borne by yourself. Do not leave bags unattended at airports.

#### **COUNTDOWN TO DEPARTURE**

- Begin a fitness programme as it makes sense to get as fit as possible prior to the trek. You need to concentrate on building stamina. Running, cycling, aerobics and swimming are all excellent forms of exercise, so too is walking, particularly up and down hills (Lake District, Peak District,



North Wales). Be sensible in your approach to getting fit and build up fitness gradually.

- Make sure that your passport is up to date and if you need to apply for a new one, do so immediately. Your passport needs to be valid for at least 6 months from the date you enter Nepal.
- Complete and return the confidential questionnaire
- Start to accumulate any extra equipment/clothing you will need.
- **Eight weeks** before departure begin your series of immunisations.
- **Eight weeks** before departure apply for your Nepalese entry visa, if you are planning to obtain your visa before departure.
- We will send you your Classic Journeys kit bag approximately four weeks prior to departure..
- **Two weeks** before departure finish accumulating your equipment and have a go at packing . Check that the weight is not over 20 kgs.
- If you haven't already done so, make arrangements for travelling to the airport.
- **Day before departure** pack your bags for the final time. Once again check that your hold luggage is not over 20 kgs. Make Sure You Have;
  - ☐ Passport & Foreign Entry Visa
  - ☐ Passport Photographs
  - ☐ Flight Tickets
  - ☐ Baggage Tags
  - ☐ Insurance Certificate
  - ☐ Money
  - ☐ Personal Medical Kit
  - ☐ Trek Dossier – Itinerary and this information dossier
  - ☐ Arrival Details & in-country contact details
- **Day of departure** allow sufficient time to get to the airport without having to rush. Arrive at the airlines check-in counter at the pre-arranged time (usually 3 hours prior to departure).
- Now you can relax and have a pre-departure drink in the departure lounge before boarding the plane.

#### Adventure Guide

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