

MERA PEAK EXPEDITION



Summit day on Mera Peak with Mount Makalu behind



HIGHLIGHTS

- Roland, owner and founder of The Mountain Company, will lead our Mera Peak Expedition in November 2010. He has led groups to the summit of Mera in 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009 and is looking forward to his fifth expedition to the mountain in 2010!
- The view from the summit is one of the finest in the Himalaya with five 8,000m peaks visible in a superb panoramic view (Cho Oyu, Lhotse, Everest, Makalu and Kanchenjunga).
- Rather than trekking in and out over the Zatra La we start the trek by walking south of Lukla towards Khari Khola then east over the Pangum La (3,170m) and later passing the five holy lakes of Panch Pokhari. Not only is this route scenically and culturally interesting but provides essential acclimatisation.
- After the summit of Mera Peak we walk out to Lukla over the Zatra La. In this way our journey is a circuit and the walk over this pass is an interesting finale to the expedition.
- Mera Peak would be a suitable objective for fit hill walkers or climbers looking for their first Himalayan expedition.

REASONS TO CHOOSE THE MOUNTAIN COMPANY FOR MERA PEAK

- Roland will lead the Mera Peak expedition trek in November 2010. He has already summited Mera Peak four times so knows the route well.
- Our Mera Peak itinerary has been designed based on this first hand experience which is the best in terms of acclimatisation, safety and enjoyment. There are 18 trekking days including acclimatisation days at Tagnag and Khare. We also camp at Dig Kharka halfway between these two places in order to break this increase in height.



- Top Sherpas will help Roland lead this expedition, for example in 2009 our lead Sherpa guide Pemba was a double Everest summiteer.
- We use **Mountain Hardwear Trango 3.1** tents for all camping treks in Nepal. These are three person domed tents where there is plenty of space for two people sharing a tent plus gear.
- We bring a satellite phone (Thuraya) for logistical, safety and personal use.
- There will be a range of tasty meals for breakfast, lunch and supper. We also bring along a supply of chocolate, Pringles, biscuits and nuts.
- We bring a comprehensive first aid kit from UK (Life Systems Mountain Leader) plus high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines. There will also be a portable altitude chamber (PAC or Gamow bag).
- Everyone's blood oxygen saturation and heart rate is measured twice daily using a pulse oximeter in order to monitor how the group is adjusting to the altitude.
- Pre trip support will be given by Roland via email, phone or face to face meetings.

“Well at last I think I'm fully recovered from the trek! I must be because I can only remember the good bits now. Seriously I just thought I'd let you know what a great time I had despite the cough. Yes it was hard work, yes it was cold and bloody tiring in the last few days. It was also exhilarating, rewarding and let me see views of the highest mountains in the world that will stay with me forever. It also left a superb feeling of achievement.

The whole experience of the trek, from the earliest enquiries about booking through to staggering onto the top of Mera and returning to Kathmandu, was a positive one and one which I would not hesitate to recommend to others seeking to do something similar. Thanks again and best wishes for the New Year.” Keith Jardine, Mera Peak October 2007



MERA PEAK EXPEDITION

Total number of days	22 days
Grade & days trekking	Strenuous (Mountaineering), 18 trekking days
Accommodation	3 nights hotel, 18 nights camping
2010 price ex Kathmandu	£1,750 (US\$2,950)
Minimum group size	6
Dates	October 31 st to November 21 st 2010 (Roland Hunter) October 30 th to November 20 th 2011



THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP

- Internal flight to/from Lukla and Kathmandu.
- All transfers including airport collections.
- Twin share room at Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu.
- Breakfast only at Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu, all meals included while on trek.
- Twin share tents while on trek using our three person Mountain Hardwear Trango 3.1s.
- All trekking arrangements including permits and fees, tents, Western and Sherpa guides, porters and cook.
- Complimentary Mera Peak trekking map.
- Financial protection insurance with International Passenger Protection..

THE FOLLOWING SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IS AVAILABLE:

Single room supplement	£80
Single tent supplement	£125

Please note that if you are a single person booking on one of our trips you do not have to pay the single room supplement, this is only payable if you specifically request to have a room or tent to yourself. You will not have to pay this for this option if you happen to end up with a single room or tent due to odd numbers on the trip.

THE FOLLOWING IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP

- International flight to/from Kathmandu (London from £515).
- Travel & trekking insurance (Snowcard from £90).
- Nepal visa for 30 days at US\$40 (approx £25).



- Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu.
- Personal clothing & equipment, please see Appendix for suggested kit list.
- Tips (guidance on amounts included in Nepal pre departure information).
- Other items not listed in “What is included”.

YOUR COMPLETE FINANCIAL PROTECTION

In accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992" all passengers booking with The Mountain Company are fully protected for the initial deposit and subsequently the balance of all monies paid to us, including repatriation if required, arising from cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements due to the insolvency of The Mountain Company.

This Insurance has been arranged by International Passenger Protection Limited and underwritten by Insurers who are members of the Association of British Insurers. A certificate detailing this cover will be given to each passenger as evidence of cover.



PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Participants should be aware trekking, mountaineering and travelling in a developing country are activities that involve a risk of personal injury or death. As a condition of booking you must accept these risks and be responsible for your own actions and involvement.

Adventure travel requires an open and flexible attitude. You may experience extreme conditions, unpredictable weather and last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. Lack of acclimatisation to high altitudes could also be a risk



factor. Our itineraries allow optimum time for acclimatising although it is possible that some individuals might be slow acclimatisers.

The majority of our trips visit remote areas where you are away from normal emergency services and medical facilities. In case of a serious injury requiring hospitalisation, it has to be accepted by you, evacuation could take up to several days and may impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the most usual means of evacuation, however they are not always available or they may be hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

INTRODUCTION

Mera Peak is the highest trekking peak in Nepal at 6,476m. The view from the summit is one of the finest in the Himalaya with five 8,000m peaks visible: Everest, Lhotse, Cho Oyu, Makalu and Kanchenjunga. Roland Hunter will lead our expedition to Mera Peak in November 2010, he has led four successful expeditions to the summit of Mera Peak.

Our itinerary has been carefully designed to allow for gradual acclimatisation. We believe that by using this itinerary you will have a higher chance of safely summiting Mera Peak and enjoying the experience. As a safety precaution we bring a portable altitude chamber, an oxymeter and a satellite phone.

This expedition would be suitable for a climber visiting the Himalayas for the first time or keen hill walkers with some previous experience of using crampons and ice axe. You can learn these basic mountaineering skills by joining our annual Chamonix training weekend.

DETAILED ITINERARY

It is our intention to keep to the day by day itinerary detailed below, although there might be some flexibility due to local conditions or other factors beyond our control. If this is the case the trek leader will do everything possible to work out the changes to the itinerary in order to minimise your inconvenience.



Day 1. Arrive Kathmandu and join the tour at the hotel.

You will be met on arrival at Kathmandu airport and driven back to the hotel. Please provide travel plans on booking and we will arrange the pick up and transfer. A full expedition briefing will be given in the afternoon.

Day 2. Fly to Lukla (2,840m), trek to Puiyan (2,800m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.

After the exciting flight to Lukla (35 minutes), we start walking on the quieter trails towards the south following the classic Jiri walkout which is in the opposite direction to the busy Everest base camp trail.

The kitchen crew will walk ahead and prepare lunch for us at Surke an hour or so from Lukla. Our first night is at Puiyan where we camp in the garden of a teahouse and use their dining room for the evening meal and breakfast.

Day 3. Trek to Pangom (2,800m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.

In the morning we continue walking along the Jiri trail and after an hour we turn off to climb towards the Khare La. On a clear day there is a good view towards Namche and the airstrip of Shyangboche.

Today lunch will be prepared at a teahouse in Kharte. The trail continues through terraced fields and farms, as always one of the pleasures walking in Nepal is observing the daily life of villagers in the middle hills. We camp at Pangom where the tents are put up in the garden of a teahouse and we use their dining room for the evening meal and breakfast.

Day 4. Trek to Nashi Dingma (2,600m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.

This morning we walk up through rhododendron and bamboo to the Pangom La (3,173m) where we get our first view of Mera Peak! From the pass we descend steeply to a bridge crossing the Hinku river and lunch will be served shortly afterwards. There is a climb up to Nashi Dingma where we set up camp for the night.

Day 5. Trek to Chalem Kharka (3,600m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.

Today we climb over the Surke La and then follow the ridge through lush greenery to our campsite at Chalem Kharka.



Day 6. Rest day at Chalem Kharka (3,600m).

To aid acclimatisation before walking over the pass to Chunbu Kharka La we take a rest & acclimatisation day. We strongly encourage the group to do a day walk to the pass at 4,200m (“climb high, sleep low”) in order to make the next day easier for you.

Day 7. Trek to Chunbu Kharka (4,200m)- 5 to 6 hours walking.

Today we climb to two passes on the Surkhe Danda ridge before dropping down to the holy lakes of Panch Pokhari. There are superb views of Numbur, Kusum Kangguru and the Kangchenjunga range.

Day 8. Trek into the Hinku valley near Kote (3,600m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.

Today we descend into the Hinku valley through forest of Himalayan pine and rhododendron until we get to the camp at Khote on the banks of the Hinku Drangka river.

Day 9. Trek to Tagnag (4,360m)- 6 hours walking.

The trail ascends gradually up the valley to the small settlement of Tagnag. The view from here is spectacular with the peaks Kyashar, Kusum Kangri and Mera towering overhead.

Day 10. Acclimatisation day, hike to shoulder of Kusum Kanguru (5,000m).

Today is an acclimatisation day where we have a few options for hikes. We can go to either the shoulder of Kusum Kanguru or to the moraine dammed lake of Sabai Tsho.

Day 11. Trek to Dig Kharka (4,720m)- 2 to 3 hours walking.

It is a short walk to the beautiful camp at Dig Kharka. Most expeditions will walk from Tagnag to Khare whereas we spend two days in order to break the increase in height in order to aid acclimatisation.

Day 12. Trek to Khare (5,000m).

It is another short walk to Khare but this means we have more time to explore the area. After lunch we can go for a superb walk up the valley leading to Kangtaiga or for a shorter up the ridge above camp. From the ridge there is a good view of the route to the summit of Mera Peak.



Day 13. Acclimatisation and glacial skills practice day.

For those in the group who would like to practice skills needed for glacial travel we will organise a practice session on the glacier above Khare. Alternatively, you can go for a day walk and explore the area.

Day 14. Trek to Mera La (5,415m)- 5 hours walking.

Today we walk up to the glacier above Khare and then move across it to the Mera La. We will set up camp just below the pass on rocky ledges.

Day 15. Trek to Mera Peak High Camp (5,800m).

We continue up the glacier to the Mera Peak high camp which is located on a rocky outcrop. The view is superb with Kanchenjunga, Makalu, Cho Oyu, Lhotse and Everest visible.

Day 16. Summit attempt on Mera Peak (6,476m).

This is summit day! After an early start, probably around 3am, we cross the wide glacier and ascend a ridge before approaching the summit on easier ground. After the summit we will try and descend as far as Khare but depends on how strong the group is feeling at this stage.

Day 17. Return to Kote.

Day 18. Trek to Thuli Kharka (4,300m).

Day 19. Return to Lukla by crossing the Zatra la (4,700m).

Day 20. Fly to Kathmandu.

Day 21. At leisure in Kathmandu.

Day 22. Fly back home.



ETHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Mountain Company is committed to adopting a responsible attitude to the areas we visit. We are guests of the communities visited and with some thought and care we can ensure that everyone benefits from the experience.

We work closely with the International Porter Protection Group (www.ippg.net) who we support as a Camp 1 sponsor- we abide by their 5 guidelines for porter protection.

We also work with other organisations such as Climate Care (www.climatecare.org), Tourism Concern (www.tourismconcern.org.uk), Friends of Conservation (www.foc-uk.com) and Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (www.keepnepal.org).

We have developed a Responsible Tourism policy which aims to ensure that The Mountain Company and its clients act in a way that is socially, environmentally and culturally sound.

The Mountain Company has joined the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Know Before You Go campaign. The aim is to make sure travellers are properly prepared before travelling overseas. The best way to get the FCO latest advice is to visit their website at: www.fco.gov.uk/travel.

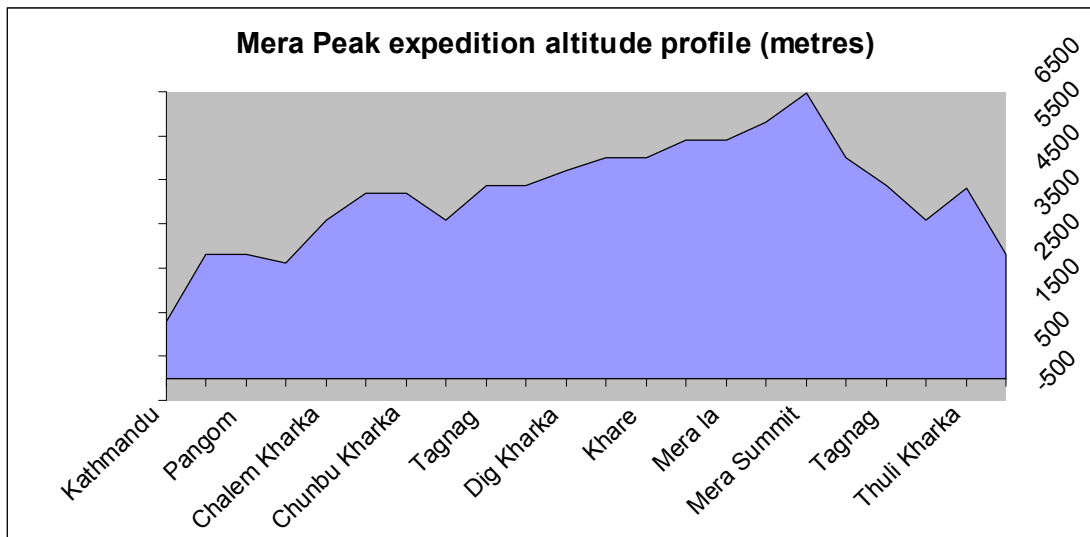




PRACTICAL INFORMATION

ALTITUDE AND ACCLIMATISATION

Our Mera Peak itinerary has been designed for gradual acclimatisation to take place, take a look at the altitude profile for the itinerary below:



There are ways of helping the acclimatisation process, as described below:

- **Walk slowly:** there is plenty of time included in the itinerary so there is no need to rush, go at your own pace and enjoy the incredible views!
- **Drinks lots of water:** it is easier for your body to acclimatise when hydrated so drink water and avoid coffee, tea and alcohol.
- **Consider taking diamox (acetazolamide):** before using this drug we recommend consulting a doctor and thoroughly researching the pros and cons.



For further information we suggest you take a look at the following websites:

Base Camp MD website:

<http://www.BaseCampmd.com/expguide/highalt.shtml>

High Altitude medicine website:

<http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com>

Medex Travel at High Altitude:

<http://www.medex.org.uk/v26%20booklet.pdf>

BMC website:

<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/Feature.aspx?id=1746>

COMMUNICATIONS

We bring a Thuraya satellite phone for logistical, safety and personal use. Personal calls charged at £3 per minute and £2 to send and receive SMS text.

ACCOMMODATION IN KATHMANDU

In Kathmandu we use Hotel Tibet (three star). The hotel is located close to the British Embassy near to the centre of Kathmandu. It is within walking distance of the Royal Palace and the tourist hub of Thamel.

A TYPICAL DAY ON TREK

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the cook's helpers. Before heading over to the mess tent for breakfast it is best to pack your overnight gear into your duffel bag. During breakfast the tents will be packed away and, after the porters have arranged their loads, they will set off on the trail in the cool of the morning.

After breakfast, probably between 7am and 8am, we start walking. The pace of the trek is leisurely with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos and explore the



local villages. Lunch will be around 11am at a spot by the side of the trail and is prepared for us by the cooks.

There is more walking after lunch and normally you will get into camp by mid afternoon with the tents already put up by the local staff. In the evening a three course meal is served in the mess tent around 7pm. After supper the western leader will discuss the plan for the next day with the group. People might stay in the mess tent chatting about the day's events for a while before retiring to their tent for the night.

FOOD

In Kathmandu there is a wide range of excellent restaurants to try out, some of the more popular ones are: K Too Steak House, Everest Steak House, Rumdoodles, Fire and Ice, La Dolce Vita, Mike's Breakfast and New Orleans. Breakfast is provided each morning by the hotel.

While on the trek, the cook will provide good quality food in sufficient quantities. For breakfast you are likely to get porridge or cereal, toast or chapattis, omelettes and a range of hot drinks. On arrival to camp in the afternoon you will be given tea and biscuits and a three course meal will follow later in the evening.

CLIMATE

The traditional trekking season in Nepal is late September to May, with October and November generally recognised as having the best weather. Spring is also a popular time of year with warmer weather and the advantage of seeing spring flowers and rhododendrons in bloom.

This trek will have a wide range of temperatures depending on the altitude and the time of day. In the mountains between 1,000m and 3,500m the nights will be cool, normally around 5°C, and during the day temperatures sometimes rise to 25°C. At higher altitudes temperatures range from about 15°C to -20°C.



CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

A list of suggested clothing and equipment for the Mera Peak expedition has been included in the Appendix below. This is a comprehensive list and experienced trekkers will often take only a selection of these items based on what has worked in the past. It is worth pointing out that you will need a sleeping bag for this trip.

If you do not have the clothing and equipment contained in this list then a good option might be to rent from the UK. Trek Hire is a company that rents out high quality items at competitive prices which would save you the expense of buying. The link to their website is <http://www.trekhireuk.com/>

Alternatively if you are going to buy then please contact the office for the Cotswold Outdoor promo code that entitles you, as a client of The Mountain Company, to a 15% discount in their stores and online.

Each trekker should bring one backpack for items required during the day. Your day backpack will contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and snacks.

The rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel bag or backpack will be carried by a porter. **The maximum weight allowance is 20kgs.** Please ensure that your bag is marked clearly on the outside for easy identification.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

All foreigners require a visa for entry into Nepal. It is your responsibility to obtain the entry visa. You can get from a Nepalese embassy overseas or on arrival in Nepal. Most people will obtain their visa on arrival to Kathmandu airport.

You will need one passport photo and the following fees dependent:

15 days: USD\$25
30 days: USD\$40
90 days: USD\$100

You can also pay for your Nepalese visa in Pounds Sterling or Euros however are likely to receive your change in US Dollars.



For the latest information, please see the Nepal Department of Immigration website at <http://www.immi.gov.np>

VACCINATIONS AND MEDICAL

You should obtain professional advice from a travel clinic or your local GP about which vaccinations to have before you arrive in Nepal. A dental check-up is a good idea as there will be no dental facilities while on the trek.

We bring a comprehensive first aid kit from UK (Life Systems Mountain Leader) plus high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines.

FLIGHTS

We recommend Max Travel (ATOL bonded license# 4705) for booking international flights and other travel arrangements. Please take a look at their website at <http://www.maxtravel.co.uk/> or give them a call on 020 7095 0920.

There are a number of good online agents that we also recommend, they are:

Kayak: *an excellent flight cost comparison website* <http://www.kayak.co.uk/>

Traveljungle: *another good flight cost comparison website*
<http://www.traveljungle.co.uk/>

Cheap Tickets: this site quotes airfares in USD\$ & often is very competitive when translated back to GBP£ <http://www.cheaptickets.com/>

Southall Travel: very competitive prices for India, Pakistan and Nepal both online and telephone support <http://www.southalltravel.co.uk/>

INSURANCE

Travel insurance for any Mountain Company itinerary is a condition of booking a holiday. At the very least you should have emergency medical and repatriation insurance which must include the cost of mountain rescue. Cancellation insurance



is strongly recommended as all deposits paid to The Mountain Company are non-refundable.

To get an online quote for your personal travel and trekking insurance (UK residents only), take a look at Snowcard's website at

http://www.snowcard.co.uk/pages/d_select1.asp?referrer_id=MC

The Snowcard activity level for Mera Peak is 4 and prices start from £90.



Please note that The Mountain Company do not act as an agent of Snowcard Insurance and any policy bought via this web link is effected directly with Snowcard Insurance Services Limited.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

For those of you who are visiting Nepal for the first time we have provided some cultural information to help you fit in and feel at ease:

- The dress code is important for both men and women. Men and women should wear trousers rather than shorts while trekking.
- There are many hot springs, rivers and lakes where it is pleasant to take a dip, it is fine for men to go bare-chested while bathing but they should not go nude. Women should try and be as modest as possible in these situations.
- Hindus are concerned about the ritual pollution of food when it is touched by someone outside their caste or religion. Therefore, do not touch any cooked foods on display and when drinking from a container used by others avoid touching your lips to it. Do not eat food with your left hand and make sure you only give or receive food with your right hand.
- Shoes are considered degrading so keep them on the ground and remove them before putting your feet on anything. If you enter a Nepali house follow the

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example of your host in deciding whether to remove your shoes but on entering a temple or monastery you should definitely remove them.

- You will pass Buddhist mani walls, chortens, and stupas along the trek and to follow local traditions you should pass them on your right.
- When visiting a monastery or gumpa it is customary to give a donation for its upkeep.

SUGGESTED READING

Please take a look at The Mountain Company's online bookstore for a wide selection of books and maps to Nepal, the link is at:

<http://astore.amazon.co.uk/themountainco-21>

The Ascent of Rum Doodle by WE Bowman

Nepali Phrasebook by Lonely Planet

MAPS

Trekking map Mera Peak Shorong & Hinku Valley by Sherpa maps 1:60,000 **We will give you this map in our welcome pack on your arrival to Kathmandu.**

Mera Peak Nepa Maps 1:30,000

Mount Everest National Geographic Society 1:50,000



APPENDIX

SUGGESTED CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST

Footwear:

- Plastic mountaineering boots.
- Walking boots. A pair of water repellent boots with ankle support.
- Gaiters. A pair used to keep boots dry if walking through deep snow or on wet ground.
- Wool and liner socks.
- Trainers/sneakers or sandals. Can be used in camp/lodge in the evenings.

Clothing:

- Waterproof jacket and trousers (goretex or similar).
- Trekking trousers.
- Long sleeve shirts (not cotton).
- Micro fleece.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece.
- Sleeveless or body warmer type fleece.
- Thermals or baselayer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
- Fleece pants.
- Medium weight down jacket (eg. Nuptse jacket by The North Face).

Handwear:

- Fleece gloves.
- Warms mittens and/or gloves.

**Headwear:**

- Wool or fleece hat.
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf.
- Headtorch. Bring extra batteries.
- Sunglasses.
- Wool or fleece hat.
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf.
- Headtorch. Bring extra batteries.
- Sunglasses.

Climbing equipment:

- Climbing harness with 1m sling, 3 screw gate carabiners, belay plate and 3m of 5mm static cord for prussiks.
- Crampons (10 or 12 point general mountaineering type are the best).
- Mountaineering ice axe.

Personal Equipment:

- Sleeping bag.
- Sleeping mat (eg. Thermarest).
- Backpack large enough to carry water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing.
- Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised.
- Two water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best).
- Sunscreen and lipsalve with a high SPF.
- Insect repellent.



- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira).
- Favourite snack food.
- Trekking poles.
- Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
- Insurance certificate.
- Earplugs (optional).
- Baby wipes (optional).
- Hand sanitizer (optional).

Travelling:

- Duffle bag or large backpack for your personal gear on the trek (carried by a porter). Bring a small combination padlock to secure the bag.
- Travel clothes. You will need casual clothing for air travel days and time spent in Kathmandu.
- Toiletry bag include toilet paper, soap, towel, toothbrush, etc.

Personal first aid kit:

Note: we provide a comprehensive group first aid kit but please bring personal medications and other items you might use regularly such as:

- Any personal medications.
- Blister treatment (Compeed patches are the best).
- Rehydration powder eg Dioralyte.
- Analgesics (paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin).
- Plasters and zinc oxide tape.
- Throat lozenges.
- Diamox (helps with acclimatisation).