

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 starting October 28th 2012 now guaranteed to run. He has led groups to the summit of Mera in 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 and is looking forward returning in 2012.
- The view from the summit is one of the finest in the Himalaya with five 8,000m peaks visible in a superb panoramic view with the following major peaks visible: 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

- The Mountain Company has one of the best success rates in getting our groups to the summit of Mera Peak, our objective is to get everyone to the top. Please take a look at our trip reports:

<http://www.themountaincompany.co.uk/nepal/mountaineering/mera-peak-expedition/report/>

- Our Mera Peak itinerary has been designed based on our first hand experience which is the best in terms of acclimatisation, safety and enjoyment. There are



eighteen trekking days including rest and acclimatisation days at Chalem Kharka, Tagnag and Khare.

- We have also included in our itinerary one spare or contingency day that could be used for a second summit attempt if poor weather and conditions or in case of any other delays experienced along the way such as Lukla flight.
- Top climbing Sherpas will help our western leaders organise this expedition, we have worked with the same crew for the last four years with our Sirdar Pemba Tamang having climbed Everest twice plus summits of Manaslu and Shishapangma.
- 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 give everyone in the group one chocolate bar per day (Mars, Twix, Bounty etc) and also provide Pringles and biscuits at tea time. For breakfast every morning we provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.
- 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.
- We have a limited number of "Harness packs" for rent, this includes harness (Black Diamond Alpine BOD), ATC belay device with a large carabiner, three scewgate carabiners, Petzl handle ascender, two slings and prussik cord.



TESTIMONIALS

“Well, what a fantastic circular trek, the whole experience was, for me totally out of this world, made even better by the organisation skills of Roland. The whole trek was way beyond all expectations; the great variety of the walk was stupendous. I would certainly recommend this route with The Mountain Company to anyone thinking of summiting Mera Peak. I have already booked my next trek with Roland in November.” Mick Finch (UK)

“I just want to say a big thank you for a fantastic time on the Mera Peak trek. As a ‘first timer’ I could not have wished for a better group that was lead so professionally. My appetite has been well and truly tweaked so I’m already thinking about the next one! Once again thanks for a great adventure.” Mark Rogers (UK)

“I just thought I'd let you know what a great time I had on Mera Peak, 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.” Keith Jardine (UK)

“I have trekked with many companies and with many fine trek leaders. Roland Hunter is quite simply, in a class of his own. This engaging, interesting and obliging man has made our Mera Peak expedition an unforgettable experience. Roland's enthusiasm is infectious, his personal involvement is absolute and his planning and logistics are seamless. The professional team at The Mountain Company provide invaluable catering and guiding support and the local knowledge to ensure a well catered, safe and thoroughly rewarding climb. I would not contemplate trekking in Nepal without The Mountain Company.” David Strachan (Australia)



“Thanks so much for an amazing trek, it was brilliant! It was really well organised and was great having the extra time to acclimatise compared to other treks and I’ve no doubt it made the trek much more enjoyable and the summit a more achievable goal.

I also really appreciated the emphasis on safety, it was reassuring that you were always checking everyone was ok and good having the pulse and oxygen monitor to measure our acclimatisation. The training en route was also really useful and we all felt confident with the equipment when we got to the glacier.

The Nepalese trek crew were all amazing, the Sherpas were so encouraging and always made sure that everyone was getting on OK as well as having enormous patience. The kitchen team were also great, I did not expect to be eating three course meals in bed at 5800m! They managed to make yummy and varied food throughout. The porters were also incredible.

Mera Peak was a brilliant trip and totally exceeded my expectations. I will definitely recommend The Mountain Company to anyone looking for a trek in the future. Thank you again for an amazing trip.” Harriet Gossage (UK)

“I wanted to say thank you so much for a brilliant holiday and as for feedback I only have good things to say really. I thought that the route you had planned with slow ascents and rest days was perfect for maximising the chances of summit success. I thought we had a great leader – making sure everyone was OK each morning. The crew were great too and Nima's route finding amazing. I would certainly highly recommend you to friends– I had a great time.” Corinne Cummings (UK)



MERA PEAK EXPEDITION

Total number of days	22 days
Grade & days trekking	Strenuous (Mountaineering), 18 trekking days
Accommodation	3 nights hotel, 18 nights camping
2012 price ex Kathmandu	£1,995 (US\$3,295)
Minimum group size	6
Dates	April 15 th to May 6 th 2012 October 28 th to November 18 th 2012 April 14 th to May 5 th 2013 November 3 rd to 24 th 2013



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 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.
- Wood heater charges in the dining room of the teahouse lodges (usual charge is £2 per person per day). Most other operators will ask members to pay this as extra while on trek.
- Mera Peak trekking map given to you on arrival to Kathmandu.
- Rubberised luggage tags posted to you before departure.
- Financial protection insurance with International Passenger Protection.
- Pre departure support and advice from The Mountain Company by email, phone or face to face meetings in London. After booking with us we will send our comprehensive “Nepal Trek Information” notes.

THE FOLLOWING SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IS AVAILABLE:

Single room supplement	£140 (US\$230)
Single tent supplement	£125 (US\$200)

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 £550).
- 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 our “Nepal Trek Information” notes).
- 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 Trekking Company Ltd (“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.



For further information about our financial protection insurance with International Passenger Protection please see Appendix 2.



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 over 6,400m. 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.

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. Overnight hotel.

Day 2. Fly to Lukla (2,840m) then trek to Puiyan (2,800m)- 5 to 6 hours walking.

You will be driven to Kathmandu domestic airport for the early morning flight to mountain airstrip at Lukla. This is a truly spectacular beginning to the trek as you fly over the rolling foothills of Nepal with the huge Himalayan peaks visible to the north. The flight takes about thirty five minutes flying in small Twin Otter planes.

On arrival to Lukla we meet our trek crew and porters and then begin the trek heading south in the opposite direction to the busy trail to Everest Base Camp. Our kitchen crew will walk ahead and prepare lunch for us at Surke an hour or so from Lukla. Our first night is in the village of Puiyan where we camp in the garden of a teahouse lodge and use their dining room for our meals. Overnight camping.

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

After forty five minutes we turn off the main Jiri to Namche trade route and then ascend on a quieter trail to Khari La. From this pass there are good views up the Dudh Khosi valley towards Namche Bazaar and Sherpa holy mountain called Mount Kumbila at 5,761m.

We descend through rhododendron forest to the scattered village of Kharte where we have lunch. The morning walk normally takes around three hours and in the afternoon we have a further three and a half hours walking to camp. After lunch we start contouring through oak forest towards the east before climbing steadily up to the Sherpa village of Pangom. Overnight camping.



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

From Pangom village we walk through rhododendron forest and bamboo up to Pangom La at 3,173m where we get our first view of the impressive Mera Peak. After the pass we descend for ½ hour to Shibuche village and then drop steeply on a loose trail to a suspension bridge crossing the Hinku river. It takes about four hours to reach our lunch place located beyond the bridge. After lunch we have a sustained climb to our campsite at Nashing Dingma normally taking a further two to three hours. Overnight camping.

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

From Nashing Dingma it takes about one and a half hours to climb over Surke La then only another hour until lunch as there is no water available further along ridge. After lunch the trail follows Surkhe Danda ridge covered in bamboo and rhododendrons with beautiful views looking out to the hills east of the Hongu valley. There is a further two to three hours walking to reach Chalem Kharka, this campsite has a number of terraces cut out by Rai people from Bung village who own the land. Overnight camping.

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

To aid our acclimatisation we spend two nights at Chalem Kharka. In the morning we will organise a walk to the pass heading towards Chunbu Kharka, on the way up to the pass you can see the trail we will take after climbing Mera Peak that goes out over Zatra La back to Lukla. At the top of the pass there are superb views of Mount Kanchenjunga the third highest mountain in the world. This walk takes about four hours and is highly recommended as helps your acclimatisation by climbing to 4,200m at the pass before descending to Chalem Kharka at 3,600m (“climb high sleep low”). Overnight camping.

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

Today we retrace yesterday's trail to the first pass at 4,200m taking two hours then carry on for a further hour and a half to the second pass at 4,450m. It is a short descent taking twenty minutes to the stunning Panch Pokhari lakes where we usually eat our pack lunches while enjoying the view of this magnificent place. These lakes are considered to be holy by Hindus and each summer many pilgrims visit during their religious festivals. Look out for the numerous tridents left behind in



this area, these symbolise the Hindu God Lord Shiva. From the lakes it takes a further thirty minutes to walk to our camp at Chunbu Kharka. Overnight camping.

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

There is a steep climb out of our camp to gain a ridge at 4,400m then from here the trail contours high above the Hinku river. Trekking poles are essential for today's walk as the trail is steep in places and can be icy due to its northern aspect. After four hours walking we descend steeply through rhododendron forest finally get to our lunch place after another hour.

Look out for the huge erosion scar in the valley above Hinku river. This was happened on September 3rd 1998 when a glacial lake called Sabai Tsho further up the valley above Tagnag breached its moraine dam producing a devastating Glacial Lake Outburst Flood ("GLOF") that surged down the Hinku valley.

After lunch there is a further two to three hours walking, we cross Hinku river on a bridge to reach Kothe where there are a number of lodges. We camp in a grassy area next to one of these lodges. Overnight camping.

Day 9. Trek to Tagnag (4,360m)- 5 hours walking.

Today it feels like you are entering into the high mountains of the Himalaya for the first time rather than seeing them from distance as on the trek so far. There are superb views of Kyashar (6,769m) and Kusum Karguru (6,367m).

The walk is a steady and gradual climb up the valley, for the first section we walk near the river on a rocky trail then later on climb up to grassy yak pastures (kharka) above river level. It takes three hours to reach our lunch place and then a further two hours to Tagnag. It is worth visiting the cave monastery reached an hour or so after lunch. Overnight camping.

Day 10. Acclimatisation day.

To aid our acclimatisation we spend two nights at Tagnag. In the morning we will organise a walk up the ridge behind Tagnag where there are superb views of Mera Peak, Kyashar and Kusum Kanguru. If continue to top of the ridge one can get to an altitude of 5,100m, this walk takes three and half hours up and one and a half back to Tagnag. Overnight camping.



Day 11. Trek to Khare (5,000m)- 4 hours walking.

On leaving Tagnag we cross the boulders left behind when Sabai Tsho glacial lake burst in 1998 during GLOF. After about one hour walk from Tagnag, it is worth walking over to see Sabai Tsho as this is only a short detour from the main trail.

It takes two and a half hours to walk to the grassy area at Dig Kharka then the trail climbs up a hill and takes a further hour to Khare. There are several lodges in Khare with good camping grounds. In the afternoon you can go for a walk up the moraine ridge above camp where there is a good view of our route to the summit of Mera Peak. Overnight camping.

Day 12. Acclimatisation and glacial skills practice day.

To aid our acclimatisation we spend two nights at Khare. For those who would like to practice skills needed for glacial travel we will organise a session on the glacier above Khare. Alternatively, you can go for a day walk and explore the area to the north of camp towards Kangtega. Overnight camping.

Day 13. Trek to Mera La (5,415m)- 4 hours walking.

Leaving Khare we ascend a moraine ridge then followed by a scree slope to arrive at a small tea shop, this normally takes one and a half hours walking. It is a further half hour to reach the snout of the glacier where we gear up putting on crampons and harness. Once on the glacier there is a short climb on ice to reach the glacial plateau that can then be followed all the way to the Mera La. Once at the Mera La there is a short descent to the east side of the pass to get to the rocky tent platforms. Overnight camping.

Day 14. Trek to Mera Peak High Camp (5,800m)- 3 hours walking.

From our camp we ascend back to Mera La taking half an hour or so then our route turns left and following easy angled snow slopes. As you climb higher the Himalaya vista opens up, the first 8,000m peak seen is Mount Makalu to the east then a little higher you see Mount Everest and finally shortly before arriving to High Camp Mount Kanchenjunga. High Camp is located on a rocky outcrop at 5,800m and from here you can also see most of tomorrow's route to the summit of Mera Peak. Overnight camping.



Day 15. Ascend to Mera Peak summit and back to Khare- 9 to 10 hours walking.

Today we have an early morning start normally around 3am walking in the dark using head torches to light the way, in November the first glow from sun appears at 5.15am and it is light by 6.15am. Of course it will be very cold so it is essential that you are fully kitted out for these conditions (see kit list in Appendix of this Trip Dossier).

We will rope together in groups of three to four climbers with a western guide or Sherpa on each rope. Shortly out of High Camp the route passes through an area with several crevasses then after an hour or so the trail turns to right and starts to steepen as we approach the summit. It normally takes between five and six hours to reach the summit from High Camp whereas the descent back down take two hours and then another two hours down to Khare. Overnight camping.

Day 16. Spare summit or contingency day.

This spare day could be used for a second summit attempt if poor weather and conditions were experienced yesterday. This is also a buffer day in case of any other delays experienced along the way such as Lukla flight. Overnight camping.

Day 17. Return to Kothe- 7 hours walking.

Today we retrace our route back to Kothe. It takes two hours to walk to Tagnag then a further two hours to lunch then afterwards it takes a further then two and half hours to Kothe. Overnight camping.

Day 18. Trek to Thuli Kharka (4,300m)- 7 hours walking.

Coming out of Kothe we follow Hinku river downstream for a while before ascending to our lunch place at Tattor. After lunch we climb through blue pine forest then rhododendron followed by a long undulating traverse to reach our camping place at Thuli Kharka. Overnight camping.

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

There is a steep ascent from Thuli Kharka to the first pass Zatra Og normally taking an hour and half followed by a traverse to the second pass Zatra La taking a further forty five minutes. The descent from Zatra La can be icy so depending on



conditions you might have to use your crampons and ice axe and we might also fix rope to help secure your passage.

Once we get to the tea shop the trail will be clear of snow and ice, from here we continue our descent for an hour or so until we reach the lunch place. After this we continue through forest and then cultivated farmland to reach Lukla. Overnight camping.

Day 20. Fly to Kathmandu.

If the weather is fine in Lukla then hopefully we will get an early morning flight back to Kathmandu. The rest of the day you are free to relax in Kathmandu or to go shopping, normally groups will meet up in the evening for a farewell meal. Overnight hotel.

Day 21. At leisure in Kathmandu. Overnight hotel.

Day 22. Fly back home.

Transfer to Kathmandu airport for the flight back home. End of trip.



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.

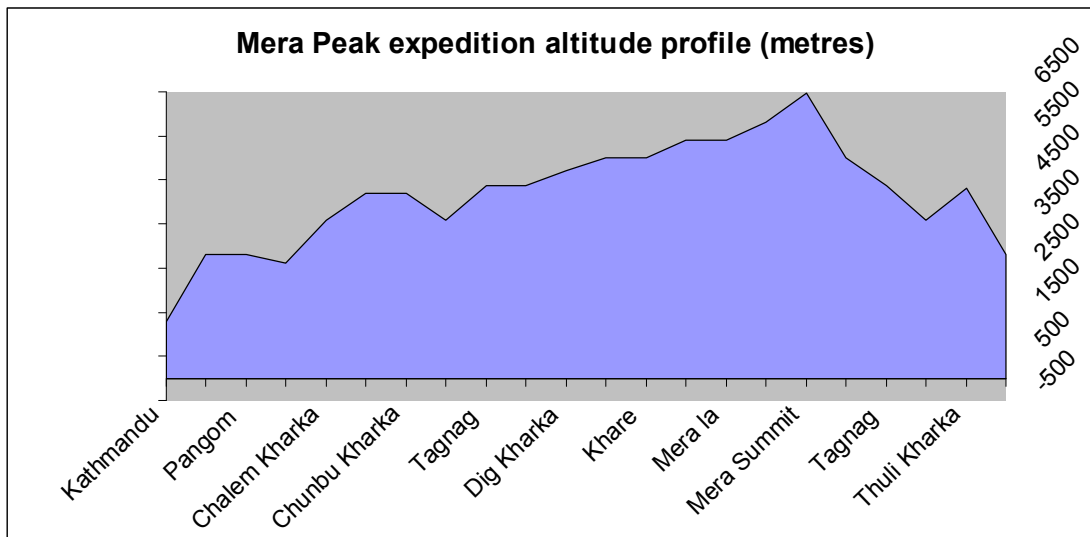




PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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!
- Drink 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.

KATHMANDU HOTELS

For our Mera Peak expeditions we use several hotels in Kathmandu depending on availability. They are as follows:

Hotel Tibet is located in Lazimpat next to the Radisson. For more information on Hotel Tibet please take a look at their website <http://www.hotel-tibet.com/> .

Hotel Manaslu is located in Lazimpat close to Hotel Tibet and the Radisson. For more information on Hotel Manaslu please take a look at their website <http://www.hotelmanaslu.com/>

Hotel Vajra is located on the road to Swayambunath Temple (commonly know as Monkey Temple). For more information on Hotel Vajra please take a look at their website <http://www.hotelvajra.com/>

Hotel Ambassador is located in Lazimpat near the diplomatic enclave. For more information on Hotel Ambassador please take a look at their website <http://www.acehotelsnepal.com/ambassador/>

Telephone and fax: 0207 4980953 / International callers: +44 207498 0953

Skype ID: RoIandh1 / Email: info@themountaincompany.co.uk / www.themountaincompany.co.uk

Postal address: Flat 3, 190 Cedars Rd, Clapham, London SW40PP, UK



There are store rooms at all of these hotels where you can leave luggage not required while on trek. There is also a security safe at these hotels for storage of valuables.

LUKLA FLIGHT

Please note that flights to and from Nepal's Short Take-Off & Landing ("STOL") mountain airstrips such as Lukla are dependent on the weather. Delays often happen if there is poor visibility or high winds.

If you have to wait in Kathmandu at the beginning of the trip due to delays in flying into a STOL mountain airstrip the cost for your overnight accommodation in Kathmandu is not included so you will have to pay extra for this.

In all of our itineraries visiting areas with STOL mountain airstrips such as Everest region we include one extra day in Kathmandu at the end of the trip in case of delays flying back. If you are delayed longer than this our office in Kathmandu can help reschedule your international flights however there is likely to be a fee charged by the airline for this. You will also have to pay for all of your additional costs incurred in Kathmandu as a result of the delay such as accommodation and meals.

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 to 12am 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



for them in the past. It is worth pointing out that you will need a sleeping bag for this trip.

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.

If you do not have the technical mountaineering gear required for this expedition then you can rent this equipment from us, we will give these items to you on arrival to Kathmandu. We have “harness packs” for rent, this pack includes harness (Black Diamond Alpine BOD), belay device with large carabiner, three scwgate carabiners, Petzl handle ascender (jumar), two slings and prussik cord. Rental of a harness pack for the duration of your expedition costs £25 (US\$40), please contact TMC office for availability.

We have crampons available for rental, both Grivel G12s and Climbing Technology Nuptse Classic twelve point crampons. Rental of crampons for the duration of your expedition costs £10 (US\$15), please contact TMC office for availability.

We also have ice axes for rental, both Grivel Munro (65cm) and Grivel Brenva SA (60cm). Rental of an ice axe for the duration of your expedition costs £10 (US\$15), please contact TMC office for availability.

If you do not have clothing contained in this list such as sleeping bag 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.



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.

Telephone and fax: 0207 4980953 / International callers: +44 207498 0953

Skype ID: Rolandh1 / Email: info@themountaincompany.co.uk / www.themountaincompany.co.uk

Postal address: Flat 3, 190 Cedars Rd, Clapham, London SW40PP, UK



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 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 1

SUGGESTED CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST

Footwear:

- Plastic mountaineering boots.
- Walking boots. For the trek you will need 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. 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.
- Neoprene face mask.
- Sunglasses.
- Ski goggles.

Climbing equipment:

- Climbing harness with two slings, four screw gate carabiners, belay plate and 3m of 5mm static cord for prussiks [*we have a limited number of “Harness packs” for rent, this includes harness (medium size Black Diamond Alpine BOD), ATC belay device with large carabiner, three screwgate carabiners, Petzl handle ascender, two slings and prussik cord. Please contact TMC office for further prices and availability*]
- Jumar ascender (eg. Petzl handle ascender).
- Crampons (10 or 12 point general mountaineering type are the best).
- Mountaineering ice axe with leash.
- Climbing helmet.

Personal Equipment:

- Sleeping bag.
- Sleeping mat (eg. Thermarest). On trek we provide everyone with one foam mat however we recommend two layers for maximum insulation and comfort.
- Backpack large enough to carry water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing.
- Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised.
- Headtorch. Bring extra batteries.



- 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).
- Trekking poles (Black Diamond with “Flick Lock” are best).
- 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).
- Analgesics (paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin).
- Throat lozenges.
- Diamox (helps with acclimatisation).



APPENDIX 2

INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER PROTECTION

In accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992" all passengers booking with The Mountain Trekking Company Ltd ("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.

There is no requirement for Financial Protection of day trips, and none is provided. This insurance is only valid for packages booked that DO NOT include flights.

Consumer aware: Your booking is insured by IPP Ltd and its panel of insurers. This insurance is only valid for passengers who book and pay directly with/to The Mountain Company. If you have booked and/ or paid direct to a Travel Agent for a holiday with The Mountain Company please request proof of how the booking is secured as this will not be covered by IPP Ltd in this instance. For further information please go to www.ipplondon.co.uk

This Insurance has been arranged by International Passenger Protection Limited and underwritten by Insurers who are members of the Association of British Insurers & Lloyds Syndicates.

Claim procedures: download claim form from www.ipplondon.co.uk, any occurrence which may give rise to a claim should be advised within 14 days to: International Passenger Protection Limited, Claims Office, IPP House, 22-26 Station Road, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0PR, United Kingdom. Telephone: +44 (0) 208 7763752. Fax: +44 (0) 208 7763751.

In order to deal promptly with any claims hereunder it is essential that you retain all bills, receipts and other documents relating to your travel arrangements. Claims forms must be submitted to IPP within six months of date of insolvency they cannot consider or pay claims received after this date.