

MERA PEAK EXPEDITION



Summit day on Mera Peak with Mount Makalu behind



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HIGHLIGHTS

-) 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 people with previous mountaineering experience (Scotland, Alps, New Zealand or North America Rockies etc) looking for a Himalayan expedition climbing over 6,000m.

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.

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-) The Mountain Company will receive bespoke weather forecasts for the Mera Peak region from EverestWeather.com throughout the duration of this expedition.
-) Western branded tents are used for all of our camping treks in Nepal. These are three person domed tents with plenty of space for two people sharing plus gear.
-) We send a Thuraya satellite phone on all of our treks in Nepal. It is essential for your guide to have reliable communications with us for logistics, planning and group safety.
-) We use GPS on Thuraya satellite phone to upload daily your location onto Google Maps so your friends and family can track your progress during the trek.
-) 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 plus high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines. There will also be a portable altitude chamber (PAC or Gamow bag) and a stretcher.
-) 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 scwgate 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	23 days
Grade & days trekking	Challenging, 18 trekking days
Accommodation	4 nights hotel, 18 nights camping
2019 price ex Kathmandu	£2,895 (US\$3,750 or €3,295)
2020 price ex Kathmandu	£2,895 (US\$3,750 or €3,295)
Minimum group size	5
Maximum group size	12
Dates	October 28 th to November 19 th 2019 April 6 th to 28 th 2020 (Easter: April 12th) October 26 th to November 17 th 2020



THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP

-) Internal flight from Kathmandu to Phaplu and from Lukla back to Kathmandu including baggage allowance of 20kg for your main bag checked into the hold and 5kg for day pack carried with you inside the aircraft.
-) All transfers including airport collections.
-) Twin share room at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador in Kathmandu.
-) Breakfast only in Kathmandu, all meals included while on trek.
-) Twin share tents while on trek using our Western branded tents. These are three person domed tents with plenty of space for two people sharing plus gear.
-) All trekking arrangements including permits and fees, tents, Western and Sherpa guides, porters and cook.
-) Bespoke weather forecasts for Mera Peak from EverestWeather.com throughout the duration of this expedition.
-) Thuraya satellite phone for organising logistics and medical evacuations, it can also be also used for personal calls at extra cost.
-) We use GPS on Thuraya satellite phone to upload daily your location onto Google Maps so your friends and family can track your progress during the trek.
-) 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.
-) Full financial protection for all monies paid to us through our membership of Association of Bonded Travel Operators Trust (our ABTOT membership number is 5365) and having an Air Travel Organiser's Licence (our ATOL number is 10921).



-) 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 Pre Trip Information” notes.

THE FOLLOWING SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IS AVAILABLE:

Single room supplement	£190 (US\$240 or €210)
Single tent supplement	£250 (US\$310 or €265)

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.
-) Travel & trekking insurance.
-) Nepal visa for 30 days.
-) Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu.
-) Personal clothing & equipment, please see Appendix for suggested kit list.
-) Tips (guidance on amounts included in our “Nepal Pre Trip Information” notes).
-) If you have to wait in Kathmandu at the beginning of the trip due to delays in flying into Lukla STOL mountain airstrip the cost for your overnight accommodation in Kathmandu is not included so you will have to pay extra for this.
-) If there are cancellations with the airplanes flying into Lukla it may be possible to fly in a helicopter. There would be an extra cost for this service between US\$400



to US\$600 per person depending on which helicopter company is used and the demand at the time.

) Other items not listed in “What is included”.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

The Mountain Company carefully selects and screens potential participants applying to join our groups to ensure the trip is an appropriate objective for you. We have a number of pre-trip questions asking information about your outdoor experience, training, experience, medical conditions and fitness. To access the pre-trip questions please send in your application by clicking on the “**Apply now**” **button** on the trek webpage. After review of your replies we might contact you by telephone or email for further information to aid our selection process.

Please ensure you have done your own research about Mera Peak Expedition by reading our pre trip documents (Trip Dossier, Trip Grading and Trip Reports published on TMC blog) to ensure you have a realistic idea of what to expect. Every trip organised by The Mountain Company has been graded based on four factors: daily walking times, altitude, terrain and remoteness.

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.

Mera Peak would be a suitable objective for people with previous mountaineering experience (Scotland, Alps, New Zealand or North America Rockies etc) looking for a Himalayan expedition climbing over 6,000m.



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 at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador (Meals: none).**

Day 2. Day in Kathmandu.

Today your leader will brief you on the expedition and check your gear for the trip. **Overnight at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador (Meals: B).**

Day 3. Fly to Phaplu (2,500m) then trek to Taksindo (2,800m)- 5 hours walking.

You will be driven to Kathmandu domestic airport for the early morning flight to mountain airstrip at Phaplu. 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 Phaplu we meet our trek crew and porters and then begin the trek towards Taksindo La pass. Our first night is in the village of Taksindo where we camp in the garden of a teahouse lodge and use their dining room for our meals.

Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).

Important note: there is a significant safety risk to consider when flying on airlines in Nepal, if you would like to avoid STOL flight from Kathmandu to Phaplu there is an option to extend your trek by driving to Phaplu in one day. However there are also safety considerations with this option as driving in Nepal is risky too. For further information about the flight safety risk in Nepal please read our "Threat and Risk Assessment" plus "Lukla and Phaplu STOL flight" sections of this Trip Dossier.



Day 4. Trek to Khari Khola (2,040m)- 7 hours walking.

There is a steep descent into Dudh Khosi valley and then an ascent on other side of the river to Khari Khola village. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 5. Trek to Pangom (2,800m)- 5 hours walking.

We ascend through the village of Hil Tang up to the Sherpa village of Pangom. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 6. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 7. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 8. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**



Day 9. 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 Kote where there are a number of lodges. We camp in a grassy area next to one of these lodges. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 10. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 11. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**



Day 12. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 13. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 14. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 15. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**



Day 16. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 17. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 18. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 19. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 20. 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. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

Day 21. 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 at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador (Meals: B).

Day 22. At leisure in Kathmandu. Overnight at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador (Meals: B).

Day 23. Fly back home.

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



YOUR COMPLETE FINANCIAL PROTECTION

The Mountain Trekking Company Ltd (trading as The Mountain Company) is a fully licensed and bonded tour operator. For flight inclusive packages sold to UK residents these will be covered by our Air Travel Organisers Licence (our ATOL number is 10921). For packages that do not include flights and for packages sold to customers outside of the UK your financial protection is covered by our membership of Association of Bonded Travel Organisers' Trust ("ABTOT"). Our ABTOT membership number is 5365.



Our membership of these organisations means that you can book with us in complete confidence that all monies paid to us for trips are protected.

THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

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. The ability to work in team is an important aspect of all of our trips.

As a part of our planning process we have performed a detailed threat and risk assessment for our Mera Peak Expedition. It is worth pointing out all of our trips have a certain degree of risk, this is of course part of the attraction of adventure

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travel and why so many people choose to join this type of holiday. However by identifying the potential hazards on Mera Peak Expedition we can assess the level of risk and implement control measures to reduce this happening.

Our full threat and risk assessment for Mera Peak Expedition is available to clients on request. For your information we have listed below a summary of the significant risks and hazards identified by us:

-) Falls and trips resulting in physical injury eg. slipping on ice or falling off the path.
-) Altitude illness including but not limited to AMS, HACE and HAPE.
-) Getting lost or becoming separated from group eg. summit day in whiteout.
-) Severe bad weather and conditions when camping eg. at Mera La or High Camp.
-) Climatic injuries (dehydration, sun burn, heat exhaustion, hypothermia or heat stroke).
-) Crossing a river with no bridge resulting in drowning and/ or a fall.
-) Rock fall and landslides.
-) Snow and ice avalanches eg. on Mera Peak and crossing Zatra La.
-) Lightning strike.
-) Wildlife, pack animals (eg. donkeys or horses) or stray dogs. Pack animals have been known to knock people off the path. Dogs can attack and bite, we advise you discuss rabies vaccination with your doctor.
-) Earthquake.
-) Risk of fire in the hotel or lodge.
-) Endemic local diseases. We advise you discuss vaccinations with your doctor before departure.
-) Physiological injury such as heart attack, appendicitis, hernia, toothache etc. in a remote area.



-) Road traffic or flight accident [*see paragraph “Lukla and Phaplu flight” for further information about STOL flights*].
-) Contaminated food and/ or water.

This trip visits a remote area where you are away from normal emergency services and medical facilities. In case of a serious injury requiring hospitalisation 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.

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS (“AITO”)

The Mountain Company is a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) and we have agreed to abide by the terms of the AITO Quality Charter.

AITO is the Association for independent and specialist holiday companies. Our member companies, usually owner-managed, strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating. For more information please take a look at <http://www.aito.com/>





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 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.

In 2017 the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) launched Project PROTECT in recognition of the important role that destinations play in the future of the travel industry. The aim of this project is to encourage sustainable tourism and to nurture the destinations for tomorrow's travellers. The PROTECT acronym stands for People / Resources / Outreach / Tourism / Environment / Conservation / Tomorrow.

This project is led by Professor Xavier Font of the University of Surrey and each AITO member has to publish an annual pledge and report back at the end of the year on how they got along. To see The Mountain Company's Project PROTECT pledges for 2018 and 2017, please take a look at our [Sustainable Tourism page on AITO website](#).



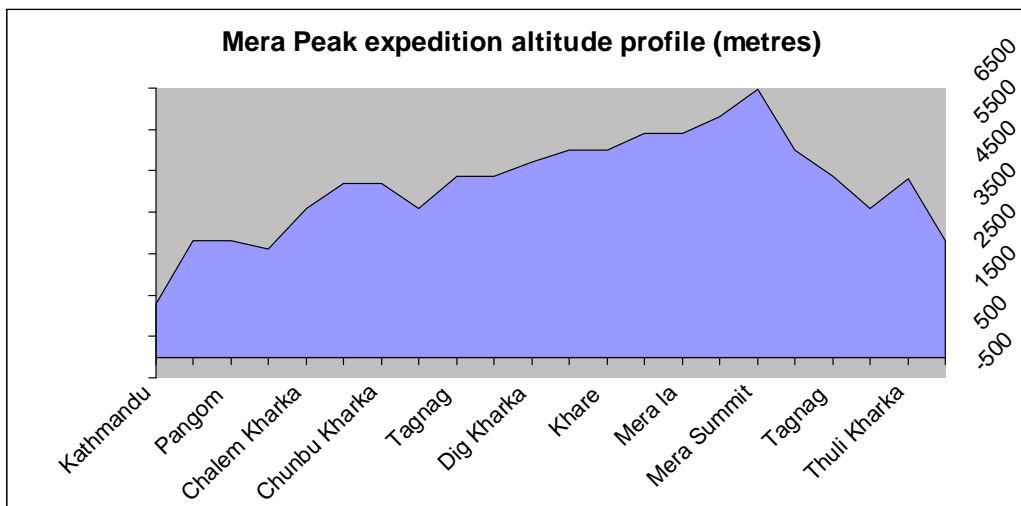
We work closely with the International Porter Protection Group and abide by their five guidelines for porter protection, their website is at www.ippg.net. We also have partnered with Kathmandu Environmental Education Project in Nepal, their website is at www.keepnepal.org



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.

Please remember even the fittest and healthiest person can develop one of the altitude illnesses: AMS (acute mountain sickness), HACE (high altitude cerebral edema) and/ or HAPE (high altitude pulmonary edema). The symptoms of these illnesses are listed below, if any of these occur when you are on trek please immediately tell your guide.

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Symptoms of AMS:

-) Tiredness
-) Dizziness
-) Nausea or if severe, vomiting
-) Poor sleep

Symptoms of HACE:

-) Usually preceded by AMS
-) Like “Severe AMS” also with severe headache unresponsive to painkillers; confusion and physical clumsiness (ataxia).

Symptoms of HAPE:

-) Fluid in the lungs: cough, tiredness, breathlessness out of proportion to exercise especially at rest and worse when lying flat.
-) Often symptoms start later (at night or after 24 to 48 hours at new altitude).
-) Often occurs without AMS (often no headache)
-) But you can have AMS and HACE too.

If you have symptoms of altitude illness (AMS, HACE or HAPE) you must not ascend in altitude. If you have HACE or HAPE you must descend to nearest health post (if available) or seek medical help.

If you have only mild symptoms of AMS you should rest, drink fluids, try to eat, keep warm. If symptoms go away then you can go up. If symptoms get worse you have to descend in altitude escorted by one of our guides (someone with altitude illness must never descend alone).

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

High Altitude medicine website:

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

Telephone: 01647 433880 / International callers: +44 1647 433880

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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 £4 (US\$5) per minute and £2 (US\$3) 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. Hotel Tibet is our usual hotel for our standard trips in Nepal as our clients enjoy staying at this property due to its good location, comfortable rooms and high level of service. There is a garden terrace next to the restaurant on the ground floor and the roof terrace with the Yeti Bar overlooking the city. For more information on Hotel Tibet please take a look at their website <http://www.hotel-tibet.com/> .

Hotel Ambassador is located in Lazimpat not far from Hotel Tibet and Manaslu. This hotel was rebuilt and opened in Spring 2017 with well-appointed rooms including both King size and twin beds, complimentary wifi, tea & coffee, iron & board, combined bath & shower. The rooms are a good size at 30m² and are well decorated with original art. The rooms have air conditioning and are sound proofed for quiet nights rest. For more information on Hotel Ambassador please take a look at their website: <http://www.ambassadornepal.com/>

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.

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LUKLA AND PHAPLU FLIGHT

Please note that flights to and from Nepal's Short Take-Off & Landing ("STOL") mountain airstrips such as Lukla and Phaplu 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. If there are cancellations with the airplanes flying into Lukla it may be possible to fly in a helicopter. There would be an extra cost for this service between US\$400 to US\$600 per person depending on which helicopter company is used and the demand at the time.

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.

British Foreign & Commonwealth Office ("FCO") travel advice to Nepal states that "STOL airstrips in Nepal are among the most remote and difficult to land on in the world and are a challenge for even the most technically proficient pilots and well-maintained aircraft." For their latest advice please take a look at their Safety & Security section under Air Travel, link at: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nepal/safety-and-security>

There have been a number of recent air accidents in Nepal and in December 2013 The European Union banned all airlines based in Nepal from flying in the 28-nation bloc under the latest changes to a list of unsafe carriers. For more information on Nepal's air safety profile take a look at Aviation Safety Network, link at: <http://aviation-safety.net/database/country/country.php?id=9N>



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

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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 -18°C.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

A list of clothing and equipment for Mera Peak has been included in the Appendix below. 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 and Expedition Kit Hire rent out high quality items at competitive prices which would save you the expense of buying.

The links to their websites are at <http://www.trekhireuk.com/> and <http://www.expeditionkithire.co.uk>

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.

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 £30 (US\$50), 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 £15 (US\$20), 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.

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. Please read our Nepal Pre Trip information document for more details about getting your Nepal visa.

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 including high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines. Please get in contact with us if you would like to see the list of medicines contained in our medical kits.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

The Mountain Company does not book international flights for our holidays. Instead all package prices are Land Only with services starting from arrival to the destination country.



If you would like help arranging flights then we suggest you contact our partner travel agent, StudentUniverse (ATOL registered) a specialist division of the Flight Centre Travel Group ---> [Get an online quote](#)

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.

Please carefully check your insurers' Terms and Conditions in particular you should make sure the following is covered: 1) Activity (i.e touring, trekking or mountaineering) 2) Maximum altitude reached on trek 3) Helicopter evacuation in an emergency.

It is important for you to understand that ultimately the burden of any expense incurred in evacuation and repatriation procedures will be borne by you and that it is your responsibility to pay any costs incurred in respect of any evacuation or for medical treatment. You should be fully aware of the implications involved in arranging your own travel insurance and understand the limitations and exclusions of your policy.

You should be aware that under certain circumstances, The Mountain Company leader (or our local agent, if no western leader) might instigate rescue proceedings via helicopter (or any other means necessary) in situations of medical emergency without first contacting your insurance company for their approval.

We have [listed on TMC website a comprehensive list of specialist adventure travel insurers](#) that our trekkers from UK, EU and Internationally based have used in the past. Please carefully check their Terms & Conditions prior to purchase. These companies are not necessarily recommended by us so it is your responsibility to ensure you have appropriate coverage.



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.



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

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST FOR MERA PEAK

For the safety of everyone in the group and to help ensure a successful expedition, you are required to have the following items in our clothing and equipment list tailored for Mera Peak. Your gear will be checked by the group leader in Kathmandu prior to departure.

As a reminder, the weather on this trek will vary season to season and day to day as you ascend to higher elevations. During the first couple of days on Mera Peak you will experience warm with temperatures around 20 to 25°C. You will experience the coldest temperatures at High Camp and for early morning summit attempt where overnight lows could be down to around -20°C (even lower when considering wind chill too).

Footwear:

) Double mountaineering boots with insulated inners (i.e Plastics) eg. Scarpa Vegas High Altitude or La Sportiva Spantik, there are other suitable boots available please visit a reputable outdoor store for further advice on latest products available). Please note double mountaineering boots are mandatory for Mera Peak.

If you are UK based you can rent boots and other mountaineering gear from <http://www.expeditionkithire.co.uk>

) Three season walking boots. For the trek you will need a pair of water repellent boots with ankle support.

) Gaiters. A pair of knee high gaiters used to keep boots dry if walking through deep snow or on wet ground.

) Mountaineering socks for time spent on Mera Peak (eg Bridgedale summit socks).



-) Walking socks.
-) Trail shoes or trainers. Can be used around camp.

Clothing:

-) Waterproof jacket and trousers (goretex or similar). For use if it rains or snows during the trek.
-) Trekking trousers (eg. Mountain Hardwear Mesa V2 or The North Face Paramount Peak). Minimum two pairs of trousers.
-) Soft shell trousers (eg. The North Face Cotopaxi).
-) Long sleeve synthetic shirts ie. not cotton (eg. Capilene base layer from Patagonia). Minimum two shirts.
-) Micro fleece (eg. The North Face 100 Glacier or 100 Khyber fleeces or Mountain Hardwear Microstretch Zip T or Patagonia R1 pullover).
-) Mid to heavyweight fleece (eg. The Mountain Hardwear Desna Hoody II or Patagonia R2).
-) Sleeveless or body warmer type fleece (eg. The Mountain Hardwear Tech vest or Patagonia Better Sweater vest). This will help keep your core warm while not bulking when layering up. Gilet fleece can be used in combination with base layers, other fleeces and down jacket to provide maximum warmth and insulation.
-) Thermals or base layer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
-) Fleece pants. To be worn around camp or added as an additional layer when the temperatures start to drop higher up.
-) Medium weight down jacket (eg. The North Face Nuptse jacket or Mountain Hardwear Hooded Phantom Jacket).

Handwear: please note we strongly recommend you bring all three types of the gloves and mitts listed below.

-) Fleece gloves. It is best to have these gloves with Windblocker fabric for extra warmth.



-) Mountaineering gloves (eg. Mountain Hardware Medusa glove or Black Diamond Enforcer or Guide glove).
-) Warm mitts (eg. Mountain Hardware Absolute Zero or Nilas mitt or Black Diamond Mercury mitt).

Headwear:

-) Wool or fleece hat. It is best to have hat with Windblocker fabric for extra warmth.
-) Sun hat.
-) Bandana or face mask (eg. Buff Headwear check out <http://www.buffwear.com>)
-) Sunglasses. These need to have side protection or should be wraparound design to prevent light getting through to your eyes that could cause sun blindness.
-) 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, 12 point general mountaineering type are the best (eg Grivel G12s)
-) Kahtoola Microspikes or YakTrax XTRs. These are for your safety and security when descending passes if snowy or icy conditions, for more information please take a look at: <https://kahtoola.com/product/microspikes/> and <https://www.yaktrax.com/product/xtr>
-) Mountaineering ice axe with leash.
-) Climbing helmet (mandatory as there is risk of rock fall on Mera Peak).



Personal Equipment:

-) Sleeping bag. Temperature rated to at least -18 Celsius.
-) Fleece or silk liner for your sleeping bag. A liner protects your sleeping bag from getting dirty and helps by adding extra insulation to keep you warm at night.
-) Sleeping mat (eg. Thermarest). On trek we provide everyone with one foam mat however we recommend two layers for maximum insulation and comfort.
-) Daypack. Recommended size is 50 litres or larger as you need to have enough space to carry water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing as well as crampons, ice axe and down jacket for when climbing on Mera Peak. It is also a good idea to bring a pack cover to keep the contents dry.
-) Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised. Or even better are fold-drybags such as from Exped, for more information:
-) Headtorch. Bring extra batteries.
-) Sunglasses. The lenses need to be Category 4 rated and should have side protection or wraparound design to prevent light getting through to your eyes that could cause sun blindness.
-) Two water bottles (eg. Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best).
-) Pee bottle. Highly recommended as means you do not have to get up to find toilet tent at night! For men you can use an old water bottle for women take a look at SheWee at <http://www.shewee.com/>
-) Sunscreen and lipsalve with a high SPF.
-) Insect repellent.
-) Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira). You will be provided with boiled water at camp however if you refill water bottle at a water tap or steam during the day you should use water purifiers.
-) Trekking poles (Black Diamond with “Flick Lock” are best). Having two poles is mandatory as required for your safety on steep and loose sections of the trail and for walking through deep snow higher up.



-) Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
-) Insurance certificate.
-) Earplugs (optional).
-) Baby wipes (optional).
-) Hand sanitizer. We suggest you keep this in your day pack for use after a toilet break during the trek or before eating any snacks.

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. We provide toilet paper so you do not need to bring this with you.

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).
-) Antibiotics. Although we carry antibiotics for the team, it is advisable to bring some of your own. We recommend that you visit your doctor and request one set of antibiotics to treat stomach infection and one for upper respiratory tract infection.