Everest Lodge to Lodge

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

Wilderness Travel

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Travel Information

PASSPORT

Passport requirements:

- Must be valid for at least six months beyond your departure from Nepal.
- Have at least two blank visa pages labeled "Visas" for every country you will visit.

Renewal: If needed, apply through the US State Department or use Passport Visas Express for expedited service.

VISAS & ENTRY NOTES

Nepal Visa: US citizens need a visa for Nepal. Nepal issues 15-day, 30-day, and 90-day visas, depending on your length of stay.

A 15-day visa is required for this trip and can be obtained upon arrival at the Kathmandu airport. In order to obtain this visa, $30 and one passport photo are currently required (and must be presented to the Nepali Immigration officials upon arrival).

If you plan to stay longer than 15 days (e.g. you are doing an extension or staying extra nights in Kathmandu), you will need a 30-day visa, which currently costs $50 and requires one passport photo.

If you are staying longer than 30 days, a 90-day visa will be necessary. It is currently $125, with one passport photo needed.

Wilderness Travel has arranged VIP Arrival Service for you at the Kathmandu Airport. You will be met at the airport for assistance with your Nepal visa and paperwork. You will need to provide payment (both USD and Nepal rupees are accepted) upon arrival.

While the representative will have your documentation and visa photo pre-arranged, it is a good idea to bring an extra 2x2 visa photo with you, to be safe.

India Visa: If you are planning to visit India before or after your trip, a visa must be obtained prior to your departure from the US. Please call or email us for further details, even if you are just planning to transit through an India city.

If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

Please note that all visa requirements and regulations are subject to change.

MONEY

We suggest you bring US cash and one or two major credit cards for any shopping and extra expenses on your trip. Having US cash is typically easiest and always best for minor expenses

The currency in Nepal is the *rupee*. You can easily change money at the Kathmandu airport, the group hotel, or stores in Kathmandu. Please remember to keep all currency exchange receipts. You may need them to change any remaining rupees back into US dollars upon departure. You can usually reconvert only 15% of the exchange receipts you have, so try to use up all your rupees before leaving Nepal.

Shops, hotels, and restaurants may add a service charge of 3% or 4% when you use your credit card (Visa and MasterCard are more widely accepted than American Express). If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad. There are ATM machines in many locations in Kathmandu and the Kathmandu Valley. They accept most international ATM and credit cards. Please note there are sometimes restrictions on the amount you can withdraw per transaction or per day. While on trek, ATMs are only available in Lukla and Namche and tend to have low maximum withdrawals. To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. Check with your bank before

leaving to make sure your card and PIN number will work in Nepal. If you are withdrawing larger amounts for tips, etc. we recommend withdrawing cash while in Kathmandu.

You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, any meals not included in the trip itinerary (approximately $10-$20 each for lunches and $15-$35 each for dinners) and for personal items such as beverages, snacks, etc. A taxi from the hotel to downtown costs about $5, but should be paid in Nepali rupees. Taxis usually have meters, but they are often not used and you might have to bargain with the driver before departure. Tipping is not expected for taxi drivers.

TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides for outstanding service. As a reference, a **tip starting at $180 USD per trip member for the Trip Leader, $140 USD per trip member for the Assistant Guide, and $200 USD per trip member for the Trek Crew** is suggested.

For your included sightseeing tour in Kathmandu, we suggest $15 USD per trip member for the local guide and $10 USD for the day for the driver. For airport assistance, we suggest $10 USD per agent assisting with arrival at the airport and $2 USD per trip member for one-way airport transfers for drivers.

For meals on your own in Kathmandu, a service charge is usually included in restaurant bills in Nepal, so no further tipping is necessary.

FOOD

We can accommodate most dietary needs. Please complete all trip forms in your Guest Portal to let us know of any dietary restrictions, preferences, and/or food allergies. Please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or logistical limitations mean that not all requests may be possible.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone
The international dialing code for Nepal is 977. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

SAT (Satellite) Phones
Currently, SAT phones are allowed in Nepal, but must be declared upon arrival. A Customs duty will most likely be charged (rates vary, but can be expensive). In addition, Nepali authorities require that you register the SAT phone with a Nepali SIM card through an authorized company in Nepal. It is illegal to use an international SIM card (from the US) in the phone. Obtaining a Nepali SIM card can be very expensive ($250-$450 or more for 25-100 minutes of talking - exact rates cannot be guaranteed by Wilderness Travel).

Email & Internet Access
Wi-Fi is available in the Everest region, but connection can be unreliable. Some lodges offer complimentary internet, while others will charge a small fee (please remember to bring rupees with you on trek for this purpose). Currently, there is an internet service provider that allows you to purchase a card in order to access the internet at higher elevations. This card can be recharged at the lodges that use the service for amounts of $3-$10, which allows for a limited amount of data/internet connection throughout the trek.

ELECTRICITY

Nepal has 230-volt current. Plugs usually have three round pins in a triangular configuration or two round pins. Bring a plug adapter kit for appliance use. Please check your appliances to see if a converter is also necessary. You can recharge batteries

at the hotel in Kathmandu, and while on trek, you can recharge camera batteries at various Sherpa lodges. Please note that the lodges may require a small fee for you to charge your electronic items (to be paid in rupees).

LAUNDRY

Laundry service is available at the hotel in Kathmandu and Namche.

RECOMMENDED READING

Elevate your travel experience by delving into this curated collection of books tailored to your upcoming adventure. They will not only entertain but also provide invaluable insights into the history, culture, cuisine, wildlife, mountain trails, or even folklore of the places you're about to explore. Discover the perfect companions for your journey ahead by following the link or scanning the QR code.

Medical Information

It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please complete the Medical Form in your Guest Portal, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

INOCULATIONS

Entry requirements are subject to change; check with the Centers for Disease Control for updates. All shots should be entered on your International Health Card (yellow card), which is provided by the facility giving the shots. Keep it with your passport while traveling. This provides an important personal record for you to refer to when making future travel plans. We recommend you discuss the following with your physician:

Polio: People who have received the primary series of at least three doses of polio vaccine are considered fully immunized. People who are unsure of their status should receive the vaccine (three doses spaced at intervals).

Hepatitis: The vaccines HAVRIX and VAQTA (two injections, six to 18 months apart) give long-term protection against Hepatitis A and are worthwhile if you travel regularly to developing countries.

Tetanus Booster: A booster is strongly recommended (effective for 10 years).

Typhoid: The CDC recommends the shot or the oral vaccine, Vivotif Berna. You may not be able to take the oral vaccine simultaneously with mefloquine (for malaria prevention).

MALARIA PREVENTION

Malaria is a serious but preventable disease spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. There is no risk of malaria in Kathmandu or Pokhara or at altitudes encountered on the trek, but all travelers visiting the terai areas of Nepal (such as Royal Chitwan National Park, Royal Bardia Wildlife Preserve, or Biratnagar, which are below 2,000 feet in altitude), or India or rural areas of Thailand are urged take anti-malarial precautions unless instructed otherwise by your doctor. Please discuss antimalarial medication with your doctor, who will explain various antimalarials and their side effects and recommend a regimen for you. In addition to medication, a further precaution against malaria is to wear long sleeves and long pants at dusk. Thin clothing should be sprayed with insect repellent, especially around the elbows and ankles. Use repellent containing DEET.

If, after returning from your trip, you have a persistent fever with chills, muscle aches, and headache, report to your doctor the possibility of exposure to malaria.

For further malaria information, consult your doctor or the CDC Malaria Hotline (cdc.gov/malaria/travelers) or by phone at 888-232-3228.

STAYING HEALTHY

While on trek, our crew is well trained in hygienic practices. Boiled drinking water is provided and is safe to use at the lodges and during the trek. In hotels, do not brush your teeth with tap water; use bottled water. Don't use ice in your drinks unless you are sure it was made with treated water. When in doubt, ask our local partners or your Trek Leader for guidelines.

MEDICAL CARE

The following clinics are recommended if you need medical assistance while in Kathmandu:

The Travel and Mountain Medicine Center (TMMC) was established in 2011 by Dr. Buddha Basnyat, an American Board-Certified internist, Fellow of the American College of Physicians, and Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh), who has also led trips for Wilderness Travel. Dr. Basnyat formed the TMMC alongside Dr. Geeta Basnyat, a distinguished radiologist and healthcare leader. Their primary mission is to provide modern ambulatory care in travel and mountain medicine.

The CIWEC Hospital and Travel Medicine Center is one of the most reputable destination travel medicine centers in the world. It was established as a clinic in 1982, and has expanded its services to be a full service hospital, providing both outpatient and inpatient care. It also operates a fully equipped hospital in Pokhara.

ALTITUDE CONSIDERATIONS

Individuals vary widely in their ability to acclimatize. Since physical fitness does not confer any protection or facilitate acclimatization, it is impossible to predict how you will adapt to the altitude. The greatest protection is avoiding rapid ascents and allowing time for acclimatization. Normal physiological changes at altitude include headache, nausea, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, irregular breathing, shortness of breath, fatigue, and swelling of the ankles and eyelids.

It is not uncommon to experience some of these symptoms when you first arrive at high altitude and then have them decrease in severity within a few days. It is important that you inform your Trip Leader immediately of any symptoms or discomfort, however minor, so that he or she can help you monitor the situation. While acclimatizing, avoid pushing yourself too hard, however physically fit you may be or feel. Pace yourself comfortably, rest often. You may find that you walk more slowly than others in the group, or slower than you are used to.

Proper hydration is essential at high altitude. You need to drink much more fluid than you are used to. Try to drink even if you're not feeling thirsty. Avoid caffeine, which is a diuretic, and avoid alcohol, which is dehydrating. Cut down on salt. Your appetite will probably decrease, but it is still important to eat well (especially carbohydrates), even if you're not feeling well. Sleeping pills and narcotic painkillers (such as codeine) should not be used at altitude because they depress respiration.

Severe progressions of AMS are high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE) and high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE). Symptoms of HAPE include breathlessness that continues at rest, severe cough with watery or bloody sputum, and noisy, bubbling breath. Symptoms of HACE include extreme weariness, vomiting, severe headache, staggering walk, and changes in behavior. If any such symptoms develop, you must notify the Trek Leader immediately and descend to a lower altitude at once.

Diamox (Acetazolamide)

Diamox (Acetazolamide) The prescription drug Diamox can be used as a prophylactic against the early symptoms of altitude sickness. Consult with your physician for proper dosage. It is usually recommended above 14,000 feet, but for anyone not sleeping well, Diamox can be started before reaching that elevation. Some cautionary notes: Diamox can severely dehydrate you; be sure to drink the minimum 3-4 quarts of water daily if you take it. Diamox is a sulfa drug and should not be taken by sulfa-allergic travelers. It is not effective in dealing with more serious symptoms of altitude sickness. If you are taking Diamox, it is essential that you advise the Trip Leader. You can also read more about it at the Himalayan Rescue Association's website.

ALTITUDE PREPARATION

You can learn more about what to expect and how to prepare for traveling to high altitudes in our video linked here or by scanning the QR code.

Packing List

ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- Extra passport photo(s) (see Visa section)
- Expense money

LUGGAGE

- Duffel bag with small TSA approved padlock. We recommend a minimum size of 30” x 15” and a maximum of 36” x 18.” **This duffel must be soft-sided with no wheels**. Wheeled duffels cannot be used because they are rigid and can't be securely carried by our porters or strapped to the animals. It is essential that you have a sturdy duffel.
- Daypack, large enough for a fleece jacket, rain gear, water bottle, camera, and other items you want on the trail. It should be a shoulder pack (not a fanny pack) with a supporting waist belt. Packs with a capacity of 1450-2000 cubic inches are recommended.
- Small extra roll-up duffel if you are an avid shopper.

Weight Limits

All Nepal internal (domestic) flights have a ***total*** **weight limit of 15 kgs per person (approximately 33 lbs)** - this includes both checked and carry-on baggage. You can have more than one checked bag as long as your total weight does not exceed 33 lbs

While you are on the trek, a small amount of baggage can be stored at the hotel in Kathmandu for your convenience (with your non-trekking clothes and souvenirs).

CLOTHING

Dress on the trip is very informal, with the exception of city dinners for which you may want to dress up a little (jackets are not required for men). You should carry or wear your hiking boots on your flights to make sure they arrive with you.

For Women: In Nepal's culture, women typically wear long skirts and do not show their legs. Outside of Kathmandu, however, loose-fitting shorts are acceptable. Some women trekkers will want to hike in knee-length hiking shorts (as long as it is warm enough) while others will prefer long pants or a below-the-knee hiking skirt (skirts also provide some privacy on the trail for toilet purposes). Use your own judgment and hiking experience.

For Men: Wearing tight running shorts or hiking shirtless is not appropriate. Knee-length hiking shorts are fine but shouldn't be worn inside temples or monasteries

Fabrics

An insulating base layer (top and bottom) beneath your hiking clothes will keep you warm and comfortable. Capilene, fleece, and other synthetic fabrics are excellent, as are lightweight wool insulating layers by Patagonia, Icebreakers, and SmartWool. Cotton is not a good insulator, especially as a first layer next to the skin. Once it gets wet from perspiration, it stays wet and keeps you cold.

Shell Clothing

Shell clothing includes jackets and pants that protect from rain and wind. Gore-Tex and equivalent fabrics are waterproof and breathable, so they are the best choice. Shell clothing should be roomy enough to fit over other layers of clothing.

Please note: Lodges cannot support central heating at high altitude, so most travelers find them colder than expected in mornings and evenings! (Beds are kept warm with heating pads or hot water bottles, and common rooms have stove heaters.) During the day and at different altitudes, temperatures can fluctuate; you might find yourself adding and removing jackets multiple times throughout the day. We recommend wearing multiple layers rather than one heavy coat. Please check the weather ahead of your trip and pack accordingly.

The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only; we encourage you to pack as lightly as possible.

- Neck gaiter (for dust on trail)
- Gore-Tex rain/wind shell jacket with hood. A poncho is not adequate.
- Gore-Tex rain/wind pants (preferably with leg zippers so that they can be taken off without removing your boots)
- Medium-weight down or fiberfill jacket with hood
- Hiking mid-layers (pullovers, fleeces, or other lightly insulated options)
- Hiking pants. Synthetic hiking pants are a practical choice. Jeans are not suitable for trekking because they are made of dense cotton.
- Sturdy hiking shorts (baggy, knee-length)
- Long-sleeved shirts. Quick-drying "travel" fabrics like nylon are ideal.
- T-shirts. Synthetics are best for the trek; cotton will get soggy with perspiration.
- Shade hat with wide brim
- Medium to heavyweight hiking boots
- Running shoes, Tevas, or other comfortable shoes (for city wear or for relaxing at the lodge)
- Hiking socks. Thorlo hiking socks (moisture-wicking synthetic with padded toes and heels) are excellent, as are SmartWool.
- Casual socks for city wear
- Underwear; synthetics dry faster

Recommended for trips in winter months (December-February):

- Two sets of Polypropylene, Capilene, or wool long underwear, bottoms and tops. You will appreciate the extra set when you're sleeping. We recommend one medium-weight and one expedition weight.
- Fleece or down mittens or gloves, for the lodges
- Fleece hat for warmth
- Warm socks booties for mornings and evenings at lodges

HIKING BOOTS

Your boots must be waterproof, warm, comfortable, and broken in, with an excellent tread! If you are uncertain about the tread quality of your boots, buy a new pair rather than risk slipping on rocky trails and scree. Please choose your boots carefully. It is a sensible precaution to wear or hand-carry your hiking boots on the plane. Nearly everything else can be replaced in case of baggage loss, but not a pair of well-fitted, fully broken-in hiking boots.

For this trip, you need medium- to heavyweight hiking boots designed for on- and off-trail hiking with multi-day hikes in mind. Lightweight boots don't offer the high degree of ankle support and foot protection you need. Full-grain leather is extremely water-resistant and durable and is preferable to split-grain leather or nylon. Remember that full-grain leather boots tend to be stiffer and will need a break-in period. If you are shopping for new boots, ask your store about boots with built-in Gore-Tex-type waterproof barriers that enhance water-resistance. If you have old full-grain leather boots, coat them with silicon waterproofing material to increase their water resistance. Waterproofing materials wear off over time and need to be re-applied. Gore-Tex boots are considered waterproof for one year unless the membrane is punctured.

If you're buying a new pair of boots, make sure a qualified salesperson gives you proper guidance in determining fit. Don't buy any boots that you are not permitted to return after wearing for several hours around the house. Blisters caused by improperly fitted or insufficiently broken-in boots are the most common and painful problem normally encountered on hiking trips. Before you depart, you should be able to wear your boots for a full, active day with no discomfort. Even boots you have owned for years can sometimes produce blisters when you are doing this amount of hiking. Limber up feet and boots before departure, and bring a good supply of Second Skin.

Running shoes are not sufficient for the hiking conditions you'll encounter, although they are comfortable to change into at night.

EQUIPMENT

- Two sturdy reusable water bottles, 1 qt. capacity, capable of holding boiling water (Nalgene brand is preferable)
- Two pairs of good quality sunglasses with cases. Side shields are recommended for high altitude treks. One pair is a spare.
- Personal toiletries, biodegradable soap.
- Assorted plastic bags to keep items dry in your duffel; garbage bags to use as a duffel liner for rain protection
- Bandannas; good for protecting your neck from the sun and for use as handkerchiefs
- Toilet paper (one roll). Tissue (Kleenex) pocket packs are handy. Local brands of toilet paper will be provided at the lodges, but you can bring your own for softer quality or for stops during the day.
- Battery pack, as power does not operate 24 hours a day in some lodges

PERSONAL FIRST AID

Every trip member must bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher. Essential at high altitudes! We recommend mineral-based sunscreens because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are known to be harmful to the environment
- Lip balm with sunscreen and/or zinc oxide
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol for muscle pain or headache, Tylenol PM for sleep
- Topical antibiotic (such as Neosporin) for cuts, bites, or sores
- Insect repellent
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. “Liquid band-aids,” such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Moisturizing cream, Vaseline for nose/lips (for dry air at altitude)
- Anti-bacterial gel for hand washing
- Antihistamine such as Benadryl
- Decongestant (daytime and nighttime types) for colds, sinus headaches
- Cough drops (for dry throat caused by altitude)
- Pepto-Bismol tablets for diarrhea, heartburn, indigestion
- Imodium for diarrhea. If you wish to bring an antibiotic for diarrhea prophylaxis, please consult your physician.
- Prescription medications properly labeled, enough to last the entire length of the trip
- Contact lenses or prescription glasses; contact lens wearers should bring spare glasses (or extra disposable lenses) for dusty areas and at altitudes
- Optional—Diamox for altitude acclimatization. See the Diamox section in the Altitude Considerations section.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Converter/plug adapter for appliance use

- Hiking Poles. Hiking with collapsible hiking poles, such as those by Leki and REI, helps distribute body weight, taking pressure off the knees and improving overall balance. Some hikers prefer using one pole, while others like to hike with two poles.
- Camera, spare batteries, spare memory cards.
- Reading/writing material
- Playing cards
- Binoculars (small, lightweight)
- Travel clock
- Money belt or neck pouch. Always carry your passport, credit cards, and cash with you in a money belt or neck pouch tucked down inside your shirt or blouse.

GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our WT Gear Store (wildernesstravel.newheadings.com).

PROHIBITED ITEMS

E-Cigarettes: Please do not bring e-cigarettes (vaporizers), including e-cigarette refills. The countries of Thailand, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Vietnam have all outlawed the import and export of e-cigarettes (vaporizers), including e-cigarette refills. Travelers found with these items could be fined or sent to prison for up to 10 years if convicted. This applies to both entry and transit through these countries, which is why we recommend that you do not bring them with you, just in case.

SAT (Satellite) Phones in India: SAT phones are not allowed to be brought into India. This also applies to travelers who are just transiting through India on the way to/from their actual trip. If you bring a satellite phone to India, it will be confiscated and you could be subject to serious penalties, including arrest.

Please double-check current entry requirements into Nepal and any country you may be visiting/transiting through during your trip.

Helpful Information

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

There is an undeniable fragility to our planet, and tourism can have an impact either as a positive force for increased awareness and change, or as a contributor to cultural and environmental exploitation. At Wilderness Travel, we want to see the positive benefits of travel outweigh or even cancel out the negative impacts of tourism. We have instituted a number of policies designed to reduce the impact our groups have on the areas through which we trek.

Bathing and Washing

Soap and shampoo is available at lodges throughout the trek, but is often not available for hand-washing at rest stops along the trail. We recommend bringing your own small container of soap or hand sanitizer. Please use biodegradable soap. Dr. Bronner's Castille soap is a popular multi-purpose, biodegradable soap.

Toilet Facilities

On the trail, you will locate quiet spots for toilet purposes. Try to be at least 100 feet from any water source and bury or cover waste. Basic squat toilets are often available at teahouses along the trek. You will need to carry your own toilet paper for use at most of these toilets.

Garbage

Please carry a small plastic bag in your daypack to store your garbage throughout the day. Bring all tissues, wrappers, and other garbage with you to the lodge where the staff can bury or burn them. We ask that you carry your own non-burnable garbage, especially used batteries and plastic products, back home for proper disposal since there are limited facilities in Nepal.

Be a Vocal Environmentalist

Do not hesitate to express your conservationist concerns and help explain these guidelines to other Westerners. Let our Trek Leader know if you have any additional suggestions.

SHOPPING & SOUVENIRS

Souvenirs and handicrafts in Nepal are numerous and quite inexpensive. Good Tibetan hand-knotted wool carpets can be bought for about $100. More expensive rugs are also available. Other popular items include gems, wool blankets and sweaters, brass and copper ware, woodcarvings, paintings, and other artwork. There is good shopping in Thamel, Durbar Marg, and the shops at Bodhnath (Tibetan handicrafts in particular). Carpets are found in Thamel and at the Tibetan Handicraft Center.

If you decide to let a shipping company in Kathmandu handle shipping, they can pack items, take them to the Department of Archaeology for approval (if necessary), check them through Customs, and send them. We do not recommend shipping items home, however, as shipping can be complicated and unreliable. The safest thing to do is bring an extra roll-up duffel bag with you and carry your souvenirs home. Wilderness Travel assumes no responsibility for any purchases made or shipping arrangements, even if you have enlisted the help of our local partners or your Trek Leader in making them.