



# PROJECT DOSSIER

## *UPSTREAM TO EVEREST*

KATHMANDU TO KATHMANDU

28 days

500kms by road &  
200kms trekking

### **Nepal - Everest Region**

#### **Itinerary Guideline**

##### **FROM KATHMANDU**

**Day 1** Early a.m. departure. Drive from Kathmandu to Terai lowlands. South and out of the mountains to Hetauda and the farm/forestlands along the Indian border. (approx. 10 hrs including stops/breaks). Basic hotel.

**Day 2** Drive to Chatra on the Sun-Kosi River in eastern Nepal. Lateral road through lowlands; tobacco fields & small towns to Itahari, Dharan & Chatra. (approx. 7 hrs). Basic hotel.

**Day 3** Short drive to Hille, meet porters, final preparations. Camping.

**Days 4-7** Begin Trek. Easy walking up Arun Valley, villages & hill farms; to Takure, Tumlingtar & Chandanpur. (Days 4-7 approx. 8 hrs walking per day (13 kms). Camping.

**Day 8** Leave main trail from Tibet, across Arun River & start ascents towards Salpa Pass.

**Days 9 & 10** Across Salpa Pass, 3,400m.



**Days 11-15** Descend to Guidel village & Hongu Valley. Steep ascent out of forests onto Satu La Pass, 3,200m.

**Day 16** Reach Namche Bazaar.

**Day 17** Rest & acclimatise .

**Days 18 & 19** Ascent through alpine meadows to Thyangboche & Dingboche, 4,360m.

**Day 20** Rest & acclimatise.

**Day 21** Moraine & rock to Lobuche & Khumbu Glacier.

**Day 22** Climb to peak of Kala Pattar, 5,540m, return to camp at Lobuche.

**Day 23-27** Descend via Thyangboche & Namche to Lukla, 2,800m.

**Day 28** Small plane flight Lukla - Kathmandu. End arrangements.

## PLEASE NOTE

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that the constraints of weather, road, trail & flying conditions may sometimes alter our exact timings.

## Highlights & Route

The Arun River in eastern Nepal carves a high pass between the Everest and Kanchenjunga massifs, from Tibet to the Indian plains. It is an ancient trading route and a different, less travelled approach to Everest. Drive from Kathmandu to the lowlands and Chatra on the Arun/Sun-Kosi River. The end of the plains and the start of the Himalayas is precise and sudden here. Trek up the Arun Gorge along the busy foot and mule trail from Tibet. Across the river at Tumlingtar to the Salpa and Satu La Passes, quieter trails to highland forests and isolated villages. Above the tree line to Namche Bazaar, mountain monasteries and the Sherpa lands. Alpine meadows to Thyangboche, the Khumbu glacier and the peak of Kala Pattar (5,540m) in the snow and ice of the world's greatest peaks.

We leave Kathmandu to descend the winding Raj Path, the first road built into Nepal in the 1950's. Before this, anything reaching Kathmandu did so on the backs of porters, or via a long aerial cableway from the lowlands. The empty towers of this amazing piece of engineering can still be seen from the road. Until 60 years ago the lowlands of the Terai along the border with India were richly forested, malaria ridden & inhabited mostly by tiger, rhinoceros & Asian wildlife. Malaria was eradicated and farmers moved from the hills, where crops had to be laboriously raised & watered on terraced mountainsides, to this land of flat, rich soil. Large tracts of sal forest and jungle remain but today most of the Terai has been cleared to cattle, rice, wheat & tobacco farming.

At Chatra the point where the plains end and the mountains begin is exact & defined and it's all uphill from here! It is easy walking as we slowly ascend through the villages and small farms of the Rai & Limbu peoples along the Arun River, and the old trade link with Tibet. Mule trains still ply this route into central Asia. At the Tumlingtar plateau our route splits from this wide and well-

formed trail as we cross the Arun to meet our first steep climbs & descents.

The walking is not easy but the pace is relaxed. 13 kms a day is an average distance. We are accompanied by Sherpa guides, and porters. Loads are apportioned by the Sirdar head Sherpa. Porters usually disdain the western backpack, placing everything into a wide conical basket slung on their backs from a headstrap.

All we need to carry is a daypack with warm jacket, camera & daily needs. A typical day on the trail dawns with a hot mug of tea thrust into your tent. We start walking after breakfast while the porters break camp. Trails seldom keep to the same level, dropping 600 metres from ridge to valley floor before climbing back again, higher, on the other side. But there is time - within reason - to set your own pace, stopping at village tea houses or admiring the view. The porters pass us on the trail to set up camp at the end of our trekking day in the late afternoon.

Now traversing the line of hills & ridges that spear down from the high peaks, we trek through slippery rainforest to cross streams by precarious bamboo & rope bridges. Across Salpa Pass 3,400m to the Hongu Valley & Guidel village, to climb out of the lower forests to Satu La Pass. On our 16th day we reach Namche Bazaar, the main town of the Khumbu region and our first close views of Everest.

The Sherpas of the Khumbu have traditionally been herders & traders but are renowned for their accomplishments on high altitude mountain expeditions. They are an incredibly hardy but easy going people, strong in Buddhist traditions and the equality of their close-knit society.

We spend two nights in Namche to rest, acclimatise to the altitude, and relax in this prosperous & interesting market. Beyond the stony fields of Kunde, with views across to Ama Dablam & Nuptse, we reach the Thyangboche Monastery 3,800m on a high ridge above the confluence of the Imja Khola & Dudh Kosi Rivers. Set in a high meadow with a backdrop of towering peaks, this is the leading monastery & centre of Buddhism in the Khumbu.

Crossing the Imja Khola, our trail climbs steadily through yak pastures into the wild & bleak scenery of Dingboche 4,400m, and another day to acclimatise at the base of Lhotse's great south wall. Movement & exertion becomes harder and

slower as distances take longer to cover. Skirting the moraine of the Khumbu glacier we climb the shattered rock of Kala Pattar (5,450m) - to face-to-face views of Changtse, Nuptse, Everest & the Khumbu icefall, Ama Dablam & countless other ice & snow towers in a dramatic 360 degree perspective of the high Himalaya. We descend slowly through the Khumbu to easier & warmer heights. Down through the Dudh Kosi Canyon, criss-crossing the river through forests of fir & juniper to Lukla 2,900m. To the precipitous airstrip high above the churning river, and our 40 minute flight by small aircraft back to Kathmandu.

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

The ground arrangements for this project are operated by Himalayan Encounters who are our appointed Nepal trekking and rafting operator. They are one of the most experienced local operators in Nepal and their services are provided to the highest standard.

#### **GROUP SIZE**

10-14 plus Trek Crew of Nepali trek leader, Sirdhar, cooks & porters.

#### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

This is a demanding project requiring a high degree of physical fitness. The trek ascends from 620m to the highest point of 5,540m where the effects of altitude & oxygen deprivation can be severe. Porters carry our equipment & supplies as well as personal gear, so all you need to carry is a larger size day-pack on trek. But the hiking consists of repeated and increasingly harder ascents & descents and is much harsher than any high-mountain walking in Europe/ North America etc. Turning back mid-way through trek is not feasible and an emergency medical evacuation could take several days. We cannot recommend this trek to anyone not in good physical condition.

#### **THE LOCAL PAYMENT** (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to Himalayan Encounters at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, either in cash notes or recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the organisation to cover a proportion but not all of

the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

#### **INCLUDED IN PROJECT COST**

All transport (including the flight from Lukla back to Kathmandu), food-3 meals a day, camping equipment & activities as detailed from Day 1 until return to Kathmandu on afternoon/evening of Day 28. Services of staff in Kathmandu & on trek. Porters for personal gear on trek. There are no kitties or en route payments. (Should our flight from Lukla to Kathmandu be delayed due to poor flying conditions, our continuing camping & food costs & staff services will still be met by Encounter until our arrival in Kathmandu).

#### **PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER**

Local Payment. International flights between home & Kathmandu, transfers to/from Kathmandu airport and airport taxes. Vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, tips to porters, personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Evening meal & accommodation in Kathmandu on Day 28.

#### **EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED**

Lightweight 2 person tents, kitchen/dining tent, insulated sleeping mats, all domestic & cooking equipment on trek. Field first aid kit.

#### **WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING**

A high altitude sleeping bag, mountain cold-weather outer clothing, medium/large size day-pack, a soft sided bag or backpack, strong boots, water bottle, personal clothing, medicines & toiletries. Some of the more specialised clothing & equipment above represents a costly investment. If you don't already have this kind of mountain equipment, you may prefer to hire it in Kathmandu. A suitable sleeping bag, cold weather gear, gloves, hat, water-bottle, day-pack etc can be hired from local suppliers in Kathmandu at approx. US\$3 per day. A recommended list of what to bring is supplied in the Pre-departure information pack.

### TRANSPORT

Minibus from Kathmandu to Chatra, chartered local transport & jeeps Chatra to Hile, on foot Hile to Lukla, small aircraft flight Lukla to Kathmandu.

### INTERNAL FLIGHT

The cost of our flight from Lukla to Kathmandu is included. Ticketing is arranged by Encounter in Kathmandu and is not part of your international ticketing arrangements. (Please also see note under LEAVING AT END OF PROJECT re: possible flight delays).

### ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout. 2 person lightweight tents and insulated sleeping mats. There are few shower or campground facilities on this trek though there is frequent opportunity for river/stream bathing, washing & basic hygiene. Accommodation on night 28 in Kathmandu is not included. Reservations in our Kathmandu hotels before Day 1 may be made through Encounter, with payment by you directly to hotel on arrival.

### MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

All meals from breakfast on Day 1 until arrival back in Kathmandu on afternoon/evening of Day 28. (Evening meal Day 28 not included). All meals on trek prepared by Sherpas and Nepali cooks. Western & Nepali dishes. Camp cooked breakfasts & dinners, picnic style lunches. (local fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, salami, eggs, cheese, preserves, bread, biscuits, cereals, hot drinks, canned & dried goods).

### PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than **6 months** after the end of the project, and which contains not less than **2 blank pages**. All nationalities require visas for Nepal which should preferably be obtained before you leave home. Their costs vary according to your nationality. Encounter or your agent can advise you of up to date visa details & their costs applicable to you. We can also help you in obtaining one.

### INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on p60 of the brochure. Please

bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting. If your policy does not cover this minimum level then Encounter will not accept responsibility for the consequences.

### MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

### PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

Other than tea, a cold drink or even sometimes a beer at village tea houses there is little need for money during the trek. The streets & markets of Kathmandu are crammed with tempting goods & handicrafts. Good buys can include woodcarvings, Hindu deity bronzes & statues, Buddhist prayer wheels, religious items & thanka paintings, jewellery, Tibetan carpets made by refugee villages in Nepal. Small & interesting "treasures" need not cost much at all. Credit cards accepted by most hotels & well-established merchants in Kathmandu only. Other than the above, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money.

### ARRIVING AT START OF THE PROJECT

There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Kathmandu office at 18.00hrs one day before Day 1. This meeting is also your latest arrival time. If you are arriving earlier there is plenty to see & do in the Kathmandu valley: shopping & city bazaars; palaces & museums; lively cafes, restaurants & bars; hill top Swayambhunath Temple (20 mins bicycle), great Bodhnath Stupa (30 mins bicycle), nature reserve (45 mins bicycle), ancient city of Bhaktapur (30 mins bus, 1 hr bicycle), overnight at Nagarkot (45 mins bus)-spectacular sunrise/sunset views across Himalayas. Simple bicycles may be hired at small cost from most Kathmandu hotels.

### LEAVING AT END OF THE PROJECT

Arrangements end on arrival back at our Kathmandu hotel on the afternoon/evening of Day 28, **BUT:** The Lukla airstrip can only be used in fair weather and pilots, sensibly, will not land at Lukla unless the runway is clearly visible. Our flight from Lukla to Kathmandu on Day 28 is

therefore subject to delay. Consequently your international flights out of Kathmandu should not be arranged for any less than 2 days after Day 28. (If your timings are extremely tight and you are willing to take the very real risk of a delay from Lukla, you should nevertheless not make onward flight arrangements from Kathmandu for the evening of Day 28. International flights are often overbooked, and late or un-reconfirmed check-ins will be denied boarding with little prospect of another flight out for several days).

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Encounter Overland Ltd.

**COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS**

Days 3-28 of “Upstream to Everest” are also days 9-34 of the “Himalayan Challenge” project that also spends 8 days rafting the white water of the SunKosi River of Gold from near the Tibetan border down to the plains at Chatra. You may therefore be trekking with some group members who have just come down the Sun-Kosi River. (Maximum combined group size will still remain the same at 14).

**INTERESTING READING**

Tiger for Breakfast (Michael Peissel), Schoolhouse in the Clouds (Sir Edmund Hillary), The Waiting Land (Dervla Murphy). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

**OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES**

- Local Payment .....
- Return international flights.....
- Visas.....
- Vaccinations.....
- Insurance.....
- Personal spending money.....
- Total**\_\_\_\_\_