

Earthbound Expeditions

Lobuche East Peak Climbing with Everest Base Camp

19 days, from US$2,890 per person

Duration
19 days

Grade
Very strenuous

Max altitude
6,119 m

Start and end
Kathmandu

Daily walking
5 to 7 hours a day

Best season
Mar to May, Sep to Nov

Accommodation
Teahouses and tents

Meals
All meals on the trek

Group size
Up to 8

Getting there
Fly to Lukla

Lobuche East Peak Climbing with Everest Base Camp Overview

Trek the Everest Base Camp trail, then climb a 6,119 m peak with crampons, an alpine start, fixed lines and a summit ridge.

Climb overview

The trip lasts nineteen days, thirteen of which are spent on the trail or the mountain. You trek the Everest Base Camp route as far as Kala Patthar, which provides your acclimatisation, then cross to Lobuche East Base Camp at 4,950 m. There you spend a day training with ropes and crampons, move up to a high camp at about 5,400 m, and climb through the night to the 6,119 m summit.

Who this trip is for

This trip is for trekkers who want to climb their first mountain, rather than mountaineers looking for a difficult one. You do not need previous alpine experience, and most people who climb it with us have none. You do need to be fit enough for the Base Camp trek followed by a summit day, and willing to learn to use an ascender and abseil on a rope before you need to do so in the dark.

The technical climbing

Above the crampon point at roughly 5,700 m you are on glacier and fixed rope. The headwall below the summit ridge is 45 to 50 degrees; you climb it with a jumar and descend it by abseil. The ridge at the top is narrow, with a long drop on one side. The climb is graded PD+ in the alpine system. It is not difficult by mountaineering standards, but it requires proper preparation.

Why the trip takes 19 days

A single weather window is not enough to plan around. Day 14 is a reserve summit day: if wind or fresh snow stops the first attempt, you try again the following night rather than going home. Day 18 is a spare day in Kathmandu in case the Lukla flight is delayed. Shorter versions of this trip use up both of these days in their itinerary and have no reserve.

Key highlights of the Lobuche East Peak Climbing with Everest Base Camp

- Summit Lobuche East, 6,119 m, on fixed lines
- Everest Base Camp and Kala Patthar on the way in
- Two nights in tents, at base camp and high camp
- A day of rope, jumar and crampon training before the climb
- A full reserve day for the summit

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	-	-	1,400 m
2	Permits, kit check and briefing	-	-	1,400 m
3	Fly to Lukla, walk to Phakding	3–4 hrs	8 km	2,610 m

4	Phakding to Namche Bazaar	6–7 hrs	11 km	3,440 m
5	Namche, acclimatisation day	3–4 hrs	-	3,440 m
6	Namche to Tengboche	5–6 hrs	10 km	3,860 m
7	Tengboche to Dingboche	5–6 hrs	11 km	4,410 m
8	Dingboche, Nangkartshang ridge	4–5 hrs	-	4,410 m
9	Dingboche to Lobuche	5–6 hrs	8 km	4,940 m
10	Base Camp, sleep Gorak Shep	7–8 hrs	13 km	5,164 m
11	Kala Patthar, then Lobuche East Base Camp	7–8 hrs	12 km	4,950 m
12	Skills morning, climb to High Camp	3–4 hrs	3 km	5,400 m
13	Summit day, back down to base camp	10–12 hrs	8 km	6,119 m
14	Reserve summit day, or down to Pheriche	4–5 hrs	9 km	4,371 m
15	Pheriche to Namche	6–7 hrs	15 km	3,440 m
16	Namche to Lukla	6–7 hrs	13 km	2,840 m
17	Fly to Kathmandu	-	-	1,400 m
18	Spare day in Kathmandu	-	-	1,400 m
19	Fly home	-	-	-

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

When you land in Kathmandu, we meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel in Thamel. The afternoon is free to rest after the flight or explore the old streets. In the evening we have dinner together, go through the route day by day and answer any questions you have.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Dinner

Day 2

Permits, kit check and briefing

A working day in Kathmandu. We lodge your climbing permit with the Nepal Mountaineering Association, then check your kit item by item: boots, crampons, harness, helmet and ascender. Anything missing is hired or bought in Thamel the same afternoon, which is far cheaper than buying it at home. Your guide checks the fit of every item personally.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: Easy walking, 1–2 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3

Fly to Lukla and trek to Phakding

An early mountain flight of about twenty minutes over the ridges takes you to Lukla at 2,840 m, where the runway is built on a slope. From the airstrip the trail descends gently through Chheplung and Ghat beside the Dudh Koshi. It is a half day of easy walking to Phakding, which helps your legs adjust to trekking.

Altitude: 2,610 m On foot: 8 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Phakding Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Trek to Namche Bazaar

A long climb into the heart of the Khumbu. You cross the river five times on suspension bridges and pass the national park gate at Monjo, where permits are checked, then climb 600 metres of forested switchbacks. Near the top, Everest can be seen briefly through the trees if the cloud allows.

Altitude: 3,440 m On foot: 11 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Namche Bazaar Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Acclimatisation day in Namche Bazaar

Although it may look like a rest day, this is an active acclimatisation day. You walk up to the Everest View Hotel at 3,880 m for the panorama, continue to Khumjung and its monastery, and return to sleep at Namche. Climbing high and sleeping low is what makes the summit possible two weeks later.

Altitude: 3,440 m On foot: 6 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Namche Bazaar Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek to Tengboche

The trail follows the valley wall with Ama Dablam ahead the whole way, drops to the river at Phunki Tenga, then climbs 600 metres through rhododendron forest to Tengboche. The monastery holds an afternoon service most days, and visitors may sit quietly at the back. Please remove your hat and boots.

Altitude: 3,860 m On foot: 10 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Tengboche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek to Dingboche

The trail descends through Debuche, crosses the Imja Khola and climbs past Pangboche, where the oldest monastery in the Khumbu stands above the trail. The trees end at around Shomare, and the valley opens into dry scrub and stone-walled fields. Dingboche sits at 4,410 m, with Island Peak at the head of the valley.

Altitude: 4,410 m On foot: 11 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dingboche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Acclimatisation day in Dingboche

This is the second acclimatisation day, and it is more demanding than many people expect. You climb the Nangkartshang ridge behind the village to about 5,083 m, which takes three hours and gives views of Makalu, Lhotse and Ama Dablam, then return to the same lodge to sleep. Walk slowly and steadily; there is no advantage in arriving first.

Altitude: 4,410 m On foot: 5 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dingboche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Trek to Lobuche

You walk up the valley to Dughla, then climb steeply onto the terminal moraine of the Khumbu Glacier. At the top are the memorials to climbers who died on Everest, including Scott Fischer and Babu Chiri Sherpa, where most people spend about half an hour. Lobuche is another hour further on, at 4,940 m, and is cold and windy.

Altitude: 4,940 m On foot: 8 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lobuche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Trek to Everest Base Camp and Gorak Shep

The main day of the trekking section. You follow the moraine to Gorak Shep, leave your bag at the lodge, then cross the glacier to Everest Base Camp at 5,364 m, with the Khumbu Icefall above you at the head of the valley. You return to Gorak Shep for the highest and most uncomfortable night of the trip.

Altitude: 5,164 m On foot: 13 km, 7–8 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gorak Shep Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Hike to Kala Patthar and trek to Lobuche East Base Camp

You climb Kala Patthar (5,545 m) before dawn for a view of Everest that cannot be seen from Base Camp itself. It is very cold before sunrise, but the view is well worth it. You then descend past Lobuche and cross to Lobuche East Base Camp at 4,950 m, where the tents, kitchen and dining shelter are already set up.

Altitude: 4,950 m On foot: 12 km, 7–8 hrs Night: Tented camp, Lobuche East Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Skills training and climb to High Camp

In the morning you practise with crampons, harness and abseil device, and spend an hour on a fixed rope with your ascender until the technique becomes familiar. After lunch you climb the boulder slope to High Camp at about 5,400 m, a three-hour scramble over rock carrying your climbing kit. Dinner and bed are early, and most people sleep little.

Altitude: 5,400 m On foot: 3 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Tented camp, High Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

Summit day, 6,119 m

You wake around midnight for soup and sweet tea. You cross rocky ground by headtorch to the crampon point near 5,700 m, then the glacier, then the fixed lines. The headwall below the ridge is 45 to 50 degrees, and you climb it with your ascender. The summit ridge is narrow and exposed. You abseil the steep sections on the descent.

Altitude: 6,119 m On foot: 8 km, 10–12 hrs Night: Tented camp, Lobuche East Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14

Reserve summit day or trek to Pheriche

This is the reserve day, and the reason the itinerary is nineteen days rather than seventeen. If wind or fresh snow stopped your attempt the night before, you eat, rest and try again tonight. If you reached the summit, the camp is taken down and you walk to Pheriche at 4,371 m, where the lower altitude makes breathing noticeably easier.

Altitude: 4,371 m On foot: 9 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Pheriche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15

Trek down to Namche Bazaar

A long descent, where the thicker air makes breathing easier. You walk down the Imja valley past Pangboche and Tengboche, cross the river and finish with a steady one-hour climb to Namche. After two weeks above the treeline, Namche offers bakeries, hot showers and the first proper wash since Dingboche.

Altitude: 3,440 m On foot: 15 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Namche Bazaar Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 16

Trek to Lukla

The last day on the trail. You descend the switchbacks to the river, cross the high bridge and follow the Dudh Koshi through Monjo and Phakding. The day ends with a final climb up to Lukla. In the evening you have dinner with the crew and hand over the tips together.

Altitude: 2,840 m On foot: 13 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lukla Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 17

Fly to Kathmandu

A morning flight out, weather permitting, either directly to Kathmandu or to Manthali followed by a drive. You are back at the hotel by early afternoon, with a hot shower, a proper bed and a choice of meals other than dal bhat.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, flight day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast

Day 18

Spare day in Kathmandu

This day is held in reserve in case the Lukla flight is delayed. If it is not needed, the day is free: you can visit Patan and Bhaktapur, the great stupa at Boudhanath, or the shops of Thamel. In the evening we present your summit certificate and have a farewell dinner together.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: Optional 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 19

Departure

We take you to the airport for your flight home. If your flight is later in the day, we hold the room until midday, and our office can store your bags in the meantime. We recommend booking your flight home with a clear day to spare after the trip.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- Airport transfers & ground transport
- Climbing guide, trekking guide & porters
- NMA climbing permit & national park fees
- Group climbing gear, tents & camp meals
- Accommodation & meals as per the itinerary

Not included

- International flights
- Travel & rescue insurance to 6,500 m
- Personal climbing & trekking gear
- Tips & personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Permits and other costs

Permit	Fee	Issued by
Lobuche East climbing permit. Rates are set by the NMA and were revised in 2025. Parties of five or more receive a reduction, which is already included in your price.	$350 in spring, $175 in autumn, winter and summer	Nepal Mountaineering Association, Kathmandu

Garbage deposit. Refunded when we bring the rubbish down from the mountain. We pay the deposit and receive the refund, so it does not appear on your bill.	$500 per team, refundable	Nepal Mountaineering Association
Sagarmatha National Park entry permit. SAARC nationals pay NPR 1,500. Children under ten go free.	NPR 3,390, about $25	Kathmandu, or at Monjo on the way in
Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality permit. Covers the first four weeks. NPR 2,500 after that.	NPR 2,000, about $15	Lukla, on arrival
TIMS card. Discontinued in the Khumbu in 2018 and replaced by the municipality permit. It is still sometimes listed, but you do not need one for this trip.	Not required	-

Other cost	Amount	Note
Lobuche East climbing permit	$350 spring, $175 autumn	NMA, per climber
Garbage deposit	$500 per team	refunded when the waste is brought back
Lukla flight, both ways	$350–420	about $500 via Manthali in peak season
Sagarmatha National Park permit	$25	NPR 3,390
Khumbu Pasang Lhamu permit	$15	NPR 2,000, the local permit
Climbing guide for the peak	$450–650	one per two climbers, for the climbing days
Trekking guide	$30–40 a day	plus their bed and board
Porter, one per two climbers	$22–28 a day	plus their bed and board
Tents, kitchen crew and camp food	$260–380	two nights above the lodges
Personal climbing gear, hired	$130–220	boots, crampons, axe, harness, ascender
Teahouse bed and food	$30–55 a day	prices rise with altitude
Insurance to 6,500 m	$180–320	must name climbing and helicopter rescue
Tips, whole team	$250–400	per climber, at the end

Packing list

Hire climbing equipment in Kathmandu, bring clothing from home

Boots, crampons, ice axe, harness, helmet and ascender can all be hired in Kathmandu for around $130 to $220 for the trip. Hiring them saves you carrying 8 kg through three airports and past the Lukla baggage limit of 15 kg. Bring from home anything that needs to fit you well: base layers, gloves, socks and your trekking boots. We provide the duffel, sleeping bag, down jacket, helmet and harness, and all the group gear, including ropes, screws and snow bars.

On your head

- Climbing helmet. We provide one, and it is worn from the crampon point upwards
- Warm hat that covers your ears, and a sun hat with a brim
- Balaclava or two buffs. On summit night the wind is a greater problem than the cold
- Glacier glasses, category 4, and ski goggles for the wind
- Headtorch and spare batteries. Summit day begins in the dark, and batteries drain quickly in the cold
- Sunscreen SPF 50 and lip balm with sun protection

On your body

- Four merino or synthetic base layers, no cotton
- Two mid layers, one fleece and one light insulated
- Expedition down jacket for summit night. We provide one
- Waterproof shell, jacket and trousers, that packs small
- Softshell or insulated climbing trousers for the summit
- Climbing harness. We provide one, and you will wear it for a day first

Hands and feet

- Liner gloves, insulated gloves and one pair of proper mittens
- Double or insulated mountaineering boots, crampon compatible. Hired in Kathmandu if you do not own them
- Broken-in trekking boots for the eleven days before that
- Crampons and gaiters, fitted to the boots before you leave Kathmandu
- Five pairs of socks, wool, including one thick pair kept dry for the summit

Bags

- Duffel for the porter, 20 kg maximum. We provide one
- Daypack, 35 to 40 litres, large enough to carry your climbing kit to high camp
- Dry bags or thick liners. Bags do not stay waterproof for long on this trail

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to -20°C for the camps. We provide one
- Silk or cotton liner, for warmth and hygiene
- Insulated mat. We provide a foam mat; bring an inflatable one if you sleep cold
- Earplugs, for plywood teahouse walls and for wind on tent fabric

Health

- Personal first aid: blister plasters, tape, painkillers, rehydration salts
- Diamox, if your doctor agrees, plus any medication you take routinely
- Water purification: tablets, a filter or a SteriPen
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes. There is no shower above Dingboche
- Two one-litre bottles, not a bladder. Hoses freeze on summit night
- Throat lozenges. Almost everyone develops the Khumbu cough

Papers and money

- Passport valid for six months, plus two photocopies
- Four passport photographs for the permits
- Insurance certificate covering climbing to 6,500 m and helicopter rescue
- $400 to $600 in small notes. There is no ATM above Namche

Altitude profile

Day	Place	Sleep at	Highest point
1	Kathmandu	1,400 m	-
2	Kathmandu	1,400 m	-
3	Phakding	2,610 m	2,840 m
4	Namche Bazaar	3,440 m	-
5	Namche Bazaar	3,440 m	3,880 m
6	Tengboche	3,860 m	-
7	Dingboche	4,410 m	-
8	Dingboche	4,410 m	5,083 m
9	Lobuche	4,940 m	-
10	Gorak Shep	5,164 m	5,364 m
11	Lobuche East Base Camp	4,950 m	5,545 m
12	High Camp	5,400 m	-
13	Lobuche East Base Camp	4,950 m	6,119 m
14	Pheriche	4,371 m	-
15	Namche Bazaar	3,440 m	-
16	Lukla	2,840 m	-
17	Kathmandu	1,400 m	-
18	Kathmandu	1,400 m	-

Lukla flights

Flight delays are the most common problem on any Khumbu trip, at both the start and the end. This section explains how they are handled.

Kathmandu or Ramechhap, depending on the month

Outside the two busiest periods of the year, the flight leaves Kathmandu and takes about 35 minutes. For much of March to May and late September to November, air traffic control moves Lukla departures to Manthali airport at Ramechhap. This means a four to five hour drive leaving Kathmandu at around two in the morning, followed by a twenty-minute flight. The destination is the same, but the night is much shorter. We tell you which applies to your dates before you book.

Baggage allowance

The allowance is 15 kg in total, 10 kg checked and 5 kg hand luggage, and it is weighed. The aircraft has nineteen seats and lands on a 527-metre runway built on a slope. Excess baggage costs roughly $1.50 per kilo. Climbing kit uses up the allowance quickly, which is one good reason to hire boots and crampons in Kathmandu rather than bring them from home.

Flight delays

Lukla is closed by cloud several times a month in every season. Losing one day is common and losing two is not unusual, which is why there is a spare day on day 18. If the flight is delayed at the start for more than three days, we rearrange the trip rather than shorten the acclimatisation, because shortening it puts climbers at risk. A helicopter seat out costs around $500, and we can usually arrange one within a few hours.

Book your flight home with a spare day

Whatever the itinerary says, book an international flight that leaves at least one clear day after your scheduled return to Kathmandu. On a trip that includes a reserve summit day, this margin is especially important. It is the cheapest protection you can buy for this climb.

Accommodation

Teahouse nights

Up to Gorak Shep, and again on the way down, you sleep in teahouses: family-run lodges with one warm dining room heated by a single stove, and simple twin rooms with foam mattresses and thin walls. At Phakding, Namche and Lukla most rooms have a private bathroom. Above Namche bathrooms are shared, hot showers, charging and wifi are paid for separately, and Gorak Shep has no shower.

Tent nights

After Kala Patthar you move into tents. At Lobuche East Base Camp, at about 4,950 m, you spend two nights in two-person tents, with a dining tent, a kitchen and a toilet tent. High Camp, at about 5,400 m, is one short night on rocky ground before the summit. It is cold, and a four-season sleeping bag is needed.

Where	Nights	Type	Room	Bathroom
Kathmandu	4	Three-star hotel	Twin or double	Private, hot water
Phakding	1	Teahouse	Twin	Private in most lodges

Namche Bazaar	3	Teahouse	Twin	Private, hot shower for a fee
Tengboche	1	Teahouse	Twin	Shared
Dingboche	2	Teahouse	Twin	Shared
Lobuche	1	Teahouse	Twin	Shared
Gorak Shep	1	Teahouse, the highest on the route	Twin, basic	Shared, no shower
Lobuche East Base Camp	2	Tented camp, 4,950 m	Two-person tent	Toilet tent
High Camp	1	Tented camp, about 5,400 m	Two-person tent	Toilet tent
Pheriche	1	Teahouse	Twin	Shared
Lukla	1	Teahouse	Twin	Private

Heating
A stove in the lodge dining room, lit at dusk. At base camp and high camp there is only the dining tent.

Hot shower
Available up to Dingboche for $4 to $8. There are no showers above Dingboche or at either camp.

Charging
$3 to $5 per device in the lodges. At camp we carry a solar panel and a battery, and summit day equipment takes priority.

Wifi
Everest Link cards, about $20 for 10 GB, work as far as Gorak Shep. There is no usable signal at high camp.

Phone signal
Ncell and NTC cover most of the route to Lobuche. Your climbing guide carries a satellite phone above that.

Water
Boiled water costs $1 to $4 a litre in the lodges. At camp our crew melts and boils water free of charge.

Sleeping bag
Provided, rated to -20°C for the camps. It is loaned to you for the trip.

Tents
Two-person tents at base camp and high camp, with a foam mat each and a dining tent alongside.

Meals

Meal	Time	What it is like
Breakfast	7:00–7:30	Porridge, Tibetan bread, eggs, chapati, pancakes, tea or coffee
Lunch	12:00–13:00	Dal bhat, fried rice, noodles, soup, momo, potatoes cooked in many ways
Dinner	18:30–19:30	Dal bhat, pasta, thukpa, curry and rice, soup to start
Summit night	23:00	Porridge, biscuits, soup and sweet tea, eaten in a tent at a time when few people feel hungry

Diet	How we manage it
Vegetarian	Easy throughout, including at camp. Dal bhat is vegetarian and is available on every menu.
Vegan	Manageable with advance notice. Please tell us when you book, so the camp food can be bought with your needs in mind.
Gluten free	Rice, dal, potatoes and eggs are safe. Bread, noodles and momo are not, and a teahouse kitchen cannot rule out cross-contamination.
Halal	There is no certified halal kitchen on the route. A vegetarian diet is the practical option.
Meat	Available at lower altitudes, but we advise against it above Namche, because it is carried up for two days without refrigeration.

A typical day

Time	What happens
6:00	Tea in your room, and a bowl of warm water to wash in
6:30	Pack, and put the duffel outside your door for the porter
7:00	Breakfast together
8:00	On the trail. The guide sets a slow, steady pace
12:00	Lunch on the route, about an hour
13:00	Two to four hours more, depending on the day
15:30	Arrive at the lodge, tea, choose a bed, wash and rest if needed
17:00	Oxygen saturation and pulse taken, and written down
18:30	Dinner, and the guide briefs you on the next day
20:30	Bed. At 4,000 m most people are asleep before nine

Difficulty and preparation

Difficulty 5 of 5

A trekking peak with a genuine technical climb at the top.

- Eleven days of trekking, five to seven hours a day, before the climb begins.
- Summit day is 10 to 12 hours, starting around midnight, in the coldest hours of the night.
- Fixed rope from roughly 5,700 m, with a headwall of 45 to 50 degrees below the summit ridge.
- You ascend with a jumar and descend by abseil, and you practise both the day before.
- You sleep at about 5,400 m, which is higher than any point on the Base Camp trek.
- Around four in five climbers on well-acclimatised guided teams reach the true summit. Weather and altitude account for almost every turnaround.

Getting ready

16 weeks before: Build endurance
Do four cardio sessions a week, 45 to 60 minutes each, at a pace where you can still hold a conversation. This trip involves eleven days of trekking before the climbing starts, and this base fitness is what carries you through them.

14 weeks before: Add hill walking
Replace one session with a one-hour hill walk with 300 m of ascent, and add two strength sessions: squats, step-ups, lunges and calf raises. Your quadriceps work harder on descents than on ascents, and on summit day you descend 1,200 m.

12 weeks before: Train with a loaded pack
Walk with the pack you will carry, loaded to 8 kg, in the boots you will trek in. Blisters end more Himalayan trips than weather does, and they are entirely preventable.

10 weeks before: Walk on consecutive days
Take a five-hour walk at the weekend, then a three-hour walk the next morning on tired legs. Walking on consecutive days with tired legs is what this trip involves.

8 weeks before: Learn rope techniques
If you can get to an indoor climbing wall or a climbing club, spend two sessions practising with a jumar and an abseil device until both feel routine. We teach this at base camp, but it is harder to learn at 4,950 m than at home.

6 weeks before: Longest training day
Walk for seven hours with 1,000 m of ascent and the same descent, carrying your pack. If you finish able to eat a meal and sleep normally, you are ready for everything except the altitude, which nothing at home can prepare you for.

2 weeks before: Reduce training
Halve the volume but keep the frequency. Nothing you do in the last two weeks will make you fitter, and heavy training at this stage can cause injury. Rest and sleep well instead.

Altitude and safety

The summit is at 6,119 m, where each breath contains a little under half the oxygen available at sea level, and you spend a night at about 5,400 m on the way. The Himalayan Rescue Association advises raising your sleeping altitude by no more than 300 to 400 m a day above 3,000 m, and the Base Camp trek in the first half of this trip allows us to follow that guidance. Fitness and altitude tolerance are unrelated: being very fit will not protect you, and average fitness does not put you at greater risk.

What to watch for

- Headache that does not improve with water and paracetamol
- Nausea, or a complete loss of appetite when you would expect to be hungry
- Dizziness, or feeling drunk without having drunk alcohol
- Breathlessness at rest, not only when climbing
- Sleeping badly, or waking short of breath
- A wet cough or gurgling breathing, which indicates a problem in the lungs and is an emergency
- Loss of coordination, which indicates a problem in the brain and requires immediate descent

How to prevent it

- Walk more slowly than you want to. Your guide will set a slower pace, and they are right to do so.
- Drink three to four litres of water a day, even though you will not feel thirsty enough to drink that much.
- Eat, even when you do not want to. Appetite is usually the first thing to go.
- No alcohol above Namche, and no sleeping pills at any altitude on this trip.
- Climb high and sleep low: on the rest days you climb 400 to 600 m and come back down.
- Diamox is effective and is worth discussing with your doctor before you leave.
- Tell your guide on the first day a symptom appears, not the third.

What we do

1. Daily health checks
Your guide carries a pulse oximeter and checks your oxygen saturation and pulse every evening, and again on any morning you feel unwell. The readings are recorded, so any decline over three days is clear from the figures rather than a matter of opinion.

2. Rules at the camps
Base camp and high camp are not places to wait for a headache to pass. If you are unwell at 4,950 m, you do not go up to 5,400 m. If you are unwell at high camp, you descend that night with a guide while the rest of the team climbs.

3. Mild symptoms
You rest for a day where you are, or descend a short distance to the last village and climb back up the following day. Most cases resolve at this stage and the climb continues.

4. Serious symptoms
Descent is the only effective treatment, and 500 m of descent is usually enough. This decision is not negotiable and is not put to a vote.

5. Oxygen and altitude chamber
Bottled oxygen and a portable altitude chamber travel with the climbing team from base camp onwards. Both provide time to descend. Neither is a reason to continue climbing.

6. Helicopter evacuation
Helicopter evacuation can be arranged by phone from anywhere on this route, and in daylight the helicopter is usually airborne within the hour. The cost is $3,000 to $5,000, and the helicopter will not fly without a guarantee of payment, which is what your insurance provides.

7. Medical clinic at Pheriche
The Himalayan Rescue Association clinic at Pheriche, 4,371 m, is staffed by volunteer doctors during both climbing seasons and is on our route on the way down.

Weather by month

We do not run the climb in two of these months, and in two more we run it only for climbers who understand the conditions they will face.

Month	Day, on the trail	Night, on the trail	Night at High Camp	Conditions	Note

January	4°C	-10°C	-24°C	We do not run it	We do not run the climb. Extreme cold and high wind on the ridge make the camps unworkable.
February	6°C	-8°C	-23°C	Hard	Late February is climbable for experienced parties. Very cold nights and short weather windows.
March	10°C	-5°C	-19°C	Good	The season opens. Cold at high camp, firm snow, and the trail below is still quiet.
April	13°C	-2°C	-15°C	Best	The best month. Stable weather, good snow on the headwall, rhododendron in flower below Namche.
May	15°C	1°C	-11°C	Best	Warm and settled early on. By late May the snow softens and the monsoon haze builds.
June	16°C	4°C	-7°C	Hard	Monsoon arrives. Wet snow, poor visibility on the glacier, and flights start failing.
July	16°C	5°C	-6°C	We do not run it	We do not run the climb. Visibility is poor and flights are frequently cancelled.
August	16°C	5°C	-6°C	We do not run it	Similar to July. Cloud hides the mountain for most of the month.
September	14°C	2°C	-9°C	Good	The monsoon clears during the month. By late September the air is clear and the climb is possible.
October	12°C	-3°C	-16°C	Best	The most reliable weather of the year and the busiest trail. Book months ahead.
November	9°C	-7°C	-19°C	Best	Cold, clear and emptying out. The last good summit window is usually mid-November.
December	6°C	-9°C	-22°C	Hard	Clear and very cold. The climb is possible with the right kit and a readiness for a very cold night at high camp.

Averages built from Nepal DHM station data for the Khumbu and long-run records for Lukla and Lobuche. Any given week can be ten degrees either side, and wind on the summit ridge makes minus twenty feel like minus thirty-five.

Guides and porters

Your guides

A government-licensed trekking guide leads the whole trip, and from base camp one climbing guide joins for every two climbers. Our climbing guides have NMA climbing instructor training, and most have climbed this peak many times. One porter carries for every two climbers on the trekking days.

Fixed ropes

We fix our own rope on every trip. Old fixed line left on the mountain from previous seasons is sun-bleached and unreliable, and we do not use it or leave ours behind. On summit night the climbing guides go ahead of the team and place the anchors on the headwall.

Porters and luggage

Each porter carries 20 kg, which is your duffel and one other. This is below the 25 kg limit set by the trekking association and well below the loads you will see on the trail. Porters carry duffels, not daypacks: your water, camera, jacket and climbing kit stay with you on the days you need them.

Staff pay and insurance

The salary, insurance, food and lodging of every guide, climbing guide, cook and porter are included in the price you pay. Climbing staff are insured for altitude work and helicopter evacuation on the same terms we ask of you. This costs more than trekking cover, and we do not reduce it to save money.

Tipping

Tipping is customary but not compulsory, and it never replaces wages. On a climb like this, $250 to $400 per climber for the whole team is usual, handed over together on the last evening rather than daily. Your guide will not ask for tips, and would prefer that you do not tip them in front of the group.

Responsible travel

Waste

Everything we take up is brought back down: tent pegs, rope, gas canisters, batteries, food packaging and human waste from the camps. The NMA holds a $500 deposit for this purpose, and we aim to leave base camp clean regardless of the deposit.

Drinking water

A climber drinking bottled water uses around fifty plastic bottles on a trip of this length, each one flown or carried into a national park. Boiled water costs a dollar or two a litre in the lodges and is free at our camps. Bring purification as a backup rather than as your main supply.

Supporting local communities

The lodges are family businesses in the villages on the route. The guides, climbing guides, cooks and porters live in this district. The permits fund the national park, the rural municipality and the NMA. Almost all of what you pay is spent within thirty miles of the trail.

Local customs

Ask before photographing anyone. When a mule train approaches, stand on the mountain side of the trail, not the drop side, and let it pass. Monasteries welcome visitors, but they are places of worship, not attractions. Remove your hat and shoes, and if a service is taking place, wait.

Booking and payment

How to book

Write to us or send a WhatsApp message and tell us your approximate dates. You will receive a personal reply from someone who has climbed this mountain. We will ask about any climbing and rope work you have done, because this affects how we staff your team.

Deposit

A deposit of thirty per cent holds your dates, and the balance is paid when you arrive in Kathmandu, in cash or by card. The climbing permit is issued in your name, so at the same time we need a copy of your passport, your insurance certificate and any dietary or medical notes.

Payment

Pay by bank transfer, or by card through a secure link. Card payments carry the bank's fee of about 4 per cent, which we show you before you pay. The balance in Kathmandu can be paid in US dollars, pounds, euros or Nepali rupees.

Cancellation

If you cancel more than 45 days before departure, the deposit can be transferred to any other date or trip we run, with no time limit. Within 45 days the deposit is retained, because the permit, flights and climbing crew are committed by then. If we cancel for any reason other than weather, you receive a full refund.

If the summit is not reached

If weather or conditions prevent the summit on both the climbing day and the reserve day, the trip is not refunded, because the permit, camps and crew were all paid for and used. Instead, we give you $400 off any peak you climb with us in the next three years.

Late bookings

Two weeks' notice is enough if the Lukla flights have space, although in spring and autumn they often do not. The climbing permit takes a day or two to issue. If you are already in Kathmandu, visit our office and we will see what is possible.

Optional extras

Add Island Peak

from $1,290, +5 days

Climb Lobuche East, descend to Chhukung, and climb Island Peak at 6,189 m with your acclimatisation already complete. This is the most economical way to add a second summit.

Helicopter out from Pheriche

from $500 a seat, saves 3 days

Fly out the morning after the climb instead of walking to Lukla. Most people choose this to save time or to spare their knees.

One-to-one climbing guide

$480, -

Your own guide on the rope for the climbing days, rather than one guide between two climbers. Recommended if you have never used an ascender.

Everest scenic flight

$220, 1 morning

A one-hour flight along the range from Kathmandu, with a guaranteed window seat. A good way to see the mountains if Lukla flights are grounded by cloud for a week.

Chitwan or Bardia, three days

from $390, +3 days

Travel down to the lowland jungle to see rhino, and possibly tiger at Bardia. A restful contrast after two weeks above 3,000 m.

Single room in Kathmandu

$180

A room to yourself for all four hotel nights. On the trail, lodges are twin-share and tents are two-person.

Luxury lodge upgrade in the lower Khumbu

Price on request

Where the route passes one, we book a premium lodge in place of the standard teahouse. Mountain Lodges of Nepal has lodges at Lukla, Phakding, Monjo, Namche and Deboche, and Everest Summit Lodges at Lukla, Monjo, Tashinga and Pangboche. Expect warmer rooms, better beds, attached bathrooms in most rooms and a quieter dining room.

There are no premium lodges above Pangboche, so the higher nights are in the usual teahouses. We confirm which lodges have rooms on your dates before you book.

Frequently asked questions

Answers to the 22 questions travellers ask us most often. If your question is not here, contact us and we will answer it.

Do I need climbing experience?

No. Most people who climb it with us have none. We ask only that you arrive willing to learn. You spend a morning at base camp practising with crampons, ascender and abseil device before you use them on the mountain, and above base camp there is one climbing guide for every two climbers.

How is this harder than the Everest Base Camp trek?

It includes the Base Camp trek and adds three days. The differences are a night at about 5,400 m, a summit day of ten to twelve hours starting around midnight, and several hundred metres of fixed rope at 45 to 50 degrees. The trekking days are the same, but the summit day is a technical climb rather than a walk.

How fit do I need to be?

You need to be fit enough to trek five to seven hours a day for eleven consecutive days, followed by a very long summit night. The sixteen-week training plan on this page is suitable for a reasonably active person. Leg strength matters more than speed on this climb.

Is there an age limit?

There is no upper age limit, and we have guided climbers in their sixties to the summit. The minimum age is 16, and climbers under 18 must be accompanied by a parent. We ask everyone over 55, and anyone with a history of heart or lung conditions, to provide a doctor's letter before the climbing days.

What are my chances of summiting?

On well-acclimatised guided teams, roughly four in five climbers reach the true summit. Almost every turnaround is caused by weather, wind on the ridge or altitude, rather than fitness or skill. The reserve day on day 14 means that one night of bad weather still leaves you a second attempt.

What is summit day like?

You wake near midnight, eat what you can and leave high camp by headtorch. There are two hours of rock and scree to the crampon point at around 5,700 m, then the glacier, then fixed line to the headwall, which is 45 to 50 degrees. The ridge above is narrow. Most teams reach the summit soon after sunrise.

What is the false summit on Lobuche East?

Lobuche East has a subsidiary high point that is easily mistaken for the top. It lies well short of the true summit, along a corniced ridge. Some parties stop there and count it as the summit. We do not. If conditions on the ridge are safe, we take you to the true summit at 6,119 m.

Who fixes the ropes?

Our own climbing guides fix our own rope on every trip. Old rope left from earlier seasons is bleached and weakened, and we do not clip into it or leave ours behind. On summit night the guides go ahead of the team to set the anchors on the headwall before the climbers reach it.

How technical is the climb?

The climb is graded Alpine PD+. This means steep snow and ice, fixed rope and short technical sections. It is well below what an experienced alpinist would consider difficult, but it is considerably more demanding than a trek. Keep both points in mind when you decide.

What climbing gear do I need to own?

You do not need to own any. Boots, crampons, ice axe, harness, helmet, ascender and abseil device can all be hired in Kathmandu for around $130 to $220, and we include the helmet, harness and all group gear. Bring from home only the items that need to fit you well: gloves, socks, base layers and your trekking boots.

Is the acclimatisation enough?

Yes. The itinerary is designed around it. You sleep at 5,164 m at Gorak Shep before you approach the mountain, and the two rest days follow the Himalayan Rescue Association guidance of raising your sleeping altitude by 300 to 400 m a day above 3,000 m. Shorter fourteen-day itineraries do not.

Do you carry oxygen?

Yes. Bottled oxygen and a portable altitude chamber travel with the climbing team from base camp upwards, and the guides are trained to use both. They are not used to allow an unwell climber to continue. They provide time for a descent, which is the only effective treatment.

What happens if I get sick at high camp?

You descend that night with a guide, and the rest of the team continues the climb. This is a safety decision, not a punishment or a group vote. High camp is at about 5,400 m, which is not a safe place to wait and see whether a headache improves, and 500 m of descent usually resolves symptoms that nothing else will.

What insurance do I need?

You need a policy that covers mountaineering or climbing to 6,500 m, including helicopter evacuation and repatriation. Standard trekking cover to 6,000 m is not sufficient for a 6,119 m summit, and insurers do enforce this limit. We ask to see your certificate before you fly, because a helicopter will not fly without a guarantee of payment.

How cold does it get on summit night?

Expect minus 15 to minus 25 degrees at high camp before dawn, and colder in the wind on the ridge. This is the night when your down jacket, mittens and thick dry socks are essential. Keep batteries and a water bottle inside your sleeping bag.

What are the two camps like?

You sleep in two-person tents with a foam mat each, and eat in a dining tent where our cook serves your meals. Base camp at 4,950 m sits on rock and moraine below the peak. High camp at about 5,400 m is a small group of ledges. There is a toilet tent, and there are no showers at either camp.

Can I charge devices and use the internet?

In the lodges, yes, for $3 to $5 per device, and Everest Link wifi cards work as far as Gorak Shep. At the camps we carry a solar panel and a battery, and headtorches and radios take priority. Expect to be out of contact on the climbing days.

How heavy is my pack on the climbing days?

Around 8 kg to high camp: climbing kit, down jacket, water, snacks, and the sleeping bag if the porters have turned back. Porters carry only as far as base camp, so the loads for high camp are carried by you and the climbing guides. On summit night your pack is light.

What if the Lukla flight is cancelled?

Cancellations happen several times a month in every season. The spare day on day 18 covers one cancellation at the end of the trip. If a delay at the start lasts more than three days, we rearrange the itinerary rather than shorten the acclimatisation. A helicopter seat costs about $500, and we can usually arrange one within a few hours.

Can I do this as a private trip on my own dates?

Yes, and most climbers choose this option. For a party of five or more, it costs no more than the published departure. For one person on their own dates, it costs $3,890 and runs regardless of other bookings, with a dedicated climbing guide for the summit.

What does the climbing permit cost and who issues it?

The Nepal Mountaineering Association issues it: $350 per climber in spring and $175 in autumn, winter and summer, under the rates revised in 2025. It is included in your price, along with the national park permit, the municipality permit and the refundable $500 team garbage deposit.

How much cash should I carry?

Carry 400 to 600 US dollars in small notes, changed to rupees in Kathmandu. There is no ATM above Namche, and the ATMs in Namche often run out of cash in the busy season. This covers drinks, hot showers, charging, wifi, occasional bakery visits and your share of the tips at the end.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/lobuche-peak-climbing