



Earthbound Expeditions

Gokyo Lakes and Everest Base Camp Trek via Cho La Pass

18 days, from US\$2,290 per person

Duration

18 days

Start and end

Kathmandu

Accommodation

Teahouses

Getting there

Fly to Lukla

Grade

Strenuous

On the trail

4 to 7 hours a day

Meals

All meals on the trek

Max altitude

5,545 m

Best season

Mar to May, Sep to Nov

Group size

Up to 8

Contact us

Phone

+977 9851017772

Email

earthboundnpl@gmail.com

Office

G.P.O. Box 5801, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal

WhatsApp

+9779851017772

Website

enepaltrekking.com

Gokyo Lakes and Everest Base Camp Trek via Cho La Pass Overview

Both Khumbu valleys joined into one circuit: the six Gokyo lakes and the view from Gokyo Ri, a crossing of the Cho La at 5,420 m, then Everest Base Camp and sunrise from Kala Patthar.

Trek overview

This trek links the two main valleys of the Khumbu. You fly to Lukla, walk to Namche, and then take the left branch of the trail to Gokyo rather than the right branch to Base Camp. You spend five days walking up the quiet valley to the lakes, climb Gokyo Ri at dawn, and then cross east over the Cho La at 5,420 m into the Khumbu valley for Everest Base Camp and Kala Patthar. The trek spends fourteen days on the trail and is walked as a circuit rather than there and back.

The Cho La

Without the pass, these would be two separate trips. With it, one trek includes both the best view in the Khumbu and its most famous destination, and no section of trail is repeated between leaving Namche and returning to it. The crossing involves a 4 am start, a boulder gully up to the ice, a short, flat glacier crossed in microspikes, and a steep, loose descent on the eastern side. It is not climbing and there are no ropes, but on this one morning the terrain is as important as the altitude.

Who this trip is for

This trek suits people who are comfortable walking six hours a day for two weeks and want to see more than one valley. You do not need previous experience of altitude, but you should consider carefully how you feel about ice. If forty minutes on a glacier in microspikes, holding a fixed rope for part of the way, would make you uncomfortable, the classic Base Camp trek reaches the same Base Camp without any of this. If you are more interested in the lakes and the view than in Base Camp, the Gokyo Lakes trek is shorter, cheaper and easier.

Why the lakes come first

We walk this route anticlockwise, visiting Gokyo first and Base Camp second, for good reason. This puts the pass on day 10, after a week of acclimatisation, rather than on day 5 with none. It also means you cross the Cho La from west to east, climbing the steeper side and descending the gentler one. Finally, it leaves Base Camp and Kala Patthar until the end, so the trek builds to the destination most people come for.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu, kit check	–	–	1,400 m
2	Fly to Lukla, walk to Phakding	3–4 hrs	8 km	2,651 m
3	Phakding to Namche Bazaar	6–7 hrs	11 km	3,440 m
4	Namche, acclimatisation day	2–4 hrs	–	3,440 m
5	Namche to Dole, over Mong La	5–6 hrs	12 km	4,040 m
6	Dole to Machhermo	4–5 hrs	7 km	4,470 m
7	Machhermo to Gokyo, past three lakes	4–5 hrs	9 km	4,790 m
8	Gokyo Ri at dawn, second night at Gokyo	4–5 hrs	5 km	5,357 m

9	Across the Ngozumpa glacier to Thagnak	2–3 hrs	4 km	4,700 m
10	Over the Cho La to Dzongla	7–9 hrs	14 km	5,420 m
11	Dzongla to Lobuche	3–4 hrs	6 km	4,940 m
12	Lobuche to Base Camp, sleep Gorak Shep	7–8 hrs	13 km	5,364 m
13	Kala Patthar at dawn, down to Pheriche	8–9 hrs	15 km	5,545 m
14	Pheriche to Namche, via Tengboche	6–7 hrs	15 km	3,440 m
15	Namche to Lukla	6–7 hrs	13 km	2,840 m
16	Fly to Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
17	Spare day in Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
18	Fly home	–	–	–

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

We meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel. Later, your guide checks your equipment with you. This is more important on this trek than on most, because the Cho La requires microspikes, gaiters and gloves you can use on rock. Anything missing can be bought or hired in Thamel that afternoon. In the evening, we have dinner together and go through the route.

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

Day 2

Fly to Lukla and trek to Phakding

An early flight to Lukla, from Kathmandu or Manthali depending on the month, followed by an easy half day down the Dudh Koshi valley to Phakding. You lose height rather than gain it, which is a gentle start, and the walking is level beside the river, through Ghat and past its mani walls.

Altitude: 2,651 m On foot: 8 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Phakding Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3

Trek to Namche Bazaar

The trail crosses the river several times on suspension bridges, enters the national park at Monjo, and then climbs steadily for two and a half hours to Namche. Near the top, weather permitting, you have your first view of Everest behind you. Namche is the last town on the route, with the last cash machine.

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

Day 4

Acclimatisation day in Namche Bazaar

A day at the same overnight altitude, which is not a rest day. You walk up past the airstrip at Syangboche to the viewpoint at 3,880 m for views of Everest, Lhotse and Ama Dablam, then return to sleep lower than the height you reached. The rest of the afternoon is free for the bakeries and equipment shops, or for resting.

Altitude: 3,440 m On foot: Optional 2–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Namche Bazaar Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Trek to Dole via Mong La

Above Kyangjuma, the trail divides and you take the left branch, away from the Base Camp route, climbing to the chorten on the saddle at Mong La at 3,975 m, with the valley falling away on both sides. A steep descent follows to the river at Phortse Thanga, then a long climb through rhododendron and juniper forest to Dole.

Altitude: 4,040 m On foot: 12 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dole Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek to Machhermo

A deliberately short day after the previous day's climb. The trail follows the side of the valley through scrub and the summer grazing settlements of Lhabarma and Luza, with Cho Oyu ahead and the river far below. Machhermo has a Himalayan Rescue Association aid post, which gives a talk on altitude most afternoons. It is worth attending.

Altitude: 4,470 m On foot: 7 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Machhermo Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek to Gokyo

Walk up past Pangka, then climb onto the terminal moraine of the Ngozumpa Glacier. The first lake appears below you, then the second, and Gokyo village stands on the shore of the third, at 4,790 m. The walk takes four or five hours, and the afternoon is free to relax by the lake.

Altitude: 4,790 m On foot: 9 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gokyo Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Hike to Gokyo Ri

Set off in the dark to climb the hill behind the village: 560 metres of steep zigzags to 5,357 m. From the top, Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Cho Oyu stand in one line, four of the six highest mountains in the world, with the lakes below and the glacier stretching north out of sight. Return to the village for lunch, then rest.

Altitude: 5,357 m at Gokyo Ri On foot: 5 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gokyo Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Cross the Ngozumpa Glacier to Thagnak

A walk of two or three hours, and one of the most unusual in Nepal. You cross the Ngozumpa, the longest glacier in the country: a kilometre of grey rubble, meltwater pools and small ice cliffs, with the route marked by cairns that are rebuilt every season. Thagnak, on the far side, has three lodges below the pass. You go to bed early.

Altitude: 4,700 m On foot: 4 km, 2–3 hrs Night: Teahouse, Thagnak Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Cross the Cho La and trek to Dzongla

The hardest day and the main feature of the trek. You set off at 4 am with headtorches, walk for an hour on rough ground, then climb a steep boulder gully to the snow line and cross a short glacier in microspikes. The pass, at 5,420 m, is hung with prayer flags and is windy. On the east side, there are two hours of loose moraine before the trail eases down to Dzongla.

Altitude: 5,420 m at the pass On foot: 14 km, 7–9 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dzongla Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Trek to Lobuche

An easy walk of three or four hours, which is welcome after the pass. The path follows a grassy shelf above the Chola Tsho lake, with Cholatse behind you and Ama Dablam to the south, then joins the main Base Camp trail at Lobuche. From here to Kala Patthar, you share the valley with trekkers on the classic route.

Altitude: 4,940 m On foot: 6 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lobuche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Trek to Everest Base Camp

Follow the lateral moraine of the Khumbu Glacier to Gorak Shep for lunch, then cross the rubble to Base Camp at 5,364 m, directly below the Khumbu Icefall. In spring, it is filled with yellow expedition tents and generators. You walk back to Gorak Shep to sleep at 5,164 m, the highest and coldest night of the trek.

Altitude: 5,364 m at Base Camp On foot: 13 km, 7–8 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gorak Shep Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

Hike to Kala Patthar and trek to Pheriche

Another early start in the dark to climb Kala Patthar at 5,545 m, for a view that Base Camp does not have: the whole south-west face of Everest at sunrise. Then a long descent past Lobuche and the climbers' memorials at Thukla to Pheriche, where breathing is noticeably easier and the clinic is beside the trail.

Altitude: 5,545 m at Kala Patthar On foot: 15 km, 8–9 hrs Night: Teahouse, Pheriche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14

Trek to Namche Bazaar via Tengboche

A long day, mostly downhill, through Pangboche and up the last climb of the trek to the monastery at Tengboche, followed by the steep descent to the river at Phunki Tenga and a level walk back to Namche. You return to forest, birdsong, warmth and a hot shower. Most people have a very good appetite by the evening.

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

Day 15

Trek to Lukla

The last day on the trail: the long descent to the river, back over the bridges through Monjo and Phakding, and a final climb to Lukla. The descent is hard on the knees, and the day is longer than the map suggests. In the evening, we have dinner with the guides and porters to mark the end of the trek.

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

Day 16

Fly to Kathmandu

A short morning flight back to Kathmandu, or a flight to Manthali followed by a drive, depending on the season. The rest of the day is free for a bath, a long lunch and collecting the equipment you left at our office eighteen days earlier. We have dinner together in the evening.

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

Day 17

Spare day in Kathmandu

This day is kept in reserve in case of weather delays, because Lukla flights are delayed often enough that an itinerary without a spare day puts your flight home at risk. If everything has run to schedule, the day is free: you can visit Bhaktapur, Patan or the stupa at Boudhanath, or simply relax.

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

Day 18

Departure

We take you to the airport for your flight. If you are travelling on elsewhere in Nepal, such as Chitwan or Pokhara, we can arrange this for you. We recommend keeping a spare day in your wider plans in case of weather delays at Lukla.

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

What's included

- Airport transfers & ground transport
- Licensed English-speaking guide
- Accommodation throughout the trip
- All permits & national park fees
- Meals as per the itinerary
- Microspikes for the Cho La crossing

Not included

- International flights
- Travel & rescue insurance
- Personal trekking gear
- Tips & personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Packing list

Baggage weight limits and microspikes

Your porter carries a maximum of 20 kg, shared between two trekkers, and the Lukla flight allows 15 kg in total, 10 kg checked and 5 kg as hand luggage. The flight limit is the stricter of the two. The one item on this list that a Base Camp trekker does not need is microspikes. We provide a pair, which you return at Dzongla after the pass. We also lend the duffel bag, the sleeping bag and the down jacket, so you do not need to bring these, and you can store anything else at our office in Kathmandu.

Head and eyes

- Sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat that covers your ears
- Two buffs or neck gaiters
- Category 4 sunglasses if possible. The glare on the Cho La glacier is stronger than anywhere on the Base Camp trail
- Headtorch and spare batteries. The pass crossing and the climb to Kala Patthar both start in the dark
- SPF 50 sunscreen and lip balm with sun protection

Clothing

- Four merino or synthetic base layers, not cotton
- Two mid layers: a fleece and a light insulated jacket
- Down jacket. We lend one, but bring your own if you tend to feel the cold
- Waterproof jacket and trousers that pack small
- Two pairs of trekking trousers, one of them lined
- Underwear for five days, washed along the way

Hands and feet

- Liner gloves and insulated outer gloves or mittens. Do not handle the rock on the pass with bare hands
- Broken-in boots with ankle support and a sole stiff enough to hold microspikes
- Microspikes for the Cho La. We provide them, and you are welcome to bring your own
- Gaiters, essential in March and late November
- Four pairs of wool trekking socks, and camp shoes for the evenings

Bags

- Duffel bag for the porter, 20 kg maximum. We provide one
- Daypack of 30 to 35 litres with a rain cover, which on the day of the pass holds lunch and water for nine hours
- Dry bags or heavy liners, as rain and snow will eventually soak through ordinary bags

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to -15°C, which we provide
- Silk or cotton liner, for warmth and hygiene
- Earplugs. The lodges at Thagnak and Dzongla have thin plywood walls and are busy

Health

- Personal first aid kit: blister plasters, tape, painkillers and rehydration salts
- Acetazolamide, if your doctor agrees, and any regular medication
- Water purification: tablets, a filter or a SteriPen
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes, for the four days without showers
- Throat lozenges. Most people develop the Khumbu cough around day 9

Documents and money

- Passport valid for six months, and two photocopies
- Four passport photographs for the permits
- Insurance certificate showing helicopter cover and trekking to 6,000 m
- \$350 to \$550 in small notes. The last cash machine is in Namche, and it often runs out of money

Route map

Gokyo Lakes and Everest Base Camp Trek via Cho La Pass

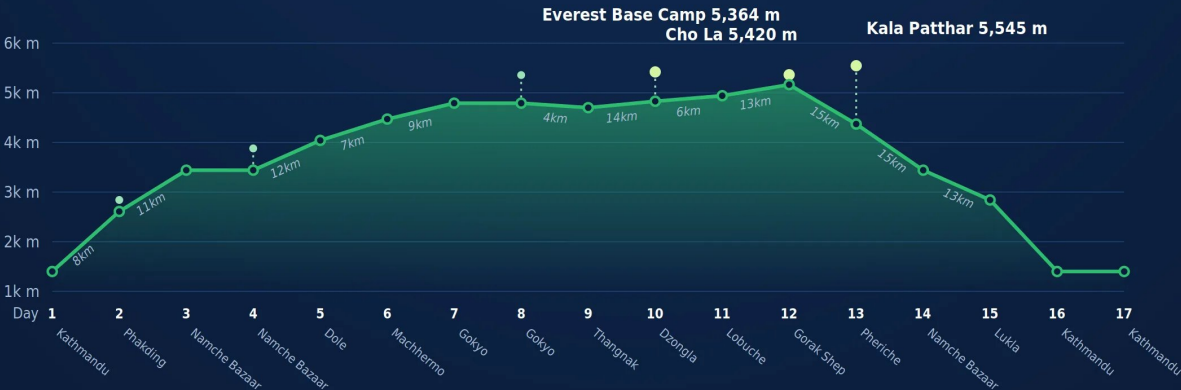
18 days | Highest point 5,545 m | Strenuous



Start: Fly to Lukla, walk to Phakding

End: Fly back to Kathmandu

Altitude by day



Optional extras

Fourth and fifth lakes from Gokyo

\$180, +1 day

An extra day at Gokyo to visit the upper lakes and Scoundrel's Viewpoint, which looks up the Ngozumpa Glacier towards Everest. It also gives you another night at 4,790 m before the pass, which helps your acclimatisation.

Return over the Renjo La

from \$420, +3 days

Instead of descending the Gokyo valley, you return west over a 5,340 m pass to Thame, making this a two-pass circuit. This is only advisable after the Cho La, not before it.

Helicopter from Gorak Shep

from \$500 a seat, saves 3 days

Fly from Gorak Shep or Pheriche to Lukla or directly to Kathmandu. Travellers choose this to save time, and also to avoid the long descent.

Everest scenic flight

\$220, 1 morning

A one-hour flight along the Himalaya from Kathmandu, with a guaranteed window seat. A good alternative to keep in reserve if bad weather stops you reaching Lukla.

Chitwan or Bardia, three days

from \$390, +3 days

Travel down to the lowland jungle to see rhinos and, if you are fortunate at Bardia, a tiger. A welcome contrast after two weeks above 3,000 m.

Single room in Kathmandu

\$135

A room to yourself for all three hotel nights. On the trail, the lodges only have twin rooms, especially at Thagnak.

Luxury lodge upgrade in the lower Khumbu

Price on request

Where the route passes a premium lodge, we book it in place of the standard teahouse. Mountain Lodges of Nepal has lodges at Lukla, Phakding, Monjo, Namche and Deboche, and Everest Summit Lodges has 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 standard teahouses. We confirm which lodges have rooms on your dates before you book.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: enepaltrekking.com/gokyo-everest-base-camp-trek