



Earthbound Expeditions

Gokyo Lakes and Gokyo Ri Trek

15 days, from US\$1,787 per person

Duration

15 days

Grade

Strenuous

Max altitude

5,357 m

Start and end

Kathmandu

On the trail

4 to 6 hours a day

Best season

Mar to May, Sep to Nov

Accommodation

Teahouses

Meals

All meals on the trek

Group size

Up to 8

Getting there

Fly to Lukla

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Gokyo Lakes and Gokyo Ri Trek Overview

Six turquoise lakes, the longest glacier in Nepal, and a summit view of four of the six highest mountains in the world. The Everest region with far fewer trekkers.

Trek overview

This trek visits the other main valley of the Khumbu. You fly to Lukla and walk for two days to Namche, as on every Everest trek, and on day 6 the trail divides: right for Base Camp, left for Gokyo. Five more days take you up beside the Ngozumpa Glacier, past a chain of six turquoise lakes, to a village on the shore of the third lake at 4,790 m, below a hill with one of the best views in Nepal.

Gokyo compared with Base Camp

Base Camp is a destination rather than a viewpoint: you stand on the moraine at 5,364 m below the Khumbu Icefall, and you cannot see Everest from there. From Gokyo Ri, at 5,357 m, you can see Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Cho Oyu, four of the six highest mountains in the world, with the lakes and a 36 km glacier below. Base Camp is the more famous destination and Gokyo has the better view, and a significant number of people who have done both treks say they would choose this one if they were to repeat one.

Who this trip is for

This trek requires the same fitness as the classic Base Camp trek: five or six hours of walking a day for eleven days at altitude. It particularly suits two groups: people who have already been to Base Camp and want to see more of the Khumbu, and people who want to avoid the October crowds on the Base Camp trail. This valley has far fewer trekkers.

The Gokyo lakes

Six lakes lie along the valley, fed by the Ngozumpa Glacier and held in place by its moraine, and together they form the highest freshwater lake system in the world. Gokyo village is on the third lake, Dudh Pokhari. The lakes are a Ramsar wetland site and are sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists, which is why there is a small shrine at the third lake and why people bathe there in August, at 4,790 m.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
2	Kathmandu valley sites	–	–	1,400 m
3	Fly to Lukla, walk to Phakding	3–4 hrs	8 km	2,651 m
4	Phakding to Namche Bazaar	6–7 hrs	11 km	3,440 m
5	Namche, acclimatisation day	2–4 hrs	–	3,440 m
6	Namche to Dole, over Mong La	5–6 hrs	12 km	4,110 m
7	Dole to Machhermo	4–5 hrs	7 km	4,470 m
8	Machhermo to Gokyo, past three lakes	4–5 hrs	9 km	4,790 m
9	Gokyo Ri at dawn	4–5 hrs	5 km	5,357 m

10	Fourth and fifth lakes, Scoundrel's Viewpoint	5–6 hrs	12 km	5,000 m
11	Gokyo to Dole	5–6 hrs	16 km	4,110 m
12	Dole to Namche	5–6 hrs	12 km	3,440 m
13	Namche to Lukla	6–7 hrs	13 km	2,840 m
14	Fly to Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
15	Fly home	–	–	–

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

We meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel. In the evening, we go through the trek, check your equipment and weigh your bag, because the Lukla baggage allowance is strictly enforced.

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

Day 2

Kathmandu Valley sightseeing

Visit the historic sites of the valley: the hilltop stupa at Swayambhunath, the riverside temples at Pashupatinath, the great dome of Boudhanath and the carved squares of Patan. A good way to recover from the flight.

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

Day 3

Fly to Lukla and trek to Phakding

After the mountain flight, walk gently downhill for half a day beside the Dudh Koshi. This is easy walking, and the same first afternoon as on every Khumbu trek.

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

Day 4

Trek to Namche Bazaar

Cross the suspension bridges and make the long climb through pine forest to Namche. On a clear day, you have your first view of Everest on the way up. Namche is the last town with cash machines, bakeries and a bookshop.

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

A day to allow your body to adjust to the altitude. Climb to the viewpoint above the town for views of Everest, Lhotse and Ama Dablam, then return to Namche to sleep, following the principle of climbing high and sleeping low.

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

Day 6

Trek to Dole

Here the Gokyo trail leaves the Base Camp route. Base Camp trekkers turn right for Tengboche; you turn left, climb past Mong La with views of the Khumbu behind you, and descend into the other branch of the Dudh Koshi valley. From here, the trail is quiet.

Altitude: 4,110 m On foot: 12 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dole Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek to Machhermo

A short day at altitude up an increasingly open valley, with Cho Oyu ahead and Kangtega behind. Machhermo is a small group of lodges in a side valley, with a Himalayan Rescue Association aid post that gives a free talk on altitude every afternoon during the season.

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

Day 8

Trek to Gokyo

The trail climbs onto the lateral moraine of the Ngozumpa, the longest glacier in Nepal, and then passes the first, second and third lakes. Gokyo village is on the shore of the third lake, which is a striking turquoise against the grey rock and white ice.

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

Day 9

Hike to Gokyo Ri

The main highlight of the trek. Climb for two to three hours in the dark up the hill behind the village to watch the sunrise from 5,357 m. The view includes Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Cho Oyu, four of the six highest mountains in the world, from one summit, with the lakes below and the glacier stretching away to the north. It is the best viewpoint in the Khumbu, and many people consider it better than Kala Patthar.

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

Day 10

Hike to the fourth and fifth lakes

Walk north along the edge of the glacier to the fourth and fifth lakes, and climb to Scoundrel's Viewpoint above the fifth lake for views of the north face of Everest and the full 36 kilometres of the Ngozumpa Glacier. The walk is gentler than the previous day but spends longer at altitude, and very few trekkers come here.

Altitude: 5,000 m at the fifth lake On foot: 12 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gokyo Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Trek to Dole

You return the way you came, but walking downhill feels very different: breathing becomes easier as you descend, the lakes are behind you and the valley opens out ahead. A long but easy day.

Altitude: 4,110 m On foot: 16 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dole Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Trek to Namche Bazaar

Cross back over Mong La and descend into the forest. By the afternoon, you have a hot shower, a bakery and easier breathing than at any time in the past week.

Altitude: 3,440 m On foot: 12 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Namche Bazaar Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

Trek to Lukla

The last full day on the trail, back across the bridges and through the villages to Lukla. 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 14

Fly to Kathmandu

A short morning flight back to Kathmandu, with the rest of the day free to rest or shop. A farewell dinner in the evening.

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

Day 15

Departure

We take you to the airport. As on any Khumbu trek, allow 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

Not included

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

Packing list

Baggage weight limits

Your porter carries a maximum of 20 kg, shared between two trekkers. The Lukla flight allows 15 kg in total, 10 kg checked and 5 kg as hand luggage, and all baggage is weighed. Anything you do not take on the trek is stored free at our Kathmandu office, and we provide the duffel bag, the sleeping bag and the down jacket.

Head and eyes

- Sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat that covers your ears
- Two buffs or neck gaiters
- Category 3 or 4 sunglasses. Snow glare at this altitude is severe
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- SPF 50 sunscreen and lip balm with sun protection

Clothing

- Three or four merino or synthetic base layers, not cotton
- Two mid layers: one fleece and one light insulated jacket
- Down jacket. We provide 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 four or five days, washed along the way

Hands and feet

- Liner gloves and insulated outer gloves or mittens
- Trekking boots with ankle support, which must be broken in before the trek
- Four pairs of wool trekking socks
- Camp shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Gaiters, if you are travelling in winter or early spring

Bags

- Duffel bag for the porter, 20 kg maximum. We provide one
- Daypack, 30 to 35 litres, with a rain cover
- Dry bags or thick liners, as rain and snow will eventually soak through ordinary bags

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to -15°C. We provide one
- Silk or cotton liner, for warmth and hygiene
- Earplugs, as teahouse walls are thin plywood

Health

- Personal first aid kit: blister plasters, tape, painkillers and rehydration salts
- Diamox, if your doctor agrees, and any regular medication
- Water purification: tablets, a filter or a SteriPen
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes
- Throat lozenges. Almost everyone develops a dry cough at high altitude

Documents and money

- Passport valid for six months, and two photocopies
- Four passport photographs for permits
- Travel insurance certificate showing helicopter cover to 6,000 m
- \$300 to \$500 in small notes. The last cash machine is at Namche Bazaar

For Gokyo

- A reliable headtorch and spare batteries. The climb to Gokyo Ri starts at 4:30 am in the dark, and the zigzag path is loose

- Category 4 sunglasses. Three days beside a glacier and two frozen lakes means a great deal of reflected light
- A down jacket you can walk in and carry. You climb Gokyo Ri warm but will be cold at the top
- A power bank, because Gokyo runs on solar power and on a cloudy day there is no charging
- Two litres of insulated bottle capacity. Above the fourth lake, a bottle in an outside pocket will freeze

Route map

Gokyo Lakes and Gokyo Ri Trek

15 days | Highest point 5,357 m | Strenuous



Start: Fly to Lukla, walk to Phakding

End: Fly back to Kathmandu

Altitude by day



Optional extras

Renjo La, returning through Thame

from \$420, +3 days

Cross the 5,340 m Renjo La west from Gokyo and descend the Bhote Koshi valley through Thame, the old salt-trading village and home of a remarkable number of Everest summiteers. It turns the trek into a loop and is the best extension to this trek.

Cho La and Everest Base Camp

from \$640, +5 days

Cross the 5,420 m Cho La east from Gokyo and join the Base Camp route at Dzongla. Both valleys and both viewpoints in one trip. A demanding extension, and a popular Khumbu combination.

An extra night at Gokyo

\$110, +1 day

This allows you to do the Gokyo Ri climb and the walk to the fifth lake on separate days. The two main days are otherwise consecutive at 4,790 m, so this is a very good-value extra.

Helicopter from Gokyo

from \$2,900 for the aircraft, saves 3 days

Priced for the whole helicopter rather than by the seat, so it is reasonable when shared between five and expensive for one person. Dependent on the weather at 4,790 m.

Everest scenic flight

\$220, 1 morning

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

Single room in Kathmandu

\$135

A room to yourself for the three hotel nights. At Gokyo, the lodges only have twin rooms and are fully booked in October, so single rooms are not available there.

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-lakes-trek