

Preparing for your trek: Nepal

The following information tells you what you will need to do to prepare for your trek.

Checklist

Paperwork to send to CAT office now

- Medical form
- Insurance declaration form
- Equipment hire form
- Photocopy of details page of your passport
- passport photos: 2 photos for treks in the Everest & Langtang regions treks
 4 photos for treks in the Annapurna region
 6 photos for Manaslu treks

Other things to do

- Now - Make a note in your diary of the payment schedule shown on your invoice
- Now - Check that the name on your invoice EXACTLY matches the first and surname on your passport and notify the CAT office immediately if there are any discrepancies.
- Set aside time to improve your mountain fitness
- Vaccinations – travel clinic. 2-3 months before departure
- Obtain medical items on kit list – may need doctor's prescription for diamox and antibiotics.
- Dental check-up. 1-2 months before departure
- Insurance
- Visa application – will need passport photos
- Equipment list – decide which items you may need to buy. If you want to hire anything, return the equipment hire form to us, with payment by cheque. Deadline for hiring is with your balance payment.

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Health issues

- **Fitness - train for your trip** – you will enjoy the trek much more if you are fit. For most of our trekking trips you will need to be comfortable trekking for on average 6 hours a day in mountainous terrain. By far the best way to train for Himalayan trekking is to get out on the British hills and spend time climbing, for example, to the heights of the Lake District peaks, ie around 800 – 1000m. If you are capable of putting together a few days of that calibre back-to-back, you should be capable of most of our treks. (Please note that the trekking peak trips require additional technical experience). For those not able to regularly get to the British hills, then regular cardiovascular exercise, for example on the stepper in the gym is a good alternative, but you should still try to get some time in mountain terrain as gyms cannot simulate the rough ground found in a mountain environment.

NB. For our **Trekking Peak** trips you will also need basic climbing skills and have experience of using ice axe, crampons and ropes. There may be difficult passes, glaciers or river crossings.

- **Medical form** – please complete and sign the enclosed form. You will need a doctor to sign the form to declare your suitability for the trek if you are over 65 or have a pre-existing medical condition.
- **Vaccinations** – travel vaccinations are advised for the countries we trek to. You should plan to see your GP's travel clinic several months ahead of your trip, as some vaccinations require a course of injections over a couple of months. For advice on which vaccinations are recommended for you, please speak to your travel clinic as, unlike us, they have access to your medical history. The website www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk is also very useful.
Malaria: Please note that for travellers to Nepal, anti-malarials are **not** required unless you are intending to visit Chitwan National Park in the Terai district.
Rabies does exist in Nepal – avoid dogs and monkeys! The decision about the expensive course of course of rabies injections is a matter of personal choice.
- **Dental checkup** – altitude and flying are notorious for highlighting dental problems, and there is nothing worse than being on trek with toothache. A check-up timed sufficiently in advance of the departure date to allow for any work that is required to be done on your teeth can save you a lot of pain on trek.
- **Staying healthy in Nepal** – Sadly, Nepal is not the cleanest country, so be scrupulous about your own personal hygiene. **Wash your hands before you eat anything**, and also use antibacterial hand gel in addition to soap and water. Remember that money is one of the dirtiest things you will touch. **Do NOT drink tapwater, or even brush your teeth in it**, even if you see the locals doing it. Bottled water is safe in the towns, though be sure the seal hasn't been broken. On trek we will provide you with water that has been boiled (better than buying plastic bottled water as recycling facilities haven't reached Nepal yet)! It is a good idea to keep your toothbrush by your safe water, not by the sink. **Be careful what you eat** – the food and drinks our cooks prepare for you will be safe, but when eating elsewhere avoid uncooked food, or things that might not have been washed in safe water, ie, avoid ice cream, ice cubes, salads and fruit if you're not sure how it was washed etc. Hot drinks are safe, as the water has been boiled. If in doubt, ask for advice.
- **Medicines** – see the kit list later in this document. A basic first aid kit is carried on all our treks, and your sirdar/trek leader will be trained in first aid, but you should make sure that YOU carry any medication that you rely on. It is very important that you tell your sirdar / trek leader of any medication that you take, and also of any medical conditions, even if you have already told us about them on your medical form.
- **Stomach upsets** can happen, sometimes just as a result of a change of diet, but sometimes from a more persistent cause. In the event of you having an upset stomach, we recommend that you do NOT block up your system with immodium-type medicines, but that you limit your food intake, keep to a low-fat diet. Flattened coke seems to help, as do rehydration salts (eg Dioralyte or Jeevan Jal). If it looks like the problem is severe, antibiotics almost always offer an extremely effectively and rapid solution.
- **Trekking at altitude** – Our itineraries are planned to give time for acclimatisation, but it is important to think of trekking at altitude as a multi-day event. Think "marathon" rather than "sprint". If you can't talk while you are walking, you are walking too fast. Keeping to this as a guide, and learning to listen to what your body is telling you will help you with acclimatisation. Above 3000m, almost all

westerners will find it harder to breathe, and walking uphill needs to be done at a slower pace than at sea level. Headaches, nausea, breathlessness, dizziness, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping are not unusual, but you should report any of these symptoms to your sirdar / guide so that they can help prevent them turning into anything serious. If ignored, these symptoms can worsen, and can lead to potentially fatal pulmonary or cerebral oedema. Descent cures altitude sickness. Diamox is a prescription drug available through your GP. It won't mask the symptoms of an oedema, but can be used to help treat altitude related problems. In cases where the onset of an oedema is suspected, diamox must never be used instead of descent.

Paperwork

Insurance: It is a condition of booking that you have adequate insurance for your trip. Your insurance must cover you for the entire period of travel, and for the activities* and the altitude you are going to, and also for helicopter rescue and repatriation. You should also notify the insurance company of all pre-existing medical conditions. Please note that many insurance companies do not cover these requirements. There are a few insurance companies that specialise in insurance policies suitable for trekking expeditions. If your current travel insurance company cannot provide you with a suitable policy, please contact us for further information. We recommend that you also have insurance for cancellation and personal baggage.

As a result of changes to travel insurance rules from 1 January 2009 we can no longer arrange your insurance for you. However, we would be happy to refer you to Campbell Irvine, an insurance company we have worked with in the past, but the relationship is then between yourself and the insurance company. To purchase the same insurance that you would have previously been able to buy from ourselves, please contact Campbell Irvine direct by one of the following methods, **and please mention that you are trekking with Community Action Treks:**

Online at: www.catreks.com/info/Insurance.pdf
By telephone: 020 7938 1734
By email: info@campbellirvine.com

In all cases, extra costs incurred by a client as a result of premature departure from the expedition, eg, rescue, food and accommodation costs of themselves and support staff etc, are the responsibility of the client. It is important that all clients carry with them the financial means to meet these costs at the time of them being incurred.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please complete the enclosed insurance declaration form, and return it to us.

*Trekking Peak Insurance: If you have booked onto one of our Trekking Peak trips (Yala Peak, Island Peak, Mera Peak, Teng Kongma Peak or Pokalde Peak) please ensure you are covered to the height you hope to achieve and that they are aware that you will be using ropes, crampons and other climbing equipment.

Passport

Check that your passport will have at least 6 months of validity at the time of travelling. Send a copy of the details page of your passport to the CAT office. You may also like to travel with a copy of this page in case you lose your passport.

Photos: Please send the following numbers of passport photos to the CAT office:

- 2 photos for treks in the Everest & Langtang regions treks
- 4 photos for treks in the Annapurna region
- 6 photos for Manaslu treks

You will also need a passport photo for your Nepalese visa. Don't forget to also this with you if you intend to purchase your Nepalese visa on arrival at Kathmandu airport.

Visa: You can choose to get your Nepalese visa either before you leave for your trip or on arrival in Nepal. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have visas in time for your trip, except visas for Tibet and Bhutan which are arranged by our agents on your behalf.

Embassies regularly change their requirements for visas, so you are strongly recommended to check the visa page of your country's Nepal embassy website: www.nepembassy.org.uk (for holders of UK passports). A visa application form is attached to this document.

Completing the visa form: Answer the questions on the application form carefully and accurately and enter the following details on it:

Where you are required to state "Purpose of visit" - write "Tourist – trekking"

For "Address in Nepal" write "c/o Community Action Treks, The Hotel Malla, PO Box 787, Lekhnath Marg, Kathmandu.

For "Expenses whilst in Nepal will be borne by" - you should put "Community Action Treks."

How to apply:

1. By post: Send (BY SPECIAL DELIVERY) your passport and the completed application form, one passport size photograph, the fee in the form of cash, Postal Order or Bank Draft (cheque) made payable to the Embassy of Nepal, London and a STAMPED and ADDRESSED SPECIAL DELIVERY ENVELOPE for the return of your passport to: **Embassy of Nepal, 12A Kensington Palace Gardens London W8 4QU. (tel 0207 229 1594).**

2. In person at the embassy: Alternatively you can apply in person at the Nepalese Embassy. Your visa will be processed ready for you to collect the next working day. Currently the visa section is open Mon-Fri 1000-1200 hrs.

3. On arrival in Kathmandu: Payments may be made in cash, but must be in £ or US\$.

Payment: Please check the embassy website for the latest prices, although prices. The tourist visa structure and prices are currently (as at November 2009):

- **Multiple entry tourist visa:** 15 days validity: £20 or US\$25.
- **Multiple entry tourist visa:** 30 days validity: £35 or US\$40.
- **Multiple entry tourist visa:** 90 days validity: £75 or US\$100.
- **Single entry tourist visa:** no longer available.
- **Gratis visa:** no longer available.

Validity: Do not apply for your visa more than 6 months prior to your arrival in the country.

The validity of visa dates are counted from the date of arrival in Nepal. Visas can be extended once you are in Nepal.

Photos: 1 passport photo. NB: there is NO photo booth at Kathmandu airport

If you are applying for your visa at the border/airport, payment can be made in sterling or US dollars. For postal applications, payment is by Postal Order or Bank Draft made payable to the Embassy. Personal cheques or card payments are not acceptable. If you are applying via the Nepalese embassy in the UK by post, enclose a stamped addressed envelope with recorded mail for the return of your passport. Visas take at least 2 weeks to process by post, or alternatively you can either go to the embassy yourself (see website for opening hours).

Travel via India: Please note that if you are travelling to Nepal via India, unless your travel arrangements will take you **outside** the Indian airport you do not need to apply for an Indian transit visa. However, if you will be going outside an Indian airport you will need an Indian tourist visa. Please also note that the responsibility for ensuring you have the necessary visas, travel permits etc, for your chosen route of travel to the joining point, lies entirely with you.

Money

- **Currency:** Nepalese rupees cannot be obtained outside Nepal. However, sterling (but not Scottish notes) and US dollars cash can easily be changed in Kathmandu. You will get a better exchange rate at the money exchange bureaus in Thamel (the tourist area of Kathmandu where our group hotel is located) than at the hotel or the airport. You will also get a better exchange rate for cash than for travellers cheques. It is a good idea to always try to pay with a big note (500 or 1000 rupees) in the cities, and to keep the change for your time on trek. Whilst Kathmandu shop owners may say they have no change, they can always get some, and there are banks nearby. On trek, the nearest bank could be a week's walk away! It also makes giving tips to the trek crew a lot less embarrassing if you can give them exactly what you want to give them rather than asking 2 or 3 members of your crew to split a note between them! Don't accept or give torn or extremely dirty notes. The current exchange rate for UK Pound:Nepalese Rupees is around 1:110. Please note that it is now illegal to use, import or export Indian 1,000 and 500 rupee notes in Nepal.
- **Credit & debit cards:** Although a few of the bigger shops now accept payment by card, you should not rely on being able to use them. In the mountains, only Nepalese rupees cash is accepted.

However, we do ask that you take a credit card with you, see the note below on **Leaving a trek early**.

- **Spending money:** Most people find that £250 is sufficient for their personal trek expenses and including porter/trekking crew tips. Please see your itinerary for a list of what is and is not included in the package price. There is very little to spend money on once on trek, although soft drinks, snacks and craft items can be bought at villages on trek. The prices become more expensive the higher you go as the cost of portering from the road increases with altitude. Most cases of Maoists asking tourists for money have diminished now, but it may still happen. Your trek leader or sirdar will negotiate a fee, (usually only £10-£30) and you will be given a receipt for 'safe passage'. No tourist has been harmed by Maoists demanding money.
- **Bartering:** Bartering is the expected practise for tourist items. Try to negotiate a fair price – if you don't the prices will be made artificially higher in the future, and it creates an even greater imbalance in the economy of the country. Nepal is one of the poorest countries on earth, but those Nepalese who have contact with westerners are significantly more wealthy than those who have no contact with tourists. Please note that the price is fixed in some shops, all supermarkets and tea house food/accommodation.
- **Tipping:** Many people from the UK feel awkward about tipping. In Nepal tipping is a way of life and our local staff have been trained to see it as a reward for good service, but not to expect it. We find that most trekkers want to tip the staff, as a genuine "thank you" for all their hard work and unfailing good humour and smiles along the way.

It is difficult to give advice about tipping without it appearing to be a directive, but many of our clients ask for advice so we hope the following at least gives you some guidelines:

Up to 8 days on trek: up to £50 per trekker to split amongst the whole crew

8-15 days on trek: up to £70 per trekker to split amongst the whole crew

15 days +: up to £90 per trekker to split amongst the whole crew

The crew would normally receive tips on the following basis per day:

Porter: £1-£1.50 Sherpa guide or kitchen helper: £2.00 Cook or Sirdar: £2.50-£3.00

We suggest groups make a collection among themselves and present the tips to the staff directly (not via the sirdar) at the end of the trek. Remember though that tipping is up to you and should only be given if you are happy with the service you have received.

- **Departure Taxes:** Departure taxes for international flights from Kathmandu are now included in the cost of your international flight ticket. The departure taxes for internal flights are included in the cost of your trek.
- **Leaving a trek early:** If you leave a trek early you are responsible for the costs incurred by yourself and the trek participants and/or staff who accompany you. This applies whether you choose to leave early, or if you are forced to leave early due to medical reasons. The costs of this can be several thousand pounds, especially if helicopters are required which is why we insist that you take out insurance to cover you for medical emergencies. We ask that all participants ensure they have a credit card with them with credit to cover this. In some cases, credit card banking fees may be incurred.
- **Gifts to beggars and children:** We would ask that you do NOT give small gifts to beggars and children. It only encourages begging, and an apparently innocent "give me pen" soon turns into "gimme dollar". Sweets rot teeth, and dental facilities and the national health service isn't like ours! If you would like to give something to the people of Nepal, we have a dedicated sister organisation, Community Action Nepal, which is a registered charity which operates to improve the medical and educational facilities of areas that really need it. If you would like to give to this, please contact info@canepal.com. If you are a tax payer, your donation can also be gift-aided at no extra cost to yourself.

Extensions: If you wish to have extra nights in Nepal before or after their trek, discuss your options with us asap. The cost of your flights may alter if you change your plans, so early decisions about this are advisable. Changes cannot be made once your air ticket has been issued (normally 8 weeks prior to departure). Please see our Nepal extensions itineraries for ideas.

Further information

Arrival in Kathmandu: You will be met at Kathmandu airport by our staff there, and taken to the group hotel in Thamel, the tourist district of Kathmandu. If you are making your own flight arrangements, please let us have details of ALL your flights so we know when to meet you! This journey takes about 30 minutes. Politely decline all offers of help to carry luggage, take you to hotels etc from anyone who is not CAT staff. A simple “no thank you” and walking on works 99% of the time in Nepal.

A typical trekking day: Life on trek is quickly adopts a very simple pattern. You will be woken around 6am by the sherpas bringing bed tea to your tent. They then bring a bowl of warm washing water for you. This is the time to get up and pack your kit bag so that your tent can be taken down and the porters or pack animals leave with your tent and kit bag while you are having breakfast. After breakfast we start trekking, taking time for rests, drinks and toilet stops along the way. We stop for a long lunch, which is usually a hot lunch which is cooked for us. If you don't like stopping for a long time mid-walk, try to keep moving and stretching as it is not uncommon for the lunch to take 1½ hours. Then we set off again for the afternoon walk to our campsite. The tents may already be there, but if not you will need to have with you a spare warm layer to keep warm while you are waiting for them to arrive. Time to rest, wash and change into clothes for the evening, and to prepare your tent for night before eating dinner with your fellow trekkers in the mess tent or tea house. An early night is necessary as the crew will be keen to sleep where you are sitting for your dinner, and everyone will get up early for another day of trekking.

Food: Please refer to the trip itinerary for details of which meals are included in your package price. Generally all meals and hot drinks on trek are included. On trek you will be served a high-carbohydrate, largely vegetarian diet consisting of a mixture of Western and Nepalese food.

Accommodation: Our group hotel in Kathmandu is usually the Hotel Malla in twin rooms. Occasionally we may have to use a hotel of a similar standard. Whilst on trek you will be in a 2-person tent. Sole use of a tent or single hotel rooms is usually possible – please see your itinerary for the single tent / room supplement prices. If you do not choose a single tent or single room, you will be allocated a tent / room mate of the same gender. If you have a preference for who you would like to share with, please notify the CAT office asap.

Washing / Toilet facilities: On trek you will be provided with a bowl of warm washing water every day. You can use this for washing yourself and your socks etc! On some treks there may be the possibility of a shower at a tea house for which you would pay the didi of the house (the tea house owner - literally “elder sister”) a set fee, often around 50 – 150 rupees. Toilets on trek are usually squat-style. Toilet tents will be used when we are camping – a hole in the ground within a tent for privacy. In some places we may decide to use the local facilities if they are clean enough. If you get caught short whilst trekking, please ask – we may be able to find you a local toilet to use. If not, please bury your offering and put your toilet paper in a plastic bag to tip into the next camp toilet. There is nothing worse than seeing the litter of “western prayer flags” along the way. Keep toilet paper with you at all times in Nepal!

Itinerary changes: These may happen, though we will try to keep changes to a minimum. There are some things that are outside of CAT's control (eg, civil war, airline changes, the weather, strikes etc). We will always endeavour to work around any disruption to provide you with the best possible alternative. We ask you to travel with an open mind, and an awareness that disruption happens more frequently in Himalayan countries than at home.

Mobile Phones and Internet: Mobile coverage is starting to appear in some trekking areas, especially in the Khumbu, and also in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Check with your mobile phone company to see if your phone will work in Nepal. Internet cafes are abundant in Kathmandu and Pokhara, and there are one or two cafes on certain trekking routes, though these are satellite-phone run so expensive, and also should not be relied upon.

Electricity (voltage, adaptors etc)

Electricity is now being introduced into the main trekking areas. It is often possible to charge camera batteries etc for a small fee in the larger tea houses. A continental 2-pin adaptor will suffice. Be aware that the voltages are not very stable, and more delicate electrical devices may fail if subjected to voltage fluctuations (iPods seem particularly vulnerable).

Weather: There are 2 main trekking seasons in Nepal: pre-monsoon (March/April/May) and post-monsoon (October / November).

- **Pre-monsoon (March/April/May):** This is a beautiful time of year to trek, when many flowers are in bloom, and the temperatures are warm. It is often 15-25°C in these months during the daytime, though it can drop to -10 °C at night at the higher camps. As you trek above 3000m the temperatures will drop. Typical weather (though it is getting harder to generalise in the current state of global climate change) would see clear blue skies in the morning, with clouds rolling in from late morning obscuring the views, usually clearing again in the evening. The temperature drops sharply when the sun disappears from your part of the valley. The cloud build-up becomes more significant in the run-up to the monsoon, so the later in the spring you trek, the greater the chance of more cloud and perhaps some rain. For trekkers to the Everest region, you are likely to encounter the climbing expeditions on their way to, and at the base camps at this time of year.
- **Post-monsoon (October/November):** This is the most popular time of year to trek. Although it is colder than the spring, the visibility is usually better after the monsoon has cleared the air. It can be 15-25°C in these months during the daytime, though it can drop to -15 °C at night at the higher camps. As you trek above 3000m the temperatures will be much cooler in the day time, especially if you are out of the sun. Typically clouds build-up later in the day than in the spring, and usually clear skies again in the evening. The temperature drops sharply when the sun disappears from your part of the valley. The weather becomes colder the later in the autumn you trek.
- **Winter:** Trekking during the winter months is also possible, but temperatures drop considerably then.

General notes about the weather: Temperatures vary wildly depending on the altitude and whether you are in the sun or the shade.

Kathmandu is at 1336m, and whilst a t-shirt is fine for daytime, you may prefer a fleece, especially in the autumn. Rain storms are not unusual, especially in the pre-monsoon months.

Pokhara is warmer than Kathmandu as it is only 1000m above sea level.

Visitors to Chitwan can expect significantly hotter temperatures.

Trekking in the Annapurna regions can be quite hot to start with, as some start from 800m. However, all treks get cold in the evening, so the range of clothing in our kit list is recommended.

Trekking in the Everest region starts a little cooler. Walks that start from Lukla start from 2800m.

Further reading:

We recommend doing some reading about Nepal before your trek. The following titles may be of interest:

Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya, Stan Armington, Lonely Planet – a good introduction

Trailblazer Guides do a great range of books which are area-specific, but which also include good information about Kathmandu:

Trekking in the Everest Region, Jamie McGuinness

Trekking in the Annapurna Region, Bryn Thomas

Trekking in Langtang, Helambu & Gosainkund, Jamie McGuinness

A Guide to Trekking in Nepal, Stephen Bezruchka, Cordee Books – a specialised trekking guide but with good sections on health, culture, religion and attitudes.

Kathmandu & the Kingdom of Nepal, Prakash A. Raj, Lonely Planet – Plenty of useful information, especially on the Kathmandu Valley.

Himalayan Climber, Doug Scott, Hodder & Stoughton – a photographic autobiography, describes treks and climbs in Makalu, Everest & Kanchenjunga etc. Signed copies may be purchased direct from CAT at £15.00 + £3.25 postage.

Maps of Nepal It is probably best to buy what you need in Nepal as good maps are readily and cheaply available. Alternatively you could try Stanfords, Long Acre, London

The Himalayan Tourist Code

By following these simple guidelines, *you* can help preserve the unique environment and ancient cultures of the Himalaya

PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- **Limit deforestation – make no open fires** and discourage others from doing so on your behalf. Where water is heated by scarce firewood, use as little as possible. When possible choose accommodation which uses kerosene or fuel-efficient wood stoves.
- **Remove litter, burn or bury paper** and carry out all non-degradable litter. Graffiti are permanent examples of environmental pollution
- **Keep local water clean and avoid using pollutants** such as detergents in streams or springs. If no toilet facilities are available, make sure you are at least 30 metres away from water sources, and bury or cover wastes.
- **Plants should be left to flourish in their natural environment** – taking cuttings, seeds and roots is illegal in many parts of the Himalaya.
- **Help your guides and porters to follow conservation measures.**

THE HIMALAYA MAY CHANGE YOU – PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THEM

As a guest, respect local traditions, protect local cultures, maintain local pride.

- **When taking photographs, respect privacy** ask permission, use restraint.
- **Respect holy places** – preserve what you have come to see, never touch or remove religious objects. Shoes should be removed when visiting temples.
- **Giving to children encourages begging** – a donation to a project, health centre or school is a more constructive way to help.
- **You will be accepted and welcomed if you follow local customs** – use only your right hand for eating and greeting. Do not share cutlery or cups, etc. It is polite to use both hands when giving or receiving gifts.
- **Respect for local etiquette earns you respect** – loose, lightweight clothes are preferable to revealing shorts, skimpy and tight fitting *action wear*. Hand holding or kissing in public is disliked by local people.
- **Observe standard food and bed charges** but do not condone over-charging. Remember when you are shopping that the bargains you buy may only be possible because of low income to others.
- **Visitors who value local traditions encourage local pride and maintain cultures**, please help local people gain a *realistic* view of life in Western countries.

BE PATIENT, FRIENDLY AND SENSITIVE. REMEMBER – YOU ARE A GUEST

Equipment List

Ensure you have the appropriate equipment, and use it before your trek. It is essential that you ensure you are comfortable walking all day in your boots in a mountain environment well in advance of departure.

This is a list of suggested equipment you should take with you on trek. Your kitbag will be carried by the porters or pack animals and should not weigh more than 15kg. Any excess baggage charges are the responsibility of the client. You will carry your own daysac containing the items you will need access to during the time spent walking each day. Any luggage not needed on trek can be left at the hotel in Kathmandu, and laundry can be left with the hotel for you to collect on your return.

If you are on a TREKKING PEAKS trip (Pokalde Peak, Yala Peak, Island Peak, Mera Peak and Teng Kongma Peak), there is an additional kit list later in this document.

General note about clothing: At all times of year you should work on the layer principle so you can easily take off or put on layers as temperatures dictate. Several thin layers are better than one thick layer. Clothing in layers traps air and keeps you warmer.

	D		indicates to be carried in daysac during your trek
		H	indicates can be hired – see equipment hire form at back of this document
√			Travel essentials
	D	Passport	must have at least 6 months validity from date of entry (plus a photocopy of the details page, carried separately in case of loss of original)
	D	Airline tickets	Will be left with our staff in Kathmandu for reconfirmation.
	D	Passport photos	For visa and a couple of photos may be needed during your travels
	D	Completed visa form	If you wish to obtain your visa on arrival at Kathmandu airport
	D	Insurance documents	
	D	Spending money	Refer to trip itinerary and the money section of "Preparing for your trek"
	D	Credit card	For emergency rescue payments
			Clothing – essential items
		Walking boots	Good, well broken in waterproof boots with ankle support. Wear them on the plane!
	D	Waterproof jacket	Breathable, and with a hood
	D	Waterproof trousers	
	D	Sun hat	with broad brim
	D	Hat - Woollen or fleece hat	
	D	2 pairs gloves or warm insulated mittens	
		2-3 short-sleeved thermal tops	Take thermal or coolmax t-shirts instead of cotton as they dry quicker. Merino wool is also excellent, and doesn't smell even after several days of trekking.
		2-3 long-sleeved thermal tops / shirts	As above. Recommend at least 1 zip-necked thermal long-sleeved top.
		2 fleece jackets	ideally windproof
		2 pairs of loose fitting walking trousers	not jeans, as once wet are hard to dry
		3 pairs thick walking socks	
		Underwear	
			Clothing – optional items
	H	Down jacket	recommended for trips above 4,000m, especially from October - February
		Gaiters	
		Trainers or trekking sandals	to change into at the end of the day
		Thermal long johns and vest	
		Shorts	knee length for women (please note that local women don't wear shorts. Also, on the low-caste local men or those doing menial chores wear shorts. To be culturally sensitive we would recommend that women avoid wearing shorts in the villages / cities).
		Loose-fitting long skirt / wrap around skirt or sarong for women	
		Swimming costume	may be useful in some hotels
		Casual clothes for travelling	
			Equipment – essential items
		Kitbag approx 80 litres	Kitbags are easier for portage than rucsacs. CAT kitbags can be bought cheaply from the office
	D	Comfortable daysac for walking	25 – 30 litres
	H	4 or 5 season sleeping bag	5 season bag recommended for treks above 4500m.
	H	Sleeping bag liner	Silk is the best. Fleece liners also add a lot of warmth, and can be bought cheaply in Nepal.
	D	2 x 1 litre strong water bottles	you need to drink much more at altitude. The best bottles to use are the wide-mouthed Nalgene plastic bottles as they are completely waterproof and are much easier for the crew to fill with boiling water than narrow-necked metal bottles. They don't freeze as easily as metal bottles, and if they do freeze it is usually still possible to drink water as the ice doesn't block the whole of the neck when you drink. Fill them up with boiled water at dinner time, take them to bed as a hot water bottle or dry your socks on them overnight, and by morning you have water cooled ready to drink on trek. Water bladders are also ok, but don't use them as hot water bottles.

	D	Sun glasses	
	D	Money pouch or belt for valuables	
	D	Head torch with spare batteries	
	D	Zip up plastic bags for toilet paper, rubbish etc	
	D	Suntan lotion & lip protection	(Factor 15+)
	D	Antibacterial handwash	
	D	Toilet paper	
	D	Penknife	but put this in your kitbag for all flights
	D	Small personal first aid kit	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plasters• Blister pack• Antiseptic wipes and cream• Painkillers: paracetamol, aspirin or ibuprofen• Tubigrip or compression bandage• Iodine or water purification tablets (We provide safe drinking water which has been boiled on trek, but pack some of these in case you run out of the water we have given you). (Vitamin C soluble tablets can be used to remove unpleasant taste from treated water but you need to wait for the purification to take effect first).• 'Dioralyte' or similar rehydration powder sachets• Cold remedy / decongestants / throat lozenges• 2 courses of broad spectrum antibiotics of which one should be Ciprofloxacin (available on prescription from your GP, but to be taken only if required and in consultation with your Sirdar or trek leader).• Diamox (for altitude problems – available on prescription from your GP, but to be taken only if required and in consultation with your trek leader)• Repair kit (sewing kit, duct tape, spare laces)
	D	Snacks	dried fruit is particularly good at altitude
		Personal toiletries	
		Small quick-drying towel	available from outdoor/camping shops
		Small padlocks for kitbag / left luggage	
Equipment – optional items			
	D	Trekking poles	Most people find 2 poles better than 1.
		Inflatable mattress	Foam sleeping mats are provided. For extra comfort you may wish to bring your own blow up 'thermarest' type mat.
	D	Camera, spare batteries, memory cards & charger	With memory cards and batteries kept in sealable bag to keep out dust
		Phone & charger	For organising that lift home when you get back to the UK!
		Travel adapter plug	2 pin European style
		Reading book / diary / pen / cards	For those evenings in the mess tent
		Small bag	To leave travel clothing in the hotel during the trek
		Assorted drybags or strong plastic bags	the roll-top bags sold in outdoor shops are excellent and way to keep your kit organised and dry
		Elasticated washing line	or piece of string and clothes pegs – to dry your smalls!
		Flannel	helps for washing from a bowl
		Ear plugs	
		Anti-malarials & insect repellent	If going on the jungle tour extension to Chitwan National Park

Equipment marked **H** is available to hire for our trips in Nepal. The equipment will be provided once you are in Kathmandu so you won't have to fly with on your international flights. See equipment hire booking form

If you are not a regular hiker you may find you do not have many of the items above. Rather than going out and purchasing a lot of gear you may not use again, why not try and borrow some of the items from your hiking friends? If you have time in Kathmandu before your trek you may be able to buy or hire some of these items quite cheaply in Kathmandu.

The most difficult to reliably acquire in Kathmandu is suitable trekking or climbing boots for Western-sized feet. It is always worth considering wearing your boots on your outbound flights – arriving in Kathmandu without them could have serious implications on your trip.

Suppliers: There are many excellent outdoor retailers. The following companies are just some that offer good advice, a good range and a mail order facility.

Cotswold Discount: Cotswold is a UK-wide chain of outdoor equipment shops, and also an on-line shop. They have generously offered a **15% discount** to Community Action Treks clients – details will be sent to you with the confirmation of your booking.

Cotswold tel. 0844 557 7755
Field & Trek tel. 0844 800 1001
Field & Trek tel. 0844 800 1001
Needlesports tel. 017687 72227

www.cotswoldoutdoor.com
www.fieldandtrek.com
www.fieldandtrek.com
<http://www.needlesports.com/index.php>

Additional insurance and equipment requirements for Trekking Peak trips

Trekking Peak trips include the following peaks: Yala Peak, Island Peak, Mera Peak and Teng Kongma Peak. For Pokalde Peak see note below.

Insurance

Please ensure you are covered to the height you hope to achieve and that they are aware that you will be using ropes, crampons and other climbing equipment.

Additional equipment

In addition to the general equipment list for trekking, the following items will be required for a peak. (Please note: conditions in the Himalayas are constantly changing; the list below represents the equipment necessary to attempt a climb in any reasonable condition. If the snow and the weather is exceptionally good, certain pieces of equipment may not be needed on the day). You will need a 45-50 litre daysac to carry all the equipment you will need on the higher days.

	D		indicates to be carried in daysac during your trek	
		H	indicates can be hired – see equipment hire form at back of this document	
Essential additional clothing for Trekking Peaks				
			Essentially, your clothing system should keep out moisture, wind and cold, and should “wick” away the sweat. To this end you will need a thermal element, a windproof and waterproof element (or the alternative Buffalo system which works very well at altitude), in a combination that offers you a degree of versatility. Remember that you will be starting out on your climb in freezing conditions (possibly down to minus 25 degrees C), but as soon as the sun rises the temperature will rapidly increase. It is important to realise that you need not buy the most expensive, top of the range Goretex clothing to be safe and warm on the mountain, although you must be sure that whatever you do buy is good quality and will not fail under quite extreme conditions. A suggested combination of protective and thermal layers:	
			Base layer	thermal underwear (including long johns) and maybe a light fleece
			Mid layer	fleece to provide the bulk of the warmth
			Shell	probably Goretex, but any hardwearing waterproof/windproof/breathable jacket and trousers (salopettes are even better) will suffice.
		H	Down Jacket	essential for trekking peaks
			Thermal inner gloves	provide extra warmth and versatility on the mountain. Essential when taking those early morning photographs when exposure to the cold, even for a minute or two, could be dangerous
	D		2 pairs good quality mountain gloves	Mitts are warmer than gloves.
	D		Warm hat and balaclava	
Essential extra equipment for Trekking Peaks				
			Boots	these must be suitable for all-day crampon use and must be warm and waterproof. For the easier, less technical climbs, a good quality 4 season boot may be used for the trek and the climb, but on the more serious peaks full specification plastic, or the new generation lightweight leather, mountaineering boots must be taken. Generally, proper mountaineering boots will be best suited to any of our trekking peaks.
		H	Sleeping bag	5 season or expedition quality with a comfort rating of -15 to -20 degrees C.
	D	H	Crampons	Essential for all of our trekking peaks, and must have front points. It is important to match your boots and crampons well, and they must be suitable for all-day use. There are many models to choose from, but you should be looking at walking/mountaineering styles - not technical ice climbing models such as the “foot fangs”.
	D	H	Ice Axe	A reasonably light alpine walking axe at about 55 - 75 cm, with a curved pick and an adze
	D	H	Climbing Harness	Make sure this fits you well with all your mountain clothing on.
	D		2 x screw-gate karabiners	
	D		Prussic Loop	(about 1½ meters of 6mm or 7mm cord from a climbing shop, made into a loop tied with a double fisherman’s bend)

	D		belay/abseil device	Eg a stitch plate or DMM's "Bug"
	D	H	Jumar	(ascender)
	D		Figure of 8	(descender)
	D		240 cm climbing sling	
	D		Helmet	Whilst it is not always strictly necessary to wear helmets, the use of a helmet entirely depends upon the amount of snow or rocks on the peak. If the snow is very old then there is a possibility of snow/rocks rolling down. Obviously it is better to have safety equipment available for use where conditions are variable
	D		Snow goggles or glacier sunglasses	
			Rucksack	In order to carry the extra kit needed for a trekking peak you will need a 45 - 50 litre rucksack

POKALDE PEAK: This is not classed as a technical peak but for safety purposes the following should be read. Plastic boots are not generally necessary for Pokalde Peak, since we follow a non-technical route, however, jumar (ascenders), harness and karabiners are required as a safety measure, however may be necessary dependant upon prevailing weather conditions. Additionally, crampons and ice axes may be needed in case of snow, which of course cannot be predicted. Our Climbing Sirdar / Sherpa will check your the equipment at Namche Bazaar and if necessary, climbing gear can be cheaply hired here with their guidance. A brief training session will be given in the use of this equipment.



COMMUNITY ACTION TREKS LTD

Stewart Hill Cottage, Near Hesket Newmarket, Wigton, Cumbria, CA7 8HX

Tel: 01768 484842

Email: info@catreks.com Web: www.catreks.com



EQUIPMENT HIRE – KATHMANDU BASED TREKS

The following equipment is available to hire for our trips which pass through Kathmandu. The equipment will be provided once you are in Kathmandu so you won't have to fly with it on your international flights.

Please return this form with your final balance, or earlier if you can.

Please print in BLOCK CAPITALS

Name(s):				
Trek title:				
Trek dates:				
* Please refer to the equipment list in the document "Preparing for your trek" to see what equipment is necessary for your trek.				
Item *	Size	£ per week or part week of trek	Quantity required	Total for trek
Sleeping bag (liner included)	N/A	£20		£
Down Jacket	NB: if in doubt, chose a larger size than you would use in the UK as Nepalese sizing is smaller than UK sizes. Ladies please note that sizes are unisex. Please circle: S M L XL	£15		£
Trekking Peak equipment *:				
Walking ice axe	N/A	£5		£
Crampons	N/A	£15		£
Jumar	N/A	£5		£
Harness	Please circle: S M L XL	£15		£
TOTAL ENCLOSED:				£
I acknowledge that I will be liable for any damaged equipment.				
Signed:				

Please return this form, together with a cheque for the full amount made payable to *Community Action Treks Ltd*, to the address shown above.



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Medical Form

Community Action Treks Ltd operate in often extreme and inhospitable terrain and most of our treks demand a fairly high degree of physical fitness and health. Please fill in this form carefully, detailing your medical history. We will treat all information in the strictest confidence and send it to the trek leader and /or doctor / medic who are responsible for your safety and welfare during your trek with us. Once your trek is complete and you have returned to your destination and safety and there is no further need for the information on this form, it will then be destroyed.

If you have a history of any of the following medical conditions, please give details such as frequency, severity and aggravating factors where necessary. If you have had an operation within the last year, whether minor or not we need to know the details of the operation and the outcomes and possible long term problems, particularly ones that may occur or be accentuated if strenuous and physically demanding exercise is taken.

It is the responsibility of each trekker to ensure that he/she is adequately insured for the trek, including activities undertaken, and the altitude. Helicopter rescue and repatriation must be a part of the insurance policy. Pre-existing medical conditions must be declared to the insurance company.

Title and Full Name as it is shown on your passport (please print in CAPITALS)			
Trek:			
Date of Trek:		Height:	
Date of Birth:		Weight:	
Condition	Yes/No	Details (if insufficient room for details, please write on reverse of this sheet)	
High blood pressure			
Heart/circulatory disorders			
Chest/lung disease			
Asthma/hay fever			
Epilepsy/diabetes			
Digestive/bowel disorders			
Joint/ back injuries			
Knee/ hip/ ankle			
Surgical operations			
Mental/emotional problems			
Pregnancy (at the time of the trek)			
Allergies			
Any current medical conditions			
Dietary requirements			

- I understand that I will be undertaking a challenge which requires a good level of fitness and I believe that I am fit enough to complete the challenge and take responsibility for myself under these conditions.
- I declare that the above information is a true and fair representation of my current state of health. Should my circumstances change, I will inform Community Action Treks at the earliest opportunity

Signature **Date**

If you are over 65 or have a pre-existing medical condition, please ask your doctor to sign below to confirm that you are fit enough to undertake the challenge:

We recommend an ECG for participants over the age of 65 at your doctor's discretion

Signature of Doctor **Date**



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Trekking Insurance Information

It is a condition of booking that you have adequate insurance for your trip.

Your insurance must cover you for

- the entire period of travel
- the activities* and the altitude you are going to
- for helicopter rescue and repatriation.

- You should also notify the insurance company of all pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that many insurance companies do not cover these requirements. There are a few insurance companies that specialise in insurance policies suitable for trekking expeditions. If your current travel insurance company cannot provide you with a suitable policy, please contact us for further information. We recommend that you also have insurance for cancellation and personal baggage. Once you have arranged your insurance, please complete this insurance declaration form, and return it to us as soon as possible.

*Trekking Peak Insurance: If you have booked onto one of our Trekking Peak trips (Yala Peak, Island Peak, Mera Peak, Teng Kongma Peak or Pokalde Peak) please ensure you are covered to the height you hope to achieve and that they are aware that you will be using ropes, crampons and other climbing equipment.

Name:	
Trip Title:	
Trip code or group name:	
Land-only dates:	
Insurance company:	
Insurance policy number:	
Insurance company general telephone number:	
Insurance company emergency international assistance telephone number:	
I understand that responsibility for the payment of all bills incurred for rescue and repatriation lies ultimately with myself, the client in the event of the insurance company not paying for them. I am responsible for ensuring that these payments can be met as outlined in the Booking Conditions.	
Signature:	
Date:	

VISA APPLICATION FORM FOR
NEPAL

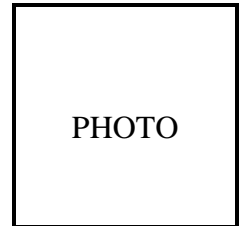
EMBASSY OF NEPAL
VISA SECTION
12A, KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS
LONDON W8 4QU

TEL: 020 7229 1594
FAX: 0207 7792 9861
OPENING: MON – FRI
10AM – 12NOON

PLEASE READ GENERAL INFORMATION BEFORE FILLING THIS FORM AND SEND ALONG WITH YOUR ORIGINAL PASSPORT.

PLEASE FILL THIS FORM IN BLOCK LETTER.

01. NAME (MR/MRS/MISS): _____
02. NATIONALITY: _____ 03. OCCUPATION: _____
04. DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: _____
05. ADDRESS: _____



TEL (RES) _____ TEL (WORK) _____
06. PASSPORT NO: _____ 07. ISSUED AT: _____
08. DATE OF ISSUE: _____ 09. DATE OF EXPIRY: _____
10. EXPECTED DATE OF ARRIVAL IN NEPAL: _____
11. DURATION OF STAY IN NEPAL: _____
12. ADDRESS IN NEPAL: _____
13. PURPOSE OF VISIT: HOLIDAY/ TREKKING/ MOUNTAINEERING/ OTHERS
14. DATE (S) OF PREVIOUS VISIT (S) TO NEPAL, IF ANY: _____

15. ACCOMPANYING CHILD(REN) OR WIFE INCLUDING IN THE PASSPORT WHO REQUIRE VISA:
A) NAME: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: _____ SEX: _____
B) NAME: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: _____ SEX: _____
16. TYPE OF VISA: A) DIPLOMATIC B) OFFICIAL C) TOURIST
17. MULTIPLE ENTRY VISA A) 15 DAYS B) 30 DAYS C) 90 DAYS
18. IF YOU ARE RE-APPLYING WITHIN THE CURRENT VISA YEAR, PLEASE MENTION YOUR LAST
DATE OF ENTRY INTO NEPAL: _____

DATE: _____ SINGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____

FOR OFFICIAL USE

Category of visa: _____ Signature of Visa officer: _____
Date: _____ Serial & Sticker No.: _____
Remark: _____