

# The Responsible Travellers



The Responsible Travellers is a non commercial organisation specialising in travel within the Himalaya. The company's primary objective is to encourage travel to this remote area of the world and thereby generate "aid through trade" and income for charitable projects which support environmental and educational development in Nepal. We can therefore offer our clients a rare and unique opportunity to visit this spectacular Himalayan Kingdom knowing that all profits generated will be invested in local charitable projects. Whether it is trekking amongst the splendid mountain peaks, an elephant safari in the jungle or an enriching cultural experience, Nepal is the ultimate travel destination, and The Responsible Travellers are the very essence of responsible & ethical tourism. As well as the scheduled departures, we specialise in offering tailor made holidays and experiences. These may be independent trips, charity or corporate challenge events, bespoke groups, school field trips or gap year experiences

## **Our Ethics:**

When you travel with The Responsible Travellers you benefit and so does the local community:

- ✓ We are a non commercial organisation donating 100% of profits to Charitable Projects.
- ✓ We will pay the cost to Carbon Balance your international flights
- ✓ Through a committed Environmental Policy we work to ensure minimal impact of our activities
- ✓ Our fair and simple Pricing Policy has no extra fees or land charges – price us up against other companies!
- ✓ We have a fair and ethical Employment Policy which is committed to employing local staff and paying fair wages

## **Our People:**

You can also depend on our experience and professional expertise. Our Directors have a combination of Travel Industry, Charity and Global Corporate backgrounds. We are able to combine these skills to create a highly professional and experienced team. Equally, we take our responsibilities seriously when looking after you in the mountains. The trekking staffs have all been working in the industry for up to 20 years plus. Our Group Leaders attend professional trainings with the Nepal Mountaineering Association and for Mountain Leadership and Mountain Safety & first aid training provided by KEEP (Kathmandu Environmental Education Project is a registered non-governmental organization, working to support sustainable tourism in Nepal). We pride ourselves on paying wages higher than commercial organisations and limit the loads that our porter staffs carry. Equally the assistant Sherpa staffs receive training in English language and eco-trekking. You can read more about our employment policies and relationships with KEEP and other charities on the website: at [www.theresponsibletravellers.com](http://www.theresponsibletravellers.com) and click on Our Ethics.

# Mera Peak & Island Peak Trip Notes Grade D+

## Highlights:

### Mountains

Mera Peak Summit View	Everest
Amphu Labtsa	Ama Dablam
Hinku Valley	Lhotse & Nupste
Cho Oyu	Makalu
	Kangchenjunga

Stunning views, high on altitude and wilderness camps..... Mera Peak is a fabulous remote trek to the highest trekking peak in Nepal. The summit view is an amazing vista with Everest in front of you and views of five of the six highest mountains in the world.

The trip starts with a mountain flight to Lukla, from where we meet our support crew to commence the trek. From here we go south towards Surkhe on this completely off the beaten track itinerary. Passing over the Pangkongma La we get our first views of the mountain as we descend into the Hinku Valley. Here we follow the Hinku Khola along a spectacular path high above this beautiful remote valley, before dropping through rhododendron forest to the valley floor. We spend a couple of days in Tagnang acclimatising before ascending to our base camp at Khare from where we can see our route up the Mera Glacier to the summit. From here we put on our crampons and ascend the glacier, experiencing two more high camps before our summit day. The ascent is not technical apart from a short pitch onto the summit dome, but we will be roped up to avoid crevasses. Summit day will be a long day.

We then continue up the Hongu Valley through wilderness trails to the Amphu Labtsa – a stunning pass which is the gateway into the Chukung Valley and Island Peak base camp. We then attempt our second peak for views of Makalu and Nuptse and the Khumbu beyond.

A descent along the Everest Base camp trails then brings us back to Lukla for a fabulous circuit of the Everest region.

## Detailed Itinerary

### **Day 1: Arrival Kathmandu**

Arrive in Kathmandu (5hrs 45mns ahead of GMT winter time, 4 hrs 45 mins ahead of GMT in the summer).

Transfer to the hotel from the airport. Evening will be spent settling in and relaxing in the hotel, group dinner will be arranged in a restaurant in the evening.

Accommodation: City Hotel Bed & Breakfast

### **Day 2: Equipment check & Briefing**

This morning there will be a full trip briefing by your leader followed by a full equipment check. Following this, you will have the afternoon free to enjoy the hotel facilities or venture around Kathmandu sightseeing & Shopping.

Accommodation: City Hotel Bed & Breakfast

### **Day 3: Mountain Flight to Lukla**

We take the spectacular flight to the mountain airstrip of Lukla early this morning. We will be met by our staff and after making the final preparations we will start the trek to our first camp at Poyan.

Flight time: 30 mins

Altitude: 2800m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

### **Day 4: Pangkongma**

After crossing the Poyan Khola we leave the main trail and climb steeply onto a ridge. The trail descends for a while from here then as we contour around, we steadily climb up to the village of Pangkongma.

Altitude: 2846m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

### **Day 5: Nasing Dingma**

The morning is a steady climb through forests of rhododendron and bamboo to Pangkongmala. We will view Mera Peak for the first time and Naulekh from the pass. We descend steeply from here to cross the Hinku River, then climb up to Nashing Dingma, our camp for the day.

Altitude: 2600m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

### **Day 6: Chalem Kharka**

We go over another pass again this morning. We steadily gain altitude and the climb becomes steeper as we ascend the Surke la pass. A tea stop in a tea shop here will be a welcome break before we commence with our trek to Chalem Kharka. You will start to feel the altitude today.

Altitude: 3600m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

### **Day 7: Chunbu Kharka**

We continue climbing from the camp and as we leave the treeline. The vegetation turns to scrubby yak pasture. From the col here we get excellent view of Kangchenjunga, the third highest peak in the world, and the pointed peak of Jannu looking east. Kangchenjunga was known to be the highest until Everest was discovered in 1852. We steadily ascent from here to the lakes of Panch Pokhari, then descend down to Chunbu Kharka camp.

Altitude: 4200m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

### **Day 8: Kote**

Leaving Chunbu Kharka the trail contours around to begin with, then we descend steeply through varying landscape and vegetation all day right down to the valley floor. At Kote you will witness the devastation wrought in 1998 when a glacial lake broke and brought down a massive surge of water and debris.

Altitude: 3550m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

### **Day 9: Thangnak**

We start the day following the boulder strewn valley floor and cross the river onto the grassy riverbank. Walking becomes more pleasant now along the valley floor in the shadow of Kusum Kanguru to Thangnak.

Altitude: 4300m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 10: Dig Kharka**

Today is a short day to Dig Kharka. The trail turns east toward the mountains steadily ascending for about three hours to camp for lunch. The afternoon may be spent resting and acclimatizing, or you may walk up the moraine for great view of the north face of Mera.

Altitude: 4650m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 11 & 12: Khare**

We will have another short day today to Khare gaining just over 300m to help us acclimatize better in this initial stage of the climb. After lunch in the afternoon we will walk up to the glacier and practice walking on crampons and ice axe techniques.

On our acclimatization day we shall have further time on the glacier, so we will spend the day practicing essential skills preparing for the final climb.

Altitude: 5000m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 13: Mera La**

Today for the first time our trek will be on ice as we ascend the glacier to Mera La at 5400m. We descend a little and camp just below the pass. This is a fantastic location with great views.

Altitude: 5300m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 14: High Camp**

The climb to High Camp goes up from the pass, then after the crevasses the climb becomes steeper just as we arrive at the rocky outcrop at 5800m where camp is set. The view is great from here of five of the 8000m peaks in Nepal. We will retire after the final preparation this evening for an early start tomorrow.

Altitude: 5800m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 15: Summit Day**

We will start very early in the dark as it will be a long day and to avoid windy and unpleasant conditions that can start late morning/early afternoon. There are three peaks of Mera and ours will be central, the highest of them. It is a gradual ascent to begin with, avoiding crevasses, then the climb gets steeper as we ascend on a ridge, then a final steep push will summit us the peak at 6476m. You will be well rewarded by the stunningly beautiful 360 degree panorama from here including five of the six highest peaks in the world. Cho Oyu, Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and Kangchenjunga. We will descend via the same route past High Camp to base at Khare.

Altitude: 5000m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 16: Trek down to Hongu Valley**

We descend from camp after a good night rest down to the Hinku River. Then following the river we pass a lake to today's camp, a spectacular lakeside location.

Altitude: 5000m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 17: Trek up the Hongu Valley**

We continue up this glacial valley following the river with Chamlang towering above us, we then trek along the glacier to the camp at the holy site of Panch Pokhari. We have three hundred and sixty degree view of great mountains around us looking up to Amphu Labtsa Pass.

Altitude: 5,400m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 18: Rest day**

We will have rest day before the next ascend whilst the staff make preparation for the technical descend of Amphu Labtsa.

Altitude: 5,400m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 19: The Amphu Labtsa (5,780m)**

The ascend is Amphu Labtsa is an interesting traverse of scree slopes and glacier. We trek along a fantastic icefall to the crest of the pass at 5780m. Here we have stunning views of Island Peak, Lhotse and Nuptse looming over the Imja Valley. The descent down to the valley is steep with a section that we negotiate by abseiling; looking back it will be quite an awesome feeling. We carry on descending on moraine to camp beside the Imaja Glacier.

Altitude: 5,000m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 20: Rest day at Island Peak Base Camp**

Today is a rest day, however it can also be a contingency day in case of delay or impeding weather.

Altitude: 5,000m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 21: High camp**

We start the climb towards our mountain today to camp at High Camp. The climb is quite gentle to begin with, followed by a steep climb on scree like slope, then high altitude pasture towards a rocky gully below which we will make high camp.

Altitude: 5,600m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day22: Island Peak Ascent**

Early start up the rocky gully that involves some scrambling followed by few more scramble stretches. Then we follow the ridge that becomes quite exposed till we get to the glacier. There are crevasses here that we will negotiate with the help of ropes, then after a steep climb on fixed ropes we follow a sharp ridge to the summit **6,189m/20,305ft**. We will descend all the way back to Base Camp.

Altitude: 5,000m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day23: Spare summit day**

Spare/contingency day or exploration day in case of delays or weather, or even rest day.

Altitude: 5,000m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day24: Pangboche**

The trail crosses over moraines until we reach the village of Chukung, then following the river we descend to Dingboche. Under the shadows of Ama Dablam the valley narrows through Shomare to reach our destination of Pangboche.

Altitude: 4,000m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day 25: Namche Bazaar**

After a gradual descent we cross the river then passing through Devoche we enter the forest through which we climb up to Thyangboche Monastery. A long descend from here brings us to cross the river again then after about an hours climb will get us to Kyangjuma with great view of Ama Dablam. The trail now traverses for about two hrs to Namche.

Altitude: 3,440m

Accommodation: Fully catered tented camp

**Day26: Lukla:**

The day begins with a steep descend for about an hour to cross a very high bridge over the Dudh Koshi. The trail from here undulates with some short steep climbs passing through several Sherpa villages to Lukla. Tonight we celebrate the completion of the trip and say farewell to the staff.

Altitude: 2,800m

Accommodation: Teahouse

**Day27: Fly to Kathmandu**

Morning flight to Kathmandu and the rest of the afternoon is free to explore the sights and sounds of the valley.

**Day 28: Depart Kathmandu**

Today you have complimentary airport transfers for your international departing flight.

Optional activities are available during the day for those with late flights.

**Should you wish to extend your stay in Nepal please review the optional extra excursions online at [www.theresponsibletravellers.com](http://www.theresponsibletravellers.com) and go to our destinations and click on extensions.**

**Additional Information*****Please Note costs include:***

- ✓ Carbon Balancing for international flights to Kathmandu
- ✓ 3 nights city hotel bed & breakfast accommodation
- ✓ 24 nights fully catered tented camp on trek
- ✓ All transportation included in the itinerary whilst in Nepal
- ✓ Internal return flight from Kathmandu to Lukla
- ✓ Porterage and guides fees
- ✓ National Park Entrance fees
- ✓ NMA Climbing Permits

***Not included:***

- International flights & airport taxes to Kathmandu (international airport tax leaving Kathmandu - approx £15)
- All meals (other than breakfast whilst in Kathmandu)
- Incidental extra personal expenses
- Staff tips
- Nepal Tourist Entry Visa (\$30)
- Single persons supplement
- Additional sightseeing not specified in the itinerary
- Travel Insurance

**Single Person Supplement:** the costs are based on two people sharing a twin room/tent. Should you require a single room/tent a supplement of £150 will be levied.

**Flight Information:** Our trips are land only and operate Kathmandu to Kathmandu (please see trip notes for specific details). Given our clients come from a variety of locations around the world we are able to help you source flights but we do not purchase on your behalf. We also prefer to give you the option to add extensions or create a tailor made trip and therefore have the

flexibility of flights at your own convenience. Please contact us if you want advice about flight options and how to purchase.

**Insurance:** It is compulsory to take full holiday insurance which covers trekking to the maximum altitude of your trek/trip, and also covers full rescue and repatriation costs. You will need to provide a copy of your insurance details, including an emergency 24 hour telephone number to the trek leader before departing Kathmandu. This should include any correspondence stating clarification of the required cover. If your policy documents are not available or prove to provide insufficient cover you may not be able to continue your trip. Please ensure that your policy also covers any extra activity outside of the stated itinerary you wish to do if you are extending your trip.

**Passport:** Passports need to be valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of visa application if you are applying in the UK and from the date of entry into Nepal.

**Visa Details:** Visas are available in advance from the Nepal Embassy for approx. £20. A link to the website is below:

[http://www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa\\_information.html](http://www.nepembassy.org.uk/visa_information.html)

You can also have the visa processed at Kathmandu airport. If you intend to wait until your arrival at the airport please remember to bring two passport photos and US\$30 dollars in cash (N.B US dollars - is the only accepted payment).

**Vaccinations:** We strongly recommend you to take advice from your local GP travel clinic regarding required vaccinations.

**Money:** The local currency is Nepali Rupees (approx exchange rate 120 NRS - £1 – subject to daily fluctuation) Please note this can not be purchased in the UK. It is advised to take either sterling or US Dollars. Traveller's cheques and cash can be exchanged for local currency in Kathmandu. Credit cards are not generally accepted. In Kathmandu there are ATMs available to access cash via Cirrus / MasterCard / Visa cards.

**Baggage, Equipment Hire & Purchase :** If trekking you should use a Rucksack or Kit bag that is strong enough to withstand the rigors of transportation in the mountains. Suitcases or rigid bags can not be used as these are a difficult and awkward load for porters and pack animals. If you are taking an internal flight 15kgs is the limitation for luggage on this flight including day sack. As a responsible employer we have a strict policy to limit the porter loads. Please help us to maintain standards by restricting your kit bag to 12.5kg. Many items are available in Kathmandu for purchase at lower cost than in the UK e.g. sleeping bag liners, trekking trousers, down jackets & sleeping bags. Please contact us at least 1 month before departure with any queries regarding kit hires or purchases you may wish to make.

**Itinerary:** All that is possible will be done to ensure the trip follows the outlined itinerary. However, due to factors beyond our control such as local weather, politics and airlines it may be necessary to vary one or more of the days. If this does occur we shall do our utmost to ensure minimal impact to you.

**Staff:** All staff are specially selected and hired locally, the trek Leader will be an experienced professional leader working full time in the Himalayas & Central Asia. As a responsible employer we pride ourselves on paying wages higher than commercial organisations. We also have high standards limiting the loads our porters carry.

**Group Size:** Due to the remote locations that are visited, we remain sympathetic to the local culture and environment by limiting our trips to a maximum of 12 places. This may be slightly smaller than other operators, and we believe it ensures the maximum enjoyment and fulfilment

of our trip members by giving the opportunity to absorb the local culture more easily. This also avoids the feeling of “herding” from being part of a large group. There is a minimum of 6 to operate the trek.

**Preparation and Training:** This is a high altitude peak ascent and previous experience at altitude and in the mountains is necessary. It is imperative that you are in good physical fitness and in good health for this trip. You may need to train in order to be fully prepared for the trip. Please remember you will be travelling to the Himalayas, this is a remote destination where the way of life is very different. You should be prepared for facilities and services appropriate for the local conditions and not equivalent to Western standards.

**Sponsorship:** You may choose to take this opportunity to raise sponsorship for one of our affiliated charities, If you wish to do so please contact us at: [info@theresponsibletravellers.com](mailto:info@theresponsibletravellers.com) and we will forward details to you.

**Further Information:** If you have any queries regarding this trip, whether it is about preparation, the itinerary or general travel information please do not hesitate to contact us. If this trip is not for you perhaps you would like to contact us for details of alternative trips. All our trips and additional extensions can be viewed online at: [www.theresponsibletravellers.com](http://www.theresponsibletravellers.com) or write to us at [info@theresponsibletravellers.com](mailto:info@theresponsibletravellers.com), or by post at PO Box 20878, Kathmandu, Nepal.

## More about our charity work.....

Here at The Responsible Travellers we take great pride in the fact that we are **doing the right thing** by you our customers, by our staff, and by the people, country and environment in which we operate.

We believe actions speak louder than words, over the next page you can read how our ethics are put into practice.

**Before you go....** We start to take responsibility for your trip by carbon balancing your flights. The impact on climate change from the way in which we live today is a topic we have all heard about, and is under much debate from the world’s scientific community. This is something that we can not and should not ignore. We work to calculate the carbon emissions generated from your flights, and invest in both reforestation and renewable energy resources in order to offset the carbon emissions of your trip. For example in the Terai region of Nepal, WWF have identified critical areas suffering from forest degradation. Projects such as biogas plants (converting human & animal solid waste to gas) provide alternative renewable fuel resources. Travel with peace of mind with The Responsible Travellers

**Whilst you are there....** Our Employment and environmental policies demonstrate our continued sense of responsibility. Firstly, our belief in aid through trade and therefore the generation of local employment and how this is managed is at the very heart of our operation. This is why we have a 100% commitment to employing only local staff. Our customers benefit from this by being able to get closer to the culture and learn more from the experience in the Himalayas, travelling with those who are born and bred in the area. By employing this policy we are also ensuring that the local economy benefits as much as possible rather than commercial organisations. We take great pride in ensuring fair wages to all our local staff and protecting our porters from exploitation. Secondly, our environmental policy addresses waste management, water usage, and encourages and supports the use of renewable resources. In addition, we work closely with the Nepal Sustainable Tourism Development Unit and WWF to ensure the strongest



commitment to the local environment. Read more at: [www.theresponsibletravellers.com](http://www.theresponsibletravellers.com) and click on our ethics.

**After you've gone.....** The Responsible Travellers donates all profits from its travel operations to charitable projects in Nepal. We believe the most effective way to invest is with the help of specialist organisations. Our partner charities and areas of investment include:

Education: We believe all development starts with educating the people. We support community education programmes, child sponsorship, and interest free loans for adult education through our beneficiary charities: CHANCE & Save the Children.

Community Development: In association with local charity KEEP (Kathmandu Environmental Education Project) we help communities to provide themselves with improved facilities and encourage this to be done in an environmentally friendly way. Our volunteer programs allow visitors to experience this first hand when they opt for a family home stay and participate in the community project holidays.

Re-Forestation & Renewable Resources: The WWF estimate that only 29% of the original forest covers in Nepal still remains. Between 1990 and 2005, Nepal lost 1.2 million hectares of forest. We support the work of WWF which helps the communities re-instate the forest environment and woodland habitats and provide alternative energy sources.

Our commitment to **Doing the Right Thing** extends from investing in local charitable projects, to making sure that our customers also get a good deal.

To help you have a hassle free holiday, we provide a fair and simple **pricing policy**:

- ✓ We charge a fair price: to make sure the holiday is as satisfying as possible; we charge what we believe is a fair price, not what we can get away with – compare us to other companies!
- ✓ No extra land charges or hidden fees: To keep life simple we make a single charge
- ✓ No profiteering from single supplements: we charge a fair price based on cost & do not charge excessive premiums for single supplements
- ✓ No nagging for donations: We do not request charitable donations from you in order to justify our responsible tourism policy. We work hard on your behalf so you can just concentrate on having a great time!

The choice is easy when you are...

.....Doing the right thing