

Gokyo Lakes and Cho La to Everest Base Camp

Before you go · last checked on 15 October 2026

At a glance

Days	17 days, Kathmandu to Kathmandu
Highest point	5,644 m (Kala Patthar)
Grade	Challenging
Starts	Kathmandu
Ends	Kathmandu
Best season	Spring and Autumn
Sleeping	Family lodges (teahouses)

Is this walk for you?

It suits you if:

- You have trekked at altitude before, or are fit and patient.
- You want Everest Base Camp but also the quieter side of the Khumbu.
- You can walk 7 to 8 hours on rough ground at high altitude.
- You have 17 days and some spare time for weather.

Think twice if:

- It is your first trek at altitude: start with Gokyo or Everest Base Camp alone.
- You do not like steep, rocky ground and a little ice.
- You have only two weeks.
- You have heart or lung problems at altitude; please ask me first.

The honest downsides

- The Cho La has a small glacier on its east side: icy in the morning, and in snow it may be closed.
- The pass day is long and hard, at high altitude.
- Gorak Shep and Lobuche are cold, crowded and expensive in season.
- Lukla flights are often delayed by weather.
- Altitude sickness is a real risk above 4,500 m; we go down at once if it comes.

When to walk it

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cold	Cold	Good	Best	Best	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Best	Best	Cold

In winter and early spring the Cho La can be closed by snow. In the monsoon the views are hidden and flights to Lukla are often cancelled.

Permits and papers

Two permits are needed: the Sagarmatha National Park entry permit and the Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality permit.

The park permit is bought at the Nepal Tourism Board in Kathmandu or at the park entrance in Monjo. The municipality permit is bought in Lukla. Both are paid at the official price, and I arrange them with you.

Carry your passport. Both permits are checked at Monjo and on the trail.

- ☐ Passport, valid for at least six months, and a copy
- ☐ Your Nepal visa
- ☐ Passport photos for the permits
- ☐ Travel insurance that covers trekking at this altitude and helicopter rescue

For your budget

My guide fee for this walk is about \$ 35 a day, the same for 1 to 5 people.

A porter, if you hire one: about the same as a guide's day rate. Permits, transport, rooms and meals are paid separately, at cost.

What	Paid to	About	Note
Guide (me)	Rujan Neupane	My day rate × 17 days	One rate for 1 to 5 people
Sagarmatha National Park permit	Sagarmatha National Park	Official price	Paid at cost
Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality permit	The local municipality	Official price	Paid at cost in Lukla
Lukla flights	The airline	The airline's fare	You pay the airline, at cost
Microspikes for the pass, if needed	A shop in Kathmandu or Namche	Rent or buy	Paid at cost
Porter, if you want one	The porter	His day rate	Paid to him
Lodges and meals	Family lodges on the trail	What the lodge charges	You pay the lodges directly; I never add anything

What to pack

Challenging Trek Packing List

CHALLENGING GRADE TREKKING PACKING LIST

General

- ☐ Duffel bag: 75L–90L heavy-duty waterproof PVC duffel
- ☐ Daypack: 30L–40L technical pack with rain cover
- ☐ Sleeping bag: 4-Season down bag (rated to -15°C to -20°C)
- ☐ Trekking poles: Heavy-duty collapsible poles with mud/snow baskets
- ☐ Headlamp: 300+ lumen headlamp with red-light mode
- ☐ Water gear: 2x 1L Nalgene wide-mouth bottles + insulated jackets
- ☐ Water purification: Chlorine dioxide tablets & Steripen UV backup

Head & Face

- ☐ Sun hat & Warm beanie: Wide-brim cap & high-loft wool beanie

- ☐ Glacier glasses: Category 3 or 4 UV400 eyewear with side shields
- ☐ Buffs: 2x Neck gaiters (1 thermal fleece, 1 lightweight)
- ☐ Sun care: High-altitude SPF 50+ sunscreen & SPF 30+ lip balm

Upper Body

- ☐ Base layers: 3x Heavyweight Merino wool long-sleeve thermals
- ☐ Mid-layer: Technical grid fleece or hybrid jacket
- ☐ Down jacket: Heavyweight 800+ fill-power insulated down parka
- ☐ Hard shell: Gore-Tex 3-layer fully waterproof jacket

Hand & Lower Body

- ☐ Gloves: 1x Liner gloves + 1x Heavy waterproof mountaineering gloves
- ☐ Base layer bottoms: 2x Thermal merino tights
- ☐ Trekking trousers: 2x Technical softshell pants
- ☐ Shell pants: Waterproof hard shell pants with side zips

Footwear & Technical

- ☐ Boots: High-ankle waterproof mountain trekking boots
- ☐ Traction: Microspikes / 12-spike crampons for glacier ice
- ☐ Camp shoes: Insulated slip-ons or lightweight camp shoes
- ☐ Socks & Gaiters: 5x Heavy merino socks, liner socks, & ankle gaiters

Backpack, Electronics & Care

- ☐ Docs & Cash: Waterproof pouch for permits, insurance, & local cash
- ☐ Electronics: 20,000+ mAh power bank & universal adapters
- ☐ Toiletries: Biodegradable wet wipes, toilet paper, & hand sanitizer
- ☐ Medical: Altitude meds (Diamox), comprehensive first aid, & blister kit

High pass extras

Added to the main list on treks that cross a high pass.

For the pass day

- ☐ Warm down jacket, worn from the start in the dark
- ☐ Thick waterproof gloves, and thin gloves under them
- ☐ Warm hat and a buff for the wind
- ☐ Thermal layer for the night before at the high camp

Snow and ice

- ☐ Microspikes, in winter and early spring
- ☐ Gaiters, when there is snow on the trail
- ☐ Trekking poles for the long descent

The early start

- ☐ Headlamp with fresh batteries, and spare batteries kept warm
- ☐ Water bottle in an insulated cover or inside your jacket (tubes freeze)
- ☐ Snacks you can eat with gloves on

Sun and wind up high

- ☐ Dark sunglasses (category 3 or 4) for snow
- ☐ Sunscreen SPF 50 and lip balm
- ☐ A scarf or buff for dust on the far side