

Jiri to Everest Base Camp Trek: the Pioneers' Route

Before you go · last checked on 14 October 2026

At a glance

Days	21 days, Kathmandu to Kathmandu
Highest point	5,545 m (Kala Patthar)
Grade	Strenuous
Starts	Kathmandu
Ends	Kathmandu
Best season	Spring and Autumn
Sleeping	Tea House / Lodge

Is this walk for you?

It suits you if:

- You have three weeks and want to walk all the way in.
- You want quiet hills and villages before the busy Khumbu trail.
- You can walk 6 to 8 hours a day, with long climbs and descents.
- You would rather not fly into Lukla.

Think twice if:

- You have less than three weeks: the classic route from Lukla is shorter.
- You dislike long up-and-down days.
- You want comfortable lodges all the way: the Solu lodges are simple.
- You have heart or lung problems at altitude; please ask me first.

The honest downsides

- Long: about three weeks, with big climbs and descents in the first week.
- The drive to Shivalaya is long and rough.
- Lodges in the Solu hills are simple; the Khumbu is busy in season.
- The flight out of Lukla depends on the weather.
- Above Namche it is high and cold; altitude needs respect.

When to walk it

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

The Solu hills are quiet all year; the Khumbu part is busiest in October and April.

Permits and papers

Three permits or fees are needed, each at the official price: the Gaurishankar Conservation Area permit for the first days from Jiri, the Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality fee, and the Sagarmatha National Park permit. I arrange them with you; carry your passport, they are checked 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 × 21 days	One rate for 1 to 5 people
Gaurishankar Conservation Area permit	The conservation area	Official price	Paid at cost
Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality fee	The municipality	Official price	Paid at cost
Sagarmatha National Park permit	The national park	Official price	Paid at cost
Jeep or bus to Shivalaya	The jeep owners or bus	Agreed before the trek	Paid at cost
Flight Lukla–Kathmandu	The airline	The airline's fare	You pay the airline, at cost
Porter, if you want one	The porter	His day rate	Paid to him
Lodges, homestays and meals	Families on the trail	What they charge	You pay them directly; I never add anything

What to pack

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

STRENUOUS GRADE PACKING LIST

For extreme technical trekking, severe sub-zero environments, peaks above 5500m, and unassisted crossings.

General

- ☐ Duffel bag: 90L+ Ultra-durable waterproof expedition duffel
- ☐ Daypack: 40L–50L Alpine summit pack
- ☐ Sleeping system: 800+ fill down bag (rated to -25°C or lower) + thermal sleeping pad
- ☐ Trekking poles: Reinforced carbon/aluminum shock poles
- ☐ Headlamp: 450+ lumen cold-resistant headlamp + spare lithium batteries
- ☐ Hydration: 2x 1.5L Steel/Nalgene vacuum-insulated bottles
- ☐ Water purification: Heavy-duty water filtration system & purification drops

Head & Face

- ☐ Headwear: Balaclava, heavy windproof fleece beanie, & sun cap
- ☐ Glacier goggles: Category 4 glacier glasses + anti-fog snow goggles
- ☐ Buffs: Neoprene face mask & thermal fleece neck gaiters
- ☐ Skin protection: Zinc oxide sun block & heavy-duty lip balm

Upper Body

- ☐ Base layers: 3–4x Heavyweight 250g+ Merino wool tops
- ☐ Mid-layers: 2x Heavy fleece / Active synthetic insulation jackets
- ☐ Expedition down: 850–900 fill expedition-grade down suit/parka
- ☐ Outer shell: Heavy-duty Gore-Tex Pro waterproof/windproof jacket

Handwear & Technical Harness

- ☐ Gloves: Liner gloves, thick fleece gloves, & extreme expedition down mitts
- ☐ Mountaineering hardware: Harness, ice axe, safety leash, & locking carabiners (if required)

Lower Body

- ☐ Base layers: 2–3x Heavyweight thermal tights
- ☐ Trekking pants: Heavy-duty windproof softshell pants
- ☐ Down pants: Insulated down trousers for extreme camp cold
- ☐ Hard shell pants: Gore-Tex Pro full-zip waterproof trousers

Footwear

- ☐ Boots: Double boots or rigid B2/B3 rated high-altitude boots
- ☐ Crampons: Semi-rigid or fully rigid mountaineering crampons
- ☐ Gaiters: Full-length high waterproof mountaineering gaiters
- ☐ Socks: 5–6x Expedition-density wool socks & heated/liner socks

Backpack, Electronics & Survival

- ☐ Packing: Heavy-duty dry bags & compression sacks
- ☐ Electronics: Cold-weather battery packs, solar panels, & satellite messenger (Garmin InReach)
- ☐ Docs & Cash: Emergency helicopter rescue insurance, permits, & cash
- ☐ Medical & Care: Advanced medical kit, oxygen saturation monitor (oximeter), chemical