

## Island Peak Climb with EBC Trek

Island Peak, located along the route to Everest Base Camp (EBC) in the Khumbu region of central Nepal, is one of the most popular of the Himalayan “climbing peaks”. Rising like an island in a sea of ice, the peak rises to 6,189 meters (20,305ft). The summit climb is an ideal introduction to mountaineering, either as a goal in itself or as a first step for anyone interested in conquering even more challenging peaks. The climb is combined with a trek up to Everest Base Camp and Kala Pattar peak, as an ideal acclimatization routine and to experience the spectacular views of other Himalayan peaks and the Khumbu glacier.

After an 8 day trek up to EBC and Kala Pattar you will descend to Chukkung village (4600 m) where we will meet other members of the climbing crew and preparations for your climb will begin. You will receive final instructions and climb preparations at Island Peak Base Camp from where the climb to the summit will be made. The amazing mountain views and extraordinary sense of accomplishment upon reaching the summit will reward you with memories to be cherished for a lifetime.

### **Highlights of the trek and climb**

Views of Mt. Everest from Kala Pattar peak. Extraordinary accomplishment of reaching a mountaineering peak. Experience Sherpa village life and visit fascinating monasteries along the trek route.

### **Trek dates**

Daily from September to early December and March to early June

### **Detailed Itinerary**

Itinerary can be customized according to your needs and length of stay if you are not planning to join a scheduled group trek.

#### **Day 01 – Arrival in Kathmandu**

Upon arrival at Kathmandu International Airport transfer to your hotel in Kathmandu or Bhaktapur. Short briefing will follow concerning the necessary formalities and your trekking itinerary. Depending upon your arrival time you may spend free time visiting nearby sanctuaries or resting.

#### **Day 02 – Trek Preparations and Sightseeing in Kathmandu Valley**

Half day sightseeing around UNESCO Bhaktapur /Kathmandu where your guide will escort you on a tour of Buddhist and Hindu temples and shrines reflecting ancient local traditions. There is time to explore the city’s many places of interest on your own or take a rest while trekking permits are finalized. In the evening trek briefing/preparation with your guide followed by a delicious traditional Nepali dinner. Overnight in Kathmandu.

#### **Day 03 – Kathmandu to Phakding (2610m)**

Early morning you will be picked up by your guide to go to the Kathmandu airport, from where we will take the airplane to Lukla, which will take us about 35 minutes of flight time. At Lukla we will be meet our porters and will head north from the airstrip to Chablung (2700m). Here we will cross the Tharo Kosi river on a local-style suspension bridge. Just past the bridge we can see the peak of

Kusum Kangru (6367m), which is the most difficult of the so-called “trekking peaks”. Beyond the Tharo Kosi the trail climbs a bit towards Ghat (2590m), we will cross a ridge marked with painted Mani stones and climb to Phakding where we will stay overnight (3 hrs).

#### **Day 04 – Phakding to Namche Bazaar (3420m)**

From Phakding we follow the valley of the Dudh Kosi river, staying on the west bank of the river. We climb steeply over a rocky ridge towards Benkar (2710m). From here the trail continues alongside the river. All along this part of the trail, villages are interspersed with magnificent forests of rhododendron, magnolia and giant firs. In both the early autumn and late spring, the flowers on this portion of the trek make it a beautiful walk. We cross the Kyashar Khola river and climb out of the valley to Monjo (2840m). Just beyond Monjo the trek enters the Sagarmatha (Everest) National Park, which was established in 1976 to protect a 1148 sq km area surrounding Mt Everest. Beyond the national park entrance station, the trail makes a steep rocky descent and crosses the Dhud Kosi river on a 120m-long suspension bridge towards Jorsale (2830m). After crossing this river a few times while climbing our way up the valley we will reach Namche Bazaar (3420m). Namche Bazaar is the maintrading centre in this region and features numerous shops, hotels and restaurants (6 hrs).

#### **Day 05 – Acclimatization in Namche Bazaar**

Acclimatization is important before proceeding higher. Today we will take a day hike through the villages of Khunde and Khumjung. We start with a steep one-hour climb to the Shyangboche airstrip (3790m), from where we will slowly ascend towards Khunde passing numerous chorten (stone Buddhist monuments). From Khunde we follow the trail eastwards to Khumjung, the largest village in Khumbu, at the foot of the sacred peak Khumbila. After enjoying lunch here we will follow a steep switchbacking trail descending to Chhorkung (3540m). From here it is a quick descent back to Namche Bazaar (5 hrs).

#### **Day 06 – Namche Bazaar to Tengboche (3860m)**

Our route of today to Tengboche weaves in and out of side valleys, making small ups and downs, to the teashops of Kenjoma, and joins the trail from Khumjung just before a collection of mani stones. The views of Everest and Ama Dablam are excellent from this part of the trek. We pass the small settlement of Sanasa from where the trail drops towards Phunki Thanga (3250m). From here the trail climbs steeply through forests and around mani stones as it follows the side of a hill to the saddle on which the monastery of Tengboche sits at 3870m. The view from here is rightly deemed to be one of the world’s most magnificent. Kwangde (6187m), Tawachee (6542m), Everest, Nuptse, Lhotse (8501m), Ama Dablan, Kantega and Thamserku provide an inspiring panorama of Himalayan giants. We will spend the night in Tengboche village (5 hrs).

#### **Day 07– Tengboche to Pheriche or Dingboche (4240m)**

From Tengboche we start our day by descending through forests of birches, conifers and rhododendrons to the village of Devoche. From here the level trail passes many Mani walls in a deep rhododendron forest. After crossing the Imja Khola river the route climbs past some magnificently carved mani stones to Pangboche (3860m). This is the highest year-round settlement in the valley, and the Pangboche gompa is the oldest in Khumbu and once contained relics that were said to be the skull and hand of a yeti. Beyond Pangboche the route enters alpine meadows above the tree line,

mostly consisting of scrub juniper and tundra. We will cross the Khumbu Khola river and arrive in Pheriche, which is a labyrinth of walls and pastures (4:30 hrs). We will also have the option of spending the night in Dingboche.

#### **Day 08 – Acclimatisation day in Dingboche/Chukung**

The most important thing to acclimatisation to high altitudes is a slow ascent. Therefore it is imperative that we spend an additional night at this altitude to aid the acclimatisation process. A good way to spend the day and aid acclimatization is to hike up to Chukung-ri peak which will also allow us to get close views of Island Peak where we will be climbing a few days later. From here we also have fantastic views of the south face of Lhotse and the southeastern face of Ama Dablam. After enjoying the views here we return back to Dingboche (4 hrs).

#### **Day 09 – Dingboche to Lobuche (4930m)**

From Dingboche the trail goes along a ridge above the terminal moraine of the Khumbu Glacier via Dughla village where we can have tea/coffee after crossing the river. After a steep climb to the memorial area known as Chukpilhara the trail levels out and follows the western side of the valley to Lobuche, a summer settlement at 4930m that has become a major trekking stop. The sunset on Nuptse, seen from here, is a memorable sight. (5 hrs)

**Day 10- Lobuche- Everest Base Camp (5364 m) to Gorak Shep (5170 m)** Take the trail to Everest Base Camp through the once vast Gorak Shep Lake. Continuing straight ahead, come through the Indian army mountaineers' memorials. The path from here can be misleading, hence follow the lead Sherpa, every year the trail changes due to the movements of the glacier - the walk is quite strenuous due to thin air in high altitude, passing through over rocky dunes and moraine and streams - until we reach the base camp. As we reach Everest Base Camp, we cannot stop ourselves from appreciating the Everest climbers who take the hazardous route through the Khumbu Icefall. Everest Base Camp is lively with commotion during the high expedition season. Mountaineer's tents stand out in bright colors against all the dull gray surroundings (especially in spring). Nuptse, Khumbutse, Pumori are the mountains we can view from base camp but Everest itself is not visible from here. We get back to Gorak Shep for a good night's rest. However, the sunset view from Kala Patthar is more admirable than the sunrise view. As the setting sun's rays strike the snow capped mountains the resulting scenery is indescribable. For those trekkers who wish to continue to Kala Patthar our guides and Sherpas coordinate a hike to Kala Patthar for amazing sunset view today rather than waiting until the next day. Overnight in Gorak Shep. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 11- Gorak Shep - Kala Patthar (5545 m) to Lobuche (4940 m)**

We start early in the morning to catch the dramatic views from Kala Patthar witnessing the first light of day shining on Mount Everest. However, we need to get prepared for an early morning, dark and cold temperature (-10 to -14 C) departure beforehand. Plus there is always the likelihood of chilly winds. Familiar peaks such as Lingtren, Khumbutse, Changtse tower to the east even as Everest begins to reveal itself emerging between the west shoulder crest and Nuptse. During the ascent to Kala Patthar, we can pause to catch our breath at several outstanding view points to snap pictures. After several hours of an ascent, we reach Kala Patthar. From here scramble to climb the rocky outcrop near to the summit marked by cairns and prayer flags and take in views to last a lifetime.

After returning to Gorak Shep, we have breakfast followed by a gradual descent down to Lobuche. Overnight in Lobuche. (B,L,D)

### **Day 12 - Lobuche - Kongma La (5,535m) to Chhukung (4,730m)**

After breakfast we trek via the Khumbu Glacier to Kongma La Base Camp (5,000m/16,404ft) and continue ascending to Kongma pass. After reaching Kongma La, we see a cairn wrapped in prayer flags, and then we descend a gradual hike along the Imja Khola valley to Chhukung, Overnight in Chhukung where we meet the rest of our climbing crew and begin preparations for Island Peak climbing. (B, L, D)

**Note:** If we do not like to undertake the Kongma La pass, instead we can follow another route from Lobuche via Dingboche to Chhukung

### **Day 13- Chhukung to Island Peak Base camp (5,200m)**

The path from Chhukung leads fairly steep way climbing south then turning east to the main line of the valley. It then winds along or below the southern flank of the moraine from the Lhotse Glacier. We continue walking along a streamside past the route to the Amphu Lapcha to the southeast. A criss-cross route through the Imja and Lhotse glacier moraines leads to a wide valley flanking the southwest side of Island peak. Overnight at Island Peak Base Camp. (B, L, D)

**Pre-Climb Training :** After lunch at base camp, our guides will provide training on peak climbing techniques and using climbing gears such as ice axe, climbing boot and crampons, harness, ascender, etc and on how to go up and down using ropes. Although it is not mandatory to have prior training experience for Island Peak Climbing, we believe that some training experience will boost up your confidence and climbing skills to increase the chances of scaling the summit as well as to fully enjoy the experience.

### **Day 14 - Island Peak Base Camp to High Camp (5,600m)**

We move to Island Peak High Camp. The path leads up beyond base camp for several hundred meters before striking off left up the steep hillside. Initially sandy, the path soon turns to grass before becoming boulder strewn. As we climb the hill, we will see that the slope narrows and the path enter a steep rock channel. Overnight in Island Peak High Camp. (B, L, D)

**Note:** Climbers often find it easier to attempt for Island summit in one push directly from the Base Camp. If we decide to attempt the summit push from the Base Camp, we will spend two nights at the Base Camp for acclimatization and training. We will make an acclimatization climb to the High Camp after taking breakfast on the second day, spend some time there, and come back to the Base Camp. Generally, we take lunch after completing the hike.

### **Day 15 - High camp to summit Island Peak-Base camp to Chhukung**

Island Peak Ascent (6,189m): We begin our climb early in the morning, generally around 1 AM. In the beginning, we climb the rock gully. This is not difficult but there are several short rock steps to climb before we emerge on the right side of the gully. The route then follows a ridgeline, which leads to an exhilarating and exposed traverse onto the snout of the summit glacier. We need to rope up for the glacier as it contains several crevasses. The guides will fix a rope wherever necessary. A steep

snow slope leads us onto the summit ridge. After enjoying the summit views, and taking pictures, we descend all the way to Chhukung for overnight and to celebrate of our successful climb. (B, L, D)

#### **Day 16 - Reserve Day for Contingency**

There is no guarantee that we can get quite a favorable weather on our planned day for the summit so this day is used as a contingency in case if we are unable to summit the Island Peak on day 14 due to bad weather condition or some other reasons. If weather gets very unfavorable we will postpone the program of summiting the peak on day 14 for today. (B, L, D)

#### **Day 17 - Chhukung to Namche Bazar**

This is a long trekking day but not difficult because of easy downhill terrain. The Imja Khola joins the Dudh Koshi River a little above the Pangboche village. There is a famous gompa at Pangboche believed to have been the oldest in the Khumbu region. Descend out of the alpine dessert and back into landscapes of pine forests.. Visit the Tenboche Monastery. Making a steep descent leads back to the Dudh Kosi river. The final steep climb traverses the hill side into Namche Bazaar. In case our contingency day remains unused and you want take today's long trek relaxed manner, we can divide long trekking of today into two days. (B, L, D)

#### **Day - 18 Namche Bazaar to Lukla**

The trail descends steeply downward so we need to walk slowly and under control as our shaky legs continuously battle the rocky terrain. After crossing the suspension bridges over the fast flowing Dudh Koshi and its tributaries the trail becomes more level and natural. Although we are travelling the same route down, we feel completely different views. Walk through the Sherpa villages' noticing impressive faith in Buddhism and culture of prayer stones and prayers flag while we walk through the villages. On arrival at Lukla, we stretch those sore legs and recall the experiences of the last couple of weeks. We experience the culmination of a fantastic trek on a happy note with everyone back safe and sound with smile on their faces! Overnight in Lukla. (B, L, D)

#### **Day 19 – Fly to Lukla**

The 35 minute flight from Lukla will bring us back to Kathmandu. Since the flight usually arrives in the morning you should have plenty of free time for sightseeing or shopping in Kathmandu.

#### **Day 20 - Kathmandu**

We will escort you to the international airport and assist you to insure that all your documents and luggage are ready for your departure flight from Kathmandu.