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Mustang Trek & Cultural Adventure

September 7 - 23, 2017 (17 days)

Lying on a high and austere beautiful plateau behind the snowy Himalayan massifs of Dhaulagiri and Annapurna, the kingdom of "Lo," as Nepal's Mustang region was once known, is an enclave of Tibetan culture. Known as *Lopas*, the people of Mustang maintain centuries-old traditions, and, indeed, this hidden kingdom was completely closed to foreigners until 1991. On this adventure, join Cathy Ann Taylor for a discovery of this fascinating and rugged land. Our itinerary offers scenic panoramas of some of the sacred peaks of the Central Nepal Himalaya, countless opportunities to meet local folk in their picturesque villages and farms, and explorations of ancient temples and monasteries lost in time. Cathy Ann last visited Mustang in 2015 and is eager to return. A road is in the process of being built from the Tibetan border to Lo Manthang, the 500-year-old walled city and capital of the Kingdom of Mustang, which will undoubtedly have implications for the people of this land. Join us this year and see it before it changes forever. In addition we'll be donating funds to the Himalayan Children's Care Home in Pokhara Nepal. Since 2010 Cathy Ann/Cattara has been involved in raising money for this non-profit. The home is dedicated to preserving the rich cultural heritage of the remote Mustang area, where the Tibetan culture and traditions are on the brink of extinction. Himalayan Children's Care Home is a non-profit organization that aims to provide health services, education, food, and shelter to the children of Mustang, many who have lost their parents due to the harsh conditions in the region. The home was founded in 1996 and currently houses 32 children with ages ranging from 4-13. Please see their website at: www.hchmustang.org. Cathy Ann's longtime friend, Stan Armington, who has lived in Nepal for many years, is passionate about this project and has been involved in raising funds. We'll be presenting the donation to Lama Pasang at our festive welcome dinner with the children in Pokhara.

TRIP DETAILS

Strenuous ▶ 11 days strenuous trekking at medium to high elevation (maximum 14,186'); 9 nights camping, 3 nights lodges, 4 nights hotels

ITINERARY

(You will need to leave the U.S. on September 5 or 6, depending on which route you take, in order to arrive in Kathmandu on September 7.)

Day 1, Sept 7 ▶ Arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal

Arrive in Kathmandu (4,360') by mid-afternoon on Day 1. Your trip leader or a Cattara representative will meet you outside the customs and immigration area at the airport. He or she will escort you to the Shangri La Hotel. Besides the gorgeous gardens and pool area, the hotel also has fantastic restaurants, a bar, and several shops. Later in the afternoon, there will be a briefing on the trek arrangements.

D...Shangri La Hotel

Day 2, Sept 8 ▶ Kathmandu – Pokhara

In the late morning, we take a scenic flight to Pokhara (2,700'), passing over the deep valleys and rivers of central Nepal and taking in views of the Ganesh, Dhaulagiri, and Annapurna Himals. After checking into our lovely hotel we'll enjoy a poolside lunch. After lunch we will visit a beautiful waterfall, drive along the Lake Phewa Tal, and have a chance to visit Lama Pasang's Himalayan Children's Care Home. This evening, you'll enjoy a "Welcome" dinner with the group and all the kids at Stan Armington's Tibet Resort.

B,L,D...Shangri La Village Hotel

Day 3, Sept 9 ▶ Jomsom – Kagbeni (9,315')

From Pokhara we take a very early flight up the spectacular Kali Gandaki Gorge lying between the peaks of Dhaulagiri (26,788') and Annapurna (26,538') to Jomsom (9,053'), the administrative center of the Mustang district. Upon arrival, we meet our trekking staff and begin hiking along the banks of the Kali Gandaki River to Kagbeni (9,315'), a medieval-looking village that is the "gateway" to Mustang. We are now in the rain shadow of the Himalaya, and it's easy to see how closely this area geographically resembles Tibet. The peak of Nilgiri (23,166') dominates the southern skyline. (3-4 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Lodge

Day 4, Sept 10 ▶ Chele (10,168')

After passing the police checkpoint, we enter the restricted area of Upper Mustang. Since the river is often at high water, we will take a trail on the east bank of the Kali Gandaki to Tangbe (10,037'), a village of whitewashed houses, fields of buckwheat, barley, wheat, and apple orchards, and architecture typical of Mustang (it is here we begin to see the beautiful red, black, and white chortens of Mustang). Across the river we can see picturesque cliffs with inaccessible caves. We continue to a village at the confluence of the Kali Gandaki and Narshing Khola, and then head north. Crossing the Kali Gandaki, we make a short climb to our campsite at the large Tibetan village of Chele. (6-7 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

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Day 5, Sept 11 ▶ Geling (11,710')

We have fabulous views of the Nilgiri range as we make a long climb up to the village of Samar (11,874') and enter the high altitude desert country. Samar, surrounded by poplars, is a major stopping place for horse caravans. Our afternoon hike brings us over three high ridges (the highest is 13,153 feet) and past some teahouses, then continues to Geling. This is a long and difficult day! (8-9 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

Day 6, Sept 12 ▶ Charang (11,677')

After climbing gently through barley fields below the village of Tama Gaon, we'll begin an unrelenting climb that takes us across the head of the valley to the Nyi La pass (13,186'), the southern boundary of Mustang proper. A gentle descent brings us to the Ghemi La, the trail then drops more steeply to the village of Ghemi (11,513'). In the afternoon we cross a suspension bridge over a river, pass one of the most impressive and longest mani walls in Nepal, climb another high pass (12,694'), and enter the ancient town of Charang. The entry portal is picturesque, with a nearby five-story dzong (fortress-monastery), formerly the home of the kings of Mustang, and the vast red Dorje Dhen Gompa, which we will visit as time permits. (7-8 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

Day 7, Sept 13 ▶ Lo Manthang (12,595')

After descending to cross the Charang Chu River and climbing to yet another ridge at 12,956 feet, we get our first view of Lo Manthang, the fabled walled "capital" of Mustang. The trail widens and is quite a thoroughfare across desert-like landscapes with beautiful hues of red, grey, and yellow. Another "up and down" hike brings us to camp outside of town. (5 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Camp

Day 8, Sept 14 ▶ Lo Manthang

A day to explore Lo Manthang, one of the last walled cities in Asia. We will explore two important monasteries built in the early 15th century: Thugchen Gompa and Champa Lhakhang. Both have extensive Buddhist mural art and Champa Lhakhang also has a fifty-foot-tall image of Maitreya, the future Buddha, making it the largest clay statue in Nepal. We also visit the Choedhe monastic school and the five-story king's palace. (Note—The PBS documentary *Journey of Transformation* is about Mustang and the restoration projects of this fragile area.)

B,L,D...Camp

Day 9, Sept 15 ▶ Lo Manthang

A day to explore further North in Mustang with a visit to Cathy Ann's friend Lama Tashi's village of Chhosar. We will transfer by jeep and spend the day touring the village. Return to Lo Manthang for the night.

B,L,D...Camp

Day 10, Sept 16 ▶ Lo Manthang – Drakmar (12,530')

Our return trek takes a slightly different route which gives us the opportunity to visit two villages we didn't see on the trek northward. Leaving Lo Manthang, we take a high loop southwest to cross

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Chogo La pass at 14,186 feet. The trail traverses a large grassy valley before descending steeply to a bridge across the Charang Khola. We stop for lunch outside Ghar Gompa (also known as Lo Gekar), the oldest active monastery in Nepal, dating back to the 8th century. It is also being restored with the funding of the American Himalayan Foundation. From here we climb over a ridge and descend through a spectacular series of red rock formations to our pretty grassy campsite at Drakmar (12,530'), from where we may possibly see blue sheep. (6 ½ - 7 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Camp

Day 11, Sept 17 ▶ Shyangmochen (12,460')

The trail descends alongside a stream through the extensive village of Drakmar. Continue up to another ridge and descend to the lower part of Ghemi. We re-cross the Nyi La pass and descend steeply, bypassing Geling, and traverse to Tama Gaon, with its imposing chorten. We rejoin the main trail and continue down steeply rejoining the Geling trail to Shyangmochen. There is a chance we may stay in Tama Gaon with its nice camp site, but it does make the following day longer. (6 -7 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Camp

Days 12 - 14, Sept 18- 20 ▶ Jomsom (9,053')

Retracing our steps, we cross over three passes back to Samar then follow the trail to Chele and cross the Kali Gandaki River. We return to Kagbeni, passing through the villages of Chhuksang and Tangbe, then trek through a windswept valley on the left bank of the Kali Gandaki River to Jomsom. (Day 11; Shyangmochen to Chhusang 7-8 hours hiking, Day 12; Chhusang to Kagbeni 3 ½ - 4 ½ hours hiking; Day 13 Kagbeni to Jomsom 3 -4 hours hiking.)
B,L,D each day...Camp or Lodge

Day 15, Sept 21 ▶ Pokhara (2,700')

Fly from Jomsom to Pokhara (weather permitting)*. Transfer to hotel. Lunch and dinner at hotel. The afternoon is free to shop and explore Pokhara.
B,L,D...Hotel Shangri La Village Hotel

Flights in and out of Jomsom's tiny mountain airstrip are commonly delayed. We have scheduled an extra day at the end of the trek so as not to interfere with your homeward-bound flights.

Day 16, Sept 22 ▶ Kathmandu

If the Pokhara flight is not delayed, we'll have a free day to relax or for shopping and sightseeing on your own in Kathmandu. Festive farewell dinner with the group.
B, D ...Shangri La Hotel

Day 17, Sept 23 ▶ Fly home

Transfer to the airport and leave Kathmandu on homeward-bound flights.
B...

LAND COST

\$6,395 per person (6-7 members)

\$6,195 per person (8-9 members)

\$5,895 per person (10-14 members)

\$500 per person Nepal Government Permit Fee

*Should you choose to pay with credit card there will be a service charge of 3%, the fee we incur from the bank.

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations at the Shangri La Hotel in Kathmandu and the Shangri La Village Hotel in Pokhara.

Single Supplement—\$750. If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you wish to share accommodations, we'll try to match you up with a roommate. If that's not possible, we will still have to charge you the single supplement. At the lodge in Kagbeni we will have to share accommodations as there are a limited number of rooms.

LAND COST INCLUDES...

- Expert leadership of Cathy Ann Taylor
- Accommodations in hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara
- Two round trip flights Kathmandu-Pokhara-Kathmandu and Pokhara-Jomsom-Pokhara
- All trek arrangements, including tents, foam sleeping pads, community camping and commissary equipment, services of camp and commissary crew, including camp and cook staff
- Meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Airport transfers
- Sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- Ground transportation
- Additional guides and porters where necessary
- Trek permits

LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE...

International airfare to Kathmandu and return; accommodations en route to Nepal (depending on airline, you will need to overnight in Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Delhi or Bangkok en route to Kathmandu); meals not noted on itinerary; special government permit fee; trip insurance (it is required that you purchase emergency evacuation insurance to visit Mustang), Cattara offers travel insurance which includes evacuation and trip cancellation insurance; optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; visas; cost of medical immunizations; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

TRIP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation25% of land cost
120 days prior to departure25% of land cost
90 days prior to departure.....Balance

CANCELLATION FEE SCHEDULE

From time of reservation

until 90 days prior to departure25% of land cost
89-60 days prior to departure.....50% of land cost
59 days of fewer prior to departure.....100% of land cost

EXPERT LEADERSHIP

Expert leadership is the key to every successful trip. Cattara attracts knowledgeable and gifted leaders who are passionate about guiding trips and truly enjoy sharing the experience with others. They understand the cultures and traditions they work in and are a fountain of information. In addition to making sure everything runs smoothly and safely, Cattara guides enhance your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends.

TRIP LEADERS



Cathy Ann Taylor, a high altitude trekking guide for the last 27 years, will be leading this trip. Cathy Ann has trekked all over Nepal, Tibet, and Bhutan, with well over 200 trips in the Himalayas (she still considers the Himalayas her “second home”)! She has also hiked extensively in the European Alps (Tour du Mont Blanc (5), The Haute Route, Gran Paradiso, the Dolomites, and the Georgian Caucasus, India and South America. A devout hiker and mountain biker, she leaves no trail undiscovered, and her passion for the mountains, caring nature, and boundless energy are

renowned. Her experience, knowledge, positive attitude (she can find the good in anything!), and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has been able to manage the sponsorship of nineteen remote village children, all of whom are in boarding school in Nepal or in Universities in the United States. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and has quite a following. Cathy Ann is active in the Breast Cancer Fund and has participated in sixteen expeditions, including Mount McKinley, Cho Oyu, Mount Fuji, Mount Shasta, and Mount Rainier, which helped increase awareness of breast cancer (she alone has raised over \$670,000 for the cause!). Cat’s new program, Sacred Treks to benefit the Breast Cancer Fund (Bhutan, Mont Blanc, Peru, Everest, Ladakh, Mustang, Georgian Caucasus, Sikkim, and Dolomites treks) has raised over \$670,000. She has also reached the summit of Ama Dablam (22,500') in Nepal and Argentina's Aconcagua (22,834'), the highest peak in South America. Cathy Ann received an honorable mention in *Hooked on the Outdoors* magazine's Outdoor Person of the Year Awards, and also received a letter of recognition for her fundraising and environmental work from former Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS

This trip is strenuous and designed for those who are fit and experienced in the outdoors. We expect you to be a strong, experienced hiker and in great physical condition. On this trip, you will hike anywhere from five to nine hours a day, up and down mountain trails that are steep and rocky, and mostly at elevations above 9,000 feet. Medium to high altitude trekking can be very physically taxing and may create discomfort. You may experience symptoms of illness that you do not experience while exercising at sea level, such as shortness of breath, restlessness or sleeplessness at night, and

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headaches. You should be aware of the demands and risks imposed by high altitude, be in excellent underlying health, and prepare by training rigorously. We recommend you have a thorough physical exam and evaluation to uncover any general medical problem that might flare up while trekking in the remote areas of Nepal, where medical care may be many days away.

While on trek, you should drink a lot of water—this helps to avoid dehydration. Consult with your physician for advice on trekking at high altitude and any prescription medications you may need.

For physical preparation for this trek, we strongly suggest regular cardiovascular exercise for one to two hours at least 4-5 times a week. We recommend stair climbing, running, and mountain biking on hills, or elliptical or treadmill training in the gym with 10-15 pound day packs. This gets the heart rate going, which will be very beneficial for the type of high altitude trekking you will be undertaking.

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

Your trekking day typically starts at 6:00 a.m., when the camp staff will bring you “bed tea” to start the day, along with a large bowl of hot water for washing. (Bring along a washcloth and you can have a full sponge bath in the privacy of your tent!) After packing your bags, you’ll enjoy a hearty breakfast of porridge, eggs, and toast. By 7:30 or 8:00 you’re off on the trail.

During the morning’s hike you’ll have time to visit local teashops, stop for a view or a photo, and exchange a smile or greeting (Namaste!) with the friendly Nepali people who share the trail. A hot trailside lunch breaks up the day, giving you time to rest and refuel before heading out on the trail for the afternoon hike.

You arrive in camp by 4:00 p.m. and have time to wash up and get settled in your tent before enjoying tea and snacks in the dining tent. While waiting for dinner, you can write in your journal, read a book, play cards, or simply relax. The day ends with a hot, multi-course dinner, which often includes ethnic cuisine as well as American favorites. After dinner you can gaze at the stars (incredible viewing in this part of the world) and the moonlit ridges and distant peaks, go over the events of the day, or retire to your tent to read for a while before heading off to sleep.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

In addition to a passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of completion of the trip, you will need a visa for Nepal. You can get it upon arrival at the airport in Kathmandu or contact the Nepalese Consulate in DC or NY. If you prefer to use a visa service you will find many by searching on the internet, one in particular we have found reliable is CIBT: <http://cibtvisas.com/>. If you prefer to get your visa on arrival in Kathmandu, you’ll need one passport photo and \$40 cash (US dollars are accepted, please have exact change) for a 30 day visa. You may have to wait in a longer line if you arrive without a visa, but it’s less expensive than using a visa service. A good tip is to make a photocopy of the photo page of your passport and carry it separately from your passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, a photocopy will help the local consulate speed up authorization for replacement. Also bring several spare passport photos—they’re handy in case of unexpected visa or permit requirements.

If you plan to travel to Kathmandu via Thailand, you don’t need a Thai visa. U.S. citizens don’t need visas for visits to Thailand of up to 30 days. If you plan to travel to and from Kathmandu via India,

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you will need to get a multiple-entry Indian visa in advance. Indian visas *cannot* be obtained upon arrival in India.

Note—most countries requiring visas require a completely blank page on which to stamp the visa, so your passport should contain at least one blank page for each country you plan to visit.

AIR TRAVEL

Airfare is not included in the land cost of the trip. For air reservations, please contact the airlines directly, either by phone or via the Internet. Plan your arrival in Kathmandu by the early afternoon of Day 1 (September 21). Many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling, but please check with us before purchasing or obtaining your tickets. We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip. Note—Names on air tickets and passports must match!

MEDICAL MATTERS

No vaccinations are currently required to enter Nepal, but immunizations for typhoid, tetanus, hepatitis A, and polio are *recommended*. These regulations and recommendations change frequently, so please check with your local health department or the CDC for more information (www.cdc.gov). In addition, the CDC sometimes recommends meningococcal meningitis vaccine for travelers to Nepal and Delhi, India, if there has been a recent outbreak. Confer with your physician for further advice.

Please advise us of any pre-existing medical conditions that may affect your health on the trek (recent injuries or surgeries, chronic illnesses, etc.). Hospital facilities for serious medical emergencies may be far away and evacuation can be difficult (and expensive).

To avoid intestinal problems while on the trip, do not drink tap water or even use it to brush your teeth. In Kathmandu, drink bottled water only. While on trek, the camp staff will provide boiled water for daily use. You must be careful when eating out in Kathmandu, too. That said, there are many wonderful restaurants and your trip leader will recommend a few to you. She will also give you more guidelines on staying healthy while in Nepal.

We recommend you bring your own personal first-aid kit, which should include antibiotics (Cipro or other), pain killers, and allergy medicines if you are prone to allergic reactions. The trip leader will also carry a basic kit for emergencies, but will not have any prescription medications.

MONEY MATTERS

You should bring enough money for any souvenirs you may buy, plus a few meals that are not included in the cost of the trip (e.g. various meals in Kathmandu, or meals and accommodation en route to Nepal). Depending on how much of a shopper you are, \$500-\$600 is usually enough for incidentals and souvenirs. You should bring an additional amount for optional gratuities to the trip leader and local trekking staff. At least US \$450 is recommended for the trip leader (presenting this personally rather than collectively gives you the opportunity to say thank you individually and is greatly appreciated); at least \$250 toward a group tip for the trekking staff, preferably paid in local currency, as traveler’s checks are impossible for the trekking staff to exchange.

Bring some of your money in traveler's checks and most in cash. There is an American Express office above the Thai Airlines office (same building) on Durbar Marg. Bring along your credit card in case of emergencies. Credit cards are also becoming more widely accepted in the small tourist shops of Thamel and at the large hotels. You can use your ATM card at the airport in Bangkok. There are many ATM machines throughout Kathmandu now; in Thamel (the shopping district), downtown and Durbar Marg. The local currency in Nepal is the *rupee*.

WEATHER & CLIMATE

Because our trek is in the rain shadow of the Himalaya, we shouldn't see much rain. It is probable we will encounter some windy and dusty conditions, especially in the afternoons. Daytime temperatures should be comfortable to warm, depending on clouds or sun, ranging between 50° and 80° F with cool to cold nights ranging between 35° and 50° F. Temperatures are relatively moderate and skies are usually brilliantly clear. Rain or snow is always possible in the high mountains.

INCIDENTALS

Laundry: Laundry service is available at Shangri La Hotel. While on trek, wash basins are available for any laundry you may want to do yourself in the afternoon, but it's usually too late or cold for garments to dry very quickly. Synthetic fabrics are the easiest to wash, and they dry quickly. Please make sure you bring biodegradable soap.

Electricity: Nepal is on the 220V system. Sockets are usually the three-pin variety, but they vary. If you are planning to use something like a hairdryer or electric shaver at the hotel, bring a converter and a selection of plug adapters (you can buy these in drugstores or travel specialty stores in the U.S.).

Time Zones: Nepal is Greenwich Mean Time plus five hours and 45 minutes. That means if it's 8:00pm in Kathmandu, it's 9:15am in New York and 6:15am in California.

Environmental Responsibility: We ask you to **carry out whatever you carry in**, including non-biodegradable items such as batteries, flashlight bulbs, empty plastic containers, and so on. Nepal does not have the proper facilities to process this kind of waste and your throwaways will end up in the river or tossed down a hillside.

SHOPPING

Kathmandu is a fun place to shop—street vendors and emporiums are everywhere you look. Craft items to buy include beautiful hand-woven Tibetan carpets, traditional brass cooking vessels, semi-precious gemstones, Tibetan prayer wheels, and *thangka* paintings. The markets of Kathmandu also serve as an outlet for items from Bhutan and Tibet. You'll need to sharpen your bargaining skills to get the best deal.

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WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT LIST

Packing Notes

It's best to go as light as possible and take only the essentials. Excess baggage can be a burden, not only to you but to support personnel.

Your trekking duffel and backpack combined must not weigh more than **33 lbs.** for the Jomsom flight. This includes all items you will need while on trek as well as your sleeping bag. We suggest you bring an additional small duffel to store non-trek clothes and items at the hotel in Kathmandu or Pokhara.

Overweight baggage is *not* accepted on these flights even if you are willing to pay excess baggage charges.

Luggage

- Duffel bag. A good size is about 14" x 15" x 36" (7,560 cu. in)—large enough to hold your sleeping bag plus your trekking clothes and gear. It should have a full-length zipper (for easy access), and be sturdy and water-resistant or waterproof.
- Daypack with a capacity of 2,000 to 2,500 cubic inches, with a good padded waist belt. It can double as your carryon bag. Always bring all irreplaceable items, such as camera, medications, important documentation, and trekking boots in your carryon luggage.
- Spare roll-up duffel. This is essential if you wish to store your city clothes while on the trek and to bring home those great souvenirs! It should be lockable.

Clothing Notes

Because you will be mainly be trekking at medium to high elevations, the weather could be hot during the day or cold if the clouds come in. Nighttime temperatures are likely to be comfortable to just above freezing.

Bring comfortable clothing that will protect you from heat, wind, cold and possible wet weather. Synthetic fabrics (such as polypropylene, capilene, or fleece) are the most effective barriers against the cold. They provide the best insulation, are light in weight, wick away perspiration, and dry quickly if wet. Wool and wool/synthetics are also suitable. (Cotton garments are not good in cold or wet mountain conditions.)

Layering is the way to go. Your innermost layer should be a T-shirt and pants or long underwear (depending on the weather, it may be too warm during the day). The middle layer can be a synthetic long sleeve top. The outermost layer should be a synthetic jacket, and/or a good quality wind/rain jacket and over-pants.

We suggest women & men trek in comfortable, loose-fitting long pants.

Underwear

- Regular underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry. Depending on the weather, you may be able to hand-wash some on your rest days during the trek.
- Thermal underwear (one lightweight, one medium-weight,) top and bottoms, of a polyester-type fabric. Wool and wool/synthetic blends are also suitable. You can use them to sleep at night and as layers for maximum warmth.

Socks

- Athletic socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for your walking (not hiking) shoes. You can store them in your extra duffel while on trek.
- Medium weight hiking socks (synthetic or wool/synthetic).
- Synthetic or silk sock liners—optional. Some people wear sock liners to help prevent blisters, and some wear the same pair of hiking socks for three days in a row and achieve the same result.

Shirts

- Long-sleeved, synthetic or wool shirt.
- Short-sleeved, synthetic T-shirts.

Pants

- Full-length pants, preferably of quick-drying synthetic fabric.
- Fleece pants, ideal for camp time or layering for warmth.

Outerwear

- Medium-weight jacket of synthetic fabric, such as fleece.
- Light to medium-weight down or synthetic-fill jacket, ideal for camp time.
- Rain/wind parka (must fit over bulky clothing).
- Light weight rain/wind pants, preferably with full-length side zipper (must fit over your other pants).
- Gloves or mittens (fleece or combination of fleece with waterproof shell overmitt or glove).
- Glove liners (synthetic).

Head Gear

- Sun hat with wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off.
- Fleece or wool hat.
- Bandanna or Buff. A generally useful item—it will keep your neck from getting sunburned and can double as a hand towel in the field.

Footwear

Please break new boots in well before the trip.

- Medium-weight, hiking boots with padded ankle, good arch support, and lug sole for traction. Your hiking boots should be waterproofed, well broken in, and suitable for prolonged walking on rough dirt trails with rocks.
- Tennis shoes, teva-type sandals or slip on clogs to wear in camp

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Sleeping Gear

- Medium weight sleeping bag. We recommend a rating of about 5° to 20° F, depending on whether you sleep hot or cold, everyone is different.
- We provide thick foam sleeping pads, but for added comfort, you may wish to bring your own ultra lightweight pad.

Other Items

- Water bottles, 1 or 1.5 quart capacity. Make sure they are leak-proof, wide mouthed, and heavy duty. Bring 2 and mark them with your name or initials as several people may have the same bottle. **Note—CamelBaks or other bladder hydration systems are not recommended, as they often break or leak, are difficult to fill with boiled water, and are hard to keep clean.**
- Hiking sticks—highly recommended. They help relieve the impact on your knees during long downhills; they are also useful on uphill. Practice with them before the trip.
- Cord to use as a clothesline inside your tent.
- Set of casual city clothes that are dressier than your trekking clothes. You will store these in your extra duffel while you are on trek.
- Toiletry kit—biodegradable soap, toothbrush, etc.
- Roll of toilet paper (1). Toilet paper is provided at camp, but you need to carry your own on trek during the day.
- Purell hand sanitizer for quick hand washing and hygiene (a must!).
- Personal medical kit.
- Throat lozenges (antiseptic menthol or hard candies), about 20 of them. Good for soothing sore or dry throats.
- Body lotion for dry skin at higher altitudes.
- Small towel of synthetic-type fabric.
- Sponge or washcloth to wash up at camp.
- Ace bandage or brace if you're prone to sore knees or ankles.
- Sunglasses (100% UVA/URB protected). For high altitudes, it's good to have glasses with a special dark lens and side shields that block reflected UV.
- Spare pair of prescription glasses, prescription sunglasses, or contact lenses.
- Sunscreen lotion and lipstick of SPF 25 or higher.
- Small headlamp with spare batteries.
- Stuff sacks to waterproof and sort out clothes and other items in your duffel. Ziploc bags are great for small items and camera gear.
- Heavyweight plastic garbage bag to use as a waterproofing liner inside your duffel and daypack.
- Small padlocks or combination locks for your duffels.
- Extra passport photos. Keep them with your travel documents as you may need them throughout your journey.
- Money belt or neck pouch to store cash.

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Optional Travel Accessories

- Camera and plenty memory cards, and extra batteries.
- Swimsuit for hotel in Bangkok, Kathmandu, and Pokhara.
- Repair kit with needle, thread, and safety pins.
- Pair of compact binoculars.
- Swiss Army-type pocket knife.
- Powdered electrolyte mixes for your water.
- Your favorite trail snacks.
- Reading and writing material.

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