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Nepal: Tsum Valley – Manaslu Trek

October 7-November 2, 2013 (27 days)

Join Himalayan trip leader Cathy Ann Taylor for a 50th birthday celebration trek to the secluded Tsum Valley, a sacred pilgrimage region east of Manaslu, the world's 8th highest peak. Opened to the outside world only since 2008, the Tsum Valley is surrounded by majestic snow-clad peaks, including Manaslu, Himalchuli, Baudha Himal, Ganesh Himal, and Sringi Himal. Beginning from the lowlands we trek through Gurung villages along the Buri Gandaki River and climb to the hidden alpine valleys of Tsum, where we walk past ancient gompas and along paths lined with fluttering prayer flags, chortens, and long mani walls. Our route follows an ancient pilgrimage circuit that once extended from Manaslu and Tsum to southern parts of Tibet. As we hike we will have a chance to explore this Buddhist enclave untainted by modern influences, experience the ancient traditions and lifestyles of the inhabitants, visit monasteries with Buddhist art, sacred monuments, monks and nuns, and meditation caves, and enjoy the timeless beauty of this valley with its waterfalls cascading from soaring cliffs and spectacular snow peaks soaring against deep blue skies. Our trek then brings us to the valleys below Manaslu, where a climb of the Larkya La (17,103') reveals astounding panoramas of the peaks of the Manaslu and Ganesh Himals.

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TRIP DETAILS

Very Challenging ▶ 21 days strenuous hiking on rocky, steep terrain at high elevation (max. 17,103'); 22 nights camping, 4 nights hotels

ITINERARY

(You will likely need to leave the U.S. on October 5 or 6 depending on the routing in order to arrive in Kathmandu on October 7.)

Day 1, October 7 ▶ Arrive In Kathmandu, Nepal

Arrive in Kathmandu 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 centrally located Shangri La Hotel, a 15-minute walk to the Royal Palace and the bustling Thamel market. Besides a nice garden area the hotel also has a good restaurant and several shops. Later in the afternoon, there will be a briefing on the trek arrangements. This evening, you'll enjoy a "Welcome" dinner with the group.

D...Shangri La Hotel

Day 2, October 8 ▶ Explore Kathmandu

Morning tour of Bhaktapur, an ancient medieval Nepalese city. Among the highlights is Durbar Square, with its many temples, remains of an ancient palace, and the Sun Dhoka, a gilded copper gate crafted in the mid-18th century. In the afternoon you'll be free to tour Kathmandu, with a visit of the many interesting sights, shrines, and markets, and perhaps a stroll in Kathmandu's fascinating Asan Tole bazaar. Time permitting, you can further explore Durbar Square at your leisure, Thamel, Swayambunath (the "Monkey Temple," overlooking the entire Valley); you can also hire a driver to take you to the nearby city of Patan.

B...Shangri La Hotel

Day 3, October 9 ▶ Arkhet Bazaar (2,493')

From Kathmandu, a long (~100 miles) but interesting drive takes us west along the Kathmandu Pokhara highway, then north to Gorkha into the foothills of the Himalaya, with their small villages and terraced fields. Soon we begin to enjoy spectacular scenery as the snowy summits of Manaslu (26,758') and Himalchuli (25,896') emerge into view. We arrive at Arkhet Bazaar (2,493'), set along the Buri Gandaki River. Arkhet is a lively market town surrounded by Gurung and Magar villages. We meet our camp crew and porters and head to our campsite just outside of town. Camp overnight.

B,L,D...Camp

Days 4-8, October 10-14 ▶ Macha Khola (3,051') – Jagat (4,626') – Lokpa (6,988') – Rainjom Gompa (9331') – Rachen Gompa (10,499')

We follow trails that hug the banks of the Buri Gandaki, passing small settlements, heading through shady sal forests, crossing the river several times by suspension bridge, and occasionally seeing waterfalls that spill over the steep rock ledges. As we head farther up, the valley becomes narrower, with the trail undulating on stony paths along the river and traversing hundreds of stone steps as it climbs and descends along the cliff side. At the village of Jagat (4,626'), views of snow peaks begin

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to appear, framed between the walls of the gorge. We are now in the Manaslu Conservation Area, which protects the ecosystem and cultural environment of these Himalayan river valleys. The next day, we enter the Tsum Valley at Lokpa, surrounded by fields of barley. As we hike, we see beautiful chortens and mani stones lining the trail. The Tsum Valley's history with Buddhism dates back to the time of the revered saint Milarepa, who purportedly meditated in the valley's caves. We continue to Rainjom Gompa and then on to Rachen Gompa, a retreat for more than a hundred Tibetan Buddhist nuns who receive a classic education here.
B,L,D each day...Camp

Days 9-13, October 15-19 ▶ Mu Gompa (12,139') – Chakamparo (9,875') – Gumba Lungdang (10,500') – Ganesh Himal Base Camp (16,076')

Climbing higher through an arid landscape reminiscent of Tibet, we come to Mu Gompa (12,139'), the largest monastery in the region and the highest point in the Tsum Valley. A day hike from here brings us north to pastures at around 13,200 feet where yaks graze and then northeast toward the Tibetan border. We may see yak caravans bringing goods from Tibet into the Tsum Valley. As we trek to Gumba Lungdang, set high on a ridge, we enjoy fantastic views of Himalchuli to the west, the Ganesh Himal to the south, and east to Ghyajung Himal (19,936') and its glaciers. At Gumba Lungdang (10,500'), a small gompa with 40 nuns, we have the opportunity to take a round-trip day hike to Ganesh Himal Base Camp (16,076') for the absolutely best views of the entire Ganesh Himal. This is a steep hike through forests of rhododendrons and pines.
B,L,D each day...Camp

Days 14-16, October 20-22 ▶ Chumling (7,743') – Bhi (6,988') – Namrung (8,727')

We leave the Tsum Valley and return to the environs of the Buri Gandaki as we descend steeply for a couple of days through the Manaslu Valley to the village of Bhi (6,988'), set high above the river. From here we have good views of Kutang Himal. The villagers of Bhi are well known throughout Nepal for their fine craftsmanship of carved mani stones, which we have admired along the trail for the last several days. Ascending again, we continue to Namrung (8,727'), crossing back and forth across the Buri Gandaki and through forests of rhododendron and bamboo.
B,L,D each day...Camp

Days 17-19, October 23-25 ▶ Lhogaon (9,186') – Samagaon (11,155') – Samdo (12,106')

Climbing ever higher, we come to the village of Lhogaon, where the views of Manaslu are simply spectacular. Hiking up a side valley near the Pungen Glacier, we visit Pungun Gompa (14,760'), set right beneath Manaslu and Peak 29. Manaslu, known locally as Pungen Ri, is worshiped in this gompa. Hiking farther on, the entire south face of Manaslu is revealed to us—nearly 15,000 feet of vertical ice! After viewing this stunning sight, we descend to Samagaon, set in an open pasture where yak herders often pitch their tents. The following day we trek to Samdo (12,106'), enjoying views of Manaslu, Himalchuli, and other peaks along the way.
B,L,D each day...Camp

Days 20-24, October 26-30 ▶ Dharamsala (14,698') – Bimthang (12,205') – Tilje (7,546') – Jagat (4,626') – Bulbule (3,051')

From Samdo, we follow trails leading to the Larkya La (17,103'), climbing in and out of a huge gorge, climbing up a ridge, and up to a moraine at 15,400 feet. After descending a bit, we head

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steeply to the pass on a long and rocky trail. From here the views are magnificent, with Himlung Himal, Cheo Himal, Kang Guru, and Annapurna II (26,041') in clear view (weather permitting). We descend steeply, traversing scree slopes and a long set of steep switchbacks to cross the moraine, with a final long and steep descent to Bimthang (12,205'), with continuous views of icefalls, mountains, and glaciers. We continue trekking, passing through the village of Jagat (4,626') and on to Bulbule (3,051') for a final night of camping.

B,L,D each day...Camp

Day 25, October 31 ▶ Return to Kathmandu

We make a return drive to Kathmandu. Overnight at hotel

B,L...Shangri La Hotel

Day 26, November 1 ▶ Kathmandu

We have a free day to relax or explore on our own. Tonight we meet for a festive farewell dinner.

B,D...Shangri La Hotel

Day 27, November 2 ▶ Depart

Transfer to the airport and depart on homeward-bound flights.

B...

(You will arrive in the U.S. on November 3)

LAND COST

\$6,795 per person (10-15 members)

\$7,395 per person (6-9 members)

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

Single Supplement—\$650 for requested singles; \$450 for forced singles. 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 only charge you a portion of the single supplement.

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

LAND COST INCLUDES...

- Expert leadership of Cathy Ann Taylor
- Accommodations in hotels in Kathmandu
- All trek arrangements, including tents, foam sleeping pads, community camping and commissary equipment, services of camp and commissary crew, including camp and cook staff, and lodges where noted
- Meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Airport transfers

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- o Sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- o Ground transportation
- o Additional guides and porters where necessary
- o Trek permits & registration fees for Manaslu & Tsum

LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE...

International airfare to Kathmandu and return; meals not noted on itinerary; accommodations en route to Nepal (depending on airline, you will need to overnight in Hong Kong, Delhi, Seoul, Singapore, or Bangkok en route to Kathmandu); trip insurance (we strongly recommend you purchase the optional trip insurance offered by Cattara, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; visas; airport taxes; 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.

Cathy Ann Taylor, a high altitude trekking guide for the last 23 years, will be leading this trek. She's trekked all over Nepal, Tibet, and Bhutan, with well over 150 trips in the Himalayas, as well as Ladakh in India, the Mont Blanc Circuit in the European Alps, and the Peruvian Andes. 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, and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience in ways you couldn't imagine. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has managed the sponsorship of eleven remote village children from Nepal all of whom are in boarding school and two who have completed graduate school in the US and Australia. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and has quite a loyal following. Cathy Ann remains active in the Breast Cancer Fund and has participated in thirteen expeditions, including Mount McKinley, Cho Oyu, Mount Fuji, Mount Shasta, and Mount Rainier, which helped raise funds for breast cancer

prevention (she alone has raised over \$500,000 for the cause!). Cathy Ann's program, Sacred Treks, which benefits the Breast Cancer Fund, has raised over \$450,000. 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, January 2006, and also received a letter of recognition for her fundraising and environmental work from Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS

This trip is extremely challenging and is designed for those who are very 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 five to eight hours a day, up and down mountain trails that are steep and rocky, and mostly at elevations above 11,000 feet, with several days spent at altitudes above 10,000 feet (the maximum is 17,103 feet). Nepal. The trails are rough and steep, with many overhangs high above the river and involve prolonged climbing and descending of steep ridges to detour precipitous cliffs.

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 headaches. You should be aware of the demands and risks imposed by very 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.

This trek is designed to allow time for acclimatization while trying to follow a schedule that accommodates peoples' time constraints. Certain aspects of the trek organization and schedule that may seem illogical are designed to maximize acclimatization. For instance, once at altitude, elevation gains between camps are limited: you may climb higher during the day but descend to sleep (climb high, sleep low).

While on trek, you should drink a lot of water—this helps to avoid dehydration. The prescription drug Acetazolamide (Diamox) can also help acclimatization (latest studies show that ibuprofen is just as effective), prevent acute mountain sickness, and treat mild cases of mountain sickness. It is also very helpful for altitude insomnia and should be used in preference to sleeping pills or Valium, which are dangerous at altitude. Consult with your physician for advice on trekking at high altitude and any prescription medications you may need.

For physical preparation for this very challenging 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.

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LIFE ON THE TRAIL

Your trekking day typically starts at 6:30 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 8:00 or 8:30 you’re off on the trail.

The morning’s hike takes you through villages, forests, and up and down green hills and valleys or along rocky mountain trails. 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 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 you can obtain one in advance. (We recommend sending your passport to the Nepalese Embassy in DC or Zierer Visa Service—1-866-788-1100 or www.zvs.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). 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. The Trekking Agents Association of Nepal, with government approval, has introduced Trekker’s Registration Cards; you will need to bring two passport photos for this permit. 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, you will need to get a multiple-entry Indian visa in advance. Indian visas *cannot* be obtained upon arrival in India. Contact Zierer Visa Service for more information.

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.

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IF YOU ARE TRAVELING TO NEPAL VIA BANGKOK, THAILAND

Overnighting in Bangkok

The new airport hotel is called the **NOVOTEL SUVARNABHUMI AIRPORT HOTEL**. The hotel operates a 24-hour shuttle between the airport and the hotel. The shuttle runs every five minutes and the ride is about five to ten minutes. Exit at door number 4 to catch the shuttle. For reservations at the Novotel attached is their link:

http://www.novotel.com/novotel/fichehotel/gb/nov/6183/fiche_hotel.shtml

Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel

Moo 1 Nongprue Bang Phli, Samutprakarn, 10540 Bangkok, Thailand

Tel: 011 66 2 1311111; Fax: 011 66 2 1311188

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 (October 7). 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 (Diamox, Cipro, Z-pack, 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

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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. Trip members often ask for guidelines on tipping the trip leaders. Typically, trip members tip the trip leader at least US \$400 (presenting this personally rather than collectively gives you the opportunity to say thank you individually and is greatly appreciated) and 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* and it is approximately 71 rupees to the dollar.

WEATHER & CLIMATE

Fall is one of the best trekking seasons in Nepal. During the autumn months, temperatures are relatively cooler and skies are usually brilliantly clear. Daytime temperatures range between 35° and 85°F (depending on our altitude, there is quite a range on this trip), and nighttime temperatures between 0° and 65°F. Rain or snow is possible at any time of year. The temperature typically drops about 3.5°F for every 1,000 feet you gain in elevation.

INCIDENTALS

Laundry: Laundry service is available at the Shangri La Hotel. While on trek, wash basins are available for any laundry you may want to do yourself on rest days, but it's usually too 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 (a hairdryer is provided at the Shangri La 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.

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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.

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 must not weigh more than **30 lbs.**, because it will be carried by a porter or pack animal. This includes all items you will need while on trek as well as your sleeping bag. We suggest you bring an additional small lockable duffel to store non-trek clothes and items at the hotel in Kathmandu.

In addition, there are baggage weight restrictions in the small planes used for domestic flights in Nepal. 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 going to higher elevations, the weather will be cold part of the time. Nighttime temperatures are likely to fall below freezing many nights in a row; sometimes even daytime temperatures (at least in the shade) can be close to freezing. Because you will be starting the trek at very low elevations, the weather will be quite warm part of the time.

Bring comfortable clothing that will protect you from cold and wet weather or possible warm temperatures. Synthetic fabrics (such as polypropylene, capilene, or fleece) are the most effective

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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 long underwear. The middle layer can be a synthetic turtleneck or wool shirt, and pants. The outermost layer should be a synthetic or down jacket, and/or a good quality Gore-Tex wind/rain parka and over-pants.

We suggest women trek in comfortable, loose-fitting long pants. Long, baggy hiking-type shorts for men are acceptable on the trek, particularly at the lower altitudes where it can be quite warm.

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 light weight, one medium weight, top and one light weight, one medium weight bottom, 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

We recommend you bring four outer pairs and four to six inner pairs (if you wear liners) of 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 or wool 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.
- Medium-weight down or synthetic-fill jacket (10-12 oz. of down or 15-20 oz. of fiberfill). A must for camp.
- Rain/wind parka (must fit over bulky clothing).
- 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).

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Head Gear

- Sun hat with wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off, or baseball cap.
- Balaclava for warmth at night. The combination of a cap and neck gaiter also works well.
- 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, sturdy 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 snow and/or rocks.
- Tennis shoes, or slip on clogs to wear in camp.
- Knee-high, gaiters to keep snow out of your boots (Just in case).

Sleeping Gear

- Expedition weight sleeping bag. We recommend a rating of -5° to -15° F.
- 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—A must! They help relieve the impact on your knees during long downhill; they are also useful on uphill. Practice with them before the trip.
- Parachute 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 in Kathmandu while you are on trek.
- Toiletry kit—biodegradable soap, toothbrush, feminine products, etc.
- Roll of toilet paper (2-3). 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 40 of them. Good for soothing sore or dry throats at altitude.
- Body lotion for dry skin at higher altitudes.
- Small towel of synthetic-type fabric.
- Sponge or washcloth to wash up at camp.

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- Ace bandage or brace if you're prone to sore knees or ankles.
- Sunglasses (100% UVA/UVB 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.
- Glacier sunscreen or zinc oxide sunscreen if you want serious UV protection at high altitudes.
- Small headlamp with spare batteries.
- Heavy weight trash bags to waterproof and sort out clothes and other items in your duffel and backpack. Ziploc bags are great for small items and camera gear; nylon stuff sacks are also handy.
- Small padlock or combination lock for your stored city duffel.
- 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.

Optional Travel Accessories

- Camera and plenty memory cards, and extra batteries.
- Repair kit with needle, thread, and safety pins.
- Swiss Army-type pocket knife.
- Pair of compact binoculars.
- Powdered electrolyte mixes for your water.
- Your favorite trail snacks, especially if you have allergies or dietary restrictions.
- Reading and writing material.

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