Trek Curator
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Everest Three Passes Trek - 17 Days

Suppose you dream of the ultimate Everest region experience that pushes your physical limits and rewards you with the most dramatic views of the Himalayas. In that case, the Everest Three Passes Trek is exactly what you want. Unlike the classic Everest Base Camp route, this trek is a complete loop, also known as the Everest Circuit, which takes you off the beaten path, weaving through three high mountain passes, traditional Sherpa settlements, remote glacial valleys, and turquoise alpine lakes. It’s intense, no doubt, but every step brings new wonder. Whether you’re an avid hiker chasing elevation or a soul-searcher seeking something deeper in the Himalayas, this journey offers an unforgettable balance of nature, culture, and challenge.

The Three High Passes: Renjo La, Cho La & Kongma La

The heart of this trek lies in conquering its three mighty passes: Renjo La (5,360m), Cho La (5,420m), and Kongma La (5,535m). Each one is unique in its landscape, level of difficulty, and the kind of view it rewards you with. Renjo La greets you with one of the most picture-perfect scenes in the Everest region, the Gokyo Lakes shimmering under the skyline of Everest, Lhotse, and Makalu. It’s a quiet, less-traveled pass that offers a peaceful introduction to the raw beauty of the Khumbu.

Crossing Cho La is a real Himalayan adventure. You’ll find yourself scrambling over glacial ice, navigating narrow ridges, and stepping into a wild, icy world. It’s one of the more technical parts of the trek, linking the Gokyo Valley to the trail that leads to Everest Base Camp. Finally, Kongma La, the highest of the peaks, is a rocky, desolate stretch that feels like trekking on Mars. It is usually the last pass on the circuit, and while it demands a strong will and steady legs, the satisfaction of completing it is unmatched. Altogether, these passes aren’t just challenges to overcome; they are defining highlights of the trek.

Everest Base Camp – The Holy Grail of Treks

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Naturally, one of the key milestones of this journey is reaching Everest Base Camp (5,364m). Even though you are not climbing Everest itself, standing at the base of the world's tallest mountain is an incredibly powerful experience. As you approach Base Camp via Gorakshep and Lobuche, you will be walking in the footsteps of legendary climbers, explorers, and dreamers who've stood there before you. The view of the Khumbu Icefall and the surrounding peaks is breathtaking, and the sense of presence in such an iconic location is deeply humbling.

This part of the trek is not just about elevation; it is about reflection. By this point, your body has adjusted to the altitude, and the journey becomes more internal. It is where fatigue meets fulfillment and, often, where many trekkers realize just how far they've come not only on the trail but within themselves.

Bonus Gems: Kalapatthar, Gokyo, Namche & Tengboche

As if the three passes and Everest Base Camp weren't enough, this trek also leads you to some of the most spectacular side attractions in the region. Kalapatthar (5,545m) is often considered the best place to see Everest itself, especially at sunrise, when the first light touches the summit in glowing gold. The view is simply unforgettable and arguably more iconic than what you get from Base Camp.

Gokyo Valley, with its series of cobalt-blue glacial lakes, feels like a hidden Himalayan paradise. A short climb up Gokyo Ri (5,357m) gives you sweeping 360-degree views that include Everest, Cho Oyu, Makalu, and Lhotse, all above 8,000 meters. Then there's Namche Bazaar, the main Sherpa hub of the Khumbu region. It is a lively, colorful town full of charm, great for acclimatization, last-minute gear shopping, or simply enjoying a warm drink and some apple pie with a view.

Lastly, Tengboche Monastery, nestled among peaks like Ama Dablam and Thamserku, brings a moment of peace and spirituality to the adventure. The prayer chants echoing through the thin mountain air remind you that this trek is as much a journey of the soul as it is of the body.

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Is It For You?

Make no mistake, this is one of the most demanding treks in Nepal. It spans around 18 to 21 days, often over rugged and icy terrain, and reaches serious altitudes. But if you are reasonably fit, mentally prepared, and looking for an adventure that combines natural beauty, cultural immersion, and physical achievement, the Everest Three Passes Trek could be the experience of a lifetime.

Planning this trek requires good timing, proper gear, and smart acclimatization. If you're interested, I can help you through everything from building a detailed itinerary to understanding permit requirements, weather windows, and more.

So, are you ready to take on the Everest Three Passes Trek and step into the high Himalayas like never before? Let Trek Curator handle all your logistics and complete the toughest pass with ease through professional assistance.

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PRICE INCLUDES

- Pick up from Tribhuvan International Kathmandu Airport and final departure
- 2-night accommodation in Kathmandu (BB plan)
- flight Kathmandu to Lukla to Kathmandu
- License holder trekking leader
- All permits for Sagarmatha National Park, TIMS card, and Trek Card
- Accommodation on the trek
- 3 meals each day during the trek
- First aid medical box
- Trekking map
- Guide salary, lodging, food, and insurance
- All tax, VAT, and service charges

PRICE EXCLUDES

- Nepal Visa Fee
- International flight tickets and extra baggage charges
- All kinds of Drinks
- Extra night accommodation in Kathmandu due to any change in the scheduled itinerary
- Porter
- Travel insurance and Rescue operation costs

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- All personal expenses (laundry, electronic device, and Hot Shower charging cost)
- Sleeping bags and down jackets are made available for rent
- Tip for guides and porters

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DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Kathmandu (1,300 m / 4,265 ft)

Your Himalayan adventure begins as you touch down in the vibrant capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu. Upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, you will be greeted by the representative from Trek Curator and you will be transferred to your hotel in the heart of Thamel or nearby. The bustling streets of Kathmandu greet you with a colorful blend of ancient temples, chaotic traffic, and warm hospitality. After checking in, you can take some time to rest or explore the nearby markets, local eateries, and historic sites like the Garden of Dreams or Durbar Square if time permits. A briefing in the evening will outline your trek, introduce your guide, and assist with any last-minute gear checks or permit preparations.

Dinner tonight is your first chance to enjoy traditional Nepali dal bhat or momo dumplings, fuel for the journey ahead.

Day 2: Kathmandu to Lukla (Flight) – Trek to Phakding (2,651 m / 8,697 ft) – 3 to 4 hrs

The day starts early with a scenic and exhilarating flight from Kathmandu (or Ramechhap during peak seasons) to Lukla, a tiny mountaintop airport perched at 2,860 meters. The 35-minute flight offers your first dramatic glimpses of snow-capped peaks as you glide between lush hills and into the remote Khumbu region. Upon landing, you'll meet the rest of your trekking crew, adjust your gear, and begin your journey with a relatively gentle 3–4 hour trek to Phakding.

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The trail descends slightly through forests of pine and rhododendrons, passing painted mani stones, fluttering prayer flags, and small Sherpa villages. You'll cross the first of many suspension bridges over the Dudh Koshi River. Lunch is usually taken at a riverside lodge in Ghat or Toktok. Arriving in Phakding by late afternoon, you will check into a cozy tea house near the river. Enjoy your dinner and a peaceful night as the sounds of the Khumbu wilderness lull you to sleep.

Day 3: Phakding to Namche Bazaar (3,438 m / 11,279 ft) – 5 to 6 hrs

Today's walk marks your first real ascent and tests your endurance a bit. Leaving Phakding after breakfast, you will follow the Dudh Koshi upstream, crossing several thrilling suspension bridges, including the famous Hillary Bridge near the foot of the climb to Namche. The trail leads through rhododendron forests, past small settlements like Benkar and Monjo, where you'll enter Sagarmatha National Park. After lunch in Jorsalle or a riverside stop, the real challenge begins: a long, steep switchback ascent of over 600 meters.

As you climb, Everest occasionally teases you with its summit peeking out behind Lhotse. Finally, you reach Namche Bazaar, a horseshoe-shaped Sherpa town nestled into the mountainside. This bustling hub is the largest settlement in the Khumbu and a welcome sight after the day's climb. You'll settle into your lodge, enjoy a hearty meal, and relax amidst cafés, bakeries, and local shops.

Day 4: Acclimatization Day in Namche Bazaar – 3 to 4 hrs

Acclimatization is key to any high-altitude trek, and today is dedicated to helping your body adjust. But don't worry, it is not a rest day in the traditional sense. After breakfast, you will set out for an acclimatization hike to the Everest View Hotel (3,880 m), one of

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the highest luxury hotels in the world, offering sweeping panoramas of Everest, Lhotse, Ama Dablam, and Thamserku.

Along the way, you may visit Khunde and Khumjung villages, home to Hillary's School and Hospital, as well as the Khumjung Monastery, where a "Yeti scalp" is displayed. After enjoying tea and mountain views, you'll descend back to Namche for lunch. The afternoon is free, perhaps visit the Sherpa Culture Museum or browse trekking gear shops. Tonight is another warm tea house dinner, paired with the hum of stories from trekkers around the world.

Day 5: Namche Bazaar to Tengboche (3,956 m / 12,979 ft) – 5 to 6 hrs

This segment of the trek rewards you with one of the most scenic walks of the entire journey. You begin by traversing the ridgeline above Namche, enjoying striking views of Everest, Nuptse, and Ama Dablam. The trail gently ascends and then descends steeply into the valley at Phunki Tenga, where you'll stop for lunch amidst forested surroundings beside the river. After refueling, a steady 2-hour climb through fir, pine, and rhododendron forests brings you to the spiritual heart of the Khumbu, Tengboche Monastery. This stunning location, framed by mountain peaks, is not only a sacred Buddhist site but also one of the most photogenic in the region.

Depending on your arrival time, you may witness a prayer ceremony inside the monastery. After checking into your tea house, warm up with a hot meal and enjoy the quiet, reflective energy of this sacred mountain setting.

Day 6: Tengboche to Dingboche (4,380 m / 14,370 ft) – 4 to 5 hrs

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You will wake up to a crisp Himalayan morning with panoramic views of Ama Dablam glowing in the early light. After breakfast, begin a gentle descent through forests and down to Debuche, a quiet hamlet hidden in the woods. Crossing a wooden bridge over the Imja Khola, the trail gradually climbs through Pangboche, one of the oldest Sherpa villages in the region. Here, you might visit the ancient Pangboche Monastery, which houses sacred relics and offers spiritual significance.

The terrain opens up into alpine scrub as you approach Somare and Orsho, where you will likely stop for lunch. From here, the landscape becomes more dramatic and treeless as you climb steadily towards Dingboche, located in a wide, windswept valley under the shadow of towering peaks. Fields of buckwheat and potatoes are protected by stone walls, and yak herds roam freely. Dinner is served at your tea house, where you'll likely spend two nights to acclimatize.

Day 7: Acclimatization Day in Dingboche – 3 to 4 hrs

Today is another important acclimatization day, allowing your body to adapt to the thinning air. After breakfast, embark on a hike to Nangkartshang Hill (approximately 5,100 m), a ridge above Dingboche that offers panoramic views of Makalu, Ama Dablam, Lhotse, and Island Peak. The hike is steep but not technical, and you will be rewarded with some of the best high-altitude vistas of the trek. You will return to Dingboche for lunch and spend the rest of the day relaxing, journaling, reading, or chatting with other trekkers. Tea houses in Dingboche offer warm stoves and hearty meals, perfect for a restful acclimatization day.

Day 8: Dingboche to Lobuche via Kongma La Pass (5,535 m / 18,159 ft) – 9 to 10 hrs

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Prepare for one of the most challenging yet rewarding days of the trek. After an early breakfast, you'll leave Dingboche and begin the ascent toward Kongma La Pass, the first of the three major passes. The trail is steep, remote, and rugged, rising through rocky terrain with cairns marking the route. As you gain altitude, you'll traverse across glacial moraines and eventually summit Kongma La, a spectacular high pass offering panoramic views of Makalu, Lhotse, and the surrounding peaks.

The descent is technical and steep, taking you across the Khumbu Glacier, where caution is essential. After this full-day effort, you will reach Lobuche, a small settlement nestled beneath towering cliffs and the Khumbu Icefall. Settle in for a well-earned meal and deep sleep after a truly epic day.

Day 9: Lobuche to Gorakshep (5,164 m / 16,942 ft) – Afternoon hike to Kalapatthar (5,545 m / 18,192 ft) – 7 to 8 hrs

Your journey continues along the Khumbu Glacier, passing memorial cairns dedicated to climbers who lost their lives on Everest. After a few hours of gradual ascent over glacial moraines, you arrive in Gorakshep, the last settlement before Everest Base Camp.

After an early lunch, the afternoon is devoted to hiking up Kalapatthar, one of the highest trekking points on the route. The steep climb is tough but offers the best panoramic view of Everest, especially at sunset when golden light illuminates the peak. You'll see the Everest summit, South Col, Nuptse, Pumori, and the vast icefields below. Return to Gorakshep for dinner and rest, having reached one of the trek's most iconic highlights.

Day 10: Gorakshep to Dzongla (4,830 m / 15,846 ft) – Morning hike to Everest Base Camp – 8 hrs

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Before breakfast, make an early-morning push to Everest Base Camp (5,364 m). The trail is rocky and weaves through the shifting terrain of the glacier. Flags, stones, and climbers' camps mark the base of the tallest mountain on Earth. Standing here, with the Khumbu Icefall rumbling in the background, is a moment to savor. After soaking in the energy of EBC, return to Gorakshep for a hot breakfast. Then, begin your descent along a less-traveled route toward Dzongla, a peaceful village nestled beneath Cho La Pass. The trail is quieter and features incredible backdrops of Taboche and Cholatse. Arrive by late afternoon, tired but content, and ready for the second pass tomorrow.

Day 11: Dzongla to Gokyo via Cho La Pass (5,420 m / 17,782 ft) – 8 to 9 hrs

Another demanding but unforgettable day awaits. Start early to tackle Cho La Pass, a steep and icy climb that often involves crossing snowfields and a small glacier. Yak tracks and cairns guide the way up to the pass, where prayer flags flutter in the wind against the backdrop of sparkling peaks.

The descent is slippery and requires careful footing over rocks and scree, leading to Thagnak, where you may pause for lunch. From here, continue across the Ngozumpa Glacier, the largest glacier in Nepal, before climbing to Gokyo, a stunning settlement beside the turquoise waters of Gokyo Lake (Dudh Pokhari). You'll arrive by early evening, with time to marvel at the lake reflecting Cho Oyu and the surrounding giants. This tranquil village is a well-earned resting point.

Day 12: Acclimatization Day in Gokyo – Optional Hike to Gokyo Ri (5,357 m / 17,575 ft)

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A well-deserved rest day, but with an optional hike to Gokyo Ri, a 2–3 hour ascent offering arguably the finest panoramic view in the Everest region. From the summit, you'll witness a breathtaking 360-degree vista of Everest, Lhotse, Makalu, and Cho Oyu, along with the sprawling Ngozumpa Glacier and five sacred lakes below.

If you prefer a more relaxing day, explore the village, visit the higher lakes (Fourth and Fifth Gokyo Lakes), or simply relax by the shore, soaking in the peace and beauty of this magical valley. Tonight's dinner is accompanied by stories and laughter from fellow trekkers who've shared similar paths.

Day 13: Gokyo to Marlung via Renjo La Pass (5,360 m / 17,585 ft) – 7 to 8 hrs

Today marks your final and perhaps most scenic pass, Renjo La. The ascent begins early, winding past Gokyo Lake and gradually climbing over stone steps and switchbacks. As you reach the top, a spectacular panorama of the Gokyo Valley, Everest, Makalu, and the Tibetan border ranges spreads before you.

After soaking in the views, the descent to Lungden is long and steep but takes you into a much less trekked region of the Khumbu. The trail follows yak herding routes and remote alpine meadows. Eventually, you reach Marlung, a quiet, traditional Sherpa village far from the usual tourist path. Settle into a peaceful tea house and reflect on the incredible trilogy of passes you've conquered.

Day 14: Marlung to Namche Bazaar (3,438 m / 11,279 ft) – 5 to 6 hrs

Today's descent continues along ancient trade routes used by Tibetan traders. You'll pass through Thame, the birthplace of Tenzing Norgay, and see the historic Thame Monastery perched on the hillside. The trail is serene, winding along a quiet valley with

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views of Kongde and Khumbi Yul Lha. After a stop for lunch in Thamo, you continue through pine forests and re-enter Namche Bazaar, where comfort and civilization await. Return to your familiar tea house, indulge in a bakery treat, and celebrate your return with fellow trekkers. Wi-Fi and hot showers feel like luxuries after days in the high mountains.

Day 15: Namche Bazaar to Lukla (2,860 m / 9,383 ft) – 7 to 8 hrs

Your final day of trekking retraces your steps through Monjo, Phakding, and several suspension bridges as you descend steadily to Lukla. The path is easier on the lungs but tough on the knees, so pace yourself. Stop for lunch in Phakding or Ghat, and enjoy the last riverside meal on the trail. By mid-afternoon, you'll arrive in Lukla, where you can finally take off your boots, raise a toast with your guide and porters, and reminisce about the highs and challenges of the past two weeks. The final dinner is usually a joyful affair, filled with gratitude and celebration.

Day 16: Lukla to Kathmandu (Flight – 35 minutes)

An early morning flight takes you back to Kathmandu, where the city's buzz feels both foreign and familiar after days in the wild. Once you have checked into your hotel, you're free to spend the rest of the day exploring, shopping for souvenirs, or relaxing with a well-earned massage or celebratory dinner. The comforts of city life are a welcome contrast, and your heart will already be full of memories of Everest with the team of Trek Curators.

Day 17: Departure from Kathmandu

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Depending on your flight schedule, enjoy a leisurely breakfast before being transferred to the airport. Trek Curator’s member will arrange your departure to the airport.

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