

WHAT SHOULD YOU CARRY?

Back Pack (Not to weigh more than 20Kgs when packed)

This will have multiple sets of clothes, sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, down jacket, gloves, extra provisions of dry fruits, energy bars, chocolates, extra batteries, toiletries, etc. Backpacks are convenient for porters to carry and are excellent to lug during travel and airport transfers. They keep your hands free. Get a 55 – 60 ltrs pack on the trek.

Daypack

A small one (25-30Ltrs) to carry your essentials will suffice. This will contain your rain poncho, wind cheater, water pouch, camera, head/ hand torch, money pouch, medicines, sunglasses, sun block, energy supplies for the day, packed lunch (if provided), toilet paper, napkins etc.

Waist Pouch

This will be handy to carry small valuables, small cameras, change, money, emergency items like vitamin tablets, lighters, keys, extra rolls, etc.

Clothing

Clothes are not expected to get dirty (at least due to grime). You may rarely get to wash them on the trek. *The guiding principle is to carry what you wear.* Usually people carry more clothes than they will ever need. *Clothes should be enough so that on the coldest day, your backpack is empty.*

Underwear (at least 3 sets extra)

These will tend to get wet due to moisture, occasional rains, sweat and sometimes crossing streams / rivers.

Full - Trousers (at least 2 others than what you wear)

Pack in cotton pants and **not denims!** Denims are extremely bulky to carry and when wet due to sweat or wading, are very heavy and uncomfortable to wear. Track pants can be very comfortable but will have to be supplemented with over pants or long johns (thermals) for the night chills / temperatures. *OR Lightweight and breathable soft shell pants are great for tough outdoor conditions. They are worth investing in if you have the chance and the choice to access them. This is a highly recommended option.*

Shirt / T Shirts (Layers that keep you dry)

Long sleeve shirts (get at least 2) will help protect from sunburns at the same time protect against cold when heading into winds or resting while on trail. These can be worn over half/full sleeve T-shirts (get at least 3) that absorb sweat and are comfortable to wear. "Climalite®" T-shirts from Adidas (Dry-fit from Nike) are quick to dry and a couple of them can be worn over one another to form insulating layers to protect against extreme cold. At any given time, Climalites combined with cotton tees and wind proof jackets may just be enough.

Woolens (Mid-layer – layers that keep you warm and dry)

A woolen sweater will come in handy in case the weather turns extreme. A windproof jacket may do the job equally well but will not be able to "wick" the internal moisture away. Woolens are also bulky to carry but you will not regret lugging them along particularly if you do not have good resistance to cold. Multiple layers of Climalites and cotton tees will do the job equally good without adding too much load to your pack. A fleece jacket is extremely effective to keep warm. Fleece is lighter, warmer and can be

easily worn as a mid-layer. A down filled jacket or thick sweat shirt may work great in not very cold conditions.

Windproof jacket (Also called shell – layers that come in direct contact with elements)

This is the outermost layer you wear in very cold conditions or in windy conditions. This can also be used to repel light rain or snow. This is like a thick (not filled) wind-cheater.

Shorts

There will be days when you are feeling hot and the weather permits you to be in shorts for some time. Split pants may be an easy choice.

Balaclava / Monkey Cap / Ear Band

All made of wool or micro-fleece, these will come in handy for extreme weather and while heading into winds. Fleece monkey caps, easily available at many shops are extremely light and warm. These do not cause the irritation of wool on your scalp or skin when worn over the face.

Cap

The sun and the chill are both to be guarded against while at high altitude. A cap is essential as it will help conserve some heat that is lost through the head while walking in cold conditions and save from hypothermia. Some caps have a neck protector and can be very useful.

Rain Jacket (Also see windproof jacket section above)

There is nothing you will wish you got along at high altitudes than good rain gear. This serves a dual purpose; first it will come in handy during rains and secondly this will contribute to keep you warm. And when we say good rain gear, it must stand up to the test of heavy rains and high winds without any seepage on the inside. Look for one with an attached hood. In case you have a good wind proof and warmer jacket that is not water proof, the best thing to supplement is a rainponcho made of durable plastic.

Towel

Use the "Gamcha" variety. They are lightweight, take little space and dry faster.

Hand-gloves

These must be thick and wind-proof. Some leather gloves work well, but when wet, leather gloves may not be effective in protecting from frost-bites in extreme cold. Woolen gloves work well in hill-stations only. On treks, get gloves or mittens made of artificial material and ensure that these can be worn over at least one layer of woolen gloves or fleece gloves / liners.

Socks

Woolen socks (at least 1 pair) will be helpful during the walks over high passes and cold nights; get cotton ones (2-3 pairs) for easy walks and backups. Thinner nylon socks (1 pairs) will give added protection (insulation) and bulk to your feet when the walks get chilly. **Socks taken have to be used ones.** Please avoid new socks. If new, please ensure they've been worn atleast 4-5 times before the journey commences. Else it'll be blister time on the trail and these can be painful while walking.

Shoes

Good firm shoes that are covered from all sides and have enough volume to be able to take two pair of socks worn one over the other. Shoes should last you the trek, have a **thick leather upper and deep**

treads. You may want to treat your shoe leather with wax coating to make them resistant to water. Always remember to “break” into them before you head out. Remember them blisters?! Consider your adventure as good as over even before it’s started if you get them. (Also visit www.debolinsen.in and see Gear Up/Gears for the kind of shoes needed)

Floater / Sandals

Floater/Sandals will be comfortable to travel in and move about at the end of each day. However there may be days when you may still have to live in your shoes. Ensure that your floaters/sandals can be worn over at least one pair of socks.

Medical Tape / Duct Tape

Will be handy to repair sheared footwear or to take care of the blisters and scratches.

Small sewing kit

This will help sew up those buttons and small gashes (in case!) to your clothing. Besides you can never underestimate the utility of a good long thread and a sharp needle in the outdoors.

Penknife

Want to slice fruits? Or chop that loose lace? Or want to take out that thorn stuck in your shoes? There is more to a penknife than what you can think of! A Swiss Army Knife with maximum features is most ideal.

Match Box / cigarette lighter

Whether you smoke or you don’t, a matchbox can create fire, one of the five essential elements. Keep it, just as part of the emergency kit.

Whistle

A whistle can attract attention of people in case you have gotten into some kind of difficulty, either in the dark or if passers-by cannot see you or if you are too weak to shout to attract attention. Attach a string and hang the whistle around your neck so that it is always with you. Go for a whistle which has a good shrill pitch, sacrifice aesthetics if you have to. *The internationally recognised distress signal is 6 blasts of the whistle with a 1 minute break and then repeated. The reply is 3 blasts with the same pause.*

Spare boot laces

These are something you never remember to pack since your existing laces are just fine. You would probably never need a spare pair of laces, but be rest assured that they are going to snap on that one trip when you are not carrying a spare pair. It does not take any space; just pack a couple of spares. There may be other things you might wish to tie.

Torch with extra batteries (Mandatory)

This will be one of the most often used extra in your kit. Make sure it works well, before you pack it in. And don’t forget to pack extra batteries. They’ll be useful wherever needed. Head Torch preferred.

Pen & Paper

Another essential for the long form narrative you may indulge in or just for taking notes and directions. A note book and pen is very useful to document your journey. Places visited, names and addresses of friends you make along the way, distances of various places from important locations, etc.

Goggles / Sun Shades

These will be helpful during walks in the sun and the snow. Get those which have UV protection, are anti-glare and anti-reflection. Good sunglasses are needed even when it's cloudy. Avoid fashionable ones and rely more on functionality. Ultraviolet light and radiation is very high in higher altitudes. In extreme cases you might end up with snow blindness or retinopathy.

Water Bottle or a Water Pouch (Mandatory)

A capacity of at least 2 litres is essential. Always top it up before you set out on the trail. You may need more and we suggest you to take extra if you can take the load. Else the refills can happen at the nearest water source in the mountains or every morning before we leave the lodge. Water purification tablets are an added asset. *A water pouch is highly recommended for its functional ease. Also remember one way to prevent or at least delay the onset of high altitude illness is to drink lots and lots of water, almost to the point of nausea.*

Zip-locks / Zip-pouches

These will be useful to pack in just about everything. They will also help to sort items in your backpack while packing every day. They are great value and keep all your clothes and valuables safe from moisture and seepage.

Cameras

We all have digital cameras these days. Logistically it means charging the camera batteries at the nearest available point, keeping them warm at night, tucked away in woolen socks, in the sleeping bag or any other place which will prevent them from losing charge. Batteries drain quicker in cold weather. Of course you may always choose to carry multiple sets of batteries for your digital equipment. A video camera is a very good option if you want to document your journey in moving pictures. Carry lots of tapes.

High energy snacks

Food may be some distance away and it's always good to be prepared in case you need to skip a meal. Carry lots of chocolates and dry fruits are good too - cashew nuts, peanuts, raisins, dates, etc - small in volume but huge in energy.

Primary Medical Kit (Mandatory)

- ✓ Some Band Aid strips / Johnson-plast / Elastoplasts tape
- ✓ Cotton / cotton gauze
- ✓ Dispirin (headaches)
- ✓ Avomine (motion sickness)
- ✓ Antacid tablets (Gelusil)
- ✓ Paracetamol / Metacin / Crocin (This works well for altitude as well)
- ✓ Dyrade or any other equivalent (Works well for the 'runs')
- ✓ Brufen (don't think the trail will be that painful, but it's always handy; and have one along with an antacid to avoid getting acidity)
- ✓ Combiflam (for over all body aches)
- ✓ A few satches of Electoral
- ✓ A strip of Diamox (for AMS prevention. Diamox is also a Sulpha drug. Some may be allergic to it. Please consult your doctor before you consider including it. It will make you pee often. Hence the water intake will high. Other options are paracetamols and garlic!)
- ✓ Volini Gel /Omnigel for sprains etc.

- ✓ Vitamin supplements
- ✓ Cough Lozenges
- ✓ Your own prescribed medicines if any

Toiletries

- ✓ Bath Soap (Mandatory for the few opportunities you may get for steaming geyser baths. Very refreshing in the biting cold. Geyser baths cost Rs.200/- in Nepali rupees)
- ✓ Soap Paper
- ✓ Detergent Soap (if you choose to wash your clothes in the cold!)
- ✓ Sunscreen lotion ~ SPF30 or higher. (Mandatory)
- ✓ Lip Balm / Petroleum Jelly / Lip gel stick. (Mandatory)
- ✓ Tooth Brush (Mandatory)
- ✓ Tooth Paste: a resource not everyone needs to carry. Pool the same to make your pack lighter.
- ✓ Shampoo sachets / Small bottle: The small bottle can be bought from a pool to share instead of each one carrying too much load. Besides empty sachet covers may just be an environmental eyesore.
- ✓ Toilet Paper – 1 full roll (Mandatory)
- ✓ Face tissues – a couple of hand-packs will suffice.
- ✓ Mosquito Repellent (Mandatory): May be needed in certain places. This may also be used to keep flies, insects away on trail.
- ✓ Small packet of salt to counter leeches when it rains. Salt will help detach them.

WHAT YOU NEED NOT CARRY

Tote Bags

The ones you cannot carry on your back will be the biggest liability. Though we will hire dzos / yaks / ponies etc. for the trail, while travel and during some walks and emergencies, you may have to carry these all by yourself. You will curse yourself for choosing the tote bags or the shoulder travel bags. A backpack will certainly be a boon. Besides keeping both your hands free, will help you keep your balance while the hands can be used for grabbing supports / walking sticks etc.

Valuables

Keep them at home. The outdoors are no place for them. On some occasions, when cold metal comes in contact with moist skin, the results are metal bites. When the metal turns very cold (when temperatures drop below freezing) and sticks to the skin it freezes the skin moisture causing local frostbites. A very painful condition!

Jeans / Denim trousers / jackets

These are a no-no for treks as they will be either soaked by your own sweat or rains / river crossings. Wet denims are a liability to lug as they do not dry fast. Denims are thick and may provide only temporary respite from cold. Besides when wet with sweat they may chaff your skin. They are also uncomfortable for long treks.

Electronics

Many electronics refuse to work below freezing or in cold conditions. Cold electronics gadgets consume more battery and hence you will have to carry extra batteries and hence extra load. Each additional pencil battery (*if applicable*) can add weight. Plus there's the problem of disposing them. Used batteries

are considered to be one of the biggest environmental hazards. Protecting your electronics from the elements may pose another challenge. These also attract the attention of locals/ porters and may induce them into theft.

Heavy material

Any heavy material, which you feel may add load to your backpack. Consider the absolute necessity to carry such items and the occasions when and how many times you may use the same, before you pack them. Such items may include things like heavy key chains, chain locks, bulky perfume / deo-bottles, glass bottles for oil / liquids, etc.

Happy Packing!
