

Ama Dablam

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Tim MoseDale

for Climbing, Guiding & Instruction



A trip to the 'Matterhorn of The Himalayas.'

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The maps report Ama Dablam as being anything from 6814m to 6856m – but one thing for sure is that it is well over 22,000 feet. Ama Dablam commands the Everest region and is by far and away the most impressive peak along the Khumbu trail. People who trek in the region will always come away with a few mountain names added to their vocabulary, and Ama Dablam will definitely be one of them.

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This trip not only takes in the sights and sounds of Kathmandu, but also the historic trading post of Namche Bazaar and the world famous monastery at Tengboche. What better way to acclimatise and get ourselves ready for an awesome route on the mountain of a lifetime?

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This itinerary is based on a 4 week Saturday to Sunday period

Day 1 - Depart country of origin.

Day 2 - Arrive Kathmandu (KTM). You will be met at the airport and transferred to a 4* Hotel on the outskirts of Thamel. We will then pop in to town for our first group meal. All meals are included in the full inclusive trip cost and that doesn't mean that we go to third rate eateries—typically we go to the likes of Fire & Ice, Roadhouse Café, Rum Doodle, Krua Thai, Everest Steak House, Northfields etc. Far better to all eat together (and have the meal paid for) and start to get to know each other than for some people to go to one restaurant and others to another, which often happens when people have to pay for the meals themselves.

Day 3 - Sightseeing trip in the morning (transport, guide and all entrance fees are included). Meet for lunch at the fantastic culinary paradise that is Mike's Breakfast on the outskirts of Thamel. Sort gear / final preparations for the expedition in the afternoon.

Day 4 - Early morning flight to Lukla (2,800m). This is the flight of a lifetime. After our early morning departure we'll arrive in Lukla and transfer to our lodge for breakfast. I'll then relieve you of your crampons, ice axes, mountain boots, harness etc as well as gear that you won't be needing until we get to Base Camp. After sorting the gear in to loads we start trekking. We follow the easy trail, stopping for lunch along the way (again all meals en route are included in the price) and gradually descend in to the valley bottom. We use teahouse accommodation for the trek in and our first stop is at Phak Ding (2,650m) or, better, Monjo (2,750m).

Day 5 - After breakfast we start on the trail along the side of the Dudh Kosi (Milk River) which originates from the Khumbu Glacier some 30 miles away. If we have stopped the previous night in Monjo it makes for a very easy transition to Namche Bazaar because we are ahead of all the crowds who generally stop at Phak Ding. In Namche Bazaar we convene at the Everest Bakery for Coffee and Chocolate Doughnuts, then have lunch in Kala Pattar Lodge before having some tourist time to check out Namche. After another quick trip to the Everest Bakery we then continue along the trail to stay with Tashi and Lakpa at Kyanjuma. All in all about 3 and a half to 5 hours of walking.

Day 6 - Rest day. When we say 'Rest Day' we don't actually mean that we rest all



day! We'll trek up to the Everest View Hotel, a fantastic colonial style building, where we have drinks on the veranda. The amazing view includes Taweche, Nuptse, Everest, Lhotse, Thamesurku, Kang Tega and, of course, Ama Dablam. We then drop down to the villages of Khumjung and Khunde (actually the 'capital' of The Khumbu but far quieter than the busy Everest Base Camp trail) and have lunch before descending back to Kyanjuma (3,600m) where we stay at Tashi's place — The Ama Dablam View Lodge. Tashi, and her husband Lakpa (2 times Everest Summiteer), have an excellent reputation and consequently run one of the busiest teahouses along the trail. We visit Tashi's prayer room where she is happy to tell us about the Buddhist religion and answer any questions.

Day 7 - Today we drop all the way down to the Dudh Kosi and have a drink at Phunki Tenga, before making our way steadily back up to Tengboche where we stop for lunch.

After visiting the monastery and looking around the visitor centre we drop down through the beautiful Rhododendron Forest to Deboche. A little further on we cross the Dudh Kosi again and continue along to Pangboche. We stay at the Sonam Lodge Teahouse which is run by Germin Sherpa and his wife. Germin has summited Everest a number of times as well as Cho Oyu and Ama Dablam. Another awesome family for us to stay with. It is the closest teahouse to our mountain and Ama Dablam dominates the dining room window. In the evening we'll have a chat about Acute Mountain Sickness as well as other altitude related issues.

Day 8 - After breakfast we visit the monastery at 'Upper Pangboche.' This is a beautiful quiet village just 15 minutes easy walking above Pangboche. After our first 'puja' (blessing) of the trip we drop back down to Sonam Lodge for an early lunch. We then cross the Dudh Kosi for the last time and make our way up to our Base Camp (4,450m). We don't stay at the regular Base Camp location, but prefer to use a much more exclusive site at an old landing strip. This is a much better, quieter location and the water supply is much cleaner. I'll introduce you to our staff who will be working with us for the next fortnight.



Day 9 - Rest and technical training day. We have a very thorough session on the use of jumars, belay devices, prussiks and appropriate techniques for dealing with fixed ropes (See Note 1). There are comprehensive notes on my website about how we deal with fixed ropes in ascent and descent which is recommended reading before the trip. But it is still good to put all this in to practise one last time before we start to use these skills for real. We also cover radio procedures, mountain skills and have a look at the comprehensive 1st aid kit.



Day 10 - Base Camp Puja and rest day. In actual fact Day 9 and Day 10 are interchangeable depending upon how people are feeling and which is the most auspicious day for the Base Camp puja. After the puja, which is conducted by a lama who visits from Pangboche, we will have time to start sorting the loads for our first carry. For those with the inclination we can also go for a leg stretch to acquaint ourselves with the beginning of the route to ABC.

From now on this is a suggested itinerary. Generally speaking the group will soon split in to three sub groups—those who are acclimatising well and are slightly ahead of the schedule, those on the itinerary and there will be some who will require a little extra time and will be slightly behind the itinerary. This allows people to develop their own schedule according to how they feel from day to day and allows for plenty of flexibility. I will make sure that the logistics are in place to cover all eventualities and that staff are allocated appropriately.

Day 11 - Acclimatisation day. After our final preparations for our first foray up the hill we will have an early lunch at Base Camp. We start along the easy trail and then gradually gain height along the ridge. There are a couple of steeper sections that will get the lungs going, and then the angle eases off for the final 30 minutes to Advance Base Camp, which is sited on some flat platforms created at around 5,350m. (2½ - 6 hrs). After delivering our first load we drop back down to Base Camp for afternoon tea.

Day 12 - Our first day for real on the hill. Some folk may want a packed lunch to make an early start and others may opt for an early lunch at Base Camp. Either which way we are going on the hill for our first sleep. So we follow the trail back to ABC and settle in for the night. The views are utterly amazing and the sunset is usually pretty spectacular.

Day 13 - After your first night it's up to you to start deciding how you want your acclimatisation schedule to pan out. If your first night wasn't so good then it's probably best to drop down to Base Camp for a rest. If your first night at ABC was reasonable then another night

is suggested. If your first night at ABC was fantastic then what about pushing on up to C1—it's 'only' an hour and a half away and another 250m elevation.

Day 14 - Depending on where you are depends on what you do. Let's assume you dropped to Base Camp for a rest. In which case after a leisurely Base Camp breakfast we rest for the morning. After an early lunch (or pack lunch if preferred) we then trek back up to ABC in the afternoon. It's much easier the second time around because we will have left most of our gear there from the first visit.

Day 15 - It's now time to move and sleep further up the hill (as mentioned, some people may already have pushed ahead on the itinerary if they have acclimatised well). We pack up and shoulder sacks to make our way up to the slabs below Camp 1 where we'll have our harnesses, helmets and climbing gear stashed. We'll spend the rest of the afternoon brewing up and rehydrating whilst enjoying the awesome views. Sleep at C1 (5,800m).



Day 16 - Another easy start to the day. After breakfast and plenty of brews we'll pop the harnesses on and recce the route along towards Camp 2. The route is fabulous and is on great rock. The majority of the going is very pleasant scrambling and there are a couple of sections of easy climbing. After mooching as far as we fancy along the ropes we'll return to Camp 1 to get the cookers on again. 2nd night at Camp 1.

Day 17 - Rest day. We pack the gear up and leave everything we can at C1. We descend the slabs and stash our climbing gear and then drop back down to Base Camp.

Day 18 - Rest Day. The point to remember is that every time you are on the hill you won't eat enough, drink enough or sleep enough. So rest days such as this at Base Camp are vitally important to catch up—so the nibbles are out again and we take in another film for those with the energy.

Day 19 - After an early lunch we trek back up to Camp 1.

Day 20 - We'll be back on familiar terrain for most of today but this time we'll be in big boots and have heavy sacks on—it's an exciting time. The route today culminates with the Yellow Tower which, even with fixed ropes, is no push over. Thankfully Camp 2 (5,950m) is only another 5 to 10 minutes away. Time to get the cooker on again. (See Note 2).



Day 21 - Today is a big day. We don crampons and after a short traverse we find ourselves ascending the Grey Couloir. This is over soon enough and at the top of the Grey Couloir we hang a right and follow an easy snow slope to a rock wall. We traverse across the base of this before another couloir leads to mushroom ridge. Once we reach the top of the couloir we make our way along mushroom ridge to sleep at Camp 2.9 (6,250m) (See Note 2).

Day 22 - The biggest day of the lot! I don't want to give too much away but basically we make our way up well to the right of The Dablam, cross the Bergschrund and then follow a snow ridge all the way to the top. Bring your camera because the views are totally awesome and includes Cho Oyu (6th highest), Pumori, Nuptse, Everest, Lhotse (4th highest), Makalu (5th highest) and Kangchengjunga (3rd highest). (6856m). We then return to Camp 2.9 or even Camp 2 depending on how long it took to get to the summit.



Day 23 - Spare Day (See Note 3).

Day 24 - Clear all Camps back to Base Camp. Arrange porter loads.

Day 25 - Meet porters. Trek to Tashi's place. Get outrageously pissed. (See Note 4).

Day 26 - Trek to Namche Bazaar. Have coffee and doughnuts. Continue down to Phak Ding.

Day 27 - Trek to Lukla.

Day 28 - Fly to KTM. Shower. Shave. Lunch. Coffee. Free time. Beer. Steak. Beer.

Day 29 - Last minute shopping. Depart KTM early evening (See Note 5).

Day 30 - Arrive home.



Notes :-

1. Whilst the staff / client ratio is very generous there may be times when people may be moving independently up and down lower parts of the mountain. To that end we will need a training day before we start on the mountain so that everyone is clear as to how to use the equipment to negotiate any fixed ropes safely up to Camp 1. Please note that the training day is not a day where you should be learning to abseil. Beyond Camp 1 there is always a member of staff.
2. Optional depending upon how people feel and whether there are other parties going for the summit at the same time. Some members may wish to go to the summit from Camp 2 and return to Camp 2 (or even Camp 1 or, at a push, Base Camp). Some may wish to use Camp 2 en route to Camp 2.9 and go for the summit from there (returning to Camp 2.9, 2, 1 or Base Camp). Others may wish to miss out Camp 2 altogether and go from Camp 1 to Camp 2.9 and then to the summit. The itinerary is designed to incorporate enough flexibility to cater for all of the options that are required to fulfil individual need and aspirations.
3. This is a contingency day that can be used at whatever time during the trip that we feel appropriate. It could be that it is used as a second summit day, a poor weather day, to spend an extra day at Namche Bazaar on the way out or whatever. Basically we don't want to use it too early on if we can help it. There are also other days built in to this itinerary that can be shuffled and used to take up any slack and we could even miss out Camp 2 or Camp 2.9 (See note 3).
4. Optional - but mine's a San Miguel (sub note to Americans - pissed is Eng slang for drunk).
5. It is not to be relied upon to depart Lukla in the morning and to catch your international flight the same afternoon (although this is possible – I had to do it in October '01 due to bad weather in Lukla for a couple of days) – hence arriving KTM Day 28 and departing 24 to 36 hours later. It's also nice to have some time for us to all unwind together and enjoy the hustle and bustle of the Thamel District of Kathmandu – not to mention a pizza and fresh salad.

Please note that this is an outline itinerary and during the trip it may be necessary to make some alterations depending upon weather, personal acclimatisation and our progress on the mountain.

What is it going to cost?

The trip cost—which includes just about everything you can think of from KTM and back again—costs US\$5,950. This quote may go up slightly but only if there is a significant increase in the peak fees, LO fees or similar. You will be consulted if this is the case.

If you want to make your own way in to the Khumbu and meet at Ama Dablam Base Camp, or if you want to just join the permit and are arranging all your own logistics, then please contact me so that I can give you a competitive quote.

So why pay in the region of US\$7,500 to US\$17,000(!) (and still have to pay for your meals and sight seeing in Kathmandu) when you can do it for sooooo much less but still get the same quality and better staff ratios?

Please remember that these estimates do not include international flights (allow approx £750).

Equipment Requirements

If you are already a year round mountaineer then you will probably have most of the appropriate equipment required for the day to day trekking and mountaineering and the only notable extra may be a heavy duty kit bag for your belongings (you could use a large rucksack but the porters may damage it).

I provide a comprehensive kit list for the trip itself but some notable items that people may need to think about which may affect the finances are :-

- Plastic Mountaineering Boots
- 4/5 season sleeping bag (available to buy or hire in KTM. Cheaper than the UK although somewhat bulkier and heavier)
- 3/4 season Base Camp sleeping bag—saves carrying 2Kg of feathers up and down the hill if you have 2 sleeping bags (available to buy or hire in KTM. Cheaper than the UK although somewhat bulkier and heavier)
- Down Jacket (again available in KTM – cheaper and bulkier).
- Thick Thermarest / 4 season sleeping mat
- Jumar
- Alpine ice tool
- (New?) sharp crampons

What is included

- Peak Fees
- Liaison Officer
- Sirdar
- Some of the strongest Climbing Sherpas in The Khumbu
- Administration fee for my agents in Nepal - I use one of the premiere trekking and climbing agencies in KTM. They have a proven track record of providing an excellent service, are able to provide full support throughout the expedition and have a tried and tested emergency call out procedure should the need arise.
- My fee for administration and planning prior to the expedition and technical support, guiding, instruction, planning and logistics during the expedition
- 2nd Western leader (larger groups only)
- Trekking and accommodation arrangements to / from Base Camp and during our stay at Base Camp on a full board basis (this includes 3 course meals, service of cook crew, full porter support to / from Base Camp, camping equipment, kitchen tent, dining tent, toilet tent, kitchen utensils etc)
- Food and fuel above Base Camp
- Comprehensive 1st aid kit including antibiotics and medicines for use at altitude
- Insurance for Climbing Sherpas
- Insurance for the porters and support staff
- Internal flights KTM / Lukla / KTM
- Departure Tax KTM / Lukla / KTM
- Airport transfers in KTM
- National Park entrance fees
- 4* Hotel arrangements in Kathmandu
- Feeding arrangements in Kathmandu
- Sightseeing tour in Kathmandu including entrance fees, guide and transport

What is not included

- International flight (allow approx £750-£950)
- Entry visa (approx £40)
- Inoculation / vaccination costs
- Travel and medical insurance – MUST include helicopter rescue and repatriation
- Hire of any equipment for personal use
- Tips for the staff (approx US\$120)
- Climbing Sherpa Summit Bonus (approx US\$300)
- Excess baggage charges
- Drinks with meals in Kathmandu
- Any drinks and/or food during the trek other than that which is provided by the crew (e.g. soft drinks, snacks, alcohol, etc etc).
- Spending money
- Any costs incurred due to leaving the expedition early

Who is it for?

If you are a seasoned all round mountaineer and are wanting to do your first Himalayan peak then this trip will be right up your alley. Or perhaps you have visited Nepal already and want to do something higher or harder than Mera or Island peak. Alternatively maybe you are just awe inspired by the name, sight and size of the mountain and just want to give it a go.

The terrain on Ama Dablam is fantastic and consistently easier than it looks (it is a pretty daunting mountain from afar). Having said that a good head for heights and being happy with exposure does help.

People often hear that there are sections of VS or HVS climbing, that it is Scottish grade III out of Camp 2.9 or that you have to be able to do 5a moves. In all honesty the harder sections are fixed and it is up to you, on a personal basis, to decide how you want to climb the mountain.

Some folk will want to solely jumal to get to the top, some may want to clip a cows tail in to the fixed ropes and climb the harder sections safe in the knowledge that they are protected, and others will perhaps want to do a combination of various techniques. It is entirely a personal choice and since we all have different thresholds it is up to you to decide how you want to tackle it (and if you want to carry all your own loads and do it Alpine style then go for it).

But regardless of all that, rest assured that I conduct a comprehensive training session at Base Camp, on appropriate terrain, to cover all the situations that you may be faced with.

If you need to brush up on your crampon and ice axe techniques then why not come to Scotland for a few days this winter where you can prepare for the trip? If you have already signed up for the trip, and paid a deposit, you'll get a 15% discount on the instruction fees (minimum 2 days). And you can always bring a friend to split the cost.

Staffing

The ratios that I use are between 1:2 and 1:3 depending on the group size - so for a group of 6 there will be myself and 2 Climbing Sherpas and for a group of 12 there will be myself and 4 or 5 Climbing Sherpas.

So you can be safe in the knowledge that all situations can be dealt with swiftly by your staff.

But please remember that this is NOT a guided trip. If you wish to hire a personal Climbing Sherpa then please contact me and I can provide you with a quote.

A Special Note on The Political Situation

In the past few years Nepal has made the news due to a variety of different political and diplomatic incidents. Despite these hiccoughs Nepal in general, and the popular trekking regions in particular, have actually remained very safe areas for travellers and mountaineers. On a particularly poignant note the Maoists have specifically said that tourists are not a target (they realise the benefits of our trade and custom. Without the annual influx of tourists the entire Nepalese economy will suffer, which will undoubtedly be detrimental to the way the population feels about the Maoists and potentially cause a backlash).

Bearing in mind that we have London bombings, occasional riots, the odd national strike, frequent flooding, BSE, Foot and Mouth, warm beer and The Spice Girls - if a tourist were to ask you if the UK is safe to visit what would you say?...

By the same token Nepal is still a safe country to travel to if you go to the safe areas. And you can rest assured that The Khumbu is about as safe as you get.

If the situation were to become so serious that our governments were to decree that Nepal was not safe for us to travel to then naturally the trip will need to be postponed or cancelled.

Friends and Family

If you have friends or family who would like to come to the Khumbu, but who don't necessarily want to climb Ama Dablam, then an alternative itinerary can be arranged. For as little as £750 they could accompany you to Base Camp and then return to Kathmandu - an excellent 2 week trip from the UK for those with limited time available. Alternatively they may wish to explore the Khumbu, climb Pokalde, visit Kala Pattar for views of Everest, trek to Gokyo and climb Gokyo Ri or do side trips from Ama Dablam Base Camp. They can decide to go tea house trekking with a porter or be fully supported throughout - please ask for further details.

If there are only 4 or 5 people interested in Ama Dablam then the options are that we try to find another couple to make up the numbers, or that a small supplement will need to be charged.

You will be billed on the assumption that we have minimum numbers, even if more people sign up for the trip. That way you won't be refunded only to be re-invoiced if other people sign up and then drop out again. Appropriate refunds will be issued on your return to UK once the garbage deposit has been recovered and any losses or damages have been deducted.

What is next?

- To secure a booking I will require a non refundable deposit of 25% of the trip cost per person along with a completed application form (please ask if you need one).
- I will then need 50% of the outstanding balance to be settled 6 months prior to the start of the trip.
- At this stage I will require you to forward your flight itinerary (I can provide a good contact for your flight requirements).
- I will also require a copy of your trip insurance which **MUST** cover helicopter rescue and repatriation and will also cover you for lost baggage, legitimate cancellations, missed departures, loss of passport etc (the sooner you take this insurance out the better since you are covered from the day of payment for cancellation cover).
- Lastly I will require the final balance to be paid in full 12 weeks prior to the trip.

Your Expedition Account

All payments are to be in Pounds Sterling. You will be invoiced according to the services required and your expedition account will be credited with any payments received. Any bank charges and currency fluctuations will be your responsibility.

Cancellation Policy

If, for legitimate, unforeseeable reasons, you should need to cancel your place on the trip then the following cancellation refunds will apply :-

- From booking to 9 months prior to trip - Loss of deposit
- From 9 months to 6 months prior to trip - 35% refund
- From 6 months to 3 months prior to trip - 20% refund
- Less than 3 months prior to trip - No refund

To that end please make sure that you take out appropriate insurance.

Why timmosedale.co.uk?

- I provide a personal service throughout - from your initial contact to standing on top of our mountain. To that end you will not be getting conflicting advice from someone in an office who hasn't actually been there, as happens with many trekking companies.
- I am a full member of The Association of Mountaineering Instructors and a qualified instructor holding my Mountain Instructors Award, Winter ML, MIC training and current 1st aid certificate appropriate to the outdoors and wilderness environment. This is quite rare amongst trek leaders, many of whom are totally unqualified - but that is not to say that they are not good at their jobs.
- Since I have no office, admin staff, brochures and general business overheads I offer quality treks at very competitive prices. I use the same in-country agents as many of the big trekking companies and so you can be assured that the quality will be the same. The difference is that with me you will be getting incredible value for money.
- With my experience working at Needlesports in Keswick, and having conducted a number of gear reviews for On The Edge and Climb magazine, I can advise you quite specifically on what gear and equipment is appropriate for your trip.
- Lastly, I am an active year round climber and mountaineer, have trekked numerous times in the Khumbu and successfully climbed and guided on Lobuche East (5 times), Pokalde (7 times), Island Peak (8 times), Mera Peak (twice), Ama Dablam (14 times). I have also guided and summited Cho Oyu as well as summiting Everest 4 times—once from the North in 2005 and 3 times with clients from the South (1 x 2011 and 2 x 2013). I have numerous Alpine seasons, Greenland expeditions (over 50 first ascents), Scottish winters, and over two and a half thousand rock climbs under my belt. You are in experienced, safe and qualified hands.

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Extensions

If you wish to extend your stay with a visit to Chitwan National Park, a rafting trip, bungee jump, mountain biking, cultural tour of Bhaktapur, sunny bolted climbing in Thailand or whatever takes your fancy, then please ask for details and I can advise accordingly.

Added Value for YOU

Once you have signed up for the trip, and paid a deposit, I will be available to come and meet you to discuss the trip in more detail if you require (mainland UK - free if within 100 miles of Keswick, £15 supplement per 100 miles thereafter. Elsewhere please ask for cost). Alternatively you can arrange to come to The Lakes and we can meet up there.

I have a guest house in Keswick so by all means come and stay where we can discuss kit and equipment, you can make any last minute purchases at Needlesports and I will be available to do a slide show to put things in to perspective.

As mentioned earlier I will give a 15% discount on instruction fees for any winter days out (minimum 2 days). Alternatively you can get a £50 discount on the cost of the trip per day for any summer climbing / instruction days.

You can call or e mail me anytime and I will be available to answer your questions.

And lastly it will be me who is your personal contact from initial enquiry to post expedition pizza in Kathmandu - which means continuity.

Any Questions?

If you have any queries then please do not hesitate to contact me on climb@timmosedale.co.uk - I reply to all e mails as soon as I receive them so if you don't hear back immediately please bear in mind that I may be out of reach for a few days.

Alternatively you can call me on 017687 71050 or 07980 521079.

In the meantime 'Live the dream'

Yours



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