

Gokyo Valley Trek

One of the most popular alternatives to the Everest Base Camp Trek, the Gokyo Valley Trek leads to a quiet, tranquil valley of 19 lakes of religious importance...

DURATION	DIFFICULTY	MAX ALTITUDE
14 days	Moderate	5,357m

Highlights

- Visit the sacred Gokyo Lakes, a system of glacier-fed lakes held holy by Hindus and Buddhists
- Climb Gokyo Ri (5,357m) for one of the best panoramic views in the Everest region, including 4 of the world's 6 highest peaks
- Walk alongside the Ngozumpa Glacier, the longest glacier in the Himalaya
- Take a quieter, less-crowded alternative to the main Everest Base Camp trail
- Pass through remote Sherpa villages including Phortse, Machherma, and Dole
- See close-up views of Cho Oyu (8,201m), Makalu (8,475m), and Mount Everest (8,848m)
- Spot Himalayan wildlife, including tahr, in Sagarmatha National Park
- Acclimatize gradually through the forested lower valleys of Sagarmatha National Park

Itinerary

Day	Activity	Walking Hr	Max Altitude
Day 1	Arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal, and transfer to the hotel by private vehicle	—	1,300m
	A private vehicle and representative meet you at Tribhuvan International Airport for the transfer to your hotel. Meet your guide for a trip briefing and gear check, then rest overnight in Kathmandu.		
Day 2	Kathmandu sightseeing and trek preparation	—	1,300m
	A day to explore Kathmandu's UNESCO World Heritage sites, sort last-minute trekking gear, and go over the route ahead with your guide.		
Day 3	Flight from Kathmandu to Lukla and trek to Phakding	3-4 hrs	2,800m
	A scenic mountain flight into Lukla, followed by a gentle walk down to Phakding along the Dudh Koshi river.		
Day 4	Trek from Phakding to Namche Bazaar	5-6 hrs	3,440m
	The trail crosses the Dudh Koshi on high suspension bridges and enters Sagarmatha National Park at Monjo, before climbing steadily to Namche Bazaar.		
Day 5	Acclimatization day in Namche Bazaar	—	3,440m
	A short acclimatization hike for mountain views, with free time to explore Namche's market, bakeries, and shops.		
Day 6	Trek from Namche Bazaar to Phortse Village	5-6 hrs	3,810m
	A quieter trail branches off the main Everest Base Camp route, climbing through forest with a good chance of spotting Himalayan tahr, to the village of Phortse.		
Day 7	Trek from Phortse to Machherma	5-6 hrs	4,470m
	A gradually climbing valley walk along the Dudh Koshi, with views opening up towards Cho Oyu as the trail reaches Machherma.		
Day 8	Trek from Machherma to Gokyo	5-6 hrs	4,800m
	The trail climbs above the Ngozumpa Glacier before arriving at the shores of Dudh Pokhari, the first of the sacred Gokyo lakes.		
Day 9	Hike to Gokyo Ri and back to Gokyo	5-6 hrs	5,357m
	A pre-dawn climb to Gokyo Ri for a panoramic sunrise view over the Ngozumpa Glacier, with Everest, Lhotse, Makalu, and Cho Oyu all visible at once, before returning to Gokyo.		

Day	Activity	Walking Hr	Max Altitude
Day 10	Trek from Gokyo to Dole	3-4 hrs	4,200m
	A descent back down the valley, retracing the trail past Machherma to Dole.		
Day 11	Trek from Dole to Namche	5-6 hrs	3,440m
	The trail descends through forest back to Namche Bazaar for a final night in the Khumbu's largest town.		
Day 12	Trek from Namche Bazaar to Lukla	6-7 hrs	2,650m
	The final trekking day retraces the route back down to Lukla.		
Day 13	Fly back from Lukla to Kathmandu	30 min	1,345m
	A morning flight back to Kathmandu, with the rest of the day free to relax or explore.		
Day 14	Transfer to the airport for your onward journey	—	—
	A final breakfast, then a transfer to Tribhuvan International Airport for your onward flight.		

Trip details

One of the most popular alternatives to the Everest Base Camp Trek, the Gokyo Valley Trek leads to a quiet, tranquil valley of 19 lakes of religious importance to both Hindus and Buddhists. Set at high altitude, the valley is a spiritually uplifting experience in itself, alongside its unique geology as a high, glacier-fed lake system.

The Gokyo Valley Trek is an exciting but strenuous 14-day journey, gaining around 2,500 metres in altitude while passing through Sagarmatha National Park and Sherpa villages including Dole, Machhermo, Thame, and Sansa, with views of Cho Oyu (8,201m), Makalu (8,475m), and Mount Everest (8,848m). The trek's highest point, Gokyo Ri (5,357m), offers a panoramic view of the Everest massif and the wide Gokyo valley below.

Includes & Excludes

Includes

- Airport transfers in Kathmandu
- Domestic flights (Kathmandu/Manthali to Lukla and back)
- Accommodation in Kathmandu before and after the trek
- Accommodation in teahouses during the trek
- Three meals per day during the trek
- English-speaking trekking guide
- Porter service (usually 1 porter for 2 trekkers)
- Necessary trekking permits and national park fees
- First aid kit, trekking map, and duffel bag
- Sleeping bag and down jacket rental
- Salary for all staff and government taxes

Excludes

- International airfare to and from Kathmandu
- Nepal entry visa fees
- Travel insurance (including emergency helicopter evacuation)
- Personal expenses (phone calls, internet, laundry, etc.)
- Meals in Kathmandu outside those included
- Alcoholic and cold drinks during the trek
- Hot showers and battery charging at teahouses
- Tips for guides and porters
- Personal trekking gear and clothing

Practical Info

Best Time to Trek

Spring (March-May) and autumn (September-November) offer the most stable weather and the clearest views of the lakes and surrounding peaks. Winter is possible for well-prepared trekkers, though some lodges close; the summer monsoon (June-August) brings rain and unreliable flights.

Fitness and Experience

The trek is rated strenuous, gaining around 2,500m over 14 days with several long, steep days. Good cardiovascular fitness, built up over 2-3 months beforehand, is recommended, though no technical climbing skills are needed.

Altitude and Safety

The route includes a dedicated acclimatization day in Namche Bazaar and a gradual altitude gain through the lower valleys. Your guide monitors for symptoms of altitude sickness throughout, and travel insurance covering emergency evacuation is required.

Packing Checklist

- Broken-in waterproof trekking boots and camp shoes
- Warm base layers, a fleece, and an insulated down jacket
- Waterproof/windproof jacket and trousers
- Thermal gloves and a warm hat
- UV-protection sunglasses and sunscreen
- Trekking poles
- Headlamp with spare batteries
- Sleeping bag rated to -15°C or colder
- Water bottles or a hydration bladder and purification tablets
- First aid kit and personal medication
- Duffel bag for porter-carried luggage and a daypack
- Passport, permits, and travel insurance documents

Do Not Do

- Don't skip the acclimatization day in Namche Bazaar, even if you're feeling strong
- Don't rush the ascent to Gokyo — the altitude gain is significant over a short distance
- Don't drink untreated water — use purification tablets or a filter
- Don't travel without insurance that covers trekking above 5,000m and emergency evacuation
- Don't ignore headaches, nausea, or dizziness — tell your guide immediately

Frequently Asked Questions

How difficult is the Gokyo Valley Trek?

It's rated strenuous, gaining around 2,500m in altitude over 14 days with several long, steep days. Good fitness is recommended, though no technical climbing skills are needed.

How does it compare to the Everest Base Camp Trek?

It's a quieter alternative that reaches a similar altitude over a similar duration, but follows a different valley to the Gokyo Lakes and Gokyo Ri rather than Base Camp itself.

When is the best time to go?

Spring (March-May) and autumn (September-November) offer the most stable weather and clearest views.

Do I need prior trekking experience?

No prior experience is required if you have a good level of fitness, though training beforehand is recommended given the trek's strenuous rating.

What permits are required?

The Sagarmatha National Park Entry Permit and the Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality Entrance Permit.