

## **GHT Logistics**

### **Pre-hike**

#### **Visas**

Nepal: As of 2011, \$25.00 for 15 days multiple entry; \$40.00 for 30 days multiple entry, \$100.00 for 90 days multiple-entries. If you are doing the entire GHT through Nepal you will probably need the 90 day visa. All visas can be obtained either at the entry point or at the Nepalese Embassy abroad.

India: Need to get a visa before you leave your home country. Most visas are multiple entry visas but there are strange rules about 2 months in between entries. They offer 6 month multiple entry and 5 year multiple entry visas. I think they are around \$100.

Pakistan: Need to get a visa beforehand. About \$125. Be prepared, rules change. When I applied I fulfilled all of the requirements they listed online but when they received my application they also said that I needed a letter from a sponsor in Pakistan and also a copy of his/her Pakistani ID card.

**Permits:** (all prices are as of March 2011, but should give you a ballpark of how much things will be)

Permits for trekking in Nepal (from east to west):

Often you need a permit for the area, a conservation card (or fee), and a separate TIMS card. Passport photos are required for TIMS cards and some permits so make sure to travel with plenty of extras.

The following are considered restricted areas. The term sounds daunting but it just means that you need a permit to enter. Usually you need a group of two to hike through these areas but if you are alone then you might just be able to buy two permits and get away with it or just assume nobody will enforce it. Rules seem to change and once you are out in the backcountry it seems like people don't even really know the quirky rules that the government has actually come up with. I would get permits for each section while in Kathmandu and not assume that you can get them when you are entering that area. Better safe than sorry when in another country. In popular trekking areas your permits will be checked. In other areas they probably won't be but at least you will be legit just in case.

It was very helpful to use a trekking agent to help secure the permits. He would go off and get our permits and we could do other things and get organized instead of wasting our time standing in lines or dealing with bureaucracies. We used Urja Tamang from Alliance Adventure, phone: 9841555702/ 9813319143, email: pakhrinurjalama@gmail.com. He was a very nice person and not the usual just out

to make a buck type of guy that you find with a lot of these trekking agents. Robin's agent in Nepal was Pema Sherpa ([pema\\_te@yahoo.com](mailto:pema_te@yahoo.com)).

### 1) Kanchenjunga

Trekking permit US\$ 10 issued to groups of two or more trekkers applying through an agency / outfitter.

NRP 1000 (~EUR 10 / US\$ 15) to enter [Kanchenjunga Conservation Area](#). An agent in Kathmandu should be able to organize this too. Otherwise see <http://dnpwc.gov.np/>. The office is near [Babarmahal](#) in Kathmandu.

Includes Olangchun Gola, Lelep, Papung and Yamphudin.

### 2) Makalu Barun National Park

Nepali Rupees about 1000 (\$15) park fee payable in advance in Kathmandu via DNPWC, supposedly also excepted when you get to the "gate" but I wouldn't risk it and that seems like it would open you up to some form of bribery. Most likely need a TIMS card and conservation fee also.

(Upper Arun Nadi and Makalu Region, including Kimathanka, Chepuwa, Hatiya and Pawakhola)

### 3) Everest region (Solo Khumbu)

Sagamatha National Park entrance fee NRP 1000 (\$15) payable at Monjo on the route from Lukla so better paid in advance if not entering this way i.e. along the GHT route. Also need a TIMS card and might possibly make you pay a conservation fee of NRP 1000.

(Everest Region including all northwestern areas way from Thame to Nangpa La)

### 4) Helambu, Ganesh Himal & Langtang

NRP 1000 (\$15) fee to enter Langtang National Park. The same for the Ganesh Himal. NRP 250 (\$4) to pass through Shivapuri National Park if walking in from Kathmandu. You won't go through Shivapuri National Park if you are walking the GHT route and use Last Resort or Berhabise as resupply points to go to Kathmandu.

### 5) Manaslu region

Here you will enter the [Manaslu Conservation Area](#) for which a payment of NRP 2000 (\$30) must be made.

Supposedly to enter this area you must trek with a registered guide in a group of two or more. We didn't have a guide and nobody at any of the checkpoints said anything. The "broker" (trekking agent/outfitter) we used to get our permits in

Kathmandu did a little finagling and I think we paid a little extra for the permit since we did not have a guide, but that was fine with us. Permit fee is:

Peak season (Sep, Oct, Nov) – US\$ 70 for the first week and US\$ 10 per day thereafter.

Other times – US\$ 50 for the first week and US\$ 7 per day thereafter.

I think we paid \$90 per person for this permit.

#### 6) Nar-Phu

You probably don't need this permit since this isn't directly on the route but if you take this detour to this 'hidden-land' a permit costs US\$90 in peak season (Sep, Oct, Nov) or US\$70 for other times. You can loop this onto the route without backtracking but it will add mileage to the route.

#### 7) Annapurna / ACAP

ACAP permit is NRP 2000 (\$30) to be paid in advance in Kathmandu or Pokhara. Two passport photos also required. TIMS card and possible conservation fee also.

#### 8) Upper Mustang

Detouring into the restricted area of Upper Mustang would be memorable but costly. The fee is a minimum of US\$ 500 (covers up to 10 days) plus US\$50 per day thereafter. Additionally the permit is issued for a declared date range so incorporating into a long trek needs to bear this in mind. And they ask you to return to the ACAP office after your visit so this does not make it easy for incorporating into the GHT. You do not need this permit if you are sticking to the GHT route (pink or green routes).

#### 9) Shey Phuksumdo National Park

NRP 1000 (\$15) entry fee payable at Suli Gaad (near Dunai) or in Kathmandu.

#### Dolpa:

They separate Upper and Lower Dolpa and require different permits. The lower Dolpa permit is reasonable and is something like NRP 1000 (\$15) entrance fee. The boundary between what they classify as Upper and Lower Dolpa is hard to discern but from our research it seems like if you take the GHT pink route to Ringmo and then head south and around on one of the yellow routes you will bypass Upper Dolpa and just be in Lower Dolpa.

The Upper Dolpa permit has the same fee structure as Upper Mustang. It was \$500 for up to 10 days and then \$50/day thereafter.

We did not meet anybody along this stretch that checked our permits but I think as the area gets more popular they will set up some sort of checking system and I would not want to be the one to get caught without a permit.

#### 10) Mugu

US\$ 90 for first week then US\$ 15 per day. You don't need this permit if you stay along the pink, green, or yellow routes. This only pertains if you do some sort of other trek in the Mugu area after Dolpa.

#### 11) Rara National Park

NRP 1000 (\$15) park entrance fee to be paid. You don't need this permit if you follow the pink GHT route.

#### 12) Humla

US\$ 50 per week and US\$ 7 per day for each subsequent day. This is the permit for the Simikot/Humla area on the pink route. If you follow the green route towards Darchula you do not need this permit, but will probably need a different one.

(Simikot, Yari, Limi, Muchu and routes to Tibet via Tangekhola and Darma)

#### 13) Saipal

US\$ 90 for first week then US\$ 15 per day. Only need if following green route to Darchula.

(Kanda, Saipal, Dhuli)

#### 14) Darchula

US\$ 90 for first week then US\$ 15 per day. Only need if following green route to Darchula.

(Including Byas)

### **India**

This will all probably seem like a bunch of mumbo jumbo until you get into the planning and get to know some of these names. I tried to get some permits for the Northeastern part of India, including the Unta Dura, Kalindi Khai, and a few other places. They are VERY difficult to get and are hardly ever granted. I ended up just altering the route and didn't need to get any permits for my entire hike through India. In case you really want to hit some of these areas, below are the list of areas that you will need a permit for or are just flat out not allowed as a tourist.

INDIA RESTRICTED AREAS: Foreigners are not permitted to visit restricted / Protected areas, normally in remote border areas. Information about such restricted

areas in India is available from Indian Missions / Tourist Offices overseas. Most of these areas in India are away from the normal tourist circuits.

**Restricted Areas in India Where Permits Are Required. Tourists are not allowed near the Line of Control (the border between India and China/Tibet).**

**The following could be along your India route:**

### **NORTH-EASTERN REGION, INDIA**

Currently the following places require special permits. Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and parts of Spiti. Theoretically, permits are granted to tourists in groups of four or more people on a tour arranged through a recognized travel agent. Permits allow for a maximum 10 day stay in each state.

### **ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA**

**Places for which permit is required:** Itanagar, Ziro, Along, Deporijo Miao, Namdapha & Tipi Sujusha(Puki), Bhalukpong

Authority that grants Permits :-

- ▶ Home Commissioner, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar
- ▶ All FRROs at Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chief Immigration Officer Chennai
- ▶ All Indian Missions abroad

INDIVIDUAL TOURISTS NOT PERMITTED, 10 DAYS ALLOWED . TOURIST GROUPS ARE TO TRAVEL ON IDENTIFIED TOUR CIRCUITS ONLY.

**Additional Routes for Trekking Holidays in India Opened-up for foreign tourists:**

- ▶ Pasighat-Jengging-Yingkion
- ▶ Bhalukpong-Bomdilla-Tawang
- ▶ Roing-Mayodia-Anini
- ▶ Tezu-Hayuling

### **HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA**

Places for which permit is required

- ▶ Poo-Khab-Sumdho-Dhankar-Tabo-Gompa-Kaza
- ▶ Morang-Dabbling

Authority That Grants Permits :-

- ▶ MHA
- ▶ Govt. of H.P.
- ▶ DM / SDM concerned

▶ ITBP/ Spl. Commissioner (Tourism)/ Resident Commissioner

▶ DG of Police, H.P., Shimla

FOR TREKKING HOLIDAYS ONLY, INDIVIDUAL TOURISTS NOT PERMITTED

## **UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA**

### **Places for which permit is required**

▶ Nanda Devi Sanctuary, Niti Ghati and Kalindi Khai in Chamoli, Uttar Kashi Districts.

▶ Adjoining areas of Milam Glacier

Authority that Grants Permits -

▶ MHA

▶ Govt. of U.P.

▶ DM / SDM concerned

▶ ITBP

INDIVIDUAL TOURISTS NOT PERMITTED

## **JAMMU & KASHMIR, INDIA**

### **Places for which permit is required**

**1)** Khaltse Sub-Division (Drokaupa Area) Khaltse-Dunkhar-Skroduchan-Hanudo-Biana-Dha

**2)** Nubra Sub Division

Leh-Khardung-la-khalsar - Tirit up to Panasik

Leh-Khardung-La-Khalsar - up to Hund

Leh-Sabo-Digar La-Digar-Labab-Khungru Gampa-Tangar (only for trekking conducted by approved tour operators and accompanied by State Police Personnel

**3)** Nyona Sub-Division

- Leh-Upshi-Chumathang-Mahe-Puga-Tso-Moari Lake / Kozok
- Leh-Upshi-Debring-Puga-Tso-Morari Lake / Kozork
- Leh-Karu-Changla-Durbuk-Tangtse-Lukung-Span
- Pangong Lake upto Spankmik

Authority That Grants Permits :-

▶ MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs)

## 🇮🇳 District Magistrates

INDIVIDUAL TOURISTS NOT PERMITTED, 7 DAYS ALLOWED. TOURIST GROUPS ARE TO TRAVEL ON IDENTIFIED TOUR CIRCUITS ONLY.

## INDIA

### **Northwestern States**

**Uttarakhand** - Permits are required for treks above Gangotri (to the Ganges source), anywhere around nanda Devi Sanctuary (Kuari Pass, Rup Kund, Milam and Nanda Devi East base camp).

**Himachal Pradesh** - Kinnaur Kailash Circuit (including Charang La) and Inner Line permit for any routes between Spiti and Kinnaur.

**Ladakh** - specific travel permits required for outlying areas, check in Leh for details.

**Jammu & Kashmir** - this State is often closed. It is wise to check in Delhi if you can visit and if there are any restrictions in place.

## Pakistan

**Baltistan:** Ashkoli to Concordia, Masherbrum Base Camp, Gondogoro Valley and K-7 Base Camp.

### **Following Regions/Treks Are Located In Open Zone:**

- ▶ **District Chitral:** treks in Kalash valleys, Chitral Gol National Park, Shishi Gol & Golen Gol, Lutkhu valley, Laspur valley and Bashqar Gol. However, a permission from the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Chitral is required.
- ▶ **District Ghizer:** treks in upper Ghizer River Valley, Yasin Valley to Yarkhun Valley and Yasin Valley to Ishkoman Valley.
- ▶ **District Gilgit:** Bagrot & Haramosh Valleys, Naltar & Pakora Valleys.
- ▶ **Diamer District:** Nanga Parbat region.
- ▶ **Hunza Valley:** Nagar, Hunza proper, Gojal.
- ▶ **Baltistan:** Basha, Tormik & Stak Valleys, Deosai Mountains and Plains, Biafo Hispar traverse, Thalle La & Tusserpo La and Aling Glacier & K-6 Base Camp.

### **Following Regions/Treks Are Located In Restricted Zone:**

**Chitral District:** Turikho Valley and upper Yarkhun Valley.

**Hunza:** Chapursan Valley

**Baltistan:** Ashkoli to Concordia, Masherbrum Base Camp, Gondogoro Valley and K-7 Base Camp.

The Baltoro Glacier permit can be pricey. We had read a write-up online that said it cost \$1000 for 2 people. We're not sure about the details and if this was for some sort of guided service including the permit or just for the permit though.

### **Vaccines:**

#### **INDIA**

**Meningococcal-** Recommended for all travelers to the states of Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram in the northeast

**Hepatitis A-** Recommended for all travelers

**Typhoid-** Recommended for all travelers

**Polio-** One-time booster recommended for any adult traveler who completed the childhood series but never had polio vaccine as an adult

**Yellow fever-** Required for all travelers arriving from or transiting through a yellow-fever-infected area in Africa or the Americas. Not recommended otherwise.

**Japanese encephalitis-** For travelers who may spend a month or more in rural areas and for short-term travelers who may spend substantial time outdoors in rural areas, especially after dusk

**Hepatitis B-** Recommended for all travelers

**Rabies -** For travelers spending a lot of time outdoors, or at high risk for animal bites, or involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats

**Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)-** Two doses recommended for all travelers born after 1956, if not previously given

**Tetanus-diphtheria-** Revaccination recommended every 10 years

#### **NEPAL/BHUTAN**

**Hepatitis A-** Recommended for all travelers

**Typhoid-** Recommended for all travelers

**Polio-** One-time booster recommended for any adult traveler who completed the childhood series but never had polio vaccine as an adult

**Yellow fever-** Required for all travelers arriving from a yellow-fever-infected area in Africa or the Americas. Not recommended otherwise.



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## **COST**

To give you a ballpark figure this was how much the vaccines cost at a travel clinic we went to.

[Hepatitis A](#): series of two immunizations 19 & older: \$30.00 per dose

[Hepatitis B](#): series of three immunizations 20 years & older: \$40.00 per dose

[MMR](#): Measles, Mumps, Rubella \$58.00 per dose

[Meningococcal](#): for children ages 2-10 and adults over age 55 \$115.00 per dose

[IPV](#): Polio Available only through [VFC](#) program

[Td](#): Tetanus and Diphtheria (ages 7 & older) \$31.00 per dose

## **Maps and Guidebooks**

Navigation never seemed like the hardest challenge on this trail. In addition often there are people or villages where you can ask for directions. Just make sure not to ask a yes or no question and be clear and specific. For example if you ask "Is Yala La this way?" They will undoubtedly say yes. If you ask "Which way to Yala La?", without pointing or leading them in any way then you will receive a more reliable answer. Also many locals do not know much about towns that are over a day's walk. If you are asking for directions or to check which way to go, make sure to phrase it so you ask about the next town that you are meant to walk through and one that isn't too far away. This will help give you a much more reliable answer. Enough about that. The guidebooks and maps are pretty good. The guidebook is straightforward with a lot of interesting information but we did not feel like we really needed it. We referred to it sometimes and often read it the night before but

more often than not it was buried in our pack. The guidebook for Nepal is written by Robin Boustead and it is also a hiking book for the entire Nepal Himalaya so it had a lot of excess information and pages that we immediately tore out and left in Kathmandu.

The Nepal maps proved more worthwhile but still weren't the end all. They did have a few mistakes and the elevation profiles were worthless. However, we didn't really get lost so the maps did their job. Just make sure to get the right ones. We used the low resolution ones which I will include in this GHT logistics package for planning while we were at home and then picked up the maps when we arrived in Kathmandu. You can also check out [www.himalayan-maphouse.com.np](http://www.himalayan-maphouse.com.np). If you are in the UK I have heard there is a great map store there called Stanfords (<http://www.stanfords.co.uk/>), that you can probably get them from before you head over. Likewise in the U.S. you might be able to get them from Omnimap, [www.omnimap.com](http://www.omnimap.com). In Kathmandu there are hoards of maps for the Himalaya. Many of them even say they have the GHT on them and some sort of slogan like "approved by Robin Boustead". This is a crock. The only ones he really helped with have a red sidebar and header. They have a pink route on the maps for the GHT high route, a green route for the GHT cultural route (which is lower and more in the foothills), and yellow route which are other hiking routes. The scale is ok but definitely not great for navigating. Nepal is a series of 9 maps with 2 of them being double sided. We planned the hike from the low res maps that are included in this logistics package and picked up the other stuff on arrival in Kathmandu. There are tons of map shops in the Thamel part of Kathmandu. The Pilgrims Bookshop and one almost immediately across the street both had the guidebook and full map set.

Some of the maps for Nepal had 80 meter contour lines (about 240 feet). This made it a little interesting and a lot of small climbs did not show up on the maps. We also measured out distances on the maps using string. This helped so we had a good idea of how far apart key places, resupplies, and daily distances were. We figure that because of the scale of the maps, the steepness of the terrain, and based on our hiking times, the actual, real, distances were 20-30% greater than what we measured. I have included the measured distances at the bottom of this document to help with planning, schedules, and daily distances. I would copy them onto your maps before you set off. We found them very helpful to have and well worth the time of measuring them out. In addition they were much more helpful for us than the "Day break-ups" like Robin does in the guidebook. We were often doing 3-5 of his hiking days in one day.

India maps are very hard to find when you are in India. If you are going to hike in India I would highly recommend getting them sorted out before you leave for the trip. There are some Swiss maps, Leomann maps, National Geographic Maps is coming out with some, and a few other kinds also. I haven't seen the NatGeo ones yet, but none of the other ones are very good. I used the Leomann maps because they were all I could find. These are definitely not recommended. They are the only maps that I have ever seen called topo maps that actually don't have any topo lines.

I also used the Trekking In the Indian Himalaya Lonely Planet book to help give some insight on possible routes.

## **Electronics**

We went over with extra batteries for everything that was rechargeable in case it would be a while without getting to an outlet. There were more options to outlets than we would have thought. Many places, especially on the more common treks you can pay to recharge things. Just make sure to have your charger and an international plug kit. Most of the outlets had 2 or 3 circular prongs. We had a few long stretches so the extra batteries were helpful. We also left lithium AA, AAA, and CR 123's in our duffel because lithiums were not available there and last much longer and are better in the cold.

We also tried to use a solar charger but it wasn't ideal since we were moving constantly and clouds often came in during the afternoons.






## **Communication**

In Nepal and India many people speak English or at least some words. We picked up a few Nepalese words but in general it was fairly easy to communicate by speaking or gestures.

As far as communicating with people at home we found it very easy. In Kathmandu and Pokhara there are tons of internet places with good internet connection where you can use e-mail and Skype to stay in touch with friends and family. In rural areas but common trekking areas, like on the Annapurna trek and in Namche Bazaar there are also internet services but they are much more expensive.

## **Customs and Etiquette**

### Nepal

-  Take off your shoes before entering a temple or one's home.
-  Ask for permission before entering a Hindu temple.
-  Taking photographs inside the most temples are considered illegal. Ask for permission before taking photographs of objects, and including Nepali people.
-  Public displays of affection such as kissing may be considered offensive.
-  Say hello or Namaskar if anyone is initiating a dialogue with you. The form of

greeting in Nepal is Namaste or Namaskar. Say it to greet Nepali people. It has a lot of meaning such as hello, how are you, have a nice day, bye bye. To do Namaskar by hand, join your palms together, bring it few inches below you chin facing it upwards.

• You may accept handshake offered by both sex male or female, but never offer your hand first to women. Instead you do `Namaskar' Its considered rude for a man to touch a women even shaking a hand, especially married women. Hand shakes are more gentle not strong, so don't feel the person isn't interested, it's just their way.

• Roads are narrow and crowded so horns help drivers save lives. They signal pedestrians with each beat of the heart! So be ready to hear horn noise and accept it - don't get upset about it

• *Khana Khanu Bhayo?* - Nepalese may ask you in Nepali, *Khana Khanu Bhayo* (have you eaten) ? Its a form of greeting more than the question. So go ahead say `you ate one (*Khaya*)' if you are busy, or they will have you joining their dining table if you say (*Chaainaa*)!

• For Yes : shake your head from side to side, and for NO: nod your head up and down

• It is common to see same sex walking together hand in hand or with arms around each other. It is a common friendship gesture in Nepal. Perception of friendship is realized before such terms like Gay or Lesbian. When someone talks to you and taps you while talking to you consider that the person is trying to get your attention - its a Nepali friendship way.

• Pointing your finger at people is considered bad - it means wait and I will have something against you! If you have to point at someone, use your upturned hand or lift your chin and say oo

• It is believed that it's uncommon to say *Ma Lai Thaha Chaina* (I don't know in English). Its often considered rude to say it. So if you have to say "I don't know" try saying it like you knew it! Suppose someone asks you where is America and you didn't know, you would say "Try looking up in the globe?" So people expect answers from you but not the "I don't know" answer!

• When you are in a Nepali dining table, there is usually the senior member of the family, usually a female, serving to everyone. She will repeatedly offer food. Consider that as a respect, don't get offended, take a little and say thank you. In Nepali, usually the mother eats last and she makes sure that everyone eats and eats well. That's why you have the repeated offers!

• Elders are called by their title but not by their names. Never call your daddy by his name nor do you call your mummy by her name, it's considered rude. When you visit your friend's parent, you also don't use their names. Brothers and Sisters also do not use their names while calling one another.

• Shopping in Nepal start by bargaining. Most products don't have price tags, so you are expected to haggle with shop owners. Don't buy anything without bargaining or if you feel that extra dollars of yours would not hurt poor Nepalese go ahead give your best shot! Bargaining is common for buying stuff like vegetables and groceries, riding a cab, buying gift items such as Nepali Kukuri, Carpets, and just about anything really.

• When you touch someone with your feet accidentally, you pay back the respect by tapping the person's shoulder, and then your forehead.

• Calling people by names like Dad, Mum, Sister, Brother, Uncle is very common. For example, you say 'Amaa' (Mother) or Buba (Dad) to your friend's parents but never call them by their names.

• Never tell a girl you don't know that she is beautiful or compliment on her features. Girls consider it impolite and rude - they think you are flirting with them. Most Nepalese girls don't flirt except for a few bunch living in cities breathing western air!.

• Slurping - It is common to slurp tea and other hot drinks in restaurants and homes.

• Superstition is a part of Nepalese life. Never say a young baby healthy and or fat - they don't like that, they think the baby will get sick afterwards. Never keep your shoes or sandals upside down - it brings bad luck around. Spilling rice on the floor (specially cooked rice) and walking on it is an insult to the Hindu Goddess of Food. For a long journey away from home, you usually depart with a sip of yogurt and/or a red tika (colored mix or powder) on your forehead given by the senior member of your family. Some highly superstitious people will only travel on specific days of the week for leaving home towards a specification directions like north or south. The number 3 is considered unlucky - for example, when three people have to depart from the same location, they leave one after another but not all at same time. It is common to pray before traveling specially on a long journey, so you will see bus drivers with photos of Hindu goddess, incense and bells and doing prayers before beginning the first drive of the day. Its common to see hanging of red dried Chillies in places like homes, restaurants and even in buses - it's done to protect the place from bad spirits.

• Fat - If you tell someone he or she is fat, it's a compliment. Say it in Nepali "*Tapai Kastoo Moto HooNuuHunChaa*". Nepalese like that and most Nepalese like to be called fat. When someone has a big fat belly, it means they have got a lot of money to eat, it shows off. Most big fat bellies in poor countries do walk proudly.

• Sharing a meal - You always ask someone around you if that person want's to share your meal. If you take a snack to work, you always ask your colleague if they would like to have a bit out of it. When a Nepali family prepares a special meal or

even a special pickle at home, they will send it out to neighbors before they have it themselves. Sharing a meal makes them feel good about it. This is very common specially in remote villages in the country.

Nothing in Nepal works on time. Don't expect punctually. Public buses don't run on time, road traffics are unpredictable, and I didn't know about the meeting time - the kind of excuses you will hear from someone who shows up late in Nepal. Expect everything to slow down. Did you know that it takes hours just to pay your Electricity Bills, forget about paying your telephone Bill - it might take a whole day of waiting in a line! So expect delay at all levels from getting a bus, taxi, plane and getting a room in your hotel



Nepali *Topi* is the the national cap of Nepal - it's rather the part of the national dress for men. Many Nepalese wear Topi proudly and it makes them feel good. One of the best ways to show that you care about Nepal and Nepalese is to wear this cap. Many visitors take back home a Nepali topi and use it in special occasions such for receiving Nepali friends at airport or during celebrations. Nepali Topi makes an unique and simple method to show your affection for Nepal and Nepalese. If you can, wear a Nepali topi while traveling in Nepal - for a Nepali topi on your head you feel like a Nepali and what better experience can be more than that!

Use of bad language is not common even among friends. Visitors to Nepal should avoid using bad language, and remember most city people do understand spoken English.

Licking your fingers is considered a bad manner. In most countries like USA, you lick your fingers if it has touched any edible substances. Doing the same in Nepal in public is considered gross.

Blowing your nose in front of people is considered rude. If you must blow, do it quietly and/or alone.

People spit and throw stuff everywhere- there is no law against littering. Don't complain, just go about your business, ignore it. The most common spitting is from the chewing of Betel Leaf (*Paan*) and chewable tobacco (*Khaine in Nepali*)

When women have their monthly (Period or menstruation), they sleep and eat alone without touching anyone in the family for three to four days, they are also kept isolated for a week when they give a birth. Such traditions have been modified

to fit family's desire or needs. During untouchable period, women don't visit temples or perform *puja* (worshiping and making offerings to God ). Some go as far as not celebrating festivals. For example, a sister who has a period during *Tihar* festival won't give or receive *tika* (a special mark on forehead). [Learn about Tihar festival](#)

• Most Nepalese eat their meal by hand specially for the Nepali food *Dal Bhat and Tarkari*

• Once someone has eaten from a plate, most Nepalese will not eat from it as it is considered impure (*Jutho* in Nepali). They feel they might get germs from it. But it is found that many Nepalese women eat leftovers from her husband's plate - for sharing of food is a loving gesture.

• Priest play an important role in the lives of Nepalese. He is called in to get a special 'birth name' when you are born, he is there to witness your marriage vows, and he is with you at your funeral, and also in selected Hindu festivals like *Janai Purnima*. He performs *puja*, worships God and asks God for forgiveness of your sins. They are passionate people, they love their job like no other. Never criticise the job of a priest, even if you don't agree.

• Traditional Nepalese marriage is a deal between the parents. The boy, his mother and his father will come to see the girl and her parents. She will offer them tea. He will get to see her for a while, and the deal is made by the parents. If its not good enough, they will go search for another deal.

• People who don't look like the ordinary Nepalese will get lots of looks and even constant staring. Specially when you are away from the main cities like Kathmandu, you will be noticed constantly by many people including beautiful Nepalese kids whose curious eyes will be all around you. Smile and Enjoy

• Many of the Nepalese customs are based on traditions and beliefs in Hindu and Buddhist religions. You haven't known about Nepalese until you have been with all. There are more than 100 ethic groups of Nepalese in Nepal each with their own custom, tradition, and rituals, all sorts speaking different Nepali language.

## **Pakistani Society & Culture**

Urdu is the main language spoken but many wealthy and upper class people will speak English.

### **Islam**

. Islam is practised by the majority of Pakistanis and governs their personal, political, economic and legal lives.

. Among certain obligations for Muslims are to pray five times a day - at dawn, noon,



afternoon, sunset, and evening.

- . Friday is the Muslim holy day. Everything is closed.
- . During the holy month of Ramadan all Muslims must fast from dawn to dusk and are only permitted to work six hours per day. Fasting includes no eating, drinking, cigarette smoking, or gum chewing.

### **The Family**

- . The extended family is the basis of the social structure and individual identity.
- . It includes the nuclear family, immediate relatives, distant relatives, tribe members, friends, and neighbours.
- . Loyalty to the family comes before other social relationships, even business.
- . Nepotism is viewed positively, since it guarantees hiring people who can be trusted, which is crucial in a country where working with people one knows and trusts is of primary importance.
- . The family is more private than in many other cultures.
- . Female relatives are protected from outside influences. It is considered inappropriate to ask questions about a Pakistani's wife or other female relatives.
- . Families are quite large by western standards, often having up to 6 children.

### **Hierarchical Society**

- . Pakistan is a hierarchical society.
- . People are respected because of their age and position.
- . Older people are viewed as wise and are granted respect. In a social situation, they are served first and their drinks may be poured for them. Elders are introduced first, are provided with the choicest cuts of meat, and in general are treated much like royalty.
- . Pakistanis expect the most senior person, by age or position, to make decisions that are in the best interest of the group.
- . Titles are very important and denote respect. It is expected that you will use a person's title and their surname until invited to use their first name.

Etiquette & Customs in Pakistan

### **Meeting and Greeting**

- . Greetings are therefore often between members of the same sex; however, when dealing with people in the middle class, greetings may be across sex lines.
- . Men shake hands with each other. Once a relationship is developed, they may hug as well as shake hands.
- . Women generally hug and kiss. Pakistanis take their time during greetings and ask about the person's health, family, and business success.
- . Pakistani names often include a name that denotes a person's class, tribe, occupation, or other status indicator.
- . They may also include two names that have a specific meaning when used together, and the meaning is lost if the names are separated. . It is best to ask a person how they wish to be addressed.



. In general, this is not a culture where first names are commonly used, except among close friends.

### **Gift Giving Etiquette**

- . If invited to a Pakistani's home, bring the hostess a small gift such as flowers or good quality chocolates.
- . Men should avoid giving flowers to women.
- . Do not give white flowers as they are used at weddings.
- . If a man must give a gift to a woman, he should say that it is from his wife, mother, sister, or some other female relative.
- . Do not give alcohol.
- . Gifts are not opened when received.
- . Gifts are given with two hands.

### **Dining Etiquette**

- . If invited to a home you will most likely have to remove your shoes. Check to see if the host is wearing shoes. If not, remove yours at the door.
- . Dress conservatively.
- . Arrive approximately 15 minutes later than the stipulated time when invited to dinner or a small gathering.
- . You may arrive up to one hour later than the stipulated time when invited to a party.
- . Show respect for the elders by greeting them first.
- . In more rural areas, it is still common to eat meals from a knee-high round table while sitting on the floor.
- . Many people in urban areas do not use eating utensils, although more westernized families do.
- . When in doubt, watch what others are doing and emulate their behaviour.
- . Guests are served first. Then the oldest, continuing in some rough approximation of age order until the youngest is served.
- . Do not start eating until the oldest person at the table begins.
- . You will be urged to take second and even third helpings. Saying "I'm full" will be taken as a polite gesture and not accepted at face value.
- . Eat only with the right hand.

## **India**

### Languages in India

The different states of India have different official languages, some of them not recognized by the central government. Some states have more than one official language. Bihar in east India has three official languages - [Hindi](#), Urdu and [Bengali](#) - which are all recognized by the central government. But Sikkim, also in east India, has four official languages of which only Nepali is recognized by the central

government. Besides the languages officially recognized by central or state governments, there are other languages which don't have this recognition and their speakers are running political struggles to get this recognition. Central government decided that Hindi was to be the official language of India and therefore it also has the status of official language in the states.

## **Indian Society & Culture**

### **Hierarchy**

- . The influences of Hinduism and the tradition of the caste system have created a culture that emphasizes established hierarchical relationships.
- . Indians are always conscious of social order and their status relative to other people, be they family, friends, or strangers.
- . All relationships involve hierarchies. In schools, teachers are called gurus and are viewed as the source of all knowledge. The patriarch, usually the father, is considered the leader of the family. The boss is seen as the source of ultimate responsibility in business. Every relationship has a clear-cut hierarchy that must be observed for the social order to be maintained.

### **The Role of the Family**

- . People typically define themselves by the groups to which they belong rather than by their status as individuals. Someone is deemed to be affiliated to a specific state, region, city, family, career path, religion, etc.
- . This group orientation stems from the close personal ties Indians maintain with their family, including the extended family.
- . The extended family creates a myriad of interrelationships, rules, and structures. Along with these mutual obligations comes a deep-rooted trust among relatives.

### **Just Can't Say No**

- . Indians do not like to express 'no,' be it verbally or non-verbally.
- . Rather than disappoint you, for example, by saying something isn't available, Indians will offer you the response that they think you want to hear.
- . This behavior should not be considered dishonest. An Indian would be considered terribly rude if he did not attempt to give a person what had been asked.
- . Since they do not like to give negative answers, Indians may give an affirmative answer but be deliberately vague about any specific details. This will require you to look for non-verbal cues, such as a reluctance to commit to an actual time for a meeting or an enthusiastic response.

Etiquette and Customs in India

### **Meeting Etiquette**

- . Religion, education and social class all influence greetings in India.
- . This is a hierarchical culture, so greet the eldest or most senior person first.
- . When leaving a group, each person must be bid farewell individually.

- . Shaking hands is common, especially in the large cities among the more educated who are accustomed to dealing with westerners.
- . Men may shake hands with other men and women may shake hands with other women; however there are seldom handshakes between men and women because of religious beliefs. If you are uncertain, wait for them to extend their hand.

### **Naming Conventions**

Indian names vary based upon religion, social class, and region of the country. The following are some basic guidelines to understanding the naming conventions:

Hindus:

- . In the north, many people have both a given name and a surname.
- . In the south, surnames are less common and a person generally uses the initial of their father's name in front of their own name.
- . The man's formal name is their name "s/o" (son of) and the father's name. Women use "d/o" to refer to themselves as the daughter of their father.
- . At marriage, women drop their father's name and use their first name with their husband's first name as a sort of surname.

Muslims:

- . Many Muslims do not have surnames. Instead, men add the father's name to their own name with the connector 'bin'. So, Abdullah bin Ahmed is Abdullah the son of Ahmad.
- . Women use the connector 'binti'.
- . The title Hajji (m) or Hajjah (f) before the name indicates the person has made their pilgrimage to Mecca.

Sikhs:

- . Sikhs all use the name Singh. It is either adopted as a surname or as a connector name to the surname.

### **Gift Giving Etiquette**

- . Indians believe that giving gifts eases the transition into the next life.
- . Gifts of cash are given to friends and members of the extended family to celebrate life events such as birth, death and marriage.
- . It is not the value of the gift, but the sincerity with which it is given, that is important to the recipient.
- . If invited to an Indian's home for a meal, it is not necessary to bring a gift, although one will not be turned down.
- . Do not give frangipani or white flowers as they are used at funerals.
- . Yellow, green and red are lucky colours, so try to use them to wrap gifts.
- . A gift from a man should be said to come from both he and his wife/mother/sister or some other female relative.
- . Hindus should not be given gifts made of leather.
- . Muslims should not be given gifts made of pigskin or alcoholic products.
- . Gifts are not opened when received.

## **Dining Etiquette**

- . Indians entertain in their homes, restaurants, private clubs, or other public venues, depending upon the occasion and circumstances.
- . Although Indians are not always punctual themselves, they expect foreigners to arrive close to the appointed time.
- . Take off your shoes before entering the house.
- . Dress modestly and conservatively.
- . Politely turn down the first offer of tea, coffee, or snacks. You will be asked again and again. Saying no to the first invitation is part of the protocol.

There are diverse dietary restrictions in India, and these may affect the foods that are served:

- . Hindus do not eat beef and many are vegetarians.
- . Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol.
- . Sikhs do not eat beef.
- . Lamb, chicken, and fish are the most commonly served main courses for non-vegetarian meals as they avoid the meat restrictions of the religious groups.

**Table manners** are somewhat formal, but this formality is tempered by the religious beliefs of the various groups.

- . Much Indian food is eaten with the fingers.
- . Wait to be told where to sit.
- . If utensils are used, they are generally a tablespoon and a fork.
- . Guests are often served in a particular order: the guest of honour is served first, followed by the men, and the children are served last. Women typically serve the men and eat later.
- . You may be asked to wash your hands before and after sitting down to a meal.
- . Always use your right hand to eat, whether you are using utensils or your fingers.
- . In some situations food may be put on your plate for you, while in other situations you may be allowed to serve yourself from a communal bowl.
- . Leaving a small amount of food on your plate indicates that you are satisfied. Finishing all your food means that you are still hungry.

## **Politics:**

In India and especially in Nepal leave yourself plenty of time to deal with bureaucracy. Things just don't seem nearly as organized. 2011 was supposed to be the "Tourism Year In Nepal" with 0 strikes. We lost at least 3 days because of strikes and government closures. Sometimes government offices were closed so we were set back with logistics and trying to get permits while other times the the whole city was shut down and transportation services stopped so we couldn't return to the trail. Don't be in a rush and expect to lose days from things that are out of your control.

## **Money:**

As of July 2011: US Dollar \$1= about 70 Nepali Rupees and about 45 Indian Rupees

Don't expect to hit ATM's along the trail or places in the backcountry and small towns to accept credit cards. Some small towns like Dhunchee have ATM's but mainly if they are the district headquarters, often market with the red dots on the maps. The towns that are district headquarters sometimes have internet services as well. Not all district headquarters had ATM's though. Make sure to carry enough cash and have small bills. Many rural places don't have change for larger bills. If you are flying out of places for resupply don't expect them to accept credit cards either. Often they want US dollars so carry cash in US dollars and also the local currency. In Nepal, plan ahead a little and you can buy "open" tickets for plane travel if you want. That way you can pay by credit card since you will be purchasing them when you are in Kathmandu or Pokhara (larger cities). Then you won't have to carry quite as much cash.

## **On Trail**

### **Weather:**

There are two main trekking seasons in the Himalaya. They vary depending on how far east or west you will be. In Nepal the monsoons arrive in May/June from east to west and then taper off through September. In the Indian Himalaya they arrive a little later, usually around mid to late June and taper off through September. The best seasons to hike are the spring and fall, usually April and May or October and November. The fall being the most popular because typically the weather is a little better and the air is more clear for photography. Hiking in the winter, December and January, is also an option but it can be very cold at high elevations and many villagers move down below 4000 meters so make sure that you can resupply and don't count on staying at those teahouses. On the contrary the spring season can be very hot at lower elevations, mainly below 2000-2500 meters.

### **Resupply:**

I would highly recommend doing the "duffel drop" method. We carried over a decent amount of extra food and gear with us and stored it at a hotel in Kathmandu. Most hotels in Kathmandu will provide that service since trekking is common and then they know that you will come back and stay there when you return. We resupplied from that duffel 2 times and then went to Pokhara to resupply another time. It is hard to find sufficient food for a 10 day stretch from a small town. You can supplement with supplies at the small towns but don't count on them. Often they just have biscuits, instant noodles and a few other medial items. It was nice to get out to the larger towns for resupply and get caught up on internet access, arrange our permits for the next stretch, get some new shoes and swap out some gear from the duffel, and eat some decent food besides for dhal bhat.

I then brought my duffel to India and stored it at a hotel in Delhi (also seems to be pretty common). I did not resupply from the duffel besides for at the start of India but then it was in Delhi all ready for when I finished and I could change clothes and get ready to head home when I was done hiking and back there. Delhi is one of the the main travel hubs for India so I scheduled my return flight to depart from there.

### **Transportation:**

There is a pretty comprehensive system of prop planes that fly to small airports around Nepal. There are also shared taxis (buses) that run up and down dirt roads. The buses are dirt cheap for the distance you travel but can take FOREVER. I takes around 4-8 hours (usually towards the upper end) to go from Kathmandu to Berhabise. Typical bus rides into the mountains are full day rides, if not more.

Things are a little faster in India since the infrastructure is a bit better but there can still be ridiculously long bus rides. Jet planes travel from Delhi to a decent number of cities within striking distance of trails so that can help speed things up if you are willing to pay the price. The buses are cheap but can be crowded and quite uncomfortable. In India they offer multiple classes of bus service (A/C, no A/C, deluxe, super deluxe, Volvo, and shared vans) for different prices. Keep in mind the roads to Leh, Padam, and Kargil are usually not open until around mid June.

### **Gear Thoughts:**

#### - Shelters

We brought over 3 different shelters with us not knowing exactly what to expect. We brought 2 ultralight tents which weighed about 2 pounds and an ultralight teepee tarp. In retrospect we probably could have used the UL teepee the entire time. But it was nice to have a little heavier duty tent for the Kanchenjunga to Berhabise section, especially if you are going to be following the high/pink route. The tent will provide some extra warmth and hold up to worse weather. We are attuned to ultralight equipment and didn't see the need to carry anything heavier for a shelter. From our perspective there was no reason to have a full on mountaineering tent.

#### - Water Treatment

I would definitely carry water treatment. We were often getting water from the "mystery" faucets in villages. Who knows where this water is actually coming from. The water is probably ok but with having the ability to treat the water we also saved money and saved plastic bottles when in towns and in KTM because we did not need to buy bottled water. We usually just treated the tap water. I would not set out on this trip without some sort of water treatment system. There typically was tons of water sources and water never seemed to be an issue that we had to keep in mind. I never carried over a liter of water.

### **Cooking and Fuel:**

This is highly variable depending on your resupply strategy. We used a multifuel stove since we didn't know what to expect. We were able to find canisters in Kathmandu and were able to use those on 2 or 3 stretches. 1 Stretch we used kerosene (but probably could have used a canister if we carried it from Kathmandu) and used gasoline on another stretch. I used gasoline all through India. I found 1 place with canisters in Delhi. Outdoor equipment was very hard to find in Delhi and the only canister size I could find was the enormous one so I decided to just use petrol. There was a very small and pretty worthless outdoor store in Connaught Place above the movie theatre. I'd be surprised if it is still in business a year from now. I'd try getting everything you are going to need in KTM if you are continuing on through India and trying to check the fuel in a checked bag on the airplane, unless you are going to use regular gasoline for your stove. Gasoline can be found throughout India.

I did not see any alcohol, methylated spirits or anything similar for sale in Kathmandu. I think it would be very hard to find anything to burn in an alcohol stove or solid fuel stove.

We were able to find quick cook meals and instant noodles in many places. Quick cook meals were common in the supermarket near Thamel in Kathmandu (the Bhat Bhateni) and instant noodles are widespread even in rural villages.

### **Footwear:**

For the first stretch through Kanchenjunga and Makalu, we both set off with slightly heavier than normal waterproof shoes and lightweight gaiters. We weren't sure exactly what to expect. In retrospect I think that was the right choice, especially if you are going to stick to the pink route and do West Col, Sherpani Col, Amphu Labsta, and Tashi Labsta passes. After Berhabise we both switched out to our normal trail runners (without gaiters) and wore those from then on.

### **Technical Gear:**

In Nepal, if you are going to do West Col, Sherpani Col, Amphu Labsta, Tashi Labsta, and Tilman Pass then you will need to bring technical gear. You will need snow pickets (known as snow bars in Nepal). Below is a list of what we brought over with us for the technical passes. We had to pick up 4 snow pickets in Kathmandu. We didn't end up using or bringing any of the ice screws along.

There are also a slew of passes with glacier travel in India if you decide to do those. Kang La and Umasi La are two of the more known ones but there are tons of other doable passes.

Here's a sample gear list for technical equipment. This includes some glacier travel and mandatory rappels.

<b>Technical Gear</b>		
Sterling Ice Thong 7.7mm	49.3oz	Half rope, cut to 35m

Sterling Power Cord	TBD	6mm, tag line, 45m, extra for anchors
Camp XLC 490 Crampons	13.8oz	Work well with trail runners
Camp Corsa Ice Axe	8.8oz	60cm, use 2nds for pitched routes
Camp Nano 23 Biners (6)	4.8oz	
Camp HMS Nitro Lockers (2)	3.8oz	
8mmx60cm Dynnema Runner (3)	2.1oz	
8mmx100cm Dynnema Runner	1.1oz	
12mmx240cm Dyneema Runner	4.8oz	
Camp Stream Ice Screw 22cm (2)	6.2oz	V-Threads
Camp Stream Ice Screw 12cm (2)	8.8oz	
Camp Speed Helmet	7.4oz	
Camp Alp 95 Harness	3.4oz	size medium
<b>TOTAL</b>		

### **Sleeping Bags/ Temps:**

We both used 15 degree sleeping bags for the entire trip. I think this was a bit overkill. I definitely could have gotten away with switching out to a lighter bag if I had brought one over. I would definitely use a 15 degree bag or possibly even heavier if you are going to do the high passes mentioned in the 2 previous sections. I felt like after that area I could have probably gotten away with a 20-30 degree bag most of the time. If we camped up high the nights were chilly, probably ranging from 10 to 30 degrees at 5000 meters, but if we were lower than 3000 meters the nights were balmy.

### **Terrain and Trail**

The Himalayas are the biggest mountain range in the world. Expect huge elevation gains and losses. We were routinely doing 2000 meters up and 2000 meters down in a day just counting the big climbs and descents (days we started calling “double-doubles”). This is over 6000 vertical up and down. Often we would do even more. The first few weeks of this were tough and affected our daily mileage. By the end we were used to it and were able to do 24-30 miles per day, a little off our usual pace of 30-35 miles per day. At the start of each stretch we would be carrying 10 days of food too. That didn’t make it any easier. Be prepared and plan accordingly to adjust your schedule not just based on mileage but also factoring in elevations and altitude.

The trail conditions were usually pretty good. Landslides are common so sometimes there would be areas that had been rerouted. Generally trails were very easy to follow and went from village to village. Above the highest village and kharkas (grazing areas) the trails would usually fade when heading over the passes unless on a main trekking route. Some trails, especially when following rivers have issues contouring well, usually because the river valleys are very steep and have



shear walls. This can be a hassle and it seemed the worst in the Kanchenjunga area, possibly because we were just “breaking in” too.

### **Altitude**

Always keep the altitude in mind and try not to ascend too much in one day. Descent is never a problem. There were a few days we dropped well over 10,000 vertical feet (over 3000 meters) in a day after crossing a pass in the morning. When ascending most people stick to the 1000 meters per day as standard. We didn't really follow that too much since it seemed way to slow. Listen to your body. We tried to plan ahead and use that to help us acclimate. We easily acclimated to anything below 4500 meters. One of our strategies is if we were at 800 meters and had to climb for the next 45 miles and up to 5300 meters. We would try to get to around 4200 meters and camp. Then push over the pass early the next morning and drop. That way even if we started getting a headache or something it would quickly go away once we got over the pass and the AMS would never get too bad. There were a couple of stretches where you are above 4000 meters for the entire time (Solu Khumbu and Dolpa). These were a similar strategy where we acclimated to 4400-4500 meters and tried to camp low until we were used to it.

### **Flora/ Fauna**

We did not see too much wildlife. We followed snow leopard footprints a few times. I saw bear prints in India. We saw pikas, a bunch of birds, spiders, and our guide said he got attacked by 2 yetis one night (which we didn't witness but heard him scream). We are VERY skeptical about this story. Anyway there was nothing too crazy.

Regarding the flora. There are different ecosystems at different elevations. Lower down the woods can be very thick. Through most elevations do not expect to do any cross country travel. The woods are either thick or the terrain is way to steep and shear. There are beautiful areas of birch forests and rhododendron groves. Then the grass and alpine zones usually start around 4300 meters depending on location. In India there are more meadows and broader valleys as well as access to the trans-Himalaya area around Leh where the weather is much drier and vegetation can be sparse.

### **Guides and Porters**

Hiring guides and porters are personal preference. If you want guides and porters it is usually better to hire them all from Kathmandu. Definitely quiz them and test make sure they will fit your style and have been where you are going. If there are areas of uncertainty they can always organize the hiring of a local guide for a few days. The author of the GHT guidebook highly recommends this procedure. We never got a local guide because the navigation never seemed that difficult for us.

Most guides will also want a porter for their equipment so keep that in mind. There is also the option of hiring a cook as well. We heard a bunch of porter horror storied

from people. Unprepared porters, porters having a mutiny, and porters up and leaving. Definitely try to get a guide who has a connection to the porters he is hiring and keep them in mind when making route and daily decisions. They usually have set daily stops when on more common trekking routes and if you want to hike farther than these places it can be like pulling teeth. On the other hand the local knowledge and insight into local culture from a good guide can be priceless. Guide and porter service can also be relatively cheap compared to anything you would hire in Western countries. Make sure your guide speaks good English (or whatever language you speak) and be prepared to pay up if you are doing a technical route (like the high/pink route from Makalu to Solu Khumbu). I think they quoted us to add \$200 for each technical pass.

In India there are also trekking agents that can find you guides and porters just like in Kathmandu. Just find them online. The person Robin used to line all of that up is Sumit and you can contact him at this webpage <http://himalayanpictures.com/contact-us>.

### **Teahouses**

Teahouses are common throughout Nepal. However, they are pretty much nonexistent in the backcountry of India. Teahouses usually offer overnight places to stay as well. This can range from a bed in a private locked room to bench or floor spaces around their fire inside. It can be a great way to experience the culture and lifestyle of the local people and it is usually pretty cheap. Most teahouses in 2011 ranged from NRP 50 to NRP 200 (about .50 cents to about \$3). Most of the time they would also throw in some dhal bhat for dinner. The beauty of dhal bhat is that it is all you can eat. It can also be nice to stop into a teahouse and grab some lunch, some tea, and get out of the elements. Most villages have some sort of teahouse, which in some cases is just a house where the owners let travelers stay and offer to cook for them. Staying at tea houses was one of the main ways that we were able to experience and see Nepalese culture.

### **GHT Logistics and Route**

Nepal Data Table from east to west:

Please note these are measured with string and intended to save you time. We figured that because of the scale of the maps real distance were probably 20-30% more than measured distances.

Sorry we didn't do detailed distances for the first 2 maps.

Kanchenjunga Map:

Taplejung to Taplethok 35km

Taplethok to Thyanyani 30km

Thyanyani to Ghunsa 22km

Ghunsa to Thasa Khola Camp, 2km before Yangma Khola Camp 21km->Olangchun Gola 20km->Pass Camp at 4450m 21km

Makalu Map:

->Lasa 21km->Chyamtang 26km-Alternate route around technical passes-->Barun Bajar 41km->Num 38km

Resupply

Solu-Khumbu Map:

Lukla->Namche Bazar 17km->Loboche 24km-Side Trip to Everest Base Camp-->E.BC->Dzongla 29km->Gokyo 14km->Renjo La 4km->Lumde 6km->Thame 10km->Tashi Labsta La 12km->Glacier Camp 6km

Rolwaling Map:

Kabug 6km->Na 7km->Beding 6km-> Dokhang 10km->Chhetchhet 10km->Singati Bajar (via road) 20km->Sarwa 14km->Bigu Gumpa 5km->Tinsang La 7km

Langtang & Helambu Map:

Sano Jyandan 9km->Last Resort 14km->Barhabise 17km->Bokse 16km-> Ratnaule 15km ->Pokhari Bhanjyang 14km->Timbu 20km->Setighyang 7km->Tarkado 7km->Thadepati Pass 6km->Lauribina Pass 12km->Laurebina 7km->Syabru Besi 12km->Gatlang 13km->Somdang 17km->Tipling 16km->Borang 9km

Manaslu & Ganesh Himals:

->Lapa Khola 3km->Nauban Kharka 13km->Kerauja 15km->Jagat 15km->Deng 20km->Namrung 16km->Sama 14km->Samdo 8km->Dharamsala Camp 5km->Larkya La 9km->Bintang 6km->Dharapani 22km

Annapurna, Naar, & Phu Map:

->Chame 15km->Pisang 15km->Manang 15km->Yak Kharka 10km->Thorung Phedi 7km->Thorung La 4km->Muktinath 8km->Kagbeni 11km

----Alternate from Manang to Jomsom over Mesokanta La----

Manang->Tilicho Lake Southern B.C. 18km-> Route over Eastern Pass around northeast side of lake is 9km, route on southwestern side is 6km to where they meet up above western end of lake->Jomsom 20km

Mustang Map:

Kagbeni->Yak Kharka 8km->Bhima Lojun La 10km

### Dolpo and Mugu Map:

->Santa 8km->Ghalden Ghulden Khola Camp 8km->Nulungsumda Kharka 16km->Chharka Bhot 18km->Cap Chu Lake Camp 13km->Maran 19km->Tokyu 10km->Jyanta La 12km->Chasip 22km->Saldang 10km->Nengla La 8km->Bhijer 10km

-----Alternate from Tokyu to Bhijer-----

Tokyu->Danigar 15km->Temche 9km->Ringmogoan 9km->Phoksundo Khola Camp 7km->Pass Camp 12km->Shey Gompa 11km->Bhijer 26km

Bhijer->Pho 11km->Pung Kharka 17km->Chyandi Khola 10km->Takla Khola 10km->Thajachaur 11km->Shilenchaura Kharka 12km->Tiyar 12km->Gamghadi 35km

### Far West Map:

Gamghadi->Bam 9km->Jogimara 10km->Piplan 20km->Apsia Lek 16km->Punkha Khola 10km->River Camp 12km->Simikot 16km

-----Alternate following river from Piplin to Simikot----

Piplin->Sarkeghat 13km->Karanga 27km->meet back up with pink route near Kharpunath 8km->Simikot 6km

Here's a little break down of how we broke things up.

### Route:

Fly into Kathmandu

Have our visa which we got before we left but you can also get at the airport. Drop gear cache at hotel.

Get permits for:

1. Taplejung District
2. Kanchenjunga Conservation Area and Kanchenjunga Trekking permit
3. Makalu- Barun NP & Conservation Area
4. Sagarmatha/Solu Khumbu NP

Fly to Taplejung from Kathmandu

Section 1 Taplejung - Barhabise Rt 318

## **Yellow Route - Taplejung, Suketar, Yamphudin, Cheram, Ghunsa**

**GHT** - Ghunsa, Nango La (4820m), Olangchun Gola, Lumbha Sambha (5159m), Thudam, Chyamtang, Chepuwa, Hongon, Nehe Kharka, Langmale Kharka, Sherpani Col (6180m), West Col (6190m), Amphu Labsta (5845m), Dingboche, Cho La (5420m), Renjo La (5360m), Thame, Tashi Labsta (5760m), Na, Beding, Dokhang, Simigaon, Chetchet, Orangdanda, Laduk, Loting, Bigu Gompa, Tinsang La (4778m), Barhabise

## **Transport from Barhabise to Kathmandu for resupply (bus)**

Get permits for:

1. Langtang NP
2. Manaslu Conservation Area
3. Annapurna Conservation Area
4. Shey Phuksumdo NP
5. Dolpa (Upper or Lower depending on route you choose)
6. Mugu >>>Will probably avoid this area unless you choose to resupply in Mugu or do an alternate other than the pink or green route
7. Rara NP >>>You can avoid this permit unless you hike out of Gamghadi to Rara Lake
8. Darchula District >>> Only need this if you are planning on finishing in Darchula area

## **Transport back to Barhabise (bus)**

### **Section 2 Barhabise - Jomosom**

**GHT** - Barhabise, Last Resort, Kisti, Bagam Gompa, Chogormugor Kharka, Tembathan, Tilman Pass (5308m), Langshisa Kharka, Kyangjin Gompa, Ghoratabela, Rimche, Thulo, Syabru Best, Gatlang, Somdang, Tipling, Boran, Lapagaon, Mangro Bhanjyang (?m), Yarsa, Keraunja, Tatopani, Jagat, Phillim, Deng, Prok, Namrung, Sho, Shyala, Sama, Samdo, Dharamsala, Larkye La (5135m), Bimtang, Goa, Bagarchhap, Timang, Chame, Pisang, Humde, Manang, Thorong La (5416m), Muktinath, Kagbeni, Jomosom

We did slightly different route then pink route description above: We left Berhabise on the cultural route and followed it to a town on the road to Timbu (end of the road). We then hiked to Timbu and up to Melamchigoan where we met up with the Gosakund trek and followed that to Syabru Besi.

Fly from Jomosom to Pokhara for resupply and return

### **Section 3 Jomosom -Simikot**

**GHT** - Jomosom, Santa, Ghok, Junbeh La (5550m), Niwas La (5124m), Nulungsumda Kharka, Chharka Bhot, Chan La (5378m), Maran, Dho Tarap, Tokyu, Numala South (5309m), Danigai, Bagala La (5169m), Ringmo, Pass Camp, Nangdalo La (5350m), Shey Gompa, Tora, Pho, Nyingma Gyanzen (5563m), Yala La (5414m), Chyargola Bhanjyang (5150m), Khari, Tiyar, Lhumsa, Gamgadhi, Piplin, Simikot

>>>>Possible Alt 1-

Yellow Route - Ringmo, Sanduwa, Chhepka, Shyanta, Sulighat, Dunai

Green Route - Dunai, Tibrikot, Muhu, Jumla

Yellow Route- Jumla, Bumra, Pina, Gamgadhi

>>>>Possible Alt 2 - Ringmo, Php, Jhonpa La (?m), Dolphu, Tiyar, Lhumsa, Gamgadhi

Yellow Route - Gamgadhi, Niga, Rara

Green Route - Rara, Murma, Tak Bazaar, Boldhik, Kolti

Yellow Route - Kolti, Dadagiri (3309m), Pokhara, Bateli Bhanjyang (?m), Chainpur

Green Route - Chainpur, Baniya, Pathrasi Shanjyang (4890m), Chhetti, Ghusa, Rapla, Darchula

Transport or hike from Simikot to KTM via Nepalgunj (no direct flights)

Fly from KTM to Delhi

Resupply in Delhi. Get Permits and organize for India section. Fly from Delhi and resume hike.

### **India Route Ideas**

Uttarakhand

## Permitted Areas:

### 1. Sources of the Ganges

- 150 quota per day. Issued at District Forest Office in Uttarkashi. First come first serve. Rs 350 for 2 day/ Rs 175/ day after

### 2. Kuari Pass

- Issued @ Forest Office in Joshimath. Rs 350/ 3 days, Rs 175/day additional. Additional fees for staff and camping?

### 3. Rup Kund

- Issued @ Forest Office in Nandaaprayag or Bedni Bugyal. Rs 350/ 3 days, Rs 175/day additional. Additional fees for staff and camping.

### 4. Milam Glacier & Nanda Devi

- Issued at Magistrates Office. Need copy of Passport. No Charge. Issued same day.

## Route:

Dharchula, Askot, Gori Ganga, Martori, Longstaff Col (5910m), Nanda Devi Base Camp, Rishi Ganga, Lata, Tabovan, Joshimath, Govind Ghat, Ghangaria, Bhamani Dhaur (Valley of Flowers NP), Hanliman Chatti, Mana, Arwa River, Kalindi Khal (5873m), Chaturang Glacier (source of the Ganges), Tapovan, Gangotri, Harsil, Dhumdhar Pass ?, Ruinsara River, Supin River, Naitwar, Sewa, Jakhu, Rupin Pass (4540m), Sangla

## Himachal Pradesh

## Permitted Areas:

### 1. Kinnaur Kalias Trek

- Inner Line Permit required. Obtain in Shimla or Rekonng Peo

### 2. Inner Line Permit between Spiti and Kinnaur

- Issued from District Magistrate Office in Shimla or Rekonng Peo (Kinnaur) or from Sub Magistrate Office in Spiti (Kaza)

## Route:

Sangla, Wangtu, Kapnu, Tarik La (4850m), Pin Parvati Pass (5320m), Parvati River, Basholi, Jari, Malana, Chandrakani Pass (3650m), Naggar, Jagatsukh, Hampta Pass

(4270m), Chatru, Batal, Chandra River, Baralacha La (4900m), Baralacha La North (4950m)

Ladakh

Permitted Areas:

1. Hemis NP

- Issued at Rumbak. Rs 100.

2. Rupsu

- ?

3. Nubra Valley

- Get Permit in person at District's Commissioners Office or thru Trekking Agency. Rs 100 per day, 7 day max stay. 4 person group min, easy to get around.

4. Pangong Lake

- Get Permit in person at District's Commissioners Office or thru Trekking Agency. Rs 100 per day, 7 day max stay. 4 person group min, easy to get around.

5. Dha-Hanu

- Get Permit in person at District's Commissioners Office or thru Trekking Agency. Rs 100 per day, 7 day max stay. 4 person group min, easy to get around.

6. Tso Moriri

- Get Permit in person at District's Commissioners Office or thru Trekking Agency. Rs 100 per day, 7 day max stay. 4 person group min, easy to get around.

7. Tso Kar

- Get Permit in person at District's Commissioners Office or thru Trekking Agency. Rs 100 per day, 7 day max stay. 4 person group min, easy to get around.

**Route:**

Baralacha La North (4950m), Lingti River, Phitse La (5250m), Tanze, Kargyak River,

OR:



Shingu La or Phirtse La, Padum, Pensi La, Kargil

Alt 1: Kang La, Padum, Umasi La, Lonvilad Pass, Umba La or Chilung La, Srinigar

## **Pakistan**

Start to Skardu

Maps: Gilgit, Mundik

Permits: Open Zone

From Karakoram Highway

- South on rd to Halala (T)
- east on trail up Diamer River to Zangot (T)
- south up Airi River valley onto Loiba Glacier, over Mazeno Pass (5377m)
- east onto Rupal Glacier to Tarashing (T)
- road walk east, then north to Astor (T)
- east up Parishing River, over Banak Pass (4964m), down to Kachura Lake
- road walk south to Skardu

ALT: Astor to Skardu through the Deosai Plateau (restricted zone)

**Our Daily Stages Through Nepal** (as mentioned earlier real distances are probably 20-30% more than measured distances below due to the scale of the maps and elevation gains/losses are only measuring major climbs/descents more than 1 contour line):

Day 1: Taplejung to Taplethok, 7.75hr, 35km, -900m/+460m

Day 2: Taplethok to Thyanyani, 7.75hr, 30 km, +920m

Day 3: Thyanyani to Ghunsa, 4.25hr, 22km (1/2 day, resupply in Ghunsa), +1200m

Day 4: Ghunsa to Thasa Khola Camp, 8hr, 21km, +1180m, -970m

Day 5: High Camp to Olangchun Gola, 4.5hr, 20km (1/2 day), +300m, -900m

Day 6: Olangchun Gola to Pass Camp (4450m), 5hr, 21km, +1250m

Day 7: Pass Camp to Lasa, 9.5hr, 21km, +700m, -1200m  
Day 8: Lasa to Chyamtang, 7.75hr, 26km, +700m, -1500m  
Day 9: Chyamtang to Barun Bajar, 6.75hr, 41km, -1100m  
Day 10: Barun Bajar to Num, 6hr, 38km, +1200m, -700m  
Day 11: Lukla to Namche, 6hr, 17km (1/2 day), +750m  
Day 12: Namche to Loboche, 8hr, 24km, +1900m, -400m  
Day 13: Loboche to Everest Base Camp to Dzongla, 7hr, 29km, +450, -550m  
Day 14: Dzongla to Gokyo, 5.75hr, 14km, (3/4 day), +600m, -600m  
Day 15: Gokyo to Namche, 6.75hr, 28km (resupply), +570m, -1900m  
Day 16: Namche to Tashi Labsta Camp (5150m), 5.75hr, 18km, +1700m  
Day 17: Tashi High Camp to Beding Camp, 10.5hr, 27km, +800m, -2100m  
Day 18: Beding to Singati Khola Camp, 11hr, 45km, +800m, -2800m  
Day 19: Singati Khola Camp to Karthali, 12hr, 47+km, +2200m, -700m  
Day 20: Karthali to Berhabise, 1hr, 5km (resupply by taking bus to KTM), -700m  
Day 21: Berhabise to Okhreni, 4.5hr, 10km, +1300m, -400m  
Day 22: Kheri Camp to Camp (Jyamire @1800m), 11hr, 28km, +1700m, -800m  
Day 23: Jyamire to Melamchegoan, 7.5hr, 36km, +1600m, -1000m  
Day 24: Melamchegoan to Thadepati, 3.5hr, 4km (1/3 of day hiking, stopped at 10am and were going very slow, Shawn was sick), +1200m  
Day 25: Thadepati to Dhunchee, 10hr, 31km, +1200, -2900m  
Day 26: Dhunchee to Somdang, 10hr, 45km, +2300m, -900m  
Day 27: Somdang to Lapagoan, 9hr, 32km, +1400m, -2800m  
Day 28: Lapagoan to Machhakhola, 10.5hr, 24km, +2000m, -2700m  
Day 29: Machhakhola to Bihi Phedi, 11hr, 39km, +1100m  
Day 30: Bihi Phedi to Larkya Bazar, 10.5hr, 37km, +2100m  
Day 31: Larkya Bazar to Dharapani, 10.5hr, 39km, +1100m, -3300m  
Day 32: Dharapani to Manang, 10hr, 45km, +1700m

Day 33: Manang to Thorung Phedi, 4hr, 17km (1/3 of the day hiking), +900m

Day 34: Thorung Phedi to Kagbeni/Jomsom, 5hr, 23km, +1000m, -2600m

Day 35: Kagbeni to Santa, 6.5 hr, 26km, +1650m, -700m

Day 36: Santa to Thajan Khola Camp (4700m), 11hr, 30km, +2200m, -1300m

Day 37: Thajan Camp to Chan La Camp (4700m), 8.5hr, 30km, +700m, -600m

Day 38: Chan La Camp to Jyanta La Camp (4700m), 11.5hr, 40km, +2000m, -1900m

Day 39: Jyanta La Camp to Nengla La Camp (5200m), 11hr, 35km, +1500, -1000m

Day 40: Nengla La Camp to Pho Camp (4350m), 10hr, 26km, +2200m, -2900m

Day 41: Pho Camp to Chyadi Khola, 12hr, 23km, +2300m, -1800m

Day 42: Chyadi Khola to Takla Khola, (1/2 day hiking) 5.5hr, 12km, +600, -1400m

Day 43: Takla Khola to Gilang Khola Camp (2600m), 11hr, 31km, +1400m, -2500m

Day 44: Gilang Khola to Gamghadi, 8hr, 40km, +300m, -700m

Day 45: Gamghadi to Piplan, 10hr, 39km, +2800m, -2500m

Day 46: Piplan to Ghatte Khola Camp, 11.5hr, 50km, +600m

Day 47: Ghatte Khola Camp to Simikot, 1.5hr, 4km, +900m (but in actuality I think the maps are wrong and it is a much shorter climb).