



International  
MedicalRelief



# HIMALAYA MEDICAL EXPEDITION

## GEAR LIST

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Himalaya Medical Expedition Gear List



Print the list below. Use it as a checklist to plan and again to pack. Strict adherence is not required if you have a system or combination of items you know works for you. Use your judgment, but don't bring items or systems that you have not used before.

Items of clothing and gear that might fail or be difficult to repair while trekking should be left home and replaced with more reliable items. It is important that you have used your clothing, sleeping, and gear systems this before the trip. You need to be very familiar and comfortable with all your clothing and gear during your pre-trip training. That means hiking with the boot/sock system you will use, and sleeping out in the exact bag/pad system you plan to use.

If you need to obtain clothing or gear, know that "quality" does not necessarily mean "expensive." You can sometimes find some needed items at Army surplus and thrift stores. Here are some additional options for best buys:

- Backcountry - <http://www.backcountry.com/>
- Steep and Cheap – <http://www.steepandcheap.com/>
- "Garage Sales" and "Gear Swaps" held occasionally at REI stores and some local mountaineering shops throughout the U.S. Call those near you and inquire when the next one might be.
- Sierra Trading Post website – great sale prices <http://www.sierratradingpost.com>
- Campmor website: <http://www.campmor.com>
- REI Outlet has daily specials: <http://www.rei.com/outlet>
- Used gear bulletin boards at mountaineering shops

Please mark all your gear with your last name or initials using an indelible marker, to the extent practical. It can be difficult to remember which water bottle or pair of mittens belongs to you, and many items of clothing and gear can look almost identical.

Inspect all your gear and clothing carefully to insure the materials, grommets, zippers, seams, and waterproof characteristics are in good shape. Jackets and rain pants should be treated with durable water repellent (such as Nikwax TX Direct or Gore-Revivex) before the trip.

## **GEAR**

- Daypack** - for use as your carry-on bag when you fly, and carrying personal items while trekking (water bottles, extra clothing, head lamp, snacks, camera, etc).
- Duffel bag** - to hold everything you will not be carrying in your daypack. It will be checked as luggage when you fly, and carried by a porter while we are trekking. It should be made of durable cordura, ballistic cloth, or heavy pack cloth. Porters do not prefer to use backpacks. This duffel should not have wheels to save weight. They tend to carry loads in a woven basket with a single strap around the forehead. A duffel is expected and acceptable. Ensure things that should stay dry are packed in a waterproof stuff sack or a plastic garbage bag (trash compactor bags work well for this purpose because they are thick and won't tear easily).
- Sleeping bag** - rated to 20 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Sleeping pad** - suited for cold weather. Inflatable pads tend to be warmer but can be fragile.
- Nalgene water bottles (2)** - with a minimum combined capacity of 2 liters. Consider water bottle holders that attach to your hip belt; the easier the access to

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the water, the more likely you will drink often. “Hydration systems” are acceptable but an insulated hose is recommended.

## **FOOTWEAR**

- ❑ **Hiking boots** - suitable for rocky trails and occasional snow. Should go above the ankle. Either a Gore-Tex membrane or a leather exterior that can be waterproofed is strongly recommended. The boots should support your ankle and the rest of your foot. If you are using leather boots, bring along some extra waterproofing material. Boots must be well broken in prior to the trip!
- ❑ **Gaiters** - should be waterproof. They help you avoid getting pebbles, dirt, or snow in your boots and prevent your boots, socks, and the bottom of your trousers getting as wet and worn as they would otherwise. Ankle high gaiters are best for this trip.
- ❑ **Liner socks** - thin Capilene, other synthetic, or silk socks worn next to the skin to reduce the incidence of blisters or hot spots. NO COTTON. Bring a minimum of two pairs, and alternate days. You can switch out your liner socks and dry the worn pair under your hat or in your bag while you sleep each night
- ❑ **Insulating socks** - bring the very warmest wool or synthetic blend sock that comfortably fit in your boots. NO COTTON. Bring 3 pairs - 2 to alternate like you do with your liner socks, and keep the third fresh for sleeping in and use around camp.
- ❑ **Light weight trekking shoes** - old running shoes or low trekking shoes to wear around camp after a day on the trail. Once you see how the trails are, there may be days low in the Khumbu when you might prefer to wear these instead of your boots. This will likely be your shoe while we are in Kathmandu.

## **CLOTHING**

Bring at least two thick insulating layers and a rainproof outer layer. These garments should fit comfortably over each other so they can all be worn at the same time. Combinations of insulating layers are acceptable.

- ❑ **Waterproof shell coat and pants** - lightweight, strong, and roomy. Full front zippered, agoules and anorak coats are all acceptable. Garments made of breathable fabrics are best, including Gore-Tex, Klimate, Entrant, eVent, Precip, Watergate, Epic, Triplepoint, Drilite, and others. Coated nylon is not recommended.
- ❑ **Fleece or thick wool jacket and pants** - your principal insulating layer when the weather is cold.
- ❑ **Down jacket**
- ❑ **Base layer uppers and lowers** - thin lightweight synthetic to be worn next to your skin. Bring 2 base layer uppers and just one base layer lower. While expensive, new generation Merino wool (such as Icebreaker or Smartwool) is comfortable, super warm, and does not absorb odors as much as synthetics.
- ❑ **Insulating 2<sup>nd</sup> upper and lower layers** - thicker expedition weight synthetic or wool.

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- Trekking pants** - 2 pairs of light and comfortable synthetic pants that turn into shorts.
- T-shirts** - bring 2 pairs of whatever is comfortable for you. Synthetics are best. We suggest a cotton shirt to keep cool if the temperature is hot when we descend back to Lukla at the end of our trek or KTM.
- Underwear** - synthetic! (Cotton set to sleep in is OK.)
- Sunhat** - a lightweight brimmed hat or baseball cap will be useful on hot sunny days in order to avoid getting sunburn.
- Insulating hat** - wool or synthetic material. Must cover your ears. Balaclavas are great. You must have either a waterproof hood on your outer shell or a waterproof outer fabric on your hat.
- Liner gloves** - made of wool or synthetic material.
- Mittens or expedition gloves** - for the high passes and hills. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Do not bring gloves unless they are of the highest quality with a waterproof outer fabric. Think skiing on a cold day and you know what you need!

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- Journal and pen or pencil.**
- Hand sanitizer** - required! You must use some before each group meal. Please bring enough for the entire trip including use during clinic.
- Headlamp** - a light at night is essential for getting to the toilet or finding things in a dark tent. A headlamp is practical since it leaves your hands free, but a small, lightweight flashlight works fine too. Bring a set of extra batteries for your headlight/flashlight.
- Sunscreen** - exposed skin can quickly get badly burned at high altitudes. Bring SPF 30 or higher. To gauge volume needed, remember that only your face and neck will be exposed for most of the trip but you will need it every day.
- Lip balm** - with SPF of 15 or higher.
- Sunglasses** - with protection from ultraviolet. Failure to protect your eyes at altitude can lead to painful snow blindness and an expensive evacuation.
- Chemical heat packs** - for your feet and hands for the two high passes we cross or the two high hills you will have an opportunity to ascend. Bring 4 pairs of each.
- Toilet kit** - put the following in a zip-lock bag and carry it in your daypack during the trek: toilet paper, hand sanitizer, small lighter (to burn the TP when you are away from pit latrines).
- Toothbrush and toothpaste.**
- Spare laces** - in case you break yours.
- Cotton bandanna** - 101 uses, including to clean sunglasses or cover your head. A dark colored bandanna is preferable, as it will not show dirt like a light colored one.
- Money/passport carrier** - is essential to keep your passport and money secure and out of sight.
- Waterproof stuff sacks or garbage bags** - for your sleeping bag, clothes, and other things that need to stay dry.
- Blister repair kit** - such as moleskin.

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- Medications** - prescription meds you need should be carried in a waterproof container. Also consider bringing Pepto-Bismol, Imodium, ibuprofen or aspirin, decongestants, cough or throat lozenges, and any other personal medical items you think you will need. The team will have a comprehensive first aid kit and medicine kit, but that should not be relied on for your regular or predictable needs.

#### **OPTIONAL**

- Camera** - a lightweight digital camera may be preferable to a larger traditional 35mm SLR. Consider an extra battery.
- Video camera** - see the caution above for cameras. Consider an extra battery. Most phones and cameras are suitable for both photo and video combined.
- Trekking poles** - especially if you experience knee pain, these walking poles can offer some relief especially during walks down steep trails.
- Pocket knife** - it might be handy to bring along a basic blade, can and bottle opener, scissors, and tweezers, but make sure you store it in your checked luggage for the flight.
- Electric 110/220 adapter** - useful if you plan on using personal electric appliances in Kathmandu.
- Acetazolomide (Diamox)** - this prescription drug is often used for the prevention and treatment of Acute Mountain Sickness that occurs at high altitudes. Diamox can be used prophylactically or to treat the symptoms of altitude sickness as they occur. Diamox often helps people sleep better at altitude. Thoughts regarding its efficacy and use vary among mountaineers, guides, and the medical community. Increased urination is a common and side effect of this drug. If you want to use it, you should educate yourself about its use and try it before arriving in Nepal for the mission.
- Down booties** - for in your tent, around camp, or in your bag on cold nights up high.
- Pre-moistened towelettes.**
- Foot powder.**
- Small camp towel.**
- Binoculars** - lightweight models only.
- Earplugs** - these light and small items may help you sleep if your tent mate saws wood.

#### **SUGGESTIONS**

- Leave expensive jewelry and watches at home.
- Follow the training program and ensure that your boots are well broken in before you leave home.
- Have a good blister kit in your first aid kit and learn how to properly take care of blisters before you embark on the trek.
- Purchase trip insurance well in advance of the trip. Read the policy carefully.
- Consider flying independently and acclimating for a few days prior to the trip in Kathmandu (altitude: ~5000 ft).

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