

## LUXURY EVEREST BASE CAMP TREK #4 2019

### First Day on the Trail

29 September 2019

Our Luxury Everest Base Camp Trek #4 is underway!

Our team have arrived in Nepal and after some last-minute preparations in Kathmandu, they are on their way.



Ready for the flight

The journey started with a dramatic helicopter ride from Kathmandu to Lukla (2,860m/9,383ft), the entrance to the Khumbu Valley and the start of this epic trek.



Passing Buddhist chortens and mani stones along the trail

Following a quick refresh in Lukla after their early start, the team took to the trail under some heavy skies and rain. Fortunately, the weather eased as they passed through the village of Phakding, and had managed to stop for the last section of trail to Monjo (2,835m/9,301ft), their rest stop for the night.



Enjoying the lush greens of the lower valley

It was a good five-hour hike for the trekkers, which with the jump in altitude from the city to the mountains is a great start to the trek.



Full waterfalls after the rains

## **Monjo to Namche Bazaar**

30 September 2019

The rain held off for our team as they set out from Monjo this morning, with cloudy skies keeping the temperatures at a good level for hiking.



Painted mani stones line the trail

Today's trail followed the valley to the base of the Namche Hill, a steep incline that is always a good test of mettle in the early stages of acclimatisation. It didn't prove a problem for our group though, negotiating the day's trekking to Namche Bazaar in around 3½ hours.



Tom and Mike with Trek Leader Tsering Wongchu in the centre

Namche Bazaar (3,440m/11,286ft) is the main settlement in the Khumbu Valley, a bustling and colourful town. The team have now crossed the 3,000m threshold, gaining around 600m/2,000ft in elevation since their previous night in Monjo — which makes this an ideal spot to pause for a day, explore and consolidate the altitude gains they have made as they adjust to the thinner air.



Arriving into Namche Bazaar



Relaxing after a good day on the trails

## Namche Rest Day

1 October 2019

With two nights scheduled in Namche Bazaar, today the team had a full day to enjoy as they pleased.



Exploring Namche

The weather was cool and cloudy but the rain held off, ideal for exploring the town and local area.

Namche is the hub of the Khumbu Valley and the perfect place to pause and drink in the Sherpa culture. Situated in a natural amphitheatre, Namche is only accessible by foot or air but is still a busy market town with dramatic views over the surrounding high peaks.



Sherpa Tenzing Norgay Memorial

There's lots to see and do, being home to the Sagarmatha National Park Headquarters, as well as craft shopping and cafés to people-watch and enjoy the unique Sherpa architecture.

For our team, it's also a welcome day to go lighter on the legs and take a breather before they continue on up the valley towards their goal.

## On to Tashinga

2 October 2019

Today the team trekked the short distance to Tashinga, exploring the twin villages of Khunde (3,840m/12,598ft) and Khumjung (3,780m/12,402ft) along the way.



Low cloud hovered all day

The trail meanders easily up the valley, and took the team around 4 hours in total. Often, Everest can be clearly seen on the horizon ahead, but cloudy weather kept the team from viewing their goal today.



Enjoying a pause

Despite the clouds, it was a thoroughly enjoyable day and the team remain very happy!



Exploring Buddhist monestaries enroute - yeti skull at Khumjung



Wooded trails

## Tashinga to Pangboche

3 October 2019

There were more high spirits from the team this morning as fine weather continued to grace their trek.



Splendid pine and rhododendron forests

Leaving Tashinga, the trail descended steeply before crossing the bubbling Dudh Kosi river, only to turn sharply upwards again on the opposite bank.



Views of Ama Dablam are spectacular

The carrot at the end of the rise was the beautiful Tengboche Monastery, perched at the top of a long ridge. It's the largest monastery in the Khumbu Valley and an excellent excuse for a breather at the top!



Smiles for the trail!

After lunch in Tengboche, the clouds slowly started to roll in as the team descended to cross the Imja Khola river this time, followed by an easier climb to the small village of Pangboche (3,985m/13,074ft), where they will stay the night.



The entrance to Tengboche Monastery

## On to Dingboche

4 October 2019

After a morning visit around Pangboche, it was another fine day on the trail as our team headed up the valley towards the village of Dingboche.



Ama Dablam dominates the skyline

Fuelled by a tea break along the way in Shomare, the team made good progress and reached their goal in 3½ hours.



Trekking towards Dingboche under stunning skies

The overall elevation gain of the day was around 250m/820ft, but it saw them cross an important threshold for their first night above 4,000m/13,100ft.

Here in Dingboche (4,240m/13,900ft) they will stay just outside the village at the first of our well-appointed Luxury Camps, taking advantage of two nights here to take a break for the trail and solidify their acclimatisation.



Making way for traffic



Onwards and upwards

## Getting Higher

5 October 2019

It's always nice to have a place to set down your gear and call home for a couple of nights, especially when it's such a good one!



Dingboche Camp

That was today's treat for our Luxury Everest Base Camp team, who are enjoying the comforts of our Lobuche Camp for a second night.



Looking back towards Ama Dablam

The team took the opportunity to explore the local environs and push their acclimatisation that little further with a day hike to Lhengbo (4,700m/15,400ft).



Pausing for a break with Dingboche in the distance

With fantastic weather and breathtaking scenery, it was a great day for our team who have reported in as feeling good and really enjoying the trek.



The dramatic Lhotse ridge frames the backdrop

## Lobuche Luxury Tented Camp

6 October 2019

After their rest day in Dingboche, the team continued on their way towards Base Camp, slowly gaining altitude through a landscape which has become quite stark and dramatic at this elevation. But whilst the vegetation has become sparser, the views continue to expand and become ever more impressive.



Sparser vegetation in the higher reaches of the valley

The team continued through glacial valley up onto the Dughla Ridge and moved onto the moraine towards the Khumbu Glacier. Their home for tonight is our second luxury tented camp, located outside the village of Lobuche at a lofty 4,900m/16,100ft. It would have been a sight for sore eyes after their 4½ hours of solid trekking.



The dramatic Dughla Ridge with Cholatse looming out of the clouds in the distance

Despite a little light afternoon rain, the team have settled in for the next couple of nights, as tomorrow they will enjoy a second acclimatisation day here.



Dinner in camp

## Lobuche Rest Day

7 October 2019

Today was a light day for the team as they enjoyed relaxing in the relative luxuries of our Lobuche Camp, complete with showers and beds!



Hiking to the ridge above Lobuche

As the weather was good, Tom and Mike kept their legs ticking over with an hour's hike to a ridge above the camp. From here they were rewarded with great views of the Khumbu Glacier beyond, with atmospheric high cloud swirling around the tops of the peaks.

Both trekkers are doing well and tomorrow they will continue on their journey, getting ever closer to their goal.

## Everest Base Camp

9 October 2019

It's been an important couple of days on the trail for our Luxury Everest Base Camp Team. Yesterday they made the trek to Gorak Shep, a small settlement nestled in the sandy meadows beneath the slopes of Pumori. After some cloud cover in the morning, the weather slowly started to clear, making for great trekking conditions. It was a 3½ hour hike to Gorak Shep, with the team arriving in good time for lunch at our luxury camp there.



Perfect day for it

Refuelled, Tom was still eager for more and headed out again for an afternoon hike. Along with Tsering Wongchu and Assistant Trekking Sherpa Sonam, they made their way up Kala Patar, a rocky 'hill' (it's still 5,554m/18,222ft!) with some of the best views of Everest. It was a 2½ hour round trip and we're sure Tom appreciated the comforts of camp upon his return!

Some overnight snow followed by good weather in the morning made everything beautiful for the team's big day today, the final stretch to Everest Base Camp. Trekking along the moraine of the Khumbu Glacier, the team arrived after 3¾ hours, the perfect place to celebrate Mike's birthday today! Happy birthday Mike!



That's us...



Made it!

After celebrations, the team descended back to Gorak Shep for another night in camp. Well done team!



Congratulations to Tom, Tsering Wongchu and Mike

## Down to Dingboche

10 October 2019

Will the hard work done and the goal of Everest Base Camp reached, the descent has officially begun for our trekking team.



Tom on the trail

After a hearty breakfast in our Gorak Shep Camp, Tom and Tsering Wongchu began the trek down to our Dingboche Camp. Despite the welcome downhill, it's still a long haul, taking nearly 5 hours on the trail. Although we think it's safe to say the scenery would have more than made up for it!



Incredible scenery down to Dingboche

Mike rewarded himself with a birdseye view of the Khumbu, taking a heli between camps for some out of this world scenery in this upper part of the valley.



Mike's birthday cake



Happy birthday!

Both Mike and Tom are doing great tonight and have been relaxing in camp with movies.