



Nepal

HIDDEN VALLEYS OF KHUMBU TREK & BABAI RIVER CAMP

16 DAYS

HIMALAYAN CLIMBS

We run ethical, professionally led climbs. Our operations focuses foremost on responsible tourism:

Safety: All guides carry satellite phones in case of an emergency or helicopter rescue. Carried on all treks are comprehensive emergency kits. High altitude trips require bringing a Portable Altitude Chamber (PAC) and supplemental oxygen.

Responsibility: All rubbish is disposed of properly, adhering to 'trash in trash out' practices. Any non-biodegradable items are taken back to the head office to make sure they're disposed of properly. To help the local economy all vegetables, rice, kerosene, chicken, and sheep is bought from local villages en route to where guests are trekking.

Teams: Like most of our teams, the porters have been working with us for almost 10 years. Porters are provided with adequate warm gear and tents, are paid timely, and are never overloaded. In addition, porters are insured and never left on the mountain. In fact, most insurance benefits are extended to their families as well. Teams are paid above industry average and training programs and English courses are conducted in the low seasons; their knowledge goes beyond just trekking but also into history, flora, fauna, and politics.

Client Experience: Our treks proudly introduce fantastic food. Cooks undergo refresher courses every season to ensure that menus are new and exciting. All food is very hygienically cared for. By providing private toilets, shower tents, mess tents, tables, chairs, Thermarest mattresses, sleeping bags, liners and carefully choosing campsites for location in terms of safety, distance, space, availability of water and the views – our guests are sure to have a comfortable and enjoyable experience!



SAFETY DEVICES

Portable Altitude Chamber
[on crater ascents]

First Aid Kits

Oxygen + regulator + mask

Pulse Oximeters



Neck
brace

Water Filter

Mobile Phone

Satelite Phone
(on Shira + Crater)

Stethoscope

Guest + Crew AMS
Monitoring sheets

Portable
stretcher

HIDDEN VALLEYS OF KHUMBU TREK & BABAI RIVER CAMP

Overview

Soaring to an ultimate 8,850m, Mt Everest and its buttress the Lhotse wall dominates all other peaks in view and interest. Hundreds of trekkers make their way up the Khumbu Valley to witness the sun rising behind the highest point on earth and pay a visit to a temporary home on the icy Khumbu Glacier climbers call 'Everest Base Camp.' With rising demands, locals have created basic lodges all along the valley and so if you do not wish to sleep under canvas the option is there. However the ease of travel along the valley restricts you from being able to see the amazing variety of landscapes, flora and fauna only the other side of the valleys can offer and very rarely do you find yourself not sharing the trail with many other fellow trekkers and trains of pack animals.

The Hidden Valleys of the Khumbu is a trek that allows you to make your pilgrimage to the must see places before you die but doing it the right way. First we fly into the world's most amazing airport – Lukla at 9,300ft, spend a day acclimatizing and then make our way slowly up through Namche Bazar staying at Luxury lodges to an elevation of 11,300ft. Beyond this point we leave the trekker's highway to trek and camp as we explore the stunningly beautiful Khangtaiga, Mingbo La, Imja, and Amadablam Valleys where yaks graze freely and other trekkers rarely roam. We head into the stunningly beautiful Dingboche valley and onto Gorakshep, the gateway to Everest Base Camp. On a clear day the trekker is rewarded with picturesque views. The ascent of Kalapathar (18,200ft) begins at Gorakshep with a series of switchbacks and eventually leading the windswept summit ridge with prayer flags for views of Everest from top to bottom. Then as you descend down the valley you once again leave the main trail at the village of Pangboche to skirt around the base of Mt Tawoche on a trail that enjoys a panoramic view of the southern horizon that is dominated by Mt Amadabalam, Mt Khangtaiga, Mt Thamserku and Kwangde Himal Phortse.

From here, a spectacular experience awaits at Babai River Camp located in Bardia National park, home to the endangered one-horned rhino and the elusive Royal Bengal tiger. Bardia, formerly a Royal hunting reserve, is famous for its wildlife which include tiger, leopard, rhino, wild elephant, seven species of deer and antelope, marsh-muggar and gharial crocodiles and many other animals. Over 400 bird species have been recorded within the National Park. After the jungle safari experience you will return to Kathmandu fully rejuvenated ready to explore the busy streets of Kathmandu city. Finally, with all these wonderful memories, it is time to bid Nepal goodbye with the plan to return one day back to the country of smiles.



HIDDEN VALLEYS OF KHUMBU TREK & BABAI RIVER CAMP: ITINERARY AT-A-GLANCE

DAY 1

Kathmandu

Arrival into International Airport, welcome + briefing. Overnight Dwarika's Hotel

DAY 2

Lukla/ Phakding

Flight to Lukla airstrip (9,300 ft), start trek, 3 hours walking, Overnight Local Lodge

DAY 3

Namche

6 hrs Walking, Overnight Hotel Sherpaland

DAY 4

Tashinga

4 hrs Walking, Overnight Everest Summit Lodge Tashinga

DAY 5

Yarin

5-6 hrs Walking, Overnight Yarin Camp

DAY 6

Yarin

5-6 hrs Walking, Overnight Yarin Camp

DAY 7

Yarin

5-6 hrs Walking, Overnight Yarin Camp

DAY 8

Dingboche

5-6 hrs Walking, Overnight Local Lodge

DAY 9

Lobuche

5-6 hrs Walking, Overnight Local Lodge

DAY 10

Everest Base Camp/ Gorakshep

6-7 hrs Walking, Overnight Local Lodge

HIDDEN VALLEYS OF KHUMBU TREK & BABAI RIVER CAMP: ITINERARY AT-A-GLANCE

DAY 11

Lobuche

6-7 hrs Walking,
Overnight Local Lodge

DAY 12

Kathmandu

Fly by private
helicopter to
Kathmandu, city
touring, Overnight
Local Lodge

DAY 13

Babai River Camp

Domestic flight to fly to
Nepalgunj, Bardia
National Park, Transfer
by road, Overnight
Babai River Camp

DAY 14

Babai River Camp

Jeep drive, wildlife
spotting, Ghuti
Elephant Camp,
Overnight Babai River
Camp

DAY 15

Babai River Camp

Safari drive to Gaida
Tal in pursuit of
spotting a Royal
Bengal Tiger, Three
course dinner and
drinks, Overnight Babai
River Camp

DAY 16

Kathmandu

Drive to Nepalgunj
Airport, return flight to
Kathmandu, Farewell
dinner, departing flights



DAY 1: KATHMANDU

Upon arrival into Tribhuvan Kathmandu International Airport and are personally met and transferred to hotel. Tonight there is a welcome dinner and briefing.

Overnight Dwarika's Hotel (Dinner)



DAY 2: LUKLA / PHAKDING

Today you transfer to the airport and head to Lukla airstrip (9,300 ft). You will find Lukla humming with local life as you are introduced to your trek crew and dzopkyos (a pack animal that is a cross between a yak and a highland cattle). Here before you start your trek, you hand over your kit for carrying and in a short while head up the Dudh Kosi valley. Right from Lukla on a clear day, the mountains of Kwangde, Kusum Kangaru and Khumbila greet the new visitor. It is about 2 hours to lunch at Thado Kosi beside a side stream. You cross a few suspension bridges that bring you to the village of Phakding. You spend the night in Phakding 8,661 ft. (Walking 3 hrs)

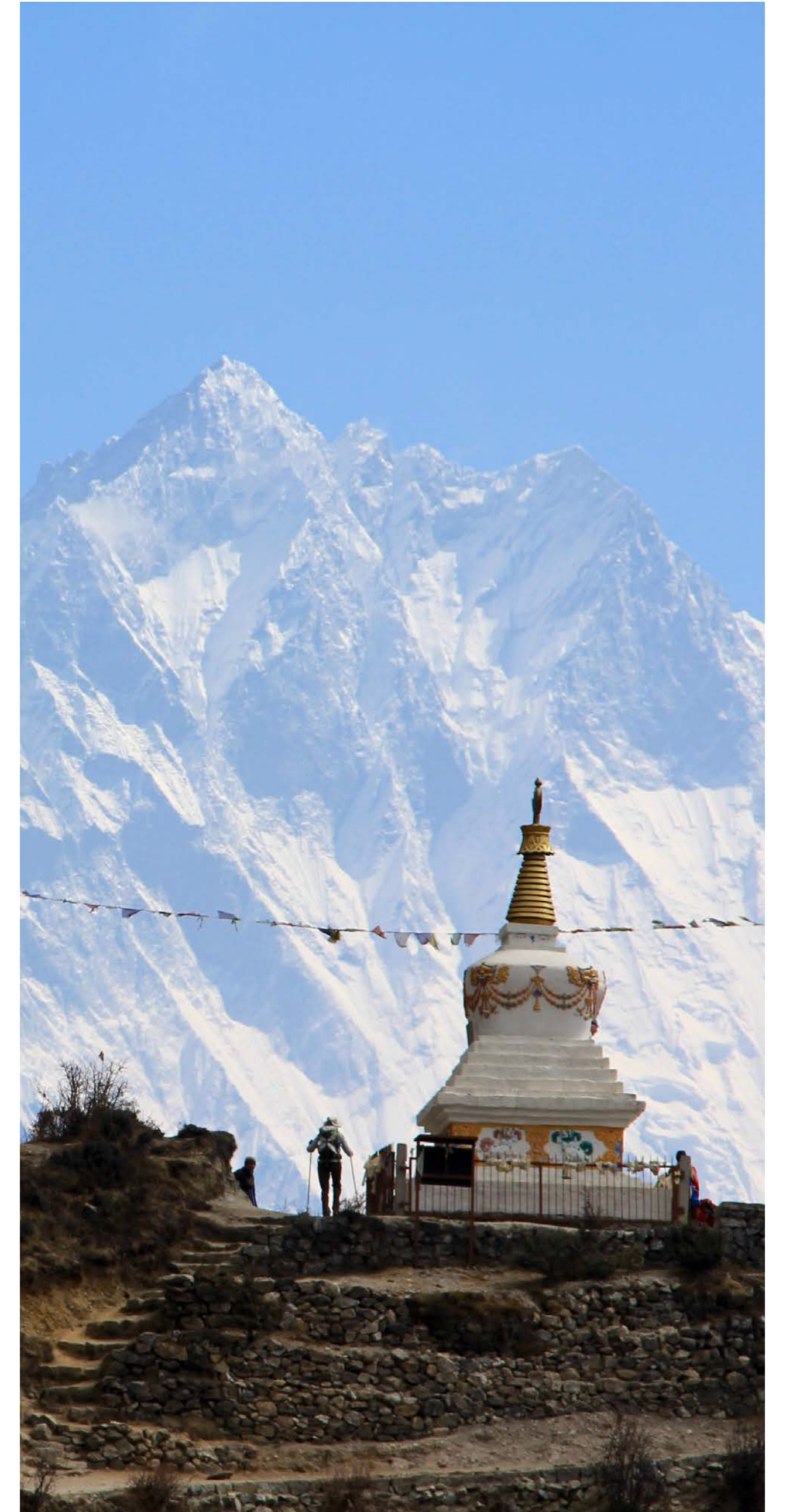
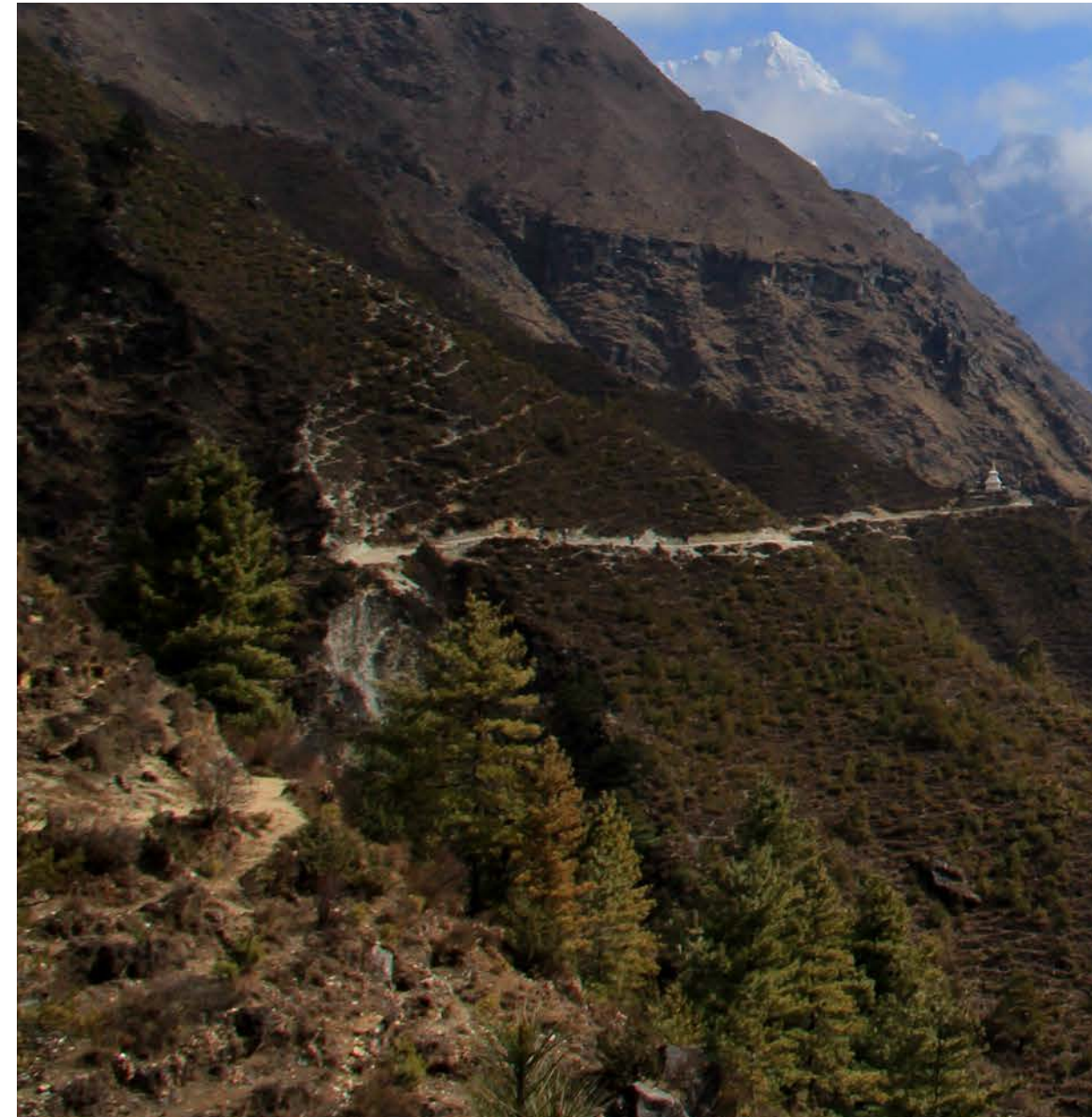
Overnight Local Lodge with catering (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 3: NAMTCHE

Today, the trail wanders past farmhouses and through rolling terrain that slowly ascends to reach the entrance to Sagarmatha National Park. An early lunch provides fuel for the 1,800-foot steep hike to the village of Namche Bazaar (11,300 ft). Namche is the largest Sherpa village. Beyond Phakding, we pass several interesting villages nestled beside the river, cross the raging Dudh Kosi several times on the smart and the newly built suspension bridges, entering the Sagarmatha National Park at Jorsale. After lunch near the river under the pine trees, we leave the Dudh Kosi and climb the steps up to the Sherpa capital and administrative center of Khumbu, Namche 11,300 ft. (Walking 6 hrs)

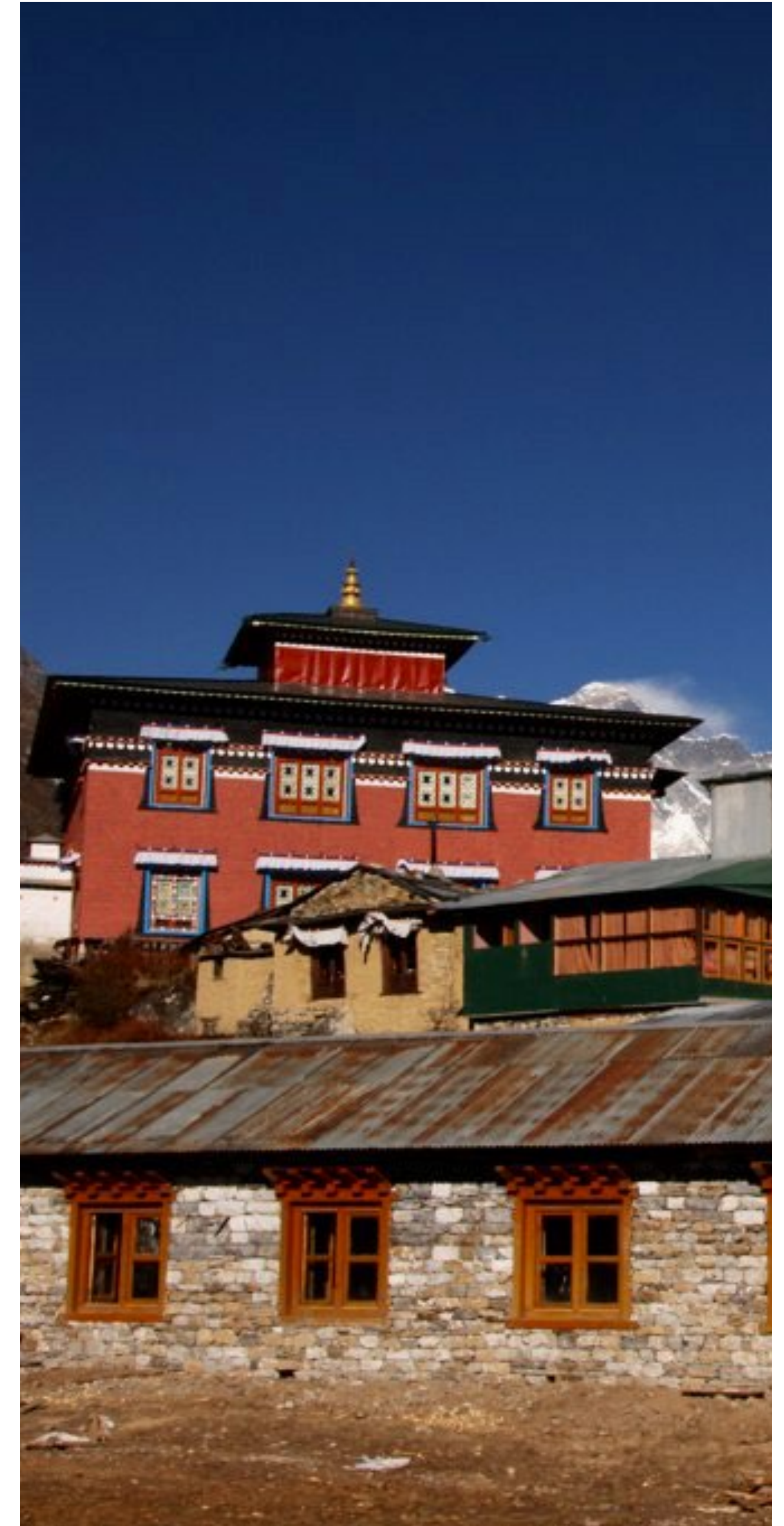
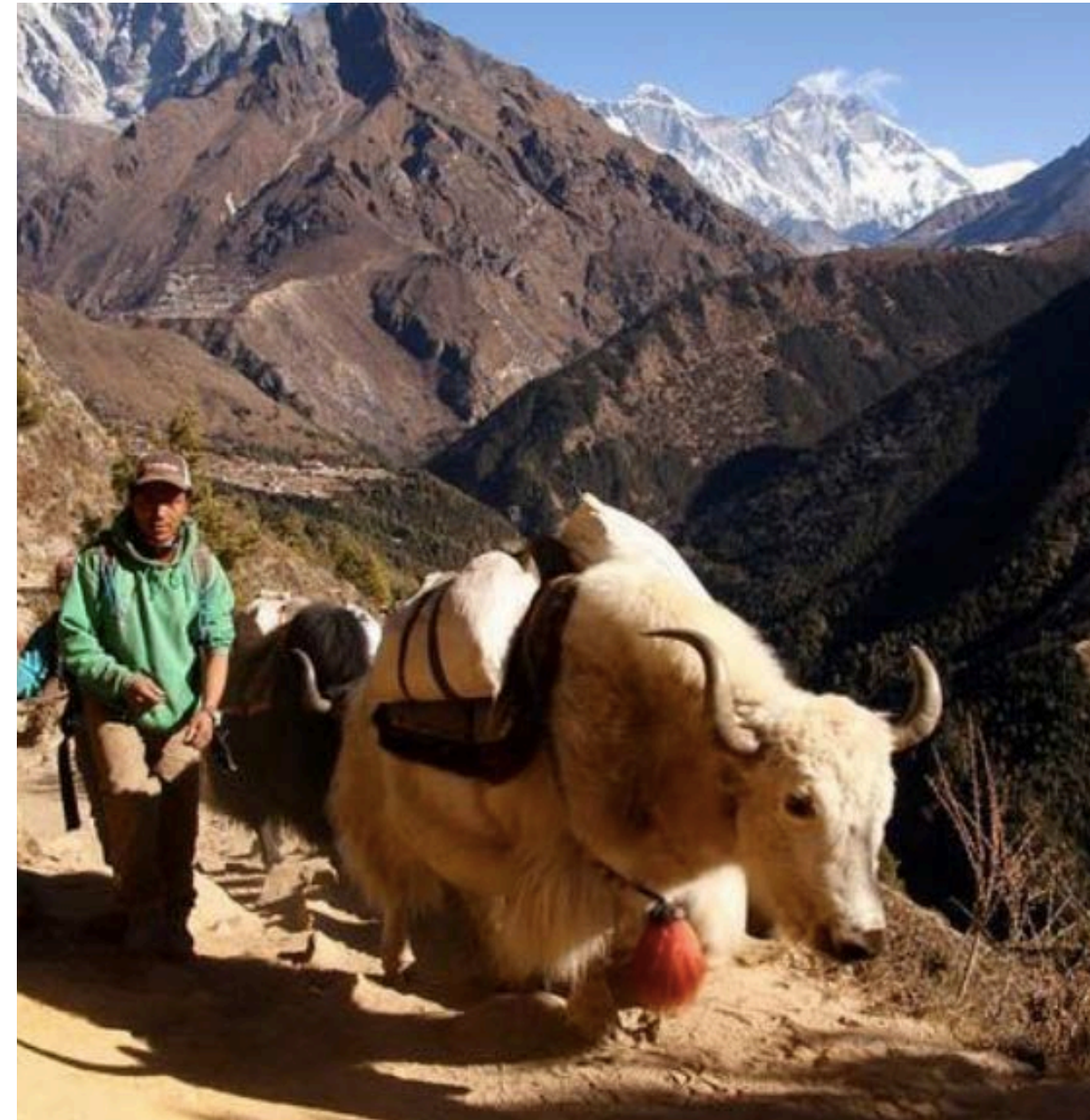
Overnight Hotel Sherpaland (ESL Namche) (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 4: TASHINGA

Temple horns and yak bells may awaken us. On a clear day as you head north Mt Thamserku and Khangtaiga rises to your right, Mt Ama Dabalam, Mt Lhotse and Mt Everest dominates the northern horizon while Mt Tawoche soars in the west. Look out for herds of Thar (goat antelope) and Impheyan pheasants that like to quietly graze on the steep slopes above or below the trail. You pass the small villages of Kenzuma and Sanasa before leaving the main trail to Tengboche to arrive at the Everest Summit Lodge of Tashinga 11300ft in a little while. Kenzuma at one time had an excellent population of the musk deer however recently they have fallen prey to snow leopards that are becoming more active every year in this area. (Walking 4 hrs)

Overnight Everest Summit Lodge Tashinga (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)





DAY 5: YARIN

From the quiet fields of Tashinga you descend to the tea-houses of Langsasa to cross the Dudh Koshi river and arrive at the teashops of Phunki Tenga. Newly repaired water driven prayer wheels grace the trail next to the army post. It is a 2 hour ascent through a rhododendron forest that can be all flowering if you trek through in April. At the top of the hill Tengboche monastery with its grand entrance greets all visitors with a breathtaking view of Mt Everest, Mt Lhotse and Ama Dabalam. Tengboche which at one time was an advance base camp for early Everest Expeditions has several basic lodges and a very good bakery. At the north end of the monastery grounds you leave the main trail to Deboche and trek on an off the beaten trail through lovely birch forests covered in Lichen that look like Old Man's Beard. This undisturbed trail can be a good place to spot the Musk Deer and the rare Blood Pheasant. Your camp at Yarin, a yak summer pasture is beyond the small hydro power station at the beginning of Mt Khangtaiga Valley. This is the first day of the camping portion that explores the Hidden Valleys of the Khumbu. We will spend 3 nights at this camp. (Walking 6 hrs)

Overnight Yarin Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 6: YARIN

Camping at Omega gives you an amazing opportunity to explore a valley rarely anyone visits. Being on the other side of the main trail it has no lodges and so no visitors. You can either follow the stream south all the way to the edge of the Mt Khangtaiga Glacier or scramble up the steep hillside to the east to a rocky summit. The hike can be a half day excursion to a full day trek with a packed lunch. This day offers you an opportunity to get very close to Mt Khangtaiga and its valley system giving you that perspective offered by no other trek in this region. (Walking 5-6 hrs)

Overnight Yarin Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 7: YARIN

No other peak captures the attention of trekkers in the Khumbu than the 'Mother's Jewelry Box Mountain' – Mt Ama Dabalam. This morning we follow the Imja River to the pastures of Lapharma before heading east uphill to the base camp of Mt Ama Dabalam. This meadow right below the massif with a small stream flowing through it gets very busy in Spring. South of this spot is the abandoned airstrip of Mingbo which many years ago saw a single engine aircraft ferry supplies for an expedition to the summit. (Walking 5-6 hours)

Overnight Yarin Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 8: DINGBOCHE

Today, there will be lots of ups and downs. We will have crossed, and will cross more, suspension bridges over roaring rivers fed by glaciers. We will pass the Dingboche monastery (13,030 ft), one of the oldest monasteries in the Everest region. Then you cross the raging Imja river from where you can look up into this wonderful gorge and you will see Ama Dabalam peeking from the top. We pass the Pangboche village with its oldest monastery in the region and ascend gradually up the windy and dusty trail which lies above the tree line with low lying juniper bushes all the way to Dingboche 14,271 ft. (Walking 5-6 hrs).

Overnight Local Lodge with catering (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

DAY 9: LOBUCHE

Today, there will be lots of ups and downs. We will have crossed, and will cross more, suspension bridges over roaring rivers fed by glaciers. We will pass the Dingboche monastery (13,030 ft), one of the oldest monasteries in the Everest region. Then you cross the raging Imja river from where you can look up into this wonderful gorge and you will see Ama Dabalam peeking from the top. We pass the Pangboche village with its oldest monastery in the region and ascend gradually up the windy and dusty trail which lies above the tree line with low lying juniper bushes all the way to Dingboche 14,271 ft. (Walking 5-6 hrs).

Overnight Local Lodge with catering (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 10: EVEREST BASE CAMP / GORAKSHEP

This is the much awaited day. The walk first involves crossing the terminal moraine of Khangri Glacier before descending to Gorakshep 16,962 ft - 'Place of the Ravens'. We stop for tea and prepare ourselves before setting out across the ice and rock of the Khumbu Glacier to Everest Base Camp. After exploring and learning much about the 'base camp life', we return to Gorakshep. (Walking 6-7 hrs)

Overnight Local Lodge with catering (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 11: LOBUCHE

Today we make a morning hike to Kalapathar (Black Rock) 18,190 ft, where we scramble around large boulders, and then photograph Everest clearly with ourselves in the picture. Your chance to see the best view of the highest point on earth - Mt Everest, the Khumbu glacier and the peaks that surround and complement it since we are perched 800 ft above Base Camp at this point. We congratulate ourselves, and start our descent back to Gorakshep for lunch. We continue to descend to Lobuche and enjoy the view of the sun setting on the peaks. (Walking 6-7 hrs)

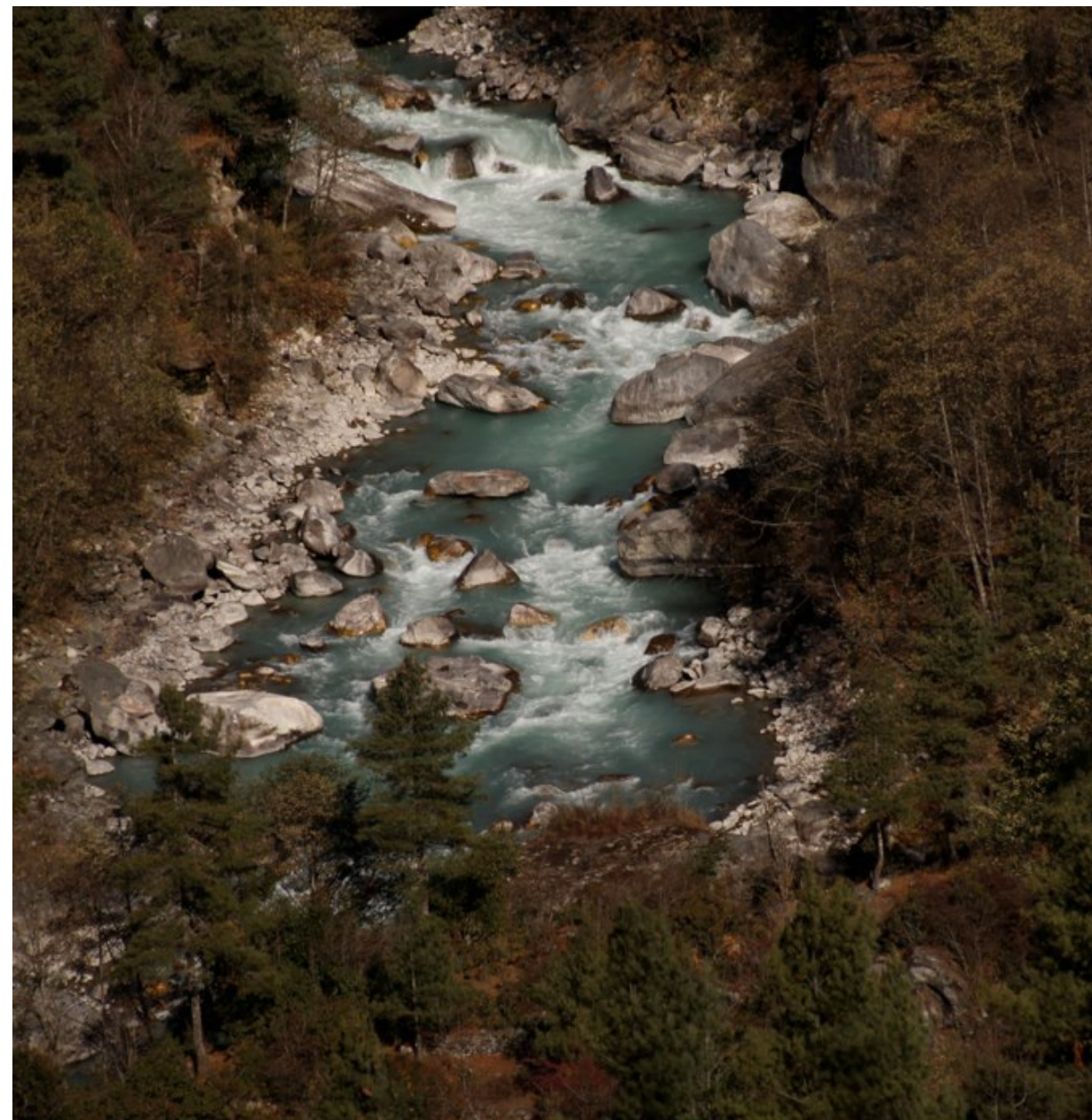
Overnight Local Lodge with catering (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 12: KATHMANDU

We start early descending down the beautiful valley to reach Pheriche where we meet our private helicopter to fly to Kathmandu. Met and transfer to hotel. Afternoon we explore the city, touring the Stupa of Baudhanath and the old city of Bhaktapur. (Walking 3 hrs).

Overnight Local Lodge with catering (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)





DAY 13: BABAI RIVER CAMP

Transfer to domestic airport to fly to Nepalgunj (1 hour flight). Met at the airport and begin drive towards Babai River Camp (5 hours). We stop at a scenic point to enjoy a picnic lunch on the way. You will be greeted with a cup of tea or coffee upon arrival and then led to your superior tented accommodation with proper bedding and eco camp facilities. After a refreshing shower there will be a briefing by the Camp Manager. There will be no activities today but there is the option to enjoy the sunset while fishing on the nearby Babai River, or explore around camp looking for birds especially the rare Brown Fish Owl which nests close to our camp.

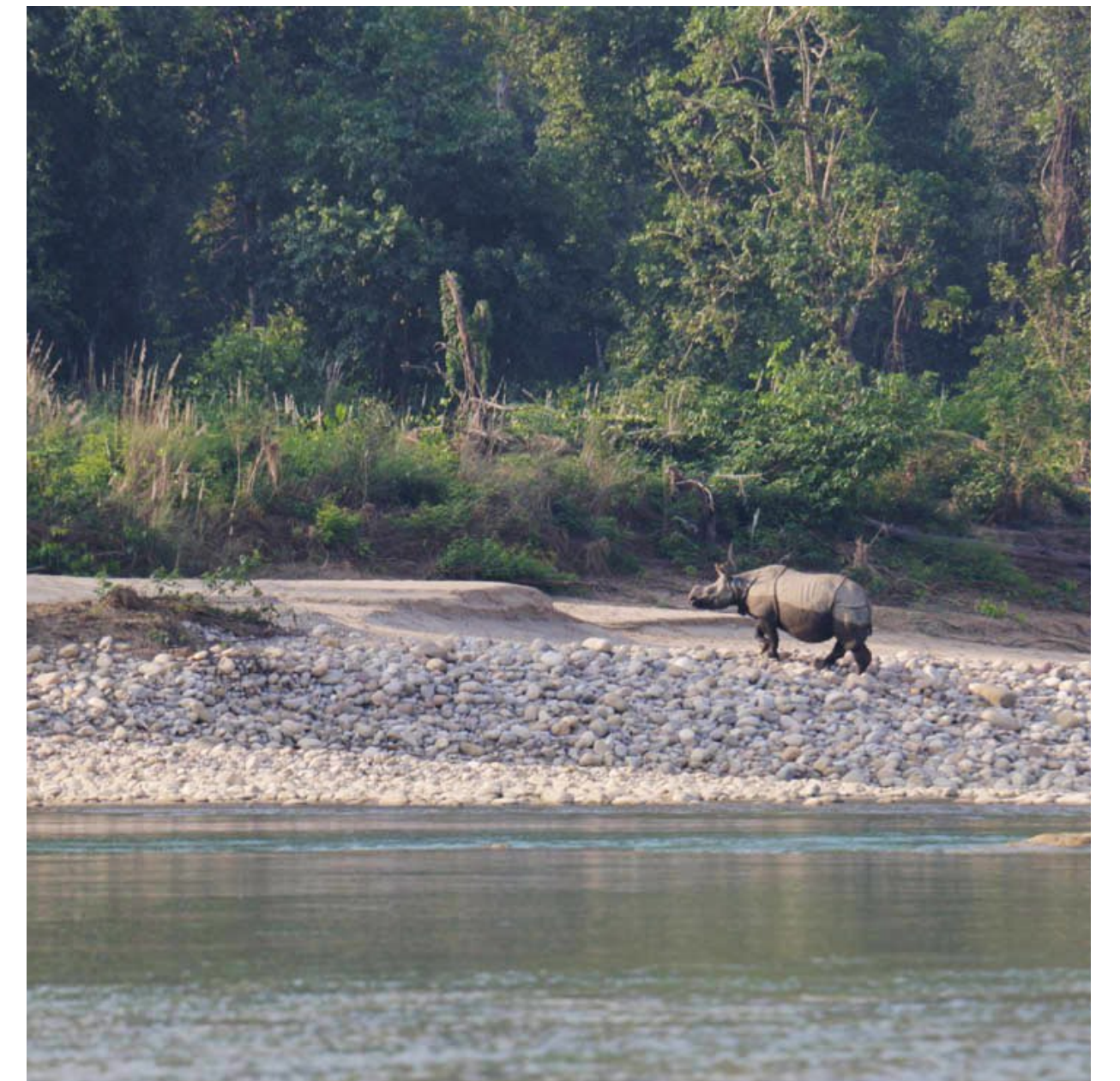
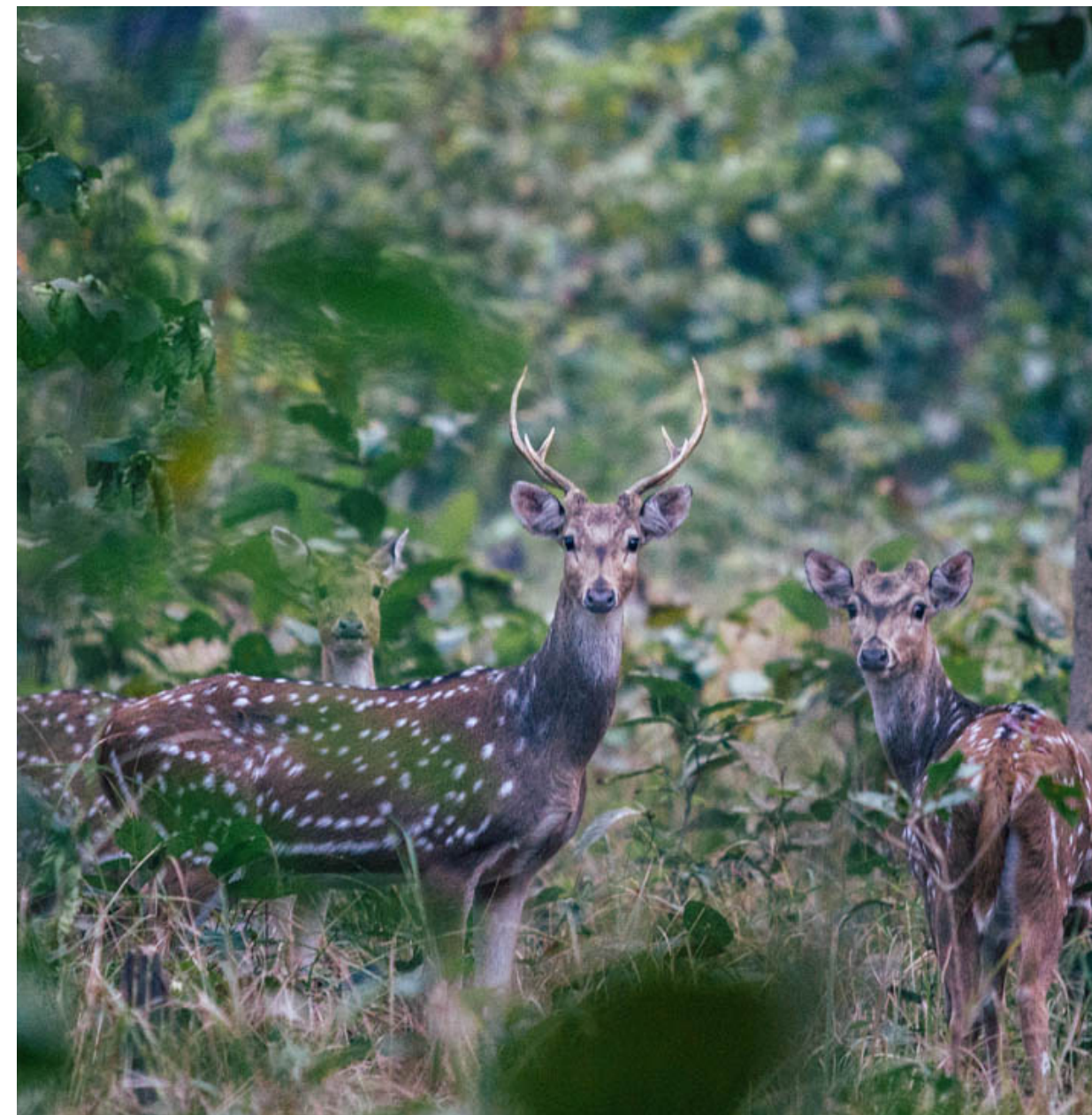
Overnight Babai River Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 14: BABAI RIVER CAMP

We start early at dawn with a Jeep drive heading to Nak Dara, an excellent view point just in time to enjoy the sunrise and to experience nature waking up to a new day. This is also a good location to spot local Marsh Mugger crocodiles and other aquatic birds. On the way back, we stop at Gaida Tal to look for the Asian one-Horned Rhino. Drive back to camp to enjoy a late cooked breakfast and a few cups of fresh ground coffee. You will have few hours at camp to relax and enjoy quiet time by the river. After lunch we will drive to Ghuti Camp to learn about Asian elephants from an expert and, if the situation permits, participate in elephant bathing in the river. Next we will hop back into our jeep heading towards Rato Matey with our fingers crossed for spotting the rare and elusive Royal Bengal tiger. After spending much time exploring this area we return to our camp. Overnight Babai River Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

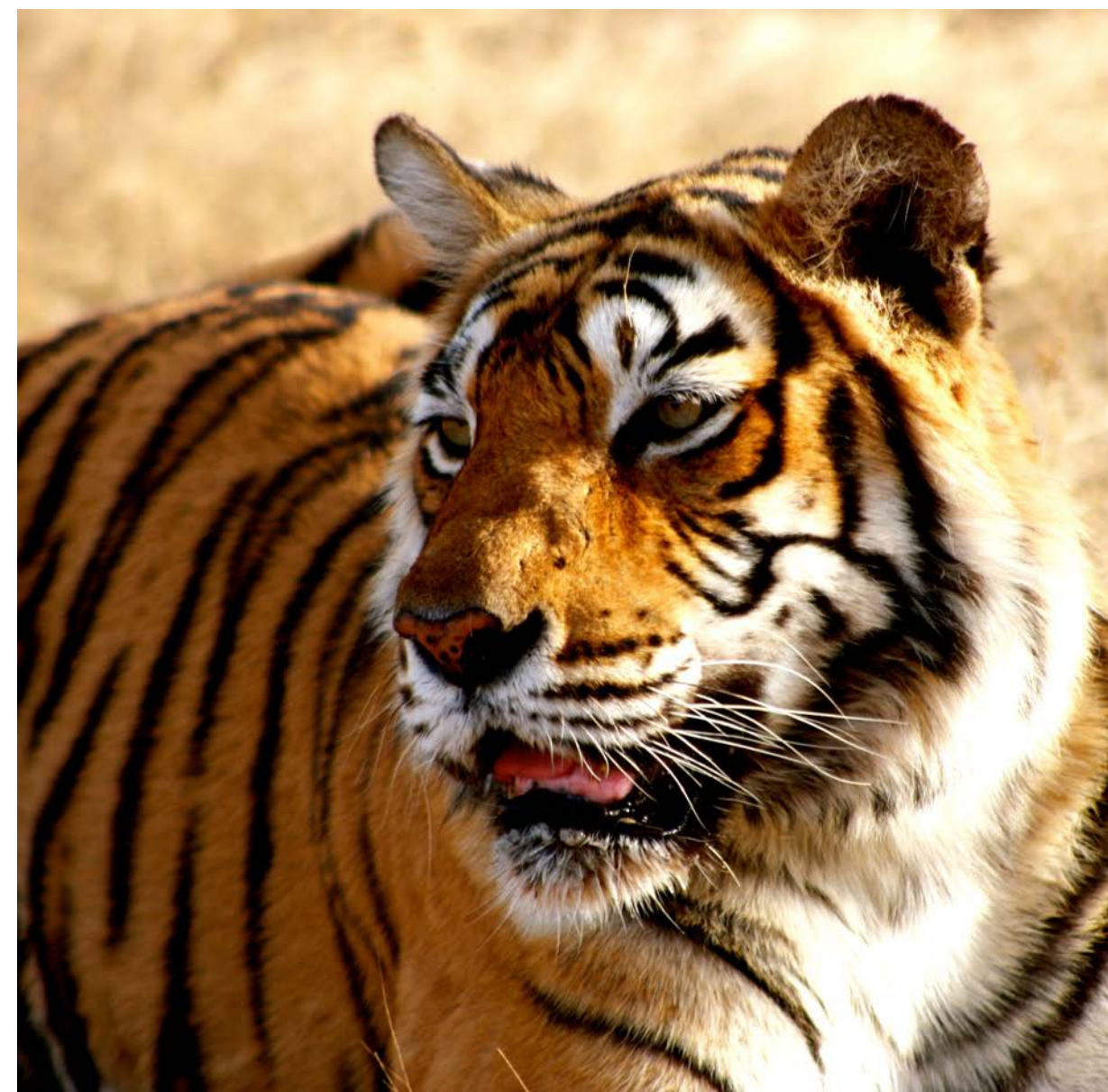
Overnight Babai River Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 15: BABAI RIVER CAMP

We start early with a Safari drive up to Gaida Tal, and then head across the river to Thulo Shree as our pursuit of spotting the rare Royal Bengal tiger continues. After scouring the area for any signs of tiger activity, we drive back to camp for a much deserved breakfast. Leisure time at camp. After lunch we begin our drive to Ghuti for Elephant Safari through forest and grassland, followed by another Safari drive to Guthi Machan for spotting spotted deer, wild boar, rhino and wild peacocks. After a dramatic day in the wild we return to our camp to enjoy a full three course dinner and drinks. Overnight Babai River Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Overnight Babai River Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

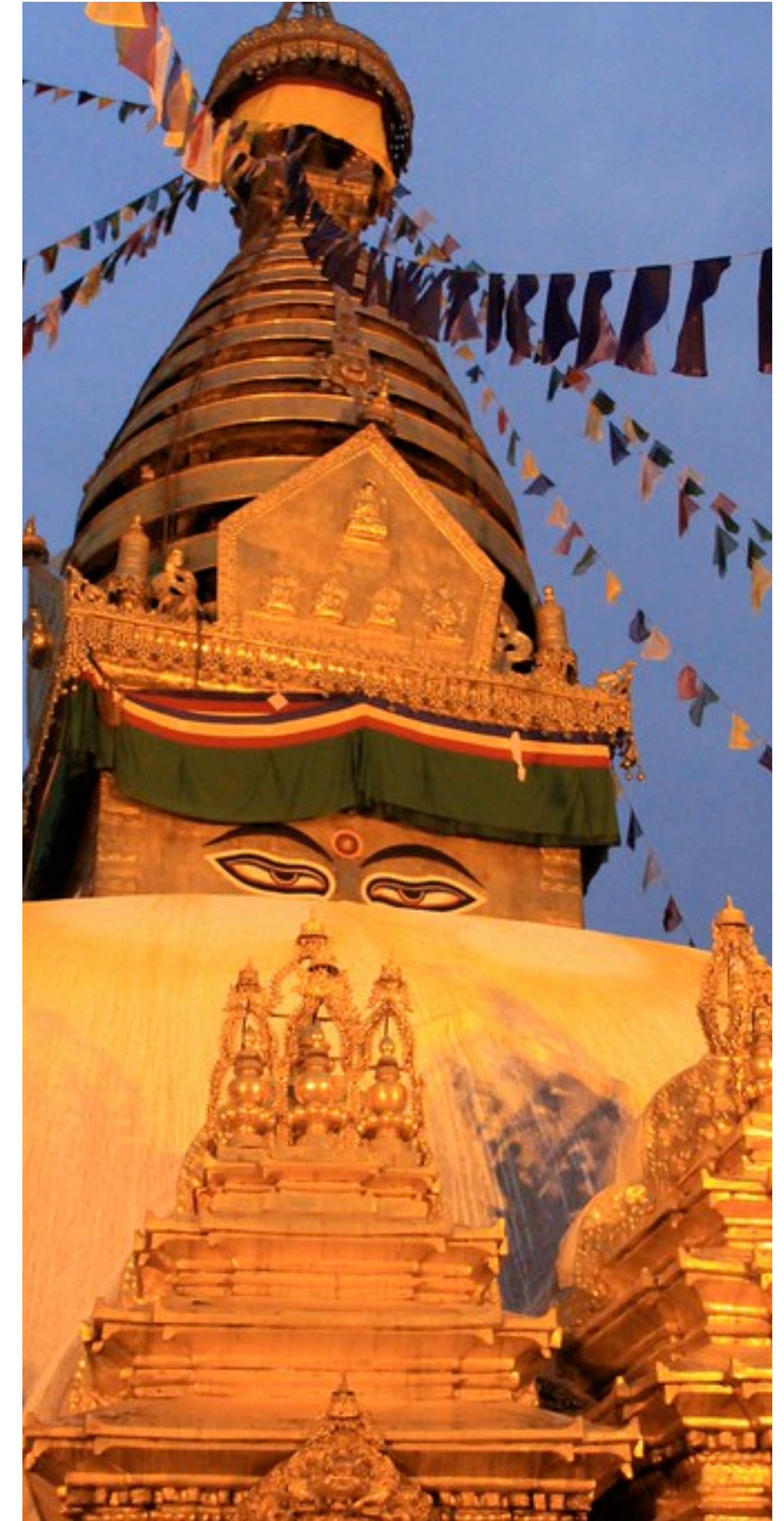




DAY 16: KATHMANDU

We leave camp and drive to Nepalgunj Airport to catch the return flight to Kathmandu. Met and transfer to hotel. Rest of the day at leisure or shopping. Tonight there will be a farewell dinner remembering all the good times spent.

Overnight Dwarika's Hotel (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



DAY 17: DEPART KATHMANDU

Transfer to Kathmandu international airport for departure





ACCOMMODATIONS

HIMALAYAN PRIVATE CAMP is set up every step of the way and ready for when you arrive into camp in the afternoon. A mess tent contains a table, chairs, and all cutlery. Whenever possible, our Himalayan crews like to have guests eat outside to enjoy the splendid views. Guest tents fit 2 people comfortably with bed cots, sleeping bag, all set up for a comfortable sleep. A separate toilet tent is also set up on the perimeter for private and cleaner bathroom facilities. We also have a shower tent!



BABAI RIVER CAMP Situated deep in the Jungle of West Nepal is a river valley that has become the last refuge of the Big Game animals of the Indian Subcontinent. In this quiet corner of the world only reachable by four wheel drive lies the Babai River Camp. A camp that is totally mobile. Setup just a few days before your arrival and then dismantled immediately after to leave the place as it was, back to the wild. The camp lies in an idyllic spot beside the Babai River. Situated inside a Sal (Shorea Robusta) forest the African Style tents stay secluded yet overlook the river and the open southern bank of the Babai where herds of elephants, tiger, deer, otters, etc can be spotted. The spacious canvas tents have comfortable mattresses, crisp cotton linen with ensuite portable toilets and a beautiful handmade brass sink. Just behind the tents are day time toilets and private showers with herbal shower products. 3 course freshly prepared meals are prepared by a team of cooks with many years of experience cooking in the Himalayan Outdoors.



ACCOMMODATIONS

DWARIKA'S HOTEL is built upon a rich tradition of Nepali hospitality and incorporating some of the country's most exquisite architectural traditions, the Dwarika's Hotel in Kathmandu is an authentic experience of Nepal's ancient cultural heritage. A boutique hotel located in the heart of the city with spacious rooms, elegant setting and Nepali warmth make it a luxurious retreat.



EVEREST SUMMIT LODGES TASHINGA & LUKLA is a concept of blending adventure and comfort. The 9 high quality lodges have heated common rooms, comfortable beds and rooms with ensuite toilets. The lodges offer fantastic mountain scenery.



HOTEL SHERPALAND (ESL NAMCHE) is situated in the heart of Namche Bazaar. It is one of the hotels where you can feel the comfort of a 5 star standard service. 22 rooms with traditional interiors and equipped with toilet and hot shower.



GUEST HOUSES & LOCAL LODGES offer spotlessly clean, albeit simple rooms, and a very warm and cozy lounge/dining room with views over the mountains beyond. Very simple teahouses that allow self-catering, our teams provide cooking & service to keep hygiene levels up**

A wide-angle landscape photograph of a mountain range in Nepal, South Asia. The foreground is dominated by the dark, silhouetted tops of trees. In the middle ground, several layers of mountain ridges are visible, receding into the distance. The background features a prominent range of high, rugged mountains with significant snow cover. The peaks are bathed in a warm, golden light, likely from the setting or rising sun, which contrasts with the cooler, blueish tones of the sky and the lower mountain slopes. The overall atmosphere is serene and majestic.

DESTINATION:
NEPAL, SOUTH ASIA

DESTINATION: NEPAL, SOUTH ASIA

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, is a landlocked country in South Asia. It is located in the Himalayas and bordered to the north by the People's Republic of China, and to the south, east, and west by the Republic of India. Kathmandu is the nation's capital and the country's largest metropolis. Nepal has rich geography. Nepal is popular for mountaineering, containing some of the world's highest and most challenging peaks. The mountainous north has 8 of the world's 10 tallest mountains, including the highest point on Earth, Mount Everest 29,029ft (8848m), called Sagarmatha in Nepali. It contains more than 240 peaks over 20,000ft (6096m) above sea level. The fertile and humid south is heavily urbanized. By some measures, Hinduism is practiced by a larger majority of people in Nepal than in any other nation. Buddhism, though a minority faith in the country, is linked historically with Nepal as the birthplace of the Buddha. A monarchy throughout most of its history, Nepal was ruled by the Shah dynasty of kings from 1768, when Prithvi Narayan Shah unified its many small kingdoms. In 2006, however, a decade-long Civil War by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) along with several weeks of mass protests by all major political parties of Nepal culminated in a peace accord, and the ensuing elections for the constituent assembly voted overwhelmingly in favor of the abdication of the last Nepali monarch Gyanendra Shah and the establishment of a federal democratic republic on May 28 2008. The first President of Nepal, Ram Baran Yadav was sworn in on July 23 2008. Neolithic tools found in the Kathmandu Valley indicate that people have been living in the Himalayan region for at least 9,000 years. Nepal has been highlighted in many scriptures; small kingdoms and confederations arose in the region, from these a prince named Siddharta Gautama renounced his loyalty to lead an ascetic life and came to be known as the Buddha ("the enlightened one"). After some disputes over bordering territories with the British East India company and China, in 1923 the UK formerly recognized Nepal's independence. In 1924 slavery was abolished, nevertheless debt bondage even involving debtor's children has been a persistent social problem. In 1991, Bhutan expelled roughly 100,000 ethnic Nepalis, most of whom have been living in refugee camps in eastern Nepal ever since.



DESTINATION: NEPAL, SOUTH ASIA

Entry Requirements

Nepal Visas should be obtained beforehand, but can be obtained upon arrival. US Citizens pay \$40 per person for single entry for 30 days. A passport valid for six months after date of entry is required. Visitors must hold return/onward tickets and all documents required for their next destination.

Vaccinations

Hepatitis A and B, Tetanus, and Typhoid immunizations are recommended for all travelers. Malaria prophylaxis is recommended for travel in the southern Nepal regions of Terai during the hot and rainy months. Malaria is low risk in the mountain and trekking areas. You should consult your local doctor or physician to advise which malaria medication is best suited for you. Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the CDC's Internet site at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>

Weather

Kathmandu, Nepal

MONTH	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
AVE. HIGH	62	70	77	86	84	84	82	84	82	82	75	70
AVE. LOW	37	35	44	48	59	66	66	66	64	55	42	35

Communication

Nepal – country code +977. Most areas will have mobile access and Internet is very limited. Some areas while trekking or on safari may not have mobile access.

Electricity

India - Electrical current is 230 volts, 50Hz (Type C; electrical plug with two circular pins) (Type D; electrical plug has three circular pins) (Type M; electrical plug has three large circular pins)

Travel Advisories

Make two photocopies of valuables such as your passport, tickets, visas and travelers' cheques. Keep one copy with you in a separate place to the original and

leave another copy with someone at home. Be sure to inform your credit card company as well as your bank you will travel internationally into India. This will eliminate any credit card holds for fraudulent activity.

Currency

Carrying cash, an ATM or traveler's check card and also a credit card that can be used for cash advances in case of emergency is advisable. The best places to exchange money are normally bureau de change, which are fast, have longer hours and often give slightly better rates than banks. Local currency is Nepalese Rupee (NPR), however most urban places accept USD. Better hotels, lodges, and camps will accept credit cards, however it is advised to withdraw cash when visiting remote areas and villages.

Government

Nepal functions within a framework of a republic with a multi-party system. President is the head of state.

Religion

Nepal – 80% Hindu, 10% Buddhist, 4.4% Muslim, 3.6% Kirat, 0.5% Christian, and 0.4% other such as Bon.

Ethnic Groups

Nepalis are descendants of migrants from parts of earlier Greater Nepal, Tibet, India and parts of Burma and Yunnan along with native tribal population. Among the earliest inhabitants were the Kirat of east mid-region, Newar of the Kathmandu Valley and aboriginal Tharu in the malarial southern Terai region. The ancestors of the Khas migrated eastward along the Himalayan foothills out of Kashmir, Kumaon, Garhwal – parts of then Greater Nepal, Karnali Praadesh and perhaps also north from the Gangeatic Plains during invasions. Other ethnic groups trace their origins to North Burma, Yunnan and Tibet. In Terai, much of the population is physically and culturally similar to Indo-Aryans of northern India. Indo-Aryan and East Asian looking mixed people live in the hill region. Central and western Nepal ethnic Tibetans inhabit even higher semi-arid valleys north of the high Himalaya.

Languages

Nepali is the official and de facto language of Nepal and also spoken in Bhutan,

parts of India and parts of Myanmar (Burma).

Economy

Nepal – an isolated, agrarian society until the mid-20th century, Nepal entered the modern era in 1951 without schools, hospitals, roads, telecommunications, electric power, industry, or civil service. The country has, however, made progress toward sustainable economic growth since the 1950's and is committed to a program of economic liberalization. Foreign aid accounts for more than half of the development budget. Agriculture remains Nepal's principal economic activity, employing 80% of the population and providing 37% of GDP. Only about 20% of the total area is cultivable; another 33% is forested; most of the rest is mountainous. Rice and wheat are the main food crops. The lowland Terai region produces an agricultural surplus, part of which supplies the food-deficient hill areas. Economic development in social services and infrastructure has not made dramatic progress due to GDP dependency on India. Major towns are connected to the capital by telephone and domestic air services. The export-oriented carpet and garment industries have grown rapidly in recent years and together now account for approximately 70% of merchandise exports. Nepal was ranked 29th worst country on the Global Hunger Index, between Tanzania and Kenya.

Climate

The climate of Nepal varies from warm summers with mild winters in the low-lying southern region, to alpine conditions with very severe winters in the mountains. Between December and February temperatures drop well below freezing in the mountains. The best time to travel to Nepal for trekking is in early spring or late autumn, when the weather is dry and temperatures mild. The monsoon season on the coast occurs between June and September.