

24-day Nepal Backpacking Leadership and Guide Training Course

Course Location

Draped along the spine of the Himalaya, Nepal is a land of spectacular scenery, ancient temples, and some of the best trekking on earth. It is rich in scenic beauty and cultural treasures. Kathmandu is the starting and ending point for our courses in Nepal. It is a fascinating city with many interesting sights. While in Kathmandu we will visit the Hindu and Buddhist temples of Syhumbunath, Bodanath, and Pashupatinath as well as the historic Durbar Square.

We fly into and out of Lukla, located at the base of the Khumbu valley at 9,000 ft. It is an exciting place in the spring and the fall; the village bustles with porters and the Sherpa people organizing expeditions and the transport of goods and supplies to villages further up the valley. On our way to Gokyo and the Upper Khumbu Valley, we will visit the Namche Bazaar and Tengboche Monastery. As we enter the upper reaches of the valley, we will acclimate, explore, and take in the incredible views of Thamskerku, Kangtaga, Ama Dablam, and Mt Everest.

This course in Nepal is an excellent educational opportunity for students looking to safely and effectively lead trekking groups to altitude while learning about the unique culture of the region.

Course Goals

- Students will gain a strong technical high altitude trekking skill set and appropriate traveling techniques.
- Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to professionally deal with all aspects of emergency scenarios while in the field.
- Students will be able to use and teach state-of-the art minimum-impact camping and travel techniques.
- They will be able to exercise good quality judgment and decision-making skills within a leadership position to avoid potential accident and survival situations and develop a comprehensive understanding of safety considerations in Nepal.
- They will be able to recognize their own leadership abilities and limitations within the context of a group. Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to make decisions and lead small groups in the mountain environment of Nepal.
- Students will be able evaluate their personal acclimatization process, be knowledgeable about appropriate acclimatization regimens, and have an understanding of medicines and methods associated with high altitude.





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Course Itinerary

This is a flexible trip itinerary that shows the general progression of the trip.

Day 0: Arrive Kathmandu

Day 1-2: We'll spend the first day preparing, planning, having a pre-trip meeting, and packing food and equipment for our expedition into the Khumbu region. We talk about expectations for the course from the students and from the instructors.

Day 3: Flights to Lukla (9403ft) and Phakding. This is a 40-minute flight into about a small Sherpa town in the Khumbu. Lukla is an exciting place in the spring and the fall; the village bustles with porters and the Sherpa people organizing expeditions and the transport of goods and supplies to villages further up the valley. After lunch we will hike a few hours to Phakding for the night.

Day 4-5: Phakding to Namche Bazaar: This is a big day, hiking ancient trails, crossing suspension bridges, and climbing to Namche Bazaar at 11,300 feet. Namche is the cultural center of the Khumbu. Home for the weekly market where traders from the lowlands trade with the highland Sherpa people. We will spend 2 nights in Namche exploring and acclimatizing.

Day 5-7: Namche to Tengpoche Monastery: Tengpoche is the largest and most active monastery in the Khumbu. There are great views of both Mt Everest and Ama Dablam from the site. We will spend 2 days here for further acclimatization. We will do a variety of side hikes.

Day 8-12: Tengpoche to Gokyo Ri: The views of Mt. Everest from Gokyo Ri are phenomenal. We'll spend 2 days there for even more acclimatization. Mid-course evaluation

Day 13-14: Cho La pass (17,377ft): We climb over this high pass and descend into Lobuche.

Day 15: We'll journey to Gorak Shep (the highest village in the Khumbu at 17,000 ft.)

Day 16-20: Upper Khumbu to Tengpoche

Day 20-22: Tengpoche to Lukla: In the last few days of the course we will have final peer and instructor evaluations. Students will be evaluated on their understanding and completion of the IWLS curriculum.

Day 23: Flights from Lukla to Kathmandu

Day 24: Flights Home



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A Typical Day

A typical day starts around 7am with breakfast and hot drinks. While water is heating you will most likely be preparing for the days' adventures. After breakfast we'll get ready to hit the river or hit the trail!



You will play an integral part of the expedition team by setting up camp, cooking meals, or carrying a portion of the group gear. You may be leader of the day, responsible for planning the day, accomplishing objectives, or facilitating a lesson plan.

The day's activities will vary depending on weather, location, and progression of the course. We may work on developing your technical skills set, learn about different leadership styles, or get an alpine start and climb a large peak in the area. Regardless of the day's

activities, it will be full of learning and adventure.

Dinner could be anything from pasta to backcountry pizza. Students often walk away from our courses with a newfound love for cooking good and original food.

The day will finish with a debrief session where we'll discuss the day's events, what you learned, and how you'll be able to use your newfound skills in the near future.

Course Curriculum

The International Wilderness Leadership Schools' educational model nurtures leadership development and creates an awareness of the guiding mentality that is essential for leading safe, fun adventures on the water. The combination of technical skills training, experiential education and practical leadership experience make the IWLS curriculum world class.

We believe that experiences drive our learning and therefore we use formal and informal classes taught by both instructors and students. Instructors are eager to help facilitate the learning process but ultimately, how much you learn will be dependent on the amount of effort you put into the course.

A detailed curriculum will be provided at the beginning of the course. Below is a partial list of curriculum points that will be covered throughout your course.



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IWLS General Curriculum

- **Leader of the Day:** Opportunities to lead the group will be abundant and you'll have the time to learn and practice multiple styles of leadership.
- **Situational Based Decision Making:** Over the course of 12 days, we'll discover ways to make effective and safe decisions in the field.
- **Focused and "Big Picture" Awareness:** Learn to identify objective and subjective hazards in a backcountry setting.
- **Logistics:** Develop the ability to efficiently plan and pack for an extended expedition in the backcountry.
- **Communication Skills:** Learn to communicate to a wide variety of audiences and provide constructive and appropriate feedback during daily group debriefs.
- **Teaching and Lesson Plans:** You'll have the opportunity to develop lesson plans, teach in front of the group, and learn the importance of progressions for teaching technical skills and leadership.
- **Expedition Behavior and Group Dynamics:** As this course is a true wilderness expedition, interactions between group members need to be supportive and contribute to the efficacy of the group. Learn the finer points of teaching these facilitation skills.
- **Camp Set-up and Maintenance:** Mastering these essential skills will prove valuable whether you are pitching a tent in gale force winds or melting snow for drinking water.
- **Nutrition and Cooking:** A healthy diet is vital for maintaining energy throughout an expedition. Learn to appropriately prepare nutritional and tasty backcountry meals.
- **Navigation:** Learn how to take a bearing, read a topographical map, triangulate your position, and navigate in a whiteout.
- **Weather:** Will the storm arrive in the next 12 hours, or the next 48? Understanding weather patterns and trends will help you plan successful trips in a wilderness setting.
- **Leave No Trace® Ethics:** As adventurers in some of the most pristine environments on the planet it is our duty to respect the natural world.
- **Natural and Cultural History:** Having a strong understanding of cultural history, flora, and fauna is an integral part of leading people in an outdoor environment. You'll learn some of the botany, ecology, and geology that apply to this remarkable area.

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IWLS Backpacking Curriculum

- **Pre-trip Activities:** Learn how to plan and prepare for an extended wilderness expedition. We'll cover everything from technical camping equipment to group and personal expectations.
- **Backpacks:** Proper packing and fitting of backpacks improves efficiency and helps avoid injury.
- **Bear Safety:** How high should you hang your food? Is it a curious bear or a defensive bear? Learn to keep bears and humans safe by being bear aware.
- **Tents:** Staying dry in the wilderness is an essential survival skill. You'll learn how to repair a damaged tent, how to set up camp in high winds, and techniques to secure your dry space for the night.
- **Stoves and Campfires:** The ability to repair a broken stove, make an emergency fire after being submerged in an icy river, and melt snow efficiently for water are key components for leading a group in the wilderness.
- **Cooking:** Sometimes in the backcountry, the meal makes the day. Whether cooking oatmeal or Thanksgiving dinner, you'll develop your skills at making tasty treats.
- **Lightning Hazards:** Learn how to read weather patterns and avoid exposure, and how to manage a group in an emergency situation.
- **River and Stream Crossings:** In river crossings, attention to detail and safety are #1. You'll learn and practice safe techniques for wading across a small stream or doing a Tyrolean traverse across a raging river.
- **Travel on Scree and Talus:** The term 'talus' originated from a Greek name for a giant who throws rocks. Learn how to safely travel on this potentially dangerous terrain.
- **Geology:** From plate tectonics to granitic batholiths, you'll learn the history of the land you are exploring and how these forces create and influence the environment around you.
- **Objective Hazards:** River crossings, bear encounters and "widow makers" are examples of objective hazards. We'll learn how to effectively deal with or avoid these hazards.
- **Subjective Hazards:** Among other things, dehydration, fatigue and personal pride can be detrimental to group safety. Learn how to implement measures to mitigate these potential hazards.
- **Timing:** This is a key component of group management. You'll develop this awareness and how it affects all aspects of a day on an expedition.



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Journal Writing

Keeping a wilderness journal can help students to record, reflect, and gain from experiences throughout the expedition. The following are examples of topics that may be assigned throughout the course: First-Aid SOAP notes, incident management forms, leadership analyses, trip reports, lesson plans and decision making analyses.

Evaluation and Grading

Students who take this course for credit will receive a letter grade. Grading is a measurement of one's knowledge of material, participation, written and oral communication, and one's judgment and awareness. Students will be evaluated on their skills, level of participation, their knowledge and awareness of their own abilities as outdoor leaders, their level of judgment as applied to decisions, and written projects assigned during the trip. Students that don't take the course for credit will receive a written instructor evaluation in place of a grade.

Certifications

Upon completion of the 24-day Nepal backpacking leadership course, students will be eligible for the following certifications:



24 Day Guide Training Certificate of Completion
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