



# IWLS

International Wilderness Leadership School

## Nepal Mountaineering Course



### Course Overview

Ascending into the upper Khumbu, the backdrop of Mt. Everest, Lhotse, and Ama Dablam have inspired mountaineers like few other places. The peaks of Chukung Ri (18,253 ft/5565m), (Lobuche (20,075ft/6,119m) Imja Tse or Island Peak (20,285ft/6,183m), and potentially Mera Peak (21,247ft/6,476m) offer a world class mountaineering classroom for students on an IWLS Nepal mountaineering course. You'll set fixed lines, learn about high altitude medicine and attempt to summit these incredible peaks.

Between setting a high camp, reviewing crevasse rescue skills and teaching your peers about the rest step, you'll enjoy the company of the friendly Sherpa people and learn about their culture. The IWLS Nepal mountaineering course is perfect for students who want to develop high altitude mountaineering skills, international expedition experience and leadership ability in a world class setting.

### Course Location

Draped along the spine of the Himalayas, Nepal is a land of spectacular scenery, ancient Buddhist monasteries and some of the best trekking, mountaineering, and river rafting on earth. Tumultuous rivers fill glaciated valleys, ancient trails meander below towering 8000 meter peaks and villages dot the landscape. IWLS courses here offer a chance to experience the incredible Sherpa culture, trek through the awesome panorama of the Himalayas, climb amongst the tallest peaks of the world, and raft awe inspiring whitewater while learning expedition and leadership skills.

Kathmandu is the starting and ending point for our mountaineering 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.

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## Course Goals

- Students will gain a strong technical high altitude trekking and mountaineering skill sets along with appropriate traveling techniques.
- 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.
- Students will gain and understanding of the Nepali culture.

## Course Itinerary

*This is a flexible trip itinerary that shows the general progression of the trip. Certain sections of the itinerary may be re-organized to provide the best experience in relation to the current season and conditions.*

**Day 0:** Arrive Kathmandu

**Day 1:** 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 2:** The drive from Kathmandu to Jiri takes about nine hours. We'll stay overnight at a lodge in Jiri.

**Day 3:** We'll start our trek from Jiri to Deurali, about 6 hours.

**Day 4:** Deurali to Sete, about 5 hours.



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**Day 5:** Sete to Junbeshi takes about six hour and we cross over the Lamjura Pass (11,480ft/3500m.)

**Day 6:** Junbeshi to Nunthala

**Day 7:** Nunthala to Bupsa. takes about six hours.

**Day 8:** Bupsa to Surkey takes about five and half hours. At the start of the day, we ascend steeply for two hours to climb over Khari La Pass (9450ft/2880m.) Surkey is a small Sherpa village at the bottom of Lukla.

**Day 9:** Surkey to Phakding takes about five hours.

**Day 10:** 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 11-12:** Namche to Tengpoche Monastery: Tengpoche is the largest and most active monastery in the Khumbu. We will spend 2 days here for further acclimatization. We will do a variety of side hikes. The Tengpoche monastery is the religious center of the Khumbu. Many of the Sherpa people's most important religious festivals and ceremonies occur here. We will likely spend another day here acclimatizing and taking in the incredible views of Thamserku, Kangtaga, Ama Dablam, and Mt Everest.

**Day 12-14:** Tengpoche to Pheriche: We'll spend 2 days there for even more acclimatization and a visit to the Himalayan Rescue Association in Pheriche.

**Day 15-16:** Pheriche to Chukung:

**Day 17:** Rest day in Chukung

**Day 18:** Ascent of Chukung Ri (18,253 ft/5565m) This acclimation ascent offers incredible views of the Nuptse-Lhotse wall (the largest rock wall in the Himalaya), the pink granite monolith of Makalu, and the southern wall fluted with ice gullies from 7000m Baruntse and 7000m Ama Dablam.

**Day 19:** Move to base camp of Island Peak

**Day 20-24:** Establish high camp and summit Imja Tse (20,285ft/6,183m). We will summit via the south ridge or the east face depending on conditions. We'll also have additional opportunities to learn mountaineering skills.



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**Day 25:** Move camp to below peaks of Lobuche.

**Day 26-30:** The peaks of Lobuche (20,075ft/6,119m) provide great options for covering mountaineering skills. We'll make an attempt on Lobuche East.

**Day 31:** Phakding to Surkey

**Day 32:** Surkey to Bupsa (7708ft/2350m) via Phuiyan

**Day 33:** Bupsa to Nunthala (7216ft/2200m).

**Day 34:** Nunthala to Junbeshi (8770ft/2675m).

**Day 35:** Junbeshi to Sete.

**Day 36:** Sete to Deurali (8872ft/2705m).

**Day 37:** Deurali to Jiri (6250ft/1905m).

**Day 38:** Return to Kathmandu

**Day 39:** Extra acclimatization and/or weather day

**Day 40:** Debrief and flights home

## A Typical Day

While water is heating you will most likely be preparing for the days' adventures. 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's trek, 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 mountaineering skills set, learn about different leadership styles, or get an alpine start on a nearby trekking peak. Regardless of the day's activities, it will be full of learning and adventure. Dinner could be anything from tasty Nepali fare to noodles, students often walk away from our courses with a newfound love for cooking and for international cuisine.

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



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## 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.

## IWLS General Curriculum

- **Decision Making and Problem Solving:** Over the course of the semester, we'll discover ways to assess problems, explore solutions and evaluate options in order to make effective and safe decisions in the field.
- **Leadership:** Opportunities to lead the group will be abundant, and you'll have the time to learn and practice multiple styles of leadership in varied situations.
- **Expedition Behavior and Group Dynamics:** Because this course is a true wilderness expedition, interactions between group members need to be supportive and contribute to the efficacy of the group. The daily dynamics of the group, combined with instruction, will teach participants not only how to be a member of a team, but how to influence and lead an expedition.
- **Environmental Ethics:** As adventurers in some of the most pristine environments on the planet, it is our duty to respect the natural world. All of our courses practice and teach Leave No Trace® principles.

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- **Basic Camping Skills:** Mastering these essential skills will prove valuable whether you are pitching a tent in gale force winds or melting snow for drinking water.
- **Equipment/Clothing Selection and Use:** You'll learn to choose the right gear for the correct application, whether enjoying a sunny afternoon on a snow slope or trekking through a tropical rainforest.
- **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.
- **Navigation:** Learn how to take a bearing, read a topographical map, triangulate your position, or navigate in a whiteout.
- **Safety and Risk Management:** Safety is always the #1 consideration. As the course progresses, you'll develop an awareness to appropriately assess risk and make safe decisions.
- **Wilderness Emergency Procedures and Treatment:** Learn how to effectively manage safe, efficient and timely backcountry rescues.
- **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 these remarkable areas.
- **Communication Skills:** Speaking in public, managing a personal conflict, or leading a group in the wilderness, all of these situations require effective communication. You'll gain confidence in your communication abilities as you develop your personal leadership style over the length of this course.
- **Trip Planning:** The first day of the 86-day semester is devoted to planning, packing, and organizing the logistics, food, and equipment for the expedition.
- **Teaching:** 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.

## IWLS Mountaineering Curriculum

- **Pre-trip Activities:** Learn how to plan and prepare for an extended wilderness expedition. We'll cover everything from technical climbing equipment to group and personal expectations.
- **Camping Skills:** Basic expedition skills, such as tent set-up, site selection, and leaving camp, are essential to a successful trip into the mountains. We'll learn these skills through practical experience.
- **General Mountaineering Skills:** The mountain environment is an exciting and potentially dangerous place. You'll discover how to travel on steep mountain slopes using equipment such as an ice axe and crampons, as well as how to teach these skills to your fellow students.
- **Anchors:** Anchor building is a fun, yet intricate subject. We'll examine single, double, triple and complex anchors, and their different applications. Learn how to place anchors in snow, rock, and ice.



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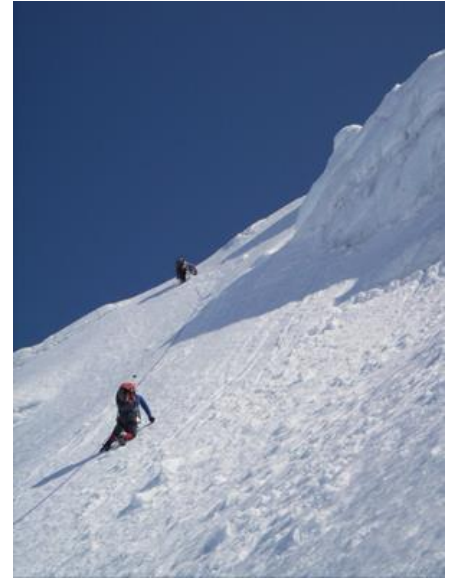




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- **Ropes:** 50 meters or 70 meters? 8.0mm or 10.5mm? Single, double or twin? These are all questions you'll be able to knowledgeably answer. We'll also learn how to care for and maintain these important pieces of equipment.
- **Knots:** Learn the appropriate applications for the figure 8, water knot, double fisherman, bowline, and other essential climbing knots.
- **Belaying:** Should we use a fixed belay or a running belay? Our team will learn and practice the finer points of different belay techniques such as the hip belay, running belay, boot axe belay or fixed belay.
- **Ascending:** Fixed lines are an important tool for large groups and guiding applications. We'll learn how to efficiently build, use and maintain them.
- **Rappelling:** Rappelling down a steep rock face is a thrilling moment and our team will learn how to do it safely. We'll also look at different methods for teaching rappelling and dealing with incapacitated climbers.
- **Rope Teams:** Rope team travel is a complicated endeavor that requires skill, technique and teamwork. We'll cover everything from prussic arrangement to team management for this form of mountain travel.
- **Crevasse Rescue:** Traveling in glaciated terrain requires that every member of the team be proficient in crevasse rescue. We'll learn how to get a teammate out of a crevasse quickly and efficiently.
- **Glaciology:** Through climbing, walking and traversing on glaciers and ice fields, students will learn and experience first hand the intriguing complexities of these enormous rivers of ice and their effect on the land.
- **Objective Hazards:** Rock fall, river crossings, and avalanches are examples of objective hazards. Learn how to identify such hazards and minimize group exposure.
- **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.
- **Technical Climbing:** Rock climbing, ice climbing and steep snow climbing are all included in the IWLS' curriculum.
- **Top Rope Setup:** Top ropes allow people to push their limits and learn solid climbing technique in a fun and safe environment. We'll cover sight selection, rope management and group management.
- **Escaping the Belay:** What happens when things go bad? We'll practice escaping the belay and getting to the aid of an injured climber.



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- **Short Roping:** Learn different applications of short roping technique and times and places to utilize it.
- **Sleds:** Key for long expeditions in the mountains. Learn how to maneuver, pack, and construct expedition sleds.
- **Timing:** In the mountains, timing is everything: when to leave camp, when to turn around, and when to push for the summit. Time management is a critical component of safe travel and plays into many aspects of mountaineering.

**IWLS Backpacking Curriculum** prepares students for exploration into remote, backcountry settings.

- **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 40-day Nepal mountaineering leadership course, students will be eligible for the following certifications:



**40-Day Guide Training Certificate of Completion**  
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