

## INFORMATION FOR LODGE-BASED TREKS

This sheet has been produced to give you extra information that you may find useful whilst on one of our lodge-based treks. It should be read in conjunction with the General Information Booklet and the Trip Notes specific to your trek.

### ACCOMMODATION

There are a number of factors that affect our choice of a particular lodge, which may not always be immediately obvious. The smartest looking lodge from the outside may not be the cleanest and may not provide the best service or food. We also do not use lodges that will not provide accommodation or food for our porters and guides, as we believe that we have a duty to look after all our staff. Sometimes we have no choice in the lodge we use, as it is the only one available.

The lodges we use normally have a combination of dormitories, twin and triple rooms (because of park rules on number of lodges allowed in each place, the lodges on the Annapurna Sanctuary trek from Chomro to Annapurna Base Camp have multi bedded rooms so you will need to share). All the beds have a foam mattress of varying thickness. You will need to bring a sleeping bag or hire one from Exodus. The comfortable lodges on TNX and TND have twin bedded rooms and all bedding (sheets and duvets) are provided so you do not need a sleeping bag.

Some of the lodges now have attached bathrooms. However, we do not include attached bathrooms in the price of our trips (except TNX and TND). Occasionally due to availability issues you may be given a room with a bathroom. Some lodges lock the bathrooms unless they are paid for, in which case you must use the common bathrooms as usual. If you wish to use the attached bathroom then you will need to pay extra to the lodge owner directly. Your leader will advise you on this. The comfortable lodges on TNX and TND treks have rooms with attached bathrooms with shower, sink and western toilet.

In December, January and February some of the lodges close which means occasionally we cannot use our regular lodge. In this case we will use a lodge of an equivalent standard.

### WASHING AND TOILET FACILITIES

Most lodges now offer hot showers. In the Annapurna region showers are often free but in the Everest region the cost of a hot shower is approximately Rs250-Rs 400. Sometimes a hot shower means a bucket of hot water (not an actual shower head). Ask your leader if you want a hot shower. For ecological reasons please try and limit your use of hot water if the water is not solar-heated. In the Everest region we have donated solar cookers to many of the lodges we use and if the weather is good the lodge owners often heat water for showers using the solar cooker. Some of the lodges have gas showers – please take care when using these and make sure there is ventilation in the bathroom. Please note that in the Everest region there is very little water and often it is frozen in winter. We do not recommend taking showers at the higher altitudes

for health reasons and the fact that the showers are too basic. You may prefer to wash in the middle of the day, when it is warmest, in which case you should carry your soap and towel in your daypack. We highly recommend you carry anti bacterial hand washing gel with you to use before you eat or after you have used the bathroom.

Most lodges will have some kind of hand washing facility – a sink, bucket or small bowl of water. This will be cold water. Sometimes this is not in the most obvious place and it is often not next to the toilet and at higher altitudes where the water freezes in pipes it may well just be a bucket or bowl of hand washing water. If you are unsure of where to wash your hands or clean your teeth please ask your leader or if you have ordered a hot shower and do not know how to use it ask your leader.

Toilets are usually Asian 'squat' style (although many lodges have now installed 'western style sit' toilets). Standards of cleanliness vary especially in the main trekking season when the lodges are more than full. They tend to be cleaner in the Annapurna region where there is more water. Many of the lodges are now building an inside toilet for night time use only. At night please take care in the Everest region when using the inside toilets as often any water on the floor will freeze and it can thus be very slippery. The toilets in a few of the more basic lodges in the Everest region, especially at the very high altitudes are not very clean. The rubbish bin in the toilet is for used toilet paper. There should be some water in the toilet to flush it with – if the water has run out please either refill it or ask the lodge owner or your leader to do so. Toilet paper is not provided and you need to bring your own or buy it locally (most tea houses will sell toilet paper).

On the Annapurna in Luxury (TNX) and Everest in Luxury (TND) treks all rooms in the lodges on trek are twin bedded with attached bathrooms with shower, western toilet and sink. Hot water is available for showers. Bedding, towels, toilet paper and soap are also provided.

### ELECTRICITY

Small scale electricity schemes are now up and running in several mountain communities, but as they are by definition small, the light may not be strong enough to read by and may not always work. Kerosene lamps, candles or solar lights are often used in the lodges where there is no electricity. A torch is essential. In the Annapurna region there is electricity in many of the lodges – this is mostly for light but some lodges offer recharging facilities.

In the Everest region most of the lodges now have electricity – usually in the public areas and at the higher altitudes this tends to be solar light bulbs. In some places you will be able to recharge cameras/phones/i pods etc. The cost is approximately Rs 150-Rs350 per hour.

Please note the electricity cannot be guaranteed and load shedding occurs regularly. Also if the electricity is fuelled by solar panels, during bad weather there may well be no supply. Your leader will advise you more specifically about electricity at the briefing in Kathmandu.

Mobile phones work in some places. In the Everest region there is mobile reception up to Everest Base Camp but please note there are some places where there is no reception. In the Annapurna region mobiles will work around Pokhara and some places on trek. Your leader will carry a mobile phone. There are public telephones and satellite phones available in many lodges and villages and it is possible to make international calls from these. However this is not always guaranteed.

#### **MONEY**

You will need to change money in Kathmandu to pay for meals and drinks on trek. At your trek briefing your leader will advise on how much you are likely to need. It is a good idea to carry some spare cash with you on trek in case of an emergency.

As a general guide in the Annapurna region you will need approximately £20-£30 a day for food, drinks, showers, charging, and snacks and in the Everest region you will need around £25-£35 a day for food, drinks, snacks, charging and showers. The amount you spend depends on the amount of imported food and drink you buy and whether you have hot showers every day and whether you need the charging facilities every day. Please note that in the Everest region imported food and drink is now much more expensive than in the UK (for example a Mars Bar will cost Rs150 at the start of the trek and Rs350 at the highest point of the trek so you may want to bring some snacks with you from the UK). Money changing facilities are available in Lukla and Namche in the Everest region and in Pokhara and Jomosom in the Annapurna region. There are ATM machines in Kathmandu and Pokhara.

#### **DRINKING WATER**

We recommend that all tap/filtered water should be treated before drinking. You should carry some form of water purification with you on trek. The lodges provide boiled water (they charge for this), which is safe to drink. We do NOT encourage the use of mineral water on trek: the empty plastic bottles are a major ecological problem as they are rarely carried out of the region to be disposed of properly. On the Annapurna Circuit (TNQ) trek there are safe drinking water stations in many villages. The water is safe to drink and costs around Rs35/50 per litre. Your leader will advise you where these water stations are located. On the Annapurna Sanctuary (TNS) trek mineral water is banned in the Sanctuary and you must either treat water yourself or buy boiled water. On the Annapurna in Luxury Trek (TNX) you will be given safe drinking water on the trek and at the raft camp.

#### **FOOD ORDERING**

Every lodge has a menu and a food ordering book. You should write everything down you order in this book, under your name and room number. Your bill is then calculated in the morning before you leave. Try to order supper at least 2 hours in advance. Lunch is normally eaten in a lodge along the way. We suggest the group tries to order similar dishes at lunchtime otherwise the meal will take a long time to prepare.

Furthermore if everyone in the group orders a different dish more valuable wood or kerosene will be used to prepare the food. It is customary to leave a small tip (Rs30/40 per person) when paying the bill. On our teahouse treks meals are not included and the price you pay for meals will very much depend on whether you eat local Nepali food or more western style dishes.

Most menus are fairly similar in the food they offer. For breakfast there will be porridge, muesli, eggs, toast, Tibetan bread, chapattis, various teas, coffee and hot chocolate. For lunches and dinners there will be various soups on offer and for main course there will be rice dishes (eg vegetable or egg fried rice, rice and curry), potato dishes (eg as fried potatoes with vegetables, chips, hash browns with cheese/eggs), pasta dishes (eg spaghetti with tomato sauce, pasta with fried vegetables). There will always be dal bhat, the typical Nepali meal of as much rice, lentils and vegetable (sometimes meat) curry as you can eat. Momos are a popular local Tibetan meal and are stuffed dumplings – either fried or steamed, filled with vegetables or meat. There will often be western style dishes such as pizza on the menu and for desert there will be apple pie, custard pudding, rice pudding. Please note that the items on the menu are a local interpretation of a certain dish and your pizza will not always be the same as your local takeaway. The food is meant to be filling and provide carbohydrate, which is highly recommended at high altitude. We do not include the food in our trips as it allows you to eat what you want and when you want to. Appetites often are lost at high altitude and you can choose what you actually fancy to eat rather than being faced by a set meal, which is not really what you wanted.

On the Everest in Luxury treks (TND) breakfast and dinners are included in the cost of the holiday. You will need to pay for lunches and extra drinks during the daytime and bottled drinks with dinner. (Allow approximately £5-£7 per day for this). On the Annapurna in Luxury trek (TNX) all food and hot drinks are included Drinks outside of meal times and alcoholic drinks are extra however. On both of these luxury trips all of the lodges have a bar and happy hour before dinner.

#### **RUBBISH**

The lodges have waste bins for disposal of rubbish. Please leave toilet paper in the bin inside the toilet. Leave any other rubbish in the bin in the lodge, which will either be inside the bedroom or a general rubbish bin in the dining room. We do request that you take batteries back home with you. Please bring biodegradable soaps and shampoos and leave as much packaging as possible at home.

#### **ITINERARY**

There is often scope on trek to extend or lengthen the walking days. Please discuss this with your leader and communicate your wishes. He is there to maximise your enjoyment of the trek, but he cannot read your mind – some groups are happy to rest in the afternoon whilst others would like a walk organised.

#### **FIRST AID KIT**

A first aid kit is carried on all treks and your trek leader will have completed a first aid course. However he is not a doctor and it is therefore your sole decision as to what drugs you take – he can only suggest. The first-aid kit is carried by a sherpa who will walk with the group so that it is available for you

to use at all times. A PAC bag is also carried on treks that go over 4,200m. All our leaders are trained in the use of PAC bags. If you have any medical issues or concerns please talk to your leader in Kathmandu.

#### **CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Some Nepalese (older women in particular) do not like being photographed. Always ask before you photograph anyone.

As you are passing through, and staying in, Nepali villages we would ask you to dress conservatively. Whilst it is acceptable for men to wear shorts it is not recommended that women walk in shorts; skirts or trousers are better suited as are t-shirts that cover the shoulders.

Why not learn a few words of Nepali – your leader and guides will be happy to teach you.

#### **RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**

We ask that you refrain from buying mineral water on trek as the plastic bottles are not biodegradable and are not disposed of properly in the mountains. Please see the **Drinking Water** section for alternatives to mineral water.

Please use biodegradable soaps and shampoos and do not wash yourself or clothes in any water that could be used for drinking.

Dispose of rubbish properly – see **Rubbish** section.

Please be aware of Nepali customs and culture. Dress and act accordingly so as not to cause offence. Your leader will advise you on local customs.

Do not give money, sweets or pens to children begging. If you wish to give to people we have various ongoing projects to which you can donate. Your leader can advise you about these current projects in Nepal and there is also more information on the notice board in the Royal Singi Hotel. Details of our projects can also be found online at <http://www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel/our-projects/himalayan-community-support?>

#### **TIPPING OF TREK STAFF**

Your leader will advise you on the appropriate amount for tips at the briefing. As this is your money and represents a reward for good service, it is not obligatory. The leader will recommend the amounts only. If you disagree with what is suggested please let him know. He can help you collect the money at the end of the trek as this is usually distributed to the staff on the last night of the trek. The leader will have a list of the amounts for each staff member should you wish to see this.

The money collected will not include a tip for the services of the leader. A tip for your leader is discretionary.