



## Ama Dablam SW ridge expedition



### EXPEDITION OVERVIEW

This expedition will give you the opportunity to gain a fascinating insight into the lives of the Sherpa people, as well as the sights, sounds and smells of Kathmandu. The South West ridge of Ama Dablam is a Himalayan classic and involves some steep, exciting climbing on one of the world's most beautiful mountains. "A near perfect climb on a near perfect mountain". The mountain is well named. Ama Dablam means "Mother's necklace"; the long ridges on each side like the arms of a mother (Ama) protecting her child, and the hanging glacier thought of as the Dablam, the traditional double-pendant containing pictures of the gods, worn by Sherpa women. Ama Dablam dominates the eastern sky for anyone trekking to Mount Everest basecamp. Our route is essentially the 'mothers' left arm, the SW Ridge



### **Participation Statement**

Arnold Coster recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

### **Adventure Travel, Accuracy of Itinerary**

Although it is our intention to operate this itinerary as printed, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops and the duration of the day may vary from those outlined. You should be aware that some events are beyond our control and we would ask for your patience.

### **Recommended Previous Experience**



Ama Dablam's SW ridge is quite technical and people should be comfortable with operating on steep ground in exposed situations. There are sections of steep rock which are usually climbed with an ascender on fixed ropes and some experience of this before the expedition will prove beneficial. To move efficiently and enjoyably on the SW ridge of Ama Dablam Arnold Coster Expeditions recommend that you have experience of Alpine AD routes and / or an ability to climb multipitch rock at grade UIAA IV; F 4 or US 5.7

The climbing days between the three camps on the mountain are relatively short (3-6 hours), the summit day being the longest day is typically 7-9 hours (6000m-6856m). However most people will find climbing at this altitude extremely demanding and should prepare for this with fitness training and be able to cope with long hill days on the mountain.

## OUTLINE ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart from home country.

Day 2: Arrive Kathmandu. Transfer to hotel close to the famous, bustling Thamel district of Kathmandu , a place with lovely gardens where one can relax.

Day 3: Day enjoying the 'bombardment of the senses' that is Kathmandu. Sightseeing tours can be arranged and would include visiting the temples of Bodnath, Swayambhunath (The Monkey Temple), Pashupatinath and Durbar Square. Simply wandering around the huge array of shops, markets, cafes, bars and restaurants in Thamel is a fascinating experience.



Day 4: Fly to Lukla (2800m) Trek to Phakding (2610m). A spectacular short internal flight takes us to this tiny airstrip town and the gateway to the Sherpa Kingdom. After lunch we start our short trek along the typically stony path that descends from the forested terraces of Lukla right into the Dudh Kosi valley and the brightly painted lodges of Phakding. There are good views of Kusum Kanguru's North Face (6367m)

Day 5: Phakding to Namche Bazaar (3440m). Into the Sherpa capital and the heart of the Khumbu. You will now be becoming familiar with local protocol for passing chortens, mani stones, yaks, spinning prayer wheels etc. and enjoying the hustle and bustle of trekking and everyday life that exists on the 'Everest Trail'. At Monjo we enter Sagarmartha National Park and can visit the small visitor centre there. Four hours.

Day 6: Rest Day in Namche Bazaar. It is important to have a couple of nights and a rest day in Namche before proceeding any higher. You can spend the day taking short walks up to Thami or Khumjung, visiting the Everest and Ama Dablam viewpoints or just relaxing and exploring the narrow streets of the busy Sherpa capital.

Day 7: Namche Bazaar to Pangboche (3930m). We climb steeply out of Namche, turn the corner and are immediately presented with superb views of Everest, Lhotse, Nuptse and our destination, Ama Dablam. Crossing the Dudh Kosi involves a steep descent to Phunki Thanghka and its fine water driven prayer wheels before re-ascending toThyangboche. The famous Sherpa monastery can be visited here and the surrounding panorama is rightly deemed to be one of the most magnificent





Mountain View points in the world. The going is easy now and Pangboche, the highest year round settlement in the valley, is soon reached. Six hours.

Day 8: Pangboche to Ama Dablam Base Camp (4450m). We leave the busy Everest trail and cross the Imja Khola. Climbing steeply out of the valley and above the tree line we enter the alpine meadows that provide such a fine location for a base camp, no cold and scrappy glacier moraine sites here!

Day 9: Rest Day at Base Camp. Another acclimatisation day spent exploring the alpine meadows and views around camp, packing gear for higher on the mountain and relaxing.

Day 10-25: Ascent of Ama Dablam, South West Ridge. See section entitled 'The Climbing Day'.

Day 26: Base Camp to Thyangboche (3860m). On the return trek folk have the option of staying in places not visited on the way up, or returning to the more western style luxuries available in Namche.

Day 27: Thyangboche to Monjo (2840m). You will now really feel the warmth and rich air of the forest zone.

Day 28: Monjo to Lukla. The Alpine mountain hut atmosphere of Paradise Lodge in Lukla is the ideal place to relax and celebrate your journeys end.

Day 29: Fly Lukla to Kathmandu. Back to the comforts of our hotel in Thamel and the enjoyable hustle and bustle. This is a good time to buy souvenirs and try your hand at haggling with the local shopkeepers. We will dine in one of Kathmandu's finest restaurants and experience some local dancing styles!

Day 30: Return flight from Kathmandu. The flight usually departs late afternoon so you will have a final morning free in Kathmandu.

### **The Climbing Day**

It would be impossible to produce an itinerary that suited all people's abilities & preferences. Climbing a mountain like Ama Dablam involves a lot of different stresses on the body and folk will respond to this in different ways and at different rates. Through utilising a good ratio of leaders and Sherpa's to clients we can allow people to progress up the mountain at a rate appropriate to their own needs. A description of the route is included and the programme is flexible enough for people to listen to their own bodies and rest, climb high, sleep low, or 'go for it' accordingly.

### **Base Camp (4575m) to Camp 1 (5700m)**



This is quite a long walk and may take five to six hours on the first journey. This is likely to reduce considerably with improved acclimatisation.

Unusually there is no glacier approach and you can walk in trainers along pleasant grassy ridges that curve around behind the SW ridge. As you gain height, superb views open up to the whole of the Western Himalaya, most notably Cho Oyu (8201m), Numbur (6859m) and Taweche (6367m). The first time up we will use a temporary ABC at 5500 meter, this way we can adjust to the altitude slowly. There is

a water shortage in ABC, especially at the end of the season when the mountain gets drier. Therefore we only install this camp in the beginning of the expedition. Just before reaching camp 1 we cross a granite boulder field and scramble easily up some huge boiler plate granite slabs.

### **Camp 1 to Camp 2 (6080m)**

Camp 1 is situated at the foot of the SW ridge and so you embark on the climb as soon as you leave camp and clip into the fixed ropes. Initially there is some quite easy traversing of rocky terraces and snowy ledges. Then there are some superb compact granite slabs to cross and these lead into equally enjoyable slabby buttresses to ascend. Just before Camp 2 is reached; The Yellow Tower must be climbed/ Jumared and this provides the technical crux of the whole route. The climbing is extremely enjoyable but it is hard work at this altitude. Three to five hours.



### **Camp 2 to Camp 2.9 (6200m)/ Ama Dablam Summit**



(6856m) Most teams these days make their summit bids from camp 2, however there is an option of very limited camping space at the end of Mushroom Ridge, Camp 2.9, which offers an airy launching platform for a shorter summit day. The group will make a decision whether to use this camp or not. As soon as you leave Camp 2 you start gaining height. It's hard work but the climbing is



good and the ascent of The Grey Tower provides the next obstacle. Easy snow and ice then leads to the 'Mushroom Ridge', the corniced snow crest that links the mixed SW ridge below with the summit snow fields above. Your 'composure with exposure' will be tested here!

However the ground is not technically difficult and you will soon reach the broad snow shelves that provide the site of the old Camp 3. As we are now essentially on the West Face the sun does not arrive until around 9.30am, so this can be a cold place until the sun hits. From here it takes around 3-4 hours to reach the summit ascending the fixed ropes up the 50-60 degree snow fields.

There is one short steep section over an icy bulge that provides a welcome contrast in climbing style! The summit of Ama Dablam is a truly outstanding view point. Typical ascent time 8-10 hours from camp 2.

We would aim to descend as low down the mountain as possible after summiting, ideally camp 1 or if you are going really well, Base Camp!

### **Weather Conditions**

The Post-monsoon and pre-winter conditions experienced from October into mid-December are usually very fair, dry and stable. Daytime temperatures are pleasantly warm in the valleys (20-30 degree Celsius) whilst cool to very cold (especially with wind chill) high on Ama Dablam. Night time temperatures are cold to very cold (possibly as low as minus 25 degree Celsius) and you should make sure you have a warm sleeping bag.



## **WEATHER FORECAST**

We get regular weather forecasts direct to our laptop at base camp, which can be relayed up the mountain and further ones as a back up to our Satellite phone.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Arnold Coster issues every member and Sherpa's with a handheld VHF radio, supported by high powered base sets at BC and Advanced BC. Base Camp is equipped with a Laptop and a High speed Satellite Data Connection.



Arnold Coster expedition's communications are supplied by:



[www.xtra-link.com](http://www.xtra-link.com)

## **WHAT TO CARRY**

On the trek you should aim to carry a light rucksack (around 30L) containing 1-2L of water, waterproofs, a spare warm layer, camera, mini first aid kit, sun hat, sun cream, sun glasses and a warm hat and gloves. The rest of your gear can go in your kit bag to be carried by the yaks or porters.



I suggest a 50L sac to enable you to carry your personal equipment up to the higher camps on the mountain, also a smaller pack will be too short for the 4l oxygen bottles. The Sherpa's will establish & stock the camps as well as porter the oxygen to camp ready for the summit attempt. Sherpa's will also help carrying personal equipment like; down suits, sleeping bags etc.

### **CATERING ARRANGEMENTS**



Base Camp food is excellent and designed to stimulate your appetite and keep you going despite frequent altitude induced loss of appetite. Breakfast includes porridge and cereal followed by eggs (fried, boiled, poached or omelettes) and bacon along with either bread or chapattis with jam, honey, peanut butter etc. Lunch starts with juice followed by a hot meal which may include some of the following: chips, rice, lentils, vegetables, salad, sandwiches, beans, tinned fish and tinned meat. Dessert is usually fresh or tinned fruit

and tea. The evening meal always starts with soup (often with a healthy dose of garlic to aid acclimatisation) accompanied by pompadours, popcorn or prawn crackers. The main meal varies from local style – Dal Bhat (rice and lentils with an onion and vegetable sauce), yak stew, momos etc. to western style – yak burgers, chips, pasta, even pizza! Desserts are equally appealing and include apple pie, cake, custard etc. You will not be hungry!

Snack food for the hill will be plentiful and consist of such things as: chocolate, cereal bars, jelly, dried fruit, nuts, cheese and salami (you help yourself from tubs, so there is no limit!). Cooked food higher on the hill will be a combination of freeze dried food, soup and supplemented by snacks. Most people experience some kind of appetite loss and we mainly aim to keep as hydrated as possible with fruit teas, soup and powdered fruit drinks. For special interest and to keep the taste buds going we ask each member to bring a small 'luxury' item of desire to share at some point with the rest of the group.

### **IMPORTANT–The small print**

Please note, if for any reason you need to return to Kathmandu separate from the whole group, there will be costs incurred which you will need to pay. In this situation you should claim back any cost through your insurance





## **CHANGE OF INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS**

We allow extra days in the itinerary for bad weather. If you do summit or come back early additional costs may be incurred. When obtaining your flights, be sure to book alterable, refundable flights.

## **INSURANCE**

Insurance which covers mountain rescue and medical expenses is essential. You should note there are no official mountain rescue services in Nepal and any evacuation in the event of a serious medical emergency to the nearest hospital will be by land or military helicopter. We will require a copy of your insurance prior to departure. Please contact me if you need an insurance advice.

## **RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**

We employ Nepalese Sherpa's and cooks as well as a local cook boy who all work alongside our own group leader giving employment beyond farming. We will have our power shower setup at BC, but if you would like a bowl of hot water to wash in, then just ask the cook. Wet wipes also work really well as an alternative. We recommend you take items such as batteries back to Kathmandu for recycling.

## **ALTITUDE**

You should already be familiar with the effects of altitude from your previous experience. However if you are new to extreme altitude you may still have concerns about the effects. Don't worry; our itinerary allows sufficient time to acclimatise. The best way to avoid such symptoms is to do everything slowly, walk at a steady pace and drink plenty of fluid.

## **USEFUL TIPS**

Just in case your main luggage goes missing en route, it is a good idea to wear your boots on the plane. Most other things can be replaced but comfortable, well worn-in boots are impossible to replace.



## **EQUIPMENT**

A detailed equipment list is provided on booking. Specialist items such as sleeping bags and down jackets/suits can be hired also (limited availability).

## **BAGGAGE**

For your own comfort, travel light. For such a long trip it's amazing how quickly the weight adds up. Some European airlines only allow 20kg on economy flights and charge huge money for excess baggage (specially the cheapest flights). Most airlines offer a 30kg allowance for sports equipment, but this has to be obtained when you buy the ticket in advance. Some items can be left at the hotel for your return. Suitable kit bags must be bought and important items should also be packed in plastic bags. A 27-35 litre day sac is needed to carry a fleece, rain gear, gloves, water bottle, camera and guidebook, for the acclimatisation walks.

## **VISAS AND PERMITS**

US, UK citizens and most EU nationals can get the Nepal Visas on arrival. All other nationals should check with their local embassy and/or [www.immi.gov.np](http://www.immi.gov.np). Passports must be valid for at least six months after the end date of the trip.

## **LOCAL COSTS**

Most meals are inclusive, please see the key above. Individuals are responsible for drinks and hotel meals throughout whilst in Kathmandu which gives the flexibility to choose where you eat. The following approximate costs (mid range) may vary:

Tea/coffee 1.5\$; Beer 4\$; Soft drink 1.5\$; Local lunch 10\$; 3-course dinner 20\$

There are a number of good bars in Lukla, Phakding, Namche and Pangboche selling a variety of beers and spirits. Along the trek it is possible to buy hot drinks (very cheap), soft drinks, beer and spirits (not recommended on the way up).

## **CURRENCY**



Nepalese Rupee; Euros, UK Sterling, and US Dollars can easily be changed in Kathmandu. ATM (cash machines) are available in Kathmandu but are often out of order, but usually you can find one that works within the same area.

### **TIPPING**

It is traditional to tip the local staff including the porters and cook staff. These folk work incredibly hard and will do almost anything to help you throughout the expedition. You will probably want to make a reasonably generous tip at the end of the trek and we recommend allowing about \$150 for this. Climbing Sherpa's usually get a "summit Bonus" for a job well done, expect to pay \$750 for this per Sherpa that stands on the Summit. This can be shared between members, but it can happen that you summit with a Sherpa alone.

### **MODE OF PAYMENT**

The mode of payment below is suggested, however it maybe possible through discussion to agree an alternative arrangement.

Refundable Deposit payable with booking 2500\$

Final payment 2 months before departure

Please note – The final Payment is non-refundable and you are advised, therefore to take out adequate cancellation insurance when you book



### **What is Included**

- All permits, charges, importation taxes and levies payable to the Nepal Government in connection with the expedition.
- All hotel and other accommodation up to and including two nights accommodation on our return to Kathmandu.
- All tents, ropes and other communal equipment necessary for the climb.
- Medical safety equipment and supplies.
- Communication equipment (each member will have a radio on the hill), satellite telephone and e-mail facilities, website, weather forecasts.
- All food, fuel and cooking equipment.
- All trucks, jeeps, yaks, base camp workers.
- Base Camp and Advance Base Camp services, cooks, cook boys, tents, seating etc.
- Climbing Sherpa support on the mountain 2 member : 1 Sherpa

### **What is not included**

- Air travel to Kathmandu.
- Personal climbing clothes and equipment.
- Personal insurance, visas and inoculations.
- Food whilst the team is in Kathmandu.
- Importation taxes incurred by your personal equipment (e.g. satellite telephone and other high-tec equipment).
- Personal medical supplies and personal use of communication equipment.
- Tips and Sherpa Bonus.
- Additional Helicopter flights.
- Anything of a personal Nature



## **WHY BOOK WITH ARNOLD COSTER?**

Our price is not the cheapest available but we are exceptionally competitive and provide a very high level of service for a little extra cost. Until you have been to these altitudes it is difficult to fully appreciate that extra value. We provide: Strong Leadership and Support. The expedition will be lead by Arnold Coster himself, who led nineteen 8000m expeditions and as many 7000m. He will be supported by our strong team of Sherpa's, who have also been to the summit many times. Dawa and Mingma our senior Sherpa's climbed all fourteen 8000m peaks!

To cater every climbers need you can choose from two different service levels:

**Basic Service:** This includes all cost to, from and in Base Camp. Only for members who join as a group of 2 or more. If you need additional services; these can be added for additional cost.

- All logistical cost during the trek to and from base camp are included, also all accommodation and food during the trek.
- Comfortable base camp setup with all facilities.
- Fixed rope, Medical support, weather report and communications with Base Camp
- 4 nights Shared room in midrange Hotel in Kathmandu

**Full Service:** Basically this includes everything for an experienced climber.

- All high altitude equipment; tents, fuel, stoves, food and snacks are provided.
- There will be one Sherpa for two members to assist during summit days.
- 4 Nights Single room in Midrange Hotel in Kathmandu

## **Very strong communication equipment**

All members and Sherpa's are given a radio for the duration of the expedition and we have quality base sets at BC and ABC. Satellite telephone backup. Satellite telephones at Base Camp and Advance Base Camp; essential for weather forecasts. You can take the phone to use in the privacy of your own tent.



### **E-mail facilities**

We receive our own weather forecast direct to our own e-mail on a regular basis and do not rely on a third party.

### **Quality Mountain Equipment**

We use expedition tested equipment, a good supply of stoves, shovels etc. Quality Base Camp & Advance Base Camp. We do not use agency tents and equipment and as a result we can guarantee the quality. Our Mess tents and base camp facilities are among the most comfortable ones in Base Camp!

Although this may appear to be a luxury we have found they add to your overall comfort and relaxation allowing you to be physically more able at critical times. Only those who have been to these altitudes for long periods will fully appreciate the subtle differences.

All those Little Luxuries; Showers, mess tent heaters, high quality tents, entertainment and comfortable seating don't add to the cost of your expedition but can add to your potential summit success. You will be more relaxed and rested which in turn allows you to retain your strength or regain it if you suffer a bout of illness.

### **Staffing**

We have good cooks and Sherpa; staff who regularly work for us. We have a cook and cook assistant at both BC and ABC to ensure you are well looked after wherever you are. At least 1 climbing Sherpa to every 2 client. This is a higher ratio than many other companies and allows for illness, accident or to give the resources needed to get logistics in place after a bad spell of weather etc.

### **Medical**

We normally manage to have a Doctor on the team but this is not guaranteed.

Our Leader is trained and has a lot of experience in treating and recognizing High Altitude Sickness. The expedition has his own: Medical supplies, Gammo Bag Emergency equipment, spare oxygen, stretcher etc



Arnold Coster wants to thank his sponsors for all their years of support!

