

# EXPLORE!

## TRIP NOTES



### Simien Mountain Trek (ES)

2012/13 Standard Itinerary

Ethiopia

13 days

Comfort: <sup>1</sup>



Active: <sup>2</sup>



These trip notes refer to the 2012/13 Standard Itinerary version of this tour. Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.



### Trip Highlights

**Addis Ababa** - Orientation tour with guide.

**Simien Mountains** - 10 days fully supported trekking in one of Africa's most spectacular and little-visited mountain ranges.

**Gondar** - Visit Fasilidas Castles & Debre Berhan Church.

### Overview

The Simien highlands of northern Ethiopia form one of the major mountain massifs in Africa. A highlight is the ascent to the summit of Ras Dasha – Ethiopia's highest peak and the fifth highest on the continent. As we trek through this isolated region we admire the spectacular scenery of rocky plateaux, spires, mesas and deep gorges.

1.Comfort rating: Comfort 1

Down-to-earth and natural: typically camping with limited facilities. You will pitch your own tent and help out with the camp chores.

2.Activity level: Active 5

Treks and cycling trips with challenging physical activity most days.

## Joining Tour Abroad

This tour is 13 days land only. Join tour in: Addis Ababa (day 1. ) End tour in: Addis Ababa (day 13).

Clients booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point. Please refer to separate 'Joining Instructions' for time and place of rendezvous with tour leader.

## Group Travel from London

Passengers with **non-group flights** booked through Explore should refer to their individual confirmation invoice for flight details. Transfers to and from the airport are not included unless purchased in addition to the tour package.

### 15 days/14 nights Tour including Connecting Group Flights London-Addis Ababa-London

**Depart from London** on overnight flight, to join tour in Addis Ababa the following day (day 1 of Land Only itinerary). Transfer to hotel.

**Return from Addis Ababa** (on day 13 Land Only itinerary) to arrive London the same day.

## Land Only Itinerary

### Be Prepared

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day route as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built into the itinerary. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

The infrastructure of Ethiopia in terms of transport and accommodation is in a formative stage. Domestic flight schedules can change at short notice which may result in a variation to the day-to-day itinerary detailed below. The availability of hot water in the hotels is usually limited. Power cuts are common. Campsites are very simple in the Simien Mountains. The final trek route may vary depending on local weather and trail conditions. We stay at some government hotels which at times can be commandeered by government officials at short notice this means that night stops may vary as a result.

## Walking Grades and Fitness

To enjoy any trek such as the exciting Simien Mountains Trek it is essential to be in shape before you arrive. It is not wise to regard a trek as a means of getting into shape or losing excess weight. Start a programme of conditioning well before departure – in fact as soon as you book – and be aware that short walks on the flat do little to prepare you for the gradients involved on this trek. Running, hill walking and other more active sports are suitable. We've given each walking & trekking holiday a trek grade to help you decide which one is appropriate for you. This holiday is rated 'Strenuous'.

**Strenuous:** Long and sometimes challenging walks, normally around 6 to 8 hours per day. You should expect some difficult terrain and sometimes high altitude trekking. Ascents and descents are demanding, up to about 1000 metres per day. High levels of fitness and stamina are important. Some previous trekking experience is recommended.

### Day 1: Join tour Addis Ababa

Addis is situated at an elevation of around 2438m and is only about a century old. It has some elegant modern buildings and is quite spacious with wide streets and green areas. It remains the capital of a predominantly rural area and the Mercato is one of the largest open markets in Africa. This afternoon we will make an orientation tour of the city visiting the Ethnographical Museum and the church of the Holy Trinity, whose large dome and slender pinnacles make it a landmark in the city and take a drive up Entoto Hill to take in a panoramic view of Addis Ababa.

*Overnight Standard Hotel (H+) Included meals: Breakfast*

### Day 2: Fly to Gondar

Today we take a short, but scenic flight to Gondar, located on the high plateau just north of Lake Tana. The town of Gondar was the imperial capital of Ethiopia for 200 years. Gondar's most famous monuments are its exceptionally well preserved 17th century castles. The largest and best is that of King Fasilidas. It is a stone-built construction with round turrets and wooden balconies. This whole complex of buildings is unique in Ethiopia and unlike anything found elsewhere in Africa. On arrival, as well as visiting the castle ruins and King Fasilidas baths, we'll also make

a visit to the Debre Berhan Selassie Church famed for its ceiling frescoes of many faces.

*Overnight Standard Hotel (H+) Included meals: Breakfast*

### Day 3: Drive to Simien Mountains N.P. via Debark; PM trek to Sankaber

Today, we drive to Debark, the village base for hiking in the Simien Mountains. The range lies north of Gondar and many of the peaks rise above 4,000m with the highest being Mount Ras Dashen at 4,543m, the fifth highest in Africa. The mountains are criss-crossed with tracks made by the local people travelling from village to village or moving their animals to fresh pastures. The combination of these tracks and the spectacular scenery make for excellent walking. We start our trek with a 2-3 hour walk to our first camp Sankaber. During the trek we may spend each night in a different place. The circuits walked will vary depending on local conditions and on the group's ability. Details of the standard circuit we might take are given below – the itinerary for days 6 to 12 is given as an example only.

*Overnight Basic Camping (C) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Carbon Offset

As a responsible tour operator, we have included in our tour prices the costs of offsetting CO2 emissions from all

international and domestic flights forming part of the tour. Our chosen offset partner is Climate Care. If you are making independent flight arrangements to join one of our tours, may we urge you to take responsibility for your CO2 emissions by offsetting through Climate Care, or a similar offsetting scheme.



## Day 4: Trek to Geech Camp

We trek to Geech camp via Sankaber (approx. 6-7 hours), with the possibility of seeing gelada baboons and red-hot poker plants en route. The gelada baboon is endemic to Ethiopia and has adapted to living on the nearly vertical cliff faces. We may also see the Jinbar river waterfalls today that plummet into Geech Abyss. The Abyss is a vast canyon cut into the main wall of the escarpment.

*Overnight Basic Camping (C) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Day 5: Hike to Imet Gogo from Geech Camp

A flexible day with a morning option to hike to the viewpoint of Imet Gogo (3926m). From the viewpoint there are spectacular views of the lowlands and across the Simien range with rock spires and mesas prominent (approx. 5 hours return). Keep a close look out for the elusive simien fox. It misnamed as it is not really a fox but a member of the dog family restricted to Ethiopia.

*Overnight Basic Camping (C) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Day 6: Trek to Chenek Camp

We aim to trek to Chenek camp today on good piste via Inatye (4070m) and along the escarpment (approx. 6-7 hours). This exciting walk traverses the Jinbar river and provides us with fantastic views. You may like to take the opportunity to freshen-up in the nearby stream south of camp.

*Overnight Basic Camping (C) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Day 7: Trek to Ambikwa

Today we trek to Ambikwa (approx. 11-12 hours) and plan to stop at a spectacular viewpoint (4200m) north of Bwahit where, on clear days, we can see across the Mesheha river to Ras Dashen peak. We then descend steeply and pass through the village of Chiro Leba to follow a stream bed until we reach the large Mesheha River. We'll cross the river and follow a path across the east side of the valley to our camp (3200m) in a little meadow. Ambikwa village is tiny and has a small church. We will then continue for a couple more hours to the campsite en route up to Ras Dashen

*Overnight Basic Camping (C) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Day 8: Ascent of Ras Dashen; trek to Ambikwa

Starting before sunrise we follow the main valley up and climb steeply via Mizma huts to reach a ridge crest and open grassy slopes (3700m) on our invigorating ascent of Ethiopia's highest mountain. Next we traverse around ridges and climb more steeply to a broad col at 4250m. Keep an eye open for giant lobelia, by far the most spectacular plant of this region with flower stalks up to 8m high! Eventually we enter a huge semicircular basin of rocky peaks and buttresses – Ras Dashen. The last section involves some rock scrambling and climbing to a fine viewpoint at 4543m. We'll spend the rest of the day hiking back to our camp (total walking today approx. 09-10 hours).

*Overnight Basic Camping (C) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Day 9: Trek to Sona

Today we will trek from Ambikwa to the camp at Sona. There are a couple of good options available to us so we will choose the best option dependant on space available. We will experience great mountain views of Imet Gogo and other peaks and pass through local villages. We will re-cross the River Mesheha (2800m) before climbing up through cultivated fields and villages to 3700m. After passing the newly moved village of Arkwasiye we slowly descend to our camp situated on a cliff just below Sona village at 3000m. (Approx 8-10 hrs walking)

*Overnight Basic Camping (C) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Day 10: Trek to Mekarebia

Today we make our way to Mekarebia. We will descend steeply for the first 3 hours to the Ansiye River at an altitude of 1900 m. Here we can have some time to relax for a well earned wash or swim before continuing on our trek to our overnight stop at 1868m. The route we take today will provide good opportunities for birdwatching and will also give us great views of the route we have taken so far. Our campsite will be close to an elementary school which you may have the option of visiting in the afternoon. (Approx 4-6 hrs walking)

*Overnight Basic Camping (C) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Day 11: Trek to Mulit

This morning we immediately descend another 350m to rejoin the Ansiye River. As we walk along the river, criss-crossing in places the birdlife is breathtaking, with vervet monkeys to be seen too. After leaving the Ansiye Valley we will have time to relax beside a lagoon formed by a waterfall. Will then have a more challenging ascent of 500m for the last couple of hours enjoying the views of the Awuzu peaks before reaching our campsite at Mulit at 2100m asl. (Approx 6hrs walking)

*Overnight Basic Camping (C) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Day 12: Trek to Adi Arkay, drive to Gondar

This morning we will take our final 2 hr trek to Adi Arkay where we meet our vehicle that will transport us back to Gondar (approx. 5-6 hours drive). As we drive out of the Simien Mountains we'll have time to take in a final look at some of the most spectacular views. There may be time this afternoon to further explore Gondar. You may choose to visit the local market or the nearby ruined palace of Kusquam.

*Overnight Standard Hotel (H+) Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

## Day 13: Fly to Addis; PM free. Tour ends

We fly back to the capital this morning and the afternoon is left free.

*Overnight Standard Hotel (H+) Included meals: Breakfast*

**EXPLORE ACCOMMODATION RATINGS:** An important feature of many Explore tours is the wide range of accommodation used, and since the beginning our philosophy has been to select accommodation to suit the itinerary - not the other way round. To help gauge the comfort level on your chosen tour, we have graded the accommodation standards at all night-stops using the rating guide below. Please keep in mind however that standards can vary from one trip to the next, and occasionally we may need to change a night-stop without advance warning.

### Hotels / lodges / guesthouses - or similar

**H++ :** Comfortable hotels, lodges or guesthouses with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. With air-conditioning/heating where appropriate and with reliable hot and cold water. Generally good levels of service and often with added amenities such as restaurant, bar, gardens or swimming pool.

**H+ :** Standard hotels, lodges or guesthouses, usually with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. These are generally standard, no-frills hotels with adequate amenities and service standards. Whilst comfort levels are perfectly acceptable to most, please don't expect too much! These are often small, family run establishments.

**H :** Basic hotels, lodges or guesthouses (also village houses, mountain huts, hotels etc often come into this category). Accommodation may be communal or dorm-style, and WC / washing facilities are usually shared. Running hot and cold water may be unreliable or even unavailable. These can be the most rewarding and memorable places to stay, but comfort levels are low.

### Camping

**C++ :** Comfortable, full service camping generally in permanent, fixed camps with walk-in tents, proper beds and often with en-suite facilities and other amenities such as dining area, bar, gardens and a swimming pool. Your bed-linen is provided.

**C+ :** Standard camping in private or public campsites, usually with WC and washing / showering facilities in a shared ablutions building. Typically in two person tents, and some level of participation is often required. Generally bed linen or sleeping bags are not provided.

**C :** Basic camping in wild camps where facilities / amenities may be limited or non-existent. Generally there is no running water, and we dig a temporary bush toilet. Two person tents are often used, but occasionally we sleep under the stars. Participation normally required and sleeping bags usually not provided. Note: other accommodation, for example, aboard boats or on overnight sleeper trains is described individually at the appropriate point in the tour itinerary above.

## Booking a Single Room

All of our tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation.

On this particular tour we are pleased to be able to offer customers the option of pre-booking a guaranteed single room for each night of the tour.

Please refer to the dates and prices section for single room option prices for this tour.

## Personal Expenses

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### Meals Included

Included Meals: 12 Breakfasts, 10 Lunches, 9 Dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location and the prices below are given as a rough guide for budgeting.

### Local Costs

	UK	Ethiopia
Tea/Coffee	£1.20	£0.50
Soft Drink	£0.80	£0.50
Bottled Water	£0.80	£0.50
Bottle of Beer	£2.50	£1.00
2 Course Meal*	£10.00	£3.50
3 Course Meal**	£18.00	£6.00
Bottle of Wine	£10.00	£15.00
Breakfast	£5.00	

\*Cheap local fare in a small cafe or restaurant.

\*\*Typical food in a simple, reasonably comfortable mid-range restaurant.

## Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these trip notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

### Excursion Prices

**Addis Ababa** - National museum £3.00.

### Tipping

**Local crew** - Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$80 for tipping of local drivers, guides, muleteers and for any miscellaneous tipping of hotel staff.

**Tour Leader:** At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

## Foreign Exchange

**Local Currency:** Ethiopia: Ethiopian Birr.

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** It is advisable to take your spending money in Sterling, Euros or US Dollars cash (high denomination notes usually get better exchange rates). Please note that any pre- 1999 or torn US Dollar bills will not be accepted in Ethiopia. Please keep any receipts as you may be able to change back any unused local currency.

**Where to Exchange:** Your Tour leader will advise you.

**ATM Availability:** Very Limited.

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Limited.

## Responsible Tourism

### Send A Cow

This organisation provides breeding livestock – not just cows but poultry, sheep and goats...even fruit trees – to the poorest members of the community in Ethiopia. They also train beneficiaries in better farming techniques to enable them to grow sufficient food for their families and to generate income. Offspring are passed on to another member of the community so that the benefit is spread and shared. This is grassroots initiative that makes a real difference to the most needy.

### What you can do

Your donation will help some of the poorest communities in Ethiopia develop in a tangible and long term way. [www.sendacow.org.uk](http://www.sendacow.org.uk)

**Travellers Cheques:** Very difficult to exchange and are not recommended.

Up-to-date information on global exchange rates can be obtained at [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)

### Fasting Days

During the 55 days preceding Easter and 40 days preceding Christmas (Genna), Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia abstain from eating animal products. During this time, therefore, local restaurants predominantly serve vegetarian food, though meat is usually available in some larger establishments.

In Ethiopia video recorders are not permitted at some sights and at those where they are, charges vary between US\$10 and US\$20 per visit.

## Practical Information

### Climate

Ethiopia is generally pleasant and warm, but varies with altitude. The long rains usually arrive mid-June to early September and the short rains between mid-February and April although this pattern has been completely erratic in recent times. After the rains, the highlands of northern Ethiopia are usually green and thus particularly scenic. The temperature all year round rarely falls below 18°C. Night-time temperatures in the mountains can be cold and can drop below freezing at higher altitude. There is a strong risk of sunburn at high altitude in Ethiopia.

For additional climate information check our [weather page](#)

Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

### Visa Requirements

Entry visas are required by all nationalities and you must obtain them prior to your arrival.

Visas are available through the Embassy or through Explore's recommended visa service, Visa Swift [www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx](http://www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx). All nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

Please note that with effect from April 2012 visas on arrival are no longer available.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

### Vaccinations & Protection

An International Certificate of Vaccination against yellow fever is required. We recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid and polio. Although the risk is low you may also consider immunisation against rabies and meningococcal meningitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against Malaria.

The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

### Electric Supply & Plugs

For comprehensive information regarding voltages and plug types in use in the countries visited, follow the relevant link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

### Insurance

**Do you need to organise travel insurance for your holiday?** If so, you can arrange Explore Travel insurance - which covers you for any included activity on any Explore trip. You can either purchase this at the time of booking or call us on 0844 499 0901 after you have booked.

**Travel insurance is compulsory for all customers.** At the start of the trip you must provide us with: the name of your insurance company, your policy number, a 24 hour medical emergency contact number, and the expiry date of the policy. You should ensure that your policy covers you for medical expenses and repatriation.

**If you are unable to provide all this information at the start of the trip you will not be allowed to join the trip.** If you have purchased Explore Insurance you should carry the Master Certificate leaflet with you, which outlines the conditions of the policy together with a copy of your Confirmation Invoice, which is your proof of purchase of insurance. Explore Worldwide are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority.

### Earth Matters

- During this tour, you may encounter local children asking you for pens, sweets etc. Whilst this may seem innocent enough, by many members of the community, it is seen as begging and is frowned upon. It is recommended that you don't give anything individually to children. If you wish to donate anything, your tour leader may be able to organise a visit to a local project.
- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

## Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs, including advice re: the legality of and local attitudes towards same-sex relationships. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

## Packing for your Trip

Unfortunately it does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company

### Luggage

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### Equipment

#### Trek Kit Bag

For an exclusively designed Explore Trek Bag, follow the relevant link at [www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore)

#### Personal First Aid Kit

For an exclusively designed Explore Medical Kit, visit [www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore)

### Need help on Clothing or Equipment?

Then we suggest you contact Nomad Travel, our equipment partner, who specialise in kitting people out for adventurous travel. You receive a special 10% discount in-store or online. Visit one of their stores, phone 0845 260 0044, or visit their website [www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore) for further information.

## Additional Information for your Trekking Trip

This trip to the Simien Mountains features more mountain walking than many of our other holidays. For this reason we feel that it is of value to provide this extra information sheet to help you prepare for your trip. If you are in any doubt about the suitability of the trip you have booked, call us now. It stands to reason that the better your mental and physical preparation the more you will enjoy yourself.

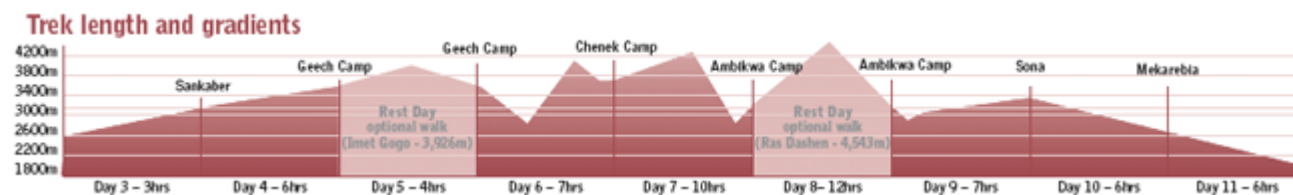
### Altitude: On Trek

**Note on Altitude:** In the Simien Mountains trekking is strenuous with 6-8 hrs a day walking on average, at altitudes of 3,000- 4,500m, though there are some longer days (including the ascent of Ras Dashen, 4,543m). There is very little flat walking involved. We cover approx 65 miles, ascend 7460m and descend 6880m. Your leader will ensure that during your stay in the mountains you acclimatise enough before an ascent of Ras Dashen. At altitude you will find yourself moving slower than usual, but this gives an excellent opportunity to admire the spectacular views. Please be aware when trekking over 3000m there is a possibility of altitude sickness.

**Insurance:** Please ensure that your insurance policy covers you to the altitude indicated before you come on tour. If you have Explore insurance you will be covered to this altitude.

**Medical Examination:** You should visit your GP and specifically mention the maximum altitude the trek reaches, i.e. 4543m. Bear in mind that the final trek to the summit is optional, and can be omitted if so wished.

### Gradient Chart



### Luggage: On Trek

A kitbag/barrel bag carried by mules on trek, a stuff-sack to store surplus belongings while on trek and a daysac. Maximum weight on trek **15kg/33 lbs**. Pack mules are used to carry equipment, food and most personal gear. Pack heavy/dense items into your kitbag.

**Trek Kit Bag** Before leaving Gondar there is plenty of time to re-sort luggage into what you need on trek and what can be left in Gondar. Think about what you are taking on trek (remember your sleeping bag) and then think how big your kit bag needs to be. An ex-army type can usually be obtained cheaply. A nylon or canvas bag with a zip along the top is also suitable. Whatever you choose, it must be strong, as porters are not very gentle with

baggage. Soft luggage is preferable! Framed rucksacks are unsuitable. The weight limit for the bag AND its contents is 15kg but you will probably find that you do not need this much. Please note there are occasional opportunities to hand wash clothing whilst on the trek. For an exclusively designed Explore Trek Bag, follow the relevant link at [www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore)

**Small Rucksack/Daysac** During the course of a trekking day, you do not have access to the luggage that is being carried for you by the porters. In any mountain region the weather can change rapidly and you must be equipped for this eventuality. Your daysac should, therefore, be large enough to carry the following: waterproofs, sweater, long trousers (if walking in shorts), warm hat and gloves, sun hat, sun cream, water bottle (at least 2litre), tissues and your packed lunch. Most people normally find that this adds up to about 2 to 3kg. Camera equipment can be heavy so think carefully when deciding what to take. Remember to carry spare film with you during the day. Other optional items in a daysac might be binoculars, a diary or a book to read at lunch time. It is usually more comfortable to carry a slightly larger pack that is not full than to carry a small pack that is overfull or with 'bits' tied on the outside. Something between 20 and 25 litres capacity is probably the most suitable. A shoulder bag is not a practical alternative.

**Plastic Bags** If you pack your gear in plastic bags inside your kit bag they will stay dry in case of rain. It will also be easier for you to sort through. Remember, the less you have to unpack in the evening, the less you have to repack each morning! A bin liner to pack inside your daysac is also a good idea.

## Clothing & Footwear: On Trek

**Walking Boots** Probably the trickiest part of all. We strongly recommend walking in good boots. Trainers, tennis shoes or shoes of a similar ilk simply do not give the ankle support afforded by a decent pair of boots. Many people now trek in the lighter weight Goretex or leather boots They have the advantage that they take little breaking in. The slightly heavier traditional leather walking boots are also good. Avoid the types often found in high street shoe shops which are simply cheap trainers with a higher canvas side sewn on – they give little support and will probably not last the trek. Above all, your boots must be well broken in and comfortable. We do not recommend borrowing or renting boots. It is a good idea to carry your boots in your hand luggage on international flights or wear them – should your luggage be delayed, your well broken in boots are the one thing which will be irreplaceable. Gaiters are useful to keep snow and/or scree out of your boots.

**Trainers or Trekking sandals** Useful around the villages and when travelling.

**Socks** It is best to wear a pair of liner socks under a pair of fairly thick loop stitch socks. This helps to protect your feet against blisters. Avoid nylon socks, they are abrasive, don't breathe well and can cause blisters.

**Jacket** After sunset, temperatures can fall below freezing. A very warm jacket is the most convenient way of keeping warm when the temperature drops.

**Waterproofs** Breathable waterproofs made from material such as Goretex not only protects against rain and wind but also stops you from overheating. They 'breathe' and avoid condensation that you will experience from nylon waterproofs.

**Long Trousers** For everyday walking, light cotton trousers are the most suitable. Jeans are not recommended as they are often difficult to walk in over longer distances and become cumbersome when wet.

**Thick sweater/fleece jacket** A thick sweater or fleece jacket is necessary as nights can be very cold at altitude. Make sure that your waterproof jacket is loose enough to wear over your sweater or fleece.

**Track suit** Comfortable around the villages and much more practical (and warmer) to sleep in than pyjamas. Alternatively, thermal underwear is good.

**Shorts** Shorts can be very comfortable to walk in but you must carry long trousers with you in case you get either sunburned or cold! Follow your tour leaders advice on local sensitivities to wearing shorts during the trek.

**Gloves** Especially useful in the morning and in the evening at higher altitudes. Also bring a scarf to cover your face from the dust during the day and a warm hat/balaclava.

**Swimwear** for swimming opportunities during the trek

## Equipment Provided: On Trek

All cooking and kitchen gear.

Tents and Mess tents.

Mattresses will be provided

## Personal Equipment: On Trek

**Sleeping Bag** As you do not carry it yourself this may be down or synthetic, but it must be 4-season (temperature  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). A cotton liner helps to keep your bag clean.

**Sleeping Mat** Regular sleeping mats will be provided but if you would prefer an inflatable thermarest style you will need to bring your own.

**Walking Stick/Pole** Walking sticks and poles are recommended.

**Water Bottle** Water along the trail must never be considered as drinkable. Take at least a 2 litre personal water bottle, preferably insulated. A personal supply of water purification tablets/drops is also essential. Powdered fruit juice can be used to disguise the taste. Energy snacks, including chocolate and sweets, are also recommended whilst on trek.

**Sunglasses/Snow Goggles** A good pair of sunglasses are essential for protection against UV rays and glare at high altitudes.

**Sun Hat, High Factor Sun Cream/Block & Lip Salve** Choose a high factor suncream (Factor 15 or more) to protect your skin against the sun at high altitudes. A combination sunblock/ lipsalve is ideal for facial protection.

**Torch/Batteries/Bulb** A small torch is essential for finding things at night. Often a head torch is useful for the early ascent to the summit. Remember to bring some spare batteries.

**Toiletries** Keep heavy cosmetics to a minimum. Essentials are toothbrush/paste, soap (preferably biodegradable), small towel, small nail brush. 'Wet Wipes' are great for a quick clean up, so bring a pack of those (nonperfumed to avoid rashes!).

**Personal First Aid Kit** On each trek a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials. Please do not give medicines to local people without consulting the tour leader.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these trip notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these trip notes These trip notes were last updated on 18/05/2012 16:20:12

Please note: 2011 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2011. 2012/13 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2012. For tours departing during 2013, itineraries may be subject to change and will be confirmed by the publication of the 2013 brochure/s in Autumn 2012.