



Nepal - Poon Hill Trek

Important Information & Example Packing List

Please find the following list of important information and a non-exhaustive example packing list. If you have any questions, please be sure to let us know. If you have further questions about altitude, your health, immunizations, etc., your doctor is the very best resource for information on these topics.

1. PHYSICAL FITNESS

Although the trek to Poon Hill in the Annapurna Region of the Himalayan Mountains in Nepal is not a technical climb or at extreme altitude (reaching a maximum altitude of about 10,531ft or 3,210m), it is still a challenge and you should not underestimate the rigors of trekking long days at altitude. The pace of your ascent coupled with good acclimatization will help you on the trek, but it is also essential to be mentally and physically prepared before you start. Regular hikes are one of the best ways to prepare, increasing frequency and length of your hikes as you get closer to the trek. All aerobic exercises such as cycling, running, swimming, and aerobics classes are good for strengthening muscles and the cardiovascular system. Any exercise that increases your heart rate for 20 minutes is helpful, but don't overdo it just before the trek.

On this trek you can hike up to 31 miles (51 km) in total and be on the trails about 5-6 hours per day (including rest, lunch and snack stops). **If you don't think that you are capable of trekking at this pace, this distance and at these altitudes, please contact us about trips to Machu Picchu that do not involve trekking.**

2. ALTITUDE AND ACCLIMATIZATION

Altitudes are generally defined as follows:

- **Significant altitude:** 8,000 ft. – 13,800 ft. (2,400 m – 4,200 m)
- **High altitude:** 13,800 ft. – 17,700 ft. (4,200 m – 5,400 m)
- **Very high altitude:** above 17,700 ft. (5,400 m)

Poon Hill Trek:

- **High point (Poon Hill):** 10,531 feet (3,210 meters)
- **Pokhara:** 5,710 feet (1,740m)
- **Kathmandu:** 4,200 feet (1,280m)

It is likely that all trekkers will experience some form of mild altitude related effects during their trek to Poon Hill. It is caused by the inability of the body to adapt quickly enough to the reduced level of oxygen in the air at an increased altitude. Acclimation is an important process of going to higher altitude, then returning to a lower level to sleep. It triggers the body to create more red blood cells to carry more oxygen, thus helping your body acclimate to higher altitude.



There are many different symptoms related to hiking at higher altitude, but the most common are headache, light-headedness, nausea, loss of appetite, tingling in the toes and fingers, and a mild swelling of ankles and fingers. These mild forms are not serious and will normally disappear within 48 hours. **Remember to always keep your local trekking guide informed of how you feel as they are trained to distinguish between the various altitude related symptoms and how to address them with your safety in mind. Also, it is important to follow your guide's instructions, from the preparation stage of the hike to the finish. That said, if ever in doubt, the best remedy for altitude related symptoms is to immediately return to lower altitudes.**

Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate: One of the most important things you can do at altitude is stay hydrated. Drink much more water per day than you would normally drink... up to 5 liters a day while trekking. It is also very important to stay very well hydrated on the days before you start your trek. At altitude there is less oxygen in the air and the air is very dry. To maintain oxygen levels in your body you breathe at a faster rate. The combination of breathing more and the intensely dry air causes your body to lose water vapor at an accelerated rate. As a result, your intake of water needs to increase exponentially to replace the fluids. Failure to do so will lead to headaches, dehydration and increased altitude related effects. Adding hydration salts to your water is said to help tremendously as well (see "Other Items to Consider" in the packing list below).

3. OTHER HEALTH TIPS

All contact lens wearers should take care to remove the lenses at night, as the eye needs to absorb oxygen from the atmosphere. The rarefied conditions of altitude reduce oxygen levels and in extreme cases a Corneal Edema can develop. Also, be sure to always stay well hydrated by drinking far more water than you would at lower altitudes. This is extremely important at high altitudes, as dehydration is a very common effect of hiking at altitude and can lead to other serious side effects. Be sure to discuss this with your eye professional and follow their instructions.

4. PHOTOGRAPHY

Cameras, whether video or film, need to be protected against the severe cold weather either in warm pouch or the interior pockets of your clothing. A selection of lenses will aid the final results although weight and bulk will obviously influence your selection. A polarized or neutral density filter is great for SLR users.

For digital equipment, check with the manufacturer's specifications for temperature range (especially battery life), water tightness, and general hardiness.

5. WEATHER

Packing can be a challenge for the Trek as you will encounter multiple conditions from warm sub-tropical weather to cold mountain conditions during the evening. Also, while we schedule treks during the 'drier' season you are up in the high Himalayan Mountains, so rain and/or passing showers are always a possibility.

Before discussing the trek, it's important to know that you will leave your primary luggage behind in the hotel's luggage room in Pokhara before you leave for the trek (the hotel porter checks your bag, but it's best to put a



lock on the bag) and you will pick it back up after returning from the trek... so pack your clothes for the days before/after the trek in Pokhara and Kathmandu separately from what you'll use on the trek.

Pokhara & Kathmandu Weather: Pokhara and Kathmandu are down in the lower slopes of the Himalaya (Pokhara is 5,710 feet (1,740m) and Kathmandu is 4,200 feet (1,280m)). Typically it is warm and comfortable during the day and evening.

Trek Weather: It's best to break the trek into two parts (lower level during the beginning and end of the trek & up higher during the Poon Hill summit);

- 1) **Higher Altitude (Poon Hill Summit):** as you reach the higher altitudes of the trek, the days can range widely from warm to cold and can be very cold at night.
 - a. **Day Time Temps:** During the day temperatures can range anywhere from 40's to 70's depending on cloud coverage and wind. Due to the thinner atmosphere at higher altitude, if the sun is out and there is no wind it can feel hot (almost like the 70's or even 80), but if the sun is behind the clouds it can feel cool (in the 40's). And if the wind is high it can feel even colder. You will also be trekking during the early morning hours in the dark to reach the summit of Poon Hill for the sunrise. Therefore it is very important to wear/carry multiple layers (moisture wicking base shirt, long sleeve shirt, sweater/fleece, wool hat, wool or waterproof gloves (a second dry pair of gloves and a second hat is a good idea), breathable and waterproof wind/rain outer layer, etc.) in your day bag during these days/evening. It is also important to keep your headlamp/flashlight in your day bag, along with a spare set of batteries.

NOTE: Try to avoid wearing cotton items as your base layer on these two days if you can, as cotton traps moisture/sweat which can cool rapidly/freeze as the temperate drops (which isn't good).

NOTE 2: Bring a few garbage bags to keep your clothes and important things dry, both in the day bag you carry and the bag that the Sherpa Porter carries.

NOTE 3: It's dry season, but you are in the mountains so rain is possible at any time during the trek. It's important that you have a wool hat, wool or waterproof gloves, a waterproof cover for your backpack, waterproof hiking boots (like Gore Tek), and high quality breathable and waterproof wind/rain outer layer. (a second dry pair of gloves, a second hat, and a second dry pair of hiking shoes is a good idea)

- b. **Night Time Temps:** During the evening, especially during the early morning pre-dawn ascent up to Poon Hill, it can get quite cold. Again, depending on the cloud coverage (lots of clouds keeps some of the warmth in the air) and wind, it can be a crisp 30's or down as low as the 20's or lower with wind chill. Multiple warm layers are very important (including thermal under garments, wool socks, hat, gloves, shirts, pants, sweater/fleece, outer layer, warm sleeping bag, etc.)... you'll be wearing most of the clothes you bring on the trek this evening (except those worn during the day that might be moist from sweat and/or rain).



NOTE: Having a second pair of comfortable hiking shoes is important to have, as your primary pair may get moist from sweat or rain. Having a dry pair of shoes in the cold weather (at night and as a back-up) is important in keeping you warm, dry and comfortable. A cheap pair of thin flip flops is good too (especially if the hot springs are open later in the trek).

- 2) **WARMER Lower Altitude (beginning & end of the trek):** during the beginning and end of the trek you will be in the lower / warmer altitudes.
- Day Time Temps:** The beginning and end of the trek the weather tends to be warmer as you are in lower altitude. You'll still want to have a few layers, especially a wind/rain coat or if the weather is cooler than normal, but you could be in a t-shirt and long light pants (or even shorts).
 - Night Time Temps:** You'll typically see temperatures in the 40's - 60's at night.

NOTE: Much of your outer layers can/will be worn multiple days, but changing your under garments and base layers daily with clean and dry ones is very important.

Climber's Packing List

Machu Picchu - Example Travel Packing List

Keep in mind that the temperature in Nepal can vary widely especially in altitude, so it's best to dress in layers and be prepared for all conditions.

Kathmandu/Pokhara: During the day it is warm in Kathmandu and Pokhara (around low 70's - 21c) and at night around 60's (16c).

Poon Hill Trek: During the trek, especially at higher altitudes, it is quite warm in the sun and can get instantly cool in the shade. During the beginning of the trek it's similar temperatures to Kathmandu & Pokhara, but toward the higher elevations of the trek it can be in the 50's during the day and 40's at night (or even below freezing on occasion). Layers are the best for these conditions. In the evening, it can be quite cold. While there are plenty of blankets in the guesthouses, there is no heat in the rooms, so again, layers (including long johns), warm clothing, sleeping bag and hats/gloves are best.



We therefore suggest you to prepare to bring warm clothes or purchase them in one of the many very inexpensive shops in Kathmandu. Below is an extensive, but certainly not exhaustive, check list to help with your preparation.

The following basic equipment check lists should help you with your packing. Please remember that you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum (DURING THE TREK, PLEASE HAVE NO MORE THAN ONE BACKPACK OR DUFFLE BAG (that the Porter carries) & ONE DAYPACK (that you carry). You will also need to leave your primary luggage (locked) at the hotel in Pokhara before starting the trek with anything you don't need on the trek. You will pick it up after the trek is done.

Some items could be avoided according to your personal preference. Also, pretty much everything (except quality footwear and special prescription medications) can be found in Kathmandu at very reasonable prices.

Documents

- Valid Passport
- Medical insurance card
- Airline tickets, e-tickets
- Printed copy of the Pre-Departure Dossier** (emailed to you 3 weeks or so before departure).
- Passport size photos (will need to bring 4 passport photos. ***Be sure you have 2 in your carry-on bag for your Nepal Visa, as you won't get your checked bags until after immigration. Note: Immigration may or may not ask for them, but best to have.***)

✓ **Please Note:** We suggest scanning your passport, airline tickets/schedule, travelers checks numbers, credit and ATM cards (front & back), and medical cards. Password protect this scanned document and email it to yourself to an email you can access on the road. Also, leave a copy with someone trusted at home.

Baggage

- For Trekking (Sherpas Carry):** During the trek Sherpa porters will carry **one (1)** personal duffle bag per person. This bag should contain no more than around 15-20 lbs of your clothing, gear, etc. (excess weight or bags will require you to pay for an additional Sherpa porter as determined by the guide). ***We recommend that the bag you bring be either waterproof OR that you bring a waterproof cover*** (a couple of garbage bags works too). Also be sure to put your clothes and other person items inside garbage bags, zip lock bags and/or air-tight compression bags before putting them into the duffle bags. Sleeping bags are carried separately from the duffle bag with your gear and are not counted towards the weight limit, but should be equally protected from the weather in waterproof bags.

NOTE: backpacks can be used too, but bags with wheels or hard frames are not allowed. Duffle bags



(waterproof or otherwise) can be purchased in the shops in Kathmandu fairly inexpensively.

- Example:



- **For Trekking (You Carry):** Small day backpack - you carry this backpack during daily treks (to carry layers, rain gear, water, snacks, camera, etc.). Be sure this bag has a waterproof cover or bring along a waterproof bag to cover it - even a garbage bag.

- Example:



- **Your Primary Luggage (You Leave it Behind at Hotel with All Your Non-Trekking Gear):** You will leave your primary luggage behind at the hotel in Pokhara before starting the trek and pick it up again after the trek is done (rolling suitcase, backpack or whatever size and style works for you). This way you don't need to bring anything you don't require for the trek, lessening the burden on the horses. Please securely lock your bag and do not leave any valuables or fragile items in it - talk to the hotel desk about storing these items in the hotel safe.

- Example:



- Sleeping Bag:** Bring a cold weather sleeping bag and wrap it in a waterproof bag or heavy-duty garbage bag. Your bag should be rated at least zero degrees or lower. A fleece liner is a great idea to have for those colder nights or as a light cover on warm nights. Sleeping bags are carried separately from the duffel bag with your gear and are not counted towards the weight limit.
- Waterproof plastic bags** for storing clothing, cameras & valuables, sleeping bags, and gear (garbage bags, zip lock bags and/or air-tight compression bags are a great idea). We recommend bringing along 4-5 garbage bags and zip lock bags.

Clothing (layering is the best)

- Consider taking breathable, lightweight, hand-washable, and quick-drying clothes
- Shorts
- Long pants (zip-off pants are very useful)
- Shirts, T-shirts, long sleeved shirts
- Undergarments
- Long johns
- Sport bras for women
- Fleece, sweater, jacket, windbreaker
- Rain/water proof jackets and pants (these are important... and quality highly breathable raingear can perform double duty as outer layer wind breakers too... cheap ones get sweaty inside easily)
- Winter hat (wool or fleece)
- Gloves (a light pair for cool days and second warmer pair for cold days/ nights... waterproof or wool are best)
- Neck gaiter
- Sun hat with brim and chin strap
- Belt



- Pajamas
- Waterproof plastic bags for storing clothing, cameras & valuables, sleeping bags, wrapping your gear/bags, etc. (garbage bags, zip lock bags and/or air-tight compression bags are a great idea). We recommend bringing along 4-5 garbage bags and zip lock bags.
- Swimsuit (there are hot springs during the trek - *subject to being open as the river floods periodically wash them out or itinerary changes*)

Footwear

- Trail hiking shoes/boots - comfortable, breathable, water proof/resistant, broken in
- 2nd backup pair of shoes for wearing in camp or if you primary pair gets wet
- Flip flops or light/easy packable shoes for in camp/showers/hot springs
- Multiple pairs of comfortable, breathable socks (wool hiking socks for beginning of trek and the cool nights are a good idea)

Toiletries (for the trek, pack just a sandwich bag with the essentials (travel/trial sized items are best) and leave the bulk of items in your checked bag you leave behind at the hotel)

- Soap, shampoo, conditioner
- Shaving items
- Toothbrush, toothpaste
- Moist towelettes (handi-wipes anti-bacterial and Cetaphil gentle skin wipes are great - very helpful on the days without showers)
- Hand sanitizer
- Sunscreen
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Small towel
- Toilet paper (can get at the hotel before the trek, but important to have on the trek as some stops don't have any available)
- Tampons and sanitary napkins

Electronics

- Headlamp or flashlight (headlamp is best... you will need this for night time - KEEP IN YOUR DAYPACK while hiking as you may need it if trek runs late AND for the pre-dawn trek up to Poon Hill)
- Extra batteries for Headlamp, camera, etc.
- Camera, lenses, filters, memory disks
- Video camera, tapes
- Alarm clock (for hotel - no need for trek)
- Calculator (for currency conversion - again, no need for trek)



- Battery chargers, Electricity adapter (very limited to no electricity on the trek)

Note:

- ✓ Store electronics in sealed water-proof bags

Other Items to Consider

- Prescribed medicines if any
- Hydration salts (example: Nunn Active Hydration: <http://www.nuun.com/products>)
- Sunglasses
- Eyeglasses, contacts, solution
- Trekking poles (very helpful during downhill trekking)
- Leg Gaiters
- Binoculars
- Pocket knife
- Notebook, pencil and pen
- Playing cards, games, books, etc
- Energy bars, hard candy, snacks, and comfort foods (can be found at super market in Kathmandu and randomly in little snack shops along the trail)
- Cash, credit cards, ATM (if bringing USD cash, be sure they are small denominations and of the newer style bills in good condition (no tears))
- Money belt
- Maps, guidebooks
- Water bottles - Nalgene and/or Camelback (Camelback's are useful while trekking, though not required)... bottled water for purchase is plentiful and inexpensive

Note:

- ✓ About a week or so before departure, it is important that you advise your credit card and banks (ATM) that you will be traveling to Nepal so that your cards don't get frozen for overseas use.
- ✓ Bottled water is readily available for purchase all over Nepal, including at shops, restaurants, hotels, guesthouses, markets and along the trail.

First Aid

- Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, or Aspirin
- Disinfectant, antiseptic cream, antibiotic ointment
- Blister treatment (like Mole Skin - which you can buy in most pharmacies in the US)
- Band-Aids
- Gauze bandages and tape
- Sunscreen
- Throat lozenges



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- Vitamins
- Imodium or other antidiarrheal tablets
- Antihistamines
- Antacids
- Cold tablets
- Insect repellent (important)
- Ace bandage
- Antibiotics (consult your doctor)
- Prescription drugs (consult your doctor)
- Etc.