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Tilicho Lake & Mesokanto La Trek - 17 Days

Trek an off-beaten path trek to Tilicho Lake and Mesokanto La pass ending it at Jomsom. Tilicho Lake and Mesokanto La Trek have lately been popular as a rewarding but challenging alternative to Thorong La Pass of the Annapurna circuit. As Annapurna circuit trek sees many tourists these days, Tilicho Lake and Mesokanto La pass trek are ideal for those who love a challenge and want to trek through less crowded zones.

Despite the growing popularity of the Tilicho Lake and Mesokanto La Pass trek over the past years, only a few people attempt this demanding trek. So feel the real of remoteness, enjoy the turquoise high alpine lake at 4900m, and get enthralled by the view of the great Grand Barrier, Annapurna, and Dhaulagiri range of mountains.

Gape at the awesome mountain barrier to the south, awesome maybe a much everyday word, but the ridge of 7,000m peaks stretching from Nilgiri to Annapurna II certainly will strike us with awe.

We start our trek from Syange after a long drive from Kathmandu. We continue through the regular well-managed trekking trail of Annapurna Circuit until Manang. We divert towards the Tilicho route from Manang after acclimatizing there for two nights. We continue through beautiful Khangsar village to Tilicho Base camp and finally to Tilicho Lake.

We spend a night at Tilicho Lake to enjoy the lake and surrounding views! Camping on the shores of Tilicho Lake and dwarfed by surroundings, we will feel so insignificant and yet so wonderfully alive. Then, we prepare ourselves to take the challenge of crossing Mesokanto La pass. The next day starting early, we cross first the Eastern pass and then the Mesokanto La.

After enjoying the majestic Himalayan views from the Mesokanto La top, we trek carefully down to Yak Kharka for an overnight stay. The next day we trek down to Kali Gandaki valley to Jomsom and end our trek.
Tilicho Lake and Mesokanto La pass trek are suitable for adventurous and challenge-loving spirits only. However, if you are an average normal trekker, we suggest you do Annapurna Circuit Trek, which takes you through the Thorong La Pass.

On the Tilicho Lake and Mesokanto La Pass Trek, we enjoy trekking through the variegated mountain topography, cross grazing yaks, admire Tibetan temples and monasteries, and visit picturesque ethnic villages.

The journey through this multifaceted vegetation and varied cultural zones and the panoramic view of the impressive massifs of the Annapurna and the Dhaulagiri results in an unforgettable experience of unique and memorable trekking in Nepal.

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PRICE INCLUDES

- Airport and hotel transfers as per itinerary in private vehicle
- 3 nights' accommodation (twin sharing) in Kathmandu in a 4-star category hotel: Ramada Encore or similar
- One night twin sharing accommodation with breakfast at a 3-star category hotel in Pokhara
- Guided sightseeing in Kathmandu including entrance fees and private vehicle
- Meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) during the trek
- Best available teahouse/lodge accommodation (twin sharing) during the trek
- Staff– one professional, knowledgeable and friendly English speaking trekking leader along with assistant guide (6 trekkers : 1 assistant guide) and porters (2 trekkers : 1 porter) including their food, accommodation, salary, equipment, transportation, and insurance
- Kathmandu to Beshishahar and Pokhara to Kathmandu transfers in private vehicle
- Beshishahar to Khudi in public jeep
- Duffel bag, sleeping bag, and down jacket for use during the trek
- Icicles Adventure T - shirt, trekking map and trip achievement certificate
- First aid medical kit
- TIMS and Annapurna Conservation Area Permit
- All government taxes & office service charge

PRICE EXCLUDES

- Nepal visa arrangement (more on Nepal Visa Information)
- International airfares
- Excess baggage charges
- Travel and rescue insurance
- Added night/s accommodation in Kathmandu or Pokhara because of early arrival, delayed departure, early return from mountain (due to any cause) than the programmed itinerary
- Lunch and dinner in Kathmandu or Pokhara (and also in the case of early return from mountain than the programmed itinerary)
- All kind of drinks (alcoholic, hot, or cold)
- Personal expenses such as phone calls, bar bills, laundry, battery recharge, bottle or boiled water, hot shower, extra porters, etc)
- Personal equipments and clothing
- Tips for guides and porters (tip is expected by the staff)

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ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Day 1: Arrival in Kathmandu airport (1,338 m/4,390 ft)

Welcome to Nepal! As you land at Kathmandu airport, finish your custom formalities (visa, etc.) and get to the airport waiting terminal, you will find our representative waiting to greet you. He/she will be holding Icicles Adventure Treks and Tour signboard and your name. You will be then transferred to your respective hotel in our private vehicle. Accommodation: Hotel.

Day 2: Kathmandu (1,338 m/4,390 ft): Sightseeing and Trek Preparation

After breakfast we start a guided tour to several medieval and spiritual sites in Kathmandu which are also listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites including the historic Durbar Square, the sacred Hindu temple of Pashupati Nath, the famous 'Monkey Temple' (Swayambhunath) and Buddhists shrine (BouddhaNath) which is one of the large Stupas in the world. Later after sightseeing program, we will introduce you with your trekking guide and have a small pre-trip meeting. You can also take an opportunity to hire/buy any last minute trekking equipment or bargain for your souvenirs at the many stores. You are advised to pack your things and be set up for your actual Everest base camp trekking adventure that will begin the next day. Accommodation: Hotel. Included Meal: B

Day 3: Drive Kathmandu to Beshishahar to Syange (1100/3600 ft)

We make an early departure from Kathmandu this morning for BesiSahar. It is a beautiful journey to the trek road head. We set off for Pokhara after breakfast. Driving today is adventurous and pleasant as it winds down hugging the mountain side through terraced fields. Following the side of Mahesh River we come to the Trishuli River. We follow Trisuli River side all the way up to Mugling where Trisuli River confluences with the Marshyangdi River. After crossing a bridge over Marshyangdi River we head further west to Pokhara. If you are on the right pane of your vehicle the journey today provides plenty of opportunity to view cultivated terraced fields, rivers, streams, green valleys, rocky gorges, farmlands and typical rural life of Nepal. We take lunch break in a restaurant along the way. Leaving Besishahar we drive up to Syange. On this drive, the scenery will impress right from the moment of leaving Besisahar. The jeep track follows the Masryangdi River upstream through gradually a narrowing and increasingly lush valley all the while with the water of the Masryangdi raging violently below. Weather permitting provides great views of Himalchuli (7893m) and Ngadichuli (7541m) who belong to the Manaslu Range of mountains. Driving Time: 7-8 hrs. Accommodation: Local lodge. Accommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 4: Trek start Syange to Dharapani (1,860m/6100 ft)

We start early after breakfast. A rising and falling trail leads to Chamje, after which we cross a suspension bridge and climb through oak forest. We will notice a dramatic change in the landscape today as the valley narrows to a very deep gorge, and cascading waterfalls as the one here across the valley are a common sight in the feature for the next few days. The trail then emerges into a level valley where 'Tal', the next village is situated at the foot of a grand waterfall (1700m). Further we walk ahead past some mani stones Just after Tal Village. The local custom is to walk on the left hand side of the Mani walls. We cross Marshangdi river over suspension bridges couple of times before reaching Dharapani. Walking Time: 6-7 hrs. OAccommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 5: Dharapani to Chame (2,710m/8890 ft)

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It is a very gentle climb from Dharapani to Bagarchap, here we will be rewarded by sight of Annapurna II (7937m) looking up the valley. As we continue through Danakyue and climb up to Temang one cannot help but stop and look back to enjoy the view of the Manaslu Range. You will notice a general change in the vegetation today to pine and fir. The trail is fairly level from here for about an hour until after emerging out into a clearing which has a couple of tea houses and fields. We then descend to cross a bridge and climbing out we pass through Thanchok Village with its apple orchards. We reach Koto in about thirty minutes from Thanchok village and another thirty minutes to Chame, the headquarter of Manang District. Walking Time: 5-6 hrs. Accommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 6: Chame to Pisang (3,300m/10824ft)

We spent the rest of the morning trekking through rich forest of blue pine and fir keeping alongside the river to Brathang. The old Brathang village used to be a Tibetan resistant camp fighting Chinese occupation of Tibet by making raids over the border. Today you see only an apple orchard with a couple of tea houses. We carry on walking through the forest, the trail clings on a cliff side for a while and as we cross the bridge, looking back the view of the huge rock face of Mui Tscho (Paunde Danda) is breathtaking rising about 1500m from the valley floor. After climbing steeply through the forest, there is a sudden change in the landscape as we enter the Upper Manang District. The valley becomes very broad and vegetation mainly pine, Juniper and berberis shrubs is very sparse. A beautiful and easy hour of walking in the shadows of Annapurna II brings us to Lower Pisang. By this point you would have trekked around to the north side of the Annapurnas and the views from here on are of Annapurna II and IV to the south and Pisang Peak and the Chulu East to the north. Walking Time: 5-6 hrs. Accommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 7: Pisang to Manang (3,540m/11611 ft)

Today we continue through the drier upper part of the Manang district, cut off from the full effect of the monsoon by the Annapurna Range. People of this region herd the yaks and raise crops for a part of the year. Leaving Pisang, we have alternate trails form the north and the south of the Marsyangdi River which meets up again at Mungji. The southern route by Hongde, with its airstrip at 3,325m, involves less climbing than the northern route via Ghyaru and Ngawal villages. For better views we take the northern route, i.e. through upper Pisang that follows the northern bank of the river. We come across a very picturesque village clinging on to a cliff side where the houses appear to be stacked on top of each other. Its Bragha village dominated by the oldest monastery of the region which is more than 500 years old. Upon reaching Manang, The rest of the day can be spent walking around the village and visiting the monastery and enjoying the view from the lodge and acclimatizing. Walking Time: 5-6 hrs. Accommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 8: Acclimatization Day at Manang Village

We spend a day acclimatizing in Manang. It is recommended to stay active and take short walk to higher altitude is suggested to get acclimatized with the altitude. The whole day we spend doing some fine day walks and viewing the magnificent sights around the village. The upcoming next two days will be very demanding and tiring trek for us with swift gain in altitude. We should never be too confident with the altitude and should always be watchful. Bodzo Gompa or Gangapurna Lake is worth visiting sites from acclimatization point of view. Manang village houses Himalayan Rescue Association. Volunteer western doctors work here during the trekking seasons helping educate trekkers and researching on Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). An altitude talk is held here every afternoon, which is

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definitely worthwhile attending. Walking Time: 3-4 hrs. Accommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 9: Manang to Kangshar

From Manang we head out through the western gates and then we follow path down to the river. We cross the river and continue on the south side of it through coniferous forest towards Khangsar. One section is across a steep and exposed scree slope. Cross the Khangsar Khola on the bridge below Khangsar and ascend the slope to the village. Walking Time: 3-4 hrs. Accommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 10: Kangshar to Tilicho Base camp (4150m/13612): 5-6 hrs

Continue from Khangsar on a large path. Pass a Gompa (monastery). The route ahead goes on a recently constructed path up towards a high ridge. At one point is an intersection. One path maintains the altitude, traversing the slopes towards a place where the valley is narrow; the other continues to ascend towards the line of the ridge. The former is the old path, and is much more difficult as it goes on really steep scree; the latter is the new path that goes a completely different way. Continue along the new path, reach a high crest, and descend on switch backs carved out through the scree slopes to a side valley of the main valley. At its bottom is a brook. On the other side of it is a building known as Tilicho Base Camp. Walking Time: 5-6 hrs. Accommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 11: Tilicho Base Camp to Tilicho Lake [4920m/16137ft]: 5 hours

From Tilicho Base Camp the path covers that route. We continue along the shore to a little plain. Leave the lake here and aim for a small saddle in the ridge above. The path is rather steep and there is plenty of lose scree and boulders. We reach first pass and descend to a valley on the other side. Following it upwards we step on to a flat glacier that has no crevasses and is safe. Following the glacier's left (south) side upwards. We leave it where an obvious saddle westwards is visible. As we reach a little lake, we continue ahead on a faint path, lose a little altitude, and then gain another saddle. On the other side one descends in to a small valley that turns south. Coming out of it one has reached the western shore of Tilicho Lake. On the left side the shores are guarded by broken ice and the sheer walls of Grande Barrier and Tilicho Peak. The Grande Barrier and Annapurna range of Himalayas meet at Mt. Khangsar Kang. French expedition team named it "Roc noir" means black rock. It is so steep that no snow can hold on it and it remains black without snow. Other side of Khangsar Kang is seen from Annapurna Base camp! We stroll around and enjoy this exceptionally pristine and magical site. Walking Time: 7-8 hrs. Accommodation: Tented camp. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 12: Tilicho Lake to Mesokanta La Pass to Yak Kharka (4,200m/13,776ft)

We start early as today is a real highlight day of our trip. We will be crossing the difficult Mesokanta La pass. Its possible that we feel more exhausted today as we are ascending to above 5000m. We start from the lake beach making about 300 m climb through the loose scree to a cathedral guarded by the fluttering prayer flags, then comes long section of flat snowfield to cross to the far end of the lake known as Eastern Pass. Dhaulagiri appears for the first time ahead of us, peeking up quietly on the far horizon initially, though it soon comes to dominate the view. A gentle rise brings us to the top of a rocky knoll at the far end of the cathedral. A short drop takes us to the base of another scree slope. The path traverses upwards across, as Tilicho Lake appears again briefly between mountainsides behind us. Another short ascent up a snow slope brings us to the start of the pass, which involves about half a mile of

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traversing a rocky gradient. A rock tower and a somewhat incompatible signpost to Jomsom marks the Mesokanto La itself. It's renowned as one of the difficult passes in the Annapurnas because the far side is covered in ice and awfully steep. Not only you have to cut steps to make your way through, you need ropes too in more icy conditions. The ice section only lasts for about two hundred vertical metres, and then we're onto firm ground again. As we reach the Kharka, we set up our tents and give time to rest for our shaking legs. Walking Time: 7-8 hrs. Accommodation: Tented camp. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 13: Yak Kharka to Jomsom (2700m/8856 ft)

Today we are at Kali Gandaki valley. We descend to Jomsom via the beautiful village as our last day trek. We walk through juniper forest and bushes those give nice smell until top of Thini village. In Thini all the fields are full of greenery of wheat, barley, potato & vegetable etc. We could view clearly the lower Mustang valley including Marpha, Syang, Dhumba, Thini, old & new Jomsom etc. Walking Time: 4-5 hrs. Accommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 14: Morning flight to Pokhara. Sightseeing around Pokhara

A 30-minute morning flight takes us to Pokhara from Jomsom. Once we arrive at Pokhara airport, we then drive to the hotel. In the afternoon we will have a sightseeing tour around Pokhara valley, which covers Fewa Lake, Devi's water fall, Museum, Tibetan refugee settlement and Gupteshower cave, etc. Overnight at a hotel. Flight Time: 30 minutes. Accommodation: Local lodge. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 15: Contingency day (sightseeing in Pokhara if everything went smooth)

The day today is a complimentary day just in case Jomsom to Pokhara flight get delayed or cancelled because Jomsom to Pokhara flight is highly affected by the mountain weather. If everything went smooth as planned, you can use this day for sightseeing around Pokhara, which is a nice city to relax after a long trek. Accommodation: City Hotel. Included Meal: B, L, D

Day 16: Drive back to Kathmandu

We drive back to Kathmandu today. Try to get left pane of your vehicle to enjoy the greeneries, mountains, river gorges, villages and terraces during the drive. In the evening, we will have a farewell dinner in a traditional Nepalese restaurant with cultural performances. Driving Time: 6 hrs. Accommodation: City Hotel. Included Meal: B
Note: You have the option to extend your trip with an extra day at Pokhara (Pokhara is a beautiful city to relax after a long trek), Chitwan jungle safari, rafting adventure, Bunjee Jumping, Kayaking, Canoeing, Kathmandu valley shopping tour, Bhaktapur and Patan sightseeing, scenic Everest flight, mountain biking and other activities.

Day 17: Depart Kathmandu-Airport drop

Your Tilicho Lake and round Annapurna Circuit Trek concludes today. Our airport representative will drop you at the international airport in Kathmandu for your departure flight from Nepal. We hope beautiful Nepal, the magnificent Himalayan sceneries, and unique cultural experience you got along your Annapurna Circuit Trek will stay in your memory lifelong and you will go back home with a sense of achievement. Included Meal: B