

2018

My Everest Base Camp Trek



Kevin Miller

basecampchallenge.co.uk

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My Everest Adventure

Saturday Nov 3rd

I was feeling very nervous inside, not about the trek itself but about being away from family. I felt very sad when they left but once checked in, all was ok. Had a meal with Duncan, Debbie, Paul, Caroline and Gary.

The flight was boring and I didn't get any sleep.

Mumbai was really quick but we did see a massive amount of slums.

On the flight to Kathmandu I got a window seat and as we approached Kathmandu I got to see EVEREST.



Sunday Nov 4th

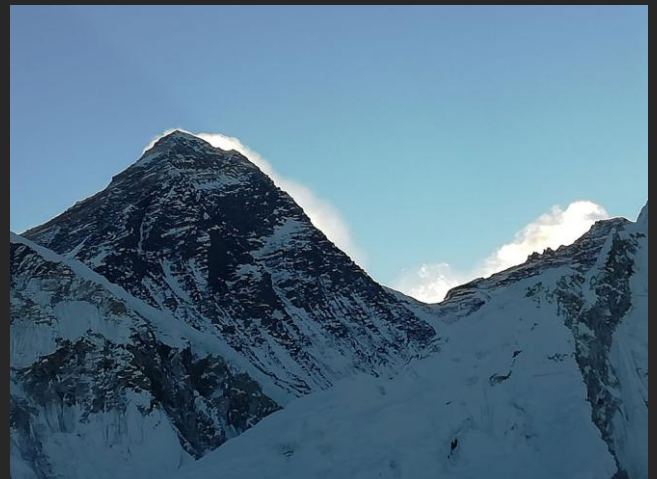
Arrived in Kathmandu at 11.15am. The hotel was OK (the Marshyangdi) but Kathmandu itself is a horrible dirty place so I can't wait to leave for Lukla. Had a meal with the group and our guides plus Jo our group leader who is an amazing person as summiting Everest is on her CV! The meal was a traditional meal and there was a dancing act. Time for bed but also had the trots!



Monday November 5th

I had a fair night's sleep, had a little breakfast but my guts still weren't great. We went for a day trip around Kathmandu. Well, what an experience that was. We visited various temples etc, we had lunch in a roof top restaurant with an amazing view of Europe's largest Stompa. Then it was back on the coach into a nightmare rush hour so we got back later than planned which meant a bit of a rush to get our bags packed and weighed for our flight to Lukla. Jo and Lisa took us to an outdoor restaurant where I had my last meat meal until our return.

Early to bed at 10pm.



Tuesday November 6th

Well it was up early for breakfast and then on to the coach for 7.30am and onto the airport for our flight to Lukla and the real start of our challenge.

I was on the first flight to Lukla along with Duncan, Debbie, Caroline, Paul, Jo, Helen, Maureen, Keith and Mick. We got on the bus to board the flight, drove to the plane and then sat on the bus for an hour and a half due to busy air traffic. Once we boarded the flight it was out of this world. It was a true one-off experience. The flight was very bumpy and the landing was better than any theme park ride!

Lukla is a magical place. Once we got off the plane we all had a group hug. Our bags were given to our porters and we were taken to a lovely teahouse to wait for the rest of the group who were on the next flight.

The flights in and out of Lukla don't turn off their engines; they unload and reload within moments (amazing).

The second flight was delayed even longer so we had lunch in the teahouse. Veg noodles and lemon tea. The others arrived about 2.30pm. They had a quick lunch and we left for Phakding, about a 3 hour trek which meant that due to the flight delays we would be trekking in the dark (exciting). We arrived at Phakding at 7pm.

Stepping inside the teahouse was amazing. We were really doing this amazing challenge in the Himalayas! The food was excellent (dal bati, tomato soup). The rooms were very very basic. The loos were gross. Sleep was not bad but we were not drinking massive amounts of water.



Wednesday 7th November

Well, what a day. So we left our teahouse at Phakding (2610 alt) at 7.30am after a great breakfast of porridge, omlette, toast and marmite.

Once hitting the path it was busy with yaks, porters, guides and trekkers of all nationalities. Today was a very tough day. We were aiming to reach Namche Bazaar (3440 meters) but to get there we had 11 km to cover gaining 800 meters but before that we had to cross 6 suspension bridges including the famous Hillary Bridge. Today we also got our first glimpse of the main event – EVEREST. It was amazing and it brought a tear to my eye and a lump in my throat. Then after 7 hours of hard dusty trekking we reached Namche Bazaar. That also brought a tear to my eyes as we walked past the amazing Stompa and prayer wheels.

We had reached our teahouse – Hotel Kalapatter) where we would be staying for 2 nights for acclimatisation days. The hotel is good, the whole group happy as they had hot showers and proper toilets. The group had really bonded now. They are a great mixed lot.

We had a walk around the town after dropping our bags in the rooms. Tea was tomato soup and fried potatoes and egg. Not risking spice at the moment! After our 6.30pm tea we all sat chatting until about 9.30pm then bed. Height not affecting me yet.





Thursday 8th November

Breakfast with porridge and egg on toast then off on an acclimatisation walk up to the Everest View Hotel (3840 meters). It was tough going but no ill effects so all good. The view of Everest from here was amazing as was the lemon tea and apple pie. Then it was back down to Namache for a lunch of veg noodles. We then went around shopping and to coffee shops.

I then had a hot shower (500 rts) it was amazing with fresh clothes and PANTS! For tea it was potato rosti and eggs then we played cards, chess and piss taking. Caroline didn't join us as she was really feeling the altitude - as are a few the others.

Friday November 9th

We were sad to leave our fairly comfy teahouse but with a 7 hour trek ahead of us we all stayed positive. We passed an elderly gentleman with a collection box for maintaining the trail. He was on the Tenzing and Hillary Expedition.

We reached our first coffee stop mid morning. Caroline was struggling still and the decision was made that she would be returning home. We were all very upset but the show goes on and we all rallied around Paul her husband, as they had made a pact that he would carry on.

For lunch we had noodles and rice at a lovely teahouse by the Dudh Kosi River (Milk River). Jo our leader gave me her rice as I seemed to have the appetite of a horse! After lunch we then had a 2 hour 400 meter trek up a valley side to Tengboche. It was fucking brutal! Blazing sun, dust, yak trains and very very steep but at the very top the weather changed and it was suddenly freezing but luckily we were only minutes from our teahouse which was a result.

Once checked in and bags were in our rooms, I amazingly got a phone signal so rang mum and dad and Kate - HAPPY DAYS. Tea was good, tomato soup, egg and potatoes. We then sat around drinking hot chocolate and having a chat. I wasn't looking forward to going to bed as our rooms were freezing (no heating).

Sleep was good.



Saturday November 10th

Breakfast was NOT pleasant. Porridge and cold omlette and toast. We left the teahouse around 8am on a long 7 hour trek to Dingboche. A couple of the group are starting to feel it but the show must go on. Today's morning trek was pretty uneventful. The scenery has changed massively today. We have lost all the trees; it is just far more barren (rocks and dust) and a lot lot colder.

Lunch today was amazing in the most beautiful teahouse that just appeared from nowhere, then the final 2 hr trek to Dingboche. There were helicopters everywhere today. Freezing mist followed us into Dingboche. Our teahouse is at the top of the village. To say the least it was BASIC and COLD but hey I signed up for this life time adventure.

Mine and George's room had ice on the inside of the windows.

Tonight's dinner was the first meal I really didn't like. We all are feeling it now, so we all had an early night after a couple of games of doodle and cards.

Had a chat with mum and dad and wished mum a happy birthday. Spoke to Jade and Kate. I'm really missing home now.





Sunday November 11th

Had a fair night's sleep but woke about every 2 hours as altitude starts to take its toll. We are now at 4350 metres. Today is a rest/acclimatisation day so after breakfast we left for a trek, taking us to around 4800 metres. At this height at 11am we held a 2 minutes silence for Remembrance Sunday. We then trekked back down for lunch. On the way down I had bad tummy pains. Once down I had a very upset stomach - hopefully a one-off.

We had a great lunch then just chilled for the rest of the afternoon (really missing home). I just want to get going now. Jo our group leader gave a talk about Everest and her summit expedition. It was very interesting. She is truly an incredible lady.

For dinner it was egg, chips and tomato soup then a few more games of doodle and the whole group had an early night at 8 pm.

Monday November 12th

I had a good night's sleep and only woke about 4 times, once for a pee. Sleeping at altitude really affects your sleep. You wake up gasping for air plus you have really odd dreams which are quite frightening at times. We had breakfast of porridge, toast and eggs and left the teahouse at 7.30am for Lobuche about 7 - 8 hours away. We now entered the Khumbu Valley heading towards the Khumbu Glacier and the main target - Everest Base Camp. We had an early lunch then a brutal trek uphill to the climber's memorial ground - it was very humbling. Once we left there the scenery changed dramatically, almost like a moonscape and the temperature dropped massively. The size of the mountains now because we are walking among world cannot describe it. We arrived at the most surreal village in the middle of nowhere - Lobuche. The teahouse sit-on toilets were a real bonus in this country. The rooms were freezing but the main living area of the teahouse was toasty warm. We all had an early night as we were leaving at 6am so a 5.15am breakfast. It was freezing at that time but soon warmed up as trekking was quite difficult at this altitude (over 4000 mts)



Tuesday November 13th

We left Lobuche at 6am freezing cold as we were aiming to reach Gorakshep about mid morning and we got there at about 11am. We put on extra layers and had a quick bite to eat and left for Everest Base Camp which is about a 3 hour trek to reach our main target.

When I arrived at base camp the place was so so emotional. It was indescribable. I sent a few video blogs and took loads of photos. We spent about 30 minutes there. By the time we left the temperature was already starting to plummet. We arrived back to a lovely warm teahouse apart from the bedrooms which had ice inside the windows. After tea (egg, chips and tomato soup) we all turned in for the night as there was a chance to trek up Kala Patthar to watch the sunrise over Everest but we would have to leave at 4.30am so up at 4am. Me and ten others took up the chance, 2 others asked but were told they were not fit health wise. I slept really badly waking up constantly and had really weird dreams and nightmares.



Wednesday November 14th

We meet downstairs in the main tearoom at 4.15am for a quick coffee before leaving for our epic hike. Three guides came with us. It's about a 2 - 2.5 hour trek to the summit and me, Gary, Paul, Callam and Keith were in the front group. We tag our guide closely.

It was unbelievably steep and it was freezing. I can honestly say it was the most brutal thing I have ever done both mentally and physically. It was at an altitude of 5643 mts (18500 ft) and a temperature of - 30.

It was amazing to see the sun rise over Everest, really unforgettable. We were told we could only stay there for 5 - 6 minutes. We were so cold we could hardly talk. We could see the need to get down as we were starting to lose feeling in our hands and feet. Once down the feeling of relief and achievement was amazing. Then it was back to the teahouse to pack our bags, have breakfast and play catch up with the rest of the group who had left 1.5 hours ago so the race was on. We had Bric, our guide who was up for the chase so the race was to retrace our steps. It was great fun as we were not dropping to a lower altitude so we were full of energy. We caught our group just before lunch and we all trekked down to Pheriche a small village at about 4800 mts. There was not a lot there but the teahouse was lovely and the food excellent.

Thursday November 15th

We rose at 7am for breakfast of porridge and egg and toast at 7.30am. It was freezing. When we left it was a very windy bleak place and about an hour's trek to come across our original route up the Khumbu valley so we started to retrace our steps towards Lukla. Just after lunch we reached Dingboche, the same teahouse as we stopped at on our way up the Everest base camp. We were all very worried as our doctor Lia had been taken ill en route and the guides and Jo returned to help her. She eventually made it to the teahouse and she was taken straight to a bedroom to rest. The afternoon is taken up by a Monastery tour conducted by Ash our head guide then off to a local bakery for hot chocolate and cake. Then it was back to the teahouse for our evening meal, doddle and bed at about 9pm.

Friday November 16th

Another early morning start with a 2 hour downhill trek with our target today being Namache bazaar. We are all looking forward to reaching Namache as the teahouse we are staying in is the same once we stopped in on our way up. Also Namache is an amazing town, so vibrant. On reaching the Kala Patthar teahouse we had lunch then hot showers and fresh clothes. We also had the chance to have some laundry done (4 hours). We all went shopping for gifts to take home. For the evening meal I had steak which was water buffalo. Doctor Lia travelled today's section on a pony. She said it was terrifying. We all went to bed about 9pm. I personally had my best night's sleep since starting my adventure and only woke up once for a wee.

journey back to Kathmandu arriving at the hotel at about 5pm. We then went out drinking and eating and had a brilliant night.

Saturday November 17th

We all had a relative lie in as breakfast was not until 8am and we were not leaving until 9.30am. A chance to buy last minute gifts. Our destination today is Phakding and the group is not looking forward to staying there as we stayed there on the first night after landing at Lukla.

Today we also returned over many rope bridges including the famous Hillary Bridge. Today was hard work as we were all starting to feel tired as we had now been going for days on end. On arriving at Phakding we were all surprised how busy and vibrant it was. We had totally misjudged this place as en route we had arrived after dark and left before dawn. After putting our bags in our rooms we had a couple of hours before dinner so about 10 of us went to the Irish Bar and played table football! Some had a few beers; a few of us only had coffee. Then it was back for dinner which was not too bad. We then all chatted, played card etc until about 9.30pm - a really late night. A few returned to the bars.

Sunday November 18th

We left Phakding early and it was a straightforward trek back to Lukla stopping for coffee en route but arrived to find everything had been delayed due to fog for the last couple of days. This was not good and we spent the night in Lukla all feeling a little fed up now but had a celebration and tip night then early to bed.

Monday November 19th

We woke up to be told to stay at the teahouse as there were still no flights due to the fog. We were all getting really fed up but Jo was hatching a plan. No flights so Jo informed us that hopefully in the morning she would get us on a flight to a little airstrip lower down the mountain so we went off to bed in good spirits.

Tuesday November 20th

We were up very early to get to the airport in Lukla which was in walking distance. After a slight delay we reached Lukla for this tiny airstrip down lower. The take off was so exciting and 20 minutes later we were on minibuses and coaches for a 6 hour very scary journey back to Kathmandu arriving at the hotel at about 5pm. We then went out drinking and eating and had a brill night.

Wednesday November 21st

Up very early to catch the flight home going via New Delhi to Heathrow. I slept most of the flight. We said our goodbyes in the baggage reclaim. Kate, Jade and James all met me in arrivals and it was amazing to see them again.



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