arnoldcoster expeditions

Ama Dablam

SW Ridge Expedition 2026



USD 9500 PER PERSON

10TH OCTOBER, 2027

Fixed Departure Date

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

The expedition is a professionally-led non-guided expedition for experienced mountaineers who want to work as part of a team to tackle the mountain. We say non guided because our leaders and Sherpa team working with you will not be able to protect your every move and you should have suitable experience to enable you to be relatively self-sufficient and willing to move between camps unsupervised but with the support of our leaders and Sherpa team. On the summit push everybody will be assisted by his own Sherpa, but climbing Ama Dablam will always be a serious undertaking

Ama Dablam
PEAK NAME

6812 M
MAX. ELEVATION

30 DAYS
DURATION

NEPAL
COUNTRY



Detailed Itinerary

DAY 1 : Arrival at Kathmandu

Upon arrival at Kathmandu. Transfer to hotel close to the famous, bustling Thamel district of Kathmandu , a place with lovely gardens where one can relax

DAY 2 : Kathmandu

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 3: Fly to Lukla (2800 M) - Phakding (2610 M)

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 4: Phakding (2610 M) - Namche Bazaar (3440 M)

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 5: Rest at Namche Bazaar (3440 M)

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 6: Namche Bazaar - Pangboche (3930 M)

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 7: Pangboche - Ama Dablam Base Camp (4450 M)
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 8: Rest at Ama Dablam Base Camp (4450 M)
Another acclimatisation day spent exploring the alpine meadows and views around camp, packing gear for higher on the mountain and relaxing.

DAY 9-25: Climbing Period
Ascent of Ama Dablam, South West Ridge. See section entitled 'The Climbing Day'.

DAY 26: Return to Namche Bazaar
Today we walk back to "civilization" and Namche offers the pleasures of a small Alpine Town

DAY 27: Namche Bazaar - Lukla
Today is a long day of walking back to Lukla. First mainly down, but then 2 hr before Lukla a long slow slope up again. This is what we call "Nepali flat", a little bit up and a little bit down

DAY 28: Lukla - 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 29: Spare Day
Spare day in case of bad weather

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

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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.



Arnold Coster

Expedition Leader

Arnold Coster is a relaxed, considerate and thoughtful person; an expert leader and a highly-skilled professional who specializes in getting people to the summit and back down in 100 percent safety. He is a good communicator, a great motivator, and has a positive attitude. Arnold is at home in any terrain, with any kind of group.

Arnold Coster, has more as a decade of experience in the Himalaya's and led over forty five expeditions. His Sherpa's are some off the strongest in Nepal!

Join Arnold Coster on his Ama Dablam expedition. His experience is amongst the best in the world, combined with a very high success rate. Where there is a will, I will aim to provide a way!

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.

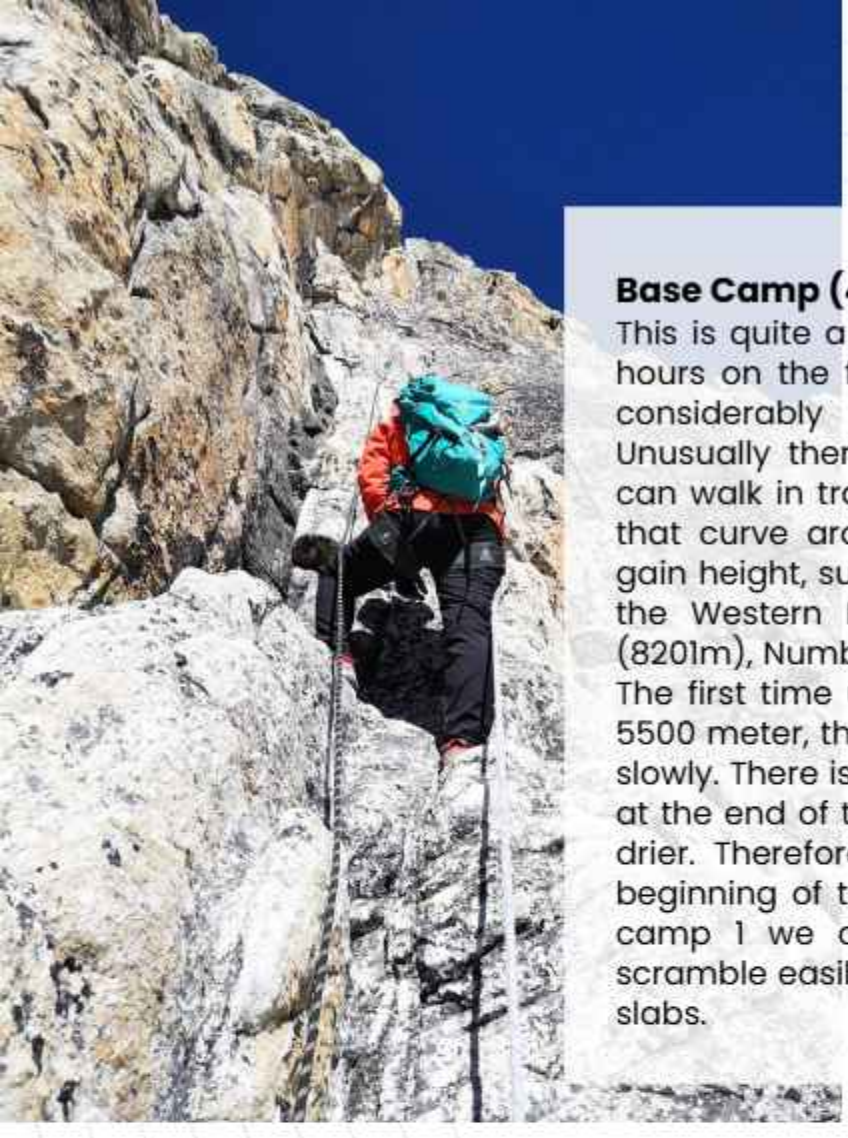
Participation Statement



Recommended Previous Experience

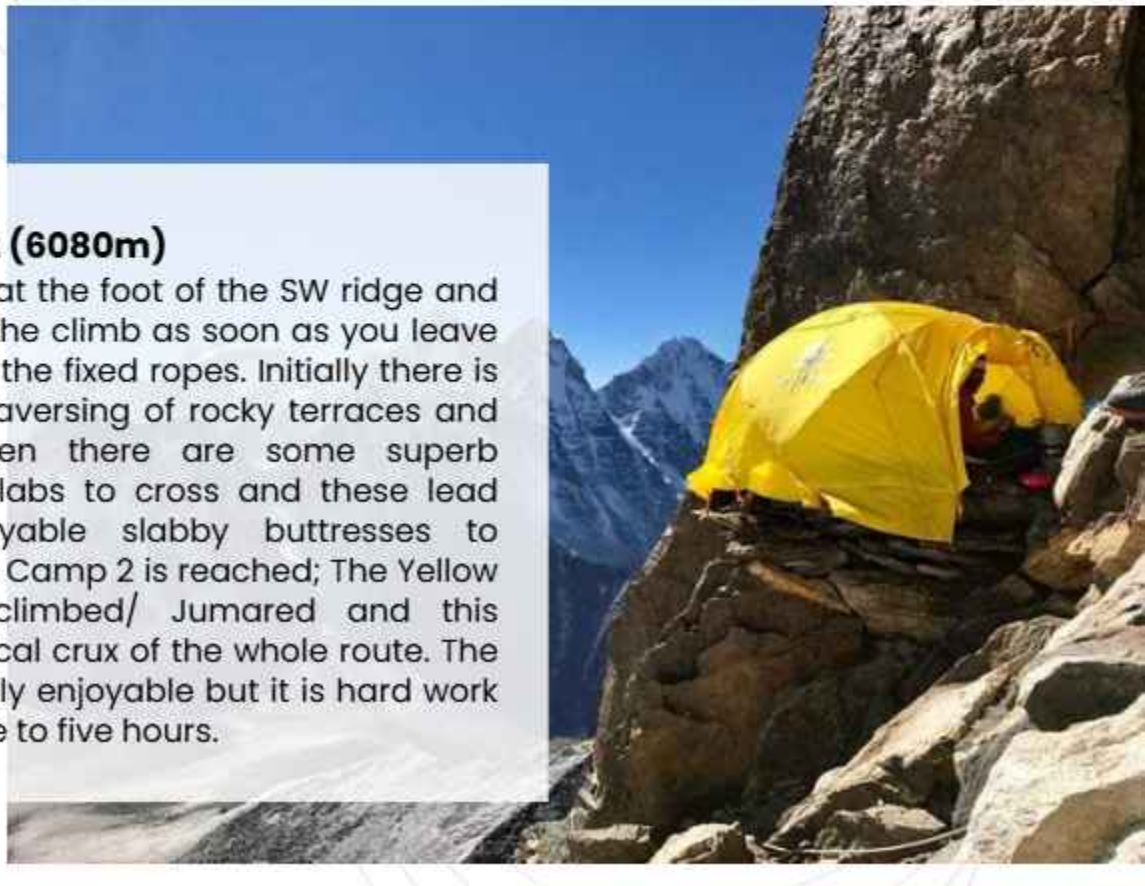
Ama Dablam's SW ridge is quite technical and people should be comfortable with operating on steep ground in exposed situations. There are sections of steep rock which are usually climbed with an ascender on fixed ropes and some experience of this before the expedition will prove beneficial. To move efficiently 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.



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 thisaltitude. 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.

Communication

Arnold Coster issues every member and Sherpa's with a handheld VHF radio, supported by high powered base sets at BC. Base Camp has his own internet provider: "Everest Link" and members can buy WIFI according to their consumptions

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. 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 Arrangement

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

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.

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. 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 $250 for this. Climbing Sherpa's usually get a "summit Bonus" for a job well done, expect to pay $850 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 in the beginning and 2 nights 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 1 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-tech equipment).
- Personal medical supplies and personal use of communication equipment.
- Tips and Sherpa Bonus.
- Additional Helicopter flights.
- Anything of a personal Nature

Booking & Payment Process

At Arnold Coster, we would like to talk to the climber personally before we finalize any applications for the expeditions. We want to make sure that we understand each other completely before we ask for any commitments.

info@arnoldcoster.com

If you would like to book a place on this expedition, you can do so securely by requesting our application form, over the phone or by sending an email on

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