

## Stok Kangri - Expedition Information Pack

### Pre-Expedition Preparation:

In this document, you will find detailed information on fitness & training, the necessary equipment, tourist visas, travel insurance, medical advice, temperatures & climate, altitude considerations, spending money and tips. Please review this information in full and prepare yourself for this fantastic adventure! We have also included information about India, an FAQ and the expedition itinerary with details on what's included and excluded.

### Fitness & Training:

Stok Kangri is a demanding trek with an average of six hours of walking per day, except on the summit day which involves roughly ten hours of walking. As with all our 'demanding' expeditions we expect participants to have a very good level of fitness. Although this is not a technical climb, there is some scrambling on summit day. If there is snow or ice on the ground, you may need to use crampons and be roped to one of our local guides. For many people, it will be the hardest physical challenge of their lives. It is not essential but we recommend that all participants should have previous experience of camping and trekking at high altitude (>4000m). The group moves at a comfortable pace and nobody is ever left behind. Nevertheless, it is your responsibility to contact us if you have any concerns regarding your level of fitness, health or ability to complete the trek. We strongly recommend that you read the expedition itinerary in full before signing up to this challenge.

Everybody is different, so we cannot recommend a specific pre-expedition fitness programme. However please remember the fitter you are the more you will enjoy the expedition.

As a guide to how fit you should be to attempt this trek we have decided to give you some measurable training goals. With an 8kg rucksack you should be able to complete the following routes from start to finish in the following time frame. Don't worry if you cannot complete the walks in the suggested time at first, your fitness will improve rapidly by undertaking cardiovascular exercise 3 to 4 times per week.

Walk	Route	Time
Carrauntoohill (Kerry)	Caher (Coomboughra) Route	6 hrs
Croagh Patrick (Mayo)	Main Route	3/4 hrs
Galtymore (Tipperary)	Black Road Route	4/5 hrs
Lugnaquilla (Wicklow)	Camara Hill Route	4/5 hrs
Spink (Wicklow)	Looped Walk Route	3/4 hrs

Please do not attempt these walks alone. You or someone in your party should have walking experience and the necessary navigational skills. If you would like to hire a guide to take you on one of these walks please contact us to be put in touch with a qualified mountain leader.

Although hillwalking is best, please remember any type of cardiovascular training will help you prepare for this expedition. Focus your training on building endurance fitness by completing long, slow and low intensity training sessions rather than fast and short sessions. Build the distance and duration of your training sessions slowly as overtraining often leads to injury. In the three months prior to departure try to include two long training days in a row to replicate walking for continuous days on the expedition.

If you have any old injuries, weak joints, soft tissue injuries or any other issues which affect your mobility we suggest you address these issues now. It goes without saying that if you are experiencing

discomfort or pain during short training sessions the problem has the potential to become more serious when exercising for long durations on continuous days. Please visit your physiotherapist in an effort to address the issue and strengthen the weakened area. If you have low muscle mass in your legs we suggest that you add strength training to your schedule. Muscle mass protects our joints and this is very important especially on long descents.

If you are buying any new equipment for this expedition such as a rucksack, boots, base layers etc., be sure to use it before departure. All gear should be well broken in to avoid blisters and chafing!

The itinerary has been designed with correct acclimatisation in mind with no big jumps in elevation. While on the expedition you will be encouraged to take it easy, eat well and stay very hydrated. Very hydrated means drinking between three and five litres of water per day depending on how much you sweat. Drinking three or more litres in a day is much harder than it sounds. We would recommend people practice drinking a large amount of water. Try drinking from a 500ml water bottle and see how many times you can refill it in a day. In our experience, it is those who cannot stay well hydrated that run into problems at altitude. Although your ability to withstand high altitudes is not directly related to your physical fitness levels, a good level of fitness will certainly assist in your general stamina.

It is not uncommon for people to encounter stomach problems on expeditions. This is due to a number of reasons such as poor hygiene, change in diet, a low immune system and poorly prepared food. We do everything we can to make sure food and water is safe for you to consume. It is very important that you wash your hands before eating and after going to the toilet. We recommend people eat as healthily as possible and take a multivitamin supplement and probiotics for one month prior to departure and during the expedition. This will help you adjust to changes in your diet and keep you healthy throughout the expedition.

**Earth's Edge Pre-Departure Weekends:**

We hold pre-departure weekends prior to all expeditions. Attending your Pre-Departure weekend is compulsory as they form a key part to preparing you for your upcoming adventure! You will meet an expedition leader, expedition doctor and your fellow adventurers! An experienced expedition leader will be giving a full expedition brief, leading two training hikes and sharing expert advice on all aspects of the expedition. These events are also a lot of fun and they take place in Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, which is a stunning location!

**Equipment**

The following is what we recommend you take, and is a guideline of what to bring on this expedition. You are responsible for having the necessary personal equipment you need for this trek. When you sign up to an Earth's Edge expedition you are entitled to a loyalty card with our equipment partner; Great Outdoors. Great Outdoors have an excellent range of expedition equipment, very knowledgeable staff and are 100% Irish owned. The loyalty card entitles you to a 15% discount until the day your expedition departs and 10% discount thereafter.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST	
Walking boots. If you are buying new boots for this trip please ensure they are well broken in before departure. Few things will make you more miserable during the trek than blisters.	
12 point crampons that will fit a standard walking boot rather than a mountaineering boot. The Grivel GR 10 or Black Diamond Contact Crampon are recommended.	
Runners or sandals (to wear in transit & around camp).	

Mid-weight hiking socks x 3. At least three pairs, some people choose to bring a pair of socks for each day of trekking.	
Lightweight liner socks (for summit night).	
Underwear, we recommend you bring enough so you are comfortable at all times. Synthetic rather than cotton underwear is advisable.	
Shorts x 1 (knee length or below).	
Lightweight trousers x 1.	
Synthetic/wool/silk long johns (for night time use and summit night).	
Waterproof trousers (N.B. make sure the trousers have zips to the knee at least).	
Long sleeve base layer x 2 (silk, wool, or synthetic).	
Short sleeve base layer x 2 (silk, wool, or synthetic).	
Mid-weight fleece x 2.	
A down jacket. It must be heavy weight with a hood (at least 600 grams in weight).	
Waterproof jacket.	
A fleece hat to wear in the mornings and evenings.	
A balaclava/a buff.	
Sunglasses (category 3).	
A sun hat with a wide brim to cover the face and neck.	
A pair of lightweight wool or synthetic liner gloves.	
A pair of down mitts.	
Walking poles.	
Rucksack: This is a small rucksack (30 to 35 litres) to carry the equipment you will need while trekking such as your camera, spare jacket, waterproof jacket, water bottle and packed lunch.	
Duffel bag (90 litres) or large rucksack to carry your equipment while trekking. We recommend you use something strong and sturdy as this bag will be carried by the support team.	
Dry bags (if either your day bag or duffel bag don't have sufficient waterproofing and to separate your equipment in your bags).	
Water bottles (2 x 1 litre nalgenes) & water bladder (2 litre). You must have the capacity to carry at least three litres of water while walking.	
A warm sleeping bag (comfort rating of -15°C or lower).	
Sun cream at least factor 30.	
SPF lip balm.	
Insect repellent, deet based products are best.	
Hand sanitiser. You need to have enough supplies for the duration of your expedition.	
Toiletries, N.B as little as possible, if you are travelling with friends try to share toiletries. * Wet wipes and a nail brush are very useful.	
Personal first aid kit. You need to have enough supplies for the duration of your expedition. We recommend you carry the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehydration salts</li> <li>• Plasters</li> <li>• Compeed</li> <li>• Paracetamol</li> <li>• Imodium</li> <li>• Motilium</li> <li>• Throat lozenges</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nasal spray</li> <li>• Decongestant such as Sudafed</li> <li>• Antibiotics suitable to treat traveller's diarrhoea <i>Azithromycin or something with similar coverage would be the most suitable antibiotic, please consult your doctor for up-to-date advice. The expedition medic will have a full medical kit to deal with issues of a more serious nature.</i></li> </ul>	
<p>Personal medication. Please carry any medication you are currently taking on a regular basis such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asthma inhalers</li> <li>• Nutritional supplements</li> <li>• Blood pressure tablets</li> </ul> <p>If you suffer or have suffered from any skin condition, bring appropriate creams such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canesten</li> <li>• Zovirax</li> <li>• Anusol</li> </ul> <p>Hydrocortisone 1%</p>	
Small towel for washing.	
Personal snacks; although sufficient food is supplied throughout the trek you need to bring your own supply of high energy snacks for the expedition. Bring snacks you enjoy eating such as sweets, energy bars & chocolate.	
Headtorch with spare batteries.	
A spare set of clothes to wear after you finish the expedition.	
Photocopies of your passport & travel insurance policy.	
Two passport photos.	
Your vaccination booklet.	
<b>OPTIONAL ITEMS</b>	
Diamox (tablet form not capsules); if you have decided to take it. For more information about Diamox its uses and side effects please refer to the information on AMS and Diamox in this document.	
We ensure that all drinking water provided to you is treated correctly but you may still wish to bring your own personal supply of tablets/drops for water purification such as iodine or chlorine. Powdered fruit juice can be used to disguise the taste of the purification.	
A sleeping bag liner (This is not essential but it helps to keep your sleeping bag clean and adds an extra season).	
Thermarest (roll mat will be provided).	
Ear plugs.	
For glasses/contact wearers we advise bringing both glasses & contact lenses. Daily disposable lenses rather than monthlies are highly recommended.	
A camera.	
A book and/or writing paper.	
Hand warmer sachets.	

**Tourist Visas:**

At the time of writing, single entry visas are required by citizens of IRE, UK, AUS, NZ, USA, CAN – other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. Please contact your local consular office for particular information regarding travel from your country. Visa requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure. Allow plenty of time to obtain your visa. We will send all participants a visa help sheet to guide you through the process.

**Travel Insurance:**

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have sufficient personal travel insurance for this expedition. Your policy must provide cover for; a) medical injury or sickness b) trekking up to 6,153 metres (c) helicopter evacuation in an emergency situation, and d) repatriation to country of residence. You must declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your insurers and ensure you receive written confirmation that any pre-existing medical conditions are fully insured. We advise you to obtain travel insurance as soon as you book that will cover you for unforeseeable circumstances, such as illness or injury that might result in you not being able to take part in your expedition. We recommend Campbell Irvine for your travel insurance requirements as their policies cover a, b, c & d as above and include cancellation cover. To contact Campbell Irvine call [+44 844 826 2722](tel:+448448262722) or go to their website [www.campbellirvinedirect.com/earthsedge](http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/earthsedge).

**Vaccinations & Prophylaxis:**

We are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health directly. We recommend consulting your GP or The Travel Health Clinic ([www.travelhealth.ie](http://www.travelhealth.ie)) for the most up to date medical advice. When you sign up for this event we will email you specific advice supplied to us by the Travel Health Clinic which details what is required for this destination.

**Medical:**

Before departure you will be required to complete an extensive medical questionnaire. It is for your own safety that we require you to disclose as much detail about your medical history as possible. The information you supply is treated with the strictest confidence. We will do our best to accommodate everyone on this expedition, but we do reserve the right to refuse participation if we feel your safety or that of the group may be compromised. All participants on Earth's Edge expeditions are required to have a medical form completed by their own doctor. We recommend you do this at the same time you see your doctor for travel vaccines (if required). These measures are put in place for the safety of all participants on the trek.

**Temperatures & Climate:**

Temperatures on the expedition may vary from 0 to 30 degrees during the day and -20 to 10 degrees at night. It's best to be prepared for lower temperatures due to wind chill or the weather turning bad. Usually the days are hot and the nights are cold. You should be ready for inclement weather at all times as the weather can change rather quickly at high altitude. For accurate weather information please review these two websites;

Mountain Forecasts: [www.mountain-forecast.com/](http://www.mountain-forecast.com/)

Norwegian Meteorological Institute: [www.yr.no](http://www.yr.no)

**Altitude Considerations:**

The human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of barometric pressures and there is plenty of oxygen even at the highest point of this expedition. However, the process of adaptation or acclimatisation does take time and the most important rule is to gain height slowly. Keeping well hydrated is also a huge factor in avoiding AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness). AMS is brought on by lower

oxygen levels at higher altitudes. Symptoms include breathlessness, headache, poor sleep, nausea & dizziness. AMS is treated simply by not ascending to higher elevations or in more severe cases descending to lower elevations, where in most cases the symptoms are quickly relieved. This itinerary has been designed to minimise the chances of you getting altitude sickness. Our guides are highly experienced in these matters and will be able to give you good advice to help minimise any temporary discomfort that you might experience. If you have suffered serious problems at altitude before, you should seek the advice of your doctor or a specialist. Please note it is common for most people to experience mild headaches on the summit day of this expedition. Always keep your guide informed on how you are feeling.

**Diamox:**

Diamox (Acetazolamide) is a carbonic anhydrase inhibitor. In simple terms Diamox causes the kidneys to excrete more bicarbonate which causes the blood to become more acidic. Acidifying the blood stimulates ventilation, which increases the amount of oxygen in the blood which reduces the chances of getting AMS. We recommend all participants, especially those who have had AMS in the past, to take Diamox prophylactically (as a preventative) on Stok Kangri, starting on the first day of trekking. Current guidelines suggest 125 mg twice per day (in tablet form not capsules). You should try taking Diamox for two days at some stage prior to departing Ireland to ensure you don't suffer any of the more serious side effects. Numbness and tingling fingers and toes are common but in some cases users can suffer from nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea. If you experience any of the latter three side-effects we would advise against using Diamox. Always consult and follow the advice of your own doctor about Diamox or any other medication.

**Summit Day Policy:**

Our goal on this expedition is for the entire group to reach the summit and return safely. Due to the difficulty of the summit day on this mountain and the importance of maintaining a good guide to guest ratio, it is essential we attempt the summit with a strong team. Any guests who are deemed by our expedition leader as not fit enough to reach and return from the summit safely, will not be allowed to attempt the summit. This ensures we have a strong team for summit and that those guests who are fit enough are given the best opportunity to attempt it.

**Spending Money & Tips:**

We recommend that you carry €300 with you to India in mixed notes. Euro can be exchanged to Rupees easily in Delhi and Leh. There are also some ATMs where you can withdraw cash using a credit card. Tipping is common in India. We recommend you tip if you are happy with the service. Our recommended tip is 6000INR (€80). Please give your tip to the Expedition Leader and he/she will distribute the tip evenly among all staff. The recommended spending amount above includes the tip for the local staff.

**About Ladakh:**

We advise all participants to educate themselves on local laws and customs before travelling to India. Up to date travel advice can be found on the [DFA website](#).

Area:	India; 3,287,590 sq km Ladakh; 86,904 sq km
Population:	India; 1,236,344,631 Ladakh; 274,289
Official Languages:	India; Hindi & English Ladakh; Ladakhi (Bhoti).
Religion:	Buddhism & Islam.
Local Time:	GMT +5.30.
Local Currency:	Indian Rupee.
Currency for Exchange:	Euro, US Dollars or GBP.
Where to Exchange:	Most major towns – your Expedition Leader can advise you on arrival.

Worn or ripped Rupee notes may prove difficult to use, so beware of this when accepting notes.

ATMs: Available in Delhi and Leh.  
Credit Cards: Are generally not accepted.

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

### **Stok Kangri Expedition Summary & Itinerary:**

This 15 day expedition is suitable for experienced trekkers who have a good level of fitness. Towering at an impressive 6,153 metres (20187ft), Stok Kangri is a serious challenge. Although it is widely considered to be a trekking peak the summit day involves some scrambling and the use of crampons is sometimes required. We take a unique and scenic route crossing two large passes to reach base camp. This allows us to see more of Ladakh and increases acclimatisation improving our chances of a successful summit attempt. The view from the top is one of the best in the Himalaya offering great views of the Zaskar and Karakoram ranges including K2 (8,611m), the second highest peak in the world. This is one of the best trekking peaks in the Indian Himalayas and its proximity to Leh makes it very accessible. Ladakh, often referred to as 'little Tibet', is characterised by Buddhist culture and tradition. Visits to monasteries, palaces, markets and remote villages are all included in this expedition.

As well as enjoying 12 fantastic days in Ladakh you will see Delhi's best sights and enjoy plenty of retail therapy.

#### **Day 1: Dublin to Delhi.**

Depart Dublin on an overnight flight to Delhi.

#### **Day 2: Arrive Delhi.**

You will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel. Spend the afternoon and evening relaxing in your hotel room or taking in the sights of Delhi. Overnight hotel.

#### **Day 3: Delhi to Leh (3,505 m): 1 hr**

Take the one hour flight to Leh, capital of Ladakh. This is an incredible flight over the greater Himalaya with spectacular views of K2 (8,611 m) among others. Overnight hotel.

#### **Day 4: Acclimatise and sightseeing in Leh.**

Spend the day in Leh to acclimatise. For the more energetic a visit to monasteries such as Shey, Thikse and Hemis will be arranged. Or choose to relax and walk around Leh. Visit markets, shops and outdoor restaurants. Enjoy the great views of Stok Kangri (6,153 m) and its surrounding peaks. Overnight hotel.

#### **Day 5: Leh to Skyu (3,400m): 8 hrs.**

After breakfast we drive for two hours to reach Chilling Village on the banks of the mighty Zaskar River. The drive takes us past the Leh airstrip, the Spituk Gompa and crosses the Indus River. We cross the Zaskar River using a basket trolley which makes for an exciting start to our journey. If it's busy it can take up to two hours to get everyone across the river. The trail follows the Markha River all the way to Skyu where we make camp for the night. Our first day on the trek takes no more than four hours. Overnight camp.

#### **Day 6: Skyu to the base of Ganda La (4,300m): 6 hrs.**

Today we ascend just under 1000 metres to the foot of the Ganda La Pass. It's a beautiful walk with great scenery. We pass through the village of Shingo and then continue on to our campsite near the river. Overnight camp.

**Day 7: Base of Ganda La to Rumbak (4,000m): 8 hrs.**

We make an early start to avoid the midday heat. Soon after leaving camp the trail climbs steadily for several hours to reach Ganda La Pass (4,960m). The views from the pass are well worth all the effort as we are treated to views of Stok Kangri, tomorrow's route and a 360 panorama of huge peaks. From the pass we descend all the way to Rumbak, a small village which is the meeting point of several different trails. We set up camp just outside the village. Overnight camp.

**Day 8: Rumbak to Mankarmo (4,200m): 7 hrs.**

We start early walking towards the Stok La Pass (4,850m). After three hours the trail becomes steep and we climb steadily to reach the pass, where we are greeted by impressive views of the surrounding mountains. Then we walk for a further three hours descending and ascending to reach our campsite at Mankarmo beside the Stok River. Overnight camp.

**Day 9: Mankarmo to Base Camp (4,900m): 3 hrs.**

A short distance to cover today, but again important to take it slowly as we are gaining 700m. We follow the Stok River all the way to the Base Camp. In the afternoon we go for an acclimatisation hike up to nearby ridge which offers us our first view of the Karakoram Range. Overnight camp.

**Day 10: Rest day at Base Camp.**

Have a full day of rest at the base camp to maximise our chances of a successful summit attempt. There is an option to go for a hike in the morning but we advise complete rest. Overnight camp.

**Day 11: Base Camp to Stok Kangri (6,153m) to Base Camp: 10 hrs.**

This is the most difficult day of the trek and takes a lot of physical and mental strength. We rise very early (just after midnight) and walk for two hours to reach the Stok Glacier. Crossing the glacier takes an hour and is relatively flat and easy. From there we climb for another two hours on a long scree slope stopping to put on crampons where there is some snow. At the end of the scree slope we reach a ridge which we follow for a further two hours to reach the summit. From the summit we are greeted by amazing views of the Himalaya and Karakoram. The Zaskar, Stok, and Ladakh ranges form an outstanding vista of snow-capped peaks. The walk from the summit back to base camp takes three hours with everyone enjoying a well-earned rest upon arrival. Overnight camp.

**Day 12: Spare Summit Day.**

This day is included for possible bad weather or further acclimatisation if needed. In the event that we summit Stok Kangri on Day 11, we will return to Leh on Day 12.

**Day 13: Base Camp to Stok Village (3,480m) to Leh: 6 hrs**

We walk for 5 hours all downhill, along the Stok River to reach Stok Village. From Stok Village it takes one hour to reach Leh where you have a nice warm shower! Relax or go shopping for the afternoon. Overnight hotel.

**Day 14: Leh to Delhi.**

Take the amazing flight back down to Delhi over the Great Himalayan Range. Enjoy a full day in Delhi for shopping, sightseeing or relaxing. Overnight hotel.

**Day 15: Depart India**

After breakfast transfer to the international airport in time for your flight home to Dublin. Expedition ends.

### Expedition Costs:

€399 deposit at the time of booking & €3,000 balance payment at least two months prior to departure - Total €3,399. Read our [best price guarantee](#).

\*If you wish to pay for your trek in instalments, contact us for more information.

\* Prices were set on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### EXPEDITION COSTS INCLUDE:

- International flights from Dublin to Delhi return economy class.
- Internal flights in India.
- Experienced Irish expedition leader accompanying you from Dublin airport.
- Experienced Irish expedition doctor accompanying you from Dublin airport.
- Earth's Edge Pre-Departure Weekends.
- Local English speaking guides, local cooks and muleteers.
- All accommodation based on twin sharing in hotels in Delhi and Leh and camping elsewhere.
- All meals and drinking water are included except in Delhi where accommodation is based on B&B.
- A celebratory dinner at the end of the expedition.
- All transport throughout the expedition.
- All group gear consisting of first aid kits, mountaineering equipment, cooking equipment etc.
- An Earth's Edge bandana for all participants.

### EXPEDITION COSTS EXCLUDE:

- Personal travel insurance.
- Transfers to and from Dublin Airport.
- Medical vaccinations.
- Tourist visas.
- Personal equipment.
- Optional sightseeing in Delhi.
- Personal spending and tips.
- Expenses of a personal nature like laundry, phone calls, alcohol, excess baggage charges and any costs arising out of unforeseen circumstances such as bad weather, landslides, road conditions and any other circumstances beyond our control.

### SHARE YOUR JOURNEY AND WIN A €300 ADVENTURE PACK:

On each expedition, one person will win an Earth's Edge Down jacket, Gore-Tex jacket and an environmentally friendly Keep-Cup. How do you win? Share your journey from start to finish on your Instagram. We want to see your gym sessions, your training hikes, your gear prep, and of course your photos of your amazing adventure with us! Simply let us know your Instagram handle, tag us in your post, and use our hashtag #EarthsEdge. There's no limit on how many posts you can do, and if you win we could feature your photos on our Instagram or Website! ***On average, we have 12 people on our expeditions, so you have a 1 in 12 chance of winning! Get snapping! We will select a winner approximately four weeks after each expedition!***

### Expedition FAQ:

#### What is a typical day like on this expedition?

The following is a typical day on this expedition and most days on the route will follow this general

format. However, every day is slightly different and the weather can have a huge influence too. Wake up, sometimes at sunrise, to enjoy the spectacular views of the surrounding landscape. After a substantial breakfast, we pack up all the equipment and get ready to leave. After giving your main bag to the porters we get moving. You need only carry a small rucksack with a spare jacket, hat, sun cream, water bottle, packed lunch and camera. We move at a pace that suits the group and stop regularly for photo opportunities and rests. At around midday we break for lunch. After a healthy and energising lunch, we start moving again and by mid-afternoon we will have reached our destination. Once settled in, we play cards, explore the area and enjoy watching the sun disappear below the horizon. Meanwhile, the cooks will be busy preparing dinner using fresh seasonal local produce. After dinner the Earth's Edge expedition leader will brief you on tomorrow's adventure. That night you can enjoy the company and stories of your guides and fellow adventurers. Then head to bed for a good night's sleep to be ready to do it all again the next day!

### **What is the accommodation like on this expedition?**

While in Delhi & Leh we will stay in locally run hotels in an effort to support the local economy. All rooms are clean and comfortable. While camping we will stay in two person tents. Our prices are based on two people sharing. It is generally possible to arrange single rooms/tents on Earth's Edge expeditions. Contact us to request a single room or tent.

### **What is the food like on this expedition?**

Food plays a huge part in the success of our expeditions. A cook accompanies all expeditions to prepare nutritious, tasty food. All fresh produce is washed using clean water and all perishable items are kept cool. We provide balanced meals which keep participants energised throughout the expedition. We like to cook local seasonal dishes but we also cook western dishes.

### **Can Earth's Edge cater for my dietary restriction?**

We will try our best to cater for those with dietary restrictions. If you have a dietary restriction, please state this on your medical declaration form which you will complete prior to your expedition. We will organise for you to have a suitable meal on your flight where meals are supplied by the airline. It is not possible for us to source specialist gluten or dairy free products locally. We will endeavour to provide suitable alternative carbohydrates, for example potatoes or rice rather than bread. If you want to have specialist food like gluten free bread and pasta or lactose free milk you will need to bring them with you on the expedition.

### **How many people can take part in this expedition?**

This expedition will have an average of 13 participants.

### **Who is leading this expedition?**

An Earth's Edge expedition leader accompanies all expeditions. Our leaders are highly experienced and skilled in expedition leadership and wilderness first aid. Local English-speaking guides work with our expedition leaders to run the expedition. Our local guides are highly experienced and very familiar with the expedition route, local history, cultures and customs of the region.

### **Will I get a chance to meet any of my other team members before departure?**

Yes we hold pre-departure weekends about two months before every expedition. If you cannot attend the particular weekend that is scheduled for your expedition, then you are welcome to attend another training weekend. An experienced Earth's Edge expedition leader and expedition doctor will meet the group to answer questions about the trek. Most people at this stage will have questions about their equipment and will be given advice on the best way to pack for the trip. This is also a great opportunity for participants to meet one another before setting off. Around this time, you will receive a

pre-departure document which will include lots of important information such as what time you need to meet at the airport and emergency contact information that you can pass on to your next of kin. Please note where differences exist between this info pack and the pre-departure document the pre-departure document supersedes.

### **Can participants extend their stay after the expedition?**

Extensions are possible but subject to availability, contact us ASAP if you wish to extend your trip. For extension requests made at least four months before departure there is a change fee of €100 plus fare difference. For requests made between two and four months before departure there is a change fee of €150 plus fare difference. It is not possible to make an extension request within two months of departure.

### **What back-up support is there on this expedition?**

Along with the Earth's Edge expedition leader we use local guides, cooks, drivers and porters of the highest standard. We employ local staff based on their qualifications, experience and references. Our expedition leaders are trained in wilderness first-aid and most of our local guides are first-aid trained too. Our expedition leaders and local staff are familiar with the locations of local medical services and hospitals. Where no mobile/cell phone network is available expeditions are accompanied by two-way radios and satellite phones. Our expedition leaders have 24/7 access to our office in Ireland.

### **What emergency procedures are in place?**

A detailed assessment of risk is completed for all expeditions. The risk assessment covers potential minor and major injuries, environmental risks, political risks and evacuation plans detailing the locations of local hospitals, emergency services and airports.

### **What happens if someone gets sick or injured?**

In the event of someone falling ill or getting injured, the expedition medic will assess and treat the sick or injured person. Often with some rest, participants can continue without a problem. If needed a guide will help the injured person to the next camp where an evacuation to a hospital can be arranged for more serious incidents. In the unlikely event of a serious incident which requires urgent hospital treatment a helicopter evacuation can be requested from local authorities. The decision to evacuate is ultimately the expedition leader's. You must respect the decisions of your expedition leader at all times. Extra costs incurred as a result of an evacuation must be paid by the participant. Your personal travel insurance must cover such eventualities.

### **What happens in bad weather?**

In the event of a sudden change of weather conditions the Earth's Edge expedition leader will assess the situation and make an informed decision on what to do. Participant safety is always the priority in the decision-making process. Our itineraries are designed taking into consideration possible bad weather. Alternative routes and contingency plans are always in place in case of adverse weather conditions. We always aim to keep to the itinerary as much as possible but please remember that this is adventure travel and changes can occur!

### **What will happen to participant's luggage during the expedition days?**

On this expedition, you only need carry a small bag with the essentials such as a spare jacket, hat, water, packed lunch, camera etc. The bulk of participant's luggage will be carried in a separate bag by the support team.

### **What happens if the airline loses a participant's luggage?**

If an airline loses luggage, Earth's Edge will help report the lost baggage and chase up the airline while

the participant continues on the expedition. Personal travel insurance should cover the purchase of any necessary clothes and equipment needed. Generally, the airline will deliver lost luggage within 24 hours.

**What happens if a participant misses their airport connection?**

If a flight connection is missed because a previous flight was delayed, the airlines will offer an alternative flight and accommodation if necessary. If this disrupts any part of your expedition, Earth's Edge will make alternative arrangements to get you back on schedule. Any extra costs incurred due to a missed connection will be covered by the airline or the participant's personal travel insurance.

## Why Earth's Edge?

- Earth's Edge is Ireland's first fully licensed & bonded adventure travel company.
- Earth's Edge is 100% Irish owned.

- We send expedition leaders from Ireland with solid travel experience & who are 'salt of the earth' genuinely lovely people.
- We send doctors on all our expeditions, regardless of the difficulty or remoteness of its location. They are accompanied by a comprehensive medical kit.
- We excel at expedition planning and management. Each expedition goes through a custom-made event check-list starting 12 months before departure to ensure we do all we can to run expeditions as smoothly as possible.
- We provide excellent expedition support. All expeditions are managed from our office in Dublin and have 24/7 support from an operations and medical expert.
- We endeavour to respond to all enquiries from both current & potential participants within 24hrs.
- Our office staff are all highly qualified and boast many years of customer service and operations experience between them. Most importantly, they are keen adventurers themselves and are passionate about exploring the globe! They each take part in at least one Earth's Edge expedition a year. So, when you make an enquiry, you are speaking to an expert as opposed to a travel agent.
- We offer very inclusive packages which are excellent value for money.
- The emphasis we place on preparing our participants for their expeditions is second to none. We provide detailed informative trip documentation, medical & vaccine guidance & visa support.
- Earth's Edge hold pre-departure weekends prior to each expedition which include a full expedition brief, two training hikes and expert advice from an Earth's Edge expedition leader and doctor.
- We follow a strict environmental, social & economic responsible travel policy.
- Earth's Edge group sizes are always small. This enables us to minimise our environmental impact & it also ensures we retain the element of adventure in our expeditions that separates them from your average holiday.