

Info from our PreDeparture Briefing for Dalai Lama Trekkers

From Heidi and Huw

First things first: Bags

Our local team will give us each a duffle bag to be carried on the mules from camp to camp.

Into the duffle bags go:

- The pillow and blanket they provide (you might want to bring a pillowcase as a reminder of home)
- Sleeping bag and optional liner
- Sleeping mat if you want to bring one (Huw recommends them) to use with the foam mats provided
- Clean clothes, trek t-shirt, nightwear, wash kit, medication, snacks, etc - in drybags or other strong bags.

Our luggage from home, containing our celebration evening, travelling and extension clothes, stays in the hotel.

That means that we CAN bring soft-sided bags with wheels! (NOT hard-sided). The maximum is 20kg weight for the whole trip, however long you are staying.

Here's the bag, about 1-1.3m high



Altitude sickness

We'll be at the height when altitude sickness can affect some people.

No-one can predict who will get it – it's nothing to do with fitness, or even if you've had it before.

For all of us the advice is:

Avoid alcohol

Drink lots of water (Carry 3 litres each morning)

Take it slow.

Walking, terrain and weather

Walking days likely to be 8-9 hours.

Poles are recommended.

Great news for Inca, China, Petra and Lost City trekkers - There are steps!

Weather likely to be mild/warm by day but chilly (0 degrees) at night.

There may be rain – bring a proper rain jacket (not poncho or pac-a-mac) warmth and wind protection.

Pack for every eventuality – trek weather is famously unpredictable.

NOTE: On Days 3 and 4 (around Triund) we are out of reach of vehicles.

Hygiene, washing, loos

Hot water delivered to our tents each morning – so soap + flannel (in a plastic bag) recommended rather than wipes.

Bring wipes for loo stops while walking, along with nappy sacks and hand gel.

Camp toilet tents have seats over pits and are OK. They provide loo, roll, you may want to bring your own.

Bring hand sanitiser to use after the loo AND always before you eat.

What to wear in camp

It gets cold at night and goes dark quickly. So you'll want:

- Warm socks and comfy shoes (crocs, trainers or sliders. NOT flipflops because you need to wear socks!)
- Thermals, hats, gloves
- Headtorch plus spare batteries or charging pack (no charging available on the trek)
- Down jacket and/or thick fleece.

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Food & Drink

Delicious and plentiful food including pancakes, porridge, fruit and curry for breakfast, and lots of snacks provided.

So bring snacks/sweets for comfort rather than sustenance.

We need to carry 3 litres of water when we leave camp each morning. There will be a limited amount of water for top-ups most lunchtimes.

For coffee snobs and herbal tea lovers - bring your own bags.

And if you like your coffee and tea white, bring a few sachets/pots of milk as there is limited milk in camp.

Wifi, power, and e-sims

There will be **no power** in the camps so bring a powerbank or two, and keep it warm in your sleeping bag at night.

Some people use solar-powered power packs, recharging during the day on their backpacks.

Switch your phone to airplane mode to conserve battery and stop it trying to connect.

Make sure you have spare batteries for your essentials – headtorches, hearing aids, airbed pumps etc.

There will probably be wifi in hotels but not in camps.

Mobile signal is also patchy on the trail. Make sure you let loved ones know you're unlikely to be able to contact them while we're trekking – no news is good news! (DA crew will have radios for emergencies).

Recommended e-sims are Ubigi and Saily.

Money and tipping

Bring £ sterling CASH to change in India.

Recommended amount is £150 for the main trek, plus £40 for crew tips, plus perhaps £30 a day for extensions.

They will arrange for us all to change money in the hotel in McLeod Ganj or change in airport if there's time. India is the land of tipping – and we tip AS A GROUP!

We all give Heidi £20 sterling cash on Day 1 so our local guides can tip porters, drivers, etc, as we go.

We will also give group tips to our crew (and gifts to our DA team) at the end of our trek.

Many places take cards (debit cards rather than Monzo-style currency cards) but you'll want cash for snacks, and little shops on the trail.

When should I wear my Stars Appeal and Commemorative Trek T-shirts?

Travelling Salisbury-Heathrow-India: **Wear your bright blue Stars Appeal t-shirt**

On the last day of trekking: **Wear your pale blue Trek T-shirt** (and possibly on other trek days with good photo opportunities). So make sure it goes in your duffle bag.

And the last advice is from Huw:

Bring Ear Plugs

And **Be Honest!**

If you're feeling:

- Sick/Ill
- Injured
- Frightened
- Strange
- Unhappy

Tell the DA Team as soon as you can so they can help. And they will be honest with us about the trek and how we're doing.

Now read on: the Itinerary, Kit List, FAQs and India Factsheet are in your DA portal or here:

<https://starsappeal.org/events/dalai-lama-trekkers-private-page/>