



Expedition Newsletter

Welcome to the Eleventh of our regular news letters. If you discover anything of interest and want to share it (links, articles etc), let us know and we'll include it.

Octobers Meeting

There was a disappointing turn out for this month get-together which was a pity as we had a visitor, Prasun of the Rotract club of Nepal Join us. Prasun, who's father is heading the water supply project, brought a video of Nayapatti to show us where we would be working on our service project.

In addition Hilary laid on a Nepalese meal which we had to consume "Nepalese style" with no cutlery and not using our left hands. It took a while to adapt but we all managed.

Sunday morning Ramble

For those of you wishing to get some miles under your belt before we depart we will be holding the first of our Rambles this coming Sunday 5th November.

As it's the first one we'll keep it local and head off Over St Martha's and the Chantries then back via the gunpowder works in Chilworth and back to the start point at Newlands Corner.

If we could meet at Newlands Corner at 9am with suitable clothing and a drink / snack (if you want). We should be back by 3pm

The next Ramble will be instead of our December meeting on 21st December.

A thought to ponder!

I wonder how many of you just simply forgot about this months meeting? Parents forgot to remind you? Attendance at every meeting is not always possible, but only 4 of you sent apologies.

I deliberately, do not send out reminders as I feel you should by now be capable of managing your own affairs. In 145 days time we head out on a major event where you will have, to a large degree, to look after yourself and be relied on to get on with things without constant reminding.

How much confidence does it give me as unit leader if you can't even sort your own diary out?

Think about it!

Polo Shirts

As we have discussed at previous meetings we will be issuing you with 2 polo shirts to wear with your scarf in lieu of uniform on the expedition. Green was the first choice of colour but having seen a sample it's a bit to "In your face" therefore we switched to Heather grey.

A form is attached for you to give us your sizes etc. If you want to order any additional shirts you can do so at the prices stated and you can choose whichever colour you like. I would not advise Black or seriously dark colours as the writing won't show through



News Spotlight

The Next Expedition team meeting will be held on **Tuesday 21st November 2006** at Merrow HQ Starting 19:30.

In Brief

Paul's mum has acquired a quantity of leather shoe polish for us. If any one wants some to get their boots nice and supple before we go let me know.

145 days to go and counting



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As food was the theme of this month's meeting I thought we'd carry it on to this issue's culture page.

Eating In Nepal

Nepali food is practical rather than gourmet fare--which is not to say it isn't tasty. The national dish is daal bhaat, boiled rice (bhaat) with a thin lentil sauce (daal), accompanied by curried vegetables (tarkaari) and possibly a dab of pungent pickle (achaar). In rice-growing areas daal bhaat is eaten twice a day, the first meal at around 10:30 a.m. and the second shortly after sunset. Sweet, milky tea and snacks like beaten or popped rice, flat bread, or curried potatoes tide the hungry over until mealtime. Beyond this there isn't a tremendous variety of dishes. Ethnic groups have their own specialties, but basically it's all subsistence food. Nepalis know the value of food as fuel: trek for just a few days and you'll learn it too.

Most Nepalis eat with the right hand, though urban diners have adopted silverware. Metal spoons are said to ruin the flavor of food and to make you thinner--not a good thing in Nepal. Food may be served in a thaali, a metal plate divided into separate compartments. The method is to attack the mountain of daal bhaat quickly, while it's still hot. If the daal came in a separate bowl, pour it over the rice, breaking up chunks with your fingers as you do. Add a bit of tarkaari and/or achaar, squeeze it all together, and pop it into your mouth. The hand remains in constant motion until the food vanishes.

Daal bhaat is an all-you-can-eat affair. Servers make the rounds with bowls of daal and vegetables. A one-plate daal bhaat is rarely enough for a Nepali. On the trail, porters fill up on three plates before heading up a hill. The distance to a mountain pass can be measured by the amount of rice it takes a porter to reach the top, as in the famous "five-maanaa" climb into the Kathmandu Valley.

Snacks (Khaajaa)

Chiura, beaten rice, is made by pounding soaked, uncooked rice with a heavy wooden mallet. Easy to carry and requiring no cooking, it's a popular snack with farmers and porters. Served with yoghurt, vegetable curry, achaar, and fried meat (chuela), it's an essential element of Newar ritual feasts. Roasted chiura, crunchier and tastier than the plain type, is mixed with yoghurt as a substitute for breakfast cereals. Roasted with butter and sugar, it rivals caramel corn. Popped rice (bhujja) is the Nepali equivalent of Rice Krispies, popped in a pan, in hot sand to distribute the heat evenly.

Other favourite snacks include curried potatoes (alu daam), dried peas in sauce (kerau), chewy dried meat (sukuti), and deep-fried triangular dumplings (samosa). Breads vary from fried rings of rice-flour (sel roti) to Gurung corn cakes and the Indian flat, thin wheat-flour disks (chapaati) and the smaller fried puri. Kathmandu's south Indian restaurants offer dosa, huge crispy thin pancakes of lentil flour filled with spiced vegetables and served with several sauces.

Seasonings

Women grind their spices fresh daily on a big stone mortar, using cumin, chili, turmeric, fennel, fenugreek, mustard seed, coriander, and the mixed-spice masala. Bright orange besaar or turmeric, "poor man's saffron," gives curries their characteristic golden tint. Rubbed over the skin of butchered goats, it acts as a fly repellent and preservative.

Mustard or rapeseed is grown all over lower Nepal, carpeting fields with yellow flowers in the spring. Mustard oil is used for cooking, as well as oil lamps, temple offerings, and massage. Food is fried in mustard oil and liberally seasoned with garlic, onions, and fresh ginger. More flavor comes from a spoonful of achaar, a pickle which can be sweet, salty, sour, or hot. Try pungent mango pickle and sweet mango relish, and a simple and delicious achaar of chopped tomatoes, onion, garlic, lemon juice, and fresh cilantro.

Authentic Nepali food isn't burning hot, but it does have a distinct bite of chili pepper (koorsani).