



Expedition Newsletter

Welcome to the Seventh 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.

Flight Details

After an extended period of being messed around by the airline we have finally got the flights sorted out.

We will be flying with Qatar Airlines stopping over at Doha details are:

Outbound

Depart Heathrow Friday 23rd March at 21:45

Arrive Doha Saturday 24th March at 07:25

Depart Doha same day at 09:00

Arrive Kathmandu Saturday 24th March 16:00

Inbound

Depart Kathmandu Saturday 14th April at 20:05

Arrive Doha same day at 22:20

Depart Doha Sunday 15th April at 01:30

Arrive London Gatwick Sunday 15th April at 06:55

The smart ones amongst you will notice the intelligence test for your parents! We'll be returning to Gatwick having left from Heathrow. I'll be taking bets during the expedition on who's parents go to the wrong airport!

If he can do it!

Scrolling through the TV channels the other night there was a programme on "Adventure one" channel about a blind climber who scaled Everest Not 100% relevant to us but an Interesting programme none the less as the first 10 minutes were worth watching as he made his way up to base camp. (He was accompanied to that point by his 60 year old dad). If a blind man can get to the top of Everest, I'm sure we can all make base camp.

Ripley Farmers Market

We're still doing well taking our biggest total yet this month. We should say thank you to Sue Grubb for the novelty "England" Gingerbread men they sold like (*excuse the pun!*) hotcakes.

The market organisers are giving us some "Market" shopping bags which we can sell and keep the profits for our funds.

In Brief

Hillary is back in Kathmandu at the moment and she has been requested to head out to Nayapati, proposed venue for our service project and gather some photo's of the place.

From September I intend to start a monthly "Sunday ramble". Attendance won't be compulsory but it will help you walk those boots in and get used to walking at a steady pace.

Just to confuse you: Nepal Time is 5 hours 45 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time and 15 minutes ahead of Indian Standard Time.

If you haven't already done so. Check your passport expiry dates. Your passport need to be valid for at least 6 months after our return ie expires after October 2007. (*Everyone one needs their own passport*)



News Spotlight

The Next Expedition team meeting will be held on **Thursday 20th July 2006** Venue 1st Merrow (*unless notified otherwise*) Starting 19:30.

265 days to go and counting



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THE SHERPAS

Nepal's most famous ethnic group, the Sherpas probably migrated to Solu-Khumbu four or five centuries ago from eastern Tibet. Their name means "People from the East". They were originally nomads, driving their yaks to pasture in Tibet and wintering in Nepal, until change came from an unlikely quarter. The introduction of the potato in the 1830s is believed to have been the catalyst that caused Sherpas to settle in villages, and the extra wealth brought by this simple innovation financed the building of most monasteries visible today.

Sherpas maintain the highest permanent settlements in the world - up to 4700m, which accounts for their legendary hardiness at altitude. Their mountaineering talents were discovered as early as 1907, and by the 1920s hundreds of Sherpas were signing on as porters with expeditions to Everest and other Himalayan peaks - from the Tibet side, ironically, as Nepal was closed to foreigners at the time. When mountaineering expeditions were finally allowed into Nepal in 1949, Sherpas took over the lion's share of the portering work, and four years later Tenzing Norgay reached the top of Everest, clinching Sherpas' worldwide fame. The break couldn't have come at a better time, for trans-Himalayan trade, once an important source of income, was cut short by the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959. Since then, Sherpas have deftly diversified into tourism, starting their own trekking and mountaineering agencies, opening lodges and selling souvenirs. Conveniently, the trekking season doesn't conflict with summer farming duties. Like Tibetans and other Bhotiya groups, Sherpas are devout Buddhists, and most villages of note support a "Gompa" and a few monks (or nuns). But in a throwback to animism that's perfectly permissible in Lamaist Buddhism, they revere Khumbila, a sacred peak just north of Namche, as a sort of tribal totem, and regard fire as a deity (it's disrespectful to throw rubbish into a Sherpa hearth). Sherpas eat meat, of course, but in deference to the dharma they draw the line at slaughtering it they hire Tibetians to do that.

Welcoming Gesture

A traditional affair



Welcoming ceremony is an important gesture of guest relation. Every country has its own way of doing it with a touch of uniqueness and originality. Tourist welcoming has over the years become the best lobbying factor in the tourism industry around the globe. Indeed a travel experience begins and ends with it. The ritual of doing so differs widely among the hospitality industries as it is done to make the guests feel comfortable. It makes them feel homely and accepted.

Rooted in its culture and religious traits, Nepalese believe that guests are torsos of gods so the famous saying goes, "Athiti dewa bhawa". Nepalese believe in gods and they pray to gods every day. Praying is a part of their daily routine. In Nepal, guests who come to one's home are considered to be the forms of god. So the guests are welcomed whole-heartedly and attended to with care and respect.

Source: www.nepal-traveller.com/