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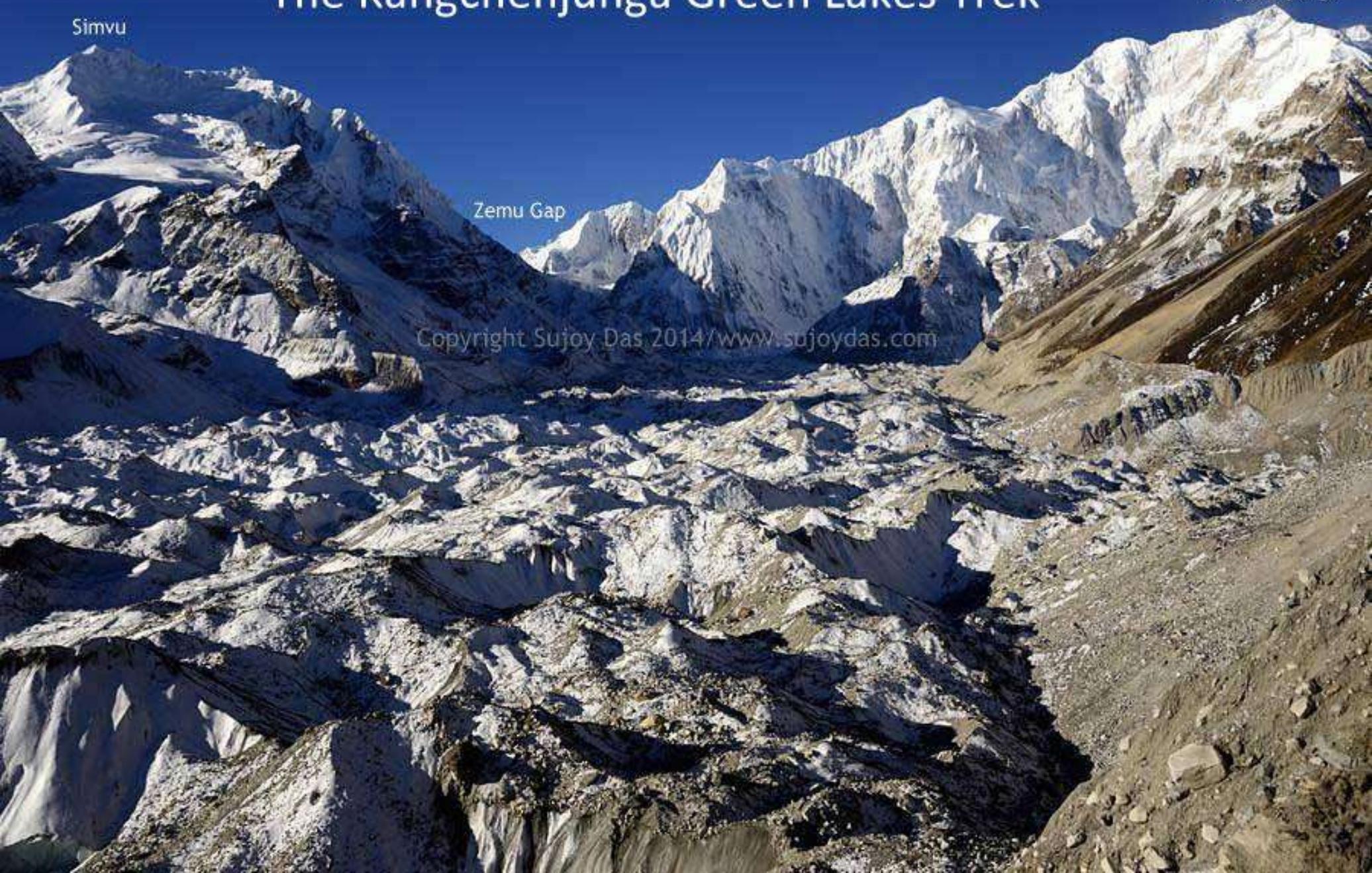
The Kangchenjunga Green Lakes Trek

Kangchenjunga

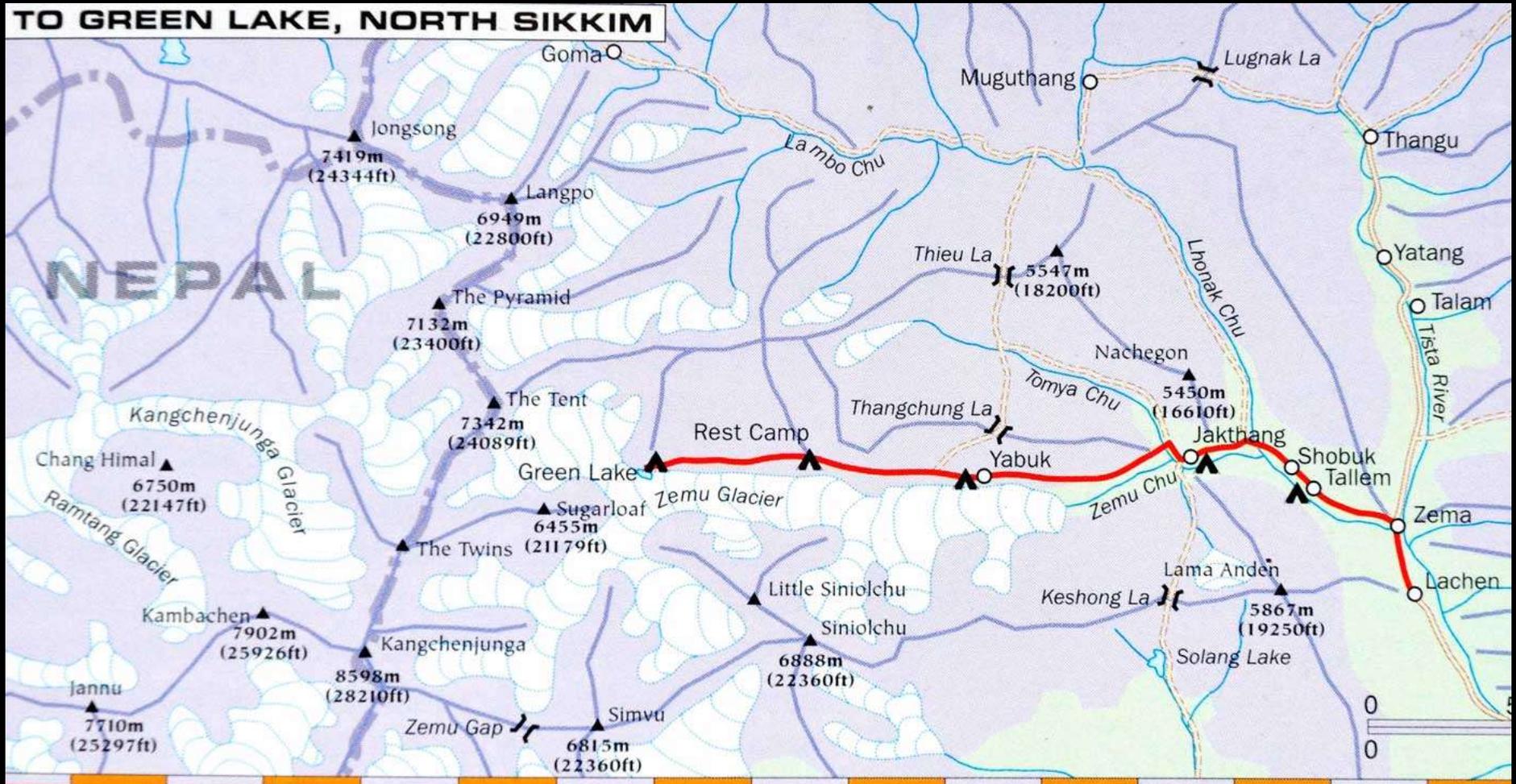
Simvu

Zemu Gap

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Map of the Green Lakes Region



The Green Lakes Trek (11 days Gangtok to Gangtok)

- Green Lakes is the North Base Camp of Mt Kangchendzonga in Sikkim, the third highest peak in the world. The trek to Green Lakes is strictly controlled by a rigid permit system.
- It is possibly one of the most outstanding treks in the Himalayas and rivals even the Everest Base Camp and Annapurna treks.
- The costs of this trek is **Rs 85,000 plus 5% GST** - Minimum group size 6. Exclusions apply. For details please see page 8.



The Green Lakes Trek Itinerary - 1

- **Day 1: Gangtok to Lachen by road**
- We leave Gangtok after breakfast and make the six hour drive to Lachen which we should reach by early afternoon. Day walks can be undertaken up the valley. Lachen has a number of carpet weaving centres in the main village and a visit to one of these is recommended.
- **Day 2: Lachen (2700 m) to Zema by vehicle and then onto Tallem (3250 m) (5-6 hours) Level: Easy to Moderate**
- Follow the main North Sikkim Highway which continues along the right bank of the river to Thangu proceeding north to the junction of the Lachen Chu and the Zemu Chu at Zema. The road to Zema can be covered in a jeep/land rover and would take about half an hour. After crossing the Zemu Chu by the permanent bridge, go westwards up the Zemu valley following a trail through the forest on the right bank of the Zemu Chu. The going in this section is usually slow as the path travels through water-logged rhododendron thickets and fallen tree trunks rotting in the morass. Tallem is reached by early afternoon and we camp here.
- **Day 3: Tallem to Jakthang (3430 m) (4-5 hours) Level: Moderate**
- About 3 km, before Jakthang the path crosses the Lhonak Chu which usually has a bridge though landslides can often wreak havoc in this section of the trail. Jakthang is situated in a small meadow with broken herdsman's hut that makes a convenient night's halt.
- **Day 4: Jakthang (3430 m) to Yabuk (4040 m) (4-5 hours) Level: Moderate**
- The path to Yabuk climbs due west through the forest and after about three hours of steady walking you reach the snout of the Zemu glacier. The glacier forms a deep tongue of ice in the centre of the valley and is almost entirely covered with rocky debris: the main stream issues from a cave near the northern edge and the route to be followed leads past this and along the rocks of the lateral moraine. If there is no snow then the trail is defined. Yabuk is usually reached by lunchtime.



The Green Lakes Trek Itinerary - 2

- **Day 5: Acclimatization day at Yabuk (4040m)**
- The rest day can be spent walking up the valley, bird watching or just lazing at camp.
- **Day 6: Yabuk (4040 m) to Rest Camp (4500 m) (4-5 hours) Level: Moderate to Difficult**
- The path continues to travel west and follows the glacier of the Zemu. The single trail is mainly over boulders and is difficult on the feet. The Zemu Chu rushes through the glacier and as the valley opens up the great peaks come into view. The Rest Camp is situated right opposite Siniolchu and has a fabulous view of the one of the most beautiful mountains in Sikkim. Bharal or blue sheep are often sighted on the hill opposite the Rest Camp and this is also snow leopard country. The Himalayan Bearded Vulture or lammergier can be spotted soaring overhead with the thermals. Walk slowly as the air is getting thinner and acclimatization becomes of essence.
- **Day 7: Rest Camp (4500 m) to Green Lakes (5050 m) (3 to 4 hours) Level: Difficult**
- The trail from Rest Camp climbs gently up the valley in a north westerly direction. The walking pace is usually slow because of the altitude. On a clear morning this is one of the finest walks in the Himalayas rivaling the walk from the Machhapuchare Base Camp to Annapurna Base Camp and from Dugla to Gorak Shep in the Nepal Himalaya. Siniolchu, Simvu, Twins, Nepal Peak and Kangchendzonga are some of the giants that dominate the horizon. The camp is usually on a grassy flat known as the Green Lake Plain, the name being derived from a small tarn at the eastern end where on a clear morning the reflection of Kangchendzonga is seen in the waters.



The Green Lakes Trek Itinerary - 3

- **Day 8: Rest Day at Green Lakes**
- Spend the day lazing in the sunshine and watching the peaks. The more intrepid can climb the hill behind the camp for about an hour or so to come to a high point with magnificent views both towards Kangchendzonga as well as down the valley. The Zemu gap that links the Zemu valley to the Talung valley is clearly seen from this high point.
- **Day 9: Green Lakes (5050 m) to Yabuk (4040 m) (5-6 hours)** - It is possible to make the march from Green Lakes to Yabuk in one day, as the trail is mostly downhill. More intrepid trekkers and porters could try to reach Jakthang on the same day.
- **Day 10: Yabuk (4040 m) - Tallem** - The march down to Tallem would take about five hours and drop in altitude is welcome.
- **Day 11: Tallem to - Lachen (2700 m) (3 hours) to Gangtok** by road
- The way down from Yabuk follows the trail through the forest. Zema, which is the road head, can be reached before lunch and from here it is a short drive back to Lachen. After lunch at Lachen we head back to Gangtok the same day and reach in time for dinner.



The Green Lakes Trek Costs

- **For Indian Nationals Indian Rs 85,000 plus GST 5%**
- ~~The cost is per person for Gangtok to Gangtok (11 days) as per the itinerary given.~~
- Costs given above are at current rates and may change without notice. Changes if any will be notified 2 months before the trek.

Costs include:

- Transport from Gangtok to Lachen the roadhead for the trek in a private vehicle - up and down.
- All necessary restricted area permits and Kangchendzonga National Park permits as needed from Sikkim Govt and Ministry of Home Affairs New Delhi. Royalty fees and payments to liaison officer cum guide.
- **One night hotel stay in Lachen on the way in.**
- Dinner and breakfast in Gangtok on the way in and out.
- Hotel accommodation in Gangtok for one night on the way in and one night on the way out is covered in a three star hotel.
- All meals on the trek are covered.
- Cost of porters/guides and other support staff on the trek is covered. Please note that porters will carry one duffel bag or backpack not exceeding 10-12 kgs in weight for each trekker comprising of personal items, clothing, sleeping bag etc.

Costs not included

- Flight Cost/Train costs to reach Bagdogra/New Jalpaiguri and then taxi costs to Gangtok and back.
- Client travel and medical insurance of any kind. Emergency evacuation costs if needed.
- Personal clothing and equipment; sleeping bag; down/ goretex jacket, medicines for personal use etc.
- Air fare from residence country to India and back
- Tips to porters and guide at the end of trek
- **Estimate of Costs not included**
- Present cost of air tickets to Bagdogra from Delhi/Calcutta are Rs 12,000 /8,000 return . Fares could be lower on advance bookings. Taxis from Bagdogra to Gangtok would take around Rs 4000-5000 for a full taxi.

Why trek to Green Lakes with South Col?



- South Col is a small, personalized firm specializing in treks in the Himalayan region. **Sujoy is one of the few trekkers to have visited Green Lakes way back in 1987! We last trekked Green Lakes in November 2014.**
- We are keenly aware of the fragility of environment and cultures in which we trek and recognize our responsibility in maintaining them. "Take pictures, leave only foot prints" is our motto.
- Trekkers get personalized attention both in the planning stage as well as during the trek itself.
- Support team of guides and porters as needed are personally supervised by Sujoy to ensure that the clients are comfortable and well looked after.
- Sujoy has intimate knowledge of the trekking trails so can advise on the best stops for photographs and local culture etc.
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Special Note on Camping

- The Green Lakes trek is a full support camping trek with porters, guide, cook, helpers and Sikkim Govt Liaison Officer.
- It is not a lodge or tea house trek.
- Tents with mattresses will be provided every night. Quilts and blankets will not be possible. You will need a warm sleeping bag at least three seasons.
- We will have a team of one cook and two helpers who will cook all meals. Food will be basic like porridge, cornflakes, some eggs, chapattis, rice, dal, vegetables etc. All food will be carried from Gangtok.
- Our bags and luggage will be carried by porters supervised by a sirdar.
- **Toilets will not be available on the trail. We will provide toilet tent.**



The Green Lakes Trek FAQ #1

How fit do I have to be to do a trek? Whilst you do not need to be super-fit, you need to be fit enough to comfortably walk for 5-6 hours per day in the mountains on reasonable trails. You will definitely need to walk for around an hour at least every day to get fit. If you can spend some time in the gym it would help. Walking uphill/stairs etc also helps a great deal.

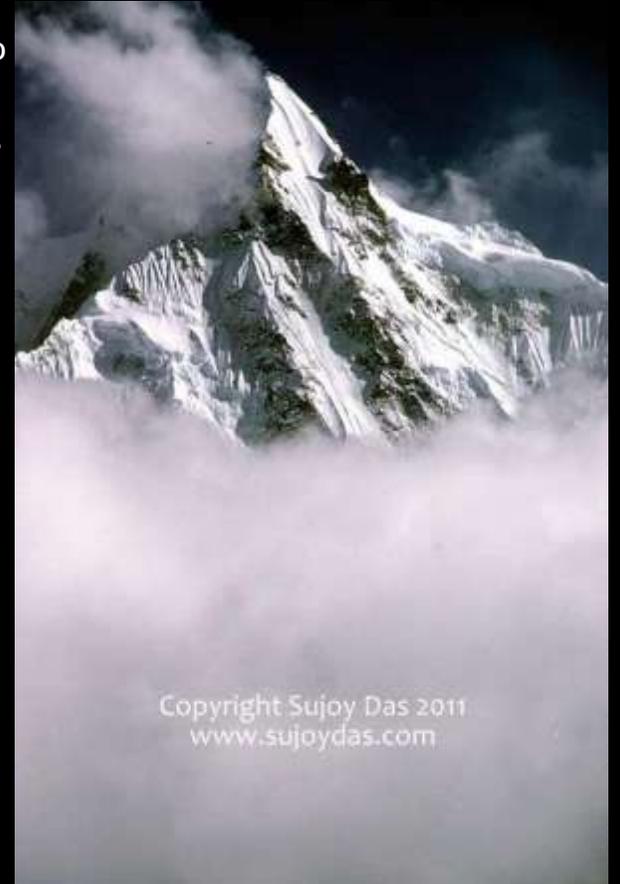
What is a typical group? Will I fit in? Groups range in size from 8 up to 12, and typically comprise a range of nationalities and experience. We have also had a group upto 14! So far, all of our groups have got along very well. One of the attractions of such a trip is the chance to meet people with different backgrounds and personalities.

Do I need to buy special equipment? Usually our clients simply bring their existing clothing and equipment and if necessary supplement this with some extra items purchased cheaply in Gangtok. Please check the equipment list which we will send out.

I am a single trekker. How does this work? Normally single trekkers have no problems fitting in with a group. Normally single trekkers share rooms or tents with other trekkers of the same sex, but if we have an odd-number we ensure that a room or tent is organized accordingly.

Will I be able to deal with the high altitude? Our itineraries are designed so that our clients ascend at a sensible and safe rate. The effects of altitude are felt by everyone, even the guides and Sherpas, but most people find that gentle acclimatization allows them to reach their high point without any problems. We will be monitoring this closely on the trek and in the event of any problems we will ensure that there is no compromise on safety. For details on AMS visit

http://www.ismmed.org/np_altitude_tutorial.htm#prevention



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The Green Lakes Trek FAQ #2

Where do we stay on the trek? Tents are provided with mattress on this trek. You need to bring your own sleeping bag.

Where do we eat our meals? As this is a camping trek meals will be cooked by our crew and served at camp. Lunch will be usually given packed in the morning to have during the day. You are encouraged to bring chocolates, nuts, energy bars etc with you.

Where do we get water during the trip? It is our suggestion that in order to save money, trekkers carry iodine tablets or lugols solution or chlorine with them so that they can purify the water every day.

What type of shoes or boots should I wear? The proper foot wear depends on the trek. The Green Lakes trek should be done in boots with firm ankle support. Having said that you will find locals and porters trekking in sneakers! Shoes and boots are best purchased before your arrival for the trek with proper break in.

What will the weather be like? April is the pre monsoon season so we expect clear sunny days and cold nights. Temperatures in the day can range between 10 and 20 degrees Celsius while nights would be between 0 and 6 celsius. Higher up the temperatures will be less and being spring snow is likely though a freak snow storm cannot be ruled out! Green Lakes is likely to have sub zero temperatures at night which can go down to -5 to 8 celsius!

How should I give my gear to the porter? Ideally the gear should be given to the porter in a duffle bag locked and this will be returned to the client in the evening. As you may not be able to access the duffle bag during the day please carry the essentials like water, jacket, camera, sweets etc in your daypack.

Standard Terms and Conditions # 1

■ **CANCELLATION POLICY**

■ The cancellation policy as available is given below:

- 0-7 days before the start of the trek =100%
- 8 -15 days before the start of the trek = 60%
- 16-30 days before the start of the trek = 40%
- 31-45 days before the start of the trek = 30%
- 46 days and above = 20%



■ **IN CASE OF LEAVING THE GROUP**

■ If due to illness or any other reason a client has to leave the group and go down or wait at a lodge for the group to pick him/her up on the way back or return to Kathmandu, all expenses including lodging, fooding, transport and any porter/guide related expenses if any are to be borne by the individual client over and above the trek fees paid for the trek. There are also no refunds for leaving a trek before completion.

■ **HIRING OF PONIES ETC**

■ In the eventuality of a client needed the services of a pony to come down to lower altitudes, the cost of hiring the pony will be paid by the client.

■ **EVACUATION BY HELICOPTER**

■ In the eventuality of not being covered by emergency helicopter evacuation insurance and an evacuation is considered necessary, the cost of the evacuation will be paid by the client in advance to the helicopter company/travel agent etc as deemed necessary.

Standard Terms and Conditions # 2

DELAYS DUE TO BANDHS, STRIKES AND OTHER FORCE MAJEURE EVENTS

- In the event of a delay in starting or ending the trek due to issues beyond the control of South Col, additional costs if any arising out of the same would have to be borne by the clients.

LODGES ON THE TREK

- The choice of lodges to be used on the trek will be decided by South Col and clients will have to stay at these designated lodges. Clients are not permitted to choose their own lodges on the route. Best possible lodges will be provided.

TREK ROUTE

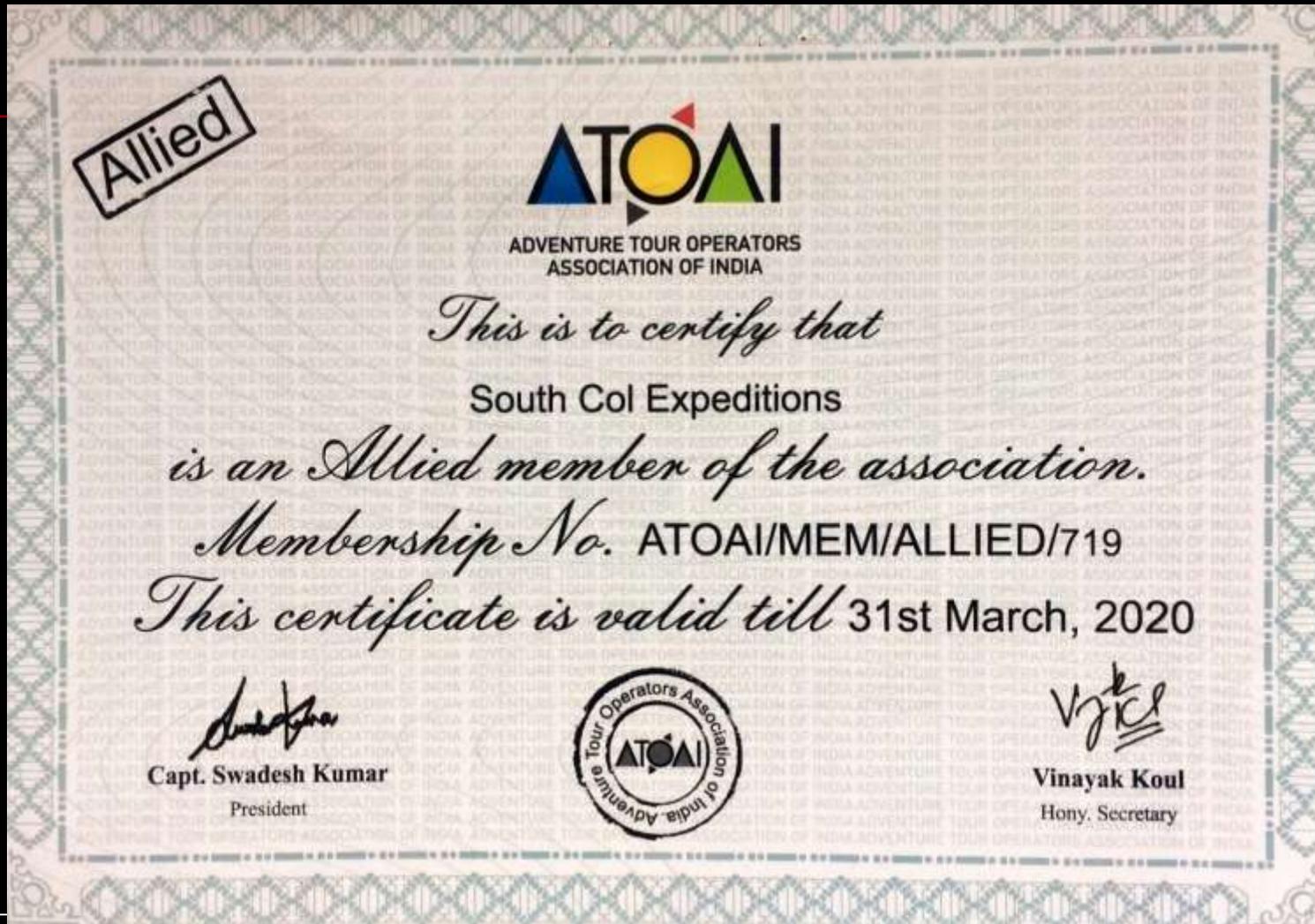
- The trek route and day wise schedule will be fixed by South Col and will have to be followed by the client.

RISKS AND LIABILITY

- The trek is in a remote mountain area and has certain additional dangers and risks, some of which include: physical exertion for which the client should be prepared; weather extremes subject to sudden and unexpected changes; remoteness from normal medical services; evacuation difficulties.
- In the event of injury or illness South Col Expeditions (Sujoy Das) or its Staff can, at the clients cost arrange any medical treatment and emergency evacuation service as it or they deem necessary for the health and safety of the client. Waiver of liability form as per link attached to be signed by the client. <http://www.southcol.com/waiver-of-liability-release/>



Membership



South Col Founder Profile

Sujoy Das has been trekking and photographing in the Himalayas for more than thirty years.

His notable treks include: Winter ascent of Kala Pattar peak (Everest region) Dec 2003; Everest Base Camp 18,500 feet (2001); Thorung-la pass/Annapurna Circuit 17,746 feet (2000); Annapurna Base Camp 14,300 feet (1999); Gokyo Ri peak Everest region 18,275 feet (1998); Rupkund Lake, Garhwal 16,200 feet (1996); Kangchendzonga Base Camp North and Green Lakes 16,875 feet (1987); Dorji La peak North Sikkim 18,644 feet (1986); crossing of Lhonak-la pass North Sikkim (1987), Kangchenjunga Pangpema Base Camp 2019.

He has visited the Annapurna region a dozen times including two visits to the Base Camp and the entire circuit of Annapurna. He has trekked in the Everest region more than fifteen times including the winter of 2003-04. In the Eastern Himalaya he has trekked the Singalila ridge of Sandakphu and Phalut six times and made four visits to the alp of Dzongri in West Sikkim. In September 2009 he trekked across seven passes in Ladakh from the monastery of Lamayuru to Padum in Zaskar.

He has been an invited speaker at the Mussoorie Mountain Festival 2017 and Mountain Echoes - the Bhutan Literary Festival 2019.

He is the joint author and photographer of a number of books like Sikkim- A Travellers Guide, Nepal Himalaya - A Journey Through Time, Everest Reflections on the Solukhumbu, Lonely Planet - Nepal for the Indian Traveller. His essays and photographs have been published in books and magazines worldwide. To view his photographs of the Himalaya please visit www.sujoydas.com. He can be contacted at sujoyrdas@gmail.com



Om Mani Padme Hum!

Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus

