

# American Alpine Institute<sup>Ltd.</sup>

## CHO OYU 2007

### Expedition Notes

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During the Autumn season of 2007 the American Alpine Institute/Adventure Consultants alliance will operate its tenth expedition to Cho Oyu via the normal route from Tibet.

Of the world's fourteen 8,000 meter peaks, Cho Oyu has the highest success rate. This is due to a combination of factors including its easy access. Utilizing land transport to the mountain cuts down on the logistical strain that hampers many teams in the Himalaya. The normal route is not a technically difficult climb and access to the first mountain camp can be gained in trekking boots. However, it is important to recognize that Cho Oyu at 8,201 meters is still the sixth highest peak on the planet and, as such, is a demanding undertaking in even the most ideal conditions.



### **The Expedition Leader**

The expedition is being led by Mike Roberts, who led the AAI/Adventure Consultants Cho Oyu Expeditions in 2003 and 2005. Mike is an IFMGA International Guide and his experience is vast. He has summited Mount Everest twice (most recently in 2007) and led expeditions to Aconcagua in South America, Denali in Alaska (11 summits), Vinson Massif in Antarctica, Gasherbrum II in Pakistan and Muztagh Ata in Western China. He has also managed to fit in 14 seasons mountain and ski guiding in the Southern Alps of New Zealand, 10 seasons in Antarctica as a Field Leader / Guide to the USA Antarctic Program, has worked as a Professional Ski Patroller / Avalanche Forecaster and is a qualified Physiotherapist. Add Mike's calm and welcoming personality, and attention to detail to the picture and you have a very personable and experienced Guide.

Mike will be assisted by Steve Moffat, an NZMGA Assistant Ski and Mountain Guide from New Zealand. Steve guides for us on ascents and courses New Zealand, and has guided on our Aconcagua, Ama Dablam, Island Peak and Three Peaks Expeditions. In 2006 he guided Mount

Everest and was successful in reaching the top. All of our trip leaders to the 8000m peaks have extensive experience at high altitude and a proven record of safety, success and compatibility.

### **The route and how the expedition will operate**

The expedition commences from Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. From there we travel by plane to Lhasa where we are met by the staff from the Tibetan Mountaineering Association. There is time to sightsee in Lhasa, and we begin to acclimatize since Lhasa is at a height of 3540m. We then transfer to Chinese vehicles for the journey overland to the mountain. We stop for a few nights along the way to assist acclimatization as the vehicles ultimately take us to 4,800 meters. From the road's end a two-day trek, with yaks carrying the luggage, leads us to the base camp at 600 meters. This is a spectacular spot set across from the famous Nangpa La pass.

The route to Camp One follows the moraine up the main glacier and turns off to the east up a tributary glacier after a two-hour hike. After a steep climb up the scree and snow we are led to the camp at 6,200 meters. From Camp One, the route follows a moderate snow and ice ridge before leading through a small ice serac and out onto a broad plateau. Camp Two is situated at 7,200 meters in a 'football field' looking up at the summit region.

From Camp Two, a 30 degree snow climb leads directly up to Camp Three at 7,600 meters.

The summit climb from Camp Three will take around 12 hours return for most members and involves climbing through a short rock band just above the top camp before heading into an open couloir, which in turn leads to the summit plateau. A small team of Sherpas will accompany the expedition to provide the real 'carrying power' and ensure the high camps are well stocked for the summit climb. The climbing plan involves several trips up the mountain as far as Camp Two for acclimatization, punctuated by some rest days at the base camp.

The summit climb will take place at the end of September during the best weather window. Two bottles of oxygen will be available for each member for the summit climb. All members will be accompanied by guides and Sherpas during the summit day.

### **The other expedition members**

We get a wide range of experience levels on our trips and the expeditions are geared to accommodate this. People without a lot of high altitude experience often experience trepidation about their performance before a trip and the only way to find out how you will perform is by going to altitude. Increasingly we find that accomplished high altitude climbers are using our services so they can concentrate on their sponsorships rather than private expedition organizing.

We recommend to aspiring high altitude climbers that the best approach is to climb gradually higher peaks throughout your career so you can adjust to the requirements of altitude. However, anyone who is a strong and active mountaineer will most probably experience few problems at altitude under our supervision.

### **The level of climbing skills required**

There is no definite measure for assessing the required skill level to climb Cho Oyu so we prefer to discuss this on an individual basis. However, there are some broad guidelines that can be applied from the outset. A successful team member will have been visiting the mountains for at least three seasons and made ascents of peaks up to 18-20,000 feet (5,500 - 6,000 meters). It is quite common for members to have previously climbed Denali in Alaska, Aconcagua in South America, or various Mexican volcanoes as training for Cho Oyu. He/she will be familiar with crevasse travel techniques and have a good overall standard of fitness. Age itself is no barrier. To

date we have succeeded on Himalayan trips with members aged from 25 to 56 years of age.

A fierce determination and a burning desire to climb the mountain are essential prerequisites for this expedition. The guides and other expedition staff will provide the leadership, tactics and overall decision making required during the climb, but still you will have to physically put one foot in front of the other to climb to the top and back.

### Visas

Expedition members will be required to obtain visas for both Nepal and China. A Nepalese single entry visa is easily procured at Kathmandu Airport upon arrival. Chinese Embassies will not issue individual visas for Tibet without the proper paperwork from a Tibet based travel agency, in our case the Tibetan Mountaineering Association. For this reason it is easier to obtain your Chinese visa from the Chinese Embassy once you have arrived in Kathmandu. There is a one-day service available for this at a cost of US\$100, and this will take place on August 31. Our agent in Kathmandu will assist members with this task.

### Itinerary

August 30 to October 7 2007

- Aug 30 Arrive Kathmandu
- 31 Sightseeing in Kathmandu, get Chinese Visas
- Sep 1 Fly to Lhasa
- 2 Sightsee in Lhasa
- 3 Drive to Xigatse
- 4 Drive to Tingri
- 5 Rest day in Tingri
- 6 Drive to road end Base Camp
- 7 Rest/acclimatization at road end (4,800m)
- 8 Trek to valley camp (5,300m)
- 9 Trek to base camp (5,650m)
- 10 Rest at base camp/organize equipment
- 11-24 Establish high camps and acclimatize
- 27 –Oct 1 Summit climb
- Oct 2 Return to base camp
- 3 Pack equipment
- 4 Trek back to road end and drive to Tingri
- 5 Drive to Nepalese border
- 6 Drive to Kathmandu
- 7 Depart from Kathmandu

### The Expedition Fee

The cost of the expedition ex Kathmandu is US\$16,550. This is an inclusive cost and covers the following:

- Chinese government royalty fees
- All expedition organizational requirements
- All climbing and trekking permits
- Land transport in Tibet and Nepal
- Flight to Lhasa from Kathmandu
- All team equipment & two bottles of oxygen
- All expedition staff, including Sherpa support
- All food after departing Kathmandu and before arriving back in Kathmandu

- All supplies necessary to make a safe and strong bid for the summit
- Medical services

The expedition fee does not include the following:

- Air travel to and from Nepal
- Hotel accommodation and meals in Kathmandu
- Bottled drinks, showers or laundry at lodges (showers provided at Basecamp)
- Entry visa for Nepal (suggest getting 60 day multiple entry into Nepal on arrival into Kathmandu)
- Entry visa for China
- Personal clothing and equipment
- Personal insurance
- Gratuities to Guides and Sherpas
- Airport Taxes

### **Deposit**

A non-refundable deposit of US\$2,000 is payable to secure a place on the expedition.

### **Balance**

The balance of US\$14,550 is payable by 30 June 2007.

### **Cancellation & Refund Policy**

An expedition member may cancel his/her participation on the following basis:

A Prior to 30 July 2007 a refund of 50% of 30 June 2007 payment.

B After 30 July 2007 there will be no refunds.

*Team members should take out private insurance if they wish to be covered against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons.*

### **Team Membership**

The team will have a maximum size of 12 members and 3 guides. The base camp will be staffed by a Sherpa Sirdar/cook. A team of between 3 and 6 climbing Sherpas will carry loads and support the summit climb.

### **Food**

Food will be of the highest standard possible, given the remoteness of the situation. Please inform us if you have any special dietary requirements. Our base camp equipment and ample, nutritious meals are always the envy of other groups on the mountain!

### **Equipment List**

Expedition members will be sent a list detailing all necessary clothing and equipment to be individually provided.

### **Medical Examination**

Expedition members will be provided with a medical questionnaire and asked to visit their family physician and receive a full medical examination. This information will be sighted only by our medical adviser and treated with full confidentiality. Advice on immunizations will be provided at this time.

### **Documentation and photographs**

Expedition members will need to provide 6 passport photographs for various climbing and

trekking permits and a copy of their passport bio-data page.

### **The advantages of climbing with us**

The American Alpine Institute and Adventure Consultants are renowned for the quality of their service and strategy applied to high altitude expedition climbing. Our reputations are attributed to meticulous planning and experienced logistics coordination. We have a philosophy of investing in every expedition to offer our climbers the best possible chance of success. We employ strong and specialized Expedition leaders and Sherpa staff, who are some of the most pre-eminent in the industry. We pride ourselves on operating with small teams, the best back-up and support available. This includes nutritious and ample quantities of food, comfortable base camp facilities, reliable communications systems and the necessary medical back up.

Many of our expedition members come to us because they have seen us in action on a previous trip and decide to opt for our level of service and proven experience. Others return because they know we do our very best to make expeditions safe and successful.

### **How to join this expedition**

If you would like to join the expedition please contact us for an expedition application form or register on-line at <https://aai.cc/register.asp>. If you require more information please contact us at;

American Alpine Institute  
1515 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Ph 1 360-671-1505 Fax 1 360-734-8890  
Email [info@aai.cc](mailto:info@aai.cc)