

Ama Dablam 2019 The Bakery Team

The Ama Dablam team were privileged to participate in our expedition's puja ceremony at Base Camp, delivered by the local lama and orchestrated by our Sirdar Pemchhiri.

We enjoyed settled weather, trekking from Namche to Rivendell lodge, Deboche, followed by a day to Pheriche. Here we attended the High Altitude lecture given by volunteer Doctor Andy, of the Himalayan Rescue Association. We gained 5000m on Nangkartshang, then descended to Dingboche, the Summit lodge and an afternoon bakery run. Bakery visits for cappuccinos and cakes seems to top the itinerary, perhaps our team should call themselves 'The Bakery Half Dozen'.

From Dingboche we backtracked swiftly to the bridge over the Dudh Kosi, below Pangboche, and wound our way slowly up to Base Camp. We were greeted by our Sherpas Ang Rinji and Chhimi, along with our cook team of Kancha and Lambu. The boys had been busy preparing our excellent base camp, and Kancha impressed us with his expertise, serving up a delicious dal bhat and curry..

Fixed rope training saw everyone rehearse and refine their safety systems and techniques for protecting themselves on the mountain, ascending, traversing and descending.

Training was followed by a trek above Base Camp to gain the South West ridge and push beyond 5000m again, progressing our acclimatisation.

Acclimatisation at Base Camp prepared us for a rotation on the mountain, with nights at Yak camp and Camp One, and the chance to climb the granite ridge and the famous Yellow Tower, to tag Camp Two, before descending to Base Camp to recover.

The first night above Base Camp invariably comes with the discomfort of acclimatising, even having tagged Yak camp twice. Beyond this we ascended the first of the fixed lines to Camp 1, where most continued above for a couple of hours, enjoying the first real technicalities of scrambling up the South West ridge.

After a night at Camp 1 we all headed up the ridge again. Sherpas Rinji and Chhimi led the way to reach Camp 2, with Charlie and John, before descending to Camp 1 for a second night. Cory and Nick had two forays, helped by boiled potatoes and warm feet respectively. Marcela and Tony had a shorter outing on the lines with Pemchhiri, before descending to the luxuries of Base Camp and Kanchhama's cooking.

If all this up and down seems detailed, such is the reality as each individual climber finds their unique response to both acclimatising and the technicalities of the route.

After much needed and very much enjoyed showers, even if it's just a bucket of hot water in our shower tent, the team were ready to be refuelled. Our stroll to Pangboche for lunch added to Kanchhama's provision at Base Camp.

Ahead we looked to the mountain and the weather forecast for a window of opportunity.

There was a forecast of lighter summit winds in a few days, that offered us a chance, but a cold one. Each person too had to look to themselves to gauge the challenges ahead.

December 8th 2019, just as 2018, a weather window of opportunity opened for Jagged Globe's Bakery Team.

Have no doubts, the climb of Ama Dablam's South West ridge is an exacting challenge. With Camp 2 perched at near 6000m, it's a 2am start and straight into the steepness of rock and snow runnels up the Grey Tower.

This leads to the snow topped Mushroom ridge and an intricate weaving route through ice cliff barriers, bringing the temporary levelling of a small sized football pitch at 6300m.

The head wall offers a highway to the sky, safe passage to the right hand side of the Dablam serac. In recent years this line too has become more featured and intricate, with occasional rock outcrops and steeper pitches of snow ice.

For Tony reaching Camp 2 in good style was an achievement in its own right. Marcela got this far too, with a night to savour, lashed to the perch. An untimely bout of nausea put paid to poor Cory's summit bid, and this after tip toeing his way freely up the crux Yellow Tower rock pitch in his G2's. There'll be many more mountains for them all.

Into the cold night air Rinji led the way. Nick put all his Khumbu Climber experience and more into effect, casting all doubts aside, to not only reach the summit but descend all the way to Base Camp, a terrific personal achievement.

Following behind Pemba Dorje Sherpa, young John and Charlie progressed with good pace and tactics. A nine hour ascent saw us all in the summit, with time to savour the moment and allow the splendour of cloudless views fill our senses.

Careful checks on countless abseils, encouragement of one another and firm direction, kept our descent on track. A further night at Camp 2 was barely restful but with continued concentration the next morning, we regained Camp 1 and slid the last of the lines below it, hopped through the boulder field, to stroll the trekking ridge below Yak camp, and so to the safe haven of Base Camp.

All of this was only made possible by our support team of Sherpas Pemchhiri, Rinji, Chhimi and Pemba, along with the amazing help of Krishna, Lambu and Kanchhaman. Their efforts were awesome.

We were just a restful night and a six hour stroll from the bakeries of Namche. Stroll on Bakery Team.....stroll on!

Jamie

December 2019