

Makalu Base Camp



COUNTRIES VISITED: NEPAL

TRIP TYPE: Trekking
TRIP GRADE: Demanding
TRIP STYLE: Tea House

TRIP LEADER: Local Leader
GROUP SIZE: 2 - 10 people
NEXT DEPARTURE: 04 Apr 2021

This is a remote trek to the Base Camp of Mount Makalu the world's fifth highest mountain.

Our itinerary has been planned to allow for sufficient acclimatisation to the altitude and to maximise our time around Makalu Base Camp. The trail takes you from the humid lowlands near Tumlingtar on the Arun River through one of the least frequented areas of Nepal to Makalu Base Camp. The trek passes a large diversity of ecosystems and cultures, on lower sections of the trek there are Rai villages and at higher altitudes Sherpa villages.

We cross Shipton La at 4,216m into the remote and beautiful Barun river valley before arriving at Makalu Base Camp. Along the trail there are superb views of the south face of Makalu as well Chamlang and Kanchenjunga. Makalu Barun National Park was established in 1992 as Nepal's eighth national park covering 2,330 sq km. This area is a remote wilderness containing some of the last remaining areas of pristine forests and alpine meadows in Nepal. The area receives few foreign trekkers due to its relative inaccessibility.

REASONS TO CHOOSE US

- The Mountain Company organised a successful Makalu to Everest expedition in April/ May 2011 led by Roland Hunter (also in Spring 2009 he climbed to the summit of Mount Makalu without supplemental oxygen or Sherpa support). As a result of these trips we know the Makalu area well.

- We are Himalayan trekking specialists and we have been operating trips in Nepal for many years. Roland Hunter, owner and founder of The Mountain Company, has modified this itinerary based on his first-hand experience of the Makalu region.
- We work with some of the best mountain leaders and guides with deep knowledge and experience of the Himalaya and Karakoram.
- Our approach to organising trips in the Himalayas has helped The Mountain Company win awards such as 2018 Gold Award as AITO Tour Operator of the Year and 2015 Bronze Award as AITO Tour Operator of the Year.
- Our itinerary has been carefully designed to ensure sufficient acclimatisation as well as including a number of spare days to maximise the chance of crossing the passes.
- Western branded tents are used for all of our camping treks in Nepal. These are high quality three person domed tents with plenty of space for two people sharing plus gear.
- The Mountain Company will receive bespoke weather forecasts for the Makalu region from EverestWeather.com and from our in house forecasting throughout the duration of this trek.
- We send a Thuraya satellite phone on all of our treks in Nepal. It is essential for your guide to have reliable communications with us for logistics, planning and group safety. We use GPS on Thuraya satellite phone to upload daily your location on to Google Maps so your friends and family can track your progress during the trek.
- We provide all porters with windproof jacket & trousers, crampons and shelter as per International Porter Protection Group ("IPPG") guidelines.
- We bring a comprehensive first aid kit plus high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines. There will also be a portable altitude chamber (PAC or Gamow bag).
- The Mountain Company is an accredited trek operator in the Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) Alliance, this is a group of organisations and individuals who voluntarily adopt their Codes of Conduct.
- Pre trip support will be given by our Operations team with first hand knowledge of Makalu Base Camp trek. During high season we have a TMC representative from our UK Operations team based in Kathmandu.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Internal flight to/from Kathmandu and Tumlingtar.
- All transfers including airport collections.
- One day sightseeing in Kathmandu with Nepalese cultural guide and private vehicle.
- Twin share room at Hotel Tibet and Hotel Ambassador in Kathmandu.
- Breakfast only in Kathmandu, all meals included while on trek.
- Dormitory room with common bathroom while on trek. We also send along a tent as a back-up in case you prefer to sleep outside or if the rooms at the lodge are full.
- All trekking arrangements including permits and fees, trekking guide(s) and porter(s). We provide one trekking guide for group size of two people and two guides for a group size of three people and three guides for group size of six people plus.
- Bespoke weather forecasts for Makalu region from EverestWeather.com throughout the duration of this trek.
- Thuraya satellite phone to ensure our guides have reliable communications with us for logistics, planning and group safety.
- Makalu trekking map given to you on arrival to Kathmandu.
- Rubberised luggage tags posted to you before departure.
- Full financial protection for all monies paid to us through our membership of Association of Bonded Travel Operators Trust (our ABTOT membership number is 5365) and having an Air Travel Organiser's Licence (our ATOL number is 10921).
- Pre departure support and advice from The Mountain Company by email, phone or face to face meetings in London. After booking with us we will send our comprehensive "Nepal Pre Trip Information" notes.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flight to/from Kathmandu.
- Travel & trekking insurance.
- Nepal visa for 30 days at US\$40 (approx £25).
- Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu.
- Personal clothing & equipment, please see the Appendix for suggested kit list.

- Tips (guidance on amounts included in our “Nepal Pre Trip Information” notes).
- Other items not listed in “What is included”.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU (1,400M)

Arrive in Kathmandu

No meals

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

You will be met on arrival at Kathmandu airport and driven back to the hotel. Please provide travel plans on booking and we will arrange the pick-up and transfer.

DAY 2: BRIEFING AND PREPARATIONS IN KATHMANDU

Breakfast

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

A full expedition briefing will be given in the morning then in the afternoon you can purchase last minute items in Kathmandu, pack your bags etc.

DAY 3: FLY TO TUMLINGTAR AND DRIVE TO NUM (1,500M)

Fly to Tumlingtar

Drive to Num (4 hours driving)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

The flight to Tumlingtar takes about 45 minutes, on arrival we will have lunch at a local lodge then we take jeeps along a rough road to the busy market town of Khandbari then we continue driving along the increasingly rough road passing terraced fields and then further up through forest to the village of Chichila located at the top of a ridge. From here the jeep track follows the ridge where on a clear day there are further fine views of Makalu and Chamlang. After reaching the small Sherpa village of Mure and we then descend to the village of Num. Num is set on a promontory above the Arun river with good views over the valley towards Sedua village.

DAY 4: TREK TO SEDUA (1,540M)

Walking 4km (5 to 6 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

From Num we descend steeply through terraced fields and jungle to the Arun river at an altitude of 650m. We cross the suspension bridge over the fast flowing Arun river and then have a steep climb up to the village of Sedua. The entry checkpoint for Makalu-Barun National Park is in this village.

DAY 5: TREK TO TASHIGAON (2,070M)

Walking 7.5km (4 to 5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

We continue climbing out of the valley through rhododendron and bamboo then start traversing through terraced rice fields to Manigaon village. From here the trail contours through forest and farmland to reach the school at the entrance to Tashigaon village. Our camp is in the higher part of the village next to several teahouse lodges. Tashigaon is the last village until we get to Chhukung in the Everest as there are no permanent settlements in Barun valley.

DAY 6: TREK TO KHONGMA (3,560M)

Walking 7.5km (6 to 7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

From Tashigaon there is a steady climb through forest, and after a while, it starts to open out with more rhododendrons until we reach a few huts at Chipla. We camp further along the ridge to Khongma where there is a teahouse lodge with tent terraces.

DAY 7: REST & ACCLIMATISATION DAY AT KHONGMA (3,560M)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

After a rapid ascent of 1,400m yesterday it is essential to take a rest day to help your acclimatisation before crossing Shipton La (4,216m) tomorrow. We will organise an optional morning walk along Khongma Danda (ridge) towards Shipton La, this is useful to help the acclimatisation process by "climbing high and sleeping low". There is a superb view from Khongma looking eastwards towards Kanchenjunga.

DAY 8: TREK TO DEBOTAY (3,800M) VIA SHIPTON LA (4,125M)

Walking 4km (6 to 7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

From Khongma the trail climbs steeply along switchbacks with superb views of Makalu and Chamlang and also over to Kanchenjunga in the east. We continue walking along a stone staircase through rhododendrons before reaching Shipton La (4,216m) followed by a descent to Kalo Pokhari lake. We make a climb to Keke La (4,150m) after this final pass we walk down through a beautiful valley Debotay where there is a basic lodge cleared among the rhododendron forest.

DAY 9: TREK TO YANGLE KHARKA (3,700M)

Walking 7.5km (5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

After leaving Debotay the trail traverses along the steep sides of the Barun Valley and crosses a number of landslide areas. On either side of the river there are huge rock walls towering overhead and views of Peak 6 and 7 down the valley. Further along the valley widens and near Yangle Kharka there is a large flat grassy area with a basic teahouse where we camp for the night.

DAY 10: TREK TO LANGMALE KHARKA (4,450M)

Walking 7.5km (4 to 5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

Today we pass a number of yak pastures (kharkas) and herder huts with a number of different names and varying altitudes depending on which map or guidebook you read. As we are now approaching high altitude we limit our rate of ascent to ensure your body has necessary time to acclimatise. We camp at the grazing area called Langmale Kharka where there is a new lodge and terraces cleared for camping.

DAY 11: ACCLIMATISATION DAY AT LANGMALE KHARKA (4,450M)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

Today we have a shorter day to help our acclimatisation before walking up to Makalu Base Camp tomorrow. There are superb views of the Himalayan mountains throughout the day so take your time and enjoy the walk you will see Peak 3, 4, and 5 as well as Chamlang.

DAY 12: TREK TO MAKALU BASE CAMP (4,900M)

Walking 9.5km (5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

On approaching Sherson the south east ridge of Mount Makalu comes into view and as one approaches Base Camp the stunning view of its south face is revealed. We set up camp at Makalu Base Camp where we intend to stay for two nights.

DAY 13: DAY WALK NEAR MAKALU BASE CAMP (4,900M)

Day walk from Makalu Base Camp

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

We will arrange an optional walk on the slopes on east side of Makalu Base Camp, this is well worth doing not only to help your acclimatisation but also for the good views of Everest, Lhotse and of course Makalu. The walk will take about 5 hours return and reaches an altitude of 5,300m.

DAY 14: TREK TO YANGLE KHARKA (3,700M)

Walking 15km (7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

We descend down the same trail to Yangle Kharka.

DAY 15: TREK TO DEBOTAY (3,800M)

Walking 7.5km (6 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

We follow the same trail back to Debotay.

DAY 16: TREK TO TASHIGAON (2,070M)

Walking 12km (8 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

We cross over Shipton La to Khongma and then descend the trail to Tashigaon.

DAY 17: TREK TO NUM (1,500M)

Walking 11.5km (8 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

We descend on the same trail to cross Arun river and ascend steeply to Num.

DAY 18: DRIVE TO TUMLINGTAR (285M)

Drive to Tumlingtar (4 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Teahouse lodge

Today we take jeeps along a rough road to Chichila and onto the busy market town of Khandbari then we continue driving along the increasingly rough road passing terraced fields to Tumlingtar.

DAY 19: FLY TO KATHMANDU

Fly to Kathmandu

Breakfast

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

We take a mid-morning flight to Kathmandu and after arrival are driven to our hotel for the last night of the trip.

DAY 20: SIGHTSEEING IN KATHMANDU

Sightseeing in Kathmandu

Breakfast

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

This is a day to explore Kathmandu where we organise guided sightseeing to the Buddhist and Hindu sights in Kathmandu, to Kathmandu's Durbar Square, Swayambunath - the Buddhist monkey temple and Pashupatinath - a sacred Hindu temple complex on the banks of the Bagmati River.

Three major towns are located in the valley, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, each having a great artistic and architectural tradition. Kathmandu is the capital and the largest city in the country. Patan, the second largest is separated from Kathmandu by a river. Bhaktapur, the third largest, is towards the eastern end of the valley and its relative isolation is reflected in its slower pace and more distinctly mediaeval atmosphere.

In the Kathmandu Valley the landscape is dramatically sculpted by the contours of the paddy fields. The towns and villages are alive with the colours of farm produce, ranging from pyramids of golden grain to the vivid reds of chilli peppers laid out on mats to dry in the sun. In the streets and towns there is a constant bustle of activity, especially in the bazaars and markets where the farmers sell their vegetables and fruit. You should get back to the hotel after your sightseeing tour around mid-afternoon and the rest of the day is free for you to explore the city further and pack bags ready for the start of the trek the following morning. You can leave a bag at the hotel with items you will not need on the trek.

DAY 21: FLY BACK HOME

Fly home

Breakfast

Transfer from hotel to Kathmandu airport for your flight back home.

DATES & PRICES

2021

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
04 Apr 2021 to 24 Apr 2021	Local Leader	US\$2,595pp	US\$240pp / NA	2 Left to Guarantee
03 Oct 2021 to 23 Oct 2021	Local Leader	US\$2,595pp	US\$240pp / NA	2 Left to Guarantee

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

A Typical Day On Camping Trek

A TYPICAL DAY ON CAMPING TREK

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the assistant guides. Before heading over to the mess tent for breakfast you will pack your overnight gear into your duffel bag. During breakfast the tents will be packed away and, after the porters have arranged their loads, they will set off on the trail in the cool of the morning. After breakfast, probably between 7am and 8am, we start walking. The pace of the trek is leisurely with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos and explore the local villages. Lunch will be around 11am at a spot by the side of the trail and is prepared for us by the cooks.

There is more walking after lunch and normally you will get into camp by mid afternoon with the tents already put up by the local staff. In the evening a three course meal is served in the mess tent around 6-7pm. After supper the international leader will discuss the plan for the next day with the group. People might stay in the mess tent chatting about the day's events for a while before retiring to their tent for the night.

Food provided on Camping Trek

While on the trek, the cook will provide good quality food in sufficient quantities. For breakfast you are likely to get porridge or cereal, toast or chapatis, omelettes and a range of hot drinks. For our camping treks in Nepal we provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine. On arrival to camp in the afternoon you will be given tea and biscuits and a three course meal will follow later in the evening.

Clothing and Equipment List

For the safety of everyone in the group and to help ensure a successful trek, you are required to have the following items in our clothing and equipment list tailored for Makalu Base Camp trek.

As a reminder, the weather on this trek will vary season to season and day to day as you ascend to higher elevations. During the first couple of days on Makalu Base Camp trek you are likely to experience quite warm conditions and you will experience the coldest temperatures at Makalu Base Camp at an altitude of 4,900m where overnight lows can get down to around -15°C.

Each trekker should bring one backpack for gear required during the day. Your day backpack will contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and snacks. **The maximum weight allowance for back pack is 5kg.** The rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel or kit bag will be carried by a porter. **The maximum weight allowance for your duffel bag is 15kg.** Please ensure that your bag is marked clearly on the outside for easy identification.

We suggest you print the kit list and tick items off as you pack them then weigh your kit bag before you come on trek.

Footwear:

- Walking boots. A pair of water repellent boots with ankle support.
- Walking socks.
- Trainers or trail shoes. Can be used in lodge in the evenings.

Trekking gear for crossing the passes:

- Trekking poles (Black Diamond with "Flick Lock" are best). Having two poles is mandatory as required for your safety on steep and loose sections of the trail and for walking through deep snow higher up.
- Kahtoola Microspikes or YakTrax XTRs. These are for your safety and security when descending passes if snowy or icy conditions, for more information please take a look at: <https://kahtoola.com/product/microspikes/> and <https://www.yaktrax.com/product/xtr>
- A pair of knee high gaiters used to keep boots dry if walking through deep snow or on wet ground.

Clothing:

- Waterproof jacket and trousers (goretex or similar). For use if it rains or snows during the trek.
- Trekking trousers. Minimum two pairs of trousers.
- Long sleeve shirts (not cotton). Minimum two shirts.
- Micro fleece.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece.
- Sleeveless/ gilet or body warmer type fleece. This will help keep your core warm while not bulking when layering up. Gilet fleece can be used in combination with base layers, other fleeces and down jacket to provide maximum warmth and insulation.
- Thermals or base layer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
- Fleece pants. To be worn around camp or added as an additional layer when the temperatures start to drop higher up.
- Medium weight down jacket (eg Nuptse jacket by The North Face)

Handwear:

- Fleece gloves.
- Warms mittens and/or gloves.

Headwear:

- Wool or fleece hat.
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf. (eg. Buff Headwear check out <http://www.buffwear.com>)
- Bring extra batteries.
- The lenses need to be Category 4 rated and should have side protection or wraparound design to prevent light getting through to your eyes that could cause sun blindness.

Personal Equipment:

- Sleeping bag. Maximum overnight lows at Thorung Phedi will be around -15 Celsius. Note: it is possible to rent a bag in Kathmandu from Shonas Rental.
- Fleece or silk liner for your sleeping bag. A liner protects your sleeping bag from getting dirty and helps by adding extra insulation to keep you warm at night.
- Recommended size is 30 to 40 litres as you need to have enough space to carry water bottles, camera, snacks and extra clothing such as down jacket etc. It is also a good idea to bring a rain cover to keep the contents dry.
- Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised. Or even better are fold- drybags such as from Exped.
- Two water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best).
- Sunscreen and lipsalve with a high SPF.
- Insect repellent.
- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira).
- Favourite snack food.
- Books, ipod and cards etc.
- Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
- Insurance certificate.
- Earplugs (optional).
- Baby wipes (optional).
- Hand sanitizer (optional).

Travelling:

- Duffle bag or large backpack for your personal gear on the trek (carried by a porter). Bring a small combination padlock to secure the bag.
- Travel clothes. You will need casual clothing for air travel days and time spent in Kathmandu.
- Toiletry bag include toilet paper, soap, towel, toothbrush, etc.

Personal first aid kit:

Note: we provide a comprehensive group first aid kit but please bring personal medications and other items you might use regularly such as:

- Any personal medications.
- Blister treatment (Compeed patches are the best).
- Rehydration powder eg Dioralyte.
- Analgesics (paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin).
- Plasters and zinc oxide tape.
- Throat lozenges.
- Diamox (helps with acclimatisation).

Threat and risk assessment

THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT FOR MAKALU BASE CAMP

Participants should be aware trekking, mountaineering and travelling in a developing country are activities that involve a risk of personal injury or death. As a condition of booking you must accept these risks and be responsible for your own actions and involvement.

Adventure travel requires an open and flexible attitude. You may experience extreme conditions, unpredictable weather and last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. The ability to work in team is an important aspect of all of our trips.

As a part of our planning process we have performed a detailed threat and risk assessment for our Makalu Base Camp trek. It is worth pointing out all of our trips have a certain degree of risk, this is of course part of the attraction of adventure travel and why so many people choose to join this type of holiday. However by identifying the potential hazards on Makalu Base Camp we can assess the level of risk and implement control measures to reduce this happening.

Our full threat and risk assessment for Makalu Base Camp is available to clients on request. For your

information we have listed below a summary of the significant risks and hazards identified by us:

- Falls and trips resulting in physical injury eg. slipping on ice or falling off the path.
- Altitude illness including but not limited to AMS, HACE and HAPE.
- Getting lost or becoming separated from group eg. crossing Shipton La pass in whiteout.
- Severe bad weather and conditions when camping.
- Climatic injuries (dehydration, sun burn, heat exhaustion, hypothermia or heat stroke).
- Crossing a river with no bridge resulting in drowning and/ or a fall.
- Rock fall and landslides eg walking in Barun valley.
- Snow and ice avalanches eg crossing Shipton La pass.
- Lightning strike.
- Wildlife, pack animals (eg. donkeys or horses) or stray dogs. Pack animals have been known to knock people off the path. Dogs can attack and bite, we advise you discuss rabies vaccination with your doctor.
- Earthquake.
- Risk of fire in the hotel or lodge.
- Endemic local diseases. We advise you discuss vaccinations with your doctor before departure.
- Physiological injury such as heart attack, appendicitis, hernia, toothache etc. in a remote area.
- Road traffic or flight accident [*see paragraph "Tumlingtar flight" for further information about STOL flights*].
- Contaminated food and/ or water.

This trip visits a remote area where you are away from normal emergency services and medical facilities. In case of a serious injury requiring hospitalisation evacuation could take up to several days and may impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the most usual means of evacuation, however they are not always available or they may be hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

Internal Flights

INTERNAL FLIGHTS

British Foreign & Commonwealth Office ("FCO") travel advice to Nepal states that "STOL airstrips in Nepal are among the most remote and difficult to land on in the world and are a challenge for even the most technically proficient pilots and well-maintained aircraft." For their latest advice please take a look at their [Safety & Security section under Air Travel](#).

There have been a number of recent air accidents in Nepal and in December 2013 The European Union banned all airlines based in Nepal from flying in the 28-nation bloc under the latest changes to a list of unsafe carriers. For more information on Nepal's air safety profile take a look at [Aviation Safety Network](#).

Weather and climate

WEATHER AND CLIMATE FOR MAKALU BASE CAMP

The traditional trekking season in Nepal is late September to May, with October and November generally recognised as having the best weather. Spring is also a popular time of year with warmer weather and the advantage of seeing spring flowers and rhododendrons in bloom.

This trek will have a wide range of temperatures depending on the altitude and the time of day. In the mountains between 1,000m and 3,500m the nights will be cool, normally around 5°C, and during the day temperatures sometimes rise to 25°C. At higher altitudes temperatures range from about 15°C to -15°C.

ACCOMMODATION

HOTEL TIBET IN KATHMANDU



Hotel Tibet is located in Lazimpat next to the Radisson and is our usual hotel for our standard trips in Nepal.

We have used Hotel Tibet for over 15 years and our previous clients enjoy staying at this property due to its good location, comfortable rooms and high level of service. There is a garden terrace next to the restaurant on the ground floor and the roof terrace with the Yeti Bar overlooking the city.

CAMPING IN NEPAL



We use both Mountain Hardwear Trango 3.1s and Quechua tents for our camping treks in Nepal.

Notes downloaded on: 06-07-2020

