


MAKALU HIGH BASE CAMP TREK INCLUDING SHIPTON LA

- Grade:** Strenuous 
- Land-only duration:** 27 days Kathmandu - Kathmandu
- Trekking days:** 22
- Maximum altitude:** 5200m, with an option to 6170m
- Minimum numbers:** Requires just 4 participants to guarantee these departures at the advertised price.
- Dates and prices:** Our latest dates and prices list is available at www.catreks.com or from the CAT office.



Makalu High Base camp (Andy Norris)



The world's fifth highest mountain, 8463m Makalu, forms the eastern shoulder of the mighty Khumbu Massif. Possibly meaning 'Great Black One', the mountain was first climbed by the French in 1955. The approach to its base camp is reminiscent of early Himalayan expeditions, taking trekkers through a wild and sparsely inhabited region that is seldom seen by outsiders. On the approach route, several days are spent in the Arun Valley, an area of eastern Nepal that sees few westerners yet is, in many respects, ideally suited to trekking. The mighty Arun River has its origins in Tibet, north of Everest. One of Nepal's largest rivers, it cuts a deep gorge through the Himalaya on its route south to the Ganges plain. Its densely forested valley, believed to be the deepest in the world, supports an incredible diversity of flora and is inhabited by Rai, Limbu, Chhetri and Brahmin villagers.

Our trek starts at Tumlingtar from where we follow a ridge high above the Arun Valley. After several days on the trail and distant views of Makalu and Chamlang, we descend to cross the Arun River and reach the village of Seduwa. After a rest day we set off again and the frequency of settlements tails off as we pass the last villages on our route. The approach to the base camp takes us over Shipton La, a tough pass which offers sensational views of Makalu and Chamlang. Following the upper Barun Valley we enter the Makalu-Barun National Park, which is known for its abundant bird populations and varied but elusive mammal species, among them snow leopard, forest leopard, red panda, grey wolf, Himalayan black bear and musk and barking deer. Making our way up the valley, we reach first the low base camp, where we acclimatise for a day before ascending to the high base camp near the foot of the Chago Glacier. A free day in the area allows those who have fully acclimatised the chance to climb a 6170m peak which affords wonderful views of the whole region.

Highlights of the trek are the lush and dramatic scenery of the Arun Valley, the wilderness of the Makalu-Barun National Park and the stark beauty of Makalu, its glaciers and awesome granite south face. It is with good reason that many people consider this to be one of the finest treks in Nepal. The trek is graded strenuous because of its length, and because of the time spent at high altitude. To enjoy it fully, you need to be a fit, regular walker with ideally some previous trekking experience.

• Land-only prices:

The cost of flights, in particular those to Nepal, are less predictable than they used to be. Airlines now request full payment upfront. As a result, we will quote you a land-only cost, and quote separately for the cheapest flights we can find at the time of your booking. We will, however, require full payment for the flights prior to booking them. If you prefer to search for alternative flights yourself, we can sell you the trek at the land-only price.

• Important note – minimum numbers:

Before booking flights, please note that this trip requires a minimum of 4 trekkers before we can guarantee the departure at the advertised price. Please note that should you decide to book your own flights, it is essential that you check with the Community Action Treks office to ensure that the departure is guaranteed before committing financially to any flights or travel arrangements.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

Walking and journey times are approximate

- Day 1 Arrive Kathmandu**
Transfer to hotel. Rest of the day free.
- Day 2 Free in Kathmandu**
Explore the fascinating city of Kathmandu, with its temples and markets, or take an optional excursion (can be booked locally through our Nepal office) into the Kathmandu Valley.
- Day 3 Fly to Tumlingtar 460m to Khandbari 1050m
3 / 4 hours walking**
On arrival we start trekking along the main trade route to Khandbari 1050m, a bustling market town and the last of any size we will encounter on our trek. After an hour on the flat we climb through bamboo stands and pipaal (bo) trees to reach Khandbari, which is home to Chhetris, Newars, Tamangs and a few Sherpas. Many of the rural houses in the area are made of mud and thatch.
- Day 4 Khandbari to Chichira 1900m
5 / 6 hours walking**
We start with a climb of an hour and a half to Manebhanjyang followed by a further 900m to the plateau that separates the Arun River from its tributary, the Sabha. After lunch at Bhotebas we climb a further 100m to a 1900m pass, where we may enjoy spectacular views of Makalu, Mera Peak, Chamlang and many others. After a further hour and a half of contouring we reach our camp at Chichira 1900m, a community of five houses. Four of the families are Tamangs, while the fifth is a Christian Chhetri family.
- Day 5 Chichira to Num 1510m
6 / 7 hours walking**
Leaving Chichira we walk through rhododendron forests and bamboo stands. Starting our walk in the early morning we will enjoy a chorus of bird song. During much of the day will be crossing and re-crossing the ridge with views of Makalu to the north. After lunch we reach Mure, a small Sherpa village 1943m, from where we descend to Num 1510m, for our overnight camp.
- Day 6 Num to Seduwa 1600m
7 / 8 hours walking**
A strenuous day. We cut down into the dense jungles of the Arun Valley, descending 650m to cross the turbulent river by a spectacular suspension bridge, before climbing up the other side, to Seduwa 1600m.
- Day 7 Seduwa to Tashigaon 2050m
6 hours walking**
We continue climbing out of the valley, through dense forests of rhododendron, birch and bamboo which are especially rich in flora and fauna. We camp at Tashigaon 2050m, the last important village on the route.
- Day 8 Acclimatisation day at Tashigaon**
We have an acclimatisation day at Machermo, and a local walk to gain height during the day is recommended, returning to spend a second night at the same altitude. This is a very important aspect of our trek and will undoubtedly assist with the success, as well as with our enjoyment of it.
- Day 9 Tashigaon to Kongma 3500m
6 / 7 hours walking**
A long and steady climb but the terrain starts to open out, with less forest and better views of the mountains. Bamboo and rhododendron cover the slopes of the ridge we climb to reach our camp at Kongma 3500m.
- Day 10 Kongma to Mumbuk 3400m
6 hours walking**
A day of spectacular scenery with views of Chamlang 7319m and Makalu from the Shipton La 4217m. With its lakes and open heathland, the scenery at the pass is strangely reminiscent of that of the Lake District. After time at the pass enjoying the views, we descend back into the forest and camp at Mumbuk 3400m.
- Day 11 Mumbuk to Yangle Kharka 3540m
6 / 7 hours walking**
We make our way along the steep side of the Barun Valley. The route may become more challenging as the trails here are little used, except by yak herders whose huts dot the valley slopes. We camp by one of the huts at Yangle Kharka, above the river 3540m.
- Day 12 Yangle Kharka to lower Barun Glacier
4300m 5 hours walking**
We cross the Barun River over a rickety bridge and then climb steeply out of the valley to the shelter at Ripock Kharka. Weather permitting we should get good views of Pyramid Peak, Chamalang and any others as we make way up towards the lower Barun Glacier. Camp is at one of the herders' shelters 4300m.
- Day 13 Lower Barun Glacier to Base Camp 5000m
4 hours walking**
The last day before base camp is one of constantly looking to Makalu for inspiration. Visible long before we reach it base camp should perhaps be called Makalu Sanctuary, as it is surrounded by peaks. The Tibetan border is just kilometres away to the north and east.
- Day 14 Acclimatisation day**
It is important to spend today acclimatising at Makalu base camp 5000m, a pleasant grassy spot. The impressive south face of Makalu can be seen in its entirety just 3 miles away. Sunrise and sunset against these giant mountains can be very spectacular though we

have the whole day to enjoy the peaceful solitude of the place, exploring at leisure. In the remarkably clear air, there may be wonderful opportunities for photography.

Day 15 Lower BC to Advanced Base Camp
We ascend to advanced base camp via the Barun Glacier to camp near the foot of the Chago Glacier, on the western edge of the twin cirque formed by Chago 6860m, Kangchungtse 7640m and Makalu 8463m.

Day 16 Climb
Today, weather and acclimatisation permitting, we have the chance to climb a 6170m peak which affords wonderful views of the Chago Glacier and the peaks of Makalu and Kangchungtse.

Day 17 Return to Base Camp.

Days 18 – 24 Return to Tumlingtar

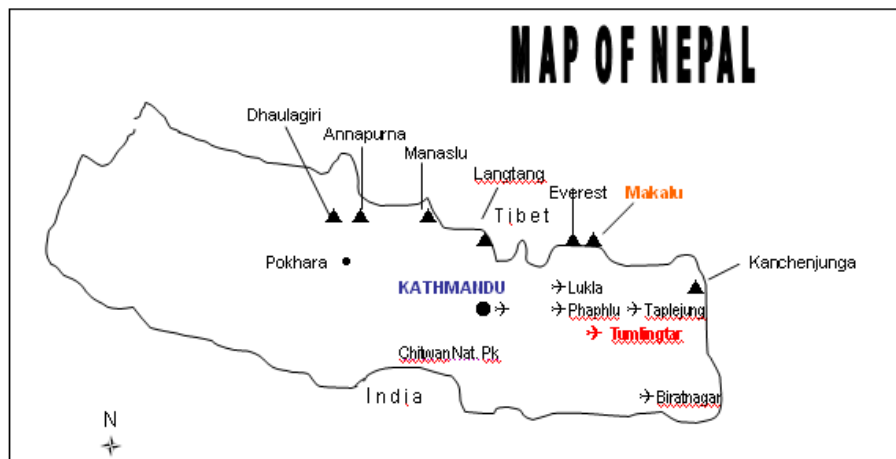
The return trek to Tumlingtar. Though we retrace our steps, a journey is never quite the same in reverse and there may be the chance to renew acquaintances made on the approach walk, or photograph scenes missed the first time.

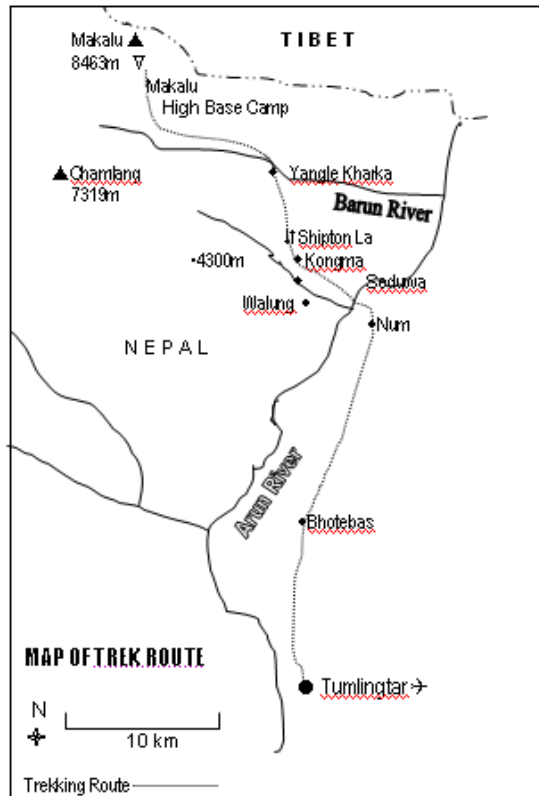
Day 25 Fly to Kathmandu
We fly from Tumlingtar to Kathmandu.

Day 26 Free day in Kathmandu
A free day in Kathmandu at leisure. Optional excursions (at extra cost, bookable locally) may be taken or you can shop for the many fine crafts.

Day 27 Depart Nepal
Transfer to Kathmandu airport for international flights.

Please note that the itinerary is subject to weather and local conditions and that flights in and out of Tumlingtar can be affected. Whilst we expect that the trek will run as per the above itinerary, participants should realise there is a possibility of changes being necessary, and that this itinerary is more prone to logistical changes than some of our other itineraries.





The Price Includes:

- Return flights between Kathmandu and Tumblingtar, including departure taxes for internal flights where applicable.
- Transfers between Kathmandu airport and hotel accommodation
- Accommodation for 4 nights in Kathmandu in rooms with shower and w.c. and inclusive of breakfast
- Participation in the trek as per itinerary inclusive of full board, camping equipment (not sleeping bags), services of porters (15 kg load per participant); Sirdar (head guide) and kitchen staff; trekking permit and National Park entrance fee

Not included:

- International flights
- Nepalese visa (please refer to our document "Preparing for your trek: Nepal" for latest prices)
- Meals other than breakfast in Kathmandu.
- Travel Insurance
- Tips
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls and souvenirs (allow approximately £250 spending money)

Options:

- Extra nights are available in Kathmandu in our group hotel, and in Pokhara in our choice of accommodation.
- Extension packages can also be organized in Nepal, Tibet or Bhutan. Please refer to our Himalayan extensions dossier for more details. Extensions should be arranged to booking international flights.