



COMMUNITY ACTION TREKS

Makalu and Shipton La Trek

A trek off the beaten track with dramatic scenery.

NEPAL





GRADE
DEMANDING

MAX ALTITUDE
5150m

TREKKING DAYS
18

TRIP LENGTH
25 days

MIN PEOPLE
4

Makalu and Shipton La Trek

The world's fifth highest mountain, Makalu 8463m, 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.

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GRADE
STRENUOUS

MAX ALTITUDE
5550m

TREKKING DAYS
18

TRIP LENGTH
23 days

MIN PEOPLE
4

Makalu and Shipton La Trek

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 formidable 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 demanding 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 previous trekking experience.



TREKKING WINDOW
MAR - MAY & OCT - DEC

PRICE

£3050 per person* (land only price - see last page)

*prices subject to change



Makalu and Shipton La Trek

Itinerary

CAMPING TREK

walking times are approximate

Day 1

Arrive Kathmandu

Namaste! And welcome to Kathmandu, the colourful capital of Nepal where ornately carved balconies mingle with beautiful shrines and temples. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting on arrival at the exit gate of Kathmandu airport. Our staff will welcome you with CAT's palm plate and take you to your hotel. For the rest of the day you can relax at the hotel or take a short evening walk around local markets on your own.

Day 2

Free day 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, Drive to Num 1560m (35 mins flight, 3-hour drive).

On arrival in Tumlingtar we start driving along the main trade route to Num, (where we meet our guide and porters), 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 Pipal (Bo) trees to reach Num via 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

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.





Day 5

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, the last important village on the route.

Day 6

Acclimatisation day at Tashigaon.

We have an acclimatisation day at Tashigaon. We recommend a local walk to gain height during the day, 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 7

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.

Day 8

Kongma to Mumbuk 3400m (6 hours walking).

A day of spectacular scenery with views of Chamlang 7319m and Makalu 8463m 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.

Day 9

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.



Day 10

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, Chamlang and any others as we make our way up towards the lower Barun Glacier. Camp is at one of the Yak herders' shelters.

Day 11

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 12

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 13

Lower BC to Advanced Base Camp 4870m (4-5 hours walking).

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 14

Climb Today, weather and acclimatisation permitting.

Today 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 15

Return to Lower Base Camp. 5000m (4-5 hours walking).

Day 16

Return to Yangle Kharka 3540m (6-7 hours walking).

Today we make our way back to Yangle Kharka. 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 17

Yangle Kharka to Mumbuk 3400m (6-7 hours walking).

We walk on a flat surface alongside a small river, then after we cross the river, we ascend to Mumbuk (Forest Camp).

Day 18

Mumbuk to Kongma 3500m (6 hours walking).

Today we have the views of Shipton La and Chamlang once again. We also pass a small, beautiful lake.

Day 19

Kongma to Tashigaon 2050m (5 hours walking).

We descend from Kongma down to Dhara Kharka, where we'll stop for a cup of tea. We then continue to descend to Tashigaon, which is quite a big Sherpa village. You can enjoy fresh organic vegetables and fresh meat here.





Day 20

Tashigaon to Seduwa 1600m (4-5 hours walking).
Today we retrace our steps back to Seduwa.

Day 21

Seduwa to Num 1560m (7-8 hours walking).
It's a long, fairly steep descent, mainly on stone steps, all the way down to the Arun River at 770m. It will be feeling very warm now as we head deep into the forest lower down. We cross the river and endure the 800m climb all the way back to Num. We will have lunch at a tea house approximately 300m below Num. You may get the chance to have local organic bananas on the way to Num.

Day 22

Drive to Tumlingtar 460m (3 hour drive).
Today we drive to Tumlingtar where you can celebrate your successful trek with your guide and porters.

Day 23

Fly to Kathmandu.
We fly from Tumlingtar to Kathmandu. The rest of the day is free for packing, last-minute shopping or relaxing in the hotel.



Day 24

Free day in Kathmandu.

A day to explore Kathmandu and do some last-minute shopping.

Day 25

Depart Nepal.

Transfer to Kathmandu airport.



The price includes on a camping basis:

- Transfers between Kathmandu airport and hotel accommodation
- Flights to and from Tumlingtar
- Accommodation for 4 nights in Kathmandu in rooms on sharing basis (single supplement extra) with shower and WC and inclusive of breakfast
- All ground transportation as per the itinerary
- Participation in the trek as per itinerary inclusive of full board, camping equipment (not sleeping bags).
- Services of local porters on camping basis (15kg max per person), Sirdar (head guide), assistant guide (depending on group size) and kitchen staff.
- All Nepalese staff' insurance as per Government regulations
- All Trekking permits & National Park Fees

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).

Land only prices

The cost of international 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.

Options

Extra nights are available in Kathmandu in our group hotel, and in Pokhara in our choice of accommodation. Extension packages can also be organised in Nepal, Tibet or Bhutan.

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Contact us

for more information about any of our treks, please contact us and speak to our professional travel guides using the information below:

DENISE PRIOR (LONDON)

+44 (0) 7986 372 558

deniseprior@catreks.com

BHAI B. TAMANG (KATHMANDU)

info@catreks.com

or visit our website at www.catreks.com

Community Action Treks,
Stewart Hill Cottage, Near Hesket Newmarket,
Wigton, Cumbria,
CA7 8HX

Important Note

Whilst we expect that the trek will run as per the itinerary, participants should accept that there is a possibility of changes being necessary subject to local conditions.