



Earthbound Expeditions

Cho-Oyu Expedition

46 days, from US\$8,627 per person

Duration

46 days

Start and end

Kathmandu

Meals

Full board

Grade

Expedition

Best season

Apr to May, Sep to Oct

Group size

Up to 30

Max altitude

8,188 m

Accommodation

Hotel and tents

Getting there

Overland by 4WD

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Cho-Oyu Expedition Overview

Attempt the world's sixth-highest peak, often considered the most accessible 8,000 m peak, with a fully supported expedition team.

Expedition overview

Cho Oyu, at 8,188 m, is the sixth-highest mountain in the world. It lies on the Tibetan side of the border, about thirty kilometres west of Everest. It is often described as the easiest of the eight-thousand-metre peaks, but only in comparison with the others: there is no technical crux above the Yellow Band, a vehicle can reach base camp, and the summit is a broad plateau. Even so, climbers die on the mountain in most years.

Why it is often a first 8,000 m peak

There are three reasons. Chinese Base Camp at 4,900 m can be reached by road, so there is no week-long approach on foot. The route has no icefall and no serious objective hazards below Camp 2. The summit day, although long and very cold, is a walk on snow rather than a technical climb. For these reasons, most climbers who go on to Everest start here.

Who this trip is for

Climbers who have summited a 6,000 m or 7,000 m peak, are comfortable on fixed rope in crampons, and have spent time above 7,000 m or are prepared to do so for the first time. Cho Oyu is a much bigger step up from Island Peak than Island Peak is from a trek. If you are unsure whether you are ready, please talk to us first; we will probably recommend a season on a 7,000 m peak before this expedition.

Why the expedition takes 46 days

The expedition involves three days of travel, a week of approach and acclimatisation, and then four to five weeks of rotations between base camp and the high camps while waiting for a summit window. The window lasts a few days and may not come at all. Most of an expedition is spent waiting at altitude, with some very hard days in between. An 8,000 m expedition cannot be safely completed in three weeks.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
2	Kathmandu, permits, gear check and briefing	–	–	1,400 m
3	Drive to the Tibet border at Kerung	7–8 hrs	–	2,800 m
4	Drive to Tingri, across the plateau	5–6 hrs	–	4,300 m
5	Tingri, acclimatisation	–	–	4,300 m
6	Drive to Chinese Base Camp	3 hrs	–	4,900 m
7	Yak train to Advanced Base Camp	5–6 hrs	–	5,700 m
8	Advanced Base Camp, acclimatisation	–	–	5,700 m
9	Climbing period begins: rotations to Camp 1	–	–	6,400 m

20	Rotations to Camp 2 and Camp 3	-	-	7,450 m
35	Summit window, weather permitting	-	-	8,188 m
42	Clear the mountain, back to Chinese Base Camp	-	-	4,900 m
44	Drive back across the border to Kathmandu	2 days	-	1,400 m
46	Fly home	-	-	-

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

You are met at the airport and taken to your hotel. There are no activities planned for today.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Dinner

Day 2

Permits, gear check and briefing

The day includes the expedition briefing, a full equipment check and the remaining paperwork. Your Tibet permits will already have been issued in your name; today we confirm the liaison officer and the oxygen plan.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, briefing day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3

Drive to the Tibet border at Kerung

You drive north out of the Kathmandu valley and up the Trishuli and Bhote Koshi gorges to Rasuwagadhi, complete the border formalities and continue up the other side to Kerung.

Altitude: 2,800 m On foot: Drive, 7–8 hrs Night: Hotel, Kerung Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Drive across the plateau to Tingri

You cross a 5,236 m pass onto the Tibetan plateau. On a clear day, Shishapangma, Cho Oyu and Everest are visible from the top.

Altitude: 4,300 m On foot: Drive, 5–6 hrs Night: Hotel, Tingri Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Acclimatisation day in Tingri

A rest day at 4,300 m. This is the first important acclimatisation stop of the trip.

Altitude: 4,300 m On foot: Optional 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Tingri Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Drive to Chinese Base Camp

A three-hour drive to the end of the road at 4,900 m. Road access to base camp is the main reason Cho Oyu is considered the most accessible eight-thousand-metre peak.

Altitude: 4,900 m On foot: Drive, 3 hrs Night: Tents, Chinese Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek to Advanced Base Camp

Yaks carry the loads while you walk up to 5,700 m. Advanced Base Camp is the main base of operations, where you spend most of the following month.

Altitude: 5,700 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Tents, Advanced Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Acclimatisation at Advanced Base Camp

You settle in at 5,700 m: sorting loads, testing oxygen sets and allowing your body to adjust before anyone climbs higher.

Altitude: 5,700 m On foot: Optional 1–2 hrs Night: Tents, Advanced Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Start of the climbing period and rotations to Camp 1

The first load carry and the first night at 6,400 m, followed by a return to base camp. From this point the expedition is a series of rotations, each going a little higher and returning lower to sleep.

Altitude: 6,400 m On foot: 4–6 hrs to Camp 1 Night: Tents, Camp 1 and Advanced Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 20

Rotations to Camp 2 and Camp 3

Higher load carries on fixed rope, above the Yellow Band, to 7,100 m and then 7,450 m. Between rotations you rest at Advanced Base Camp, eat as much as you can and wait for the next stage.

Altitude: 7,450 m On foot: 5–8 hrs a day Night: Tents, the high camps and Advanced Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 35

Summit window, weather permitting

When the forecast shows a few settled days, the team moves up over three or four days and leaves Camp 3 before dawn for the summit plateau at 8,188 m. The window may come earlier, later or not at all, which is why the itinerary includes reserve weeks.

Altitude: 8,188 m On foot: 10–12 hrs Night: Tents, the high camps Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 42

Strike the high camps

The high camps, fixed ropes and all rubbish are brought down from the mountain. The yaks then come up to collect the loads and you walk back to Chinese Base Camp.

Altitude: 4,900 m On foot: 4–5 hrs Night: Tents, Chinese Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 44

Drive back to Kathmandu

Two days by road down from the plateau to Kathmandu, a descent of more than three kilometres. This is a rest period for the team.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: Drive, 2 days Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 45

Free day in Kathmandu

A free day to rest, bathe and enjoy a meal in the city, followed by a farewell dinner with the team in the evening.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, free day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 46

Departure

Transfer to the airport for your departure.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- Airport transfers and ground transport
- Licensed English-speaking guide
- Accommodation throughout the trip
- All permits and national park fees
- Meals as per the itinerary

Not included

- International flights
- Travel and rescue insurance
- Personal trekking gear
- Tips and personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Packing list

Luggage travels by truck and yak and is searched at the border

Your equipment travels by truck to Chinese Base Camp and by yak to Advanced Base Camp, so pack it in two strong, lockable duffel bags of about 20 to 25 kg each, which is the standard yak load. Keep your high-mountain equipment together in one of them. Bags are searched at the Kerung border. Do not carry anything relating to the Dalai Lama or Tibetan politics, including books and photographs, and tell us in advance about satellite phones and drones, which require permission. We provide group equipment, tents, ropes and oxygen; personal climbing equipment is your own, or can be hired in Kathmandu.

Headwear and eye protection

- Warm hat, and a balaclava or face mask for the summit
- Two buffs or neck gaiters
- Category 4 glacier glasses, and ski goggles for wind
- Head torch with spare lithium batteries
- Sunscreen SPF 50 and lip balm with sun protection

Clothing

- Down suit for the summit push, rated for 8,000 m
- Heavy down jacket for base camp and the high camps
- Synthetic or merino base layers, no cotton
- Fleece and softshell mid layers
- Waterproof, windproof shell jacket and trousers

Gloves

- Liner gloves
- Climbing gloves for fixed rope work
- Two pairs of down expedition mitts, one as a spare
- Chemical hand warmers

Footwear

- 8,000 m mountaineering boots with integrated gaiters
- Crampons fitted to those boots before you leave Kathmandu
- Trekking boots for the walk to Advanced Base Camp
- Warm down booties for camp
- Several pairs of wool socks and liner socks

Climbing kit

- Harness, ascender, belay device, and locking and plain carabiners
- Ice axe and helmet
- A climbing pack of 50 to 60 litres
- Two strong, lockable expedition duffels

Sleeping

- Down sleeping bag rated to at least -30°C
- A second sleeping bag for base camp, if you prefer not to carry one up and down
- Inflatable mattress, plus a closed-cell foam mat
- A pee bottle, clearly marked

Health

- Personal medical kit, agreed with your doctor, including any regular medication
- Diamox, if your doctor agrees
- Throat lozenges. The dry air causes a cough in almost everyone
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes

Documents and money

- Passport valid for at least six months, with blank pages
- Colour scans of your passport, sent to us six weeks before departure
- Insurance certificate covering high-altitude mountaineering to 8,500 m and evacuation

- Cash in US dollars for tips, summit bonuses and purchases along the way

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: enepaltrekking.com/cho-oyu-expedition