



Earthbound Expeditions

Kanchenjunga Base Camp Trek

28 days, from US\$2,397 per person

Duration

28 days

Start and end

Kathmandu

Accommodation

Teahouses

Getting there

Fly to Biratnagar

Grade

Strenuous

On the trail

5 to 7 hours a day

Meals

All meals on the trek

Max altitude

5,143 m

Best season

Apr to May, Oct to Nov

Group size

Up to 10

Contact us

Phone

+977 9851017772

Email

earthboundnpl@gmail.com

Office

G.P.O. Box 5801, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal

WhatsApp

+9779851017772

Website

enepaltrekking.com

Kanchenjunga Base Camp Trek Overview

A four-week trek to the foot of Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain on earth, in the far east of Nepal, on a restricted trail used by a few hundred trekkers a year.

Trek overview

This trek has twenty-two walking days and takes you to the north base camp of Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain on earth, in the far eastern corner of Nepal on the border with Sikkim. It is the longest trek we offer and by far the least crowded: a few hundred foreign trekkers walk it each year, compared with tens of thousands in the Khumbu. For several days at a time you will meet only local people going about their daily lives.

Both sides of the mountain

This itinerary follows the full circuit rather than returning the same way. You go up the Ghunsa valley to Pangpema for the north face, then cross the Sele La at around 4,700 m into the Yalung valley for Oktang and the south face. Most Kanchenjunga itineraries visit only one side. Visiting both is why the trek takes four weeks rather than three, and it is the main purpose of this route.

Who this trip is for

Trekkers who have completed a two-week Himalayan trek and want to spend a month on the trail. It is not technically harder than the Annapurna Circuit, but it is far more remote: there is no road for two weeks, no reliable helicopter landing site above Ghunsa and no clinic, and many teahouses are simple rooms in family homes. The difficulty comes from the length and isolation of the trek rather than the altitude.

Teahouse accommodation

Teahouses are now available along the whole route, which was not the case ten years ago, and they are basic. Expect a plywood room, a shared long-drop toilet, dal bhat twice a day and no shower above Ghunsa. Several are run by a single family and have only four beds. Conditions are closer to Manaslu fifteen years ago than to anything in the Annapurna region today.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
3	Fly to Biratnagar, drive to Hille	–	–	1,900 m
8	Reach Taplejung, the last road head	–	–	1,820 m
10	Sekathum, where the restricted area starts	–	–	1,640 m
13	Ghunsa, the Tibetan village	–	–	3,410 m
15	Khambachen, acclimatisation day	–	–	4,050 m
17	Pangpema and the north face	–	–	5,143 m
20	Over the Sele La into the Yalung	–	–	4,700 m
21	Ramche and Oktang, the south face	–	–	4,580 m
26	Back to Taplejung and the road	–	–	1,820 m
27	Fly back to Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m

Day 1**Arrive in Kathmandu**

We meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel, with a briefing in the evening. This is a restricted area trek, so we check the permit paperwork and passport copies at the same time.

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

Day 2**Kathmandu Valley sightseeing**

Visits to Swayambhunath, Pashupatinath, Boudhanath and Patan, and an equipment check in the afternoon. On a four-week trek, it is important to find any problem with your boots before you start.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3**Fly to Biratnagar and drive to Hille**

A short flight to the Terai, followed by a long drive up into the eastern hills. The far east of Nepal is greener, wetter and far less visited than any other region we cover.

Altitude: 1,900 m On foot: None, flight and 3–4 hr drive Night: Lodge, Hille Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4**Trek from Hille to Shidua**

The trek begins through terraced hillsides and Rai villages, on local paths used by villagers rather than dedicated trekking routes.

Altitude: 2,150 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Shidua Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5**Trek from Shidua to Door Pani**

You climb through rhododendron and oak forest to a ridge with the first clear view east towards Kanchenjunga.

Altitude: 2,780 m On foot: 6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Door Pani Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6**Trek from Door Pani to Gupha Pokhari**

A day along the ridge, past a small sacred lake, with Makalu behind you and Kanchenjunga ahead on a clear morning.

Altitude: 2,890 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gupha Pokhari Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7**Trek from Gupha Pokhari to Nesum**

A long descent out of the rhododendron forest into farmland and Limbu villages.

Altitude: 1,620 m On foot: 6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Nesum Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8**Trek from Nesum to Taplejung**

You descend to the river and climb again to the district town, the last place with shops, a bank and road access.

Altitude: 1,820 m On foot: 6 hrs Night: Lodge, Taplejung Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Trek from Taplejung to Chirwa

You enter the Tamur valley and follow the river north. From here, the trail is the only route in or out.

Altitude: 1,270 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Chirwa Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Trek from Chirwa to Sekathum

The trail follows the Tamur upstream through cardamom fields and across suspension bridges to the confluence at Sekathum, where the restricted area begins.

Altitude: 1,640 m On foot: 6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Sekathum Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Trek from Sekathum to Amjilosa

The gorge narrows and the trail, cut into its side, climbs steeply. The distance is short, but the day is physically demanding.

Altitude: 2,510 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Amjilosa Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Trek from Amjilosa to Gyabla

The trail passes through mossy forest and waterfalls as the valley narrows. The villages change from Limbu to Tibetan.

Altitude: 2,730 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gyabla Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

Trek from Gyabla to Ghunsa

The trail leaves the gorge for an open valley and the largest village on the route, a Tibetan settlement with a gompa, a micro-hydro scheme and a school.

Altitude: 3,410 m On foot: 5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Ghunsa Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14

Trek from Ghunsa to Khambachen

You climb above the treeline, crossing a landslide section slowly and carefully, as the north face of Jannu comes into view.

Altitude: 4,050 m On foot: 6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Khambachen Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15

Acclimatisation day in Khambachen

An acclimatisation day, with a walk up towards the Jannu glacier and back down to Khambachen to sleep.

Altitude: 4,050 m On foot: Optional 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Khambachen Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 16

Trek from Khambachen to Lhonak

A high, open day across rubble beside the moraine, with very little vegetation and extensive mountain views.

Altitude: 4,780 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lhonak Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 17

Hike to Pangpema and return to Lhonak

This is the main objective of the trek. You walk for four hours up the Kanchenjunga glacier to Pangpema at 5,143 m, where the entire north face rises three and a half vertical kilometres in front of you. You return to Lhonak to sleep.

Altitude: 5,143 m at Pangpema On foot: 7–8 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lhonak Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 18

Trek back to Ghunsa

A long descent, covering the ground of two days in one, with breathing becoming easier as you lose height.

Altitude: 3,410 m On foot: 7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Ghunsa Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 19

Trek from Ghunsa to Sele Le

You leave the valley floor and climb through forest towards the pass, camping at a high site.

Altitude: 4,290 m On foot: 6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Sele Le Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 20

Cross the Sele La to Tseram

The pass crossing: a series of passes up to around 4,700 m, with Jannu, Makalu and Everest visible on a clear morning, followed by a long descent into the Simbuwa valley.

Altitude: 4,700 m at the pass On foot: 8–9 hrs Night: Teahouse, Tseram Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 21

Trek from Tseram to Ramche and visit Oktang

You walk up the Yalung valley to Ramche and continue to the Oktang viewpoint for the south face of Kanchenjunga.

Altitude: 4,580 m On foot: 6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Ramche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 22

Trek from Ramche to Torontan

You descend the Yalung valley back into forest, losing height quickly.

Altitude: 2,995 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Torontan Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 23

Trek from Torontan to Yamphudin

You leave the high country for farmland and reach the first village with a shop for several days.

Altitude: 1,690 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Yamphudin Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 24

Trek from Yamphudin to Phumphe

Rolling hill country through Limbu villages and cardamom fields.

Altitude: 1,780 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Phumphe Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 25

Trek from Phumphe to Phawa Khola

You descend to the river and follow it, on paths used daily by local people.

Altitude: 1,430 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Phawa Khola Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 26

Trek from Phawa Khola to Taplejung

The last day of walking, back to the road head and a comfortable bed.

Altitude: 1,820 m On foot: 5 hrs Night: Lodge, Taplejung Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 27

Return to Kathmandu from Taplejung

Depending on your dates, you either drive to Bhadrapur and fly west to Kathmandu, or travel the whole way by road. A farewell dinner in the evening.

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

Day 28

Departure

We take you to the airport for your flight home. At four weeks, this is the longest trek we run.

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

What's included

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

Not included

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

Packing list

Weight limits for four weeks

Your porter carries a strict maximum of 20 kg, shared between two trekkers. The flights to the east allow 15 kg, and bags are weighed. There is no shop after Taplejung on day 8, so you need to buy everything for the twenty-two days in Kathmandu. We provide the duffel bag and the sleeping bag.

On your head

- Sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat that covers your ears
- Buff or neck gaiter, two of them
- Sunglasses, category 3 or 4. Snow glare at this altitude is serious
- Headtorch and spare batteries

- Sunscreen SPF 50 and lip balm with sun protection

On your body

- Three or four merino or synthetic base layers, no cotton
- Two mid layers, one fleece and one light insulated jacket
- Down jacket. We provide one; bring your own if you feel the cold at night
- Waterproof jacket and trousers that pack small
- Two pairs of trekking trousers, one lined
- Underwear for four or five days, washed on the way

Hands and feet

- Liner gloves and insulated outer gloves or mittens
- Trekking boots with ankle support, fully broken in before the trek
- Four pairs of wool trekking socks
- Camp shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Gaiters, if you are going in winter or early spring

Bags

- Duffel bag for the porter, 20 kg maximum. We provide one
- Daypack, 30 to 35 litres, with a rain cover
- Dry bags or thick liners. Bags do not stay waterproof for long on a Himalayan trail

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to -15°C. We provide one
- Silk or cotton liner, for warmth and hygiene
- Earplugs. Teahouse walls are made of plywood

Health

- Personal first aid: blister plasters, tape, painkillers, rehydration salts
- Diamox, if your doctor agrees, plus any medicine you take routinely
- Water purification: tablets, a filter, or a SteriPen
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes
- Throat lozenges. Almost everyone develops a dry cough at high altitude

Papers and money

- Passport valid for six months, plus two photocopies
- Four passport photographs for permits
- Travel insurance certificate showing helicopter cover to 6,000 m
- \$450 to \$650 in small notes. The last cash machine is at Taplejung, on day 8, and it is not reliable

Extra items for four weeks in a restricted area

- All the cash you will need. There is no reliable cash machine after Taplejung, and cards are not accepted anywhere
- Two power banks, and a solar charger if you have one. Electricity is rationed for twenty-two days
- One or more books. The evenings are long and dark, with no internet
- Spare boot laces, tape and a repair kit. There is no shop to replace anything after day 8
- Leech socks for the lower gorge, which is wet forest in the shoulder months

Route map

Kanchenjunga Base Camp Trek

28 days | Highest point 5,143 m | Strenuous



Start: Fly east to Biratnagar, drive to Hille End: Taplejung to Kathmandu

Altitude by day



Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: nepaltravelling.com/kanchenjunga-trek