



Earthbound Expeditions

Langtang Gosainkunda Circuit Trek

17 days, from US\$1,487 per person

Duration

17 days

Start and end

Kathmandu

Accommodation

Teahouses

Getting there

By jeep

Grade

Moderate to strenuous

On the trail

5 to 7 hours a day

Meals

All meals on the trek

Max altitude

4,610 m

Best season

Mar to May, Oct to Nov

Group size

Up to 10

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Langtang Gosainkunda Circuit Trek Overview

Three valleys and one high pass: up Langtang to Kyanjin Gumpa, over the Laurebina La past the sacred lakes at Gosainkunda, and out on foot through Helambu to the edge of Kathmandu.

Trek overview

This is a circuit rather than a return trek. You drive north, walk for four days up the Langtang valley to Kyanjin Gumpa at 3,870 m, come back down the gorge, then climb out of it into a second valley to reach the sacred lakes at Gosainkunda, 4,380 m. From there you cross the Laurebina La at 4,610 m into Helambu and walk south along the ridges for three days to Sundarimal, at the edge of the Kathmandu valley. The route covers three valleys and one pass, and you finish on foot rather than by bus.

How it differs from the shorter trek

Our Langtang Valley and Gosainkunda Trek goes up to the lakes and returns the same way, down to Dhunche and the road. This trek continues beyond the lakes: over the pass and down the long descent into Helambu on the far side. That adds four days, a genuine high crossing, and a week of very different country, forested and inhabited, where Langtang is glacial and open.

The pass and pass closures

The Laurebina La is not technical. It is a two-hour climb over boulders and old snow from the lake, where you sleep at 4,380 m, followed by 1,200 m of loose descent that takes most of the day. It requires an early start, a settled forecast and legs that have already walked for ten days. The pass does close. If there is fresh snow, ice on the traverse or low cloud, we turn back at the lake and walk out to Dhunche instead, which follows the shorter trek. The guide makes that decision on the morning, and we would rather lose four days of your itinerary than take a risk at 4,500 m.

The 2015 earthquake

You walk through the affected area, so you should know about it before you arrive. On 25 April 2015 the earthquake brought ice and rock down from Langtang Lirung onto Langtang village, and the official count for the valley is 306 dead: local people, Nepalis from elsewhere, guides and foreign trekkers. Local families believe the number is higher. The old village lies under the debris field that the trail crosses, and the village you sleep in was rebuilt further up the valley by the survivors, largely with money earned from trekking. Trekking here puts money back into the community. Please pass the memorial quietly.

Who this trip is for

Trekkers who have walked at altitude before, have a little over two weeks, and prefer to cross a pass rather than return the same way. It is not the hardest trek we offer, and it is not a beginner's trek either: it has thirteen consecutive walking days, a 4,610 m pass with a rest day built in before it, and three long days in Helambu that people often underestimate. There are no flights that can be cancelled, which is an important advantage for many travellers.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
2	Kathmandu valley sites and briefing	–	–	1,400 m
3	Drive to Syabrubesi	7 to 8 hrs	122 km	1,460 m

4	Syabrubesi to Lama Hotel	6 hrs	11 km	2,470 m
5	Lama Hotel to Langtang village	6 hrs	14 km	3,430 m
6	Langtang village to Kyanjin Gomba	3 to 4 hrs	7 km	3,870 m
7	Kyanjin Gomba, Tserko Ri or Kyanjin Ri	4 to 7 hrs	6 to 12 km	4,984 m
8	Kyanjin Gomba to Lama Hotel	6 to 7 hrs	21 km	2,470 m
9	Lama Hotel to Thulo Syabru	5 hrs	11 km	2,250 m
10	Thulo Syabru to Sing Gomba	5 hrs	9 km	3,330 m
11	Sing Gomba to Gosainkunda	5 to 6 hrs	7 km	4,380 m
12	Gosainkunda, lakes and viewpoint	2 to 3 hrs	4 km	4,610 m
13	Laurebina La to Ghopte	7 to 8 hrs	11 km	4,610 m
14	Ghopte to Kutumsang via Tharepati	6 to 7 hrs	14 km	3,690 m
15	Kutumsang to Chisapani	7 hrs	16 km	2,215 m
16	Chisapani to Sundarjal, drive to Kathmandu	4 hrs walk, 1 hr drive	10 km	1,400 m
17	Fly home	–	–	1,400 m

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

We meet you at Tribhuvan airport and drive you to your hotel in Thamel. No activities are planned today. If you have the energy, the old streets around Asan, a ten-minute walk away, are busy in the evening. Over dinner we go through the whole route, check your insurance and inspect your boots, which is an important check.

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

Day 2

Kathmandu Valley sightseeing and trek briefing

A guided day around the valley: the great stupa at Boudhanath, the cremation ghats at Pashupatinath, the hilltop temple at Swayambhunath and the carved courtyards of Patan. It is a gentle way to recover from the flight. Your guide uses the day to assess the group's pace and to finalise the permits before the drive north.

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

Day 3

Drive to Syabrubesi

The 122 km drive north takes seven to eight hours on a very winding road. You climb out of the valley at Kakani, descend to the Trishuli, then follow the Pasang Lhamu highway past Dhunche, where the national park checkpoint is. The last section is rough and slow. Syabrubesi is at a river junction at 1,460 m.

Altitude: 1,460 m On foot: None, 7–8 hr drive Night: Teahouse, Syabrubesi Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Trek to Lama Hotel

You cross the Bhote Koshi and turn east into the narrow Langtang gorge. The trail follows six hours of forest, oak giving way to rhododendron, with the river loud below and langur monkeys in the trees. It is a humid, steady day without major views, and it gains a thousand metres.

Altitude: 2,470 m On foot: 11 km, 6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lama Hotel Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Trek from Lama Hotel to Langtang village

The trail climbs out of the forest in the biggest ascent of the first week. You gain nearly a thousand metres through Ghoda Tabela, where your permit is checked, and the valley opens up as the forest gives way to yak pasture. You then cross the avalanche debris field, half an hour of grey rubble and carved stones, and reach the rebuilt village beyond it.

Altitude: 3,430 m On foot: 14 km, 6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Langtang village Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek to Kyanjin Gumpa

A short day, planned for acclimatisation. You walk for three to four hours past Mundu and Sindum, over a moraine and alongside the longest mani wall in the valley, to Kyanjin Gumpa below the south face of Langtang Lirung. You arrive by lunch, leaving the afternoon to visit the yak cheese factory and rest at 3,870 m.

Altitude: 3,870 m On foot: 7 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Kyanjin Gumpa Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Acclimatisation day at Kyanjin Gumpa

This is an acclimatisation day, but an active one. Tserko Ri at 4,984 m is a seven-hour round trip with a full panorama of Langtang Lirung, Dorje Lakpa and the peaks on the Tibetan border. Kyanjin Ri at 4,773 m takes half as long and offers a similar view. Your guide decides at breakfast, based on how everyone slept.

Altitude: 4,984 m On foot: 6–12 km, 4–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Kyanjin Gumpa Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Trek from Kyanjin Gumpa to Lama Hotel

Today you descend in one day the height you climbed over two. It is twenty-one kilometres downhill through the village, the debris field and the gorge, which is hard on the knees. Walking poles are very useful today. You also see the valley from the opposite direction, with the light behind you rather than in your eyes.

Altitude: 2,470 m On foot: 21 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lama Hotel Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Trek from Lama Hotel to Thulo Syabru

You descend the gorge to the bridge over the Bhote Koshi, then climb steeply on the far side to Thulo Syabru, a Tamang village along a ridge with the Langtang range behind it. From here the circuit changes direction: you climb into a different valley and do not walk the same ground twice.

Altitude: 2,250 m On foot: 11 km, 5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Thulo Syabru Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Trek from Thulo Syabru to Sing Gompa

The day involves 1,100 metres of climbing through rhododendron and oak forest to Dursagang, followed by a long ridge walk into silver fir forest. Sing Gompa, also called Chandanbari, has a small Buddhist monastery and a second cheese factory at about 3,330 m. Red pandas live in this forest, although sightings are very rare.

Altitude: 3,330 m On foot: 9 km, 5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Sing Gompa Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Trek from Sing Gompa to Gosainkunda

The most scenic walking day of the trek and the hardest so far. You climb past Cholangpati to Laurebina Yak at 3,920 m, where the tree line ends and Manaslu, Ganesh Himal and Himalchuli are visible behind you. A rocky traverse then passes two smaller lakes to Gosainkunda itself at 4,380 m, with the lodges on the near shore.

Altitude: 4,380 m On foot: 7 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gosainkunda Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Acclimatisation day at Gosainkunda

This rest day is what makes the pass crossing safe. You walk along the north shore past the rock in the water that pilgrims regard as Shiva's head, then climb to the viewpoint at about 4,610 m and return to sleep by the lake. Reaching the height of the next day's pass and then descending to sleep is the purpose of the day.

Altitude: 4,610 m On foot: 4 km, 2–3 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gosainkunda Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

Cross the Laurebina La and trek to Ghopte

This is the most demanding day of the trek. Two hours over boulders and old snow bring you to the Laurebina La at 4,610 m, marked by prayer flags, with views from Langtang Lirung to the Annapurnas on a clear morning. This is followed by 1,200 m of descent through Phedi to Ghopte, on loose rock and through juniper, which takes considerably longer than it appears.

Altitude: 3,430 m On foot: 11 km, 7–8 hrs Night: Teahouse, Ghopte Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14

Trek from Ghopte to Kutumsang

A varied and scenic day. You climb back up to Tharepati at 3,690 m, the last high ground of the trek, then follow the ridge south through Magen Goth into moss-covered fir forest that is very different from the Langtang valley. Kutumsang, at 2,470 m, is a Sherpa and Tamang village with terraced fields below it and warm nights.

Altitude: 2,470 m On foot: 14 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Kutumsang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15

Trek from Kutumsang to Chisapani

This is the longest day of the final section: sixteen kilometres over a series of ridge saddles at Gul Bhanjyang, Chipling and Pati Bhanjyang, climbing and descending all day through villages and millet terraces. Chisapani has views north to Langtang and Ganesh Himal and south towards Kathmandu. It is your last night on the trail.

Altitude: 2,215 m On foot: 16 km, 7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Chisapani Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 16

Trek to Sundarijal and drive to Kathmandu

The trail enters Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park through oak forest, passes the Tamang hamlet at Mulkharka, then descends a very long staircase beside the pipeline that carries Kathmandu's water to the checkpoint at Sundarijal. From there it is an hour's drive back to the hotel, with the full circuit complete and no section retraced.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: 10 km, 4 hrs, then 1 hr drive Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 17

Departure

We take you to the airport three hours before your flight. If you have a free morning, the shops in Thamel sell singing bowls and other souvenirs. If you let us know in advance, we will reserve a day room at the hotel so you can shower and repack before a late departure, as most flights from Kathmandu leave late.

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

Luggage weight limit

There are no flights on this trek, so your luggage is not weighed at a check-in desk. Your porter carries a strict maximum of 20 kg shared between two trekkers, which is more than the allowance on any Everest itinerary. We provide the duffel, the sleeping bag and the down jacket, so you do not need to bring these. Anything you do not take on the trek is stored free of charge at our Kathmandu office. The item people most often forget is warm clothing for two nights at 4,380 m, where the lake is frozen for much of the season.

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 the lakes is strong

- Headtorch and spare batteries. The pass day starts before daylight
- 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
- Down jacket. We provide one, and you will need it for the nights at the lake
- Waterproof shell, jacket and trousers, that packs small
- Two pairs of trekking trousers, one of them lined
- Underwear for four or five days, and wash clothes in Helambu

Hands and feet

- Liner gloves and insulated outer gloves or mittens
- Boots with ankle support, broken in before the trek
- Microspikes, light and worth carrying in any month
- Four pairs of wool trekking socks
- Camp shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Gaiters, for the traverse below the pass after snow

Bags

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

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to minus 15 degrees. We provide one
- Silk or cotton liner, for warmth and hygiene
- Earplugs. Teahouse walls are plywood, and Ghopte is the most basic lodge

Health

- Personal first aid: blister plasters, tape, painkillers, rehydration salts
- Diamox, if your doctor agrees, plus anything you take routinely
- Water purification: tablets, a filter or a SteriPen
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes. No shower at the lakes or at Ghopte
- Knee support or two walking poles for the descents, which are long

Papers and money

- Passport valid for six months, plus two photocopies
- Four passport photographs for permits
- Insurance certificate showing helicopter cover to 5,000 m
- \$200 to \$300 in rupees, in small notes. Cards are not accepted above Thulo Syabru

Langtang Gosainkunda Circuit Trek

17 days | Highest point 4,984 m | Moderate to Strenuous



Altitude by day



Optional extras

Both hills at Kyanjin

\$110, +1 day

An extra night at Kyanjin Gompa so you can climb Kyanjin Ri and Tserko Ri on separate days instead of choosing between them. It is excellent value and it improves acclimatisation for the pass.

Tamang Heritage Trail before the trek

from \$290, +3 days

A lower cultural loop west of Syabrubesi through Tamang villages, with a hot spring at Tatopani and a view into Tibet. Added at the start, it also provides acclimatisation, which makes the rest of the circuit easier.

Melamchi Gaon and Tarke Ghyang

\$180, +2 days

Descend east from Tharepati into the Buddhist heart of Helambu instead of following the Kutumsang ridge, then finish at Melamchi Pul. This option has older monasteries, easier days, and finishes by road instead of on foot.

Private jeep instead of the bus

\$110, 1 drive

For the one road day at the start. Eight hours on the Pasang Lhamu highway is much more comfortable with six people in a jeep than with forty in a bus, and you leave when you choose.

Chitwan or Bardia, three days

from \$390, +3 days

Travel to the lowland jungle to see rhino, and possibly tiger at Bardia. It is a good contrast to two weeks of mountain ridges, and easy to add after a trek that ends at the edge of Kathmandu.

Single room

\$120, whole trip

For the Kathmandu nights and wherever a lodge has a spare room. Most lodges at Gosainkunda and Ghopte do not, and in late October none do.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: enepaltrekking.com/langtang-gosainkunda-helambu-trek