



Earthbound Expeditions

Manaslu Circuit Trek

15 days, from US\$1,687 per person

Duration

15 days

Start and end

Kathmandu

Accommodation

Teahouses

Getting there

By jeep

Grade

Strenuous

On the trail

5 to 7 hours a day

Meals

All meals on the trek

Max altitude

5,106 m

Best season

Mar to May, Sep 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

Manaslu Circuit Trek Overview

A quieter, more remote alternative to the Annapurna Circuit, circling the world's eighth-highest mountain through remote villages with a strong Tibetan influence.

Trek overview

A full circuit of the world's eighth-highest mountain, up the Budhi Gandaki gorge and over a 5,106 m pass to join the upper section of the Annapurna Circuit. There are eleven walking days through an area that was closed to foreigners until 1991 and is still a restricted area today. It is similar to the Annapurna Circuit of thirty years ago: there is no road through the middle section, the villages are Tibetan in language and religion rather than Nepali, and there are far fewer trekkers.

Who this trip is for

This trek suits someone who has already done a Himalayan trek and wants the next one to be quieter rather than higher. It is not technically harder than the Annapurna Circuit, but it is much more remote: there are fewer lodges, fewer good ones, no road to walk out to for a week in the middle, and no helicopter landing site until Samagaon. If your first trek went well and you would have preferred fewer people on the trail, this trek is a good choice.

The Budhi Gandaki gorge

The Budhi Gandaki cuts a narrow channel through the foothills, and the trail is cut into its side. Days 4 to 6 are therefore a continuous series of climbs and descents that gain very little height and are tiring on the legs. There are suspension bridges, landslide crossings and stone staircases, and the views are of the gorge walls rather than the mountains. It is the least scenic section of any of our treks, but it leads to the upper half of the route, which is among the best.

Acclimatisation day at Samagaon

Samagaon, at 3,530 m, is the acclimatisation stop. It prepares you for a pass 1,576 m higher, with a night at 4,460 m in between. It is also the best place on the trek to spend a day: Birendra Lake is an hour away, Manaslu Base Camp is a hard day hike above it, and the Pungyen Gompa sits on a moraine with the mountain directly behind. Some itineraries skip this day, and their trekkers are the ones who turn back at Dharamsala.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
2	Kathmandu valley sites, trek briefing	–	–	1,400 m
3	Drive to Maccha Khola	8 hrs	–	870 m
4	Maccha Khola to Jagat	6–7 hrs	22 km	1,340 m
5	Jagat to Dyang	6–7 hrs	18 km	1,800 m
6	Dyang to Ghap	5–6 hrs	16 km	2,080 m
7	Ghap to Lho	5–6 hrs	14 km	3,180 m
8	Lho to Samagaon	6–7 hrs	12 km	3,530 m
9	Samagaon to Samdo	4–5 hrs	8 km	3,875 m

10	Samdo, acclimatisation day	4–5 hrs	–	4,400 m
11	Samdo to Dharamsala	4–5 hrs	7 km	4,460 m
12	Over the Larkya La to Bimthang	8–10 hrs	24 km	5,106 m
13	Bimthang to Tilje	5–6 hrs	13 km	2,300 m
14	Walk to Dharapani, jeep to Kathmandu	7–8 hrs driving	–	1,400 m
15	Fly home	–	–	–

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

An Earthbound Expeditions representative meets you at Tribhuvan International Airport and transfers you to your hotel to rest.

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

Day 2

Kathmandu Valley sightseeing

A tour of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including Swayambhunath Stupa, Boudhanath and Pashupatinath, followed by a pre-trek briefing. Overnight in a hotel.

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

Day 3

Drive from Kathmandu to Maccha Khola (870 m)

An 8 hour drive over rough roads passes Arughat on the Budhi Gandaki River and continues through Soti Khola to Maccha Khola. Overnight in a simple riverside teahouse.

Altitude: 870 m On foot: None, 8 hr drive Night: Teahouse, Maccha Khola Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Trek to Jagat (1,340 m)

A 6 to 7 hour trail climbs and descends past the Tatopani hot springs, over ridges and bridges above the Budhi Gandaki gorge, to the traditional village of Jagat. Teahouse accommodation.

Altitude: 1,340 m On foot: 22 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Jagat Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Trek to Nyak or Dyang (1,800 m)

About 18 km of walking climbs to Salleri, then descends through Philim and Ekle Bhatti, crossing millet fields and bamboo forests to the Himalayan village of Dyang. Teahouse accommodation.

Altitude: 1,800 m On foot: 18 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dyang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek to Ghap (2,080 m)

Beyond Deng, the route crosses the Budhi Gandaki, climbs to Rana and heads west through forests to Ghap, known for its mani stones, waterfalls and views of snow-capped peaks. Teahouse accommodation.

Altitude: 2,080 m On foot: 16 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Ghap Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek to Lho (3,180 m)

A 5 to 6 hour trail crosses the Simnang Himal side valley to Lho, which has a large gompa and a carved chorten, and close views of Mount Manaslu. Teahouse accommodation.

Altitude: 3,180 m On foot: 14 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lho Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Trek to Samagaon (3,530 m)

A 6 to 7 hour route via Shyala crosses rough terrain beneath Manaslu and large glaciers, with a visit to Pungyen Gompa. Samagaon is an essential acclimatisation stop. Teahouse accommodation.

Altitude: 3,530 m On foot: 12 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Samagaon Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Trek to Samdo (3,875 m)

The route descends to the Budhi Gandaki River, then crosses bridges and passes through birch forests at Kermo Kharka to Samdo, a small Bhotia village of Tibetan origin with monasteries and chortens. Teahouse accommodation.

Altitude: 3,875 m On foot: 8 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Samdo Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Acclimatisation day at Samdo (3,875 m)

A rest day before the Larkya La, with an optional hike along old Tibetan trade routes offering views of Manaslu, Simrang and Ngadi peaks. Teahouse accommodation.

Altitude: 3,875 m On foot: Optional 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Samdo Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Trek to Dharamsala (4,460 m)

A 4 to 5 hour day along narrow trail edges and over wooden bridges passes the Larkya Glacier and the Salka Khola valley to Dharamsala, via the seasonal Larkya Bazaar. Overnight in a stone shelter.

Altitude: 4,460 m On foot: 7 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dharamsala Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Cross the Larkya La pass (5,106 m) to Bimthang (3,590 m)

This is the longest day, about 24 km. The route climbs to the Larkya Glacier and crosses the pass, one of the hardest parts of the trek, with views of Himlung, Cheo and Kang Guru, before a steep descent to Bimthang. Teahouse accommodation.

Altitude: 5,106 m at the Larkya La On foot: 24 km, 8–10 hrs Night: Teahouse, Bimthang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

Trek to Tilje (2,300 m)

About 13 km of descent through the Sangure Kharka pastures, across the Dudh Khola and through rhododendron forests and Karche, to the village of Tilje. Teahouse accommodation.

Altitude: 2,300 m On foot: 13 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Tilje Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14

Trek to Dharapani and drive to Kathmandu

A walk along dirt roads through the Marsyangdi valley rejoins the Annapurna Circuit at Dharapani. A 7 to 8 hour jeep or bus journey then returns to Kathmandu, followed by an evening cultural show and dinner.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: 1–2 hrs, then 7–8 hr drive Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15

Departure

You may end or extend your trip. If you are departing, we provide transport to Tribhuvan International Airport.

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 limit and supplies

Your porter carries a strict maximum of 20 kg, shared between two trekkers. There are no flights on this trek and no shops after day 8, so you must bring everything you need from Kathmandu. We provide the duffel bag and the sleeping bag.

Headwear and sun protection

- Sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat that covers your ears
- Two buffs or neck gaiters
- Sunglasses, category 3 or 4. Snow glare at this altitude can damage your eyes
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sunscreen SPF 50 and lip balm with sun protection

Clothing

- Three or four merino or synthetic base layers, no cotton
- Two mid layers; fleece is sufficient
- A light down or synthetic jacket for the evenings
- Waterproof jacket and trousers that pack small
- Two pairs of trekking trousers, one lined
- Underwear for four or five days, washed along the way

Footwear and gloves

- Light gloves, and a warmer pair for the mornings
- Trekking boots with ankle support, already worn in. This is essential
- Four pairs of wool trekking socks
- Camp shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Gaiters, if you are trekking 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. No bag stays waterproof for long on a Himalayan trail

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to -10°C. We provide one
- Silk or cotton liner, for warmth and hygiene
- Earplugs. Teahouse walls are thin plywood

Health

- Personal first aid: blister plasters, tape, painkillers, rehydration salts
- Any medication you take regularly, in its original packaging
- Water purification: tablets, a filter, or a SteriPen
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes
- Throat lozenges. Almost everyone develops a dry cough at high altitude

Documents and money

- Passport valid for six months, plus two photocopies
- Four passport photographs for permits
- Travel insurance certificate showing trekking cover to your maximum altitude
- \$300 to \$450 in small notes. The last cash machine is in Kathmandu, and there is none on this route

Specific to this restricted area

- All the money you will need, in Nepali rupees. There is no cash machine anywhere on this trek, and cards are not accepted
- Two power banks. Charging above Lho is solar, rationed, and sometimes unavailable at Dharamsala

- An insulated flask. A hydration bladder hose freezes on the pass day
- Microspikes for a March or November crossing. Your guide decides at Samdo whether they are needed, and they can be bought in Kathmandu
- A sleeping bag liner you are comfortable with. The bedding at Dharamsala is the most basic on any trek we offer

Route map

Manaslu Circuit Trek

15 days | Highest point 5,106 m | Strenuous



Start: Drive from Kathmandu to Maccha Khola (870 m) End: From Tilje to Kathmandu

Altitude by day



Optional extras

Tsum Valley

from \$690, +7 days

A side valley reached from Lokpa that was closed to outsiders until 2008, with its own dialect, its own gompas and a longstanding ban on killing animals. It requires its own restricted area permit, and it is the best extension we offer.

Manaslu Base Camp day hike

no extra cost, uses the Samagaon day

A demanding day hike, climbing 1,200 m from Samagaon to the base camp at 4,800 m. It provides excellent acclimatisation and views, and is only suitable for trekkers who are already acclimatising well.

An extra night at Samagaon

\$90, +1 day

The most useful day you can add to this trek. It gives time for Birendra Lake and the Pungyen Gompa, and a much better chance of crossing the pass.

Continue on the Annapurna Circuit

from \$740, +7 days

You finish the Manaslu Circuit at Dharapani, where the upper section of the Annapurna Circuit begins. This gives two 5,000 m passes in one trip and about a month on the trail.

Helicopter from Samagaon

from \$2,900 for the aircraft, saves 6 days

Priced per aircraft rather than per seat. It is usually chosen because of a change of plan rather than an emergency, and it depends on the weather.

Single room where available

\$120

For the Kathmandu nights and the better lodges. Above Samagaon the lodges do not have single rooms, and Dharamsala is a dormitory.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: enepaltrekking.com/manaslu-circuit-trek